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GAMEINFORMER

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Vice city

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ISSUE
113

SEPTEMBER 2002

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ONIMUSHA 2TM

Samurai's Destiny

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WHAT'S FOOTBALL WITHOUT THE BLITZ?

EVERYONE
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PlayStation 2

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SACK UP AND GET READY FOR THE BLITZ! BLAZING BACK ONTO THE FIELD IS NFL BLITZ 20-03, A GRIDIRON FIRESTORM OF HARD HITS, OUTRAGEOUS MOVES, FLYING TACKLES, AND THINGS USUALLY LEFT TO THE IMAGINATION. BRING SOME COURAGE AND YOUR MOUTHPIECE 'CAUSE THINGS JUST GOT SERIOUS.

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COVER STORY

38 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

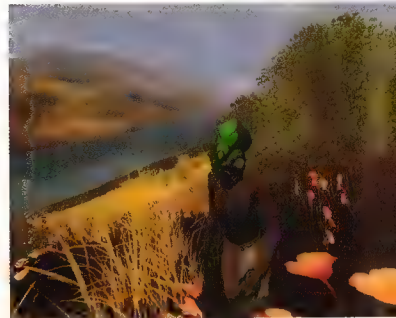
You know you want it—fast, shiny cars, skinny ties, pastel suites, "catchy" tunes, drug money, and seriously questionable hairstyling. It's all there in our groundbreaking first look at the massive addition to *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*, baby!



FEATURE

46 ONLINE GAMING

The first battle of the console wars was launching the systems, the next will be over our Internet connections. Microsoft is showing dial-up the back door, while Sony is laying out the welcome mat to any connection. Nintendo looks to be eyeing up the competition and letting the powerhouses play guinea pig to the masses before it commits. Which of the holy trinity should rule the roost?



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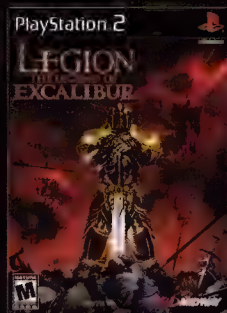
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PlayStation 2



Blood
Violence



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Leading Edge. Game Informer is officially the man-on-top, but what proverbial carrots are dangling ahead to keep it this way?

18 GI SPY

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

20 DEAR GI

Sex, Lies, and Video Games: smut or an example of journalistic integrity? Discuss. Also, the GI staff doesn't smile because of Sony's butt (or, how one reader answers another's question).

26 NEWS

Sega's in the black and getting ready to blow some extra cash, if rumors hold true. The Rock and Rockstar get movie deals. Xbox II? Yep. Find out what else Microsoft wants to monopolize in your living room.

58 PREVIEWS

The big boys are starting to show up for the madcap pre-holiday fun with appearances by B.C., thieving Sly Cooper, the origins of Umbrella

(Resident Evil 0), Tomb Raider, and everyone's favorite finishing move, Mortal Kombat.

74 REVIEWS

Check out our feelings on the latest batch of anti-social-behavior-inducers with painfully in-depth reviews of SOCOM: US Navy SEALs, Onimusha 2, Super Mario Sunshine, Dead to Rights, and more football games than should rightfully be in the same place at the same time.

96 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.

100 PLAY TO PERFECTION

An epic game like Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny deserves an epic strategy guide. GI gives you the sweet and lowdown on making friends, dealing with enemies,

trading your goods, and sucking every last bit of strategy from the fighting engine.

106 SECRET ACCESS

GI's legendary codebreakers unleash a fierce torrent of codes and tips, peeking under Spider-Man's pajamas and showing you his underwear.

110 CLASSIC GI

GTA2 is no Vice City, but it does have Kill Frenzy missions multiplying the overall destruction in each level. We show you how to raise the violence exponentially and even throw in a few codes for fun. Mighty Final Fight, Plok, and a couple others get the review treatment from the gaming encyclopedia called Classic GI.

116 ETC

Whip your sorry equipment into a frenzy of individualism by slapping on a sticker or shipping the prized possession off to a total stranger. Either that or play with some monkey balls.





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EDITORS' FORUM

THE LEADING EDGE



I can't begin to tell you how long I have waited to be able to write a letter from the editor proclaiming Game Informer the largest circulated video game magazine in the nation, but now that the moment has arrived, I really don't think it's appropriate.

There are too many people to thank for our success, and there are too many things still left to be done before my staff or myself can say that we have created the perfect magazine. However, with our climb in circulation the opportunity has opened for us to snag bigger and better stories for our readers, including this month's cover story on the most anticipated game of 2002—Grand Theft Auto: Vice City.

Over the coming months, Game Informer has secured some amazing exclusives for our readers. I wish I could tell you what we have coming, but that would ruin the surprise, wouldn't it? I can tell you, however, that from the glimpses we have had of these products, they are definitely going to knock your socks off.

Unfortunately, these scoops have come with a small price. I have been a long time fan of putting out big stories on games as they hit the market. Or as I like to call them...review covers. These stories generally include a strategy guide and have all the details on what makes the featured game the absolute must-have of the month. Over the coming issues, Game Informer will be doing less review covers and more exclusives on never-before-seen titles. Don't let these new covers fool you, though; we will still have the hottest product as our Game of the Month and we will still have timely and useful strategy guides launching at the same time as the biggest games. We are just going to change the cover stories so that they blow the doors off games you have been dying to learn about.

I'd love to hear your feedback on these new covers, what you think of the magazine currently, and what we could do better, so feel free to drop me an email with your thoughts. It's nice to be on the leading edge, but it doesn't do us any good to get here if we can't stay on top.


Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com
I don't even know why we bother writing these asinine blurbs. If I know you as well as I think I do, you've already flipped to the Vice City cover story and are drooling over the pictures. From there, you'll work your way through the rest of the magazine, never once thinking that I should go check out what Reiner or Matt have to say. You know what? God bless you! Roughly 99.9% of the time we have nothing interesting to say, so stupidly bother, like Kristian's blurb, for example. I can't believe how stupid it is. What does Ghet have to say? Who cares! Do me a favor: Quit reading this and get the hell out of Dodge! You'll probably die of a brain aneurysm if you don't!

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com
Here comes the part where I get down and kiss some Nintendo butt after I've spent months dissing them in print. So, here it is: Eternal Darkness was probably my favorite game of the year so far, and Super Mario Sunshine is just as amazing as everyone hoped, Zelda and Star Fox will no doubt follow suit, and—judging by recent events—it's very possible that the Gt Stalfi might be eating a big ol' slice of humble pie when Method Prime (a game that we've been pretty lukewarm on so far) is released. Of course, I'll smooch Miyamoto's rear all day long if I can keep getting a steady stream of awesome titles for the GameCube. In closing: 'yay, yay, Nintendo-whoo! Hip hip hooray! Pika pika!

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG

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Have you people tried Vanilla Coke yet? I've tried it and I like it, but it's a tough thing to drink straight for a long period of time. It's kind of like drinking grape soda a sip every once in a while is nice, but too much is going to turn you off, know what I mean? Hawaiian Punch, on the other hand, is a beverage I can get onboard with. It's tangy, sweet, and it mixes well with other soft drinks. In fact, I would say it mixes well with any drink that isn't dairy-based, cola-related, or a root beer. Plus, it's got both carbohydrates and fat. Basically, Hawaiian Punch is the workhorse of the liquid refreshment industry. I expect my endorsement check to come in the mail any day now...

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

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Lots of artists like to brag about going platinum. But hell, we hit platinum every month! Are we bling-bling or what? To celebrate, I usually like to hit the Old Country Buffet. Because I'm The Deviant, I get senior discount prices, and they even let me skip to the front of the line. Screw waiting for seconds on lukewarm mac & cheese! I even spring for Aquafina—no tap water for me! People come up and ask for my autograph, and I'm all, "Step off, kid! Can't you see I'm eating my third piece of cheesecake?" Then I cruise back to my Cubs-worthy one-bedroom apartment and cry myself to sleep. Booyah!

KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com
I'm not one to fight the future, but I've got problems with the cult of thinking that champions the Internet, cell phones, etc. just because they're new technology. I'll live with them, but not by them. People thought that TV was going to be the greatest educational tool when it debuted, and look what it's become. I imagine the same for the "wild frontier" of the Internet. Worse yet, those without it are going to be ghetto-ized. The Internet doesn't care about you or your webpage—it's all about money, and companies like Microsoft will happily squeeze you out when it comes time to take back what's theirs.

CHET, THE CHRONIC GAMER

chet@gameinformer.com
Our words are a glimpse into our soul, into our essence, so you shouldn't be contemplating whether to read these blurbs (hopefully you are), but which of us you most identify with. Knowing our personalities and gaming tastes (as a whole and individually) will help you decide what upcoming titles will be cool, and which new ones you should purchase. Unfortunately, I cannot write every review. So for every gamer who feels a particular affinity with me, I welcome your emails for my opinion. Oh yeah, sincerest props to Reiner for introducing me to the greatest comic book ever written, Preacher by Garth Ennis. And I personally want to thank our retail division for a job well done. Peace out!

LISA, LA GAME NIKITA

lisa@gameinformer.com
I am of the generation that brought cartoons to new levels (cartoons, video games, sugary cereal with toys in the bottom...these are our real contributions to society thus far). What happened to Saturday mornings in front of the TV eating Lucky Charms? Today, you've got crayon bean commercials with crazy teen "issues" and not a single freaking robot in disguise to be found on network television! Ugghhh Speaking of robots in disguise—even in disguise, they still look like robots—curious, no? Anyway, I want to watch animated animals living with human parents and causing mischief on my days off—not Saved by the Bell, the 800M Class.

1. Reiner, Matt, and Lisa prepare Andy for the insertion of the team with the patented "Li' Minuatuzer" particle beam. 2. Chet and Justin explore a cavity with caution. 3. Map of the team's route. 4. They're impacted deep. We almost lost Kato! 5. Kristian and Kato try to decide if what they see is a stalagmite or a stalactite.

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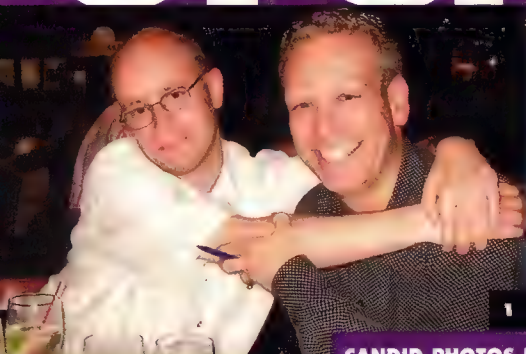
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GI SPY



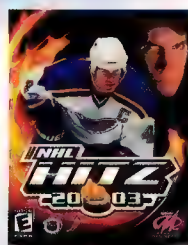
CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Matt and Acclaim's Alan Lewis are just good friends. **2** When Activision sends people out on a press junket, they go all out. We don't have space to list everyone by name, but they are all very nice and bought us treats at Dairy Queen. Yum! **3** Microsoft's Chad Ellman, Jeni Martin, and Charlie Scibetta think that last month's cover is a-okay! The bad news: They're our last three subscribers. **4** Moonlighting as a sports agent, Justin tries to convince NBA superstar Jason Kidd to jump ship and save his favorite team – the decrepit Utah Jazz. Kidd didn't take the deal, even when Justin told him that all Jazz players get free senior citizen discount cards at Denny's. **5** Humans are generally a nasty species, so we're giving it up for canines! Here's the Neversoft dog, Logan. **6** Dave Mirra BMX XXX producer Shawn Ross and Acclaim PR coordinator Matthew Schlosberg are ready to eat! **7** Eidos' Denny Chiu holds court in the tomb-like confines of the Acme Comedy Club in Minneapolis. Hey, that place is right downstairs from where we work! We never knew.





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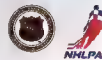


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DEAR GI

SEX, LIES, AND VIDEO GAMES

I just finished reading your article "Sex, Lies, and Video Games", and needless to say I was shocked at the "high school boy" charm that these games are apparently going to contain. I appreciate your insight on them, and will make sure that neither of these games is ever accessible by my two sons (ages 13 and 10).

Most of the games my children play are RPGs and racing games, although we do have Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2. We adhere to the rating system for the most part, but allow games with a Teen rating if we find the game does not contain overly offensive graphics or audio.

If these games are intended for a more "mature" audience, then the definition of mature might need to be defined as "boys and men of all ages that can't get a real date." Using sex and the sexual exploitation of women (girls, actually) to sell video games is beyond the grasp of my "middle-aged mom of two" mind. If the gaming industry wishes to delve into this abyss then they should be forced to do so in the same fashion that the magazine and movie industry has done - by selling the games in stores that are purely for adults over 21.

If this industry wishes to go forward in catering to a more "adult" audience, I would dare to say that their sales will drop. I cannot debate your facts that the gaming industry is more tuned to males 18 to 34, but will argue to you that in middle class suburbia, it is quite the opposite. [The people I see playing games] are children ages seven to 15, and demographically speaking, we (the parents of this age group) are far more financially equipped to make or break the industry.

My husband and I both enjoy playing the games with our children, but if this is the wave of the future, then rainy days might better be filled with a trip to the movies or a game of Payday.

Please continue to help keep us parents (and children) informed. Your magazine is read by all four of us in our family, and though we do not always agree with you, we do respect your opinion, and hope you respect ours.

Mrs. Sunny Williams
Orlando, Florida

I am a subscriber to your magazine and I have really enjoyed the past few issues. They have a huge amount of great game reviews that help me determine whether or not to purchase a game. However, all is not well in gaming land.

The issue entitled *Sex, Lies, and Video Games* was



over the line of decency. As soon as I picked your magazine up from my mailbox and saw the front cover, I grimaced. With one glance inside at the cover article, and the pictures surrounding it, I knew what I had to do. I threw your magazine in the trash.

I mean, do I, a 19-year-old male, need to be subjected to that? In addition, my three younger brothers also enjoy reading your past magazines as well. They look up to me to be their leader, and I will not allow their minds to be polluted by trashy pictures placed for lustful sin. Obviously, if things do not change then I will, most certainly, not renew my subscription to your magazine. There are other places I can go for insightful video game reviews that do not degrade women.

I missed the magazine, but I do not miss the temptation, which means that I am glad I threw the magazine

away, but sorry that it ever appeared in the first place. I implore you to change. An apology from the staff and head editor is definitely in order. I would bet that my subscription is not the only one that you will lose.

Tyler Fogarty
Manchester, Maryland

We've received a lot of mail, both negative and positive, about last month's cover, and even a few cancelled subscriptions. Although the subject matter was admittedly controversial, we at Game Informer feel that it is our job to cover the most important events in the video game industry. As gaming continues to push the boundaries of explicit content, we will continue to attempt to educate our readers on what games may or may not be appropriate for them or their children. While we respect Mr. Fogarty's (or any other reader's) right to decide what is or is not acceptable reading material for his or her family, we hope that a majority of our subscribers actually took the time to read and think about the article, as it is obvious Mrs. Williams did. We felt our cover story was written in a responsible and factual manner, and did not attempt to glorify or unduly hype Dave Mirra XXX or DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball.

In today's world, it's important that every parent is educated on

the entertainment that their child is experiencing, and hopefully our magazine can be an aid to our readers and their parents in making decisions on what games they should be playing.

SONY'S BUTT + GI = TRUE LOVE ALWAYS?

How come you people at GI always kiss Sony's butt. I mean, you talk about Sony more than any other video game company. In issue #111 you guys gave Sony an A but gave Microsoft a B for that E3 thing. I don't get it. Microsoft can beat Sony any day - especially since Microsoft has the Xbox. Also, every time I read your top 10 list Sony is always number one when you people know good and well Microsoft had better titles, and one of its greatest games should've been up there. Anyway, you guys are cool and I love your magazine. Keep up the good work!

L. Bryant
Via email

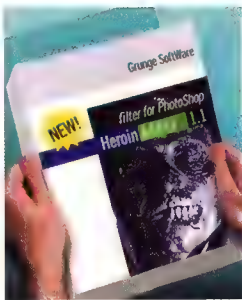
Have you ever seen Sony's butt? It's not something you'd want to kiss, trust us. Especially when Sony wears a thong - yuck! Really, we keep dropping hints to Sony that it might want to lay off the Doritos, but so far it just seems content to sit on the couch, watching reruns of Frasier and drinking chocolate milk...but we digress. Believe it or not (and God knows many of you never will), we don't have any particular loyalty to a system or console manufacturer. The fact is that - right now - Sony is winning the console war. PlayStation 2 has the biggest market share. It has the largest and best library of games. It has most of the top game franchises. We're not making that up; it's the truth. That's not to say that there aren't a lot of good times to be had on Xbox or GameCube, but at the present time it appears that it's going to be tough for either one of them to catch up with Sony. Sorry if that's not what you wanted to hear.

SMILE - IT'S CONTAGIOUS!

Hello. I am a 13-year-old gamer who loves your magazine. Really, I do. I can't even imagine subscribing to anything else. But there is one thing that concerns me. Since I've subscribed to GI, I've noticed that most of you never smile in your pictures. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, because I know that you're good people. But, I believe that smiling is a healthy thing, so why don't you smile in your pictures?

Xepo
Via email

Well, some of us could sure use more fiber in our diet, but that's not the only reason that the GI staff looks like a bunch of gloomy Gusses in our Reviews



ENVELOPE ART

page portraits. You see, those photos were once as bright and cheery as a spring morning, until the Game Informer Art Director got the urge to use his new Photoshop "heroin addict" filter. A few clicks and - viola! - new, moodier version of the GI staff was born. If you don't like it, don't worry yourself. We generally get new staff photos taken every time Reiner gets a new baseball hat or Justin trims his goatee, which shouldn't be long now. Anyway, we're touched by your concern, Xeppe.

NOSTRAGAMEVS?

If the Xbox and GameCube do present a serious threat to the existence of the PS2, then Sony will greenlight the production of the PS3 early. That would put pressure on the Xbox and GameCube, which are still in their infancy. This, in turn, would force Nintendo and Microsoft to accelerate plans on their next consoles, perhaps releasing them before the current systems really get anywhere. That would cause the life to be sucked out of the companies like Intel, and IBM, because they work so closely with the major console manufacturers. All video games would die forever!

Chris Laux
Via lycos.com



Well, it's obvious that you are a big player in the video game industry (We can tell by the way you use the word "greenlight" as a verb). Your dire predictions struck a note of terror in our souls. Filled with morbid fascination, we probed the nether regions of the video game realm for the truth. Sadly, it appears that the fallout from the success of GameCube and Xbox will not stop at the mere bankruptcy of Intel and IBM. Faced with a massive surplus of worthless GameCube and Xbox CPUs, both companies will resort to dumping them in the sea off the coast of New Zealand. These discarded chips cause the temperature of the oceans to rise even higher, completely melting the polar ice caps and flooding most of the planet, save for parts of Russia and eastern Iowa. This new aquatic world spawns a race of giant super squid, which feast on the few humans that remain on Earth. Every last remnant of human existence will be gone, extinguished by mankind's rash desire to buy GameCubes and Xboxes. Of course, we're just reporting the facts, and this is in no way an endorsement of Sony or the PlayStation 2.



Primrose Cuaycong
The art is as confusing as the artist's name.



LeVar Williams
Now available in two sizes!

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

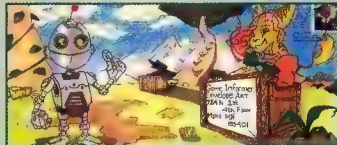
Send to:
Game Informer
Envelope Art Contest
724 North First St., 4th Floor
Mpls, MN 55401



SEPTEMBER WINNER!

Chijyo

Spider-Man's cheating on Mary Jane with Laura Ingalls Wilder!



Carrie Correa

"Hey Ratchet, guess where this goes!"



Louie R. Hidaigo

This is the artist's caption for the piece: "Tecmo used my money and support to put the Dead or Alive series on another console. Guess I'll just use Ninja Gaiden's head as a toilet brush." Um...okay, dude!



Miles Kominski

Tight denim jeans...pointy 12-inch object...it must be Captain N!



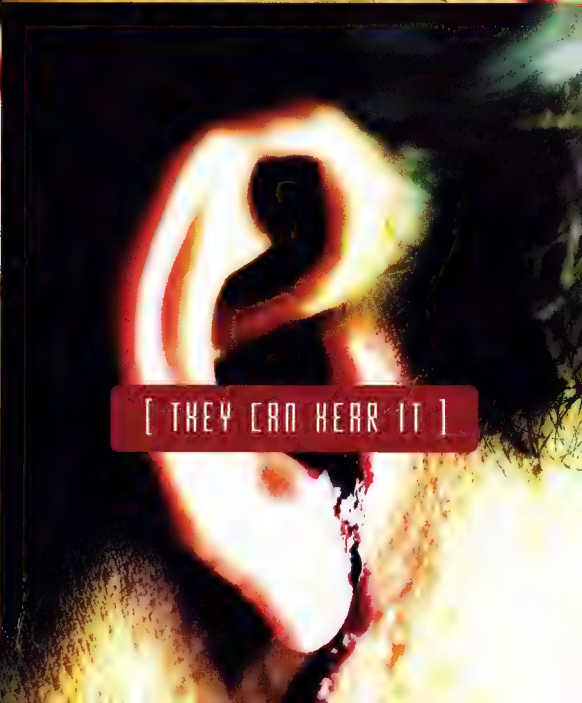
[THEY CAN SEE IT]



[THEY CAN TASTE IT]



[THEY CAN SMELL IT]



[THEY CAN HEAR IT]



[THE SCENT OF



It's Savage World 5.0 Real. You'll smell the smoke of war-torn cities and burning jungles. See the harrowing battles that define us from the



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BLOOD YOURS]



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PlayStation 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE



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GI NEWS

SNEAK PEEK AT MIDWAY'S 2003 LINEUP

We're all anxiously awaiting the next-generation editions of classic **Midway** franchises like **Mortal Kombat** and **Defender**, but the company has plenty of new titles coming down the pipe in 2003 that may be worth checking out.

Whether it's a grizzly mano a mano contest that brings out your primal instincts for survival or a *Roger Rabbit*-looking action/platformer, Midway's got a well-rounded bag of tricks. The games below are primarily slated for the **PlayStation 2**, but will likely appear on all of the consoles.

Nitrocity

(Developed by Midway/Milpitas)

Nitrocity takes its inspiration from *The Fast and the Furious*, but has the potential to do good by expanding the racing genre. The action will take place in real cities across America, which creates the potential for some large maps and plenty of free-roaming gameplay.

Nitrocity won't, however, feature licensed cars. This may sound like a drawback, but this will allow you to bust the hell out of these rides. Not only are tremendous crashes in order, but so is customizing these cars to replicate their flashy, real-life counterparts that you see on the street every day.



Gladiator: Crimson Reign

(Developed by Midway/Milpitas)

Say Joey, do you like films about gladiators? Well, **Crimson Reign** will feature a selection of deadly and desperate warriors to choose from, each with their own background and specialized set of skills. Plenty of weapons will also be yours to select, as well as different arenas.

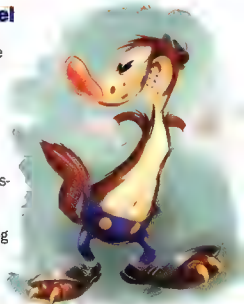
Information on this title is limited at the moment, but we can only hope that Midway has some impressive fighting dynamics in mind for this title.



Crank the Weasel

(Developed by Midway)

By the title alone, we're very curious what this game has to offer. Its genre is of the action/platform ilk, but we know that there's much more in store for you than that. With '50s-esque graphics and curvy dames to match, **Crank** is already making a name for itself amongst an ever-crowding genre.



Freestyle: MetalX

(Developed by Deivus Entertainment)

Maybe you'd rather choke yourself with a bike chain than play another freestyle title, but this game intrigues us. What could **MetalX** possibly mean? We envision a BMX war featuring Rob Halford, Ozzy Osbourne, and Bruce Dickinson, but because details on this game are so limited at the moment, we could be TOTALLY wrong!



EA BIG'S NEWEST RIDE

At the recent Camp EA event, publisher **Electronic Arts** unveiled the newest title from **EA Big** – the publishing brand for **SSX Tricky** and **NBA Street** – a car racing title named **Shox**. Due to come out for the **PlayStation 2** and **GameCube** this fall, **Shox** isn't your traditional rally rigma-
role. What else did

you expect from EA Big? Twenty-four licensed vehicles (including rides from Mitsubishi, Subaru, Lancia, and Ford) slide and jockey for position through snow, desert, and jungle locations. The difference is that each circuit contains **Shox Zones**, where you can pick up a bronze, silver, or gold medal depending on how you fare in them. Doing well in a track's Zones means you will unlock new areas.

Shox also has a Wagering mode where you can put up the points you've won to obtain new cars – or lose them all trying. Other features include four-person multiplayer and a capture the flag option.



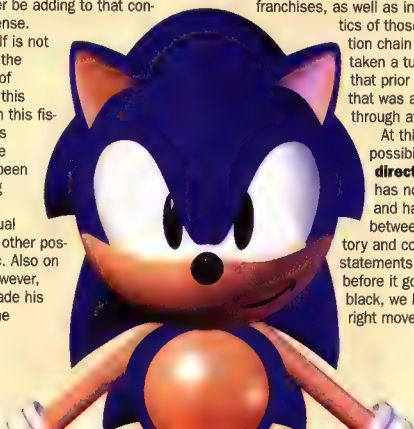
SEGA HUNGRY; WANTS TO EAT

When storied publisher and developer **Sega** decided to pull out of the hardware business last year, it was a moment filled with mixed emotions. While many were saddened that the company that had given us the **Genesis**, **Saturn**, **Dreamcast**, and others would no longer be adding to that console legacy, most knew that it made financial sense. Creating and supporting hardware in and of itself is not a profitable business. Selling software is where the money's at, and relying on Sega's rich heritage of games was clearly the ticket to success. Today, this strategy is already paying off for the company. In this fiscal year since the death of the Dreamcast, it has returned to profitability after several years on the other side of the ledger. Now that the ship has been righted, Sega is looking to expand by purchasing another, as yet unknown company.

The list of suspects contains some of the usual names that have already been banded about in other possible acquisitions: **Interplay**, **3DO**, **Midway**, etc. Also on the list are **Infogrames**, **THQ**, and **Acclaim**. However, **Sega vice president Charles Bellfield** has made his large ambitions known. Only **Electronic Arts**, the

largest third-party publisher, is not under consideration at this point according to Bellfield. The potential targets being looked at by the company are those who would be able to provide Sega with valuable, established game franchises, as well as internal development teams. Other characteristics of those listed above include ties to Sega's distribution chain (THQ, Infogrames) and/or stocks that have taken a tumble (Interplay, 3DO, Midway). Bellfield said that prior to this year's **E3**, there was a deal in place that was almost ready to be announced, but it had fallen through at the last minute.

At this point, nobody involved will comment on the possibility of any sale. In fact, **Sega of Japan's director Hiroyuki Soga** has said that the company has no definite plans to acquire anyone at this point, and has directly denied that talks have taken place between Sega and Infogrames or Midway. Still, if history and common business practices are any guide, such statements are often said merely to mask the deal right before it goes down. With Sega already fiscally in the black, we bet gobbling up another company would be the right move to get it back in with the big boys.



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.

RESERVOIR DOGS



Upon entering the game, you'll be faced with a difficult decision: Who do you want to play as? Mr. White, Orange, Blonde, Pink, Blue, and Mr. Brown are all at your disposal. You might think playing a game you already know the ending to is a little boring, but the developer has been able to

allow players to build their own ending. If you're smart enough to pull off that botched diamond robbery, you'll be able to retire and enjoy the good life. Maybe you're a sadistic bastard who likes cutting people's ears off – feel free to take Mr. Blonde to his gasoline filled, Stealers Wheel blaring destiny. Or you could play Mr. Orange (Tim Roth) and decide that being a cop is boring, and crime really does pay.

Through the use of a cutting-edge artificial intelligence system, the game will actually fill in the plot of your adventure according to which character you're playing, and how you're making him behave. Through this, gamers will have scores of different ways to play and finish Res Dogs – a person who plays Mr. Pink like a bully will have a much different experience than one who plays him like a conniving mastermind. If all goes according to plan, an online version will be released where players will plan and execute their own cooperative high-stakes heists. It's all up to you this holiday season – get your trigger finger ready.

NAME THAT GAME

Capcom can lay claim to many famous series: Street Fighter, Resident Evil, Mega Man...the list goes on and on. However, the publisher/developer never really was the jock of the walk.

This month's SNES game was a part of the company's ill-fated, self-named sports series. With a look similar to the early Madden on Genesis, this title was an incomplete pass – and the only piskin vid ever made by the company. Maybe it never took off because it didn't have some famous football player in its title.

(Answer on page 35)

TOP 10 FAILED GI CONTESTS

- 10 A lifetime supply of Army Men sequels
- 9 Win a copy of N64's *Aldin Chronicles* (With free sword to impale yourself on)
- 8 An endless subscription to GI
- 7 Enter for your chance to appear in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII*
- 6 An all-you-can-eat buffet of refrigerator baking soda
- 5 A signed copy of Chet's autobiography: *My Life as a Street Fighter Dork Vol. 1*
- 4 Win your own personalized insult from Reiner, the Raging Gamer
- 3 Win a pink SOCOM: US Navy SEALs t-shirt that says "In the Navy"
- 2 An all-expenses paid trip to Nevada to visit the Atari 2600 landfill
- 1 Meet GI's Kat

DEVELOPER TOP 5

KELLY RYAN
9/93 DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- 1 NFL GameDay 2003 – PS2
- 2 NFL GameDay 1998 – PS-X
- 3 NHL FaceOff 1997 – PS-X
- 4 Tempo Bowl – NES
- 5 NHL Hockey 1992-1994 – Genesis



READER TOP 5

JAMES O'BRIEN
MUSTANG, OK

- 1 The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past – SNES
- 2 Chrono Trigger – SNES
- 3 Castivania: Symphony of the Night – PS-X
- 4 Super Metroid – SNES
- 5 Mega Man 3 – NES



Game Informer is looking for your top five favorite games. Please send your Top Fives and a photo of yourself to:

Game Informer Magazine
Attn: Top Fives
724 North First St., 4th Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Everyone that enters each month will be entered in a drawing to win a GI T-Shirt! So get writing!

ROCK'S GOT SPY HUNTER MOVIE COOKIN'



Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson will get another chance to practice that thing he calls "acting" in a film adaptation of *Midway's* arcade classic, **PlayStation 2** title **Spy Hunter**. **Universal Pictures** and **Daybreak Productions** have signed up the license, and expect the movie to be ready for Christmas of 2003. At the moment, neither a writer nor a director has been assigned to the project, but the budget is expected to be over \$100 million.

The Rock will play a former F-15 pilot named Alec Sects who has been employed by the International Espionage Services to take down the evil, wannabe-world-dominators known as Nostra (yawn!). No doubt a big part of the budget will be used in getting the fabled G-6155 Interceptor to transform itself from a car into its other forms, which include a boat, airplane, and a motorcycle. Stops off in the weapons van, can equip the vehicle with oil slicks and other spy gadgets. Says Adrian Askarieh, one of the film's producers, "We played the old arcade game and also the next-generation version last year and liked what *Midway's* done with the franchise."

As for *Midway*, a movie tie-in video game (and sequel to the original next-gen game) is already in its sights. **Spy Hunter 2's** release should coincide with the film's at the end of next year.

In other video game movie news, **Rockstar's State of Emergency** title has been picked up by **New Line Cinema**. No actors, writers, or directors have been assigned to the project yet.



WRESTLING GAMES MAKE STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

An unlikely partnership between **EA Big, Aki**, and **Def Jam** has pooled their resources together for an upcoming next-gen wrestling title. Too new to even have a name yet, the game's engine is provided by Japan-based Aki – makers of grappling classics like **WWF No Mercy** and **WCW Revenge**. The producers have titles such as **NBA Street** and EA's **WCW** games under their belts.

As one of five spandex-clad gladiators, you will witness the drama and tension of the squared circle in gritty, dimly lit venues. Def Jam not only provides the soundtrack, but artists like **Method Man**, **Ludacris**, and **Redman** will appear as in-game characters. WWE will have some definite competition, and it's about time.

BROSNAN BECOMES EA'S BOND



Finally! No more messed-up accents. No more phoney, two-bit actors crowding in on THE REAL Bond's territory. Actor **Pierce Brosnan** has agreed to supply his voice to **Electronic Arts'** upcoming **James Bond 007: NightFire**. The game is set to appear simultaneously on the **PlayStation 2**, **Xbox**, **GameCube**, and the **PC** to coincide with the late November release of the 20th James Bond flick **Die Another Day**. As it stands, Brosnan's deal with EA is specifically for this game only, so it remains to be seen if this will be the standard for the publisher.

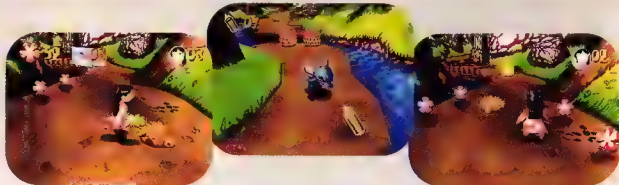
In other voice acting news, youngin' **Haley Joel Osment** (*The Sixth Sense*, *Forrest Gump*) has agreed to lend his talents to **Square's Kingdom Hearts**. Other "famous" names are attached to the game, but we hear that Haley's contractual demands have ensured he gets top billing and everyone else shares a cup for a bathroom.



FREE!!

YOU'VE NEVER HAD A PET LIKE THIS.

Let's just say he's not your normal pound puppy. Then again, she's not exactly your normal owner. She's Lilo, a feisty little surf betty with 'tude to spare, and he's Stitch, a two-foot genetic alien experiment on the run. She was just looking for a pet. She ended up with an alien with a knack for destruction. Making mischief on the beautiful Island of Hawaii is what it's all about. Lilo likes to use her voodoo wand, whereas Stitch, well, he just likes to smash everything in his path. Good luck enforcing leash laws with this pair.



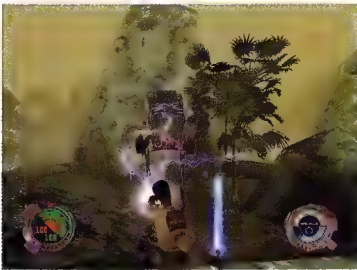
THE LAST STRIKE: ONIMUSHA 3

Capcom has included a sneak-peek trailer for **Onimusha 3** at the end of **Onimusha 2: Samurai Destiny** for the **PlayStation 2**. Although brief, we see that the gauntlet of power has returned. Who will control its mysterious forces this time? Will we see a third and all-new bearer of this orb-sucker? And to borrow a quote from another Capcom title: "Where's Samanosuke?"

All questions should be answered by the time of **Onimusha 3**'s conclusion, as producer **Keiji Inafune** has always planned the series as a trilogy – making this iteration the end of the franchise. Don't worry, however, as he has saved the best for last. This third installment will feature fully 3D environment, much like last year's **Devil May Cry**. This represents another break from the pre-rendered backgrounds that developer/publisher Capcom has made famous with its **Resident Evil** series. Inafune said that this dramatic move was made because of pressure from American audiences for 3D. Who said that being a pushy American was a bad thing? **Onimusha 3** for the PS2 is being planned for 2004.



JEDI KNIGHT II'S FORCE FLOWS TO XBOX, GC



The return of outlaw Jedi Kyle Katam was a presence fully felt by any **PC** gamer worth their salt, and a pleasure for all who played it. Now, LucasArts is letting the console crowd in on this good time. Both the **Xbox** and **GameCube** will see editions of **Star Wars: Jedi Outcast** come November.

Vicarious Visions

is taking over the extraordinary job that developer **Raven** has already done for the **PC**, with some optimized graphics for the consoles being the result. Still, the insane fun of running along walls and participating in fantastic lightsaber duels shall remain the same.



UGLY – Video game and music nerds collide at next year's **E3**. Orchestrated renditions of famous video game scores are being planned for an event at the **Hollywood Bowl** amphitheater. We expect to see plenty of people embarrassingly jamming out while playing "air controller."

GOOD – Congratulations to **Blizzard**, as its **WarCraft III** game sold well over a million units by the end of July. This made it the fastest-selling **PC** or **Mac** game ever – elbowing fellow Blizzard title **Diablo II** off the top spot.

BAD – **EverQuest Invasion** is coming to a town near you. This convention will enable **EQ** players to actually leave their homes and meet other people (albeit other socially retarded Morlocks like themselves).

BAD – **Nintendo** has outfitted several people with mobile **GameCube** and **Game Boy Advance** packs in an effort to get passersby at malls to play the units. Pick-up lines like, "Do you want to play with my joystick?" will be heard for the first time since 1983.



GOOD – A neurologist in **Japan** conducted a study which found that video game sessions suppress the brain's beta waves and could create "game brain" – **Attention Deficit Disorder** and unstable emotions. Finally there's a reason for our stupidity!



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

Besides **Kingdom Hearts**, **Square** has been laying low as of late. Its energies are being directed at bringing **Final Fantasy XI** online. This isn't all, however. As many as 10 games are being discussed at the present.

This will make the Hobbit hair on your feet stand on end: **Loose Talk** has heard that **Sierra** is planning a **Lord of the Rings** online game. Helm's Deep will rock, but who wants to be a midget Hobbit battling the Lord of the Nazgul?!

Eidos has apparently been heartened (or hardened, rather) by **Acclaim** and **Tecmo**'s forays into digital nudity. If anybody can put the sin back into skin it's **Fear Effect: Inferno**'s lesbian combo of Hana and Rain.

Here's a taste of what almost was: **Rocketstar Games** and developer **Ratbag Studios** were working on a first-person shooter/**Smuggler's Run** hybrid called **Icon**. Word is that the project has now been cancelled.

Speaking of **Rockstar**, its **Italian Job** **PlayStation** title seems to have put the property back in the limelight. A remake of the movie is rumored, with a next-gen video game perhaps to follow.

We all love the **Game Boy Advance**, but the same might not be true for some of the smaller publishers out there. **Loose Talk** has heard that software for the system may be pared down in the future.

Disney's
Stitch
EXPERIMENT
626

STITCH IS ON THE LOOSE.

Bad dog! Dog? It's going to take a lot more than a couple of inches of reinforced steel to hold back Stitch, a pint-sized fighting machine who lives and breathes mayhem. There's nothing he enjoys more than exploring new paths and destroying everything in them. He doesn't hide behind boulders. He throws them. Help him solve puzzles and blast enemies with a weapon in each of his four hands. (Did we mention he's a genetic alien experiment out of control?) With power like this, it's easy to go through walls. And a heck of a lot of chew toys.



PlayStation 2



Unfortunately, it's nearly time for school again. But never fear! To help you cope with the video game withdrawal symptoms caused by summer addiction, we've devised six ways to play your GBA at school. Take the Trivia test to see which method you're worthy of.

QUESTION 1: Reflections Interactive (famous for the Driver series) has a long history of making games. Which title did it develop first?

- A. Race Drivin' (SNES)
- B. Destruction Derby (PS-X)
- C. Shadow of the Beast (Amiga)
- D. Raven Skull (Acorn Electron)

QUESTION 2: What was the name of the full motion video first-person fighter that appeared on 3DO and Sega CD?



First-person fighting? Cool in concept, but that's it!

- A. Prize Fighter
- B. Corpse Killer
- C. Supreme Warrior
- D. Shadow: War of Succession

QUESTION 3: When the Neo Geo debuted, SNK claimed that its machine was 24-bit. Actually, it contained both a 16- and an 8-bit processor, both of which were also used in two other systems. What are these systems?

- A. Sega Genesis and Master System
- B. Super Nintendo and Nintendo Entertainment System
- C. NEC TurboGrafx and Sega CD
- D. NEC SuperGrafx and TurboGrafx

QUESTION 4: When Sega released its 32X Genesis peripheral, it was initially incompatible with the Genesis CDX.

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Maybe
- D. None of the above

QUESTION 5: What were the first games on console to have 8 and 16 megabits worth of memory, respectively?

- A. Super Mario World and Final Fantasy II
- B. Sonic the Hedgehog and Bubsy the Bobcat
- C. Super Castlevania IV and Final Fantasy III
- D. Strider and Street Fighter II

QUESTION 6: What was the first home video game system to support portable memory card units?

- A. SNK Neo Geo
- B. Sony PlayStation
- C. PC Engine
- D. Amiga CD32

QUESTION 7: How many games featuring Nintendo's Link and Mario appeared on Philips CD-i game machine?

- A. 2
- B. 4
- C. 8
- D. 10

QUESTION 8: From 1983 to 1995, what was the rate at which Nintendo had been selling games?

- A. Six per day
- B. Five per hour
- C. Four per minute
- D. Three per second

QUESTION 9: What is the name of the second mono-chrome system that Tiger Electronics released in 1998?



It was cheap, but already dated before it released

- A. PDA
- B. Pocketpro
- C. Game.com
- D. Pocket Tiger

QUESTION 10: What did Nintendo of Japan originally plan to call the Nintendo 64, but couldn't because the name was already trademarked?

- A. Ultra 64
- B. Ultra Famicom
- C. Famicom 64
- D. NES 64

SONY'S FIRST-PARTY PRICE CUT

Gamers were happy to hear of price cuts for all three next-gen consoles earlier this year, as competitors **Sony**, **Microsoft**, and **Nintendo** fought to keep up with each other. Despite these drops in the cost of hardware, one thing has remained constant even since the days of the original **PlayStation** and **Nintendo 64** – software has almost always debuted at about 50 bucks. Sony is hoping to change this slightly. In a quiet move, the company has lowered the cost of most first-party games for the **PlayStation 2** to a suggested retail price of **\$39.99**.

This new price point is a guideline for retailers – one that they don't absolutely have to abide by. Therefore, Game Informer has found out that some stores may or may not be selling Sony first-party PS2 titles at this new amount. For example, we checked a few online sites of major retailers, and it was listing new and future releases such as **The Mark of Kri**, **Ratchet & Clank**, and **Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus** all at \$39.99. On the other hand, some locations may still be at \$49.99, so we advise you to check around before you head out with money in hand.

Is this the new price war? Will other publishers follow suit? We found out that this is not likely. The reason Sony is able to do this for its own games is that, unlike third-party publishers like **Electronic Arts**, Sony obviously doesn't have to pay royalties on its own products. A spokesperson for EA looked at this new price another way, however. "If you have a good game, people will buy it. We don't need a price cut to get people to buy [EA's games]." We contacted the other console giants, Nintendo and Microsoft, but it looks like neither is planning to reduce the retail cost of their first-party titles. The latter company told us: "While selected games experienced a price reduction earlier this summer, there are no plans to reduce the price of Microsoft Game Studio titles in the near future."

Sony already has an advantage with the tremendous installed base of PlayStation 2, but with low-priced, quality first-party games on the horizon like those above, it is firmly on the right road to keep itself on top.



71% of GI editors have had some sort of dental situation, busted joints, or rotator cuff problem. Let the funny gas flow!

4% of you play games solo – according to Sony. Does it know what else goes on in the privacy of your own home?

31% of Kristian's speech this month was voice commands to his SOCOM: US Navy SEALs buddies. "Bravo, follow", "Bravo Assault on Delta", and (we think) "What's your Vector, Victor?"

.19% That's the number of Xbox's Mad Dash Racing games sold in Japan compared to Nintendo's Super Mario Sunshine for GameCube

65% of those who complained about last month's cover didn't bother to read the (insightful) article within

THIS ISN'T THE GBA YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!



1
Cram your GBA in a deflated balloon, and insert it where the sun doesn't shine



1-2
Attempt the Jedi Mind Trick on your teacher



3-4
Take many bathroom breaks



5-6
Blame your baseball coach



7-9
Hollow out a hiding spot in a text book



10
Claim your GBA is the latest TI calculator

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Only \$199.99!

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*(FREE Overnight on Super Mario Sunshine see page 34)

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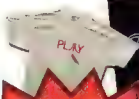


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DATA FILE

> **Zombie life is cheap, but not as cheap as this winter's Resident Evil 2 and 3.** Slated by Capcom to appear on the GameCube for the same price of only \$20, these RE titles are ports NOT remakes.

> **Infragames has secured the rights to Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines** for all platforms, as well as the first option on games for Terminator 4. Terminator 3 will come out to coincide with the film's summer 2003 release. According to an Infragames press release, T3 will be "one of the most popular movies of all time." Hello? Ever heard of Short Circuit?

> Using art and design from comic book artists **Brian Bielecki (Judge Dredd, Heavy Metal)** and **David DeVries (X-men covers)**, 3DO has unveiled a multi-platform title called **The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**.

> While it's been good that Microsoft has put out a steady stream of first-party software after launch, there's been a small hiccup in the road. **Midtown Madness 3** and **Jung Fu Chaos** have been delayed until early 2003, while **Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge** is being slated for the second quarter of next year.

> More high kicking **Teemo** has announced that **Dead or Alive 4** will appear next year. Interestingly, the game's platform hasn't been declared. Creator **Tomonobu Itagaki** once swore that the Xbox was the only system that could handle the fighting series.

> **THQ** continues to do right by the **Game Boy Advance**. The company has agreed to bring over **Xbox** and **PC** titles to the handheld, starting with **Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee** and **Monster Truck Madness 2.0** early next year. More announcements are expected.

> More **EverQuest** is on the way. **Sony Online** has enlisted **Rapid Eye** and **Snowblind** to make new titles for the series for the **PC** and **PS2**, respectively. The PC's will be a real-time strategy offering, while the latter will be of an undetermined genre.

> Someday there may actually be more **Tony Hawk's Pro Skater** games than you've had hot meals. The series just signed a contract for video games with **Activision** until 2015. Gf has heard that we're all supposed to have hover boards and hover cars by then.

> What goes up must come crashing down says **Midway**. **Gravity Games Bike's Street Vert** and **DIRT** has been cancelled for the **GameCube**. The title is currently available for the **Xbox** and **PlayStation 2**.

Name That Game Answer: **republic**

XBOX II LAUNCH DATE SET?

Microsoft's Xbox is starting to build some momentum. New numbers from the NPD Group say that sales of the platform have increased 131% since its price drop a few months ago. This is coupled with the news that the company has met its lowered estimate of shifting four million units worldwide by the end of June. Naturally, however, Gates and company are already looking towards the future at **Xbox II**.

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer openly told the Japanese press recently that he expects the second version of the Xbox to appear sometime in **2006**. This would likely mean a 2005 release in America. Also, in an exclusive conversation with Game Informer, **Xbox's general manager J Allard** talked about the timing of Microsoft's next system, as well as the effect that August's launch of the broadband service **Xbox Live** will have on the platform's welfare. "If we get 10 or 20% of them [customers], and if we really build a lot of experience base, and we build some key franchises and stuff, I bet that those guys we got on Live, this generation, are going to buy an Xbox II instead of a **PlayStation 3**. No matter what!"

As far as the launch date of the upcoming console, Allard was adamant that the key to success was not letting a competitor like **Sony** be able to exist all by itself on retail shelves – like the PlayStation 2 was able to do for a year and half. "If we can ship the hardware the same day that those guys [Sony] do. An 18-month head start is a tough gap to close. So next time, they don't get any. Mr. Kutaragi [Sony's President] does not get a day ahead of us! It's gonna be an even fight next time."

What will Xbox II be like? That is literally the billion-dollar question. Rumors have been furiously circulating that there will actually be a souped-up edition of the current Xbox that will hit the shelves first which features **UltimateTV**, which has digital video recording. In fact,

Microsoft's Bill Gates has long been a proponent of making the Xbox do more than just play video games. Whether this metamorphosis occurs with the current console or in its next iteration remains to be seen. Insiders see some sort of expansion of the system a good move, as it will make the Xbox more accessible to non-gamers and help the company gain ground on the estimated \$750 million it lost on the system as of the end of June.



FINAL FANTASY I & II REDUX

Square of Japan is giving the people what they want...sort of. While many thought that the company would take advantage of its renewed relationship with **Nintendo**, Square is instead bringing **Final Fantasy I & II** to the original **PlayStation** instead of the **Game Boy Advance**. This pair started out on the **Famicom** in Japan, and will receive a considerable (and obvious) upgrade on Sony's old console.

New CG intros will be the first thing you notice, followed by overall enhancements to the graphics and sound. Also new to these two are quick saves, added scenes, a 3D field map for airships, an Easy mode, and a dash feature. **Final Fantasy I & II** will be available in Japan this fall.



Final Fantasy I



Final Fantasy II

CONTEST THE STUNTMAN CASTING CALL



There's no need to risk your life and limb just to get a copy of Infragames' **PlayStation 2** game **Stuntman**. Here at Game Informer, we're giving them away to five lucky winners. Once you turn it on and proceed to nump your thumbs through the game's demanding cavalcade of stunts, you'll soon realize that getting set on fire for a living isn't nearly as easy as winning one of our contests. Also along for the ride are official strategy guides and some oh-so-attractive Atari t-shirts. They don't quite say "The Lee Majors Fan Club" on them, but still, no prospective stuntman would be caught dead without one.

Grand Prize (3)

- Infragames' Stuntman PlayStation 2 game
- Prima Games' official Stuntman strategy guide
- Infragames' Atari t-shirt

First Prize (2)

- Infragames' Stuntman PlayStation 2 game
- Infragames' Atari t-shirt

There Are Two Ways To Enter:

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

Gf's Stuntman
724 N. FIRST ST. 4TH FLOOR
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

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

Your name will be placed in a pool of valid entrants for a random drawing to be conducted on October 7, 2002.

GAME INFORMER'S STUNTMAN OFFICIAL RULES
 1. PURCHASE NECESSARY: To enter and/or view the contest and to be eligible to win, you must purchase a copy of the game Stuntman 724 N. First St. 4th Floor, Minneapolis, MN 55401 or email your name, address, and telephone number to stuntman@gameinformer.com. Entries must be received by October 7, 2002. One entry per person. Unpublished rules will be displayed. Game Informer magazine (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, illegible, incomplete, or undelivered entries. 2. PRIZES: There are three grand prizes, two first prizes, and one Atari t-shirt. Grand prize includes PlayStation 2 game, Prima Games' strategy guide, and Atari t-shirt. First prize includes PlayStation 2 game and Atari t-shirt. Sponsor reserves the right to substitute prize of equal or greater value at any time. Prizes are non-transferable and void where prohibited. 3. WINNERS: Winners will be determined by random drawing of all valid entries received by the Sponsor. Winner's address will be verified or about October 7, 2002. Winners will be notified by email and/or phone. 4. ELIGIBILITY: Promotion open to legal residents of the United States only. Residents of other countries are ineligible. 5. ENTRY: All entries are subject to the rules of the contest and are void where prohibited. 6. CANCELLATION: Sponsor reserves the right to cancel or suspend the contest at any time without notice. 7. MODIFICATION: Sponsor reserves the right to modify the contest at any time without notice. 8. LIABILITY: Sponsor shall not be liable for any injury or damage to persons or property, or for any loss of profits, or for any other damages, or for any other consequences of participation in the contest. 9. ACCEPTANCE: By participating in the contest, you agree to the use of the name and likeness for purposes of advertising and promotion. 10. FURTHER COMMUNICATION: Entries prohibited to be transferred to the Sponsor, Game Informer Magazine, and the game and peripherals. Companies and individuals who have been contacted by the Sponsor are to provide information, contact or respond to requests within 14 days of receipt of notice, or express that winners might not be a result of the investigation or receipt of the RESTRICTIONS and where prohibited or restricted by law.

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It's better to give than to receive.



Work faster than the gas tank at 99¢.



Use the power of love to disarm your enemies and
Jack's best friend, reality.

Nothing makes Jack Slate feel warmer inside than
giving the gift of flying lead. But Jack will also take.
With disarm moves that will take a weapon off a thug
so fast it'll make his head spin. With such generosity,
the coroner's gonna run out of gift wrap.



Use humor, wit, and fight back to hand.



Unlock 15 deadly disarm moves.



Dead to Rights



Just Can't Get Enough

Grand Theft Auto

Vice City

Rockstar Takes Gamers Back to the Age of Excess

Eighteen months ago,

Game Informer brought America its first look at Grand Theft Auto III. At the time, we observed that "Grand Theft Auto III has all the makings of a blockbuster PS2 title." In all honesty, we really didn't know how GTA III would fare with consumers. The game looked promising, if a little rough around the edges. The development team, DMA Design (since renamed Rockstar North), was still overcoming the technical hurdles of the PlayStation 2, and there were questions surrounding how retailers in the United States would receive the game's violent, gritty content. Still, there was something alluring about Rockstar's promise that GTA III would open up a whole new era of gameplay freedom.

It's amazing how quickly things change.


A year later, the only journalistic error we could be accused of is gross understatement. The phrase "blockbuster PS2 title" doesn't come close to describing the kind of success that Grand Theft Auto III has experienced over the last few months. Since its release in November, the game has remained at or near the top of the sales charts, tallied over seven million units sold worldwide, inspired a rabid cult on Internet discussion boards, and recently became the best-selling PlayStation or PlayStation 2 game of all time. Still moving over 100,000 copies per month at full price, Grand Theft Auto III has a legitimate shot at surpassing The Sims as the best-selling game – period.

Even Terry Donovan, Rockstar's literate and outspoken COO, a man who speaks

about Rockstar's mission with the fervor of a tent revival preacher, admitted surprise at just how successful GTA III has become. "Did we expect it? No way," Donovan commented. "No one expects anything like this. The fact that it's the best selling PlayStation game – PSone or PS2 – of all time, is pretty serious. We spent the whole of last year with people telling us, 'Well, it's really a case of the race for second place after Metal Gear.' That discussion was on the table right up until November. We may have thought it was a better game than Metal Gear, but it was hard not to listen to that argument."

The media was quick to pick up on the GTA phenomenon, but the

■ PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 2 ■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES ■ DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR NORTH
■ RELEASE OCTOBER 22



resulting coverage often focused not on the title's considerable merits, but its controversial subject matter. Reports on GTA III tended to focus largely on the most lurid details of the game, while managing to completely ignore its groundbreaking mix of third-person action, driving, and nonlinear mission structure. In fact, if your only exposure to the game had been through the mainstream press, you would probably remember little about GTA III, save for the fact that some of Liberty

City's denizens were practitioners of the world's oldest profession – something that clearly irritates Donovan.

"All that [nonsense] to do with the hooker is insulting. In a hundred hours of gameplay, that's the stuff that made it to the mass media," Donovan said. "That's reductive journalism: that's taking the most salacious tiny detail and [blowing it out of proportion]. I don't think we sold any copies because of the hookers; I genuinely don't – because nobody spends \$50 to see a car bounce up and down."

Although the media may have missed the point, gamers clearly understood what made GTA III so addictive. It wasn't about conquering levels and bosses; it was about

exploring and interacting with a world that felt alive and real in a way that games of the past had failed to achieve. As the GTA franchise grows ever more popular, Rockstar, a company whose marketing had generally ran far ahead of its commercial performance, finds itself in the unfamiliar position of having to deliver a sequel that lives up to the sky-high expectations of the press and consumers the world over.

After a brief demonstration of the game, and talking to some of the principals involved in crafting Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, we are pleased to report that it will not disappoint. If you wondered whether the newly prosperous Rockstar Games had grown fat and complacent, fear not. Building on the impressive foundation of GTA III, Vice City can be summed up in four simple words: bigger, better, faster, more.



Going Way Back

Entering the 1980s, as the crushing economic depression and oil crisis of the seventies subsided, America was a country on the rebound. A revolution in computer technology and a surging stock market brought a new prosperity to our nation, breeding a class of young, upwardly mobile professionals who found themselves in the enviable

position of being young, pretty, and having more money than they could spend. Faced with newfound affluence, this status-driven class of young people responded the only way they knew how – by partaking in an explosive mixture of disposable pop music, bad dancing, recreational drug use, tacky clothes, expensive cars, and some of the worst haircuts in the history of mankind. There was little room for the lofty ideals of 1960s in the neon-and-glass world of eighties club kids, and by the time comedian Billy Crystal (as Latin lothario Fernando on *Saturday Night Live*) coined the phrase, “It is better to look good

than to feel good,” it was hard to tell if he was joking. Taking a good deal of inspiration from the lush visuals of the glossy television drug drama *Miami Vice*, GTA: Vice City plumbs the depths of the eighties for all they're worth. “Why did we set it in the eighties?” Donovan asks. “Because the eighties have a huge under-explored wealth of culture...There were things that were great about it and there were things that were disgusting about it. [In Miami] there is this sense of glamour and wealth, and these fantastic colors and warmth. Then, it has this seedy underbelly. Just in terms of the basic scene-setting, that's an interesting thing to play with.”

Every era is defined by its popular songs, and Vice City's soundtrack will attempt the daunting task of encompassing the whole of eighties music. To do so, the developers have increased the size of the soundtrack to an unbelievable nine hours. In comparison, the soundtrack of GTA III – which we awarded the Best of 2001 – clocked in at three-and-a-half hours long. The process of licensing vintage tracks has been long and arduous, but the end result will be a score that features close to 90 songs. Due to the pitfalls of the legal process, this number could shrink or grow, and Rockstar would not release a full listing of the tracks. Whatever the final number, Donovan promises that Vice City's score will “annihilate any other entertainment soundtrack imaginable.” He also hinted that the company had big plans relating to the Vice City soundtrack. When we asked whether these plans might include a commercially released CD, he responded, “Much bigger than that.” Could this mean a box set? Who knows, but many of

Rockstar's executives have a background in the music industry (Donovan was once a club DJ and an A&R agent at BMG), and would certainly have the experience necessary for such an ambitious undertaking.

As before, the songs will be delivered to the player through 10 or so fictional radio stations. Of course, the DJs, commercials, and callers will all be speaking in period slang, which should add to the already considerable humor of the experience. We have also heard reports that cynical GTA III radio personality Lazlow will be back, but Rockstar would not confirm his participation in the project.

It's not often that sequels to blockbuster games offer fans such a dramatic shift in setting and tone, but we can't help but think that this is a brilliant move on Rockstar's part. Nostalgia for recent history, from *Happy Days* to *That '70s Show*, has been a staple of popular culture for decades, so it's only appropriate that video games should follow suit. For Donovan, it's another phase in the company's plan to cater to the needs of adult gamers, and playing to their memories of the eighties is just another selling point. “At the beginning of a system, the demographic is, by definition, older. Every time a new platform starts, that age [will be older still], because video games are the one toy that people of our generation didn't put down,” posits Donovan. “If it were 1982, they'd be 10. If it were 1992, they'd be 20. In 2002, they'd be 30. So, your starting demographic is older, more discerning, more experienced, and they've got a lot of entertainment options. If your favorite movie is *Goodfellas*, do you really want to be playing with a hedgehog? I played *Sonic*; I love *Sonic*. But would I rush out and buy it now? I don't know. Entertainment changes, that's the way it works.”



You'll notice that the cars have more reflective surfaces

position of being young, pretty, and having more money than they could spend. Faced with newfound affluence, this status-driven class of young people responded the only way they knew how – by partaking in an explosive mixture of disposable pop music, bad dancing, recreational drug use, tacky clothes, expensive cars, and some of the worst haircuts in the history of mankind. There was little room for the lofty ideals of 1960s in the neon-and-glass world of eighties club kids, and by the time comedian Billy Crystal (as Latin lothario Fernando on *Saturday Night Live*) coined the phrase, “It is better to look good

ESSENTIAL '80S

If you were in diapers in the early eighties, you might be surprised to learn that those dorky adults you roll your eyes at engaged in some pretty freaky behavior back in the day. Here's a slice of the eighties culture that helped inspire *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*.



Bad Hair – From Cyndi Lauper to Kid n Play, the eighties offered a cavalcade of hairstyle “don'ts.” There were a lot of bad coifs to choose from, but the most dominant was the mullet, renowned for its “business up front, party in the back” attitude.



Miami Vice – Director Michael Mann created a pioneering blend of art house cinematography and MTV editing with *Miami Vice*, a hit drama that chronicled the decadent drug trade of the mid-eighties. The show starred Don Johnson and Phillip Michael Thomas as undercover narcs Sonny Crockett and Ricardo Tubbs.



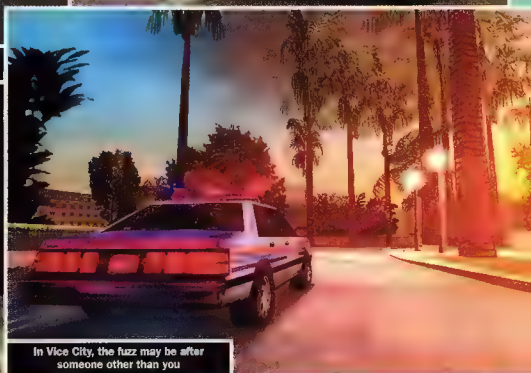
Less Than Zero – Starring in *Less Than Zero*, based on Bret Easton Ellis's acclaimed account of tragically pretty early-eighties party people, Robert Downey Jr.'s portrayal of doomed drug addict Julian Wells made him the face of yuppie ennui. Downey went on to reprise this role in real life for the next 15 years.



New Wave – Robert Moog invented the synthesizer in 1964; 20 years later, America was under invasion by an army of pale, mesocara-loving Brits that dressed like gay pirates and sang melancholy melodies over percolating sequencer rhythms. Strangely, the little girls loved it, and no band defines new wave better than Depeche Mode (see also: *Bad Hair*, *Bad Clothes*).



Unlike GTA III, all of Vice City is open to players from the start



In Vice City, the fuzz may be after someone other than you

SOUNDS OF THE CITY

One thing is sure: Grand Theft Auto: Vice City will set a new standard for video game soundtracks. Rockstar hasn't finalized the roster yet, but we can confirm the inclusion of a handful of songs. So far, Vice City looks to include a good mix of fluke hits and era-defining classics:



"You've Got Another Thing Coming" by Judas Priest

"The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

"Self Control" by Laura Branigan

"Summer Madness" by Kool and the Gang

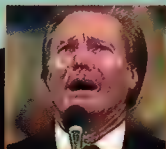
"I Ran" by Flock of Seagulls

"Out of Touch" by Hall & Oates

"I Just Died in Your Arms" by Cutting Crew



Scarface – Starring Al Pacino as Tony Montana, a Miami drug kingpin, 1983's *Scarface* is hands-down one of the most violent, hard-boiled gangster films ever made. Affecting a ludicrous Cuban accent and laying waste to the scenery with a performance so over-the-top it's nearly comical, Pacino has never been more memorably insane than he was in *Scarface*. All together now: "Say 'ello to my leetle fren!"



Jimmy Swaggart – Another symbol of the corrupt eighties, televangelist Jimmy Swaggart (the real-life cousin of rock n' roll rebel Jerry Lee Lewis) was the epitome of the decade's do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do morality. He denounced everything from rock music to Catholicism as sinful, before being caught on tape leavina a New Orleans motel with a woman of ill repute. He then apologized to his flock in famously tearful fashion, and disappeared from the public eye.



Bad Clothes – From bolo ties (see above) to Spuds McKenzie t-shirts to (good God!) grown men wearing biking shorts in public, the eighties was a laundry list of fashion horrors. Does a friend or coworker claim to have "misplaced" his high school pictures? He just might be desperately attempting to cover up his Adam Ant period – investigate. In keeping with the theme, all of Vice City's characters display authentic bad taste.

A Parallel Past

"Vice City is not a sequel, it's not a prequel. It's the next slice of Grand Theft Auto," claims Terry Donovan, and this statement seems to reflect Rockstar's thinking about the franchise. Instead of one continuing story arc, Grand Theft Auto is conceived as a "universe," where multiple storylines can take place in various periods of time, similar to the worlds created by the comic book masterminds at DC and Marvel. As such, Vice City's plot shares little in common with that of GTA III.

Set 20 years before its predecessor, Vice City introduces us to a new hero, Tommy Vercetti, a former street soldier for the Forelli brothers who has recently been released from an extended prison stay. As a reward for his silence, a young Sonny Forelli sends Tommy to Vice City to expand their criminal empire. Of course, Tommy's first big deal goes terribly wrong, and he soon discovers that he has lost all the cash the Forellis had earmarked for their VC operations. Sonny Forelli, not a man to be jerked around by a washed-up ex-con, demands his money back in no uncertain terms.

Tommy happens upon a small bit of luck through his relationship with Ken Rosenberg, a shady lawyer with heavy connections in the VC underworld. Rosenberg befriends Tony, outfitting him up with a sweet pastel suit and an invitation to a boat party that will be attended by many of the leading lights of the criminal community. What happens after this is anyone's guess, as Rockstar would not comment. Still, we expect that Tommy's road to the riches will not be without its share of double-crosses and violent betrayals.

One more thing, did we mention the fact that the main character — who was laconic to the point of being mute in GTA III — now speaks? This might come as a shock to fans, but surely they won't fault Rockstar's choice in voice talent: Ray Liotta, the star of the legendary *Goodfellas*. As with the music, considerable effort has gone into improving the voice-overs (which now number at 8,000, versus 2,000 from GTA III), and Terry Donovan promised that they have enlisted around 20 other top Hollywood figures to round out the cast.

Regardless, it's great to see Tommy trading verbal taunts with fellow mobsters during cutscenes, or mouthing off to pushy pedestrians on the street.



Goodfellas star Ray Liotta is among the many Hollywood personalities slated to do voice-overs for Vice City



Welcome To Vice City

In most video games, the environment is there largely to facilitate the action at hand, direct the player towards the level goals, and show off the developer's graphical prowess. Vice City is more than just a setting, it's a virtual place — one that players will spend countless hours exploring. As impressive as Liberty City was for gamers used to track and corridor-based level design, GTA: Vice City raises the bar impossibly high.

For one, it encompasses an area double the size of the previous game. Even better, the entire city is open to players from the start. This is great news for fans, as the divided nature of Liberty City was one of the only things about GTA III that felt like an artificial construct, somewhat diminishing the player's sense that it was a real place. Of course, saying that Vice City is twice as large as Liberty City doesn't quite do justice to Rockstar North's accomplishments, as the game has also expanded its scope to include interior action. Yes, you heard correctly. During our demonstration of the game, we saw Tommy running through hotel lobbies, discos, and other points of interest. These aren't just simple storefronts like Ammu-Nation, either; they are multi-tiered environments with scores of hallways to explore. A Rockstar representative confirmed that many missions will feature both indoor and outdoor objectives. We can't wait.

A quick drive down one of Vice City's picturesque boulevards will also demonstrate the strides that the development team has made towards making Vice City seem more alive and vibrant than we could have imagined. For starters, there are flocks of pedestrians on the streets,

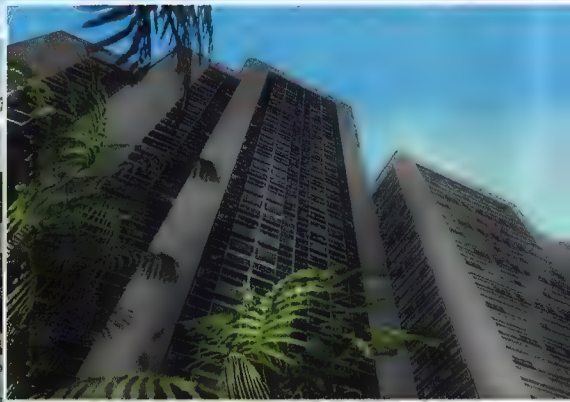




Image Is Everything

partaking in a wider variety of activities. You'll see retirees holding court on park benches, joggers, roller-skaters, and all manner of beach people enjoying the sun. What's more, the AI and routing system of the pedestrians has been revamped, meaning that people will jump out of the way of cars, cross streets, and walk in tandem.

Gangs will also engage in more complex behavior, beating down random passersby, stealing cars, and getting into chases with police. This will result in a few scares, as the next time you see a cop flash his lights behind you, he might speed right past in pursuit of another criminal.

Beyond the technical improvements, you'll find that – mostly due to its tropical setting – Vice City is a much more pleasant place to spend your afternoon than Liberty City. Its bright, pastel color palette is pleasing to the eye – a huge improvement over GTA III's drab grays and browns. You won't realize just how rundown Liberty City was until you get a taste of VC, but trust us when we say that you'll never want to go back. And why would you? Vice City is the land of sun, fun, fast cars, and beautiful women – not a bad way to kill an hour or several dozen.

Considering the scale of the project, Grand Theft Auto III was reasonably good looking, but pretty is not a word we would use to describe its blocky characters and muddy textures. Utilizing the new Renderware engine in congress with modifications to its texture-streaming technology has allowed Rockstar North to implement some significant improvements to the graphical presentation of Vice City. Textures are now running at a much higher resolution, and the framerate appears to have been increased as well. Those familiar with Miami know that the city is a showcase for neon, and the developer has been hard at work on new radiosity lighting system that lets it capture the incandescent glow of the beachfront clubs that have become the city's hallmark.

The game's character models have also benefited from a complete overhaul, and gone are the boxy figures we came to know and tolerate last time around. The effect is impressive, especially in Tommy's model, which is taller and much more proportionate. Also, all characters are now fully skinned, which should alleviate past tendencies towards seam tearing at joints. Overall, we couldn't be more pleased with the level of improvement on the graphical side of GTA: Vice City, and things will only get better as Rockstar North begins its final fine-tuning process.

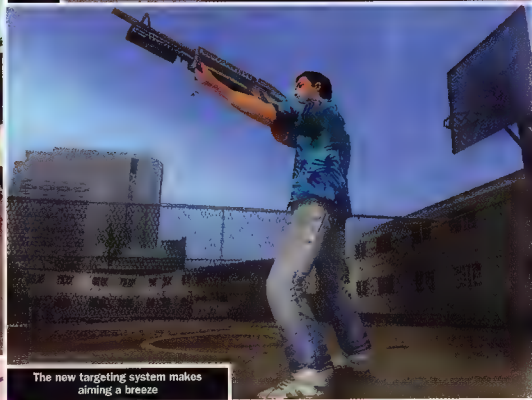


The character models are vastly improved, and better at martial arts





Could SWAT missions be hidden in Vice City? Rockstar isn't saying.



The new targeting system makes aiming a breeze

Changing the Game

With seven millions units sold,

making changes to basic gameplay mechanics might not be the first thing on the minds of most developers. Thankfully, Rockstar North is not most developers, and set right towards changing Grand Theft Auto III's single biggest flaw: the suspect targeting system. If you were ever frustrated that you were targeting the granny in front of you, while the gangster down the block kept plugging you from a distance, rest assured that this will not be a problem in the future. A new auto-targeting system has been created – one that highlights victims based on priority, rather than proximity. Also, a new dual-crosshairs has been added, which displays both the exact target and bullet spray radius. Although it wasn't working on the build we saw, the targeting icon will also change colors to show the degree of threat a pedestrian presents. In total, there are 40 weapons – up from 15 in GTA III –

many of which (like the machete) use completely new character animations. In shootouts, Tommy can make better use of cover with a new crouch maneuver.

Camera issues also plagued out-of-the-car combat in GTA III, and the VC team has found the solution by locking the camera in an over-the-shoulder view when in targeting mode. As you toggle between enemies, your view changes instantaneously, avoiding the seasickness caused by the wildly swinging camera of last year's model. This will also facilitate the interior corridor action, as will a new HUD map display that shows your elevation relative to your goal.

These enhanced controls will be put to good use, as Rockstar is setting forth considerable effort into forging missions that are more engrossing, challenging, and complex than the oftentimes simple grab-and-go objectives in GTA III. In post-production

meetings, the mission that the team picked as their favorite was "Bomb da Base" (in which players provided sniper cover for partner-in-crime Eightball as he walked aboard a ship in the dockyards). This has been the model for their current efforts, and we can expect that many will be made up of multiple sections that meld driving, street fighting, and interior sequences.

If your missions don't pay out as much as you're used to, don't complain that you're getting cheated. This is the eighties, and all completed objectives are paid out in real period-value dollars. Of course, you can supplement your income with the infamous side missions. All your favorites from last year will be present in modified form, and there will be a host of new trades to try your hand at. For now, Rockstar will only reveal one: pizza delivery – a sly jab at critics who complained that GTA III's missions were unimaginative.



Let Me Ride

The Grand Theft Auto series brought out the amateur car collector in many, and those of you who became more obsessed with acquiring new rides than completing missions will find a lot to search for in Vice City. Featuring GTA III's then-impressive selection of 50 vehicles, Vice City ups the count to 120 – many of which are inspired by eighties-era sports cars like Lamborghinis and Ferraris. Also, given the temperate climate, we expect that convertibles will be more plentiful than they were in the past.

Furthermore, we can confirm what many had guessed, based on the Vice City box art that has been circulating the internet since E3: Motorcycles have been added to the roster of vehicles. It's exciting stuff, and the moment we saw Tommy get on a huge chopper with an attractive young lady riding on back, we were hooked. The bikes look great, and Tommy pilots them like a pro, stretching out his leg for balance around corners and using his feet to back up out of parking spaces. Cruising down the expressway, you'll even see your clothes rippling in the wind – a nice touch that adds to Vice City's sense of realism.

Although the cars might seem like old hat, we can say that they are breathtaking, exhibiting more reflective surfaces, and real-time shadowing from the passing scenery. Also, you can now use a sniper rifle to shoot out tires, which will drastically alter each vehicle's handling physics. It's a great way to stop enemies dead in their tracks; but beware, as the cops can give as good as they get – which might make your job a great deal more difficult.

Given the game's seaside topography, boats will also play a bigger role during gameplay. Numerous waterways and canals crosscut real-life Miami, and Vice City is no different. Fortunately, the game engine's water physics and boat handling have been completely revamped, and rumors have even suggested that that cigarette boats and jet skis might be a reality as well.



Here's a glimpse at one of the tully muskled interiors

The Next Level

Over the past few months, many readers have asked us, "Why didn't you score GTA III a perfect 10?" Grand Theft Auto: Vice City answers that question in the best possible fashion: by surpassing its predecessor in every way. For this, Rockstar deserves every bit of the commercial and critical accolades it will likely receive following the game's release on October 22nd. This effort is even more commendable when you consider that nearly everyone who played Grand Theft Auto III would have been more than happy with an expansion pack, or a quick-and-easy sequel that stuck close to the existing blueprint.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City is more than we could have hoped for, and it looks like Rockstar will again set the tone for the next year in video games. GTA is now more than a fluke hit, it's shaping up to be a long-term franchise that will be with us for years to come – one that is pointing the way towards the future of genre-melding, open-ended gameplay. Its durability will be aided by the fact that it's defined not by a mascot or character, but rather a sensibility and a love for pop culture that will give it the ability to constantly reinvent itself. As society changes, so will Grand Theft Auto. Right now, Vice City doesn't feel like the culmination of Rockstar's efforts, but the beginning of a new era. An era in which games will take their place as the dominant form of entertainment, by combining the strengths of film, television, and music with interactivity and exploration that only gaming can offer.



Many of the vehicles are inspired by classic 1980s sports cars

PlayStation 2 Online

Man walks on the moon, PlayStation 2 invades cyberspace



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Console or Computer?

Is your video game console a crossdresser?



Page 48

XBOX LIVE

It was always the most powerful... now it can fly!



Page 52

Gleaming the Cube

Online or not?



Page 56

Online Gaming

Final Frontier

the battle for the



In just a matter of months, the landscape of gaming will be forever changed. All three of the consoles on the market are expanding their reaches to the online realm. As expected, each manufacturer is using different strategies and methods to win the affections of gamers across the world. Of course, many questions abound. Is Sony's philosophy of targeting the casual gamer with dial-up the way to go, or is the network rooted in prehistoric times? Conversely, is Microsoft going too far and leapfrogging generations with its broadband-only approach? What about Nintendo? Should gamers invest their money now in GameCube's online capabilities, or wait it out? Journey with us as we break down the strategies, components, benefits, and problems involved with video games' evolution to the Net.

The Difference

Who will win the online console war?



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PlayStation 2 Online >>>

As a multinational entertainment empire, Sony is used to doing things in a big way. Whether it's a compact disc, television, computer, or Walkman, chances are that every one of our readers has at least one Sony product in their house. In recent years, its PlayStation dynasty has been one of the linchpins of Sony's success, and one of the company's most profitable divisions. Now, its long-delayed plans for bringing the PlayStation 2 online are finally coming to fruition and gamers around the world are nearly drooling in anticipation.

Unlike Microsoft, which prides itself on skating

the cutting edge of technology, Sony's approach to Internet gaming mirrors its mass-market philosophy. Supporting both conventional 56k dial-up and cable/DSL broadband connections, PlayStation 2's online functions will likely serve as the medium for introducing millions of newbies to the joys of online fragging and leveling-up. While Xbox Live (a broadband-only service) will probably be the most satisfying and comprehensive experience for the hardcore audience, Sony's open-arms approach will ensure that nearly all of the over 30 million PlayStation 2 owners will have the option of a good number of amazing online titles. Given that an overwhelming

majority of American households still utilize dial-up connections, the strategy makes a good deal more business sense than Microsoft's Xbox Live initiative.

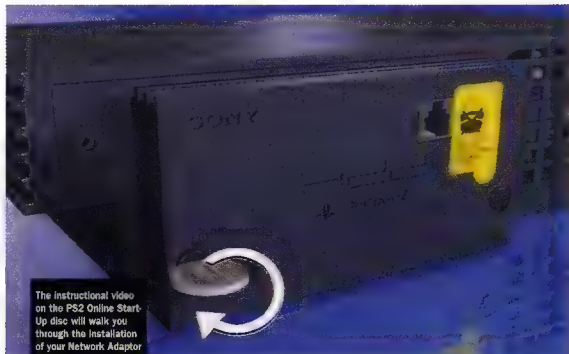
For now, let's leave these questions to the analysts. Real gamers want to know the facts about PlayStation 2 online – how, and how well it works. From the initial experiences we've had, Sony's Internet empire appears to be off to a good start. On August 27, when the Sony Network Adaptor hits retail shelves across the country, gamers are going to have a lot to be excited about. Now, let's examine the nuts and bolts of what you'll need to get up and running.

Getting Started

The first thing you're going to need is the Sony Network Adaptor. Retailing at \$39.99, the Adaptor is basically a combination Ethernet/Modem that features ports for both dial-up and broadband connections. At this point, it's probably going to be a good idea to pick up another PS2 memory card as well, as you will need at least 137k of free space to save your network and ISP settings. Even better, the unit comes with a coupon redeemable for a free copy of Twisted Metal: Black Online, a multiplayer update of the early PS2 car combat classic.

Also included with your Network Adaptor will be your network Start-Up disc, which provides you with everything you're going to need to get your PS2 up and running online. The first thing you're going to want to check out is the Help video which, via some slick CG, shows you exactly how to install the Network Adaptor in to the back of your PlayStation 2. Don't worry if you're not a tech-head, the process is relatively painless, and the only tool you'll need is a nickel coin (for the oversized screws that fasten the unit to the back of your console).

Next, you'll need to go through the ISP Setup, which we're happy to report is also a fairly intuitive process. Keep in mind that you're going to need to have Internet service already in your home. However, Sony's open-ended policy means that virtually every major ISP is compatible with PS2 Online, including AOL, AT&T, Prodigy, Earthlink, and Simpatico. Having run some online tests here in the office, we can assure you that you should have little problem getting through this process, as the helpful menus generally prompt you to enter all applicable information. From here on out, you'll be able to start your Internet gaming with a simple press of a button, usually found within the Online options screen of whatever game you're playing.



The ISP Setup menu provides a simple process for getting your Network Adaptor configured.



⚠ WARNING! ⚠

DO NOT install your PS2 Network Adaptor when the unit is powered-up. This is called a "hot swap," and could permanently damage your PlayStation 2. Remember: Power off, Network Adaptor in.



Console or Computer?

Historically, the differences between a computer and a console were as different as night and day. As technology has improved on both fronts, this line has begun to blur. Now that console gaming has evolved to the online medium, computer-like functionality is needed to a certain degree. Are consoles transforming into computers? Instinctively, you want to say no. However, you may change your mind after reading what manufacturers and consumers are doing with your plug and play video game systems.

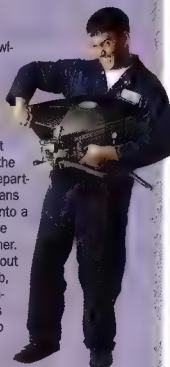
PlayStation 2

Sony's online brigade is loaded to the hilt with versatility. Not only does it offer a wealth of options to gamers, it's also a play-ground for programmers. Sony is offering a bundle that taps into the Linux operating system. Enthusiasts of this software can transform their PlayStation 2 into a desktop computer with Sony's Linux Kit. You'll be able to download several Linux programs including multimedia players, programming environments, HTML editors, and office solutions. The Linux Kit has a retail price of \$199.99 and is currently only available online at www.playstation.com. The Kit consists of Linux Version 1.0 software, an Internal Hard Disc Drive (40 GB), an Ethernet Network Adaptor, a Monitor Cable Adaptor, and a USB Keyboard and Mouse. To use this bundle, a PlayStation 2 8MB Memory Card (dedicated solely to the Linux Kit) and a VGA Monitor (with Sync-on-green capability) are required. The Linux Kit will not enhance games in any way, shape, or form. Furthermore, the hard disc drive is formatted for Linux specifically and will not work with HDD compatible games.



Xbox

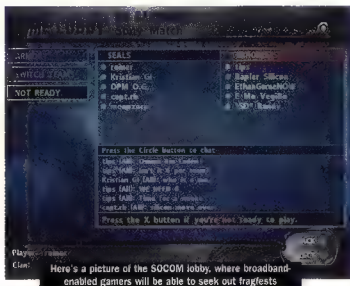
Microsoft is the most knowledgeable and skilled in online and computer operations. Assuredly, the thought of Windows running on an Xbox has crossed your mind at least once. Even though it has the most experience in this department, Microsoft has no plans of transforming the Xbox into a computer. Consumers have different thoughts altogether. If you take a few minutes out of your day to surf the web, you may stumble upon discussion boards of hackers trying to figure out ways to use Linux on the Xbox. An anonymous user is so intent on using Linux on Xbox that he's willing to award hackers up to \$200,000 for making this dream possible. He'll dish out \$100,000 to programmers who successfully port Linux to a modified Xbox, and an additional \$100,000 to people who run unsigned code on an Xbox without hardware modification. Strange indeed, but amusing nonetheless.



PlayStation 2 Online >>>

So Far, So Good

We came away from our recent sessions of PS2 online very impressed, to say the least. Hands down, the best thing going right now is SOCOM: US Navy SEALs, which avoids the pitfalls of inconsistent 56k connections with its broadband-only policy. It runs fast and furious, and nearly matches the best of the tactical military PC titles. Sony has put a hefty investment into its servers, which are located primarily in San Diego and the San Francisco area, enhanced by several sites in the mid-west and east coast. As to be expected, 56k is more prone to lag problems, but fortunately, Sony is segregating their broadband and 56k customers onto separate servers, thereby evening the playing field. Of course, where you are in relation to the server you're playing on and your baud rate and ping will also factor in to how steady your online experience is, but it does appear that Sony is doing all it can to alleviate any headaches. On the downside, we already know that 56k users will only be able to run 2-player games of Tribes Army Assault (instead of the 16-player max for broadband connections), which is just plain lame.



Here's a picture of the SOCOM lobby, where broadband-enabled gamers will be able to seek out fragfests



Star Wars Galaxies will likely charge a monthly fee for play

Even more encouraging is the fact that, for now, you'll be able to get your Internet jollies for free. Unlike Microsoft, Sony isn't charging for the service, and is letting third-party developers make the call as to how much, if any, they are going to bill gamers for their online titles. As massively-multiplayer online RPGs like Final Fantasy XI (which charges a monthly rate in Japan), EverQuest Adventures, and Star Wars Galaxies come to the fore, these free policies will likely change. However, we still expect that a vast majority of PS2 titles will offer at least some degree of no-cost Internet functionality. Another question that remains is whether SOCOM's headset microphone (which works almost as well as Microsoft's

Voice Communicator) will be used for any future Sony or third-party titles. Nothing is announced at the moment, but let's hope so. After Xbox Live launches, typing trash talk will seem about as up-to-date as communicating through telegraph. Down the road, a Sony spokesman confirmed that the company's partnership with America Online will come to fruition in the form of AOL web browsing, email, and Instant Messenger functions. We can't wait. For now, let's get ready for August 27th, and start limbering up our trigger fingers for a game of SOCOM.

Connection Fee

Sony isn't charging a monthly fee for its services, but you will need a dial-up or broadband connection. We did our research and checked out exactly how much it will cost to get the PlayStation 2 up and running. You'll of course have to purchase the Network Adaptor for \$39.99. On top of this, if you're going with the simplistic dial-up approach, you're looking at spending \$10 to \$25 a month for online services. Broadband is a tad more expensive with a range between \$30 and \$50 a month. A game will run you \$39.99 to \$49.99 (\$59.99 for SOCOM). You're basically looking at spending between \$90 to \$150.

Mega Man.EXE and his pal Lan are back...

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PlayStation 2 / Online Games >>>

Tribes Aerial Assault



Developer: Sierra • Distributor: Inevitable • Release: September

Although 16 players won't be nearly as intoxicating or as insane as the 64 player limit for the PC version, Tribes Aerial Assault is still a rip-roaring riot on the PlayStation 2. All of the character types, mountable vehicles, and game modes are still intact and running just as smoothly. Of course, to maximize this experience fully, the Broadband modem is recommended. It does work with dial-up connections as well, but with no more than two players. You'll also be able to play the game single-player through 11 missions and any of the online modes with CPU bots.

Final Fantasy XI



Publisher: Square Soft • Developer: Square Soft • Release: 2003

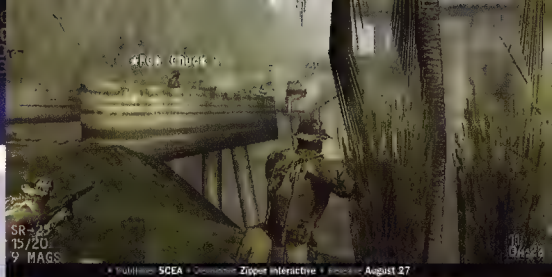
Final Fantasy XI is the first game that requires the Hard Disc Drive. Much like a PC game, Square Soft can use this peripheral continually to incorporate new to content and fix glitches through downloadable patches. If you are a fan of this long-running series, you'll be familiar with the character classes, monster types, and magical elements. On the other hand, the gameplay is a complete departure from the tried-and-true formula. Communication with human-controlled characters, forming parties, and strategizing for enemy encounters are all in a day's work. Spending countless hours to level up and obtain rare items are what this game is all about.

Twisted Metal: Black Online



Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Inco, Inc. • Release: August 27

It's free! Well...almost. When you purchase your PlayStation 2 Network Adaptor, don't toss out the extraneous paperwork! If you take the time to look through the documents enclosed, you'll see that you received a mail-away coupon that can be sent in and exchanged for a complimentary copy of Twisted Metal: Black Online. New types of levels have been added. For the first time ever, up to eight players can heat the living tar out of each other's vehicles.



Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Zipper Interactive • Release: August 27

SOCOM: US Navy SEALs

Thanks to the broadband connection (which is required), up to 16 players can compete, communicate, and team up with the SEALs or terrorists in three different online modes. Single-player gaming is also available for those of you without online capabilities.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4



Publisher: Activision • Developer: Neversoft • Release: November 5

Neversoft is taking Mr. Hawk online for a second time. Tony 4 features a slew of new online modes, and a host of innovations and improvements that were not present in Tony 3. Rumor has it that you'll even be able to host competitions on levels created within the Park Editor. If you thought Tony Hawk was incredibly addictive as a single-player game, wait until you play it online.

EverQuest Online Adventures



Publisher: SOGA • Developer: SOGA • Release: March 2003

Sony claims that it will take the average gamer approximately 600 to 800 hours to raise their character to level 50. You'll be able to trek across 323 miles of terrain, choose between nine races and 13 classes, chat with friends on a USB keyboard, and play up to three different characters. Up to 5,000 players can interact with one another in the same world, and yes, a monthly fee will be necessary. The Hard Disc Drive isn't required, but Sony is considering implementing additional features for players that do have one.



© Publisher: Eidos • Developer: Free Radical Design • Release: September

TimeSplitters 2

When it comes to multiplayer, TimeSplitters is in a league of its own. In the first game, players had the freedom to design their own levels. In the sequel, online warfare is the guilty pleasure. Up to 16 players will be able to compete at once; and you can even throw in a handful of bots for good measure. Right now, Free Radical has designed 17 different multiplayer modes – many of which will be available for online play. The variety this game offers is truly outstanding.

ATV Offroad Fury 2



© Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Rainbow Studios • Release: November 12

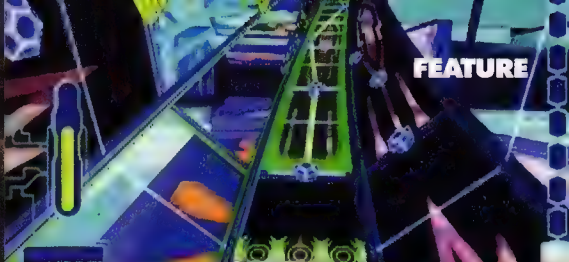
This sequel makes its precursor look like a 10-second demo in comparison. The amount of new material in this game is overwhelming. Not only has the Career mode been completely overhauled with depth and variety, you'll also be able to customize every inch of fabric on your rider, take a break in five different minigames including ATV Soccer and race for the gold online against three other human-controlled riders. Along with head-to-head competitions, a new mode called Relay allows two players to compete as a team against other players in Supercross, Nationals, Enduro, and Freestyle Stunt events.

Resident Evil Online



© Publisher: Capcom • Developer: Capcom • Release: 2003

Details on this highly anticipated venture are scarce, but we were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of this online-only title in action. As crazy as it may sound, the gameplay appears to be modeled after the previous incarnations, with human-controlled characters backed into a corner firing blindly as a herd of slow-witted zombies approach. Of course, all players online will be able to interact and communicate. More interesting yet, word on the streets is that you may be able to play as the undead as well.



FEATURE

© Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Harmonix Music Systems • Release: August 27

Frequency

The rumor early on was that Sony's network would launch with Frequency 2. Unfortunately, this isn't the case. It's not Frequency 2 – just an online version of the original.

Auto Modellista



© Publisher: Capcom • Developer: Capcom • Release: October 15

Peel out and compete against four players online (network or LAN). Capcom is also looking into using the HDD for downloadable content and player-customized logos. Sweet!

My Street



© Publisher: SCEA • Developer: Idol Minds • Release: November 12

If you connected your PS2 to the Net for personal pleasure, but have a younger sibling or child that wants a piece of the action, My Street is your solution. This non-violent title is actually eight games in one. Look on as the tyke in the house destroys the competition in heated games like Marbles, Volleyball, Pigs and Chickens, Chemistry Set, Dodge Ball, RC Racing, Lawn Mowers, and the perplexing Corn Field Maze. Up to four players can compete online or via the Multi-Tap Peripheral.

Xbox Live Online >>>

Xbox Live

The console war is exploding on all fronts, but Microsoft doesn't seem too worried about the battle that will be waged across the Internet. Assuredly, knocking the GameCube out of the way is as simple a gesture as breathing, but the PlayStation 2 may bite back when provoked. Of much interest indeed, Sony's online stance is very different from Microsoft's. Sony is opening its doors to everyone, whereas Microsoft's admittance is primarily VIP. Choosing to create a broadband-only network is a gutsy move on Microsoft's part, especially since Sony has opted to support both dial-up and broadband connections. If you have a phone in your house, you can get dial-up. Broadband, on the other hand, is a luxury. As of now, only about 35 percent of Xbox owners have it, and it's not even available in some parts of the country.

However, Microsoft should be commended for pushing the envelope. Dial-up connections can only go so far nowadays, and could potentially become a nagging headache. Will developers sacrifice the quality of a game to incorporate the lowest common denominator? With Microsoft's network, Xbox Live, developers never have to worry about the low-end users, but rather, push the multiplayer experience as far as the network will allow. Microsoft's strategy may be a little ahead of its time, but it's where gaming needs to go, and should be a shining example as to how exquisite online console gaming truly can be.

What is It?

Xbox Live is not a web browser. As you may recall, Microsoft already attempted bringing the Internet to TV viewers through a little device called Web TV. A little device that Microsoft invested \$425 million into, but nobody bought. Xbox Live is an online gaming network and nothing more. If you want to surf the web, get a computer! If you want to send mail, get a pen and paper! If you want to hang out in chat rooms, get a life! The only thing you'll be able to do is play games against people across the globe at the fastest connection speed possible.

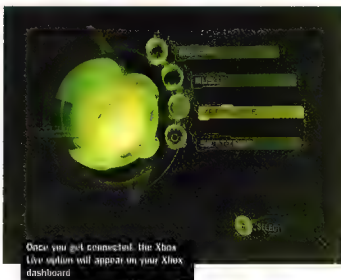
Prepping for Launch

"We're going to launch when we're ready," exclaims J Allard, Microsoft's Xbox general manager. "As for turning on the Internet service? The service is already on today. It's just a

matter of turning up the volume. It's really straightforward and simple. The expectation is that we'll have everything up and running and ready for retail before Thanksgiving." If you do plan on taking your Xbox into cyberspace, there are a number of things that you can do in preparation. For

The Xbox Live Starter Kit is packaged in an extravagant holder which we've jokingly dubbed the "man bag."

The "man bag" features pouches for games, memory cards, electric razors, and shaving cream!



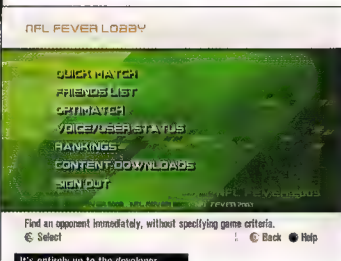
Once you get connected, the Xbox Live option will appear on your Xbox dashboard.



From here, you'll be able to set up accounts...



...and create your user profile.



Find an opponent immediately, without specifying game criteria.

It's entirely up to the developer whether or not the game will make use of Optimatch.

starts, we strongly recommend sizing up the services and prices of the Internet providers within your area. What kind of deals can you get? What are the installation fees? If you have friends who already subscribe to such services, ask them how their connections have been treating them. You're probably asking yourself why you need to go to these lengths, and we don't blame you. Think of it this way: If you don't have a good connection, it's like playing a game that's missing half of the frames of animation. This is especially crucial since Xbox Live allows players to view opponent build rates and determine whether they want to enter a game with them or not. If you have a high ping, you'll basically become the nerdy kid that always gets picked last for recess basketball games.

When you do secure a DSL or cable broadband connection, which will have a fairly expensive monthly rate, you'll need to run out and pick up the Xbox Live Starter Kit. In this package, which will retail for \$49.95, you'll find the Xbox Communicator Headset, which allows you to verbally chat with anyone online within any given game; an Xbox Live Startup Disc for setup; and a full year of Xbox Live service. As of press time, Microsoft confirmed that a number of minigames and demos would be included on the startup disc, and, tentatively, an online version of Acclaim's Revolt. As of now, a connector cable is not included.

If you already have your broadband connection, getting online should be an effortless task.

Profiling

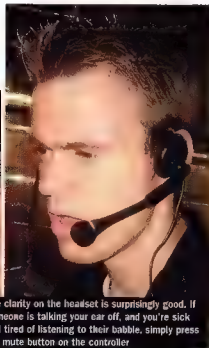
Instead of allowing users to run amok on the Xbox servers, your monthly fee delivers a number of interesting governing services. When you log onto the network, I think long and hard about your user profile. The name you select is as permanent as your social security number...or so Microsoft says. This aspect seems a little silly to us, but it does allow Microsoft to police the customer base, and also generates the sensation that you've entered a community where nobody hides behind thousands of different names. You can freely view the profiles of people online, and if a relationship is established, you can add them to your Friends list. If you feel the need, you can even access a menu of prescribed eBay-like comments. If you enjoyed your gaming session with individual, make a note on their profile for others to see. If a user named Darth Buttocks is causing trouble, and a number of people have flagged him in the past, you'll have the chance to avoid him and block him out permanently if you choose. If Darth Buttocks racks up enough complaints, the big brother at Xbox Live may take action.

Optimatch

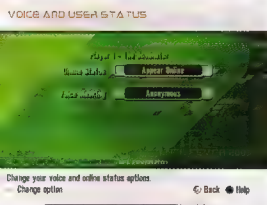
The Optimatch function will allow players to be very specific with every little aspect of a game. In addition to being able to find specific players, you'll be able to locate and enter games that are tailored to your favor. For example, in a game like NFL Fever 2003, Optimatch will search the list of players online for just about anything you want, even the Top 100 players in the nation. If you want to play 10 minute quarters, Optimatch will find out if anyone else has the same game plan and will bring up a list of the available participants. You can even sort by teams, weather conditions, penalties, Friends...you name it. Also, if you happen to have given a specific player five negative comments, they won't show up on your Optimatch listing. The developers have complete freedom as to what functionality Optimatch will have for each game.

Innovative Chat

If you were one of the fortunate people who had the chance to play NFK 2K1 on the Dreamcast network, you probably experienced the painstaking motion of dropping the controller as quickly as you could so that you could type in a humorous quip on the keyboard. Those days are long gone. With the Xbox



The clarity on the headset is surprisingly good. If someone is talking your ear off, and you're sick and tired of listening to their babble, simply press the mute button on the controller



Change your voice and online status options. Change option. Back Help. If you choose to, you'll be able to mask your voice at any given time.

Communicator headset (which comes bundled with the Xbox Live Starter Kit), you'll be able to use your vocal cords to communicate within every game.

That's right, all Xbox Live

games support this peripheral. Don't worry, there aren't any long distance fees. Furthermore, if you find yourself stuck in a match against a handful of people of the opposite gender and don't want to be hit on, you can mask your voice and blend with the crowd. Much like OptiMatch, the developer is required to implement the voice masking options for each game. This may sound completely asinine, but it's actually quite cool.

As J Allard recalls from the first Communicator headset test session, voice masking is a must. "In 1999, we decided to do voice. We had eight hardcore gamers come [to Microsoft] to test out the prototype. I was like, 'You guys are going to be the first gamers to see voice on a console game.' Are you ready for it? They were like, 'Hell, yeah! Bring it on!' They were all pumped up and everything, so we sent them off to eight different rooms. I sat in the

If a game like Dark Age of Camelot were released for Xbox Live, Mythic Entertainment would probably charge an extra monthly fee



lobby watching. I had my little headphones on and they don't talk to each other. So I bring them all out and said, 'What the hell is wrong with you guys?! Is the system broken!? Why aren't you talking to each other? You're lips aren't moving! I know it's not broken!' They responded with, 'We don't know each other.' I said that I knew that they spent all of their time in EverQuest and ICQ and are constantly messaging people they don't know, but they said, 'Well yeah. But I'm anonymous there. That's just letters on a screen with a bull— name. Here, it's my real voice.' I never thought about that. With the exception of telemarketers, you really don't talk to strangers that you can't see or have some reason to meet."

The intent was to make the network feel like you were playing a game on a couch next to a buddy — only you don't know who this buddy is. With voice masking it takes the edge off and allows you to be completely anonymous. If you want to sound like a girl, you can do it. If you want to be a robot, go right ahead. Let's say you're playing Halo 2 and you get shot up to bits and your health is fairly low, the developers can actually change your voice so that it sounds scratchy or faint or breath. We spent a fair amount of time with the Communicator, and we can't live without it now. Whether it's random chat with strangers, or flat out trash taking, it'll forever alter the way you play online games. Hopefully, developers will actually implement this feature into team-based games (like an FPS clan or RPG guild).

The Not-So-Flat Rate?

The question on everyone's mind is, "If I purchase the Xbox Live Starter Kit for \$49.95, will I have to pay anything extra per month?" The answer is a tad ambiguous. No, you won't have to pay anything unless you plan on playing certain types of games. J Allard described it as such: "Gamers understand the notion of a flat fee. They say, 'The thing that we really understand is cable. We don't understand early cell phone billing. We like the new \$49 plans.' So basic cable comes with ESPN and MTV. The basic fee contains most of the stuff that you'd want. If there are premium stations like HBO, you'll

have to pay extra for that. There's going to be a community of games where the developer continual invests in the world. That's 20, 30, 40 people that come to work every day to make that game improve. That's the premium cost. We don't expect Activision to nickel and dime you for new levels and clothing [in Tony Hawk]."

Downloads

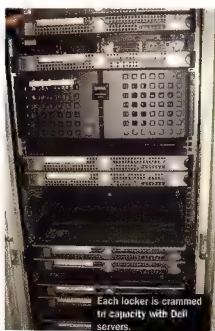
The Xbox hard drive (which is built into your unit) will play a vital role in the online gaming experience. As you may have guessed, developers will have the freedom to create downloadable items such as new levels and characters. There's also a chance that you'll be able to download game demos, music, and video clips in the future.

Connection Fee

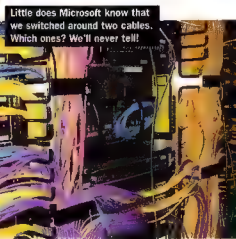
Getting the Xbox online may break a few bank accounts. Here's a rough ballpark figure of how much you'll need to spend on launch day: You'll need to fork out \$49.95 for the Xbox Starter Kit, \$49.99 for a game, and between \$30 and \$50 (plus possible installation fees) for DSL or cable service. So you're basically looking at spending \$130-\$150 on launch day. You'll also have to continue paying your DSL or cable fee on a monthly basis.

Server Power

Xbox Live is powered by five data centers located in London, Seattle, Tokyo, Redmond, and Tukwila. By the end of next year, Microsoft predicts that each of these centers will house roughly 200 game servers each. To put this into perspective, the Redmond center, which is just the test network, is larger than all of Microsoft.com, which just happens to be one of the top five websites on the Internet.



Each locker is crammed fit capacity with Dell servers.



Little does Microsoft know that we switched around two cables. Which ones? We'll never tell!

Xbox Live Online Games

Unreal Championship



Publisher: Infogrames • Developer: Digital Streams • Release: October 31

A version of perhaps the best online FPS series to grace the PC will finally make its way to Xbox very shortly. Unreal Championship basically brings a whole new set of maps, and introduces vehicles. Through Xbox Live's Optimatch function, players will be ranked based on their performances in the game. The only apprehensions we have so far revolve around the lack of mouse and keyboard support. Whether or not the controller is adequate, you can count on Unreal Championship being the FPS king to topple when Live launches.

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon



Publisher: Ubi Soft • Developer: Red Storm • Release: October 29

Lay down a fiery assault cooperatively with five teammates, or compete against one another in a handful of exciting 16-player adversarial modes. Ubi Soft has pulled out all of the stops for this port. You'll be able to find and join games through your Friends list, or use Optimatch to find the best game to enter by mode, map, or number of players. Much like Sony's SOCOM: US Navy SEALs, you'll be able to bark out verbal orders to your team through the Xbox Communicator.

XIII



Publisher: Ubi Soft • Developer: Ubi Soft • Release: February 2003

By the look of XIII, you'd never suspect that it was running on the Unreal engine. Why is it called XIII? Well, it turns out that the lead character can only be identified by the "XIII" tattooed on his clavicle. Interesting, no? It also turns out that this mysterious XIII character has a sixth sense that acts like radar. Along with a slew of weapons like an M16 and a sniper rifle, you'll be able to pick up and use inanimate objects such as broken bottles. Up to 16 players will be able to play XIII online in a number of familiar and innovative modes.

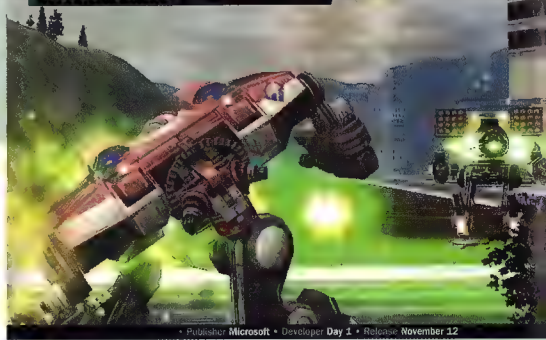


Publisher: Microsoft • Developer: Digital Illusions • Release: First Quarter 2003

Midtown Madness 3

Microsoft recently pushed Midtown Madness 3 into the first quarter of next year, but we can only imagine what kind of online connectivity it will have.

MechAssault



Publisher: Microsoft • Developer: Day 1 • Release: November 22

Day 1 is working feverishly to finish off the online component of MechAssault. The exact player count hasn't been finalized just yet, but Day 1 is shooting for eight or 12. MechAssault will also be one of the first games to incorporate downloadable content. In the future, you can expect to see new mechs and levels incorporated. We've even heard that one of the downloads may reveal a new mode that allows players to build bases.

Whacked!



Publisher: Microsoft • Developer: Presto Studios • Release: October 9

This crazy action game reminds us of *Cel Damage*, only without the really cool vehicles and mass amounts of destruction. The gameplay is very reminiscent of games like *Twisted Metal* and *Vigilante 8*, but the havoc you wreak is on foot and the weapons you bear are goofy as opposed to deadly. Up to four players can compete online in this maddening festival of craziness!



Stake

• Publisher Metro 3D • Developer Gannex Art Studios • Release December 2

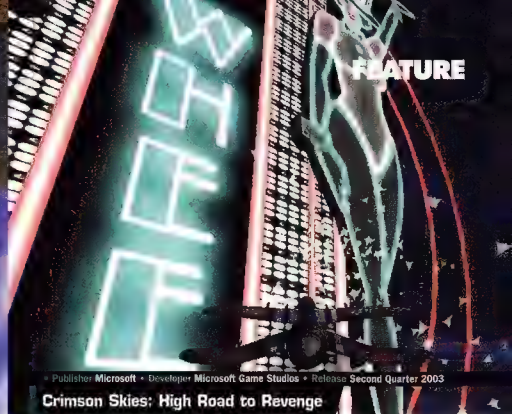
We haven't seen a decent arena fighting game since Power Stone 2, but we're definitely intrigued by Stake's prospects. From what we've seen thus far, Stake leans a little closer to the mindless brawler type of gameplay than Power Stone, but there's definitely strategy involved, especially for the eight-player online battles. Shortly after the December 2 release, Metro 3D is planning downloads of new maps, characters, and a level editor.

Shining Lore



• Publisher Phantagram Interactive • Developer Phantagram Ltd. • Release TBA

For the time being, the Xbox is RPG starved. Of course, come next year, this will change with the release of Star Wars Galaxies. Phantagram is also planning on throwing its hat in the ring with Shining Lore, a MMORPG that veers closer to the console RPG formula than today's time-intensive online games. In addition to the standard RPG ingredients, Shining Lore promises to keep gamers occupied through a number of minigames, ranging from battle chess to card games. The PC version will release in December, while the Xbox and PS2 versions are expected to make an appearance late in 2003.



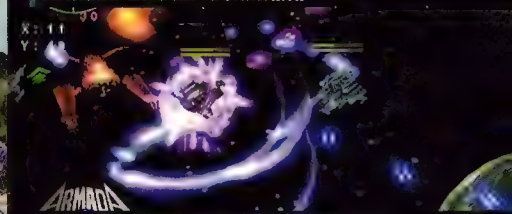
FEATURE

• Publisher Microsoft • Developer Microsoft Game Studios • Release Second Quarter 2003

Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge

Microsoft hasn't announced this game for Xbox Live yet, but we have a sneaking suspicion that it's on its way. The game was recently delayed until 2003, and J Allard spoke of playing Crimson Skies with the user profile named "Red Baron." Hmm. Crimson Skies looked great to begin with and we can only dream of how exciting it'll be to dogfight against other human-controlled aviators.

Armada 2: Star Command



• Publisher Metro 3D • Developer Metro 3D • Release September 15

It may not look like much, but if you were fortunate enough to play the original on the Dreamcast, you know just how addictive this strategic space shooter can be. The fact that it now supports up to eight players online (four otherwise) makes it all the more enticing.

Lamborghini



• Publisher Majesco Games • Developer Rage Software • Release First Quarter 2003

Racing is definitely one of the most promising online genres, and we have a feeling that Lamborghini will be one of Xbox Live's premiere franchises. Rage Software is well versed in games like this, and you can't go wrong with the Lamborghini license. The game will feature nine different tracks and 25 types of Lamborghini cars including the Murcielago, Countach, 350 GT, Miura, and the ever-popular Diablo.

GameCube Online

Have you ever watched two bullies play keep-away catch from a child that is roughly a third of their size? If so, then you have a good picture as to how the GameCube's online prospects shape up in comparison to the PlayStation 2 and Xbox. The GameCube, of course, is the little child that will never wrap his hands around that ball.

Beginning in late September, the GameCube will in fact join the online gaming revolution. Players will have the option to purchase the v.90 Modem Adaptor, which works with most ISP connections, or the wickedly fast Broadband Adaptor. Both items will retail for \$34.95 apiece. On the game side, the options aren't nearly as luxurious. That's right, there's only one title that currently taps into the GameCube's online capabilities. Hopefully, you have a taste for role-playing games—primarily role-playing games that debuted roughly two years ago on a system that crashed and burned. From Internet launch day until who knows when, Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II is the only online compatible title on the market.

Nintendo of America's vice president of marketing, George Harrison, pretty much summed up Nintendo's philosophy on the matter by saying, "We think it's a very interesting market. We also view it as a very small market for the foreseeable future...and one where it's yet to be demonstrated how to make a profit. We're taking an approach that allows publishers to have an environment where we can experiment. They can decide how to approach it based on their own business model, not a model we're imposing on them."

With Microsoft and Sony leaping forward, we don't necessarily see online gaming staying "very small" for long. As disappointing as Nintendo's stance may be, there's definitely a chance that it could be the right decision. What if gamers don't embrace online gaming? Where does that leave Sony and Microsoft? To say the very least, it'll be interesting to see how things shape up in 2003.

For now, however, if you want to play Phantasy Star Day in and day out for God knows how long, hopping online is a sound investment. On the other hand, if you're approaching the GameCube's online activities with hopes that Nintendo will release a web browser and a plethora of games, the future (as of now) appears to be very bleak.

The Difference

Sony is providing its service to everyone, and this option won't be nearly as taxing on your bank account as Xbox Live. As you can clearly see, the online war is just as competitive and interesting to watch as the consoles themselves. Who will come out on top? Did Sony do right with dial-up? Most definitely. Getting the casual gamer involved is priority one. Did Microsoft go too far by making Xbox Live broadband only? In our opinion, yes and no. When Sony offers both options, you have to match or you will be left in the dust.

On the other hand, Xbox Live will most definitely be the place where hardcore gamers compete. If the Xbox sticks around for another four years, Xbox Live will definitely evolve into a serious force, but we really don't see everyone forking out the cash on day one to play Whacked or NFL Fever 2003. As for Nintendo, there is a chance, albeit a slim one, that the company may avoid online gaming altogether, but don't be surprised if you see Nintendo playing catch-up next year.

Come 2003, the biggest online game will actually land on both the PS2 and Xbox, which is surprising when you take into account who the developer is. Late next year, Sony Online Entertainment and LucasArts will

Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II



This is the only officially announced GameCube online title that is currently slated to release. Technically, however, it is two games in one—if that means anything. You may have played these games years ago on the Dreamcast, but you will soon have the chance to do so again. New material is planned, and both versions will work with the dial-up or broadband modems.

Star Wars Galaxies



bring the highly touted PC game, Star Wars Galaxies to console consoles. According to our contacts at SOE, the console versions of Galaxies will be quite different from the PC game. Exactly what this statement entails, we haven't a clue, but we can't wait to see how these adaptations fare. The rumor mill has also produced an interesting story that Gran Turismo will be making an appearance online in 2003. Couple this with a handful of must-have RPGs, and people could stay online forever.

What does Microsoft have to counter? How do Halo 2, Project Gotham Racing 2, and Half-Life: Counter-Strike sound? Both systems have quality product in the pipeline, but again, the war boils down to convenience and pricing, and Sony caters to both.

Online Sports

All four of the simulation-based pigskin games will be online this year. As such, players will be treated to some unique experiences, not only from game to game, but from console to console.



For the PlayStation 2, EA's Madden NFL 2003 comes to mind when you think of the system, but it may not turn out to be the most feature-rich game on the platform. Sony's own GameDay NFL 2003 is (so far) the only football title on the PS2 that has drivers for USB keyboard support to enable real-time trash typing. Furthermore, Sony has a special offers section in its online lobby that the company has earmarked for tournaments and other user promotions. Sega, meanwhile, will be the only publisher with online play appearing on more than one console. NFL 2K3 for the PS2 will host tournaments as well as an online ranking system called the Sega Sports Challenge. Beware, however, as you can't even type to opponents on the PS2.



On the Xbox, the Communicator (which comes with your subscription to Xbox Live) is surely its go-to guy. However, Microsoft's own NFL Fever 2003 won't be the only game to utilize this revolutionary real-time chat feature. Sega's NFL 2K3 has added it to its roster of online features, as well as those already listed above. Xbox's broadband-only approach should also keep Fever and 2K3 running at a fairly healthy clip.

Shortly after the online football frenzy is underway, basketball will light up the networks. By next year, we predict that all sports will be online in some fashion.

Spells punishing: 26,875

Tournaments underway: 882

Creatures attacking: 49,438

Prizes on the line: 1,000

1

Deadly strategies: Unlimited

2

MAGIC

The Gathering™

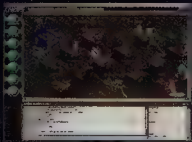
ONLINE

In seconds, *Magic: The Gathering Online* lets you access over a thousand powerful creatures and spells. All different. All deadly. And every year, hundreds more are added to the arsenal.

Magic Online:
Second to none.



DECKLISTS, STRATEGIES



MORE COMPETITION



BEST REWARDS

Get the game free: mtgonline.com



PREVIEWS



XBOX

B.C.

SIMULATED SEMI-SIMIANS

If there's one thing we want out of games nowadays, it's realism and intrigue. We don't want to play a game that looks like polygonal garbage with characters that are as predictable as a Steven Spielberg film. Gamers are a fickle sort; and if something doesn't look good, play well, and capture the imagination, we'll find something else that does. In the highly anticipated game B.C., Xbox owners will see the thin, red line between artificial intelligence and simulated life shrink even more. B.C. promises to be a game which (in the words of creator Peter Molyneux himself) will be "completely simulated." What does that mean? It means that every scrap of life you see when you play this game will "live" independently – every bug will crawl around on the ground according to its own needs, and every Raptor will hunt when it's hungry – not just when a scripting sequence tells it to.

Let's back up for a second, though. There has to be more to a game than bugs crawling around in a semi-intelligent manner. B.C. is just as much about an epic storyline as it is about what makes that storyline interesting to play. You've been thrown millions of years into the past to raise and support a tribe of cave-people. As you may or may not know, cave-people are not very bright (just look at Encino Man, dude!), and need a lot of direction. You'll take control of a few ragtag early humans, teach them how to support themselves and how to interact with their environment. For example, to help your tribe begin to produce its own food, you may bring three people over to a couple of rocks that resemble a mortar and pestle. Telling them to examine these items will initiate a phase where they'll experiment with what you've given them until they figure out how to grind up corn to make corneal. Likewise, you can select a few people to



One of these herbivores is watching for danger while the other munches on grass

sit around a campfire together, and they'll begin pounding out the basis for a rudimentary language.

It won't be all fun and games for these people, though. Remember, there are very large, very hungry reptiles and other assorted nasties that want to tear your limb from succulent limb. Teaching your people how to defend themselves is of paramount importance if you want to survive, as is passing on the knowledge of arrowhead making and various other skills. Each member of your clan will grow and develop their own unique likes and dislikes, as well as fears, prejudices, wants, needs, and interests. Just make sure those interests don't include luring predators near your camp.

Aside from the realism, you'll need to worry about keeping things on the up-and-up so humanity doesn't die out. Didn't we mention that? Yep, you're in control of the destiny of mankind, so don't screw it up! Use the land to your advantage – explore new areas and move your clan when you think it's right, or hunker down for the winter when the time arrives. Don't be bashful, or slow for that matter. There's a lot riding on this, so you'd better keep your eye on the ball, and make sure humans don't go the way of the Little River Band.



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** INTREPID GAMES/LIONHEAD STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** TBA



The character models are polygon-rific



"Hey! Which way to the Hilton?"



Dinosaur mohawks. Dig it



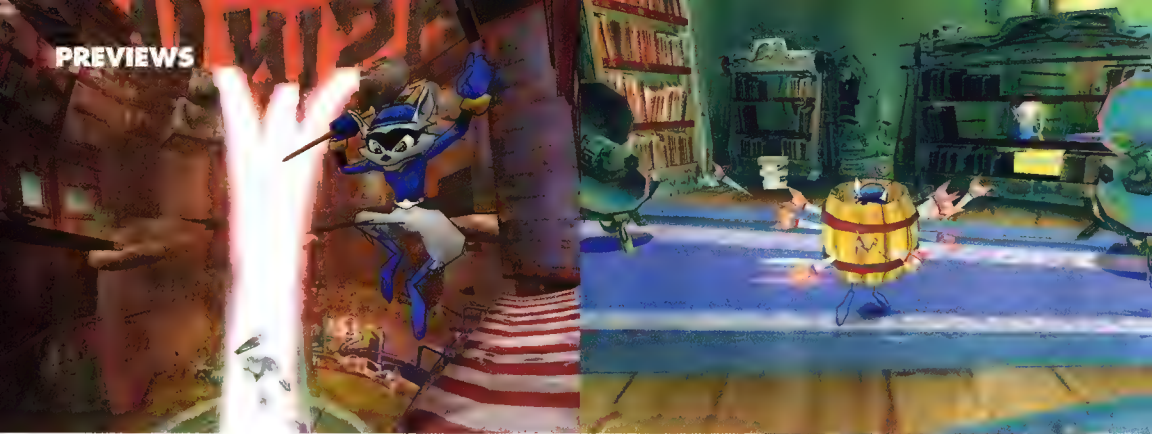
Prehistoric people were very fito fitness and muscle tone



"Dude! Look to your right!"



Every location you see in this picture is available for your exploration



PLAYSTATION 2

SLY COOPER AND THE THIEVIUS RACCOONUS

YEAR OF THE PLATFORMER

Stop! Do not hastily dismiss Sly Cooper as "just another platformer featuring some generic critter." Sly already possesses that addictive sense of platforming magic found in games like Jak & Dexter, Ape Escape, and Mario 64; yet, this title presents an atmosphere and feel all its own.

The gameplay is an eloquent blend of collection, puzzles, obstacles, and intense platforming. Players snag three types of items throughout each level: coins, horseshoes, and message bottles. The first two basically provide Sly with extra life, while the last more directly enhances the experience. If you manage to get every bottle, you're awarded with a special move.

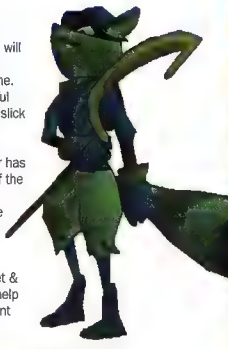
Sucker Punch boasts that Sly can learn around 20 unique moves, the most interesting of which are Slow Motion and covert hat bomb. Players can access Slow Motion during a jump to aid in platforming. The inconspicuous hat bomb resembles a land mine: Place it in the path of an unsuspecting enemy to blow it to pieces. The game design does not require players to obtain every special move, but those who do will find certain sections easier, and have access to more secrets and hidden areas. The most enjoyable of these surprises will perhaps be the numerous minigames, which range from revisions of classics like Robotron to more original shooting and racing games.

The puzzles, obstacles, and platforming components compose the heart of Sly's gameplay. During a recent gameplay demo, Sly encountered a number of precarious moments that required exact platforming precision, and of course, since you're a professional thief, covert tactics. In one instance, the camera moves to present a 2D perspective (à la Klonoa). Sly must then bounce off numerous awnings, slash enemies, and hide behind various pillars all while trying to avoid a spotlight quickly moving over the screen.

Fortunately, the only problem we've encountered thus far involves the lack of health: One hit and you're dead. Although Sucker Punch seems to have designed each level well enough to prevent constant frustration, there are already a few spots that require trial and error, meaning death is

necessary.

However, we don't suspect this problem will hinder the our overall enjoyment of the game. Besides, with beautiful cel-shaded graphics, slick dynamic music, and around 30 levels of gameplay, Sly Cooper has the stuff to be one of the best platformers around. Even with the eminent release of heavy hitters such as Super Mario Sunshine and Ratchet & Clank, we still can't help but feel the excitement for the master of the Thievius Raccoonus.



▲ The hookstaff is a versatile weapon



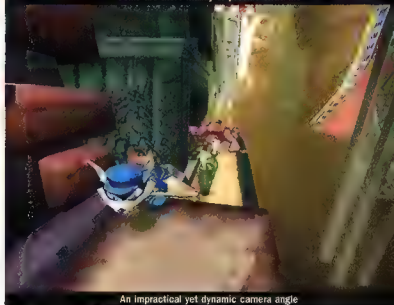
Hit those awnings without getting spotted



Platforming can be treacherous, offering a good challenge



Coins are there mainly to provide extra life



An impractical yet dynamic camera angle

■ **STYLE** ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SUCKER PUNCH
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 17



This is the racing minigame, and it controls pretty well



One hit and you're toast, but enemies can usually be killed in a single swipe, too



Many sections are best dealt with using covert tactics



PLAYSTATION 2

GUNGRAVE

BE YOUR OWN PALLBEARER

He's dead, he's pissed, and he's wearing a black and red suit. No, it's not Spawn; it's Grave, the star of Sega's new shoot 'em up, Gungrave. Grave's not only got a chip on his shoulder, but also a coffin on his back. He's packing more heat than the sun, and will mow down bad guys like blades of grass.

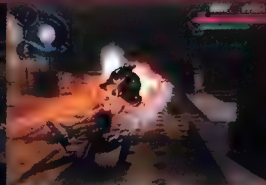
With cel shading (Sega is forgiven for using this technique, since it originated it) and a decidedly anime art style, Gungrave has its own look. Grave's after the Syndicate, a criminal organization he was affiliated with in his more "lively" moments. Helping him is an old man and a naive little girl. Against him are countless, armed adversaries. But he's dead, so what's the worst that could happen?

Grave is packing a pair of pistols with limitless ammo, so feel free to fire to your heart's content. The coffin he carries can be swung around as a melee weapon, and there are also a few special moves to dispatch a whole screen of enemies with ease. Unfortunately, all that heavy metal Grave carries has him moving a little slow. Holding circle puts some spring in his step, but his normal walking speed would have senior citizens passing him up like Rosie O'Donnell in a marathon.

The mission of Gungrave, as it tells you at the beginning of each level, is to "kick their ass." While the game achieves this, it remains to be seen if that's enough to make for a compelling release.



Cutscenes let you see Grave's front for once



We don't know where that missile comes from, and frankly we don't want to

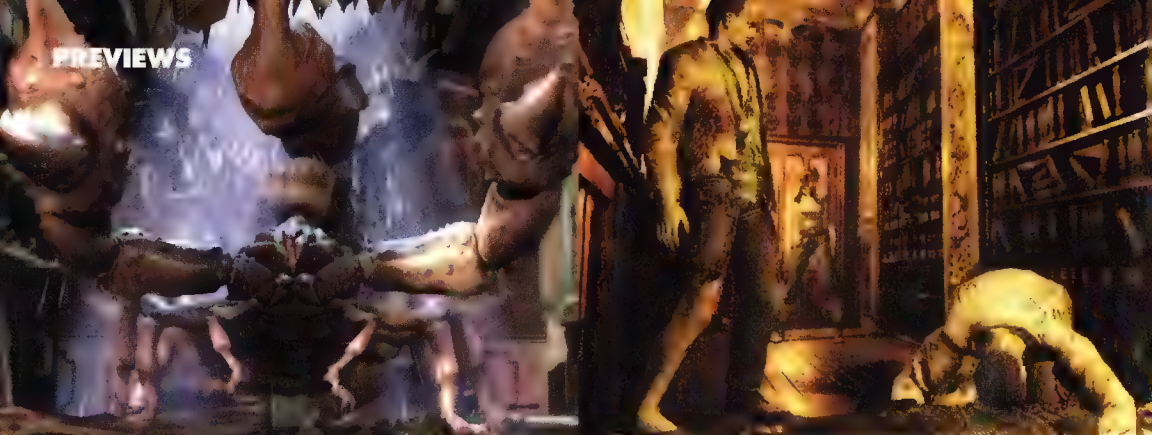


Swing your coffin 'round and 'round. Make the bad guys hit the ground



"Ha ha! You missed, suckal!"

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER RED ■ RELEASE SEPTEMBER 17



GAMECUBE

RESIDENT EVIL 0

NEW MYSTERIES, OLD GAMEPLAY?

Before the notorious mansion incident, the first recorded account of the T-Virus' destruction actually occurred in the suburbs of Raccoon City. According to witnesses, a small group of horribly mutilated people randomly began attacking and consuming the flesh of innocents. Police sent out a small elite task force dubbed Team Bravo to investigate the situation, but the team's helicopter mysteriously crashed, leaving only two members alive: Officer Rebecca Chambers and reformed convict Billy Cohen. Now it's up to you to take command of these heroes, and play through the events that lead up to the first Resident Evil.

Of course, since Capcom created Resident Evil 0 as a prequel, we already know that Rebecca survives, and something (probably bad) happens to Billy. Maybe we'll discover that he's the one transformed into our favorite boss, Tyrant! We also are aware of the evil corporation, Umbrella, and its responsibility for this event. So then, what twisted new surprises, horrific scares, and difficult challenges does Capcom have in store?

Based on the latest demo, the atmosphere feels even creepier than the remake of the original, with the graphics making their obvious contribution. Capcom has tweaked the character models, as well as animated the prerendered backgrounds. This latter element definitely intensifies the

experience, and makes the overall presentation seem even less out-and-paste.

Furthermore, the game's initial setting (the train) features only narrow hallways and particularly tiny rooms, which heighten the sense of claustrophobia. In many cases, players will enter a room only to discover two zombies waiting impatiently for their supper.

Although we already encountered some frightening situations, the game's overall feel is slightly different. With more zombie encounters, more ammo, fewer zombies, and two simultaneous characters, the action and events move along at a much faster pace. Don't get us wrong; wasting zombies left and right with Rebecca and Billy is exciting and invigorating, but it prevents the buildup of anxiety. Fortunately, we know that some areas require the team to split, which will slow events; plus, Capcom could've intentionally designed just the train section in this manner.

Our only other gripe thus far is the lack of defensive weapons, like the daggers and grenades featured in the recent remake of Resident Evil. However, this element only makes a minor contribution to gameplay. Besides, Capcom has plenty of time to include them in other levels (if it hasn't already), as well as surprise us with even more noteworthy improvements and additions.



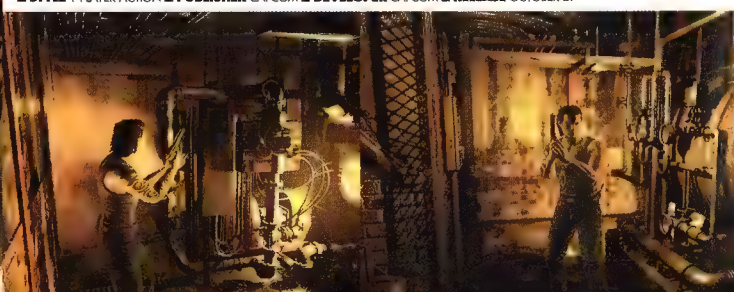
Justin's annoying love for scorpions will make killing this boss all the more fun



Monsters, zombies, and guns — oh my!



Small rooms with zombies require quick reactions



The puzzles will certainly offer a challenge, but seem easy in the demo

The character models and textures are amazing

■ STYLE 1 PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 29



PLAYSTATION 2

UNLIMITED SAGA

A NEW TYPE OF GRAPHICS

SaGa Frontier wowed

many of us with its beautiful 2D graphics and unusual plot, which consequently helped it stand out among the crowd. The story followed an interesting historical chronology of events that revolved around a kingdom and its land and people, rather than follow the exploits of one particular hero. If, in Unlimited Saga – the latest addition to the series – its appearance and battle system are in any way indicative of the entire package, then we'll likely be treated to yet another unique RPG.

Most gamers will probably mistake the graphics for either 2D pixel-based sprites or cel-shaded polygons. However, Unlimited Saga uses neither of these techniques. The lead artist, Yusuke Naora (famous for his art in Final Fantasy X), explains that they create each character from a series of frames and parts. Once these are finished, the artists connect each piece together to form a final set of animations. The final result: superbly fluid animation with detailed characters in a 3D environment.

Headed up by Akitoshi Kawazu (who worked on both the FF and SaGa series), Square will provide a new, open-ended battle system that should make combat interesting throughout. Players will have regular attacks, spells, and monster summons at their disposal. At each turn, you'll be able to execute five commands; but instead of assigning one command to each character, you can order one character to attack three times, and have another heal the party and then cast a spell on an enemy. After the orders are issued, a slot machine-esque wheel appears to determine what type of maneuver your character will perform.



Perhaps these are some Mystical Wonders?

The end result could be a double, triple, or quadruple slash! And, if you prefer, your character can save these attacks for a later turn and combine them with the attacks from other characters to create one huge offensive!

To balance this combat system, and prevent particular party members from getting too strong too quickly, Hit Points (HP) will regulate commands. Each time one is issued, the character will lose HP; once you deplete the HP, the character's Life Points (LP) will start to decrease.

Unfortunately, we know significantly less about Unlimited Saga's story, but we did discover that the plot will focus on a few characters this time: an ex-prirate named Laura and a young boy called Henri. Apparently, these two are somehow caught up in a search for the seven Mystical Wonders. Once your party procures all of the Wonders, they can release the power of

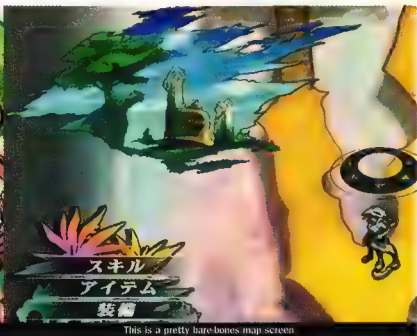
the Gods, and once again bring peace to the land. Of course, we suspect that as things unfold, you will gain at least a few more members.

Although we would actually like to see the historical story approach continued and refined, we're sure it will at least be adequate. As long as that's the case, the other elements (mainly the battle system) should make Unlimited Saga a memorable experience.

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ PUBLISHER SQUARE
 ■ DEVELOPER SQUARE ■ RELEASE SPRING 2003



There are supposed to be CG movies as well, but some cut-scenes will feature art



This is a pretty bare-bones map screen



PLAYSTATION 2

TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

LESS BOOBS AND MORE 'TUDE

The cynicism around the announcement of Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness has just cause. After all, releasing five games in five years that play similarly (faults and all), and then actually killing Lara only to resurrect her again, is bound to produce more than a few disgruntled gamers.

Nevertheless, this series' massive success has inspired a sixth adventure. Fortunately, this time around, Core understands that in order to maintain its fan base, and recapture the cynics, it must make drastic improvements, changes, and enhancements.

Unlike previous installments, Core will break AOD into three gameplay-conscious sections, which are held together by an overall plot. The first features Lara in various European cities such as Paris and Prague. She's summoned to Paris to aid her old mentor, Von Croy, only to find that he's been murdered – and she's being framed for it. As the story unfolds, players discover that an evil group called the Cabal are somehow involved. These five villains (probably bosses) possess preternatural powers that distort reality.

In terms of gameplay, the city environments and plot call for play mechanics that deviate from their predecessors. Players not only receive various stealth moves (think Metal Gear), but they'll also be required to interact with many NPCs. Depending on who Lara speaks with and what actions she takes, the outcome will change. Furthermore, Core plans to reward

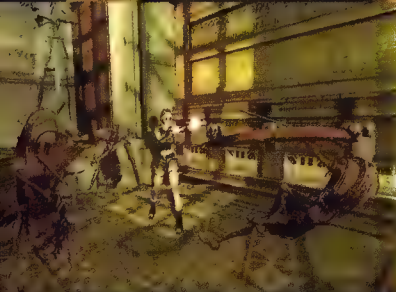
players who actually take the initiative to talk to everyone and explore hidden areas. For example, if you discover and complete a bonus section, the game might reward you with increased power or speed, which would thereby make gameplay easier and allow access to other secrets.

The second part of her adventure will feature traditional Tomb Raider action, along with an atmosphere that you'd expect – but with new moves to spruce things up. In one incident, Lara swings from a tapestry into a statue – causing it to fall into and destroy a wall – and then flips safely back to the ground.

The third part marks the series' most significant alteration: Players must use a different character, Kurtis Trent. He wants to avenge his father by killing his murderer. We presume this is the same person that Lara pursues, since they eventually team up. Lara and Kurtis mainly differ in their play styles; he's more action oriented, so you'll have access to new moves and distinct weapons. Kurtis possesses a gun, as well as a Glaive (shown above) – his main method of attack, which he can hurl at enemies, and control using his limited, yet useful, telekinetic powers.

The supernatural powers, a dark story, covert tactics, and new character certainly suggest that Core has all those creative juices flowing. But it remains to be seen whether all of its effort can culminate into something truly inspired and exciting.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** CORE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



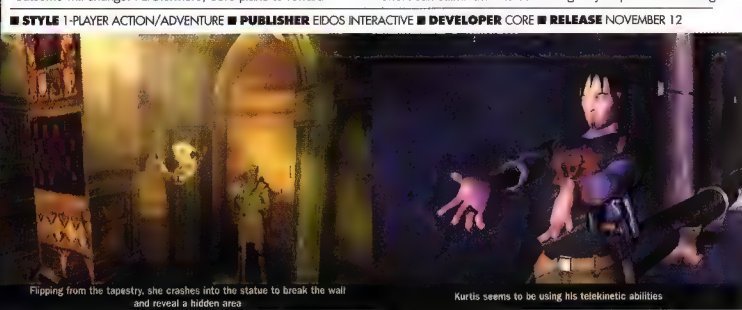
It would be nice to pistol whip those sword-bearing freaks!



It appears that Kurtis also has a few stealth moves of his own.



Platforming will remain an integral element



Flipping from the tapestry, she crashes into the statue to break the wall and reveal a hidden area

Kurtis seems to be using his telekinetic abilities



PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / GAMECUBE

MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

FATALITY!

Originally slated to street in September, Midway has pushed the release of *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance* back until late December. Yes, it is disappointing that we're going to have to wait another four months to get our greedy little hands on the game, but as always, the extension in the development cycle should produce a better product at the end of the day. Good things will come to those who wait.

In the meantime, Midway has supplied us with a wealth of new information and visual material. If you read the *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance* cover story from the April edition of *Game Informer*, you heard rumblings from Ed Boon and his team that they were tinkering around with the idea of creating a female version of SubZero. If you look closely at the screenshot above, you'll see Kano fighting a female adversary named Frost. This is, in fact, the character that Boon spoke of. And yes, she is a part of the Lin Kuei clan. We'd also like to note that she does wear a mask much like SubZero's - Kano just happened to knock it off moments before this picture was taken.

Boon also talked a lot about how the combat would be more physical this time around, with projectiles and special attacks playing second fiddle to combos. A lot of readers

dropped us emails, venting how *Mortal Kombat* is unique because of its frantic, projectile-based play. We regret to inform you that this aspect has been toned down significantly, but it is still in the game. The projectiles in *Deadly Alliance* are primarily used as long range attacks, but still harness traits from the long running series. Scorpion will pierce opponents with his spear, and SubZero holds true to his name with magical ice blasts.

The aspect that we've actually wondered the most about is how Fatalities will work. Don't worry - Boon hasn't defiled this crucial component in the slightest. If anything, the Fatalities in *Deadly Alliance* will be more gruesome and realistic. Midway is steering away from the cheese factor this time around. How will the Fatalities be performed? From what we hear, in exactly the same way as they always have. The imagery expressed within SubZero's first Fatality really gets our blood pumping. We can't wait to see what kind of murderous moves the other characters can unleash. Like we said, *Deadly Alliance* won't be available until December. It's going to be a bloody Christmas indeed.

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER MIDWAY ■ DEVELOPER MIDWAY ■ RELEASE DECEMBER



If characters smash an object in the environments, there's a good chance that they may go right through it, showering particles everywhere

What else can we say other than, "Get over here!"



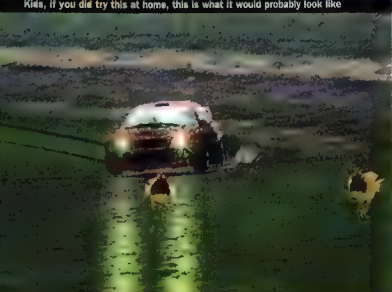
Scorpion stands dazed...

...as SubZero digs into his back...

...and extracts not just the spine but his entire skeleton!



Kids, if you did try this at home, this is what it would probably look like



This is the Chicken Run you've always wanted



Gran Canaria's two laps are along different routes

PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / GAMECUBE

RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS

GET A WHIFF OF THIS

You probably think that rally racing isn't for you. Peugeot might as well translate into "Le Car" for all you know, and maybe you think it's best left at that. So why is Activision of all companies doing sniffing around this world of exhaust, and even worse smelling Europeans? Hoping to bring you the rally game of your dreams, that's what.

If there have been two common problems among most rally games recently, it's that they both are and aren't rally games. You see, the problem with the sport is that you don't face off against live opponents. Instead, you try to beat someone else's time along a particular stretch of road. That exciting hey-I-rugged-you-off-a-sheer-cliff-face-so-there kind of racing naturally isn't a part of the rally experience. Rally Fusion remedies this by giving you a slew of arcade-like modes that pit you against AI opponents, who are smart enough to dislike losing as much as you do. Hill Climb takes you and 4 to 6 other cars to perilous heights. Elimination knocks out one opponent after another at different checkpoints until it's just you and the leader sprinting to the finish. Many other modes are to be had, such as Driving Challenges and Follow the Leader. For those more into the sim side of things, however, you can participate in a championship mode that does use the realistic beat-the-

clock format, as well as the actual Race of Champions. This is a specific tournament held in Gran Canaria.

The second main problem with most rally games is that they don't rely on the brakes enough. This is where they are unreal. Rally Fusion isn't just about laying off the accelerator; it's about managing that careful balance between speed and sliding that's so important to the sport. Some of the courses we saw were mad fun, as you'd launch off a jump and have to prepare your brakes to careen around a turn almost as soon as you landed. If this isn't enough to keep you wide-eyed and caffeinated; avalanches, chickens, and other distractions will occasionally jump out at you. Finally, Fusion comes with both a detailed damage model and some environments that equal those in Xbox's RallySport.

By bringing the arcade and sim sides of rally racing together into a hopefully complete package, Activision will have to do a good balancing job to keep both types of gamers happy. The spider-cracked windshields are cool, but can you damage out of a race? Is the game's championship mode as deep as the car physics and arcade extras? If so, Activision and Climax could bring rally racing to the mainstream with an accent that you'll finally understand.



If you look closely, you can see the water droplets that form on your windshield



Rally Fusion's globetrotting gives you all sorts of terrain

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER CLIMAX ■ RELEASE WINTER

" I WAS A 99 LB. BARBARIAN "

- Gothar of Gundria



BEFORE UPGRADE



AFTER UPGRADE*

"I used to get molten lava kicked in my face.

I was a little girly man, better suited to playing with sissy baby dolls than with battle axes. But then I mastered the **UPGRADE FEATURE** in **BARBARIAN**. Now nobody messes with me...

NOBODY!!!"



NEW & BETTER FORMULA
2/3 Brawl
1/3 Adventure

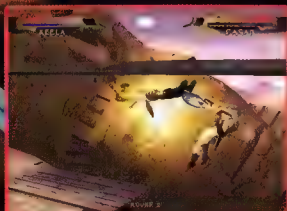
BARBARIAN is a revolutionary new game engineered to increase – and maintain – character power and ferociousness, fast! In recent head to head field tests, even mildly upgraded barbarians crushed their friends and foes without mercy. The MASSIVE 1-PLAYER QUEST mode – with 10 characters to choose from and literally hundreds of adventures to play – is the perfect training ground for customizing your barbarian, increasing strength and magic, and winning friends and influencing people with pure brute force. But wait! There's more: **BARBARIAN** also features an insane MULTIPLAYER MODE for up to 8 playable characters on screen at once, plus totally interactive environments, and best of all an exclusive ass-kicking "save-your-customized-barbarian-and-take-him-anywhere-with-you" formula!

**DON'T SETTLE FOR LESSER GAMES.
DEMAND BARBARIAN TODAY.**

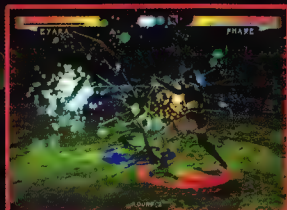
www.barbarian-game.com



"I had a great time in Barbarian. I had a lot of fun and I enjoyed it. I haven't seen any other game like it. I would love to see BARBARIAN 2!"

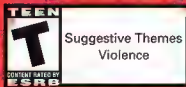


"Here I am getting Medieval on Keela. My weapon of choice is usually a tree, or a pillar, or my opponent... but you know me, everytime I can grab onto something and throw it..."



"I had no social life before, but now, with BARBARIAN'S SAVE AND RUN formula, I can take my muscles with me to a friend's... and work that disco magic, if you know what I mean..."

* Your actual results may vary.
Mr. Saggy Breasts.



PlayStation 2



PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION

X-VAL HEALING

Whether it was a learning curve, or simply time constraints, Paradox has finally taken significant strides to correct the problems with this series. The control seems to be the most significantly improved element. After only a few minutes of play, we noticed that performing the Street Fighter-style special moves, executing the Marvel VS Capcom influenced air attacks, and chaining together the Tekken-like tap combos is actually a piece of cake.

Paradox will also go a step beyond with a few minor innovations. Taking advantage of the presence of an analog stick and d-pad, players can move in complete 3D with the stick, and fight in typical 2D fashion with the pad. Story Mode takes on a different form than what's usual to the genre, too: Instead of proceeding through events with a particular hero, players now get one comprehensible plot, which is broken up by fights. At each of these encounters, players can choose one character from a group of allies. But of course, if your only concern is the fighting component without the story, you can play Arcade Mode to your heart's content.

In total, Activision plans to feature 24 Marvel heroes and villains; these include Forge, Juggernaut, Phoenix, Bishop, Sentinel, Lady Deathstrike, Rogue, and Havok. Plus, if you're lucky enough to own an Xbox, you'll get an extra level, and the ability to play as Pyro (a hidden character).



The character models look bland, but the effects aren't bad

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **DEVELOPER** PARADOX (PS2, XBOX), EXACT (GC)
 ■ **RELEASE** FALL



GAMECUBE

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

THE FUNKY MONKEYS

Aside from Luigi's Mansion, Nintendo owners didn't have much to get excited about when the GameCube launched last year. Luckily, Sega stepped to the fore and delivered Super Monkey Ball, a unique arcade title that was both amazingly simple and incredibly difficult. That's a deadly combination, as anyone who lost part of their sanity trying to conquer the game's seemingly endless series of boards knows. Apparently it was successful, as Sega is now bringing out an all-new sequel — one that should eclipse its predecessor in every way imaginable.

For starters, the Story Mode has been expanded to a mind-boggling 150 levels, a full hundred more than the original. These modes are divided into 10 worlds consisting of 10 levels each, and augmented by 50 expert levels that are unlocked by superior performance and scores. Thankfully, this segment of the game now features unlimited lives and continues, but there is also a Challenge Mode, which gives limited lives to players who truly want to test their skills. Even more exciting are the Minigames, which now number at a full 12. All your favorites (including Monkey Golf and Monkey Bowling) from the first are present and accounted for, but revamped with new stages and gameplay tweaks. The six new minigames include Boat Race, Monkey Soccer, Monkey Baseball, Monkey Tennis, Dog Fight (a flight combat contest), and Shot (similar to Virtua Cop, but with Monkeys that shoot fruit at each other).

Going along with the impressive gameplay addition, graphical improvements have been implemented as well. The gameboards are still simplistic, but the lush fantasy backgrounds that surround them are quite breathtaking. Also, there is an absolutely hilarious story that is told between levels via real-time cutscenes, tracing the tale of Dr. Bad-Boon, a mad scientist who has taken all the bananas from the monkey's world.

It's super-ridiculous, and extra-funny, in that weird, Japanese way. For now, we'll end by quoting the monkeys themselves: "Magical spell is Ei-Ei-Pool!" No more needs to be said.



Meet your nemesis, Dr. Bad-Boon



...and Shot



Remember these words — they may save your life

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA/AMUSEMENT VISION ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 26



GAME BOY ADVANCE

POKÉMON RUBY/SAPPHIRE

CARRYING ON THE FAMILY JEWELS

Even if you weren't a hype-filled adolescent, the Pokémon games have been some of the best handheld titles released. The series' popularity may be waning, but we are sure there's still quite a contingent waiting to throw their Pokéballs around in the next Pokémon games. While 2003 is definitely a long way off, we have new info and screens to keep you trainer hopefuls happy in the meantime.

Following Pokémon Crystal's example, Ruby and Sapphire will allow you to play as a boy or girl. These new characters appear to have some wild choices of hair and attire, making former game star Ash look like an even bigger wuss. As they journey around the world, you'll see the difference Game Boy Advance's power makes in both big things, like the town environments; to minute details, such as reflective puddles and footprints in the sand.

The Pokémon themselves are the games' main draw, of course. Ruby and Sapphire will feature over 350 unique monsters – some only found on Ruby, and some exclusive to Sapphire. You'll catch Pokémon that resemble real-life animals, while others will be straight-up funky looking. In a startling first, you can have two of your creatures on the battlefield at once! We don't know if double-team moves are in the works, but the possibilities are nearly endless.

The strange e-Card Reader that has been shown since the GBA first launched will be put to good use here, as it will allow compatibility with the upcoming Pokémon e-cards, used in the collectible trading card game. Pokémon may not be as popular as it once was, but it's still got the star power and the gameplay to make waves in the handheld universe.



■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** GAME FREAK/CREATURES/NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** 2003

Lang
HP 539 240

PLAYSTATION 2

LEGIA 2: DUEL SAGA

AN RPG FOR THE FANS

Anyone familiar with the last Legend of Legia will immediately feel comfortable with this sequel. Besides offering a new story, the game and gameplay mechanics are set up similarly. Most importantly, this means that the unique battle system remains intact.

During combat, players input a series of commands using the d-pad to create a combo. If a specific sequence is pressed, your character will perform a Master Art, delivering more damage. To keep this element fresh throughout, players can learn new Master Arts by experimenting with different sequences.

Fortunately, the developers further enhanced the experience by adding Origins. Each character possesses a specific Origin of a specific type; the player can summon these creatures in a battle to perform defensive and offensive maneuvers. And of course, your Origin will learn new attacks as you proceed through the adventure.

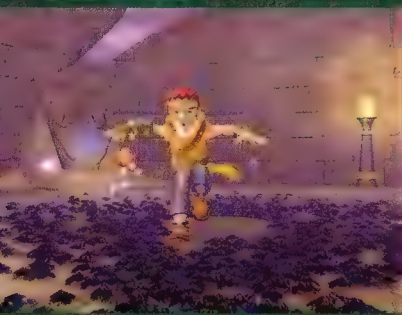
Unfortunately, the story seems less promising, although we're still uncertain of many details. Basically, it revolves around a young man named Lang, who is coming of age. When someone lifts his town's Water Stone, Lang is charged to recover it before the ever encroaching desert turns the town to dust.

It may not sound like the most interesting plot, but as long as the other elements (music, combat, and characters) stand out, fans of the genre and the first game should be pleased.



The combat is Legia's strong point

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** FRESH GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** PROKION ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 1



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

HAVEN: CALL OF THE KING

NOT JUST ANOTHER PLATFORMER

Despite the myriad of platformers recently announced, Haven's three-year session of TLC has given its developers the chance to create something unique, and of top-notch quality. So far, based on its story, gameplay features, and graphics, Haven certainly shows potential.

Players assume the role of Haven, who is called to liberate his fellow Aurians, who have been enslaved by the Vetch—a race of cruel invaders. To do so, Haven must ultimately obtain a bell called the Golden Voice, which the Vetch have hidden. If Haven rings the bell, it will summon King Athellion to save the planet.

Interestingly, Haven and his people are enslaved through a poison administered by the Vetch. So, throughout the numerous planets you encounter, instead of gathering the all-too-typical coin, Haven must collect enough antidote to stay alive. Of course, players will also find that areas are littered with power-ups, weapons, and secrets.

Based on our initial impressions, Haven's shield and the various mechanized vehicles he pilots during the game are the features that should really excite gamers. Besides just being a defensive maneuver, players can use the shield to dampen sound and sneak past enemies. The vehicles, fortunately, are numerous, and include a motorcycle, glider, spacecraft, hovercraft, and boat.

Hopefully, Haven's promised gameplay variety will receive a worthy execution. Otherwise, it could be easily overlooked in a field of high-profile platformers like Ratchet & Clank.

We can't wait to see what obstacles the glider area has in store

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ PUBLISHER MIDWAY
 ■ DEVELOPER TRAVELLER'S TALES ■ RELEASE FALL



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

BLOODRAYNE

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL BUT DEADLY

BloodRayne has been garnering a lot of attention, much of which is due to the comely looks of its leather-clad heroine. Still, there's more to this game than just a pretty face, and on a recent swing by the Game Informer offices, Majesco and Terminal Reality representatives showed us a new build of the game that revealed some gruesome new details regarding its gameplay and levels.

For one, it was obvious that this game features foes much more horrific and deadly than the Nazis that have been featured in pictures so far. We saw everything from giant bugs to hordes of snake-like creatures that tear the heads off victims and occupy their bodies. In an even more interesting twist, we even saw a level where BloodRayne takes command of a giant mech suit and goes after Nazi scum with an arsenal of missiles. Take THAT, Dieter!

The PlayStation 2 version of BloodRayne has always looked solid, and now the GameCube and Xbox version are on track as well — and may even prove to be graphically superior by the time this title ships. The only gripe we had with the build we saw was that the animations tended to be almost too quick. As she went through her arsenal of high-speed, martial arts maneuvers, sometimes the effect resembled that of a buxom Tasmanian Devil. However, Terminal Reality is still fine-tuning the game, and promised us that it would address this issue.

So, what do we have here? A red-hot babe equipped with tons of weapons, four special mind powers (one of which can slow down time à la Max Payne), and large knives on her elbows that runs around killing Nazis and various undead ghouls. Whaddya want? Us to show up at your house with the game on a silver platter and give a backrub while you play it? C'mon. Times 'a wastin'. Get your skills ready, BloodRayne is coming this Halloween and you better be ready.



Usually, soldiers don't get this kind of treatment unless they're stationed in Thailand

BloodRayne's special powers let her know which enemies are ripe for feeding



Whoa. This kind of reminds us of a movie we saw

Got blood?

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER MAJESCO ■ DEVELOPER TERMINAL REALITY ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 31



XBOX/PC

KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: THE CRUSADERS

CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE

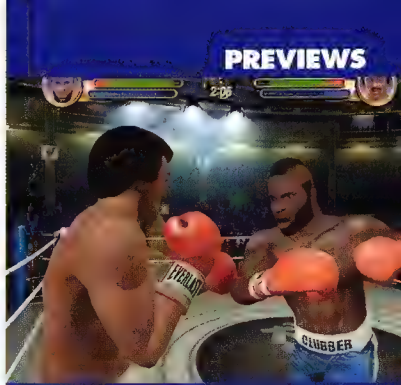
Many of us have seen movies like *Braveheart* or *Gladiator*, and have wondered what it would be like to be in the middle of those huge, hand-to-hand battles. What would the crunch of steel on bone sound like? How long would you last in that kind of brutal and bloody environment? Phantagram plans to answer these questions for you with their release of *Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders* next year.

Being billed as a mix of real-time strategy, action, and fantasy, this game is one that will give you intimate control over how your army battles and where. The story revolves around repelling an Orcish horde as it begins to invade the peaceful countryside of the Sacred Land. We don't need those filthy Orcs ruining the Sacred Land, so suit up and prepare for war, baby!

You will choose one of four heroes who will act as generals in your army. Through sound strategic decisions and a little luck, this person will gain experience and aptitude – along with the soldiers – as he or she accumulates victories. Your hero can also execute special moves and abilities in the thick of battle to turn the tide of a confrontation you might be losing. You'll need to keep sharp, though – up to 450 units will be on the field at once. We'll have more information for you on this great-looking game in the coming months.



■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ PUBLISHER PHANTAGRAM ■ DEVELOPER PHANTAGRAM ■ RELEASE Q1 2003



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

ROCKY

EAT LIGHTNING & CRAP THUNDER

Let us remember Sly Stallone for his dramatic, heroic role in the Rocky movies, rather than thinking about him as the arm-wrestling trucker in *Over The Top* (go for it); the cop whose mom rules his life in *Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot*; or the country-singing cab driver in *Rhinestone*. Ubi Soft is resurrecting the pugilist protagonist and all his rivals into a next-gen boxing sensation!

Along with "The Italian Stallion," gamers will lace up gloves with the furious Ivan Drago, bad seed Clubber Lang, and Rocky protégé Tommy Gun (who was played by boxer Tommy Morrison). Each of the 20 fighters looks phenomenal, and will no doubt take you to the limit in any of the game's modes – including Movie Mode and Knockout Tournament. Damage is simulated through realistic bruises, swelling, and plenty of the red stuff. You'll even see the shimmer of sweat coat your fighter's body as the bout rages on.

Before you step through the ropes against these heavy hitters though, you'd better get your behind to the gym. Mickey will use his tough love to guide you through a rigorous regimen of sit-ups and combo drills. You're not going to KO Mr. T by just sitting on the couch eating Gummi Crunch, you know.



■ STYLE 1 OR 2 PLAYER FIGHTING
 ■ PUBLISHER UBI SOFT ■ DEVELOPER RAGE SOFTWARE
 ■ RELEASE NOVEMBER 12

PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2

MYSTICAL NINJA GOEMON



The world's favorite (and only) blue-haired cartoon ninja is back for the ought-two in *Mystical Ninja Goemon*, a port of the Konami-developed Japanese PS2 hit of last year. Konami wasn't too keen on bringing it to the States, but fortunately Working Designs has inked a deal that will allow it to publish the game on our shores. Expect a ton of high-quality action/RPG fun, all with that loving attention to detail that comes with every Working Designs title. As is typical of this company, there is no firm release date for *Mystical Ninja Goemon*.

PLAYSTATION 2

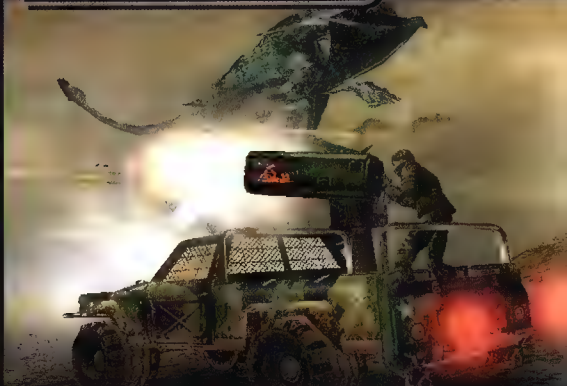
GROWLANSER II & III



The *Growlanser* series is beloved among the hardest of the hardcore Japanese RPG fans, which makes it a perfect fit for Working Designs, a company that makes its living selling obscure games to people that know who Satoshi Uruahihara (*Growlanser*'s legendary character designer) is. As a result of a recently signed deal, the company will be bringing the revered sequels *Growlanser II: The Sense of Justice* and *Growlanser III: The Dual Darkness* to our shores. Both games will be sold separately, but no release dates have been given at this time.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

REIGN OF FIRE



We don't want to declare the Oscar race over already, but if *Reign of Fire*, which features Matthew "I keep getting older, they stay the same age" McConaughey and Christian "Hip to be Square" Bale battling dragons in post-apocalyptic England, doesn't win Best Picture, we'll be shocked. Really, futuristic dragons are almost as cool as the super-intelligent sharks from *Deep Blue Seal Lucky* for us, Bam Entertainment is working on an action title based on the film, which will incorporate third-person gameplay, military vehicles, and even a little aerial dragon combat. Look for *RoF* on PS2 and Xbox this fall, then on GameCube in early 2003.

PLAYSTATION 2

CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH



Repeat after me: "If it's done with clay, it's A-OK!" Rockstar is most likely going to use this mantra in the video game adaptation of MTV's show, *Celebrity Deathmatch*. Mills Lane will wear the striped shirt, and Johnny and Nick team up for commentary. The list of crazed celebs is a wild one, including Jerry Springer, Tommy Lee, Carmen Electra, Busta Rhymes, Marilyn Manson, Dennis Rodman, and – making his second appearance in this month's issue – Mr. TI Score the fake gore in early 2003.

PLAYSTATION 2/GAMECUBE

RTX RED ROCK



Although the name makes it sound like a motocross game set in Colorado, we can assure you that RTX Red Rock is a third-person action/adventure through-and-through. The title will introduce a new hero, E.Z. Wheeler (no relation to Easy-E or I.P. Freely), into the LucasArts universe, and follow his efforts to rescue the Red Rock Mars colony from hostile alien forces. Equipped with a synthetic arm (which can be powered up with a number of different tools and weapons) and a sassy portable computer system named IRIS, it appears that RTX Red Rock could very well overcome its dorky premise with some groundbreaking gameplay.

PLAYSTATION 2

SILENT SCOPE 3



The Silent Scope series has been one of the only genuinely innovative gun games of the last few years, and now Konami is coming back hard with Silent Scope 3. The game will be a bounty for fans, offering up an all-new story mode and also 14 levels from last year's arcade sensation, Silent Scope EX. Like 37 percent of all video games, SS 3's plot revolves around an underground terrorist organization that abducts a prominent scientist as part of its plan for global domination.

PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS



We're still waiting for Empire Interactive's long-promised Starksy & Hutch for the PS2, but for now we'll feast on Big Mutha Truckerz; a big-rig mission-based racer that would be one of the most unique driving games in recent memory - if Sega's 18 Wheeler American Pro Truckler had never existed. Still, we were glad to hear that Empire has signed Eutechnyx, the able developers behind Test Drive Le Mans and 007 Racing, to create the title. Bonus street-cred points awarded for spelling "mother" as "mutha." Look for Big Mutha Truckers sometime this holiday season, good buddy.

PLAYSTATION 2

CY GIRLS



Based on a popular line of Japanese dolls...er...action figures (sorry geeks!), Cy Girls proves that the only thing better than an action/adventure game that blends martial arts combat, high-tech weaponry, and stealthy gameplay is an action/adventure game that blends martial arts combat, high-tech weaponry, and stealthy gameplay with hot chicks! It should be interesting to see how Cy Girls pans out, but given Konami's obvious experience in the genre, we have high hopes.

PC

MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR



No one does massive scale battles better than Creative Assembly, and with Activision at its side, it will have outdone itself when this title ships on August 20. Medieval: Total War will incorporate many of the intricacies of medieval battle techniques, including different types of artillery, unit formations, and updated AI for both sides. Plus, look at that picture! Holy crap! We're very excited to see how this game turns out.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 – Limited appeal. There are always a few people 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 presented.

GRAPHICS

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

SOUND

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

PLAYABILITY

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

ENTERTAINMENT

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

REPLY 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.



ANDY

Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** Exotic Coasters With Free Food And Drink, Roller Coasters (I So Want To Ride X At Six Flags Magic Mountain) **Dislikes:** Deal Breakers, Hot Weather, Angry Mothers Who Don't Read The Story, Connecting Flights **Current Favorite Games:** WarCraft III, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2

When Andy's not yelling at a game for "rippin' him off," he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, *Unbelievable Jolly Machine*. A longtime fan of *Metrodirt*, 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 try 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:** My Tireless Devotion To Becoming A God/Like Entity, Sidekicks, Cowis And Capes **Dislikes:** The Mental Damage That Reading Too Many Comic Books Can Eventually Bring, The Fact That Superman Wears His Underwear On The Outside Of His Costume **Current Favorite Games:** Super Mario Sunshine, 30000: US Navy SEALs, Madden NFL 2003

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 589 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, Extreme Sports **Interests:** Buying A Suit, Getting New Glasses, Flaming Lips, The Best Bootlegs In The World Ever **Dislikes:** Flying, Buckled Concrete, Flat Tires **Current Favorite Games:** Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Super Mario Sunshine, Super Monkey Ball 2, 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:** Mowing My Lawn, The Road To Perdition, Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts **Dislikes:** Shots (With The Needle, Not The Glass), Dog Poop In My Yard, Carson Daly **Current Favorite Games:** Madden NFL 2003 (Xbox), Medieval: Total War, Outlaw Golf

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



JUSTIN

Handle: The Digital Deviant **Expertise:** Action/Sports, Action/Adventure, Fighting, RPG **Interests:** Boba (Bubble Tea), Mr. Show DVD, Bargains, Uptown Minneapolis, Rippled Fuel, Healing, Google Maps **Dislikes:** LeBaron, My Car's ABS Light, The Things You Like **Current Favorite Games:** Dead To Rights, Street Fighter Alpha 3 (GBA), Aggressive Inline, Drakan: The Ancients' Gates

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



KAYO

Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Racing, Action/Platform **Interests:** Paul Newman, Grilling, Training Camp, The Hammond B3 **Dislikes:** Moty, The Smug Subway Guy, Commercials Using Licensed Music (With Your Own Damn Songs) **Current Favorite Games:** Madden NFL 2003, NFL 2K3, Super Mario Sunshine, Super Monkey Ball 2

When not buying copious amounts of records, Kayo can be found exercising good taste, feeding the goats, and trying in vain to update his wardrobe into the 21st century. Like other young men of his generation, he quickly found out that the one true real world application of good grades was the free arcade 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, Simulation **Interests:** Waffle Ball, Spinza, Buddhist Thought, Japanese Culture And Language, Preacher **Dislikes:** Real Violence, Dishonesty, Cucumbers On My Sandwich **Current Favorite Games:** Super Mario Sunshine, Emporer: Rise Of The Middle Kingdom, UT 2K3, Street Fighter Alpha 3, Castlevania: Harmony Of Dissonance

Chet considers gaming to be a lifestyle, which means he spends a ridiculous amount of time gaming. When he's not in an intense session with it or, relaxing with 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:** New Car, The Onion, Painting And Screenprinting Computers, Concerts, Air Conditioning **Dislikes:** Feeling Out Of The Loop (See Also: Sold Out Concerts), Growing Out Hair **Current Favorite Games:** Aero The Acrobol, Super Mario Sunshine, Grand Theft Auto III

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 drawn out boss battles since she was 8. She has been known to wax philosophically about why *Jiggy 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 *Gauntlet*.

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

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

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

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 CG scene.

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

framesteal - 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.

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

minigame - A small, simple game within a larger one.

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

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

Wii! **Yai Waiho!** - Mario's Triple Jump.

REVIEWS

GAME OF THE MONTH SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

After six years of golf, tennis, and partying, Mario is finally returning to his platforming roots. While early speculation pointed at a 64-bit rehash, Nintendo has actually gone out of its way and created a sequel that is overflowing with variety, unique gameplay spins, and harrowing challenges. We didn't believe it ourselves, but *Super Mario Sunshine* truly is the most accomplished Mario game yet. Page 82.





"...this is a great game for any self-respecting PS2 owner to buy."

PLAYSTATION 2

SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS

SEALED FOR YOUR PROTECTION



T 9.5

- **Concept:**
A thinking person's tactical shooter with a bit of new technology thrown in
- **Graphics:**
The character models are gorgeous, and the environments are nice to boot
- **Sound:**
The great battle effects coupled with the intimacy of your fire team's radio chatter do a lot to immerse you in the action
- **Playability:**
The controls might take you a couple of minutes to get used to, but they're nothing you can't handle
- **Entertainment:**
Even if you can't get online, this game offers a lot of thrills in a variety of ways
- **Replay Value:**
High

I'll come right out and say that I had a hard time reviewing this game. I've played a heaping helping of tactical shooters in my day, and this is definitely one of the best – but not for the reasons you might think. Everything about SOCOM is solid. The controls don't get in the way of coaxing out the best tactics your trooper can offer, the graphics are sharp enough to be reasonably believable, and the sounds keep you interested. For all intents and purposes, this is a well put together title that I probably would have forgotten about a couple of days after playing it. Except for one thing – one big thing: the headset communicator.

This little device was the difference between a good score and a great score for me. I know that sounds a little ridiculous – after all, I'm reviewing the game not the gizmo, right? Yeah, I get it, but the gizmo is what makes this title come to life. I haven't had an experience quite like this one during a single-player military simulation. Let's all remember that I'm both a console junkie and a PC slave, so I've seen this type of thing, but I've never seen it pulled off on a console before. The commands you can give the men in your fire team are pretty basic, but they get the job done. I tried out a number of different dialects and accents to try to fool the computer; but as long as you're clear, your command will usually go through with surprising speed. So why does this thing make the game so good? Because you actually get the

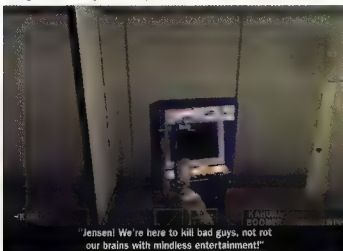
feeling that you're in the field with three other guys, and you're all working together to accomplish complicated objectives. Sitting behind a tree and telling Bravo team to cover the area while you secure a small house is quite awesome.

Aside from the technical innovations that make SOCOM worth owning, there are a couple of things to look out for. One of the massive gaffes this game makes is the hit-or-miss AI which both your teammates and the enemy exhibit from time to time. Another is the suspect bullet collision you'll see. During one operation, I had a "tango" (enemy) perfectly in my sights. I pulled the trigger when my scope was in the middle of his neck, and he simply dropped to one knee for a moment, then came up firing. His partner, who was standing a couple of yards away from him, did nothing. These things don't happen very often, but they do happen; which is a bit disappointing.

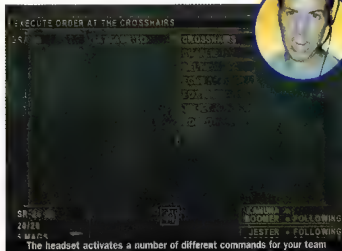
Then there's the online mode – which I have to say is quite luscious. The voice communicator is sweet if you have a bunch of people who know what they're doing on your team; and the ranking system is perfectly tuned to keep you in the game looking for more kills. People who aren't as interested in the military as myself may have a harder time getting into SOCOM, but this is a great game for any self-respecting PS2 owner to buy. – **KRISTIAN**



Deactivating bombs is an important part of a SEAL's repertoire



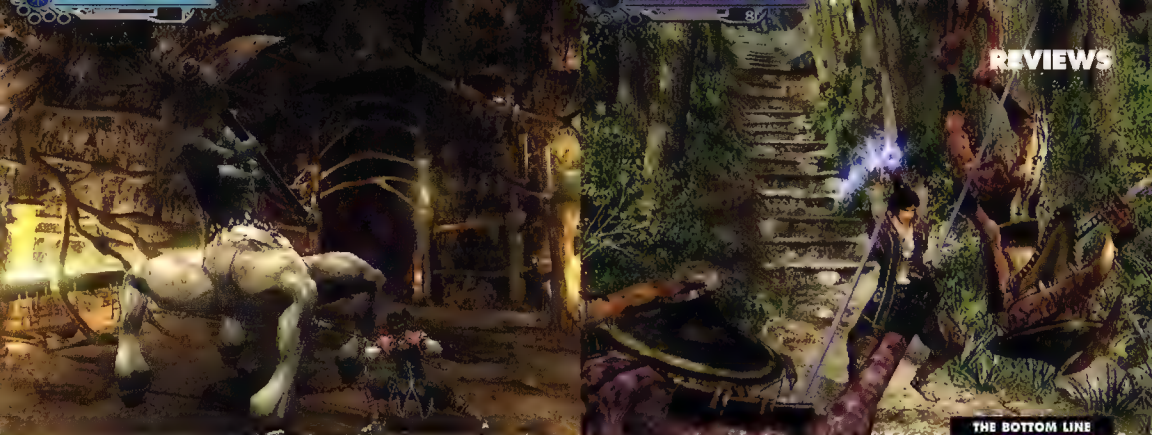
■ **STYLE 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION** ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** ZIPPER INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 27



SECOND OPINION

I've invested countless hours into PC games of this ilk. Believe me when I say that I was more than surprised to see that SOCOM can hang with the big boys – namely Counter-Strike and Operation Flashpoint. Along with a deep single-player experience, SOCOM lights up the internet with sumptuous online play. If you haven't had the chance to play a game like this online yet, and your multiplayer repertoire is limited to games like Halo and Red Faction, brace yourselves for a mind-blowing revelation. SOCOM will forever change the way you play games. Verbally coordinating tactics with teammates, raiding terrorist bases, commanding sniper towers – it really doesn't get much better than this. The controller interface is right on the money, the graphics gleam with detail, and the overall experience is a neurological overload of intensity and obsession. A must.

REINER – 9.5



PLAYSTATION 2

"...the game quickly transforms into a photocopy of the original *Onimusha*."

ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

THE TWO FACES OF SURVIVAL HORROR

With video games in a constant state of evolution, and developers continually pushing the envelope, time is of the essence. A title that is considered a blockbuster could in fact become antiquated a day later. Such is the case for *Onimusha*. Within the same year of its release, *Onimusha* was upstaged and outclassed by *Devil May Cry*. Conceptually, the two games are similar in design; but when you break down the gameplay execution, *Devil May Cry* simply crushes *Onimusha*—making it look archaic by comparison. It's a dog-eat-dog video game world.

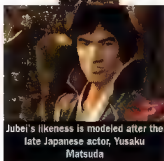
During the creation of *Onimusha 2*, it only seems natural that the developers wouldn't rest until their game was equal to or better than *Devil May Cry*. Just moments after turning on the game, I believed just this. The opening cinematic is simply breathtaking, baring finely crafted animations, motion picture-like cinematography, and an artistic style all its own. The opening segments of play bask in this glorious light as well. The pre-rendered backdrops scream with lifelike details; the combat system is as swift as it is vicious; and then, when you'd least expect it, the game tosses a handful of RPG elements into your face. Not only will you find yourself conversing with villagers, purchasing items, and killing monsters for gold; you'll also be trading gifts with a handful of different characters in hopes of encouraging them to join your party. If you can persuade a specific character to unite with you, they'll lend a hand in boss

encounters, and may even be playable for a few segments in the game. The beauty to this element is that you can only entice one character at a time. The person you collaborate with will determine which alternate routes you can navigate. Henceforth, you'll have to play through the title numerous times to see everything.

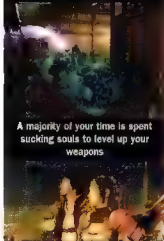
At this point in the game, I truly believed that *Onimusha 2* ran neck and neck with *Devil May Cry*. The combat system wasn't nearly as engaging, but the RPG angle gave survival horror an addictive hook. I spouted off my praise for the game to everyone in the office, completed my online preorder, and canceled any plans I had for my week. After going to great lengths to extend my time with the game, everything came crashing down. At a certain point in the quest, all of the RPG material mysteriously vanishes and never resurfaces. The enemies cease to drop gold, communication channels are silenced, and the game quickly transforms into a photocopy of the original *Onimusha*.

Early on, *Onimusha 2* showed promise and appeared to be the innovative followup that it so desperately needed to be. However, as the game went on, and the entertaining gameplay aspects disappeared, my enthusiasm for the game withered. Of course, even with this unfortunate design, it's still a decent title and a worthy sequel for the series. At the same time, it's nothing new and a generation behind the current trends of gaming. —REINER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 27



Jubel's likeness is modeled after the late Japanese actor, Yutsaku Matsuda

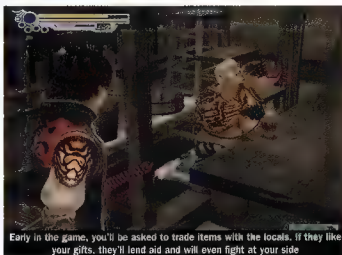


A majority of your time is spent sucking souls to level up your weapons

Game Informer Fart Joke #631: "Oh dear Lord, Jubel! Did you fart! It, like, absolutely reeks up here!"



Even though Jubel has never met *Onimusha*'s Sannanosuke, his combat prowess is identical



Early in the game, you'll be asked to trade items with the locals. If they like your gifts, they'll lend aid and will even fight at your side

THE BOTTOM LINE

M 8.75
MATURE
CONTENT
RATED
ESRB

- **Concept:**
A high-powered sequel that experiments with new gameplay components, but quickly reverts back to the tried and true survival horror formula
- **Graphics:**
Pre-rendered bliss
- **Sound:**
The voice acting is so bad that it's laughable. Oddly, the unintended humor fits
- **Playability:**
The movement, combat, and puzzles perfectly mimic the original *Onimusha*
- **Entertainment:**
With choice titles like *Devil May Cry* on the market, the *Onimusha* style of play is not nearly as engrossing as it once was
- **Replay Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Onimusha 2 resides uncomfortably between being a copycat of the first one and an all-new experience. I think that fans of this series (like me) will have their fun, but clearly see where it could have expanded. Despite some new fighting moves, I found myself merely jamming on the attack button too much to be impressed. Combine this with the fact that you still can't use the analog stick for movement, and sometimes you'd swear you were playing the original. What will grab your attention, however, are some of the awesome uses of FMV in the traditional pre-rendered backgrounds, and the gift system with the other characters—an RPG aspect that isn't fully explored. Capcom brought actor Yutsaku Matsuda's likeness back from the dead, but I think the series needs rebirth, not resurrection.

KATO — 8



PLAYSTATION 2

MADDEN NFL 2003

ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACK EXTRAORDINAIRE

"You've got to become a student of the game."

Madden NFL 2003 finds itself in an interesting situation — one that is almost impossible to escape. Football games have gotten to the point where it's harder to make people's jaws drop from year to year. Thus, the sport's games tend to be seen as merely roster updates. This favors a title like Sega's NFL 2K3, because it's easier to notice its changes as it tries to catch up to Madden's veteran standard. So how do you preach to the faithful? As new Vikings coach Mike Tice said to QB Daunte Culpepper: "You've got to become a student of the game."

Madden's major changes have occurred on the defense to raise the learning curve and create more strategy. Before the snap, the new linebacker shifting (which the computer also uses effectively) lets you set them up to combat either inside runs or sweeps — a much-needed addition from last year. For its part, the CPU will juke and spin more. I liked this, but it seemed to peel off too many big plays; busting through as many as six tackles in one instance. As far as the defensive strafe move, its relevance is harder to assess. I could see it being useful for those who like to be ball-hawking free safeties, but if you play the DT like me, it's harder to master and integrate into your game. Overall, the defense comes together nicely due to a refined AI that rewards cornerbacks that sit on routes with INTs.

Offense has gotten both easier and more demanding. The

slant hot routes for WRs (who are smarter in breaking off routes and sitting in zones) are awesome and although not perfect, the interior running game is noticeably improved. Perhaps the biggest difference is in the QB's momentum. If you get happy feet easily, you'll miss a lot of your passes as you try to run and gun. Also, there are more errant throws as you try to hit — likely due to QBs' slow release of the ball. These new pieces are also introduced in Minicamp mode, which is not only for fun, but helps you appreciate and study these nuances so you can master and incorporate them into your game. Further depth is provided by the scouting and pre-season development of players in Franchise Mode. Wannabe GMs like myself will delight in participating in the new dynamics of draft day. Don't even get me started on how fun it is to make your own plays...

Gang tackles (the best among this year's football games) and other cool new animations are there for those who take just a cursory look at the game, but that won't do this title justice. That being said, Madden 2003's leap may not be as dramatic as Sega's, but this game is no flumble by EA by any stretch of the imagination — even if its online approach is very basic. The rewards for exploring its awesome depth make this Madden another exceptional catch in an already amazing career. — **KATO**



- **Concept:** Madden excels in the face of stiff competition by bettering its winning formula
- **Graphics:** Great work has been done on players' faces and the gang tackles are amazing
- **Sound:** A Michaels makes a world of difference, but the in-your-face licensed music is shameless and obnoxious
- **Playability:** The game loads up on the defensive side of the ball, while minicamp helps you refine your skills
- **Entertainment:** The on-the-field play is as fierce as ever, but franchise just keeps getting deeper
- **Replay Value:** High



■ **STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS** ■ **PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS** ■ **DEVELOPER EA TIBURON** ■ **RELEASE AUGUST 13**



SECOND OPINION

Madden gets my nod for football game of the year, but that's not to say it's the best game suited for you. All of this year's gridiron releases excel in different ways. When it comes to gamepiece mechanics, Madden hasn't made a significant leap forward. EA spent a lot of time enhancing the defensive model, but neglected to concoct a remedy for the robotic running game. Yes, the gang tackles are beautiful, but after all of these years, you'd think that the backs would finally be able to cut on a dime. Madden's gameplay definitely shows its age when lined up against 2K3, but it simply crushes the competition with its fantasy options and multiplayer modes. Unlike 2K3, multiple users can create and/or manage teams within Franchise mode. In such, if you want to start a multiplayer league, Madden has you covered. It's a tough call. You just have to size up the type of game you need.

REINER — 9.5



PLAYSTATION 2

NFL 2K3

THE QB CONTROVERSY

Is NFL 2K3 better than Madden? There are arguments that would or wouldn't make it number one, but the score says it all. Developer Visual Concepts has bulked up the game in the off-season and is ready to compete.

ESPN's presence helps the game's primetime feeling with everything from nice load screens to weekly score wrap-ups. More tangible is the boatload of new animations that give 2K3 an impressive aura of hard-nosed football. Secondaries are just as unforgiving but are now aided by the fact that their jumps tend to be less floaty. But this new 2K iteration has more than cosmetic changes. The pigskin chess match is increased by the way the new hot routes (called by the vocal incantation of the QB) can be countered by the defense's ability to assign their shutdown cornerback to cover any specific WR. Linebackers and DBs can shift before the snap, but doing so isn't as easy as in Madden. The on-the-field energy of the game carries over into Franchise mode, where I got giddy by scouting rookies, getting into free agent bidding wars, and having to draft while on the clock.

Although there were some o-line AI gaffes, balls over the middle were slow, and I don't like the old super tackles with the game's sim direction, 2K3 is awesome as it files around the ball and turns the NFL into the Non-stop Fun League. So how does it all shake down? I suggest you do yourself a favor and get both NFL 2K3 and Madden this year, because this contest just went into overtime. — **KATO**



The running game is still powerful, and backs in a multitude of fluid animations

2K3's Maximum Passing system is simply the best of the bunch

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERETT
E 9.5
ESRB

- **Concept:** Sega signs free agent ESPN and makes a big push for the top.
- **Graphics:** New player models and a slew of additional animations make the game a sight to behold. There are even cloud shadows on the field.
- **Sound:** You can hear the phone ring in franchise mode. How cool!
- **Playability:** The new setup for the defensive special moves offers additional choices but is more complex.
- **Entertainment:** NFL 2K3 leaves football gamers with two great choices this year, but 2K3's PS2 online is more bare bones than Madden.
- **Replay Value:** High.

SECOND OPINION

I couldn't disagree more with Kato's suggestion to run out and purchase both games. You really only need one football game, and there's enough of a difference between Madden and NFL 2K3 to determine which one to buy. If the majority of your football experience is spent within head-to-head matches, NFL 2K3 is the way to go. The gameplay is more dynamic, smoother around the edges, and faster in pace. The running and passing games are a stroke of genius and are a generation ahead of Madden. At the same time, however, NFL 2K3 doesn't come close to touching — let alone touching — Madden's simulation and fantasy options. The Create-a-Team isn't as detailed, human makes are lacking, and the Franchise is a farce. In comparison, Madden definitely has more to offer, and the gameplay isn't that far behind; but if you just want a game to toss in and play, 2K3 will deliver the most enjoyment.

REINER — 9

REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

NFL GAMEDAY 2003

TEN YARD FIGHT

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERETT
E 7.5
ESRB

To say that GameDay needs a comeback is like saying the Redskins need a quarterback — no kidding. There are two questions to ask this year's title: "Is it better than before?" and "Does it compete with the other football games on the console?" The answers to these questions are yes and no, respectively.

Although I commend Red Zone for making the game playable above all else, I soon realized how easy it is to take for granted the years of experience in Madden. GameDay's biggest fault is that it lacks refinement and some of the features I've come to expect. It has hot routes for WRs, but not defensive ones. GameDay has sweet animations like gang tackles and an assortment of bruising hits, even if players sometimes slide around the field (like the o-linemen, for example). The title can be fast, but is noticeably slow when the defense comes off the snap or when the QB pitches the ball to the RB. Also, passing has improved greatly — now including tips, drops, and bobbles — even if the secondary's AI isn't all there.

I'm glad GameDay 2003 has pulled itself up off the bottom of the pile. It remains the most playable and enjoyable in its history. However, is there room for an 83 team these days, as Madden and NFL 2K3 keep getting better, not worse? True fans of the series can take heart in its improvements, but it looks like next year will have to be its Cinderella season. — **KATO**

- **Concept:** 989's attempt at a resurrection keeps the series alive — but it's not up to full strength just yet.
- **Graphics:** GameDay has improved things like its player faces, although it lacks the smoothness of the other next-gen football titles.
- **Sound:** Madden has the name, but color man/ex-QB Dan Fouts has the voice and is more enjoyable to listen to.
- **Playability:** You pay for GameDay's lack of speed in certain areas.
- **Entertainment:** While this is the series' best version, it lacks some of the polish and amenities of the other titles.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High.

SECOND OPINION

At long last, Red Zone Interactive is finally getting its act together. No longer will you feel robbed if you were to purchase this game. The play mechanics are not just tolerable — they're impressive at times, and the collision is a tad off at times, but altogether it is much better. The sad thing is, even though this year's GameDay is better, it's still light-years away from competing with Madden and NFL 2K3.

REINER — 7

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL CONCEPTS
■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** 989 SPORTS
■ **DEVELOPER** RED ZONE INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13

REVIEWS



Kiss of Death
Rosemarie

PLAYSTATION 2

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

THE TRAINING WHEEL YEARS

The first Hoffman was a generation off the pace, having more in common with Tony Hawk than Tony 2, which came out six months before it. Rainbow came in to handle the sequel, but its inexperience with the genre shows, and keeps the series from elevating.

Zavis' and Neversoft's series have made leaps and bounds, making Hoffman lag even further behind the action/sports standard. Since the level design isn't all that special (unlike Tony 3), having to repeat timed runs (unlike Aggressive Inline) to hit five alarms or grab five hot dogs is a bore. The goals are unoriginal and unappealing – the equivalent of collecting coins in a platformer. I also hate the pause as the camera resets after each crash. Rainbow does interesting things like a gap checklist, a neat scrapbook option, and hidden goodies, but they're not compelling enough to compensate.

PS-X Hoffman had some control flaws, and this sequel is no different. The buttons can be unresponsive, and the pace is slower than it should be. On the upside, flatland tricks live up to the hype; you can string great combos together. I like the foot plants and wallrides, too.

There's definitely enough here to make me look forward to what Rainbow Studios – our Developer of the Year for 2001 – can do with the lessons it learned. However, I view Hoffman 2 as a rebuilding year, and can't recommend a purchase. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

T **7.25**

Concept: A great developer, unproven in action/sports, tries to take Hoffman to the promised land. Too bad it fails.

Graphics: I can't find anything to complain about in the visual department.

Sound: An eclectic mix of songs that don't really fit the game. I like tracks by Bad Brains and LL Cool J, but few others.

Playability: Typical control, though a little slow on response.

Entertainment: The game has kept advancing, and new titles like Aggressive Inline leave this archaic game in the dust.

Replay Value: Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Honestly, I am getting a little tired of completing the same objectives over and over in these various Tony Hawk rip-offs.

Seriously, the whole point of these games is to perform crazy tricks – and create outrageous trick strings. Why not leave most of the tasks around this feature, or at least devise some more interesting objectives besides "Collect the Gas Cans." Other than that, the control and camera are decent, if not a bit sloppy; the graphics and music are mediocre; the level design is okay; and the extras are more than adequate. It's not a bad addition – just nothing special.

CHET – 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** RAINBOW STUDIOS
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13



THE BOTTOM LINE

T

8

PLAYSTATION 2

ARMORED CORE 3

AN AWESOME EXPANSION PACK

I am starting to get the feeling that From Software is apprehensive about making any significant changes to the Armored Core series. Outside of a few peripheral additions, AC3 plays exactly like its predecessors.

As in Armored Core 2, players are charged to complete various types of missions and (as a diversion to earn secrets and cash) battle bots in Arena mode – a tournament consisting of one-on-one matches. Of course, you'll also have free reign to customize your mech with an even larger, more interesting selection of parts.

Unfortunately, this conservative attitude means that the two biggest problems with the series remain: nonsense story and control. The plot moves along slowly and contains a dry and jumbled mess of political BS. Despite analog implementation, the control scheme still feels counter-intuitive.

However, the new features at least make AC3 feel like a rock-solid expansion pack. Players can now house three mechs in their garage. Second, mechs can toss and discard weapons to improve mobility or aid a team member in multiplayer. Finally, in tight situations, it's possible to access a super attack called Exceed Orbit.

Although these additions are indeed welcome, and slightly improve the overall experience, I still wanted to see more drastic enhancements. – **CHET**



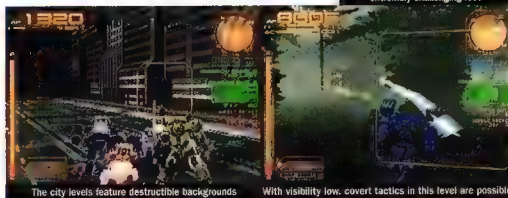
Dodging is easy, but getting used to the control is key.



The customization aspect is as detailed as ever.



The Arena mode pits you against extremely challenging foes.



The city levels feature destructible backgrounds.

With visibility low, covert tactics in this level are possible.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** AGETEC ■ **DEVELOPER** FROM SOFTWARE
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 10

■ **Concept:** A good mission-based mech game with customization up the wazoo!

■ **Graphics:** The graphics are crisp and clean with everything running at a consistent 60 FPS

■ **Sound:** Mostly techno-type tunes, which suits the game very well

■ **Playability:** The ability to use analog control helps, but the controller set-up still feels a bit clunky

■ **Entertainment:** Once you get used to the control, the game's challenge and endless number of parts will hook you to the end

■ **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

The amount of new material in the previous incarnation was more than enough, but believe it or not, From Software found a way to overhaul the game once again. Along with a bevy of new parts, upgrades, and weapons, players can now use analog controls, spend cash to hire AI controlled wingmen, jettison weapons mid-mission, and perform devastating Exceed Orbit attacks. The implementations are fantastic, but it seems that From Software spent most of its time beefing the game up and not enough on balancing the new content and ensuring that the missions were diverse. In such, the difficulty is much more forgiving and the objectives repeat way too often. Thankfully, though, the missions are only half of the experience. From reinstated the highly competitive Arena mode, and it's stacked to the rafters with Impressive AI adversaries. As always, AC is hit or miss, but it always finds a way to stay entertaining.

REINER – 8.5

LEGO SOCCER MANIA

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4 PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 18



While Lego Cup fever threatened to sweep the office as fiercely as the World Cup one had, this game didn't quite take hold. I can't believe that you can't build your own custom stadium and/or pitches –

what else are Legos for? Regardless, kids should dig the powerups and Story mode, and they'll get used to the gameplay pretty quickly as well. Although I can't recommend it for its simplified style of soccer, youngsters should have fun kicking this one around for awhile. – **KATO**

E **7**

GTC AFRICA

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 15



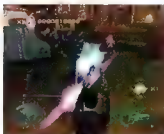
When Gran Turismo 3's short rally experience beats out your entire PS2 game, then you know you've got problems. Part of GTC's woes is that the textures smell as bad as hot camel breath – even if the tracks

themselves are cool. The game is a part of an unfortunate trend in rally titles, where the ebrake is more of a luxury than a necessity. Playing GTC wasn't a joyless experience, but one that The Flying Scotsman (Colin McRae) should have no trouble obliterating when his new title comes out. – **KATO**

E **6.5**

MEN IN BLACK II: ALIEN ESCAPE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAVES
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 29



Just like its movie cohort, Men in Black II: Alien Escape delivers in mindless fluff. Supplying little by the way of plot and sticking to what is known to work well, MIB II has decent graphics, lots of guns, and

straightforward shooter controls (although the default config is a little counter-intuitive, other schemes worked better for me). I want more for my money, but MIB II begins to break the curse of movie games. – **LISA**

T **7.5**

MONSTER JAM: MAXIMUM DESTRUCTION

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 12



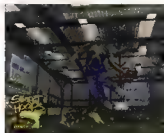
I may have lived in a few trailer parks in my day, but I've still never embraced monster trucks as a sport/hobby. I think Ubi Soft made a wise choice to limit the racing element to mere minigames, and focus

on destroying stuff. In essence, Monster Jam is a mediocre car combat title. The main modes don't stay fun for too long and vehicle upgrading is an afterthought, but driving big trucks with guns on them sounds like every kid's dream. – **JUSTIN**

T **6.5**

STREET HOOPS

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13



It's painfully apparent that Street Hoops was thought up by some guys in suits to capture an urban audience with urban music, gear, and slang. They even did a semi-decent job at capturing those facets.

What they forgot, though, is that urban gamers – like the rest of us – look for gameplay first. With choppy play, no strategy, and an asinine betting system (bet on the most dunks and you'll win every time), Street Hoops is a tall guy paper doll simulator at best. NBA Street wins in a rout. – **JUSTIN**

E **5.5**



GRAVITY GAMES BIKE: STREET, VERT, DIRT

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 27

If I didn't open up the shrink-wrapped box copy of Gravity Games myself, I wouldn't believe this game was actually "finished." A blatant Mat Hoffman rip-off, SVD makes early PlayStation extreme clones like Grind Session look like works of genius. Poor control, absolutely horrific collision problems, and weird camera angles pop up like zit on this gigantic swollen ass of a game. I'd say the physics were bad, but I'm afraid that Albert Einstein would rise from his grave and stab me with a tractor for using the word "physics" in the same sentence as Gravity Games. Buy Aggressive Inline; buy Tony Hawk 4; buy a Little House on the Prairie commemorative plate – anything but Gravity Games Bike. – **MATT**

T **2**

TWISTED METAL: BLACK ONLINE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 27



For at least a limited time, Twisted Metal: Black Online is free for those that purchase Sony's Network Adaptor and send in the coupon. As far as coupons go, this one is a pretty good deal. There are

a number of new arenas for online play and various games and mods that you can use to alter the game to your tastes. Overall, there is nothing new here, but for the price you really can't beat the fun. – **ANDY**

M **8.75**



PLAYSTATION 2

TENNIS 2K2

THE BEST IS BACK

Tennis has never been a major-league video game sport, and that's due to the fact that most publishers view it as a "blist" pursuit, and therefore have not put the proper development muscle behind their efforts. Obviously, Sega isn't most publishers, and last year it released what was universally hailed as the greatest tennis game ever, Tennis 2K2. Too bad it was from Dreamcast, a system that few people cared about at that point. Now, it's been ported to PS2, and looks no worse for the wear spent on the sidelines.

Tennis is a deceptively complex sport; one that requires you to make split-second decisions about body positioning, shot placement, and spin that can be the difference between success and failure. Tennis 2K2's brilliant gameplay engine is really the first time that the nuances of the sport have been truly captured by a video game. Even better, the career mode (a feature that is usually ignored in niche sports genres) is brilliantly conceived, allowing you to develop the skills of both a male and female player simultaneously, by way of some inventive minigames. Later in your career, you'll even be able to hire on a Williams sister as a doubles partner to tackle the tournament circuit. If you're a tennis fan, I don't know what else you could ask for. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE
E **9.25**

■ **Concept:**
 Oops – we wasted the best tennis game ever on the Dreamcast! Let's put it out on PS2 so we can actually sell a few copies.

■ **Graphics:**
 The character models are slightly smoothed over, but it's much the same as the great-looking DC version.

■ **Sound:**
 Got my favorite CDs you haven't listened to in a while? Go find them!

■ **Playability:**
 Nothing comes closer to replicating the feel of the sport.

■ **Entertainment:**
 If you want to expand your sports repertoire beyond Madden and NHL, this is a great place to start.

■ **Playful Value:**
 High

SECOND OPINION

I had a hard time trying to figure out what was different about Tennis 2K2 compared to the previous year's edition on Dreamcast. Many times I thought the action was more heated with what seemed like more intense matches and more acrobatics by the players. Then I played the old one, and just wasn't sure anymore. Tennis 2K2 is the best tennis game out there, and a great sports title for PS2 owners that missed it on Dreamcast, but if you own this there really is no reason to buy the PS2 incarnation.

ANDY – 8.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
 ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA ■ **RELEASE** JULY 30



You'll have to control the angle and length of the water stream



To tackle this mini-boss...



...Mario must do the unspeakable

GAMECUBE

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

BACK TO THE BASICS

This is aged-in-oak proof that a game doesn't need to be original to win over the hearts of gamers. When a new Mario game hits the market, there's an underlying expectation that it'll revolutionize gaming as we know it. Assuredly, this statement may seem like a stretch, but if you gauge the impact that each Mario release has made, it's not so crazy after all. Think of this: If Nintendo never released Super Mario 64, what would the shape of 3D gaming be like? It's a scary thought, especially when you take into account that almost every platformer on the market is in some way influenced by this legendary release. Of course, this was six years ago, and given the lengthy absence, everyone anticipated that Mario's reemergence would bring about another mind-boggling gaming revolution.

Rather than reinventing the wheel, Nintendo developed the long-awaited GameCube follow-up under the philosophy "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Super Mario Sunshine truly is 64-bit at heart. Just the look of the game should evoke a flashback of memories. Ironically, age is on Mario's side. Rather than experimenting with jet set technologies, Nintendo took the knowledge and experience from the previous game and used it to fashion the perfect sequel.

Super Mario Sunshine doesn't spur a game revolution, but it can be argued that it is the best Mario game to date. The gameplay mechanics are stripped from the 64-bit adventure, and the visual dynamics haven't evolved too terribly much, but the variety that has been included far exceeds anything that I ever expected to see, or wanted from a Mario game. I know this may be hard to believe, but there really is never a dull moment of play. Even if you're just messing around, it's always exciting and fast-paced.

The biggest difference between Super Mario Sunshine and Super Mario 64 is the water cannon that Mario wears on his back. In addition to his arsenal of acrobatic moves, Mario can now shoot out streams of water, or transform the cannon nozzle into a hover device for brief segments of flying. As a whole, the gameplay really couldn't be much more complex. As is the case with every Mario game, the control schematic fits like a glove. It's perfect. If you see a ledge several stories up, there's a good chance that you'll

be able to create a jumping combo to reach it. For instance, you can double-jump between walls, spin high into the air, and hit the hover boost at the peak of your jump to elevate enough to grab the ledge and pull yourself up. The diversity that the water cannon brings—whether it's topping off a jump combo or hosing down a prairie covered in gunk—gives the game a fresh look and a style all its own. I don't want to spoil the surprises that Sunshine continually throws out, but I will say that you will find yourself hosing off plaque from the teeth of a gigantic fish; extinguishing blazing Chomp Chomps; spraying water into the mouth of a dehydrated Piranha Plant; and watering eggs buried beneath the soil. These actions may sound asinine, but you'll have the time of your life completing them.

In the previous game, Yoshi made an appearance; but other than handing over a bundle of free lives, you couldn't interact with him. This time around, you'll actually have a chance to ride on Yoshi's back within several of the stages. The fact that he controls and sounds just like he does in Yoshi's Story is a stroke of brilliance on Nintendo's part. The overall structure of the game is a little more open-ended as well, which in turn brings about the need for greater exploration and experimentation.

The only problem that I have with Super Mario Sunshine is purely of the mechanic nature. The quest itself has no flaws. It's that good. The camera system, on the other hand, hasn't evolved, and considering Mario 64 was one of the first 3D platformers, this speaks volumes. Manhandling the angles will eventually become second nature to most, but it's still a nuisance to continually to adjust the camera with every move that you make. Rather than working on this aspect, Nintendo tried to hide the fact that it didn't work as well as it should by making the objects that are hidden from view silhouette images. You can kind of see what's going on, but it's a poor solution—especially considering where games are today.

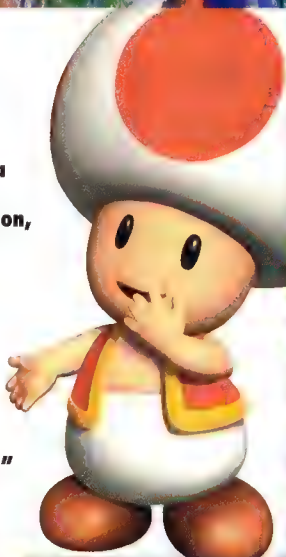
In the grand scheme of things, however, the camera truly is a small complaint. I had my doubts at first, but Super Mario Sunshine is the most addictive and beguiling entry thus far. Once you start playing, putting it down may be the hardest thing that you ever do. —REINER

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER NINTENDO ■ RELEASE AUGUST 26



Mario's new nemesis is...uh...himself?

"Super Mario Sunshine doesn't spur a game revolution, but it can be argued that it is the best Mario game to date."



The solution to this loss is to spray him in the mouth so that his gut expands



In the incredibly challenging bonus world, it's back to the basics as Mario no longer possesses the water cannon



Most of Mario's moves hark back to Super Mario 64



You'll compete in a handful of minigames, including a time trial race on the top of a baby squid

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E 9.75

- **Concept:** A new spin on the 64-bit formula that may appear to be old fashioned, but couldn't be more innovative
- **Graphics:** Nothing really jumps off of the screen, but the visuals are dynamic in composition, the animation is silky smooth, and the effects look fantastic
- **Sound:** The classic Mario theme with a new-age mix
- **Playability:** The camera is too demanding of user control, but the gameplay itself is incredibly intuitive and insanely complex. You won't believe what you'll find yourself doing
- **Entertainment:** Out of all of the Mario games, this one has the most variety and longevity
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Mario Sunshine is my new vice, and my favorite title in the series. Nintendo has once again concocted a magical recipe that captures that sense of wonder, excitement, and tension that is typical of its flagship series. Every stage, and even the sub world, is packed full of secrets, challenging puzzles, intense platforming objectives, and quite a few inventive bosses; the level of variety is staggering. The only reason I cannot award Sunshine with a perfect score is the camera. While it's not particularly bad (some games would certainly benefit from this type of camera), a few situations are made unnecessarily difficult due to awkward perspectives. Nintendo should've developed a camera that doesn't constantly require players to manage it for optimal view. If you haven't felt compelled to buy a GameCube yet, Mario Sunshine is certainly reason enough.

CHET - 9.75



GAMECUBE

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

IN LINE WITH THE BEST

In Justin's review of the PlayStation 2 version of Aggressive Inline he claimed that it was "as much a platformer as it is an action/sports title." He couldn't have been more right. (I know it's hard to believe that Justin could get something right, but work with me here.) Aggressive Inline, even for all its "extreme" elements, is indeed more about completing the challenges and finding all the hidden areas than putting together a mean run of tricks.

Not to say that tricks aren't a big part of Aggressive Inline, but the game is designed with no time limit and the modifiers and multipliers don't lessen in value as you link together more moves. What this creates is a trick system that is almost too easy. With a bit of time spent, you can pull off 70x multiplier tricks with little to no effort. I enjoy pulling them off, but they really don't give me any satisfaction.

Aggressive Inline features some great levels and is definitely fun to play, but with a slightly more difficult trick system, I would have given it a nine easy since the game is innovative in a lot of areas. Overall, I do highly recommend Aggressive Inline for fans of Tony Hawk or Dave Mirra that are looking for another game to pass the time. I just would have liked it better with more Tony and less Mario. — **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE
T **8.75**

- **Concept:** Create an "extreme" platformer with inline skaters.
- **Graphics:** The levels are absolutely gorgeous but I am not a fan of the character art style.
- **Sound:** If P.O.D. wasn't on here I would have really been annoyed by this soundtrack. More killer, less filler.
- **Playability:** Great controls, but the trick system is too easy (love the wall 'nug command).
- **Entertainment:** Exploring the levels is outditing, but the tricks are secondary.
- **Replay Value:** High.

SECOND OPINION

As I write this, Aggressive Inline is still the most-played game for me away from work. Add to that the fact that I still haven't seen everything there is to see, and you've got my highest recommendation. Some stages have 130+ items to grab. Keys unlock sections of levels that sometimes double the stage's size. Don't pass this up!

JUSTIN - 9.25



GAMECUBE

SMUGGLER'S RUN: WARZONES

SMUGGLIN' GRAPES

I was a big proponent of the original Smuggler's Run released back in the early days of the PS2, when its huge, open environments were an awe-inspiring feat of technology. Of course, now we all take stuff like that for granted. Fortunately, SR's basic off-road racing action remains some of the fastest and most fun on the market. If you're a Nintendo stalwart that hasn't had a chance to play this series yet — you're in luck. For a console that has perhaps the most piss-poor selection of driving games of any in history, Warzones should do the trick nicely.

Warzones is essentially an enhanced edition of Smuggler's Run 2, and in most of the single-player missions are slightly tweaked versions of the ones from that PS2 title. Fortunately, the framerate has been bumped up to a full 60 fps, and some of the new countermeasures (like Acid Drop and Vertical Boost) add a new dimension to some of the vehicles. Also, the new Fox and Hounds minigame is the best of the multiplayer mode (which can now be experienced in four-player split-screen mode). There's only one thing that prevents Smuggler's Run from joining the ranks of the elite — the lack of mission variety. A great majority of the stages revolve around getting packages and dropping them off somewhere. Compared to the intense and demanding levels in Stuntman, it's a bit thin. However, accept Warzones for what it is and you'll have a fine time. — **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN **T** **7.75**

- **Concept:** Similar to Crazy Taxi 3, this title combines the best of the first two Smuggler's Runs with some new bonus goodies.
- **Graphics:** Now running at 60 frames per second, this looks better and faster than Smuggler's Run 2 on PS2.
- **Sound:** I would have liked this, but Eminem told me that nobody listens to techno.
- **Playability:** The difficulty has been smoothed out a bit, and there are some cool new countermeasures.
- **Entertainment:** Fun for GameCube newbies, but the new features aren't enough to warrant another purchase for SR vets.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High.

SECOND OPINION

No matter how you cut it, Warzones is a director's cut of Smuggler's Run 2. Given the fact that the series is new to the GameCube, this isn't necessarily a bad thing. The main bulk of the game may appear to be the same, but if you took the time to analyze every facet of it, you'll discover that the learning curve, balance of difficulty, and graphical prowess have all been tweaked significantly. On the outside, the array of multiplayer modes now support four players and hidden goodies have been added to the Joyride mode as well. Unfortunately, even with all of these enhancements in place, the gameplay still suffers from monotony. The missions are filled with variety, and each stage proves to be more hair-raising than the last, but the fact that you're racing across the same terrain formations through the entire game is a major buzz-kill. It's a decent title, but a little too repetitive for my blood.

REINER - 7.5



The CIA's on your case. Shouldn't they be looking for Osama bin Laden or something?

The environmental effects like snow look much better on the GameCube

The new multiplayer modes are a blast

Hey, doesn't this guy know that 4x4 all-terrain vehicles are for driving your kids to the mall?



GAMECUBE

BEACH SPIKERS

SIDE OUT

Sega has worked magic in the arena of tennis, but unfortunately Beach Spikers leaves one feeling like AM2 missed an opportunity to reestablish volleyball as a premier video game sport. Aside from a few interesting features, like the player-create and a team-building mechanic that is revolves around how you communicate with your teammates between points, there really isn't much here to recommend. The reason? As usual, suspect gameplay and poor camerawork are the culprits. The most apparent is the fact that the game doesn't automatically switch your control to the player nearest the ball, so you are frequently at the mercy of your computer-controlled partner. Also, many of your moves are assigned to clumsy A and B combos, while the X and Y buttons go unused. There's four buttons for a reason, people. Even worse is the "dynamic" camera system, which rotates wildly during a match, which means that getting into position for a return shot is often blind guesswork. Hopefully, Tecmo's DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball can get it right. Next! — **MATT**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA/AM2
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13

SECOND OPINION

I don't absolutely loathe Beach Spikers, but there are some fundamental flaws. First, Sega doesn't use official volleyball rules — lame. Second, it takes a bit of time and losing to build your team member up so that she isn't a complete dunce. But when you finally do, some of the game's other problems become more obvious, like certain camera angles. Finally, the gameplay has been simplified to the point that very little technique remains. As a result, Beach Spikers is easy to pick up and play, but it won't hold your attention for very long.

CHET — 5.75

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** Girls, sand, sun, and fun. What went wrong?
- **Graphics:** The character models are pretty, but everything else is pretty...mediocre
- **Sound:** I love Sega to death, but they have some of the most tedious, generic game music in the business
- **Playability:** Mechanical and frustrating. Also, your computer partner is a knucklehead
- **Entertainment:** Not a lot
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low



GAMECUBE

FREESTYLE

FREEKY STYLE

Damn! Freestyle should come packed with a nut cup, because it gave me one of the hardest kicks to the nuggets I've had in a long time. If you like your racing fast, furious, and over-the-top, this is your game. Essentially an update of SSX Tricky with motorcycles, Freestyle delivers an even more raucous experience than its snowbound buddy, and I, for one, think that's a good thing. Motocross punts will sniff at the cartoonish action, but let them go huff on Jeremy McGrath's tailpipe for all I care. Freestyle isn't about the subtle nuances of off-road biking; it's about busting crazy air, crazy tricks, and going crazy fast with the help of your trusty power boost. It's about jumping through hoops of fire as you strike poses like one of those Chinese acrobats from the Cirque du Soleil. At times, it's also about getting whipped by the stiff AI competition, which can be a little annoying. Other than that, I can't think of too many bad things to say about Freestyle. Throw in the fact that it looks a little better on GameCube, I don't know what you're waiting for. — **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

Tossing real-life physics to the wayside appears to be what Freestyle is all about. That, and kicking your sorry little ass into the heap of newly humble gamers left in its wake. So frustrating, but so gratifying when you finally get somewhere.

LISA — 8.5

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** A gasoline-chugging, mud-flinging mutation of SSX Tricky
- **Graphics:** Looks a little sharper, and less blurry than the PS2 version
- **Sound:** Is it me, or is nu-metal getting a little older?
- **Playability:** It's damn hard, but the controls and the trick system are dead-on
- **Entertainment:** Step up if you're down for a fun — and very difficult — racing experience
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA BIG
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 10

GAMECUBE

NFL 2K3

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13



We all know about the high visual mark set by the GameCube. That's why I was surprised to see that this edition is actually the least impressive out of the bunch. Not only was there an overall lack of crispness, but I also noticed that the field was largely comprised of muddled textures. Of course, this game keeps all its alluring features and great gameplay, but I consider it the weakest of all three NFL 2K3s. — **KATO**



noticed that the field was largely comprised of muddled textures. Of course, this game keeps all its alluring features and great gameplay, but I consider it the weakest of all three NFL 2K3s. — **KATO**



GAMECUBE

MX SUPERFLY

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 28

Dirt textures have taken a noticeable leap for this MX. Superfly, but the trick system has unfortunately taken a step back, as it's more finicky than usual. Even if you change the controls from the default setting (highly recommended), you'll often go up a jump wanting to do a Rodeo Air and come down with a Heel Clicker. I noticed other such fickle happenings like the fact that I never knew if I was going to make it or break it on landings. This series has lots of potential, but has yet to live up to it. — **KATO**



GAMECUBE

MADDEN NFL 2003

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13



There's no denying that this is a great pigskin title, no matter what system it's on. The GameCube version seems to hamper players a little bit just because of the odd configuration of the controller, but everything else is smooth

and silky. The graphics might not look as crisp as they do on the Xbox version, but who cares? This is the best football game of the year — go get it. — **KRISTIAN**





**“Never before
have I seen
an action title
with such
deadly depth.”**

XBOX

DEAD TO RIGHTS

SLATE'S POTPOURRI – OF DEATH!

I've been closely tracking *Dead to Rights*' progress for over two years now, since Namco first announced it. After finally putting this testosterone-filled, violent, and varied adventure through its paces, I have just one thing to say: Can I pick a winner, or what?

Never before have I seen an action title with so much deadly depth. While most games have a lone gimmick they exploit throughout, *Dead to Rights* throws so many different scenarios and attack options at you, you'll feel like Ted Nugent in a wildlife reserve. Yes, we already did the slow-motion dive in *Max Payne*, but main character Jack Slate will also perform countless disarms, slink against walls, sic his dog on enemies, take human shields (then execute them), engage in hand-to-hand combat, snipe, and compete in minigames at every turn. How's that for a repertoire?

The regular gunplay scenes alone would've made a high quality title. You can target easily – even see how vulnerable baddies are to your shots – and switch victims on the fly. Much time was put into developing a good, unarmed combat system as well; with multiple throws and kick/punch combinations. It's not as deep as *Tekken*, but it stands well on its own, even when it's all you do in some levels.

Disarms flat-out rock. They're on par on the kick-ass scale with the stealth kills of *Tenchu* or *The Mark of Kri*, and there are a ton of them. Simply snap a neck, or get acrobatic with a flying leg-scissors. No matter what, it ends the same way:

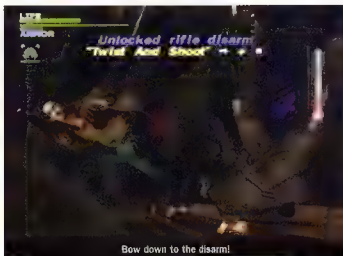
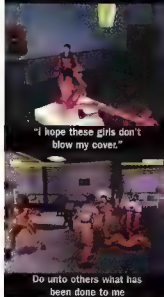
dead villains and more guns for you. Your faithful husky Shadow is truly Jack's best friend. Not only can he maul enemies and fetch their firearms – some missions even have you play from his perspective.

Being a dog is just a small portion of the gameplay variations you'll partake in. These also include gattling foes from a helicopter, disarming bombs, protecting civilians, arm wrestling, shooting up limos, extinguishing fires, and controlling a distracting stripper. Some of these take a maximum of a couple minutes to accomplish, but each one is a hearty experience.

If *Dead to Rights* didn't play as amazingly as it does, the graphics may have bothered me. The models are very basic and segmented, and don't even move their mouths when speaking. Many areas are void of ambient objects, and the textures aren't impressive. This just means the developers concentrated on gameplay first, and I guess I can't fault them for it. My only other gripe has to do with a few drawn-out, unexciting levels.

If Xbox had more games like *Dead to Rights*, the console wars would be a lot closer than they are. *DTR* offers everything a gamer could want in this type of title, even if the look won't knock your socks off. If there is at least one violent bone in your body, *Dead to Rights* belongs at the top of your list. – JUSTIN

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER NAMCO ■ DEVELOPER NAMCO HOMETEK ■ RELEASE AUGUST 20



THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE
9.25

- **Concept:** Give one game a wealth of blasting, beating, and so much more
- **Graphics:** Particles and real-time shadows can't hide the fact that visuals obviously took a back seat to gameplay
- **Sound:** Nothing special in terms of voiceovers or sound effects, but they won't annoy, either
- **Playability:** Targeting works like a dream, as does every other move. You'll cramp when using the R-trigger a lot, but what else is new
- **Entertainment:** There is no possible way you could get bored with *DTR*. There are just too many cool things going on
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

This is one hell of an action game. I guarantee some of the firefights in *DTR* will have your blood pressure pushing dangerously high levels. It's wicked hard, and the developer's use of some innovative gameplay techniques (disarms, human shields) is just plain awesome. *Dead to Right* places an emphasis on diversity (even some timed-button-press minigames) – almost to a fault. I appreciate the fact that Namco tried to incorporate hand-to-hand combat into the mix, but I felt the beat-em-up portions of the game got a bit tedious at times (especially in the prison level). These sequences aren't helped by the sometimes-suspect camera system. Fortunately, the run 'n' gun levels are some of the most challenging and inspired I've seen since *Syphon Filter*. *Dead to Rights* might be a bit frustrating for some, but hardcore gamers will eat this up.

MATT – 8.75

AGGRESSIVE IN LINE™



Skate the edge of sanity.

developed by
Z-AXIS



**Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes**



PlayStation 2



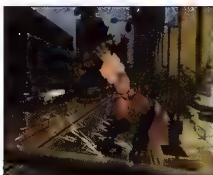
GAME BOY ADVANCE



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, coss 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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GameCube logo are trademarks of Nintendo. Game Boy and Game Boy Advance are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2001 Nintendo. Screenshots were taken from the PlayStation2 version of the video game.

AKA
Acclaim
acclaim.com

REVIEWS



XBOX

SOCCER SLAM SUCK ON THESE ORANGES

Let's face it: Publishers and developers are rarely going to make versions of the same game different for each console. We'd all like that, but it just isn't practical. For this reason, platform exclusivity is seldom even a big deal these days. Personally, I think that developer Visual Concepts (with help from Black Box) had enough time to correct a few problems from the original GameCube version of Soccer Slam. The fact remains that these problems exist, and we're going to have to deal with it.

The main change I'm referring to is that the button to hit the ball and to strike other players is always the same. This means that often times if you try to perform a one-time shot, you'll instead end up flailing at the guy next to you—something that happens frequently in the close quarters of the arenas. Combine this stupid sight with the abysmal AI for the goalies, and you know where the fine tuning for this game needs to be.

These imperfections are a blotch on an otherwise good time. It gives you some nice moves to manage—so much so that I suggest using the tutorial so that you can become acquainted with them all. If you don't utilize every trick, you'll be at a severe disadvantage. High passes and give-and-gos make it soccer, even if the enclosed fields sometimes have you thinking it's hockey.

"As I'm sure you've heard a million times from your little-league soccer coach: 'We'll get em next time kids.'" —KATO

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
E 7.25
SEGA

■ **Concept:**
Sega definitely needed to get off the GameCube and bring this one to the masses.

■ **Graphics:**
All the on-the-field commotion is perfectly captured without hiccup.

■ **Sound:**
It didn't take long to tire of the over-the-top, clichéd announcers.

■ **Playability:**
The button mapping and AI could still use some work.

■ **Entertainment:**
A few frustrations keep this from being the best game Midway ever made.

■ **Replay Value:**
Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

I'm sure that more than a few soccer fanatics will click their tongue at this "Blitzification" of their beloved sport, but I actually enjoyed my time with Soccer Slam. It's true that the gameplay is a bit unpolished, but it's a quick-paced and enjoyable title for the most part. Hey, I had Turkey winning the World Cup in my bracket, so what do I know?

MATT — 7.75



XBOX

NFL FEVER 2003

THE NON-REBUILDING YEAR

Every team—even the Rams—need to make changes from year to year to at least keep pace with their competitors, if not to excel past them. NFL Fever has more or less stayed the same, which means that it has actually lost ground.

I'm glad to say that the AI for secondaries has improved some, but not enough. In fact, it may have caused more problems. Without the bunching of the players, there's more man-to-man downfield, thus big passing plays are still the norm. Defenses are aggressive, but unrealistic interceptions from defensive linemen remain. Also, since you can't control your receiver when the ball is in the air, you often see cornerbacks budge in front of you to pick off the ball while you stand there helpless. This situation isn't helped by the ball's velocity, which is still a tad slow. These problems and others make Fever mainly an arcade-esque experience that can have its thrills, such as its penchant for big hits and quick plays.

Unfortunately, these ultimately keep it out of the firm neighborhood where the big kids live. Microsoft is counting on Xbox Live (and the game's built-in devotees) to make this a hit, but this game just doesn't compare with the others. Modes featuring classic teams and online voice-masking with high-pitch "punter" voices are cool, but there are too many other areas to fix before you can sell this to me as anything more than a refresh. —KATO



Unlikely INTs are still in the game

Fever prides itself on its classic and custom uniforms.

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E 7
SEGA

■ **Concept:**
Online's cool, but it's going to take more on-the-field changes to be a competitor.

■ **Graphics:**
There's no doubt that there are a lot of polys flying around, but not one player looks like he does in real life.

■ **Sound:**
I apologize for misleading you all. Ron Pitts is back, and I couldn't be angrier.

■ **Playability:**
This does well as an arcade-type game, but its holes still leave me wanting.

■ **Entertainment:**
Fever wasn't bad last year, but it can't survive without changing.

■ **Replay Value:**
High.

SECOND OPINION

You could liken playing a game of Fever to watching a girls' junior high basketball game: humorous, yet strangely embarrassing to watch. It's too bad, since I know the developers have been hard at work pounding out the mistakes they made last year, but so many of them make a reappearance (floaty passing, bad AI, constant long-ball scoring). It makes it hard for me to give Fever the benefit of the doubt. I recommend that any of you out there thinking the online side of this game will make up for other shortcomings, quickly disabuse yourselves of that notion. Fever needs to spend some time in the CFL before playing with the big boys.

KRISTIAN — 6

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL CONCEPTS ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 20

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** MICROSOFT
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 5



XBOX

MADDEN NFL 2003

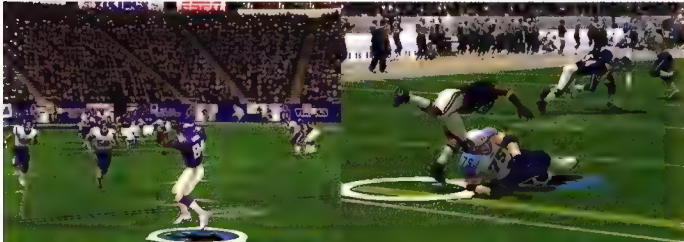
FOOTBALL FOR THE FOLKS

This year's Madden release is nothing if not excellent. There are so many ways to play this game (franchise, create-a-team, etc.), you'll have no problem getting your money's worth within the first couple of weeks you play it. The crowds have received a much-needed facelift, the player models have been tweaked a bit, and the play animations have been revamped to show off this game's capabilities. Aside from the updated rosters, there are a number of reasons to reinvest in Madden.

The running game has gotten better, and there are more interceptions – which is nice because I can't tell you how many times I've seen errant passes bounce off my d-back's hands in the past. The linebacker movement is nice, but I would have liked to have seen something similar for my safeties.

Additionally, you may have to get used to the implementation and execution of all the new commands on your controller before plowing into a season. Playing the minicamp drills is a good way to get acquainted with them, I've found. All in all, this is an excellent football game. I would recommend buying Madden over all other franchises 100 times out of 100 to any Xbox owner. – **KRISTIAN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA TIBERON
■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13



XBOX

NFL 2K3

BEST OF THE BOX

NFL 2K3 is the second must-have football game for this console. What's the other? It's not Fever, I can tell you that much. Interestingly enough, the PlayStation 2 version of this game is on par with the Xbox's. What distinguishes the two is that developer Visual Concepts has made this version of 2K3 the premier attraction for the franchise's online plans.

NFL 2K3 doesn't just benefit from the fact that Madden doesn't have online with Microsoft's Xbox Live. No, the Xbox Communicator is what this title's online experience is all about. Also, I trust Visual Concepts' experience with the online through the Dreamcast – something EA doesn't have. Beyond Net play, 2K3 simply can't be ignored for the new depth within its Franchise mode and the series' evolving commitment to football that smacks you upside the head. This fact, along with the game's obvious attempts to become more well rounded, make it something you shouldn't pass up. – **KATO**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** VISUAL CONCEPTS
■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13

SECOND OPINION

This Xbox version is the graphical benchmark for the series – even if the outdoor fields have an unsightly green running down the middle of them. Players' faces have extra depth and jersey wear is more noticeable. I commend developer Tiburon for switching to WR button assignments that make more sense, but I think that whatever Xbox controller you have, you're less likely to use the special moves, which are more accessible for the PS2.

KATO – 9.25

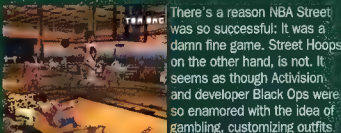
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
9.5

- **Concept:** The best football title available just got a little better
- **Graphics:** Things are a little sharper than last year
- **Sound:** Madden and Michaels make a nice combination. The rest is pretty much the same as last year
- **Playability:** Some of the controls you've gotten used to have been switched for the better
- **Entertainment:** This is the best football game available. Accept no substitutes
- **Replay Value:** High

XBOX STREET HOOPS

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 13



There's a reason NBA Street was so successful: It was a damn fine game. Street Hoops, on the other hand, is not. It seems as though Activision and developer Black Ops were so enamored with the idea of gambling, customizing outfits and an admittedly power-packed hip-hop soundtrack (Ludacris!), that they figured gameplay was secondary. This is a worse dunk-fest than Hoopz; steals and blocking are awful; and doing Street-esque fancy moves serve little purpose. Street Hoops is so bush league it's not even funny. Call it Barkley Shut Up & Jam 3. – **JUSTIN**

EVERYONE
E
5.5



XBOX

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
■ **RELEASE** JULY 30

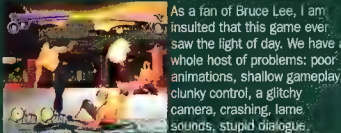
I know this complaint has become a cliché on the order of a stand-up comedian discussing bad airplane food or the differences between men and woman, but I still hate the Xbox controller. Combo-intensive games like Aggressive Inline amplify its shortcomings, and you'll curse having to perform a coss slide with those little black and white buttons. However, after I decided to tough it out, I became just as enthralled by this version of Aggressive Inline as I was of the PS2 version. If you're a Tony Hawk fan that hasn't played this game yet, do yourself a favor. I guarantee the expensive and intricate levels will blow you away. – **MATT**

EVERYONE
E
9.25

XBOX

BRUCE LEE: QUEST OF THE DRAGON

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE
■ **RELEASE** JULY 2



As a fan of Bruce Lee, I am insulted that this game ever saw the light of day. We have a whole host of problems: poor animations, shallow gameplay, clunky control, a glitchy camera, crashing, lame sounds, stupid dialogue, primitive enemy AI, boring boss fights, ugly textures, etc. In fact, I hate this clear exploitation of Bruce Lee's name so much that I am considering going out to buy this game just to bust it into a hundred little pieces. – **CHET**

TEEN
T

YOU ROCK!

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AND HONORS THEIR
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GAMESTOP – HOUSTON, TX

Left to right: Saul Zambrano, Daniel Doty, Kareem Gregg, Rick Vo, Mark Santana, Geno Garcia, and Jenifer Sanchez



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Left to right: Chad McCanna, Adrian Martinez, Benito Gomez, Flora Guzman, and Sara Moore



GAMESTOP – CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA

Left to right: Anthony Tillo, Matt Hall, Mike Thompson, Robert Lim, and Michael Cortez



FUNCOLAND – LOUISVILLE, KY

Left to right: Evan Pack, Dean Wiekert, Al Randolph, Dave Rogers, and Nick Dumeyer



GAMESTOP – HURST, TX

Left to right: Garret Moss, Damon Lara, Randy Stacy, Damon Ross, and Chad Williams



FUNCOLAND – BRONX, NY

Left to right: Richard Firicano, Rosany Cora, Christina Cruz, Tovey Wall, and Kimberly Bellfield



GAMESTOP – DEARBORN, MI

Left to right: Gabrielle Johnson and Marlon Johnson



Thral!

Yes, boredom and the beating sun have put us all on edge. But we must push on! All will be made clear once we meet the Oracle.

THE BOTTOM LINE

9.5

PC

“WarCraft III sets a new standard for what an RTS should be.”

WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS

THE WRATH OF CRAFT

Few PC titles enjoy the legacy of well-tuned, masterfully wrought predecessors the way WarCraft does. It stands to reason that Blizzard knew it had a mountain to scale to improve upon that which was already quite good. That's fine, because we've all heard that knowing is half the battle, but how to do it? One word: depth. Sure, the past games were a lot of fun, and we all enjoyed playing them (right?), but I was always left with a feeling that I was on the outside looking in – not really a part of what was going on down there on the field. WarCraft III ingeniously insinuates role-playing elements to the story, and as a result, has struck a near-perfect cord in the harmony of action elements versus role-playing investment.

The story opens with the usual threat-to-the-world's-existence-because-undead-are-coming bullroar we've all seen in games, but there are a bunch of great plot twists that keep things interesting, and a story that was mature enough for me to stay interested in even when my appendages were falling asleep. The real meat of the game comes from persistent heroes you're introduced to at the beginning of a race's campaign who stay with you throughout your crusade. As you move from mission to mission, your character will gain experience through battle, and will also accumulate assorted items that can be equipped to enhance his or her skills. Leveling up not only means raised stats, but it also means you get to pick one of four different spells to learn or improve upon. These can range

from healing to area-effect spells, and will mean the difference between completing an objective and starting a mission over on many occasions.

Okay, so persistent heroes are definitely good, and this game looks fantastic, but some of the old ghosts of WarCraft's past raise their heads during gameplay. One of the biggest complaints I've always had about WarCraft (and StarCraft, for that matter) is that you constantly have to research the same things on every level to upgrade your unit's capabilities. Once something is “discovered,” why can't it be rolled over into the next scenario? Oh well. On another note, the ability to cast spells on individual units by clicking on their picture in the grouping window is awesome, but the amount of units you're able to gather together is so small it's almost impossible to find allies that need individual attention that are not in the same group as your caster. Basically this causes a bunch of frantic clicking during battle situations in the vein hope you'll find the guy who needs your help the most.

Enough complaining. Aside from a few sticking points, WarCraft III sets a new standard for what an RTS should be. The multiplayer is amazing (of course), and the world editor is impressive, but the single-player experience is a masterpiece. From the well-balanced unit abilities to the gorgeously rendered cutscenes which bookend each campaign, this title is one for the ages. — KRISTIAN

■ **Concept:**
It's WarCraft with some inspired role-playing elements thrown in

■ **Graphics:**
That same cartoony style you remember is alive and well

■ **Sound:**
No real breakthroughs here, but the dialogue Easter eggs are still quite hilarious

■ **Playability:**
Even if you've never played WarCraft (yeah, right!), you'd have no problem picking this game up

■ **Entertainment:**
It's probably a good idea to start this game on a Friday, because your next few days are going to be occupied

■ **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

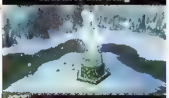
I haven't seen a big innovation or evolution in real-time strategy games since their inception, but WarCraft III marks the first move forward for the genre in quite some time. Unlike most, WarCraft III has a story. In fact, it's a fantastic tale that weaves around the various races that are available for play and gives you a chance to try them all before the quest reaches its conclusion. The use of upkeep penalties to stop players from zerging is an interesting addition to the series, and one that I both embrace and despise at the same time. I think it wouldn't bother me so much if the AI of your heroes and troops was better, but as it stands, some of the pathing and targeting could be improved (trying to heal someone not in group is a real bear). Overall, I loved the story and the pace of the game is fantastic, offering lots of variety in the missions. It's not perfect, but it's the best thing to happen to RTS for quite some time.

ANDY — 9.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** BLIZZARD ■ **DEVELOPER** BLIZZARD ■ **RELEASE** JULY 3



The Lockheed stealthiest their structures into being



This sword is bad. Very, very bad...



The rendered cutscenes are incredibly detailed



Multiplayer carnage!



Whoopsie
By killing your own father and setting his head to the ground, you'll get "Damn you, devil guy! Damn you to hell!"
Wait a second, that didn't make sense.

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PC

EMPEROR: RISE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

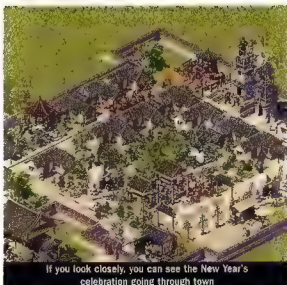
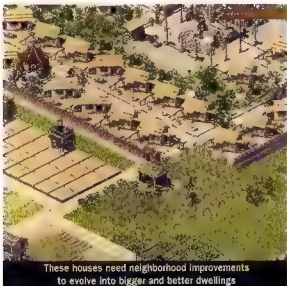
DIGITAL FENG SHUI

A couple of years ago, a great little game called Zeus: Master of Olympus released to much critical accord. After a successful expansion pack (Poseidon, 2001), I thought we might have seen the last of the series. Well, I was right and I was wrong. Impressions has released another city-builder in the same vein as the Zeus series,

but the content couldn't be more different.

Instead of leading the ancient Greeks through mythological situations with the cast of Grecian characters you might expect, Emperor takes you back to the beginning of Chinese civilization (roughly 2000 B.C.) and gives you the task of building healthy, successful, and economically diverse cities. What does that mean? It means you design everything from planning out residential areas to where the best place is for growing crops or training troops.

As your scheme for the city you've been asked to coddle into existence begins to take shape, you'll need to deal with trade to other cities, internal unrest, unemployment, and even war. Things take a while to develop, but once you've got 500 people nagging you for this or that, you'll have plenty to do. Emperor is another great city-builder from a developer that has come to define a niche genre all its own. — KRISTIAN



■ STYLE 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ PUBLISHER SIERRA ■ DEVELOPER IMPRESSIONS GAMES ■ RELEASE SEPTEMBER 10

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
9.25

- **Concept:**
A city builder using Chinese history to move the plot along
- **Graphics:**
It would have been nifty to be able to get in closer to the city, but everything is nice and tight the way it is
- **Sound:**
Great music and interesting effects. Some of the tunes reminded me of *American Beauty*—strange, no?
- **Playability:**
The long tutorial process is a must. If you want to succeed in the campaign portion of the game
- **Entertainment:**
Emperor is an awesome game for any city-builder fans out there
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Emperor most impressed me with its extreme level of detail, and its pleasantly soothing, ancient Chinese-influenced soundtrack. As you evolve your dirt road into a bustling city, you'll have to create an army, build commerce, establish government, promote trade, determine a religion, and more. And during this process, you'll constantly have to monitor numerous aspects of your town in order to maintain an overall level of happiness. Fortunately, Sierra included a very well thought-out tutorial that can accustom even the newest newbies to the experience. Although I have a couple gripes in a few areas of the gameplay, I found the overall execution to be superb. Ultimately, I think that most gamers will discover the beauty and wonder in building their own ancient Chinese empire, but some will certainly find the process tedious and boring.

■ CHET — 9.25



PC

AUSTERLITZ: NAPOLEON'S GREATEST VICTORY

LITTLE MAN SYNDROME

If you're looking for a quick game for you, here it is. If you could give a crap about Napoleon, early 19th century warfare, or moving Battalion A to location B in formation C, then I would suggest you move on to the next review right now, because this is not the game for you. Okay, now that I've got three of you with me, I must say Austerlitz tickled the historical nerd fancy inside of me. This title gives you an in-depth and (in my opinion) extremely interesting account of the events and troop movements surrounding the battle you're about to begin, gives you some strategic pointers based on what worked, and what didn't in the actual battle, and then puts you in the field.

So that's cool, but the gameplay and unit AI is so suspect that, from time to time, you just have to wonder what the hell is going on. Case in point — I was fortunate enough to route an enemy battalion by flanking it with one of my own while charging at them with another. They turned tail and ran, but suddenly my men stopped shooting. Every good general knows the best time to press the attack is when the enemy is in disarray, but I wasn't able to do that. Bigger. Play hiccup notwithstanding, this is a game for hardcore strategy fans — others need not worry. — KRISTIAN

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
7.25

- **Concept:**
Maneuver a bunch of little guys around a field and hope they win
- **Graphics:**
Things are seriously lacking in this department, and the zoom levels are painful when you start getting in close.
- **Sound:**
Very few effects and very little music make Austerlitz a sonic snore-fest.
- **Playability:**
A bit of a learning curve is to be expected unless you're familiar with this series.
- **Entertainment:**
If you're a history buff, this game can be a lot of fun, but otherwise it drags.
- **Replay Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

One day I was riding in the car with Kristian, and he revealed to me that — if he could — he would be a war reenactment geek (WRG for short). For those of you that don't know, WRGs are "people" that like to get together with friends and play "war" by eating, dressing, and not shooting like the participants in the historic wars they are recreating. Scared? You should be. Austerlitz is for those people. People that like history. People like Kristian. God have mercy on their souls.

■ ANDY — 2

■ STYLE 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ PUBLISHER SHIRAZNEL GAMES ■ DEVELOPER BREAKAWAY LTD. ■ RELEASE JULY 14

REVIEWS

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WTA TOUR TENNIS

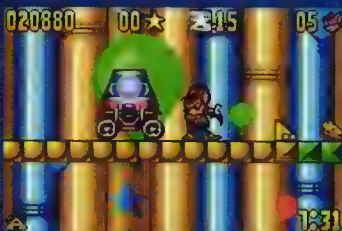
- **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
- **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
- **RELEASE** JULY 1



One of the better games in the legendary (for sucking) Konami sports line-up, WTA Tour Tennis for GBA eclipses its PS2 sister title by sticking to the basics of classic 8- and 16-bit tennis gaming.

It's a little bit poky at times, and I still don't like that odd overhead smash indicator, but overall I enjoyed my time on the pint-sized court. The gameplay is surprisingly deep, allowing you to use the shoulder buttons to make slice, topspin, and drop shots. As a bonus, the hilarious player select screen shows you what Martina Hingis and Serena Williams would look like as anime characters. —**MATT**

E 7.75



GAME BOY ADVANCE

AERO THE ACROBAT

- **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
- **PUBLISHER** METRO3D, INC.
- **RELEASE** JUNE 30

Aero the Acrobat is more than just fodder to fuel the towering joke of creepy, rabid clowns. Although a crazed legion of circus folk has aligned forces to destroy the big top forever, the look of Aero is decidedly perky. Having good graphics, excellent controls, creative gameplay with lots of circus staples (think water tanks and cannons), and genius character animation puts Aero into his own class of goodness. —**LISA**

E 9.25

GAME BOY ADVANCE

EARTHWORM JIM 2

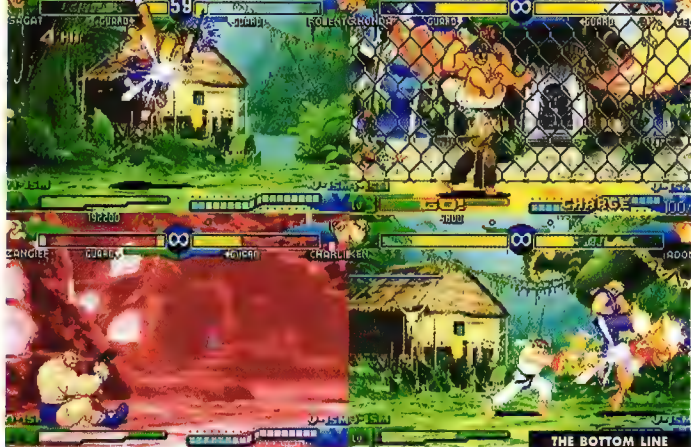
- **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
- **RELEASE** MAY 31



I remember enjoying Jim a second adventure a whole lot more many years ago. Almost everything present seems to replicate the original version quite well (except for some annoying

glitches), so I can only attribute my slight dissatisfaction to the fact that EWJ2 has aged poorly. Still, there's a decent amount of variety, an above-average challenge, and cool music. But with better action games out there for GBA, I suggest leaving this earthworm to the fishermen. —**CHET**

E 6.5



THE BOTTOM LINE

T 9.5

GAME BOY ADVANCE

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING STREET FIGHTER

The first time I saw a Shoryuken and Hadouken at my local arcade over a decade ago, I nearly snotted myself in excitement. To this day, I've managed to control my nose whenever exposed to something creatively exhilarating in games. However, after experiencing Alpha 3 for GBA, the snot pipes could not be contained. Capcom has reproduced nearly every component that made Alpha 3 the best Street Fighter, despite the GBA's obvious deficiencies.

Most will readily point out the conspicuous lack of six buttons on GBA. However, Capcom managed to work around this issue quite well. Even with only four buttons and a tiny d-pad, performing medium attacks, executing special moves and supers, and putting together elaborate combos is easy enough.

Furthermore, the GBA's memory limitations have only meant the loss of a few minor elements and, unfortunately, World Tour mode. Although World Tour did indeed add flair to the single player experience, the memory requirements and need for serious battery backup make it impossible to include. This is immediately understandable if you consider what a superb job Capcom did in every other aspect.

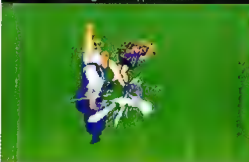
Players will be treated to decent animation, fluid gameplay, large and clean sprites, over 30 characters, and six modes of play—Single, Versus, Survival, Dramatic Battle, Final Battle, and Training. With so much to offer, there's little reason to pass this one up. —**CHET**



Many of the stages are nice this, although some appear absent



Dramatic Battle is as fun as ever!



Super moves have been simplified for the tiny d-pad



The various -isms are also present

- **Concept:** The best Street Fighter game ever brought to handheld with minimal sacrifice
- **Graphics:** The sprites move quite fluidly, and are surprisingly large
- **Sound:** The quality isn't horrible, but the variety is lacking a little
- **Playability:** Despite the two buttons missing, I found executing combos easy
- **Entertainment:** Again, this is perhaps the best Street Fighter made. Although it's missing the World Tour mode, it's still a blast to play
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Street Fighter Alpha 3 rocks, no matter the platform. It just so happens the GBA version is as amazing as its console counterparts. The characters, moves, and graphics are all here, forming what is still my favorite 2D fighter of all time. I can understand why World Tour—the role-playing, character-building mode—was left out. That doesn't mean that I can't be slightly bummed over it, though. Hitting two buttons for medium attacks works surprisingly well, and dashing down supers were a clever idea. Unfortunately, my hands got cramped after about an hour. Still, that's a small price to pay to take this all-time great with you on the road. Capcom has done it again. Long live E. Honda!

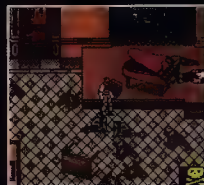
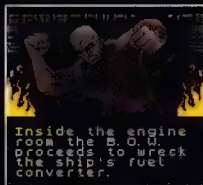
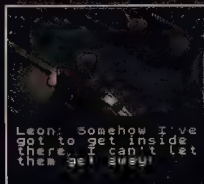
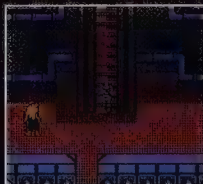
JUSTIN — 9.25

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CRAWFISH INTERACTIVE/CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 15



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CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best-selling software on a month-to-month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top-selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.



NPD TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For Week Ending Based On Units Sold

RANK	L	MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	4		Medal of Honor: Frontline	PS2	9	May-02	\$50

Only the President of the United States can award you with the Congressional Medal of Honor. On top of that, you have to distinguish yourself as gallant and heroic, risking your life above and beyond the call of duty. Forget that. You should just go to your local game store and buy it like everyone else. Take that, Congress!

2	3		Grand Theft Auto III	PS2	9.5	Oct-01	\$50
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Are you still baffled as to why GTA III keeps selling this well month in and month out? We have one word for you: Catharsis. What is that, you ask? We're glad you asked! Cathar-ses n. pl. – A technique used to relieve tension and anxiety by bringing repressed feelings and fears to consciousness.

3	5		Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	PS2	9	Jul-01	\$21
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This racing classic features well over 150 shiny, new vehicles, and gives you the keys. So what are you going to do with them, Speedy? You're going to collide them with other cars. You're going to scrape them against guardrails. You're going to wear down every brake pad and tire tread you get your grubby little mitts on. Ungrateful sods!

4	2		Dragon Ball Z: The Legacy of Goku	GBA	7.5	May-02	\$31
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Did you know we had some art from Dragon Ball artist Akira Toriyama on our cover once? It's true! It was for the Square RPG, Chrono Trigger. Toriyama objected, however, saying the artwork would make our magazine worth hundreds on the black market. We'll say it was an amicable breakup, though, since both of us have done well since.

5	1		Spider-Man	PS2	7.75	Apr-02	\$48
---	---	--	-------------------	-----	------	--------	------

So this guy is bitten by some mutant bug, inherits all these trippy powers, and gets to make out with Kristen Dunst to boot? That convinced us to let every insect in sight feast on our flesh. First, we tried fire ants, moved to centipedes, and lastly mosquitoes. What did we get? A lot of red welts, and a restraining order from Dunst. Rip-off!

RANK	L	MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A		Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Xbox	7.5	Jun-02	\$51
7	N/A		WWE Wrestlemania X8	GC	6.5	Jun-02	\$50
8	N/A		Test Drive	PS2	8.5	May-02	\$50
9	10		Super Mario Advance 2	GBA	9.5	Feb-02	\$30
10	8		Halo	Xbox	9.5	Nov-01	\$50
11	N/A		Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	GC	9.5	Jun-02	\$50
12	12		Yu-Gi-Oh!: Forbidden Memories	PS-X	5.5	Mar-02	\$31
13	15		Midnight Club	PS2	7.5	Oct-00	\$20
14	N/A		Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones	GBA	1	May-02	\$30
15	N/A		Stuntman	PS2	9.5	Jun-02	\$50
16	13		ATV Offroad Fury	PS2	8.5	Feb-01	\$21
17	20		Super Smash Bros. Melee	GC	9.25	Dec-01	\$50
18	18		Sonic Advance	GBA	8.5	Feb-02	\$39
19	N/A		Yu-Gi-Oh!: Dark Duel Stories	GBC	5.5	Mar-02	\$30
20	7		Spider-Man	Xbox	8.25	Apr-02	\$48

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Keith Barnett/MoxNorth (516) 625-2463

JAPAN TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L	MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A		Yu-Gi-Oh!: Duel Monsters 7	GBA
2	N/A		Way of the Samurai	PS2
3	N/A		Digimon World 3: The Door to New Adventures	PS-X
4	N/A		Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age	GBC
5	3		World Soccer Winning Eleven 6	PS2
6	N/A		One Piece Phantom Grand Battle	GBC
7	N/A		.hack Vol. 1	PS2
8	N/A		Victorious Boxers Championship Edition	PS2
9	N/A		Gun Survivor 3: Dino Crisis	PS2
10	N/A		Arc The Lad: WonderSwan Edition	WS



GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L	MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A		Super Mario Sunshine	GC
2	N/A		SOCOM: US Navy SEALs	PS2
3	N/A		Dead to Rights	Xbox
4	N/A		Madden NFL 2003	PS2
5	N/A		Street Fighter Alpha 3	GBA
6	N/A		Warcraft III	PC
7	1		Eternal Darkness	GC
8	N/A		NFL 2K3	PS2
9	3		Aggressive Inline	PS2
10	N/A		Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	PS2




PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service. Report Based On Month 10 (2002)

POS.	L	MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	N/A		Warcraft III	Jun-02	\$59
2	N/A		Neverwinter Nights	Jun-02	\$55
3	1		The Sims: Vacation	Mar-02	\$28
4	2		Grand Theft Auto III	May-02	\$44
5	4		The Sims	Feb-00	\$42
6	8		Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault	Jan-02	\$45
7	N/A		Warcraft III: Collector's Edition	Jun-02	\$76
8	N/A		Backyard Baseball 2003	Jun-02	\$19
9	3		Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	Mar-02	\$49
10	6		Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix	May-02	\$47





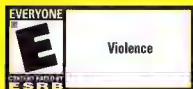
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GAME BOY ADVANCE

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Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
PLAYSTATION 2		
8/27/02	Antz Extreme Racing	Vivendi Universal
9/10/02	Amored Core 3	Ageatec
10/1/02	Bambino: Treasures in Time	Vivendi Universal
9/3/02	Blade II	Activision
8/27/02	Camels: Measure of Man of Courage	Eidos
9/30/02	Conflict: Desert Storm	Take 2
9/17/02	Das Stahlnetz	Capcom
9/10/02	Disney Golf	Electronic Arts
9/2/02	Dual Hearts	Atlus
9/17/02	Dynasty Tactics	Koei
9/10/02	Egg Mania: Eggtrime Madnes	Kemco
9/30/02	Grandia Xtreme	Ente
9/17/02	Garden: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai
9/17/02	Gungame	Sega
9/2/02	H2O Overdrive	Crave
9/17/02	Himen 2	Eidos

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
9/17/02	Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	Vivendi Universal
8/12/02	Disney's Magical Mirror: Starring Mickey Mouse	Vivendi Universal
9/10/02	Egg Mania: Eggtrime Madnes	Kemco
9/10/02	FreeStyle	Electronic Arts
9/17/02	Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision
8/13/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/24/02	Max Hellstrom's Pro BMX 2	Activision
8/26/02	MLB Slugfest 2003	M/way
9/15/02	Morantas: Hit Screen Arena	THQ
9/2/02	Mythic Heroes	Koei
10/1/02	NASCAR Thunder: 2003	Electronic Arts
9/2/02	NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega
9/23/02	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	NFL 2K3	Sega
8/12/02	NFL Blitz 2003	M/way
10/1/02	NHL 2003	M/way
9/18/02	NHL Hitz 2003	M/way
9/3/02	PackMan Fever	Namco
9/2/02	Pacman Arena	Ubisoft
8/4/02	Rocket Power: Beach Bandits	THQ
9/4/02	Scooby Doo: Night of 100 Frights	THQ
9/10/02	Scorpion King: 9 of the Apocalypse	Vivendi Universal
9/23/02	Star Fox Adventure: NES	Nintendo of America
8/26/02	Super Mario Sunshine	Nintendo of America
8/26/02	Super Monkey Ball 2	Sega
9/24/02	T-Model Soldiers 2	Electronic Arts
8/4/02	Top Gun: Combat Zones	EA Software
9/17/02	Turk: Evolution	Acclaim
9/17/02	Warus Blade	Ubisoft

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
10/1/02	Duke Nukem Forever	Take 2
9/17/02	Earth & Beyond	Electronic Arts
9/10/02	Empire: Rise of the Middle Kingdom	Vivendi Universal
9/27/02	Evil Twin	Ubisoft
9/17/02	Finalizer	Microsoft
9/17/02	Himen 2	Eidos
9/27/02	Isolated Data II	Vivendi Universal
9/17/02	Juicy	JuicyWood
9/24/02	Jurassic 3	Beverly
9/24/02	Law & Order	Vivendi Universal
10/1/02	Mad Girlin Buntzy Hunter	Electronic Arts
8/27/02	Mafia	Take 2
9/24/02	Major League II	Beverly
8/30/02	MeatWar: Total War	Activision
9/24/02	Monopoly 3	Beverly
9/24/02	Must Win at All Costs	Activision
10/1/02	MS Combat Flight Simulator 3	Microsoft

BLADE II

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 3



Activision's intent is to make this game as gory and bloody as possible. At any given time, up to 30 characters can crowd the screen, and yes, Blade can slice and dice them by the bits. Afterwards, the ceiling, floors, and walls should be caked in chunky goo. The combat is incredibly inventive, making use of the right analog stick for directional attacks. All of Blade's signature moves from the movie are represented in some fashion as well. Best of all, though, if a vampire truly gets under your skin, you can perform one of many finishing maneuvers that showcase a brutal death much like Mortal Kombat's Fatalities.

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
9/17/02	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	THQ
9/17/02	Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision
9/19/02	King Of Coasum	Bam! Entertainment
9/17/02	Knightin Hearts	Square Soft
10/1/02	Legion of Dual Seps	Eidos
10/1/02	Lost, The	Crave
8/13/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/13/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/17/02	Mad Max: Esle	Ubisoft
9/23/02	NASCAR Thunder 2003	Electronic Arts
9/2/02	NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony
8/13/02	NCAA GameMaster 2003	Sony
9/17/02	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	NFL 2K3	M/way
8/12/02	NFL Blitz 2003	M/way
8/13/02	NFL Game Day 2003	Sony
9/23/02	NHL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/18/02	NHL Hitz 2003	M/way
9/17/02	Nine Ascar	Namco
8/27/02	Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom
9/3/02	PackMan Fever	Namco
9/23/02	Pro Race Driver	Infogrames
9/24/02	Ragman Arena	Ubisoft
9/23/02	Riding Sca	THQ
9/23/02	Rocket Battery	THQ
9/3/02	Rocket Power: Beach Bandits	THQ
9/23/02	Scorpion King: 9 of the Apocalypse	Vivendi Universal
9/24/02	Sega Bass Fishing Dual	Sega
9/23/02	Shok	Electronic Arts
9/17/02	Sinnersin Skateboarding	Electronic Arts
9/17/02	Sly Cooper and the Thievous Racoon	Sony
9/17/02	Spider Slam	Sony
8/27/02	SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sega
8/13/02	Street Hoops	Activision
9/17/02	Survivance 2	THQ
9/24/02	Supernatural: Shadow of Apokalip	Infogrames
9/24/02	Tad Wariand	Infogrames
9/24/02	Teklan 4	Namco
9/24/02	Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Vivendi Universal
9/24/02	Thing, The	Vivendi Universal
9/24/02	T-Model Soldiers 2	Eidos
10/1/02	Total Immersion Racing	Vivendi Universal
9/24/02	Turk: Evolution	Acclaim
9/24/02	V-Rally	Infogrames
9/17/02	Wie Arms 3	Sony

PLAYSTATION

8/27/02	Aces of the Air	Tommo
8/26/02	Action Powers Football	Take 2
8/21/02	Grand Theft Auto: Completion	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/24/02	Mobile Arm	Electronic Arts
9/23/02	NASCAR Thunder 2003	Electronic Arts
9/11/02	NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony
8/13/02	NFL Game Day 2003	Sony
9/25/02	Planet of the Apes	Ubisoft
9/25/02	Spec Ops: Airborne Commando	Take 2

GAMECUBE

9/16/02	Animal Crossing	Nintendo of America
8/20/02	Barban	This Software
10/1/02	Barbie: Treasures in Time	Vivendi Universal
8/13/02	Beach Soccer	Sega
9/10/02	Big Eye Freestyle	Infogrames

XBOX

8/27/02	Antz Extreme Racing	Vivendi Universal
9/2/02	Blade II	Activision
9/24/02	Blitz: The Time Sweeper	Microsoft
10/1/02	Brute Force	Microsoft
8/13/02	Camels: Measure of Man of Courage	Electronic Arts
9/30/02	Conflict: Desert Storm	Take 2
9/20/02	Dead to Rights	Namco
9/30/02	Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei
10/1/02	Fate/Fate	Tommo
9/17/02	Himen 2	Eidos
9/24/02	Hollywood Stunts: Starring Chase	Bam! Entertainment
9/17/02	Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision
9/24/02	King of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, The	Infogrames
9/24/02	Lotus Challenge	This Software
9/23/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	Mad Hellstrom's Pro BMX 2	Activision
9/24/02	Max Hellstrom's Pro BMX 2	M/way
8/13/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/23/02	NASCAR Thunder 2003	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega
9/23/02	Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	NFL 2K3	Sega
8/12/02	NFL Blitz 2003	M/way
9/23/02	NFL Fever 2003	Microsoft
9/23/02	NHL 2003	Microsoft
9/18/02	NHL Hitz 2003	M/way
9/10/02	Quantum Reality	Microsoft
9/24/02	Ragman Arena	Ubisoft
9/23/02	Robotech Battlery	TDI Software
9/23/02	Sega GT 2002	Sega
9/20/02	Scorcher Storm	Electronic Arts
8/13/02	Street Hoops	Activision
9/24/02	Tad Wariand	Infogrames

SWINGERZ GOLF

■ **FORMAT** GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 8



In Japan, this title was originally dubbed *Waika Waika Golf*. Unless Pac-Man was the star, Eidos made the logical decision to change it for localization. Don't be confused by the new names, however. It's actually a clever play on words and not...

well...you know. If you're a fan of Hot Shots or Outlaw Golf, you'll be happy to hear that this upstart franchise is very similar in composition. It combines the goofy look of Hot Shots with the analog controls of Outlaw Golf. So basically, you're getting the best of both worlds all in one tightly-bound GameCube package.

9/24/02	Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Infogrames
9/10/02	Thing, The	Vivendi Universal
9/24/02	TimeSplitters 2	Ubisoft
10/1/02	Total Immersion Racing	Vivendi Universal
9/5/02	Tad King	THQ
9/17/02	Turk: Evolution	Acclaim

PC

8/27/02	Antz Racing	Vivendi Universal
9/2/02	Arx Fatalis	THQ
9/2/02	Beam Riders	Electronic Arts
9/16/02	Call of Duty	Activision
8/20/02	Cello King: Rhapsody of the East	Ubisoft
9/10/02	ChessMaster 9000	Microsoft
9/30/02	Conflict: Desert Storm	Take 2

TUROK: EVOLUTION

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX, GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 1

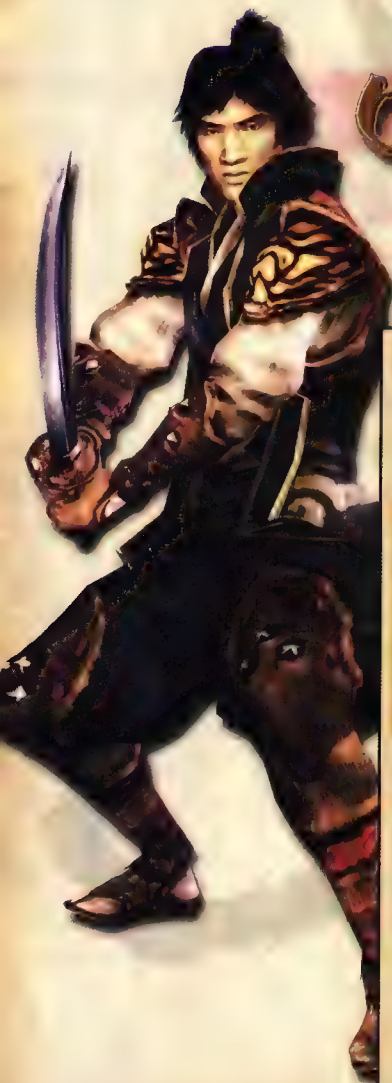
Scientists believe that a meteor wiped out the dinosaurs. The truth of the matter is, however, that one man is responsible for this genocide. His name is Turok, and you'll have the privilege of assuming his identity. His actions may not seem just, but it's a kill or be killed prehistoric world. Of course, all of the dinosaurs are armed with weapons of mass destruction so this won't be as easy as you'd think. Die, dinosaurs! Die!

GAME BOY ADVANCE

8/22/02	ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim
9/3/02	Barbie Groovy Games	Vivendi Universal
9/17/02	Boulder Dash EX	THQ
9/24/02	Burt Reynolds' Star vs Battles	Vivendi Universal
10/1/02	Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami
9/17/02	Chase	Ubisoft
9/17/02	Cliff McBae	Ubisoft
10/1/02	Cray Chase	Kemco
9/10/02	Davis Cup	Ubisoft
9/28/02	Defender of the Crown	Metro 3D
8/13/02	Disney's Magical Quest: Starring Mickey & Minnie	Nintendo of America
9/19/02	Dual Blades	Metro 3D
9/17/02	Duke Nukem Advance	Take 2
9/17/02	Egg Mania	Kemco
9/25/02	Evil's Wrestling 2	Bam! Entertainment
9/17/02	Grand Theft Auto III	Distribution: Software
9/24/02	Jimmy Neutron vs. Jimmy Neutron	THQ
9/17/02	Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision
9/20/02	Madden NFL 2003	Electronic Arts
9/10/02	MadMax: Cross Town Heroes	THQ
8/20/02	Medio of Honor: Underground	Destiny on Software
9/17/02	Mega Man Zero	Capcom
8/12/02	NFL Blitz 2003	M/way
9/17/02	Pokey & Rocky	SVG
9/19/02	Power Rangers Wild Force	THQ
9/19/02	Reign of Fire	Bam! Entertainment
9/3/02	Rip in Time	THQ
9/29/02	RoboTenn: The Madness Saga	THQ
9/27/02	Sabrina the Teenage Witch	Ubisoft
9/24/02	Smash Pack	THQ
8/27/02	Smuggler's Run	Westwood Software
9/24/02	Spyro: Season of Fire	Vivendi Universal
9/24/02	Spyro: Grouches 'n' Ghosts	Capcom
9/17/02	Toca Evolution	Infogrames
9/20/02	Ultimate Brain X	THQ
9/25/02	War'n Tennis	THQ
9/24/02	Wings	Metro 3D
10/1/02	WuJitsu: The Summoning	SVG
9/17/02	Yu-Gi-Oh! World Party	Ubisoft
9/17/02	Yu-Gi-Oh! Super Man Advance 3	Microsoft
10/1/02	Yu-Gi-Oh! Immortal Duelist Soul	Konami

PLAY TO PERFECTION

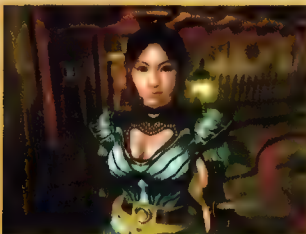
ONIMOSHITA 2™ Samurai's Destiny



Basic Training

Trading Items

If you truly want to succeed in this game, you'll need to trade with your allies frequently. Always talk to the characters to gauge their interest and see if you have an item that matches. For instance, Magoichi has an



interest in reading. The logical move would be to give him books or scrolls. If you truly impress the characters, they'll hand over amazing items, such as a Secret maneuver for a weapon, healing items, or artwork. Just keep experimenting to see what you can get. Also, we recommend saving before any exchanges take place. This will allow you to start fresh if you mess up.

Friendship

If you come through and deliver the items that your allies want most, they'll become your close friends. If you hand them an item that they don't want, their degree of friendship will lower. Also, if you cater to a specific person, another character may become jealous. For instance, if you become friends with Oyu, Kotaro will feel alienated. If you seek companionship with Ekei, Magoichi will freak out.

Masterful Techniques

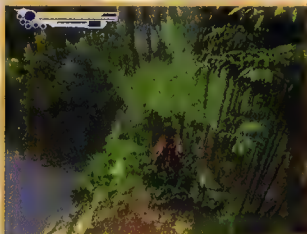
While the gameplay may seem to be developed in the hack n' slash vein, there's actually a great amount of strategy that comes into play. Most of the enemies in the game react diversely to the different weapons. Formulating strategies and changing up weapons will keep you out of harm's way. Also, make use of the secondary moves. The kick (Down + □) can stun enemies temporarily. The side step (R1 + direction) will help greatly as well.



Chapter 1: Voices

After the flashy introductory movie comes to a close, you'll take control of Jubei. If you choose to, you can save your game at the shrine (look for the flashing blue light atop the staircase). Once you head down the stairs, the war will begin. Dispose of the attackers and work your way along the path. You'll find a chest holding Yagyu Village Map on the left-hand side of the bridge.

Continue along the path to the pond. At this point, a brief cutscene will take place. Before venturing further, turn to your left and hack down the trees to reveal a box holding an Herb. As odd as this may sound, grab the Frog that's bouncing through the grass. Now, hop across the rocks on the pond and enter the cave. Navigate the dwelling to the sacred temple. At long last, you'll run into the mysterious woman who has been toying with your emotions. She will give you a special gift – the power to absorb souls – and will also illustrate what is required of you. Her last gift is the Charity Orb. As if we need to point it out, grab the Herb from the chest to the left before departing. Also, once inside of the cave, don't forget to suck the souls out of the statue.

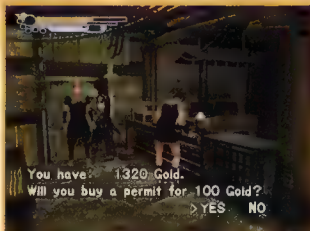


Before examining the altar near the lip of the pond, backtrack into town. Save your game (avoid enchanting for the moment), and pass through the house at the beginning of the stage. It just so happens to be your house! Spend a few minutes to investigate your surroundings and you'll uncover chests holding an Abacus, a Kaleidoscope, a Fork, Oolong Tea, and Four Guardians: Left. Solving the block puzzle can only open the chest at the end of the hall. Inside you'll be rewarded with the first Power Jewel. If you search the shelves, you'll also find Artwork #10. Be sure to look for a white scroll hanging on the wall. If you cut it in two, you'll obtain the Four Guardians: Right. Lastly, when you reach the backyard, search the fence on the far side for a well-hidden Wasabi. If you're wondering about the large chest that is missing an orb, there's nothing you can do with it at this point.

The only option available now is to head back to the pond and place your hand into the Dragon Shrine.

Chapter 2: New Acquaintances

Explore the town and talk with all of the locals (one of which will hand over the Ancient Documents). If your vision serves you correctly, you'll spot well-hidden chests holding a Globe, a Tengu Mask, Folding Fan, Cloth, Pipe, and the Imasho Town Map. If you talk to the lady wearing yellow garbs three times in a row, she'll hand over History Book Vol. 2. At this point, you can also head into the blacksmith shop and pull the lever to the left. Now, run as quickly as you can around



the fire pit to the platform that just lowered. Ride it to the top to find a box holding the Bow.

Other than searching for goods, there's nothing for you to do here, so head up the mountain path at the far end of town. Along with an assortment of enemies, you'll stumble upon a Telescope. When you reach the mine, you'll be sent back to town. Head into the restaurant and a cutscene will ensue. You'll be introduced to Magoichi and Ekei and will also receive the Gift Exchange. From here, talk to the man at the far end of the restaurant. He'll sell you the Mine Permit for 100 gold. Before heading to the mine, talk to the two boxes in front of the blacksmith. Their tip will lead you back to the restaurant. Head up the stairs and you'll run into Kotaro.

At this point, you may want to trade items with the three sub-characters to build your allegiance with them. Otherwise, it's time to return to the mine.



Helpful Tip!

Check the store frequently for newly stocked items like Artwork files and garments for the secondary characters.

Chapter 3: Into the Mine

Talk to the security guard, grab the History Book Vol. 4 from the chest, then head inside. Veer down the left path and grab the Demon Wall Scroll from the chest. You'll also run into another trick chest. Solve the puzzle to get the Baraitou Secret. At this point, head back to the previous room and pass through the entrance to the right. The Gold Mine Map can be found on this path. Continue through the mine and trouble will



emerge from the shadows. Fight your way to the fork in the road. Run to the right (toward the screen), and battle alongside your allies.

When the coast is clear, continue forward deeper into the mine. To the right awaits a chest holding the Five Ori Orbs file. If you approach the Dragon Shrine in this room, you'll receive the Hyoujin-Yari Ice Spear. Now, head back to the fork in the road and enter the unexplored area. After an event takes place, use the ice power to remove the force field from the door. Pass through, grab the Medicine, and place the Charity Orb into the hole next to the door. At long last, it's boss time!



Boss: Ginghamphatts

This half-breed demon will suck your life away; but as luck would have it, at a specific point during the fight, your buddies will come to the rescue. If you haven't traded any items yet, Ekei will enter by default, but the guy you want for this encounter is Magoichi. If he's with you, the option of running and hiding is available. If not, you'll need to strike fast and retreat even quicker. Just stay away from the boss' swipes and lure him into destroying the generators in the room. It may seem like an eternity, but he'll eventually fall.

After the fight, continue your quest through the mine. Pass by the injured man for now and grab the loot within the next room. You'll find a Mirror in a chest, tons of Gold on the floor, and the Hyoujin-Yari Secret in a trick box (solution: bottom right, right top, bottom left, right bottom). Now, talk to the man you passed up just moments ago. After conversing with the man, he'll hand over the Red Ring.

Optional Event: Chalk of Life

After defeating the boss in the mine, head into the shop and talk to the man wearing brown attire. He will tell you of his ill-fated father and will give a handful of Chalk. Hand this item to Ekei to get the Tale of the Heike. Trade this item with Magoichi for the Emblem. Following the chain of command, bring this item to Kotaro to receive the Melon that the man needs to heal his father. Take it to him.



Optional Event: Pickpocket

hide on the second floor of the restaurant. Confront her, and she'll flee the scene again. Again, she's hiding in broad daylight in front of the blacksmith. Bug her one last time and she'll return to her original hiding place. If you talk to her again, she'll hand over Ekei's Broken Bell. Return the item and you'll receive the Buratouji Tech. 1 in return.

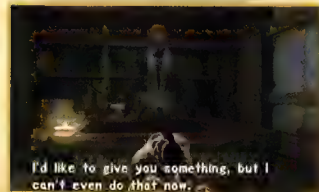
Chapter 4: Familiar Dwellings

With the Red Ring in hand, return to the mine and place it on the golden lid in the same room that the injured man once occupied. Grab all of the gold from the nearby area, then insert the Red Ring into the lid. Drop into the hole and prepare for a difficult fight against the statue demons. Use your combo moves to take them out. Proceed into the next chamber and grab the chest on the left holding a Crystal Ball before ascending the stairwell. When you resurface, run around the stairs toward the door. An ally event will occur. Pass through the door and eliminate the archer as quickly as you can. Snag the Gifu Keep Tower Map and Incoense from the chests, then pass

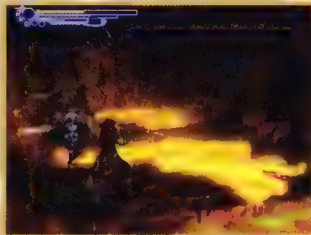


through the top left door. The only thing to do here is solve a puzzle...a perplexing one at that. The trick here is to arrange the numbers so that the sums all equate to 15 when added vertically, diagonally, and horizontally. Arrange the numbers as such: six (top left), eight (top right), two (bottom left), four (bottom right). For this tedious task, you'll receive the Bronze Mask (Right).

Backtrack into the hall and enter the double door to the right. After disposing of the beast, pass through the door it was guarding, and solve the



puzzle box to get a Power Jewel. Save in the next room, then continue along the path. Under the staircase you'll find a chest holding History Book Vol. 1. Before heading upstairs, enter the door leading to the well room. Grab the Demons' History book from the shelf, then head out and ascend the stairs. Another ally event will take place, followed by a lengthy, emotional story break. Continue through the door, across the balcony, and into another room. Grab the Purify Charm from the shelf. Return to the well and use the Charm to get the Bronze Mask (Left). Backtrack even further to the save room and use the Bronze Mask pieces on the door. You'll bump into an old acquaintance and will be forced to battle. Slay the enemies, then continue forward into the cavern. If you're low on health, heal before taking another step. A difficult battle is right around the corner.

Boss: Gogandantess

This guy is a serious dork, and we're certain that you'd like nothing better than to slice and dice him into little bits. Unfortunately, you won't be able to hit him. He's too good. The only thing you can do is block and duck out of the way. If you can keep this up for a few minutes, someone will come to your rescue.



Work your way through the tunnel to the ladder. Ascend it and talk to your rescuer. You'll receive the Faith Orb. Insert the Orb into the boulder, and the events that unfold should take your breath away. As every good hero should do, ride into the sunset with your girl. After a lengthy cutscene, you'll turn up in town. After taking a few steps, an event with Kotaro's cunosity will peak.

Optional Event: Clearance Sale

If you completed the Chalk of Life optional event, return to the store and talk to the man in green. For saving his life, he'll give you the Orange Necklace. This next

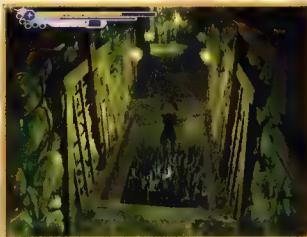
feat will take some time. Since the storekeeper is closing shop, you'll need to purchase every item in his inventory. Thankfully, the enemies on the mountain path drop between 50 and 80 gold each. This is also a great point to level up your weapons. Talk to the shop owner after you clean him out and he'll give you a White Necklace.

Helpful Tip!

This will be the last time that you'll have the ability to freely walk around and trade with all of the characters. Unload all of the items you can to receive power-ups and health. Also, make sure that you appease the person you want to be at your side with the best gifts.

Chapter 5: All in the Family

After talking with Oyu, enter the market and locate the lady with the umbrella. Ahhh!!! She's hideous! In a flash of light, you'll be teleported to your house. Strange, no? Since you really don't have a say in what happens at this point, work your way back to the pond. Enter the cave and a startling cutscene will take place. Grab the Ring of Takajo off of the ground. You know what to do with this. Before heading back to your house, however, if Magochi appears outside the cave, he'll give you explosives that can be used to blow through the filmy rocks next to the Dragon Shrine. The Green Necklace awaits inside! From here on in, we recommend wearing the Green Necklace as it reveals the location of hidden magic chests that hold health power-ups and ammo. For the sanity of those of you that decided to make friends with characters other than Magochi (meaning you couldn't get the Green Necklace), none of the magical box locations are listed in the continuity of the guide. Again, the items you'll unearth with this Necklace are power-ups.



After this, work your way back to your house and insert the Ring into the locked dresser that you tinkered with early on in the game. The solution to the spinning dial puzzle that appears is: black turtle (top), red sparrow (bottom), white tiger (left), blue dragon (right).

Climb down the ladder that appears. As you quickly find out, this tunnel is full of perils. Jump over the spike pit that appears, then slice the rope to make the spinning boulder appear. Of course, you'll need to run away from it. Hop back over the spiked pit, then quickly jump over it again and hang. The boulder will pass over you, allowing safe passage to fog valley. You won't be able to open the magically sealed box just yet, so continue forward and ascend the series of ladders to the bridge. Once you pass it, and the challenges that it brings, keep your eyes



peeled for a chest holding an Herb under a tree. A little further down awaits another Dragon Shrine. Insert your cursed hand to get the Sunpumar. With this new weapon in hand, return to the green force field you passed up seconds ago. Hack the force field to unearth Nobunaga's Knowledge.

From here, head past the save point (near the Dragon Shrine) into the forest. The goal here is to destroy three fireflies within the repeating environments. Just battle your way through the enemies and kill the dragonflies when they appear. If Kotaro is your friend, you'll experience an alternate route altogether that leads to a handful of interesting items. Once either of these feats is accomplished, you'll run into a beloved adversary again.

Boss: Ginghamhatt's



The first boss in the game makes another appearance. He may talk a big game this time around, but he's no match for your skills. Just hack away at him and watch for the falling leaves when he vaults into the brush. Stay back a few feet and slash at him when he runs by. His pace will increase, so you may need to slow down your assault and evade until he lets up. When he perishes, you'll receive Nobunaga's Reign.

Chapter 6: Into the Heart of Hell

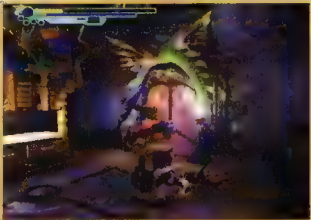
Now, work your way around the swamp, up the stairs, and to the seal. Smash it with the Buraito and Nobunaga's Dignity is yours. Return to the swamp and pass through the door. Before heading forward, veer to the left and open the trick box to obtain the Senpumaru Secret. Continue forward to the monitor puzzle. The image of the Nobunaga statues is random. Just remember which one goes where and place the statues accordingly to open the door. Battle the enemies in the chamber, then pass through the door atop the slope. Fight the assortment of bizarre creatures, then grab Jujudormah's Diary off of the desk and save your game.

Pass through the door on the left. A cutscene with the lovely hag will commence. At long last, you'll have the chance to take her down.



Boss: Oni Witch

After you hit this hag, she'll disappear and reappear at a distance – granting her the freedom to unload with magic. Block or dodge the shots and find an opening in which you can run up and take a few whacks. When



her health begins to deplete, her aggression will increase, and she will begin swinging at you wildly. Just dodge, block, and counter to take her out without breaking a sweat. After an amusing death, your adversary will drop the Honest Orb.

From here, locate the wall with a red light on it and activate the switch to reveal a hidden passage. Grab the Herb from the chest, then run when the gas begins to fill the room. At the end of your jaunt, you'll be treated to an exciting cutscene that ends with Jubei in an underwater cave.

Chapter 7: Switching Hands

Grab Oni's Sacred Place from the chest, then save your game. Place the Honesty Orb into the boat and an incredibly detailed CG cutscene will grace the screen. Wow! When it concludes, you'll run into Gogandantess again.

Boss: Gogandantess

This time around, you'll actually need to land several hits on Gogandantess. The Secret attacks for each of the three weapons work well, but the most damage can be dealt with Hyoujin-Yari's ice blast. After a few minutes, the fight will end.



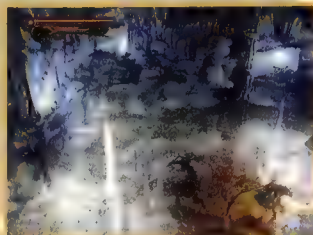
(Chapter 7: Switching Hands I)

Interestingly, control will switch over to Oyu. A familiar visitor will hand her the Red Bracelet. Save your game, go down the ramp to the basement, then reemerge in the statue room. Grab the Key Plate from the chest, then return to the previous room. Place the Plate on the lock in front of the Dragon Shrine. From here, pass through the door on the right (not near the save). Work your way down the hall through another door. Dispose of the enemies, grab the Oni's Super Weapon document from the shelf, and Oni's Place Map #1 from the chest. Before heading deeper into this dungeon, run around the yellow pool and grab the Medicine near the fence. Now, move on. Pass through the hall into the glass room.



Battle the fish to remove the force field. Descend the ladder and fight your way across the room. Grab the Adarga from the chest and lop the heads off of the snake beast to illuminate a new path. Follow the white light down to a save point and a chest with a Gradius sword in it. Equip this armament and get ready for a war.

Boss: Twin Bulls



Just when you'd least expect it, a bull drops out of the sky. Naturally, this side of beef is holding a huge axe and is desperate for your blood. Basically, do what you can. Exact combos, use magic – just don't let him hit you with the axe. After the bull is defeated, another one will fall onto the battlefield. This one is a tad quicker, but again, it doesn't have a lot of health, and any strategy will work. After the fight, you'll be rewarded with the Sacred Flute.

Chapter 8: Back in the Saddle Again

Return to the temple's entrance to initiate a cutscene and gain control of Jubei again. Enter and activate the Dragon Shrine to obtain the enormous Dokoutsu Hammer. Double over the path the Oyu took. Once you

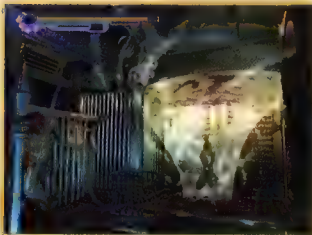
reach the basement, keep your eyes open for a glowing yellow force field. Destroy it with the Dokoutsui. Look closely for the glowing Circle Key on the floor in the next room. Before moving on, be sure to talk to Oyu for a free Herb.

Now, return to the Dragon Shrine room. Pass through the door on the left (near the save point) and grab the Lift Instructions and Magic Liquid off of the floor. Equip the Senpumaru and perform the magical tornado attack under the fan to activate the lift. Take it down to the lower level. Before moving on, grab Oni's Place Map # 2 from the chest.

In the next room, if Ekei is your friend, a cutscene will take place. This sequence will reveal a secret chest holding the Yellow Necklace. Examine this room to find a trick box. The solution is: top right, top center, right bottom. Inside you'll find a Tanegashima. Now, ascend the ladder and run around the walkway to another door...and another puzzle. Once again, you must arrange the numbers so that they equate to the sum of 34 vertically, horizontally, and diagonally. Here's the solution:

1	15	14	4
12	6	7	9
8	10	11	5
13	3	2	16

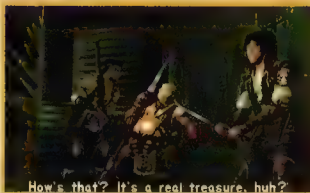
Completing this mathematical headache will bring about the Golden Key. Before leaving this room, grab the Guildstern Letter from the bench. Now, backtrack to the first room on this floor. Ascend the ladder and insert the Golden Key into the lock. Hop across the boxes to the new door. Use the Circular Key to open it. On the floor you'll find Tokichiro's Memo #1. Another puzzle awaits. This one is simple; just line up the symbols in the same way they are displayed in the picture above. Once this is completed, the Light path will appear. Teleport onto the roof, then use the ladder to reach another trick box. The solution is: top right, right bot-



tom, bottom left, left top, top left, left bottom. For this feat, you'll receive the Talisman. Use the stairs to reach the ground floor, which holds a Green Wedge in a chest and a save point.

Approach the door to trigger a cutscene. At this point, control will switch over to Ekei. Head into the building to the left and grab the Gifu East Area Map from the chest on the counter and the Yellow Bracelet from the chest on the floor. Pass through the door and cross the bridge. Grab the Cherry Key from the chest, then unlock the door. Descend the stairs in the center of the courtyard. Run down the spiral ramp and grab the Medicine from the chest. Return to the courtyard and maneuver to the door behind the stairs you just accessed. Do you remember this area? We certainly hope so. Pass through the central door, then use the Cherry Key on the next door to the right. Grab the Nich Protector, Crescent Key, and Artwork #12, then solve the trick box. The solution is: left center, top left, right top. The prize is a Magic Jewel.

Now that you have a key, return to the bridge and



How's that? It's a real treasure, huh?

veer off onto the dock on the left. Use the Crescent Key on the door. Run past the spitting fish and continue along the path all the way up to the cabin. Along the way, search behind the waterfall for a box containing a Halberd. Enter the cabin and save your game. Snag the Hunting Schedule from the shelf, then when you're ready, mosey on downstairs. Ride the boat across the lake. A familiar bull boss will appear. Unlike other bosses, this one isn't worth elaborating on as he's just as easy to defeat as a standard enemy. When he falls, he'll drop the Snake Key. Make sure you grab the books and Artwork #13 from the far side of the room before heading back to Jubei. Free him from his cell and Ekei's work will be done.

Optional Event: Skill Tower

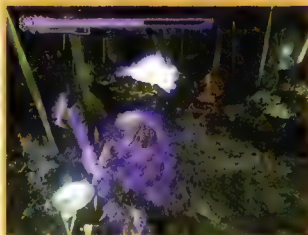
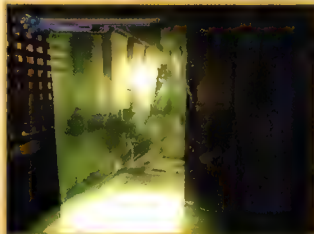


Exit the tower and break the force field on the right using the Buraitou. Pick up Tokichiro's Diary and Artwork #11 before using the Green Wedge on the green light. This optional quest is actually an endurance and skill test. Your objective is to destroy different sets of enemies on 10 different floors. When the last level is cleared out, you'll receive the Purple Necklace and a Perfect Medicine.

Chapter 9: Retracing Steps

The next step, even if you've completed the optional event, is to head to the right and enter the temple for the third time. Once inside, head upstairs and enter the room on the far side of the balcony. Use the Dokoutsui to remove the force field from the door. Inside you'll find Medicine and a trick box holding the Dokoutsui Secret. The solution is: right bottom, bottom right, bottom left, right center, bottom center, right top.

From here, return to the room that Ekei opened with the Crescent Key. On the bridge to the right you'll see a force field blocking a door. Use the Hyoujin-Yari to smash through. Snag the Gourd from the box, then step into the light. Follow the path past the stone bod-



ies to the drawbridge. Pull the lever, then continue forward. In the save room, grab Tokichiro's Memo #2 from the ground beside the body, and the Demon Cave Map from the chest. Trek deeper into the catacombs and you'll run into a chest holding a Great Powder Tube. From here on in, use the Tube on the petrified people you see. Many of the victims will give you items. With this noted, continue on. A little further down awaits a force field. Use the Senpumaru to destroy it. Of course, on the other side awaits a trick box holding a Power Jewel. The solution is: bottom left, left bottom, bottom right, right bottom, top left. From here, there's nothing else to do. Teleport back to the temple and backtrack to where Ekei fought the bull boss. When you reach the lake, you'll confront a downed Magoichi. Save him and his intentions will be revealed.



After taking the boat, enter the temple and you'll find two frozen villagers. Use the Tube on them to gain access to a new room. Solve the puzzle at the shrine (another easy one), and a purple stream of energy will appear. Pass into it to teleport to the Blood Pond. Navigate the path and enter the door. The one with the bone hands can only be opened if you collected three Petrified Bones through trading with your friends. If you have these items, you'll find



the Black Necklace inside a trick box. The solution is: top right, right bottom, bottom left, left center. From here, locate the save room and grab Oni's Place Map #3 from the chest. Continue on into the circular room. Veer off through the door to the left and then make a right at the fork in the road. Hop into the gap to the left to find a trick box with a Magic Jewel inside. The solution is: right top, right bottom, top left, left bottom. Navigate the rest of maze and you'll find a room with a ceiling fan. Use the Sempumaru magic to activate it. Take the lift up and grab the Scarlet Key and Artwork #14 off of the ground.

Head into the hallway and enter the door to Jubel's right. Work your way through the familiar area and pass through the door near the save. Use the lift and run across the room through the door. Use the catwalk to reach the magic replenishing room. Use the Scarlet Key on the door. You may want to save your progress after the cutscene as your good friend Gogandantess is just around the corner. Snag the items in the chests, then get ready for the fight of your life.

Boss: Gogandantess

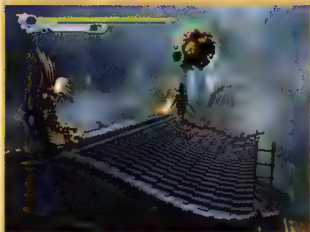


The first thing you'll need to do is play the Sacred Flute to lower his shield. We knew he was cheating before! This time around, he's fairly easy to beat. Just hack away. The Sempumaru magic works very well, as do most of the Secret attacks. After a disturbing death, Gogandantess will give you the Respect Orb.

After the fight, exit through the opposite end and work your way along the catwalks and piping. Snag all of the chests and open the trick box to find a Power Jewel. The solution is: right bottom, bottom right, top left, left top, top center. Hop across the metal structures to the door. Talk with Oyu and then place the Respect Orb into the statue.

Chapter 10: The Beginning of the End

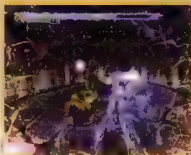
Search the object in the center of the room and an alarm will sound. Rotate both analog sticks (in different directions) to open the door before time expires. After the gorgeous CG sequence ends, work your way past the save point, beyond the door, and over to the trick box holding a Magic Jewel. The solution is: right center, top center, right bottom, bottom center, left center, top right. Before heading through the door, run to the far end of the room and grab the glowing Magic Liquid from the corner. Proceed into the next chamber. Destroy the barrels to find a chest holding Medicine. Now, move on to the next room. Navigate the conveyor belts and enter the control room. After the cutscene, push the red button to see an amusing little sequence.



When you arrive at your next destination, run past the save point and grab Tokichiro's Memo #3. Enter the door and clean out the room before moving on. In the next room, a chest holding Medicine is hidden behind the stairs. Ascend to the balcony, then enter the first door that you come across. Inside you'll find Artwork #15 and the Purple Wedge. Head to the rear of the room and pass into the narrow hallway. Climb the ladder to the roof, where a difficult adversary awaits. The Sempumaru magic will dispose of this beast in a blink of the eye, but you'll need to hit it with at least five magical blasts. If you're out of magic, you'll have to wait for him to swoop down and attack. This adversary will drop the Gold Scale. Luckily, you'll use this item right away. Just place it into the goldfish to remove the black force field from the balcony below.

Return to the balcony. You'll now have two options in front of you. Will you continue the quest, or veer off of the beaten path in pursuit of the ultimate weapon? The choice is yours.

Optional Event: Rekka-Ken



From the balcony, find the closet (near the bridge) and place the Purple Wedge into the purple light. You'll find yourself in a familiar tower. This time around, however, you'll need to battle through 20 floors instead of 10. On the last one, you'll win the Rekka-Ken flame sword. Before leaving, plunge the sword into the ground to open a secret path leading to a 21st floor. Open the chest to find Fashionable Goods. You won't be able to equip this item just yet, so leave it for now.

From the balcony, cross the bridge and save your game. Ascend the ladder and Ginghamphatts will make his final curtain call. Will this freak ever die?!

Boss: Ginghamphatts



Even if you have the Rekka-Ken, use the Sempumaru to stun Ginghamphatts, removing his ability to counterattack. Use combo attacks repeatedly, and before long, Ginghamphatts will split in two. At this point, the Rekka-Ken fire magic will make quick work of this adversary. If you don't have this weapon, the ice and earth magic will come in handy. Continually attack the legs, and avoid the hammer strikes at all costs. Just keep pounding away and he'll drop before you know it. In his wake, you'll find the Strength Orb.

Retreat down the ladder you used to reach this platform and save your game. Run around to the backside of the flame tower and place the Strength Orb into the hole to open the door. Before you can enter, you'll view a hilarious cutscene. Where did the stars come from? Anyway, when you reach the lower level, a displeased and highly irritated Nobunaga will attack.

Boss: Nobunaga



This guy is loaded to the hilt with devastating attacks. He's also airborne for roughly 70% of the fight. Of all the weapons that will aid you the most, the Tanegashima keeps this battle in perspective. Just shoot Nobunaga when he takes to the air. With each shot, he will sink a few feet. When he comes close to the ground, unleash a magical attack. Repeat this process and dodge his assaults to move on to the final boss. You won't be able to save after this fight, so make sure you have plenty of health left over for the final conflict.

Boss: Ghost in the Machine



What a strange ending. All of the gameplay mechanics you spent hours mastering don't come into play here. This boss is basically formatted like a shooter. Hold down R1 to strafe and blast away. Your shots will automatically hit the machine's hit zones. After the legs are taken out, your aim will raise to the head. Just keep plugging away and strafe out of the way of the lasers and head attacks. In a sense, this is one of the easiest fights in the game. After the machine explodes, sit back and enjoy the ending. And yes, there's a sequence after the credits.



FREESTYLE

Input all of these cheats at the Enter Codes menu within the Options screen.

- All Bikes – WHEELS
- All Characters – POPULATE
- All Costumes – YARDSALE
- All Tracks – TRAKMEET
- Brian Deegan's Commander Costume – SOLDIER
- Brian Deegan's Dominator Bike – WHOZASKN
- Brian Deegan's Heavy Metal Bike – HEDBANGR
- Brian Deegan's Muscle Bound Costume – RIPPED
- Burbs FreeStyle Track – TUCKELLE
- Burn It Up Track – CARVEROK
- Cheat Mode – LOKSMITH
- Clifford Adoptante – COOLDUDE
- Clifford Adoptante's Gone Tiki Bike – SUPDUDE
- Clifford Adoptante's Hang Loose Bike – STOKED
- Clifford Adoptante's Island Spirit Bike – GOFLOBRO
- Clifford Adoptante's Tankin' It Costume – NOSLEEVE
- Clifford Adoptante's Tiki Costume – WINGS
- Crash Pad FreeStyle Track – WIDOPEN
- Gnome Sweet Gnome Track – CLIPPERS
- Greg Albertyn – GIMEGREG
- Greg Albertyn's Champion Bike – NUMBER1
- Greg Albertyn's National Pride Bike – PATRIOT
- Greg Albertyn's The King Bike – ALLSHOOK
- Infinite Freekout – ALLFREEK
- Jessica Patterson – BLONDIE
- Jessica Patterson's Charged Up Bike – LIGHTNIN
- Jessica Patterson's Hoodie Style Costume – NOT2GRLY
- Jessica Patterson's Racer Girl Bike – TONBOY
- Jessica Patterson's Speedy Bike – HEKACOOOL
- Jessica Patterson's Warming Up Costume – LAYERS
- Leeann Tweeden's Fun Lovin' Costume – THINKPINK
- Leeann Tweeden's Hot Stuff Bike – OVENMITT
- Leeann Tweeden's Red Hot Costume – SPICY
- Leeann Tweeden's Seducer Bike – GOODLOOK
- Leeann Tweeden's Trendsetter Bike – STYLIN
- Let It Ride Track – BLACKJAK
- Mike Jones – TOUGHGUY
- Mike Jones' Beater Bike – KICKBUTT
- Mike Jones' Blue Collar Costume – BABYBLUE
- Mike Jones' Lil' Demon Bike – HORNS
- Mike Jones' Flushed Bike – PLUNGER
- Mike Jones' High Roller Costume – BOXCARS
- Mike Metzger's All Tatted Up Costume – BODYART
- Mike Metzger's Bloodshot Bike – EYEDROPS
- Mike Metzger's Echo MX Costume – HELLOOOO
- Mike Metzger's Rhino Rage Bike – SEVENTWO
- Mike Metzger's Rock of Ages Bike – BRRRRRAP
- Mulisha Man Bike – WHATEVER
- Rocket Garden Track – TODAMOON
- Stefy Bau's 211 Bike – TWONEONE
- Stefy Bau's Amore Bike – HEREIAM
- Stefy Bau's Disco Tech Bike – SPARKLES
- Stefy Bau's Playing Jax Costume – KIDSGAME
- Stefy Bau's UFO Racer Costume – INVASION

Mr. Smellmebum
Poopstain City, FL

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS VII

Hidden Officers – To enter these codes, select the New Officer option at the Main Menu. Create a new officer using one of the names listed below. For example, if you choose Ben Franklin, enter Ben as the last name and Franklin, so that the name appears as Ben Franklin on the screen. Once the name is entered, you'll hear a musical note signifying that the code is in effect.

- Abe Lincoln
- Albert Einstein
- Augustus Caesar
- Ben Franklin
- Benedict Arnold
- Betsy Ross
- Charles Darwin
- Crazy Horse
- Daniel Boone
- Dynasty Warrior
- Genghis Khan
- Gitaroo Man
- Harry Houdini
- Jeanne Darc
- Julius Caesar
- Lady Diana
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Mark Antony
- Nikola Tesla
- Norma Jean
- Robert Lee
- Robin Hood
- Sitting Bull
- Sun Tzu
- Thomas Paine
- Ulysses Grant
- Wyatt Earp

Marcus Henderson
Dallas, TX



SPLASHDOWN

Cheat Mode – Enter the Options menu and highlight Game Options. Hold the R Button and press Up (x2), Down (x2), Left, Right, Left, Right, X, B, X, B to bring up the Code Entry screen. Now, input any of the codes below. Note: All of the codes are case sensitive.

- All Characters – AllChar
- All Costumes – Passport
- All FMVs – Festival
- All Wetsuits – LaPinata
- Expert AI – AllOutAI
- F-18 Time Trials – F18
- Ghost Time Trials – SEADOO
- Hard Track With Normal AI – Hobble
- Invincibility – TopBird

Charlie Sheen
New York, NY

CODE OF THE MONTH



STUNTMAN

Enter all of these codes as driver names at the New Game screen. Note: All of the cheats are case sensitive.

- All Cars – SPIDER
- All Driving Games – Bindl
- All Toys – MeFF
- All Trailers – fellA

Simon Garrett
Washington, DC



MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Enter this code at the Press Start screen.

Cheat Mode – X, B, L Button, R Button

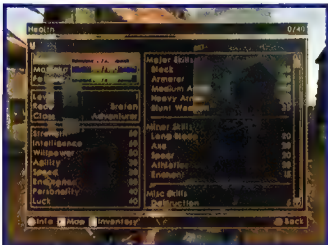
Benicio Del Toro
Los Angeles, CA

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

Enter this code at any point during gameplay.

All Weapons – B, Up, Left, Down, Right, B (x2)

David Willis
Rockford, IL



THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

Restore Fatigue – During gameplay, press B to bring up the menu screen. Use the L and R Buttons to switch to the Statistics menu. Now, use the directional pad to highlight the Fatigue entry. From here, tap Black (x2), White (x2), Black. Press and hold A until the desired Fatigue level is achieved.

Restore Health – During gameplay, press B to bring up the menu screen. Use the L and R Buttons to switch to the Statistics menu. Now, use the directional pad to highlight the Health entry. From here, tap Black, White, Black (x3). Press and hold A until the desired Health level is achieved.

Restore Magicka – During gameplay, press B to bring up the menu screen. Use the L and R Buttons to switch to the Statistics menu. Now, use the directional pad to highlight the Magicka entry. From here, tap Black, White (x2), Black, White. Press and hold A until the desired Magicka level is achieved.

Michael Yonkers
Cleveland, OH

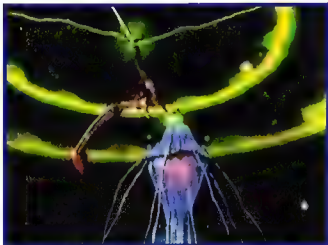


OUTLAW GOLF

New Costumes – Head to the Character Selection screen. Hold the L Button, then press Y (x2), White, Y, Black, Y.

Unlock Everything – At the beginning of a game, enter Golf_Gone_Wild as your player name to unlock all of the golfers, courses, and clubs.

"Telly The Terrible"
Great Basin, WA



ETERNAL DARKNESS: SANITY'S REQUIEM

Three Endings – In total, there are three different endings to unlock in Eternal Darkness. Completing the game once will bring up the standard conclusion and you'll also unlock the Credits option. Beating the game twice with the same save file and different colored rune path will bring about another ending and Jump to Stage option. If you can complete the game again using the same save file with the last rune artifact path, you'll see another ending that reveals everything. You'll also unlock Eternal Mode at this point.

Darren Williams
Huntsville, TN

RedCard 2003

Enter this code as a Create/Load Profile.

Cheat Mode – BIGTANK

David Birch III
Green Valley, ID



MX SUPERFLY

Enter this code at the Title Screen.

Unlock Everything – X, Y, L Button + X, X, L Button, Z, R Button + Y

Lauren Hill
San Antonio, TX

BOMBERMAN GENERATION

Max in Battle Mode – To unlock this mystery character for multiplayer matches, collect all of the Lightning Cards within the Quest mode. Once this feat is accomplished, head to the Battle mode Player Selection screen and press Z to bring up Max.

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8

If you feel that Wrestlemania X8 comes up short in the number of characters you can play as, there's actually a handful of hidden wrestlers embedded within the Create-A-Superstar mode. Here's a listing of what you'll need to do to recreate each one's likeness.



Billy
Body Type: 03
Face: 10
Hair: 07 (Yellow)
Wrist: 01 (White)
Lower Body: 04 (Red)
Logo: 06 (Black)
Foot: 03 (White)

Upper Body Tattoo: 03
Elbow: 03
Hand: 04
Lower Body: 0 (Black)
Knee: 03 (Black)



Mankind
Body Type: 00
Skin Color: 01
Modify Figure:
Chest: +11
Waist: +14
Abdomen: +14
Thigh: +7
Face: 4
Hair: 4 (Brown)
Upper Body: 09 (\ White)
Lower Body: 12 (Black)



Bret Hart
Body Type: 06
Face: 08
Hair: 05 (Black)
Upper Body: 03 (Black)
Logo: 01 (Click R)
Elbow: 06 (Black)
Wrist: 01 (Pink)
Lower Body: 02 (Pink)
Logo: 08 (Click R)
Knee: 03 (Pink)
Foot: 05 (White)



Perry Saturn
Body Type: 06
Skin Color: Middle
Face: 09
Facial Hair: 07 (Second Lightest Color)
Tattoo: 07
Wrist: 01 (White)
Lower Body Logo: 03 (Black)
Foot: 08 (Black)



Diamond Dallas Page
Body Type: 0
Skin Color: 04
Face: 02
Hair: 03 (Color 3rd from Left)
Facial Hair: 03 (Brown)
Elbow: 03
Wrist: 01
Hand: 01
Lower Body: 08 (Black)

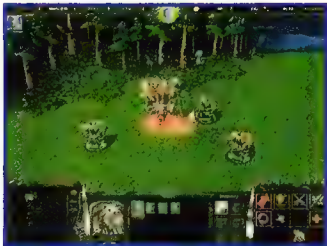


Shawn Michaels
Body Type: 01
Face: 07
Hair: 12 (Brown)
Upper Body: 04 (Black)
Logo: 03
Wrist: 01
Lower Body: 02 (White)
Logo: 06



Goldberg
Body Type: 03
Skin Color: 03
Face: 14
Facial Hair: 04 (Brown)

"Joystick Juggalo"
Detroit, MI

**WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS**

During gameplay, press [Enter] to display the two player messaging box. From here, type in any of the codes below and press [Enter] to activate the cheat function. When a code is entered correctly, a message will pop up on screen.

Continue Playing After Defeat (Campaign) – strengthandhonor

Cool Down – thedudeadibes

Full Map – iseedeadpeople

Gold Modifier – keysersoze [number]

Infinite Mana – thereisnospoon

Instant Defeat – somebodysetuspthebomb

Instant Victory – allyourbasearebelongtous

Invincibility & One Hit Kills – whosyourdaddy

Lumber Modifier – leafittome [number]

Speedy Construction – warpten

Speedy Research – whoisjohnfalt

Tech Tree Unlocked – synergy

Time Day – daylightsavings [hour]

Time Evening – lightshot

Time Morning – riseandshine

Upgrades – sharpandshiny

*"The VidMan"
Uptown, MN*

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

At any point during play, simply enter the desired code.

100% Armor (Unpatched Version) – turtoise

100% Armor (Patched Version) – tortoise

All Weapons – gunsunguns

Change Costume – ilikedressingup

Clear Weather – skincancerforme

Cloudy Weather – ilikescotland

Crazy Pedestrians – itsallgoingmaaad

Destroy All Cars – bangbangbang

Extra Cash – ifwearerichman

Faster Gameplay – booooring

Faster Time – timeflieswhenyou

Flying Car – chilitychitybb

Foggy Weather – peasoup

Full Health – gesundheit

Gore Mode – nastylimbscheat

Higher Wanted Level – morepoliceplease

Improved Handling – cornerslikemad

Invisible Cars – anicestofwheels

Lower Wanted Level – nopoliceplease

Pedestrian War – weaponsforall

Rainy Weather – ilovescotland

Sun Up...Sun Down – madweather

Tank (Rhino) – giveusatank

*Assmuch Dundee
Perth, Australia*

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2**SKY GUNNER**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
0E3C7DF21853E59E
EE8FEDEBCBB114A

All Modes/Planes –
CE8897C2BCA99A82

All Scene 1 Photos –
CE8896AABCA99A82

All Scene 2 Photos –
CE8896B6BCA99A82

All Scene 3 Photos –
CE8896B2BCA99A82

All Scene 4 Photos –
CE8896B6BCA99A82

All Scene 5 Photos –
CE8896B6BCA99A82

All Ventre's Photos –
CE8896AEBCA99A82

STUNTMAN

Master Code (Must Be On) –
0E3C7DF21853E59E
EE98F50EBCDD8AA

Bundle of Cars –
DE94EB2EFB899B83
DE94EB2AFB899B83
DE94EB36FB899B83

Hideos Texture Blur –
DE98929EBCA99B83

Infinite Time –
D1EE09DABCA95603

Monster Driver –
DE94FAEEF9EDD4DB
DE94FAFAF9EDD4DB
DE94FA6F9EDD4DB

No Walls Mode –
DE989282BCA99B84
DE98928EBCA99B84

BARBARIAN

Master Code (Must Be On) –
0E3C7DF21853E59E
EE8FE7ABCC22EA

Infinite AP –
CEB55902BCA99B89

MEN IN BLACK: ALIEN ESCAPE

Master Code (Must Be On) –
0E3C7DF21853E59E
EE8FE7ABCCDBA

Infinite Health –
CE70D90BCA9DD4B

Infinite Lives –
CE70D97ABCA99C8C

GRAVITY GAMES BIKE: STREET, VERT, DIRT

Master Code (Must Be On) –
0E3C7DF21853E59E
EE8FEDEBCBB114A

All Modes/Planes –
CE8897C2BCA99A82

All Scene 1 Photos –
CE8896AABCA99A82

All Scene 2 Photos –
CE8896B6BCA99A82

All Scene 3 Photos –
CE8896B2BCA99A82

All Scene 4 Photos –
CE8896B6BCA99A82

All Scene 5 Photos –
CE8896B6BCA99A82

All Ventre's Photos –
CE8896AEBCA99A82

**GRAVITY GAMES BIKE: STREET, VERT, DIRT**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
0E3C7DF21853E59E
EE850786BCC2F182

High Score –
DEA710F2C19E7B82

GAME BOY ADVANCE**PINBALL OF THE DEAD**

Master Code (Must Be On) –
FC45706F01B02CA
FA389DF01D26DA34

High Score –
5CC83B3EFAD4F36

Tons Of Kills –
11F9E471A299C5BF

ENTER TO WIN

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these halloved pages will receive a Secret Access T-shirt.

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CLASSIC GI

MARK TURMELL: THE FATHER OF FANTASY SPORTS

What is your background in the gaming industry?

It goes way back, but in 1979 I bought an Apple II computer, and had my first game published in '79/'80. I did a few Apple II games. The first game was called Sneakers; and then I did Beer Run. After, I went on to do Atari VCS games with 20th Century Fox. Do you remember Sewer Shark and Night Trap? I worked on those games. Then I went to work with Hasbro. At Hasbro we were working on this interactive tape system – a VHS based system where we could encode each field of video with a header, which allowed us just to display that frame in multiple tracks. But the technology ended up never making it to the market; the chairman of Hasbro got AIDS, and he wanted to cancel the project to keep his legacy intact because he was spending a lot of money on it. There was about a two or three-year period of working on these interactive movie type of things. Then, around '89, I came to Midway and did Smash T.V. and Total Carnage. I went on to do NBA Jam, and a few more versions of Jam such as Tournament Edition. My next few projects were WrestleMania, NBA Hang Time, and NFL Blitz. Blitz was our first 3D game, and our first game developed in C [a popular programming language of its day – Ed.]. Previously, we did everything in assembly language. After Blitz, we went on to NBA Showtime. Now, we just finished Sluggfest. Throughout all of this I worked mostly as a programmer and designer.

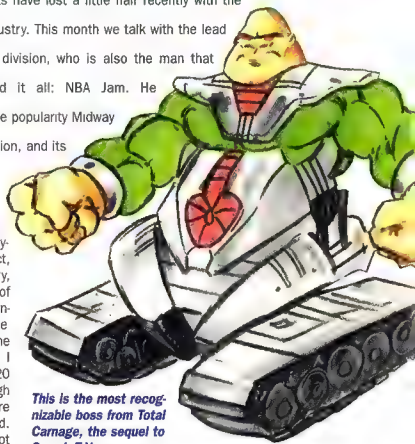
How has your role as a developer changed; has it expanded and grown?

Well, in the early days, of course, you did everything. You did the sounds, art, and programming all by yourself. Up until Smash T.V., that was still the way it worked. Right when I started Smash T.V., I hired John Tobias. He was a great cartoon artist, but had never done any computer-related art. Fortunately, he quickly picked it up. So Smash T.V. turned out really looking great. We had land mines and body chunks flying. When Smash T.V. was done, [Tobias] split off to do MK [Mortal Kombat], and I split off to do NBA Jam. We both found success with different products. Going down the whole digitized approach, we got the studio to video tape athletes or martial artists, so it was a time of significant change. Now it is a huge team effort. We have 40 people focused on Blitz, and a game like MK has 30.

How has the demise of the arcade industry affected your work creatively?

It's devastating. Everybody in Chicago was bummed about it. We finally shut down [the arcade division] a year and a half ago. It was a real sad day, but we saw it coming for a long time. Pinball died first, as you know. But we still had grand plans of connecting arcades online, and we had plen-

Midway and its extreme fantasy sports have lost a little flair recently with the plague that has struck the arcade industry. This month we talk with the lead designer of Midway's fantasy sports division, who is also the man that worked on the game that started it all: NBA Jam. He provides some insight into his past, the popularity Midway found in the '90s with its arcade division, and its ultimate fall.



This is the most recognizable boss from Total Carnage, the sequel to Smash T.V.

ty of other good ideas. We even had [online arcades] testing in Chicago, such as MK machines connected from one arcade to the next. But the bottom line is that the players and kids stopped showing up. I think this is a weird fact, but every week we looked at earnings around the country, and the day that the Clinton report from the testimony of Monica Lewinsky got published on the Internet, the earnings in the arcades dropped 20%. Unfortunately, [those earnings] never returned! At that moment, I think the Internet became a source of entertainment. From then, I think that there were a lot of kids, high schoolers, and 20 year-olds that suddenly spent more time digging through those kinds of stories. The bottom line is this: There are many, many different ways to entertain yourself as a kid. Obviously consoles are much stronger; PC games are a lot better; the Internet is entertainment in and of itself.

Do you ever see arcades returning?

Even if the hardware manufacturers could make a game and sell it for \$1,500 to an operator, it's still not a slam-dunk good decision to go and buy it. Arcades are going to continue to go away. It's sad since we used to live in them; it was a great social experience. It's a real shame for a company like Midway since it was the ideal testbed for a product. We had to make a game that collected money; something that hooked you and kept it going. We didn't have to make a game that even lasted an hour; we didn't have to make a game that had franchise mode or lasted a month – we wanted 50 cents. And we knew that a number one-earning arcade game would do well on the home front. Without having that testbed, you lose a connection with the user. It would've been cool if we could've had high score pages, and added competitive features. You could've walked into an arcade anywhere in the country and see the high scores and pictures of the top players. We also had plans of uploading new games [to arcades] so that you could see a game for the first time, like a feature film release. You know, advertise that Mortal Kombat V is coming March 1, 2002 at 5:00 p.m.



The NBA Jam design team, Mark Turmell back row, second from left

Did you attempt to use the memory card as a kind of bridge between the home and arcade?

Actually we tried that with NFL Blitz '99. We added a N64 memory card reader. So we worked with Nintendo; we had a play editor on the home side with the first consumer release of Blitz. So you could design plays at home, plug your card in, and download them into the coin-op. It was a little-used feature because you could only design offensive plays. We also didn't allow players to design plays that would totally ruin the game and allow them to score every time. There were reasons why [this feature] wasn't that successful, but we did it, and there was that tie-in with Nintendo. We kept audits on its success, and still that many people went back and forth between the two. Still, it was kind of cool to see the little door open up, and put memory card in.

Arcades were definitely a good source of inspiration for you guys. Didn't Midway pretty much popularize some of the types of codes, secrets, and hidden characters in games today?

Really kind of the whole Big Head mode, the hidden characters, we stumbled on. In NBA Jam, we put our heads in the game, and we made our stats better than say Pippen's or whoever. Then we would go into the arcades and put our codes in, and people would freak out, and look at you weird while you're dunking on them. So then the secret codes spread instantly. This was back in '92; that was when we realized that secret players and secret codes made an impact. I would go into arcades and people would recognize me saying, [laughs] 'Oh, I play as you. You're MJ32!' So the big head feature is something we triggered back in '92. The whole CPU assistance, and catch-up code in these games, which is debatable whether that's a smart thing or not, is something that we created.

Has anyone, like parents' associations, approached you about violence in your sports games?

One thing that immediately comes to mind is the original T.V. spot for Blitz. We had Kordell Stewart throwing a football; it was him and a coach, and you heard these sounds of good! And then the coach says, 'Arm's looking good!' Then it cuts to down the field, and it shows [Kordell] picking off band members; they were flying and getting nailed all over. We had a big uproar with different band associations, and we eventually pulled the ad. ESPN just did a piece on sports video games and athletes. It had about 15 minutes focused on Blitz and HitZ. ESPN went to the leagues and asked, 'Why did you license these products?' Their answer reflected that these products are in a kind of fantasy category - an answer we agree with. Still we [and the leagues] try to walk a fine line in entertainment versus something that would be dangerous.



This character is one of the two main heroes from Smash T.V.

took all of the violence out and put it in the arcade. It actually still made similar money. So the version of Blitz that you see today is the non-violent version. We removed about 60 percent of the tackles and moves. You could grab guys from the face mask, pick them up, punch them on the ground, kick them, pile driver them, and do a lot of other wrestling-type of moves.

How has EA's Big brand affected your business? How will you combat them?

'I'll tell you, but I don't know if I should go there; it's a sore subject with me for a couple of reasons. One of them has to do with NBA Showtime. It was a three-on-three basketball game, but at the tenth or eleventh hour, we shifted to two-on-two, which is what we had done in the past with Hangtime and Jam because we knew we could make that fun. We had [three-on-three] working, but we just had some other problems like slowdown issues - and I'm the type of guy who will never ship a game

that's not 60 FPS. The lead programmer on the game went to EA, and actually went to NuFX (the developer for Street) to do the Street product. What they've been able to do with that product in particular, you got to take your hat off to. They've sold hundreds of thousands of units. They made a clean product, but it's certainly not the best product. We knew EA Big was certainly going in that direction for a few years now - it makes sense. I think you'll see Visual Concepts come out with a different line - extreme takes on their sports games. In fact, Greg Thomas [head of VCI] is on record as saying that as soon as they get their act together on all these major sports (from a sim standpoint), they're going to try to tackle [fantasy sports] too.

Outside of fantasy sports, what else do you plan to do?

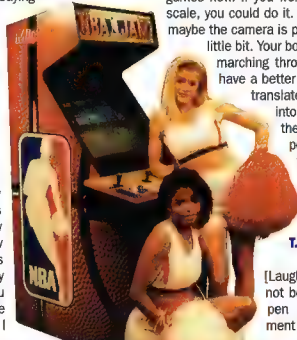
Smash T.V.! Smash T.V. in particular would be ideal for 3D games now. If you were to keep the players in a smaller scale, you could do it. Just imagine Smash T.V. in 3D, but maybe the camera is pulled back a little bit, and rotating a little bit. Your body chunks are flying, and you're still marching through hordes of enemies. You could have a better experience in 3D than 2D. It would translate perfectly. Developers have run into a few problems when translating the old games. They're just so compelled to do something new and different in 3D, that it ruins the original experience. In the end, it just doesn't play well.

So we can expect to see Smash T.V.?

[Laughs] It's one of my pet projects. It's not being developed now, but it will happen someday. There is growing sentiment to do it.

We heard in Slugfest that the MLB actually put few restrictions on what you could and could not show, like knocking out the pitcher.

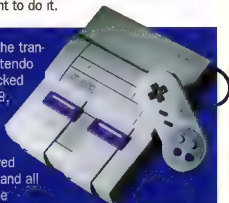
That's actually not the case. The MLB wanted more violence. They were looking for it. However, we don't develop these games to try to put in violence just for the sake of violence. That's where [Sony's] NFL Xtreme went wrong. They simply thought, 'We just have to add violence.' We make a fun game, and if there's a move that looks a little violent, then we exaggerate that. So Slugfest literally had no violence; it was just crisp gameplay and good animations. We talked with the MLB about adding bench-clearing brawls and things like that, but we didn't have time to add fighting - to do justice to it, I mean. Our idea was to cut to the second basemen and shortstop, and have them reacting to the violence on the mound, while listening to the sound effects. It was our quick and dirty way of solving the problem. It certainly wasn't the MLB saying that we couldn't show it. There's another story you may or may not have heard. We got the license for Blitz and developed the game without the [NFL] ever seeing it. We told them it was doing great on location. Mostly, we appealed more to the fighting game fans initially; there were a lot of Tekken guys at the arcades at the time. Then we had the typical sports guy come, too. The NFL finally showed up two or three days before it was about to ship. They looked at it and said, 'You know what: We wash our hands of this product. We'll give you your money back. We can't be involved. Or, you have to take some of the violence out.' We thought about it, and I



THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

but kill the TurboGrafx. The SNES must be remembered for giving our industry some of the greatest 2D games ever made: Super Metroid, Street Fighter II, Zelda: A Link to the Past, Final Fantasy III, Donkey Kong Country, Super Castlevania, Axelay, R-Type III, Contra III, Mario Kart, and the list goes on...

On September 9, 1991, Nintendo finally made the transition to 16-bit, releasing the Super Nintendo Entertainment System. Although the SNES packed Super Mario World at a reasonable \$199, Nintendo was behind NEC, and especially Sega, in sales. However, Nintendo's "quality over quantity" policy, its unopposed dominance in Japan, and its pretty graphics and sound allowed the SNES to catch up to the Genesis in the US, and all



Who could ever forget that lovely thing called Mode-7?

GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Brett Weiss

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.



MR. DO!

INFORMAT SYSTEMS
PUBLISHER BLACK PEARL SOFTWARE

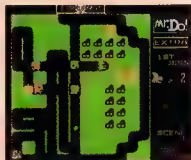


Despite a mere two megs of power and a distinct lack of graphical sophistication, Mr. Do! for the Super NES is sheer gameplay excellence, offering up a killer rendition of the vastly underrated Universal coin-op classic. Players control a goofy-looking clown as he digs tunnels, gobbles cherries, and throws a magical ball at "creeps" that prol the ever-changing maze in hot pursuit. Near the center of each maze lies a food item, which when eaten brings forth an Alphonster and his henchmen. Killing enough Alphonsters can spell out EXTRA, granting players an extra life. Occasionally, a sparkling diamond will appear. Gobbling up this goodie is worth 10,000 points and advances the game to the next screen. Level progression otherwise requires eating all the cherries, spelling out EXTRA, or killing all the monsters.

Mr. Do! is often dismissed as a poor man's Dig Dug by the philistines of the gaming world. While it was indeed inspired by that great game, it's an excellent title in its own right. Throwing a ball at enemies may not be as satisfying as blowing them up with a pump, but watching helplessly as the ball bounces around the tunnels, missing the enemies when you desperately need the ball back, is excruciating - but in an exhilarating kind of way. More importantly, spelling out EXTRA adds an additional dimension to the action, and the "pushable" apples in Mr. Do! are far more versatile than the "unpushable" rocks in Dig Dug.

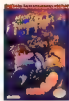
Mr. Do! is strategically diverse and endlessly entertaining, and it has somewhat difficulty progression, meaning anyone can play. In later levels, it takes tremendous skill to survive, but the game never gets frustrating. Upping one's high score to the nth degree can be a years-long objective.

So, what makes this version superior to the arcade original? Nothing less than a 2-player Battle Mode that pits one clown against another! Thus, Mr. Do! for the Super NES gets my vote as the Greatest Game of All Time.

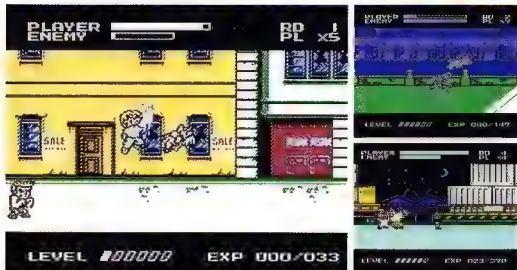


NES

MIGHTY FINAL FIGHT



RETRO RATING
6.75



Capcom's "mini-me" version of Final Fight had the unfortunate luck of appearing on an already obsolete system, and releasing at roughly the same time as its significantly more handsome brothers - Final Fight and Final Fight 2. So if you missed out, we understand. In terms of gameplay, however, this midget Final Fight holds its own. Allowing players the ability to perform an additional special move, as well as build up each character's stats, Mighty Final Fight offers a deep experience, but only for a brawler. Everything else is very status quo, which means we get a relatively short and repetitive adventure. Furthermore, although the sprites look impressive by NES standards, the amount of flicker present is inexcusable, especially since it came towards the end of NES' life cycle. Mighty Final Fight certainly offered gamers a better experience a decade ago, but if you always liked the series, this certainly makes a decent addition - if for nothing other than as a novelty.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1993

SNES

PLOK



RETRO RATING
7



Around the mid-90s, every company wanted a mascot. Sonic and Mario had proven to be big bucks for their companies (Sega and Nintendo, respectively), and all others wanted to follow suit. For better or for worse (usually worse), gamers were bombarded with platformers like Accolade's Bubsy, Tengen's Awesome Possum, and JVC's Wonder Dog. Plok was the disjointed coverboy for Tradewest. A wizard's hat with arms and legs that could be tossed at will, Plok's noble quest started because someone hooked his favorite flag. Plok scoured the overworld (which looked like Mario World's, but was actually linear) to find it. This led to some difficult but typical jumping and bopping. Plok collected coin-like items, battled mildly interesting bosses, and whipped his limbs left and right. The graphics and sound were both above average, but nothing really made Plok stand out from the crowd. We never heard from the hat guy after this; presumably he was de-animated and returned to the wizard's head from which he came.

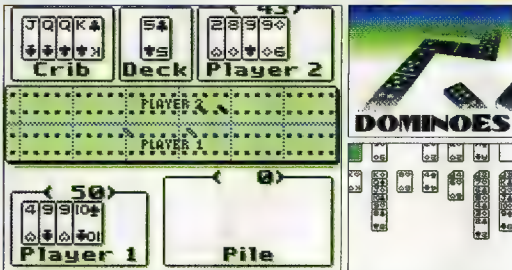
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** TRADEWEST ■ **DEVELOPER** SOFTWARE CREATIONS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1993

GAME BOY

4 IN 1 FUNPAK VOLUME II



RETRO RATING
9



Rarely does a game meet the very strict parameters for being perfect on the go. For one, it's got to be addictive, because you're going to be playing for a while. Another one is to not be overly difficult, while still presenting a challenge. All four games on this compilation cart possess these qualities. 4 In 1 Funpak Volume II has a quintet of tabletop games on it: Solitaire, Dominoes, Cribbage, and Yacht (Yachtze to us). Each one can help you while away the hours waiting in line at the clinic, sitting in your cell for committing a 311 (indecent exposure), or when you just have nothing better to do, ya big loser! Solitaire is the same game installed on Windows everywhere, but still packs a punch. Dominoes is a great way to play without ruining your momma's table. Cribbage is a Midwest family favorite, complete with things like Nobs and a Crib, which make no sense to people who haven't played it. Yacht has slightly different rules from the Parker Brothers game, but still combines luck and strategy. What a team!

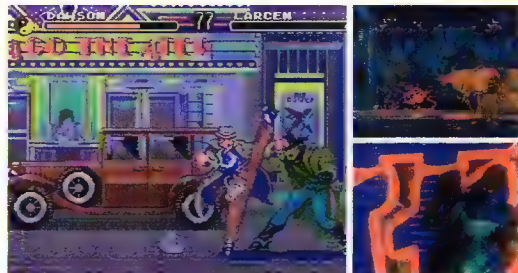
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** INTERPLAY
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1993

SEGA CD

ETERNAL CHAMPIONS



RETRO RATING
8



Putting out a decent fighter isn't as easy as Capcom or Namco make it seem. Sega put forth a good effort with the original Eternal Champions, appearing on Genesis. It wasn't until this Sega CD update, though, that the series really came into its own. With Street Fighter-style characters, Mortal Kombat gore, and some very impressive CG for its time, EC was quite the fun fight. The two dozen large-spirited characters (including unlockable ones like a chicken and a senator) had a wealth of moves - including those that didn't necessarily damage the opponent, but rather altered a fighter's state. Unfortunately, its two speed settings were either too slow or too fast. Once you wore down your opponent, there were several means to finishing them off, including level and character-specific death scenes. One other type, called the Cnekill, showed a CG movie of the character getting obliterated. It's not a masterpiece by any means, but Eternal Champions is a title that offered loads of entertainment, and is deserving of a sequel.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** DEEP WATER ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1994



PLAYSTATION

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

1. Tank Kill Frenzy (226, 238) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds



2. Flamethrower Kill Frenzy (203,197) Blow up five vehicles in 60 seconds

3. Taxi Kill Frenzy (8, 139) Run over 50 people in 180 seconds

4. Flamethrower Kill Frenzy (125, 82) Torch 30 people in 120 seconds

5. Flamethrower Kill Frenzy (247, 220) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds

The Grand Theft Auto series set the standard for controversial gameplay. While it is highly primitive in comparison to GTA III, GTA2 still has plenty of violence, cuss words, and lewd conduct. Since your mission objectives are highly obvious, we thought we'd enlighten you on all the über-violent Kill Frenzy missions each level holds for the ambitious felon. We'll even throw in a mess of codes at no extra cost! The coordinates after the mission names correspond to the Wuggles code, which will aid in navigation.

6. Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy (194, 121) Kill 30 people in 180 seconds

7. Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy (181, 145) Destroy five taxis in 180 seconds

8. Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy (166, 183) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds

9. Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy (168, 207) Kill 30 people in 120 seconds

10. Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy (130, 109) Kill five people in 60 seconds

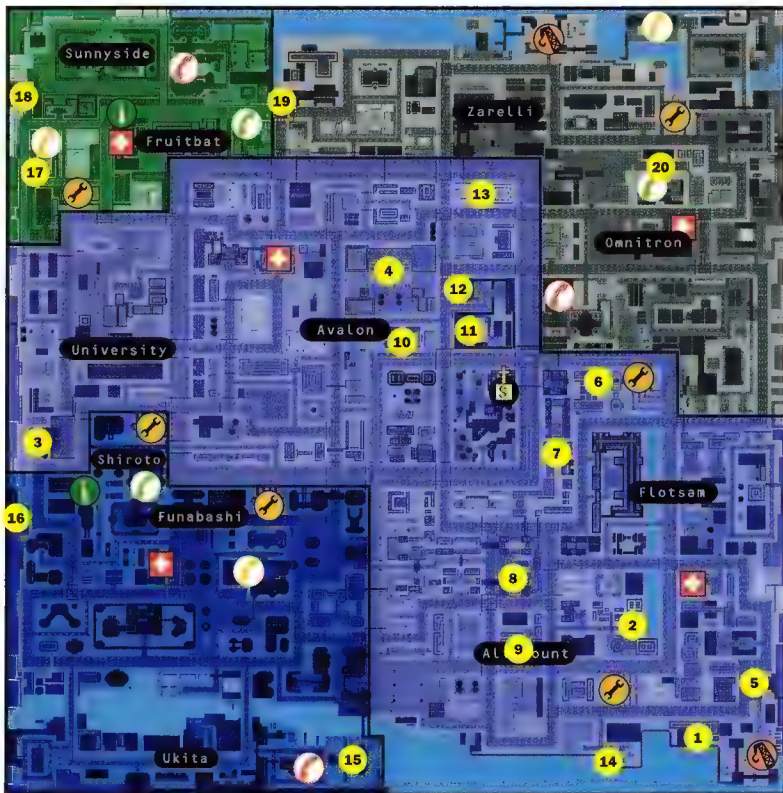
11. Silenced Machine Gun Kill Frenzy (152, 104) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds

12. Silenced Machine Gun Kill Frenzy (147, 91) Kill 20 people in 120 minutes

13. Machine Gun Kill Frenzy (153, 58) Destroy eight vehicles in 120 seconds



MAP 1: DOWNTOWN SECTOR



14. Silenced Uzi Kill Frenzy (198, 245) Kill 20 people in 120 seconds

15. Silenced Uzi Kill Frenzy (112, 241) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds

16. Tank Kill Frenzy (3, 164) Destroy 10 vehicles in 60 seconds

17. Silenced Machine Gun Frenzy (9, 53) Destroy four vehicles in 60 seconds

18. Fire Truck Kill Frenzy (5, 26) Run over 20 people in 60 seconds

19. Silenced Uzi Kill Frenzy (88, 27) Kill 15 people in 120 seconds

20. Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy (214, 50) Destroy 10 vehicles in 60 seconds

CODES

Enter these at the Player Name screen before starting the game. To enter multiple codes, simply re-enter the screen, delete the old code, and insert a new one

WUGGLES

Shows location coordinates onscreen. Also, hit on the second controller to eliminate police level, and use the shoulder buttons to adjust gang opinion

LIVELONG

Don't take damage, unless you're in a car or you fall in the water

LOSEFEDS

Police go bye-bye

MUCHCASH

Start the game with \$500,000

NAVARONE

Start with all weapons

- 1. Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy** (112, 164) Destroy 15 vehicles in 60 seconds
- 2. ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (146, 211) Destroy five cars in 120 seconds



- 3. Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy** (176, 143) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds
- 4. ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (151, 122) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds



- 5. Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy** (113, 144) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds
- 6. Silenced Uzi Kill Frenzy** (132, 171) Kill 20 people in 90 seconds
- 7. Tank Kill Frenzy** (29, 177) Shoot 20 vehicles in 120 seconds
- 8. Furore GT Kill Frenzy** (6, 173) Run over 30 people in 90 seconds
- 9. Flamethrower Kill Frenzy** (43, 146) Kill 10 people in 90 seconds
- 10. Tank Kill Frenzy** (26, 102) Shoot 20 people in 120 seconds



- 11. Flamethrower Kill Frenzy** (9, 27) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds
- 12. Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy** (84, 57) Destroy 10 cars in 120 seconds
- 13. Furore GT Kill Frenzy** (67, 17) Shoot 30 people in 120 seconds
- 14. ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (147, 43) Kill 20 people in 120 seconds

- 15. Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy** (164, 77) Destroy 20 vehicles in 60 seconds

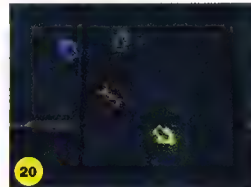


- 16. Shotgun Kill Frenzy** (208, 93) Kill 10 people in 90 seconds
- 17. S-Uzi Machine Gun Kill Frenzy** (252, 102) Kill 10 people in 90 seconds

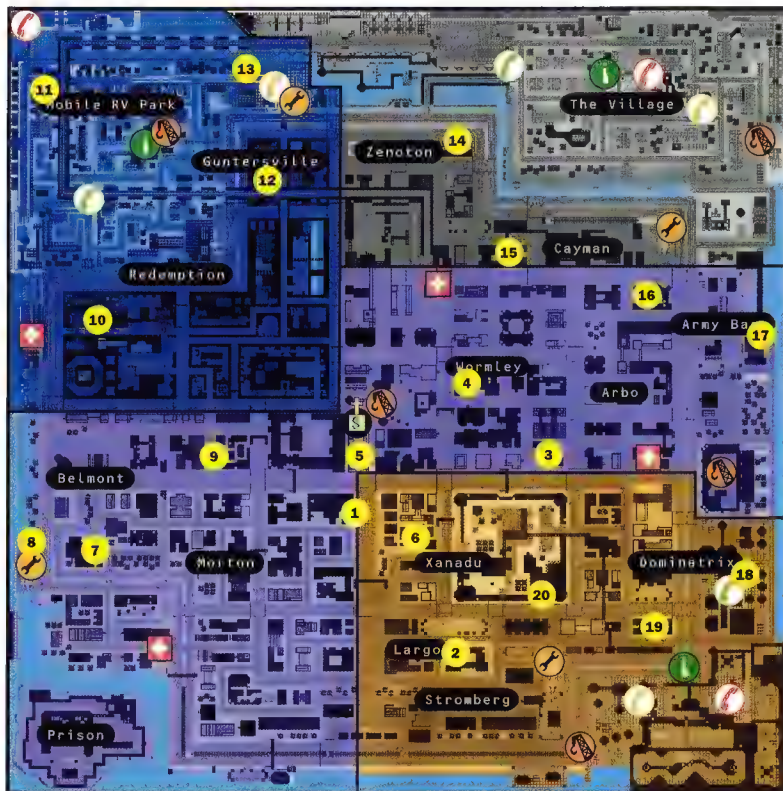
- 18. Furore GT Kill Frenzy** (242, 185) Use mines to destroy 15 cars in 120 seconds



- 20. Shotgun Kill Frenzy** (172, 192) Kill 15 people in 60 seconds



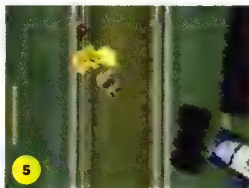
MAP 2: RESIDENTIAL SECTOR



- 1. **ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (31, 107) Kill 10 people in 120 seconds
- 2. **Famethrower Kill Frenzy** (2, 82) Kill 10 people in 90 seconds
- 3. **S-Uzi Machine Gun Kill Frenzy** (48, 42) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds
- 4. **ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (175, 56) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds



- 5. **Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy** (233, 123) Destroy 20 vehicles in 60 seconds



- 6. **ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (234, 180) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds
- 7. **Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy** (215, 80) Kill 10 people in 60 seconds
- 8. **Famethrower Kill Frenzy** *Insane

Jump required* (156, 163) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds

- 9. **Tank Kill Frenzy** *Insane Jump required* (72, 219) Shoot 20 vehicles in 120 seconds

- 10. **ElectroGun Kill Frenzy** (13, 164) Destroy five cars in 90 seconds



- 11. **Molotov Cocktail Kill Frenzy** (100, 126) Destroy 15 vehicles in 90 seconds

- 12. **Tank Kill Frenzy** *Insane Jumps required* (141, 10) Shoot 20 people in 120 seconds

- 13. **S-Uzi Machine Gun Kill Frenzy** *Insane Jumps required* (170, 219) Kill 10 people in 90 seconds



- 14. **Shotgun Kill Frenzy** (63, 190) Kill 10 people in 90 seconds

- 15. **Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy** (54, 72) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds

- 16. **Shotgun Kill Frenzy** (97, 32) Kill 20 people in 60 seconds



- 17. **Rocket Launcher Kill Frenzy** (125, 123) Destroy 10 cars in 120 seconds

- 18. **Jefferson Kill Frenzy** (154, 148) Use the car off the trailer to run over 30 people in 90 seconds

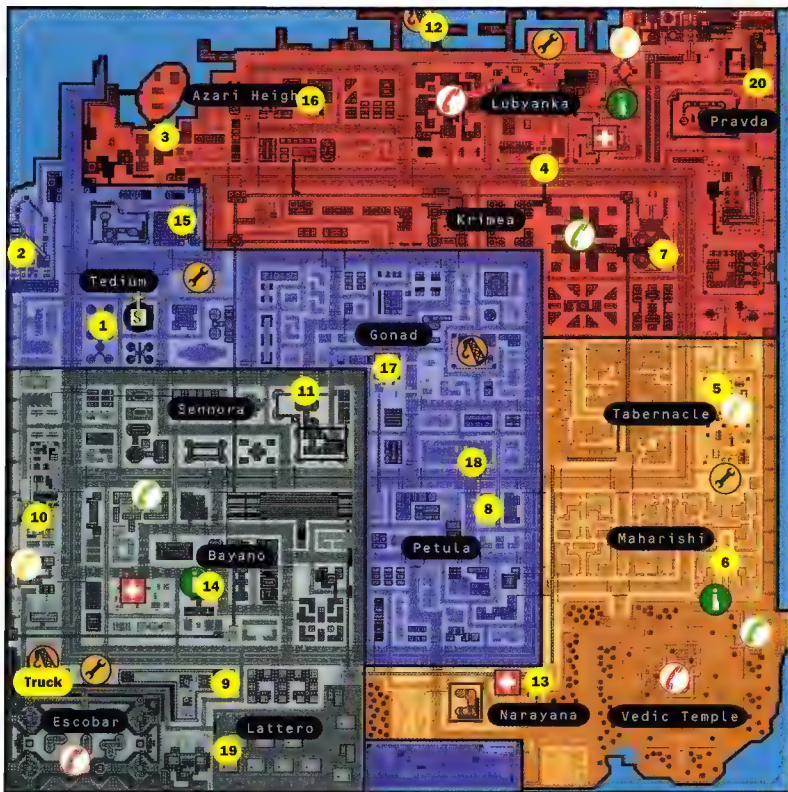


- 19. **Vehicle Machine Gun Kill Frenzy** (70, 241) Get the jeep off the trailer. Use the jeep's machine guns to kill 30 people in 120 seconds

- 20. **Vehicle Mine Kill Frenzy** (245, 26) Use mines from the Jugular off the trailer to destroy 15 cars in 120 seconds

TRUCK (11, 213)
Pick up truck cab for the last three Kill Frenzies here. Bring the loaded trailers back here to start those missions

MAP 3: INDUSTRIAL SECTOR



COLOR CONSOLES

Manufacturer: Color Consoles
Website: www.colorconsoles.com
List Price: \$24.99 (GBA Color), \$25 (GBA Backlight), \$34.99 (GC Color), \$52.99 (PS2 Color)

We know deep down inside you've wanted to bellow, "Why can't I buy a metallic pink PlayStation 2 with a glossy or matte finish?!" Well, guess what, Buttercup—you can! That's right, by boxing up your video game system and sending it to a complete stranger who will tear your system apart and paint it for as low as \$24.99 (plus shipping charges), it is possible to alter the look of your gaming system. Color consoles can even install a backlight into your Game Boy Advance for just \$25. Log onto www.colorconsoles.com and check out all of the pretty colors!



MARVEL SPIDER-PADS

Manufacturer: Joyride Studios
Website: www.joyridestudios.com
List Price: \$19.99 (GC), \$29.99 (PS2, Xbox)

Can these controllers do whatever a spider can? Not quite, but they do come equipped with turbo and slow motion functions. Best of all, though, you'll look like a complete tard while using one. What? You think they look cool? Well, think about this. You're holding a controller that is dressed up to look like Spider-Man. It's a mechanical Barbie doll! Would you use a controller that was wearing a Mr. T costume? What if it was dressed up in cute little Papa Smurf garments? Or worse yet, wearing Fred Durst's hat? Wait a minute! These ideas are brilliant! If you'll excuse us, we have a job to quit and a controller company to form! Out of the way, people!



MARVEL ULTIMATE X-MEN GAME FACES

Manufacturer: Naki • **Website:** www.nakiusa.com
List Price: \$6.99

If you don't feel confident sending your Game Boy Advance to Color Consoles, Naki has a safe and cheap solution. It has created six different designs to plaster onto your GBA. Using a new adhesive technology, each face can be used over 1,000 times without leaving behind a sticky residue on your GBA. We got a kick out of these skins, and no, it's not because the buttons just happen to represent several of the characters' breasts.



GRAND THEFT AUTO 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



Manufacturer: New Concorde • **Website:** www.newconcorde.com • **List Price:** \$14.99

Ron Howard is a video game visionary. That's right. Opie done good! He came up with the concept for Grand Theft Auto over 25 years ago. If you missed the theatrical release, don't fret; you can now own this landmark film on DVD. Rumor has it that Don Knotts actually came up with the concept for The Legend of Zelda while rehearsing lines for *The Apple Dumpling Gang*. We've also heard that Tom Bosley wrote a screenplay called *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball* while taking a bathroom break on the set of *The World of Henry Orient* in 1964. All the good game ideas are gone!

RCA VPORT TVS

Manufacturer: RCA • **Website:** www.rca.com
List Price: \$349-\$1,499

TV manufacturers are finally recognizing video games. Well...the Xbox at least. RCA's latest line of TVs are designed to enhance the visual presentation of Xbox games. Through a VPORT component video cable connection, the Xbox will light up the HDTV screen with the utmost of clarity. This jack also doubles as a second component video input which you can use to simultaneously connect two devices. If you want to play in style, check out the 36-inch monitor. It'll completely alter the way you look at games. Of course, it will also break your bank account with its \$1,499 price point. Smaller versions (20, 27, and 32-inch) are also available with the same breakthrough technologies.



SUPER MONKEY BALL TOYS

Manufacturer: Joyride Studios
Website: www.joyridestudios.com • **List Price:** N/A

Why would you let your kids play with action figures and dollies when they could be knocking around a pair of monkey balls! Roll 'em! Slap 'em! Do whatever you want with them! Just don't get caught with a monkey ball in your mouth, otherwise you may find yourself in a world of hurt! Go find your mom and dad, and tell 'em, "I want to play with monkey balls!" You'll be able to wrap your hands around your very own balls this summer! Go get 'em, ball lovers!





A PLANET WITH FEAR NEEDS A HERO WITH NONE.



General Scales has torn apart Dinosaur Planet, and now it faces total annihilation. It's Fox McCloud to the rescue.

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ADVENTURES**

Join him as he exits his Arwing and enters as hero to save the dinosaurs in his biggest adventure ever. Only for Nintendo GameCube.

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the past.

a beautiful blonde.

and oh yeah...



First-person shooting action



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a really cool gun.

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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.



PlayStation 2

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