



SPAWN JOINS THE SOUL CALIBUR 2 CREW

VIN DIESEL
MEET HIS INNER GEEK



The #1 Videogame Mag for PS2 • Xbox • GameCube • PS1 • GBA...

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

FIGHT!

**POKÉMON
VS. YU-GI-OH!**

2 GAMES ENTER, 1 GAME LEAVE

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THE YEAR**

AND 39 OTHER
FRESH AWARDS

**FIRST REVIEWS!
FREE STRATEGY POSTER!**

THE LEGEND OF

ZELDA

THE WIND WAKER

► Kids Game or Link's Triumphant Return?

Can you believe this guy's in Soul Calibur 2, too? See pg. 34

DISPLAY UNTIL APRIL 1

**125+
GAMES!**



DEF JAM:
VENDETTA



SILENT HILL 3



PITFALL
HARRY

PLUS:

Splinter Cell (PS2),
Resident Evil Online, Dino
Crisis 3, Indiana Jones,
Final Fantasy Origins...

Issue 165

April 2003 \$4.99/\$6.50 Canada

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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.



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Blood and Gore
Violence

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

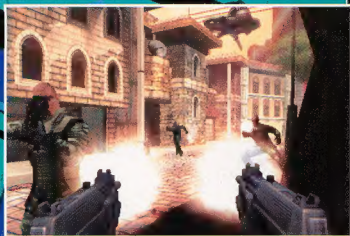


D'ETAT

overthrow the Dictator Sopot.



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



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

THE REBELS

■ SUPER SOLDIERS

ALIAS, the best of the Faction Super Soldiers. Is shown here in demolition gear.



Demolition Charges

NGL-8 Nanotech Grenade Launcher

Battle Armored Personal Combat System

THE WEAPONRY

These are only a few of the many weapons at the disposal of the Red Faction army.



■ CMRD-32 MAGNETIC RAIL DRIVER

Fires metal slugs that go through just about any barrier without losing velocity. The targeting scope makes this weapon extremely accurate.



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PlayStation 2



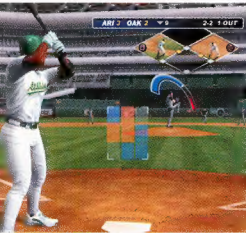
Violence

hardest part is doing anything.



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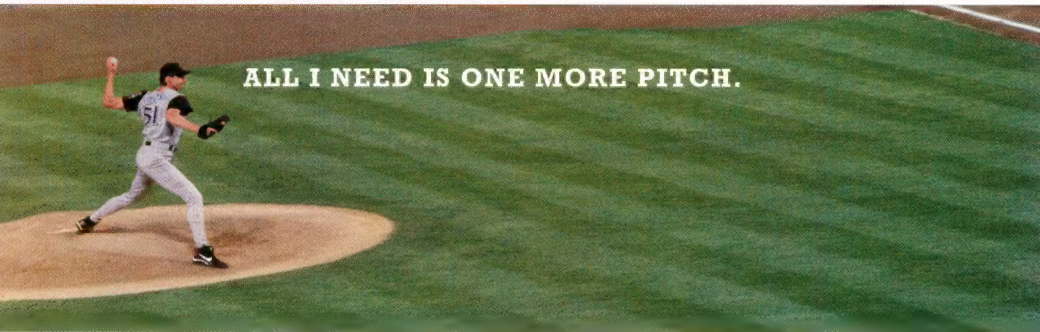


determine the optimum release point for every pitch you deliver. Then to put the potato in the catcher's cowhide,



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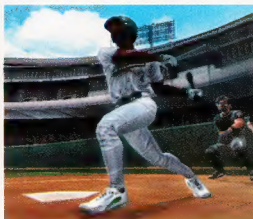
PlayStation®2





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<<< Skipper sending the sign to Sac Fly? Need to pull the pea opposite way against

the shift? With **FULL SWING CONTROL**, fend off the nasty junk the pitcher's bringing

until you see the one you like. Stay alive in the count long enough and you might get tipped off to when the pitcher leaves one in your wheelhouse.

Voula! No more ducks on the pond. Get yourself into the starting lineup at mvpbaseball2003.ea.com.

PITCHER VS. BATTER. WHAT SIDE OF THE FENCE ARE YOU ON?





PlayStation®2

Sometimes the only
way to fight evil
is to become it.

LARA CROFT
**TOMB
RAIDER**
the angel of darkness

out of the tombs. into hell.



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SET YOUR SAILS



You wanna know whether *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* lives up to the hype? Look no further than our **five-page review** where you'll learn all the odds and ends of Link's latest adventure, and how it stacks up against other games in this storied franchise.

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And the winner is...



Did *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* reign supreme, or has the long-awaited return of Samus to a Nintendo console prevail? Why not end all of the suspense by reading our **2002 Gamers' Choice Awards** feature.

Interested in the new **GBA SP**? Check out our hands-on impressions on **page 32**.



See each console's exclusive *Soul Calibur 2* character on **page 34**.

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Your survival-horror appetite is sure to be satisfied with **Silent Hill 3**, **Resident Evil Online**, and **Dino Crisis 3**. Vampire hunting returns to the GBA in the form of Konami's **Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow**. We also have an exclusive first look at **Pitfall Harry** for PS2, GC, and Xbox.

110	Review Crew
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Yes, we actually did review more than just **Zelda**. Read what we had to say about **Def Jam Vendetta**, **Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven**, **Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb**, **Final Fantasy Origins**, and even **Yu-Gi-Oh!**

138	Tricks
-----	--------

We provide all the necessary tips for those struggling **Panzer Dragoon Orta** players, and offer additional hints for **Vice City**.

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EDITORIAL

By Dan "Shoe" Hsu



In EGM You Trust

We're an opinionated bunch. We can't help it. Our magazine was founded on the principles of tell-it-like-it-is gaming journalism, so we're going to speak our minds.

This no-BS attitude isn't without its drawbacks. Naturally, it means some of you will agree with what we say, some won't. It also means some of you will accuse us of being biased. A few of you have even claimed we cater to advertisers!

We can deal with these remarks—it comes with the territory. If we played it safe all the time, we wouldn't get any hate mail, and we'd have nothing to read at night before we go to sleep. Plus, we get a kick out of hearing we're anti/pro PlayStation 2, anti/pro GameCube, and anti/pro Xbox—simultaneously. Still, I'd like to use this space to explain our editorial philosophy. Please read this handy FAQ.

Q: Is EGM biased?

A: Yes. Toward good games.

Q: Do the editors prefer some genres or game systems over others?

A: Yes. But this doesn't affect our objectivity. It's important that we review all games equally and fairly. But we're human, just like we assume you

are, so we have different ideas as to what's good or bad. That's why we use a three-reviewer system: so you get a more diverse and better sampling of opinions.

Q: What if a game company threatens to pull advertising over low-scoring reviews?

A: If they threaten to pull ads—and they have—we tell them to go right ahead. At our magazine, nothing is allowed to influence a reviewer. No matter what a game company says or threatens to do, our editorial voice is independent, firm, and uncompromising.

Q: Have the Review Crew members taken bribes in exchange for better review scores?

A: We've made as much "side" money as you have IQ points, apparently.

I tell you these things so you know you can completely trust what we write in the pages of this magazine. You may not agree with us all the time, but you can sleep easy knowing we're honest and fair. We know reader faith is something we have to earn—and it's something we can never put a price tag on.

That's our opinion, anyway.

—Shoe, Editor-in-Chief

Contributors



Scott Steinberg

Our people did lunch with Mr. Steinberg's people to negotiate our interview with celebrity gamer Vin Diesel, whose people promptly threw our people out a window.



Jon Quiljak

Only a mathematical genius like Jonny boy here could handle reviewing flight sim *Aero Elite* while simultaneously constructing our crossword puzzle. With his feet.



Joe Fieldler

After Joe languished in the face of ultimate horror to write this month's *Silent Hill 3* preview, we offered him a scarier task: the job of Reviews Editor. Bwa ha ha...



Dan Leahy

Danny boy is our ace in the hole when it comes time to tackle soccer bopping, ball-busting, and the like. This month, Sports reviews *High Heat '04* and *Winning Eleven*.



Seanbaby

Seanbaby has friends in every village from here to the Sudan. He speaks 12 languages. He'll blend in. Disappear. None of that saved him from reviewing *Rugrats: Royal Ransom*.



Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

Todd Zuniga, Chris Baker, Gary Steinman, and little Sammy Kennedy assisted this month, writing some reviews so we could play a few bitchin' 16-player *Halo* matches.



GameNOW

Ethan Einhorn is one of the few men over 13 who understands *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, so we let him review games, from a safe distance, along with Phil Theobald and Miguel Lopez.



IGN

It's hip, it's stylin', it has even transcended vowels—there's only one *GMR*. This month, James Mielke and Tom "Poop" Price let their critical acumen to our Review Crew.



XBN

Chou and Greg Orlando—*XBN*'s power duo—are not afraid to get their hands dirty and/or put their backs into it. And they don't mind helping us with reviews, either.



Charles Ernst

Chuck's an experienced 3D artist (www.digitalcrufridge.com) who rendered our Robot the Awards Robot, lovable mascot of the Gamers' Choice Awards. Eat that, Pixar.

Second-Prize Winners:

Philipp Brooklyn, NY
Terrance Columbus, GA
Christopher Orange, CA
Steven Astoria, NY

Third-Prize Winners:

W..... Des Moines, IA
Wen..... New Martonville, WV
Chris New Paltz, NY
Todd Columbia, MS
Chris Fenelon, MO
Tim Omaha, NE
Dawn Savannah, GA
Chad Whitefield, IN
Matt Florence, KY
Kimberly Waterloo, IA

Ziff Davis and Sega congratulate the winners of the *PlayStation Online* contest on Gamers.com!

Grand Prize Winner:

Ian Cartersville, GA

Editor-in-Chief: Dan "Shoe" Hsu • shoe@ziffdavis.com
Executive Editor: Mark MacDonell • mark_macdonell@ziffdavis.com
Managing Editor: Jennifer Tiso • jennifer_tiso@ziffdavis.com
Features Editor: Crispin Boyer • crispin_boyer@ziffdavis.com
News Editor: Chris "C" Johnson • chris_johnston@ziffdavis.com
Reviews Editor: Greg Sewart • greg_sewart@ziffdavis.com
Preview Editor: Shane Bettenhausen • shane_bettenhausen@ziffdavis.com
Editor at Large: Dennis Lien • denlia@ziffdavis.com
Associate Editor/Production Designer: Paul Byrnes • paul_byrnes@ziffdavis.com
Associate Editor: Bryan Kohler • bryan_lath@ziffdavis.com
Tricks Editor: David Hodgson • tricks@ziffdavis.com

Art Director: Monica Martinez • monique_martinez@ziffdavis.com
Assoc. Art Director: Stefan Belayev • stefan_belayev@ziffdavis.com

Copy Chief: Kristen Salvatore • kristen_salvatore@ziffdavis.com
Copy Editors: Greg Ford • greg_ford@ziffdavis.com
Tom "Tbone" Edwards • tom_edwards@ziffdavis.com

Contributors: Jeffery Scott Shalberg, Seanbaby, Jonathan Dudlak, Dan Leahy, James Mielke, Sam Kennedy, Chris Baker, Gary Steinman, Todd Zuniga, Miguel Lopez, Greg Orlando, Cha Chou, Ethan Einhorn, Tom Price, Casey Lee, Charles Ernst, Norm Scott, Andre Slobyan, Nik Schultz, Colin Adams

International Editor: John Riccardi
Japanese Correspondent: Yotaka Ohkubo

Manufacturing Director: Carlos Lago
Senior Production Manager: Arnie Arias Miguel
Art Production Manager: Michele Voltaggio-Massouss
Assistant Production Manager: Teresa Newsum

Vice President/Frame Group: Dale Strang
Editorial Director: John Davidson
Creative Director: Steven Cox
Business Director: Cathy Bendoff
Senior Newsstand Sales Manager: Dan Galen

Group Circulation Director: Tracy Schultz
Single-Copy Sales Director: Bob Kenick
Internet and Partnership Marketing Director: Chris Wilkes

Advertising Inquiries Contact: Game Group
300 and Street, 8th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone: 415-547-8978

Subscription Service Number: 800-275-2774 (United States and Canada)
Website: <http://ziffdavis.com/gamemag>

PLEASE SEND ALL SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS TO: 300 and Street, 8th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105
DO NOT CONTACT THE EDITORS RE: SUB PROBLEMS

Group Publisher: Lee Unicko
415-547-8974 • lee_unicko@ziffdavis.com
Group Associate Publisher: Stan Laigen
415-547-8975 • stan_laigen@ziffdavis.com

KEY ACCOUNTS WEST
Regional Sales Manager: Marc Yamaguchi
415-547-8944 • marc_yamaguchi@ziffdavis.com

Account Executive: Amy Mishra
415-547-8976 • amy_mishra@ziffdavis.com
District Sales Representative: Mary Gray
415-547-8978 • mary_gray@ziffdavis.com

Account Executive: Aaron Gallion
415-547-8995 • aaron_gallion@ziffdavis.com
MIDWEST:
Regional Sales Manager: Marc Callison
630-810-0595 • marc_callison@ziffdavis.com

EAST:
Regional Sales Manager: Ian Sinclair
303-955-5795 • ian_sinclair@ziffdavis.com

Account Executive: Mary Larson
415-547-8926 • mary_larson@ziffdavis.com
SOUTH:
Regional Sales Manager: Julie Knapp
310-379-4321 • julie_knapp@ziffdavis.com

Account Executive: Emily Dilmas
415-547-8978 • emily_dilmas@ziffdavis.com

Online Sales: Bill Young • 415-547-8433
Marketing Director: Roy LeDda
415-547-8975 • roy_ledda@ziffdavis.com

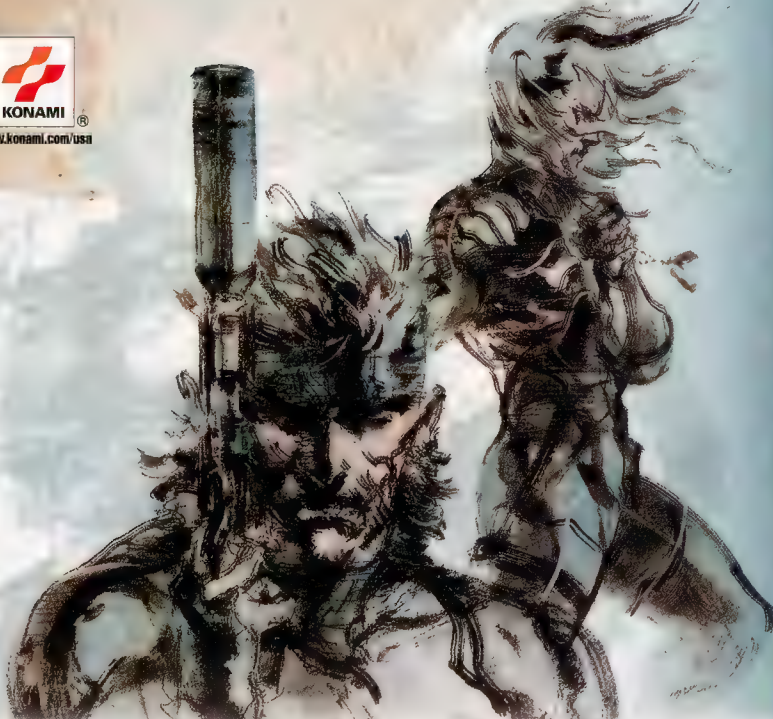
Marketing Associate: Wayne Sills
415-547-8948 • wayne_sills@ziffdavis.com
Senior Advertising Coordinator: Tiger Libbehold
415-547-8949 • tiger_libbehold@ziffdavis.com

Senior Sales Associate: Amanda Nelson
415-547-8978 • kristen_jain@ziffdavis.com
Amanda Nelson
415-547-8975 • amanda_nelson@ziffdavis.com

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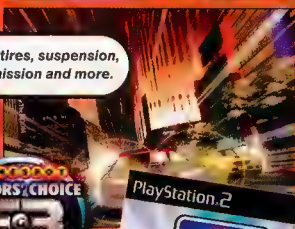
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Letters to the Editors

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Fanboys = Teh Suck

Congratulations, Douglas Christensen, Jr.! You win a copy of our game of the month, *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*, by the good folks at Nintendo. Go pick up that GameCube post haste.



It was good seeing *EGM* talk about and poke fun at fanboys [*EGM* #163], the breed of gamer that sometimes crosses the line to insanity. I can't count the number of times I've seen a normal message-board user voice his honest opinion, only to be flamed and humiliated by these fanboys and their strange ways.

I was recently on Gamers.com and the user XboxTerminator wrote in a user review for *Splinter Cell*, and I quote, "The Graphics look Seriously Outdated...The Xbox just cant Keep up with PS2 and GC in Graphic Performance," and he finishes up his review with a nice, big ASCII art of someone giving the middle finger with, in big capital letters, "GO TO HELL, XBOX QUEERS!!!!!"

Maybe I missed the psychology class in high school where they discuss people's attachment to objects, but I really can't understand this fan-

boy thing. My Xbox, PS2, PS1, and Super Nintendo sit together in a nice little area of my bedroom, and once a little more money rolls in, GameCube will be there, too. The only way I can see justifying fanboyism is if [insert game system here] had an electrical short, burned down your house, and you lost your cat in the inferno. Obviously, you're going to dislike said game system for emotional and psychological reasons. Now, if you will excuse me, I'm going to go play my Super Nintendo. "Cause it rulez!!"

Douglas Christensen, Jr.
doug_and_carmen@yahoo.com



Gangsta Gates

A few weeks ago, I was getting ready to play a few hours of sweet, delicious *Halo*. Out of curiosity, I decided instead to check out the music library on my Xbox. To my surprise, there was already a file there, even though no one has ever put any tracks on it since we bought it. The file was called Killa Cutz, or something like that, and it had about 20 tracks of pretty obscene rap on it.

Unless my 11-year-old brother has a taste for gangsta rap, these tracks were already on the Xbox when we got it. Has this happened to anyone else?

Natalie Quick

So, let's get this straight...you don't even suspect your little hellion of a

brother? Although, the idea of Bill Gates loving the Geto Boys' "Damn It Feels Good To Be A Gangsta" so much he puts it on every Xbox does have a certain appeal.

When Animals Annoy

In *Animal Crossing*, how many tuck-up tightwadcs can move into one town? Almost everyone in my town is cranky all the time.

josh3gamefreak@aol.com

Our advice? Spend some personal time with Michael Jackson's "Man In The Mirror" on repeat and get back to us.

Review Crew Goes Global

Each month you print a number of reviews for games that appear on multiple platforms. Would you please explain how it is determined which platform a particular title will be reviewed on? What I mean is, do you

SHORTS

Are you going to make *Final Fantasy Tactics* for PS2? Ballinbooyk12003

We have no plans to make *Final Fantasy Tactics* for PS2 at this time.

Hey *EGM*, who is your all-time favorite classic movie monster? Greg iMac

Gamera. You can't mess with a giant fire-breathing turtle that flies by jet power and loves children.

I hate it how people just write in to complain! LOL! Daniel Gratie

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Also note: We don't have the man hours, the wherewithal, or the technology to answer every letter, but we read 'em (sometimes skim), so don't say we never did anything for ya

Cosplay Korner

Cosplay was pick #1. The practice of dressing up as a favorite videogame or anime character. See also: crime and insanity.

Readers have been nooding out a small box with pictures of themselves in cosplay outfits. OK, they haven't really. We had to go out to the scary internet and spend hours looking for them. And we're at it again.



multiplatform titles, we generally review the first version we can get our hands on due to time constraints. If we get more than one version at once, which is rare, we look at which platform's review section is a little sparser that month and slot it in there. Other times, we just do what makes sense—for

pick the console that best showcases what the game can do? Do you support the older companies who you have been working with longer?

Tim McCauley

Reviews Editor Shane Bettenhausen steps up to the mike, taps it and asks if this thing's on: "Well, with

OOPS!

We know it's hard to accept, but sometimes we screw up. Remember all those great premade skater names we listed in *Tricks for Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*? Yeah...turns out fakes the Clown and Stealing is Bad don't actually work. Big ups to the guys (and gals!) at PlanetTonyHawk.com for pointing that out and tracking down all those names in the first place.

example, the *Tony Hawk* series came up on PlayStation, and that's where most of its fans are, so *THPS4* gets reviewed for PS2. Actually, we'd really like to cover every multiplatform release for each console...and it looks like we will begin doing just that very soon. Massive, life-enriching changes are afoot in the Reviews section—look out!"

Lack of Ninja Sweetness

BMX XXX, *Grand Theft Auto*, blah blah blah...we all know that these games have been under the spotlight of some overprotective parents, but what about the worst offender of them all: *Ninja Assault*? This game is just amazingly offensive. Make all the jokes you want about ninjas totally flipping out and killing pirates; that won't ruin their total sweetness. But when they give them and they become nothing more than guys in black pajamas wanting to shoot someone. Seriously, you can't cut a building in half with a pistol. Hell, you can't even make a cool "shwing" sound when you draw your gun.

Anthony Mojica

Tell it.

Metaphysical Question

Who do you think would win in a face-off: *Metroid's* Samus or *Star Wars*' Jango Fett? Are they both not bounty hunters? Do they both not kick ass? Let me know where people in the office stand on this important question.

Pedro P

Well Pedro, we really haven't spent much time thinking about it, what with work, life, and fingernails to clip. But, we'll go with Samus. Yes, Samus would win, and anyone who thinks differently doesn't know the first thing about hypothetical mano-a-mano deathmatches between characters from different licensed fantasy worlds. Of course, if we were talkin' *Boba Fett*, that might be a different story.

Elderly Gaming Monthly

Hate It

I just received *EGM* #163 and finished reading Dan "Shoe" Hsu's editorial. I agree with some of it as, yes, videogames have grown up more and more. But the thing is, you guys run a magazine where some parents have young kids, and they let them read it. What's wrong with having the idea of writing and organizing content for everyone?

Just because the average gamer is 28 means you all of a sudden have to write for 28-year-old gamers? I sure don't think so. What about a kid who likes videogames and looks to *EGM* for information? Why not have content wholesome enough for that person? It's not like 28-year-olds have this craving for cuss words in a magazine. So *EGM*, why not write for everyone? You have to think of people from young to old.

younger kids, and we're for the oldesters with their walkers, receding hairlines, and occasional blue language. A writer that way—we're better that way.

Like It

Hey Shoe, I read your little editorial in *EGM* #163, and you know what, I totally agree with you. I'm 31 and have a subscription to *EGM*. My 10-year-old stepson also reads the magazine. When *EGM* #162 came out, just like every other month, I read the magazine from cover to cover and decided that he didn't need to read the "9 Naughtiest Games" feature. So, I just clipped it out of the magazine. Nice and simple.

I don't get some people. There are all kinds of games in my house—some are games my stepson can play, and some he can't. I take the time to figure it out first, but it isn't that hard.

North Kottus



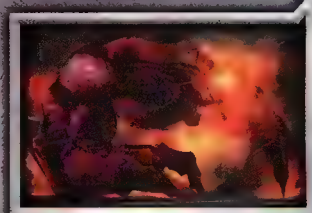
When was the last time you read *Highlights*? It's just not possible to make a magazine that an adult and a 7-year-old would both love, although some of our competitors are still trying. As Shoe mentioned, our sister magazine *GameNOW* caters to the

Think Fast, Act Fast, Or Die Fast.

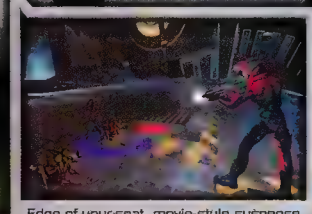
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The Rocks vs. Sucks Issue

Why is there a guy on the front cover of *EGM* #163 thinking to himself, "EGM sucks!?" Shouldn't he say "EGM rocks!" or something like that? What will your potential customers think when they pick up your magazine and see "EGM sucks!" on the front cover?

Actually, it would be kinda cool if it turned out to be the work of a disgruntled *EGM* staffer...anyways, *EGM* rocks! Greg

See, "EGM rocks" sounds good when you say it, but if we say it, it's just sad.

Kano...Loses

OK guys, I've got a complaint. It's about your *Mortal Kombat Advance* review. That game is the greatest piece of gaming goodness ever! I mean, I spend more of my time playing



SHORTS

In the Letters section of *EGM* #164, you said later model PlayStation 2s can burn CDs. I can't get the code to work.
Josh Fenderman

How queer.

Hey *EGM*, you screwed up. Your code to open the PS2 CD burner menu includes the A and B buttons—but Sony controllers don't have A or B buttons!
Charlie Forb

Is that a fact? Seems like the sort of thing we should have known. Now listen here—it was all a big lie. The PS2 can't burn CDs. No, no, no. Sorry, Charlie.

it than anything else; I can't find a single fault. As soon as I saw it in the store, I knew it was the game to rule my life. I've spent some of my best time on the john playing *MKA*. What's wrong with you guys?
Ian Ellis

Oh, we see through your clever ruse, Ian—pretending to like a terrible game just so we'll print your letter and insult you. We won't fall for it. But we will refer you to page 104 for more on *MKA*.

Retro Gams

Hey, whatever happened to that girl with the nice legs on the front of *California Games* for NES?
Vequinox



After appearing in David Lee Roth's "California Girls" video and then on the box of *Epy's California Games*, leg model Jenny "Sweet Gams" McGillicuddy suffered a career-ending shin bruise in a horrific grocery-cart collision and then moved to Tampa.

Fewer Nazis, Please

I'm having some philosophical problems with World War II first-person shooters. Two games that are really getting under my skin right now are *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* and *BloodRayne*. First, *RTCW*—supernazis and zombies? Supernazis—what the hell, did Activision's employees even go to school? That's so stupid. And zombies, Jesus-Allah-Buddha, zombies? Next, we've got *BloodRayne*. A vampire killing regular (nonsuper) Nazis. Great. Why in the hell is a vampire killing Nazis? That just sounds dumb.

And then there's the *Medal of Honor* series. Can someone please tell me why plucky Jimmy Patterson is fighting the war all by himself? There were 600,000 soldiers at Bastogne, and somehow one man does almost all the fighting? Little help?

Andy Hendrickson

Hey, you're just lucky Rayne isn't a Nazi-killing vampire ninja robot from Dimension X. ☘

QUESTION of the Moment

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

Most hyped game in a while? *Metal Gear Solid 2*. I couldn't figure out if it was a bad movie I played or a bad game I watched.
Cory Welter

I think *Sly Cooper* and the *Thievius Raccoonus* was a sleeper—what a great game. I mean, it doesn't stack up to games like *Metalroid Prime* or *Super Mario Sunshine*, but *Sly Cooper* was a good chunk of fun.

Anuj Agrawal

I believe that *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* was more hyped than any other game, ever. I don't know how this one game can get so much hype even after its release when there are plenty of other games out that are at least as good.

Stephen Harris

Wild Arms 3 was an underappreciated game. I would have missed out on an excellent RPG if a friend hadn't clued me in.

Nathan Koch

The *Getaway* got way too much hype. It's got good graphics and a good story line, but the gameplay is clunky and annoying. Most important, it's not fun!

Psychicbean2002@aol.com

Definitely *Eternal Darkness*. One of the greatest CEme games nobody bought.

Rebecca

Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball got more hype than it deserved. I like boobs and all, but I can only take so much. The game is OK, but only for the hypnotic...bouncing...boobs... "druols"

D.P. Mouser

Super Mario Sunshine is an overhyped, boring kids' game with a fruity name that got higher ratings than it deserved. All you do is shoot water on goo to collect Shines—woo hoo, so exciting. I traded it for a used *Rogue Leader* game.

Aaron S.

Next Month's Question of the Moment:

What game franchise should be retired, for the good of all humanity?

Send your brief, coherent responses to EGM@ziffdavis.com with the subject heading: **MAKE IT STOP!**

Return of Letter Art!

Yes, it's back for one month only, on account of unfinished business. Phillip Lickwar's pencil sketch of *EGM* editors Jennifer as Legolas, Shane as Aragorn, and Crispin as Gimli could not be denied, even if Jennifer does have serious man-hand action (in the drawing, of course). Though, we would have tipped Shane for the Gimli role, if Philip had asked.

Robert Wells also requested that his "color composition and blending abilities be recognized," and so we will. Cloud Strife of *Final Fantasy VII* fame, a vision in green.





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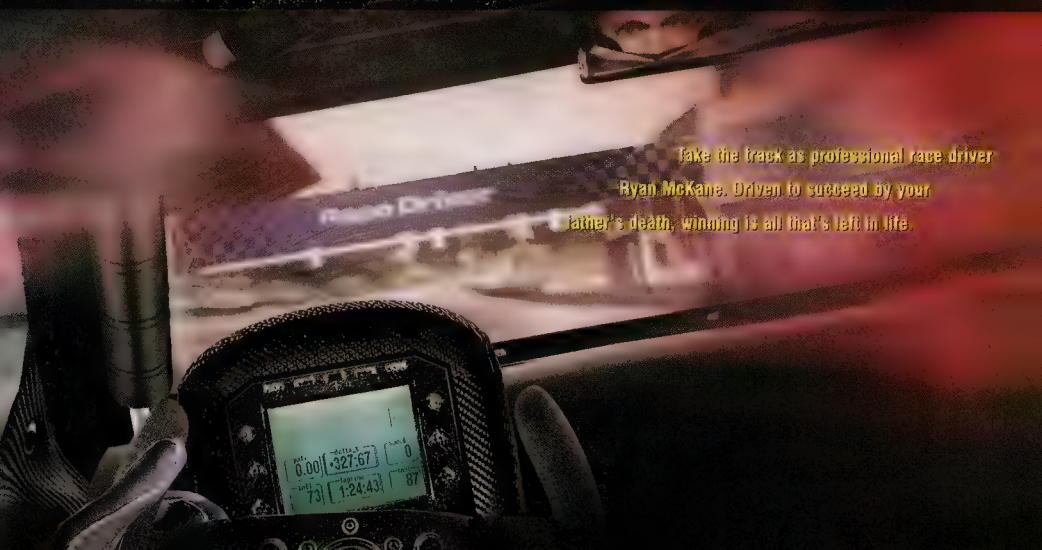
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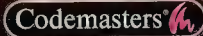


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PlayStation 2

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GENIUS AT PLAY

Screen shots taken from PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system game play.

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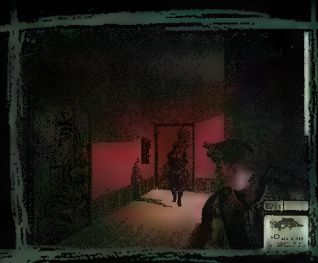
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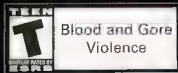
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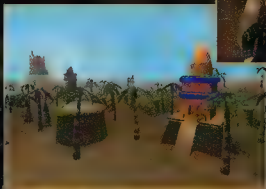
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Press Start

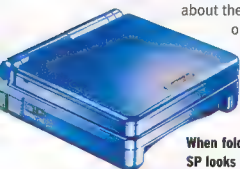
The Hottest Gaming News on the Planet

Advance Gets Enhanced

EGM takes Nintendo's new Game Boy Advance SP for a test drive

On March 23, 2003, Nintendo will launch a new iteration of its Game Boy handheld. The Game Boy Advance SP (for "special") is no more powerful than the GBA you already know. It doesn't have better graphics or sound, doesn't play MP3s, isn't a cell phone, and doesn't help you keep track of your personal finances. Rather, the SP's upgrades are mostly about aesthetics, plus two more-practical bonuses: an added screen light (so you can play in the dark) and a rechargeable battery. But you'll have to pay for these luxuries. The cool \$100 (\$99.95, to be exact) price tag is \$30 more than the current model. Is it worth it? Should you sell your current GBA to your little brother's friend before he finds out

about the SP? We had an opportunity to give the SP a try, and here's what we thought.



When folded up, the GBA SP looks like a baby laptop.



Say hello to the Game Boy you're gonna spend another 100 bucks on.

First Contact

The first things you notice about the SP are its small size and vertical layout (unlike the standard GBA's horizontal orientation). It looks more like a mature, high-tech electronic gadget. The SP folds in the center like a laptop computer or flip-style cell phone, making it small enough to slip in your pocket with ease.

At first glance, it seems too small to be comfortable, but once you've got your hands on it, you find your index fingers rest nicely on the tiny L and R buttons in the back of the unit.

Let the Light Shine

More important than the SP's new look is its light, which is mounted inside the screen cas-

Top 5 GBA games we can't wait to play with the light

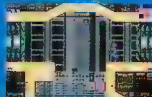
1. Castlevania: Circle of the Moon
Now we'll be able to see the dark purple outlets bosses shoot and kill us no more.



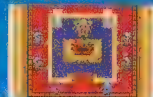
2. Castlevania: R. of Dissonance
We'll actually be able to use the castle map without seeing only eyes.



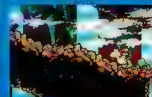
3. Metroid Fusion
Every bombable nook and speed-dashable cranny of the space station will be visible to us, finally.



4. Zelda: A Link to the Past
Now we'll never miss the small cracks in palace walls that we bombed out.



5. Mario Advance 2: Yoshi's Island
Finally, we can actually see what's going on in all those underground levels.





SUPER NES PAD FOR GC

Looking for an old-school game pad to play *Sonic Mega Collection*, or to experience all those GBA games on the GB Player (which lets you play GB games on your TV through your GameCube, coming in May) the way they were meant to be experienced? Check out this sweet baby—a GameCube controller that looks like a Super NES pad, ditching the analog stick and making the digital pad the focus for those classic 2D games. It's import-only, though, so check stores like NCS (ncs.com) or Tronix (tronixweb.com) for availability.

Five Burning GBA SP Questions

Q: Will the e-Reader work with it?

A: Yes. In fact, during our hands-on session with the SP, we busted out our e-Reader to see how it hooked up (see pic at right). You're using it to read *Animal Crossing* e-Card data, you connect the GC-GBA link cable to the link port on the SP instead of the one on the e-Reader.



Q: Are there any games that don't work on the SP?

A: The only one we know of not seen in *Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble* (the cartridge slot is now facing the other way, so the lid won't register correctly).

Q: Is it easy to replace the Lithium Ion battery if it goes bad?

A: Nintendo estimates the SP's battery will last "for several years." The company has yet to announce a repair program, but it doesn't sound like you'll be able to easily replace it yourself. Like you would two AA batteries.

Q: What does the original Game Boy game look like in this thing? Will the cartridge stick out too?

A: Not at all. The cartridge sticks out but doesn't get in the way because of the way your hands are positioned (see pic at right).



Q: OK, so if I buy this, I'll never have to buy another Game Boy ever again, right?

A: Ha! If history serves, in another two or three years, Nintendo will upgrade the Game Boy yet again.

GBA SP Road Map



ing directly below the screen. When it's on (toggled by a button on the SP's face), it lights the screen well in any condition, including total darkness, without the glare from which add-on accessory lights sometimes suffer. It's less effective than a true backlit screen, but it gets the job done.

Recharge and Go

Another impressive upgrade is the addition of a Lithium Ion battery, which Nintendo says will allow 10 hours of play with the light on (18 with it off) on a 3-hour charge. Plug the AC adapter into the wall and you can even play while it's charging. No need to worry about wasting AA batteries, since the SP uses only the built-in rechargeable.

A Sound Disappointment

If there's one disappointing aspect of the SP, it's the lack of a built-in headphone jack. Gamers wishing to hear their blips without disturbing anyone nearby will need to invest in a headphone adapter sold separately. No U.S. price has been announced for this extra, but we expect it will cost about what it does in Japan (\$5). The headphone adapter uses the same port as the

AC adapter, so you won't be able to use headphones and charge the unit simultaneously.

Final Analysis

It's sleek, it's sexy, it's cool...but \$100? If you already have a GBA, or just bought one and don't cherish the idea of spending more dough on another one, you can take a pass on the SP. The aesthetic touches are incredibly cool, but ask yourself: Do you really need another GBA? No. Still, the smaller package, rechargeable battery, and light make it very tempting, so if you don't already have a GBA, this is definitely the one to get.

—Chris Johnston

Size Matters

To get an accurate look at the GBA SP size, you've got to compare it to the standard GBA. Check out this comparison pic and take a look at your own GBA. When folded up, the SP's half the size.





PRESS
START



FOLLOW THE RABBIT

What does this mean? Patience. The answer is out there. It's looking for you, and it will find you if you want it to (next issue!).

High-Caliber Cast

Soul Calibur 2 hits all three platforms with exclusive characters

Publisher Namco recently made one of the coolest and most frustrating announcements in its history. *Soul Calibur 2*, the sequel to the best-selling and highly acclaimed weapons-based fighting game (Dreamcast, arcade), will be released in the United States this August for PlayStation 2, GameCube,

and Xbox. The cool part: Each version will feature an exclusive character unique to that platform. The frustrating part: Each version will feature an exclusive character unique to that platform—in other words, you have to buy all three to get the full experience.

In addition, all three versions will intro-

duce Necrid, a new character designed by Todd McFarlane Productions of *Spawn* fame (McFarlane Toys will also be producing a line of *SC2* action figures). Other secret fighters will appear in the console versions of *Soul Calibur 2*, but we don't know at this point if they're exclusive to any platforms.



Link

Which Version He's In: GameCube

First Appearance: *The Legend of Zelda* (NES)

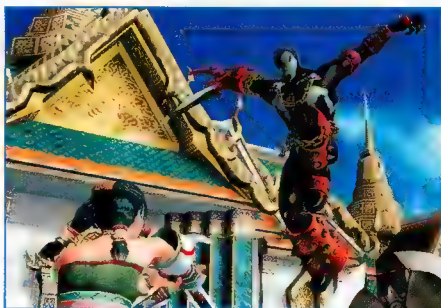
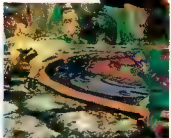
Weapons of Choice: Sword, boomerang, and bow. Yup, he'll have ranged attacks in this melee-based fighting game.

What He's Wearing: His fab green top and white tights

He's As Cool As: A Keebler elf



Link's brought along some of his *Smash Bros.* *Melee* moves for the GC *Calibur*.



The Karate Kid's got nothing on *Spawn*.

Spawn

Which Version He's In: Xbox

First Appearance: *Spawn* #1 (the comic book)

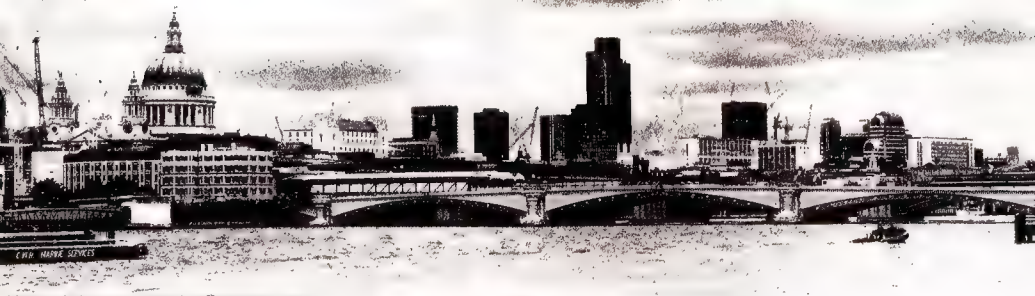
Weapon of Choice: A big, big ax

What He's Wearing: His patent-leather superhero suit and chains

He's As Cool As: A hardcore S&M Fonzie




(Continued on pg. 36)



- MAXIM

the **Getaway**

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA PRESENTS A TEAM SOHO PRODUCTION STARRING DON KEMBRY RICKY HARDS ANNA EDWARDS MICHAEL PRESTON JOE RICE
DIRECTORS OF PROGRAMMING WILLIAM BURDON AND NARESH HIRANI DIRECTOR OF ANIMATION GAVIN MOORE ART DIRECTION SAM COATES AND RAVINDER SINGH PRODUCTION DESIGN SIMON WOOD
WRITTEN BY BRENDAN MCNAMARA AND KATIE ELLWOOD ORIGINAL SCORE ANDREW HALE GAME DESIGN CHUN WAH KONG DIRECTED BY BRENDAN MCNAMARA

MATURE

 CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood
 Drug Reference
 Strong Language
 Strong Sexual Content
 Violence

PlayStation.2



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PRESS
START

Soul Calibur 2 (cont.)



POLL RAIDER

What's your take on *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*' delay?

64% Who cares? I'm, like, sooooo over Lara and her "Tomb Raider."

22% That's cool. It'll give the developers more time to get the game right.

14% Again? I'm tired of all the delays. Just lemme look at Lara's fine buttocks already!

Source: egmmag.com poll, 1/30



Heihachi



Which Version He's In:

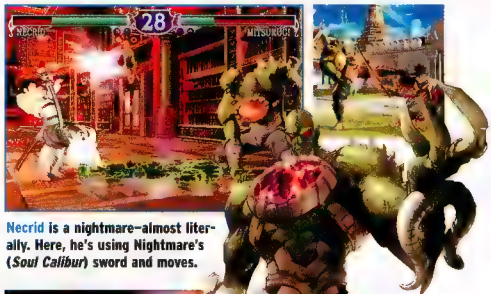
PlayStation 2

First Appearance: *Tekken* (arcade)

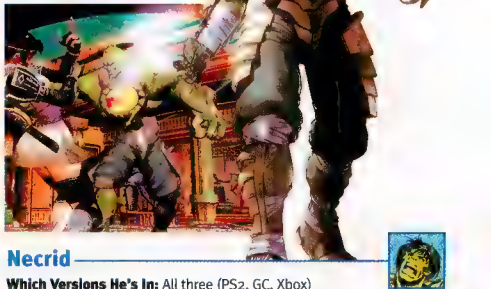
Weapon of Choice: His fists, which is silly considering this is a weapons-based fighting game

What He's Wearing: Kung-fu pants and platform sandals

He's As Cool As: Mr. Miyagi



Necrid is a nightmare—almost literally. Here, he's using Nightmare's (*Soul Calibur*) sword and moves.



Necrid

Which Versions He's In: All three (PS2, GC, Xbox)

First Appearance: This is his first appearance.

Weapons of Choice: Everyone else's—he can take on the characteristics and arsenal of the other fighters (like Inferno or Edge Master from the original *Soul Calibur*).

What He's Wearing: Some Iron Man—looking chest piece

He's As Cool As: The Incredible Hulk wearing an Iron Man chest piece



Old-man Heihachi joins fellow *Tekken*te Yoshimitsu (not pictured) in the *SC2* cast.



Delay of Game: New Tomb Raider Now MIA till May



...t when we thought Lara Croft was ready to re-face in her first PlayStation 2 adventure—*Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*, which was poised to see the light in February—developer Core Design wailed ol' Lara back in her tomb until mid-May. It's not the first time her game's submerged back into development (it was originally due last November), but Core is confident

it will be her last. "As of today [Jan. 29], we have fully playable levels and still three more months to polish the game," says Core Operations Director Adrian Smith, who has said all along that *Angel of Darkness* won't ship until it's ready. "So the May release is a very solid one."




A true fan

Knows the organist and the mascot's real identity.

Would play for free.

Has never caught a ball, but always brings a mitt.

Understands the infield fly rule.



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Screenshots from PlayStation™2 computer entertainment system

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PlayStation 2



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"This is the only next-generation title that realistically re-creates every facet of the game."

— EGM (March 2002)

"Console baseball's first grand slam."

— DPM (March 2002)

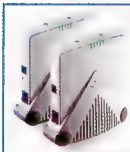
- New graphics include all new, motion-captured animations
- New Career and Franchise modes include full Minor Leagues™ system (AAA, AA, A) and unlimited seasons
- Two On Two Showdown™ mode for the ultimate quick game fun
- Improved award-winning controls, A.I., and baseball realism
- Curt Schilling consulted to create 27 individual pitch types



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PRESS
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WIRE-LESS THROUGH YOUR WIRING

A company called Phonex offers another minimal-fuss, sorta-wireless way to network gear in your house through the electrical wiring (instead of doing it the way we describe below). We're not going to go into the details here (we've probably confused you with enough networking talk for one day), but if you're feeling adventurous and think you know what you're doing, check 'em out at www.phonex.com.

Hey, Look Ma—No Wires

EGM's quick-and-dirty guide to getting your consoles online without tearing out the walls, the carpet, and your hair

The last thing you want when you're about to smoke some lamers in an online match of *MechAssault* is to get disconnected because your dog/girlfriend/wife (or a combination of all three) tripped over the mass of network cabling between your DSL/cable modem access point and your gaming rig. And who really has a giant television with surround sound sitting close to their PC and network hook-up? No one, that's who. But never fear—a wireless solution is out there, and by following our handy guide, you can set one up without days of weeping, swearing, and shouting at various network devices. We chose equipment by Linksys, a brand you'll find anywhere that sells network gear. Just follow the steps listed on the next two pages and use our handy chart to set it up. (First, a warning: *EGM* accepts no responsibility for you cooking up the whole installation process. Although it worked flawlessly for us, it may work *lawfully* for you, so keep those receipts handy in case you need to return anything.)



Wireless Shopping List

You should already have:

- ▶ Game console(s) with network adapters or Internet connectivity activated.
- ▶ Broadband (as opposed to dial-up) Internet service that works with the PS2 Network Adaptor, Xbox Live, or GameCube Broadband Adaptor.
- ▶ DSL/cable modem

You'll need to buy:

- ▶ Linksys Wireless Ethernet Bridge (WET11)
- ▶ RJ-45 Ethernet cables to hook your system(s) of choice to the WET11 (or to the Five-Port Hub, if you're connecting multiple consoles).



Linksys Wireless Ethernet Bridge (WAP11)

Also buy one of these:

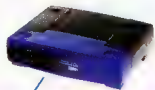
- ▶ If you already have a router between your modem and computer that directs Internet traffic, get the **Wireless Access Point Ver. 2.6 (WAP11)**.
- ▶ If you don't have a router and will need to network other equipment like your PC, get the **Wireless Access Point Router with Four-Port Switch (BEFW11S4)**.
- ▶ **Optional!** If you're looking to connect multiple consoles, get a **Linksys EtherFast 10/100 Five-Port Auto-Sensing Hub (EFAH05W)**.



Linksys Wireless Access Point (WAP11)



Linksys Wireless Access Point Router with Four-Port Switch (BEFW11S4)



Linksys EtherFast 10/100 Five-Port Auto-Sensing Hub (EFAH05W)

Step 1 — **Check to make sure you have** the Access Point and Ethernet Bridge components (though you may be able to find them for cheaper via online retailers), so that you can get the best possible quality.

Step 2 — **If you have a router, plug** the Ethernet cable into Port 1 of the router and into the UpLink port of the Wireless Ethernet Bridge (WAP11).

If you don't have a router, plug the Ethernet cable into your modem and connect

to the UpLink port of the Wireless Access Point with Four-Port Switch (BEFW11S4).

This setup should ideally be near to your home PC. Plug everything in, make sure everything's getting power (are the power lights on?), reboot your PC, install the Wireless Access Point software, and follow the included instructions to create a wireless network.

Step 3 — **Download the Wireless Ethernet Bridge (WET11),** the smaller blue box with one antenna up to any consoles just yet. First, you

need to configure it to connect to your access point. Plug an Ethernet cable into the WET11 and into the network port of your nearby PC. Follow the installation instructions that came with your WET11 to make sure that it's "ready" to be wireless.

Step 4 — **Once the WET11 is "reconfigured,"** ensure you're getting "the internet" through your computer while it's linked to the WET11. Then disconnect the WET11 from



SIT AIBO, SIT

You bought that \$2,500 Aibo 'cause it "looked so cool and futuristic," and now it's propping open your bathroom door. Well, if you have the means to play Japanese PS2 games (and if you're using a robot dog as a doorstop, we're guessing you do), you may want to look into *Deka Voice*. In this 1930s-era detective adventure, coming to Japan this spring from Sony, you use the *SOCOM* head-set to "talk" to in-game characters—and, if you hook your Aibo up to your PS2, your cyber pup will mimic the actions of your detective's canine partner. U.S. release? Don't bet on it.

Putting It All Together

To make things easy, while you're reading the steps below, you might want to follow along with this handy chart. Depending on your setup as described below, select one of the top and one of the bottom configurations.

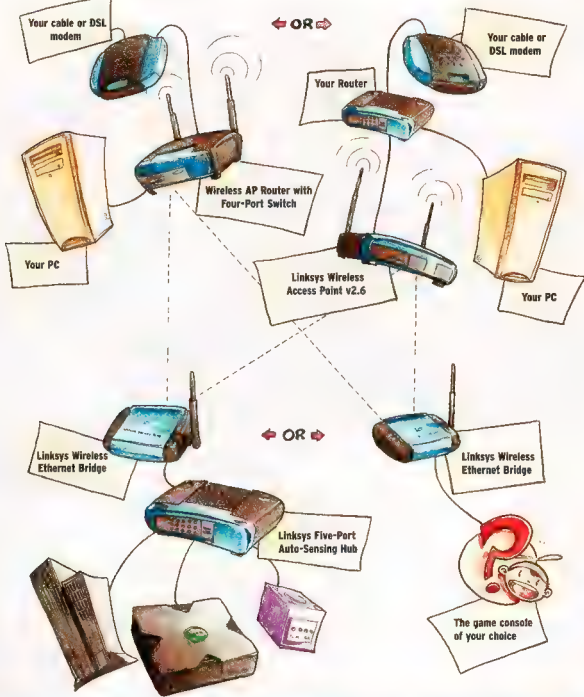


Illustration: Jeremy "Norm" Scott

...computer. Before this point, you should already have tested your console's online capabilities to be sure they work when they're wired.

If you want to connect the Wireless Ethernet Bridge to multiple Internet-enabled consoles, connect an Ethernet cable from the WET11 to the Uplink port on the Linksys EtherFast 10/100 5-Port Auto-Sensing Hub (EFAH05W). Then connect Ethernet cables from the open ports of the Hub to each of your consoles.

If you've just got one console, simply connect the WET11 with an Ethernet cable to the console of your choice. Now, begin gibbering quietly to yourself. You're welcome, baby.

Help is just a click away

Having trouble? Point your web browser to www.linksys.com/splash/webbox.asp or www.linksys.com/splash/wetps2.asp for additional assistance from Linksys on wirelessly hooking up your consoles.

IMAGE PROBLEM



EverQuest Online Adventures (Sony Online Ent., PS2) • Fantasy's classic characters, clockwise from bottom: The Dwarf lord from his hall of stone, the hard-boiled barbarian, the Elf princess of white power, and classic Power Ranger villain Space Demon Greenie (complete with pole up ass; note his expression). Here, they display understandable frustration in front of the highly inaccessible Beige Fortress of Doom That Would Actually Look Quite Scary on a Day That Wasn't So Sunny and Pleasant, No Really.

Go to Game School For Free

Want to design games for a living? Keep readin'. The Art Institute of California is doling out \$300,000 in scholarships for its Visual & Game Programming and Game Art & Design 3-year bachelor programs. You'll need to knock their socks off with your artistic or programming skills and general awesomeness, and, of course, you'll have to write an essay. Only high school and international students graduating in spring '03 are eligible, so that disqualifies some of us. E-mail aidfadm@aii.edu or call (888) 493-3261 for entry forms. Hurry—the deadline is April 30, 2003.



PRESS
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“...it’s about violence and gangsters...but I don’t think anybody ever actually feels good about the violence.”

—Getaway Director Brendan McNamara



Afterthoughts: The Getaway

London wasn’t built in a day. Well, at least not the London in Sony’s PS2 crime spree *The Getaway*. That took Sony’s Team Solo a full three years. Now that the dust has settled and the game is in stores, we sat down for tea with Director Brendan McNamara to chat about violence, turn signals, and those inevitable *Grand Theft Auto* comparisons.

EGM: When we saw the first screens of the game (before PS2 even launched), it just looked like a driving game. Did it start out that way?

BM: No. It may’ve sounded that way originally, but it was because our team worked on [the PS3 games] *Porsche Challenge* and [the Europe-only] *Rapid Racer*, so our heritage was in driving. But, we also made a few soccer games, so we had experience in character animation, too. We wanted to bring those two areas together.

EGM: That had to have been difficult. What was the biggest challenge to achieving the kind of game you wanted?

BM: The biggest challenge was letting players drive around in a car and run around on foot, never making them wait for the game to load while they’re doing it. You can walk in and out of a building, and it never takes you out of the action. It’s the same reason we didn’t want to use arrows and health bars and all that. We wanted people to look at it and just use their eyes and ears. We wanted to get rid of things that are really just arcade leftovers.

EGM: Why make players rely on things like watching their car’s turn signals to tell them where to go, or leaning up against a wall to regain health instead of the standard game conventions?

BM: This was my personal idea more than the



rush-hour traffic drives another gun-toting commuter to violence.

design team’s. I don’t want to see things that take me out of the game. If I see a big arrow telling me where to go, it takes me out of the game. So, we tried to find solutions to keep you out of that. The first time I saw the lean, I wasn’t too crazy about it. But in the end, we never came up with a solution that was better. There probably is one; someone will find it or we will. These subtle indicators ask something of your audience, but I don’t think we’re asking too much.

EGM: Did you ever have any concern that the game was too violent?

BM: One of the things I like about *The Getaway*

FOUR TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL GETAWAY

Getaway Director Brendan McNamara gives us the 411 on ways to beat some of the tougher missions in the game:

Art Appreciation: >

“I really like this level, especially with its secret ending. You can blow up the boiler and kill everyone that way rather than fighting.”



Out of the Frying Pan:

“Hide and shoot over the top of cars, ‘cause it’s just carnage in there.”

Land of Hope and Glory:

“You can just get on the crane and bypass [everything].”

When driving a police car:

“If you turn on the sirens, all the traffic in front of you parts. It’s great.”



Whether in a warehouse or a whorehouse, your best bet is always to take cover first, shoot second.



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DID YOU KNOW

...that Mark and Frank can lean against walls to regain some health? "It's an interesting compromise," muses Director Brendan McNamara. "It's no more plausible than medipacks, but it fits the nature of the game. If you just stand there, you'll get shot. If you find a safe corner, then you're set. We were tragically incompetent about that, 'cause we never put it in the European manual." Looks like the tragedy continued: It's not in the U.S. manual either.



more than other games is it's about violence and gangsters and things, but I don't think anybody ever actually feels good about the violence. It's carnage, but it's not cartoony...like, "Hey, I just shot 40 people." It's "How do I get out of this alive?" There's a lot more tension, especially when you see your character limping around hurt, and you think, "Where can I hide?" I like that the violence isn't gratuitous—it's gritty. I think that's one of the things a good story gives you. It gives you a reason to play other than just to kill 50 guys and get 100 points.

EGM: Was the story always split between the two characters, Mark Hammond and Frank Carter?

BM: It was always a design goal. Personally, I

was against it, but the team wanted both characters for two sides of the story. So, we decided that if we're gonna do it, we're gonna try to do it right. That meant having a timeline for one guy and then the other, and seeing where those two stories would cross over. I had to be convinced about it, because on paper it looked like a nightmare.

EGM: And then casting real actors—that had to be a nightmare, too. Did it work the way you planned, and would you do it again?

BM: I think it's the only way forward if you want to make the story compelling and make people believe in those characters, believe they're at risk, and feel tension. It isn't necessary to have big names; they just need to be believable.

EGM: What do you think of the comparisons between *The Getaway* and that "other" game, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*?

BM: They're legitimate comparisons. They're both underworld stories, and in both you drive around a living, breathing city. But, what sets us apart is that we have a story. There's a story to *Vice City*, but it's a smaller part of the game. The great innovation in *GTA* is the free-roaming gameplay. I think that's great because you end up with a big playbox where you can do anything. But, we didn't want to make an "I've got the biggest gun" game.

GETAWAY AGAIN



EGM: We heard there was an add-on disc planned for *The Getaway*. Care to comment?

BM: Yes, there was. But in all likelihood, we'll just go for a full-blown sequel instead, (smiles) which, of course, we haven't announced yet.

EGM: Will the sequel still be set in London?

BM: Definitely. It took us three years to build London, and none of us wants to do that again (laughs). We can add a lot like The Tube and more buildings you can go into. But, we really want to play with the characters more than anything. Do we want to go back and find out how Charlie Jolson became a gangster in London, or go forward and see what happened to Frank Carter? Is he popular for letting over half the waterfront get blown up, or is he in jail? In the first game, the audience stayed with us because Mark was the victim, but how do you pull that off if you play the bad guy? Hmm...

EGM: We waited this long for the first *Getaway*. When do you think we'll really see the next one?

BM: Unfortunately, that's our reputation. (laughs) I think the time frame will be about two years. We wanna get it out before PlayStation 3.

We get plenty of comments like, "this would be great with a sniper rifle," but that's not what *The Getaway* is about. We've taken lots of risks, but we've tried to show what the future of games might be with a great story and how cameras might work and how a game would look without all that stuff all over the screen. We know our audience is intelligent enough to get their heads around this. 🐾

TOBACCO

is
WHACKO

IF
YOU'RE
A TEEN



PRESS
START



ALIAS-ED

This fall, you'll be able to get closer than you ever thought possible to *Alias*' Jennifer Garner. Well, actually, you'll just get to play as her character, sexy CIA agent Sydney Bristow, in a third-person adventure game based on the show. It's coming in fall 2003 from Acclaim for all next-generation platforms. Acclaim, eh? Dare we hope for *Alias XXX*? Dare we stop making *BMX XXX* jokes?

Death to Pikachu?

Those damn kids have a new after-school obsession, and its name is Yu-Gi-Oh! Meet a pocket monster's worst nightmare

That Charizard *Pokémon* sticker your kid bro' lovingly stuck on his Trapper Keeper two years ago has likely been ripped off and replaced with the spikey-do'd dude you see below. Meet *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, the current playground king who's pooping all over *Pokémon*'s party...

YU-GI-OH! (not pronounced "you-gee-oh")

POKÉMON (not pronounced "poka-man")

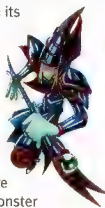


Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses (PS2)

What is the big deal? It all started as a Japanese comic book about a kid named Yugi (that's him below) who duels bad guys via a card game. But we ain't talkin' Go Fish: These cards summon monsters, traps, and mystical attacks. A real-life card game followed and, last March, *Yu-Gi-Oh!* landed in the United States with a hit cartoon followed by four Konami videogames. "*Yu-Gi-Oh!* is now the seventh most profitable property of the year," says Reyne Rice, director of The NP Group, which tracks trends in tyke gaming. That puts it up there with Hot Wheels, Star Wars, and Barbie.

Why are the kids sooooo into it? *Yu-Gi-Oh!* is following the *Pokémon* formula: It kicked off as an underground sensation, with its own arcane rules and mythology that only kids could decode and appreciate. But *Yu-Gi-Oh!* has an edge to it, too. Unlike the sugarcoted *Pokémon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*'s characters and story lines are grim (it even has an evil

CEO). Just compare this *Yu-Gi-Oh!* monster with the cuddly *Pokémon* to his right.



But are the games any good? So far, nuh-uh. But that hasn't held back series sales (the PS1 *Yu-Gi-Oh!* RPG is the top-selling PS1 title). And don't expect a surge in quality now that the franchise has debuted on PS2 with *Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses* (reviewed on page 120). You're best off reading the translated manga (available monthly in *Shonen Jump* magazine, www.shonenjump.com) if you want a *Yu-Gi-Oh!* experience anyone out of junior high can get into.

vs.

What was the big deal? Three years after launching as a Japanese Game Boy game in 1996, *Pokémon* had grown into a multibillion-buck business fueled by a megahot card game, a movie that grossed \$86 million, a cartoon series that aired 12 times a week, every type of merchandise from 150 licensees, and—of course—more top-selling videogames. Distracted students even led a few schools to ban *Pokémon*. But, then, interest in the card game cooled, toy sales slid, and the most recent movie fizzled.



Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire (GBA)

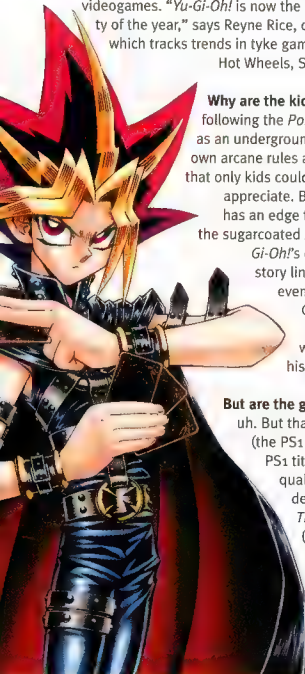
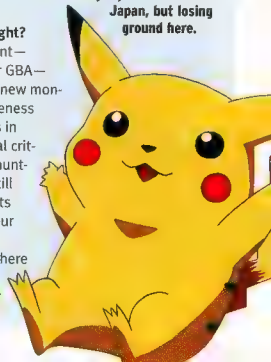
Why are the kids sooooo over it? *Pokémon*'s catchphrase, "Gotta catch 'em all!" has been fulfilled: The kids have caught all the monsters in the games and grabbed all the collectibles that their bulging toy boxes could contain. Store shelves had become saturated with *Poké*-products. "Once Wal-Mart and other mass marketers picked up on it," says Rice, "it wasn't as collectible, because you could get it everywhere." And as the franchise got more mainstream, its target audience of 9 to 14-year-olds felt less and less like the sole keepers of *Poké*-spirit. "If your parents or your 5-year-old brother shared your understanding of *Pokémon*," Rice tells us, "it's not so exciting anymore."



But the games are still good, right? The next big *Pokémon* installment—*Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire* for GBA—refines the series' formula, with new monster traits like Coolness and Cuteness (you can even enter your critters in beauty contests) and 135 original critters. But, you still spend hours hunting monsters in tall grass. You still battle trainers. Your path still gets blocked early on by a bush. If your interest in the series has waned down, you may not find enough here to pluck up your *Poké*-spirit. ☘

—Crispin Boyer

Pikachu: Still a cutie-pie powerhouse in Japan, but losing ground here.





PRESS
START

Dreamin' Up PlayStation 3

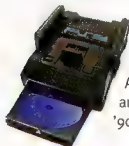
Wouldn't it be great if everything you read on the Internet was true? Hell, not only could we really super-size our private parts (or get our money back), but we'd also know all kinds of gooey details about PlayStation 3. We know it will happen eventually, but Sony hasn't officially said anything tangible about it. Of course, that hasn't stopped Web-savvy game fans from spreading some amazing rumors, speculation, and hoaxes surrounding the alleged "PS3." Let's run down the three biggest:



► **PS3 Mock-Up Logo** Testing the limits of Microsoft Paint and human imagination, one

visionary brought Web-goers this little taste of what the PS3 logo may look like. Sony ad execs, take note: The "2" has been replaced with a hipper and more with-it digit.

► **"PS3 will be 1,000 times as powerful as PS2."** Don't be fooled by this statement; "power" is a vague term. This simply means that PS3 will be capable of laser-etching its logo onto your skull and inserting itself into your dreams.



► **PS3 eBay Auction** Betamax-player styling and big, clumsy switches weren't enough to dissuade a few bidders before eBay pulled this auction.

Apparently, PS3 will utilize leftover PS2 drive bays and be able to interface with similarly designed early '90s gaming systems by way of huge, plastic wings.



Overheard

What became the first mass-produced game-playing console with a built-in hard drive and broadband capabilities, in 2001? Answer: GameCube.

Original Purpose's 50th Anniversary Edition gets one wrong (the correct answer is 2 ms—but thank you already, thank you!)



The only console to ever have a game-playing console with a plug to power the new system around the same time as rival makers (in 2005, or 2006!) — Nintendo President Satoru Iwata

"When we withdraw from the home game console [market], that's when we withdraw from the videogame business."

—Ohhhhhh, snapt Iwata checks off the "withdrawal" part
Nintendo 2006, www.nintendo.com



PRESS
START



CLASH OF THE TITANS

At this past January's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, monster-of-the-basketball-court Shaquille O'Neal (left) squared off Xbox Live-style against monster-of-the-megacorporation Bill Gates in a game of the upcoming Xbox racer, *Midtown Madness 3*. The race ended with the basketball star defeating Gates, but we're gonna guess Shaq had the advantage—his hands are the only ones big enough to hold the standard Xbox pad.

CELEBRITY GAMER

Vin Diesel: Actor, Geek, Game Developer



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. Actor Vin Diesel likes his games fast and furious, and when he's not playing them, he's making them: Diesel recently started his own game company, Tigon Games, whose first title, *Perrone*, is based on the life of a 1970s NYPD cop. So, to find out how much of a player this Hollywood hotshot really is, we sat down and grilled him about the games he spends his free time with and the quality of *xXx* for Game Boy Advance.

EGM: We've heard the rumors—now's your chance to comment. Just how much of a closet geek are you?

VD: A huge one. I love *Lord of the Rings*. *Dungeons & Dragons* is great, too—a training ground for imagination. As for DVDs, you'd have to count mine by shelf space. I have a private screening room where I play those and also get lost in whatever videogame I'm into.

EGM: Our *D&D* group is in need of **Dungeon Master**, but I'll ask you about that later. Coming from a movie background, what do you think of videogames finally maturing?

VD: It's really exciting to me. The line between movies and games is blurring. Titles like *Grand Theft Auto* are using real screenwriters—and that's fantastic. I'll spend 20 hours playing some of these suckers, like *Dynasty Warriors 3*....It's awesome.

EGM: Films have influenced many games over the years. Is the trend starting to reverse now?

VD: Not especially, but it is coming. Games themselves are becoming more cinematic. How far off can the transition be?

EGM: Is the prospect of more cinematic games exciting to you?

VD: It's not so bad, considering I love videogames so much I'm creating my own company to develop them. Wait and see.

EGM: After *xXx* for Game Boy Advance? We'd rather not.

VD: [laughs] Thanks for calling me out there. It's a shame, but you're right. It was a piece of s***. I didn't know better. Give me time—I'm learning. I promise the situation will be rectified.

EGM: It had better be, mister, or we totally won't let you be our **Dungeon Master**.

VD: Making a game I would enjoy is a hobby and personal challenge, man. Your payoff is getting to play my games. I'm bringing out several types for all platforms. But you can bet every one will be off tha' hook.

EGM: You seem to be taking a gamble in making your own games. Why put so much on the line and do it all yourself instead of leaving it to the pros?

VD: Simple. The time is right. People have wanted me to sign up to do so many games lately, I was finally like, "Screw this—it's time to do something on my own."

GBA SP Sound Off

So, what do you, our readers, think of the upcoming GBA SP? We went to our message boards at www.egm.com and asked. Here's what people told us:



watermelon: Love it! It's perfect!



The Zombie Luke adds: Like how it looks like a PD and how the screen folds down. I also applaud Nintendo for going with a rechargeable battery. The only problem I have is [that I'm] essentially buying the same system. But the excellent design makes up for it.



retired: Great game, great console, great price!



ChiefPigman comments: I love it, but I already own a GBA. There's no reason for me to buy this new one... especially with the Game Boy Player for GameCube just around the corner.

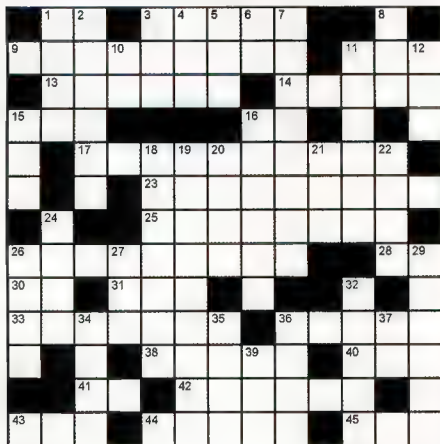


Maverick: I'm looking forward to it. I'm a fan of the GBA and I'm a fan of the SP. I'm a fan of the GBA and I'm a fan of the SP.



PRESS
START

Continuing Classics (Solution on page 142)



ACROSS

- NBA 2K3's 76er state (abbrv.)
- The Wind
- Arcade classic with insects and shrooms
- One of the *Bubble Bobble* (NES) pair
- Pokémon that evolves into Pidgeotto
- 34 down is the master of this
- Sonic's Chaos Emerald, for one
- Giants' city in *World Series Baseball* (abbrv.)
- PS2 boxer, Black
- Gearbit or Gimmick Gear
- Jike well-done textures
- Contra* revival's Soldier (PS2)
- Brought The Two Towers to PS2
- Street Fighter III's* Oro has only one
- Power Stone strongman
- Shield-chucking hero reborn on the PS2
- Pokémon #193
- This boy and his Yorda are almost never parted
- Ricky Carmichael's motocross game
- Grow-a-man-fish game (DC)
- Sonic Team Dreamcast hit remade on GameCube and Xbox (abbrv.)
- Dance Dance Revolution moves
- Mega Man 8* (PS): "I'm Aquaman, but you can call me handsome"

DOWN

- LePew of *Bugs Bunny Game Boy* games
- GameCube's *Crossing*
- Resident Evil* Code: Veronica's Alfreo wears one at times
- Like Diddy or Donkey Kong
- Use one per door in *Gauntlet*
- Completes the trio with *Edd and Eddy* on GBC
- Resident Evil* surname
- Cast appears in some really Xtreme Beach Volleyball
- Six points in NFL 2K3
- Rush 'n' Attack* (NES) heroes wear them when they're out on the town
- Acclaim's XXX sport
- Crystal Dynamics' reptilian platform star (retired)
- Season for being outside, not playing videogames inside
- Do it to "all monsters" in *GC Godzilla*
- Let Dreamcasts play PS1 games
- Mario breaks boxes with his in *Mario Bros.*
- "Down, Up, Right" on the NES *Zelda*
- Mega Man X can do it; Mega Man can't
- Played Vagabond in *Wing Commander III* and *IV*, François
- This company was called "Service Games" once upon a time
- NBA Street court material
- What *Paradise* (Japan) is to *Gradus* (NES)
- Makes some people stop gaming
- Little NES platformer star
- Take one to stop the clock in *Madden 2003*
- NFL Fever's St. Louis team
- The arcade version of Amusement Vision/Nintendo's *F-Zero*
- You can look at this in three dimensions in *Metrod Prime*



CIVILIZATION IS ONLY SKIN DEEP.



The battle to save the outside world starts within. As Jen Tate, a conflicted and unsuspecting hero, you'll assume a host of savage yet intelligent demon forms in order to save four distant realms – from decaying kingdoms submerged in poisoned waters to bleak netherworlds shrouded in eternal winter. You'll engage legions of enemies. Meet and, at times, be incarnated as Scree, an ancient and powerful ally. And ultimately face your own shocking secret. Inside and out, there is no sanctuary.

PRIMAL



Blood
Violence

LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

www.playstation.com

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PRESS
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FLICK WATCH: METROID

According to a report in movie-industry mag *Variety*, the film rights to Samus Aran's misadventures with those wily, life-sucking Metroids were recently snatched up by the producers of *Final Destination*. A *Metroid* movie release has yet to be determined, but the admittedly very cool-sounding plot will follow that of the original game fairly closely: Female bounty hunter Samus Aran is commissioned by the Galactic Federation to exterminate the Metroid menace and then stumbles on a plot to use the (i!) critters to create an unstoppable army. Hmm...sounds a bit familiar. Maybe they should cast Sigourney Weaver as Ms. Aran?

Unreal Patch-ionship



If you're fed up with the cheaters and choppy frames-rates that have plagued online games of *Unreal Championship* since its release on Xbox last

November—worry no more. Developer Digital Extremes has listened to gamers' feedback, and by the time you read this, it will have released a patch to all Xbox Live players to fix these issues. We spoke with James Schmalz (above), Digital Extremes' founder and creative director, to get the inside scoop.

EGM: First off, why release a patch now? Shouldn't the game have been perfect when it came out?

James Schmalz: The game was as perfect as possible when it shipped. Microsoft made

sure of this during its certification process. Otherwise, it never would have made it to store shelves. Online games are more complex than regular games, and exploits will invariably be found when there are hundreds of thousands of people playing. Exploits that would not be an issue in single-player mode become roadblocks to online competition. Instead of allowing the game to be ruined, we are improving it, so our fans can continue to enjoy it.

EGM: How will players know that they're downloading the patch? What in-game clues will alert them to it?

JS: After logging on to Xbox Live, there will be a prompt telling you there's an auto-update for *UC*. It will then take you back to the Xbox Live Main menu and begin downloading the patch. It is a tiny download and is a forced update.



EGM: What does this patch fix? What's the immediate benefit to the player?

JS: The main exploit [this patch will fix] allowed people to move up the rankings unfairly. Other fixes include exploits with the TAG rifle, team balancing, and map boundaries. We also wanted to include an option to turn off the antialiasing [graphic effects] to boost performance in some of the more visually complex maps. And, we wanted to include some general engine performance enhancements we have recently developed to increase the overall speed of the game. In addition to the update, we are planning a simultaneous new content download that will include four new maps.

“...exploits will invariably be found when there are hundreds of thousands of people playing.”

PS2 Castlevania, TMNT Redux, and More Coming from Konami



Although it's still relatively early in the year, Konami has already divulged some info about its upcoming 2003 lineup. So far, it's silent on the *Metal Gear Solid* front, but to tide us over there's word of a new PS2 *Castlevania*. The game is being handled by the producer of the classic PS1 *Vania*, *Symphony of the Night*, so it's OK to start drooling. Also, watch for new franchises like *Gy-Birds* (imagine *Metal Gear Solid*



with hot nima chicks) and *Toad McArtair* *Monsters* (a 3D action game with character designs by the creator of *Spawn*). Old-school gamers and young tykes alike should also get psyched for the return of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* on PS2 and GameCube. It's a classic beat-'em-up in the vein of the beloved *TMNT* arcade brawlers of yesteryear, graphically updated and based on the new Fox Saturday-morn-



Inspired from the new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

ing cartoon. It will no doubt remind us all of the constant pizza-eating and “Cowabunga!” proclamations of our youth. Last but not least are new installments of the classic space-shooter series *Gradus* and *Dance Dance Revolution* (suitably titled *DDR Max 2*...betcha didn't see that coming), headed to PS2 this fall.

We don't know whether to laugh or cry. Peter Molyneux, the famed designer whose muffed Lionhead Studios has promised many console games but has yet to ship one, and Jeff Minter, prolific programmer of multiple versions (on failing systems) of the arcade-classic shooter *Tempest*, have joined forces. Their mission? To create a GameCube music-and-light show that's also a game called *Unity* (left). Based on their track records, expect it to suffer delay after delay until it is abruptly cancelled in favor of a llama picture-taking game.



Quartermann — Game Gossip & Speculation

It's spring again, a time of rejuvenation and contemplation. It's also the time when many game companies are planning their line-ups for May's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles. And if any of the current gossip holds true, it should be very exciting indeed. So, let's cut with the pleasantries and get right to it:

SP's missing feature hints at GBA Next

When Nintendo unveiled the Game Boy Advance SP (see page 32), one heavily rumored feature was missing—**wireless capability via Bluetooth**. Nintendo has already dabbled in the world of Bluetooth, RF communication with its Wavebird wireless GC controller, and it was heavily rumored that this feature would be similarly set up on SP, so you could play with friends up to 30 feet away. Not only that, but the wireless link would supposedly be compatible with the Wavebird's receiver so the SP could double as a wireless controller for playing GBA games on GC via the upcoming Game Boy Player peripheral. Exciting, eh? But all that was pulled for unknown reasons. Current speculation indicates that Nintendo might eventually release a peripheral that gives both the standard and SP GBAs wireless capability—or, more likely, we'll have to wait for the next-generation GBA, which is already in the works (but don't worry, it's still a few years off)....

Sequel Roundup: Metroid, Metal Gear, and more

Even though some of you out there haven't even finished *Prime* yet (hurry it up already), the boys at developer Retro Studios are already thinking about a new *Metroid*. It's still in the preliminary stages, but the good news is, we won't be waitin' another eight years for a new *Troid*.... Even closer on the radar is *Metal Gear Solid 3*, which is apparently further along in development than anyone dared anticipate. The Q's sources indicate we may even see the first footage from Kojima & Co.'s latest *MGS* at E3 this May.... And while we're on the subject of

sequels, Midway's apparently in the early stages of a new game in its *Rush* racing series (*San Francisco Rush*, *Rush 2049*). Let's hope the rumors The Q's heard about turning it into a *Twisted Metal Black* clone with car-combat arenas are false. That, my friends, would be a waste of a good arcade racer.... EA Games will have another *James Bond* title ready for aspiring secret agents later this year. Expect a new one every year as long as the titles keep raking in the dough like 2002's *NightFire*.... Also down the line (but far enough off to where I'm not even sure I should mention it...ah, what the hell) is a remake/revival of Capcom's *Bionic Commando*....



It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a portable Xbox

Yes, Q-fans, I said "portable." Now, insert any jokes you like (I'll even make a couple myself), but Bill Gates commented in early January at the Consumer Electronics Show in Vegas that by 2006 we could see a **portable Xbox**. Wait....has the man finally gone mad with power? That huge, monolithic, behemoth of a console (told you I was gonna make jokes)...portable? Blizzle bizzle! Well, actually, the more likely scenario (and the one you truly has heard/throw around most often) is that it will be a portable based on Xbox's architecture, minus the things that make the current console bulky: Bye-bye, hard drive...sayonara, four controller ports...auf wiedersehen, huge controller!

The Hot Q: Sony to enter Nintendo's turf?

The rumblings about a handheld game system from Sony have returned. The project, code-named Play Boy (which is not a portable PS1 and won't use CDs as its delivery medium), has reportedly been revived. We could hear something more concrete later this year, possibly even as early as E3.

That's all for this month, folks. If you feel like dropping me a line, send e-mail to quartermann@ziffdavis.com. I can't answer (anything) The Q says can and has been used against him, but at least you'll know I'm reading your transmissions. Until next time, rumor fiends.

—The Q

Bits of Q



Rumors indicate that Nintendo's *Mario Golf*, *Tennis*, and *Kart* will all be introduced at E3 and will sport the prefix "World Smash" (referencing their online playability).

LucasArts' planned massively multiplayer online RPG *Star Wars Galaxies* might skip PS2 altogether and go straight to PS3 (but should still be coming to Xbox).

Sega's Amusement Vision (*Super Monkey Ball*) is working on a new Xbox exclusive that's only playable online, via Xbox Live (no offline mode). It's early in development and there's no word about what kind of game it is, but it's expected to hit after the Xbox port of Sega's arcade fighter *SpikeOut Extreme*.

Nintendo's new GC *Pokemon* is actually two games: a *Pokemon Stadium*-type game with the working title *Colosseum* and a straight-up RPG.

Another *Medal of Honor* is coming, this time focusing on World War II's Pacific Theater (i.e., Pearl Harbor, not like the movie). And that's not all—another *Medal* is in the works after this.





PRESS
START

Charts - December 2002

TOP 20 BEST-SELLING GAMES

1	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Rockstar	10 Che	10 Greg S	10 Milkman	PS2		
2	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai InfiniFrames	8.0 CJ	7.5 Phil	7.0 Shane	PS2		
3	Madden NFL 2003 EA Sports	9.0 Jon	9.5 Dan L	9.5 Dean	PS2		
4	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Ubi Soft				PS2		
5	Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers EA Games				PS2		
6	Legend of Zelda: Link to the Past Nintendo				GAME BOY ADVANCE		
7	Yu-Gi-Oh! The Eternal Duelist Soul Konami				GAME BOY ADVANCE		
8	James Bond 007: NightFire EA Games				PS2		
9	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 Activision O2				PS2		
10	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance Midway				PS2		
11	Kingdom Hearts Square EA				PS2		
12	ATV Offroad Fury 2 Sony CEA				PS2		
13	WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth THQ				PS2		
14	Metroid Prime Nintendo				PS2		
15	Metroid Fusion Nintendo				GAME BOY ADVANCE		
16	Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets EA Games				GAME BOY ADVANCE		
17	Gran Turismo 3 A-spec Sony CEA				PS2		
18	SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Sony CEA				PS2		
19	NBA Live 2003 EA Sports				PS2		
20	Super Mario Advance 3 Nintendo				GAME BOY ADVANCE		

Source: NPD TRSIS Video Games Service. Call Data Watchdog at (516) 832-6000 for additional reporting. This list is a close approximation of the game units sold in the U.S.

TOP 10 RENTALS

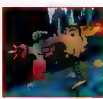


1	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Rockstar	PS2	
2	LOTR: The Two Towers EA Games	PS2	
3	James Bond 007: NightFire EA Games	PS2	
4	WWE Smackdown! Shut Your Mouth THQ	PS2	
5	Dead to Rights Namco	PS2	
6	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 Activision O2	PS2	
7	Madden NFL 2003 EA Sports	PS2	
8	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance Midway	PS2	
9	Conflict: Desert Storm Gotham Games	PS2	
10	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 EA Games	PS2	

Source: Blockbuster Video, December 2002

TOP 10 BEST-SELLING GAMES IN JAPAN

1	Pokemon Ruby/Sapphire Nintendo	GAME BOY SPREAD	<p>Even though this sales chart is swarming with PlayStation 2 titles, <i>Pokémon</i> remains the top dog. Nintendo has sold close to 4 million copies of <i>Ruby/Sapphire</i> in Japan. Also, with its strong second-place showing, Sony's <i>Ratchet & Clank</i> is trying to break the trend of U.S.-developed games not succeeding overseas.</p>
2	Ratchet & Clank Sony CEI	PS2	
3	Kingdom Hearts Final Mix Square	PS2	
4	Winning Eleven 6 Konami	PS2	
5	Momotaro Densetsu 11 Hudson	PS2	
6	Mega Man Battle Network 3 Capcom	GAME BOY SPREAD	
7	Unlimited Saga Square	PS2	
8	Zelda: The Wind Waker Nintendo	GAME BOY SPREAD	
9	Mario Party 4 Nintendo	PS2	
10	Tales of Destiny 2 Namco	PS2	



Ratchet & Clank

Source: Weekly Famitsu, week ending 1/5/03

JOHN ABRAHAMS

'KIDS', 'OUTSIDE PROVIDENCE', 'DEAD MAN WALKING',
'SCARY MOVIE', 'MEET THE PARENTS', 'ROST IN PUBLIC'



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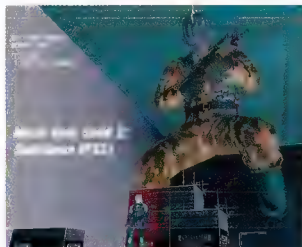


PRESS
START

Coming Soon

March

Aero Elite: Combat Academy (Flight)	PS2
Amplitude (Music)	PS2
Auto Modellista (Racing)	PS2
Batman: Dark Tomorrow (Action)	PS2, GC, Xbox
BattleBots (Action)	PS2, GC
The Chessmaster (Chess—duh)	PS2, Xbox
Clock Tower 3 (Adventure)	PS2
Colin McRae Rally 3 (Racing)	PS2, Xbox
Crazy Taxi: Catch a Ride (Driving)	GBA
Def Jam Vendetta (Wrestling)	PS2, GC
Dynasty Warriors 4 (Action)	PS2
Falcone: Into the Maelstrom (Action)	Xbox
Fila World Tour Tennis (Sports)	Xbox
Haven: Call of the King (Action)	GC, Xbox
Indiana Jones & the Emperor's Tomb (Adv.)	PS2, Xbox
Jet Grind Radio (Action)	GBA
The King of Route 66 (Racing)	PS2
The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (Adventure)	GC
The Lost (Action)	PS2, Xbox
The Lost Vikings (Action)	GBA
Lufia: The Ruins of Lore (RPG)	GBA
Marvel vs. Capcom 2 (Fighting)	Xbox
Mega Man & Bass (Action)	GBA
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (Action)	PS2
Mercedes-Benz World Racing (Racing)	Xbox
Midnight Club II (Racing)	PS2
MLB 2004 (Sports)	PS2
MLB SlugFest 20-04 (Sports)	PS2, GC, Xbox
MotoGP 3 (Racing)	PS2
Murakumo: Mech Hunter (Action)	Xbox
MVP Baseball 2003 (Sports)	PS2, Xbox
My Street (Misc.)	PS2
NBA Street Vol. 2 (Sports)	PS2, GC, Xbox
Phantasy Star Online Episode I&II (RPG)	Xbox
Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire (RPG)	GBA
Primal (Action)	PS2
Pro Race Driver (Racing)	Xbox
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc (Act.)	PS2, GC, Xbox, GBA
Red Faction II (Action)	GC, Xbox
Return to Castle Wolfenstein (Action)	PS2, Xbox
Sega Rally Championship (Racing)	GBA
The Sims (Sim-ulation)	GC, Xbox
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo (Puzzle)	GBA
Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus (Fighting)	Xbox
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven (Action)	PS2
Top Angler (Sports)	GC, Xbox
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell (Action)	PS2



WWE: Crush Hour (Non-Wrestling Action)	PS2, GC
World Series Baseball 2K3 (Sports)	PS2, Xbox
World Soccer Winning Eleven 6 Int'l (Sports)	PS2
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner (Action)	PS2

April

Backyard Baseball (Sports)	GC
Brute Force (Action)	Xbox
Enter: Desert Storm (Action)	GC
DromeZ (Action)	Xbox
Gladius (RPG)	PS2, GC, Xbox
Golden Sun: The Lost Age (RPG)	GBA
Hamtaro: Ham Ham Heartbreak (Misc.)	GBA
High Heat Baseball 2004 (Sports)	GC
Ikaruga (Shooter)	GC
Midnight Club II (Racing)	Xbox
RTL: Red Rock (Action)	PS2, GC
Silent Hill 3 (Action)	PS2
Ultimate Muscle (Wrestling)	GC, GBA

May

Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow (Adventure)	GBA
Celebrity Deathmatch (Fighting)	PS2, Xbox
Enter the Matrix (Action)	PS2, GC, Xbox
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter (Action)	PS2, GC, Xbox
Mafia (Action)	Xbox
Malice (Action)	PS2, Xbox
Mega Man Network Transmission (Action)	GC
Space Channel 5: Ulala's Cosmic Attack (Act.)	GBA
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell (Action)	GC, GBA
Warlo Ware, Inc: Mega Microgame\$ (Action)	GBA
Wario World (Action)	GC
WWE Raw 2 (Wrestling)	Xbox



IMPORT CALENDAR

Import Pick of the Month

Initial D: Special Stage



Anime fans, start your engines! Sega's bringing home the goods with the PlayStation 2 conversion of their popular (in Japan) arcade racer, *Initial D: Special Stage*. Based on a wildly successful anime and weekly manga (comic book) series, *Initial D* stars 18-year-old Takumi Fujiwara, who loves to race cars. The home version features an all-new Story mode and a one-on-one Battle mode where players can compete for points that can be used for upgrading vehicles. Fans interested in the series should check out the U.S. release of the manga and anime from our friends at TokyoPop (www.tokypop.com).

PlayStation 2

2/27	<i>Sakura Taisen</i> , Sega (Simulation)
2/27	<i>Shin Megami Tensei III: Nocturne</i> , Atlus (RPG)
2/27	<i>Star Ocean 3: Till the End of Time</i> , Enix (RPG)
3/6	<i>Chaos Legion</i> , Capcom (Action)
3/13	<i>Final Fantasy X-2</i> , Square (RPG)
3/13	<i>Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution</i> , Sega (Fighting)
3/20	<i>Arc the Lad: Spirits' Twilight</i> , SCEI (RPG)
3/27	<i>Initial D: Special Stage</i> , Sega (Racing)
3/27	<i>Soul Calibur II</i> , Namco (Fighting)

GameCube

3/6	<i>Rockman EXE Transmission</i> , Capcom (Action)
3/27	<i>P.N.03</i> , Capcom (Action)
3/27	<i>Soul Calibur II</i> , Namco (Fighting)
Apr.	<i>Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles</i> , Nintendo (RPG)
Apr.	<i>Star Fox Armada</i> , Nintendo (Shooting)

*Schedule subject to change without notice. Consult your local import-game store for the latest release info I don't smoke...but tonight I'm gonna smoke you!

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~xbox.ign.com

"...fast, furious, mech-piloting shooter action..."

~Official Xbox Magazine, Feb. 2003

INTERCEPT & DESTROY



20 intense Intercept-and-Destroy missions

5 prototypes with unique weapons

4 high-flying pursuit action modes



Violence



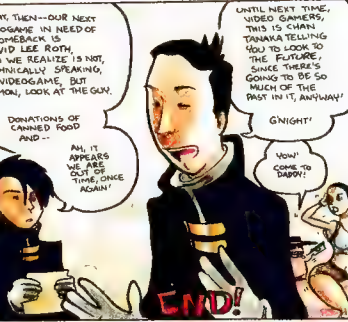
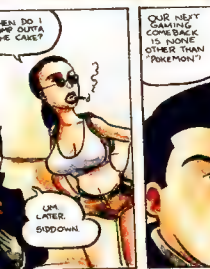
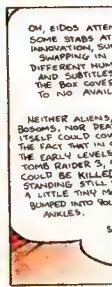
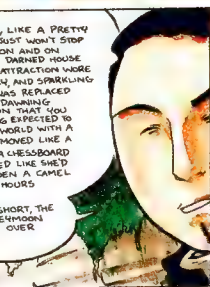
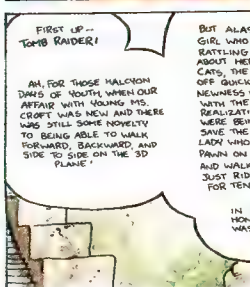
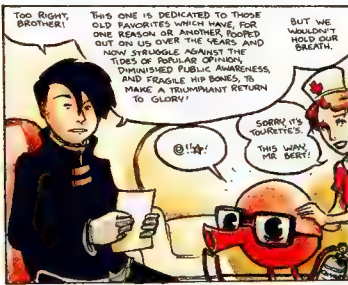
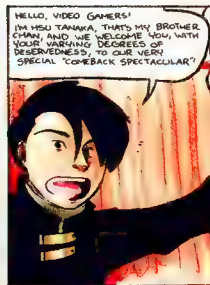
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PRESS START





JOHN AND KAREN WERE STONED AND HOOKED UP. AFTER THEY CAME DOWN, THEY REALIZED THAT IF THEY HADN'T

FATHER

SMOKED, THINGS NEVER WOULD HAVE GONE AS FAR AS THEY DID. THE CONSEQUENCES WILL LAST A LIFETIME.



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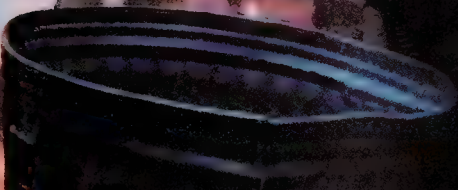
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WAR OF THE MONSTERS



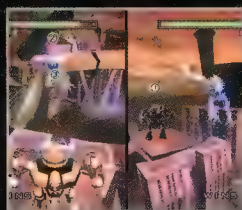
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Violence





PlayStation 2




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PLAY IN OURS.

Previews

This Month in Previews

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Auto Modellista

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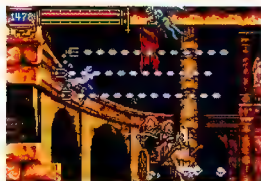


WARNING: Previews marked with international symbols may not be released in the United States. They are destined to run on Japanese or European PAL systems. Import at your own risk.

This month marks my last issue as *EGM's* previews editor. In fact, it's my final month working in San Francisco with the *EGM* crew. I'm off to the homeland in order to start *EGM Canada*. OK, I'm not really that ambitious. I'll be too busy building igloos and hunting moose to run a magazine.

And since I couldn't sell the editor-in-chief on my Greg Sewart Memorial cover story, I have to say my goodbyes right here. But rather than getting all dramatic and mushy, I'm just gonna list the three things I'll miss most about working here:

- 1. Sleeping under my desk:** The first month I worked at *EGM*, I was still writing strategies for *Expert Gamer* (our sister magazine, which became *GameNOW*). Writing a *Vagrant Story* guide while beating *Vanguard Bandits*, *Ridge Racer V*, and *Metal Gear Solid* (GBC) meant sleeping under my desk every night for over a week. I even had a mattress and *Star Wars* sheets. Ah...those were the days.
- 2. Hate mail:** I got mountains of hate mail for giving *Chrono Cross* (PS1) a review of 9.5, costing it a Platinum Award by not scoring it a 10. A lot of the comments were really mean, but at least



Dracula haunts GBA for a third time in *Aria of Sorrow*. Our preview starts on page 90.

I learned that people really give a crap about what I say. Oh, and for everyone who sent hate mail: Get over it!

3. Adoring fans: Wait a sec...I don't think I have any of those.


What I'll miss most, though, is the group of guys and girls that put this magazine together. I've never worked with a cooler crowd—and I've been in Internet sales!

And now I must depart. The INS agents have ziplined into our office and are holding our features editor hostage until I surrender. I'm going out with a bang—or at least a costly commotion. See y'all on the flip side. ☠

—Former Previews Editor Greg Sewart

GameCube

84	Ultimate Muscle
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Ultimate Muscle

86	Mega Man Network Transmission Sonic Adventure DX: Director's Cut
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Xbox

88	Dino Crisis 3
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Dino Crisis 3

89	StarCraft: Ghost
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GBA

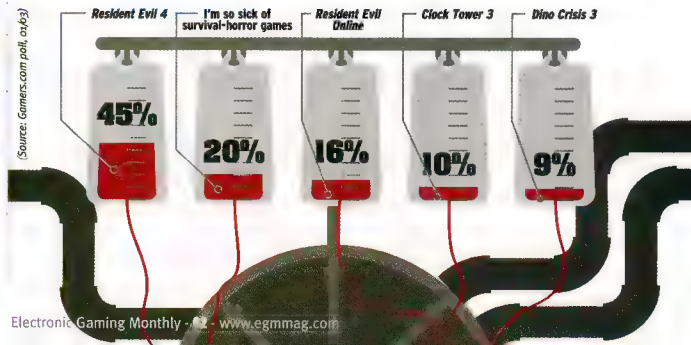
90-91	Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow
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TOP 5 Preview Picks

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow | GBA, May 2003 |
| 2. Resident Evil Online | PS2, Fall 2003 |
| 3. Silent Hill 3 | PS2, April 2003 |
| 4. Dino Crisis 3 | Xbox, August 2003 |
| 5. Ultimate Muscle | GC, April 2003 |

Which survival-horror game are you most looking forward to?

(Source: Gamers.com poll, 01/03)



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1. Moocher approaches.



2. Dig moat.



3. Fill with water.



4. Keep Juicy Fruit!

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Longer-
Lasting
Juicy Fruit

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KIT**

KEEP THE
MOOCHERS
AWAY!

Gotta Have
**Longer-Lasting
Sweet?**

WRILEY'S
Juicy Fruit
SUGAR FREE

Silent Hill 3

Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	Konami CET
Players:	1
Genre:	Terror-Horror
% Done:	80%
Release:	Summer 2003

The Good: The creature designs in the latest *Silent Hill* look even more \$\$\$ed up than before. And the game ships with a soundtrack CD.

The Bad: The game's camera goes all *Blair Witch* on you when monsters attack. (Consider screaming out "Jossht! JOSSH!!!!")

And The Ugly: There's something really creepy about playing as an underage girl.



Giant bunnies sleep it off after an all-night blood-drinking kegger.

It seemed like a routine assignment: Find out about the latest game in what Konami calls its terror-horror franchise. When *EGM* recently attended a Konami press event, we knew few facts about *Silent Hill 3*: It's not a direct sequel; the main character carries the series' trademark flashlight and radio that emits static whenever monsters get near; and it's set in the same dark, hopeless town.

Producer Akira Yamaoka and Art Director Masahiro Ito appeared at the event to demonstrate and discuss *Silent Hill 3*. Yamaoka showed it to us, and, well...it was gorgeous and sharp enough to give even some of the better-looking Xbox games a run for their money. Textures shifted in the background as the game morphed into its familiar nightmare-world scenario. Blood welled up in spots on the walls, making them seem almost alive.

"The team has gone to its darkest ideas and implemented them in this game," said Yamaoka, prompting an audience member to ask Ito, the game's main

monster designer, if he has many nightmares. "No! None at all," the artist cheerfully replied.

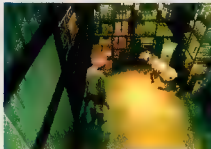
The creators were almost completely mum about the story line, however. They spoke about the three main characters: Heather, a normal teenager; Douglas Cartland, a middle-aged private investigator; and Claudia, a strange witchy-woman who knows more than she's telling. Prompted for more, Yamaoka added, "The game brings back the occult element from the original *Silent Hill*." Funny. We didn't know it had gone anywhere.

We interviewed the two designers later, hoping to get more info. "At this point, there's a limit to what we can tell you," Yamaoka said. We asked if any characters, places, or monsters from previous *Silent Hill* games appear. "No, but we didn't say there's no connection." So, there's an overall mythology at work? Yamaoka and Ito paused for a moment. "That's a very good question," they replied, laughing.

We explored the playable *Silent Hill 3* demo

MONSTER MANUAL

The assortment of creatures in *Silent Hill 3* would make H.P. Lovecraft (or, for that matter, Marilyn Manson) proud. Here's—ugh!—a taste.



This split-headed, zebra-striped dog-thing is also available in orange for fall.



What do you get when you cross a lamprey, a bloody tarp, and...oh geesh, we don't know.



If we had a dog this ugly, we'd shave its butt and teach it to walk backward.



These things have no eyes, ears, or noses. They look, sound, and smelt terrible.

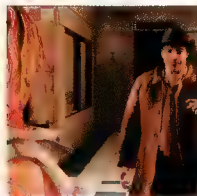


THE SILENT HILL YOU'LL NEVER PLAY

In early 2001, Konami released a Game Boy Advance version of the original *Silent Hill* in the form of a "choose your own adventure"-style interactive novel with still backgrounds. In the game, you play as either protagonist Harry Mason or policewoman Cybil Bennett in a hunt for Harry's daughter, Cheryl, and answers to what's happened to the town. Konami says there's no chance of it ever coming to the United States.



Above: We were shocked to learn that Claudia's insane.



Above: Heather might be demon-spawn, but check out that hair!

Konami gave us to find out more. It begins with Heather—an average teenager with freckles, nice accessories, and an expensive haircut—at an amusement park entryway. It's late at night, and some giant rabbit costumes with blood-smearing mouths are strewn around the area. Two tall, grated boxes are

man—who introduces himself as Douglas Cartland, a detective—says that someone wants to meet with her. "It's about your birth." He follows Heather to the bathroom, but she tells him to wait there and ducks out through the bathroom window.

You head through the back of mall into an area of

"The game brings back the occult element from the original *Silent Hill*."

—*Silent Hill 3* Producer Akira Yamaoka

strapped to the ground nearby. Something inside them is wrapped like meat in a butcher shop, but it's more human in shape.


After searching the area, you enter a darkened hallway that leads to some shops. A zebra-striped, split-headed dog chases you, as well as a large creature with a circular, featureless head and oversized fleshy arms. You duck into a candy shop, but no exit exists. The monsters soon corner you, and...you wake up in a restaurant in the local mall. "What a creepy dream," Heather says in a short cut-scene. Quite.

Heather walks into into the mall and a strange

closed-off shops. A cut-scene begins as Heather finds a gun on the floor. She picks it up in time to see a swivel-headed beast from her dream busy at work grinding the face off of a dead security guard.

After frantically searching for a while, you find a white-haired woman in old-fashioned clothes. Heather asks her about the monsters she's seen. "They've come to bear witness," the woman—Claudia—tells her, "to the rebirth of paradise spoiled by mankind." She refers to Heather as "the one who will lead us to paradise with bloodstained hands." Heather's seized by a headache and Claudia leaves her there, collapsed on the floor.

The hour-long demo ends with a trip down an elevator into a grimy basement that looks like hell. We're guessing this is right before the first boss encounter—which we saw at the press event—which a giant mutated worm bursts into the basement through a doorway right in front of you. The flesh around its eyeless head (which is unnervingly, um, foreskin-like) splits in two to reveal massive jaws.

Konami's *Silent Hill 3* is due out for PlayStation 2 this summer. Will it come to other platforms as well, like *Silent Hill 2* did? That's something Yamaoka answered. "At this moment," he said, "we don't have such a plan." 

—Joe Fielder



SNAP OPEN A SLIM JIM TO SURVIVE



It's true. Horrible dog monsters with no eyes love the taste of beef jerky. In *Silent Hill 3*, dropping sticks of processed meat onto the ground will momentarily distract a creature. And while it stops to eat, you can either run away or, say, bash it over the head repeatedly with a rusty metal pipe. The designers say this is an example of new gameplay elements found in *SH3*. Yum!

Pitfall Harry

Publisher:	Activision
Developer:	Edge of Reality
Players:	1
Genre:	Action
% Done:	65%
Release:	Fall 2003
Also On:	GC, Xbox
The Good:	The new <i>Pitfall</i> has vines, crocodiles, pits, and everything else we loved in the original, plus especially lush environments.
The Bad:	Harry's a little too clean-shaven for us to fully trust—Indiana Jones never needed no stinkin' razor.
And The Ugly:	Several of the previous games in the series were seriously, seriously ugly.

GIMME A HAND



Pitfall Harry's direct control system, which allows the player to manipulate anything in Harry's hands by using the analog sticks on the controller, is the most notable new feature in the series. "Harry's hands will react to the way you move the analog stick," explains Senior Producer Chris Hewish. "For example, if you're in a dark ruin area, you can keep your torch facing the ground in order to watch for traps or creatures that might be attacking, or you can hold it up to see if there's an opening above you." Other uses include making Harry reach out to grab an artifact, or spinning your sling around in the air à la *Sony's Ape Escape* (PS1).



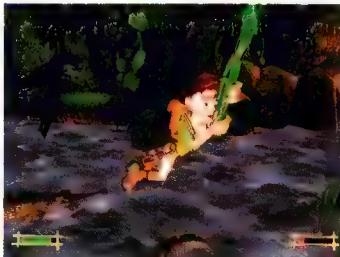
If you're old enough to have seen *Raiders of the Lost Ark* in the theaters and you could hold a game controller at the time, chances are you're among the more than four million people who snatched up Activision's *Pitfall!* for Atari 2600. The game's lead character, Pitfall Harry, was everything you wanted to see in an Indiana Jones-style videogame hero: He swung on vines, leaped over giant scorpions, jumped onto crocodiles' heads, and collected treasure. *Pitfall* has had a number of follow-ups since it first hit in '82, and the latest version is due for current systems later this year. Just don't call it a comeback...call it a remake.

"It's not a sequel to the previous games," says Chris

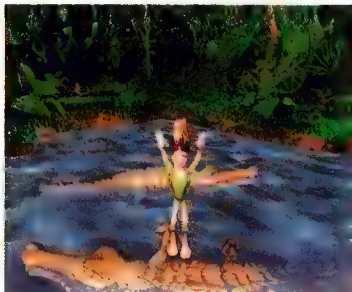
Hewish, *Pitfall Harry's* senior producer. "It's actually a relaunch of the brand—a retelling of the whole thing."

So, say goodbye to Harry Jr., the main character in the last two *Pitfall* games. In *Pitfall Harry*, you'll play as the original article as he delves deep into South American jungles to rescue the members of a failed expedition and foil a rival campaign intent on plundering the area. You'll spend most of your time swinging on vines, leaping onto crocodiles, engaging in quick battles with enemies, exploring, and solving puzzles—as well as picking up the occasional artifact dropped by the enemy expedition along its way.

Besides new versions of the crocodiles and giant scorpions of old, you'll also face piranhas, alligators,



This scene should stir some nostalgia in the souls of old-school *Pitfall* fans. Too bad Harry looks so wimpy.



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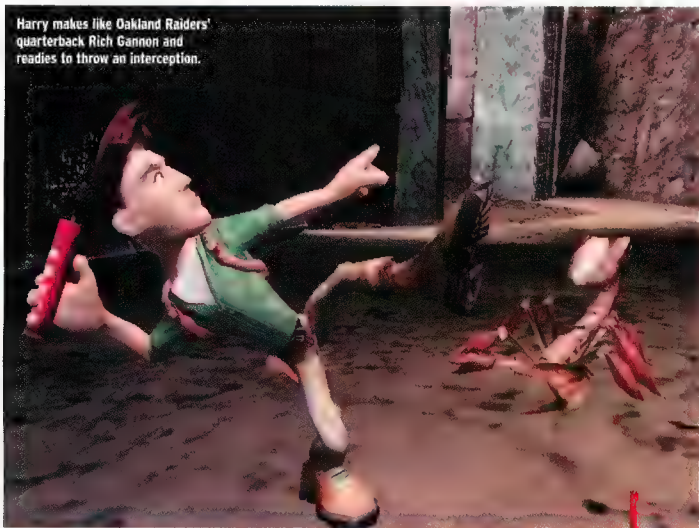
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THE LOST PITFALL

Activision was going to release a sequel to *Super Pitfall* on the Super NES. It was actually Sunsoft's Japanese game, *Atlantis no Nazo* (*Mystery of Atlantis*), licensed and renamed for American audiences. But it was never actually released here. Only one prototype of the game is known to exist.

Harry makes like Oakland Raiders' quarterback Rich Gannon and readies to throw an interception.



"It's not a sequel to the previous games. It's actually a relaunch of the brand..."

jungle cats, monkeys, and renegade natives who throw stink bombs, spin into bladed whirlwinds, or hide in bushes and sneak up behind you when you're not looking. You'll acquire additional moves and items along the way, such as a sling, dynamite, ice picks, and stink bombs, to help you combat these enemies. And you'll need the help. "We have creatures and encounters in the game that require certain items in order for you to defeat them," says Hewish. "In the case of the bush ninjas, you have to shoot

them with a sling while they're in a bush. That causes them to try to find a new bush to hide in, and while they're running, you can hit them."

To make the combat easy and painless, Harry will automatically lock onto an enemy once it's near. Unlike the similar z-targeting found in games like Nintendo's *Legend of Zelda* series, this feature doesn't require a button press, and Harry will also snap out of it once he's a certain distance away.

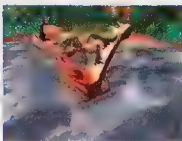
The game will also have numerous extras, such as secret areas and the ability to trade artifacts for extra items. But will it have one of the older *Pitfalls* hidden inside? "We're talking about that right now, but no decision has been made," says Hewish. "We're going to have to see how things come down." 🍄

—Joe Fielder

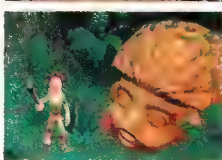
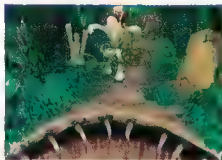


We want to come up with some kind of *Indiana Jones* joke here...but it just ain't happenin'.

GRADUAL DEATH



In many of the previous *Pitfall* games, the wrong step meant instant death. *Pitfall Harry* will be a little more forgiving. For example, if you fall into a giant, toothy pit, it will chew on you for a moment, then spit you back out. You'll also have a chance to pry open crocodiles' jaws—from the inside—when they bite you. In both cases, you'll take damage, but the attacks won't kill you outright. You can't walk away from some encounters, however—like being hit by a 3,000-pound stone column. Watch out!

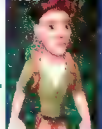


YOU KNOW? FOR KIDS!?

After seeing the new Harry, we asked Senior Producer Chris Hewish if the game had gone "kiddie." "We just want to make a fun game that's appealing to everyone," he said. "We're going to infuse a bit more of a light-hearted, whimsical approach. There's more fun elements that come out of situational humor." Maybe we're imagining it, but Harry somehow looked a hell of a lot tougher on the Atari 2600.

Then

Now



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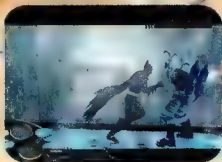
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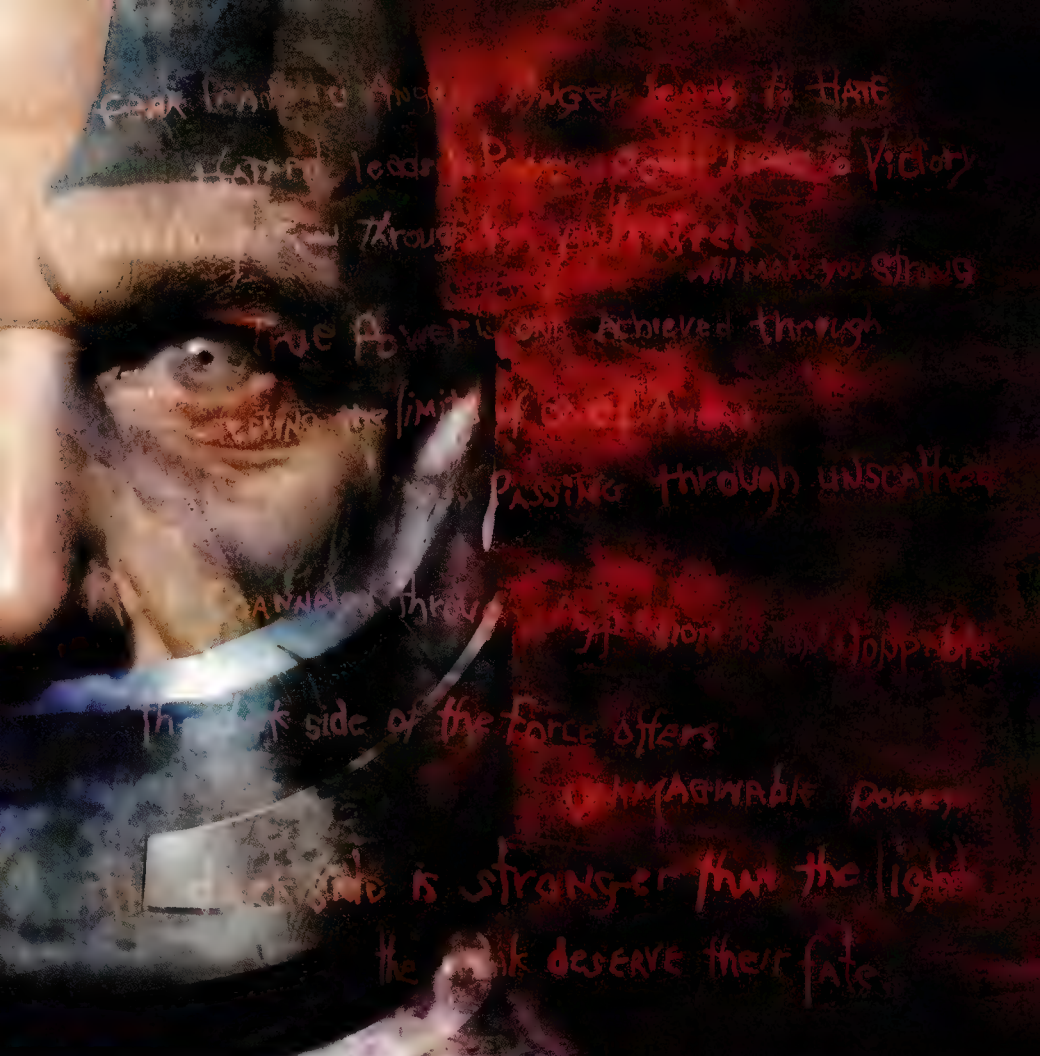


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 THE DARK IS STRONGER THAN THE LIGHT
 THE DARK DESERVE THEIR FATE



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Clock Tower 3

Publisher:	Capcom
Developer:	Capcom
Players:	1
Genre:	Survival-horror
% Done:	80%
Release:	March 2003
Also On:	None
Web Address:	www.capcom.com
The Good:	<i>Resident Evil</i> meets <i>Eternal Darkness</i>
The Bad:	Puzzles that assume you dropped out of third grade
And The Ugly:	Watching (yes, watching) a 15-year-old girl get killed with a sledgehammer



Follow your fantasy of being a schoolgirl who spends most of her time covering in fear.

Folks who normally react to the words "clock tower" with the same enthusiasm as to the words "particle board" and "iron lung" might be in for a change of attitude. *CT3* has a lot more to offer horror-game junkies than its two PS1 predecessors. Its atmosphere ranges from the serious psychological freakiness of *Silent Hill*, right on past the "Oh, hell, what is THAT thing?" factor of *Resident Evil*, and on to the ridiculously gory and outlandish mood of *Illbleed* (Dreamcast). Yeah, it shamelessly rips some ideas from these staples, but it looks and plays so well that we ain't complainin'. Let's discuss:

The latest *CT* stays true to the pacifist design of the first two games (the only time you actually fight in *CT3* is in boss battles, and even then, it's more evasion or self-defense), but it still manages to pack in all the action and suspense of its contemporaries.

Protagonist Alyssa Hale's major quests involve driving evil spirits from history's most murderous vil-

lains, but along the way, she'll also meet up with lesser stiffes and return the keepsakes they've lost. In return, she'll receive handy items from her grateful undead pals. Moreover, she won't be assaulted by their meandering ghosts, who have the potential to build up her Panic meter.

The Panic meter gauges Alyssa's stress level as a result of frightening happenings. She doesn't really have the ability to fight, so she just can't really get hurt (boss battles are the exception). But when, for example, a bad guy jumps out from behind a door or knocks her around a bit, she'll begin to panic. You'll then have to find a place for Alyssa to hide and ride out the stress. In this state, one of two things can happen: Alyssa gets so freaked out she dies, or she runs around like a drunken little schoolgirl. As much as we all like the sound of the latter, it's not good for gameplay—in that state, she's nearly impossible to control. ☠

—Jonathan Dudlak

COOKING WITH CLOCK TOWER

Capcom sent in this perfect recipe for a succulent survival-horror surprise.

RESIDENT EVIL
Just looking at the opening scene showing the inside of Alyssa's house reminds us of *RE*. All we need are some zombie dogs at the door.

THE SIXTH SENSE
"Alyssa sees dead people!" and she has to satisfy their spirits by setting their wrongful deaths right. Bruce Willis not included.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Alyssa's journeys fan out through various points in history. She's also got a Panic meter that works a lot like *ED*'s Sanity meter.

SILENT HILL
Twisted imagery, murder of innocents, and mysterious changes in the space-time continuum will remind players of their vacations in *Silent Hill*.



Four Demons spawners

Auto Modellista

Publisher:	Capcom
Developer:	Capcom
Players:	1-2 (2-8 Online, broadband only)
Genre:	Racing
% Done:	85%
Release:	March 2003
Also On:	None
Web Address:	www.capcom.com
The Good:	Race against gearheads all over the country in your custom ride.
The Bad:	Voice-chat support while racing would be nice.
And The Ugly:	This could be the closest we'll get to <i>Gran Turismo Online</i> anytime soon.



MODELLISTA CRIBS



Your ride ain't the only thing you can trick out in *Auto Modellista*. Your garage starts out pretty nondescript, but as you play through the single-player mode, you'll unlock posters, toolboxes, trophies, and other objects you can arrange and display in your carhole. All you need now is that weird mechanic who works for beer and never leaves.

You've seen 'em: those loud, modified Civics, Eclipses, RX-7s, and various other (mostly) Japanese cars that cruise the streets of your town adorned with loads of decals, colored lighting, and ridiculously huge spoilers. It's the street-racing culture. You buy a relatively cheap car, spend a few grand to up its horsepower, and decorate it to resemble something you'd see on a racetrack. Now, you'll get to do the same, but for just \$50 and the cost of your monthly Internet bill.

This type of game has been done before with the *Tokyo Xtreme Racer* series and other titles. So, why should you care about this one? Well, besides the *Daytona*-style arcade gameplay, three things will entice you to pick up *Auto Modellista*—even if you own every other street-racing game known to man.

1. Graphics

Capcom knows all driving games start to look alike after a while, which is why it's used cartoon shading on the cars in *Auto Modellista*. The cars still look realistic, but with a definite style that assures you'll never mistake this for a different product. The effect is accentuated with speed lines and mini-explosions that occur anytime a car backfires.



2. No Cash

The hundreds of parts, decals, and decorations you can use on your cars and garage in *Auto Modellista* don't cost a dime. Rather, you earn them by winning single-player races. Make no mistake—*Auto Modellista* is not a simulation like *Gran Turismo 3*. Earning and using new cars and parts is as simple as possible in this game.

3. Online Racing

We're most excited about *Auto Modellista*'s 2 to 8 player online support (broadband only). Let's face it: The PS2 online racing community is pretty hard up for games right now (*ATV Offroad Fury 2* is starting to wear a bit thin), so getting a quality game like this, in which you not only race real people but make them jealous when you show off your customized vehicle, is just what the doctor ordered.

Auto Modellista does have a few weaknesses—in particular, it doesn't have enough tracks. But with so much else to do off the track (see sidebar) and the capability to race online, the positives far outweigh the negatives. So, grab a copy of *Auto Modellista* this March and look for "Sewart."

—Greg Sewart



Resident Evil Online

Capcom • Fall 2003 • Also On: None—How the hell will Capcom take *Resident Evil* online? That's been our question since this project was announced years ago: How can *Resident Evil*'s traditionally awkward combat system and solitary, story-driven gameplay work as an online multiplayer title? It's like trying to imagine *Star Wars* as a one-man off-Broadway play—you just have no idea what to expect. A first-person shooter in which players choose to play as either police or zombies? That was rumored at one point. A racer with classic *RE* characters and zombies zipping through the burning streets of Raccoon City on wee go-karts? OK, no, that's just stupid.

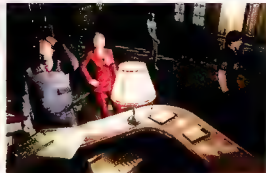
Turns out Capcom's plan is far less radical: Keep the basic *RE* structure—a third-person adventure based on finding keys, solving puzzles, and fighting zombies—and shift the gameplay so that instead of competing against each other, two to four players must work as a team to survive.

"*RE Online* is meant to be a cooperative game," says Capcom Product Manager Robert Johnson. "You definitely want your partners to stay alive. If there's not four players there, it's going to be difficult." Outside the obvious benefit of additional guns helping to keep those damn dirty zombies' paws off you, players can help each other by trading items (ammo, healing herbs, etc.), unlocking parts of the game only their character can open, solving puzzles together, and even saving each other from traps. Johnson gives an example: "At one point, you enter this bathroom—suddenly, the door shuts and poison gas shoots out. You've got to scream for help, and if another player doesn't come to rescue you, you're dead."

But other players aren't the only people who can help you; at least eight computer-controlled citizens are waiting somewhere in the game. The interesting part about these non-player characters is that their reactions depend on your actions and which character you're playing. They could run away, help you fight, unlock new areas of the map, or even betray and attack you. As a trailer for *RE Online* ominously states, "Your best friend may be your worst foe..."



Another example of players working together. Here, one gives another a boost through the hole in the ceiling.



Right now, the only way to talk to other players is through pre-scripted chat menus. Hopefully, keyboard support will be added.



Guns and knives aren't the only weapons you'll find in *Online*—even pipes and brooms will help keep the zombies at bay. (We still recommend using the guns and knives, though.)



A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

Each of the eight characters you can play in *RE Online* possesses different strengths, speeds, and special abilities based on their occupation. Unfortunately, Capcom didn't have much info for us outside everyone's name and job, so we decided to provide our best guesses for these three, along with customized action-movie one-liners for you to scream just before blowing off zombie heads. Let's watch:

Mark

Job: Security Guard

Abilities: Good with guns, can discourage zombie shoplifters
One-liner: "Sorry sir, the bank is closed!" [BLAM!]



Cindy

Job: Waitress

Abilities: Recommends the chicken-fried chicken over the liver and onions.
One-liner: "Your order...is up!" [BLAM!]



George

Job: Doctor
Abilities: Heals other players, spiffy dresser
One-liner: "Take two of these and don't call me in the morning!" [BLAM! BLAM!]





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HELLO, MY NAME IS SAM FISHER

If you weren't in the s*** with me in *Splinter Cell* on the Xbox, then allow me to introduce myself: I'm an elite member of a U.S. antiterrorism agency. Don't bother asking the government about me. They'll just look up at the ceiling and shrug their shoulders—and pretend I never existed if I get caught. Oh, and I sound a lot like that guy who got his arms ripped off in *Total Recall*.

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

Ubi Soft • March 2003 • Also On: GC, Xbox
Sorry, Xbox gamers, but you're running out of time to gloat about *Splinter Cell*, the spectacular-looking, gizmo-crammed, Eurotrash-blasting black-ops sim that until recently was exclusive to your system. Not only does the soon-to-launch PS2 version we played look almost as good (thanks to light-and-shadow rendering technology the developers have conjured specifically for PS2 hardware), but the PS2 game is arriving with worthwhile extras and tweaks, too. "Our benchmark is not the Xbox version of *Splinter Cell*," says Producer Wu Dong Hao. "It's the amazing PS2 catalogue of [competing] titles."

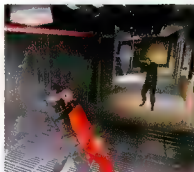
The biggest bonus here is the exclusive new power-plant mission, which is broken into four levels and integrated into the game's story line. "The scenario has been subtly modified to include this new mission," says Hao, "which takes place in the middle of a snowstorm. Sam even gets a new snowsuit." Sam also gets a new binocular gadget, a makeover in the much snazzier intro and between-mission cinematics, and several control and interface tweaks based on feedback from fans of the Xbox version. "There will be more direct access to the inventory," Hao says. "Alarm indicators will appear onscreen, so gamers will avoid the frustration of not knowing why a mission is over. Gamers will have direct access to keypad numbers. It's all the stuff that really helps the game's fluidity."



Venturing out into the open like this is a risky move.

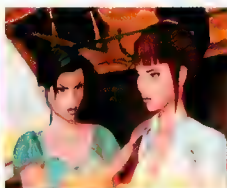


Below: Taking hostages is a good way to avoid enemy fire.



Fear Effect: Inferno

Eidos • Spring 2003 • Also On: None—Hana Tsu-Vachel has finally earned enough money to buy her contract back from the Triad. But they're not ready to let her—or her companion, Rain—go. Take control of the four-character team once again in this *RE*-style action game that will take you to the depths of hell and back (this series has always been known for its surreal and disturbing trips to the afterlife). Oh, and we're sure Hana and Rain will once again provide a lot of hot girl-on-girl action once again.



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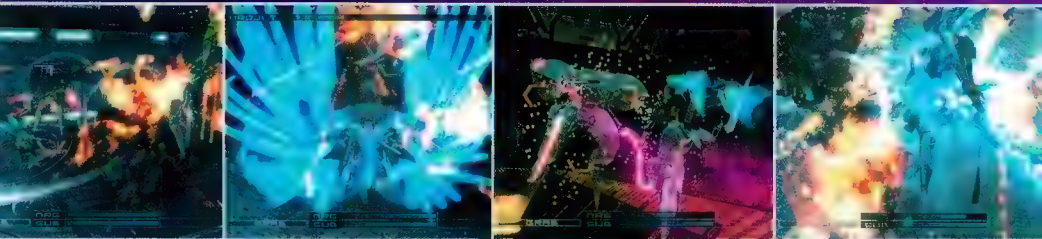


PlayStation 2



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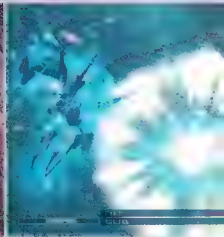
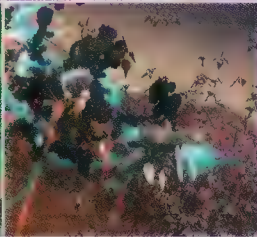
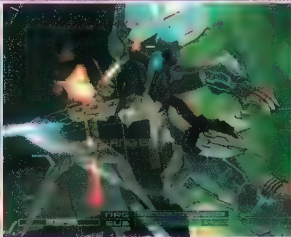
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Fugitive Hunter

Atari • March 2003 • Also On: None—*Fugitive Hunter* opens with a montage of news footage concerning realpolitik in the age of terrorism, then jumps to a hypothetical 2004 in which agents of the Criminal Interdiction and Fugitive Recovery (CIFR) task force work to hunt down terrorists. You'll find and apprehend the deranged masterminds behind the plots. That's right—*apprehend*. Henchmen and minions are fodder for your 12 weapons and multiple ammo types—just don't put the boss on ice. Instead, soften him up with a few fisticuffs, then apply the hand-i-cuffs and tote him home to Uncle Sam. (The game switches from a first-person shooter to a third-person fighter for boss battles.) Use your reward money to buy bigger and better guns for your next foray into a hostile world.

You'll see plenty of action in dozens of levels spread across Miami, Utah, Paris, the Caribbean, and Afghanistan.



Resident Evil: Dead Aim

Capcom • June 2003 • Also On: None—The zombies are on vacation. Seriously. They're on a cruise ship. Yet neither the serene waters nor the fresh air can distract them from their relentless pursuit of living flesh. And you can't let them distract you, either. Grab your guns and get to work. As a secret anti-Umbrella operative, you've infiltrated the cruiser to hunt down Morpheus, a former Umbrella executive who's doing some freelance evilin'.

Despite being a part of the *Gun Survivor* series (remember those crappy PS1 shooters?), *Dead Aim* remains a *Resident Evil* game in its black heart. You'll explore your environment for better weapons, clues about what's going on, and keys. The twist? When you decide to pump lead into the undead, *Dead Aim* switches to first-person perspective and becomes a *House of the Dead*-style shooting gallery.



Dynasty Warriors 4

Koei • March 2003 • Also On: None—If fighting seemingly insurmountable swarms of enemies in mad melee battles is your bag, then the latest *Dynasty Warriors* should be just the thing to warm your controller during these cold spring nights (OK, we're in California—we don't really understand the whole "season" thing). For the most part, *DW4* keeps on keepin' on: You lead your troops into action-packed combat against hordes of enemies, all from different warring factions in China's historic Three Kingdoms era.

The series covers a 100-year cycle, so you'd naturally expect something more than a mere sword to keep your guys going on the long road to victory. Here, *DW4* antes up. For the first time, you'll be outfitted for large-scale sieges, with fire-shooting "Tiger" tanks, bridge-building equipment, catapults, and more. New fighters, weapon upgrades, one-on-one duels, and character customization also liven up the game's 50 stages.





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PREVIEW

Ultimate Muscle: Legends vs. New Generation

Publisher:	Bandai
Developer:	Aki
Play(s):	1-4 (2-16 in Tournament mode)
Genre:	Wrestling
% Done:	80%
Release:	April 2003
Also In:	None
Web Address:	www.bandai.com
The Good:	An arcade-style wrestling game like this is a breath of fresh air.
The Bad:	Some might be turned off by the cartoon-shaded graphics.
And The Ugly:	These guys could pummel any WWE wrestler into the next millennium.



ALSO ON GBA



Scheduled to hit stores at the same time as the GC version is a portable *Ultimate Muscle* called *Ultimate Muscle: Path of the Super Heroes*.



Go all Dr. Frankenstein in the game's Create-a-Character mode.

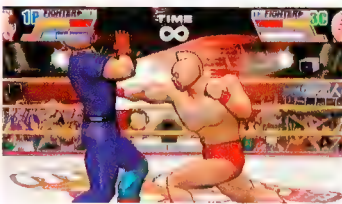
If you're a wrestling fan—and even if you're unfamiliar with *Ultimate Muscle* (part of Fox's Saturday morning cartoon lineup)—you should take note of this GC wrassler. Why? First, it's developed by Aki, the same folks who brought us *WWF: No Mercy* for Nintendo 64 (considered one of the better games in the genre) and EA Big's *Def Jam Vendetta* (due out this month). Second, this is one of the few recent wrestling games with an arcade-style interface that does it right.

Once you're in the ring, you'll immediately notice how much faster everything moves compared to a typical *WWE* title; get four players in the ring and it can be hard to keep up. But, to make sure you don't have an aneurysm, control is kept simple. Button-mashers (you know who you are) can concentrate on the one and only attack button, while skilled vets can combine that button with the others to create some new techniques and devastating moves. For example, tap jump (yes, a jump button in a wrestling

game) and then grapple to perform an aerial throw, lunging at your opponent and tossing him to the canvas. Can't do that in a *WWE* game? You've also got a special gauge that, as each of three levels fills, gives you access to more over-the-top moves and a final (third-level) super move with an accompanying cutscene. For example, during Kid Muscle's final attack, the Muscle Millennium, he tosses his opponent into the air and then flies off the ropes parallel to the mat toward the other side of the ring, crushing his foe against the ropes.

Muscle's cartoon-shaded visuals also help it stand out from the normal wrestling crowd while remaining true to its animation roots. The game's story differs from the show a bit, however, focusing on a battle between Kid Muscle and the new generation of *Ultimate Muscle* fighters versus Kid's pappy, King Muscle, and the original ultrabuff warriors from the '80s series (there are 14 characters in all). **A+**

—Chris Johnston



Since the game revolves around old vs. new, you'll find a slew of classic *MUSCLE* characters fighting a group of new-school *Ultimate Muscle* brawlers.

REMEMBER MUSCLE?

If you were a kid growing up in the '80s, you probably remember *MUSCLE*, the Millions of Unusual Small Creatures Lurking Everywhere. We knew them only as little, mostly pink figures. But in Japan, *MUSCLE* (known as *Kinnikuman*) was also a comic series and anime TV show. *Ultimate* is a rebirth of those l'il wrasslers (which explains why the characters are offspring of the original *Kinniku*-men).



PREVIEW
GALLERY

GAME NOW

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Mega Man Network Transmission

Capcom • Spring 2003 • Also On: None

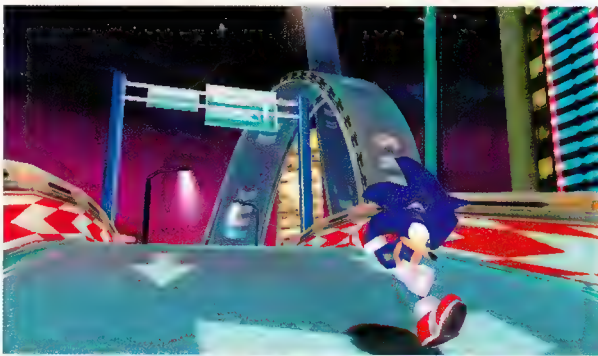
We know you're dying to find out what happened in between *Mega Man Battle Network 1* and 2 (GBA). OK, maybe you're not. But regardless, the upcoming *Network Transmission* aims to quench that hunger, GameCube style.

Taking place in the same universe as the GBA games, *Transmission* will mark the Blue Bomber's first GameCube foray. The gameplay itself is classic *Mega Man*. That's right—it's a side scroller all the way, brought into modernity by means of cartoon-style 3D graphics. What it draws from the *Battle Network* games, though, is what gives it some exciting potential. Remember the cool chip system in those games? No? Well, after killing bosses, you could steal their microchips, which were encoded with their special abilities. You could swap these chips in and out on the fly to customize your ability set. Same thing happens here, only you'll feel the effects more directly. Some make you jump higher, while others allow you to lob grenades, and more.



Sonic Adventure DX: Director's Cut

Sega • Summer 2003 • Also On: None—Thank goodness. We were worried we'd never get a GC version of the original *Adventure*, the best next-gen *Sonic* game (this blows *Sonic Adventure 2* out of the water). What's more, this is not just a port of the old Dreamcast title. As the name suggests, *Sonic Adventure* will be updated. It'll include Game Boy Advance connectivity for raising your little Chao buddies on the go (like in *Sonic 2: Battle*) and a few more hours of gameplay in the form of 50 new missions. Don't get too excited, though—you won't find any new levels. Instead, these new challenges will be scattered throughout the game's existing stages.



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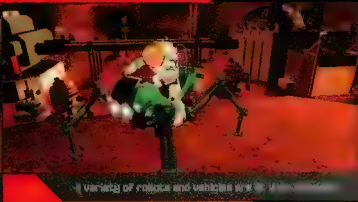
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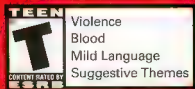
Third-person perspective, controlling hook-guns, wire law & ak.



A variety of robots and vehicles are available.



Hook-guns, wire law, and ak.



PlayStation 2

Coming Spring 2003





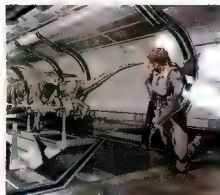
PREVIEW

Dino Crisis 3

- Capcom
- Capcom
- 1
- Adventure
- 65%
- August 2003
- None
- www.capcom.com
- Free-roaming adventure unhindered by the crappy RE-style controls scheme
- The **W** Dinosaurs are for hugging, not killing.
- The possibilities of dinosaurs doing things like wearing lab coats and wielding syringes



Patrick realized too late that dinosaur dentistry was simply a bad career choice.



Capcom's dino-nerds in space makes the plot of *Jason X* sound like something Shakespeare came up with.



I used to be that *Dino Crisis* was a more balls-out version of *Resident Evil*; the action was faster, the ammo was in higher supply, and the monsters were more aggressive. Well, *Dino Crisis 3* takes that formula, injects it with 10 times the pep, kills off the weak survival-horror controls (good riddance!), and tosses the whole thing into...space?

Yep, that's right. *Dino 3* takes place about 500 years in the future on a beastie-filled spaceship named Ozymandius. The ship has been MIA for about 300 years at the game's outset when it suddenly returns to terrestrial space, jam-packed with hungry, intelligent dinosaurs. How the dinos got aboard is anyone's guess, as is how their brains grew so much. Regardless, combine these bad boys' larger cranial capacity with their gigantic jaws and razor-sharp teeth, and you have something that's superior to a human in every way. *That's scary.*

You won't be playing as just any human, though. Patrick, the main character, is decked out with some crazy gadgets. Coolest of all is the jetpack, which allows you to fly in any direction.

And Patrick's armed to the teeth with all sorts of futuristic heavy weaponry. He'll automatically aim his laser rifle at any creature in his field of vision, ensuring very little wasted ammo. He has some even nastier little tricks up his sleeve, too, called Wasps. They're drones that fly out of his back to seek and destroy any enemies they can find. Think about it: flying, intelligent guns. Pretty useful, considering some of the wild environments.

Speaking of which, don't think of your time inside the ship as the usual romp through access tunnels—the Ozymandius is far from your average spacecraft. Its insides are constantly shifting, with passages opening and closing, and entire room layouts morphing as you solve puzzles or time passes. From what we've seen so far, the game has a pretty large exploration component, so the dynamic environments could be pretty cool.

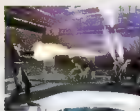
In any case, we're stoked *Dino 3* is diverging from the stagnant survival-horror formula. But intelligent, space-pirate dinosaurs? Exactly how far is Capcom trying to take this thing? —Miguel Lopez

YOU CAN FLY



Yes, you can fly in limited bursts. You can also strafe side to side and float down after you jump. The environments are built for this sort of thing, so you'll be doing it a lot. Think Sega's *Gunvalkyrie*, but with more orthodox controls.

YOU CAN KILL!



We've got four words for you: RAT A TAT TAT. Patrick will auto-aim at any enemy that gets near him. It doesn't stop there, though—hold down the Shoot button, and you'll let loose a supercharged burst that does tons of damage.

YOU'VE GOT OPTIONS!



Yeah, the Wasps are way rad. They fly out of your back when you deploy them, automatically seek out targets, and get to work. You can upgrade them throughout the course of the game, as well as find all-new ones with different sorts of attacks.

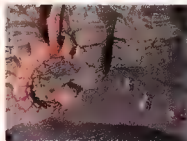
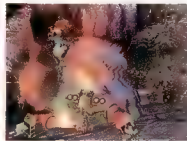
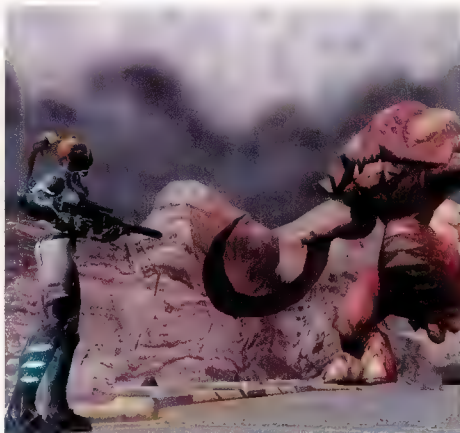


PREVIEW
GALLERY

StarCraft: Ghost

Blizzard • Fall 2003 • Also On: PS2,

GC — Yes, it's a *StarCraft* game, but no, it doesn't feature any real-time strategy like the original game (PC, N64). The gameplay in *Ghost* can best be described as a mix of elements from *Metal Gear Solid*, *Tenchu*, and *Oni*. Not only is the main character, Nova, deadly with firearms and short-range combat, she also comes equipped with a stealth cloak and the ability to see enemies through walls (one of many cool skills). In a very early Xbox version, Nova had no problem hanging upside-down from a ladder and sniping alien beings, or moving so fast that blasting away multiple enemies was a walk in the park. And even though *Ghost* is primarily a single-player game, the developers tell us a multiplayer mode is in the works.



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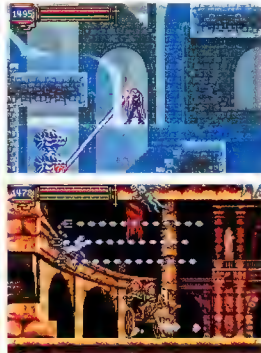
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Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow

Publisher:	Konami
Developer:	Konami CET
Platform:	GBA
Genre:	Adventure
% Done:	80%
Release Date:	May 2003
Also In:	None
Web Address:	www.konami.com
The Good:	Another cool-looking <i>Castlevania</i> so soon after the last one. One a year...we dig that.
The Bad:	Looks kinda similar, though...too much of a good thing?
And The Ugly:	Man, that Soma Cruz chick sure is hot...wait! He's a guy?! Curse you, Konami!



They sure make the skeletons big around these parts. Trouble is, they kind of forgot to add the legs.

With each passing year, gamers can count on timely updates to their favorite franchises—you can pick up a freshly crafted *Madden*, *Tony Hawk*, and...what the hell? *Castlevania*? Yep, *Aria of Sorrow* will be the third GBA *Castlevania* title in as many years. Don't fret, though—Konami doesn't disappoint here: Not only does this latest journey through Drac's pad improve upon the previous game (*Harmony of Dissonance*), but it also takes the series somewhere it's never been before—to the year 2035.

Don't start envisioning phaser-wielding skeletons and goth robots. Keep an open mind. "Since the release dates for *Aria* and *Harmony* were relatively close together, we really needed to create two distinct games," explains Producer Koji Igarashi. "We want to begin a new generation of *Castlevania*, one that explores what happens after Dracula's utter destruction." That's right—Vlad's really dead this time.

According to the game's story, a group of heroes were ready for Dracula's reappearance in 1999 and success-

fully obliterated him by trapping his castle in a solar eclipse. Apparently, without his castle he's a total wuss, so after he was destroyed, they scattered his dust to the winds. Now, back to the future. In 2035, the mild-mannered (and disturbingly feminine) Soma Cruz is visiting Japan as an exchange student. A freakish solar eclipse occurs while he's visiting a local temple, and blammo! He's transported to good ol' *Castlevania*.

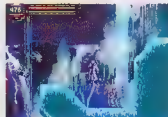
Even though Dracula bit the dust, his castle's still teeming with legions of horrible monsters. Luckily, Soma's been blessed with some nifty powers—using the Soul system, he can use his enemies' own skills against them (see below), and can also equip a full range of weapons, armor, and items, just like Alucard in *Symphony of the Night* (PS1). The Soul system replaces the traditional sub-weapon setup of past games, so you won't be picking up any axes, holy water, or crosses this time around. "Certainly, it is a gameplay revolution," Igarashi says. "But the control scheme itself will still be familiar to players, so they

SOULS: ALL ABOARD THE COOL TRAIN

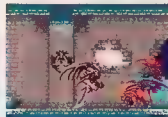
Once in a while, a defeated enemy will drop a glowing gem: its soul. Snag this bauble and Soma can absorb the inherent powers of the beast he just bested. Souls fall into one of four different categories, depending on what type of effect they have. Hardcore players (with a lot of time on their hands) can expect to find over 200 unique souls in the castle, transforming Soma into a walking arsenal of ultimate destruction.



Equipping Your Souls
On the Soul Set screen, you can customize Soma with three different soul effects at the same time.



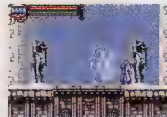
Ability Enhancement
Equip these to give Soma magical properties, like the ability to walk on water.



Magic Effects
Use these to summon a magical helper or to transform Soma into a powerful demon.



Reviv Effect
These special souls allow Soma to use new moves, like Dash and Double Jump.



Magic Weapons
With these, you can spend a little magic to toss out a special weapon or two.



LOW-COST SYMPHONY

For the past few years, copies of *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (widely considered one of the top PS1 games ever, and one of the best *Castlevania* titles in history) have routinely fetched sky-high prices on eBay. Finally, the market has calmed down somewhat—now, you can snag a Greatest Hits version for around \$30, if you're lucky. Happy hunting!

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SOMA SIBEL

The futuristic hero of *Aria* won't win any masculinity contests, but at least he's a snazzy dresser—fur-collared coats and bellbottoms are all the rage in 2035. He's not your traditional *Castlevania* leading man, though, as he has no relation to the legendary Belmont clan.



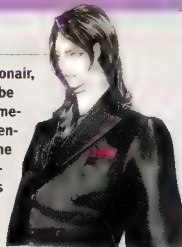
MINA HARUKA

This Japanese cutie was tending her family's shrine when a bizarre solar eclipse sucked her into Dracula's castle along with Soma. Will she need rescuing? Signs point to "Yes." Will Soma fall for her demure charm? Signs point to "We're not sure if Soma likes girls."



IGARASHI

He's creepy, debonaire, and happens to be inside Drac's home-stead. Did we mention that his name sounds 99.5 percent the same as Alucard's (star of the PS1 classic *Symphony of the Night* and Dracula's son)? Something's fishy...and Igarashi isn't talking. He advised us to "play and find out."



"...A new generation of Castlevania that explores what happens after Dracula's ultimate destruction."

—Producer Koji Igarashi

shouldn't have a tough time adjusting."

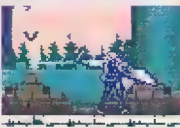
The unexpected addition of the Soul system definitely shakes up the series' fundamental gameplay (in a good way), but the development team didn't forget to address the few quibbles that gamers had with *Harmony of Dissonance*. First, the music has

been substantially improved. "HotD was the first GBA game we did [*Circle of the Moon* was developed by a different team: Konami's Kyoto group]—we didn't know how far we could push the machine," says Igarashi. "Now, we have a much better idea of the GBA's capabilities, so we can pull some really high-quality stuff out of it." We've heard it, and yep—much better tunes. Konami has also tackled gamers' other main peeve: the difficulty. *Harmony* was a fantastic game but rather easy. Hopefully, the undead cakewalks are behind us. "The internal evaluators playing it at Konami keep telling me that it's too hard this time!" laughs Igarashi. ♣

—Shane Bettenhausen



BIT LUTHERUS



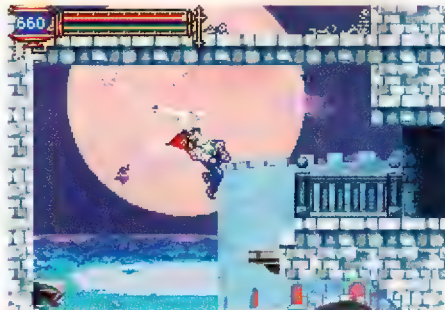
Aria of Sorrow features a full inventory for Soma, including a plethora of weapons for him to wield. Longswords, lances, and even landmines are all part of the arsenal. (You might even find a whip if you search hard enough.)

SOUL 2 SOUL

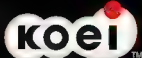


Tracking down every last enemy soul will be a massive undertaking. Have your friends help. Grab your GBA Link Cable and prepare for some soul-swapping action by linking up systems. Don't worry about giving your pals an unfair start, though—if

you hand over the really deadly stuff early on, they'll be too low-level to make much use of it. Also, gamers who don't link up aren't screwed—this isn't *Pokémon*. "There aren't two versions of the game," explains producer Igarashi. "When I play something and I can't get everything on one cartridge, that sucks!"



Soma gets a little help from his fantastical friends by equipping a magic effect soul that lifts up his jacket in order to make him fall more slowly.



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PlayStation 2



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MARCH 2003

The Warriors Return, and the Battle Rages On...

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



FIG. 4. – Hurlful Words
Insults are unloaded regularly to further humiliate an opponent already suffering from repeated blows to the head.

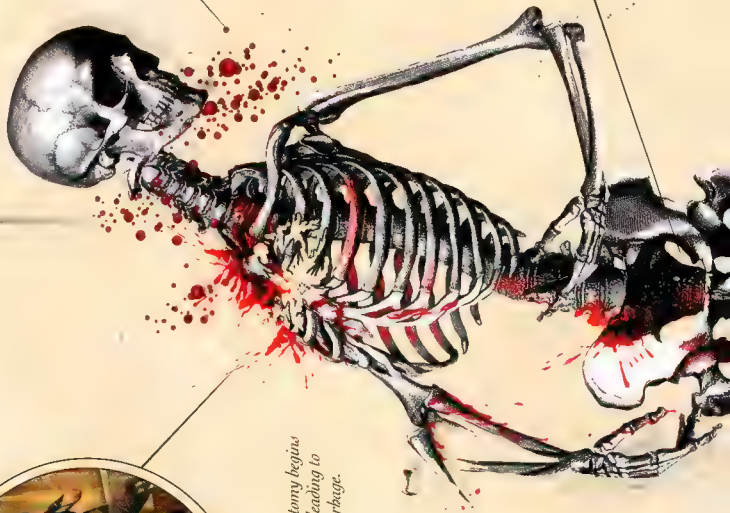




FIG. 2. — Physical Disability
The deconstruction nears completion as limbs weaken and break from continuous physical abuse, finally rendering the enemy useless.



FIG. 5. — Harm or Heal
Once supernatural Chi reaches full capacity within the body, the powerful energy force can be unleashed to harm enemies or used to heal the damage they have inflicted on you.

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And the Lord replied,

"My child, I was with you

through all your travels,

but along the most difficult paths

when there were no prints in the sand,

that is when I carried you."



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PlayStation.2



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2002

Gamers' Choice Awards

Much as we hate to bust our mint-in-box robot-shaped awards* from their polystyrene packages, sending them into the cruel world to be dirtied by human hands and to plummet in value...it's that time again. It's time to recognize last year's best games, pat some backs (no high-fives allowed, however), and heap some scorn upon all we hate (see our First Annual Tobias Bruckner Memorial Awards for Excellence in the Field of Crapulence at the end of the feature).

Once again, we've given you a ballot, too—via our website, www.egmmag.com—so you'll see your top choices right next to ours. It's rather surprising just how much we agreed on. If you notice some glaring discrepancies, remember that we disqualify our Game of the Year winner from all other categories to ensure one title doesn't monopolize the editors' awards. We leave your picks alone, though: If you wanted to vote *Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian* as best of the year in every category, we let ya. But thanks to you all for not doing that. Well, all except that one guy, anyway.

ACCESSORIES SOLD SEPARATELY

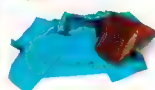
MEDAL OF HONOR RIFLE!



METROID GUN ARM!



VICE CITY MULLET!



VIRTUA RED BELT!



Artwork: Chuck Ernst

*Winners of our Gamers' Choice Awards each receive Robot the Awards Robot, a fully functional robo-trophy suitable for framing and/or bomb defusing. Winners of The First Annual Tobias Bruckner Memorial Award for Excellence in the Field of Crapulence get a boot in the ass.

PlayStation 2 Game of the Year: Grand Theft Auto: Vice City • Rockstar



Whoever says crime doesn't pay has either 1) been convicted and now clings desperately to the soap during every shower, or 2) never built their own criminal empire in this anything-goes adventure. We assure you: Cruising around town *Airwolf*-style in your stolen helicopter gunship while collecting weekly profits from your personal porno studio does not suck.

HOW YOU VOTED

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City • 3,246 votes
Kingdom Hearts • 1,221 votes
Virtua Fighter 4 • 411 votes
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs • 363 votes
Ratchet & Clank • 219 votes



Moment of Greatness: Jacking a mansion. Ah, the joys of owning your own home and squad of heavily armed henchmen.

Driving Game of the Year: Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 • EA Games • PS2

Superfast arcade action, kickin' tunes, and hot rods the gods would kill for come together in this superb racing game that has our resident speed freaks shaking and sweating. Well, at least for the PS2 incarnation—the other versions are less souped-up.

Moment of Greatness: Unleashing the spike strips on your buddy in Hot Pursuit mode, and then listening to him cry foul.



HOW YOU VOTED

Need for Speed: HP2 (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 2,277
Sega GT 2002 (Xbox) • 806
Burnout 2 (PS2) • 564
RalliSport Challenge (Xbox) • 535
ATV Offroad Fury 2 (PS2) • 401

Sports Game of the Year: Madden NFL 2003 • EA Sports • PS2, GC, Xbox, PS1

The latest *Madden* is as close as you can get to playing football without actually having to, you know, stand up and stuff. Along with the finely tuned true-to-the-gridiron gameplay, new Minicamp and Football 101 modes will have rookies and veterans alike pointing to the sky, giving mad props to the deity.

Moment of Greatness: Winning your first game...online.



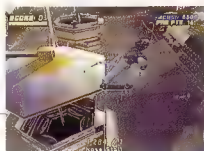
HOW YOU VOTED

Madden NFL 2003 (PS2, GC, Xbox, PS1) • 1,599
NFL 2K3 (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 814
NBA 2K3 (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 770
Beach Spikers (GC) • 717
Hot Shots Golf 3 (PS2) • 419

Action Sports Game of the Year: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 • Activision • PS2, GC, Xbox, PS1

With amazing rail-tastic levels, intense Pro Challenges, and a new game structure that lets you play any skater on any unlocked level with no time limit, the latest *Hawk* is as fun as it is challenging. There must be something in the coffee over there at developer Neversoft.

Moment of Greatness: Realizing *THPS4* would take way, way longer to beat than you ever imagined.



HOW YOU VOTED

THPS4 (PS2, GC, Xbox, PS1) • 4,825
Aggressive Inline (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 597
BMX XXX (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 444
FreeStyle (PS2, GC) • 173
Jet X20 (PS2) • 117

THE OTHER AWARDS...We spent 10 minutes thinkin' these up, so you better read 'em.

Hottest Babe:

What's-her-name from Eternal Darkness (GC)—You know, that hot chick with the ponytail? She has a Linda Hamilton thing happening. And she wears slacks—that means she's classy.



Hottest Hunks:

UFC: Throwdown (PS2)—The sweaty tangle of legs, arms, and totally ripped abs that was *Throwdown* contains some of these so-called hunks, we've been led to believe.



Best Bad Good

Guy: Tommy Vercetti (GTA: Vice City, PS2)—You gotta root for a guy who starts a criminal empire with a stolen Impala and 10 bucks in his acid-washed pocket. Rumor has it he once shot a man for snoring too loud.





IT WAS A GOOD YEAR FOR...



Rygar swings, hits.

...retro games

Shinobi, *Rygar*, and *Contra* all made triumphant returns to the great relief of many diehard fans. The new *Defender*, although not too shabby, didn't quite live up to the olden days when men were men and side-scrolling 2D space shooters were bitchin'.

...war games

Trickle-down economics didn't work so hot, but our supreme leader's lust for war on all possible fronts definitely trickled down to gamers. The *Medal of Honor* series, *Ghost Recon*, *SOCOM*, and *Conflict: Desert Storm* came out with guns blazin'.

...Xbox Live

All three consoles are online, but Xbox Live is miles ahead of the rest thanks to the Communicator headset, a strong lineup of online titles, and a centralized game-matching service. The winner is you.



Xbox Game of the Year: Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell • Ubi Soft



How many games let you sneak around military installations, evading security cameras, knocking out guards, and employing all kinds of fancy hi-tech gadgets to accomplish your mission? Well...actually, we can think of a few, but none did it as well as *Splinter Cell*. With a politically charged story and graphics that take full advantage of the hardware, it makes us proud to own an Xbox.

Moment of Greatness: Interrogating a petrified hostage as you hold him at gunpoint.

HOW YOU VOTED

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	• 2,561
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	• 723
Steel Battalion	• 489
Jet Set Radio Future	• 402
MechAssault	• 396

Adventure Game of the Year: Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Rockstar • PS2

If working your way from lowly ex-con to crime lord of Miami circa 1986 isn't the definition of a great adventure, then we'll eat our mullet clippings.

Moment of Greatness: Nabbing your first copter and realizing how absolutely huge the city is.

HOW YOU VOTED

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (PS2)	• 3,317
Metroid Fusion (GBA)	• 1,299
Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem (GC)	• 1,216
Zelda: A Link to the Past (GBA)	• 619
Shenmue II (Xbox)	• 595



THE OTHER AWARDS...Hey, it was either these or more ads for that game with the ninjas.

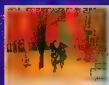
Best Game None of You Heartless Bastards Bought:

GitarooMan (PS2)—This story of boy-meets-girl-meets-guitar-and-saves-the-universe warmed our hearts (cockles included), but it didn't warm enough of yours, so now we can kiss a sequel goodbye. Damn you all!



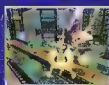
Award for 100 Percent Gooodood Lookin':

Splinter Cell (Xbox)—Let's put *Splinter Cell*'s zowie effects into perspective: If this game were a pop star, it'd be Britney Spears hanging out with Christina Aguilera in a hot tub while Shakira applied oils and creams.



Most Costly Addition:

Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II (GC)—Game: \$50. Subscription fee: \$9. ISP: \$20. Keyboard (import): \$100. Network adapter (good luck finding one): \$35. Total: \$214. Do they realize how many lawns Cube owners will have to mow?





Fighting Game of the Year: Virtua Fighter 4

Sega • PS2

Two broken joysticks, 50,000 matches, and countless hours of smack-talk later, Sega's masterpiece still reigns as our favorite one-on-one PS2 fighter. It's simple to pick up, yet profoundly deep.



Moment of Greatness: Playing through Kumite mode to unlock the perfect goofy-ass hat for your custom costume.

HOW YOU VOTED

Virtua Fighter 4 (PS2) • 3,385
Mortal Kombat: DA (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 1,584
Tekken 4 (PS2) • 728
Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters (GC) • 570
Marvel vs. Capcom 2 (PS2) • 551

IT WAS A BAD YEAR FOR...

...games gettin' blamed for society's ills

"Those nutball snipers played *Doom* once, eight-odd years ago! *GTA: Vice City* is a game about beating up prostitutes! We don't understand videogames, so they must be evil!" Please shut the hell up.

...network adapters

Sony! Nintendo! Sort it out! It's kind of hard for your online plans (such as they are) to take off when nobody can track down a network adapter! Little help, please?

...the Xbox controller (the big'n')

Microsoft's hulking behemoth of a controller is on the endangered-species list now that the smaller S version is bundled with the system. We can't say we'll miss it.

...the PS2

it's over. It's buddy. Players and developers have moved on. But hey, you had a pretty good world-conquering little run there. Nice work.



PSOne, R.I.P.

PS1 Game of the Year: The Italian Job • Rockstar

HOW YOU VOTED

The Italian Job • 1,598
Arc the Lad Collection • 986
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 • 965
Dance Dance Revolution: KonamiX • 864
Yu-Gi-Oh: Forbidden Memories • 388

This *Driver* clone, based on the classic 1969 Michael Caine film of the same name, is one of the best movie-inspired games ever to hit PS1. On top of that, it'll cost you just 50 bucks to buy it new.

Moment of Greatness: Reliving the flick's hilarious final chase scene, stunt-for-stunt.



Button of the Year:

**Steel Battalion's
Windshield Washer**

Button (Xbox) — "Cause you can't fight what you can't see. Incidentally, the gigantic controller can also be used to subdue intruders if you're out of cast-iron frying pans.



Best Licensed

**Game: Lord of the
Rings: The Two Towers**

(PS2, GC, Xbox) — Good guys dicing bad guys with swords? Eh, we've been there. But EA's *Rings* had the full might of Middle-earth behind it, with production values as high as Director Peter Jackson's two flicks.



\$!\$% this Game is

Hard: Shinobi (PS2) —

Enclave for Xbox made us curse. *Contra* for PS2 made us cry. But only the dastardly difficult misadventures of come-back-kid Shinobi made us consider looking into a less stressful line of work. Air-traffic control, perhaps.





First-Person Shooter of the Year: Medal of Honor: Frontline

EA Games • PS2, GC, Xbox

Our last great war made for a great ol' time in EA's *Medal of Honor* series, but this latest edition goes beyond the call of duty in terms of wow factor and stinkin'-Nazi body count.



Moment of Greatness: Storming Normandy's beach is nerve-rattling *and* historically accurate. Now that's edutainment!

HOW YOU VOTED

Metroid Prime (GC) • 5,357
Medal of Honor: Frontline (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 624
TimeSplitters 2 (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 621
Unreal Championship (Xbox) • 475
007 NightFire (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 224



GameCube Game of the Year: Super Mario Sunshine

Nintendo

All Nintendo systems come with a guarantee: You will get at least one great *Mario* game. It's true that *Mario Sunshine's* water-backpack action didn't make the splash everyone was expecting, but the plumber's latest adventure still packed spectacular worlds to explore, nifty new moves, and enough collectible Shine doodads to keep us busy for a month.



Moment of Greatness: Seeing and hearing old-school-style *Mario* in the bonus stages.

HOW YOU VOTED

Metroid Prime • 4,514
Animal Crossing • 604
Super Mario Sunshine • 483
Resident Evil Zero • 219
Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem • 210

Action Game of the Year: Super Mario Sunshine • Nintendo • GC

Except for those few killer new moves—courtesy of his chatty, H₂O-squirting backpack—Mario didn't bring many novel tricks to his first real game in six years. But *Mario Sunshine's* state-of-the-art platforming gameplay still doused the competition. Even quality competitors like *Ratchet & Clank* on PS2 couldn't top it.



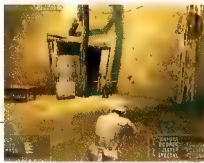
Moment of Greatness: Finding dino-pal Yoshi and taking him for a joyride. And drenching villagers with his stomach contents.

HOW YOU VOTED

Super Mario Sunshine (GC) • 2,582
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell (Xbox) • 1,544
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs (PS2) • 725
LOTR: The Two Towers (PS2, GC, Xbox) • 484
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (Xbox) • 386

Online Game of the Year: SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs • Sony CEA • PS2

As four-star General George S. Patton once said, "The only thing more fun than killing the enemy is killing the enemy online and with voice communication." *SOCOM's* cool headset, broadband compatibility, and intense, realistic team-based gameplay prove he was right.



Moment of Greatness: Hearing your teammates' voices cut off by gunfire. "Hey! I found 'em! They're by—BUDABUDABUDABUDA!"

HOW YOU VOTED

PSO: Episode I & II (GC) • 2,359
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs (PS2) • 11,879
MechAssault (Xbox) • 607
Unreal Championship (Xbox) • 534
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 (PS2) • 377

THE OTHER AWARDS...Because every moment spent reading these is a moment you can't

Best Ad for the Worst Game: *Barbarian* (PS2)—We got misty-eyed for the old-time Arnold when we saw this fun ad. Too bad the game turned out to be more Fabio than Conan.



Best \$\$. We Ever Spent: *Excitebike-e* (GBA e-Card)—Anyone too young to remember this NES game's tale of a bike, bumps, and a talking blender should buy the dirt-cheap GBA e-Card version pronto. Anyone who does remember knows we made up the bit about the blender.



Guilty Pleasure: *Animal Crossing* (GC)—What would your friends think if they knew you really left the party early so you could visit Tom Nook's shop before it closes and sell all those turnips before they go bad? They wouldn't understand...but we do. Oh yes, we do.



Handheld Game of the Year: Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance • Konami • GBA

OK, so Juste Belmont looks a bit like a girl. But *Castlevania* fans didn't care. We were just happy to have a new game we could actually *almost* see (unlike the superdark *Circle of the Moon*).



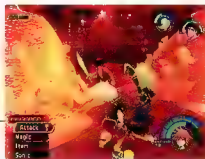
Moment of Greatness: When you realize the castle you've been exploring is actually two separate castles in two different dimensions. Kinda makes your head hurt, doesn't it?

HOW YOU VOTED

Metroid Fusion • 2,875 votes
Zelda: A Link to the Past, Four Swords • 1,461
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance • 759
Super Mario Advance 2 • 327
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis • 249

Role-Playing Game of the Year: Kingdom Hearts • Square EA • PS2

Whether you'll be crying, "Hey, you got your Mickey Mouse in my *Final Fantasy*!" or, "Nope, you put your damned spiky-haired Cloud Strife in my *Little Mermaid*!" you're in for an awesome, epic adventure when you put away those preconceptions and pick up this unique action-RPG.



Moment of Greatness: Once again seeing *Final Fantasy VII*'s Cloud, Yuffie, and especially Aerith (who, as Aeris, died in *FFVII*).

HOW YOU VOTED

Kingdom Hearts (PS2) • 3,027
PSO: Episode I & II (GC) • 1,393 votes
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind (Xbox) • 883
Sulkedon III (PS2) • 605
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis (GBA) • 305

Game of the Year: Metroid Prime • Nintendo • GC

It's hard to remember just how sure we all were that *Metroid Prime* was going to be crap. Here was Nintendo taking one of gaming's most beloved franchises, turning it into a first-person shooter, and giving it to a new, American developer (in Texas, for crying out loud) with



exactly zero published games to its name. It was as though the third *Terminator* movie had been announced as an underwater love story directed by some no-name Russian guy in Moscow — there was simply no way this game would be anything but a disappointment.

Except that it wasn't. Turns out the first-person perspective didn't hinder the exploration and intense action of classic *Metroid* gameplay — it complemented them. Turns out that American developer has some of the most talented artists and skilled programmers in the business, creating one of the best-looking games for any system. Turns out our Game of the Year for 2002 is *Metroid Prime*.

Moment of Greatness: The time between first powering up *Prime* and when the final credits start to roll.

HOW YOU VOTED

Metroid Prime (GC) • 3,529
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (PS2) • 1,315
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell (Xbox) • 601
Kingdom Hearts (PS2) • 432
Animal Crossing (GC) • 249



use to write us nasty letters.

Cooliest Japanese Game (That'll Never Come Out Here): *Talko no Tatsujin (PS2)* — Leave it to the Japanese to make a game in which you bang anthropomorphic drum characters to keep them in the "pleasure zone." If only we could bottle the feeling we get when playing this one.



Best Music: *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (PS2)* — *Vice City*'s it-came-from-the-80s soundtrack makes it the only game that bares Hall & Oates one minute and Megadeth the next, which, in most normal situations, would make your CD player explode.



Presidential Boobs Award for 100% Awesome: *BMX XXX (PS2, GC, Xbox)* — While the terms "awesome" and "BMX XXX" should never appear together, XXX's wealth of real fake stripper breasts must be recognized.



The First Annual Tobias Bruckner Memorial Awards for Excellence in the Field of Crapulence

Tobias Bruckner (right), the arch villain of last year's *Turok: Evolution*, wears many hats. A cowboy hat, certainly, but also the racist-half-cyborg-U.S.-Cavalry-Captain-who-rides-a-half-cyborg-tyrannosaurus hat, and the I-represent-everything-horrible-in-game-design hat, which is really more of a sombrero. Just like poor, ridiculous Tobias fell through a wormhole into another dimension in *Evolution*, he's also fallen into the mascot role of our First Annual Excellence in the Field of Crapulence awards. And the Tobies go to...



Blockiest Graphics: Cubivore (GC)

What happens when you take a Japanese Nintendo 64 game about fighting cardboard boxes and port it to GameCube without changing much of anything? Magic! And you get our Tobie for Blockiest Graphics. *Cubivore* makes *Animal Crossing* look like *Splinter Cell*.



Worst use of the best license: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (PS2, Xbox)



How can you ruin *Lord of the Rings*, aside from adding a Jar Jar Binks-like character (in addition to Gimli, of course)? Developer Black Label found a whole bunch of ways in this game based on the novels.

Most Disturbing Ad: Bawls Guarana's Naked Fat Chick

First rule of advertising: If you can make the audience vomit, they are yours. We're not sure what product this ad from our late 2002 issues is hawking. All we know is that this thing's not for a videogame; it dredges up memories of that time we accidentally saw grandma naked; and, somewhere, pork chops were consumed.



Worst Game Made from a Horrible Movie: xXx (GBA)

Did someone throw a chair into the room? Oh no, that's just wooden "actor" Vin Diesel. "Welcome to the Xander zone," he says in the movie. "We were just leaving," we say, to both movie and game. "Enjoy your zone."

Game with Too Many Dogs Humping: BMX XXX (PS2, GC, Xbox)

Because even one dog humping is too many. Let's just hope Acclaim hoses down the motion-capture studio before their next baseball game.



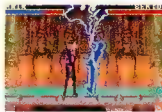
Shut Up & Punch Somebody, Anybody, Award: Shenmue II (Xbox)



Like Elvis said (probably while waiting for his special-order five-patty Big Mac with hash browns instead of buns to arrive): "A little less conversation, a little more action. All this aggravation just ain't satisfactionin' me."

Game that Made Us Want to Drop our Handheld: Mortal Kombat Advance (GBA)

It burns! And stinks! Editor-in-Chief Dan Hsu gave it a zero in his review. Word (from on high) is that they're adding a 10th layer to hell featuring a *Mortal Kombat Advance* demo kiosk.



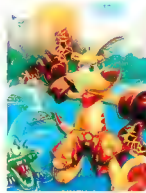
Most Thankless Crate Pushing: Blood Omen II (PS2, GC, Xbox)

You'd think an all-powerful vampire lord like Kain here would be able to levitate his way through these damn crate-shoving puzzles—or at least have access to one of those palette-jack things.



Worst New Character Who's Not Tobias Bruckner: Ty the Tazmanian Tiger (PS2, GC, Xbox)

Ty gives us that nostalgic feeling for old, generic, soul-less marketing-executive-spawned characters like Bubsy, Punky Skunk, and other species of clothes-wearing cartoon animals with attitude that's "In your face!" In your ass is more like it.



Most Delayed Game: Galleon (GC, Xbox)

"Playing *Galleon* spoils a lot of other third-person games," boasts Toby Gard, head of *Galleon* developer Confounding Factor and co-creator of *Lara Croft*. We'll have to take his word for it, seeing as how *Galleon* is more than a freakin' year late! Even the game's publisher can't say when this pirate adventure will set sail. "We'll make announcements when we know more," says Interplay PR. 🏴‍☠️



YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE
TO MAKE A LAST IMPRESSION.



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Live by honor. Kill by stealth.



Earn 9 unlockable new abilities in 26 intense single-player missions.



Play as 1 of 3 characters, relying on stealth and over 30 authentic ninja weapons and tools.



Engage in 2 lethal multiplayer modes: co-op and deathmatch.

MATURE



Blood and Gore
Violence



PlayStation 2

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MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
BLOOD
VIOLENCE

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE

BLACK
LABEL
GAME

VIVENDI
UNIVERSAL
GAMES



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THE BATTLE LINE BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK HAS BEEN CAST.



NEW CRUCIAL CHECK
POINTS FOR SURVIVAL



PLAY AS LIGHT OR DARK
FROM THE BEGINNING

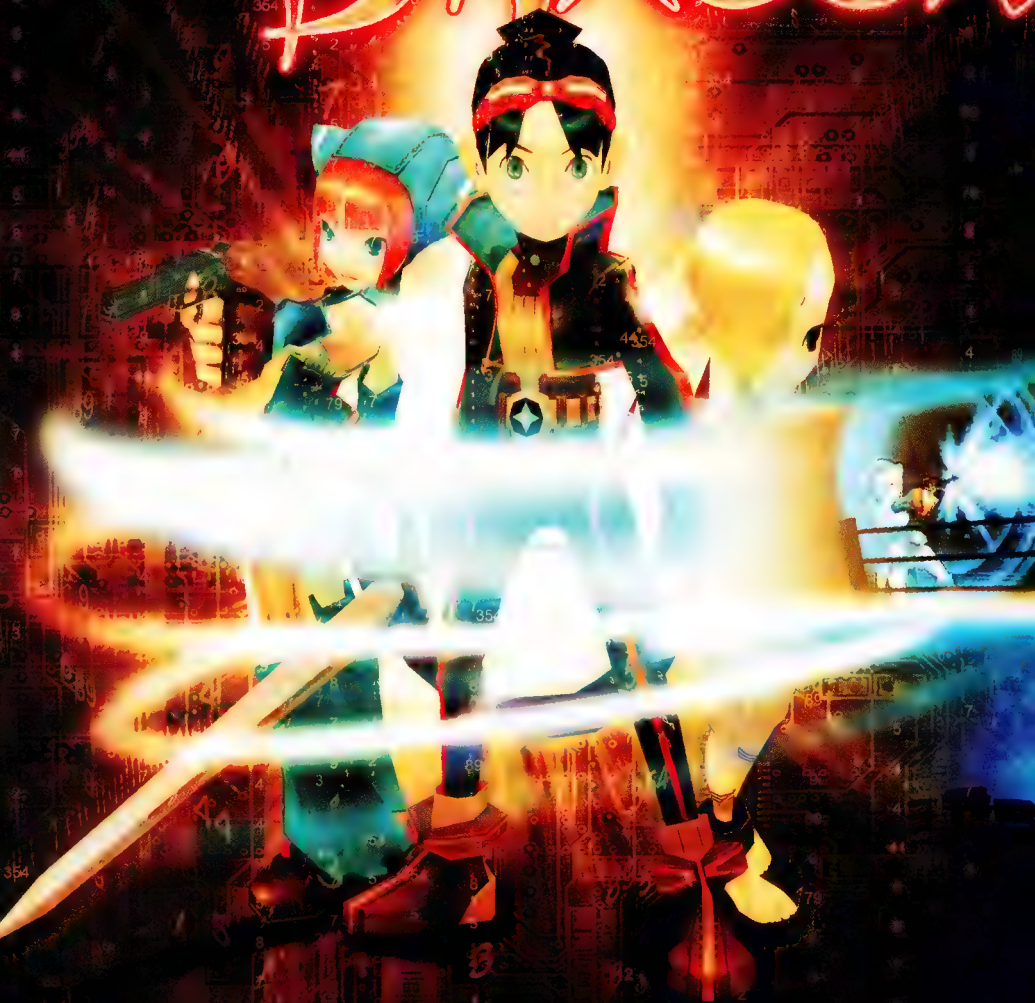


BATTLE AS 12 PLAYABLE
WIZARDS AND WARRIORS.

In an age long past, the rift was formed, separating the lands of light and the plains of darkness by an impassable chasm. The two sides collided in an epic battle, and the struggle between good and evil raged. Now you must determine the fate of this troubled land.



BREATH DRAGON



FROM BENEATH THE SURFACE

A SECRET HIDDEN FOR EONS IS ABOUT TO BE REDISCOVERED

OF FIRE™

QUARTER™



• A BRAND NEW EVOLUTION OF THE
BREATH OF FIRE SERIES

• NEW REAL-TIME, TURN-BASED
BATTLE SYSTEM

• 3-D WORLDS EVOLVE TO SUIT
YOUR PLAYING STYLE



Blood
Partial Nudity
Violence

PlayStation 2

CAPCOM





Review Crew

Our Philosophy

EGM rates games based on how they compare with other titles on the same system. The highest score we'll give a game is a 10. When a game receives a 10, you can rest assured it's one of the best games ever made—a revolutionary title that truly stands above everything else in its genre for its time.



At the other end of the spectrum sits the lowest score a game can receive: a 0.0. This is the kind of game you want to avoid at all costs. It's pure crap. In the middle lies the average grade, 5.0. We repeat: 5.0 IS AVERAGE. Simple, ain't it?

Our Awards



Platinum Awards go to games that get all 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 newly cutesy Link cleaves the competition this month, but he's not the only gaming winner in town—*Def Jam: Vendetta* raps 'n wrangles its way to good marks, *MGS2: Substance* successfully milks the Snake on PS2, and *Final Fantasy: Origins* proves that not every PS1 release belongs in Seanbaby's crap roundup.

The Crew



Paul Byrnes Associate Editor

Paul met Blanka at a mall in 1992, and they became fast friends. Blanka has terrible manners, and OK, some of his moves are kind of cheap, but he's loyal. And hairy. He's both loyal and hairy.

Favorite Genres: FPS, RPG, Fighting
Current Faves: *Halo*, *Animal Crossing*



Brian Iltihar Associate Editor

Being new to the crew, Bryan was able to experience in his first few days the legendary interoffice *Halo* matches. We're still not sure if he has recovered from all those kills courtesy of Mark and Shoe.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Sports
Current Faves: *Metroid Prime*, *Tenchu: WoJ*



Mark MacDonald Executive Editor

Emerging after a week of self-imposed isolation to finish *Zelda*, Mark came back 20 pounds lighter, unshaven, and blabbering incoherently about something named "Tingle" that was "watching him."

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Zelda*, *SOCOM*, *Hotel Mario*



Shane Bettenhausen Reviews Editor

Shane's either still reeling from the godly brilliance of *Zelda* or he's recreating his scene-stealing performance in one of this summer's upcoming blockbusters. Which one? Tune in next month to find out.

Favorite Genres: RPG, Action, Fighting
Current Faves: *Zelda*, *Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow*



Greg Ford Assistant Editor

While Ford is happy that many of his old favorites are making the next-gen leap—the *Castlevanias*, *Marios*, and *Contras*—he wonders why nobody is bringing back gaming's best from the Commodore 64 days: *Crossroads*.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Mario Sunshine*, *Vice City*, *Halo*



Chris Johnston News Editor

With *Zelda*, *Pakémon*, and GBA SP just a few precious days away, CJ is passing the time by surrounding himself with all things Nintendo. Of course, that will do little to comfort his wallet...it's an expensive month!

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Puzzle
Current Faves: *Nintendo Puzzle Collection*, *Zelda*



Greg Sewart Illegal Alien

The Port Authority finally caught up with Sewart and shipped his ass back to Canada. But in order to maintain our 90 percent Canadian-content policy, he'll still be contributing to *EGM* on a regular basis.

Favorite Genres: Racing, RPG, Action
Current Faves: *Zelda*, *Tomb Raider*

Game of the Month



The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

pg. 122

The jury delivers its overwhelmingly positive verdict on Link's cuddly new look—the beautiful animation and unique style fit the game perfectly. Like every *Zelda* before it, *The Wind Waker* oozes with depth, creativity, and spectacular gameplay. Buy it. Now.



Crispin Boyer Features Editor

Cris was ticked when he heard the new *Zelda* lacked a fishing game. He'd already ordered P-enzyme-enriched Bass Assassin lures, now with 50 percent more hog lard! If he asks, don't smell his fingers.

Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure
Current Faves: *Panzer Dragoon Orta*, *Splinter Cell*



Dan "Shoe" Hsu Editor-in-Chief

Shoe and co. are now on two shows a week with CNN Headline News. Look for them Thursday evenings on your moving-picture box. Hopefully, this will raise public awareness for that little-known cable network.

Favorite Genres: Everything
Current Faves: Anything *Metroid* and *Zelda*



Demian Iann Editor-at-Large

It was an epic struggle against all odds, man-versus-environment, etc., but Demian managed to avoid using the term "bling bling" in this month's *Def Jam* review. But he couldn't say no to a solid gold grill.

Favorite Genres: Action, Hockey, Racing, boyeeel
Current Faves: *Zelda*, *NHL 2k3*, *Halo* (again)



Jennifer Tsao Managing Editor

Playing *My Street* this month gave Jennifer a brilliant idea. Dodgeball, which in her youth she saw as just a fun rainy-day diversion, also works rather well at getting delinquent editors to turn their stuff in on time.

Favorite Genres: Action sports, Adventure, RPG
Current Faves: *EverQuest Adv.*, *The Sims*, *Vex*

Aero Elite

Publisher: **SEGA**
 Developer: **AM2**
 Players: **1**
 Also On: **None**
 Highway to: **The Danger Zone**
 Website: **www.sega.com**

Best Feature: Way rad guitar-dominated soundtrack
Worst Feature: Unforgiving difficulty lessens fun

I'm probably the most reckless virtual pilot ever, so my preference is for fast-action arcade flyers. But I do like tricky sim-style missions to straighten me up and fly right on occasion. *Aero Elite* has just enough of that to keep me high. Stringent pilot-training courses and competitions seem dull at first, but as you unlock cooler aircraft, the fun blossoms. My performance on the especially tricky helicopter tests has pretty much confirmed that I'll never pilot a real-life whirly, but the game rewards patient players who can master the intricacies of flight (Arcade mode offers quicker thrills without all the tests and trials). Dogfighting's quite a challenge, though—fans of Namco's *Ace Combat* games will cozy up to the missile-spewing, barrel-rolling action, but less skilled aviators (like me) might end up reaching for the Eject button. I actually got much more satisfaction enjoying the rich backgrounds, rockin' hair metal, and engaging gameplay in the Pilot Training and Free Flight scenarios; I recommend you do the same. **It's a strong rental or worthy purchase for flyboys.**

Jon D.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	5	7



High Heat Baseball 2004

Publisher: **3DO**
 Developer: **3DO**
 Players: **1-2 (2-4 w/ Multitap)**
 Also On: **GC, Xbox**
 Supports: **C. Schilling's charity**
 Website: **www.3do.com**

Best Feature: Amazing gameplay realism
Worst Feature: Animations still a bit rough

If you compare *High Heat* to the rest of this year's baseball crop, there's no contest: Dazzling graphics and an array of gimmicky modes might initially make its competitors seem cooler, but *High Heat* triumphs by focusing squarely on gameplay. It's a game you can enjoy nearly as much in single-player mode as you can with other people, and that says a lot about 3DO's effort. No other baseball game on the market offers A.I. of this caliber: situational substitutions, timely pitching moves, and smart defensive alignments are just a few of the CPU's subtle stratagems. If you can keep pace, you stand a good chance of winning, and that's the real genius of *HH '04*: Everything matters. Yes, you can grimace at some of the game's crotch-py camera work (it's too tight on a lot of the action), and yes, the animations still rouse a chuckle or two, but *HH '04* is as dependable as an ugly old Honda. Plus, this year's Franchise mode adds unlimited replay value—it'll be playing in this till next year's model shows up. I really can't say enough good things about it. An instant purchase.

Dan L.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	7	9

Black & Bruised



Publisher: **Majesco**
 Developer: **Digital Fiction**
 Players: **1-2**
 Also On: **GameCube**
 Throw In: **The towel**
Best Feature: 3D cartoon characters
Worst Feature: Everything else
 Website: **www.blackandbruised.com**

Black & Bruised invites us to step into the ring and beat the ever living crap out of goofy themed boxers in a funny cartoon world. It's a clever concept, but sadly the execution is lacking. Superb character design carries the game—for about an hour. After that, the shallow gameplay wears out its welcome faster than you can say "Muhammad Ali." Sure, the game looks great. Smooth animation and amusing voice acting complement the bruisers' capocatic cartoon rendering. Mickey McFist drunkenly slurs his brogue-essed speech, Knuckles Nadine is a boxing Daisy Duke, and Royal Pain brines English-aristocracy snobbery into the ring. All 18 characters have similarly vibrant personalities. But let's not pull punches—this game is no fun. The boxing itself allows little subtlety or creativity. The fighters share the same eight punches, which hardly vary in terms of accuracy, speed, or damage. A skilled brawler might save a power-up for a strategic moment, but even this tactic is blunted by the unstable nature of the power-ups, which disappear if your boxer starts taking a beating. **The simple truth is *Black & Bruised* is a button-masher.** Mash buttons to slug your opponent, mash buttons to haul your palooka off the mat when you get laid out, and mash buttons to skip the repetitive cinematics that bookend every round. Aside from its well-rendered characters, there is neither sweetness nor science to be found here.

Paul

Black & Bruised has an identity crisis. Its impressive visuals and comical story say "easy-to-play, arcade-style boxing game." But the controls and gameplay aren't shake-n-bake simple, and that's where *Bruised* stumbles. The controls (with eight different types of punches...eight) belong in a serious sim, not in a seemingly fun punchfest. The most frustrating thing about *Bruised* is that, to be successful, you've either got to memorize a lot of combos or just mash and hope for the best. And because the game's so fast and the camera's so tight on the action, blocking takes more luck than skill. **The graphics and style are a KO, but the gameplay doesn't have the same punch.**

CJ

I was as excited to play *Black & Bruised* as I was to punch myself in the face, which is to say, very, not. But I played it. And it surprised me. And I liked it. Quite a bit. The game pulls off funny the same way the under-appreciated snowboarding game *Dark Summit* did: with kitsch. **The Boxer's Life** story mode will keep you entertained with the 18 characters' wacky story lines. Think of a regular boxing Story mode, delete anything serious, and add in whatever comes to mind. And I mean whatever. While dimwits like Paul and CJ might not be able to follow the complex plots, I quite like non sequiter narratives. It's that recipe that makes the game fresh and worthwhile.

Todd

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	6	4	5



Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance



Publisher: **Konami**
 Developer: **Konami CET**
 Players: **1**
 Also On: **Xbox**
 Featured In: **EGM #164**
Best Feature: Incredible gameplay
Worst Feature: Lame story
 Website: **www.konami.com**

Here we go again. PS2 owners may have grumbled a bit when Xbox players got the deluxe *MG52* last Christmas, but now they can sleep well knowing they get not only the same game, but also less slowdown and an all-new mode: Snakeboard! Get it? Skateboarding with Solid Snake! Hal! Anyway, this is the same *Metal Gear Solid 2* you played a couple years ago. It's still got the kick-ass stealth gameplay (flight is better than fight) and a story that all but unravels at the end. Seriously, the plot will leave you totally confused for the last hour or so of the game. Luckily, for those of you who don't need a story, the dozens of cool new VR missions—everything from learning how to sneak through enemy-infested areas to protecting a plate of curry with a sniper rifle—will keep you playing for weeks. On top of that, you get a few extra miniscenarios dubbed Snake Tales. These are totally original, but probably too friggin' hard for any casual gamer. But if you're the type that found *MG52* too easy at the highest difficulty setting, these are for you. And finally, Snakeboarding. I have to say—I'm not impressed. It's basically Konami's lame *Evolution Skateboarding* game using *MG5* settings and characters. It's pretty clunky and not really worth playing. Otherwise, the rest of *Substance's* extra features make **it worth buying over the much cheaper Greatest Hits version of *MG52* on PS2.**

Greg S.

As far as I'm concerned, the original *MG52*'s package of clever controls, crisp graphics, hide-and-seek stealth, and guns-blazing action still stands as one of the best PS2 titles to date. The two aspects of the game I didn't like (the wussy main character Raiden and the nut-ball plot), *Substance* sweeps under the rug. **A huge selection of new minimeasures allows for more time playing as famed series stud Solid Snake, and they further exploit *MG52*'s strongest suit: the gameplay.** Not worth buying again (and unless you were one of the five PS2 owners who missed out on the game the first time), but definitely an intense weekend rental for fans.

Mark

Metal Gear fans that played the crap out of *MG52* a year-and-a-half ago still have plenty to look forward to in *Substance*. Aside from the main game itself, which remains one of the boldest, most experimental blockbuster to date, you're also treated to some fun VR missions that truly capture the essence of *MG52*'s gameplay. Sadly, alternate Snake Tales episodes all take place on the tanker and Big Shell, and the skateboarding minimeasure is completely redundant, no thanks to *Tony Hawk*. *MG52* is still an awesome game, but one year later, and with the regular game now available as a \$20 Greatest Hits title, ***Substance* should have been released at a discounted price.**

Che

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	8	6	8

Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter

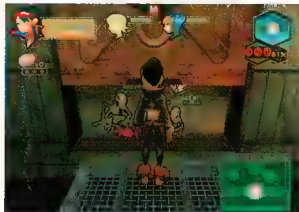


Dragon Quarter's mix of intense strategy and real-time action makes for immensely fun battles.

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #157
Best Feature: Deep battle system
Worst Feature: Bizarre gameplay concepts
Website: www.capcom.com

PS2

Longtime *Breath of Fire* fans are in for a shock—this fifth installment of the always good (but rarely great) role-playing franchise abandons nearly every gameplay element the series is known for. A giant kingdom to explore? Nope, *Dragon Quarter* takes place exclusively in a cramped, postapocalyptic underground cave—no forests, rivers, or mountains to traverse this



time. What about the giant cast of lovable characters? Sorry, you'll only get three party members to play with here. OK, at least you'll be able to relax by fishing, like in the past four games, right? Not a chance. The only water you'll find here is flowing through a trash-strewn sewer.

So, what does *Dragon Quarter* offer? Well, something entirely different. It's a survival-RPG that blends traditional role-playing concepts with gameplay ideas straight outta survival-horror games like *Resident Evil*. You still have the basic tenets of RPG-dom, including hit points, experience points, equipment, magic, and turn-based battles. But now those old-school ideas are coupled with such a severe level of difficulty that you'll be forced to avoid overly difficult battles, conserve healing resources, and find items in order to save (much like *RE's* typewriter ribbons) just to stay alive. And if you do die, you're forced to make a colossal decision that could send you all the way back to the start of the game (scope the sidebar for the scoop).

Conceptually, it's truly groundbreaking stuff, but it's so daring that some of the leaps don't exactly work smoothly. However, if you're in the market for something funkily fresh and devilishly hard in the RPG realm, investigate *Dragon Quarter*.

Succeeding at the game's exceedingly tough battles requires careful planning—pay attention to your AP meter so you can run in for a powerful attack and then escape to a safe distance all in one turn. Most enemies can't travel very far, so you can dart in, dart out, and remain totally safe.



I've played through a lot of RPGs over the years, so it's awfully hard for anything in the genre to surprise me. Well, *Dragon Quarter* did just that, throwing me for a loop and leaving me for dead with its obscene difficulty and whacked-out gameplay innovations. Be prepared—this game is **insanely and unfairly difficult by design**. Normal enemies will overpower you, healing items are a scarce commodity, restorative spells are nonexistent, and even saving your game is an arduous prospect. Chalk it up to the blasted Scenario Overlay System (SOL), wherein you restart the game from scratch and keep all your experience and items after you die. The game doesn't force you to SOL, but realistically, you'll have to do it in order to beat the game. You even get rewarded with extra cut-scenes when you replay via SOL! In my opinion, it's a cheap trick that ekes extra replayability out of a fairly short (less than 20 hours) RPG. It's a shame that the game is so damned tough, because I genuinely like every other aspect of it: The attractive cel-shaded visuals are cartoony yet dark and edgy, the soundtrack rocks, the bleak plot unfolds nicely, and the strategy-heavy battle system is among the best I've ever experienced. If only all of these elements could migrate over to a normal, more-fun RPG, I'd be in heaven. As it stands, *Dragon Quarter* remains a broken attempt at changing the RPG rules. Try before you consider buying.

Shane

I knew full well going into *Dragon Quarter* that I was going to die and have to restart—it's just a component of the gameplay. Perhaps this is why I never became frustrated like grumpy ol' Shane. In fact, I kinda liked being able to start over at any time in order to replay areas with built-up stats and check out additional cut-scenes. The SOL system captured my attention, and the insanely cool, ultrastrategic battle system sucked me in further. **Honestly, I don't think I've ever had as much fun with RPG battles before.** The soundtrack rocks, too. The game may be a little out there, but seriously, this is just what the genre needs.

Sam K.

I will admit right now that when I first started playing *Dragon Quarter*, I hated it. Yes, the game's graphics are gorgeous, the character design is amazing, the music is fantastic, and the unique strategy-battle system rocks the house, but the game's scarcity of save points, clumsy inventory system, and seemingly impossible difficulty level made me wanna holler. Never before have I played a game that was designed to make me level up, make partial progress, and restart the game better prepared than before. While coming to grips with this system was initially frustrating, I stuck with it and saw it through to the rewarding end. A sleeper.

Milkman

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	9	7

DEAD? YOU'RE S.O.L., SON



Want more cut-scenes? Die and start over!

The Scenario Overlay System (SOL) is paramount among *Dragon Quarter's* wacky innovations. When you die (and you will die), you're given two choices: You can either continue from your last save point minus most of your earnings, or you can SOL and restart the entire game with all your goodies and experience intact. Plus, if you SOL, the game adds new cut-scenes that help flesh out the story. Bizarre!

MEGAMAN KICKS OFF HIS 15th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



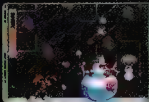
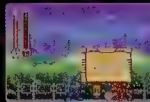
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for humankind as you face off with
the newest menace in town, Robot King. He's
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creations in order to crush and dominate all
humans. Mega Man and Bass set out separately
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Weapons: Double Jumps
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Defeat Robot Masters
to Open More Paths



EVERYONE



VIOLENCE

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Def Jam: Vendetta



Publisher: EA Sports Big
Developer: EA Canada/Aki
Players: 1-2 (2-4 with Multitap)
Also On: GameCube
Featured In: EGM #163
Best Feature: Can Ludacris beat up Method Man? This age-old question is answered. No. Create-a-wrestler option? Lame.
Worst Feature: No Create-a-wrestler option? Lame.
Website: www.defjamvendetta.com



The pitch for *Def Jam: Vendetta* must have sounded like some kind of cynical marketing wet dream: "It's *Fight Club* meets hip-hop! It'll be, uh, off the hook...or, whatever the kids say. Hella something."

We can't even count all the ways this could have gone wrong, so we're glad we don't have to. Developer Aki is known for its wrestling-game expertise, and Def Jam, well, they're pretty good with the hip-hop. Together, they've made a decent brawl that incorporates the hip-hop stars you presumably love (Ludacris, DMX, Redman...almost the entire Def Jam lineup) and even compelling story—compelling for a wrestling game, at least.

The Def Jam crew members are the villains, with each artist acting as a boss. As you climb the ranks in Story mode and struggle to get the

girl (well, girls—there's more than one), you'll earn cash, which you can use to buy attribute upgrades. There's all kinds of other stuff to unlock, too: new fighters (39 in all), stages, and even swank Phatfam threads, in case your wardrobe is low on powder-blue track suits.

The multiplayer games you'd expect are there—Tag Team, Free For All, and Handicap modes—and you can even earn cash from these bouts to spend in Story mode, but you can't set up tournaments or tweak many options. The lack of a Create-a-character feature is also a bummer. If you enjoy the hip-hop and the wasslin', you'll get many hours of fun out of this one, but if you're a hardcore WWE fan, you may want to stick with what you've already got.

Method Man has PeeWee (one of the non-rapper scrubs) on the metaphorical ropes, while a small assembly of onlookers call out for blood. They'll be disappointed, 'cause there ain't none. You'd think the guy in the peace shirt would be against this sort of thing, but apparently not.



Def Jam: Vendetta sounds less like a good idea for a game and more like a license to print money, but it's actually done pretty well. The characters look like they should, even down to their outfits, and the gameplay is what you'd expect from a good brawler. It's also surprisingly challenging—sometimes frustratingly so, at least initially—on the Normal difficulty level. But when you get all powered up and unleash a "Blazin'" finishing move, the resulting punishment is quite satisfying, in a "boy, did he ever get hit in the crotch" kind of way. The computer A.I. always mounts a comeback if it's on the ropes, which adds tension to a match but increases the risk of you throwing your controller to the ground in disgust after your foe unleashes a string of combos you're powerless to stop. There are some nice details, like body-part-specific damage and a diverse range of moves to master, but also some glaring omissions: Match conditions, like rope breaks, ring outs, and time limits (there isn't one, ever) aren't customizable. The fighters' stats aren't listed in the Multiplayer Character-select screen. And, you can't grab a chair from the audience for pummeling purposes (or, as the case may be, a big bottle of Aizé, the beverage of choice among rappers' girlfriends). *Def Jam* will be a must-have for some, but if the hip-hop angle doesn't particularly appeal, you may want to get your sweaty man-thrills elsewhere.

Demian

I don't like fighting games. I think the WWE is stupid, and only recently have I become a hip-hop enthusiast, courtesy of what I've deemed "The 8 Mile Effect." But I love any game good enough to hook me, and *Vendetta* is certainly that. While the story line has fewer twists than a breadstick, the game is addictive because the balanced fighting engine keeps every battle interesting. Unlocking DMX and Ludacris as players, and a handful of *Maxim*-style photographs of some really pretty girls don't hurt, either. Painfully limited tunage is the game's only serious flaw. There are too few songs (16 or so), considering that *Vice City* offers more than 80 and *Tony Hawk 4* features 40.

Todd

Vendetta is the swift kick in the junk that the wrestling genre sorely needs, but it still left me feeling somewhat empty. I really like the entertaining Story mode, fast action, easy-to-learn controls, and K.O. system (which keeps match lengths reasonable). Unlike most wasslin' games, the gauges make sense (one even tells you if an opponent can escape a pin). But, there's also a lot that needs work: it's criminally low on match types, doesn't have any weapons, doesn't have a Create-a-character mode, the camera sucks when more than two wrestlers are onscreen, and there're 44 characters, but only four can be used in Story mode. In short, it's still a promising start to a great series.

GAT FIGHT!



Def Jam: Vendetta isn't just about Def Jam artists. You'll also find the lovely ladies who, uh, associate with the Def Jam crew. As your wrestler gains more respect, the gals will actually fight over him (no hair pulling, unfortunately, but there is slapping). When you get a new lady friend, you'll also open a gallery of her cheesecake pictures—not rendered art, but real photographs of the gal the character is based on. Sexy...or desperately sad? It's a personal question.

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

8

8

6

7



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Comic Mischief
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The King of Route 66



Publisher:
Sega
Developer:
AM2
Players:
1-2
Also On:
None
Featured In:
EGM #163
Website:
www.sega.com

Best Feature: Queen of Route 66 mode
Worst Feature: Short, overly difficult stages

Breaker, breaker! You got yer ears on? Drivin' yer diesel car in *King of Route 66* should be a real sweet deal. "Specially with no smokies at yer back door. Know what I mean? But this dog don't hunt. It's got all the same problems as *18 Wheeler*—mostly muddy controls and levels shorter than your average commercial. At least the levels are plentiful this time around. You might not get to see all the stages, though, since the **difficulty curve is all messed up**. When I've gotta drive the first few levels over and over again, something's wrong. No matter which mode you play in, it happens. At least I had some fun with the Queen of Route 66 mode. What's that, you ask? It's basically *Gun Turismo* for trucks. You complete various challenges, earn cash, and upgrade your truck from a child's toy to something Bj and The Bear would be proud to drive. But, again, the cruel difficulty hampers the enjoyment. I was really lookin' forward to drivin' the big rigs in a great game for once, too. Oh well, looks like I'll have to wait for another *18 Wheeler* sequel before I live that particular dream. **Greg S.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	6	4	6

My Street



Publisher:
Sony CEA
Developer:
Idol Minds
Players:
1-4
Also On:
None
Featured In:
EGM #164
Website:
playstation.com

Best Feature: Competent multiplayer minigames
Worst Feature: Pointless, badly designed Story mode

My Street really challenges me, but not the way a game typically should. I'm not driven to explore by the cunning design (it's rather basic—you run up to different neighborhood kids who invite you to play a bunch of tried-and-true multiplayer diversions of yore). Nor am I baffled by the endless variety of minigames (there's a grand total of seven). Instead, ***My Street* challenges me to think of a single type of gamer who would actually enjoy playing it.** I've come up with two: bored kids with overprotective parents, and adults with bad taste in games. Now, that's not to say all the minigames are terrible; it's tough to truly destroy a *Tetris* or *ChuChu Rocket!* rip-off, and the *Marbles* and *Lawnmowers* games are somewhat fun. But the RC Racing game is just boring, and in team-based games like *Volleyball* and *Dodgeball*, when it's not your turn, you can't even see your team on the screen. Finally, the freaky-looking characters you create might frighten rather than amuse you. The fact that the game offers online play redeems *My Street*, but only slightly. **Jennifer**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	4	2	5

Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc



Publisher: Ubi Soft
Developer: Ubi Soft
Players: 1
Also On: GC, Xbox
Featured In: EGM #159
Best Feature: Good graphics
Worst Feature: Horrible unlockable "bonuses"
Website: www.rayman.com

Since *Rayman 2* was released, some phenomenal platformers have hit the scene from the likes of Nintendo (*Mario Sunshine*) and Sony (*Sly Cooper, Jak and Daxter, and Ratchet & Clank*). And while *Rayman 3* is a slight improvement on the limless wonder's impressive-at-the-time last adventure, it just can't compete with the genre's lofty new benchmarks. Its problems begin with a horribly uninteresting story and unfunny voice acting. Thirdly, since in I was looking for the at least tolerable Raymanesque voice option from *Rayman 2*, but alas, it was not to be found. From there, the game continues its descent with a haphazard mix of derivative gameplay that runs the gamut from imaginative and fun (like the hunt for a gun-toting badgie around his mansion) to utterly annoying and dull (like the absolutely infuriating and pointless levels where you surfboard over planks of light). For each thing that's kinda fun, you get three or four things that aren't. Even bits you'd think would be enjoyable, like a bunch of unlockable bonus games and "funny" cinemas, are so poorly executed they aren't worth looking at more than once—if at all. But...for all its incredible faults, at its core, the game is still pretty good—better than many of the uninspired action-platform games that have found their way to stores recently (*Dr. Mutó* or *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger*, anyone?). Good? Yes. Great? No. **CJ**

Here's an odd statement for *Rayman* to wrap his limbless arms around: *Hoodlum Havoc* improves on almost everything that its predecessor offered, yet *Rayman 2* remains the better game. *Havoc's* visuals are much better, with smooth, stylish environments and spectacular lighting effects. Plus, the control (especially the targeting) is much tighter. But in an effort to change things up—making constant combat, intense boss battles, and quick action *Havoc's* focus—*Rayman* has lost the sprawling sense of adventure that made the prior game so enticing. What you're left with is a solid, sometimes engaging action-platformer, but nothing more. **Gary S.**

Dear *Rayman*: Your latest effort, *Hoodlum Havoc*, is a fun game. You're as spry as ever, hipply-hopping all over the place and shooting your fists at whomever needs a beating. And your helicopter hair is dynamite, as always. And yet...sorry, Ray, but it's like this: People expect you to exceed their expectations. *Rayman 2* really knocked their socks off, and they're hoping you'll do it again. *Havoc* is cute, lighthearted, accessible, and fun. But its straightforward jumping puzzles and quirky boss battles will put your fans through their paces without really challenging them. **This is a no-nonsense platformer from the king of nonsense!** Let's discuss it further over lunch. Sincerely, **Paul**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	8	7

MotoGP 3



Publisher:
Namco
Developer:
Namco
Players:
1-2
Also On:
None
Still Needs:
Online multiplayer
Website:
www.namco.com

Best Feature: Addition of front and rear brakes
Worst Feature: Steep learning curve

MotoGP was one of the first PS2 titles that made me go "holy s***." It was absolutely gorgeous and played much better than most motorcycle racing games up to that point. The only thing missing was control over both the front and rear brakes (they're independent on racing bikes). Now in its second sequel, *MotoGP* offers that level of control for the first time. Personally, I don't find it makes much of a difference on the track, but bike buffs will be stoked with the option, and it doesn't detract from the gameplay. Other than that, ***MGP3* plays just like Namco's previous two games, with deceptively difficult turns and a great sense of speed.** Even when I tire of racing through a full season, *MotoGP* offers enough different modes—like racing legendary drivers on each track or trying to complete the 100 extra challenges—to keep me playing. I only wish *MotoGP 3* had come with some major enhancements like online play. But if you're a fan of the sport, a simple update to *MGP2*'s list more than enough. **Greg S.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	5	8

World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 International



Publisher:
Konami
Developer:
Konami CET
Players:
1-2 (2-8 w/ Multitap)
Also On: None
Big In: Japan, Europe
Website:
www.konami.com

Best Feature: Master League play
Worst Feature: Intimidating learning curve

Even though you've probably never heard of it, *W6* is the world's most-revered soccer game. If you dabble in the Net soccer-fan scene at all, you'll find some truly rabid fans who spread its gospel, like Jabberwock (a message-board denizen) who explains: "*Winning Eleven 6* is the best game in the world. No, it's not just the best soccer game—it's the best game." OK, he's exaggerating a bit, but he's on the right track—it's a **staggering sports sim worthy of praise**, with spectacular graphics, depth, and gameplay. I'm amazed by the lifelike animations for every imaginable scenario—you'll rarely see the same steals, falls, or blocks twice in a match. The audio is also superbly done, and its marriage to the action is flawless. Although the lavish looks and sounds will draw you in, the gameplay will keep you hooked. The excellent Training mode will definitely help a beginner along the game's steep learning curve, and once you learn the skills, it's easy to master the precise controls. I'm no soccer maniac, but this title deserves merit as a possible Sports Game of the Year. **Dan L.**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
9	7	7	8

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.



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Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven



Two new multiplayer modes provide a new challenge for the *Tenchu* series. In Versus mode, you can assume the role of the two main characters or one of the game's wide variety of enemies, while Co-op has Ayame and Rikimaru teaming up splitscreen to fight evil.



Wrath of Heaven is all about one thing—stealth. Start by sneaking around corners or holding onto ledges, then pop up, jump on an enemy's shoulders, and drive a katana through his skull—that should make any ninja wannabe smile. **The stealth-kill animations are fantastic,** and the incentive of earning additional attacks and special moves for racking up the kills makes the game addictive. Developer K2 has also done a nice job giving a series coming from PS1 the necessary graphical facelift—the huge levels and detailed characters look great. Though the camera still causes some frustration, it's much better than the old *Tenchu* games' clumsy cinematography. My biggest gripe is with the enemy A.I.: In a nutshell, it's pretty stupid. If a guard spots you, most of the time, all you need to do is run away and wait for him to return to his previous position. Plus, the ridiculously easy boss battles require little strategy. In fact, more skilled players may want to bump up the game's difficulty level right from the beginning. I was also hoping for multiplayer modes that felt less like a collection of minigames. Maybe next time. With a few gameplay tweaks and a more compelling story line (everything here is either vague or silly), this could have been a must-have PS2 title. Still, *Tenchu* fans and gamers looking for some stealthy *Metal Gear Solid*-style action should give this game a shot.

Bryan

If nothing else, *Wrath of Heaven* succeeds where it absolutely must—**executing stealth-kills as a ninja is simply exhilarating,** and the animations rock. It's enough to make you want to play through the whole game with each character—but don't expect perfection. Locking on to enemies works OK, but *Wrath's* overly constricive camera adds loads of artificial difficulty, balanced out only by often inept enemy A.I. (you can outpace a pursuer simply by turning a corner, even on a one-way path). And there's nothing like being 20 minutes into a level and falling into a pit you can't even see—pure frustration! Luckily, the solid gameplay and multiplayer thrills win out in the end.

Chris B.

It's tough for *Tenchu* 3 to remain relevant in the face of recent eye-busting stealth-action gems like *MG2: Substance* and the pending PS2 *Splinter Cell*. Luckily, the most memorable thing about the series—namely, the emphasis on cool, grizzly stealth-kills—is in full effect, and the flowing blood does quite a bit to keep the experience afloat. Sneak-quits aside, the combat controls are still a bit cumbersome, despite improvements made over the previous games. Ditto with the A.I.: Sure, they'll climb up walls and maybe come find you when you run, but they'll stop chasing you after about three turns. Overall, it's no classic, but the carnage alone makes it worthwhile.

Miguel

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

7

6

6

6

Publisher: Activision
Developer: K2
Players: 1-2
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #163
Best Feature: Badass stealth kills
Worst Feature: Easy boss fights
Website: www.activision.com

PS2



See those flaming exclamation points? That means Rikimaru's about to berserker barrage some fools.

Almost three years have passed since we last got our ninja groove on with the mildly disappointing *Tenchu 2*, but fledgling developer K2 re-ignites our inner ninjitsu with this third installment on PlayStation 2. *Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven* successfully builds upon what made the series popular on the original PlayStation, as everything revolves around making you look, feel, and act like a real ninja.

The gameplay sticks close to the original game's stealth-assassination groundwork. The two playable characters (with a third unlockable) come with their own sets of weapons and attacks, but more important, both can deliver some horrific damage with their ever-so-sneaky stealth-kills. Similar to *Metal Gear Solid's* radar, *Tenchu's* Ki meter allows you to track your enemies' proximity and awareness of your current position. When the enemy nin-

jas aren't looking, you can go for the immensely gratifying stealth-kill move. Offing foes while remaining unseen makes traversing the game's nine massive levels much easier.

Visually, this chapter easily hangs with other PS2 heavy hitters. Detailed character models and stunning environments impart a realistic, solid feel that the PS1 *Tenchu*s seriously lacked. The camera system still isn't perfect, but it's manageable. Apart from the jumpy camera, the lack of difficult bosses stands as the game's major stumbling block. Compared to its predecessors, this is a much less challenging endeavor, but rewarding nonetheless.

KANJI: THE KEY TO BECOMING A TRUE NINJA



Every time you perform a stealth-kill in *Wrath of Heaven*, you earn a kanji (a Chinese symbol signifying a Japanese word). Your Kuji meter (located right above your Ki and health meter) has nine kanji slots. If you fill the meter during a mission, your character will earn a new skill, like Ninja Vision, which lets you throw items farther and have a better sense of enemy locations. A full Kuji meter will also strengthen your attacks.

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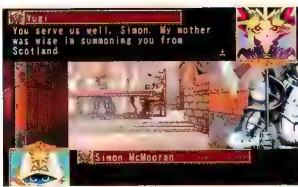
Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelists of the Roses



Publisher: Konami
Developer: KCE Japan
Players: 1-2
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #164
Best Feature: Cool-lookin' monster fights
Worst Feature: Impossibly difficult for beginners
Website: www.konami.com

PS2

The game that everyone's calling "the next *Pokémon*" has finally arrived on PS2, and it's sure to divide players into two distinct camps: fans of the TV show (who will love it) and everybody else (who will likely be confused by it). *The Duelists of the Roses* is complicated, difficult, and demanding, which won't be a problem for vets of *Forbidden Memories* (the PS1 game), but if you're new to the franchise, expect a frustrating initiation. The computer A.I. is way out of whack, making it ridiculously tough for you to score even your first win. And the new Fusion system is confusing as all heck. But to be fair, when compared to Yugi's PS1 debut, *Duelists* definitely offers the better experience; the new board layout adds a lot, making the game feel a bit like chess. There's plenty of strategy involved, and once



Although Yugi is in the game, you don't get to play as him. Which kinda blows if you're a Yugi fan.



you get to the point where you understand the defense and attack principles, it's definitely addictive. The big question is whether you'll play long enough to understand all the rules.

The Duelists of the Roses includes more than 600 different monsters, all in glorious 3D. Which means you'll sometimes see some really lame ones, like the fearsome Pumpkin with Squiggly Legs. "Roar," he says. "I've got a pumpkin for a head! A PUMPKIN! I'M TASTY AND FEROCIOUS!!"



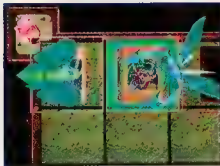
As was the case with *Yu-Gi-Oh! Forbidden Memories* on PS1, *The Duelists of the Roses* is a true love it/hate it kind of game. Fans of the franchise will scream bloody murder when they see this score, while casual gamers are gonna think the grade is at least a couple points too high. But here's the bottom line: While far from great and way too complicated for its own good, *Duelists* is reasonably deep and ultimately pretty satisfying. Players willing to put 20-plus hours into learning the rules of this crazy card-and-board-game hybrid will have a decent time. After all, the monster battles look fantastic and the game's strategic elements make for a **surprisingly addictive experience**. The problem is, it takes forever to learn how to play the damn thing. Combining monster cards to create a more powerful deck is the key to winning battles, but trying to understand all of the unstated (and seemingly arbitrary) card-compatibility guidelines is a nightmare. Worse still, the steep learning curve will obliterate new players. Weevil, the first boss, is easily as tough as Kaiba, your final opponent. If you've never played a *Yu-Gi-Oh!* game before, it's possible that you'll lose for a good 10 hours or so before claiming your first victory. Oh, and I have to mention the music—after a decent hours, a little variety would have been nice. Fans of the show and strategic gamers with perseverance should ante up; everybody else should pass.

Ethan

Some card-battling games, like *Monster Rancher BattleCard* (PS1) and *Card Fighters' Clash* (Neo Geo Pocket), are fun even for those of us uninitiated into the Brotherhood of Hardcore Trading-Card Gamers. But you won't enjoy *Duelists* if you don't already know and love the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* card game. The confusing Terrain and Fusion systems, boring battles, and uneven difficulty make *Duelists* a frustrating mess. It's unforgiving for newbies; the in-game tutorial doesn't actually teach you how to play, so you're left to crawl/whimper and error through its convoluted rules. At least fans of the card game will enjoy watching their favorite beasts in 3D, but the rest of us won't find anything fun here.

CG

CREATE THE PERFECTLY ULTIMATE GREAT MOTH AND BECOME THE PERFECTLY GEEKY GAMED



When you defeat Weevil (your first opponent), be sure to capture his Cocoon of Evolution card. Combine that card with a Larvae Monster card and flip it upward in the Defense position for six turns. Once that hatches into a second form, flip the new card upward and place it in the Defense position for one more turn. That'll transform the card into the legendary Perfectly Ultimate Great Moth; keep it face up in the Defense position and you'll steal 100 ATK points from all enemy cards every turn.

Play this game long enough and you'll feel like a complete loser. Not because of the *Yu-Gi-Oh!* license, mind you—I've actually grown to appreciate Yugi and his card-carrying pals, thanks to the endearing cartoons and the nifty manga. Rather, it's because *Roses* stacks the cards so heavily against you that you're likely to lose the vast majority of your battles. This isn't a game of strategy. No, it's all about random trial and error, memorization, note taking (how else will you recall that the Princess of Isurugi combines with a Dark Rabbit to form a Negokai #2), and frustration. Even curious card-battling aficionados should steer clear—this is for hardcore *Yu-Gi-Oh!* fans only.

Gary S.

VISUALS 6 SOUND 3 INGENUITY 5 REPLAY 7

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PlayStation 2

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The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker



After seeing what Link's packin' in *Soul Calibur II* we like *Wind Waker's* G-rated look even more.

Publisher: Nintendo
Developer: Nintendo
Players: 1 (2 with GBA Link)
Also On: None
Sailing: Takes me away, to where I'm going
Best Feature: Slick graphics (yes, the graphics!)
Worst Feature: Sailing everywhere can get old
Website: www.zelda.com

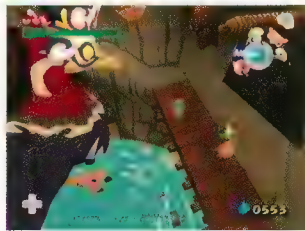


There are two kinds of people in this world—those who think *Zelda's* radical, new toon-shaded style is a brilliant move, and those who think its bug-eyed characters belong in cheesy '70s-era cartoons, not in a videogame for adults. But we have news for any of you who place yourself firmly in that second camp: Experience this game firsthand and you just might change your mind. Once you see how enemy faces lock into a grimace as they take a hit, how fire dances on a torch, how defeated enemies explode into a whirling vortex of clouds and streaking smoke, it's a lot easier to understand why Nintendo made the choice they did. The animation in this game is without equal; as a result, all three of our reviewers (one of whom was previously on the fence regarding the graphics and another who was sure the change

was a mistake) now agree that *The Wind Waker's* new look is as effective as it is unique. In fact, the more realistic, adult Link featured in *Soul Calibur II* (see the, uh, form-fitting pic top right) now looks pretty ridiculous to most of us.

Less discussed but ultimately more important is, of course, the gameplay. Although the controls and basic setup follow the expected *Zelda* mold (puzzle-packed dungeons, giant bosses, music-based magic, etc.), *The Wind Waker* adds a good amount of new material. Link will find several items with multiple ingenious uses—for example, a giant leaf that can

(continued on page 124)



Death from above: Link catches major air.

TREASURE HUNTIN'

The Wind Waker's vast ocean hides many treasures—rupees, heart containers, you name it. And while you could just sail around looking for the tiny rings of light that appear over any submerged chest, we know a great way to build Link's fortune.

First, you'll need a treasure map—you can find them hidden in dungeons, under rocks, and in other out-of-the-way locations. Open that map and find an island on your Sea Chart that matches your location. (Be sure to feed all the local fish you see—they'll fill in parts of your Sea Chart with all the local islands.) Now, sail to the spot marked with the big "X," and as you approach, you'll notice a stronger beam of light. Use your grapple hook to pull up the chest and voila!



Combat: The Smorgasbord of Pain (or, How to Kill in Four Easy Steps)

Link may look like he couldn't take on a Care Bear, but when it comes time to throw down, enemies better step off. The *Wind Waker* takes all the standard *Zelda* slashes and combos, adds new special moves (hit Attack at just the right time), a ton of weapons, and even offensive uses for items like a giant leaf and

a grappling hook to give Link a wide array of deadly attacks. It's this variety that keeps combat fresh and exciting. It's like the buffet at Sizzler—well, in that you can keep going back again and again and choose something different each time, not in that it will give you uncontrollable diarrhea.

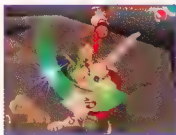
FIGHT!



STEP 1: DISROBE



REMOVE ARMOR: Link goes all Jackie Chan, rolling under the guard's attack to swing around and cut off his armor from behind, all in one smooth motion.



REMOVE HELMET: Push Up and Attack at just the right time (watch for the A button to flash) and Link will leap up and take off his attacker's helmet in midair.

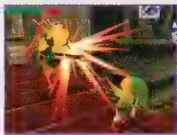
STEP 2: DISORIENT



DOOMERANG: A 'rang to the forehead will stun your foe—strike him quickly now!



GRAPPLING HOOK: Send in the hook to snarf power-ups and items.

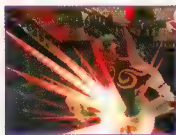


BOW: Arrows are fast and should knock your enemy off of their feet.

STEP 3: DISARM



DODGE ATTACK: As we mentioned before, press Attack at just the right time and you can evade your enemies' attack, then smack them for even thinking about it.

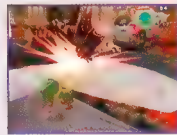


COMBO ATTACK: Hold the stick in any direction and jam on the Attack button to transform Link into a whirling green blur of deadly sword strikes.

STEP 4: JUST PLAIN "DIS"



BOMBERMAN: Toss a bomb and, if you time it right, make bad guy go BOOM!

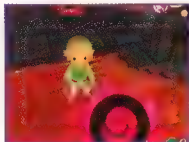


TAKE THEIR WEAPONS: And use or throw them back at your attackers.



STRATEGY: Enemies' attacks can hurt other enemies, so help them to help you.

YOU WIN!

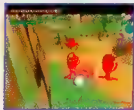


To the victor go the spoils. And since Victor ain't around, there's no one to stop Link from helping himself to any treasure left by his fallen enemies. What you're hoping for is one of these multicolored orbs; hit it with your sword and it'll explode into a pile of goodies.

The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (cont.)

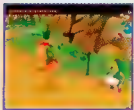
WHEN ANIMALS ATTACK

The beauty of *The Wind Waker's* combat is that you can tackle almost any enemy in a variety of ways. Behold:



Chu Chus

Follow one rule when fighting the electrified versions of these little buggers: Don't hit them with your sword. Instead, stun them with your boomerang or Hookshot, then go in for a bit of swordplay. Of course, a well-placed bomb or a few shots from your bow will get the job done, too.



Peahats

Arrows are the most conventional way to fight airborne foes, but not the most creative. Fire the boomerang at a baddie to clip its propeller, then once removed to finish the job. Or, use the Deku Leaf to blow it to the ground. Just be sure to thwack it again before its propeller grows back.



Blue Bubbles

If you take these flaming skulls head on, you'll get burned. Instead, extinguish those flames with a blast from the Deku Leaf and finish the job with your sword. Or, if you're an excellent shot, take 'em out using your Ice Arrows. One icy shot and they'll be vulnerable to your blade's deadly kiss.



Poes

These ghosts are invincible unless you shine some light on them with your Mirror Shield. Once they turn solid, they're as mortal as you or I. For lazy warriors, simply letting the Poe possess you will do the trick. Your controls are messed up for a bit, but once it's over, the Poe is gone for good.

Feed the seagulls the right kind of bait (you can find it at almost any floating shop) and you can take control of one of these proud birds. Swoop and fly around to hit switches and uncover secrets, but be sure to keep an eye out for enemy vultures. If they hit your bird, control will return to Link.



What the hell were we all so worried about? *The Wind Waker's* toon-shaded look once seemed like a daring risk, but after actually trying the finished game, it's hard to imagine it any other way. In short, Nintendo achieved its goal—playing *Zelda* feels like you're controlling a cartoon. Maybe that's why five different people watching me play immediately said almost the exact same thing: "[Expletive], the animation is incredible!" Every character and enemy movement, every reaction, and every facial expression is seamless and fluidly animated on a level no other game can touch. Some people will never get over the cartoony style, and it's true, the game does have a certain Disney look to it, but I'm confident even *Grand Theft Auto*-loving holdouts will be won over if they would just see the game firsthand.

Certainly no one will be able to fault the gameplay. At its core, *The Wind Waker* shares the same polished foundation as past *Zelda* games: You traverse a huge world, solving dungeons and finding special items as you progress and unlock new areas. Controls are solid, precise, and easily navigated, thanks to the ability to assign buttons as you choose. (The use of the D-pad to quickly flip between maps is also handy.)

Dungeon designs are likewise ingenious and surprisingly different thanks to the occasional addition of a second playable character. Working out puzzles that require switching back and forth between Link and an assistant is the kind of clever gameplay device that keeps you playing long after you should have gone to bed/school/work. Even combat presents all sorts of possibilities, from using items to enemy weapons to timed dodge-attacks in defeating your foes. And, as always, all the bad guys from bosses to foot soldiers have weak spots that can be exploited in different ways.

I have only two minor complaints with *The Wind Waker*: First, it's a bit too easy—I never had to worry about dying at any time through the entire game. Second is the boat Link rides everywhere. Yes, it is a unique and cool method to get around; the way you dredge up treasure, aim your cannon to attack, and use the wind to steer feels unlike anything *Zelda*, or any other game, has done before. And yes, it makes for some special moments, like when you're stuck in the chop during a thunderstorm, or cutting smooth waters as you watch the sun slowly rise. But my trouble is, you're sailing a lot. Despite a limited warp spell you get later, it can get tiresome. Constantly needing to change the wind direction is a bit of a chore, and combat out at sea isn't nearly as fun as it is on dry land.

But these are minor quibbles next to everything that *Zelda* does so well. It's the kind of game that, even now that I've finished it, I can't wait to go back and thoroughly explore every nook, secret, and side quest (and there are plenty of each). It's one of the most unique and enjoyable games ever—play it.

Mark

(continued from page 122)

work as a big fan or as a parachute, and a grappling hook that can pull Link up or steal items from enemies.

Combat has also been tweaked, with the ability to use enemy weapons (which also factors into some dungeon puzzles) and new special attacks. As you can probably tell from the giant chart on the last page, fighting has never been as deep, or as much fun, in any *Zelda* game.

Of course, the most obvious change to *Zelda's* world is that it's now one big ocean. Instead of walking from place to place on a giant overworld as in every previous *Zelda* game, everything in *The Wind Waker* is connected by water. You therefore spend much of the game sailing between islands, charting the seas, and fighting sharks and pirates on Link's new boat. Our reviewers were split on how well they felt this idea worked—although

THE OTHER GAMEBOY ZELDAS

Those of you who took advantage of the *Wind Waker* preorder campaign came home with a bonus disc featuring the Nintendo 64 classic *Ocarina of Time* and its never-before-seen follow-up, *Ocarina of Time: Master Quest*. Here's our take on exactly what you're getting with this unusual freebie.

The main thing you should know is that *OOT* and *Master Quest* are extremely similar. In fact, there's only one difference between them: the dungeons. Each dungeon from *Ocarina* has been slightly remixed in *Master Quest*, meaning the route you take and some of the puzzles have changed (including one truly bizarre example involving cows that we won't go into here), with many enemy and item locations mixed up a bit as well. These new dungeons aren't significantly better or worse than the old ones, but at the very least they give anyone who's already played *Ocarina* a fresh workout.

Aesthetically speaking, *Ocarina* looks almost the same now as it did four years ago, which basically means your eyes are in for a world of blurry, washed-out hurt. The visuals are definitely sharper and cleaner on GC, but there's no denying the games already look hopelessly outdated. Ultimately, however, gameplay is what matters, and for that, *Ocarina* still delivers. And you can't beat the price: Free!



TAQ TEAM TRAVERSAL

Two of *Wind Waker's* later dungeons introduce a shockingly cool gameplay concept: Link joins up with another character (with its own unique abilities) to tackle a puzzle-laden labyrinth. These amazingly complex, cleverly designed areas really shine; the puzzles and challenges constantly force you to come up with creative solutions involving switching between two characters. Here's an example of one relatively simple room you'll encounter where Link teams up with Makar, a cuddly l'l'l forest spirit:



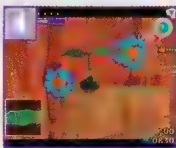
Link and Makar (the hat-like thing) survey the area.



First, take out some Blue Bubbles with Ice Arrows.



Conduct the Song of Command to possess Makar.



Fly Makar over to the cliff, avoiding the enemies.



Have Makar sow his special seeds to create trees.



Finally, Link grapples up to the top. Success!

everyone agreed it was a novel idea. Shane and Greg appreciated the new approach, while some aspects of sea travel left Mark longing to have his feet back on terra firma.

Another Big New Idea for this *Zelda* is that you sometimes have access to a second playable character—a statue, a flying bird-girl, a wee forest spirit, or even a seagull. This opens up the possibilities for cool secrets and dungeon puzzles that can be solved only by having your two

onscreen personae help each other (check out the big sidebar above). It's a bit like *Co* for PS2, except in *Zelda*, your partner is worth a damn.

The *Wind Waker* also introduces another kind of second-player possibility—you can link-up a Game Boy Advance and have a friend play along (see below). This feature was originally incorporated for those new to the series or videogames, or for situations where one player has

(continued on page 126)

These little spiny guys are a real nuisance; they glem onto Link and slow him down, leaving him open to attacks. It's best to blow 'em away with your boomerang before they can touch you, but if they do grab on, perform Link's devastating spinning 360-degree attack to knock them off.



I didn't approach *Wind Waker* with the euphoric glee I've felt for past *Zeldas*. In fact, I was actually kind of wary. I couldn't help but be skeptical about the radical graphical overhaul (would it make the game feel too kiddy?), the oceanic overworld (would sailing the open seas get boring?), and even the fact that Link had to rescue his sister, Aryll (what? Link shouldn't have a sister! Foul!). Luckily, all of my fears were, in the end, unfounded. This is a worthy inheritor of the *Zelda* crown—an **instant classic no gamer should miss**.

First, I was wrong to ever doubt the new visual style. As good as *Metroid Prime's* amazing graphics are at painting the realistic world of Tallon IV, *Wind Waker's* cel-shaded style brings Link's fantastical adventure to life with an equal amount of refinement. It's a throwback to the simple design of the original NES *Zelda* game—and I love that. Link's not some macho badass; he's a kid on a storybook quest. Everything in the game adheres to an amazing, stylized aesthetic, from the crashing waves ripped from an old Japanese woodcut to the freakish four-armed Fairies who offer solace in their fountains. It's not just the unique style, though—**these graphics are legitimately astounding**. Check out the sky full of undulating volcanic ash at Dragon Roost Island, or the climactic, windswept battle with a giant eagle atop the Forbidden Fortress, and you'll see just how well these graphics work. Oh, and the music—it's spectacular. Longtime *Zelda* fans will cream their tunics when they hear these arrangements of classic themes, and the haunting new tracks are also great.

Enough about the graphics and sound, though. Gameplay is paramount, and *Wind Waker* doesn't disappoint. I shouldn't have worried about the sea-faring, since cruising the high seas offers just as much action and variety as the central hubs of Hyrule Field (in *Ocarina of Time*) and Termina Field (in *Majora's Mask*). You can battle enemies, dredge up treasure, jump obstacles, and even run races in your boat. And the combat, puzzles, and dungeons more than impress—I think ***Wind Waker's* core gameplay is the best the series has ever had**. Every single battle in the game explodes with strategic options, so fighting never gets boring. Neither do the sprawling dungeons, which teem with tricky puzzles and scads of hidden treasures. In fact, I was left wanting more labyrinths to explore after I'd cleared them all, but I'm only being greedy, as the adventure is plenty long.

Surprisingly, *Wind Waker's* excellent story provides the final push for me to give it this score. *Zelda* plots have never been this good. Maybe it's the intense characterization Link's expressive face imparts, the direct connections to past titles, or the nearly post-apocalyptic feel to this *Waterworld*-style Hyrule, but I got pretty wrapped up in the story line. By the game's end, it felt like a touching coda to my favorite series of all time, and a new beginning, full of possibilities.

Shane

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

10

9

8

7

MY GAME BOY IS TINGLING



Nintendo's been trying to get us to link our GameCubes to our Game Boy Advances (via a \$45 cable) for a while now, and while dabbling with *Animal Crossing* was fun, *Wind Waker* is the best reason yet to enter the synergistic world of connectivity. Once you find the Tingle Tuner item in the game, you're ready to commune with the festive, leotard-clad fairy. Plug in your GBA and check out Tingle's tricks:



TINGLE BOMB
Tingle tosses explosives, trouncing enemies and revealing hidden treasures for Link.



TINGLE BALLOON
For five seconds, Link floats merrily through the air. Most helpful before you get the Deku Leaf.



TINGLE SHIELD
For a measly 40 rupees, Link gets 30 seconds of total invincibility. Great in dungeons.



RED, GREEN, & BLUE TINGLE
Tingle can heal Link with three types of potions: health, magic, and one that does both.



FINDING HIDDEN CHESTS
Tingle can see hidden treasures both at sea and in dungeons, so keep a keen eye out.

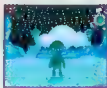
The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (cont.)

SIDE QUESTS

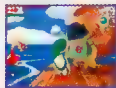
All *Zelda* games have optional bits, but *The Wind Waker* is especially packed with side quests, ranging from simple diversions to long, complicated errands. The great part about these tasks is that they're there if you're looking for a break from the main story or more to do once you've beaten the final boss, but if you don't want to bother, you don't have to. Take a look at a few examples here and award yourself with the corresponding honorary EGM degree in *Zelda* fandom based on how many you plan to complete:

QUEST: Locate fairy grottoes to increase your max bombs, arrows, or rupees.
DEGREE: ZELDA DROPOUT
That's all you plan to do?

Legend of Zelda, my ass, you lazy elf punk.



QUEST: Trade with special merchants hidden throughout the world for a special magic shield.
DEGREE: ZELDA G.E.D.
Well, I guess you pass—barely.



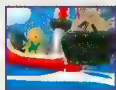
QUEST: Smack the old man 500 times before he can get in three hits (not easy) to earn your prize.
DEGREE: BACHELORS OF ZELDARY
Your mother and I are proud.



QUEST: Use Tingle to locate special hidden chests in each dungeon.
DEGREE: MASTERS OF ZELDAONOMICS
Wow—you must be a fan of the series.



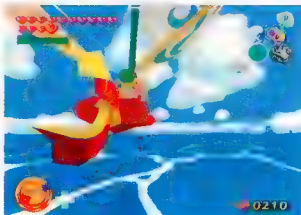
QUEST: Find every single deviously hidden heart container in the game.
DEGREE: Ph.D. IN ZELDAOSOPHY
Got some time on your hands, eh?



QUEST: Take a picture of every single person and monster and have them made into little statues.
DEGREE: OBSESSED
FREAK! Get professional help. Now.



Link's boat is really cool, but it doesn't turn on a dime—that is, not until you discover that jumping and turning will get you to face the opposite direction much more quickly. Now, if only they'd let us install an outboard instead. Sailing's fine, but we want horsepower!



Playing *The Wind Waker* for the first time is kind of a lot to take in. First of all, Link looks downright creepy. Huge head, freaky eyes, and stumpy legs don't remind me of the cool little dude I liked so much in the last two N64 games. But after I'd started playing, I never again noticed his new look.

That's the beauty of this game—you barely notice anything. You barely notice the subtle animation of Link and everyone else in his world. You barely notice the undulating waves gaining height as a storm blows in. You barely notice the seagulls flying near every island. You barely notice any of it because it blends in so seamlessly; **the world is so perfectly realized that everything just fits.** Now that I've played it, I couldn't imagine this game looking any other way.

Initially, I was worried by the sheer amount of travel involved in getting anywhere from your little island. Later, you learn how to warp around the overworld map, but in the first part of the game, sailing seems to take forever. (I kept expecting Kevin Costner to show up and tell me that dry land didn't exist.) That feeling is alleviated when you discover all you can do while you're navigating the vast ocean. Simply charting the waters (by finding the fish in each quadrant) will keep you occupied. Plus, you find various minigames (like the boat race) and myriad tiny islands and lookout points to stop at and explore along the way. You'll soon find yourself actually *wanting* to spend more time out on the ocean just to see what you'll find next.

And *Zelda*'s classic gameplay complements all this new stuff. *The Wind Waker* plays almost exactly like the two amazing N64 games that preceded it. Considering *Ocarina* was the first 3D action game to get combat right using the *n*-targeting system (where you hold down a button so the camera will lock onto a specific enemy), why change things? **I love that I never have to worry about a camera angle or losing track of my adversary in the heat of battle.** That's why it's so easy to appreciate the sweet maze design in the massive dungeons—not that superb puzzles and excellent layout are anything new to the series. But this game's dungeons impress me like none from the *Zelda* titles before it. Figuring out what to do in each room is never so difficult that you'll get totally stuck, but it's just tough enough to give you that great feeling of accomplishment when you finally discover the solution.

As you can probably tell, I don't really have any complaints about *The Wind Waker*. I was never frustrated or seriously lost, and I never found a boss fight too difficult. **My biggest concern with *Zelda* was actually forcing myself to stop playing it so I could get some sleep before I had to go to work the next day.** That doesn't happen to me often (although the last time was with the recent *Metroid Prime*), so I can't recommend this game enough. It's yet another masterpiece in the *Legend of Zelda* series.

EGM

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY
10 9 7 5

(continued from page 125)
more experience than the other (older brother/younger brother or father/son situations, for example). It's a great idea and lots of fun for both players, just as long as player two doesn't mind sometimes not having much to do, and player one doesn't mind the game being much easier. Sure, hardcore types may consider it cheating to get tips on how to beat enemies and solve puzzles, or get your

health instantly replenished, but Tingle's hilarious dialogue and the hidden extras you can only find using this feature ensure even those playing alone will want to check it out.

There's plenty more to talk about in *Zelda*—minigames, side quests, secrets—that we'll leave to the sidebar and individual reviewers. But, honestly, you really need to hear only five words about *The Wind Waker*: You must play this game.

FANCIFUL DISTRACTIONS

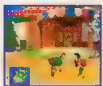
Zelda is jam-packed with sweet minigames that keep the experience fresh. Check out five of our favorite time-wasters.



Auctions
Fill up a bid meter, but be sure you time it so you're the last person to bid. And don't just leave your meter almost full, either, 'cause it slowly goes up on its own, too.



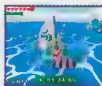
Mail Sorting
The post office is looking for help. Within 30 seconds, sort as much mail as possible into six different slots. The better you do, the more rupees you make.



Hide 'n' Seek
Find each of the four Killer Bees hiding somewhere on Windfall Island. Then chase 'em down and tag 'em. These little guys hide in some really devious spots.



Link's Oasis
You've seen this one before: Using your control stick, slide the little squares around the picture frame in order to reassemble the original painting.



Boat Racin'
Sail between two white-flagged barrels to start a sailing course to collect rupees. As long as you keep collecting them, more keep appearing.

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"AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN
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PlayStation 2



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*MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE FOR BOTH XBOX™ AND PLAYSTATION 2 GREATEST HITS

Resident Evil 2



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
Also On: PS3, N64, Dreamcast
Best Feature: Overly dramatic
Worst Feature: Ridiculous price and lack of extras
Website: residentevil.com

Let's do a little math: In 1997, *RE2* for PS1 sold for \$50. In 2000, *RE2* for Dreamcast sold for \$20. In 2003, *RE2* for GC retails for \$40. Add all these together, divide by the number of years, multiply by five, and the result is: THIS GAME IS A FRICKIN' RIP-OFF. I don't know what the hell Capcom is thinking—this is the same game as before, with nothing new (and actually missing minor bonuses from other editions, like opened minigames and extra story files), save the slightly sharpened graphics. *RE2* is not a bad game by any means. It can't compete with the *RE1* remake or *RE0*, but the detailed backgrounds hold up fairly well, and, based on game-play and especially the ambitious story line, *RE2* still deserves playing. The ability to play as one of two characters, each with his or her own costumes, items, and enemies, and then discovering another side of the plot by playing as the other, will keep you hooked—if only to see what happens next. Add to that the usual helping of odd puzzles, gruesome bosses, and a heavier emphasis on zombie blasting, and *RE2* warrants a rental for virgins, but that's it.

Mark

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
3	6	1	7

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1
Also On: PS2, Dreamcast
Best Feature: Should Have Been: Packaged with *RE2*
Worst Feature: \$40 price. What are they thinking?
Website: residentevil.com

Since it echoes my feelings about this *RE3* re-release, allow me to summarize my *RE2* review: \$40 FOR THIS OLD GAME WITH NOTHING NEW IS A FRICKIN' RIP-OFF! Ahem. All right, now let's get down to the game itself. *RE3* doesn't have the razzle-dazzle look of the newer Cube *RE* games or the in-depth double-sided story of *RE2*, but it does have enough unique features to keep it relevant and enjoyable today. First and foremost is the Nemesis, a giant, nasty creature that chases you through the burning rubble of Raccoon City, often following you from room to room (like the Crimson Heads in the *RE* remake). The fear and panic of being pursued produces exactly the spooky feeling we look for in *RE* games. Other highlights include more enemies (and more onscreen at once), a now-standard quick 180° turn, an excellent unlockable minigame, and a few areas where you have the option to choose between two slightly different branching paths. As with *RE2*, though, *RE3*'s high price and disappointing lack of extras mean I can't recommend it as anything more than a rental for those new to the series.

Mark

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
4	6	1	6



Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Acclaim Studios Austin
Players: 1
Also On: PS2, Xbox
Avail: The much junkier PS2 version
Best Feature: Massive levels are epic and pretty
Worst Feature: Camera problems galore
Website: www.vexxthegame.com

Paul (see his review below) didn't like *Vexx* as much as I did for valid reasons: The game and controls are problematic, especially on the first stage. You'll also find a lot of trial-and-error areas and some poorly designed trouble spots you'll want to tear your hair out over—also on the first stage. That's not good for a 3D platformer. I can see some of you giving *Vexx* a shot based on the score you see here, getting frustrated right away, then thinking, "This Shoe is on crack, and I'm never trusting his reviews again." First of all, I'm not on crack (can't speak for Paul, though). Second, and trust me on this one, stick with the game, and you'll start forgetting about its technical pitfalls (although they never truly go away). After I got used to things, *Vexx* blew me away. Its grand, majestic worlds look like they were born in some fantasy-writer's dreams. Within each stage you'll find such a wide variety of gameplay (though some of it borrows from the book of 3D-platforming clichés), you'll want to see *Vexx* through to the end to see everything it has to offer. Yes, each level has standard "collect X many things" objectives, but the rest are damn innovative and "wow"-inducing. The developers packed so much into this disc, each individual world feels almost like an entire game on its own (some challenging substages of substages have taken me an hour to complete). Don't skip it just because you don't see "Mario" in the title.

Shoe

Although it's tempting, please don't dismiss *Vexx* as just another platformer. The game has unusually creative missions with a cool hook—a riddle for each one. When you get stuck, these clever brainteasers are a neat way to get help. Even if some are a tad cheesy, I was motivated to unlock levels just to see the new ridges and figure out what each one meant (and yes, I realize how nerdy that sounds). Overall, it's a fun, complex adventure, and I'd score *Vexx* higher if not for its weak camera, which often locks you in narrow hallway or corners and unpredictably zooms in or out. Also, the levels are undoubtedly gorgeous and vast, but sometimes it's too easy to get lost.

Jennifer

Vexx is brilliant but deeply flawed. Yes, there are dozens of memorable puzzles and levels. For example, in the giant's house, the piano sounds notes as *Vexx* runs across the keys and the giant's pet stalks below just waiting for his tiny lunch. On another level, *Vexx* enters 2D tapestries, becoming part of the picture as he runs and jumps toward some elusive items. But each stylish set piece is matched by two or three (or ten) ignorable detours from cheap bosses or bottomless pits. *Vexx*'s unremitting difficulty makes it an ode to frustration. In that poetic spirit, here is a haiku dedicated to *Vexx*: *Magic talons shine / As bright as the brightest star / From this dark abyss.*

Paul

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	6	6



Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Just Add Monsters
Players: 1-4
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #55
Best Feature: Enjoyable four-player mayhem
Worst Feature: Nightmareish character design
Website: www.kungfuchaos.com

Try to repress your painful memories of *Whacked!* and *Fuzion Frenzy*, because Microsoft's retying the party genre with *KFC*. This time the action's a blend of mash-up mayhem, *Mario Party*-style minigames, and a semiserious fighting engine. It's a competent package, but ultimately four-player is the draw...but only for a few nights. Graphically, it's stunning, yet often for the wrong reasons. Sure, the levels look great, packed with interactive elements and spiffy effects, but the characters make me wanna barf. The art style is just awful; choosing a character is tough 'cause I hate them all. Fortunately, the gameplay isn't nearly as repulsive. It's fairly deep for a party game, but not as robust as a real fighter. Once you figure out how to taunt and bust out super attacks, it's a cinch. The single-player mode provides a good tutorial (and plenty of unlockables), but a death of enemy types and the requirement that you perfect every stage to unlock the final one detract from the fun. Also, the subject matter is a little sketchy. If *Super Smash Bros. Melee* is a love letter to Nintendo fans, this is a similar attempt aimed at guys who dig old kung fu flicks. The difference is that while *Smash Bros.* treats its source material with reverence, *KFC* tackles the karate-film genre with outright mockery and borderline racism. Most gamers might not take offense at the chop-socky accents and stereotypes, but some might. Rent it if you're curious.

Shane

Playing *KFC* is like zipping back in time to when—dare I say it—racism was rampant and widely accepted in mainstream media. Before I'll call me a political-correctness fascist, know that I have a high threshold for intelligent, edgy, and offensive humor. *KFC's* humor is about as subtle as a punch to the groin, and not nearly as smart. Every stage features a buck-toothed, slanty-eyed "director" who's more annoying than he is funny. And even if I look beyond the inappropriate humor, the game still offers little. It's a ramshackle brawler with ugly characters, frustrating stages packed with cheap detours, and scant depth once you've mastered the easy taunts and super attacks.

Che

This slightly above-average *Power Stone* (Dreamcast) clone has a few things going for it. First, the combo system works well. Your attacks are nicely varied, and there's a definite strategic advantage to mixing things up in combat. The stages are pretty hectic, too, with most involving some dynamic interactive elements. One, for instance, has a crazy T-Rex chasing you as you fight, biting off pieces of your raft and, if you're unlucky, your head. Playing solo gets dull quickly, but with four players it's alright. But what's up with the stereotypical character designs, particularly that screwed-up announcer guy? If I were Asian, I'd want to punch this game in the throat.

Miguel

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	6	6	6



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Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb



Pro Tip: Whipping the sensitive parts of this anatomically correct statue exactly 69 times does not yield a "boooiiiing" sound.



Developer: LucasArts
Franchise: The Collective
Platform: 1
Available In: PS2
Featured In: EGM #163
Best Feature: Nazi-walloping fisticuffs
Must-See Feature: Nonsensical boss battles
Website: www.lucasarts.com



Seeing such a well-wrought Indy brought to life in a vaguely *Tomb Raider*-esque adventure is probably enough for anyone Jonesing for a decent Dr. Jones videogame. Lordy knows, good *Indy* games are as rare as pimples on an *American Idol* finalist. And *Emperor's Tomb* goes beyond whipping up mere tomb-raiding thrills. (Well, at least two of our three reviewers feel that way.) Although the game does send you on dull snag-the-artifact quests that have you backtracking across sprawling levels, it also puts an army of Nazis, monks, and Arabian troublemakers in your path, and connecting Indy's fists with these guys' jaws proves supremely satisfying.

Chalk it up to the game's pedigree. *Emperor's Tomb* was developed by the team

that brought you *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* for Xbox, and thus uses the same beat-em-up science. (It even packs one of the same weapons, which smells a little like lazy game design to us.) The point, as anyone who high-kicked bloodsucker butt with *Buffy* will tell you, is that brawling makes for a great way to pass time during the more boring bits. Indy can clock enemies with one-two combos. He can sock both the guy behind and in front of him with a single roundhouse punch. He can deliver rib-rattling cheap kicks to Nazis knocked prone. Meanwhile, just about anything that isn't bolted to the floor—including knives, bottles, and chairs—makes for a handy weapon. And Indy can off enemies more rapidly with his pistol or the various

Lots of games have you raiding tombs and digging up artifacts. And lots of games have you exterminating goose-stepping Nazis. But only this game has the *hat*. And the *whip*. And that famous movie music that roars in like a cavalry charge. *Emperor's Tomb* re-creates Indiana Jones—and his take-no-guff attitude—right down to the scar on his chinny-chin-chin.

RECAPABILITY OF INDY: FENDS OFF FIVE THINGS DERIVED FROM THE FLICKS

Although *Emperor's Tomb* packs an original story not based on any of the *Indiana Jones* movies, it does keep up with the movies' Dr. Jones in several key scenes and scenarios. Whip out your old *Indy* videotapes and tell us if any of this stuff sounds familiar...

HAZIS...



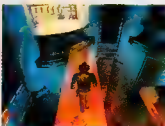
...Indy hates these guys. So he smacks 'em around—a lot. He also dresses up in a Nazi uniform to infiltrate a base. Yep, just like in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

A PENITENT MAN...



...kneels! Spinning buzz saws and flailing blades pop up in the unlikeliest places, like this Nazi castle hallway. Who built this crazy place? Cuisinart?

LEAPS OF FAITH...



...are easy if you find the right artifact to light the way. It's a more mystical puzzle than that invisible bridge in the *Last Crusade* flick, but still the same idea.

AWARDING BLOODLINES...



...does not make a special guest appearance. Instead, Indy must scamper madly from a Nazi tank that looks a lot like the drilling vehicle from *Total Recall*.

CRACK THAT WHIP...



...and use it to swipe weapons out of enemies' hands, swing over chasms, or just give those Nazis something to cry about. Indy can swing on ropes, too.

THEY'RE NOT THE BOSS OF HIM



The game's fun mano-a-mano combat falls apart when Indy encounters the bosses, all of whom are about as lame and clichéd as, say, a robot Frankenstein. Wait...one of the bosses is a robot Frankenstein (above left)—and he's actually the most well crafted big bad guy of the bunch. All the other boss battles are so sloppily constructed, we had a hard time figuring out what was going on. Just wait until you face the giant squid that randomly blasts your submerged Indy against walls while simultaneously trying to lure him within striking distance via an army of drifting jellyfish. Believe us, it makes even less sense when you see it in the game. And we beat a duo of Japanese she-ninja bosses (above right) by trapping them in a corner and flicking them with Indy's whip for five minutes. Cripes—even a robot Frankenstein is smarter than that!

Grab a Nazi and chuck him off a cliff. Bonus points if he lands in shark-infested waters.

automatic weapons he'll find in later levels—as well as mounted machine-gun emplacements he'll man *Medal of Honor*-style. But we had the most fun just using our dukers. Our favorite way to take care of business: Grab a Nazi and chuck him off a cliff. Bonus points if he lands in shark-infested waters.

It's not all jaw-cracking and puzzle solving, though. Indy will stumble upon fun diversions, such as a gun battle from the back of a rumbly rickshaw and some target practice atop a moving gondola. And, toward the end of the

game, after Indy has zipped from the jungles of Ceylon to the alleys of Hong Kong in his quest to find a magic tchotchke called the Heart of the Dragon, the puzzles themselves finally start to get interesting. Zombie kung-fu-ists and skeletal ghosts prowl a freaked-out underworld filled with traps that would look at home in one of Indy's flicks. It's the kind of cliffhanger thrills we expect from Dr. Jones' adventures. If only the rest of the game required as much brains to go with all the bare-knuckled brawn.



The Nazis suspected Indy was an imposter because of his American accent. And the speargun on his back.

Hat trick: Indy's fedora is as much a part of his image as Mario's mustache and Lara Croft's sports bra, so the developers have given the hat special weight in the game. Take a beating and the hat will fly to the ground, forcing you to retrieve it or go bareheaded for the rest of the level.



If *Emperor's Tomb* were released as a bona fide Indiana Jones flick, it would go straight to video and star one of the lesser Baldwins instead of Harrison Ford. Nothing here is quite blockbuster material. You spend half the adventure wallpopping, shooting, and skewering generic bad guys (I counted less than a dozen enemy character models), and much of the rest of the game "solving" weak fetch-the-item "puzzles." You'd figure an action hero like Indy would have more exciting things to do than breaststroke around a waterlogged tomb for an hour, looking for an ancient knickknack. He does engage in a few extracurricular heroics, including shooting down planes with an anti-aircraft gun and running headlong from a barreling Nazi tank, but these bonus bits feel clunky and tacked on. Puzzles become trickier toward the end when you face the kind of lethal contraptions you'd expect from Indy's onscreen adventures. It's too bad these traps require precise platform hops and chasm-clearing swings—none of which are easy with the jerky control. It doesn't make for a terrible experience, but despite the fun hand-to-hand action, this game just fails to deliver the kind of high adventure you'd expect from the Indy name. **Take away the movie music and the hat and you're left with a game that halfheartedly clones *Tomb Raider* and *Medal of Honor*—and where's the fortune and glory in that?** **Crispin**

Dr. Jones is just as talented as Lara Croft when it comes to tomb raiding, and as a fighter, he's peerless. In *The Emperor's Tomb*, all the punching, kicking, and shooting sequences feel just right; you'll look forward to every intense scuffle. Many of the game's levels will inspire fond memories of the films, and that classic John Williams music instantly gets my blood pumping. The game's only downside is that it feels a bit too much like Xbox's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (which The Collective also developed), complete with many of the same animations. These production shortcuts are unfortunate, but they don't keep this from being the **best Indiana Jones console game to date.** **Ethan**

Had we known the supposedly stodgy science of archaeology really involved punching lots of Nazis in their stupid Nazi mouths, blowing stuff up, and generally wreaking mayhem, we might have taken up tomb raiding. No matter; *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb* puts players in the shoes of the hard-boiled Professor (you call him Doctor!) Jones, and is, simply, excellent. **Gorgeous graphics, inspired combat, fun minigames, and cool puzzles and platform challenges bolster play immensely.** Despite an occasionally wonky camera and a save-game system that sucks like a Hoover on overdrive, *Emperor's Tomb* is a breathless, world-tripping adventure. **Greg O.**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Sega Sports

Developer: Visual Concepts

Players: 1-4

Also On: PS2

Where's: Online play?

Best Feature: Impeccable ESPN-style presentation

Worst Feature: Dippy fielding A.I.

Website: www.segasports.com



This year's market for baseball simulators is blowing up like Cinerigi field. With no less than five digital representations of the national pastime (not including Midway's flaming-ball-a-thon, *MLB Slugfest*) due to hit various consoles this season, it's gonna be a tough right. *World Series Baseball* stands out thanks to a flawless interface that perfectly mimics *ESPN Sportscenter's* graphic style and an incredibly realistic 3D game engine. Visually, it's a stunner, but one nagging gameplay choice keeps me from completely embracing the game. It's that damn batting cursor. It may be a matter of taste to some, but playing with a cursor seems to defeat the purpose of learning what the pitches look like and how to interpret their various subtle motions, something some poor programmer must have spent months fine-tuning. **Playing against another human being turns the pitcher-batter interface into a minigame of hide-and-go-seek.** *WSB* also suffers from some basic defensive A.I. and hard-to-see indicators that make fielding tough. But if you are a hardcore baseball nerd (is there any other kind?), then you'll appreciate the deep Franchise mode, with its real-world Minor League players, complex but easy-to-use budgetary system, and advanced coaching console. Overall, baseball fans who want to simulate a season have a lot to noodle with, and a pretty accurate approximation of the game we call stick. **Tom**

WSB 2k3's lifelike player models, fluid animations, and countless customization options help it stand out among this year's crop of baseball games. It's a solid update to last year's model, and you'll have no problem with its easy-to-use and informative pitcher/batter interface. Tossing fastballs feels great, and knocking them out of the park is even better. Fielding isn't quite as smooth as players react slowly and the computer doesn't always put you in control of the best fielder to make the play. Also, the sedate crowd barely responds to spectacular plays, and the commentary isn't very insightful. It's not perfect, but **Xbox owners can't go wrong with *WSB 2k3*** this spring. **Bryan**

With the ESPN-licensed presentation bringing together great pitching, solid hitting, and wonderful (although not always accurate) player models, *World Series Baseball 2k3* is **easy for any casual baseball fan to get into.** The controls are intuitive, and the pitcher/batter screen is packed with useful info. Defensively, though, the computer occasionally takes poor routes to the ball and auto-selects the wrong player, leaving you to compensate manually. I also wish the announcers had more to say, but hearing the *Baseball Tonight* theme certainly helps. In the crowded baseball game, Sega delivers an impressive pick-up-and-play package worth checking out. **G. Ford**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Ubi Soft

Developer: From Software

Players: 1

Also On: None

Also Try: *Phantom Crash*

Best Feature: Detailed cityscapes

Worst Feature: Sluggish controls

Website: www.ubisoft.com



This futuristic mech-shooter opens with an ultraslick intro movie that promises high-speed chases and high-tech destruction set to wailing Yngwie Malmsteen-esque guitar licks, but it fails to convey the game's woefully sluggish gameplay. Sadly, *Murakumo* is a case of style over substance. Do I want to zip effortlessly through labyrinthine cityscapes pursuing evil 'bots while unleashing unholy amounts of munitions? Hell yes! Do I also want a balanced spectrum of well-designed machinery, each one unique with its own weapons and strengths? Bring it on! Do I want these kick-ass mechs to control like unstopable bricks being hurled through the air? Er, well...no. *Murakumo's* problem is that you must chase down these superagile rogue units, but your mechs aren't up to the task. To keep up the pursuit, you've got rechargeable boosters and retro-thrusters at your disposal, but even the most nimble machine has piss-poor turning rates and reaction times. As a result, you fumble your way through by studying the A.I.'s preset paths and completing each level via trial and error. The game isn't all that hard, and with enough determination, you will get through these seemingly impossible stages. After struggling through level after level of this mundane action, I had to ask myself: Am I having fun yet? Nope, not really. **Che**

Chase robots through a futuristic city. Shoot. Repeat. Unlock new, sometimes uncontrollable, ships. Use them to chase robots through a futuristic city. Shoot. Repeat. Listen to a cheesy, pounding rock soundtrack as you chase robots through a futuristic city. Shoot. Repeat. Smash into all manner of vaguely high-tech-looking buildings while chasing robots through a futuristic city. Watch extended cut-scenes while wondering if you'll ever get these wholeheartedly average minutes of your life back before chasing more robots through a futuristic city. Shoot. Repeat. **Contemplate starting a nice stop collection.** Smile. Repeat. **Greg O.**

Ordinarily, a game with sweet-looking mechs shooting the crap out of each other at high speeds through detailed, sprawling cityscapes would be right up my alley, but *Murakumo* disappoints just as often as it thrills. Although the mech designs are beautiful and the presentation is slick, an overly busy HUD and vague control feedback make **hunting enemies much more problematic than it should be.** For example, the external view is all but useless, while clouds or gunfire usually obscure your reticle in the interior cockpit view, making it hard to see if you've locked on to your target. A frustrating, lackluster effort. **Milkman**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Universal Interactive
Developer: Blue Tongue
Players: 1

Also On: PS2
Website: universalinteractive.com

Best Feature: Variety in mission-based modes
Worst Feature: No variety in open-ended modes

Most PC-style strategy games go through a nasty dummy-down filter when ported to consoles. Luckily, *Genesis* keeps its teeth. From organizing dinosaur DNA digs and then cloning the lizards, to keeping them and your Homo sapiens guests happy and fed, this theme-park simulator offers plenty of fun things to do. In fact, it may be too complex for some (i.e., those who need that dummy-down filter)—getting e-mail notices and warnings every 10 seconds doesn't help (at least they're free of penis-growth spam). Peek ahead, however, and you can see the long-term fun is doomed for extinction. Sure, you get a lot to do, but not many ways to do it. You raise all the dinos the same way; you have the same limited park amenities and research options game after game; and you won't experience anything new after playing through an open-ended game once. The objective-based modes save *Genesis'* leathery behind, though. They're over too quickly, but their rescue missions, photo sessions, and goal-oriented stages kept me from running out of the park and demanding a refund. **Shoe**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY



Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
Players: 1

Also Try: *Mega Man Zero*
Pump up the: Bass
Website: www.capcom.com

Best Feature: Classic Mega Man gameplay
Worst Features: Lack of any real innovation

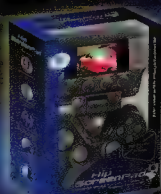
With all the *Xs*, *Legends*, and *Battle Networks*, it's easy to forget what made the *Mega Man* series so great in the first place. After all, it's been six years since *Mega Man 8* (for PS1 and Saturn), the last "real" *Mega Man* game. *Mega Man & Bass* brings us back to the series' roots and gives us what made the little blue guy so popular to begin with: a great, if slightly derivative, platformer. If you've played any of the 2D *Mega Man* titles, you know what to expect here. Lead the Blue Bomber through a well-designed stage, blow up enemies, and smash a wacky boss robot (whose weapon you snag). *MMSB* adds a new twist to this old formula with a second playable character, Bass, who has different moves and abilities. There's also plenty of replay value, thanks to the 100 collectable CDs scattered throughout the levels. *MM* fans will notice that even though *MMSB* is a completely new adventure, many stage elements and two bosses were lifted from *Mega Man 8*. Regardless, this is still great fun. Unless you're completely worn out on the series, you'll find this to be one of the best action games on GBA. **Phil**

VISUALS SOUND INGENUITY REPLAY

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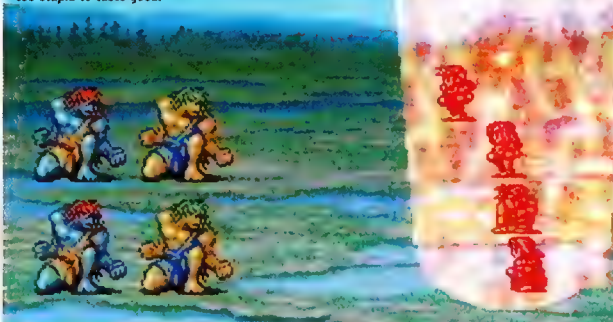


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Final Fantasy Origins

Our heroes set themselves on fire, hoping the Ogres will think they're too stupid to taste good.



Ogre Mage
Ogre

NIN

Firion
Maria
Gus
Gordon

10045
8489
10000

5667
10000
10000

10000
10000
10000

10000
10000
10000

10000
10000
10000

Publisher: Square EA
Developer: Squaresoft
Players: 1
Also On: None
Featured In: EGM #164
Best Feature: Two great RPGs on one disc
Worst Feature: Two really old RPGs on one disc
Website: www.squaresoft.com



Remaking a role-playing classic like *Final Fantasy* and *Final Fantasy II* (both from the '80s) is always risky. If the game was worth remaking, it was likely a pivotal title in the genre, beloved by all who remember it, so you don't want to mess with the gameplay, graphics...really, with anything, for fear of damaging the game's integrity.

The problem is that old games are just that: old. Don't dress them up and modern-day players might snub them. Plus, the RPG genre has advanced so much during the past 15 years that fans expect certain things. For instance, knowing that party members will attack the next-best enemy if the first one they targeted dies or runs away during battle. Or stats showing the relative might of weapons in a shop.



Airships have been a part of *Final Fantasy* ever since *FFI*. Grab one to make travel a breeze.

Luckily, *Final Fantasy Origins* comes complete with those kinds of tweaks. Overhauled graphics and much-needed gameplay updates bring these classics up to speed, but the games are still true to the originals. As to whether that's enough to warrant playing them almost two decades later...well, read our reviews to find out.

EXPERIENCE POINT



Final Fantasy II features a unique experience system we would need pages and pages to explain. Instead, here's a quick hint to build up your hit points (we also suggest visiting www.gamefaqs.com for a more in-depth guide): Enter a battle with a weak group of enemies and wallop them until there's only one left. Now, turn on your own party, hitting them until less than half their hit points are left. Finally, finish off that last enemy. If you did it right, your characters' maximum hit points should go up.

Bosses fill the screen in *Final Fantasy Origins*, but they never move. Maybe they're shy...or Square's just lazy. Your characters, however, step forward a few feet to swing weapons or cast spells. *Final Fantasy X* it ain't, but this was considered high tech back in the '80s.



Playing *Final Fantasy Origins* is a trip down memory lane—I basically fell in love with the RPG genre because of the original *Final Fantasy*. It's too bad this update still suffers from the same basic battle system, boring plot, and personality-devoid characters as its 8-bit ancestor. Despite that, the game is still worth playing for nostalgia's sake, though the real gem is the first English version of *Final Fantasy II*. I love this game. Its unique experience system alone kept me interested—once I understood it. Your characters' attributes grow based on performance only, so how each member fights directly determines his or her stats. It's weird, but I appreciate its strategic edge. It's also cool to experience the first instance of a *Final Fantasy* story line in which you're given particular characters (with names and personalities) that come and go as the story dictates. My only real quibble with *Origins* is that both games are feakin' hard! To be fair, *FFI* does have an optional Easy mode. In fact, RPGers weaned on the new generation of games (like *Final Fantasy VII-X*) may grumble when they realize they're in for a lot of aimless wandering and fighting battle after battle to build up experience and earn cash. Just remember, back in the day, you didn't need fancy-schmancy video cinemas and pansy bosses you could beat on the first try to make a good RPG. Pick up *Origins* and check out the genre's roots.

Greg S.

An exciting PS1 release in 2003? Yep. Kudos to Square for bringing this antiquated duo stateside—it's a **nostalgic must-buy for Final Fantasy fanatics**. The glossy new CG cinemas, nicely arranged soundtracks, and bonus art galleries will have longtime fans reeling with joy. Plus, the gameplay actually holds up pretty well. Unlike Gary, I even enjoyed tackling *FFI* again (on Easy mode with four Black Mages...crazy fun). I only wish these remakes looked better (Gary and Greg have painfully low standards, it seems). A little animation in the battle backgrounds or *snazzier* spell effects would have really added some 32-bit flair. Regardless, these games are worth the \$30 for RPG fans.

Shane

Unlike my picky pal Shane, I think *Origins* remakes look perfect. Square upgraded the graphics just enough to rid these musty classics of their old-school ugliness while retaining their old-school charm. Likewise, they tweaked the gameplay just enough to fix some nagging problems without altering the essence of these titles. But are they any fun? No—and yes. By today's standards, *Final Fantasy* is an impenetrable mess with a bare-bones bore of a battle system that's all about mindless leveling-up. But *Final Fantasy II* is a real treat: The story, system, and pacing all hold up marvelously. Play *Final Fantasy* for a look at how far RPGs have come, but play *FFII* just for fun.

Gary S.

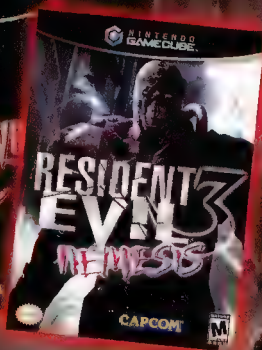
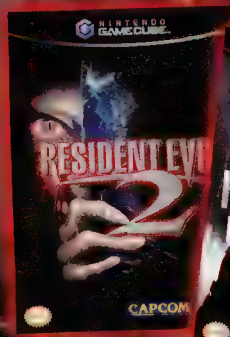


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RESIDENT EVIL are registered trademarks of CAPCOM CO., LTD. Nintendo
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The Rest of the Crap

Reviewing the games no one else bothered to



Buying videogames can be a gamble. Except for the games *EGM* makes me review here. Thanks to distributors honest enough to put words like "Sea-Monkeys" and "Rugrats" right in the title, you don't even have to read the boxes to know you'll hate these games. As such, these games will not receive scores, but compared to your favorite game of all time, they would probably rate somewhere around -∞.

The Amazing Virtual Sea-Monkeys

Publisher: Conspiracy
Developer: ELO Interactive

**ESRB: E**

"Own a BOWL-FULL OF HAPPINESS—Instant PETS!" In the old comic-book ads for Live Sea-Monkeys, you could see that the "clowning around" of "these frolicsome pets" could keep an entire family entertained for days. Of course, if you sent in your \$1.25 plus shipping, you know the truth: You get a pouch of fishy-scented powder, and once it slowly falls to the bottom of the water, that's the end of its undersea adventures.

The PS1 version of *Sea-Monkeys* keeps all the disappointment and boredom of the original *Sea-Monkeys*; you play the part of a tiny submarine that must clear a safe path for the little phobias. Apparently, the corporate fatcats behind the Sea-Monkey craze have made these digital dehydrated brine shrimp as hardy as real ones, because these virtual *Sea-Monkeys* are completely suicidal. If you've cleared them a perfect path to the finish line, they'll crack their heads open trying to swim around it and get torn apart by a school of piranha. This is bad news for people trying to beat this game, but if you're one of those people, here's some good news: You're too retarded for your state to execute you.

Cabela's Big Game Hunter

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Sand Grain Studios

**ESRB: T**

Even today, herds of majestic animals fight for survival in the beautiful landscapes of

North America. Of course, before you can saw off one of their heads and mount it on the wall over your Budweiser mirror, you need to kill it. And since this game doesn't include poisoned camper-flavored doughnuts, I recommend using the next best thing: a giant moose decoy. Though it doesn't seem to attract any moose, it's pretty handy after a few days in the lonely woods of Alaska.

Just like in real life, you're only allowed to kill an animal if you have a tag for it, so shooting the face off a polar bear while you're hunting pronghorn antelope ends your game and gets you scolded by the virtual park ranger. And, as you can imagine, not being able to shoot certain animals means **this game mostly simulates you wandering aimlessly through a forest and NOT killing things**. However, this Nazi rule can turn deadly if there's a polar bear chasing you just because you've rammed into it with your four-wheeler.



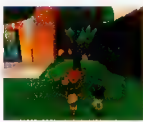
Rugrats Royal Ransom

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Avalanche

**ESRB: E**

Unless this magazine is being sung to you by a roller-skating man in a panda suit, you probably don't care about my penetrating insights into the gameplay dynamics of *Rugrats Royal Ransom*. And that's a good thing, because playing this game offended my delicate aesthetic sensibilities even more than that prototype Bea Arthur dating game for Atari 2600.

Seriously, these are the most disgustingly ugly cartoon representations of babies ever to steal America's hearts via comic mischief and soiled diapers. These nasty things are the stars of television, movies, and breakfast cereal! They look like someone filled a bag with babies and beat it against a ceiling fan. If someone sent me a ransom note for these malformed



infants, I'd be ecstatic to be rid of them. To be honest, the game itself isn't that bad, but if you must play a game about infants rescuing toys, you can probably find one with babies that don't look like they've been used to test hammers.

Superstar Dance Club #1 Hits!!!

Publisher: XS Games
Developer: Warashi

**ESRB: E**

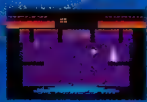
For most people, the hassles of dancing far outweigh the benefits.

Learning the steps is tricky, choosing the right outfit is tough, and glowsticks are pricey outside of the Halloween season. Plus, a lot of Americans are overweight, and all that jiggling invariably turns their floppy love handles into deadly swinging battering rams that threaten to topple nearby revelers. That's why *Dance Club* has safely reduced dancing down to slowly tapping buttons. The allegedly "#1" music in this game sounds like a Casio keyboard being kicked to death by a harmonica. As you tap along to this musical tragedy, the game's hot, half-naked girl performs a total of one "high-energy dancing action" move. Evidently, the public demand for this game was so powerful, they didn't have time to draw a third frame of animation before releasing it.



Classic Crap

Porky's for the old Atari 2600 is the touching story of some guys on a brave quest to get laid. Obviously, translating that into a videogame required developers to take heavy drugs, go insane, and then make it about something else entirely. If Frogger occasionally stopped to sneak into a shower and get his crotch assaulted by a P.E. teacher, and then someone added—and I'm serious here—pole-vaulting, you'd have *Porky's*.





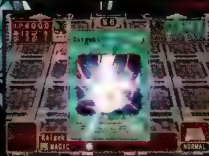
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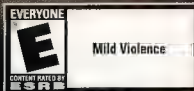
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Tricks of the Trade

By David S. J. Hodgson

Whoa, boy. We have fewer tricks this month, but there are some real winners in these pages. In fact, this month we "uncover" the most exciting tips you've ever likely to see (before you go blind, at any rate). Read on...

Tricks in Partnership with Prima Games

If you're in need of tip-top tricks, take heed. The tricks in these here pages are taken from the following Prima guides: *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, *Panzer Dragoon Orta*, *Skies of Arcadia Legends* and *Disaster Report*. Check out the full guides wherever games are sold!



EASTER EGGS-CITIMENT!

Videogame Easter eggs: In-jokes nobody but the designer's mother cares about, or cool features?

Who the f*** cares?	Cool feature!
I'm still stuck on level 1.	Mmmm... eggs.

WINNER!

Source: Games.com poll 01/02

Top 5 Tricks of the Month

2345

1 Die Hard: Vendetta: Into the way-back machine

Now, don't get too excited, but we're about to reveal a code that shrinks craniums to tiny pinheads (1)! **Oh dear! Our sides have split in mirth!** How about a code that coats everyone in metallic goo? No, really! And sets fire to them (2)! What we really need now is a code to make everyone's head swell to the size of a watermelon (3). Wait a minute... that's in there, too! Yes, Fox Interactive has revisited 1996 and returned with all the lame codes from the recent past. But hey, as long as they're in there... Enter these codes at the Main menu. L, R, L, R, L, R, L, R **gives you invulnerability**. X, Y, Z, Z, X,

Y, Z, Z **unlocks all levels**. B, X, Y, Z, L, R **yields infinite hero time**. B, Y, L, L **gives you "hot hands"**. L, L, R, L **shrinks heads**. R, R, L, R **gives you big heads**. L, R, Z, Y, B **gets you exploding bullets**. B, X, R, R **makes enemies explode**. And B, Y, X, B, Y, X **makes everyone into liquid metal**. Welcome to the played-out party, pal!



War of the Monsters Mecha Sweet Tooth!

Remember the *Twisted Metal: Black* Save file you wiped two months ago? Well, it's time to relive the pain and **finish the game as Sweet Tooth**. Now, with that Save file on the memory card in your PS2, boot up *War of the Monsters*. This automatically unlocks the fourth Agamo skin, **Mecha Sweet Tooth** (which costs \$50,000). Now, you can stom around with your head on fire!

2 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4: Unlock hidden skaters

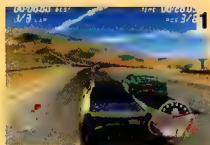
Use this code to unlock everything, including the four hidden skaters, which are **Eddie**, the Iron Maiden mascot (1), **Jango Fett**, ironically, looking better than he does in *Bounty Hunter* (2), some guy (3), and some chick with *DOA*-inspired bosoms (4). The code? Enter **watch me xplode** in the Cheat menu. This works on PS2 and



Xbox. GameCube owners type **Watch_Me_Xplode** instead. (Be sure to include the underscores.) **Cool and groovy thanks to**

"slateman" and everyone at PlanetTonyHawk.com for providing *Tony* codes in the last three issues of *EGM*.

3 Pro Race Driver: Real physics? Laughable codes!



Codemasters should be roundly slapped for implementing the **lamest method of cheats activation in the history of videogames**: Each game you buy has a different ID code, and



the cheats you input in the game differ depending on it (the ID is hidden in an Options screen). To get the codes for your particular game, you have to go online, find a phone number, and get billed

an outrageous sum of money, or **pay** to become a member of the Codies website. What's more, you only get two codes! Whoever dreamed this up needs to be **taken out back and shot**. Despite this atrocity, there are three universal codes for this game (enter at Code screen): **DAMAGE** for realistic hits (1), **SIM** for real physics (2), and **CREDITS**, which shows the names of those responsible for making the game (hurray!).

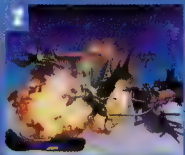


Quantum Redshift Code wipeout!

Four codes—maximum game ruining. First, create a profile called **CHEAT**, then enter the following: For **infinite future hover-sled shields** (above), type in **ThinkBat**. For **all characters**, tap **Nematode**. For **all easter eggs**, try **CHOCchoc**. Finally, for **all tracks (including the hidden one)** type in **headSLAP**. These codes are case-sensitive.

Panzer Dragoon Orta

Everything you Orta know about "S" ranks, Pandora's Box, changing outfits and mounts, and the Ultimate Dragon!



1. **Practice until your eyes and hands bleed.** You can't even need to look at the radar anymore because you can predict where the next wave of enemies will come from. Next, turn the Instruments setting in your options to Full. Now, you can see how many points various enemies count as when you blast 'em. Now you can concentrate your fire on the foes that give you the most bang-bang for your effort. You can also see the routes when you access them on the bottom corner of your screen as you know where positions are. Once you have the hang of that, it's time to bring you some up to the major leagues with babies multiple. Killing multiple foes simultaneously (1) is the key to getting an "S" rank for your shot. Downgrade for example, if you take down one enemy worth 10 points, you'll score 20 points. Obviously, take down four of those, you'll score 40 and you'll score 400 points. Not enough. But if you rock one four-foe-point target and blast them all at once, you'll get all the 40 points they're worth times the number of enemies, 160 points. What's more, you can target some animals and invincible enemies like the dragonmares in level 3 or the Drular Sensors in level 4 that cannot be destroyed by your laser but still count towards your multiplier. Work one of these targets into the previous combo and you'll score 640 points (total point value of bad guys x a total number of targets) or a 6400 points. Also, try changing your dragon's outfit and enemies for increased extra points. Check out our list of the contents of our full guide book (called "Ultima") at the start of level 2 with your Instrument setting at Full. If you hit enough at once, each enemy's points will be multiplied up to 25 times.

2. **Practice until your eyes and hands bleed.** You can't even need to look at the radar anymore because you can predict where the next wave of enemies will come from. Next, turn the Instruments setting in your options to Full. Now, you can see how many points various enemies count as when you blast 'em. Now you can concentrate your fire on the foes that give you the most bang-bang for your effort. You can also see the routes when you access them on the bottom corner of your screen as you know where positions are. Once you have the hang of that, it's time to bring you some up to the major leagues with babies multiple. Killing multiple foes simultaneously (1) is the key to getting an "S" rank for your shot. Downgrade for example, if you take down one enemy worth 10 points, you'll score 20 points. Obviously, take down four of those, you'll score 40 and you'll score 400 points. Not enough. But if you rock one four-foe-point target and blast them all at once, you'll get all the 40 points they're worth times the number of enemies, 160 points. What's more, you can target some animals and invincible enemies like the dragonmares in level 3 or the Drular Sensors in level 4 that cannot be destroyed by your laser but still count towards your multiplier. Work one of these targets into the previous combo and you'll score 640 points (total point value of bad guys x a total number of targets) or a 6400 points. Also, try changing your dragon's outfit and enemies for increased extra points. Check out our list of the contents of our full guide book (called "Ultima") at the start of level 2 with your Instrument setting at Full. If you hit enough at once, each enemy's points will be multiplied up to 25 times.

3. **Accrue over 20 hours of playing time.** 4. **Finish all subgames, including the original Panzer Dragoon on Hard** (use the cheats we revealed in *POW #163*). When you're done, check the log game for tons of extras, including your original mount (1), Warmider (2), Baby Wing (3), Blue Dragon (4), Dragonmare (7) (to turn white, press White when you beat Dragonmare), (8), Panda, Wing (9), and Airship (10). There are different riders, like Orta (10), Iva (11), Dragonmare (12), Mero (13), and Axel (14). Finally, try different outfits (called "Ultima") at the start of level 2 with your Instrument setting at Full. If you hit enough at once, each enemy's points will be multiplied up to 25 times.



Voiced by Full Sail student Brian Gerhart

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TRICKS

GTA: *Advice city*

Easter eggs, Vice City style! Check them out!

It'll be Easter soon, and that means thousands of children hunting for hard eggs and hardy egg-shaped chocolates. Meanwhile, thousands more kids are sneaking off to their unsupervised friend's house for some *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* carnage. But we're taking a break from lamenting the standard of parental care in the United States to tell you about some of the Easter eggs you can find in *Vice City*. Hey kids, it's time to get home to dinner time. Mom's making stove-top stuffing.



1. Pop off the ceiling, peek at the adjacent building from outside, and a small room with a black sphere for business. It's a sphere.



2. Head to the health and balance clinic, find the apartment on the floor, take a look at the adjacent building. It's a sphere.



3. Head to the health and balance clinic, find an eye out for the cabinet, take a look at the adjacent building. It's a sphere.



4. Head to the health and balance clinic, find a stage and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.



5. Head to the health and balance clinic, find a car after using the checkered flag, and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.



6. The phone company, head to the phone company, find a room with a large black sphere, and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.



7. Head to the health and balance clinic, find a wall, and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.



8. Just head to the health and balance clinic, find a wall, and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.



9. The sphere is a sphere, and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.

Skies of Arcadia Legends

Secrets of the Skies: Send Piasol packing! Find the ingredients for the savory hidden kabob!



1. Have you fought the superdeformed (yet still sexy) Mystery Assassin? At certain points during the battle, you'll receive a "black spot." There are four black spots in total, and they mark you for **Piasol**, the **Angel of Death (4-3)**. She's on her ship, west of Sailor's Island. Go there and talk to her, and a crazy boss/bounty battle occurs. Take out her



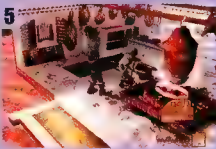
Death Hound as early as you can. Be sure to heal, resurrect, and keep your party's hit points high. Use **Vyse** and the other male party member to attack her while Aika and Fina build up Spirit. After you've inflicted 8,700 points of damage, Piasol leaves the proverbial building. That is, until you reunite her with Maria. After you've done the secret "Kabal Skewer"



quest, speak to the Kabal Skewer Lady in Maramba (4-5). She tells you about her daughter, who has run away. You can find her in Esparanza, and then search for skewer pieces in Kabal, Gentrum, and Khale. One spice can be found on the way from the Dark Rift to Yafutoma. Another is with a merchant in Nasrad. Get the meat from Gordo (at the Bistro or on his



ship). Once you reunite mother and daughter, you'll be rewarded with the **Abirik Charm** (and **Mom's Skewer** later).



5. A character in a kitchen, and you'll encounter the sphere. It's a sphere.

One Bad Muthaf

Forgotten Superstar #4 "Dave" Batista



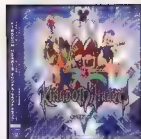
After Tommy (EGM #162), Scotty (#163) and, er, Rey-y (#164), this month's created Superstar is the monster formerly known as "Deacon" and "Dave," but we just like to call him

Batista. Here's how to make him (if an option isn't listed, use the default or ignore it):

Head: Hair: 22 (black)
Face: Eyebrows: 57 (black)
Face: Eyes: 17
Face: Cheek: Face Morphing: 22; Eyebrow 30/-20; Eyes -60/15, -50/-40; Nose 10/-10, 0/-20; Cheek 20; Mouth 10/-10; Jaw -75/-10, 20
Face: Mustache: 68 (black); 7 (black, 35% opacity)
Body: Skin: 5
Body: Tattoo: 14 (Semi-transparent, dark blue)
Waist: Underwear: Blank: 1 (dark red)
Body: Knee Pads: Both: Blank: 1 (dark red)
Feet: Shoes: Blank: 12 (length -50, black)
Design: Pattern: Body: Simple: 101 (reduce 1x, place

over navel)
Design: Pattern: Right Arm: Simple: 57 (turn 2x, place on side of right shoulder)
Design: Letters: Left Arm: Chinese: middle character in bottom row (red; place just below shoulder on side of left arm)
Design: Letters: Left Arm: Chinese: middle character in second to last row (red; place just below last tattoo)
 Batista's trunks have a tribal/flamelle pattern on them. We used **Design:** Pattern: Body: Simple numbers 12, 10, and 145 to create it. The pattern should be gold, stretching

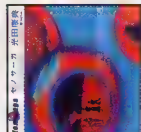
across Batista's backside and around his left hip. To make it stand out, copy each pattern in the Layer List, move it down one or two pixels, make it black, and move it below the gold version; this gives you a black outline around the gold pattern.
Skin color: 5
Figure: Head -40, 40; Neck -5/-10, -40; Chest 100/60; Shoulder (both) -60/-5, -10; Abdomen: 12/5, 5; Arms, (both) -35/5, -40; Forearms (both) -30/-20, -100; Hands (both) -40/0, -50; Waist 10/-40; Thigh 10/10, -70; Legs 0/0, 25; Ankles -30/-30
Figure: Height: 6' 5"
Profile: Name&Nick: Batista
Profile: Call Name: Deacon Batista
Ability: Powerful Auto Setting
Moves: Superstars: 46 (change Finishers to Falling Powerbomb 1 and Falling Powerbomb Pin 1; change entrance moves to Superstars and music to Kane's)
Logic: Grappler, Balanced



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The Evil Has Landed

Mercenaries, biker and disco costumes, plus more!



Get bigger guns! Here's how: Finish and save the game. Choose the Mercenaries minigame (1). You're awarded "undead cutting cash" based on your performance. \$2,000 buys an assault rifle. \$3,000 gets you a Gatling gun. For \$4,000

you can use a rocket launcher to really outstay your welcome. If you manage to earn \$9,999, you'll get yourself infinite ammo for all weapons. Pick up the guns you "buy" in item boxes during the game; all come with handy infinite ammo. **More.**

outfits! Jill's RE3 outfit and Regina's Dino Crisis (2) are on offer in the uptown boutique with the key you get when you finish the game. Get an "A" rank on Hard difficulty for the miniskirt, disco, and biker fashion travesties (3).

FROM THE MAULT: RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS REVISITED!

we got all of our cool collectibles!

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Disaster Report Card

A whole lotta shakin' goin' on. Here's the best-ending plan



PURE Hey! Eyes up here, please! There are seven different endings to *Disaster Report*, and two of them are "good." **Here's how to get Karen's ending.** Give her water whenever you drink. Encourage her when she sees the choppers leaving. If you get to the bus

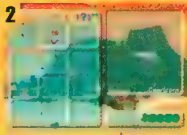
before you nab the crowbar, don't split up. Give her the umbrella when it rains. When Greg asks you where to go, select "Karen's house." When Karen talks about her uncle, **encourage her.** When she asks to look for her dog, select "of course." Grab the family

photo from Christophe Construction, and at Windrunner Park, talk to William and then Karen about it. When Greg asks who you want to go with, choose Karen. After you talk to Terry Striver, encourage Karen, and **don't let Karen drink impure water!**

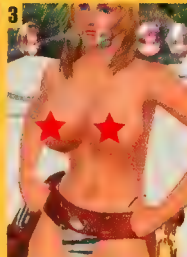
DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball: Topless mode exposed!



1 No freakin' way! Oh yes! We've discovered a trick that allows the *DOA* ladies to come out to play *sans* tops for **jaw-dropping, bosom-bouncing** seminueude action. (Yes, **without the red stars or black stripes**; nipples are present and accounted for!) Behold Topless mode! Here's how to unlock it: Start a new Save file with any girl and partner with Lisa. Travel only to island locations with no other people. As



soon as you arrive, quickly exit the area. At the end of the first day, you're forced to play volleyball. As soon as possible, hit Pause and choose "Give up." From day two onward, **continue going to island locations with no other people and exiting out quickly.** End each day normally by sleeping. Do this for all 14 days, and you'll see the end credits roll (without your having played any volleyball!). Now, go back to your Save file. Does it have a **time of 0:03 or less (1)?** Then rock on, you perv! You've activated Topless mode! Continue this Save file with any girl. Here's where the magic happens. Open the



Item screen, go to the swimsuits, press the Y button on an already-equipped suit, and "W" (wear) will change to "T" (topless) **(2).** **This works only with two-piece costumes.** Now, start the game, and all competitors in two-piece suits suddenly "forget" their modesty **(3-6)! Special thanks to Tina for bringing out two sets of big guns (3)!** At least now we know why this game got an "M" rating! Scandalous!



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FINAL WORD

Online Games: Now It's Personal

LOOK WHO'S TALKING

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Paul Byrnes
Associate Editor

Bryan Intihar
Associate Editor

Chris "CJ" Johnston
News Editor

Demian Linn
Editor-at-Large

Greg Sewart
Previews Editor

Jennifer Tsao
Managing Editor

Paul: For years, we've been hearing (and saying) that online games will revolutionize videogaming in the future. Well, here we are in the future. We don't have shiny silver pants or flying cars, but we do have Net-enabled games for three quite snazzy game consoles. Is the revolution living up to its propaganda? What are you guys playing online right now?

Greg: I have to say I'm not all that impressed yet. Online gaming isn't taking off nearly as fast as everyone hoped it would. I play only *NHL 2K3* online, and even that not very much, since it has no tournament settings and anyone who's losing in the third period simply disconnects.

Shane: Online gaming hasn't completely blossomed for me, either. I'm still riding the white pony that is *Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II* for GameCube. I haven't used Xbox Live or my PS2 Network Adaptor nearly as much as I thought I would. But I hear that Jen plays a lot of *My Street* online....

CJ: Man, you guys gotta get into Xbox Live. I honestly couldn't care less about the PS2's online games (except *SOCOM*), and *PSO* on GC is a joke without a keyboard—but Live games rule. I've been playing *Unreal Championship* or *MechAssault* nearly every weekend.

Bryan: I had such high hopes for online gaming, but besides *Madden* for PS2 and *PSO* for GameCube, not much has tickled my fancy.



Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II is more fun with a keyboard, y'all.

Even those games have problems (*cough*, no *PSO* keyboard, *cough*). Maybe I should try challenging Jen to a game of *My Street*.

Shane: Hey, I've got a keyboard for *PSO* on the Cube, and it's great! I only had to bribe someone to go to Japan and search through 40 stores to find it for me! Is that too much to ask?

Crispin: *My Street?* Blah. Why would anybody want to play nice with the neighborhood kids online when it's more fun to stalk them through the bushes and chuck a grenade at their feet? And since that kind of stuff is still frowned upon in real life, I'm sticking with *SOCOM: US Navy SEALs*. It's the only recent online game I play on a regular basis. I've never really gotten tired of it, despite the frequent server outages and rotten-cheat players who snipe you from within the walls. Now there's a game that needs a patch.



Take your Master Chief online and pop some caps in sucka MCs when *Halo 2* arrives later this year.

CJ: I'm also looking forward to *PSO* on Xbox, *Midtown Madness 3*, and *Halo 2*. I just wish that someone would revive *Speed Devils* for one of the newer consoles (Ubi Soft, please!). That game was online crack, and it didn't get the credit it deserved on Sega's ill-fated Dreamcast.

I'm still waiting for that "must-have" online game I can't live without.

Demian: I'm a little slow on the draw—I just picked up my Xbox Live starter kit a few days ago (\$40 at my supersecret, nerds-only discount electronics retailer), so I can keep punishing Sewart with my *NHL 2K3* finesse game when he returns to the wilds of Canada. As for *PS2* and GC online action...sorry, I'm not feelin' it yet. But hey, I'm sure *My Street's* great.

Jennifer: You guys jest about my time online with *My Street*, and indeed, it was laughable, but it also served a valuable purpose. It deepened my affection for the real online deal, a game that so often gets overlooked in these discussions, *Tony Hawk 4*—simple, pure trash-talkin' fun.

Paul: Heh. You said "jest." That sounds like *EverQuest's* influence to me. So, what are we looking forward to in the next few months?

Greg: There are some kick-ass online racers coming up—*Midnight Club II*, *Midtown Madness 3*, and *Auto Modellista*—that should get me in the online groove.

Shane: I'm sure *PSO* for Xbox, *Final Fantasy XI*, and *Halo 2* will get me playing online later this year.

Bryan: I'm still waiting for that "must-have" online game I can't live without. Could it be *Halo 2* or *True Fantasy Live Online*?

Paul: I think we all have high hopes for *Halo 2*. Otherwise, I'm really jonesin' for a good online fighter. Something 3D for 2003, you know? *Dead or Alive*, *Tekken*, or *Soul Calibur*—any one of them would turn the Internet into a magical arcade where opponents are always available and you don't have to put your quarter up.

Bryan: As much as I'd love to have *Soul Calibur* or *Virtua Fighter* online so I could school my East Coast friends, I'm not sure we're at the point yet with connection speeds that an online 3D fighting game would be an enjoyable experience. That may have to wait until the PS3 or Xbox 2 arrives on the gaming scene.

Paul: If the current hardware and infrastructure can handle 16 players in a first-person shooter (the twitchiest of twitch genres), they should be able to handle two players in a fighter. Or even four players, which mathematics tells us would provide exactly double the awesomeness.

Greg: For the record, I did beat Demian in *NHL 2K3* once. He's not undefeated. He's like 8-1-0.

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

May 2003

There Is No Spoon

We're entering the Matrix this month with a hands-on look at the entire game, plus interviews with the movie's actors and producers. Will this movie-based game that's only kinda based on the movie actually be worth your bullet timer? Pick up your black leather overcoat from the dry cleaners and find out next month. Plus, do you really "catch 'em all"? The Review Crew answers that question with a thorough look at the big N's new Pokémon offerings for GBA. And that's not all! We look ahead at pricing and dicing action from that rude Canadian dude.

Join us for a peek at X2: Wolverine's Revenge!

Next Month's Preview



Enter the Matrix



Pokémon



X2: Wolverine's Revenge



NEXT MONTH

Issue #166, on sale April 1

Reviewed Next Month:

• Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire (GBA)

• NBA Hoopz 2003 (PS2)

• Batman: Dark Knight (GC)

• Midway Arcade Advance (GC)

• Tao Feng (Xbox)

Previewed Next Month:

• X2: Wolverine's Revenge (PS2, GC, Xbox)

• Halo 2 (Xbox)

• Halo: Combat Evolved (Xbox)

• World of Warcraft (PC)

• Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (PS2)

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IF YOU PURCHASED A SUBSCRIPTION TO THIS OR ANOTHER MAGAZINE, THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT MAY AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS

This notice describes a proposed nationwide settlement of class action lawsuits relating to magazine subscriptions that has been reached in the Magazine Antitrust Litigation, on CV 08-489 (S.D.N.Y.) (the "Action"), and preliminarily approved by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (the "Court").

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF MONEY OR OTHER COMPENSATION TO THE CLASS MEMBERS BUT INSTEAD SOLELY ADDRESSING CERTAIN INDUSTRY RULES AND PRACTICES THAT WERE DIRECTLY CHALLENGED IN THE ACTION AS BEING UNLAWFUL (SEE "THE CLAIMS IN THE LAWSUIT" SECTION BELOW).

This announcement is intended to give class members notice under Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Order of the Court dated September 30, 2002, as modified on September 30, 2002, that a hearing will be held before the Hon. Richard Conway Casey on May 27, 2003, at 10:00 a.m. to determine whether: (a) to certify the proposed settlement class under Rule 23; (b) the proposed settlement of the Action is fair, reasonable and adequate; (c) a final judgment should be entered dismissing the Action with prejudice to the class members; and (d) to approve class counsel's application for attorneys' fees and expenses. The text of this notice summarizes the terms of the proposed settlement. You can obtain a copy of the settlement agreement, the Consolidated Amended Class Action Complaint (the "Complaint"), and a list of the magazine subscriptions at issue in the Action, at www.magazine.org or by writing to The Garden City Group, Inc., the Administrator of the Notice Program, at Magazine Antitrust Litigation, P.O. Box 9000 # 6042, Merrick, NY 11566-9000 (the "Administrator"). ANY QUESTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING THIS NOTICE OR THE SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE ADMINISTRATOR AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE OR BY CALLING 1-888-230-0018. PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE ADMINISTRATOR WITH QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR OWN SUBSCRIPTIONS UNLESS THOSE QUESTIONS RELATE TO THE CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT.

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PUBLISHER REGARDING THIS NOTICE. THE ADMINISTRATOR, WHERE APPROPRIATE, WILL REFER ANY QUESTIONS TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON. THE CLAIMS IN THE LAWSUIT. The Complaint was filed in this Action in or about October 2000, against the Magazine Publishers of America ("MPA"), a consumer magazine trade association, and fourteen magazine publishing companies (the "Publisher Defendants"). The Complaint alleged an agreement among the Publisher Defendants and the MPA to set the minimum price of the maximum discount on magazine subscriptions through the enactment of MPA Guideline 4(a) and/or the collective action among publishers to adhere to the ABC's 50% Rule (as referred to in 1% of the Amended Complaint) or the similar Rule of the IPA International pertaining to its definition of "paid circulation." The Complaint asked the Court to eliminate or modify Guideline 4(a) and to award damages that allegedly were suffered by consumers who purchased subscriptions to the Publisher Defendants' magazines.

The defendants have denied the material allegations of the Complaint. The parties have now agreed to settle the Action in its entirety. On September 20, 2002, the Court preliminarily approved the settlement.

TERMS OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT. In the proposed settlement, the defendants have agreed to do two things: (1) the MPA shall delete its in-house MPA Guideline 4(a); and (2) the defendants shall defray the costs incurred in connection with the Action, including the costs of the Notice program involving notifying class members of the terms and conditions of the proposed settlement and the Plaintiffs' actual attorneys' fees and expenses awarded by the Court up to \$1.5 million. In exchange, the Plaintiffs have agreed that, if the settlement is approved, the Court will enter a judgment dismissing the Action with prejudice, and the named Plaintiffs and all class members who have not duly opted-out of the class will be deemed to be subject to the release in this case, which provides as follows: "As of the date on which the Agreement is finally approved, the Publisher Defendants and the MPA . . . shall be completely released, acquitted, and forever discharged, from any and all claims, demands, actions, suits, causes of action, injuries or damages, whether class, individual or otherwise in nature, that Plaintiffs, the Class

Members or each of them, in his or her capacity as a subscriber to a magazine, ever had or now has, in law or equity, under federal or state law, relating to an agreement to set the minimum price of or maximum discount on magazine subscriptions through the enactment of MPA Guideline 4(a) and/or the collective action among publishers to adhere to the ABC's 50% Rule (as referred to in 1% of the Amended Complaint) or the similar Rule of the IPA International pertaining to its definition of "paid circulation." The release also releases class action claims that were previously brought. But subsequently dismissed without prejudice by a plaintiff in the State Court in San Diego, California, who asserted similar allegations against the defendants albeit based on violations of California state laws. The California action was styled *Cossan v. Hearst Corp., et al.*, No. 01-CV-7998, a copy of the Cossan Complaint can be obtained at www.magazine.org.

WHO ARE THE PUBLISHER DEFENDANTS?

The Publisher Defendants are: Condé Nast Publications, Inc.; Gruner + Jahr Printing and Publishing Company; Hachette Filipacchi Media U.S., Inc. (G/F/A Hachette International); Data Group, Inc.; Meredith Corporation; Newsweek, Inc.; Primedia, Inc.; Reader's Digest Association, Inc.; Rodale Inc.; Time Inc.; TimeMedia; Inc. (T/I/A Time Mirror Magazines, Inc.); TV Guide, Inc. and Ziff-Davis Publishing, Inc.

WHO IS IN THE CLASS?

Class Members are those persons who purchased a subscription to this publication or other publications that were published by any of the Publisher Defendants during the period from and including July 3, 1995 up to and including April 25, 2002 (the "Class"). For purposes of determining inclusion in the Class, it does not matter whether you purchased your subscription from one of the Publisher Defendants, or through agents, sub-agents or other third party marketers. You are not, however, a member of the Class if you did not purchase a magazine subscription within the time period stated above, or if you purchased your magazines only at newsstands.

YOUR RIGHT TO OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT. You have the right to appear, in person or by counsel, at the hearing on the proposed settlement in order to

comment on, or object to, the terms of the proposed settlement. Its adequacy or reasonableness and/or the award of attorneys' fees and expenses to class counsel. However, you will only be heard at that time if you first, by May 5, 2003, (a) file with the Court a notice of your intention to appear, which includes the basis for your objection, a statement identifying the magazines to which you subscribed, and the approximate time period of each such subscription; and (b) serve copies of the notice (and all other papers you intend to rely upon) by hand or first class mail on Plaintiff's lead counsel, Bruce E. Gerstein, Esq., Garwin, Bronzath, Gerstein, & Fisher, LLP, 3005 Broadway, Suite 1416, New York, NY 10001 and E. Laddie Montague, Jr., Esq., Berger & Montague, 5622 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19101, and on Defendants' coordinating counsel, Lawrence I. Fox, Esq., at McMenamin, Will & Emery, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, 14th Floor, New York, New York 10020.

YOUR RIGHT TO OPT-OUT OF THE SETTLEMENT. ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAR AT THE HEARING, YOU HAVE NO OBLIGATION TO DO SO. If you do not wish to participate in or be bound by the proposed settlement, you can exclude yourself (i.e., "opt-out"). To opt out, you MUST send a request for exclusion in an envelope POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN May 5, 2003 to the Administrator of the Notice Program Magazine Antitrust Litigation, P.O. Box 9000 # 6042, Merrick, NY 11566-9000. The request for exclusion must state your full name, the magazine(s) to which you subscribed and the approximate time period of each subscription, and the address to which your magazines were sent. IF YOU DO NOT EXCLUDE YOURSELF, you will be barred from prosecuting any legal action against the MPA or its members and the Publisher Defendants to the full extent of the release set forth in the "Terms of the Proposed Settlement" section above.

EXAMINATION OF PAPERS AND INQUIRIES

For a more detailed statement of the matters involved in the Action, including the Complaint, the settlement agreement, motion papers and certain orders of the Court, you may visit the office of the Clerk of the United States District Court, 500 Pearl Street, New York, New York 10038 during business hours. Copies of the papers relating to the settlement are also available at www.magazine.org.



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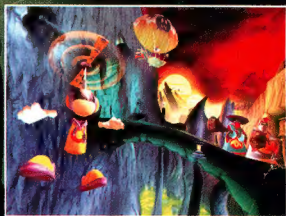


PlayStation 2



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