

FIRST REVIEW AND STRATEGY FOR GTA: V

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The Final Word On Computer & Video Games



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**BONUS
HOLIDAY
BUYER'S
GUIDE**

**SHOP TILL
YOU DROP
PG. 51**

MATRIX

WE TOOK THE RED PILL... FIND OUT THE REAL STORY INSIDE

MUST READ REVIEWS

- STEEL BATTALION
- TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
- CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER
- STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS
- RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
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ISSUE
116

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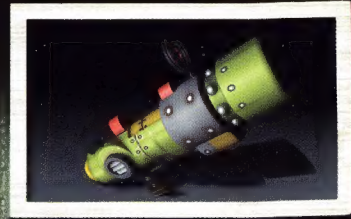


LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.



R.Y.N.O.

IT STANDS FOR RIP YOU A NEW ONE.
GET IT?



DEVASTATOR

COME ON, IT'S CALLED THE DEVASTATOR.
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT DOES?

ONE GIANT STEP BACK



TRESPASSER

YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO PAY
ATTENTION TO THOSE
"NO TRESPASSING" SIGNS.



BLASTER

IT'S RAINING BULLETS AND SOMEONE
FORGOT HIS UMBRELLA.



TESLA CLAW

LET'S JUST SAY THE RESULTS
ARE NOT PRETTY.



MORPH-O-RAY

DID SOMEBODY
ORDER CHICKEN?



TAUNTER

"YOUR MOMMA IS SOOOO FAT,
NO, REALLY, SHE IS."
SEE? TAUNTING IS FUN.

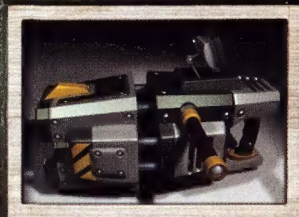


WALLOPER

KNOCK YOUR ENEMIES
INTO NEXT WEEK.

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GAMES

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VISIBOMB

REMOTE CONTROLLED MISSILE WITH A MOUNTED CAMERA THAT GUIDES IT STRAIGHT INTO YOUR ENEMY—SAY CHEESE.

PYROCITOR

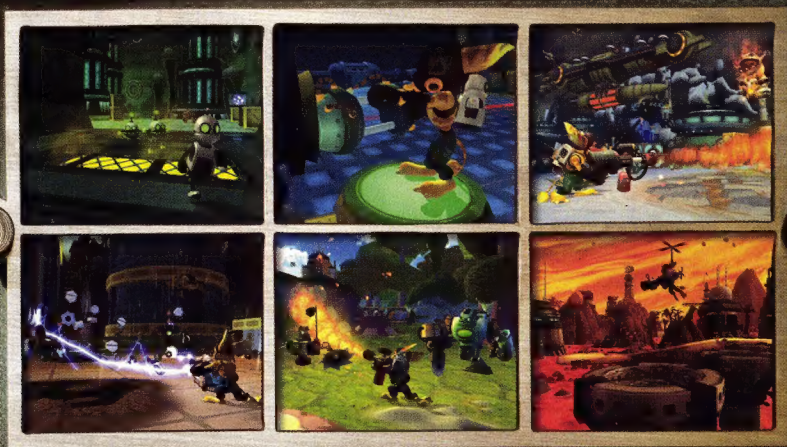
WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR ENEMIES MEDIUM OR WELL-DONE?

HYDRO DISPLACER

FISH OUT OF WATER!
FISH OUT OF WATER!

WARDS FOR MANKIND

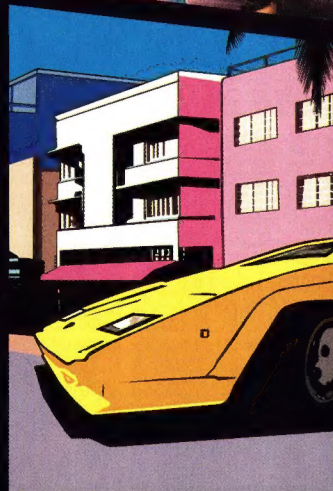
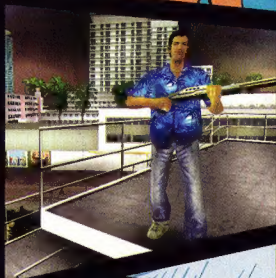
RIP THE GALAXY A NEW ONE.
YOU DECIDE HOW.



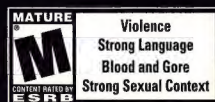
PlayStation 2



Mild Violence



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PlayStation®2

grand theft auto

Vice City



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PREY ON THE DEAD... OR THE DEAD WILL PREY ON YOU.



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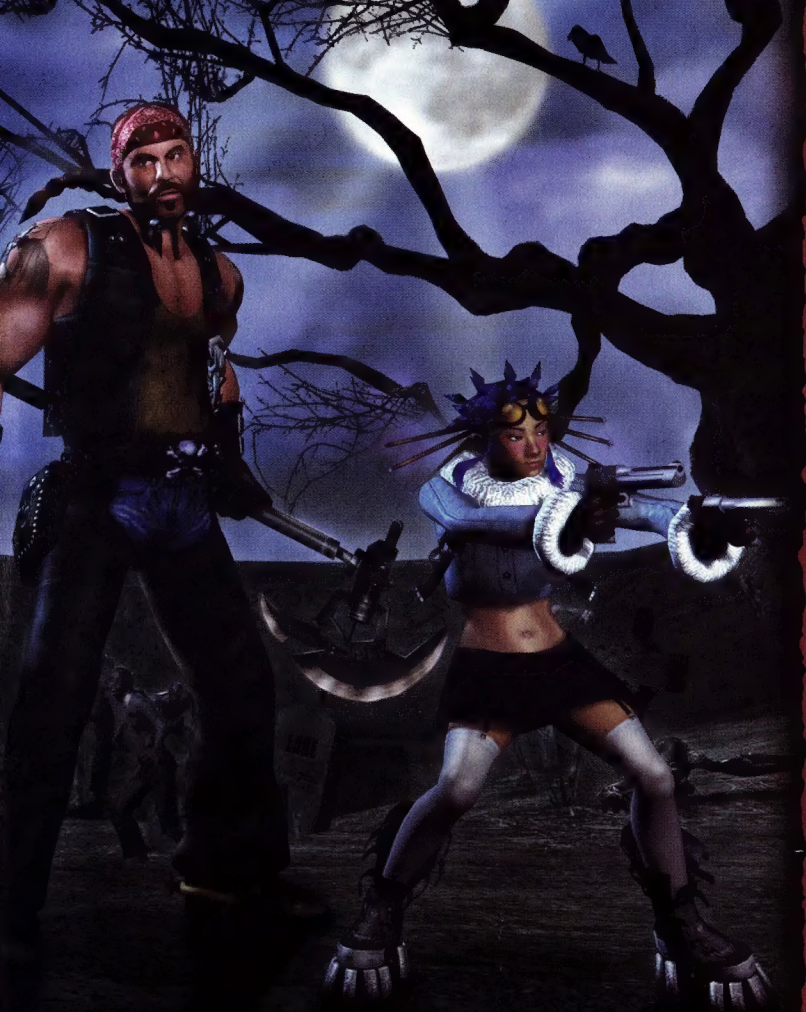
Fight zombies, vampires and ghouls on your own as one of 4 unique Hunters, or battle evil cooperatively with up to 4 players on a single screen.



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HUNTER THE RECKONING

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"GAME OF THE MONTH"
—Playboy Magazine (July, 2002)

"Be warned: When you're done, your Spidey senses will be tingling almost as much as your tired fingers."
—Entertainment Weekly

"Hunter is a joy. I dream about this game. I don't have to stop to think 'what game do I wanna play tonight,' because I already know. It's all about the Hunter." —IGN.com

"Hunter comes through as one of the most fun, frenetic, addictive, multiplayer action shoot 'em ups on Xbox, and, most likely any system."
—Official Xbox Magazine

"★★★★★ (out of 5)...if you have even the slightest interest in removing zombie infestations, Hunter: The Reckoning is the game you've been waiting for your entire life."
—Adrenaline Vault



Blood and Gore
Violence



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RYGAR

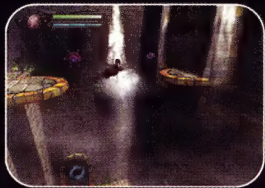
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PlayStation 2



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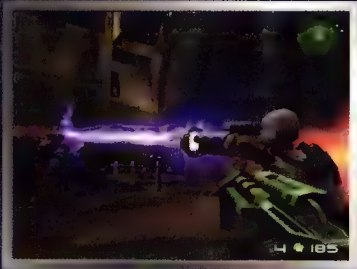
**THE MOST
ACCLAIMED GAME
OF THE YEAR**



Violence



PlayStation®2



5 out of 5 -

"55,947 bullets later, I'm still addicted"
- GPM

9/10 - Game of the Month
"The Definitive PS2 Shooter"
- PSM

4.75 out of 5 - "A Brilliant Game"
- Nintendo Power

Editor's Choice Award - "Awesome"
- IGN

Silver Award - Editor's Choice
"Heir Apparent to GoldenEye"
- Electronic Gaming Monthly

"First Halo, Now This"
- Xbox Nation

TIMESPLITTERS 2

OUT NOW

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

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Unfortunately, Morpheus was wrong when he said that, "No one can be told what the Matrix is." Follow the white rabbit into a world not based on a movie – but a world that explains and expands on a movie.



FEATURE **51 HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE**

Holiday Sam shows up again to usher the merchandizing rush of late December into the living rooms of America. Survive with Game Informer's help, wisdom, experience, and shameless admittance of the traps we've succumbed to in the past. Don't repeat our mistakes!



FEATURE **68 RARE JUMPS FROM THE CUBE TO THE BOX**

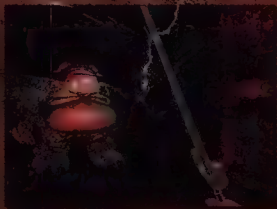
Questions keep pouring in about what Microsoft's purchase of Rare means to the people that truly matter – us gamers. Calm your fears and breed new ones about Microsoft's adopted child.



FEATURE **70 DUDE OR DWEEB REDUX**

Freud would have a field day with us. Tap into the inner you! Own up to your dysfunction! Revel in generalizations of gamers – they became stereotypes for a reason.





**“MORROWIND IS THE BEST-LOOKING
XBOX GAME SINCE HALO.”**

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- * **NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY.** Realistic textures and objects, incredible polygon counts, and advanced weather systems.

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GAMEPRO, 5.0 score
 GAMEZONE, Editors' Choice
 GAMEOVER, Gamer's Choice award
 XBOX EVOLVED, Gold Medal
 THE ARMCHAIR EMPIRE, 10/10
 UGO, A- score
 GAME VORTEX, 9 of 10

IGN, Editors' Choice
 ADRENALINE VAULT, Seal of Excellence
 GAME INDUSTRY NEWS, 5 gems
 GAMESPOT, Game-of-the-month
 GDXBOX, GD Drool award
 XBOX MANIACS, Editors' Choice
 GAME CHRONICLES, Editors' Choice

GAMES DOMAIN, Top Game award
 TEAM XBOX, Editors' Choice
 INVISIBLE DREAM, 99% rating
 GAME RANKINGS, 96% score
 NEXT LEVEL GAMING, 5 of 6
 GAMINGWORLDX, 9.0 score
 GAMING TARGET, 9.0 score

The Elder Scrolls III
MORROWIND

Bethesda
 SOFTWARES
 a ZeniMax Media company



Blood
 Violence



107



86



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Let's face it, the editors who work at this magazine are crazier than a craphouse rat. Take a look at Chet's blurb – that wasn't written by a sane person, pal!

18 GI SPY

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

20 DEAR GI

We like subtitles in games, too. Is single-player going the way of the dodo? Flash Monkey tries to state the obvious. What about the devil of Microsoft and the angel of Rare? NCAA rules are flaky.

26 NEWS

BMX XXX faces retail resistance. Sega brings the old-school to PS2. Tolkien goes online with Sierra. Think that you could've pulled off *Titanic* for \$15? GBA and PS2 upgrades rumored. More Myst!

78 PREVIEWS

Beach babes that used to kick booty, but now show theirs off in *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball*. *Final Fantasy* after the online venture gets some coverage. *Primal* shows what it's got so far, and *Dragon's Lair 3D* looks good and makes us feel old.

100 REVIEWS

The best part of Christmas – new games like *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*, and *Contra: Shattered Solider* on PS2. *GameCube* ups the ante with *Resident Evil 0* and *Mario Party 4*. *Baldr's Gate*, *TimeSplitters 2*, *Dr. Muto*, and *Serious Sam* hold court for Xbox. PC comes up with *Unreal Tournament 2003* and *Earth & Beyond*. GBA lets *Spyro* play with *Contra*, *Sega Smash Pack*, and *Aggressive Inline*.

157 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.

160 PLAY TO PERFECTION

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City is here in full force. Get back on the good side of the bad guys by executing missions with expert skill, determination, and precision. We'll help you less...colorful...types get there quickly with a full Miami – we mean *Vice City* – walkthrough and tips.

168 SECRET ACCESS

No lumps of coal for the loyal GI readers. *Santa Secret Access* lets the codes out for your holiday vacation.

172 CLASSIC GI

Play Yoshi's Island with exceptional skill on the new GBA port or the original SNES. Wanna bring back the Sega CD? Some people are – and making new content for myriad "retired" systems.

178 ETC

What do Madonna action figures, an *Love* in the Dark comic book, a wireless PS2 controller, and the *Animatrix* all have in common? Nothing, but they're all in ETC this month.

124



"THIS GAME IS
BRUTAL FUN.
PLAY IT, LOVE IT,
LIVE IT.

—IGN.com

"ONE OF THE BEST
SURPRISES OF
THE **YEAR.**" —GAMEPEN

"FAST, VIOLENT AND THANKS
TO A **SLICK** CONTROL SCHEME,
EASY TO PICK UP."
—XENGAMERS

"...there's NO DOUBTING the
FUN TO BE HAD WITH SUCH
AN **INSANE** game concept."
—Gamespy



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NO GI NEXT MONTH?



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EDITORS' FORUM

THE NUMBER ONE RULE THAT TRUMPS THEM ALL



While strolling around the office one day, I walked in on the conversation where an editor, who shall remain nameless, felt ashamed of the fact that he was currently more addicted to his PC than his console. This, of course, kicked off the age-old PC vs. console debate that leads you in circles and makes you dizzy. The fact of the matter is, the whole argument is moot because any self-respecting, hardcore gamer knows that you must have both (including any and all console systems, obviously) if you really want to play the latest and the greatest.

You must have it all.

So following that simple rule, you never have

to debate with friends or enemies as to which console is more powerful. Or hear about why this or this version is better than the other, or why my RAM kicks your RAM's...dad's...behind...or however that goes...because you have it all. There really is no better feeling than winning the toy war, and this month Game Informer is going to help you get there. Not only do we have the return of the infamous Dude or Dweeb Quiz, where you can find out how hardcore you truly are; we also have a huge holiday buying guide that features all the high tech toys and games you need. You may never have to leave your mom's basement again.

Enjoy the issue.

Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com



Elves: (left to right) Lisa, Matt, Chet Santa: Andy On Santa's lap: Reiner Waiting: (left to right) Kristian, Justin, Kato.

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com

Have you ever noticed that video games get a bad rap on TV? I may be reading into this a little much, but whenever I see a game being played on a sitcom or in a movie, the actors look completely uninterested, they fall away on the buttons in a completely unrealistic manner, and for some strange reason, even when they are holding Dual Shock controllers, the sound effects that emit from the TV are usually from Pac-Man for the Atari 2600. Gaming is a sophisticated entertainment medium, not something that the funny gay people from *Will and Grace* can pass off as a stupid little prop. Hollywood is holding the gamer down and it has to stop!

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com

For a few days this month, I thought I had some kind of tumor in my throat, but after much freakin' out on my part, a trip to the doctor confirmed that it was just some food debris that had collected in my tonsils. Who wants to make out? Yuck! Anyway, this imaginary brush with death made me realize how precious life really is. Since I usually waste most of my time in these gaming salt mines, I decided to take a break from work, and hired some ghost writers to complete my assignments for me. So, thanks to Cormac McCarthy (*All The Pretty Horses*) and Tom Morrisson (*On the Way*), Heck, I'm not even writing this blurb -- it's courtesy of the *Today Show's* Katie Couric!

KRISTIAN, THE VIDEO VIKING

kristian@gameinformer.com

You know that old saying that goes something like, "You don't know how good you've got it until it's taken away?" Well, this month I've come to realize that I didn't know how *crappy* I had it until it was taken away. While you flip through this magazine, you might notice an exquisite Alienware PC with a whole lot of bells and whistles in the Holiday buyer's guide section. Guess what? That bad boy is sitting on my desk as we speak! I've s#**canned that old law-boy Dell I had, and got something that can run more computations per second than three nerds at a Magic card trading convention. Let gaming nirvana commence -- I'm not afraid of what awaits me in the dark recesses of my beautiful green machine. Now where did I put my dinner...

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com

What the hell do you want? You're cutting into my GTA: Vice City time! This game doesn't just beat itself, y'know. Yeah, you can watch, just shut up. No, I'm not going to pick up another prostitute in the game. No! Look, I picked up eight prostitutes already for you. Besides, don't you see the four military transports tailing me? They aren't just trying to read my bumper sticker -- especially since my bumper blew off two miles back. No, I won't see if Laddow's on, hey, didn't I tell you to keep your pie-hole closed? No, I'm not getting violent because the game is a bad influence on me. Now piss off!

KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com

I like Reiner -- he's a funny kid. So when he started ribbing me about the Vikings' bad beginning (there's still plenty of football left, dammit), I had to chuckle to myself. I can take a joke -- and you can expect nothing less from Reiner -- but when a man who likes the St. Louis Blues and Chicago Cubs starts making fun of my team, that's when I draw the line. I'm sorry, but those two teams are the definition of toiling in futility. What about football? Reiner likes Brett Favre. He's talented, no doubt, but Reiner chose him because Brett let him sniff his jock ones. Nice. I know some of you kids look up to him and all, but he's just another big loser like the rest of us.

CHET, THE JOYSTICK JOCKEY

chet@gameinformer.com

You may have noticed that I changed my tag already! It's not because I dislike Chronic Gamer -- it fits me well. However, the government says that it suggests that I take drugs, and drug use, as we know, is one of the worst crimes in the U.S. Apparently, it's even worse than declaring war on a dispirited nation where thousands of civilians will certainly die over oil. Go figure! Besides, mastering the art of the joystick with *Street Fighter* made me a hardcore gamer. In fact, I was so intent on understanding the joystick's intricate functionality that I use to fiddle with it until I got blisters on my fingers! When that happened, I would poke at them until they burst, wrap them in a Band-Aid, and keep playing. So, the new tag is actually a memento to the activity that made me the person I am today. Fireballs forever!

LISA, LA GAME NIKITA

lisa@gameinformer.com

Ahh, my second major addiction is kicking into gear with its season of new games, television, people. I love *Alias*, and 24, and *The Simpsons*, and *Good Eats* (on FoodTV), and *Scrubs* -- even *Friends*. I know that it's not cool to say that I love something so mainstream, but I'm standing by it. The show makes me laugh and I'm not apologizing for it. So there...I've come clean. Mock me if you will, but I feel comfortable enough with myself to admit what I really enjoy in the minuscule free time afforded to me, cool or no. Also, by special request, hello to my great home state -- North Dakota!

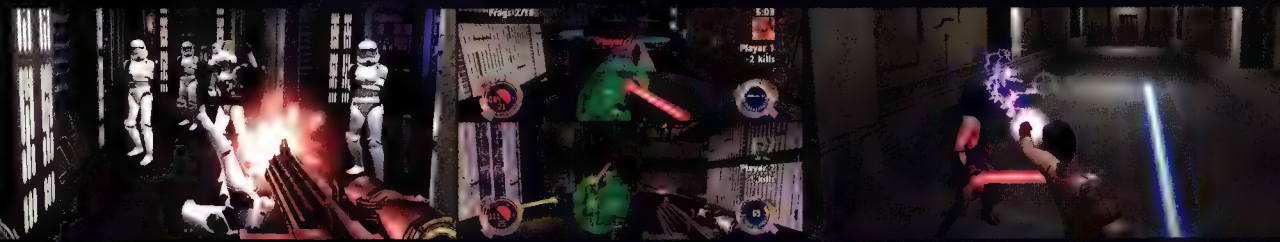


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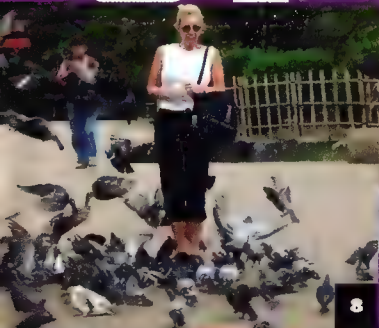


Official Star Wars Web Site: www.starwars.com



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GI SPY



8



1



2



7

CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Kristian is so gangsta, even his cat, Emma, fantasizes about a life of crime!
2 Andy and Reiner cheer as Rob "Pickle King" Fleischer pulls off his crowd-pleasing "Dump ketchup on Rockstar's Jeff Casteneda's head" trick. **3** Koei director Seinosuke Fukui, president Kiyoshi Komatsu, and vice president of sales Amos Ip are looking good. Cue: "Sharp Dressed Man!" **4** A few Game Informer employees and other assorted hooligans accost *Evil Dead* legend Bruce Campbell at a St. Paul bookstore. **5** We think that legendary Castlevania producer Koji Igarashi has next month's Envelope Art contest all wrapped up. **6** Killer rabbit statues are so cool they don't need funny captions! **7** In hopes of jump-starting his wrestling career, Justin sucks up to Jimmy "The Mouth of the South" Hart. **8** Capcom's Melinda Mongelluzzo reenacts Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* in Kyoto.



3



6



5

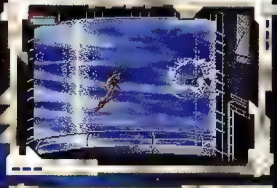
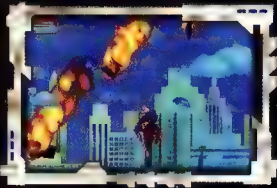


4

JUSTICE LEAGUE

INJUSTICE FOR ALL

MIDWAY



JUSTICE LEAGUE COMES TO THE GAME BOY ADVANCE

When global catastrophe strikes and the world is in peril, the call goes out for the *Justice League*, the greatest super heroes of all time. Fighting for truth, justice and freedom, *Superman*, *Batman*, *Wonder Woman*, *The Flash*, *Green Lantern*, *Hawkgirl* and *Martian Manhunter* have banded together to fight for the common good against the *Injustice League* in an all-new action adventure title for the Game Boy Advance. Featuring 12 levels of non-stop action, gamers will overcome dangerous obstacles, an onslaught of villains and discover power-ups on the path to victory!

GAME PREVIEW AT:
WWW.JUSTICELEAGUE.MIDWAY.COM



GAME BOY ADVANCE

EVERYONE
E
Violence
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

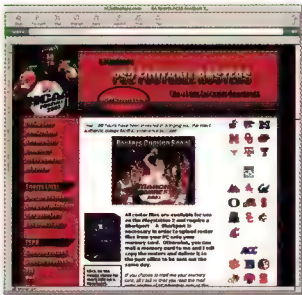
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DEAR GI

THE NAME GAME

Dear GI, I am 13 years old and fairly new to college football. When I rented NCCA Football 2003 for the PS2 something surprised me – all the frickin' names were things like WR #18 and QB #5. I wondered what the problem was and later found out that it's a rule in NCCA that no names can be put on merchandise etc. But when I created a school, all of my players had names that the announcer clearly said. So obviously player names were recorded. I don't mind filling in all the names for every team, but would you know where I could get a list of all the names? Thanks for your help.



Isalah Kendrick
via email

Since you're starting your own school, there's no law binding the use of fictitious names in a game, which is why you heard what you did. Real names, as you found out, is a different matter entirely. The big question is how to get them in your game. If you want to get names quick, and you don't mind spending a little money, we recommend you go to www.ncaarosters.com. They give you the option of either sending in your memory card to have the roster file downloaded (it will then be sent back, of course), or downloading the file yourself, and using a Sharkport to transmit the file onto your card. If all you're looking for is one big list, and you don't mind a lot of data entry, we highly recommend www.sportplanet.com/ncaa/rosterpedia. The teams and conferences are clearly organized, and each roster is easy to get to. Happy naming!

FRIENDS, PROGRAMMERS, PUBLISHERS, LEND HIM SOME TEXT

I'm deaf (not D-E-F as in da bomb). I'd like to know why companies don't close-caption all games? Metal Gear and Final Fantasy X were captioned throughout (CG movies and all). Yet games like the Resident Evil, Tomb Raider series and Jak & Daxter are not. Is this a time or money thing? Or do developers work under the assumption that everyone has five senses? I'd really enjoy games more if I could understand everything that went on, and I want to encourage other deaf people to voice their opinions on this. Thanks.

Ralph
Via Email

That is an excellent question, Ralph. After contacting representatives from Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft, we have good news and better news. The good news is, each of these companies is definitely aware of the deaf population in terms of a demographic they're concerned about including, but the implementation of subtitles and things of that nature takes time and planning. That being said, because of the concern of people like yourself, all gamers with hearing difficulties are receiving more attention by the industry as a

whole. That's where the better news comes in. Game Informer was recently in England seeing a new Peter Molyneux game. During the conversation about the title's ins and outs, a developer made a special point of talking about all of the cutscenes featuring subtitles so members of the deaf culture could enjoy the game as much as hearing folk. As more and more developers and publishers take this kind of initiative, we hope to see a day when all

games have the option to engage subtitles whenever you want them. In the meantime, rest assured that this is an issue which is being addressed by each of the Big Three, and will continue to gain momentum throughout video games as more people become aware of it.

IRONY

You guys are weird.

Flash Monkey
Via email

Hmm...

SINGLE AND LOVING IT

I am writing this in response to your article about online console gaming. I have been a console gamer for as long as I can remember, and I've never really been into playing games online.

After reading your article I got a little scared that solo play on game consoles, especially GameCube and PlayStation 2, is endangered. I mostly play solo games, and have few multiplayer titles; so you might be able to see where I'm coming from on this issue. Now, I find out that one of my favorite single-player franchises, Final Fantasy, is going exclusively online with FFXI. Does this mean that I will never be able to play Final Fantasy again, or will they continue to make one-player FF games?

If online console gaming grows too popular, where will it leave solo gamers like me? I know I'm not the only gamer out there that sticks to single-player games, and I'm sure that all of us are scared of our gaming preference shrinking. Will online gaming be the downfall of solo gaming?

Kyle Callahan
Via email

To answer the first part of your question Kyle, you have nothing to worry about. We contacted Square directly, and were assured that there are many single-player Final Fantasy titles coming soon for multiple systems.

GameCube is scheduled to enjoy Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles, which will have connectivity with the Game Boy Advance. The GBA itself will have an updated version of Final Fantasy Tactics, and the PlayStation 2 will host Final Fantasy X-2 – a FF X spin-off. Plus, you just that FFXII is going to come out as some point, it's just a matter of when.

Secondly, have no fear that your beloved single-player experience will go the way of toaster-ovens and Care Bears. Take solace in the fact that the PC market went through this exact situation with the advent of the Internet and its inherent online gaming capabilities. Today, PC games are bigger, better, and more diverse than ever before. True, a majority of PC titles released today feature an online component, but the single-player experience is no less important. The console world will likely follow suit, and offer gamers the opportunity to go online, but still make their product entertaining to all comers, not just those who have access to high-speed Internet connections.

A CLASSIC IDEA

As an avid video game collector who has over 20 systems and hundreds of games for systems ranging from the Atari XE to GameCube, I can say that *Classic GI* is my favorite part of your magazine. In it, I will occasionally find a gem I may have missed as well as reading about really crappy games that I'm glad I never touched. If nothing else, it provides me with a nice dose of nostalgia each month. What I was wondering is if you guys would consider expanding this section, or even making a separate publication called *Classic GI*?

John Nieman
Via email

We would love to start a new magazine on classic gaming. Unfortunately, putting out the magazine you hold in your hands today is more than a full-time job for those of us who produce its content. In a dream world where bulldogs all have rubber teeth and the hens lay soft-boiled eggs, we'd put out multiple publications on multiple subjects, but Old Man Money has a way of keeping dreams from becoming reality. We will do this for you, though: We promise we'll continue to chum out the classic strategy guides, features, and reviews you like as long as you keep reading them. To tell you the truth we'd do it anyway, just because we think classic gaming is bloody cool. As far as expanding the classic section, who knows what the future holds?

As far as expanding the classic section, who knows what the future holds?

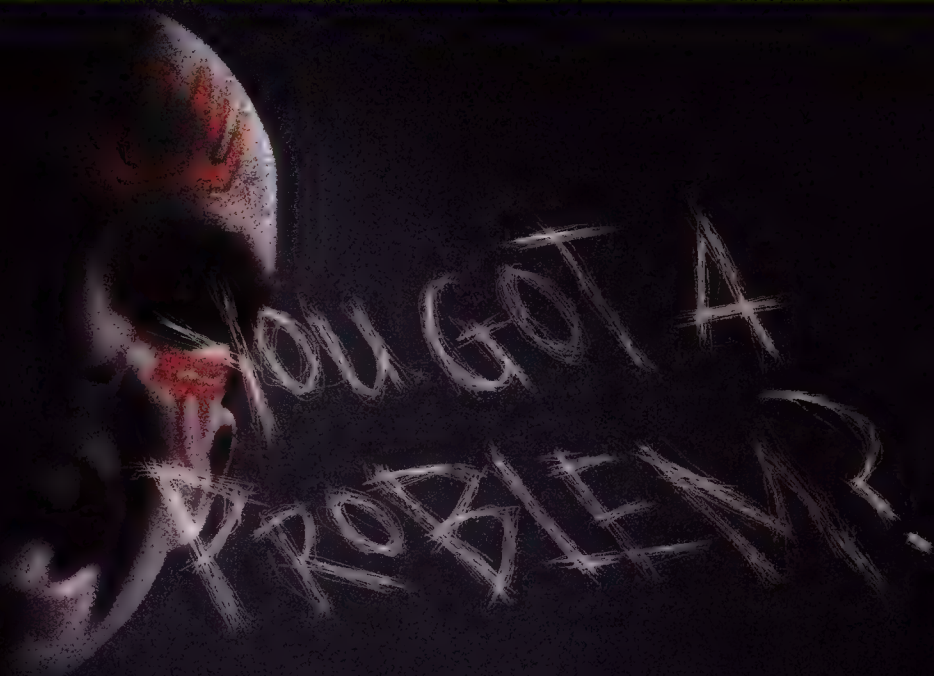
GAMER EXPERIENCES EFFECTS OF ADD

I'm really bored waiting for Vice City. What the hell do I do in the meantime?!?

Josh
Via email

After a long and confrontational conversation with Sony representatives, the





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XBOX
www.xbox.com

company has confirmed that there are, and will be other games available to play for the PlayStation 2. If that doesn't interest you, we've recently discovered that *Charles in Charge* runs Saturday mornings on Fox – at least it does in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. If different games and Scott Baio can't sate your hunger for entertainment, take some Ritalin and read a book.

Microsoft's acquisition of Rare represents the only trick left up Bill Gate's sleeve for getting some Xbox exclusive titles. The fact is, very few companies are willing to develop solely for a console that has 1/10th the installed customer base of its biggest competitor. Look, I'm sure Perfect Dark Zero will be good on Xbox. But that's not the point. Don't you see? Bill Gates is trying to force you to buy an Xbox by buying all your favorite games! Let's face it, it's exactly the reason Xbox has Halo in the first place – Microsoft bought Bungie Software. So what's next? Square Soft? EA? The more Microsoft resorts to these tactics, the less inclined I am to buy an Xbox.

J. Forrester
Via aol.com

I Just heard Nintendo is dropping Rare! Donkey Kong is my favorite game, and now it's gone! Make it change back please! I need DK, it's my source of life! Help me!

Benny Kong
Via email



Okay, people – settle! First of all, faulting Microsoft for making a sound business decision is ridiculous. Look at companies like Vivendi, Ubi Soft, or Infogrames. They've all been absorbing development houses for years – you just haven't heard about it. Secondly, if you had the money, wouldn't you buy Rare? They're one of the best developers in the world, and they were looking for something new. Microsoft is in dire need of exclusive third party content, so Rare was a perfect fit. Thirdly, previous Rare games won't disappear. Titles like the Donkey Kong series will stay under Nintendo's rule, while Rare originals such as Perfect Dark or Conker's have been retained by the company.

Adding some new blood to a next-gen console should be exciting for all gamers – change is a good thing, remember? This is especially true in the world of video games, where companies that are sedentary wilt and perish in only a few month's time. Everything's going to be okay – you'll still be able to play your favorite games from Rare, they're just under new ownership. Okay? For the inside scoop on the Rare/Microsoft deal, check out Steve Kent's feature on page 68.

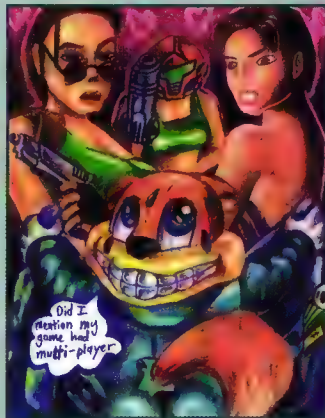
ENVELOPE ART



Mario A. Kocher L.
Yu-Gi-Oh! and Dragon Ball Z battle it out for the last Eggo waffle

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:
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Jason Rodriguez
At long last, Conker reveals exactly where he stores his nuts

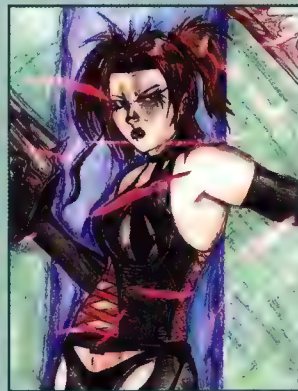
Charles Atkins
After helping Captain Olimar fix his spaceship, those mischievous Pikmin ditch him, steal his ride, and make for White Castle!



DECEMBER WINNER!

Robby Burgess

Being the good friend that he is, Mario checks Toad for earwax



Sainee Goldenberg

"You're not leaving the house dressed like that, young lady!"

Derick T. Morales

Say hello to mother green and her killing machine!





SO BRUTAL. SO EVIL. SO DEADLY.

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HAPKIDO

BROADSWORDS



TAI-CHI

HAPKIDO



GAME BOY ADVANCE

PlayStation 2

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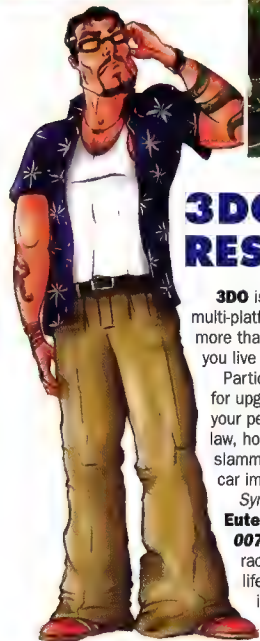
GI NEWS

EA TAKES IT BACK TO THE STREETS AND BACK IN TIME

Game Informer is backing up our earlier **NBA Street Vol. 2** (tentative title) *Loose Talk* with an exclusive first look at the urban b-ball'er. We pressed publisher **Electronic Arts** for specifics on the **PlayStation 2** title, but details are still as scarce as Kevin Garnett in a playoff game.

We have learned, however, that high socks and short shorts will be represented in full thanks to a bevy of classic players including Larry Bird, Wilt Chamberlain, and many, many more. Double alley-oops? Yes, you heard it here first.

The more things change, the more they stay the same, though, as this new edition still has plenty of ups due to the return of Gamebreakers, Trick Points, and the unrivalled commentary shouting out straight from the streets. Vol. 2 is expected to hit stores in the spring of next year.



3DO RACES FOR RESPECT

3DO is thankfully diversifying its game lineup with the multi-platform **Street Racing Syndicate**. The 2003 title does more than just put you behind the wheel; it is aimed at letting you live the life of a street racing fanatic.

Participate in officially sanctioned, or totally illegal events for upgrades, and more importantly, respect – not only from your peers, but from the opposite sex, too. Run afoul of the law, however, and you could wind up spending a night in the slammer, getting traffic tickets, or having your car impounded.

Syndicate is being developed by **Eutechnyx** from the UK – the people behind **007 Racing**. 3DO wants to expand the racing genre to reflect the underground lifestyle of the participants, and *Syndicate* is definitely a step in the right direction.



BMX XXX BANNED!

Acclaim and its Mature-rated *BMX XXX* title is facing retail resistance. **Wal-Mart**, **Toys "R" Us**, and **KayBee Toys** have said that they will not carry the game, which contains strong language, nudity, and other adult situations. Speaking to Reuters news service, Wal-Mart spokesman Tom Williams said, "We're not going to carry any software with any vulgarity or nudity – we're just not going to do it." The retailer has had a history of banning controversial video games.

Publisher Acclaim in fact, anticipated such resistance. Speaking to *Game Informer* months ago, Shawn Rosen, producer of *BMX XXX*, told us, "Wal-Mart is really important to us, and they do reflect a huge portion of our sales nowadays – so we do worry about that. But I also realize that all of these retailers have a double standard. If the game sells, I think they'll buy it." It does not look like these moral-minded chain stores will bend. However, *Game Informer* did talk to a Wal-Mart representative who told us that the company will use "customer demand" as a barometer in reevaluating *BMX*'s banned status, should the title be censored. Similarly, other major retailers such as **Best Buy** and **Target** have said that they would only carry *BMX XXX* if it were censored.

Gregory Fischbach, Acclaim's chief executive, said that he still believes the title will "get substantially full distribution in the United States." Specialty stores like **GameStop** and **EB Games** have stood by the title, choosing to let parents and consumers decide for themselves.

That leaves the all-important question: Will Acclaim censor its product in order to get it onto shelves? The vid will appear on the **PlayStation 2**, **Xbox**, and **GameCube**, and as of press time, only the folks at **Sony** seemed to have a problem with it appearing on their respective console. Mr. Fischbach told Reuters that if the company asked them to alter the game, they would. However, we contacted Acclaim and it would not comment officially on the matter. And, neither Acclaim nor Sony could say if the game would be modified for the system; a censored version would run just for Sony; or if shoppers could pick from "clean" or "dirty" editions.

Speaking for **Microsoft**, John O'Rourke, director of worldwide Xbox marketing, said, "Xbox lets parents restrict the games their children play, and we know that not all games are for all consumers."

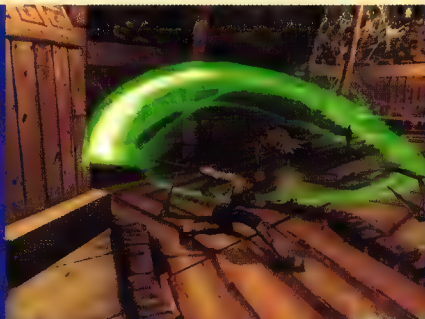
Nintendo has reportedly agreed to allow *BMX XXX* on the GameCube regardless of the content, but it could not comment officially on the matter by the time we went to press.

Interestingly, Mr. Fischbach told Reuters that any alterations would not affect the title's release date of November 19. This suggests that the publisher has already prepared a censored copy of the game in anticipation of these events. Has *BMX XXX*'s hype just been one big marketing play all along? More importantly, can it still withstand the weight of expectation?

MICROSOFT SIGNS JAPANESE RPG

OK, maybe the **Xbox** erased your precious *Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* save, but **Microsoft Game Studios** is hoping to satiate you with action/RPG title *Sudeki*. The Japanese developer **Climax** is mixing role-playing and dungeon crawling action, with the emphasis being on utilizing all four players in your party.

Apart from each character having their own traits, all will be able to combine to deliver super-strikes that can send numerous onscreen foes to their makers. Over 100 different types of enemies will be yours for the slicing, and will inhabit worlds filled with twists, turns, and every opportunity to turn your hero into the legend you want them to be.



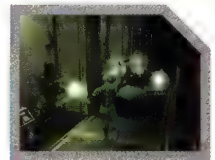


MATURE
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CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

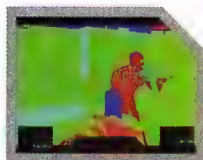
Blood and Gore
Partial Nudity
Violence

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 OBVIOUS THAT THE SERIES DESERVES A SPOT RIGHT
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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.

RASCAL XTREME RACING



Many video game publishers focus on the younger demographic with their extreme sports games. Things like scooters and inline skates are of no interest to the more mature gamer, however. These elderly members of society crave a game that really reaches out to them, and Entertainment Mobility is

happy to oblige with Rascal Xtreme Racing. The Rascal has long been the mobility vehicle of choice for the old and old at heart. This game features all models, from the economic 245, to the powerful, low-riding 305 – capable of speeds up to 15 mph! Eight courses are here for you to burn rubber on, including the bingo parlor, Silver Steed Retirement Community, and Jo-Ann Fabrics. There's even a treacherous downtown street, complete with suspicious-looking youngsters playing that damn rock and roll music. Pick up prune power-ups for extra speed, or seek out Social Security checks to upgrade your Rascal with a cupholder, seat lift, or AM radio for enjoying Lawrence Welk ditties to your heart's content! No extreme game is complete without tricks, and RXR knows it. Show off by climbing a ramp, or going in reverse! If you have a real wild side, try driving off the sidewalk curb! Just don't let your blood pressure rise too much, or it's game over – permanently.

NAME THAT GAME

Before the craptacular Great Mighty Poo and Diddy Kong Racing, developer Rare helped make its name with this SNES arcade port. This title was notable for being the first to include outrageous combo hits (which are a fighting game staple to this day), combo breakers, and combo finishers. Can we get an "Ultra" shout-out?



(Answer on page 36)

TOP 10 VICES IN VIDEO CITY

- 10 Stealing a car, then jumping out right before it speeds into the ocean.
- 9 Driving drunk to take your friend to the hospital.
- 8 Holding up a store, getting the money, then shooting the clerk anyway.
- 7 Hitting a motorcycle head on with your SUV.
- 6 Driving a car through a crowded shopping mall.
- 5 Throwing a grenade onstage at the Village People knock-off.
- 4 Distributing porno porno flyers via seaplane.
- 3 Selling drugs disguised as an ice cream man - Cheesus & Chong Style.
- 2 Getting a brainwash broadcast on you by Miss Cleo.
- 1 Buying an adult film studio and searching for "talent."

DEVELOPER TOP:
TAKAZUMI TOMOIKE
PRODUCER, DYNASTY WARRIORS SERIES

(Tomoike-san is currently working on Dynasty Warriors 4.)



- 1 Dragon Warrior II – NES
- 2 Ultima Online
- 3 Command & Conquer: Red Alert – PC
- 4 The Legend of Zelda – NES
- 5 Street Fighter II – Arcade

READER TOP 5:
BRIAN STROMMEN
JANESVILLE, WI

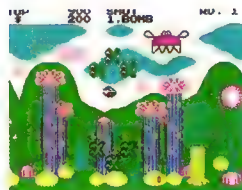
- 1 ToeJam & Earl – Genesis
- 2 Crash Team Racing – PS-X
- 3 Unreal Tournament – PC
- 4 Star Ocean: The Second Story – PS-X
- 5 Jerry Brannan's Football Frenzy – Genesis

Game Informer is seeking to add to the Franchise Top 100. Please send your Top 100 list and a photo of your favorite Game Informer magazine. Attach Top Five. 724 North First St., 1st Floor Minneapolis, MN 55403 email: top100@gameinformer.com (attach digital picture). Everyone that enters this contest will be entered in a drawing to win a GI "Shut" button.

SEGA PUTS CLASSICS ON PS2

Sega has inked a deal with Japanese developer **D3** in order to form a label called **3D Ages**. This subsidiary will put out classic, reduced-price Sega titles on the **PlayStation 2** starting in spring 2003 over in Japan. Game Informer contacted **Sega of America**, but it couldn't comment on the chances of these old **Mega Drive**, **Saturn**, and **Dreamcast** titles appearing in the US.

These games are going to be "re-developed," although it is unclear if this actually means overhauls and upgrades for this series, which will kick off with **Monaco GP** and **Fantasy Zone**. The company 3D Ages will be majority owned by Sega.



Fantasy Zone

SIERRA BRINGS TOLKIEN ONLINE

Sierra is tapping into its license with **Tolkien Enterprises** to bring you more video games based on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy of books. Most intriguing is the development of a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (**The Lord of the Rings: Middle-Earth Online**) and a real-time strategy offering



(**The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Ring**). Both of these titles are for unspecified platforms and will be followed by vids based on the *Two Towers* and *Return of the King* novels.

As with its **Fellowship of the Ring** game out now, Sierra will be expanding Tolkien's beloved story in order to further flesh out the world, and offer additional quests to players of *Middle-Earth Online* and *War of the Ring*.

MOTO MADNESS EVERYWHERE

Thank God helmets are mandatory... **Namco's MotoGP 3** has just surfaced in Japan for the **PlayStation 2**, and Game Informer has learned that, of course, Namco of America is eyeing a US release in the second half of 2003. As if taking chicanes over 30 courses wasn't hard enough, **MotoGP 3** will offer a Simulation Mode that gives you the reigns of a realistically replicated ride.

Namco's title isn't to be confused with **THQ's** bike rider **MotoGP** for the Xbox. For those that already own this game, the title can now be played online with **Xbox Live**. The service's **Starter Kit** comes with the **MotoGP Online Demo** included to give the rest of you a taste of hot asphalt.



Namco's MotoGP 3

"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...

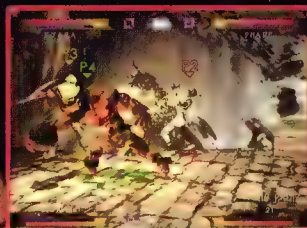
NOBODY!!!!



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.



"The 4-player mode is wicked. Now if I could just find 4 opponents I haven't already beaten... I would show you BARBARIAN'S true power!"



"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 show off..."



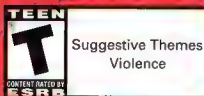
SILVER MEDAL
– PSE2 Magazine

★★★★★ (out of 5)

– Maxim

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

www.barbarian-game.com



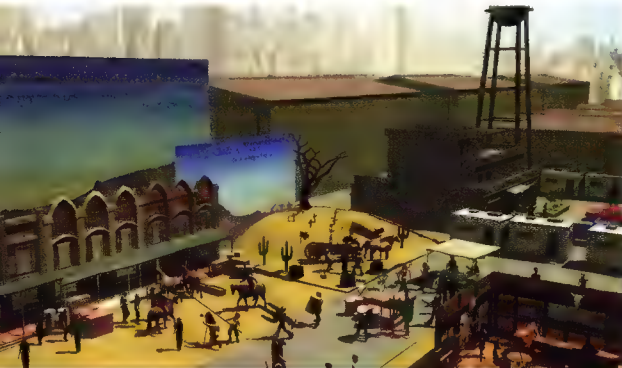
PlayStation 2



MAKING MOVIE MAGIC

Peter Molyneux's **Lionhead Studios** is letting you engineer a century of cinematic history in the 2003 PC title **The Movies**. As a studio head, you'll be responsible for everything from the content of your films to guiding your company through the evolution of movie-making itself. Start out by giving the censors heart attacks with the world's first onscreen kiss, and end by making movies with budgets whose size is rivaled only by your stars' egos.

Create your own movie genres, pick your director, and maybe even win some awards when it's all said and done. Do you go with unknowns or blow your wad on big-name stars? Do you run a tight ship or go for broke with a cast of thousands and crane shots galore? If nothing else, you can find out exactly what the hell a gaffer is.



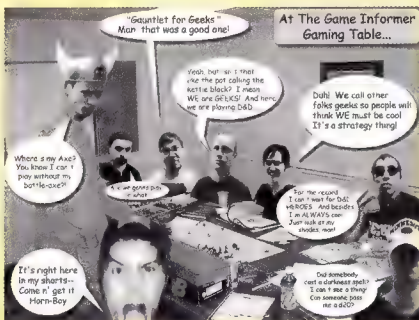
UGLY – A 24-year-old man in South Korea died from a marathon 86+ hour video game session in an Internet café. Witnesses say that he never ate or slept during this time.

BAD – For **Tomb Raider** fans, this isn't good. **Eidos** is delaying **Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness** till next year, signaling a probable spring release. The game bombed at **E3** and it may take more than a few extra months to salvage this title.

GOOD – **3DO** CEO **Trip Hawkins** has loaned his company \$3 million to keep it afloat. In an age where most CEOs are robbing employees' retirement funds to pay for furniture in their summer homes, this is some honest good news.

GOOD – **Sony's Kaz Hirai** is number four among executives on *Entertainment Weekly's* yearly Power List. In your face, Herb Scannell (#14) of Nickelodeon!

UGLY – Our put-down of D&D players in the October preview of **Dungeons & Dragons Heroes** has geeks seething. Some have come up with comics poking fun at us. Funny. Using our likeness without our permission has our lawyers laughing as well. *Gf: 2, D&D Geeks: 0.*



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

"Warriors come out and play." **Rockstar Games** is bringing B-movie gang masterpiece **The Warriors** to next-gen consoles. Rival gangs, radio personalities, and '80s fashion all fall right under Rockstar's mantra. "Can you dig it!?"

Word out of Japan is that publisher/developer **Konami** is looking to pull its support from the **Xbox**. Proof? Formerly Xbox-exclusive **Silent Hill 3** is now only on the **PS2**. America may be next.

Loose Talk has heard that **EA** is not only planning a **Return of the King** video game to follow up **The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers**, but is also looking to expand into other genres with the license. Finally, a title encompassing all three movies is also being discussed.

According to the British magazine *Edge*, **Nintendo** is planning to release a new and improved **Game Boy Advance**, complete with a flip up, backlit screen, two extra face buttons, and utilizing smaller, longer-lasting batteries. Also rumored to be included with this new GBA (said to go on sale in the US by the end of the year) is a more powerful processor and onboard RAM. The new handheld would play old GBA titles. As attractive as this all sounds, it seems contrary to Nintendo's age-old policy of milking successful platforms as long as it can.

SO WHAT IS **HARDCORE** MULTIMEDIA?

EY *SonicXS*



It's big fat satellites that will fill your world with **DANGEROUSLY EXCESSIVE SOUND.**

It's a massively efficient subwoofer that will **SHAKE THE PAINT** off your walls without distortion.

EY *SonicXS 4.1*



It's scientifically tuned horn tweeters that let you hear the **SCREAMS** of your victims in perfect fidelity.

EY *SonicXJR*



It's in your face audio that takes no prisoners.

ARE YOU READY?

For more information and to buy now, go to www.hardcoremultimedia.com



Concert sound for your computer



VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

Santa has always been a cute idol that children all over have come to love and adore. However, people have experienced and created numerous different kinds of Santas, some of which are evil! Your knowledge of game trivia this month will determine which kind of Santa will visit you on Christmas Eve. Good luck!

QUESTION 1: What is Mario and Luigi's last name?

- A. Mario
- B. Luigi
- C. Soprano
- D. Corleone

QUESTION 2: This is a CGI demo of a Final Fantasy game that was presumably coming to N64 before Square announced its plans for PlayStation. Can you name these characters in this demo that were taken from a previous FF title?

- A. Kane, Cecil, Rosa
- B. Cid, Cloud, Aeris
- C. Shadow, Locke, Terra
- D. Steiner, Zidane, Garnet

QUESTION 3: What was the first-ever third-party software company, which was formed by four disgruntled Atari programmers?

- A. Parker Brothers
- B. Activision
- C. Williams
- D. CBS Electronics

QUESTION 4: What was the last Street Fighter title to appear on Super Nintendo?

- A. Super Street Fighter II
- B. Pocket Fighter
- C. Street Fighter Alpha
- D. Street Fighter Alpha 2

QUESTION 5: This was one of the Jaguar's last games. To compete with Tekken and Virtua Fighter, Atari devised this piece of crap. Can you name it?

- A. Way of the Warrior
- B. Kasumi Ninja
- C. Ultra Vortex
- D. Fight for Life



Who are these characters?

QUESTION 6: The name Nintendo is composed of three Japanese characters that roughly translates to "Heaven Blesses Hard Work," or "Leave Luck to Heaven."

- A. True
- B. False

QUESTION 7: Back in the NES days, Microsoft teamed up with Atari to develop a powerful game system for the Japanese market only. However, do to production costs, it was ultimately canned. What was the name of this system?

- A. Microsoft X
- B. X-PC
- C. Atari Voyager
- D. MES (Microsoft Entertainment System)

QUESTION 8: Who was the voice talent for the 3DO game, Gex?

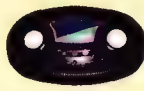
- A. Dom Irrera
- B. Wayne Brady
- C. Dana Carvey
- D. Dana Gould

QUESTION 9: If Pikachu were a child, what would his name be?

- A. Richu
- B. Pichu
- C. Pika
- D. Chu Chu

QUESTION 10: Atari had a portable system back in the day. It had no screen and no cartridge slot, but it contained 100 titles and allowed gamers to use batteries. Do you remember the name of the "first" portable gaming system?

- A. Mini-2600
- B. Video-Go
- C. TV Boy
- D. Atari Express



What is the name of this obscure system?



Supposedly, Atari miraculously snagged the janitor that worked in Yu Suzuki's office to work on this product. Whooh!

Score & Rank



0
Evil Santa: You definitely don't want this duplicitous Santa in your house at night!



1
Coca Cola Santa: No presents! Coke's Santa forces consumerism down your throat with too many soft drinks!



2-4
Smokey Santa: He brings toys, but also a pipe to blow smoke in your face



5-7
Fake Santa: Your parents scare you for life with a fake Santa, but you still get presents



8-9
Lovable Santa: He only brings presents



10
Cute Santa: A damn fine Santa to visit late at night and bring presents

CHAOS CALLS FROM CAPCOM



With **Capcom's Onimusha 2** already released, and a sequel for **Devil May Cry** just around the corner, the company has yet another ass-kicking **PlayStation 2** title already up its sleeve in the spring of 2003 in Japan. **Chaos Legion** is being described as an action/RPG game that incorporates the frantic, stylized, and destructive spirit of the famous Capcom games above.

Chaos Legion will follow the tracks of a legendary swordswoman named Sieg Wahrheit (who is a member of an organization known as the Dark Seal Knights) and his former friend and current foe Victor Delacroix.

Apart from the game's obvious Capcom action pedigree, the title will apparently try to distinguish itself in the visual department by using various effects for the myriad weapons at your disposal. One of these is your trainable Legions, which are summons brought forth by your Dark Emblem. Should it prove popular in Japan, Capcom has said that **Chaos Legion** is expected to appear in the States.



20% The amount by which Nintendo has lowered its shipment projection for the GameCube outside of the US

40% more profanities were heard around the office while editors played *Contra* for the PS2 and Game Boy Advance

3% of readers think that we're biased towards the Bandai WonderSwan

96% of the DVDs in Matt's collection stink. He owns such gems as *The Playaz Court*, *Surviving Gilligan's Island*, and *Johnson County War* (starring Luke Perry)

83% of Holiday Sam's appearance fee consisted of alcoholic beverages and cheese sandwiches (no crusts)

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Baldur's Gate

DARK ALLIANCE

Live the Fantasy...

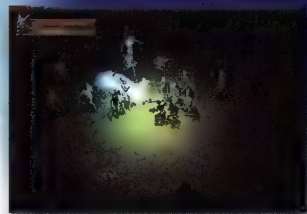
"Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance looks like an absolute must-have game..."

- GameSpy.com

bgdaxbox.blackisle.com



Explosive spell effects



Hordes of D&D® creatures



Blood
Violence
Use of Alcohol



developed by
snowblind
STUDIOS



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TURN YOUR PS2 INTO A VCR

Now that the Network Adaptor is out, **Sony** already has plans in motion to expand the uses of the **PlayStation 2**. In an interview with the Japanese press, a spokesperson for Sony said that the company is working on a way to enable the video game console to receive broadcast signals and record them onto hard disks. Not only are these tuner kits being contemplated, but PS2s with these functions built-in are also being considered.

"The game market and the audiovisual market are different, but this product could cover both," said **Kenichi Fukunaga**, Sony spokesperson. "Our thinking is that it would be more convenient for consumers to enjoy home networking and manage broadcasting content as well."

However, there are a few factors that are as yet undecided. Will the platform use the Hard Drive (which still hasn't appeared in America)? What kind of signals will it receive - digital, cable, analog, etc.? No timetable was mentioned for this new feature set for the PS2, but Sony did say that it is expected to come to the US eventually.



SEGA'S MUD FLAP MAYHEM

Grab a stick of beef jerky, your favorite truck-stop-bought Willie Nelson cassette, and a fistful of No-Doz - **Sega** is bringing the no-holds-barred 18 wheeler **King of Route 66** to the **PlayStation 2** in March. Starting in Illinois and ending in California, players will make the long haul as you fend off Tornado Corporation goons on your way to a grand payday. Hell, maybe you can even pick up a little female company along the way.

Mission-based objectives, minigames, and large levels all await those who have enough diesel in their blood to step up to the challenge. You can even customize your rig just the way you like it - no *Juggs* center-folds allowed, however. Bored stiff by **18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker**? Why not try this Demolition Derby-esque 10 gallon hat on for size and truck on into the night.



DATA FILE

► Some games that have been swallowed up by the delay monster: **The Sims** for PS2 (Jan.), **SimCity 4** (Jan.), **Auto Modellista** (March), and **Malice** (first quarter).

► **Namco** has signed a deal with **Criterion Studios** to use its **RenderWare** middleware technology for two as-yet-unnamed games to be developed here in the US.

► The more **Myst** the merrier. **Ubi Soft** has announced that it has inked a deal with developer **Oyan Worlds** to crank out **Myst** games until 2008. **Mensa** should have good membership numbers for years.

► **Kill Bill**. **Quentin Tarantino's** next film, will get the video game treatment courtesy of **Vivendi Universal**. The fall 2003 movie starring Uma Thurman and Lucy Liu as assassins will spawn games over multiple platforms in the summer of 2004, when the DVD is released.

► Putting an ironic twist on the video game violence issue, **Warner Bros.** is looking to grab the rights to **id Software's Doom** for a movie. Hollywood will make big bucks off of this property while gaming continues to come under government fire for it.

► "Game over, man!" **Electronic Arts** has announced that it is canceling **Aliens: Colonial Marines**, and does not plan to pick up its development at a later date.

► **TDK** has received the video game rights to **Bonnie and Clyde**. It is believed that this not only covers the movies, but also the television series. The publisher also has **Spy vs. Spy** video games in the works.

► The Duke boys are back. **Ubi Soft** will be making racing-themed titles based on the exploits of Bo, Luke, and the rest of the crew, taking over for the defunct **SouthPeak Interactive**.

► **Sega** will provide downloads of **Super Monkey Ball**, **Soccer Slam**, and **Fast Lane** for AT&T Wireless customers subscribing to mMode. AT&T expects to eventually offer the games preloaded.

► UK's **Empire Interactive** has signed onto **Chow Yun-Fat's** spring 2003 martial arts flick, **Bulletproof Monk** - which is already a comic book by the same name. The vid isn't expected to be out in conjunction with the film, but it will follow its storyline closely.

► Developer **Luxoflux** has been bought out by **Activision**. The game studio is now putting the finishing touches on **True Crime: Streets of LA** for the publisher.

► **Konami** has gone public on the **New York Stock Exchange**, with the symbol **KNM**. We wonder out loud if the classic Konami code (see last issue) does anything to the stock's price?

CONTEST

GO ONLINE WITH YOUR NEW XBOX



Broadband gaming is the place to be, and Game Informer is happy to put you there with help from Microsoft. Forget about sappy and crappy dial-up connections or trash talking one typed letter at a time. Xbox Live is the way to play, and we're here to hook you up with the goods to make it happen. Enter now to get a shot at an Xbox console, a year's worth of free service to Xbox Live, a Voice Communicator, and a collection of three Xbox Live-enabled titles: NFL Fever 2003, Whacked, and MechAssault. All you have to do is supply the broadband, and you're cooking with the best online gaming gas.

Grand Prize (1)

- A Microsoft Xbox console
- A year's free subscription to Xbox Live (including the Xbox Communicator)
- NFL Fever 2003
- MechAssault
- Whacked

Second Prize (1)

- A year's free subscription to Xbox Live (including the Xbox Communicator)
- NFL Fever 2003
- MechAssault
- Whacked

There Are Two Ways To Enter:

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

GI's XBOX LIVE
724 N. FIRST ST. 4TH FLOOR
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

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

Your name will be placed in a pool of valid entrants for a random drawing to be conducted on February 3, 2003.

GAME INFORMER'S XBOX LIVE OFFICIAL RULES

1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter, send your name, age, address and telephone number on a postcard to: GI's Xbox Live, 724 First St. North, 4th Floor, Minneapolis, MN 55401. Or, email your name, age, address and telephone number to: xboxlive@gameinformer.com. Entries must be received by February 3, 2003. One entry per person. Duplicate entries will be disqualified. Game Informer reserves the right to sponsor or be responsible for use, sale, distribution, receipt, expiration or replacement of prizes. 2. PRIZES: 1 (one) grand prize winner will receive a Microsoft Xbox, a year's free subscription to Xbox Live (including the Xbox Communicator, NFL Fever, MechAssault, and Whacked) (approximate retail value \$375). 1 (one) second prize winner will receive a year's free subscription to Xbox Live (including the Xbox Communicator, NFL Fever, MechAssault, and Whacked) (approximate retail value \$175). Sponsor reserves the right to substitute prize of equal or greater value if prize is unavailable. Prizes are non-transferable and no substitutions allowed. 3. WINNERS: Winners will be determined by random drawing of all valid entries received by the Sponsor, whose decision is final. Drawing will be held on or about February 3, 2003. Winners shall be notified by email and telephone. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery of prizes. 4. COUSIN OF WARNING: The sales of winning prizes on number of valid entries received. 5. ELIGIBILITY: Promotion open to residents of United States only. Prizes of any previous restrictions or disqualifications will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winners may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liabilities acceptance within 14 days of receipt of prize letter. If the winner is a minor, then prize may be awarded to winner's parent or legal guardian. By acceptance of prize, winner agrees to the use of their name and image for purposes of advertising, trade or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor, Game Informer Magazine, and their parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, division or related companies are responsible for any damages, losses, or injuries that winners might incur as a result of this advertisement or prize or claim. 6. RESOLUTION: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

Name That Game Answer:
Killer Instinct



BEGINNER



NOVICE



EXPERT

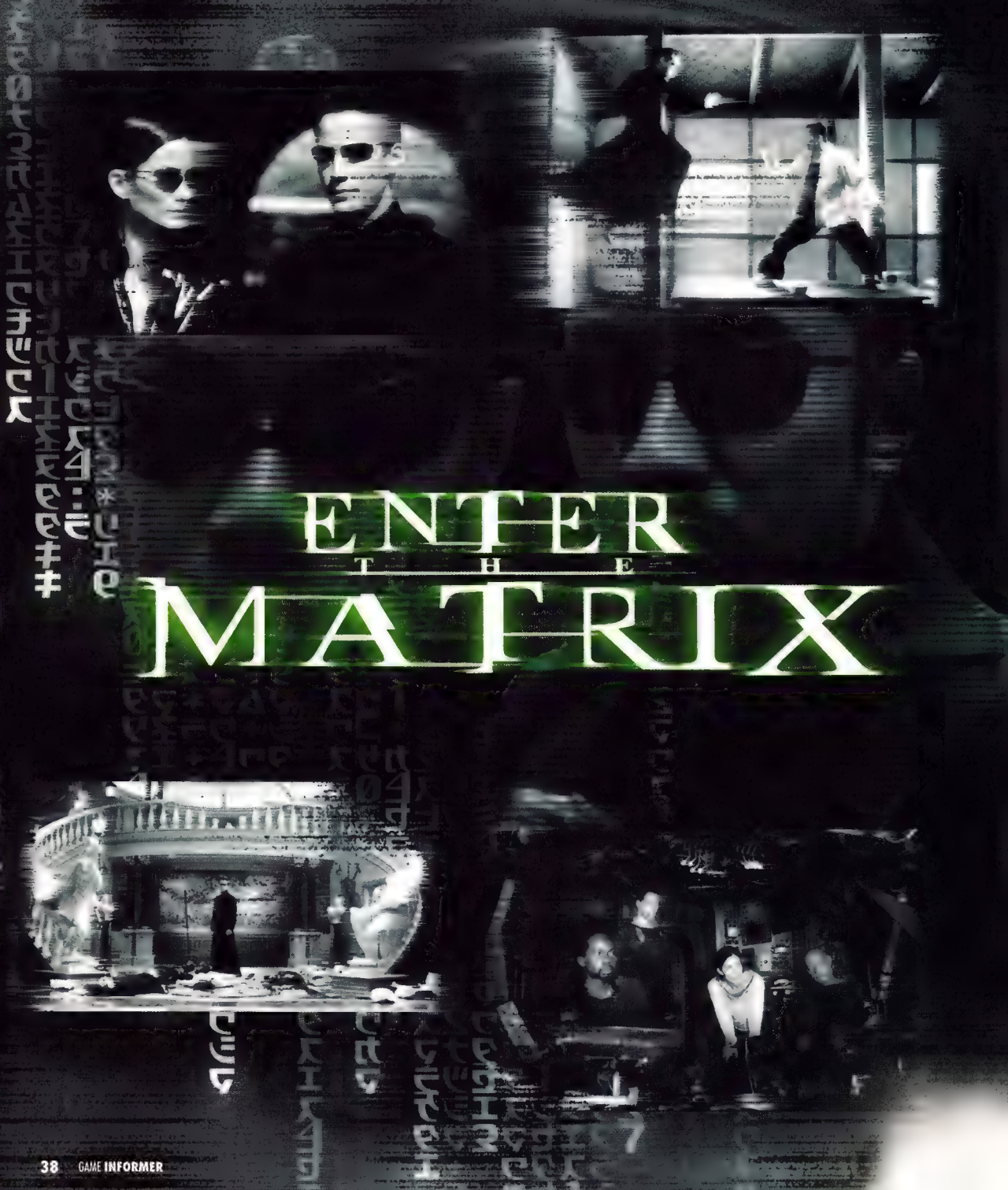


SILENT SCOPE 3

SILENT SCOPE'S INTENSE SHOOTING ACTION RETURNS FOR A 3RD ROUND WITH AN ALL-NEW GAME FOR THE PLAYSTATION®2 COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM! AS THE WORLD'S BEST SHARP-SHOOTER, PREVENT A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION FROM USING CLONING TECHNOLOGY FOR GLOBAL DOMINATION. FEATURING EXPANSIVE LEVELS, MADDOCAL BOSSES, AND NEW 3D SOUND TECHNOLOGY TO FIND AND TARGET OPPONENTS, IT'S TIME TO SILENCE THE ENEMY THREAT. AS A BONUS, SILENT SCOPE 3 ALSO DELIVERS THOSE THE GAME PLAY BY INCLUDING THE NEW ARCADE GAME, SILENT SCOPE EX!



PlayStation®2



ENTER THE MATRIX

NOTHING CAN PREPARE YOU

“Why didn’t we do the first *Matrix* film?”

voices David Perry, Shiny Entertainment’s president, who, for the better portion of the last three years, has seemingly vanished from the face of the Earth. “I was actually asked to do it. I met with the Wachowski brothers (Andy and Larry) and they showed me the original storyboards for the first *Matrix* movie. Joel Silver did his little pitch, yet I sat there in their office and said no. It was the worst mistake I ever made in my career. When I watched the movie in the theater, I was so blown away by it that I thought, ‘What the hell have I done?’ I thought it was going to be another hacker movie!”

Although they weren’t able to create a game that coincided with the timing of the first film, the Wachowskis remained deeply rooted within the video game industry and sought out other partnerships for their upcoming plans. Hideo Kojima, the mastermind behind Konami’s acclaimed *Metal Gear* series, was asked to apply his unique fingerprint to the *Matrix* universe. Although not quite the development powerhouse it is today, the Wachowskis also pursued Bungie, the studio that delivered the Xbox juggernaut *Halo*. As interesting as these reports are, nothing ever came to fruition, and a game based on the first movie exists only in the imagination of its fans.

Shortly after the theatrical release, negotiations resumed with their number one draft pick. David Perry recalls, “When the movie came out, they called me right away and asked, ‘Did you see the film?’ I replied, [expletive deleted] yeah. It’s awesome!” So they said, ‘Come on up here and we’ll talk about the next movie.’ I jumped into my car and we inked the deal as quickly as possible. The deal was signed February 2001, and we were secretly working with the Wachowski brothers on it for six to eight months before that. That’s when we were getting all of the plans laid out. The day it got signed, we really got started. We dove right into the technology to make it possible.” As avid gamers (who have reportedly destroyed an Xbox unit during a fevered *Halo* match), the Wachowskis didn’t want to make a derivative game that followed the story arc of the second film. They wanted to try something different. Something that speaks volumes to gamers. Something that *Matrix* fans can embrace. Something that seamlessly blends the efforts of developer and studio. Something that will redefine the way that moviegoers view games and gamers view movies. That something is *Enter The Matrix*.

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX, GAMECUBE, PC ■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMS/ATARI ■ **DEVELOPER** SHINY ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** MAY 15, 2003



**“THIS IS
MORE THAN
A LICENSING
DEAL. IT’S
AN ARTISTIC
PARTNERSHIP.”**

**— THE WACHOWSKI
BROTHERS**

“I expect to surprise a lot of people with what we’ve been up to,” interjects David. “We’re not doing what you are expecting. What you think we’re doing, we’re not doing. What you think the Wachowski brothers are doing, they’re not doing. They are not making *Matrix 1.1.1*. It doesn’t just follow along from where the last movie left off. So don’t go into theaters expecting to get the same experience again. They took the story and showed us how deep the rabbit hole really goes.”

The first film made us question our existence. Are we real? The continuation of this story will surely expand upon this message, but will also be accompanied by a new mystique – a different kind of uncertainty. If you reeled over the twists and turns that the first film so masterfully delivered, and can hardly wait for more, you’re in for quite the treat. The Wachowski brothers are just getting started, and have actually created an entire universe that spans across all forms of multimedia. The

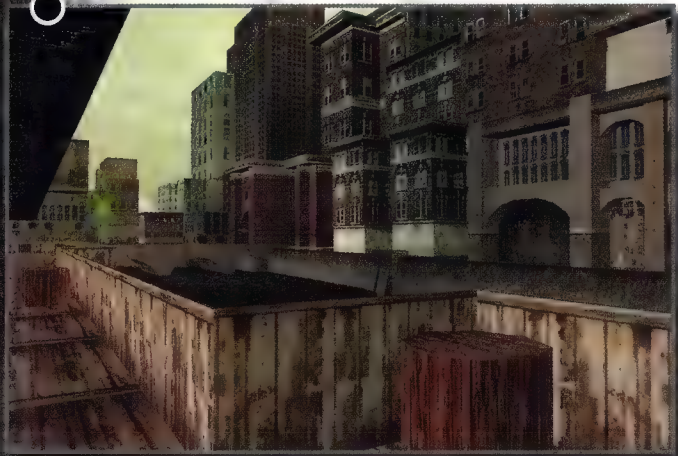
movies will of course be the cornerstone that everything is built on. But as time goes on, it will eventually branch out and grow in different ways. Rather than sitting on an idea for 20 years like George Lucas stubbornly does with *Star Wars*, the Wachowskis move quickly. Come next year, *The Matrix* will literally be everywhere. In theaters, fans of the series will be treated to not one, but two sequels: *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*, which were filmed in unison; much like

Xbox, GameCube, and PC. As a whole, movie-to-game translations rarely fare well, but just recently, there’s been resurgence – a rebirth of sorts. Rather than creating a generic action game with a hot movie license plastered on top, Activision and Electronic Arts have been blazing new trails with bankable talent signing on for voice work and likeness usage for their respective *Spider-Man* (Activision), *Lord of the Rings* (EA), and *James Bond* titles (EA).

As you can see, the collaboration between video games and Hollywood is definitely moving in the right direction, yet none of these notable efforts even come close to touching the partnership that Shiny Entertainment and the Wachowski brothers have forged for Enter The Matrix. David explains Shiny’s involvement. “[The Wachowski brothers] knew exactly what we needed. They had access to everything, being the directors. They trusted us and gave us their scripts right away. They let our staff work on their sets. I had some of the Shiny staff in Australia for 16 weeks working on the movie sets with the people making

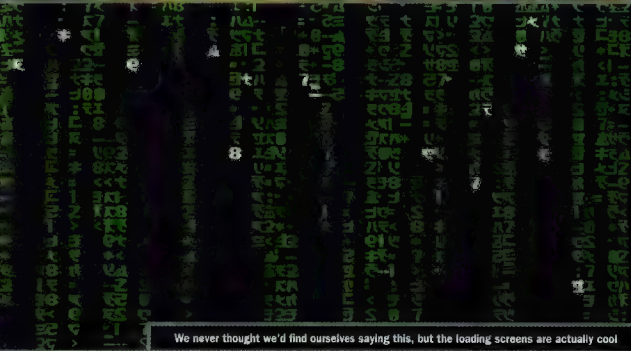
New Line’s The Lord of the Rings trilogy. As of now, the exact date when *Reloaded* will hit theaters hasn’t been set in stone, but all signs point toward May 15, 2003. On the day that the film makes its debut, the Wachowski brothers, Shiny Entertainment, and publishing partner Infogrames will usher in Enter The Matrix for PlayStation 2,

The speed at which Shiny was able to erect 3D environments allowed the Wachowskis to see what they would look like well before the sets were made for filming.





In the movies, you'll only see the grand hall, but in the game, you'll actually see the adjoining ballroom and whatever else lies beyond



We never thought we'd find ourselves saying this, but the loading screens are actually cool

the film. They let us use all of their equipment. They are also taking a key part in directing the game."

The Wachowskis' involvement actually goes much deeper than this. Rather than handing over the script to the second film and nervously requesting Shiny to make a game out of the material on the pages, the brothers took it upon themselves to ensure that the video game experience is just as rewarding as the motion pictures. The brothers actually wrote a new story specifically for the game. While details are scarce at this point, the plot does tie into the second film, but none of the material is repeated. You may find yourself in a familiar environment from the movie, but you won't relive the scene. In the game, you may enter a room, have a conversation with a character, then leave just moments before Neo and a handful of Agents tear the place apart in the film. The

video game script complements the movie perfectly. As the Wachowskis illustrated, "This is more than a licensing deal. It's an artistic partnership."

David Perry adds, "There are things that you're going to see in the video game that will basically open up *Reloaded* and *Revolutions* for you. You'll experience more from this game as a gamer than someone sitting in the movie theater watching the movie. That was basically the conversation that I had with the Wachowski brothers. We went back and forth. How can we make it so if I'm in the movie theater watching *The Matrix Reloaded* and there's a guy sitting right next to me who's a gamer, they get completely different experiences? The answer is...we find ways to do it. It meant that the brothers had to go and scratch their heads a bit, which they did, but they came up with the solutions. So ultimately, this guy here, the gamer, knows why

things are happening the way they are happening. Usually, when you watch a movie, you just accept the way that things happen. As a gamer, though, you'll say, 'Holy [expletive deleted]! I delivered

that to here!' Or, 'I caused that to happen! You wouldn't believe the war that happened to make this situation occur!' While someone in the movie theater is just going to go, 'I guess this is what happens.' By playing the game, you'll have a broader sense of what is going on. At one point, the video game actually screws up the movie. We come in. We come out. We change what is going on inside the movie. You end up screwing up the movie, but the guy next to you just accepts it as it is going."

In total, the story will amount to over 200 minutes of in-game cinematics, which Shiny calls "cineratives." To authenticate the experience, all of the actors from the film, including Keanu Reeves, have recorded dialogue for the game. Shiny also spent three weeks motion-capturing the actors for these scenes, and for the gameplay. Always the pioneers in camera work, the Wachowskis actually set

up 32 motion-capture cameras for higher-quality captures. David comments, "These poor actors really didn't know what they were signing on to when they signed up for this game. When they do their movie, they have to learn their lines for the movie. But when you come to the video game, we handed them small books as far as scripts go. They're like, 'Oh my God! This is for the game!' They weren't expecting it, so they had to learn tons of new material for this video game so they could act it out on stage; and that's exactly what they did."

As a whole, this Titanic-sized project easily surpasses any movie-to-game translation to date, but it gets better – or so we hear. A rumor has leaked out of Hollywood stating that the Wachowskis actually filmed new live-action footage exclusively for the game. When we asked David about this, he smiled and said, "That's a great rumor, but I cannot confirm or deny that right now. It's a really great rumor and I certainly wouldn't crush it right now. [laughs]" How exciting would that be? If true, this isn't just a game, it's a whole new movie as well – an extension that fans, gamers or not, will absolutely have to experience.





“ENTER THE MATRIX IS NOT THE MATRIX RELOADED, THE VIDEO GAME. WE ARE NOT MAKING A VIDEO GAME BASED ON THIS NEXT MOVIE.”

— DAVID PERRY, PRESIDENT SHINY ENTERTAINMENT



the next two films, you will not step into the shoes of Neo or Trinity. This comes as a shock, but if you remember how the first movie ended, it would be impossible to develop a game as seen through the eyes of Neo. He can stop bullets by raising his hand, jump into Agent bodies, soar through the air, and peer through fabricated constructs to the digital coding beneath. Attempting to construct a game around that kind of messiah-like ability set would be nearly impossible, and would probably yield boring results. In light of this, Shiny and the brothers Wachowski have come to a strategic compromise that meshes with the film's architecture as well as allowing variety and mystery in the game's play.

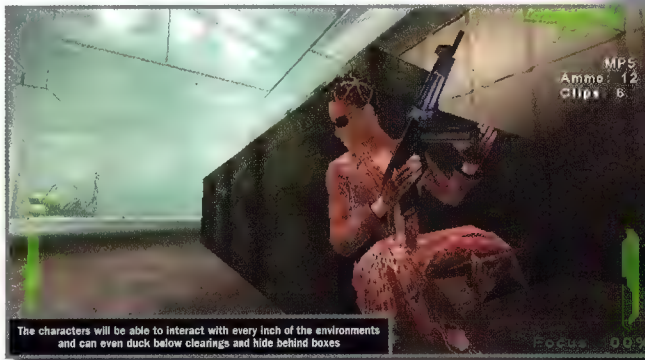
to fight alongside them for certain scenes. You'll see Neo completely devastate Agents with little effort and look on as Morpheus' skills within the Matrix grow. So who will you control? Much like Resident Evil, at the beginning of the game you will be asked to choose between two characters. There's Niobe, who is brought to life by actress Jada Pinkett Smith. She once had romantic ties with Morpheus, is the fastest pilot in the hovercraft fleet, and is the best driver. Conversely, you can also play as the mysterious character named Ghost. He's the weapons expert, fights with a Zen-like focus, and has a relationship with Trinity that you'll get to explore. David jokes, "When the Wachowski brothers first called me up, they said that Ghost was an Apache Zen-Buddhist assassin." Both of these characters play a large

As for the direction the game went in, David Perry and his team wouldn't agree to a deal unless they had full support from the Wachowskis and Warner Brothers. "In my past, I've actually dealt with licensed stuff before," David recalls. "But I've always had to bend for the license. So when we did the Terminator game for example, I wanted to be the Terminator, but they said, 'No you can't be the Terminator.' I said, 'Well, that sucks. Okay, I want to be Sarah Connor then: They said you can't be her because we don't have the rights to Linda Hamilton. Can we have Arnold Schwarzenegger in the game at all? You can't have him, either. So I can't be Sarah Connor, and I can't be the Terminator, who am I going to be? They said Kyle Reese...the guy who dies in the movie. So here I am trying to make a game that can only have one Termina-

tor that you can't kill because you wouldn't have the Terminator left. It was awful. It was an awful experience. With [Enter the Matrix], when I got started with the brothers, I said, 'Before we start this, I don't want to be involved unless we have the rights to everything we want to use. They said, 'Of course. This is absolutely the way it has to be.' Ultimately, they did exactly that and backed it up and gave us access to everything we asked for."

Surely, when you envision a game based on the Matrix universe, you envision assuming the identity of Neo or Trinity, and flipping off of walls in slow-motion, while unloading countless rounds of ammo. Due in part to the new story, and the stasis of the characters within

You will see all of the familiar characters from the first film, and will even have a chance





role in the films, and of course, they will be the key players in the developments and outcome of the game as well. You won't be able to switch characters mid-game, but it will be in the player's interest to play through the game twice as it unfolds differently for both characters.

Shiny spent a significant amount of time modeling the characters after their real-life counterparts. Since the Wachowskis bring with them Hollywood-caliber cinematics, every little detail has been meticulously crafted to be authentic as possible. David comments, "This is part of what this relationship is all about. For filming, the brothers wanted to see a particular room, but to do that they had to draw everything in autoCAD, have guys come in with tools, and start sawing wood to build this thing. That takes a long time. Whereas we were given the blueprints and were able to put this thing together so they could see what

the room was going to look like before they had the set built. That's where the relationship starts to become quite helpful. They realized that they could pre-see things through us because we can get it in fast. Whereas with the film they have to wait for some carpenter to finish it."

Since the video game world is quite different from Hollywood, the Wachowski brothers and Shiny continually ran into roadblocks, but pressed forward to find a happy medium between the two. For instance, cinematography has been, for the most part, an afterthought in most games. We're just now entering the age where characters speak and interact with one another realistically. Andy and Larry didn't want to cut back on the story or delete shots. So, if a character was hacking into the Matrix, the Wachowski brothers wanted to express this action as they would in a film. You may see the camera zoom in onto the

fingers on the keyboard, then pan out to a different angle. The solution that we, as gamers, have become accustomed to are panoramic shots that are used solely to hide the fact that the characters' hands are actually unarticulated mittens that never make contact with the keyboard. The Wachowskis didn't want this, so, as we said, detail has been applied everywhere. You'll see articulated fingers, realistic shadows, proper collision, and genuine human emotion expressed within the real-time cutscenes. It should look eerily realistic, much like *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*.

David broke down exactly how big of a deal this really is. "The video game industry has a lot to learn from Hollywood. They really beat us into shape very quickly. When I first started the project, they would call me up and ask for a list of things for the motion-capture stage. So we would make a list out for them, and they would go, 'That's not

a list!' They would start typing it themselves, and they go right down to every single bag of sand you set on something or every single tripod you use. You have to have everything extremely organized. So basically in getting the project going, it's been a hell of a learning curve for us, but it's been really fun." In total, Shiny collected over 4,000 different motion-capture moves - more than anyone has ever done. David put this into perspective for us. "All of that data got collected, and we recently worked out how many discs it's going to take to ship this game on PC, and the current count without doing compression is 14 CDs. We're currently solving the compression problem right now. It's really going to be a monster of a game. It's the same story for GameCube. How are we ever going to get this game to fit onto those little discs? The answer is multiple discs. That's what we're going to have to do." To ensure that development moved smoothly for all four versions of the game, Shiny created a new cross-platform engine that allows the team to simultaneously work on all four versions of the game. If a bug were to appear on one platform, the very same bug will pop up in the others. This system streamlines the development process and ensures that all four editions are identical at development's end.

9000\$
Ammo: 11
Clips: 0

9000\$
Ammo: 11
Clips: 0

When you hit the Focus meter, you'll be able to perform amazing feats. For instance, you'll be able to run along any wall

Health 65%

Focus 64%

So what type of game is Enter The Matrix? This is actually a difficult question to answer. We will say this, though: As the quest unfolds, you'll find yourself leaning against walls and peering around a corner, flipping through the air in slow-motion, wielding a sniper rifle, driving in a car across crowded city streets, soaring in a hovercraft beneath the Earth's surface, and hacking into the Matrix itself. There's a lot to this project, but as you probably hoped, the main bulk of gameplay centers around combat. When you see this portion of the game in action, there's little doubt that Max Payne will cross your mind. Enter The Matrix looks a lot like it, which is fairly ironic since Max Payne was more or less inspired by *The Matrix* to begin with.

For starters, you'll see your character onscreen at all times, which, as you can imagine, leads to eye-popping visuals and extremely organic moves. All of the standard actions that you've come to expect from games of this ilk are included in Enter The Matrix. You can

climb ladders, hang from ledges, duck beneath clearings, hand-over-hand swing, shimmy along walls, and leap into the air. Of course, the characters are trained to free their minds, which in turn can transform the most simplistic of movements into an extraordinary feat. For example, all of the moves are pressure sensitive. So, if you climb a ladder, you have the choice of ascending nonchalantly, or if you apply the pressure, zooming like the Flash up to the next level. It's quite amusing to see a character move this fast, but as the movie taught us, anything, even altering the flow of time, is possible. Conversely, you can also slow things down, simulating the popular and innovative camerawork from the movie. To alter reality like this, you'll have to tap into your Focus meter. By holding down one of the shoulder buttons, the speed will slow down dramatically, a familiar sound effect will ring through your ears, and your assortment of moves will transform to include acrobatic impossibilities.

At this point, you'll have a distinct advantage over your adversaries. Dodging bullets, corkscrewing through the air, and running on walls are effortlessly performed. There are also a number of circumstantial moves that stem from Focus. With two enemies at your side and one directly ahead, if you were to hop into the air, you'd do the splits and simultaneously kick the foes to your right and left, then dispose of the adversary directly ahead, all before your feet hit the ground. The Focus meter produces new moves, augments existing techniques, and looks absolutely bitchin' when activated.

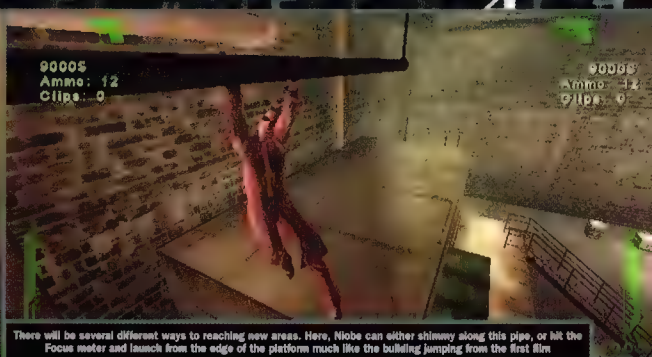
If you exhaust your Focus meter, there's a chance that you will still have the advantage over your opponent. In total, you'll be able to wield 24 different firearms. All, we might add, are authenticated by the weapons expert from the film. "This guy is awesome!" injects David. "He does so many movies that he gets access to guns before they come out. So he has prototype weapons that gun companies are planning to release. He let

us use those in the games as well. We actually have some next-generation weapons in the game that are real and will come out." If Shiny can hit the desired gameplay pitch, you'll empty clips in a heartbeat, toss guns aside, pick up others, and rattle off thousands of rounds within minutes. Whether you're running and gunning, leaning around corners and snapping a few quick shots, tossing a grenade, or hanging upside down from a beam with a sniper rifle, Shiny has covered every base – ensuring that all of the weapons fire realistically and sound appropriate.

We have yet to see choreographed kung-fu sequences, much like the subway fight in the first film, but Shiny has included a comprehensive combat system that is brimming with dozens of combos. As it stands now, this system is terribly complex, true to the license, and a step ahead of the market. Presently, the battles that ensue are more than enough to make Matrix fans weak at the knees, but in the grand scheme of things, these sequences are just the tip of the iceberg.



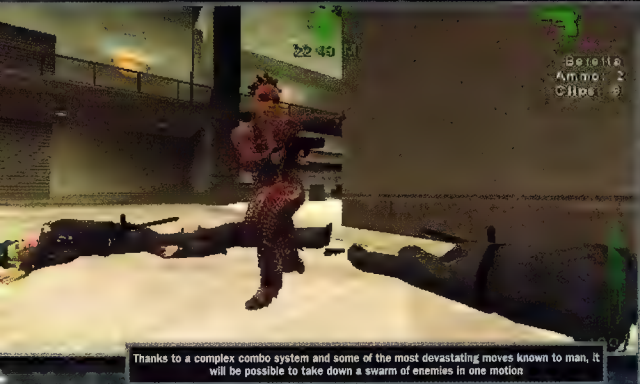
Ghost hones his skills in the Zen garden



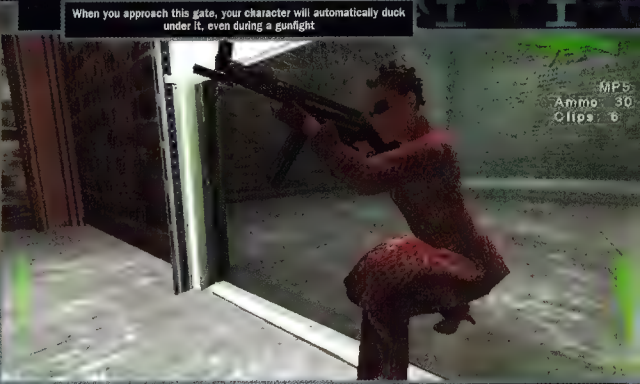
There will be several different ways to reaching new areas. Here, Niobe can either shimmy along this pipe, or hit the Focus meter and launch from the edge of the platform much like the building jumping from the first film



Stealth plays a large role in exploration. This includes sneaking quietly and leaning around corners



Thanks to a complex combo system and some of the most devastating moves known to man, it will be possible to take down a swarm of enemies in one motion.



When you approach this gate, your character will automatically duck under it, even during a gunfight.



The game will feature a wide variety of firearms, including a handful of prototype weapons.

As we mentioned earlier, the characters will be thrust into varied gameplay segments. At some point in the quest, you'll find yourself outside of the Matrix flying through the Earth's mantle in a hovercraft called the Logos. "It's a three person hovercraft and is the fastest one in the fleet," David adds. "In the movie, whenever they get into a tight bind, and they need to go save someone, get something, or get somewhere really fast, it's the Logos they choose to do it in."

The character you choose from the outset will determine what role you have in the flying segments. Since Niobe is the fastest pilot, she's the one who will control the movement of the vessel. Ghost, on the other hand, is the weapons guru, so he'll man the turrets. Niobe will race through the treacherous mechanical tunnels and past the Sentinel scourge, while Ghost will blow them away and keep them off of the ship. If they latch on, they'll try to drill their way in, just as you witnessed in the first film. Of course, you'll get to use your EMP too. All of the flying takes place within a first-person perspective and is accompanied by incredibly responsive controls. David

assures us, "When you thread the needle, it feels fantastic."

The same gameplay setup applies for the driving stages, where we find our heroes racing down a highly trafficked highway. "This is not a driving game," says David. "I have to keep saying that to the programmers. 'Stop trying to make it be like Driver. It shouldn't be like Test Drive. It shouldn't be like Gran Turismo. None of those things.' It's basically a roller coaster ride of getting to the hard line [the telephone that transports characters into and out of the Matrix] and everybody is trying to stop you. All you want to do is get to the hard line. So we've designed our cities so that you can drive through the cities averaging 90 mph as you're crossing the streets." The Agents and police will throw everything they can at you, and you'll find yourself performing outstanding stunts as you dodge their attacks. Once again, Niobe is at the wheel and Ghost commands the firepower.

The one aspect from the films that we never expected to see integrated into the game is hacking. You'll actually be able to dial into the Matrix coding and hack. What can you do with this perplexing gameplay mechanic? How does the ability

to download new types of kung-fu sound? You'll also be able to connect to the real world, write messages to characters, and uncover secrets and cheats. You can actually enter cheat codes directly into the hacking system. Shiny didn't want to comment too much on this element as of press time, so we're not entirely sure what gameplay functionality it will provide, but it definitely sounds interesting. You'll even have the ability to hack into your player profile for various undisclosed reasons.

If you want to take a break from the quest, Shiny has also included a dojo that can be used for sparring against a friend.

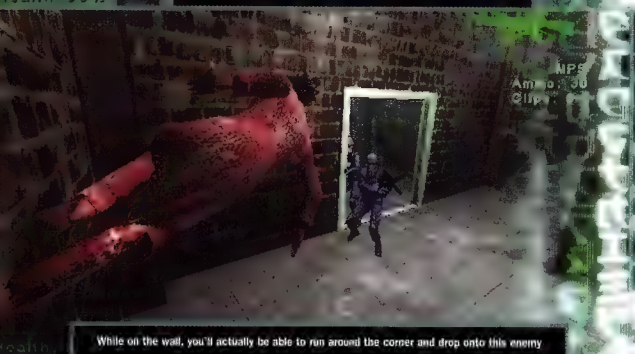
May 15 is still a long way away, but the game is already looking fantastic and we can't wait to see how it fares upon completion. We knew Shiny was working on a Matrix game, but we had no idea how big of a project it truly was. With a team of roughly 80 people, full support from the Wachowskis and one of the most highly revered gaming figures conducting this operation, it seems likely that Enter The Matrix will eclipse the success of the motion picture universe that it extends from.



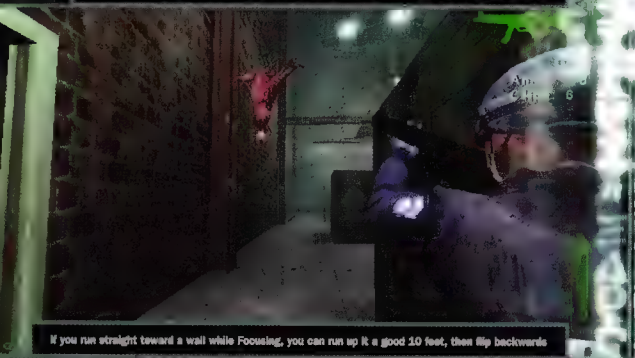
When you hit the Focus button, the game slows down significantly, and all of your actions (and enemy reactions) are exaggerated



"Do you gentlemen have a preference as to which way you will die?"



While on the wall, you'll actually be able to run around the corner and drop onto this enemy



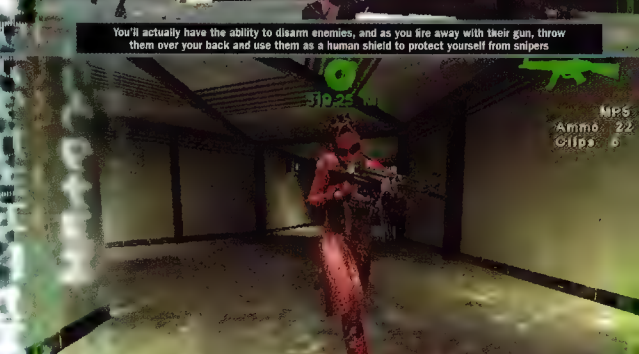
If you run straight toward a wall while Focusing, you can run up it a good 10 feet, then flip backwards



Niobe's roundhouse kick will shatter jaws and spin enemies like tops



You'll actually have the ability to disarm enemies, and as you fire away with their gun, throw them over your back and use them as a human shield to protect yourself from snipers



You'll be emptying rounds and dropping weapons left and right



Dynamic camera positioning accompanies every inch of gameplay



WE ARE
 THE NATION'S CHOSEN FEW.
 WE ARE SWIFT, SILENT, AND INVISIBLE.
 WE WILL NOT FAIL OUR COUNTRY.
 WE WILL NOT FAIL EACH OTHER.
 WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER
 WE FIGHT, SO THAT PEACE MAY REIGN.
 WE ARE THE GHOSTS.



SQUAD-BASED BATTLEFIELD COMBAT
 Command the Ghosts, an elite handful of specially-trained Green Berets, in a deadly, realistic campaign waged on the war-torn battlefields of tomorrow's headlines. Use cutting-edge gear and guns to lay waste to the enemy, or your multiplayer opponents. A total battlefield experience that only Tom Clancy and the makers of Rainbow Six can deliver.



Blood and Gore
 Violence



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PlayStation 2



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HOLIDAY SAM'S HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

I GOT THE SWAG
RIGHT HERE, BABY!!



"That's right, fools, Holiday Sam is back up in this for the two-double-oh-two! Whooptie whoop! It's been awhile since I hipped you slimy-toed tree monkeys to the Xmas game, but these boys at Game Informer begged me to come back and help you hopeless saps out of a pickle. I know many of you were wondering what ol' Holiday Sam has been up to since we last spoke. Well, suffice it to say that I've been in Honduras on business. I also spent some time in the Wisconsin Dells working as part of a water ski show, but my lawyers have advised me not to speak about that until the case is settled. Now, where was I? Oh yeah, I'm going to show you the best stuff to put on your Christmas list. Why, by the time we're done, you and I are going to be tighter than a thong in Louie Anderson's butt crack!"



PLAYSTATION 2



"Holiday Sam loves Grand Theft Auto III, so you know he's got a PlayStation 2! In fact, I've actually done time for grand theft auto, but I ain't talkin' about some sissy video

game!! Anyway, just to get these fancy-ass Game Informer dorks to quit calling me at all hours of the night, I'm gonna give you some of the best deals out there for PS2 this Xmas. Heck, these are almost as big of a bargain as smokes at an Indian casino."

Software Forecast

Sports

Medium Hot

With EA and Sega slugging it out, this might be the best year for sports ever

Hot picks: Madden NFL 2003, NBA 2K3, NHL 2K3

RPGs

Medium Hot

No system comes close to PS2 for hardcore RPG fans

Hot picks: Final Fantasy X, Suikoden III, Summoner 2

Action

Medium Hot

Sony's platformers are getting better and better, but GTA: Vice City is still number one

Hot Picks: Sly Cooper, GTA: Vice City, Red Faction II

Fighting

Cold Medium Hot

With exclusives like Tekken and Virtua Fighter, PS2 is the place to be for fighters

Hot Picks: Virtua Fighter 4, Tekken 4

Racing

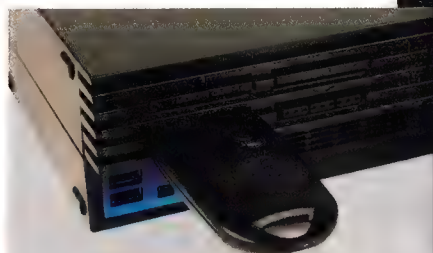
Cold Medium Hot

Gran Turismo 3 is still the champ, but Pro Race Driver is the first new blood in the genre for a while

Hot Picks: GT 3, Pro Race Driver, NASCAR Thunder 2003

Playstation 2 - \$199

Sony, the big kid on the video game block, is the only console maker not offering a bundle package this season. Then again, when you're number one, and have the all-powerful Grand Theft Auto franchise on your system, you don't have to try too hard to move units.



Mad Catz 900MHz Wireless Controller - \$34.99

Sick of your Nintendo friends bragging about their WaveBird? Get a piece of the wireless action straight from Mad Catz, one of the most respected third-party controller manufacturers in the business. Features a rechargeable battery good for eight hours of continuous use.

Greatest Hits Games - \$19.99

Sony's Greatest Hits series is probably the best deal in all of gaming, letting latecomers get a host of classic PS2 titles, like Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec, Onimusha, and Jak and Daxter for the paltry sum of \$19.99. It really doesn't get any better than this people, so go get 'em!



1



1 Linksys EtherFast Cable/DSL router - \$59.99

www.linksys.com

If you've just got your PS2 online, and want to manage both your computer and console on the same DSL or cable line, this Linksys router is a simple solution.

2 PSone - \$49.99

www.playstation.com

If your gaming budget is tight, don't forget that you can still get one of the best systems of all time, the PSone, for next to nothing. There are also a ton of great games available at cut-rate prices.

3 SOCOM: US Navy SEALs - \$59.99

www.playstation.com

If there is one game that is going to make you love console gaming online, this is it. SOCOM's amazing squad-based action, and the surprisingly cool functionality of the packed-in headset microphone should put this at the top of your list for Santa.

4 Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Soundtracks - \$13.99 (single CD), \$49.99 (box set)

www.rockstargames.com

Vice City's soundtrack is probably the best, most diverse collection of '80s music ever assembled, and Rockstar is releasing an unprecedented seven soundtrack CDs for your listening pleasure. The discs are divided by genre, and feature both tracks and assorted DJ chatter from the in-game radio stations.

5 PS2 Network Adaptor - \$39.99

www.playstation.com

With the first batch of Network Adaptors selling out in a matter of days, expect Sony's modem/broadband unit to be a hot ticket this holiday season.

6 Panasonic Triple Play TV/DVD/VCR Combo - \$799

website: www.panasonic.com

Sick of that tangle of cords behind your TV? This slick 27-incher has your DVD and VCR built right in. Just plug in your gaming rig, and you're ready to go.

2



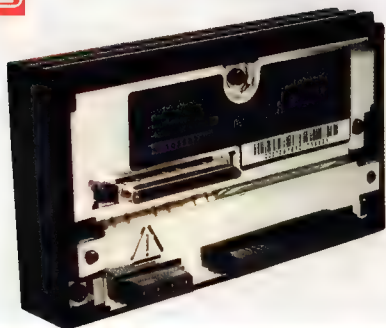
3



4 GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY O.S.T - VOLUME 7 : RADIO ESPANTOSO



5



6



"It's like the old saying says: You can lead a naked midget to water, but you can't make him wash your socks. What that means to me is that there is a hell of a lot of cool stuff to buy for Xbox this year, so you better give me some damn money!! Heh, heh, Holiday Sam is just kiddin', but he certainly wouldn't turn down your kind generosity. After all, you never look a gift horse in the butt, or let him give you a foot massage. Toothbrush!! Now, if you look at these pretty pictures, I'd be much obliged."

Software Forecast

Sports

Everything that PS2 has, except it looks better

Hot Picks: Madden NFL 2003, NBA 2K3, NHL 2K3

RPGs

Very slim pickings until Fable comes out

Hot Picks: Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

Action

Getting better, with some hot exclusives this season

Hot Picks: Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell, Metal Gear Solid: Substance

Fighting

Forget Bruce Lee ever happened, and hope that MK is the bomb

Hot Picks: Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance

Racing

All of them look great, but still missing that Gran Turismo-sized super hit

Hot Picks: Project Gotham Racing, NASCAR Thunder 2003, Sega GT 2003, Colin McRae Rally 3



Steel Battalion - \$199

Do you see this controller? See how big it is? If you love games, this should give you a boner (or a metaphorical boner, if you're a girl). It's very expensive, but Steel Battalion rocks and will make you the coolest person in the world if you own it. There aren't going to be many of these released, so buy it now or pay \$500 on eBay later. If you're not convinced, check out our review of the game on page 132.

1 Phonex NeverWire 14 Powerline Ethernet Bridge - \$249 www.phonex.com

This ingenious device allows you to use your home's power wires as broadband connections. Just plug one into your DSL/cable port, and the other into a power jack near your Xbox, and you're ready to roll.

2 Shiatsu Lounger - \$2595 www.panasonic.com

The ultimate video game chair? Perhaps. Combining contemporary styling and high-tech shiatsu wizardry, this Panasonic lounge will make your every dream come true. Yet another reason to invest in a colostomy bag.

3 Xbox Live Starter Kit - \$49.99 www.xboxlive.com

Game companies have been promising a console online revolution since the '80s, but Xbox Live might really make it a reality. If you don't want to be left out of the action, get wired for broadband, and pick up your Xbox Live Starter Kit.



RCA VPORT Televisions - \$349 - \$1499

Designed for the Xbox, these TVs feature HDTV compatibility and a component video in for optimum clarity. They even have a cool Xbox logo on them!

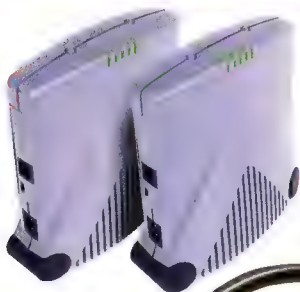
I LIKES IT FOR WATCHIN' NERKIP MOVIES!





Xbox Sega/Controller S Bundle - \$199

The already affordable Xbox just got even more appealing with the announcement of this wonderful bundle pack. Featuring not one, but two excellent Sega titles (Jet Set Radio Future and Sega GT 2002), plus the sleek Controller S – all for \$199, the normal cost of the console itself! A good deal for consumers, and a great way to make the plunge into the world of Xbox.





REIGN OF FIRE™

GAME BOY ADVANCE



PlayStation 2



Blood
Violence

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AND BEASTS ON THE GROUND
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AND MILITARY-STYLE VEHICLES.

GAMECUBE

"Hell, this little GameCube is smaller than some kidney stones I've passed, but that don't mean it won't tickle your fancy like a dime store floozy. If'n you want my advise, I'd stay away from that Mario fella - he looks like one o' them perverts to me with that funny mustache and the way he's always giggling like a schoolgirl. Then again, I've been a little off since I drank that bottle of nail polish remover. In fact, I think I'm going to have a seizure right now. See you around!"

Software Forecast

Sports

Cold Medium Hot

After years in the crapper, Nintendo is finally getting its share

Hot Picks: Sega Soccer Slam, All-Star Baseball 2003, Madden NFL 2003

RPGs

Cold Medium Hot

Not many, but they all kick Aidy'n Chronicles' ass

Hot Picks: Evolution Worlds, Lost Kingdoms

Action

Cold Medium Hot

Where Nintendo's big hitters come out to play

Hot Picks: Resident Evil 0, Super Mario Sunshine, Metroid Prime, Eternal Darkness

Fighting

Medium Hot

The controller's not the greatest for combos, but there are a few standouts

Hot Picks: Bloody Roar: Primal Fury, Super Smash Bros. Melee

Racing:

Medium Hot

We're still waiting for a big splash in this genre

Hot Picks: Burnout 2, Rally Fusion: Race of Champions, NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona



Super Mario Sunshine Bundle Pack - \$189.99

Nintendo is giving gamers a nice gift this Christmas in the form of the Super Mario Bundle Pack, which gives you a GameCube, one copy of SMS, and a Memory Card 59 all for \$189.99. That's a savings of \$25!! If you act now, Nintendo will throw in a free juicer!

GBA Link Cable - \$9.99

The GBA Link has been out for some time now, but Nintendo's cult hit Animal Crossing has made it a suddenly in-demand item, as fans use it to download four e-Reader exclusive NES games. With more GBA/GC cross-overs planned for upcoming releases, this will be must-buy in coming months.

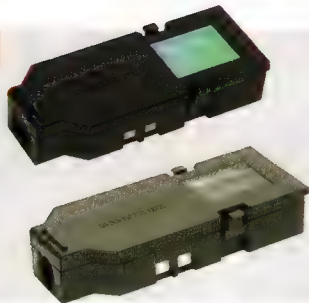




WaveBird controller - \$34.99

We haven't quit raving about this controller since we got ours a few months ago, which is probably why none of our friends talk to us anymore. It's their loss, because the WaveBird is simply the greatest aftermarket controller ever made. Using radio waves to transmit to the GameCube, the responsiveness and reliability is every bit the equal of the stock GameCube controller. We've literally played games from over a hundred feet away and had no problems, except for the fact that we were in another room and couldn't see the screen.

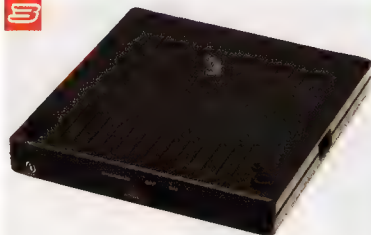
1



1 GameCube Mobile Monitor - \$99 www.interact.com

The GameCube's small size makes it the perfect choice for taking it on the road with you, and now you can, thanks to Interact and its 5.4" LCD screen attachment. For the price, it's a nice little addition to your GC collection.

2



2 Nintendo v90 Modem Adaptor, Broadband Adaptor - \$34.99 www.nintendo.com

Although Phantasy Star Online Version 2 is the only title that supports network play, you will be able to step up to the next big thing in gaming with either one of these GameCube modem units.

4



3 Mobile Power GC - \$49.99 www.interact.com

Couple this with the Mobile Monitor, and you've got yourself the world's most powerful portable. This rechargeable battery can run a GameCube and LCD screen for over 90 minutes of continuous play.

4 Animal Crossing e-Cards - \$2.99 www.nintendo.com

Animal Crossing addicts will be scooping up these cards like mad to unlock a host of secret in-game goodies. You'll need a GBA e-Reader to do it, but trust us, it will all be worth it.

You can't fight
what you can't see.



OVERWORKS™

臨兵闘者皆陣烈在前臨兵闘者皆陣烈在前臨



Shinobi

闖者皆陣亡



PlayStation 2



Blood and Gore
Violence

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PERSONAL COMPUTER

"Hey, peckerwoods! I don't waste my precious time hunting unicorns with a bunch of D&D nerds, but you fools probably think it's the greatest thing since frozen gravy. Well, this page has everything you need to be the cock o' the PC walk. Once you get up and running, I might have to come over and use your computer for a minute, if'n you don't mind. I've got to order some more herbal medicine for my cataracts. It's a terrible condition, I tell ya. Now gimme five dollars, ya stork-porkin' tiddywink!!!"

Software Forecast

Strategy

PC is the place where intellectual gaming reigns

Hot Picks: WarCraft III, Medieval: Total War, Stronghold: Crusader

RPGs

Get your RPG on in number of different worlds

Hot Picks: EverQuest: Planes of Power, Icewind Dale II, The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

Action

If you're serious about first-person shooters, you need a PC

Hot Picks: Unreal Tournament 2003, No One Lives Forever 2, Medal of Honor: Allied Assault

Simulation

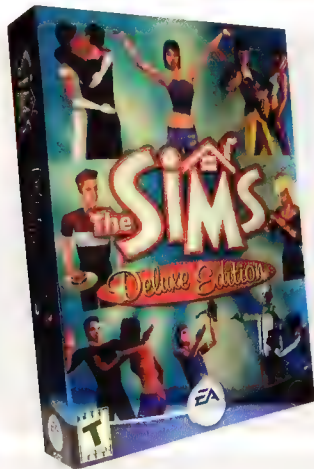
The Sims Online will change everything you thought about gaming

Hot Picks: The Sims Online, Sim City 4, RollerCoaster Tycoon 2



Alienware PC - \$1160-2951

For many of you, the PC isn't used for balancing your checkbook or ordering groceries online - it's just a really expensive gaming rig. So, why get bogged down with all that crap that Dell and Gateway pack into their computers? Alienware, a long-time favorite of hardcore gamers, will outfit you with a custom system built to spec. Of course, you'll want to fork over the cash for the latest Pentium 4 2.8GHz processor and the GeForce 4 while you're at it. Thankfully, the cool futuristic look comes standard.



1 The Sims Deluxe – \$39.95
www.thesims.com

If you've never played the Sims before, this is a great way to start. Features the original game, the Livin' Large expansion, exclusive items and clothing, and a character editor.

2 Nostromo SpeedPad – \$34.95
www.belkin.com

Looking to ditch your clunky keyboard? The Nostromo SpeedPad features 10 programmable keys, a d-pad, and throttle wheel. Perfect for FPS fans everywhere.

3 SonicXS 2.1 Speakers – \$189
www.electrovoice.com

Electro-Voice has been making PA gear for years, and their PC systems pump out decibel levels worthy of the Scorpions themselves. Plus, they are big, black, and tough-looking.

4 Multisync FE 1250+ – \$599
www.necmitsubishi.com

LCD flat-screens have been the hot ticket over the past few years, but unless you're willing to shell out upwards of two grand on one, most people would still be better off investing in a high-quality CRT monitor like NEC's Multisync FE 1250+, which, at \$599, is one of the best values in the world of monitors.

Age of Mythology Collector's Ed. – \$69.99
www.ageofmythology.com

This oversized package will include a soundtrack CD, six posters featuring the game's most important Gods, a "Making Of" DVD, and a minotaur figurine! Woo-hoo!

5 GeForce4 Ti 4600 – \$291
www.nvidia.com

The NVIDIA GeForce4 Ti 4600 is the most powerful card yet in the famous series. Screw the tech specs; let's put it this way: It can do a lot of everything you want really f^&*ing fast!

6 High Performance Mice – \$49.95-\$79.95
www.logitech.com

Super-accurate, these babies will change the way you point and click forever. Feature two thumb switches, as well as a programmable toggle button. Comes in both standard and cordless models.



GAME BOY ADVANCE

"This cute 'lil bugger is near and dear to old Holiday Sam's heart. Why, if you want to take my Game Boy Advance, you're going to have to pry it out of my cold, dead hands. Did I mention that the moon landing was faked? [cough] Aaanyway, this pint-sized contraption is perfect for my on-the-go lifestyle, especially since I am currently not, shall we say, in a 'permanent housing situation.' Unless you count the trunk of that Cadillac Eldorado on Lincoln Street. If you ask me, size don't matter a bit, and the GBA is the proof in that puddin'. This is the end of the road for Holiday Sam, so until next year, remember to keep both feet on the ground and shut the hell up. Noell!"

Software Forecast

Puzzle

Handhelds, and long flights, are made for puzzle games

Hot Picks: ZooCube, Egg Mania, Tetris Worlds

RPGs:

There aren't a lot, but the overall quality is very high

Hot Picks: Breath of Fire II, Golden Sun, Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis

Action

Classic ports and some great new titles make this the GBA's strong suit

Hot Picks: Doom II, Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island, Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance

Racing

The GBA isn't ideal for racing, but there are a few gems

Hot Picks: Mario Kart: Super Circuit, Spy Hunter, Driver 2 Advance, F-Zero: Maximum Velocity



1 Mad Catz Power Station - \$19.99

www.madcatz.com

The GBA does have improved battery life over its predecessor, but it's still not a cheap proposition to keep buying new ones. For a mere 20 spot, you can have the Mad Catz Power Station, which features two rechargeable battery packs and a charging base that keeps your GBA at full power 24-7.



2 NES e-Card Games - \$4.99

www.nintendo.com

Nintendo is to be commended for turning their old games into gold through endless rereleasing and repackaging, but the company's new line of NES e-Cards has to be its best idea yet. Just slide 'em through the e-Reader, and you'll be playing a classic 8-bit title. Even better, the low cost of production means that the cards are only five5 bucks a pop!



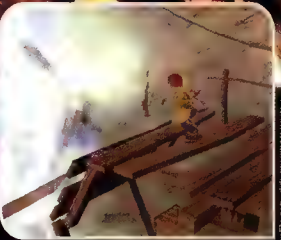
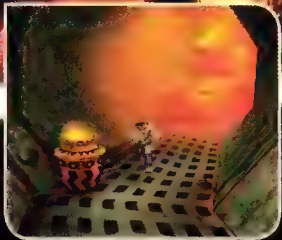
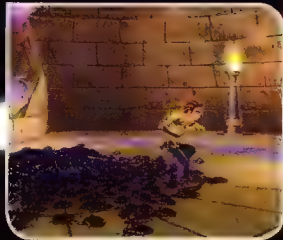
Nintendo e-Reader - \$44.95

While we initially believed that this peripheral would go the way of such ill-fated products as the Game Boy Color Printer, the GBA e-Reader is fast becoming a staple of our gaming life. We already told you it can help you get new Animal Crossing goodies, but we're also hearing rumors that many more upcoming Nintendo titles, like Pokémon Sapphire and Ruby will use e-Card compatibility. Given how creative Nintendo can be, the sky's the limit for the uses of this bad boy.



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GAME BOY ADVANCE

PlayStation 2



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RARE JUMPS FROM THE CUBE TO THE BOX



In September, Microsoft announced that it had acquired a British game developer called Rare, Ltd. (also known as Rareware). In gaming circles, this wasn't just big news; it was huge. This wasn't just Britney leaving Justin who then left N-SYNC, this was more like Mick dropping out of the Rolling Stones.

Rare wasn't just any development house, it was Nintendo's chief second-party development house. Rare was the company that enabled Nintendo to ultimately triumph over Sega in the 16-bit wars. Microsoft didn't just buy Rare; it bought Rare from Nintendo. When the company that made Donkey Kong Country and GoldenEye 007 jumps from GameCube to Xbox, big changes are bound to follow.

A RARE BREED OF DEVELOPER

Founded by Chris and Tim Stamper, of Warwickshire, England, and a Miami businessman named Joel Hochberg, Rare, Ltd. first coiled up to Nintendo in the mid-eighties, even before the Famicom was introduced in the United States as the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES).

A former child prodigy with an uncanny knack for technology, Chris Stamper reverse-engineered the Famicom and discovered that it could run split screen games, an ability Nintendo had not purposely built into the system. Nintendo of America president Minoru Arakawa was so impressed that he commissioned Rare to develop games for his company. Rare's first NES game, and the first NES game to feature a split screen mode, was Slalom.

Nintendo was not the only company to hire Rare's services during the days of the NES. The up-and-coming developer made Iron Sword and WrestleMania for Acclaim, Marble Madness for Milton Bradley, and John Elway Football for Tradewest. The Battletoads franchise Rare licensed to Tradewest was such a hit that Electronic Arts commissioned Rare to make an arcade game based on it. Battletoads was EA's first arcade game. In all, the company created more than 60 games for the NES, but the Rare/Nintendo partnership was destined for bigger things.

Between 1992 and 1993, Chris Stamper dissected the Super NES and discovered that it could run rendered graphics. Armed with this innovative new technique, Tim (Rare's creative visionary) asked Nintendo for permission to revive a classic arcade character; and in 1994, Rare delivered Donkey Kong Country.

Donkey Kong Country's groundbreaking visuals brought players back to Nintendo, giving Super NES an edge over Genesis and permanently slamming the door on the Atari Jaguar and 3DO Interactive Multiplayer. Nintendo sold 8 million copies of Donkey Kong Country, making it the third best-selling Super NES game of all time, behind Super Mario World and Mario All-Stars — both pack-in games. It was also the best-selling foreign-made adventure game ever released in Japan. For this success, Nintendo rewarded Rare by purchasing a small stake in the company.

Rare's next big bang was the genre-defining first-person shooter GoldenEye 007 for Nintendo 64. Like Donkey Kong Country, GoldenEye 007 was the third best-selling game of its generation—this time behind Super Mario 64 and Mario

Kart 64. Nintendo responded by upping its investment in Rare in 1997. By 1999, Nintendo held a 49 percent stake in Rare. But the Nintendo relationship was bound to go the way of Lucy and Desi, Sonny and Cher, and Ellen and Anne.

THE GREAT DIVORCE

"We came to a point at which we felt that we needed Nintendo to buy us out in order for us to do what they wanted us to do," says Joel Hochberg.

And what point was that? Rare had long stopped making games for systems other than Nintendo consoles in 1986, and stopped making games for any publisher other than Nintendo in 1994. Having released Diddy Kong Racing, Blast Corps, Killer Instinct Gold, GoldenEye 007, Jet Force Gemini, Banjo-Kazooie, Donkey Kong 64, and Perfect Dark, Rare played a huge role throughout the Nintendo 64 period.

However, by last winter, rumors started surfacing that a split was in the works between Rare and Nintendo.

"Nintendo had the opportunity to purchase Rare," says Hochberg. "At the time when the transaction could have taken place, they came to us with a restructured deal that we rejected."

"It [the decision not to buy Rare] came out of the perception of price versus value," says George Harrison, Nintendo of America senior vice president of marketing and communications. "Rare has done some of the greatest games that we have seen on our systems, but the value wasn't there in the view of NCL (Nintendo's Japanese headquarters). They believed that they could take that money and do development deals elsewhere."

At one time or another, Sony, Activision, THQ, and several other publishers were said to be eyeing Rare.

The final suitor turned out to be Microsoft, purchasing Rare for \$375 million. At a price like that, Rare was probably too expensive for anyone but Sony or Microsoft. By comparison, Microsoft is rumored to have paid only \$25 million for Bungie, the creators of the massive hit Halo. On September 23, at an event held in Seville, Spain, the Stamper brothers and Microsoft executives announced that Microsoft had acquired Rare.

Even before the deal was officially announced, however, Nintendo sought to position itself as better off without Rare. In a press release, Nintendo claimed that sales of Rare-developed games only accounted for 9.5 percent of its overall sales in 2000 and 1.5 percent of its sales in 2001.

"That in itself is very telling," says Harrison. "If you look at Rare sales from the TRST data for 2001, it's a fairly small number."

That number is true, but a bit misleading. What this statistic does not reflect was that Rare had yet to release a game for any current Nintendo hardware system. That 1.5 percent of Nintendo sales was based on games for N64 (which had not been a viable platform for some time) and Game Boy Color. Star Fox Adventures, Rare's first foray on

Photo courtesy of RePlay Magazine



Joel Hochberg in the arcade heyday

To celebrate partnering with Microsoft, Rare created a fairly amusing video that featured cameos by its biggest stars. The most notable being Conker, who marked his territory on the Xbox logo. The video can be viewed at www.rareware.com





GameCube, was released shortly after the Microsoft announcement.

Another point of conflict between the two companies came over Rare's propensity towards missing developmental deadlines, which has frequently resulted in its games being delayed.

"There have been gaps in the development stream as well," explains Harrison.

Nobody is arguing the point, as Rare has a terrible reputation for missing deadlines, but Joel Hochberg simply feels that any delays can be attributed to the company's perfectionism and commitment to quality.

"Maybe we haven't been the most punctual," says Hochberg, "but our games were certainly the best when we got them to the marketplace."

This is a good point, and

with his company averaging an astronomical 1.4 million copies sold for every game released, its sales record, and the overall quality of its products, Rare is almost unparalleled.

But punctuality may still be a question. In the press release issued to announce the Rare acquisition, Microsoft stated that Rare would release five games in the next two years. When asked about this in an exclusive telephone interview with Game Informer, however, the Stammers seemed at a loss for words.

"I don't think they saw that part of the press release," joked Ed Fries, Microsoft vice president of Xbox game content.

"Kameo will be out next year," Chris Stammer told Game Informer. "Obviously we have some things to learn about the Xbox. We are at an early stage. Kameo will be our first game. We're not exactly sure what game will follow that, but we do have five games that are at various stages of development."

Can Rare meet the high expectations of its new corporate leadership? Microsoft's ambitious plans will likely present a challenge to the Stammers and their staff, but one should never bet against a development house with such a storied tradition and strong internal talent. If Rare can put out games on a more regular basis, there is every indication that this new partnership will be tremendously beneficial for both parties.

THE RARE FIT

Rare excels in making action/adventure games and those for family audiences. Appropriately, Microsoft, which has focused on older audiences in its Xbox marketing efforts, has thus far been weak in these very same market sectors. Microsoft did publish the disappointing *Azurik: Rise of Peratha* in 2001; but, not surprisingly, company spokespeople do not like to speak about that particular title.

"It's all about great games," says Tim Stammer. "If you want to compete in the marketplace, you have to expand the appeal of the types of games you're producing. I think that is where Rare comes in."

If this is in fact Microsoft's goal, Rare is a perfect fit. Still, Microsoft contends that its acquisition of Rare is not motivated by a need to reach any particular demographic, but rather a desire to work with the best and brightest in world of gaming.

"I think that [Rare filling the family gap] is one of the benefits, but it's not why we set out to do this [buy Rare]," says Fries. "That is not why I am excited about it. I'm excited about it because Rare is one of the best game developers in the world. The chance to team up with them and bring their games to the platform is just a huge opportunity."

One would be hard-pressed to disagree with Fries. Along with 200 employees and a winning track record, Rare owns the rights to

several successful game franchises. While Nintendo will retain *Star Fox* and *Donkey Kong*, as well as Rare-created sidekicks such as *Diddy Kong*, Rare will leave with the rights to a good stable of franchises and characters.

"We kept [the rights to] *Killer Instinct*, *Banjo-Kazooie*, *Conker*, and a number of other character sets that were not a part of Nintendo," says Hochberg. "That includes *Battletroads*, *Blast Corps*, and *Perfect Dark*."

"If you look at the history of Rare over the last few years, it has been a big thrust with Rare to develop unique character franchises that they could own," says Nintendo's Harrison. "Microsoft is acting the way that they need to. They do not have a big internal development group. From the start, they recognized that they needed to go out and secure an outside development force."

Buying Rare is a good step in that direction for the Seattle software giant. After all, *Banjo* and *Kazooie* may not be the world's most popular game characters, but they have more fans than *Azurik*.

With new ownership, a new console to develop for, and a new outlook on life, things are changing at Rare. This is true in the front office as well. After nearly 20 years with Rare, Joel Hochberg plans to take a less-active role in the company.

One thing isn't changing, however. Rare is still making games for Game Boy Advance. Microsoft does not view Game Boy Advance as a rival system, and Rare has great expertise developing games for Nintendo's handheld systems – including *Diddy Kong Pilot* and *Coconut Crackers* which were already underway before the Microsoft deal went down.

In the meantime, Chris Stammer and other Rare engineers have begun dissecting Xbox in an effort to find the kinds of technical secrets that gave them such an advantage with NES and Super NES.

"It's very early yet," says Chris Stammer. "We've had the Xbox development kits for about two-and-a-half weeks; but yes, I believe that we can [discover new abilities]. Our initial experience has been fantastic. The whole level of support is far greater than on any platform that we have ever worked on, and the capability of the machine is just amazing."

"The Xbox is the easiest platform to develop for, for a number of reasons," adds Rare software director Mark Betteridge. "The hardware is easy to program. The main reason is the completeness of all of the tools that we received from Microsoft and the level of support that we've had from Microsoft."

If nothing else, the Rare/Microsoft deal answers the questions many had regarding two interesting events that occurred last May at the Electronic Entertainment Expo. First, in an effort to demonstrate its commitment to Xbox, Microsoft announced plans to spend \$2 billion over the next two years developing its console business.

At the same time, Nintendo, which had announced several Rare projects for GameCube, only showed *Star Fox Adventure* at its booth, causing many industry insiders to wonder what had become of highly-anticipated properties like *Kameo: Elements of Power* and *Perfect Dark Zero*. In one watershed move, both questions have been answered. Now the industry knows where the missing GameCube games have gone, and what Microsoft intended to do with its money. In the coming months, all eyes will be on Microsoft and Rare, hoping to see what further history the two companies will make together.



(left to right): Chris Stammer, Ed Fries, Tim Stammer, and Sandy Duncan at Xo2, in Seville, Spain

Article by Steven L. Kent, a veteran game journalist, columnist for msnb.com, and the author of *The Ultimate History of Video Games*

So you think you're pretty hot stuff, do ya? You think you've got what it takes to trade in that geek uniform? If you're holding this magazine, chances are you're probably doomed already – but we've got faith in you, kid. Give this bad-boy a once over, and see how you do. You might come out on the other end with more studly swagger than Tom Jones, but then again, your nerdiest fears may be realized. Don't be shy – take the test; it's not like anyone's looking. Or maybe we are! You can forget about that date to Sadie Hawkins, bub! Hee-hee-heeee!!

YO! GOT A 2-BOLT MAIN CHEVY 350 BORED .030 OVER, WITH A GM BLOWER AND DUAL CARBS MAN! AND MY CHICK IS SO HOT, TOO!

$A^2 + B^2 = C^2$ THE SQUARE OF THE HYPOTENUSE OF A RIGHT TRIANGLE IS EQUAL TO THE SUM OF THE SQUARES OF THE TWO OTHER SIDES!

DUDE
(COOLUS
STUDLEUS
DUDUS)

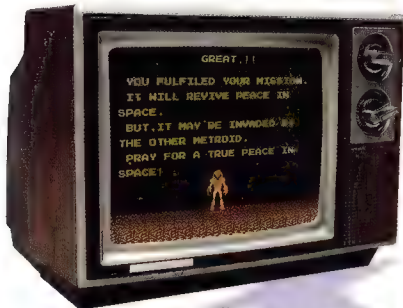
DUDE
OR
DWEEB?

REDUX

DWEEB
(DWEEBUS DORKUS
MALORKUS)
AKA: NERD

ARE YOU STILL A NERD?

1 Have you ever taken a picture of your TV screen to prove that you got a certain score, or beat a boss in a game?



2 What is the longest you've played a game in one sitting?

- 0-4 hours
- 11-15 hours
- 5-10 hours
- 16 and over



3 What games are these quotes from?

- "Our princess is in another castle!"
- "Rise from you grave"
- "The meat-locker is infested with gerbils"
- "Don't open that door!"
- "Boom! He's on his back!"



4 Have you ever imported a game from Japan?



5 Who do you idolize?



- A popular video game personality
- A celebrity (actor, musician, etc.)
- A relative
- A political leader
- Joseph of Arimathea

6 Which of the following best describes a typical evening hanging out with your friends?



- Ordering pizza and huddling around the TV as you play vids all night long
- Throwing back a few brewskies as you work on your Camaro
- Sitting around the kitchen table creating new Dungeons & Dragons characters
- Going to a club and partying it up

7 Is the love of your life a hardcore gamer? If so, would you consider them good looking?



8 Has video game music inspired you to...

- Hum a song unconsciously
- Purchase a game's soundtrack
- Hire a band you heard to play at your wedding
- Form a cover band that tours the nation and rocks out nonstop, bay-beeee!



9 The PlayStation 3 is about to hit the streets. What preparations do you make to ensure that this powerful new machine is in your hands on day one?

- Camp out overnight in front of the store
- Reserve it in advance and head to the store at your leisure
- Take your chances on day one
- Order it over the Internet and hope that it arrives on time and in one piece
- You wouldn't make any preparations because you are loyal to only Nintendo or Microsoft and would never taint your gaming experience with a stupid PlayStation 3

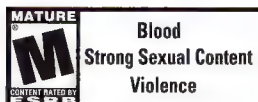




HUNT FOR THE THRILL



O U T N O W



PlayStation 2



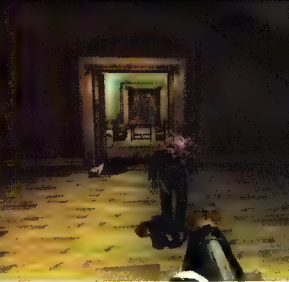
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PAID FOR THE KILL

PICK UP FIBER WIRE

TAKE CLOTHES
DRAG



 io-Interactive
HITMAN2.COM

HITMAN 2

SILENT ASSASSIN

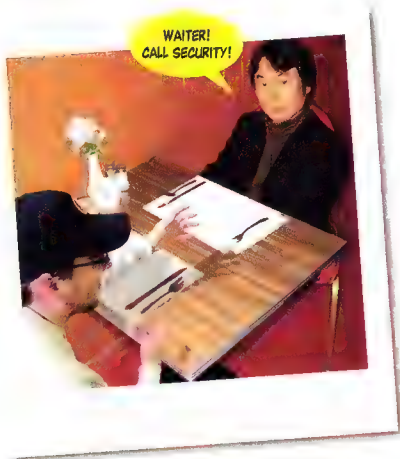
EIDOS
INTERACTIVE



10 Who is this?

11 You run into Shigeru Miyamoto at a local restaurant. What do you do?

- Shake his hand, praise his work, and offer a sincere thank you
- Express your displeasure for the new Zelda art style, and angrily tell him to get his head out of his garden and make good games again
- Become strangely aroused
- Tell him that Sonic is the best game ever!!!
- Do nothing



12 Where do you live?

- In your very own house
- In an apartment
- In a dorm
- In your parent's basement



13 How do you openly express your love for a video game?

- Talk about its brilliance, and recommend it to everyone
- Create a fan site
- Dress like your favorite character for Halloween
- Include it in your prayer at Thanksgiving
- Get a tattoo to immortalize it forever



16 Which one of these situations would make you quit playing video games?

- Someone offers you eternal wealth on the condition you give up video games forever
- Research reveals that gaming causes brain cancer in 99% of the population
- To alleviate the weight problem of the nation, the government mandates that you cannot play games until you complete a marathon
- The only games released are based on the Army Men license



AAAAH... UMM... HELLO GAME INFORMER? UMM... I WAS WONDERING... YOU KNOW THAT GAME? AHHH... WHERE THE GUY DOES THAT THING WITH THE THING...

14 If you could ask a Game Informer editor one question, what would it be?



15 How many hours have you invested into a massively multiplayer online RPG?

- Never played one
- Between 1 and 50
- Between 51 and 900
- Over 8,760 (one full year)



17 At some point, every gamer aspires to create their very own game. What actions have you taken in pursuing this dream?

- Thought about it but didn't do anything more
- Jotted down some notes and designed a couple of characters on a piece of paper
- Penned an entire script, created an entire universe, and mapped out how the gameplay would work on a controller
- Created a simplistic game on your computer
- Actually went to school for programming, and sought out a video game position within the industry
- Wrote an angry letter to a developer proclaiming that its game sucks and yours would be so much better

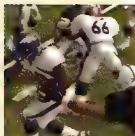


18 If you logged onto eBay, what would you be shopping for?

- Marky Mark's unreleased bootleg club single "Dude, Man. Dude!"
- A Scarlett O'Hara collector's plate
- A DeLorean
- Rare video games
- Characters, items, and weapons for your favorite massively multiplayer online role-playing game
- Something else



20 Have you ever simulated a sports game for gambling purposes?



21 Do you buy gifts for your significant other to cover up for the fact that you're not going to spend time with them, but rather play vids by your lonesome?

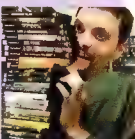


22 What is your greatest athletic accomplishment?



- Playing tee-ball
- Participating in high school sports
- Winning the Super Bowl in Madden
- Getting out of bed

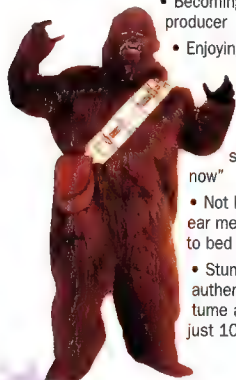
23 How many games do you currently own?



- 0
- 1 to 20
- 21 to 40
- 41 to 80
- 81 and higher

19 On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the least and 10 being the most, which of these scenarios do you find the most exciting?

- Becoming a video game producer
- Enjoying a nice café latte at Starbucks
- Hearing someone that you find incredibly attractive say "I want you now"
- Not having to take your ear medicine when you go to bed at night
- Stumbling across an authentic Chewbacca costume at a garage sale for just 10 dollars



24 What do you see?



25 Who are these video game personalities?



SCORING NERDOMETER!

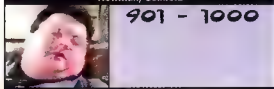
Garth, Wyatt, and Max/Weird Science

1000+



Newman/Seinfeld

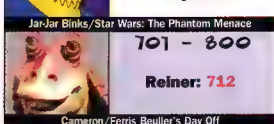
901 - 1000



Comic Book Guy/The Simpsons

801 - 900

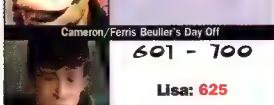
Chet: 825!!!!
Andy: 818



Jar-Jar Binks/Star Wars: The Phantom Menace

701 - 800

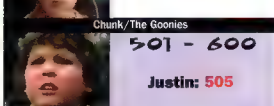
Reiner: 712



Cameron/Ferris: Bullseye's Day Off

601 - 700

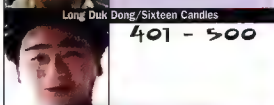
Lisa: 625



Chunk/The Goonies

501 - 600

Justin: 505



Long Duk Dong/Sixteen Candles

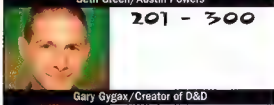
401 - 500



McCaulley Cullin/Home Alone

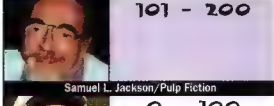
301 - 400

Matt: 378
Kato: 375
Kristian: 338



Seth Green/Austin Powers

201 - 300



Gary Gygax/Creator of D&D

101 - 200



Samuel L. Jackson/Pulp Fiction

0 - 100

Don't look at this page... unless you've already finished the quiz. How does this scoring system work? It's simple really, just tally up all of the points on this scoring meter to see how high your rate on the Nerdometer. This scale shows how big of a dork...er... gamer you really are. If you always felt that the GI staff wasn't nearly as studly as you are, we forced every editor to take the quiz as well so that you can compare and contrast numbers. Enjoy!

Question 1

If you answered Yes: 25 points. Give yourself an extra 10 if you actually send them to the developer of the game, and another 30 if you do it for every game that you play.

- No, but wish you had: 10 points
- No: 0 points

Question 2

• 0-4 hours: 5 points
• 5-10 hours: 15 points
• 11-15 hours: 30 points
• 16 and over: 50 points
• Give yourself an extra 10 points if you went without food or drink during this time, another 10 if didn't use the bathroom, and 50 if you went to the bathroom, but never left your chair.

Question 3

Score the following for each correct answer.

- Super Mario Bros.: 10 points
- Altered Beast: 5 points
- You realized this quote is made up: 20 points. Give yourself an extra 30 points if you spent more than five minutes figuring this out.
- Resident Evil: 25 points
- Madden NFL Football: 30 points

Question 4

• No, but if I knew how I would: 10 points
• No way! Karji scares me... English or bust!: 2 points
• Of course! 40 points. Give yourself another 50 if you imported a horseracing RPG, and an additional 75 if you learned Japanese for the soul purpose of gaming.

Question 5

• If you said Peter Molyneux or Will Wright: 25 points
• If you said Steven Spielberg subtract 10. If you said anyone else: 20 points
• A celebrity: 10 points. Give yourself another 20 if you said Jesse Camp. Remove 10 for Carson Daly.
• Someone of relation: 15 points
• A political leader: 5 points
• Joseph of Arimathea: 5 points. Go ahead and give yourself another 20 if you actually know who he is.
• If you chose Alf: 100 points.

Question 6

• Games and pizza: 30 points
• Fixin' the car: 1 point. Add 5 more if you do so in a wife-beater.
• Role-playing fest: 50 points
• If you chose this you are a liar! Add 70 points for being an even bigger geek who would lie about something like this!

Question 7

• I don't have a significant other - That's what lotion's for!: 60 points
• If they are a hardcore gamer, and you've faced the truth: 10 points
• If they are a hardcore gamer, and you're still telling yourself that you can stomach their presence: 30 points
• If they're not a hardcore gamer, and they're hot: 0 points
• If they're not a hardcore game, and they're downright ugly (what are you doing?): 5 points

Question 8

- For humming: 5 points
- Spending money on beats: 30 points
- Prelude to an annulment: 45 points
- Big time tour: 65 points

Question 9

- If you would camp out: 40 points
- Reserve it in advance: 20 points
- Take your chances: 5 points
- Order it over the Internet: 1 point
- There can be only one: 30 points

Question 10

The correct answer is Richard Garriott, a.k.a. Lord British. Score 40 points if you knew this. Give yourself 20 if you thought it was one of the Monty Python cast from the Holy Grail. Give yourself 70 more if you dress like this every day.

Question 11

- Being respectful: 15 points
- Cel-da sucks!: 10 points (it shows you care!)
- Schwing!: 25 points
- Sonic is a Yuji Naka game you meathed!: Subtract 20 points and slap yourself for being stupid!
- Shigeru who? Subtract 10 points

Question 12

- Your very own digs: 1 point
- In an apartment: 5 points
- In a dorm: 7 points
- In your parents' basement: 70 points

Question 13

- If you would talk about it until you were blue in the face: 5 points
- Create a fan site: 25 points
- Cross-dress, using Halloween as a convenient excuse: 20 points
- Ruin Thanksgiving: 30 points
- Scar your body: 100 points

Question 14

- Why did you score [insert game here] so low? It should have gotten .25 better than that!: 50 points
- Are you hring?: 30 points
- Why are you so biased against [insert favorite system here]? You guys suck!: 60 points
- It's my birthday, will you send me a free game?: 40 points. And no, we won't.

Question 15

- If you never played one: 0 points
- Between 1 and 50: 10 points
- Between 51 and 900: 30 points
- Over a year: 100 points (You deserve it...nerd!)

Question 16

- I'll take the money and run, baby!: 5 points
- I treat my body like a temple: 10 points
- Slim and gaming is better than fat and bored: 20 points
- Screw those little green, people!!: 30 points
- If none of these would make you quit, you truly are hardcore, give yourself 80 points. If you wanted to choose more than one, subtract 20 points.

Question 17

- Thought about it: 5 points
- Jotted down notes: 25 points
- You went to the extreme and mapped out everything: 50 points
- Created a game on your computer: 60 points
- If you actually went to school: 100 points
- Made an ass out of yourself for the developer's amusement: 15 points

Question 18

- Marky Mark's bootleg single "Dude, Man. Dude!": 5 points

- A Scarlett O'Hara collector's plate: 2 points
- A DeLorean: 10 points
- Rare video games: 25 points
- Characters, items, and weapons for your favorite massively multiplayer online role-playing game: 40 points
- I march to my own drummer!: 5 points

Question 19

Add up the ratings you gave everything and that's your score for this question. That is, unless you rated the "I want you now" choice less than a 10. If this is the case, give yourself an extra 100 points.

Question 20

- If you answered Yes: 35 points. If you actually made money off of it, give yourself another 10 points.
- If you answered No: 0 points for having common sense.
- If this question gave you a great idea for next Sunday's football games: 10 points

Question 21

- If your answer is Yes: 75 points. However, let it be noted that we don't really condone this kind of behavior, but if it works...booyah!!!
- If your answer is No, but have other techniques for getting rid of your loved one for game time: 50 points
- If you would never do such a callous and mean-spirited thing, but have thought about it: 5 points
- Never in a lifetime, bub!: 0 points

Question 22

- Tee-ball: 1 point
- Participating in high school sports: 5 points.
- Give yourself 10 more if it was just to fulfill your athletic requirement.
- Winning the Super Bowl in Madden: 25 points
- Getting out of bed: 50 points

Question 23

- 0: 0 points
- 1 to 20: 5 points
- 21 to 40: 20 points
- 41 to 80: 35 points
- 81 and higher: 50 points

Question 24

- Someone with a Game Boy Advance in his pocket: 20 points
- A gentleman sporting a pair of denim slacks: 5 points
- You're too embarrassed to say and are currently questioning your sexuality: 10 points
- A small mustard stain near the zipper region: 5 points

Question 25

Score the following for each correct answer.

- E) Mork Chief from Halo: 5 points
- D) Dirk the Daring from Dragon's Lair: 10 points
- C) Haunter from Pokémon: 15 points
- B) Dixie from Donkey Kong Country 2: 30 points
- F) Barret from Final Fantasy VII: 40 points
- A) Zool from Zool: 65 points, he's the ninja of the "nth" dimension, man!!!

Bonus Points

- If you looked ahead to the scoring section to adjust your final score: 15 points
- If you truly believe that adjusting your score will make you look cooler: 20 points
- If you had to use a calculator to add up your points: Subtract 10 points
- If you're related to any of the people on the Nerdometer: 45 points
- If you found the quiz offensive at any time: 20 points
- If your significant other scores higher than you do and he or she is not a gamer: 50 points

GET READY TO RUBBLE



There's a new fight in town and this time it's huge. Take command of 120ft. tall, fully armored, fully loaded Meganites and stop the apocalyptic Vorgara invasion from rampaging through our cities. If that means you have to knock down a few buildings and crush some pedestrians, well, such is the price of victory. We didn't say it would be easy to save the world, but hey, nothing ever is.



ROAD

ROBOT ALCHEMIC DRIVE



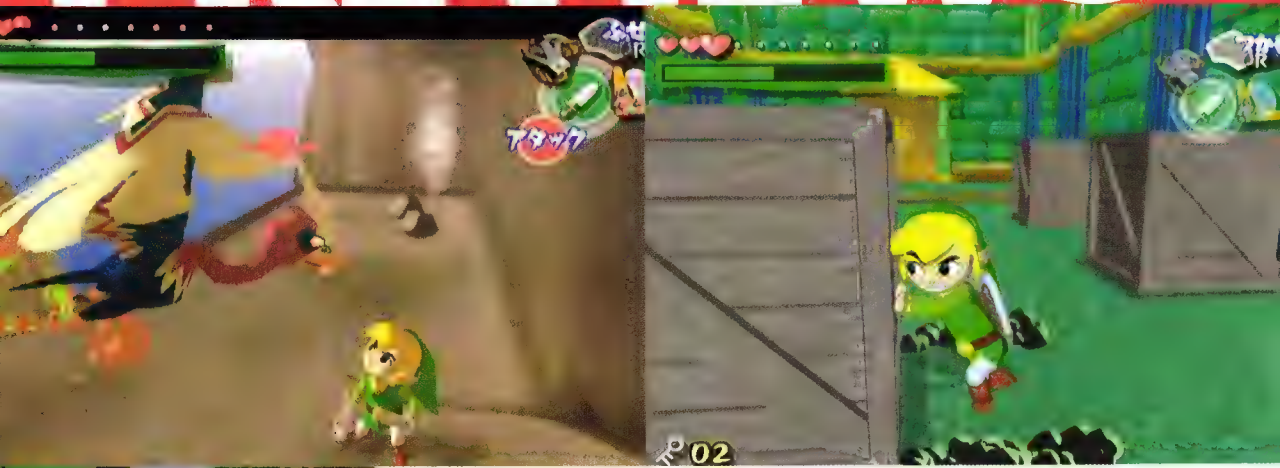
Blood
Violence



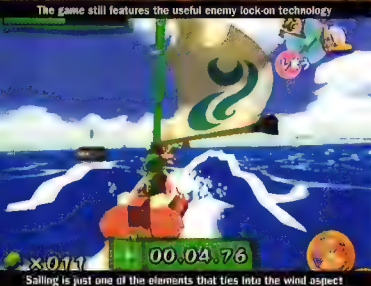
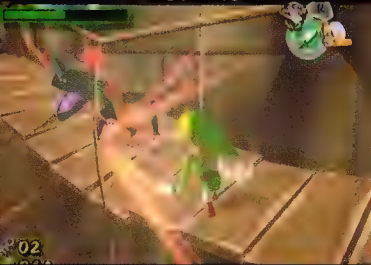
PlayStation 2



PREVIEWS



At times, you'll have to do everything in your power to avoid being spotted by guards



Sailing is just one of the elements that ties into the wind aspect

GAMECUBE

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

NINTENDO'S SYSTEM LINK

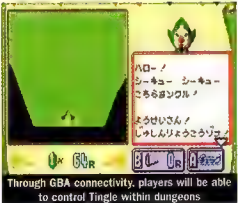
You never really think about it, but ever since A Link to the Past, all of the Zelda games have been gimmick driven. For instance, The Ocarina of Time's most important gameplay aspect revolved solely around Link's ability to play an ocarina. The same can be said about Majora's Mask. The moon wouldn't crash into the ground if the devious villain didn't wear the mask. For a change, it seemed as though the GC Zelda would break tradition and emerge without any ties to a specific item or plot twist.

Just when we thought Shigeru Miyamoto had turned over a new leaf, details have begun trickling out of Japan tying Link's adventure to a specific hook. This time around, it sounds like everything will tie into wind. It'll be a powerful weapon, but also your greatest adversary. To reflect this, the Japanese title of the game has recently been revealed to be The Legend of Zelda: Kaze no Takuto, which translates roughly to "The Wind of Takuto." Nintendo will likely create a similar name for the US version, but nothing has been finalized as of press time.

From what we understand, select puzzles in the game will behave in a certain manner depending on which way the wind is blowing. Seeing how tricky the puzzles have been in the previous installments, we can't wait to see what Nintendo has in store for us with this new gameplay twist. If you thought that this Zelda was going to be the same thing all over again, just with a drastically different look, you'll be in for quite the shock when it hits retail shelves next February.

Already we've seen Link outperforming Solid Snake in the stealth department as he ducks behind objects, peeks around corners, and drops to the ground to crawl beneath objects. The combat system, which will rely on the same lock-on technology, now enables players to pick up weapons dropped by enemies – even armaments that are way too big for Link's scrawny frame.

If you own a Game Boy Advance, you'll be rewarded with an interesting gameplay addition. By connecting your GBA to the second controller slot on the GameCube, your onscreen character will actually wield an item that just happens to be the Game Boy Advance. By activating this gadget, Link will be asked if he wants to summon Tingle – who just happens to be the map salesman from Majora's Mask. In a flash, a map of the area you inhabit in the GameCube version will appear on the GBA screen. The graphics are nothing special, but you can clearly see Link's position, and where the enemies reside as well. You'll actually control Tingle on the GBA. The extent of his

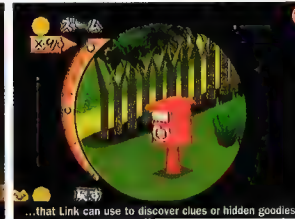


Through GBA connectivity, players will be able to control Tingle within dungeons

use is unknown at this time, but we do know that he can drop bombs on the enemies and blow open hidden areas as well. Wouldn't it be great if you continued exploring as Link on the GameCube and your friend assumed Tingle on the GBA? We can't wait to find out exactly how this gadget works, and what else Miyamoto and his team have in store for us. They haven't failed yet.



Characters will hand over items...



...that Link can use to discover clues or hidden goodies

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER NINTENDO ■ RELEASE FEBRUARY 1, 2003



For the first time, Link will express a wide range of emotions, including the "Did somebody fart in here" look pictured here



"You'll give me how much if I do what with this pig?"



After disposing of an enemy, they'll leave their weapon behind...



...yet no matter how large it may be, Link can wield it



As you can see, Link has a QRA designated as his Y item



Link's eyes will actually pan back and forth to the objects that you highlight



Float Like A Butterfly

Sting Like A Bee

- Kain



THE LEGACY OF KAIN SERIES

BLOOD OROBOROS

! This game is intended for mature audiences **ONLY.**



Take your enemies head on or deliver to each a final lethal surprise with Kain's many stealth means



When battle-ax and sword edges dull, Kain turns to Dark Gifts such as rupture and possession.



Whether in pursuit of power or just for the thrill of the kill, Kain's lust for blood is inspiring.

www.LegacyofKain.com



Blood and Gore
Violence



PlayStation 2



EIDOS



PLAYSTATION 2

FINAL FANTASY X-2

A TRUE SEQUEL TO A FINAL FANTASY GAME?

Square's bread and butter has always been its acclaimed Final Fantasy series. Since the prospect of FF XI actually making a serious financial impact continues to dwindle, we are not surprised to discover that Square plans on releasing a side story to the most recent installment. Although Square, as usual, will hardly dish out any succulent details about Final Fantasy X-2, we do know that the plot will focus on everyone's favorite summoner, Yuna.

While the GI staff certainly won't argue with this choice, we hope that certain favorites will make an appearance; Auron's bad-ass sword skills and Tidus' tearjerking, romantic advances would be sorely missed. But even if none of the previous team show up in large capacity, we'll be satisfied with at least a cameo. Besides, we have complete faith in Square's ability to create new and engaging characters set in a compelling story.

Since the adventure begins two years after Yuna's epic battle with Sin, and the environments and people look very similar, we suspect that the plot will involve the same world (and dimension) under similar circumstances. Perhaps Sin has returned earlier than expected; or, maybe an element of Sin didn't completely perish? Ideally, however, we would like to see Square evolve this into a love story that places Yuna in a quest to seek out Tidus in the dream world.

Besides offering a mysterious plot twist, the two year gap will also affect Yuna's abilities, and her play mechanics in general. Along with her summoning capabilities, Yuna now wields two deadly handguns, which certainly suggests a more eclectic arsenal. This, the presence of "Active mode" during battle sequences, and Yuna's ability to platform also seem to be indicative of a more action-oriented combat system.

Since the game looks to display only Yuna's Hit and Magic Points, while FF X's HUD featured an

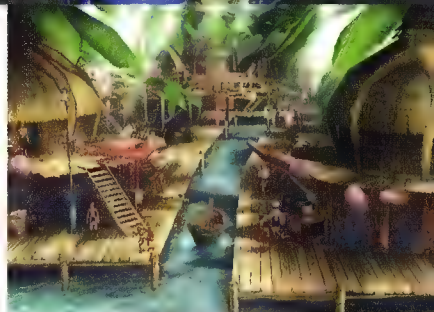
elaborate menu of commands that's normally associated with turn-based RPGs, we're assuming that once you engage an enemy, you can move around the playfield as in Kingdom Hearts. Then again, Active mode could reference something else, or arise only during certain scripted events.

Technically, FF X-2 has received an upgrade, even if it's slight. The environments certainly look more lush, and Yuna's character model sports more detail. Plus, Square will seemingly cram in better special effects, hinted at by the vibrant lighting in the village area, and the green particles that surround Yuna.

Unfortunately, we have absolutely nothing else for you FF fanatics to drool over. Just scrutinize these pictures like we did, and see if you can decipher anything else until our next preview.



Cool, a floating castle! Perhaps the home of a boss fight, or Yuna's secret lair



The villages appear to be slightly larger and certainly more lush and detailed



Yuna platforms here, which may indicate more active gameplay



Check out the detail, as well as Yuna's new get-up

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



寺院がスピラの秘密を独占する時代はもう終わったんだ

No Yuna? Perhaps this a story sequence, or maybe you're in control of other playable characters



今は毎日元気にあちこち飛び回って
楽しんでいます

The new airship contains smaller flying vessels. We wonder if Yuna can use these for transportation?



The graphics are absolutely stunning. This shows off just how much more performance Square has gotten out of the PS2



オラの考えより オシマイ早そうだなや

This looks like a very overweight jester. We're uncertain as to what his role is, but we're certain he's an NPC



These are familiar enemies set within a familiar environment



In addition to excelling in the long jump, Yuna is an experienced rock climber

SMASH UP

The last thing to go through your mind will be your ass.



"best car crashes on the planet... big, violent and damaging"
9.0 Editor's Choice Award - IGN.com

"bigger... and more intense smash ups"
4.5/5 - GamePro



"For arcade racing fans, it just doesn't get any better than this."
98/100 Platinum Award - PSE2



HEART RACING. POLICE SIRENS FLASHING BEHIND YOU. HANDS GLENCHING THE WHEEL AS YOU MANEUVER THROUGH THE MOST REALISTIC TRAFFIC SCENARIOS EVER DEVELOPED. EYES WATERING AS YOU WITNESS THE MOST REALISTIC AND HORRIFIC CRASHES EVER SEEN IN A GAME. MUSCLES TENSING AS YOU TRY TO MAINTAIN CONTROL THROUGH 30 OPEN ROAD STAGES. YOU'VE PICKED YOUR CAR FROM AN AUTOMOTIVE ARSENAL OF 14 ALL-NEW VEHICLES. HOPEFULLY, CAR AND DRIVER WILL SURVIVE THE POINT OF IMPACT. OR THE LAST THING TO GO THROUGH YOUR MIND WILL BE YOUR ASS.



Mild Violence

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BURNOUT



BURNOUTTM 2

POINT OF IMPACT



PlayStation 2



PREVIEWS



XBOX

DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Our issue featuring Tecmo's *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball* a couple months back may have gotten a few parents ticked, but what do they know about vids anyway? Okay, to prove that we weren't just interested in women in swimsuits, *Game Informer* is going to make your pants feel tight over all those things that make video games great – plot lines, technology, and gameplay.

Like any good late-night flick starring buxom, scantily clad women, *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball*'s got one hell of a story behind it. Zack (using his *Dead or Alive 3* earnings to buy his own island) invites all the females into a *Dead or Alive 4* tournament. But before you can yell "cat fight!" he tricks them all. There was no tourney planned to begin with – just an attempt by Zack to corral all the gorgeous DOA babes for himself. You can't blame a guy for trying – we don't.

This plot isn't as flimsy as a stuffed string bikini, though. Tecmo has actually set up an island where you live – and play – to win. Making money is your main role, and 2-on-2 volleyball is just one of the ways to earn it. To be successful on the court, your ladies have to get along. This even applies to liking particular volleyball courts. Individually, each character will have to be comfortable with the accessories (sunglasses, flowers, hats, etc.) you've given them. "Does my butt look big in this swimsuit?" No way, baby. What's the secret in keeping characters happy? Check out their bio sheet and get to know them for a start (great personalities and greater bodies!). Maybe gifts will help smooth things over (this interaction can be done in the island's hotel). At the end of the day, winning always helps smooth over any bad feelings – and it can even start new friendships.

Zack Island's casino is another place where

fortunes are made and lost. Bristling at the label "minigame", Tecmo told us that the casino is a fully integrated aspect of *Volleyball*. Poker, blackjack, roulette, and slot machines are just some of the games you can play. Tecmo is so serious about the casino that all the rules and odds of winning are accurately modeled. Finally, the island's radio station and movie theater are also there to amuse you. There's even an exercise to help you calibrate the analog sensitivity of your controller's buttons (and make some cash) that has your character skipping and bouncing across some pool cushions – a perfect test of the game's rumored "Breast Physics Engine".

What about nudity? Tecmo wouldn't say anything definite, but assured us that *Xtreme Volleyball*'s playful sexuality would not disappoint fans one bit. No matter what angle you look at it, this baby's got it where it counts.



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO ■ **DEVELOPER** TEAM NINJA ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 3



Dogs aren't the only ones who bury bones (in the sand)




Tom Hanks' Castaway friend, Wilson, ditches that loser for better company



Unlock items for customization

CHARACTER SELECT



LISA

NATIONALITY
American

AGE / BIRTHDAY
21 years old / Jul.20


HEIGHT / WEIGHT
5'9" 117 lbs

BODY SIZE
B36" W22" H34"

HOBBY
Surfing

LIKES
Cherry pie

FAVORITE COLOR
Crimson red



Select your characters

Meet the new girl. She's also interested in world peace and helping children



Will you wake up with breakfast in bed?

DEAD OR ALIVE
ULTIMATE COLLECTION
TECHNOLOGY TERMINATA 20



PLAYSTATION 2

VIRTUAL-ON MARZ

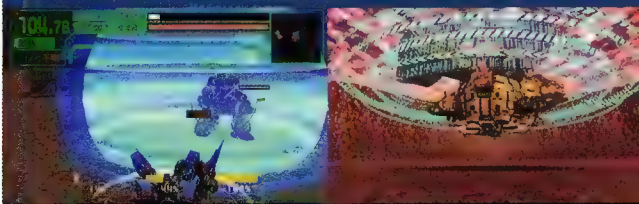
LIFE ON MARZ

Sega's Virtual-On series

pays homage to the company's arcade roots. Although the franchise has appeared on home platforms like the Dreamcast and Saturn, Sega has always supported it with a twin-stick peripheral to help simulate that arcade feel. While plans were being laid to do so for Marz, that isn't necessary. Developer Hitmaker has promised fans that it will do everything in its power to make PlayStation 2's Dual Analog controller feel like the real thing.

Game Informer recently had a chance to play Marz at Tokyo Game Show, and we were disappointed. For those not initiated, the Virtual-On series is all about non-stop mech combat. Not slow, lumbering buckets of bolts, but hyper-responsive robots with lightning-fast moves. As such, the title plays more like a fighter than it does an Armored Core, for example. The game was sporting a simplified control scheme at the show, but we have faith in Hitmaker that it will deliver on the gameplay. One change that we know is in store is something called Dramatic Mode. Here the fights will be supplied with backstories to help flesh them out.

Mech titles appeal to select fans in America, but hopefully, Sega will bring Virtual-On Marz our way and help change common thinking for the better.



Bubbie Boy throws up a powerful defense

Background textures are a little bland, but the visual effects aren't



Hopefully the Dual Analog can replicate the control fans are used to

Close-quarters combat is frantic

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER HITMAKER

■ RELEASE SPRING 2003 (JAPAN)

GAME INFORMER 87



GAMECUBE

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS

FROM THE LAND OF MISFIT GAMES

The Dreamcast didn't stick around long, but in the short time that it warmed our hearts and snuggled with us under the covers, its software library housed a number of noteworthy titles. Since only a small fraction of the gaming populace actually owned this machine (for shame!), hardly anyone had the chance to experience these amazing games. They basically went to waste. Although Sega has wisely buried anything related to this console, it is dusting off one of the Dreamcast's finest games and reformatted it for the GameCube.

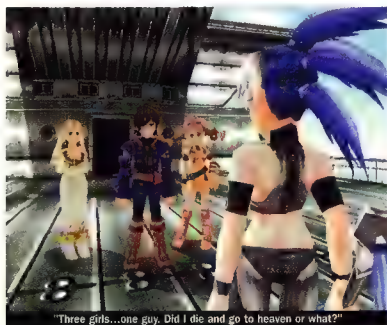
The game of mention is *Skies of Arcadia*, a title that not only earns the rank of the best RPG on the Dreamcast, but one of the best console RPGs period. Rather than following the standard RPG formula that seems to weasel its way into 90% of the games within this genre, *Skies of Arcadia* is as original as a game comes. With a plot that revolves around the lifestyle of pirates, a world constructed solely on floating islands, and a uniquely crafted combat system, you can clearly see where our fascination and praise stems from.

Rather than just porting this material over without alterations, Overworks has created up to 10 hours of new material for the game. The majority of this content is actually

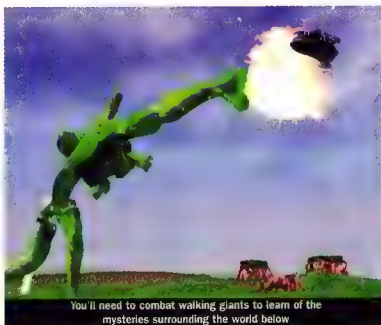
used for character back-stories. So, if you have always wondered why the main character Vyse has a scar on his face, you'll now learn the answer firsthand. Overworks has also listened closely to the comments that people made about the Dreamcast version and has tweaked the gameplay to make it less tedious. The most notable change revolves around the random monster encounters. They occurred way too often during the original quest, so Overworks has reduced the encounter rate and upped the experience gained for each creature. If you felt that the boat battles were slow and tedious as well, you should be quite pleased by the revamped pace that they now feature.

The graphics may be a tad dated and the cinematics may not have a dynamic punch to them, but even today, it still looks quite good. Naturally though, Overworks has implemented new effects and graphical touches that take advantage of the GameCube's abilities.

Skies of Arcadia was a great game to begin with, and the bevy of new material should make it all the more explosive...even if it already had its day in the sun.



Three girls...one guy. Did I die and go to heaven or what?"



You'll need to combat walking giants to learn of the mysteries surrounding the world below



The random encounter rate is much lower than before



Boats are cool...but boats that fly are even better!!!



You'll learn much more about your party members in the newly created back-stories

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER OVERWORKS ■ RELEASE JANUARY 2003

namco®

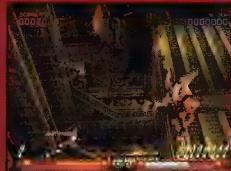


Ninjas: **BAD**

Ninjas with guns: **BAD ASS**



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GUNCON™2



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Demon scum this fast require something with a little more pop. So ditch the sword. Dump the stars. And grab hold of the Guncon™2 — official Demon-Slayer of bad ass Ninjas everywhere.

Ninja
NINJA ASSAULT™
ASSAULT



Blood
Violence

PlayStation 2



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PLAYSTATION 2

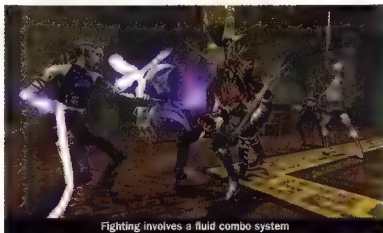
PRIMAL

ADVENTURES IN METAMORPHOSIS

We first caught wind of Primal earlier this year, on a trip to the Cambridge-based SCEA development team. For those of you who were lucky enough to experience the PlayStation sleeper hits *MediEvil* and *MediEvil II*, you'll be pleased to know that the Primal posse are the same blokes that created the infamous Sir Dan.

While Primal does exhibit the same highly crafted gameplay, complex puzzle solving, and carefully drawn characters that made *MediEvil* such an overlooked gem, the game does represent a sharp turn away from the dry British humor that has marked the team's past works. Like many recent action/adventures, Primal is a grim, gothic affair, one that takes its protagonist Jen through five huge fantasy realms on her quest to rescue her would-be rock star boyfriend, Lewis, from the clutches of the dark lord Abaddon and restore order to the universe.

In each realm (Solum, Aquis, Aetha, and Volca), Jen will



Fighting involves a fluid combo system

undergo shape-shifting transformations in which she takes on both the physical look and superhuman powers of the races that inhabit the region. The Feral race, who rule Solum, are vicious tribal warriors with tremendous strength and a physical appearance that could be best described as a mix of feline and Klingon. The Aquis realm is populated by the Undine, an aquatic race marked by their gills, fins, and tentacles. In Aetha, the vampiric Wraiths reign supreme, mostly due to their ability to suck power from their foes, much like Kain in the *Blood Omen* series. Finally, the fiery Volca is the home to the Djinn, the most brutal and powerful race in the game, who fight with fearsome flaming swords.

Luckily for Jen, she will not have to face the daunting task of conquering these strange foes alone. Throughout the game, she is accompanied by Scree, a diminutive gargoyles who functions as her sidekick and a source of comic relief. At times, you will take control of Scree to scout out unexplored areas or to solve various puzzles. This character-switching dynamic is similar in style to the puzzle elements of games like *Munch's Oddysee*.

Even for all its rich storyline and gorgeous visuals, a good portion of Primal's impact will come from its fighting system, which seeks to give gamers a deeper experience than the average third-person hack n' slasher. During combat, Jen will lock onto an assailant, and then deliver one of the 20 odd combos at her disposal. Of course, given the fact that Jen's physical body is constantly changing, so will her battle tactics. You will be able to switch in and out of whatever demon form Jen possesses at the time, provided that your enemy doesn't sap your strength.



Jen is accompanied by her gargoyle companion, Scree



Maybe it's us, but we're not that crazy about the Gap's winter line

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY CAMBRIDGE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15



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Players can surprise enemies as well as avoid them



The green ring indicates the field of play; you can move only within this area



Get in an early shot before the battle begins

PLAYSTATION 2

BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER

A REDESIGNED DRAGON

Serious followers of the *Breath of Fire* games might easily mistake this latest edition as something entirely different. Dubbed Dragon Quarter, Capcom certainly retains elements that tie it to the universe, such as Dragon themes; and the cel-shaded characters help maintain the series' traditional 2D look, despite the fact that everything is now three-dimensional.

The story and game structure perhaps represent the most significant changes. Since Earth has suffered a huge ecological disaster, humans are forced to live underground in an ancient city (known as Shelter) for many generations. You play as Ryu, a Ranger who experiences an awakening of some sort. This strange revelation motivates him and his friends to make their way to the surface—your eventual goal.

Since almost the entire game takes place inside of this facility, players won't visit outside environments and travel to myriad lands and kingdoms. Instead, players will "dungeon crawl," ascending the numerous levels of the city. Although the game's scope seems more concentrated, it will still take about 50 hours to finish, which is most likely due to DQ's unique design.

Capcom actually intends on players dying a lot. When you perish, you'll have to restart from the beginning, but you'll retain all of the items, magic, and experience you've earned. Furthermore, any puzzles you've completed and bosses you've killed will remain that way. Based on these accomplishments, the dungeons will actually change, presenting new objectives and

incentives. Although the specifics of this design are still being developed, Capcom promises that returning to the point of death shouldn't require an exorbitant amount of time.

The combat system also deviates from established precedents. Players now have the ability to initiate a surprise hit before the battle actually begins. Once the fight ensues, actions are carried out in the typical turned-based fashion, but with a few refreshing twists. First, all of the characters possess a Dragon meter to regulate the number of special attacks they can perform. Since the game's over once this meter reaches 100, players must consider when these abilities are required most.

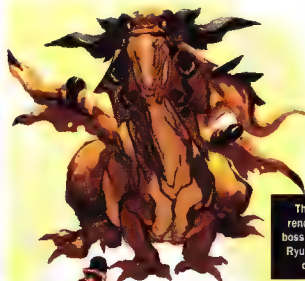
Second, it's now possible to perform combo attacks, and set traps and decoys. You can perform combos simply by linking various weapon skills of same attack level. If done correctly, you'll inflict bonus damage upon the enemy. The traps and decoys mostly aid in keeping monsters in strategically weak positions, which helps since characters can move freely around the playfield. For example, if you're up against an enemy who's weak against fire, you can create a wall of fire to maintain distance while you nip away at his HP with long-range techniques.

Many of these alterations may result in a *Bof* title too distinct to appeal to some extremely hardcore fans, but to us, these additions and innovations are more than worth the risk. Hopefully, it will all culminate into one of the freshest and most exciting RPG experiences around.

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM ■ RELEASE MARCH



You'll be able to set your players up in strategic positions during fights



This artist rendition of a boss battle pits Ryu against a dragon!



PC

COMMAND & CONQUER GENERALS

MOVE OVER, YURI

Although the developer may look foreign to anyone who is familiar with the Command & Conquer series, not to fear! Westwood has its hands all over this release. "We've reinvented the Command & Conquer franchise with Generals, with a brand new storyline, units and tactics that have all been inspired by the technologies and ideologies of today's tumultuous world," said one EA Pacific representative when asked about this game. It seems that the C&C universe is about to take a turn toward reality – a notion as interesting as it is exciting.

Taking place 20 years in the future, Generals is being described as a metaphor for today's global military possibilities. To this end, three distinctive sides are fighting for supremacy in the game, each with its own unique advantages, features, and drawbacks. The first (and in our opinion the best) superpower vying for dominance is the mighty US of A. Because of the USA's high opinion of human life, its infantry is comprised of a small but highly trained and terrifyingly capable ground force. China, because they could give a rip about the individual, sends swarms of foot soldiers that choke the opposition with their sheer numbers. As an added bonus, China likes to use fire in a lot of their weapons, so you can be sure we'll be seeing some incredible explosion effects. The last and most enigmatic superpower in the game is the Global Liberation Army, which relies on stealth tactics and hit-and-run capabilities.



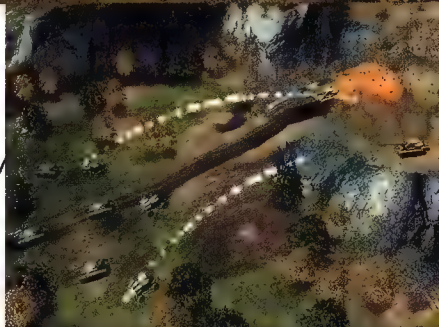
One of the most intriguing aspects of this C&C iteration is the player's ability to choose a unique General before each mission. These characters will open up a virtual armada of play possibilities depending on which persona you choose. Each individual unit unlocks specialized upgrades, troops, economic bonuses, and abilities. From this facet of gameplay comes a whole new set of strategic implications. Do you take General A because he'll give you a better infantry, or do you select General B because he'll help you get more money faster? What a delicious problem that will be to puzzle out.

We expect C&C Generals to present a benchmark in RTS gaming, but it has a lot to compete against. Blizzard has shown it can talk the talk and walk the walk with Warcraft III, and Westwood/EA Pacific hasn't made waves since its masterpiece, Red Alert 2. From the looks of it, Generals has the chops, and come the first of December, we'll see if the hype is just that.

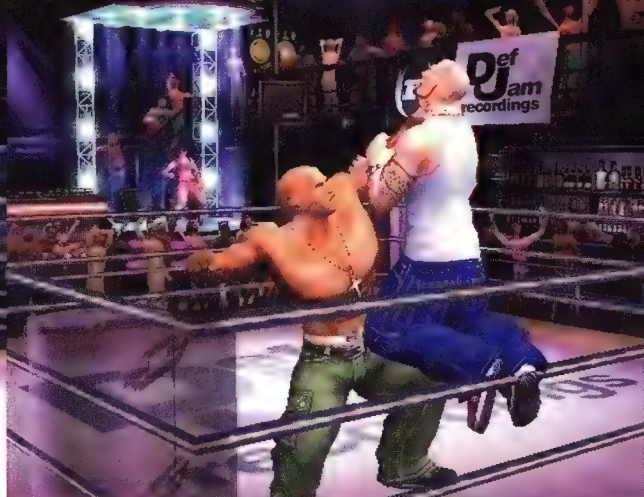
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA PACIFIC ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 1



This Chinese structure is being threatened by a squad of American armor



PREVIEWS


Def
Jam
recordings


PLAYSTATION 2 / GAMECUBE

DEF JAM VENDETTA

TIME TO RAMMA JAMMA

The wrestling you see on television isn't the whole story. Those well-paid behemoths all started with much more modest roots. It's in the smoky nightclubs and seedy bars where stars begin their journey. All of them had to pay their dues in front of rowdy, unforgiving crowds to get to the top. EA Big combines this spirit of independent wrestling with the equally gritty hip hop culture for Def Jam Vendetta.

Yes, there are real rappers that you wrestle with or as, but we'll talk about that later – especially since that fact probably worries grappling purists. First, let's talk about the engine, which is done by AKI. Who's AKI, you ask? Do the names WCW Revenge and WWF No Mercy ring any bells? Yes, this is the same Japanese development house that produced those N64 classics, along with Virtual Pro Wrestling 2 in Japan – widely regarded as the best wrestling game ever (sorry, NES Pro Wrestling fans). This means that the action will be extremely authentic, and the gameplay will be insanely deep.

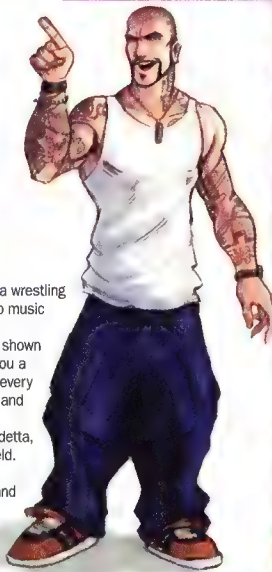
It's apparent this is a wrestling game first, and a rap music vehicle second.

AKI's games have shown versatility by giving you a variety of moves for every angle and situation; and from our short time playing Def Jam Vendetta, this tradition is upheld. The game boasts 1,500 animations, and two finishers and taunts for each of the 45 characters.

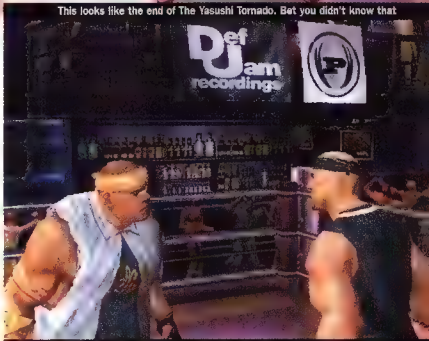
There's also a storyline to all the brawling and grappling. Former champs are trying to recapture lost glory. Up-and-comers are hungry for recognition. EA promises a ton of drama along with the bumps and bruises. Matches take place as single, tag-team, handicap, or free-for-all affairs.

Okay, now about the rappers. There are a dozen well-known Def Jam artists who appear as characters in the game. Ludacris, DMX, Ghostface Killa, Scarface, and all the others obviously have the ability to talk a good game. Now, we'll get to see if they can back it up. Each one contributed input on his character and move set, including the taunts and signature moves. Also, expect to hear new songs from these guys blaring out of your speakers as you play. See, wrestling game purists? There's nothing to worry about! Everything is going to be all right.

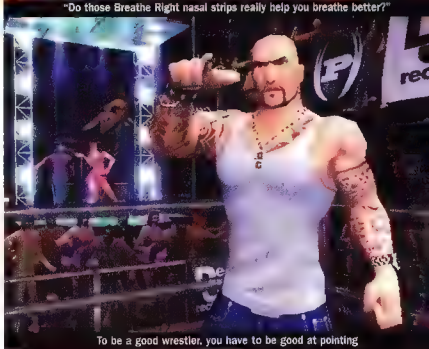
With Legends of Wrestling appealing to hardcore fans and THQ's WWE games expanding the genre but not scoring many pinfalls, the market is wide open for Def Jam Vendetta to come in and make a killing. Yeah, it's got rap, but it also has the expertise of the best wrestling game developer the world has ever seen. So there.



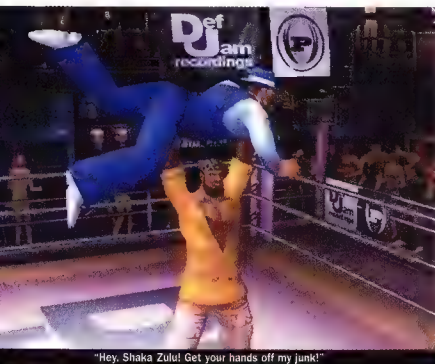
This looks like the end of The Yasushi Tornado. Bet you didn't know that



"Do those Breathe Right nasal strips really help you breathe better?"



To be a good wrestler, you have to be good at pointing



"Hey, Shaka Zulu! Get your hands off my junk!"

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ DEVELOPER EA CANADA, AKI ■ RELEASE MARCH 2003

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PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

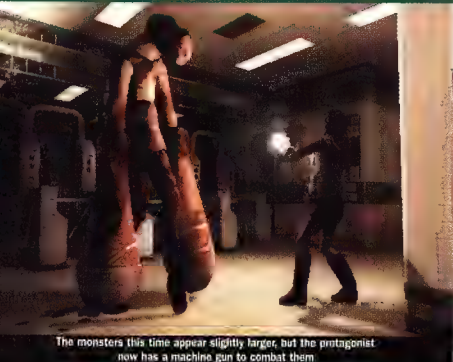
SILENT HILL 3

TERROR TRIFECTA

If nothing else, this series always manages to excel in its presentation, forming a horrific symphony of psychologically damaging sounds, creepy music, and downright eerie graphics. Fortunately, the latest edition in the gallows of Silent Hill follows this tradition, and actually seems to surpass its predecessors' horror element in many ways.

Players will encounter an even stranger array of mutations and visit perhaps some of the sickest environments possibly imaginable – but sleek not simply in the sense that you'll encounter a room that pulsates with blood. One area displays a merry-go-round, a seemingly innocent childhood amusement. However, by interspersing this sequence with frightening images, the freaks at Konami warp this innocence and break down those notions of trust, safety, and joy.

The gameplay will remain similar, which means that players will encounter a fair number of enemies and solve myriad puzzles. While this formula is tried and true, SH's extremely derivative nature has always hindered it. Hopefully, Konami will offer a few surprises that at least elevate its gameplay beyond the mundane and typical.



The monsters this time appear slightly larger, but the protagonist now has a machine gun to combat them

■ **STYLE** 1 PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 14

96 GAME INFORMER



PLAYSTATION 2

HYPERSONIC XTREME

THE RACING GAME, NOT THE ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH

Let's pour out a little liquor for the once-thriving futuristic racing genre, a style of game that has suffered a precipitous decline in popularity in recent years. Back in the early days of the PlayStation, Wipeout was the toast of the video game town, racking up sales and even spawning successful soundtrack albums that featured the cream of the mid-90s techno crop (Prodigy, anyone?). Sadly, these salad days didn't last. Recent racers of the ilk, like Sony's Kinetica, Acclaim's Extreme G3, and the much-hyped return of Wipeout itself, were met by the gaming community with little more than a few shrugged shoulders and nervous coughs.

Here's hoping that HyperSonic Xtreme, Majesco's promising new entry into the "post-modern rocket thingies speeding down twisty tracks" sweepstakes, will revive the futuristic racer. Sure, the name is silly enough to be cribbed from a fake Saturday Night Live commercial, but the game itself is looking quite nice. It's certainly no graphical masterpiece, but that's only because the developers have put the PS2's hardware to work where it counts – in the speed department. It's as fast and furious as Vin Diesel with a wedge, and made even more compelling by the awesome track create mode, which allows you easily to construct a mind-blowing course by twisting and turning track segments in real-time. Neat, neat, neat!



Create your own wicked courses in the TrakEdit mode...

...and test them out with one of the game's 10 different vehicles

HSX is filled with terror-inducing jumps like this

Nice raindrop effects on the camera lens – where's Solid Snake?

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO ■ **DEVELOPER** BLADE INTERACTIVE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** WINTER 2003

PREVIEWS

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

AQUAMAN: BATTLE FOR ATLANTIS

PROVING THAT FISH REALLY
CAN TALK

Holy Mackerel, comic book fans! We never thought that DC Comics would find a company stupid enough to create a game based on this worthless license, especially after canceling the comic book series and killing Aquaman, but TDK Mediactive sunk its teeth into it...hook, line and sinker. With the development talents of Lucky Chicken Games onboard, we're sure that this is going to be a high-quality project. This is, in fact, the same studio that warmed our hearts with *The Land Before Time: Dinosaur Arcade* and *Casper: Spirit Dimensions*.

So, what kind of action can you expect from a game of this caliber? To tell you the truth, we're not quite sure, but we're more than certain that it'll leave you speechless. You'll find yourself exchanging fistcuffs with Black Manta, exploring ancient ruins, controlling a submarine, and most importantly, communicating with fish. For instance, you'll actually be able to summon sharks to help you during a fight. As of press time, TDK wouldn't comment on the possibility of Lagoon Boy or Aqua Lad being in the game, but come on folks—it really wouldn't be Aquaman without them, would it?

If this game just happens to be a success, perhaps TDK will pick up the rights for Elongated Man, Thor, and Superboy.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TDK MEDIACTIVE
■ **DEVELOPER** LUCKY CHICKEN GAMES ■ **RELEASE** FIRST
QUARTER 2003

98 GAME INFORMER



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

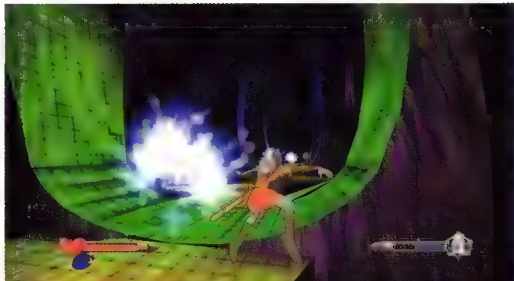
DRAGON'S LAIR 3D: RETURN TO THE LAIR

IS DIRK STILL DARING?

Do you feel old? No? Well try this on for size. Next year will be the 20th anniversary of *Dragon's Lair*. How does that sit? Does it make you feel old? It should. This fact may be hard to fathom, but it's true. Rick Dyer's revolutionary arcade classic has been around for two decades. It's almost old enough to buy alcohol! To celebrate this event, *Dirk the Daring* is returning to the video game scene in a souped-up sequel for the PlayStation 2, Xbox, GameCube, and PC.

Now that cel-shaded graphics are the latest craze, it only seems natural that *Dragon's Lair* would return. True to form, *Dirk's* latest escapade taps into this technology and comes close to mimicking the look of the original arcade game. Of course, this time around, you'll have complete control over *Dirk's* movements that include such actions as rolling, climbing, swinging, and somersaulting. As *Dirk* quests to save *Daphne* from the evil clutches of *Mordroc* once again, he will encounter 30 different enemies which consist of roughly a dozen new designs by Don Bluth. He will also trek through 15 levels chopped up into 43 areas and over 250 rooms.

Dragon's Lair 3D is a departure from the traditional gameplay formula, but many of the signature elements, sounds, and puzzles are still in place. We've kept a close eye on this game from day one and can't wait to see how it turns out. Hopefully, it won't rain on *Dirk's* 20-year parade. The Xbox and PC versions will lead on November 18, with the PlayStation 2 and GameCube incarnations just before the end of the year on December 31.



The Xbox version will feature 1080i support for High Definition TVs



Dirk will wield different weapons and can even pick up and move objects

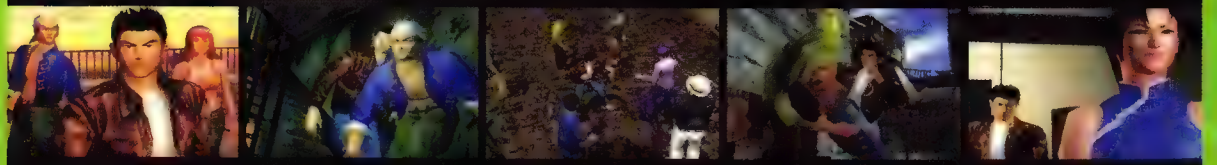
Legendary artist Don Bluth designed over a dozen new creatures for this long overdue sequel

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ENCORE SOFTWARE/UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** DRAGONSTONE
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18 (XBOX, PC), DECEMBER 31 (PS2, GC)

...the man who killed your father,
the man who knows who you are,
...the woman who may be your sister,
...the people finding them.



Shenmue II



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Use of Alcohol
Gambling
Violence

SEGA

www.xbox.com/shenmue2

**ONLY ON
XBOX**



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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), and 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.



ANDY

Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** Bugging Chet, Looking For New Tech Gadgets to Buy, Butterfingers, Bulldogs **Dislikes:** Rally Monkey, Losing To Chet In Dude Or Dweeb Because I Used A Calculator **Current Favorite Games:** Steel Battalion, The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

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



REINER

Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier And Clay, The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, Pizza Hut/Taco Bell **Dislikes:** Brent Favre **Dislikes:** Ben Affleck (My Left Breast Is More Talented), Not Being Able To Play Vice City While I Sleep **Current Favorite Games:** Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Animal Crossing, Contra: Shattered Soldier, Suikoden III

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 608 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, Action/Sports **Interests:** Spoon's Kill The Moonlight, John Henry Days by Colson Whitehead, Nicorette Gum, The Vikes Finally Winning One **Dislikes:** The Anaheim Angels, Hypochondria, Budgetary Constraints, Madonna **Current Favorite Games:** Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Ratchet & Clank, Dr. Muto, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4

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 Video Veking **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** New Alienware PCs, Grilling, '80s Music, Matt's Leather Coat, The Minnesota Twins **Dislikes:** Bad Television Reception, Not Having Cable, Cell Phones in Movie Theaters, Bud "I'm a Horse's Ass" Selig **Current Favorite Games:** NASCAR Thunder 2003 (Xbox), Animal Crossing, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

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:** Playing Vice City, Japanese Sports Drinks, Music Game Soundtracks, Akhbarah, 3x1 **Dislikes:** Putting Life On Hold To Play Vice City, Divorce Court Replacing People's Court For My Morning TV Viewing, Putting Poisons in Your Body, Dead Crowds **Current Favorite Games:** Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Suikoden III, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Animal Crossing

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



KATO

Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Racing, Action/Adventure, Action/Platform **Interests:** Randy Moss, The Turnbull A.C.s, The Twinnings, IKEA **Dislikes:** Sick & Tired Of Being Sick & Tired, The Highfights, Adam Kennedy **Current Favorite Games:** The Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers, Contra: Shattered Soldier, Colin McRae Rally 3, Rygar: The Legendary Adventure, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

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



CHET

Handle: The Joystick Jockey **Expertise:** Fighting, Action, RPG, FPS, Shooter, Platform, RTS **Interests:** Japanese, UT Cans, Veggie, Anti-War Demonstrations **Dislikes:** War, George W. Bush, WTO **Current Favorite Games:** Marvel Vs. Capcom 2, Unreal Tournament 2003, No One Lives Forever 2, Resident Evil 0, Suikoden III

Chet considers gaming to be a lifestyle, which means that a ridiculous amount of time with his games. When he's not in an intense session with his UT clan, or relaxing with one of his consoles, he's hopefully 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, Horror **Interests:** Myst Novels, Geocaching, Guitar Tabs, Red Tea, Dredlocks, Cheap Parking, Vegetarian Birthday Cards **Dislikes:** Orange Clean Wipes (They Just Suck), Fargodome Audiences, Gas Station Bathrooms **Current Favorite Games:** Resident Evil 0, Animal Crossing, Tekken 4, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

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 Jiggly 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

cel shading – A technique used to create 3D rendered objects that resemble hand-drawn animation cels

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 cutscene

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

framerate – The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement

frontend – A game's menus and options

GBA – Game Boy Advance

GBC – Game Boy Color

GC – GameCube

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. These 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 newbie or vulnerable characters in MMORPGs or shooting their teammates in games like *Counter-Strike*

puzzle – A term we use for games like *Tetris* and *Chu Chu Rocket!*

racing – A term we use for games like *Gran Turismo* and *Mario Kart*

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

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

SNES – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

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

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

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

Yamahama! – An exclamation akin to "Oh my God!" or "Holy cow!"

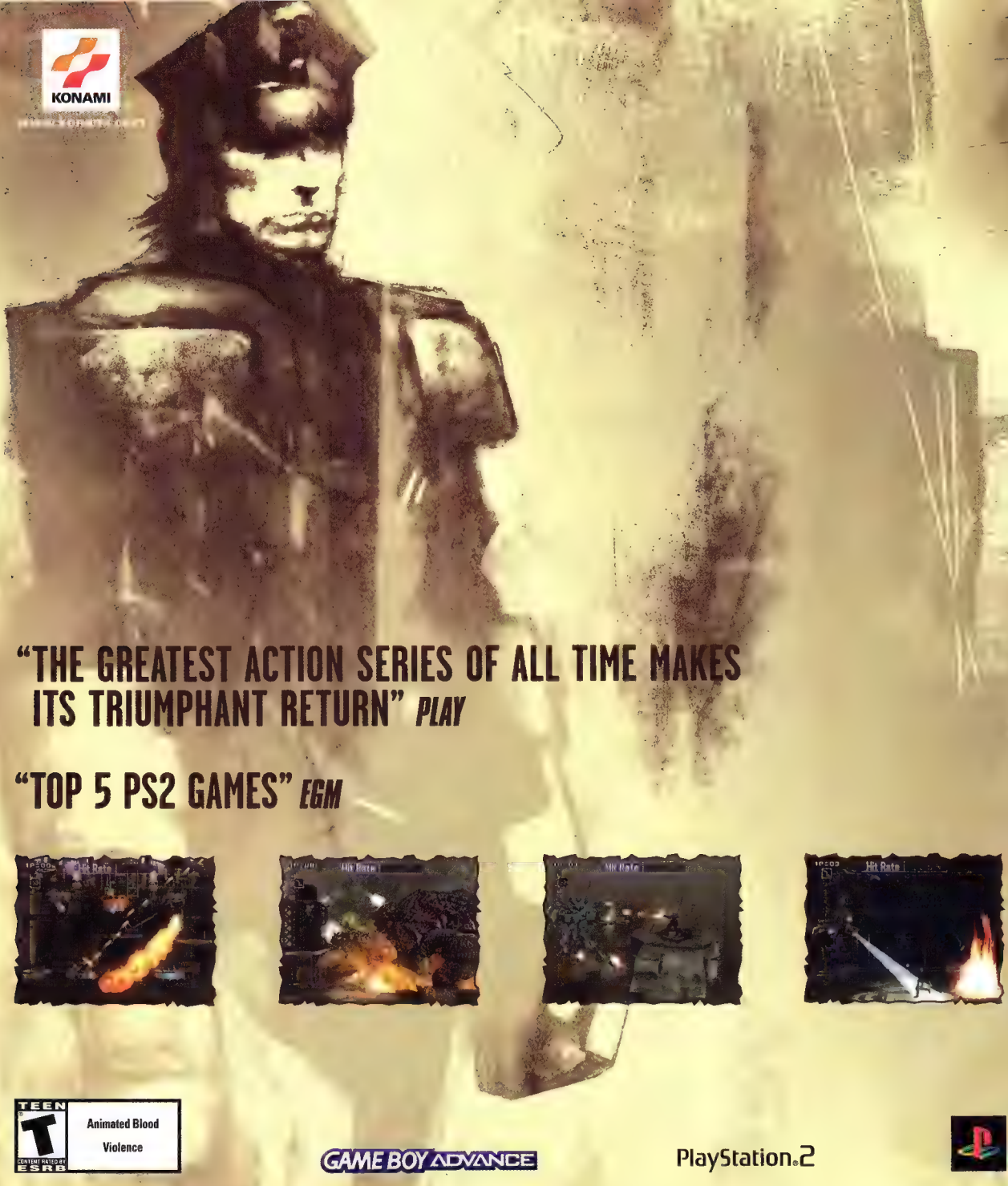
Grand Theft Auto Vice City

GAME OF THE MONTH GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

Grand Theft Auto III was the most successful game of last year, and certainly the most influential as well. In its wake, we've seen M-rated gaming become standard practice for the industry, and companies like Acclaim try to push society's buttons even further with controversial works like *BMX XXX*. Still, *GTA III*'s success wasn't due only to violence and rough language – it offered up some amazing gameplay and genre-defying design. Fortunately for us, and the 8 million other people that have become converts to the *GTA* cult in recent months, *Vice City* is even bigger and better than its predecessor. The '80s are officially back in what might well be the best game of the year. Dig into our review on page 104.

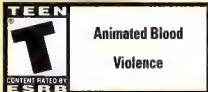
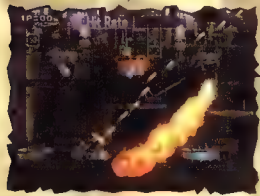


KONAMI COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT



“THE GREATEST ACTION SERIES OF ALL TIME MAKES ITS TRIUMPHANT RETURN” *PLAY*

“TOP 5 PS2 GAMES” *EGM*



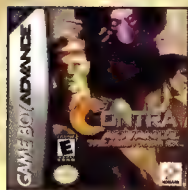
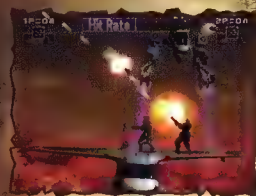
GAME BOY ADVANCE

PlayStation.2



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THE ULTIMATE RUN AND GUN SHOOTER RETURNS



CONTRA

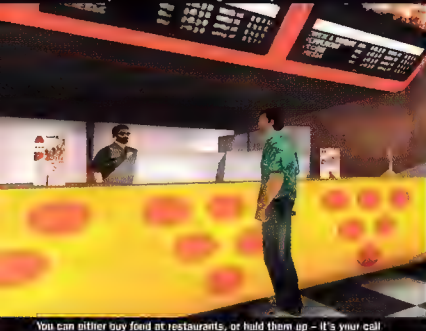
SHATTERED SOLDIER™



In this mission, you have to use a rifle to protect your business partners...



...then pursue a Haitian through Vice City on a dirt bike



You can either buy food at restaurants, or hold them up - it's your call

PLAYSTATION 2

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

THE WINNER, AND STILL CHAMPION



If every other publisher in the country has been waiting for Rockstar and Grand Theft Auto's reign of chart dominance to come to an end, or wishing that GTA III would prove to be a fluke hit - they better be ready to wait another year. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City doesn't just match the magic of GTA III; it bests it in every way possible. There's a lot to say about this game, but let's put it this way: Vice City is a lot more than some new GTA III missions cobbled together.

No doubt you've already heard a lot of hype regarding the early-'80s vibe of Vice City. Usually, it's risky to change a successful game's setting and time frame this dramatically, but you'll soon see that the skinny-tie era gimmick works exactly as Rockstar North intended it. For those of us who spent our childhood in the decade of Reagan, the nostalgic kick received from seeing a pastel Miami Vice suit, or hearing a long-forgotten Animation song gives Vice City an extra dimension of entertainment value that other games just can't capture. The same goes for the amazing cast, which includes Burt Reynolds, Ray Liotta, and Miss Cleo (among others) assembled for the voice-overs. It's a blast to play "spot the superstar" while watching cutscenes. Yes, the presentation is just window dressing, but it's the first time that I've felt that a video game was really part of pop culture in the way a movie, TV show, or music video is.

Sure, the high-profile voice actors and over 100 vintage songs are the things that selling over 8 million copies of GTA III can buy. Thankfully, the improvements aren't just found in the production values; the nuts and bolts of the gameplay have also received some significant alterations. For one, the selection of vehicles is flat-out awesome, and the motorcycles and helicopter are sure to become fast fan favorites. Popping wheelies and cutting razor-sharp corners on a bike with a hot babe on your back is awesome, and the helicopter allows you to explore areas of the city you might never find on foot, including rooftops that are inaccessible from the ground. You can also become a real estate magnate by buying

various pieces of property around the city, which then become new save points - a nice time-saving feature that gamers will definitely appreciate.

There are so many new facets to Vice City that I don't have time to hit them all, so I'll just lay out the two things that I really believe make this a much better game than GTA III. One, the gun targeting, which is now set on a fixed over-the-shoulder perspective, is improved to the point where combat can actually be fun, not a chore. Two, the missions are much, much more complex and varied in nature. You'll do everything from destroying an office complex with the aid of a remote-controlled helicopter, to attacking an enemy compound with the real thing. Vice City is definitely not a "pizza delivery" game (although that minigame is included as well).

Oh yeah, it's still packed with all the "mature" content that fans love, and critics loathe. Hopefully, this time around, both parties will begin to ignore the controversy and recognize Grand Theft Auto: Vice City for what it really is: a brilliant video game.

- MATT



The targeting system has been completely revamped, and is much more accurate than GTA III's

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RACING ■ PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES ■ DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR NORTH
 ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 29



GAME OF THE MONTH GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY



This "erotic" film director's voice-overs are performed by the legendary Dennis Hopper



"Grand Theft Auto: Vice City doesn't just match the magic of GTA III; it bests it in every way possible."



International waters mean nothing to an attack chopper.



Boats are much easier to get in and out of in Vice City



It's a non-stop party at the Malibu club



During your stay in Vice City, you'll join a motorcycle gang

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:**
The most important game of the last five years takes a trip back to the 1980s
- **Graphics:**
The new character models are much improved, as are the textures, but people still have deformed claws for hands
- **Sound:**
Featuring nearly 100 tracks of '80s classics and guilty pleasures, this is probably the most ambitious soundtrack ever released, video game or otherwise
- **Playability:**
They fixed the weapon targeting – PRAISE GOD! I just wish that water vehicles controlled as well as the cars
- **Entertainment:**
An already amazing franchise builds on its strengths, and gives gamers another unforgettable experience
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Vice City rekindles all the amazement I felt from GTA III. Where its precursor blew you away with innovations and size, Vice City heaps on familiarity and kitsch. You'll rock out to Loverboy and Twisted Sister; talk with Dennis Hopper and Lawrence Taylor – all while wearing penny loafers and headbands. This is far more than GTA III with a makeover. Rockstar North couldn't be more ambitious, adding an unfathomable list of new features in such a short time. My favorites include smashing into guys on motorcycles, evading cops on four flat tires, buying property, and scamming rooftops in a helicopter – but there's so much more! The targeting problem is fixed, too. Suspect wall collision and minor camera issues can't stop the fact that Vice City is insanely deep, witty, open-ended, musical, star-studded, violent, addictive, and all-around the most entertaining product money can buy. It's going to take a hell of a lot to top this.

JUSTIN – 10

REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

NOT JUST ABOUT SKATING ANYMORE

"It just takes a few hours for the game to show its true colors."

Tony Hawk 4's gameplay is just as seductive and overpowering as the previous entries in the series, but rather than sticking with the tried and true formula in its entirety, Neversoft revamped the Career mode and sought out new means to keep gamers on the edge of their seats. The outcome of these efforts showcases fine craftsmanship and an unyielding desire to take the series to new heights. While commendable in execution, the changes that have been implemented may in fact alienate a good portion of the fan base. For much of the game, rather than pushing players skills to the limit and forcing them to concoct massive combos lines, the challenges you are faced with seem more appropriate for Jackass: The Video Game than the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series.

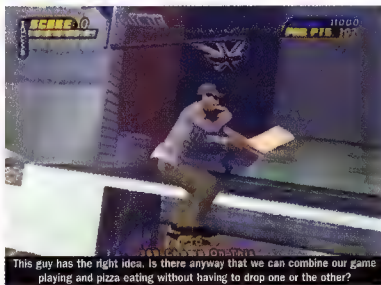
As you skitch on the back of a runaway car, play tennis, and dodge monkey feces, you quickly realize that a significant chunk of the goals don't tap into the complex gameplay you've grown to love. Most of the missions revolve around a single trick, one little run, scavenging items or something completely unrelated to skating altogether. As if this wasn't enough of a deterrent, the game spoon-feeds you the goals, which in turn completely eliminates the need to explore the levels and become familiar with the lay of the land. Just talk to someone, complete the goal that they manifest, then move on to the next person. It's an uninspired daisy chain that rarely taps into a player's skill or inventiveness. Everything is scripted and

handed to you on a silver platter. To make matters worse, when a scoring challenge does inch out of the woodwork, the game cuts you off after you reach the desired score. It doesn't even let you finish your run! Nor does it tally your score!

There are a few challenges that give hardcore fans something to sink their teeth into, but are few and far between. For instance, after completing a certain number of goals, the difficulty escalates with the arrival of the Pro Challenges. At this point, beads of sweat will roll down your face as you feverishly try to topple difficult feats, like scoring one million points within two minutes. If you're a fervent Tony Hawk fan, these are the moments you've been eagerly awaiting. Unfortunately, it just happens that they're buried beneath elements that really don't have a place in this game. While I appreciate the creativity that some of the new goals bring, the Tony Hawk series didn't accumulate fans through its goofy antics. It's all about the gameplay and ability for players to continually improve upon their best scores. This still holds true for multiplayer sessions, especially the online competitions, but the Career mode wavers dangerously close to having no value.

For the next installment, I hope Neversoft offers Pro Challenges from the outset and does away with the adventure aspect in favor of honing in on the basics. Like I said, this game does retain its glory, but you actually have to work, and work hard, to find it. — REINER

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** NEVERSOFT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 23



THE BOTTOM LINE

T **9.25**

- **Concept:** Bigger in every conceivable way, but the new design focuses more on goofy missions than it does the skating
- **Graphics:** Neversoft's artists are at the peak of their game, sparing no detail within the environments and animations
- **Sound:** Dynamic effects and a questionable mix of beats
- **Playability:** The skating is better than ever, yet due to the variety in missions, you rarely tap into it fully
- **Entertainment:** Infinite depth and online play
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Let me start off by saying I'm a huge Tony Hawk fan, and this installment, like the ones before it, is very addictive. However, I am disappointed by a number of the game's elements (or lack thereof). For one, I don't like the Free Skate addition to career mode. Sure, you can get challenges from the various guys in the level, but most of them are way too easy, or just stupid hard. I like the rush that the timer brings to the game, plus it forces you to learn high-scoring lines. As it stands, I often found myself just blasting through the challenges and not really learning the levels, because it's not needed to progress. I love some of the new games (like COMBO), and online multiplayer is a blast, but the single-player experience is too much Tony RPG and not enough Tony in your face. It's a shame too, because this really is a fantastic game, but the design and difficulty curve are just all wrong. Steal more ideas from Aggressive Inline, and less from Grand Theft Auto.

ANDY - 9



Sgt. Joe
 "Don't attract attention.
 Just act naturally and
 walk slowly."



THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
 9.5

"Suikoden III is probably the first game to actually teach me something."

PLAYSTATION 2

SUIKODEN III

AN EPIC WITH A MORAL

Every RPG invariably gets compared to the Final Fantasy franchise. The Suikoden series, however, has always been different enough to avoid this. Its 2D artistry and ally finding put it in a class all its own. This third installment strays quite far from the path the first two had laid, but darned if it isn't still one of the best role-playing games that I've ever played.

Suikoden III is probably the first game to actually teach me something. It weaves a tale of discrimination, judgement, and assumption – and shows how inaccurate they can be. At the game's start, three distinct characters have a tale to tell: a knight captain dealing with politics, a young boy on a peace-bringing mission, and a mercenary leader.

Each person's quest goes on for hours, during the same span of time as the others. You'll see the same events take place, but in a different perspective. People you thought were trustworthy prove to be the opposite. Unexplainable occurrences suddenly make more sense. Eventually, these three figures converge and join together. Here, you'll form one society, filled with the dozens of inhabitants (108, to be exact) that make the series so addictive.

The gameplay in Suikoden III switches things up a little. Your party has three pairs of two fighters, and each group acts together. Since battles take place on a 3D plane, characters move around freely, and don't always take the one-at-a-time approach that most RPG combat consists of.

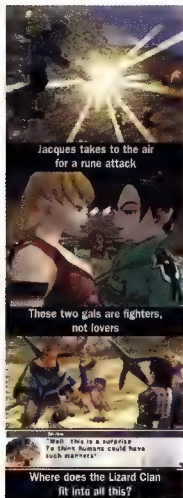
Along with experience, skill points are earned. They can be cashed in at a fighting center to improve accuracy, defense, and even spells. These magic attacks happen through runes, and most require charging for one turn. Blasts elicit dazzling lighting and more effects than Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve. Other varying fighting forms of old are here too, including large-scale warfare and mano-a-mano duels.

The visual flair of Suikoden III did something to me. It's not really about the character models or the environments. Instead it's the cinematography that is really stunning. Unparalleled attention went into the camera's placement during cutscenes, making sure it's always in the right place, and constantly showing new angles. It truly makes all the difference.

I must point out the few bidders in this game. First, it's a little hard to traverse the 3D environments. The map, while normally helpful, actually impedes some navigation. Also, some of Suikoden III's toughest battles can be 15 minutes worth of cutscenes away from a save, forcing you to view them again if you die.

Overall, I was truly captivated by what Suikoden III showed and taught me. I wanted to continue playing the lengthy quest to find the truth in every scenario, and enlist more people into my ranks. This game does what all RPGs (and good books) set out to do: harness your emotions. I couldn't recommend it more. – JUSTIN

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT TOKYO
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 29



Jacques takes to the air for a rune attack

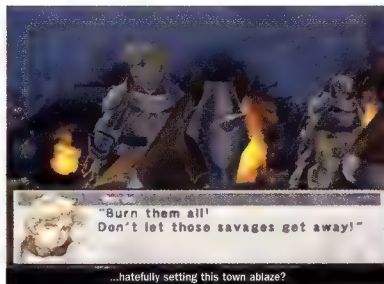
These two gals are fighters, not lovers

Where does the Lizard Clan fit into all this?



"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Why is the noble knight Borus...



"Burn them all! Don't let those savages get away!"


...hatefully setting this town ablaze?

SECOND OPINION

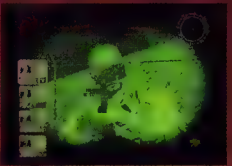
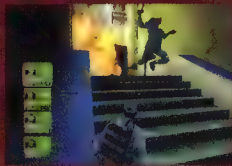
I initially felt apprehensive about the changes Konami planned for this third installment. However, I'm happy to report that Suikoden III is indeed a worthy sequel! Like its predecessors, S III sports a comprehensive and in-depth story, a huge cast of characters, a town to build, and an exciting combat system. The story, in particular, is Suikoden III's strong point. Even with the numerous characters and varying scenarios, I always felt engaged in each group's situation. Unfortunately, the game isn't without some minor problems. First, the character animations look stiff. Second, the set camera (which I like for the most part) limits visibility during battles, sometimes resulting in unnecessary damage. Finally, the story follows a fairly linear path, which limits exploration. Still, overall, Suikoden III is a captivating RPG that will certainly please fans and casual gamers alike.

CHET – 9.25

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"Geo-Mod is a beautiful, beautiful thing."



Firing from a gunship can be messy



Your Geo-Mod at work



The main gun on this tank is absolutely lethal

PLAYSTATION 2

RED FACTION II

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE COMBAT

The first Red Faction was nothing short of mind-blowing. Heck, we put it on our cover lo these many months ago – it had to be good! It had all the important ingredients necessary for a first-person shooter blockbuster: plot, action, graphics, and a gimmick. The gimmick, of course, was and still is the Geo-Mod engine. Gamers have never been able to decimate an environment like they have in these two releases, and anyone who tells you it isn't fun as hell is either lying to you, or wants money. The action and the graphics are still up to snuff with the first RF, but the plot is seriously lacking this time around.

There was something novel about your situation at the beginning of the last game. Fighting your way out of a mine complex as you put foot to ass for your oppressed brethren was interesting, and kept you tied into what was going to happen next. Red Faction II is neither interesting, nor is it novel, in my opinion. You're thrown into the first mission with very little exposition, and there isn't a semblance of plot until a twist limps into play about a third of the way through the game. Because of this, I was left feeling a little cheated at the end of my experience – I wanted to care about what was going to happen next, but sadly, I didn't. Fortunately for everyone involved in the production of this game, the action is second to none.

Geo-Mod is a beautiful, beautiful thing. For some strange reason, blowing away an entire wall to get to an enemy cowering in the corner of a storeroom just feels good. It's a shame that every wall isn't destructible, but doing so would make level design nearly impossible, so it's understandable. In any event, there are a lot of destructible objects to...well...destroy, so you won't feel cheated by any means. The firefights are intense and appropriately bloody, and the vehicles you're able to pilot are interesting – especially the dual machine gun-wielding, incendiary grenade-launching, rocket-hurling Battle Armor unit. It's the kind of unit that makes you say, "Oh, you're going to shoot at me? Okay, have a little of this (rocket then splatters quarry in every conceivable direction)!" Speaking of things that go "blammo," your weapon load-out is much improved this time around, and RF II makes use of every square centimeter of the Dual Shock's real estate. Believe me, you'll need it. The off-hand grenade deployment ability (à la Halo) is a welcome addition, and the secondary features on your weapons complement their primary abilities perfectly.

So here it is, kiddies: Don't go into Red Faction II expecting to be swept off your feet by the incredible story line. Instead, get into knowing that balls-to-the-wall action will be around every corner. — KRISTIAN

■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER THQ ■ DEVELOPER VOLITION ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 16



Any job well done deserves a trip through the sewers



Vehicles are vulnerable to damage just like everything else

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.75

- Concept:** Continue the revolution while blowing through walls and other such insanity
- Graphics:** I didn't see anything in this title that I liked more or less from the first
- Sound:** What you'd expect from a FPS nowadays – a lot of voice acting, ambient effects, and the "pop" of bullets flying through the air
- Playability:** After you get your controller configured comfortably, you'll be good to go
- Entertainment:** It's definitely fun, but the plot is about as interesting as a house plant
- Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Man, is Volition on a roll. Last month it released the much-improved Summer 2, and now Red Faction II – a worthy sequel to last year's surprise FPS. The main highlights include relentless action, a versatile arsenal, an interesting story, and oodles of gameplay variety. Players will encounter an assortment of enemies, a multifarious set of missions, and some highly destructive vehicles, the coolest of which is a mech. Furthermore, RF II offers mouse and keyboard support, resolving my biggest complaint with console FPSs. Fortunately, only two problems slightly hurt the experience. First, the execution is a little rough around the edges. Second, I expected Volition to take more advantage of its Geo-Mod technology (destructible environments). Nevertheless, for those craving a great console FPS, ignore Turok and TimeSplitters 2 and pick up RF II.

CHET — 9



THE BOTTOM LINE

T 9.25

“...the fighting gets so intense, you can feel the fate of Middle Earth weighing down on you...with each blow.”

PLAYSTATION 2

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

...AND IN THE DARKNESS BIND THEM

The challenges of conveying the sheer scope, depth, and richness of J.R.R. Tolkien's novels on the big screen was enough to keep it from being made into a film for years. You might think that EA would have it easy—just sign the license and make the game. Not so. The films' director, Peter Jackson, did such a masterful job in bringing the many facets of the trilogy to life that I wondered whether this video game's pure hack n' slash theme would come off as shallow in comparison. It doesn't. Two Towers expands wonderfully on the film's visual brilliance with finely tuned strikes of hard steel.

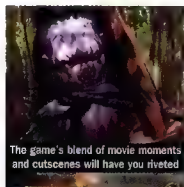
This title couldn't start more perfectly. Interspersing footage from the movie with in-game cutscenes, you take control of Isildur at the foot of Mount Doom—when the strength of Men failed. Throughout the Two Towers, you will be treated to many such scenes using moments from both films. This isn't a gimmick—it's effective because the game itself so closely mimics the movie in look and feel. Drive arrows into orc skulls in quick succession at Balin's Tomb with Legolas, or shudder while you hear the Horn of Gondor calling as waves of highly detailed Uruk-Hai charge.

Two Towers lets you buy combos as you level up Legolas, Aragorn, and Gimli (son of Glain). Anyone in this trio can be chosen before a level, and each will have their own combos

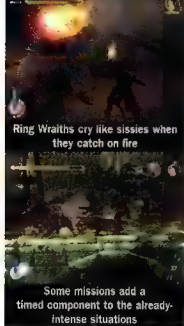
to be earned. Far from being merely fancy flourishes, these strikes must be coordinated. Linked Attacks, for example, must be performed after a block. Stronger enemies have shields that can only be broken by a successful combo. Furthermore, combat is enriched with the parry—a move that must be seamlessly incorporated into your attacks in order to survive. The gameplay here is every bit as fast and furious as Mark of Kri's, without some of the thinking involved. More than once I had to parry a blow, quickly counter-attack, deflect an incoming arrow from a distant archer, then pull out my bow to respond without missing a beat. Sometimes the fighting gets so intense, you can feel the fate of Middle Earth weighing down on you more and more with each blow.

I found few shortcomings in this game. The camera is often in a fixed position like in Resident Evil, and can occasionally confuse. Quick strikes with your bow are a necessity, but sometimes I would trip myself up. Cooperative multiplayer would have been nice, but there is little to desire with this title that isn't already in there (but where's the Balrog?!). Electronic Arts has forged a triumphant game that enriches the two films and breathes life of its own into the already rich Tolkien legacy. —KATO

- **Concept:**
“You have my sword.” “You have my bow.” “And my axe.” Now go kick some orc ass
- **Graphics:**
Orcs' movements, combo finishers, and the in-game cutscenes are perfect
- **Sound:**
To hear the real actor's shouts and cries during the Balin's Tomb scene is simply awesome
- **Playability:**
The combos fly, although I had trouble every once and a while with the bow
- **Entertainment:**
Orcs' movements, combo finishers, and the in-game cutscenes are perfect
- **Replay Value:**
Moderately High



The game's blend of movie moments and cutscenes will have you riveted.



Ring Wraiths cry like sissies when they catch on fire

Some missions add a timed component to the already-intense situations

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** STORMFRONT STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 21



Legolas' stylized strikes are unblockable combos



Isildur, moments before he keeps the Ring like a total jackass

SECOND OPINION

The Two Towers kicks into high gear from the moment you get to play as Isildur during the introduction movie—and the intensity doesn't let up. The battle is chaotic, and it pays to not just fall on the buttons, though I found myself doing just that many times when the hordes converged on my position. Many of the battle sequences are fairly short, but the rush they deliver will make any Lord of the Rings fan cackle with glee. Splicing in video from the movie actually adds to the experience and the music—oh the music—is simply amazing. When the chants come to a crescendo and the orchestra is pumping out a death march you just can't help but be sucked in. For some, this game will be just another brawl. For fans of the movie this is your chance to fight side by side with the Fellowship, and the experience couldn't be much better. This game could score lower, but I'm a big enough Tolkien fan to bump it up a notch just because I can.

ANDY — 9



IF YOU THREATEN OUR NATION,
 I WILL HUNT YOU DOWN. YOU CANNOT HIDE.
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"The detail that went into the worlds and fluidity of the character movements are towering achievements that have no rival."



Some of the gadgets, such as this water device, are used to alter the landscape and open new paths

Some of the stages feature gameplay variants such as this mountable turret

You'll need to concoct strategies, which are based on your arsenal, to take down the bosses

PLAYSTATION 2

RATCHET & CLANK

A SLOW STARTER

In this day and age, a game that sets a new standard for gameplay and graphics could very well be considered a complete and utter failure. How is this possible, you ask? As developers continue to aggrandize the size of the quests that we embark on, if the play is unbalanced, or the adventure has vast lulls in its pacing, it doesn't really matter how visually dynamic or innovative the gameplay is. People will become disenchanted with the game and will move on to bigger and better things. I never thought I'd find myself saying this about a title developed by the very team that brought to life the 32-bit Spyro adventures, but sadly, this just happens to be the case.

With Ratchet & Clank, developer Insomniac Games has forged a platformer of a different ilk. While the design seems like a radical new venture for the team, most of the material in the game either sticks to the platforming basics or is directly influenced by the Spyro series. Altogether, the game has a nice feel to it. The assortment of weapons is extravagant and clever in use, the character movements are precise and smooth, and the cutscenes, while void of action, convey an amusing story. There's no denying Insomniac's craftsmanship. The detail that went into the worlds and fluidity of the character movements are towering achievements that have no rival. As stupendous as it may sound, I actually walked away from the game with mixed emotions, and felt that I didn't get the chance to see what

this game was truly capable of. In the end, it really does feel like Insomniac held back on the difficulty. The first eight stages, which equate to the first half of the game, are yawn inducing. You'll basically find yourself running around collecting cash to buy weapons that will be used in a very linear fashion for the most simplistic of challenges. At this point, all of Insomniac's hard work and inventiveness don't create an enthralling experience.

As the game progresses, however, caution is thrown to the wind and the quest pounds you with hyperactive and incredibly challenging combat sequences. It kicks into high gear and finally transforms into the game that you were craving from the first seconds of play. So, that begs the question: If a game is eventually going to kick the living tar out of you, why not do so from minute one? Do we really need a tutorial? In my opinion, no; we haven't since the first 3D platformer hit the market. People will experiment and figure it out on their own. Insomniac wanted to create a game for everyone, and walked on glass to hit this mark. But in the end, this is where the game comes up short. If the action would have been relentless from the get-go, it would have been, without the slightest hint of doubt, one of the best games on the market. As it stands now, it's another decent platformer with a lackluster first act and a rip-roaring finale. — REINER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
 ■ **DEVELOPER** INSOMNIAC GAMES ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5



In total, players will amass 35 different weapons and gadgets



The detail that went into the worlds will take your breath away

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
MATURE

8.75

■ **Concept:**

The Inspector Gadget of platformers offers gameplay variety, but comes up short in its execution

■ **Graphics:**

Enormous levels crammed to capacity with detailed constructs, ambient life, and gorgeous effects

■ **Sound:**

The soundtrack is as catchy as ever, and for a change, the character voiceovers are actually tolerable

■ **Playability:**

The controls are solid, but most of the challenges could be completed by a newborn

■ **Entertainment:**

It gets better as it unfolds, but early on it's a real snooze-fest

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

As I played through Ratchet & Clank, my view of the game took a dramatic 180-degree turn. During the first few worlds, I was flat-out bored, quickly growing tired of wandering about the landscape breaking boxes and collecting screws. Then, as if the developers could tell my interest was flagging, the intensity level picked up (on the Rllgar stage) and it became clear that this is a platformer of the highest order. Once you get past the lackluster start, you'll be hooked on taking out the game's myriad of enemies with Ratchet's wicked arsenal of arm weapons. While it may be a bit too reliant on simple exploration, the world you're traversing is graphically stunning, if not for the aforementioned problems with pacing, it would have scored much higher. As it stands, it's great, although I do slightly prefer the more focused and inventive Sly Cooper.

MATT — 8.75

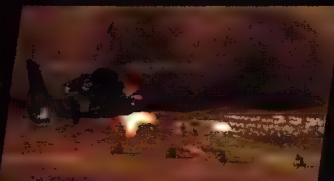
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TEEN
T

CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Blood and Gore
Violence



PlayStation 2

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REVIEWS



THE BOTTOM LINE

T 8.25
TEEN
ESRB

"Gameplay-wise, Shattered Soldier is a near perfect recreation of its predecessors' non-stop action formula."

PLAYSTATION 2

CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER

BACK TO ITS ROOTS

This is old-school Contra executed just the way fans have been dreaming of ever since Konami released Legacy of War – the turd in the series. Gameplay-wise, Shattered Soldier is a near-perfect recreation of its predecessors' non-stop action formula. Each stage comes packed with hordes of enemies and bosses to destroy, which forces players to memorize challenging attack patterns with exact precision.

Furthermore, Contra's presentation is absolutely awesome. The graphics consist of 3D polygonal characters set in two-dimensional environments. The animation presents itself as some of the finest ever seen in a 2D style game, and the artistic direction is creative to say the least. The first level boss looks especially cool, and reminds me of Tetsuo's disgusting transformation at the end of *Akira*. Shattered Soldier's look is complemented by its fast-paced heavy metal tunes. Although I'm not a huge fan of the genre, I found that the music suits the game's run-down industrial appearance and constant action well enough to create an even more engrossing experience.

Much to my disappointment, however, other aspects left me slightly underwhelmed. Foremost, Shattered Soldier is way too short, and the levels lack variety overall. Players will

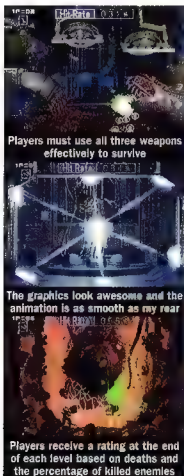
proceed through five basic missions, which present enemies and scenarios akin to or exactly like previous Contra titles. Fortunately, completing it on the Normal difficulty will take time, and all of the bosses are well thought out and challenging.

Second, I sorely miss the old weapons that Konami decided to remove. Gone are the spray gun, missile launchers, laser cannon, and super bomb. Instead, players begin each stage with all of the game's three weapons (Machine Gun, Flamethrower, and Grenade Launcher), and have the ability to charge them for a special attack. Granted, these weapons are well implemented, with each being advantageous in specific situations. Furthermore, it's a welcome convenience to have them at your disposal at all times, even if you die.

Finally, although fans of the series will certainly appreciate the game's difficulty and required precision, people unfamiliar with Contra, and those who started gaming during the PS-X era, will probably find the challenge too high and overly frustrating.

Nevertheless, fans will be happy to know that Contra has finally returned to its roots. Let's just hope that Konami's next attempt is a little more ambitious. —CHET

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER KONAMI ■ DEVELOPER KONAMI ■ RELEASE NOVEMBER 5



Players must use all three weapons effectively to survive.

The graphics look awesome and the animation is as smooth as my rear.

Players receive a rating at the end of each level based on deaths and the percentage of killed enemies.



The first boss looks cool and different, but is much like the first boss in Contra III.



This is another standard scene from previous Contra titles.

■ Concept:

It's freakin' old-school Contra done the way it should've been done on PS-X.

■ Graphics:

Perhaps the coolest 2D graphics with 3D characters around.

■ Sound:

The sound effects rock, and even though I'm not into heavy metal, I liked the music.

■ Playability:

The control is nearly perfect, but shooting diagonally sometimes presented problems.

■ Entertainment:

This game is a blast with one or two players. I liked the old-school feel, and the difficulty seemed spot-on, but there aren't enough levels.

■ Replay Value:

Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

This game is going to be something of an anomaly this holiday season, and I couldn't be happier. The question it asks is simply this: How good do you think you are? In a universe of extensive feature sets, cool shading, and large, persistent worlds, Contra merely cuts to the gameplay chase and lets you test your mettle. On the other hand, it does offer sights to see. Large, colorful bosses will take your breath away shortly before taking your life, and your adversaries are as interesting to look at as they are to dispatch. Old schoolers will instantly recognize this game (and some encounters lifted from past Contras) and the frustration and fun that comes with it. However, as mad as I got at some of the cheap deaths and bad respawns, I never wanted to stop playing it. Contra is a testament to what makes games great in the first place.

KATO - 8.5

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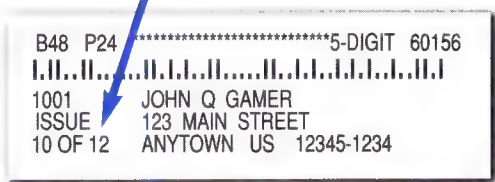


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PLAYSTATION 2

SHINOBI

REDEFINING ACTION

"Shinobi has some of the best arcade action I've seen from a next-gen game."

The remakes are coming! The remakes are coming! This holiday season is wrought with updates to classic series: Contra, Defender, ToeJam and Earl, etc. Many of them try too hard to go in new directions. Others just update the graphics and duplicate the old-school gameplay. I'd wager to say Shinobi is near the top of the classic gaming redux heap, because it keeps the arcade spirit alive, while giving you tons of new ways to kick ass.

I was never a huge Shinobi fan back in the day, preferring Ninja Gaiden or Ninja Spirit. Thus, I don't mind the new main character and art style. Hotsuma breaks away from the pajama-wearing ninja stereotype of the '80s and '90s. His flowing cape and bloodthirsty blade separate him from the flock — thanks in part to Tsuchibayashi Makoto, who was also the main artist behind Devil May Cry's Dante. Like Musashi, the series' previous hero, Hotsuma is a master at jumping, shuriken tossing, and sword swinging. However, he has new abilities in all three categories, which really open up the gameplay.

The first sweet maneuver is the stealth dash. With it, you become a blue blur to evade enemies, or get behind them for an unguarded strike. Combine it with the double jump, and you can cover lots of space. Hotsuma can run along walls too, which isn't terribly useful — but fun to do. On the attack front, you have a sweet multi-shuriken attack that tosses eight



throwing stars to stun a group of baddies; screen-illuminating ninja magic; a charged burst move; and simple-but-effective sword combos. Kill a posse of four or more enemies in short order, and you'll witness a cutscene of them literally falling to pieces. This also increases the power your sword receives.

Bringing a 2D series to 3D has always been a hit-or-miss proposition, but Shinobi does so with much success. Combat is simple, thanks to an effective targeting system which allows you to keep a bead on your enemy, while still retaining mobility. The camera is never a nuisance, and only requires a re-centering click or two every so often.

This game goes for straight action, rather than slowing things down with adventure elements or sneaking. If something's on the screen, you'd best kill it. In fact, Akujiki, the mystical sword, requires that you keep on slaying. The enemies are pretty smart, and make you use Hotsuma's array of skills to stay alive. Of course, if you bite it, there's always the option to continue. Shinobi has some of the best arcade action I've seen from a next-gen game. It scores a little lower than Devil May Cry on the coolness scale, so I suggest picking that up first (especially since it's a Greatest Hit now). However, if you want nonstop action with the right amount of difficulty and ingenuity, toss back a few shuriken with Shinobi. — **JUSTIN**

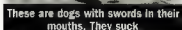
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** OVERWORKS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



A magical burst takes out a horde of punks



Nobody runs along a wall like Hotsuma



These are dogs with swords in their mouths. They suck.



It's best to get behind guys like this



You'll be thankful for the targeting when going up against airborne hellspawn



■ **Concept:**
Shinobi brings action tonight. Oh, and satisfaction — all right!

■ **Graphics:**
Nicely designed enemies get bloody in so-so environments. The cape's movement is a trip

■ **Sound:**
Only the whoosh of the sword is euphonious, so toss in a CD

■ **Playability:**
More new moves than I would've thought possible, and very cool ones at that

■ **Entertainment:**
Arcade action is not dead; it's just been sleeping. Shinobi has awoken. Kiddies. Sharpen your blade

■ **Replay Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Outside of the artistic character design, there really is nothing extraordinary about this release. With desultory level designs that follow the simplistic "kill enemies to remove a force field" formula and an anorexic gameplay package that relies on the same hack n' slash tactics from start to finish, the only thing that really stands out is the 30-foot cowl that trails behind your character. That's not to say that this game is a complete and utter failure, however. The action, which consists of a handful of acrobatic maneuvers such as running on walls, is fairly amusing and challenging enough to keep hardcore gamers hooked. I was also pleasantly surprised by the detail that went into the cinematics that appear between levels. Altogether though, the monotony I was forced to endure made what I thought would be one of the most electric gameplay experiences of the year nothing more than a spark that fizzles out after an hour.

REINER — 7.25

REVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

X-MEN NEXT DIMENSION

X-MEN NEXT DISASTER?

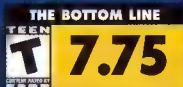
Activision has brought this title a long way since its first incarnation, refining Next Dimension to the point of being a fighter that holds its own. The combat system makes the most significant leap forward. It now feels much less random and hectic, and is fairly precise. Performing air combos, regular combos, chains, and super moves is easy with a little training. Although the combat is relatively more open-ended, ND still cannot touch the depth and precision of Capcom's Marvel titles.

Two areas that ND does excel in, however, are the stage designs and story. Each level is 3D, so players can move anywhere and dodge attacks with a flick of the analog stick. Furthermore, like DOA, you can launch opponents into the background to reveal new areas.

The story is decent, but only for a fighting game. Players will proceed through a set plot, where you're forced to choose from a few characters depending on the situation. This means that you'll sometimes play an X-Men, and in other situations, you can choose a character from Magneto's pack.

Although ND isn't great, Activision's persistence with this series is paying off. Hopefully, the next version will result in a finely tweaked title with some innovation. — **CHET**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **DEVELOPER** PARADOX ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 15



- **Concept:** A fighter not unlike the Capcom Marvel games, but done in 3D.
- **Graphics:** A little lackluster compared to Tekken and VF4, but they get the job done.
- **Sound:** Nothing special here. The music isn't noteworthy and the sounds are typical. Patrick Stewart's voice as Xavier is the highlight.
- **Playability:** Performing moves, for the most part, and executing combos presents hardly any trouble.
- **Entertainment:** Next Dimension is a fairly well-executed fighter. While the combat system is interesting, it's not quite as deep as the competition.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

As has been the case since this series' inception, Next Dimension is an average of a fighter as they come. The gameplay has a nice balance to it, but is also fairly shallow. I appreciate the unique twist made to Story mode, and love the bevy of secrets that you can unlock, but it still needs a more satisfying gameplay package.

REINER = 7



PLAYSTATION 2

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE

THE RISE OF A HERO

Shatoshi Kanematsu, Rygar's executive producer, told us that this game was about "ultimate destruction." What he may or may not know, however, is that his creation arcs across such a brute description into a great video game journey that is matched only by our hero's own quest.

Rygar's environments will amaze you from the beginning. Better yet, they are organic. What do I mean? Not only can you bust up much of the scenery to get items, but you will be able to uncover new areas within old stages as your skills progress. This isn't boring backtracking, it's exploration and discovery that elevates the game above trackaction titles like Onimusha. Your Diskarmor grows as the worlds do. You eventually get three of them (each with different characteristics), and they can be outfitted with a multitude of staves to change their characteristics. Add an expanded roster of combo attacks, special moves, and magical Summons, and you will smile every time your Diskarmor unfurls and sends heads rolling. Unfortunately, the weapon's collision and the title's camera could have been better.

Gamers remember the original Rygar for being an epic quest in an 8-bit world, and this title will elevate the series once again. The Legendary Adventure is just as its name implies. It's a title that will go down in your gaming memory for its blend of action and love of the quest. — **KATO**



The Diskarmor's many abilities match the game's twists and turns

Ice! Summons can save your butt

Rygar's worlds are absolutely beautiful, full of surprises, and superbly designed

"Round and round it goes, where she stops nobody knows." Rack up the hits by swinging foes wildly

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** Rygar possesses a good balance of action and exploration that sets it apart from other titles in the genre.
- **Graphics:** Some of the landscapes will simply take your breath away.
- **Sound:** The orchestral score for the game is amazing.
- **Playability:** There's no end to what your Diskarmor(s) can do.
- **Entertainment:** Like the original, this Rygar gives you more than just action. It's a stunning journey filled with excitement and wonder.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Coming into this issue, I had my own agenda: figure out which of the classic remakes — Contra, Shinobi, or Rygar — was going to make the biggest return to past glories. While it's a tough call, since all three turned out to be quite outstanding games in their own right, Rygar is the king of the hill in my book. Definitely owing some thanks to Capcom's Devil May Cry, Rygar is a tour de force of action, exploration, and just plain ass kicking. While you could easily argue that other games are better looking, Rygar has its own style, and it works. Plus, Tecmo did a great job with the sound effects. Especially with the voice-overs, which are so cheesy that they are actually good. Purists may have a problem with Rygar's evolution, but you would have to be pretty hardcore to be disappointed with what Tecmo has created. It's that well done. It's not perfect, but you should definitely give it a try.

ANDY = 9

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO ■ **DEVELOPER** TECMO
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14



PLAYSTATION 2

WWE SMACKDOWN: SHUT YOUR MOUTH

THE NEXT BIG THING?

Shut Your Mouth easily beats all the other nextgen wrestling games released so far. Is that saying much? No, but better is better. The new SmackDown looks great. From a presentation standpoint, it's tough to find a flaw. The crowd is much improved, the wrestlers – especially facially – are tremendously modeled, and the referee finally does more than count. Season mode easily surpasses Just Bring It by being longer and more captivating. There's enough drama to keep you interested, and the commentary from Just Bring It is replaced with sporadic dialogue, which I also prefer.

If you take your mom to the prom, it doesn't matter how good she looks. It's still your mom. Likewise, regardless of the polish THQ and Yuke's put on this series' graphics and modes, the engine is still outdated and weak. It was obviously made for ease of use, but depth is horribly sacrificed. Things like the tree of woe and jumping off guardrails are just band-aids on a gunshot wound. First-person exploration is still too slow and uneventful.

If you consider yourself a fan of World Wrestling Entertainment, I'm sure you'll get your money's worth here. I, as a jaded critic of both games and wrestling, still see a mountain of untapped potential with this genre. Still, I'll probably be playing and enjoying SmackDown right along with you. Just don't expect me to keep my mouth shut all the time. – **JUSTIN**



That's a long way to fall for a title

First-person mode lets you cruise the food court. Wow!

Tonight we will witness the first ever World Wrestling Entertainment draft

Oh my goodness! This is total disrespect

Linda McMahon opens up the brand extension draft

Reiner's created self decorates the trophy

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** YUKE'S
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 11

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** Get as close to a bang-up wrestling game as possible, without replacing the engine
- **Graphics:** So realistic, I bet you can fool old people and pets into thinking they're watching the TV show
- **Sound:** More Marilyn Manson than I ever wanted to hear. Real wrestler voice-overs are desperately needed
- **Playability:** Anyone can pick this up and compete. A few new moves to fool with
- **Entertainment:** Detailed creator, fun multiplayer, and a substantial Season mode mean good times
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Smoke and mirrors are used to hide the fact that this is still the same hyperactive wrestling game that it's always been. The new character models harness the true essence of realism, the camerawork pinpoints the best angles for specific moves, and the Season mode now offers a deep and fulfilling experience. At the heart of the matter, however, the gameplay hasn't changed a bit. Sure, the referee can now hold back wrestlers who try to interfere with a match, and you can't help but chuckle when someone pulls the padding off of a tumblebug and rams the opponent's head into the steel pipe, but these are just frivolous additions that ever-so-briefly make you think you're experiencing something new. It's still a fun game, but it should have evolved by now. Better control is an absolute must for next year's game.

REINER – 7.25



PLAYSTATION 2

RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS

WHO'S THE CHAMP?

Rally Fusion starts off as perhaps one of the most annoying rally titles I have ever played. Mostly because your choice of vehicles is just pathetic (a Rav 4), and the racing is rather difficult. However, this bad news turns to good news as you get deeper in the game, because it forces you to be a better driver and the cars you unlock down the road really haul.

After this progression, Rally Fusion ultimately leads to some truly heart-pounding races, especially on the Race of Champions track in Gran Canaria. This course is hands down the best in the game, and it's a shame that the rest of Fusion's circuits aren't as fun.

This leads me to some of the title's drawbacks. For one, to move up in racing class, you must trudge your way through some rather annoying modes. The worst being the Driving Challenges that force you to race to various points on a track and park, or navigate a tedious slalom course. My second problem is the lack of a quick restart command. This is especially annoying since almost every course or race requires perfect driving to win.

I've played better racing games, but Fusion ain't bad. There are a number of great modes to keep you busy. Plus, the multiplayer on the RoC track is incredibly intense, and will have you racing with a buddy late into the night. – **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:** Lots of different modes that challenge your driving abilities
- **Graphics:** The models look great, and deform depending on the amount of punishment you apply.
- **Sound:** All summed up with the co-driver's line, "You'll wreck the #&[ing] car!"
- **Playability:** Solid play mechanics that require finesse to keep the cars on the track
- **Entertainment:** Some annoying hiccups in production detract from this one, but overall it works
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I really loved Rally Fusion's one-on-one racing circuits, and the driving mechanics strike a nice balance between Colin McRae's demanding realism and arcade fun. The difficulty level, especially on some of the skill trials, can become frustrating at times, especially because you can't restart a race from the pause menu.

MATT – 8

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER** CLIMAX ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN
T
SCORE
7.75

PLAYSTATION 2

JET X20

EXTREMELY AVERAGE

Jet X20 is a difficult game to review. On the one hand, it doesn't really add anything remotely new or interesting to its genre. It also doesn't come close to the quality of *Splashdown* or *WaveRace: Blue Storm*—two recent games that did a lot to bring *Waverunner* racing back into the spotlight. By that reasoning, I should be dishing out a poison-pen ass-whuppin' to *Jet X20*. I'm not going to do that, however, and here's why: There's also really nothing wrong with the game. It works. You race some fairly elaborate, large tracks that are strewn with ramps and hidden shortcuts. You can bust out some nice tricks using a shoulder-button system that has become standard for games of this type since *SSX* came out.

I was disappointed with the water effects and physics. There are some wave swells, but they don't really affect your craft's handling to the point where you really have to be conscious of your body positioning. Also, the splash effects are just not up to par. Overall, the game just doesn't force you to use much skill. It's really a matter of hitting tricks to get turbos and making sure you catch every single shortcut. Overall, *Jet X20* is an uneventful, but not altogether unenjoyable racing game that fails to distinguish itself from the pack. —MATT

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
E
SCORE
7.5

- **Concept:** SSX for the personal watercraft set.
- **Graphics:** Nice environments, but the water effects pale in comparison to much of its competition.
- **Sound:** Features funny repartee between the riders and get this—techno music!
- **Playability:** The loose control doesn't match the ultra-realistic physics of *Splashdown*.
- **Entertainment:** If you are absolutely bananas about *SSX*, Freakstyle, and the like, you may want to check this out.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

There is little doubt this hybrid of *SSX* and *Splashdown* offers some adrenaline pumping action. Like most of the extreme racing games of the day, *Jet X20* has plenty of shortcuts and tricks to keep your fingers busy. Sadly, this also means that the key to winning is finding and using these alternate paths. The water graphics aren't exactly breathtaking to look at, but the currents and big waves that toss you around as you race add quite a bit to this title. While not the same caliber of title as the two games it is derived from, *JetX20* definitely has its moments.

ANDY — 8

PLAYSTATION 2

ROBOTIC ALCHEMIC DRIVE

ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN... ONE GIANT LEAP FOR ROBOTS!

Through synchronal gameplay, you'll be able to switch control from an average-sized human character, who can freely move about a sprawling city environment, to a gigantic 75-ton robot that towers above the city. Since the human commands this mechanized behemoth via remote control, you'll watch the action unfold from the character's eyes, rather than from the robot. This is a strange sensation indeed—much like an ant looking up at a human—but it does capture the true sense of scale and produces a gameplay experience unlike anything we've ever seen before.

Although it seems unlikely, you control all of the robot's movements manually. For instance, to take a step with the left leg, you must hold L1. When this action is initiated, the robot's leg will rise into the air. As the gears grind, it will slowly outstretch, lean forward, and crash to the ground with a thundering roar that shakes the screen and sends debris flying. It's quite the spectacle, but in many ways, this obscure gameplay dynamic is the only aspect that isn't flawed in some way.

When a battle erupts, which is usually against another robot, the game basically falls apart. Much like the walking functionality, all of the robot's combat maneuvers key in on user participation. The problem that players will run into deals with the positioning of the human character. Since the robots are so large, they can move across several city blocks within seconds. When this happens, various objects such as buildings or trees often block the human's point of view. At this point in time, you'll be forced to switch control to the slow-moving human, which leaves your robot vulnerable, to find a better vantagepoint. This is a unique way to present the action, but as innovative of a concept as it may be, it really couldn't be much more aggravating. In a way, this system puts to shame any of the camera problems I've experienced in other games.

Even with this glaring gameplay discrepancy, I strongly recommend that you take a look at *RAD*. There hasn't been anything quite like it before, and I don't think there ever will be again. It's by no means a blockbuster, but rather a gimmick-driven oddity that just happens to be fascinating and enjoyable. —REINER



The sense of scale is accurately portrayed and intricately detailed. Buildings will crumble and people will get stomped on.



Choose from three different characters and three different robots.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY
COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** KILLER
GAME ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 30

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ENIX ■ **DEVELOPER** SANDLOT
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5

SECOND OPINION

When I first saw this game, it reminded me of the *Beastie Boys* video for "Intergalactic." But instead of hitting us over the head with B-movie antics, the title's story comes off as something more akin to *Zone of the Enders*. In other words, *RAD* has a decidedly Japanese flavor that makes it a niche title all the way. Reinforcing this is the gameplay, which is original, but just doesn't execute well. Ironically, this game ends up blaming YOU for camera problems rather than the other way around. In the end, coordinating your robot, the camera, and your hero on the ground makes *RAD* more puzzle-like than filled with over-the-top action. The manual controls are nifty, but can't solve the fact that you are still in control of a lumbering robot. On the flip side, the destructible environments are a big plus, and the game's sense of scale is perfect. *RAD*'s deliberate action will appeal to some, but not all.

KATO — 7.5

Chris has sworn to protect her people.

Chris, the silver maiden, needs to conclude a peace agreement with the grassland barbarians of the six clans.
But is there something she doesn't know about the treaty?



Swikoden®

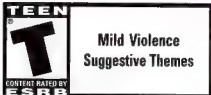
幻想水滸伝

- Unleash the power of three on a quest for peace -

The fates of three opposing heroes are forever altered in a battle that will determine the destiny of the entire land.

Uncover the 108 Stars of Destiny, create a homeland castle town,

discover the secrets of the 27 True Runes, and save the world from destruction.

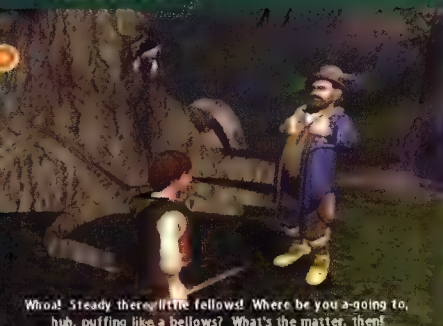


PlayStation.2



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REVIEWS



Whoa! Steady there, little fellows! Where be you a-going to, huh, puffing like a bellows? What's the matter, then?

PLAYSTATION 2

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

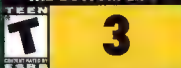
WE CAN HEAR TOLKIEN TURNING IN HIS GRAVE

Some would accuse Tolkien's trilogy of being tedious and long-winded, and normally I would have a long diatribe to counteract this blasphemous statement. But in the case of this game, it's all true.

Where to begin? There are so many things wrong with this one, it's hard to decide. For one, the story is delivered with all the emotion of a grade school play. This wouldn't be such a bad thing, if the gameplay weren't absolutely abysmal. Not only is the combat annoying, but for most levels the best strategy is just to run through the stage.

I did enjoy that this title was based on the books and touched on some of the areas missed in the movie, but the execution is just so horrible it's not even worth your time for these small nuggets of goodness. My advice for this game is best summed up in the words of Gandalf: "Run, you fools! Run!!!" — **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE



Concept: Make a game based on a book, but make it so horrible that people would rather read

Graphics: If you can ignore the models and animations, it looks halfway decent

Sound: Other than having to endure Frodo singing, it's about the best thing this game has going for it

Playability: You don't so much play, as run

Entertainment: I would rather burn in the fires of Mount Doom than play this atrocity

Replay Value: Low

SECOND OPINION

As the ring-bearer, your job is to...pick weeds for Tom Bombadil? From the mindless chores to the bad camera, Fellowship reduces Tolkien's great story to a poor video game that you wouldn't even consider buying if it weren't Lord of the Rings. I enjoyed the layout of the Minas of Moria, but in the end, it was laughable due to the suspect collision and crudeness of the combat. Cast this one into the fire.

KATO — 5.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** VIVIDBI UNIVERSAL GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** SURREAL SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 22



PLAYSTATION 2

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING

FLASHBACK TO 1997

Konami's last attempt at cornering the skateboarding market didn't fare well. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, ESPN X Games: Skateboarding had about as much play value as a piece of gum stuck beneath Tony Hawk's sneaker. Although Evolution Skateboarding is essentially a direct follow-up, it also bears a resemblance to the first Tony Hawk game. While I found myself howling in disgust at the obscure control schematic, lack of moves, and bare bones combo system, I at least found slight solace in the nostalgic vibe.

It's three generations behind the current benchmark, yet even with the odds stacked heavily against it, this game finds a way to entertain. With its variety, unique boss battles, and interesting secrets (like Metal Gear's Solid Snake), Evolution Skateboarding is actually somewhat amusing...but only, and I stress this, if you've already consumed every little morsel within Tony 4. — **REINER**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT** OSAKA ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 8

SECOND OPINION

Your skater handles slightly better than a robot that fell in wet cement. The tricks just blow. Pitting this ironically named game against Tony 4 is like flicking a booger at an Abrams tank. Just so I'm not 100% negative, the radar and boss battles are mildly cool.

JUSTIN — 4.75

THE BOTTOM LINE



Concept: Not the disaster that ESPN X Games: Skateboarding was, but nowhere near the success that Tony Hawk's Pro Skater is

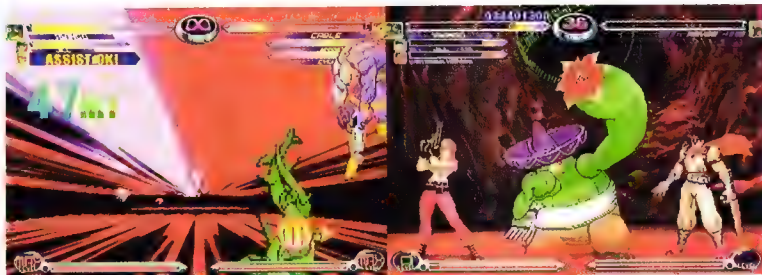
Graphics: Colorful and detailed as a whole, but some transitions between animations are a tad funky

Sound: Another compilation of no-name bands that is piercing to the ears

Playability: Simplistic gameplay with a few amusing missions and outrageous boss battles

Entertainment: A Tony Hawk derivative that actually has some legs

Replay Value: Moderate



PLAYSTATION 2

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2

STILL COOL, VERY COOL

This is the epitome of fast-twitch fighting action. The frantic pace of executing a chain combo to an aerial combo to a special move to a super move to a team assist super combo is just as fun and insane as it sounds. Get a few friends dedicated to mastering MVC2's 100, 200, and 300 hit combos and you'll be playing for a while!

The transition from Dreamcast to PS2 is flawless, which means that every ounce of detail and animation, all of the 40 characters, and the numerous secrets are included. Actually, since the PS2 controller is certainly more conducive to executing the various moves and combos than the standard DC pad, I actually like this version a tad more.

Unfortunately, nothing else has been refined or improved in this two-year-old game. Although I enjoy the fighting system, as it is fairly balanced considering how many characters are present, the inability to escape from devastating combos still adds a cheap factor. Granted, they take some time and effort to learn, but once you manage to execute one successfully, your opponent is essentially finished.

Nevertheless, if you happened to miss this in arcades or for DC, MVC 2 is a sweet 2D fighter worthy of purchase. — **CHET**

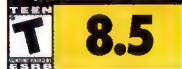
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5

SECOND OPINION

The shopping, characters, and eye candy of this game are astounding. Unfortunately, the combat is too button-mashy, and I honestly don't know how I pulled off half of my moves. Still great, and seemingly identical to the Dreamcast version.

JUSTIN — 8.25

THE BOTTOM LINE



Concept: A three-on-three 2D fighter with more combos than should be legal

Graphics: The graphics are smooth and fast, and the backgrounds are all 3D!

Sound: The music is fast and appropriate, but there are some that just annoy me

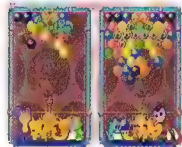
Playability: The four-button design suits the controller perfectly

Entertainment: With secrets to unlock and a deep fighting engine, you'll play for some time. Too bad there's no World Tour mode

Replay Value: High

BUST-A-MOVE 2

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 2-PLAYER PUZZLE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 24



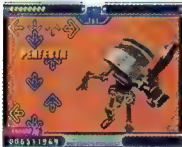
Bust-A-Move remains a pretty fun puzzle game after all these years, and to its credit, Ubi has devised a few minor gameplay changes which help set Super Bust 2 slightly apart from the previous

installment. However, in the end, you basically have more of the same thing. If you happen to be a huge fan of the series, I'm certain you'll appreciate the small additions and changes, but for everyone else, you don't need it. — **CHET**

E 7.5

DDR MAX

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5



DDR is overdue for a PS2 edition, to be sure. However, the series doesn't have the same sparkle it once did. DDR Max is far from revolutionary: high-res graphics and one new move—the freeze, which makes you hold one step while executing others. I liked unlocking new songs and reading an overview on each one. The gameplay formula is still addictive, but I'm ready to move on. How many times do you really need to impress bystanders at the mall arcade? Please, Konami, bring over some other Bemani games. — **JUSTIN**

E 7.5

WRECKLESS

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13



The PS2 couldn't handle the awe-inspiring look of the Xbox version, so the developers actually had to perform a massive overhaul on the game to bring it to Sony fans. This proves to be a good thing, because it gave the team time to rework the original's problematic and dull gameplay. It's not as pretty, but the addition of car-mounted missiles, some slick two-player modes, and a greater sensation of speed more than makes up for the lack of graphical flash. Much improved, and it's still only okay. — **MATT**

T 7.75

DR. MUTO

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 11



Solid platforming with a sense of humor is the biggest drawing point for Dr. Muto. After blowing up a planet like he was trying to get information from Princess Leia, Dr. Muto must transform into a menagerie of creatures, collect pieces of junk to form a greater gadget whole, and execute the master plan. Our mad scientist lives in a world that looks mighty pretty and sounds even better, but lacks major innovation in its platforming. — **LISA**

E 7.75

NBA STARTING FIVE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 8



Sometimes fun just isn't enough. While I enjoyed Starting Five, there are far too many flaws for it to compete. The music is horrendous.

Models only look good when their hands are down. The rebounding is way behind other games. There's no fantasy draft. Charging is called so often and inaccurately that I threw down the controller in disgust. It's still playable, but with the other options out there, why bother? I hate to say it, but it's time for basketball game retraction, and Konami's may be first to go. — **JUSTIN**

E 6.25

REIGN OF FIRE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER
 ■ **PUBLISHER** BAM ENTERTAINMENT
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 31



I wasn't expecting a lot of out of this licensed product since the movie it's based on turned out so poorly, but I was pleasantly surprised to find some

entertainment in this game's simple premise. Sporting play controls similar to Halo's driving portions, the player cruises around in a 4x4 blasting targets as they converge on you from all sides. You also get a chance to play as the dragons. The title does a good job of conveying a sense of urgency and being in the field of combat, but the overall design is just average. Not bad, but not good either. — **ANDY**

M 6.25

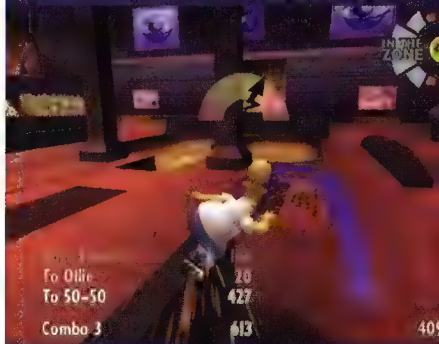


TIMESPLITTERS 2

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 8

TimeSplitters 2 is going to please fans of the first, but I am a little disappointed that Free Radical (which includes several members of the original GoldenEye team) didn't do more to push the FPS forward with this one. The Story mode is decent, but I actually had more fun in the Arcade and Challenge sections of the game. Also, the aiming is not finely tuned (especially since there are no crosshairs in normal mode), and not nearly as many checkpoints as there should be. This is a solid, great-looking game, just not the masterpiece that I was hoping for. — **MATT**

T 8.25



PLAYSTATION 2

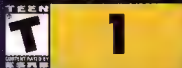
SIMPSONS SKATEBOARDING

WORST GAME EVER!

Never before have I seen a developer put forth such an effort to secure the Worst Game of the Year award. I'll even go as far to say that this may very well be the worst PlayStation 2 game on the market. After spending a significant amount of time with this product, something that I wouldn't even unleash on my worst enemies, I came to the realization that Simpsons Skateboarding manages to do everything, even the simplest of things, completely wrong. For this aspect, and this aspect alone, I was actually somewhat amused. It's like watching someone trip over his or her shoelaces and smack the concrete face first. Deep down inside, you're freaking out and wondering if the person's okay, but for some strange reason, you just happen to drop to your knees in laughter.

So how downright awful could this game really be, you ask? Well, at one point, I actually found myself contemplating whether or not the developer took it upon itself to create gameplay, or if the action that I was controlling was a strange glitch or bug. Was the testing department on strike? Did EA accidentally ship the early Alpha build? I don't know what happened exactly, but the outcome is nothing short of a resounding o'hoi — **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE



■ **Concept:** Proof that a popular license can outweigh the need for gameplay.

■ **Graphics:** Why does it look like someone slit Homer's throat? Also, is there any texturing or is everything plain shaded?

■ **Sound:** Tons of spoken dialogue from the television series, and what could quite possibly be the worst announcing to date.

■ **Playability:** "Hey, kid, you don't need gameplay to enjoy a Simpsons game. Trust me, you like the show so buy the game!"

■ **Entertainment:** Approximately 10 seconds of it...all occurring as you wait for the game to load for the very first time.

■ **Replay Value:** Low.

SECOND OPINION

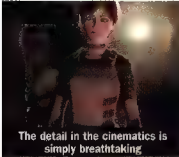
Games this bad only come around a few times in a lifetime, so let's all cherish Simpsons Skateboarding for being a shoddy, painfully unfunny, totally inept example of an extreme sports title gone horribly, horribly wrong. By "cherish" I mean "point and laugh at," not "purchase."

MATT — 1

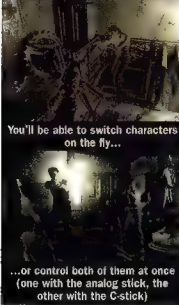
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS/FOX INTERACTIVE
 ■ **DEVELOPER** THE CODE MONKEYS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 29



By the end of the game, you'll feel physically exhausted by how much content you've absorbed..."



The detail in the cinematics is simply breathtaking



You'll be able to switch characters on the fly...

...or control both of them at once (one with the analog stick, the other with the C-stick)

GAMECUBE

RESIDENT EVIL 0

EVERY STORY HAS A BEGINNING

Much like a David Lynch film, the storytelling in the Resident Evil series tiptoes around the truth, interjects false leads, and constantly references a past that you know nothing about. While the idea of creating a prequel seems rather absurd, or just another way for Capcom to milk this license for all of its worth, this flashback episode had to happen. Leaving players in wonderment is part of Resident Evil's mystique, there's no arguing that, but leaving players hanging with countless questions in their heads for seven years is a tad cruel. At long last Capcom is delivering the answers we've anxiously awaited.

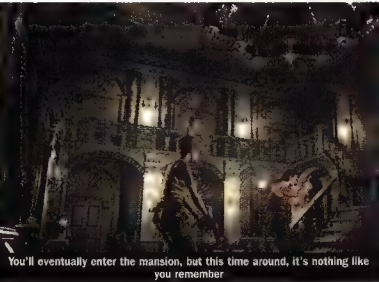
Since there are a number of explanations that Capcom has to include, I was a little concerned that these revelations would stick out like a soar thumb or greatly outweigh the amount of new content. There are a few segments where the explanations are a little convoluted or long winded in their delivery, but as a whole, the plot is actually quite good and never once does it seem that Capcom was trying to force answers down players' throats. If anything, this tale brings about a greater sense of uncertainty, as you'll find yourself asking, "Why wasn't Billy in any of the other games? Does he die? Turn into a Tyrant? Where is he later in the series?" Unlike the other chapters in the series, Capcom doesn't hold back in progressing the story or explaining what is truly afoot. Everything ties together in a whirlwind of twists, turns, and surprises. By the end of the game, you'll feel physically exhausted by how much content you've absorbed, yet relieved that it doesn't leave anything open to the imagination.

Along with the solid scripting, the visuals soar above any other entry in the series as well, and while this may be hard to believe, completely eclipse the GameCube remake of the original. It's running on the same engine, and the look is definitely similar. However, a higher degree of detail is emphasized within the environments, which now boast countless animated objects, and the character models made me contemplate whether they were real.

At this point, it truly does sound like a perfect game, but it's actually anything but. The gameplay is as clunky as ever. Sure, you can now drop items anywhere, which is nice, and switching between your two characters on the fly does produce interesting scenarios and exploration techniques, but it still struggles with the basics. The preset camera views are as aggravating as always, blinding players even during the most intense of firefights, and the controls don't allow for precise targeting or smoothness of movement. To make matters worse, the defensive items from the remake are missing. It's essentially a step back in some regards, which is fairly disappointing, but if you've stuck with the series up until this point, this was probably expected. —REINER



■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM ■ RELEASE NOVEMBER 12



You'll eventually enter the mansion, but this time around, it's nothing like you remember



The Tyrants are back and joined by even deadlier accomplices

THE BOTTOM LINE
MATURE
M 9.25
 ESRB

- **Concept:**
Learn of the events that lead up to the mansion incident in this finely sculpted prequel
- **Graphics:**
Frighteningly realistic environment modeling, authentic lighting effects, plus some of the most disturbing CG cinematics this side of George Romero
- **Sound:**
Brilliant ambience, believable voice acting, and a chilling score
- **Playability:**
The dual character action is pretty amazing, but the controls are as clunky as always
- **Entertainment:**
Two discs of heart-pounding excitement that will mess with your head until the surprise ending
- **Replay Value:**
Moderate

SECOND OPINION

If the devil's in the details, then RE 0 should register for duty in hell. The graphics are beyond gorgeous and it's hard to pick out which parts of the scene you can manipulate, as everything (including the characters) blends completely. The cooperative gameplay lets the game feel fresher, even though it has familiar characters (Rebecca) in familiar environments (the mansion again) with familiar puzzles (find the oddly shaped crank again!). I did find that having the ability to chuck items is a double-edged sword — meager on-person carrying space and lots of items I may need later don't marry happily. Having to gripe a little, the hot spots are still hit and miss — you'll wander around a box of ammo hitting a five or ten times before Rebecca finds it in her heart to pick it up. That said, RE 0 won't revolutionize the word; but it is scary, pretty, and most of all, a true Resident Evil game.

LISA — 9.25



"Within just minutes of play, it can make grown men cry..."

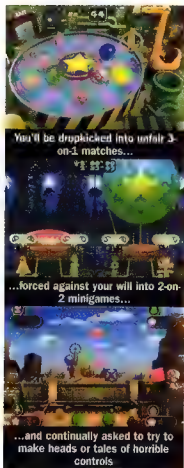
MARIO PARTY 4

TURN OUT THE LIGHTS...THIS PARTY IS OVER!

I wouldn't necessarily consider myself a religious man by any stretch of the imagination, but when I see games like Mario Party 4 hit the market, I begin to question my spirituality, wondering if Satan is actually working at Nintendo on this godforsaken series. I've seen the evil at work firsthand. Within just minutes of play, it can make grown men cry, turn friends against one another, and mess with your head so much that you begin conjuring up devious thoughts. Should I dropkick my friend's GameCube? Should I lock myself in the bathroom and try to chisel through the wall with a curling iron?

From a conceptual basis, there really is nothing wrong with this game. The idea of interlacing a traditional board game with minigames is as sound as can be. For the fourth consecutive time, however, this particular board game is as unorthodox as it is tedious. As far as I can tell, Hudson Soft is guilty of substance abuse. Rather than using a simplistic square game board much like Monopoly, Mario Party 4's playing surface is crammed to capacity with twists and turns, item shops, lotteries, secret squares, bonus games, and even roller coasters. It sounds like an absolute riot, but when you add it all up, it creates confusion, stalls the game, and throws out any semblance of strategy that it might have had. To be quite frank, it really doesn't make much sense. Picture Mouse Trap to the nth degree.

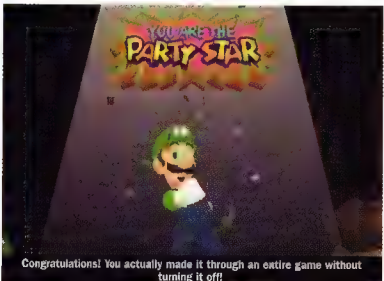
■ STYLE 1 TO 4-PLAYER BOARD ■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER HUDSON SOFT ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 22



You'll be drapped into unfair 3-on-1 matches...

...forced against your will into 2-on-2 minigames...

...and continually asked to try to make heads of tales of horrible controls



Congratulations! You actually made it through an entire game without turning it off!



The board game aspect is boring, uneventful, and perhaps the biggest waste of time in your lifetime

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE **E** 3

- **Concept:** A poorly designed board game with the Mario gang and over 50 minigames
- **Graphics:** Still 64-bit at heart, but the resolution is much sharper and some of the effects are quite impressive
- **Sound:** Familiar Mario voices that are usually drowned out by blood curdling screams of agony by you and your friends
- **Playability:** The board game defies logic and many of the minigames control atrociously
- **Entertainment:** Only for bedwetters and adults who openly admit that they are as dumb as rocks
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

We've been on the warpath against the Mario Party series since day one, so I'm sure that a lot of you just write our wrath off as the bitter musings of a bunch of jaded buttholes. I'll be the first to admit that I'm a jaded butthole, but that doesn't mean that Mario Party 4 (or any Mario Party game) is a well-made piece of software. It's sad, because it doesn't have to be this way. There's nothing inherently wrong with the board game/simple minigame format. It should be possible to merge the addictive quality of old-school arcade classics like Breakout or Ms. Pac-Man with the strategy of a board game masterpiece like Monopoly. Too bad Mario Party has none of the things that make those two aforementioned genres great. The board game portion of the package is arbitrary and boring, and the minigames are simplistic exercises in button-mashing tedium. At least Crash Bash for PS-X had the good sense to rip off some decent early '80s games.

MATT - 4

REVIEWS



GAMECUBE

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

STORMING THE CUBE

No matter what system you own, you're guaranteed an excellent World War II first-person shooter, courtesy of Electronic Arts. Pounding around, Frontline is one of the best there is on the console FPS market. You've got a good story, great graphics, solid gameplay, an interesting assortment of weapons, and cinema-quality music...what's not to like?

Let's face it, the GameCube is not what you want to buy if you're looking for FPS titles. I don't think I'm breaking any hearts by pointing that out, but EA has managed to inject a lot of bang into that wafer of a disc. Frontline fires on all cylinders on the Cube, and the controller actually lends itself very well to translating your reactions onscreen. I thought the bulky button layout would be a hindrance, but not so. I was able to maneuver my character around the beautiful environments just as deftly as I did with the Dual Shock or the Controller S.

From going behind enemy lines, to smuggling yourself aboard a German U-Boat, this is a title that will keep you glued to your seat from start to finish. It's not the tour-de-force that Allied Assault was, but it sticks to its guns, and turns out one of the best console FPS experiences available. Enjoy. —KRISTIAN

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN **8.75**

- **Concept:** Medal of Honor's Nazi extermination comes to GameCube.
- **Graphics:** As with many GameCube games, things look good at a distance, but muddy quickly as you approach them.
- **Sound:** How they get all of that audio on one little disc is beyond me.
- **Playability:** The controller didn't hold me back as much as I thought it would.
- **Entertainment:** Frontline works on many levels, and GameCube owners will spend hours exploring all of them.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

As this is Medal of Honor's first appearance on the GameCube, what better way to indoctrinate new recruits than by letting them storm the beaches of Normandy? Despite the game's lackluster AI and uneven hit detection, it soundly delivers on its promise and is a title that should not be missed—especially as this edition has multiplayer.

KATO — 9



GAMECUBE

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS

PLANES, TRAINS, AND DEATH STARS

Through a *mélange* of varied gameplay styles, The Clone Wars emerges as one of LucasArts' most meritorious of releases. Although the presentation and mission structure cling tightly to the framework of Rogue Leader and the Starfighter games, the variety in terms of vehicles produces a unique twist. As the action unfolds, you never know what to expect next. You'll find yourself gliding across the terrain in a fully loaded hover tank, stomping through a heavily fortified enemy camp in an assault walker, speeding through a junkyard on a speeder bike, taking to the skies in a Republic gunship, and hacking away at swarms of battle droids with a lightsaber as you infiltrate a Trade Federation complex on foot.

As expected, the assortment of playable craft and varying gameplay styles for each produces mixed results. Much like the old Nintendo 64 game, Shadows of the Empire, some of the gameplay components work well, while others leave much to be desired, or seem completely rushed off of the design floor. I loved the tank levels, appreciated the gunship, maru, and walker missions, but couldn't wait for the speeder bike and foot stages to come to a close. Thanks in part to a host of checkpoints, the difficulty level is not nearly as taxing as it was in Rogue Leader, but you will run into challenging bosses, timed sequences, and bonus missions. To give the game some legs, a number of secrets can be unlocked by finding hidden items and excelling in specific areas.

Even though it comes up short on several fronts, The Clone Wars does excel where needed, proving that its strengths greatly dwarf its shortcomings. The combat hits you at a fevered pitch, the visual presentation rocks your senses, and before long, you'll find yourself locked, loaded, and completely hooked by the momentous battles that are unfolding before your very eyes. It's definitely not for everyone, but if you are a Star Wars fan, it's a no-brainer. —REINER



You'll find yourself blowing away spiders in a TX-130S Fighter Tank...

...and slashing through hundreds of robotic troops on foot

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** PANDEMIC ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 28

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN **8.25**

- **Concept:** Another Star Wars game that fires direct hits, yet also manages to miss the target completely.
- **Graphics:** Picture Rogue Leader with less emphasis on vehicular detailing and more on the size of the battles and dynamics of effects.
- **Sound:** Authentic Star Wars sounds, and some of the worst voice impersonations known to Man.
- **Playability:** Varied play styles with mixed results that span from brilliant to downright awful.
- **Entertainment:** A lengthy game with engaging gameplay, interesting missions, and tons of secrets.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

The usage of Episode II material is golden, as the epic battle on Geonosis won't let you down. You can see units of clone troopers on the ground, while rich, earth-shattering explosions quake before you. Who said not to let your emotions take control of the Force? They obviously have never been dropped in some of these hyper-intense levels. The game goes wrong in the targeting department, however. There is no permanent lock-on, and due to the high number of targets, it's way too easy for your reticle to slip off one foe and onto another. The only way to ensure a hit is to always keep your enemy dead ahead of you—a dangerous strategy. Even this doesn't always work, because low flying craft have a hard time targeting high objects like turrets. Clone Wars tries to wear different hats with its segments putting you on foot, but it fails to be as well-rounded, or as fundamentally sound as Jedi Outcast.

KATO — 8.25

USE EVERYTHING AT YOUR DISPOSAL

DISPOSE

OF EVERYTHING



The four-mode visor. The morph ball. The freeze beam. The wave beam.



Evil must be exterminated. But first it must be found.



Violence

REVIEWS

SCORE 4800
TIME 4:12
CRITICS 0



GAMECUBE

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION

NINTENDO GETS EVERY 16-BIT SONIC, ALMOST

With 12 classic Genesis games crammed on to one disc, Mega Collection reigns as perhaps the best compilation ever to appear. Almost every 16-bit Sonic is represented; these include Sonic 1, 2, and 3, Sonic and Knuckles, 3D Blast, Spinball, and Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine.

Players must unlock the five remaining titles: Knuckles in Sonic 2 and 3, Flicky, Ristar, and Blue Sphere. Flicky is a fun puzzle game where players control a bird who must collect her infants before the cat gobbles them. Ristar is fine platformer featuring a star as the hero. Finally, Blue Sphere is a minigame from Sonic and Knuckles.

While these are certainly solid additions, I sincerely wanted to see two of Sonic's other adventures on this disc. Unfortunately, Sonic CD (the best Sonic game, Justin and I think) and Sonic R are absent, which makes me feel a little gyped.

Nevertheless, with so many great classics and some Sonic movies, art, and comics, Sonic Mega Collection is a great value. Fans, collectors, and anyone else even mildly interested in Sonic during his heyday should definitely snag a copy. — **CHET**

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.75

■ **Concept:**

It's 12 classic Genesis games — with nine of them being Sonic games.

■ **Graphics:**

They look exactly like their predecessors. I wish they were improved though.

■ **Sound:**

The effects and music are exactly like the older games.

■ **Playability:**

The controller presents no problems.

■ **Entertainment:**

Playing these games again was a blast. Although I wish Sonic CD and Sonic R were included, the secret games and bonuses nearly compensate.

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Most compilation titles wrap out and don't include enough games to be worth the price tag, but Sonic Mega Collection delivers the goods. With 12 games of Sonic goodness, fans can relive the glory days for weeks on end. I'm disappointed that Sonic CD is missing from this monster, but otherwise Sonic zealots have much to rejoice about. If any gamers out there missed these classics, now is the perfect time to snag them on one disc.

ANDY — 8.75

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
■ **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



GAMECUBE

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY

THE VERSATILE VERITECH

This is the third time I've strapped into this video game Veritech, and Battlecry has lost none of its luster. In fact, it's gotten better, because once you master changing in and out of your ship's forms, things that you once thought impossible are now pieces of cake. Developer Vicious Cycle should feel good that that gameplay holds up that well. This time around I used more of the special capabilities of each form. I went into sniper mode (Battloid mode) and dropped missile-diverting flares with the Fighter in areas I hadn't previously.

Unfortunately, the game's overall speed still strikes me as a little slow during the mid-air dogfights, but it certainly doesn't hamper the action on the ground. There's a good range of movements available between the Battloid and Guardian modes, and your booster rockets. This helped me cleanly navigate around the unhelpful camera and avoid careening into the sometimes-close quarters of the city. This is the best fighter-combat title since Rogue Leader. — **KATO**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TDK MEDIAEVE ■ **DEVELOPER** VICIOUS CYCLE
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 10

SECOND OPINION

Does justice to the license with gorgeous cel-shaded graphics, a riveting score, and a well-rounded gameplay package that is as just as versatile as it is action packed. The only area that doesn't really hit home is the vague and uneventful storytelling.

REINER — 8.25

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.5

■ **Concept:**

Give the GameCube a big bag 'o' action with 50+ stages

■ **Graphics:**

This title leaps off the screen, grabs you, and drags you into the fight

■ **Sound:**

In all departments, Battlecry more than fits the bill

■ **Playability:**

Changing your Veritech's forms will soon become second nature

■ **Entertainment:**

Robotech's gameplay depth helps to keep things going

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately High



GAMECUBE

TIMESPLITTERS 2

LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN

Few people were as excited about TimeSplitters 2 as I was. A GoldenEye-esque Story mode mixed with the speed and style of the original 'Splitters? Damn! Unfortunately, the end result is much closer to good than great. Arcade mode (which is basically what all of the original game was) is fast, fun deathmatching. Challenge mode is cool, too — dishing out a grocery list of tasks like finding bananas, breaking windows, and beheading dead folk.

Unfortunately, Story mode — which I had the highest hopes for — let me down. Sure, each environment has its own enemies and weapons, and the variety of gameplay is noble. Three things really bugged me, though: the difficulty (either too hard or too easy), the inability to save at any time (each level has one checkpoint), and the fact that nothing ties the stages together. I just couldn't get it in.

TS2 deserves many props: It looks stupendous, multiplayer is a trailer-load of fun, the physics engine works well, and the controller is definitely optimized. With the sad Story mode, you're left having slightly more meat than the original, but that isn't enough to make this an out and out must-have. — **JUSTIN**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS ■ **DEVELOPER** FREE RADICAL
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 15

SECOND OPINION

I was waiting for the story to grab a hold of me, but I never felt so much as a tickle. Also, the cartoony quality of the graphics turned me off after a while. That being said, this is definitely a robust title, but it falls squarely in the middle of the heap in terms of overall quality.

KRISTIAN — 8

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.5

■ **Concept:**

Travel through time and kill lots of people

■ **Graphics:**

Some of the best textures I've seen — mixed with wacky character models

■ **Sound:**

Music fits the levels, and voice-overs match the outrageous characters

■ **Playability:**

I wanted to kiss my GameCube controller. Button layout and responsiveness are perfect

■ **Entertainment:**

Lots of modes for your moolah, though Story mode is a disappointment

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately High

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GAMECUBE

EVOLUTION WORLDS

NOT-SO-EVOLVED

Like most RPGs, you form a party, look for a lot of items, develop some strategy, and take turns fighting a string of random battles. Evolution Worlds (an updated port of Evolution: The World of Sacred Device and Evolution 2: Far Off Promise) does admirably in the basic tasks of the RPG genre.

Graphics, on the other hand, show their age with dismal, painfully tiled texture maps and small environments. Thankfully, Evolution Worlds does truly shine in one technical area: voice acting. The script is funny, and voiced well. Even the mouths match!

I find it easy to say that my biggest gripe is the lack of camera control. Running through dungeons, it stays stationary while you scurry through channels on the screen. Controlling every movement with the shoulder buttons doesn't sound all that bad, but you're cruising through dungeons! They're twisty, and turny, and it makes finding things unacceptably painful.

The good news is that the gameplay is simple to learn, and really would be a good choice for newbies who don't know any better. — LISA

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
7

■ **Concept:** Bring back the prestige of the Launcher family as its only surviving son.

■ **Graphics:** Purportedly improved from the Dreamcast versions, but seriously lackluster.

■ **Sound:** Voice acting is actually done by reasonably trained actors — the best part of the game.

■ **Playability:** Turn-based and really, really dull!

■ **Entertainment:** Scrolling through lots of text isn't usually my idea of a good time, but this isn't all bad.

■ **Replay Value:** Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

This is an easy game to get into, and stay into. It's too bad the whole thing came off as a five-year-old's version of Final Fantasy, but that's what cute art direction will get you. I liked the battle animations, and the magic/item system, however. This is probably a great game to give someone who isn't really familiar with the genre.

KRISTIAN — 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT/STING
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18

GAMECUBE QUICKIES

MONSTERS, INC. SCREAM ARENA

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 18

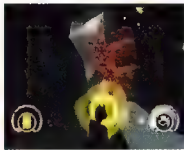


This game is balls. Big ones, soft ones, bouncy ones, it's all about getting them in your hands. Unfortunately, there is little else to it other than chucking balls at opponents in various settings. Scream Arena replicates the movie's charm wonderfully, but its lack of variety hardly qualifies it even as a party game. This is the kind of title that your mom would buy for you by mistake, because she thinks you'd enjoy anything related to the film. Warn her now before you open up your present and find this lump of coal. — KATO

E 5

DARKENED SKYE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



You probably haven't heard of this game, and frankly, it does little to help its cause. While Skye is painfully average in looks and combat, and the platforming can be uneven, it simply has a way of keeping you going. I liked the magic system, and was surprised that the irrelevant story started to grow on me rather than the reverse. Should I tell you to buy it? I don't know, but I do suggest you save often. Skye's laundry list of quests is strangely solid in both its simplicity and repetitive challenge. — KATO

T 6.75

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 23

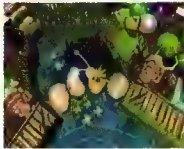


Neversoft tried to drastically change the Tony Hawk franchise with this fourth installment, but I think it tried a little too hard in the wrong areas. Many missions — while fun — take away from the skating, which is why we play the game. The vast amount of goals, buying secrets, and some memorable tasks make THPS 4 another stupendous action/sports title. However, Aggressive Inline's humor, RPG elements, and constantly changing levels give it an ever-so-slight advantage. — JUSTIN

T 9

ZAPPER: ONE WICKED CRICKET

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER PUZZLE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGAMES
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



I love a game with the word "Wicked" in the title (except Wicked 18 and Wicked Surfing), and I have to love a game with great graphics, good sound, creative level design, tons of extra features, and a perfectly paced ramp-up of difficulty. Like Frogger before it, Zapper has the same hurry-up-and-plan puzzle formula. My only complaint is universal to the genre: Angled camera shots can make for excessive deaths due to operator confusion. — LISA

E 8.75

BLOODRAYNE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 16



Andy and Kristian loved this one; I must be missing something. It's just another average third-person hack 'n' slasher, augmented with some cool blood-sucking animations and a ton of gore. If you love this kind of thing, it might be worth your \$50, but I couldn't get over the amateurish production values, camera bugs, and shallow combat control. It's not a horrible way to kill a few hours, but I think your time is more valuable than this. — MATT

M 7



FIFA 2003

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS
 ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5

The FIFA series continues to be a mixed bag. This isn't just this year's World Cup title with club teams. The new manual dekes are very impressive, the game's smoother, and the dead ball set pieces are fabulous. Unfortunately, some of Cup's animations (including the juggling moves) are absent, the AI needs work, and the passing can be anemic. EA keeps tinkering with things, but remains unable to capture perfection. At some point, being "the best soccer game in America" shouldn't be enough. — KATO

E 8

OUTLAW GOLF

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** SIMON AND SCHUSTER
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 29



As far as golf games go, the GameCube is pretty much starved — until now. Outlaw Golf is just as good on this system as it is on the Xbox, and the segmented analog orbit that Cube controllers sport make for straighter shots more often. The announcing is still hilarious, and the ball physics are decent. The camera, however, sucks the big one from time to time, and the replay feature is basically useless. Plus, there are only three courses...what's the deal with that? I liked the unlockable stuff though, and the multiplayer modes are a lot of fun. Give it a whirl if you're a dimple-hitter. — KRISTIAN

T 7.75

THE ONLY THING THAT
CAN STOP THE RACE IS
GOOD WEATHER



WHITEOUT



Experience the thrills, spills and sub-arctic chills of authentic snowmobile action. Careen along snow-packed trails in blinding blizzards. Bust big, frosty air with over 30 different tricks. And pray for endless winter storm fronts. It's Whiteout. And it's got racing down cold.



PlayStation.2





THE BOTTOM LINE
T **9.5**
TEEN
ESRB

XBOX

STEEL BATTALION

SHELL SHOCK!

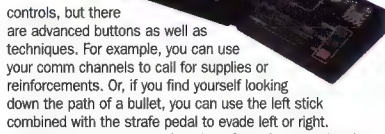
“Every level explodes with the sights and sounds of war.”

It's been a long time since a game has made my heart race quite like Steel Battalion. Sure, you could joke that the price point alone of 200 dollars is enough to get any gamers heart racing (and wallet crying), but the fact of the matter is that Steel Battalion without its monster joystick just wouldn't be the same game.

The gargantuan control array features 38 buttons, 2 joysticks, a throttle, a communication dial, a joypad on the left stick for upper torso movement, plus three foot pedals. As you would imagine with all these gadgets, even firing up your mech is a treat. The start-up sequence has you flipping toggles to bring systems online, and ultimately hitting the start button when all systems are go. From there, you just put it in gear and use the foot pedals to give it some gas.

Movement is fairly simple: The throttle combined with the accelerator and brake pedals moves your mech forwards or backwards, with the left joystick controlling lateral movement. On top of the left stick is also a joypad that moves the upper torso around so you can move in one direction and fire in another. To make this pat-your-head-while-rubbing-your-belly movement scheme easier to use, the bottom monitor on your Heads Up Display (HUD) gives you a forward view at all times.

Battle is also fairly easy once you get the hang of it. The right joypad controls targeting, with a trigger button to fire your sub weapons, and a main weapon and lock-on button at your thumb position. The center panel houses the controls to switch weapons as well as wash your view screen, extinguish fires, and fire chaff. Those are pretty much the basic

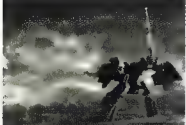


controls, but there are advanced buttons as well as techniques. For example, you can use your comm channels to call for supplies or reinforcements. Or, if you find yourself looking down the path of a bullet, you can use the left stick combined with the strafe pedal to evade left or right.

Obviously, the controller is quite a feat of engineering, but the game is awe-inspiring as well. Every level explodes with the sights and sounds of war. The detail in the environments is just amazing with trees and landscape obstacles, as well as all the tools of war unleashing a fireworks show of death and destruction that had me fearing for my well-being. Those feelings are real too, since if your mech gets destroyed in battle without you pressing the eject button (complete with flip cover) it's game over, man. Don't be surprised if you have to repeat levels often, but it really makes the game what it is – the ultimate mech war simulator.

If you have the means, I highly advise the experience. Steel Battalion is a one-of-a-kind game that will thrill you like no other. Plus, if Capcom manages to sell enough of these babies here in the States, we can expect to see a sequel with full Xbox Live capabilities and that, my friends, will be utter bliss. – **ANDY**

- **Concept:**
Use a big complex controller to make for the most intense mech simulator of all time
- **Graphics:**
A lot of the screen is covered by your HUD, but the realism is still there
- **Sound:**
Every sound effect in this game is so perfect it literally puts you in the cockpit
- **Playability:**
It's complex, but once you get the control down you will never understand how you lived without it
- **Entertainment:**
Simulated mech combat doesn't sound like the coolest thing ever, but it is
- **Replay Value:**
High



You can outfit your mech with a variety of weapons



Terrain can make for difficult combat



It's like a carry all...for mechs!

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15



Take a turn too fast and you'll find yourself on your back



The level of detail in the explosions is fantastic

SECOND OPINION

Is this game worth the money? If you're a mech fan, then the answer is absolutely. Looking past the controller, this title has gameplay depth. Managing your secondary weapons, ammo, and even weight distribution (you can actually tip over) makes each mech different. At first I didn't like the game's bluntness, but it's all part of the gritty war experience that will have you in awe once your cannons lay their first enemy flat on its butt, or you see the morning mist roll through the battlefield. Also, you can complain about the lack of game saves, but that's all part of Battalion's realism. If you can't afford spare mechs, then you're just another corpse – too bad, time to start all over. This title is no gimmick. It's still a mech game, but one that'll give you an experience like no other. If you're not a fan of the genre, bite the bullet and pay for it if you can.

KATO — 8.75



THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE
9
ESRB

XBOX

"...you [get] just enough time to either shake that turd out of your shorts or to start firing – but not both"

SERIOUS SAM

A-GORE-APHOBICS ANONYMOUS

For a game that, at its core, champions the no-nonsense pursuit of dismembering aliens in the goriest possible manner, there is surprisingly a lot going on with Serious Sam. For starters, Xbox owners should feel very fortunate that it encompasses both PC editions of Serious Sam – giving you multiplayer. Not only that, but extra work has been done to spruce up textures and character models.

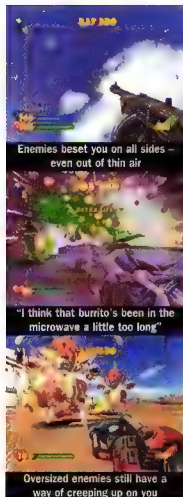
Serious Sam is not a relentless shoot 'em up. While it will pour legions of enemies on the screen at one time (leaving you just enough time to either shake that turd out of your shorts or to start firing – but not both), it paces such intense sequences perfectly. For example, you'll come across an open area. While your first inclination is to rush forward and grab those much-needed shotgun shells or health packs, don't be fooled. This game likes to lure you out into the open or lull you to sleep with a few easy kills before it ambushes you to death (and gives you agoraphobics out there a heart attack). Sometimes it will downright scare you with enemies that spawn in your face or right behind you. This latter fact is one that I feel is a mark against the game. It can produce some cheap hits that you can't avoid. Plus, it negates one of Sam's finer points – sound.

One of your defenses (besides a powerful, bullet-studded offense) is detecting noises from enemies. You can hear almost every foe (those right behind you strike before you

can react – which is the rub outlined above) before you see it. This produces almost *Aliens*-like freak-outs, where you feverishly whirl around, trying to get a bead on your target. Another helping hand comes from the fact that despite the hairy situations you'll have to blast your way out of, Serious Sam does an excellent job in giving you ammo, armor, and health. It seemed that whenever I was just about to kick the bucket, I knew that if I persevered a little further, I'd get my reward. This tactic kept me pushing on, despite some incredible odds. Finally, the game's button mapping and gameplay ease make it easy to cozy up to. Frequent weapon switching is demanded and mastering the multi-kill is a must. Non-keyboard and mouse first-person shooters like this have to rely on a generous hit detection, but that's fine. The game can move at a blurring speed. In one spectacular situation, I was attacked by a multitude of spiders. My only way out was to lay on the trigger and literally spin in circles until every one of the eight-legged freaks was dust. This kind of frantic pace is normal, and at that moment gave Serious Sam more of an old-school shooter feel.

You've heard Xbox owners talk your ear off about Halo, but Serious Sam represents the console and the genre well by packing a tremendous punch and some heavy heat. – **KATO**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** GOTHAM GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** CROTEAM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



Concept:

Serious Sam is an orgy of mayhem made better by the importance it places on level design, sound, and other fundamentals

Graphics:

This Xbox edition features better models and permits more enemies onscreen

Sound:

Sam revolves around detecting foes' noises. I never want to hear horse's hooves again

Playability:

You'll be asked to weapon change frequently, and you won't be let down

Entertainment:

The green glow of your Xbox goes very well with splatterings of green entrails

Replay Value:

High

SECOND OPINION

I can't believe how much this game still rocks! Absolutely every section of this Serious Sam presents non-stop violent action. Players will get a host of different weapons to destroy a huge variety of monsters. At times, nearly 100 enemies crowd the screen – all hoping to tear a chunk out of our hero, Sam! Fortunately, the combat manages to remain fresh with enemy and map variety; very few games can execute this effectively. However, a break from the constant killing and tension with perhaps a few simple puzzles or something would be nice. Furthermore, although the framerate always maintains a smooth 60 FPS, the textures and overall graphical presentation won't absolutely blow you away. Nevertheless, Serious Sam is one of the coolest and most addicting first-person shooters made, and a must-buy for all Xbox owners who haven't played the PC version.

CHET – 9.25

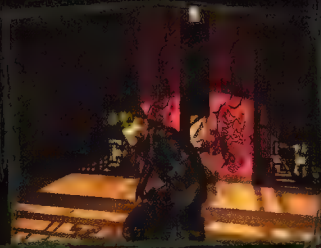


I ALONE HAVE THE FIFTH FREEDOM.

THE RIGHT TO SPY, STEAL, DESTROY AND ASSASSINATE,
TO ENSURE THAT AMERICAN FREEDOMS ARE PROTECTED
IF CAPTURED, MY GOVERNMENT WILL DISAVOW
ANY KNOWLEDGE OF MY EXISTENCE.

I AM SAM FISHER.

I AM A SPLINTER CELL.



STEALTH ACTION REDEFINED

You make the rules in the high stakes game of covert espionage. Work alone, outside the boundaries of the law, to thwart cyberterrorist attacks against the United States. With thermal goggles, fiber optic cameras, prototype guns and other dirty tricks, you redefine justice and punishment. Rappel, split jump, glide along ziplines, force information from your enemies, even use them as human shields. And remember - a dead witness is not really a witness.



Blood and Gore
Violence

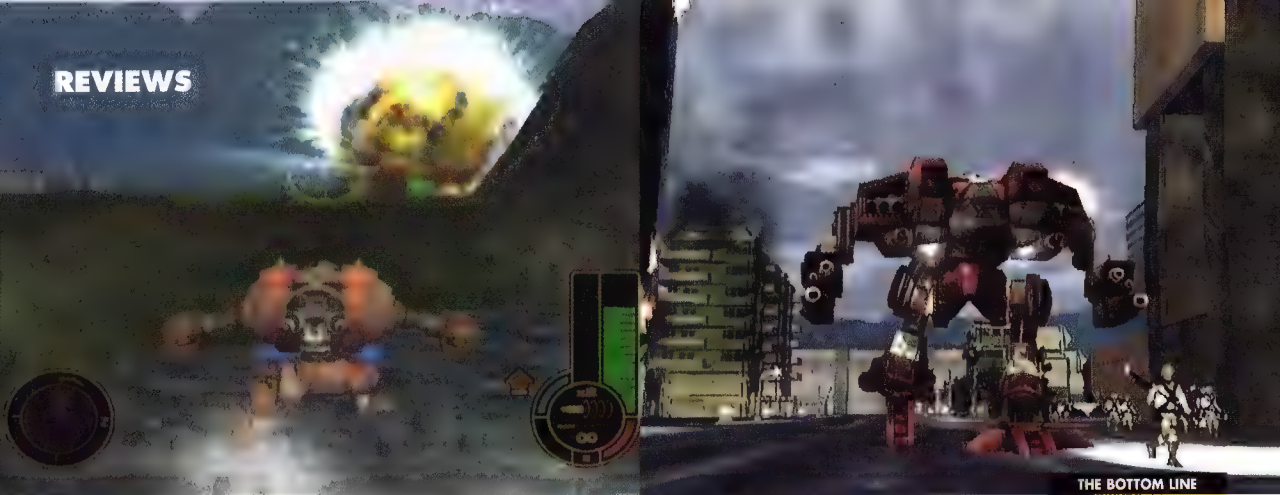


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★ Tom Clancy's
**SPLINTER
CELL**

www.splintercell.com



THE BOTTOM LINE



8.75

“...the damage modeling in this game is second to none”

XBOX

MECHASSAULT

BLOWING AWAY THE GENRE

I've been following MechAssault for many, many months now, and it's looked good from the first time I saw it. Thankfully, the actual item does not disappoint in the least. I was afraid that this title would be all explosions, and no substance — I wasn't totally wrong with that assumption, but I was less wrong than I thought I would be... Does that make any sense? Xbox owners are in for a treat with MechAssault, there's no denying that. The real question will be whether a mainstream gaming audience will get onboard with a mech-based action title. I think it has an excellent chance.

First and foremost, the damage modeling in this game is second to none. When you're in a huge city filled with skyscrapers, not only can you send said buildings tumbling to the ground in a deluge of debris and dust, but as you're firing at this thing to bring it down, your shots will produce shattering glass, hanging insulation, and all manner of collateral damage to individual places on the structure. That means you see the effect of each and every round you fire. Not too shabby. On a similar note, the explosion technology is terrific, especially when enemy mechs succumb to your onslaught and their nuclear reactors go critical. Additionally, small ground craft are not only destructible, they're also puntable. If you have a head of steam going, and you run into a truck, you'll punt it the

length of a football field. Oddly, enemy ground units such as tanks or missile vehicles aren't puntable. Why? I don't get that. You should be able to crush those things like ants with your towering mountain of armor, but instead you just run into them like you were hitting a boundary in the environment.

Speaking of the environment, I love the scale conveyed throughout the game. It really feels like I am a 20-foot tall killing machine walking around various planet-side locations during my missions, and the missions themselves don't hinder the experience on the other hand, they don't really add to it either. I guess there's only so much you can do to spice up a “go here and blast everything” kind of game, but what there is isn't bad.

The AI logic is terribly bad on occasion, but it normally works in your favor. In one instance, an enemy Puma tried to get at me by walking through a concrete barrier. Since he was unable to do that, I perched myself on the ledge above him, and teed off with salvo after salvo of point-blank PPC fire until he gave up the ghost. Of course multiplayer action is where the real challenge lies if you're looking for hot mech-on-mech action, so you know you've got more game to explore if you sail through the single-player experience. Definitely a good addition to your holiday wish list. — KRISTIAN

■ **Concept:**

A mech game without all of the pesky simulation aspects, and plenty of explosions

■ **Graphics:**

Excellent destruction effects, great particle effects, and intricately modeled units

■ **Sound:**

Explosion noises are interesting, but the music is terrible

■ **Playability:**

The controls are basic enough that most of you will be able to hit the ground running

■ **Entertainment:**

Mech fans and newcomers alike will get into this one

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderately High



Charging a PPC

This direct hit is one of many

Bigger machines mean heavier weaponry

Gauss rifle time. MOFO!

■ **STYLE 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION** ■ **PUBLISHER MICROSOFT** ■ **DEVELOPER DAY 1 STUDIOS** ■ **RELEASE NOVEMBER 12**



"I say shoot, you say boom — SHOOT!"



Some structures offer a better destruction display than others

SECOND OPINION

Without the ability to customize payloads, toggle the most minuscule of system functions, or any of the high-tech tweaking from the PC version, this is basically MechWarrior for dummies. This isn't a bad thing, however. While it lacks the bells and whistles that you've come to expect, developer Day One Studios did a phenomenal job creating a different kind of gameplay package that is just as savvy, but faster, sleeker, and more explosive than ever before. The level of destruction that unfolds onscreen is in a league of its own. When rockets hit a building, you'll see windows shattering, water pipes bursting, and debris sailing through the air. It's quite the show. The storytelling could use a little work, and more variety within the missions would be nice, but the gameplay is right on the money and its multiplayer options are quite extravagant as well.

REINER — 8.5



XBOX

STAR WARS: JEDI OUTCAST

WHO SAYS THERE'S NO MATCH FOR A GOOD BLASTER?

If you ever run into a jaded Star Wars fan, chances are they are that way simply because they care. They think that the series has been going downhill since *Return of the Jedi*, and want something to rescue it from the mire of George Lucas' flawed genius. While Jedi Outcast can't erase the damage done by Jar Jar Binks, it can fill your mind with some of the sweetest combat you've ever had the pleasure of playing.

First-person shooters are usually simply just that, but Outcast throws in third-person lightsaber duels and barely skips a beat. Best of all, it makes both indispensable. In later levels I found great joy in quickly switching from sniping in the first-person to lightsaber-throwing devastation. Some have criticized the game's pace, but I found the beginning puzzles only made using the Force later that much more sweet. It also highlighted the game's remarkable recreation of Star Wars' unique style in the level design.

The third-person perspective not only offered some fantastic battles, but it enabled intuitive, Zen-like Jedi duels despite occasional blind spots. Throw in Force powers (without the Dark Side consequences) like Lightning and Grip, and you'll soon be making Luke Skywalker look like some talentless stiff from the sticks. —KATO



Now you can Force Push with a clear conscience

"Don't shove, there's plenty here for everyone"

The lightsaber controls are fluid and intuitive

A slight weapons malfunction ends an otherwise boring conversation

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** VICARIOUS VISIONS/RAVEN SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

THE BOTTOM LINE



9

- **Concept:** Deliver the most complete Star Wars experience to date
- **Graphics:** Outscenes could use some work, and there are occasional hiccups to hamper smoothness
- **Sound:** Do not underestimate the value of blaster kick or bits of garbled Probe Droid speak
- **Playability:** The third-person lightsaber controls are almost flawless
- **Entertainment:** The best Star Wars game yet, and it doesn't even use the movies. The Xbox is without online multiplayer, however
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

With darkly seductive gameplay and a powerful visual presentation, Jedi Outcast quickly makes every Star Wars game before it obsolete. As you'll soon realize, this is the first game truly to capture the essence of the Jedi art. With the utmost of precision, you'll tap into the Force to catapult yourself 30 feet into the air, mentally disarm Stormtroopers, and propel electrical blasts from your fingertips. These actions, and the entire gameplay package for that matter, are flawlessly executed, well balanced, and as smooth as can be. The visual presentation is equally as impressive with effects that mimic the films and towering level designs. It would have been nice to see the highly addictive online presence from the PC version running on Xbox Live, but while not nearly as magnificent, the four-player deathmatch still manages to deliver a fair share of thrills.

REINER — 9.5

REVIEWS



XBOX

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

VIRTUAL CRACK NUMBER 2

Tony Hawk 4 is addicting: as hell. Seriously, I could hardly put the controller to rest so that I could write this review. If you've played the series at all, you know what to expect. You'll progress through 10 levels, unlock a few secrets, and complete various challenges.

Some of the new challenges, like COMBO, force players to learn trick lines, which I like. However, there are an equal number, such as Ollie the Bum, that just annoy and simply seem like filler. Fortunately, after completing each level once (a ten-hour ordeal), you'll unlock the Pro Challenges, where veteran players can finally test their virtual skating skills.

The levels remain similar to past incarnations, but are significantly larger. Furthermore, Neversoft removed the time limit, which is both good and bad. On one hand, it's convenient to remain in the level and complete challenges at your own pace, giving you time to find new trick lines. However, in this mode, everything is set up in a linear fashion, so there's hardly anything hidden to discover. Plus, your score eventually resets, which kind of negates the purpose.

Although THPS 4 is less evolved compared to its predecessors, casual and hardcore fans alike will certainly dig Tony's fourth adventure.

—CHET

THE BOTTOM LINE



9

- **Concept:** The same as before; just add bigger levels, a Spine Transfer, and some new challenges
- **Graphics:** The graphics are a step up from previous games, especially in terms of animation
- **Sound:** The sound effects are great, and there are more music tracks than any other title in the series
- **Playability:** The control is precise and tight, although the Xbox q-pad is a little stiff
- **Entertainment:** I enjoyed playing the regular game and the multiplayer stuff, despite some disappointments and no online play
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

This is the first game in the Tony Hawk series that doesn't completely blow its predecessor away. The enormous levels are amazing, but the mission structure doesn't lend the game the sense of urgency that previous Pro Skaters had. Also, as gameplay innovations go, the Spine Transfer is no Revert. It's a testament to how great this series is that I'm slightly disappointed by a game that earns every bit of this high score.

MATT — 9.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** NEVERSOFT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 23



SERIOUS SAM™

GET SERIOUS.

Monsters spawned from another dimension are trying to make the Milky Way galaxy their personal trashcan. As attempts to defend the solar system fail, the fate of the Earth (that's US people!) and even the universe rests with one man.

YOU are Sam 'Serious' Stone, a legend in our time. Sam is our only hope against these mischievous miscreants and their evil leader, the one we call 'MENTAL'.

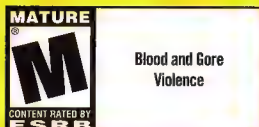
The only way to get Mental and save us all, is to use an ancient artifact called the 'Time Lock', to teleport back in time.

Don't ask us how or why this is happening. All we can tell you is, this is serious...

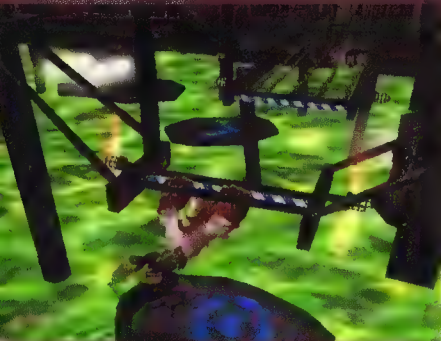
"Serious Sam... is only about one thing: insane action, which many of us simply describe as f@#\$ing nuts!"
- *Game Informer Magazine*



www.gothamgames.com/sam



REVIEWS



XBOX

DR. MUTO

IT'S MUTORIFIC

Midway hasn't had much success in the action/platformer genre in the past, so I didn't have high expectations for Dr. Muto. I couldn't be happier about being wrong. Far from the usual 3D-platforming fare, Muto is based more on action than exploration, and is the better for it. You do have to collect the usual trinkets, but nearly everything you acquire is used to clone new mutant forms for your character, or outfit him with a new weapon or gadget. This means that you'll actually want to discover everything the game has to offer.

Muto isn't perfect by any means, and suffers from the usual camera problems and graphical hitches that plague most second-tier platformers. Also, the control is annoying, particularly when you're swinging from bars. Thankfully, the game's shape-shifting shick lifts it above the average.

by allowing the good doctor to transform himself into a spider, gorilla, and several other types of creatures. It's a unique concept done very well. Dr. Muto is good fun, and certainly a welcome addition to the Xbox's slim portfolio of platformers.

MATT

THE BOTTOM LINE



8

■ Concept:

Save the universe as a shape-shifting mad scientist

■ Graphics:

Nothing special, to be sure, but the transformation effects are pretty cool

■ Sound:

Techno tunes interspersed with the usual platforming chatter

■ Playability:

It's not extremely deep, but some levels do some tricky form-changing

■ Entertainment:

A surprising sleeper hit from a company that's on a roll

■ Replay Value:

Moderate

SECOND OPINION

The wacky scientist bit went old about a decade ago, but Dr. Muto is surprisingly solid as an action/platformer. While not as gorgeous or inventive as Blinx, I really feel this is the premiere action/platformer for the Xbox this year. It certainly took me a while to get over the character, and he still bugged me even as I got deeper in the game, but there certainly is a lot of entertainment here. The morphs and gadgets keep it interesting, even though Dr. Muto himself is not.

ANDY - 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
 ■ **DEVELOPER** MIDWAY ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



XBOX

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

HITTIN' IT

In the realm of action/strategy titles out there nowadays, there are definite frontrunners. Metal Gear Solid 2 and Splinter Cell come to mind for many people, but Eidos is looking to change all of that. Hitman 2 offers an intense experience in varied environments that are filled to the brim with beautiful spectacles, and a churning undercurrent of ambient life. Because of this depth, and the gameplay structure, Silent Assassin is able to serve up a thinking person's shooter—but that could be either good or bad depending on how you like to play your gun-wielding executioner characters.

This game is basically one huge lesson in trial and error. You're given a limited number of saves to implement at any time in a level, which is nice, but I would be shocked if you didn't load those saves 10 to 20 times throughout the area. The enemy AI is very astute when it comes to sniffing out your stealthy activities, and once you blunder into a bad situation, your cover is either blown or you're engaging in a close-quarters firefight with severely lopsided odds. I loved the multiple-solution facet of the game, but I wish there was less of a need to load and reload your saves during every single mission. In any event, Hitman 2 is a solid buy, and worth holding on to if you find it under the <insert your particular faith's gift giving centerpiece> this <insert your December holiday>. —KRISTIAN

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.5

■ Concept:

An assassin game with a lot of trial and error

■ Graphics:

Hitman's second offering is a graphical jewel, and the Xbox has yet another optical masterpiece to point at

■ Sound:

I was surprised at the realism in the ballistics sound department

■ Playability:

Be ready to get well acquainted with the save and load features in the menu system

■ Entertainment:

This is a great game if you have the patience to weather its eccentricities

■ Replay Value:

Low



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE
 ■ **DEVELOPER** IO INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 1

SECOND OPINION

The packaging and marketing campaign behind Hitman 2 might lead many to believe this is an action game along the lines of Max Payne. If you come into this expecting to blow away anyone and everyone like a heavily armed Tasmanian Devil, you're in for a nasty (and pleasant) surprise. In fact, Hitman 2 is closer to a 3D version of strategy games like Commandos, placing an emphasis on careful stealth tactics. Basically, you have to make your way through the complex missions through trial and error, quick saving at every opportunity. Gameplay will often result in death. This game will frustrate many, and the sometimes-erratic camera and AI don't help matters. Still, it's a remarkable game, offering a dramatic sense of urgency and missions that can be completed in a number of different ways. Really cool.

MATT - 8.75



XBOX

GHOST RECON

SHOOT 'EM DOWN

Ghost Recon on the PC was a major leap forward for developer Red Storm, so it's no surprise that ports are now showing up on the consoles. Since it is a port, I was expecting a downgrade in both play mechanics and graphics. Surprisingly, there is very little graphical degradation that I could detect, and the control scheme has been shunted over to the Xbox controller with a decent amount of effectiveness. True, the map/order-issuing system is sloppy at best, but it seems to me like the developers did the best they could with the buttons they had to work with.

In terms of mission structure and pacing, suspense hangs heavy in the air during every mission. I can't tell you how many times I would be sneaking through the undergrowth, then nearly crap myself as one of my squadmates squeezed off a couple of rounds at an enemy I didn't see. The environments add to the sense of realism with excellent ambient effects, and the enemies exhibit passable AI. Basically, if you're looking to get really, really into a military simulation title on your Xbox, this is simply the best way to go. Watch out for the rock formations though — for some reason you're not able to walk on them in the world of Clancy. The multiplayer side of things makes up for some of the game's other short-comings with Xbox Live play, and the cooperative missions are particularly nice. Worth checking out, even if you're just curious. — **KRISTIAN**



A trooper approaches suspicious looking rubble



The Army enjoys practicing maneuvers near Madison County



Tanks should be left alone, unless you have a death wish

THE BOTTOM LINE

M
 MATURE
 17+

8.5

- **Concept:** Make your way through assorted levels without getting anyone on your team shot
- **Graphics:** I was hoping the blockiness of some of the environments would receive a little attention, but no
- **Sound:** The ear-ringing effect you get from being too close to an exploding grenade is indicative of the rest of the game's excellent audio
- **Playability:** Expect a steep learning curve when you fire this one up for the first time
- **Entertainment:** Once you get into it, this title is very difficult to put down
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Ghost Recon is a mixed bag for me. On one hand, you have this highly realistic single-player experience where caution and planning really pay off. On the other hand, the action nut in me gets bored moving from position to position and talking such precautions to keep my head from being blown off. The interface for team interaction is also full of good and bad points. After playing SOCOM, I really like using verbal commands to move my team. But on the other hand, I also like this interface because, unlike SOCOM, the teams in Ghost Recon actually follow my commands and their AI isn't one step above stupid. If you have the patience, the single-player game really captures military operations to a tee. The multiplayer action, however, is this game's best asset. Communication with your team through Xbox Live or a local area network ups the level of intensity and gets rid of some of the tedium of the single player experience.

ANDY— 8.5



XBOX

TIMESPLITTERS 2

DEATHMATCH OR BUST!

If you play first-person shooters primarily for the single-player experience, stop reading and flip the page. Even though Free Radical labored intensively to make this area attractive and invigorating, it still falls way short of the current industry benchmark and pales in comparison to the multiplayer options and inventive Challenge mode that are included on this disc. A catastrophe like this would cripple most games, but in Timesplitters 2's case, it doesn't really matter.

As strange as this may sound, the heart and soul of this game can only be found on the outskirts. The Challenge mode, which has quickly become my mode of choice, pushes players to complete outrageous tasks in missions that can best be described as high-tension minigames. Although it's my favorite aspect, the crowning jewel of Timesplitters 2 is the customization and variety embedded within the multiplayer game. You can tweak every little thing, build amazing arenas in the Map Maker, and compete in a wide variety of modes.

The targeting system can be a little funky at times, and it may not be the complete package you were hoping for, but it's still one heck of a game — a serious tour de force for deathmatch. — **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

T
 TEEN
 13+

8.5

- **Concept:** A high-budget sequel that puts emphasis on excess and neglects the main portion of the game.
- **Graphics:** Finely sculpted character models and razor-sharp texturing, yet poorly detailed environments.
- **Sound:** A mildly upbeat-themed score that ties in with the different eras you travel to.
- **Playability:** Slippery aiming, but otherwise fairly solid.
- **Entertainment:** Longevity is amassed through the amazing multiplayer modes, Map Maker, and Challenge mode.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Timesplitters 2 is kind of like a meal where all your side dishes are better than the main course. The thin Story mode is no great shakes; the real fun is in the wild, over-the-top Challenge and Arcade portions of the game. It's not as great as I hoped, and the aiming is a mess, but it's still a nice FPS.

MATT — 8.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 26

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** EBIDS ■ **DEVELOPER** FREE RADICAL ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 15

REVIEWS

XBOX

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

A PS2 SLEEPER HITS XBOX

PlayStation 2 gamers were treated with Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance almost a year ago to the day, but time hasn't changed the fact that it's a truly outstanding game.

Unlike its PC brethren, Dark Alliance isn't a complex RPG, but rather a fun, dungeon crawler where you fight your way, real-time, through a horde of monsters. You can play as one of three characters: a human archer, a dwarven fighter, or an elven sorceress. As you would suspect from any game following the AD&D rule set, there are many items for you to collect and outfit on your character, plus feats they can learn as they level-up.

Dark Alliance is pretty challenging at times. You will definitely run (or try to run) from a fair share of enemies as well as reload from save points often, but it's still a great experience. The environments and characters are so finely detailed and animated that just exploring the dungeons is a treat. As an added bonus for Forgotten Realms fans, if you defeat the game in Extreme mode you unlock Drizzt Do'urden as a playable character. So if you love magic and monsters, you really can't go wrong with Dark Alliance. — ANDY

■ **STYLE 1** OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK ISLE STUDIOS/SNOWBUND STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN **T** **8.5**

- **Concept:** Explore a series of dungeons with one of three characters.
- **Graphics:** Small in stature but big in detail!
- **Sound:** The voice-overs and soundtrack are movie quality — and a good movie at that!
- **Playability:** The buttons setup is a little awkward, but can be customized.
- **Entertainment:** There is always something to be said for a good dungeon crawler.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

The graphics, sound, and gameplay are all executed at a fairly high level. Unfortunately, compared to some other games in the genre and its predecessors, DA just isn't ambitious. There are only three different characters, and the quest takes a mere 20 hours to complete. Nevertheless, I had a fun time playing it again.

CHET — 8.5



XBOX

NHL 2K3

CHECKING EA OVER THE BOARDS

For 11 consecutive years, the only hockey game that I would even think about playing was Electronic Arts' NHL series. I still find it hard to believe, but this year, EA's reign has ended and Sega is currently the company to beat. All of the changes that EA made to its series defied what was once the most intense sports game on the market. Even though EA destroyed itself, there's a good chance that Sega's product would have crushed it anyway.

Aside from the fact that NHL 2K3's front end is incredibly deep and comprehensive, offering a host of fantasy options and online play, you can clearly see that the main focus was actually the gameplay. With smooth controls, innovative moves, and amazing CPU AI, it doesn't get much better than this. For the first time ever in a hockey game, your players will get in scrums along the boards, dive to stop breakaways, and reach up to snag pucks. It's a brilliant design, and a generation ahead of where EA is today. — REINER

■ **STYLE 1** TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** TREYARCH ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



XBOX

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

HONORABLE AMMO DISCHARGE

The Medal of Honor series is not just a great batch of first-person shooters. They put you into the most brutal military conflicts of the last century. Frontline may just be the most intense, enjoyable history lesson you ever get.

This is a direct port of the PS2 version we called June's Game of the Month. As such, it contains one of the best levels in FPS gaming: D-Day. This stage has debris-spewing explosions, random fire, and all-around carnage. Every time I play it, I get the same butterflies in the pit of my stomach. Proceeding levels feature mission-based, spy-like infiltration, but still keep the tension high. The poor enemy AI diminishes some of the drama of the situations, but things never get monotonous.

The era-specific weapons pack some sweet firepower. Sniping is even more satisfying than in most games, and explosives pack a punch, too. Grabbing mounted machine guns and the like are held back a bit by the difficulty in aiming.

I really wish EA would've gone for the M rating and added blood and gore, but the hell that is war is still accurately portrayed. Make it your civic duty to enlist. — JUSTIN

■ **STYLE 1** TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** DREAMWORKS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 12



THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE **E** **9.25**

SECOND OPINION

This is the best hockey game this year. Franchise mode blows EA out of the water, and the gameplay is equally as fierce. Puck collision is one tweaked, but this is the one to buy.

KATO — 9

- **Concept:** The first hockey game to upstage EA in gameplay, graphics, and simulation options.
- **Graphics:** The character models look good, and the animation is commendable.
- **Sound:** Fantastic rink sounds, familiar ESPN tunes, and the worst commentary imaginable.
- **Playability:** Silly smooth gameplay that is chock-full of player moves and complex team strategies.
- **Entertainment:** Extensive fantasy options and online capabilities.
- **Replay Value:** High



THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN **T** **8.75**

SECOND OPINION

MOH remains awesome on Xbox. If you love FPSs, you definitely can't afford to miss this game. Furthermore, you'll be hard-put to find a more accurate interactive portrayal of the Second World War than Frontline. This is a must-buy.

CHET — 9.25

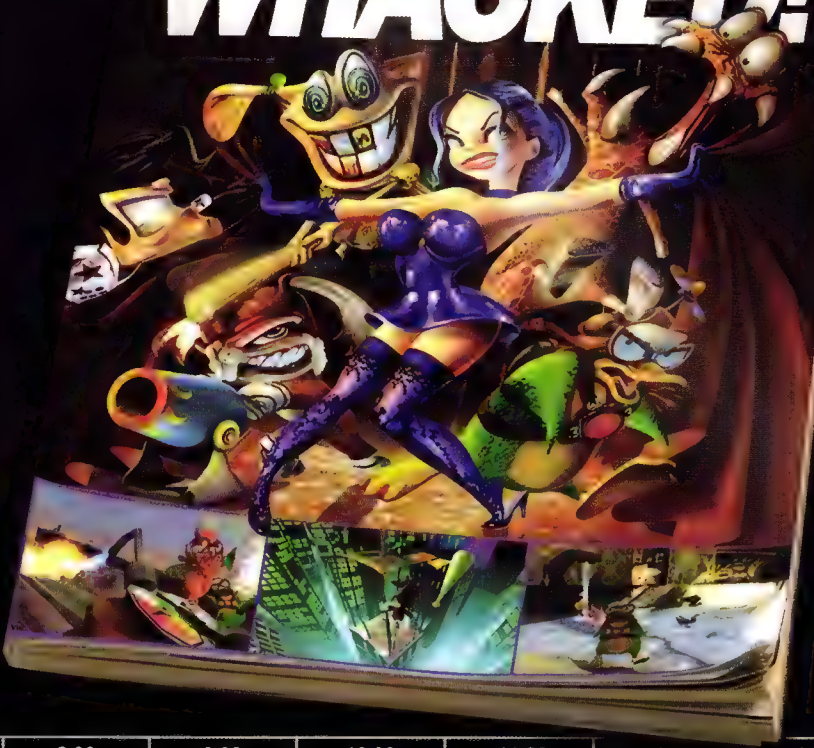
- **Concept:** A direct part of the game that makes war that much more personal.
- **Graphics:** Dark and dirty — just like the real-life scenes it portrays.
- **Sound:** Exquisite detail in both soundtrack and effects. They recorded bullets hitting sides of beef, for goodness' sake!
- **Playability:** Once again, the Xbox controller proves its worth for FPSs.
- **Entertainment:** War is hell. MOH: Frontline is bliss.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

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TU
WEAKLY

FINALLY, A GAME SHOW
THAT SEPARATES
THE BAD-ASSES FROM
THE BED-WETTERS.

WHACKED!



CHNL	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	2:00
XBOX	Whacked! — Game Show VIOLENCE		(2002) A wild, multi-player, free-for-all combat game. Players must sabotage one another with 7 unique characters plus one sick and twisted host in 13 diverse environments with 30+ weapons and power-ups.				
XBOX LIVE	Whacked! — Game Show VIOLENCE (Now online)		For added mayhem, play online with Xbox Live and trample, torch, and trash-talk other gamers in a 4-player melee.				

www.whackedtv.com

TEEN
T
Mature Sexual Themes
Violence
Strong Language



WHACKED!
GAME SHOW GONE WRONG

www.xbox.com

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REVIEWS



ROCKY NOT A COMPLETE CHUMP

I'm sure you're as skeptical as I am when it comes to movie-to-game translations, but Rocky beats the odds just like the silver-screen puglist that inspired it. In terms of gameplay, it sticks close to the Knockout Kings formula — utilizing the four face buttons for the basic punches, and the shoulder triggers for dodging and modified punches like uppercuts. Your CPU opponents are fairly quick, and will force you to rely on solid combos and good movement to win. Ironically, this means that the digital Rocky is actually a more subtle and studied boxer than his movie counterpart ever was. Speaking of the movie, hardcore Stallone freaks will be pleased with the movie clips and content included in the package.

On the downside, it's very easy to get trapped on the ropes, and sometimes the game exhibits the common problem of your boxer not facing towards his opponent when he engages in a flurry. Also, there's no boxer-create mode, but you probably only want to play as the handful of Rockies available anyway. Graphically, the models are nothing to brag about, and are almost as deformed-looking as the real-life Sylvester Stallone. I'll still take Knockout King's roster of greats over Rocky, Drago, Clubber, Apollo, and some generic chumps, but this is an adequate boxing title for fans of the franchise. — **MATT**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** RAGE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14



■ **Concept:**
Return the Italian Stallion to greatness with a video game comeback.

■ **Graphics:**
Nice animated crowds, but the character models are bizarre and stumpy.

■ **Sound:**
Nothing gets you pumped up for a battle like "Gonna Fly Now"

■ **Playability:**
Surprisingly deep, but things get a little sticky around the ropes

■ **Entertainment:**
A good selection of Rocky movies for the fans, but does nothing to convince anyone else.

■ **Replay Value:**
Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

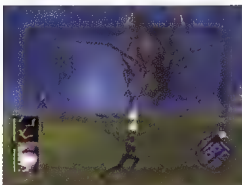
Did Ubi Soft get the Rocky model from that Lipton Brisk commercial? His head is HUGE! The sound is horrid, but everything else is pretty adequate. The movie elements are the game's obvious highlights. Basically, Rocky is what I expected it would be, and nothing more. It is weekend rental material, though. Yo Adiant! This is mediocre!

JUSTIN — 6.75

XBOX QUICKIES

BLOODRAYNE

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 15



The graphics didn't bowl me over. The gameplay is slightly above average. So why do I think BloodRayne reigns? It makes me feel dirty for all

the right reasons. A smokin' main character, gory fighting, and seductive bloodsucking (listen to the moans!) keep things interesting in a genre so full of mediocrity. I mean, a sexy goth vampire chick shooting and slicing skeleton spiders and Nazis in the 1930s? You gotta love that! — **JUSTIN**

M 7.75



ANTZ EXTREME RACING

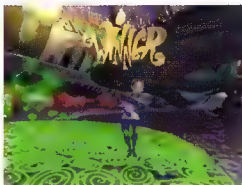
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 9

I would have scored Antz Extreme Racing lower, but I think that this might be a really great game for that key "toddler to pre-school" demographic. For everyone else, there is nothing "extreme" to be found in the gameplay or activities; the controls give no feel of racing, the graphics are bland at best, and the sound is forgettable. Also, with only eight races per character averaging less than two minutes a piece, it's very short on challenge. — **LISA**

E 5.5

WHACKED

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER BOARD
■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 9



This annoying new approach to party games subjects you to the wild world of Whacked — where a grating game-show host leads you through a series of action battle games.

Unlike Mario party, there is a certain amount of skill involved with these challenges, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are entertaining. Since Whacked is Xbox Live enabled, the title does have longer legs in the online arena, but the fun of these party games wears thin rather quickly. Somewhere in the universe there is an alternate Earth, and I'm willing to bet the people there are rejoicing that they don't have to play Whacked. — **ANDY**

T 2

WHITEOUT

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5



"I want to rip off Sled Storm," someone behind Whiteout must have said. Ok, tiger, mission accomplished. However, you forgot a few things, like style

and speed. Without those, this game inspires me to bury my head in the snow and hibernate until all the white stuff melts. Just so I don't sound too negative, at least the music is cool, and having gaps is a good (albeit unoriginal) idea. Unless you know who Tucker Hibbert is, avoid this one. — **JUSTIN**

E 6.25

MONOPOLY PARTY

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER BOARD
■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAVES
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5



Since my cell phone is capable of more graphical prowess, and the "party" element is five paltry themes, I just can't condone spending any amount of money on the

lackluster Monopoly Party. Classic, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Prehistoric, and Ancient Monuments themes are cool in real life; but on a console, you're left with a classic board game and no nifty little houses to roll around in your hand and lose under the couch. — **LISA**

E 4



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 19

This is simply the best rally game out there, bar none. The visual effects are stunning (particularly the weather on your car) and your ride actually takes a beating. Best of all, the stages are long and damage carries over, as races last days. I loved every single jump, tight, twisty turn, and brush with death on a mountainside. The only thing that kept me alive was the superb co-driving of Nicky Grist and the awesome handling of the cars (although I didn't use the e-brake as much as I thought I would). While it's a shame that you can only be Colin, I highly suggest you buy this game. I just can't be responsible for what you do to your Ford Focus afterwards. — **KATO**

E 8.75



"Earth & Beyond is a beautifully conceived piece of software..."

PC

EARTH & BEYOND

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

There really hasn't been a whole lot of variety as of late when it comes to massively multiplayer titles. Sure, we've all heard about Galaxies and Freelancer, but where are they? You can't play a rumor! Until now, if you were after an online role-playing experience, you were probably going to strap on some jerkin and slay a few elves. Earth & Beyond is a beautifully conceived piece of software, and I've never seen a galaxy come to life like I did during my time with this title.

After you get through the somewhat anemic character creation phase, a lengthy and well-proportioned tutorial takes over. It served to keep me interested while at the same time giving me a usable knowledge base that I could apply to the rest of the game. Sure, there were hoops to jump through, but this is a control scheme that you'll need to become intimately familiar with in order to be successful throughout the rest of your journey. To that end, the controls are intuitive, and don't punish you, should you have a memory lapse.

As far as navigating around this immense galaxy Westwood has created, a star chart will guide you from sector to sector and system to system, but its functionality is extremely clunky if you don't know how to manipulate it correctly. I once

went a half hour and two sectors in the wrong direction because I misread one line. Similarly, there are jump-gates that allow only certain classes of characters to pass and some that let every class enter. The problem is, it's difficult to know which your character has access to, and ultimately it ends up being a lot of hassle for anyone who wants to explore a new system.

The combat, on the other hand, is smooth and dynamic. Interestingly, Westwood has inserted a cooperative grouping bonus system where players can join together and share experience points as well as defensive or offensive bonuses depending on their race. I found it to be an invaluable tool for leveling up quickly, and it served as an excellent ice-breaker for getting to know other players who are allied with your sect. Credits are gathered by beaming the items left from your defeated opponents into your cargo bay, then selling them at the nearest outpost. There are numerous other ways to get coinage (mining and trade being some), and the more you utilize, the bigger your bank account will get. Don't hesitate to get this title if you're looking for a break from the norm; it's got everything you want in a game of this ilk – and it's from Westwood...its not going to let you down. —KRISTIAN

STYLE MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** WESTWOOD STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 24



THE BOTTOM LINE

T 9.25

- **Concept:** Command a spaceship and fly around an enormous galaxy while trying to make your way in the game
- **Graphics:** Gorgeous particle effects, and some breathtaking scenery lead the charge on the visual front
- **Sound:** The music is mellow and understated enough where you won't mind having it accompany the battle and environmental effects
- **Playability:** As far as tutorials go, this is one of the best I've seen
- **Entertainment:** Good freaking luck putting this down. Plan on spending a lot of time online
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

There is little doubt that Earth & Beyond is the best looking massively multiplayer online game I have ever had the pleasure to play. Its interface is very user friendly (other than the chat font size) and the training sections of the game got you started on the right foot. Unfortunately, even though I appreciate the help in movement by being able to warp from location to location, the execution of travel in real time severely slows this game down, and in the end detracts from its enjoyment. There are many positive things going on here – like the separate experience for combat, exploration, or trading – but in the end I found myself unmotivated to play since almost every gameplay aspect feels more like an errand. Exploring space is fun, but the travel time and lack of compelling space combat (it's more RPG than X-Wing) kept me from continuing my journey to Earth or anyplace else.

ANDY – 7.5



"If you're a devotee to Quake, UT, FPSs, or online games in general, this is certainly a ride you won't want to miss."

PC

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

VIRTUAL CRACK

Unreal Tournament is my second favorite game of all-time (Street Fighter II being first, of course), so my expectations for the sequel were insanely high.

Overall, Digital Extremes did not disappoint, clearly putting forth a huge effort to make UT 2003 an amazing product.

Fans will readily notice a few significant changes, most of which benefit gameplay. Foremost, players have access to special moves, regulated by an Adrenaline meter. Adrenaline icons and kills raise the meter, and once you fill it, you can increase speed, power, turn invisible, etc. by inputting specific button taps. Initially, I was skeptical, thinking that such a "gimmick" might imbalance gameplay, but these moves actually add depth and flare. Furthermore, players can now jump in the middle of a dodge and double jump, which provides for even more technique to evade during intense firefights. Finally, the detailed physics and graphics engines certainly enhance the game's feel and playability.

Although the weapons remain essentially untouched (thank goodness), DE tweaked and refined them to increase balance. For example, the Flak Cannon's spread has been tightened, so you can't easily blanket a room with fire. The rocket launcher now loads only three rockets at once, and deals less damage overall. The Shockrifle's energy ball moves slightly slower so that "shock combos" are even more manageable. The Link Gun (formerly the Plasma Rifle)

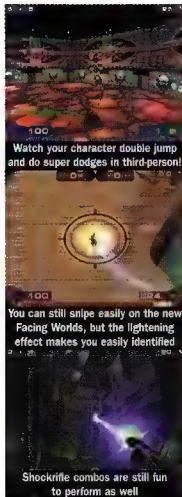
allows players to link up with teammates to transfer power, and thereby deal more damage. The only weapon change I dislike is the Lighting Gun (a.k.a. Sniper). Its conspicuous strike makes identifying the user's location easy, and the fact that it charges between shots makes it more balanced, but the new electric scope and the accompanying static outside of the reticule area sometimes hinders sight.

Fortunately, DE devised some very well thought-out and intricate maps, which offer variety enough to make many classics. In fact, besides a few Deathmatch arenas, I like all of them; even the revisions of old maps such as Curse II, Phobos, and Facing Worlds. Unfortunately, I hoped to see a few of the better classics like Deck-16 and Liandri, which were absent.

My only other gripe has to do with the lack of more games and mods. Granted, the new Bombing Run is welcome, and even more addictive than Capture the Flag in my opinion. Also, mods such as Low Gravity, Instagib, and Arena will certainly appeal to many gamers. However, apparent staples like Jail Break, Assault, and Last Man Standing should've been included.

Still, these faults don't seriously detract from the game, especially since hardcore fans will certainly devote the time to fix these complaints with the UT2K3's Editor. If you're a devotee to Quake, UT, FPSs, or online games in general, this is certainly a ride you won't want to miss. — **CHET**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRADES ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL EXTREMES ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 1



Watch your character double jump and do super dodges in third-person!

You can still snipe easily on the new Facing Worlds, but the lightning effect makes you easily identified

Shockrifle combos are still fun to perform as well



Instagib is still awesome, but they've sped up the speed of the shot



Bombing Run requires much teamwork, since you can pass the bomb

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE
ESRB
9.5

- **Concept:**
A FPS with diverse weapons and plenty of technique, making it seem even more like a sport
- **Graphics:**
Some of the best the PC has to offer yet
- **Sound:**
The music is good and appropriate, consisting of futuristic techno-like tunes. However, the new announcer can get annoying
- **Playability:**
Executing the special Adrenaline moves, dodging, and aiming is executed flawlessly
- **Entertainment:**
The Bombing Run and old games remain as addictive and as fun as ever; I just wish that there were more modes
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

Simply put, Unreal Tournament 2003 is more junk for the junkie. In a lot of ways, UT2K3 is not really all that different from the original. But, the overall update in graphics and speed of play that R delivers makes it a worthy purchase for anyone who is a fan of the series, and will most certainly suck new players into the fold. On the single-player front, Epic Games has really upped the intelligence of the Bots, so players that are either unconnected or wish to practice their skills offline are faced with a decent challenge. On the multiplayer side, the game just rips. While one of my favorite modes, Assault, has been removed, the addition of the Bombing Run really adds some new dimensions to the classic kill or be killed scenarios. If you love to challenge yourself with the latest and greatest first-person shooters around, Unreal Tournament 2003 is really a must-have as it has all the right moves to keep you playing.

ANDY — 9.5

REVIEWS



PC

DIVINE DIVINITY

ATTACK OF THE CLONE

There's no getting around the fact that this game is basically a Diablo doppelganger. Unfortunately, Divine Divinity doesn't enjoy the intuitive inventory system that Diablo does, and it suffers from one of the worst names I've ever seen attached to any game. In any event, action/RPG fans should embrace this title with open arms. There's a comfortable familiarity to its medieval setting, and the story is refreshingly non-linear – if you want it to be. There is a mainline story arc, but should you want to strike out on your own and make a name for yourself with the local populous, feel free to do so.

The magic and combat systems are easy to wrap your mind around, but I found that if you're not playing the warrior class character, it is very difficult to progress through the opening stages of the game in a timely manner. When you level up, you're given the option of taking any skill from any character class (my thief ended up specializing in axes early), which helps; but if you want to avoid a lot of frustration, start off with a little muscle behind you. Graphically, the game strikes me as drab, but the 1024x768 resolution option is a wonderful thing to see. Basically, Divine Divinity is solid all around, but doesn't do anything that will knock you out of your chair. An acceptable buy to be sure, just make sure this is something you really want to play. — **KRISTIAN**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** CDV SOFTWARE ■ **DEVELOPER** LARIAN STUDIOS
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 22

148 GAME INFORMER



- **Concept:** A classic role-playing hack 'n' slash affair.
- **Graphics:** The game's overall look is decidedly dark, but what you can see looks good.
- **Sound:** What an incredible musical score – I was shocked at the caliber of what I heard, voice acting notwithstanding.
- **Playability:** Remember the Diablo series? Point, click, attack, and repeat.
- **Entertainment:** There's certainly a lot of depth here, but some might not see it all.
- **Replay Value:** Moderate.

SECOND OPINION

Although it's not quite up to par with the likes of Baldur's Gate or Diablo, fans of the genre will certainly have no problem enjoying this game. There's plenty to explore, a solid story, and myriad enemies to off. However, navigating is sometimes imprecise, and there are a few spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

CHET – 8.25



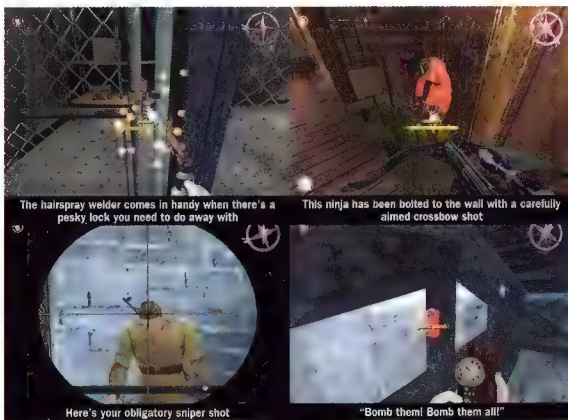
PC

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2: A SPY IN H.A.R.M.'S WAY

SHAKEN AND STIRRED

This title's older brother was a breakaway hit when it landed on shelves in 2000, and Monolith is continuing its tradition of excellence with the release of a stunning sequel. NOLF 2 is the kind of follow-up title many companies dream of producing. The problems of the first have been addressed, and the strengths have been added to. Not a bad way to go about putting a game together.

Graphically, NOLF 2 is striking; with razor-sharp character models, environments, gadgets, and weaponry, there's always something pretty to look at. Because of this detail, those of you with lower-end systems will probably experience degraded frame-rates and a lot of choppiness, but that's not the game's fault...it's just something to keep in mind if you're out with your money in hand. Conversely, the game's story, humor, and action are well implemented, but I would have liked to see a little less emphasis on stealth. Alerting one guard to your presence is an easy way to end up looking at a loading screen, so you'll need to choose your victims wisely. To improve your chances of success in every mission, a tastefully done skill development system has been implemented which allows players to spend intelligence points gained through completing side quests or finding classified information. NOLF 2 is one of the best FPSs to be released this year – don't make the mistake of passing it over for something that sucks. — **KRISTIAN**



The hairspray welder comes in handy when there's a pesky lock you need to do away with

This ninja has been bolted to the wall with a carefully aimed crossbow shot

Here's your obligatory sniper shot

"Bomb them! Bomb them all!"

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SIERRA ■ **DEVELOPER** MONOLITH
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 5

THE BOTTOM LINE



9

- **Concept:** Play as a sexy '60s secret agent and kill a bunch of people in hilarious ways
- **Graphics:** This game is a sight to behold. If you have a higher-end system, you'll be shocked
- **Sound:** The musical score matches the voice acting in excellence
- **Playability:** It's a first-person shooter. It might take you five minutes to get used to the intricacies of the control scheme
- **Entertainment:** Everything you want and like about FPSs is in here
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

The action and story are clearly influenced by the Bond universe. Players will encounter various gadgets, inventive weapons (the exploding robot kitty is my favorite), and plenty of covert missions. The presentation is more than slightly goofy, but fortunately, this aspect didn't bother so much since the gameplay is fully realized – especially the stealth component. Players must often sneak out of ham's way, hide bodies, and use silent weapons – crossbow, ninja stars, silencer, katana, etc. NOLF 2's problems are fairly minor. First, certain areas are a little cryptic. Although you usually understand the objectives and where you need to go, actually reaching your destination can be confusing. Finally, I really disliked the blurred reticule effect. Basically, it blurs when you move, which decreases accuracy. To me, moving around and hitting your target is a skill, and challenge enough.

CHET – 9



PC

STRONGHOLD: CRUSADER

THE HOLY HAND GRENADE OF ANTIOCH

Getting into this game is easier than sitting on a sofa. The formula Firefly has developed for the gameplay is genius – give players a small amount of resources to get things going, then let them fend for themselves. Sure, that sounds like any other RTS out there, but Crusader does it with a panache all its own. For example, if you want to survive the missions, you have to build a castle that works. What that means is you can't throw up some walls, put a gate in, then expect to wipe your opponent off the map. The AI will find a way to slaughter you, so thinking strategically is a necessity. Many real world military tactics translate perfectly into this game. Case in point: defense in depth. Building an outer wall with small lookout towers and large inner walls with substantial defensive capabilities will repel almost any attack.

Conversely, the pace of the game seems to lag from time to time, and I would have liked a little more unit variety, but the additive economic aspects you'll grapple with coupled with its historical accuracy make Crusader a force to be reckoned with. Plus, when you use a trebuchet (an enormous catapult) to launch a diseased cow over an enemy's walls and watch his population drop like flies, you can't help but get that warm fuzzy "I love this game" feeling.

— KRISTIAN



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS
 ■ **DEVELOPER** FIREFLY STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 29

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.75

- **Concept:**
Build a castle, maintain it, defend it, then kill the bad guys
- **Graphics:**
Surprisingly good detail has been injected into every structure and unit
- **Sound:**
The battle sounds and the music are quite good – which was true of the last release as well
- **Playability:**
Playing the tutorials isn't a bad idea if you're a newcomer or just a little rusty
- **Entertainment:**
Crusader is a great investment if you're looking for something you can play again and again
- **Replay Value:**
High

SECOND OPINION

It's quite obvious that Firefly spent a lot of time with Crusader, as this title is much more in-depth with a long list of new elements. Unlike the original however, this sequel demands a lot out of player in both the economy and battle areas of the game, and sadly, I found this to be a drawback. Many times I was overwhelmed with things to do, which made it feel more like work than play. I do like the Castle Builder mode that let me enjoy the creation of my world without the outside pressures, but it is rather shallow when compared to the skills needed for the single-player Crusader mode or multiplayer. In the end, I guess it comes down to the fact that I like to play either a battle or an economy game, and Stronghold Crusader is just a little too much of both without either area really doing it for me.

ANDY – 7

REVIEWS



PC

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2

HIGH ROLLERS

This game has addiction written all over it. I sat down with it in the morning, and the next thing I knew, it was six hours later. RollerCoaster Tycoon 2 is the consummate sequel – I got more of what I wanted, and less of what I didn't. With the 25 Six Flags coasters and five recreations of Six Flags parks, I found myself engrossed in the game with alarming speed. The 'Increased building area' is a welcome addition as well – there's nothing worse than designing a killer coaster, then having to go back to the drawing board because of a lack of real estate.

Not only are you able to design your own coasters and trade them online with other tycoons, but you're essentially asked to build an amusement park economy from the ground up. People who know enough to put bathrooms next to their more nauseating rides won't have to rely on their handymen to clean up as much puke on the paths. It's the simple, yet strategic, portions of this game that make it a blast to play. Savvy owners will watch their parks burst at the seams with customers, while gaming morons will look at their deserted grounds and wonder where they went wrong. On the flip side, when you're trying to place a coaster, it can be unbelievably difficult to see where you need to build a path so your park-goers can enter it. That, a few other technical glitches, and the title's graphical ineptitude, hold it back, but they in no way hinder RCT 2 from being a solid buy. — KRISTIAN

THE BOTTOM LINE



8.5

- **Concept:**
Build roller coasters and make some money while doing it
- **Graphics:**
Everything looks like you're seeing it through smoked glass, but the coasters look good at least
- **Sound:**
Some of the rides have interesting sound, but as with other games of this ilk, the audio is strictly optional
- **Playability:**
Placing some of the bigger coasters can be a bear
- **Entertainment:**
An easy way to lose an afternoon and not feel too guilty about it
- **Replay Value:**
Moderately High

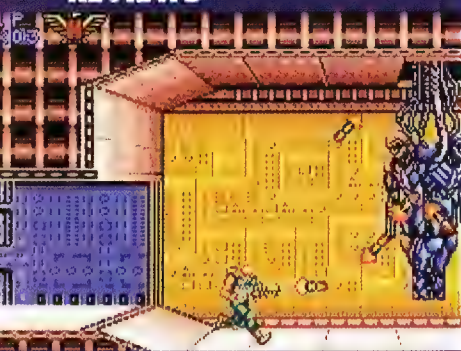
SECOND OPINION

Roller Coaster Tycoon 2 gives new meaning to depth. It's not a matter of how you can and can't do, but rather how complicated the desired aspect will be. You'll have more land to work with now, you can form higher elevations, download scenarios, track coasters out of the park, create every little customer detail, and zoom in closer thanks to the new graphics engine. You can even insert 25 authentic Six Flags coasters. Amazing! Simply amazing!

REINER – 9

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SIMULATION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES
 ■ **DEVELOPER** CHRIS SAWYER ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 13

REVIEWS



GAME BOY ADVANCE

CONTRA ADVANCE: THE ALIEN WARS EX

CHEAP

Contra Advance seamlessly combines levels from the SNES and Genesis titles, which were both very enjoyable, and challenged even the most skillful gamers. Unfortunately, Konami made some changes for the worse, elevating this version's difficulty!

First, some of the boss fights have been reworked, making them particularly unfair. Second, Konami removed the super bomb that eradicates everything onscreen. Finally, players can only hold one weapon at a time; this not only means you're stuck with the weapon you acquire, but once you die, you can't keep it. Furthermore, I suffered a few cheap deaths in certain parts of levels, although this doesn't happen too often.

While the graphics and sound aren't bad by current GBA standards, I wish I could say that these features are superior to their predecessors. Everything looks slightly miniaturized and washed-out, and the music is inferior to the SNES version.

Despite these flaws and alterations, Konami has done a decent enough job with Contra Advance to satisfy most of its hardcore fans. However, for everyone else who doesn't share any partiality to this series, this game will only frustrate. — **CHET**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
6.75

Concept:

Takes levels from the SNES and Genesis games and combines them.

Graphics:

They're fine, but look a little washed-out compared to the SNES version.

Sound:

Some sound effects have been removed, and the music is of lower quality than Contra III.

Playability:

The control is flawless, thank goodness. Otherwise, this adventure would've been impossible.

Entertainment:

Although some things have been removed or changed, it's an okay reproduction of the past titles. However, this version is much harder.

Replay Value:

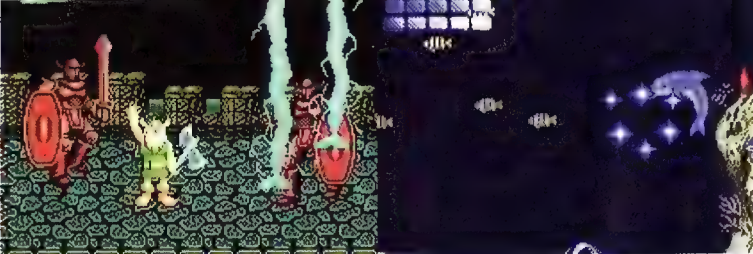
Moderate.

SECONDOPINION

GBA has a young audience, right? Then why would Konami increase Contra's already-hard difficulty? Where is the option for extra lives? I may be crazy, but it also seems like you get less invincible time when you respawn, which is a huge pain. I'm nowhere near good enough to beat this on "Normal," so it ends up being a four-level demo of sorts. What a letdown.

JUSTIN — 6.5

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 5



GAME BOY ADVANCE

SEGA SMASH PACK

NOSTALGIC VALUE

I had no idea that the GBA contained the fabled "Blast Processing" chip! Only that piece of technology could propel Sonic and Ecco this fast across the screen! In all seriousness though, this Smash Pack represents a fine compilation of classic Genesis titles that any hardcore gamer would proudly add to his or her collection. Golden Axe, although somewhat crummy by today's standards, recalled plenty of fond memories of me and my buddy chopping through Death Adder and his cronies. Sonic Spinball remains a decent pinball title that anyone can quickly play and enjoy, making it perfect for on-the-go action. Finally, Ecco the Dolphin reigns supreme on this pack. With an interesting story, compelling gameplay that requires more than a few hours to complete, and solid tunes, it's the most engrossing.

Unfortunately, THQ dated absolutely nothing, which means that Golden Axe, in particular, looks and sounds extremely dated. Perhaps this laziness wouldn't have bothered me if I got one or two more games. — **CHET**

SECONDOPINION

When I saw the list of games included on this compilation, I had a Sega throwback moment and remembered how great all these titles were. However, in practice, the games just aren't quite as good as I remember them. Spinball is the most entertaining of the bunch and I consider it mediocre at best.

ANDY — 5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** CODEFIRE
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 24



Battle commences! Enemy takes turn...

GAME BOY ADVANCE

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

OH NO FRODO

Frodo the Ring bearer. Frodo the errand boy. Frodo the incredible bore. This game is the fear of every Lord of the Rings fan — the reduction of Tolkien's literary genius into something not worthy. In other words: Go read the books. I don't doubt the sincerity of this attempt, as some flavor is added between the gaps in bringing the story into the video game world. Unfortunately, it simply isn't interesting to play. For example, you don't actually escape from the Black Riders — you merely go down a different road to avoid them. Problem: All the tension is sucked from the fearful Nazgul. Battles are dry even by RPG standards, although the one redeeming element of the gameplay is that you control the Fellowship as you will, and can trade items between them. What remains, however, is a good story that should stay bound in the pages of a book. I think I'd rather have Gandalf turn me into something unnatural — like a hairy newt — rather than play this game again. — **KATO**

SECONDOPINION

The good news about this edition of Lord of the Rings is that it is an RPG. The bad news is that it's not a very good one. Combat is slow and the quest is even slower. It's a shame too, as the graphics engine isn't bad.

ANDY — 4.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** BLACK LABEL GAMES
■ **DEVELOPER** POCKET STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
7

Concept:

Three classic Genesis games crammed on one cart

Graphics:

They're the same as the originals, so they're okay

Sound:

They're the same too, which means some things sound scruffy, but Ecco sounds fine

Playability:

The control is decent, since these titles only used three buttons anyway

Entertainment:

Overall, this is a solid compilation. I just wish there were more titles and/or improved graphics and sound

Replay Value:

Moderate

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
E
5

Concept:

A clever plot by the Literacy Guild to drive people to read the books instead

Graphics:

The strongest part of this game. Colorful and occasionally showing detail

Sound:

As with the consoles, time was obviously spent here

Playability:

Switching amongst the Fellowship is a good gameplay element

Entertainment:

Another unfortunate example of a good license gone bad

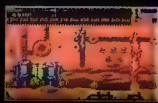
Replay Value:

Low

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GAME BOY ADVANCE

SPYRO 2: SEASON OF FLAME

FLAME ON!

Spyro 2: Season of Flame, the sequel to the Game Boy Advance hit Spyro: Season of Ice, doesn't go far off from the original formula (or name for that matter), but does offer up new moves and playable characters to add some variety to the adventure. You still play most of the game as Spyro—who has been powered-up with a new freeze and electric breath—and in different levels you get a chance to control Sparx (again), Sheila the Kangaroo, and Agent 9 the Space Monkey. These alternate characters are definitely a highlight, as Sheila's levels are very 0-Bert-esque and Agent 9's are a strange take on Rush 'N' Attack.

Overall, it took me a while to get used to playing Spyro in an isometric world, but once you have it down, the control is surprisingly responsive and fans of the first will have no problems getting into this one. The jumping portions of the game are still a little iffy, and I killed myself quite a lot from misreading the view, but in the end I enjoyed exploring the worlds. — **ANDY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

E 7.5

- **Concept:** Make a new adventure with some extra moves for the spunky Spyro.
- **Graphics:** Almost identical to the first adventure, but that's not a bad thing.
- **Sound:** Someone, somewhere, very happy with their purchase of a Casio keyboard.
- **Playability:** The isometric view can be frustrating at times, but overall it works.
- **Entertainment:** Spyro's world is so happy it makes me want to puke, but for some odd reason it seems to work.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

SECOND OPINION

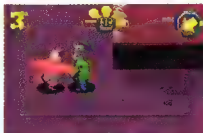
The isometric view isn't exactly ideal for platforming, but Spyro: Season of Ice manages to overcome this handicap with some nicely designed levels, a bunch of secrets to uncover, and the inclusion of side-scrolling levels starring Agent 9, which are a nice break from the Spyro sections.

MATT - 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
 ■ **PUBLISHER** UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE
 ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL ECLIPSE ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 24

THE RIPPING FRIENDS: THE WORLD'S MOST MANLY MEN

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 14



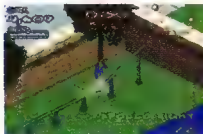
The game's cartoony appearance, clean graphics, and overall decent presentation may persuade you into a purchase. Furthermore, you might actually

appreciate Ripping's progression, and the fact that it isn't simply a side-scrolling brawler. However, these elements are about all this title has to boast. The combat is basic, sloppy, and imprecise, and the spastic overhead camera often gets annoying. — **CHET**

E 4.75

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 28



The quality of music in this game blew my mind. The songs have vocals! The gameplay was far less astounding. Things like jumping out of grinds and simple navigation are a little rough around the edges, but cool tricks abound. It's a shame there's no battery backup to save progress—which means this is a long trip game, rather than a porcelain pit stop game. Aggressive Inline sits somewhere in the middle of all the extreme sports miniatures on the

GBA. — **JUSTIN**

E 7.75

SSX TRICKY

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS
 ■ **PUBLISHER** EA BIG
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 21

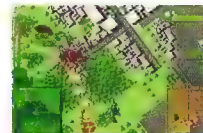


You know you're in trouble when you can tally the number of frames per second on one hand. I kid you not, people. I blinked and the race was suddenly over. As if I need to say anything more, it would probably be in your best interest to avoid this game. The fancy 3D graphics are impressive for the Game Boy Advance, but to make them glisten like they do, the framerate, draw distance, and gameplay were, for the better part, sacrificed in their entirety. — **REINER**

E 4

AIRFORCE DELTA STORM

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
 ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 23



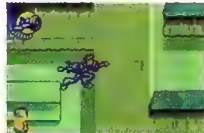
I got really excited about playing this game when I thought all of the action would be taking place on one elevation. Unfortunately, you're constantly forced to alter your height and speed if you want to shoot down the planes whizzing past you. A couple of missions do away with elevation change, but they're so boring it doesn't make up for it. On the upside, your character is given the callsign "Goose," and the graphics are pretty silky for a handheld flyer. You could do

worse. — **KRISTIAN**

E 6.75

GALIDOR: DEFENDERS OF THE OUTER DIMENSION

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS/LEGO INTERACTIVE
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 29



Based on the popular animated series, Galidor: Defenders of the Outer Dimension defies my low expectations by borrowing a few tricks

from the NES classic Bionic Commando. Even better, it expands its palette of cybernetic limb attachments beyond the old grappling hook to include Power Wings (twin arm jets that let you fly), Amphibian Fin (frog legs that allow you to swim), and a host of other cool upgrades. It's a lot of fun, and definitely not the run-of-the-mill GBA license cash-in. — **MATT**

E 7.75

DOOM II

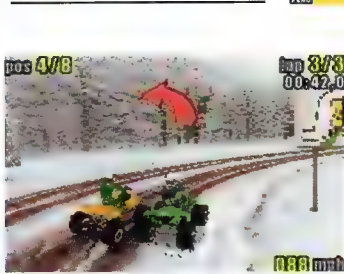
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
 ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 22



I was surprised at how fast this GBA version of Doom moved. It can really haul. While there are plenty of times when the graphics are pixelated, overall it

doesn't affect the gameplay. Sure it doesn't aim as well as a mouse and keyboard, but it is sufficient. I still think Duke Nukem Advance is a better handheld FPS choice since it was designed specifically for the GBA, but Doom II sure does bring back some great memories and plenty of action to boot. Plus, two players can link up and play co-op. — **ANDY**

M 8.5



ATV: QUAD POWER RACING

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RACING
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM
 ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 22

Which lesser of two evils was ATV born from: a tech demo of some good scrolling, or the need to bring the series to the Game Boy Advance? The game hardly distinguishes itself otherwise. Your ride's handling is fun as you slip in and out of curves, but the racing itself is rather pedestrian. The title's difficulty is so easy that I almost finished the game without ever losing a race. Whip donuts in the dirt with your ATV if you want to go in circles; just don't play this game. — **KATO**

E 6

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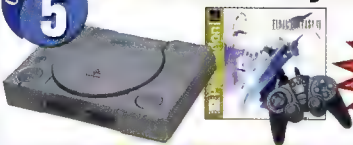


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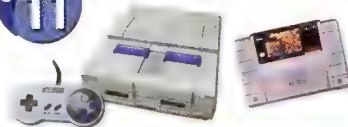
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Game

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and controller

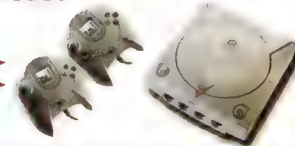
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OFFER 22 Preowned Genesis *
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CHARTS

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

Rankings Based Upon NPD Data For September 2002 Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	1	Madden NFL 2003	PS2	9.5	Aug-02	\$49
Madden continues to sell well for EA Sports, and we couldn't be happier for them. Unfortunately, the Vikings continuing woes have resulted in a ban on football talk at GI, so we can't say anything more about this game. So...ah...how have you been? Good. [cough] Oh, about the same...yeah. No, we haven't talked to him for awhile...Yes, the weather has been nice. Fall is so pretty...yeah, well...um...we should probably be going. Take it easy.						
2	N/A	Kingdom Hearts	PS2	9.5	Sep-02	\$50
When Square and Disney decided to transform like Voltron and form a monolithic partnership, we knew that video game gold was sure to follow. It appears we were right. Kingdom Hearts has made mad bank in Japan, and this strong number two debut suggests that it will have a bright future on this side of the Pacific as well, especially when it begins to show up in the stockings of gamers this holiday season.						
3	2	Super Mario Sunshine	GC	9.75	Aug-02	\$50
Being that PlayStation 2s outnumber GameCubes by a million or ten, Super Mario Sunshine has been selling extremely well. Still, not being able to hit the number one spot with his big comeback vehicle must be a bit of a blow to the ego of the Italian Stallion. Cheer up, Mario! We still love you! In fact, to show you how much we care, the Game Informer staff got together and knitted you a scarf. Hope you like pink!						
4	3	SOCOM: US Navy SEALs	PS2	9.5	Aug-02	\$60
Proving that people are raring to get online with their PS2s, SOCOM stayed in the top five this month. Unfortunately, all of the PlayStation 2 Network Adaptors sold out in a matter of hours, so we don't expect that this one will stay on the charts for long, although this certainly must be an encouraging sign for Sony.						
5	N/A	Tekken 4	PS2	9	Sep-02	\$50
Okay, write five Tekken puns in 30 seconds. GO! Hey ladies, don't start Tekken your clothes off all at once! (One!) Our favorite Doobie Brothers song is "Tekken It To The Streets." (Two!) We're not Tekken this anymore! (Three!) Game Informer: We're Tekken video game journalism to the extreme! (Four!) Justin was quite Tekken with Rosie O'Donnell, but she didn't seem interested in him. (Five!) Yay! We win!!!						

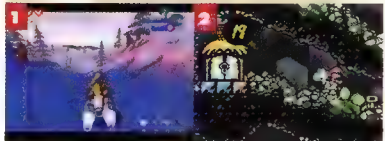
RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A	Star Fox Adventures	GC	8.75	Sep-02	\$50
7	7	Yu-Gi-Oh! Dark Duel Stories	GBC	5.5	Mar-02	\$29
8	N/A	Animal Crossing	GC	9.5	Sep-02	\$50
9	6	Grand Theft Auto III	PS2	9.5	Oct-01	\$50
10	16	Yu-Gi-Oh! Forbidden Memories	PS-X	5.5	Mar-02	\$30
11	12	Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	PS2	8.75	Aug-02	\$50
12	4	NCAA Football 2003	PS2	N/A	Jul-02	\$50
13	N/A	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	PS2	9.75	Oct-01	\$18
14	N/A	Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island	GBA	8.75	Sep-02	\$28
15	9	Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	PS2	9	Jul-01	\$20
16	8	Dead to Rights	Xbox	9.25	Aug-02	\$50
17	11	Super Mario Advance 2	GBA	9.5	Feb-02	\$29
18	19	NBA Street	PS2	9.25	Jun-01	\$20
19	10	Medal of Honor: Frontline	PS2	9	May-02	\$49
20	15	Street Hoops	PS2	5.5	Aug-02	\$51

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett/VonKorff (516) 625-2481

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	Star Fox Adventures	GC
2	N/A	Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island	GBA
3	N/A	Tennis Princes	PS-X
4	N/A	Energy Force	PS2
5	1	Dynasty Warriors 2: Adventures	PS2
6	N/A	Culdcept II	PS2
7	N/A	Yamasa DigWorld SP	PS2
8	N/A	hack Vol. 2	PS2
9	N/A	Marvel Vs. Capcom 2: New Age of Heroes	PS2
10	N/A	Kimi Ga Nozomu Eien	DC



GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Pick

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	PS2
2	2	Animal Crossing	GC
3	N/A	Steel Battalion	Xbox
4	N/A	Sulkoden III	PS2
5	N/A	Unreal Tournament 2003	PC
6	N/A	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	PS2
7	N/A	The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	PS2
8	N/A	Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	PS2
9	N/A	Red Faction II	PS2
10	3	Kingdom Hearts	PS2



PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service. Review: Kristin Barnett/VonKorff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	N/A	The Sims: Unleashed	Sep-02	\$29
2	N/A	Unreal Tournament 2003	Jun-02	\$47
3	N/A	Battlefield 1942	Mar-02	\$44
4	N/A	The Sims Deluxe	May-02	\$42
5	2	WarCraft III: Reign of Chaos	Feb-00	\$50
6	1	The Sims: Vacation	Jan-02	\$28
7	10	Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault	Jun-02	\$46
8	7	Medieval: Total War	Jun-02	\$33
9	N/A	The Sims: Hot Date	Mar-02	\$29
10	3	The Sims	May-02	\$42



NEW RELEASES

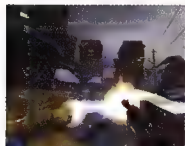
Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
PLAYSTATION 2		
2/11/03	hack	Bandai
11/26/02	Barbie: Treasures in Time	Vivendi Universal
2/17/03	Batman: Dark Tomorrow	Konami
1/21/03	Battle Engine Aquila	Infogrames
12/16/02	Battlezone	THQ
1/1/03	Black & Branded	Majesco
11/19/02	BMX XXX	Acclaim
11/19/02	Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision
2/3/03	Cabela's Off Road Adventure	Activision
2/17/03	ChopLifter: Search and Rescue	Xcxi Interactive
2/10/03	Dark Cloud 2	Sony
11/19/02	Dead to Rights	Namco
1/28/03	Devil May Cry 2	Capcom
1/3/03	Disaster Report	Infogrames
2/17/02	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Electronic Software
12/31/02	Dragon's Lair 3D	

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
12/3/02	Dead to Rights	Namco
11/19/02	Die Hard Vendetta	Vivendi Universal
1/5/03	Disney Sports Basketball	Konami
12/17/02	Disney Sports Football	Konami
12/21/02	Dragon's Lair 3D	Electronic Software
2/4/03	Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes	THQ
2/25/03	Dungeon Snowboarding	Konami
11/25/02	Evolution Snowboarding	Ubisoft
2/3/03	Fireblades	Midway
2/3/03	Freakey Flyers	Midway
11/19/02	Frogger Beyond	Konami
12/18/02	Gladius	Infogrames
11/19/02	Hunter: The Reckoning	Vivendi Universal
11/18/02	James Bond 007: Nightfire	Electronic Arts
11/25/02	Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius	THQ
2/3/03	Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker	Nintendo
12/3/02	Legends of Westing II	Acclaim
11/25/02	Method Prime	Nintendo
2/3/03	Micromachias	Infogrames
12/2/02	Mike Tyson Boxing	Infogrames
11/19/02	Monopoly Party	Ubisoft
11/18/02	Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction	Midway
12/10/02	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Electronic Arts
12/10/02	NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega
11/19/02	Nickelodeon Party Blast	Infogrames
1/15/03	Pro Race Driver	Infogrames
1/7/03	Resident Evil 2	Capcom
1/7/03	Resident Evil 3	Capcom
1/28/03	Risk	Infogrames
12/2/02	Sponge Bob Square Pants: Revenge of the Flying Dutchman	THQ
11/25/02	Star Wars Bounty Hunter	Lucas Arts
11/19/02	Star Wars Jedi Outcast	Lucas Arts
12/3/02	Super Bust a Move II	Ubisoft
12/17/02	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft
12/10/02	Tom Clancy's Sum of All Fears	Ubisoft
2/11/03	Vex	Acclaim
1/31/03	Wario World	Nintendo

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
PC		
2/3/03	1344: The Great War	JoWood Productions
1/25/03	Albion Tycoon II	Global Star Software
11/25/02	Anarchy Online: The Notum Wars	Funcom
2/3/03	Aquanox 2: Revelation	JoWood Productions
12/6/02	Archangel	JoWood Productions
1/1/03	Call of Chululu	Fishlabs Interactive
1/15/03	Castles & Cataapults	Infogrames
11/18/02	Cast 5	Ubisoft
1/25/03	Cold Zero	JoWood Productions
1/21/03	Counter-Strike: Condition Zero	Vivendi Universal
12/10/02	Dark Age of Camelot: Shrouded Isles Expansion	Vivendi Universal
12/10/02	Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	Electronic Arts
11/18/02	Dogz 5	Ubisoft
11/18/02	Dragon's Lair 3D	Ubisoft
2/25/03	Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp	Digital Leisure
2/4/03	Fit Department	Infogrames
1/31/03	Gothic II	JoWood Productions

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2, XBOX, GAMECUBE, PC ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION (CONSOLE), 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION (PC) ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 18



Electronic Arts is once again tapping their precious James Bond license to bring you some of the most exciting 00-action you've seen yet. Mr. Shaken-not-stirred will finally graduate from a certain in-joke endo with a genuinely sultry secretary.

Yahoo! Okay, we're kidding, but now that we've brought your highest hopes crashing to the ground, we're going to build them right back up again. James will be battling to save the world from the nefarious criminal mastermind Rafael Drake. Of course, Bond wouldn't be Bond without crazy weaponry, high-tech Q-lab gadgets, and sexy ladies.

11/18/02	Drome Racers	Electronic Arts
11/18/02	Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes	Infogrames
2/17/03	Elder Scrol's Adventures	Bethesda Softworks
1/14/03	Everblue 2	Capcom
2/17/03	EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony
12/3/02	Evolution Snowboarding	Ubisoft
2/17/03	Fear Effect 3	Edios Interactive
11/19/02	Fighter Maker 2	Tommo
1/21/03	Fisherman's Challenge	Korayms
2/3/03	Freakey Flyers	Midway
1/14/03	Frogger Beyond	Konami
2/10/03	Gateway, The	Sony
1/17/03	Gladius	Lucas Arts
11/18/02	Haven: Call of the King	Midway
11/18/02	Island Xtreme Stunts	Electronic Arts
2/18/02	James Bond 007: Nightfire	Electronic Arts
12/10/02	James Cameron's Dark Angel	Vivendi Universal
2/3/03	Jeopardy	Infogrames
2/31/03	John's Stargate Adventures	Capcom
2/11/03	Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft
12/3/02	Legends of Westing II	Acclaim
1/2/03	Lost, The	Crave
11/18/02	Malice	Vivendi Universal
11/25/02	March Madness 2003	Electronic Arts
11/19/02	Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom
11/25/02	Micromachias	Infogrames
2/25/03	Miss on Impossible 2	Infogrames
11/18/02	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Electronic Arts
2/10/03	My Street	Sony
12/17/02	Mystic Heroes	Konami
12/10/02	NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega
2/4/03	Nickelodeon Party Blast	Infogrames
2/12/02	Powerball Online: Rampage	THQ Entertainment
1/15/03	Police PC	THQ
1/14/03	Primal	Sony
12/10/02	Pro Race Driver	Infogrames
2/14/03	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Ubisoft
1/28/03	Risk	Infogrames
11/19/02	Rocky	Ubisoft
11/18/02	Shrek Super Party	THQ Mediativity
1/14/03	Sims, The	Electronic Arts
12/16/02	Smash Cars	Metroid3D
11/20/02	Sponge Bob Square Pants: Revenge of the Flying Dutchman	THQ
12/3/02	Star Wars: The Clone Wars	Lucas Arts
12/3/02	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft
2/17/03	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft
2/11/03	Vex	Acclaim
1/14/03	War of the Monsters	Sony
2/3/03	Wheat of Fortune	Infogrames
1/14/03	World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony
11/18/02	WWE SmackDown: Shut Your Mouth	THQ
2/17/03	Xenosaga	Namco
2/15/03	Yu-Gi-Oh! The Duelist of the Roses	Konami

CRIMSON SEA

■ **FORMAT** XBOX ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI ■ **RELEASE** WINTER

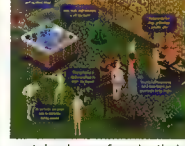
11/18/02	Dead to Rights	Namco
11/19/02	Die Hard Vendetta	Vivendi Universal
1/5/03	Disney Sports Basketball	Konami
12/17/02	Disney Sports Football	Konami
12/21/02	Dragon's Lair 3D	Electronic Software
2/4/03	Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes	THQ
2/25/03	Dungeon Snowboarding	Konami
11/25/02	Evolution Snowboarding	Ubisoft
2/3/03	Fireblades	Midway
2/3/03	Freakey Flyers	Midway
11/19/02	Frogger Beyond	Konami
12/18/02	Gladius	Infogrames
11/19/02	Hunter: The Reckoning	Vivendi Universal
11/18/02	James Bond 007: Nightfire	Electronic Arts
11/25/02	Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius	THQ
2/3/03	Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker	Nintendo
12/3/02	Legends of Westing II	Acclaim
11/25/02	Method Prime	Nintendo
2/3/03	Micromachias	Infogrames
12/2/02	Mike Tyson Boxing	Infogrames
11/19/02	Monopoly Party	Ubisoft
11/18/02	Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction	Midway
12/10/02	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Electronic Arts
12/10/02	NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega
11/19/02	Nickelodeon Party Blast	Infogrames
1/15/03	Pro Race Driver	Infogrames
1/7/03	Resident Evil 2	Capcom
1/7/03	Resident Evil 3	Capcom
1/28/03	Risk	Infogrames
12/2/02	Sponge Bob Square Pants: Revenge of the Flying Dutchman	THQ
11/25/02	Star Wars Bounty Hunter	Lucas Arts
11/19/02	Star Wars Jedi Outcast	Lucas Arts
12/3/02	Super Bust a Move II	Ubisoft
12/17/02	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft
12/10/02	Tom Clancy's Sum of All Fears	Ubisoft
2/11/03	Vex	Acclaim
1/31/03	Wario World	Nintendo

Koel used its Romance of the Three Kingdoms as the basis for Kessen II, and then Dynasty Warriors 3. Now it seems the brawler is expanding its horizons into interplanetary space. So here's the question: Will Crimson Sea merely be another excuse to use its impressive Group Control Engine or will the company really give something new to the Xbox? This year's E3 told us little, other than that Crimson Sea will – at a minimum – be stunning to behold. Koel promises the game will have RPG elements in order to build your character Sho, but as far as other similarities to the genre go, all we know is that you have a "clouded past" and an unrealized destiny.

11/18/02	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Electronic Arts
12/2/02	Motor Trend Lotus Challenge	Midway
12/10/02	NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega
1/14/03	Panzer Dragon Orta	Sega
1/15/03	Pro Race Driver	Infogrames
1/3/03	Rayman 3 Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft
11/19/02	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision
1/28/03	Risk	Infogrames
11/19/02	Shrek Super Party	THQ
11/19/02	Star Wars: Jedi Outcast	Lucas Arts
2/17/03	Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic	Lucas Arts
1/15/02	Steel Battalion (w/controller)	Ubisoft
11/19/02	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft
11/19/02	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft
2/11/03	Vex	Acclaim
11/18/02	Whitout	Korayms
2/3/03	XIII	Ubisoft

THE SIMS ONLINE

■ **FORMAT** PC ■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 21



Imagine living out a simulated existence on a distant server. A life complete with friends, enemies, gossip, intrigue, triumph, failure, love, hate... It starts taking on the look of SimReality if you sit down and think about it for a while. Will

certain players forsake their normal lives in favor of a simulated one? Perhaps, but from the look of this title, it may be hard for all of us to tear ourselves away and plunge into our real lives. Whether it's getting roommates, starting a business, getting married, divorced, or what have you – the Sims Online will cause people to rethink what a massively multiplayer game is capable of.

1/22/03	Highland Warriors	Data Becker
1/30/03	Impossible Creatures	Microsoft
1/15/03	Indiana Jones & the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts
11/18/02	James Bond 007: Nightfire	Electronic Arts
1/15/03	Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Electronic Arts
11/18/02	Lago Drome Racers	Electronic Arts
11/18/02	Lago Island Xtreme Stunts	Electronic Arts
1/1/03	Lords of the Realm III	Vivendi Universal
11/26/02	Master of Orion III	Beverly
11/18/02	Medal of Honor Allied Assault: Spearhead	Electronic Arts
12/3/02	Monster Jam: Maximum Destruction	Ubisoft
2/4/03	NASCAR Racing 2003 Season	Vivendi Universal
11/19/02	O.R.B.	Strategy First
1/15/03	Operation Steel Tilt	Infogrames
11/26/02	Prastofans	Electronic Arts
11/19/02	Project IGI2: Covert Strike	Codemasters
2/4/03	Rainbow Six: Raven Shield	Ubisoft
1/15/03	Riddle of the Sphinx II: Omega Stone	Dreamcatcher
2/5/03	Rise of Nations	Microsoft
1/21/03	Sensuous Sam: Gold	Gathering of Developers
2/3/03	Shadowbane Online	Ubisoft
11/18/02	Sims, The Online	Electronic Arts
12/3/02	Soldier Of Fortune 2: Gold	Activision
2/3/03	Space Ace	Digital Leisure
2/25/03	Star Trek Elite Force 2	Activision
1/20/03	Star Wars Galaxies Online	LucasArts
12/23/02	Test Drive	Infogrames
12/10/02	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft
11/19/02	Tom Rider: The Angel of Darkness	Edios Interactive
11/19/02	Unreal III: The Awakening	Infogrames
11/19/02	Unreal III: The Awakening Collector's Edition	Infogrames
1/15/03	Vetnaag	THQ
1/15/03	Who Shot Johnny Rock?	Digital Leisure
12/12/02	Zanzibar	Xcxi Interactive

GAME BOY ADVANCE

11/25/02	Altered Beast: Guardian of the Reams	THQ
1/2/03	Barbar's Gate: Dark Alliance	Electronic Source
1/24/03	Bratz	Ubisoft
11/19/02	Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision
1/2/03	Creatures	Crave
11/19/02	Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 3	Crave
12/2/02	Ed, Edd & Eddy	Crave
11/18/02	GarunTad Dark Legacy	Midway
12/5/02	Hardcore Parball	Telegames
11/18/02	Jungle Boy	Ubisoft
11/18/02	Justice League of America	Midway
12/2/02	Kidby	Nintendo
11/18/02	Legend of Seta: A Link to the Past, The	Acclaim
12/3/02	Legends of Westing II	Ubisoft
11/25/02	Lunar	Ubisoft
1/2/03	Medabots: Metabee-Gold	Crave
1/2/03	Medabots: Rokushu-Silver	Crave
11/18/02	Metroid Fusion	Nintendo
12/6/02	Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway
11/18/02	Moto Race	Ubisoft
11/25/02	Mummy, The	Ubisoft
11/25/02	Phantom Star Collection	THQ
12/10/02	Samurai Jack: The Amulet of Time	Bam Entertainment
1/2/03	Sin City 4	Electronic Source
1/21/03	Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom
12/3/03	Super Puzzle Fighter II	Capcom
11/18/02	SuperDoo:Paradise World of Dr. Snuggs, The	Capcom
1/3/03	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft
12/5/02	Ultimate Bran Games	Telegames
12/3/03	Wizardry: The Summoning	Crave
11/18/02	Woody Woodpecker: Gray Castle 5	Konami
2/12/03	Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeon Dice Monsters	Konami

PLAY TO PERFECTION

Grand Theft Auto Vice City



WARNING:

A combination of frustration and experimentation are some of the greatest things in this game. Using this guide may diminish these aspects. Only use it for moments of frustration or confusion, you dirty cheat!

Miscellaneous Cool Stuff

- Buying food at the mall food court will refresh your health
- Picking up a scantily clad lady and taking her to a secluded area will regain your health – even past 100!
- If you really need cash, knock over parking meters downtown. They will dump money all over the street
- Go to the west end of the shipyard, and find a garage with an eight-ball above it. Drive a car into it, and it will get wired with a bomb
- If you jack a car with a passenger in it, and take off before they get out, your unwilling accessory will scream bloody murder until you give them a chance to flee
- Once you buy Pole Position, go into the back rooms. One is open. Sit down and enjoy a lap dance
- Once you complete all the taxi company missions, the Zebra Cab will be parked in that garage
- If you manage to beat the game, then keep playing, you'll get several hilarious cell phone calls from a drunken Kent Paul, a worried Cortez, and others
- On the beach and in some pools, you'll find a beach ball. Shoot it or kick it around for a cheap thrill
- In pizza parlors, there are two arcade games. One is the Degenetron, a classic game knock-off, and the other is Pogo The Monkey – referenced in GTA III radio commercials! Unfortunately, neither is playable
- Use a sniper scope, and look in the ocean's water. You may see schools of fish, a Portuguese man-of-war, and even a shark
- Check out the bartender at The Malibu. Trust us



Hidden Packages

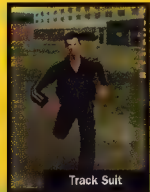
There are 100 Hidden Packages in this game. We've done the leg work to find the first 50 for you

1. Behind hospital near shore
2. Inside pizza parlor
3. In North Point Mall, at the catwalk over The Gash's escalator.
4. Slightly north of hospital, under motel balcony, behind stairs
5. Club Malibu, corner of fenced-in parking lot
6. Near north exit of North Point Mall
7. West end of Diaz property, seaside trench
8. Back of house with Rockstar logo-shaped pool
9. Behind Vice Point Langer beachside
10. Near alley by Hyman Condo
11. Behind ambulance at hospital by Love Fist
12. West side around stadium
13. In barn on northeast end of Phil's Place
14. Upstairs in Sunshine Autos
15. In fireworks store, south of ice cream factory
16. In lighthouse
17. Behind concrete wall across from Cubans
18. Basement stairs in back of building north of Hatian hideout
19. East side of street, ramped greenish house
20. In jacuzzi across the street from mansion
21. Backyard of jagged-shaped pool across from lowest island-connecting bridge
22. In Gate 1-8 of airport
23. Main deck of east end boat with multicolored crates
24. Canal on southeast side of golf course island
25. Around the deck of 1102 Washington St.
26. On bridge to southern island in golf course
27. Under highway bridge southeast of golf course entrance
28. Last driving range stall, north end of golf course
29. In building north of Shack property, up stairs and into office
30. Alley on Prawn Island
31. Porch of leftmost rundown house on Prawn Island
32. On top of diving board of huge hotel
33. In weird statue east of Hyman apartments
34. Slightly northwest of paint shop
35. In second floor office inside police headquarters
36. End of red beam on third floor, unfinished building
37. Behind Life's A Beach billboard
38. On rooftop penthouse of apartment north of the Malibu
39. Under wing of huge covered passenger plane
40. Between two trailers in parking lot
41. On top of corner building (two sets of stairs)
42. On helipad of hanger
43. On top of closed garage. Jump from yellow pinstriped ramp
44. In corner of underground parking lot by dock
45. Behind a wooden sign near RC car track
46. Middle of the airport roof. Use surfer billboard as jump
47. Behind fence and row of billboards on northeast end of airport
48. Next to communication tower on building (use helicopter or jump crates)
49. Back corner of penthouse atop green and tan building
50. Dimple of office building, water side

Outfits

These must be unlocked:

- Street Clothes** – Most regular save points
- Overalls** – In hardware stores
- Fancy Suit** – Rafael's near Ocean Point Hotel
- Golf Duds** – Pro shop by the country club
- Casual Outfit** – The Gash in North Point Mall
- Track suit** – Laundromat by the Cubans, and at Jock Sport, south of Love Fist studio
- Mr. Versetti suit** – Collar and Cuff west of the Ocean Point Hotel
- Cop Outfit** – In the locker room of the police station in Washington Beach
- Hockey Mask** – Outside of the Malibu



Rampages

There are 35 Rampages in this game. We've done the leg work to find the first 23 for you

- 1 – In front of Vinyl Countdown, inside North Point Mall
- 2 – At the pool, on the highest diving board behind Standing Vice Point
- 3 – In front of North Point Mall's east entrance
- 4 – Atop parking ramp, south of 1102 Washington property
- 5 – Behind the building next to your house at 3321 Vice Point
- 6 – East of military training base
- 7 – North side of stadium, near the heliport
- 8 – Square alley behind pizza parlor, south of Love Fist
- 9 – Behind hospital near shore
- 10 – On the way to the lighthouse
- 11 – On dock
- 12 – Middle-eastern end of golf course, by water
- 13 – Corner opposite the entrance inside airport
- 14 – Main deck of boat with multicolored crates
- 15 – By odd statue, near the Degenetron billboard
- 16 – Top of airport building (helicopter necessary)
- 17 – In basketball court of Little Havana
- 18 – Behind the bank
- 19 – On top of corner building (two sets of stairs)
- 20 – On rooftop near southwest corner of three-floor parking garage. Just jump off of ramp onto roof
- 21 – Edge of beach, near save point
- 22 – Take staircase up, on the same side of the street, but east of the downtown Ammu-Nation
- 23 – The roof two buildings up from the Ice Cream Factory

Rewards:

These will be at the mansion

- Find 10 Packages – Body Armor
- Find 20 Packages – Chainsaw
- Find 30 Packages – Python Handgun
- Find 40 Packages – Flamethrower
- Find 50 Packages – Laser Scope

Legends

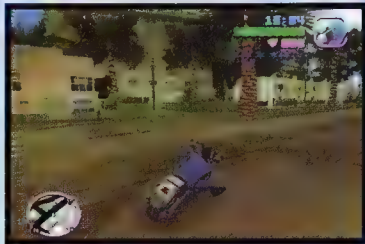
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|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| L Levels | Remover |
| C Cartaz | Hidden Package |
| D Distr | SAVE Save Point |
| A Awey | Level Fini |
| P Park | Bikez Club |
| V Veevett | TAXI Taxi Dispensary |
| Ammo Nation | Pizza Palace |
| Counterfeit Money Printing | Car Dealership |
| HaHaian | Spray Show |
| Culvans | Pole Position Strip Club |
| Hardware Store | The Malibu Club |
| Boatyard | |



Regular Missions

LAWYER

The Party – Following the initial intro, you'll finally reach your first mission. First, get your party duds at Rafael's. Next, gank the chopper, and head to the boat at Pier 2. Once aboard, you'll be introduced to many of the personalities you'll meet later on. Toss the lady on your hog and boogie to the Pole Position.

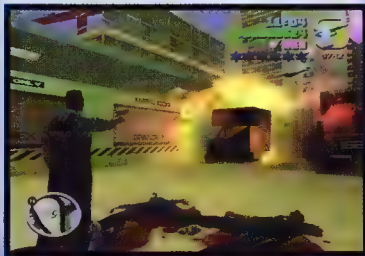


Back Alley Brawl – Be-bop to the Malibu for your first visit with Kent Paul, a fast-talking Brit. He'll send you to see a chef on Ocean Drive. Take your vehicle, run him over, then snatch his cell phone. Book to Lance's car. He'll direct you to the gun shop, then back to your hotel.



Jury Fury – Use the hammer the roadkill dropped, and follow the yellow triangles to the jurors. Beat up their cars to coerce them into a not-guilty verdict. Don't stop the onslaught until they speak.

Riot – Avery Carrington (Burt Reynolds) is at the lawyer's. Get another change of clothes (overalls), and go to the protest scene. Use your hammer to beat enough workers to incite a full-blown riot. Now, go inside the fenced area, target the red drums, and blow up the three trucks. Use your hammer on leftovers. Pick up the cash off the corpses on your way out – they won't need it.



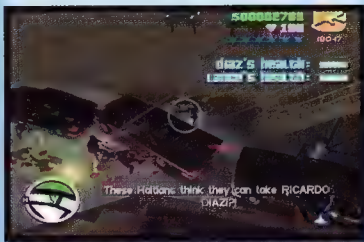
CORTEZ

Treachorous Swine – Cortez wants Gonzales dead, and he wants you to do it. He also wants you to use a chainsaw. Alrighty! When you get to his place, take out the goons first. Switch to your gun to increase your footspeed (you're slow when carrying the saw). Now chase him down and take him out. Use the chainsaw when he's down for a fountain of fun! Shake the cops and you're home free.

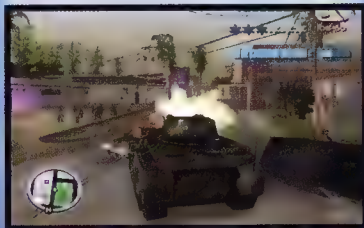


Mail Shootout – You're heading to an '80s staple – the mall. The French government interrupts your transaction, and you're forced to chase. Your target's on a bike, so take a car and ram him. He's tough, so keep running him over. Grab the package and head to the dock.

Guardian Angels – Jam to the parking lot and get some firepower. Lance shows up, and accompanies you to the drop off. Make sure you know how to use the new gun, because you'll have to mow down any bad-wishers from your vantage point. Keep Diaz alive, and you'll have to chase a dirt bike-driving punk. Shoot him while on a bike for best results. Grab the package he drops, and return it to Diaz.



Sir, Yes Sir! – This is a toughie. You're going to have to move quick. Park a vehicle in front of the convoy to buy time. Create some distance, then snipe the tank driver, followed by as many vehicles as possible. Find some wheels and lead them on a chase to divert the other troops. Run to the tank, and get in. Now, drive toward the pink marker. You need to park the tank in a garage and escape before its self-destruct system detonates.



All Hands On Deck – Stock up on first-person-aiming weapons at Ammu-Nation. Just blast the boats to bits from the deck. When the French attempt a blockade, shoot the watercraft in the same fashion, but keep an eye out for those who board you. Fire away at the helicopter when it comes, but the trio that jumps out takes top priority. Do the same to the attack chopper.



AVERY

Four Iron – A country club-worthy outfit is necessary. You'll need to check firearms at security, but you should still have the chainsaw. Take out the bodyguards, then go after your target. He'll take off on a golf cart. Chase after him. If he's still not dead, he'll get in a car to flee. Follow suit.



Demolition Man – Hop in the nearby van, where you'll pilot the RC helicopter. Grab a bomb, and place it on one of four targets. Once the first bomb is grabbed, you've got seven minutes to do it, so make sure you practice before taking any. You'll need to go up the stairs to the building interior. The bombs on the second, third, and fourth floors are all on the right side of the stairways. You don't need to worry about escaping, though. The chopper is expendable.

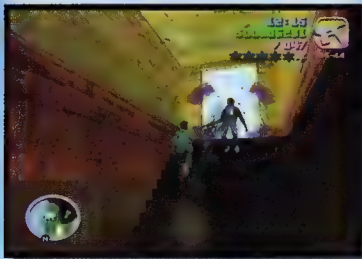
Two Bit Hit – Time for yet another costume change, holmes. Disrupt the funeral, and take out the guy with the ominous pink arrow. Escaping won't be that easy, though. Just try to get out as fast as possible.



DIAZ

The Chase – A simple spy operation goes bad when you get spotted. A rooftop chase ensues. Make sure to take the boards or jump across the roof gaps, then quickly grab a set of wheels to tail the culprit. The scooter is your only option straight out. He's got some heavy-duty ammo, so keep your distance until he reaches the hideout. Your work is done.

Phnom Penh '86 – This is a sniping mission, but from a moving helicopter. Let the chopper do some of the work, instead of fighting it. Also, take out things like vehicles and barrels to wipe out multiple villains in one blow. Once you're on the ground, switch to an auto-targeting gun, rather than the assault rifle. Blast your way to the roof, and Lance will return to whisk you away.



The Fastest Boat – You may not be very popular on your way to the fastest boat. The switch to lower it is in the garage by the launch site. There will be a lot of guys to kill, including the innocent looking dudes in the garage. Just cap them all, get in, and boat your butt to Diaz's mansion.

Supply and Demand – Race your boat to the ship faster than the competition. To do this, take the left path on the first fork. It's infinitely easier. Just outrun these two, hugging the left side of the course. Then, use the same strategy from Phnom Penh '86 to take out the boats, chopper, and gunman following you.

Rub Out – Use your car to run down the men in the front yard. Snipe the others from afar. Follow Lance through the maze, letting him go ahead of you. Once inside, keep a firm grip on the lock-on, then work your way to the big boss. Watch out for Lance walking in your line of fire, and take out the bad guy.



VERSETTI

Shakedown – Make sure your automatic weapons have plenty of ammo, and head to the North Point Mall. Take out all the windows at the marked storefronts (the owners will yell when completed), and dodge as much security as possible. It's helpful to use the car on display inside of the mall, both

to get around faster and to drive-by or run into the ground level stores. A quick costume change at the Gash or the hardware store will get the heat off, if it's not too hot. Keep in mind the Gash has two floors you need to mess up.



Bar Brawl – Snipe the guards outside. If one flees, run him down. When you get to the hideout, just drive on in and run them over, too. Chase down the guys on bikes and guess what? Yup, run 'em down. Easy.



Cop Land – Getting a cop car to follow you isn't tough. If you don't know how to do that by now, you must've been staring at sea life this whole time. A cutscene follows the closing of the garage (north side of block). There's a cop car on the side of the garage for you. Plant the bomb then leave the mall ASAP. There is a star icon below the exit, and another one in the alley by the garage. They should make getting home a little easier.

LOVE FIST

Love Juice – Take a fast car to the dealer. Chase him, and run him over when possible (don't lose him). Now, follow the pink mark to Mercedes. You have a very limited time to deliver her, so the faster the better. If you're confident, a motorcycle hauls.



Psycho Killer – Chase the cross-dressing crazy with the limo. The trick is to pour it on fast, nail the first left turn, and crush him into the semi that will always cross your path. Next, pull him out of his car and kill him, or just blow it up. If you don't do this, it will be a difficult game of cat and mouse as you try to ram him into submission without losing him.



Publicity Tour – It's Speed: The Game! Keep things fast, and head for the straightaways. The east side of the island has a long stretch of highway, but we recommend that you go to the stadium (far northwest), and ride around it. There's no traffic, and the turns are gradual. Eventually, the bomb will be diffused. Then, just drive a short distance to the Love Fist gig.

BIKER CLUB

Alloy Wheels of Steel – Find a bike worthy of the competition (no dirt bikes or un-American jobs). If you can't locate one, some respawn near the race start. While racing, feel free to be aggressive, but don't kill any opponents – you'll fail automatically. It won't be too tough to win, though. It should take no more than 2:30.



Messing with the Man – Causing carnage is the name of the game. The best way to do that is to use a few molotov cocktails. In lieu of that, though, do drive-bys to blow up cars. Don't go after people; they don't help fill the meter, and attract a lot of cops. Look out for ticked off drivers and stay out of the blast radius.

Hog Tied – You need a bike to save a bike. Grab a motorcycle and head to the marker. Use the staircase by the marker to launch across the street. The further you go, the more likely you won't draw attention. Try to keep from being spotted, grab the bike, and speed back to the club. Their vans will be hot on your tail too, so look out.



CUBANS

Stunt Boat Challenge – The stunt boat handles better than the other boat(s) you've driven, and there is a lot of open water here. Just get your aim on the jumps, look out for the U-turn section, and everyone will admire the size of your cojones.

Cannon Fodder – It's gang warfare, with you in the middle. Do NOT shoot any Cubans. Blow up the car the Haitians are hiding behind, then cap the sniper. There's a heart by the left-hand staircase. Pick off the leftovers, and go in the trenches. The Haitians will respawn, so don't try to kill 'em all. Get in the van, making sure nobody will pull you out. Do a big circle to get yourself in the right direction, then make it back to the Cuban headquarters in this van. Be very careful, since your tires are likely all shot and cops will be after you. There's a wanted level decreaser to the east, on the way to the spray shop (if necessary).



Naval Engagement – You'll definitely need body armor and ammo. Just keep locking onto targets on the boats. Once on land, duck behind the cement wall on the left side. Take out the guys in sight, then play peek-a-boo with those closer to the house. There are three briefcases to collect. When you get up to the house, hug a corner and wait for the gunfire to die down. When the boat blows, grab the vehicle on the other side of the building (left side), and jet over to the mansion (nearby). There should be body armor there (provided you've found at least 10 packages), and a fast car for the rest of the way.

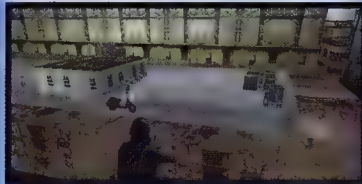


Trojan Voodoo – Find a Voodoo car, then join the Cubans. Drive through Haitian turf, then go inside. There are three bomb plant stations; one is upstairs. Now, get the hell out of there. If you're not far enough come go-time, the mission will abort, and you'll fail. To get far away, take a right when facing the gate, go upstairs, and run the rooftops.

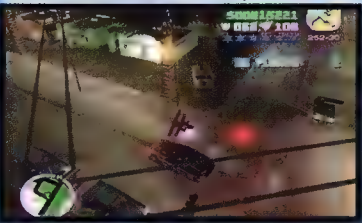


HAITIANS

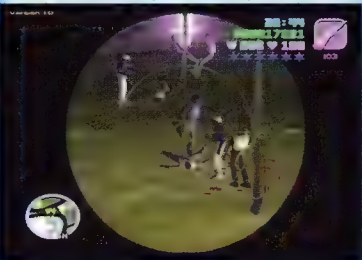
Juju Scramble – Grab a bike for the first package, so you can drive up the ramp, then jump off the building without getting hurt. The second one is just on a corner. The third is in the open, too. Each one you grab increases the police attention, but you're never far from the next one, or home.



Bombs Away! – You only have three planes, so make them count. Get high into the air, then dip down, and repeat. Bomb the dock to cause a panic. Chase after the Cuban boats, then the car. After disposing of the mobile Cubans, take out the lone guy on the dock.



Dirty Lickins – The snipe point is on the building north of the battlefield. Take the stairs behind it to get up, but take the pill first to slow things down. Reinforcements keep coming, but focus on the areas around the Haitians; you lose if they all die.



ICE CREAM FACTORY

Distribute – Park the truck, click the left analog, and let your yellow dot customers buy your treats. Be careful not to stay too long, though. Cops and gangs won't be pleased with you if you stay in one place too long. The best strategy is going to the shipyards, since there's no gang, police presence is light, and there are plenty of spaces to duck behind. Deliver a total of 100 – it doesn't have to be all at once – to complete the mission.



BOATYARD

Checkpoint Charlie – Take the boat on your right. Other than U-turns and jumps, it's easy. Of course, there are a bunch of U-turns and jumps at the start. From there, it's a piece of cake.



Property

Use any of these for a quick save. Some have garages, boats, or heliports. The businesses start earning money when you complete their missions.

Skunkole Shack \$1,000 – Atop stairs between the top two island-connecting bridges on the west island

3321 Vice Point \$2,500 – On the northern tip of the east island, near the mall

1102 Washington St. \$3,000 – Near the lowest island-connecting bridge on the east island

Linke View Apartment \$6,000 – On the east island, across from the golf course

El Swanko Casa \$8,000 – Fancy house three-quarters up the main strip on the east island

Ocean Heights Apartment \$7,000 – One block east of the southernmost Ammu-Nation

Boatyard \$10,000 – Southeast tip of the west island

Hyman Condo \$14,000 – Go north past Love Fist studio. Take the right down the alley after the street with Ammu-Nation

Ice Cream Factory \$20,000 – On west island, south of bridge going to Starfish Island

Pole Position Strip Club \$30,000 – Two blocks east of the southernmost Ammu-Nation

Kaufman Taxi \$40,000 – By second island, connecting bridge from top on the west island

Sunshine Autos \$50,000 – On diagonal street south of the west island's southernmost hardware store

Film Studio \$60,000 – At the main corner of Prawn Island

Print Works \$70,000 – Between the middle two island-connecting bridges, slightly inland

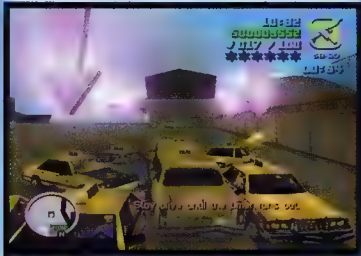
The Malibu Club \$120,000 – Halfway up on the east island, at the bend in the main strip

TAXI COMPANY

VIP – Take out rival cabs to get your VIP to the destination. Use your drive-by tactic to waste the competition.

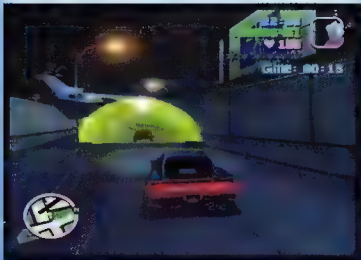
Friendly Rivalry – Take out three cabs. Drive-by yet again.

Cabmageddon – Keep running circles, pausing momentarily before your cuts. These guys are easy to out-manuever. The tiger-striped guy can be killed with some good drive-by action, using the other cars to hide behind, or just overpowering him – even into the water! That'll teach them for taking Mercedes' name in vain.



SUNSHINE AUTOS

Vice Street Racer – Buying this property is your ticket to street racing. There are six courses in total. Go to the paint area, and check the map on the wall. Here, you can race any course, provided you have the entry fee. If you win, you get four times what you paid to enter. These drivers are crazy, so just wait for them to make mistakes, and scoot ahead. Keep an eye on your map for surprise turns.



THE MALIBU

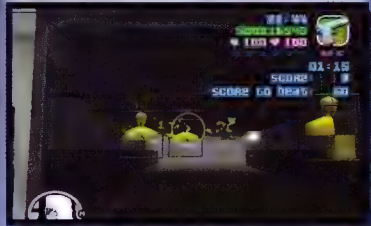
Death Row – This mission happens before you buy the place, after beating Supply and Demand. Bring a quick but durable car to the Malibu, because you're going to need it to save Lance. Before reaching the construction yard, snipe the car in front to kill the first three guards. Now, drive on in. Try to avoid having it get blown up or getting pulled out on your way. Snipe the guy on the crane if possible. Motor into where Lance is held. Take the vacant garbage truck, and flee to the hospital. The truck is heavy duty enough to withstand the damage tailing gang cars try to inflict upon you.



No Escape? – Set up with body armor and a good car – which you should point north. Change clothes, and go upstairs for the keycard (and Package #35). You'll have a four-star rating when you get out of the cop shop, and will be surrounded. Getting in a car is tricky; waiting for Cam to get in is trickier still. Find a vehicle, then creep up a bit. He'll follow. Make sure he gets in before a cop pulls you out. There's a star reducer south in the alley, one near the Malibu, another in an alley across from the golf course, and one more in the North Point Mall parking lot. That should get you down to one. Now, just don't mess up, and let that last star disappear.



The Shootist – You have three rounds to beat 60 points. It should be no problem. For round one, shoot all but the head of the one-point target, so it's not in the way. After the first round, make sure you don't accidentally leave. For the next two rounds, you should have figured out that using the d-pad is best for aiming, rather than the analog stick.



The Driver – Hilary is far better than the psychos in Vice Street Racer. His car is better than yours, and you can't really push him around. Plus, you're given two stars from the start. How do you beat him? Don't let him get too far ahead of you. He will mess up a few corners and may get turned around, which you can use to take the lead. He won't be down for long, though. There are a few places where, depending on whether you're winning or not, two cops will try to sandwich you from opposite ends: the right turn where the bridge to the mansion is on your left, and the right onto the bridge after the destroyed building.



The Job – Follow the markers in the bank, always ready to cap any security. Don't shoot any of the downstairs guys or the manager, though. When the SWAT team shows up, shoot them. Find the armor and heart if they're needed. Outside, clear an area around the cab to make your break. There are cops everywhere. Worry about yourself, and get out of there. When you can, double back and pick up who's left. A last resort is to book to the mansion to get a faster car and body armor. There's a spray shop down the street where you can get repaired, and once you have your posse, it'll get rid of the heat. When the stars are gone, go to Cam's.



El Swanko Casa



Film Studio



Ice Cream Factory



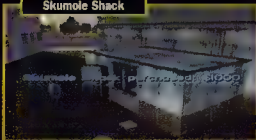
Kaufman Taxi



The Malibu Club



Skumole Shack



FILM STUDIO

Recruitment Drive – Who better for your films than Candy Suxx? Shoot the four guys that attack you, then chase after the pimp. This must be a clown car, because even more goons may come out. Chase him down (is everyone in Vice City a stunt driver?), and go back to Candy. If your car's too small for both girls, there's a four-door across the street.

Dildo Dodo – The Dodo is very hard to fly, as you'll find out. Play the wind, and bob and weave to stay in the air. Locate a blue spot, then hit circle when you reach it. Now, fly to the reddish orb. Repeat until done. We suggest saving the northernmost blue until last, because its red orb is the trickiest to hit.



Martha's Mug Shot – All's funny and nice, up until the five-star cop rating. D'oh! Make sure you can access your car (i.e. not near the hotel side door), and it's facing the road. Grab the star reducer straight ahead, then head north. The spray shop is your target, but there are plenty of star icons in lieu of that. You may want to take a test run before actually accepting the mission to get your route down. You still must blast through the cop brigade in front of the studio, but that's easy.

G-Spotlight – You could use a chopper to get to the spotlight, but the game won't let you. Fortunately, this mission is loads of fun. Get a good start for each jump, but brake quickly when you get across. There's a bridge that comes down about halfway. You may want to take that opportunity to get a new bike, as you'll probably be billowing smoke.



PHIL'S PLACE

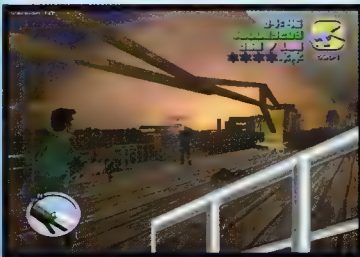
Gun Runner – Get yourself a pretty tough vehicle – you'll need it. Hit the trucks, and grab the booty. Kill the guy in back just for fun. After a few times, things get tougher with lots of thugs on scooters. The good news is you get bonus bucks if you blast them. Mop up the rest of the trucks for some good cash.



Boomshine Saigon – WARNING: This could cause real-life nausea! Phil needs you to lend him a hand, but you're a little messed up. Just keep weaving with the dizziness (which wears off as you go), and don't sweat little smacks – you're in a Patriot, after all. Between the hospital and the "alternative," the cops will chase you for drunk driving. You're almost home though, so no worries. Phil's Place now becomes a firearm depot.

PRINT WORKS

Spilling The Beans – Take the cab to the Malibu, then drive to the mansion. Here, grab your helicopter. Fly to the tanker and land on the roof. The chopper will probably blow, but it's served its purpose. Go down the stairs and into the highlighted space. Now, shoot your way to land. There's more armor across the street. Gank a car and Spray-paint it, then get back to the Print Works.



Hit The Courier – Get to the pink marker (docks) when the yellow marker (helicopter) is near. It is hostile territory, so be strapped. Take out the courier – preferably before she gets on the open road. It shouldn't be too tough. We actually killed her on foot by blowing up the car. Nobody even chases you back to the Print Works.



MAFIA MISSIONS (AFTER ALL REGULAR MISSIONS ARE COMPLETED)

Cap The Collector (Print Works) – It's mafia backlash! These guys are on motorcycles – if anything – so they're easy to take out. Don't fight them on your feet, or you'll get messed up. Just run over them. There are three groups. Keep checking the map to see where they are or where they're heading.



Keep Your Friends Close (Mansion) – Arm your Python, stay in the office corner, and shoot goons as they come. Eventually, it says to go after the traitor. Leave the office area and run downstairs, into the room to the left. Now, go up to the roof. Get by the heliport (a heart's behind you), and snipe everyone you can. The back-stabber will take a few hits (or one well-placed grenade) to kill. Go back down to the second floor. You're fully healed and armored now. Stay opposite the office and alternate between capping with your Python, and tossing bombs or grenades down to the ground floor. When things are thinned out enough, take the staircase with rooftop access down to the ground floor. Get into the long hallway leading back to the main room, and snipe Sonny to end the conflict.



EXTRA MISSIONS • EXTRA MISSIONS • EXTRA MISSIONS • EXTRA MIS

PHONE BOOTH

Roadkill – Grab a car and find the pizza boy. Run him over, and squash any remains.

Waste The Wife – Mrs. Dawson's Comet hauls, so pick a vehicle that can keep up. Keep ramming her, and trying to force her into other cars or immovable objects. When she starts flaming, exit stage wherever.



Autocide – Take the sniper rifle provided, and the bike nearby. Cap the first guy – look up on the billboard, from the ground. Take the stairs in the alley across from the second one so he won't spot you, and snipe him through the windshield. Number three and four are together in a truck. Go slightly northwest of their location, and snipe them from some motel stairs. The next is on a boat, easily shot from the shore. The final is a motorcycle rider. He's tough to catch, but you should have plenty of time to drive-by him.

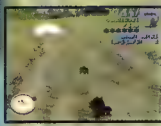


Check Out At The Check in – The key to this is patience. When the target starts moving, just anticipate his movement. Grab the case and head out. You'll have both cops and punks on your tail, and a long way to go. Spray-paint the car to get the cops off of you, at least.

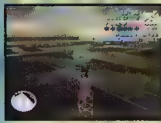


Loose Ends – Find the sniper rifle and use it. Often, when there are no more heads to take off, use an Uzi and blast barrels for maximum effectiveness. There's body armor in a corner. You want to get to the ledge that a guard was on. From here, snipe some more, then get on the roof. Watch out for the guy atop the billboard. Now zoom to the airport.

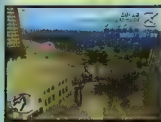
OTHERS



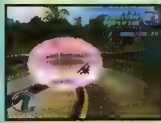
RC Bandit Race – Find this in the van by the east island desert track. This is a two-lap race with RC cars in a desert setting. Hit the checkpoint, keep your finger on the gas, and you should win with ease.



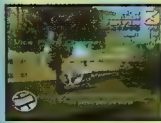
RC Raider Pickup – This is near the south entrance of the hangar. Don't even bother with it, unless you're a completist. The 15 minutes it takes is not worth the \$100 reward.



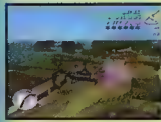
Ocean Beach Chopper – This takes some time to reach. First off, go to the spray shop on the south end of the east island. There's an odd building on the corner north of it. Find the bike tucked away there. Now, use the alley for speed (about halfway down should do it), and take off up the stairway. With luck, you'll land on a rooftop with a helicopter. Once in the chopper, hit all the pink points as fast as possible. This is a weak whirly, so look out for power lines and buildings.



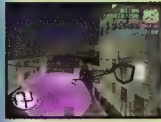
RC Baron Race – Find this in the van on the top floor of the North Point Mall parking lot. Dipping is key. Try to stay as high as possible, then duck down and touch the checkpoint. Your map shows the next two points. The race is about 2:15 long.



Vice Point Chopper – This one is much easier than Ocean Beach. It's in a grassy area surrounded by plain buildings with fenced alleys between them, east of the golf course. The course itself is a bit tougher though,



Little Haiti Chopper – To get here, grab a fast car (or bike). You'll find a south-facing jump in an alley north of the Haitian headquarters. Jump on the roof, hitting the billboard to stop you. Get in the chopper. This is the easiest of the four chopper missions.



Downtown Chopper – Slightly north of the biker club, there is a set of stairs on the west side of the street. They're also used in G-Spotlight studio mission. Take them to the chopper. Watch out for the



Off-Roadin' – Go to the northeast section of the west map. You'll find a truck, along with a dirtbike. Jump in the truck and do a few laps. Don't tip over, and you'll get a cash reward for completing it, as well as each time you beat your old score.



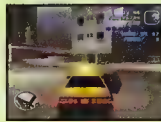
Dirt Bikin' – Take the bike and tool around. The same rules and rewards apply as with Off-Roadin'.



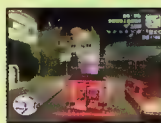
Pizza Boy – After the first phone mission, pizza delivery scooters will show up at the pizzeria near the Love Fist area. Use these like cabs, ambulances, etc. You have to deliver an insane amount to complete the mission. Plot the best course with the map before you take off. If there are more than six spots, break them up so you can easily get back and refill your pies.



Hold Up Stores – Go into an open store. Aim at the clerk, and he will drop some money on the counter. He will also hit the alarm if you don't kill him, giving you a two-star wanted level. There are 15 of these wait until later in the game to do this.



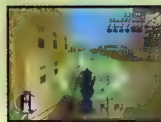
Insane Taxi – Steal a cab and hit the analog stick. Find a passenger and take them where they want to go. Repeat. If your car gets too damaged, the customer will run away.



Save Lives Instead Of Taking Them – Steal an ambulance, and click the analog stick. Deliver injured folk to the hospital. Of course, you'll probably hurt more people on the way there, but at least your heart's in the right place.



We Didn't Start The Fire – Borrow a firetruck, and click the analog stick. Use circle and the left analog to put out fires. Burning passengers often flee from charred vehicles, so don't forget about them.



PCJ Playground – Get on the bike in the corner of the Standing Vice building on the east island's main drag. This is a matter of finding the right run. Go straight at first, using the stairs to get the first out-

there piece. Now, take the stairs in the alley to get the high goal, and the one along the building. When you whip around, don't worry about the goal on the house. Instead, go right and follow to more stairs, rooftops, and the last two checkpoints.

Vigil Vigilante – Get in a cop car or FBI vehicle, and click the analog. Now, chase after criminals and kill them. Being on the good side of the law ain't so bad after all...

SECRET ACCESS

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2



ARMORED CORE 3

Here's a list of techniques to obliterate the competition within Arena mode. Follow the steps listed and you'll be king of the hill in no time.

Parking Lot – Boost backwards into the corner. Sometimes the opponent will get caught on the wall, and you'll have a little time to score a few free shots.

Parking Lot – Equip the heavy tank legs, and the heavy EO Core. Now attach the Flame-thrower for the left arm the Grenade Rifle for the right arm. At the start, boost backwards into the corner. When the enemy gets close, turn on the flames while shooting it with the Grenade Rifle and EO weapon.

Reservoir – At the start, boost backwards to the out-of-bounds line. Since the enemy will most likely try to attack from behind, it will head out of bounds and forfeit the match. However, not all opponents will fall for this trick.

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH



TEKKEN 4

Although they're nothing too special. These are a few cool nooks that will certainly make Tekken 4 even more exciting!

Alternate Victory Pose – After winning a match, hold X, or during the replay to see a different pose.

Paul's Secret Taunt – Crouch and don't move; wait three seconds for a surprise!

Fredrick Johnson
Venice Beach, GA



BLADE II

Enter these super codes to make your time with Blade II much more manageable.

Escorted NPCs Invincible – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press X, X.

Level Select – At the Main Menu, hold L1 and press Down, Up, Left (x2), Right, Down, .

Unlimited Health – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press .

Unlimited Rage – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press Left, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Right, Up.

Greg Norman
Hopkins, MN



SUMMONER 2

Easy Money – Head to Mas Ora's district in Munari City and enter the House of Soleil; it's the first on the left once you enter this district. You'll encounter a human right in front of you; loan him a 1,000 gold pieces and he'll give you a Bodril. Hold it until later when he asks to return the loan. Now tell him you wish to purchase the Bodril for 5,000 gold pieces, but answer "No" when asks if you actually want to do that. You'll gain some gold and experiences. After this he will ask if you actually want to buy it. Instead of leaving, continue to speak with him, and he'll keep asking the same question. Just keep replying "No," and you'll get gold each time.

"The Game Molester"
Washington, DC

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS

Head to the Cheats screen and enter the following codes to unlock their secrets. Not only will they help you out during gameplay, but you can unlock all of the movies and biographies!

All Movies – LANA LANG

Biographies – LARA

Hard Mode – JOR EL

Infinite Health & Super Power – SMALLVILLE

Pedro Martinez
Boston, MA

CODE OF THE MONTH



NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

You cannot save cars you unlocked using a code. You must enter the codes each time you play. Note that all codes must be entered at the Main Menu, and a message will indicate a correct code entry.

Aston Martin V12 Vanquish – Press R2, Right, R2, Right, Left, Left

BMW Z8 – Press Right, Right, R2, R2, Chevrolet Corvette Z06 – Press Left, R2, Left, R2, L1, R1, L1, R1

Ferrari 360 Spider – Press R2, R2, L2, L2, L2

Ferrari F50 – Press L1, L1, L1, Right, L2, Right, L2

Ferrari F550 – Press L1, L1, Right, R1, Right, R1

Ford Pursuit Mustang Cobra R – Press Left, Left, R2, R1, R2, R1

Ford TS50 – Press Right, Left, Right, Left, R2, R2,

HSV Coupe GTS – Press L1, L2, L1, L2, R1, R1, R1

Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT – Press Right, R2, Right, R2, R1, L1, R1, L1

Lotus Elise – Press R2, R2, Left, Left,

McLaren F1 – Press L1, L1, R1, Left, R1, Left

McLaren F1 LM – Press L1, L1, Right, Right

Mercedes CLK GTR – Press R2, R1, R2, R1, Left, Left,

Porsche Carrera GT – Press Left, Right, Left, Right, R1, R2, R1, R2

Tim Bale
Chicago, IL

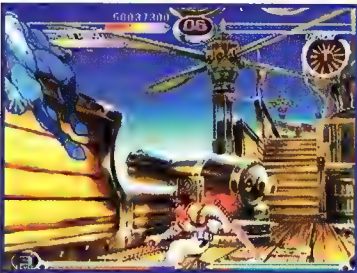


HITMAN 2

These cheats really are just for fun. Inputting them may cause glitches, and present problems with level completion. Input all of the codes during gameplay, except for the Level Menu cheat. You must do that one on the Main Menu.

- All Weapons** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, Up, X
- Bomb** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, Up, L1
- Complete Level** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, O, X, O, X
- God Mode** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, R2, L2, R1, L1
- Gravity** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, L2, L2
- Hitmanall** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, Up (x2)
- Hitman Full Life** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, Up, Down
- Lethal Charge** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, R1, R1
- Level Menu** – At the Main Menu, press R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, X, Δ, ○
- MegaForce** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, R2, R2
- Nailgun** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, L1, L1
- Siomo** – R2, L2, Up, Down, X, L3, Up, L2

Irene Ireland
Molasses Creek, IA



MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2

These little tips will make your gaming experience more fun, and more importantly, a whole lot less costly.

Disgrace – After beating an opponent, press Start and you'll be able to move your character. Go over to the fallen foe and begin beating him some more.

Hidden Characters and Cheaper Prices – To get hidden characters and cheaper prices, simply enter and leave the shop over and over again. You'll eventually encounter the character you wish to purchase, and probably at a lower price.

"GI Droid"
(location unknown – last seen undercover with your sister...and mom!)

BLADE II

Blade II sucks – yes, it is true. But if you happened to purchase or rent this product, inputting these codes should make it a little better.

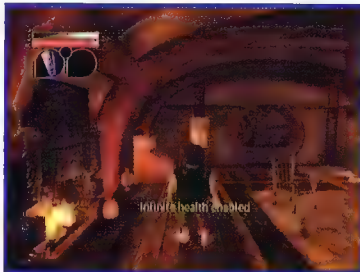
Escorted NPCs are invincible – Pause during a game, hold L and press X, B, Y, A, X, B, Y, A. This code only works when you're escorting NPCs.

Level Select – At the Main Menu, hold L and press Down, Up, Left (x2), B, Right, Down, X.

Unlimited Health – During a game, pause, hold L and press Y, X, Y, X, Y, B, Y, B.

Unlimited Hage – During a game, pause, hold L and press Left, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Right, Up.

Melanie Hardaway
Memphis, TN

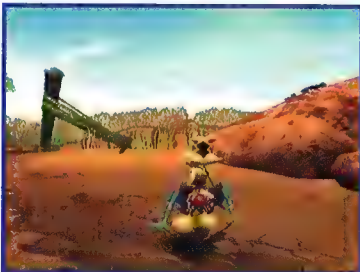


THE LORD OF THE RINGS: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Quickly input all of the following codes during gameplay. We promise, Frodo won't get at all angry if you cheat, but only a little bit.

- Infinite Ammo** – X, B, Y, A, X, B
- Infinite Health** – Y, A, X, B, A, Y
- Infinite Ring Use** – Y, B, A, B, Y, X

"The Gaming God"
Philadelphia, PA



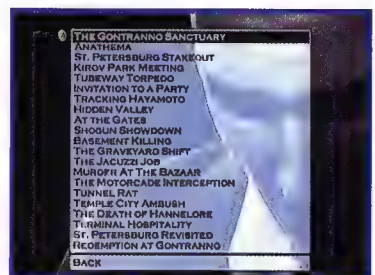
TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER

Boomerangs are abundant with these codes. If you're having a tough time with any of the enemies, just enter these during gameplay to relieve all your troubles.

All Technorangs – White, Black, White, Black, Y (x3), X, Y, X

Elemental Rangs, Aqurang, Swim & Dive – White, Black, White, Black, Y (x2), X (x2), Y, X

Billy Ripken
Baltimore, MD



HITMAN 2

Some of these might cause glitches and mess with the level completion. All of them need to be inputted during gameplay, except for the Level Menu cheat, which should be entered at the Main Menu.

- All Weapons** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Up, A
- Bomb** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Up, White
- Complete Level** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, B, A, B, A
- God Mode** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Right Button, Left Button, Black, White
- Hitman All** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Up, Up
- Hitman Full Life** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Up, Down
- Lethal Charge** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Black, Black
- Level Menu** – At the Main Menu, press Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, X, Y, B.
- Mega Force** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, Right Button, Right Button
- Nailgun** – Right Button, Left Button, Up, Down, A, Left, White (x2)

Mr. Poopy Pants
Stinkybutcheeks, HI

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

Enter all of these kick-ass codes at the Extras screen. A wonderfully horrific scream will indicate a correct code entry.

- Slayer Power** – Press Y (x3), Black (x3), Y, White, Black (x2), White, Y
- Unlimited Health** – Press Y, White, Black (x2), White, Y, Black (x3), Y (x3). Note: Falls are still harmful.

"The Vidman"
Uptown, MN

NBA Live 2003

At the Create Player menu, enter these codes as the player's last name. A message will appear, indicating that the code worked. The new player will appear in the free agent pool. Sign them to your team.

- Play as Busta Rhymes** – FLIPMODE
- Play as DJ Clue** – MIXTAPES
- Play as Ghetto Fabulous** – GHETTOFAB
- Play as Hot Karl** – CALIFORNIA
- Play as Just Blaze** – GOODBEATS

Randle Fenton
Hanover, ME

ANIMAL CROSSING

NES Games

You can purchase certain games from Redd, all of which cost a hefty 12,000 Bells. Also, you can purchase some from Tom Nook, which will only set you back a minor 3,000 Bells. The ones that don't have a name next to them, indicating the place of purchase, you must obtain through Feng Shui. Feng Shui is simply the preferred manner in which you decorate



your house. The proper Feng Shui is as follows: the north part of your house should be covered with orange items; the west side should be covered with yellow; the south should be covered with green; and the east should be covered with red. So, for instance, to get Punch Out, the east side of your house should be decorated with red items. The more red there is, the better chance you'll come across Punch Out.

- Balloon Fight** - Redd, Nook, Feng Shui Yellow
- Baseball** - Feng Shui Red
- Clu Clu Land** - Redd, Nook
- Clu Clu Land D** - Feng Shui Red
- Donkey Kong** - Nook, Feng Shui Red
- Donkey Kong 3** - Feng Shui Red
- Donkey Kong Jr** - Feng Shui Red
- Donkey Kong Jr Math** - Nook, Feng Shui Green
- Excitebike** - Nook, Feng Shui Red
- Golf** - Redd, Nook, Feng Shui Red
- Pinball** - Redd, Nook
- Punch Out** - Feng Shui Red
- Soccer** - Feng Shui Red
- Tennis** - Nook, Feng Shui Yellow
- Wario's Woods** - Feng Shui Red



Fish

Certain types of fish only appear in specific bodies of water and at certain times of the year. Here is a list of all the fish, where to get them, and when you'll find them in the greatest of abundance. As you've probably experienced by now, some fish appear randomly in different places, and you may luck out and catch one out of season.

Fish	Price	Location	Peak Time
Angelfish	3,000	River, Pond	May to Oct., 4 P.M. to 10 A.M.
Arapaima	10,000	River, Pond	July to Middle Sept., 4 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Arowana	10,000	River, Pond	June to Sept., 4 A.M. to 10 A.M. & 4 P.M. to 9 P.M.
Barbel Steed	200	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Barred Knifejaw	5,000	Ocean	Mar. to Nov., 4 A.M. to 9 A.M. & 4 P.M. to 9 P.M.
Bass	300	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Bitterling	1,300	River, Pond	Dec. to Feb., All Day
Bluegill	120	River, Pond	All Year, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Brook Trout	150	Pond	All Year, All Day
Carp	300	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Catfish	200	River, Pond	Mar. to Oct., 4 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Cherry Salmon	1,300	River, Pond	Mar. to June & Sept. to Nov., 4 A.M. to 9 A.M. & 4 P.M. to 10 P.M.
Coelacanth	15,000	Ocean	All Year, 4 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Crawfish	250	During Rain	Apr. to Middle Sept., All Day
Crucian Carp	120	Holding Pond	All Year, All Day
Dace	200	River, Pond	All Year, 4 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Eel	2,000	River, Pond	June to Sept., 5 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Freshwater Goby	300	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Frog	250	Holding Pond	May to Aug., All Day
Giant Catfish	3,000	Pond	June to Aug., 4 P.M. to 10 A.M.
Giant Snakehead	6,500	Pond	June to Aug., 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
Goldfish	1,300	River, Pond	All Year, All Day

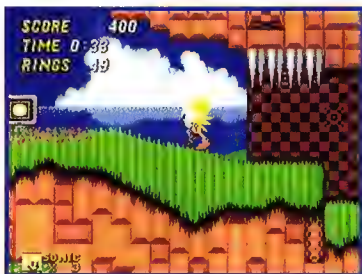
Guppy	1,300	River, Pond	Apr. to Nov., 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
Jellyfish	100	Ocean	2nd half of Aug., All Day
Killifish	300	Holding Pond	Apr. to Aug., All Day
Koi	2,000	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Large Bass	3,000	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Large Char	10,000	Waterfall	Mar. to June & Sept. to Nov., 4 A.M. to 9 A.M. & 4 P.M. to 9 P.M.
Loach	300	River, Pond	Mar. to May, All Day
Pale Chub	200	River, Pond	All Year, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
Piranha	6,500	River, Pond	June to Sept., 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. & 9 P.M. to 4 A.M.
Pond Smelt	300	River, Pond	Dec. to Feb., All Day
Popeyed Goldfish	1,300	River, Pond	All Year, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.
Rainbow Trout	650	River, Pond	Mar. to June & Sept. to Nov., 4 A.M. to 9 A.M. & 4 P.M. to 9 P.M.
Red Snapper	3,000	Ocean	All Year, 4 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Salmon	650	River, Ocean, Pond	Sept., All Day
Sea Bass	120	Ocean	2nd Half Aug. to Middle Sept., All Day
Small Bass	200	River, Pond	All Year, All Day
Stringfish	15,000	River, Pond	Dec. to Feb., 4 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Sweetfish	1,300	River, Pond	July to Sept., All Day

Insects

There are also a number of insects to collect, so always keep a net with you just in case you come across one of these rare ones. Like the fish, these bugs are only found in certain places at specific times of the year.

Insect	Price	Location	Peak Time
Ant	80	Dead Turnips, Candy	All Year, All Day
Bagworm	250	In Trees	Oct. to Mar., All Day
Banded Dragonfly	4,500	Anywhere	July to Aug., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Bee	4,500	In Trees	All Year, All Day
Bill Cricket	430	In Grass	Sept. to Oct., 5 P.M. to 9 A.M.
Brown Cicada	200	On Trees	July to Aug., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Cockroach	5	Trees, Flowers	Mar. to Nov., All Day
Common Butterfly	80	Anywhere	Mar. to Oct., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Common Dragonfly	130	Anywhere	May to July, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Cricket	130	In Grass	Sept. to Nov., 5 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Darner Dragonfly	200	Anywhere	June to Aug., 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Drone Beetle	80	On Trees	July to Aug., All Day
Dynastid Beetle	1,350	On Trees	July to Aug., 7 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Evening Cicada	850	On Trees	July to Aug., 4 to 8 A.M. & 4 to 7 P.M.
Firefly	250	Near Water	June, 7 P.M. to 4 A.M.
Flat Stag Beetle	2,000	On Trees	June to Aug., 7 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Giant Beetle	10,000	On Trees	July to Aug., 11 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Grasshopper	130	In Grass	Aug. to Sept., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Jewel Beetle	3,000	On Trees	July to Aug. 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Ladybug	130	On Flowers	Mar. to July & Oct., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Longhorn Beetle	200	Anywhere	June to Aug., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Long Locust	200	In Grass	Aug. to Nov., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Mantis	430	On Flowers	Aug. to Oct., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Migratory Locust	1,350	In Grass	Sept. to Nov., 9 A.M. to 7 P.M.
Mole Cricket	200	Underground	Nov. to May, All Day
Mosquito	130	Anywhere	May to Sept., 8 A.M. to 10 P.M.
Mountain Beetle	2,000	On Trees	July to Aug., 7 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Pill Bug	250	Under Rocks	All Year, All Day
Pine Cricket	100	In Grass	Sept. to Oct., 5 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Pondskater	130	Holding Ponds	June to Sept., 8 A.M. to 7 P.M.
Purple Butterfly	2,000	Anywhere	June to Aug., 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Red Dragonfly	80	Anywhere	Sept. to Oct., 8 A.M. to 7 P.M.
Robust Cicada	300	On Trees	July to Aug., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Saw Stag Beetle	2,000	On Trees	July to Aug., 8 P.M. to 8 A.M.
Snail	250	On Flowers	Apr. to Sept., All Day
Spider	300	In Trees	Apr. to Sept., All Day
Spotted Ladybug	200	On Flowers	Mar. to July & Oct., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Timer Butterfly	200	Anywhere	Apr. to Sept., 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Walker Cicada	400	On Trees	July to Sept., 8 A.M. to 4 P.M.
Yellow Butterfly	80	Anywhere	Mar. to Oct., 8 A.M. to 5 P.M.

"The GI Staff"
Minneapolis, MN



SONIC MEGA COLLECTION

We've discovered all of these wonderful Sonic codes, which you can enjoy your second (or first) time through these games. Just sit back, and have a blast tinkering with everyone's favorite blue mascot.

Sonic Spinball

Level Select - Go to the options screen and press B, Down, A, Down, X, Down, B, A, Up, B, X, Up, A, X, Up. If done correctly you'll hear a sound. Return to the title screen. Press B and Start for level two, A and Start for level three, or X and Start for level four.

Sonic 3D Blast

Level Select - Head to the Press Start screen and press A, B, Right, B, X, Up, Down, B. Now start a game and the Level Select screen will appear. Once you've done this, you can skip levels simply by pausing and pressing B.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2

Debug Mode - In the Level Select screen, play music tracks 1, 9, 9, 2, 1, 1, 2, 4. While holding B, select a stage, until the level appears. The controls are as follows: B turns debug on and off, A switches objects, X places objects.

Level Select - Go to the options menu and play the following songs in order: 19, 65, 9, 17. You'll hear a ring if entered correctly. Press X and then Start to return to the title screen. Now hold the B button and start a game. You'll be taken to the Level Select Screen.

Super Sonic - In the Level Select screen, play music tracks 4, 1, 2, 6 in order. Start a game and collect 50 coins. Jump in the air with B and you'll transform!

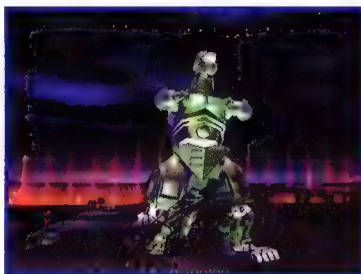
Sonic the Hedgehog

Control Mode - At the title screen, press Up, X, Down, X, Left, X, Right. A ring will confirm a correct entry. Start a game and pause it. B will reset the game; A will play the game in slow motion; and X will advance the game one frame at a time.

Debug Mode - Enter the same code as before, but hold B as you press Start to begin a game. The controls are exactly the same as in the Debug mode for Sonic 2.

Level Select - At the title screen, press Up, Down, Left, Right. A ring will indicate a correct entry. Now press B and Start. This will take you to the Level Select menu.

Larry Sanders
New York, NY



GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE

In order to input these codes, you must first access the Cheat mode. At the Main Menu press and hold L Button, B, R Button, (in that order) then release B, R Button, L Button (in that order). This will display the code entry screen. Now enter the following codes at this screen. If entered correctly, you'll hear a roar.

- 11 Lives - 760611
- Almost All Monsters - 696924
- Black & White Mode - 567980
- Disable Life & Energy Display - 443253
- Indestructible Buildings - 112122
- Invisible Player Two - 459113
- No Energy Gain For Player One - 650867
- Small Player One - 986875
- Small Player Two - 971934
- Technicolor Mode - 661334
- View Credits - 176542
- View Version Number - 097401

Kenji Otaku
Shinjuku, Japan



MARIO PARTY 4

Weird Sounds - During the game, press the Left Button to make your character blurt some sounds. If you push the C-Stick in various directions, you can manipulate the pitch of these sounds. This trick is especially effective when you desire to annoy other players!

Adam Eurlaker
Orlando, FL

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER

All Technorangs - Left Button, Right Button, Left Button, Right Button, Y (x3), B, Y, B

Elemental Rangs, Aqurang, Swim & Dive - Left Button, Right Button, Left Button, Right Button, Y (x2), B (x2), Y, B

"Daddy Fat Sacks"
Memphis, TN



KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

To enter cheats in Kelly Slater, go to the Extras menu and select the Cheats option. A cellphone will appear, where you must input these various numbers. This will activate the following cheats.

- All Beaches - 7145558092
- All Levels - 3285554497
- All Suits - 7025552918
- All Surfers - 9495556799
- All Tricks - 6265556043
- First-Person View - 8775553825
- Higher Jumps - 2175550217
- Max Stats - 2125551776
- Perfect Balance - 213555721
- Surfer Freak - 3105556217
- Surfer Tiki God - 8885554506
- Surfer Tony Hawk - 3235559787
- Surfer Travis Pastrana - 8005556292
- Trippy Graphics - 8185551447

Clyde Hendricks
Green Bay, WI

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY

Invincibility - Select training mode. Enter jet fighter training, destroy only the first two targets, then exit. Enter story mode and you will be invincible.

Steven Wright
Atlanta, GA

NASCAR THUNDER 2003

Enter the first two codes at the Create-A-Car screen. The first word in these codes goes in the First Name slot, and the second word goes in the Last Name slot. For the last one, you simply require a memory card.

Dale Earnhardt - Dale Earnhardt
Fantasy Drivers - Extra Drivers
Tiburon Speedway Track - Use a memory card with a saved file from an EA Sports 2003 game.

"The Armchair Quarterback"
Canton, OH

ENTER TO WIN

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hallowed pages will receive a Secret Access t-shirt.

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CLASSIC GI

RETROGAMING

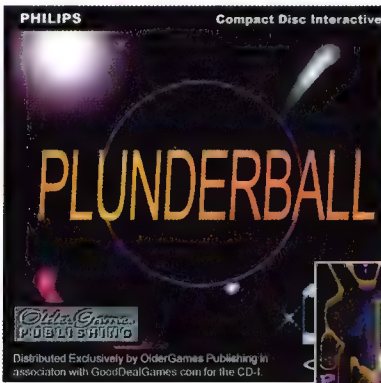
A NEW BREED OF D.I.Y. DEVELOPERS BREATHES LIFE INTO OLD CONSOLES

The very concept of Classic GI is based on the assumption that the consoles of old are history; that their stories have ended, and thus can be dissected and

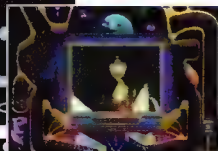
retold in these pages. However, assumptions are frequently wrong – none more so than the one that suggests that the systems of yesterday are dead. In fact, for the last few years, there has been a steady stream of new and previously unreleased titles published for consoles, ranging from the legendary Atari 2600 to the all-but-forgotten Philips CD-i. While industry giants like Electronic Arts and Square Soft labor to pull off ever more graphically complex feats on the Xbox, PlayStation 2, and GameCube, a devoted and growing subculture of "homebrew" developers are spearheading a revival in old-school gaming.

The retrogaming movement (as it is called by many of its enthusiasts) is gaining momentum, as evidenced by the 20 new titles that made their debut at the recently held Classic Gaming Expo in Las Vegas. Like many grass-roots pop culture phenomena, it is a subculture based not on the profit motive that fuels the mainstream game industry, but a genuine love of the art and craft of video games. In many ways, it is a throwback to the early days of gaming, when all it took to create a groundbreaking title was a little ingenuity, a little imagination, and a lot of hard work. This "Do-It-Yourself" ethic is really a return to the era when a few California hackers turned the world on its ear.

As you might expect, publishing a game without the benefit of millions of dollars and the aid of a huge staff is a mammoth undertaking. R.W. Bivens, co-founder of OlderGames – a company that has published a slate of previously unreleased Philips CD-i games like Jack Sprite vs. The Crimson Ghost and Plunderball – comments that securing the rights to long-lost titles requires some ace detective work to track down the copyright holder. "A lot of the stuff we do doesn't rely as much on our business skills as our investigative skills. When you're talking about stuff this old, it's like finding a needle in a haystack." Still, companies like OlderGames (and their partner Good Deal Games) have been successful in rescuing many



OlderGames have recently brought out *Plunderball* and *Jack Sprite Vs. The Crimson Ghost*, two long-lost Philips CD-i titles, and are now working on *Citizen X*, a Sega CD game



forgotten prototypes from the dustbin of history.

For homebrew enthusiasts intent on creating their own original titles, the challenges are even greater. Some systems, like the Atari 2600, are supported by relatively stable PC emulators. Other more obscure systems, like the Sega CD, require the home developer to track down an original development kit. Even more daunting is the task of overcoming the myriad vagaries and bugs imbedded in the hardware of the systems themselves. With no technical support from the original console manufacturers, problems must be solved with a combination of ingenuity and advice

from fellow amateur developers. Carl Forhan, the owner of Songbird Productions who has programmed several Atari Lynx and Jaguar games commented, "The Jaguar had some very well-known bugs in its architecture. So, sometimes we run into things that I don't understand, and there are very few people to go and ask anymore, when you don't know what the answer is.

R.W. Bivens concurs, "Not only is it next to impossible to find a Sega CD original dev kit, but, even worse than that, you try to find some really in-depth documentation and it's almost non-existent. It's not just the tools, it's the knowledge."

Once completed, getting the game into a playable form is another laborious step in the process, especially for cartridge-based systems like the Lynx or Atari 2600. "It's fairly easy, it's just time-consuming," observes Joe Grand, head of Pixels Past and programmer of the homebrew classic SCSicide. "If you use old cartridges, you can strip the old labels using a heat gun and paint stripper. Then, you put on a new label." Modifications must also be made to the original circuit boards. In hopes of making things easier for fellow home developers, Grand is now marketing his own line of 2600 circuit boards which are available online at www.atariage.com, and plans to debut a line of custom colored cartridge casings in the next year.

This laundry list of developmental hurdles begs the question: Why are so many people willing to sacrifice so much of their time and personal resources to create titles for systems that most Americans have long since filed away in some dusty corner of their closets? For most of the homebrew developers we talked to, this hobby is simply an outgrowth of a lifelong love of games and programming. "I came from a background where I was a huge fan of games, but at the same time I could turn around and do something that I really enjoy," reminisces R.W. Bivens. "Plus, I get to be a part of that whole process of creating and putting them out. That's priceless to me; it's really a dream job."

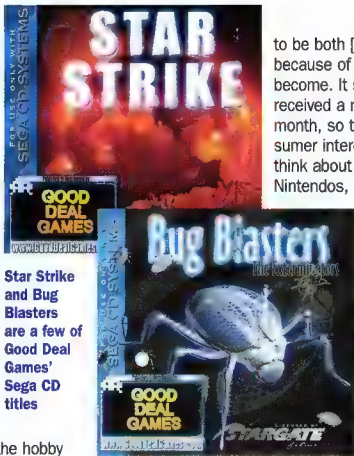
Joe Grand, an electrical engineer by trade, attributes his love of classic development to the challenge inherent in overcoming the technical constraints of these now-primitive systems. "The constraints are what makes the Atari so great, and it's what makes the games and programming the games a challenge. It's a puzzle...if you're given the latest and greatest

hardware with the best hardware accelerators, a gig of RAM, and unlimited ROM size, where's the fun?"

Talking to the leading lights of the retrogaming scene, it's also obvious that the movement is tied together by a very real sense of community, inspired by a mutual love and admiration for the early days of video games. "The classic gaming community seems to be a real genuine group of individuals," said Michael Thomasson of Good Deal Games. "We are a fairly close group and our love of the hobby makes us pretty aware of what is happening in the retro scene...Over the years, I have met some absolutely fantastic individuals, all with unique stories to tell. Just walk around with an Atari shirt on for a single day, and you'll be surprised how many individuals approach you and tell you of their fond times with their VCS just like it was yesterday."

Interest in homebrew development, and classic gaming in general, is growing with each successive year. It's tempting to wonder if this garage industry might soon grow into a money-making enterprise in its own right. On this issue, the people we talked to were somewhat divided. "It would be nice to make a little bit of money, but I'm not really expecting to," said Joe Grand. "I think that this community is fairly small, as far as classic games go. There are a lot of collectors, but even that number is fairly small. The amount of developers is even smaller. If that's my target audience, then there are only so many people that are going to buy my circuit board or buy my cartridge casings."

R.W. Bivens is more optimistic, and feels that the retrogaming scene will one day rival even the current systems in popularity. "I definitely guarantee that it's going



Star Strike and Bug Blasters are a few of Good Deal Games' Sega CD titles

to be both [profitable and a labor of love], because of the way our business has become. It started off as fun, but we've received a million page views our first month, so there is definitely a lot of consumer interest out there. One thing to think about is this: How many 8-bit Nintendos, how many Super Nintendos,

how many Sega Genesis units are out there? How many units of those systems were sold worldwide? When you think about it, we, in all actuality, have the largest market share in the game industry; it's just that people don't know about it yet."

Even if retrogaming never becomes a force in the marketplace, it is already a success, if for only the fact that it shows that there is still a

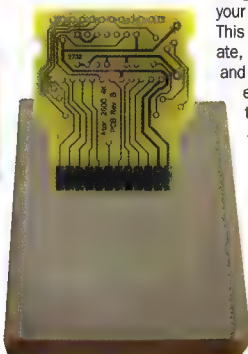
place for the dedicated hobbyist who wants to bring his vision to life. "I think that's the appeal here: You can take a system and pretty much do it start to finish yourself, or maybe just you and an artist. It's not at all like a PlayStation 2 or GameCube budget where you need all the full-motion video, thousands of hours of gameplay, or a massive fantasy world," observes Carl Forhan.

For Joe Grand, the reward is in process itself, and the appreciation of the devoted video game collectors out there. "It's rewarding to release a game, to sell a game to people – to have people actually play your piece of work. So, I think [retrogaming is] partly nostalgia, and partly just wanting to provide some-

thing new to people and your fellow collectors." This simple urge to create, to conceive unique and fun gameplay experiences, is certainly the most admirable part of the homebrew movement, and something that today's market-driven video game industry would be wise to learn from.



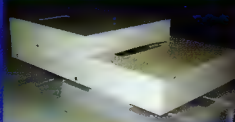
Joe Grand, the creator of SCSSicide for the Atari 2600, is also marketing custom 2600 cartridge boards and casings in hopes of aiding fellow home developers



THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

disc drive, in favor of the Nintendo 64. Sony, for its part, would take the knowledge it gained on the ND Drive project and launch the hugely successful Sony PlayStation, ending Nintendo's reign of dominance in video games. Pictured here is one of the three surviving ND Drive prototypes ever created.

This month in 1993, Nintendo announced plans for the SNES ND Drive, a CD-ROM attachment for the company's 16-bit Super Nintendo system. The unit was to plug into the console's cartridge port, much like the similar Sega CD system for Genesis. The ND Drive would support new Nintendo-created software, and also play Philips CD-i discs. Unfortunately, the company would later abandon the product, and sever its relationship with Sony, who was helping to create the



CLASSIC GI

GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Chad Reker

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.



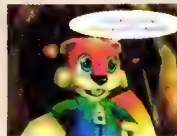
CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

■ FORMAT | TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
■ PUBLISHER | RARE

As anyone who's played it and has a sense of humor knows, Conker's Bad Fur Day is the funniest game of all time. Period. Although much of its humor is decidedly raunchy, it also has an underlying wit along with many clever movie parodies, from the opening stolen straight from *A Clockwork Orange* to the dead-on *The Matrix* stage. Plus, everybody loves the Great Mighty Poo. The whole premise of the game is a job at the traditional cutesy platformer. The complete lack of any kind of coherent plot and frequent in-game references to being in a video game (such as Conker exclaiming, "Man, I was sure the windmill was the final stage!") show just how little this game takes itself seriously, which makes it that much more refreshing. Half of the fun of Conker is waiting to see what's going to happen next.

Even without the humor, Conker is still a very solid platformer. The game utilizes the original "context sensitive" pads, giving Conker different abilities for each objective. Sometimes he wields a shotgun against the undead, while other times he must get piss-drunk (quite literally) in order to put out some fiery demons. The context sensitive system makes sure the action doesn't get stale, which I've found is a problem even in such classics as *Grand Theft Auto III*. The graphics are as good as I've ever seen on the N64, and the voice acting is great by any standards, especially a video game. I've heard some people gripe about the camera, but I've never had any significant problems with it.

Conker's single-player is more than good enough to stand on its own, but the game also has an extremely entertaining multiplayer mode, which increases the replay value immeasurably. Instead of merely throwing in a few multiplayer features, Conker's rivals that of games which are primarily known for their multiplayer, such as the Bomberman series. The modes are far too numerous for me to name in this tiny space, but almost all of them are very well done. My favorite is the War mode; nothing is more fun than leading a Tediz (teddy bear versions of Nazis) charge into a squirrel base and hewing away with a chainsaw. But maybe that's just me.



SUPER NINTENDO

WHIZZ



RETRO RATING
5.5

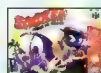


Super Nintendo doesn't have as many games as Genesis or NES, but it does have its share of rarities. Whizz is definitely one of them. Released late in the system's life, Whizz is somewhere between the old school Crystal Castle and Sonic 3D Blast. It features a magical, top hat-sporting rabbit that runs through multi-level, isometric mazes, trying to reach his hot air balloon before time runs out. Many enemies stand in Whizz's way. Once they make contact, baddies just seem to stick to you, sucking away valuable energy. Unfortunately, Whizz can't pee on them, as the title may suggest. As a rabbit, your main character is a strong jumper. However, the isometric layout makes hitting your mark more difficult than it should be. Racing against time brings about a thrill or two, but really hinders exploration and leads to frustration. Whizz was lame in its day, and is no better now. Some games are rare for a reason. Only hardcore collectors need apply.

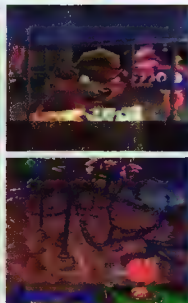
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TITLUS ■ **DEVELOPER** FLAIR
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1996

NINTENDO 64

ROCKET: ROBOT ON WHEELS



RETRO RATING
8



If you owned an N64, chances are you played your share of 3D platformers like Mario 64 and Banjo-Kazooie. What you probably didn't play, though, was Rocket. Called Sprocket basically up until its release, Rocket: Robot on Wheels was the first effort from Sucker Punch – the developer behind Sly Cooper, aka last month's Game of the Month. Instead of a raccoon being the hero in this tale, he is the villain. As Rocket, a little unicycle robot, you must stop him from ruining an amusement park. Rocket has several unique moves, many of which involve his tractor beam. He can throw boxes and swing from bars, but he'll also drive a car and design a roller coaster. Collecting various coin-like objects is, of course, mandatory. Rocket's physics are very smooth, but it suffers from the universal 3D problem of its day: a bad camera. Unlike most games of this ilk, there isn't even a centering button for it. D'oh! But, that flaw shouldn't keep you from picking up Rocket, the lost gem in the N64 platformer library.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** SUCKER PUNCH
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1999

SATURN

NIGHTS INTO DREAMS



RETRO RATING
8.5



Can anything be more trippy than Nights? We highly doubt it. In one of Sega's best attempts to inject life into its failing Saturn platform, Sonic Team came up with a new twist on flying and character-based titles. Though really a 2D game, Nights had you embarking on a somewhat track-based, shifting perspective flight. Along the way, there are loops to go through, items to collect, and enemies to destroy. If the timer runs out, your jester-dressed character turns back into a human and has to run around the rocky terrain, trying to find a launch pad again. You're very vulnerable in the jester form as swift, floating things chase after you. The flying portions are fast and stylish – loaded with some of Saturn's best graphical eye candy. Sadly, it pales in comparison to what was out on the PlayStation or N64 at the time. The 3D controller that came in a bundle with the game is leagues better than the standard Saturn pad. While a little thin on replay, Nights is definitely one of the better Saturn games released in the US.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1996

NES

LITTLE NINJA BROTHERS

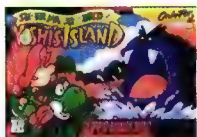


RETRO RATING
7



Kicking and punching are commonplace in action games, but Little Ninja Brothers brings these techniques to the RPG realm. As brothers Jack and Ryu (yes, it's two-player), you're charged with saving Chinaland from a dastardly dictator. This entails the acquiring of bells of various colors. Blah, blah – story means little. In most ways, Little Ninja Brothers is a typical role-playing game, with equipment upgrades, healing items, and random battles. What is different, though, is the combat. Taking place in real-time, the brothers (or just Jack, in single-player mode) take on a slew of adversaries in a 3D environment. Train for new moves or punch rocks to obtain power-ups. It's a nice alternative to the ho-hum turn-based battles. With average graphics and blippy sound, there isn't much reason to dust off the NES for this game; unless you and a friend are extremely bored, and none of the more recent multiplayer RPGs (Secret of Mana, Legend of Mana, etc.) are available.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** CULTURE BRAIN ■ **DEVELOPER** CULTURE BRAIN
■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1991



SUPER NINTENDO

YOSHI'S ISLAND

This strategy guide will help you defeat every boss, offers step by step instructions to complete the Extra stages with 100 points, and provides hints and codes to give you a little advantage. Our guide applies to the classic SNES version as well as the release for the Game Boy Advance, Super Mario Advance 3: Yoshi's Island.

WORLD ONE

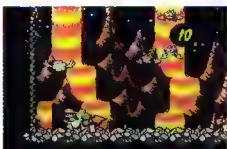
Boss 1-4

Be careful of the boss on the fifth hit. He will jump towards you, so make sure that you're ducking in the little indentation in the ground. This will prevent you from losing any stars.

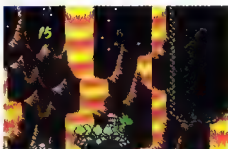
Boss 1-8

If you get hit, and you have extra lives, just fall in the lava on the right. You'll start over with 30 Stars.

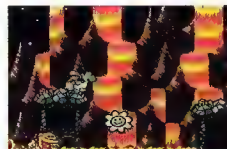
Extra 1 - Steps to 100%



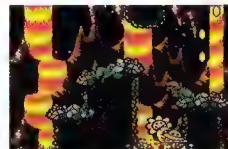
1. Make sure you get some eggs before you do anything. It never hurts to have extra. Plus, if you stay here and let the bats come to you, the screen won't scroll.



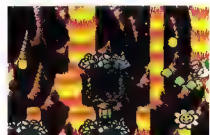
2. Wait for the mutt to come here. The direction that you face will dictate the direction that he moves.



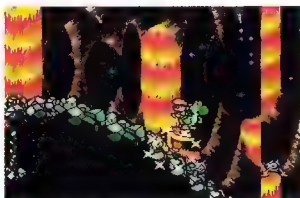
3. You must jump forward and float a little ahead to get him to come through. Once he does, jump on his back and get the Flower.



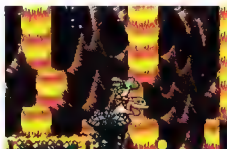
4. When your mutt jumps over the ledge, quickly turn left, which will allow you to fall to the pit and get the Flower safely. Get the Red coins next by jumping from your



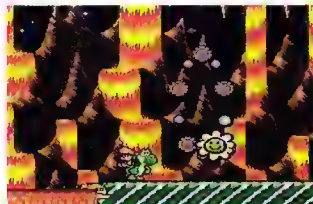
5. Let the screen scroll ahead of you a bit until the lava rock eemerges and then submerges. Proceed slowly.



6. To get past these enemies, just ride your dog all the way to the pit with coins.



7. From here, dismount and jump at an arch trying to float and collect as many coins as possible. Be careful of staying to the right too much, or you could fall in lava.



8. Don't forget to use your +20 Star icon before you jump through the loop!

dog's back, and floating to the platform. Use the brown wooden platform to better judge your dog's position.

WORLD TWO

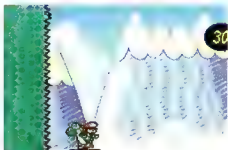
Boss 2-4

This boss is too easy. If he gets close, use the platforms to jump over it and get to the other side. To cause damage, hit it by bouncing your shots off the walls.

Boss 2-8

All you need to do is push the pot that he emerges from over the ledge! When it jets forward to push you back, simply duck.

Extra 2 - Steps to 100%



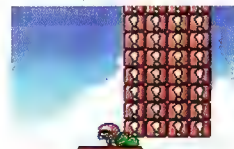
1. Immediately go left at the beginning and take the pipe down for a bunch of stars. Make sure you leave with two eggs.



2. Get off as the moving platform is going up and quickly hit the "I" switch. Get back on quickly. You'll be tempted to jump off when it launches into the air, but stay on to get the Red coins.



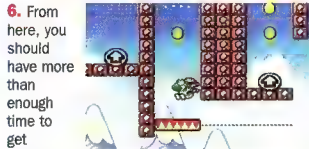
3. Use the arrow to jump up and hit the "I" switch. Quickly shoot the Flower with an egg and get on the platform. You should have the target aimed down and locked so that you can shoot the egg quickly before you reach it.



4. When you encounter the walls of exclamation marks, duck. Don't forget to miss the Flowers and Red coins



5. You'll get to another platform that launches you. Again, remain on it to obtain Red coins, jumping off only at the last minute to the next platform with the "I" switch. Hit it quickly, very quickly!



6. From here, you should have more than enough time to get through. Get the Flowers, which should not be a problem, using the arrow spheres to get over each wall.

WORLD THREE

Boss 3-4

You must launch the large eggs at his uvula while trying to avoid the drops of acid. If you simply stand directly under the uvula and eat the enemies as they fall, you won't be touched.

Boss 3-8

The boss has three means of attack. For the first one, he'll charge you going completely across the screen. Just jump over him to the other side. For the second, he'll do a similar action, but he'll stop halfway, and go back. Just jump and hover for a moment, then return to your previous position. For the third, the boss uses his tentacles. They follow Yoshi under the bridge, and then pop up. Just get out of their way, but if you get caught under one, simply jump out of the way. To damage the boss, reflect an egg off the wall so it goes under the bridge.

CLASSIC STRATEGY

WORLD THREE (CONT.)

Extra 3 - Steps to 100%



1. Get the Red coin held by the flying enemy at the beginning, as well as the "?" clouds. Also, the second pole contains a Red coin.

2. With seeds, go to the spinning platform that is rotated off by a wall. Fall to the platform that is at the bottom of the rotation and make a small jump forward to get to the next platform. From there, jump and shoot a seed at the monkey. Now stand on a platform, and when you reach the top, jump to access a secret area.



3. You'll fail to another rotating platform. Knock the monkey off the tree to the right.

Launch an egg at the spiked enemy to the left. Buttslam the pole where the spiked enemy was. Jump to the rotating platform to the right.

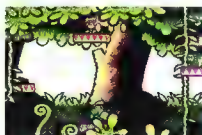


4. The next few parts should be okay; just hit those monkeys with seeds. Try to take care of them one at a time, always watching to see where they are spitting first!

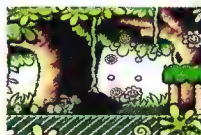


Buttslam this pole to free the rotating platform. Ride it over to the stable rotating platform. Quickly knock the spiked creature off and snag the flying enemy with a Red coin.

5. When you get to the pole with a spiked enemy on it, use your tongue to knock it

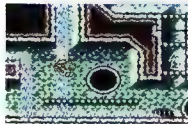


6. Get on the platform moving vertically under the plant-spitting eggs. Eat the monkey and shoot eggs to get the coins and to knock off the green enemies on the platform.



7. Before you go through the loop, get the two Red coins held by flying enemies, and shoot the Flower on the other side of the loop.

Extra 4 - Steps to 100%



1. When you emerge from the first sewer, go down. Follow the arrow to the right. Go down to the left and get the Red eggs. Enter the sewer. You'll make your way and encounter a box. Forget it and jump the gap. Go down the area to the left, opposite the arrow. Enter the first sewer you see.

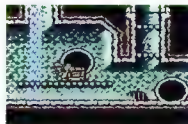


the sewer indicated by the eight arrows. Go back to the beginning and smash the box now.

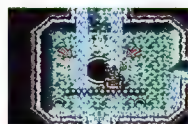


2. Collect the eggs and get the Flower. When you emerge, follow the arrow down and get the next Flower you see. Follow the next arrow down to the left. Fall, since you can't enter

3. Get back to the box part and push it over; don't smash it this time. Push it to the right until you get to the section with an arrow pointing up to some white platforms.



4. Transform and get all of the coins. Bust the box in the next area. Now return to the previous sewer, and then go back to this box. Push the box to the left, down the hole. Move it underneath the sewer, get on the box, and enter the sewer.



of the arrows pointing at it. Also be aware that boxes will disappear if you don't keep up with them, which means you'll have to start over.



5. Transform, get the four coins, and get the glowing eggs in the next area. Be sure to use these eggs on enemies, as they will reveal Red coins! Follow the box down to the sewer with all of the arrows pointing at it. Also be aware that boxes will disappear if you don't keep up with them, which means you'll have to start over.

6. Enter the sewer, get the final Flower, and jump to the platform before you plummet to your death.

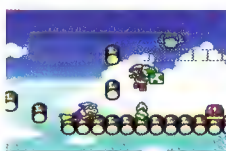
WORLD FIVE

Boss 5-4

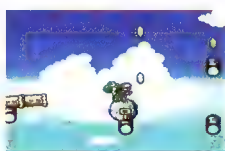
The ghost is easy, but you must act quickly. With at least five eggs, keep pushing in its exterior until you reach the heart. Once you're close to the heart, launch another egg to cause damage.

Boss 5-8

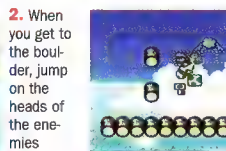
This giant crow isn't too bad, since it only has two attacks. When it runs at you, head in the opposite direction. When it spits fire, jump over it. To damage the crow, wait for it to walk over a pole that's already nailed in. Now, buttslam the pole opposite of the crow.



1. Obviously you have to watch for Kamek throughout the entire round. Whenever you hear the sound of Kamek flying towards you, jump!



eggs at you to eliminate the nuisance; kill them in the order presented. Now go back to the rock, and stand on the edge of it to cause it to fall. Get the key, and don't forget all of the coins.



2. When you get to the boulder, jump on the heads of the enemies throwing

3. Load up on eggs and set your target to aim high before you hit the "H"

switch. Hit the Flower, and then hit the two flying enemies holding the Red coin. Screw the clouds; they only have Stars anyway. Just be sure that you have a +20 Star icon.

WORLD FOUR

Boss 4-4

Simply buttslam the enemy, and it'll divide. Keep doing this until the boss splits into edible pieces. Eat them, and you're finished!

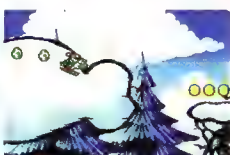
Boss 4-8

Bounce on its head to make it spit out eggs. Get the eggs and fire them at his face. Keep doing this in succession at a slight distance until the mutated turtle falls! Now, buttslam its stomach. Repeat until you've done it three times. Most of its attacks can be avoided by jumps, but after you hit it, it will bounce at you. Just run away, but if you're in a corner, you must go under it.

WORLD FIVE (CONT.)



4. Enter the locked door in the next area. When you see the first Flower, don't jump immediately, but hold back and tap jump about two inches before you meet the ledge. To get the next set of coins, jump as soon as you see the red arrow before the gap.



5. In the second screen (you should have 10 Red coins and two Flowers), when you get to the last descending platform and you can see the platforms ahead which hold coins and a Flower, jump. When you get on the cloud, leap about two inches from the edge and you'll obtain the set of Red coins.



don't jump. Let the slope propel you and you'll hit a helicopter morph. There are five coins and a Flower here, so once you get them, snag another helicopter morph and leave, heading right! To do this efficiently, we suggest getting the Flower in the middle last, as there's a morph next to it.



7. You'll encounter the last Flower behind a white wall emerging from the ceiling. First, stay high, then go low when you see the single red arrow. Now you're forced high; once over the wall, head down and then up to snag the Flower. From here, start descending while you move forward and you'll hit the Yoshi morph.

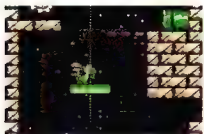
WORLD SIX

Boss 6-4

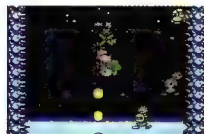
You must get the big spiked freak into the lava, which means you must use eggs to break away the blocks. Draw the enemy to one side and quickly hop over to the other. Now begin breaking away the blocks. When the enemy gets too close, jump on the platforms to replenish your eggs. On the highest platform, the enemy can barely touch you. When you know the enemy is under you, jump to avoid getting hit. Once a hole is made, just stand in front of it, and the spiked freak will fall in.

Boss 6-8

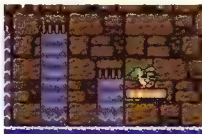
For baby Bowser, let him come at you, making sure that he doesn't hit you. As soon as his shockwave passes by, you must buttslam to send your own shockwave at him. When he lands, you should already be in the air, starting the buttslam while his shockwave is directly under you. Also, you must be pretty close to him when you do it; otherwise, it won't reach him in time. For big Bowser, run back and forth across the screen to avoid fireballs. When you receive a large Red egg, your target will move up and down. You have to launch these eggs at his head. Your aim has to be precise, or the eggs will fly right over or under him. If you wait until he gets somewhat close, it will be easier to hit him, but if he gets too close the platforms fall and your game is over. Good luck!



6. Don't worry too much about the coins in this part. When enemies throw eggs at you, just try to jump and get out of the way. When you reach the top, be careful – the lift is about an inch from the platforms. Do a small jump to the left to get the Flower. Enter the sewer.

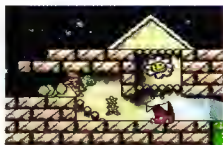


7. Fall down the middle to get the coins, but do a buttslam so that you don't get hit by any eggs. In the next area, just do another buttslam as you fall, but it's not necessary.



8. The part in the water is easy enough. Just stay on the platform and it will take you to the coins. If you mess up, proceed all the way to the end and make sure you're in the water. There's a platform that will jet you back to the beginning. The only danger you need to be aware of is the spikes. Duck under them as the platforms move you along.

Extra 6 - Steps to 100%



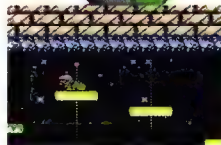
1. Get some eggs and shoot them at the ghost to push it back. Get the Flower and coins. Do the same thing at the next two ghosts.



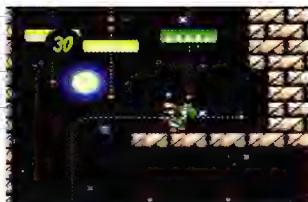
snag them. Do the same thing at the next wooden wheel, and don't forget to shoot the clouds. You'll encounter a third wheel. To be safe, shoot the coins that are under the spikes; then fall, floating down and to the left to get the coins under the stairs. Get back up and fall to the

2. When you get to the first wooden wheel, shoot eggs at the coins rather than trying to

right this time to get the other coins and a Flower.



3. The yellow platforms are the ones you have to worry about. You can avoid death on the first yellow one if you duck, but the second one will kill you no matter what. So to get all of the coins, quickly jump to the second yellow platform, and then leap back to the previous one if you miss any coins.



5. When you ascend, use the lifts on the left, as there's a ghost on the right. There's also one you need to look out for just after this. He's in the middle of the screen. Don't worry about the coins, since none are red.

CODES

Bonus Stages

SNES

At the map screen, hold select and press X, X, Y, B, A.

GBA

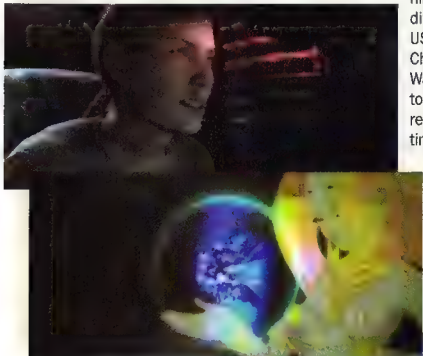
At the map screen, hold select and press L, L, B, A, R.



THE ANIMATRIX DVD

Manufacturer: Various • **Website:** www.whatisthematrix.com • **List Price:** NA

With the near-limitless possibilities of CG and anime, the Animatrix looks to be the coolest thing this side of a party on the roof of the Standard in downtown LA. Featuring nine different stories by seven different creators, (Square USA, Mahiro Maeda, and Peter Chung will be among them) the Wachowski brothers are going to have their wildest *Matrix*-related dreams realized sometime next year. By the looks of the trailer, this DVD has the potential to be one of the hottest releases since *Monsters, Inc.* When exactly it will release next year is anyone's guess, but we're hoping it'll be in the first half.



DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN MADONNA ACTION FIGURES

Manufacturer: Vital Toys • **Website:** www.vitaltoys.com
List Price: \$19.99

It's not worth hiding it any longer – we know you have a Madonna shrine hidden behind that loose piece of drywall in your closet. Come out and admit it! Now that you've got all of that extra space on your mantle and a clear conscience, we've got the perfect thing for you: Madonna action figures! The Material Girl has never looked better than she did in the 1985 comedy, *Desperately Seeking Susan*. Feel free to pose and prod your figures from this breakout film any way you want; why should you miss out on what half the world has already enjoyed with the real thing? Just make sure your parents don't find out – you'll be cut out of the will, you sick bastard.



ZONE OF THE ENDERS: IDOLO DVD

Manufacturer: ADV Films • **Website:** www.advfilm.com
List Price: \$21.50

Exploding robots! Anime! More exploding robots! How could any video game dork worth his weight in salt not want to see this thing? Look, Earth is about to be blown away by the Martians, and it's up to Lieutenant Radium Lavans to save billions of lives. Don't think that you can watch this DVD and feel safe after you turn it off, though. Take notes, for crissakes! We might come under a massive attack from Mars any second now, and you would be a virtual Stormin' Norman with your voluminous ZOE knowledge. Do Earth a favor and check this one out.



ALONE IN THE DARK COMIC BOOK

Manufacturer: Image Comics
Website: www.imagecomics.com
List Price: \$5.95

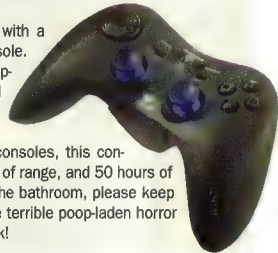
Remember the Alone in the Dark games? Good for you. Now you've got a comic book to drool over. It breaks down a little something like this: An ancient artifact of enormous power known as the Crown of Ghengis is in the middle of a hidden temple somewhere in the mountainous region of Nepal. People try to find it, scary things jump out at them, and firearms are activated at things you wouldn't like to see under your bed. Are you man (or woman) enough to finish this comic? Maybe...maybe not.



LOGITECH CORDLESS CONTROLLER FOR PLAYSTATION

Manufacturer: Logitech • **Website:** www.logitech.com
List Price: \$59.95

Nintendo is no longer the only company with a cordless gaming option for its newest console. A number of peripheral companies are jumping on the cordless bandwagon, and Logitech is leading the way with this 2.4 GHz behemoth. Featuring compatibility with both PlayStation and PlayStation 2 consoles, this controller has a rumble feature, 20 feet worth of range, and 50 hours of battery life. If you're going to take it into the bathroom, please keep it away from the toilet – we've heard some terrible poop-laden horror stories from those who weren't careful. Ick!



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY PILLOW

Manufacturer: Rockstar
Website: www.rockstargames.com/warehouse/
List Price: \$25.00

What better way to enjoy a refreshing nap than nestled in the loving arms of Rockstar games' pink Vice City pillow with the picture of a razor blade on the back? What does the razor mean? We're not sure, and we don't know why we keep getting mirrors emblazoned with the Vice City logo in the mail, but we think it has something to do with that five o'clock shadow fad that was all the rage in the '80s. Maybe not, but in any event, the eighties-ness of the whole thing is just too fun to pass up. Imagine your drab little pad with a couple of these babies lying on a couch. Finally you

have throw pillows that you care about! Don't pay attention to your girlfriend when she starts droning on and on about how hot pink doesn't match anything – Vice City forever! Tubular!





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The wife.



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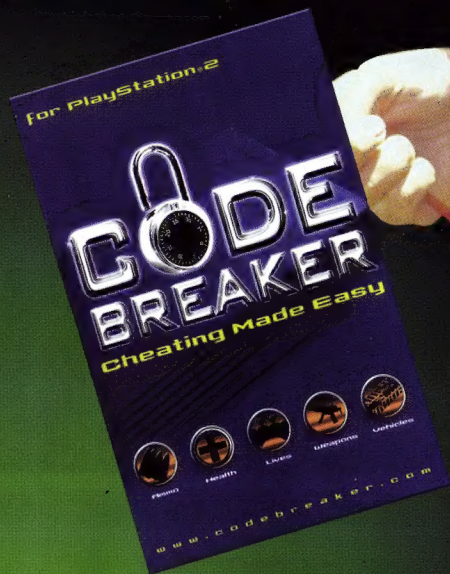
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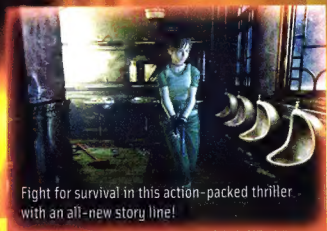
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