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WRITTEN BY BRENDAN McNAMARA AND KATIE ELLWOOD ORIGINAL SCORE ANDREW HALE GAME DESIGN CHUN WAH KONG DIRECTED BY BRENDAN McNAMARA



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Strong Sexual Content
Violence

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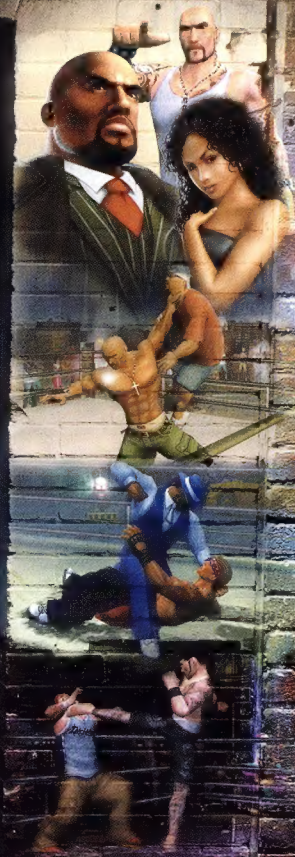




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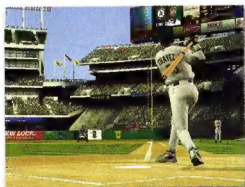
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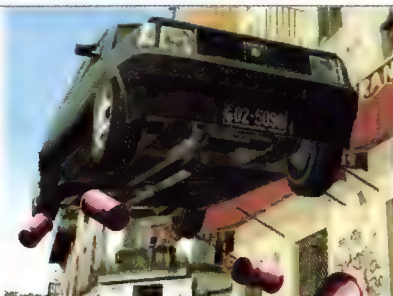
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DRIVER 3

It's set in Miami. It lets you swipe boats. It packs on-foot gun battles. No, we're not running an old *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* story. We put you behind the wheel of *Driver 3*, which is racing to every system this fall. Is it more than just a GTA clone? Find out on page 102.

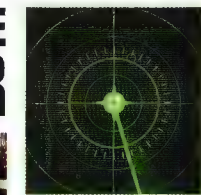
UNDER THE RAAR



You know all about the incoming bombshells—the *Final Fantasies*, the *Tomb Raiders*, the *Tony Hawk's Pro Cash Cows*. But while your sensors focus on those loo-megaton hits, great unknown titles are liable to slip by undetected. We lock onto 2003's top potential sleepers on page 44.



What's the new GameCube *Zelda* free, and how can it get you two free games? Find out on page 88.



Nintendo reveals a new GBA for you to buy (and it has a light)! Check out page 42.



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Departments

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Our system forecast has an update on where the big three consoles are and where they're going in the next year. Plus, the makers of *Hitman 2* talk about the creation of their "hit" game. Ha!

Previews 66

A whole mess of former console-exclusives are switching sides—*Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance* and *Splinter Cell* move to PS2 while *Phantasy Star Online Episode I&II* finally makes it to Xbox.

Review Crew 110

Our team of trained sandwich artists delve into highly anticipated sequels: *Devil May Cry 2*, *Dark Cloud 2*, and *Everblue 2* (we know how excited you've been for that last one). Also, boobies in *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball* and Dwarf boobies in *EverQuest Online Adventures*.

Tricks 136

Still playing *Vice City*? You definitely need our help. Plus, tips for the GBA *Zelda*, wacky *Rygor* fun, and—hey kids—*Yu-Gi-Oh!*

The Final Word 144





EDITORIAL

Mmmm...Boobies...

I'm sick of discussing videogame violence. Breasts—let's talk about them apples instead. To join along in this conversation, first go out and play some *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball* on Xbox. Get an boob? Good. Now, lemme ask: How come boobs don't cause as much controversy as gaming blood and gore? *Tomb Raider's* Lara Croft has been flaunting them for years. The *DOA* gals are downright determined to show off their bountiful assets. And *BMX XXX* actually did show enough to take one's eyes out—and no one even noticed or cared! (That could be because the game sucked.)

So what's the deal? Aren't these mounds of polygons raising a nation of pervs? Aren't they setting unrealistic standards for women? Aren't they objectifying females?

I don't have a stance on this boobs in gaming issue, and I'm not looking to take one on. I'm just wandering out loud. Maybe I'm even trying to get mainstream America talking about something other than running over prostitutes in *GTA: Vice City*. Some people in my trade will be awfully ticked off when they read this editorial. "Why are you drawing more heat to videogames? Shouldn't you be protecting the medium?" Well, yes and no.

By Dan "Shoe" Hsu



love this business, but if we're going to accept videogaming as normal entertainment, then we ought to be comfortable discussing anything in it. Even boobs.

But I'm curious what people think. Are breast games less "evil" for kids to play than those with lots of killing? More? Actually, the answer to that is pretty obvious: Breasts are officially less evil than killing—unless you're talking about breasts that kill people (see *Austin Powers*). My real question: Since gaming has officially grown-up, can developers get away with showing the full monty? And what about—as gasp—sex?

Pornography is legal in this country, provided you're of age. With the videogame industry exploding in popularity, widespread acceptance, and revenue, it's inevitable we'll start seeing Adults Only console games hitting certain store shelves—we'll be getting a lot more than just boobs in our *Final Fantasies*. As long as these AO-rated titles are sold strictly to adults, is it OK for developers to make them? Drop us a note at EGM@ziffdavis.com and let us know what's on your mind—if it's appropriate, that is.

—Shoe, Editor-in-Chief

*This is a reference to *The Simpsons*, so don't write in complaining about how immature we are. We already know it.

Contributors



Scott Steinberg

Celebrity stalking ain't easy. Fortunately, we got Scotty here to buy a map to the stars' homes and dig through their trash. This month's victim: Busta Rhymes.



John Brandon

John has written about so many gadgets for mags like *Tech Edge* and *LAPTOP* that he's more machine than man. So we sicked this machine on *Tao Feng* for Xbox.



Joanne Kim

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the mall, Jeane leaps from the food-court shadows and hounds passers-by for work on the Street section.



Nick Wolfand

We couldn't stomach the two-month ship voyage to England to see *Driver 3* for our cover story, so we sent UK native Nick, a BBC writer and reformed soccer hooligan.



Dan Leahy

Dapper, dashing, and swarthy are just some of the words that come to mind when one contemplates our sports-game reviewer, Dan Leahy. Another word is crunky.



Seanbaby

Look out, reigning Hot Dog Eating Champion Takeru Kobayashi!—our reviewer Seanbaby is training for his first competitive eating event. So basically, you're screwed.



Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

John Davison, Joe Rybicki, Todd Zuniga, and "Hairy" Gary Steinman contributed this month, freeing our schedules so we could just sit around and watch *Mama's Family*.



GameNOW

GameNow editor Miguel Lopez not only helped with reviews this month, he's from Miami. Funny thing: Not once has he come to work in a stolen helicopter.



Xbox Nation

What, you read *XBN* and you still can't get enough Greg Orlando? That's a rare malady. But you're in luck, as *EGM* now features 110% more Orlando than ever before.



Computer Gaming World

In the spirit of cultural awareness, we let *CGW's* Darren Gladstone and Scooter Nguyen play console games while they told us all about PC productivity software.



GMR

Run to Electronics Boutique pronto—it's the only place you'll find this brilliant new mag, staffed by contributor James "Milky" Mielke. Ignore red lights to get there faster.



Joe Fletcher

Joe did our preview of *Backyard Wrestling*, the latest in a series of games chronicling the devolution of civilization and bottoming out of the lowest common denominator.

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Aliases: Eduardo "El Patron" Perez, El Capitan, El Jefe, Manuel Ramon, Miguel Ramon

DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth: March 31, 1957

Height: 5' 10"

Scars and Marks: None Known

Eyes: Black

Complexion: Olive

Nationality: Colombian

Remarks: *A cunning and ruthless drug lord, Perez makes his personal wealth from drugs a top priority, wantonly killing anyone who gets in his way. Has a particular taste for killing law enforcement officers. Growing his drug business is his only goal. Has been heard to say, "Today's children are tomorrow's drug customers."*



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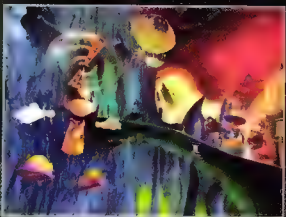
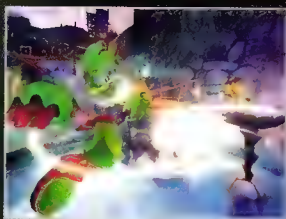
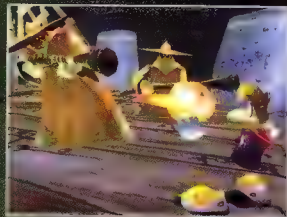
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Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Twit Family Robinson

Congratulations, Eliza Paparelli! You win an InterAct GameShark for PlayStation 2, PlayStation, Dreamcast, Game Boy Advance, or Game Boy Color. Hopefully, you'll put your GameShark to good use. Try entering the "fun" code!



In the Holiday Buyer's Guide (EGM #162), you said that *Animal Crossing* (GameCube) helps bring couples together. Apparently you haven't actually asked any real couples.

My mom's boyfriend bought it for me—and I got to play it *once*. My mother, a *Sims* nut, saw it and immediately took control of our little village. We managed to cooperate and share the village resources fairly.

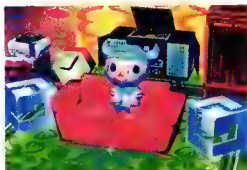
We tried to get the boyfriend to play, and finally he caved. He created a character, Twitly by name, twitly by nature. Well, Twitly turned out to be a Viking in disguise.

Fairness went out the window. Twitly took all the good stuff and we got his table scraps. I finally relinquished control of Mel, my character, into the hands of my mother.

Since then, I have had to listen to countless arguments about everything from who dug up all the fossils to not running through the town, because you'll trample the flowers. Twice there's nearly been a brawl over the controller. Relationship builder, eh?

Eliza Paparelli

Relationships are based on cooperation. And revenge. Welcome to the



revenge stage. Here are a few shady Bell-earning schemes to tip the balance of power back in your favor....

Plug in a GBA, steal all the fruit in the village, and then feed it to the island dweller. Wait for your cash prizes to drop, and repeat.

Or secretly make a new village, stockpile cash and items, and then stop by for a visit with your original character and grab the booty. Start an orchard with a new type of fruit in your old village, and Tom Nook will shower you with riches.

And of course there's the old Turnip racket. Visit Joan on a Sunday, check the Turnip prices at Nook's, and return with 10,000-plus Bells in profits.

In no time at all, you'll be lounging in your sprawling duplex, while Twitly, the flower-treading chump, struggles to furnish his shack on the seedy side of town.

ESRB FUBAR?

I am a 14-year-old boy who plays videogames often. Not videogames-are-my-entire-life often, but often enough. I've played my fair share of M-rated games (*Grand Theft Auto 3*, *Blood Omen 2*, etc.), and I know the definition and purpose of each rating. There's the trusty "E" for everyone, "T" for teen, "M" for mature, and then the less well-known "AO" for adults only, the rating that was—or, rather, should have been—on games like *BMX XXX*.

The AO rating has never been used on a console game, as far as I know. It exists in case a game comes along that ventures past M-rated in terms of sexual or violent content. So what do you

call *BMX XXX*? Wake up, ESRB, you need to put games like this in their proper place: the Adults Only rack!

Lewis Medeiros

wisemandomingo@hotmail.com

Patricia E. Vance, ESRB President responds: "You're right that *BMX XXX* was rated M for Mature (which means the game isn't recommended for people under 17) with content descriptors for nudity, sexual themes, strong language, and comic mischief. Under the ESRB system, games receive ratings after three or more specially trained ESRB reviewers watch actual footage of the game, examining its most extreme

SHORTS

Do you guys ever get "gamed out"? If anyone cracks can I have his or her job?
—Danny Johnson

Sometimes, and no.

How much do you guys get paid?
—RYAN662

Two farthings, ten coppers, and a tuppenny, fortnightly.

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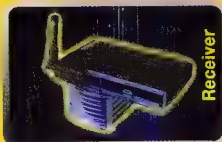
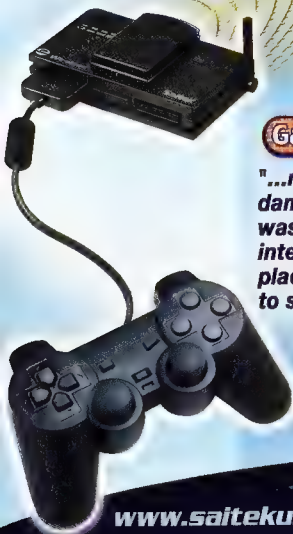
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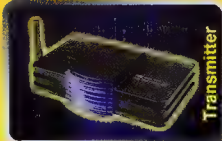
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Also note: We don't have the man-hours, the wherewithal, or the postage to answer every letter, but we read 'em (even the totally incoherent ones), so you got that going for you...

content, overall context, and intensity. The raters then apply their training and their own good judgment in recommending a rating, which becomes final once a consensus is reached. ESRB raters have previously assigned AO ratings to several games, but in the case of *BMX XXX*, they determined that an M-rating was most appropriate."

Big Arsenal

Like a good little geek, I have a problem with one of the comments made in your review of *Splinter Cell* (Xbox) in EGM #162.

You stated, "...the weak 5.7mm pistol Fisher packs...Man up to a 9mm, Fisher!" This implies that a 9mm handgun is more powerful than the 5.7mm. Arguably, that is not so. F. N. Herstal designed the "weak 5.7mm" to stop armored terrorist threats and it's rated to penetrate 48 layers of Kevlar. This means it

will pierce through a Kevlar helmet (depending on the angle, of course) rather easily, while a 9mm round would most likely deflect.

The 5.7mm will not expand as well in soft tissue and cause as much internal damage, but for a skilled agent like Mr. Fisher, accuracy and follow-up shots are likely the most important factors, not to mention ammo capacity. The 5.7mm holds 20 rounds, whereas most 9mm handguns hold less than 15.

In addition, you also mentioned, "Since it's equipped with a silencer, the gun's stopping power is considerably weak..." which assumes that a silencer (preferably called a sound suppressor) will weaken such a bullet. This is true to a limited extent. However, in this case, even Sb193 subsonic ammunition will penetrate Class III body armor up to 50 meters.

To sum up, it was likely a game balance decision by Ubi Soft to weaken the technologically

GameCube: Not Dead Yet Nintendo

After reading the Quartermann column in EGM #163, I came to realize what a joke some of the industry's economics are. The Q-mann mentions rumors about Nintendo third-party publishers canceling future GameCube titles in favor of Xbox or PS2 versions, because only Nintendo's own games are selling well. Why should Nintendo be punished for putting out superior software? Third-party publishers should look at the standard of quality that Nintendo sets and start making better games. This would improve the entire industry and not just benefit the GameCube. After all, who in their right mind would pick up some cheap third-party port of an average PS2 game when

Nintendo-published titles completely blow it away? If this causes Nintendo to drop the GC and just develop software for the Xbox and PS2, other publishers are still going to get screwed, because they will now have bigger and better competition. How many third-party devel-

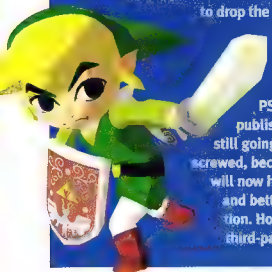
opers could compete with Nintendo? I can't think of one.

Dave Conner

I am really sick of EGM's "Nintendo leaving hardware" rumors. I have always looked forward to the rumors section of EGM, but this is pure garbage. Nintendo of America's VP [Peter MacDougall] was recently quoted saying that Cube and Game Boy Advance successors are already in development. Nintendo is in the biz to stay. If Nintendo were going out, why would Square have rejoined the fold? Why would Capcom announce five major GC titles? What about the Triforce [Nintendo, Sega, and Namco's jointly developed arcade hardware]?

Toymachine228@aol.com

Hey, it's a rumor. Some rumors come true, some don't. Quartermann even said just before the rumor you mention, "[it's] almost too far-fetched to report, but since it's making the rounds I'll pass it along anyway." The Game Boy's future is as rosy as ever, but if Cube sales hit a wall, or the Cube's successor fails, anything could happen. Same goes for the Xbox and even PS2. We're quite happy with a three-console tug of war, but you can bet most third-party publishers would love to see one of the platforms drop from the race.



"AND I THOUGHT PRISON LIFE WAS A PAIN IN THE ASS."

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Black & Bruised looks and feels like a most generous FIGHT NIGHT rip-off, but it's not!
—*IGN.com*



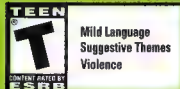
Boxing of Frank's and his...
...and his...



Frank's boxing...
...and his...



Frank's boxing...
...and his...



PlayStation 2



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QUESTION of the Moment

Is online console gaming living up to the hype?

Hype? I'll have to find a PS2 Network Adaptor first. It's been available for months, and I still can't find one at a local retailer. Hey, keep pumping out those online games, though. Sooner or later, I and a few million other people will finally track down an Adaptor....

Kevin Spradling

I think online (console) gaming isn't quite living up to the hype yet, and probably won't be the best it can be until the PS3/Xbox 2 era. This is more like a gigantic public beta test.

Justin

Phantasy Star Online: the best game ever? Or just the most addictive? That fine line has been blurred—must go play!

Matthew Mitchell

Online is totally awesome! You get to lay waste to all the backwater folk you want and make fun of their silly accents!

Andy Flater

Online multiplayer has ruined PC gaming, and it's about to do the same for console games. Within a few years there will be no such thing as a quality single-player game released on the consoles. It's already happening on the PC.

Eric Watkins

Personally, I feel that when the Dreamcast died, so did online console gaming.

Rajiv Sinha

It is awesome. I've seen crack addicts with more control than me.

Dave Dude

Online gaming was just a big hoo-hah for a short time; most people will forget about it and move on soon. But when *Halo 2* comes out everyone is gonna be all like, "Woo hoo!"

Evan Rothstein

It is if you're an Xbox owner! With *Unreal Championship*, *Ghost Recon*, Sega's *2K3* series, and *Capcom vs. SNK 2 EO*, the Xbox covers all online additions! Now bring on the RPGs like *Fable* and *PSO II/III*! Long live Xbox Live!

Eddie Rivera

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

Which recent game do you think is a sleeper hit or got more hype than it deserved?

Send your brief, coherent responses to:
EGM02@idvsn.com with the subject heading:

NIIP NYPE NORRAY! HO! HAY! HO! HAY!



LETTERS

advanced 5.7mm. Thanks for reading my rant and please continue the excellent work!
"Gun Nut" William T.
evazerone@hotmail.com

Wow. We're going to assume you're right and slowly, slowly back away, hands visible at all times.

Junk in Trunk

I'm tired of you guys toying with me. I know that I'll just sound like some horny guy, but I want my butt! I remember back in your preview of *Resident Evil Zero* that you said Rebecca had some "junk in the trunk." I am quite annoyed that you did not present a clear picture to back up your point! I would let that pass, except that now in the preview of *Final Fantasy X-2* you did pretty much the same thing. You talk up Yuna's ass and don't provide a nice, large picture to properly display your argument. And you call yourselves legitimate journalists.

Rob Gravell



You want Yuna with the junk in the trunk? You can't handle Yuna with the junk in the trunk! (Thanks to Official PlayStation Magazine for letting us "borrow" Fat Yuna.)

Chronic Squinting

I recently had to replace my old PS2. When I got home and popped in *Virtua Fighter 4* (I was dying to play it, since I hadn't in over two weeks), I noticed the game looked dramatically smoother. The model number on my new PS2 is SCPH-39001, compared to my older SCPH-30001. I know that the DVD

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driver is more recent, but I didn't expect such a dramatic graphical change. Has Sony improved their hardware without telling us?

Nabeel Soomro

According to our hardware contact at Sony, Irwin Fletcher, all PlayStation 3 SCPH-33001s on feature an upgraded fetzer valve, which both improves graphics and allows you to burn CDs. (Tap Up-Down-Up-Down-Left-Right-Left-Right-B-A-Start to open the CD burner menu.) That aside, there haven't been any changes.

Pumpkin Eater

I have just proudly purchased a PS2 and *Vice City*. But sometimes when I play after inputting numerous cheats, the game freezes, and sometimes after completing a mission using cheats, I get a warning message advising against saving the game, because one or more cheats have been used. Is it my PS2?

Rodney Paul

No, it's you. Here's a crazy idea: Play without cheats. Next!

A Cry for Help

This is getting out of hand. I've written countless gaming magazines and tried to get them to stop making fun of the *Super Mario Bros.* movie. OK, so it didn't really have anything to do with *Mario* games, but I still liked that movie, and all you do is criticize it. Please stop the hating and say something good about that movie.

Jack Terrell

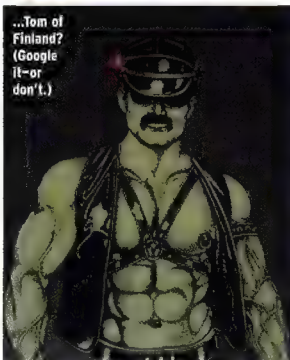
Something good, something good, hrm... at least it didn't completely end Bob Hoskins's career. How's that?

Rainbow Competition

After playing *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*, I was completely awestruck. Kensi, while not the first handicapped hero in a fighting game (Dr. B, anyone?), overcomes adversity and manages to fight evil while blind. Not to be outdone by the physically challenged, another new character, Bo Rai Cho, is living with alcoholism. This brave protagonist turns life's lemons into lemonade and uses his disease to his advantage. Both are accompanied by the absolutely *fabulous* Hsu Hao, who lives an alternative lifestyle with pride (wrestling sweaty men while dressed like a village person). These positive portrayals of inspiring



Hsu Hao of *Mortal Kombat*...



...Tom of Finland? (Google it—or don't.)

Individuals promote tolerance and awareness. *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance* is another step in the right direction toward equality, and I, for one, say bravo!

Mike Hayward

bigfatseout@yahoo.com

Libel-icious!

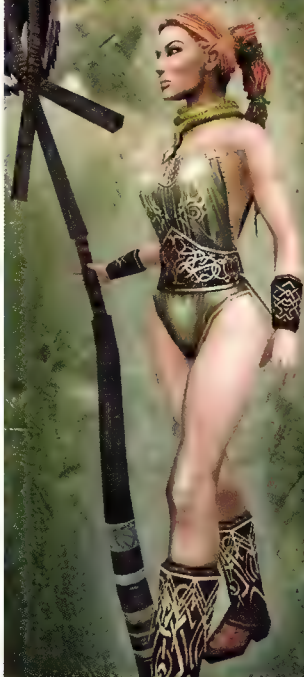
Hey, just wanted to tell all the Xbox Live-ers out there about gamertagdatabase.com. You can search for other XBL-ers in your area, leave feedback for your friends and foes, and even organize tournaments!

David Di Franco

VgAmEr32@comcast.net

You can leave comments about other players? Good luck with that... ☛

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— EGM (March 2002)

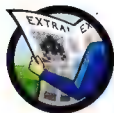
"Console baseball's first grand slam."

— OPM (March 2002)

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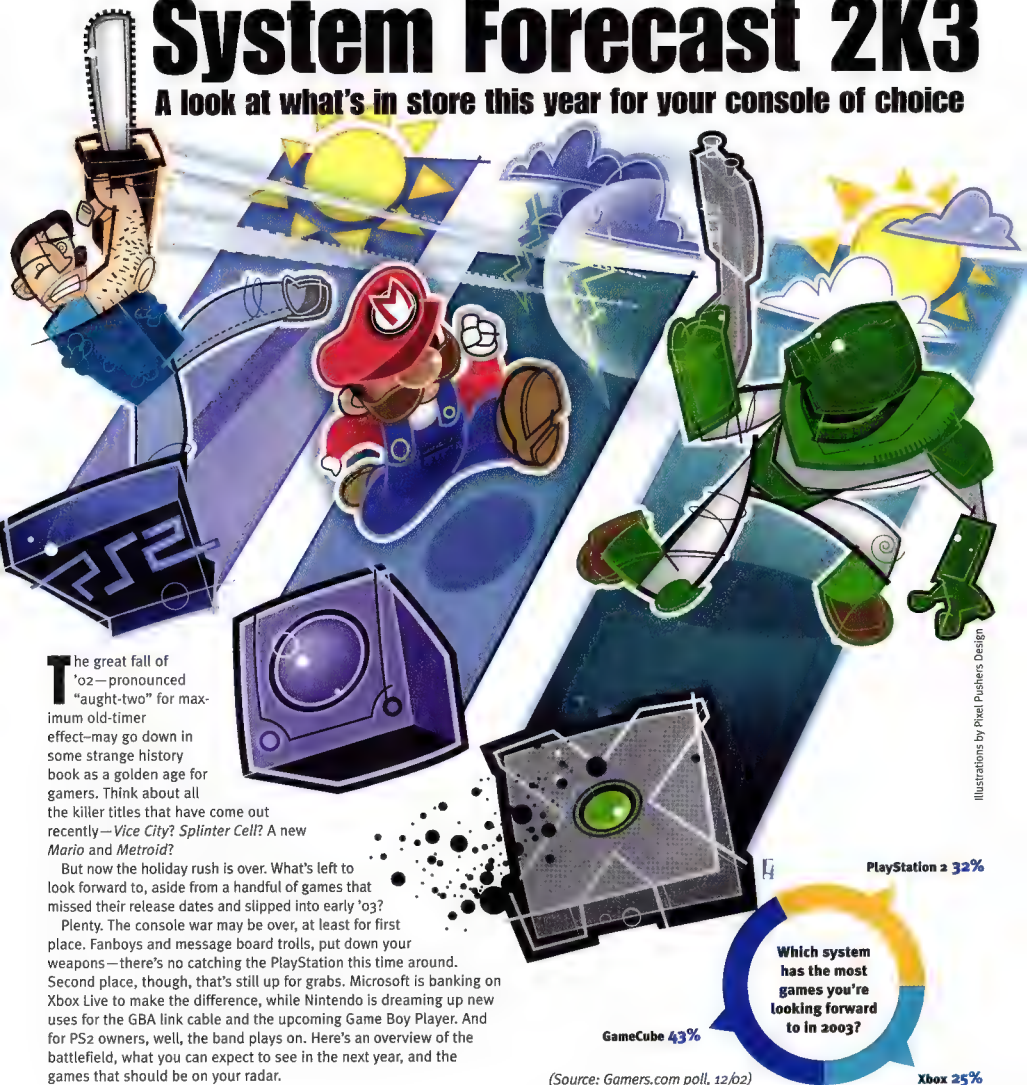


Press Start

The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

System Forecast 2K3

A look at what's in store this year for your console of choice



Illustrations by Pixel Pushers Design

The great fall of '02—pronounced “aught-two” for maximum old-timer effect—may go down in some strange history book as a golden age for gamers. Think about all the killer titles that have come out recently—*Vice City*? *Splinter Cell*? A new *Mario* and *Metroid*?

But now the holiday rush is over. What's left to look forward to, aside from a handful of games that missed their release dates and slipped into early '03?

Plenty. The console war may be over, at least for first place. Fanboys and message board trolls, put down your weapons—there's no catching the PlayStation this time around. Second place, though, that's still up for grabs. Microsoft is banking on Xbox Live to make the difference, while Nintendo is dreaming up new uses for the GBA link cable and the upcoming Game Boy Player. And for PS2 owners, well, the band plays on. Here's an overview of the battlefield, what you can expect to see in the next year, and the games that should be on your radar.

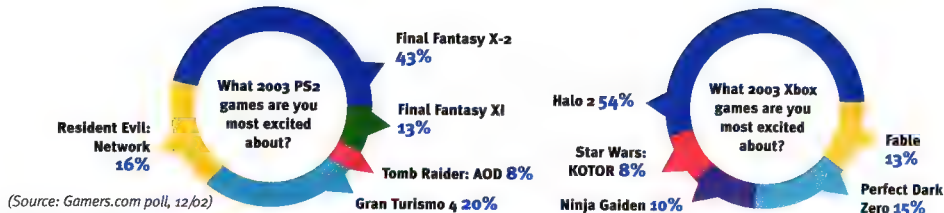
PlayStation 2 **32%**

Which system has the most games you're looking forward to in 2003?

GameCube **43%**

Xbox **25%**

(Source: Gamers.com poll, 12/02)



PlayStation 2

Current Conditions

What, you've completed every goal in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4* already? Found all the packages in *Vice City*? How about you turn your attention to *Devil May Cry 2* or *The Sims*? A few key PS2 games that didn't make the holiday rush are just coming out now, so there's no reason to come down from your current gaming high just yet.

"As the PlayStation 2 enters its third year, we continue to grow our extensive software library...the PS2 is just hitting its stride," says Andrew House, executive VP of SCEA. Sony's online plans have been slow to gather steam, however, and the shortage of Network Adaptors hasn't helped, but *EverQuest Online Adventures* (February) may be the killer app that finally gets things going. (Maybe—see our reviews on page 118.) We're still looking forward to *Auto*



Modellista (March, assuming it doesn't get pushed back again), and we're holding out for more titles that use the SOCOM headset, too.

Extended Forecast

The PS2 hard drive still hasn't been released outside of Japan, and Sony isn't saying when it'll appear. We're beginning to wonder if it'll appear at all. The strictly online *Final Fantasy XI* requires the hard drive, so if it doesn't show we can only imagine how many Square fanatics will need to be talked down from high ledges. At least they'll have *Final Fantasy X-2* to ease the pain.

Most of the upcoming games we're excited about are sequels, unsurprisingly. *Gran Turismo 4* and *Resident Evil: Network* should be two more good reasons to pick up a Network Adaptor if you've been dragging your feet.

ON THE RADAR

Auto Modellista • March '03
This racer looks great and it'll be online; we know that much.

Final Fantasy X-2 • Fall '03
The first direct sequel to a FF game has Square fans beside themselves (as usual).

Final Fantasy XI • Fall '03
It requires the PS2 hard drive, so expect a simultaneous launch. And it's online only.

Gran Turismo 4 • Winter '03
The last *Gran Turismo* game on the current generation PlayStation is a ways off, but online play is promised. Finally!

Resident Evil: Network • TBA
Up to four players can indulge in cooperative zombie killing in the first RE game to go online.

Silent Hill 3 • April '03
The other big survival-horror franchise returns with a new, female playable character and greater emphasis on combat.

Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness • March '03
Lara's back, sporting a new look, new outfits, and new hairstyle all at the same time. And she's brought a new guy-friend along, too.

Xbox

Current Conditions

Despite Microsoft shunning the legions of dial-up customers out there, the broadband-only Xbox Live service has been the most successful online console-gaming venture so far. "In the first week alone, there were more than five million games played on Xbox Live—that's about 500 games per minute," says Ken Lobb, Microsoft's director of content planning for the Xbox.

Sega's *Panzer Dragoon Orta* is probably the biggest post-Christmas Xbox release, but there's more to come: "There are almost 90 games scheduled to ship in the first half of this year, bringing the total to nearly 300," says Lobb. Sure, many of them are cross-platform titles, but who's going to turn up their nose at the likes of *Soul Calibur 2* or *The Sims*?

Extended Forecast

Microsoft's acquisition of former Nintendo developer Rare brings some big-name games to the Xbox. *Kameo: Elements of Power* will be Rare's first Xbox exclusive, followed by *Perfect Dark Zero*, which will almost certainly offer online play. Rumors are also flying about *Banjo*



and even *Conker* games heading for the 'box. Other major franchises making exclusive debuts include *Ninja Gaiden* and *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*. The long-awaited RPG *Fable* (formerly *Project Ego*) is expected to finally show up around next Christmas.

On the Live front, Microsoft will look to build on its early online advantage. "This year there will be more than 50 new games available for Xbox Live supporting almost every genre imaginable," says Lobb.

And then there's a game called *Halo 2*. *Halo 2*: Master Chief will be in our dreams around holiday time, probably blowing away sugar plum fairies by the dozen—online sugar plum fairies, the best kind.



ON THE RADAR

Fable • Winter '03
PC game designer Peter Molyneux has claimed publicly that it'll be the best role-playing game ever created. We'll see....

Halo 2 • November '03
Twice the vehicles. Destructible environments. More everything. We are seriously freaking out, and it's months away.

Kameo: Elements of Power • Spring '03
Kameo has been on the radar as a GameCube game since forever, but now it's slated to be Rare's first Xbox title.

Ninja Gaiden • Winter '03
First *Shinobi*, and now the classic *Ninja Gaiden* is making a comeback. Everything old is new again, especially if ninjas are involved.

Perfect Dark Zero • Winter '03
Microsoft's alliance with Rare means the next *Perfect Dark* game will be Xbox exclusive.

Project Gotham Racing 2 • Winter '03
The good news is it'll be online. The bad news is it's far, far away.

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic • March '03
Hopes are high for the first *Star Wars* RPG, seeing as how it's developed by the creators of acclaimed PC RPG *Baldur's Gate*.

Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus • March '03
Mortal Kombat co-creator Jon Tobias has his hand in *Tao Feng*, and all signs currently point to bitchin'.



PRESS
START

The Legend of Zelda:
The Wind Waker 58%

Mario Kart 9%

Pokémon 7%

(Source: Gamers.com poll, 12/02)

What 2003 GC
games are you
most excited
about?

F-Zero GC 6%

Final Fantasy: CC 20%

GameCube

Current Conditions

Depending on whose spin you believe, Nintendo either screwed up royally by letting Rare get away, or it got out at just the right moment. It's tough to lose *Perfect Dark*, but Nintendo still owns the franchises Rare was shepherding—namely *Donkey Kong* and *Star Fox*. But hey, Squaresoft and Nintendo are finally on good terms again, so *Final Fantasy* games on the GC are no small consolation.

Nintendo's online strategy is, uh, seriously lagging. The modem and broadband adapters have been out for a while, but the only compatible game is *Phantasy Star Online*. That's great if you spend your days righting wrongs as a 24th level FOnevm, but how about the rest of us?

Zelda's right around the corner, and that's enough to make us forget about the whole online thing for at least a few weeks. Get your preorder in *now* (see On The Radar, right).

Nintendo is also trying to change the GC's reputation as a kiddie console. "Older gamers are finally discovering that [GameCube] is the exclusive location to find teen- and M-rated hits like *Resident Evil Zero* and *Metroid Prime*," says Perrin Kaplan, a VP at Nintendo of



America. Look for third-party ports like *Splinter Cell* and *Hitman 2* to continue that trend.

Extended Forecast

Nintendo seems to be more interested in exploring GameCube—Game Boy Advance link-up capabilities than providing a strong online experience. *Pokémon*, *Animal Crossing 2*, and *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* are just some of the upcoming games expected to feature serious interconnectivity action through the GC-GBA Cable. The Game Boy Player (coming in May) is also major news—it'll allow you to play GBA games on GameCube (so you can see everything on your TV), and you won't even have to own a GBA to do it.

Unfortunately the GC's online roster isn't going to get exciting for quite some time. We're working off of rumors at this point, but the list of likely candidates includes: *Animal Crossing 2*, *Mario Kart*, *Pokémon*, *Mario Tennis*, *Mario Golf*, and maybe even *Mario 128*. Great—but none of these have a firm release date.

ON THE RADAR

Animal Crossing 2 • Winter '03

More videogame crack is en route to the GameCube, extra-cute style, possibly online. *F-Zero GC* • Summer '03

Sega (!) is working on the latest update to the *F-Zero* racing franchise. A track editor is likely, and we're holding our breath for online play.

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles • TBA

The FF series returns to Nintendo with *Crystal Chronicles* and much rejoicing. Expect a heavy focus on GBA connectivity.

Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker • March '03

Preorder and you'll get a bonus disk with *Ocarina of Time* and *Ocarina of Time: Master Quest*, the unreleased "remix" version developed for the ill-conceived 64DD. Hold me!

Mario 128 • TBA

Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto recently confirmed that *Mario 128* was a go-project in the pages of Japan's *Playboy* magazine. We don't know anything else about it at this point.

Mario Kart GC • TBA

It's coming, but we still don't know when. If it doesn't include online racing, well...George is gettin' upset!

Pikmin 2 • TBA

Miyamoto also tipped his hand about this one in his chat with *Playboy*, but details are scarce, to the surprise of exactly no one.

Pokémon • TBA

The Cube version of *Pokémon* is rumored to have online play and link-up compatibility with *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*.

Star Fox Armada • TBA

Namco is taking the *Star Fox* series back to its shooter roots with *Armada*.



Game Boy Advance

Current Conditions

Everything's sweetness and light for the little GBA, what with its ever-expanding game library and titles like *Metroid Fusion* and the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* series still flying off the shelves. Nintendo's passion for adding GC-GBA link-up compatibility to

many upcoming GameCube games is going to make the GBA almost required equipment for many GameCube owners this year.



Extended Forecast

The launch of the Game Boy Player is the biggest news. It should give new life to your GBA game collection, and open up some intriguing possibilities. With *Donkey Kong Plus*, for example, you'll be able to design new levels with the GameCube and then load 'em up on your GBA. Two *Final Fantasy* titles are GBA-bound, along with a new *Castlevania*, a *Banjo-Kazooie* game from Rare, and *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire*.

ON THE RADAR

Donkey Kong Plus • May '03

This update of Nintendo's arcade classic is likely to debut with the Game Boy Player. *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* • TBA

Expect major link-up action with the GC. *FF Tactics Advance* • Summer '03

Neither a port nor remake of the PS1 strategy-RPG, but all-new. *Golden Sun 2* • Spring '03

The first was one of the GBA's best RPGs.

Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire • March '03

Two playable characters, 100 new Pokémon, and GC connectivity.

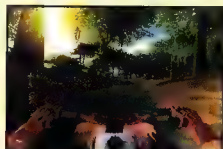
Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3 • TBA

We're taking a guess at that goofy title, and it better be wrong. Can't wait for the game itself, though. Let the raccoon-suit antics commence!

ATV outroad fury 2



SO REALISTIC, YOU'LL SWEAR YOU WERE THERE. The Rocky Mountains? Merely a speed bump. The Mojave Desert? A sandbox. The Black Forest? A flower garden. Welcome to an insanely realistic new world of offroad racing. 40 massive environments, more than 20 real-world ATVs, minigames, a hard-core soundtrack, plus intensely competitive online gameplay. So find yourself a comfortable chair, sit back and get ready, because it's gonna get dirty. **BLAZE YOUR OWN TRAIL.**



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.™



Mild Lyrics

www.playstation.com ATV Offroad Fury is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Developed by Rainbow Studios. Online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately). ©2002 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "Live in Your World, Play in Ours", "Blaze Your Own Trail" and the Online Icon are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.



rainbow
STUDIOS

PlayStation.2



PRESS
START



Afterthoughts: Hitman 2

One of last fall's surprise hits was Eidos' PS2 and Xbox action game, *Hitman 2*. Agent 47's bald head and stealthy gunplay made his shooter one of the best-selling titles of the holidays. (OK...maybe the chrome dome didn't have *that* much to do with it.) And in March 2003, it's headed to GameCube. So we thought, what better time than now to sit down for an Afterthoughts interview with lo Interactive's Thor Frolich, artist and designer for *Hitman 2*, and find out about the Sikh controversy, the reason it's not a first-person game, and the grenades you'll never see Agent 47 toss.

EGM: *Hitman 2* is extremely successful. What feedback have you received from players?

Thor Frolich: The feedback we've gotten is either from players who either absolutely love the game or think we're horrible monsters that should pray for death. Fortunately, those who love it are by far the majority.

EGM: *H2* alludes to the first game a lot. Since the first *Hitman* never came out for consoles, have you considered doing a remake?

TF: No. We're pleased with the way things have turned out for the two games. We knew *Hitman 2* was going to be the first console entry in the series. But I think we'd rather do a new game and evolve the concept than redo the first one.

EGM: The game begins with you hiding out in a church in Sicily. Can you explain the setup?

TF: It has a lot to do with redemption. Agent 47



Hey buddy, this is a nonsmoking mansion.

recently killed his own father and learned of his sterile and cynical background. Also, he has a flash of a new emotion: guilt. Combine this with the desire to lie low for a while, and a monastery in Sicily sounds like the perfect place [to hide out in]. And the religious imagery was hard to resist.

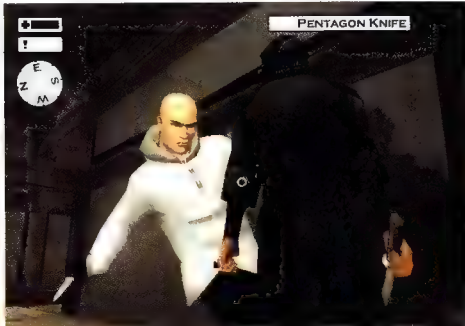
EGM: When *Hitman 2* first came out, it ignited a huge backlash with the Sikhs (a reli-

gious group based in India) because of how the game depicted them. Eidos has since agreed to remove them from future versions and took their images off the game's official website. Can you talk us through what happened there?

TF: We never intended to offend any religious or ethnic group. Our game is not a political statement. I think it was one of those situations where we hadn't thought everything completely



Agent 47 gives a nighttime jogger his just due.





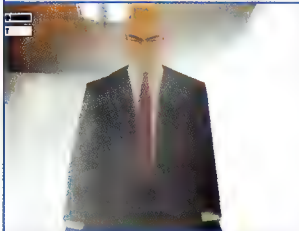
FAVORITE HITMEN

We wondered which movie (or real-life) hitmen were designer Thor Frolich's favorites, since movies seem to have influenced the feel of the *Hitman* series. "My personal favorite is *Ghost Dog* (at left, from the movie *Ghost Dog*)," he tells us. "But Martin Blank (*Grosse Pointe Blank*), Nikita (*La Femme Nikita*), and Leon (*The Professional*) are great characters as well. As for real-life hitmen, I don't know too many of those, fortunately. Real-life hits tend to be nasty, messy, and tragic—in other words, real!"

through because we didn't even think that someone might have a problem with what we did. Add to this the fact that this is a group that's very protective of their reputation. I'm glad we were able to overcome this confrontation to both their and our satisfaction. However, I'm concerned that it might become common practice to give into every faction, religious group, or local chess club that might take offense to what you're doing.

CUE-BALL ANTIHERO

He's Got the Look



EGM: Agent 47 is very distinctive-looking. What influenced that? Are all our guys bald?

TF: 47's appearance actually changed quite a bit during development of the first game. He started out looking much more like a sleazy private investigator. His head was adorned with hair in the initial drawings—a receding hairline, but a hairdo nonetheless. From there he evolved into what we have today. He's not based on anyone we know, although we did have an electrician in the building for a while who bore an uncanny resemblance to 47.

EGM: Agent 47: hero or villain? Is he evil or just a pawn?

TF: He's definitely an antihero. I don't know if he's evil. He's guilty of some pretty gruesome things, but I guess he does the only thing he can do. He's a product of a bleak and dark upbringing. And after all, like John Cusack says in *Grosse Pointe Blank*: "If a hitman shows up at your door, chances are you did something to deserve it." But 47 is definitely not innocent, either.

EGM: Was there ever the temptation to make *Hitman 2* a first-person game?

TF: No, I can't say there was. We included a first-person option in *Hitman 2* for specific aiming purposes, and we allow players to use it all the way through the entire game. However, we never considered removing the third-person perspective. In this type of game, where stealth is one of the main gameplay elements, only the third-person view will give you the sense of your surroundings that you need. It's the primary way to play the game, and it was designed with this in mind.

EGM: What's your favorite mission, and why does it stand out to you?

TF: I'm very fond of the first mission—the Sicilian Mafia mansion. It allows you to employ all the different skills that 47 has, and there are numerous ways to accomplish the objective, none of which is more correct than any other. This is the true spirit of the *Hitman* games, and the graphics in that level are superb.

EGM: If you had had another month for development, what would you have used the time to do?

TF: I think we would have spent some time polishing the game some more and included some of the features that were too far down on the priorities list to actually make it in—like bullet holes on characters, for instance.

EGM: Are any of those features being planned for the GC *Hitman 2* that's coming out in March?

TF: No. There are no changes I'm aware of besides bug fixes and things like that. We've tried really hard to deliver the same game on all platforms. The versions are quite different since we didn't simply port one of the versions to the other systems. But these differences can only be found under the hood, so to speak—the game plays the same whether you choose the consoles or the PC.

EGM: Were there any weapons that didn't make it into the final game (for balancing purposes or otherwise)?

TF: Early on we discussed the use of various types of grenades. They were discarded though, because we found they would probably be too effective, and they were very unhitmanlike.

EGM: Were there ever any plans or thoughts on adding a multiplayer or online mode to *Hitman 2*?

TF: We've discussed how the *Hitman* gaming experience might translate to a multiplayer environment, but we decided to focus completely on the single-player aspect for now. You might see some form of multiplayer for *Hitman* in the future, though. We have some interesting ideas we'd like to try, but nothing I can talk about yet. 🎮





PRESS
START



VIRTUAL HEF

Do you think all it took for Hugh Hefner to build the *Playboy* empire was to put a few pics of naked women in a magazine? Well smarty-pants, now you can try your hand at it in a game coming to PS2, Xbox, and PC in 2004. This world-building-style title (think the *Tycoon* series of PC games) from Arush Entertainment will let you become Hef, building the biz and living the *Playboy* lifestyle (wink, wink, nudge, nudge).

CELEBRITY GAMER

Busta Rhymes Got Game



Celebrities are people, too—just incredibly rich ones. You like games; they like games. Each issue, we talk to a different celebrity who plays games, is involved in their creation, or is lucky enough to be in one. Rapper, actor, and video-B-ball fan Busta Rhymes recently got the chance to hit the courts as an unlockable character in EA Sports' *NBA Live 2003*. He also contributed the song "Here We Go" for the game's intro. We sent our intrepid interviewer (who thinks he's street) to sit down with Busta to find out how long he's been gaming and what games he spends his free time with.

EGM: What up, homey? Tell us, when did your gaming addiction first develop?

Busta Rhymes: My mom got me my first Atari 2600 when I was about 7. I had a color TV in my bedroom, too. She took care of me. I was brought up spoiled in that way. And that love of games as a child never left. It's still with me today.

EGM: Yeah, that's what everyone se

interview says. Prove it. What's your gaming rig like at home?

BR: Man, I own every game system: GameCube, PS1, PlayStation 2, Xbox—I got all that s***. But PlayStation 2 is the realer. I run with that mostly. It's the hottest home system. Plus, it's got the most and best games.

EGM: Besides a fat (or is that phat?) royally check, why hook up with EA Sports?

BR: I was a fan of *NBA Live* way before I'd ever conceived in my wildest dreams I'd be in a game. I'm a fanatical baller. Street hoops is my recreation, my spaz-out, you know.

EGM: Uh, sure. What else does Busta Buss play when he's not passing the Courvoisier?

BR: Don't laugh—I can't get enough of the *Williams Classics*. *Defender*, *Joust*, *Sinistar*...I'm sick with that *Grand Theft Auto*. Crazy for *Max Payne*. Yo, Lee [motions to his buddy], what's that joint I be bustin' your ass in? *NBA Street*. [To Lee:] Don't front like you don't know!

EGM: Ha ha, yeah. I front like I don't know all the time. So what games are you spending your time with nowadays?

BR: *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. The Miami joint. I got my copy of my *NBA Live 2003*, too, so that's sewn up. Not just 'cause I'm in it, too.... I got the highest averages on my character. EA Sports really hooked me up.

EGM: What game couldn't we whoop your ass at?

BR: *NBA Street*. I hold the crown—dudes can't mess with me. I don't mess around. I can talk smack about it because, at the end of the day, I bring it, baby.



Overheard



"You'll be surprised, but this is not really a sex game. The girls are beautiful, but I think of them as my daughters. They're my babies!"

—Hugh Hefner, *Playboy* founder, publisher, and CEO of Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

"I'm a happy little hook and a little bit of a slut!"

—Hugh Hefner, *Playboy* founder, publisher, and CEO of Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

—Hugh Hefner, *Playboy* founder, publisher, and CEO of Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

"This is... why your Xbox can play CDs, & burn CDs."

—Hugh Hefner, *Playboy* founder, publisher, and CEO of Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

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eckō unltd.



Metzger



Photo: et's.com/foto



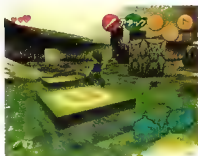
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Mike Metzger



PRESS
START



U.S. GETS ZELDA PREORDER SPECIAL

Last month we told you about Nintendo's Japanese campaign for *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* that gave anyone who preordered the game a free GC disc with two N64 games: *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* and a remixed version of *Ocarina* called *Master Quest*. Shortly after the last issue went to press, Nintendo of America announced that starting February 16, U.S. gamers who preorder *Wind Waker* at participating stores will get an English version of that same special disc.

Nintendo Unveils New GBA

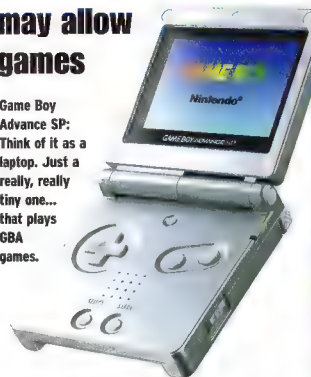
New, smaller hardware may allow gamers to actually see games

We begged. We pleaded. We groveled. Finally, Nintendo answered our prayers by announcing a new version of Game Boy Advance, known as GBA SP, with its own light built in. (Hallelujah! It's about time.) But they didn't stop there. As you can see from the picture, SP looks a little different from the GBA we've gotten to know since its release less than two years ago.

The first and most noticeable difference is its flip-top setup, with the screen (same size as the current GBA) on one half and controls on the other. It folds into about a 3-by-3-inch square (about 1 inch thick) that can easily fit in your pocket. When unfolded, it looks more like the Game Boys of old, but broken in half. The L and R buttons are positioned at the top of the lower half of the unit, and the cartridge slot is now located on the bottom (makes you wonder how easy it's going to be to use the e-Reader accessory with it, eh?). And if you're looking for a headphone jack on this bad boy, you won't find one. Playing your GBA SP with headphones will require an additional adapter that plugs into the link port.

Also, just like the older-model GBA, it's backwards compatible with all GB titles and accessories. But while those changes are all well and good, SP's handiest feature by far is the addition of a light mounted inside and in front of the screen that you can toggle on or off so you can play in poorly lit areas (i.e., everywhere). And you won't have to worry about going through Duracells like water, either, since the SP features a rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery that's good for 10 hours of play with the

Game Boy Advance SP: Think of it as a laptop. Just a really, really tiny one... that plays GBA games.



light on (and 18 hours with it off) after a three-hour charge.

We're gonna guess that you're either cursing Nintendo for bringing out this better GBA model when you just recently bought the regular one, or you're itchin' to drop your dough on this bad boy when it hits stores. For gamers that fit the latter, here are the details: GBA SP goes on sale in the States on March 23—the day before the GC *Zelda*'s release (turning it into an expensive week for Nintendo fans)—for an MSRP of \$99.95. You'll have the choice of two colors: cobalt (metallic) blue and platinum. Or, if you're an elite gamer who must have it early, import shops will probably be carrying the Japanese SP shortly after its February 14 debut there. (And the Japanese get another color to choose from: a super-sexy black model.)

Still want to know if this more expensive, illuminated version of GBA is worth your scratch? Next issue we'll be able to tell you more in our in-depth, hands-on road test of the new machine.

MAN ON THE STREET

Retro Remakes

We love going to our local game store and freaking people out by asking them random questions about gaming. With the recent releases of *Shinobi*, *Rygar*, and *Mortal Kombat*, we wondered what other old-school franchises people wanted to see updated. So we asked folks, "What retro game would you like to see updated for modern systems and why?" Here's what they said:



"*Super Tecmo Bowl!* They should bring it back and redo all the graphics but keep the name and the whole idea the same because it was just incredible. It's still one of the best football games ever."

—Andrew Wehde, Glenview, IL



[laughs] "*Super Mario Bros.*" [We explain to her that Mario Sunshine just came out.] "No, no! I don't care about *Sunshine*. They [changed it too much]. It's horrible."

—Hannah Kim, Morton Grove, IL



"*NBA Jam* for Super Nintendo. 'Cause you got the fire ball when you're 'on fire,' and you got the cool music and all that."

—Michael Gurce, Skokie, IL



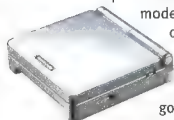
"Any bowling game, because it's the best sport on the planet! I used to have *Championship Bowling* for Nintendo and Sega Genesis. It would be cool to see a bowling game for PS2 or Xbox with updated bowlers and newer technology."

—Justin Goodman, Skokie, IL



"*Duck Hunt*, because that was the first game I ever got for the 8-bit Nintendo when I was really young. That was so cool—I just want to see a remake."

—Alan Tieng, Skokie, IL



The SP doesn't use AA batteries—plug it into the wall with this power adapter and three hours later, the internal Lithium-Ion battery will be charged and ready to go.



If you want to use your headphones with the GBA SP, you're gonna need this adapter cable.

Now, keep moochers away from your
NEW Longer-Lasting
Juicy Fruit!

**HERE'S
HOW IT
WORKS!**



1. Moocher approaches.



2. Dig moat.



3. Fill with water.



4. Keep Juicy Fruit!

NEW!
Longer-
Lasting
Juicy Fruit

**MORT
KIT**

KEEP THE
MOOCHERS
AWAY!



Gotta Have
Longer-Lasting
Sweet?





PRESS
START

WITHIN RANGE:



MARK OF KRI (PS2)
You get gory stealth combat with Disney-quality visuals. Oh, and a bird buddy, too.

Under the Radar

The five coolest upcoming games you've never heard of

Our system forecast at the beginning of Press Start laid out over 40-megaton titles and sequel that will hit this year with all the subtlety of an asteroid collision. But what about the dozens of quirky, underhyped, and undermarketed games that will slip by near-

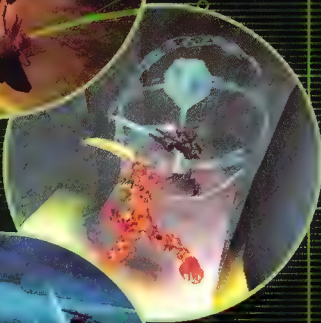
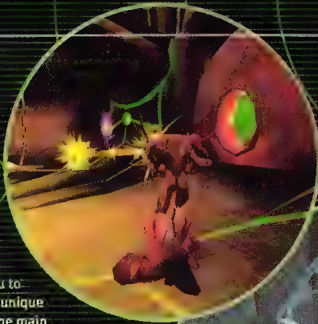
ly undetected? We've cranked our sensors to max and locked on to five upcoming games that just aren't getting the buzz they deserve. Plus, we tapped NORAD to analyze each of these great unknowns and guesstimate its hit potential.

Alter Echo

PS2, Xbox • THQ • Summer 2003

Target data: On its surface, *Alter Echo* looks like a simple fighting/platforming action game set in some M.C. Escher-inspired world. But it promises more than just some surreal cartoon characters for you to play around with. The unique graphics engine and the main character's PolySuit have you transforming between three different shapes on the fly. You get a gun-toting behemoth, a sword-swinging alien avenger, and a stealthy lizard critter that'll have you climbing the walls. You can play through the entire game as any of the three forms, and get a different experience each time.

Hit potential: *Alter Echo's* character-morphing gameplay promises to be more than just a gimmicky stupid-human trick. You can morph in the middle of an attack to bust out free-form combos—and even temporarily freeze time to build up multiple attacks. And what gamer isn't looking for exciting new ways to beat up stuff?



5

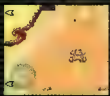
FIVE OVERLOOKED TITLES YOU CAN LOCK ON TO TODAY



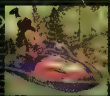
CUBIVORE (GC)—Not for everybody, but definitely the best thing-eating thing sim on GC.



HITMAN 2 (PS2, GC, Xbox)—Killing is your business, and business is good—and fun!



CAR BATTLER JOE (GBA)—A deep, auto-dueling RPG packed with road-raging thrills.



JET XAO (PS2)—55X Tricky on water, with lots of shortcuts and even more tricks.

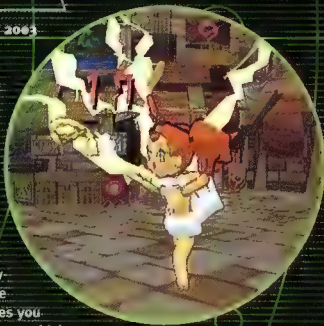
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Color Quest

PS2 • Ageatec • May 2003

Target data: Lots of games let you create characters, but only *Color Quest* lets you doodle 'em from scratch. One of the more original games to come along in a while, *Color Quest* drops you in a land where your pen brings drawings to life: The game transforms 2D doodles you create into 3D creatures, which duke it out in arenas. You start off with the ability to draw blobs, then earn the right through battles and a first-person RPG adventure to draw arms, legs, and special abilities. We're already getting drawn in. Get it? Drawn? Hahaha...uh.

Hit potential: If the pornographic graffiti we find in airport crapper stalls is any indication, most folks skipped art class (and sex ed) in high school. But that shouldn't be a problem here, because *Color Quest* was designed so that all gamers, regardless of whether they dabble in finger paints or acrylics, can get their Rembrandt on. And the game's quirky vibe should make it an instant hit with hardcore types and oddball Japanese-game aficionados.



Viewtiful Joe

GameCube • Capcom • Summer 2003

3

Target data: *Viewtiful Joe*, the story of a well-dressed superhero out to save his girlfriend (oh, the originality!), is sure to attract attention with its toon-flavored eye candy and nostalgic 2D gameplay. (Read: It's a throwback to the old left-to-right side-scrolling beat-'em-ups.) This comic book-like creation has you running, jumping, and whacking down bad guys in high style, while swinging from chandeliers and basting out bizarre, chop-socky special moves.

Hit potential: We just don't know enough about this kooky Japan-developed game to target its potential. (Capcom hasn't even confirmed whether *Viewtiful Joe* is States-bound, but we figure you can count on its U.S. debut this summer.) While the intricacies of its gameplay are still as mysterious as its main character, *Viewtiful Joe* does have a rock-solid pedigree: Hideki Kamiya, director of the original *Devil May Cry*, is working on the game. Sounds like it has more than a fighting chance to us.





PRESS
START

2

Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders

Xbox • Phantagram • September 2003

Target data: Imagine a game that's got both the million-man, sword-swinging action of *Dynasty Warriors 3* (PS2, Xbox) and the tactics of real-time strategy. Instead of having the god's-eye view of combat found in most strategy titles, though,

Crusaders drops you in the trenches controlling the hero. And as you try to fight back the hordes with your own two hands, you're making tactical adjustments on the fly. *Crusaders* also packs RPG elements, such as traveling to different towns and recruiting new troops as you prepare for war. And, as your army grows, so will the skills of your underlings.

Hit potential: *Kingdom Under Fire* if that name sounds familiar, you musta played the original, a run-of-the-mill strategy PC game that got lost on store shelves behind copies of *Warcraft III* and *Deer Hunter 3D*. This Xbox-exclusive sequel, though, provides an interesting blend of styles—and possible Xbox Live online play (which Phantagram has yet to confirm). The game could be the strategic shot in the arm that Xbox needs.



1

Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis

Xbox • Codemasters • June 2003

Target data: The theme of this PC port is nothing novel: You and a squad of gung-ho heroes slog behind enemy lines and cut down bad guys. But here's the Cold War clincher: It's set in 1985, Russia, and instead of hoofin' it, you can commandeer any vehicle you find. That includes tanks, troop carriers—even helicopter gunships. You have free reign to explore *Flashpoint*'s expansive

world, and developer Codemasters plans to throw in a new campaign that gives you an additional 300 kilometers (which is, like, 100,000 miles or something) of battlefield.



Hit potential: With squad-based battle games like *COMBAT* (PS2) and *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon* (PS2, Xbox, GC) setting the Humvee lead, these days, *Flashpoint* should be a week-end-warrior hit. After all, the PC game was hailed by most as being better than *Ghost Recon*. What's really going to win or lose the battle for Codemasters is multiplayer support. We've received no transmissions yet on whether the game will work with Xbox Live, but we know that Microsoft wants a broad selection of titles tapping the online service. ☛

—Darren Gladstone



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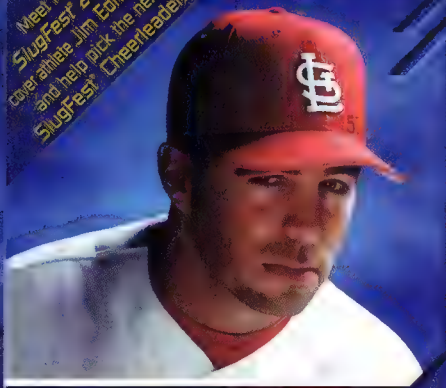
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Available March 2003

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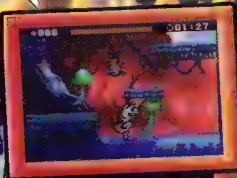
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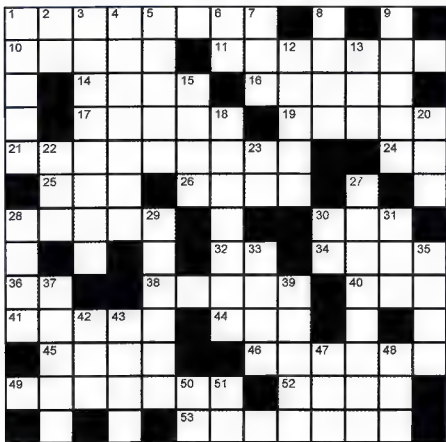
GAME BOY ADVANCE





PRESS
START

License to Driver (Solution on page 144)



ACROSS

1. Driver maker's PS2 side project
2. Many Disney characters have a ____ in *Kingdom Hearts*
3. Most important *Driver* tool
4. Gives *Universal Studios* (GC) some teeth
5. Responsible for *Ninja Golden* and *DOA 3*
6. Levels, worlds, ____
7. Take these in RPGs to recover your energy
8. *Space Race* (PS2) pilot
9. Classic villain exclamation
10. They drive the ambulance in *GTA: Vice City* before you do
11. When the game ____, the credits roll
12. *Monster Rancher* (PS1) food plans
13. In *Mario Golf* (N64), it's "four" on Toad Highlands, hole 11
14. *Virtual* __ (Saturn)
15. *Batman's* poison dame and *Soul Calibur's* tough gal
16. *Lord* __ the *Rings*
17. Super Nintendo RPG
18. *Driver* tag line, "____ are the wheelman."
19. "The last *Metroid* is in captivity. The galaxy is at ____" — *Super Metroid*, Super NES
20. Used to blow up a construction site in *GTA: Vice City*
21. One-third of "RPG"
22. Yoshi's way of dealing with enemies
23. Vacation here instead of the real-life *Vice City*
24. Like *Zelda: Oracle of Seasons'* Maku
25. *Ninja Turtles'* (NES) robotic vermin

DOWN

1. Gnosts often do this to Luigi in his mansion
2. Abbreviation for mode in which you race against the clock
3. PS1's *lammy*
4. Where you'll have to sit if you don't have

5. a wireless controller
6. *House of the Dead 2* serpentine boss
7. You drive on one in *Driver 2* (abbrv.)
8. *NBA 2K3* goal
9. *Grand Theft Auto's* newest city
10. Usually the weakest armor in RPGs
11. Round 'em up in *Sheep* (PS1)
12. An Xbox disc is 12 of these in diameter (abbrv.)
13. *World Series Baseball* call
14. Brought us *Blaster Master* (NES)
15. *Serious* __ (Xbox)
16. *Lilo & Stitch* neck accessory
17. *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* measurement size?
18. *Driver 2* Chicago area
19. Neo Geo's *Magical* __ II
20. *Gran Turismo 2* Mustang
21. A 3D Pac-Man's waist size divided by his diameter
22. SNK subject of *Street Fighter* Dan's mockery
23. Number of dungeons in *The Legend of Zelda* (NES)
24. *Final Fantasy III's* opera scene is __, not spoken
25. Take the dock to this in *Driver 2's* Havana stage
26. Must destroy all of these in the Kothlis mission of *Rogue Leader*
27. Dial-up service option for PS2 online gamers
28. Group of people who like to play online games together
29. Short for an *NBA Street* three-pointer?
30. *Ikid Karcus* first appeared on this platform
31. D & D game host, for short
32. Bond alias, __7

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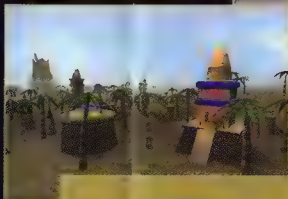
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PlayStation 2



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PRESS
START

MICHIGAN READIES GAME BILL

Gamers in Michigan under the age of 17 might find it more difficult to buy mature- or adults-only-rated games soon. A bill penalizing retailers (\$1,000 fine and/or a 90-day prison sentence) for selling titles with an M or AO rating to minors recently passed the state's House of Representatives and will move to the state's Senate later this year.

Quartermann — Game Gossip & Speculation

Welco Metot Henex Tlevel, folks. 'Tis I, your illustrious host, the Quartermann, back again with another boatload full of titillating rumors. This month, our mom 'n' pop rumor section goes in like a lion and out like a lamb. (Hey—this is technically the March issue even if you're reading it in February. Let me have my fun.) And without further ado, let's let the first piece of gossip out of its cage:

Vince to work his voodoo on Xbox this year

Microsoft's put out a few of their own decent character-based action games on Xbox already—*Bliŋx*, *Munch*, *Azurik*... (OK, maybe not the blue-skinned bomb) but none of them has shot into the potential system-mascot position. What's this? We have a new contender. It's **Voodoo Vince**, a game that has reportedly been in development for a few years by a mysterious collection of ex-Humongous Entertainment (*Putt-Putt*, *Pajama Sam*, *Freddi the Fish*... don't act like you don't know) employees. The Q's sources have revealed that Vince is indeed a 3D, character-based action game and it is scheduled to come out in 2003....

Rumblings on New GC Pokémon

The Q has talked about the **GameCube** version of **Pokémon** before, and now official talk of it is making the rounds in Japan. The current chatter pins a Japanese release in the summer, and if history has taught us anything, it's that a U.S. release will follow sometime later, possibly this fall or in time for the '03 holiday season. Even more interesting is that the GC 'Mon will, according to reports in the Japanese press, require the GBA game (likely accomplished via the Game Boy Player GC add-on that'll be released in

May 2003) for it to load up. Personally, The Q finds that last bit suspect. Nintendo has never required the GB *Pokémon*s to play the *Stadium* games on N64 (even though you really needed them to get full enjoyment out of 'em). Why would they start doing that now? Sneaky, sneaky....



Next stop for Vince and the *Arcadia* crew: your cell phone.

Sega to go heavy into mobile gaming

The idea of playing games on your cell phone is still struggling to take off in the U.S., but already **Sega** is planning major mobile support. The Q-Mann has learned that Sega plans to introduce mobile versions of many of their most popular gaming properties stateside, including **Phantasy Star**, **Toejam & Earl**, **Skies of Arcadia**, and more. Also the company may soon announce a partnership with a major cell-phone provider to offer a special gaming package for the "technologically challenged" to get started with. Stay tuned, folks....

The Hot Q: Kingdom Hearts: The Movie

Disney and Square's collaboration on *Kingdom Hearts* doesn't look like it'll stop with the PlayStation 2 game. The Quartermeister recently put his good ear to the ground (long enough to hear that the House of Mouse could soon turn the property into a feature film (and later, a TV series). Don't look for it too soon, though, since there's still no script for a *KH* flick just yet (although The Q also hears that a *Hearts* PS2 sequel is in the cards for the future)....



Wow, look at the time. It's like it passed faster while we were having so much fun. If you feel like dropping me a line, send e-mail to quartermann@ziffdavis.com. Q-Mann has officially left the building for the month! Until next time....

—The Q

Bits of Q



■ New Installments in Nintendo's Kirby franchise and its popular Japanese *Fire Emblem* RPG series are in development for GBA and GC. Expect Kirby to be a definite U.S.

release, whereas *Emblem* (remember cameos from *FE*'s Roy and Marth in 2003's *Super Smash Bros. Melee*?) is still a bit hazy.

■ A third group of Nintendo Entertainment System classics is in the works for release on cards for the GBA e-Reader, as is a dedicated series of Game & Watch cards. The G&W cards will have one game per card (à la *Manhole*, which comes packed with the Reader). Look for both this spring.

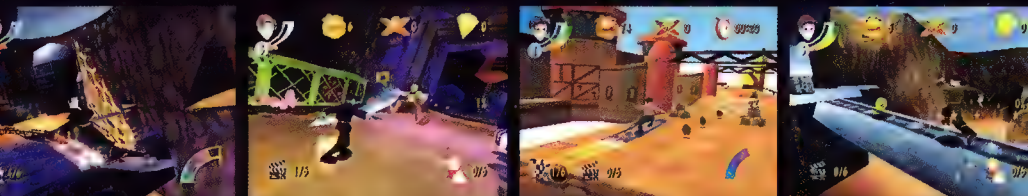
■ If you're much of a fan as The Q is of the Saturday morning cartoon *Ultimate Muscle* currently running on Fox, you'll be happy to know that the GameCube wrestling game based on the show will make its U.S. nod in April. A GBA game starring Kid Muscle and his buds will follow soon after.





Space. The final boarding park.

Disney's TREASURE PLANET



Ride through portals into other universes and catch air a million miles up as you shred your way through an intergalactic treasure hunt in Disney's *Treasure Planet* for PlayStation. Based on the Walt Disney Pictures film *Treasure Planet*, in theatres now.



Mild Violence

PlayStation



PRESS
START

Charts - November 2002

TOP 20 BEST-SELLING GAMES						
1	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Rockstar	10 Che	10 Greg S	10 Milkman	PS2	
2	Metroid Prime Nintendo	10 Mark	10 Miguel	10 Shane	NEW!	
3	WWE Smackdown! Shut Your Mouth THQ	7.5 CJ	7.5 Greg S	7.0 Shane	NEW!	
4	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 Activision OZ					
5	Yu-Gi-Oh! The Eternal Duelist Soul Konami					
6	Madden NFL 2003 EA Sports					
7	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Ubi Soft					
8	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers EA Games					
9	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance Midway					
10	Metroid Fusion Nintendo					
11	Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets EA Games					
12	Kingdom Hearts Square EA					
13	Super Mario Advance 3 Nintendo					
14	Mario Party 4 Nintendo					
15	Frogger: Temple of the Frog Konami					
16	Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets EA Games					
17	ATV Offroad Fury 2 Sony CEA					
18	NBA Live 2003 EA Sports					
19	James Bond 007: NightFire EA Games					
20	Super Mario Sunshine Nintendo					

TOP 10 RENTALS		BLOCKBUSTER
1	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Rockstar	PS2
2	LOTR: The Two Towers EA Games	PS2
3	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 Activision OZ	PS2
4	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 EA Games	PS2
5	Conflict: Desert Storm Gotham Games	PS2
6	Madden NFL 2003 EA Sports	PS2
7	NBA Live 2003 EA Sports	PS2
8	Mario Party 4 Nintendo	
9	SOCOM: U.S. Navy Seals Sony CEA	PS2
10	Red Faction II THQ	PS2

Source: Blockbuster Video, November 2002

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES IN JAPAN		
1	Tales of Destiny 2 Namco	PS2
2	Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire Nintendo	NEW!
3	SD Gundam G-Gen Neo Bandai	PS2
4	Lupin the 3rd Banpresto	PS2
5	Dark Cloud 2: Dark Chronicle Sony CEA	PS2
6	Resident Evil 6 Capcom	
7	Kamen Rider Ryuki Bandai	
8	Mario Party 4 Nintendo	
9	Taiko no Tatsujin Namco	PS2
10	K-1 World Grand Prix 2002 Konami	PS2

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 12/1/02

Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire

Source: NPD Video Games Service, Call Kristin Barnett von Korf at (510) 625-2481 for questions regarding this list.

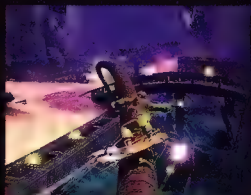
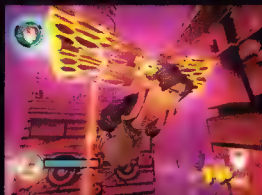


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Space pirates. Alien robots. Not the kind of guys you want to drop in on while solar surfing the new frontier. Set sail on an intergalactic treasure hunt on *Treasure Planet*. Also available on PlayStation. Based on the Walt Disney Pictures film *Treasure Planet*, in theatres now.



Mild Violence

PlayStation 2



PRESS
START

Coming Soon

February

- Batman: Dark Tomorrow (Action) PS2, GC, Xbox
- BattleBots (Action) PS2, GC
- Breath of Fire V: Dragon Quarter (RPG) PS2
- Capcom vs. SNK 2 EO (Fighting) Xbox
- Colin McRae Rally 3 (Racing) PS2, Xbox
- Conflict: Desert Storm (Action) GC
- Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge (Flight) Xbox
- Cubix Robots for Everyone: Showdown (Action) GC
- Daredevil (Action) GBA
- Dark Cloud 2 (RPG) PS2
- Disaster Report (Action) PS2
- Disney Sports: Snowboarding (Sports) GBA
- EverQuest Online Adventures (Online RPG) PS2
- Evolution Snowboarding (Sports) GC
- Falcone: Into the Maelstrom (Action) Xbox
- Freaky Flyers (Action) PS2, Xbox
- GT Advance 3: Pro Concept Racing (Racing) GBA
- .hack Vol. 1 (RPG) PS2
- Jackie Chan Adventures (Action) PS2
- Kung-Fu Chaos (Fighting) Xbox
- Lufia: The Ruins of Lore (RPG) GBA
- Mega Man & Bass (Action) GBA
- Midnight Club II (Racing) PS2
- Murakumo: Mech Hunter (Action) Xbox
- Pride Fighting Championships (Fighting) PS2
- Primal (Action) PS2
- Pro Race Driver (Racing) Xbox
- State of Emergency (Action) Xbox
- Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo (Puzzle) GBA
- Vexx (Action) PS2, GC, Xbox
- Xenosaga: Episode I (RPG) PS2
- Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses (RPG) PS2
- Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeon Dice Monsters (RPG) GBA



EverQuest Online Adventures

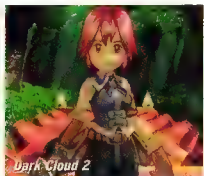
- Hitman 2 (Action) GC
- Indiana Jones and the Emp.'s Tomb (Adv.) PS2, Xbox
- Jet Grind Radio (Action) GBA
- The Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker (Adventure) GC
- The Lost (Action) PS2, Xbox
- The Lost Vikings (Puzzle) GBA
- Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter (Action) PS2, GC, Xbox
- Marvel vs. Capcom 2 (Fighting) Xbox
- Mercedes-Benz World Racing (Racing) Xbox
- Midnight Club II (Racing) Xbox
- Midtown Madness 3 (Racing) Xbox
- MotoGP 3 (Racing) PS2
- NBA Street Vol. 2 (Sports) PS2, GC, Xbox
- Phantasy Star Online Episode I&II (RPG) Xbox
- Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire (RPG) GBA
- Rainbow Six: Raven Shield (Action) Xbox
- Rayman 3: Hood. Havoc (Action) PS2, GC, Xbox, GBA
- Return to Castle Wolfenstein (Action) PS2, Xbox
- RPG Maker 2 (RPG...maker) PS2
- RTX: Red Rock (Action) PS2, GC
- Space Channel 5: Ulaia's Cosmic Attack (Action) GBA
- Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (RPG) Xbox
- Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus (Fighting) Xbox
- Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven (Action) PS2
- Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness (Adv.) PS2
- WWE Crush Hour (Action) GC
- WWE Raw 2 (Wrestling) Xbox
- World Series Baseball 2K3 (Sports) PS2, GC, Xbox

April

- 2080° Avalanche (Sports) GC
- Brute Force (Action) Xbox
- Gladius (RPG) PS2, GC, Xbox
- High Heat Baseball 2004 (Sports) PS2, GC, Xbox
- Wario World (Action) GC
- World's Scariest Police Chases (Action) PS2, Xbox



Mega Man & Bass



Dark Cloud 2



High Heat Baseball 2004

IMPORT CALENDAR

Nintendo Puzzle Collection



Import Pick of the Month: Puzzle fever, baby! Nintendo's puttin' three of their classic brain-bending puzzlers—*Dr. Mario*, *Yoshi's Cookie*, and *Panel de Pon* (aka *Tetris Attack*, or more recently, *Pokémon Puzzle League*)—on one disc and giving them a full four-player makeover for GameCube. All three games will feature enhanced graphics and four-player support, as well as the ability to use your GBA as a controller (using the GC-GBA link cable). Best of all, you can even download the games to your GBA (using said cable) and play them on the go. In all likelihood, this set'll come to the United States eventually, but why wait?

PlayStation 2

- 2/27 *Sakura Taisen*, Sega (Strategy-RPG)
- Feb. *Star Ocean 3: Till the End of Time*, Enix (RPG)
- Feb. *Shin Megami Tensei III: Nocturne*, Atlus (RPG)
- Feb. *Gun Survivor 4: Biohazard*, Capcom (Shooting)
- 3/13 *Final Fantasy X-2*, Square (RPG)
- 3/13 *Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution*, Sega (Fighting)
- 3/27 *Initial D: Special Stage*, Sega (Racing)
- 3/27 *Metal Slug 3*, Playmore (Action)

Game Boy Advance

- 2/14 *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, Square (Strategy-RPG)

GameCube

- Jan. *Nintendo Puzzle Collection*, Nintendo (Puzzle)
- Mar. *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles*, Nintendo (RPG)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import game store for the latest release info. Don't forget to brush your teeth today, dear.

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- the N64 Zelda hit "Ocarina of Time"
- the updated "Ocarina of Time Master Quest" never released outside of Japan!



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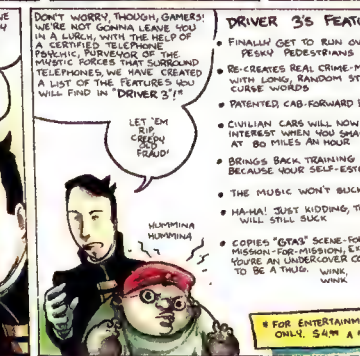
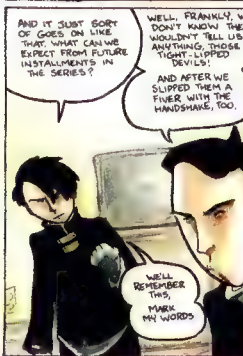
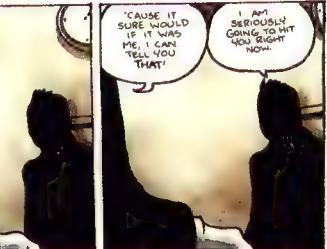
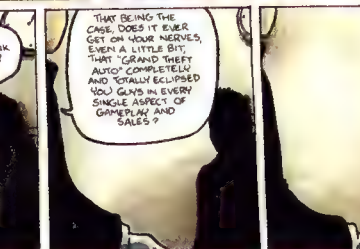
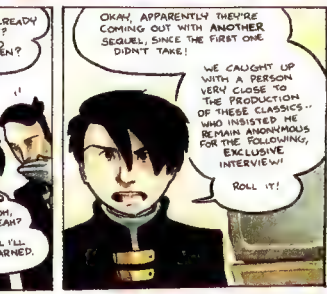
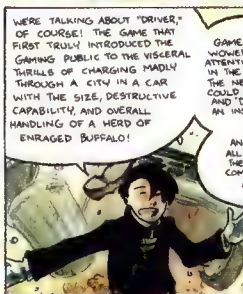
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Nintendo



PRESS
START



HSU AND CHAN
GAME DESIGNERS IN...
DRIVE!
HOWEVER THIS TURNS OUT, WE'VE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON ABOUT MESSING THE LAPD!
PRISON, CHAN!

THE OPEN ROAD, VIDEO GAMERS! THAT ENDLESS HORIZON, THAT RUSH OF MOTION, THAT SENSE OF SPEED THAT MANY HAVE ONLY SEEN AN UNFORTUNATE STRAIGHT...
IS IT ANY WONDER SOME DESIGNERS HAVE LATCHED ON TO THIS CONCEPT AND TOTALLY RUN IT INTO THE GROUND?
WE THINK NOT!

IT IS FOR THIS REASON WE ARE HONORING TODAY THE GAME SERIES THAT FIRST TRULY MADE AN ART FORM OUT OF RUNNING AWAY FROM THE LAW MAN!
LOOK! CONS!
GRAND THEFT AUTO!
NO! NEED FOR SPEED?
NO! I'M TALKING OF COURSE, ABOUT...
NO!
AAAGH! DON'T HIT!

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT "DRIVER," OF COURSE! THE GAME THAT FIRST TRULY INTRODUCED THE GAMING PUBLIC TO THE VISCERAL THRILLS OF CHARGING MADLY THROUGH A CITY IN A CAR WITH THE SIZE, DESTRUCTIVE CAPABILITY, AND OVERALL HANDLING OF A HERD OF ENRAGED BUFFALO!
GAMERS WERE WONDED BY THE GAME'S ATTENTION TO DETAIL IN THE SENSE OF ALL THE NEAT STUFF YOU COULD RUN OVER AND "DRIVER" BECAME AN INSTANT SUCCESS!
AND NOW, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, THEY'RE FINALLY COMING OUT WITH A SEQUEL!

"DRIVER 2" ALREADY CAME OUT? WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN?
OH, YEAH? WELL, I'D BE DAMNED.

OHAY, APPARENTLY THEY'RE COMING OUT WITH ANOTHER SEQUEL, SINCE THE FIRST ONE DIDN'T TAKE!
WE CAUGHT UP WITH A PERSON VERY VERY CLOSE TO THE PRODUCTION OF THESE CLASSICS... WHO INSISTED HE REMAIN ANONYMOUS FOR THE FOLLOWING, EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!
ROLL IT!

BEFORE WE START, I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT THE "DRIVER" BRAND IS HIGH-QUALITY WORK, WITH GREAT EFFORT BEING EVIDENT IN ALL AREAS OF THE PRODUCT.
WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

THAT BEING THE CASE, DOES IT EVER GET ON YOUR NERVES, EVEN A LITTLE BIT, THAT "GRAND THEFT AUTO" COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY ECLIPSED YOU GUYS IN EVERY SINGLE ASPECT OF GAMEPLAY AND SALES?
LET 'EM RIP, CHAN! YOU'VE FRAUD!

'CAUSE IT SURE WOULD IF IT WERE ME, I CAN TELL YOU THAT!
I AM! SERIOUSLY GOING TO HIT YOU RIGHT NOW!

AND IT JUST SORT OF GOES ON LIKE THAT, WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM FUTURE INSTALLMENTS IN THE SERIES?
WELL, FRANKLY, WE DON'T KNOW! THEY WOULDN'T TELL US ANYTHING, THOSE TIGHT-LIPPED DEVILS!
AND AFTER WE SLIPPED THEM A FIVER WITH THE HANDSOME, TOO!
WELL, REMEMBER THIS, MARK MY WORDS.

DRIVER 3'S FEATURES:
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 • BRINGS BACK TRAINING CHALLENGES, BECAUSE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM IS TOO HIGH
 • THE MUSIC WON'T BUCK
 • HA-HA! JUST KIDDING, THE MUSIC WILL STILL BUCK
 • COPIES "GTA'S" SCENE-FOR-SCENE AND MISSION-FOR-MISSION, EXCEPT NOW YOU'RE AN UNDERCOVER COP PRETENDING TO BE A THUG. WINK, WINK.
 * FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY. \$499 A MINUTE.

AND LOOK, WE'RE OUT OF SPACE FOR ANOTHER MONTH!
OFF TO THE CHECKS!
UNTIL NEXT TIME, THIS IS CHAN AND HSU TALKING, BRINGING YOU SAFE DRIVING AND LOW FELONY COUNTS!
GOOD NIGHT!
YOU MESSAGED ME, CHAN! CALL NOW!
THE END

Thank you sir may I have another.

Thank you sir may I have another.

Thank you sir may I have another.

Thrice the pleasure.

Thrice the pain.



Reserve The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker™ now and get a free bonus disk with The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time™ and the never before released Master Quest, only for Nintendo GameCube.



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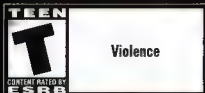
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- PSM DECEMBER 2002



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PlayStation®2

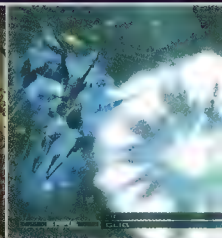
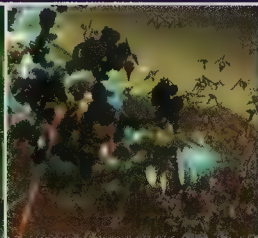
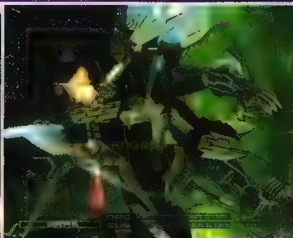
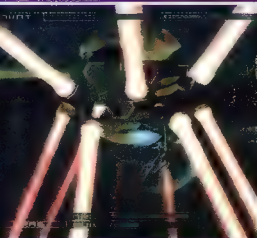
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ZONE OF THE ENDERS

THE 2nd RUNNER



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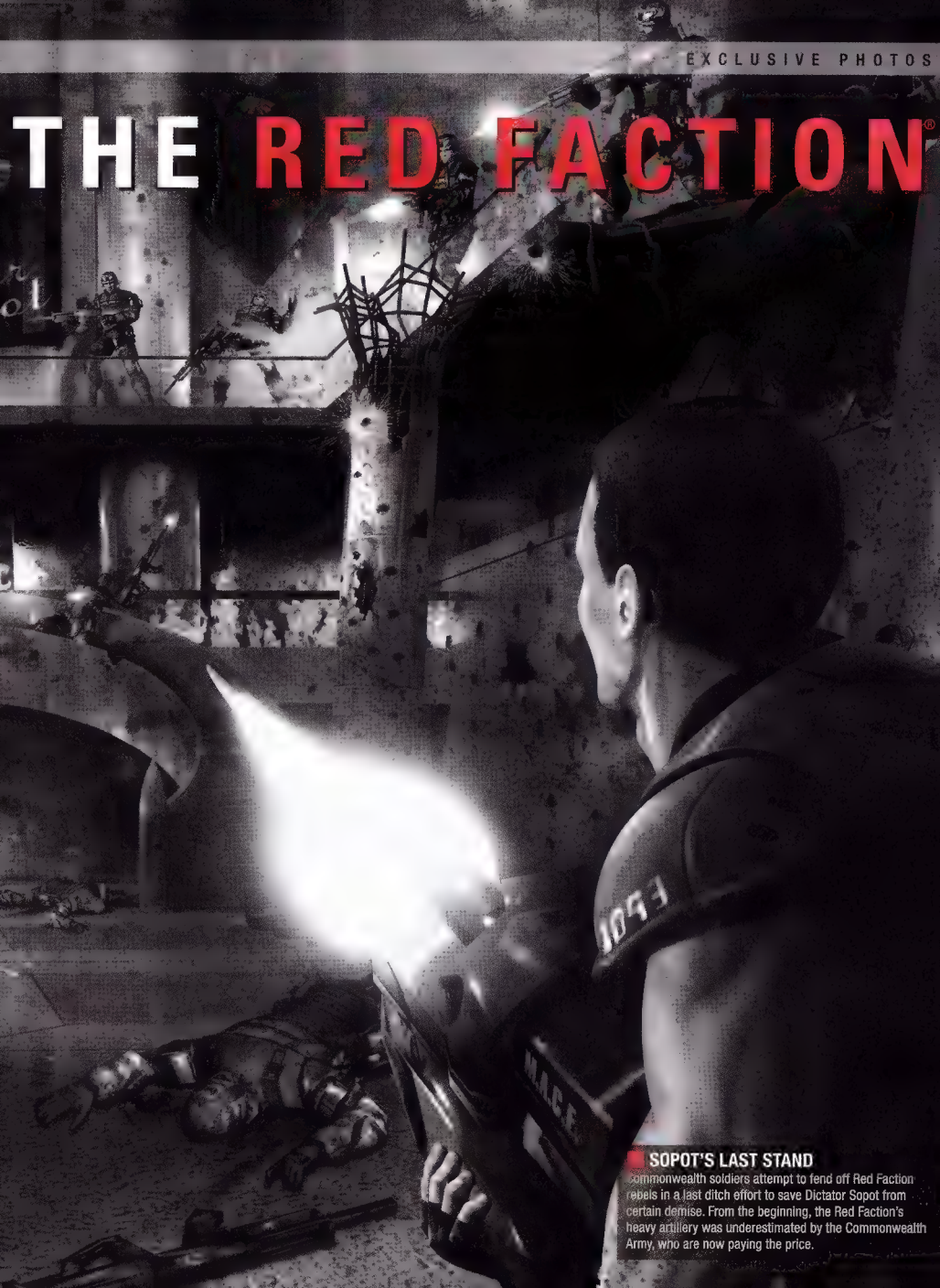


RED FACTION II

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EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS

THE RED FACTION®



SOPOT'S LAST STAND

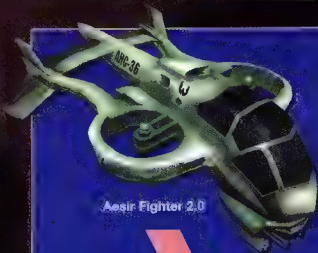
Commonwealth soldiers attempt to fend off Red Faction rebels in a last ditch effort to save Dictator Sopot from certain demise. From the beginning, the Red Faction's heavy artillery was underestimated by the Commonwealth Army, who are now paying the price.



RED FACTION II

COMMONWEALTH COUP

The Red Faction is using their entire arsenal in the latest attempt to



Aesir Fighter 2.0

FROM THE AIR

The Red Faction customized Aesir is a maneuverable air assault vehicle equipped with optical zoom which allows for precise hits on enemy targets.



Drop Point 5:37am
Troops assemble at the Sopot Harbor.

SOPOT CITY

CIVILIAN UPRISING

After Sopot's forces withdrew from the main city, several Red Faction rebels raided Harbor Island and desecrated the symbolic statue of the dictator.



Blood and Gore
Violence

For more up-to-the-minute coverage of the conflict, go to www.redfaction2.com



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D'ETAT

overthrow the Dictator Sopot.



Public Information Building 6:05am
Commonwealth Elite Guards attempt to fend off the attacking Faction soldiers.



NGL-8 Nanotech Grenade Launcher

Elite Armored Soldier's Combat System

THE REBELS

• SUPER SOLDIERS

REBEL: the best of the Faction's Super Soldiers to blow you out of your seat.



THE WEAPONRY

These are only a few of the many weapons used by the Red Faction army.



• CMRD-32 MAGNETIC RAIL DRIVER

Loss metal slugs that go through just about any barrier with a single shot. The magnetic scope makes this weapon extra-precise.



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Capable of delivering automatic, computer-aimed rounds as well as subsonic rounds.



• CAR-72 MILITARY ASSAULT RIFLE

A fully automatic, high-powered rifle in a light-weight, compact form.



The Slums 6:22am
Rebel soldiers continue to fight despite rumors of growing animosity between Faction leaders.

PlayStation 2



PC
CD
ROM



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Previews

This Month in Previews

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If you own only one system, and it happens to be a GameCube, life's gotta be kind of weird right now. On the one hand, you're likely just coming off finishing the superb *Metroid Prime* or getting that last Shine in *Mario Sunshine*. And then of course there's the anticipation for the new *Zelda* game: *The Wind Waker*. (Check out our huge preview, it starts on page 88.)

On the other hand, third-party developers seem ready to abandon the console faster than rats on a sinking ship. It's a fact, folks—few third-party games are seeing much success on the Nintendo box. It should all seem terribly familiar to older Nintendo fans, who recently saw the exact same thing happen on last generation's Nintendo 64.

But really, is it that big of a deal? Having Nintendo as the primary game supplier on your system is about as good as it gets. Sure, getting support from companies like Sega (which is one of the few big companies really backing the GC, by the way), Rockstar, and Electronic Arts is nice, but not really necessary for most Nintendo fans. Older gamers weaned on *Super Mario Bros.* and the original *Zelda* and the Cube's



Hitman 2 is one of the games GC owners can look forward to. Check it out on page 96.

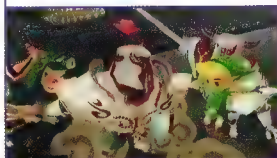
large younger audience are more than happy to receive one kick-ass game every couple months rather than dozens of OK ones. Besides, most Nintendo products have so much replay value that it takes a huge chunk of time just getting through them all anyway.

So while the forecast seems cloudy for the GameCube, it's not going the way of the Dreamcast anytime soon. Nintendo simply makes way too much money from their first-party software to cut the cord on the six-sided system. As long as you're cool with playing Nintendo games almost exclusively (not such a bad thing), your future looks pretty bright. 🍀

—Previews Editor Greg Sewart

GameCube

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The Wind Waker



The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

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Lost Kingdoms II
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TOP 5 Preview Picks

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2. **Final Fantasy Origins** PS1, March 2003
3. **Phantasy Star Online Ep. I&II** Xbox, March 2003
4. **Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner** PS2, March 2003
5. **NBA Street Volume 2** PS2, Xbox, Spring 2003

Link's New Look

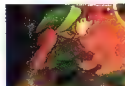


(Source: egmmag.com poll, 05/02)

There's no question that Link's new look in *The Wind Waker* is a major departure from the pixelated elf we all came to love in past *Zelda* adventures. We asked patrons of www.egmmag.com who the new Link reminded them of most.



51% Hermey, the wannabe dentist-elf from *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*.



39% Link from the original 8-bit *Nintendo Zelda* game's instruction manual.



10% The overly festive Link from the rarely seen, rarely played CD-i *Zelda* games.

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GROANING ENGINES.
GRINDING GEARS.
AH, THE SOUNDS
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—PSM, OCTOBER '02



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PlayStation 2



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Backyard Wrestling

Publisher:	Eidos
Developer:	Paradox
Players:	1-2 (1-4 w/Multitap)
Genre:	Wrestling
% Done:	65%
Release:	June 2003
Also On:	None
Web Address:	www.eidos.com

The Good: The game's *Tony Hawk*-style level objectives, *Bushido Blade*-like environments, and fast pace make it feel a lot different from other wrestling games.

The Bad: Those *Backyard Wrestling* "babes" frighten us.

And The Ugly: Your wrestler after a good beating.



If you aren't familiar with *Backyard Wrestling*, just stay up late some night and watch TV. You'll see commercials for a series of videos and DVDs that meld Mic Foley-style extreme wrestling with *Jackass*-like freestyle stunts. You'll witness guys jumping off roofs, getting hit with barbed wire covered bricks, and falling on tacks. In short, these tapes show footage of people across the country that never took "don't try this at home" very seriously at all.

Eidos Senior Project Manager Kevin Gill says the game version of *Backyard Wrestling* first came together after he ordered the tapes during a Christmas party. "[Later] I went to Rob Dyer, the president of Eidos Interactive, and pitched the idea to him. It went through the whole development committee, [and then] we had the task of finding who was the best-suited, most talented developer for the project. The first thing



that came to my mind was, 'Well, it could be like *Thrill Kill*.' Then it was like, 'let's just go right to the source, you know?'" If you're not sure what the heck *Thrill Kill* is, check the sidebar on page 70.

"The biggest difference gameplay-wise between our game and other wrestling games is that you can do anything," boasts Mark Acero, lead designer for Paradox Development—the company responsible for the infamous *Thrill Kill* and *X-Men: Next Dimension*. Not only are you not confined to a ring in *Backyard Wrestling*, you're encouraged to explore your surroundings because, as Acero likes to say, "the entire environment is basically a potential weapon."

Backyard Wrestling's main focus is to give you a ton of interesting toys and then simply let you play with them, as in Rockstar's *Grand Theft Auto* series. The game's large, open stages are filled with weapons,

THE BACKYARD WRESTLERS

Like the soundtrack, the full lineup of wrestlers in *Backyard Wrestling* is yet to be determined, though Josh Prohibition, M-Dogg 20, the Masked Horndog, and El Drunko are set to appear. "We're not necessarily limiting ourselves to people who've appeared in the *Backyard Wrestling* DVDs," Eidos' Kevin Gill says cryptically.



BACKYARD BOSSES

EGM spoke with the two men responsible for creating *Backyard Wrestling* in the first place: **Backyard Wrestling Inc.** President, Rick Mahr, and CEO, Houston Curtis.

EGM: How did *Backyard Wrestling* get started?

Houston Curtis: We were trading underground tapes until it dawned on us that the rest of the world would be just as fascinated with *Backyard Wrestling* as we were. That's the day our lives changed forever and *The Best of Backyard Wrestling* was born.

EGM: So you guys are both rich now, huh? How's that working out for you?

HC: I don't know about that, but I'm glad to report now I can finally afford to own a PS2, Xbox, and a GameCube!

EGM: We just read an article about the guy who started the *Girls Gone Wild* videos. Tell the truth, do you think you

guys could take him?

HC: Our hardcore Backyard Babes could kick the crap out of his girls "gone wild" any day!

Rick Mahr: Hell yeah! And, by the way, it would make one hell of a pay-per-view.

EGM: What's next for *Backyard Wrestling*?

HC: We have plenty of new releases scheduled for 2003. Our recent holiday pay-per-view, "*The Best Of Backyard Wrestling: Season's Beatings*," ran through the end of 2002 and our next all-new event will premiere in February. And while we can't make an official statement at this time, fans can expect to hear an announcement about *Backyard Wrestling: The Movie* in the near future.

RM: Our newest title, *The Best of Backyard Wrestling 5*, debuts nationwide in January. Your readers can also look forward to the soon-to-be-released *Backyard Babes 3: 100% Buck Naked!*

objects, hazards, and spectators, all of which you can use against an opponent or can be used against you. You beat up foes with weapons like stop signs or chairs, while you place an object like a trash can over a wrestler's head (or just throw it at him). An old car, Gill remarks, shows off a lot of the variety found within an environment. "In the course of the fight," he says, "the door comes off, and you can bash somebody with it. Then the hood comes off, too. And when the trunk breaks open, there's a tire iron in there that you can use to change someone's way of thinking."

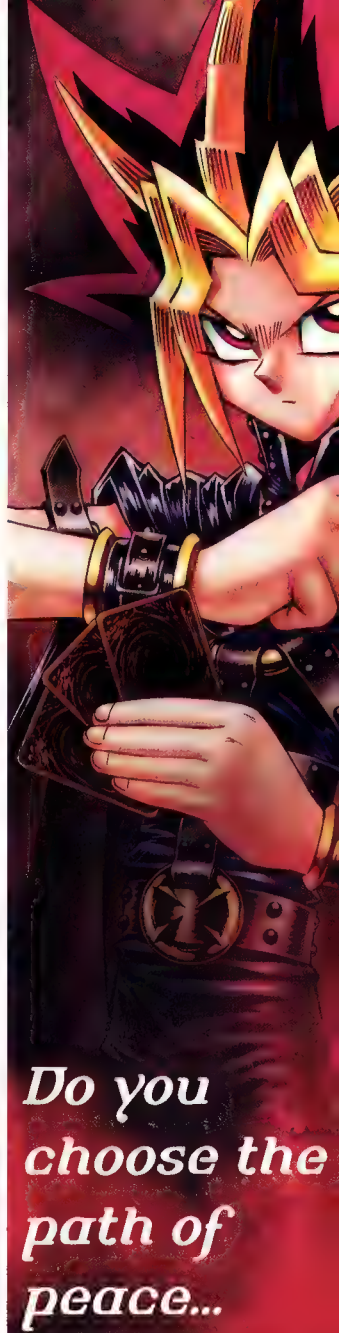
Though Paradox won't say much about the game's stages yet, we got to see one set in a rich kid's backyard. In it, a band plays behind a

large mansion, and a breakable side gate leads to a new area complete with an empty pool and a jacuzzi filled with bikini-clad women. Spectators like this do serve a purpose. "Say I'm trying to get an opponent near a roof-top structure I want to jump from," explains James Maxwell, studio director for Paradox. "The problem is he might not stay stunned, so what I want to do is drag him, knock his head into a tree to stun him again, then throw him into a spectator. While the spectator is interacting with him, that allows me to climb a ladder and do my big drop. Normally, if I just took this character, body slammed him, and tried to do this big drop on him, he'd recover before that."

The crowd interacts with you in other ways as



The WWE's Hardcore Holly's a punk compared to these bloodied bruisers. He's also much better paid.



*Do you
choose the
path of
peace...*



Backyard Wrestling has more blood than *Wipe Out* and *Mortal Kombat* combined. (Oh, we best make that up...but it is really bloody)

NO STAMINA BAR

Just as Paradox's unreleased *Thrill Kill* ignored the traditional fighting-game health-bar system, *Backyard Wrestling* won't have the worn-out wrestling-game stamina bar or any sort of adrenaline meter that you need to build up for your special moves. Because of that, you can do the best moves in the game right away.



well, such as through the game's "pops and jeers" system, which Paradox hopes will effectively keep players from using the same moves over and over again. "They want to see blood and guts," Acero says, "and the system rewards that [by giving you extra momentum]. But if you take a chair and start hitting a guy over the head with it over and over again, you're going to hear the crowd boo. If you really piss them off, they'll throw objects at you that'll knock you down."

The game's single-player Career mode won't require you to beat only the next wrestler in order to progress to the next level like in other wrestling games; there will be a number of *Tony Hawk*-style mission objectives for each stage, too. "It helps point people to the way that you have to interact with the environment," says Gill, "because you can beat up a guy pretty badly from the start, but you're going to want to learn to maximize every possible thing you can do."

Another interesting aspect of *Backyard Wrestling* is that there are three levels of damage for each part of a wrestler's body. After we play the game for a few minutes, the wrestler shown on screen has bloody knuckles, there's a nasty cut over his right eye, the left side

THRILL KILL RIP




Paradox Development is almost as well known for a game that *didn't* come out as any that did. Back in '98, they created a PS1 fighting title for Virgin Interactive called *Thrill Kill*, which was hailed as the most violent game ever created. It featured a cast of characters such as a scalpel-wielding doctor with a bear-trap mouth, a provocatively dressed French maid armed with a cattle prod, a redneck cannibal, and a midget on stilts. Using the PS1 Multitap, up to four players tried to kill each other in cramped environments, such as an insane asylum or a bathroom. As one *egm-mag.com* user described it, *Thrill Kill* was "like a *Tekken* tournament held in *Silent Hill* and everybody's doing PCP."

Instead of keeping track of your own health, you worked to build up a "kill meter." Once it was full, bolts of lightning energized your character, and you had a few moments to perform a kill move on a foe. While you were powered up, all the other fighters would scramble away and push others towards you.

But it was sadly not to be. After Virgin Interactive folded, the rights to its game library were sold to EA, who promptly reported that the game was "shelved because its content was not appropriate for the market."

A completed product when it was cut, *Thrill Kill* remains one of the most famous cancelled games yet. Pirated copies have appeared online for years and in outdoor stands as far-off as Hong Kong and Bosnia.

of his chest is dripping blood, his legs are covered in mud, and a scrape on his elbow looks particularly painful. "If I get power-bombed onto thumbtacks, you'll see them stuck in me," Gill says.

It's obvious that if you're into the *Backyard Wrestling* video series, you're going to be pretty pleased with the game, but it looks worth paying attention to either way. If Paradox nails the game engine, there's a chance you could be looking at the next *Tony Hawk*—a series with a legion of fans that aren't necessarily into skateboarding. At the very least, it'll be popular in trailer parks across America.  —Joe Fielder

PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance

Konami • March 2003 • Also On: Xbox

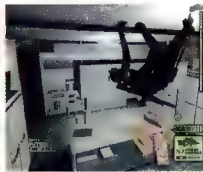
Late last year, Xbox owners got a real treat when Konami released *MGS2: Substance* on their system. The game included the full version of *Sons of Liberty* (released on PS2 in 2003) as well as dozens of new training missions for Snake, Raiden, and a few hidden characters. On top of that, *Substance* contained several new super-hard challenges for Solid Snake that were loosely based on the original game.

Soon, PlayStation 2 owners will thrill to the same new missions for their favorite (and not-so-favorite) characters that Xbox owners have enjoyed for the past few months. You'll be able to sneak through virtual levels without being seen or do in every guard in a set amount of time. You'll even find yourself avoiding 100-foot-tall enemy soldiers (complete with Godzilla spines) and using a sniper rifle to keep ne'er-do-wells away from a plate of delicious curry.



Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

Ubi Soft • March 2003 • Also On: GC, Xbox—We really can't blame Microsoft for letting Ubi Soft's stealth-action hit *Splinter Cell* slip away from Xbox exclusivity to appear on every other console this spring. After all, Sam Fisher—the game's silent-but-violent secret agent—is one sneaky guy. And in the PS2 version, he'll use his creeping, climbing, and "interrogation" skills in a bonus mission, as well as all the scenarios in the Xbox game. The game also looks like it will come close to duplicating the Xbox original's famously superb lighting effects—something you really can't appreciate until you've got Sam lurking in the shadows.



Or the path
of power...



PREVIEW

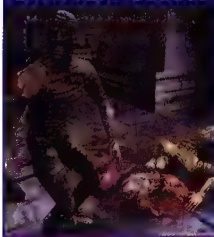
Return to Castle Wolfenstein

- Publisher:** Activision
- Developer:** Raster Productions
- Players:** 1
- Genre:** First-person shooter
- % Done:** 85%
- Release:** March 2003
- Also On:** Xbox
- Web Address:** www.activision.com
- The Good:** The console port of *Wolfenstein* will have new levels, weapons, and enemies.
- The Bad:** The online multiplayer side of the PC *Wolfenstein* was the best part of the game, and it ain't in the PS2 version.
- And The Ugly:** The look on PS2 owners' faces when they realize Xbox gamers can play *Wolfenstein* online



Nazi soldiers are only part of the enemy roster. Soon, crazy mutants and genetic experiments will appear.

REFRESHER COURSE



The Xbox Version

Besides having all the new levels available in the PS2 port of the game, the Xbox edition (titled *Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War*) will have a co-op two-player game, carry system-link support, and make full use of Xbox Live for online gameplay. The only downside? The Xbox version will have a checkpoint save system for its single-player game (as opposed to the save-anywhere setup in the PS2 game).

Early last year, Activision announced that *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* (the modern PC game follow-up to Id's classic first-person shooter *Wolfenstein 3D*) was coming to PlayStation 2 and Xbox. Raster Productions, the company responsible for the excellent ports of *Quake III: Arena* on Dreamcast and *Quake II* on Nintendo 64, is developing the PlayStation 2 version, while Nerve Software, the developers behind the multiplayer portion of the PC *Return*, is handling its Xbox brother. Last month, EGM previewed the Xbox edition, *Tides of War*. This month, we look at the PlayStation 2 version, *Operation Resurrection*.

Return to Castle Wolfenstein puts you in the role of B.J. Blazkowicz, agent of the OSA (Office of Secret Actions) and All-American one-man army. While EA's *Medal of Honor* series carries a realistic *Saving Private Ryan* approach to World War II-themed games, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* has more of an *Indiana Jones* movie feel to it. The game begins when you, as Blazkowicz, escape from a jail cell in the castle and report to the OSA about the mysterious experiments being carried out there under the orders of SS Leader Heinrich Himmler. However, you soon discover the extent of Himmler's plans—which involve using genetic engineering and magic to create an unstoppable army to crush the Allies—and realize that it's up to you to stop him.

As you travel to hidden crypts, secret weapons facilities, and genetic labs to keep Himmler's experi-

ments from reaching fruition, the enemies you'll fight range from Nazi soldiers and elite guards to zombies and cyborgs. While normal Nazi soldiers may seem rather vanilla compared to what comes later, the game's enemy A.I. still makes them fun to fight. They work together in groups, hide to reload, toss your grenades back at you or dive on top of them, knock over tables to create cover, and run like hell if they see you pull out a flame thrower. Other weapons include a combat knife, a Luger 9mm, a Colt Model 1911 pistol, the M40 submachine gun, a Thompson machine gun, a Sten silenced submachine gun, two kinds of grenades, a Panzerfaust rocket launcher, the Venom chain gun, a Tesla lightning cannon, and, when all else fails, your boot.



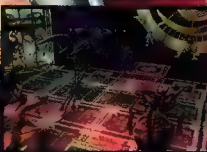
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PlayStation 2



HISTORY LESSON

Doom may be the game that put first-person shooting on the map, but *Wolfenstein* is the grandpappy of them all. It might surprise you to know that the games didn't start out in 3D, though. Let's take a quick look back at the history of this long-lived series.

Castle Wolfenstein

Platforms: Apple II, Commodore 64

Release date: 1983

The original *Castle Wolfenstein* was a top-down action game in which you either shot, stabbed, deceived, or bribed guards in order to infiltrate a Nazi fortress.

**Beyond Castle Wolfenstein**

Platforms: Apple II, Commodore 64

Release date: 1984

The gameplay remained much the same in this *Wolfenstein* sequel, but the goal was to leave a bomb outside Hitler's meeting room and quickly escape before it went off.

**Wolfenstein 3D**

Platforms: PC, Mac, SNES, Jag, GBA, 3DO

Release date: 1992 (original PC game)

The third game in the *Wolfenstein* series was a landmark first-person shooter in which you moved through hallways adorned with images of Hitler, on a quest to take out Germany's war machine.

**Spear of Destiny**

Platform: PC

Release date: 1992

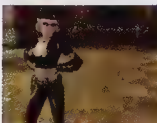
This 20-level sequel followed *Wolfenstein 3D* by only four months and introduced mutant Nazis to the series. Add-on mission packs for the game came out in '94.

**Return to Castle Wolfenstein**

Platforms: PC, Mac, PS2, Xbox

Release date: 2001 (original PC game)

This much-anticipated game was lauded for its excellent *CounterStrike*-style multiplayer gameplay, but many found the single-player levels underwhelming.

**Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory**

Platform: PC

Release date: June 2003

This upcoming expansion will contain a series of squad-based single-player missions, additional maps, extra weapons, and the newly created covert operative character class.



The PlayStation 2 version will have several new features over the original PC game. The most noteworthy additions are new Egyptian levels that act as a prologue to the story, introduce you to your partner Agent One, and set you against new mercenary enemies. Other new foes include the Tesla energy-empowered occult priests in the crypt levels, and




"They used to say I was over-compensating for something. Now they eat through a straw."

Return to Castle Wolfenstein has more of an Indiana Jones movie feel to it.

cyborg German shepherds in the X Labs. To help combat these creatures, you'll gain a holy cross that destroys zombies, an EMP device that stuns the cyborg X creatures, and the X shield, which creates a temporary force field around you.

In order to bring the PC game to PS2, slight alterations were made to some of the levels. Mostly, this means certain areas had to be split into multiple parts so the PS2 can load each separately. Luckily, while the developers were doing this, they also added a bunch of new hidden areas to many levels. Unfortunately, though, the PlayStation 2 version will have no multiplayer options to speak of.

While PlayStation 2 owners may not be getting the same cool multiplayer modes as their Xbox-owning counterparts, it's not so bad. *Wolfenstein* is still a great single-player game. It is a shame that we're going to have yet another title that doesn't take advantage of the PS2 Network Adaptor, though. 

—Joe Fielder



Midnight Club II

Publisher:	Rockstar
Developer:	Rockstar San Diego
Players:	1-2 (2-8 Online)
Genre:	Racing
% Done:	90%
Release:	February 2003
Also On:	Xbox (Spring 2003)
Web Address:	midnightclub2.com
The Good:	A much-improved sequel to the PS2 launch hit.
The Bad:	It's sometimes easy to get lost when you're racing through busy city streets.
Ugly:	Running into a wall while you're racing a bike...ouch!



When the PlayStation 2 launched back in 2000, there were very few games worth playing right off the bat. One that was worth it, however, was the original *Midnight Club*. This go-anywhere street-racing title plopped you in New York City and London and let you tear up the streets in race after race. Man, was it a good time. And why shouldn't it have been? Developer Angel Studios (now known as Rockstar San Diego) cut its teeth on a go-anywhere racing game called *Midtown Madness* (PC) for Microsoft years earlier, so this was familiar territory.

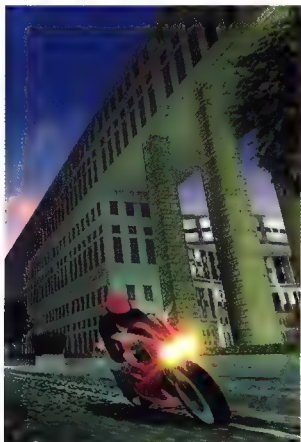
But as much fun as *Midnight Club* was, it had very little style to go with all that substance. Basically, it was a racing game with a unique setup: You had to

roam the city looking for other street racers and challenge them to a duel before you'd be allowed to take part in any events. One of the main improvements in this sequel is the inclusion of a cohesive story line and an eclectic group of street racers with very cool personalities. And, if a few of them remind you of characters from *The Fast and The Furious*...well, that's not too surprising. The developers used that movie as the inspiration for the whole feel of *Midnight Club II*.

While a lot of work has gone into the design and attitude of the game's characters, Rockstar San Diego knows there's nothing better than racing against real, human opponents. With that in mind,



Not only is it fast and furious, but *Midnight Club II* has the graphics to back up the gameplay. Just look at those cars!



Street-racing bikes debut in *Midnight Club II*.

the developer ensured that the biggest focus in this sequel is online play. Every type of race you can run in the single-player game—from Checkpoint to Police Chase—is available to play online (but only if you have a broadband connection). The only downside is that in this game, where trash-talk is so important, you probably won't be able to use the *SOCOM* headset to chat with fellow racers (though as of this writing, nothing was finalized yet, so there's always hope). Of course, you'll be able to play a splitscreen game with one PlayStation 2.

Although using real, licensed cars is the current trend in most big racing games, *Midnight Club II* won't feature any. Instead, you'll get a collection of vehicles that just happen to look like a Honda Civic or McLaren F1. Rockstar pointed out to us that getting licenses from actual car manufacturers would have been too difficult, since all the behavior in the game is very illegal. Besides, not using true car names means the mayhem and destruction you can create is nigh unlimited.

And isn't that really the point? The whole street-racing culture is based on going super-fast in places you shouldn't, which often results in major property damage or worse. God bless those crazy kids. The developers of *Midnight Club II* are doing a superb job of capturing that atmosphere—you can almost smell the exhaust fumes. 🍀

—Greg Sewart

BIG SCREEN TO SMALL SCREEN

Midnight Club II features more than a few similarities to *The Fast and The Furious*.

MIDNIGHT CLUB II

MAIN CHARACTER

You: A young racer who strives to rise in the ranks of street racing and gain the respect of his peers. He's not really a pretty-boy unless you are.



THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

Brian: A pretty-boy who strives to rise in the ranks of street racing, gain respect, and sleep with Dominic's sister. Oh, and he's an undercover cop.



BAD-ASS BALDIE:

Dice: The man everyone wants to beat on the street. Winning against him is nearly impossible, but it's the best way to earn street-cred.



Dominic: The man everyone wants to beat. He lives his life a quarter-mile at a time in his tricked-out RX-7, and robs semi trucks as a hobby.



HOT CHICK:

Gina: This street racer DJ is a part-time DJ who doesn't really have much in common with Mia other than good looks and a low-cut top. *Rrrrr!*



Mia: A quiet, unassuming young lady who's amazing behind the wheel (and, we assume, in other places). She's also Dominic's baby sister.



TOUGH CHICK:

Maria: Just like Letty, Maria simply won't back down, no matter what the situation. She's been racing since junior high.



Letty: Dominic's woman fears nothing and no one, both on the track and hand-to-hand. She's been around cars since she was a teenager.



SWEETEST RIDE:

Veloci: OK, so this McLaren F1-inspired car has no similarities to the movie's Supra. We just wanted to show a beauty shot of it.



Toyota Supra: This car spends most of the movie on the junk heap. But after Dom and Brian rebuild it...oh baby. No better way to shame a Ferrari.



The Human Anatomy

as deconstructed by Tao Feng



FIG. 1. - Considerable Pain

The process of deconstructing the anatomy begins with bruising at the point of contact, leading to bloody contusions and cerebral hemorrhage.



FIG. 2. - Physical Disability

The deconstruction nears completion as limbs weaken and break from continuous physical abuse, finally rendering the enemy useless.

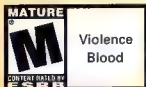


FIG. 3. - Environmental Destruction

Opponents are often hurled into walls and glass situated nearby, resulting in injuries of variable depth and size.

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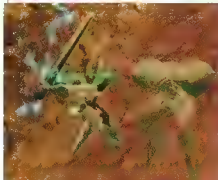
ONLY ON
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Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner

Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	Konami CEJ
Players:	1-2
Genre:	Action
% Done:	80%
Release:	March 2003
Also On:	None
Web Address:	www.konami.com
The Good:	Cornea-scorching special effects
The Bad:	Uch! Our corneas!
And The Ugly:	Double eyepatches



Above: Are you ready for *Voltron* League tee-ball season?



Zone of the Enders was the first game really to show off the graphical power of the PlayStation 2. So it's fitting that *ZOE's* sequel sets a new benchmark for PS2 visuals. With its new enemies, larger cast of characters, even faster combat, and new moves to master, *Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner* brings giant-robot mayhem back with a vengeance.

Welcome to colonialism in the 22nd century. Earth's territory on Mars is in open revolt. And because it's the future, colossal fighting machines called "orbital frames" handle warfare. As in *Zone of the Enders*, you control a powerful frame named Jehuty. But whereas the events of *ZOE* took place in a space station on the periphery of the struggle, *The 2nd Runner's* action is set years later on the red planet itself, in the thick of the conflict.

And the conflict is a lot thicker this time. Literally dozens of drones, robots, and frames surround you in battle. Thin the foes' ranks with Jehuty's new ability to fire homing missiles at multiple targets, and then

charge into their midst with your trusty giant-robot sword and make like a flying metal samurai to dispatch the stragglers. Or get up close and grab a naughty robot and swing or throw it into the others. A well-aimed toss can destroy half a dozen enemies and tear up the scenery to boot.

Waves of hostiles, each comprising 40 to 60 units of varying types, attack at a relentless pace. *ZOE2* gives the palpable feeling that if you slack off even for a second, you'll be overwhelmed. Remember, the best defense is a good offense. So blow up everything that moves and then turn to face the new foes. Next!

Battle plays out like an improvisational dance, but with a lot more explosions. Jehuty maneuvers in three dimensions with ease and has plenty of methods to mete out destruction. Snipe the most dangerous enemy in a group from afar, and then zip in close for some hacking and slashing. Just for fun, tear a support pole from a wall and use some bad guys for batting practice. Throw the pole like a javelin to finish off the

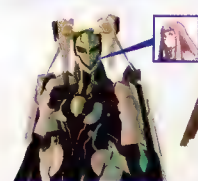
ORBITAL FRAMES AND THE RUNNERS WHO LOVE THEM

JEHUTY/DINGO EGRET



dingo: a wild dog of Australia.
egret: a heron that bears long plumes during breeding season.

ARDJET/KEN MARINARIS



At first, Ken's got a big chip on her shoulder, but we bet she becomes Dingo's love interest.

ANUBIS/NOHMAN

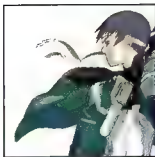


These pictures make it abundantly clear that this Nohman dude's a bad, bad man.

NEPHTIS/VIOLA

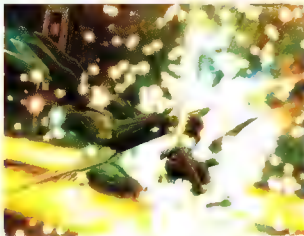
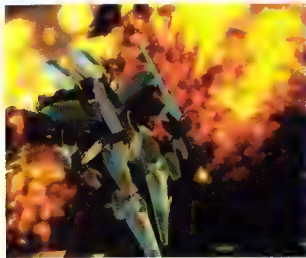


Don't call it a comeback—of course, we're not sure what else you should call it.



LEO, MEET VIC

Several years have passed since the original *Zone of the Enders*. Still fighting for the Martian rebels, Leo now pilots the Vic Viper (the ship from Konami's venerable *Gradius* series), which is one kick-ass transformer.



If you can't stand the heat, dodge better next time.

last bad guy with a flourish. Ah, poetry in motion. In addition to vast swarms of smallfries, expect gargantuan multipart bosses, each with unique weaknesses to be discovered and exploited. Also be prepared for lots of dramatic frame-versus-frame duels. The bad guys' mechs are just as maneuverable as Jehuty, and they pack more heat. They can parry sword strokes with their own weapons, and their minions don't necessarily back off just because you're busy fighting the big cheese. Unfair? Maybe. Fun? Yup.

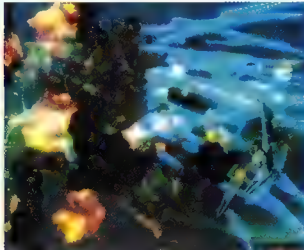
Konami's new baby has butter-smooth special effects, and it loves to show them off. These screenshots can't convey the chaos of the game in motion, with three or five or eight brilliant weapon effects prodigally layered one on top of another—without a hint of slowdown! Luminous lasers zig-zag around Jehuty, crowding in among smoke trails, sword sparks, and light-warping shields. It actually feels as though you're playing an animated mech flick like *Gundam* or *Neon Genesis Evangelion*.

Unlike in *Zone of the Enders*, the movie segments in *ZOE: The 2nd Runner* are traditional hand-drawn animation, and they look great. Although the version we saw was in Japanese, it's clear that the game's style goes hand-in-hand with a story full of double-crosses, hot-headed heroes, and the surprise return of old

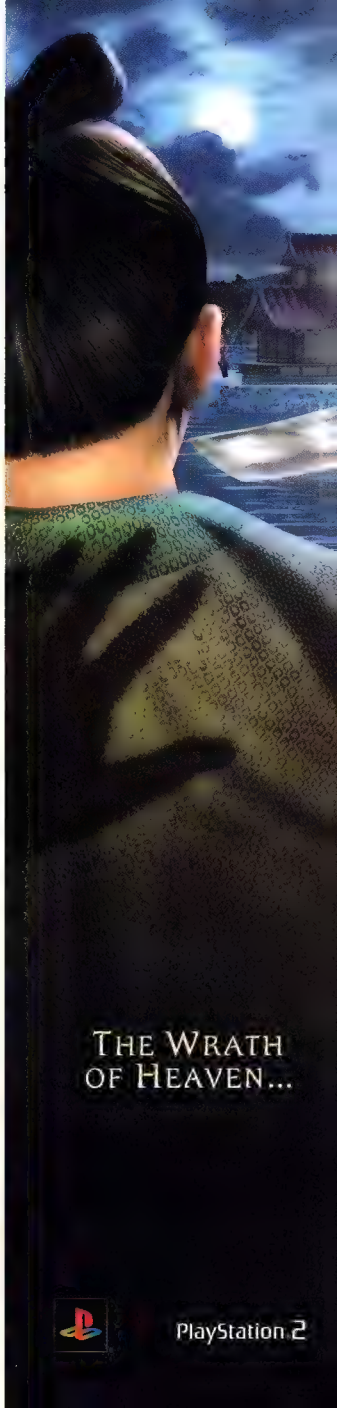
antagonists (reminds us of *Metal Gear Solid 2*). That's right, familiar faces of friends and foes alike return in this episode. Although Leo isn't Jehuty's frame runner this time around, he does make an appearance. Jehuty's onboard artificial intelligence ADA continues to provide needed guidance and occasional comic relief. The orbital frame Anubis is back, more wicked than ever, and so is Viola, who somehow escaped a fiery death at the end of *ZOE* and now seeks sweet revenge. The smart money says that other characters from the first game will return as well, probably when we least expect it.

Although the first episode had a gripping story, it was painfully short. Konami offered some welcome reassurance on that score, saying that *The 2nd Runner* will be "at least twice as long" as *Zone of the Enders'* meager six hours.

While Hideo Kojima (the man behind *Metal Gear Solid*) was the producer on the original *Zone of the Enders*, his role was mostly overseeing the development. Konami tells us that he's much more involved in this sequel, and we believe it. His influence is felt throughout, especially in the pacing and cinematography. Kojima is leading the *Zone of the Enders* team in a promising new direction. In early 2003, it seems that a whole lot of us are going to spend some time in the *Zone*. 🍀 —Paul Byrnes



Jehuty shoots at one, two, three—a whole lot of drones...and a whole lot of drones go boom.



THE WRATH OF HEAVEN...



PlayStation 2

Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness

Publisher:	Eidos
Developer:	Core
Players:	1
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	70%
Release:	March 2003
Also On:	None
Web Address:	www.tombraider.com

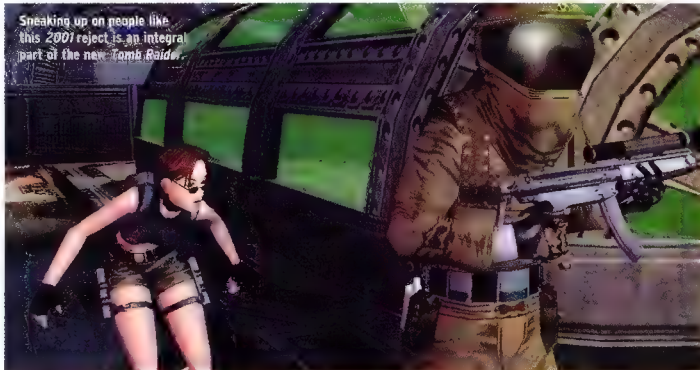
The Deal: Finally, a *Tomb Raider* game that brings new tricks to the franchise.

The Bad: One of those tricks is a new control scheme that may take some getting used to.

And The Ugly: New male character Kurtis Trent means we can't stare at Lara's perfect tush for the whole game.



Meet Kurtis Trent. This hunky hero brings a man's touch to Lara's world as a playable character. Don't get too excited (or disappointed, whatever), though. He's still relegated to co-star status against the lovely lady raider.



Fact has finally caught up with short-shorts-wearing fiction: Lara Croft, missing and presumed crushed under rubble in the story line of her top-selling *Tomb Raider* series, is now MIA in real life. Her new game, the PS2-exclusive *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*, was supposed to arrive in November. It didn't. Should we start sifting through the ruins for her bod?

Yeah, right. Developer Core and publisher Eidos are not about to leave their flagship franchise dead and buried, despite a string of sequels that many gamers felt were growing moldy. Instead, Core has been dotting so diligently on this first next-generation installment of the series—adding what they claim are new ways to change up Lara's game (see below)—that they just blew past their holiday deadline. “Are the consumers miffed that we missed

Christmas?” asks Adrian Smith, Core's development director. “I don't know. Will they be happy they get a better game for it? Yeah, I think they will be.”

So rumors of Lady Lara's death—both in real life and in her game—are greatly exaggerated. *Angel of Darkness* sees our heroine alive and spy, framed for the murder of her mentor, Werner Von Crox, and coerced into helping a shadowy cabal resurrect an extinct race. It's a plot that had better grab the fans—Core has fleshed out the story for the next two PS2 sequels (*Darkness* is part of a planned trilogy). In fact, the next installment is already far into development and may hit around Thanksgiving. “That would equate to two *Tomb Raider* games this year,” Smith says. “How scary is that?” Looks like this girl's making up for lost time. ☛

—Crispin Boyer

REINVENTING THE RAIDER: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW IN LARA LAND

BUILD A BETTER LARA



You'll find power-ups that boost Lara's lower- and upper-body brawn, letting her leap farther and clutch ledges longer to reach alternate routes and loot. “The upper-body power-up,” Core's Adrian Smith says, “will let you smash down some doors and find items.”

GUY POWER



Angel of Darkness packs 20 percent more testosterone than previous *Raiders* in the form of Kurtis Trent, whom you control for the last fifth of the game. A warrior descendant of a lost race, he wields a Frisbee-like disk with protruding blades that would likely land Whammo one monster lawsuit.

CONTROL ISSUE



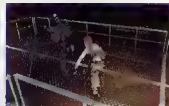
“The tile system was a pig,” Core head Jeremy Smith says of the old *Raider* games' ponderous grid-based movement system and remote-control-style push-forward-to-walk control. *Darkness*'s scheme has been completely revamped. Now, Lara will mosey in whatever direction you tilt the analog stick.

SHADOW WARRIOR



Being a world-famous adventurer and novelist can make life tricky for an on-the-lam murder suspect, so Ms. Croft will have to rely on *Metal Gear Solid*-style stealth tactics more often than in previous games. Fortunately, alternate routes through levels make it easier to sneak past the cops.

SMALL TALK



Core is cranking up Lara's interpersonal communication skills by giving her lots of characters to track down and talk to. In conversations, you can choose from multiple phrases. Play the harmless and you might intimidate a contact into giving you needed info—or keeping mum if you push too hard.

PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

My Street

Sony CEA • March 2003 • Also On: None—In this modern age, kids can't be bothered to actually go outside and play. Meet at the playground? Totally passé! Instead, hop online with Sony's *My Street* and chill with your homies in a virtual neighborhood. You can compete in eight wacky kiddie minigames, including Dodgeball, Marbles, Volleyball, and Lawn-mower Racing. Plus, you don't have to go online—you can invite your pals over and play *Mario Party*-style.



Amplitude

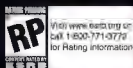
Sony CEA • March 2003 • Also On: None—The name may be different, but *Amplitude* is actually the sequel to last year's sleeper-hit music title, *Frequency*. Developer Harmonix has made a few changes in the gameplay department, but the basic premise is the same: You still have to complete various "tracks" in each song by pressing the correct buttons at the right moments. This time around, you get a better selection of music to choose from, including tracks from Garbage, Weezer, Blink 182, David Bowie, the Baldwin Brothers, and others. Hey, you know this game's going to be a hit if it has Herbie Hancock's *Rockit*. *Amplitude* includes online multiplayer play, and Sony plans to offer downloadable song remixes submitted by users and the performers themselves.



...IS CLOSER
THAN IT APPEARS.

TENCHU[®]
WRATH OF HEAVEN™

Live by honor. Kill by stealth.



ACTIVISION
activision.com

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NBA Street Vol. 2

Publisher:	EA Sports Big
Developer:	EA Canada
Players:	1-2 (1-4 w/Multitap)
Genre:	Sports
% Done:	85%
Release:	March 2003
Also On:	GC, Xbox
Web Address:	www.nbastreet.com
The Good:	More of the same great basketball action from two years ago.
The Bad:	No online play.
And The Ugly:	The trash talk after your roommate blocks you for the fifth consecutive time.



After *NBA Street* stole the sports spotlight over a year ago with its over-the-top *NBA Jam*-style basketball and crazy tricks and dunks, everyone thought this would be an EA Big annual franchise to match up with the yearly EA Sports titles. Not so. In one of the longest lead times for a sports game (especially a sequel), *Street Vol. 2* has taken 18 months to reinvent itself.

Not only does *NBA Street Vol. 2* reinvent itself (the original doesn't hold a candle to this, if you can believe it), it redefines the term "old school." Note: There's a difference between old school and old hat (see *Rygar*, *Contra*, and *Defender*). Old school is cool. Old school is Wilt the Stilt and Pistol Pete and Earl the Pearl. Old school is having a belt buckle on your gym shorts, wearing a white headband around your noggin, and choosing a pair of Chuck's over a pair of Jordan's.

But as old school as this one is, it defines the term "new school" at the same time, which is no small task. New school is just Blaze mixing beats for the game's 12 courts. New school is having stylish, almost cartoony characters on gritty backgrounds. New school is Missy Elliott and Jay-Z pumpin' out phat rhymes.

Back to the old school: The NBA legends that grace *Street 2* (some unlockable, some open from the start) aren't just the best players that ever played in the

NBA. That's not old school. They're guys that made their mark with their style of play. Dr. J, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird...those dudes are old school. But ready yourself with a basketball encyclopedia. Some of the guys you'll play with may be legends, but most of the guys you've never heard of them. Connie Hawkins anyone? *That's* old school.

The newest new-school thing about *Street 2* is the gameplay. The rebounding is the game's biggest fix, plus the crazy dribble moves can now be countered by a defensive maneuver. You can even pass with the right analog stick, take control of the player without the ball, go up for an alley-oop by yourself, and call for the pass from the computer player while in midair. Now *that's* new school.

Gone, most importantly, is the rubber-band logic that made every game fight in the first *Street*. Now you can go into My Rules and give points to your opponent. If someone's playing for the first time, spot them six, and once they get their hands dirty, you can taunt them by giving them another six.

As for additions, nothing makes more sense than allowing two ballers play on the same team. You can even play four players at once now. Finally.

Street is the game. After you play it, you'll be able to kick it old school with pride. 🏀

—Todd Zuniga

O. G.



It costs around \$300 to be officially old school. You don't have to buy a plaque or anything, but you will need a jersey by Mitchell & Ness. Their old-school jerseys are featured in *Street 2*, and they'll run you three bills if you're hungry enough.

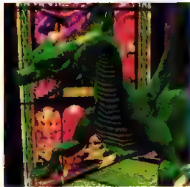
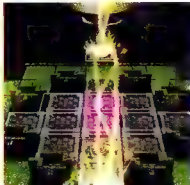


PS2

PREVIEW
GALLERY

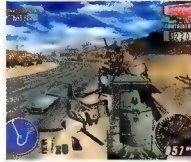
Yu-Gi-Oh! Duelists of the Roses

Konami • March 2003 • Also On: None—*Pokémon* was big, but *Yu-Gi-Oh!*—the latest card game/animated series/videogame phenomenon—has taken over as the thing every kid watches, collects, talks about, and wants. And now, it's hitting PS2. *Duelists of the Roses* features the cast from the TV show, but it specifically traces the ancestry of young hero Yugi and one of his dueling rivals, Seto Kaiba—both descendants of rival factions from England's 15th-century War of the Roses. They're carrying on the struggle in the new millennium in this game, which features a new Card Movement Battle System, mystical traps, and 680 3D monsters.



The King of Route 66

Sega • March 2003 • Also On: None—The biggest problem with truck-driving game *18 Wheeler* was that it took a grand total of 18 minutes to finish the whole thing. No foolin'. And while this sequel uses the same basic premise (get across the country before your rival does without damaging your cargo too badly), Sega's lengthened the game significantly by adding a Career mode. Earning the cash to upgrade your rig and winning the hearts of the eight Queens of Route 66 (we're not kidding) is the name of the game in the new mode. We've got high hopes for this one, since it seems like it'll simply be a much longer, deeper version of what was an incredibly short, but really good game.



Vazhar
by Full Sail Student
Brian Germain

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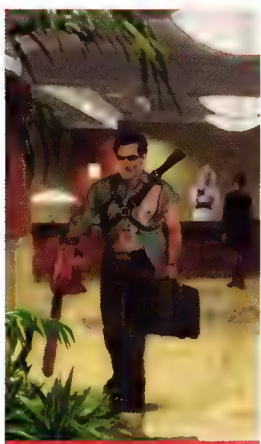
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24 HOURS WITH ASH

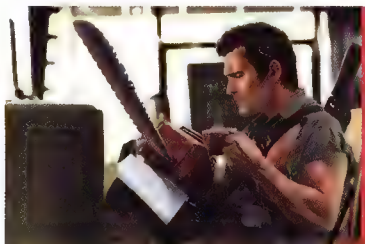


We tracked this ZOMBIE-KILLING MEGASTAR on a recent stop to Dearborn, Michigan.

8:22 a.m. Ash arrives at the swanky Dearborn Hotel wearing a pair of wrap-around shades.



11:23 a.m. In a rush, Ash, late for a meeting with his agent, fends off Deadites with a chainsaw.



10:56 a.m. We caught Ash sipping a cup of Sri Lankan Chai Latte at a trendy local bistro.



12:44 p.m. Ash switches from the trusty chainsaw to a boombstick just for kicks.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Stop following me!"

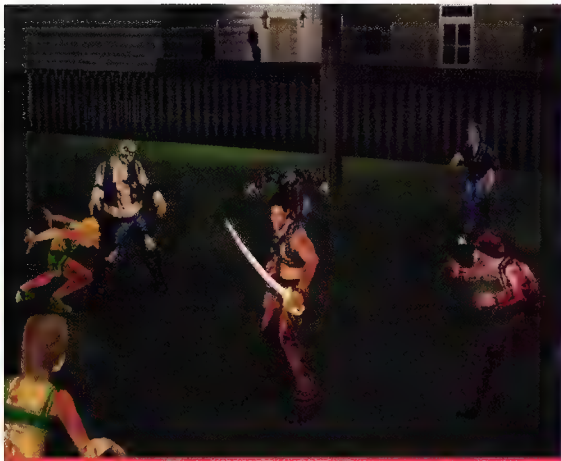
Ash, to our photographer during an encounter in a public restroom.



Blood and Gore
Violence



PlayStation 2



2:31 p.m. Friends in low places. An angry Ash tells a slew of pesky Deadites to stop bothering him by killing them.



5:32 p.m. Ash getting a little R&R on a friend's boat in Lake Michigan.



7:46 p.m. Presto chango! Ash throws a little magic spell on those darned Deadites.



11:34 p.m. Killing is hard work. Ash takes advantage of the Dearborn nightlife after a job well done.

EVIL DEAD A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

For more snapshots of today's featured star,
visit evildeadgame.com

VIS
VIS entertainment pic

THQ
www.thq.com

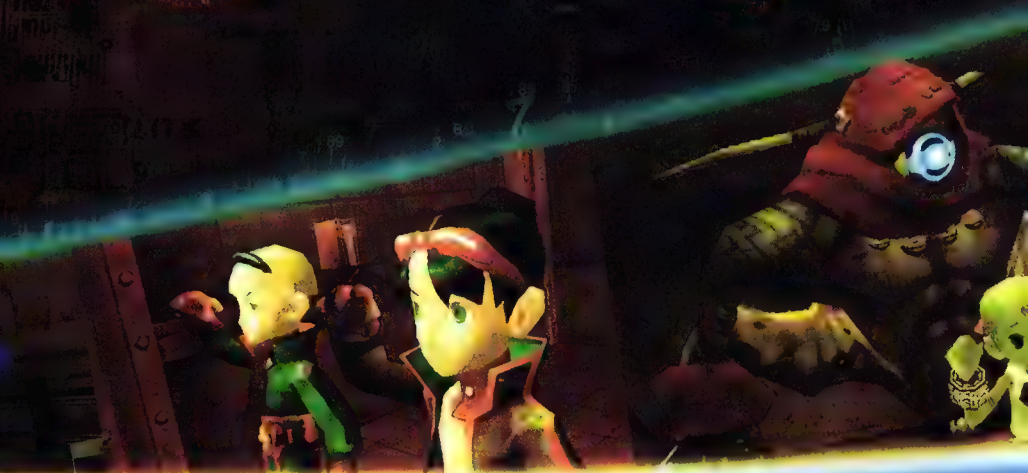
BREATH DRAGON

The image is a promotional poster for the video game 'Breath of the Dragon'. It features three main characters in the center: a young man with black hair and a red headband, a young woman with red hair and a green hood, and a yellow, egg-shaped character. They are surrounded by bright, glowing energy beams in yellow and blue. The background is a dark, industrial-looking environment with various mechanical parts and glowing elements. The title 'BREATH DRAGON' is at the top, with 'BREATH' in a simple white font and 'DRAGON' in a large, stylized, glowing red font. At the bottom, there is a tagline in white text.

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TEEN
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CONTAINS RATED BY
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Blood
Partial Nudity
Violence

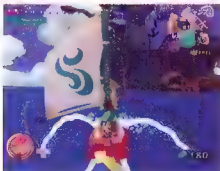
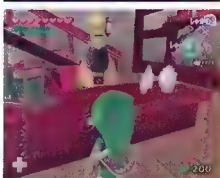
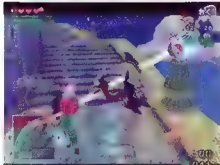
PlayStation 2

CAPCOM



The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Players: 1 (2 with GBA link)
Genre: Adventure
% Done: 70%
Release: March 24, 2003
Also On: None
Web Address: www.zelda.com
The Good: The new graphical style, along with excellent *Zelda* gameplay, works wonders
The Bad: Some people may never give it a chance anyway
And The Ugly: Tingle—the over-weight, bearded elf—doing his vaguely sexual pelvic dance



When people first see the game," says *Zelda* series creator Shigeru Miyamoto, "the graphics are the first thing they talk about." So, let's get this out of the way right off the bat: Much of the attention paid to *The Wind Waker* over the last year—in Internet chat rooms, game stores, and the press (yes, even in *EGM*)—has been focused on the game's revamped, "toon-shaded" visual style. It's true, the new Link does look like a bug-eyed elf from a children's animated TV special. Does it really matter? Miyamoto says no—at least, not in the way you might think. "As soon as you start playing the game,

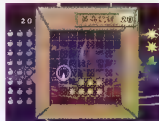
you're going to get sucked into the story and the gameplay," he says. "The more you play, the more you get sucked into the graphic style, kind of forgetting about it."

Where the graphical style does matter is in the seamless animation, and ironically, the realism that the 3D-cartoon look makes possible. "[*Zelda*] seems very realistic despite the graphic style," says Miyamoto. "When I say 'realistic,' I mean the qualities of the world itself. I don't mean to deny the value of more photorealistic graphics, but the more realistic the graphics get, the more unrealistic things like

MINIGAMES

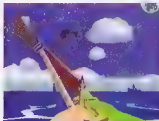
A few of the bite-sized games our bite-sized hero will encounter throughout his travels:

BATTLESHIP



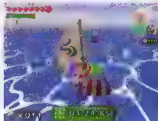
Well, not exactly, but this game does play a lot like the old Milton Bradley board game: You get 24 guesses to find three different-sized ships on a grid.

TARGET PRACTICE



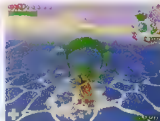
Your fishy friend will give you ten arrows you use to try nailing him as he flops around in the water. The more hits you score, the more money you'll earn.

BOAT RACE



See how many rupees gems you can collect by jumping over barrels in your boat. Oh, and you've only got three minutes, so do it as fast as you can.

LONG JUMP



How far can you make it before you fall into the drink? Use the whirlwinds roving back and forth for an extra boost upwards as you fly through the course.

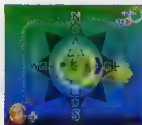
WIND WITH THE GONE

What gives *The Wind Breaker...er, Wanker...I mean Waker. The Wind Waker. (Ahem.)* What gives this new *Zelda* its curious subtitle? Just a few examples:



Evil, poisonous smoke out of the way, turn rotors to power elevators, and more.

Fan a giant magical leaf to scatter leaves (that may cover items or secrets), blow poisonous



since you depend on your sailboat to travel everywhere.

Using a special baton, you can cast a spell to change the direction the wind blows; very helpful,



magic meter (it slowly drains while you're floating).

Extend your jumps by using your giant leaf as a glider. Just be sure to keep an eye on your

bumping into a wall or getting hurt might look. If not expressed properly, they will seem out of place. This time, we've tried to have a very realistic expression. We want to have a game where everything in the world feels like it is in its place. We think that when you play, you will never see Link do something or react in a way that's not realistic."

After playing the import version of *The Wind Waker* for a week straight, we would have to agree with Miyamoto on all accounts. Only a few hours into the game, any lingering concerns

about the Saturday-morning graphics melted away, replaced by awe at the bright, gorgeous world, fluid movement, and myriad ways Link interacts with his surroundings. When Link gets hurt, he really looks like he's in pain. When he gets tired, you can see the exhaustion in his face. When he's trying to be sneaky, he's got the sly squint of a thief on the prowl. And it's not just him—everyone (friends and enemies) and even a few things (fire, smoke, explosions, trees) have a similarly impressive range of possible interactions and animations.

But enough about the graphics...

Whatever it looks like, the core gameplay of *Zelda* is rock solid—*The Wind Waker* is definitely a *Zelda* game. Like the evolution from *Mario 64* to *Mario Sunshine*, *The Wind Waker* takes the basic system and controls of the Nintendo 64 *Zelda* titles and improves on them, adds to them, and mixes them up a bit. The result is a game that will feel familiar to fans of the series, but new at the same time.

Take dungeons: As in every *Zelda* game, you still explore a series of caverns in *The Wind*

THE EYES HAVE IT

OK, so the new graphical style gives *Zelda* its distinct look and smooth animation. But why the gigantic, dilated, deer-in-the-headlights eyeballs? "We wanted to show Link's expressions," says Director Eiji Aonuma, "and so the eyes became very important. Gradually, as we programmed the eyes to move, we began to look at

different ways we could make use of [them]. It became more of a natural process in how we could make Link feel alive, and make the player feel that Link is aware of his surroundings." Here are a few examples of the different ways our hero's big orbs convey emotion and factor into gameplay:



No, Link isn't going Number Two—when he gets hurt, he winces.



Link will give you hints by looking at enemies or useful objects nearby.



Even hurricane-like winds won't stop Link from...well, whatever he's after.



When he gets low on health, Link starts breathing heavily. He is not amused.



Link has a family this time around, and he's not too happy to leave them behind.



Certain enemies launch fireballs that'll turn our hero into a fried sausage Link.



Link sees his new "toon-shaded" look in a mirror for the first time.



Sometimes, being stealthy is the only way to accomplish your goal.



Highlight up to five objects with your boomerang, then let it fly to activate switches, pick items up, or smack enemies down.

Waker. You still find one important item (boomerang, bow and arrows, etc.) in each stage, still find keys to unlock doors, still solve puzzles, and still fight bosses. But a few new abilities expand upon these traditional aspects. As Miyamoto says, "Zelda has always been based on the player thinking things through—figuring out puzzles and moving into the next room. We've tried to focus on ways to improve that." For example, now that you can pick up and use or throw enemy weapons, you might have to smash open a doorway with an enemy's oversized sword, or toss a lit staff to burn down another blocked passage. Or sneak past guards by hiding under a barrel. Or use a giant leaf to blow moving platforms along. Or take control of another character to cooperate on activating two switches at once. And that's just a small taste of what the game has to offer. Plenty of surprises await even the most diehard *Zelda* veteran—just take a look around this preview for more examples.

TINGLE, TINGLE, (ZELDA'S) LITTLE STAR



help out on the GBA as everyone's favorite freakish, pear-shaped elf, Tingle. (Remember the weird guy with the balloon who sold you maps in *Zelda: Majora's Mask*? Same dude.)

Believe it or not, *The Wind Waker* is actually a two-player game. Well, it can be, as long as you have a Game Boy Advance and the cable to hook it up to your GameCube. Link up the two Nintendo systems and while one player continues the main quest on the TV, the other player can



With his overhead view of whatever is going on in the game, Tingle can basically act as Link's guardian angel, helping out in all sorts of ways (though keep in mind, each of these activities costs a bit of money). He can:



- ▶ Tell you the direction the wind is blowing, or exactly what time it is in the game.
- ▶ Find treasure chests (including ones invisible to the naked eye) in dungeons or out in the ocean.
- ▶ Attack enemies or destroy stones with bombs.
- ▶ Heal Link or pick him up and move him around.
- ▶ Give hints on how to defeat enemies or get past puzzles.

Making all these new abilities possible is a similarly evolved control system. "I've been working on *Zelda* controls since [N64's] *Ocarina of Time*," says Director Eiji Aonuma. "We really like [*Ocarina's*] system and thought

we could make use of a similar setup, but really improve upon it for this game. We have the new [GameCube] controller this time, so we've tried to add features that will make it easier to control Link, and also ways to assist

GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM...

Tingle isn't the only help you'll find in the new *Zelda*. At certain points, Link can switch control over to another character.



This idol follows you around like a puppy; possess it with a spell to have Link and his friend activate switches simultaneously.



This friendly bird-girl can carry Link to places he can't otherwise get to, like the top of this column, where a switch awaits.



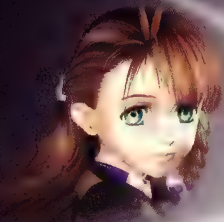
She also carries a golden harp you can use to reflect the sun at light-sensitive enemies, switches, or invisible chests.

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Blood and Gore
Violence

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PlayStation.2





PREVIEW

ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS

Because all of *The Wind Waker* takes place on a series of small islands, you spend a lot of time sailing the open ocean between locations. What's there to do out on the big blue, you ask? Here are a few examples:

TREASURE HUNT



Use your maps and grapple hook to search the ocean floor for sunken treasure. You might find rupees, or even a heart container to boost your maximum health.

AVAST YE MATEYS!



Trade cannonballs with patrolling enemy ships and guard towers. Also keep an eye out for boat-ramming sharks, rock-splitting Octoroks, and other nasties.

CARTOGRAPHY



Find a fish and toss him some food, and he'll draw in a section of your map. Stick around and he even might even give you a hint about where you should be headed next.

with gameplay."

The big A button handles your primary actions: talking to people, jumping up on blocks, crouching down to crawl into holes, etc. The B button activates your sword. X, Y, and Z can be set to any item in your inventory, similar to the way the yellow C buttons worked in the old N64 games—configure your boomerang, bow, grapple hook, or whatever you want, wherever you want it. The lock-on

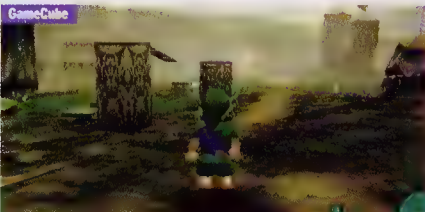
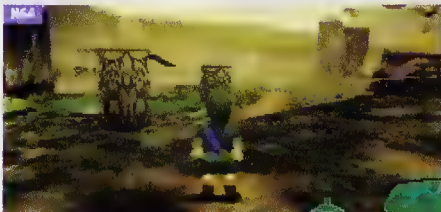
combat-targeting system that *Zelda* made famous returns on the L trigger, and the C-stick now controls the camera for easier manipulation. (The camera works just like that in *Mario Sunshine*—up to zoom in, back to pull out, left or right to swivel the camera around to either side, or you can activate a first-person mode to see everything from Link's point of view.) The D-pad brings up your maps, essential for making your way through

the maze-like dungeons and the vast ocean that makes up most of *Waker's* world.

Suffice to say, whatever side of the graphical argument you fall on, the mix of innovative and familiar qualities found in every previous *Zelda* game is definitely present in *The Wind Waker*. To anyone still complaining they feel embarrassed to play a game that looks like a cartoon—maybe it's you who needs to grow up. 🍌

—Mark MacDonald

ACT NOW AND GET THREE GAMES FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!



The only major differences between the new *Ocarina* re-release and the old N64 version are the cleaner textures and sharper edges.

Getting impatient for *The Wind Waker's* March 24 release? Nintendo feels your pain. In order to make the wait just a bit more bearable, Nintendo will be offering a special gift to anyone who preorders the new GameCube *Zelda* at participating retailers, starting on February 16: a free GC disc with two playable games on it: the full N64 *Zelda* game *Ocarina of Time*, and a special, slightly remixed version of that game called *Ocarina of Time: Master Quest*.

Master Quest was originally created (but never released) for the

64DD, a Japan-only N64 disk-drive attachment that sold about as well across the Pacific as the Xbox does currently (that is, worse than crap-scented scratch-n-sniff stickers). It's basically the same game as *Ocarina of Time*, but with altered dungeons.

"[*Master Quest*] Isn't that different from *Ocarina of Time*," Miyamoto explains. "It's more of a 'second quest.' People who played through *Ocarina* can play through *Master Quest* and have a few laughs at some things, find some more difficult things, and take a few varied paths."

LIGHTS.....CAMERA.....ATTACK!!!



In a world where violence and celebrity go hand in hand, one video game beautifully glorifies both. *Kung Fu Chaos* is the story of director Shao Ting's mad obsession to assemble top 70's martial artists — throw them onto movie sets and have them beat the duck sauce out of each other. With 21 big-budget locations, 8 hot-tempered actors and a cameo by a mystery master, it's never the same movie — er, game twice.



Blood
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PREVIEW GALLERY

Hitman 2

Eidos • March 2003 • Also On: PS2, Xbox—Break out the black leather gloves—this could get messy. *Hitman 2*'s blend of *Metal Gear Solid*-style sneaking and *Max Payne*-ish mayhem scored a 9.0 with our PS2 review, and should please you people complaining about the lack of "mature" games on the GC. As a retired assassin forced to re-enter the business, you'll use everything from a simple garrote to the most advanced sniper rifles to get the job done. It's like the movie *The Professional* but without Natalie Portman. And with less French.



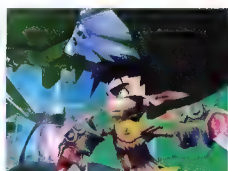
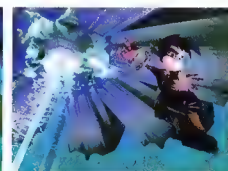
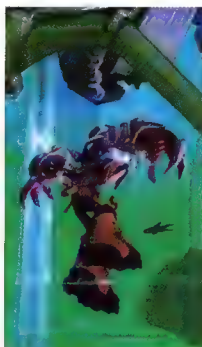
Lost Kingdoms II

Activision • Spring 2003 • Also On: None—Two hundred years after the events of the original *Lost Kingdoms*, a mysterious force threatens to destroy the kingdom of Argwyl. The heroine Tara, who was abandoned in infancy to be raised by thieves, is the land's only hope in this new RPG. (Buy real estate in Argwyl now, and when she saves the day, you'll make a mint. That's free advice.) Tara fights using more than 200 magical cards (including more than 100 new ones), which summon dragons, hounds, mechanized beasts, and other fierce allies. Choose which quests to accept, which cards and items to seek, and which of your creatures to upgrade. You can save the kingdom of Argwyl and no doubt reap a hero's reward—if you play your cards right.



Vexx

Acclaim • February 2003 • Also On: PS2, Xbox—When the sorcerer Dark Yabu enslaves Vexx's people and murders his grandfather, our hero is understandably miffed and sets off on a rescue mission. Not the most ingenious story for an action game, but Vexx does have two things going for it. First, Vexx's huge interactive levels, which are packed with minigames and hidden areas, lend a truly epic feeling to the quest. And second, Vexx's gauntlets provide a welcome variety of moves, such as Wolverine-style straight slashes, uppercuts, and an air-to-ground energy strike.

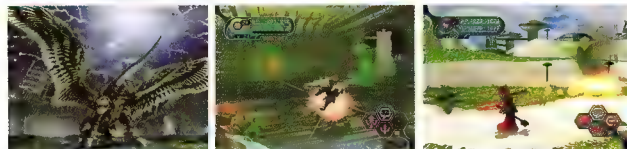




PREVIEW
GALLERY

Phantasy Star Online Episode I&II

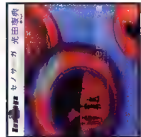
Microsoft • March 2003 • Also On: GC—*PSO*'s Xbox debut promises to offer the ultimate *Phantasy Star Online* experience, rendering all previous editions obsolete. Like its GameCube cousin, this version offers one- to four-player action-RPG thrills for either online or splitscreen fun. It's an ever-evolving, incredibly addictive quest for better equipment and treasure in the vein of *Diablo* (PC, PS1). Plus, it's two games in one—*Episode I*, the original Dreamcast adventure, and *Episode II*, an all-new set of levels, monsters, and quests. You don't need to finish the first adventure to start the second; they're both available the moment you turn the game on. Although it might seem to be a straight port of the GC game, this version sports a secret weapon: the Xbox Communicator. For the first time in *PSO* history, you'll be able to engage in real-time voice chat with the other three players in your online party.



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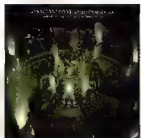


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PREVIEW


Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus

- Platform:** Microsoft
- Developer:** Studio Gigante
- Players:** 1-2
- Genre:** Fighting
- Rating:** 85%
- Release:** March 2003
- Also on:** None
- Web Address:** www.xbox.com
- The Good:** Chi powers add new strategy elements.
- The Bad:** Another tech demo from Microsoft? Hope not.
- Just how bad:** Pumping veins, flowing blood, real gore.



You know that's gonna leave a mark.

WRING A TIC



There's more strategy to *Tao Feng* than you might think. Sure, you could fight your opponents the conventional way, but that won't work to your advantage. Instead, concentrate on a specific limb. You'll see it start to bruise and eventually break.

If you happen to be on the receiving end of such a beating, take heart. Build up enough Chi energy and you can use it to repair your broken limb. Of course, that means you can't use that energy for other things like special attacks or finishing moves.

Good guys always wear white, flash a toothy grin, and save the universe from imminent destruction. Bad guys wear black, scowl savagely, and seek world domination. At least, that's the norm. But *Tao Feng* blurs those lines. The supposedly good Pale Lotus warriors are just as likely to rip your spleen apart as the evil Black Mantis, and both perform brutal, bloody finishing moves.

Wait, did someone say finishing moves? That's right. *Tao Feng's* similarities to *Mortal Kombat* are no coincidence, since its designer is none other than John Tobias, co-creator of the original fatality-filled arcade hit. *Tao Feng* is a bloody fighting game like *MK*, but Tobias insists there's more than meets the eye.

For starters, the story line and characters are much deeper than in most fighters. "[The story] centers on the two warring factions who've migrated to New China, which is an alternate version of West Coast America," says Tobias. "Character names are influenced by old Chinese mythological tales: Fiery Phoenix, Fierce Tiger, Zhao Yen...."

Tobias has studied these ancient Chinese myths, developing his characters with unique, Buddhist-inspired abilities. "Fiery Phoenix creates fire energy, and Jade Dragon summons a dragon," explains Tobias. "Other characters do things that are consist-

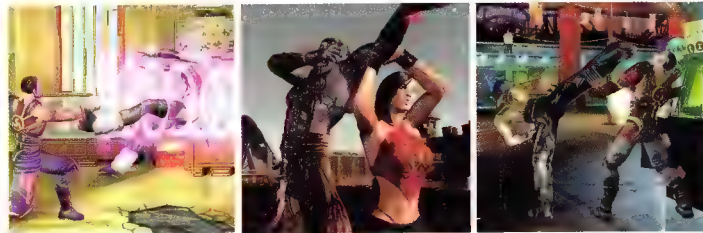
ent with their look and feel. Exile is a big brute so his Chi attacks quake the ground, Master Sage creates balls of energy through his Tai Chi, and Wulong Goth just does creepy things, because he's a creep."

Tao Feng's interactive environments and visuals add a new twist to classic *Mortal Kombat*-style fighting. You can throw opponents through glass panes, perform wall-jumps, and twist around vertical poles. And, depending on how you're laying the smack down, you'll see some gruesome limb damage and blood-spurting injuries. Tobias must've missed all the violence-in-gaming controversy the original *MK* caused.

Other graphical effects continually push Xbox's impressive visual capabilities. Clothes gradually smear and wrinkle; veins pump vividly on characters' arms and muscles. Techno-geeks call it bump mapping—we call it lifelike. "If there's a bell or whistle on Xbox to ring, we're ringing it," says Tobias. "It's that kind of detail that makes *Tao Feng* a gorgeous game to look at."

Tao Feng may be the perfect alternative for Xbox gamers who weren't too happy with the recent *Kakuto Chojin*. And, with the ultrarealistic gore, Chi powers, and a Taoist story line, it's much more than just a *Mortal Kombat* rip-off. 🌿

—John Brandon





Hidden characters, extra weapons and undiscovered worlds are all at your fingertips. Cut out the cards, slip them into the game's case for a quick trick.

When you get the itch, punch in these codes and really get into the game.

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CRASH BANDICOOT 2: N-TRANCED

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

SUPER MOVES

Crash has a ton of cool and exciting moves, here are two special moves that will help you make your way through the game.

Rodent Jump
This special move, obtained after you defeat Evil Coco, allows you to catch more air than a double-jump. You can reach every Crate and platform in the earlier levels without the Rocket Jump, but the later levels require it.

Hornado Spin
Gotta get this special move by defeating Fake Crash. It lasts longer than a regular spin. Use it to extend the length of a jump or double-jump, because you float slowly downward to land.



MASSIVE JUMP

When you're in a level, hold down the jump button and hold it for a few seconds. This will cause you to jump a massive distance. Use this to reach high platforms or to cross long gaps. This move is also useful for reaching the end of a level.

side.

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

XBOX, PLAYSTATION 2

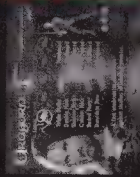


THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

PLAYSTATION 2

SUPER CODES!

If you've had it up to your ears with battling countless armies of orcs, orcs and more orcs, try these codes to breeze through the game a little easier. Start a mission, then pause and hold in L1, L2, R1, and R2. Now, tap the following: All Upgrades: Trf, Cr, Trf, Cr; Invulnerable: Trf, Squ, X, Cr; Slow Motion: Trf, Cr, X, Squ, Always Devastating: Squ, Squ, Cr, Cr; Twichy: Froamias Trf, Trf, X; Infinite Missiles: Squ, Cr, X; Refill Health: Trf, Do, X, Up, Oh, and beat the game with all three characters to unlock Isildur.





Hidden characters, extra weapons and undiscovered worlds are all at your fingertips. Cut out the cards, slip them into the game's case for a quick trick. When you get the itch, punch in these codes and really get into the game.

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STAR WARS: BUNTY HUNTER



BEAT LONGO TWO-GUNS

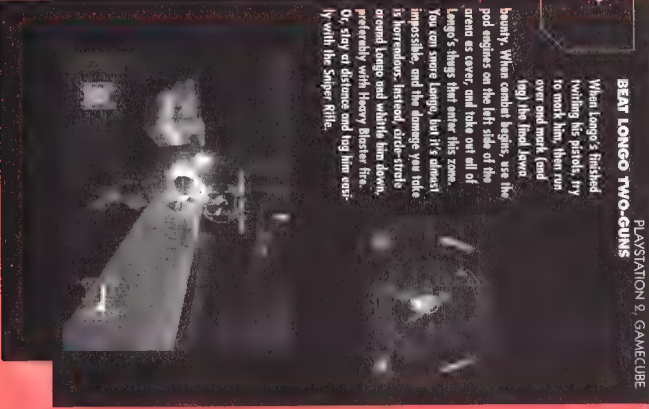
PLAYSTATION 2, GAMECUBE

When Longo's thinned twirling his pistols, try to mock him, then you over and mock. Good boy!

Boy, the final love

beauty. When combat begins, see the pod engine on the left side of the arena as cover and take over all of Longo's things that enter this zone.

You can snare Longo, but it's almost impossible, and the damage you take is horrendous. Instead, slide-trails around Longo and whittle him down, preferably with heavy Blaster fire. Or, slip at distance and tag him overly with the Sniper Rifle.



SPLINTER CELL



CAMERA SHY

Instead being caught or cornered in situations to avoid alert-

ing the enemy, the

new missions. A crowd of enemies

has been set in motion about the

camera set (using your reflexes

handicap) or to wait until a

moment in the opposite direction

and then sneak behind it (only do

this if you're out of ammo, though

it's a riskier tactic). If you can't

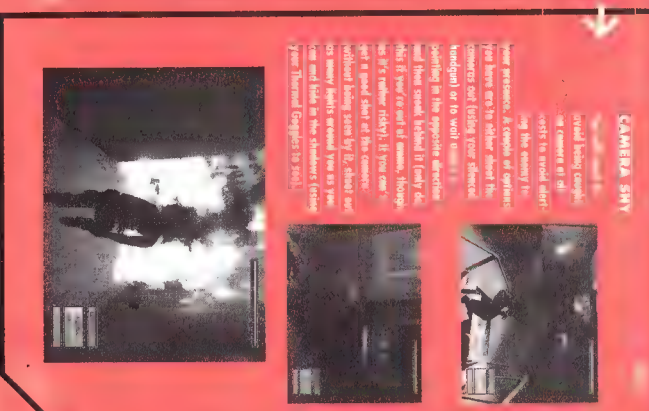
get a good shot at the camera,

without being seen by it, shoot at

its mirror lights instead, you can

use and hide in the shadows (even

you'll be able to see).



DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI



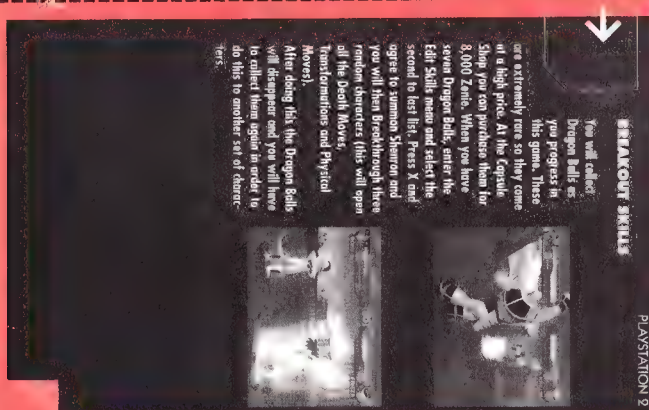
BEATCOURT SKILLS

You will collect Dragon Ball Z as you progress in his game. These

are extremely rare so they come at a high price. At the Kapsule Shop you can purchase them for 8,000 Zennies. When you have seven Dragon Balls, enter the Edit Skills menu and select the second to last list, Press X and

press to summon Shumon and you will then Breakthrough here random characters (this will open all the Death Moves, Transformations and Physical Moves).

After doing this the Dragon Balls will disappear and you will have to collect them again in order to do this to another set of character.



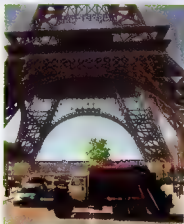
Midtown Madness 3

Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Digital Illusions
Players: 1-4 (2-8 Online)
Genre: Racing
% Done: 80%
Release Date: Spring 2003
Age Rating: None
Web Address: www.xbox.com
The Good: *Midtown Madness 3* is what the world needs more of: online racing games.

The Bad: Any time Digital Illusions spends on other games might delay the Xbox version of *Battlefield 1942!*

And The Web: It doesn't look as good as Activision's *Wreckless* or Rockstar's *Midnight Club II*.

WHY PARIS?



When you're thinking about major cities you'd love to see in a racing game, Paris probably doesn't immediately come to mind. (Doesn't Microsoft heart New York City? No love for L.A.?) But it's one of the areas included in *Midtown Madness 3*. Apparently, sales for the previous *Midtown Madness* games were higher in France than in any other country outside the United States. So, the inclusion of Paris was an obvious move for this sequel.



B.J. and the Bear make their own traffic laws.

San Francisco Rush. *Midnight Club*. *Project Gotham Racing*. We've all played racing games that were set in realistic re-creations of well-known cities. But *Midtown Madness 3* has something none of these other games has had: You can play it online against human opponents using Xbox Live.

Let's get back to that point in a bit. History lesson: Microsoft's PC-game series, *Midtown Madness*, has been famous for its meticulously detailed city environments that show everything from a town's major landmarks to its back alleys. The first *Midtown Madness* offered an extremely authentic Chicago for players to explore and race around in, while *Midtown Madness 2* was set in both London and San Francisco.

The Xbox-exclusive *Midtown Madness 3* takes place in Washington, D.C. and Paris, and has a new single-player option its PC brethren doesn't: the *Driver*-like Career mode. In it, you're an undercover secret agent who takes such jobs as a limo driver, stunt driver, private investigator, or taxi driver in order to catch criminals. Some missions require you to chase opponents or avoid pursuers, while others focus on you making deliveries or keeping your car from getting too damaged. In the game's other single-player modes, you'll race against the clock, compete against fellow drivers, or take your time to fully explore the city (and if police are present, you better

be sure to obey stoplights).

Midtown Madness 3 has more than 30 different cars, and most of them are real, such as the Corvette Z06, the BMW Mini Cooper, and the dreamy '67 Mustang. You'll compete in races against similarly classed cars, so if you choose a truck, you'll be speeding along against a bus or dump truck, not a Lotus or Viper.

But the aspect of *Midtown Madness 3* we're most interested in is the game's online capabilities. Using Xbox Live, you'll play with up to seven other players (in teams or solo) in such modes as Hunter, where you either chase multiple opponents or are chased by them; Stayaway, where you're the prey all the time; and Capture the Gold, where you have to take the money and get it back to your base. If you don't have Xbox Live, you can always use a system link (and wear a stupid headset) to pretend, but then you'd miss out on the downloadable cars and races that will be available in the future.

Midtown Madness 3 is just one among the many planned online racing games for Xbox live (*Midnight Club II* and *Project Gotham 2*, for example). Since it's blazing the online-racing trail, we're sure there'll be a few chinks in the armor when it comes out. But we're excited to play it either way. 🐾

—Joe Fielder





PREVIEW

Final Fantasy Origins

Publisher: Square EA
Developer: Squaresoft
Players: 1
Genre: RPG
% Done: 75%
Release: Spring 2003
Also On: None
Web Address: www.playonline.com

The Good: *Final Fantasy II* in English...finally!
The Bad: The graphics only received a 16-bit quality upgrade.
And The Ugly: Slogging through *Land Before Time* and *Barbie* games to find this on the PS1 shelves.



The story's new themes in *Origins* fill the screen with blazing spells, epic battles, and the occasional preposterous transsexual.



(Below) *Final Fantasy II* features an amazing innovation—characters!



For many role-playing fans, PlayStation 1's *Final Fantasy VII* represents the entry point into this legendary RPG franchise, but as the name suggests, six previous games laid the groundwork years before Cloud had impure thoughts about Tifa on the Ferris wheel. Luckily, all the Johnny-come-latelies can catch up on what they missed—Square's done an admirable job bringing the classic Super Nintendo *Final Fantasy* games back into the spotlight with *Final Fantasy Anthology* (bundling *FFV* and *FFVI*) and *Final Fantasy Chronicles* (which included *FFIV*) on PS1. Now, *Origins* excavates the ancient (in gaming terms, anyway) 8-bit gems *Final Fantasy and Final Fantasy II*. Older gamers might dredge up fond memories of the first title on the 8-bit Nintendo in 1990, but *FFII* has never come stateside before, so even the super-hardcore *Fantasy* fans have reason for excitement. (In fact, now every *Final Fantasy* is available in English

except for the Japanese 8-bit *Final Fantasy III*, which isn't currently on the horizon for a PS1 remake.)

Square didn't just shovel two musty, old games onto a PlayStation disc. Completely reworked visuals lead the enhancements to these classics. We aren't talking *FFVII*-style eye candy here, but the nicely redrawn graphics rank up with those of the Super NES games. Also, Square has prefaced each title with a beautiful CG cinema that explains a bit of the story leading up to the game. A completely remixed sound track offers beautifully orchestrated versions of classic tunes and a few new songs. Lastly, diehard fans will really dig the inclusion of a special art gallery filled with images by renowned *Final Fantasy* artist Yoshitaka Amano.

Just as the aforementioned surface changes bring the look and sound up to date, some crucial gameplay tweaks help make these games more playable.

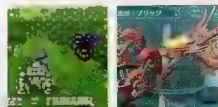
OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL

BLACK MAGE



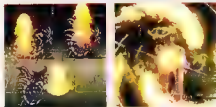
FFI's black mage character class provided obvious inspiration for *FFIX's* lovable-yet-whiny star, Vivi.

AIRSHIP



The first six *FF* games featured fairly traditional airships, but check out the wild one in the upcoming *FFX-2*.

SPELLS



Spell effects in the older games are understated and simple, while modern *FF* magic is over-the-top insanity.

HOT CHICK



FFII's Maria was the series' first hottie. Compared to *FFX-2's* Rikku, however, she's prim and proper.

THE NAME GAME

OK, so *Final Fantasy II* already came out in the United States...kinda. The *FFII* you remember on Super Nintendo was actually the English version of Japan's *Final Fantasy IV*. See, the names got all screwy over here because not all the *Final Fantasy* games made the journey across the Pacific. Got it?

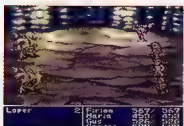
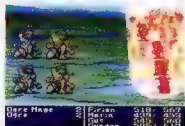
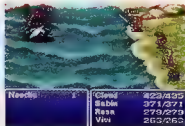
ANCIENT INNOVATIONS

Both of the original *Final Fantasy* games featured some inventive gameplay concepts that, while seemingly cool at the time, were ditched in future installments. Here's a look at some creative role-playing ideas that ultimately didn't stand the test of time.



FINAL FANTASY I: CUSTOMIZABLE PARTY

Instead of amassing a group of characters as you go, you begin *Final Fantasy* with four guys, assigning a name and character class (fighter, thief, monk, red mage, white mage, or black mage) to each one. This lets you tailor your group however you like—balance it out for a standard playthrough, or go crazy with a woefully weak group of four black mages if you're feeling lucky. Also, midway through the game, your characters get promoted, which changes their appearance.



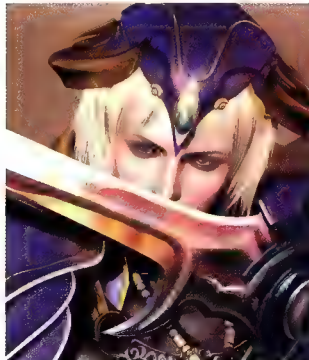
FINAL FANTASY II: GOODBYE, EXPERIENCE POINTS

Rather than traditional experience points, *Final Fantasy II* rewards your characters with attributes based on their actions, so they get more MP if they get hurt a lot, more strength if they attack copiously, more MP if they cast tons of spells, and so on. In the original version, it helped to sit around attacking your own party members in order to gain hit point upgrades. On PS1, the game is balanced enough so that you won't have to resort to such silliness.

First and foremost, you can now run in towns and dungeons. Before, your walking speed was stuck in first gear; now you can dash around with reckless abandon. Also, Square has included an Easy mode in *FFI*, so gamers who don't want to overcome the original's sizable difficulty can still enjoy the game. *Final Fantasy II* doesn't get the easy treatment, but its innovative (and somewhat busted) experience system has been tweaked a bit (see above sidebar).

Final Fantasy I

FFI stands proud as the grandpappy of the series, but compared to modern RPGs, it's kind of weird. There aren't really any playable charac-



FFI's Gars gets a glossy cut-scene makeover.

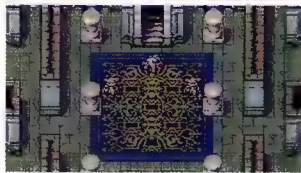
ters, just anonymous heroes you create. This allows you to customize your party to your liking, but it also means that these guys aren't talking, interacting, or adding anything to the game whatsoever. The plot's fairly basic, too—an evil demon is wreaking havoc and it's your duty to stop him. But hey, dynamic characters and gripping plots weren't commonplace 15 years ago. You'll still get rollicking gameplay packed with airships to fly, sprawling dungeons to explore, and tricky battles to wage.

Final Fantasy II

You'll notice a definite improvement in *FFII* over its predecessor. This time, the plot's much more fleshed out. You actually control a set group of characters: three orphans (Fionel, Guy, and Maria) who are trying to rescue a friend from an evil empire. Along the way, many other party members rotate in and out of the fourth character slot, adding considerable variety to the game. You'll also notice that *FFII* boasts more complex graphics, larger dungeons, and more methods of travel (including the first appearance of Chocobos) than its forerunner. As mentioned earlier, the leveling-up system is a bit zany, but overall, it's still a really neat RPG that clearly demonstrates how the series evolved over the years.

Final Fantasy fans new and old alike should investigate the *Origins* (har) of this landmark series. Sure, it probably won't replace modern RPGs in your heart, but it'll be a fun, nostalgic way to fill the role-playing void until Yuna and Rikku parade around in their bloomers later this year in *FFX-2*. ☘

—Shane Bettenhausen





THRILL OF THE CHASE

Carjacking in the Miami heat. Wet-and-wild boat chases. Blazing gunfights within the buildings of a wicked city. No, this isn't another Grand Theft Auto: Vice City cover story. It's time for driver's ed on **Driver 3**, the high-revving hardly-a-GTA-clone that's peeling rubber to PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube

By Nick Walkland

Martin Edmonson, creative and managing director at Newcastle, England-based developer Reflections, is braced for the inevitable. And we're not talking about run-of-the-mill unstoppable forces like death, taxes, or another season of *The Bachelor*. We just asked the question he's been waiting for: "Wait, *Driver 3* takes place in Miami? But that's where developer Rockstar North set *GTA: Vice City*, right?" Edmonson's response is blunt: "Miami has been in the design for *Driver 3* for over two years. And we're modeling and creating a photo-real town. [*Vice City* is a fictionalized, boiled-down version of the city.] Then, of course, the first level of the original *Driver* was set in Miami...so in a way [Rockstar] copied us."

And really, comparisons with Rockstar's king-of-the-world auto-theft franchise just aren't fair. The original *Driver*, a fast-and-furious hit for the PlayStation 1 back in 1999, laid the roadwork for urban, go-anywhere 3D driving. And *Driver 2*—its sluggish, tough, overly linear PS1 sequel—actually let you get out of your car, mosey

around town, and jack other vehicles.

With *Driver 3*, due on every major system this fall, Reflections intends to take players back to the seat-of-your-pants Hollywood-Flick-style car chases that made the first game such a smash, while adding lots of features that are new to the series. You finally

Town and out

This look is immediately noticeable as you start progressing through the game's three cities: Miami; Nice, France; and Istanbul, Turkey. Miami is the smallest, believe it or not, with its pastel shades, flat land, grid layout, and the essential alleyways (plus a

"We're after a photo-real look."

—Reflections Creative/Managing Director Martin Edmonson

get weapons and proper out-of-car missions for all the guns-a-blazing, house-invading, vehicle-jacking thrills you could want. Oh, and if you see a nice boat, hop aboard and take it for a cruise. Any arguments, just whip out your machine pistol, chase baddies indoors, and create a plasterer's nightmare. Sure, it's all the kind of stuff you can do in *Vice City*, but, again, Edmonson is ready to roadblock the inevitable comparisons. "*GTA* went for a very cartoony look," he says. "We're after a photo-real look."

bizarre sense of déjà vu). Then your seedy underworld ties take you into the larger, hillier French city of Nice (pronounced "niece"), until you eventually get to the largest in-game city, Istanbul. Cynics might complain that *Driver 3* has one city less than the last two games, but "the cities now are much bigger," Edmonson explains. "Also, going from PS1 to PS2, the amount of detail we can stream is astronomical in comparison. There are just over 31,000 buildings—all of which had to be positioned by

COVER STORY:
THRILL OF
THE CHASE



through to make it all like the good games. I think I know you all the way—go look to find your finest car-chase moments, reposition the cameras, and even recut scenes.



hand using our city design tool—so there's no generic-looking mass."

As in the past games, you play a chiseled-jaw undercover cop named Tanner, who gets involved in the murky underworld by joining a global carjacking network. You have to pull off some grand theft auto yourself in order to get in the bad guys' good books. And *Driver 3* is first and foremost a driving game—at least 70 percent of the time, that is—clinging to its *Driver* roots with a cinematic feel. "Think of *French Connection*, *Ronin*, *The Blues Brothers*...any famous car chase you can

remember," Edmonson says. "It's what *Driver* has always been about: to be the best simulation possible of a Hollywood car chase, and it's something that still hasn't been done if you look at other recent games like *Grand Theft Auto* and *The Getaway*."

Let's get physics-al

Sounds thrilling and all, but you're only as good as your equipment. Fortunately, *Driver 3* brings realistic car handling and damage modeling to your vehicles, as you would expect from the creators of the PS2 daredevilry sim

Real Physics, Fake Cars

Driver 3's vehicles aren't the shiny, licensed real McCoy's seen in *The Getaway* or *Gran Turismo*. "Manufacturers are not willing to put up with the amount of damage and destruction we do to their cars," says Reflections' Martin Edmonson, "and they don't like that *Driver 3* is set on real streets."

That's not to say Reflections didn't try to get some real-life jalopies for their game. "We have gone into it, believe me," Edmonson says, "but it's far too much like hard work. You'll get one small manufacturer to agree to some of it, but the next manufacturer won't agree to any of it, so it's just a bit of a mess." In the end, Reflections relied on the same tactic used in *Driver*, *Driver 2*, and *Stuntman*: They made the vehicles look similar to recognizable cars, but then removed logos and changed the models slightly to the point where "the legal people are happy," says Edmonson.





"You can really wrap around objects you collide with."

—Reflections' Martin Edmonson

Stuntman. In fact, the physics engine is improved over *Stuntman*'s, although the cars handle as they did in previous *Driver* games. It's less forgiving than the likes of *Vice City*, but then this is much more realistic—loaded trucks even jackknife.

As you smash the vehicles, they dent and eventually lose their panels, reaching a level of destruction similar to *Stuntman*'s. You can damage your car right down to its frame. Knock a wheel off and it bounces away and becomes a physical part of the world. The car then handles differently and sits down

on its suspension with sparks a-flying. Lose the other front wheel and you have no steering at all. "You can actually crumple the shape of the car," Edmonson says, as he destroys a vehicle in a PS2 physics-test area. "In *Stuntman* when you smack into something, the car stays relatively rigid. Here, if you hit something at an angle...one side of the hood will come up and the other won't. You can really wrap around objects you collide with."

Pedestrians still scatter and get out of your way in *Driver 3*, but now, if you're really determined to nail them, you actually can. The developer isn't sure yet if the game will have blood and gore, though. We do know the vehicular-manslaughter physics won't be true to life. "Real-person impact physics is incredibly complicated," says Edmonson. "We treat how two cars react when they hit each other very realistically. If you drive into a person, however, the way that person reacts is a very



Contaminate



感染拡大
DOT hack
 INFECTION
 Part 1

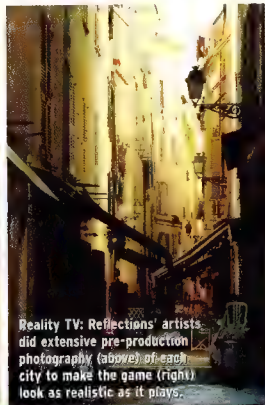


PlayStation 2



TEEN
 Mature Sexual Themes
 Mild Language
 Violence

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'Want to machine-gun a room?'

—Reflections' Martin Edmonson

complex problem because of lots of linked joints. And because it's not a serious part of our game, we don't treat it as realistically."

Please exit your vehicle

Simple math will tell you that if 70 percent of Driver 3 is focused on high-speed chases, the other 30 percent must have you trekking around on foot. That's something that was treated very lightly in the second game. You

could basically get out of the car and wander, and then solve puzzles with a simple button press. But Reflections has really gone to town in the out-of-car missions in Driver 3. You can still nick any old car left around, but now you can jack trucks and boats, too. The action button is sensitive to the location, situation, and mission. It might set a bomb or let rip with a machine gun, or it might just mundanely pick things up or

Reality TV: Reflections' artists did extensive pre-production photography (above) of each city to make the game (right) look as realistic as it plays.

Driver 3's version of Miami is more run-down and realistic than *GTA: Vice City's*.



unlock a door.

But the biggest change and challenge of *Driver 3* involves wandering around the interiors of buildings. You can't barge into every building, of course, but you'll find several key constructions and missions to unlock. We don't want to give too much away.... Let's just say you can expect rooftop chases and airport devastation.

And you'll bring about all this destruction with your arsenal of guns—another addition to the *Driver* formula. Edmonson wants *Driver 3's* gunplay to be more fun than realistic. "Want to machine-gun a room?" he asks. "Sure, why not? Nothing more complex than that. You just

pick up a gun and throw it away when you're done. There are plenty of bad guys around, so you shouldn't struggle finding a Beretta or MAC-10." The guns also fire at unrealistic rates. In real life, one clip on a MAC-10 holds 32 bullets and empties in less than one second, but, argues Edmonson, "Where's the fun in that?" When it comes to the actual havoc your weapons can wreak on environments, the game gets realistic again. "It's on par with the damage you can cause in a car," Edmonson says. So people who like smashing up vehicles and seeing the results can wander around a room with a submachine gun and make the same kind of true-to-life mess.

Road log: If you took a cruise down every road in one direction in *Driver 3*, you'd log exactly 153.1 miles on your odometer. And all three of the game's massive cities cover nearly 30 square miles (*The Getaway* is about a tenth that size). Just one city alone has more than 16,000 buildings.



Eliminate



感染拡大
DOT hack
INFECTION
Part 1



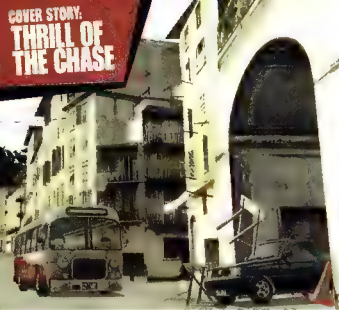
PlayStation 2



Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Language
Violence

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DRIVER STORY: THRILL OF THE CHASE



allow people to do absolutely everything. Otherwise you end up with multistrand stories, which massively increases the workload, because people who go one way will have a completely different story and a different set of cut-scenes.... We want to maintain a strong story that has some flow and meaning to it."

That means *Driver 3* won't deliver the wide-open gameplay options of the *GTA* series, which lets you branch off into free-agent roles. "It's a trade-off thing," says Edmonson. "Do you put all your effort into 100 missions or that same effort into 25 really good ones? We think 25 really good missions is the way to go. I suppose we're doing it more like *The Getaway* than *GTA*, where you had the false feeling that you could do what you wanted, then take a taxi mission or deliver something from A to B. *GTA* was like *Driver 1* really, as that had the multithread missions, but you still had to come back to the key story moments."

Despite the strict order in which you face

missions in *Driver 3*, though, Reflections has created open-ended and novel methods of completing them. "We allow missions to be solved in ways that you or even we haven't thought about," says Edmonson.

A simple example is one early stage in which you must steal a car from the back of a moving truck. All you know is that the truck is going to pick up the stolen vehicle from a compound and then drive away to the docks. Sounds easy, right? But when you pull up to the compound, an angry pack of bad guys jumps out and starts shooting at you. Why not pick a fast car to beat the truck to the compound and then gun down the truck's driver as he comes by? Pull out the dead driver and drive the truck yourself. When you reach the compound, the bad guys will assume you're the legit driver and load your truck with the stolen vehicle. There's no firefight, thank you very much. Mission complete.

And here's another level to rev you up: You must gun down a villain in Stiltsville, an area

Tell us a story

If you didn't like the rigid storyline and linear gameplay of *Driver 2*, too bad—Reflections is sticking with this lack of mission branching in *Driver 3*. "We had an open story line in *Driver 3*, but we ditched it," explains Edmonson, "because it's hard to get a coherent story. It's very difficult to tell a story effectively if you

Crime Wave

"Just like *Grand Theft Auto*" is the phrase you'd most likely hear when someone describes any game with cars, guns, and guys with guns who steal cars. But is

it fair to call *Driver 3* and every other raging road game a *GTA* copycat? We round up the usual suspects and run 'em through our crime-lab computer.



	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Driver 3	The Getaway	True Crime: Streets of L.A.
System(s):	PS2	PS2, PC, Xbox	PS2	PS2, PC, Xbox
Release date:	Oct. 2004	Fall 2003	Oct. 2004	Spring 2003
The hero:	 Tommy Vercetti	 Tommy	 Mark Hammond	 Nick Kane
His beef:	He's a Yankee wiseguys sent south to establish a criminal empire built on drugs, sex, and real estate.	He's an undercover cop infiltrating a car-theft cartel and must jack a record number of cars—basically.	When a mob boss kills his wife and kidnaps his son, this retired gangster goes back into active duty.	Nick's a loose-cannon cop selected for the LAPD's antimob task force.
Jackable vehicles:	 Cars, bikes, trucks, buses, boats, helicopters, and planes.	 Cars, trucks, and boats.	 Cars and double-decker buses (but unlike those in the other games, these are real, licensed vehicles).	 Cars that you can commandeer for official police.
What's it got that the other games don't?	 Vice City offers wildly non-linear gameplay, the ability to snap up real estate, and a real thug-life experience.	 The car-crunching physics here are truly smashing—way more realistic than what's in the other games.	 The game's brutal plot was filmed using real actors before being turned into cut-scenes.	 A human lethal weapon: you spend more time kicking ass kung-fu style than leadfoot driving.
So is it really just like <i>GTA</i>?	Well, yeah: it is <i>GTA</i> .	The linear story here has more in common with <i>Driver 2</i> and <i>The Getaway</i> .	Not at all. It's a very linear, story-driven game set in an accurate rendering of London.	Although you can drive anywhere, as in <i>GTA</i> , the emphasis is more on gunplay and combat.



Play with yourself: Don't expect the splitscreen two-player mode of *Driver 2*. This sequel is for one player only.



of Miami where all the buildings are built on poles in the sea. You chase this guy until he parks up his boat. If you follow him into this little hut and blow away his goons, he'll just take off in another boat, forcing you to chase him down again. Why not bypass his goon-squad and stand outside on the corner while he goes inside his hut? Then you can just shoot out his boat as he boards again. "Or

better still," adds Edmonson, "if you think about it, you can sneak up to his boat and destroy it before he even gets into it. Simply leave some plastic explosives in his boat so when the villain gets in and starts the engine, the whole thing explodes." There, you've just cut out the middleman and the entire second part of the mission.

You'll find so many ways of completing missions in *Driver 3* that Reflections intends to add certain bonuses and Easter eggs. "We are planning on letting players unlock some secrets," Edmonson says, "in terms of hidden cars and driving games, based on clever solutions to particular missions." Of course, the *GTA* series lets you come up with novel ways of solving scenarios, too. And we can rattle off another dozen similarities between *Driver 3* and *GTA*. Ultimately, though, we'd rather just jack a few jalopies and shoot up the town. "Remember, *Driver* was always a back-from-the-pub-with-your-mates, cruise-around-town, pick-up-and-play kind of game," Edmonson says, "and that hasn't changed with *Driver 3*." 🍌



Dominate

hack ranks among the top 9 RPGs for 2003!

DOT **hack** INFECTION Part 1

Taking over the **world** has never been this contagious

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PlayStation 2



Mature Sexual Themes
Mild Language
Violence

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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 its time.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

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 10s, 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**.

Introduction

The holiday gaming deluge is only a memory, but 2003's already out of the gate with some big-name titles...trouble is, some of these potential blockbusters aren't quite making the grade. This month, *EverQuest Online Adventures*, *The Getaway*, *DOAXBV*, and *Devil May Cry 2* all garnered mixed marks—none of

these titles could manage to eke out an award from our reviewers. Still, some truly awesome games will be landing on store shelves, like Sony's excellent action-RPG sequel, *Dark Cloud 2*, and Sammy's rock 'n' roll fighting romp, *Guilty Gear X2*. Oh, and be sure to check out Seanbaby's crappiest month yet!

The Crew



Shane Bettenhausen Reviews Editor

The heavy religious themes of *Xenosaga* and the heavy-metal music of *Guilty Gear X2* combined to transform Shane into a self-styled Rock 'N' Roll messiah for the 21st century. True Metal People unite!

Favorite Genres: RPG, Action, Fighting
Current Faves: *Xenosaga*, *Guilty Gear X2*



Chris Johnston News Editor

CJ spent the holidays in Chicago, bundled up for the cold weather. But his New Year warmed up quite a bit once *DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball* showed up. Maybe he's a little too into that stuff.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Music
Current Fave: *DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball*



Paul Byrnes Associate Editor

Paul won't stop referring to his glasses as "scan visor," sunglasses as "thermal visor," and contact lenses as "combat visor." It's incredibly irritating. When confronted, he rolls into a ball and somersaults away.

Favorite Genres: Everything but sports sims
Current Faves: *Metroid Prime*, *War of the Monsters*



Crispin Boyer Features Editor

Crispin Prime: Cubicle-wall Phazon deposits have made this EGM editor immune to all weapon attacks. His only weakness: a trick knee from that time he totally fell while trying to climb onto the roof of a 7-11.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Metroid Prime*, *Splinter Cell*



Demian Linn Editor-at-Large

To keep up with the torrent of foreign swears in *The Getaway*, Demian's been consulting *Roger's Profanisaurus*, the definitive reference work for British expletives. "Wizard's sleeve" is shockingly bad.

Favorite Genres: Anything requiring "the twitch"
Current Faves: *THPS4*, *NHL 2K3*, *Metroid Fusion*

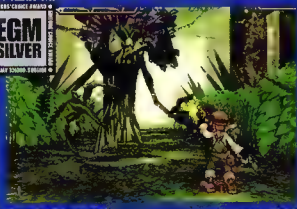


Greg Sewart Previews Editor

Sewart's been seen reading the *Robotech* novelizations recently. You read that right—novelizations based a cartoon. As far as we can tell, no one is forcing him to do this. Could he big a bigger loser?

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Robots
Current Faves: *Lunar Legend*, *Final Fantasy IV*

Game of the Month



Dark Cloud 2

pg. 111

Arguably the prettiest and most inventive game reviewed this month, *Dark Cloud 2* is the only epic RPG you're likely to find where your breaks are built right into the game. Take it easy, do some fishing, invent a better mousetrap. Then, calm and relaxed, go back to thwacking monsters and saving the world.



Greg Ford Assistant Editor

That gentle whimpering heard among the cubes is Ford, as his girlfriend sits 3,000 miles away and his Pats missed the playoffs. But thanks to some fellow editors' compassion and *Mario Sunshine*, he's OK for another month.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Hotel Mario*, *THPS4*, *Vice City*



Dan "Shoe" Hsu Editor-in-Chief

Now that Shoe thinks he's a big-time snowboarder, he can't wait to play the upcoming 2080° (GC). Can life imitate art? So far, he's gotten his real-life spins up to 5° with a 75 percent chance of wipeout.

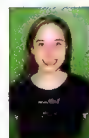
Favorite Genres: Everything
Current Faves: *Panzer Dragoon Orta*, *The Sims*



Mark MacDonald Executive Editor

Due to pending litigation, Mark refuses to comment on his first foray into skateboarding beyond his official statement: "900s are not as easy as *Tony Hawk 4* would have you believe."

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, RPG
Current Faves: *Splinter Cell*, *Zelda: Wind Waker*



Jennifer Tsao Managing Editor

Jennifer was living proof this month that sometimes, when you're role-playing online and you meet an Elven sorceress with cool flowing gloves and long blonde hair, there really is a cute girl on the other end!

Favorite Genres: Action sports, RPG
Current Faves: *EQOA*, *THPS4*, *Icewind Dale II*

Dark Cloud 2



Monica came from the future to kick ass and chew bubblegum—and she's all out of bubblegum.

Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Level 5
Players: 1
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #163
Best Feature: Extensive weapon customization
Worst Feature: Hopelessly jumbled inventory
Website: www.playstation.com



To the experienced console role-playing gamer, this story will be familiar: A rapacious villain threatens to destroy the world. Only you, as the plucky heroes, can stand against him. Magic! Fighting! An epic quest! Yes, it's all here. In a way, this serves *Dark Cloud 2* well: The story's adherence to formula provides a conventional foundation that supports the more original gameplay.

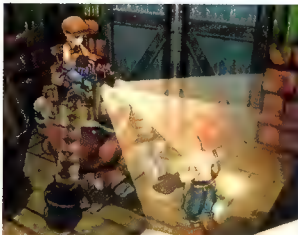
Landing between the "everyone's invited" party systems of traditional RPGs and the solo exploits of *Zelda*-style adventures, *Dark Cloud 2* puts you in control of only two characters: Max, a tow-headed kid with a genius for invention, and Monica, a sorceress girl from the future. Although Max can ride a clockwork battle robot and Monica can transform herself into various enemies and sneak among them, M&M spend most of the game on their own feet, fighting monsters in real-time via a smoothly implemented lock-on battle system.

As one would expect, defeated enemies cough

up gold, items, and experience points. But the experience accrues not to your characters, but to the weapon that delivered the killing blow. When a weapon reaches a new level, it can absorb the essence of an item and improve one of 10 characteristics (damage to the undead, flame damage, and so on). And when those various ratings are high enough, the weapon can be transformed into a more powerful version, complete with a snazzy new appearance. It's a neat system, allowing for ample customization and variety in your arsenal and a goal beyond just leveling up your characters.

While the other consoles have one or two exclusive role-playing games apiece, the PlayStation 2 is a regular RPG frathouse. Well, the newest pledge to Rho Pi Gamma is a shoe-in. With its polished presentation of genre conventions, innovative game mechanics, and cartoony character design, *Dark Cloud 2* will satisfy old-schoolers, new-schoolers, and even pre-schoolers.

This is your trusty battle robot, Steve. Just as your weapons (and fishing pole) do, he gathers his own experience and can be upgraded with new items, inventions, and abilities—which explains why Steve's eyes are so bright that everyone else has to wear shades.

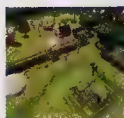


Simply put, it's a rare game indeed that combines convention and innovation this well. Its cartoony heroes and real-time hack 'n' slash combat are reminiscent of Square's superb classics *Secret of Mana* (Super Nintendo) and *Legend of Mana* (PSa), while its experience system and world-building quests spice up the timeworn RPG canon. Of course, *Dark Cloud 2* isn't perfect—the story's occasionally marred by weird tonal incongruities: One villain swings jarringly from comic relief to psychosis and back again, and the main hero's ponderous voice-over monologues never quite work. And the game's impossible-to-organize inventory really should have been subdivided by item type. But these are quibbles. The lack of any challenging puzzles is a much more serious concern. Progress comes at a steady clip, which means you never get stuck, but it also means you never get the exultant "eureka!" of solving a tough riddle. Still, the game delivers an entertaining, whimsical adventure with style to spare. A determined gamer can push through the game in about 30 hours, while a more lackadaisical player might spend twice as long and remain entranced by its many side-quests, including fishing, inventing new items, and masquerading as various monsters to snag unique items. Despite a few flaws, *Dark Cloud 2* is a fun, inventive RPG that truly rewards the time and effort spent playing it. **Paul**

Dungeon crawl-style RPGs tend to be a bit boring, especially when they feature randomly generated levels. Nonetheless, I found myself hooked on *Dark Cloud 2* because of its creative minigames and sub-quests (oh, and its absolutely gorgeous, stylish graphics didn't hurt, either). Fishing, photography, inventing new items, and of course building towns (as in the first *Dark Cloud*) eat up loads of time and successfully alleviate the monotony of slashing away at wave after wave of enemies in the endless dungeons. But even then, being able to switch between characters with unique abilities helps keep things fresh. A very solid action-RPG. **Grog S.**

You can call an RPG lots of things—compelling, cinematic, thought provoking—but rarely addictive. *Dark Cloud 2* is completely, utterly addictive. At its heart, this game is basically a real-time dungeon-hack, but it has tons of variety and gripping gameplay options. When you're off taking on a torrent of terrific-looking foes, you can pop out of the dungeons to explore your town, recruit people to move to new areas, snap pictures to spawn ideas for new inventions, customize your robo-pal Steve, and, best of all, rebuild the world. And that's not all—minigames abound, from fishing to golf and beyond. Yeah, the story is a bit weak, but with gameplay like this, who cares? **Gary**

GEORAMA-RAMA



Dark Cloud 2 features terraforming puzzles that provide an enjoyable, relaxing diversion from murdering monsters. Controlling a construction contraption called Carpenterion, Max can place trees, houses, rivers, and dozens of other features any way he sees fit. Max and Monica scour the dungeons for clues on how they should terraform the present. When all conditions have been met, our heroes travel to the restored future and the story progresses.

VISUALS 9 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 9 REPLAY 5

Devil May Cry 2



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #160
Best Feature: Devilishly tight control
Worst Feature: Abysmally low difficulty
Website: www.capcom.com

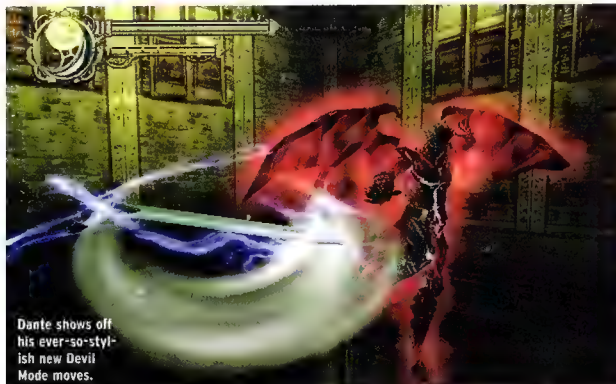
PS2

and-dirty sequel. Instead, a slew of new game-play ideas sweeten the deal, but a few unsettling new problems sour it a bit, too.

The adventure begins when hottie-in-need-of-a-hand Lucia puts in a call for help to Dante's bafflingly named agency, Devil May Cry. Never one to turn down the request of a lovely lady, our hero rushes to the scene. The plot's a bit on the loopy side; it involves a megalomaniacal businessman (who looks a bit like *Tekken's* Heihachi), billions of whacked-out ghouls invading from the Demon World, and an evil skyscraper...with a head. Don't worry about the story, though—concentrate on Dante and Lucia kicking amazing amounts of ass.

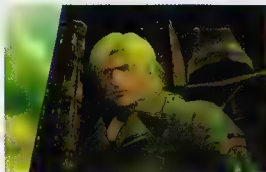
Actually, although Dante and Lucia are both after the same goal, their paths only briefly intersect. In what's definitely one of the game's coolest features, you can choose to play the

It's been just a little over a year since the first *Devil May Cry* infused the survival-horror genre with a healthy dose of good ol' fashionable action, and Dante, the dashing and demonic detective star, already has another case to solve. If you played the first game, you already know that Dante's investigative procedure basically boils down to swinging a big sword, pumping monsters full of lead, and occasionally morphing into a vicious hellspawn. Surprisingly, *DMC2* is not a quick-



Dante shows off his ever-so-stylish new Devil Mode moves.

SECRET FASHIONS



Devils in Diesel

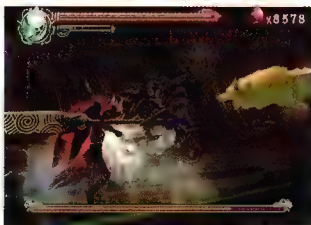
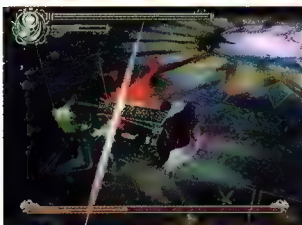
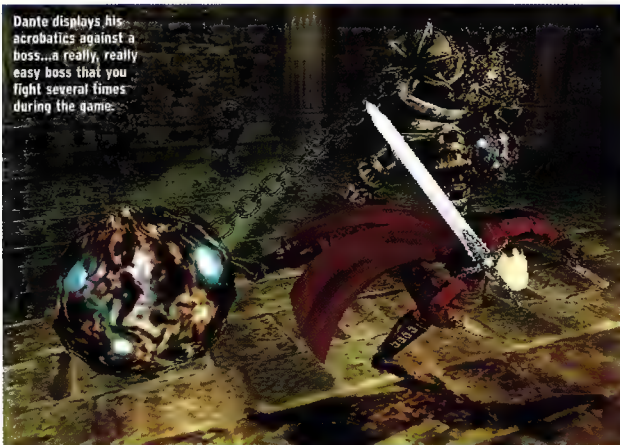
If you finish the game with a sufficiently high Devil Rank (computed by averaging things like how quickly you finish levels, how many Red Orbs you pick up, and how stylishly you dispatch baddies), you'll unlock fetching Diesel jeans outfits for Dante and Lucia. Très chic!



entire quest as either character—just stick the appropriately titled Dante Disc or Lucia Disc in your PS2. Gameplay-wise, they handle similarly, and that isn't a bad thing, since *DMC* offers excellent, perfectly tight control. While Dante wields swords and guns, Lucia cuts loose with dual cutlasses and throwing knives. She's slightly faster and he can dole out heavier damage, but they both command a considerable arsenal of killer combos and acrobatic



Dante displays his acrobatics against a boss...a really, really easy boss that you fight several times during the game.

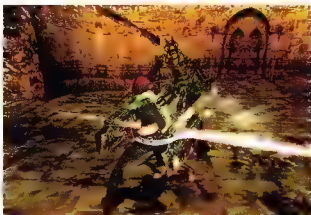
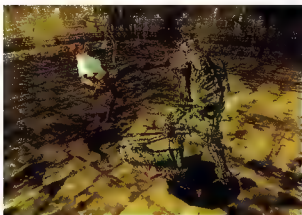


The game is so amazingly easy that you'll assuredly beat it on the first night, no problem.

maneuvers that make fighting foes a thrilling experience. Plus, both characters can truly get in touch with their Satanic sides by transforming into invincible demons for short periods of time. In Devil Mode, you can inflict tremendous damage on foes, move with lightning-fast speed, and even fly, depending on what type of amulet you're wearing (see sidebar).

Like the first *DMC*, this sequel breaks the action into linear, straightforward missions that are about 80 percent brawling and 20 percent

light puzzle-solving. As expected, most stages climax with an impressive boss fight. In fact, several of the game's 18 stages are actually massive boss battles, with very little level to speak of. Since some of the normal stages are also quite short, the entire game with your first character is over quite quickly. You can then throw in the other disc and tackle the story from the other hero's perspective...but that also disappoints, as the games are far too similar. For the most part, Dante and Lucia traverse the



AMULEXICON

EQUIP

FLIGHT **AGILITY**
 Double your speed in Devil Treasure.

HEAT
 Adds fire element to your attack in Devil Treasure.

RECOVERY
 Increases ability to recover vitality in Devil Treasure.

Devil May Accessorize
 Your Devil form does more than just unleash its demonic wrath willy-nilly. By equipping your amulet with different gemstones, you can customize your demonic abilities. Some of the options include flight, super-fast running, elemental attacks, and heating. You can equip three gems at once, so experiment to find the best combinations.

same levels, fight the same bosses (except for the final one), and solve the same puzzles. Realistically, less than 20 percent of each character's game is unique to him/her. It's a squandered opportunity to really do something creative and exciting. Even so, you'll probably still want to play through both discs (it'll only take around 6 to 8 hours to do so).

DMC2 is a short ride, but at least it's a snazzy one. Like its predecessor, it offers stylized, macabre environments straight outta a horror movie, with crumbling castles, apocalyptic cityscapes, and shadowy temples. Everything runs without a hint of slowdown and the animation is awesome, but

DMC2's sultry new heroine, Lucia, keeps pace with trenchcoat-clad Dante. Vicious sabers and throwing knives constitute her impressive killing arsenal.

Devil May Cry 2 (cont.)

The demons attack with tenacious ferocity, but Dante's ready for 'em, with twin pistols and the ability to target two at once.



fans of the first game might notice that the levels seem comparatively low on detail. It's a conscious tradeoff: The levels are now utterly massive, but low on graphical variety. For example, you'll scamper through a sprawling town full of buildings that all look exactly alike.

The overly similar quests and downgraded graphics are minor bums, but what actually hurts *DMC2* the most is that it's unbelievably easy. *DMC1* was a damn hard game, and if you could finish it on Normal mode, you felt like you'd really accomplished something. *DMC2* offers just one difficulty setting, and although it's called Normal we'd classify it as something more like Kindergarten. We're not kidding—the game is so amazingly easy that you'll assuredly beat it on the first night, no problem. Once you beat the game

with both characters, Hard mode is unlocked, but since you can only play that with all the weapons and upgrades you gained on Normal, Hard mode is actually easier than Normal. Truly bizarre. Younger gamers (and those who lack the proper skillz) might like this new, less-menacing direction, but we wanted something a bit meatier.

Devil May Cry 2 can't avoid being compared to its impressive predecessor, and in the end, it doesn't exactly measure up. Sure, you'll still have an enjoyable, bloody romp with it. Just don't expect to be challenged at all, or to dig the laughable plot. Come instead for the visceral, jaw-dropping combat and the smooth control. It's a fun time while it lasts, but you won't linger much once it's over. Hopefully, Dante's next case will be more substantial.

Devil Mode plays a much larger role in *DMC2* than it did in the first game. You'll need to switch into your demonic form in order to fly, run quickly, or generally kick the living bejeesus out of everything onscreen. Lucia's Devil Mode isn't quite as strong, but her Devil gauge fills up very quickly.



I'd be lying if I said that *DMC2* didn't let me down. Don't get me wrong—you still should play it, but fans of the first will be disappointed. *DMC1* was a smashing debut, and a sequel that built upon that solid foundation should have been a big improvement, but something just feels wrong here. First, the lame-o difficulty (the first game was probably too hard, but come on, I've played through *Rugrats* games) means that you'll blow through it in a night. Second, the Dante and Lucia games are just too similar. Sure, she gets two exclusive swimming stages and a different end boss, but they're basically the same game. Oh, and the plot's a big puddle of nonsense that would be skippable if not for the chance to hear the line "Devils never cry" three separate times during the game. Events unfold in a slapdash, thrown-together manner that rarely makes logical sense. Even with all these problems, the game still manages to succeed based largely on gameplay alone. **You simply can't find better swordplay in any other action/adventure game.** The combo system is tough to master and extremely rewarding—you'll want to replay the stages until you can routinely dish out 20-hit "Showtime" combos. And most of the boss encounters, while repetitive, fill the screen with titanic, nasty beasts that are a blast to bring down. It's an awesome rental that'll rock your weekend, but buy it and you may be left feeling a tinge unfulfilled.

Shane

Dante definitely retains his crown as the most stylish badass in gaming today; his two-handed gunplay and *Crouching Tiger* acrobatics are so cool, it's often a thrill just being behind the controller (not cool enough to convince me to buy a pair of Diesel jeans, but cool). Too bad the game around him can't match the same level of excitement. The story is awful, enemies and bosses lack imagination, and you won't find anything worth calling a "puzzle." Slash-slash-slash or endless blasting is as deep as it gets; real technique is rarely necessary or useful, even on the Hard setting. ***DMC1* is solid as an easy, mindless action game,** but as a big fan of the original, I can't help feeling disappointed.

Mark

The good news first: *DMC2* is just as fast and stylish as the original. Dante's new moves don't add too dramatically to the gameplay, but they're pretty satisfying to execute nonetheless—after your first wall-walk, you'll be a believer. The new character, though, steals the show. Lucia's moves are completely out of hand, and I'm tempted to say she's even cooler than Dante. There's some bad news, though, like the glaringly slack difficulty. It's ridiculous—you'll kill some bosses before you realize they're dead. The janky targeting system sometimes adds some challenge, but that's a whole other story. *DMC1* is fun in spite of these things; but it's not as intense as *DMC1*.

Michael

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SURVIVAL BOREDOM



Bloody Mansion

You unlock this survival minigame by finishing the Normal game with both characters. It's a harrowing tower packed with hundreds upon hundreds of floors teeming with foes from the game. What kind of reward awaits the hardcore who make it to the end? Uh, check back next month...our hands starting cramping up on floor 702.



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EVERYONE



Violence

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Everblue 2



Publisher: **Capcom**
 Developer: **Arika**
 Players: **One**
 Also On: **None**
 Could Use: **A Leviathan spell**
 Website: **www.capcom.com**

Best Feature: Friendly gameplay
Worst Feature: Can get boring

I'm certain I can write whatever I want here since there's no way *Everblue 2* is on any gamer's radar, and just about zero of you are reading this review. This scuba diving RPG is so niche, I'd be surprised if it's piqued anyone's interest. You won't find any spells, weapons, or epic "save the [blank] from the evil [blank]" story lines here—just sunshine, clear water, colorful sea life, and nearby villagers who constantly send you on quests to salvage stuff from sunken vessels. Sound interesting? Sure is. Fun? Well, I literally fell asleep 15 minutes into my first "exciting" mission of taking pictures of fish, so that should tell you something. But stick with it, and you may find yourself inexplicably drawn in despite the lack of explosions, guts, and bullets. Whether it's a new area to explore, a slight twist in the plot, better equipment to buy, or all the things you can collect (for yourself or the islanders), the game gives you just enough reason to keep on diving. It's not for everyone, but this friendly, laid-back, and unique experience won't give you the bends. **Shoe**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
 6 5 8 2

P.T.O. IV: Pacific Theater of Operations



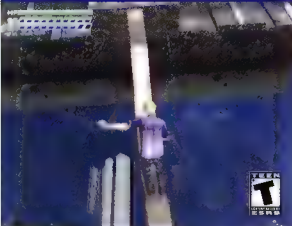
Publisher: **Koei**
 Developer: **Koei**
 Players: **One**
 Also On: **None**
 Also Supports: **The Atlantic**
 Website: **www.koelgames.com**

Best Feature: Tons of depth...
Worst Feature: ...except in the weak battle system

Koei returns to the Pacific theater, allowing you to command the WWII navy of one of four countries (Britain, Germany, Japan, or the United States) and deploy ships on a global scale. The sheer amount of control you have is impressive; admiral admirals can manage every aspect of the war at sea, from setting large-scale strategic goals and research agendas to designing new ships from scratch. Sadly, the lousy in-game tutorial means you'll spend hours just figuring out how to do all the works. *P.T.O. IV's* problem isn't its daunting complexity, though—the menu and setup are convoluted, but the game itself is too easy. The actual battles are ridiculously simple when compared to the well-developed strategy phase. You're stuck commanding entire fleets with three possible actions—moving, picking a target, or launching aircraft. With so little control, most battles become a matter of who has the most ships, and careful planning (and spying) wins most engagements before they even start. Still, there's a lot of depth here for hardcore strategy fans willing to wade through the shallow end. **Dave**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
 6 4 6 8

Disaster Report



Publisher: **Agetec**
 Developer: **Irem**
 Players: **1**
 Also On: **None**
 Featured In: **EGM #160**
Best Feature: Wardrobe customization
Worst Feature: Pervasive slowdown
 Website: **www.agetec.com**

On Keith's first day as a reporter, a huge earthquake strikes, and aftershocks rack the unstable man-made island on which Capital City rests. Can Keith get out of the city alive? Can he get out with a new girlfriend, a snazzy mismatched outfit, and the scoop on the disaster? Yes. Yes, he can. Despite its survival-horror classification, *Disaster Report* plays nothing like *Resident Evil*. With just one exception, Keith progresses by finding a path to the next area, rather than by solving puzzles or defeating enemies. He dodges falling buildings, helps fellow survivors, and crosses chasms on top of fallen debris. While the terra infirma premise works well at first, the concept loses its luster when it becomes clear what limited threats gravity alone can offer: Keith falls to his death, or heavy things fall on him. That's it. At least some Japanese quaintness provides unexpected fun: Savor the sheer pointlessness of collecting compasses and finding hats, sunglasses, and gloves. **Be warned that the game doesn't have frequent slowdown so much as it has infrequent bursts of normal speed.** And although it has seven endings, they're delivered by flavorless text only, virtually eliminating any replay incentive. A group of friends with the right temperament can appreciate *Disaster Report* as they would a *Bmovie*, enjoying its stilted dialogue and bad voice acting, picking up a few inside jokes, and after a while, forgetting it entirely. **Paul**

I was really looking forward to *DR* and its captivating, earthquake-ravaged-city concept. Unfortunately, this great premise serves only as a shell around a mediocre game. Each exhilarating, cinematic moment (like dodging falling skyscraper pieces) is offset by the slow character and camera movement. Any sense of satisfaction achieved by completing a tricky objective is doused by the immediate need to find another water source to remain hydrated (nothing wrong with the idea, except this guy can't run for five minutes without needing a fill-up). While I enjoyed playing through the game, its excellent concept demanded better execution. **G.Ford**

With a slightly bigger budget, a lot less slowdown, and better dialogue, *Disaster Report* would be a great game. As is, it's just a good survival-horror game without the horror. The island-city-rocked-by-constant-earthquakes setting is a perfect tension-builder, and the gameplay is solid. But *Report's* problems lie in little details, like the simplistic graphics and near-constant slowdown. The story remains a fine line between sappy melodrama and cheesiness, all made worse by stunted voice acting and the awkward translation. Also, dramatic moments are often left silent—music would've added a lot to the uneasy atmosphere. *Report* is a tremor in a genre that needs a good quake. **CJ**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
 6 5 8 4

Galerians: Ash



Publisher: **Sammy Studios**
 Developer: **Polygon Magic**
 Players: **1**
 Also On: **None**
 Sequel To: **Galerians (PS3)**
Best Feature: Interesting combat system
Worst Feature: Overly confusing
 Website: **www.sammy-studios.com**

I never played the first *Galerians* (released a few years ago for PS3), so I found myself completely lost at the beginning of *Ash*. The game assumes that you're familiar with the first installment and know how everything works in the *Galerians* universe, which makes it difficult for a first-time player to get up to speed. Its story and setup are good, but also very similar to the stereotypical, high-concept "screw your own head" plots of Japanese anime hits like *Akira* and *Serial Experiments Lain*—only the narrative and characters in *Ash* aren't as interesting or well-developed. Add to that the game's short length (less than eight hours), and you're left feeling as if you've read only the middle chapters of a longer story. Gameplay is a unique cross between survival-horror and RPG, but—like the story—it isn't fully fleshed out, so it becomes tiresome quickly. Graphically, *Ash* has some nice touches, but ultimately the colorful visuals don't match the dark and gritty story. In addition, characters look simple and overly clean, as though they've just stepped out of the shower even though they're slogging through enemy-infested corridors. Stirring the visual cauldron even more is a head-ache-inducing camera that moves spasmodically with every little adjustment in your direction. Chances are good that if you enjoyed the first *Galerians* (anyone...anyone?), you'll like *Ash*; if not, you may want to leave this as a rental. **CJ**

Friends watching me play this game quickly dubbed it *Galerians: Ass*, but I wouldn't go that far; it's just mediocre. Call it *Galerians: Ehh*. For such a short game, *Ash* has you spending too much time running back and forth through the same or similar boring hallways and labs, fighting the same dull enemies. Yawn. Progression feels arbitrary, too; it's often just a matter of guessing the right person to talk to. At one point you can see an important key, but you can't pick it up until the appointed time. As with the first game, what I do like about *Ash* is the futuristic world (ripped out of the movie *Akira*) and interesting battle system. But it's still a rental at best, even for fans of the original. **Mark**

Ash picks up exactly where its predecessor left off. The first game's drug-addicted hero, psychotic villains, and grim setting all return in fine style. This bleak tale of a genocidal supercomputer and her genetically engineered progeny is borrowed wholesale from anime movies like *Akira* and *Metropolis*, but it is compelling nonetheless. Also, the gripping story line is the only reason to struggle with a frustrating and monotonous combat system, to wander in repetitive environments, and to suffer through predictable gameplay. In fact, after a few hours, all pretense of a viable game world dissolves—you're not searching for a key or computer terminal, but in fact for the next cinema. **Paul**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
 6 5 5 2

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EverQuest Online Adventures



Publisher: Sony Online Ent. 
Developer: Sony Online Ent.
Players: Massively Multiplayer
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #62
Best Feature: Expansive persistent online world
Worst Feature: Clunky targeting system
Website: everquestonlineadventures.station.sony.com

Admit it: You're curious. Despite the fact that you've probably laughed somewhat mockingly at all those sad, old PC geezers whose lives got sucked up by the original *EverQuest*, you're still more than a bit curious to see what all the fuss is about. The good news is that *EverQuest Online Adventures* for PS2 offers many features that made the original *EQ* so compelling on PC. The bad news is that it remains to be seen how a vital element—the online community—is going to develop. If you're looking for online RPG action on your PS2, the game is definitely worth a look. But *EverQuest Online Adventures* is only a first step in the evolution of massively multiplayer online role-playing games geared at a console audience.

The basic game structure that was so addictive on PC carries over here. You create



a character, choosing from a variety of races and classes. Then you take that character out into the persistent online world of Tunaria. After a few initial quests, which teach you fundamental skills and earn you basic equip-



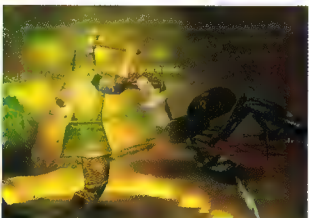
GET A KEYBOARD

EverQuest's control scheme has been completely customized for PS2. Technically, you need only your Dual Shock controller. In practice, however, you'll find that you absolutely need a USB keyboard. Communication with other players is vital in this game. When you're playing with a group (which is most of the time), you need to tell your teammates that you're running low on spells or that a hill giant has just attacked you and they should be prepared. Yes, you can do all this with the controller, but with the many different kinds of messages you need to convey, it's inevitable that lots of them are going to be buried in submenu after submenu. Targeting can be difficult, too. Pressing the shoulder buttons cycles through everything in your visual range. If you know what you want to hit, it's clunky to have to click repeatedly until you reach your target. Getting a keyboard won't change that, but it'll still make the game easier and more fun.

ment, you'll need to form a group with other players. Together, you'll venture forth into the world to fight greater monsters and complete tougher quests to earn all-valuable experience points. Experience helps you gain levels, higher stats, better skills, and cooler items—and as you become more powerful, you can adventure into more challenging areas of the vast world, where you'll encounter some truly stunning beasts. The formula is simple but seductive—especially if you have anything remotely resembling an acquisitive nature. Every time you obtain a



Sure, the graphics might be a bit blah, but these spell effects look awesome in the midst of battle.



new spell or piece of armor, it feels like a hugely satisfying accomplishment. But moments later, you'll find yourself looking for your next score, and you'll need to kill bigger and meaner baddies to satisfy your hunger.

The game takes place in the same world as on PC, but *EQOA* is set 500 years earlier so certain geography and names are different. As on PC, though, the scope of the world is truly awesome. You can wander for hours and hours and continue to set foot on new, unfamiliar ground. Ranging from snowy tundra to desert dunes, the environments beckon you to wander. Though you'll encounter many of the same basic types of monsters (bears,

You can wander for hours and hours and continue to set foot on new, unfamiliar ground.

lions, spiders, beetles, and the like), it's the new and unexpected beasts (like the gangrenous zombie or underwater red dragon ee) that make exploration intoxicating. You really can immerse yourself in the world and pretend that you're a ranger tracking his foes through hostile territory or a wizard seeking arcane knowledge in the dark corners of the world. Because your world map gives you only a rough lay of the land, you'll have to

rely on fellow travelers or your own experience to really get to know your way around. In this way, *EQOA* delivers an unparalleled gaming experience for the true *Dungeons & Dragons* geek, where you can roleplay (with real people, no less!) to your heart's content.

EverQuest Online Adventures is not for dilettantes, however. You can't just log on now and then to kick a little dragon butt when and where you choose. To battle the



RUN, DON'T WALK

Transportation from zone to zone in Tunaria is among the biggest hurdles players will face at the beginning of *EQOA*. There is an in-game transport system, with coachmen who will get you around fast. Problem is you have to register first in any town you wish to visit, so at some point, unless you have a friendly high-level Shaman willing to teleport you, you're going to have to hoof it to the next town over. The road is usually long, dangerous, and downright annoying.



EverQuest Online Adventures (cont.)

A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS



If you're looking for a solo gaming experience, *EverQuest Online Adventures*, quite honestly, is not for you. Without a group of courteous co-conspirators at your level, on your server, interested in doing the same things you are, and agreeing with your group tactics, the game is almost impossible to play. Pretty much every class needs a complement of other skills to survive in Tunaria. Wizards and clerics need fighters to soak up damage while they cast their spells. Warriors need healers and spellcasters to deal out the heavy-duty damage that earthy weapons can't. The beta server we tested was pretty lightly populated, so it was frequently difficult to find a good group—and that could prove a fatal flaw if *EQOA* doesn't achieve a critical mass of players.

most difficult beasts, first you need to be powerful enough, which won't happen for your first several weeks or even months of play. Next, you'll have to gather a party of like-minded adventurers, travel to and locate the dragon's secret lair, then concoct elaborate tactics to win the battle. It's a large and complex game world, and you can't go it alone. Even with a solid crew, you and your buddies might find yourselves outmatched until you perfect your communication and combat strategy. Once that happens, the real fun begins.

On PC, *EverQuest* has a highly developed online community, so you rarely lack the necessary companionship. Because the PS2 online edition is just developing, it's tough to say whether *EQOA* will attract enough players to keep the world adequately populated. Plus, Sony Online Entertainment says it is planning on charging a monthly fee to play the game, which could make some console gamers reluctant to join the party. Let's hope enough gamers are willing to try something new; then this game could easily burgeon into a rival to its PC sibling.

Baddies like this drake (below) are fierce in combat, and their presence can mean that an even bigger, nastier dragon lurks somewhere nearby. Pursuing any dragon is a difficult but worthwhile endeavor, because they usually hoard treasure chests brimming with piles of gold and excellent loot.



I was your typical *EverQuest* addict when the PC version came out. I could play for hours, days, or even entire weekends, breaking only for the odd meal here and there—as long as I had a good group going and some fun areas to explore. With *EQOA*, I initially had a little more trouble getting immersed. Finding a group was difficult because there weren't enough players on the server. Plus, the starting quests were too complicated, and the stupidly vague quest log gave no guidance as to how to complete them. (If I hadn't been reviewing the game, for all I know I might have given up without ever getting to the fun parts.) But **perseverance does pay off**. Each quest gives you a ton of experience (one earned me almost a whole level) and useful equipment that'll get you going for your first few levels. Plus, when you do find good people to play with, you'll make friends who can accompany you out into the wilds and dungeons at later levels. When I traveled to other areas of the world (In stealth, as I was still a lowly level-10 wizard), I spied some incredible creatures that I longed to revisit at a higher level to fight. I'll concede that the graphics won't knock your socks off, but *EverQuest* has always been more about multiplayer battle dynamics than cutting-edge graphics. The basic mechanics are there, and with the right community development, the game could be as crazily addictive as it is on PC.

Jennifer

On the one hand, cramming this PC megahit so adroitly into the PS2 deserves praise. On the other hand, the PC version can range from wildly addictive to unbearably boring, depending on whom you ask. This version does look better than the original...but that's not saying much, as it still looks decidedly sub-PS2 quality. Simple visuals help to eliminate loading, but I'm not sure it was a worthy sacrifice. Combine the ugly graphics with the shallow and clumsy quest system and you have something I'd call an acquired taste. **If the social aspect of playing with thousands of other humans can outweigh nasty presentation in your mind, you're in luck.** If not, wait for *FFXI*.

Joe R.

Bringing massively multiplayer role-playing to the PS2 masses is a noble mission, but I don't think *EQ* is the right vehicle to convert gamers to online questing—the fundamental gameplay just isn't fun enough. That said, **if you come into *Online Adventures* with the right expectations you won't be terribly disappointed.** The thrill of entering a gargantuan online realm teaming with other real players, monsters to slay, and treasures to win will have you buzzin' for the first few play sessions. It's when you stand back and think about the tacky, clunky graphics and the intrinsically repugnant battle system that you realize what's wrong here—and what another MMORPG needs to do right.

Shane



VISUALS 3 SOUND 6 INGENUITY 7 REPLAY 9

IT'S AN ALL-NEW DICE DUELING GAME!



Dueling will never be the same! In *Dungeon Dice Monsters*, the newest addition to the Yu-Gi-Oh! universe, collect and duel with dice inscribed with mystical powers, magical traps and powerful monsters. Can you defeat the scheming creator of *Dungeon Dice Monsters*, Duke Devlin, and become the ultimate dice duelist?

THE ORIGINAL DUNGEON DICE MONSTERS

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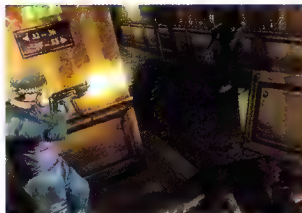
GAME BOY ADVANCE



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The Getaway

Frank and company decide they want the insurance money on the cruiser *now!*



You won't be limited to handguns in *The Getaway*. Shotguns, AK-47s, and others are plentiful.



Publisher: Sony CEA
Developer: Team Soho
Players: 1
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #162
Best Feature: An excellent story
Worst Feature: Flow is interrupted by "realism"
Website: thegatewayplaystation.com



Grand Theft Auto III made games resembling gangster flicks chic, but *The Getaway* blurs the line between the two mediums like no title before it. This is an interactive movie, but not in the way those crappy full-motion-video games of yesteryear were. (Survivors of systems like the Sega CD and the early PS1 days know what we're talking about.) *The Getaway* has plenty of great gameplay to go along with the superbly acted cut-scenes and top-notch plot.

It's a plot movie director Guy Ritchie (*Lock,*



Stack & Two Smoking Barrels, Snatch) would be proud of, in fact. You play as retired gangster Mark Hammond, who gets pulled back into "the life" when mob boss Charlie Jolson frames him for his wife's murder and kidnaps

his son. To get his kid back, Mark's forced to act as Charlie's errand boy. Jolson has him doing everything from stealing crank to torching buildings to doing hits on rival gangs. It's a very basic beginning to what becomes an involved story with more than a few twists toward the end.

In keeping with the interactive-movie theme, *The Getaway* features no onscreen indicators to remind you you're playing a videogame. The developers decided to go for total immersion in the game world. Instead, visual cues give away what's happening onscreen. The amount of blood on Mark's clothes acts as your damage meter. You get your driving directions by paying attention to your car's turn signals (hazard lights indicate

SAY WHAT?

They say the United States and England are two countries separated by a common language. True dat. Since the game's set in London, here's a glossary of some words you'll hear over and over in *The Getaway*, translated by *Official PlayStation Magazine's* John "I'm English!" Davison. You'll thank us later.

Bird	Chick, dame, broad, skirt...you know, a girl
Claret	Blood
The Filth	The fuzz, the man, the cops, the police
Fag	Cigarette
Yardies	A Jamaican gang
Topper	Assassin
Tart	Prostitute

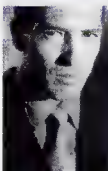


If you get into a gunfight on the streets, don't forget to use stopped cars as cover.

MAIN MEN

Mark Hammond

In the first half of *The Getaway*, you play as Mark Hammond as he runs errands for mob boss Charlie Jolson in order to retrieve his kid-napped son.



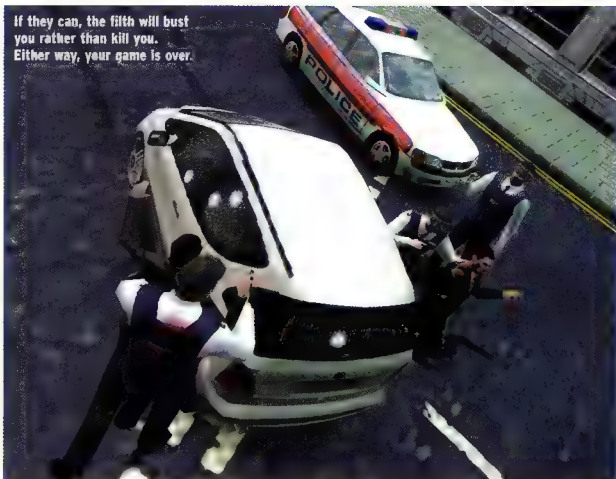
Frank Carter

In the second half, you take the roll of renegade cop Frank Carter (recently taken off the force), and follow events that run parallel to Mark Hammond's story line.

you've arrived). You don't even get a crosshair in the shooting bits. It's very high-concept for an action game.

In fact, it's a bit too high-concept for its own good. Once the novelty of this clean screen wears off, you'll find yourself wishing for a better idea of just how much more punishment Mark can take before he collapses. And a big arrow pointing to your final driving destination (like *Crazy Taxi*) would be great, considering the current direction system often leaves you driving blindly down streets, hitting dead ends,

If they can, the filth will bust you rather than kill you. Either way, your game is over.



The Getaway's hyper-realistic visuals really put Grand Theft Auto: Vice City's graphics to shame.

doubling back on yourself, and generally getting into all sorts of trouble.

But you can't deny how cool it all looks. *The Getaway's* hyper-realistic visuals really put *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City's* to shame. The cars look real, London looks superb, and the people are quite detailed. So what if all you ever do is mow them down?

The Getaway also gives *Grand Theft Auto* a run for its money in terms of violence. It's shocking how much blood you'll see in this game—almost always spilled by your own hands. One of our favorite gory scenes plays out thus: Charlie's nephew gets boosted from jail and arrives at his hideout just in time to interrogate a Triad prisoner. Except interroga-



LEAN ON ME

Since there's no such thing as a health pick-up in *The Getaway* (for realism's sake, you understand), the only way to heal Mark or Frank when they get shot up is to find a nice quiet place and lean against the wall for a few minutes. It's an interesting idea, but man is it boring—not to mention making you a prime target during a gunfight. Those thugs have absolutely no manners.



As you can probably tell, most of your time will be spent on the mean streets of London, so polish those driving skills early in the game.

The Getaway (cont.)

THE GETAWAY VS. VICE CITY

Here's a quick comparison of these two trailblazing gangster games.

Category	The Getaway	GTA: Vice City
Missions	24	100+
Licensed cars	Yep—56	Nope
Helicopters	Nope	Yep
Motorbikes	Nope	Yep
Boats	Nope	Yep
Strip Club	Yep	Yep
Nudity	Nope	Nope
Hot Chick	Yep—assassin	Yep—amateur porn star
Graphics	Very realistic	Very cartoony
Profanity	F*** yeah!	Yep, but not as much

tion entails stringing the poor guy up, wiring him, and electrocuting him over and over again. Plus, the thugs take turns beating on him in the meantime (they must be wearing rubber gloves).

Anyway, when the prisoner's nothing but a bloody mess, it becomes Mark's job to drive him back to the Triad's turf and dump him. Needless to say, it's a dangerous job. Especially considering that the mobsters take the bloody corpse into the passenger seat next to you. Very gruesome. It almost makes you feel guilty just watching it.

And it's stuff like that that will hold your interest in *The Getaway*, even if you're one of the folks who finds the controls a bit frustrating, or navigating the London streets with those tiny hazard lights a little confusing. The absolute disregard for what's normally

deemed acceptable in a videogame (just count the amount of times you hear "f***") without being totally pointless (see *BMX XXX*) is what makes this the next step in gaming's evolution from kids' stuff to legitimate grown-up entertainment.



Take hostages to use as a human shield. It's not moral, but it's practical.



Remember the realism factor in *The Getaway*. If your car rolls or takes a lot of gunfire, Mark or Frank will take damage. And if your car happens to catch fire while you're in it, then just bend over and kiss your ass goodbye, 'cause there ain't no way you're surviving that one.



If you're planning to pick up *The Getaway*, you need to understand one thing: This isn't meant to be a *Grand Theft Auto* clone. *The Getaway* is very purposefully linear, since it's supposed to play like an interactive movie. You have specific places to go to in each mission, and usually a time limit to get there. If you can accept that, then you'll have a really good time with this game. And if you're a fan of films like *Lack, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch*, you'll feel right at home with this twisted tale. The visuals are truly stunning, offering lifelike re-creations of London (both exterior and interior). Control-wise, *The Getaway* is decent, though the main characters move a bit slowly for my tastes, and the game is too unforgiving if you take a wrong turn or get into a situation where you're grossly outnumbered. But hey, the goal here is to accurately mimic real life, so I suppose that's to be expected—though, the effort to make *The Getaway* so lifelike is what hurts it the most. The lack of a very clear direction indicator while you're driving leads to aimless zigzagging around London as you frantically try to reach your intended destination on time. And no sign of how much damage your character has sustained in the shoot-out sections means you'll often spend too much time leaning against walls to heal. Still a great game, but it's in need of some refining.

Greg S.

Guy Ritchie had better be getting royalties. *The Getaway* borrows heavily from the director's South London gangster flicks *Lack, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch*—even down to some of the characters (main villain Johnson is a ringer for *Lack, Stock's* "Hatchet" Harry). At its best, *The Getaway* comes as close as any game ever has to feeling like a movie. It's gritty, shockingly violent (it's so banned in Australia), and the lack of any onscreen health/ammo indicators increases the immersion factor. Unfortunately, the game is deeply flawed: The controls, aiming system, and camera all have major problems, and the trial-and-error missions are often more frustrating than fun.

Demian

Mmm... I love the way the cars control here. It's something I wasn't expecting, and the intrinsic driving differences between a Lexus SC430 and a London taxi are quite pronounced. Often, I would purposely put around just to enjoy the way a particularly cool car peels out and takes corners. It's a shame that the on-foot parts don't have the same classy control. It took me ages to get used to the characters' slow and purposeful gait, and even longer to start nailing the combat. That said, it's these areas that really push the story along, and the tension is sustained well throughout. Stick with it and you'll actually care about Hammond in the end.

John D.

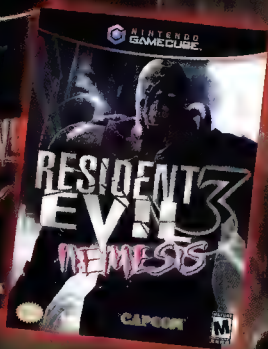
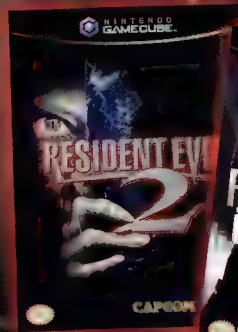
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MATURE



Blood and Gore
Violence

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Publisher: Sammy Studios
Developer: ARC System Works
Players: 1-2
Also On: None
Craziest Move: False Roman Cancel
Best Feature: Insanely smooth graphics
Worst Feature: Steep learning curve
Website: www.sammystudios.com

The *Guilty Gear* series is an anomaly—it's an old-school, 2D fighting-game franchise that isn't from Capcom or SNK...and it's good. I love to see this kind of addictive, primal gameplay carry on nearly a decade after the advent of 3D brawlers like *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter*. It's wickedly fun, blending the stylish weapon-based feel of *Samurai Shodown* with *Marvel vs. Capcom*'s off-the-wall, hyperactive insanity. And, while newcomers can enjoy its quick thrills, serious players can master attack reversals, reverse reversals, fake-out moves, even fake fake-out moves—this game is deep. Honing your skills enough to actually pull off these moves takes dedication, and the steep learning curve isn't for everyone. **But true fighting fans will love every second of it.** Amazing visuals match the impressive gameplay perfectly. You've never seen smoother animation or cooler character designs on a PS2 fighter—this game looks spectacular. One caveat: Depending on your tastes, GGX2's pervasive heavy-metal cheesiness might negatively influence your opinion of the game. With characters named after *Adolf*, *Shane*, and *Snuff 'Nuff*, plus a blistering butt-rock soundtrack, I was inspired to break out the Manowar hair-metal records in the off hours...but some gamers might find it too schlocky. Ultimately, with stellar visuals, tight gameplay, and a bevy of options, GGX2 is a no-brainer purchase for fighting fans.

Shane

Most people either love or hate *Guilty Gear* games. I happen to be in the first category. I dig it whacked-out, beautifully animated action. GGX2 continues this grand tradition, so expect dizzying, high-flying combat, outlandish instant-kill special moves, and, hands down, some of the coolest 2D game artwork ever. The characters in *Guilty Gear* have always been known as the fighting genre's most detailed, and the newcomers here are the raddest yet. When all is said and done, though, GGX2 is a serious, skill-based fighter with a rough entry barrier. Still, if you've got your 2D chops—or are interested in developing some—then check this out.

Miguel

Old-school fighting stands proud as one of the final bastions of the ever-dwindling 2D gaming world. In this genre dominated by Capcom, the *Guilty Gear* series shatters expectations by offering fast, twitchy gameplay and superior graphics. Nearly as sharp and detailed as the characters in an anime movie, X2's fighters spring to life with fluid visuals that put *Street Fighter III's* to shame. The gameplay's just as smooth—the action never chugs, keeping a furious pace throughout. X2 improves upon its predecessor (*Guilty Gear X*) by adding tough Mission modes, a slick-looking Story mode, and a multitude of customizable options. Fighting fans, get this now.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	7	8



Publisher: THQ
Developer: Anchor
Players: Two-player matchups
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #353
Best Feature: Two-player matchups
Worst Feature: Dull one-player modes
Website: www.thq.com

Let's just say anything-goes contact sports like the Ultimate Fighting Championship are as American as a backyard wrestler falling through a table covered with apple pies, behold the *Pride Fighting Championships*, a Japanese blood sport that outbrutalizes the U.S.A.'s UFC. So, unless you're a connoisseur of pay-per-view violence, this game won't lure you with its cast of unknown brawlers, half of whom look like the same thick-necked dude with varying amounts of body hair. Instead, you'll need a prerequisite interest in *Pride*'s particular breed of pro wrestling: 80 percent of the battle is spent locked in a grapple on the blood-smeared ring floor, with each warrior keying in countermeasures and submission holds designed to make the other guy wuss out. But, despite gameplay that looks like men spooning, *Pride* delivers a deep experience. You get unique moves not just for every warrior but for every stance and floor position, and it's all fairly easy to get the knack of—no need to memorize long chains of button jobs here. Unfortunately, the selection of one-player modes isn't as strong as the fighting engine. I got tired of battling through the ladder of repetitive muscleheads. The game gets gripping only when you grapple with another human. Matches can end in less than five seconds when you take out a newbie, but skilled players can last a while, rolling back and forth through reversals and counter-reversals.

Crispin

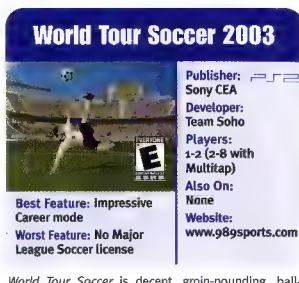
At first, I was really into *Pride*. The different fighting styles used by the brawlers are readily apparent, and understanding each fighter's strength is the key to winning a match (i.e., don't get into a grapple if you're beat at kickboxing; don't try fistfighting if you're best at throws and holds). But, once you learn the styles and understand the simple reversal system, *Pride* doesn't have very long legs. I found myself losing interest quickly. Maybe a Career mode would have helped matters, but either way, *Pride* is a bit too one-dimensional for most fighting fans. The bloodthirsty UFC crowd might find something to like here, though.

Greg S.

Frankly, I much prefer the deadly sin of pride to *Pride* the fighting game. Here, you'll find uninspired 3D brawling wherein grown men kick each other in the face and seek victory by knockout or submission. In an odd nod to realism, bouts often conclude in less time than it takes to show the introductory movies. The fighting engine is rather uneven—the plastic-looking fighters perform intricate and well-animated throws, tosses, and stomps, but when two combatants grapple on the mat, their animations become stilted and jerky, as if under all that shiny plastic was a mix of wires and bad programming. Ultimately, *Pride* delivers an unexciting, average brawling experience.

Greg O.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
5	5	5	7



Best Feature: Impressive Career mode
Worst Feature: No Major League Soccer license

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Team Soho
Players: 1-2 (2-8 with Multiplay)
Also On: None
Website: www.989sports.com

World Tour Soccer is decent, grain-pounding, ball-heading soccer fare for those of you disposed toward that kind of thing. I like soccer, but I like it with the backdrop of international flair and drama that EA's *FIFA* so lovingly re-creates. *WTS 2003* lacks the Major League Soccer license, which means it lacks authenticity. Unless you're a devout fan who has memorized rosters, negotiating the imposing mass of made-up teams and anonymous players is tricky. Gameplay is pleasing enough, if a bit sparse on the simulation aspects of the sport. **Anyone turned off by FIFA's deliberate pace and complex controls might find an approachable bopper here—controls are responsive and the action is more akin to hockey than soccer. Plus, a meaty Career mode offsets the light gameplay. Here, you can start as a small school club and try to work through the professional ranks. It's similar to what some other games offer, but it mixes in a logical progression of different events on the road to the championship. Don't expect to lose sleep over this one, but it's one of Sony's most competitive sports games in a while.**

Dan L.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	5	5	6



Best Feature: Sassy robots aplenty
Worst Feature: Uninspired combat

Publisher: 3do
Developer: Blitz Games
Players: 1-4
Also On: None
Best For: Young tykes
Website: www.3do.com

The egalitarian sentiments expressed in *Cubix Robots For Everyone: Showdown* are admirable but misplaced. The automatons contained herein would be for everyone, and only if, everyone were under the age of 14. Based on the cartoon of the same name, *Cubix* emerges as a fine kids game; players take the role of spunky heroes Connor or Abby, and seek to restore order to Bubble Town, which has been struck by a wave of malfunctioning robots. Using the robot Cubix, a hero can attack the maladjusted but ever-so-sassy robots, and combat blends elements of skill, luck, and timing. Players must pit strength against weakness, select a combat posture, and employ EPU chips to create special attacks and defensive moves. A spinning wheel determines hits or misses, and perfect timing is the key to winning. **It's fairly mindless and all too easy. Win, and the defeated robot is added to the hero's stable. Lose, and the game forgives you for being dumb.** Simple exploration and block-pushing puzzles round out the gameplay, and graphic solidity and "catch-em-all" elements bolster the package.

Greg O.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	5	5

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EACH CITIZEN REACTS DIFFERENTLY TO EVENTS



GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH UP TO 3 FRIENDS OR
FIGHT TOGETHER AGAINST YOUR OPPRESSORS



Blood and Gore
Violence

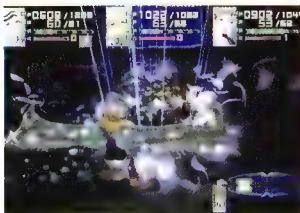


Xenosaga: Episode I



Normally, an overabundance of CG cut-scenes drag an RPG down, but in *Xenosaga* it's quite compelling.

Publisher: Namco
Developer: Monolith Soft
Players: 1
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #163
Best Feature: Groundbreaking story
Worst Feature: Long cinemas require patience
Website: www.xenosaga.com



offering a revolutionary, epic story line that redefines what we've come to expect from game narrative.

We'll tell it to you straight—by a longshot *Xenosaga* has the most cut-scenes that we've ever seen in an RPG. The first six hours of the game involves only around two hours of actual gameplay. If this sounds appalling to you, you're not alone. All the noninteractive watching initially freaked out our reviewers, but as the ratio of gameplay to movie evened out, the cinemas became an entertaining break from the traditional (and challenging) role-playing bits. You'll outfit a party of warriors, equip weapons and magic, explore sprawling dungeons, fight battles, and even squander your time on silly minigames, just like in *Final Fantasy*.

Episode I begins a mammoth series of six planned titles that tell of mankind's distant future as a spacefaring culture. Colossal battleships, warp travel, sentient robots, and vile aliens are par for the course, and the sweeping story tackles weighty themes of human rights, the nature of consciousness, and the existence of God. In fact, the scope of the series is so grand that this first chapter barely scratches the surface of what's to come. It's daring, brash, and bizarre...just be ready for the long cinemas.

Fans of the original *Xenogears* (the pseudosequel to *Xenosaga* that is technically *Episode V* in the overall epic) will find a few subtle references linking the two games. Many 'Gears' vets will recognize the Zohar artifacts from the first game (the yellow cross behind the boss below is one).



I've never had so much fun *not* playing a game. People would walk by as I watched *Xenosaga's* spectacular cinematic events, notice the DualShock a lying dominant on the floor, and give me puzzled looks, but they just didn't understand—the plot is so damn good that I'd watch 100 hours of this if I could. The genre-bending sci-fi story line is nearly inexplicable in its complexity, and the (largely unresolved) ending only made me yearn for future installments. Realistically, the cinemas aren't even that obnoxious (though I know many, more impatient gamers will disagree), as the ratio of actual gameplay to cut-scene is tipped squarely in the favor of combat and traversing dungeons. The refined battle system offers massive depth, allowing you to intricately customize your characters' skills, spells, attacks, and attributes. Also, unlike most RPGs, this one is legitimately challenging—many bosses will kill you, I promise. Visually, *Xenosaga* excels at creating a shiny, futuristic universe to explore. Everything looks gorgeous, including the full-screen movies (that use the same style as the in-game portions to maintain a *Metal Gear Solid*-like continuity). Disappointingly, a sparse soundtrack detracts from the experience, but at least Namco did a bang-up job with the English voice acting. Overall, although the first few hours will try your patience, the next 45 are quite good, so just muddle through the slow rising action and you'll be hooked.

Shane

Shortly after I finally beat *Xenosaga*, a pal of mine asked me to describe the story in a nutshell. For the life of me, I couldn't. It's simply too big, too bold, and too far out there to wrap up in a few words. In fact, *Xenosaga* eschews the traditional linear narrative in favor of a sprawling, metaphysical mystery that'll have you deep in thought for months afterward, contemplating everything from the meaning of life to the surreal sexiness of a killing machine like KOS-MOS. But don't think this game's all about story, despite the hour-long cinemas, it has more gameplay than most RPGs thanks to its deep battle system, tons of customizable stats, detailed minigames, and absorbing side quests.

Gary

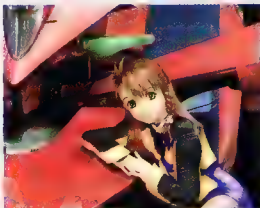
You don't play *Xenosaga* so much as watch it. The sheer number of 20-minute-plus cinemas I sat through had me wondering why I was even holding a controller. Still, they are pretty sweet, and the story is engaging, if sometimes a bit clichéd and other times confusing (much like the original *Xenogears*). When you do actually get to play the game once in a while, you're treated to a unique battle system, loads of stats to keep track of, and even some creative gameplay (like a few *Metal Gear Solid*-style stealth bits). Some people will really dig it. Personally, I'd much rather just play the game than have every second door I enter trigger yet another lengthy, long-winded cut-scene to endure.

Greg S.



An uneven, yet undeniable, rift divides the realm of console role-playing games—at the top of the food chain you've got Square's *Final Fantasy* games garnering the lion's share of sales and critical acclaim, while beneath them, all the other RPGs fight it out for the leftovers. *Xenosaga* bravely rises above the fray to battle the *FF* juggernaut head-on,

A.G.W.S. OF STEEL



In addition to the standard mano-a-mano combat with your party members, certain characters can hop into massive robots, called A.G.W.S., to deliver devastating damage. During the first half of the game these lumbering giants are basically unnecessary, but be sure to power them up for the later battles—they're invaluable.

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Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball



Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: Team Ninja
Players: 1-2
Also On: None
Reveals: Your inner dirty old man
Best Feature: Best...graphics...ever
Worst Feature: Not much of a game
Website: www.tecmoinc.com



girls take the hoax in stride, forgoing fisticuffs to take advantage of the balmy weather, take off most of their clothing, and give fans what they really want: maximum boobage. Welcome to Zack Island (named after the island's owner, winner of the DOA3 tournament).

As you might have guessed, *DOAX* isn't your typical sports sim. The word "volleyball" in the title is merely a suggestion. *DOAX* is more of a "watch a bunch of women cavort and fidget around in skimpy swimsuits" simulator. There's no tournament, no goals, and no pressure to perform on the court. Instead, think of it as a vacation where you've got 14 virtual days to control one of the DOA girls as she (among other things) plays some v-ball, lounges by the pool, catches some rays, or bets her life savings at the island's huge casino—you can even go from the opening movie to the end credits without playing an entire match (yes, we're serious).

Should you decide to hit the sand, the volley-



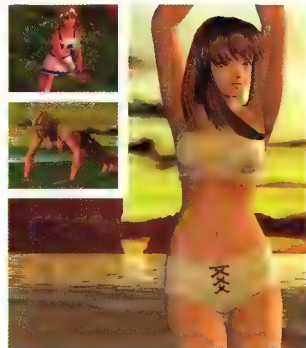
At night, when you've left the sun and surf, you can try your luck at roulette, blackjack, poker, and eight different slot machines (each one designed after one of the girls) in Zack's casino. It makes winning enough money to buy the most expensive, most revealing swimsuit much, much easier.

Ever since Tecmo's *Dead or Alive* bounced onto the scene, the gravity-defying bosoms of its female combatants have helped it stand out in the crowded fighting genre. But, what with all the punches, kicks, and, well, gameplay, there was never a whole lot of time to sit back and savor the jiggles. That is, until now. In *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball*, the young lassies ease their deadly combat stances, let their hair down, and show a little skin. They've all traveled to a tropical island, the supposed location for the next DOA tournament, only to find they've been bamboozled. But the

ACCESSORIZE, MAN



Part of *DOAX*'s fun involves amassing a collection of goodies in order to doll up your virtual vixen any way you like. Give her a revealing bikini, a hat, sunglasses, shoes—the possibilities are endless since there are so many items. And if you want to partner with a certain girl on the island (or keep your current one happy), you can buy gifts for the target of your affection until you've won her favor. You'll also receive gifts from Zack each night, be it new swimsuits, accessories, or special videos like the commercial for *DOA3* or a preview of Tecmo's upcoming *Ninja Gaiden*. Collecting this stuff constitutes the game's real goal, and it's actually surprisingly addictive once you succumb to the game's sultry allure. Once we saw the barely there Venus suit, we simply had to work toward attaining it.





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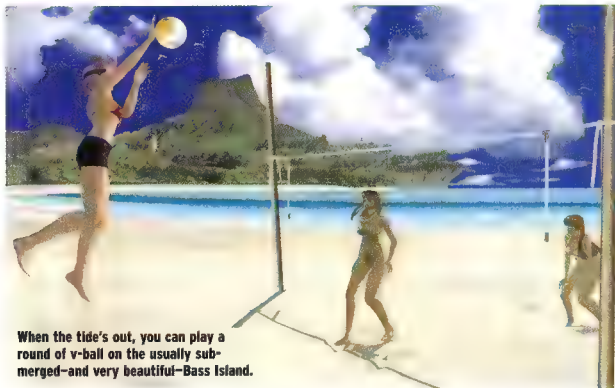
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Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball (cont.)



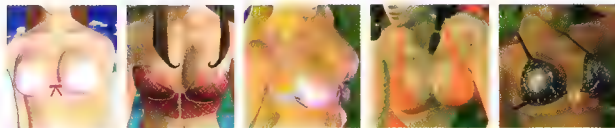
When the tide's out, you can play a round of v-ball on the usually submerged—and very beautiful—Bass Island.

girl squirm seductively on a lounge chair...for hours, if you wish (you sick bastard). Or, maybe you want to let her take a rest while you pan the camera around the young thang's curvaceous body. Gratuitous? Sure. Enjoyable? We think so. And if that's not interactive enough for you, there's also a fun skill-building minigame where you guide your lady as she makes coquettish leaps across a pool over wobbly floating platforms.

As if you couldn't see for yourself on this page, all of these shenanigans look absolutely beautiful. We wouldn't be lying by saying this is one of the best-looking games ever released, and we're not just referring to the babes. Like *DOA3*, the environments (although criminally few in number, considering all the cool stuff you see from the island's aerial view) are amazing. But the real attraction is the bikini-clad gals, and Team Ninja proves once again they are experts at producing 3D visuals of the female body and its most attractive assets. The graphics walk a

tightrope between *Playboy* and pinup. But the package is still oddly reserved, like a peep show where the really good stuff is just out of sight. Even the game's opening movie is a bit misleading, considering there's not even a nanosecond's worth of volleyball anywhere in it. That scene of Lei Fang feeding berries to Hitomi is nothing more than a pipe dream—you never see any girl-on-girl action outside of the volleyball matches. And you'd think that spreading suntan oil on your woman surely could've been done as a nice, slow, ever-so-titillating cinema, right? Not in *DOAX*, sadly. Instead, you select the suntan oil from a menu and watch the bottle slowly disappear... Oh yeah, baby, slower...er, uh...yeah.

Your enjoyment of *DOAX* will vary. Its unfocused style (no clear goal, no tournament, no character-specific endings) will undoubtedly annoy those looking for a method to the madness. But if eye candy is your thing, there's enough of it here to make you sick and not feel bad about it in the morning.



ADULT PLEASURE

To enhance your *DOAX* experience, we suggest you forget about the game's included tunes. Instead, rip these tracks to your Xbox and select them at the in-game radio station. You can thank us later.

"The Thong Song" — Sisqó
 "Sexual Healing" — Marvin Gaye
 "Me So Horny" — 2 Live Crew
 "Blister in the Sun" — Violent Femmes
 "Baby Got Back" — Sir Mix-A-Lot
 "My Ding-A-Ling" — Chuck Berry

"Do Me" — Bel Biv DeVoe
 "I Touch Myself" — Divinyls
 "She Bop" — Cyndi Lauper
 "Hot in Here" — Nelly
 "Hey Ladies" — Beastie Boys
 "Girls, Girls, Girls" — Motley Crüe



The Hopping Game (below) puts your dexterity (and ability not just to stare at your girl's assets) to the test. You jump across floating platforms. For quick hops, you tap the A button lightly. For longer jumps, you have to really jam on it. Win and you're rewarded with an extended ogling session.



My relationship with *DOAX* has gone through a lot. At first, I didn't like her. She didn't seem to be much more than a virtual wankfest, and while that's perfectly fine for some, I wanted a real *game* to go along with it. But the more I played, the more I realized that maybe I was being a little too hard on her. I still wish her game play had more substance and the camera was better, but when she looks at me with those puppy dog eyes, I just can't say no. So instead of expecting what could never be, I started to appreciate the things she has going for her, and that's when I began enjoying *DOAX*. She's **less a game and more an interactive vacation—something I can play whenever I have time and not get completely lost**. Plus, the easy controls let me slip right back in after a week away from my gal—she welcomes me unconditionally. Her biggest asset is her easy-on-the-eyes visuals. You cannot look at her and call her ugly or fat. My only complaint (besides the lack of a real goal) is that you don't get to see enough. If all *DOAX* is going to be is eye candy, why can't you watch your girl walking around the casino, applying suntan oil, buying items, giving gifts, and going off to bed instead of selecting these activities through a menu and reading some scrolling text? But wait...I can't stay mad at her—she's just too fun to be around!

CJ

Keep this in mind before purchasing *DOAX*: It's not a strictly regimented volleyball game, meaning that if you don't want to have the ladies bumpin' balls, you don't have to. As your tropical vacation on Zack Island transpires, you'll strive to purchase every last swimsuit and accessory offered, but if you'd rather gamble, cavort on the beach, or just jump across a pool and sip piña colodas, you can. The luscious graphics, saucy soundtrack, and **simple-yet-fun game play** all mesh wonderfully. Although the game isn't perverted enough for some of the staff (cough, CJ), it's still an addictive, alluring way to whittle away a few hours with some lovely ladies.

Milkman

I think most young men have dreamt of this: A bunch of fine young ladies in skimpy swimsuits frolicking with each other on the beach...mmm. Unfortunately, *Xtreme Breast*, or *Beach Volleyball* proves that it's not as much fun as it sounds. This is just **Barbie Shopping with a mediocre volleyball game attached to it**. Honestly, the actual sports bits basically play themselves—you only occasionally need to tap a button. And though the whole package is compelling for a little while (mostly due to the gorgeous graphics and simple casino minigames), it's not worth the price of admission. Save the cash and order Cinemax or a subscription to *Playboy* instead.

Greg S.





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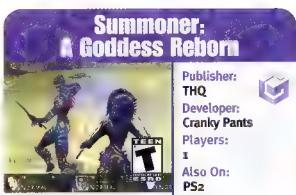


Publisher: Atari
Developer: Milestone
Players: 1-2
Featured In: EGM #163
Also On: None
Website: www.atari.com

Best Feature: Awesome sense of speed
Worst Feature: Overaggressive opponents

Making a game that allows players to manufacture and race their own cars can be risky. While it's a cool idea, a lot of videogame racing junkies won't look at a title that doesn't feature licensed cars from the likes of Ford, Toyota, or Mitsubishi. So, Milestone went the extra mile and created a game that should please all racing fans. *Apex* is an addictive driving game that's unique but not so high-concept as to scare away the masses. Basically, all you have to worry about is finishing well in each race, and your car company will more or less take care of itself. It's kind of fun to watch your headquarters expand from a grimy garage to a massive factory, but the real entertainment begins when you get your cars out on the track. *Apex* is **fast, pretty, and controls almost perfectly**. The balanced opponent AI won't let you lap the field, but you also won't suffer from any surprising bursts of speed from the second-place car. I have only one major gripe—there's no way to win a shoving match. If another car touches you anywhere, it'll always pass you. It's an annoying, but not fatal, flaw.

Greg S.



Publisher: THQ
Developer: Cranky Pants
Players: 1
Also On: PS2
Also Try: *Sties of Arcadia*
Website: www.thq.com

Best Feature: Long, involved quest
Worst Feature: Clunky, dull combat

Apparently, all it takes for this *Goddess's* rebirth is a leather thong and some fishnet stockings. Yep, this is the same action-RPG that graced PlayStation 2 last fall as *Summer 2*, with a handful of visual enhancements that give it a slight edge over its previous incarnation. Made-over characters sport stylin' new outfits and more realistic animation, subtle lighting effects add eerie atmosphere, and the audio quality has been bumped up. **Even with all of these upgrades, *Goddess* doesn't reach must-buy status.** The quest is plenty long, stuffed with oodles of playable characters and political intrigue (your main heroine, Maia, must occasionally go back to her day job as queen and do some kingdom management), but the game's combat fails to impress. This button-mashing free-for-all brawling just isn't very engrossing. Also, the seemingly random difficulty can really bite you in the ass—rinky-dink enemies sometimes easily kill your heroes. Investigate this with a rental if you're in desperate need of role-playing on your GC.

Shane



Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Taito
Players: 1 (2-4 Linked)
Buy if you liked: *Golden Sun*
Website: www.atlus.com
Track Down: The old SNES *Lufia* games

Best Feature: Deep battle system
Worst Feature: Low-fi background music

Odds are you've never heard of the *Lufia* RPG series. Square's *Final Fantasy* titles overshadowed the first two *Lufias* (for Super Nintendo), and the Game Boy Color sequel met with chirping crickets in 2001. Finally, though, the franchise might have a shot at success on GBA. *Ruins of Lore* succeeds on nearly every level—it's an **attractive, engaging, complex adventure** that easily ranks alongside heavyweight titles like *Golden Sun* and *Lunar Legend*. In terms of plot, it's standard ragtag-kids-versus-the-evil-empire stuff, but impressive visuals and deep gameplay make it worthwhile. Environments spring to life with bright colors and nicely animated touches, and combat sequences feature clever 3D effects. The excellent battle system provides the real draw, however. You can fight with eight party members at once, capture and breed monsters, cycle your characters through 11 different jobs, and even link-up with three friends for a creative multiplayer dungeon hack. A thin soundtrack and occasionally uneven difficulty kink minor dents in the game's armor, but overall, it's a winner.

Shane



Publisher: Universal Interactive
Developer: Vicarious Visions
Players: 1 (2 Linked)
Best Level Name: Mr. Lava Lava
Website: www.crashbandicoot.com

Best Feature: Faithful to the old *Crash* formula
Worst Feature: Annoying 3D flying stages

Like most GBA editions of an established console franchise, *Crash 2* only attempts to re-create the popular formula of its big brothers (in this case, the old PS1 games), and in many respects it succeeds. This wee Bandicoot has all the moves you expect (slide, double jump, spin, crawl), plus a few more you learn along the way (dash, super jump, etc.), with great animation and decent control throughout. The platforming stages that make up most of the game also stick to the simple *Crash* design—jump over obstacles, grab berries, and smash various crates. Even the old run-away-from-something-and-into-the-screen stages are included, and they look and play great. Other modes mix things up, but don't fare so well—odd physics make some *Monkey Ball*-style levels even more tedious, and 3D stages with *Coco* flying through space are sloppy. Other disappointments include a lack of variety in the short-scrolling levels, tacked-on multiplayer, and an overall short 'n' easy quest. Then again, plenty of hard-to-find secrets await, and this is a GBA game after all. **Younger gamers won't be disappointed.**

Mark



Publisher: AKA Acclaim
Developer: Climax UK
Players: 1-4
Also On: PS2, GC
Thank God It's Not: *ATV XXX*
Website: akaacclaim.com

Best Feature: Really sweet graphics
Worst Feature: Screwly jump-loading setup

When I first fired up *ATV2*, I wasn't very impressed. Pretty graphics aside, the tracks were boring and the controls frustrating because the game's spring-loading technique (used for high jumps) is not nearly as natural as that in Sony's *Offroad Fury 2*. But after playing for a couple hours, I started enjoying myself. Yes, the control is a bit sloppy, but the tracks really improve as the game progresses. I can deal with a little uneven control if the rest of the game is good, and there's plenty to do here: an assortment of innovative, fun mini-games extend the experience. Not only do these diversions teach you how to do tricks like Wheelies and Two-Wheelers (which you need to master in order to win the trick competitions), but they also give you a bunch of really cool obstacle courses to navigate. The challenges include everything from competing on classic slalom courses to climbing massive towers that stand on thin, precarious ramps and bridges. Basically, *ATV2* is a **fun, if flawed, game**. It's quite an improvement over the PS1 original, and at this rate, the third game should be just about right.

Greg S.



Publisher: Encore
Developer: Griptonite Games
Players: 1
Buy Instead: *Spider-Man (The Movie)* for GBA
Website: www.daredevil-game.com

Best Feature: Jennifer Garner in leather
Worst Features: Passwords, mediocrity, Ben Affleck

In theory, Daredevil sounds like an insanely stupid character—a blind guy in red tights fighting crime with a stick? Yet great writers like Frank Miller and Kevin Smith have made it one of the best comic books out there. The movie might be OK. But the game? It's a **lifeless, mediocre beat-em-up**. Daredevil punches, kicks, and billy clubs his way through Hell's Kitchen the same way every other brawl has for the past 15 years. Well, Daredevil does have his radar sense, which reveals hidden items and secrets (kinda cool), but it also annoyingly turns the world black and white. Level design is repetitive and boring with scant twists. And while Daredevil is commonly known as the Man Without Fear in the comics, the game knows him better as the Man Without Saves thanks to the archaic, clunky password system. One possible reason to play—you can unlock sexy, albeit pixelated, pictures of Jennifer Garner in her Elektra costume. Honestly, if you have 30 bucks and a desire to understand the 'Devil, give up a pile of comics instead.

Scotter





The Rest of the Crap

Reviewing the games no one else bothered to

Judging by the magazine you're reading, you're probably pretty educated about videogames. While in the store, you can flip a game over and quickly discern what its genre is from the screenshots. As an example, with *BMX XXX* you might say, "Oh, this is a bicycle game about breasts," or with *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball*, "Finally! A boob breast about breast breasts!" But the real advantage to your videogame-educated eye is how it filters out the games I'm forced to review here. They're right there on the shelf next to the games you do buy, and you probably never notice them—because your brain has learned by now that when a game's title starts with the words "The Land Before Time," you don't need to bother reading any more. The cruel, diabolical editors here, however, take extraordinary pleasure in sending these ungodly horrors to me. You try getting an e-mail demanding to know where the review for *The Berenstain Bears Xtreme Rodeo Challenge* is, and you'll understand why I spend four months out of the year trying to ruin Christmas.

—Seanbaby



Sean covets Mr. T's gold-plated plate.



Watch out—that demon will kill for SKITTLES®.



A You may be suckered in by the bad graphics and boring gameplay, but it's really the indefinable lame-ness of the game that keeps you hating it.

This game's box is so considerate and thoughtful. It cautions future players to "Get ready for exuberant running, jumping, log-riding, and mud-sliding fun with Littlefoot and company!" It'd like to respond to each of these grim warnings individually. Exuberant running: If you need to prepare yourself for the exuberance of making a tiny dinosaur jog left and right, then the first time you see a piñata, your face will explode. Exuberant jumping: Brace yourself—your dorky dinosaur can execute a pitiful hop. Thrilling. Exuberant log-riding: I have to admit that when I first witnessed the dinosaur slowly floating across a river on a log, the adrenaline rush caused something primal and animal deep inside me to scream for release. Exuberant mud-sliding: Hitting even the tiniest downward grade causes your dinosaur to gently slide down. Once this happens, your buttons stop working and your brain dies. For featuring practically no enemies and no obstacles, with loading screens that take longer to finish than the levels, *TBTA: BWA* receives the "You'll Have More Fun Watching a Dead Fish" Award for Exuberance.



A Beware, children. You never know when the unkillable Mickey Mouse could be watching.

Tons of games let you be Mickey Mouse. But a game where you get to pretend not to be Mickey but live near him, and then pretend to make pancakes, has always been an unattainable fantasy...until now. You're Mickey Mouse's neighbor, and this is a kitchen simulator, but Mickey and Minnie are awful, nosy neighbors who peek their heads through your window and invite themselves to dinner. And if you go through the lengthy click-click-click process to actually cook something, one of them will call you to tell you they can smell it. **They're creepy little leeches, and they can't be killed.** Believe me, I tried. My first plan was, of course, rat poison. The designers thought of this, so you can't include any poisonous materials in your baking. I did the next best thing. I made a turkey stuffed with cheese and hot dogs and set it on the floor. For three days. Once it drew a thriving colony of toxic bacteria and diseases, I served it. Mickey found it delicious and was infuriatingly not dead from it.



A Uh oh! Mouse in the house!! I haven't hated an animal mascot so much since Smokey the Bear beat out a forest fire with my body.

Sneakers is available only at Toys "R" Us, where kids are surrounded by thousands of things that they'd prefer to have. If it really wanted to sell this game, Microsoft would have sold it exclusively at The Genital Clamp Warehouse. At least then the competition for impulse-buying would be fair. "Well, if my choice is *Sneakers* or searing groin pain...hmmm...if you have it in blue, I'll take the genital clamp." Most of the game is spent trying to find rats hiding throughout a house by moving along predetermined paths and clicking your cursor on them. I'm not fascinated by how someone came up with that idea. People come up with stupid ideas all the time. That's why your detergent tells you not to eat it. Here's what must've happened at the brainstorming meeting: "Sir, my idea—hang onto your knickers—is to make a **clunky Xbox version of hide 'n' seek starring mice**. L...I'm fired! I see, Well, I guess I'll just go mail off these photographs of your straggling hookers! Oh, you'll make the game now. Great."



A For years, mankind has been looking for a nonre-tarded way to mix sorcery and candy. After *Darkened Skye* was released, mankind continued its search.

I think you can be fully immersed in the dark and forbidding world of *Darkened Skye* simply by reading this short passage from its instructional manual: "Necroth has rounded up all SKITTLES® for himself and his own foul purposes." You didn't read that wrong. **Your enemy in this game is a sinister SKITTLES® collector who is somehow using them for evil.** And the only way you, a sexy god herder, can restore the rainbow is to find the rest of the SKITTLES® and harness their magical fruitiness to taste the rainbow of sweet victory. You know what? If you held a nationwide press conference to declare war on pudding, it would be a slightly less insane idea than this game. When you think of SKITTLES® brand snack candy, of course you think of fantasy, right? *Darkened Skye* features all the spells, goblins, and magic you come to expect from mass-market confections. It even outdoes the epic scope of *Twilight Forever Realms* (starring Kool-Aid Man and Charleston Chew) and *M&M: Shellshocked*.



Tricks of the Trade

By David S J Hodgson

We're ramping up the Tricks section and going off the rails this month. Is that just awful punning to introduce all the stunt jumps in *Vice City* and extras in *Simpsons Skateboarding* and *Tony Hawk 4*? Yes. Yes, it is. Sorry.

Tricks in Partnership with Prima Games



Tricks, tips, strategies, and loony code-based frivolity from *Zelda: A Link to the Past*, *Yu-Gi-Oh! Eternal Duelist Soul*, *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon*, *Unreal Championship*, *Crash N-Tranced*, and *Rygar* are taken from their respective guides, on sale now!

TIME TO GAME: POLL RESULTS

Resident Evil developers take note: Gamers want 35 to 30 hours of game for their \$50, not three.

3%	Under 1 hour	37%	10-30 hours	WINNER!
3%	1-5 hours	22%	31-50 hours	
16%	6-15 hours	12%	76+ hours	

Source: Gameinn.com poll 12/10/02

Top 5 Tricks of the Month

2345

1 Simpsons Skateboarding: Homer's Code Odyssey

Want to try Skatefest with Chief Wiggum? **Another season of Futurama?** Not a chance. How about the worst 3D model of Wiggum ever? That, we can do. Try these codes at **Character Select**, holding L1, L2, R1, and R2 for each one. **Choose outfits afterward with Cir.** Big-head Homer: Cir, X, Tri, Squ. **Tightie White Homer (1):** Tri, Cir, X, Squ. Big-head Bart: X, Squ, Cir, Tri. Gangsta Bart: Cir, X, Squ, Tri. Demon Marge: X, Squ, Tri, Cir. Big-head Lisa: Squ, Tri, X, Cir. Gangsta Lisa: Squ, Tri, Cir, X. Big-head Nelson: Tri, Squ, Cir, X. Ballerina Nelson: Tri, Squ, X, Cir. **Man-in-Black Otto (2):** Squ, X, Cir, Tri.

Big-head Frink: Squ, X, Tri, Cir. Groovy Frink: X, Cir, Tri, Squ. Suited Krusty: Cir, Tri, Squ, X. Big-head Wiggum: X, Cir, Squ, Tri. **Man-eater Wiggum (3):** Tri, Cir, Squ, X. All Skaters: Cir, Tri, X, Squ. All levels: Tri, X, Squ, Cir. All boards: X, Tri, Cir, Squ. \$99: Tri, X, Squ, Cir. Fuzzy Skaters: X, Tri, Squ, Cir. **Doh!**



4 Crash N-Tranced Bandicoot bonanza!

Don't you just love tricks that **force you to buy another game** to unlock them? We do, which is why these hidden characters are so dear to our hearts (and bank accounts). Step 1: Purchase *Crash: The Huge Adventure*. Step 2: Copy a C:HA Save file to *N-Tranced* for Cortex. Defeat **Tiny** in C:HA to unlock him in C:NT. Slap **Dingodile** in C:HA to access him in C:NT. Beat down **N. Gin** in C:HA to have him in C:NT. Finally, a **Neo Cortex** kerfuffle in C:HA unlocks the **Megamix level**.

2 Rocky: Eating Lightning and Crapping Thunder

These codes work on all systems (Xboxers and GameCubers, substitute the left trigger for L1 and the right trigger for R2). Hold R1 at the Main menu for all codes. **All default boxers and arenas plus a playable statue and Mikey (1-2):** Up, Do, Do, Le, Le, L1. Inflict double punch damage: Ri, Do, Le, Up, Le, L1. Double speed: Do, Le, Do, Up, Ri, L1. Max



stats in Movie mode: Ri, Do, Do, Up, Le, L1. Max stats in Tournament and Exhibition modes: Le, Up, Up, Do, Ri, L1. Win

the fight in Movie mode: Ri, Ri, Le, Le, Up, L1. **PS2 owners can attain victory in midbout by pressing L2 + R2.**

3 007 NightFire: Instant Oddjob, but no Pussy Galore



Tap these codes into your Codename selection. **To unlock all single-player levels, enter PASSPORT (1).** For more Sniper ammo, tap MAGA-

ZINE. All gadgets? **Q_LAB** (don't forget the underscore!). Fast laser firing: **PHOTON**. The rest of the codes make multiplayer games even crazier. **For Oddjob, tap BOWLER. Jaws is DENTAL**

(2). Xenia is JANUS. Scaramanga is ASSASSIN. Christmas Jones is NUCLEAR. Baron Samedi is VOODOO. Bond Tuxedo is BLACKTIE. Goldfinger is MIDAS. Drake in a suit is NUMBER 1. Exploding scenery is BOOM. GoldenEye strike is ORBIT. Protection mode is GUARDIAN. Team King of the Hill is TEAMWORK. Uplink mode is TRANSMIT. Destruction mode is TNT. Golden Gun is TARGET. Assassination mode is SCOPE.

Tony Hawk 4 More skaters

Parking Guy. Peasus. Pete Day. Pooper. Rick Thorne. Sik. Stacey D. Stacey Ytuarte. Stealing is Bad. Team Chicken. Ted Barber. Todd Wahoske. Top Bloke. Wardcore. Zac Zig Drake. **All pre-created skaters.** Tap them in! PS2 owners, try "ssbsts" for perfect rails (above), and "mullenponp" for perfect manuals. GC owners enter "2wheellin" for perfect manuals. **Xbox owners? Unlucky.**



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GTA: Advice city

Islands Jump Survival! Every Leap Showed!

Opening around Vice City and flipping through the same old, same old (the game is so good, and so amazing). And now jumping, there's worth big money to reward. But how do you do it? Well, you can't. The PG Game has been made. Let's begin and I'll follow you with the 18 jumps in Ocean Beach.



1. Start by heading down the road to the right. You'll see a wooden ramp. Jump off the ramp and land on the ground.



2. Head to the right and you'll see a grassy area. Jump off the ground and land on the grass.



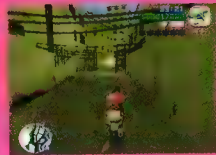
3. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



4. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



5. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



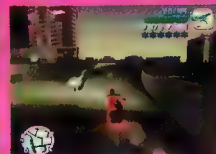
6. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



7. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



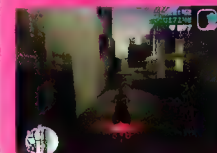
8. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



9. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



10. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



11. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



12. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.



13. Head to the right and you'll see a street. Jump off the ground and land on the street.

ALL-POINTS MULLET-IN

Ocean Beach

The final five stunt jumps



14. Once you finish jump No. 13, aim your bike onto the second of two ramps on the roof and fly off of it. Land where you can!



15. South of where you met the colonel, go down the pier, turn left, and leap from the wooden ramp.



16. As you land on jump No. 15, continue speeding over another wooden ramp. If you skid and turn, you'll flip into the ocean!



17. Using the concrete ramp near the bridge to Starfish Island, jump over the river channel.



18. Land jump No. 17, spin 180 degrees, head to the right of the bridge (to the shallow cement ramp), and hop the channel again.

(continued on page 140)

Zelda: Missing Links

Find the Master Sword, see the palace, and scavenge away!

FROM THE VAULT:
ZELDA: A LINK TO
THE PAST EXTRAS!



Where's that blasted Master Sword, anyway? **Find it in the Lost Woods (1)** after you collect three Pendulums from the East Palace, the Desert Palace, and the Mountain Tower. With the Master Sword (or the more powerful tempered and Golden Swords), Link can fire a magical beam when his heart meter is full. This is both pretty and damaging... It is even available in *Four Swords*! Now then, where's that **Palace of the Four Swords (2)**? Well, try defeat



ing Ganon in *A Link to the Past*, and slap down Vaati in *Four Swords*, then return to *A Link to the Past* and enter the Pyramid of Power in the Dark World through a crack in the upper night wall. Presto! Welcome to the Palace—an all-new dungeon! Find the four pieces of the Four Swords to challenge the bosses (four different Links) to give you a supersecret ending with a crazed quest log telling you how many times you used each item and how long you stared at your GBA!



Finally, after acquiring 10 Medals of Courage in *Four Swords*, return to *A Link and visit the lumberjack. snag the following 10 items with your bug-catching net and return them to Mr. Bumpkin, and you'll be rewarded with a **Tornado Sword attack (3)**. The 10 objects tall found in the Light World are a chick en, a crab, a red rupee, a fish, an Octoballoon, a slime, a squirrel, a fake Master Sword, an apple, and a Cukeman. You should know where these are hiding by now! Happy hunting!*

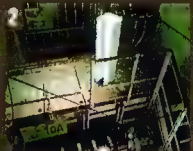
The Evil Has Landed

A hunk-a-burnin' love, playing with tofu, and RE2 outfits!

FROM THE VAULT:
RESIDENT EVIL 2
GAMECUBE REVISITED!



Don't know who Brad "Zombie" Vickers is? Craving hot tofu action? Finish one of the second scenarios with an A rating: This unlocks **The 4th Survivor (1)**, a rooftop dash starring the embarrassingly named Umbrella special-forces grunt. Now comes The Tofu Survivor; beat six games



back to back and earn an A ranking to unlock Hunk. **Play Hunk's adventure as a slab of curd (2, 3)**. Those crazy Capcom developers. Then there's **Extreme Battle mode (4)**, a fight to the police station that becomes available after finishing both adventures (A and B) in Original mode. Finally, comes the out-



of-fashion clothing. Play on Normal, don't pick up items outside the police station, and you'll find Brad "Zombie" Vickers on the long path outside (5). Entice him to lunge at your leg and stamp his cranium. Take his key, unlock the Dark Room's locker (6), and nab a Colt Python and a denim jacket.



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GTA: Advice city

The Airport, Little Haiti, and Starfish Island!

Finished in Ocean Beach? Head to the southwest part of the map and tag the airport for eight jumps, then go to Little Haiti for another four. Take a trip to Starfish Island for a single loony leap, then go downtown for another quartet of aerial maneuvers (available only during/after the G-Spotlight mission). And lastly, head to Prawn Island.



20. Near the airport entrance, build up some speed, drive up the small wooden ramp and the Vice Surf sign, and land on the airport roof. Sheer madness!



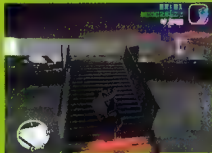
21. At the northeast end of the main runway, accelerate to pant-wetingly fast speeds and fly up and over the left or right ramp to land on the tarmac.



19. Aim your bike at the moveable steps and hop over the fence into the parking lot.



22. Head to the moveable steps (don't move them) and jump over the east loading passenger bridge. You can hit the bridge roof, but keep that speed up!



23. Continue heading west toward the second loading bridge and locate the moveable steps there. Line up carefully and reprise jump No. 22.



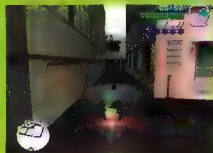
24. One more loading bridge jump. Find (and jump!) the ramp that faces east, over the west side of the bridge you leaped over during stunt jump No. 23.



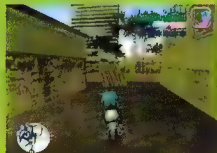
25. Turn around, head for the radar tower, and look for the runway marker. Fly off the right side of it and clear the lower right radar tower roof.



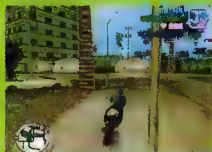
26. On the west side of the radar tower is your final moveable ramp. Get an incredible run-up and launch your bike past the tower. Not into it!



27. In the north part of Little Haiti, find the alley heading south and sail over the red and blue storage boxes, through a delicious police bribe.



28. In the middle of Little Haiti is a burned-out school bus. Find the wooden ramp in the alley near it and take a long run-up over it, pointing your bike to the left.



29. In the same main area as the burned-out bus, find the shell of the car, point yourself to the east, and go over the wooden ramp across the drainage ditch.



30. The final Little Haiti screen shows where to begin your jump. Head over the rooftops and across a street to the top of the one-hour photo store.

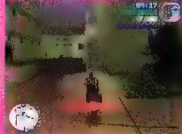


31. On Starfish Island, head to the garden of the northeast house. Gain as much speed as you can and jump from the steps over two hedges. Tricky!



ALL-POINTS MULLET-IN

Doing Overviews



Yu-Gi-Oh!

Eternal Duelist's Soul

15 Incredible Fusion Cards!

Fusion Cards are the product of combining two or more Monster Cards and one Polymerization Magic Card. Remember, the Monster Cards must be on the field or in your hand. The Magic Card must be played from the Magic zone. The resulting monster is played from the Fusion Deck to the Monster Card zone. The used cards are sent to your graveyard. Got it? All right, time to check the goodies! **1. Amphibious Bugroth:** Ground Effecter Bugroth + Guardian of the Sea. **2. Aqua Dragon:** Fairy Dragon + Amazon of the Seas. **3. Zone Eater:** **Barox:** Frozen Pandora + Ryu-Kishin. **4. Bickerozo:** Grass Clown + Dream Clown. **5. Brachio-Raidus:** Two-Headed King, Rex + Crawling Dragon. **6. Charubin the Fire Knight:** Monster Egg + Mitotama Soul. **7. Crimson Sunbird:** Faith Bird + Skull Red Bird. **8. Darkfire Dragon:** Firegraze + Petit Dragon. **9. Empress Judges Queen's Double:** Habbaleme. **10. Flame Swordsman:** Flame Manipulator + Masaki. **11. Gale the Dragon Champion:** Gales the Fire Knight + Curse of Dragon. **12. Giffu the D. Knight:** Guardian of the Labrynix + Protector of the Throne. **13. Great Mammoth of Goldmine:** The Snow King + Dragon Bomber. **14. Kaiser Dragon:** Wings Dragon, Guardian of the Fortress #14, Fairy Dragon. **15. Labyrinth Tanks:** Giga Tech Wolf + Cannon Soldier.



Looking for an independent voice in all things Xbox related?

THE GAMING LANDSCAPE ON THE XBOX IS FOREVER CHANGING AND WITHOUT THE LATEST INFO ON THIS UP-AND-COMING PLATFORM, YOU'LL BE LEFT IN THE DUST.



To keep up with all the news, breaking news, and reviews, Xbox Nation will now be coming to you bi-monthly, starting with the February 2003 issue. Expect great features, such as the exclusive hands-on preview of Brute Force in Issue #6, every 2 months. Check out your newsstand now.



One Bad Muthaf... SMACK DOWN!

Forgotten Superstar #3 Rey Mysterio

So THQ managed to get Bradshaw's "gay cowboy" outfit in there but couldn't find room for cruiserweight King Rey Mysterio? **Gah!** Fortunately, *Smack Your Mouth* has that handy Create a Superstar mode, and *EGM's* here to put your favorite wrestlers back in the ring, where they belong. Previous forgotten superstars Tommy Dreamer (*EGM* #162) and Scott Steinberg (*EGM* #163) are joined this month by **The Man of 1,000 Masks**. His high-flying lucha libre style has earned him a huge following in the few months he's appeared on WWE television, making Thursday nights must-see TV for sports-entertainment junkies. Follow the simple instructions below to **add Rey Mysterio to your WWE**

roster (if there are no directions for a particular Create mode option, leave it at its default setting.):
FACE: Cheek: 7 (slightly enlarge all features).
FACE: Mask: Lay 73 over 74.
FACE: Mustache: 5 (slightly transparent).
BODY: Skin: 2.
BODY: Tattoo: 25.
PATTERN: 102 (left should

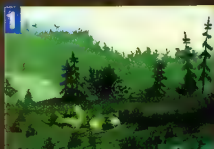
der), 101 (right shoulder), 100 (both upper arms), **ARMS** (both): Elbow Pads: 11 over 1 (match color to mask).
HANDS (both): Gloves: 12 (match color to mask).
HANDS (both): Accessories: 7 (black).
FEET: Shoes: Blank: 14 (black).
LEGS: Pans: Others: 13 (match color to mask).
PATTERN: Side of Left Leg: "6," "4," "9" in Numerical Font 5 (black).
SKIN COLOR: 5.
HEIGHT: 5' 6".
FORM: Slightly increase width of all body parts.
ABILITY: Speedy auto-setting.
MOVE SET: Superstars' Moves Set 18 (change finishing moves to West Coast Pop and Dragonrana Pin).



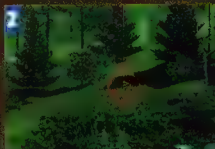


ALIVE & Kickin'!

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Receives Tactical Takedown Advice!



Engaging the enemy (whether online or off) by simply wandering into battle doesn't pay dividends. Instead, try **hugging the borders** of the maps to avoid foes. Go prone (hit the dirt) the **moment your threat indicator turns red (1)**. This makes you difficult to hit and steadies your aim. Crawl to cover, then scan for the enemy. Also, try peeking around a corner and locating a foe. Control your fire; use full auto only for extreme situa-

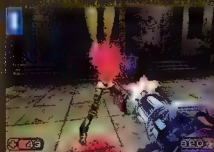


tions. But even before combat begins, memorize your squad. Cycle through them and **memorize how many joypad taps** it takes to get to each soldier. Then, when you're under fire, you'll be able to switch to the correct guy immediately. Knowing the order of your team, you can **call on snipers (2)** or demolitions more effectively. Finally, there's a trick when you're **pinned down**, and it doesn't involve soiling your

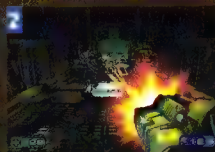


fatigues and waving a small white handkerchief—unless you're part of the French army. If you're prone and under fire, check what your squadmates are doing. If they aren't firing, **find the best cover (3)**, switch teams, toggle to a member of your other squad and identify the enemy position. While the enemy is occupied, bring this second squad in to **finish them**, then switch back.

Unreal Championship Strategies from Epic's Cliff B!



Here's a treat for shooter fans: One of *Unreal Championship's* developers offers cunning plans for **dominating the game**. Although he's been called "the Miyamoto of first-person-shooter level design," Cliff B doesn't ride a scooter to work or **play the banjo**. Take it away, Cliff!

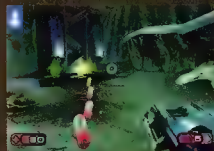


Tip 1 (1): "There's more to a pretty face in *UC*. The **character you choose** affects which weapon you spawn with, your health, speed, and other attributes."

Tip 2 (2-3): "Learn the nuances of each gun. Experiment with primary and alternate fire. This



ain't your daddy's first-person shooter. These guns have tricks and techniques that can **take months to perfect**. Any gamer who knows how to properly execute a good Shock Rifle combo is going to **own** every opponent who steps up to him!"

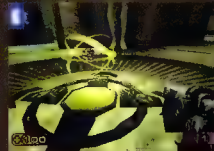


Tip 3 (4): "As any of the pharmaceutical giants out there knows, **taking pills makes you happy**. Collecting adrenaline is just as important as grabbing guns, ammo, and power-ups. Having 100 adrenaline can make the **difference between victory and defeat**. Executing a good speed



boost when you have the ball or flag will enable you to score quickly."

Tip 4 (5-6): In Bombing Run, "coordination is the key to a quick victory. Utilize the Xbox Live **voice communicator** with teammates on a private channel to set up passing plays while



planning a strong defense. You get more points jumping through the goal rather than tossing the ball. Have a player **rush the goal as the ball carrier hangs back**. Follow these tips and you'll be fragging with the best in no time. I look forward to crushing you on Xbox Live soon!"

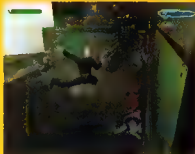


CODEX

Minority Report

Reports of fun incoming...

You feel angry. You paid money for this game. You seek revenge. Dish it out with a collection of codes to make this turkey less stale. Input all codes at the Cheat screen:



All Weapons: STRAPPED
All Combs: NINJA
Full Armor: STEELUP
Bouncing Foes: BOUNZMEN
Baseball Bat: SLUGGER
Cluttered Levels: CLUTZ
Concept Art: SKETCHPAD
Dramatic Finish: STYLIN
Unlock Ending: WIMP
More Health: BUTTERUP
Free Aim: FPSSTYLE
Invincibility (above): LRGARM5
All FMV Cinemas: DIRECTOR
Select Level: PASSKEY
Max-out Ammo: MRJUAREZ
Max-out Damage: SPINACH
Pain Arenas: MAXIMUMHURT
Clown: SCARYCLOWN
Convict: JAILBREAK
Soldier: GNRLINFRANTRY
Lizard: HISSSS
Moseley: BIGLIPS
Nara: WEIGHTGAIN
Nikki: HAIRLOSS
Robot: MRROBOTO
Superhero: SUPERJOHN
Zombie: IAMSODEAD
Rag Doll: CLUMSY
Complete Level: QUITTER
Slow Motion: SLIZOMIZO

CODEX

Contra: Shattered Soldier

30 lives on normal difficulty
This is achieved by tapping: Up, Up, Do, Do, L1, R1, L2, R2, L3, R3 on a joypad plugged into controller port 2. (As you may already know, L3 and R3 are on the analog sticks. Press them down until they click.)

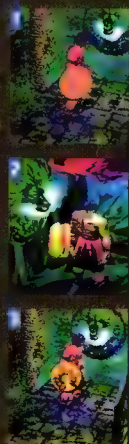


Rygar: Cheats & Tips

Get "a pizza" the action with wacky shield armor!

No hidden costumes. Instead, bizarre foodstuffs are applied to your weaponry. Tecmo has officially gone crazy.

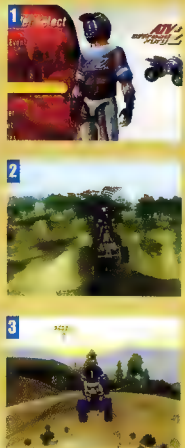
Let's start with the regular nonsense stuff. Beat the game to access Easy and Hard modes. Hard mode has more enemies, more mystic stones, and more-clever bosses. Finish the game on Hard to open Legendary mode. The enemies are even more devious, and extra nasties are sprinkled in. Oh, and they regenerate. And there are even more stones to find. **Now for the wacky Diskarmors.** First up is the **Pizzarmor (1)** in three toppings. Beat the game on Normal to access it. For the hunger-inducing **Burgerarmor**, beat the game on Hard (2). There's a burger, a double burger, and some sort of fish sandwich. How about the **Titan Pizzarmor (3)**? That's available when you complete the Necromondio Cave on Easy mode. Reach this hidden area after you beat down Typhoon. Then backtrack to just before the entrance to the Elysion shrine. Drop into the **crevice below the orange roof, smash the nearby vases and the exposed wall**. Also, mystic stones are carried over when you begin a game again (so you keep the Stones from Normal mode when you start Hard). The same plan works with divine armor. Finally, the more sound chunks, sculptures, and reliefs you find, the more the game unlocks in the Gallery option.



ATV Offroad Fury 2

All the dirt on unlocking events, tracks, games, equipment, ATVs, and more!

Are the mud and vicious CPU foes making you cry? Then stifle those sniffles, and head to the Profile Editor. Click on Unlock Items, go to the cheats area, and **enter the following codes:** For the whole shebang, try IGIVEUP. All championship events: GOLDCUPS. All equipment: THREADS (1). The San Jacinto Isle tracks (2): GABRIEL, 1000 profile points: GIMMEPTS. All tracks: TRL-BLAZR (3). Unlock all games: GAMEON. All ATVs (4): SHOWROOM. Aggro AI: EATDIRT. Disable Wrecks: FLYPAPER.



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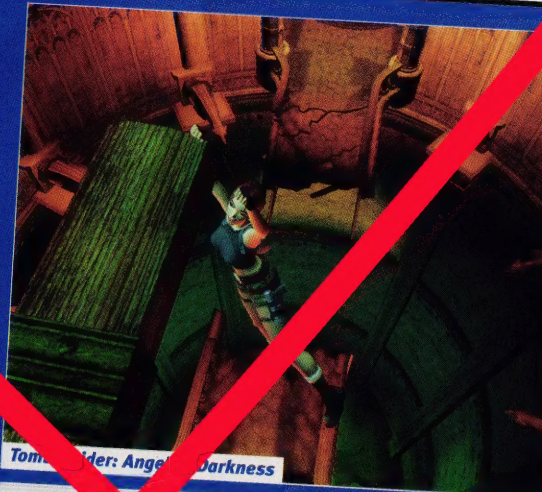
April 2003

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

Issue #165, on sale March 4

Rise From Your Grave

A few years ago, videogame vixen Lara Croft was the hottest thing to grace a PlayStation. Her English accent, Caucasian, considerable bust size, and John Woo-style gunplay made *Tomb Raider* a massive success. But after some clusterfucks, sequels churned out at a breakneck speed, Lara began to show her age. Does this filly still have what it takes to captivate gamers as she has in *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness*? And that's not the only series trying to claw back to or stay at the top. *Pokémon*, *Driver*, *Syphon Filter*, and *Final Fantasy* will soon join it. We'll explore whether these new entries have what it takes to make the next-generation leap.



Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness



Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire



Final Fantasy X-2

Reviewed Next Month:

- Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire (GBA)
- World Series Baseball 2K3 (PS2, Xbox)
- Def Jam Vendetta (PS2, GC)
- Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)

Previewed Next Month:

- Silent Hill 3 (PS2)
- Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow (GBA)
- Pitfall Harry (PS2)
- Auto Modellista (PS2)
- X-Men Legends (PS2, GC, Xbox)
- Vexx (PS2, GC, Xbox)

ALL EDITORIAL CONTENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

March 2003 On sale Feb. 14



WarCraft III

WARCRAFT III

The war in Azeroth is not over! Blizzard is hard at work on the expansion pack to their blockbuster strategy game, and CGW has the world-exclusive scoop. Don't miss it!

REVIEWS:

- Sinter Cell
- Jim City 4
- Robin Hood
- Zoo Tycoon: Marine Mania
- Arx Fatalis
- Law & Order

PREVIEWS:

- Black & White 2
- Rise of Nations

GAMENOW

March 2003 On sale Feb. 18



Yu-Gi-Oh!

YU-GI-OH!

What is it about this trading card game that has entranced the nation? Find out in our tell-all review, and then learn the ins and outs in our blowout strategy guide.

REVIEWS:

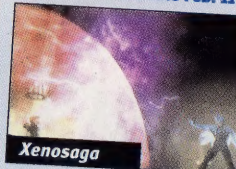
- Devil May Cry 2 (PS2)
- Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball (Xbox)
- EverQuest Online Adventures (PS2)

PREVIEWS:

- Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)
- Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire (GBA)
- Rayman 3 (PS2/Xbox/GC)

GMR

March 2003 On sale Feb. 11



Xenosaga

XENOSAGA

Lock your doors: *GMR* is loose and prowling the streets! In issue #2, we've got an exclusive, in-depth review of Namco's sci-fi spectacular, *Xenosaga*.

REVIEWS:

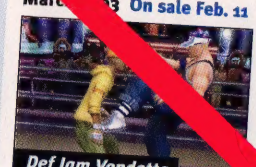
- Devil May Cry 2 (PS2)
- The Getaway (PS2)
- Impossible Creatures (PC)
- Galerians Ash (PS2)

PREVIEWS:

- Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (GC)
- Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner (PS2)
- Savage! (PC)

PlayStation MAGAZINE

March 2003 On sale Feb. 11



Def Jam Vendetta

DEF JAM VENDETTA

EA Big teams up with Def Jam to bring you the hip-hoppiest wrestler ever, starring DMX, Ludacris, Method Man, Redman, and other Def Jam artists. Fa shizzle, my nizzle.

REVIEWS:

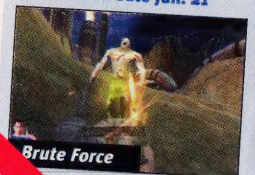
- The Getaway
- Xenosaga: Episode I
- Dark Cloud 2

DEMO DISC PLAYABLES:

- Jet X20
- Pride FC
- Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven
- Rocky
- Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner

XBN

XBN #6 On sale Jan. 21



Brute Force

BRUTE FORCE

Exclusive hands-on playtest of Microsoft's first-person shooter, *Brute Force*. Plus: Hack the planet! In-depth look at the wonderful world of modifying your Xbox.

REVIEWS:

- Panzer Dragoon Orta
- Battle Engine Aquila
- Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball

PREVIEWS:

- Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb
- Sudeki
- Big Mutha Truckers
- Duality



Playstation 2

MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Strong Lyrics
Violence

Best Fighting Game
Best Simulation



BREAK FACES



DRAW BLOOD

**FOR ALL THE PAIN HE'S IN,
QUITTING WOULD FEEL
MUCH WORSE.**

PRIDE FC
FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

WIN AT ALL COSTS



DISLOCATE LIMBS



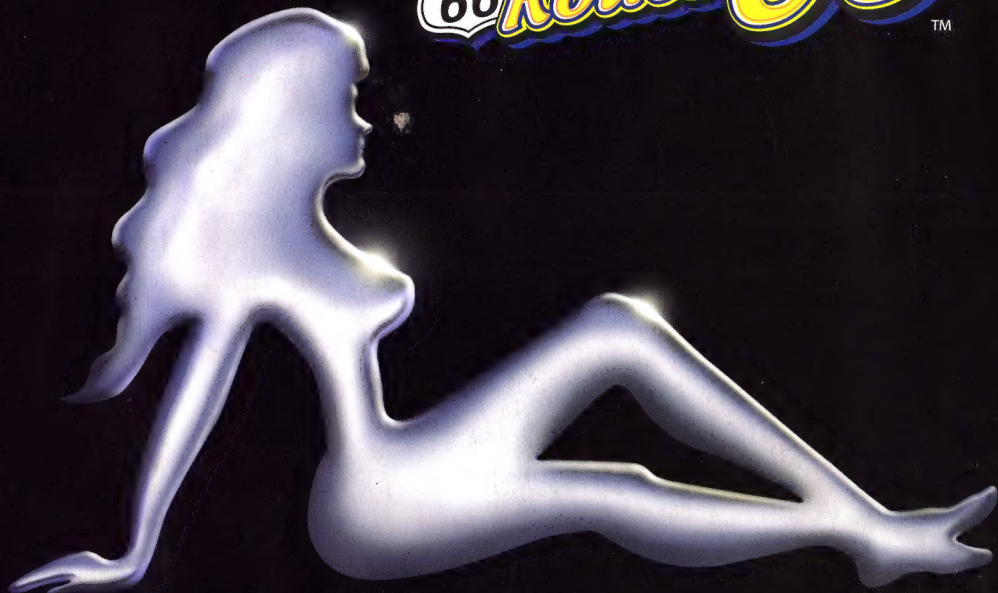
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