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ISSUE
106

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from the makers of TWISTED METAL® and TWISTED METAL 2

REM CONT

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**TWISTED
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small brawl

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Warrior



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OURS, WHERE THERE HAS
NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME FOR
THE EMERGENCE OF HEROES.
ONES THAT ARE BRAVE...
ONES THAT ARE COURAGEOUS.
AND TO ANSWER THAT CALL
AND TO CHALLENGE THE FORCES OF
DARKNESS ARE TWO WARRIORS.
WELL, MAYBE ONE WARRIOR.



A NEW LEGACY IS BORN.



PlayStation 2



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NAUGHTY DOG



Violence



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Blood and Gore
Violence

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TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF INTENSITY."

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SEEN AND PLAYED, IT'S AS FUN AS THEY COME."



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PEOPLE FILL THE SCREEN - EACH CITIZEN
REACTS DIFFERENTLY TO EVENTS



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



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

PlayStation 2



GAMEINFORMER

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You've been without your favorite dinosaur hunter for far too long. There will be twists and turns in the road ahead, but it's nothing you can't handle. Come with us as we give you the world premiere on this highly anticipated title.

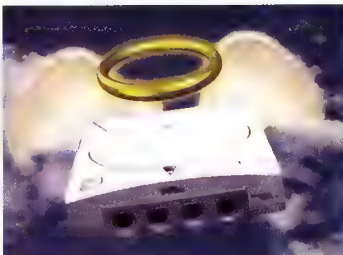
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The sound and music aspect of video games has come a long way from the tweets and buzzes of the past. How far? You'll be amazed at the processes and technology behind the waves that caress your ears every time you turn on your system.



FEATURE **52 DREAMCAST RESURRECTED**

Wait! Don't mothball your Dreamcast quite yet – the old girl still has life left in her! Check out some great games you might have missed, and let us remind you why you bought this resilient console in the first place.



FEATURE **58 THE ART OF MAKING A GAME**

So you say you want to be a game developer, eh? Well take a look at what these intrepid souls at Naughty Dog went through just so you could play Jak and Daxter in a blissful state of semi-conscious oblivion.



BAD CAR



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Take short cuts over buildings or through them. Don't use 'em. Don't expect to win.



Grab power-ups to turn your cab into a metal beast. Battering ram. Monster truck tires. Slider. Some blast horn. It's all good.

SMASHING
DRIVE

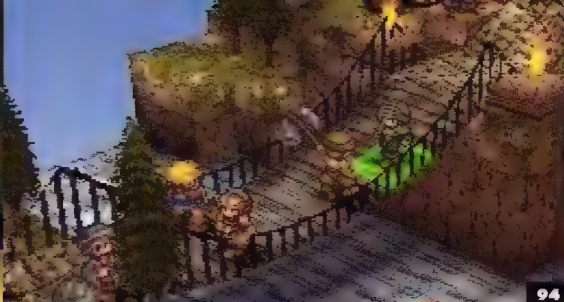
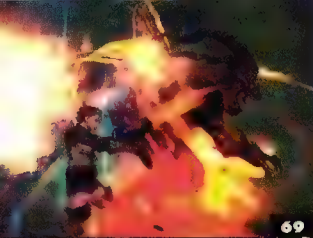
Sometimes a horn
and a gesture won't do.

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Violence



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22 GI SPY

The Game Informer paparazzi stalk the video game industry, bringing you candid photos of all the action.

24 DEAR GI

We always knew our readers were horny, but we had no idea they'd be asking us these kind of questions! Plus, New York and Florida residents are mad, and it seems the cause behind our recent influx of cheap games has been discovered.

30 NEWS

Game Informer gets an exclusive first look at EA's new Lord of the Rings title in this month's GI News section. As if that isn't enough, Eidos springs a little Japanese love on us, and controversy surrounding video game violence continues to stir up debate.

62 PREVIEWS

Sometimes it's amazing that we can fit so many incredible games into one little section. We thought Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter would take up the entire section, but we were still able to fit in State of Emergency, Final Fantasy XI, Suikoden III, Freekstyle 2002 and a ton more. Seeing is believing, so you'd better get moving.

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Medal of Honor: Allied Assault is absolutely incredible. Then again, so is Super Smash Bros. Melee. There are a surprising amount of good games out right now - except for Azurik. That game really blows. We're sorry.

104 CHARTS

What's hot? What's not? What's up? What's down? It's not NASDAQ, it's the Retail Sales Data and the GI editors' Top 10 Games.

106 PLAY TO PERFECTION

Get your smash on with Super Smash Bros. Melee. We've got all the moves you need to tame this wild beast of a game. After reading this guide no one will stand a chance against you!

110 SECRET ACCESS

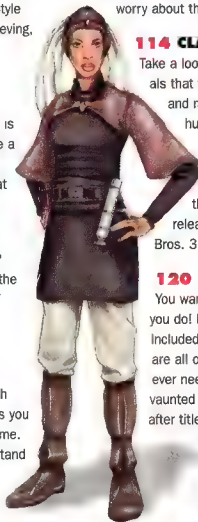
There are many games that are difficult to fully complete. To help you in your quest to be the greatest gamer ever, we've included codes to assist you. There's nothing better than beating a game without having to worry about those pesky enemies.

114 CLASSIC GI

Take a look at some peripherals that taxed our patience and made our brains hurt. As an added bonus, try out our awesome strategy guide for one of the best games ever released: Super Mario Bros. 3

120 ITC

You want to be a nerd. Yes you do! Don't deny it. Included in this month's ETC are all of the things you'll ever need to reach this vaunted and highly sought after title.



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PUBLISHER

Cathy Preston

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Andrew McNamara

EDITORS

Senior Associate Editor Andrew Reiner

Associate Editors Matt Helgeson • Kristian Brogger

Justin Leeper • Matthew Kato

Copy Editor Jon Storm

Mascot Arthur

PRODUCTION

Art Director Thomas Blustin

Production Director Curtis Fung

Production Assistant Rachel Gilles

ADVERTISING

Rob Borm • (612) 486-6155 • Fax (612) 486-6101

email: rob@gameinformer.com

724 North First St., 4th Floor • Minneapolis, MN 55401

CIRCULATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

For change of address or subscription inquiry only:

(612) 486-6100 Fax (612) 486-6101

or send correspondence to:

724 North First St., 4th Floor • Minneapolis, MN 55401 • Attn: CIS Dept

Circulation Manager

Paul Anderson (612) 486-6104

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

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



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EDITORS' FORUM

GAMES: MOVING FORWARD OR MOVING BACKWARD?



Much like the movie business, the video game industry has grown and redefined itself over the years. From the dawn of gaming, games that relied on gameplay to define value, like Pac-Man, have been replaced with titles that, in part, rely on graphics and storytelling for their experience, like Metal Gear Solid.

Many of the classic gamers out there would claim this change is for the worse (since many of the modern vids can be defeated and shelved in about 10 hours). However, I would just say that time and technology have enabled games to offer many different forms of entertainment. I, for one, am all about the new adventures and actually appreciate a game that can be beaten and enjoyed in an afternoon, but I do wonder if the ability to create a title that's fun for fun's sake may be a lost art.

Am I asking that we all throw our PlayStation 2s, Xboxes, and GameCubes out the window in some defiant statement to game manufacturers? Most definitely not, but I would like to see game developers, reviewers, and

gamers take a serious look at what games are about. A perfect example of a modern-day title with old-school sensibilities is Super Monkey Ball. It's simple, and you can challenge yourself with it over and over – not to see the crazy Hollywood ending, but just to play. Did it get all the credit it deserved? Probably not. I know I am guilty of perhaps undervaluing a game because I have grown to expect a certain amount of bells and whistles.

While there is no real ending to the evolution of games, I would hope that the heart and soul of what gaming is about – the gameplay – is not forgotten. I hope that gamers haven't become so dependent on movies and fancy graphics that companies will no longer be willing to take a chance on concepts that don't involve the scope and story of a Metal Gear Solid.

I want my Metal Gear Solid, but a video game universe filled with nothing but Metal Gears is not a place I want to be. I want variety and games that appeal to both the modern, and classic gamer that I know resides in us all.

Andy
Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com
I recently received a letter from a US soldier stationed in Tora Bora, Afghanistan. After filling me in on the status of the war, he went on to say that my reviews filled his heart with a newfound determination to complete his mission and get back to his passion in life: gaming. Certainly, this is a great honor, but I can't help but feel guilty. Just to set the record straight, I talk about you for approximately 99.9% of each issue. If my memory serves me correctly, there's a saying: if you place typewriters in front of 1,000 monkeys for ten years, one of them will eventually rewrite the Declaration of Independence. If my meaningless ramblings are inspirational, it's primarily by dumb luck. But hey, if my firing of gibberish aids in the war against terrorism, I'll continue to squeeze it out. Go USA!

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com
As the caretaker of our Dear Gl section, I'm privy to many scolding and obscenely worded emails from our readers. In the last few weeks, I've already received a deluge of letters protesting our naming of the Xbox controller as 2001's Blunder of the Year. In response to all the smart alecks who didn't realize they were the 27th person to think of the joke: No, we don't all have really small grin faces. To clarify our position, the Xbox controller certainly won't prevent you from enjoying a great game like Halo. However, all things being equal, wouldn't you rather it were more like the Dual Shock or the GameCube controller? Both of them are just so much more comfortable. If you think about it, the two consoles from the past that had controllers most like the Xbox's are the Dreamcast and Atari Jaguar. That's not exactly the company I'd want to be in.

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG

kristian@gameinformer.com
At press time, the only thing separating me from my first viewing of *The Lord of the Rings* is a few measly hours. From what I've heard, this is an incredible film. It is as phenomenal as say *Weekend Update* or *Bernie's 2 or 3*? Probably not. But in case it is, I have a feeling it might be a back-to-backer – the kind of movie you see twice in one day. The last back-to-backer I saw was *The Matrix*. I'm going to make a prediction: *The Lord of the Rings* will do better at the box office throughout its entire run than *Episode II*. Bait? Perhaps, but that's just the way it is.

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com
Now that Matt has signed his life away on an eternal mortgage, I am the only editor without home ownership. Should I feel jealous? Hell, no. You see, I'm just keepin' it real. Everyone else has sold out, moving next door to Chip Yuppie and Suzanne Sooculous in the bling-bling 'burbs. Me, I'm spending my nights in the 'hood like the rest of you lower middle-class slobos. Sure, Gl editor salanes rival those of all-star athletes, but money's not what I'm about – I'm a man of the people. I love you guys. Of course, if you try to approach me on the street, I'll appreciate you faster than Ota interrupts Fuku-san on Iron Chef, but that's besides the point.

KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com
In order to get this issue done by Christmas, this was definitely the shortest deadline I've ever been a part of. I say this mainly because if any of my loved ones read this and wonder why I got them a large wooden cooking spoon for Christmas (even if it's got the best damn handle they've ever got their mitts on), then you know what was really on my mind instead of dancing sugar plumbs. I hear that Matt bought a house. Wonderful, buddy! Here's my housewarming gift to you, O.G.: Take it from me, your girlfriend will appreciate it when you show up to do more than just pay the mortgage. The worst thing about it is that all the games I want to play (i.e. not *Blood Wake*) are sitting in a dust-covered pile on top of my TV. It was nearly impossible to come up with my favorite games this month 'cause how the hell would I know!



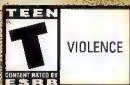
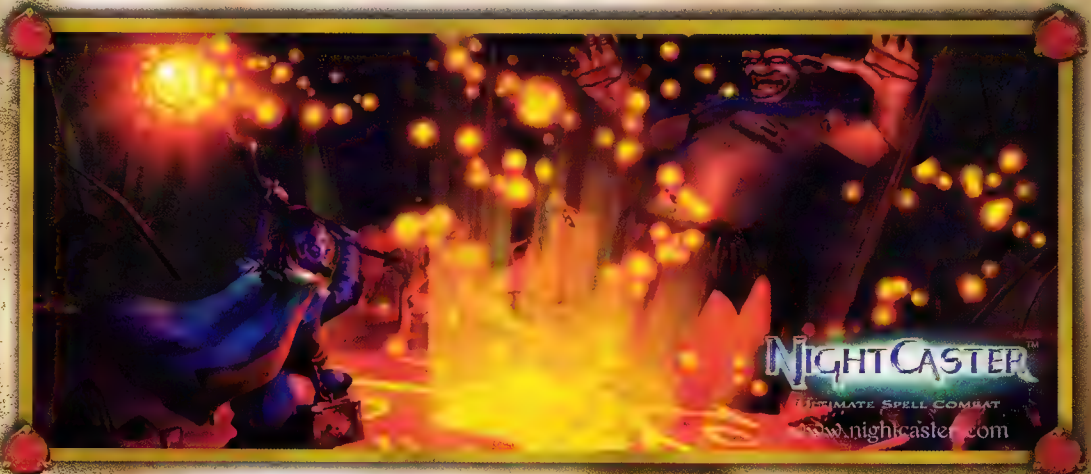
Why publish a gaming mag in Minnesota you might ask? The Gl staff wouldn't miss all that Minnesota has to offer this time of year. 1. Justin shows Reiner his snowboarding moves. 2. Matt and Arthur enjoy the pulse-pounding excitement that is ice fishing. 3. Grateful that Gl has a good dental plan, Reiner and Kristian chill out in the penalty box. 4. The wearing of the braids; a Sunday ritual for Kato. 5. Insane from cabin fever, Andy wanders outside for some faint sunlight as the thermometer hits a refreshing 40° below zero.



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

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

Not even near the end



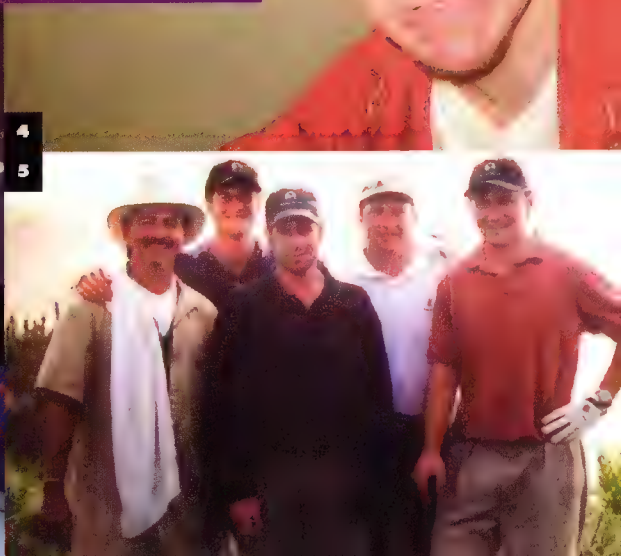
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GI SPY



CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

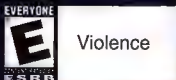
1. Hey, this is cool. I'm on a date with Tara Reid from *American Pie*. But wait, I'm Peter Nguyen from Access PR! I can do better than this! Besides, she's made out with Carson Daly. Yucky! 2. Yeah, Milla Jovovich! This is more like it. My first date with a supermodel. But, you know, maybe I COULD do better. I mean, she's kind of an airhead, and that Joan of Arc movie she was in, really stunk! 3. Wooo-hooo! I'm the King! I'm the MAN! Triplets, baby! Aw yeah! Ladies and gentlemen, the mack of the video game industry has arrived! 4. "Alright, who wants some?" Dave Dienstbier of Acclaim is looking for a fight. 5. From left to right, "The Best Damn Caddy in the World" Ruben Ramirez, Paul Baldwin (Eidos), Rob Borm (Game Informer Magazine), Doug Rebert (Konami), and Erik Whiteford (EA) enjoy a day of golf at Pebble Beach for the 2001 Game Informer Cup. 6. As part of Nintendo's GameCube marketing plan, the Pikmin are travelling the country, intent on giving every single American citizen a big hug. Aww. 7. Wherever there are sweaty men, Justin will be there. Here we see the Deviant hanging with Mike Derks (BalSac) and Brad Roberts (JizMak) from Gwar and the Dave Brookie Experience at the Lab nightclub in beautiful Lowertown. 8. Paul, Jay Boor and Kelly Ranger pose for the camera outside the GI offices.



MEGAMAN X6

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DEAR GI

GRAND THEFT PLAYSTATION

I would like to tell you my sad story about how my PS2 and I were separated a few weeks ago. It was like I lost a family member. You see, my PlayStation 2 got stolen right along with most, if not all, of the hottest games out, including Grand Theft Auto III, Devil May Cry, Tony Hawk 3, and Metal Gear Solid 2. It was so, so sad. The worst part is that it was stolen by my best friend of eight years who broke into my house while I was at work. Even worse, I heard that he even sold it all to somebody for a measly \$200! He could have at least made more money off of my stuff. Not only was I ripped off, he was, too. If you are going to be a thief, at least be a smart one.

I'm feeling a little better now; I just bought a brand spankin' new PS2 right along with a new copy of Grand Theft Auto III. The only problem is, I didn't have enough money to get a new memory card, so I am stuck doing the same missions over and over again. Oh well, I guess I will move on and restart my collection. This can only make me stronger, even though I feel like crying whenever I think about all the games that I had before.

Thanks for your time GI, I hope this letter will help people to protect their PS2s, Xboxes, and GameCubes a little better, and be more careful of who their friends are. PEOPLE ARE SO CRUEL!!

Mark Dunbar
North Brunswick, NH

We have no idea what you're talking about. We swear. We don't know anyone from New Hampshire, certainly not any nice young gentlemen who promised us that the PlayStation 2 and games we were buying for \$200 had "fallen off the back of the truck" and were totally legit. Hey, what's that over there? [hurried footsteps]

In all seriousness, we suggest you report this incident to your local police department. Maybe they can get your PlayStation 2 back. If not, there's always the People's Court, where we're sure the scrumptious Judge Marilyn Milian will turn those sexy brown eyes your way while she awards you some dough. Judge...Marilyn...Milian...so beautiful...so lovely...so...full...of...common sense...we...must...have...you!

NO LOVE FOR NY?

What's up with residents of New York not being eligible for the Next Level of Gaming Sweepstakes? The grand prize is possibly the best prize I've ever seen in a gaming magazine. I must have that TV! Will it help if

I denounce the Yankees and Mets? I'll even root for the Red Sox next season, I swear. Just let me in the damn contest!

Matt Pepe
New York, NY



Word cousin, we've been dissin' NYC on the regular ever since '96, when the East Coast/West Coast beef erupted in the hip-hop community. Being unofficial members of the Death Row Mafia, you know we had to cut off the Big Apple from our contests after Biggie dissed Pac. Wessssiiiiiiiide!

Actually, the reason residents of New York and Florida weren't eligible for the Next Level of Gaming giveaway was a result of the rules governing sweepstakes in those states. A representative of Kraft Foods (the company that staged the contest) informed us that both New York and Florida require notification and registration with the state within a specific time limit, usually about 30 days before the sweeps begin. Kraft wasn't able to provide the necessary information within the time limit, and could not allow entries from those states. In this case, the company simply didn't have enough time. If you look at similar contests or sweepstakes, you'll see that very few of them register in New York or Florida. We regret that some of our readers had to miss out on the fun, but any further complaints should be directed toward your state government.

READER DEMANDS DIRT

I have one question for you guys, it's about the ESRB rating system. There's one particular letter I want to discuss: the "Adults Only" rating. Are any companies going to make a game that's A-rated? What's the point of having it if they're not going to make a game that gets that rating?

Henry Taing
Via hotmail.com

If you're waiting around for Mario Does Dallas or Lara Croft: Spring Break Uncensored, don't hold your breath. According to the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, there have only been 15 titles that have received an Adults Only rating since the inception of the industry's current rating system. Of these, most of the titles rated A are not

actually games, but risqué screensavers, interactive manga DVDs, and the like. Most of them are probably really tedious and a complete waste of money as well.

So far, there has really been only one proper mainstream game that ever received the dreaded A rating, Virgin Interactive's aborted arena fighter, Thrill Kill (which was cancelled due to the uproar surrounding its ultra-violent combat). The Thrill Kill engine was later used in the mediocre Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style, which proved there wasn't really much depth to the game once you removed the blood, guts, and sexual innuendo. Now, why don't you go take a cold shower, then play a good, wholesome game like ICO? It's sure to tug on your heartstrings, maybe even make you shed a few tears.

OBNOXIOUS CARTOON CHARACTER TO RETURN!

Your magazine is wonderful, but what happened to the Vidiot? Seriously, I love those adventures! Start making some more! I suggest having Squall vs. Cloud from FF VII and FFXIII, or maybe Tifa vs. Yuffie Kisaragi. Thanks, guys, and keep up the great work!

Adrienne
Via aol.com

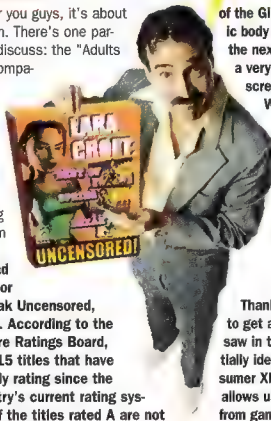
Actually, we already did Squall vs. Cloud, way back in issue 86, but why revisit the past? The third edition of Video Game Deathmatch has been a mammoth undertaking, but we can guarantee that Game Informer readers have not seen the last of the Vidiot. In fact, Dan Veessenmeyer, the artist who brought our twisted anthero to life, is collaborating with Reiner on the creation of a brand new character that will accompany the Big V in his adventures. We hear that this new member of the GI team is a comely female with some cybernetic body parts. Woah nelly! At press time, the lineup of the next Deathmatch was unconfirmed, but recently a very inebriated Vidiot ran through the GI offices screaming, "Punch! Kick! It's all in the mind!!" Whatever could he mean?

MYSTERY BOX

While browsing through issue 103 I noticed something very interesting. On page 44, in the lower right-hand corner, you had a picture of a clear, green Xbox! What's the story behind this?

David "King Koopa" Cooper
Via cs.com

Thanks, smarty-pants, we thought we were going to get away with that one. The green Xbox unit you saw in that picture is an Xbox Debug Kit. It's essentially identical in size and function to the standard consumer Xbox, but is equipped with special circuitry that allows us to play DVD-R and CDR discs that we get from game publishers. Playing these burned copies of



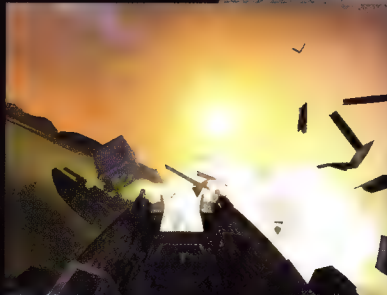
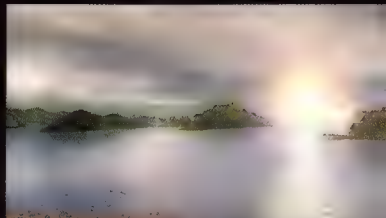
YOU WANT DIRT? ... I GOT THE DIRT, BABY!!

Out here,

amongst the clouds

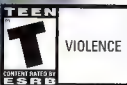
and the sea,

a chain gun.



STORMFRONT
STUDIOS

ONLY ON
XBOX



Step aboard a
torpedo-laden gunboat
and while away your
days destroying Devil
boats, forts and shore
batteries. Paradise
awaits in the Dragon Sea.

Set

a course

for

destruction

BLOOD WAKE

bloodwake.com

XBOX

ENVELOPE ART

games ensures that we will be able to get our review of a game out to you before, or around, the time the title is shipped to retailers. If we had to wait for the box copy (as we sometimes do), our review wouldn't hit newsstands until well after the game had been out.

Because of our lead-time, we didn't have a final consumer version of the Xbox when we did our GameCube vs. Xbox cover story. To better illustrate some of the Xbox's features, we used our Debug Kit for photography purposes. Hope that clears things up, and no, you will never get Microsoft to send you one.

ERRATA

I found a mistake in issue 104 on page 29. In the last sentence of the story regarding Sony's online plans, someone wrote "third-party" instead of third-party. Just thought I'd let you know.

Tyson
Via email

Good eye, Tyson. Although we spend countless hours pouring over the proofs of the magazine, occasionally typos do slip by unnoticed. Rest assured that we will be more careful in our proofreading in the futur.

IT TAKES A LOT TO LAUGH, IT TAKES A GAME TO CRY

This is embarrassing, but I have to confess to someone. I hope you will understand. I wept yesterday — unashamedly. I thought I had lost someone, and when I found her there, lying on the beach, I just couldn't help myself.

I almost wish I was talking about real life, but after finishing ICO, I don't care about reality anymore. I live in my own happy little fantasy world where I will always be able to look after Yorda, and she will follow me whenever I call her. I am in love with this game!

It had been said that this would be the first title to really emotionally involve you with the characters, but I didn't think it would be true. If games continue to move in this direction, I will no longer need family or friends, because I will always have people like Yorda. One can only hope.

Jordan Robinson
Via msn.com

See — we knew ICO was going to strike a chord with our readers! Maybe Oprah should ditch that Dr. Phil guy and have us dishing out advice on her show instead. O, baby, give us a call! As pathetic as you probably feel (and you should), we have to let you know

that you have a kindred spirit in GI's Game Hombre. Recently, Andy admitted to us that he too was distraught, and even cried, when he witnessed the end of ICO. As part of his counseling program, we've been giving him wedgies and mercilessly mocking him for days now. He seems to be making tremendous progress, and his emotional recovery should be complete once we spray paint "Sissy Boy" on the side of his SUV. Tough love really works.



Andrea Fierro
Lara Croft art? That is sooo '90s! Throw on a flannel and crank up the Pearl Jam!



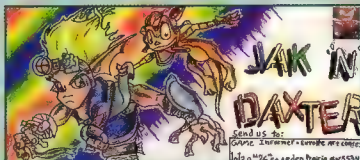
FEBRUARY WINNER!

William Swanson
"[Sniff] Just [sniff] because I'm seven feet tall and named Nightmare doesn't mean I don't have any feelings."

Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

Send to:
Game Informer • Envelope Art Contest
724 North 1st St., 4th Floor • Mpls, MN 55401

Jake Kainu
"Hi, I'm Dexter! Who wants to french kiss?"



Spencer Graham
Another member of the Trenchcoat Mafia.



Gabriel Sanchez
Dante, Adam Ant called. He wants his jacket back.



Pedro Valentin
Check out this amazingly detailed black and white piece.

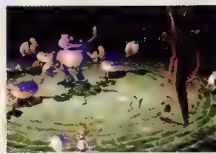
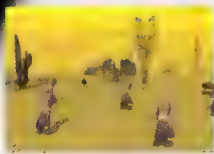




PlayStation.2

ARE YOU IN CONTROL OF YOUR SHADOW?

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



Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Mild Violence

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OKAGE

Shadow King



GI NEWS



EA'S RING IS REVEALED

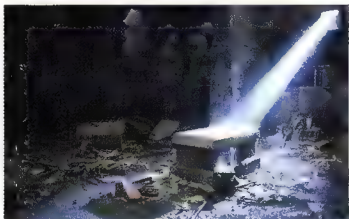
The long journey to Mordor has already begun with the film **The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring**, but **Electronic Arts'** own game based on the movie won't be out until the second film appears in the fall of this year. Work has already begun in earnest on the third-person action/adventure title and *Game Informer* is here with an exclusive first look at some of the early results.

EA's video game chooses to focus on **Aragorn** as he helps **Frodo** and company in their mission to dispose of the One Ring and escape Sauron's minions. *The Lord of the Rings* will be a mission-based game with a detailed and interactive 3D environment. EA wants the game's combat to be more strategic than just your average slasher, with greater care given to everything from your weapon selection to your movement during combat. Visually, EA is using all the license can offer by drawing directly from the movie in order to match its stunning style.

Electronic Arts owns the rights to make titles based on the film adaptations of **J.R.R. Tolkien's** *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. On the other hand, sometime this year **Universal Interactive** (through its partnership with **Vivendi**) will draw from a separate license that covers the actual books themselves, for its video games (next-gen consoles, handhelds, and online) based on **Middle Earth** lore.



In-game shot



Still shot from film

EA is dedicated to replicating the film's look



SEGA'S SOCCER SLAM

Sega's **Visual Concepts** development team is already known for its very successful **2K** series of sim-sports titles, and now it is taking soccer to another extreme. **Soccer Slam** will be a 3-on-3 title to release this spring which takes the arcade feel of VC's titles and blows it up to frantic proportions. Soccer isn't known for its non-stop excitement, but it certainly is famous for its brutal and rowdy fans. Now they will be an integral part of the mix, along with power-ups, combo moves, tournaments, and the Continental Cup mode.



MORE ON THE GOVERNMENT AND VIDEO GAME VIOLENCE

A report recently released by the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** has praised the video game industry for its cooperation and participation in limiting the marketing and availability of unsuitable material to children. When we last visited the issue, prior to the events of September 11, Senators **Joseph Lieberman** (D-CT) and **Herb Kohl** (D-WI) had introduced a bill titled the **Media Marketing Accountability Act (MMAA)** that would allow the FTC to target and prosecute companies marketing inappropriate material toward children.

Unfortunately, the bill's authors have not been so kind to retailers who actually sell the video games. According to the FTC report, underage kids were able to purchase M-rated titles 78% of the time, down 7% from the previous year. Senators Lieberman and Kohl have sent a cautionary letter to 34 retail chains criticizing their lax enforcement of the ratings that have been set by the **Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB)**. "No one expects the industry to be 100% perfect in enforcing policies barring kids from buying Mature-rated games. But a 22% effectiveness rate is not nearly good enough," read the letter. "We urge your company to make this a priority from the executive office suites to the floors of your stores."

The letter was sent to the 34 chains that were identified by the **Interactive Entertainment Merchants Association** as constituting the bulk of the video game rental and sales market. It included stores such as **Best Buy**, **Electronics Boutique**, **Blockbuster**, and more. Only **Wal-Mart**, **Target**, and **Sears** (which doesn't sell M-rated games) were singled out for praise in their enforcement. Despite the tone, the letter did not threaten any legislation toward the retailers. For more on the MMAA, this issue, and what you can do, please read the **Gaming Under Fire** feature in the October 2001 issue (#102) of *Game Informer*.

ACCLAIM REVEALS NEW CHARACTER

At this year's **E3** in LA, **Acclaim** divulged that it was working on a brand new franchise featuring a character tentatively named **Jinx**. Acclaim was very reluctant to spill the full beans about the series, although the company has given us a Christmas present in more ways than one. This year's Christmas card from the publisher has revealed a first peek at what the plucky lad looks like.

This new franchise from Acclaim will be in the action/adventure mold, and should make a splash from the company that has previously given us **Fur Fighters** and the **Turok** series, among others. There are big plans for this upcoming character – so much so that Acclaim is now drawing from large amounts of its developmental force to deliver a compelling gameplay experience to rival the best of them. The project is moving forward at full steam, but a representative from the company informed us that neither the character nor the game will be called **Jinx**. Look forward to next month's issue of *Game Informer*, when we'll have more on Acclaim's new franchise and the pictures to prove it.



NEW CONCEPTS FOR GT3

If you're one of the hardcore muffer heads that have burned through all the cars in **PlayStation 2's Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec**, then this no time to rest on your laurels. Sony of Japan has issued a stand-alone **Turismo** title based on **GT3** featuring more than 20 new cars and 5 tracks. **Gran Turismo Concept 2001 Tokyo** was debuted at the **2001 Tokyo Motor Show** and is designed to highlight such Japanese concept cars as **Suzuki's GSX-R/4**, the unique **Honda Dual Note**, and the equally interesting **Toyota POD**.

Though it uses the backbone of the original **GT3**, **Concept 2001 Tokyo** will not feature the Simulation portion of the series, focusing on racing these new rides in the Arcade mode. **Gran Turismo's** creator, **Kazunori Yamauchi**, has said that this type of stand-alone title (which retails in Japan for under \$30) is the sort of thing we can probably expect in the future before the next full **Gran Turismo** is released. *Game Informer* talked to **Sony of America** representatives who told us that it wasn't planning on bringing this expansion disc over to the States at the time of this writing. Then again, if you're a **Gran Turismo** fanatic, you probably already have your eye on how you can import this new **GT** fleet into your living room.



GI NEWS



Game Informer's research and development operatives search the globe, seeking out the untapped licenses that will become tomorrow's killer games. If you have any great ideas for games of the future, be sure to drop us a line. Maybe we'll use our godlike power over the video game industry to turn you into a millionaire – or just steal your idea.

SMOOTH MOVER

As Valentine's Day draws near, your character (the new kid in school) needs a date to the Merridale High Heart Days dance. Everyone knows being new isn't easy, but when it comes to snagging a significant other, things can get downright ugly. During character creation, you're given a number of skill points to distribute among a number of abilities.



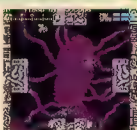
Do you want your digital dater to be a jock? Maybe the ladies (or guys) will be more drawn to the dark and mysterious type...it's hard to say. Your goal is to climb into the hot-seat of school

popularity, but if you show up to the dance alone, your stock will plummet. After completing your first major step toward becoming a school superstar, it's up to you to make the right moves at the right times. As you make friends, your popularity level increases, thereby giving you the opportunity to channel more personality points into your character. Once prom hits, you'll rule the school, baby! Just don't break too many hearts along the way.



NAME THAT GAME

This '80s Capcom game started a loose trilogy of jetpack shooters also containing Sidearms and Forgotten Worlds. The game began in the arcades, but was transformed when it appeared on the NES a few years later. Here you controlled Captain Commando as he took on the L-Brain and the Balangool Empire. Also, the gameplay was less linear than its predecessor, favoring a more Metroid-esque style.



(Answer on page 37)

TOP 10 GAMES
GAMES (2000)

PRIMETIME MECHA

Developer Genki is taking a stab at the Xbox with an interesting mecha combat title called *Phantom Crash*. Similar to the *Tokyo Xtreme Racer* series' skewed take on racing, *Phantom Crash* attempts to add a gameplay twist to the genre. Players will participate in Tokyo's favorite entertainment in the year 2031, live mecha carnage through the streets.

Just as important as the usual customization and weapon selection is the use of camouflage. This is sure to produce some nice effects on the environment, and foster some inventive battle-field strategies. *Phantom Crash* will appear in Japan this spring, with a US date unknown at this time.



CONSOLE WARS UPDATE

Last month we gave you the first glimpse at the momentous launches of **Nintendo's GameCube** and **Microsoft's Xbox**. Now the numbers are in, and it looks like all sides can claim a victory or two. It is estimated that Microsoft shipped about 300,000 units of the Xbox for its November 15 launch day, while Nintendo claims to have sent out 740,000 units for GC's November 18 birth. According to trusted **NPD TRST** data, through its first seven days of life the GameCube sold 469,000 units. Meanwhile, it took the Xbox ten days (having gone on sale three days earlier) to reach 556,000 units through November 24.

During the crucial post-Thanksgiving buying binge the week of November 25 through December 1, the Xbox overtook the GameCube's quick start. Through this period Microsoft sold 182,000 Xboxes, while Nintendo slowed significantly. Only 65,000 units of its console were purchased during this week. Thus, the total after December 1 was 738,000 to 534,000 in favor of the Xbox. Also, Microsoft's first home gaming platform seems to have won the software battle so far. Reports claim that Xbox leads with 2.4 games (namely Halo) being bought with the system versus 1.9 per GameCube (with Luigi's Mansion the favorite).

Sony, meanwhile, has scored perhaps the biggest victory. According to the same NPD TRST data for the post-Thanksgiving week, the company sold 241,000 PlayStation 2s to bring its installed base to 5.2 million consoles sold since October 26, 2000 in the United States.

DAY 37:

Killed Catalisks this morning by combining water, air and fire elements.
Haven't saved the world yet. Really hungry.

DAY 37:

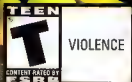
Fighting never ends.
Axiom working overtime.
Killed grolm.

DAY 42:

Spent day in "fire" realm.
Got lost. Sure wish I had
"Backpacker's Guide to Perathia".

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

AZURIK
GO ELEMENTAL
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ADD SPICE TO YOUR SLICE

EA Sports' **Tiger Woods** franchise rolls on this March, bringing a bag full of new features in tow. Take on Tiger through 18 holes designed by the master himself in the Tiger Challenge, pursue your career, drop your ball anywhere in the new Practice mode (including the volcano and canyon fantasy courses), or take on a buddy in Speed Golf. This split-screen game lives up the afternoon more than **Jesper Parnevik's** finest duds by awarding points to the fastest golfer. The Swedish sensation is included in this year's **Tiger**, as are six original amateur players whom you can bring up through the ranks. Also changed is the traditional golf-swing format. **Woods 2002** does away with the customary 3-click interface in favor of a more natural analog swing.



THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

GOOD - **Ubi Soft** gets the license for **Charlie's Angels**. This deal covers the TV show, the movie, and the sequel to the 2000 film, and will put the property on all the consoles. What's so good about this? *GI* hopes that a game will be made featuring **Charlie's Angels** and Ubi Soft's other babe license, **V.I.P.** We don't want to play it, we just want to watch.

UGLY - The debut of **EverQuest's Shadows of Luclin** expansion was sabotaged by **Sony Online** itself. The game's servers weren't ready by the time the title hit the shelves. Worse than that, in order to run the pack's new models, many players had to buy around 256 MBs of RAM. Sez *GI's* Andy: "I haven't spent that much on a game since I paid **Activision's** booth babes to play mud **Twister** with me at **E3** last year."

BAD - Developer **iRock Interactive** has dropped **Ozzy Osbourne** from his own **PS2/PC** game, **Ozzy's Black Skies**. The move was due to the financial constraints of signing Ozzy (i.e. the part of the contract that outlined his "liquid refreshments"), and the difficulty iRock was having in pitching the game to publishers. That's pretty bad, considering rock-themed games is what the whole company is about. The vid will now be called **Savage Skies** and will only feature some dumb-ass dragon.



GOOD - We come in one morning and the office microwave is clean. Now we don't have to worry about our lunches mutating into inedible forms due to the radiation and layers and layers of caked-on, splattered gunk inside. Thanks, Cathy.

BAD - Australia's **Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC)** has declared a ban on **Rockstar's** .44 Magnum opus, **Grand Theft Auto III**. The game has been pulled from shelves and must undergo changes before it can return (no more beating the homeless, the elderly, or any combination thereof). What about dingoes eating babies?



LOOSE TALK

Whenever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, Game Informer experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest, and you've just learned about them months before anyone else! In the industry and need to get back at the boss who fired you by spilling some secrets? Email us at loosetalk@gameinformer.com and we'll be your shoulder to cry on.

Rockstar's amazing success with **Grand Theft Auto III** is going to the company's head. Ideas are already being dreamt up and even worked on for **Grand Theft Auto IV** as we speak. In the meantime, all you **GameCube** owners can rest easy, as Rockstar is working on **GTA III** for you guys which should be out before this fall.

Where are the big **GameCube** games? They are registering for domain names on the Internet. **Nintendo** has already laid claim to **Banjo-Threeie**, and our sources indeed tell us that developer **Rare** is already working on a sequel to **Banjo-Tooie**. Tentative title or bad, bad name choice? Time will tell.

Remember **Lara Croft? Eidos** and developer **Core Design** have been laying low on the heroine's first **PlayStation 2** exploits since an initial unveiling many months ago. Is there a redesign in the works at Core's studio in England? Something tells us that on Valentine's Day, or Lara's birthday, we might learn some new information on the project's development.

Activision is looking for new ways to spice up the licensed music for **Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2**. The company is currently talking to **Leggy Pop** about the matter. The negotiations apparently hinge on whether or not **leggy** will be allowed to cut himself and bleed all over the game.

The talk is flying after a **Business Week** article stated that **Microsoft** was very interested in buying **Take 2 Interactive**. Although **Take 2** laughed about the matter, *Loose Talk's* own sources tell us that **Bill** is hungry to feed his Xbox with some quality games. **Infogrames** is also being bandied about as a possible target. Look for the lion to eat soon.

THEY'RE REVOLTING!



TEAM UP. POWER UP. BLOW UP. ODDWORLD NEEDS YOU.



No really, they're revolting, uprising against the conniving, corporate clods of Oddworld that are eating an entire species to extinction. And you can join the fight. Be both Munch and his flatulent friend Abe in cooperative game play. Hit some twisted power-ups along the way, and lead the revolution against the misguided power mongers. C'mon. The fate of Oddworld is in your hands.

ODDWORLD
Munchies
Oddysee™

POWER-UPS TO THE PEOPLE!



COMIC MISCHIEF
VIOLENCE



ONLY ON
XBOX

MunchOnThis.com

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VIDEO GAME TRIVIA



Are you looking for that special person to fill the void in your lonely life? Well, since you're a gamer, we really don't need to give you any tips as to how to handle your joystick. On the other hand, we're almost certain that you've lived most of your life in utter solitude, and probably don't have the best social skills. Never fear. Take our quiz, and your score will determine which pickup line you should use. We've tried them out, and believe us, they're foolproof!

Question 1: The father of the Final Fantasy series, Shinobu Sakaguchi, made his entry into the video game industry as a programmer of PC games for Square Co, Ltd. Which one of these games did he lay down coding for?

- A. Blast Ride
- B. Death Trap
- C. Invasion Force
- D. Fantasy World

Question 2: When Mario made his video game debut in 1981's Donkey Kong, Shigeru Miyamoto hadn't given him a name yet. For the time being, his nickname was Jumpman. When Nintendo of America's President, Minoru Arakawa, first saw Jumpman in action, he said that it reminded him of someone he knew who just happened to be by the name of Mario. What was Minoru's association with this inspirational figure?

- A. Mario was his Italian landlord
- B. Mario was his college buddy
- C. Mario was his red-hatted plumber
- D. Mario was his pet cat

Question 3: What was the suggested retail price of the Game Boy when it launched in America in 1988?

- A. \$99.95
- B. \$89.95
- C. \$159.95
- D. \$169.95

Question 4: In the NES classic, Mike Tyson's Punch-Out, players assumed the role of Little Mac, a light-footed up-and-comer from Bronx, NY. What was Little Mac's age and weight?

- A. 21, 121
- B. 17, 107
- C. 19, 132
- D. 18, 101

Question 5: Before former Nintendo of America President Howard Lincoln joined the company in 1983, he made a name for himself at a very young age. What was his ticket to stardom?

- A. His extraordinary backhand spin won him a Silver Medal in Olympic ping pong
- B. He starred as a military extra in the film, *Cleopatra*
- C. He modeled for a Norman Rockwell Boy Scout calendar
- D. He co-created the flashing Christmas tree light bulb

Question 6: Yoshi is Mario's faithful steed and one of Nintendo's most recognizable characters. While his name

has little meaning here in the States, it's actually quite significant in Japan, and is used very frequently in conversations. What does Yoshi roughly translate to in Japanese?

- A. Farewell
- B. Good
- C. Happy Birthday!
- D. Got any grass?

Question 7: Silicon Knights has been laboring away at the GameCube title *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem* for many moons. The game was originally planned to be a Nintendo 64 release, but after a handful of delays, it was quickly cancelled...but not completely. At the GameCube unveiling, *Eternal Darkness* made a return and was announced as a GameCube launch title. The project has hence been pushed back until this spring. Harking back to simpler times when the development process didn't take over five years, what was the first game to be completed by Silicon Knights?

- A. Cyber Empires
- B. Dark Legions
- C. Fantasy Empires
- D. Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain

Question 8: In the 1991 SNES football release, *John Madden Football*, there were four offensive units you could bring onto the field before plays. What were they?

- A. Hands, Feet, Butts, Heads
- B. Catching, Throwing, Running, Kicking
- C. Throwing, Running, Kicking, Blocking
- D. Hands, Fast, Big, Normal

Question 9: In the PC series *Wing Commander*, who were the Confederate Space Force's adversaries?

- A. The Kilrathi
- B. The Claw
- C. The Border Worlds
- D. The Jintar

Question 10: Scott Miller created Duke Nukem in 1981. Rather than create a generic personality for this big lug, Scott tapped into the personality traits of three legendary figureheads. Along with Clint Eastwood and John Wayne, who was the third?

- A. Bruce Campbell
- B. Andrew Dice Clay
- C. Batman
- D. Kevin Costner

Score & Rank

1 "My name's not Elmo, but you can tickle me anytime."

2-3 "If I said you had a beautiful body, would you hold it against me?"

4-6 "You must be tired, because you've been running through my mind all night."

7-9 "If I could rearrange the alphabet, I would put 'u' and 'l' closer together."

10 "You be my Dairy Queen, I'll be your Burger King. You treat me right, and I'll do it your way."



Video Game Trivia Answers:

0 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 0 1 2 3 4

XBOX JUMPS ONLINE

Xbox owners have already begun online play with the console, even though Microsoft says the official launch of Internet gaming for the system won't happen until May at the earliest. Using the Xbox's broadband connections, you can play system-link games online with other players. As of press time, those titles are *Halo*, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2X*, and *NASCAR Heat 2002*. This is possible provided you use the system in conjunction with a web-enabled PC, both are connected via Ethernet, and you access a matchmaking service such as *GameSpy Arcade*.

So what does Microsoft think of people jumping the gun without its permission? In a statement to retailers, the company seemed happy enough just to be able to beat PlayStation 2 and GameCube to the punch. "The GameSpy Arcade efforts are a strong indication that people want online console game experiences. Additionally, these efforts showcase the superiority of Xbox."

Still, the experience isn't without its problems. These early efforts to play online seem to be best suited to only two players, and the network connection isn't an ideal one, either. Furthermore, Microsoft tells us that it has all sorts of goodies in store for when Xbox Internet play becomes official. The console's General Manager, J. Allard, told us about everything from interactive TV gaming to a setup where gamers will participate in "missions of the week." With all the Sega and EA Sports titles signed up, you can imagine how cool massive play-off contests are going to be. Microsoft has also promised voice-chat as a mandatory feature for all online games, as well as other amenities. Said Allard, "If you want to go in and shoot some hoops on *NBA Street* or whatever, you can go in and say 'find me three random guys with good connections.' We've got to make the console simple, so you just drop in the disc and play. There's no dial-up in the background and you instantly know where your friends are so that you do battle."

Although Allard promised us "an awesome experience, from day one," speculation is that the Xbox's online frontier will be more of a slow rollout, similar to how the Dreamcast starting out with puzzle title *ChuChu Rocket*. This would push back marquee title *Unreal Championship* until the latter portion of this year.



5% of writers to Dear GI this month oppose censorship of "violet games." However, we're not sure what they think of barring titles that are purple, lavender, or have lots of gore

16% of GI editors got lumps of coal for Christmas. The remaining 84% fared much worse by getting Soldier of Fortune Gold for the PS2. We know where you live, Santa

100% of the holiday gifts GI got from video game companies weren't solid gold Rolex watches. Maybe next year...

17% of the gaming world is "undecided" as to who's the bigger wuss, Luigi or Metal Gear Solid 2's Raiden

41% of all conversations involving Kristian and Kato somehow, inexplicably, end up involving the word NASCAR

EIDOS EMIGRATES JAPANESE GAMES

You hear us say it all the time: "This game will never be released in America." Well, someone is finally tapping into the gaming gray train from Japan and bringing home the goods for us to enjoy. **Eidos** announced it has set up a publishing arm, tentatively called **Fresh Games**, to allow for US audiences to enjoy some of the more niche, intriguing, and downright bizarre games from across the Pacific pond.

This March you'll get to sample delights from the Far East, starting with a pair of **PlayStation 2** vids, **Mister Mosquito** and **Mad Maestro!** (tentative titles) have been released as first-party **Sony** of Japan titles, and are known over there as **Ka** (mosquito) and **Bravo Music**, respectively. *Game Informer* has already gotten its hands on the Japanese version of bug simulation title *Mister Mosquito* (see the preview in our September 2001 #101 issue), and haven't gotten this much skin since...well, ever. *Mad Maestro!*, on the other hand, is a music rhythm title where you're the conductor who has to save the Concert Hall from being destroyed by putting on performances. You know, kinda' like *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo*.

Hats off to **Eidos** for having the cojones to stick its profit neck out there in the name of hardcore gaming. Let's hope Fresh Games keeps 'em coming.



Mad Maestro!



Mister Mosquito



DATA FILE

► A familiar name recently popped up on a **Konami** of Japan release list: **Castlevania**. The fabled series will be brought to the **PlayStation 2**, hopefully by the end of the year, in sweetest 2D. GI talked to **Konami** of **America** representatives, but they couldn't shed any light on the subject.

► **SNK** may be resurrected thanks to pachinko company **Playmore**. The Japanese company has gained the rights to all of **SNK's** properties. Playmore will relaunch these under the name **SNK NeoGeo** out of its new headquarters in Korea. One of the first orders of business for the new regime will be to stem the tide of bootlegged **SNK** software.

► **Burnin' Productions** has a new TV series about video games and their culture called *Cypher*. The show is currently in production for 13 episodes, although no network deals have been disclosed yet. *Cypher* will feature cross-console competitions and other content highlighting gamers. If that's so, the wardrobe and make-up departments should be busy.

► **Dead or Alive** creator **Tomonobu Itagaki** has said that American gamers will get to see the extra features that were on the Japanese release of **DOA 3** for the **Xbox**. These include additional costumes and some other goodies. **Tecmo** has confirmed these plans, but has yet to set a release date for the add-on disc.

► More weapons can only mean fewer limbs for your enemies. Such will be the result when **Codemasters** brings sequel **Ultimate Blade of Darkness** exclusively to the **Xbox** before the end of the year. Hit an artery. Any artery.

► **James Bond 007** in...**EA** port plot: The **PS2** title **Agent Under Fire** will be brought to the **Xbox** and **GameCube** this spring. Some sailors have a lady in every port of call, and **James Bond** is certainly no different.

► **Activision** has said it is committed to a fourth **Tony Hawk** and more money in the bank. The fourth installment of the series is slated to come out before the end of fiscal year 2003 (which is actually in the spring of the 2003 calendar year). The real hand wringing has begun as to what the company will call it. Our bet is something like **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4**. Maybe.

► Upcoming online RPG **Migard** has been put indefinitely on hold. Norwegian developer **Funcom** has laid people off from the project and shifted others away from it to focus on **Anarchy Online**. **Funcom** says that it plans to resume work on **Migard** and rehire those employees shortly.

Name That Game Answer:

2/10/03

LEVEL-UP WITH THE FINAL FANTASY X MOTHER LODE

The good people at Square, Koto, Inc., and BradyGames have put together the ultimate Final Fantasy X package for three very, very lucky readers. The prizes here defy belief and even the size perimeters of this page! Suffice it to say, this is all you could want from a Final Fantasy X contest. So without further ado, let's roll the list of free stuff!

Grand Prize (2)

- Square Soft's Final Fantasy X PlayStation 2 Game
- Koto Tidus Action Figure
- Koto Yuna Vinyl Figure
- Koto Bahamut Vinyl Figure
- Koto Tidus Wall Poster
- Koto Yuna Wall Scroll
- Koto Yuna Lunch Box
- Koto Yojimbo T-Shirt
- Koto Tonberry, Mog, Pupu, Cactuar, and Chocobo Plush Dolls
- BradyGames FF X Strategy Guide
- TokyoPOP's Official FF X Soundtrack

Second Prize (1)

- Square Soft's Final Fantasy X PlayStation 2 Game
- Koto Tidus Wall Poster
- Koto Yuna Wall Scroll
- Koto Yuna Lunch Box
- Koto Yojimbo T-Shirt
- Koto Pupu, Cactuar, and Chocobo Plush Dolls
- TokyoPOP's Official FF X Soundtrack



There Are Two Ways To Enter:



(1) Send a POSTCARD with your NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER to:

GI's FF X CONTEST
724 N. FIRST ST. 4TH FLOOR
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

(2) Send an EMAIL with your NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER to: ffx@gameinformer.com

Your name will be placed in a pool of valid entrants for a random drawing to be conducted on March 11, 2002.

GAME INFORMER'S FINAL FANTASY X OFFICIAL RULES

* NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter and give name, age, address, and telephone number on a postcard to: GI's FF X CONTEST, 724 N. FIRST ST., 4TH FLOOR, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401. Or, via our online form, address, and telephone number in ffxcontest.com. Entries must be received by March 11, 2002. One entry per person. Duplicate entries will be disqualified. Game Informer magazine the "Sponsor" is not responsible for lost, misplaced, illegible, corrupted, or undelivered entries. © 2002 Koto, Inc. Grand prize winner will receive Final Fantasy X PlayStation 2 game, Koto Tidus Action Figure, Koto Yuna Vinyl Figure, Koto Bahamut Vinyl Figure, Koto Tidus Wall Poster, Koto Yuna Wall Scroll, Koto Yuna Lunch Box, Koto Yojimbo T-Shirt, Koto Tonberry, Mog, Pupu, Cactuar, and Chocobo Plush Dolls, BradyGames Final Fantasy X Strategy Guide, and TokyoPOP's Official Final Fantasy X Soundtrack. Sponsor reserves the right to substitute prizes of equal or greater value if necessary. Prizes are not redeemable and are non-transferable. A MINIMUM WINNERS will be determined by random drawings at all valid entries received by the Sponsor, whose decisions are final. Drawing will be held on or about March 11, 2002. Winner's details must be mailed and complete. Prizes will also be sought through the University of Illinois. © 2002 GI WINNERS. Prizes of varying degree or value of valid entries received. S. LEGIBILITY: Prizes open only to residents of United States only. Winner of any prize may forfeit or allow another to do so without penalty and an alternate winner will be selected. Winner may be required to give an address of slightly higher or slightly lower address than provided within 14 days of receipt of contest prize. If a winner is a minor, then prize will be awarded to winner's parent or legal guardian. In appreciation of prize, winners agree to the use of their name and address for promotional or advertising, trade or otherwise without compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor, Game Informer Magazine, and their parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions or related companies are responsible for any damages, losses, or costs that winners might incur as a result of this promotion or receipt of prize. © RESTRICTIONS: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.



THE ART

TUROK

EVOLUTION

Turok, the most famous

dinosaur hunter in video games, has already set his place in gaming history.

Starting in one of the premiere third-party games for the software-starved Nintendo 64, Turok: Dinosaur Hunter received both critical and commercial accolades for its heart-pounding action and, for its time, fast and glitzy graphics.

Despite its early success, Acclaim's three follow-up games (also on the Nintendo 64) never lived up to the first. Turok 2: Seeds of Evil disappointed gamers with its high difficulty curve and lack of save points. Rage Wars, the multiplayer-only product, lacked the one-player adventure people craved, and never made it to the top of the charts. Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion, the last game in the series, delivered an entertaining and well-rounded experience, but featured Turok's offspring, rather than the man himself. Plus, by that time, many of Turok's fans had already moved on.

It could easily be said that Turok's slow slide from video game super stardom was due to its "Only on Nintendo" status, but we suspect the decline came because the follow-up games never delivered what gamers really wanted – compelling content with Turok knee-deep in dinosaurs, doling out death with his amazing arsenal of weapons.

Whatever the reasons, they all mean nothing now. Turok is about to undergo an evolution. Any and all barriers that were in the way are crashing down, bringing Turok back to his former glory. Deep in the heart of Texas, the very same development house that brought you the original (formerly Iguana, now Acclaim Studios Austin) is returning Turok to his roots, bringing gamers back to what they loved about the founding release. Not only that, but Acclaim has removed the Nintendo-only limitation, and plans to deliver the game to all three platforms: Xbox, GameCube, and PlayStation 2. So the table is set, and Turok is ready to reach for his rightful place atop the video-game food chain.

■ PLATFORM: XBOX, GAMECUBE, PLAYSTATION 2 ■ STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TO BE ANNOUNCED) ■ PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
 ■ DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM STUDIOS AUSTIN ■ RELEASE: AUGUST

OF WAR

TALL TALES



Seer TarKeen

Captain Tobias
Bruckner

The story of Turok: Evolution also returns to its roots, because in many ways this game is the *Episode 1* of the series, and the origin of Turok. Ambushed by the bloodthirsty Captain Tobias Bruckner, the Saquin Nation finds itself facing extinction. During the bloody battle that ensues, the mortally wounded warrior, Tal'Set, cuts through the Cavalry troops and engages in mortal combat with Bruckner. A cave-in sends the two tumbling into an underground cavern, where in the final moments of death's embrace, a mysterious portal opens and pulls Tal'Set into the Lost Land.

On the brink of Death, Tal'Set is saved by the Seer TarKeen and taken to the River People, where he is nursed back to health. With the death of his people still fresh in his mind, Tal'Set sets out to find the puppeteer who has pulled his strings and brought him to the Lost Land. That is when he discovers he is part of a higher purpose. He is to become Turok, the Son of Stone, protector and savior.

Unwilling to accept his fate, Tal'Set's destiny is set in motion when the Evil Lord Tyrannus, leader of the Dinosaur armies, sets out to purify the Lost Land by slaughtering any creatures that won't bow to his power. Thus, the epic tale of victory, treachery, and betrayal begins.



The Tok Bow can be equipped with poison arrows to send enemies into nasty convulsions.

DINO Θ PIA MEETS Θ MAHA BEACH

David Dienstbeir, Turok's creative director, is more than familiar with the series – he's been the visionary behind the project since the beginning. To him, the goal of Turok: Evolution is simple. "Get back to the roots of the original." In some ways, this might be considered a shortsighted statement, until he backs it up with the determined comment, "We are working to put Turok not just ahead of the [first-person shooters] currently on the market, but to blow away anything that comes out over the next year." He then sums up the development goal of Turok: Evolution with the mantra "DinoTopia meets Omaha Beach."

From what we have seen, Dienstbeir and his team are heading in the right direction. While the game is being developed for Xbox, GameCube, and PlayStation 2, the demonstration we saw had it up and running on the Xbox. The first level finds Turok in a jungle (yet another example of how the game is going back to its roots), and we were instantly impressed by the level of detail and ambient life in this environment.

Plant life lined the walls. Pterodactyls circled above. Tranquil dinosaurs drank from a nearby pool of water. Insects swarmed. Palm trees hung in idle thought. It was the Lost Lands like you have never seen them before.

Then the bushes moved. Like a shark weaving underwater, something was lurking in the brush, swaying them in its wake. Perhaps it's the prehistoric version of a rat (the compy), just looking for a bite to eat; or maybe, just maybe, it's a man-eating raptor lying in wait. This time, Turok is lucky and it's a compy. Next time, his luck may run out.

Upon closer inspection of the surroundings, Turok can move in and out of the thick shrubs, and like the dinosaurs or enemies that await, he can hide in them. Surprisingly, all of the onscreen plants move.

And when we say all of them, we mean each and every one – easily numbering into the hundreds of objects, with not a lick of slowdown. Eventually, this plant life will even fold under the heavy footfalls of giant dinosaurs, and give aural clues as to enemy and dinosaur movements.



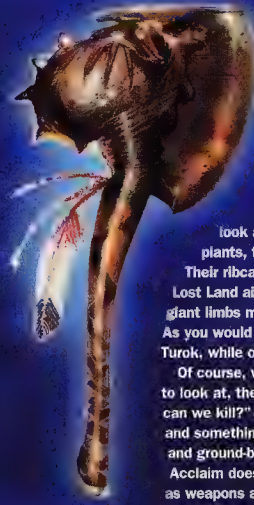
Slide into the foliage to hide from view



The variation in plants and trees is quite outstanding



Just an example of how populated the environments can be



These environmental improvements are not only great eye candy, but important gameplay elements. There will be times when Turok must use these bushes to make his way stealthily through a level. Move too fast and Turok will rustle the ferns, giving away his position. Move like a cat stalking his prey, and you can use the bushes for cover as you snipe enemies from the safety of the foliage.

Venturing out of the underbrush, we get a closer look at the dinosaur populations and, much like the plants, the dinosaurs themselves are in constant motion.

Their ribcages expand and contract as they breathe in the Lost Land air. When they walk, their muscles ripple as their giant limbs move, and dust clouds spring up under their weight. As you would suspect, the mighty Apatosaurus towers over Turok, while other dinosaurs observe the hunter eye-to-eye.

Of course, with all these beautiful animals and gorgeous flora to look at, the first thing that came to our minds was, "What can we kill?" Enter one of the mainstays of the Turok series and something that fans have come to expect — high-powered and ground-breaking weapons. Unfortunately, at this time, Acclaim doesn't want to show too much of its hand as far as weapons are concerned, but we were given a peek at some of them.

There will be eight weapons in total, but that number is a little deceiving, since each one will have a number of

attachments that can be collected, unlocking alternate modes of fire. For example, the pistol can eventually be outfitted with a sniper scope that, when engaged, will make the weapon fold out a barrel and stabilizer (articulated masterfully onscreen), for long-distance wet-work.

Another interesting weapon we saw was a small spider-like robot you could throw, then control from a third-person perspective. This little gadget has different uses. It can be a mobile explosive, or equipped with various voice samples to lure an enemy or various other creatures to different locations. For instance, it might make a Raptor sound to scare off guards, or call for help and draw them into a pack of hungry dinosaurs.

As in previous installments, Turok will also wield a melee weapon, which in this game is a tomahawk/mace hybrid. Interestingly enough, this weapon can also be used to cut through heavy foliage, or just hack through baddies in a deadly efficient manner. We pushed the team to reveal more on the weapons — always one of Turok's trademarks — but they didn't want to spoil it. However, with weapons like the cerebral bore of their past, we expect to see some exciting death tools revealed in the coming months.

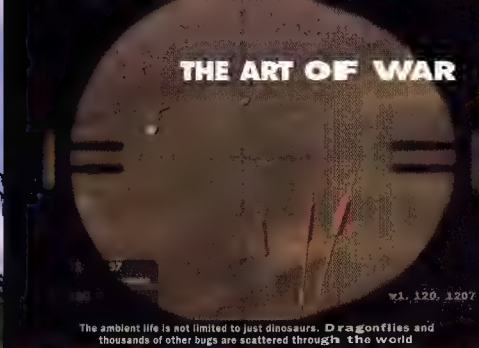
Not all of the levels find Turok in a jungle environment either, as he will visit canyons and cities, and find himself exploring his fair share of indoor architectures. However, the development team is really trying to keep Turok out in the wild, so expect to revisit the jungle more than once.

The architecture in the levels is exquisite.

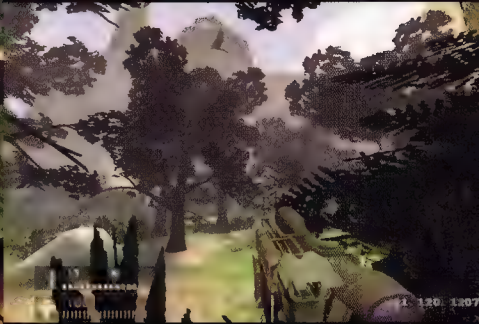




It might be in Turok's best interest to leave this one alone



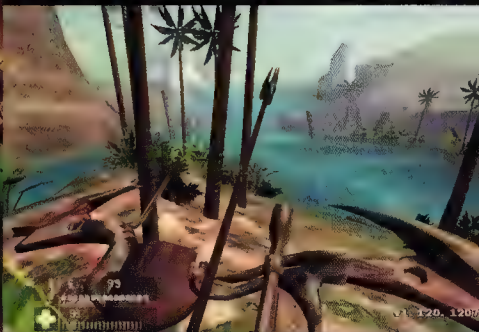
The ambient life is not limited to just dinosaurs. Dragonflies and thousands of other bugs are scattered through the world



If you look closely you can see dinosaurs fly! eg. above

At the time we saw *Turok: Evolution*, much of the sound effects were not implemented. The team did inform us that over 1,000 sound effects and 2,500 lines of script were being prepared for this monster, and that the Dolby and DTS capabilities of each respective system would be pushed to their limits. We had a chance to hear some of the samples that were in the works, and can only tell you that almost anything you can think of in a first-person shooter has been covered. From different sounds for spent shells bouncing off stone or sand, to Turok issuing different grunts depending on where he is hit. Acclaim Studios Austin has it covered.

So what else lies in store? For multiplayer maniacs, there is a producer on staff whose only job is to work on multiplayer aspects of the game. Plus, one of the surprises is that there will be some team aspects built into the game. This information is still on the down-low, but Game Informer has uncovered that *Turok: Evolution* will also feature some areas where you will be fighting alongside various computer controlled characters you meet during your quest. Is this the mysterious Omaha Beach aspect of the game that is part of the development mantra? We'll have to wait and see, but rest assured there are plenty of surprises left in this project. One of those surprises we don't have to wait for, however – the addition of flight levels to the Turok universe.



Like previous Turok adventures you can expect to spend some time underwater



In sniper mode you can see the quality of the textures

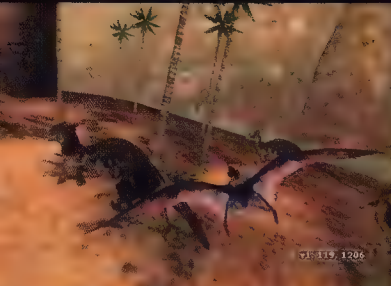
TO THE SKIES

One of the newest aspects of Turok: Evolution is the addition of flight levels where Turok climbs aboard a Quetzalcoatlus, the largest flying dinosaur in history with a wing span of 40 feet. The gameplay is familiar to any who have played Star Fox, as these sections have you cruising down a track, blasting through wave after wave of enemies. Turok: Evolution does break from the mold a little, as these flying stages include multiple paths, and even hubs you can spin around

to get another pass at sections of the level. The weaponry is rather simple, with just a blaster and missiles at your command, but the flight itself is robust – delivering a sensation of riding the wind as Turok dives and glides. In total, there will be four flight stages in the game, and some areas will even offer 360-degree movement. Will this creature be the only thing that Turok rides in this adventure? We think not, but for the time being, this is the only mount we know of.

Break apart the herd by swooping down into them

We never learned in history class that flying lizards could fire missiles from their wings. What is up with that?



Turok's flying steed, the Quetzalcoatlus, is named after the feathered Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. Now that's a mouthful



Here is a rendering of one of the 360-degree areas



The flight levels will give you a good tour of the Lost Land



TECHNOLOGY THAT TRIPLES YOUR PLEASURE

The decision to bring a game with the scope of Turok to multiple systems is not something decided in a moment's notice. In fact, the technology for Turok: Evolution, and any other games that will come out of the Austin studios, has been in the works for over a year and half.

In an effort to bring the game designers closer to the product, Acclaim Studios Austin has created a system where the designers can create playable levels using only raw polygons. While this sounds rather simple, the way the entire system works is actually quite complex and ingenious. As the designer tweaks the gameplay and works on scripts for the adventure that unfolds in his level, the artist is able to create and input the art without impeding his progress. Since both designer and artist work off the same files, development time is better spent actually creating a game that is truly fun.

Since Acclaim Studios Austin is developing for all three systems simultaneously, after the levels and art are complete, the designers will be able to head back in and tweak the code set for each particular system to capitalize on individual strong points. At this time, no one is sure which console will get Turok: Evolution first, but Acclaim Studios Austin is confident that, even if it does come out on one system before another, the others will follow shortly. So be ready to relive Turok this August when it comes to a video game system near you. You won't regret it.

"Makes all dinosaurs in any other game look like a sad sock-puppet show"

A comment made while showing off the dinosaur models in Turok: Evolution
- Neill Glancy, Lead Designer



"A list of insects [in the game] would be never ending"

In reference to all the ambient life that will tickle your senses

- David Levy,
Lead Artist



"Expert to be surprised"

Pertaining to the ability of dinosaurs to attack you from the foliage

- Dave Dienstbeir,
Creative Director



Dinosaurs won't be your only adversary



THE TUROK DEVELOPMENT TEAM





Sound Matters

Video games are, first and foremost, a visual medium. From the very earliest days of this most modern form of entertainment, those of us who write about games for a living have displayed a single-minded obsession with game creators' ability to create new and more spectacular displays of graphical prowess. Perhaps not surprisingly, this blind adherence to the gospel of graphics has caused many to overlook an equally important element of the gaming experience: sound.

Anyone looking for evidence of just how important audio is to one's enjoyment of games need only press the mute button on their television. Robbed of sound, even the most artfully crafted title seems hollow and impotent, incapable of generating the hair-raising excitement that is the hallmark of any truly great game. Imagine *Resident Evil* without its eerie ambient sounds, or the gruesome crackle of the undead feeding on the flesh of the living. Would the *Final Fantasy* series still inspire us if devoid of its emotional, orchestral passages and victorious fanfares?

Although sonic concerns have traditionally taken a backseat to graphics in the minds of developers, recent years have seen a revolution in video game sound that is every bit as dramatic as the well-publicized graphical improvements made possible by the powerful home consoles of today. As games continue to rival film and television in terms of quality and popular acclaim, a new generation of sound designers has begun to emulate the sophistication of the largest movie productions. Not only are they rapidly closing the gap that separates the best of Silicon Valley from the best of Hollywood, they are pioneering a new frontier of interactive audio that the film industry has yet to imagine.

In an attempt to learn just what constitutes state-of-the-art game audio in 2002, we've interviewed several of the leading sound professionals in the business, picking their brains to find out where we've been, and where sound is heading as we move further into the 21st century. We'll take a look at all the elements that make up sound in video games, from original scores, to sound effects, to the rhythm and dance titles that are opening up new possibilities in audio-based gameplay. Listen and learn.

A Closer Look At Video Game Audio

The Early Days

Tellingly, the very first video game ever made – Wally Higinbotham's modest approximation of table tennis created on an oscilloscope at the Brookhaven National Laboratory – was completely silent. Given the tremendous technical hurdles they faced in getting their games to operate correctly, pre-1980s game makers put little emphasis on sound, and most early arcade units and consoles featured minimal audible effects (Pong) or no sound at all (the Magnavox Odyssey). The Atari 2600, the first home system to feature any substantial audio, was very modest in its technical abilities, limiting programmers to a small



Space Invaders' pulsing score perfectly matched its relentless gameplay

palette of machine-language beeps and white noise.

As technology advanced, the arcades and living rooms of America began to resound with a virtual cacophony of digital squiggles and primitive explosions. Sound was fast becoming an integral part of the gaming experience. Early high watermarks in sound design include *Space Invaders* (1978), which featured a pounding, insistent rhythm track that sped up as the pace of gameplay increased. Although not complex by today's standards, *Space Invaders* might be considered the first game to use a degree of interactive audio.

The next year, the advanced-for-its-time Intellivision console became the first game system to utilize audible speech, in the sports hit *Major League Baseball*. During gameplay, a digitized voice would utter simple words like "ball," "strike," and "out," a feature that serves as precursor to the play-by-play commentary that has become a common fact of modern-day sports titles. Later in that same year, the arcade smash *Berzerk* expanded speech synthesis technology with an intricate sound chip that could produce a variety of phrases in a much more realistic voice. Following games would improve on the concepts birthed by *Major League Baseball* and *Berzerk*, culminating in 1983 with the release of *Dragon's Lair* (a laser disc game that featured animation by former Disney artist Don Bluth), which is remembered as the first title to showcase actual recorded dialogue.

Pac-Man didn't offer much in the way of innovative sound design, but its memorable munching noises and infamous death sound are notable if only for the fact that they were the first video game effects to become ingrained in America's collective subconscious. Today, television shows use the familiar *Pac-Man* noises as sonic shorthand for "video games." Even if the fictional character in question is running a PlayStation through its paces, don't be surprised

if the audio is from the arcade unit that first made video games a part of national pop culture.

Save for sentimental value, the early days of video games should not be remembered fondly, at least in terms of sonic quality. However, the increased capabilities of the Nintendo Entertainment System opened up a host of new possibilities for game makers interested in creating memorable game music and audio effects in the mid-1980s. The 8-bit era is often referred to as the golden age of game soundtracks, and there is a healthy online subculture that keeps the flame alive. Many websites post MP3 files of 8-bit music, and there are a growing number of musical groups that specialize in performing full-band arrangements of classic game scores.

Tommy Tallarico, a veteran sound designer who has coordinated the audio of games like *Earthworm Jim* and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, remembers the music of the NES era fondly. "8-bit music is great and – let's face it – it's never coming back. It's come and gone. I listen to something like the *Rastan* soundtrack and I get tears in my eyes. It was great because, back then, you had to concentrate more on the melody as opposed to anything else. If you didn't have a melody, you were screwed."

Not surprisingly, Nintendo, the company that dominated the industry at that time, created much of the most beloved music of that era. Super Mario Bros., with a brilliantly composed score that perfectly mimicked the ebb and flow of gameplay, is probably the best remembered. In fact, it remains so relentlessly catchy today that it was recently sampled by New York rappers Cocoa Brovaz to create the foundation for their 2000 underground classic *Super Brooklyn*. Other notable NES soundtracks include Shigeru Miyamoto's ambitious *Zelda* scores, and *Final Fantasy*, which featured legendary Square composer Nobuo Uematsu, whose works were unprecedented in their cinematic scope.



Square composer Nobuo Uematsu is famous for his *Final Fantasy* scores



Electronic pioneers Tangerine Dream (top left) and Kraftwerk (top right) share a common aesthetic with 8-bit music. Today, hip-hop producers like the Neptunes are hugely influenced by classic game music

Although the limitations of the cartridge format precluded many sonic architects from pushing the envelope as far as they wished, the Super Nintendo and Genesis systems allowed for a fundamental change in the way game music was created.

"Back then, you really had to be a programmer to do video game music – there weren't really musicians doing it. It was programming. I never really liked a lot of the video game music I heard," Tommy Tallarico explains. "They literally had to type notes on a computer keyboard. Obviously, that's why it was very short and repetitive, because they didn't have the technology or the space at the time. I wanted to change the interface so that people who were real musicians could create music. We created devices that let me hook my keyboard up to a sequencer that recorded MIDI data, which would be hooked right into the Genesis or Super Nintendo. I was sitting there playing the boxes, so exactly what I heard was coming out."

Though simple, the best music of the 8- and 16-bit eras were studies in economy and ingenuity, and succeeded in effectively creating an accessible version of the chilly Teutonic minimalism of pioneering electronic music groups like Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream. Even more notable is the fact that video games brought these avant-garde ideas into the living rooms of middle America, well before techno music was anything but an obscure European subculture. Today, hip hop producers Swizz Beats (DMX, Eve) and the Neptunes (Britney Spears, Busta Rhymes) traffic in jumpy, one-finger synth melodies that betray a childhood spent playing Nintendo.



The indie rock group Minibosses has won a large following playing classic 8-bit tunes. Favorites include the themes from *Contra*, *Ghosts 'n Goblins*, and *Rygar*

The Modern Age

As the '90s began to take shape, the cartridge format was replaced by a storage media that opened up new horizons in game audio: the CD-ROM.

"I would say the CD-ROM was a huge leap in that now we were able to store larger songs and have real music playing for the first time," explains Tallarico. "We didn't have to use MIDI and tiny little instruments to make our music, we could actually record real music and the player could hear that."

Liberated from the confines of the cartridge, video games have now begun to explore the full spectrum of music, from bruising rock to the soothing strains of classical music played by real-life orchestras. Michael Giacchino, the acclaimed composer for EA's Medal of Honor series, is now known for his epic orchestral scores. However, early in his career, he was encouraged to pursue his grand visions by no less than Hollywood mogul Steven Spielberg.



Michael Giacchino records his Medal of Honor scores with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra

"The first couple of games I did for them, it was just synth stuff. Then, *Last World* came around. Spielberg was directing the *Last World* at that time, and we were making the game. [He] 's a huge game nut and...he was really attentive to Dreamworks Interactive, because it was just a fun place for him to go when he wasn't working on his huge projects. He would come over, and listen to the mock-ups we had ready. He was listening to the music, and he said, 'We're going to do this with a live orchestra, right?' In his mind, that's what he's been doing all his life, so it made sense. The guys at Dreamworks Interactive were like, 'Yeah...We guess so.' It hadn't really crossed our minds to do so. But when Steven says that's what we're going to do, that's just what happens. So, we put together a budget and recorded it with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. It was the first time we had done that, and it worked out great."

As games become more and more cinematic, there are increasing demands on composers to create music that can match the ambition of the graphics and gameplay. Planning has now become of tremendous importance for those who wish to create a truly compelling soundtrack. Gone are the days when short music loops were tacked on to a completed project in post-production, as modern musicians now become involved in the very earliest stages of the development cycle. "First thing we do is I go and sit down with the game's producers and lead designer. We spend half a day going through every aspect of what the game is going to be and talk about what styles and moods we're going for," explains Giacchino. "We go into unbelievable detail, and really build a huge film score with themes that we weave in and out throughout the whole thing. Hopefully, the music will have its own cohesive storyline that we can lay on top of the action."

Tallarico echoes these sentiments, adamant in his belief that a hands-on approach is necessary if music is ever to

gain equal footing with the visual elements of the game experience. "Look, for me to accomplish the best audio quality I can, I really need to have just as much space as [the] other guys. I still say that today, because some people still don't get it. To me, audio is one-third of the game. You have your programming, your game design, and how your character moves - that's one-third. The other third is your visuals, your graphics and your animations. And the other third is audio. So, in my mind, one-third of the game has to be taken seriously."

While the '90s saw original music rise to new heights, it also saw the birth of the licensed soundtrack, bringing the rock and rap music that populates the Top 40 into the world of video games for the first time. Electronic Arts' Road Rash (1994) for the 3DO system, which featured then-upcoming alternative artists like Soundgarden, Monster Magnet, and Swervedriver, essentially codified a formula that has been used and reused innumerable times. The most successful example of this, both artistically and commercially, can be heard in Activision O2's action sports lineup, in the hip and impeccably done soundtracks for Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX. However, some, like Michael Giacchino, wonder if we are losing a degree of creativity when so many companies are choosing to load down their soundtracks with licensed pop music.

"Certain games and certain films lend themselves perfectly to an Eminem song or Limp Bizkit," comments Tallarico. "It may fit perfectly with that project, and, if it does, then I don't see anything wrong with it. What I have a problem with is when they start selling things with music 'inspired by' a game or a film. When they force it down your



Taking advantage of the 3DO's CD-ROM capabilities, EA's Road Rash pioneered the use of licensed music in video games

the game's content and attitude. Extreme sports titles like Tony Hawk and Mat Hoffman lend themselves well to this approach, as skateboarding and freestyle BMX have always had a vital connection to the underground punk and rap communities. "Most of the riders have music they like and request for the game," explains Brian Bright, producer for the Mat Hoffman series. "If none seem to fit into the overall tonal range I have set for the game, I begin digging through the crates. I'll sit in my studio and play the game, listening to records and MP3s all night and maybe only find one or two songs that work. If the song is really popular, I usually don't even want it. If there is a commercial that uses the song, I don't want it. If it is some sort of trend at the moment, I don't want it. [You have to] avoid cheese, have eclectic diversity and taste."

Sound Bio

Michael Giacchino
Video Game Composer
Dreamworks Studios

Michael Giacchino, raised in Edgewater Park, New Jersey, has taken a circuitous route on his way to becoming one of the most respected and acclaimed composers in video games today. Following high school, a childhood interest in film led Giacchino to enroll in the School of Visual Arts in New York City, where he earned a degree in film production, as his musical talent blossomed, he then became a student at Juillard, pursuing a degree in music composition. A day job in the marketing department of Disney led him to the West Coast, where he eventually completed his music degree at UCLA. In 1997, Giacchino took work at the newly formed Dreamworks Interactive, where he composed the soundtrack for a game based on the blockbuster Steven Spielberg film *Jurassic Park: The Lost World*. Today, he continues to win accolades for his orchestral scores on the Medal of Honor series.

Career Highlights:

- Medal of Honor
- Medal of Honor: Underground
- Call of Duty: War of the Tiger
- Alias (ABC Television series)

Awards:

- Medal of Honor - Best Sound Design, Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences
- Medal of Honor: Underground - Outstanding Achievement in Original Musical Composition
- Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences
- Outstanding Achievement in Sound Design



Beyond the Music

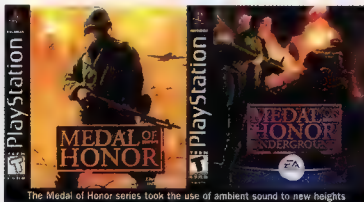
The composers and the popular music artists who populate game soundtracks are the most visible face of sound in video games, but there are a large number of professionals whose important contribution to the art of audio goes largely unnoticed. Call them sound designers or audio engineers, these are the people who perform the nuts and bolts work of gathering effects, creating ambient sounds, and making sure the entire soundscape, including the score, fits properly into the game engine. It's an exciting and often arduous task, but one that can make the difference between a game that is good and a game that is truly great.

At the outset of a project, much of a sound designer's job is determined by the overall direction taken by the programmers. To put it simply, the sound has to be integrated into the game code correctly, or no amount of recording and high-tech audio trickery will be successful. Tallarico, who works with the technical aspects of sound design in addition to composing original music, explains the various approaches different developers take in implementing sound. "Let's take a driving game, for instance. Let's say, Ridge Racer. At the beginning, when they're loading in the level, they load in the entire track. Now, the disc just sits there. So, I'm able to stream in all the music and voices on the fly right off the CD. I could have interactive music if I wanted to, I could have whatever. You might have another game, like one of the Test Drives, where they're streaming the level information and the texture maps constantly. What they do, because they can't fit it all at once, they have to stream it. If they're doing that, how am I going to use that disc for music? Because the music can't just stop while they load in the next quarter mile of track. Technically, there are so many different ways to do things."

Another major facet of a designer's job is the gathering and creation of sound effects and ambient noise. Most often, effects are culled from a number of different sources, including the existing sound libraries created over the years in the film industry, as well as recorded noises created specifically for a certain project. Dreamworks Interactive's Erik Kraber, Audio Director for the Medal of Honor series, has won acclaim for his tremendous attention to detail and revolutionary use of ambient sound. Avoiding

the use of stock effects and Hollywood Foley, the Medal of Honor team prides itself on the use of originally recorded sounds, all of which are done with the purpose of being as sonically and historically accurate as possible.

"The percentage breakdown for Allied Assault was probably 60 to 70 percent recorded stuff and the rest was from sound libraries. All the bullet impacts, all the bullet whizz-bys, all the gunshots, all of that stuff were things that we recorded. We went to one of the biggest prop houses in Hollywood and had them bring every weapon we were going to use in the Medal of Honor games. They had to use live ammunition, because we didn't want them shooting blanks," Kraber elaborates. "We set up several microphone systems, where we had microphones anywhere from a



caption: The Medal of Honor series took the use of ambient sound to new heights. couple of inches away from the weapon to over 400 yards away, to capture each weapon at different distances with different microphone types. We got sounds of bullets skipping off slate to get ricochet sound effects, had bullets



"I was typically disappointed in games that would use short loops, little 'cricket' loops that are three or four seconds long playing constantly in the background. What we really wanted to do was to give the sense of complete depth to the environment."

ERIK KRABER

AUDIO DIRECTOR, MEDAL OF HONOR SERIES

topple end over end as they passed microphones to get the whizz-by effect. Brought a U-Haul truck full of every type of junk and surface type we could find, lined them up, and shot them each with silent, subsonic rounds, so that you couldn't hear the report of the weapon, you just hear the bullet impact on each of the surface types."

Sound designers go to great lengths to capture new and exciting sounds, often at the risk of life and limb. In talking with Kraber, he mentioned a recording session that involved a grenade, an enclosed space, and an unlucky microphone operator running for his life. Sometimes, the quest to find new effects can take bizarre, even humorous turns. Andy Brook, Lead Sound Designer for Acclaim's Turok: Evolution, describes a particularly memorable encounter with a pig.

"I took the opportunity to get some animal sounds that I could manipulate to create the dinosaur noises for Turok. I went to the Austin Zoo, and I was getting some pig squeals, just standing there with the shotgun microphone. I asked the zookeeper, 'Is there any way to make them squeal a bit more?' So, she got in there, climbed in the pigpen and put her boot on the pig's head. It started making the most incredible noises, like it was being sexually abused or something. The sound will probably be pitched down and used as an Ankylosaurus in Turok."

Of course, coordinating the audio for a big-budget title doesn't stop there. As real-time dialogue becomes industry standard, sound leads must work with scriptwriters, cast voice actors, and supervise recording sessions. In addition, ambient sound is becoming more and more sophisticated, as developers try to create sonic environments that are as immersive as the game's graphical landscape. As with every element of sound, the Medal of Honor series has done much to further the use of complex and highly ordered layers of ambient.

"I was typically disappointed in games that would use short loops, little 'cricket' loops that are three or four seconds long playing constantly in the background," Kraber said. "What we really wanted to do was to give the sense of complete depth to the environment. So we decided that not only were we going to do sound for what's in the level – the weapons, and all that – but let's also do sound for what isn't in the level. Let's make the sound of the things that are happening over the hill that you never see but you only hear in the ambiances. Let's put queues in the ambiances that let you know that eventually in that level you're going to be running into dogs. We took a more film-like approach to it and created really long, streaming backgrounds for each of the different levels, and each level was somewhere in the neighborhood of being five minutes long. That makes it a lot harder to detect where there is a loop point happening."

Sound Bio

Tommy Tallarico
Founder
Tommy Tallarico Studios

In classic American fashion, Tommy Tallarico headed west to the promised land of California at the tender age of 21. Finding work at a Guitar Center selling keyboards, Tommy quickly talked his way into a job testing games at Virgin Interactive. Moving into the field of sound design and game music, Tallarico soon became one of the busiest audio professionals in the industry. Since founding Tommy Tallarico Studios in 1994, he has worked on over 175 best-selling games for almost every major developer in the world. In addition to his work as a soundman, Tommy is also the co-founder and host of the syndicated television show Electric Playground. Always in demand, some of Tommy's upcoming projects include Maximo and Metroid Prime.

Career Highlights:

Earthworm Jim 1 & 2
 Aladdin
 Unreal
 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
 Spider-Man
 Tomorrow Never Dies

Awards:

The Terminator (Sega CD) – 1993 Best CD Soundtrack, Video Games Magazine
 Earthworm Jim 2 – Best Music and Sound Effects 1995, Sega Third-Party Award
 Wild 9 – Nominated Finalist 1998, Interactive Academy of Arts and Sciences Award
 Knockout Kings (NG4) – Best Console Sports Product 1999 (won as co-designer)



SOUND MATTERS

Future Sounds of Gaming

Video game sound has come a long way over the years, evolving from a crude smattering of computerized gurgles to a genre that encompasses every element of audio. Whether it's the neoclassical orchestral scores of Medal of Honor, or the sophisticated commentary of EA's various sports titles, the leading lights of the video game industry continue to find ways to surprise and innovate. Now the Xbox, PlayStation 2, and GameCube are offering up sonic capabilities that literally blow the doors off their predecessors. With so much power at their fingertips, we expect to see game sound veer off in a number of surprising new directions over the next few years.

Rhythm games, which use sound as the fundamental building block of gameplay, already enjoy great popularity in Japan, and are one area where developers are free to push their musical visions as far as their imaginations allow them. Generally, games in this genre place little emphasis on graphics, allowing more of the system's power to be focused toward audio. Early rhythm titles, like Dance Dance



Popular in Japan, rhythm games like Konami's Dance Dance Revolution turn audio into an essential part of gameplay.

Revolution, essentially combined the repetition of the ancient Simon electronic toy with the active dynamic of the NES Power Pad peripheral. The player, following a series of onscreen icons, simply danced (or played an instrument) in time with the music. Other titles, like Sony's PaRappa the Rapper and Um Jammer Lammy, supplemented the rudimentary gameplay with a creative music performance element. This year, Sony released its most involved rhythm game to date - Frequency, a title that allows users to create and remix various techno tracks in real-time through carefully timed button presses. This merging of traditional rhythm with the creative freedom of Codemasters' MTV Music Generator

software presents an intriguing set of new possibilities for musically-inclined gamers.

As for the more traditional elements of sound, the experts we talked to seemed to agree that the future lies in interactive audio, a catch-all term that refers to music and effects that change based on the player's action or scripted events. When asked about the future of game music, Michael Giacchino described the challenges inherent to the brave new world of the next-generation consoles.

"It actually makes [my job] a little harder, because now we can start doing more dynamically with the music," Giacchino said. "On Medal of Honor: Frontline, we tried really hard to have the music change as you are playing, triggered by events in the game. So we had to do a lot of transition pieces and a lot of different moods within a level, but all based around the same thematic, so it all feels like it's part of the whole. Now, the music can suddenly switch and become very action-oriented, or become very tense at any moment. It was interesting trying to map all of that out. I had to sit with the producers and designers and see what were the specific transition points for different pieces of music. Basically, from a certain point, the action could go in a number of different ways, and we had to have music for all of those options."

Erik Kraber is continuing in his efforts to make sound effects and dialogue that react to the player and the environment in more meaningful ways. One area in which he sees a lot of room for improvement is the varying of speech patterns based on the proximity of characters. For example, if two characters were far apart in a level, they would need to shout to each other. If they are in close quarters, the same lines should be recited in a more intimate fashion. Despite the changing tides of technology, Kraber insists that the basic challenges of creating quality sound remain the same. "Believe it or not, the biggest challenges haven't changed," comments Kraber. "The challenge is still figuring out how you're going to get your grand vision into such a small space. As much as the new platforms have given audio guys more opportunities to put more stuff in there at higher quality, the amount of power and extra RAM they've been giving to the audio portion of the console has really paled in comparison to what they've been able to do with the graphics engines. Even now, sound is considered the least important aspect of the game."

Talking with Tommy Tallarico, who first entered the industry in the late-1980s, one gets the feeling that the best days of game audio are still ahead of us. "Now, with things like the Xbox coming out, there's really no limit to audio. There's nothing you can't do on the Xbox. 256 channels of sound? 5.1 Surround on the fly? Tell me what I can't do. Over the



Frequency combines traditional rhythm gameplay with expanded music creation elements.

last 10 years, if you had audio working in your game, even if it didn't necessarily sound great, you got the thumbs up. Now, it's getting up to the quality of films and television. In the video game music of the future, acceptable isn't good enough. It has to be great."

Game Music on the Web

<http://www.gamemusic.com>

A retail site that offers hundreds of video game soundtracks, sheet music, and collectibles from both America and Japan.

<http://www.soundtrackcentral.com>

For fans of RPG scores, this is the place to go on the web. Features tons of reviews on the scores of (mostly) Japanese RPGs, as well as links to retail sites where you can buy imported game soundtracks.

<http://www.gamingforce.com/audio>

A fan site that specializes in posting MP3s of game music, most recorded directly from the games themselves. They're currently in the process of updating the site, but once it's up and running, it should be smoking.

<http://www.mhnbosses.com>

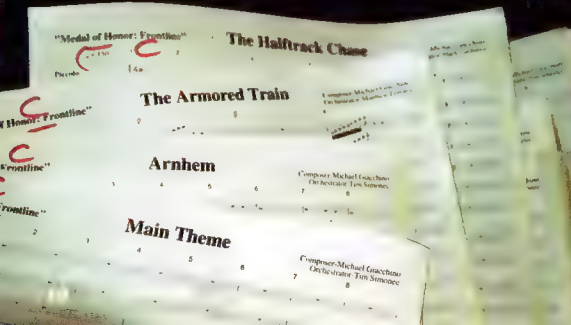
This band has been causing a stir in the gaming community over the last few years with their rocking renditions of classic 8 and 16-bit game music. This site features a ton of band pictures, set lists, and upcoming performances. Also, they've been nice enough to post MP3s of some of their best numbers. The site also includes information on ordering CDs.

http://gamespot.com/gamespot/features/video/vg_music

Gamespot's A Brief History of Game Music by Glen McDonald is a well-written and thorough history of the evolution of sound in video games. It was an invaluable resource in the writing of this article, and is highly recommended reading.

For the interactive score of Medal of Honor: Frontline, Giacchino wrote multiple themes and motifs that can be switched in and out at a moment's notice.

Giacchino and his staff recorded the Medal of Honor: Frontline soundtrack using a Mackie DBB 48-channel mixer and digital hard disc recorder.



PlayStation 2



airblade

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



Mild Violence
Mild Language



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Dreamcast Resurrected

The First Next-Gen System's Affordable Afterlife

Sega announced that 2001 would be the final year of Dreamcast support, causing legions of fans to howl sorrowfully at the moon. One of the most promising gaming machines was euthanized prematurely, leaving behind a sea of potential. In its short two-year history, the Dreamcast featured innovation and ingenuity. It was the first (and only) console with dedicated online support. The memory card (VMU) came equipped with its own LCD screen. Sega had a slew of in-house developers pumping out amazing games like nobody's business. The only problem was, no one was buying.

After a highly successful launch, sales numbers dwindled to a near standstill. Third-party software developers didn't want to put big games on Dreamcast until it sold better, but that wouldn't happen until more big games showed up. It was a double-edged sword. Even those titles that would be killer apps on any other console seemed to be ignored, and only a handful of games actually broke into the TRST top 20 for units sold. Things were no better in Japan – Sega's homeland – where brand-new software went straight to bargain bins.

Perhaps gamers were still jaded over Sega's mistakes with the 32X and Sega Saturn. Maybe they were content with the hundreds of PlayStation titles. It's possible that they were saving their pennies for the future release of PlayStation 2, which despite even a botched launch, dominated Dreamcast once it released. No one factor can be blamed, but they all attributed to the death of the system.

Like a Phoenix rising out of the ashes, Sega gave the remaining stock of units an unbelievable \$50 price point – about the cost of most next-gen games themselves. Add to that great Dreamcast titles being clearanced for about the cost of a music CD, and you have an irresistible offer. Any self-respecting gamer owes it to him or herself to pick up this sleek, sexy piece of hardware. The question then becomes, "What else should I get?" Here, we present to you all the information and guidance you'll need to be the happiest Dreamcast owner on your block, with money in your pocket and a smile on your face.

Then & Now

Here's a chart comparing prices between the Dreamcast now, Dreamcast at launch, and the current console cash cow, Xbox.

	Dreamcast Now	Dreamcast Then	Xbox
Console	\$49.95	\$199.99	\$299.99
Extra Controller	\$14.99	\$29.99	\$39.99
Memory Card	\$12.99	\$24.99	\$34.99
Games	\$4.99 - \$39.99	\$49.99	\$49.99
Jump Pack	\$9.99	\$24.99	n/a
Keyboard	\$9.99	\$24.99	n/a
Fishing Controller	\$14.99	\$39.99	n/a

The Whole Shebang: Dreamcast, extra controller, VMU, Dreamcast keyboard, and every game in the Dreamcast Dozen (NFL 2K1 and NBA 2K1 of their respective franchises, and including both Crazy Taxits) = approx. **\$307**

The Online Advantage

The Dreamcast boasted a 56K modem right out of the box, and is a pioneer in that field today. The system's first chance to strut its Internet stuff was the Sonic Team puzzle title *ChuChu Rocket*. It wasn't until a year after launch and the coming of Visual Concepts' NFL2K1, however, that playing online with your Dreamcast became the thing to do. Gamers relished the chance to test their skills against faceless, but not soulless opponents. Better yet, those with Dreamcast keyboards could start their own pigskin rivalries with smack talk worse than Bill Romanowski's. Naturally, Sega brought other sports titles such as NBA 2K1 into the online arena.

Continued hits and innovations followed in other video game genres, courtesy of titles like *Phantasy Star Online*, *Unreal Tournament*, and *Alien Front Online*. *Phantasy Star Online* brought together console gamers worldwide for quests and interaction between players' unique, customized characters. Meanwhile, *Alien Front Online* shipped with its own microphone to enable voice chat among the members of the squads. Microsoft now considers this feature a key component of the online gaming experience for its own Xbox.

Although it has dropped out of the ISP business, SegaNet still offers online gaming, tournaments, and other community features for a mere \$9.95 a month. The original *Phantasy Star Online* is still available for free, while PS Ver. 2 can be played online for the rate of \$15 for three months of unlimited use (both Phantasy Stars are on servers separate from SegaNet). This online model has opened the doors for other next-gen consoles to follow, but it's more than just a footnote in video gaming history.



ChuChu Rocket = \$8



Power Stone = \$10



Space Channel 5 = \$8

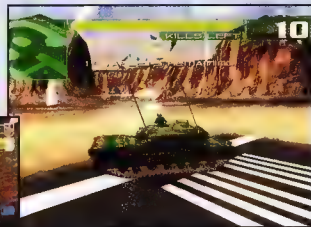


Dreamcast Keyboard = \$10



Visual Memory Unit = \$12.99

Unreal Tournament



Alien Front Online

Final Report Card

13 Wheeler	Jan-01	8.5	F-1 World Grand Prix	Feb-00	7.75	NBA 2K2	Dec-01	9.25	Rush 2046	Oct-00	7	Tech Rimoncer	Aug-00	8.5
4 Wheel Thunder	Jan-00	7.25	F3SS Challenge Passion Ross	Dec-00	7.5	NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC	Dec-99	7.25	Samba De Amigo	Dec-00	6.5	Tea Off	Apr-00	6.25
4M Evolution	Dec-00	7.5	Fighting Force 2	Mar-00	5.25	NCAA College Football 2K2	Dec-01	8	Seaman	Sep-00	7	Tennis 2K2	Jan-02	8.5
AcroWings 2	Oct-99	7	Flag to Flag	Oct-99	4.5	Road to the Rose Bowl	Oct-01	8	Sega Bass Fishing	Sep-99	8	Test Drive G	Feb-00	8
AeroWings 2: Air Strife	Sep-00	7.5	Florian Bros.	Aug-01	8.25	Next Tennis: On-Line Addition	Dec-00	7	Sega Bass Fishing 2	Oct-01	8.5	Test Drive Le Mans	Jan-01	4.75
Arizona Delta	Oct-99	7.75	Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	Dec-00	7	NFL 2K	Oct-99	9.25	Sega GT	Oct-00	9	Test Drive V-Rally	Jan-01	1
Asian Front Online	Sep-01	8	Fur Fighters	Aug-00	7.75	NFL 2K1	Nov-01	9.5	Sega Marine Fishing	Nov-00	8	The Last Blade 2: Heart of the Samurai	Sep-01	8
Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Nov-01	8	Garfield Legends	Apr-00	7.75	NFL 2K2	Nov-01	9	Sega Rally Championship	Jan-00	7.5	TNN Hardcore Heat	Oct-99	3.75
Amnada	Feb-00	6.5	Giga Wing	Mar-00	7.5	NFL Blitz 2000	Oct-99	9	Sega Smash Pack	May-01	9	Tokyo Xtreme Racer	Oct-99	8.75
Alien Front Online	Sep-01	8	Grand Theft Auto 2	Jan-00	7.5	NFL Blitz 2001	Nov-00	5.25	Shadowman	Feb-00	7.75	Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2	Nov-00	6.5
Alien Front Online	Sep-01	8	Grand Theft Auto 2	Jan-00	7.5	NFL Quarterback Club 2000	Feb-00	2.25	Shumash	Tom-00	6	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	Nov-99	8.5
Alto's Adventure	Oct-99	5.25	Gunzies 2	Oct-00	5.5	NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Nov-00	2.5	Silent Scope	Sep-01	7.5	Trojan Spear	Feb-01	7
Blue Stinger	Oct-99	5.25	Gunzies 2	Oct-00	5.5	NFL 2K	Nov-00	8.25	Silver	Sep-00	8	Tom Raider: The Last Revelation	Jan-00	7.75
Bombberman Online	Nov-01	8.5	Gundam Side Story 0079	Jul-00	7.75	NFL 2K1	Sep-02	9	Sins of Arcadia	Jan-01	8.5	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	Jun-00	9
Cartoon Space	Sep-00	7.75	Heavy Metal: Mechanism	Dec-01	3	Nightmare Creatures II	Sep-02	5	Steep	Jan-00	8.5	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Jan-01	9.75
Casual Mission	Nov-01	8.5	Hidden & Dangerous	Oct-00	7	Omikron: The Nomadic Soul	Sep-00	5.5	Steep Zero	Jan-00	6.25	Toy Commander	Nov-99	8.75
Castor	Apr-00	6.75	Houses of the Dead 2	Oct-99	8	Ooga Booga	Oct-01	6	Soldier of Fortune	Aug-01	7.5	Toy Commander	Sep-01	7.75
Champion's Ruler	Mar-01	5	Hydro Thunder	Oct-99	8	Outright	Jan-01	6.25	Sonic Adventure	Aug-01	7.5	Tripping of the Dead	Feb-01	9
Chicken Run	Jan-01	5	Idle Thief	Jan-01	5	PBA Tour Bowling 2001	Jan-01	6.25	Sonic Adventure 2	Aug-01	7.5	Tripping of the Dead	Oct-00	8.5
ChuChu Rocket	Apr-00	8.75	incoming	Mar-00	5.5	PanPan Trilocation	Oct-99	4	Sonic Shuffle	Jan-01	7	Unreal Tournament	Apr-01	8.5
Confidential Mission	Jan-01	5.5	Jeremy McGrath's Supercross 2000	Nov-00	3.75	Phantasy Star Online	Mar-01	9	Soul Collector	Oct-99	8.75	Unreal Tournament	Apr-01	8.5
Crash Day	Feb-00	8.75	Jai-Ging Radio	Dec-00	6.25	Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2	Nov-01	8.75	Star Fighter	Jan-00	5.5	Vanshesh Point	Mar-01	7.5
Crazy Taxi	Jul-01	8.75	Julio's Bizzare Adventure	Mar-00	3	Pisces Wizard: Nightmares of Blissem	May-00	7.25	Space Channel 5	May-00	7.75	Vigilante 8 2nd Offense	Mar-00	8
DC	Oct-00	4.75	Kao the Kangaroo	Apr-01	7	Pod Speedway	Jan-01	3.5	Spowin: In the Demon's Hand	Nov-00	6.5	Virus Antenna 2000	Oct-00	7
Dia Mira Freestyle BMX	Feb-01	8	King of Fighters Dream Match 1999	Oct-99	8	Power Stone 2	Aug-00	8.5	Speed Devils Online	Jan-01	7.5	Virus Fighter 3D	Nov-99	7.75
Daytona USA	Apr-00	7	KISS Psycho Circus	Feb-01	4.5	Project Justice	Feb-01	7	Spider-Man	Jan-01	8	Virus Striker 2	Mar-00	5.25
Dead or Alive 2	Apr-00	8	The Nightmare 2	Jan-00	7	Psycho Force 2012	Jan-00	7	Sports Jam	Jan-01	7.75	Virus Tennis	Aug-00	9.25
Death Crimson CX	Dec-01	4	Legends of Kean Soul: Rouser	Jan-01	7	Quake II Arena	Jan-01	9.25	Star Wars Episode I: Racer	Jan-00	6.75	Virus X: Oratorio Tangram	Aug-00	7.25
Deep Fighter	Jan-00	6.75	Looney Tunes Space Race	Feb-01	7	Railroad Tycoon II	Nov-00	5	Star Wars Demolition	Jan-01	7	Wacky Races	Sep-00	6
Demolition Racer: No Exit	Nov-00	8	Malien X	Jan-00	7.75	Rayman 2: The Great Escape	Apr-00	8	Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles	Jan-01	8	Will Drive World Quest	Oct-00	7.25
Dino Crisis	Jan-01	6.5	Mars Wars	May-01	7	Rayman 2: The Great Escape	Apr-00	8	Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles	Jan-01	8	Will Drive World Quest	Oct-00	7.25
Dinosaur: Call of the Wyrn	Jan-00	7.75	Marvel Vs. Capcom	Aug-00	7.5	Razor Freestyle Scooter	Oct-01	7.5	Star Wars: Episode I: Racer	Jan-00	6.75	Wizard: Floating Tux	Mar-00	5
Dynasty Cop	Nov-99	7	Marvel Vs. Capcom 2	Aug-00	8	Pie Valt	Feb-00	5	Star Wars Demolition	Jan-01	7	Wretches	Apr-00	5
Eco: The Dolphin	Oct-00	7	Midnight Pro BMX	Dec-01	7	Racey 2: Rumble Banging	Oct-99	7.25	Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike	Nov-00	8.25	Wu-Mu	May-01	8
Eco: The Dolphin	Oct-00	7	Midnight Pro BMX	Dec-01	7	Racey 2: Rumble Banging: Round 2	Oct-01	7.5	Street Fighter III: Double Impact	Jan-00	7.5	World Series Baseball 2K1	Sep-00	5.75
ECW Anarchy Ruz	Mar-01	3	Mitropolis Street Racer	Dec-00	9	Recog of Loddes War	May-01	8.5	Striker Pro	Aug-00	6.75	World Series Baseball 2K2	Oct-01	7
EW: Hardcore Revolution	May-00	7.75	Motocross Grand Prix	Oct-99	7	Ried Dog	Dec-00	7.75	Suiter Magnific Neo	Aug-00	6.5	Worlds World Party	May-01	8
Elemental Crimson Gear	Mar-00	7	Motocross Grand Prix	Oct-99	7.25	Resident Evil 2	Jan-01	7.5	Super Rumble: San Francisco Edition	Jan-00	9	Worlds World Party	Jan-00	8.5
Elemental Crimson Gear	Mar-00	7	Motocross Grand Prix	Oct-99	7.25	Resident Evil 2: Nemesis	Jan-01	8	Super Rumble: Double Impact	Feb-01	5.5	WWF Royal Rumble	Sep-00	6.75
Evolution: Hell in the King	Dec-99	7	Nanmo Museum	Sep-00	7.75	Resident Evil: Code Veronica	Apr-99	3.5	Suzuki Extreme Racing	Dec-99	8	XXIII Sports	Jan-01	7
Evolution 2: Far Off Promise	Jul-00	6	NBA 2K	Jan-02	9	Ripper Riders	Dec-99	7	Sword of the Berserk	Apr-00	8	Zombie Revenge	Feb-00	6.75
Expendable Millennium	Oct-99	4	NBA 2K1	Jan-01	9.5	Roadtothe	Jan-00	3.5	System 2000	Oct-00	3.5			

THE DREAMCAST DOZEN

These 12 entries in the console's library represent the best combo of affordability, availability, and playability.



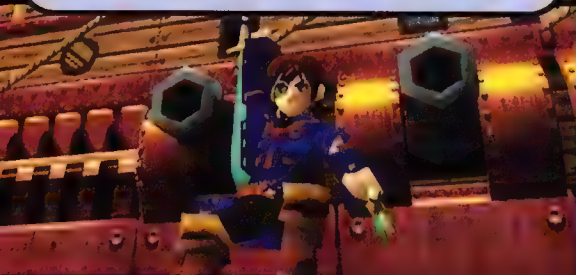
CRAZY TAXI SERIES

Who would've guessed that driving a taxi around would be so fun? This arcade title made a perfect port, and the console-exclusive sequel only served to increase the insanity. You could get Crazy Taxi on PS2 or GameCube for \$50, or pick up the Dreamcast set for \$30. Hmmm...



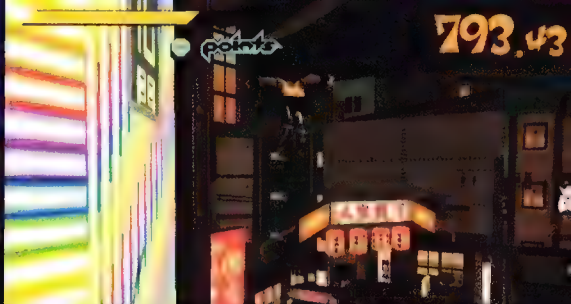
SOUL CALIBUR

One of the greatest fighting games ever created, Namco's Soul Blade sequel took the genre to a new level of detail. Hair and clothing blew in the wind, a Mission Battle mode brought replay to a near-infinite level, and the animation was second to none.



SKIES OF ARCADIA

It's hard to endorse any game with a pirate theme, but Skies of Arcadia takes the loot as a great RPG. Its calling card? It allows you to customize your rig and partake in sweet airborne battles. How good is this game? Both GameCube and PlayStation 2 are now trying to jump on the bandwagon well after its release.



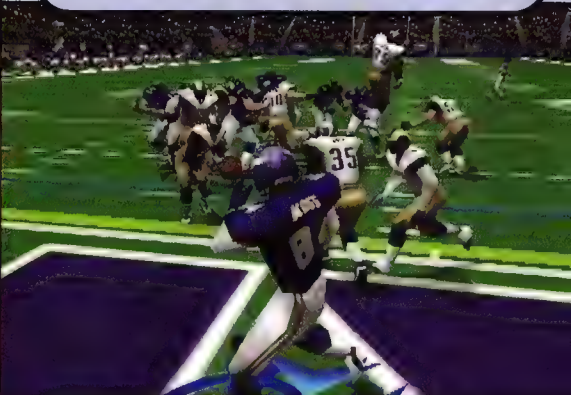
JET GRIND RADIO

Jet Grind Radio isn't just a part of the extreme sports fad, nor is it a novelty by being the first next-gen cel-shaded title. It's just cool. That you can zoom around with your own custom graffiti tag for under ten bucks nowadays is a testament to the game's own street savvy and attitude of rebellious fun.



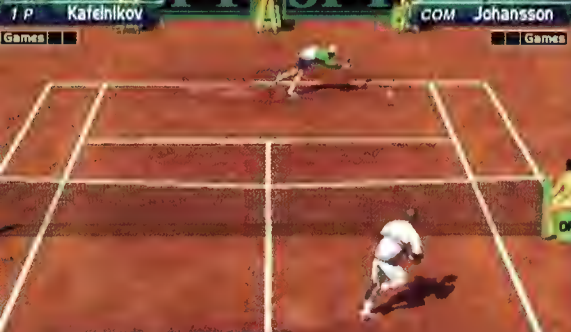
THE TYPING OF THE DEAD

What an original idea -- typing words on a keyboard to defeat gore-spewing zombies. The concept is made even more brilliant with the cheesiest voice-overs and outscenes imaginable. Typing of the Dead is the most fun you can have while learning.



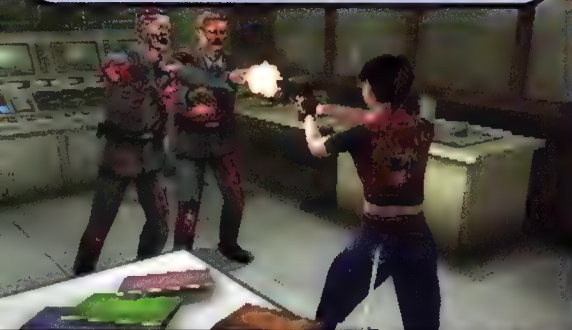
NFL 2K SERIES

NFL 2K was like Sega returning the opening kickoff for a TD. 2K1's online capabilities put it in a class by itself, and with 2K2 it still is. Being able to play football titles this good for this cheap is like getting away with murder. Yes, the NFL 2K series is THAT true to the sport.



VIRTUA TENNIS

Virtua Tennis came out of nowhere and smacked the sports world upside the head with frantic volleying and clay court dives the likes of which EA Sports hadn't even seen. Tack on a host of minigames, and some realistic play mechanics, and you've got a standard that other companies are just now trying to emulate.



RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA

PlayStation 2 fans can brag that their version has extras. You can remind them who their real daddy is AND mention what you did with the surplus cash in your pocket. After all, Capcom's Dreamcast edition looked every bit as good as PS2's. Who wants ten more minutes of Resident Evil's patented bad acting?



NBA 2K SERIES

Using the Dreamcast's technology, as well as some crafty development, Sega and Visual Concepts fashioned the best basketball dynasty in video games. The AI is hard-nosed and the options are heavy. Plus, 2K1 and 2K2 have an unbeatable Franchise mode.



DREAMCAST RESURRECTED

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

The immersive, addictive experience of online role-playing comes to consoles! Explore an alien landscape on your own, or with three other cyber-buds. Select your appearance, class, and weapons preference, and find out what happened to the last space colony.



ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

A surprising release from Crave, UFC captured all of the technique of the Octagon, along with great models and a kick-ass career mode. Its gameplay put most wrestling games to shame, and featured innumerable reversals, counters, and other ways to make men cry.



SEGA GT

Before Gran Turismo 3, Sega GT struck next-gen racing fans with a title that survived the similarities. Although it doesn't have nearly as many licensed cars as Sony's GT series, it allows you to create your own car from scratch. How about them freakin' apples, huh?!

Games Not To Buy At Any Price

- Blue Stinger
- Elemental Gimmick Gear
- Evil Dead: Hail to the King
- Evolution
- KISS Psycho Circus
- PenPen Trilcelon
- Soul Fighter
- South Park Rally
- Sydney 2000
- Who Wants To Beat Up A Millionaire?



AN OLYMPIC STORY THAT TEACHES US THE VALUE OF SPORTSMANSHIP. AND HARDWARE.

The rarest medal in the Olympics wasn't created from gold, but a bolt.

The story begins on a cold, winter afternoon in Innsbruck at the 1964 Olympic two-man bobsled competition. A British team driven by Tony Nash had just completed its first run, which had put them in second place. Then they made a most disheartening discovery. They had broken a bolt on the rear axle of their sled, which would put them out of the competition.

At the bottom of the hill, the great Italian bobsled driver, Eugenio Monti, who was in first place, heard of their plight. Without hesitation, Monti removed the bolt from the rear axle of his own sled and sent it to the top of the hill. The British team affixed it to their sled and then completed their run and won the gold medal. Monti's Italian team took the bronze.

When asked about his act of sportsmanship, Eugenio Monti deflected any praise, saying, "Tony Nash did not win because I gave him a bolt. Tony Nash won because he was the best driver."

The story of Monti's selfless act spread. And because of it he was given the first De Coubertin Medal for sportsmanship. The award, named after the founder of the modern Olympics, is one of the noblest honors that can be bestowed upon an Olympic athlete. In other words, the most precious hardware any Olympian can own. **CELEBRATE HUMANITY.**



POSE 3

JAK'S FACE

Darker on Brow



Design & Development: The Art of Making a Game

Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy

How do you follow up a classic franchise? For most developers, the answer is easy – Just keep making sequels until people stop buying. Over the years, we've seen this happen countless times, in Core's gradually declining Tomb Raider series or Capcom's uninspired string of Mega Man spin-offs. Crash Bandicoot was a phenomenal success on the PlayStation, selling millions of copies, and making Naughty Dog's highly-caffeinated marsupial the de facto mascot of the console that dominated the 1990s. Vivendi Universal, the company that owns the rights to the Crash Bandicoot license, was intent on bringing the series to the greener pastures of the PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube. However, Naughty Dog, whose original vision for the games had been exhausted by more than a half-decade spent refining and modifying the Crash formula into two best-selling sequels and a brief foray into kart racing, were aching to leave their most successful creation behind.

Throwing caution to the wind, Naughty Dog made a bold decision. The firm, esteemed in the industry as one of the best practitioners of the action/platformer, broke with Vivendi Universal, leaving the future of Crash Bandicoot in the hands of his corporate masters. Seeking to alleviate themselves of the headaches of running the financial side of their operation, founders Jason Rubin and Andy Gavin sold the company they had built from scratch to Sony. For their maiden voyage into PS2 waters, they vowed to create a new franchise that would be bigger, better, and more ambitious than anything they had accomplished on the PlayStation. This game would come to be known as Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy, and was recently released to near-universal acclaim from the video game press. For this article, the Naughty Dog staff gave us the opportunity to hear the real story behind the game, from the earliest planning stages to the final code, revealing all the joy and pain that goes into creating a video game. As every game is very much a product of the people that created it, we've decided to let them tell you this tale in their own words.

The Genesis

The Jak and Daxter project actually began back in 1998, when most of the company was working on finishing Crash Team Racing. During this time Andy Gavin and a small team of programming aces began work on the technology tools that would be used to create the game's graphics engine. This was an exciting time for the company, most of whom were anxious to leave Crash Bandicoot as a fond memory. Soon, ideas for new gameplay concepts and character designs were being feverishly tossed around the Naughty Dog offices.



JASON RUBIN (President, Co-Founder): We do what we do because we like it. We were getting bored with the Crash series, and that's why we ended with Crash Team Racing. We didn't want to make another Crash game; we were out of ideas. We didn't want to bring Crash to the next-generation hardware because we would be handcuffed to whatever we had done before and whatever mistakes we had made with the Crash series. We had allens in Crash Team Racing. How were we going to work all of that out?

ANDY GAVIN (Lead Programmer, Co-Founder): I mean time travel, space stations – c'mon!



JASON RUBIN: The whole thing was just getting out of hand. There was nothing new we wanted to do with this. It's like skydivers. They don't just skydive once and say "Woo! That was hard, but I got through it. I'm never going to do it again." You start to want that adrenaline rush, and it's great.

As development began in earnest, more members of the CTR team were moved over to the Jak and Daxter project.



EVAN WELLS (Co-Designer): Development of Jak and Daxter actually started even before we completed Crash Team Racing. While the rest of the team was toiling away on CTR, we had two programmers (Andy Gavin and Stephen White) laying the groundwork for what was to become Jak and Daxter. Of course, at the time it was being called Project Y (the logical progression from Project X, CTR's early developmental code name) and nobody had any idea exactly where it would end up. They spent this first year getting a head start, so that the rest of the team would have an engine and tools to work with when the time came.



GREG OMI (Programmer): Our main engine design principle was to have a high density of polygons, as in the Crash series, but with a free-roaming environment. Our goal was to deliver grand vistas where you could see other areas of the game and move seamlessly between "levels" without any interruption of gameplay.



DIIDER MALENFANT (Programmer): I was hired in September 1999, and helped out a little bit on building up the very first tool pipeline for Project Y. We very quickly got our first level up and running. I moved on to try to figure out how geometry occlusion would be done in the game, which was a very difficult problem considering how much geometry we have.

Once some of their fundamental technology was completed, Naughty Dog began to create a character and a design for the game.

EVAN WELLS: Through several brainstorming sessions we worked out the design goals that would shape the game we were about to spend the next two years developing. The number one goal on that list was to create a fully realized, seamless world that the player could explore without any load times.

GREG OMI: We also wanted to deliver an enhanced animation system so that we could smoothly blend between animations without any popping.

EVAN WELLS: Specifically from a game design standpoint, we were trying to achieve a combination of the kind of platform gaming found in Banjo-Kazooie, the epic adventure feeling found in the Legend of Zelda, and some of the do-or-die excitement from the Crash Bandicoot series.

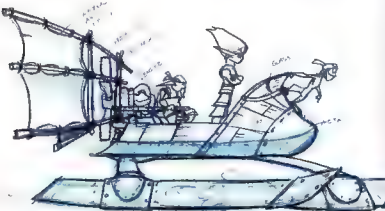
DIDIER MALENFANT: Basically, we wanted to free ourselves from the limitations of the Crash universe and create a whole new, fresh set of characters.

EVAN WELLS: Our earliest designs actually called for a third main character. We were going to have our hero, his sidekick, and a third, cuter pet-like character. He was going to evolve as you played the game, similar to a Tamagotchi. The way you played the game would determine how he would "grow up," and what kind of creature you had at the end of the game. However, this idea didn't work out, and we decided to proceed with two characters fairly early on.



JOSH SCHERR (Animator): Jak and Daxter are much more cartoony than realistic. We drew inspirations from a lot of the classics of animation; Warner Brothers cartoons directed by Chuck Jones and Tex Avery, Disney films such as *Aladdin* and *Tarzan*, and of course Pixar's films.

EVAN WELLS: Jak went through several looks and probably as many names before we reached the final version you see in the game. Initially we thought about exploring chain physics on our hero, so some of the early designs had up to three ponytails. We also didn't settle on the long-eared elfin look for some time either. We went through some very animal looks early on, some even resembling the Thunder Cats! Once our Art Director, Bob Rafael, was narrowing in on the final design, picking Jak's colors

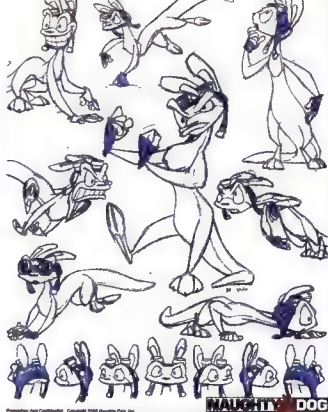


Before any rendering is done, all of the elements of the game are first designed by hand

was one of the last decisions made. There was probably a week or so when we tried almost every hair and jacket color combination possible.

Fueling the Engine

With the characters and development tools well in place, it's now time to bring the vision to life. The Naughty Dog team begins the hard work of



Thousands of poses that were drawn for Jak's sidekick, Daxter. Naughty Dog originally intended to have Daxter as a playable character, and these illustrations clearly show some of the moves they had originally envisioned

tweaking the engine to deliver unprecedented visuals and play. Along the way, the game undergoes many changes in design and technology.

EVAN WELLS: From a game design standpoint, we had a few goals we were shooting for. We wanted our hero to be very athletic with heavy influences from gymnastics and martial arts. We didn't want him to carry a weapon in an attempt to minimize any violence. And we wanted him to appeal to a slightly older audience than we had targeted with Crash Bandicoot.

DIDIER MALENFANT: From a programming point of view, we wanted to push the boundaries of the PlayStation 2, just like the Crash games had been pushing the boundaries of the PS-X. Only this time in a free-roaming game with no load times, so as to make the world continuous.

EVAN WELLS: The design challenges that we encountered in the development were non-stop. The story had to be written to remain flexible to accommodate the ever-evolving design. The script had to be written well in advance of the animation and gameplay implementation. The world had to be designed such that it made complete spatial sense. So, if there was a cave in a mountain, it actually had to fit in the mountain. It also had to be laid out just right to allow the spooling system to hide all of the load times.

DIDIER MALENFANT: This single hurdle - avoiding loading times - affected every single decision that we made in writing the tools and the engine and made everything 10 times more challenging.

EVAN WELLS: Our last major goal was to provide an additional motivation to the platform genre. We wanted to make every task in the game story-driven in some regard. All other decisions we made in the development were shaped by these early design goals.

Wanting the game to have a more engrossing storyline than the Crash Bandicoot titles, the team

implemented a series of real-time cutscenes, all of which operated using the game engine, and featured voice-overs in five languages.

EVAN WELLS: We really wanted to incorporate Disney-quality animated cut scenes to tell the story. On top of that, we wanted to give every instruction and hint in the game through audio instead of text, which led us to creating the sidekick character, Daxter.

JOSH SCHERR: Between the 50 minutes worth of real-time cut scenes, the main character cycles, and all of the creatures and objects in the game, the amount of animation we had to create was nearly comparable to doing a feature film. We were generally putting out about 30 seconds of finished animation per week - by way of comparison; feature film animators will do about four to six seconds per week.

GREG OMI: Any of these tasks alone is a huge project, which any sane programming team would dismiss as overly ambitious. In addition to all of this, we decided to write our own operating system and language to make development "easier." Every single one of our programmers has been a lead programmer on one or more projects. We even have artists and designers that can program, which is a huge asset when working on tools, particles, and gameplay.

Not satisfied with a game engine that merely worked, the J&D programmers instituted numerous and wide ranging changes in the game engine throughout the course of the development cycle. Of course, attempting a project of this scope brings many challenges.

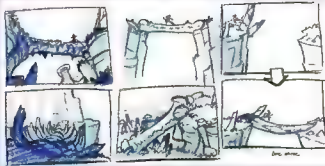
EVAN WELLS: We had several challenges in the course of development from numerous engine re-writes, to last-minute script changes.

ANDY GAVIN: Our game isn't a first generation game. We've written at least two games full of shippable engines: good engines that people would be happy with, and just tossed them. We had a character engine that was running for a year and a half that is probably better than most people's are by quite a bit, and we tossed it completely in favor of our new one, which is even better.

DIDIER MALENFANT: The biggest problem from a programming point of view was the modeling

All of the final character designs are posted on a board for reference





The levels are inspired from a series of storyboards

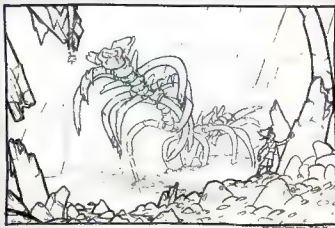
packages that the artists were using. They just couldn't handle the amount of geometry that Jak and Daxter has, and we spent an enormous amount of time writing plug-ins to help the artists finish the game.

JOSH SCHERR: Besides the aforementioned organization issues, we didn't really encounter too many problems on the animation side except those you'd expect for an undertaking of this complexity. For example, since it sometimes took a while to cast the best voices for the characters, we'd get the recordings later than we would've liked, but our animation team got the job done despite the delays.

ANDY GAVIN: I love the animation blending system. Other people do similar types of blending stuff, but I think we have a framework for using it that makes it easy for us to create much more fluid character animations than most people do. It's even made the animators lazy. They used to have to line everything up, and get animations to match, now they'll say, "Oh well, just smooth that over. Slow it down here, stuff like that." [Laughs]

As the game progressed, Naughty Dog was eager to show their new creation. Jak and Daxter's coming out party was to be at E3 2001, where it was prominently featured in the Sony pre-E3 press conference.

EVAN WELLS: Our goal was to make a big debut at the 2001 E3. We wanted to go into the show with the first village completely finished and we just made that goal. Of course, in the grand scheme of a three-year development cycle, E3 is really close to Christmas, and we felt the pressure as soon as the show was over. The next six months were a blur of script re-writes, engine overhauls, focus tests, and level building. A team of 35 people can get a lot done in six months, and that's what we did. The final two months of that crunch were when you could actually finally play the game from start to finish. That was a major accomplishment, and when you start to feel like you've got a game.



Launch and Beyond

After nearly three years of blood, sweat, and tears, Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy was released on December 5, 2001. Game journalists generally embraced the game, and it received positive reviews in most major outlets. It's too early to tell how Jak and Daxter will fare with consumers, but we were informed that sales have been steadily increasing since a slow start. Whatever the charts may say, the Naughty Dog staff is pleased with the end results, and looks forward to a sequel in which they can implement some of the ideas that were left off of their first PlayStation 2 effort.

EVAN WELLS: Once the game has been submitted for approval, the waiting game starts. You play the game over and over yourself; looking for bugs, and hoping you don't find any. Every email you open, you're hoping for a notice of approval, and fearing a



Jak and Daxter features roughly an hour of animated cutscenes

new bug report. Finally, the good news comes. The game is approved. You can go home and sleep. I'm very proud of the game. The fact that we actually achieved our initial goal of creating the fully realized, seamless and load-free world still blows me away.

ANDY GAVIN: I think the fact that there was no loading is extremely impressive. There was quite a lot of work behind that.



Here's a side-by-side comparison showing the early pencil work and how it looks in the finished game

JASON RUBIN: [Laughs] That's the good thing about not being a programmer. You can stand up and shout, "A game in 2001 should not have loading times!" Then, the programmers have to go off and actually do it!

EVAN WELLS: In retrospect, I question our decision to not have Jak speak. Though I believe our intentions were good, in the final implementation it doesn't come off quite the way we originally intended.

GREG OMI: My favorite part of the game is Daxter. I just love his commentary. If there were one thing that I would change in the game, it would be to give Jak some lines. I think Jak and Daxter could get a good banter going; either that or we could have better played off of his silence like Penn and Teller.

JOSH SCHERR: [I would have liked] a more satisfying ending for completing 100 percent of the game, even if it was just something simple like a menu option that allowed you to watch any of the cut scenes from the menu. There just wasn't time.

JASON RUBIN: There are some gameplay elements that got left out. There was an idea to combine yet another genre into this action/adventure, and maybe we'll get it into the next one.

ANDY GAVIN: You can only do so many things in one game, and we've put a lot of them in this one.

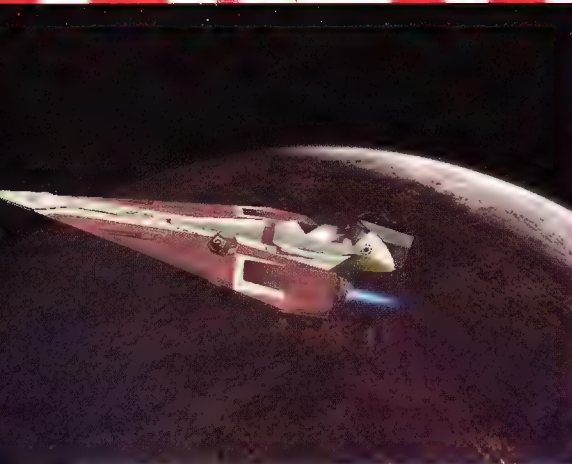
JASON RUBIN: There's a lot of stuff we could do to improve it. If we could yank out 20 percent of the draw time, without changing the look, and use that 20 percent to have more environment mapping and some bump mapping, that would be huge. That's certainly possible... We don't have ground fog. I'm sure we could do it, we just don't have it. We don't have mirrors, I'm sure we could do that too. It's just a matter of going through and doing it. We just have to decide what we want to do and do it. There are so many options.

EVAN WELLS: Of course those ideas won't go to waste, necessarily. Hopefully, the game will have enough success to warrant sequels!

ANDY GAVIN: Ultimately, the public has to judge it, but I feel really good about it. Basically everyone - game industry or not - that we've shown the game to has given us really good feedback.

JASON RUBIN: We're going into another Christmas season, things are unsure again, and we're alive. That's the feeling of life. That's not to say I wouldn't want to do a sequel to Jak and Daxter, because there's a lot of things that we want to do. Still, it's nice to do something new. I don't know how Charles Schultz did it. I don't know how he died at 77 years old having done Peanuts for that long. It would kill me. I couldn't do that. There's nothing interesting in that.

PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

LUCASARTS TAPS INTO EPISODE II

This spring, gamers will get a sneak peek at *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones* through LucasArts' highly-anticipated PlayStation 2 sequel, Jedi Starfighter. In 15 story-based missions, which can now be played cooperatively with a friend, players will get a first-hand look at several of the key locations featured in the forthcoming film. Along with roughly 50 different starships and capital-class vessels, a handful of the vehicles are either inspired or directly taken from Episode II. The most notable addition, one that players will have the chance to pilot, is the sleek and highly agile Jedi Starfighter. On the big screen, you'll see Obi-Wan take the helm of this incredible vehicle, but in the game, it will be flown by the Jedi Master Adi Gallia. Other recognizable Jedi Council members, such as Sassaë Tiin, will make appearances as well.

Always a question in the minds of Star Wars fans is what role the Force plays within space combat. Through direct collaboration with LucasFilm's big wigs and creative minds, LucasArts has created a system that will allow players to tap into this mystical power and greatly enhance their performance. Throughout the course of the game, the gameplay dynamics will push players to tap into this art. As of now, LucasArts won't reveal every little detail linked to this interesting gameplay element, but has cited several examples. At any given time, players can summon a Force Shield to propel enemy blasts and protect their ship's hull. If swarms of enemies approach, a quick blast of Force Lightning will directly target enemy power systems. There's also a chance that this energy surge may render an enemy pilot unconscious. For ground missions, the Jedi pilots will be able to call upon a

Force Shockwave that expands from the ship in multiple directions, devastating everything this radial explosion comes in contact with. Much like Max Payne's Bullet Time system, players can call upon a Force Reflex to slow down the world around them. When this happens, the Jedi's ship retains its normal speed, giving players an unfair advantage over the opposition.

Rather than structuring the plot around the events that take place in Episode II, LucasArts is continuing the story from the founding release — primarily following the actions of the blue-skinned alien, Nym. When we first met Nym, his haphazard lifestyle revealed that of Han Solo. However, as time progressed, his character evolved. He showed compassion and assisted in the movement to crush the Trade Federation's sinister plans. In Jedi Starfighter, Nym's evolution continues. Long forgotten are his days of pirating; he's now a rebel leader. Even with a radical new outlook on life, some things never change. Nym still pilots the Havoc, which has now been upgraded with cruise missiles, proximity mines, and cluster bombs.

If the game is played cooperatively, additional characters and craft will be introduced. Along with Reti (the obnoxious Toydarian who pilots the Zoomer), Nym's understudy, Jinkins, takes to the skies in the Freefall, which has been upgraded with laser cannons and drone fighter wingmen.

The texturing directly reflects that of the original release, but LucasArts is doing everything in its power to enhance the engine. If all goes as planned, this Star Wars experience should be just as cutting-edge as the masterful GameCube release, Rogue Leader.



Many enhancements have been made to the graphics engine

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER ■ PUBLISHER LUCASARTS ■ DEVELOPER LUCASARTS ■ RELEASE 1ST QUARTER



Many of the environments are designed after key locales from *Attack of the Clones*



PREVIEWS

In addition to the Jedi pilots, Nym makes a triumphant return



By tapping into the Force, players can propel attacks, such as Force Lightning



While Obi-Wan pilots this vessel in *Attack of the Clones*, it will be controlled by Adi Gallia in the game



The Force Shockwave is powerful enough to completely obliterate a Trade Federation Drop Ship



If the game is played cooperatively, new characters and vessels will appear



PLAYSTATION 2

FREESTYLE

GET UR FREAK ON!

Everything EA Big touches seems to turn to gold. The first title under Electronic Arts' new label was SSX, and it finally put a stop to the snowboard funk that had permeated the sport for years, with a slope full of pretenders and underachievers. Then came NBA Street, and that blockbuster took arcade hoops to a new level, then shattered the backboard. Now, EA Big faces its biggest challenge yet: getting motocross over with the masses.

To Game Informer editors, riding a motorcycle on dirt is akin to test-marketing the Nerf Crotch Bat. Few exceptions exist, and really nothing has come close to touching the NES classic, Excitebike. The droning hum of the engine induces involuntary nerve twitches throughout every inch of our bodies. Perhaps the most fun we've had with these games has been the freestyle portions, where we're able to pull a few tricks off of massive jumps. At least there's only one bike making a horrible racket, as opposed to a race. Still, EA Big has ensured us that Page 44, Freestyle's developer, is going all-out to reverse any stigma attached to this racing genre.

Riders, of course, want to win every race, but style points are almost equally as important. Eighty tricks can be

performed and combined together for even more insanity. We know you can't resist the urge to pull a Saran Wrap or a Superman Seat Grab off the huge inclines, and who can blame you? This trick setup is very similar to NBA Street, where you complete trick points along with the actual buckets you score.

Unlike SSX's eclectic cast of characters, the riders in Freestyle are all real professionals. It appears there are enough crazies who do this stuff for a living that you don't have to make people up. Such cycle stalwarts as Mike Metzger, Greg Albertyn and Brian Deegan are all included, along with many more. Do you know any of those people? Neither do we, but we imagine we'll get acquainted with them pretty fast, as we watch them tackle the eight challenging courses, complete with shortcuts and different paths.

If anyone can pull off a great motocross game, it's EA Big. We look forward to seeing what will become of Freestyle, and how it will change our perception of this under-appreciated sport.



■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ PUBLISHER EA SPORTS BIG ■ DEVELOPER PAGE 44 ■ RELEASE MARCH 26





Heel Click

We hope biting this trick leads to a nutter animation



Cordova

A great way to get a tan



Only you can prevent forest fires, jerk



Saran Wrap

Keeps foods fresh, notches mad points



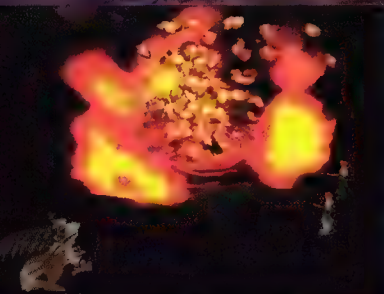
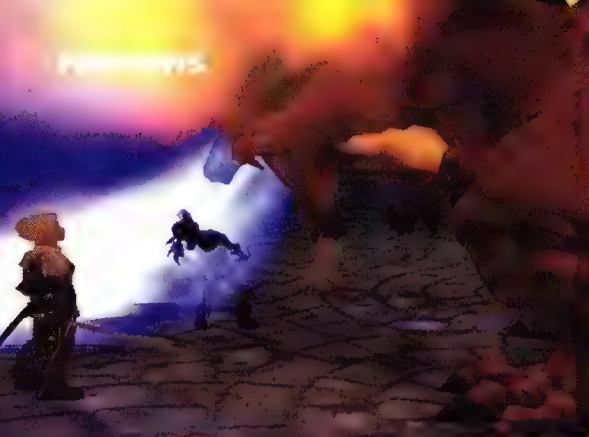
Animation is a cool GO fop



Pray for strong shocks



Heel Click



PLAYSTATION 2

SUIKODEN III

3D DESTINY OF THE STARS

RPGs haven't always depended on cutting-edge graphics, instead relying on their complex, involving stories and battle systems to carry them through. There are exceptions to this, and Final Fantasy X was a noteworthy case for the PS2. Until then, the PlayStation 2 had yet to really establish itself with a roster of grade-A RPGs. This leaves a daunting wake for others in the genre such as Konami's Suikoden III. The series' first step into 3D isn't quite as spectacular looking as FFX, but its refined battle system, epic story arcs, and 108 Stars of Destiny make it a title no RPG fan could resist.

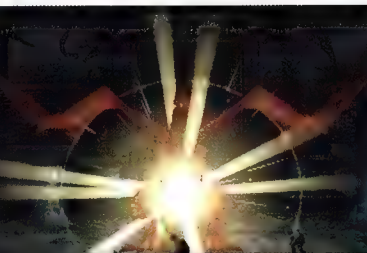
Suikoden's move into 3D takes away somewhat from the realistic characters the series previously had, using instead more deformed and exaggerated models. An early demo we've played showed environments that were a little basic, with action largely moving along predetermined paths. It also sounds like there will be less freedom than before, but then again, the series hasn't given you the opportunity to play through three separate main characters before. Suikoden III takes place 15 years before the second installment, and this larger time elapse makes for a story that is more separated than the others have been. It starts off with Hugo, son of Karaya Clan chief Lucia, on his way to deliver a letter of truce to Xexen. The events that unfold will lead him to a meeting with Lilly Pendragon from Tinto — who has grown up from Suikoden II's Unification War. Such intersections are what the title's Trinity Sight System is all

about. At the beginning of a chapter you'll choose who you want to control: Hugo, Chris (captain of the Xexen Confederacy Knights), or Gedo (unit commander of the Harmonian Regional Defense Force). You'll then play through until the characters' fates meet up and then diverge.

The game's battle system is also different from previous titles. In order to move away from the standard jump forward, attack enemy, jump back format of most turn-based RPGs, Suikoden III has the Free Position Battle System (FPBS). Here your characters will remain directly in front of, or away from, a foe (depending on the attacks you execute). Thus, you must take note of the range of your attacks and how this might endanger you to your enemies' strikes. This, in conjunction with a new Buddy System, creates more strategy. In the Buddy System, your usual party of six is broken up into three pairs. You must decide who is in front and who is in back, how you want to coordinate United Attacks, and what your position will mean offensively and defensively for the pair. Furthermore, you can achieve Ride-on status, where two characters can combine their HPs during a battle.

Suikoden III won't come out until well into 2002, so there is plenty of time to work on some issues, such as the camerawork during combat. The series' move onto the PS2 has created challenges, but also opened the door for some exciting changes to the grand tale that is still uniquely Suikoden.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** FALL



Character placement is important in Suikoden III's turn-based combat

"Finally! You big red bastard!"

Japanese RPGs 101: Mysterious women are essential to any good plot, especially when their name is a series of question marks

GAMECUBE

RESIDENT EVIL

REDEFINING HORROR

As consumers decide which console they'll invest their hard-earned income into, the video game titans are battling for territorial dominance and securing as many third-party allies as they can. Microsoft fired the first shot, delivering a startling blow to Sony and Nintendo by signing on Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee and Dead or Alive 3 as Xbox exclusives. This attack came as a surprise, but it really didn't do much damage. Both of these franchises are well recognized, but neither will truly help Microsoft sell Xbox units. In retaliation, Nintendo launched a full-on assault against Microsoft and Sony, crushing the classification that the GameCube is strictly for kids, Nintendo and Capcom reached an agreement to make Resident Evil a GameCube-only franchise. This deal includes the highly anticipated Resident Evil 4; the prequel, Resident Evil: Zero; a remake of the original Resident Evil; and ports of Resident Evil 2, 3, and Code: Veronica.

Backtracking to where the series started, the first game out of Capcom is the remake of the founding release. To ensure that the title doesn't feel dated in any way, Capcom is starting from scratch. Even though the game closely mimics the classic survival horror formula, drastic improvements have been implemented into every inch of the quest. Instead of using live actors for the cutscenes, the entire story will be presented through rendered sequences. The overall story arc will begin and end in the same manner, but players will run into a handful of different plot twists along the way. The game once again offers two separate quests for Chris and Jill. The detail that went into both of these characters is incredible. If you look closely, you can see Chris' pants wrinkle as he cautiously

sidesteps down a hallway. All the more exciting, Jill has a newfound "bounce" in her movements. Rather than running away from enemies when a firearm's ammo is depleted, or trying to stab an enemy with a knife, both characters can now perform a number of hand-to-hand combat tactics. Chris puts a lot of muscle behind his punches, while Jill relies on her swiftness and acrobatic abilities to inflict massive amounts of damage through kicks.

Rather than rely specifically on gore, Capcom is using the environments to set the mood for any given sequence. Through impressive lighting techniques, like lightning blasts within a dimly lit room, or shadows that expand across the floor as a light bulb flickers, each environment truly has a life of its own and no longer appears to be static. Ensuring that the quest feels completely foreign to gamers, Capcom has also reworked all of the puzzles and item placements. The locations of enemies is also completely different. In the past, one zombie may have occupied a room. In the GameCube remake, four hunters may populate it.

To counter the implementation of kung fu tactics, the enemies also embody different attacks. As pesky as ever, the dogs can now bite specific limbs. They can also knock you to the ground and gnaw at your face. Of course, they're still no match for a quick shotgun blast.

At press time, an announcement regarding the US release had not been made, but Capcom representatives have confirmed that the title will indeed be ported over to the States and it should see the light of day shortly after the March 22 Japanese release.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 22 (JAPAN), 2ND QUARTER (US)



Capcom is enhancing the combat engine to include hand-to-hand melee. Jill can now perform punch combos and a wide variety of kicks.



Brought to life with horrific realism, Chris can still stomp on the heads of zombies gnawing at his boot.



Sparing no expense, the level of detail that went into each environment sets a new standard for survival horror games.



The entire quest has been rewritten to include new plot twists, item placements, puzzles, and monster encounters.



Each enemy type interacts differently with the characters. In this scene, a dog latches onto Chris' arm and tears away a piece of flesh.



XBOX

NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2002

SIXTH MAN OF THE YEAR: BILL GATES

Breaking into the game with a new sports franchise may be the most difficult task in the video game industry. Microsoft represented just fine with its first-party NFL title, *Fever*, though it has a ways to go to beat out EA's Madden or Sega's NFL 2K series. The basketball market is equally dominated by these two publishers, and Microsoft wants NBA Inside Drive to sneak in and create a three-game race.

What makes this difficult is the fact that Microsoft is starting from scratch, whereas established franchises can just update existing engines, adding things they missed in years past. What counts most is gameplay, and developer High Voltage has given a good first effort in this category. All the control elements are here, with realistic steals, rejections, and dunks. Rebounding, which is most games' Achilles' heel, even seems above



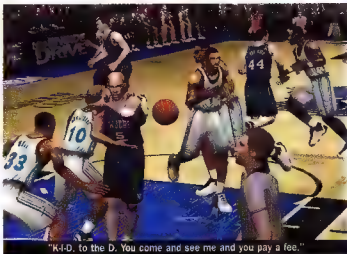
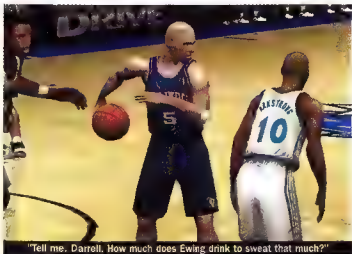
average. Icon passing is here, and play-calling is done with ease.

None can fault the job done on Inside Drive's graphics, either. Possibly the most impressive aspect of the visuals is the way jerseys and shorts have bump-mapped wrinkles on them. Player expressions and faces are also expertly detailed, and telling Tracy McGrady from Grant Hill will be no problem.

A curious amount of attention was paid to accurately recreating all 29 arenas. The Staples Center looks nothing like America West Arena. If you don't know the intricacies of Conseco Fieldhouse, prepare to be amazed. However, this detail was done at the expense of features like Franchise mode and Create-A-Player, both of which are absent from this game. Those omissions aside, we look forward to seeing just how much game NBA Inside Drive 2002 will offer.



■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER HIGH VOLTAGE ■ RELEASE JANUARY 29





PLAYSTATION 2/PC

FINAL FANTASY XI

A NEW REALITY

Moving away from the plug-and-play formula, Final Fantasy XI will be the first online-only console RPG. While many claim that Phantasy Star Online came first, it was actually a multifunctional release that included a single-player game, as well as the highly-touted online experience. Rather than compete with Sega, Square Soft is heading in a different direction, targeting the heavyweight PC title, EverQuest. Square's goal is to deliver a living, persistent world where players can interact and quest together. No details have been given as to how many players can occupy the world, but we've witnessed video clips with roughly 20 human-controlled characters scurrying about a town. Much like EverQuest's guild system, up to 18 players can unite to form an alliance. If Square Soft plays its cards right, specific bosses won't be defeatable unless attacked by a well-trained and high-powered alliance.

The game is currently being developed for the PlayStation 2 and PC, and both versions will be compatible with one another. Final Fantasy XI will also be a bilingual release, offering text in English and Japanese. As of now, the Japanese release date has been moved back. Beta testing is well underway and Square won't release the game until all the bugs are worked out. In the future, patches and files can

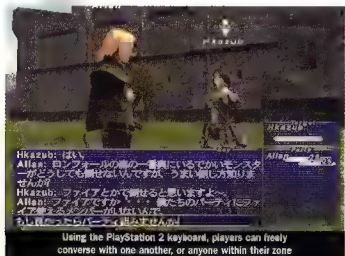
be downloaded to a hard drive. All the player data is saved on Square Soft's Play Online servers, and every precaution has been taken to prevent hackers from cheating.

Those fortunate enough to be on the beta testing team have taken an oath not to divulge any details, but a few threads of information have leaked out. Apparently, the game makes good use of Final Fantasy Tactics' class/job system, allowing players to study and excel in a wide variety of arts. When players boot up the game, they'll have the freedom to completely customize their character's appearance. Thus far, three races are playable. Along with humans, you'll don the pointy ears of elves, or shrink down to the midget-size of the taru taru. The game takes place in the land of Vana Dir, which is separated into three kingdoms (Bastuaque, Windus, and Sandoria), each representing a specific race. To easily navigate this expansive world, mountable chocobos can be purchased.

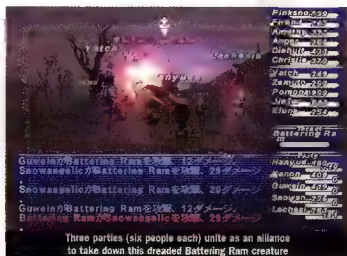
Along with the flat rate for the game, players will be charged a monthly Play Online fee. The Japanese launch has been delayed, but it should occur sometime this spring. As for the US date, Square Soft is still throwing around possibilities. The talk is that it could be as late as 2003.

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SQUARE SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** SQUARE SOFT

■ **RELEASE** TBA



Using the PlayStation 2 keyboard, players can freely converse with one another, or anyone within their zone



Three parties (six people each) unite as an alliance to take down this dreaded Blattering Ram creature



The playable races consist of the adorable little taru taru...



...the vulcan-like elves...



...and the scraggly faced humans



XBOX

NEW LEGENDS

A LEGEND IN THE MAKING

Some games take place back in the day in Asia. Others have futuristic, machine-driven settings. *New Legends*, true to its name, combines both motifs into a unique world all its own. Sun Soo is an heir to the Soo Dynasty, one of the most popular territories in China.

Throughout this game, though, he is treated like anything but royalty. First, his father is slaughtered. Then, he becomes imprisoned as a common criminal, submitting himself to daily torture and forced soapingdroppings. Despite all this adversity, Sun Soo doesn't lose focus of his goal: defeat the wicked Yao Gon and restore freedom to China.

To accomplish his mission, Soo needs to use many weapons. The interface allows him to wield two implements at once, and combine them into devastating attacks. Melee weapons include claws, swords, and clubs. Long-range firearms and bows can also be put to good use dispatching the many foes, who themselves have some dazzling moves, and will assure your block button sees frequent use.

Because of the amalgamation of time periods, not only will samurai ghosts be on your trail, but unmanned flying craft also set their sites on you. Fortunately, Soo is not without allies. First and foremost is a misanthropic, blue half-Demon named Boo. Other simple troops and friends will fight the

good fight alongside you, resulting in large-scale battles. They are even adequate guides, and you can follow them in a pinch. In the same vein, an invaluable onscreen compass aids your navigation, preventing you from getting too lost. With so many methods of finding your way, exploration of the large environments is encouraged.

New Legends' mission-based gameplay takes you on many adventures, and your path is constantly changing. One minute Soo finds himself using a massive cannon to open up a path to a bridge; the next, he's running for his life as an avalanche engulfs everything in its path. The graphics, with simple textures and a minimum of ambient objects, probably won't be dropping any jaws. However, the camera system is extremely intuitive, and lets you keep your eyes on the most important thing: the action at hand. Audio compensates for the graphical limitations by bathing you in voice-overs and stunning sound effects.

The Xbox needs more original, innovative titles, and *New Legends'* arrival isn't a moment too soon. While not displaying the power of Xbox, it is promising in almost all other aspects, and could be the start of something big for THQ.



Nice Dockers



Technology sucks, sayeth the samurai

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** INFINITE MACHINE ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 21



Some weapons require two hands



The blue dork is Boo. The gay Sun slashed looks a bit like Cyclops



Ride the lightning



XBOX / PLAYSTATION 2 / GAMECUBE / PC

BLOODRAYNE

RED SKIES AT NIGHT, BLOODY DELIGHT

Majesco's got a third-person action horror-fest with a female fists o' fury named Agent BloodRayne. The publisher hopes this premise will get your red juices going pretty good – not only because the game's got a stew of gameplay features to pitch, but because the half-human, half-vampress Ms. BloodRayne gets off on drinking blood. Sounds like she should hook up with Blade for a night on the town, but that's another tale for another time. Equally compelling is the fact that developer Terminal Reality is drawing on experience and new technology to spice up the game's own mix of familiar and exciting features.

Dipping into the same time period as Terminal Reality's Nocturne (although the two titles are unrelated), BloodRayne takes place in the 1930s before WWII. The Nazis have already taken up residence in South America in order to investigate an ancient power. To unleash this fabled force, three artifacts must be found and joined together. The Nazis are soon in over their heads and dealing with an entity more evil than they are, so it's up to Agent BloodRayne to save the entire world from being engulfed by the power those morons have unleashed (feel free to let those Nazi stooges die a horrible death, however). This may sound like Indiana Jones meets Resident Evil meets



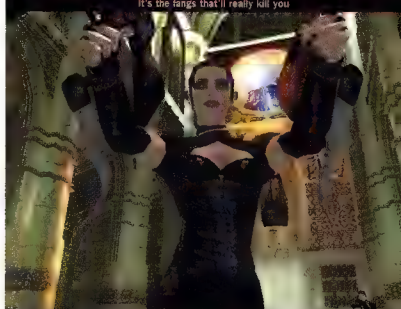
BloodRayne challenges these spider-bat creatures to see who sucks better.

the next Lara Croft, but there's more to it than that. Terminal Reality is using a new engine for the game dubbed the Infernal Engine, which will allow for everything from the slo-mo effects we've come to love from *The Matrix* and *Max Payne*, to a camera which allows you to follow the course of your bullets and knives. The best thing is that all the carnage you can cause only spurs your agent on even further. Drink enough blood and you'll go into a Bloodrage, drink even more and you'll induce a Blooddrage, where you can unleash a violent frenzy upon your foes. Also in tune with her half-vampress heritage is our heroine's supernatural abilities such as increased vision, speed, and agility.

BloodRayne is still early in its development, so there is plenty of time to distinguish itself from the surface comparisons. Terminal Reality is already at work on melding all of Rayne's physical gifts into a smooth, yet unrelenting concoction of combat that isn't at odds with the game's story. Above all else, this could be the key factor that would raise the game above the others and give us a complete gaming experience.



It's the fangs that'll really kill you



Check out BloodRayne's wicked forearm knives



Boba Fett? Boba Fett? Where?!

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER MAJESCO ■ DEVELOPER TERMINAL REALITY ■ RELEASE FALL



In addition to keeping the pod on the track, you'll need to keep an eye on the engine and temperature meters.



Dust rises as the pods zoom across the terrain.



Anakin and Sebulba jockey for position at Tatooine's Boonta Eve Classic.

PLAYSTATION 2

STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE

RACING UNDER THE RAINBOW

The development of *Racer Revenge* is spearheaded by Game Informer's 2001 Developer of the Year, Rainbow Studios. When it comes to vehicular physics, nobody even comes close to matching the attention to detail and realism that Rainbow incorporates into every one of its games. In *ATV Off-Road Fury*, Rainbow nailed the sensation of driving a quad bike. In the pursuit of authenticity, Rainbow even went so far as to successfully re-create how weight distribution works for not only the bike, but the rider as well. With *Rainbow's* most recent release, *Splashdown*, the company completely reinvented water bike racing. The water physics in Nintendo's *Wave Race* seemed as true to life as could be, but after playing *Splashdown* and seeing the nuances that go into each wave, your reality is forever changed.

Rainbow is now faced with its most difficult challenge yet: harnessing the true feeling of what it's like to pilot a podracer. Since these machines are completely fictional, *Rainbow's* only source of information comes from approximately 10 minutes of movie footage — as seen in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. The complexities of these machines are completely alien and just as farfetched as a talking slug. It's *Rainbow's* job to make the experience seem real. LucasArts did a commendable job of capturing the sheer speed of these racing vehicles, but it really didn't tackle any of the physics involved. With *Rainbow's* track record, LucasArts enlisted the help of this developer to try and amalgamate both of these aspects into one game.



From what we've seen thus far, *Rainbow* has once again performed a miracle. Each engine appears to have a life of its own; pulling free and shooting off into a different direction, violently shaking when the gas is heavily applied, and properly adjusting to terrain differentials. Looking elsewhere for naturalness, the terrain is also affected by the engines, sending clouds of dust swirling into the air.

Racer's high-speed gameplay has been transitioned nicely onto the PlayStation 2 controller, allowing players to bank tightly, spin the pod, and repair the engines when needed. The bothersome turbo system has also been reworked so players can easily activate a boost. With the increase in graphical capabilities come a number of enhancements, primarily within the architecture of the pods and detail within the environments. Of course, Tatooine makes a return, but the rest of the tracks (and worlds) are completely new. You'll now race across Mon Calamari, Gamorr, Sullust, and Rylot. Within the eight years that have passed since the story in the first game, Anakin has aged, and his adversary, Sebulba, is once again intent on seeking revenge. Both of these characters will pilot new pods, although the designs do bear a striking resemblance to their older models. In total, *Racer Revenge* offers 18 race circuits and 16 podracers. All the pods can be upgraded with different gizmos by purchasing parts from the legendary Watto.

Racer Revenge will release for the PlayStation 2 on January 21. According to inside sources, we hear that a GameCUBE version may be in the works as well.

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ PUBLISHER LUCASARTS ■ DEVELOPER RAINBOW STUDIOS ■ RELEASE JANUARY 21



When a pod takes on damage, the engines will shake, flame up, and then eventually explode.



Players will be rewarded for racing dirty.



PLAYSTATION 2

STATE OF EMERGENCY

SOMEONE'S GOT AN UZI IN THE MOSH PIT

In the few months that have passed since we last checked in on the progress of *State of Emergency*, America's political and cultural landscape has changed dramatically. Following September 11, many wondered if Rockstar would pull the plug on this sure-to-be controversial title, given that its themes of urban chaos and civil unrest have now been eclipsed by real-world events more shocking than anything that dwells in the imagination of a game designer. Despite any misgivings, *State of Emergency* is still on its way to completion, and should hit its mid-January release date with no problem.

It's easy to play the moralist, but after playing *State of Emergency*, it becomes apparent that the game is intended as a parody, rather than a reflection of the sometimes frightening realities of modern city life. Nearly every element of the game, from its cartoonish character designs to the wildly over-the-top action, reinforces the player's sense that he or she has left the real world, and the laws that govern civil society, behind for a few hours.

At first glance, *State of Emergency* seems to share a number of characteristics with Rockstar's recent smash Grand Theft Auto III, but closer examination reveals that it actually has more in common with the great brawlers of the 16-bit era—games like the Genesis classic *Streets of Rage*. Talking with *State of Emergency* Producer Jeronimo Barrera, he informed us that the original concept of *State of Emergency* was to create a more strategy-oriented action game ("Pikmin in a riot," to borrow his phrase), where the manipulation of crowds would be key to accomplishing level goals. However, this more complex gameplay dynamic proved unpopular with focus test groups, and developer VIS decided to mold the title into a simpler, but no less technologically impressive, game that harks back to the beloved arcade hit *Smash TV*.

State of Emergency lets the player run roughshod through four unique areas of the fictional Capital City, in an effort to undermine the rule of the multinational Americo corporation. The gameplay mixes the use of hand-to-hand combat with an assortment of weapons ranging from meat cleavers to flamethrowers. Levels are cleared by accomplishing specific goals (like destroying a certain storefront) and racking up points that measure the amount of destruction you're able to dish out.

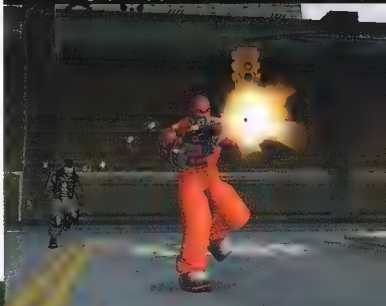
While the mainstream press will no doubt choose to focus on *State of Emergency*'s violent subject matter, what's really noteworthy about this title is VIS's effort toward putting unprecedented numbers of characters onscreen. At some points during gameplay, the levels will be populated with more than 200 Capital City denizens; everyone engaged their own frenzied activities. We guarantee you've never seen anything like it.



With the PlayStation 2, developers finally have the power to create realistic man-boots!



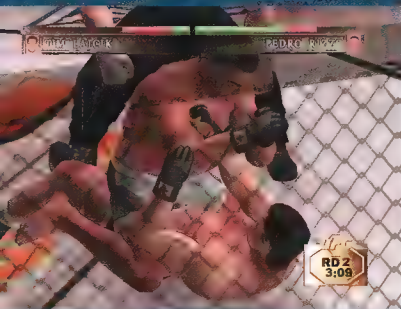
State of Emergency can display over 200 characters onscreen simultaneously



Destroying storefronts equals big points

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES
 ■ DEVELOPER VIS ■ RELEASE JANUARY 16

PREVIEWS



XBOX

UFC: TAPOUT

IT'LL MAKE YOU TAP, TAP, TAPAROO

You need some hairy coconuts to step into the Octagon. Inside, there are no time-outs, no rest holds, and no mercy. The men who engage in such combat are to be feared and respected. Crave's Dreamcast Ultimate Fighting Championship did a good job of conveying these contests, but it's a whiny diaper baby compared to the raw power of Xbox and UFC: Tapout.

The roster features 27 sadists, along with some great hidden characters, including the OG you know and love, No Not Matt, the Original Gamer — it's too Ti. Each model is made up of 12,000 polygons, nearly four times that of Dreamcast. Textures and real-time fighting make them look more realistic than ever, and particular attention has been paid to the blood, which will stain the mat. If you're going to wear a crimson mask, it might as well look good.

All the modes are back, including a fighter creator and the UFC tournament. Added is Arcade mode, where you battle endless challengers and unlock guest brawlers. The gameplay is very similar to the UFC of old, but there are more variations of reversals and counters. An ill-advised kick leaves you wide open, and every limb is subjected to being twisted in ways it shouldn't be. Unfortunately, we didn't get UFC: Tapout in time to review it this issue, but check out next month's GI for the judges' decision.



■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE
 ■ **DEVELOPER** DREAM FACTORY ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 27



PLAYSTATION 2/PC

SALT LAKE 2002

SNOW DAZE

Every kid has the dream of winning Olympic gold, even if it is for that wussy curling event. Many don't even make it onto their high school cross-country ski team, but soon there will be a way anyone and everyone can take an active role in the Olympics! With the impending release of Salt Lake 2002, bringing home a precious medal for your country will be as close as your television screen.

Imagine yourself rocketing down a snowy slope, the wind biting your face, certain doom just one careless move away — no one wants to do that! It's much better to partake in this dangerous pastime from the comfort and safety of that filthy pigsty you call a basement. Not only will you be able to hurtle yourself down a virtual mountain in the men's alpine skiing event, but you'll also be able to climb into a bobsled, slither through a slalom course, get your freak on with some killer freestyle skiing aerials, launch into space with ski jumping, and show Shaun Palmer how it's done with giant slalom snowboarding.

As if that isn't enough, there are 16 different countries to represent, four play modes to explore (Freeform, Olympic, Classic, and Tournament), and enough multiplayer action to drive a deep rift in any friendship with all of the gloating you're going to do. Watching the Olympics is for suckers and figure-skating tutu wearers! Make your own action with Salt Lake 2002 and you won't even have to sit through those ridiculous commercials where some poor shlub practices one sport for years on end, then falls miserably and finds solace in a hot bowl of chunky-style soup. You should have stayed home and played vids, loser!



"Go go gadget copter!"



Bobsledding made easy



"My teeth are very white! Look!"



Skilling may never be the same again

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** ATTENTION TO DETAIL
 ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15



XBOX

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

NO TRACTION? NO PROBLEM

Rally games draw about as much attention in the American video game scene as that car with the funny smell sitting in the hailstorm sale lot. The worst thing about that smell is that it reeks of a Frenchman or some other unwashed guy from the continent with croissant breath. Despite this less than ideal start, Microsoft believes Rallisport Challenge can overcome the barriers and do a powerslide into the hearts of the Stateside Xbox faithful.

Where to start? Well, Rallisport does hang a little air freshener on the rear view mirror in the form of — you guessed it — impressive graphics. Being a rally game, it's not as simple as having nice looking cars. Challenge's sand kicks up and creates trails on slippery turns, while the ice courses gleam from the real-time sun overhead. Also noteworthy is the fact that, unlike some other racing games out there, the weather is random and not fixed according to which track you're on. Surfaces vary from the slippery turns of the Ice Racing circuit to the mountainous regions of the Hill Climb events, and on to the asphalt and dirt mix of Rally Cross. Rallisport features 29 cars in all, including some of the 850+ HP Group B cars that have been banned in real life, due to their ability to produce deadly speeds.

We've taken a few laps with the game, and can say first-hand that the cars take some cool damage, such as cracked windshields and burned-out taillights. Here's where Microsoft really tries to sell Rallisport to the masses; although it handles like a Rally title should, it definitely has a pick-up-and-play quality about it, with the crashes being humorous and over-the-top, rather than debilitating. This appeal may come at the expense of some of the depth exhibited by other hardcore racers out there, but Rallisport will still be a fast and challenging ride.



"Which side captures my true beauty? From the front..."



"...or from the left?"



Into the wild white yonder



Tire tracks are prevalent in all of Rallisport's terrains

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER DICE ■ RELEASE FEBRUARY

PREVIEWS



XBOX

CIRCUS MAXIMUS: CHARIOT WARS

MACHO MEN IN SKIRTS BATTLE FOR HONOR

We suspect the genesis of this game came sometime in the summer of 2000, when Russell Crowe enthralled the world with his exploits in the sword-and-sandals epic *Gladiator*. Since then, skirt-wearing men engaged in deathfights has dropped slightly in popularity (outside of some choice episodes of the *Jersey Springer Show*). Still, Kodiak is intent on bringing *Circus Maximus* to the Xbox, hoping to win a following with gamers as one of the most unique vehicular combat games we've seen in quite some time.

To summarize *Circus Maximus* in one sentence: It's *Road Rash* with chariots. Each team has a driver and a gladiator, each of which is controlled independently. The general direction, and speed of your chariot is guided with the left analog stick, while you hack and slash at your competitors with the right analog and the Y and B buttons. Of course, since your chariot runs on pure horsepower, there is no gas pedal to govern your velocity. Instead, you must try to maintain a target pace by occasionally whipping your horse — a play mechanic that will be familiar to fans of horse racing games like *Gallop Racer*. Advancing through Tournament mode will unlock new drivers, horses, and gladiators, as well as impressive tracks set in real and fictionalized settings like Britannia, Rome, and the Circus Nero.



■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING/ACTION ■ PUBLISHER ENCORE SOFTWARE ■ DEVELOPER KODIAK INTERACTIVE ■ RELEASE FEBRUARY 12

PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2

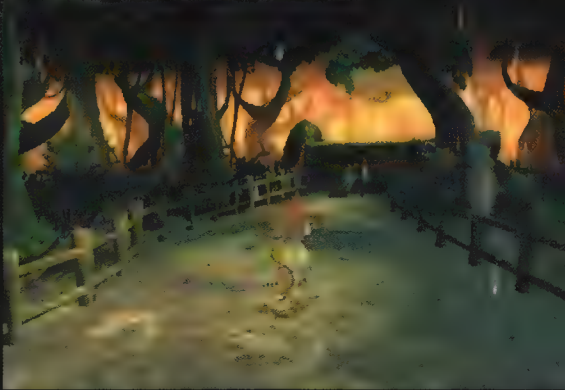
HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN



As a sequel to the innovative and popular Hitman: Codename 47, this offering will once again enter the mind of a mild-mannered, feeble assassin as he tries to escape his violent past and figure out his true identity. Of course, escaping one's violent past by creating a violent present is a bit odd, but wait! Those damned Russians are back at it, trying to take over the world. This time it's a Russian crime boss, but still...can't we all get along? The answer is no. Therefore, you exact go out and shoot many people in the cranium, but there's a catch this time - you soon learn that you yourself are the target of a trained assassin. It seems the hunter has become the hunted.

PLAYSTATION 2

HERDY GERDY



Here's this for an original premise: Young Gerdy's father got into some trouble a while back. It seems he managed to tick off a powerful mago-user and is now under a terrible spell. It's Gerdy's job to herd groups of wild creatures to safety, and ultimately win a herding championship to become Master Herder. By doing this, he will free his father and defeat the evil being who brought terror to his island. Will this game ever come out? Yes, but developers will be developers, you know. We hope to see this title on shelves by spring.

PLAYSTATION 2

EOE: EVE OF EXTINCTION



You are Josh Calloway, an employee of Winston Incorporated, and the subject of extensive biochemical experimentation. You hope to use your increased physical attributes for good, but Winston wants to use these technologies for evil. Featuring 3D brawling action, quick reflexes and attention to detail will serve you well as you lead Josh on the path of goodness.

PLAYSTATION 2

KING'S FIELD: THE ANCIENT CITY



In this one-player extravaganza gamers take on the role of a powerful warrior searching for the ruins of an ancient outpost of a long-forgotten race, in the hopes of defeating a terrible evil that has corrupted the land. In keeping with the King's Field tradition, the familiar first-person RPG format will return with the power of Sony's next-gen console behind it. With over 90 levels to explore, this game is set for the faint of heart.

GAMECUBE

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY

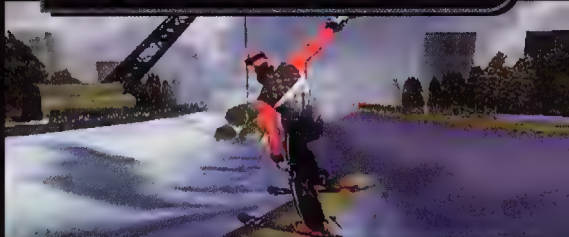


The GameCube version of Bloody Roar will include new characters, stages, and special attacks for the 16 different playable characters. With its five single-player modes and two two-player modes, it's no wonder Activision representatives are heralding this game as "the most spectacular and challenging yet." Look for a spring release for this one.

PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2

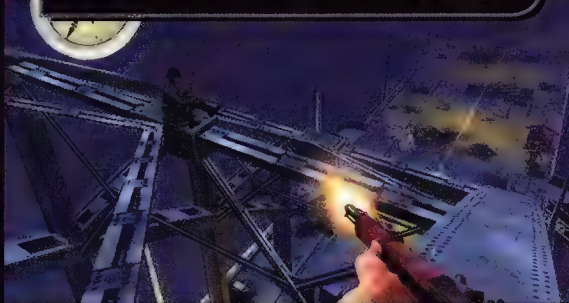
JONNY MOSELEY MAD TRIX



Get your skis shined up, take a look at Jonny Mo', the game is gonna move ya. Take a peek, at the trix, the game is gonna move ya when you're twirlin' 'round your stick! Jonny Mo' is gonna move ya! He's got the trix, they'll get right to ya! Jonny Mo' the game the game the game is gonna mo-ove ya!!!!

PLAYSTATION 2

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE



The same team that brought you Medal of Honor, and Medal of Honor: Underground (EA LA, formerly Dreamworks), has put the proverbial axe to the grindstone again with the third MoH creation - Frontline. This time, however, the PS2 is EA's corner, and the game intends to use every bit of processing power to its fullest. Fans of the series will find a familiar face in Jimmy Patterson, as once again he goes behind enemy lines to keep the world safe from Nazis. This time, players will have a squad of soldiers available that will react to various player-inputted commands. Of course, you'll need all the help you can get if you want to accomplish your mission of bringing down the top-secret HO-X flying wing. Thousands of lives hang in the balance! Good luck, soldier.

PLAYSTATION 2 / GAME BOY ADVANCE

WTA TOUR TENNIS



Nomani lets you take control of your favorite female tennis pro (we know you like being in control), and whack your way to tennis nirvana. With intense four-player action on both platforms, fans of the fuzzy yellow ball will be able to serve and volley to their hearts' content. Is Anna Kournikova available for play? You'll just have to wait and see, you magnificent bastards!

REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you hate. Each game is reviewed by at least two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what the reviewers are like (so you can find the reviewer most like yourself), what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. Read on and soon you will be talking FPS and FMV with the best of them.

THE SCORING SYSTEM



Game Informer's rating system ranges from 0 to 10, and is similar to school grading. 7 is average, 9 and above is exemplary work, 5 and below is a failure. Aside from concept, entertainment, graphics, playability, sound, and replay value (all explained to the right), other factors that influence a game's final score are how much game you get for your money and how all the game's elements come together.

10 - Perfection. One of the best games of all time, if not THE best game of all time. This game has no flaws, and thus this rating is rarely given out.

9 - Worth owning. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game, but even those who don't normally like this type of game may find themselves getting hooked.

8 - Worth playing. Still a great game, but arguably so. It may not be the best ever, but there's enough to keep your fingers wrapped around the controller for some time.

7 - Worth renting. Unless you're a fledgling gamer, you've probably seen everything this game has to offer before. Still, just checking it out won't ruin your weekend.

6 - Limited appeal. There are always a few people that will fall in love with a game of this caliber, but for the most part, those playing it will be yearning for something more.

5 & BELOW - Garbage. From this point down, it's just a matter of how much of a failure the game is. The lower the score, the more you're hating life for playing it.

CONCEPT

What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

GRAPHICS

How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

SOUND

Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

PLAYABILITY

Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the playability.

ENTERTAINMENT

Fiat out, just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.

REPLAY VALUE

The longevity of the title.

- **High** - You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** - Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** - Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** - After finishing it, there's not much reason to give it a second go.
- **Low** - You'll quit playing before you complete the game.



ANDY

Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters
Interests: *The Lord Of The Rings*, *Rival Schools* (The Band, Not The Game), *Twix*, Dr. Pepper
Dislikes: All The Lovey Dovey Crap In The New Star Wars Trailer, How Incredibly Cold My Office Is
Current Favorite Games: Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault, Return To Castle Wolfenstein, EverQuest: Shadows Of Lucin, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3

When Andy's not yelling at a game for "rippin' him off," he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, Unbelievable Jolly Machine. A longtime fan of Metroid, Andy has been reviewing video games professionally since the days of the 8-bit NES. While a big sports fan in real life, Andy isn't the first to line up for sports titles, but is always willing to put in the extra hours to play a good RPG or strategy game.

REINER

Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Sports
Interests: Comic Books, DVD Movies, *The Lord Of The Rings*, *Blade II*
Dislikes: Coworkers Who Listen To Phish, The Tragic State Of Professional Sports, Green Goblin's Power Ranger-Like Big Screen Appearance
Current Favorite Games: Super Smash Bros. Melee, *Drakan: The Ancients' Gates*, *Final Fantasy X*, *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*

Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 544 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his six years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, *Perfect Dark*.



MATT

Handle: The Original Gamer **Expertise:** Racing, Puzzle, Action/Adventure
Interests: Metacritic.com, *The Royal Tenenbaums*, Home Ownership, *The Avalanches*
Dislikes: Coworkers That Talk My Ear Off About William Faulkner Novels, *Stard Deatlines*, The Fact That We Got Suckered Into Putting Azurik On Our Cover
Current Favorite Games: *Grand Theft Auto III*, Halo, *Drakan: The Ancients' Gates*, *SSX Tricky*

While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on how close your desk is to his. Less esoteric than his colleagues, Matt prefers traditional action and platform games.

KRISTIAN

Handle: The Game Dawg **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports
Interests: Flying Cars, Intelligence Tablets, Colonies On Mars, Moon Pies, Robots
Dislikes: Drivers Over 70, Late Fees, Helen Hunt, Parking In Uptown Minneapolis
Current Favorite Games: Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault, Ghost Recon, *Cranium*

Kristian enjoys opening a can of whoop-ass on his buddies at the ping pong table, then running off to the driving range for a lesson in humility and anger management. The original text-driven Zork started Kristian on the gaming road. *Ultima 6*, *NES Baseball*, and *Zelda* made sure he stayed. Still an avid RPG fan, he can always find time to pound out a good sports game.



JUSTIN

Handle: The Digital Deviant **Expertise:** Action/Platform, Fighting, RPGs
Interests: Minimal Snowfall, Terry Pratchett's *Disco World Series*, Utah Jazz, *GWAR*
Dislikes: Dry Skin, Broken Cologne Bottles, Cranky Upstairs Neighbors
Current Favorite Games: *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty*, *Super Smash Bros. Melee*, *Jak And Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*

Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He moonlights as wrestler Justin Lee in the Minnesota independent scene, where he violently bonds with other sweaty males - a practice that just gets blank stares when attempted on other GI reviewers. Though the youngest on staff, Justin's tastes are highly school-age, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.

KATO

Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Action/Platform
Interests: *The Royal Tenenbaums*, Marmite, Nougat In All Of Its Fun Forms, *The Lord Of The Rings*
Dislikes: Creed, Staind, Lump Bizkit, Linkin Park - All Of That Crap, You Name It, And I Probably Hate It
Current Favorite Games: *World Tour Soccer 2002*, *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty*, Madden NFL 2002

When not buying copious amounts of records, Kato can be found exercising good taste, feeding the goats, and trying in vain to update his wardrobe into the 21st century. Like other young men of his generation, he quickly found out that the one true real world application of good grades was the free arcade token that were given out at as reward. With allegiance to none, he takes an every game with an equal eye.



NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

For our newest readers, here is a glossary of terms and abbreviations that formerly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droits you are looking for).

action - A term we use for games like *Zone of the Enders* and *Gauntlet*

adventure - A term we use for games like *Myst* and *Escape From Monkey Island*

AI - Artificial Intelligence. Usually used to refer to how well the computer reacts to a human opponent

board - A term we use for games like *Jeopardy!* and *Mario Party*

CG - Computer-Generated graphics

DC - Sega Dreamcast

E3 - Electronic Entertainment Expo. The world's largest convention for video games

fighting - A term we use for games like *Street Fighter* and *Dead or Alive*

flummox - To confuse

FMV - Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CG outdoor scene

FPS - Frames Per Second. How many animation frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First-Person Shooters like *Doom*, *GoldenEye*, & *Unreal Tournament*

frame rate - The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement

frontend - A game's menus and options

GB - Game Boy

GBA - Game Boy Advance

GBC - Game Boy Color

GC - GameCube

isometric - Three-quarters top down view, like *StarCraft* or *Red Alert 2*

ISP - Internet Service Provider. The company that provides you with access to the Internet

jagged - Graphical lines that are jagged when they should be straight

LAN - Local Area Network. Connecting computers or consoles together within a small space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay

minigame - A small, simple game within a larger one

motion-capture - Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also mo-cap

N64 - Nintendo 64

NES - Nintendo Entertainment System

platform - A term we use for games like *Super Mario* and *Crash Bandicoot*

pop-up - When onscreen objects, usually distant, suddenly appear

PS2 - Sony PlayStation 2

PSX - Sony PlayStation

puzzle - A term we use for games like *Tetris* and *Zhu Zhu Rocket*

racing - A term we use for games like *Gren Turismo* and *Mano Kart*

RPG - Role-Playing Game. A game that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Warrior*

SG - Sega Genesis

shooter - A term we use for games like *Mars Matrix* and *Gradius*

SNES - Super Nintendo Entertainment System

sports - A term we use for games like *Madden NFL*

SS - Sega Saturn


strategy - A term we use for games like *Command & Conquer* and *Fallout Tactics*

third-party - Something made for a console by a company other than the console manufacturer

REVIEWS

GAME OF THE MONTH MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

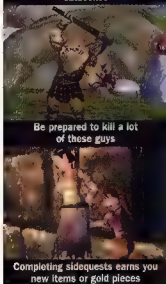
Once in a great while a title comes along that captures the attention of gamers for months, sometimes years, on end. *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* is one of these games, and steps up to the hype surrounding it by blowing you (literally and figuratively) out of the water with its razor sharp gameplay. First-person shooters will never be the same again. Page 96



MEDAL OF HONOR
ALLIED ASSAULT



**"[Drakan]
always gives
you a reason to
continue, if
only to find
new and better
ways of slaying
the game's var-
ious monsters."**



PLAYSTATION 2

DRAKAN: THE ANCIENTS' GATES

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR INNER GEEK

In general, I make it a policy to avoid role-playing games. No doubt, this is mostly due to a combination of my impatience, and my ignorance of the genre. Nearly everything about them, from the hours of boring dialogue with meaningless characters, to the tedious random encounters, to the intricacies of summons and turn-based combat, tends to put me to sleep faster than a Saturday afternoon showing of *The English Patient*. I'm not saying that there aren't a lot of well-made RPGs out there, I just tend to glaze over if I'm playing a game that doesn't allow me to jump around or shoot something every few seconds.

So, why was I so taken with *Drakan: The Ancients' Gates*—a third-person adventure that shares at least as many traits with *Baldur's Gate* as it does with *Tomb Raider*? Well, beside the fact that it's an amazing-looking game that offers up a bloody bushel of hack n' slash action, *Drakan* made me begin to realize why people like role-playing games. Conventional wisdom says it's because of the storytelling, but I don't think that's true. No, the real genius of the role-playing genre is that it appeals to a person's innate urge to accumulate stuff, and lots of it. I guess I'm no different, as *Drakan* had me rejoicing when acquiring a new longbow or a bitchin' set of chainmail armor.

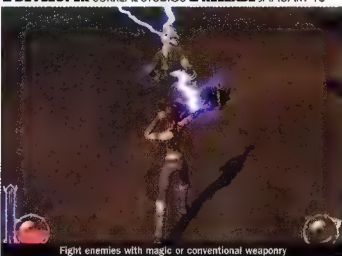
Drakan's basic premise is similar to that of *Tomb Raider* (i.e. a hot babe exploring caves), but *Surreal* manages to improve on the basic formula with a host of upgrades and a great deal of added depth. Basic character control is very

intuitive, avoiding the frustrating platforming that was the bane of *Lara Croft* fanatics. A lock-on targeting system, fluid combos, and a nice block move means that the simplistic combat never becomes dull. Also, the sheer number of different weapons, spells, and items available to your character always gives you a reason to continue, if only to find new and better ways of slaying the game's various monsters.

If this wasn't enough, *Surreal* ups the ante by allowing Rynn to mount her pet dragon, Arok, and take to the skies. Your dragon is used primarily as transportation, but on your journey, you will engage in battles with other dragons, as well as a few airborne boss battles. The flight combat isn't going to make anyone forget the *Panzer Dragoon* series, but it is reasonably well done and serves as a nice change of pace.

The plot isn't terribly original, but kept me motivated to see what would happen next. That said, the real draw of *Drakan* lies in the quest to build up your character's attributes and buy new weapons, spells, and items. This game hasn't received a lot of publicity, and I suspect many will look at the screenshots and write it off as another *Portal Runner*. This would be a mistake. *Drakan: The Ancients' Gates* is a fine feat of programming, one that dares to incorporate a great degree of variety and depth into a finely wrought third-person adventure. — **MATT**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SURREAL STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15



THE BOTTOM LINE



9

■ **Concept:**

A *Tomb Raider* knock-off enhanced with a fantasy setting, RPG character-building elements, and aerial dragon combat

■ **Graphics:**

Fantastic The real-time character models are excellent and the environments are lush with detail

■ **Sound:**

All cutscenes feature voice-overs, and enemies die in agony with appropriately gory sound effects

■ **Playability:**

Thankfully, the developers made sure this video wren controls much better than *Lara*

■ **Entertainment:**

PS2 owners would be wise to check out this engrossing adventure

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Sony's first-party efforts continue to impress, catering to a wide variety of gamers. With its RPG character-building skills and weapon management system, *Drakan* specifically targets *Dungeon & Dragons* fanboys. The level of customization may not offer nearly as much as *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, but the quest is styled creatively, allowing players to compete in sidequests and even ride on the back of a dragon. The combat system is easy to manage and equipped with combos, magic, and an enemy lock-on. Interestingly, you can even snipe baddies with an arrow from the first-person perspective. As a whole, the combat reminded me of the 64-bit *Zeldas*. It's not as finely polished, but it works well. *Drakan* has everything going for it. The detailing in the landscapes is extraordinary, the gameplay is loaded with options, and the story is fairly intriguing.

REINER — 9

SHADOW HEARTS

Journey through a time where evil lurks in the shadows, watching and waiting. Enter a world of heroes and villains. Enter a world of monsters, magic and horror. Prepare to experience an RPG unlike any other. Enter the world of Shadow Hearts.



THE TIME
FOR JUDGMENT
HAS COME

PlayStation 2



REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

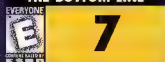
MOTOGP 2

MO! MOTO, MO! MOTO

It was refreshing last year to get out of this comfy and familiar confines of next-gen racing by hopping on Namco's two-wheeled demon. MotoGP is a sub-game which hasn't been explored much by anyone else, and perhaps it is this fact that has made Namco a little too comfortable. The predecessor to MotoGP 2 was a solid game, but without a lot of depth to draw on, its two wheels only took it so far. This may be the year where the series crosses the line of fumes.

MotoGP 2 still offers racers a good challenge because the Simulation mode plays that line between taking a corner perfectly and going airborne. It feels awesome to yank your bike from side to side on an *Scurie*. There are new things here and there to take in, such as being able to race against some motorcycle legends, but I personally wasn't looking for that kind of growth in this sequel. Going through the Challenges is still fun, but the majority of the unlockables are photos of the riders. This may be heaven for some 14-year-old girl in France, but it's not mine. Not everything has to be like EA does it, but throwing us cool extras would be nice. The ironic thing is that Namco has removed the pictures of the riders during the racers—and that's a feature I used to like! I suggest Namco make more changes next time around, before EA decides to take over motorcycle racing as well. —KATO

THE BOTTOM LINE



Concept:

The "2" should have been "too," because this title definitely takes its cues from the first MotoGP.

Graphics:

Slightly better than last year, but it's not a deal-breaker.

Sound:

Crotch rockets mixed with techno—it's the Euro trash anthem.

Playability:

Taking the time to learn the Simulation mode is more rewarding than just winning with it off.

Entertainment:

Without much added depth, this remains too similar to last year's MotoGP.

Replay Value:

Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

Like F1 games, hardcore superbike sims aren't for everyone, possibly not for anyone, and certainly not for me. Realism is great and all, but if I wanted to take turns at 30 mph I'd go drive my Taurus. There's nothing wrong with this game per se, other than a general lack of flash and excitement. If you're going to take this ride, I wish you luck. Set the gas to the right analog, and may God be with you.

MATT - 7

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO
 ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15



PLAYSTATION 2

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2

KICKIN' FREESTYLES FOR MILES

The dog came back, and he's battling some pasta, but gone are the days of the swap-meet frog rasta. Ok, I'm done rhyming. Parappa 2 had me psyched, and nobody was pulling harder for Sony to bring it to our shores. This game doesn't stray far from the original's footsteps, but if you loved the first game or Um Jammer Lammy, Parappa 2 will be music to your ears.

I'm all about the rhythm game genre. It's nice that this sequel lets you freestyle more often, and the scoring seems more logical than before. I think the teachers are the wackiest crew yet, and the story itself is extremely surreal. The 8-bit level is a hoot, as is watching Chop Chop Master Onion get his mack on.

I hate to say I have some beef with my homedog, though. Parappa 2 is far too easy. Also, while song hooks are catchy, the lyrics spit are a lot less addictive than those of Cheap Cheap or Fleaswallow from the first game (much less Missy Elliott). Unlocking new hat colors and song variations after beating the game adds replay, but it isn't as cool as winning new characters or secret stages. Multiplayer is a new twist, but is more a sideways move than a step forward. Like the career of Kool Moe Dee, Parappa's unwillingness to evolve his style may be his downfall. Maybe I'm a little greedy, but as Busta Rhymes said, "Gimme some more." —JUSTIN



■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT JAPAN ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 22

THE BOTTOM LINE



Concept:

A rapping dog uses rhythm to save his town from noodles.

Graphics:

A small step up from the PS-X original's flat-model style.

Sound:

Catchy songs, though some are a tad repetitious.

Playability:

More opportunities to freestyle, letting you off on your own.

Entertainment:

Though it doesn't surpass the first Parappa, this sequel's still a good time.

Replay Value:

Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Rhythm games are the type of thing you'll either love or hate. I love them, but I'm not sure why. Parappa 2 solidified my admiration for the genre, but I wish it would have been longer. Plus, the replay is limited at best. Different colored hats and assorted button combinations are a weak attempt to satiate the Parappa desire. I have bunnied deep inside of me. Actually, that might be the reason I'm here. In any event, the songs are quite catchy. I never thought I would go home singing "cut, cut, perm cut cut," but that's the way it goes. I would have liked to have seen more consistency with freestyling during the levels as well. Sometimes I thought I had my groove on and the computer would take points away, and other times I'd mash the buttons and be rewarded for it. I would rent this one before committing to it completely—you may find a quick fix is all you need.

KRISTIAN - 7.25



THE BOTTOM LINE



8.25

PLAYSTATION 2

JADE COCOON 2

YOUNG BOY GETS SOME TAIL

Unfortunately, Jade Cocoon was the first role-playing game I played after reviewing Final Fantasy X, which I called arguably the best RPG ever. Despite having to follow Square's pride and joy, Jade Cocoon 2 impressed me greatly. As a naive (sometimes annoyingly so) young boy, Kahu gets infected by a parasite called a Kalma and inherits a scaly tail. This makes his dream of becoming a Cocoon Master all the more urgent. Thus, it's a mad dash to find eggs of Divine Beasts to raise and use in battle. Much of the game consists of you taking jobs for people to raise your Reputation, allowing you to fight with more Divine Beasts at your side.

Jade Cocoon 2's gameplay may seem dumbed down at first, but a lot of strategy comes into play. The four different Beast types are very unique, and combining them yields interesting results. Unlike Pokémon, you don't need to subject your creatures to battles for them to advance — you just need to be in the party.

The combination of missions, discovering new eggs, and furthering the story keeps this game from hitting that stale spell that plagues many RPGs. If you don't mind your intelligence being insulted early on, Jade Cocoon 2 is a great title to nurture and raise. — **JUSTIN**



Nico is your sassy fairy sidekick

It's BaiSac from GWAR!

I shall accompany both my studies of the Orb and my studies of your tail!

A good example of what NOT to say to young boys

Your Divine Beasts encircle you during battle

- **Concept:** Make a monster-battling game that isn't a blatant Pokémon rip-off
- **Graphics:** Nice artistic style, though a little too chunky
- **Sound:** Lots of great voice-overs that rival the dialogue of FF X
- **Playability:** The monsters themselves are simplified, but choosing which ones to use requires strategy
- **Entertainment:** I was constantly hooked, and kept finding new things to like about this game
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

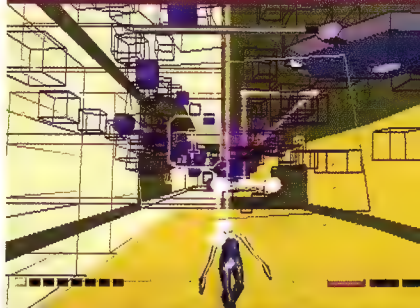
I actually enjoyed the first Jade Cocoon, although it did have a tendency to be somewhat slow and repetitive. When developing the sequel, I had a feeling Genki would address these issues and add enhancements where necessary. Well, I can honestly tell you that while the visuals are greatly improved, Genki took a step back with the rest of the game. Actually, Genki took a step back, fell off a cliff, and splattered on the rocks below. The gameplay remains boring, and the tasks you are asked to complete are even more redundant. If you thought Jar Jar Binks was the most annoying character ever created, just wait until you hear the dialogue that Jade Cocoon's main character, Kahu, spouts. Where are my Excotic Mitigative pills? Kavalat Koneko's character designs are definitely something to marvel at, but the rest of the game really didn't hold much interest for me.

REINER — 6

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** GENKI

■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 18

REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

REZ

REZIN FROM THE PS2 PIPE

Retro babes dancing around in orange plastic dresses I can understand. Freeing an artificial intelligence lifeform from a coma induced by pondering its own existence? Ya lost me there, pal. I applaud Space Channel 5's creator Tetsuya Mizuguchi for the ambitious cross-genre title: that is Rez, but he's gonna have to share some of what he's smokin' before he can convince me this is either revolutionary, brilliant, or \$50 worth of fun.

Rez works as a shooter in that there's lots of onscreen stuff to target. It attempts to bring music into the mix by activating sounds when you hit enemies. The problem here is, it lacks the cohesiveness and payoff of Frequency, for example. Either way, the whole experience is a little too short. Shooter vets should have no problems blowing through this in no time. There are other modes, but I'm not sure you'll care enough to go through the levels again. As for the graphics, this title is creative, but it feels like a PS2 launch title that just stepped off the slow boat from Japan.

Here's what you do: Rent it on a Saturday night when you and your friends are bored. One person gets the game, the other has to bring the stuff. What stuff? Well, bringing whatever gets your rocks off will be good enough. If you know Mizuguchi, tell him to bring more hotties like Space Channel 5's Ulala, because this game doesn't have much of a chance. — **KATO**

THE BOTTOM LINE



6

- **Concept:** Space Channel 5's creator flips the TV to The Lawnmower Man while hanging out with some pharmaceutical friends.
- **Graphics:** I enjoyed Rez's approach, but you may feel a little cheated here.
- **Sound:** Rez has some name artists, but their songs are so fragmented, what's the difference?
- **Playability:** "How to play" won't take you long, but "what exactly you're playing" may.
- **Entertainment:** Rez can be intense, but so can standing up too fast. Don't they seem similar?
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

SECOND OPINION

Can't...think...straight. In...a trance. Rez...good. Wait a minute — No, it isn't! It was all a brainwash trick by Soga and Rez's trippy techno vibe. Good thing I snapped out of it before I gave this wireframe shell of a shooter a higher score than it deserves. Y'know what you got? Fplus. Click.

JUSTIN — 5.75

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA

■ **DEVELOPER** UNITED GAME ARTISTS

■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15

REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

MAX PAYNE

WHY MESS WITH PERFECTION?

If you have read Game Informer before, you already know that we think Max Payne on the PC was one of the best titles of 2001. Hands down, the game deserves it, its *Matrix*-inspired, slow-motion gun-fights (known as Bullet Time) just made blasting bad guys into next week feel so good. On the PC and even the Xbox, Max Payne is pure video game bliss. On the PlayStation 2, well...it's just good. Now I know you are reading this and thinking to yourself that old Andy has lost it, but the fact of the matter is the PlayStation 2 version just isn't quite the same. The save-anywhere feature has been removed, the control is not nearly as fluid as it needs to be, and something about the game just seems off.

I know I'm supposed to give exact and professional opinions about why or how a game stinks or does not, but with this one I just can't seem to put my finger on it. Now, if you have no choice but to play Max Payne on PS2, you will never notice or be bothered by any of the things that are troubling me. But if you have a choice, please try to experience Max as it was meant to be enjoyed — on the PC or, dare I say, the Xbox. — **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE

7.75

THE BEST OF THE BEST

- **Concept:** Take the hit PC title and cram it onto the PS2.
- **Graphics:** Just as solid as the PC version, but some of the animation seems a bit off.
- **Sound:** The voice acting is some of the best heard in a video game, and gun effects are right on.
- **Playability:** Not as sharp as the PC or Xbox version, but adequate.
- **Entertainment:** Max Payne is a great experience, but some of the flaws of this version bring it down.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

SECOND OPINION

Unfortunately, the PS2 shows its limitations when it comes to playing an acceptable part of a PC title. That being said, this is still an awesome game, and if you haven't played it on the PC or Xbox, you'll never know what you're missing. It is a PS2 port of one of the best games of last year after all — that should be enough to grab anyone's attention.

KRISTIAN — 8

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
 ■ **DEVELOPER** REMEDY/3D REALMS ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 17



PLAYSTATION 2

NFL GAMEDAY 2002

THE 6TH STRING QB

Gameday 2002 didn't make it into our football preview a couple issues back because Sony didn't think it was ready. Months later, it's still not fit for viewing. It's a good thing John Gruden doesn't look like he does in real life here, otherwise he'd have a scowl on his face that would make your head burst into flames.

Let's give out a few game balls, shall we? The O-line is moving and blocking better, while receivers now catch on the run. Still, these facts (along with some noteworthy new animations) are about as much consolation as Jim Mora telling Peyton Manning: "Hey kid, none of your four picks were returned for TDs today!" The Al is so bad I was shutting down the Rams' offense by running a goal line D — not because I was sucking Warner, but because I was confusing him! This flaw was muted only by the title's chugging, inconsistent framerate. Pitches are usually money in Gameday, but in 2002, I never knew if the RB was going to get the ball in time or not. Progress is so slow in coming with this franchise it makes the Lions' march to mediocrity look like a worst-to-first finish. Gameday doesn't take it to the house, and I suggest you not let it anywhere near yours. — **KATO**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **DEVELOPER** REDZONE INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 4

SECOND OPINION

Draastic improvements have been implemented, but the gameplay is still as uncomfortable as the rubber glove segment of a physical exam. From the choppy movement to the questionable defensive AI, Gameday still doesn't have what it takes to compete.

REINER — 4

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

E

5

- **Concept:** QB's off the bench are simply expected to "not screw up." Nobody told 989.
- **Graphics:** I like the new engine's player models, but that's about it.
- **Sound:** Dan-o dispenses cranky "witticisms" like Strom Thurmond after a three-day Geritol binge.
- **Playability:** Call Pro Blue 644 out or Shotgun 68 skiny on offense.
- **Entertainment:** It's the kind of fun you get from wanting a team to go 0-16.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.



PLAYSTATION 2

WAVE RALLY

OCEAN DUMPING AT ITS WORST

Everything I liked about Splashdown is everything I hated about Wave Rally. You may look at the shots and think these two titles are quite similar. Once you get down to the gameplay, however, you couldn't be further from the truth.

As I said in my Splashdown review, a watercraft handles very differently than land-based vehicles. It seems to me that Opus got the graphics engine down for Wave Rally, but struggled in making the physics anywhere near accurate. What it settled on is a vile monstrosity maybe closer to ice skating. I don't know. Your craft seems to strafe, and there is no gray area between full throttle and an idle engine. Weight shifting only serves to slow you down, and hydroplaning is nonexistent. Tricks are plentiful, but inconsistent and asinine.

Modes might have salvaged a little bit of this floating fecal matter, but those are a letdown as well. Arcade and Championship are indistinguishable, and Freestyle is just plain boring. If you crave aquatic adventure, buy Splashdown and never look back. This is the Exxon Valdez spill in game form. — **JUSTIN**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** BIDOS ■ **DEVELOPER** OPUS
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 27

SECOND OPINION

Don't confuse Wave Rally for a Baby Ruth floating in the PS2 pool — it's a turd. The modes are dull, the tricks aren't as cool as Splashdown's, and there is little that tells me this isn't just a developer's test of some admittedly good wave effects.

KATO — 4

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

E

4

- **Concept:** Quickly paste together something for PS2 that resembles Wave Race.
- **Graphics:** Looks darn good when you're not dealing with the choppy camera.
- **Sound:** Why bother licensing bands if the annoying engine whine is so overpowering?
- **Playability:** This does not control like a waverunner, or any other type of racing vehicle.
- **Entertainment:** Nowhere near as fun as Splashdown, so don't even bother.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate.

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LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

- **STYLE** 1 TO 5-PLAYER FIGHTING
- **PUBLISHER** ACCJAW
- **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 30



Legends has a ton of notable wrestlers, some of whom are still active, and others who have either passed on or can barely walk. Their styles are mostly archaic now, but their significance and influence is undeniable. The sport has evolved, but unfortunately, Legends is way behind – not so much in the wrestlers themselves, but in the dumbed-down engine with too few moves, and a lousy create mode. Some great ideas (art style, reversal system), but it still can't hang. – **JUSTIN**

6.25

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2002

- **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS
- **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
- **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 19



Known as This is Football in the UK, Sony smartly brought this title over, since it just might be The FIFA Killer. Although EA's series looks slicker and has some more bells and whistles here and there, I simply enjoyed playing WTS more. This includes being able to promote a Division One team like Nottingham Forest into the Premier League – something you can't do with FIFA. The controls and special moves are awesome, and it plays smooth, even if some of the animations could be better. – **KATO**

8.25

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

- **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
- **RELEASE** DECEMBER 10

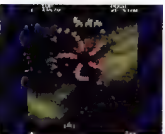


Assimilate this! I'll just come out and say that Elite Force is several generations behind the quality we're seeing in other PS2 first-person shooters. The texturing is fuzzy, the framerate skips, and the character models are more revolting than the Klingons. After watching hundreds of mediocre episodes of Deep Space Nine and Voyager, Trekkies obviously have a high tolerance level, and will probably overlook this game's numerous problems. As for everybody else, I'd recommend avoiding this game like you would a Star Trek convention. – **REINER**

4.5

NAMCO MUSEUM

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** NAMCO
- **RELEASE** DECEMBER 3



I was ready to lay into this game for being more of the same. Then I played the excellent arrangements of Dig Dug, Galaga, and Pac-Man, which maintain the integrity (and brilliance) of the originals. Then I noticed it was only \$30. Then I said to myself that things aren't so bad. Galaxian and the Pole Positions are dead weight in my opinion, but everything else on here is the cream of the classic crop. – **JUSTIN**

8

VICTORIOUS BOXERS: IPPO'S ROAD TO GLORY

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS
- **PUBLISHER** EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
- **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 8



This is an interesting take on boxing, one that differs dramatically from the combo-intensive, somewhat sluggish feel of EA's popular Knockout Kings. All your boxer's movements are controlled with the left analog stick, which lets you sway, duck and step in fluid motions. There are no health meters, so you have to catch your opponent with a well-timed punch, just like in real life. I would have scored this higher, if not for the annoying way your fighter tends to end up facing away from his opponent when circling around the ring. Despite this major flaw, I still found Victorious Boxers to be a refreshing break from the norm. – **MAIT**

7.75


WIZARDRY: TALE OF THE FORSAKEN LAND

- **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME
- **PUBLISHER** ATLUS
- **RELEASE** DECEMBER 17

Harboring traits from the long-forgotten Apple II days, Tale of the Forsaken Land upholds Wizardry's heritage of being an outdated dungeon crawler that is generations behind the competition. Instead of clouding the screen with such high-tech innovations as animation and CG cutscenes, Wizardry counters with stillframe images and plenty of text. Why show the gamer what happens within the story, when they can imagine it! As horrendous as this game may appear to be, I actually found myself somewhat engrossed. Character development allows players to customize every aspect, right down to race and class, and the combat is fast and loaded with techniques. Wizardry will bore most gamers, but I have a feeling that hardcore role-players will enjoy this flashback to the simpler days of gaming. – **REINER**

6.5

DRIVEN

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
- **PUBLISHER** BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT
- **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 8



How's this for damning: Driven is more fun than watching the movie that inspired it. Of course, so is watching your inbred Uncle Eddie pick lint out of his navel. This would have been totally uninteresting, if not for the odd "In the Zone" sequences, in which the sound becomes hushed, the screen blurs, and your car becomes easier to handle. Other than that, there's nothing much here but annoying control, plain graphics, and some rather demented cutscenes. – **MAIT**

6.5


PLAYSTATION 2

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: ZEONIC FRONT

I thought the last Gundam offering, Journey to Jaburo, didn't deliver reason enough to play the game over watching the show, but this isn't the case with Zeonic Front. Don't be turned off by the term "squad-based" – ZF delivers more intriguing strategy than those words have come to connote.

If you are a fan of the series, I'd bet you'd go ape for this game. It encapsulates the Gundam elements you already love. For strategy fans, the game's options might not be as extensive as Armored Core, but there is some fun to be had. Before missions, you'll plan the routes of your three platoons, set up strategic launch points known as Battle Codes, and outfit your Mobile Suits. During battle, ordering your units, toggling between your platoons, and keeping a keen eye on a variety of radar types are absolute keys. These controls, along with combat tactics such as flanking an enemy, can't be ignored, because your MSs won't be able to survive too many direct hits. However, given all these choices, I was a little disappointed that I was only able to control the platoon leaders (not the support suits), and it seemed missions were sometimes shorter and less involved than briefings led me to believe. Those looking for out-and-out action may have to look elsewhere, but Gundam fans and fledgling commanders everywhere will find this one worth their while. – **KATO**

THE BOTTOM LINE

7.75

- **Concept:** The zeon-controlling, strategy-based counterpart of Journey to Jaburo.
- **Graphics:** The Mobile Suits, characters, and overall presentation make you overlook some of the fog and bad draw distance.
- **Sound:** Once again, Bandai gives you spot-on Gundam sounds.
- **Playability:** The wealth of strategic controls won't get in the way of the quick maneuvering you'll be doing.
- **Entertainment:** The action isn't manic, but fans looking for more than just that should be happy.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Bandai has once again created a respectable game that Gundam fans can really dig their teeth into. The visual presentation is not as explosive as it was in Journey to Jaburo, but the gameplay is all the more remarkably executed and involving.

REINER – 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** BANDAI
 ■ **DEVELOPER** BANDAI ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15



THE BOTTOM LINE



9.25

"...wholesomely original, and the most rewarding multiplayer experience available for any console."

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SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE

WAR WITHIN NINTENDO'S WILD KINGDOM

Fondly looking back to the 64-bit days of gaming, Super Smash Bros. was a diamond in the rough – a sleeper hit that garnered praise for its unique fighting mechanics and highly competitive multiplayer antics. As engrossing as it may have been, the game held little value to those who didn't invest in the Versus mode. Though its complexity was overflowing with nuances and options, it was essentially a party game. When constructing the GameCube sequel, developer Hal Laboratories has fully addressed this issue, and while multiplayer still takes precedent, players will now get just as much out of this release within a multitude of new single-player modes.

Cramping as much data as it could onto the proprietary disc, Hal has gone out of its way to keep gamers completely immersed. Much like the tournament tree within the founding release, Melee takes players on a star-studded trip to the most exotic of locations. From the bowels of Hyrule Castle to the grassy knoll of Mushroom Kingdom, almost every Nintendo world has been re-created with authentic detailing and secondary characters occasionally poking their heads onto the frenzied battlefield. Of course, if you want to take a trip down memory lane, Hal has also completely restored the original N64 adventure. The roster of playable characters hasn't changed too much, either. Nintendo's most recognizable stars are back for round two, and just wait until you see the level of detail that went into these character

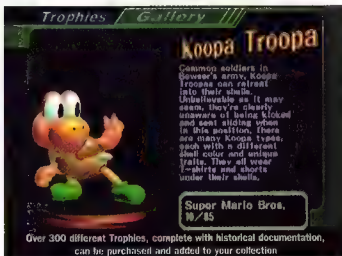
models. Bowser's muscles flex with each movement. You can pinpoint the stitching on Mario's overalls. Lighting effects reflect realistically off Samus's armor. Link's hat flutters in the wind. Also, if you keep your eyes open, you'll even see a wide variety of facial animations for each character.

Per usual, each classic stage is accompanied with a nostalgic soundtrack like the Zelda theme song, the long-forgotten Ice Climbers melody, and the obnoxious DK rap from Donkey Kong 64. Tie all of these aspects together and you can't help becoming completely lost in this fascinating, yet familiar world. Along with a handful of well-hidden characters, players will be rewarded with coins for their performances. What do you do with them? What else?! Purchase action figures! That's right, over 300 different figures (called Trophies) can be obtained through a lottery machine. What you'll get each time is a mystery, but it's usually something outstanding. I was fortunate enough to get Pit from Kid Icarus and the ducks from Duck Hunt. Very cool.

The frontend is overflowing with additional features, but the gameplay hasn't changed too terribly much. Other than a few new moves and items, the combat formula is identical. Did it need more? Perhaps, but it's still incredibly addictive and challenging. Just as it was on the Nintendo 64, Super Smash Bros. Melee is wholesomely original, and the most rewarding multiplayer experience available for any console.

—REINER

■ STYLE | 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER | NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER | HAL LABORATORIES ■ RELEASE | DECEMBER 3



SECOND OPINION

This may be the most addictive fighter I've played. The gameplay is not rocket science (hit two buttons to attack, and keep jumping to stay on the playing field), but Smash Bros. is endless in its variety and rewards. Hal Laboratories takes it far beyond mere one-on-one fighting, as I was swarmed by 128 tiny Marios, and searched a maze for the Triforce. The amount of missions and stages is staggering. Nintendo is stereotyped as a children's game maker, and with Smash Bros.' minimalist graphics and easy controls, it's tough to disagree at first look. With varying difficulty and the trips down memory lane that accompany each Trophy prize, though, it appeals to gamers of every level. This is the liberating multiplayer game, as well. DOA 3 looks worlds better, but Super Smash Bros. Melee has the patent on fun – a much more important category.

JUSTIN – 9.25

MADDEN NFL 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18



I keep going back to the seemingly endless well of fun that is Madden, and it's still good to me – on the PS2. GameCube's incarnation shares the helmet scuffs and more detailed uniforms that the

Xbox version does, but believe it or not, I had a problem with GC's controller. Using the C-stick for D-linemen's special moves wasn't fun. I also noticed a little extra blur in some of the between play shots, and that the rosters were older than they should've been. Still fun, still Madden, but not a perfect port.

– KATO

E 9

FIFA SOCCER 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 27



I'm glad EA was quick to bring this to the GameCube, because I think sports fans will benefit from taking a gander at this FIFA. The beauty of the GameCube controller is that you feel

like it was specifically designed for every title, and this is no different. The only gripe I have here is that you have to double tap for special moves. Otherwise, it's similar to the PS2 edition. Between this and Sony's World Tour Soccer, it's a banner year for the Beautiful Game. – KATO

E 8

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

■ **STYLE** 1 TOR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 24



This is the third system I've played Mirra 2 on, and it's still just as great as it was the first time. Massive levels, a terrific trick system, and amazing crashes all make for a must-have title. The one

thing holding this version back is the fact that Tony 3 showed up first, and is superior to Mirra in almost every way. Still, anyone with a taste for action sports will love getting sick with this game. – JUSTIN

E 8.75

BATMAN VENGEANCE

■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18



The opening sequence in this title had me believing that, at last, the ultimate Batman game had been created. Unfortunately, that feeling of euphoria doesn't last long as the little quirks in the gameplay start to

wear on you. Bat-maniacs will surely want this game in their collection, but for most players, this game will only slightly entertain. – ANDY

E 6.75

NHL HITZ 2002

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18



Midway's sports line has been waning over the years. Actually, it's been downright awful. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think Midway could create a game that competes on EA's level,

yet Hitz does it. Granted, it doesn't have the simulation options or any form of statistical tracking, but the gameplay is just as fast and hard-hitting. The visuals are also outstanding. From the fully animated crowds that bang on the glass and leave the game if it's a blowout, to the subtle nuances like hats being thrown onto the ice after a hat trick, Hitz captures realism while still encompassing the outrageous actions that fuels this far-fetched sports series.

– REINER

E 8



SSX TRICKY

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EA GAMES
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 24

This is the first game to be affected by the GameCube's proprietary disc limitations. None of the bonus DVD materials from the PlayStation 2 or Xbox versions are included on this disc. Certainly, it could have been worse, but it's still a little disappointing. Another subtle drawback is the framerate. The game will chug briefly when a character makes a drastic maneuver. It's hardly noticeable, but it wasn't in the other versions. Of course, the gameplay is just as wild and reckless as it's always been and the graphics truly are out of this world. It's a great game, but it lacks the bells and whistles within the founding PS2 release. – REINER

E 8.5

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002

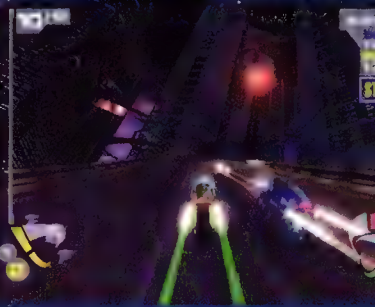
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18



I feel bad for All-Star Baseball 2002. I really do. The batting portion of the game is very well done, it's when the ball leaves the box that problems arise. The AI in this title is some of the worst I have

ever seen. Plus, what's with releasing a 2002 game when spring training for the next season is just months away? It makes no sense, I tell you! Now if you'll excuse me, I have to stick more pins in my Bud Selig doll. – KRISTIAN

E 5.75



GAMECUBE

EXTREME G3

WORD UP, G

You're not going to win my approval by saying a game's driver has a 170 IQ, or telling me speeds exceed 1,000 miles per hour (especially when, at "200 mph," you're barely moving forward). What will get my attention is kick-ass racing, and that's what Extreme G3 offers. Burning around winding, looping tracks in far-out locales is a good ol' time, whether on GameCube or PlayStation 2.

Extreme G3 is entertaining racing. You whip around corners with massive velocity, slamming on the shoulder button for strafing air brakes. Projectile weapons stall the competition long enough to zoom past them. The turbo boost ups the speed ante, even further as you tear through straightaways.

I had a love/hate relationship with my controller and this title. The shoulder buttons work nicely for the air brake, and the gas button is impossible to miss. I just wish it was easier to use one of your fingers to activate a weapon. You can configure the controls to your liking, but any way you do it, you'll wish you had one more easily accessible button. This gripe aside, Extreme G3 will keep GameCube race fans hooked for some time, especially after the mild disappointment that was Wave Race. – JUSTIN

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.25

- **Concept:**
Futuristic vehicles go ape-doodle on a next-gen system.
- **Graphics:**
I remarked at how nice the graphics looked many times, especially the cityscapes.
- **Sound:**
You can crank up the techno tunes that fit nicely with the game's vibe.
- **Playability:**
Big gas button, but that makes it a bit harder to use the other face buttons.
- **Entertainment:**
Pure adrenaline, baby. Extreme G3 is definitely one of the better recent racing games.
- **Replay Value:**
Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

I love the speed and tracks here, and this should earn it a look by 'Cube fans. My knuck on the game is that the opponent AI seemed poor and the strategy with the weapons wasn't always necessary. Even during the hard races, it seemed I could go from sixth place to first with no problem. Still, the GC-only four-player mode is impressively fast.

KATO – 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
 ■ **DEVELOPER** ACCLAIM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 27



"This is one of the few games that is truly as exciting as the screenshots make it look."

XBOX

MAX PAYNE

NO PAYNE, NO GAIN

Playing through *Max Payne* for the first time is a little like watching *Pulp Fiction* for the first time: Five minutes after the opening credits you know it's awesome, and you don't want it to end. Although the story teeters close to being just window dressing alongside the title's explosive action and eerie environments, it'll often draw you in enough to make you actually care about the characters. That may not sound like much, but when dealing with gameplay of this caliber, it's all too easy for a developer to gloss over a title's low points in favor of making the most of its strengths.

As far as strengths go, Mr. Payne has always shined in the ingenuity department. The *Bullet Time* feature – *Matrix*-style slow-motion segments – that we're all so familiar with is done well again, as are the ambient sounds and voice-overs. In fact, I could detect very little degradation from the PC version in any of these categories. Of course, the Xbox is basically just PC Lite, so it has a better foundation to build from when it comes to running a port of a PC title, but this level of replication was better than I expected.

Being both a PC nerd and a console slave, I've now put this game through its paces on three systems (PC, Xbox, and PS2). The PC version was like watching poetry in

motion, and the Xbox is able to maintain the level of detail and intensity that its more robust cousin brought to the table. In fact, there were times when it seemed like the Xbox version looked better than its PC counterpart. That was a nice surprise, but the clunky console control scheme was not. It's really no one's fault that the controls are awkward – that's just the nature of the beast when it comes to console first-person shooters. Yes, I know *Max Payne* is technically a third-person affair, but it's close enough for government work.

Aside from control issues, *Max Payne* is still one hell of a game. Just look at those awesome pictures! This is one of the few games that is truly as exciting as the screenshots make it look. The gun battles are incredible, the environments are beautifully detailed, and the sounds are among the best in the biz. Add to this the award of sixth-best video game of the year in *GI's Games of 2001* feature last month, and you've got more than enough reason to run out and look for *Max* and *Co.* Just don't expect much sleep for a few nights. – KRISTIAN

THE BOTTOM LINE

9

- **Concept:** Get guns, find ammo, shoot people, and try to stay alive
- **Graphics:** This version of *Payne* is as good, if not better than its PC sister in the graphics department
- **Sound:** The tormented screams of those who are unlucky enough to get in your way will echo in your dreams for weeks
- **Playability:** The console control scheme takes a bit of getting used to, but things could be worse
- **Entertainment:** This is a sweet game which has been given the royal treatment by the Xbox
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

From the opening sequence to the final battle, *Max Payne* weaves a comical, yet cynical tale that is so much an action hero cliché, you can't help but love it. Since I had the joy of getting to play this game on PC, I spent most of my time trying to look for differences between that version and the Xbox, and I am happy to report that about the only thing missing is the mouse. Luckily, the Xbox handles the control quite well and delivers all the gun-slinging, *Bullet Time* action of its PC counterpart. Xbox gamers looking for something to do after beating *Halo* need not look any further than *Max Payne*. Sure, you could accuse *Max Payne* of being a little short and lacking a multiplayer mode, but there isn't a gamer on this earth who will look you in the eye and say the single-player experience isn't worth a purchase. It's that good.

ANDY – 9.25

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** NEO SOFTWARE/REMEDY
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 11





"Resident Evil is comparable to *Aliens*, whereas *Silent Hill 2* follows the methodical and psychological undertones of *The Shining*."

XBOX

SILENT HILL 2: RESTLESS DREAMS

NOTHING TO FEAR

A few months ago, Capcom announced that the *Resident Evil* series would haunt gamers exclusively through the GameCube. This came as a shock, especially since the franchise was founded and continually updated on the PlayStation. Furthermore, seeing that the Xbox primarily skews toward an older audience, it would be the perfect fit for the survival horror lineage. Grinding against the grain and all that seems logical, Capcom decided to stick with Nintendo, perhaps in an attempt to break the GameCube's classification of being a kiddie machine. Until this bond is broken, gamers will have to look elsewhere to get their horror fix. As it stands now, the only noteworthy alternative on the market is Konami's *Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams*.

In comparison, *Silent Hill*'s gameplay composition and overall presentation don't hold a candle to *Resident Evil*. The character movement is generic and optionless, not allowing you to interact with the environments, or freely move during a combat sequence. Furthermore, you won't run across action-packed chase sequences. There are also times where nothing happens. Use keys to open doors, backtrack twenty minutes – it has a tendency to get quite boring and repetitive. If you can make it through these bothersome segments, you'll run across perplexing puzzles that often defy logic, and massive amounts of blood and gore.

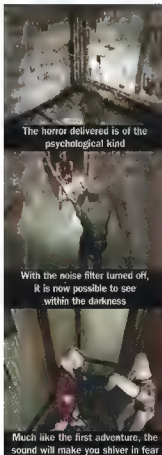
When it comes to guts and suspense, *Resident Evil* will definitely make you squirm and jump, but not to the degree that *Silent Hill* does. Rather than focusing on the action, Konami invested most of the development into creating a

game that really gets under your skin and gives you chills just thinking about it. Through eerie, ambient sounds and chilling music triggered by events, you won't want to take another step, fearing the outcome. The story is also very cryptic, pushing you forward to truly find out what's going on in this town. As an entire production, it's really quite brilliant, and couldn't be more frightening. The way I see it, *Resident Evil* is comparable to *Aliens*, whereas *Silent Hill 2* follows the methodical and psychological undertones of *The Shining*.

For those of you who have already played this game on the PlayStation 2, the Xbox version comes equipped with a number of alterations. Styled as a Director's Cut of sorts, the graphics have been cleaned up, the lighting effects have been enhanced, and an entirely new chapter has been added. This new chapter allows players to view a totally different side of the story, as seen through the eyes of the supporting character, Maria. It took me roughly five hours to complete this bonus chapter, but it was more than worth it. I was always curious what Maria was up to when James was searching for his wife, and it was also nice to see how the two characters' destinies intersected. Additionally, Konami has also added a noise filter, allowing players to illuminate the dark hallways and remove the fuzz that clouds the screen.

Of course, there's still way too much fog to trench through, and I have a feeling the pace may be a little too slow for most gamers. Regardless, if you thrive on horror, you won't want to miss this adventure. – REINER

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER KONAMI ■ DEVELOPER KONAMI ■ RELEASE DECEMBER 18



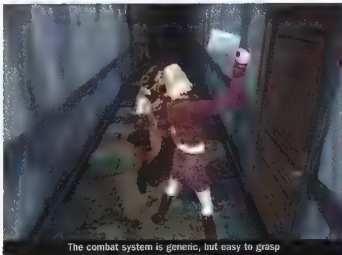
The horror delivered is of the psychological kind

With the noise filter turned off, it is now possible to see within the darkness

Much like the first adventure, the sound will make you shiver in fear



Extensive amounts of fog cloud most of the quest



The combat system is generic, but easy to grasp

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.25

Concept:

A psychological thriller with a mysterious plot, horrifying creatures, and more blood than a donor bank

Graphics:

Unlike the PS2 version, players can now turn off the noise filter from the beginning of the game

Sound:

The unerving ambient sounds, screams of agony, and chilling score set the mood for the frightening quest

Playability:

From the sluggish combat to the confusing health system, the gameplay can best be summed up as sloppy on all fronts

Entertainment:

It's creepfully slow, but it gets into your head

Replay Value:

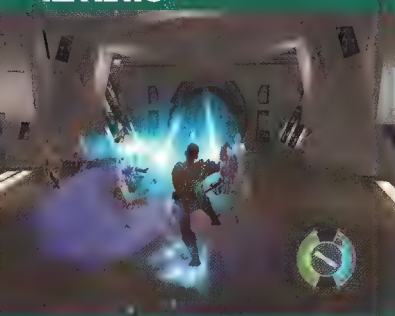
Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

My arch nemesis returns. I wasn't into *Silent Hill 2* on PS2, and this port does little to change my opinion. The control configuration suits the Xbox controller well, and it's nice to be able to see more when you're indoors. The story is an intriguing one, and the audio is great. Aside from these things, plus the addition of a very linear sequel, it's all downhill. *Silent Hill* may scare some, but I was far from spooked (I've seen one too many of those patchwork limb monsters). The amount of backtracking and tedious wandering is inexcusable. Why so slow? It's certainly not to let you marvel at the textures and effects, which are lutt. The OG is bad, too. There's just not enough payoff for me to stick with this game. The series must have a following somewhere, and will find much less competition on Xbox, but *Silent Hill* can rot for all I care.

JUSTIN – 7

REVIEWS



XBOX

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

OBI-YAWN

I could write a novel's worth of material covering the discrepancies and annoyances embedded within this game's coding. If you didn't care for the mindless action in Jedi Power Battles, you'll absolutely despise Obi-Wan. On a different note, if you managed to find some thrills within Jedi Power Battles like I did, you'll find this release, though graphically superior, just doesn't stack up in terms of intensity or execution of gameplay.

The only aspects that are successfully delivered are the lightsaber controls, and methodology behind the Force powers. Never before has a player had such a wide range of controlling the Force. You can toss your saber like a boomerang, and mentally pull a firearm away from an enemy. The entire control schematic is actually quite slick — that is, if the enemies would have been intelligent, you might have to tap into the Force just to stay alive. Unfortunately, every foe can be slaughtered by simply hacking and slashing. I was also quite disappointed to see that they can block your lightsaber attacks by simply raising their hands. Shouldn't I be able to cut through these limbs like a hot knife does butter?

The rest of the game, from irritating voice acting to the generic story telling, will leave you speechless... and not in a good way. —REINER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS
 ■ **DEVELOPER** LUCASARTS ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 15

TEEN
THE BOTTOM LINE
6.25

■ **Concept:**
 Yet another third-person action game based within the Episode I timeline.

■ **Graphics:**
 Sparsely decorated environments, obscure animations, and generic effects.

■ **Sound:**
 You can't go wrong with John Williams on the soundtrack; the voice acting, on the other hand, is some of the worst I've ever heard.

■ **Playability:**
 The Force moves and lightsaber controls are very cool, but you rarely use them strategically. Hacking and slashing works best.

■ **Entertainment:**
 The mindless action grows old quickly.

■ **Replay Value:**
 Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Note to self: If unable to book Evan McGregor for voice-over talent, do not settle for a Scottish Richard Little. Aside from the horrific voice-overs and bizarre "force-resistant" material some of your enemies possess, the lightsaber mechanics and force abilities are inspired. Is it worth picking this game up? Only if THX-1138 means anything to you.

KRISTIAN - 7



TEEN
THE BOTTOM LINE
5.5

XBOX

NIGHTCASTER

PLASTER CASTER, TURN OFF XBOX FASTER

This is the type of game I feared would come to Xbox: a PC-esque third-person title as boring as the day is long. NightCaster isn't a total failure, but it does nothing for the credibility or longevity of the new hardware it's running on.

Arran, the game's star, uses magic from four types: light, dark, fire, and water. These spells shoot from his staff, and are targeted by his orb, which treats him like a nanny does a pants-peeing tot. Each spell type has a color, as do enemies. Light works better on dark, water does more damage to fire monsters, and so on. Combat isn't altogether awful, and may be the game's strongest point. However, the lack of leveling up makes it all pretty monotonous.

Graphically, NightCaster eats acid. The textures of the ground and rocks are barely N64 quality. Objects become transparent when you approach them. With the shoddy camera that delays before catching up to you, however, you'll run into a lot of walls. Also, for some reason, enemies are nearly invisible until they're within range of your slow-moving attacks. What up with that?! If Microsoft makes a habit of releasing (or allowing the release of) games like this, Shrek, and Azurik, Xbox will die a horrifying, painful death. Cast this one out. Way out. —JUSTIN

- **Concept:**
 Magic-based fighting with a mothering orb at your side
- **Graphics:**
 A few decent effects, but it looks somewhere between N64 and Dreamcast
- **Sound:**
 Eclectic soundtrack and horrible voice acting
- **Playability:**
 Using the orb as your target is cool, and most functions are easily handled
- **Entertainment:**
 The root of the game is fun, but there are just too many things wrong to get much enjoyment
- **Replay Value:**
 Moderately Low



The power of Xbox can't help these crappy textures

The world is awash in particle effects

SECOND OPINION

While it does offer a notable gameplay feature or two, the graphics blow like a high-powered enema. Not only does NightCaster look like an N64 title, but the scenery and foes have a bad habit of disappearing and reappearing. On the bright side, I like the game's orb feature, where elemental valness must be changed according to the enemy you're facing. It also acts as an overhead camera and remote-targeting device, allowing you to run and gun. Your spells do show some cool effects and are the graphical highlight of the game. These interesting combat features combine to create some frantic battles, but it's just not enough. Microsoft had some one-dimensional titles at launch, but at least they were solid. Is this the new trend?

KATO - 5.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** VR-1
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 28



THE BOTTOM LINE
5

XBOX

BLOOD WAKE

H2 OH GOD NO!

Game Informer was lucky enough to be there when the concept for Blood Wake was first aired at the Microsoft offices. Through our network of brave Bothan spies we were able to record the proceedings. Note: The following transcription is from a damaged tape source that is slightly garbled.

Xbox technician: "The bump-mapping with the textures and the negative intergal coefficients and the hey, hey, hey..."

Xbox marketing guy cuts off the presentation: "Wow! That's some cool looking water! Hey you with the glasses; can we make that into a game? Yes? Alright! Looks like we've got another winner on our hands, folks!"

Thus, Blood Wake was born — or something like that. The game basically kills two bad ideas with one stone. It's a glorified tech demo, and it's yet another bad take on Twisted Metal's style of combat. Worse yet, it even tries to copy TM: Black's deep, personal method of storytelling to some extent, even though it fails. Maybe the fact that CG movies weren't used has something to do with it. What remains are some nice water effects, but little else. The combat is basic and the missions are boring and uninspired. Blood Wake could at least make its combat interesting by giving you a moveable turret instead of an inadequate auto-targeting reticle.

Blood Wake wasn't totally devoid of fun, but drawbacks like these make the game transparent in what it attempts to do. I'm all for mindlessly blowing things up, but after toiling around for a while, I was more interested in turning the guns on myself instead. The only Blood Wake here is the trail of red stool this game leaves behind. — **KATO**



So much for the covert, under the cover of darkness thing

The Ambiguously Gay Duo of Abe and Gary get ramm'd by some big wood

Million-dollar boats, excessive speeds, and too many cocktails can be an explosive combo

"Ramm'n speed!!!"

- **Concept:** Attempt at a lame Twisted Metal on water. Notice how I said "attempt"
- **Graphics:** The water is great and all, but I love how there are no effects for the waves hitting the beach — it's just blue on brown
- **Sound:** Your first mate is annoying as hell. If only he said "Arrrrrrr matey, we are pirates!" once and a while
- **Playability:** The controls could stand to be more first-person-shooter like
- **Entertainment:** I wish this was Knightboat: The Crime-Solving Boat instead
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it, and Blood Wake is a perfect example. Throughout the video game ages, various companies have made attempts to create an engaging boat-combat game, but they all suffer the same fate. Whether it's the horrible water and effects of the past, or the amazingly realistic waves of Blood Wake, the gameplay always bogs down in it. Driving the boats full-throttle is always an entertaining experience, but the combat is one-dimensional. Make a strafing pass...make a slow painful turn...blast away...repeat.

ANDY — 6



XBOX

AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

MORE LIKE ASS-URIKI!

THE BOTTOM LINE
4.5

I can't even begin to describe how disappointed I am with Azurik. Back in April of this year, I was lucky enough to go see the game in early development and talk to the team. After hearing their plans, I came away from the visit with high hopes for Azurik. Unfortunately, I don't believe the game has evolved since then. Instead, it seems to be pieced together to "work" (if that's what you want to call it), just so Xbox has another game available this holiday season. The problems with Azurik are numerous. From the bad camera work, to the lack of lock-on targeting (though I believe the game does auto-target; it just doesn't do a very good job) — just about everything about the

playcontrol is cumbersome. Combine the weak gameplay with truly bad animations and sound, and you begin to see where this game is going — the bargain bin.

I will admit that Azurik is breathtaking in screenshots, but as a whole the game is poorly executed. For any long-time readers of Game Informer that purchased the game already, I can't say I'm sorry enough if our previous cover story had anything to do with it. I still believe that with some care Azurik could have been a great title, but as it stands it seems rushed and unfinished.

— ANDY

- **Concept:** Make a game in the vein of Soul Reaver, but super-charged with Xbox graphics.
- **Graphics:** The screenshots of this game look marvelous, but once in motion, the game is unimpressive. The animation just stinks.
- **Sound:** Most of the music is solid, but the horribly bad sound effects make you wonder if they were pulled from a second-rate Genesis game.
- **Playability:** The lack of a block and look-on button combined with the floaty jumps was frustrating.
- **Entertainment:** After the fun of checking out the environments ends, you are left with a mediocre title.
- **Replay Value:** Low

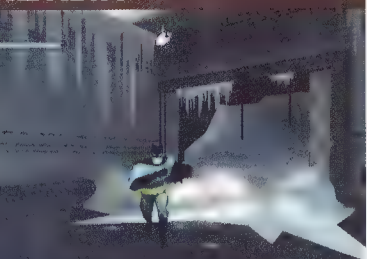
SECOND OPINION

I've seen more detailed torturing in a pool of my own vomit! I kid you not, I would rather spend an entire day playing with ear cheese than try to digest another second of this poorly designed game. Heck, I'd even French kiss your granddaddy just keep it away from me. Evil has a new name, and that name is Azurik. Bam, foul demon! Burn!

REINER — 3.25

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** ADRENALIN GAMES
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 28

REVIEWS



XBOX

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

THE DARK KNIGHT REHASH

The PlayStation 2 version of Batman: Vengeance received lukewarm reviews in our November issue, and Xbox fans will be upset to hear that this version is no better or worse. As far as my eyes could tell, it's virtually identical in every way. The graphics are still breathtaking, and I have to give Ubi Soft credit for the fine job it did in mimicking the stylish look of the television show. Xbox could use a good game in this genre, and I was hoping this would be it. Unfortunately, Batman: Vengeance for the Xbox doesn't correct any of the mistakes made by its PS2 predecessor. The platforming is still extremely annoying. There still isn't an adjustable camera system. The Bat-gadgets are still little more than window dressing on what is a very run-of-the-mill title.

I could go on, but there's really no point. As I see it, this game will basically appeal to two groups of people. The first is Batman devotees who just savor anything and everything that features the likeness of the Dark Knight. The second is Xbox fans who are just plain starved for anything that comes close to providing a decent third-person action experience, like Spider-Man or Tenchu did on the PlayStation. If you fall into one of those two categories, this might be your game, but I'd think long and hard before spending 50 bones on Batman: Vengeance. — **MATT**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 12

THE BOTTOM LINE



7

■ **Concept:**

Create a game that captures every element of the Batman universe, from the dark visuals to the vehicles to the myriad gadgets.

■ **Graphics:**

Does a brilliant job of capturing the look of the popular Batman animated series.

■ **Sound:**

Features many voice actors from the show, and a nice score.

■ **Playability:**

Here's where the wheels fall off. Sticky control and a problematic camera will give you fits.

■ **Entertainment:**

A mediocre game where a great one should have stood.

■ **Replay Value:**

Low.

■ **SECOND OPINION**

Holy smoldering piles of guano, Batman! Ubi Soft did a commendable job re-creating the Dark Knight's animated world, but the gameplay permeates a detestable stench. Fanboys will drool over the detail that went into the environments and animation, but the play is so poorly placed together that you'll wish to seek vengeance on Ubi Soft's testing department.

REINER - 7



XBOX

SSX TRICKY

FINALLY, FRESH POWDER ON THE XBOX

The Xbox library is still small, but even in its infancy, it already boasts three different snowboarding games.

Situations like this usually equate into a troublesome buying decision for the consumer. Rest assured, though, no headaches will be involved. SSX Tricky is the only title you need to invest in. Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding may offer a deeper Season mode and more variety within its runs, and Dark Summit's courses may be more outlandish, but SSX is the only release that offers solid gameplay and a noteworthy trick system. SSX Tricky's play mechanics hit you like an avalanche — instantly transforming everyone into snowboarding addicts.

For those of you who own all three consoles, or are simply sizing up which version will be the best: The controls within the PlayStation 2 version are the most intuitive and user friendly, but the game does run smoothly on the Xbox. With enhanced bump-mapped snow textures, refined shadow casting, and a consistent framerate, the Xbox version is the most finely polished of the three. A must-have for snowboarding enthusiasts. — **REINER**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA BIG ■ **DEVELOPER** EA CANADA ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 11

■ **SECOND OPINION**

SSX Tricky is a stellar game, and blows snow in the face of Microsoft's Amped. I doubt any but the most hardcore SSX players will be able to notice any significant differences between this and the equally great PlayStation 2 game. Other than some nice bump-mapped textures, this is a carbon copy.

MATT - 8.5

THE BOTTOM LINE



9

■ **Concept:**

Adrenaline-filled snowboarding that rewards players for performing death-defying stunts

■ **Graphics:**

Enhanced over the PlayStation 2 version with bump-mapped snow and a smoother framerate

■ **Sound:**

Celebrity voice talent by Hollywood's finest

■ **Playability:**

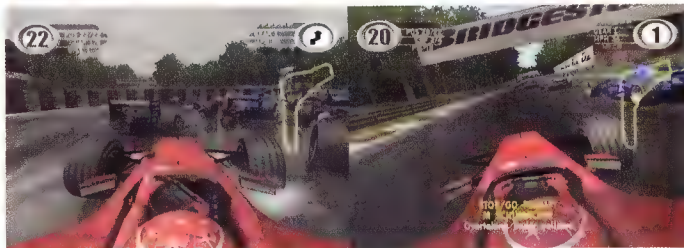
Outrageous tricks delivered through complex controls

■ **Entertainment:**

The most rewarding snowboarding game on the market

■ **Replay Value:**

High



XBOX

F1 2001

EA'S OVER/UNDER-STEER

Formula One games take the task of replicating the F1 experience very seriously. This is the plight of EA's F1 2001. I felt that for every step forward it took, it went a half step to the side.

For example, Challenge mode has you jump through all sorts of hoops to teach you how to race. The problem is, unlike Gran Turismo 3, it doesn't tell you when to brake or what the best line is — so what do you really learn? F1 goes to great lengths to include real circuit rules, technical damage, and a slew of different car conditions that affect your driving. These can be toggled on and off to your liking, but racing without them is too easy, while driving with them can result in a mess of yellow flags and pile-ups. Going without them would be a shame, since having to take into account how much fuel you're carrying and abiding by the official FIA rules is cool. The lack of a happy medium makes driving Sony's Formula One title more fun, even if it's tougher. However, you can't deny that EA has hit upon some features that make it worthwhile. — **KATO**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL SPORTS LTD. ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

■ **SECOND OPINION**

I think I may be losing my attention span. This is an awesome game by rights — great graphics, good sounds, decent controls — yet I found myself leaving more fun taming around at the beginning of a race and smashing into people head-on, then watching the replays. Slick, I know. Those who aren't true fans may have a hard time getting into this one.

KRISTIAN - 7.5

THE BOTTOM LINE



7.75

■ **Concept:**

Give F1-ers some of the realism they crave without alienating the rest of us

■ **Graphics:**

Onscreen rain droplets are almost as cool as Metal Gear Solid 2's

■ **Sound:**

Cars' whines can be intense, and listening to your crew chief is vital

■ **Playability:**

Normal and Simulation driving modes allow everyone to play

■ **Entertainment:**

Team-Mate Challenges, setting up your own Championship and the like, give it that EA extra value

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately High

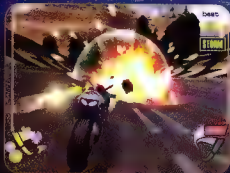
EXTREME G RACING

IN THE FUTURE...
WHAT'S BETWEEN YOUR LEGS
IS ALL THAT COUNTS.

NOW AVAILABLE FOR
NINTENDO GAMECUBE™



Your pulse quickens. Your stomach drops. You feel it in your toes. With an intense 60+ FPS frame rate and speeds up to 700 mph, XGR is super-charged, gravity-defying combat motorcycle racing that will blow your mind. But before your parents make you sit down and talk about it.



12 different super-charged tracks packing serious firepower



9 incredible racing circuits with gut-wrenching loops, twists, spirals & drops



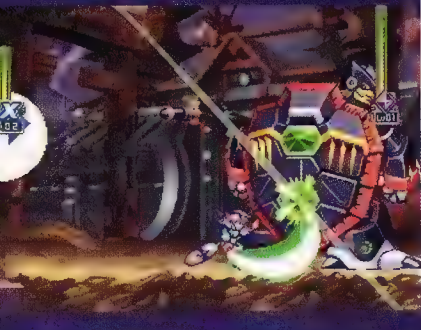
Futuristic, interactive racing environments: city, desert, arctic, ocean & canyon



PlayStation 2



REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION

MEGA MAN X6

REHASH X6

Before you read any further, I'd like to properly set the mood for this review. I want you to head into your kitchen and follow these steps. Turn on the light, walk over to the refrigerator, and grab yourself a beverage. Grab a glass, add a handful of ice, then pour the drink. After this, leave the room. Now, repeat this entire process six times. Congratulations! In a bizarre sort of way, you have just played Mega Man X6.

I'm not down on nostalgic gaming, per se. It just seems that Capcom doesn't give the 2D Mega Man games much thought anymore. As was the case with the last entry in the series, this sequel delivers a handful of changes (like random level generation and branching paths), but the gameplay has definitely deteriorated. Some segments within the levels are challenging, but the rest of the game is pretty disappointing. The environment designs are not as creative, the stages are way too short, and the boss battles are surprisingly easy.

On the graphical end, Capcom didn't make an effort to raise the standard. I guess it's kind of cool that the visuals in all six games blend together, but I'd really like to see the series evolve to include smoother animations, a more diverse color palette, and new gameplay mechanics. — REINER

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
10-12

6.5

- **Concept:** A nostalgic Mega Man game with a few enhancements on the side.
- **Graphics:** Primarily 16-bit. Either Capcom's artists are color-blind, or they haven't learned that the PlayStation can display more colors than the Super Nintendo.
- **Sound:** Obnoxious guitar riffs that scream bad heavy metal garage band.
- **Playability:** The same run-and-shoot formula with randomized stages and alternate routes.
- **Entertainment:** If you have Alzheimer's, you may think it's 1993.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

SECOND OPINION

Not that Mega Man X6 is bad, but it's almost the same game as you have played before. Perhaps if Capcom would give Mega Man a facelift and let him get out of 1989, he could really shine. I like the nostalgia of this title, and the no-holds-barred 2D action, yet I can't help but think Mega Man could be so much more. Capcom heads will be pleased, but that's about as far as it goes.

ANDY - 7

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM
■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 5



THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
13-17

7.25

PLAYSTATION

HOSHIGAMI: RUINING BLUE EARTH

GEZUNTHEIT!

I didn't expect anyone to bring any more obscure RPGs to the US, but leave it to Atlus to keep the P5one love train a' runnin'. Hoshigami is an old-school strategy/role-playing game that is beefy, but otherwise pretty average.

The storyline is of little consequence, with one kingdom attacking the two border regions. As a mercenary turned general, you must keep the dark empire from taking over. Recruits are readily available, and have a number of different specific styles. There's your frontline muscle, the long-distance archers and boomerang heavers, and those best suited for using coins, which represent magic. Each one can be assigned different skills to learn, with points going toward both increasing levels and mastering those skills.

I had to do a good bit of tutorial research before I knew what the heck I was doing in this game. One wrong button press may totally confuse you, and all but that yout progress. Get the hang of it, though, and all the status screens and so forth will prove invaluable. However, there are some aspects of Hoshigami that are still vexing, even after many hours of play. Fights are lengthy, and managing your soldiers takes just as long.

I can't recommend Hoshigami if you haven't played Final Fantasy Tactics — after all, that game is superior and only half the price. If you need more strategy/RPG in your gaming diet, though, Hoshigami has lots to digest. — JUSTIN



- **Concept:** One more strategy/RPG thrill before the PS-X gets put to bed.
- **Graphics:** Wow, does this look old. Painfully old.
- **Sound:** A little thin on the music, but I did hum along.
- **Playability:** Confusing controls at first, but soon you find them necessary.
- **Entertainment:** Not quite up to the competition, but regardless, a lot of gaming for your buck.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

SECOND OPINION

Yikes, this game looks about as good as Joan Rivers' daughter. Truth be told, I don't really think Max Five gave two rusty dunnys about how this game looked. The real tosh is in the gameplay anyway, so what difference does it make if it doesn't look all that hot? The answer is, not much. The tried-and-true strategy/RPG formula gives the expected amount of enjoyment (a lot, if you dig this type of game), and the detail in your characters' stats will drive you to play for hours on end. Yes, there are games out that do basically the same thing Hoshigami does, but the old Hosh-ster accomplishes what it sets out to do — that's more than I can say about a lot of other games. If you find Hoshigami on sale somewhere, I would say don't hesitate to add it to your collection.

KRISTIAN - 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY/ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ATLUS ■ **DEVELOPER** MAX FIVE ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 19

CONFIDENTIAL 11/6

MISSION BRIEFING

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

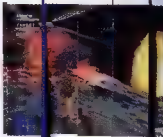


RECOMMENDED WEAPONRY: X-ray gun, nightvision rifle, taser,
M-16, proximity mines and others

ASSIGNMENT LOCATIONS: (SEE ENCLOSED PHOTOS)

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

psword: arsenal



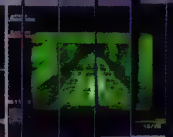
Costa Rica



Tokyo



Australia



South Africa

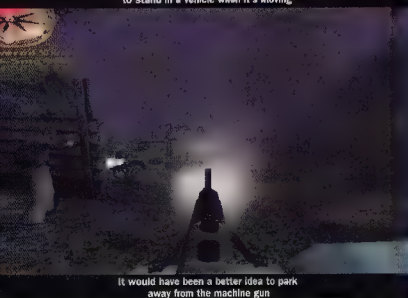
CONFIDENTIAL



A good German gun emplacement is a dead one



This Captain doesn't know it, but it's very dangerous to stand in a vehicle when it's moving



It would have been a better idea to park away from the machine gun



PC

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

BREATHTAKING

Seldom has a game made me stand up during play and look at the screen in shocked amazement. Likewise, there has NEVER been a game – on console or PC – that has given me such an intense experience. I've actually thought I had a glimpse of what war is really like. Such is Medal of Honor: Allied Assault. Any of the standards set in the FPS genre have been simply obliterated by this game. To put it a little bit into perspective, I'd have to say Allied Assault is hands-down the best first-person shooter ever coded. If you hear differently, whomever you're listening to is either lying, or a complete jackass.

You're probably wondering what in the world could cause me to spew such unbridled enthusiasm about one little game. Well my friends, the answer lies in one level: The storming of Omaha Beach. If the entire game is a 9.75, then this mission is a 27. It's unbelievable, and ultimately, indescribable. However, since I'm paid to exercise my descriptive abilities, I'll give 'er a whirl. Remember the first 20 minutes of *Saving Private Ryan*? Remember how terrifying that was? Well, now you get to make the landing yourself. If you didn't have respect for what those guys went through before, you certainly will now.

Of course, there are many other levels that are incredible in their own right, but none of them would have been noteworthy had the game's mechanics not been exemplary. The detail paid to the audio in this title is moving. There are

different sounds for when bullets hit wood, sand, dirt, concrete, glass, metal, and flesh. The score is incredibly elaborate, the character models are second-to-none, and the environments are as ornate as they are expansive. The texture detail is such that you can see individual pebbles in walls – and there's no quality degradation from getting up close to them.

"Allied Assault is hands-down the best first-person shooter ever coded."



The only point where Allied Assault comes up short is in the AI department. The enemy AI is good for the most part, but your allies can be quite the knuckleheads in a firefight. In one instance, I was pouring fire into a personnel transport from an MG-42 emplacement when my contact and ally wandered into my field of fire and was effectively cut in half. Other times my squad members would stand in the middle of a street and take hit after hit without running for cover or even ducking. These are minor problems, but nothing to be too worried about – you're on your own most of the time anyway.

If you get a hankering for company, not to worry – a robust multiplayer game is ready and waiting for you. So really you're getting two incredible games in one. If you only had enough money to buy one game this year, I wouldn't

hesitate to recommend Allied Assault. I know my evenings are shot to hell for a while. Do yourself a favor and buy a piece of what will undoubtedly become a beloved part of gaming history. – KRISTIAN

■ STYLE I TO 32-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ DEVELOPER 2012 ■ RELEASE JANUARY 22

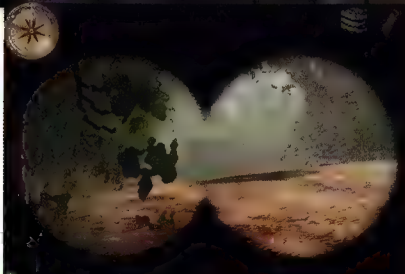


Health
100

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE
M
9.75

- **Concept:** Shoot many, many Nazis in levels and environments that will make your jaw drop to the floor
- **Graphics:** Nothing short of wonderful. The bar has definitely been raised
- **Sound:** This game puts many Hollywood films to shame in the effects department
- **Playability:** Easier to play than a kazoo
- **Entertainment:** Anyone who loves FPSs will be awestruck by Allied Assault. Believe the hype, my friends
- **Replay Value:** High



A German 88 makes for a formidable foe



If this won't scare the @#\$% out of him, nothing will

Getting this far up the beach is no easy task

SECOND OPINION

Ever since I saw the demo of Allied Assault at E3 last year, the images it created have been floating in my head. Watching it was awe-inspiring, but nothing could have prepared me for actually taking the helm. Allied Assault is easily the most immersive video game experience I have had to date. When you land on Omaha Beach and must work your way up the barricades with bullets whizzing past your head, and sand and water exploding around you, I was seriously scared. If this is just a taste of what war is like, I know I never want to be there, as it's hell on Earth and you are right in the thick of it. But, as a video game, it is pure delight. Unfortunately, not all the levels are as impressive as the Omaha Beach mission, but they are spectacular nonetheless. Many times while I was playing Allied Assault I had to step away from the computer as the game was just too intense. If you buy just one PC game in your life, make sure it's Allied Assault. It's an experience you will never forget.

ANDY - 9.75



Mortar fire doesn't make the best environment for conversation



Now we're cooking with gas!



THE BOTTOM LINE



8.75

“...the AI of the creatures and troops you’re battling is some of the best I’ve seen in any game on any platform.”

PC

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

I'M ON THE HUNT

As many of you know, Wolfenstein 3D was a wildly successful hit. Not only did it put the 3D shooter genre on the map, but it left us wanting more for years to come. I can clearly remember sitting in my friend's house for hours on end as we traversed the twists and turns of the Castle while mowing down Nazis with reckless abandon. Although I was able to relive the days of my youth and shoot a heaping helping of Nazis again, this Wolfenstein offering quickly left the close confines of the fortress. This didn't concern me, but the plot that brought about the departure did.

To put it simply, you're in charge of making sure the Nazis don't unleash a really bad Necromancer-type guy on the world who would let loose legions of undead and kill everyone. Catchy, no? I have to believe that somewhere in the enormous brain-trust that makes up id, there is a person who had a good idea for a storyline, but just didn't turn it in on time. If I don't believe that, then I begin to think that the "kill the undead and the Nazis" plot was the path of least resistance. What could have been a spectacular single-player title instead becomes a really good looking run-of-the-mill FPS experience with some nice audio mixed in. That's not to say this game isn't one of the best first-person shooters to be

released in a while (it is id, after all), it's a little like The Beatles releasing Yellow Submarine in 1968 – it was okay, but you know they could have done better.

Aside from the plot issues, this game is solid as bedrock in the gameplay department. I saw very few bugs during my time with the game, and those I did see were gone before they really registered with me. Complementing the smooth engine are sound effects that could peel the paint off your walls if you left your speakers turned up for a prolonged period of time. Symphonic undertones lace every level with a unique theme, and superb voice acting adds even more depth throughout the game. Effects wise, things seem to be status quo, but that's nothing to be disappointed about – unless you don't like being frightened by things that go bump in the night.

In an unexpected and wonderful surprise, the AI of the creatures and troops you're battling is some of the best I've seen in any game on any platform. It makes for an interesting game when one soldier uses covering fire to pin you down while another flanks your position and opens up on you from point-blank range. Add to all of this the incredible multi-player games and you've got a title that packs one heckuva wallop. – KRISTIAN

- **Concept:** Shoot undead and Nazis. What more could you ask for?
- **Graphics:** Gorgeous environments and character models make this Wolfenstein offering jump off the screen
- **Sound:** No expense was spared in this department. The music can be a bit repetitive, but you'll be too tense to notice
- **Playability:** Straight-up FPS architecture. You may need to adjust a few controls, but everything is basically ready to go
- **Entertainment:** A good sing-e-player game and superb multiplayer modes give this one some serious teeth
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

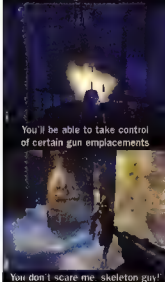
My respect for id software runs deep. Ever since it defined first-person shooters with Wolfenstein 3D, id hasn't missed the mark. Return to Castle Wolfenstein is no exception. Featuring great single-player and multiplayer options, you really get a lot of bang for your buck (no pun intended). I am slightly disappointed that some of the classic lines from the Apple II game aren't here to make me giggle, but that really isn't much to complain about. My only true gripe about the title is it doesn't really take the genre forward. I really expect id to bring something new to the table, and Return to Castle Wolfenstein just stays within the status quo. The more unique secrets were a nice touch, but I wanted a little more. I'll quit overanalyzing now, and get back to playing – the white-knuckled combat really is second-to-none.

ANDY - 9

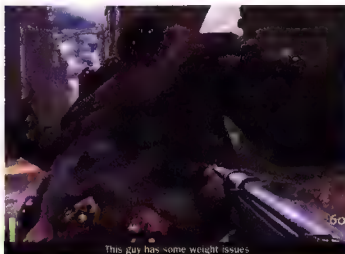
■ **STYLE** 1 to 64-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** GRAY MATTER/ID SOFTWARE
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 20



It's a shame to have to kill a thing of beauty



You'll be able to take control of certain gun emplacements



This guy has some weight issues



The multiplayer aspect is a detailed and robust component



THE BOTTOM LINE



9

PC
GHOST RECON

PUT THE GHOST IN YOUR MACHINE

As the realistic military-sim genre progresses, we the people of the United Gaming State reap the benefits. Red Storm has done some impressive things with the Rogue Spear series, but let's just say it also left a lot of room for improvement. Ghost Recon has taken cues from what Rogue Spear did well, and adds a lot to fill in what it didn't. One of my major qualms with the Rogue Spear series was that the graphics reminded me of a good-looking PS-X title. GR looks like you've stepped into the environment right beside your squad, and the character models are beautifully designed. Gameplay wise, things take a bit of getting used to, but for all intents and purposes, this is a highly detailed first-person shooter.

Gone are those boring and confusing mission briefings from the RS array of titles. Instead, one concise mission layout screen has been implemented which will show you your area of operations and the goals your squad must accomplish. There were probably people who liked the painstaking process of setting up every movement of each fireteam during the load-out phase of RS, but I couldn't stand it. GR does away with that by giving you control of your teams in the field at the touch of a button, and letting you set up strategy as the situation dictates.

Although the AI could be suspect at times (shooting repeatedly into a tree does little to bring down an enemy patrol), it also has moments of brilliance. Ghost Recon does an incredible job of mimicking the movements and strategies of soldiers in the field, while simultaneously giving the player a feeling of complete tactical control. I can't wait to see how Red Storm follows this one up.

—KRISTIAN



A grenade is your best friend when penetrating a structure



Your troopers will get combat points after successfully completing a mission, which you can put towards improving their skill sets



Night vision gives you a distinct advantage

This soldier doesn't mind squeezing off a few in public

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13

■ **Concept:**
Figure out how to kill all of the enemy soldiers in your area as quietly as possible

■ **Graphics:**
Great detail and huge environments are a couple of things you'll notice right away

■ **Sound:**
Rarely have the sounds of a firefight been mimicked this accurately

■ **Playability:**
Expect a bit of a time commitment to get a handle on this one

■ **Entertainment:**
The tension is what makes this game incredible to play

■ **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Either the squad-based AI has some problems, or my gags are suicidal. I can't even begin to count the number of times my squad disobeyed a direct order only to find themselves eating blood-soaked dirt. Red Storm Entertainment made improvements where necessary, but the AI still leaves much to be desired. Thankfully, the enemy proves to be just as stupid as your comrades, often firing at an imaginary bird, as opposed to your location. If these bugs didn't occur, this game would be amazing. The firefights are lightning-quick and very intense. The details in the landscapes are also something to sit back and gawk at. The most noticeable improvement, at least for me, is the variety that has been implemented into the missions. Rather than forcing players to run according to protocol, freedom has been granted to experiment with different strategies.

REINER — 8



PC

EVERQUEST: SHADOWS OF LUCLIN
HAVE SUPER COMPUTER, WILL TRAVEL

THE BOTTOM LINE



9.25

I'll admit it: I'm an addict. EverQuest is easily one of my favorite games of all time, and this expansion just gives me yet another excuse to sit in front of my computer and beat the tar out of virtual monsters with my online compatriots. Like anyone else who plays EverQuest, you don't need a review to tell you to buy it. If you play EQ, you already have this expansion, so I'll just get down to the nitty gritty of it.

Verant added new system requirements for this expansion, and they are actually quite astronomical. With the 256 megs of RAM minimum, you can manage to get 15 of the new models displayed onscreen. To give you an idea, that's about half of them, and it doesn't include the new horses and elementals that are another big addition to this title. So to really enjoy Luclin, you need at least 512 megs of RAM, and if your computer is slower than 1.5 Ghz, you will need to turn off the models in a raid situation.

The outrageous requirements aside, if you have the computing power to play Luclin as intended, it is a treat. The new alternative advancement skills add lots of new powers to your characters and will have you grinding experience for months to come. Plus, many of the new zones really look great. I would have liked to see more facial options and a better executed launch, but overall it gives the EQ addict all they could hope for. —ANDY

■ **Concept:**
Release new zones and character advancement opportunities to keep the EQ zombies happy

■ **Graphics:**
If your PC is uber, the game looks great, but most people don't have the horsepower to run this game as it was intended

■ **Sound:**
Check

■ **Playability:**
Still the same game, but with new skills added through alternative advancement

■ **Entertainment:**
If you manage to get past the opening week of computer problems and outrageous zone times, it's fun

■ **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

I'll admit it, Andy's an addict. EverQuest is easily one of his favorite games of all time and this expansion just gives him another excuse to sit in front of his computer and waste time. As far as the game goes, Verant has pulled the old Origin move of releasing a game r1.0 one without some significant bank can play. Of course, for those who can, this game kicks some serious ass.

KRISTIAN — 8.5

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SOE ■ **ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT** ■ **DEVELOPER** VERANT INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 3



GAME BOY ADVANCE

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

THRASHIN' ON THE MINIATURE SLOPES

When old-school gamers boot this game up, they'll instantly be reminded of the NES classic, Skate or Die. Natsume definitely took the right steps in the development of this high-profile game. One-upping the founding PlayStation 2 release, the GBA Palmer features downhill races against three additional boarders, and halfpipe events brought to life through Mode 7 technology.

Altogether, the gameplay is pretty tight. Transitioning between air and grind tricks is an effortless task, the Manual works well, and the animations are admirable.

Even though it does hark back to the primordial days of action sports, a number of problems hold it back from receiving the attention it truly deserves. The stages are quite large, but successfully navigating the slopes is next to impossible. The perspective obscures the forthcoming terrain and the gameplay speed is way too fast. By the time a jump appears, you don't have time to react.

If the speed wasn't so blistering and the perspective showed more of the field, it probably would have given this game a nine. The play really is that good. — REINER

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE **E** **6.75**

- Concept:** A handheld port of the PlayStation 2 game, Skate or Die meets the BMX event in California Games.
- Graphics:** The animations are very fluid, yet the gameplay perspective doesn't allow the player to get a good feel for the action.
- Sound:** Did Natsume accidentally insert the Harvest Moon soundtrack? Simply said, the music doesn't fit.
- Playability:** Very precise, allowing players to link together combos and even Manual down the slopes.
- Entertainment:** It's definitely engaging, but the overall experience tends to be quite frustrating.
- Replay Value:** Moderately High.

SECOND OPINION

Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder reminds me in many ways of the old BMX portion of California Games. The control and the courses really aren't designed that well, but in a weird, messed up way they seem to work. At first, this game is pretty frustrating because you can't see what's coming; but with practice, it's oddly entertaining. It's no Tony Hawk, but it will keep GBA boarders busy.

ANDY — 7.25

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** NATSUME ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 4

DOKAPON: MONSTER HUNTER

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME
 ■ **PUBLISHER** AIA
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



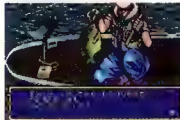
Strip away the hackneyed monster collection feature from Dokapon and you're left with an RPG that isn't too shabby. The game's battles combine Lady Luck and strategy

through a rock, paper, scissors format. Things can either roll in your favor, or get you split in two before you even take your sword out. Dying means you lose all your items, although you can square them away before missions for when you are resurrected. It's both rewarding and frustrating. — KATO

E **7**

AMERICAN BASS CHALLENGE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 13



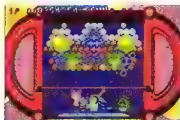
I don't know what to say about fishing. You wake up, get in your truck, and go do it. That's a lot like this game. You turn it on, get in a tournament, and before you know it, you're reeling in the

bass. That's not a knock on the title, it's actually about the best endorsement I can make for it. American Bass is a fairly well-rounded angling title that doesn't really jump off the deep end in any particular area. I'd say this would fill your Saturday while waiting for the fish to bite. — KATO

E **6**

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 29



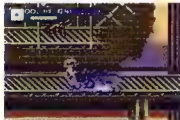
Super Bust-A-Move, as with Columns Crown reviewed on GBA two issues ago, is one of those puzzle games where the prime directive is to waste time, rather than have fun. The

formula has led to much success for the series, but it hasn't really won me over. This installment does some new things (like the non-sequential path), but it's still the same ball shooting, and it's kind of hard to see. I'd rather waste my time and enjoy it, too. — JUSTIN

E **6.75**

ALIENATORS: EVOLUTION CONTINUES

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 28



Flip over the box of Aliens in the store and you'll see exactly what this game is all about — shoot, shoot and jump, jump. That's not bad, and in fact, it's a good thing when you

throw in Ira's weapons and combat postures. However, I must say that I hate when you jump in the air and take damage from an enemy on a platform above you because there's no collision on the underside of it. Alienator isn't the originator of that problem, and its platforming-by-the-numbers approach is where it both stands and falls. — KATO

E **7**

MONSTERS, INC.

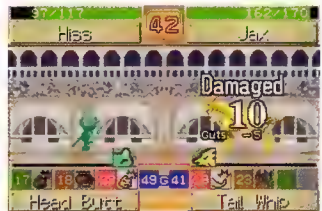
■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 25



I am quite impressed by this title's animation and some of the cutscenes it shows at the start, but the gameplay itself is fairly one-dimensional. Explore various areas looking for pieces to the

door that will get cute little Boo home. For most gamers, Monsters, Inc. will be a little too repetitive and easy, but for its target market of young tykes just getting their little hands around the GBA, it is perfect. — ANDY

E **5**



MONSTER RANCHER ADVANCE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER STRATEGY/FIGHTING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 2

Who says breeding has to be conducted within the house? With Monster Rancher Advance, you can create wherever you want! If you choose to, you can even do it in front of your parents! All of the addictive traits and adorable monsters from the console series are jam-packed into this microscopic release. The only major difference resides in how monsters are generated. Instead of inserting another game into your GBA, the system is a bit more simplistic. Spell a word, get a monster. This formula may sound cheesy, but it works quite well. Once you create a beast that you'd like to train, bring it home and prep it for battle. The combat sequences lack the high-caliber animation that made the console titles so dynamic, but all the strategic components are still in place. If you couldn't get enough of the previous entries in the series, or simply need something to do on the go, Monster Rancher Advance is an excellent companion and one heck of a game. — REINER

E **8.5**

PLANET OF THE APES

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ENTERTAINMENT
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14



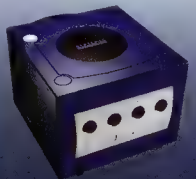
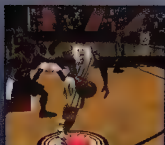
If one thing wasn't clear before, it certainly is now: The GBA can pump out some very impressive animations. Those in Planet of the Apes don't disappoint, but the game itself does

little more than help you alleviate your distaste for primates. I suppose you could compare this game to a Prince of Persia type release, but I had a lot more fun with Pop than I did with Bright Eyes and crew. Not a bad game overall, but there's much better stuff out there. — KRISTIAN

E **6.5**



NBA
COURTSIDE
2002



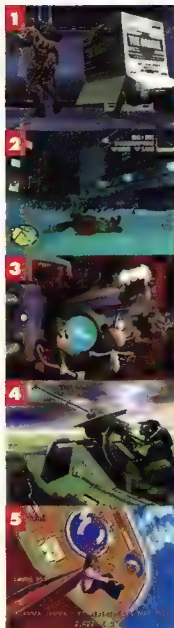
Crazy handles. Killer crossovers. And mad hops. Your prayers have been answered.
 NBA Courtside 2002 with Kobe Bryant, only for Nintendo GameCube™.

EVERYONE
E
 RATED
 EVERYONE

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CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best-selling software on a month-to-month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top-selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.



NPD TOP 20

Legend: Based Upon NPD Data For November 2002. Based on Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	N/A	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	PS2	10	Nov-01	\$50

What else would be in the number one spot? This is one of the greatest games of all time, people! Go out and buy a copy before your local retailer runs out. Seriously. Put the magazine down and get this game right this very instant. We don't care if you don't have a PS2.

2	2	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2	9.5	Oct-01	\$51
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If there's one thing we love to see, it's awesome games like Grand Theft Auto III getting the public recognition they deserve. Will this powerhouse of a title ever be able to take the number one spot? We think it has the staying power, but does it have the chutzpah? Tune in next month!

3	N/A	Luigi's Mansion	GC	9	Nov-01	\$50
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The braintrust over at Nintendo has done it again. Since Pokémon got booted off the top five they need something to be in the spotlight – and we're quite happy it's Luigi's Mansion. We were surprised this one didn't do better, but it's still early in its shelf-life.

4	N/A	Halo	Xbox	9.5	Nov-01	\$49
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Microsoft makes its first appearance in the top five with the release of its flagship title, Halo. We had a feeling it wasn't outselling Luigi's Mansion, but we're impressed with its position nonetheless. We scored it higher than Luigi anyway, and that's what counts.

5	4	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS2	9.75	Oct-01	\$48
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Tony's PlayStation 2 effort is hanging in there, if only by his fingernails. The game dropped one place from last month, but number five is pretty damned good by anyone's standards...Isn't that right Pokémon? Hello?! Oh yeah, You're GONE! HAHAAHAAHAAABLAR-RRRRGGGG!

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A	Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone	PS-X	5.5	Nov-01	\$40
7	N/A	Star Wars: Rogue Leader	GC	9.5	Nov-01	\$49
8	N/A	Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone	GBC	N/A	Nov-01	\$29
9	3	Madden NFL 2002	PS2	9.75	Aug-01	\$50
10	N/A	WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	PS2	8	Nov-01	\$51
11	N/A	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS-X	8.5	Oct-01	\$40
12	N/A	Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone	GBA	N/A	Nov-01	\$38
13	N/A	Project Gotham Racing	Xbox	8.5	Nov-01	\$49
14	N/A	Dead or Alive 3	Xbox	9.25	Nov-01	\$49
15	7	NBA Live 2002	PS2	8.5	Oct-01	\$50
16	5	Pokémon Crystal	GBC	6.75	Jul-01	\$29
17	10	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	PS-X	10	Sep-01	\$19
18	N/A	NFL Fever 2002	Xbox	8.25	Oct-01	\$49
19	N/A	Monsters, Inc.	GBC	N/A	Oct-01	\$28
20	N/A	James Bond 007 In...Agent Under Fire	PS2	9.25	Nov-01	\$50

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett/MonKoff (516) 625-2481

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan Based on Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	Dragon Quest IV: Guiding Friends	PS-X
2	N/A	Super Smash Bros. Melee	GC
3	N/A	All Star Pro Wrestling II	PS2
4	N/A	Seaman: Crazy Doctor's Experiment Island	PS2
5	N/A	Pro Baseball 2001	PS2
6	N/A	Pachisuro Aruze Dalkoku 5	PS2
7	N/A	Rez	PS2
8	N/A	Bushin: Wizardly Alternative	PS2
9	1	Jaissen Pachisuro Hisshohoh	PS2
10	2	Pikmin	GC



GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	8	Metal of Honor: Allied Assault	PC
2	N/A	Super Smash Bros. Melee	GC
3	2	Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	PS2
4	1	Final Fantasy X	PS2
5	4	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS2
6	3	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2
7	9	Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	PS2
8	5	Halo	Xbox
9	6	Star Wars: Rogue Leader	GC
10	N/A	Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	PS2



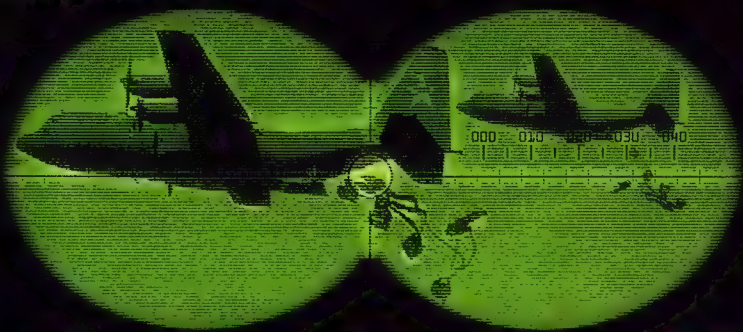
PC TOP 10

Based on Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service. Weekly Report/ReportWeek 12/16/02-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	N/A	The Sims: Hot Date	Nov-01	\$27
2	N/A	Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone	Nov-01	\$28
3	3	The Sims	Jul-01	\$40
4	N/A	Backyard Basketball	Nov-01	\$18
5	5	Roller Coaster Tycoon	May-99	\$19
6	4	Civilization III	Oct-01	\$45
7	N/A	Zoo Tycoon	Oct-01	\$28
8	N/A	Backyard Football 2002	Sep-01	\$18
9	N/A	Bob the Builder: Can We Fix It?	Aug-01	\$18
10	N/A	Survivor: The Interactive Game	Nov-01	\$18



PlayStation 2

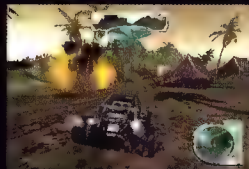


SMUGGLER'S RUN 2 HOSTILE TERRITORY

The ultimate off-road driving adventure returns to the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system. Work for an elite band of smugglers delivering contraband, escaping the authorities and attacking rivals. Make the drop, hit the nitro boost and get across the border before all hell breaks loose!



Out Now



Deliver the goods through mine fields, avalanches and enemy crossfire!



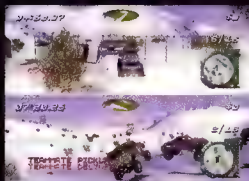
Fully integrated plot increases the adrenaline and ups the stakes



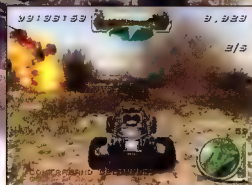
Race anywhere across the world's most dangerous territories



All new mission types including helicopter drop off!



Outrun and outwit your enemies head-to-head in split screen multiplayer mode!



WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/SMUGGLERSRUN2

blueprint



Soundtrack provided by James Ruskin, 430 West Records and Kevin Saunderson



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NEW RELEASES ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor	System	Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor	System	Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor	System
1/15/02	Dark Arena	Majesco	GBA	2/4/02	Ar Falalis	Fishbark Interactive	PC	3/1/02	Dionys's Tzaran Untamed	Ubisoft	GBA
1/15/02	Disciples II: Dark Prophecy	Infogrames	PC	2/4/02	Beam Breakers	Fishbark Interactive	PC	3/1/02	Earl Tain: Optyan's Chronicle	Ubisoft	PS2
1/15/02	Darkout: The Ancestor's Gato	Sony	PS2	2/4/02	Call of Chulahu	Fishbark Interactive	PC	3/1/02	King's Field: The Ancient City	Tommo	PS2
1/15/02	Duke Hudson: Hunting	Gathering of Developers	PC	2/4/02	Dungeon Slugs	MicroSoft	PC	3/1/02	Packy & Rocky	Crave	GBA
1/15/02	Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Banambi	PS2	2/4/02	Earl Tain: Optyan's Chronicle	Ubisoft	PC	3/1/02	Powerup! Girls	Sant Entertainment	PS2
1/15/02	Industry Tycoon 2	Macmillan	PC	2/4/02	Mad Dog McCain	Digital Leisure	PC	3/1/02	Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Ubisoft	PS2
1/15/02	Muppet Battle Pinball	NewMedia	GBA	2/4/02	Some the Hedgehog Adventure	THQ	GBA	3/1/02	R.Y.M.	Fishbark Interactive	PC
1/15/02	NBA 2K2	Sega	PS2	2/4/02	Tears World	THQ	Xbox	3/1/02	Shrek: Monsters vs. Humans	Medias9	Xbox
1/15/02	NBA 2K2	Sega	Xbox	2/5/02	Columbus Crown	THQ	GBA	3/1/02	Stutters	3DO	PS2
1/15/02	Persian Wars	Dreamcatcher	PC	2/5/02	Dark Summit	THQ	GC	3/1/02	Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	PC
1/15/02	Rally Troop	Macmillan	PC	2/5/02	Forever Kingdom	Tommo	PS2	3/1/02	World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	PS2
1/15/02	Rat	Sega	PS2	2/5/02	Wholesale	Adhesion	Xbox	3/1/02	Zona	Dreamcatcher	PS2
1/15/02	Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	PS2	2/5/02	Yuglio! Dark Duel Stories	Honami	GC	3/4/02	Star Trek: Bridge Commander	Activision	PC
				2/11/02	Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	Nintendo	GC	3/4/02	Who Shot Johnny Rock?	Digital Leisure	PC

GITARO-MAN

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 29



Music and dance games that are insanely popular in other countries fall on deaf ears and lead feet when they make it to these parts, but maybe that's because none of them totally rock! America is the place where guitar gods get the respect they deserve, and if

there's anyone who deserves your admiration, it's Gitaro-Man. Every stage in Gitaro-Man requires players to dodge enemy attacks by tapping the Dual Shock 2's buttons to the beat, then blast back by hitting riffs. When it all comes together, it really feels like you're cranking out a killer tune on an electric guitar.

1/15/02	... Serious Sam: The Second Encounter	Take 2	PC
1/15/02	... Tropics: Paradise Island 454On	Take 2	PC
1/17/02	... Mega Race 3	Dreamcatcher	PC
1/21/02	... Dune	Dreamcatcher	PS2
1/21/02	... New Legends	THQ	Xbox
1/22/02	... Back & White: Creature Isle Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	PC
1/22/02	... Grandia II	Ubisoft	PS2
1/22/02	... Medal of Honor: Allied Assault	Electronic Arts	PC
1/22/02	... Mike Tyson Boxing	Ubisoft	GBA
1/22/02	... MotoGP 2	Namco	PS2
1/22/02	... Olympic Winter Games	Ubisoft	GBA
1/22/02	... Pasappa the Rapper 2	Sony	PS2
1/22/02	... Star Wars: Starfighter Special Edition	LucasArts	PC
1/25/02	... The Cameron Film: The Secret of Loch Ness	Dreamcatcher	PC
1/28/02	... Mail Tycoon	Take 2	PC
1/29/02	... Arc the Lad: Collector	Working Designs	PSX
1/29/02	... Destroyer Command	Ubisoft	PC
1/29/02	... Genma Onimusha	Capcom	Xbox
1/29/02	... Gitaro-Man	Koei	PS2
1/29/02	... NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	GC
1/29/02	... NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	PS2
1/29/02	... NFL Blitz 2002	Midway	Xbox
1/29/02	... NHL 2K2	Sega	DC
1/29/02	... Sid Meier's Sim Golf	Electronic Arts	PC
1/29/02	... Taken Advance	Namco	GBA
1/29/02	... Tetris Worlds	THQ	PS2
1/29/02	... Top Angler	Infogrames	PS2
1/30/02	... Resilience	MicroSoft	PC
1/31/02	... O.R.B.	Infogrames	PC
1/31/02	... Smuggler's Run	Destruction Software	GBA
1/31/02	... State of Emergency	Take 2	PS2
2/1/02	... 3D Pool All Stars	Thus	GC
2/1/02	... Air Ranger	Bant Entertainment	PSX
2/1/02	... Dodge Ball	Tommo	PS2
2/1/02	... Dragon's Lair 3D	Ubisoft	PC
2/1/02	... GoGo: Elemental Force	3DO	PS2
2/1/02	... M4 Armored Clash	WizardWorks	PC
2/1/02	... RoboCop	Thus	GC
2/1/02	... Snowboarding	Thus	GBA

COMMAND & CONQUER: RENEGADE

■ **FORMAT** PC ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 26



It's not terribly surprising that a first-person shooter has finally been born out of a popular real-time strategy title. The gameplay couldn't be more different between the two, but many of us have sat back and wondered what it would be like to run around our bases behind the eyes of a common foot soldier. Always the innovator, Westwood was way ahead of us and thus, Renegade was conceived and born.

2/26/02	... Casper	Thus	GBA
2/26/02	... Command & Conquer: Renegade	Westwood Studios/EA	PC
2/26/02	... Free Wheelin' USA	Ubisoft	PC
2/26/02	... Free Wheelin' USA	Ubisoft	PSX
2/26/02	... Lock On: Modern Air Combat	Ubisoft	PC
2/26/02	... Pac-Man World 2	Namco	PS2
2/28/02	... All Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	GC
2/28/02	... Shadow March: Second Coming	Acclaim	PS2
2/28/02	... Star Trek: Shattered Universe	Vivendi Universal	PS2
3/1/02	... Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	PS2

STAR FOX ADVENTURES: DINOSAUR PLANET

■ **FORMAT** GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE/SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25



This title isn't the first time we get to control Fox McCloud outside his Arwing, but it's a new experience altogether, as the former N64 game Dinosaur Planet has been added to it. In protecting Prince Tricky and his whole planet from General

Scales, players will embark on an Oceania of Time-esque, mission-based journey that includes magical staves, multiple-character control, and old Star Fox friends and levels.

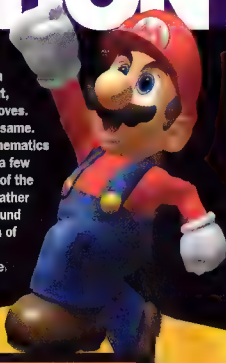
3/5/02	... NBA 2K2	Sega	Xbox
3/5/02	... Star Hawk & Pro Star 3	Activision	GBA
3/5/02	... Tury Hawk's Pro Star 3	Activision	Xbox
3/11/02	... The Ringoob	Thus	GBA
3/12/02	... Bear in the Big Blue House	Ubisoft	PS-X
3/12/02	... Die Hard: Nakatomi Plaza	Vivendi Universal	PC
3/12/02	... Duke Nukem	Take 2	PS2
3/12/02	... H2O Overdrive	Crave	PS2
3/12/02	... Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony	PS2
3/12/02	... MLB 2003	Sony	PS2
3/12/02	... MTV Fulltime	Take 2	PS2
3/12/02	... Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Ubisoft	GBA
3/12/02	... Sega GT 2002	Sega	Xbox
3/12/02	... Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	GBA
3/12/02	... Transworld Surf	Infogrames	PS2
3/12/02	... Batman: Dark Tomorrow	Crave	PC
3/15/02	... Command & Conquer 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	PS2
3/15/02	... Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda Softworks	Xbox
3/15/02	... ET: Cosmic Garden	NewMedia	GC
3/15/02	... ET: Digital Planner	NewMedia	GC
3/15/02	... Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Eidos	PS2
3/15/02	... Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2	Eidos	Xbox
3/15/02	... MegaRace 3	Dreamcatcher	PS2
3/15/02	... Flynn Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK MediaActive	PS2
3/15/02	... Race Nation	Eidos	Xbox
3/15/02	... Taken 4	Namco	PS2
3/19/02	... Race Racers	Ubisoft	GBA
3/19/02	... Disney's Jungle Book	Ubisoft	GBA
3/19/02	... Eve of Extinction	Eidos	PS2
3/19/02	... Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	Xbox
3/19/02	... Gun Valley 2	Sega	Xbox
3/19/02	... Monsters, Inc.	Eidos	PS2
3/19/02	... Project Eden	Sony	Xbox
3/19/02	... Thunderbirds: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	Xbox
3/19/02	... Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	PS2
3/19/02	... Virtua Striker 3	Sega	GC
3/22/02	... Baseball	Infogrames	Xbox
3/25/02	... Black Moon Chronicles	Dreamcatcher	PC

PLAY TO PERFECTION

THE SECRETS OF

Super Smash Bros. Melee

We labored for three weeks, 24 hours a day, to bring you this in-depth strategy guide. Early on, we had hoped to bring you a complete moves list for every character. As we soon found out, however, there really is no point in listing each character's moves. As you'll quickly learn, every character basically controls the same. Certainly, their attacks are quite different, but the control schematics are nearly identical. After experimenting with a character for a few minutes, you'll be able to develop your own strategies. Many of the key strategies are listed within the game's manual as well. Rather than scrapping the guide completely, we decided to mess around with the game a little more. What we found was a cornucopia of amazing secrets, hidden characters, and bonus items. We managed to unlock everything the game has to offer and have printed the techniques required to get the goods.



SECRET CHARACTERS

Jumping jalopy! Look at all of these hidden characters! Unfortunately, many of them are extremely difficult to unlock. As always, the devoted Game Informer staff has put its social lives on hold to bring you the secrets and techniques needed to add these recognizable Nintendo all-stars to your roster. Read on, kiddies!

PICHU



Unlocking this little bugger is a serious hassle. Before you can challenge him, you'll need to complete the first 30 Event challenges, and unlock Jigglypuff, Dr. Mario, Luigi, Falco, and Young Link. Now, enter Event mode and finish the

LUIGI



37th challenge. Alternatively, play 200 Versus mode matches. Crush this rodent to add him to your playable characters list.

Within Adventure mode, complete the first stage, Mushroom Kingdom, with a time where the seconds dial ends in a 2 (i.e., 5:02:51). When you accomplish this task, a cutscene will appear showing Luigi trouncing Mario. If you can beat Luigi and Princess Peach in

DR. MARIO



under 45 seconds and without losing a life, you'll qualify for the third step. From here, complete the rest of Adventure mode. Luigi will appear for a second time shortly after the credits. If you can defeat him, he'll join your ranks.

With Mario as your character, complete Classic mode without continuing. You can also unlock this bad boy by selecting Mario, then completing Adventure mode without losing a life. If neither of these choices sit well, he will appear after 100 Versus mode matches are played. For

all three of these options, you'll be forced to battle Dr. Mario. If you can take him down, he's yours for the keeping.

YOUNG LINK



Enter Event mode, then complete the 29th challenge. After the battle ends, Ganondorf will confront you. If you're the last man (or woman) standing, he'll be added to your arsenal of characters.

PRINCE MARTH



Use 10 different characters, two of which must be Link and Zelda, to complete Classic mode. For those of you who thrive on multiplayer, he will also appear after 500 Versus mode matches. When he appears, send this young pup flying to unlock him.

ROY



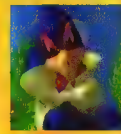
Complete Classic mode with all 14 of the default characters. He will also appear after the 70th Versus mode match, or after all 14 default characters are used in Versus mode. Per usual, beat the tar out of him when he appears, and he'll be more than happy to assist you.

GANONDORF



First, unlock Prince Marth. Using Marth, complete Adventure mode without continuing, or alternatively, run through Classic mode without losing a life. Accept his challenge, then launch him to the moon. Roy is now yours for the keeping!

FALCO LOMBARDI



Enter Event mode, then complete the 29th challenge. After the battle ends, Ganondorf will confront you. If you're the last man (or woman) standing, he'll be added to your arsenal of characters.

MEWTWO



This one is a big pain in the keester. If you can complete the 100-Man Melee, Falco will appear. Thankfully, he will also make his presence known after the 300th Versus mode match. If you can successfully knock him out, Falco will join the team.

JIGGLYPUFF



If you don't play this game for the multiplayer bouts, then you're in for a world of hurt. To unlock Mewtwo, you'll either need to rack up over 20 hours of Versus mode time, or compete in 700 Versus mode matches. Here's an easy way to

MR. GAME & WATCH



do this: If you have four controllers, plug them in and customize a four-player Versus match so it has infinite time. Now, leave the game on for five hours. Each player competing adds to the Versus mode clock (4 x 5 = 20).

MR. GAME & WATCH



Complete Classic or Adventure mode, then beat Jigglypuff when she challenges you.

Complete Adventure mode or Classic mode with all 24 of the characters and Mr. Game & Watch will appear. Bash this obscure character into next week and he's yours!

ADDITIONAL SECRETS

Nintendo's motto: More bang for your buck! Along with a handful of amazing hidden characters and some pretty slick bonus stages, players can also unlock a ton of interesting secrets. Here's how to do it!



ALL-STAR MODE

Complete Adventure and Classic modes with all 25 characters. When you complete All-Star mode, you'll receive a third Trophy for each character you beat it with.

EVENTS 11-30

Work your way through the first 10 Events to unlock another batch. Just keep going to unearth more. Once you reach 30, you'll be cut off.

EVENTS 31-39

Complete the first 30 Events and unlock Jigglypuff, Dr. Mario, Luigi, Falco, and Young Link.

EVENTS 40-50

Unlock all of the secret characters.

EVENT 51

Complete all 50 Event mode challenges.

SOUND TEST

Successfully complete all 51 Event mode challenges and a Sound Test will appear within the Options menu.

STAGE SWITCH RANDOMIZER

Unlock all of the bonus stages and this useful tool will appear within the Options menu. You'll now have the ability to determine which stages will randomly appear within Versus mode.

BONUS STAGES

A slew of nostalgic levels are hidden within Super Smash Bros. Melee. Follow the instructions below to unlock them for multiplayer use. The past stages are a nice addition, but look rather funny because of their archaic, 64-bit texturing.

BATTLEFIELD

Complete All-Star mode.

EAGLELAND

Compete in 100 Versus mode matches. You'll also receive the Battlefield Trophy.

FINAL DESTINATION

Complete all 51 Event mode challenges.

SUPERFLAT WORLD: FLAT ZONE

Either complete the 45th Event, or finish Classic mode with Mr. Game & Watch.

F-ZERO: BIG BLUE

Compete in 150 Versus mode matches.

KANTO SKIES

Compete in 200 Versus mode matches.

KONGO JUNGLE

Complete the grueling 15-Minute Melee.

MUSHROOM KINGDOM II

With Princess Peach as your character, complete Classic mode without losing a life.

PLANET ZEBES: BRINSTAR DEPTHS

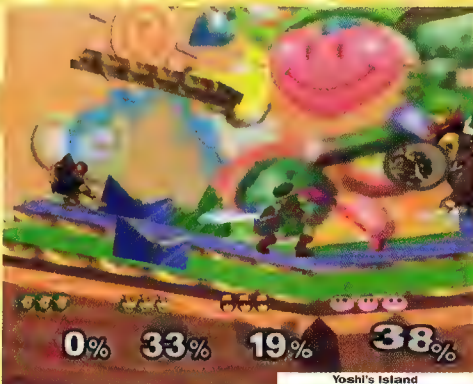
Compete in 50 Versus mode matches.

PUPUPU LAND

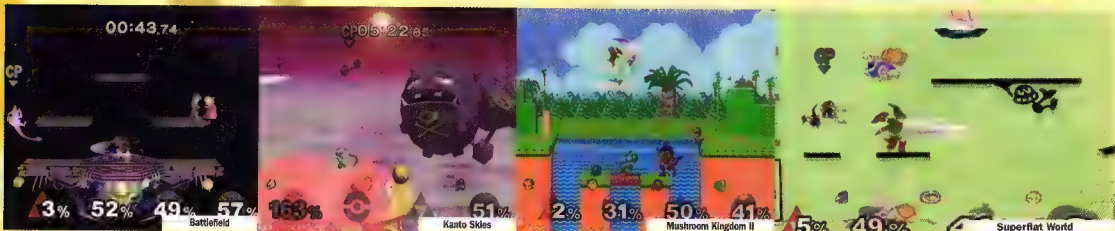
Complete all 25 Target Tests.

YOSHI'S ISLAND

Hit the Home Run Contest sandbag over 1,200 feet.



Yoshi's Island



SMASH TACTICS

There are a number of interesting things to see and/or try within this game. We've pinpointed the biggest events, hidden goodies, and useful strategies for you to try freely and see for yourself.

AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE

TERMINA GREAT BAY



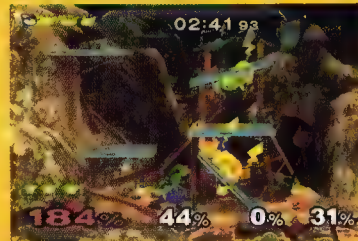
If you battle on this stage, watch the moon closely. When the timer ticks for 2 minutes and 15 seconds, the moon will plummet to the land. The giants from Majora's Mask will form around the moon and will throw it back into the sky.

PRINCESS PEACH'S CASTLE



At any point during a battle, there's a chance that Bullet Bill may want to get into the action. Without warning he will drop in and smash into the castle. If you're anywhere near his impact zone, you're toast.

POKÉMON STADIUM



If a battle ensues for approximately three minutes, the battlefield will disintegrate and transform into a mine.

FASHION SHOW



One of Peach's alternate colors perfectly mimics that of Luigi's love interest, Daisy.

Mario does his best Wario impersonation.

Each character wears four different costumes, many of which are simple color variations of their original garbs. Some, however, reflect the styling of other characters in the Nintendo universe. To scroll through the different outfits, head to the Character Selection screen and highlight a character. Press X to change their appearance.



TRAP THE OPPOSITION

When battling on Kirby's Green Greens stage, it is possible to trap an enemy underneath a stack of bricks. First destroy a number of bricks, then lure the opponent onto the remaining blocks. Jigglypuff's sleep attack works well here. If you can keep the adversary on this stack long enough, more bricks will fall and will eventually seal them. When this happens, they won't be able to move or attack.



HOW TO SCORE BIG

After each battle, players will be rated on their performance and receive a Special Bonus score. Every action performed receives a score. Here's a listing of the big point gainers and how to perform them. Many of the bonuses can be multiplied for much larger totals.

350% DAMAGE

Take over 350% damage to score an additional 15,000 points.

ALL GROUND

Use all ground attacks for a 6,000 point bonus.

CEMENT SHOES

Never perform a jump to score 4,000 points.

CLEAN SWEEP

Use low attacks for 5,000 points.

IMPERVIOUS

March through a stage without taking damage to score 7,000 points.

ITEM COLLECTOR

Grab every item that appears on the battlefield to score 4,000 points.

LAST SECOND

Complete the match with only 1 second left on the clock for 5,000 points.

NEVER LOOK BACK

Don't change the direction you face for 5,000 points.

NO-MISS CLEAR

Finish a stage without losing a life for 10,000 points.

PEACEFUL WARRIOR

Win a match without attacking for 5,000 points.

PERFECT AIM

Land every attack you propel for 10,000 points.

PITCHER

Use only grabs and throws to score over 6,000 points.

PRECISE AIM

Have all of your attacks land directly after execution for 10,000 points.

QUADRUPLE KO

Defeat four enemies at once for 8,000 points.

ROCKET KO

Launch all team enemies off the top of the screen for 5,000 points.

RUN, DON'T WALK

Run through the entire match for easy 6,500 points.

SPEED DEMON

Clear all of the levels within Adventure mode as quickly as possible for 20,000 points.

SPEEDSTER

Clear all of the levels within Classic mode as quickly as you can for 10,000 points.

TARGET MASTER

Destroy every target within Target Test for 30,000 points.

GAME CLEAR

THE REMAINING	SPECIAL BONUS
DAMAGE 36600	Half-Minute Man 2580
	Emerald 1980
	Triumph KO 1980
	Omega KO 1980
	Special KO 1780
	Double KO 1680
1 158200	12240
SCORE 580000	

HOME RUN CONTEST



This mode may not seem like much, a novelty really, but once you get the hang of it, you'll never stop playing. The goal is to smash the bag as far as you can with a baseball bat. Is it possible to knock it over 1,500 feet? Of course! To do this, you'll need to develop a different strategy for each character – making the best use of their arsenal of moves. For example, if you choose Yoshi, who is our home run champ, try something like this: Turn to the left and grab the bat, quickly leap into the air, and perform his flurry of kicks (Down + A) onto the bag. Now, jump ever so subtly, and land another flurry of kicks. If you repeat this, you should be able to rack up over 125% damage onto the bag. When the timer hits 1, simultaneously press Toward + A to knock the bag flying. It's quite fun and very rewarding. Below is a listing of the highest distances we were able to achieve with each character.

Character	Distance
Yoshi	1,912 feet
Donkey Kong	1,551 feet
Ganondorf	1,247 feet
Ice Climbers	1,223 feet
Pichu	1,211 feet
Pikachu	1,209 feet
Luigi	1,174 feet
Dr. Mario	1,136 feet
Mario	1,135 feet
Captain Falcon	1,131 feet
Princess Zelda	1,129 feet
Samus Aran	1,114 feet
Falco Lombardi	1,089 feet
Kirby	1,056 feet
Prince Marth	1,049 feet
Bowser	1,043 feet
Fox McCloud	1,021 feet
Mr. Game & Watch	1,009 feet
Jigglypuff	982 feet
Roy	971 feet
Young Link	964 feet
Link	962 feet
Princess Peach	951 feet
Mewtwo	862 feet
Ness	853 feet

TROPHIES

In our humble opinion, the Trophies are the best part of Super Smash Bros. Melee. There are 300 different Trophies to unlock. Listed below are the ones that are either extremely rare, or considered must-haves!



ANDROSS
Randomly generated



BABY BOWSER
Randomly generated



BALLOON FIGHTER
Randomly generated



BUBBLES (CLU CLU LAND)
Randomly generated



CAPTAIN OLIMAR (PIKMIN)
The only way to get this bad boy is by having a Pikmin save file on your memory card



DAISY (LUIGI'S LOVE INTEREST)
Randomly generated



DIXIE KONG
Randomly generated



DONKEY KONG, JR.
Beat Classic mode with all 25 characters, then compete in a Versus mode match in the Flat Zone stage



DR. WRIGHT (SIM CITY)
Randomly generated



DUCKS (DUCK HUNT)
Randomly generated



EGGPLANT MAN (WRECKING CREW)
Randomly generated



EXCITEBIKE
Randomly generated



ENTEI
Complete the 26th Event mode challenge. Once this Trophy is unlocked, Entei will randomly appear in Poké-balls



FOUR GIANTS (THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK)
Randomly generated



GAME & WATCH
Complete the 47th Event challenge



GOOMBA
Complete the 14th Event mode challenge



GORON (THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME)
Randomly generated



HO-OH
Randomly generated



IGGY BLUFF
Randomly generated



KIRBY HAT 4
Unlock Mr. Game & Watch



KIRBY HAT 5
Complete the 37th Event mode challenge, then take down Pichu



KOOPA PARATROOPA
Randomly generated



LAKITU
Randomly generated



LOVE GIANT (DOSHIN THE GIANT)
Randomly generated



MACH RIDER
Finish Adventure as quickly as you can if you can do it within 15 minutes, this awesome statue will be added to your collection



MAJORA'S MASK
Complete the 47th Event mode challenge



METAL MARIO
Randomly generated



METROID
Randomly generated



MISTY (POKÉMON RED & BLUE)
Randomly generated



MOON (THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK)
Randomly generated



MOTION SENSOR BOMB (PERFECT DARK ZERO)
Randomly generated



OCTOROK (THE LEGEND OF ZELDA)
Randomly generated



PIKMIN
Randomly generated



PIT (KID ICARUS)
Randomly generated



PROFESSOR OAK (POKÉMON RED & BLUE)
Randomly generated



RICK (KIRBY'S DREAMLAND 2)
Randomly generated



RIDLEY (METROID)
Randomly generated



SANDBAG
Enter Home Run contest and knock the bag over 1,000 feet



SLIPPY TOAD (STAR FOX)
Randomly generated



TINGLE (THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: MAJORA'S MASK)
Randomly generated



TOAD
Randomly generated



UNOWN
Amass over 16,500 feet in the Home Run contest. You'll need to score high with each character to raise the point total



VIRESSES (DR. MARIO)
Randomly generated



WARIO
Finish All-Star mode



SECRET ACCESS

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2



BATMAN: VENGEANCE

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. A sound will ring out when the cheats are entered correctly.

All Cheats - L2, R2, L2, R2, □ (x2), ○ (x2)

Infinite Batarangs - L1, R1, L2, R2

Infinite Batlauncher - ○ □ □ □ □ L1, R1, L2, R2

Infinite Handcuffs - □ □ □ □ □ L2, R2 (x2), L2
 "Daddy Fat Sacks"
 Memphis, TN



LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

Enter this cheat at the Main Menu. You'll know the code is inputted correctly when a message flashes onto the screen.

All Wrestlers - Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, △ (x2), □
 Tony Newbanks
 Los Angeles, CA

HALF-LIFE DECAy

Enter these codes at the Cheat Codes menu located within the Options screen.

Alien Mode - Up, △, Up, △, Up, △, Up, △, Up, △

Infinite Ammo - Down, ×, Left, ○, Down, ×, Left, ○

Invincibility - Left, □, Up, △, Right, ○, Down, ×

Invisibility - Left, □, Right, ○, Left, □, Right, ○

Slow Motion - Right, □, Up, △, Right, □, Up, △

Xen Gravity - Up, △, Down, ×, Up, △, Down, ×

Michael Strachowski
 Littleton, CO



JAMES BOND 007 IN...AGENT UNDER FIRE

To unlock the cheats and bonuses in this fine release, you'll need to accomplish a number of tasks, primarily scoring well and beating each level as quickly as you can. If you can do this, you'll receive a Gold Medal and a cheat. At this point, if you reenter the stage, you'll need to repeat your success and also find a specific number of 007 tokens. If you can do this, you'll be rewarded with a Platinum Medal and a cheat.

Stage

Trouble in Paradise
 Precious Cargo
 Dangerous Pursuit
 Bad Diplomacy
 Cold Reception
 Night of The Jackal
 Streets of Bucharest
 Fire and Water
 Forbidden Depths
 Poseidon
 Mediterranean Crisis
 Evil Summit

Gold Medal

Golden Gun
 Golden CH-6
 Unlimited Missiles
 Golden Accuracy
 Golden Clip
 Gold Grenades
 Lotus Esprit
 Rapid Fire
 Golden Armor
 Golden Bullets
 Regenerative Armor
 Unlimited Ammo

Platinum Medal

Rocket Manor (Multiplayer)
 Golden Gun (Multiplayer)
 Stealth Bond (Multiplayer)
 Gravity Boots (Multiplayer)
 Guard (Multiplayer)
 Viper (Multiplayer)
 Alpine Guard (Multiplayer)
 Calypso (Multiplayer)
 Golden CH-6 (Multiplayer)
 Cyclops Oil Guard (Multiplayer)
 Poseidon Guard (Multiplayer)
 Carrier Guard (Multiplayer)



"The Rhino"
 Toledo, OH



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Enter all of these case-sensitive codes at the Cheats screen located within the Options menu.

All Cheats - backdoor

All Movies - Peepshow

Everything Unlocked! - YOHOHIES

Steven Frost
 Duluth, MN



SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER

To enter this cheat, head to the Main Menu, then High-light Options. A sound will ring out if the code is entered correctly.

Max Freeride Statistics - Hold L1 and Right, then tap △ (x2), ○, △.

Vinny Westenberg
 National Falls, WV

CODE OF THE MONTH



BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

To enter these cheats, you must press every button simultaneously. A sound won't ring out for Character Level 20. Simply enter your character menu and check the status to see if the code has taken effect.

Character Level 20 – R2, L1, Left, △, R3
Invulnerability & Level Skip – R2, L1, Left, △, Start

Jason Kesley
 Oakland, CA



THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

These secret character codes require the alteration of the PlayStation 2's internal clock.

Christmas Apu – Change the PS2's date to 12.25.2001.
Halloween Bart – Change the PS2's date to 10.31.2001.
New Year's Krusty – Change the PS2's date to 01.01.2001.
Thanksgiving Marge – Change the PS2's date to 11.22.2001.

Thomas Williams
 North Ridge, NH

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

Alternate Ending – Successfully complete the game with 100% to unlock a hilarious second ending as well as a new door.

John Stockton
 Sucktook City, UT



CRAZY TAXI

Another Day Mode – At the Character Selection screen, tap the R Button. Now, hold the R Button and press A on the desired character. If this code is entered correctly, a message will appear at the lower left-hand corner of the screen.

Expert Mode – Head to the Time Selection menu, highlight the desired function, then simultaneously press and hold the L and R Buttons and Start. If entered correctly, a message will appear in the lower left-hand corner of the Character Selection screen.

First-Person View – During gameplay, plug an additional controller into port 3, then hold the L and R Buttons and B.

No Arrows – Head to the Time Selection menu, highlight the desired function, then simultaneously press and hold the R Button and Start. If entered correctly, a message will appear in the lower left-hand corner of the Character Selection screen.

No Destination Mark – Head to the Time Selection menu, highlight the desired function, then simultaneously press and hold the L Button and Start. If entered correctly, a message will appear in the lower left-hand corner of the Character Selection screen.

Push Bike – At the Character Selection screen, simultaneously press the L and R Buttons. Release the L Button, followed by the R Button. Again, press and hold this combo, then release them at the same time. Now, press A.

Speedometer – During gameplay, plug an additional controller into port 3, then hold the L and R Buttons and X.

Zoom Mode – During gameplay, plug an additional controller into port 3, then hold the L and R Buttons and Y.
 Jackie Chan
 New York, NY

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Enter all of these case-sensitive codes at the Cheats screen located within the Options menu. The sound of a cash register ringing will confirm that the code was indeed entered correctly. If you don't have plans to beat the game with every character, be sure to check out the movies. They rock!

All Movies – POPCORN
Max Statistics – MAXMEOUT

"Gi Droid"
 (location unknown – last seen
 skipping a rock across Lake Superior)

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

These secret character codes require the alteration of the GameCube's internal clock.

Christmas Apu – Change the GC's date to 12.25.2001.
Halloween Bart – Change the GC's date to 10.31.2001.
New Year's Krusty – Change the GC's date to 01.01.2001.
Thanksgiving Marge – Change the GC's date to 11.22.2001.

Thomas Williams
 North Ridge, NH



DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. You'll hear a snapping sound when the cheat is inputted correctly. Also, the GameCube direction pad is quite slippery, so make sure your motions are extremely precise.

All Bikes – Up, Left, Down, Right, Down (x2), Right, Down (x2), Left, B
Amish Boy – Up, Left, Down, Right (x2), Left, Left, Down, Up, Left, B
FMV Clips – Up, Left, Down, Right, Left (x2), Right, Left, Up, Down, B
Mike Dias – Up, Left, Down, Right (x2), Left, Up, Down, Up, Right, B
Park Editor Items – Up, Left, Down, Right, Down, Up (x2), Down, Right (x2), B
Park Editor Themes – Up, Left, Down, Right, Down, Up, Down, Right, Left (x2), B
Ultimate Cheat – Up, Right, Down, Left, Right (x2), Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, Left, Right, Right, Down, B

"Freak Monster"
 Wellington, GA

STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER

Enter all of these codes at the Passcodes screen.

Art Gallery – EXHIBIT!
Audio Commentary – BLAHLAHLA
Black & White Mode – LIONHEAD
Credits – THATSME!
Documentary – ?INSIDER
Music Hall – COMPOSER

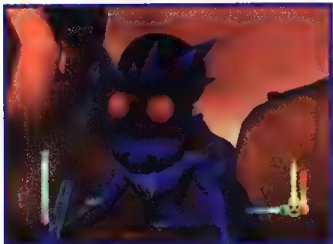
Herman Moore
 Hershfield, NJ

EXTREME G3

Enter this code at the Main Menu. If the code is entered correctly, a message will flash onto the screen.

Infinite Shields – L Button + R Button, Z, L Button + R Button, Z

"The Vidman"
 Upton, MN



AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

Enter all of these codes during gameplay. These sequences must be inputted as quickly as you can. If you are successful in your actions, a sound will ring out. You don't need to pause or hold any buttons down. Just enter the codes swiftly.

Afros & Disco Music – Down, Right, Black + White, click Right analog stick, click Left analog stick, press Left analog stick Right + Right analog stick Left, B, Y

Big Heads – Click Right analog stick, R Button, Down, Up, A

Invincibility – X, Black, White, Left Button + Right Button, click Right analog stick + Left analog stick

Pause Cam – R Button, Down, Up, Down, Up, click Right analog stick, click Left analog stick. Note: When this code is entered, use the buttons on the controller to move around the level and zoom in and out. Press Back to return to the game.)

Save Anywhere – White, Up, Down, A, B, click Right analog stick

Lindsay Stupido
Lame Game City, MI

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. You'll hear a snapping sound when the cheat is inputted correctly.

Amish Boy – Up, Left, Down, Right (x2), Left (x2), Down, Up, Left, X

FMV Clips – Up, Left, Down, Right, Left (x2), Right, Left, Up, Down, X

Mike Dias – Up, Left, Down, Right, Right, Left, Up, Down, Up, Right, X

Park Editor Items – Up, Left, Down, Right, Down, Up (x2), Down, Right (x2), X

Park Editor Themes – Up, Left, Down, Right, Down, Up, Down, Right, Left (x2), X

Ultimate Cheat – Up, Right, Down, Left, Right (x2), Up, Down, Left, Right, Up, Left, Right (x2), Down, X

"The Joystick Juggalo"
Detroit, MI

NFL FEVER 2002

All Teams & Stadiums – Input BROADWAY as your User Profile name to unlock all of the hidden teams and stadiums.

Demo Mode – At the Press Start Button screen, simultaneously press Black, White, L Button, R Button.

Jacob Jackson
Sibley, Texas



DARK SUMMIT

Enter all of these codes during gameplay. When you press Back + Start simultaneously, the pause menu will appear. After a code is entered correctly, a bell will ring.

Alien – Hold Back + Start, then press Y, L Button, X, B, R Button, A, R Button, X.

All Challenges – Hold Back + Start, then press Y, L Button, X, B, R Button, A, R Button, Y.

All Characters – Hold Back + Start, then press Y, L Button, X, B, R Button, A, R Button, B.

Huge Points – Hold Back + Start, then press Y, L Button, X, B, R Button, A, Right Button, A.

Propel Canisters – Hold Back + Start, then press Y, X, B, R Button (Simultaneously press the L + R Buttons to shoot canisters.)

Slow Motion – Hold Back + Start, then press Y, X, B, L Button. (Simultaneously press the L + R Buttons to slow the game down.)

Randy Moss
Minneapolis, MN

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE

These secret character codes require the alteration of the Xbox's internal clock.

Christmas Apu – Change the Xbox's date to 12.25.2001.

Halloween Bart – Change the Xbox's date to 10.31.2001.

New Year's Krusty – Change the Xbox's date to 01.01.2001.

Thanksgiving Marge – Change the Xbox's date to 11.22.2001.

Thomas Williams
North Ridge, NH

AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

Enter all of these case-sensitive codes at the Cheats screen located within the Options menu. A sound will confirm correct code entry.

Free Movement – ZIPster

Level Select – GimmeGimme

Moon Gravity – MegaLeg

No Tree Collision – buzzsaW

Rider Raven – RidinwRaven

Rider Steezy – ChillinwSteezy

Super Jumps – StickIT

Jarris Hampton
Aura, SD

FUZION FRENZY

Enter all of these codes at the in-game pause menu.

First Person Mode – Hold the L Button, then press Y, B, Y, B.

Mutant Mode – Hold the L Button, then press Y, B, X (x2).

Squeaky Voices – Hold the L Button, then press Y, X, Y (x2).

Turbo Mode – Hold the L Button, then press Y, A, Y (x2).

Welsh Mode – Hold the L Button, then press Y (x4).

Neil Gaze
Washington, DC



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2X

Enter both of these codes from the in-game pause menu. The screen will shake when the cheat is entered correctly.

Master Cheat – Hold the L Button, then press Start, A, White, Up, Right, Down, A, Y, B, A, B, Y.

All Levels – Hold the L Button, then press Down, Up, Left (x2), B, A, B, Y.

Jamie Kahn
East Haven, CO



ARCTIC THUNDER

All Invisible – X, Y, X, R Button, Y (x2), Start

All Missile – X (x3), White, Y, Start

Boost Mode – Y, Black (x2), Y, R Button, Start

Clones – White, L Button (x2), Y, White, Y, Start

Grappling Hooks – Y (x2), L Button, Y (x2), White, Start

No Catch Up – Y, X, Y (x2), X, Start

No Drones – X (x2), Y (x2), White, Black, Start

No Power-Ups – X (x2), Y, X, R Button, X, Start

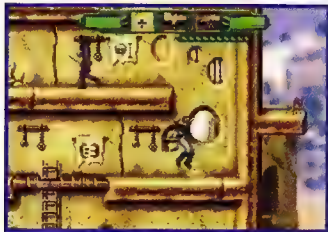
Random Power-Ups – Black, R Button, X, Y, Black, R Button, Start

Rooster Tails – Black, R Button, L Button, White, X, Start

Snow Bombs – Y (x2), Black, R Button, Start

Super Boost – Y, White, X, R Button, X, L Button, Start

Karl Malone
Iuck City, UT


GAME BOY ADVANCE
**PLANET OF THE APES**

Enter all of these level codes at the Lock screen.

Level 3 – F5BMGF
 Level 5 – 76FNHB
 Level 6 – P7GRXK
 Level 7 – 6B7VM#
 Level 8 – QK6293

*Dale Silvern
 Seattle, WA*

F-14 TOMCAT

Input all of these level codes at the Enter Password screen.

Level 3 – GSDFBFFT
 Level 4 – RRRHCFDM
 Level 5 – BPSXFDNF
 Level 6 – LDFSDTKQ
 Level 7 – PXSBSZJN
 Level 8 – DKXZ GZQK
 Level 9 – GKQB GHCT
 Level 10 – DTRH RPFJ
 Level 11 – WZPK JYXZ
 Level 12 – JDZFLKVF
 Level 13 – SPNGDRRG
 Level 14 – SFGJHDDH
 Level 15 – LPRHPRFZ
 Level 16 – TDKZXSHX
 Level 17 – DGBVXMNB
 Level 18 – KJHGRJCB
 Level 19 – VBMQRWTP
 Level 20 – LKFDSPBV

*"The Scarecrow"
 Burnt Hills, NY*

**ALIENATORS:
 EVOLUTION CONTINUES**

Enter all of these level codes at the Password screen.

Level 2 – MDKMZKCC
 Level 3 – BHSZSKTC
 Level 4 – ZKTSHKMC
 Level 5 – JLPFDKHB
 Level 6 – HMDBRKCB
 Level 7 – GLDKLKZB
 Level 8 – GLPKLKRK
 Level 9 – GLDJBKFF
 Level 10 – GLPJBKFF
 Level 11 – GLDKBKZF
 Level 12 – GLPKBKRF
 Level 13 – GLDJKHD

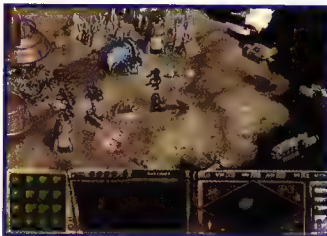
*"Naughty Nick"
 Salco, AK*


RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

Boot up the game with the `sv_cheats 1` command parameter. During gameplay, press `~` to bring up the console window. From here, enter any of the codes below.

All Weapons & Ammo – /give all
Compass – /toggle cg_drawcompass
Disable Enemy AI – /notarget
Field of View – /cg_FOV [0-9]
Full Screen – /toggle r_fullscreen
Gibs – /toggle cg_gibs
Infinite Stamina – /nofatigue
Instant Death – /kill
Invincibility – /god
Max Armor – /give armor
Max Health – /give health
No Clipping – /noclip
Max Stamina – /give stamina
Reconnect – /reconnect
Show Commands – /cmdhist
Show HUD – /toggle cg_draw2d
Show Server Settings – /serverinfo
Team Overlay – /toggle cg_drawteamoverlay
Timer – /toggle cg_drawtimer
Quit game – /quit

*Ike Vanberg
 Joliet, IL*

**STAR WARS:
 GALACTIC BATTLEGROUNDS**

During gameplay, press [Enter] to bring up the console window. From here, enter any of the codes below.

1,000 Carbon – forcecarbon
1,000 Food – forcefood
1,000 Nova – forcenova
1,000 Ore – forceora
Aggressive Ewoks – simonsays
Destroy All Enemies – tarkin
Destroy Highlighted Enemy – darkside [1-8]
Full Map – forceexplore
Invisible Naval Vessels – forceboat
Instant Building – forcebuild
Reveal Map – forcesight
Speed Boats – scaryneighbor
Win Mission – skywalker

*"The Digital Kid"
 San Jose, CA*


PS2 PLAYSTATION 2**DYNASTY WARRIORS 3**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
 0E3C7DF21645EBB3
 0C0C4C1FF88C8A6B

All Characters –
 3C298F2BF9FDFD1
 3C298F2FF9FDFD1
 3C298F33F9FDFD1
 3C298F37F9FDFD1
 3C298F3BF9FDFD1
 3C298F3FF9FDFD1
 3C298F43F9FDFD1
 3C298F47F9FDFD1
 3C298F4BF9FDFD1
 1C298F4FF8CFEF1
 (save game to reveal)

All Movies –
 3C298F53F8BFFFFF
 (save game to reveal)

**METAL GEAR SOLID 2:
 SONS OF LIBERTY**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
 0E3C7DF21645EBB3
 0C072E5BF8966B77

All Dog Tags –
 3C15B02BFFFFFFF
 3C15B02FFFFFFF
 3C15B033FFFFFFF
 3C15B037FFFFFFF
 3C15B03BFFFFFFF
 3C15B03FFFFFFFF
 3C15B043FFFFFFF
 3C15B047FFFFFFF
 3C15B04BFFFFFFF
 3C15B04FFFFFFFF
 3C15B053FFFFFFF
 2C15B057F8CFCCFF

ENTER TO WIN

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these halloved pages will receive a Secret Access T-shirt.

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 Minneapolis, MN 55401
 secretaccess@gameinformer.com

CLASSIC GI

MUSEUM OF CONTROLLER ODDITIES

MIND LINK

System: Atari 2600, Atari 7800, and Atari Computers • Manufacturer: Atari
Released: Cancelled (1984)

Let's start things off with the Atari Mind Link, surely the most bizarre and ill-fated video game controller ever made. This ambitious peripheral was designed by Atari's Tom Palecki, and purported to allow users to control the action onscreen with their thoughts. Of course, this was complete and utter fiction. The unit, fashioned to the player's head with a Velcro strap, was actually a primitive biofeedback device which measured the electrical current generated by the muscles in the player's forehead and transmitted it to an infrared receiver on top of the television. Two games were created to work with the unit, Bionic Breakthrough (a clone of the popular Breakout), and Mind Maze. Sadly, it proved to be virtually useless as a controller, and the strain of frantically raising and lowering their eyebrows gave many who tried the Mind Link painful headaches.

Atari's high hopes for the Mind Link were quickly dashed at the Summer CES convention in 1983. At a heavily attended press conference intended to unveil the company's new products for the year, the peripheral provided the audience with a bit of unintentional comic relief. At the beginning of the Mind Link portion of the presentation, the assembled press corps burst out in laughter, suspecting that the announcement was nothing more than an elaborate practical joke. Things got worse during the demonstration, when the unit fell from the head of the Atari executive, crashing to the floor and breaking. Following this inauspicious debut, the Mind Link was quietly cancelled, and was never released commercially. Currently, only a handful of Mind Link prototypes exist, and most are in the hands of video game collectors.

As the most creative of all high-technology industries, video games often attract free-minded individuals who seek to create products that change the way people play and interact with games. While many commonplace controllers are still descendants of the simple joystick-and-button configuration used in most early arcade machines, there have always been companies willing to take a risk on new peripherals that promise to take basic concepts of control and gameplay in strange new directions. Some of these ideas, like the trackball or the gun controller, have been successful. But most were destined to fail.

Of course, most failed controllers aren't particularly useful or interesting, and now serve only as examples of shoddy manufacture and poor design. However, a select few stand out from the pack, if only for the fact that they were so bizarre, so completely unique in their design, so radically different from the norm. In this month's Classic GI, we take a look back at some of the most peculiar controllers and peripherals ever released. Today, many of these are extremely collectable, and maybe you're among the lucky (or unlucky) gamers who have some in your collection. So, without further ado, we proudly present Game Informer's Museum of Controller Oddities.



U-FORCE

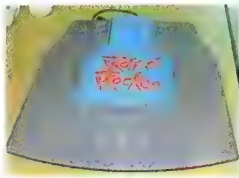
System: NES • Manufacturer: Broderbund
Released: 1989

Appearing on store shelves a few months before the Power Glove, Broderbund's U-Force was similar in design and principle to Mattel's popular peripheral. Constructed much like a laptop computer, the controller used vertical and horizontal "force fields" to sense the motion of the player's hands. Like the Power Glove, individual motions could be programmed to various controller functions using a series of switches. Although not extremely popular, the unit reportedly worked well with the classic NES title Mike Tyson's Punch-Out, and was much more comfortable to use than the Power Glove — due to the fact the unit could be placed on a tabletop, allowing the player to sit down.

ROLL & ROCKER

System: NES • Manufacturer: LJN • Released: 1989

Here's yet another peripheral that became the bane of uncoordinated gamers everywhere. The Roll & Rocker, perhaps inspired by the Pogo Ball (another fad of the '80s), used a large disc that was basically an oversized control cross. A conventional NES controller plugged into the back of the unit, so the player could access the A and B buttons. So, how did it work? Not so good. Unless you have perfect balance, or are a member of the Cirque du Soleil, you probably want to skip the Roll & Rocker. Recently, a guest at the GI offices saw our Roll & Rocker and commented, "Yeah, my friend had one of those. It was worthless." Well said.



POWER GLOVE

System: NES • Manufacturer: Mattel • Released: 1989

Heavily marketed and promoted by toy giant Mattel at the height of the Nintendo Entertainment System, this is probably the most famous of all the products we'll examine in this article. The Power Glove worked in tandem with a sensor rig that was placed around the owner's television. These sensors monitored the player's hand and finger motions, which could be programmed to trigger various controller functions.

To aid in the often-complicated task of programming the unit, Mattel included 15 preset function settings that were supposed to work with most common types of NES games. However, if you are one of the unfortunate thousands who actually purchased a Power Glove, you already know that this product worked better in theory than in practice. In addition to the incomprehensible programming interface, owners also experienced difficulties with the mounted sensors, which only fit certain size televisions, and the fatigue inherent in holding their hands out at a right angle for hours on end.

Although it was relatively cheap and not particularly user-friendly, there was actually a good bit of cutting-edge technology that went into the creation of the Power Glove, which was born out of a NASA project conducted by a company called VPL Labs. NASA had contracted VPL to design a robotic hand which astronauts could use to repair satellites while remaining onboard their spacecraft. This precursor to the Power Glove, called the Z-Glove, used optical fibers that would relay data to the remote hand, which would mimic the astronaut's motions. Eventually, VPL licensed the technology to Mattel, and the Power Glove was born. Years later, the rugged, low-cost toy is still popular among virtual-reality researchers for use in experiments.

ACTIVATOR

System: Genesis • Manufacturer: Sega
Released: 1993

Along with the Sega VR visor, the Activator was the beginning of the company's attempt to take the Genesis into the world of "virtual reality" (one of the trendy buzzwords of the early '90s). An extension of the motion-sensor technology that helped create the U-Force and Power Glove, the Activator sought to incorporate the player's entire body into the interactive experience. The controller was constructed as an octagon made up of plastic strips, each of which projected an infrared beam toward the ceiling. By punching or kicking, players could break the beam, which would trigger one of eight preprogrammed controller functions. Unfortunately, Sega forgot that most gamers are uncoordinated and rather averse to physical activity. Thus, the Activator was doomed to be a footnote in video game history.



Here's an example of a picture created with the Vectrex Light Pen (photo courtesy of Vectrex Resource Center)

**VECTREX LIGHT PEN**

System: Vectrex • Manufacturer: Milton Bradley/GCE • Released: 1983

Here's an example of a forgotten peripheral that was actually a fun, trippy little product. It released in 1983 for Milton Bradley's Vectrex console, at a time when the system was already fading into obscurity. The Light Pen was sold with a game called Art Master, which allowed users to create unique drawings on the Vectrex screen. Upon starting up the game, a set of crosshairs appeared onscreen. By holding the Light Pen in the center of the crosshairs and moving it a short distance, the crosshairs would then move to the pen's new location. In this manner, drawings could be created using a series of straight lines. Due to technological limitations, the Light Pen could not create curved lines, so any artwork created with the program shared a "connect-the-dots" look. Two other cartridges, Animation (which let users animate their drawings), and Melody Master (a primitive music program), were also compatible with the unit. Currently, Light Pens are in short supply on the collector's market, causing present-day Vectrex fanatics to post schematics that allow you to build your own Light Pen for less than \$20.

WHAC-A-CRITTER CONTROLLER

System: Genesis • Manufacturer: Realtec • Released: 1995

There's a difference between odd and just plain stupid, and this might be closer to the latter. Made by the short-lived Realtec Corporation, this controller worked in conjunction with Whac-A-Critter, a simplistic title based on the familiar "wack-a-mole" carnival game. As pixelated vermin popped up from one of nine holes, players used a small mallet to hit the corresponding button on this special packed-in controller. Whac-A-Critter (also developed by Realtec) is a rare, unlicensed Genesis game, and was produced without any endorsement from Sega. This is very hard to find, and we estimate that less than 10,000 were ever manufactured.

**THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY**

States. Of course, these so-called experts were soon proved terribly wrong. In September 1998, the games (retitled Pokémon Red and Blue) became instant hits in America, and one of the most successful franchises in the history of video games. Pokémon grew into a national obsession, spawning myriad classroom disturbances, a popular television series, a Wizards of the Coast collectible card game, and eventually making the cover of *Time* magazine.

In February 1996, Nintendo released its highly anticipated Game Boy titles Pocket Monsters Red and Pocket Monsters Green in Japan. Soon, the entire island nation came under the spell of Ash and his band of brightly colored creatures. Although hugely popular overseas, most industry analysts did not think the Pocket Monsters phenomenon would spread to the United

**GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME**

By Stephen Moore

Every month one of *Game Informer's* readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game of All Time.

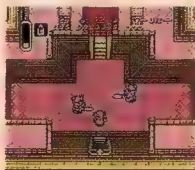
**THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST**

FORMAT SNES
PUBLISHER NINTENDO

Out of every game ever released since the dawn of video games, *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past* is the greatest. If you ever picked up the controller to play this masterpiece, you couldn't rest until you finished the entire game. It had enticing gameplay, a brilliant plot, and top-of-the-line graphics (at least for a 16-bit system) — all the ingredients of a masterpiece.

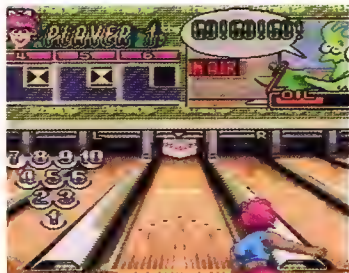
Upon starting the game, you watched a cutscene in which Zelda talked to you through telepathy. When you got into the actual gameplay, there were three mind-boggling dungeons to complete in order to gather the three pendants and get the Master Sword. Once you got the sword, you had to go save the princess and kill the evil wizard Angham. Just when you thought it was over, you found out you had to go back to complete seven more dungeons. Everything about this game is much too impressive.

Link to the Past's graphics and sound were unbelievably incredible for its time. You could hear an angry swarm of bees buzzing when you smacked into their hive. You heard the very realistic explosions whether you were blowing a wall up or stepping on a hidden bomb in the bushes. Both the realism of the debris flying from an enemy you just killed, and the gorgeous opening cutscene showed off the dedication of Shigeru Miyamoto, and made this the best of the Zelda series. This game is one of the few reasons I still have my SNES. All you Zelda fans who haven't played *A Link to the Past* should do whatever it takes to get this one.

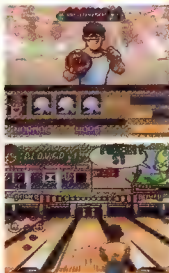


SNES

SUPER BOWLING



RETRO RATING
8



Bowling has always fallen in a similar niche category with fishing, casino, and billiards titles. They all have a small, loyal audience (stereotyped as rednecks), but most of the titles meld together into an unrecognizable heap. Super Bowling does the sport proud, though, by being an entertaining roll down the alley on the Super Nintendo. You have choices on nearly every aspect of the game – the sex and race of your bowler, ball weight (from 8 to 16 pounds), the oil level of the alley, etc. Super Bowling's gameplay has you setting a position, adjusting your hook, then nailing your power. Meters move rapidly, but not so fast that you can't easily pick up spares and get your first ball in the pocket. It may be a bit too easy, and we've scored perfect 300 games on multiple occasions. Golf mode is a fun little minigame where you are faced with difficult spare situations. Get a few friends and some beverages, and Super Bowling can be almost as fun as the real thing – and you can wear your own shoes.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** AMERICAN TECHNOS ■ **DEVELOPER** ATHENA/TECHNOS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1992

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD



RETRO RATING
8.25



The 1990s were a battleground for a massive mascot debate, pitting Sonic the Hedgehog against Mario. One console generation earlier, however, the aforementioned plumber took on Sega's Alex Kidd, star of several games on the 8-bit Sega Master System. Though the premature death of the SMS and its lack of popularity cut this showdown short, you can't discount Alex Kidd as one of the great platform stars of the era. Instead of hopping on bad guys, Alex just flat-out punched them. The game's levels scrolled much more vertically than Mario's, and had many elements to break up the status quo, including motorcycles, helicopters, and boss battles that consisted of rock-scissors-paper, best two out of three. Miracle World's graphics were vivid and comical, and the music was equally perky. These child-appealing elements hid some challenging difficulty, though. Had Alex been on a more popular system, his legacy may have carried on to the next-gen consoles. As it is, he remains just a fond memory.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1986

TI-99/4A

MUNCH MAN



RETRO RATING
7.5



Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and the success of Pac-Man bred many pretenders. The TI-99/4A was no exception, and Texas Instruments crafted a very worthy clone. Munch Man was a green guy, but rather than eating pellets, he made a chain behind him as he traversed the one-screen maze. If he filled every path with his butt phlog, he would go on to the next level. Standing in his way, though, were four Honooos. These enemies took new shapes in every stage, and became increasingly difficult as you progressed. Sometimes they look like mailboxes. Other times, they more resemble tomatoes. The shape of the playing field doesn't change, though, except on the final stage (before looping) when the whole area is invisible. Munch Man can gobble up power-ups to turn the tide on the Honooos. Instead of plain old dots, they're in the shape of Texas Instruments logos. It's really entertaining to keep playing, just to see what new form the Honooos will take, and overall Munch Man was a good Pac alternative for TI owners.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TEXAS INSTRUMENTS ■ **DEVELOPER** TEXAS INSTRUMENTS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1982

NES

ARKANOID



RETRO RATING
8.5



The action is undeniable, the premise is unmistakable, and the game is a classic in every respect. Simplicity is not always a bad thing – and Arkanoid is a perfect example. As many of you know, this game consists of little more than stopping a ball from getting past your bumper. Of course, no one can forget about the crazy power-ups that roll down the screen if you happen to hit a lucky block. Ranging in effect from transforming your paddle into a laser-shooting juggernaut, to slowing down your bouncy query, you'll find yourself wasting many a blissful hour trying as hard as you can to complete level after level. If you don't have the twist-top controller (which came included with the NES cart, making it one of the rarest and most expensive games for the system), winning this game may be a pipe dream, but there are numerous codes available to help you in your quest. This classic has aged marvelously.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TAITO ■ **DEVELOPER** TAITO ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1987

CLASSIC CODES

NES

DOOZILLA

Level Passwords – Go to your planet of choice merely by entering these codes.

Earth – HR6AMU6696 UCUGXK

Mars – XE5NYP2RL3 NNWGUJ9LT6RR

Mars (last hex) – Y4RKAQMDR1 G6S4XP

Jupiter – XOKQWPT6TH NQJ59D97T637E

Saturn (last hex) – TJRNOO4NNU 9WLJT3

Uranus – L4HM2F5EUE D7846ASSP4WXFCK

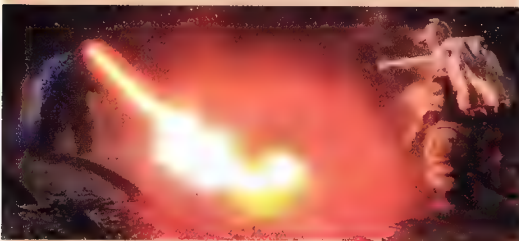
Pluto – WR65MWHFGR WCGXOJ

Neptune – H46NAP5CX2G8HK3H

Planet X – 4J62STRMH9 CWU58L

Battle Ghidora – For this final space monster showdown, enter **MONSTER 0** as your password.

Ending – To see the game's ending without plowing through the opposition, enter **START TO END** on the password screen.



KID ICARUS

Invincibility and Unlimited Feathers – Go to the password screen, and enter **ICARUS FIGHTS MEDUSA ANGELS**. This will give you a load of cheats, including making you invulnerable to attacks, putting you in level 2-4, and loading you down with as many feathers as you could possibly use.

Continue – If you don't want to start from scratch after receiving a game over, hit **B, A, B** before the title screen comes back on. You'll now start anew from the world you left off, with the same gear.

Final Countdown – You want to start at the game's last level, with everything you need to save the day? Enter **DANGER !!!!! TERROR HORROR** as your password.

SNES

SUPER BOWLING

300 Game – You don't need to be a middle-aged, overweight, balding man to bowl the perfect game, as long as you're playing Super Bowling on Super Nintendo. The best way to achieve this score is to select the pink-haired female, make her right-handed, and give her the heaviest ball, middle oil, and medium difficulty level. Now, line up to the far right of the lane. Put the aim cursor between the middle and the left-hand side. On the power meter, try to get this cursor between the middle (weakest throw), and halfway to the outside. You should throw nothing but strikes for the rest of your days, and have the adulation of pin-monkeys everywhere.



SECRET OF EVERMORE

Amazing Defense – There's a way to become almost invulnerable in this American-developed Square RPG. First, unequip everything. Cast Defend on yourself. Now save the game and reset it. Load up the save and chill out while Defend runs its course. Now you'll have some bad-ass defensive stats. Physical damage will only hit you for 1. You will be susceptible to magic attacks, though, and you can't equip anything or you'll return to your regular state.

Get Sting Spell – This is one hard magic attack to find. Your best hope is to search every single oasis in the Nobilia Desert. With luck, you'll come across an alchemist who will bestow Sting upon you. This spell hurts bees at your enemies.

Get Lance Spell – This is another elusive spell. At Ivor Tower, there is a boy inside a house who talks about his brother, Lance. A woman in the same area warns you that Lance's treasures are extremely important to him. Go upstairs, and resist the temptation to open Lance's booty. Come back down the stairs and meet up with Lance, who's sporting a beard. When he asks if you touched his treasures, tell him no. He'll graciously bestow the spell upon you, which tosses an energy spear at adversaries.

GAME BOY

LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING

Link The Thief – Bring out the klepto in the game's hero by going into a shop, grabbing what you want, then run out the door while the shopkeeper looks at the top of the screen. There are disadvantages to this, though. For one, everyone will call you THIEF for the rest of the game. For another thing, if you try to return to the shop where you ganked your item, the shopkeeper will kill you. That's a good lesson for the kiddies.

Chicken Chopper – Chickens are easy and fun prey for your sword's fury. Take it to extremes, and you'll be the one getting beaten. Just repeatedly attack one of the game's fine feathered friends, and eventually a whole roost will swarm down on you like the wrath of God. Leave the screen or you will die.



TAMAGOTCHI

Potty-Trained Pet – To make your virtual critter sit on the toilet, use the rubber duck icon a hair before they actually do their duty. A toilet appears, which your pet will sit on. How cute!

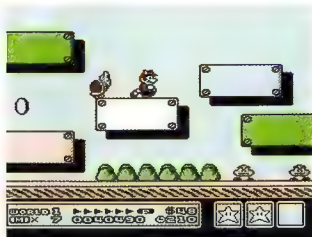
Raise A Dog – To get a dog, feed your Tamagotchi a strict diet of bread. On its sixth birthday it will change into a cuddly canine. How cute!

Raise A Mimitichi – When you hatch a black baby, give it only carrots to eat. Once it becomes six, it will change into a Mimitichi. How cute!

NES

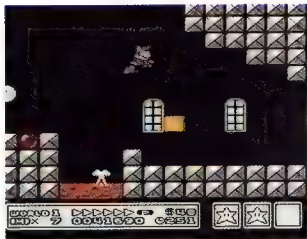
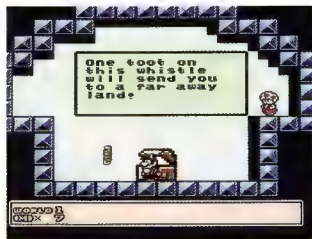


SUPER MARIO BROS. 3



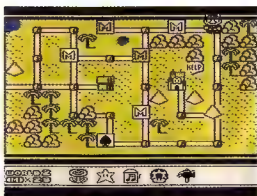
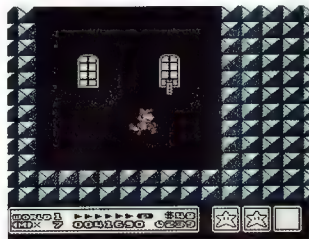
1ST WHISTLE

In World 1-3, work your way to near the end of the level. Backtrack to the floating white platform with a Koopa Troopa on top of it. Knock him off, and hold Down while standing in the middle of it. You'll drop through after a few seconds. Now run to the right, behind the normal black end screen. Here, Toad will hook you up with your first of three whistles.



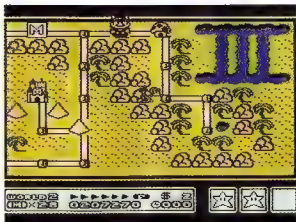
2ND WHISTLE

In World 1's first castle, make sure you have Raccoon Mario and go right until you reach the door. Don't go in, but instead, build up enough speed so you can fly above the left side of the ceiling and back right. Hit when you can't run right anymore, and you'll land in a small room with one lone chest. Inside is the second whistle.



3RD WHISTLE

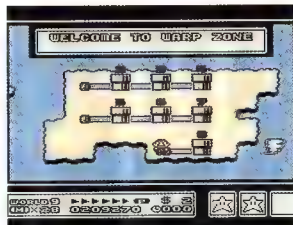
In World 2 (Desert World), go all the way to the far right section of the map. Be sure to have a hammer (from killing a Hammer Brother), and use it to take out the upper-right corner rock. This opens up a new part of the map with a Toad house, and a Hammer Brother who will cough up the third whistle after being defeated.



WHISTLE USE

Once you have the three whistles, how do you use them? Just call them up from your overworld item cache (hit B). After a catchy tune, which may be familiar to Zelda fans, a tornado will whisk you to the Warp Zone. If you use one while in World 1, you can select from worlds 2, 3, or 4.

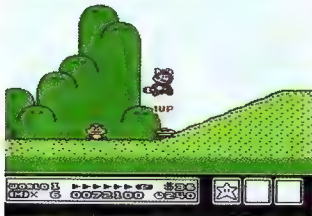
Use one after this (or just use your second on this screen), and you can go to 5, 6, or 7. Finally, if you activate one more whistle, you'll be brought to the game's final stage. If you play it smart – not wasting a whistle until beating World 1 – it'll only take you two of them to get to World 8, where you can rescue Princess Toadstool.



WORLD 1-2 1-UP LOOP

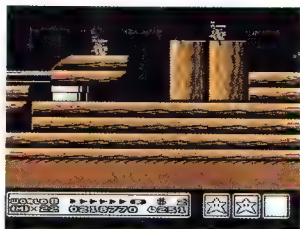
Much like World 3-1 in the original Super Mario Bros., there are ways to boost your number of lives in this game. The first (and perhaps easiest) is on World 1-2. With Raccoon Mario, go to the right of the T-shaped pipe.

When there are multiple Goombas on the screen, jump on one, rebound high off of it, flutter down by tapping the A button, then keep landing on the others. More will funnel out of the pipe, increasing the points awarded for each one munched until you start earning 1-ups.



SWIM CHEAT

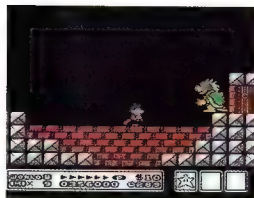
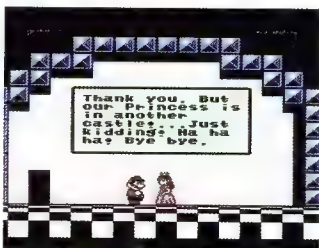
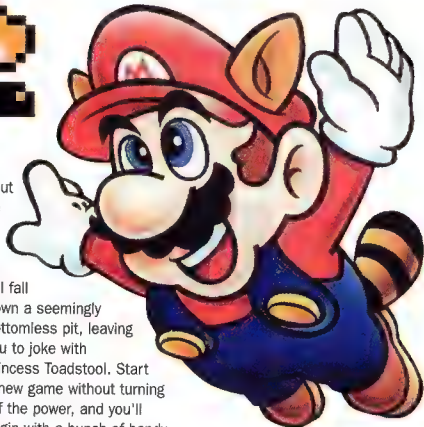
World 8 is full of difficult stages, eating up your lives before the battle with Bowser. The boat level is just one of them, but a strategy in it will keep you from losing precious Marios. Travel right until you find a spot where you can jump in the water. Now, let yourself drop down underneath the hull, and swim for your life! Keep pounding the A button and pressing right, and you'll make it to the end a little soggy, but with all your credits intact.



BEATING BOWSER

The king of the Koopa clan is a big, bad adversary, but the trick is to use his weight against him. Stay in the middle of the screen, avoiding his fireballs. Bowser will then leap high in the air, and come crashing down. Hopefully, he'll land on the bricks, not you. If you get him to jump in the middle three times, he will fall

down a seemingly bottomless pit, leaving you to joke with Princess Toadstool. Start a new game without turning off the power, and you'll begin with a bunch of handy P-Wings.



SPADE GAME

At times, a moving spade will appear on the area map. Walk over it, and Toad will let you play a concentration-style game for prizes. There are only eight combinations, and we've listed them all. You should be able to figure out which one you've been given. You can be wrong two times, giving you ample chances to clean up all the prizes.



Dork Edition: Six Easy Ways to Transform Yourself into the World's Biggest Nerd!



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: KUBRICKS

Manufacturer: Medicom • **Website:** N/A
List Price: \$4.95 (Per Figure)

Kubrick toys are the nerdy versions of Legos. You've probably never heard of the Kubrick line of toys, but they're actually quite popular, especially in Japan. You won't be able to find these figures at your local toy store, but you can order them from Diamond Comics Distributors (<http://csls.diamondcomics.com>). Each figure stands approximately 2 1/2 inches tall and comes with a handful of weapons. Yes, you'd probably be the coolest kid in school if you added these figures to your collection, but you'd also be a complete moron if you decided to line your shelves with these, as opposed to McFarlane's amazingly detailed series of action figures. The first wave of MGS 2 Kubrick figures will be available this March, and includes Snake, Jack, Hal, Ocelot, Olga, and two Gurlukovich soldiers.



SHIGERU MIYAMOTO CHEST TATTOO

Manufacturer: Any Tattoo Parlor • **Website:** N/A • **List Price:** \$2,000

Cool people usually get tattoos of skulls, hearts with daggers through them, strange Egyptian hieroglyphics, barbwire, and snakes. These symbols will be with you for life, so make it count. If you want to be a video game addict until you keel over, do it with style. There's no better way to express this than with a full-size faceprint of the video game god, Shigeru Miyamoto. He's sexy. He's dorky. He's everything a geek aspires to be. Best of all, though, if you're truly talented, you can flex your stomach muscles to alter Miyamoto's facial expressions. Heck, you might even be able to make him talk!

MARBLEIZED CHEATER DICE

Manufacturer: Chessex
Website: www.chessex.com
List Price: \$5.00

Okay, we'll just come out and say it. If you play Dungeons & Dragons, you're a bona fide loser. Thus, you probably carry around a set of 20-sided dice along with your pewter miniatures. While the majority of D&D is make-believe, one aspect comes down to simple math and numbers. You always gamble when you roll the dice, but now with Chessex Marbleized Cheater Dice, the odds will be skewed ever so slightly in your favor. You see, one of the D20 dice features an extra 20 in place of a 1. A D6 has an extra 1 replacing a 6. If you need the advantage, then why not cheat? So what if your friends catch you? By then, your character will be so strong, you can obliterate them all with little effort. If you do plan on picking these dice up, hurry! The purple set is almost sold out!



KRYPTO THE SUPERDOG STATUE

Manufacturer: DC Comics • **Website:** www.dccomics.com
List Price: \$49.95

For some strange reason, the world assumes that people who read comic books are zit-infested, overweight, social outcasts. Even *The Simpsons* pokes fun at this. If you take the time to actually read a comic, you'll see that it's entertainment at its best. There really is nothing nerdy about this hobby—that is, unless you take it to the next level. To truly fall under the stereotype of comic dork, you need to go to the extreme and furnish your abode with worthless crap that defies classification. As luck would have it, DC Comics will soon release one of the stupidest and most worthless products known to man. Meet Krypto, Superman's loyal Kryptonian mutt. This hand-painted, cold-cast porcelain statue depicts one of Krypto's finer moments—atop an asteroid, poised for action. The character was a mistake to begin with, but truly believing people would pay good money for this statue goes beyond comprehension. If you want your dork colors to shine brightly, Krypto will make you glow brighter than the sun.



STAR TREK PHASER REMOTE CONTROL

Manufacturer: Telemania • **Website:** N/A • **List Price:** \$39.95

Do you speak Klingon? Hab SoSII! Quel! Star Trek fans are some of the most tireless nerds we've ever met. They'll stand in line for 10 hours just to get an autographed photo of Tuvok.

Now that's dedication. Well, get this: Instead of using your generic TV remote to tune in to the next episode of *Enterprise*, why not do so with one of Star Trek's most beloved weapons? The phaser!

The primary function of Telemania's Phaser Remote Control flips channels, but as an added bonus, it also comes equipped with blinking lights and authentic Star Trek sound effects! Awesome! Just make sure you have it set to stun!

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER, LOSER!!!



THE ORIGINAL GEEK WEAR POCKET PROTECTOR

Manufacturer: Geekboys
Website: www.geekboys.com
List Price: \$2.50

The pocket protector has been a staple in geekdom for generations and is the simple, yet elegant, way of expressing yourself. A company named Geekboys specializes in pocket protectors. Pictured is its best-selling model, sporting a cute little face of a dork on the front. As if comfort matters, all Geekboys protectors are made of the finest virgin polyvinyl chloride. Geek. Virgin. They just blend together in perfect harmony.



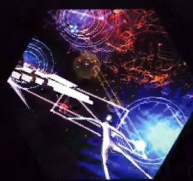
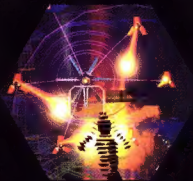
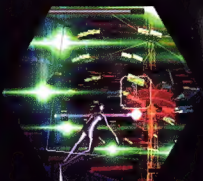
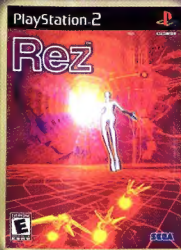


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Thank you!