

GAMER

Computer & Video Games

**SPECIAL
FEATURE**

**Fall Football
Preview
Featuring
Marshall Faulk**

**SEX
LIES
AND
VIDEO GAMES**

- NINJAS!**
- Shinobi
 - Ninja Gaiden
 - Tenchu 3

**OVER
50
GAMES
REVIEWED &
PREVIEWED**

STARRING
DAVE MIRRA BMX XXX
DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME
BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Two Titles Are Set To Change Video Games Forever, But Politics, Big Money, & Your Mother Could Make It Impossible

Find Out Why pg.30

*"Mika" from
Dave Mirra BMX XXX*

COVER 1 of 2

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ISSUE
112

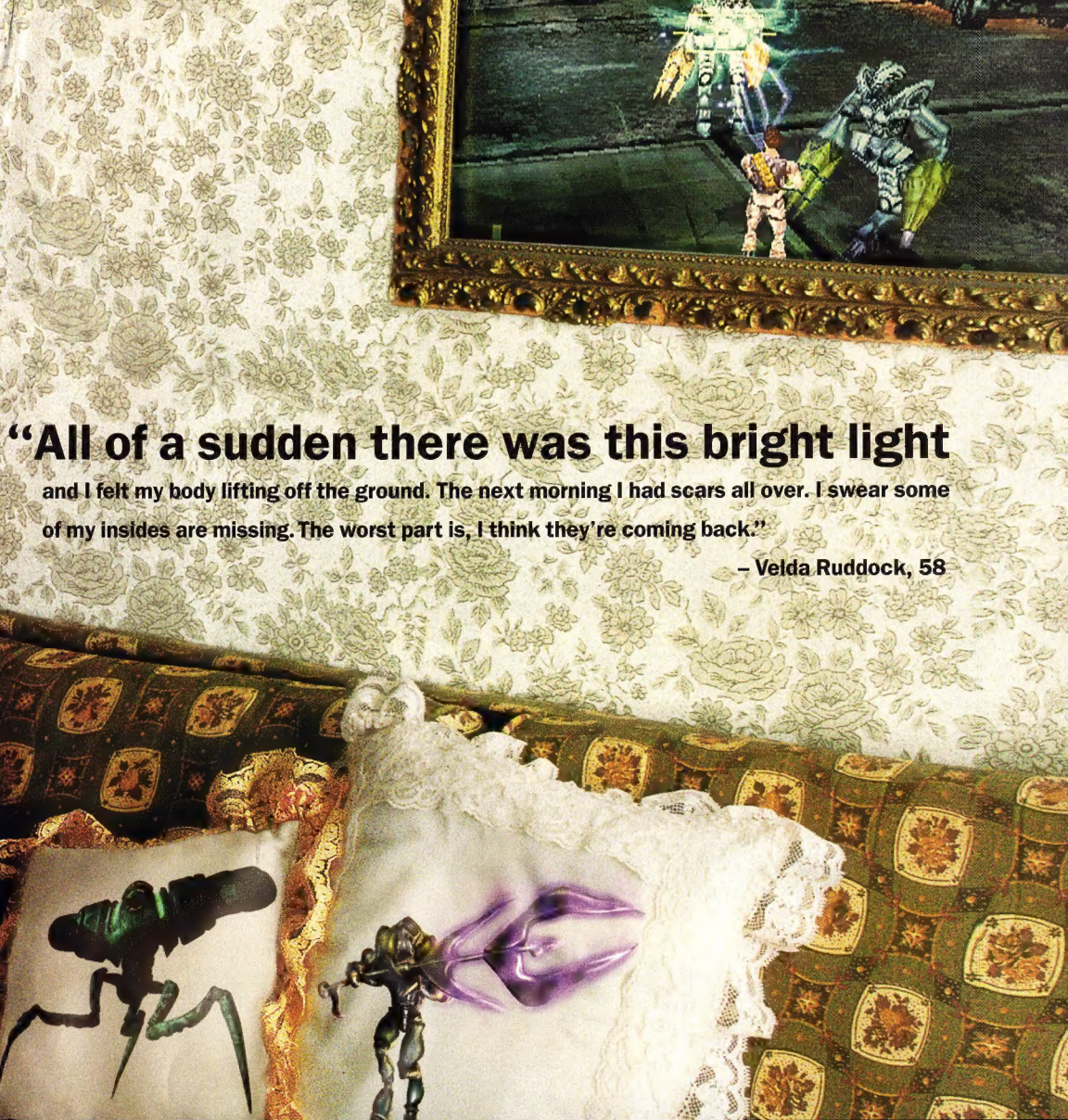
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PlayStation 2

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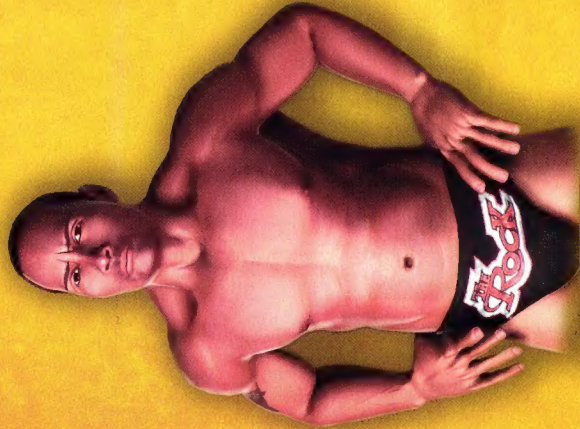
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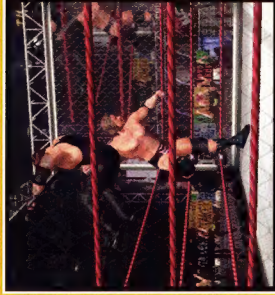


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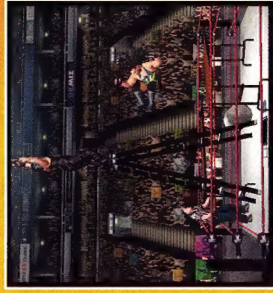


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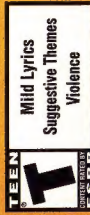
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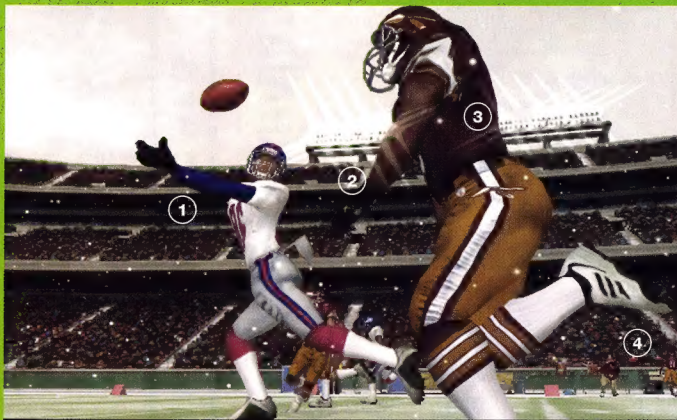
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game studios



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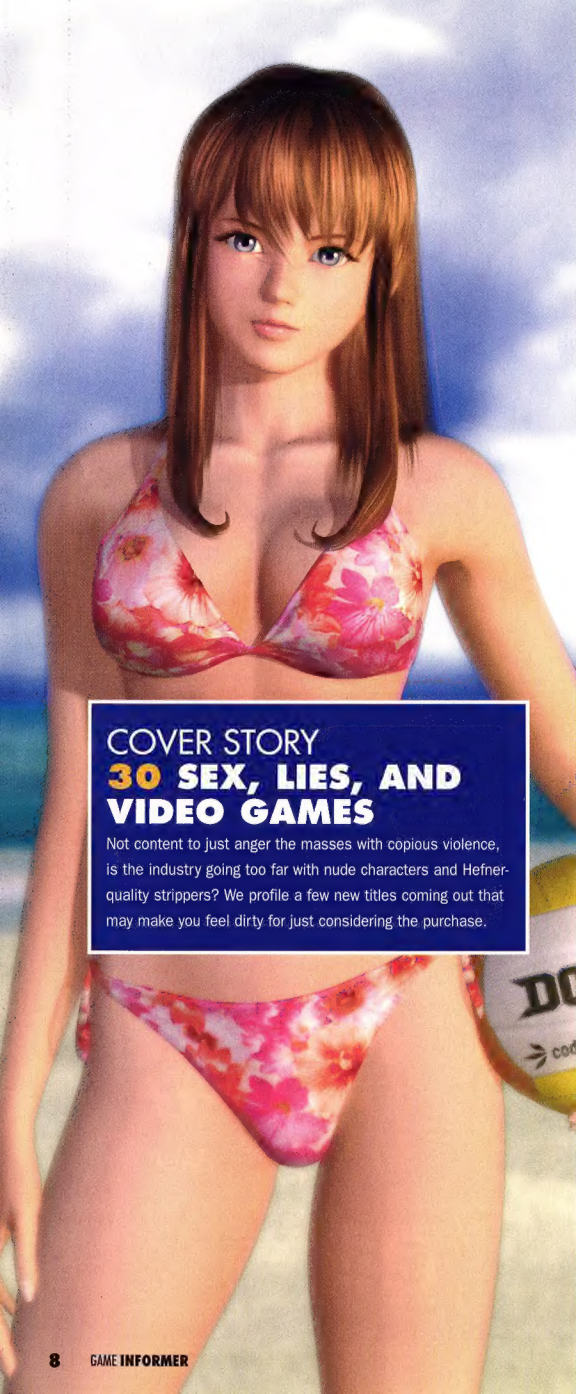
- 1 - Customize your plays to throw off the D
- 2 - Someone should've used the bump-n'-run
- 3 - Updated home and away uniforms
- 4 - One very frustrated defensive coach
- 5 - Dramatic camera angles take you all over the field
- 6 - 60+ teams mean over 1800 possible match-ups
- 7 - Player physiques from L to XXXXXL
- 8 - Updated player rosters
- 9 - Helmets that reflect the playing environment
- 10 - Unique player faces
- 11 - NFL newbies, the Houston Texans
- 12 - Watch your shadow as you drop back
- 13 - Where you sweat — they sweat
- 14 - Shirtless guy with a painted face being loud
- 15 - Use Hot Routes to exploit the defense
- 16 - Cameraman hoping not to be plowed over
- 17 - Total control over the weather — no, not in domes
- 18 - Go from clipboard holder to MVP in Career Mode
- 19 - Realistic blocking schemes
- 20 - Tougher AI anticipates your moves

NFL **NFL 2003**
FEVER

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COVER STORY **30 SEX, LIES, AND VIDEO GAMES**

Not content to just anger the masses with copious violence, is the industry going too far with nude characters and Hefner-quality strippers? We profile a few new titles coming out that may make you feel dirty for just considering the purchase.

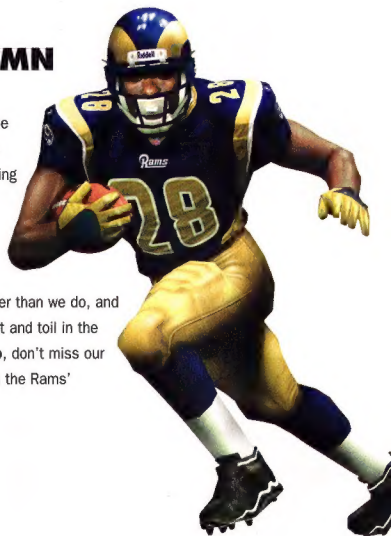
GAMEINFORMER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE

44 AUTUMN HEROES

Somewhere between the post-draft hype and the sweltering heat of training camp is GI's second annual state of the video game football nation. Nobody works these games over harder than we do, and you can taste the sweat and toil in the pages. Mmmmm!!! Also, don't miss our exclusive interview with the Rams' Marshall Faulk.



FEATURE

52 RETURN OF THE NINJAS

In the battle royal of ninja games, three champions have outlasted all others: Ninja Gaiden, Tenchu, and Shinobi. Now, all three are primed for another epic showdown on next-generation platforms.



Spells punishing: 26,875

Tournaments underway: 882

Creatures attacking: 49,438

Prizes on the line: 5,000

Deadly strategies: Unlimited

MAGIC

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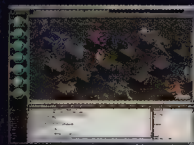
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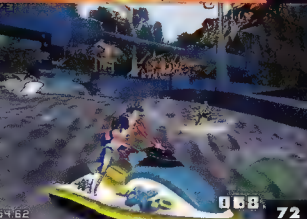




64



70



72



56



68

14 EDITOR'S FORUM

Sports Games Will Lead the Online Revolution. Which of the big three has a plan compelling enough to get all consoles online?

16 GI SPY

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

18 DEAR GI

A bad boyfriend gets publicly flogged, one GI staffer is caught on tape, missing Atari games may be sharing room with nuclear waste, and an undue amount of love is shown for Shaq-Fu.

22 NEWS

How did we get these first shots of Dino Crisis 3 and exclusive screens of Minority Report? Well, let's just say that it's a lot harder for Kato to type with only four fingers on his right hand these days...No less impressive is the dirt on Square and Nintendo's first collaboration in five years, a new Virtua Fighter 4, and the Loose Talk train pulling into sequel station.

56 PREVIEWS

Dual Tolkien titles to wet the whistle (The Hobbit, and The Lord of the Rings), the

more famous but less busy archeology geek (Indiana Jones) makes an appearance, and a highlight in Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance.

74 REVIEWS

The Mark of Kri (a personal favorite of Matt Groening's son) comes to town along with Barbarian on the PS2. GameCube gets a Game of the Month out of Eternal Darkness and makes a promise - not a threat - to mess with your head. Grand Theft Auto III morphs onto the PC, and the GBA shows off Mega Man Zero.

92 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.

96 PLAY TO PERFECTION

You can thank us later, as you'll be indisposed for the next few days. Kick the

Tome of Eternal Darkness' heinie with our strategy guide that lets you in on how to work levels, beat the bad guys, and when not to freak out. You're welcome.

102 SECRET ACCESS

GI's legendary code breakers unleash a fierce torrent of cheats and tips, including exclusive codes for Medal of Honor: Frontline and Aggressive Inline!

106 CLASSIC GI

Are developers ignoring 2D, or is the style making a comeback? Discuss how the use of visual effects in films is going through similar growing pains as the 2D to 3D transition in video games. Also, catch up with an old voyeuristic friend in Night Trap and find out what happened this month in video game history.

112 ETC

Play "Name That Video Game Tune" on a cell phone, delicately chill your palms with new controllers, let Peter Jackson rape your checkbook, and eat something...new.

96

GAME INDEX

GAME	PAGE #
hack	71
1060": White Storm	72
Age of Mythology	68
Age of Wonders II	89
ATV Offroad Fury 2	71
Barbarian	79
Battlefield 1942	67
Bomberman Generations	82
Bomberman Max 2	91
Castlevania:	
Harmony of Dissonance	67
Command & Conquer Generals	69
Contra Advance	71
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller	85
Crimson Sea	66
David Beckham Soccer	86
Disney's Magical Mirror	
Starring Mickey Mouse	72
Dropship: United Peace Force	78
Enclave	84
Eternal Darkness	60
F1 2002	79
Falcoone: Into the Maelstrom	71
Freelancer	72
Golden Sun: The Lost Age	70
Grand Theft Auto III	89
Grandia Xtreme	59
Guilty Gear X	91
He-Man: Power of Grayskull	73
Highland Warriors	70
Hitman 2	72
Hobbit, The	66
Indiana Jones	
and the Emperor's Tomb	68
Jet X20	73
Legends of Wrestling	82
Lilo & Stitch	91
Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship	
of the Ring, The	60
Mario Party 4	70
Mark of Kri, The	76
Mega Man Zero	90
MLB Slugfest 2003	79
MX Superfly	79
Mystic Heroes	72
Neverwinter Nights	88
Pac-Man Fever	79
Pro Race Driver	56
Punch King	91
RAD	73
Resident Evil Gaiden	90
Romances of the	
Three Kingdoms VII	78
RPG Maker 2	73
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	62
Scooby Dool Night of 100 Frights	79
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	73
SimCity 4	69
Smuggler's Run: Warzones	71
Space Race	79
Splashdown	86
Stitch: Experiment 626	79
TimeSplitters 2	64
Tribes: Aerial Assault	58
True Crime: Streets of LA	65
WrestleMania X8	82
Zoocube	82

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LETHAL NEW FIGHTING SYSTEM.

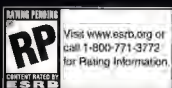
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EDITORS' FORUM

SPORTS GAMES WILL LEAD THE ONLINE REVOLUTION



With the dawn of online console gaming just around the corner, I find it interesting to listen to all the "facts" and marketing reports that people spout off as to why their title or their system will succeed in bringing online games into the mainstream. While I think the age of online gaming is unavoidable, I don't believe it's going to roll out as quickly or in the fashion that many industry pundits would have it.

As far as the big three companies are concerned, each one has a unique view on how it believes the market will take shape. Microsoft thinks that if it builds the ultimate online paradise, gamers will come to its broadband-only Xbox Live network. On the other hand, Sony is convinced that making it easy for the masses to connect is the right choice. It will give the player the option to go analog or broadband, and publishers the freedom to support it however they feel is necessary. Nintendo's strategy is fairly similar to Sony's, but with even more of a hands-off approach, since it currently isn't offering a game of its own that supports online play.


Personally, I think the Xbox Live plan fits more in line with what gamers will want, but I also believe that it may be too much, too soon. Since gamers are required to have a broadband connection and must also pay for the service, it

somewhat limits Microsoft's audience, especially when you consider any Xbox owner that already has a broadband connection is most likely playing games online with their PC right now.

Sony and Nintendo's plans certainly aren't ideal, but should be sufficient to start the online revolution. Sony's even more so, because it will deliver enough content to draw in more users to its network.

Over the coming months, online will be a big part of the games we cover, and it will be interesting to see what titles attract console players to Internet gaming. I think the games that will have the most impact will be the ones that are easy to play and bring people together. For example, sports (in particular Madden) and racing will be the first genres to bring a mass audience online – especially since these games appeal to an older audience and the college students who have easy access to the Internet.

How this new era will unfold is really anyone's guess, but I'll be putting my money on the competition and rivalry that sports games offer to lead the transition to the wonderful world of online gaming. Whose network will lead the charge still remains to be seen.


Andy McNamara
Editor
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REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

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Thanks in part to the "space-time continuum," everything we write is instantly dated by the time you read it. For instance, Kato is talking in the present tense about the World Cup. Yes, the same World Cup that ended six months ago. [Sigh] Well, I'm putting my foot down. No longer will I be yesterday's news! From this day forward, I will only speak about events from the future! Ahem... Here we go. I can't believe the Bills won the Super Bowl! The PlayStation 3 and Xbox 2 rule! Remember that time in the year 2002 (today for you when you sent me 20 dollars [do it now]). That was awesome (I'll break your legs if I don't get it by Friday).

MATT, THE FRIGID GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com
I've been bagging on Nintendo as much as anybody, for the overall lack of compelling GameCube software and its short-sighted business practices. Still, the company knows how to deliver a great game when it needs to, and Eternal Darkness is a perfect example of that. Silicon Knights has been mucked for taking nearly half a decade to get Eternal Darkness out (in fact, I'm a little nostalgic now, as the game has been in development for my entire career at Game Informer), but I'll be damned if it's not one of the most engrossing titles I've played in a long time. If Nintendo could secure more than a handful of games of this level of quality a year, it would be a step in the right direction. Hats off, gentlemen.

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG

kristian@gameinformer.com
I have met my enemy, and its name is Verizon. I swear to God and baby Jesus, every time I see one of those stupid "can you hear me now?" commercials, I want to put my fist through the television. Seriously, who the hell are these people marketing to? If a 30-second piece of media can make an individual want to tear his eyes out with a rusty melon scooper, there must be something fundamentally wrong with it. In an unrelated topic, I had a tantrum the other night after losing the AFC championship to the Broncos in Madden 2002 for the Xbox. I'm not proud of it, but I'm man enough to admit it.

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com
There is a war going on in nearly every home, my friends: the battle between watching TV and playing games. To me, it's no contest. Why would I flip around endlessly searching for something of value, when I can play games? There are no commercials. Vids keep your mind alert, and inspire thought. When I need to chill, I pop in some music and hit the links in Hot Shots Golf 3. As far as I'm concerned, TV blows. The 'Net tells me scores and news more efficiently anyway. Neither one should dominate your life, of course, but compare the two, and pay attention to your actions. You'll be surprised.

KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com
I don't know how the US will ultimately fare in the World Cup. Still, I couldn't be more proud of our squad than after beating Mexico 2-0. I know that the World hates us for it and other reasons, but I don't give a [expletive]. It's not that I think we have to dominate and take over everything. It's that our team went into the tournament without arrogance or expectation, and just played their feet off – regardless of the odds. I think that's just as much of an American trait as any the rest of the world could come up with. My hat also goes off to Japan for their hard effort.

CHET, THE CHRONIC GAMER

chet@gameinformer.com
I found out this month in my favorite non-gaming magazine, Discover, that scientists have a strong theory indicating that our galaxy is currently caught in a black hole – seriously! Although it won't affect us for five billion years or so, it motivated me to consider life outside of gaming, but only for a brief second. Fortunately, that second was just long enough for me to find a new interest: wiffle ball. After Reiner waded his behind in honorum derby (3-2 in sudden death), I wondered why we haven't seen a game based on this test of athleticism. Reiner and Chet's High Heat All Star Wiffle Ball 2K3 sounds pretty cool to me.

LISA, LA GAME NIKITA

lisa@gameinformer.com
I have done a very bad thing. I'm watching American Idols. I know, I know... I am now a questionable human being. Not being prone to reality TV (don't even get me started on the crap that NBC calls Fear Factor), I don't know what's gotten into me. Luckily, I haven't progressed to the point where I'm crazy with rage if I miss an episode. My close relatives have been given a list of circumstances that, if they ever become true, I should be shot immediately. Addiction to crappy, shameless, reality TV is in the top three.



1. Matt locks on as Kristian's guitar solo just goes on and on. 2. Andy relaxes while reading Justin trutin the lawn on his estate. 3. Roadies Kato, Chet and Austin goof off and make the new girl Lisa haul gear. 4. Ignoring sound legal advice, the boys sign their life away to the record company. (Left to right) Matt, corporate funkier, Reiner, Moe, Andy and Kristian. 5. Record exec Moe Goniff answers a question. 6. Reiner destroys another Mercedes coupe.

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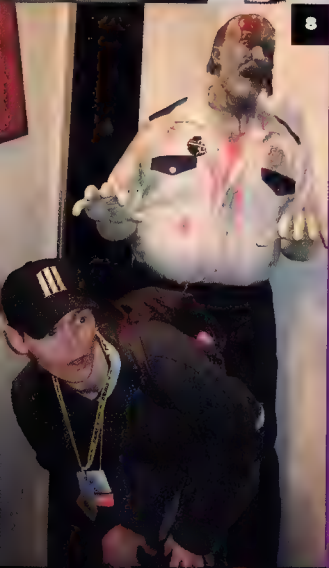
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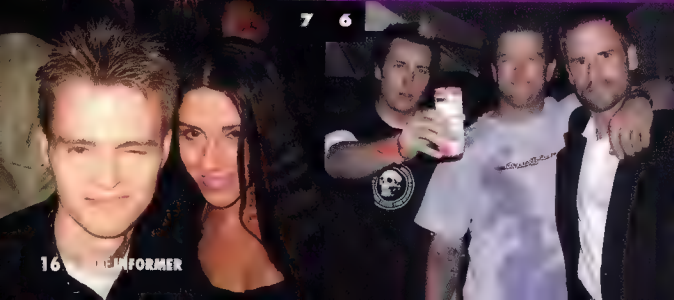
Blood
Violence

GI SPY



CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Taylor Darnell's got a mighty conveyer on this summer's Xbox Odyssey Tour, which features a mobile Xbox arcade with over 30 titles. Watch out for them smokies, sister! **2** Paul Curthoys (*Game Pro*), Lee Stabler (*GameNow*), Scott Game! (EA), Kato, and Scott Stutsman (*EA Tiburon*) work the pit at Disney Speedway in Orlando. **3** Randy Miller (far left) and Kevin Petersen (right center) of Brown Printing present Game Informer publisher Cathy Preston and Paul "The Circulation Professor" Anderson with an award for our first print run of over one million! Yay us! **4** WWE star Rob Van Dam shows Justin the proper technique for pointing your thumb at your head **5** The THQ posse - John Ardell, Sandeep Shekar and Reilly Brennan - party down in Sin City **6** Game Informer's Rob Borm (right), pro snowboarder, Shaun Palmer (center), and unidentified punk guy (left). They've got the straight edge! **7** Things didn't work out between Chet and ex-Punky Brewster star Soleil Moon Frye... ☹️...but he soon found true love on the streets of Raccoon City!



DEAR GI

SEEING DOUBLE?

I have subscribed to your magazine for three years and I agree with all our other fellow gamers in saying that rocks! Now, I have a couple questions. First of all, in last month's issue (#110), there was an article on Deus Ex 2, and for a moment, I thought I was seeing double. You repeated the same paragraph in two different sidebars. One was titled, "Speech Tags" and the other was named "Artificial Intelligence." So I, speaking for some of the not-so-smart readers of this magazine, am wondering: Was this a typo or joke that I am too thick to get?

Also, on a completely different topic, I am a fan of EverQuest. Is there going to be a better connection available for the PlayStation 2 coming up, in addition to the 56K modem? Please shower me with your knowledge, oh great gaming gods!

Ben Olsen
Via aol.com

Although we've certainly been guilty of perpetrating some rather obscure in-jokes in the pages of GI, the duplicate text in the Deus Ex 2 article was just a good old-fashioned screw up. Although we had proofed the text no less than three times, a last-minute layout change resulted in the text for the Speech Tags header being printed twice. Yes, it's been often said, but this time it's true: WE SUCK! Our apologies for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused our readers. In the interest of fairness, here's the text that was left out of the Deus Ex 2 story:

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

What this is:

Deus Ex 2 will have some of the most intelligent, sensory-aware non-player characters (NPCs) in video games. Each guard has his own field of perception. They will have their own line of sight and hearing, and everyone will react differently to stimuli. None of it is scripted. Rather, it's all dynamic and in real-time.

Why it's cool:

Example #1 You get discovered and flee the area. When you return, nobody's forgotten about your intrusion, and reinforcements are ready to hunt you down.

Example #2 You're swimming in a pond. A huge, nasty fish pays you little mind. An enemy sniper hits your leg, causing blood to flow into the water. The fish senses the blood, and begins to attack you in a frenzy.

As for you being a big fan of EverQuest, we're sorry. In any case, the PlayStation 2 will offer broadband compatibility, in addition to conventional 56K dial-up.



However, many of PS2's high-profile online games, including SOCOM: US Navy SEALs, will be broadband-only.

THE BIG PAYBACK

I am writing in response to the article "Girl Bogarts PS2" in issue #110. I am that "girl" which is mentioned in the article, and I'd like to clear a few things up. First of all, we both have our own PS2 systems, so I don't need to steal his...in fact he leaves him at school so whenever he comes home he uses MY PlayStation and MY controllers. Once, when we set up two televisions side by side he took the huge widescreen TV and I got the 27-inch,

which was about one-fifth the size and not nearly the same quality. Secondly, the Ecco the Dolphin game he refers to is HIS game, not mine - I've only played it for a total of maybe an hour and he has already beaten it. Secondly, Cookie and Cream we played together, but I was Cookie he was Cream. Final Fantasy, I had my own copy. And, last but not least, we came to the part about how I am "no good at NHL, FIFA, or Knockout Kings." I would just like to say that I kick his ass EVERY time we play Knockout Kings, he has yet to beat me more than twice - EVER! In NHL, I usually beat him, although that is a pretty fair match-up. At FIFA, he is a little bit better, but I can hold my own. Oh yeah, and as to your suggestions for him to quit showering he never does that anyway. Also, as for him wiping boogers on the controllers, I have my own set so I don't need his, and if he did that to mine - I'd beat him up! Come on, help me out here, USA!!! Help out a fellow female gamer!

Allison Kessler
Via aol.com

Oooh, SNAP! That's gotta hurt! Well, Allison, there's not much we can say to follow up this email ass-whippl', other than hope that the author of the letter in question is still in one piece. You've obviously set the record straight, and let it be known that gamer girls are takin' no shorts in the double-o-two. We actually feel a little guilty now, as we can imagine that life has been a little difficult for the author of said letter in the last few weeks. Sorry, dude. The lesson here is simple, kids: a letters to the editor section of a video game magazine might not be the best place to settle your differences with the woman in your life. Now, let's agree to put this whole ugly business behind us, okay?

GAMING URBAN LEGEND?

A little while ago a friend of mine had been scanning through random things on the Internet and came across something quite interesting. Supposedly, back in the days of the

Atari, a game based on E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial was released. There was more to the story, but it's not really important. What is important is that this game was supposedly mass-produced before it was even tested, then when it went to test audiences, it was reprimanded for sucking so bad. So the company that made it had something like ten thousand copies of this terrible game on their hands and nothing to do with them. Rumor has it that the cartridges were then buried in the desert in either Arizona or Nevada - I'm not sure. My friend and I have been joking about taking a road trip to find these cartridges and then building a house with them for quite some time. Now, it turns out I might be taking a road trip with my father that may lead us through the area in which the games are supposedly buried.

Have any of you guys at GI heard/read anything about this? Can you give me any sort of verification about it? I'm planning on scouring the Internet myself, but I figured if anyone would know, it'd be you guys.

Ivan Dillinger
Via hotmail.com

Although some of the details are incorrect, this far-fetched tale you heard is actually true. Here's what we've pieced together from Leonard Herman's Phoenix and Steve Kent's The First Quarter. E.T. for the Atari 2600 was released in 1984, just as the video game market was heading for a crash. Due to the popularity of the movie, and the fact that Howard Scott Warsaw (Yar's Revenge) was working on the project, Atari rightfully felt that it had a massive hit on its hands. An unprecedented six million copies were manufactured.

Unfortunately, the game was an absolute piece of garbage, and nearly unplayable. Even after selling a healthy million copies, it quickly became apparent that this inventory would never be sold. In a desperate move, the offending cartridges, along with a healthy selection of past Atari stinkers, were bulldozed into a landfill in the desert of New Mexico. However, your plans of visiting this shrine to bad management practices are doomed to fail. After word spread of the arid cartridge graveyard, Atari had a contractor come back with steamrollers, crush the ill-fated game, and then pour cement over the remains. Plastic to plastic, dust to dust.

CAUGHT ON TAPE

I was having a really bad day today, so I decided to watch the news to make me feel better. On the news, they were talking about the midnight opening of Star Wars: Episode II. And they go live, and whom do I spy? None other than Kristian waiting in line! This proves that GI is the biggest nerd-fest in all the land!

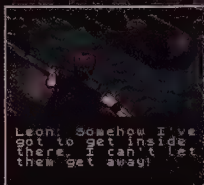
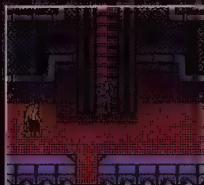
Chimp Master
Via email

Biggest nerd-fest in the land? You better believe it! In fact, every member of the GI staff attended the midnight screenings of Attack



RESIDENT EVIL® GAIDEN

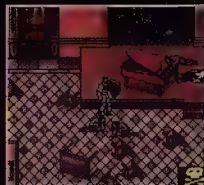
THERE IS NO ESCAPE.
SURVIVAL IS YOUR ONLY OPTION.



Leon: Somehow I've got to get inside there. I can't let them get away!



Inside the engine room the B.D.U. proceeds to wreck the ship's fuel converter.



Experience the action, the intrigue and the fight of your life in this brand new chapter of Resident Evil. Hosts of deadly zombies, countless traps and lurking horrors: will their discovery take you closer to the source of the Resident Evil or lessen your chances of survival?



Blood
Violence



CAPCOM
capcom.com

of the Clones, but only Kristian, with his dashing good looks, was recognized by the local tabloid paparazzi. The Kristian/AOTC media blitz didn't end there, however, as GI's favorite boy-toy was also quoted in our local daily newspaper, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, dispensing this nugget of Jedi wisdom: "I've come to realize that the reward is in the journey. This is what I really look forward to – being with friends, and the anticipation, and the cathartic experience of the film."

Stroke your beard to that, Chimp Master Chump! Talk about food for thought. In his spiritual quest to...umm...watch a movie, Kristian brings to mind Henry David Thoreau's transcendentalist doctrine, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, and the fact that lightsaber battles between Count Dooku and Yoda are, like, really wicked awesome!

SHAQ IS BACK?

Hey guys, what's up? I've heard on the Internet that Microsoft is talking to 3DO about making an Xbox exclusive sequel to the Shaquille O'Neal fighting game Shaq-Fu. Rumor is that it will have a multiplayer mode where you can play as Kazaam and Steel. The soundtrack will feature music from Shaquille O'Neal's various rap albums. Also, it will come with a coupon, redeemable for a Burger King Shaq Pack. This will be the best title for the Xbox yet! I am going to my local GameStop to put this on reserve as soon as possible.

Christopher Posey
Via earthlink.net



Okay, Christopher, we know you're trying to be funny, so we'll let you off with a warning this time. Still, you need to know that if we ever hear you say the words "Shaq-Fu," "3DO," and "Xbox-exclusive" in the same sentence, we're going to be forced to alert the authorities. There are some things that you just don't joke about. It's like yelling, "I've got a bomb!" on a crowded airplane. Don't let it happen again. Now, let's all forget we had this conversation.

E3 HOTTIES

Which company had the best booth babes on display this year?

Yuichi Uehara
Via email

The E3 babe competition was tough this year, but we'll have to give the nod to the hairy guys wearing kilts at the Scottish Games Alliance booth, or Justin in the black, strapless cocktail dress he wore on the last day of the show.

AUGUST WINNER!

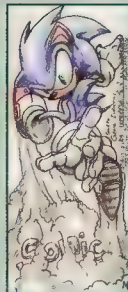
Jason Rodriguez
Oh, you're shooting at me? Let me introduce you to a friend of mine – Jango, this is Mace. Mace, this is Jango. Now don't go losing your head, Mr. Fett!
HAHAABLAARG!!



Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best damn 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 First St., 4th Floor • Mpls, MN 55401

Lee Hall
Dragonball Z – Isn't that a name of a dirty movie?



Mike Bui
Sonic is smokin'. That's what he be doin'.



Jen Foster
Speaking of dirty movies...Look at the butt-crack!



Chee Thao
Sure he's got big arms, but you should see the ace on his back.



Robert Tucker
Somebody got a facelift! Look at those cheekbones for crying out loud.

**Pure speed.
Pure combat. Pure action.**

Global warming threatens life on earth. Field reports of Saboteur have surfaced, submerging entire countries. As part of an elite group of pilots assembled by the World Alliance, your mission is to take out the World Order Reorganizer from an organization that exploits natural disasters for its own benefit. Prepare for take off.

LETHAL SKIES

Elite Pilot : Team SW



Experience G-Force using the controller.



Choose from 4 views: cockpit, cockpit without meter, small and large.



Engage multiple enemies in a variety of death-defying missions.



Mild Language
Violence

PlayStation 2

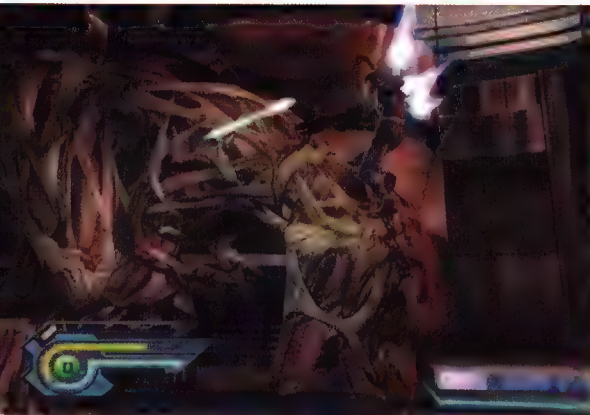


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Entertainment, Inc.

Sammy

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GI NEWS



NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM IN...DINO CRISIS 3

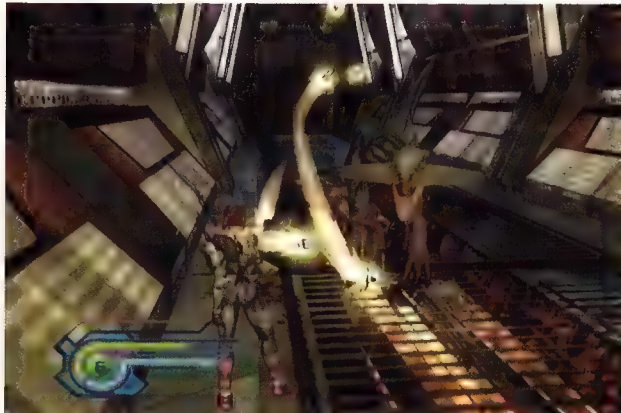
When we last left **Capcom's Dino Crisis 3**, we were afforded the briefest of looks from Producer **Shinji Mikami** at an **E3** press conference to announce the game's **Xbox** exclusivity. No, that didn't occur a few months ago at the most recent gathering in LA – it was way back in 2001. So why the no-show at this year's event? Because Mikami and his crew were hard at work getting everything right for its grand unveiling, which we are excited to show you in these first few shots – and they're gameplay screens at that!

When the **Dino Crisis** series first appeared on the **PlayStation** in 1999, you could have pigeonholed it as **Resident Evil** with dinosaurs. Of course, no one loved it any less for that, but **Dino Crisis 3's** 21st century release (no specifics given) has firmly moved the franchise forward. While the old **Crisis** titles definitely used the scare factor of getting tracked down by some angry **Allosaurus** while you're on foot, this newest iteration introduces jetpacks for your characters. As of now, you'll assume the identity of at least two different people. No details have been given as to the likeli-

hood of Regina returning, or the possibility that the female character (see picture) is one of her descendants. The futuristic angle may sound hokey, but once you see it in action, it's much more frantic than before.

Handling similar to a mech, you are now able to jet around in short bursts – evolving the series and its combat to something closer to **Gun Valkyrie** or **Armored Core**. Apart from your normal guns, a projectile weapon that emits several branching missiles is at your disposal. This appears to function like a boomerang, with the missiles returning to you. Also markedly different is the genetic makeup of the dinosaurs. Changing with the times, these beasts have evolved to the semi-mutated **T-Rex** that you see here. One aspect not so apparent, however, is how light sourcing dramatically enhances your experience. In one sequence we witnessed, you must use the muzzle-flash from your character's weapon to track an enormous beast chasing you.

Dino Crisis 3 visually, as well as thematically, contains striking similarities to the film **Aliens**. You are part of an intergalactic marine corps that discovers a colony that has been overtaken by dinosaurs. How did they get there? Is there any tie-in to the futuristic themes of **Dino Crisis 2**? How does footage from **E3 2001** depicting large-scale destruction of modern cities fit in? We, as you, anxiously wait for more.

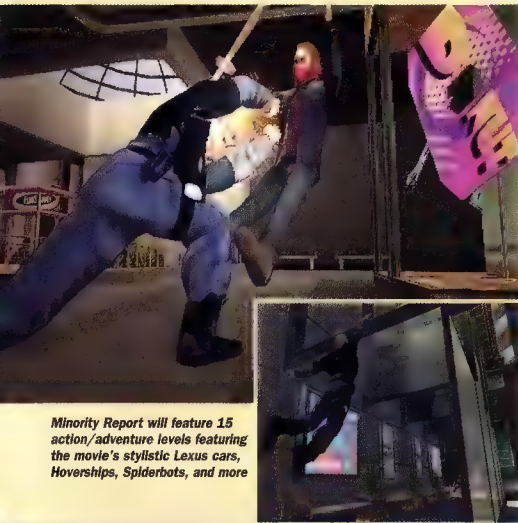


"Handling similar to a mech, you are now able to jet around in short bursts – evolving the series and its combat to something closer to Gun Valkyrie or Armored Core."

DINO CRISIS 3

PRECRIME NABS EXCLUSIVE MINORITY REPORT SHOTS

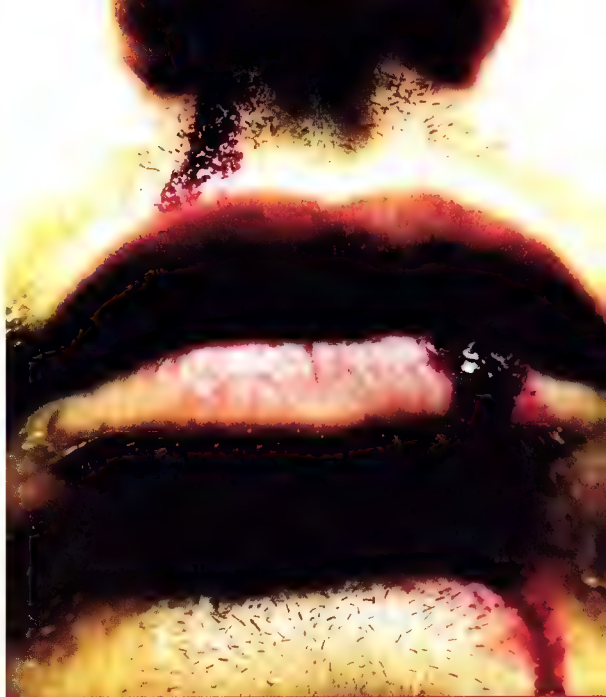
We all laughed when **Activision** and the **Xbox** licensed **Steven Spielberg's** films *A.I.* and *Minority Report* a while back. But now we're excited with *Minority Report* slated for release this fall. Developed by **Treyarch**, the title has lost its Xbox exclusivity, as it will appear on **PlayStation 2** and **GameCube** as well. Even though the plot is a separate story from the movie, we imagine film sequences like Anderson's escape through a maze of mag-level cars will be replicated in its intrinsic platforming glory.



Minority Report will feature 15 action/adventure levels featuring the movie's stylistic Lexus cars, Hoverships, Spiderbots, and more

GI'S EYE-POPPING PAIR...OF COVERS

Game Informer is going big-time with our August issue; offering you not one, but two different covers to choose from – each with sexy results. Now, like Reiner with his *Star Wars* dollies, you can have one copy of *GI* for play, and another for the vaults. We, however, don't suggest you talk to these luscious ladies as if they were real – like Reiner does with his figures!



[THEY CAN TASTE IT]

9.1.02

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Blood and Gore
Violence

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.

DECEPTION REVENGE



Following the downfall of Megatron and his horde of followers, you are one of the few remaining Deceptions. In this action/RPG title from CircleSoft, players will build a Transformer from the ground up by choosing what kind of vehicle it will

morph into, rolling ability scores, and choosing its faction allegiance. Since the Autobots have defeated the main body of the Deception army, a number of survivors have gathered into separate cells, and are now battling with each other for dominance. Your first mission is to defeat the kingpins in these factions and meld the powers of each group into that of your own. When you have control of your army, you'll need to build more units, and begin the long campaign to bring down the haughty Autobots who defend Earth—a planet which you know is rightfully yours. Level-up your character, and enjoy the benefits of the battle-tested skills your persistent troops gain throughout the different levels. If you grow weary of the single-player experience, hop online and do battle with human opponents. Headset support will help keep your attacks organized, and multi-system network play will also be available.

NAME THAT GAME

Despite being the biggest movie studio in Japan and having Godzilla at its disposal, Toho studios didn't exactly take the video game world, or Tokyo, by storm. It did, however, manage to put out a kick-ass shooter for the Super Nintendo in 1994.

Developed by those behind the TurboGrafx's Blazing Lazers (see last month's Classic Review section for more), this game was a hit for shooter fans looking for a fast experience chock-full of Mode-7 scaling.

(Answer on page 28)

METAL GEAR & GRAND THEFT AUTO GO TO THE MOVIES

More video game franchises are being tapped for films, as our favorite form of entertainment steps up into the mainstream more and more each day. Below we've rounded up the latest games to get the green light to jump to the big screen – including a few juicy tidbits on the current negotiations for movies based on the **Metal Gear Solid** and **Grand Theft Auto** licenses.

- **Metal Gear Solid:** There was heavy pressure for **Konami** to turn over *Metal Gear Solid* for film treatment from none other than actor Tom Cruise himself (to most likely produce the project). Konami, though, rejected his advances. Word is that series' mastermind **Hideo Kojima** wanted to write and direct the *Metal Gear Solid* movie, but Konami rebuffed him as well. Why not?! We're sure there'd be surprises around every single corner!
- **Grand Theft Auto: Rockstar's** golden bullet is a much sought-after property these days. The rights for this film are being hotly contested, and *Game Informer* has even heard that they might be signed away already to an unknown buyer. Rockstar isn't saying much on the movie, other than that the line of suitors goes out the door and around the block.
- **Dous Ex: Eidos** has already come to an agreement with **Columbia** for it, with **Laura Ziskin**, one of the producers of *Spider-Man* (and its already-in-the-works sequel). No release date is known for JC Denton's film debut.
- **Dead or Alive:** The producers behind the *House of the Dead* movie (see last issue's feature on it for more) have lined up this project with **Tecmo** for their next movie. Also getting the thumbs-up for a theatrical release is the publisher's *Fatal Frame*, which will be handled by Steven Spielberg's **DreamWorks SKG** studio.



COMBAT EVOLVED IN NEW VF4



Recently, at an arcade show in Japan, a surprising spin-off to the highly acclaimed *Virtua Fighter 4* made its debut. **Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution** is more than just an add-on with two new characters, although rookies Goh Humori and Brad Burns are impressive in their own right. Goh utilizes a Judo fighting style, while Brad is a kickboxer by training. *VF 4: Evolution* introduces two gameplay modes: Quest and Mission. The exact layout of this pair has not been clearly explained, although it is believed that progressing through them will earn you special items.



Sega has said that it is working on the character animations to make them smoother, as well as tweaking the camera, balancing the gameplay, and updating the other fighters. *Game Informer* contacted **Sega of America** about *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution*, but there is no information forthcoming at this time. We would expect, however, the game's US release to appear on the **PlayStation 2**.





THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

BAD – Drivers on cell phones may become even more dangerous if Sweden's **Botfighters** mobile game arrives next year. Similar to **Laser Tag**, your phone will receive signals from other players aiming to shoot you down with text messages. We envision nerd drive-by crimes to spike.

BAD – Once the darling of **Xbox**, **Sierra's Malice** has hit rock bottom. Not only will No Doubt's songs be featured in the game, but **Gwen Stefani** will take over Kat's voice. History will show that **Microsoft's** backing away from the game may have been the best move it ever made.



GOOD – **Johnny Cash's** "Ring of Fire." **Kristian's** been playing it constantly on his computer. Does he like it because he respects the old country master, or because he has been eating a lot of chili lately?

BAD – A grad student at MIT has gotten past the **Xbox's** security, opening a way for hackers to use competing software. The cheeky devil even wrote it up as part of his Ph.D. thesis! Who knew higher education could make crime pay?

UGLY – Birth, School, **Xbox**, Work, Death. A TV ad for the console has been pulled in the UK due to offending mothers who just lost a child or those recovering from illness. Trying to imbue a "Life is short, play Xbox" message, the ad showed a baby being born before forwarding through its life and slamming it into a coffin. Our message: "Life is short; turn off the telly!"



LOOSE TALK

Wherever 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. *Loose Talk* exposes inside rumors for all to see. 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!

Bolstered by its success with **NFL Fever**, **Microsoft** has other sports in mind. Which ones? Imagine what popular pastimes it has left out and you're halfway there.

Sony has chosen not to bring over its own **PlayStation 2** title **Ape Escape 2** from Japan. *Loose Talk* has heard, however, that companies like **Enix**, **Atlas**, and **Bam** are looking into grabbing the rights for the straying simians.

EA Big's next project was going to be a freeride bicycle game named **Crank**. However, the platforming-meets-extreme sports title has been pushed back to help perfect its novel approach to bicycling.

Sequels already in the works: **ICO 2**, **Spy Hunter 2**, **The Mark of Kri 2**, **Maximo 2**, and **Jak and Daxter 2**.

Nintendo hasn't officially announced it yet, but new colors for the **GameCube** are being planned as we speak. Expect these to be more pastel-like in nature.

Loose Talk knows of at least one company that isn't down with **Xbox Live** in Japan – even though they are listed to release a game for the service.



DO THEY EVEN SMELL IT!

9.1.02

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MATURE



Blood and Gore
Violence

VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

The Bond honeys have invaded GI this month! Surprisingly, we discovered that this group, and Nick Nack (aka Tattoo), are impressed by video game knowledge. However, some are harder to please than others. Can you woo Pussy Galore, or must you settle for Nick Nack?

QUESTION 1: Who was the first hidden character to appear in a Street Fighter game?

- A. Sheng Long
- B. Akuma
- C. Ermac
- D. Dan



This character rocked back in the day. Wait...he still rocks!

QUESTION 2: Name this hero from Final Fantasy III (VI in Japan) who featured Street Fighter-style moves?

- A. Locke Cole
- B. Sabin Figaro
- C. Cyan Garamonde
- D. Shadow

QUESTION 3: Who originally started Electronic Arts?

- A. 3DO's Trip Hawkins
- B. Visual Concept's Greg Thomas
- C. Konami's Hideo Kojima
- D. Nintendo's Howard Lincoln

QUESTION 4: How many years did Hiroshi Yamauchi serve as president of Nintendo?

- A. 41
- B. 29
- C. 19
- D. 53

QUESTION 5: When Nintendo first released its NES, it also released a peripheral called R.O.B. What does the acronym stand for?

- A. Robotic Organizing Boss
- B. Real Operational Bot
- C. Robotic Operating Buddy
- D. Required Organizational Bot

QUESTION 6: What is the approximate number of GameBoys (GB, GBC, and GBA) sold worldwide, making it the most successful system ever?

- A. 85,750,000 units
- B. 105,300,000 units
- C. 185,294,000 units
- D. 136,580,000 units

QUESTION 7: Some accuse Microsoft of making the worst first-party controller ever. However, we think someone else tops them. What system is this controller for?



Who created this piece of horrid crapola?

- A. Panasonic 3DO
- B. Amiga CD32
- C. Atari Jaguar
- D. SuperGrafx

QUESTION 8: In 1987, Square released its first video game. What was its name?



- A. King's Knight
- B. Final Fantasy
- C. Rad Racer
- D. World Runner

QUESTION 9: Approximately what is the largest cash prize awarded by the CPL (Cyberathlete Professional League) for a Quake tournament?

- A. \$35,000
- B. \$50,000
- C. \$100,000
- D. \$150,000

QUESTION 10: Everyone knows Joseph Lieberman failed vice-presidential candidate and the video game industry's biggest opponent. But do any of you know who this man is - one of our most convincing advocates?



Who is this unknown hero?

Read more about our hero at www.sirlin.net/Features/feature_Violence.htm. Give yourself two points if you got this question correct.

- A. Professor Henry Jenkins, MIT
- B. Sam Houser, Rockstar Games
- C. Franskan Beans, Caan University
- D. Jeff Corwin, Animal Planet

Score & Rank



0
Nick Nack
The Man With The Golden Gun



1-2
Plenty O' Toole
Diamonds are Forever



3-4
Xenia Onatopp
GoldenEye



5-6
Honey Ryder
Dr. No



7-9
Holly Goodhead
Moonraker



10
Pussy Galore
Goldfinger

NO NEW HARDWARE FROM NINTENDO?

Last month's retirement of legendary long-time Nintendo president **Hiroshi Yamauchi** signaled a clear change of leadership at the storied video game company. His replacement, **Satoru Iwata**, has already spoken out about how he sees the future of Nintendo.



At a meeting with analysts in Tokyo earlier, Iwata's comments both remained consistent with the clear path that Yamauchi had been known for, and showed flashes of his own character. While Iwata stuck close to the company's mantra that it is transfixed on quality software ("We can't be optimistic about the game market. No matter what great product you come up with, people get bored.") and a lack of confidence in online gaming, he surprised some by speaking out against the constant march towards new platforms. "The effort to produce machines with better technology has reached its limit. If things continue, they may lead to the decline of the entire game industry," he characterized the situation by saying he feels "like a chef cooking for a king who's full."

Although competitors like **Sony** already have their next console in the works, Iwata was more pessimistic. "We're reaching the limits of how far we can appeal to consumers by boosting the machine's performance or providing more compelling graphics and sound." This also seems like a covert reference to both Sony and **Microsoft's** plans to make their systems Trojan horses for downloadable media. Satoru Iwata is a software developer who joined Nintendo a few years ago. He previously was the General Manager of the company's Corporate Planning division.



99% of the office's fun-sized Twix bars have been seized by Kristian in a coup d' tat. Armed guerilla freedom fighters are currently trying to topple his cookie and caramel junta.

23% of Eternal Darkness' secrets have been spoiled for the rest of the staff by a blabbermouth named Chet.

25% of the GI editors recently got new cats

71% of readers can't decide whom they like better: Lisa, La Game Nikita or December, The Goth Gamer

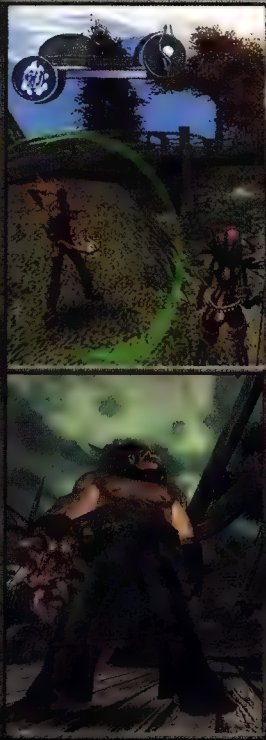
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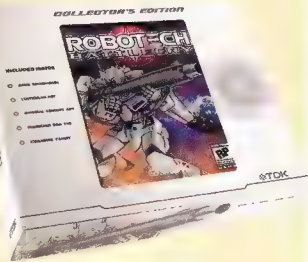
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GI NEWS

TDK DOES ROBOTECH RIGHT

It isn't often that you get extras with your video game besides some boring plastic wrapping and a receipt. **TDK**, however, is releasing a special edition version of **Robotech: Battlery** when it releases for the **PlayStation 2**, **Xbox**, and **GameCube** in the middle of September. Dubbed the **Collector's Edition**, the contents (listed below) can be yours for a measly \$80. While lacking the blow-up Lynn Minmei doll that fans were really wanting, we expect Robotechies to be all over this offer like Micronians on stink.



Robotech Battlery: Collector's Edition

- Robotech: Battlery Video Game
- Robotech: Battlery Soundtrack
- Skull-One T-shirt
- Set of Five Original Art Cards
- Lenticular Motion Card (featuring the Veritech Fighter's three forms)
- Limited Edition, Numbered Robotech: Battlery Dogtags

SWINGERZ IS MONEY

Maybe the two best things about **Eidos'** newest addition to the **Fresh Games** label, **Swingerz Golf**, are that (A) It's a lot like **Sony's** successful **Hot Shots Golf 3** and (B) It may beat out **Mario Golf** and become the much-necessary first links title on the **GameCube**. While specific release info hasn't become available yet, we expect it to hit the console this fall.

We were able to get our hands on the title at **E3** last month, and it nicely takes the look and vibe of the much-loved **Hot Shots** games while doing away with the classic three-click swing. Instead, it maps a Tiger Woods-esque analog swing onto your C-stick. **Swingerz Golf** also gives you four play modes (Tournament, Match, Stroke, and Short Course), six courses, 14 golfers (six caddies), a four-player mode, and more.

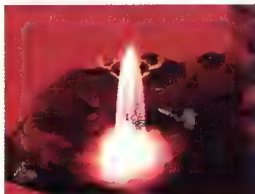
In other Fresh Games' news, an Eidos title called **Ghost Vibration** for the **PlayStation 2** will be released in Japan, but a representative for the company told us that the vid is not being planned for the boutique label. Instead, we've been told that Fresh Games has plenty of other goodies already lined up on its plate.



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS TO THE GBA

As part of a fiscal report in Japan, publisher/developer **Square Soft** has announced that it will bring an incarnation of **PlayStation's Final Fantasy Tactics** to the **Game Boy Advance** before March of next year in Japan. This move confirms earlier rumors debating which title would be the first to benefit from Square and **Nintendo's** renewed partnership (see issue #109 for more). Although not officially stated, it is assumed that this will be the first product from the **Game Designer's Studio**, which is headed by **Legend of Mana's Akitoshi Kawazu**, and has been set up to specifically produce software for this new era between the two companies. Square has also stated that it has plans to release two RPGs and an action title for the **PS2** in Japan over the same period of time.

In other Square news, it has purchased developer **Quest**. The creators of **Ogre Battle** and **Tactics Ogre** had already signed the franchises rights to Square, but this move will now give the **Final Fantasy** publishers all of **Quest's** development resources. It will also reunite some of the team members that had defected over to Square for **Final Fantasy Tactics** with their original friends.



Final Fantasy Tactics - PS-X

DATA FILE

> **Sega** has committed to two online titles for **Xbox** apart from **Phantasy Star Online** in Japan. Arcade fighter **Outlaw Xtreme** will join **Sega GT 2002** for the console in the country. **Game Informer** contacted Sega about its **GT** title appearing online over here, but no official decision has been made yet.

> The rights for **The Fast and the Furious** and its sequel have been secured by **Universal Interactive**. Yes, even the **Game Boy Advance** will be able to street race with **Vin Diesel** next year. The question remains whether Universal is a bunch of amateurs for blowing its **Nos** on this license.

> Finally, something bigger and heavier than the **Xbox** version's **Steel Battalion**, with its monstrous 40-hour controller is hitting **Xbox Live** in Japan. Although there are no official plans to bring it to **Microsoft's** online program over here, **Capcom** hasn't ruled it out. The company is currently reviewing just how to increase the controller's uses with other games. Other developer's titles are even being considered.

> **Evangelion's** Yoshiyuki Sadamoto and Kazushiro Ito of **Ghost In the Shell** fame have lent their talents to **Bandai's PlayStation 2** title **hack** (see **Photophile** for more). Now this pseudo-online game/anime feature is expanding to DVD. Thirteen episodes of the franchise's Japanese animated series are being brought over under the name **hack//SIGN**.

> Gamers rejoiced when **AIA** (formerly **Jaleco**) picked up the **Aldra** manga license, and then were confused when it was going to be used for a pinball game called **Aldra PsychoBall**. Now the news is decidedly bad, as the company has dropped the license and the **AIA** is trying to secure a couple of different next-generation projects to publish instead.

> **Ubi Soft** and German studio **Blue Byte** have announced the fifth **Settlers** title for the **PC**. This edition will also appear on unspecified consoles at some point. Using a 3D engine, the real-time strategy game will also contain additional features such as new ways to resolve tribal conflicts.

> **Sony** is getting ready for the future with its **Memory Stick** format. The 128 MB storage device is already used for digital cameras and other consumer products, but is being planned to slot into the **PS2**. This won't be to save games, but will be used to download and manage media content similar to the hard drive.

> There will be no **Space World** from **Nintendo** this year. Traditionally, the company holds this expo every August in Japan to show off its wares. This is being cancelled, however, in favor of some smaller events throughout the country. There is no word whether this is a permanent cancellation.

Name That Game Answer:

Source: Megaforce



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SEX,



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**A Look at the Controversy
Surrounding Acclaim's and Tecmo's
Taboo-Breaking New Titles**

SEX SELLS.

As long as humans have walked the earth, these two words have been true – and never more so than they are today. After the myriad of upheavals of the 1960s whittled away at America's social taboos, this once Puritanical nation has steadily grown ever more permissive in regards to art that deals with rough language, sex, and violence. In the last 10 years alone, the change in what is or isn't allowed in mainstream media had been dramatic. The major television networks, once the caretakers of the vanilla-safe, idyllic, and largely fictional image of the American family (typified by the '50s classic *Leave it to Beaver*), now traffic in suggestive, sensationalistic fare like *Fear Factor*, *Temptation Island*, and *When Animals Attack*. Even prestigious dramas such as *NYPD Blue* and *The West Wing* have broken traditional FCC rules in their use of once-forbidden four-letter words. Want to see Johnny Knoxville batter his privates and slog through raw sewage? How about Jerry Springer's endless parade of partially nude, toothless hicks screaming senselessly and beating each other senseless? Or maybe you'd prefer Christina Agullera and Lil' Kim cavorting in videos that look like a bus full of drag queens crashed into the circus? It's all there, just a click of the remote away, and usually during prime time.

Every art form has gone through its growing pains, and oftentimes these struggles revolve around content that pushes the limits of decency and good taste. The books of Henry Miller or DH Lawrence once scandalized polite society. Films like *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *The Last Tango in Paris* broke new artistic ground in the '60s and '70s. Popular music, from Elvis to Eminem, has frequently drawn the ire of moral watchdogs. Video games have done their part to worry the parents of America as well, but with one difference: While violence is seen as an almost essential part of the gameplay experience, sexual content has been traditionally discouraged – and all but ignored – by most game makers.

Although there have been notable exceptions (see page 33), by and large, video games have rarely been accused of peddling smut to the American public. However, as society changes, gaming is beginning to follow in the footsteps of its media cousins. Two upcoming titles, *Dave Mirra BMX XXX* and *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball*, are gearing up to challenge the status quo like never before, and people are already beginning to talk. Read on as we sift through the rumors, innuendo, and misinformation to get the real story on what these two titles are bringing to the table – and what might be too hot for the game industry to handle. The countdown to controversy starts now.



▲ ... of Mirra XXX's "edgy" content includes sex shops.

▲ ... the infamous Scores strip club.

▲ ... and this "man of leisure."

PUTTING THE X BACK IN BMX

Aclaim's Dave Mirra series has been the company's most successful (and lucrative) franchise of the last few years, and one of the only titles to effectively compete with Activision's Tony Hawk's Pro Skater line for the dollars of extreme sports fans. A product of Acclaim's partnership with developer Z-Axis, Dave Mirra, and its sister franchise Aggressive Inline, has shown steady improvement and posted sales of over 3 million copies worldwide.

Rather than adhere to the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" school of game design, Acclaim, led by Dave Mirra executive producer Shawn Rosen, decided to take the next installment of the series in a bold and graphic new direction. This direction is driven by a focus on character development and a raw sense of humor — one that will most certainly earn every inch of its Mature rating.

"Why do a Mature-rated game? Why take this property and do that with it?" comments Acclaim's Alan Lewis, director of public relations. "There are two reasons. One is that the demographic of today's gamer is older. It really is males ages 18 to 34. We're finding that today's gamers, the owners of this generation of hardware, are people that grew up playing NES and Genesis, and they haven't put the controller down. They've been playing games their whole lives; they're early adopters of technology; and — because they are males 18-34 — they don't always want to play the games with the soft, fuzzy characters. We found that adult humor — (by that we mean in the vein of the *Howard Stern Show* or *Maxim* magazine) is really important. Because, if you're asking gamers to invest 40 hours of their time, you want something that is going to be a good companion for them and further them in the game experience."

The developers found their inspiration for this "adult" humor in the long tradition of teen sex comedies,

ranging from classics like *Animal House* and *Porky's* to more recent hits *American Pie* and *Scary Movie*. As a general rule, there are three tenants of this school of filmmaking: bodily fluids, profanity, and female nudity. Dave Mirra BMX XXX promises to deliver all three in abundance.

To make sure that Mirra's jokes hit their mark, a comedy writer from the defunct production company Mondomedia (was employed who Rosen terms "absolutely amazing") and has now produced nearly 500 pages of dialogue for the game's numerous non-player characters. These NPCs, and the scripted events that revolve around them, are really the basis for the game's objectives and its raw humor. Here's an example of what we're talking about. As your character rides through a park, a

beleaguered city employee rattles off a profane screed about a mutt that is terrorizing the park by leaving hot piles of doggie droppings everywhere. Being a BMX rider, it's naturally your job to solve the problem. Next, you'll encounter a pimp who'll advise you that it would be in your best interest to find his "bitch," who has apparently gone astray. Soon you discover that his "bitch" (wink, wink) is actually a small poodle. Take the canine back to the park, and the two dogs soon begin to engage in some too-hot-for-television lovemaking. Thus, the park is now free of errant excrement.

These kinds of double-entendres, and copious use of a full lexicon of profanity, make up the bulk of why Dave Mirra XXX will cause some parents fits. Other examples of the game's brand of comedy include vocal

street vendors who peddle wieners and "hot nut sacks." A little juvenile, perhaps, but we must admit we chuckled when we heard the heavyset German hot dog salesman exclaim, "Do you think it's fun to play around with my wiener?" or "Who wants my hot wiener?" Acclaim clearly feels this good-natured naughtiness will be the game's biggest selling point. "That's why we put a lot of this stuff in there," Ben Fischbach, senior brand manager of Acclaim explains. "It's not just there to be gratuitous; it's there to drive people through the game. Then, you call your friends and say, 'You've got to come over, you've got to see this!' That's what we're going for."

Dave Mirra BMX XXX is certainly challenging conventional standards to a greater degree, but there are games that have broken this ground in the past — most notably Conker's Bad Fur Day and the Leisure Suit Larry series. Acclaim plans to surpass these titles' shock-value by pushing the buttons of family values crusaders in its possible use of nudity, both virtual and actual. Many noticed that, in the company's recent title, *Aggressive Inline* (which provided the basic engine for Mirra XXX), the female characters' breasts seemed to demonstrate a hyper-realistic "bounce." This was no doubt a test for what was going to be attempted in Mirra, which is set to feature such body-baring stunts as competitions that require players to get a certain number of bikini-clad women to flash them, and possibly a player-create mode that will allow you to make your own naked rider, complete with customizable chest size.

Of course, depictions of nudity in computer graphics are one thing; actual live video of nudity is another. To the surprise of many in the industry, it appears that Acclaim is planning to shatter that barrier as well, something that has never been attempted in a mainstream, mass market video game before. Through the duration of Mirra XXX, riders will collect coins — a commonplace occurrence in most video games. What isn't commonplace is the fact that these coins can be taken to a virtual version of the infamous Scores strip

"It's not just there to be gratuitous; it's there to drive people through the game. Then, you call your friends and say, 'You've got to come over, you've got to see this!' That's what we're going for."

**Ben Fischbach,
Senior Brand Manager
Acclaim**





“The Japanese guys have a whole separate set of sexual ethics, and what they think is quite conservative may not be so conservative here. What we think is kinky may be quite normal over there.”

John Inada,
Marketing Director Tecmo

club that appears in the game, in exchange for a full-motion video peep show starring one of the performers from the real-life nightspot.

How far will it go? So far, Acclaim is a little evasive as to just how much will be revealed. “This is the most controversial aspect of the product,” said Fischbach, “and we have not discussed how far we’re going to go. We’re going to have fun with it. We believe this is a funny aspect of the game, because it’s absolutely ridiculous, and we’re going to enjoy it.”

After we saw some brief footage of the game’s adult entertainer dancing in a skimpy dress, Producer Shawn Rosen hinted that there was much more to come. “We just used five coins, and there are thirty coins in a level,” Rosen laughed.

BOUNCE ON THE BEACH

Tecmo’s *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball* is similar to Dave Mirra in its use of sex appeal, but overall the game appears to be a good deal less raw, eschewing foul language and much of Mirra’s rude comedy. Although its buxom characters are clearly inspired by the tradition of busty Japanese anime heroines, *Beach Volleyball* seems to be content to offer up American gamers a good old-fashioned slice of cheesecake – nothing more, nothing less. Well, maybe a little bit more, but we’ll discuss that later.

The *Dead or Alive* series is known as one of the world’s premier fighting franchises, and the recently released *Dead or Alive 3* was one of the breakout launch titles for Microsoft’s Xbox. While it’s always been a solid fighter, another part of the DOA legacy has been its amply

endowed (and minimally-dressed) female characters, who are legendary for their strong following among video game fan boys. This sex appeal was emphasized by the tongue-in-cheek television spots for DOA 3, which featured two drooling men watching two DOA girls engaged in a heated catfight, all the while protesting that they only played the game for its finely-tuned combat.

It’s not an ambitious project as *Mirra XXX*, and it’s evident that Tecmo views this as nothing more than a slight diversion from the series’ roots. Whereas Acclaim is adamant that it is pursuing a bold new direction for the *Mirra* franchise, Tecmo marketing director John Inada says that the company is simply giving its fans what they want.

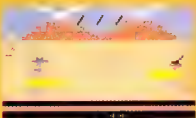
“I think initially how it started was because of all of the requests we were getting from our fans. The request to have us make a minigame based on beach volleyball was actually one of the most popular requests, so our R&D guys decided to play with the idea,” Inada remembers. “Of course, Team Ninja are a bunch of perfectionists; they couldn’t stand just making it a minigame. So, they made it into a full-blown game.”

When we asked him about those who would write *Beach Volleyball* off as a cheap use of sex appeal to sell product, he bristled. “The fact is that Team Ninja made a game they like to play...We’re not hiding behind the so-called ‘sex factor’ to get lazy in the game design. It’s not like we slapped sex appeal [on] the DOA girls out of the blue. In the first DOA through DOA 3, we’ve always established ourselves as a solid fighting game, but, of course, it comes with the beauty of the female figure.”

Girls in tiny bikinis are certainly nothing new to American gamers, but there are reports that Tecmo is going one step further – through

BAD TASTE HALL OF FAME

Video games have been under fire since their inception. Well before violence was an issue, video games were criticized for numerous things – including nudity. It all began when a company called Mystique decided to create games with the conceptual basis being adult fantasies. Listed below is a timeline chronicling some of the most risqué of releases.



CUSTER'S REVENGE Atari 2600 • 1983

This was Mystique’s first game, which in our opinion is the most controversial game ever released. The graphics were as primitive as could be, but the message it delivered was in the poorest of taste. Nudity, sex, and racism were all prominently displayed in this fiasco of a game. As the years passed, Mystique also released *Bachelor Party* and *Beat ‘Em and Eat ‘Em*. The company eventually went belly-up, but the X-rated line was scooped up by another publishing house called Playaround.

PHILLY FLASHER/CATHOUSE BLUES Atari 2600 • 1984

Playaround didn’t mess around with the content in its games. Along with variations of *Bachelor Party* and *Beat ‘Em and Eat ‘Em*, it created several cartridges that featured two different games. For instance, there was the *Jungle Fever* and *Knight on the Town* collection, as well as the outrageous *Cathouse Blues* and *Philly Flasher* medley. Think along the lines of an extremely naughty version of *Space Invaders*.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY IN THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS PC, Apple IIe • 1987

As one of the first adult-themed games to hit the PC market, this is a title all about taking 40-year-old virgin Larry Laffer through the *City of Lost Wages*. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to help Larry lose his virginity, get married, and find true love. As you can probably guess, there are a lot of opportunities to see bare boobs, which made *LSL* the game to play if you were a gamer in the 80s.



RINGS OF POWER Genesis • 1991

Yes, thanks to the good folks over at Naughtly Dog, a turn-based strategy game made our Bad Taste Hall of Fame. And no, it’s not getting mentioned for naked faeries or the anatomy of a unicorn. By inputting a code when turning this *Genesis* game on, players can view an alternate title sequence that showcases a “slightly” different Naughtly Dog logo. Yes, the lovely lady that appears is topless...and well detailed, we might add.



PLUMBERS DON'T WEAR TIES 3DO • 1994

Sex sells...at least that’s what 3DO was hoping. Toward the end of the system’s life, 3DO opened the doors to its publishers. Kirin Entertainment brought about the *Plumbers Don’t Wear Ties* and Vivid Interactive unleashed a handful of erotic movies all bearing Adults Only ratings. *Plumbers* was an interactive movie with the sole purpose of improving your character’s (ahem) love life, and the *Vivid* titles...well, those were just dirty movies. Shortly thereafter, the 3DO console crashed, burned, and was never heard from again.



FEAR EFFECT 2: RETRO HELIX PlayStation • 2001

The first adventure was straight as an arrow, but with this sequel, Eidos decided to implement an interesting twist. After probing deep into this sultry quest, players are blindsided with the revelation that the female heroes are actually lesbian lovers. Just in case you’re wondering, they don’t mind showing their affections for one another publicly.

CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY Nintendo 64 • 2001

It’s amazing how many dirty references a company can make about an animal with a large, furry tail. Conker’s *Bad Fur Day* was a hilarious adventure, starring Conker – a squirrel trying to save his girlfriend. With characters like a giant pile of poop, and a flower with hugs...um...buds (pictured), this quickly became one of the most controversial games for the N64.



Continued on page 34 >>>



rumored use of see-through swimsuits, wet t-shirt contests, and even a possible topless mode. Like Acclaim, the company is not saying what content will be in the actual finished version, but Inada did seem to suggest that the possibility of nudity was there, depending on the vision of DOA creator Tomonobu Itagaki.

"I have no idea what Itagaki is creating," Inada said. "The Japanese guys have a whole separate set of sexual ethics, and what they think is quite conservative may not be so conservative here. What we think is kinky may be quite normal over there. I really don't know. He hasn't given me the list of costumes or lack thereof. But I know when it comes to sexuality, they're much more open than we are here — at least publicly."

Inada raises a fair point regarding cultural differences between the US and Japan, where nudity is an everyday occurrence — especially in manga, a form of anime. In fact, there is even a genre of softcore pornographic video games called *hentai* (which literally means "pervert" in Japanese). Of course, no *hentai* title has been commercially released in America, and Tecmo may still find nude volleyball to be more than some US consumers will tolerate.

THE CHANGING MARKET

There is one thing we're sure about: The US video game market is changing dramatically, and shifting towards an older audience. However, there is no discounting the fact that there is still a large percentage of console owners that are under age 18. That means a great many potentially angry parents, decency

advocates, and outraged politicians could stand in the way of either one of these games being released in their original and uncensored form. Another possible barrier to their success is retail apprehension, most likely from the nation's largest chain, Wal-Mart — a company with a long history of pulling products that violate its internal moral standards.

Acclaim, for one, seems willing to accept the risks. "Do you alienate part of the market?" asks Fischbach. "Absolutely. We alienate a young part of the market that could have bought a Dave Mirra BMX product [in the past]. On the upper side, we alienate retailers because retailers may be uncomfortable... Right now, we are not intending to alienate [anybody], but we're going to do it anyway because we believe in the product and we believe in what this stands for."

Inada was quick to point out that retail standards can change quickly when big money enters the equation. "Wal-Mart is really important to us, and they do reflect a huge portion of our sales nowadays — so we do worry about that. But, I also realize that all of these retailers have a double standard. If the games sell, I think they'll buy it."

Although everyone we talked to downplayed the possibility of a backlash against the game industry, there remain serious forces on Capitol Hill, including Senator Joseph Lieberman and his proposed Media Marketing Accountability Act (which would put restrictions on game advertising and marketing strategies), that could potentially intercede in an attempt to regulate game content if they feel that the industry is not doing enough to police itself. If they become part of a furor in the mainstream media, games like Mirra XXX and DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball could chance touching off another round of highly publicized Senate hearings.

For its part, Tecmo doesn't seem worried, as John Inada even joked, "I don't [think there will be a backlash]. I don't like government to begin with, so anything to make them angry [is fine]. Of course, when I say something like that, Sony and Microsoft grab me and tell me to shut up! [laughs]"

Doug Lowenstein, the president of the Interactive Digital Software Association, echoes these sentiments, commenting, "I think you're looking for too much meaning in the release of these titles. They are neither good nor bad for the industry at large. Whether they are released or not will have little impact on the popularity and growth of the game market, which is driven by demographic forces that are inexorable and powerful."

THE RATINGS GAME

One thing that nearly everyone we talked to agreed on was that parents who are concerned about the content contained in these games should look to the industry's ESRB rating systems for guidance. "Video games are a \$49.99 entertainment experience," points out Alan Lewis. "So, the odds are that children are not going to stores and buying them with their own money. Odds are that there is a parent or authority figure who is buying these products for them... At a certain point, there's a fine line between creating censorship and the empowerment of consumers to make a decision."

But how will these two games be rated, if they do in fact make unprecedented use of nudity? Getting slapped with the ESRB's Adults Only rating is generally considered commercial suicide, as most retailers will not stock AO



products. Surprisingly, both Acclaim and Tecmo indicated that they have reason to believe that nudity, both actual and virtual, is well within the boundaries of the M rating.

"You can show anything in a game and get an M rating; you just can't show simulated sex, then you'll get an AO rating," points out Fischbach. "The ESRB actually allows you to have nudity in a game. It comes down to what we think is appropriate. It comes down to whether it makes sense. Does it make sense to go all the way? That remains to be seen."

Inada indicated that Tecmo would have license to go as far as it sees fit. "We've had multiple discussions with the ESRB about this exact issue — sexuality and nudity in the game — and what I found out was that they're quite liberal, I thought. They even said, 'If you don't mind an M rating, you can even have public half showing' — you know? They don't care."

We contacted Mark Szafran, the acting executive director of the ESRB, and, although he refused to discuss either title specifically, he did say that there are no hard-and-fast rules as to how the ESRB board determines their ratings. "I can't





really speculate on what those games might get if they include certain kinds of content like nudity or stripping. Once they are submitted, our raters will evaluate the actual content and assign the rating and the content descriptors that they think is most useful to the consumer. There aren't dividing lines, so to speak; that's not how the system works. The system really relies on the good judgement of the trained raters."

THE FULL MONTY?

So, if Acclaim and Tecmo are so confident that they are free to pursue their visions for each of these titles, why will neither company actually come right out and state how far they are going to go?

Ben Fischbach claims it is because they simply don't know yet. "We don't want to be gratuitous. We don't want to have one tiny strip scene that sells the game. I don't want it to be one little gratuitous thing and everyone feels they got cheated. That's not the hook of the game. The hook is everything else. This is one little tiny cookie bonus.

We're having fun with it. We're gauging your reaction; we're gauging retail reaction; we're gauging our own internal reaction."

These questions have led many in the industry to suspect that the hype surrounding Dave Mirra BMX XXX and Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball might be just that: one big marketing stunt. Several sources we spoke to both in the publishing community and retail speculated, off the record, that

both games would never reach consumers in their current form. We also heard reports that Dave Mirra's management team was reconsidering whether or not Mirra's name would be attached to such a potentially controversial product.

When we questioned Acclaim on the subject, the company resolutely denied that it was anything but serious about the adult content in Mirra. "The stripper is going to be in the game," said Alan Lewis. "Whether she's in the game dancing with black bars across her, or no black bars, or whether it's a cheat feature or not - this is all stuff we're working out. The stripper and Scores are in the game - bottom line." He also indicated that Mirra was enthusiastic about the game, but, if he declined to participate, the title would be published under another brand name.

Shawn Rosen was quick to point out that the game would stand on its own merits, nudity or no nudity. "You guys seem to suggest that having breasts is what makes an edgy product, but that's not the only thing here...This is a great game. Even if you took out all the humor and all the other stuff, it's a great, fun BMX game."

When asked, John Inada flatly stated that - if Itagaki and his team include nudity in the game, and it avoided an AO rating - Tecmo will publish it. "If a platform provider has no problem with it, if the ESRB doesn't have a problem with it, why not?" Game Informer contacted both Sony and Microsoft on this issue, and both indicated that they would leave publishers free to publish

any content and games that fell under ESRB guidelines.

All the facts we have at press time certainly indicate that these games are more than just vaporware, and that both companies have made serious inquiries into just how far they can challenge the traditional bounds of video game content. However, if this is just a move to garner more publicity for these products, then an article like this is playing right into the hands of both Acclaim and Tecmo. In that case, the joke would most certainly be on us.

WHAT'S NEXT?

While it would be easy to write off both these games as just cheap gimmicks, there is no doubt that the boundaries they break could fundamentally change the video game market forever. As the industry continues to draw a larger and larger audience, and evolves from a sector of the toy market into a multi-billion-dollar entertainment industry, these struggles surrounding adult-oriented content are going to become more and more frequent. Just a few years ago, the murderous action of a game like Grand Theft Auto III would have been unthinkable. Today, GTA III has sold more than six million units, and shows no signs of slowing down. If that title broke new ground in terms of its graphic violence and twisted plotlines, then perhaps Mirra XXX and DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball could be considered that game's sexy, light-hearted counterparts. One thing is sure: If these two



titles go the full monty and become commercial successes on the level of a GTA III, expect to see nudity become a regular part of the video game diet.

Of course, it is instructive to point out that none of the "edgy" content discussed in this article would raise an eyebrow in

Hollywood, where nudity and adult comedy has been a staple for years. Notice that many of the movies that Acclaim is comparing Mirra XXX to (including *Airplane* and *Animal House*) are more than two decades old.

However, video games are still fighting for the respect of the mainstream media; and, in some circles, are not yet considered an art form on par with books, movies, or music. Of course, nudity won't ultimately decide the future of video games. However, when history books are written, it's often the works of art that pushed societal taboos the furthest that are remembered the most.

Many questions remain regarding Dave Mirra BMX XXX and Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball. Do these games represent the maturation of the industry, or just more sleaze in a culture that's awash with gratuitous sexuality? Will Acclaim and Tecmo pull the trigger, or take the safe, established path? For now, all we know is that there will be a great many people taking an interest in just how these two games turn out - not bad for a BMX game and a modest little volleyball title. Of course, there's something besides sex that sells in America. That's controversy - a fact of which we're sure Acclaim and Tecmo are well aware.





dave mirra bmx



■ **PLATFORM** PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACELAW
■ **DEVELOPER** Z-AXIS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 26



▲ The things you can do while your bike is on the ground are nearly limitless



▲ The ridin' don't stop till six in the mornin'

Slowly but surely, Z-Axis and Acclaim have been building speed on a freestyle legacy. No one thought this tandem – or any other – could challenge Tony Hawk for extreme supremacy, but they have. So much so, in fact, that Pro Skater publisher Activision recently purchased Z-Axis to prevent future projects from the pair. *Aggressive Inline*, which released in late May, brought forth many new things to the genre; but that was just a warm-up for the duo's next title. The third game in the Mirra series, *Dave Mirra BMX XXX* goes off in directions previously unfathomable, but also changes the face of the genre in more conventional ways.

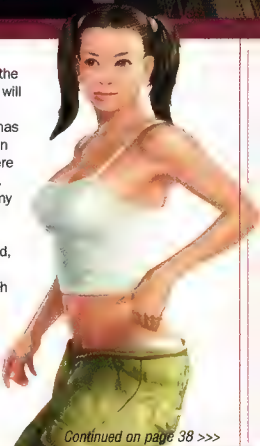
Mirra's modifier button was an incredible addition to the common vertical tricks, allowing you to switch up every action into your own original moves. *Mirra XXX* goes to

similar lengths with flatland tricks. Over 100 ground maneuvers can be performed – bringing the game's trick total to over 2,000! Thanks to motion-capture animation, each one looks entirely realistic, and can be seamlessly linked together.

Another great new addition is the ability to bail out of a trick. This comes in very handy if you're about to bite the proverbial big one – an event that will have you cringing due to the series' trademark Enhanced Skeletal Dynamics System, which makes crashes as painful as possible. Additionally, when canceling out a move, you can perform a stall on nearby objects in the environment, allowing you to keep both your run and you alive. So, rather than eating pavement, you may kick off of a wall, or stand on a cliff edge. Much better than the alternative, in our opinion.

Of course, action sport staples like the Manual and Revert-style maneuvers will keep you racking up points, as well. Answering the pleas of fans, Z-Axis has decided to make holding the X button result in your rider speeding up, where before it would just initiate a crouch. Is that the cheering of millions of Tony Hawk fans we hear?

Visually, *Mirra XXX* has outdone itself. The polygon count has doubled, while still sustaining a dreamy 60 frames-per-second of animation. Both the bikes and riders have a level of detail that puts the last *Mirra* to shame. An advanced physics model means things like clothing and hair will move realistically. Of course, when you're playing a



Continued on page 38 >>>

▼ "What are you kids doing in there?" "Just getting high, mom."

▼ Riders are so detailed, you can see the stitches on his Dr. Martens.



COVER STORY



▲ Here's one of Mirra XXX's.....stalls



▲ "I'm crazy bicycle-crotch! Now gimme some candy!"



▲ You won't be the only one showing off during the game.



▲ Polyanna loves to headbutt the asphalt sandwich.

female character, other things will have their own jiggling, too.

As big as we thought the levels in Mirra 2 were, they're dwarfed by the eight gargantuan stages of XXX. To liven up the joints, these environments will be teeming with expletive-spewing pedestrians, bike-hungry vehicles, and other competitive riders. Much like Aggressive Inline, time limits have been done away with, allowing you to explore as much as you want. Each stage has around 30 goals – many of which will be told to you by the denizens of said locales. Sure, you'll have the basic "get this many points in this much time" demands, but others will change the complexion of the level, opening up new areas. Comedic writers enlisted by Z-Axis ensure you'll be asked to do a lot of things that'll make you go hmmm. Some tasks, like a bum who tells you to blow him, make you add an item onto your bike to accomplish the task – in this case, forcing you to find a leaf-blower to affix to your ride.

If you grow restless with all that Mirra XXX has to offer, customization lets you have it your way. New to this sequel is a create-a-rider option. Show the dozen-plus pro BMXers who's the boss by inserting your own likeness into the game, or perhaps a facsimile of your favorite pin-up. The highly praised park editor returns, giving you dozens of objects to place in your own fantasy zone. Acclaim tells us you can even trade parks online! Continuing the Internet love train is a Global Ranking System, posting your best accomplishments in dozens of statistical categories.

For all the controversy and ire this game will rightfully produce, Dave Mirra BMX XXX is an action sports title of the highest pedigree. It's got great gameplay, creative missions, and massive levels. It just has boobies and cuss words to boot.



▲ If grinding a railing two stories up didn't tell you she was extreme, the neckface is a dead give-away



▲ Someone's going to have to explain that mark to the guy at Penske

The ultimate off-road driving adventure is heading to the Nintendo GameCube™ this summer! With five massive levels, a huge new arsenal of countermeasures and split-screen multiplayer action for up to four players, working for an elite band of smugglers has never been more exciting or dangerous. Make the drop, hit the nitro boost and get across the border before all hell breaks loose!



SMUGGLER'S RUN

WARZONES



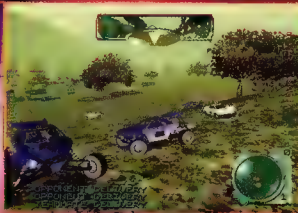
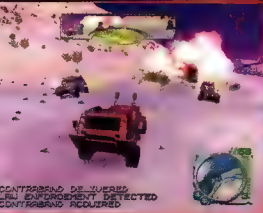
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Violence



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DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

■ PLATFORM XBOX ■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS (ONLINE 2P) ■ GENRE BEACH VOLLEYBALL
■ DEVELOPER TEAM NINJA ■ RELEASE FALL



DEAD OR ALIVE
▲ Bump, set, and a big ol' spike!

Sex undoubtedly highlights Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball, and it will certainly receive plenty of attention as a result. But by now, you're probably curious about its quality as a volleyball game. Fortunately, DOAX contains the ingredients necessary for any sports title to have a promising future.

There are two modes of play: Versus and Story. Versus simply allows up to four friends to play two-on-two matches; and if time permits, Tecmo may extend Versus to include Xbox Live online support.



▲ Hopefully, a clear bikini will be available

Based on the movies and pictures we received, the matches will at least include basic volleyball moves such as spikes, blocks, dives, sets, and different kinds of serves.

Unfortunately, without a hands-on demonstration, we cannot assess how well it plays. However, Itagaki assures us, "Control, interactivity, motion, and camera-work are what I pay the most attention to. I'm also being very careful to implement accurate beach volleyball rules. We made mistakes years ago when we developed a football game without following the accurate rules of American football."

Itagaki may aspire to obey professional rules, but we're certain DOAX won't merely simulate reality. We see proof of this in more than the outrageous eye-candy; Itagaki will allow players to perform Distraction moves – an action that's foreign to professional volleyball, we're sure. Although Tecmo will not elaborate on any "Distractions," we're confident that you're thinking what we are – the ability to flash your opponents! Unfortunately, this merely sounds appealing in theory as the distractor might just as easily become distracted.

We can only pray that this gameplay mechanic doesn't apply to absolutely every character, as Itagaki will include Zack – DOA's kickboxer – and a new American, Lisa. We hope to see Zack in his metallic alien suit, or at least a bikini version of it!

Despite the hoopla that will ensue surrounding DOAX's itsy teenie weenie polka-dot bikinis, we hope that it isn't unappreciated for this reason, especially if Tecmo manages to create an amazing volleyball game. If it does, gamers can rejoice: not only do we receive a great volleyball game, but we get one step closer to seeing a *Bikini Car Wash Company* simulator!



▲ Some characters may not like wearing cat ears, so be careful

In Story mode, a player can create a team of two, and enter numerous volleyball competitions. Each victory will improve a character's stats, as well as earn your team cash, with which you can purchase various items. Team Ninja's leader, Tomonobu Itagaki, promises to include over 100 articles such as courts, balls, bikinis, sunglasses, and suntan lotion. Interestingly, characters will tan during games, so you can apply lotion to control burning.

Players cannot simply customize their character in any nominally goofy or distasteful manner, since Itagaki will program every character with a specific personality. This means that players must discover a

character's likes and dislikes to optimize performance. For example, if you clothe one of your polygonal vixens in disagreeable attire, or pair her with someone she detests, the team may compete poorly.

To add even more variety and depth to Story mode, players can experience life off the court. Tecmo refers to this aspect of the gameplay as "hanging out." Itagaki wishes to keep these scenarios secret, but we did discover that you'll explore the island, presumably to build relationships, intensify rivalries, unlock minigames, and perhaps complete various other related tasks.

Hopefully, the exorbitant number of extras will complement a volleyball game featuring tight play mechanics.



▲ Consider this one of the island exploration parts!

» **SOME**
AGENTS HAVE
A LICENSE
TO KILL.

» **OTHERS**
ARE TOO BUSY
TO FILE THE
PAPERWORK.

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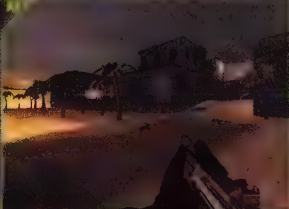
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COVERT STRIKE 2

AUTUMN HEROES

GAME INFORMER'S PRESEASON
SCOUTING REPORT



Ask any football player before a game, and he'll usually name one person on the opposing team that must be stopped at all costs.

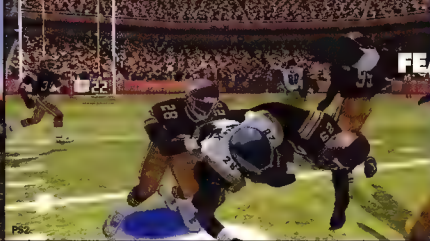
Sometimes the best you can wish for is simply to contain the damage. Marshall Faulk – whether he's running or catching the ball – is just one of the players that coaches must focus on if they hope to defeat the St. Louis Rams. By the same token, Chicago Bears linebacker Brian Urlacher is a force that must be accounted for on every play, unless the running back wants to be blindsided by the fastest brick wall he's ever smacked into. Also not to be underestimated is New England Patriots' QB Tom Brady. This Super Bowl champion quarterback doesn't get rattled. Instead, he unnerves secondaries with ease. Peyton Manning, the Indianapolis Colts' signal caller, is equally in command. He runs the offense like a battlefield general – his brain and arm being equal weapons.

The talents each of these players brings to the field is tremendous, and the video games they've signed onto (*Madden NFL 2003*, *NFL 2K3*, *GameDay 2003*, and *NFL Fever 2003*, respectively) each bring something unique to the table. This year, football fans will be spoiled with one of the richest crops of pigskin titles they've ever seen. However, even as the NFL expands with the Houston Texans, the video game gidron has gone through its own contraction. Konami has dropped its ESPN football title, while Acclaim has decided not to give us another iteration of *QB Club*. Similar to the ruthless world of football's salary cap, one team's loss is another's gain. Konami didn't renew its contract with ESPN, so Sega went ahead and signed the valuable license.

Not only are this year's titles better than ever, they are even bigger business. Both Microsoft and Sony saw fit to make football the focus of their online demonstrations

at 2002's E3 press conferences. The sport is already a vital genre for any console, and it also looks to be a cornerstone for any good online gaming strategy.

Of course, it's not all buddy-buddy between the titles themselves – after all, we are talking about football here. Will *GameDay* replicate its cover star's Cinderella story and shock a video game public that expects little from the beleaguered Sony franchise? Just how hungry for blood are Sega and Brian Urlacher? Will Peyton Manning elevate *NFL Fever* to new heights? Can anybody stop Madden and Marshall Faulk? These are important questions that neither gamers nor developers can ignore, and that only *Game Informer* can help answer. Take a look at our in-depth profile of each title, our breakdown of the match-ups, and our exclusive interview with Marshall Faulk.



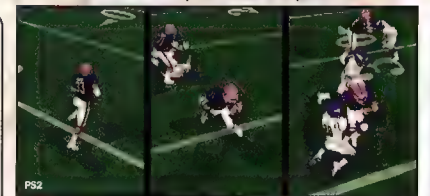
▲ This year, Madden attempts to replicate gang tackles, and the Redskins thank them for it.



▲ Madden's inside running game has been noticeably improved.



▲ Sidam throws now add a personal touch to those QBs who use them.



▲ Some of this year's replays are a little more (Piet) Mondrian than Monday Night.

There is no better parallel for Madden's dominance of the next-gen football field than with its cover athlete Marshall Faulk. The Rams have built a dynasty (that shows no signs of slowing) around an amazing assortment of weapons, of which, Faulk is a prominent one. Of course, the Patriots proved that Marshall and company aren't without their weaknesses. So, is this the year that Madden falls? There is little to suggest that such a thing will happen.

Similar to Rams' defensive coordinator Lovie Smith adding cornerback Aeneas Williams to bolster that side of the ball, this year's Madden includes a new defensive strafe move. This will help you shed blockers in order to combat plays such as sweeps – something that was a thorn in the side of fans last year. Also aided by changes are linebackers, who can tighten or fan out their formation via audibles. In fact, Madden now has two extra defensive packages, the 4-6 (which brings the strong safety up to the line) and the Quarter (featuring three down linemen and an additional d-back). Understanding your defense as a whole is now possible through the pre-snap R2 button, which not only shows you zones, but delineates players' specific responsibilities in man-to-man coverage. What's perhaps more important, however, is whether these new pieces can be coordinated with this year's improved AI.

Playing to its strengths, Madden has added to the offense and Franchise mode. You can now send receivers on a post pattern via hot routes, and running backs have been tweaked to handle rushing between the tackles better – instead of stupidly colliding with offensive linemen. Meanwhile, new animations further flesh out both broken and devastating tackles. Building a dynasty, however, will be harder, if more detailed, than in previous years. Instead of merely picking the highest rated player on your draft board, you can only see a rookie's overall skill rating after he's been selected. Thus, you must send out your scouts beforehand, in order to find out who may be a draft day steal or a first round bust. Once signed, rookies (or anybody else) can then boost their ratings through preseason play.

Rams coach Mike Martz's philosophy is that only the Rams can beat themselves. While Madden developer Tiburon has worked hard at adding to the game's experience without that kind of arrogance, Madden finds itself in a similar, and enviable, situation.

Keys To The Game

- The defense must be able to stop the sweep
- Can the AI make this defense gel effectively?

The Rookie

There is no true "off-season" anymore, so get your butt to Mini-Camp, son! More than just a collection of minigames, this feature is packed with drills which allow players to hone their skills, and unlock various exclusive trading cards. There are six offensive and defensive tasks, as well as two more for special teams. These range from utilizing the new defensive strafe move to punting the ball into "coffin corner." Progress through the difficulty levels and you can unlock a game-time situation that will put what you've learned to the test.

Intangibles

Create-a-Play (for offense and defense); Mini-Camp; Gang Tackling; Side-Arm Throws; No Need to Call Up Passing Icons; Commentary by Al Michaels and Melissa Stark; Tri-Screen Replays



Marshall Faulk – St. Louis Rams

- **Birthdate:** February 26, 1973
- **Hometown:** New Orleans, Louisiana
- **College:** San Diego State
- **NFL Experience:** 9 Years

Marshall Faulk is the ultimate weapon on the field, not only as a running back, but also as a receiver out of the backfield. This rare mix of talents has characterized the complex, fast-paced Rams offense that utilizes him to the fullest. Faulk's abilities have sent him to the Pro Bowl five times, and he was the 2000 NFL Most Valuable Player.





In this world of free agency, salary caps, and accelerated roster bonuses, an NFL team is expected to have only a few years to summon and retain a winning combination of talent in order to make a legitimate run for the title. For Sega and developer Visual Concepts, that time is now. Despite having gotten better from year to year, NFL 2K3 probably shows the greatest amount of improvement of any of this year's football titles. What's better, the franchise's progress now puts it on a collision course with EA's Madden — a showdown that should equal the taut excitement of last year's Super Bowl.

The new player models will immediately catch gamers' attention. While not totally overhauled their less lanky look and 600-plus animations heighten the game's fluidity. This is especially evident in the trenches. Any coach will tell you that the battle between the offensive and defensive lines is absolutely fundamental to winning. This year's game will not only feature a smoother transition between blocks, but will also allow defensive players to get better separation from o-lineman, in order to stop the inside running game. While no arm-tackle in the world will take down a behemoth like Jerome Bettis, it's a new animation that will help slow a runner up. For its part, the offense (including RBs) can now perform cut blocks (those at or below the knees); and, before the snap, both sides of the ball can call hot routes. Audibles are now assigned while you select your play — avoiding the past hassles of having to go to a totally separate menu.

Perhaps sensing the real possibility that this may be NFL 2K3's year, front office changes in Franchise mode have revitalized the team. A new swagger is evident (see below for the inclusion of ESPN into the game) in even the menu screens, and especially in your off-season moves as a general manager. Spend scouting points to get valuable info on potential rookie prospects, and watch it all pay off on draft day via Madison Square Garden's Big Board.

The changes above may not sound overwhelming, but you can believe us when we say that this game has on-the-field chemistry and it plays like it wants to win. Perhaps the key to victory this year will be in getting the stronghold of Madden fans to put it through its paces — and like Brian Urlacher's Bears, give it its due respect.



▲ There's some not-so-quiet Sega aggression here, but we can't hear what's being said

Brian Urlacher - Chicago Bears

- **Birthdate:** May 25, 1978
- **Hometown:** Lovington, New Mexico
- **College:** New Mexico
- **NFL Experience:** 3 years

Brian Urlacher played free safety (among other positions) at New Mexico, but he was drafted as an outside linebacker by the Chicago Bears in the first round. However, it wasn't until he was switched to middle linebacker later in the year that he took off. Brian ended up garnering Rookie of the Year honors because of his range, speed, and hard hitting. As a result, he has come to epitomize a new Bears defense.



▲ Visual Concepts wanted more "partial hits" like glancing tackles on kick returns



▲ Play-action has been refined to be very deceptive



▲ Since this is the Broncos, you know there will be a cut block — 2K3 has the legal kind

Keys To The Game

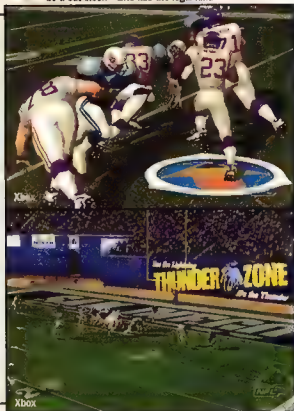
- More balance is needed between the running and passing games
- Sega's window of opportunity to beat Madden is now

The Rookie

The poor reputation of the ESPN license is Sega's only hurdle with the new acquisition. If gamers can disassociate the label from the bad string of Konami titles it used to be attached to, then this signing is worth gold. Sure, menu presentation is a small addition, but it's one that could prove to be a vital cog that helps build a championship-caliber team. Announcers Chris Berman and Tom Jackson are being considered for next year.

Intangibles

The ESPN License; New, Scaled-Down Player Models; Over 600 Additional Animations; Play Editor; More "Trick" Plays





Last year's video game expansion team did well for itself in a division filled with more experienced franchises. It had its victories over those like GameDay, for instance, but it still had a ways to go before it could challenge the likes of Madden and Sega's NFL 2K series. It will be harder for the Xbox franchise to capitalize on the surprise factor this time around. As such, it is vital that NFL Fever 2003 shore up some of its weaknesses before it can become a force to be reckoned with.

Last season, Fever's Achilles' heel was its passing game; not to suggest that it was ineffective – far from it. It was that it lacked refinement. Secondaries had a tendency to bunch themselves up, which made passing seem like a game of backyard pitch and catch at times. Either that, or the coverage AI was simply lacking. These flaws were combined with a running game that was a little too strong. Microsoft realized these problems, and will strive to fix them in Fever. With a little hands-on time, we noticed that some improvements had been made. More touch was possible on the ball, defensive linemen were no longer getting interceptions, and the secondary was making promising strides. However, scoring on big plays with the long ball was still king – showing that there was more work to be done.

Apart from these kinds of tweaks, NFL Fever does offer a few new things to look out for. Defensive backs can audibly their coverage, and a slew of uniform tweaks are now yours to cycle through. Other than this, it seems that Xbox is pinning its fortunes on bringing the series online (turn to page 49 for more) – particularly in being able to trash talk via the Xbox Communicator – something it showcased in its pre-show press conference at this year's E3. With the Dreamcast already having given gamers a taste of football online, it remains to be seen if this feature is the final free agent that will take NFL Fever to the top.

Last year's Fever benefited from a somewhat easier schedule than its opponents, as most were "pleasantly surprised" at its playability. Now, however, the game must capitalize on its success and try to make the scope of improvements that the NFL 2K series has implemented. If it doesn't go in for the kill now, it may find it harder to put away vets like Madden later in the game.

Keys To The Game

- Fever must improve almost every aspect of its passing game
- The honeymoon is over. It's now prime time against the big boys

The Rookie

Fancy yourself as smart as Peyton himself? Then take command of your offense with the Play Editor. Here, you can design a dozen offensive and defensive schemes and have the AI run through them on the field. Unfortunately, however, you can't test them yourself. These plays will be exported into your playbook under the heading, "My Plays."

Intangibles

Uniform Editor; Super Bowl Challenges With 30 Classic Teams; No Ron Pitts; New Defensive Hot Routes; Exporting of Dynasty Teams Into Online



▲ New animations bolster the running game and add that subtle touch



▲ Microsoft says that power backs like Ricky Williams are now more punishing



▲ Fever's Uniform Editor and alternate jerseys offer unlimited customization



▲ David Carr had this great dream last night. This season he wakes up

▲ Defensive stuffs will be as jarring as ever

Peyton Manning – Indianapolis Colts

- **Birthdate:** March 24, 1976
- **Hometown:** New Orleans, Louisiana
- **College:** Tennessee
- **NFL Experience:** 5 years

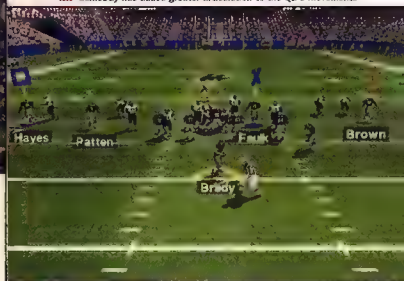
Despite going 3-13 in his rookie season, Peyton Manning garnered several rookie honors for his abilities – ones that would become instrumental in the Colts' 13-3 turnaround the next year.

Peyton's maturing process made him a student of the game and allowed him to direct the Colts' powerful offense (featuring Manning's deadly synergy with WR Marvin Harrison) through his on-field leadership and smarts.





▲ GameDay has added greater articulation to the QB's movements



Sony's GameDay franchise was one that had lived in the glories of the past. Aging, lacking the fire it once had, and with a credibility problem worse than Dennis Green's, the franchise needed more than just an off-season addition or two. It needed to accept the words that no fan likes to hear about their team – "rebuilding phase." Now, the crew at 989 Studios has returned with a hunger to contend after years of fan disappointment. As the game's PR manager, Ron Eagle, told us, "We're answering up to the call."

Part of regaining the fire starts on defense. There's an adage in football which says that offense puts butts in the seats, but defense wins championships. GameDay has gone after this by using gang tackling – with the knowledge that flying to the ball carrier is a tenacious, infectious part of any tough team's character. Kelly Ryan, 989's Director of Product Development, told us that we could expect as many as three players to be in on a tackle, with each altering the movement of the ball carrier. All of this is, as he puts it, part of the title's philosophy of "giving the user the ability to make plays; putting the control in the user's hands." Another fact baring this out is that GameDay will give you more command of your defensive backs, letting you get some of the interception glory that goes with the guts needed to play in the secondary.

On offense, many of the franchise's passing woes have been tightened up, but it doesn't stop there. Little touches like play-action passes, quarterback follow-throughs, and the animations in general were exciting to see. Even the defensive play-calling screen impressed us. The larger question remains, however: Just how far has the franchise gone to break its old habits? The game benefits from an all-new engine; and like a new coach injected into a once-poisonous locker room, this addition will be vital in erasing the memory of years of losing seasons.

"We know that the only way to get back into the game is to make the game people want," says Kelly. Fans can still remember the franchise's heyday back in '98, when it took on Madden on the PlayStation and won. Kelly and company still believe that they've got enough left in the tank for another try. If all goes according to plan, GameDay's fourth quarter heroics could earn Kelly the moniker of Captain Comeback. Just like when a man named Elway led the Broncos on a touchdown march against Cleveland in the 1986 AFC Championship game that will forever be known simply as "The Drive."



▲ C'mon Curtis, there's no need to cover from the Redskins

▲ Although changed, many of GameDay's better elements have remained



▲ Receivers now have a variety of pass catching animations at their fingertips

Tom Brady – New England Patriots

- **Birthdate:** August 3, 1977
- **Hometown:** San Mateo, California
- **College:** Michigan
- **NFL Experience:** 3 years

In an era of quarterbacks commanding sky-high salaries, <ough, Drew Bledsoe, <ough> Tom Brady fulfilled one of the greatest Cinderella stories in football. Starting the third game of the season for an injured Bledsoe, Brady never looked back. He went on to lead his team to a Super Bowl victory and picked up the game's MVP honors. Brady's unflappable nature throughout the year set a Patriots' single-season record with a .639 completion percentage.



Keys To The Game

- Must reestablish an intimidating presence on the field
- GameDay can make few mistakes in order to win

The Rookie

If there's a true rookie on this team, it's the game engine itself. The past GameDays on the PlayStation 2 were merely graphical shells running on what was ultimately PS-X technology at heart. 2003's iteration is like getting a whole new head coach. Similar to the Minnesota Vikings' new sheriff, Mike Tice, GameDay's Kelly Ryan is trying to instill a new attitude in the 989 locker room, the game, and beyond. "We want the respect of the industry," Kelly vowed, "our company, and the consumers."

Intangibles

New Engine and Player Models; Gang Tackling; Offensive Hot Routes; Online Leaderboards; Online Keyboard Chat





Having multiple seasons through a franchise mode used to be the depth pre-requisite for football games, and online play looks to be the next feature necessary to increase replay value. Just as platform launches in the past needed a strong football title to anchor and make them attractive, Sony and Microsoft's online debut this fall will similarly require the pull of the pigskin. The two giants have chosen divergent paths for their systems, and it looks like this year's football games will also have their differences.

Although Madden is the most successful title out there, Electronic Arts has decided on a limited approach in bringing the big man online. The PlayStation 2 version is the only Madden that will have this new feature. The publisher was in talks with both Microsoft and GameCube to support these consoles with online play, but a deal couldn't be worked out to EA's satisfaction. Madden will be at a disadvantage to NFL 2K3 and NFL Fever on Xbox because they will have use of the Xbox's Voice Communicator, while Madden will have limited trash talking capabilities through set menu selections. Madden will, however, feature other amenities such as bringing your user profile online, updateable rosters, and no additional cost involved (except for that of your own ISP). No official online tournaments are being planned by EA.

Sega was the pioneer of online console gaming, and NFL 2K1 was there from the start. Already possessing the servers and internal infrastructure to handle online play, NFL 2K3 comes out of the gate with veteran experience that can be used to its advantage — especially on the PS2. Greg Thomas, head of developer Visual Concepts, told us, "We've already written all our own servers for Dreamcast. If

you're a company that hasn't done it before, then yeah, the price of admission is more on the PS2 [than the Xbox]. It's no big deal for us to turn more servers on for the PS2." After hosting tournaments with the Dreamcast, Sega is also ready to do so for NFL 2K3, but at the time of this writing, the company would not supply any specifics about them. The game looks to have the advantage over all the other titles in this area simply because it is the only one going online over multiple systems, allowing it to utilize Xbox's real-time chat. As Thomas puts it, "The voice communicator is the [expletive]. The voice communicator is what it's all about. That's better than typing any day."

NFL Fever's inaugural title did well for Microsoft, and it expects the addition of online to ignite excitement in its fanbase. Despite earlier reports, the game will not feature any real-time downloads such as weather in the city you're playing in or tournaments; instead head-to-head play will be the focus. Unlike Microsoft, the fortunes of Sony's GameDay don't seem as dependent on online, but surprisingly, it might have one of the best setups for it. Being a first-party product, the title will support a USB keyboard for trash talking.

Although online play is a marquee feature for all of this year's football games, there are still too many questions to be answered to assess just how revolutionary it's going to be. On a small scale, who wins may come down to anything from who's got the most complete and timely roster updates, to simply who runs the smoothest. With all these titles offering only head-to-head play (i.e. exhibition games), Game Informer predicts that the real Internet football breakthrough will not occur until you can set up your franchise online.



THE INTERVIEW:
MARSHALL FAULK



Game Informer had a chance to sit down for an exclusive interview with Madden NFL 2003's cover star Marshall Faulk of the St. Louis Rams. While he was straightforward about his views on today's NFL (including one particular player he wouldn't mind getting

the hand-off from), he wouldn't budge on divulging his game-winning secrets for Madden to us! Looks like if we ever get to sit down in front of the game with him, we'll have to put his skills to the test! Until then, however, enjoy our chat with the All-World running back.

Game Informer: So we hear you're addicted to Madden's Mini-Camp mode, is that right?

Marshall Faulk: [Laughs] I like that you get to sharpen your skills.

GI: Have you gone through all of the drills?

MF: Yeah, I've only done the offensive stuff. Actually, I did do the one where you swat the ball and things with the defense.

GI: What other video games are you into right now?

MF: I'm playing old Madden and I'm playing SSX Tricky.

GI: Have you always been into vids?

MF: I've played all the old sports games. I've played the arcade games when I had a chance to go to the arcades,

but growing up we just didn't have a lot of video games. I play the sports games with my friends and the kid games with my kids.

GI: Do any of the other Rams play video games?

MF: Yeah, most of the guys play.

GI: Do you guys hook it up at training camp?

MF: Umm, I usually don't play at training camp because when I'm in my room I'm sleeping, and when I'm not, I'm out watching film or getting ready for football.

GI: Are you going to play Madden online?

MF: I'm sure I am. It'll be a lot easier to play friends across the country, stuff like that, you know...

(Continued on Page 50)

Come draft day, every team has their Big Board – a ranking of where they see each and every player going in the draft. Game Informer presents our own version, which breaks down each game's features and sets up a rough comparison between them all. Of course, like any player coming out of college, no

video game can be fully judged on numbers alone, so don't ignore a title's on-the-field performance – or better yet, go read our take on the games themselves! Note: Unfortunately, Microsoft was unable to supply exact numbers to some of the questions we posed, so be aware that N/A stands for information "Not Available."

	Madden NFL 2003	NFL 2K3	NFL Fever 2003	NFL GameDay 2003
Console(s)	PS2, Xbox, GC, PC, PS-X	PS2, Xbox, GC	Xbox	PS2, PS-X
Franchise Mode/# of Years	Y/30	Y/30	Y/N/A	Y/20
Practice Mode	Y	Y	Y	N
Tournament Mode	Y	Y	Y (Classic Challenge)	Y
Fantasy League	Y	Y	N	N
Preseason	Y	Y	Y	Y
Online Play	Y (PS2 Only)	Y (PS2, Xbox)	Y (Xbox Only) + Link Play	Y (PS2 Only)
Online Roster Updates	Y	Y	Y	Y
Online Chat	Y	Y	Y	Y
Online Tournaments	N	Y	N	Y
Create-A-Team	Y	N	Y	Y
Create-A-Player	Y	Y	Y	Y
Create-A-Team	Y	Y	Y	N
Customizable AI	Y	Y	Y	Y
Defensive Special Moves/ # of Moves	Y/5	Y/4	Y/2	Y/3
Receiver Hot Routes/ # of Routes	Y/7	Y/8	Y/8	Y/4
Old Uniforms	Y	Y	Y	Y
Alternate Uniforms	Y	Y	Y	N
Historic Teams	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pro Bowl	Y	Y	Y	Y
End of Season Awards/ # of Awards	Y/16	Y/12+	Y/50+	Y/7
# of Plays Per Team	300	250+	400+	270+
# of Polys Per Player	2,400+	5,000+	N/A	3,000+
# of Player Animations	1,500+	2,000+	N/A	2,280
# of Player Face Maps	300+	500+	N/A	156
# of Stat Categories	300+	75+	N/A	66
Career Stats	Y	Y	Y	Y
Middle of Game Saves	Y	N	Y	N
Replay Challenges	Y	N	N	N
Interactive Sidelines	Y	Y	N	Y
Commentary	John Madden & Al Michaels w/Michelle Stark	Dan Stevens & Peter O'Keefe	Kevin Calabro	Dick Enberg & Dan Fouts w/ Ian Eagle
Cover Star	Marshall Faulk	Brian Urlacher	Peyton Manning	Tom Brady
Developer	EA Tiburon	Visual Concepts	Microsoft	Red Zone
Publisher	Electronic Arts	Sega	Microsoft	989 Sports
Release Date	August 13 (all formats)	August 20 (PS2, Xbox) September 3 (GC)	September 5	August 13

GI: What are your favorite strategies or plays when you're playing Madden?

MF: I can't tell you that! I play for high stakes, man. My strategy is to win – how about that?

GI: Is the Rams playbook in the game similar to the one in real life?

MF: The new playbook is, I've helped them on some things. It's pretty close.

GI: How does it handle the Rams' formations, pre-snap motion, etc.?

MF: Yeah, they're gonna have all that in, but right now it's the rough draft, but it's pretty close.

GI: How does the game handle the interior running game?

MF: I think it does a good job of showing things from a running back's point of view and some of the things when the ball carrier has the ball that are some of the things that we do. It's the same on sweeps. They've got a pretty realistic version going of what really is going on.



GI: Do you read the defense in the video game the same way that you do on the field?

MF: For the most part I do. There are times that I've got to play quarterback, and I've got to see R in a different light. But when running the ball, yeah, I see it that way.

GI: What's the progression of your read of the defense? Do you look at the linebackers first, or pick up the blitz?

MF: It's different. It doesn't work the same in the game as it does in real life. In Madden, you read whether or not the play is working. You kind of watch your people rather than their people to see who's blocking and who's not.

GI: Have you used the create-a-play feature in Madden?

MF: Yeah, it's pretty cool. It takes away from the still playbook, and it gives you the advantage. It puts the know-it-all person of the game at a disadvantage because they know the plays and where certain plays can hurt you. But if somebody drew up a new play, that allows you to do things that the person's never seen before.

GI: Is there any facet of your abilities that the Rams don't utilize?



NFL 2K3 (PS2)



NFL Fever 2003 (Xbox)

Today, the NFL is a league of relative parity. In other words, almost anyone can be in the hunt in any given year. In a sense, this holds true for the upcoming crop of football video games. It looks like just about everyone will have something they can be pleased with. Madden is as good as ever, NFL 2K3 is just as impressive, and fans of Fever and GameDay will have things to cheer about.

On the other hand, former Oilers/Falcons coach-turned commentator Jerry Glanville once said that the NFL meant "Not For Long." This referred to the fact that if coaches didn't win, they'd be fired in a heartbeat. What does this mean for video games? Ask Konami and Acclaim, whose football franchises can no longer be kicked around like the 'Aints and Yuckaneers of old. With online becoming a new standard, there may be little room for subpar football titles; what publisher would commit to the online world with a product they know won't stand a chance? Nobody wants to throw a virtual football party and find out that everyone's hanging out in the lobby next door instead.

For NFL Fever and NFL GameDay, it boils down to this: These two franchises must step up and give their best effort. Although these two

will certainly be playable and enjoyable, they need to close the gap with Madden and NFL 2K in order to keep from falling too far behind. Sony seems to realize how bad GameDay has become, and has stepped up like an old veteran with a gutsy performance. NFL Fever, on the other hand, doesn't seem to go for the jugular – something that may come back to haunt it in the fourth quarter.

Speaking of which, Sega's football game is making a big push this year, and it will pay off. Madden, of course, has always been the king, but it's getting to the point where the 2K series matches it feature for feature and runs with it stride for stride. It now needs its fan base to rise up and create a rivalry similar to the old Madden/GameDay showdown of '98. This year's Super Bowl was a nail-biter till the very last play, and it looks like Madden NFL 2003 and NFL 2K3 will make things just as close and interesting. Which one's gonna kick the winning field goal? As of now, all we can say is that just for the sheer amount of changes, NFL 2K3's got us slightly more excited due to its attitude – something that is often the X-factor in hard-fought contests like this.



NFL GameDay 2003 (PS2)



Madden NFL 2003 (PS2)

MF: Oh, it doesn't matter to me. I think that whatever we do is fine with me. I don't really care what we do as long as we win. I don't care about utilizing any parts of my game any more or any less. I just want to win.

Gi: So in the Super Bowl some criticized coach Mike Martz for not giving you the ball enough...

MF: Yeah, that's for the armchair quarterbacks to criticize. The media people and armchair quarterbacks.

Gi: Growing up, were there any football players that you admired?

MF: All football players. Especially those guys that paved the way for us, because today we're looked at as celebrities and making a lot of money, but it wasn't always like that for football players. I admire all those football players who sort of stood up and made it what it was for all of us. So no particular players, just everyone in general.

Gi: How about nowadays, as far as those that you admire on the field?

MF: I think it's the same. If there's a player that I had an opportunity to play with... I think it's Brett Favre – only because I just admire the way he plays and it would be nice to play with him. Of course, I'm not taking anything away from that number 13 that I have [Rams' QB Kurt Warner]!

Gi: How about on the defensive side of the ball? Are there defenses that are tougher than others?

MF: Nah, not really. When we play people, it doesn't matter. When they come out, you'd swear they were the number one defense in the league, because everybody gives us their best. They want to make sure that we don't come up there and have a field day on them,

so you get teams playing their better game of the year against us.

Gi: Are there any running backs out there that you think match your skills?

MF: Match would be tough. I mean, there's some guys out there that can do some of the things that I can do, but they're some experience away from accomplishing some of the things that I have accomplished – but it all comes with time. I wasn't the player that I am now like three or four years ago. So, it's just the things that you can't teach except for by going through it.

Gi: Any predictions this season?

MF: It'll be a hard-fought season, but we look to come out on top.





Return of the Ninjas

Hi-ya! How's it going? For a generation now, the ninja lifestyle has captivated Western civilization, but our knowledge of the art of ninjutsu doesn't go much deeper than some black pajamas and a few pointy accoutrements. Following a discipline bordering on a religion that dates back hundreds of years, the ninja did not learn just one fighting style, but all styles. This encompassed both armed and unarmed combat, but also included poisons, explosives, and mastering one's environment. Their specialty was assassination and espionage, meaning one could be

behind you as you read this, directing the blade of his sword at your throat until...ok, it's not that likely, but it could happen.

Spawned from this pop culture hype, many ninja video games were born. Of those, a few titles rose to greatness. Coincidentally, three such franchises — *Ninja Gaiden*, *Shinobi* and *Tenchu* — all have next-generation sequels deep in development. Game Informer lurks in the shadows to get all the secret details on these hooded heroes and their latest gaming exploits.



This boss has been playing Devil May Cry



Rikimaru is the master of the blade, but can wield a spear and countless other weapons



"My scoliosis...it's cured!"



This mist just screams badly beware



Rikimaru would kick butt at hide and seek

Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven

Unlike most ninja game protagonists, the characters in Tenchu have always used wit and cunning before steel. However, they also pack enough heat to tackle any adversary head-on. In Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven, the leap in gameplay improvement and technology is staggering.

More than ever, Tenchu is a ninja simulation. Nothing beats sneaking around buildings, monitoring your enemies' alertness levels, then getting behind them and taking a little off the top (as in their head). In this sequel, the brutal, one-hit stealth kills will give you a Kanji (a Chinese character used in Japanese). Earn nine of them, and you'll be granted deadly new moves.

The combat combos are numerous, and you can also use a fallen foe's weapon (spear, bow, etc.). To avoid wrong-direction syndrome, holding R2 will lock onto the bad guy closest to you. New items abound, including our favorite, the sticky bomb—an adhesive projectile resembling a pinwheel that affixes to its target and can be detonated by clicking the analog stick. Enemies are much tougher this time around, though, and will give you a run for your money. We even saw one sub-boss toss Rikimaru (who will be joined by two other as-yet unannounced playable characters) up in the air, cap him with a rifle, and then slash his body on the way down—Devil May Cry style!

It's refreshing to see the graphics of this series finally equal the splendor of the gameplay. Gone are the texture tearing and ugly environments of the PS-X versions. Tenchu's look is definitely next-gen, with fluid animation, weather effects, and tremendous draw distance. This series might not have the tenure of the others, but Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven has the tools to be a cut above the ninja game crop.

Silent Killer Spotlight

Name:

Rikimaru

Resume:

Tenchu: Stealth Assassins (PS-X, 1998), Tenchu 2: Birth of the Stealth Assassins (PS-X, 2000), Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven (PS2, 2002)

Specialties:

Stealth Kills, Grappling Hook, Poison Rice

Weaknesses:

Overconfidence, Prematurely Gray Hair

■ FORMAT PLAYSTATION 2 ■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
 ■ PUBLISHER ACTIMISION ■ DEVELOPER K2 ■ RELEASE SPRING 2003

Ninja Gaiden

Although Mr. Hyabusa made an appearance in the 2001 hit *Dead Or Alive 3*, it has been far too long since we last followed his escapades in an action/adventure setting. Game Informer has procured some exclusive screenshots for you, and we even got some insider information from creator Tomonobu Itagaki himself.

Ninja Gaiden will be a love letter of sorts to the titles that got this franchise where it is today. With the next-generation power of Xbox firmly in its corner, Tecmo plans to kick the tires and light the fires when it comes to making sure Ryu looks better than he ever has, all the while granting him many of the familiar moves that helped him battle foes in his earlier exploits. Gripping and running along walls will be no problem, and performing the vertical surface jump is something that will become second nature to any player. This ability is a welcome addition – one that will surely raise the bar for the series.

In terms of where Ryu will be pulling off these moves, we have been told that the game will have many different types of levels. Some will hark back to the days of ancient Japan, while others will have a decidedly futuristic twist. One thing is for sure, though – this game has a definite ninja-esque feel to it. Don't worry about your favorite man in black suddenly donning a jetpack or something like that. Ryu's weaponry is rooted in tradition, as you can see throwing daggers in some of the pictures here, as well as his trusty sword (which just happens to bear the same design as his weapon in *Dead or Alive 3*). Other tools of death will make appearances, but no matter what happens, we know that all of them will remain true to the soul of Hyabusa's lineage. Without a shadow of a doubt, *Ninja Gaiden* is a new-school game with old-school heritage.

■ **FORMAT** XBOX ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO
■ **DEVELOPER** TEAM NINJA ■ **RELEASE** SPRING 2003



Ryu really hates this candle



Silent killer Spotlight

Name:

Ryu Hyabusa

Reveries:

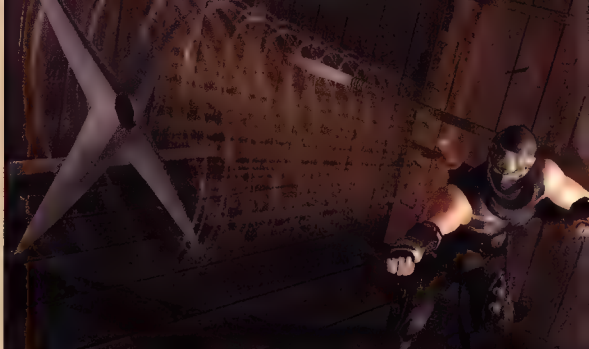
Ninja Gaiden (Arcade, 1988), *Ninja Gaiden* ((Europe only) Sega Master System, 1988), *Ninja Gaiden* (NES, 1989), *Ninja Gaiden* (PC, 1990), *Ninja Gaiden II: The Dark Sword of Chaos* (NES, 1990), *Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom* (NES, Lynx, 1991), *Ninja Gaiden* (Game Gear, 1991), *Ninja Gaiden* (Lynx, 1991), *Ninja Gaiden Shadow* (Game Boy, 1991), *Ninja Gaiden* ((Japan only) Genesis, TurboGrafx-16, 1992), *Ninja Gaiden Trilogy* (SNES, 1995), *Dead Or Alive 2* (Dreamcast, 2000), *DOA2: Hardcore* (PlayStation 2, 2000), *Dead Or Alive 3* (Xbox, 2001)

Specialties:

Wall Jump, Hand to Hand Combat, Throwing Shuriken, Battling Evil

Weaknesses:

Likes Mai Tais, Doesn't Wear Underwear, Suffers From Vertigo



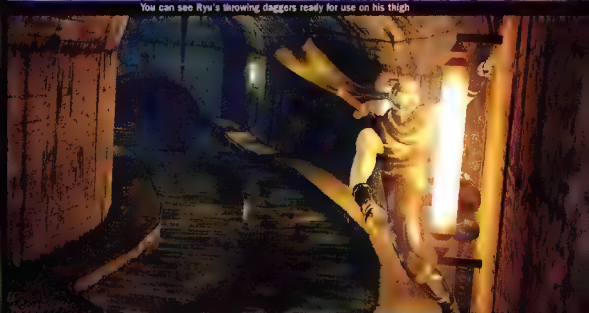
Hyabusa has never looked so good – or so deadly! [insert marical laughter here]



"I kill you because your outfit reminds me of something I saw in the toilet this morning"



You can see Ryu's throwing daggers ready for use on his thigh



Here's an example of the wall-grapple feature along with some nice lighting effects

Silent Killer Spotlight

Name:
Hotsuma

Resume:
Shinobi (Arcade, 1987),
Shadow Dancer (Arcade,
1989), The Revenge of Shinobi
(Genesis, 1989), Shadow
Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi
(Genesis, 1990), Shinobi:
Return of the Ninja Master
(Genesis, 1993), Shinobi II:
The Silent Fury (Game Gear,
1992) Shinobi Legions (Saturn,
1995)

Specialties:
Running on Walls, Slicing
Enemies in Two, Disappearing
Into Nothingness

Weaknesses:
Believes His Sword is Alive,
Occasionally Trips Over Scarf



Hotsuma is the latest hero within the Shinobi series



Hotsuma's 30-foot scarf was inspired by Spawn's flowing cape



Once slain, enemies will topple to the ground in a number of ways. If you look closely at the soldier on the right, his torso actually fell off of his body



Hotsuma can get the jump on enemies by using his Flash-like dash maneuver

Shinobi

Hidden within the shadows for many moons, Sega's stealthy assassin is finally returning to the video game battlefield. Shinobi's rebirth is in good hands and is supervised by the series' creator, Noriyoshi Ohba.

As with most classic revivals, Shinobi's reemergence is also a transformation – shedding its nostalgic, two-dimensional skin for a fully rendered, fully realized look. Of course, when this transition is made, the design could go any which way – for better or worse. Ohba's first priority, however, was to ensure that the game harbored the essence of its side-scrolling heritage. In such, Hotsuma, the main character, is well trained in the art of shuriken throwing and at the peak of athleticism. The classic double-jump maneuver makes a return and is joined by the remarkable ability of running on walls.

The most startling of changes to the series originates within the storytelling. It turns out that Hotsuma's sword is actually a living organism. Much like a vampire, the sword craves blood. This little plot twist is the perfect driving force for the action at hand. Here's the catch, though: The sword weakens quickly and is always in need of blood. The more it drinks, the stronger it becomes. For gameplay purposes, this makes for a wicked adventure. You'll have to feed off weaker enemies before engaging the more powerful adversaries. Such is the circle of life.

Since the game pumps out a constant flow of action, stealth is hardly used. In its place, however, Hotsuma can perform a dash maneuver that is so lightning quick, the eye cannot track the speed of movement. Rather, the player sees a brief silhouette in Hotsuma's recently vacated location. It's a cool effect and a crucial move, especially since it can be linked to almost every action in the game. The combat system is keen on custom-made combos and forces players to experiment – mixing jumps, dashes, and attacks in exciting and death-defying fashions.

You'll be able to slice bodies in two, toss multiple shuriken mid-jump, and cling to any wall in the game. The gameplay has a Devil May Cry-fee to it, but a style all its own. The graphical realism is also outstanding, combining an anime feel with the look of western comic books.

A release date has not been announced as of yet, but Sega promises to have the game on retail shelves this fall.

■ FORMAT PLAYSTATION 2 ■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER OVERWORKS
■ RELEASE FALL

PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

PRO RACE DRIVER

I BRAKE FOR DRAMA

Ryan McKane wanted to follow in his daddy's footsteps, like many sons do. Only, instead of being a barber or a shopkeeper, Ryan's dad was a famous racecar driver. He died doing what he loved to do, and under some questionable circumstances. With Ryan's brother also tearing up the race scene and the desire for speed and a piece of mind flooding his existence, Ryan is more determined than ever. Come hell or high water, it's his turn.

We all know Codemasters' ability to develop and publish some extremely impressive racing games – the TOCA and Colin McRae series, for example. These have always been niche titles here in the US, but they never really gained mass-market attention. The company hopes that this new storyline focus will help get it over the hump.

In order to put over the plot, Pro Race Driver will feature several detailed cutscenes, each with a blending of motion-captured animation and cel-shading. The trials and

tribulations of McKane will unfold in dramatic, cinematic fashion. Watching him being overshadowed by his brother for being mentored by his pit chief, you can't help but root for the guy.

Of course, Pro Race Driver isn't just about holding back the tears; it's as much – if not more – about shifting gears. No detail was spared in the presentation or gameplay departments, as this is perhaps the most realistic racer we've seen. These efforts will show in every tangible and intangible aspect of the game – from fine-tuning your ride to accurate physics.

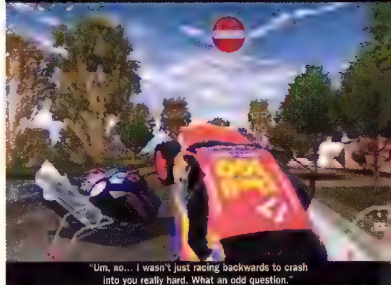
Graphically, this is on par with the best next-gen driving titles. The car models are extremely detailed, and look accurate from every angle. There's just the right amount of particle effects from burned rubber and metal-on-metal sparks. What is most amazing is vehicle damage. There are seemingly infinite points of impact on the car chassis.

Spoilers and hoods fly off, doors and trunks open, and panels get crinkled up like paper. Even glass will shatter in a rain of transparent blades onto the pavement. Vehicle physics also aids in cool wrecks, as cars take flight and cartwheel when hammered. It's all so cathartic, you'll be tempted to just abandon the race, bust a U-turn, and cause trouble.

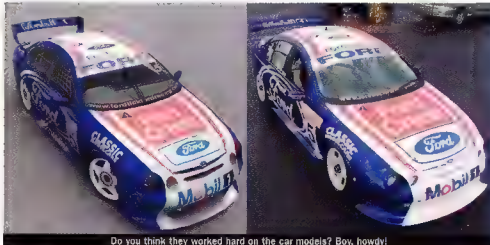
While unseen by the naked eye, AI is equally integral to the Pro Race Driver experience. Every driver has his own personality. Some will seek revenge after being passed, while others just want to make it home in



The inside-the-cockpit view is sweet, unless you're claustrophobic



"Um, no... I wasn't just racing backwards to crash into you really hard. What an odd question."



Do you think they worked hard on the car models? Boy, howdy!

one piece. You'll develop hated rivals, whose only goal will be to kick your butt all over the 30+ different tracks.

Pro Race Driver is set to combine expert storytelling with Codemasters' racing expertise. These two tastes look like they go great together so far. It's heading around turn number three, and we'll soon see if the game can take the checkered flag.

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS ■ DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS ■ RELEASE AUGUST 27 (PLAYSTATION 2), SEPTEMBER (XBOX, PC)



"This car just screams bling-bling"

"Ve Germans are ze best drivers, ja?"



"Man, my ride's so jacked, my hood almost burst from the horsepower!"

The environments themselves are quite detailed, as well



"See the shattering glass? Well run, you idiot! Run!"

Look out! Look out! Pink Mini-Coopers on parade

PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

TRIBES: AERIAL ASSAULT

AIRING IT OUT

Console gaming is about to see another crossover hit with the impending release of Tribes: Aerial Assault. In an interesting turn of events, a hugely successful PC title will give birth to a console sibling. People who love first-person shooters and their PlayStation 2 consoles will finally have a great way to release all of that pent-up anger — you know, from having to cover for that jackass who was supposed to close at the Dairy Queen on Friday night but never showed up.

This title will be one of the first online horses out of the gate for Sony, and will utilize the much-debated network adapter for multiplayer fun. Up to 16 people have the ability to tee-off against one another through a bevy of different modes. Capture the flag will of course be included, but there will also be a bunch of other multiplayer games like Siege, Hunters, and Bounty for you to master. If you get tired of the online festivities, there's always the 11-mission single-player experience to trounce. Or, you could brush up

on your online skills by playing the accompanying maps with bot opponents.

Don't buy this game thinking it'll be a run of the mill first-person experience, though. These environments are absolutely huge, and you are going to be taking up a lot of that space as you use jetpacks, vehicles, and good old-fashioned whoop-ass to convert your opponents into lifeless heaps of molten slag. Hold on a second there, Tex. We know you want to jump in and start runnin' and gunnin' without a care in the world, but you've got to think! Do you want to play the role of the heavy-armor defender, or the light infantry sniper? Didn't think of that, didja? That's what we're here for. You have to strategize how to use your satchel charges, mines, and grenades; then you'll need to figure out where the best location is to place your deployable turrets. As if that's not enough to chew on, the four exclusive air and ground vehicles (including a fighter,



This guy is a defender if we've ever seen one

one-man bomber, and an armed four-person transport) will need adept pilots and crew.

Tribes: Aerial Assault is one of the few titles which will take the PC experience and recreate it in such a way that both hardcore FPS vets and newbies alike will get a big kick out of hurtling through the air with a suit of high-tech armor and a big ol' weapon. Although your method of play may differ from your compatriots', you'll need to work as a team if you want to come out on top at the end of a match. Also, PK'ers need not apply, so all of you idiots out there who enjoy shooting your teammates can continue doing so somewhere else.

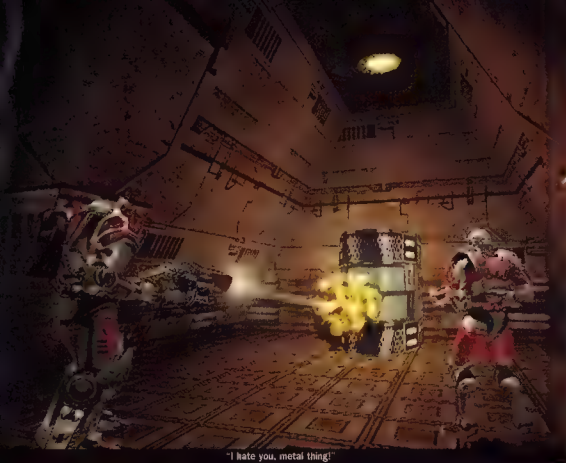
■ STYLE 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SIERRA ■ DEVELOPER INEVITABLE ENTERTAINMENT ■ RELEASE FALL



Ambush!

How's that for scale?

Score
Flags
29:30



"I hate you, metal thing!"



Getting the drop on a fighter is a difficult thing to do



Less armor means better mobility. The guy on the right won't be able to use those boot rockets for long



PLAYSTATION 2

GRANDIA XTREME

COOL GAME, DUMB NAME

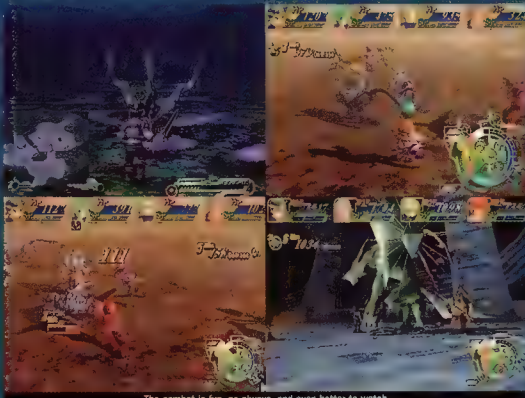


After the calamity that was *Grandia II*, we're still a bit skeptical of this new title in the series, (especially with the name) although things seem to be progressing in the right direction. Similar to other games, you fill the shoes of an unlikely hero named Evanin – a master of elemental magic – who must defeat some evil forces. We won't waste any more words on a typical overview you already know.

The gameplay remains reminiscent of previous iterations. Its turn-based nature consists of regular sword slashes, special attacks, elemental magic, and team attacks. Plus, since characters move around the battlefield, strategies based on position are possible.

Game Arts added a few new elements to the combat mix. If timed correctly, players can make their characters attack consecutively to deal a huge, impressive-looking combo! The other feature is a meter which appears in the bottom right corner of the screen that measures Evanin's mood. It basically indicates when an enemy or item is near.

Fortunately, *Xtreme* is being developed for PS2 from the ground up, which means that the graphics will look better, and there won't be any nasty conversion flaws present in the PS2 version of *Grandia II*. Although the camera still needs a little work, it's nothing that can't be fixed before its release this September.



The combat is fun, as always, and even better to watch

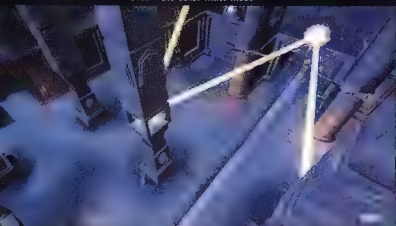
■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ PUBLISHER BANDAI ■ DEVELOPER GAME ARTS ■ RELEASE SEPTEMBER



Expect to see day and night come and go as time passes



Orcs – the other white meat



A good number of tricky puzzles will rack your brain as you explore Moria

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

BASED ON THE BOOK, YOU KNOW...
THOSE THINGS YOU READ

There are few properties that are hotter right now than J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, so there was little doubt that there would be plenty of games based on his novels, which have sold close to 100 million copies worldwide. However, as you probably noticed from the screenshots, this version looks much different from *The Two Towers* game currently being developed by Electronic Arts. The reason for the difference is actually quite simple: EA is making its game based on the movie from New Line Cinema and this adventure is based off the book license.

Game Informer – much like you, we're sure – has seen the movie multiple times, so we have the look of the actors in the movie imbedded in our brains. However, once you see this game in action you'll quickly find yourself firmly immersed in this slightly different, though definitely engrossing, version of Middle Earth.

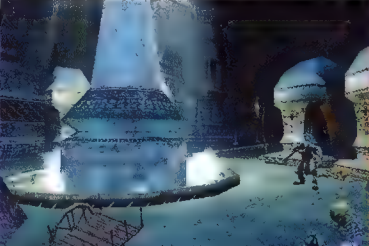
This single-player adventure encompasses the first book of the trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and will give you a chance to take control of Frodo, Gandalf, and Aragorn as

you try to gather the Fellowship and protect the One Ring from the Dark Lord Sauron. During your travels, you will encounter 28 different types of enemies ranging from roaming monsters to boss encounters like the Balrog and the Black Riders. You won't be powerless against them, however, as each character you control has different skills that will let you explore the powers of the One Ring: Stealth, Distraction, and Magic.

The thing that sets this game apart from the title being developed by Electronic Arts is that this epic will cover the entire story from the book. Even the missing scenes from the movie are here, like the encounters with Old Man Willow and Tom Bombadil.

At this point, it's hard to say how good the gameplay itself will be, but there is little doubt that fans of the series will be pleased by all the elements and little nuances that are included in the game.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SURREAL SOFTWARE (PS2), WXP (XBOX), SURREAL SOFTWARE (PC) ■ **RELEASE** WINTER



Far greater evils await the Fellowship in the Mines of Moria



Weatherstop seemed like a nice, tranquil place to meet Gandalf



PlayStation 2



"Downforce is an essential racing purCHASE for speed freaks. It's a smashing drive!"

- Play Magazine

TAKE A RIDE ON THE WILD SIDE!

TONS OF TRACKS



FASTER SPEEDS



DEVASTATING CRASHES



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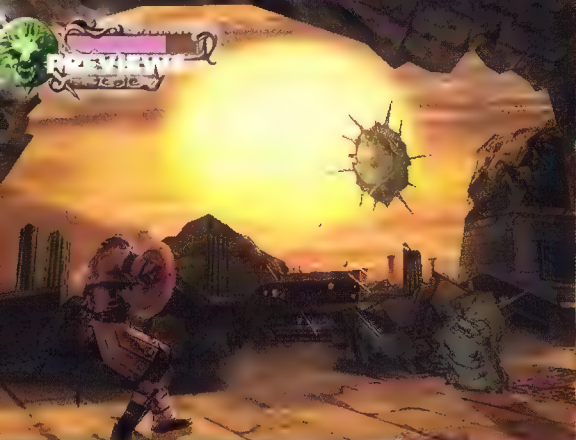
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FASTER AND MORE DEVASTATING

DOWNFORCE

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PLAYSTATION 2

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE

THE LAST GREAT GUITAR GOD

It was a very interesting E3 for Tecmo.

When you didn't have ogling hordes of males drooling over Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball, you had Rygar's producer Satoshi Kanematsu laying down guitar licks in his own self-professed developer-speak (check out last month's GI Spy). It wasn't quite David Lee Roth circa "Yankee Rose," but his game Rygar is already speaking very well for itself. The action title wowed audiences with a three-minute teaser trailer. What they didn't see, however, was what Game Informer got a peek at behind closed doors.

The first thing that struck us was just how close the title's concept art was to the actual locations used during gameplay. While we had seen some of these previously, watching our hero running around within them was amazing. Your interaction with these areas will be one of the fundamental parts of the game, and we don't just mean that you'll break a few pots for some meaty health pack, or whatever. We witnessed Rygar using his Diskarmor to topple

huge pillars in order to make his way across chasms. It will be up to you to uncover levels' secret areas merely by trying to trash areas like a spoiled rock star in a hotel suite. If you don't do it, someone else surely will. Returning to the level that we showed you in our feature article on the game (issue #109), we noticed that some enemies had been repositioned - including one gargantuan with a hammer who crashed out of a wall to surprise the pants off of us.

Perhaps the best thing about the environments and your interaction with them is that Rygar has been nicely blended into his locations, which minimizes the impression that he's merely stuck on top of them. This makes actions like being able to swing around by latching his Diskarmor onto pre-set positions in areas, and just the environments themselves, that much more alluring and believable. As an added bonus, both Rygar's and his foes' blood will spill about and help spice things up for good measure.

Unfortunately, one of the aspects we were most curious about wasn't touched on much at E3: Rygar's special moves. We were able to confirm that they are elemental in nature, with Fire and Water a lock and the others presumably being Earth and Air. Most importantly, however, is that in our behind-closed doors update with the game, we really got the impression that Kanematsu and his team are keeping true to the principles that they had set for the project, with plenty of dynamic action and the chance to break loads of stuff up. While we never got the chance to see Kanematsu smash his Les Paul in a whirl of Pete Townshend power at E3, we know that Rygar wouldn't have it any other way.



"Hmmm.... Usually the keg's the place to be at a party... Where is everybody?"



"Hi, I'm Satan. Enjoy the rest of the preview!"



Holy Hell on Wheels!

■ STYLE | PLAYER ACTION
■ PUBLISHER TECMO ■ DEVELOPER
TECMO ■ RELEASE NOVEMBER

in your hands:

the future.

the past.

a beautiful blonde.

and oh yeah...

a really cool gun.

DINO STALKER™

You are Mike Wired, a gutsy WWII fighter pilot. It's 1943. Your plane is shot down over the Atlantic. In a hailstorm of bullets, an explosion of light carries you to a futuristic hyperspace world where new dangers lurk. A new enemy waits.

Prepare to battle sadistic dinosaurs through impenetrable jungle terrain and futuristic cityscapes. Aided only by a bizarre military timepiece, a beautiful girl, and plenty of raw firepower, you must make sense of the senseless—before time runs out.



First-person shooting action



Battle enemy giants from land, sea & air



PlayStation 2

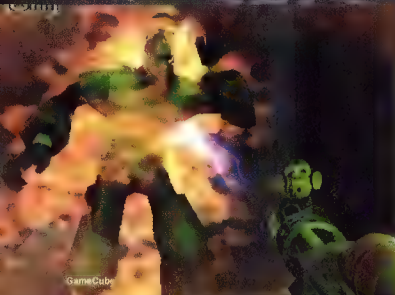
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Blood
Violence



That flaming guy looks cool, but...LOOK AT THE MONKEY!



"Hi, I'm Danica. I like love shopping, horses, and..." - BANG!



Boxy, the robot reject, has some firepower

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

TIMESPLITTERS 2

TIME KEEPS ON SPLITTIN' SPLITTIN' SPLITTIN' INTO THE FUTURE

You like first-person shooters? Then chew on this, suckas! The good gents at Free Radical, including the well-known designers who made GoldenEye the classic FPS that it is, have been hard at work crafting the sequel to the PS2 launch hit, TimeSplitters. For TimeSplitters 2, Free Radical is going above and beyond what it's done in the past, making it a standout in the crowded crop of upcoming FPS games.

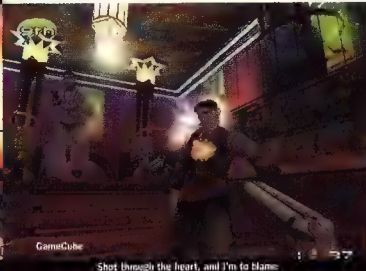
Contrary to Sony's E3 press conference statistics, more than 4% of gamers play by themselves. Thus, TS2 will have an increased focus on its single-player experience. The mission-based levels are ghetto fabulous, comprised of clever, evolving missions; dramatic, well done cutscenes; and some crafty, ruthless enemies. With sniping, bombing, and point-blank firefights, this game is sure to evoke a few GoldenEye memories, but that's most assuredly a good thing.

The memorable multiplayer mode is back in full force, too. With 70 characters to choose from (including THE MONKEY!), and the same blinding speed from the original, deathmatches have never been as adrenaline-filled. Not only will you be able to blast three of your friends in split-screen, but the PS2 version will also support H-Link so you can go at it with homeboys and girls with the entire screen to yourself. Think that's cool? The PlayStation 2 TimeSplitters 2 will also have internet capabilities. Bam! We're talking huge groups of gamers (the exact amount is TBA) shooting each other's brains out. Our trigger fingers are developing a rash as we speak. What about Xbox and GameCub games getting online? Um, we'll have to get back to you on that one.

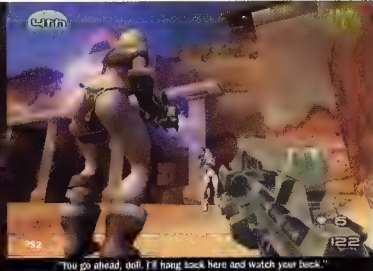
Graphically, TimeSplitters 2 maintains its rather goofy style. This time, though, the animations have been entirely reworked. Pop a cap in someone's ankle, and they'll crumble to the ground. Nail them between the eyes, and watch them fly backwards. A well-placed shot - with one of the all-new or seriously upgraded weapons - will even take the heads off some of the "living-disabled" minions of the game. Additionally, the environments have been made more interactive. Boxes can be destroyed, and fun little objects like watermelons have been placed in levels for the pure joy of destroying them. It's like your own little at-home Gallagher kit!

Expect to see a reworked Mapmaker mode. The original's version was well done, letting you add lighting changes and multiple floors to your created corridors, but our sources tell us that this year's model will be even more intricate. We even hear that you can craft your own single-player missions with this tool! Eidos and Free Radical are taking no prisoners with TimeSplitters 2, and we can't wait for the final result.

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ DEVELOPER FREE RADICAL DESIGN
■ RELEASE SEPTEMBER 24



Shot through the heart, and I'm to blame



You go ahead, doll. I'll hang back here and watch your back."



PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

TO LIVE AND DIE IN LA

We're not going to accuse anyone of trying to jump on the GTA bandwagon, but it would be safe to say that the success of Grand Theft Auto III has not gone unnoticed in the world of video game publishing. Activision, a company known for mega-franchises Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, the Wolfenstein series, and Spider-Man, is looking to round out its portfolio of game properties with True Crime: Streets of LA, an action/racing title chock full of wild car chases and bloody shoot-outs. The good news is that Activision has tapped Luxoflux, the developers of the pioneering vehicular combat series Vigilante 8, to create a more arcade-oriented spin on the rapidly expanding hard-boiled action/racing formula.

Although this game was inexplicably hidden in a modest kiosk dwarfed by Activision's huge Doom III display at E3, those that were lucky enough to actually spot the game amongst all the id-related hoopla came away impressed by how this title is shaping up. True Crime's protagonist is Nick Kang, a rogue cop (is there any other kind in video games?) who is willing to go far beyond the bounds of the law in his quest to rid the City of Angels of the Mafia. What an original premise! We'll alert the Pulitzer Prize committee immediately! On second thought, who cares? We've sat through worse drivel for the opportunity to pop a few caps in some busters, so let's just gloss over these cliched plot devices and get down to business.

The game incorporates three basic gameplay mechanics: car chases, gun fights, and hand-to-hand combat. With Luxoflux's expertise in the field, the driving sequences are already looking amazing, showcasing detailed car models, responsive handling, and your driver's ability to shoot at other cars while piloting his Detroit stallion. Upping the ante of both GTA and Sony's The Getaway, the game will encompass an area equivalent to 400 square miles of real-life Los Angeles. On foot, you'll pack no less of a punch, either through Kang's arsenal of martial arts-inspired brawling techniques, or a host of readily-available armaments.

Overall, the game appears to be a more linear experience than GTA III, with your character often being shuttled from one mission to the other. However, there are a number of side quests and smaller crimes that occur along the way to your ultimate goal, which are reminiscent of the phone booth missions you pulled in Liberty City. Of course, we expect that, by the end of your journey, many former friends will be exposed as enemies, and everything you held dear has been exposed as a malevolent fraud. Hey, for a guy like Max Pa...we mean...Nick Kang, it's all in a day's work. Kidding aside, we're extremely excited about True Crime, a game that could go a long way toward perfecting this generation's hottest new genre. It's hot, people, so cop it when it drops in 2003.

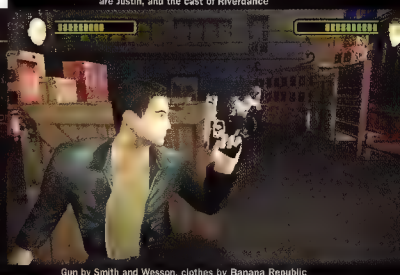
■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER LUXOFLUX ■ RELEASE SPRING 2003



Lock on targeting lets you pump lead on the go



This game of Go Fish just turned deadly



The only people that can kick higher than this are Justin, and the cast of Riverdance

Gun by Smith and Wesson, clothes by Banana Republic

PREVIEWS



XBOX

CRIMSON SEA

THE NEXT KING CRIMSON?

Koei used its *Remnants of the Three Kingdoms* as the basis for *Kessen II*, and then *Dynasty Warriors 3*. Now it seems the brawler is expanding its horizons into interplanetary space. So here's the question: Will *Crimson Sea* merely be another excuse to use its Impressive Group Control Engine or will the company really give the Xbox something new? This year's E3 told us little, other than that *Crimson Sea* will—at a minimum—look absolutely stunning.

Koei promises the game will have RPG elements in order to build your character Sho, but as far as other similarities to the genre go, all we know is that you have a "clouded past" and an unrealized destiny. Sound familiar? Oh well, you might as well uncover your secrets by taking on the game's waves of enemies, which can be dispatched through weapons, or by your magic-like Neo-psionic powers. Early movies of the game have shown off devastating attacks, which level hordes of foes in one fell swoop. The developers tell us that there will be plenty of real-time effects such as morphing enemies, as well as inventive uses of peripheral senses like vibration and sound for detecting opponents.

Koei has yet to detail the game's mission/story structure, combat mechanics, and other key elements—things that will be important in setting *Crimson Sea* apart from other Koei products and its apparent brawling roots. Visually, at least, it has already done its job in distinguishing itself from the pack quite well.



The old "lay down and die" spell works every time

Devastating gun blasts: Strong enough for a man, but made for a woman

Crimson Sea promises bugs—thousands of them

The Jedi mind trick isn't going to tame these beasts



GAMECUBE

THE HOBBIT

THE JOURNEY TO LONELY MOUNTAIN

Before Frodo headed off to Mount Doom to destroy the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, his Uncle Bilbo had gone on quite an adventure himself in J.R.R. Tolkien's first fantasy novel, *The Hobbit*. Bilbo's tale, which we're sure is familiar to many, takes him from his tiny abode in the Shire to the depths of Lonely Mountain and everywhere in between. Early next year, GameCube owners will get a chance to relive this grand saga, thanks to Sierra Entertainment.

Delivered from a third-person perspective, *The Hobbit* will require the player to use hack n' slash swordplay, along with a healthy dose of stealth and puzzle-solving to complete the journey. To keep the action varied, Bilbo also has various abilities that will grow and change based on what you do in the game.

During your adventures, you will also be able to play a strategic game of *Stonelords* with friends or characters found in-game (think along the lines of the card games in *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII*). The *Stonelords* are hidden throughout the game, so if you are a hard-nosed adventurer you should be able to pull a Pokémon and collect them all.

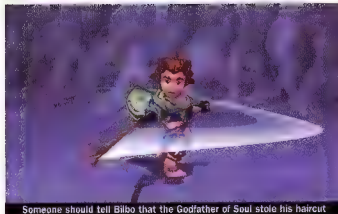
The Hobbit isn't due until 2003, but we just couldn't wait to show you some early screens from the game, and get you excited for this epic quest. We know we can't wait to get our greedy little hands on this one, preciousssss.



Walk softly and carry a big stick



Bilbo always finds himself in the most precarious of positions



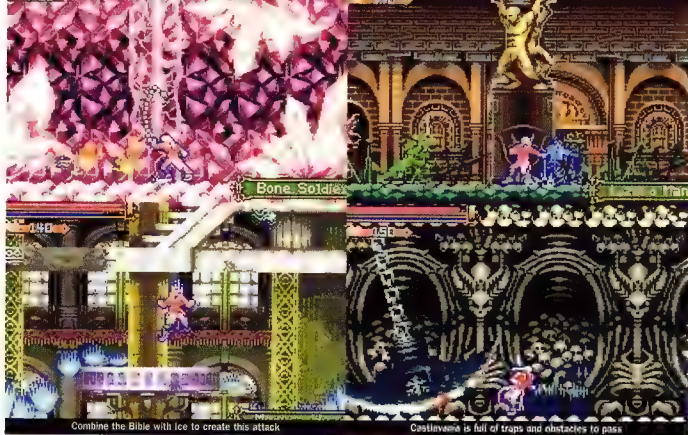
Someone should tell Bilbo that the Godfather of Soul stole his haircut



Sting doing what Sting does best

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI ■ **DEVELOPER** KOEI ■ **RELEASE** WINTER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SIERRA ENTERTAINMENT ■ **DEVELOPER** INEVITABLE ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** 2003



Combine the Bible with Ice to create this attack

Castlevania is full of traps and obstacles to pass

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE

PURE GAMEPLAY POWER

Screw 128-Bit processors pumping out 60 million polygons per second with bit and bump mapping. Even with outdated sprites and parallax scrolling, Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance outshines many "superior" 3D games for one simple reason: pure gameplay.

Done in the spirit of the PlayStation classic Castlevania: Symphony of the Night, Harmony puts players in the role of Juste Belmont, who must rescue his childhood friends, Lydie and Maxim, from Dracula, and once again banish the mysteriously appearing Castlevania. Fans will immediately recognize the parallels to SOTN in gameplay and presentation; even more conspicuous are some of the bosses borrowed from the PS-X Castlevania.

However, Harmony doesn't completely rip off SOTN, offering fans a few unique changes and additions. First, although Juste only has access to a whip, he can perform various moves and even power it up by attaching Runes. The secondary weapons also function a bit differently, thanks to Spell Books. When players activate one, the secondary weapon produces an attack incorporating that Book's specific power (Ice, Fire, etc.). For example, combining the new punch attack with Ice produces a lunging Ice punch.

This enhanced arsenal is further complimented by Juste's ability to jet forward and backward. Unlike Alucard, who could only parry backward in defense, Juste can propel himself forward to nail fleeing enemies before they can counterattack—a minor element that definitely intensifies the action for the series.

Harmony will certainly mark a bright spot in the Castlevania universe; not simply because of the quality gameplay it will offer, but mostly because Konami improved the title's brightness, actually making it possible to see and appreciate the experience!



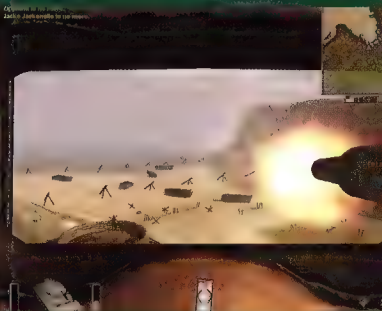
Juste has new moves and magical attacks



Collect furniture and bring it to this room—a new mini-game?

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER

PREVIEWS



XBOX/PC

BATTLEFIELD 1942

WE LIKE IKE

In this, EA's World War II-based online multiplayer action title, the gameplay is all about choices. Which side are you going to join? What battle are you going to fight? Which of the 35 vehicles are you going to commandeer? Will you storm the front, or will you hang back and direct the troops? It's all up to you in Battlefield 1942. Although it's reminiscent of World War II Online, we've been assured that when you're in the game, there will be plenty of action to keep you busy—and you won't have to wander around, looking for a fight.

Aside from the formidable multiplayer mode, there will also be a single-player experience featuring AI with no scripting. This will ensure a fresh experience each time you fire up the game. Graphically, the Refractor 2 engine makes the 46 different environments leap to life. Additionally, you will have the ability to control a number of WWII-era land vehicles, ships, and aircraft, and the option of multiple player controlled positions within larger craft (a bomber will have a pilot, gunner, bombardier, etc.). This is one title that will likely make a big splash when it releases this summer on PC, and for Xbox this holiday season.



B-29s don't maneuver too well this close to the ground

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 64-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL ILLUSIONS ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER (PC), WINTER (XBOX)



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

WHIP IT, WHIP IT GOOD

In film, the Indiana Jones franchise is legendary — one of the greatest trilogies to ever grace the silver screen. Video game translations of the series have fared, to phrase it kindly, somewhat less well. Indy's last foray into the digital dungeons, Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine, was an uninspired Tomb Raider rip that died a quiet death on both Nintendo 64 and PC. With plans for a new movie starring Harrison Ford and Sean Connery (*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*?) in place, LucasArts has tapped Buffy the Vampire Slayer developer the Collective to revitalize the Indiana Jones name for a new generation of game players.

Entitled *Indiana Jones and Emperor's Tomb*, this title looks as if it hews close to the Tomb Raider formula, without the clunky control and cumbersome combat. To this end, the Collective has implemented a hand-to-hand combat system, which allows Indy to use objects in the environment, like chairs and shovels, to smite his foes. Of course, his trusty whip and pistol will also figure into the equation. The game features a riveting plot that sends our hero on a quest to reclaim the Heart of the Dragon talisman from a Chinese emperor's tomb. Yikes! Sounds dangerous, but we suspect that Indy will come through in the end.



Who says a 95-year-old can't swing across chasms?

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** THE COLLECTIVE
 ■ **RELEASE** FALL



PC

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

MS GAMESMANSHIP

From the creators of the *Age of Empires* series comes *Age of Mythology* — an empire game that puts players in control of mythical creatures and gods. Ensemble has been knee-deep in development with this title, making sure that it will kick every inch of the butt it looks like it will. With fully rendered 3D environments, hundreds of unit animations, and a variety of attack and defense maneuvers, *Age of Mythology* looks to be a mega-hit in the making.

Aside from the realistic terrain features and the climatic effects (tornadoes, earthquakes, infernos, lightning storms, etc.), this title will dazzle with its in-depth economic models, resource gathering, and the ability to reinforce your armies with over 25 different mythological creatures. The Greek, Norse, and Egyptian races will all be recreated with painstaking accuracy, including their architectural discrepancies, and assorted strengths and weaknesses as you guide their culture from on high. Rule wisely, and you'll attract the favor of gods like Ra, Poseidon, or Thor; who will then perform different tasks for you. For those who prefer human opponents, more than 15 map types, 13 game variants, and five starting conditions round out the robust multiplayer side of the experience.



Buildings take shape with astonishing detail



Lightning strikes!



The feeling of grandeur is artfully conveyed



You can play Circus Maximus as a minigame in this level! We're kidding.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS ■ **DEVELOPER** ENSEMBLE STUDIOS
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER



PC

SIMCITY 4

SIM-PLY AMAZING

This is going to be an astounding game. Just look at those screenshots, for the love of cripe! They haven't been doctored, we saw it in action, and it looks that good. So, what's all the fuss about? How about a depth of control you've never seen in a Sim title before? SimCity 4 is finally cashing in on the promises made about SimCity 3000 – customization and interaction with your population on the neighborhood level. If your citizens are getting neglected in one area, they'll move to a better part of town, and their former homes will begin to look rundown and haggard. Put in new libraries, parks, shopping centers and other amenities to lure people back, but you'll need to pay close attention to the traffic patterns you're creating with all of this new growth. If things get too congested, you can bet your sweet bippy that you'll hear about it.

Another facet of this masterpiece – one that only Maxis can bring to a game – is the ability to import your family from The Sims into a newly built city, and ask them for advice on their new neighborhood. This title is sure to be an amazing mixture of graphical prowess, strategic thinking, and good old-fashioned fun. You may want to think about pre-ordering SimCity 4 now.



Here's a little recreation of part of the Bay Area



Nighttime is the right time!



If you look closely you can see the little firemen getting ready to fight the blaze



You'll now have the ability to stop tornadoes and other natural disasters from happening



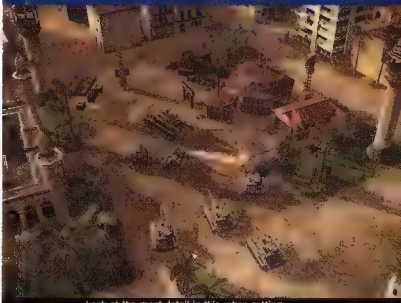
PC

COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS

PURE ENERGY

Shying away from the NOD/GDI universe, EA Pacific (a development house with close ties to Westwood Studios) takes off the real-time strategy gloves, and will give the PC universe a shake with the impending release of Command & Conquer Generals this winter. Featuring real-world units and environments, the game will give players the ability to choose one of three sides (US, Chinese, or Global Liberation Army), each with their own advantages and disadvantages. You'll also choose one of nine Generals who will grant your forces assorted powers and upgrades. For example, a NATO Tank General can unleash a torrent of raw, mechanical power, and a Chinese Secret Police General can spot and capture hidden enemy units. This will certainly make for interesting multiplayer missions as well as an engrossing single-player experience.

To enhance play of all types, a new engine dubbed "SAGE" has been implemented, thereby making the game completely 3D. From rolling hills to deep gorges, players will now have to grapple with how to use geography to their advantage. Instead of just focusing on unit movement. Also, fighting in the middle of city centers and towns will become a very real part of the Generals experience.



Look at the great detail in this urban setting

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY (MULTIPLAYER TBA)
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA PACIFIC
 ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** MAXIS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

PHOTOPHILE

GAMECUBE

MARIO PARTY 4



It's that game we love to hate—but wait a second. This version of Mario Party almost looks...cool! It must be the Apocalyptic Run for the hills! Nintendo's zany multiplayer party game is coming back on October 26, and from what we've seen, this might be a keeper. With a bestdload of new minigames, a handicap system that allows players of all skill-sets to compete, and a Tag Battle system which lets players pair up and compete to collect stars, Mario Party 4 looks to have a lot more bite than its older siblings.

PC

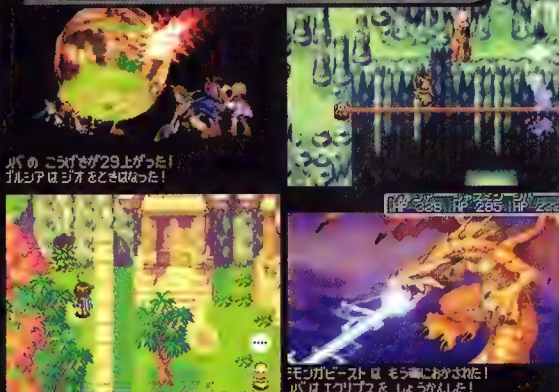
HIGHLAND WARRIORS

What do you get when you mix historically accurate units, personalities, and locations with a cutting-edge gaming engine? An incredible looking RTS named Highland Warriors from Data Becker. With the ability to zoom in on individual units, or take a top-down view for battlefield management, the sense that you're participating in the action onscreen is almost palpable. Look for HW to hit shelves this winter.



GAME BOY ADVANCE

GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE



The original Golden Sun is easily the best original RPG for the port-heavy Game Boy Advance. Thus, we couldn't be happier to bring you news of a sequel. With looks that would make a SNES game jealous, and more spells, puzzles, and Djinn helpers than a handheld game should be allowed to have, all gamers will be blinded by the need to get this sequel. Little Orphan Annie says the next Golden Sun will come out not tomorrow, but early 2003.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

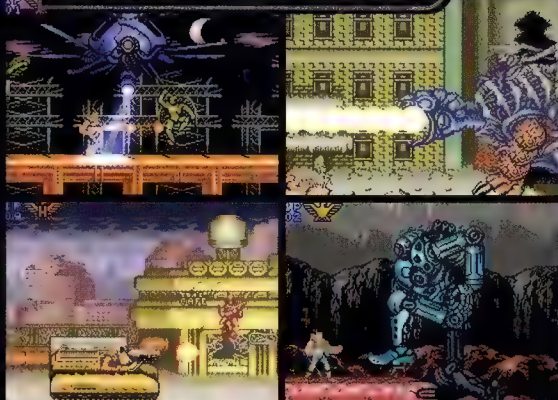
FALCONE: INTO THE MAELSTROM



If you enjoy talking like a pirate all day and you've driven away all of your friends and family, here's the game for you. As Gabriel Falcone you will dog fight with enormous battle cruisers, then board them and do battle with their crew as you ruthlessly pillage their interiors for anything you can sell or use. Arr matey! It be releasing this November if Virgin Interactive do be tellin' the truth!

GAME BOY ADVANCE

CONTRA ADVANCE



The ports just keep coming, and that's perfectly fine by us. This time, it's Super Nintendo's Contra III coming in this November; one of the best 16-bit shooters released. Tentatively called Contra Advance a decade later, you'll find all the gun-toting mayhem that made you love the series, complete with two-player simultaneous action and a few bonus features thrown in. Cock the hammer, it's time for action.

PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2

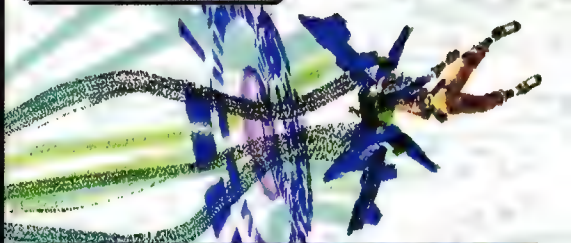
ATV OFFROAD FURY 2



Rainbow Studios is putting the finishing touches on its sequel to the PlayStation 2 Greatest Hit, ATV Offroad Fury, and it looks to be packed to the hilt with new features. Not only will it have improved graphics, bigger courses, and a revamped stunt system, but online play via the Network Adaptor and a host of new minigames are also planned. Get your ATV groove on this November.

PLAYSTATION 2

.HACK



Stay one step removed from massively multiplayer online RPG geeks like Andy by playing Bantai's .hack – a virtual MMORPG coming this October. You are Kite, a kid playing an online game called The World. When your real-life friends start dropping into comas, you must scour it in search of answers. With real-time events, online-esque features, character designs by Evangelion's Yoshiyuki Sadamoto, and a story by Ghost in the Shell's Kazumori Ito, .hack is a mind trip that's worth taking.

GAMECUBE

SMUGGLER'S RUN: WARZONES



This July will see more smuggle-ge with Rockstar Games' Smuggler's Run: Warzones. It's the same, only different! New vehicles and objectives will grace this version of SR, but will that be enough to lift this franchise into the big leagues? Time will tell, but with better multiplayer modes and a few other goodies, we wouldn't be surprised to see this one jump up the GameCube sales charts.

GAMECUBE

MYSTIC HEROES



The "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" motto seems to be alive and well at Koel as it prepares to release a title this winter which borrows heavily from the tried-and-true Dynasty Warriors formula. As a hack n' slash brawler, Mystic Heroes will inject a healthy dose of story to keep things interesting. As you can see from the picture, this game is going to look amazing - let's hope its gameplay can keep up.

GAMECUBE

1080°: WHITE STORM



Nintendo will be upping the ante in the next-gen snowboarding game with the release of 1080°: White Storm, early next year. Navigate avalanches, rockslides, and a bunch of other environmental factors that could really mess a guy up, as you break off incredible combos and slice your way down lush environments. With multiple play modes (Match Race, Time Attack, and Trick Attack to name a few) and crisp graphics, it will be interesting to see if this title can live up to the success of those that have come before it.

PC

FREELANCER



Microsoft is plunging head-first into the massively multiplayer universe with its upcoming spring 2003 release of Freelancer. As a space-based title, players will have the ability to become anything they want in this unique environment. Pirates will scavenge shady sectors, law enforcement will make sure everything is on the up-and-up, traders will try to make money - there are simply too many play perspectives to list. Rest assured, though, this game will be gigantic - both in scope and popularity.

PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / PC

HITMAN 2



More hittish action is coming your way on September 3 thanks to Eidos. As a guy with a barocade on the back of your head, you must once again make sure evil people meet their evil maker (not Anakin Skywalker). Spanning three systems, and featuring an updated graphical engine as well as enhanced gameplay, Hitman 2 is sure to be a title to watch come this fall.

GAMECUBE

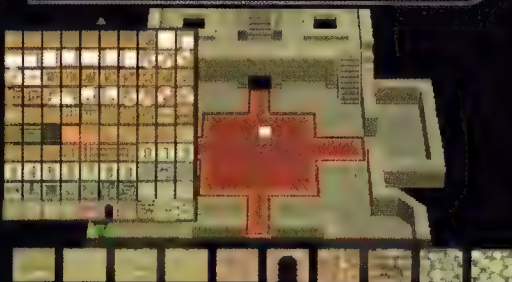
DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR STARRING MICKEY MOUSE



Get your mouse on this August when Nintendo releases what we call Mickey's Magic Mirror - its newest Disney title. Take on the role of Mickey as he solves puzzles and tricks enemies to get out of the magical mirror he's become trapped in! This new world resembles his house, but it's crazy! You must rebuild the broken mirror to get home, all the while defeating foes, and keeping a look-out for souvenirs like Pluto's collar along the way. This title will also have connectivity features, so have your GBA handy - it'll help!

PLAYSTATION 2

RPG MAKER 2



It's (almost) time to put your money where your mouths are, kiddies! Okay, so maybe you didn't like aspects of the last RPG you played on your PS2. Well, here's a chance to make your very own RPG - and it's going to be as good, or as bad, as you can make it. Compatible with a USB keyboard and utilizing a much bigger memory card than the previous installment, this title should be hitting shelves courtesy of Agetec sometime in the beginning of next year.

PLAYSTATION 2

RAD



As a giant robot destruction game, you wouldn't think that there'd be a lot of depth to discover - but there is! While these gigantic robotic opponents are fighting each other, the humans controlling them on the ground have to avoid being trampled, all the while watching for falling debris and staying clear of traffic! These robots can also transform, and are customizable via an R&D system you guide with your skillful hands. Look for RAD to release in November courtesy of Enix.

PLAYSTATION 2

SEGA BASS FISHING DUEL

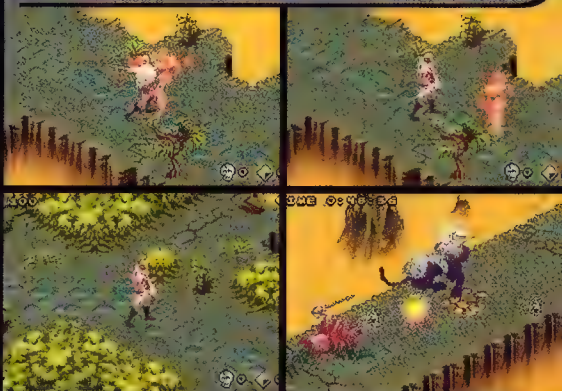


Sega's Bass games have long been considered the coolest of fishing titles. Now on the PlayStation 2, this series has a chance to inspire more drunken pseudo sportsman than ever before. The graphics have received a huge boost, as has the cunning aquatic AI. Add split-screen fishing competitions, and there will be more than enough here to make your worm wriggle this fall.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

PHOTOPHILE

HE-MAN: POWER OF GRAYSKULL



By the power of Nostalgia...I have a license! TDK is hoping that He-Man fans new and old will flock to their local retailer this fall when it releases its new action-adventure title based on the Masters of the Universe. Featuring combat both on foot and in assorted vehicles, as well as the ability for linked play with three of your buddies, He-Man: Power of Grayskull will be here before you know it.

PLAYSTATION 2

JET X20



Get this: More than 30 insane motocross-style tricks, a plethora of different tracks and environments (Atlantis, the Arctic, a swamp, and a Pacific Island to name a few), and bunch of wacky watercraft to race. This all spells out the upcoming water-racer set to release this October from Sony Computer Entertainment America. If you get bored playing with yourself, invite a buddy over for two-player split-screen action! Splash.

REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we can 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

- 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 who 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 reworked.

GRAPHICS

How good the 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 resort 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

Flat 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 playing 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.

	Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older		Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older
	Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older		Content suitable for all ages
	Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older		Product is awaiting final rating



ANDY
Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters
Interests: Walleys Fishing, Shiner (Thanks Riz), Conan, Presents **Dislikes:** Time Warner Cable's Idiot Customer Service Department, Bird Poop On My Car, The Lack Of Paladin Damage Output In EverQuest, ATA Airlines
Current Favorite Games: Omishusha 2: Samura's Destiny, Steel Battalion, Metrof Fusion, Neverwinter Nights

When Andy's not yelling at a game for 'ripping' him off, he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, Unbelievable Jolly Machine. A longtime fan of Metrof, 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, Strategy, Sports Interests: Archeo logical Digs, Gerontology, Missionary Work, Weather Ballrooms **Dislikes:** Anthropological Multimedia, Cryptococcus (Ouch!), The Romanov Dynasty, Olive Trees **Current Favorite Games:** Metrof Fusion, Super Mario Sunshine, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, The Legend Of Zelda (GC)

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 504 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:** First-Person Shooters, Puzzle, Action/Adventure **Interests:** The Kinks, Silkworm, New York City, All Things Gummy, F.E.D.S. **Magazine Dislikes:** Rain, Cell Phone Posers, ATA Airlines, Missing Connecting Flights **Current Favorite Games:** Aggressive Inline, Splashdown, Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem

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:** My New Kitten, The Baja Tortilla Grill, The Big Lebowski, Barana Trees, That 70's Show, Open Mic Standup At Acme Comedy Club **Dislikes:** My New Kitten's Smelly Poo, Camping, Anything Having To Do With Verizon, The Noisy People Who Work Upstairs **Current Favorite Games:** Madden NFL 2002 (Xbox), SimCity 4, Earth And Beyond, Morrowind (PC)

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 she 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:** Neo Pro Wrestling, Getting A Real Haircut, Conspiracy Theories, Grapes, Strawberries, Mr. Show, The Roots **Dislikes:** Haters, Unsalted Peanuts, Bad Games, Moving (Again), Hurting My Wrist **Current Favorite Games:** Hot Shots Golf 3, Aggressive Inline, Crazy Taxi 3, Gearing Roller, Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven

Unlike most gaming jargonists, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He's a former GWAAR slave and 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. Justin's gaming tastes are highly old-school, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.



KATO
Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Racing, Action/Platform **Interests:** Clint Mathis' Monarchs, Our God, Not Seeking Relection, Cnarlatans' Songs From The Other Side **Dislikes:** LA Lakers, Facial Hair, Jimmie Johnson, Kristian's Love Of Fake Mohawks **Current Favorite Games:** The Mark Of KN, Stuntman, FIFA Soccer 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 games was the free arcade tokens that were given out at as reward. With allegiance to none, he takes on every game with an equal eye.



CHET
Handle: The Chronic Gamer **Expertise:** Fighting, Action, RPG, FPS, Shooter, Platform, Adventure **Interests:** Natto, Wiffle Ball, Kato's Rice Balls And Cal-Pis, Wabavrod, Classic Gaming **Dislikes:** Striking Out In Wiffle Ball, Black Holes, Nomad's Lack Of Portability **Current Favorite Games:** Every Game Bearing The Castlevania Name

Chet considers gaming to be a lifestyle, which means that he spends a ridiculous amount of time with his games. When he's not in an intense session with his UT clan, Insane Assassinz, or relating with one of his consoles, he's hopelessly seeking out arcades where fighting games still rule. Although he places all other activities at a distant second, he realizes the importance of society. Unfortunately, mimicking the motions for Dragon Punches and Fireballs only confuses and scares most people.



LISA
Handle: La Game Nikita **Expertise:** Puzzle, RPGs, Action/Platform **Interests:** Great Expectations, Unpacking, Kinkit Tattoos, Figuring Out What To Do With Eggplant **Dislikes:** Freshway Construction, Money, Broken Autos, Car Shopping, Used Car Salesmen That Perpetuate The Stereotype **Current Favorite Games:** Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem, Enclave, The Legend Of Zelda (NES), Seanan

Barring a brief and ill advised "I want to be popular, so I'll stop playing games" phase in late junior high, Lisa has been subjecting her friends to draw on boss battles since she was 8. She has been known to wax philosophically about why Juggo Puff is desperately under-appreciated and wish that some "big" games were more fun, even if that means less pretty.

NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

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

action - A term we use for games like Zone of the Enders and Gears of War

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.

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

bump-mapping - A technique where varying light effects simulate depth on textures

CG - Computer-Generated graphics

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

FMV - Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CD-ROM game.

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

framerate - The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement.

frontend - A game's menus and options

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

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

lane - This month's "funny" addition to the Newbie Cheat Sheet

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

mini-game - A small, simple game within a larger one

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

motion blur - Phantom frames follow an object to give the impression of realistic speed

N64 - Nintendo 64

NES - Nintendo Entertainment System

NPC - Non-Player Character. Those people and creatures you see wandering around in games that are not being controlled by actual humans

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

PS-X - Sony PlayStation

particle effects - Things like smoke or sparks created in real-time

PKer - Player Killer. This is a person who thrives on killing newbies or vulnerable characters in MMORPGs or shooting their teammates in games like Counter-Strike

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

racing - A term we use for games like Gran Turismo and Mario 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

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

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 ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM

Considering this game's long, long development cycle, Nintendo's veil of secrecy, and Silicon Knight's limited track record, we were apprehensive about Eternal Darkness, to say the least. However, we are happy to report that Nintendo's "quality" policy has prevailed once again, and in its most violent form yet! Page 80

By Jeff Labrecque, Jeff Labrecque, Jeff Labrecque

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ETERNAL DARKNESS

Sanity's Requiem



"Rau can resemble a tribal Darth Maul...in a flurry of swings, jabs, and parries."

PLAYSTATION 2

THE MARK OF KRI

KILLED A MAN JUST TO WATCH HIM DIE



THE BOTTOM LINE



9

Don't be fooled by The Mark of Kri's cute look. In fact, I wouldn't look at the game's fury of sword slashing at face value, either. Although it is the meat and potatoes of the title, Kri is a deeper game than your average slasher, and is a greater experience because of it. Besides, the game contains a stealth element that rivals Metal Gear Solid 2 in its cunning, execution, and payoff.

Do yourself a favor: Don't lumber through battles like you forgot to take your Ritalin. Not only will you die a disgraceful death; you'll miss out on Kri's elegant and deadly swordplay, which balances its ferocity with rewards for more skilled players. Wild swings can get your weapon stuck in a tree, cause it to bounce off of walls, or leave you overextended and vulnerable. Moreover, later levels will demand a Zen-like focus as waves of enemies pour over you. The game's targeting system keeps track of up to nine guys simultaneously, can be reassigned at whim, and never slows down the action — a point that cannot be overstated. At his zenith, Rau can resemble a tribal Darth Maul as he masterfully brandishes the spearlike Taiaha in a flurry of swings, jabs, and parries. Get your combs down and you'll perform elaborate deathblows like beheadings and impalings. I call the later one the "Feel

Good Hit of the Summer."

Rau's stealth abilities aren't without their charms — especially when he's crushing someone's skull with the butt of his sword. I suggest using your bird Kuzo to scope out an area first. Then, you can decide who to pick off with your bow, who to stealth kill, or when to use environmental objects (like animals) in order to distract guards to their death. Hell, do it any way you like. Summon a brawl of all comers or choose your battles, they both work. For fans of the former, unlockable arenas are nice bonus areas to hone skills. If there's a weakness to The Mark of Kri, it's that your freedom isn't fully extended. I know the developers wanted to focus on melee combat, which they've mastered, but I sometimes wanted to feel that there was a world outside of the path set before me. Of course, I wouldn't want my sword to get bored or get mired in platforming, but I think there's room to expand here. How about sidequests?

The Mark of Kri is a visceral celebration of action and all that is good about hacking the bejesus out of someone — in style. I suggest you get this game and enjoy it. But whatever you do, don't surround the man with the axe in his hand. — **KATO**

Concept:
What if a Disney character snuck around and killed lots and lots of people?

Graphics:
The art is excellent, but there are flaws like texture tearing, simple environments, and too much fog at times

Sound:
The burst of a hemorrhage; the clash of steel and the groans of the near dead. Plus, Juno Realear!

Playability:
Switch in and out of attacks and weapons like the world's most dangerous Swiss Army knife

Entertainment:
Engrossing and too good to want to put down

Replay Value:
Moderately High



Rau pitches a makeshift tent to shield himself from the rains



These two were born under a bad sign...

...Watch as Rau drops down from his ledge and performs a double stealth kill



Blocking is the difference between life and death in the game's latter stages



"Wax on, Wax off"

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SCEA SAN DIEGO STUDIO ■ **RELEASE** JULY 30

SECOND OPINION

Wholly original and exquisitely crafted, The Mark of Kri breathes new life into the action genre with its exceptional visual flair, and super-colossal gameplay mechanics. With the tension of Metal Gear, the stealth factor of Tombs, and a finely-tuned yet genuine interface, you can clearly see where my enthusiasm stems from. While the missions are as linear as can be, the action is riveting and complex. The precision and bloody nature of the stealth kills greatly exceeds anything we've seen before. You don't just kill your adversaries... you mutilate them. The odd thing is, the graphical details are stylized much like a Disney movie. Of course, instead of watching bunnies bounce across the screen, we watch heads roll. Innovation runs rampant through this title, and enjoyment follows. A must-have if ever there was one.

REINER — 9.25

AGGRESSIVE INLINE™

Skate the edge of sanity.

developed by
Z-AXIS



**Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes**



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



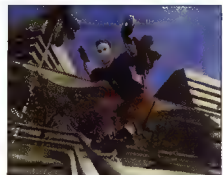
Skate as one of the 10 top pros:
Jaren Grob, Taig Khris, Shane Yost,
Matt Salerno and Chris Edwards



Unleash an arsenal of tricks, big air
maneuvers, grinds, vaults, wall rides,
fast plants, cess slides and skitches



Punish your friends with split-screen
multiplayer; build the ultimate skate-
park with the in-game park editor



Attack 9 mammoth levels with environ-
ment-altering cinematics at every corner

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AKA
acclaim.com



PLAYSTATION 2

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS VII

YOU'RE NOT FROM AROUND HERE, ARE YOU?

When I first turned on Romance VII, I felt as though I'd just stepped into a prosthetic convention—there's all these people talking about things I know nothing about. Like who? Like those who've been waiting for this title for years. In Japan, fans didn't share my like of Kessen II's spectacular spells, because it deviated from the title's Three Kingdoms historical base. "Those people will like this game."

Freedom is the operative word here. You can control lesser figures such as common generals, officers, civil servants, and even rogue agents called Ronin (That's a Japanese term, not a Chinese one, but never mind...). This not only lets you work your way up, but I liked it because at certain times it allowed you to keep playing, even in defeat, by the shifting of your responsibilities—which can be pretty varied.

Of course, the downfall in this minutia is that hearing poetry contests and getting berated by old ladies in the street for not knowing historical trivia doesn't make me forget about Kessen II's spectacular battles. What happens to the dead body of a second century Chinese warlord more than 1,900 years later? It gets very dry. An acquired taste to say the least. —KATO

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

E 7

- **Concept:** RoTK VII. Need I say more? (Yes? Take all the Chinese names in Kessen II and subtract the spells and outcuses)
- **Graphics:** I tall ya, nobody does character picture insets like the Japanese
- **Sound:** Hours of Chinese music that you may or may not listen to
- **Playability:** Lots of choices without the confusion
- **Entertainment:** It's like the Antiques Roadshow of video games. Either you're waiting for this one, or you've already tuned out.
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

The most exciting parts of this game still pale in comparison to listening to old people complain about their sciatica. You do excruciatingly mental tasks, in the most boring of ways—usually through a simple menu. Shouldn't a game be cooler than my day-to-day life? I can appreciate the massive depth of Romance VII, but that doesn't mean I want to play it again. Ever.

JUSTIN — 5.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SIMULATION ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI ■ **DEVELOPER** KOEI ■ **RELEASE** JULY 8



PLAYSTATION 2

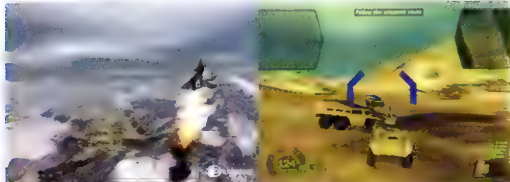
DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE

DELIVERY IN 30 MINUTES OR YOUR TROOPS ARE FREE

Flight games have been popping up on consoles like bags under our eyes during deadline, but none have been able to tear the title away from Namco's Ace Combat 04. While Dropship itself doesn't beat the king, its uniqueness and variety are worthy of merit.

Instead of just seat-of-your-pants dog-fighting, Dropship sticks you in a somewhat bulky, lumbering craft. This big boy can soar or hover, depending on the task at hand. This opens up the gameplay, giving you missions that require delivery of troops, or evasion of enemies. Add to that some driving and track shooting levels, and you've got a nice little package that doesn't get boring...too often. Unfortunately, many of the missions are just way too long, and you're bound to fail once or twice. While the difficulty is about where it should be, I would've liked some shorter missions.

Most of Dropship's graphics look like very early renders, rather than actual in-game models. That's not a compliment. They're just lifeless and square. The CG is even butt-tastic. Luckily, everything blows up really nice. Most like the plane you pilot, Dropship isn't a very pretty or elegant beast; but if you want some good airborne action, it gets the job done. —JUSTIN



Not all missions take place in the desert, thank goodness

Enemy tanks will try to muscle you away from checkpoints



Is your ship an oaf? Yes. It is.

The track shooting levels are some of the most entertaining

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** B&M ENTERTAINMENT ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT EUROPE ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 12

THE BOTTOM LINE

T

7.5

- **Concept:** A big, ugly game about a big, ugly plane
- **Graphics:** Everything seems void of detail, except the explosions
- **Sound:** Dramatic music you'll swear you've heard in 50 other games
- **Playability:** This plane doesn't control like other flight games, but it's not supposed to. You'll get used to the different in-air modes. They won't let you down
- **Entertainment:** None have surpassed Ace Combat 04, but Dropship takes a path different enough to warrant checking out
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I wasn't sure how a game featuring a sky shuttle would work, but the developers have managed to pull a lot of entertainment out of a seemingly innocuous subject matter. The air combat is done well, and there are even a few driving missions to keep things interesting, but the driving controls are dumpty and the physics are thrown in so it comes off as window dressing. In terms of a good-looking flight title, Dropship hits the mark when it tries. The terrain looks good until you get up close, and the replay element is a lot of fun; but the plot is so thin at times I really didn't care whether I moved on to another mission or not. If you're in the market for a fun flying game with a few surprises thrown in, you shouldn't feel bad at all asking for Dropship on your birthday. For a serious flight experience, go with Ace Combat 04.

KRISTIAN — 7.75

SCOOBY DOO: NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 22



It starts out with a faithful recreation of the theme song montage from the classic seventies Scooby Doo cartoon show, and it's (mostly) all downhill from there. For fans of the original O.G. doggy doggy,

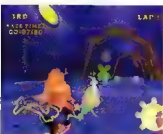
there are a lot of nice touches, especially the hilarious voiceovers and cheesy laugh track. Graphically, it's not too shabby, either, and there is even a well-designed warp system to take you between the various levels. Too bad the gameplay is so damn mediocre and dull. Oh yeah, as a reviewer, I believe I'm bound by law to say this: Scooby Doo? More like Scooby doo!

don't! — **MATT**

E 6.5

LOONEY TUNES SPACE RACE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 28



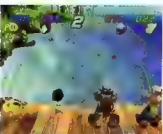
I grew up loving the Warner Brothers' cartoon universe, so I can appreciate the nostalgia factor. However, as an adult gamer, the challenge is quite lacking, even on the hardest difficulty setting.

Furthermore, there's little technique involved in the racing mechanics; basically, the racer who avoids the most attacks, and attacks efficiently, wins. Still, Space Race offers plenty of variety and a faithful presentation, which makes it a solid purchase for the 10 and under crowd. — **CHET**

E 7

PAC-MAN FEVER

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PARTY
 ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 3



Do I smell a shady remake of Mario Party? True, it has board-style competition with minigames to decide player movement, but the good thing about Namco's take is that the games (fishing and darts, for example) are fun and the opening playable characters include Pac-Man and his little lady, Ridge Racer Reiko, Tekken Tiger, and Astaroth from Soul Calibur. Plus, the animation is solid, and there's a plot to boot. — **LISA**

E 7.5

MLB SLUGFEST 2003

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 24



I must say that the commentary in this release is quite funny. Unfortunately, if you play the game a lot, it can get stale pretty quick. In terms of baseball playability, this is the perfect title for people who hate baseball.

There's a lot of action, a lot of scoring, and much more violence than you've ever seen in a hardball title. Not that it should surprise you...Midway has been perfecting the arcade sports genre for a while now, and this one seems to have a bit more "oomph" than its predecessors. — **KRISTIAN**

E 7.75

MX SUPERFLY

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 17



There are changes in Superfly that set it apart from MX2002, but this series just doesn't offer the definitive MX package quite yet. I love the new trick system that incorporates a modifier with the last

button press, as well as the minigames. Also good to see was that using the clutch and pre-loading your jumps were as important as ever. Although I liked having to earn cash through races before the season started, repeating those tracks later on was disappointing. Superfly's career mode doesn't have the kind of depth found in other sports titles these days, and that's the next step it needs to take. — **KATO**

E 7.25



STITCH: EXPERIMENT 626

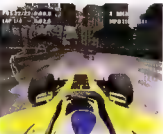
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 18

The introductory moments of gameplay are excruciating, begging the question, "Is Experiment 626 just that — an experiment that studies the pain threshold of the gaming masses?" If you see the world through my eyes, where Disney is the devil, then yes, this game was developed with the sole purpose of destroying children's lives. On the other hand, if you are the forgiving type, and can work your way through the unsatisfactory beginning, you'll see that this game actually has a lot to offer. I believe the saying is "good things come to those who wait." As the game progresses, new gadgets and moves are added to your arsenal. By mid-game, you really get a good feel for the action at hand — which can best be described as a lighthearted MDK. The camera is a tad loose, but the platforming segments are inventive, and the shooting controls have a nice feel to them. — **REINER**

E 6

F1 2002

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 11



"You've hit so-and-so... 'Stick to the track...'" Man, I swear my spotter likes to talk just to hear himself. Anyway, this year's F1 has improved in that the Challenges mode gives you cards to win instead of

turning on the cars' simulation aspects one step at a time. Unlocking the more realistic driving experience is now through menu choices. This helps the game be more accessible — even though the "Normal" driving mode doesn't skip on the F1 fun. Where else can accelerating too fast become a problem? The rain effects are fabulous and the cockpit cam is sweet, even if it skips the odd frame or two. — **KATO**

E 8



PLAYSTATION 2

BARBARIAN 3D FIGHTING GONE BAD

Fighting games are, unfortunately, making a slow and pathetic transition to 3D. This fact disgusts me only because developers have failed to reproduce a Tekken or Street Fighter-quality experience in true 3D. Usually, fighters are either still essentially 2D, or are in 3D complete with interactive backgrounds, but offer shallow and sometimes poorly executed combat.

Like Capcom's Power Stone, Barbarian steps up to the plate, and whiffs.

As in Power Stone, Barbarian allows players to move in 3D and interact with the background, but presents a combat system that's way too simple to hold your interest for very long. Furthermore, facing off against more than one enemy reveals a serious flaw in the gameplay. When enemies do surround your character, you'll find it nearly impossible to escape without taking at least a few cheap hits. Sapphire should have built specific mechanics for such situations, rather than making three-on-ones simple free-for-alls.

Fortunately, Barbarian has one saving grace: multiplayer. If you can get three friends over for a little action, Barbarian does manage to offer a bit of mindless fun. — **CHET**

THE BOTTOM LINE

T 6

■ **Concept:** A fighting game with little technique and interactive backgrounds.

■ **Graphics:** The models and environments are decent, but the appearance is nothing special.

■ **Sound:** Suitable barbarian music with suitable fighting game grunts and screams.

■ **Playability:** Very easy to pick up and enjoy, making it a great party game, but a boring single-player experience.

■ **Entertainment:** You may find it fun one time through, but you'll get the most fun out of the multiplayer mode.

■ **Replay Value:** Moderately High.

SECOND OPINION

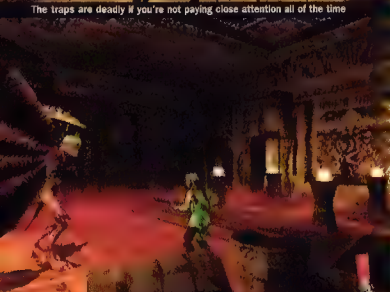
For all the things that Barbarian does right (nice character models; multi-tiered, destructible environments; and the cool Rune power-ups), it does too many things wrong (an inconsistent center/block system, repetitive combos, and some nagging camera and collision problems) for me to recommend it to any but the most hardcore barbarian fans.

MATT — 6.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** TITUS
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SAPPHIRE ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 25



The traps are deadly if you're not paying close attention all of the time



Turning green when you reset an enemy means your Sanity Meter decreased



You can target various parts of an enemy, like the head

GAMECUBE

ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM

NINTENDO DOES VIOLENCE!

Silicon Knights may have spent five years developing *Eternal Darkness*, but the copious effort has made this title a wonderfully successful psychological thriller meant to screw with gamers' minds, emotions, and fears to the nth degree.

Players initially assume the role of Alexandra Roivas, who travels to her grandfather's mansion to learn of the mysterious events that led to his murder. She stumbles upon a book, the *Tome of Eternal Darkness*, which contains 12 chapters. Each one represents a person's experience combating the apocalyptic power of *Eternal Darkness* in a different time period. You'll play out the events of each defender's experience as Alexandra reads the book. This manner of storytelling may confuse at first, but I find that the different scenarios blend well together in the context of the overall plot.

Furthermore, with each chapter presenting a varied environment and set of events, you're always kept in an agitated state of wonder. This royal mind screw can intensify and bewilder even more depending on the state of your character's Sanity Meter. Each time you encounter an enemy, the meter decreases; the lower it gets, the more often you hallucinate. These convincing hallucinations occur randomly in both frequency and intensity, which helps to maintain a high level of tension, fear, and confusion throughout the fright. I won't ruin the experience by revealing any hallucinations, but suffice it to say that this creative element suits the genre all too well. Gameplay-wise, *ED* doesn't particularly innovate: solve puzzles, kill monsters, and learn magic. However, Silicon Knights has refined the typical gameplay mechanics to near perfection.

The controls are smooth and the interface is almost seamless—meaning no cumbersome turning as in *Resident Evil*. The puzzles make sense and offer a challenge, yet never seem overly abstract or inappropriate. The killing is complemented by a relatively deep combat system that consists of various magic, plenty of weapons, and a body-part targeting system. Since each enemy has elemental and physical weaknesses, there's technique and strategy to offing enemies.

Fortunately, I only have a few gripes (a slightly confusing magic system, and some strange plot holes), but they don't drastically detract from the overall experience. The game's unique story, strange conveyance of fear, and refined play mechanics combine to create a wonderfully horrific experience that none should miss. —CHET



Some of the common monsters seem more like bosses

■ STYLE | PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER | NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER | SILICON KNIGHTS ■ RELEASE | JUNE 24



GAME OF THE MONTH

ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM



It's Nintendo, but packed with adult themes

"...a wonderfully successful psychological thriller meant to screw with gamers' minds, emotions, and fears to the nth degree."



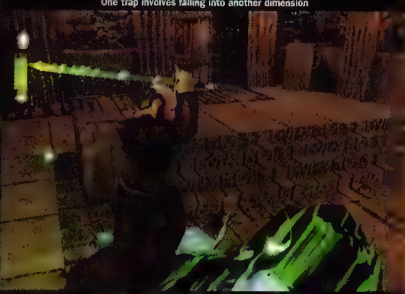
Some enemies are best dealt with by evoking them



One trap involves falling into another dimension



This is THE book. Tome of Eternal Darkness. Each chapter represents a level



If you finish an enemy off, you regain some Sanity

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE

M

9.5

- **Concept:** A survival horror game with a unique conception of horror and fear
- **Graphics:** Although the graphics don't seem quite as clean as Resident Evil, they're impressive nonetheless
- **Sound:** A constant blast of creepy, frightful sounds set to eerie background music – perfect!
- **Playability:** Perhaps the best control in the genre
- **Entertainment:** With a cool story, solid gameplay mechanics, plenty of frightful events, and a Sanity Meter, you'll want to play it in one sitting
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I can't tell you how much *Eternal Darkness* exceeded any and all expectations I had about it. For one, it fixes a lot of the problems I had with Resident Evil, with a more manageable control scheme and a deep spell system. Although, that's not really a fair comparison, as the thrills in *Eternal Darkness* are more akin to the cerebral spookiness of *The Others* than the gore of *Night of the Living Dead*. Through a time-twisting plot and a host of disturbing hallucinations, *Eternal Darkness* is an experience unlike any game I've ever played before. Think Metal Gear Solid's Psycho Mantis battle, and you'll begin to understand what *Eternal Darkness* has in store for you. A lot of people are going to use the word "cinematic" to describe this game. It's not. Instead of aping Hollywood clichés, ED stands video game conventions on their head, warping your sense of reality in the process. Here it is, folks: the first great GameCube game. Go get it.

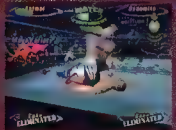
MATT — 9.5

REVIEWS

GAMECUBE

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

- **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING
- **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
- **RELEASE** JUNE



Can a game get increasingly more fun after three reviews on three separate platforms? Strangely, it can. Legends has a very unique gameplay style and makes good use of all the GameCube controller's buttons. Those things, along

with the inclusion of a career mode, put it above WrestleMania X8 in terms of overall value – even if most probably won't recognize 75% of the roster. Running moves and top rope offense are lacking, and there is an obvious sloppiness to the gameplay, but overall, Legends grapples with greatness. – **JUSTIN**

T **7**



GAMECUBE

ZOOCUBE

- **STYLE** 1 OR 4-PLAYER PUZZLE
- **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
- **RELEASE** MAY 30

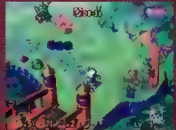
In recent years, puzzle games haven't been able to wet the gaming public's whistle on the graphics, sound, or innovation fronts; but Acclaim's ZooCube excels. The gameplay is the same as the GBA version (rotate the cube to match alike-creature symbols), and the graphics have been fleshed out. The real point is that ZooCube is everything a puzzle game should be: simple, fast, hard, fun, addictive, and serviceably pretty. – **LISA**

E **8.75**

GAMECUBE

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS

- **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO GAMES
- **RELEASE** JUNE 5



Bomberman is more than just a video game. Bomberman is a legend. No matter how you slice it, on whatever system it appears, Bomberman is a blast to play. This new GameCube incarnation features cel-shaded graphics, as well as a number of new gameplay elements in both the single and multiplayer modes. While the single player is rather ordinary, the multiplayer mode makes Bomberman Generation a must for GameCube owners with friends (which aren't included, so you'll have to go out and make your own). – **ANDY**

E **8**



GAMECUBE

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8

GET THE "F" OUT INDEED

As hardcore WWE fans feel spat on by Vince McMahon for their dedication, so have I felt betrayed by the crop of next-gen wrestling games THQ has dished out in the past year. The trail of letdowns continues with WrestleMania X8.

With no career mode, disappointing gimmick matches must fill time between ho-hum title tournaments. The AI is bumbling and unbalanced. I was in a three-way that took literally two hours; and I watched two CPU-controlled characters have a table match (in fact, they've been wrestling an hour as I write this), seemingly unaware that you must put your opponent through a table. As in Raw, you can only use offense when a wrestler is standing or lying down, and nowhere in between. A much less severe complaint: if you're going to put a ref in, why not have him do ref things, instead of just standing around?

The control is decent, but I find it odd that you must hit two buttons to do some things. Holding buttons longer, à la No Mercy, is much better. The create-a-wrestler mode is one good point, as you can adjust every dimension of your fictional fighter. Also, WrestleMania looks stupendous. However, too many complaints and no meaty modes left me unsatisfied. As Jim Ross would say, "Stop the damn match!" – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

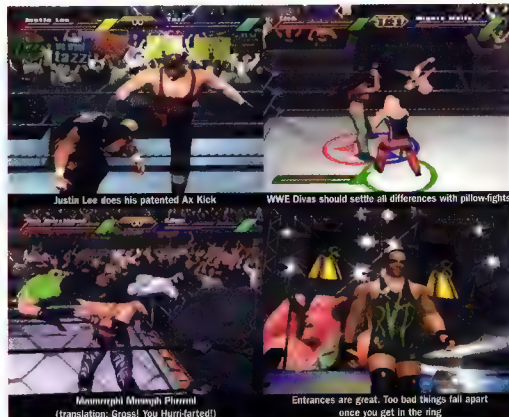
T **6.5**

- **Concept:** Giving wrestling game fans another flawed, career mode-less title? Bad idea
- **Graphics:** Well done crowds (and signs) and impressive specular highlighting on the wrestlers
- **Sound:** Nice fan noise and clear (albeit abbreviated) entrance themes, but a few weak sounds
- **Playability:** Fast. Nice countering with the shoulder buttons, but I don't like having to hit two buttons for some actions
- **Entertainment:** I can see people digging on the multi-player and maybe unlocking a few characters, but the fun dries up after that
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

THQ has hit rock bottom with this one. There's no career mode – just a bunch of worthless tournament trees. If the gameplay were respectable, I could have overlooked this glaring hole. Unfortunately, this isn't necessarily the case. The play mechanics are a step down from what we've seen in SmackDown and Raw. It comes up short in the execution, arsenal of moves, and animation. The only aspect of the game that stands out as significant is the create-a-wrestler. As you would suspect, after you spend an hour detailing your superstar, then actually get around to inserting him or her into the game, appreciation quickly sets in and all of your work was basically a gigantic waste of time. The good news, however, is that I don't think wrestling games can get much worse.

REINER – 5.75



Justin Lee does his patented Ax Kick

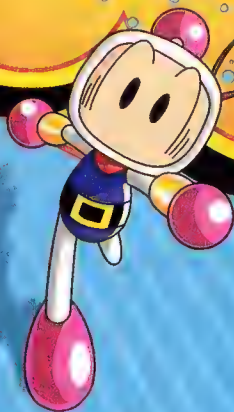
WWE Divas should settle all differences with pillow-fights

Monterrhgh Mmugh Pllerrrl (translation: Gross! You Hurri-farted!)

Entrances are great. Too bad things fall apart once you get in the ring.

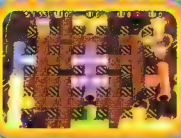
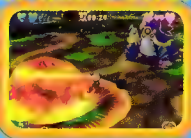
- **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING
- **PUBLISHER** THQ
- **DEVELOPER** YUKE'S
- **RELEASE** JUNE 10

(Have you heard who's on Nintendo GameCube?)



BOMBERMAN GENERATION

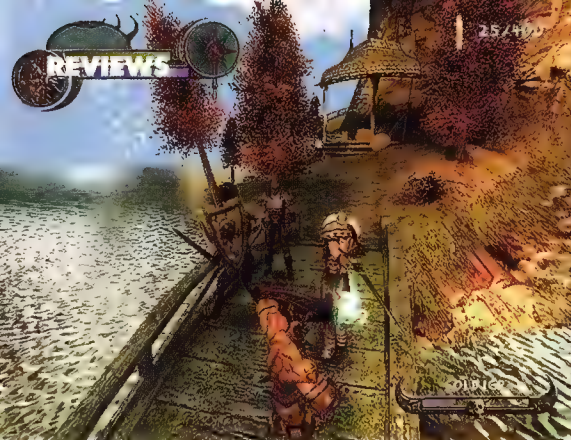
SHORT MAN, SHORT FUSE, BIG ADVENTURE.



NOTE: Actual GAME CUBE™ GAME PLAY ADVANCE.



www.bombberman.com



XBOX

ENCLAVE

UNFUNDAMENTALLY SOUND

"...Enclave is a medieval Max Payne."

Most people will write this game off as an uninspired medieval hack n' slash. To tell you the truth, after a scant five minutes of play, I was ready to do just that – pretend that I have a throbbing headache, inform the staff that I have to leave for the day, and assign someone else to review this irksome game. At first glance, everything about Enclave is commonplace. The story telling, which is disconcertingly mystifying, is expressed through obnoxious narratives extracted from a cryptic book. After waiting for an eternity, and fighting the sandman's magical dust, I eventually found myself within the game. For a medieval brawler, the gameplay didn't seem to fit. Through an unrestrained first-person shooter-like button configuration, the movement seemed too floaty, and the combat mechanics too loose. For a medieval brawler, it misses the mark completely. As fortune would have it, however, Enclave is nothing of the sort.

If you can take the time to understand the nuances that went into this game, you'll come to the startling revelation that Enclave is a medieval Max Payne. The control schematic is a perfect match. Moreover, rather than excelling in hand-to-hand combat, as Enclave should, you'll find yourself using long-range weapons more than your sword or axe. In this regard, the game suffers from an identity crisis. While players are led to believe that they are playing a straight-up

brawler, Enclave is more of a corridor shooter than anything else. Of course, the option of hacking enemies to bits is available, but for most instances, it's a suicidal course of action as it's terribly inaccurate, slippery, and somewhat ineffective.

Breaking free from the traditional mold even further, you won't be forced to battle endless streams of enemies at random moments during play. Every inch of the game is in fact pre-scripted – much like most first-person shooters. For example, a handful of enemies will flank you when you pass by the barn, but only when you pass by the barn. With this formula, Starbreeze was able to create the perfect difficulty balance and flow of action. Additionally, this component greatly enhances the graphical presentation, delivering high caliber realism and intensity. With each step you make a dungeon wall may explode, or a tower may crash to the ground.

I have a feeling that Xbox fans will be quite pleased with how Enclave turned out. The framerate is solid, the graphics glisten like gold, and the rewards that you'll earn (bonus levels, new playable characters) lengthen the experience. By no means, however, is it a must-play game. As I said before, the plot is yawn-inducing, and trying to comprehend the chaotic close range combat could lead to a heart attack. Solid, but lacking in several ways. – REINER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CONSPIRACY ENTERTAINMENT/VIVENDI UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** STARBREEZE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JULY 30



All of the events that occur are actually pre-scripted



The crossbow functions like a medieval sniper rifle



Some of the character's possess interesting abilities



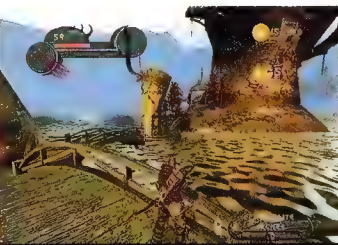
Every enemy location and event is pre-scripted



The control schematic is formatted exactly like Max Payne



The easiest way to take down enemies is by means of long-range attacks



New playable characters continually join your cause, and each excels in different abilities and combat arts

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE
M
E
S
I
N
G

7.5

- **Concept:** A medieval beat 'em up that veers away from the traditional formula and emerges as a surprisingly entertaining Max Payne off-breed
- **Graphics:** Everything that is included looks fantastic, but oddly, the little details (like animations for opening doors) were left out
- **Sound:** The 10,000th remix of the Conan theme
- **Playability:** Poor melee actions...fantastic long-range mechanics
- **Entertainment:** The missions are nicely balanced, the difficulty is just right, and the rewards are well worth striving for
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

It's still lost on me what this story is really about, but I don't mind that the turmoil of the region didn't play at all on my emotions. I didn't particularly care about the characters, or the land of magic, or the politics of a people in conflict, but I did want to kick as many asses as possible. The action is obviously scripted, well-timed and, above all, kept me interested. One big issue that stops Enclave from being a better game is the short-range fighting. Combos would have added a whole new layer to the game-play, and their absence makes me feel that the hand-to-hand combat should have been eliminated altogether. But, I really liked Enclave and the graphics are impressive and unimpeded by slowdown. This is certainly a much-needed title for the Xbox, and a fun game that should find many fans.

LISA – 7.5



"Everyone should have a Crazy Taxi in their collection, and this is the one I recommend most."

XBOX

CRAZY TAXI 3: HIGH ROLLER

PAPA NEEDS A NEW PAIR OF FUZZY DICE!

Crazy Taxi revolutionized driving games with its clever delivery-based gameplay and non-linear environments. Since then, we've had GTA III take things one step further. While Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller doesn't do anything different than the first two installments, it's still one of the best Xbox games to come out this year.

The biggest draw of High Roller is the new, Vegas-based level, and I have a love/hate relationship with it. On one hand, it's set up for some great runs, and the strip is full of things to see. On the other hand, the bustling downtown takes up too little of the actual map, which has too many rural areas (even if the Sin City is really like that). Every time I'd take a spin, it was surprising that nobody wanted to go to the strip club. You call this Vegas?

The other stages are from the first pair of Crazy Taxis. As many times as I've played the original's San Francisco-modeled level, it was still fun to do with the jump ability, and while carrying multiple passengers. Small Apple, from CT2, is NY-based, and has more blocks set up to confuse you. Each one has a few new areas inserted, encouraging you to deviate from your normal paths.

This is the Xbox, so you expect killer visuals, right? Not here, chum. It's a hair sharper than on Dreamcast, but pop-

up problems and chugging run rampant. I'd love to see damage on cars, and maybe have some more particle effects. Even the passengers are inferior to the primitive pedestrians in GTA III. What would you rather have, though: junk games that look good (Blood Wake, Wreckless), or something that's a little ugly but a hell of a lot more fun to play? That's what I thought.

I found myself addicted to the minigames, called Crazy X, in this installment. They include driving a football player across a field while countless vehicles try to push you out of bounds. You'll also dodge cars dropped by a devastating tornado, blast disco balls, and try to complete one timed lap in the first title's map. In total, you'll have 25 challenging minigames to blast through and unlock bonuses in, all the while unknowingly building up your skills.

I still think everyone should have a Crazy Taxi in their collection, and this is the one I recommend most. The replay is insane, the enjoyment factor is off the charts, and the light-hearted attitude is a good break from sniping, brawling, or any other more violent gaming objective. Let's get crazy, y'all. — JUSTIN



■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER HITMAKER ■ RELEASE JULY 23



THE BOTTOM LINE

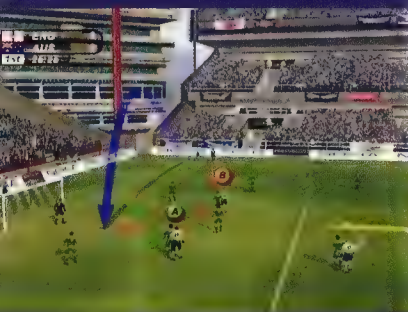
TEEN
8.5

- **Concept:** One of the best racing alternatives out there made bigger, badder, and better
- **Graphics:** Not much better than Dreamcast, and plagued by chugging and pop-up
- **Sound:** The same voice-overs and crazy Offspring songs Dreamcast, and plugged by chugging and pop-up
- **Playability:** Feels almost identical to the Dreamcast version. Crazy Drive and Crazy Dash actually seem easier
- **Entertainment:** Three big levels and 25 minigames make for a formidable and fun package
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

I have a lot of mixed feelings about this game. It's hard to pin down, as it's somewhere between an outright sequel and a Crazy Taxi "Greatest Hits" package. While it is cool to be able to play the West Coast level from the original with the jump move and multiple passengers, I really don't think I'll ever feel the need to cruise around that city (or listen to the Offspring) again. The same goes for the Small Apple level from CT2. So, what's new? The new pseudo-Las Vegas level is a great addition to the Crazy Taxi universe, but it's unfortunately hampered by some annoying slowdown and a bad case of urban sprawl. The real stars of High Roller are the Crazy X minigames, which are wackier, more over-the-top, and more fun than you can shake a stick-out. I've been a big fan of this series for the last few years, but I'm beginning to see the end of the love affair on the horizon. For now, though, Crazy Taxi is still a great arcade racer that any gamer (especially one that hasn't played the first two) should have in his or her collection.

MATT — 8.25



XBOX

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

WHERE'S SPORTY SPICE?

Given that English soccer star David Beckham is married to Posh Spice (remember the Spice Girls?), I could easily spend the rest of the review begging on the two of them. Unfortunately, David's soccer game has enough flaws for me to talk about that I just don't have the time.

Even though they invented the sport, English soccer has long been lambasted for its unimaginative tactics and thuggery. While in real life this isn't as true as it once was, this video game tends to follow the old stereotype. First of all, there are no special moves, which means no dekes, give-and-go, passing, or through balls—the latter two being absolutely crucial to making good offensive attacks. While Beckham's title does offer some sweet headers and excels at one-touch passing, there just isn't much offensive flow. Partly to blame is the lack of dribble moves, which means that you are dispossessed far too easily.

Moreover, the game's AI should be refined. Basically, if you want to score, you must counter-attack by using the long ball (similar to hockey's dump and chase). This fact, and the lack of special moves, adds no style to your play—leaving a prime example of why some hated English soccer for its lack of imagination in the first place.

There are some nice touches along the margins, but more work is needed on the basics. —KATO

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
E 5.5

- **Concept:** Sentence a worldwide household name to relative obscurity with a game that's distinguishable, but not great.
- **Graphics:** Although the models are small, they have some nice animations. Awesome stadium.
- **Sound:** Even David's wife (Posh Spice) could have sung a better menu song.
- **Playability:** The lack of special moves is surprising, given the game's great one-touch play. Better balance is also needed.
- **Entertainment:** There's more here than you think, but it all lacks a strong foundation.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

If games were judged on AI alone, this title would garner a zero. I don't know how many times my defensesmen would simply watch an opponent stroll through the box and kick the biscuit in the basket. Some of the animations are nice, and I liked the button-mapped corner kicks, but the rest of the game has a long way to go.

KRISTIAN — 6

■ **STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS** ■ **PUBLISHER MAJESCO**
 ■ **DEVELOPER THE BIRMINGHAM STUDIO** ■ **RELEASE JULY 17**



XBOX

SPLASHDOWN

GET WET!

Justin went on and on about how great this game was when it was released for PS2 last year, and, truth be told, I didn't take much notice. It looked fun enough, but I didn't think that a waverunner racing game could really capture my interest. Microsoft fans should be glad that I was totally wrong, because Infogrames and Rainbow Studios are now giving the Xbox what might just be the best racing game for the system.

It's hard to describe what makes the experience of playing Splashdown so enthralling, but I'll try. It's readily apparent that much work went into developing the engine's water and wave physics, and this translates into a racing title that is unlike any other I've played. WaveRace: Blue Storm looks pretty, but it didn't come close to emulating the satisfaction that comes from mastering the subtle turning and weight distribution mechanics of Splashdown. I also appreciate the fact that the developers—for the most part—play it straight, and forego the superfluous bells-and-whistles that usually bog down games like this. The stunts aren't wacky or annoyingly "extreme" like in SSX. Splashdown offers up some terrific gameplay without getting watered down. —MATT

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
E 9.25

- **Concept:** Great personal watercraft racing—pure and simple.
- **Graphics:** On the Xbox, the reflective swell of the water is nothing short of beautiful.
- **Sound:** It's a good see to have a video game soundtrack tapping into the underused pop punk genre!
- **Playability:** Mastering the nuances of waverunner physics will take some getting used to, but every minute of this learning curve is entertaining.
- **Entertainment:** It's not flashy, but it's fun as hell!
- **Replay Value:** High.

SECOND OPINION

I first reviewed Splashdown last November for the PS2, and to say I was a fan of the game would be an understatement. Splashdown is one of the best, if not the best water-bound racers around. It's fast. It requires a lot of technique and finesse to control. Plus, it's just a very visually stunning game. The Xbox version features two new locations to get crazy on your water bike, and some spruced up graphics that include crisper textures and better weather effects. If you missed this one on PlayStation 2, I highly recommend you pick it up as it is a testament to how good racers can be. Its perfect mix of speed and tricks reminds me of the PlayStation classic Jet Moto, and that's a good thing. If you've already given this game a run on another system there really isn't enough new content to warrant a purchase. Otherwise, it's a must-have.

ANDY — 8.75



■ **STYLE 1 PLAYER RACING** ■ **PUBLISHER INFOGRAMES/ATARI** ■ **DEVELOPER RAINBOW STUDIOSZ** ■ **RELEASE JUNE 25**

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YOUR CAR, YOU CUSTOMIZE
EVERYONE ELSE'S.**

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“Neverwinter Nights is a game that is being held to the highest standard – partially because it’s D&D related, and partially because it’s Bioware.”

PC

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

D&D ONLINE

Many of you loyal Dungeons & Dragons folk out there have been waiting, and dreaming, and fantasizing about the day when you can build your own adventure with your own rules in a digital environment; then invite all of your friends to play the game you’ve made online in real-time. Well, my faithful few, your day has come. Neverwinter Nights is a game that caters more toward you than any other section of the gaming public. Not that there’s anything wrong with that – I was just expecting a more robust single-player experience.

The character creation phase is satisfyingly robust to be sure. I expect the average D&D freak like myself to invest at least an hour pouncing over the different point awarding options, class descriptions, and feat selections. How can you have a D&D game without a huge character builder? In case you get lost, Bioware has implemented a suggestion system which will build a character for you, in effect. So, maybe you want to play a Ranger, but you’ve been playing 2nd Edition rules for a long time, and you’re unsure how to administer the points. Clicking a button at the bottom of the screen will allocate points where you’ll need them the most if you play your character right (playing a Mage like a Paladin isn’t going to work very well). At any rate, the creation of the person you’re going to be adventuring with is good, but what about the game itself?

Sadly, the answer is Neverwinter Nights offers a decent

single-player experience, but it doesn’t begin to hold a candle to the Baldur’s series. In my humble opinion, Dungeon Siege surpasses what this game is doing. Not only is Siege’s gameplay superior, but the menu systems were far more intuitive (the radial display in NN can get really clunky), and it didn’t seem as buggy. Granted, Neverwinter is a game that is being held to the highest standard – partially because it’s D&D related, and partially because it’s Bioware. Now, I don’t want you to think I didn’t like playing this game, because I absolutely did – I just didn’t have as much fun as I thought I would.

Now for the Toolset. This thing is absolutely amazing, people. I kid you not when I say that it could revolutionize the way D&D is played. You can not only build your own digital adventure complete with AI scripting, customizable items, and fully interactive NPC characters, but you can also jump into the game as a Dungeon Master, and control what is happening to your adventurers on the fly. Maybe you think one member is role-playing better than the others – go ahead and give him/her some extra experience. Perhaps someone else is lagging behind during battles, then rushing in at the end to get the loot – feel free to kill them instantly. I’m guessing most people will only be able to scratch the surface of what this component is capable of, but for those of you who have the time and inclination, Neverwinter Nights will rule your lives for months. – **KRISTIAN**

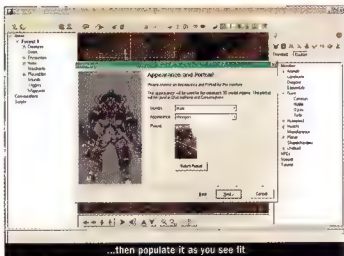
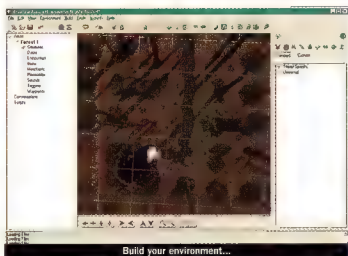
- **Concept:**
Partake in a 3rd Edition D&D adventure
- **Graphics:**
In terms of a great-looking Bioware title, this ain’t it. What’s there is good, but not great
- **Sound:**
A lot of speech, and the music is just as good as anything you’ve heard in the Baldur’s series
- **Playability:**
The radial menu structure is a bear
- **Entertainment:**
The single player experience is pretty good, but this game is more about what you can do with the Toolset
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Once I loaded Neverwinter Nights on my computer, it was hard to stop playing. This RPG is truly outstanding in so many ways, but it is also far from perfect. Easily my favorite part of NN is the character development that features perhaps the best use of skills in a video game. It also does a great job of making it easy for non-D&D players to use and still appease the D&D veteran. The adventure that is included (which can be solo or online) is fairly rich and offers some great story development. However, since you will be playing these mods over and over until new dungeons are created by the community, they do tend to get annoying rather quickly. Especially since many of the NPC interactions must be executed again, which just aren’t as interesting the second time. The tools here are just simply fantastic for dungeon creation, but otherwise I don’t think the interface is as smooth as Dungeon Siege.

ANDY – 9

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 64-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** BOWARE ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 18



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THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE
9.5

- Concept:**
The best game of last year returns to its PC roots
- Graphics:**
Ever so slightly better than the PS2 version, but most of that is probably due to the higher resolution of your monitor
- Sound:**
Still the funkiest, funniest, most eclectic soundtrack in the history of gaming
- Playability:**
The action sequences are better; the driving is worse — so GTA basically breaks even in terms of gameplay
- Entertainment:**
If you haven't played this already, you need your head examined. Get to it!
- Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Well, there's no denying it: Grand Theft Auto III is a beautiful piece of software. With so much open-ended gameplay, I found myself simply speeding around the city listening to the radio. When I wasn't doing that, I was pulling insane jobs for assorted malcontents and getting paid handsomely for a job well done. On a different note, the PC is wonderful for the out-of-vehicle antics your character will pull, but firing some of the weapons (namely the pistol) can be a bit on the clunky side. Also, steering your ill-gotten rides using the keyboard can be a big hassle if you need accuracy. Aside from those little quibbles, this game rocks the kasbah. The environments look incredible, and the ambient city life is absolutely superb. As it did on the PS2, GTA III on the PC is sure to delight all those who partake in its gitzzy goodness.

KRISTIAN — 9.25

REVIEWS



PC

AGE OF WONDERS II: THE WIZARD'S THRONE
STRATEGY FOR YOUR INNER NERD

THE BOTTOM LINE
T
8.5

Age of Wonders II is the perfect example of a niche game. For those who live and breathe the fantasy/strategy genre (I'm guessing about five of you just said, "That's me!"), this game has everything you want — structure building and upgrades, persistent heroes, epic battles, and a whole lot of moving unit, group A to location B. For the rest of us who don't necessarily count ourselves as an out-and-out fan of the genre, but who have no problem dropping ten hours to beat a level if it's put in front of us, this is a terrific way to spend a lazy afternoon.

One thing that will keep your butt in the seat is the storyline. As you guide and mold a fledgling Merlin through a number of different areas and plotpoints, you'll actually find that you're interested in what comes next. That's quite an accomplishment for a title of this ilk. In any event, the units are appealing, but I found it quite irritating that I couldn't group together more than eight individual forces at once. It is possible to keep armies within a hex of each other, thereby entering both into combat should it occur, but it seems awfully arbitrary nonetheless. Basically, you could do a lot worse than Age of Wonders II in today's PC gaming market — unless of course you don't dig on this type of thing. — KRISTIAN

- Concept:**
It's a fantasy/strategy title, featuring Merlin — not a bad idea
- Graphics:**
Had there been better unit models and terrain features, this game would have been at the top of its class.
- Sound:**
There's some good narration — but there's nothing else here that's going to keep your speakers turned up.
- Playability:**
Aside from a few building nuances, you should have an easy time of it.
- Entertainment:**
If you're a strategy nerd, here's your perfect game.
- Replay Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Age of Wonders II reminds me of a hybrid between Civilization and Heroes of Might & Magic, and that's a good thing. Traveling around exploring the map and adding various locations and units to your empire would have been entertaining enough, but the game also lets you research spells and build up your class. I encountered a couple of annoying issues on occasion, but overall Age of Wonders II is well worth your time.

ANDY — 8.25

PC

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

THUG LIFE FOR DA PC-EEZY

After my first review of GTA III, I got a lot of mail asking me why I rated the PS2 version at a mere 9.5 instead of a perfect 10. Well, that's simple — Grand Theft Auto III wasn't perfect. The character models and texturing was nothing special, and the out-of-the-car gun targeting pretty much sucked. Of course, the overall package was so innovative and addictive that no one cared, and it was still the most memorable gaming experience I've had in a long while. Now, this masterpiece is out on PC, and it will be the only opportunity that non-Sony owners will have to get a crack at it for a few years.

Overall, this is a pretty faithful port, as not much has been done to improve the visual presentation for the PC. The cars look a little shinier, and there are no discernable framerate or pop-up issues, but that's about it. The real revelation for GTA die-hards will be the opportunity to use the familiar WASD/mouse control scheme on the streets of Liberty City. Instead of desperately switching through the clumsy auto-targeting, now you're capping fools with a simple flick of the mouse. It's awesome, and I also found that, with my newfound control over my point-of-view, I actually spent more time noticing the tiny details of the environments. Unfortunately, driving with a keyboard is no easy (or fun) task, so I guess we'll call this a draw between the PS2 and PC.

In closing, I'd just like to note that, even after spending serious time with the PS2 version, I still found myself discovering new missions to try and new areas to explore in GTA III — which is a testament to this game's staying power. — MATT



This is a bad way to end a paramedic mission

The mouse makes targeting easy

The missions are identical to the PS2 version's

A top-down view is available for old-school GTA fans

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES ■ DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR NORTH ■ RELEASE MAY 21

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ PUBLISHER TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ DEVELOPER TRIUMPH STUDIOS ■ RELEASE JUNE 10



GAME BOY ADVANCE

MEGA MAN ZERO

NEW FRANCHISE...NEW HERO...SAME GAME

When I first heard about Mega Man Zero, I approached it with the greatest of curiosity. After all of these years, did Capcom finally create a unique Mega Man franchise? I was doubtful...most doubtful...but at first glance, this definitely seemed to be the case. Mega Man isn't the hero for a change. Zero takes the lead. Of equal interest, most of the powerups in the game are obtained through a system called Cyber Elf. Your performance is also tracked and rewarded within the new Administration System.

As a statistic, Mega Man Zero definitely sounds like the Second Coming -- the game we've waited all these years for. My enamored enthusiasm lasted up until the first 10 seconds of gameplay. Yes, it took just 10 measly ticks on the clock for my expectations to come crashing to the floor, and the realization that this is another rehash to sink in.

Even so, however, if you stack this game up against the tens of thousands of Mega Man games that have been released in the last few years, it performs admirably and jumps to the front of the pack. The story is actually somewhat interesting, and the difficulty level is finally on par with the ancient precursors. Not bad, but again, nothing new. --REINER

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE **E** 8.25

- **Concept:** "What? Could it be? It is! At long last, a new Mega Man series that...uh...plays exactly like the others."
- **Graphics:** "Colorful and loaded with sprite characters. In many ways, the look is more defined and vibrant than the PSX incarnations."
- **Sound:** "The soundtrack is melodic...much like an RPG."
- **Playability:** "The controls, stage designs, and boss encounters are interchangeable with every other Mega Man game."
- **Entertainment:** "The best Mega Man in quite some time...and Mega Man's not even the star."
- **Replay Value:** "Moderate."

SECOND OPINION

After bumming out on the X titles and taking a little break from the Mega Man universe, it's nice to return and see Zero in the lead role. Zero plays exactly like Mega Man, which means you get lots of solid, and difficult, 2D action. However, that's Zero's only real weakness. I think it's about time that Capcom gave these games a serious facelift, or took them in a slightly new direction. Unless you're seriously sick of Mega Man games, this is worth checking out.

CHET - 8.25

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 17



GAME BOY COLOR

RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN

THE LOVE BOAT IN HELL

Cut it some freakin' slack. Resident Evil Gaiden is a Game Boy Color game -- and for the GBC, it's a good show. I give lots of credit to M4 and Virgin for handling the inherent limitations of the GBC's tiny cartridge and putting out the best survival horror game possible.

OK, the graphics are underdone. There is a good use of color and lighting effects throughout the ship (characters' appearances are affected by shadows), but there is little in the way of animation. RE Gaiden's one song (with minor variations) plays throughout the entire game and is alarmingly appropriate.

There are no puzzles to wrap your brain around, but the combat is creative and starts when a zombie runs at you on the overhead map. Much like the old Dragon Warrior games, the combat sequences are lifeless -- consisting of a nice image of a mutant buried behind a targeting bar. To attack the creature, you have to time your shot when a sliding icon passes over the drooling beast. Different weapons move at varying speeds and the size of the target is dependent upon the distance between you and the monster. A good solution, I think, and it makes RE Gaiden a handy (pun intended) addition to the Umbrella saga. --LISA

THE BOTTOM LINE
TEEN **T** 7.5

- **Concept:** "Umbrella's zombies on a big boat. And, oh yes, you play as Barry."
- **Graphics:** "More detailed and colorful than your average Game Boy Color game (or your average aging politician)."
- **Sound:** "The one song is wonderfully moody, atmospheric, and...well, good."
- **Playability:** "An interesting combat mechanism almost makes up for the fact that it never changes."
- **Entertainment:** "It's not great, but it's the best you're going to get on Game Boy Color."
- **Replay Value:** "Moderately Low."

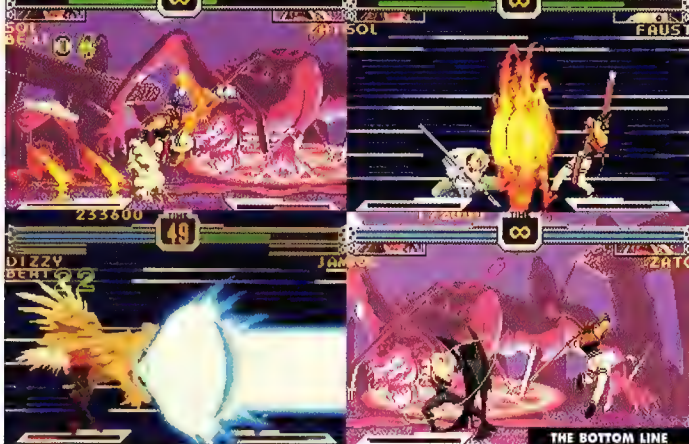
SECOND OPINION

I realize that it's hard for the Game Boy Color to give the console Resident Evil experience, but this is almost inexcusable. There is little here that actually gives you any of the series' goosebumps. Whether it's the annoying music, the need to go to a different screen for combat, or the fact that (ironically enough for this supposedly spooky game) the only real way to see anything is with a light peripheral, Gaiden just can't compete with the franchise's lineage. That's not to say that you can't try to put the genre on a handheld, but like the GBC version of Alone in the Dark found out, it takes a little more effort. Instead of this, I wish that Capcom would have gone forward with the now-scrapped handheld remake of the original using pre-rendered backgrounds, fixed cameras, and other RE staples. It can be done and Capcom knows it.

KATO - 6



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** M4, VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 4



GAME BOY ADVANCE

GUILTY GEAR X: ADVANCE EDITION

THE BEST GBA FIGHTER, ALMOST

After only fifteen minutes, I finished Guilty Gear X without losing. Now, I know my fighting game skills are beyond most gamers' (just ask my official punching bag, Justin), but I had no idea they reached such a dominating level!

In all seriousness though, Guilty Gear X presents absolutely no challenge, even on the hardest difficulty setting. Players unfamiliar with the series can easily pick up Advance Edition, mash buttons, and win without any problems. The new modes such as Tag Match and 3-on-3 add variety, but still cannot compensate for this fundamental problem.

Despite the serious setback, however, Sammy reproduced Guilty Gear X's gameplay on GBA almost perfectly. Every move is simple to perform, and all of those high-hitting combos are a cinch to execute. Plus, since Sammy originally designed Guilty Gear X as a four-button game, it's probably the most playable portable fighter around.

Overall, Guilty Gear X offers the deepest combat system among the competition, making it the best fighting game on GBA for two players. But, due to the shoddy AI, it's only a mediocre single player experience. Also, if you overvalue superficialities, you might not like the way Guilty Gear X looks or sounds. — **CHET**



Just check out some of these goofy-looking moves

Faust is one of the stranger characters

Your punches are dazzling,
You have big dreams,
don't you?

The graphics are bland, but that's a cool character effect. The cut-scenes look good, and offer a variety of dialogue

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** SAMMY ■ **DEVELOPER** ARC SYSTEM WORKS ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 25

THE BOTTOM LINE

T 8

■ **Concept:**
A fighting game that resembles Capcom's Versus titles, but for GBA!

■ **Graphics:**
The game looks okay at best. Although it doesn't bother me, the graphics aren't very impressive.

■ **Sound:**
This element is weak too; the quality isn't up to par, and the sound effects are sparse.

■ **Playability:**
Moves are easy to execute, and the four-button interface works flawlessly.

■ **Entertainment:**
GGX is a blast to play, but way too easy. Definitely snag a copy if you have someone to play against.

■ **Release Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Guilty Gear X is the proverbial mixed bag. It has a mess of complex mechanics to master. The characters are some of the most original, clever ones I've seen — ranging from a cutesy female pirate that has a dolphin deliver her anchor weapon, to a morphing, crazy doctor with a bag over his head. Tag modes rock; the backgrounds are beautiful, and I always welcome a color edit — albeit for deviant desires. Strangely, one of the few things missing is AI, which kind of makes the depth of gameplay moot. I was underwhelmed in Arcade, Survival, and Tag modes, even on the hardest difficulty level. Also, the character sprites are tiny, especially when compared to GBA's Street Fighter II. The sound effects and music would have even been lame back in the NES days. I dug GGX, despite the lack of difficulty (especially with link play), but it still hampers the overall package.

JUSTIN 7.5



GAME BOY ADVANCE

DISNEY'S LILO & STITCH

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** DISNEY INTERACTIVE
■ **RELEASE** JUNE 5

What I thought would be just another platformer spit out to support a Disney movie actually turns out to be a lot of fun, and very well put together. Yes, it is a platformer, but the excellent play mechanics coupled with the unlockable movie clips and smooth character animations make this title a pleasant surprise. The only thing holding it back is the lack of an engaging storyline. Still a great game to take on the road, though. — **KRISTIAN**

E 8

GAME BOY ADVANCE

BOMBERMAN MAX 2:
RED & BLUE ADVANCE

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
■ **RELEASE** JUNE 11

The consumer is in for a world of hurt if the concept of creating two different versions of the same game continues. Heck, developers could create separate versions for each character in a fighting game. Ouch! Anyway, the big difference between Bomberman Red and Blue is small indeed. You can play as Max in Red, and Bomberman in Blue. Also, if you link up both colors, you can trade with a friend for different arenas and Charabom creatures. As always, the multiplayer experience will keep you playing until your batteries die. The single player quest is a tad tedious, but still entertaining. A good buy. — **REINER**

E 8

GAME BOY ADVANCE

PUNCH KING

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER FIGHTING
■ **PUBLISHER** ACCCLAIM
■ **RELEASE** JUNE 2

Punch King isn't fit to clean out PunchOut's spit bucket. Rather than having fast-paced bobbing and quick counter-punching, you're forced to hold your: dodge for ens, and

deal with the worst collision ever. You can be all the way on one side of the screen, and get hit by an opponent on the other end — even though his hand is two body-lengths away. Sweet! Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go to the courthouse and file a restraining order so this crappy game cannot get within 1,000 feet of me ever.

again. — **JUSTIN**

E 3

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

Rankings Based Upon NPD Data for April 2002 Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	1	Spider-Man	PS2	7.75	Apr-02	\$50
2	N/A	Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku	GBA	7.5	May-02	\$31
3	2	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2	9.5	Oct-01	\$49
4	N/A	Medal of Honor: Frontline	PS2	9	May-02	\$50
5	3	Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	PS2	9	Jul-02	\$21

The itsy bitsy spider went up the sales charts. The rest of the games were blown away like farts. Spidey's a hero but also feels real pain, so the itsy bitsy spider stays on the top again. Out of all the passive-aggressive superheroes out there, we love Spider-Man the best. Sorry, Captain Angrier. Better luck next time, Tantrum Kid.

So I says to Puar, I says, "That Bulma sure has a nice Chi-Chi. She gives me a Captain Metalltron." And he told me that Erasa really made him feel like a Monster Carrot. Then we took a Zarbon to Babidi and played with our Piccolo. Do you have any idea what we're saying? Neither do we, but there are obviously a lot of DBZ fans out there who do.

Um, "member that time, in GTA III, when you had to steal that guy's car while he was eating? Then, um, "member you had to put a bomb in it? Yeah, and then y'know how you had to bring the car back, but you couldn't let it get damaged 'cuz the guy would know? Then, like, the guy came out and got in his car, and it blew up? "Member that? Um, that was cool.

When you buy this game - and if you own a PS2 you should - you're duty-bound to hold it proudly, and repeat the following: "This is my Frontline. There are many like it, but this one is mine. My Frontline is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. Without me, my Frontline is useless. Without my Frontline, I am useless."

There's nothing like hitting the open road as the summer sun sets serenely. Just look out for crabs. During mating season, there can be thousands of them, all looking to get a claw on some tail. They walk sideways, so they may not see you speeding toward them. It's your responsibility not to mosh them. Pick them up, hug them, and drive on.

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	4	Resident Evil	GC	9.25	Apr-02	\$49
7	5	Spider-Man	Xbox	8.25	Apr-02	\$50
8	20	Halo	Xbox	9.5	Nov-01	\$48
9	7	Spider-Man	GC	8	Apr-02	\$49
10	6	Super Mario Advance 2	GBA	9.5	Feb-02	\$30
11	N/A	Spider-Man	GBA	8.5	Apr-02	\$39
12	16	Yu-Gi-Oh!: Forbidden Memories	PS-X	5.5	Mar-02	\$31
13	9	ATV Offroad Fury	PS2	8.5	Feb-02	\$21
14	N/A	Hunter: The Reckoning	Xbox	8	May-02	\$51
15	N/A	Midnight Club	PS2	7.5	Oct-00	\$20
16	12	Twisted Metal: Black	PS2	9.5	Jun-01	\$21
17	19	Spider-Man	PS-X	8.25	Aug 00	\$21
18	10	Sonic Advance	GBA	8.5	Feb-02	\$40
19	N/A	Headhunter	PS2	8	May-02	\$52
20	18	Super Smash Bros. Melee	GC	9.25	Dec-01	\$49

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristie Barnett/Nov-Horff (515) 625-2401

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	Dragon Quest Monsters 1&2	PS-X
2	N/A	Tottoko Hamtaro 3	GBA
3	N/A	World Soccer Winning Eleven 6	PS2
4	N/A	Project FIFA World Cup	PS2
5	N/A	Shining Go	PS-X
6	N/A	Summer Scenery Hourglass	PS2
7	N/A	This Flower 2	PS2
8	2	Mobile Suit Gundam: Giren's Ambition	PS2
9	4	Netsuchu Pro Baseball 2002	PS2
10	6	2002 FIFA World Cup	PS2



GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	GC
2	N/A	The Mark of Kri	PS2
3	2	Aggressive Inline	PS2
4	1	Stuntman	PS2
5	4	Medal of Honor: Frontline	PS2
6	N/A	Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller	Xbox
7	6	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2
8	3	Hot Shots Golf 3	PS2
9	5	Resident Evil	GC
10	10	Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	PS2



PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service Origin: GameSpot.com/Nov (515) 625-2401

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	1	The Sims: Vacation	Mar-02	\$29
2	8	The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	May-02	\$52
3	2	Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault	Jan-02	\$45
4	4	Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	Mar-02	\$47
5	3	Dungeon Siege	Mar-02	\$42
6	5	The Sims	Feb-00	\$42
7	6	The Sims: Hot Date	Nov-01	\$28
8	10	The Sims: Livin' Large	Sep-00	\$28
9	N/A	Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix	May-02	\$48
10	9	Grand Theft Auto III	May-02	\$48





Air on the Side of Insanity



Hammer your way through urban fantasy tracks to the Gravity Games big time in 5 game modes through 10 massive worlds so detailed and realistic you can smell the asphalt.



Master Fuzzy Hall's real backyard course and check out pro rider behind-the-scenes DVD content with harsh wipeouts, awesome moves and in-depth interviews.



21 riders to choose from, including top pros like Dennis McCoy, Fuzzy Hall and Jamie Bestwick, along with a bevy of fantasy street characters.



Snack preview at www.gravitygamesbike.midway.com



PlayStation 2



Blood
Mild Lyrics
Mild Violence

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REVIEWS

HIGH HEAT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2003

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** 3DO ■ **REVIEWED** APR-02



The stats side of the game is surprisingly robust. Each player has highly detailed numbers attached to them, and the commentary is pretty knowledgeable when it comes to refereeing them. There are the obligatory gameplay glitches,

like fielders standing under a fly ball only to have it drop a foot to the side of them, just to remind you that you're playing a 3DO game. However, I must admit that in terms of baseball games, 3DO made EA look like a bunch of monkeys this year. High Heat has a number of different modes to mess around with, and for the most part the gameplay is solid. If the graphics had been up to par, we might be looking at one of the best MLB games to come out this year, but above-average ain't half bad. — **KRISTIAN**



PLAYSTATION 2

18 Wheeler	7.5	Dec-01
American Pro Truckin'	7.5	Dec-01
Asphalt 3	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 4	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 5	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 6	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 7	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 8	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 9	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 10	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 11	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 12	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 13	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 14	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 15	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 16	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 17	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 18	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 19	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 20	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 21	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 22	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 23	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 24	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 25	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 26	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 27	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 28	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 29	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 30	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 31	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 32	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 33	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 34	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 35	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 36	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 37	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 38	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 39	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 40	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 41	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 42	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 43	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 44	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 45	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 46	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 47	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 48	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 49	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 50	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 51	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 52	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 53	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 54	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 55	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 56	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 57	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 58	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 59	8.5	Nov-01
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Asphalt 61	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 62	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 63	8.5	Nov-01
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Asphalt 65	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 66	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 67	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 68	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 69	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 70	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 71	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 72	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 73	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 74	8.5	Nov-01
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Asphalt 84	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 85	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 86	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 87	8.5	Nov-01
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Asphalt 89	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 90	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 91	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 92	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 93	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 94	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 95	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 96	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 97	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 98	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 99	8.5	Nov-01
Asphalt 100	8.5	Nov-01

Meta Gear Solo 2	10	Dec-01
Sea of Liberty	10	Dec-01
Homecoming	9.75	Jul-02
Mobile Suit Gundam	9.75	Jul-02
Monster Rancher 3	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 4	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 5	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 6	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 7	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 8	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 9	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 10	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 11	9.75	Feb-02
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Monster Rancher 98	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 99	9.75	Feb-02
Monster Rancher 100	9.75	Feb-02

GAMECUBE

18 Wheeler	8	Apr-02
American Pro Truckin'	8	Apr-02
Asphalt 3	8.5	Feb-02
Asphalt 4	8.5	Feb-02
Asphalt 5	8.5	Feb-02
Asphalt 6	8.5	Feb-02
Asphalt 7	8.5	Feb-02
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PLAY TO PERFECTION

ETERNAL DARKNESS

Sanity's Requiem

We've composed a complete walkthrough, as well as a complete guide to all of the spells you can obtain. Learn them as quickly as possible to kick ass early in the game.

Magic Spells

Spell 1 - Enchant: Antorbok and Magormor

Allows you to fix and power up items

Spell 2 - Recover: Narokath and Santak

Enables you to recover your Magic, Health, and Sanity meters

Spell 3 - Reveal Invisible: Narokath and Redgormor

Reveals invisible doors most of the time

Spell 4 - Damage Field: Bankorok and Redgormor

Creates a field that damages any enemy that touches it

Spell 5 - Dispel Magic: Nethiek and Redgormor

Counteract enemy magic such as force fields

Spell 6 - Summon Trapper: Tier and Aretak

Allows you to use a Trapper to snare enemies

Spell 7 - Shield: Santak and Bankorok

Creates a shield around your character

Spell 8 - Summon Zombie: Tier, Aretak, Paragon, Paragon

Allows you to summon a zombie to attack

Spell 9 - Magickal Attack: Antorbok and Redgormor

Allows you to attack using a burst of magic

Spell 10 - Summon Horror: Tier, Aretak, Paragon, Paragon

Allows you to summon and attack with a Horror

Spell 11 - Magic Pool: Tier and Redgormor

Allows you to use the magickal energy from the environment

Spell 12 - Bind: Bankorok and Aretak

Allows you to possess enemies and use them as allies

PREFACE

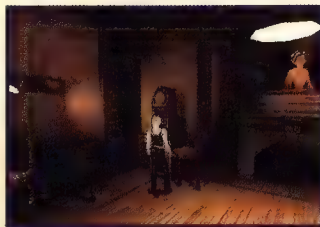
Dream



▲ Just off them until the dream ends

You start out dreaming with Alexandra Roivas. Simply run around blasting the skeletons. You'll go through a long story sequence, then begin your game in the mansion.

Mansion

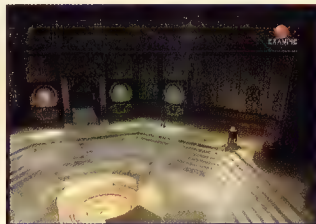


▲ Adjust the hands to reveal a secret passage

Take note of the clock on the desk in the main hall: it is directly in front of you. It's permanently stuck on 3:33. Grab the **Dresser Key** on the back. Head through the door to the east. Go through the library, heading south. You'll come to a study with an old grandfather clock. Adjust it so that it reads 3:33 too; enter this new area. Examine the book on the desk labeled, Tome of Eternal Darkness.

CHAPTER 1 - THE CHOSEN ONE

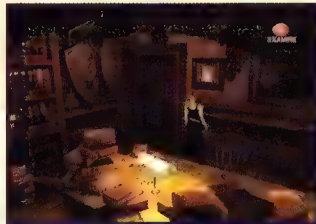
26 B.C. - Ancient Persia



▲ Put each of the Granite Blocks in these structures

1. Head down the ladder into the tomb. Kill the enemies. First decapitate them to make them ineffective, and then hit their arms. Grab the red **Granite Block** at the end of the hall.
2. In the next room, kill the same type of enemies and grab the green **Granite Block** in the center. Go through the door.
3. In this room, do the same thing and pick up the blue **Granite Block**. Descend the ladder.
4. Kill the enemy and enter the next door to the east. Kill the enemies in this large room, and then grab the purple **Granite Block** in the center.
5. Towards the entrance of this room, you will find the symbols of each block written on the wall. Place the correct **Granite Block** in the square hole under each symbol.
6. Return to the previous room and enter the now unlocked door. Complete the silly task and proceed on. Dispose of the skeletons in this room, and examine the circular object in the northern corner. Push the button and walk to the center piece.
7. In the next room, you will encounter three **Artifacts**. Any of them is okay to choose, but your quest will slightly alter depending on which one you select. Although the guide will be applicable, more or less, to each scenario, we base it off of the blue scenario, Ulyath.

Mansion

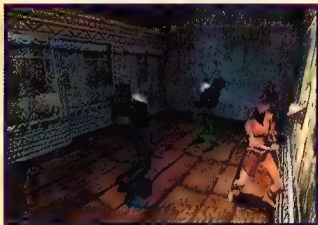


▲ Grab it off the wall and begin reading

You will now receive Tome of Eternal Darkness. Turn around and grab the **Chapter Page** on the wall directly behind you. Also, you might as well grab the **Gladius** off of the wall opposite the page. Read it.

CHAPTER 2 – THE BINDING OF THE CORPSE GOD

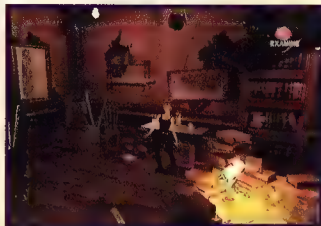
A.D. 1152 – Cambodia



▲ If this happens, run from those enemies to avoid damage

- Go straight ahead and examine the statue. Grab the **Strange Necklace** from the statue. Enter the door to the west. Examine the floor, and then the candle and painting in the corner; go through the next door.
- After you're forced to set the trap, return to the previous room, and then re-enter this trap room. Simply avoid the panels on the ground to proceed safely.
- In this next room, immediately kill the zombie; go for the head first, and then the arms. Be sure to dodge their attacks, since they require more hits than the skeletons. Now attack the Torso. Go to the candle to solve the puzzle. To do so, simply make sure the candle lit best corresponds to the sun's position on the painting. Grab the **Bronze Necklace** on the right, and return to the beginning.
- On your way back, watch for the skeletons. Place the **Bronze Necklace** on the statue and enter the new door. Proceed through the next hallway of traps to another candle room.
- Destroy the ghoul merely by decapitating it. Solve this candle puzzle, but return through the previous door. Halfway down the hall, turn left into the little cove. Grab the **Blowgun**. Now fall.
- Quickly save the man from being injured; shoot the enemies in the head, of course. If they start to emanate a blue light, quickly run into the cove you fell into until they explode.
- Now, talk to the man you rescued and get him to fix your **Short Sword**, since the **Blowgun** sucks. Proceed through the trap hallway to the next large room; take note of the cinema indicating the space for a **Lever**.
- Kill the skeletons and enter the only other door available. Most of these traps you must activate; simply watch their pattern – they're easy to pass.
- In this next large room, kill the ghouls. Enter the next door to the east. Watch the cinema and grab the **Metal Staff** from the statue. Return to the room that required a **Lever**.
- In the next hallway, skeletons will set off the traps, so be careful right at the beginning. Insert the **Metal Staff** in the space.
- Proceed back to the monstrosity, and enter the door behind it.

Mansion

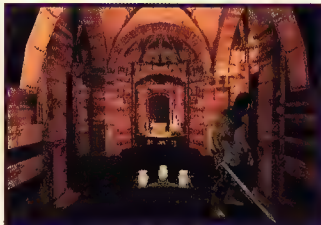


▲ Solve the candle puzzle here for the next page

Go to the candles and solve the puzzle to receive a **Message Tube**. Check it to get another **Chapter Page**. Read it.

CHAPTER 3 – SUSPICIONS OF CONSPIRACY

A.D. 814 – Amiens, France



▲ Fill the Urns with water and place them on the panel on the floor

- Head into the Church and proceed to the coffin; uncover it. Get the **Scramasax** and head upstairs – cool! Grab the book.
- Go back upstairs. Head to the bookcase and get the **Blue Urn**; use it to get the **Broken Blue Urn** and **Magical Rune**. Go to the opposite end of the room and get the **3 Point Circle of Power** off of the podium. Search the middle bookcase and move the book. Go downstairs.
- Enter the hall and kill the two skeletons; you will get a new **Magical Rune**. Enter the next door and rescue the monk from the skeletons. Talk to him to get the **Two-Edged Sword**. Pick-up the **Torch**, equip it, and then pick up the three **Broken Green Urn** pieces in the right-hand corner of the room. Enter the door.
- Go downstairs, pick up the **Magical Codex**, kill the skeleton, and get the next **Magical Rune**. Enter the next door.
- Kill the skeletons, get the **Magical Codex**, and grab the **Filled Red Urn**. Ignite the cloth in the doorway on the right with the **Torch**. Enter the new door.
- Go through the hallway, and enter the next room. Grab the **Magical Codex**. Look on the table and get the **Enchant Item Spell Scroll**. Create the spell.
- Return to the room with the fountain. Mix the like-colored pieces of **Urn** together, cast **Enchant** on each one,

- and fill them with the liquid. Now go back to the room where you found the **Scroll**.
- Place each of the **Urns** on the plate on the floor in front of the table. Enter the secret door.
 - Kill the Bishop by lopping off his head. When he falls, grab the **Bishop's Key**, and kill the skeletons. Head all the way back to the beginning.
 - In the hallway after the urn puzzle, you'll encounter a **Trapper** – it looks like a scorpion. Hold X and walk past it without touching it to avoid getting sucked into a trap. If you do get hit, wait for the teleporter to change to the color holding the transporter allowing you to leave. In this case, the one you want is purple.
 - Save before you climb the ladder. To defeat Horror (the large monster), position yourself around the desks in the beginning; he can't walk past them. After he swings, run up and strike his head. Don't worry about getting electrocuted, as it doesn't do enough damage. Hit him three times and you're done.
 - Open the door downstairs in the middle of the room on the west side.

Mansion

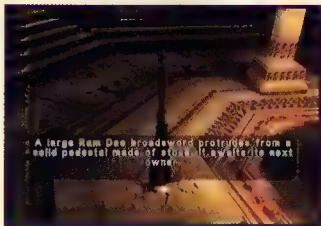


▲ Head to the second floor and enter the bathroom area

- Return to the main hallway and head upstairs. Use the **Second Floor Key**, and when it breaks, fix it.
- Turn right and enter the room; get the **Bullets** off of the table. Enter the bathroom. Get the **Page** from **Maximilian Roivas' Journal**. Return to the main hall of the second floor.
- Go to the other set of doors; enter the first one on the right. Examine the painting on the wall above the desk to Alexandra's left. Get the **Chapter Page**. Get the **Bullets** from the dresser next to the bed. Read the page.

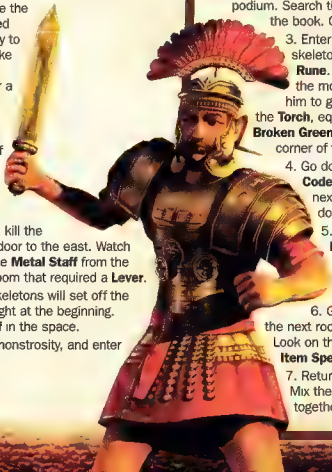
CHAPTER 4 – THE GIFT OF FOREVER

A.D. 565 – Persia



▲ A large Ram Das broadsword protrudes from a solid pedestal made of a solid yellow electric metal

- ▲ Grab the sword, but get ready for a fight!
- Head down the ladder, and grab the book. Kill the skeletons and head down the ladder again. Go down the hall, kill the skeletons, and grab the **Statuette**. Proceed on.



- Kill the skeleton to get another **Magickal Rune**. Go up the ladder. Examine the yellow force field and head down this new ladder.
- Grab the **Torch** on the right after you descend. Proceed to the next area. Kill the skeletons, grab the **Codex**, and then get the **Statuette**. Climb the previous ladder.
- Place the **Statuettes** on two of the circular plates, and then step on the third yourself. Avoid the Trappers, then descend using the center piece that just rose. Inspect the last dead body in the hall, getting the **Tulwar**, and then killing him. Simply execute three hit combos to dispatch him. When it transforms into the Dagger Mutant, go for its head. Enter the door.
- Kill the enemies and pick up the **Recover Spell Scroll**. Enter the door on the left and kill the enemies. Enter the door at the end of this small hallway.
- Once inside this room, quickly run out of the entrance way to avoid getting trapped by a Horror. Attack it as you did the one in the previous chapter. Once it's dead, you'll get a **Magickal Rune!** Go to the table and get the **Codex**. Create the Recover Spell using this new Rune.
- Watch for the Trappers in the next room, and descend the ladder past the yellow barrier. Grab the **Codex** next to the torch, and then turn right and enter the next door.
- Grab the **Ram Dao** broadsword in the pillar, and then kill the numerous enemies. Eventually you fight a foe and get a **Magickal Rune**. Return to the ladder and ascend it. Enter the door on Karim's left. Enchant the **Ram Dao** using **Ulyaoth** (the blue rune). Insert the sword in the door.
- Kill the Zombies and ascend the ladder. Sneak past the Trappers and grab **Ruby Effigy** in the center. Descend the ladder and climb past the rubble down the hallway. Kill the Horror and descend the next ladder.
- Place the **Tombe of Eternal Darkness** on the hand in the center of the room to open the gate. Enchant your sword and kill the hordes of enemies that come; be quick since they will likely damage you through your Sanity Meter. When you encounter the last Horror, Enchant your sword to dispose of it quickly.
- Walk backwards into the circular room. Grab the **Red-Clawed Artifact**.

Mansion



▲ Get the Spice Jar from the closet and open it

Return to the main hall, answer the phone on the opposite side of the room, and enter the door closest to you. To Alexandra's left is a sealed door. Enchant the sword, and insert it into the door. Grab the **Spice Jar** and inspect it to reveal a **Chapter Page**. Read the Page.

CHAPTER 5 – THE LURKING HORROR

A.D. 1760 – Roivas Family Estate, Rhode Island



▲ Move the crow over the green symbol to enter the room behind the fireplace

- Examine the desk right in front of you to get **Pistol Ammo**. Exit and enter the door down the hall opposite of the stain-glass window. Grab the **Pistol Ammo** on the desk on the right along the way.
- Grab the **Letter** on the stand next to the bed. Grab the **Codex** on the mantle above the fireplace. Enter the door to the right of the fireplace. Grab the **Ammo** and leave. Go downstairs.
- Grab the **Letter** on the table in the center. Enter the room to the west. Grab the **Codex**, and then the **Pistol Ammo** on the shelf. Now enter the storage room and grab the **Pump Handle**. Leave and enter the double doors to the north on the first floor.
- Inspect the fireplace. Move the crow so that it's in front of the green symbol (Xel'lotath). Get the **Reveal Invisible Spell Scroll**, and then the **Sabre**. Go to the desk and grab the **Tombe of Eternal Darkness**. Get the **Flintlock Pistol** from the wall.
- Head to the main hall to kill the Horror. Also be careful of your staff; some will attack you now. Just whack the big guy in the head three times to kill him and get a **Magickal Rune**. Create the **Reveal Invisible** spell. Also note that you can start making new spells that you haven't gotten scrolls for yet!
- Go upstairs. Enter the door and hang a left. Turn the next corner and go to the window. Grab the **Envelope** on the ground to the left. Check it to reveal another **Letter** and the **Basement Key**. Go downstairs; go through the black and white scene, killing the monster to get the green **Magickal Rune**. Proceed downstairs and head left to the wall with the blue seal.
- Cast **Reveal Invisible** with Xel'lotath. Unlock the door with the basement key and proceed downstairs. Execute the enemies and grab the **Damage Field Spell Scroll** next to the water. Get the **Codex** to the right. There's also some **Pistol Ammo** in the area opposite the water. Use the **Pump Handle** on the crank in front of the water.
- Climb down. Kill the enemy for the **Magickal Rune**. Learn the spell and proceed downstairs to the enemy. It uses Ulyaoth, so Enchant your weapon with Xel'lotath and cast a Xel'lotath Shield (Spell 7). Finally, kill whatever enemies it spawns, and hit it when it isn't protected by Shield.

Mansion

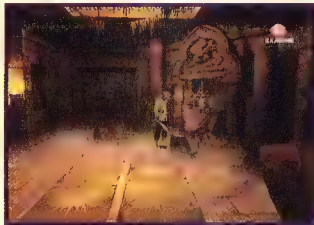


▲ Open the drawer here and get the Revolver

Leave the study and head for the second floor. Go right and enter the door. Go to the dresser and cast **Reveal Invisible** with Xel'lotath rune. Use the **Dresser Key** now to unlock the dresser and get another **Chapter Page** and **Revolver**. Read the page.

CHAPTER 6 – A JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS

A.D. 1983 – Ankor Thom Region, Cambodia



▲ Grab the Bracelet, but replace it with the Metal one quickly

- To kill the skeleton bird, simply hit its head and then run out of the way before it can hit you. If it does, it will spawn a skeleton, in which case you simply need to kill it, and then return to the bird.
- Once the bird is dead, go to the center of the room and dust the floor with your **Archaeologists Brush**; grab the **Bronze Bracelet**. Place it on the statue at the end of the room. Enter the door and grab the book. Re-enter the door and kill the enemies. Proceed through the other doorway through the hall full of traps. Halfway through the hall, turn right and get the **Metal Bracelet**. At the end, dust the spider web in the corner to get a **Codex**.
- Enter the next room and get the **Bronze Necklace**; don't worry about the monster, since it can't move. Return to the statue at the beginning of the level.
- Place the **Bronze Necklace** on the statue and enter the new door. Grab the **Silver Bracelet** and replace it with the **Metal Bracelet**. Go through the door on the left. Kill the enemies in this trap hallway, but watch for them setting traps.
- In the next room kill the enemies to obtain a **Magickal Rune**. Continue on through the next door. Halfway through this trap hallway, turn to your character's left and dust away the spider webs to reveal the **Dispel Magick Spell Scroll**. Although **Nethiek** has only a "?" for its name, you can create the spell now.
- Turn around and place the **Silver Bracelet** on the statue. Continue on through the hallway. In the next room, cast Xel'lotath **Dispel Magick** to unleash the

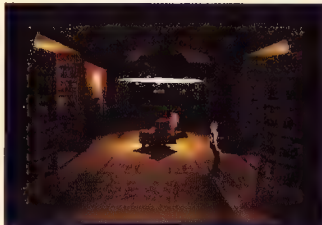
monster. Dispose of it and get the **Silver Necklace** that was behind it. Return to the previous statue.

- Put the **Silver Necklace** around the statue and enter this new door. Kill the skeleton to receive a **Magickal Rune**. With this Rune, you can now learn Spell 12. Keep descending and kill the skeleton bird. Keep going and pass the yellow seal.
- Turn to the character's left, and proceed through the trap hallway. In the next room, step on the brown, circular plate to the character's left. Run to the **Golden Bracelet** and snag it quickly. Now press the panel on the wall to the right of where the bracelet was. Leave through the next door.
- Proceed through the trap hallway until the next room. Kill the enemy and use Xel'lotath Dispel Magick. Press the panel and proceed through the next door.
- Be careful in this trap hallway, as enemies will set the traps off. Halfway, you'll encounter a statue. Place the **Gold Bracelet** on it. Proceed to the next room. Kill the enemies and cast Chaturgha Dispel Magick. Press the panel and exit through the next door. Run through the hallway, stopping for nothing, to the next room.
- Kill Horror and cast Ulyaoth Dispel Magick. In the little cove to the right of the center piece, brush away the spider webs to reveal a **Necklace**. Press the panel before you leave. Go through the next door and you'll be at the beginning.

- Keep going through once more until you return to the room with the fountain that is to the right of the center piece; it's in the room right after the hallway containing the force field you just destroyed. Place the necklace in the fountain and activate the liquid to reveal the **Gold Necklace**.
- Take it to the last statue – the one you placed the **Gold Bracelet** on. Put it on the statue. Enter the new door.
- Descend the stairs and kill the skeletons. Enter the next door and kill enemies; be sure to dust the spider webs next to the statue. This reveals a **Codex**. Go through the next door, but be careful in this dangerous hallway.
- In the next room, kill the zombies, and proceed to the next hall, which is very similar to the previous one. In the next room, kill the ghouls to receive another **Magickal Rune**. Go to the next trap hallway and on to the following room.
- This one is full of enemies, so be sure to have a healthy Sanity Meter before you enter. Kill them and grab the **Summon Trapper Spell Scroll** on the floor in the

center of the room. Continue on and you will encounter a familiar room. Go around the monstrosity to the door behind it.

Mansion



▲ To the right you will find the book

- Go to the library and find the book, **Demon Khemer**. It is in the second section on the right; you will notice that a book flies across, leading you in the right direction. Examine it to reveal the **Essence of Mantorok**.
- Exit to the main hallway. Go to the second level and enter the door. Go to the stain-glass window. Cast Xel'lotath Dispel Magick. Go out and grab the **Chapter Page**. Read it.

CHAPTER 7 – HERESY

A.D. 1485 – Amiens, France



▲ Place the sword into the chest of the statue to proceed

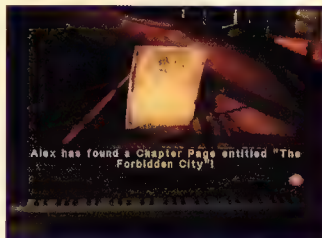
- Go straight through the double doors. Go up to the altar and take a right. Get the **Crossbow Bolts** on the pew. Go down the altar stairs and turn to your character's right. Pick up the **Torch** on the left. Enter the door.
- Open the chest to get the **Crossbow**, and examine the closet to find the **Podium Key**. Now descend the staircase behind the altar. Immediately turn left and enter the door.
- Get more **Bolts** from the shelf, and then get the **Book of Reliquaries** from the desk on your character's left. Exit and proceed on. You'll come to another room; to the right is a **Steel Mace** on the wall. Get it. On the left are some **Bolts**. Head back upstairs and head away from the altar for a necessary outscene.
- In the prison room, head right to the picture with a green **Emerald**; grab it. Exit the door and grab the book from the hand.
- Go to the doorway opposite of you. Go all the way upstairs to the bell and ring it, destroying the

monster along the way. Talk to the monk and get the **Old Tower Key**.

- Go back downstairs and go towards the altar. Before you climb the altar stairs, turn right. Use the **Old Tower Key** and enter the door. Kill the monster. Grab the **Shield Spell Scroll** on the table. On the left is a door; enter it.
- Kill the old knight and obtain the **Ruby and Two-Edged Sword**. Leave and ascend the stairs to the right of the entrance. Grab the **Sheet of Music** on the left, and get the **Diary Page** on the podium ahead. Go back downstairs to the main altar.
- Go to the organ piano to the left of the altar. Play the **Sheet of Music**. Go grab the **5 Point Circle of Power**. Descend the stairs behind the altar again and enter the door that was previously blocked by a monk.
- Kill the Trappers with your Crossbow and examine the middle barrel on the right; turn the spigot and enter the door.
- Enchant your weapon with Ulyaoth and kill the Horror to obtain the **Sapphire**. Go to the north end of the room and place the jewels in the holes. Enter the Crypt.
- Kill the enemies in the next room to receive a **Magickal Rune**. Pass through this room to the next door. Go downstairs and enter the next room, but before you do anything to the Horrors, let one kill the other. As the victor shouts, go up and destroy it. Grab the **Bolts**, and enter the door to the right.
- Kill the enemies in the hall in the next room. Get the **Bolts** from the bookcase on the left, and then examine and push the bookcase across from the entrance. Enter this secret passage.
- You'll come to another podium; grab the **Diary Page** on it. To the right is another **Codex**, a **Paragon Rune**. Use the 5 Point Circle of Power, including two paragons with all of your old spells to power them up. Return to the main altar upstairs.

- Just before you go downstairs, there is a podium on the left. Unlock the drawer and get the **Diary Page**. Go upstairs to meet your friend. He'll give you the **Sacred Knife**.
- Return to the crypt, and to the room where you saw the two Horrors fighting. Also, watch out for the Trappers in the coffin room, just before you descend into the crypt. In the back corner is a coffin. Insert the **Sacred Knife** to uncover a new door. Enter it.
- You come to a blue barrier. Cast Dispel Magic with Xel'lotath and the 5 Point Circle of Power. Examine the body. Kill the enemies; cast a Xel'lotath Damage Field if you like. Leave this area, and the door in the previous room will now be unlocked. Enter it and proceed on.

Mansion

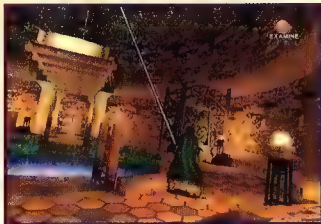


▲ The 88 Keys actually refer to the piano, which holds a chapter

To solve the **88 Keys** puzzle, head to the double doors to the left of the staircase in the main hall. Inspect the body. Now play the piano to reveal a **Chapter Page**.

CHAPTER 8 – THE FORBIDDEN CITY

A.D. 1460 – The Middle East



▲ Cut the rope to drop the bridge

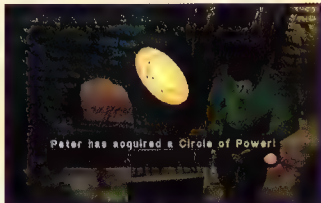
1. Climb the ladder, and then descend another one on the opposite side of the room. Proceed straight ahead; run past the enemy, or kill him if you like. Climb the next ladder.
2. In this room you'll find some **Crossbow Bolts** on your left. Survey the area by examining a pillar. Now head to the other side of the room to the ladder. Before you descend, get the **Slaf** on the left.
3. Pull the lever on the right to open the cage. Kill the enemy and pull the next lever. Kill these enemies, and then pull the third lever. Proceed to the new area and climb the ladder.
4. Grab the **Crossbow** on the left ledge and survey the area. Climb down the new ladder. Watch out for the Trappers here. Nail them with the Crossbow and continue down the hall. Climb the ladder.
5. Kill the weaker enemy first, and then go after the skeleton bird. Try not to get hit by it, since it will spawn Trappers – very annoying. Get the **Summon Zombie Spell Scroll** in the center on the table. Descend the ladder. Kill the Horror, and continue.
6. Enter the door on the left first; kill the skeletons and climb down the ladder on the right. Enter the next door.
7. Kill the Horror, but only after he's finished off the minor fiends. Go to the pedestal with the key on top. Cast **Reveal Invisible** with Xel'totath and grab the **Forgotten Corridor Key**. Return to the previous ladder and grab the **Sapphire Effigy** on the left. Climb the ladder.
8. Enter the door to the right of the double doors; survey this room and leave before the men attack. Use the **Forgotten Corridor Key** to open the double doors. Make sure you have all of your health, cast a Xel'totath Shield and run across the yellow field; you will make it, so don't worry.
9. Cut the ropes of the bridge on the right. Run across it and hit the lever. Kill the snakes and survey the bridge area. Return to the room where the enemy got smashed by the trap. Summon a Zombie and move it onto the trap. Descend the ladder.
10. Kill the weaker enemy, kill the Trapper, and then go for the skeleton bird. Proceed on for a cutscene. Grab the **Essence of Chattru'gha** and **Ruby Effigy**. Survey the area and return to the beginning.

Mansion

Head to the fireplace in the study, and survey the area around the picture that's to the right. You'll find a **Chapter Page**.

CHAPTER 9 – A WAR TO END ALL WARS

A.D. 1916 – Amiens, France



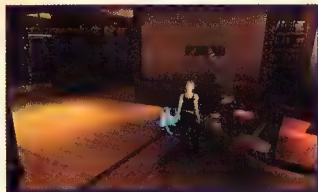
▲ Get the Circle and head upstairs to solve the puzzle

1. Grab the **Soldier's Letter** on the table. Turn around and leave the cathedral. Go up the stairs on the right. Grab the second **Soldiers Letter** on the crate. Proceed back downstairs into the cathedral. Go to the altar and check the podium on the right for a **Sealed Envelope**. Check it.
2. Go to the guard just outside the cathedral and present the **Soldier's Orders** to him. Enter the door, grab the **Revolver** and leave. Re-enter the cathedral. Run to the Altar and grab the **Rifle**. Run to the **Old Clock Tower**, avoiding the enemies. Immediately head to the door on the left; kill the enemies and get the **Torch** and **Ammo**.
3. Head upstairs. Get some more **Ammo** and the **Two-Edged Sword**. Leave the Old Clock Tower and go kill those annoying monsters in the main cathedral. Get the **Sheet of Music** from the organ. Go down the stairs behind the altar. Turn left, enter the rooms and grab the **Ammo**.
4. Leave and proceed on, collecting the items as you see them. When you pass the pipe organ parts, watch for Trappers. Kill them, and then activate your **Torch**. There will be doors on your left and right. Enter the one on your character's right first.
5. Turn the wheel on the boiler. Now leave and enter the other door. Use your **Lucky Penny** as a fuse. Pull the lever on the generator. Re-enter the boiler room. Summon a Trapper and crawl through the hole next to the door. Trap the dead soldier. Enter the room and get the third **Circle of Power**. Once again, you can charge up all of your spells using the Seven Point Circle of Power with four Pargon runes. Go back upstairs to the altar.
6. Play the organ. The notes are as follows: A, B, Y, X, B, Y, A. Go to the other side and grab the **Door Handle**. Go down the altar and turn to your character's right. Go to the wall with the Ulyatho symbol on it. Cast **Reveal Invisible** using Xel'totath and the Seven Point circle. Now use the **Door Handle** on the door.
7. Get the **Ammo**, and then head down the ladder. Kill the enemies and head down the stairs. Kill the Horror and his cronies, then enter the door on the right, but watch out for the Trappers. Enter the next room.
8. Grab the **Soldier's Letter** on the chair. Push the shelf in and proceed. In the next room, kill the Trapper first and then the skeleton. Grab the **Binding Hall Key** on the pedestal and return to the room with the previous Horror. Enter the other door now.
9. Move slowly and kill the Trappers. Grab the **Magickal Elkir** off the table. Return to the previous room. Use the key on the locked door in here. Proceed down the set of stairs and grab the **Magickal Attack Spell Scroll** from the wall. Enter the door on the left.

BOSS

At first, simply dodge the ball attacks, or shoot them with your weapon. Immediately after, cast **Magickal Attack** using the Seven Point Circle and Chattru'gha. Repeat this process twice. It will change from balls to skeletons, at which point you'll notice that you can only damage him when the blue field covers its body. When the skeletons appear, cast Chattru'gha. Be careful though: if you lack green juice and the skeletons see you, they will interrupt your spell. Finally, you will be trapped in a closed circle with it. The monster will try to stomp you seven to ten times; simply run around dodging its feet. When it stops, it will cover itself in the blue field, so immediately cast the spell. Repeat this pattern until it is finished. Grab the **Essence of Xel'totath**.

Mansion

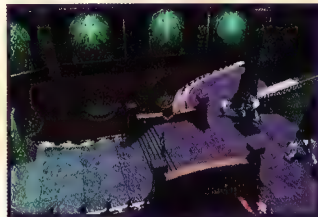


▲ Speak with the ghost to get the basement key

1. Head to the Library and talk with the Ghost Maid. Get the **Basement Key**, and then head to the main hall. Turn right in the main hall and use the key on the door. Grab the **Shotgun** from the wall. Get the **Ammo** from the ledge of the little pool and from the shelf.
2. Place that **Lucky Penny** in the fuse box next to the shelf. Press the action button again to examine the fuse box. Head to the second level and enter the room that was previously too dark. Examine the chest and get the **Journal of Maximilian Roivas**. Turn around and inspect the medicine cabinet; open it to reveal a **Chapter Page**.

CHAPTER 10 – A LEGACY OF DARKNESS

A.D. 1952 – Roivas Family Estate, Rhode Island

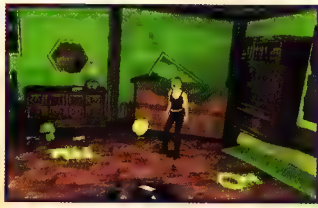


▲ Play these Horrors carefully and retreat to the previous screen, if you must

1. Get the **Historical Journal** from the mantle. Check it to reveal a **Minute Hand**. Head towards the study. Now you need the **Hour Hand** to complete the puzzle.
2. First grab the **Magick Pool Spell Scroll** on the chair. Head to the main hall, and then to the second floor. Head left down the hall and enter the first door on the right. Get the **Ammo** and the **Historical Journal** on the right. Check it to get the **Hour Hand**.

- Head back to the clock and move the hands to 3:33. Follow the ghost. Grab the **Ammo** on the right and the **Revolver** on the left. Pick up the **Tomé** on the table. Grab the rest of the **Ammo** in the corners of the room and leave.
- Kill the maid and pick up the **Bottom Half of the Basement Key** that fell from the jar. Enter the piano room. Get the **Sabre** from the stand. Return to the main hall and enter the room closest to you; save your servant. Simply hack at the vampire monster after it attacks.
- After the cutscene, go to the second floor. Walk to the door behind the wallpaper. Now walk back. Go to the room with the **Elephant Gun** and rescue your servant. Go to the room at the opposite end and kill the crazy servant. Head downstairs and rescue your other servant. This time the vampire monster will drop the other half of the **Basement Key**.
- Fix the **Basement Key** and head downstairs. Don't fight it initially, but attack the stone pillar until it's destroyed. Now kill the vampire creature. Collect the items around the room, especially the **Summon Horror Spell Scroll** on the shelf. Head down the ladder.
- Descend the stairs and kill the Horrors: Enchant your weapon if you like, just be careful. Quickly cast **Magickal Attack** before they can attack. If you ever get in trouble, just run back to the previous screen to heal up.
- Proceed to the next big fight, but heal up first. Also Enchant your weapon and activate a **Shield**. After killing the crows, get close to the enemy and cast **Dispel Magick** with Xel'Iotath. Now simply follow it and attack when it appears, avoiding contact when it's in ball form. Note, however, that once it starts a spell, the spell cannot be interrupted, so watch out for its **Magickal Attack**.
- After killing the enemy, enter the door. Pass through the machine and activate the middle array. Step into the teleporter. Kill the **Trapper**, and walk to the end of the structure. Examine the end of the structure and set it to Xel'Iotath. Step back in the teleporter.
- Kill the enemy, head upstairs and flip the switch. Leave the area. Return to the machine, and activate the other arrays. You're forced to set each array to Pargon, except for two others. Set those to Redgornor and Tier. After this task, return to the mansion.

Mansion

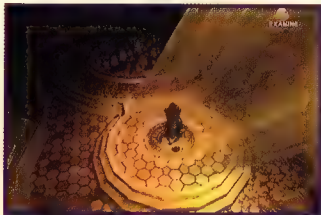


▲ Cast **Dispel Magick** and collect the goodies in the center

- Read the **Hidden Note** from Edward. Head to the basement and check the barrels on Alexandria's right to get the **Pickax**. Now head to the second floor and use the **Pickax** on the discolored section of the wall near the broken window. Use **Dispel Magick** with Chhattur'gha and examine the objects in the center. Get the **Stethoscope** and **Journal** entry.
- Read the entry and head to the safe downstairs to the basement, but watch out for enemies, as they litter the house now. Use the **Stethoscope** on the safe. The combination to the lock is 59 right, 81 left, 46 right. Collect the various items, check them, and read the **Chapter Page**.

CHAPTER 11 – ASHES TO ASHES

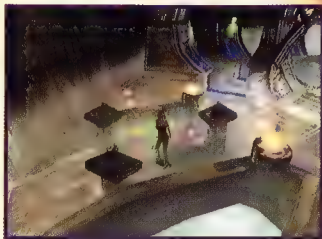
A.D. 1991 – The Middle East



▲ Set the **Staff** up and maneuver the light beam to solve the puzzle

- Kill the enemies and grab the **Assault Rifle**, **Pistol**, **Grenades**, and **Ammo** from your friend's body. Go through the door; run past the skeleton bird and descend the ladder. Climb the first ladder on the left; grab the **Gold Amulet** and return to the ladder. Climb the ladder on the right. Kill the skeletons and grab the **Staff**.
- Go back down and head to the next ladder; climb it. Go to the other side of the room, past the model. Examine the circular object shrouded in light. Combine the **Staff** with the **Gold Amulet**. Use it on the circular object. Maneuver the staff so that it burns the sphere on the right, causing it to open a compartment. Do the same to the one on the left. Now project the light onto the pyramid in the center. Descend the ladder behind the **Staff**.
- Return to the room where you found the **Gold Amulet**. Descend the ladder on the other side of the room. Kill the skeletons and ascend the ladder at the end of the hall. Kill the enemies in here, and then descend the next ladder.
- Use **Dispel Magic** to break the field and get the **Emerald Effigy**. Kill the snake creatures and continue on to your character's left. Climb the first ladder on your character's right; kill the enemies and descend the ladder in the middle of the room. Continue down the hall. Enter the door, but be careful of the Trappers.
- After you kill the Trappers, enter the only other door. Kill the skeletons, and enter the door on the right. Use each of the **effigies** in front of the paintings. Place green in front of the red painting, blue in front of the green painting, and red in front of the blue painting.
- Descend the secret staircase and get the **Enchanted Gladius**. Return to the previous room, and then the room where you just offed skeletons. Summon an Ulyatho Trapper, and trap the large pillar blocking the ladder.
- Proceed down the next few ladders and get the **Bind Spell Scroll**. Leave through the hole in the wall and cast a Xel'Iotath **Bind** spell to take out a Horror. Kill the other. Grab the **Plastic Explosives** and return to the room where you summoned the Trapper.
- Cast **Reveal Invisible** with Xel'Iotath to reveal the double doorway to your character's right. Go through it. Grab the **Detonator Caps** next to the body and proceed on as you did in the previous time period.
- Kill the snake creatures and combine the **C4** with the **Detonator Caps**. Enchant the **C4** and explode the bridge. Return to the previous room with the secret staircase. Exit through the door on the character's left which was previously blocked by rubble; it will lead you to safety.

Mansion



▲ Place all of the containers housing the **Essences** on the pedestals

- Head to the Telescope Room. Adjust the handles so that the light reaches the shiny sphere on the globe. Head to the basement and pick up the **Brown Paper Parcel** on the way. Unwrap it to receive the **Essence of Chhattur'gha** and **Enchanted Gladius**. Descend the ladder and the spiraling staircase.
- Proceed to the room of arrays, casting **Shield** to pass the yellow field. When you get there, quickly cast Xel'Iotath **Dispel Magick**. You should just make it.
- Once inside, grab the **Pedestal Fragments** on the ground. Put them together using **Enchant**. Place the **Pedestal Fragment** on top of the broken pedestal in front of the machine.
- Place all three **Essences** on the pedestals. Now you must repeat the same tedious process from the previous time period. Activate the arrays starting from the left and working your way around clockwise.
- Again you're forced to use **Pargon** on each array except for three. For these three you want to use **Aretak**, **Xel'Iotath**, and **Tier**. After you activate an array, you'll encounter a puzzle of group of enemies.
- The first one requires you to Cast **Reveal Invisible** with Xel'Iotath. The second one consists of a few Trappers. For the third, Summon each of the monsters with their correct color, and move them on the circles in front of their image. The fourth is a hallucination; if you get caught, simply refill your **Sanity Meter**. To pass the giant snake, simply creep by it. The fifth and sixth are relatively easy enemy-based tasks. On the seventh one, go to the Ulyatho symbol and cast a Xel'Iotath **Magickal Attack**. For the eighth, cast **Shield**, go to the right side, enter the yellow field, and cast **Dispel Magick** on the **Damage Field**. For the ninth, Bind the enemies and kill the last one.

FINAL BOSS

Attack him with your **Enchanted Sword** to cause a helmet looking object (Ulyatho) to appear. Wait for Pious to get close and then whack Ulyatho. Repeat this until Ulyatho stops appearing. Now you can attack Pious and cause damage. We suggest using Xel'Iotath **Magick Attacks** and **Damage Fields** along with regular sword attacks to kill him finally. To Bind the enemy at the end, simply choose **Bankorok**. Congrats!



SECRET ACCESS

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2



WAY OF THE SAMURAI

Glowing Eyes – During gameplay, hold L1 and L2, then rotate the left analog clockwise quickly. If you look closely, you'll see your characters light up when you do this. You can also do this during the in-game cutscenes. The light from your eyes is actually projected onto the environment and characters. Very strange, indeed.

Restore Health – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and L2 and press Down, Up, Down, Up, Right, Left, **O**.
"Gl Droid"
(location unknown – last seen playing "touchy feely" with Kato's pink scooter)



TEST DRIVE

All Cars & Tracks – At the Main Menu, press Right (x2), Left, **□**, Up, L2 (x2), R1. The words "Unlock Everything" will appear at the bottom of the screen.

Three Bonus Cars – After entering the code above, head to the San Francisco drag race and select the Dodge Concept Viper GTS-R. Set a new record (which should be a breeze with this ride), then instead of entering your name at the Name Entry screen, input SOUNDMAX. The Jaguar XK-R Soundmax, Jaguar XK-R Analog Devices, and Aston Martin db7 Sound Max will now be selectable in every mode except for Underground.

"The Vidman"
Uptown, MN

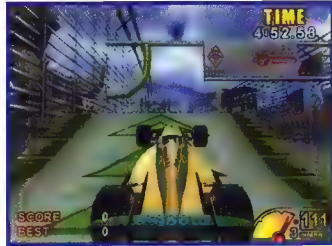


DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE

Enter all of these codes at the Unlock option with the Classified Files menu. A message will appear when a code is inputted correctly.

All Missions – KINGSLEY
Bonus Mission 1 – KREUZLER
Bonus Mission 2 – SHEARER
Bonus Mission 3 – UBERDOOPER
God Mode – TEAMBUDDIES
Infinite Ammo – BLASTRADIUS

Jennifer Hartley
Los Angeles, CA



DOWNFORCE

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. When the sequences are entered correctly, the screen will flash, or, you may be warped directly to the bonus feature.

Championship Intermediate – Down, **□**, Up, **□**, Right (x2), Left
Championship Expert – Down, **O**, Up, Down, **O** (x2), R1, L1
Crash Arena – Left, Right (x2), **□**, Down, **△** (x2), **□**
Crash Arena (2-Player) – Right, Left (x2), **O**, Up, **△** (x2), **□**
Expert AI – **△**, Right, Left, **□**, Up, **O**, Down, Right
Invincibility – L1, **△**, R1, **△**, Down (x2), **O**
Trophy Beginner – Right (x2), L1, **△** (x2), R1, Right
Trophy Intermediate – Right (x2), **□**, Left, L1, R1, **□** (x2)
Trophy Expert – Right (x2), **O**, Left, L1, **O**, R1, **O**

Rico Rodriguez
Orono, ME



REDCARD 2003

Cheat Mode – To unlock all of the teams, stadiums, and Finals mode, input BIGTANK as a new profile name.

George Lucas
Flannel Town, ID

SLED STORM

Enter all of these codes at the Press Start screen. A sound will confirm correct code entry.

Activate Cheat Mode – Hold R1 and L1, then press **O**, **□**, Up, **O**, **△**, Down.
All Characters – Hold R1 and L1, then press **O**, **△**, **O**, **△**, **O**, Down.
All Sleds – Hold R1 and L1, then press **O**, **□**, **O**, **□**, **O**, Left.
All Tracks – Hold R1 and L1, then press **O**, Left, **O**, Right, **O**, Up.
Hover Sled – Hold R1 and L1, then press **O**, **△**, **□**, **O**, **△**, Right.

Justin "Bones" Broakeasy
Wussywrestler, IL

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

To enter all of these codes, head to the Cheats menu within the Options screen. When the cheat function is activated, the Cheats menu will disappear.

All Hidden Characters – **↓**, **↑**(x2), **↓**, **←**, **↓**, **←**, **↓**, **→**(x3)
All Keys – SKELETON
Invincibility – KHUFU
Juice Maxed – BAKABAKA
Juice Regeneration – **←**(x2), **↑**(x2), **←**, **→**, **↓**, **↑**(x2), **↓**, AI.
Level Select – **↑**(x2), **↓**(x2), **←**, **→**, **←**, **→**, BABA
Low Gravity Wallrides – **↑**, **↓**, **↑**, **↓**, **←**, **→**, **←**, **→**, ABABS
Perfect Grinds – BIGUPYASELF
Perfect Handplants – JUSTIN BAILEY
Perfect Manuals – QUEZDONTSLLEEP
Super Spin – **←**(x4), **→**(x4), **←**, **→**, **←**, **→**, **↑**

Derrick F.
Duncanville, TX

CODE OF THE MONTH



MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

Enter all of these codes at the Passwords within the Options menu. You'll know the code works when the machine's lights turn green. To enable/disable the cheat functions, head to the Bonus option beneath the Password machine.

- Achilles Head Mode – GLASSJAW
- Bullet Shield – BULLEZZAP
- Complete Mission with Gold Star – MONKEY
- Complete Previous Mission with Gold Star – TIMEWARP
- FMV 1 – BACKSTAGEO
- FMV 2 – BACKSTAGER
- FMV 3 – BACKSTAGES
- FMV 4 – BACKSTAGEF
- FMV 5 – BACKSTAGEI
- FMV 6 – BACKSTAGET
- Invisible Enemies – WHEREERU
- Men With Hats – HABRDASHR
- Mission 2 – ORANGUTAN
- Mission 3 – BABOON
- Mission 4 – CHIMPZNZEE
- Mission 5 – LEMUR
- Mission 6 – GORILLA
- MOHton Torpedo – TPDOMOHTON
- Perfectionist – URTHEMAN
- Rubber Grenade Mode – BOING
- Silver Bullet Mode – WHATYOUGET
- Snipe-Rama Mode – LONGSHOT

For these cheats, begin a game, and enter the code from the pause screen. When a cheat is entered correctly, the game will automatically resume.

- Infinite Ammo – O, L2, □, L1, Select, R2, △, Select
- Invincibility – □, L1, O, R1, △, L2, Select, R2

David Blake
Everett, WA

BLOOD OMEN 2

Start with Soul Reaver & Iron Armor – To begin a new game with the most power armaments, head to the Main Menu and press L1, R1, L2, R2, □, O, △. If the code is entered correctly, you'll hear Kain yell. Now, start a new adventure and enjoy the ease of killing!

Thomas Wilhelm
Janus County, NC



BLOOD OMEN 2

Start with Soul Reaver & Iron Armor – To begin a new game with the most power armaments, head to the Main Menu and press White, Black, L Button, R Button, X, B, Y. If the code is entered correctly, you'll hear Kain yell. Now, start a new adventure and enjoy the ease of killing!

Corey Wilhelm
Janus County, NC

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

Alternate Ending – Save at least 50 Innocents before reaching the final stretch of the game to see a slightly different ending.

Sound Test – During gameplay press Right (x2) and B, or Left (x2) and B to hear random sound bits from the game.

"Daddy Fat Sacks"
Memphis, TN



STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

Everything Unlocked – Head into the Options menu and select the Code option. Input LONGO to unlock all of the levels, ships, and secrets.

David Crenshaw
West Holland, GA

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

All Wrestlers – At the Main Menu, press Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, Y (x2), X.

Peggy McTwin
Long Pastures, IA



STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER

No way! LucasArts continues to leak out new Rogue Leader codes. With each passing month, the cheats become all the more obscure. This time around, you can fly a car. What is this? Harry Potter? All of these codes must be entered at the Passwords screen.

Ace Mode – First input "U!P!WZVC". R2 will beep in acceptance. From here, input "GIVEITUP". R2 will chirp signaling correct code entry.

Darth Vader's TIE Advanced X1 – First input "NYMIUOOK". R2 will beep in acceptance. From here, input "BLKHLMTI!". R2 will chirp signaling correct code entry.

Endurance Level – First input "??WCYBRTC". R2 will beep in acceptance. From here, input "??MBC???". R2 will chirp signaling correct code entry.

Flying Convertible – First input "IZUVIEL!". R2 will beep in acceptance. From here, input "IBENZINI!". R2 will chirp signaling correct code entry.

"The GI Staff"
Minneapolis, MN



JEREMY McGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD

Enter all of these codes at the Main Menu. A message will appear in the lower left-hand corner when a cheat is entered correctly.

- Big Head Mode** – B, X, R Button, L Button, Right
- Bouncy Physics** – Up (x2), Y (x2), X (x2)
- Infinite Turbo** – Down (x3), L Button, R Button, Z
- Moon Gravity** – Left, Right, Up, Down, B (x3)
- Small Riders** – L Button, Z, Left, Right, B (x2)
- Tag Mode** – Z, X, Z, X

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH



NBA COURTSIDE 2002

Of course, for those of you that want to cheat, Nintendo's going to make you jump through hoops. To enable these codes, head into the Skills mode menu. Press and hold X and Y, Up on the analog stick, and Down on the C-Stick. Your movements must be precise. If you can pull this off, a Controller Stress Test option will magically appear. Enter this strange looking menu, then input the codes below.

- Away Team Jerseys** – Left, Right, Left, Right, Y (x2), Left
- Big Hands** – Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Y, Down
- Big Heads** – Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Y, Right
- Controller Stress Test (Toggle)** – Left, Right, Left, Right, X (x2), Left
- Hidden Teams** – Left, Right, Left, Right, X (x2), Right
- Home Team Jerseys** – Left, Right, Left, Right, Y (x2), Right
- Invisible Players** – Left, Right, Left, Right, Y, X, Right
- Little Guys** – Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Y, Left
- Little Heads** – Left, Right, Left, Right, X, Y, Up
- Secret Cheat** – Left, Right, Left, Right, Y (x2), Up
- Strange Free Throws** – Left, Right, Left, Right, Y, X, Down
Bob "Chetshot Iwantobehiswife" Clark
Houston, TX

WRESTLEMANIA X8

Here's a quick breakdown of the methods needed to unlock all of the hidden wrestlers and arenas.

- Chris Benoit** – In Path of Champions mode, win the Heavyweight Championship.
- Raven** – In Path of Champions mode, win the Light Heavyweight Championship.
- Rhyno** – In Path of Champions mode, win the Hardcore Championship.
- Rick Flair** – In Path of Champions mode, win the European Championship.
- Royal Rumble 2001 Arena** – Win the 30-man Royal Rumble.
- SDI Classic Arena** – With The Rock as your character, win the Heavyweight belt.
- Stacy** – In Path of Champions mode, win the Tag Team Championship.
- Vince McMahon** – In Path of Champions mode, win the Intercontinental Championship.
- WrestleMania X7 Arena** – Simply compete in a match on each of the arenas.

Steve Spurrier
Seattle, WA

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

All Wrestlers – At the Main Menu, press Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, Y (x2), X.

Jenny McTwin
Long Pastures, IA



THE SCORPION KING: SWORD OF OSIRIS

Enter this cheat at the Continue screen. The colors in the cheat represent the shades of the pictures used within the password. After entering the code, hit Start to bring up the menu.

Debug Mode – Blue, Green, Green, Blue

Carlos Bach
Orlando, FL

STAR WARS: EPISODE II ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Enter all of these codes at the Password screen.

- Level 2** – BJDGGM
- Level 3** – BJFGHM
- Level 4** – BJGGDM
- Level 5** – BJHGFM
- Level 6** – BJKGCM
- Level 7** – BJLGSJ
- Level 8** – BJMGTM
- Level 9** – BJNGQM
- Level 10** – BJPGJM
- Level 11** – BGQGNP
- Ending** – BGRBPK

Caramel Electrode
Hanover, RI



DESERT STRIKE ADVANCE

Enter all of these codes at the Campaign Menu screen.

- 10 Lives** – BS9JS27
- Ending Movie** – F9NSJ8C
- Level 2** – 3ZJMZT7
- Level 3** – K32L82R
- Level 4** – JR8PB8M

Jason Sammons
Oakland, CA



GRAND THEFT AUTO III

Simply type in the desired cheat at any point during play.

- 100% Armor** – turtoise
- All Weapons** – gunsgunsguns
- Angry Pedestrians** – nobodylikesme
- Change Costume** – ilikedressingup
- Clear Weather** – skincancerforme
- Cloudy Weather** – ilikescotland
- Crazy Pedestrians** – itsallgoingmaaad
- Destroy All Cars** – bangbangbang
- Extra Cash** – ifiwerearchman
- Faster Gameplay** – booooooring
- Faster Time** – timeflieswhenyou
- Flying Car** – chittychittybop
- Foggy Weather** – peassoup
- Full Health** – gesundheit
- Gore Mode** – nastylimbscheat
- Higher Wanted Level** – morepoliceplease
- Improved Handling** – comerslikemad
- Lower Wanted Level** – nopoliceplease
- Pedestrian War** – weaponsforall
- Rainy Weather** – ilovescotland
- Rhino Tank** – giveustatank
- Wheel Cars** – anicetofwheels

Michael Gross
 Fargo, ND

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX

To enter these cheats hit ~ to bring up the console window. Now, type "setrandom sv_cheats 1". Press [Enter] and then enter any of the cheats below.

- All Weapons & Ammo** – give all
- Armor** – give armor
- Commit Suicide** – kill
- Disable Enemy AI** – notarget
- God Mode** – god
- Health** – give health
- Infinite Power** – pinkspider
- List Maps** – dir maps
- Max Ammo** – give ammo
- Move to Map** – devmap [level name]
- Never Get Tired** – nofatigue
- No Clipping** – noclip
- Spawn Item** – give [item name]
- Stamina** – give stamina

Andy "The Tooth" Ache
Brushing, NJ


GAME SHARK
PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2

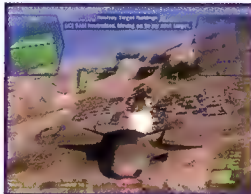
Master Code (Must Be On) –
OE3C7DF21853E59E
EE89B636BCBA1D3A

Endings Complete –
CE70133EBCA99BC2

Everything Unlocked –
CE7018FEBCA99A82

Infinite Stamina –
CE3D7086BCA99E6B

Infinite Yen –
CE701FA6BCA9C292

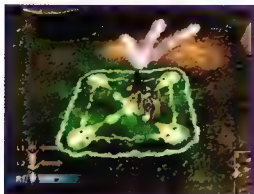

**DROPSHIP:
UNITED PEACE FORCE**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
OE3C7DF21853E59E
EE88AF26BCB92DA2

All Missions –
F1DA082EBCA99B84

Infinite Ammo –
F1DA0936BCA99B84

Infinite Health –
F1DA0937BCA99B84


**LEGION:
THE LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR**

Master Code (Must Be Entered) –
OE3C7DF21853E59E
EE8EFCCEBCCDFCE2

Tons of Cash –
D16DE7CEC19E7B82

Arthur

Max Attack –
C16DD5A8BCA99E6B

Max Health –
D16DD652E3B8C292

Gwen

Max Attack –
C16DCDE0BCA99E6B

Max Health –
D16DCD8AE3B8C292

Perceval

Max Attack –
C16DC418BCA99E6B

Max Health –
D16DC5C2E3B8C292


**SCOOBY-DOO: NIGHT OF
100 FRIGHTS**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
OE3C7DF21853E59E
EE8DB8BEBBCB8A2AA

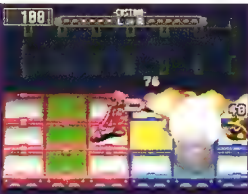
All Monster Tokens –
DEA8C132BC89A82

All Power-Ups –
CEA8C136BCA99A82

Map –
CEA97C56BCA99B84

Infinite Courage –
OEABCC6BCD99B83
CEABCC6BCA99B88

Max Scooby Snacks –
DEA8C12ABCA2122

GAME BOY ADVANCE

**MEGA MAN
BATTLE NETWORK 2**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
O49F4C280A26A0C1
5E48E75D396DF480

Complete Library –
17A352429C50B1D4
60069AB1C5855A65
325A2F30DF251F09
5A2EEFAE27B52F1B
6E6A19DC8240B9E
991953572AEF42B8
BBD4188B786CF7F4
19469D282BF9E555
AEE392AA65D26870

Infinite SubChips –
6DB2A1180771F66E
BFAE13E366A75B10

Max Health –
C87C6EF43E6B7223
(Pause rapidly to activate)

Max Zenny –
64D01EB08DD01C6


BOMBERMAN MAX 2
Red Advance

Master Code (Must Be On) –
E4D1BFED9453AD9C
FE856790CC2E23DB6

Infinite Lives –
F22128AA76150635

Infinite Time –
47EF21DFB84B3FD7

Invincibility –
CC035E16C4F71182

Blue Advance

Master Code (Must Be On) –
E4D1BFED9453AD9C
7C5227740684D3CC

Infinite Lives –
F22128AA76150635

Infinite Time –
47EF21DFB84B3FD7

Invincibility –
CC035E16C4F71182

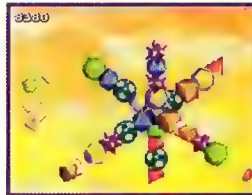
**STAR WARS: EPISODE II
ATTACK OF THE CLONES**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
77623DA3B7DOCF85
641A80E6EE5E8F7B

Infinite Force Power –
C67D18467B182C67

Infinite Health –
O4689A3039193D7D

Infinite Lives –
7DC63F50B062F901
CF6237F8AAB24AFE


ZOCUBE

Master Code (Must Be On) –
FD14F3491D287285
2A89908030BDBA8F9

Monster Score –
4E11D4D1DDB0893D
81F6C22BDB80F364

ENTER TO WIN

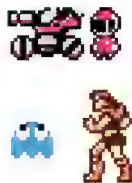
Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hallowed pages will receive a Secret Access t-shirt.

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CLASSIC GI



THE LOST ART: THE SECOND DIMENSION OF GAMING



Three Dimensions can certainly heighten the sense of realism in a game, making the world and characters come alive better than 2D ever could. Games like *Final Fantasy VII*, *Mario 64*, and *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* certainly benefited from 3D. But does that mean 3D games really offer players a more engrossing, more compelling, and more enjoyable gaming experience? We think not.

Seriously, would anyone actually argue that games like *Blood Omen 2* are better than *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*? You would also be hard-pressed to find anyone to admit that *Toshinden* is superior to *Street Fighter Alpha 3*. This shouldn't suggest that some types of games are necessarily better in 2D, as it's nearly impossible to prove that *Symphony of the Night* is better than the *Crash Bandicoot* games; or *Alpha 3* is better than *Tekken 4*.

This leaves us with only one conclusion: a game's overall quality does not depend upon whether it appears in two or three dimensions. 3D simply offers a different experience than 2D — one not being necessarily superior to the other. However, most publishers today seem to think the opposite, and probably even consider 2D an extinct venue. 2D's lack of support can be attributed to two main reasons: the newness of the 3D medium, and lack of quality 2D games.

As with anything new and spectacular, 3D's freshness brings about something significant, but not necessarily something superior. The movie industry

offers many appropriate parallels. Plenty of today's blockbuster films feature elaborate special effects that admittedly create a spectacle. As a result, they generate money, but that doesn't make them quality flicks. The remakes of *Planet of the Apes* and *The Time Machine* were inferior to the originals in every aspect except visually. Conversely, elaborate special effects can enhance a movie — take Academy Award Best Picture winner, *Gladiator*, for example.

Unfortunately, unlike movies where special effects aren't a necessity, 3D has become the status quo. When Sony, Sega, and Nintendo first ushered in their 3D systems, they introduced a new type of gaming that caught everyone's interest. Sony eventually proved to consumers that it could best support this new experience, and therefore attracted the most consumers. But in doing so, Sony simultaneously hurt the 2D market. Leonard Herman, author of *Phoenix: The Rise & Fall of Videogames*, says, "[Sony made it] very difficult for a company to get a license to write a two-dimensional game." Sony broke away from 2D to show consumers that it could offer something revolutionary. Exploiting 3D in this manner proved to be successful, but this business tactic has created a huge generation of gamers almost ignorant of 2D — seeing it, at best, as an inferior medium reserved for Game Boy Advance. Those older gamers who simply regard 3D as a superior step in gaming evolution cannot be faulted either; the industry hasn't given them enough reasons to have restored faith in 2D.

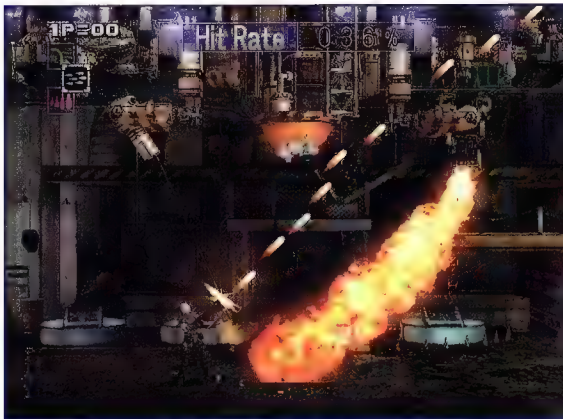
Although lackluster sales haven't motivated publishers to explore 2D further, the resources devoted to 2D games have often been too limited for developers to evolve the medium — a horrible Catch-22. The *Mega Man X* series is a perfect

▶ One of the most immersive 2D action games ever created for any system, **Castlevania: Symphony of the Night** took the *Castlevania* series to a whole new level in terms of gameplay and story.



◀ Although **Street Fighter III** didn't impress people as much as *SFII*, it did improve the strategic element and character balance, and made control even more precise.

▶ **Radiant Silvergun** has become one of the most desired shooters among hardcore gamers not only for its rarity, but also because many consider it one of the best old-school-type shooters ever made.



Although we only played the first level of it at E3, we were extremely pleased to see **Contra: Shattered Soldier** return to its roots and play as magnificently as it did back in the day.

GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Jimmy Horvenstul

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.



NIGHT TRAP

■ FORMAT SEGA CD
■ PUBLISHER SEGA

The early 90s marked an experimental stage of gaming, and a subsequent system disaster; the technology jump presented gaming with various formats — everything from Jaguar to PlayStation. Each company wanted to set the standard that people would follow to

today. It eventually worked in Sony's favor, which meant disaster for the competition and certain types of games. But in the midst of all this rubbish there stood one diamond in the rough: a game released in 1992 for the Sega CD called *Night Trap*.

Night Trap presented Full Motion Video — a concept that was only possible on the CD format. Unlike traditional games, which require you to control a character on-screen, *Night Trap* puts you behind the camera, producing the illusion that you're the main character — a convincing illusion of reality, I must say. You play as a commando for S.C.A.T. (Sega Control Attack Team), protecting 5 beautiful co-eds that are being stalked.

The game gives you the freedom to watch anyone in the eight rooms in the house at any time. You must even keep an eye on empty rooms for break-ins. So how do you protect your people? Throughout the house, there are numerous secret traps waiting for you to activate them at the right time. For example, if someone tries to break into a bedroom while the family eats, you must wait until the fool mistakenly gets near a trap, set it, and release the door under his feet. Traps come in all varieties; some are trap doors, while others consist of sliding mechanisms that launch crooks into the next life. However, you must also be careful not to trap and injure a family member if one of the enemies is wrestling with one. If you do, you must restart the mission.

Ultimately, *Night Trap* is my favorite of all time because it's the most realistic game that I've ever played. Although I wish it lasted a bit longer and the FMV was of DVD quality, it is a great game that offers gamers plenty of fun with, as the box indicates, "non-stop action!"

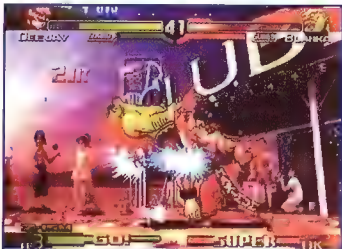
It's this guy's favorite game for some reason?



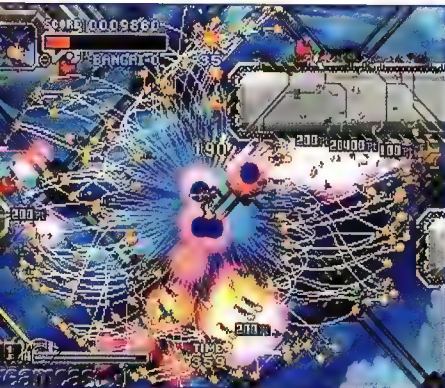
example; the most recent X game looks almost identical to the one from six years ago. However, we can already observe this trend with 3D gaming. *Tomb Raider*, for example, sold extremely well initially, but has continued to suffer waning sales as the series continues, mainly due to the developer's inability to evolve it. Therefore, we can firmly state that 2D's demise has little to do with its graphics, but with one simple fact: nobody wants to play the same game for six years.

But the question still remains: Is 2D gaming lost? No, but it's been forgotten. If it were lost, we wouldn't see any innovations (no matter how insignificant they seem) in games such as *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, *Street Fighter III*, and some of Treasure's 32-bit marvels (*Radiant Silvergun* and *Bangai-O*). The number of sprites onscreen, and the ensuing tension, in *Bangai-O* or *Radiant Silvergun* couldn't have been done on a 16-bit system. *SFIII* introduced a heightened sense of fluidity in graphics and control made possible only by a high-end machine. *SOTN* offered an in-depth, engrossing experience that even some polygonal RPGs couldn't achieve. Also, since *SOTN* made PS-X's Greatest Hits line-up, it has proven that a 2D game could sell even without mass-market publicity. Can you imagine if someone spent 5 million dollars actually using the memory capacity and power of PS2 on a 2D game?

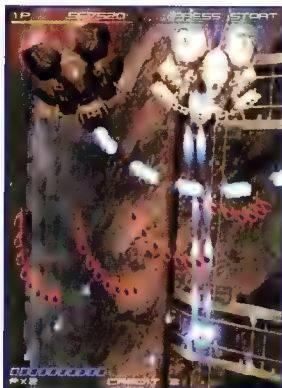
With continued support of 2D from Konami (*Castlevania* and *Contra* for PS2), Treasure (*Ikaruga*), and Capcom (new fighters), plus a new perspective on 2D's collapse, you will hopefully feel as we do. Ideally, we would love to see 2D one day become an entity similar to the independent film industry, allowing companies to concentrate on innovating in terms of story and gameplay. This would cut costs for developers, and allow them to make a decent profit — at least enough to warrant 2D's existence per se.



The most comprehensive *Street Fighter* game ever made. Besides including nearly every character, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* gave fans a number of modes, including the ability to improve your character's stats.



At first it seems way too old school to be anything new or exciting. But once you get into *Bangai-O*, you'll enter that Zen-like state, dodging hordes of fire, and blasting countless enemies.



Ikaruga continues the tradition of the nearly extinct 2D shooter. Offering even more carnage than *Radiant Silvergun*, *Treasure* fans will certainly be pleased.

THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

This month in 1982 Coleco (short for Connecticut Leather Company) stormed the industry with its home video game system, Coleco Vision. Selling a million units in record time, and selling a whopping six million in only two years, many believed that it would've been the success of the '80's had the market not crashed in '84. Coleco Vision is basically remembered for its processing power, pack-in game (*Donkey Kong*), and its ability to play Atari 2600 games through an expansion kit.



Here it is — retarded controllers and all!

TURBOGRAFX 16

FINAL LAP TWIN



RETRO RATING
7



This game, expanded from Namco's arcade title Final Lap, may be one of the first games in history to combine racing with role-playing elements. In fact, its Quest Mode is basically an RPG with driving instead of combat. Roam around town, and punk racers like Stingy Sam and Tank Jones will randomly show up and challenge you in a trip around the track. Win, and you'll get some money. Lose, and you'll be sent home to your sympathetic father, who will still give you some dough. Upgrade your vehicle's body, tires, engine, fins, and turbo fuel, and go after the city's champion. You can even search around for hidden items, and explore the vast overworld. Final Lap Twin also has your typical racing modes, but what fun is that? The gameplay itself is about as primitive as Pole Position and every other racer that predates Mode 7 scaling. Still, this is a very interesting bit of video game history for those who adore the role-playing aspects of the Gran Turismo series.

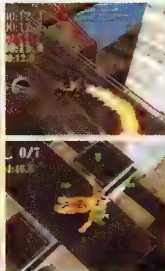
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NEC ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1987

NINTENDO 64

BLAST CORPS



RETRO RATING
8.5



Blast Corps could be viewed as the first sleeper hit on the title-lacking Nintendo 64. Releasing approximately six months after the system's launch, Blast Corps didn't have a famous license or spokesman behind it, but it was definitely a unique and high quality game. Using a wide variety of vehicles – ranging from mechs to bulldozers to dune buggies – it's your job to stop a nuclear meltdown. To do this, countless levels present entertaining missions. Many require you to destroy as much of the landscape as possible. That's far from all you'll do, though: you'll need to race and solve puzzles, many times with impending doom looming over your head. Several means to accomplishing tasks present themselves, and strategy is required. Replay comes in using different vehicles for the same mission, and trying to get the best ranking possible on each level. Blast Corps may not be Mario or Zelda, but it was a lot of fun in its time, and still holds some entertainment today.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** RARE
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1997

SNES

SHADOWRUN

Bring your love back to me baaababy!



RETRO RATING
8.75



When Shadowrun released for the SNES, not too many people were hip to the cyberpunk vibe. This dark, futuristic setting was a new and exciting one for a video game. Based on the pen and paper role-playing game of the same name, Shadowrun combined elements of an RPG, a shooter, and an adventure game. It was meticulous in its gameplay, requiring you to leave no stone unturned and no question unasked. The action happened in real time on an isometric playing field. Shadowrun was rather adult-oriented, with gritty violence and more difficulty than most games of its era – and that's definitely part of its appeal. Killing thugs would net both money (uyen) and Karma, which could then be used to upgrade skills. Much like Sega CD's Snatcher, however, you would have to talk to various denizens to make any progress. This, combined with the combing of the environment, was tedious at times, but Shadowrun is a mature, original addition to the Super Nintendo's stellar role-playing library.

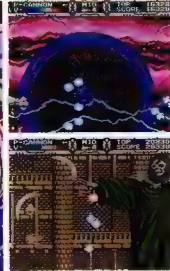
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** DATA EAST ■ **DEVELOPER** FASA
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1993

SEGA GENESIS

GAIARES



RETRO RATING
9.25



You may not know how to pronounce Gaiares (gay-are-us), but you should know that it's perhaps the greatest of all the horizontally-scrolling 2D shooters. Brought to the US by renowned Genesis publisher Renovation, Gaiares showed unparalleled level design, options, and graphical flair. Like R-Type, you have a little bot along for the ride. Called TOZ, it will not only shield you from fire, but will also blast enemies as it follows your path. Perhaps its coolest function, though, is the ability to steal the weapon from a bad guy, giving you its power. Your ship has three levels of speed, giving you a boost during intense firefights and tight control in narrow passageways. The levels themselves are ingeniously put together, with wide, scrolling paths – many with alternate routes. During your adventure, you'll see gullions, black holes, and space debris. The bosses are a sight to behold, their anime-inspired forms filling nearly the entire screen. All of this is achieved with no slowdown. Woo-hoo! Gaiares is a shooter masterpiece, and well worth the search.

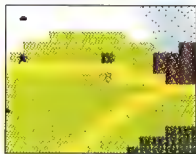
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** RENOVATION ■ **DEVELOPER** TELENET
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1990



NES
**ZELDA 2:
THE ADVENTURE
OF LINK**



TOWN RAURU



Head into the woods just north

Leave the castle to the world map. Get into some battles and gain 200 Exp. points. Now, head north from the first place and to the east. Next to the mountain chain on the left is a block of forest. Enter it and you will get some great Exp. points. Now head east to the town Rauru. You'll come to a gray house. Talk with the woman in purple and enter the house to learn Shield.

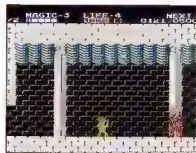
PARAPA DESERT



Kill this guy and grab the heart

Head north through the woods to Rauru Cave. Watch for the invisible enemies on the floor; constantly shoot your weapon low as you proceed. Go east and then south on the edge of the water. Avoid the bubbles in the side-scrolling sequence by constantly moving forward. Head right in the stone hinge area. Get the heart and off the enemy with the boomerangs - just jump and slash his butt. Head north to the Palace.

PARAPA PALACE

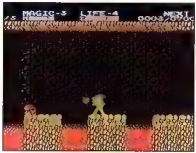


Slash his head and get out of the way quickly

Go down and to the left to get the key. Walk back to the right. Head all the way right to get the fairy. Go back to the second elevator; ride it up and get the key. Kill the Cyclops. Hit the knight behind the key to get a potion. Return to the first elevator and unlock the door; get the candle. Jump around the Exp. point potion to conserve the bridge, duck quickly and hit it. Head to the second lift and go down to fight the boss.

Mazura (Boss) - Cast shield on yourself immediately. Now, simply jump in and slash his head, and then jump back out quickly. Repeat this process until he's finished.

CAVE OF STONE STATUES AND TOWN OF RUTO

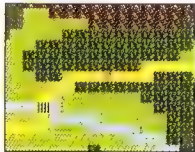


Just block their rock attack, and then kill them

Trek back towards Rauru and proceed west. Go north into the desert and enter the cave. Kill the enemies and get the Trophy at the end. Walk south past the starting castle, and then turn west when you hit the mountains. Enter the cave here. Head

right, destroying the Armadillo and Octorocks. Get the Magic Jar. Now, head northwest to a new town, Ruto. Get the Jump spell in the first house in the second screen. March south to Ruto Cave. Kill the enemies and proceed through to the next area.

SARIA PLANES



From here, go north and enter Bagu's place

Once you get out into Saria Planes, turn east into the forest patch for a surprise. Go south and then east through the forest path. When you reach the halfway point, head north, where you'll find Bagu's house. Get the note, and continue towards the bridge to the south. Once on the other side, enter the forest path and get the Exp. point bottle. Enter the town.

TOWN OF SARIA



Stand here to get the mirror

Talk to the purple woman and go get her mirror. Head left to the second part of town and enter the hut. Search it by pressing B in between the table and the first chair. Give it to her. Follow her in to learn life-healing magic. Continue back past the hut and graveyard. Proceed into the small

hut in the third segment of town. Cross the bridge. Enter the cave.

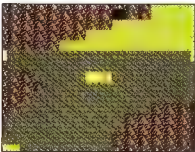
DEATH MOUNTAIN MAZE



It looks complicated, but it's easy to navigate through

First head east. Continue east through the second cave. Enter the third cave. Go past the elevator. Enter the fourth cave to the east. Enter the fifth cave. Kill the blue blobs first and then the Axe Tossers. Walk to the sixth cave. Pass through the seventh cave. Enter the eighth cave. You'll now set foot in a desert area. Head slightly to the west and then north to the hole in the ground next to a boulder. Kill the subsequent enemies and head down in the first elevator that you encounter. Go right from the elevator and kill the Axe Tossers. Get the hammer. Exit this cave.

HAMMER SMASHING

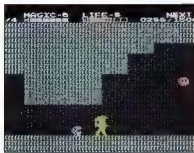


Hit this patch to reveal a secret area

Once you exit, mosey on over to that boulder and use the hammer. Walk over the area that the boulder covered. Grab the potion. Now enter the cave that is slightly north and to the east from the desert. Go through the cave and head north. Cross the bridge. Activate your jump spell and

jump over the Axe Tossers. Once you hit the graveyard, head north. If you need health, head right to the town, Mido, when you encounter the path. Otherwise, bust the boulder on the left and proceed. Continue north and you'll encounter three routes. Enter the cave on the left - but before you do, notice the clear patch in the swamp. This contains a secret area with an MP bottle. Grab the Exp. points to the right and leave. Once outside, hit the cave on the right. Snag the heart to the right and leave. Now, go south on the path, and then west towards Saria. Once you get close to the end of the path, walk north and enter the cave with a boulder in front of it. Get the bottle and leave. Now, head east to Mido. Go to the church in the second section of town. Use your Jump magic to enter the door on the second story of the church. Congratulations, you just received a new combat tactic! Now, go into the first house in the third part of town to get Fairy magic. Leave, and continue west on the path. Veer north after the boulder. Turn left and walk past the open patch in the swamp to another tiny path. Proceed west and enter the second Palace.

PALACE II



Block their fireballs and slash them quickly

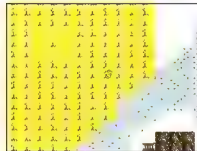
Descend in the elevator until the bottom and proceed. Kill the Blobs and run past the Dragon Head. Kill the Cyclops and grab the key. Reach the floor right above you and proceed left. Get the key and head to the next

CLASSIC STRATEGY

floor. Walk left. Kill the enemies, get the key, and continue left. Be careful on these platforms, as enemies often emerge from nowhere. Go down in the elevator and proceed left at the first floor you encounter. Once you pass the room of falling blocks, use Jump magic to reach the platform with the Knight. Slash his head to get an MP bottle. Kill the Red Knight and get the glove. Return to the elevator, go down and head right. Fight the skeletons in the corridors where the Dragon Heads can't shoot you. Pass the elevator. Get the key and descend the previous elevator. Grab the HP bottle, but be quick, as the platforms will disappear. After the boss, proceed right past the locked door. Insert the crystal. Head back to Mido to revive yourself, if necessary.

Knight King (Boss) – Just attack him with the new Downward Slash technique you learned and you shouldn't have too tough a time.

PALACE III



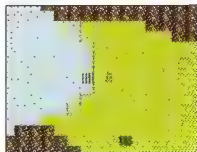
Walk around this area to find the hidden hole

Head south to the Graveyard. Go to the southeastern area and walk around. You will fall through a hole. Once in it, head right. Use the Fairy Magic to fly up. Enter the Palace. Hit the first Knight's head to get an MP Bottle. Run right and kill the enemies. Keep going right and blocks will begin to fall. Either run quickly to the other side or retreat and wait for all of them to fall. Again, keep going right and you'll encounter more enemies; dispatch them all. Use the downward thrust to obtain the key and other items trapped inside the brick floor. For now, walk right past the elevator. Secure the key and return to the elevator. Ride it down and head right. Get the next key and continue to the right, destroying any blocks that may obstruct your path. Grab the Raft and return to the elevator. Pass by it, heading left. Pass the next elevator as well. Get the key

in the next room. Don't stay on the ground destroying the blocks; you will take severe damage if you do. Instead, take the high road all the way left. Destroy the blocks to get the key, but do so in a fashion that allows you to return via the top path. Return to the elevator and take it down and proceed right. You'll encounter a room with Red and Blue Knights. Take the middle path to get through, bypassing as many of them as you can. Procure the key, head right and insert the crystal. Return to Mido.

Horse Rider (Boss) – When he rides by, jump on top of him with the Downward Slash. Repeat this until he dismounts. Then get in close and slash at him while blocking his attacks.

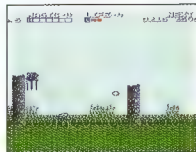
TOWN OF NABOORU



Head south into the little patch of woods

Leave Mido and go onto the dock. You will be transported to the other side. Head south to the small forest area. Kill the enemies for some Exp. points and get the Exp. bottle on top of the hill. Leave and proceed east to the town. Enter the first house and talk to the guy about boots. In the second part of town, get water at the fountain, and give it to the woman in red, who is at the right in front of the brick house. Descend the stairs and get the Fire spell. Enter the small brick house in the third part of town. Activate the Jump spell and hop to the symbol in the middle of the room and hit the action button. Do this a few times, and a message about finding hearts over the ocean will appear (remember this for later). For now, leave and head north into the Nabooru Cave. Just pass through, killing or fleeing from the enemies.

TOWN OF DARUNIA



We usually block their attacks and run under them

Head northwest once out of the cave to reach Darunia. You'll come to a pass. Take the left path, killing the enemies. Do the Downward Slash to get past them. Go into the town. Enter the first house and slash near the edge of the green table for a message. Now, go talk with everyone, and then you must get the Upward Slash technique. Here's how to do it: Go to the middle part of town and activate your Jump Boots. Jump on the roof of the shortest house. Leap to the last house to the right and go down the chimney. Get the technique. Leave town and head east. When you return to the cave entrance, head northeast. Cross the bridge.

ISLAND MAZE – CHILD RESCUE

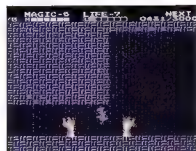


Keep going and you'll eventually fail

Head right around the periphery. Walk to the right near the edge of the water and you'll fall. Kill the orange reptile and get the baby. Return to Darunia. Enter the last part of town. Talk to the old woman that appears from the house. Learn the Reflect magic, and return to the Island Maze.



ISLAND MAZE – ISLAND PALACE



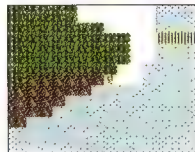
You can use Reflect to destroy them, but we usually just skip them

To get there, just take the middle path up and to the right. Keep going north, and at the first junction, continue north, but don't take the right. Go around to the right and you will find the Palace. Hit the head of the first statue for a potion, while avoiding the Eye. Ride the elevator down, then head right. Kill the Skeleton and other enemies, and proceed to the next elevator. Get off on the very next floor. Activate your Jump Boots, run to the end of the bridge, and jump. If you miss, you will fall to lower floors, which means you have to make your way back up to the previous one. Once you get across, proceed past the bridge to the end. Grab the key and return to the pit. Fall down to the right, and try to land on the ledge in the next area. Head right and kill the Skeletons, and then the Knight. Get the boots and return to the pit. Fall, and go to the left to get a key. Now head all the way left, killing the Wizards. Secure the key and return to the elevator. Take it all the way to the top. Proceed left

past the next elevator. Destroy the blocks and get the key. Head left and grab the next key and Exp. bottle. Return to the elevator, go down, then right. Be careful of the Flying Heads here; Jump or Fairy magic will help you survive. Return to the elevator, but proceed left past it. Continue through and you will come to a boss. Beat him, go right, and insert the crystal.

Super Wizard (Boss) – Just get near him, cast Reflect, and shoot his projectiles back at him. If you're close enough to hit him, you should defeat him easily and quickly.

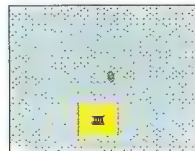
EXTRA LIFE AND SECRET HEART



Go to this area to find the hidden space

Return to Nabooru. Go east of Nabooru via the path into the water. Head northeast until you get to the bridge area. To the right at the space where the desert meets the mountain, you will find an extra life. Now, head east through the narrow path towards the Palace. At one point you can go north. Follow this path to the area containing the heart, which was what that mysterious object in the house was referring to. Head to the Palace.

WATER PALACE



You will notice that the path more or less leads right up to the Palace

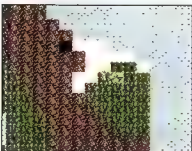
Ride the elevator down and go right. Use Fairy magic and head out of this corridor. Return to get the key and continue right. Go across the disappearing bridge, Downward Slashing the bottle. Jump over the Dragon Heads to avoid them. Head down the ele-



vator, and go left. Wait for the blocks to fall, then jump on them to get the key. Continue left, cutting through the blocks. Head down the elevator and go left. Snag the Exp. bottle and head down the elevator (use Jump to get it). Go to the next level and head left again to get another Exp. bottle. Now go right past the elevator. Jump up, kill the Knight and get the key. Continue right. Kill the Blue Knight and go through the green brick wall. Pass the elevator, and then go up the next one. Acquire the key and then go down the previous elevator. Kill the enemies and get the Flute. Go back up and proceed left. Go up in the elevator and proceed left. Pass the Cyclops, and Upwards Slash the Dragon Head statue for an MP bottle. Head down the elevator and proceed left. Kill the Blue Knight and get the key. Return to the elevator, go up to the next floor, and head left. Get the Exp. bottle and head up the elevator. Go right, kill the knights and you'll encounter a boss. Head to Nabooru to heal up.

Spiky (Boss) – Activate your Jump spell so you can get over him. When he rears back to swing his mace, jump out of the way. In between, slash at him. Repeat this until he is dead.

MAGIC CONTAINER AND NEW KASUTO

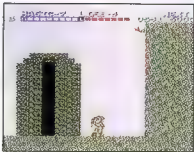


There is Kasuto. Stand in that spot and hit A

Head through the cave north of Nabooru. Once outside go north-east and cross the bridge. At the maze, follow the river east, until you travel north. At this point, leave the water and head west on to the path. You will fall into a secret area. Grab the bottle. Return to Nabooru. Head south from Nabooru. Walk up to the Black Spider and use your Flute (B button). Head east along the path once you hit the graveyard. Cross the bridge, and head north through the forest, then head east. In the center area, where the forest pokes south into the

desert is a secret area where you'll find an Exp. bottle. Head north and enter the cave. Once outside, head three steps east and then three steps south. Press A to reveal Kasuto.

KASUTO



At the dead end, use Spell to reveal this entrance

Talk with the old woman and get the clue from the second house. Descend the stairs to get a Magic bottle. Enter the first open house in the second part of town. Press up on the d-pad to enter the chimney. Go down to get the Spell magic. Walk all the way to the end of the town. When you encounter the dead end, use Spell. Enter the structure and get the Key. Leave town and enter the cave.

LAST HEART



Stand here and use your Flute. The Palace will appear

Once outside the cave, go south-east towards the desert. On the desert, go east to the coastline. Along it, you will find a secret entrance containing a heart. From here, head west to the mountains that form a triangle. In the middle, press B. Enter the Palace.



SECRET PALACE

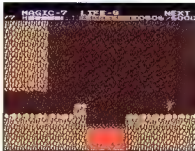


Hit his head quickly and jump to another platform

Go down the elevator. Head right on the first floor to get the Exp. bottle. Go to the left of the elevator. Kill the enemies and get the Exp. bottle. Proceed down the elevator. Head right, kill the enemies and activate Jump to cross the large hole. Hit the Knight on the ledge for an MP bottle; continue on. When you get to the next elevator, pass it for now, and continue right. You'll then fall into a hole. Head right, using your jump spell. Get the Exp. bottle and go left. Take the elevator up. Continue right, missing the hole you just fell down. After the third statue, walk about an inch and activate Jump to pass it. Now fight a former boss. Grab the cross and head back. Pass the hole and the elevator. When you get to the hole with the big jump, fall. Once more, holding right on the d-pad. Once here, go through the locked door on the right. Keep heading right over the lava, making sure you don't jump into a Flying Dragon Head. Note that only one Dragon Head will appear on-screen at a time. In the next area is a large lava pit. Cast Fairy and fly over the pit. Head down in the elevator. Go left and get the Exp. bottle. Return to the elevator and go up. Proceed left through the locked door. Go all the way left, killing the enemies, and you'll get an extra life. When you get to the ditch with the disappearing bridge, fall. On the next screen, quickly press Start and turn into a Fairy. Enter the little passage on the right; continue right. You must fight the King Dragon.

King Dragon (Boss) – First, cast Jump so that you can leap with more safety from platform to platform; if you take a plunge, you die instantly. When the Dragon appears, he will try to burn Link with a stream of fire. First, quickly slash at his head, and then jump to safety on another platform. You can also hit his head as he is submerging himself in the lava. Repeat this process until he is finished.

OLD KASUTO



To conserve life, just turn into Fairy and proceed

Head left from the Palace and cross the bndge. Enter the town with invisible enemies that you can now see, thanks to the Cross. Enter the first house and go downstairs to learn the last spell, Thunder. Note that it requires most of your magic to cast. Cross the bridge. Head north and cross the other bridge going west. Go to the graveyard. Turn south into the poopy-brown area. Now, head northwest on this terrain. When you go into battle at the required scenes, use Fairy to get by safely and quickly. For random encounters, just run from the fights. Once you enter the cave proceed; killing the Eyes slowly and carefully.

GANON'S CRIB



No technique here – just jump and slash to win

Head down in the elevator. First, go left and kill the Fire Bird. Take the path upwards. When you encounter the pillar under you, jump to the left, as there is an invisible hole. Go down in the elevator and go right. Go down the next elevator and head right. Dodge the Dragon Heads, and then kill the Bird Knight. Take the

elevator down; get off and head right. Dodge the Dragon Heads and kill the Cobras. Head down the elevator and continue. Kill the Blue Bird Knight and go down in the elevator. Run past the Cobra on the disappearing bridge. Pass the room that looks like a boss battle room. Avoid the Demon Skull and the second Blue Bird Knight. Go down in the elevator all the way to the bottom. On the next floor, however, to the right is a Fairy and to the left is an extra life. Go left, avoid the Dragon heads and destroy those blocks. Those blocks hide a secret hole in the floor; fall into it. Head right. Avoid the Giant Slime, and run and jump over the disappearing bridge. Head all the way to the right for a Fairy, and then go back and fall into the narrow hole that is under the disappearing bridge. Head left and get the potion from the destructible pillar. Go right to encounter King Fire Bird. Go meet Shadow Link.

King Fire Bird (Boss) – First, cast Thunder on him so that you can damage him. Now, while avoiding the fireballs, simply attack him.

Shadow Link (Boss) – Cast Jump and then cast Shield. Jump and attack as you come down. Don't Downward Slash, just do a regular attack. Repeat this process until he is dead. You may need to heal once.



NOKIA CELL PHONE SOUNDS

Manufacturer: N/A

Website: <http://arcadetones.emuunlim.com>

List Price: Free

If you don't have a cell phone by now, you're living in the Stone Age. Get with the times, people! For those of you who are Y2K compliant and want to stand out in a crowd, or are sick and tired of hearing the same generic ring tones, head on over to the Arcade Tones website. On this luxurious site, you'll find hundreds of classic video game songs converted into Nokia ringer tones. Almost every Final Fantasy score, Super Mario Bros. theme, and familiar arcade melody can be downloaded or programmed onto your phone. If you don't have a Nokia phone, never fear. There are several links that will lead you to solutions and different archives. Even if you don't have a cell phone (loser), take a few seconds out of your day to check out this amazing site. The dedication that went into it is staggering.



AIRFLO CONTROLLERS

Manufacturer: Nyko Technologies

Website: www.nyko.com • List Price: \$29.95

If you got BO, you gotta go! There may not be a place for sweaty people in video games, but Nyko Technologies is actually looking out for the malodorous gamer and has developed a solution. Through a technology dubbed "AirFlo," sweaty palms will now be obsolete. As the name suggests, a steady stream of cool air is pumped through the controller, keeping the player's hands chilled. You'll be able to get your grimy (and sweaty) mitts on them beginning this July for the PlayStation 2, GameCube, and Xbox.



GRAND THEFT AUTO III T-SHIRTS

Manufacturer: Rockstar Games

Website: www.rockstarwarehouse.com • List Price: \$20.00

Transcending the bounds of reality, Rockstar Games has created an assortment of T-shirts featuring the fictional companies from Grand Theft Auto III. Are you looking for the perfect birthday present for your mom? We have a feeling that she'll look absolutely stunning in a Bitch 'N' Dog Food shirt! The list price may be a tad steep (20 smackers for each shirt), but it's well worth it in our opinion. In total, there are seven different GTA III-inspired tees. You'll have to act quickly, though, the Ammunition and petsovernight.com shirts are already sold out! Log on to www.rockstarwarehouse.com and get the goods before it's too late!

THE LORD OF THE RINGS DVD SET

Manufacturer: New Line Cinema • Website: www.newline.com

List Price: \$29.95 (Standard Release August 6th), \$39.98 (Extended Release November 12), \$79.92 (Extended Gift Set Release November 12)

Peter Jackson's Academy Award-winning *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* is finally heading to DVD! Of course, there's a catch behind this highly anticipated release. The "theatrical" version of the film will release on DVD in a two-disc set on August 6. The second disc is overflowing with three "making of" segments, 15 featurettes, and the ever-important

Enya music video. Simple enough, right? Well, it turns out that before the movie could make its theatrical debut, Peter Jackson was forced to cut over 30 minutes of footage. For shame! As fortune would have it, however, the restored "extended" version of the film will release on DVD on November 12. This four-disc set is loaded to the hilt with additional features, audio commentaries by everyone imaginable, and more extras than you could ever know what to do with. So you're probably thinking, "I'll hold out for the extended version," right? Well, get this: the August 6 DVD includes one extra feature – a 10 minute behind-the-scenes look at *The Two Towers*! Decisions...decisions...



THE GUMMI CRUNCH

Manufacturer: Dumbass Industries

Website: N/A

List Price: \$1.59 (Gummi Bears), \$2.59 (Jalapeño Cheddar Doritos 3D's)

The Game Informer staff has a gambling problem. Everything (and we mean everything) is somehow or another transformed into a viable bet. In one such incident, Justin bet Reiner that he wouldn't eat a Gummi Bear at the same time as a Jalapeño Cheddar Dorito 3D. Reiner accepted the challenge, and was actually quite pleased with the outcome. Seeing how enthused Reiner was, the entire staff tried this obscure invention, and yes, they loved the flavor and texture of this unusual amalgam. Run out to the store and purchase these items: (1) bag of Jalapeño Cheddar Doritos 3D's, and (1) bag of Black Forest Gummi Bears. For best results, bite off the top of a 3D chip and shove the Gummi inside. Toss it into your mouth and enjoy!!! You'll love it!



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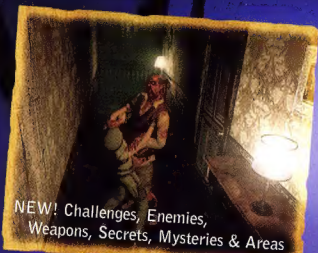
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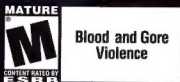
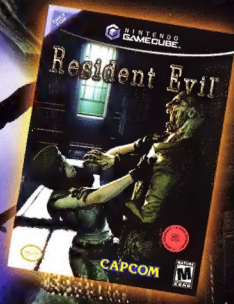
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