

FIRST LOOK:

**SSX 3**

**EXCLUSIVE: RATCHET & CLANK 2**

# GAMEINFORMER

COVER  
1 OF 2

**DOUBLE  
WORLD  
EXCLUSIVE**

**40 PAGES OF  
PREVIEWS:**

Mario Kart: Double Dash  
 Vectorman  
 Shadow Ops: Red Mercury  
 LOTR: Return of The King  
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles  
 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon  
 Star Wars: Rogue Squadron III  
 Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu  
 Madden NFL 2004  
 SOCOM 2 + P.N.03  
 NARC + NHL 2004  
 The Italian Job

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**MUST-READ  
REVIEWS:**

X2 Wolverine's Revenge  
 Return To Castle Wolfenstein  
 Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick  
 Mega Man: Network Transmission  
 Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow  
 Resident Evil: Dead Aim  
 Unlimited Saga  
 Chaos Legion  
 Star Wars Galaxies  
 Lost Kingdoms II



**PLUS:  
TONY HAWK'S  
UNDERGROUND**

# SPIDER-MAN 2

**THE MOVIE, THE GAME, THE INSIDE STORY**



**FIRST REVIEW:  
ENTER THE MATRIX**  
 For GameCube And PlayStation 2



FIRST LOOK:

**SSX 3**

**EXCLUSIVE: RATCHET & CLANK 2**



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# TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

**PLUS: SPIDER-MAN 2**

## THIS TIME YOU'RE THE STAR



**FIRST REVIEW:  
ENTER THE MATRIX**  
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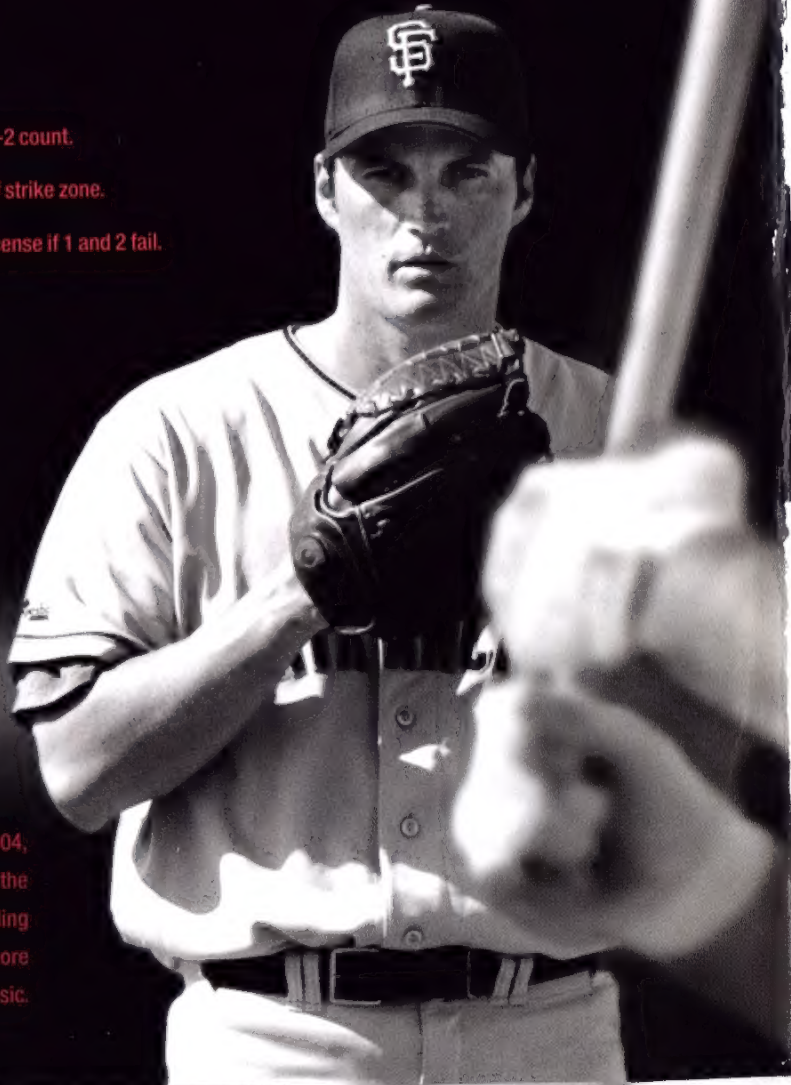
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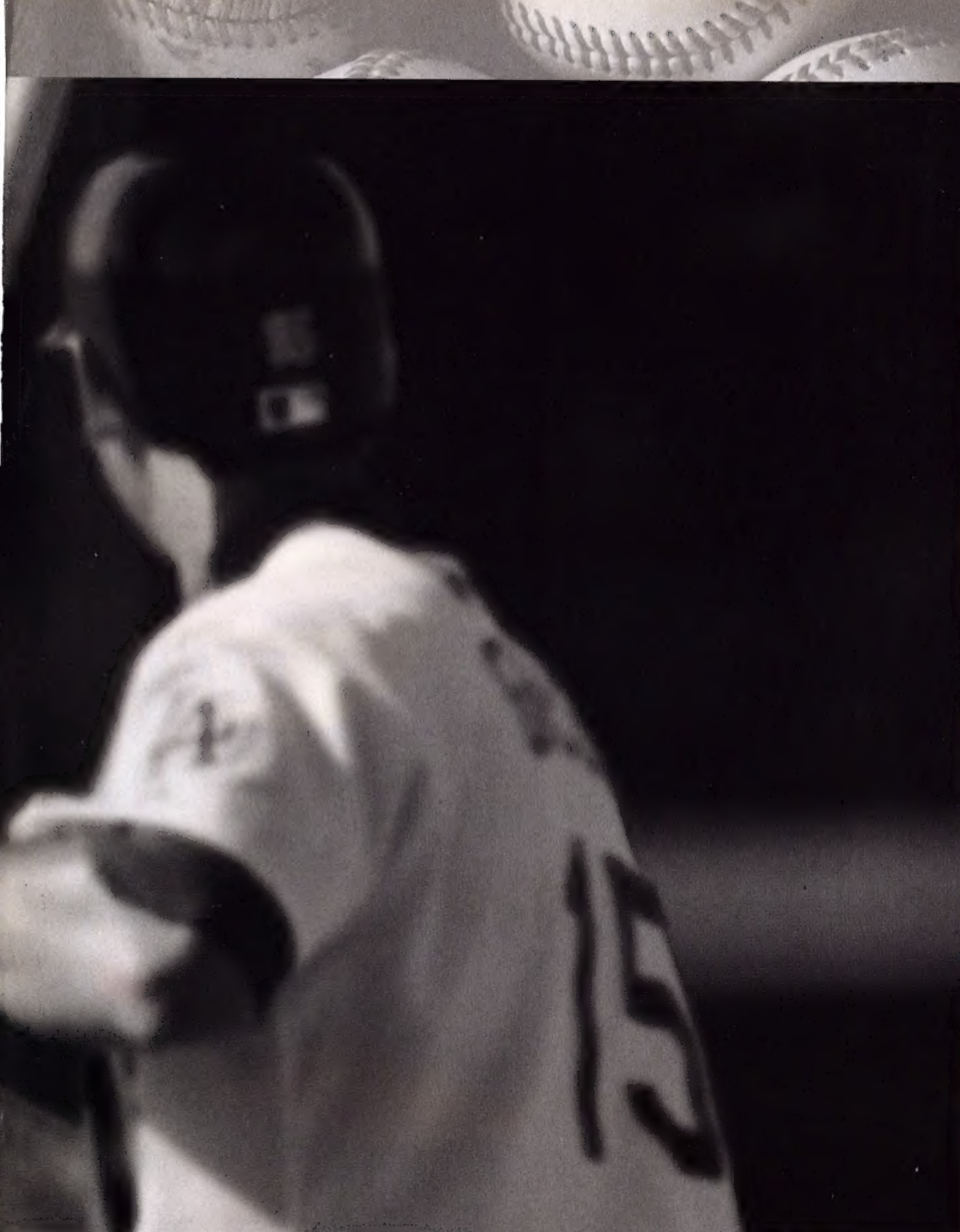


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1. Must remember to throw slider on 0-2 count.
  2. Must remember to keep slider out of strike zone.
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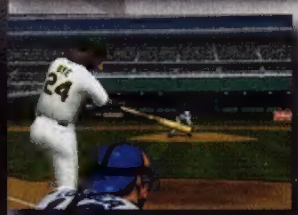
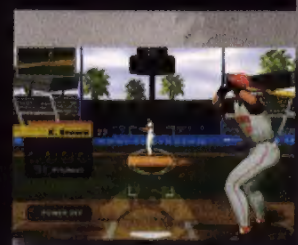
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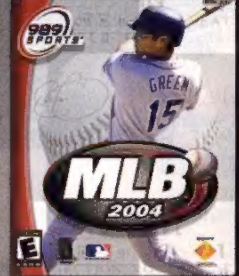
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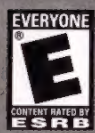
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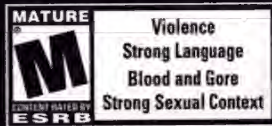
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PlayStation 2



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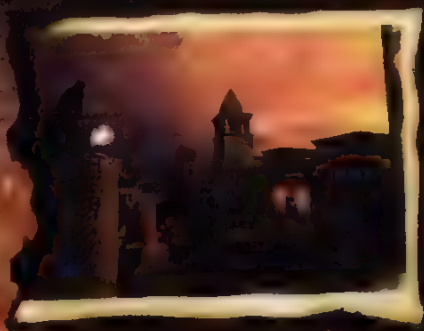


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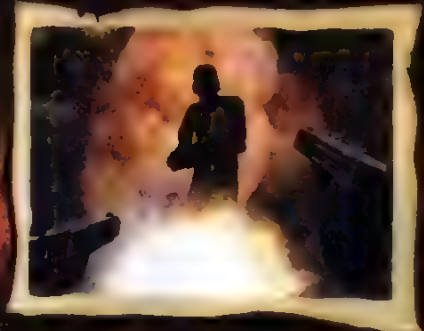
You are B. J. Blazkowicz, a US Army Ranger recruited by the OSA and the Allies' top specialist in covert operations, heavy weapons and assassination. Hitler's head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, is twisting science and the occult into an army capable of annihilating the Allies. The balance of victory is in your hands.

RETURN TO CASTLE

## Wolfenstein



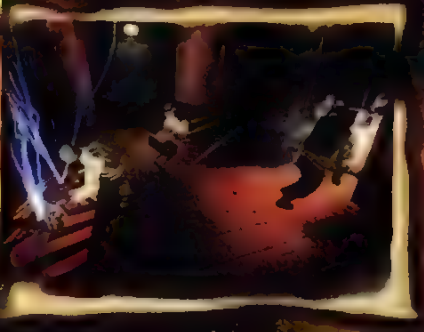
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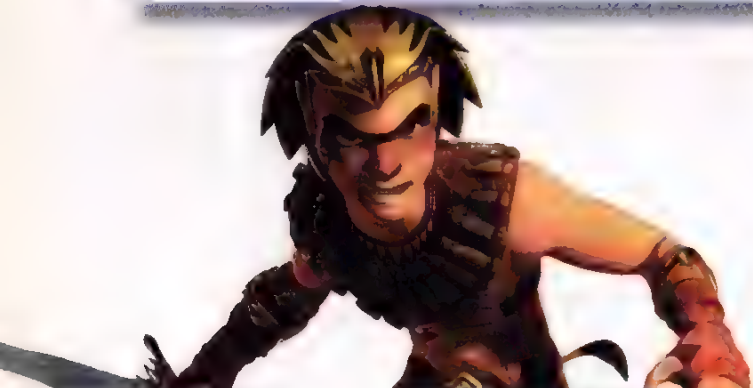


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**COVER STORY 1**  
**32 SPIDER-MAN 2**  
With a movie sequel in production, did you think Spidey would pull a no-show in the gaming world? You must be insane. *Spider-Man 2* promises a fully swinging city rivaling GTA in scope and brand new (realistic) web physics.

**COVER STORY 2**  
**39 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND**  
Let's whine together: "Annootherrr Tony Hawk game?" Ahh, young Padawan learner, this one is different: You are the pro skater. Your character starts in the Jersey 'burbs, gets sponsored, and makes the big cash...if you successfully complete the objectives.



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**46 SPHINX AND THE SHADOW OF SET**  
An adventure game of biblical proportions! Okay, the only Bible tie-in is the whole ancient Egyptian setting. While your guy is usually a human/feline hybrid, the game isn't called Sphinx by accident. What's the secret?



**FEATURE**  
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With a title like "Going Commando," a whole list of innuendos come to mind. For instance, is it Ratchet or Clank that is losing his shorts? Or, have they joined a clandestine paramilitary group? You'll have to read it to find out.

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"I ended up walking away completely amazed and addicted to the point that it was next to impossible to put the controller down."

GAME OF THE MONTH - Game Informer Magazine, May 2003



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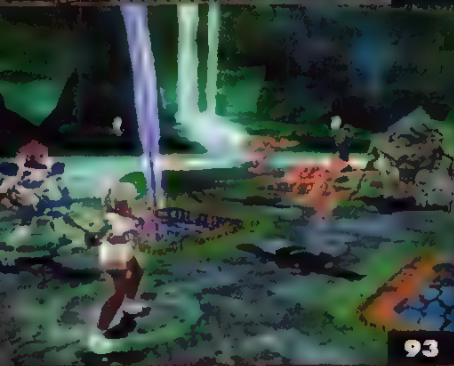


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## 22 NEWS

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## 98 REVIEWS

We've been racking our brains to fit in all the games suitable for reviewing in this issue, and there are some highly anticipated titles getting their due coverage. Between summer movies and their game counterparts, we've also got MMORPGs up the wazoo. How would you feel with something up your wazoo?

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Where else would you be without the handy Secret Access. We work our fingers to the bone to make sure that gamers everywhere know how to get unlimited lives.



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**JUNE 2003**

Volume XIII • Number 6 • Issue 122

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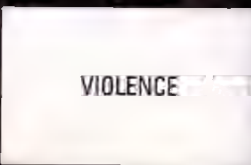
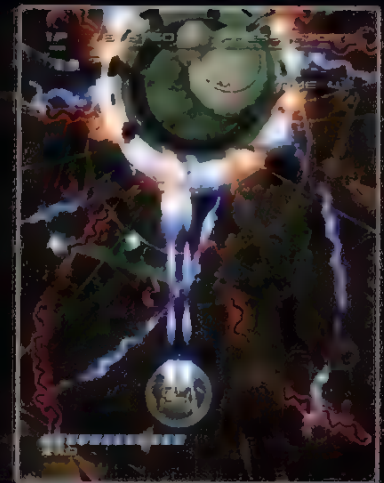
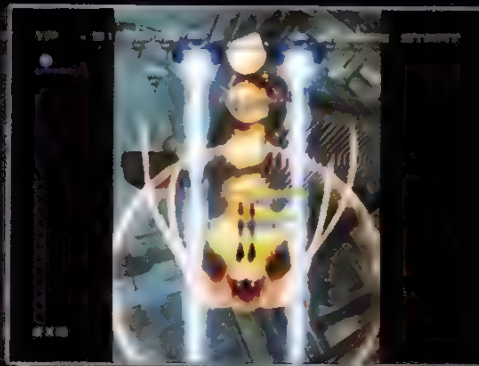
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# EDITORS' FORUM

## THE LICENSED GAME CURSE



Gamers have always had a love-hate relationship with the licensed game. For some, the addition of a Hollywood brand name is almost a guarantee that the title will be garbage. For others, it's an opportunity to become a part of a television series, movie, or book that you love. Hardcore gamers have especially been apprehensive of licensed games, since they have played more than their fair share of over-hyped stinkers. But, no matter how much the hardcore market complains or magazines protest, publishers will always rely on licenses to give a game an instant user base.

With *Enter the Matrix*, this classic video game argument will once again come to light. *Game Informer* was lucky this month to get a chance to exclusively review two of the three versions of *Enter the Matrix* (sorry Xbox users, but a technical hiccup made it impossible for us to play that version), and – as expected – we had a wide range of reactions. For big-time fans of the *Matrix* movies, the game is a no-brainer – simply because it is very easy to forgive its deficiencies and appreciate the added dimension the title offers to the overall *Matrix*

experience. Others in the office are less than wowed by the gameplay and find *Enter the Matrix* to fall into the above-average score that it perhaps deserves when viewed on its gaming merits alone.

But, I can't help asking myself that no matter how much we as gamers despise the licensed game, would the world of gaming be the same without it? Is *Star Wars Galaxies* really as good as its score, or does its name give the gameplay credibility? Is the *Lord of the Rings* series from EA only as good as its moniker? Will gamers accept mediocrity if it's wrapped in the right package? I think we all know the answers to all these questions. Licensed products are just a part of video games. Sometimes it works, other times it doesn't; but, in the end, the fan will always decide its worth. I can't stand the *Dragon Ball Z* games; yet countless players flock to every release. *Enter the Matrix* will be maligned; it will be loved; and it will be talked about. But, there is no denying that gamers everywhere would be disappointed if it weren't part of the *Matrix* mystique.

Andy McNamara  
Editor-In-Chief  
andy@gameinformer.com

### REINER, THE RAGING GAMER

reiner@gameinformer.com

I can't walk two feet without hearing industry insiders gossip about the upcoming consoles. As we speak, developers are gearing up for the next generation in gaming. Rumor has it that we could be looking at processors capable of delivering 1 trillion mathematical calculations a second. That's over 100 times more powerful than a Pentium 4 clocking in at 2.5 GHz! Expansion in power is great, but I'm more concerned about the little things – primarily 16:9 widescreen support, DVD functionality, Wi-Fi compatibility for online and LAN, a hard drive, 5.1 surround sound, four controller ports, and a reset button (this one is for you, Microsoft).

### MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER

matt@gameinformer.com

I'm beginning to worry about Nintendo's future as a console maker. Lord knows they still make the best games on the planet, but the *GameCube* has fallen into third-place behind both the PS2 and Xbox, despite having a very strong lineup of titles as of late. After having released new *Mario*, *Metroid*, and *Zelda* titles in quick succession, I wonder what they could possibly have in terms of high-profile software for the next year. Also, the much-hyped GBA/GC "connectivity" is a poor substitute for a real online strategy. Could the Big N eventually go the way of Sega? It's a distinct possibility.

### KRISTIAN, THE VIDEO VIKING

kristian@gameinformer.com

Okay, I just can't hold it in any longer – what the hell is wrong with Microsoft? It has to know that the best game on its system is still *Halo*, and yet its sequel has been delayed indefinitely. Don't get me wrong, I love *Halo*; and if I didn't give a damn about it, I wouldn't be ranting and raving. However, the boys in green seem to be dropping the ball here. The time is right for *Halo 2* now. Next year, there will be much hype directed toward Sony's newest hardware, and you know people are going to be falling over themselves to get info on the PS3. Where does that leave our beloved Bungie title? As always, time will tell.

### JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT

justin@gameinformer.com

After meeting with the *Spider-Man 2* and *Tony Hawk's Underground* teams for this issue's cover stories, I came away impressed by their work ethic. Both developers – Treyarch and Neversoft, respectively – are pouring heart and soul into their projects. And why not? When companies are working on a game, it becomes the team's life. Imagine how awful it must be to rack up a year of 60-hour workweeks to put out a lame product. As critics, we have the ability to take that hard work and either praise the result, or crush it under our boots. We take this responsibility – and our jobs – very seriously. Gamers, we got your back.

### KATO, THE GAME KATANA

kato@gameinformer.com

We get a lot of mail about how we're biased for or against this or that console. I'd like to point out two things for those writers to consider. First, the simple fact of the matter is that there's more product for the PS2 versus Xbox and GC. Therefore, our preview and review coverage for those systems can only be so big. Secondly, I believe kids have their own bias because they've just spent over a hundred dollars, and they (naturally) want their investment to be worth it. Now, you certainly won't agree with all that we say in these pages, and that's good, but there's no conspiracy going on here – except, of course, the one against Carrot Top.

### CHET, THE JOYSTICK JOCKEY

chet@gameinformer.com

Video games are cool. Everyone holding this magazine loves them, so stop reading my inane section and move on to the juicy stuff in this issue. Although none of the featured titles this month are really original, each one will attempt to perfect its long-standing formula. *Tony Hawk*, despite its fifth iteration, is trying something new. *Spider-Man 2* has a good chance of ironing out a few kinks that have plagued the series for years. *Sphinx* could surprise gamers with its "less is more" approach. Finally, the sequel to *Ratchet & Clank* looks to assert its individuality.

### LISA, LA GAME NIKITA

lisa@gameinformer.com

After watching a news piece on *Postal 2*, one of my usually liberal friends commented that a game with that content, "shouldn't be allowed to be made." While I agree with her stance that the title is morally compromised, I disagreed that the game shouldn't be made. The advantage of this country is that *Running With Scissors* has every right to produce the title. A general rule for the Bill of Rights is that, "An individual's rights end where another's begin." Therefore, as long as no creature was actually hurt (Gary Coleman doesn't count) while making the game, they have every right to create it.

**Editor's Note:** I wanted to take a second to let everyone know that I am sorry for the lack of a *Play to Perfection* in recent issues. We haven't dropped the department, there just hasn't been a game that we felt needed one as of late. Let the hate mail begin!

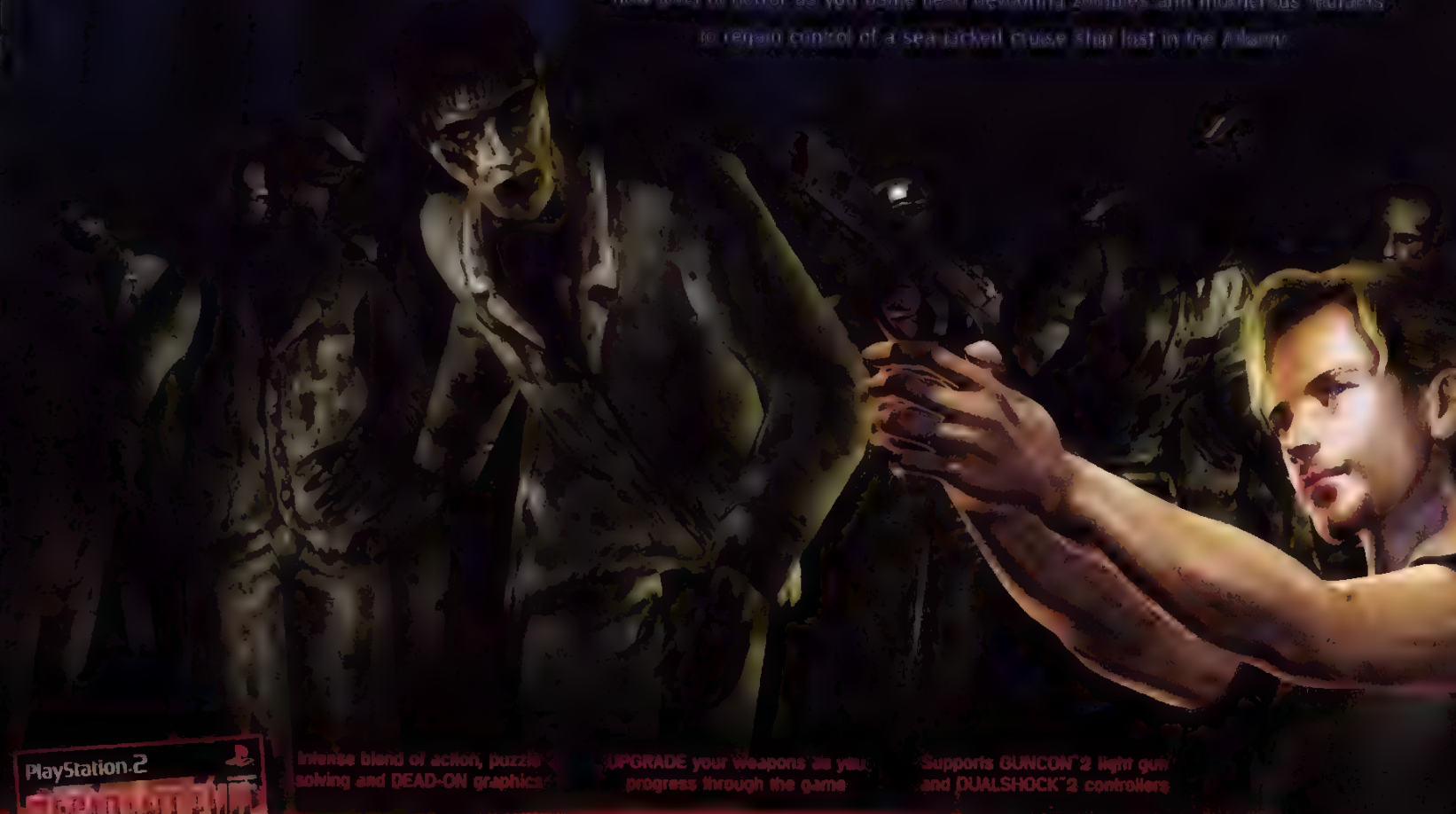


Activision's twin titans, *Spider-Man 2* and *Tony Hawk's Underground*, are both worthy of cover space. In order to give them their just desserts, we are once again printing two different cover designs this month. Both have that same great *Game Informer* content, but each has its own distinct outer appearance. It's choices like this that make America great!



# RESIDENT EVIL DEAD+AIM

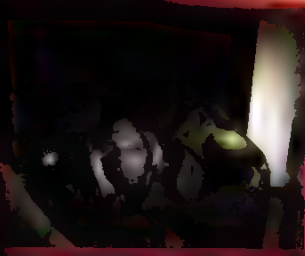
Face your gravest fears in an all-new, nightmarish first person action-strategy adventure for your PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Encounter a new level of horror as you battle flesh devouring zombies and murderous mutants to regain control of a sea-jacked cruise ship lost in the Atlantic.



Intense blend of action, puzzle solving and DEAD-ON graphics

UPGRADE your weapons as you progress through the game

Supports GUNCON 2 light gun and DUALSHOCK 2 controllers

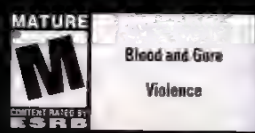


**CAPCOM**  
capcom.com

PlayStation 2



**GUNCON 2**



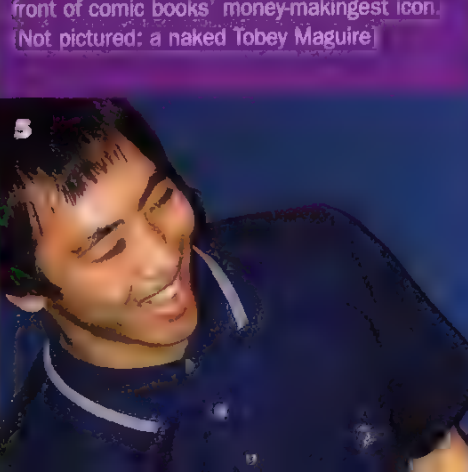
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# GI SPY



## CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Capcom's Arne Cuel looks a little scared of the GI Spy camera... 2 ...or frightened by Capcom cohort Matt Atwood's trademark "charm." Hey Matt, GI Spy misses your Japanese cross-dressing days! 3 Film and television composer Chris Lennertz, seen here conducting a 77-piece orchestra for EA's upcoming Medal of Honor: Rising Sun. 4 Sony's Shuhei Yoshida and GameSpy's Raymond Padilla prove that glasses come in many different sizes these days. (Who knew?) 5 "Hey check out the sword on that guy!" says eyes up the hairy knicker of *The Lord of the Rings*' Viggo Mortensen at Electronic Arts. 6 "Your voice will sink/So stay off my back/Or I will attack/And you don't want that" D-Von Dudley beatboxes and The Hurricane grooves as the WWE's MC extraordinaire John Cena busts out an acapella rendition of "I Got the Power" by Snap. 7 The Dudley Boys pose while Justin's tongue attempts to escape his body. 8 Activision's Spider-Man poses in front of comic books' money-makingest icon. (Not pictured: a naked Tobey Maguire)

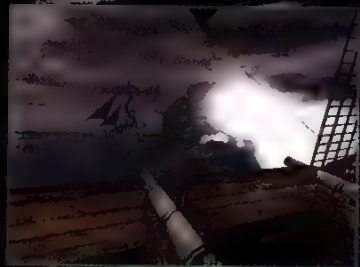


# PIRATES<sup>of the</sup> CARIBBEAN

PREPARE TO BE BLASTED  
OUT OF THE WATER!

Visit [pirates.bethsoft.com](http://pirates.bethsoft.com)

- An epic role-playing game on sea and land
- Gorgeous graphics and realistic weather effects
- Open-ended gameplay set in exotic locales
- Exciting high seas battles and thrilling duels
- Inspired by the feature film coming July 9th



ALL SCREENSHOTS FROM XBOX VERSION

**Bethesda**  
SOFTWORKS  
a ZeniMax Media company



BETHESDA

**1C**  
1C COMPANY



**PC  
CD  
ROM**



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RATING PENDING  
ESRB

Visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) or  
call 1-800-771-3772  
for Rating Information.

# DEAR GI

## HAM-HAM MADNESS

You can't hope to survive. Even now my mutated gerbils are invading your headquarters. Soon the offices of GI and all the precious video games within will be mine. I strongly suggest that you surrender before you feel the wrath of my gerbils.

Your biggest fan,  
Captain Ninja Monkey  
Via aol.com

Your meager gerbils have quite a task ahead of

them. Many have attempted to infiltrate the storied Vault of Video Games – including Kristian with a jimmied clothes hanger, but that's another story. Back to the topic at hand, the vault and our headquarters are guarded by an elite troupe of ninjas, pirates, dragons, covert Special Ops units, and T-virus-infused hamsters which will surely nibble your gerbils to wee bits of vermin goo. It will take much more, my friend, than mere vermin to take us down. [Insert evil cackle here]

## ABRE LOS OJOS

First of all, I would like to say I love this magazine. But anyway, I was playing my copy of Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back and was near the end. All of a sudden, the game froze. I reset the PlayStation sourly, but when the title screen came up, some letters were out of place and the last save file was gone! Even worse, my Final Fantasy IX data was completely erased! I have no idea what happened, but all that I can think of is that it was damaged when I sat on, er dropped it too hard...yeah...

Andrew  
Ellicott City, MD

First off, look where you're sitting. Instead of squashing equipment with a bountiful booty, you must love your memory card. Coddle it. Whisper sweet nothings in its general direction. Store it properly like a fine bottle of wine. When applying labels, please print clearly and gently massage the sticker onto the surface of the card. A memory card is like a high-maintenance partner; you must treat it well and you will share long years of lovin'.

## SMALL-BLOCK CHEVY

I have been reading Game Informer for a number of years and come across a word that stumps me: engine. I understand other words like framerate, cel shading, and bump mapping; but this word's meaning has alluded me many times. I was hoping you could help me and others with this same quandary.

Terrance Wells  
Via email



We could break down the anatomy of a video game engine technically, which would probably confuse you more than you are already, or, we could make a simple analogy. A finished game is like a car. It has different parts like doors, suspension, tires, windows – you get the drift. It also has an engine...an engine that powers the game and makes all of its parts work in unison. In short, it is the coding that makes it possible for the

environments, characters, and on-screen objects to be created in real-time.

Developers with the know-how can make many different games based off of the same engine. For instance, Splinter Cell and Unreal Tournament both share the same engine, but have only a few similarities when it comes to appearance, gameplay, or style. The engines, of course, can also be upgraded by developers.

## FRIENDLY FRIENDS

A friend of mine brought over a copy of DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball a few days ago. I played it probably forty-five minutes or so, ogling good-naturedly at the lovely bikinis and such, until the novelty wore off. I set it aside for a while, almost forgot about it, and then the most unexpected turn of events took place: My girlfriend and her best friend found it and decided to see what all the talk was about. They've since become hopelessly

addicted to the game, shrieking in glee when a new swimsuit arrives or when one of the girls likes a present or some crap. Is this strange or what? I mean, one of their favorite parts of it is the Hopping Game! Some advice?

Android  
Via attbi.com

You, Android, have defied gaming conventions on a number of levels with this good fortune. First, you have a girlfriend. Second, you both appear to have other friends. Third, she wanted to play a game. And the fourth and biggest, she likes playing a game that features hot chicks in bikinis! You want advice? Keep doing what you're doing and hope that the sweet gravy train of your life keeps on rolling with the speed of a thousand gazelles! Now, go and watch your girlfriend giggle at polygon vixens and revel in the joy that surely fills your heart.



## UNNERVED

This is a bit embarrassing – I have Resident Evil on GameCube but I can't beat it because it scares the crap out of me! I rented the game, liked it, and then bought it. I played for only a week and then three months went by while I haven't touched it because I don't have the guts. What should I do to conquer my fear of the dark and the scary stuff in the game?

Sid  
Via yahoo.com

We will supply you with the will to go on. Here is a mantra to repeat when things get spooky, "The universe is expanding. Although Leon may die, mutated dogs will not eat me. I can always select Continue. The universe is expanding. Although Rebecca may die, lickens will not decapitate me. I can always select Continue. The universe is expanding."

Repeat as necessary. If a Zen-like calm doesn't flow over you akin to a gentle wave, consider rubber undies for their durability and easy clean-up.

**EASY**  
YOUR  
CONTROLLER,  
SIR

I am 18. Can I have a job?

W. Moffett  
Via hotmail.com

Without stating which position you're applying for we cannot hire you outright. But, here are a few of the openings we have available:

**ADDRESS LABEL GENERATOR:** Each subscriber address is hand-lettered on biodegradable sticky tabs. To service a subscriber base bigger than the population of North Dakota, this applicant must have exceptional penmanship and be willing to waive their rights to workman's compensation in case of carpal tunnel syndrome.

**MULTIPLE POSITIONS OPEN – Personal Grooming Attendants.** Duties will include: foot massaging for Editor-in-Chief (shiatsu experience preferred), picking lint and various parasites from scalp of most staff members, shaving of back hair (except girly editors), and other...unsavory tasks. Must be able to sacrifice personal respect and have a strong stomach.

**GAL (OR GUY) FRIDAY:** Looking for active go-getter willing to go-and-get. Will be responsible for ensuring beverage freshness, cleansing soiled dishes, retrieving materials from the printer that's "way over thereee," ordering/paying for staff pizza, and fluffing the pillows of resting employees.

## A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS

What would it be like to play video games with commercial breaks? I was talking to a friend recently, and we decided that it would be okay for advertising to rear its ugly head in video games – if it follows a few guidelines.

1. No commercial breaks. Do not stop the game to advertise. If you need to load a game, there is nothing wrong with throwing a Doritos ad up as a loading screen.



## ENVELOPE ART

2. In-game ads are fine. By in-game ads, I mean those that do not stop the gameplay but are merely in the background. The possibilities are endless: Grand Theft Auto with billboards or radio ads (for real companies this time), football games with sponsors, hockey games with advertising on the boards, Silent Hill with rotting signs or Coke machines, etc.

3. If there is an ad in the game, make sure it fits the mood. For example, don't put a Chevy in Final Fantasy or a Snickers bar in Zelda.

In order to keep gaming prices down, I would actually like to see games start using advertising. As long as it does not detract from the game, there should be no problems. Just think of some of the realism it could create!

Cory Klein  
Via email

What you are proposing is certainly not outlandish, as some games have already taken the cue and even followed most of the good-natured laws you laid out. We've got Run Like Hell offering health through Bawls vending machines, Jet Moto shilling Mountain Dew on billboards, NFL Fever featuring a Taco Bell post-game wrap-up, and Crazy Taxi making you deliver fares to real franchises like KFC and Pizza Hut.

As far as realism, many would argue that video games are supposed to be an escape from reality, and should avoid advertising of actual products at all costs. So far, it hasn't been proven that advertising in games generates profits for the product, which leads us to believe that a full-scale commercial break is more than a few years off.

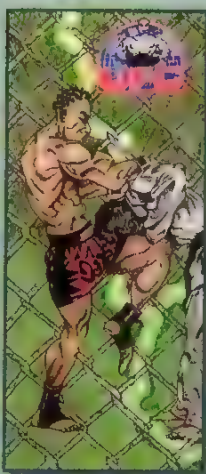
### TEXTILES-R-US

How did you guys make the GI design on Animal Crossing? That design is sweet! And what's a sleeper? Kgasnik  
Via email



Luckily both of these questions are most aptly answered by our resident wrestler/Animal Crossing junkie, Justin Leeper. When queried about the logo, he retorted with a fairly long-winded diatribe about the juxtaposition of color schemes and fit of chenille versus felt, so we are including a handy diagram that you can use to make your own GI couture. Just go visit the Able sisters and duplicate his work. Feel free to mess with color schemes or visit [www.animalxing.com/textures.php](http://www.animalxing.com/textures.php) for more ideas.

In reference to a sleeper, it is either a "legal" chokehold or (in this case) a game that wasn't expected to make a big impact in the market, and ended up enjoying hearty word-of-mouth sales and fan support.



Jaysen R. Williams  
Whoa, momma! Can you say final blow! Ha ha!

Charles Arrington Jr.  
Not able to find enough mercenary work to make ends meet, Samus is forced to use her suit to clean floors

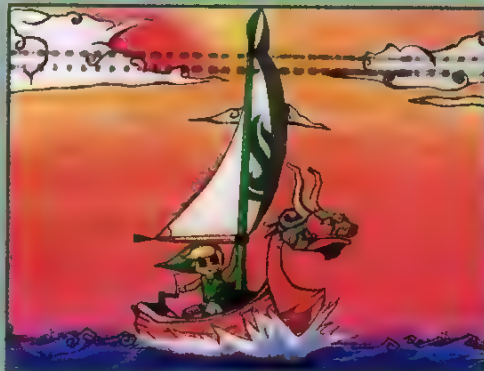


### JUNE WINNER!

Robby Burgess  
"Damn these metal undies! They chafe like nothing else!"



Frederick Colvin III  
What do you call the middle joint in a rooster's leg? A Cock-knee! HAHAAAA!!!!



Alec Helwig  
Link sails the seas in hopes of wrapping his hands around pirate booty

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

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



Afonso Ernesto Elias  
"Look out, hitman! It's Tonya Harding!"

# GI NEWS

## SOCOM'S SECOND TOUR

Online soldiers rejoice! **Sony** and developer **Zipper Interactive** are here with **SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** for the **PlayStation 2**. The broadband-only title will appear in November, and it features 12 international missions in places such as Algeria, Brazil, Albania, and Russia. More indoor settings, improved team communication, all-new mission types, interactive vehicles and machinery will help put the "Baby!" in Navy.



## NAMCO FOR THE SOUL

**Namco** is hitting us between the eyes with a lineup that has a little bit of everything. Take a first look at **Spawn** for the **PlayStation 2**, **Xbox**, and **GameCube** this fall. In this would-be blockbuster, you'll command a plethora of abilities: Hell Powers, his living costume, a slew of weapons, and more. The only question is: Will it be better than the last *Spawn* game?

**Ridge Racer** is absent in name, but the creators of that racing franchise are coming at us with **R: Racing Evolution** (PS2, Xbox, GC), which tries to bring the human component to a stable of cars through a storyline involving two rival female racers.

Also slated to appear from Namco include the following: **Breakdown** (Xbox), **Kill Switch** (PS2/Xbox), **I-Ninja** (PS2/GC), **Strike Force** (PS2), and **Time Crisis 3** (PS2).

In other Namco news, the company has sent a merger offer to **Sega**. The **Sonic the Hedgehog** publisher/developer has confirmed the offer, but has not made a decision on it yet. Sega is currently in negotiations with **Sammy** regarding a similar deal. Rumor has it that **Microsoft** and **EA** may soon enter the Sega sweepstakes.



Spawn (PS2/Xbox/GC)



Breakdown (Xbox)



I-Ninja (PS2/GC)



What do you see?

- (a) An afternoon of fun for you and your pals.
- (b) A reason to go outside and play.
- (c) Great potential for a terrible headache.

If you answered C, you might be ready to rule My Street!

## NINTENDO GETS EXCLUSIVE METAL GEAR SOLID

Amid lagging sales of the **GameCube**, **Nintendo** has struck back with its most intriguing third-party partnership to date. The console manufacturer and publisher/developer **Konami** are pairing for **Metal Gear Solid The Twin Snakes** – a GameCube exclusive – to ship later this year. This latest iteration of the series will actually contain the storyline of the first **Metal Gear Solid**, which appeared on the **PlayStation** in 1998.

Work on the title is bringing about another impressive partnership. *Twin Snakes* will be developed by American second-party studio **Silicon Knights** (**Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem**) and will be guided by both *Metal Gear* mastermind **Hideo Kojima** and Nintendo's **Shigeru Miyamoto**. Says

Miyamoto, "Mr. Kojima and I have spoken about this project for some time, and I'm excited our ideas have matched so perfectly."

Of course, *The Twin Snakes* will feature stunning graphics, but *Game Informer* has learned that the title will also contain new missions. Whether these will be integrated into *Solid's* story, or will be VR missions, is unknown. Either way, we salivate at the thought of a reunion with Psycho Mantis. "You like *Eternal Darkness*, don't you?" *The Twin Snakes* will utilize the GameCube's connectivity with the **Game Boy Advance** – possibly allowing instant access to your CODEC. We only hope that, given the vid's name, we'll see co-op LAN play, but that is not confirmed at this time.



## GI NEWS



**R&D**  
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.

## PAPARAZZI PRO



A video game tribute to sleazy photo hawks that mercilessly hound the world's rich and famous, **Paparazzi Pro** will allow you take a job as a top tabloid cameraman. You'll roam the streets of New York, London, and Los Angeles in hopes of getting that elusive shot of Gwyneth Paltrow sucking face with the guy from Coldplay, Nick

Noite's latest DWI arrest, or Winona Ryder heisting frozen pizzas at Sam's Club. Imagine a mix between Pokémon Snap and Grand Theft Auto, in a game which proves that the harsh truth of the camera eye is deadlier than any machine gun. As you navigate your way through the world's most exclusive restaurants, resorts, and night-clubs; your character will keep an eye out for all types of celebrity shenanigans. Although the game takes place largely in third person, the push of a button will switch to your telephoto lens. As in a first-person shooter, you'll still be able to move around – enabling you to set up your shot for maximum visual punch. This will be important, because the quality of your images (based on a number of factors including clarity, composition, and how close you are to the subject) will determine how much you can sell it for. Inspired by GTA III, you'll be able to take jobs from a number of different tabloids like *The Star* and *The National Enquirer*. Later missions even challenge you to pull risky stunts like rappelling off the side of a hotel to snap a secret tryst, or flying a helicopter over a beach to catch a topless (and pregnant) Catherine Zeta-Jones sunbathing nude while smoking a Camel Light.

## NAME THAT GAME

This month's entry is the start of a fighting series from SNK. The franchise's storyline actually began in Fatal Fury in the arcade, but was later given its own title in



1994. This game was known for not only creating team battles (in this case, three-on-three), but for bringing together a roster of fighters from different SNK properties under one banner – something that would continue in titles like *Capcom vs. SNK*.

(Answer on page 28)

## TOP 10 UNUSED GAME LICENSES

- 10 Pop Warner Fever 2004  
Ooops, that's *NEL Fever 2004*.
- 9 The MetRix World's Strongest Man video game
- 8 Mumvee Haven featuring LeBron James
- 7 Metamucil Color Adventures (it's a shooter)
- 6 All-Time Cincinnati Bengals Greats Card Game (Collect 'em all!)
- 5 Subway Jarod's Tumble Eat-a-Thon
- 4 Richard Simmons Fight Club
- 3 Toby Keith's Ford Truck Men 4x4 Challenge
- 2 S.A.R.S.: A New Host (it's an MMORPG)
- 1 Herpasil: Burning Strangers

## DEVELOPER TOP 5

- GAVIN RAE BURN**  
Studio Head, Juice Studios  
(Juice developed *Pro Race Driver*)
- 1 Tomb Raider – PSone
  - 2 Medal of Honor – PSone
  - 3 Half-Life – PC
  - 4 Syphon Filter – PSone
  - 5 Crash Bandicoot – PSone

## READER TOP 5



**TONY RIFFE**  
Princeton, WV  
(Tony is at right: We'd love to know what the guy on the left's favorite games are)

- 1 Adventure Time – 2600
- 2 Shining Force III – Saturn
- 3 Doom – PC
- 4 Sonic the Hedgehog – Genesis
- 5 Galaga – Arcade

Game Informer is looking for your best and favorite games. Please send your list (including a photo of yourself) to:  
Game Informer Magazine  
Attn: Top Five  
724 North First St., 9th Fl.  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
e-mail: topfive@gameinformer.com  
(please digital games)  
Entries that enter multiple times will be entered in a separate drawing.  
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## THE LEGACY CONTINUES

**Eidos** is keeping the **Kain** train rolling, only this time he has help. In fall's **Legacy of Kain: Defiance** (**PlayStation 2** and **Xbox**), players will get to control both Kain and Raziel in the same game for the first time. Also new to this title are the revamped combat system and telekinesis powers.



## CAPCOM & MIKAMI RETHINK GAMECUBE

**Nintendo** scored a major coup when it signed up **Capcom's** legendary **Resident Evil** franchise to an exclusive deal with the **GameCube**. Now, in light of some financial disappointments, the company is reevaluating its commitment to the system.

According to the Japanese newspaper *Nikkei Business Daily*, Capcom plans to shift its resources and efforts to titles for the **PlayStation 2** and **Xbox**. The company has stated that it plans to go ahead and release **Resident Evil 4** on the GameCube as scheduled, and it will not port 2002's **Resident Evil** remake, nor **Resident Evil 0**, to any other system. As these titles have either already released or are deep in development, this statement comes as no surprise, and it does not impact Capcom's larger plans.

Meanwhile, famed **Resident Evil** producer **Shinji Mikami** has stepped down as head of **Production Studio 4** – a development team that was dedicated to the GameCube (see GI issue #117 for more).

Overall, Capcom is restructuring across the board after it reported a loss of almost 20 billion yen due to the poor sales of certain games in Japan, including **P.N. 03** (GC), **Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter** (PS2), and **Resident Evil 0** (GC). As a result, 18 titles in various stages of development have now been cancelled.



## THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

**GOOD** – **ID Tech Camps** is giving kids the chance to create their own video game during the week-long Multimedia & Game Creation course this summer. For locations and more info, check out [www.internalDrive.com](http://www.internalDrive.com). School is cool.

**GOOD** – Virginia's David Rocci has been prosecuted for selling mod chips for the **Xbox** and **PlayStation 2**. Part of his punishment is five months of home imprisonment. Sweet! That's a lot of time to play some games.

**UGLY** – A day after coalition forces invaded Iraq, **Sony Computer Entertainment America** filed for a trademark on the phrase "shock and awe" for use in a possible video game. Sony subsequently dropped the application.

**BAD** – Break out your silver metallic North Face jacket. **P. Diddy** is working on a game about himself where you'll sign acts and just plain make money. No word yet as to whether you'll be able to show up to say "Uh huh" and "Bad Boy" in the background of other people's songs. We suspect that after this game tanks, he'll have to change his name again in embarrassment.



## LOOSE TALK

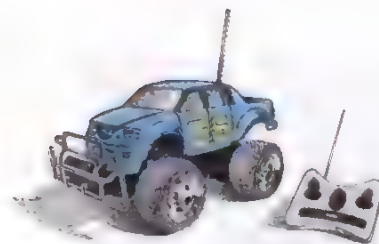
Whenever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, *Game Informer* experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest,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

**Microsoft** is just getting going on the online games for its **Xbox Live** service. But **Xbox Live Mark II** is in the works and plans to provide amenities beyond the current **Voice Communicator**, matching services, etc. Functions like IRC chat and more are rumored to be part of the next wave.

Here's a list of some not-so-average sequels sure to rake in the dough for their respective companies. **Sim City 5 (EA)**, **Kingdom Hearts 2 (Square Enix)**, and **Sly Cooper 2 (Sony)** are already swinging in the on deck circle. **Kingdom Hearts 2** will again involve a partnership with **Disney**.

Where's **Fear Effect: Inferno**? Not only has the game not hit shelves (it was supposed to this month), but publisher **Eidos** won't comment on its whereabouts. *Loose Talk* has heard that part of the hang-up actually comes from the other side of the pond, where suits in the company are questioning the title.

**Xbox** fans were bummed when news came down that **Halo 2** was being delayed until 2004. Now, it looks like things are going from bad to worse. The two latest games to be hit by the delay bug: **Fable** and **StarCraft: Ghost**.



What is this?

- (a) A battery-operated monster truck.
- (b) Hell on wheels.
- (c) A toy for kids not old enough to drive.

If you answered B, you might be ready to rule My Street.



## MO' MORROWIND FOR XBOX

**Bethesda Softworks** is giving **Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind** players more battleaxe for their buck with **Morrowind Game of the Year**. This will include the **Elder Scrolls III Xbox** title, as well as content from the two

**PC** expansion packs – **Tribunal** and **Bloodmoon**.

The coup here is that Bethesda is integrating all this content for newbies, while still allowing players of the original Morrowind on Xbox to import their characters and continue without missing a beat.

In other **Elder Scrolls** news, *Game Informer* has been told that, contrary to numerous rumors out there, Bethesda has no intention of releasing a version of the series for **PlayStation 2**. That, as they say, is that.



# UNIVERSAL EVERYWHERE

Game Informer had a sneak peek at Vivendi Universal's upcoming roster of games, and it certainly is one picnic in the park. Apart from the titles you see here, you'll also be treated to such notables as **Battlestar Galactica** (PlayStation 2/Xbox), **The Fast and the Furious** (PS2/Xbox), **Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat** (PC/Game Boy Advance), and **Spyro: Attack of the Rynocs** (GBA). All of these titles will appear before the end of the year.



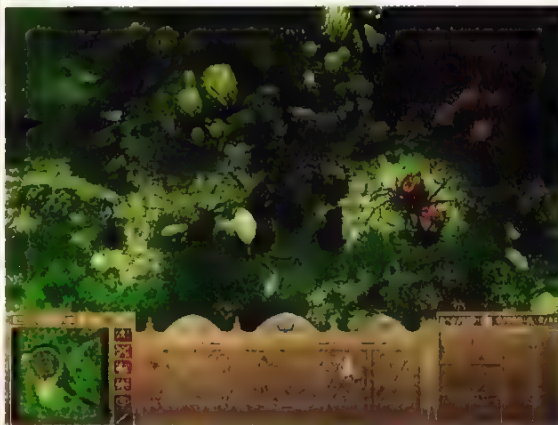
▲ **Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds**

PS2/Xbox/GC • (Fall)  
Following the success of last year's Xbox game, Buffy is back and better than ever. Not only do players get to control other characters such as Willow, but the storyline has been penned by the show's writers. *Chaos Bleeds* has been conceived as a "lost episode" from the TV series' fifth season.



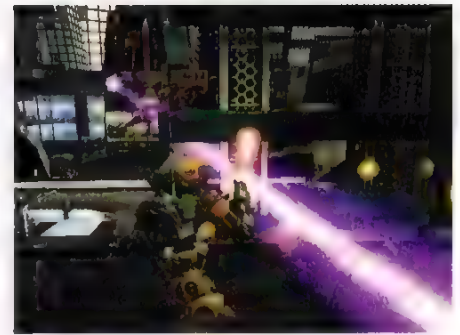
▲ **The Lord of the Rings: The Treason of Isengard**

PS2/Xbox • (Winter)  
Not only does this Tolkien-endorsed product sound similar to Electronic Arts' line of games based on the movies, now it plays like them, too. *Isengard* is a pure action/adventure title allowing you to play as various characters in order to draw as much orc blood as possible.



▲ **The Lord of the Rings: War of the Ring**

PC • (Early 2004)  
This PC-only title will allow players to do what PC nerds do best – resource management. This real-time strategy game will push all the hot keys of the Tolkien faithful who didn't find the books boring enough!



**Metal Arms**

Xbox/GC • (November)  
This isn't just some boring mech game, it's a full-blown, 50-mission action/adventure title filled with more than a few ways to skin a cat. Sniping, stealth, puzzle solving, and power-up-fueled combat round this package out.



**Crash Nitro Kart**

PS2/Xbox/GC/GBA • (November)  
This is a kart game, so if your ass isn't on fire, then you just aren't trying hard enough. This title covers 17 tracks, and even includes rides that transform to adapt to the environment.



**The Simpsons: Hit & Run**

PS2/Xbox/GC • (September)  
This new *Simpsons* title takes the **Crazy Taxi**-influenced driving of the first and adds a new twist: out-of-the-car adventures. Now you can go into the Kwik-E-Mart, the Springfield power plant, and even the Simpsons' home. Who needs the Kwik-E-Mart? We doooo!



**Tribes: Vengeance**

PC • (Late 2004)  
Why such a long lead-time? Because developer **Irrational Games** is trying to make the single-player portion of *Vengeance* something special. Moreover, the developer is working to add some multiplayer goodies to this game powered by the **Unreal** engine.

## BREAK DOWN

**55%** of copies of *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* are estimated to have pre-sold before the game went on sale, according to Nintendo

**31%** of Kato's time is spent consulting Lisa for valuable skin care tips

**20%** Sony expects PlayStation 2 shipments to be down by this amount for the upcoming fiscal year

**0%** The amount of games that are more fun with a mouthful of pimento loaf

**110%** The amount of effort it will take for you to lick your way to the center of your Xbox

# ON THE TRAIL WITH HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

The last time we hooked up with bounty hunter Jack Wade on the PlayStation 2 in *Headhunter*, he was still suffering the ill-effects of amnesia and just stepped off the Dreamcast graphics boat. Now, however, developer Amuze and Sega have the Renderware engine in hand for the sequel, *Headhunter: Redemption*.

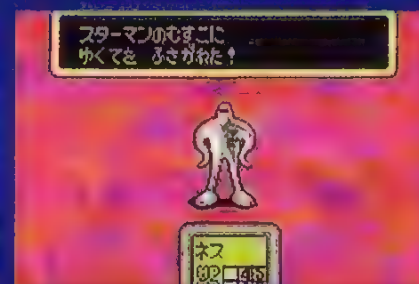
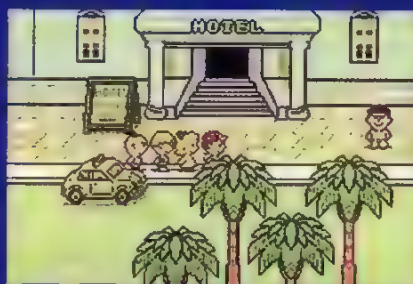
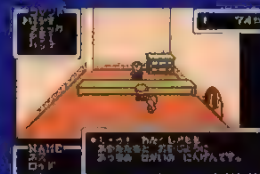
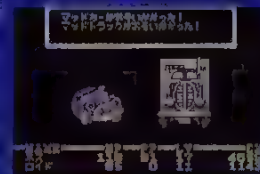
Take a look at Jack's partner, Leeza X, and it's clear that this game has fully stepped into the next generation. While he's off burning rubber and chasing down clues on his motorcycle, Leeza is combing the underground to discover the secret behind a correctional facility gone haywire. The game should appear this fall.



# EARTHBOUND INCOMING ON GBA

In 1995, *Earthbound* released for the Super Nintendo in America. This RPG was remarkable for its contemporary setting, which contrasted the traditional fantasy worlds of the genre, and in the process a cult following was born. Now Nintendo of Japan has announced that it is releasing *Mother 1+2* (as the series is dubbed over there) for the Game Boy Advance. Also in the works for the handheld is *Mother 3*.

This duo not only includes the original *Earthbound* (*Mother 2* in Japan), but the prequel, *Earthbound Zero* which was never released in the States. *Game Informer* reviewed *Zero* for our *Classic GI* section in our October 2002 issue (#114), and it was everything an *Earthbound* fan could hope for. It is unknown if Nintendo of America will release this GBA compilation over here, but the franchise is certainly closer to gamers' reach than ever before.



Seven games. One street.

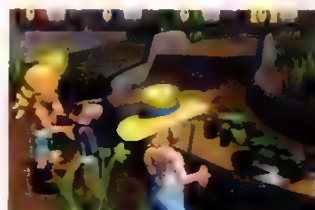
Respect is earned the old-fashioned way around here. By winning, and having lots of attitude. Not necessarily in that order. Play all seven games, forget that little thing called sportsmanship, and *My Street* could be your 'hood to rule.



Lawn Mowers



Volleyball



RC Racing



Dodgeball

PlayStation 2



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# MICROSOFT HITS NHL ICE

Continuing efforts to build itself up as a major player in the video game sports arena, Microsoft has announced that it is entering the ring with **NHL Rivals 2004** for the Xbox this fall. Similar to its other first sports entries, Microsoft is forgoing a franchise mode in favor of all-around flavor and Xbox Live support. The game is promising advance stick moves and is also setting up an interesting player ability system. Not only will your guys have responsibilities like Sniper, Enforcer, or Agitator; they will have special move sets unique to their roles. We can only hope there will be a position for the Avalanche's Peter Forsberg called Dive-Taker, but that probably won't happen.



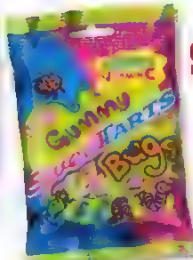
# MIDWAY GOES PRO

Midway has cranked out its over-the-top line of sports titles for years now, but the publisher/developer is taking a new tack with its Pro series of titles. Starting with **NFL Blitz Pro**, **NHL Hitz Pro**, and **MLB Slugfest Pro**; the company will try to blend its arcade-style antics with the more realistic aspects of traditional sports titles.

NFL Blitz Pro now sports 11-on-11 play, along with other staples such as a Franchise mode, online play, icon-based passing, and even a real running game! Meanwhile, NHL Hitz Pro brings the action to five a side on the ice, real penalties, online gameplay; and real teams, players, and strategies. This new generation of Midway sports titles will be available for all the major consoles.



SPECIAL CONTEST



**SweetTARTS and Game Informer want to send you to Midway's Game Development Studio!**

Do you have what it takes to become a video game developer? Do you ever wonder how your favorite title is made? If so, Game Informer and Nestlé SweetTARTS have powered up to bring you a SWEET once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You can win a trip to sunny San Diego, California to meet the developers of the popular baseball title **MLB Slugfest 2004**, and get an inside look at how video games are created!

Here's what you need to do:

(1) If you think you are at the forefront of the video game world and are between the ages of 8 and 13, send a 100-word essay describing the details of a game you would create featuring SweetTARTS' Gummy Bugs, the latest and hippest candy from SweetTARTS.

(2) Make Gummy Bugs a part of your game environment in any way you choose. They could become intense key characters that have extreme powers, a legion of enemies, or even powerful allies. It's up to you! Your essays will be judged equally by creativity, originality, and the best use of SweetTARTS gummy bugs.



So start creating the ultimate virtual gameplay experience for true gamers by capturing the essence of SweetTARTS Gummy Bugs! You could become legendary!

Fill out and submit the Official Entry Form below along with your essay to: Nestlé SweetTARTS Game Informer Contest, 6500 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1900, Los Angeles, CA 90048. **Entries must be received by and contest ends 6/30/03. See official rules below. No purchase necessary.**

Visit [www.NestleSweetarts.com](http://www.NestleSweetarts.com) to get more information about SweetTARTS Gummy Bugs

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM (Please print)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ APT.#: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

YES! I want the scoop on SweetTARTS! Please keep me posted on new products, upcoming events, promotions, and more!

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 CONTEST RULES

No purchase necessary. Entries must meet all of the following requirements or they will be disqualified: Submit your essay in 100 words or less describing the details of a game you would create featuring SweetTARTS gummy bugs. Any entry that exceeds the 100 word limit will automatically be disqualified. At the judges' discretion, entries including unsuitable content or that are in violation of third-party rights (including, but not limited to, copyrights) will be immediately disqualified. Each entry must include a completed official entry form. Enter as many times as you wish, but each entry must be original, unpublished, the sole property of submitter and not previously submitted in any other contest and mailed in a separate envelope.

Send in your description of your game featuring SweetTARTS clearly printed or typed on an 8" x 11" piece of paper and include your name, address and daytime phone number on the top of all materials submitted and mail to: SweetTARTS Game Informer Contest, M&L, 6500 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1900, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Entries must be received by and contest ends 06/30/03. Nestlé is not responsible for lost, stolen, illegible, misdirected, postage due or late mail submissions.

Judges will select the winners from all eligible entries received. Entries will be judged on 33% creativity, 33% originality and 33% best use of gummy bugs. Winners will be notified by phone and/or mail on or about 07/15/03. Limit one entry per person or address. Prizes: Two (2) Grand prize winners will each receive a trip for two (winner and parent or legal guardian) to San Diego, CA, to Midway's Games Development Center. The trip will take place in August 2003 (date TBD by Midway Games Inc. and winner's availability). Trip includes round-trip coach air travel from major airport nearest winner's home to San Diego, CA; hotel accommodations for 3 days/2 nights (one room, double occupancy); transportation to and from the airport; and \$100 for necessary expenses - based on relevant regulations (approximate total value up to \$2,500). If winner's home is less than 150 miles from San Diego, air transportation will not be included. Travel must be completed by 09/31/03. Travel restrictions and black out dates may apply. Expenses not specifically stated are the sole responsibility of the winner. If winner is unable to travel on dates specified and signed to, prize will be forfeited and another winner may be chosen. No cash substitutions for prizes will be permitted and prizes are non-transferable. Federal, state and local taxes are the sole responsibility of the winner. Limit one prize per person or address. Nestlé reserves the right to substitute prize of equal or greater value. Prizes will be awarded in the name of parent or legal guardian.

1. By entering the Contest, entrants accept and agree to these rules and the decision of the judges, which shall be final. Winners will be required to sign a Winner's Agreement and Release and return it by date specified in notification letter or prize will be forfeited in its entirety and another winner may be selected. By submitting an entry, a winner agrees to allow use of his or her name and/or photograph for advertising the property of Sponsor and will not be returned.

2. Contest open to legal residents of the U.S., U.S. and D.C., who are between 8-12 years old, except employees and the families of Nestlé USA, Inc., Game Informer Magazine, Midway Games Inc. and their affiliates, subsidiaries, promotions and advertising agencies. Nestlé USA, Inc., Game Informer Magazine, Midway Games Inc., and their affiliated companies, representatives, agents or employees are not responsible for and shall be indemnified by the prize winner against any claims, injuries, losses or damages of any kind resulting from acceptance, use, misuse, possession, or loss of the prize. Subject to all federal, state and local laws. [www.nestle.com](http://www.nestle.com)

3. For a copy of the winners list, print your name and address on a 3" x 5" card, and mail it in an envelope to: SweetTARTS Game Informer Contest, M&L, 6500 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1900, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Requests must be received by 07/31/03. Sponsored by Nestlé USA, Glendale, CA 91203 © NestléSweetarts.com

# DATA FILE

► Microsoft's FASA Studio has put the brakes on **MechWarrior 5** for the PC. The company stated that this was mainly due to the fact that "we were not advancing the genre enough." FASA says that it wants to reinvent the series for the next iteration.

► IBM has just signed a deal with Nvidia to manufacture graphics processors for the company. Nvidia is currently working with Microsoft on the processor for the next Xbox. This means that IBM will soon have a hand in the chips for all three of the console manufacturers. IBM is partnering with Toshiba and Sony for the PlayStation 3, and it has already worked with ATI for the GameCube.

► Don't blame Sony for bad games; blame yourself! The company has set up the Gamer Advisory Panel through The PlayStation Underground to gather insight and feedback on its games.

► Bam Entertainment's weekend at Bernie's is officially over. Ex-Sony and Sega executive Bernie Stolar has left his position as president and CEO of the company.

► To promote its EA-published grueling title, Def Jam Records is planning a tour starring several of its big-name rappers called the Def Jam Venetta Tour. The shows will feature sets by Method Man, Joe Buddens, Capone N Noreaga, and more. Also, GameStop stores in cities on the tour will be holding competitions to compete against Method Man! For more go to [www.defjam.com](http://www.defjam.com)

► Christopher Walken, Gary Oldman, Michael Madsen, and other less-rich actors will lend their voices to **True Crime: Streets of LA**. Meanwhile, Arnold Schwarzenegger has agreed to appear and speak in **Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines**. Who gives a better pump? Him or Henry Rollins in **Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter?**

► Microsoft has dropped action/platformer **Tork**. Please, don't stop there.

► Developer Level-5 has confirmed that it has started development on **Dark Cloud 3**. The game is being referred to as "DC 3.5" due to its significant leap over the series' second installment.

► Despite containing enough additions to qualify it as a new title, Sega's **Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution Greatest Hits**, will sell for less than \$20 under the Sony discount line for the PlayStation 2.

Name That Game Answer:



**ONLY  
\$19.99\***



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-GAME INFORMER MAGAZINE

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## Tombstone "Ultimate Summer Job" Game

**OFFICIAL RULES NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. 1. HOW TO OBTAIN A GAME MESSAGE:** Beginning on or about May 6, 2003, game messages will be available inside specially-marked packages of Tombstone 12" pizzas. To receive a game message by mail, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: Tombstone "Ultimate Summer Job" Game, P.O. Box 5190, Ellenton, FL 34222-5001. Requests must be received by October 10, 2003. Residents of VT only need not affix postage to self-addressed envelope. Limit one request per outer envelope, mailed separately. **2. HOW TO PLAY:** Open packaging and look on the back of the pizza label for game message. If your game message says, "Congratulations" and the name of a prize, you're a winner of that prize, subject to verification. **3. PRIZE CLAIMS:** To claim a prize, sign your initials in ink across the face of your original game message. Mail original game message (entire pizza label) in a stamped envelope, together with a piece of 3" x 5" paper on which you have printed your complete name, address (including zip code), daytime and evening telephone numbers and age to: Tombstone "Ultimate Summer Job" Game Claim, P.O. Box 5443, Ellenton, FL 34222-5004. Grand Prize claims must be sent via Registered Mail, return receipt requested. First Prize claims may be sent via First Class mail. First Prize claims must also indicate winner's preferred gaming system AND a ranking (from 1-4) of available games on the form provided with the winning message. If winner's 1st-choice game selection is not available, the 2nd choice game selection will be awarded, and so forth. All games are subject to availability. If no game choice/ ranking is indicated in the game claim, the game awarded is at Sponsor's discretion. All claims must be received by October 31, 2003. All prize claims are subject to verification. All claims submitted become the sole property of Kraft Foods North America, Inc. (Sponsor). Any claim received that is tampered with, illegible, mutilated, reproduced, contains printing or other errors, obtained where prohibited or not obtained legitimately, will be null and void. Sponsor and affiliated companies are not responsible for printing, distribution or production errors or for lost, late or misdirected mail. **4. PRIZES. APPROXIMATE RETAIL VALUES (ARV)/ODDS OF WINNING:** (1) Grand Prize - Trip for 2 to Los Angeles, CA where winner will spend 5 days playing video games at the Activision Studios and receive \$10,000 awarded in the form of a check. Trip consists of roundtrip, coach class air transportation for two from major airport nearest winner's residence to Los Angeles, CA; 6 days/5 nights hotel accommodations (single room, double occupancy); roundtrip ground transfers between airport/hotel and hotel/Activision studios; and \$500 spending money. ARV: \$15,800/ODDS: 1:10,559,146. (1,000) First Prizes - Activision Prize Pack including one Activision game, a tech deck, a t-shirt (adult large), a hat, and a coupon good for one free Tombstone Original pizza (up to \$4.69). ARV: \$100/ODDS: 1:10,559. Total approximate retail value of all prizes: \$115,800. Travel is subject to availability. Winner and guest must be available to travel on same itinerary, and travel must be completed by October 31, 2004 or prize will be forfeited. Trip dates are subject to approval by Sponsor and Activision Studios. Prizes consists of only those items specifically listed as part of the prizes. Unclaimed prizes will not be awarded. No substitutions, cash equivalents or transfers of prizes permitted, unless prizes are unavailable, in which case prizes of equal or greater value will be substituted. \*Grand Prize winner will not be employed or offered any type of employment by Activision, whether as an employee, independent contractor, temporary worker, intern or otherwise, and the Grand Prize shall not constitute or be construed as any such employment or offer of employment by Activision. **5. GENERAL RULES:** Open to residents of the U.S., 16 years of age and older, except employees of Kraft Foods North America, Inc. 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If winner is a minor, winner must be accompanied on trip by a parent or legal guardian. If any prize/prize notification is returned as undeliverable, if the required documents are not returned in a timely manner, or in the event of non-compliance with any other requirements, the prize will be forfeited in its entirety. By entering, participants (and their parents/legal guardians, if participants are minors) agree to abide by and be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of Promotions.com Inc., an independent judging organization, whose decisions are final in all matters. If due to a printing or other error, more prizes are claimed than intended to be awarded according to Rule 4, remaining prizes will be awarded in a random drawing from among all excess prize claims received. In no event will Sponsor be liable for more than the stated number of prizes in Rule 4. Acceptance of prize offered constitutes permission to use winners' names, addresses (city and state) and/or likenesses for advertising, promotion, or trade purposes without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. **6. WAIVER:** By entering this promotion, participant waives all rights to claim punitive, incidental and consequential damages, attorneys' fees or any damages other than actual out-of-pocket costs incurred to enter. **7. WINNERS' LIST:** For the names of winners available after December 1, 2003, send a self-addressed, stamped, #10 envelope to: Tombstone "Ultimate Summer Job" Game, P.O. Box 5449, Ellenton, FL 34222-5004 (or receipt by October 31, 2003. **SPONSOR:** Kraft Foods North America, Inc., Northfield, IL 60093.

## VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

For a healthy lifestyle, one must strike a balance between relaxation and exercise. As gamers, we have the relaxation part covered; now all we need to do is get off our fat cans every once in a while. The only question is how to do it. Complete this month's trivia, and follow the ranking to see which maneuver is best suited to get you into fighting shape fast.

**Question 1: Harry Shearer is best known as Spinal Tap bassist Derrick Smalls, but he also supplies the voices for Ned Flanders, Otto the bus driver, C. Montgomery Burns, and other denizens of Springfield, USA. Shearer has lent his vocal cords to a number of video games, but only one didn't feature the Simpsons. Which of these is the game in question?**

- A. Discworld
- B. Braindead 13
- C. Blazing Dragons
- D. Gex 3: Enter the Gecko



**Question 2: Zork, the text-based adventure game, ended up as a trilogy. Each installment has its own subheading. What is the subheading for Zork II?**

- A. The Wizard of Frobozz
- B. The Lost Continent
- C. The Great Underground Empire
- D. Return of Mr. Sparkle

**Question 3: The innovative Dreamcast game Seaman consisted of players using an included microphone to communicate with an aquatic virtual pet. Seaman would ask you questions to gauge your personality and learn more about you as he grew and evolved. A famous narrator presided over the title. What was this celebrity's name?**

- A. Abe Vigoda
- B. Roger Ebert
- C. Al Michaels
- D. Leonard Nimoy



**Question 4: In Wizards and Warriors on the NES, the brave knight Kuros is trying to save a princess from the wicked wizard Malkil. Along the way, Kuros helps out some damsels in distress, and is rewarded points for his good deeds. How much does he earn for saving poor Penelope?**

- A. 10,000
- B. 20,000
- C. 30,000
- D. 40,000

**Question 5: In the original Clay Fighter, which came out on both Genesis and SNES, there were eight wacky-zany characters to choose from - all originally sculpted out of clay. Of the four names listed below, three are fake fighters. Which one was a real playable character in the game?**

- A. Andrew Dice Clay
- B. Lumpy McNugget
- C. Ickybod Clay
- D. Dough Girl

**Question 6: Captain N: The Game Master was a Nintendo-based cartoon that ran for three seasons in the late '80s and early '90s. In the episode entitled "The Most Dangerous Game Master," Dr. Willy creates an android based off hero Kevin's past. What is the robot made to resemble?**

- A. The local bully
- B. The school librarian
- C. Kevin's girlfriend
- D. The rabid neighborhood dog



**Question 7: The Flash Kick is a famous fighting game move. Who does it, and what does it consist of?**

- A. Street Fighter II's Guile does a somersault kick in midair, accompanied by a flash of energy
- B. Mortal Kombat's Johnny Cage lurches forward in a green blur, nailing his adversary with a sidekick
- C. Street Fighter Alpha 3's Sakura pulls a camera, blinds you with the flash, then boots you in the groin
- D. Fatal Fury's Mai Shiranui drops her top, then hits a spinkick to the opponent's jaw when it drops to the floor

**Question 8: Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen may be best known for their portrayal of Michelle Tanner on the TV series, Full House. Their direct-to-video motion pictures have also been very successful. However, those teen darlings have starred in numerous video games over the years, too. Last year's GBA title was called Girls' Night Out. What type of game was it?**

- A. A paper doll-type dress-up game
- B. A platformer taking place in movie-themed levels
- C. A DDR-esque dance simulation
- D. A fighting game using pillows as weapons

**Question 9: Tommy Boy Records teamed up with Parappa the Rapper in Japan for the Parappa the Party Mix album. The record mixes classic hip-hop tracks with songs from PlayStation 2's Parappa 2 game. Which artist or group performs a song dedicated to the little, rapping dog?**

- A. Erykah Badu
- B. Naughty By Nature
- C. Busta Rhymes
- D. De La Soul



**Question 10: Bandai America has published a long list of games over the years. Many recent titles stem from Japanese licenses, including Digimon, Dragon Ball Z, and the new Dot Hack series. Which of the following NES games was published by Bandai first?**

- A. Dynowarz: The Destruction of Spondylus
- B. Athletic World
- C. Chubby Cherub
- D. Xevious

### Score & Rank



**0-1**  
Getting Out Of Bed



**2-4**  
Remote Reach



**5-6**  
Tin Can Crunchies



**7-8**  
The Car Jack



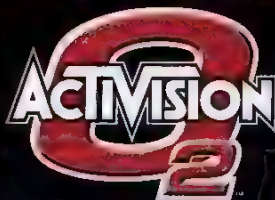
**9-10**  
The Oceanic Long Jump

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What Do YOU Want on YOUR **TOMBSTONE?**

# SPIDER

Activision has been weaving a web with the Spider-Man license since 2000; but last year, things changed a bit. *Spider-Man* turned into the motion picture event of 2002, earning the spot of fifth all-time moneymaker at the box office – breaking numerous records along the way.

As Tomo Moriwaki, the game's friendly neighborhood creative director, explains, "We got the single largest advertisement of any video game in the history of mankind." The game based upon the film rode its wave of hype and success, and final sales figures doubled Activision's expectations.

A sequel to both the cinematic and software Spidey are slated for summer 2004. With the success of the first game and the inevitable hype that will be spewed over the next movie, Activision and developer Treyarch had the option to just phone this one in and still sell gangbusters. Producer Matt "Super" Powers explains, "We could've approached [Spider-Man 2] very safely, taking the engine we had from the last product and making a newer version that would've been very safe. We knew the technology; we wouldn't have been taking risks." But, after seeing the completed film and listening to gamer feedback, the team knew what it had to do. Powers boasts, "To these guys' credit, right after they finished the first product, they started immediately into the second one – that's amazing to see: a developer so eager to get into it, instead of taking a couple months off and taking it easy."

As early as this project is (there's still a year to go), Treyarch's effort and dedication are obvious. The idea is to craft a massive, free-roaming world for Spider-Man to explore. On top of that, Treyarch is going all-out to give our hero the most realistic and entertaining web slinging that can be accomplished. We know your Spider Sense is tingling, so turn the page and explore a world-exclusive first look at Spider-Man 2 (working title).

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** TREYARCH  
■ **RELEASE** SUMMER 2004

# — M A N

COVER STORY I



## A WIDER WORLD OF WEB

# SPIDER-MAN 2

## HOT TIME, SPIDER IN THE CITY

Spider-Man looks over his kingdom...

1

2

...then leaps over the edge of the building...



All of these buildings can be scaled and swung from

7

...to strike the same defiant pose



# C

onverting the city of Manhattan for Spidey sensibility didn't seem possible to the developers at first. The game was originally just going to have bigger levels. It was encouragement from the

team behind another Activision product - True Crime: Streets of LA - which convinced Treyarch to take the plunge and go the streaming, expansive environment route.

Spider-Man 2's Manhattan is four kilometers by two kilometers, or 80 times larger than a standard level from the precursor. Powers informed us, "In and of itself the city is a very important character in the game. The art team spent time in New York taking pictures." Though not photorealistic, great care is being taken to make the

environment resemble its real-life counterpart. Moriwaka explains the fine line, "We're going as realistic as we can without jeopardizing the feel of moving around." The team has a wish list of 100 landmarks it is pursuing to have included into Spider-Man 2's world.

While smaller than the environment in The Getaway, for example, you're allowed to explore essentially every inch of the area, rather than being confined to the road. This encompasses everything from activities at street-level to the top of the highest building - which will measure upwards of 350 meters tall. Rest assured, you'll be able to climb to the top of these towering structures, like a spandex-clad miniature King Kong.

From that height, you can overlook large expanses of real estate, thanks to some tricky graphical technology like cheat geometry. You can also jump off of buildings



# SPIDER-FACT

The developer plans to scatter items within the confines of Manhattan, à la GTA III's hidden packages



...hurtling towards the pavement...

3

4

...before grabbing a pole...



...and dropping down to street level...

6

5

...launching out...

plunging all the way down to the street - without load time, thanks to the game's streaming engine. This will probably kill poor Peter Parker, but what a way to go!

The ability to go from swinging carefree to planting your feet on the street is a first for the Spider-Man series and is huge accomplishment for the developers. In past games, time spent among building tops and time pounding pavement were extremely separated experiences. Here, they're just a few web-swings away.

Treyarch wants you to feel at home in Manhattan. It's even putting things that would normally be accessed from the title screen, into the city. The tutorial will likely be found in a local arcade; the bowling minigame lies (obviously) at a bowling alley; and you can purchase health refills and other items at various stores. This, coupled with the diagonal streets of Broadway and

other landmarks, makes you feel like a townie. Says Moriwaki, "We want to keep players thinking about locations as much as possible. That will keep them thinking about the environment, and make them start to feel like it's not just Spidey's home, but their home, too."

Street-level Manhattan is populated with both pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Civilians have unpredictable reactions to Spider-Man's presence. Some will be glad to see him, while others will cower in fear. A few will ask him for help, bringing about side missions. The vehicles follow realistic traffic patterns, and you can even jump on top of them for some *Teen Wolfesque* mayhem. It's a free country, so have it your way!



You're going to have a hard time catching a cab looking like that

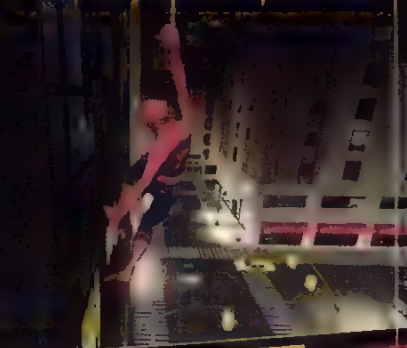


# SPIDER-FACT

The web strands you shoot off while traversing your city will remain in the environment, just dangling along. That's handier than Hansel and Gretel's breadcrumbs!

# EFRR

To quote the guy on the Best Buy commercial, "What's crackin', Spider-Man?!"



Spidey charges up a jump



Spin around a flagpole. Why? Does there have to be a reason?



With a strand in each hand, it's possible to slingshot yourself far and fast



## IT'S GOT THAT SWING

**B**eing able to swing on webbing is perhaps the coolest transportation mode of all time, and Treyarch has devoted a great deal of attention to perfecting it. Says Moriwaki, "We focused a few months, devoting almost the entire team's effort towards [swinging]. It was on everybody's minds. We have several coders and all the designers working pretty diligently on a system that is both advanced and interesting."

Seeing the motion picture gave his team a new perspective on how Spider-Man got from point A to point B. In the comics, Peter Parker would glide through the air with the greatest of ease. On film, we witnessed him learning how to use his web powers -- sometimes awkwardly. Powers tells us, "You have the scenes at the beginning of the movie where he's figuring it out, and he's taking these long, swooping swings and he's screaming and his arms are flailing. It seemed like a lot of fun. We were hoping to communicate that fun factor in the game."

But, how do you make better web swinging? The developers have many answers to that question. Moriwaki, between demonstrating the technique for us in the game, says it best, "What happens now is when you swing, it sticks to an actual part of a building, and it's real physical, pendulous-type physics at play here. So, the web is like a real thing now; it's actually a really relevant gameplay feature or item that, as the player gets used to swinging, can really start managing and understanding, and using it to do a lot of satisfying things." Believe the hype.

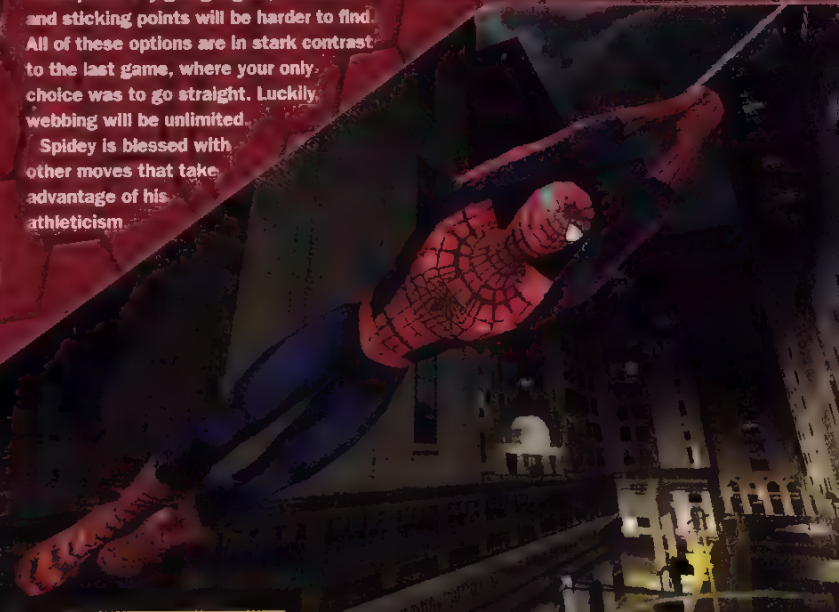
Not only is swinging freakin' sweet; it's ridiculously easy to

control. The right shoulder button extends the web, aided by a few directional presses on the analog stick. Holding onto a strand in each hand is simple, and works perfectly for either fast diagonal movements or a quick brake -- which makes swinging around corners a snap. You'll definitely need to be able to execute these maneuvers in tension-filled situations, much like when Spidey chases after Uncle Ben's killer in the first movie.

With both hands full, you can also charge a jump to make the tendrils act like a slingshot. Conversely, you can let go of the webbing and do a flurry of acrobatics in free-fall. Certain missions will call for you to pick up a citizen and swing them to safety. That's not all, kiddies; it's possible to do a full 360-degree flip, or even to grab onto moving things like helicopters. Try going higher, however, and sticking points will be harder to find. All of these options are in stark contrast to the last game, where your only choice was to go straight. Luckily, webbing will be unlimited.

Spidey is blessed with other moves that take advantage of his athleticism

The variety is staggering. Of course, his sticky fingers are put to good use (and we don't mean like Winona Ryder): Aside from buildings, the wall-crawler can cling to flagpoles, or swing on them gymnast-style when the feeling hits. It's possible to jump up while scaling walls, which replaces the web-clip from the predecessor. Speaking of walls, he can also run diagonally along them. Most actions can be affected by utilizing a charge move or the sprint function. For example, if you're sprinting down the street and jump, you'll get a longer distance than when you charge a jump from a standing position -- which gives you crazy height. Experimentation will yield the best maneuvers for your style. Needless to say, many of these new animations and moves are influenced by Tobey Maguire's alter-ego.



"I should've had a V8."



Instead of a web meter, Spider-Man has what Treyarch is calling the Hero Meter. It fills while you execute mid-air acrobatics or crunching combos. Once topped off, you can enter Spider Sense mode, which allows you to slow down enemy movement and dodge bullets, Matrix-style!



## FLUID FIGHTING

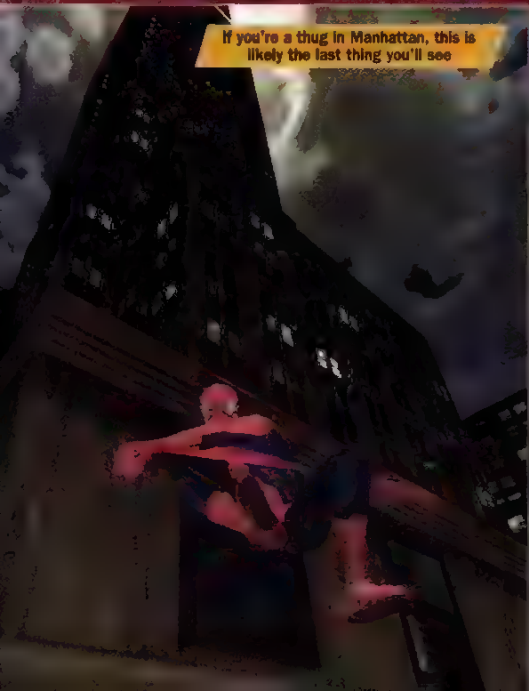
**T**he developers are going to great lengths to give the wall-crawler intuitive combat with which to defend justice. Don't expect a lot of gory finishing moves though, as Moriwaki says, "We're sensitive to anything too violent or too malicious. Even kids feel like they don't want Spidey to be too violent. It's the culture of the hero." Still, you'll kick plenty of butt just the same. Battles are replete with combos, counter-attacks, and pain-inducing grapples. Each attack is hand-animated and transitions are seamless between moves.

Every good action game needs a wealth of combination attacks, and Treyarch is outdoing itself. These are timing-based – meaning different ones will be executed based on the frequency with which you pound on the buttons. Spidey doesn't like his feet on the ground for too long, so popping foes up for a midair juggle to continue the onslaught is encouraged. We're told that you will start the game with a set amount of combos; and more are unlocked in, as Moriwaki calls them, "digestible pieces." Webbing again plays a big role in fights, and as we

previously stated, the virile young hero's supply of sticky fluid is unlimited. A shot to an enemy will usually disarm him; another web blast renders the criminal blind. Perhaps the best move in the game is to lasso a baddie with your webbing and whip them around in a move Treyarch calls the rodeo. Okay, we lied – doing a rodeo to multiple enemies at the same time is even cooler!

Your foes are no morons, and they'll toes plenty of attacks at the red and blue hero. This is where the counter button comes in. There are actually two ways to counter. If you hit the button while the enemy is starting his attack, his blow will be redirected in a push-type move. If you counter a split-second before the hit connects, you will retaliate with a stunning strike of your own. Mess with the spider, you get the fangs.

Spider-Man is as strong as he is agile, so expect grapples to come into play during combat. You'll throw people around like Tobey Maguire tosses sacks of cash into his fireplace for warmth. Like many actions in the game, grapples can be charged by holding down the button for increased effectiveness.



# WHY SPIDER-MAN GETS BETTER VIDS

**I**n games starring the big three superheroes – Batman, Superman, and Spider-Man – the web-slinger crushes his competition. We talked with Treyarch and Activision about why they think that's the case. John Heinecke, Activision's director of global brand management, cites Spidey's popularity: "Spider-Man, every time we test him with consumers, is always the most popular superhero out there. He's more popular than Superman, more popular than Batman."

Heinecke continues by giving props to Marvel, stating, "Marvel has done a good job of keeping the character fresh with Ultimate Spider-Man, with the movie out, and with the classic Spider-Man character. Batman has kind of gotten stale and Superman has definitely taken too many weird turns in his storyline, and people have walked away from it." Also, he talks about Spider-Man being easier for the audience to relate to. "The whole character of Spidey is the average shmo that all of a sudden has these cool powers. He's not born with them; he's not some dark brooding guy up in a mansion on the side of the hill lamenting the death of his parents. He's a high-school kid who wakes up and he has powers one day. As such, he's somebody people can identify with."

Of course, the fact that Activision has held Spider-Man's license for three years differs from Superman and Batman, which have both had two different publishers in the same timeframe. The advantages to this are obvious. Spider-Man 2 senior producer extraordinaire, Gregory John, explains, "Having all [developers] related to Activision means you make fewer mistakes. Mistakes that somebody else made, you're going to ask them, 'What did you guys do?' and they go, 'Don't do this.'"

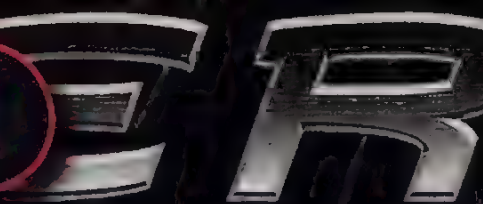
The mechanics of Spider-Man – swinging, climbing, etc. – are more game-conducive, says Spider-Man 2 creative director Tomo Moriwaki. He expands, "So much of what's enjoyable about Batman has a lot to do with the character that is portrayed and the cool things he does. When he talks [trash] to some guy and beats him up in a way that you think is right for Batman to do, that's not really easy to get across in a video game – especially when you're hoping to get hours of gameplay out of it." As for Superman, crafting a title featuring the most powerful man in the universe isn't an enviable undertaking. Moriwaki lays it out there, saying, "Superman is totally the hardest character to do in the universe."





# SPIDER-FACT

Spider-Man 2 runs on Treyarch's homegrown engine, affectionately called the Arch Engine. It's been modified and improved over the course of seven years. Talk about getting better with age!



## MAN ON A MISSION

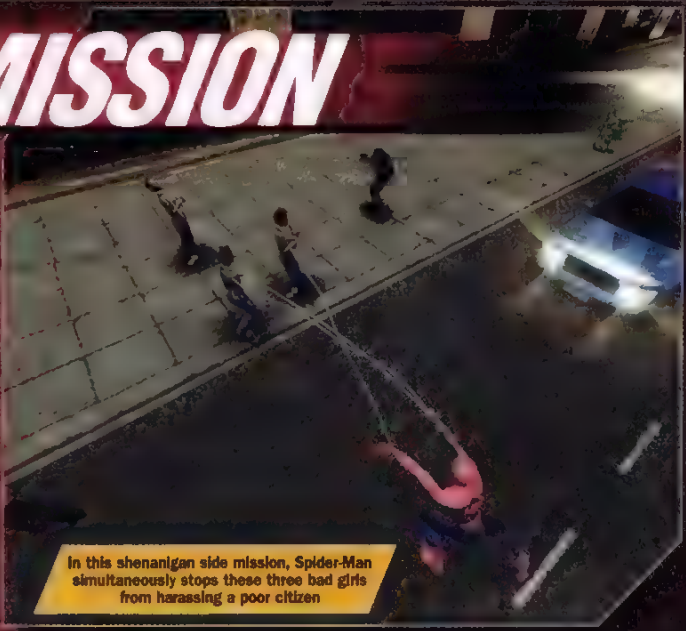


That full moon means there's a lot of crazies out on the streets tonight. Some may debate that you're one of them

In the free-form world of Spider-Man 2, there is a long list of linear missions that follow a course of events inspired by the movie. The majority of these take place in the same cityscape that you can freely explore. To reach them, you'll usually need to swing over to a specific location or chase characters to designated areas. Treyarch wants this part of the game to extend past the 20-hour mark, in terms of gameplay time for the average player.

John Heinecke, Activision's director of global brand marketing, explains why this new direction is so much better, saying, "When you have a linear experience, there's not a lot of reason to go back and play some more." Thus, there are countless other things to do besides the primary missions. A wealth of side quests, currently called "shenanigans," will pop up when Spider-Man is in the relative vicinity. These include saving a construction worker from falling off a ledge, or bringing a sick man to the hospital before his life expires the only way Spidey knows how: by swinging.

Shenanigans are voluntary, and you're only penalized if you try them and fail. Succeed, however, and you'll pick up what Treyarch is referring to as Hero Points. In addition, health or other rewards could come your way. Collect enough of these Hero Points, then visit designated areas around the city to purchase upgrades like better speed, higher jumping, or new skills. The ability to do this is especially helpful if you're struggling with one of the main story's missions, as you can try to upgrade your character before going at it again.



In this shenanigan side mission, Spider-Man simultaneously stops these three bad girls from harassing a poor citizen

### MYSTERIO



Concept art for some of the game's villains

### THE LIZARD



## THE AMAZING SEQUEL, MAN!



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Spider-Man the movie was a runaway success. Actually, it was more like a "sprint to a sports car which speeds you to a waiting space craft that blast off at light speed" success. Previously, comic book-based movies did brisk business. Some, like X-Men and the Batman flicks (before Robin showed his nipples, anyway), were worthy of being called blockbusters. However, only four movies in the history of cinema have grossed more clams, pesos, or jing than Sam Raimi's cinematic extravaganza - and none did it as quickly. Everybody and their Pekinese saw Spider-Man, and they all loved it.

The world is still shrouded in a fog of ignorance about the new Spider-Man motion picture sequel, which may have the words "The Amazing Spider-Man" associated with it. Most of the major players are indeed back. Raimi will once again occupy the director's chair, and he'll be giving orders to Tobey Maguire and Kirsten Dunst - who reclaim their roles as Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson. As far as villains go, the

strongest rumors say Dr. Otto Octavius - better known as Dr. Octopus - will be the head bad guy. There is also talk that a character called Curt Connors will show up. In Spidey lore, he eventually turns into Lizard (a possible game boss).

The motion picture is months into filming, and releases July 2, 2004, with the game coming out around the same time. There hasn't been too much communication between Activision and Sony Pictures yet for this sequel, but John Heinecke tells us that the company will be receiving full cooperation from the moviemaker. He comments, "They're more than willing to do extra stuff for us this time, because they realize the impact. They're sharing looks and set visits, and they're trying to get us assets and talent. They realize that that's going to help us sell more copies of the game in the long run and make a better game, too. There's a lot of good that came out of the success of the first one. I think Sony's really looking forward to helping us on the second one."



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PRO SKATER IS DEAD!

COVER STORY II

LONG LIVE THUG!



# TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

The Pro Skater series, which started in 1999 on the PSone, has created a tremendous tradition in an unbelievably short time.

Each successor has ushered in a staggering new level of gameplay, and increased the series' legion of fans. Pro Skater has become a must-buy title year in and year out: You knew Activision and Neversoft would release a Tony Hawk sequel, you knew it would kick serious behind, and you knew you had to have it. Thus, it was kind of surprising to hear producer Scott Pease tell us, "The game has always been called Tony Hawk's Pro Skater. It's always had a roster of between eight and 15 pro skaters in the game, and we've always tried to design the goals around those pro skaters. But, after four years, we're just kind of getting tired of that formula, and we want to mix it up."

The saying goes, "All good things must come to an end." Still, we didn't expect it to happen so soon. The series that made the video game world fall head-over-heels in love with skateboarding (and extreme sports as a whole) has left us. It has ceased to exist. From out of its ashes rises Tony Hawk's Underground (THUG). You may be skeptical. You may be wondering if we've bailed on the halfpipe one too many times without a helmet on. You ask, "It's a skateboard game, right?" And it is. You ask, "Well, Tony Hawk is in it, isn't he?" And he is. Here's the twist: Tony Hawk isn't the star of this game. You are.

■ FORMAT PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE ■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS (ONLINE TBA)  
■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION 02 ■ DEVELOPER NEVERSOFT ■ RELEASE FALL



# SKATING FROM SCRATCH

**T**he Pro Skater games were always built around their superstars, and Neversoft did everything it could to facilitate that. Recording voiceovers and giving input on special tricks and outfits always kept the skaters close to the games' development. However, as Pease reasons, "There are just certain things you can't do when you're playing as Tony Hawk, that you can do when you're a kid growing up." Hence, Underground embraces a totally new philosophy. Instead of being an established skate veteran tricking around and completing random tasks in unrelated environments, you're a created player working his or her way up the ranks. This isn't a new idea for the company. Pease reveals, "It's something we've always wanted to do since [the first] Tony Hawk. [Gamers] want to live the life of a pro skater. They want to get sponsored, they want to rise through the ranks and experience what it's like."

Joel Jewett, Neversoft's outspoken president, explains, "We basically chucked Career mode, and now we've got Story mode." The company interviewed a bevy of actual pros, absorbing the tales on how they got to where they are today. These stories helped piece together a detailed storyline, complete with a lengthy script and dramatic cutscenes. This game is all about you and your exploits.

Jewett breaks down a real pro's progression, saying, "There's no definitive set of rules on how someone becomes a pro skater. You get a little bit of guidance from your company about when you should be pro and when would be the best time to unveil you. Then, you kind of escalate from there. You might have a board sponsorship before you're pro, and get a shoe sponsorship after you're pro. When you're on one of the

company teams, you get a salary. From there, you get to the level of Tony Hawk."

Slow down those dreams of stardom, tiger. Before the fortune and fame, you've got to start at the bottom. That bottom is called New Jersey, the first level in the game. It's a typical neighborhood with its share of familiar locations (school, skate shop) and local color (cops, gangs). So, why choose Jersey, the state with the highest pedestrian death rate in the country? Pease answers, "To me, it's kind of symbolic of the whole underground thing. I think that this time we are really going to stick to – thematically – this whole underground skate culture. We wanted to take it back to the street."

Due to its storyline-based nature, the game's missions will tie together, and make sense in the context of the plot. Likewise, the people dishing out your goals aren't random passersby. The cutscenes will keep the story's flow going, as well – and having you as the main character will increase the emotional attachment between player and onscreen alter-ego. Pease summarizes, "This time, our goal has been to make the players really feel like they're living this experience."

Short-term goals include helping the police so they can remove a barnacle blocking off half of the level; plastering flyers around town for the skate shop; and stealing a car to chase some rogue SUVs around the block. Yes, you read that right: stealing a car (if you don't believe us, look at the screen shot, genius). Are you starting to see why Neversoft took Tony out of the starring role? The car, a Trans Am-esque junker, is just one of several alternate modes of transportation. Pease comments, "Having vehicles stems from the fact that we've had race goals, but racing on your skateboard doesn't work the best. We're



**"We wanted to take it back to the street."**

**SCOTT PEASE,  
THUG'S PRODUCER**

making new goals and vehicles so that it makes sense to change up the physics a bit."

In the long-term, you want to be the best, most successful skater possible. Neversoft won't say where this trek will take you, but mentions it will make sense within the confines of the skating world. Also, unlocking new levels will be used to further the character's story. Complete a certain amount of goals on one level, and a cutscene will play, followed by the opening of a new stage. You may get sent out to some exotic locale for a photo shoot. You may be invited to compete in an important contest. THUG's stages are much bigger than the already-massive environments in THPS 4. They're so large, in fact, that the developer is having a hard time fitting them on the PS2. Jewett isn't worried, however, and tells us, "That's kind of our standard process: Basically push it till it doesn't work, then fix it." The developer is also tooling around with daylight changes and weather effects.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 brought forth a peculiar predicament for Neversoft: The audience is filled with people of varying skill levels – newbies and veterans. Some people thought the game was too hard, while others complained it was too easy. To solve this, THUG is going to offer three varying difficulty levels. Chad Findley, Underground's senior designer, weighs the pros and cons: "It's about three times the work – the balancing work. It'll be totally worth it. [There will be] an easy, entry-level Tony Hawk experience; the standard game; and then a really difficult version for the hardcore veterans that challenges them every step of the way."

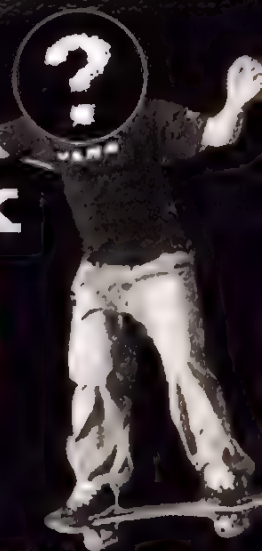


Cutscenes put you in the game – quite literally. This is one of the first, where you're just starting out on your shoddy board



Obviously, things like stealing cars wouldn't be possible in Pro Skater. But, since THUG stars you, it's one of the missions (ya punk!)

# Without Tony Hawk games...

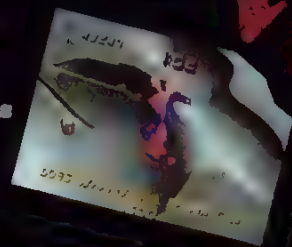


We wouldn't spend so much time staring at staircases and railings in real life

We wouldn't know the joy of saving our butts from bad runs with a quick reset. Start, Down, X!

People wouldn't care so much about having wicked in-game soundtracks (I'm the Ambassador of Kick-Your-Assador)

We'd never know what Spider-Man looked like on a skateboard (he was hidden in Tony 2)



We couldn't use the word "Stalefish" in everyday conversations (ex. "I pulled a perfect stalefish at Burnside, yo.")

We wouldn't care about empty swimming pools

There wouldn't be a game featuring Jango Fett that's worth playing (he was hidden in Tony 4)



The d-pad on next-gen controllers would be useless



# MAKE THE NEW YOU



On this screen, you mark where the eyes, nose, and lips are

**T**ony Hawk's Underground features a create-a-skater mode that's much improved over any found in the Pro Skater series. The options are nearly endless, and you'll be able to craft a likeness of yourself with ease. For those playing the game on PlayStation 2, things are infinitely more exciting than that. We'll let Pease give you the good news: "We're trying to actually make it so you could take a digital photo of yourself, get it into the PS2, put it on your character, and have that be your character."

This is definitely a first for console games. Monster Rancher 3 gave the option to place a picture of the player on a flat surface above your creature's head, but THUG literally makes you the main character. How does it work? First, you upload a digital photo to Neversoft. Its automated system magically converts

it into a file that is understood by your PS2. In the game, you merely go to the "Get New Face Map" option, enter your user name and password, and the PS2 will download the image directly into the game. From there, you plot points that represent your eyes, the middle of your nostrils, and your face – and you're set!

At present, there is only one face geometry in place. However, Neversoft promises many more, so you can tweak the character to look just like you. You can even scale geometry to match your slack-jawed overbite or your irregularly large forehead – you freak! These things will bring the realism to a whole new level, though they haven't been implemented yet. The picture of you, or whatever else you decide to map (we got two words for you: boob-face), will then show up in all the cutscenes, complete with expressions and an articulated mouth.



# TONY, WE WERE BORN TO RUN

**E**ach installment of the Pro Skater series introduced a new gameplay mechanic, generally used to keep your combos going even longer. Tony 2 had a Manual that let you keep the points racking up even when you weren't grinding or doing vert tricks. And there was much rejoicing. Tony 3's Revert allowed you to continue combos after a trick on a ramp, and the Revert to Manual maneuver became second nature – causing point totals to skyrocket. Tony 3's expanded flatland

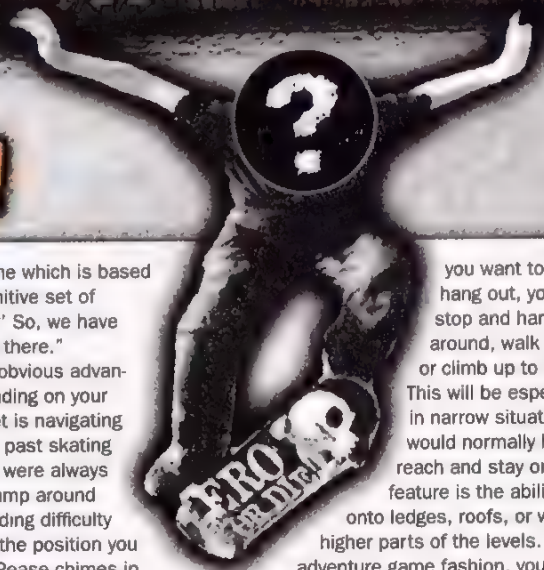
system also made Manuals more fun. The Spine Transfer in Tony 4 let you leave the confines of your ramp, bringing variety to your lines. It also had a Recovery move to save you from crashing on ill-conceived maneuvers.

Tony Hawk's Underground takes the board right out from under your skater with the ability to walk and run. Jewett comments, "[Getting off the board] comes a lot from real-life skateboarding. You don't skateboard everywhere. That's always been out there. The question for us has been, 'How do we integrate that

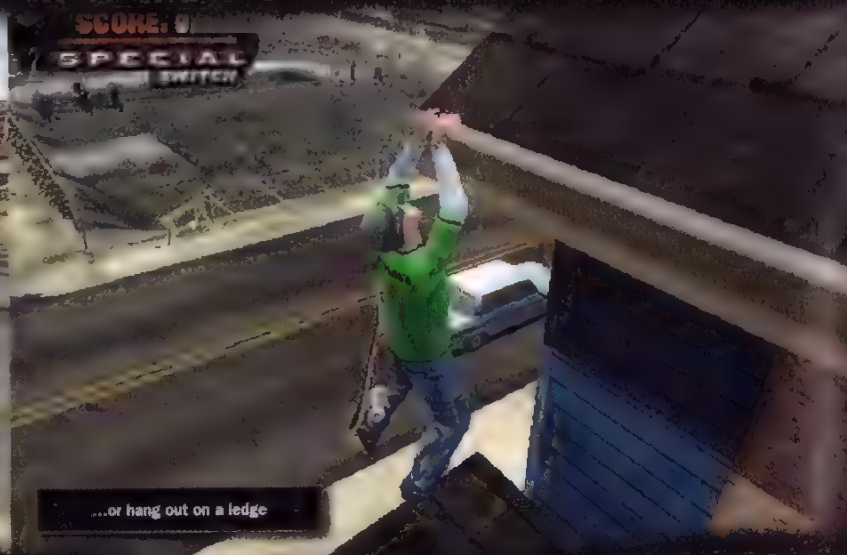
into our game which is based on this definitive set of mechanics?' So, we have some ideas there."

The most obvious advantage to standing on your own two feet is navigating the level. In past skating games, you were always forced to bump around clumsily, finding difficulty in reaching the position you wanted to. Pease chimes in, "There's the convenience factor. If

you want to just stop and hang out, you can just stop and hang out; walk around, walk up stairs, or climb up to rooftops." This will be especially helpful in narrow situations that would normally be a pain to reach and stay on. An added feature is the ability to grab onto ledges, roofs, or wires to reach higher parts of the levels. In action/adventure game fashion, you can even shimmy sideways while hanging.



Stroll around and stretch your legs...



...or hang out on a ledge



The face then gets mapped onto a generic frame, like so. Neversoft is working to make it possible to tweak the geometry of the face many different ways



It's tough to tell, but the same face map is used on this skater



**"We're just trying to give people value for their money. Just look at all you can do if you spend your money on this one; it'll last a long time."**

**JOEL JEWETT**  
PRESIDENT OF NEVERSOFT

Tony Hawk games are played for points, though, so you want to know how this affects your combo-string potential, right? Well, that aspect is still being ironed out. Still, just imagine doing a grind, jumping off the rail, landing on your feet, running up some stairs and leaping off them, ending up in a Manual. It's also great for times when you're kind of stuck, and can only do a few stationary Manual-Kickflip sequences to keep your combo alive (you know you've been there more times than you

can count). Now, you can just get up and book it to a better area to continue your line. "We don't want to turn it into a running game, obviously," says Pease. "But at the same time, there are some really cool skate tricks that build off of old-school stuff: running up to a rail and cavemanning into it." Cavemanning, for skate newbies, means placing the board under your feet – in midair – to transition into a grind.

The team is debating how to actually handle running for combo purposes.

One school of thought is to have it be a "gimme" of sorts that you can use once in a combo. Having a timer on it is another option Neversoft has pondered. Pease explains the team's testing philosophy, "We think about how it should be, so we put it in and just test the hell out of it – make sure it's cool. If it doesn't work, we try it again and again and again until we get it right."

The control mechanic for getting off your board is also being considered. When we played it (which could be

changed in the final version), you would hit L1 and R1 simultaneously at any time to hop off your primitive vehicle and walk around. A tap of the jump button lets you do just that, while holding it down makes you pick up the pace to a run. Once you execute a normal skate trick, you'll hop back on the board and move on. No matter what the final result is, it's going to be a damn fine addition to the skating arsenal, and our gaming will never be the same.



We wonder if there will be jump-specific gaps



Leap from rooftop to rooftop to find new areas

# A DEVELOPER IS YOU!

The guys at Neversoft have been making skateboard games for a while now. You think it's easy, tough guy? They're going to give you a chance to back up your smack-talk by challenging you to customize and create nearly everything in THUG. Not only can you make your own park to skate in; you can set your own goals in it, create tricks, and eventually design a skateboard to ride. Joel Jewett, Neversoft's mild-mannered head cheese, puts it plainly, "We're just trying to give people value for their money. Just look at all you can do if you spend your money on this one; it'll last a long time."

## CREATE-A-TRICK

Letting players craft a move from scratch is something video games have yet to do well. It either just blows (see Create-A-Dunk in NBA ShootOut and WWE SmackDown's Create-A-Taunt), or it's overly complicated (see Fighter Maker 2's move editor). Of course, adversity has never stopped Neversoft before. Underground's Create-A-Trick mode blends intricacy with ease of use. It allows you to make as complicated, outrageous a vert trick as your mind can fathom, and then attach it to your character's trick list. Scott Pease, THUG's producer, gives the reasoning behind the emergence of the mode, saying, "One of the things that we wanted, and that people asked for, is to be able to do a Kickflip Indy or a Kickflip to Melon. Kids always ask

us to put all of those tricks in the game. We would, but we'd run out of memory. So, the Create-A-Trick is a way to create all your favorite tricks that we weren't able to include ourselves."

The mode's interface features a timeline, which you use to plot various animations and actions. These include spin, rotation, and specific tricks. You determine how long you want each action to last, and where in the duration of the trick you want to place it. Pease elaborates, "We've got up to five or six different rotations and five or six animations per move. You don't want it too long, or you won't be able to land it. But, we're trying to make it as customizable as possible." How customizable will it be? We're told that

any animation in the game can be used for this mode, and Neversoft will even include extra poses and body positions expressly for your new maneuvers.

If you're even more ambitious, you can chop up portions of the trick's components, hacking off the front or the end so they flow smoothly into the rest of the new move. Give it a custom name, and you can go into a level to try it on for size. The game will assign a score value to it based on difficulty and required technique. Up to six created tricks can be implemented into your skater's arsenal. If you like it enough to share your pride and joy with the world, you can upload your trick (only on PS2, mind you), to the online vault for all to download and enjoy.

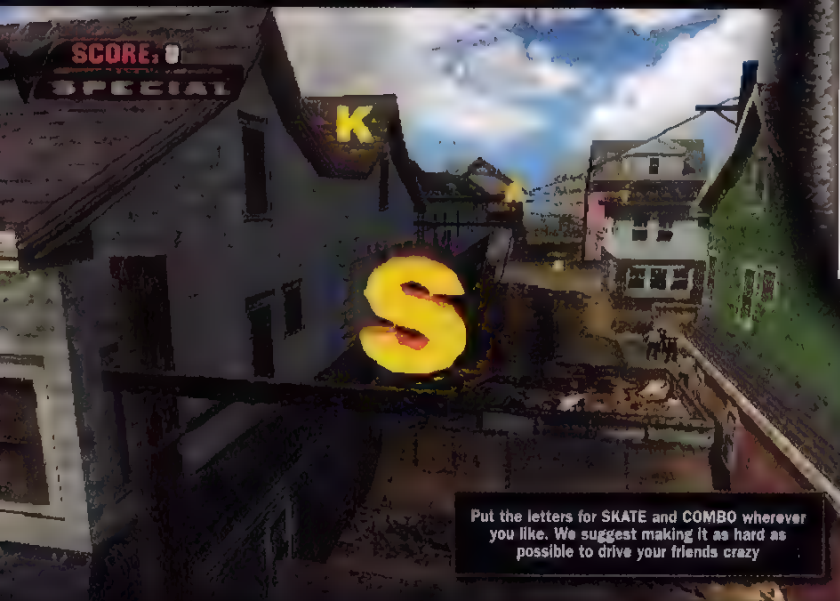




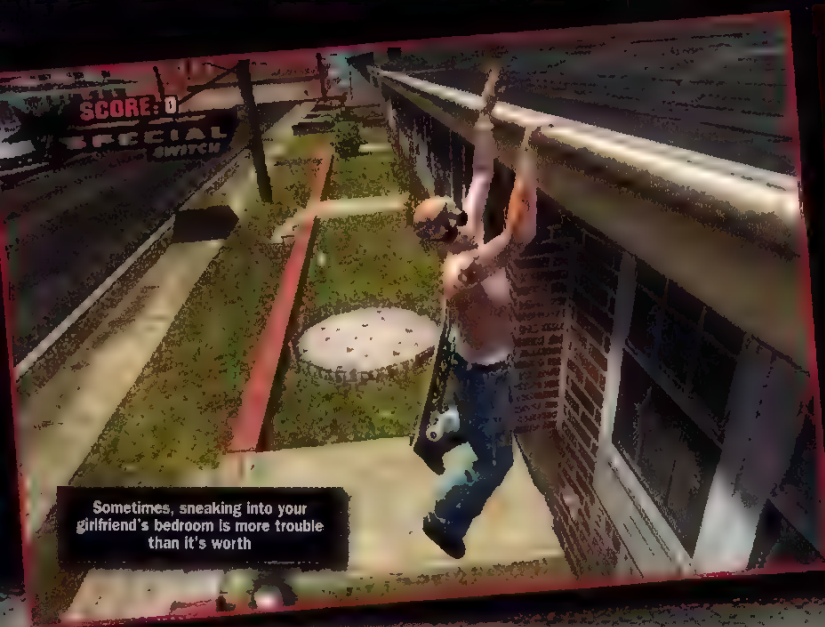


Pick the pedestrian who gives you the created goal; give him a name, a place to stand, and feed him the lines to say

**Violent Lee :**  
Collect the skater letters  
Press X to continue.



Put the letters for SKATE and COMBO wherever you like. We suggest making it as hard as possible to drive your friends crazy



Sometimes, sneaking into your girlfriend's bedroom is more trouble than it's worth

## CREATE-A-PARK

Building a customized park in which to skate is nothing new to Pro Skater fans. Of course, you can download PS2 levels crafted by other gamers online. Each park will take up about 30k on your memory card. With an 8MB card, you can fit around 270 parks. These will be larger than those in Pro Skater – with a cut-and-paste feature to store your parks – in order to facilitate another new mode, Create-A-Goal.

## CREATE-A-GOAL

Everybody has done it: You're playing Tony Hawk, and you see something you think would be fun to do. It's not a mission or anything, but you spend hours on it anyway. Now, you can make those things actual goals. Options for Create-A-Goal mode include SKATE (collecting the letters S-K-A-T-E in random order), COMBO (collecting the letters C-O-M-B-O, in that order, during the same combo), hitting a high score, getting a high-scoring combo, executing certain tricks, collecting stuff, and laying out custom gaps.

Originally, this was going to be just an add-on to the customized parks. Now, however, you can add original goals to every stage in the game! Like Create-A-

Trick, everything's up to you. Pick who you want to give you the mission objective, place him or her where you want, and type out their dialogue. Then, place the skater where he or she will start. The time limit is up to you. Of course, placing the letters in SKATE and COMBO are your decision as well.

The developers are going to get you started by adding around 10 prefabricated goals to the levels. That's aside from the normal Story Mode missions, of course. It's like having a whole secondary game included, and you can even use the original pros to boot! Do we need to tell you that you can upload/download your created goals online for PS2? We didn't think so.

## CREATE-A-BOARD

This isn't a standalone feature so much as a neat addition to Story mode. When you've secured a deck sponsorship, you're prompted to design your own model. Pease lays out the idea, "Since a paint program might be kind of tedious, we're going to have a whole slew of graphical elements that you layer and mix together, and color and combine. You can create a new deck and then skate with it." Jewett seconds the decision, adding, "If I had to draw my own stuff, it would look pretty damn bad."



## Why PS2 Gets All The Internet Fun

Xbox and GameCube owners may have noticed that, whenever we talk about online content in Tony Hawk's Underground, we only refer to PlayStation 2. That's because Activision and Neversoft are once again making their skateboard game only available for PS2 online play. At least you can take consolation in the fact that these things can be stored and traded on memory cards. Before you grumble and groan, listen to the reasoning. Microsoft keeps a tight grip on Xbox Live content. It would insist on overseeing and approving every item that gets downloaded to someone's memory card or uploaded to the servers. That includes face maps, created goals, skate parks, etc. If that were to happen, it would take an extremely long time for those things to become available. As Sony takes a more hands-off approach with its online dealings; all of the levels, faces, and other goodies can be posted and available at lightning speed – not to mention being as nasty as you want them to be. The automated system means nobody will be spying on or scrutinizing your submissions. Neversoft president Joel Jewett jokes, "We don't want to know what you're putting up there."





# SPHINX

## AND THE SHADOW OF SET

### The Unraveling of THQ's Riddle

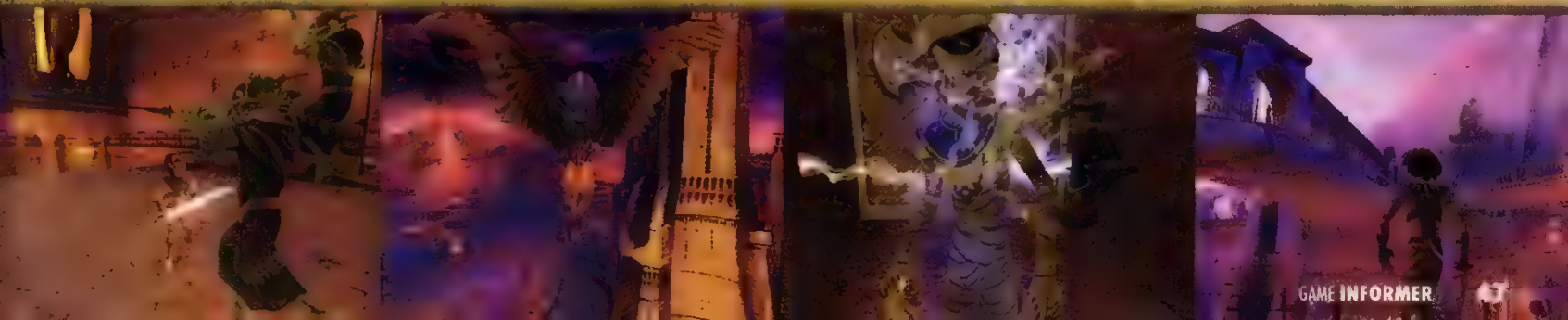
"Sphinx is kind of like a retelling of Egyptian history," says the game's producer Rob Loftus. "It's like, 'Well this could have happened, here it is.' Why is there this big Sphinx in the desert? What's the story behind that? Well, this could be it." Given the already rich history of ancient Egypt, Sphinx's use of this source material produces an almost endless well of inspiration from which to draw upon and play with. How limitless? Try interplanetary travel, the resurrection of King Tutankhamen, and the wrath of the sun god Ra. From which history book did developer Eurocom get these outlandish tales?

These fantastic elements are a good beginning for the title; but unfortunately, the boundaries of video game genres and technology still stand in the way. While filling in the gaps of history is no

easy task for the imagination; providing a solid, yet intriguing, structure for the player is even harder. Dual protagonists; large, puzzle-laden environments; and character morphing are nothing new to gamers these days, and it is becoming harder than ever to capture the attention of a public spoiled for choice – especially when you're dealing with this genre.

Interestingly, to create a compelling video game experience, Eurocom has chosen not to start at the end and add layers of gameplay upon what we already take for granted within an action/puzzle title, but to instead concentrate on perfecting the conventions of the genre above all else. This is not easy work, and it entails starting at the beginning – an origin that goes back thousands of years.

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2/GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** EUROCOM ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER





Here we see a perfect balance of Sphinx's combat and problem solving components



The game possesses a very fluid combat system centered on the three-hit combo

**Shrouded in mystery** and clouded by the literal and figurative sands of time, ancient Egypt is almost more intriguing for the questions it raises, rather than what we actually know about it. What secrets of the afterlife did the Egyptians possess? How could such a great empire fall? How did an ancient civilization get the engineering knowledge to build extraordinary structures like the Great Pyramids? Sphinx endeavors, in its own way, to solve some of these mysteries.

In Eurocom's alternate history, an ancient Egyptian Universal Empire existed which spanned several worlds apart from ours. Transportation devices called Solar Disc portals permitted travel between these kingdoms. Communication and cultural/technological exchange fueled the empire and made it prosper. Unfortunately, this harmony was disrupted, and some worlds became isolated while others struggled to keep in contact. As time went on, memory grew dim, knowledge of the old empire faded, and these civilizations grew to believe that they had existed and evolved in a vacuum. Lately, however, strange occurrences have taken place in the once-connected worlds. The formerly great satellites of the empire have truly fallen. War has torn apart villages, foreign beings have appeared, and there are rumors of a great destructive force laying waste to entire lands. Amid the descending darkness lives hope born from a legend prophesizing that two forces are trying to recapture the kingdom of worlds – one of dark, and the other of light. Where then, is the opposition to this wave of evil?

The game starts out with our hero Sphinx discovering and using one of the Solar Disc portals to travel to the world of Abydos. Here we witness the betrayal and death of King Tutankhamen by the hand of his brother. His body is mummified and entombed in Uruk – a fortress built by the evil god Set. In his design to harness the power of the worlds, Set has constructed the Eye of Ra, a powerful beam that destroys anything in its path. Sphinx learns that, to thwart this evil, he must collect crowns that exist in each of the satellites of the empire. His journey begins at Uruk.

While Sphinx may appear to be a platformer where you collect objects, Eurocom wants nothing of the sort. "We don't want it to feel like a FedEx run, you know?" quips

Loftus. As a man who usually doesn't speak sarcastically or with much exaggeration (he rattles off his producer credits – the Red Faction and Summoner franchises – as if he was telling us what he ate for breakfast), Loftus' comment speaks to this title's core principles. "This is not a platform game," he declares. "There are platform elements, but it's an adventure game. It's designed to feel like there's exploration and you're finding things and solving a puzzle that's all very localized. This way, we can put a lot of detail in the environment immediately, and really make it feel like an exploration and not just running around collecting bolts."

Sphinx aims to combine the visual impact and some of the freedom of a Jak and Daxter or Ratchet & Clank, without overwhelming the player with technology for technology's sake. As such, the game is designed so there is a seamless merging of problem solving and action, with a rhyme and reason for both. States Loftus, "You have to concentrate on your genre and what makes your game really satisfying. In Sphinx, it's the combat and the puzzle solving. So, we need to make that really, really cool to begin with. We have to make the environmental puzzles really cool and punctuate it with all this action. We are going to concentrate on delivering a really good game in this genre first, and then we're going to polish the hell out of it."

**"We don't want it to feel like a FedEx run, you know?"**  
**– Producer Rob Loftus**



Sphinx uses a Legend of Zelda-inspired icon system that is well suited for both characters



This title requires many means to take your journey to its conclusion

**The bridge between** Eurocom's desire to blend environmental problem solving and the action that gamers crave comes down to the title's two characters: Sphinx and the mummy form of King Tut. It may seem forced (yet natural) to give combat to Sphinx and leave the puzzles to the weaker character. However, the developer wants to avoid such an obvious assignment of responsibilities. Thus, not only will both protagonists perform a variety of tasks in the game; they won't be bound to rely on each other to get through a level. Instead, the mummy's adventure will be a separate but ongoing storyline occurring in conjunction with Sphinx's journey. Loftus puts the balance of gameplay among the two to be about 70 percent to 30, with the player controlling Sphinx most of the time. "He's kind of like this outer-world persona. He's not a god per se, but to the people in the world that he's adventuring in, he definitely has these god-like qualities," explains Loftus.

Eurocom has planned for the game to evolve around the burgeoning abilities of Sphinx as he progresses. He first discovers the use of a sword that is formed out of thin air, and soon adds a handy blowgun to his arsenal. Like many elements of this game, there is an instinctual usefulness to this latter weapon. It also serves to activate key switches from a distance in a first-person view. Eventually, an energy shield will become available, as well as the ability to transform into the Sphinx itself – a form known as the Wrath of Ra. This will be used to navigate through some airborne portions of the game. Sphinx's various weapons can be called upon with a handy Legend of Zelda-like mapping system.

The mummy, on the other hand, is the complete opposite of Sphinx – something that the developers always intended, but which became more and more important to take advantage of as the project took shape. Says Loftus, "We always wanted to do sort of two different characters, and when we started putting in some of the mummy's gameplay, we thought, 'This guy's really, really cool, and he's a nice break from Sphinx. His puzzles are completely different.'"

In comedy, you need the outrageous character to balance the straight man. "Whereas Sphinx is the swashbuckling hero," Loftus explains, "the mummy is the frail dead guy. And the cool thing about the mummy is that he's already dead, so we can do lots of cool things to him just to abuse him. That's how his puzzle solving actually works. You literally abuse the poor guy to accomplish your goal. He'll never have a weapon; he's not the kind of guy to fight, he's too frail." Therefore, the former King Tut will do things like split into three different personas, turn into a bat, or electrocute himself, to accomplish his tasks. For example, in one situation, he must turn himself into a slow (but heavy) rock form to depress a certain ground switch. Loftus is quick to remind us, however, of the game's overriding theme of balance. The mummy's segments are much more problem

solving oriented, but account for less of the adventure as a whole. "We didn't want to do too much mummy because [he's] pretty much comic relief. When you think of *Star Wars* and C-3PO and R2-D2, and how they work, they work pretty well as interludes, but then you think of the new *Star Wars* and how they had a lot of Jar Jar Binks in it..."

**"...we can do lots of cool things just to abuse him."**

**– Producer Rob Loftus**



What's with the tail?!

It's for Sphinx's transformation into the Wrath of Ra



The mummy will not only have to dodge these "lasers," but because he's on fire, he'll also have to watch out for the air blasts coming from below which will extinguish him.



Meanwhile, in his 2D form, air gusts will be his nemesis...



...while water puts a damper on this puzzle sequence



King Tut gets abused in life...



...and even more so in death



Eurocom has worked for over two years on this project, including building the game's engine from scratch

**There is nothing** more banal to Eurocom than the notion of the lever. Instead of just pulling one and backtracking to some now-open door, the team has have adopted a more natural structure for Sphinx's puzzles. Nothing exemplifies this like the player's first level with the mummy at Uruk. As he walks into a wide-open chamber, you are confronted with a variety of stimuli: doorways, water pedestals, alcoves high above the player, and much more. It seems overwhelming at first, but that's just what the developer intends. "It's a total teaser concept. We want the player to see all these different places and say, 'Well gosh, how do I get there?' and then have to figure something out or master some sort of ability before they can go to some certain spot." For

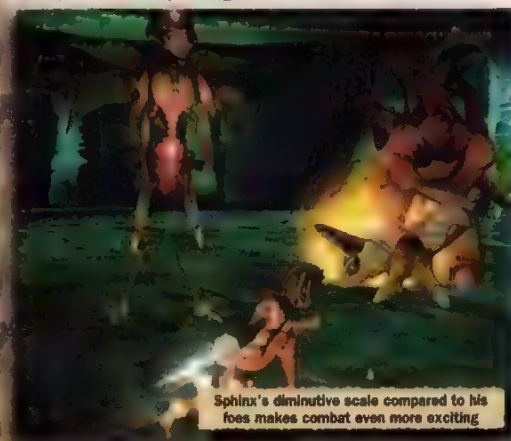
instance, in the course of maneuvering this particular junction, you'll have been set on fire and flattened into a hilarious 2D, paper-thin wafer as you set about solving the room's conundrum — one that also involves travelling to several other areas.

As we watched Loftus tackle the right sequence of events, we were amazed not only by the intricate nature of all of the puzzle's parts, but also by its sheer magnitude. Even for someone who knows what to do already like Loftus, performing the right chain of moves took some time — and that's part of its beauty. Unlike a riddle in the Resident Evil series where you hit some buttons, solving one of Sphinx's conundrums isn't a joyless task. You'll physically enjoy performing the answer as much as you did figuring it out. An example of this (and an instance where the puzzle is more in tune with the environment) is an area we saw where Sphinx had to pull stairwells out of the wall in the correct order, then run and hop across them before they retracted. If you tugged on them out of sequence, you wouldn't have time to cross. If Eurocom has its way, you'll never want to pull another lever in your life.

As a reprieve from Sphinx's riddles, the title has also put together a fairly attractive combat system. The first thing you'll notice is how fluid it is. The team opted not to use a traditional lock-on mechanism. "There is a targeting system, but we don't want you to notice it. We want you to be able to make contact fairly easily," says Loftus. Still, he doesn't believe that Sphinx should be a cakewalk, either. "I don't think the combat should be watered down," he emphasizes. "Look at Zelda [The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker].



Great game, but I don't think I've died once yet. I kind of feel like I'm more challenged by its puzzles than its combat, and in this particular game, we want to challenge the player in battle, too." As with all other aspects of this title, Eurocom stresses that it is trying to harmoniously marry differing concepts into something that the player will feel is natural. For instance, the puzzles are instinctive and organic, but not so frequent as to crowd out the fluid combat. Perhaps a good example of this philosophy is the game's boss battles. Loftus wouldn't give away any secrets, but he assured us that the big baddies won't just be "a hack n' slash kind of guy with tons of hit points." Players will often have to use the environment around them to bring down these brutes.



Here, you'll start out by transferring electricity (upper left) to activate a launcher in the center of the room (upper right). The mummy will be launched out of the cobra heads to upper platforms in the room (lower right). These lead to other areas where you'll be set on fire, for example (lower left). Here, you'll find keys, which you bring back to the original room to reconfigure the launcher. Your 2D mummy form will also come in to play later on.



Just as the different gameplay elements of Sphinx are blended well, Eurocom is working to keep the title visually seamless. First off, similar to the aforementioned opening chamber facing the mummy, the developer wants to make sure that the areas you see in the environment are available for exploration. While you won't be able to walk just anywhere, you do get glimpses of things to come. For example, while high atop the fortress of Uruk – a structure akin (visually and mood-wise) to director Peter Jackson's vision of Sauron's menacing tower of Barad-dûr – you can see deep, fiery chasms below you. In a future level, you'll explore those trenches while in your flying Sphinx form.

This kind of vertical design is also repeated in other areas, such as the jungle lands of Sakkara – where treetop huts are littered under the forest canopy. While it would seem more impressive to give the player free reign of such attractive worlds, Loftus doesn't think that being able to go wherever you want is necessarily the best. "I think there really is [a balancing point with having too much freedom]. With a game like Jak and Daxter, you have to give the player that kind of freedom because it's a platform game and you need to run around and collect things all over the place. But, I think you can bite off too much." It will be interesting to see how players respond to the developer's "less is more" attitude. There's definitely a lot to do, but it will be scaled down compared to some of Sony's more sprawling adventures.

That's not to say your adventures in any one particular area won't be lengthy. We've already mentioned some of the mummy's exploits, and Sphinx's sections are no less intense. While at Uruk, we witnessed our hero navigate outside the main tower, as well as explore numerous chambers inside it – all the while battling some of the game's 100-plus enemies. Along the way, you can even pick up a sidequest or two. Sphinx has a multitude of NPCs, and many of them offer diversions. These range from your standard search missions to combat challenges to even minigames.

Amazingly, Eurocom says that there will be no load time to hinder your progress. Loftus explained to us how to get the best of both worlds – quantity and quality: "You can design your levels in a way that

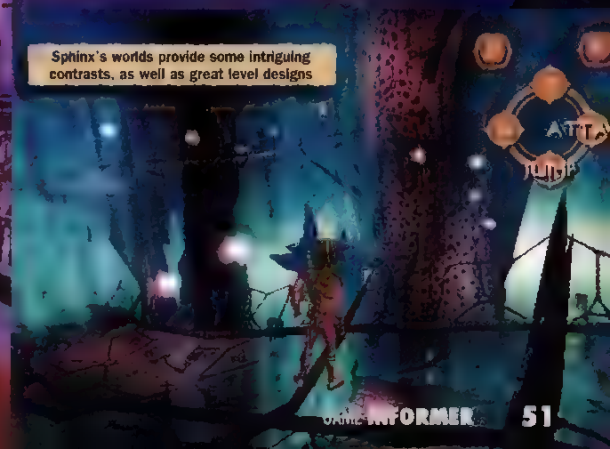
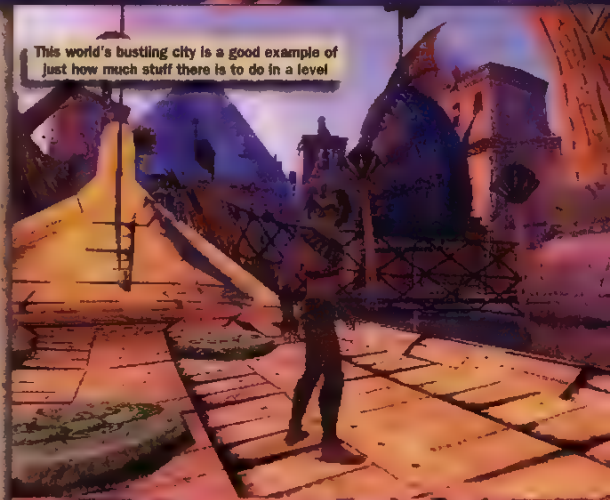
**"We're not afraid to admit that we don't know everything."**

**– Producer Rob Loftus**

you don't have to suffer from [loading]. In this particular engine [designed by Eurocom itself], we can push a lot of polys, so it's a little bit easier, but you do have to pay attention to those things, just so we're rendering as much as we can so we can make the game very detailed. But at the same time, you don't want to have to suffer

from those long pauses." The character models are intricate enough that the developer has no fear of using them in real-time cutscenes, but when Loftus says that the game's engine can push a lot of polys, that's not all that the title achieves visually. Dynamic weather patterns whip overhead, waterfalls cascade in the background, and particles dance off of Sphinx's glowing sword in more examples of the developer's constant attention to detail.

These days, in attempting to go forward and push the envelope as far as they can, studios can easily take for granted the groundwork that is necessary to keep gamers having fun in the first place. Eurocom tells us that the title is more than halfway finished, and assured us that a large part of the remainder of the work will be in making sure that all of Sphinx's gameplay elements are in perfect balance. "We're not afraid to admit that we don't know everything," Loftus confesses. That's an admission that some developers aren't prepared to make, but it's one that spurs Eurocom toward perfecting their product, and sets Sphinx down the right path.



# RATCHET & CLANK

## GOING COMMANDO



### IT'S LIKE A SEQUEL, BUT WITH NO UNDERPANTS

**I**nsomniac Games shocked the PlayStation 2 gaming community when it unleashed Ratchet & Clank last November. On the surface, it seems obvious that the simple mix of guns and platforming would work so well — it sounds like such a natural fit. In fact, LucasArts and various other developers have tried and failed with the concept numerous times. So Game Informer, like the rest of the industry, was happily surprised when the game actually turned out to be fun.

Its perfect balance of gunplay, exploration, and platforming was perhaps the first real evolution in the genre since Super Mario 64. Yes, that's a bold statement, but we doubt that the genre will ever be the same again. There are now expectations in place — players demand that a platformer offer more than just a series of jumps or coins to collect to be entertaining. You have to be new. You have to innovate, and that's exactly what Insomniac Games is doing with Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando.

Even working within the constraints of a 12-month development cycle, Insomniac Games has chosen to rework the formula and make considerable improvements to the game design. The biggest and boldest change is the expansion of character growth. In fact, it plays such a significant part in this edition that it takes on an almost RPG-like quality.

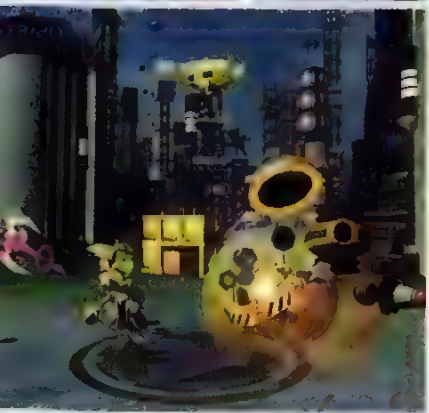
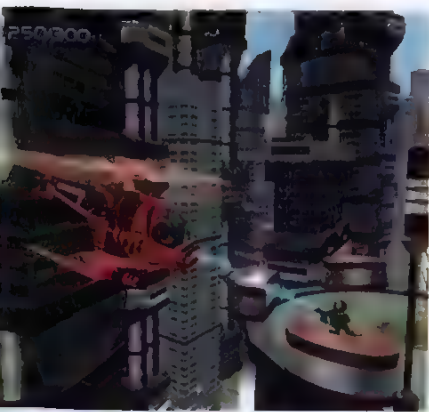
For example, every kill will earn Ratchet experience points. While he has no statistics per se (like a standard RPG), leveling up will increase his hit points. For a little perspective, there was a maximum of eight nanotech (or hit points) that you could collect in the first game. In Going Commando, there will be 80. In addition, the weapons will be upgraded depending on use. So, the Lancer will evolve into the Heavy Lancer, the Mini Turret into the Mega Turret. In fact, 18 of the 19 new weapons in Going Commando will offer enhancements to add power, functionality, or both. On top of all these upgrades, there will also be five suits of advanced armor that Ratchet can don to improve his defensive capabilities, plus two upgrades for his wrench.

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




To make sure that the difficulty level remains balanced, the enemies in *Going Commando* have received a similarly exponential increase in both power and ability. They, like Ratchet, will wear new armor sets; and their damage output and hit points have been drastically increased. For example, the strongest (non-boss) enemy in the previous game had about nine hit points. In *Going Commando*, that will be upped to 120 hit points for the toughest adversaries. Plus, some of these super enemies will be able to inflict as much as 35 hit points of damage in a single strike.

As you would suspect, the game will be much more difficult than the first. Ted Price, president and CEO of Insomniac, even goes so far as to state, "The fifth level of *Going Commando* is as hard as the hardest level in *Ratchet & Clank*. Ratchet increases in strength significantly as the game progresses – but so do the enemies." To help counter this new difficulty curve, the player will have a number of new abilities. Most importantly, Ratchet has the ability to lock on to a target and strafe.



*The clever *Going Commando* subtitle is not a reference to the practice of eschewing underpants. It actually refers to the fact that Ratchet will join a commando unit in this adventure*



*Around some of the various planets, there will be new spherical worlds in close proximity – moons, in other words. These areas mix the gameplay from the old Sonic the Hedgehog 3 bonus stage and the super-jump ability from Jak and Daxter. On this particular sphere, the objective is to find and destroy a set number of towers*

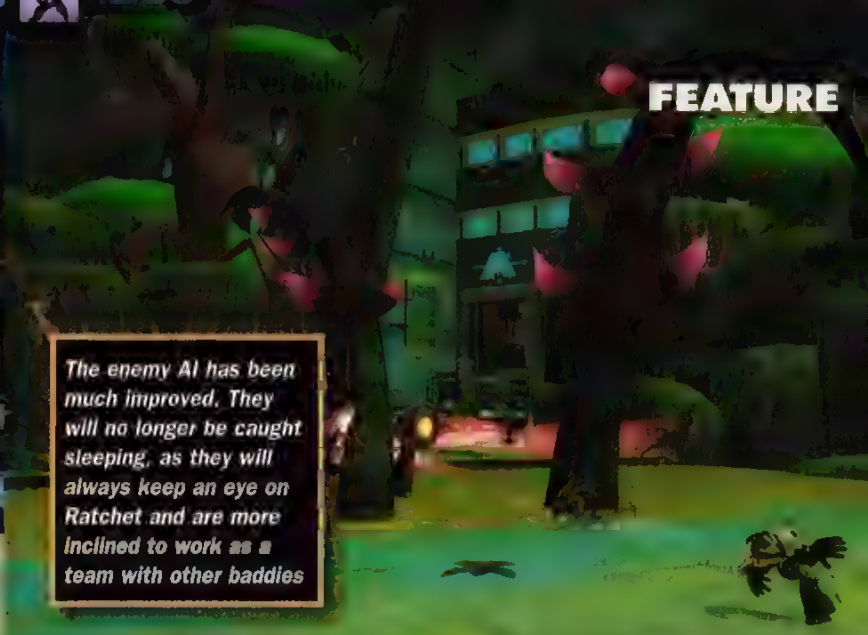


**D**uring a five-world demo that Game Informer had the opportunity to complete, we were very impressed at how much this new lock-on mechanic opened up the game. Taking on four or five enemies in the original could be an annoying affair, often leaving you wrestling with the camera control and unable to shoot the intended target. In *Going Commando*, much of that frustration is gone and the player can concentrate on the important things in the game, like dealing with weapon selection, ammo constraints, and acrobatics.

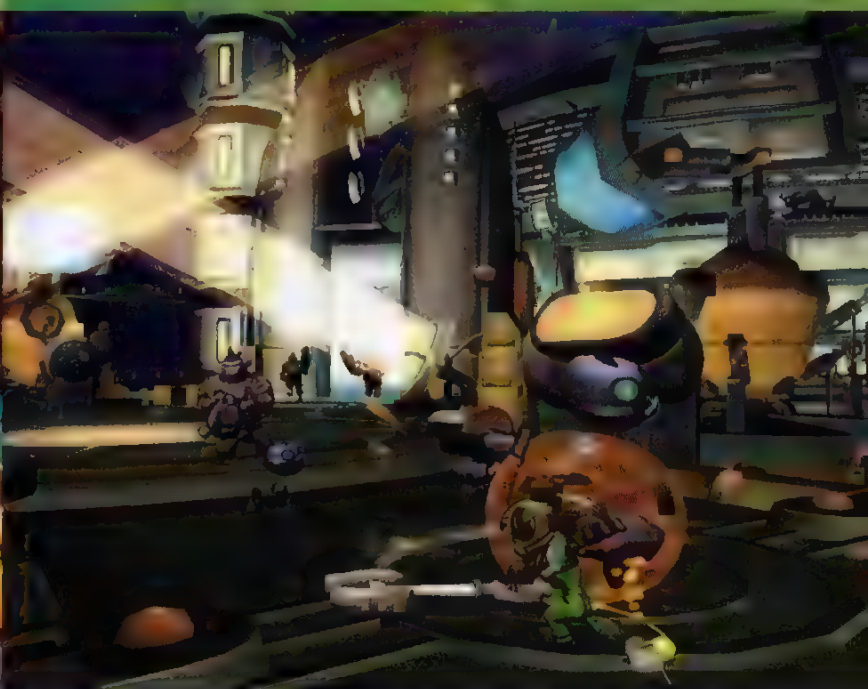
Gadgets and minigames, or as the developer likes to call them "maxi-games," are also a big part of this follow-up. In total, there will be 11 gadgets. While Insomniac was unwilling to give away too much at this time, we did learn that the Slingshot and the Grind Boots will be making a triumphant return. Some of the new gadgets include the Tractor Beam (which enables Ratchet to move blocks, as well as pull and then catapult objects that are held in place by various electrical fields) and the Electro Analyzer (an unlocking device similar to the Trespasser that challenges you to complete various circuits with alternating switches as Qix-like sparks move along the paths).



*Ratchet isn't the only character with new moves. Clank has two new command options – build-bridge and lift – available to him when he is flying solo*



*The enemy AI has been much improved. They will no longer be caught sleeping, as they will always keep an eye on Ratchet and are more inclined to work as a team with other baddies*

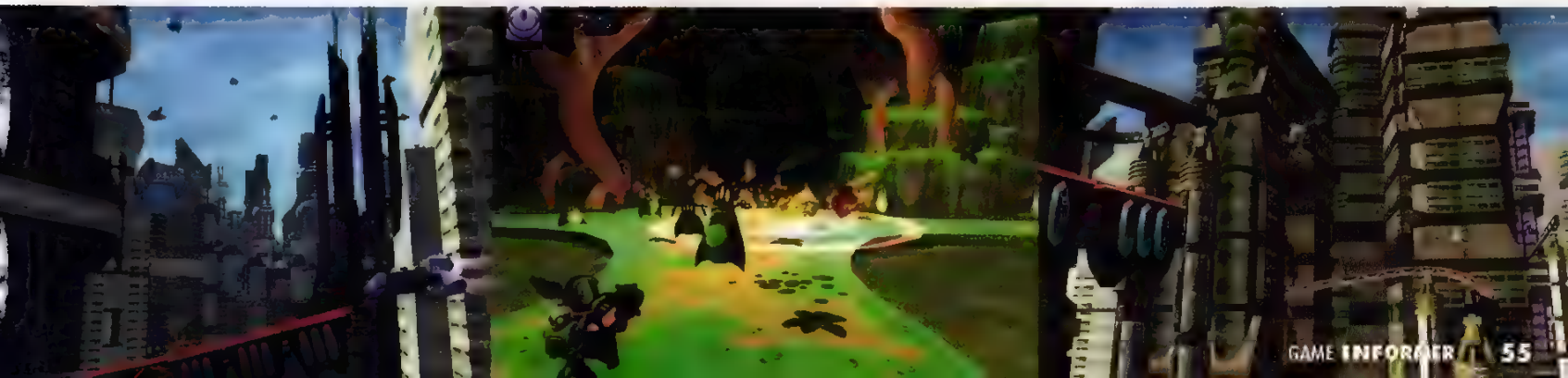


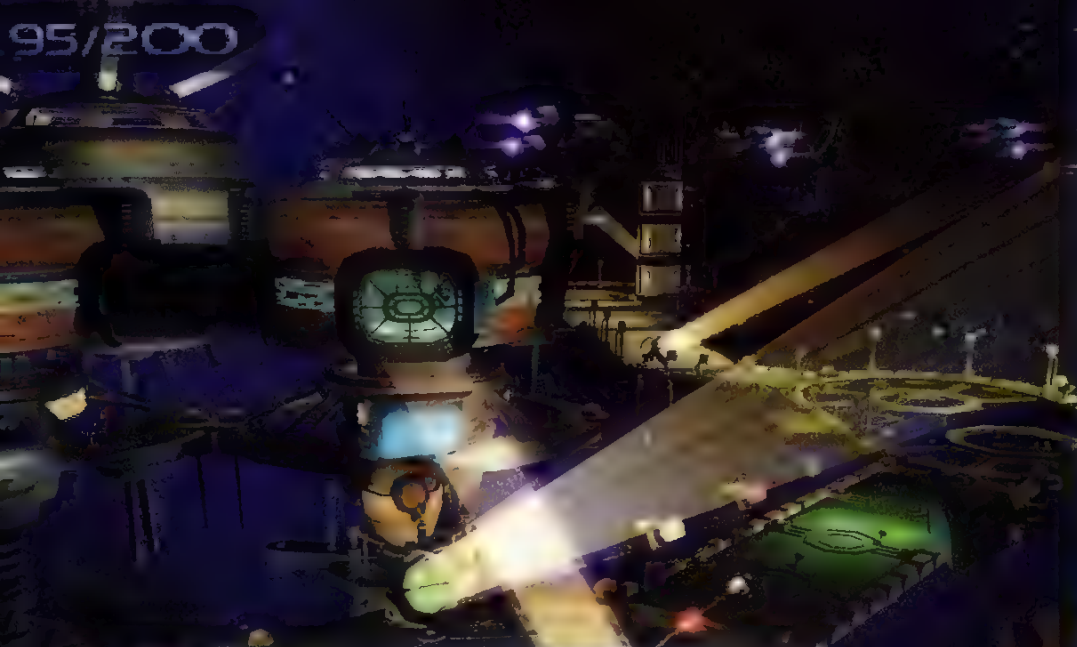
he maxi-games are a nice touch. While we personally dread the return of the space combat portions, this time around you can upgrade your ship with four different weapons. There will also be gladiator challenges that allow Ratchet and Clank to battle a barrage of baddies, à la Robotron. And finally, there is the addition of hoverbike racing that, to our eyes, looks an awful lot like Star Wars: Episode I Racer.

After you complete the game-related objectives, you can head back to any maxi-game and accomplish additional goals for bolts or prizes. For example, in the gladiator arenas, you will take on challenges like killing 30 enemies in 30

seconds, or wiping out every foe using only 200 Heavy Lancer bullets.

As you can see, the game has been reworked on many different levels. The graphics engine now supports larger environments; and many of the graphical touches, like the lighting system, have been overhauled. These visual flourishes should help make Going Commando's story, which finds Ratchet facing off with a new corporate menace on a mission that takes him to over 20 planets across the galaxy, even more compelling. When we add up all the new pieces, we can't help but be excited about this sequel. Filled to the hilt with dynamic new gameplay and weapons, Going Commando will certainly be at the top of our wish list when it releases this upcoming holiday season.





Here is the list of weapons (and their upgraded forms) that we have put together so far: Lancer/Heavy Lancer; Gravity Bomb/Mini Nuke; Chopper (a throwing star)/MultiStar; Blitz Gun/Blitz Cannon; Lava Gun/Meteoroid Gun; and Mini Turret/Mega Turret. Plus, there will be five weapons from the previous game available to players with a completed save from the original



# INSOMNIA! SOUNDS OFF ON GOING COMMANDO!

Game Informer recently had the opportunity to pick the brains of the Ratchet & Clank development staff

**Which of the new weapons and gadgets are your favorites? Also, can you explain the various wrench upgrades that will occur throughout the adventure?**

**LESLEY MATHIESON, DESIGNER:** I'm excited about all the new weapons, so it's a little hard to pick my favorites! There are three that stand out for me, though. The Lava Gun is just fun to use, like a very deadly water gun. I love spraying the lava around and watching it leave small fires and droplets of lava behind. The Mini Nuke is also great. It's very satisfying to just blow away an entire roomful of enemies, and see the mushroom cloud form where they were. My absolute favorite is definitely the Chopper. The glove lets Ratchet throw a bunch of energy-charged throwing stars that can ricochet wildly around the room, taking out the enemies on their second or third bounce. Among the new gadgets, I enjoy powering up machines with the Dynamo – it adds a new spin on some typical action/platforming challenges.

Since the wrench doesn't gain experience the way the rest of your weapons do, but is still one of the most frequently used, we wanted the player to always count on his wrench as a useful backup weapon in a sticky situation. So, there are a few new wrenches that can be found during the course of the game – which are stronger and deadlier than the old wrench. As the enemies ramp up in the amount of damage they can take, the wrench upgrades will allow you to take them down much more efficiently.

**Do you feel the increase in difficulty will frustrate gamers?**

**PETER HASTINGS, GAMEPLAY PROGRAMMER:** Well, the difficulty in Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando is intense, to say the least. Since the player will face off against enemies at the end of the game which are at least a hundred times stronger than the ones in early levels, it's easy to think that novice players will be left in the dust. However, it's in this sort of situation that the massive RPG elements of the game really shine. Players are constantly gaining experience as they play – which translates into upgraded weapons, increased hit points, and stronger armor. So, when players encounter a level that's too tough for them – and believe me, this will happen even to the most hardcore players – they'll be able to go back and work on side-quests. [That will help them] build up an arsenal that will allow them to come back and mop the floor with the enemies that had been kicking their ass before.

**Since Going Commando features many RPG elements, are you concerned that gamers can just "level-up," which might trivialize boss battles and decrease the overall challenge of the game?**

**LESLEY MATHIESON:** I'm not too concerned about that happening, because the game features a balance between those RPG elements and the action elements that the first game had. For example, you might encounter an enemy on a level, or a boss on that same level; but you're still going to have to give some thought as to what weapons you might want to use, or how the boss behaves. If the boss is really tough when you get in close to him, you're going to be looking to your long-range weapons for help, and watching what he does to make sure he

doesn't get in too close to you. So, tactics aren't thrown right out the window just because you have a stronger weapon.

But, if I want to hold off on fighting an enemy so I can level-up my weapon or save up to buy a much stronger one; then so be it. I'm still going to have to fight plenty of other enemies before I'll be able to get something that can really devastate another creature. Any player who's played through so much of the game to make one or two encounters a bit easier should be rewarded by being able to take down that enemy with an upgraded version of their favorite weapon. Once they get past that encounter, though, the enemies will continue to get more difficult; so they're going to find that they'll need to keep playing through more to get the stronger weapons they need to handle the new battles.

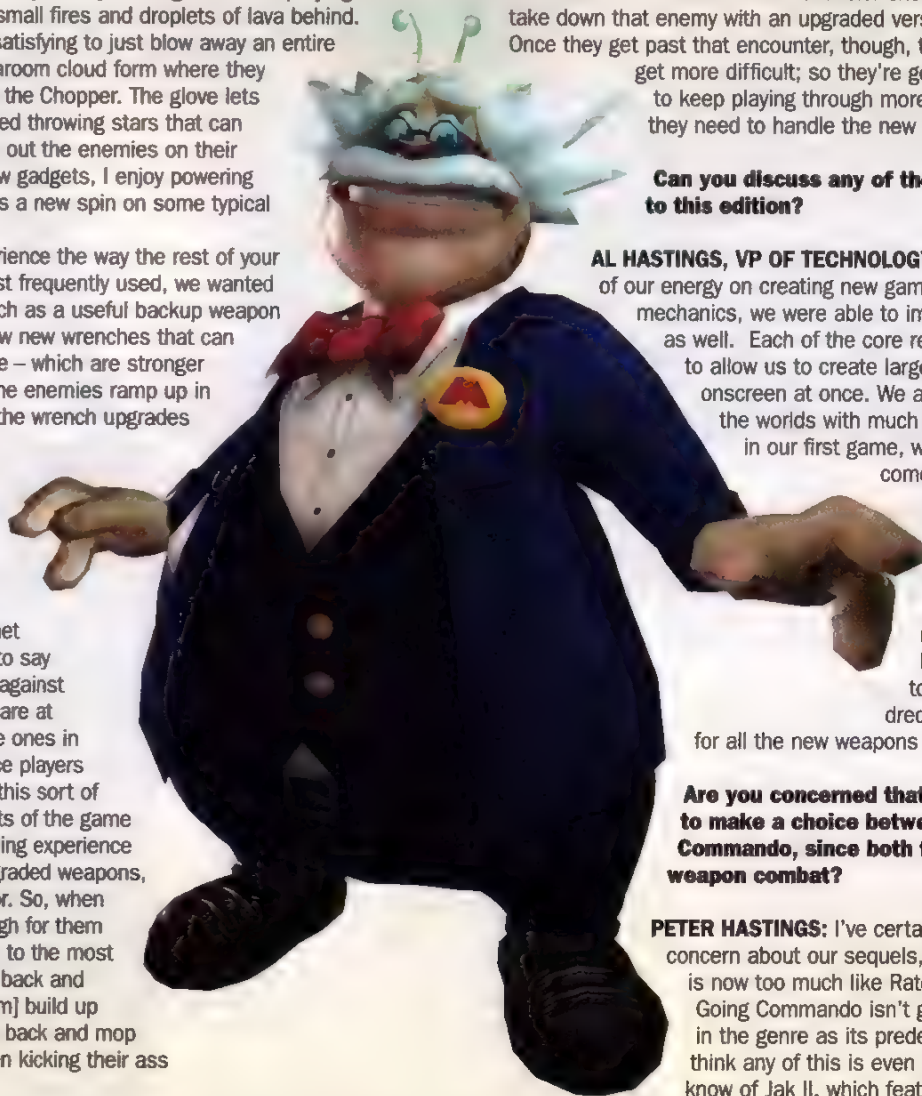
**Can you discuss any of the graphical upgrades made to this edition?**

**AL HASTINGS, VP OF TECHNOLOGY:** Though we focused a lot of our energy on creating new gameplay features and new play mechanics, we were able to improve the graphics quite a bit as well. Each of the core renderers has been optimized to allow us to create larger worlds and to display more onscreen at once. We also have the ability to fill the worlds with much more motion than we could in our first game, which really helps them to come alive. The in-game lighting system has been rewritten from scratch to give us greater control over the lighting effects in a world and more functionality for real-time dynamic lighting. But what we expect players to enjoy the most are the hundreds of unique special effects for all the new weapons and gadgets and enemies.

**Are you concerned that consumers will have to make a choice between Jak II and Going Commando, since both feature platforming and weapon combat?**

**PETER HASTINGS:** I've certainly heard fans voicing concern about our sequels, either saying that Jak II is now too much like Ratchet and Clank, or that Going Commando isn't going to be as revolutionary in the genre as its predecessor was. But, I don't think any of this is even remotely true. From what I know of Jak II, which features an exciting mixture of weapons and hand-to-hand combat moves, I imagine Naughty Dog is looking to mix the platformer and brawler genres. On the other hand, Going Commando is more of a shooter/RPG. While we still plan on having some old-school platform challenges, the real heart of the game is going to be in leveling-up through combat. And with more than 35 weapons and upgrades, various modifications, 11 new gadgets, and a few old favorites from RC 1; Going Commando could easily be as long as a standard RPG for anyone who wants to play to completion.

When people actually have a chance to sit down and play these two games side by side, I'm sure they'll find that each one offers a completely unique experience, and that both of them would belong in any serious gamer's library.



# PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2

## VECTORMAN

### THE ART OF DESTRUCTION

**“When Vectorman first** appeared on the Sega Genesis, many of us here who played that game were completely blown away,” comments Pseudo Interactive’s president and director of technology, David Wu. “It looked completely 3D, the framerate was great, and the animation was so smooth that the whole world felt alive. The gameplay was perfect: control, speed, intensity...everything.” True enough, Vectorman targeted the hardcore gamer through finely honed gameplay, a blistering pace, and state-of-the-art visuals. Even with his awkward limbless appearance, Vectorman became an overnight sensation. Striking while hot, Sega released the sequel a year later in 1996. With an expanded arsenal and a host of new morph transformations, this new Vectorman proved to be more explosive, but oddly, it didn’t sell. The timing was all wrong. Vectorman 2 was crushed at retail by the arrival of new hardware – primarily the PlayStation. With a great start came a sudden finish for Sega’s new-age action star. After the passing of the 16-bit era, Vectorman faded into obscurity.

Following an eight-year hiatus, and through the developmental talents of Pseudo Interactive, Sega is at long last bringing Vectorman back into the gaming fold. “The formula for Vectorman’s success was simple,” Wu illustrates. “Take the top contemporary action genre, distill it down to its core entertainment essence, and then push the experience well beyond its practical limits. With our new Vectorman game, we have taken the same approach. A familiar genre pushed well beyond the limits of 128-bit console technology. It’s worth mentioning that throughout the Vectorman series, the innovative technology has served as a means to an end. The end is a state-of-the-art gameplay experience.”

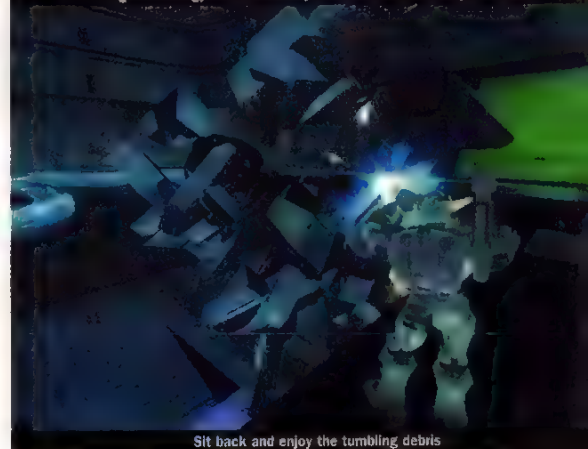
Pseudo Interactive is doing its part on the technological side to match the series’ high benchmarks. In the end, however, this new iteration will be much different than its 16-bit heritage. It’s so different, in fact, that even the title character is unrecognizable. Without the limbless, spherical physique, Vectorman just isn’t himself. Kevin Barrett, Pseudo’s project director, describes exactly why they’ve done away with the ball appearance. “The first iteration of the character was exactly that. We did a fair amount of exploration of the idea of taking the 2D platformer action of the first two games and creating a 3D version of that. In the end, we all decided that we wanted to hit a little bit of a different audience than that game idea was steering us towards. As a result, we’ve ended up with a robot character that has a more conventional construction method...and a visibly meaner disposition.”

The augmentation in character design will definitely take some getting used to, but rest assured, the polygonal surgery that he’s undergone has in no way detracted from his visceral attitude and ability to completely obliterate everything in his path. Through the collective might of 15 weapons and over 25 upgrades, players will be able to decimate everything he or she sees fit...even the environments!

The 16-bit saga combined platforming and high-octane action. This next-generation revival expands upon this incredible gameplay combination and ups the ante with unparalleled levels of destruction. A firm release date hasn’t been set yet, but Sega hopes to release Vectorman sometime in January. Even in the premature stages of development, this game looks superb, and has blown away all of our expectations as to what a next-generation Vectorman should and could be.



A good strategy is to blow away the floor that an enemy occupies

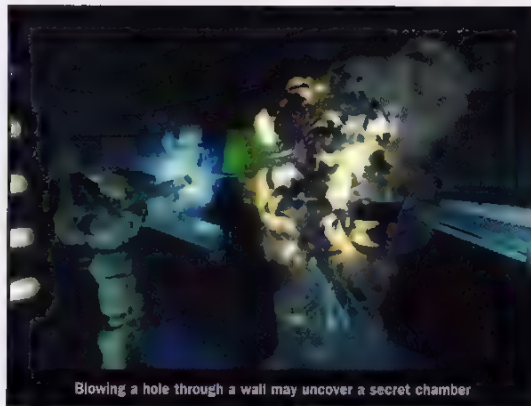


Sit back and enjoy the tumbling debris

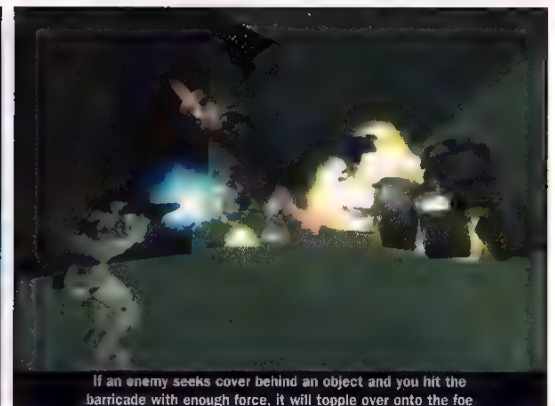
■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SEGA ■ DEVELOPER PSEUDO INTERACTIVE ■ RELEASE JANUARY 2004

**DESTRUCTIBLE ENVIRONMENTS**

Much like the Geo-Mod engine in the Red Faction series, Vectorman features destructible level geometry. Players will be able to tunnel through walls, destroy any structure they see fit, and interact with every object in an environment. Barrett details, "This technology opens up a wide array of emergent behaviors, including AI that blows away your cover and overhanging geometry that you can chunk up and drop on your opponents from above. Revealing hidden movement paths and secret areas is another gameplay use we get out of the engine." Since all of the geometry is laced with realistic physics, debris will avalanche, crushing foes and changing the terrain.



Blowing a hole through a wall may uncover a secret chamber



If an enemy seeks cover behind an object and you hit the barricade with enough force, it will topple over onto the foe



The jetpack boost makes exploration a breeze



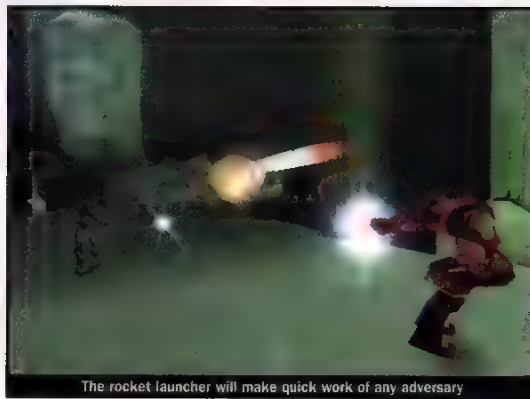
Vectorman can grapple with enemies and toss them

**ROBOTIC MOVES**

Vectorman is equipped with all the moves that you'd expect, including a boost, the ability to strafe, and an energy grapple. "This grapppler can attach itself to certain areas designated in each level," Wu comments. "Once the grapppler is attached, it 'reels' Vectorman into that location, providing a unique way for traversing difficult geometry." With the high level of interaction that Pseudo has installed, players will also pick up and toss foes and rubble from the environments that they've so carelessly destroyed. Of course, Vectorman is equipped with a handful of transformations. At certain points during gameplay, he will be able to transform into a tank and an airplane.

**A VERITABLE WALKING ARSENAL**

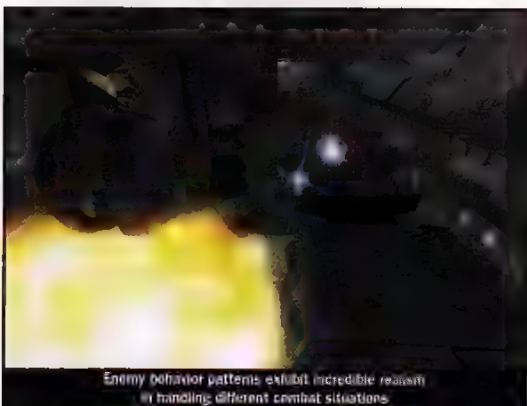
Vectorman will have immediate access to four primary weapon systems. The energy carbine handles standard fire. The missile launcher unloads dumb and guided projectiles. Grenades bring a number of options to the table, including robot-centric effects like magnetism and electro-magnetic pulse. Of course, no arsenal would be complete without a demolition charge that, as one would hope, can be used as a booby trap by detonating it from afar with a sniper shot. "In addition, his energy carbine and missile launcher morph into different weapon forms, as desired by the player," Wu injects. For example, the energy carbine can morph into an incinerator, a scope rifle, and a handful of other forms.



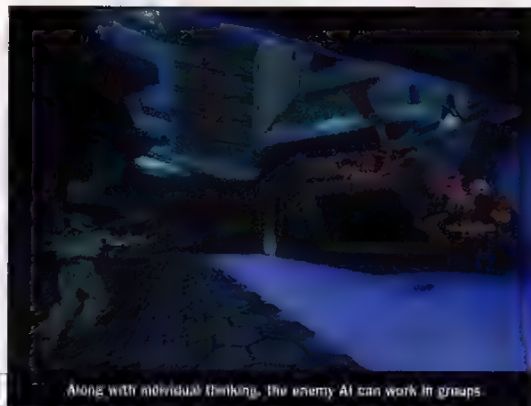
The rocket launcher will make quick work of any adversary



All of Vectorman's weapon systems can be upgraded numerous times



Enemy behavior patterns exhibit incredible realism in handling different combat situations



Along with individual thinking, the enemy AI can work in groups

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The destructible nature of gameplay is undoubtedly impressive, but there's a chance that people will walk away from this game raving about the enemy behaviors as opposed to the cataclysmic effects they brought to each level. Barrett describes, "The enemy AI comes in several flavors, but we've got pack hunters working, along with snipers and other archetypes. In combat, our AI uses combinations of suppressing fire and flanking maneuvers, which give them an eerily realistic behavior. Enemies use cover to their advantage while they reload and seek new hiding places if you happen to destroy their cover." Players will also cross paths with neutral characters who will react accordingly to events, giving each stage an added bit of realism.



XBOX/PC

# SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY

THE NSA IS GOING AFIELD

**The National Security Agency** has been getting a lot of press lately. Splinter Cell put it on the map, and Shadow Ops: Red Mercury will make sure it stays there. Although it's a little-known fact, the NSA is actually three times larger than the entire CIA, so the idea that it runs covert campaigns shouldn't surprise you. To this end, players will take on the role of an elite Delta Force operative who attempts to unravel the mystery of Red Mercury – a secret nuclear accelerant that a Russian double-agent has exposed. The idea is to get to the people who are controlling this potentially lethal substance before they sell it to some brainwashed terrorist who will use it to murder thousands of innocents.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION (PC MULTIPLAYER TBA) ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** ZOMBIE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 2004



Mercury's environments will be a feast for the eyes



It seems the water has taken a direct hit

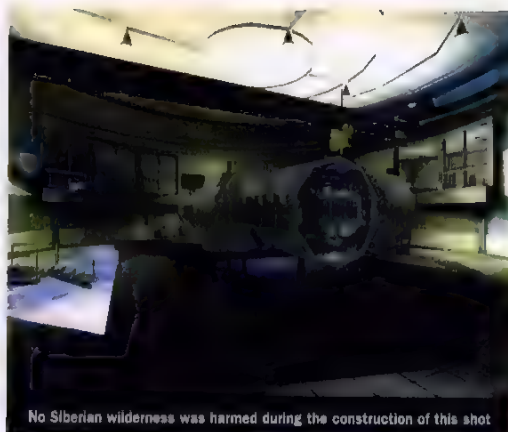


It's like hide-and-go-seek, but with bullets

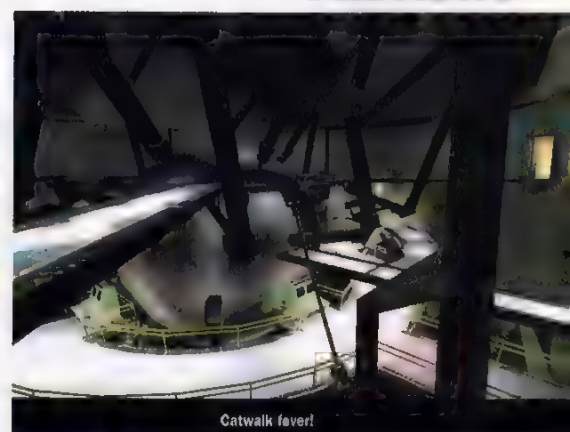




Legendary Russian scientist Sergj Zoltokskl once walked here



No Siberian wilderness was harmed during the construction of this shot



Catwalk fever!

## LOOK AT ME

Using the latest Unreal technology, Zombie Studios will create what are being called "hyper-realistic" environments which will entail Middle Eastern cities and towns; secret military bases in the wintry Russian boondocks; as well as locales in the Philippines, Bosnia, and Western Europe. Your surroundings aren't the only things that will look good, however. Over 20 authentic weapons will be fully modeled, and the Special Forces operatives themselves will be painstakingly represented; each with their own unique gear. For example, although you'll see troopers from the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, France, and Germany; each will have their country's customary look and equipment sets accurately recreated onscreen. Additionally, motion-captured body animations performed by actual Special Forces members will be implemented, along with realistic facial animations.

## GIMME SOME MORE

Today's diverse gaming tasks demand more assorted play modes, and this fact is not lost on Zombie Studios. Not only will there be around 20 single-player missions, but a 16-player Xbox Live option will be at your disposal, which works with the Xbox voice communicator. If that isn't enough, a two to four-player split-screen option will be offered for those of you who would like to go online, but are simply too damned scared to make the leap into the 21st century. Speaking of scary, the sound in this title is going to rock the proverbial casbah. With effects being provided by Soundelux, the Hollywood sound effects studio that worked on *Black Hawk Down*, *Charlie's Angels 2*, and Quentin Tarantino's upcoming *Kill Bill*; every boom and bang will sound like you're actually in the middle of a major conflict, not unlike the University of Minnesota hockey riots. The Dolby 5.1 surround sound support won't hurt your experience, either. Stay tuned for more info on this interesting game in the coming months.



Environmental damage will look excellent



"Dude! Stop, drop, and roll!"



While not hunting down evil, the soldier on the right enjoys decoupage



This Syrian space showcases the game's acute attention to detail





PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/GBA

# TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

THE SECOND GENERATION OF COWABUNGA, DUDE!



**If you've walked** through a toy store lately, the sensation that you've actually traveled 16 years into the past probably hit you over the head like a ton of bricks. As unbelievable as this may seem; toys, comic books, and cartoons based off of '80s properties have become the latest craze. The Transformers, Strawberry Shortcake, G.I. Joe, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and those detestable Care Bears (die Satan spawn!) have all made a remarkable resurgence.

This recent nostalgic kick is also having quite an effect on video games. Takara is currently working on a Transformers game; TDK is taking its best shot of bringing He-Man to the consoles (see page 83); and Konami has snagged the rights to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles license. We can't wait to see how the Transformers and He-Man games fare, but truth be told, our eyes are fixated on what Konami does with the Turtles. Konami was in fact the company responsible for the brilliant Turtle beat-em-ups of yesteryear.

Of greater importance, the producer of this exciting project is Kengo Nakamura. If his name seems familiar, there's good reason. Nakamura was a designer for the very first Gradius. He also had a hand in the creation of Rush'n Attack, Contra, Super Contra, and The Simpsons (arcade), among countless other titles. Although the games are based on the new Fox television series (which is in turn based on the original comic series), nostalgia is imbedded within the

games' coding as several team members who worked on the original TMNT titles are acting as advisors for the new console and handheld games. "They shared their view on what the secret of the success of the old TMNT games really was," Nakamura adds. "At the design stage of the project, we incorporated their feedback and experience and designed new features to make sure these games keep what was fun about the old games, but evolved that for next generation video game systems."

Keeping with the traditional hack n' slash mentality that we know and love, Konami upped the ante significantly. Nakamura comments, "The combat system of this TMNT is a really comprehensive one. I don't think any other action game has a combat system as comprehensive as this. Each of the turtles has completely different motions, not only in the attacks they use but also in their style of walking. We will also have new moves that can be unlocked. Each of the Turtles will improve and learn new moves as the player progresses in Story mode."

This robust combat system also allows players to link together combos from one enemy to the next. The game can also be played cooperatively with a friend, and yes, the two of you will be able to perform team-based combos and special moves. While the game only supports two players, all four turtles will appear onscreen at once. Later in the game, you'll unlock the ability to unleash a devastating attack that

utilizes the collective might of the foursome. The movie-like kung fu fury that this title delivers so effortlessly is spread across 35 stages, some of which consist of over 125 baddies. Many of these levels end with a boss battle.

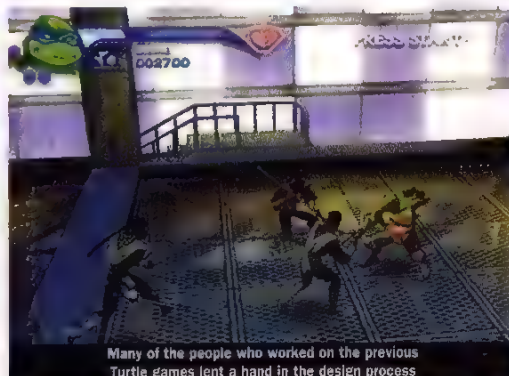
Nakamura elaborates, "In one stage, the turtles encounter a giant mouser in Dr. Stockman's lab. This is an original character that does not appear in the TV show. It literally is a giant mouser! It is three times larger than one of the turtles, heavily armed, and much more intelligent than a regular mouser. It can attack enemies from long range with missiles, and mash and shatter anything that crosses its path."

To tie the game closely to the television show, animated cutscenes will surround each stage. Some of these sequences are taken directly from the show, but others are original scenes created exclusively for the game. All of the voice actors from the show will reprise their roles as well.

The Xbox, GameCube, and PlayStation 2 versions are identical in content, but Nakamura has plans to change this. "We are working right now on some small special features that will be hidden in the games but have nothing to announce at this time. There will be connectivity between the GC version of TMNT and the GBA version. Players of the GBA game will get passwords to unlock hidden elements in the GC game when certain modes are completed."



Each of the turtles have completely different motions, attacks, and styles



Many of the people who worked on the previous Turtle games lent a hand in the design process



In some stages, you may face off against over 125 enemies

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER KONAMI ■ DEVELOPER KONAMI COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT STUDIOS ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 21



PRESS START!



The complex combo system allows for massive enemy-to-enemy strings

Only two players can play, but there are team-based moves in the game that can bring all four turtles onscreen



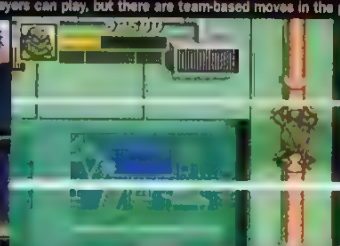
Vehicles are a part of the GBA game



Casey is but one of the familiar bosses



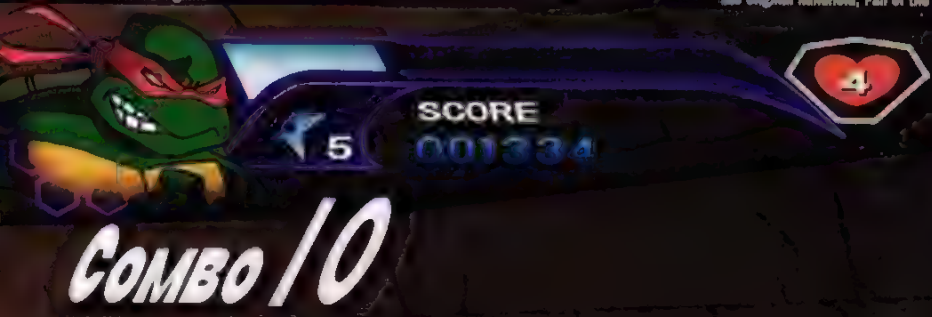
The GBA game will play similarly to the original handheld, Fall of the Foot Clan



Ah yes...it's the old climb on the pole and avoid lasers peril



"Showyu-ken!"



**PRESS START BUTTON!!**

The game consists of over 35 action-packed stages, featuring familiar foes and new adversaries created specifically for the title





PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / GAMECUBE

# SSX 3

## LET'S PUT THE X IN SSX

**SSX has been second only to Tony Hawk's Pro Skater in terms of market share and prestige in the world of extreme sports.**

The original was one of the highlights in an EA-dominated PlayStation 2 launch, and the second (dubbed SSX Tricky) was a solid addition to the series that helped make EA BIG a major part of the company's massive gaming empire.

Ask any game developer who has worked on a long-running franchise, and he or she will tell you just how difficult it is to maintain a sense of momentum from sequel to sequel. Thankfully, the SSX team believes that it can beat the odds by giving the game a fresh new outlook on the snowboarding experience. EA Canada's Larry LaPierre comments, "It's been a real challenge to innovate on all levels for SSX 3 without losing the core experience we love. The new 'whole mountain experience' allows us to do this. It is familiar through the competitions but fresher and more compelling than most sequels."

This new open-ended design philosophy is the hook that EA BIG is banking will make gamers want to strap on their boards for another go 'round. Basically, it will work a bit like Tony Hawk 4, but with more of an emphasis on actual competitions. You'll

have an enormous expanse of mountain terrain to explore and a host of secret routes and areas to unlock during and in-between races. The Big Challenges mode will add even more to the mix, requiring you to perform specific tasks, many of which will unlock new shortcuts in the environments. For example, in the first level, you'll have to grind a series of billboards. After tricking out on the last one, you'll open a hidden route that can be accessed in the races. This constant cause-and-effect relationship will give you more than enough reason to explore every inch of the thousands of virtually rendered acres that have been created for SSX 3.

Of course, the changes don't stop there. The vaunted Uber trick system has also been overhauled. You will now be able, through a new board press move, to string combos (including multiple Uber tricks) together indefinitely. Also, there are new Uber tactics for rail slides and handplants.

Joining the stable of familiar SSX characters will be four new boarders, most notably Viggo (a nutty Swede), Griff (a 12-year-old phenom), and the comely Allegra (a hot chick, not the prescription allergy medication). Other requisite improvements include upgraded snow particle effects and a deeper point system that will allow you not only to customize your boarder, but also level-up abilities and even rename certain peaks that you have conquered ("Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Butt-Face Mountain! Happy boarding!").

SSX's interactive soundtrack has always been one of its strong points, and this should continue with the third edition. Although Mixmaster Mike is no longer involved with the project, the loss of his scratching skills has been overcome by a line-up that packs more star power than in years past. Many big-time artists have already signed on to be a part of SSX 3, including Felix da Housecat, X-Ecutioners, and Queens of the Stone Age.



New particle effects will make the powder look more realistic

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



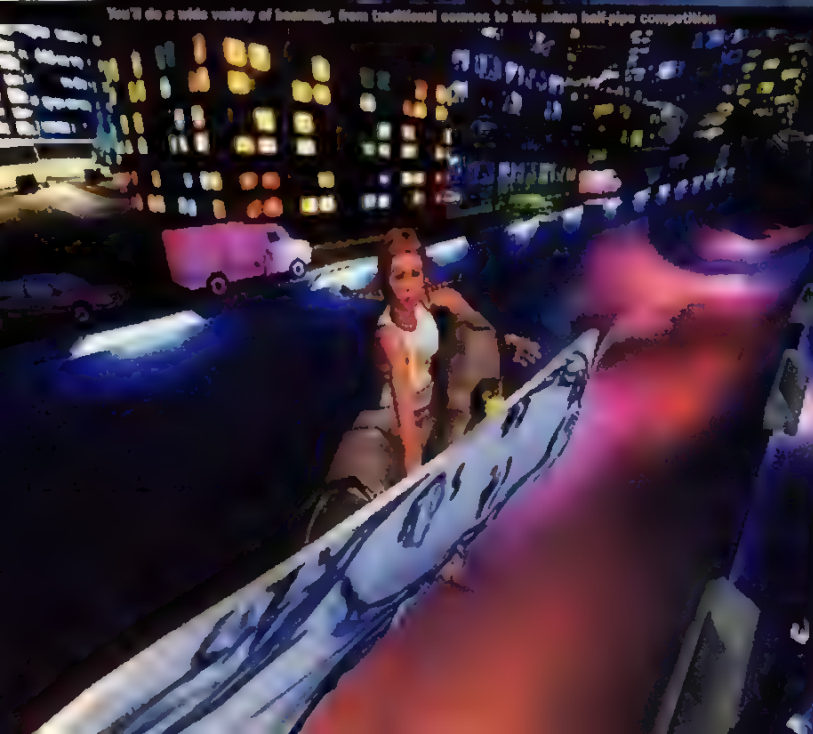
It's never too cold for tight tanktops!



There are a bunch of new tricks available, and Uber moves can now be strung together



This concept art gives us a glimpse of the epic "open mountain" environments EA Big is creating for SSX 3



You'll do a wide variety of boarding, from traditional courses to this urban half-pipe competition



Something tells us this run is a black diamond



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

THE RING IS GETTING HEAVIER



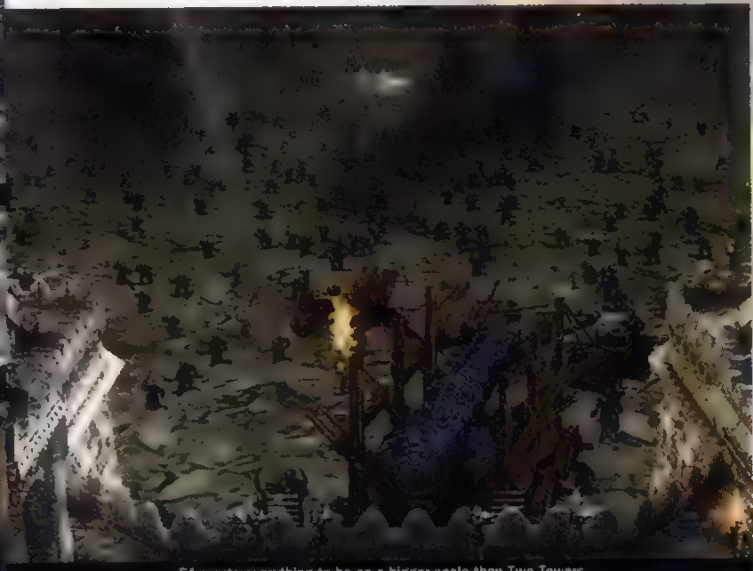
"I twight you Sir Sucksalot"

In the EA offices, there is a series of electronic clocks relentlessly ticking down to various milestone deadlines for this project. Don't worry, no pressure. This game only has to live up to the hype of the final Peter Jackson movie (releasing around Christmas) – a film which will pull out all the stops in an effort to put the word "epic" to shame. Oh yeah, why don't you take the great gameplay and effort poured into your Two Towers vid and leave it in the dust? We see those clocks tick down to the hundredth of a second...

Although it may not appear that time is on the side of the development team, hard work and plenty of good ideas are. This time around, Gandalf, Frodo, Sam, and four secret characters join Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli as playable heroes. Unlike Two Towers, however, the story progression is a lot less rigid. The game presents each storyline as separate, playable arcs. You can master Sam and Frodo's unique adventures and then go back and complete the game through the eyes of Aragorn as he traverses the Paths of the Dead and other completely different situations.



We wouldn't begrudge this old man his walking stick



EA wants everything to be on a bigger scale than Two Towers

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER EA REDWOOD SHORES ■ RELEASE NOVEMBER 4



Although the series' relentless action will remain; Neil Young, executive producer, told us that that's not enough for Return of the King. "It's okay for the player at the end of this level to put down the controller and go, 'Ow, #@%\*, my hand!' I want to retain that. I want people to be thankful that they got to the scoring screen, but I also want to create bigger moments. Two Towers really didn't have moments of the scale that we're driving into Return of the King." We witnessed a scene at Minas Tirith where the fire and ash of Mordor filled the sky and upgraded character models shone with thousands of extra polys and new fighting animations. Young and company have even expanded battles by setting up interactive environments to deepen combat. You can run along, pick up a spear, slay some orcs, then trip a catapult to bring down a wall which gives you access to another area. These new actions, of course, must be skillfully blended in with the player's normal flurry of sword swings – not an easy task.

Return of the King also rights some wrongs from Two Towers. Co-op play has been added, and it's exactly the kind of Gauntlet-style hack-fest that you wished was in the previous title. If you chuckled as Legolas and Gimli traded body counts on the ramparts of Helm's Deep, then this new co-op mode should be right up your alley.

Furthermore, Young has promised us that, unlike the omission from Two Towers of Gandalf's fight with the Balrog Demon, no major battle will be left out. Young wouldn't tell us, for example, if the fight with the Lord of the Nazgul is included – after all, none of the mentioned playable characters in the video game face it in Tolkien's book. Sounds like a job for one of the secret unlockable heroes. Then again, surely no man would dare to take on such a fearsome creature...

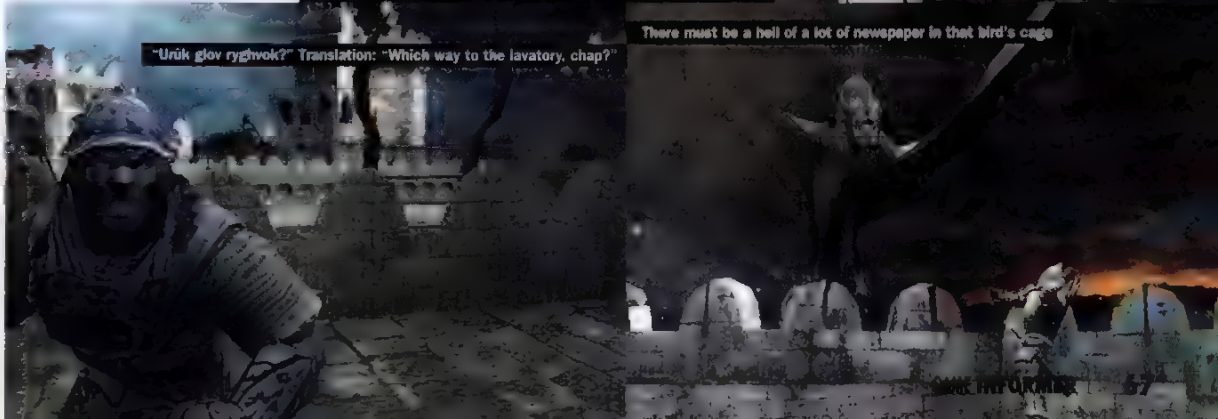
Speaking of his own challenge to produce Return of the King – not only on time, but as an exciting and worthy title – Young says, "I need to make a game that's as rich and impactful as its movie counterpart." The clocks may be ticking for the team, but it's clear that they are already well on their way.

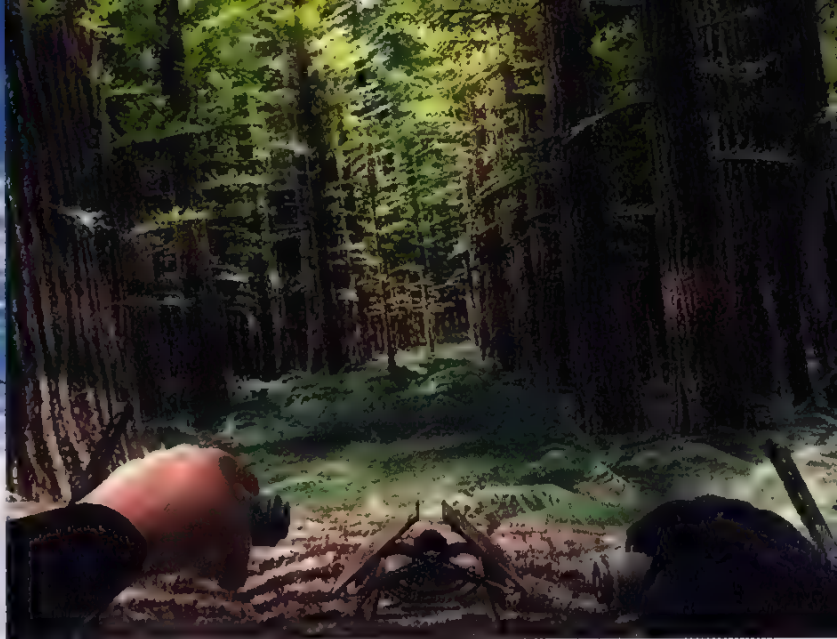
You can replay levels with the characters of your choice



"Urük glov ryzhvok?" Translation: "Which way to the lavatory, chap?"

There must be a hell of a lot of newspaper in that bird's cage





GAMECUBE

# STAR WARS ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE

EXPERIENCE HOTH AGAIN, FOR THE 98,727TH TIME

**GameCube owners looking** for more old-school Star Wars action won't have to wait much longer. Factor 5, the company responsible for bringing the original *Rogue Squadron* to N64 and the sequel to GameCube; is back with a vengeance with its third title, *Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike*. From the looks of it, Factor 5 is cooking up another winner.

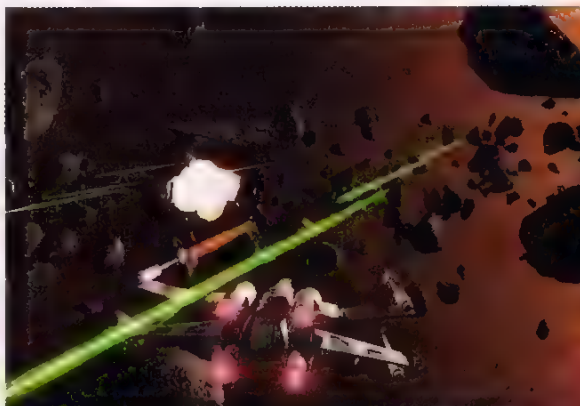
There will be plenty of vehicle-based land and space battles, which will include the usual rebel crafts like the X-Wing, B-Wing, and Y-Wing. Fortunately, Factor 5 will inject a bit of freshness with new crafts such as imperial speeder bikes, AT-STs, and TIE Bombers.

Like *Shadows of the Empire* on N64, *Rebel Strike* will offer third-person missions, utilizing the engine behind *Thornado* – an unreleased title that LucasArts announced in GameCube's infancy. This engine was used previously in *Rogue Leader's* hanger, allowing you to run around and choose your vehicle.

Remember in *Empire Strikes Back* during the Hoth battle when Luke's Snowspeeder gets shot down? Luke cables up the AT-AT, lances open the hatch, and lofts a thermal detonator inside – destroying the AT-AT. You'll be re-creating that very sequence. Presumably, there will be other scenarios that require you to exit your vehicle and wreak havoc with your blaster, or hopefully, a lightsaber.

*Rebel Strike* will also boast various multiplayer modes, the newest of which is a cooperative portion where you will be able to play through the entire original *Rogue Leader* with a partner. Yes, Factor 5 has included all the missions (including secret ones) from the original for two-player split-screen action. If you'd rather vaporize your friends, you can take them on in other modes like Capture the Base (insert "all your base" reference here), endurance, and dog-fighting. Whether Factor 5 will implement the often-rumored GameCube LAN connectivity has not been determined.

Why the Rebel Alliance hasn't been able to get the job done on the ice planet of Hoth in the last 20 Star Wars video games is beyond our comprehension – but we don't care, and we're ready to go back.



For some reason TIE Fighters always follow you into asteroid fields



This has to be Luke, because he looks like a weenie



We're guessing this isn't the lawn service

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER LUCASARTS  
■ DEVELOPER FACTOR 5 ■ RELEASE FALL





This asteroid field gives "rock n' roll" a whole new meaning



Luke suddenly realizes that running away is a good idea



Stormtroopers with guns this big are trying to compensate for specific "inadequacies"



PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / GAMECUBE

## THE ITALIAN JOB

IT'S A SOME SPICY MEATBALL!

**Rockstar enjoyed surprising** success with last year's PSone adaptation of the 1969 Michael Caine caper flick *The Italian Job*. Despite the fact that the platform was on its last legs, the game was actually a hit in both Europe (where the film is regarded as a classic) and in the States. However, Rockstar did not retain the rights to the franchise. This left the door open for Eidos' successful bid to build a game based on the upcoming movie remake – a high-powered Hollywood action flick starring Mark Wahlberg, Edward Norton, Charlize Theron, Donald Sutherland, rapper Mos Def, and Seth "Scott Evil" Green.

The new film shares little with the original, save for the fact that the characters are trying to steal a bunch of gold. The setting has been moved from jolly old England to modern-day Los Angeles; and Caine's urbane, nattily dressed Charlie Croker has morphed into the all-American hunkiness that is The Artist Formerly Known As Marky Mark. From what we hear, the movie is shaping up to be a good, all-out action blockbuster, complete with a ton of fender-mangling car chases that were filmed with real stuntmen and vehicles.

The game aims to create these automotive melees with 16 missions that are drawn from actual locations and plot points of the motion picture. Far from the usual racing fare, *The Italian Job* will have you cruising down

escalators, speeding through subway stations and drainage pipes, and even thundering over a golf course (don't hit Vijay Singh!). To add to the silver-screen magic, Eidos will include numerous full-motion video cutscenes from the movie into the mix, snippets that will serve to both heighten the experience and to advance the game's storyline. Unfortunately, none of the big-time Hollywood types that appear in the movie were available to do voiceovers, due to scheduling difficulties and (presumably) the cost involved with signing them to the project.

Even after you've completely progressed through the plot, you'll be able to take the game's souped-up Mini Coopers (one of the title's 10 vehicles) for a spin on three stunt courses and six unique circuit races. To assure that *The Italian Job* has all of the pinpoint control, extensive vehicle damage, and reflective graphical sheen that racing fans expect; the development is being headed by Climax Studios, an English firm that has enjoyed recent successes such as *ATV Quad Power Racing 2* for Acclaim and Activision's *Rally Fusion: Race of Champions*.

So there you have it, folks: It's a cool-looking game based on a cool movie with a bunch of cool car chases. For fans of recent wild rides like *Stuntman* and *Burnout 2*, *The Italian Job* looks like a sure bet.



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■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS ■ **DEVELOPER** CLIMAX STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER



In your Mini, you'll cause havoc all over Los Angeles

Sometimes, a cute little European car just doesn't cut the mustard

**"One thing in this movie that we don't have a lot of is visual effects. We did 99.9 percent of our stunts...we don't have a lot of CG. We actually tied our actors into the stunts and they did a lot of their own stunts themselves."**

## AN INTERVIEW WITH F. GARY GRAY



After making a name for himself during the west coast hip hop renaissance of the early '90s, directing such classic videos as Ice Cube's "It Was a Good Day," Coolio's "Fantastic Voyage," and TLC's "Waterfalls"; F. Gary Gray moved into the world of feature film directing with the Chris Tucker/Ice Cube stoner classic *Friday*. Recently, GI sat down and talked with the director about his work on *The Italian Job*, his passion for gaming, and the world's coolest Suburban.

**The original *Italian Job* is a bit of a cult classic, especially in England and Europe. How difficult was it to approach doing the remake? Why did you decide to take the setting and characters so far from the original?**

First off, it's more of a homage to the original. The original is definitely a cult classic, and it's something I felt that we should just leave alone. The only real similarity is the fact that we have a gold heist and we create a very large traffic jam in Los Angeles and escape with the Minis.

**Is this a pretty action-oriented, car chase movie? What are some of the sequences you're most proud of?**

One thing in this movie that we don't have a lot of is visual effects. We did 99.9 percent of our stunts. Most everything is real, like the original. We don't have a lot of CG. We actually tied our actors into the stunts and they did a lot of their own stunts themselves. There are similarities to the approach of the original. It's not that I'm not a big fan of visual effects, it's that they've become such a crutch for productions that the audience has become numb to effects. You lessen their involvement because they feel like, "Well, I know that's fake."

**You have a really huge cast in terms of star power – Mark Wahlberg, Edward Norton, Donald Sutherland, Charlize Theron, Mos Def – what was it like working with the cast, and was it difficult to balance so many egos?**

It was amazing working with the cast – it's a cast of pros. That's the one thing that I felt like I could do with this movie. Like you said, the original was kind of mod and eclectic, and I felt my casting choices were progressive. We thought outside the box by coupling Jason Statham [*The Transporter*] with Mos Def and Donald Sutherland. All these people come from different worlds. You have Jason Statham, who comes from the Guy Ritchie world; Mos Def, who comes from the whole Spike Lee world; Donald Sutherland, who's a legend; and [Edward] Norton, who is the actor's actor.

**We've heard that you're a big video game fan...**

Absolutely. I have been playing since I was a kid. I've been playing since Atari. Actually before that, in the Pong days. I'm going to age myself with that one [laughs]. My favorite games from back then were Centipede, Pac-Man, Donkey Kong, Frogger, and that one game where that guy was swinging over alligators...

**Pitfall?**

Yes. Pitfall was cool, and Galaga. I could go on forever, because I love video games from back in the day. That kind of translated to where I am today with my video games. I like them so much I built a PlayStation 2 and an Xbox into my truck.

**That is awesome! What kind of truck do you have?**

I have a Suburban which is a mobile office. I screen my dailies on a big screen TV in the back. I built in a PS2 and Xbox, and when I get some downtime when I'm travelling, I'll play my favorite games. When you're on the road and you're working 17 or 20 hours a day, I would actually play in between scenes if I knew I had a break. I would go up and play a game of Madden or NBA Live or Vice City.

**Have you been checking out the *Italian Job* game? Are you working with them?**

Absolutely. They brought a sample of the game in last week and I played it. It's very cool. It's a car game, a driving game, and it actually follows the story pretty close.



XBOX

# SEGA GT ONLINE

GRAND THEFT AUTO ONLINE

The *Sega GT* series was born in the days of Dreamcast and is the closest anyone's come to actually competing with Sony's *Gran Turismo*: juggernaut in the sim-driving arena. However, now that the next-generation is upon us, the series has slipped to being a poor man's *Turismo*. Luckily, this time around *Sega GT* should hit your online buttons before *Gran Turismo 4* does. Will it be enough?

*Sega* didn't just take *Sega GT 2002* and add online action. Players will be heartened to hear that both the single-player and online portions have new tracks and missions, and you can even upload your save from 2002 into the new title. *GT Online* will feel more like a complete Internet-enabled career mode as you gain licenses and earn scratch for parts. Things get even more involved once you put your money where your mouth is. This game lets you race for parts and even whole cars with online participants – including the full roster of 160 rides. Of course, you'll be hooked up to the Xbox Communicator, so you'll have to do your best to hold back the tears when someone steals your hard-earned pride and joy away from you. Remember, strong men also cry. Strong men also cry.



"Give me back my car, you jerk-off!"



New tracks and more have been added to make this title extra special



This is what you call leading the race from the long way around

*Sega GT 2002*'s classic cars make a return

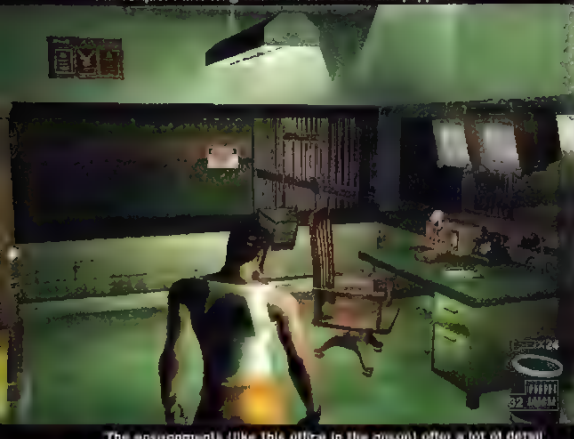
■ STYLE 1 TO 8-PLAYER RACING (VIA ONLINE) ■ PUBLISHER SEGA  
■ DEVELOPER WOW ENTERTAINMENT ■ RELEASE FALL



First-person mode allows for more action in the game



"I'm Torque. I like long walks on the beach and puppies."



The environments (like this office in the prison) offer a lot of detail

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

# THE SUFFERING

## TWISTED METTLE

**You're on death row.** Why are you on death row? Oh yeah...the murder of your wife and children. Did you do it? Were you framed? Or, most gruesome yet, are you just a psycho headcase capable of the most unspeakable acts of cruelty and malice? In Midway's forthcoming title, you play as Torque, the aforementioned inmate who is trying to sort out the facts and survive in a prison overrun with mutated apparitions.

The Suffering isn't a standard, run-of-the-mill survival horror title. For starters, you can play in third or first-person perspectives with full camera control. This camera feature is important for a number of reasons, foremost because the game has much more of an action skew than its contemporaries. While the adjustable camera does make for a more manageable scheme, additional complications are created. How do you scare players when they are walking into open rooms and have free control of where they look?

Producer Jeremy Airey tells us, "We have gone out of our way to create situations that are very disturbing – flashes of visuals and different elements of the game that creep up on you. For instance, the idea of a prison is that you are confined. You'll end up trapped in areas, but there are things that are breaking into the room you're in. So you're freaking out, trying to figure out what to do to get out of this place before this thing comes in here and gets [you]."

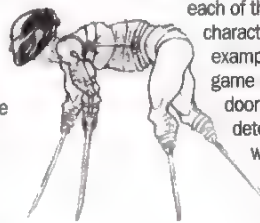
Those things creeping up on you are monsters representing a few heinous ways that people can be executed (state-

sanctioned or no). Stan Winston Studios – those hacks that created effects for *Terminator 2*, the dinosaurs for *Jurassic Park*, and the lithe aliens in *Alien* – designed each of the 11 monsters currently in the game. More creatures are planned before the title launches; and their character designs bring to mind deaths by impaling, lethal injection, electrocution, and other methods that can best be described as medieval.

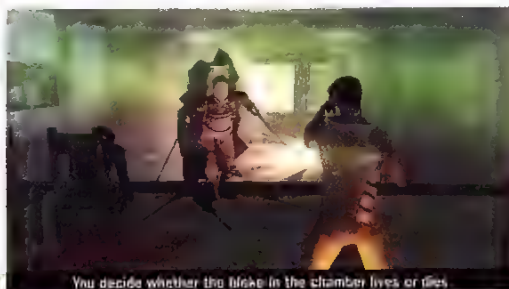
"About 40 percent of the game takes place in the prison, then you get out of the prison and onto the rest of the island. There's an insane asylum, a dockyard," Airey explains. Through each of these areas, you'll come upon a small army of characters who play a part in shaping your fate. For example, killing a guard encountered early in the game means that he can't be around to unlock a door for you later on. Your behavior, moral or not, determines which of the game's three endings you will experience.

Our protagonist Torque also has an interesting play dynamic to manage. As he is taunted and threatened by monsters, his Rage Meter rises. At its height, Torque has the ability to go into Rage Mode, which offers special moves and makes him transform into an anger-driven monster. But, there's always a catch. The higher the meter, the more hallucinogenic episodes he experiences. If the meter empties, Torque dies.

We are sure of one thing: This title is not for those under the legal age; but adults will get a demented, scary ride come October.



■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER MIDWAY ■ DEVELOPER MIDWAY ■ RELEASE OCTOBER 1



You decide whether the flicker in the chamber lives or dies



Particle effects are top-notch



PLAYSTATION 2

# APE ESCAPE 2

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

### DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE

Ape Escape was the first PSone game with analog-only support. This remains the case with the sequel as well. Almost every action in the game revolves around dual-analog movement. For instance, in netting a monkey, Jimmy's general actions are controlled by the left analog stick, and the way you swing the net depends on the right analog stick. This system worked well in the original, and is all the more intuitive and brilliant in this follow-up.



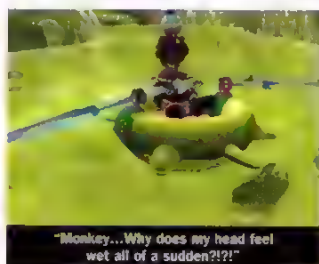
The boy and his monkey loved flying. That is, until that fateful day when the killer bees arrived



The goal of the game is to net monkeys!



"Run for your life, man! It's that crazy kid with the hula-hoop again!"



"Monkey... Why does my head feel wet all of a sudden?!"

### FUN AT HOME

Outside of the 20 levels and eight boss battles, Ape Escape 2's hub screen houses its fair share of thrills. Not only will you be able to access minigames and training exercises from this screen, you'll be able to unlock prizes at the Gotcha Box. By inserting coins that you collect in each of the stages, you'll receive an egg that holds a mystery surprise! You may get a new song, concept art, secret photos, or even monkey stories like the moving "Little Red Monkey Helmet."



"Man! Can I just get a can of Coke or what?"



"You're like hot and stuff. Do you want to touch my monkey?"

### GO-GO GADGET

Almost every tool of the trade from the first game makes a repeat performance in Ape Escape 2. Along with the fan favorite RC car; several new doodads like the ever-handy hula-hoop (which will launch your character at breakneck speeds when spun) are here for your anthropomorphic subduing needs.

### Just when it appeared

that Ape Escape 2 would become one of Japan's best kept secrets, Ubi Soft picked up the U.S. publishing rights and now plans on releasing the game stateside no later than July. The French may no longer have their name associated with fries or toast, but they'll always find a way into the hearts of American gamers. Thank you, Ubi! Why Sony passed on the publishing rights, we'll never know. As any Ape Escape fan can hope, this sequel is just as stylistic, spastic, and irresistible as its 1999 predecessor.

### MONKEY MADNESS

There are over 300 different monkeys on the loose in Ape Escape 2. As you can clearly see, you never really know what to expect from these rascally primates. They may be dressed in ninja attire, lounging at a bar, downhill skiing, or guarding a stash of bananas.

The monkeys don't necessarily want to be captured. They'll do everything they can to keep you at bay. They'll fire missiles, throw bombs and strange brown clumps, and even don body armor and shields.

By using your radar, you can view each of the primate personalities. As in the first game, these bios are often hilarious.

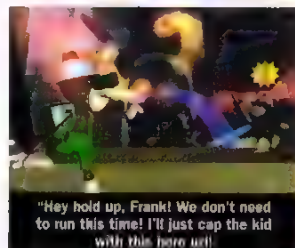
As you pursue the monkey menaces that threaten the land, you'll actually get the chance to pilot a gigantic monkey mech. As one would hope, this monstrosity specializes in the complete and utter destruction of anything that crosses its path. You'll even encounter an explosive mech-versus-mech boss battle.



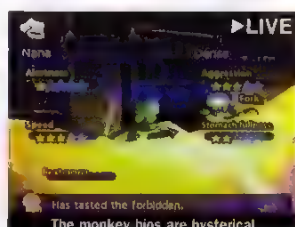
Mech monkeys rule!!!



"Ah... now bring on the babes!"



"Hey hold up, Frank! We don't need to run this time! I'll just cap the kid with this here net!"



Has tasted the forbidden. The monkey bios are hysterical

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT  
 ■ **RELEASE** JULY 7

## PREVIEWS

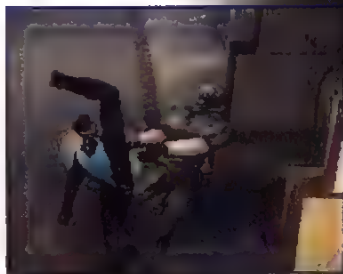


PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

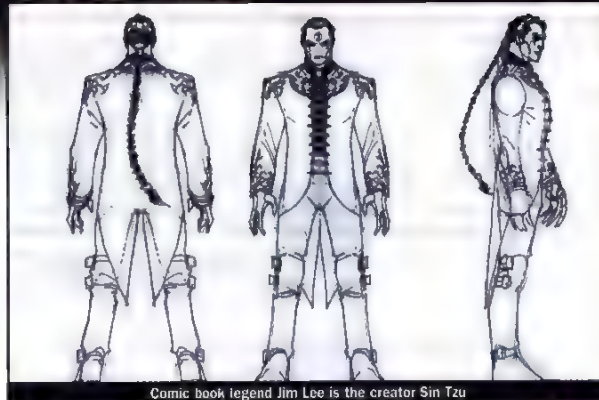
# BATMAN: RISE OF THE SIN TZU

### GESUNDHEIT!

**It may sound like** a long-lost Bruce Lee film, but believe us when we say that this is the most exciting Batman title in years. Not only does it support simultaneous two-player gameplay (yes!), it introduces a formidable new foe and features the brilliant artistic styling of comic book veteran, Jim Lee. Ubi Soft came close to having a hit on its hands with *Batman: Vengeance*, and if it can learn from its gameplay mistakes, *Rise of the Sin Tzu* could easily move Batman to the top of the video game charts. As of now, a release date isn't set in stone, but Ubi Soft is hoping to have it on retail shelves no later than October for all three systems.



## SIN TZU-WHO?



Comic book legend Jim Lee is the creator Sin Tzu

Worry not, bat-fanatics. There's good reason as to why you've never heard of a villain named Sin Tzu. As you may recall, The Joker's mistress, Harley Quinn, was created exclusively for the animated series. Due in part to her popularity, she was gradually integrated into the caped crusader's comic book universe. On a similar note, Sin Tzu is making his debut within this game. If fan boys deem him worthy and demand more, there's a good chance that he could also become a familiar face in Batman's rogues' gallery.

Sin Tzu steers away from the criminal insanity that accompanies most of Batman's foes. Much like Spider-Man's adversary Kraven, Sin Tzu is a hunter who prides himself on defeating opponents that have never fallen before. He was abandoned as an infant and adopted by a cult who lived in the caves of Chulin in Southeast Asia. It was here that he stumbled upon a necropolis that housed mystical/military texts of an ancient warlord. Studying these documents, he learned military and martial arts skills, as well as the lost knowledge of the Mehta-Sua – which allows him to channel mental energy into physical energy and vice versa. This hypnotic control can transform the weak-minded into deadly warriors. Sin Tzu built a grand army and hid behind puppet politicians to conquer parts of Cynna, Vet Nak, and carry out the invasion of Unglong. With victory behind him, he now plans to wage a new war within the streets of Gotham and against its man-bat protector. Having the collective might of Bane, Scarecrow, and Clayface willing to do his bidding, Sin Tzu could very well overtake Gotham and, for the first time, crush the bat.

## ALL IN THE FAMILY



Two players can team up and play the game cooperatively



Robin, Nightwing, and Batgirl are also playable

Rather than just fixating on Batman's heroics, his most notable sidekicks are also playable. In addition to Robin, players can suit up as Nightwing and the surprisingly agile Batgirl. The term "dynamic duo" is fully enforced as *Rise of the Sin Tzu* can be played cooperatively. Each character brings a slightly different fighting style to the battleground and can unleash over 35 different attacks and chain together devastating combo strings.



Batarangs can target multiple adversaries

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT MONTREAL STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER

PLAYSTATION 2

# ARC THE LAD: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

MORALITY 101

**This being the fourth** in the Arc the Lad series, new developer Cattle Call has updated the saga with vastly improved graphics, a cornucopia of cutscenes, voice acting for most characters, and a promised 60-plus hours of gameplay.

While Japanese gamers got the previous entries individually, the series' first three volumes appeared stateside as a collection aptly titled Arc the Lad Collection in April of 2002. Each featured a new protagonist, but had cameos of characters from past installations to maintain continuity. Twilight of the Spirits doesn't veer far from this path of bringing in new characters to liven up its plotline.

This story starts by explaining that a resource called Spirit Stones is in short supply, but is highly necessary to maintain the lifestyle of two very different cultures: the humans and the Deimos. An impetuous prince named Kharg leads the humans. The Deimos, an aggressive race characterized by their apparent genetic merging with animals and demons, has an idealistic underdog named Darc on their side.

While Kharg is being groomed as the heir to his kingdom and enjoys a leisurely lifestyle, Darc is berated and beaten by his

guardian, all the while being mocked by other Deimos for having a human mother. Despite their shockingly different upbringings, they do share a common goal and similar spiritual guidance to save their people. Elemental Spirits and the wishes of their dead fathers motivate and influence the decisions of each. The underlying focus of the tale borrows from the old Tao Yin and Yang philosophy; neither faction is entirely good or entirely evil. Each party is there for their own reasons; a moral to the story that makes this title unique.

From a technical standpoint, Twilight of the Spirits has an original (for role-playing games) combat mechanism that allows the characters to move within a designated area and use the environment to their advantage. Rocks, machinery, or crumbling rubble can block some attacks or buy a little time. Players can also take advantage of more than 14 playable characters, each with their own attributes, strengths, and weaknesses.

All in all, Twilight of the Spirits is certainly making a run for Final Fantasy's crown; and looks like it will deliver with great storytelling, a bevy of new technology, and engaging combat. Check it out sometime in June.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** CATTLE CALL ■ **RELEASE** JUNE



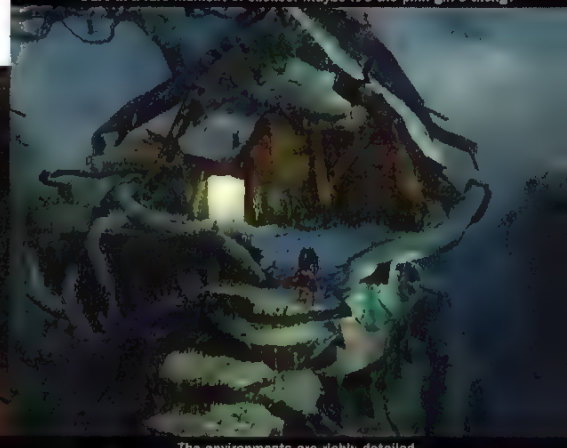
Humans and Deimos can both use magic for attacks or healing, but they must expend Spirit Stones, which are hard to come by, to do so



If enemies are lined up correctly, multiple targets can be had at once



Darc in a rare moment of silence. Maybe it's the pink girl's thong?



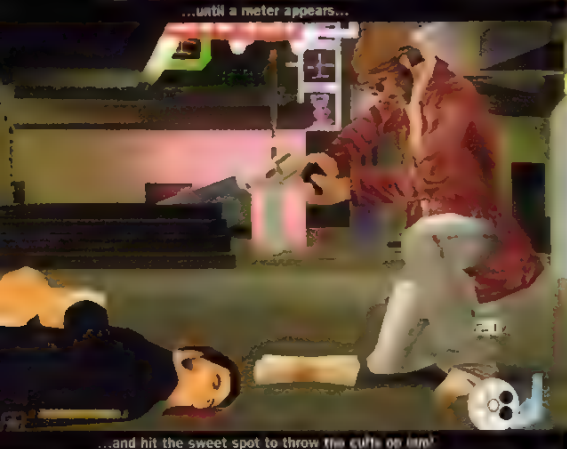
The environments are richly detailed



In Bust Mode, you wrestle a criminal...



...until a meter appears...



...and hit the sweet spot to throw the cuffs on him!

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

# NARC

## THE WAR ON DRUGS

**What's your anti-drug?** GI's anti-drug of choice is quietly crying ourselves to sleep over a cup of chamomile tea while watching taped episodes of *Ed*, but maybe that's not your cup of...um...tea. Maybe you're one of those brave souls that like to take the law into your own hands. Maybe – just maybe – you have the guts, grit, and the cool '70s wardrobe it takes to be an undercover drug agent. Thanks to Midway, you'll have the chance to take a shot at law-enforcement glory in a high-powered update of the old-school arcade hit *NARC*.

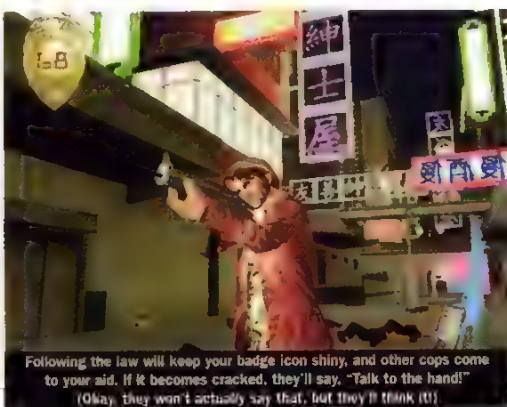
Midway has a hit-and-miss record with its classic remakes, so we were a little concerned when we heard that the developer behind the new *NARC* is VIS Entertainment, a company whose first big title (*State of Emergency*) did not live up to expectations. Not to worry, says Wayne Kline, who is overseeing the project for Midway. "*State of Emergency* was a game that was fun for 10 minutes, and then got really boring really fast," observes Kline. "One of the first things [VIS] gave us was a document outlining the weaknesses of *State of Emergency*, and what they were going to do in *NARC* so that they didn't run into the same problems. There's been a lot of attention paid to the depth of missions, variety of missions, and trying to make missions more multi-staged."

*NARC* will mark the return of hero Max Force, who is now coupled with Hitman, his former NYPD partner who

has been working at the DEA for several years. In keeping with what Midway terms a "buddy cop movie" feel, the two have some animosity towards each other, but are forced by circumstances to work together again. Their mission is to topple the nefarious K.R.A.K. gang, which is peddling a new PCP-like drug called Liquid Soul – an extract from the human adrenal gland.

Using an improved version of the already impressive SOE engine, VIS has concocted a gameplay scheme that has some very interesting improvements to the usual third-person formula. For one, you'll play as both Max and Hitman, each possessing the ability to fight with either their fists or a host of high-caliber weapons. What's new about that, you ask? Well, the control is actually completely different depending on whether you have a gun in your hand. During hand-to-hand sections, the game will work much like any brawler. However, if you pull out a gat, the control will switch to a first-person mechanic, with a right analog look and left analog player movement. Another cool detail is the Bust Meter, which you must use to throw the cuffs on a perp. You start by locking up, and once you wrestle him down, a golf swing-style icon will appear. Hit the sweet spot, and that thug is on ice. Hot damn! As excited as we are about *NARC*, we're going to have to wait awhile to get our conceal-and-carry permits, as the game is not scheduled to hit the street until late spring of next year.

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER MIDWAY ■ DEVELOPER VIS ENTERTAINMENT ■ RELEASE SPRING 2004

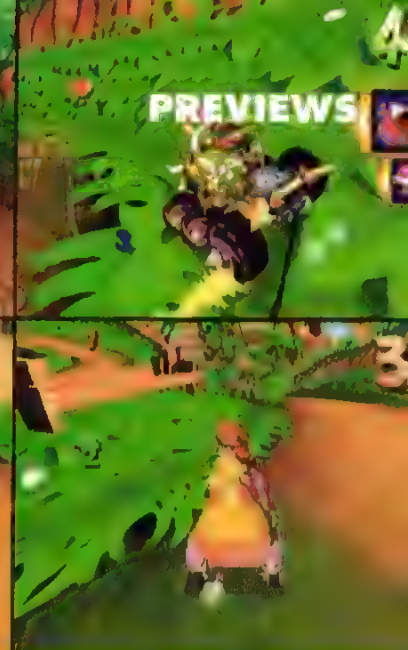


Following the law will keep your badge icon shiny, and other cops come to your aid. If it becomes cracked, they'll say, "Talk to the hand!" (Okay, they won't actually say that, but they'll think it!)



Gun Targeting should be more accurate than in *State of Emergency*





**GAMECUBE**

# MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH

LAN INSANITY

**To some people,** Mario Kart is a religion. Controllers have been smashed, vulgarities have been spewed, and little sisters have become champions. It's been a long wait for the next console version of this beloved series, and this winter the institution is back in Mario Kart: Double Dash.

One of the most noticeable changes is that each kart now holds two players (Double Dash – get it?). One character controls the kart while the other is in charge of power-ups and projectiles. You will always be in the driver's seat, but you can tell your AI partner to attack opponents. In case you want to change up your strategy in the middle of a race, racers are able to switch places on the fly. The combination of who you choose will affect the speed and agility of your ride, much like previous incarnations of Mario Kart. Since Double Dash is team-based, some pairings will not perform as well as others.

There are six general power-ups – bananas, turbo mushrooms, ghosts, and three different types of shells. New to Double Dash are eight character-specific power-ups, and the members of your team determine their abilities. For example, Mario and Peach's special attack may only affect players in back of you, but Mario and Donkey Kong's attack

may affect players on the side of your kart. Knowing what your opponents' special attacks are is vital to success.

Our sources have also indicated that select hidden characters will be unlockable. The identity of these racers is still unknown, but we've been told that you'll be able to access them by winning circuits or playing Double Dash for a certain amount of time.

Double Dash will have two to four-player split-screen multiplayer modes like Mario Kart 64 did, but Double Dash will also be one of the first GameCube titles to utilize Nintendo's new LAN connectivity. You can have up to eight people playing simultaneously by having two TVs and two GameCubes linked together with 4-player split-screen. Presumably, if you had a dual tuner television with picture-in-picture technology, you could have all eight players on one TV.

Disregarding all that new technology, Double Dash still seems to have that classic Mario Kart vibe. With eight-player LAN connectivity, Mario Kart: Double Dash could become one of the biggest party games of the year – just make sure you kick your little sister's butt this time around.



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** WINTER





PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

# SOUL CALIBUR II

## A NEW CALIBER OF FIGHTING

### MISSION: WEAPON MASTER

Soul Calibur II abandons any notion of plot, as all fans might expect: Beat the game with your favorite character, watch a seemingly inchoate ending (they consist of mere stills instead of beautiful CG movies), and unlock numerous secrets. Namco does this in favor of expanding upon the mission mode popularized in the first title. Dubbed Weapon Master, players select a warrior from a cast of 20 and play through a variety of scenarios, which range from matches that require you to fell five opponents in a row to duels that force you to attack enemies in a specific manner – such as knocking them against walls. Completing challenges yields a secret, and earns your character experience and money, enabling the player to purchase even more hidden material! The relatively small number of missions suggests that Weapon Master mode is inadequate; but if you take into consideration the variety of match types, the ability to grow your character, the respectable amount of hidden missions, and a bag of unlockables that rivals Santa on Christmas Eve; you've got a lengthy experience on par with Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance.

The new characters: Alexandra (top left), Ming Yunesung (top right), Talim (bottom left), Raphael Socol (bottom right), Noctul (far right)



The mission mode is where most of the replay value lies in SC II



Link is upgraded to a silver apprentice and sports a wicked hammer weapon

Shop	Exp	Gold
多層階級 (カサノドリ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600
武器 (カサノ)	600	600

CHET  
Lv 3 Bronze Peasant  
秘合一門

The abundance of secrets will increase the game's replay value

### SOUL OF COMBAT

The combat remains the same as the DC version. Players attack with one kick and two punch buttons, while a single button is reserved for blocking. Hitting buttons in succession results in combo attacks, while pressing combinations of buttons simultaneously produces special moves, throws, and a charging technique. The differences are minute, but the hardcore audience will find that these subtleties greatly affect combat. First, as in Tekken, walls can be employed to deal more elaborate combos and damage; but the air recovery ability can be used in this situation to escape a pummeling. Second, parries

and deflections are more easily executed. Finally, the Soul Charge consists of three levels – each one allowing for special techniques and combos.

The only serious gripe we have thus far concerns the Ring Out ability. While a few will relentlessly argue that Ring Outs enhance the strategic element, most players (like us) often find them annoying. We're not suggesting that Namco remove this feature. We would like them included for variety's sake, but if it could simply make bounded stages the vast majority, perhaps then players would tolerate the annoyance.

### NAMCO'S DIRTY SECRETS

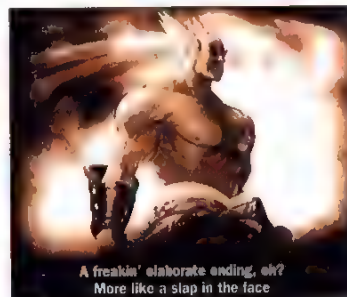
The actual rewards might not be quite as varied as Deadly Alliance (maybe random best describes them), but they're certainly more gratifying. You can earn special outfits, new weapons, stages, gameplay modes, fighters, character demo movies and profiles, and more. Although the extras that more directly affect gameplay certainly remain the most attractive, the Theater mode that features new weapons' demonstrations still manages to elicit awe.



Strangely, Heihachi controls better in SC II than in any Tekken



Talim is a quick character with lots of combos



A freakin' elaborate ending, eh? More like a slap in the face

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER NAMCO ■ DEVELOPER NAMCO ■ RELEASE AUGUST 26



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

# MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

## A DAY SO FAMOUS, IT'S IN-FAMOUS

**After riding the tsunami** of interest and success that it's European-based Medal of Honor franchise has created, EALA is shoving off into the Pacific as it releases *Rising Sun* – a title focusing on America's war with Japan in World War II. What players will be looking for is the same hard-hitting, historically accurate gameplay from the previous series' iterations, and it looks like that's exactly what they'll get. The developer has gone on record as saying that the 10 levels you'll be fighting through will be "massive." What that means exactly, we don't know; but we do know that there will be five major missions, each

with its own cluster of smaller missionettes. Also, a two-player co-op mode will be available for the entire campaign – which is really quite awesome.

You'll take on the role of Marine Corporal Joseph Griffin, who – during the course of his tour of duty through Guadalcanal, Burma, and a host of other locales – becomes separated from his brother, Donny. Donny's exploits will then be followed through a future edition of the game to release in 2004. It seems the Griffin brothers will have exciting experiences lined up for us on all three consoles.



"You're leading him too far, dude!"



Some of the opening action will take place below decks.

### Welcome To The Game, Pal

*Rising Sun* will begin as Japan unleashes a savage attack on the unsuspecting denizens of Pearl Harbor. You'll start your adventure aboard the U.S.S. *California*, and face wave after wave of Japanese fighters as they decimate the Pacific fleet. As you can see, you'll be in and out of different areas of the ship, and you may travel to different vessels to continue the fight. We're very interested to witness just how big this portion of the game is, seeing as how the landing on Omaha Beach in *MoH: Frontline* was as intense an experience as we've had with a video game.

### Let Us At 'Em

One of the most impressive parts of previous *MoH* titles has been the authenticity of the weaponry. Not only has every rifle, pistol, machine gun, and artillery piece been masterfully recreated; but even their sounds have been accurately represented. Will *Rising Sun* enjoy the same attention to detail? We can only hope, but come on people – it's EA. The company's got more money to throw at this project than Bill Gates has to crush Linux. We've been promised that over 20 WWII weapons will make appearances throughout the game, and the award-winning sound design team at EALA is currently hard at work to bring you an incredible aural experience.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EALA ■ **RELEASE** FALL



Here's why the cook always goes down with the ship



Blasting away at a Zero



GAMECUBE

# P.N. 03

## AN OLD-SCHOOL APPROACH

**Between Shinji Mikami's track record** (Resident Evil and Devil May Cry) and his calumnious comments regarding Square's Kingdom Hearts, our expectations for P.N. 03 were high, but perhaps the demand for something epic was actually our fault. After all, half of a decade separates RE and DMC. Our early disappointment with P.N. 03 was rooted in a desire to play the next Devil May Cry, which initially prevented us from enjoying P.N. 03's finer qualities.

Done in the vein of the old-school shooter, P.N. 03 places equal emphasis on the offensive and defensive elements. Typically, players will encounter a company of mechanical monstrosities, each of which attack in a specific pattern that you must quickly discern so as to make an efficient kill. This is made more practical by the dodge moves of our heroine, Vanessa Z. Schneider. For example, if an enemy rests at the end of a hall, you can position yourself safely at the corner of the corridor's opposite end, quickly spin out, rattle off a few shots, and spin back for cover. Vanessa also has the ability to duck, roll, and flip in every direction.

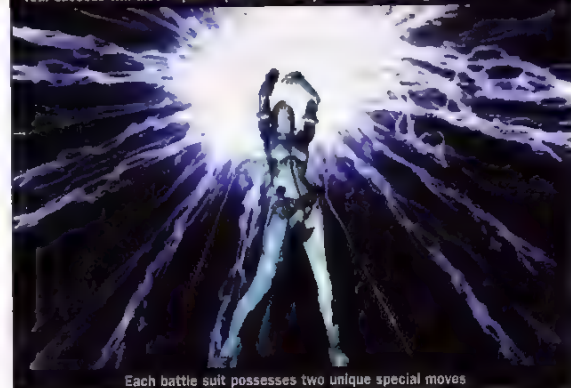
The pace, while necessarily slow in difficult situations, remains quick and frantic most of the time because of the combo meter. The more enemies you manage to eliminate in a row, the more money you earn. In addition, the less damage you take, the better your profits are upon completion of an area. With the cash, you can purchase new battle suits and ability upgrades.

As you probably suspect, Capcom has constructed P.N. 03 around eliciting the highly desirable Zen-like state, which after having played through a six-level demo, we admit it does very effectively. Nevertheless, this huge asset doesn't conceal some of P.N. 03's current faults. Vanessa's method of attack never changes - she wields only a laser cannon. However, each of the battle suits do offer two unique special attacks. Second, besides a couple of outdoor sections, the environments look too similar: Most levels consists of a series of corridors and rooms composed of plain, colorless textures. Although the gameplay is actually eclectic enough, this drab atmosphere creates a semblance of monotony overall. Finally, many will consider the controls a step down from DMC. Like Resident Evil, pressing left and right causes your character to pivot turn.

Fortunately, none of these potential problems ruin the game's fun factor, but if Capcom can rectify these hindrances, it will transform a good game into a great one.



Your success will also depend upon how well you take advantage of the environment



Each battle suit possesses two unique special moves



Areas are also littered with traps which you must overcome



The time in the top right corner indicates how long your combo chain lasts



Learning dodging techniques is a must for survival

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER CAPCOM PRODUCTION STUDIO 4 ■ RELEASE JULY



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

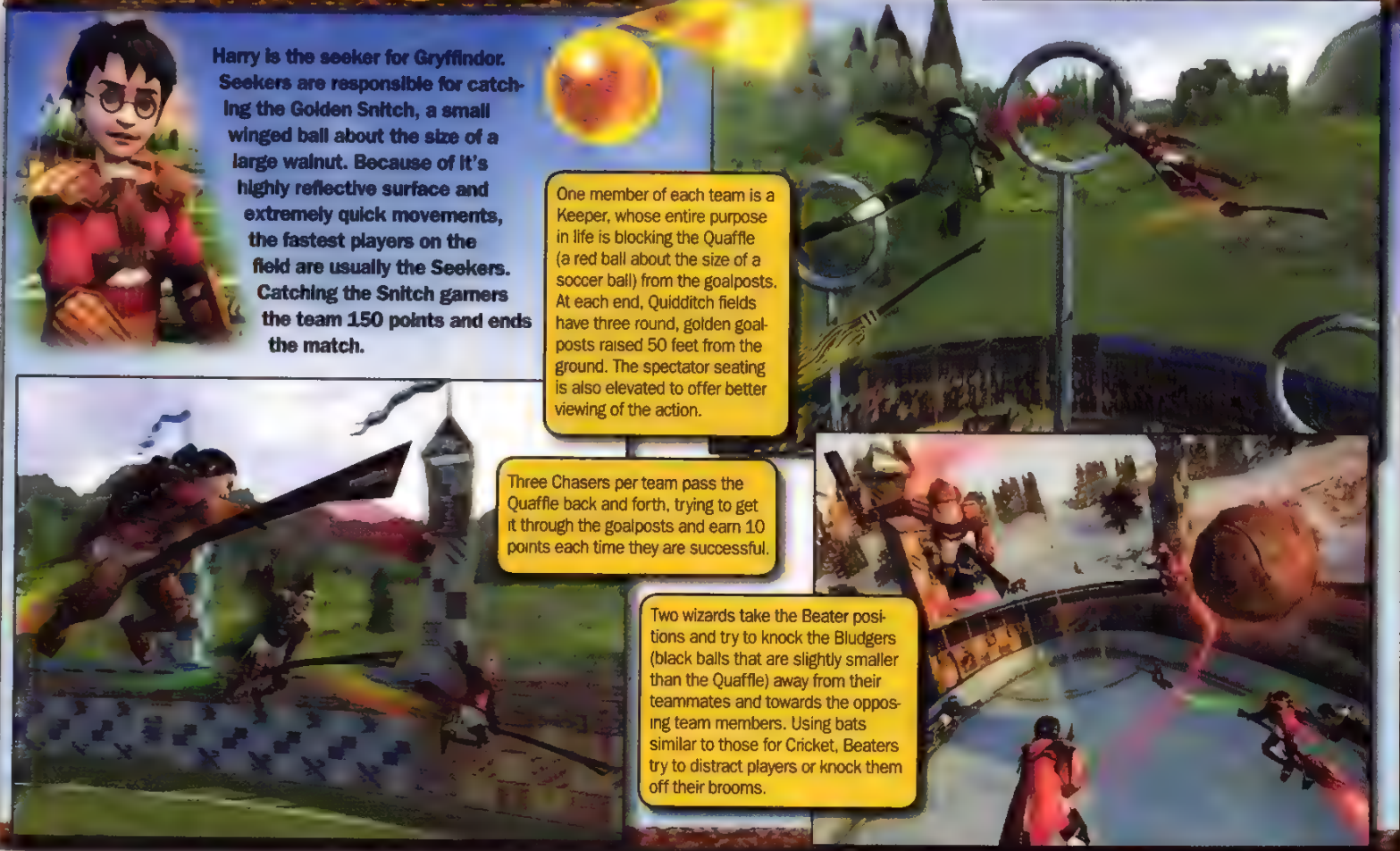
# HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

WIZARD WHOOP-ASS

**Earlier Harry Potter games** have reduced the noble sport of Quidditch to a mere task of getting through hoops in a specified period of time. Ahh, dear friends, this is not the essence of Quidditch. EA plans to make a full-fledged sports title of the wizard pastime, to come out this winter. In *Quidditch World Cup*, you pick one of the four Hogwarts House teams, compete in the Hogwarts Quidditch Cup, and move on to the international World Cup tournament. With nine international teams in addition to the four Hogwarts teams, the ability to play any position on the field, and (maybe) those distracting mascots from book four, *World Cup* looks to be a full-featured sports game for the more whimsical at heart.

## QUIDDITCH QUICKIE

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS  
 ■ **RELEASE** WINTER



Harry is the seeker for Gryffindor. Seekers are responsible for catching the Golden Snitch, a small winged ball about the size of a large walnut. Because of its highly reflective surface and extremely quick movements, the fastest players on the field are usually the Seekers. Catching the Snitch garners the team 150 points and ends the match.

One member of each team is a Keeper, whose entire purpose in life is blocking the Quaffle (a red ball about the size of a soccer ball) from the goalposts. At each end, Quidditch fields have three round, golden goalposts raised 50 feet from the ground. The spectator seating is also elevated to offer better viewing of the action.

Three Chasers per team pass the Quaffle back and forth, trying to get it through the goalposts and earn 10 points each time they are successful.

Two wizards take the Beater positions and try to knock the Bludgers (black balls that are slightly smaller than the Quaffle) away from their teammates and towards the opposing team members. Using bats similar to those for Cricket, Beaters try to distract players or knock them off their brooms.



PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / GAMECUBE

# STARCRRAFT: GHOST

RAISING THE SPECTER

**There can be no doubt** that Blizzard is pouring an enormous amount of effort into this project. Much like other highly anticipated games, it has now been confirmed that StarCraft: Ghost will be delayed until sometime next year. Although that might be a blow to die-hard Blizzard-ites, a wait of this type will likely mean a better experience for players when everything's said and done. You don't want to wade into the middle of a Zerg rush and have the game lock up, do you? Of course not. So just relax there, Scrappy. In the meantime, take a look at these new shots, and rest easy in the knowledge that people who know what they're doing are calling the shots.

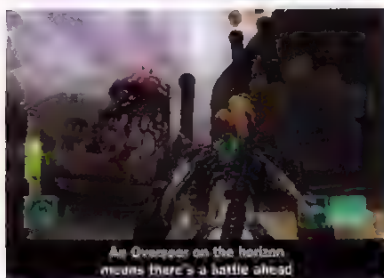
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT ■ **DEVELOPER** BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT/NIHILISTIC ■ **RELEASE** 2004



Giving new meaning to the term "hanging out"



These Space Marines look to be in trouble



An Overseer on the horizon means there's a battle ahead



"Whatchu lookin' at?!"



Nova cloaks as a Protoss unit ambles by

## WILLINGNESS AND ABILITIES

One of Nova's most interesting (and best-looking) Psionic abilities is the Cloak maneuver. When an enemy is nearby, this technique will allow players to sneak up on foes, creep by checkpoints, and afford them the luxury of simply sitting in their chairs and saying, "Holy crap, that looks cool." Other abilities include a slow-mo *Matrix*-esque option, a heat-sensing mode, and a number of additional goodies that are in the works. Hopefully, we'll be given more information on these scale-tipping features in the near future, but for now we'll just have to create our own Psionic abilities with dioramas and sock-puppets.

## WEIGHING THE SCALE

Ghost's development team has devoted a lot of time and energy to accurately constructing the units' scale from the isometric (3/4 top-down view) PC title into a living, breathing 3D environment. As you can see, players will be given a "being there" feeling; that is, when you play, Blizzard is hoping you'll experience this universe the way you've always envisioned it in terms of a worm's eye view.



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

## MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE HE-MAN: DEFENDER OF GRAYSKULL

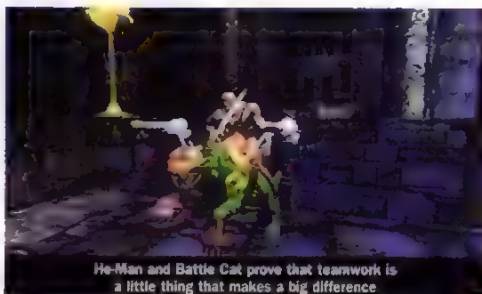
RELIVING THE '80S

**“Our objective is to immerse** the player in Eternia and for him to feel the power of the sword surging in hand,” says TDK’s producer David Artuso. To be quite frank, we really don’t need to travel to Eternia to feel a sword surging in hand – if you catch our drift – but truth be told, as fans of the original ‘80s cartoon, we’re genuinely excited and can’t wait to see how this game turns out.

Defender of Grayskull is based on the new television series and keys in on the adversarial relationship between He-Man and Skeletor. The action unfolds through six chapters consisting of 34 levels set within familiar environments like Snake Mountain, The Evergreen Forest, and of course, Castle Grayskull. As one would hope, the action takes advantage of He-Man’s incredible strength, but there are also segments in the game where he rides atop his trusty companion, Battle Cat. Artuso adds, “There are over 40 different attacks, moves, and combos currently in the game depending on whether He-Man is on foot or mounted, as well as which weapon He-Man is currently brandishing. Battle Cat is a formidable fighting machine on his own. Add saddle-mounted cannons and a sword-wielding rider, and you have the agile M1 tank of Eternia.”

As the quest unfolds, players will run into a number of familiar adversaries such as Beastman and Tr-Klops, as well as crucial allies like Sorceress and Man-At-Arms. When asked whether He-Man could transform into his humble human guise, Artuso answered, “Prince Adam is not a playable character, though he will make an appearance. After all, we must have the transformations.” Artuso wouldn’t directly comment on the plot within the game, but he did drop a major hint by saying, “What if Skeletor obtained the Power of Grayskull? What would his transformation be like?”

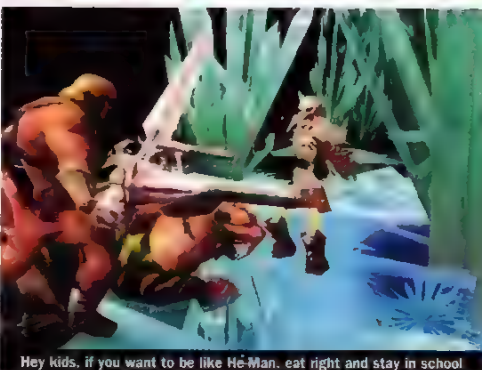
Defender of Grayskull should appear simultaneously on PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube this November. Cross your fingers and pray that this one turns out, people.



He-Man and Battle Cat prove that teamwork is a little thing that makes a big difference.



Even though the ape is different than He-Man, He-Man respects the ape for being a unique and special primate.



Hey kids, if you want to be like He-Man, eat right and stay in school.



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

## BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

'BOUT FRIGGIN' TIME!

If you played through the first Dark Alliance, you were treated to a remarkably crafted game that combined the miniscule details of the Dungeons & Dragons universe with the best in hack n' slash. You also ran headlong into an ending that will forever live in infamy. Just as the game began to quicken in pace, it came to a screaming halt and kicked players out – but not before hinting at how cool the next adventure would be. After spending two years wondering whether we'd actually see a sequel, or if Interplay had simply pulled the largest joystick tease in all of gaming, Dark Alliance II has finally surfaced.

As expected, this sequel picks up exactly where the last game left off – in a land infested with mysterious shadow beings. In total, players will travel across over 40 stages split into four acts. Whether you can load your previous save file remains to be seen, but there are five customizable characters as opposed to the original three. The story arc will branch into different directions, which makes replay an absolute necessity. The hours that can be vested into the new item and weapon creation system will also consume countless days and nights. Finally, the game can once again be played cooperatively with a friend, but there are currently no plans for online.



You'll now have the option to play as five different characters, including a dark elf.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TDK MEDIACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** SAVAGE ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GAMES/INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK ISLE STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** FOURTH QUARTER



Get ready for hyper-gaming.





GAMECUBE

# WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX

(BODY) SLAM! DUH-DUH-DUH – LET THE BOYS BE BOYS!

**We had a bevy of complaints** about the first WWE title for GameCube, *WrestleMania X8*. Those of you who played it probably did, too. However, THQ is emphatic about the fact that it listened to our criticisms and is working hard to make amends with *WrestleMania XIX*. From what we've played, it's the truth, and this game shows more promise than any of other next-gen wrestler to date.

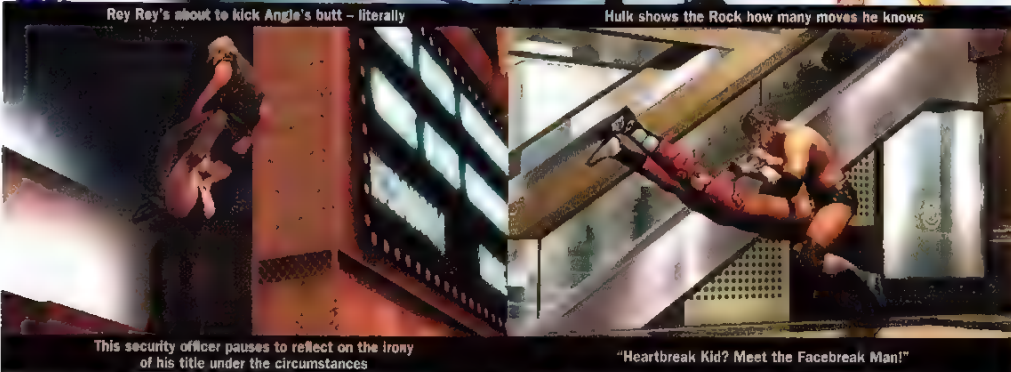
A Story mode has been added. Not just any Story mode, however – this one is out of control! With help from the WWE creative department, THQ weaves a tale of your wrestler being cast out of the WWE by Vince McMahon. With Stephanie's help (talk about the blind leading the blind), you must claw back and get revenge. This happens through 30 missions in five different environments. Most things actually take place outside of the ring and vary greatly from the simple grudge match. Details are slim at present, but the screenshot of Undertaker giving a security guard the Last Ride should serve to whet your appetite. Adding further replay is the ShopZone – an area where players can buy all manners of unlockables.

Gameplay has taken bits and pieces from other non-THQ wrestling games – including AKI-esque weak and strong grapples and the ability to drag opponents like in the *Fire Pro* series. Countering is extremely effective, from our early impressions. A totally new dynamic is location-specific damage. You can target limbs or other areas, and character models will take advantage of new animations to sell the injuries realistically. It also hinders their abilities. Last but not least, blood has finally been added to the mix! The juice is loose, baby! Will *WrestleMania XIX* do like Shawn Michaels and Chris Jericho did, and steal the show this year? Stay tuned.



Rey Rey's about to kick Angle's butt – literally

Hulk shows the Rock how many moves he knows



This security officer pauses to reflect on the irony of his title under the circumstances

"Heartbreak Kid? Meet the Facebreak Man!"



WarioWare, Inc.  
Over 200 lightning-quick  
microgames in one serving.



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## PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

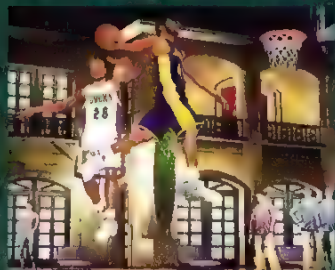
# NBA BALLERS

LIFESTYLES OF THE TALL AND SWEATY

**This may look** like yet another run-of-the-mill basketball game, but it's actually one of the most inventive titles we've seen in quite some time. Picture, if you will, the NBA colliding with *MTV Cribs*. Rather than competing on street courts or in arenas, you'll actually be invited for a game at an NBA superstar's house! That's right, Shaquille O'Neal will greet you at his front door. After getting to know one another, the camera zooms through his house, out the back door, and onto his private court.

You, of course, start out flat broke. Thankfully, you have natural skills and can hang with the best of them. By winning games, you'll be rewarded with new shoes, jewelry, cars, planes, and all the bling-bling you could ever hope for. You also attract the affection of lovely ladies and can even assemble your very own posse who will sit courtside!

Most of the games are one-on-one, but as the difficulty escalates, you'll find yourself in one-on-two and one-on-three matches. The game will feature over 60 of the NBA's top players and 24 unforgettable legends. Precocious high-schooler LeBron James will also be in the game; and yes, you may see his dinged-up Hummer courtside.



Ballers lets you suit up as 24 legends—including Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Julius Irving, and James Worthy



The detail in the player models is second to none



PLAYSTATION 2

# MONSTER RANCHER 4

THE ADDICTION CONTINUES

**If you haven't taken** the time out of your day to play a *Monster Rancher* game, consider yourself lucky. Saying that these titles are addictive could easily be the understatement of the century. The intensity of battle, pressure of training, and thrill of hunting for rare creatures will keep you mesmerized and detached from reality far longer than we care to admit.

With what we've seen thus far, *Monster Rancher 4* is shaping up to be the most dynamic, diverse, and deadly entry in the series thus far. Per usual, the game will read the coding off of PSone, PlayStation 2, DVD, and compact discs to create over 300 unique monsters. Some of the discs will create rare beasts that are usually themed to the specific media's coding that is read. As you can probably gather, you'll need to test every disc that you own to see what it will make.

As for enhancements, Tecmo is blowing the doors off of every other aspect of the game. From what we understand, you'll actually build your own ranch and place the training equipment that you want. Your character will finally be displayed onscreen; and yes, he will be able to interact with the monsters at the ranch. If you always felt that it took too long to raise your creatures, you can now train multiple monsters at the same time. Just don't overwork them!

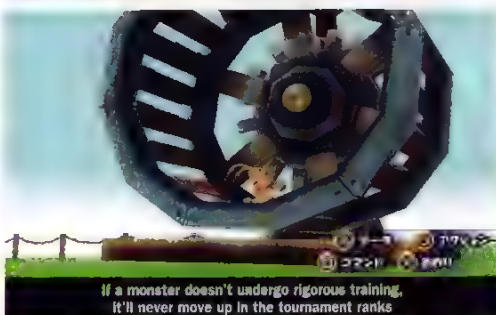
Tecmo is also expanding upon the adventure aspect. If you've played the games in the past, the adventure element was always thrown on the side. This time around, it will be just as prominent as training and fighting. What does this entail exactly? We're not sure, but we'll find out soon enough when the game ships this September.



Video Game Cliche #425: Perhaps the wise, old, talking tree knows where you should go next



Training equipment and additional structures can be purchased and placed in a SimCity-like fashion



If a monster doesn't undergo rigorous training, it'll never move up in the tournament ranks



For the first time in the series, players will have physical interaction with their monsters

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER STRATEGY/FIGHTING ■ PUBLISHER TECMO ■ DEVELOPER TECMO ■ RELEASE SEPTEMBER

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ PUBLISHER MIDWAY  
■ DEVELOPER MIDWAY SPORTS ■ RELEASE FOURTH QUARTER



GameCube

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

# MADDEN NFL 2004

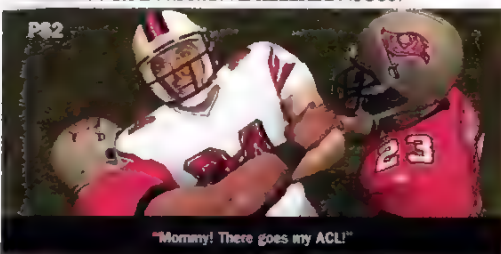
THE DEEP ROUTE

**The scope of this year's** additions for Madden NFL 2004 can be addressed in literally the blink of an eye; and yet, also over several seasons. They're something as sudden as a QB's split-second decision as well as the planning of an organization over a period of years. However you slice it, the franchise is deeper in ways almost unimaginable.

Madden 2004 now lets freewheeling QBs improvise as the play develops. This is perfect for a scrambler like Michael Vick. Through the right analog stick, you can order WRs to break off their routes to accommodate your out-of-pocket antics, or yell at blockers to set up downfield so you can tuck and run. Defenses can flood a running play if you anticipate the move seconds after the snap. Of course, pre-hike decisions are still important. You can audible a run to the opposite side of the field without having your line and receivers shift en masse, while a guy like Randy Moss can be assigned to the slot to create a mismatch on some poor, unsuspecting nickel back.

Online has expanded to include anti-cheating measures, a broadband-only headset, and tournaments. However, this year's most extraordinary changes come from Owner's mode. Running in conjunction with your franchise, this mode lets you control ticket prices, concessions, and much more in an effort to make money, renovate your stadium, and keep fans happy. If all else fails, move the entire team to another city and start over from scratch. Successful owners will hire the best coaches and trainers to improve their player's stats from year to year and keep them healthier. This SimCity-like control strengthens the Franchise portion of the game immeasurably, and has matured the series to heights that are starting to supersede the sports genre entirely.

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



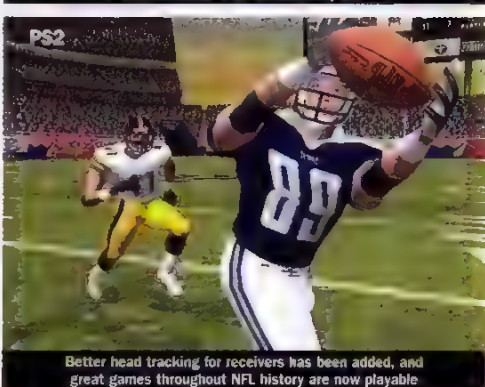
"Mommy! There goes my ACL!"



Owner mode lets you move the Browns - again. But only a sick #5%\* would do that



The faces have been redone and new animations have been created for almost every action



Better head tracking for receivers has been added, and great games throughout NFL history are now playable

## PREVIEWS



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

# NCAA FOOTBALL 2004

ANOTHER YEAR OF ELGIBILITY

**Last year,** EA Sports' NCAA football title had every bit the college spirit of a keg stand at a frat party, and it was rewarded by the masses for being the epitome of Saturday pigskin glory. How can EA Sports possibly cram more into this game? We ask the question every year, and the company simply does not disappoint in 2004.

Over 150 new teams, 100 classic squads, and plenty of custom tunnel entrances are a good start. The old teams even include those old leather helmets, so you can win one for the Gipper when the mood strikes you. On the field, a host of new trick plays replicate that big-play feel - including reverses where the QB turns into a WR.

With seven user-controlled celebrations, you can strike the Heisman pose on your way into the endzone. Your glory is made more permanent through *Sports Illustrated* covers bearing your players and the registering of your Greatest Games into the annals of history. Speaking of memorable moments, there are also College Classics which include Doug Flutie's Boston College Hail Mary and Cal's lateral-happy kickoff return (band not included, unfortunately). There's plenty more where this came from, so drink it up, Flounder!

PS2



"Yo mamma dances the Charleston like a dying bird and yo daddy's bootleg gin tastes like peel"

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** EA TIBURON ■ **RELEASE** JULY



PLAYSTATION 2

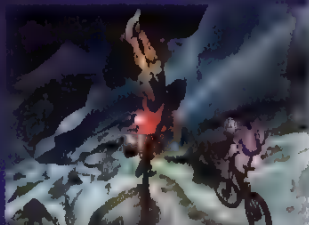
## DOWNHILL DOMINATION

IT'S ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE

**The creators of** Twisted Metal, Black and War of the Monsters are once again turning heads through extraordinary developmental diversity. While it may seem like there are a million games similar to this already in the market, Downhill Domination is in fact the first downhill mountain bike racing game for any of the high-end consoles.

Plummeting down steep inclines at speeds above and beyond 60 mph is just part of the fun. By catching big air, you'll be able to perform over 30 high-flying tricks. If the competition likes it rough, you can take the offensive and engage in combat tactics to take them down. The action unfolds from first and third-person perspectives and spans across 27 open-ended "go anywhere" courses.

Much like Activision's PS2 line of action/sports titles, Downhill Domination boasts pro riders, a diverse soundtrack of licensed bands, and authentic manufacturers and tracks. This seems like an unlikely fit for the folks at IncoG, but who knows, maybe they've stumbled upon the next big thing.



Downhill Domination is the 49th game to feature the Superman Seat Grab trick, but it's the first downhill biking game for any next-gen console!



At long last, we'll finally see how Bambi dies.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** INCOG/SCEA SANTA MONICA STUDIO ■ **RELEASE** JULY



PLAYSTATION 2

## FATAL FRAME II

TAKE MY PICTURE

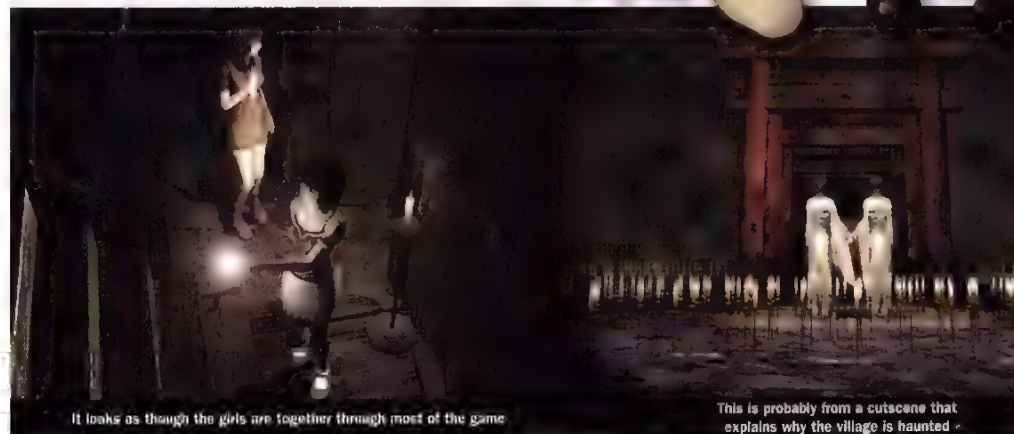
**Fatal Frame is** shaping up to be a full-fledged survival horror franchise of a different ilk. With a second chapter expected to debut during the holiday season of 2003; Tecmo is betting that legions of gamers will continue to be creeped out by ambient noises, unruly spirits, haunted environments, and with this edition, twins.

While the first Fatal Frame was advertised as being based on a true story – taking place in a mansion with a gory past – the next tale sets gamers in a haunted Japanese village. Starring twin Japanese schoolgirls, Mio and Mayu, the plot remains understandably hush-hush. From what we've seen, it looks like both girls will be together for most of the game, maybe even sporting a Resident Evil 0-style cooperative scheme.

The series is most known for an unusual brand of "combat" based off the arcane belief that having your picture taken steals your soul. As ghosts were the only enemies in the first title, taking pictures of them allowed you to both document the trapped souls and make them stop causing you pesky physical injury. This camera-focused (pun intended) combat is set to reemerge in this new chapter.

Although the combat system was reviled among certain gamers expecting more aggressive gameplay, the one thing universally acclaimed with the first release was its sound design. The 5.1 setup offered everything from ambient creaks and rattles to cacophonous symphonies during key moments. There's no reason to believe that Tecmo won't deliver this time around and continue what is becoming a trend in excellent video game audio.

The PS2 version of the original Fatal Frame appeared nearly a year before the Xbox version. In that time, Tecmo added new ghosts, more items in the environments, and a better menu scheme. Hopefully, more advancements along these lines will show up in Fatal Frame II and continue the saga of a truly unique survival horror franchise.



It looks as though the girls are together through most of the game.

This is probably from a cutscene that explains why the village is haunted.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO ■ **DEVELOPER** TECMO ■ **RELEASE** WINTER



XBOX/PC

# ARMED AND DANGEROUS

FUNNY HA HA

**LucasArts made a** little hubbub in late January when it announced a partnership with Planet Moon, the creators of *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*. Describing the development house as “witty” was an apt preface for the type of game they would be making.

*Armed and Dangerous* is a third-person shooter with heavy emphasis on action and wry humor. The heroes are a band of Scottish rebels, but are not nearly as stoic or tortured as Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*. These guys (a robot, a madman, a mole, and a criminal mastermind) drink tea and hoist an arsenal of weapons that include the interestingly titled *Guy Fawkes* and *Topsy-Turvy*. Robots!

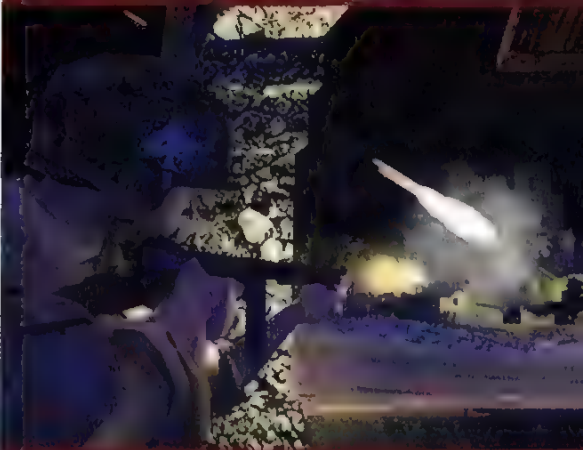
The gents have been charged with pulling off a feat that will require unparalleled skill, weaponry, determination, intelligence, and humor: executing the world’s biggest heist in the midst of a war. They will battle alongside soldiers defeating grunts, Goliaths, un-enlightened monks, war machines, and robots.

Playing as Roman, gamers can wield their personal armament or hop into large-scale weapons, take on a cockpit view; and annihilate teams using machine guns, mortar launchers, walking Giants, or zeppelins. Zeppelins, for Pete’s sake! These weapons will be more than necessary during large-scale attacks in Base Defend mode, where literally hundreds of enemies will attempt to breach the keep; and you have to blow them to bits – or suffer the consequences.

LucasArts and Planet Moon are promising sight gags and witty banter aplenty to lighten the mood of this shooter, but are being ferociously tightlipped about specific plot points or details on each of the five different play areas. Look for the title in late fall or early winter, and we’re certain to hear more at E3.



■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER LUCASARTS ■ DEVELOPER PLANET MOON ■ RELEASE WINTER

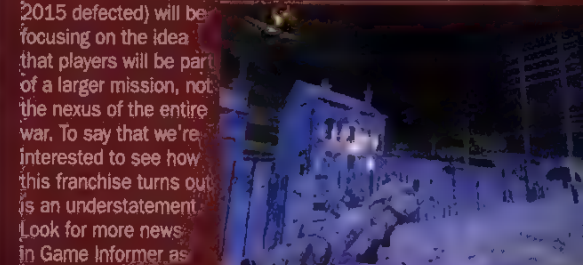


PC

## CALL OF DUTY ACTIVISION'S ANSWER

**What's the best** way to start a franchise? By emulating those who have had success before you, of course. Activision has recently announced that it intends to bring gamers the *Call of Duty* brand; as in, there will be a number of different games under the label, *Call of Duty*. If that confuses you, just think about the *Medal of Honor* franchise; it'll be kind of like that. Except for some major differences.

Dusty Welsh, vice president of global brand management, clearly explains these differences when he says, “The *Call of Duty* brand will deliver the most authentic, intense, and realistic battlefield experience from the perspective of multiple soldiers battling on the frontlines.” For the first *Call of Duty* release, this means players will be taking on the roles of a U.S. paratrooper, a Russian foot soldier, and a British commando – all in the same game. We’ve learned that *Infinity Ward* (to whom 22 *Allied Assault* developers from 2015 defected) will be focusing on the idea that players will be part of a larger mission, not the nexus of the entire war. To say that we’re interested to see how this franchise turns out is an understatement. Look for more news in *Game Informer* as it develops.



Never leave a man behind, and never look at a man's behind.



The sacrifices we make for a nice filet mignon

■ STYLE 1 TO 32-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION  
■ DEVELOPER INFINITY WARD ■ RELEASE FALL

## PREVIEWS



XBOX

# GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER

MORE CUBA, LESS GOODING

The Xbox is about to get a dose of the ol' Ghosts with the July release of *Island Thunder*. This time, your favorite bad-ass good guys aren't flying to the farthest corners of the planet to keep humanity safe. They're making the short hop over to Cuba, sans Mr. Castro. It seems as though having a power vacuum after the ouster of a highly militaristic dictator doesn't sit too well with the general populace; and, after sorting out free elections and all of that fun stuff, some factions don't like the idea of competition. What's a terrorist to do? Threaten people to vote for their candidate, and bully others into withdrawing from the race, or not running at all.

So, there's the problem; do you have the solution? With a large rifle in your hands, and a good team at your disposal, we think you'll be able to come up with something. The single-player campaign will be relatively short. Instead, the brain trust over at Ubi Soft has seen fit to give at least 12 different multiplayer modes... and eight new maps with which to lay down the smack against fellow Xbox Live subscribers. Downloadable content will also be available for the true Ghost Recon junkie.



Palm trees!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT  
 ■ **RELEASE** JULY 13



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC

# PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

ARRGGH. THEM BE THE HOT PANTS

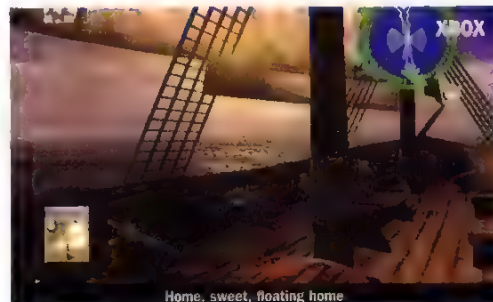
Even with the puffy shirts and bloomers, pirates hold a treasured place in our hearts. Who else could wear such goofy outfits and still be feared across the land? Okay, vikings, but apparently the horn-helmets were all legend, so they're out of the poorly-costumed-but-still-threatening category.

Bethesda's latest foray into the life of a swashbuckler was originally conceived as a sequel for their *Sea Dogs* franchise. However, after some intervention from Bethesda's marketing team, it now takes its title (sans goofy subhead) from the forthcoming movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, starring Johnny Depp and that hot elf, Orlando Bloom. Billed as an "RPG experience," executive producer Todd Vaughn says, "The *Pirates of the Caribbean* game transports players to the 17th century, where they can experience life as a pirate in any way they see fit. Whether they want to be feared by all and welcomed nowhere, or just enjoy compelling missions and a life at sea, we're creating a game that fits their gameplay style."

Players have big choices to make while exploring the numerous islands modeled after the Greater Antilles (a Caribbean chain that includes Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico). They can cruise the towns to find new crew members; trade goods; smuggle doubloons while risking capture; or idly chitchat with sailors, merchants, officers, prostitutes, and drunks. Bethesda promises over 150 fully animated characters that live against a backdrop of international power struggles (England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland are all vying for power in the islands).

The magic doesn't just happen in town, though. More than 30 ships and six cannon types have been accurately recreated for the title. In dealing with every possible weather condition (from dead calm to outright hurricanes), the craft each behave differently depending on which force of nature is bashing their sails. Bethesda also hints at large-scale naval battles and even the ability to blockade islands or board rival vessels.

It looks like *The Pirates of the Caribbean* is a hefty mix of role-playing elements and naval simulation that should keep people sailing for quite some time. The title's release is set to coincide with the movie's, around June 24th.



Home, sweet, floating home



A schooner is a sailboat, you stupid kid



Hand-to-hand combat will involve fists, swords, and guns, yeah!

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** BETHESDA SOFTWARES ■ **DEVELOPER** AKELLA ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 24 (XBOX/PC),  
 PLAYSTATION 2 TBD



XBOX/PC

# SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

FROM FRANCE TO INFINITY

LucasArts has renewed its ties with Totally Games (developer of the vaunted X-Wing and TIE Fighter series) and will release *Secret Weapons Over Normandy*, a game set in World War II-era Europe. Although many titles released as of late also feature this time period, Totally Games has a leg up on the competition, having released *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* and *The Finest Hour: Battle of Britain*—each a flight sim which puts players in the cockpit of WWII aircraft.

As you might imagine, LucasArts is saying things like, "We love Totally Games! We're so happy to be working

with them again, and we're sure our combined future will be very rosy indeed!" And Totally Games is saying, "We are very excited to be making a new flight adventure with LucasArts, and we love them very much!" While that's all fine and dandy, these screenshots do look quite enticing. We expect that the story-driven plot will entail air-to-air and bombing missions with multiple craft, but whether you'll be flying over places outside Europe has yet to be announced. Similarly, the game's online potential seems to be quite great and exact numbers will probably surface in the next couple of months. Stay tuned.



The environments will be enormous



The view from a belly-gunner's position



An AA position takes aim at a Luftwaffe bombing raid

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** TOTALLY GAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** WINTER

## PREVIEWS



XBOX

# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX

THE DIGITAL BATTLEFIELD

*Soldier of Fortune* has earned its stripes by dishing out a particularly vicious brand of blood-and-guts military shooter action, and now Xbox owners with the stomach for war will be able to sign up for a tour of duty on Xbox Live.

Double Helix will test your mettle with a wide variety of realistic single-player missions, many of which are based on the real-life adventures of John Mullins, an ex-Green Beret who now acts as a consultant to the series. You'll have to use a mix of tactics to overcome the game's fiercely intelligent AI, which will react differently depending on your approach to combat.

Of course, the Xbox Live functionality of Double Helix will be the real draw for fans, and Gratuitous Games will not disappoint in this department. Teams of up to 10 will be able to compete in six different match types, which run the gamut of popular formats, including Deathmatch, Capture-the-Flag, Infiltration, and Demolition. In addition to the 20 multiplayer maps that have been created specifically for the game, there is a random mission generator that will ensure you have a new experience every time you log on. One thing is sure: You won't be short on weapons. The arsenal will include the M2A2 "Grease Gun," M590 Combat Shotgun, the M4 with M203 Grenade Launcher, the M60, and the MK 23. We have also confirmed that there are some weapons that don't begin with the letter "m," but we'll save those for next time.



This level is based on *Memoirs of an Invisible Man* starring Chevy Chase. Sweet!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 10-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** GRATUITOUS GAMES ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER

# PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

## PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME



Although Ubi Soft's latest stab at this series isn't coming out until late this year, it still might beat out Eidos' new Tomb Raider to the shelves! Maybe not, but then again, we all know who was the first to thrill us with such third-person action/adventuring – the Prince. The game's looking pretty sharp so far, and when in combat, Ubi plans to give you plenty of silky-smooth animations, and even the ability to run on walls. The Prince needs to give Lara an almighty spanking!

PLAYSTATION 2

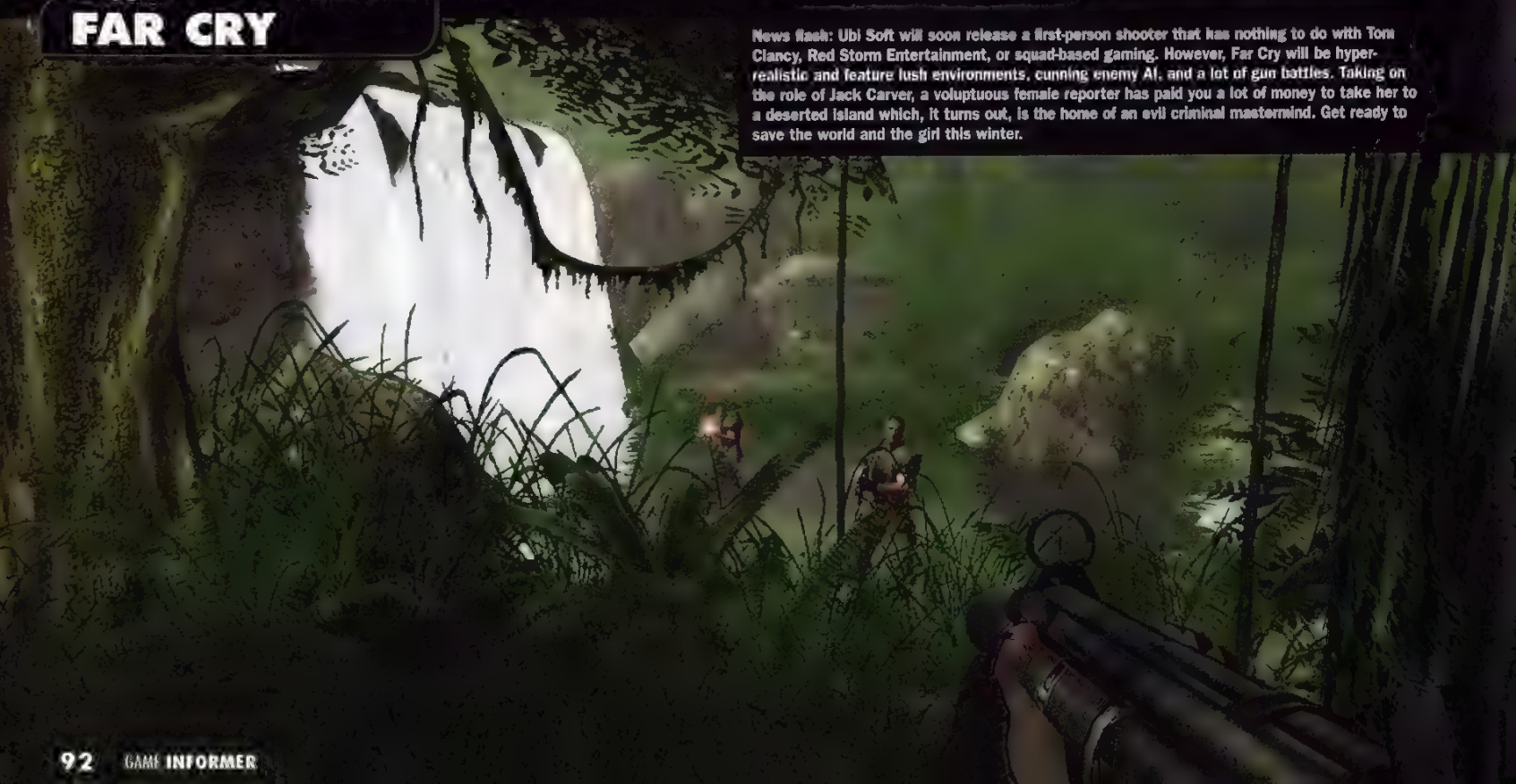
## McFARLANE'S EVIL PROPHECY



We're a wee bit excited about Todd McFarlane's new Konami game, which looks to blend the gameplay of Dynasty Warriors with the gore of Mortal Kombat. "We have a long-standing relationship with Konami, so when they asked me what we could do next, the Monsters [toy] property kind of jumped out front and center," says the exalted McFarlane. If you played with the monster toys in real life, you'll now be slaying them in the game. Players don the guise of a monster slayer and must battle their way through hordes of sea creatures, mummies, and werewolves. You'll even find yourself sparring with Dracula and Frankenstein in this exciting fall release.

PC

## FAR CRY



**News flash:** Ubi Soft will soon release a first-person shooter that has nothing to do with Tom Clancy, Red Storm Entertainment, or squad-based gaming. However, Far Cry will be hyper-realistic and feature lush environments, cunning enemy AI, and a lot of gun bottles. Taking on the role of Jack Carver, a voluptuous female reporter has paid you a lot of money to take her to a deserted island which, it turns out, is the home of an evil criminal mastermind. Get ready to save the world and the girl this winter.



PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

# NBA LIVE 2004



We haven't been overly impressed with EA's NBA Live series as of late, but we're as giddy as schoolgirls over the new material that is currently being implemented into this year's title. The gameplay now boasts a smoother animation system, a slew of new offensive fake moves, and a better passing game. Off the court, you'll find yourself micromanaging every little detail and having a hand in everything - right down to the training of players and hiring of team doctors. As if it couldn't get much better, the PS2 online component is compatible with the SOCOM headset.

XBOX/PC

# THIEF III



The Thief series, known for both stealth and blending first-person shooting and RPG elements, is back. Eldes and Ion Storm, the duo behind Deus Ex, will unleash the next installment (tentatively called Thief III) on consoles for the first time - while still remaining a PC mainstay. An exciting new feature, called "body awareness," will let you see returning protagonist (and master thief) Garrett's busy hands and feet during activities like climbing walls and picking locks. We anxiously await the game's winter release and are confident it will steal our hearts.

PHOTOPHILE

GAMECUBE

# PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE III: C.A.R.D. REVOLUTION



If O' Dirty Bastard can change his name to Dirt McGirt ODB and start a new line of underwear called Dirty Drawers, Phantasy Star Online can most certainly become a card game! Okay, it sounds like a stupid idea, and the fact that it's exclusive for Nintendo's online network makes us wonder, but it may just work. Combat now features a turn-based card system. Your deck can consist of Hunters and Items or Arks and Bosses. In all honesty, we can't wait to see the strategies that unfold through multiplayer combat. If you don't have a modem, the game can once again be played offline. As of now, Sega and developer Sonic Team hope to ship the game in the first quarter of 2004.

PLAYSTATION 2

# SPY VS. SPY



Those rascally spies from the pages of *Mad Magazine* are at long last making their return to video games. Published by TDK and set to release for the PlayStation 2 in spring 2004, players will be able to suit up as the classic black and white spies, as well as the mysterious gray spy and the lethal mech spy. As you may have guessed, this game will specialize in multiplayer madness. Spanning 12 levels and featuring all of the gadgets and gags you'd come to expect from the magazine, you can't help but shed a tear at the prospects that it brings to the table.

GAME BOY ADVANCE

## DRAGON BALL Z: THE LEGACY OF GOKU II



Taking another chunk out of the sizeable Dragon Ball Z saga is *The Legacy of Goku II*. This title should appear in stores June 24, and it takes you from the Trunks Saga to the Cell Games, letting you play as Trunks, Vegeta, Piccolo, Gohan, and Goku in the process. Our big complaint of the last *Legacy* was that the real-time combat system was too simple. Has that been fixed? It doesn't appear so, but at least there's more of it to go around! LoG II purports to be three to four times larger than the last game, with over 200 maps to explore – and if there's one thing that makes fans get a Piccolo in their Trunks, it's more *Dragon Ball Z*!

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE/PC

## FULL THROTTLE: HELL ON WHEELS



LucasArts is bringing back a classic: badass biker Ben. The first adventure in 1996 had him trying to win back an ex while participating in the occasional fight or bike race. In *Hell on Wheels*, which will release this fall, Ben's life has gotten a lot more interesting – he now leads a biker gang called the Polecats and is out to uncover a seedy plot to ruin his town. Touting furious fighting, high-speed racing, and an original story could make this worth a trip to a digital Sturgis.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

## NBA JAM 2004



Acclaim is attempting to reinvigorate the classic *NBA Jam* series by returning to its arcade roots. Expect big slams, hidden characters, and the classic commentator. New features include an extra player per team (now three-on-three), Create-a-Player mode, and unlockables to be purchased in the Jam Store. *NBA Street Vol. 2* is the current arcade hoops hero, and it'll take more than a few flaming balls to unseat it. Can Acclaim drive the lane, or will it become another piece of Street's roadkill? We'll find out when *NBA Jam 2004* releases this October.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

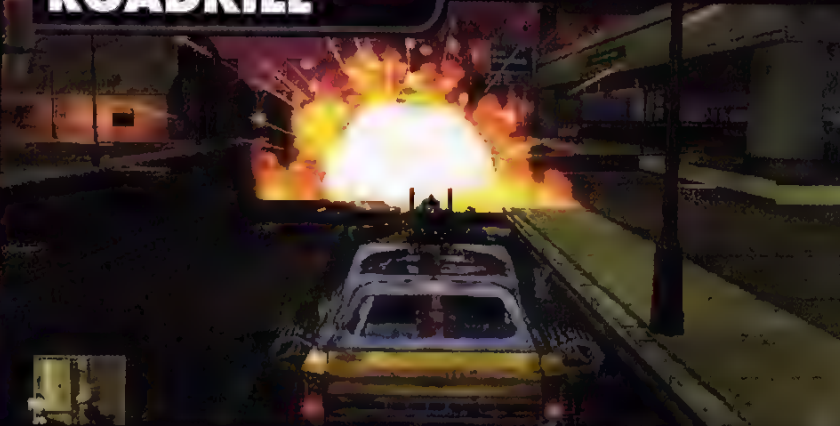
## ESPIONAGE



Being psychic is just plain cool – ask Uri Geller. Just keep him away from your grandma's silverware. Or, better yet, ask Nick Geller, an American super-agent blessed with a variety of superhuman mental powers. In *ESPIONAGE*, Nick will kick ass in a plethora of freaky ways: using his telekinetic forces to fling enemies like a used beanbag chair; starting fires; having out-of-body experiences to explore unfamiliar areas; and, last but not least, using mind control to turn vicious soldiers into his puppets of mass destruction – straight Goppetto style, fool Recognize!

PLAYSTATION 2

## ROADKILL



Midway's new combat driving game takes place in a suitably screwed-up post-apocalyptic Earth, which lends itself to the title's theme of anarchy-based clans battling for supremacy. While the game is still early in development, Midway is dangling the proverbial carrot of 24 cars with more than 30 different weapons; single, two-player cooperative, and head-to-head modes; and the intriguing possibility of car-to-car hijacking. Look for *RoadKill* sometime in the fall.



PLAYSTATION 2/PC

## AMERICAN IDOL



While *American Idol* the TV show is still sucking in an alarmingly large number of Americans, Codemasters is taking advantage this holiday season by putting out a series-inspired rhythm game. It's promised that the trio of judges will have nifty polygon versions of themselves to spout inane dialogue or (less fun) constructive criticism at your character. Your singer can show off their vocal stylings after a rigorous course of image styling, dance lessons, and maybe even a few career-ending background checks.

PLAYSTATION 2

## SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL



As video game expert Nelly once observed, it is indeed getting hot in herre. By "herre," we mean the PlayStation 2, which is finally getting its own volleyball/babe-oging title to compete with the Xbox's infamous DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball. Opting to focus on volleyball instead of being a shopping simulator, *Summer Heat* will offer 12 sand pits, 14 characters, a host of Super Spike special moves which can be unlocked through play, minigames, and a character customization screen where you can tweak your gal's appearance. This summer should be a booty-ful time to be a PS2 owner, thanks to Acclaim.



PC

## SAM & MAX II

While details on this are scarce like Buddhists at a gun show, *Sam & Max II* will bring back LucasArts' adventurers of 1993, a set of somewhat-bumbling freelance cops. Sam (the dog) and Max (a mutant bunny) were once hired to right the wrongs of a carnival gone awry. Whimsical graphics, cutting-edge voice acting, and a plot laden with the worst tourist traps of America marked the first installment. With any luck, more will be revealed about this comeback kid during E3.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

## WRATH UNLEASHED



The Collective was in an enviable position with *Wrath*: a competition over which company would get to publish their action/strategy title. LucasArts won out and promises to show off the prize at E3 this year. *Wrath Unleashed* features a bevy of fantastical creatures based on and inspired by the heroes and beasts of mythology. We infer that, in combination with some in-depth strategy, players will control their monster in actual combat. Long-range projectiles and hand-to-hand fighting methods are promised in the release this fall.

PLAYSTATION 2 / GAMECUBE

## THE MUPPET PARTY CRUISE



In our view, party games are extremely hit or miss (cough, Mario Party), and TDK is hoping that the Muppet tie-in will draw forth the masses. Promising 30 minigames of skill and six playable Muppets, you and three of your friends can wile away the hours with Kermit and crew this autumn.

PLAYSTATION 2 / GAMECUBE

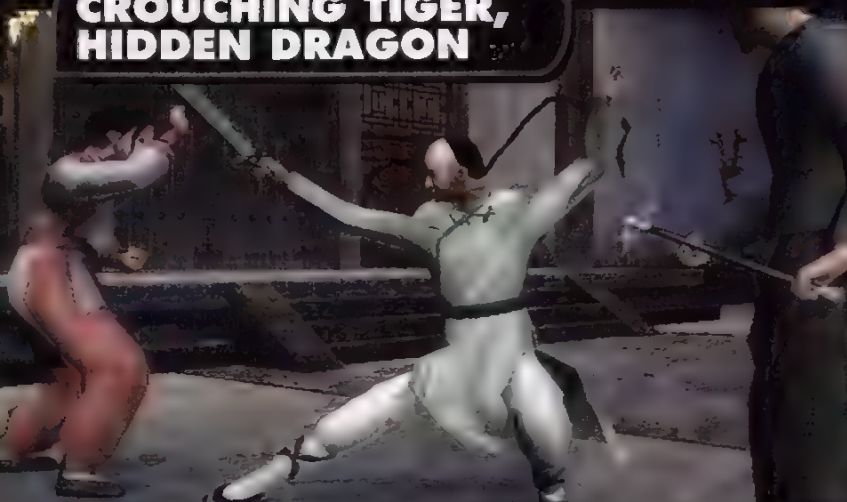
## TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU



Tak is a shaman's apprentice who must recover moonstones stolen by a rogue Juju to save the more noble Moon Juju. Using elements of the environment (animals, plants, weapons, and water), Tak must organize the right items to appease the friendly Juju that can help him in his task. THQ plans to release the promising platform title this fall. Hopefully, it will take advantage of what sounds to be an interesting puzzle dynamic with the forces of nature.

PLAYSTATION 2

## CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON



Last year at Sony's E3 party, Reiner drank 14 Red Bulls and decided he wanted to show everyone his "hidden dragon." As a result, the entire GI staff spent the night in the LA county lockup. We certainly expect that Ubi Soft's Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon will fare better than we did that fateful evening. Using both the story and main characters from the kung-fu classic, the title will allow gamers to engage in all the high-flying, gravity-defying swordplay that is the hallmark of the feature film. Look for it in August.

PLAYSTATION 2 / XBOX / PC

## NHL 2004



EA's focus for this year's release is in-game gameplay and graphics. As you can see from the screen shot, the player details are much more defined than before. On the gameplay front, performing dekes should be much easier and will no longer require unparalleled reflexes and hand coordination. Game Informer has learned NHL 2004 boasts an RPG Franchise mode that will allow players to suit up as the GM of their very own team. Along with international elite leagues, the developer is also adding online gameplay to the mix. NHL 2004 should be available at the beginning of the next hockey season.

PC

## EMPIRES: DAWN OF THE MODERN WORLD



Activision is betting that you'll be in the mood for some real-time strategy goodness this winter when it releases Empires. Spanning more than 1,000 years of history, this is a game that seems to have "I'm bored with Age of Mythology, what else is out there?" written all over it. Each empire will have its own unique advantages and disadvantages, but it'll be up to you to figure out how to compensate for each. May the RTS live forever.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

## SHREK 2: THE GAME



The first Shrek was stinkier than an ogre's jock strap. Perhaps sensing that resentful gamers might actually expect a playable product this time around, TDK has joined forces with experienced hands Activision (which will act as co-publisher) and Luxoflux (developer of the Vigilante 8 series) to create the sequel. Word has it that this will be a much longer and deeper platforming adventure, one that will allow players to switch control between Shrek and Donkey on the fly. A release date still hasn't been determined at this point in time.

XBOX/GAMECUBE

## DINOTOPIA: THE SUNSTONE ODYSSEY



TDK is releasing *Dinotopia: The Sunstone Odyssey* this summer to capitalize on Hallmark Entertainment's TV version last December. Set in the land where dinosaurs and people co-exist, the title also contains 24 levels and three modes of combat (melee, ranged, and indirect). Vicious is confident that it will fare better than the TV version, which was cancelled after only six episodes.

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/PC/PSONE

## NASCAR THUNDER 2004

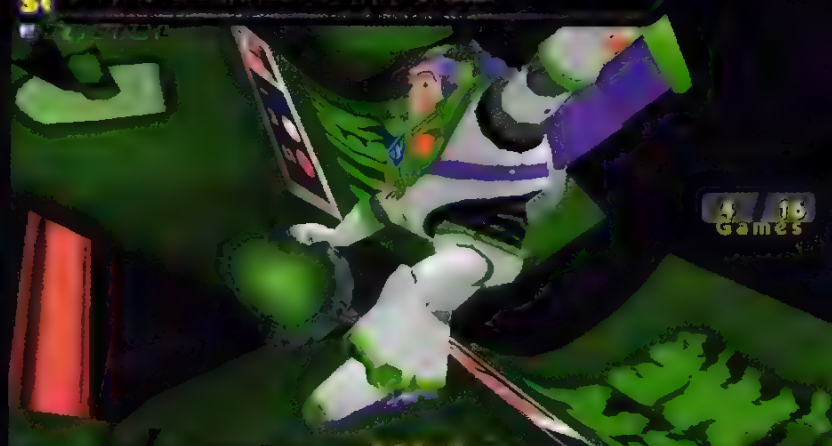


What's been missing from NASCAR games? Friendship; revenge; and the low-down, dirty double-cross. EA PR rep Scott Gamel tells us that *NASCAR Thunder 2004*'s mantra is "Race against the pack, not the track." New to this year's game are AI drivers that carry grudges and allegiances. DEI teammates Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Michael Waltrip will help each other when they can, but there is no love lost between Jeff Gordon and Rusty Wallace. In the revamped Career Mode, someone's beef against you can even last into the next race. Combine this new feature with improved graphics and online play, and this engine's running mighty hot. *Thunder* will appear on shelves this fall.

PHOTOPHILE

PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE

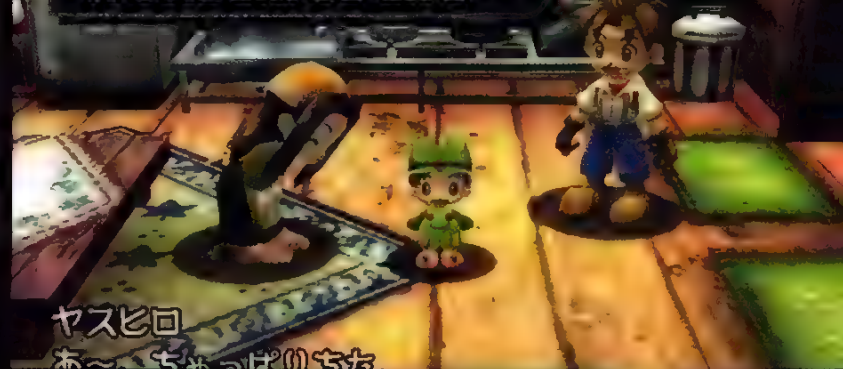
## DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE



We know what you're thinking: "Oh God! A Disney skateboarding game! How cool – NOT! I'm too hip for that – I'm going to stop reading this magazine and go watch *Jackass* and listen to 50 Cent while I get a tribal armband tattoo!" Well stud, we've got some news for you. It just so happens that this Activision title uses the Tony Hawk engine. We'll do the math for you: Skateboarding + Tony Hawk engine = A game that must be at least halfway decent. Even better, it's got a host of favorite Disney characters like Buzz Lightyear, Woody, Young Tarzan, Terk, Simba, and Rafeeki.

GAMECUBE

## HARVEST MOON: A WONDERFUL LIFE



Remove the stinky cow pies, and farming truly is a wonderful life. For this iteration of the cult favorite role-playing series, Natsume is reviving the marriage system. That's right, you'll be able to get hitched and have children. The story is separated into six chapters that span across 30 years of your character's life. Natsume is also introducing easier systems for growing veggies and tending to animals. As is the case with most GameCube games nowadays, *A Wonderful Life* will feature connectivity with the upcoming Game Boy Advance game, *Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town*. Look for both games this fall.

# REVIEWS

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



## THE SCORING SYSTEM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CONCEPT

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

## GRAPHICS

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

## SOUND

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

## PLAYABILITY

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

## ENTERTAINMENT

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

## REPLAY VALUE

The longevity of the title.

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



Content suitable for persons ages 3 and older.



Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older.



Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older.



Content suitable only for adults.



Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older.



Product is awaiting final rating.



### ANDY

**Handle:** The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** *The Amazing Adventures Of Cavalier & Clay*, *Tivo*, *Interpol*, *Pretty Girls Make Graves* **Dislikes:** Games That Don't Support Widescreen, Pepsi Removing Dr. Pepper From Various Fast Food Joints **Current Favorite Games:** *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, *Tides Of War*, *Midnight Club II*, *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow*

*Now retired from the rock scene, Andy spends endless hours locked in his home office; enjoying the benefits of high definition television and surround sound far away from those scary things he has often heard referred to as people. 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:** '80s Cartoons Transforming Into Games, Celery And Peanut Butter (Nummy!), LAN Networking For Consoles, Subwoofers That Shake Your Ass, Pit Pat From *Mr. Show* **Dislikes:** Microsoft Hinting That Fable Won't Release Until 2004, Cell Phone Drivers (If You Can't Do Both, Get Off The Frickin' Road, Loser!), Booger Eaters (Kristian!) **Current Favorite Games:** *Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow*, *Soul Calibur II*, *Mano Kart: Double Dash*, *Advance Wars 2*

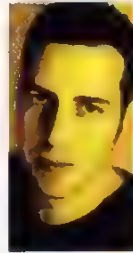
*Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 655 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his nine years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. 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:** *A Mighty Wind*, *X2: X-Men United*, *The Matrix Reloaded*, *My New Wheels* **Dislikes:** Sleazy Sales Tactics At Hopkins Honda, Disappointing X-Men Games, *Enter the Matrix* = Underwhelming **Current Favorite Games:** *Splinter Cell*, *The Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers*, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein: Tides Of War*

*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 Viking **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** Minnesota Vikings Season Tickets, *The New Yankee Workshop*, Zip Zaps **Dislikes:** Bugs (The Real Kind, And The Game Kind), The Denver Post, Doing The Dishes, Not Having A Dishwasher, Poop Lickers (Reiner!) **Current Favorite Games:** *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Halo*, *The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker*

*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, RPGs **Interests:** *Da Ai G Show*, *Mixing Up State Names* (Virginia/Illina), *Dancing* (After Enough Prodding), *The Quality Of Horsercing Games*, *Quarashi* **Dislikes:** Cigarette Smoking In Stop-Smoking Commercials (Gross!), *Lemon In My Water*, *Snot*, *My Inability To Sew* **Current Favorite Games:** *Postal 2*, *Wario Ware Inc.*, *Mega Microgames*, *Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow*, *Midnight Club II*, *NBA 2K3* (Xbox), *Metroid Prime*

*Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He's a former GWAR slave and moonlights as wrestler Justin "Violent" 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:** The Minnesota Wild, Andy Capp's Hot Fries, Two NASCAR Books: *Taking Stock* And *Cheating* **Dislikes:** The Avs (Especially Forsberg And Roy) And Their Arrogant Fans, The Vespa Mafia **Current Favorite Games:** *Midnight Club II*, *NHL 2K3*, *Madden NFL 2004*, *The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King*

*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 **Interests:** *Living With A Girl*, *Mohandas K. Gandhi*, *Leo Tolstoy*, *Fast Food Nation*, *Japanese Temples*, *Clouds*, *Game Boy Player*, *iPod Update 1.2.6*, *Talvin Singh* **Dislikes:** *The Ending Of The Film Dreamcatcher*, *Nike*, *Freddy Vs. Jason*, *Moving* **Current Favorite Games:** *Castlevania: Aria Of Sorrow*, *Evil Dead: A Fistful Of Boomstick*, *Street Fighter Alpha 3*

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



### LISA

**Handle:** La Game Nikita **Expertise:** Puzzle, RPGs, Action/Platform, Action/Adventure **Interests:** Wasabi Peanuts, Clearance Sections Of Those Stores That Are Too Hip For Their Own Good, Book Binding, New Messenger Bags **Dislikes:** Fajita (Stop With The Witty Naming Of Corporate Pizza Products, Already), Crackly MP3s, *My Kitchen* **Current Favorite Games:** *Swingerz Golf*, *Uru: Ages Of Myst*, *The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker* (Yeah, I'm Still Playing It)

*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 age 8. She has been known to wax philosophically about why Jigglypuff 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 croids 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 cells

**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*, and *Unreal Tournament*

**frame-rate** – 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

**Normal** – If someone asks you a question, and you don't know the answer, simply scream this word, then run away.

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

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

**Jaggies** – Graphical lines that are jagged when they should be straight

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

**minigame** – A small, simple game within a larger one

**motion-capture** – Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also 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. Those people and creatures you see wandering around in games that are not being controlled by actual humans

**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*

**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

**PSone** – Sony PlayStation

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

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

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

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

**SNES** – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

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

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

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

## REVIEWS



### GAME OF THE MONTH RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

*Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War* is more than a port of the PC smash hit. It is everything you could want for your Xbox, and a little bit more. Originally developed by id Software and Grey Matter, the game has now been super-charged for the Xbox by Nerve Software with enhanced graphics and exclusive weapons and enemies. Whether you're a single-player junkie or on Xbox Live, there is no denying that *Tides of War* is the best FPS since *Halo*. Find out why on page 110.

RETURN TO CASTLE

Wolfenstein™

### PG GAME OF THE MONTH STAR WARS GALAXIES

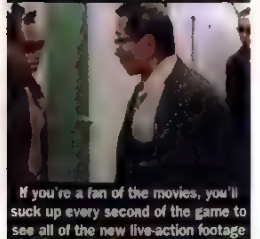
Is it possible to satiate a rabid Star Wars fan? The answer is now yes. *Star Wars Galaxies: An Empire Divided* is blazing new trails through the wilderness of MMO titles, and is likely to see both imitators and a sickeningly large following. Through a series of groundbreaking interface systems and a fascinating skill assemblage, *Galaxies* will have you throwing your life away faster than you can light up a crack pipe. Page 115



"...you won't be able to put it down until you've seen all of the new footage."



The hovercraft sequences can best be described as painful



If you're a fan of the movies, you'll suck up every second of the game to see all of the new live-action footage



By completing the game, you'll unlock a trailer for *The Matrix Revolutions*. Now how's that for a reward!

PLAYSTATION 2

# ENTER THE MATRIX

DOES IT REALLY LIVE UP TO THE HYPE?

I'd be lying if I told you that I wasn't excited about this game. How could I not be? Just the thought of running along walls and flipping to the side as I unload countless rounds of ammo all through the patented Matrix slow-motion is reason enough to hyperventilate, lose sleep, and camp out in front of my local retailer a week prior to release. Throw in a new story written and directed by the Wachowski brothers, including live-action footage filmed exclusively for the game, and I'm down for the count.

The story essentially gives you a different look at the events that are unfolding in the films – seen through the eyes of Niobe (Jada Pinkett Smith) and Ghost (Anthony Wong). Some of the sequences within the game actually affect or add to scenes within *The Matrix Reloaded*. The story within the game and movie intertwine to create a much bigger picture; and you won't know everything about The Matrix universe until you digest both.

As irresistible as this hook and its content may be, the live-action footage steals the show and seriously outguns everything else in the game. The detail of the in-game cinematics is not of the highest quality. For instance, the wheels on cars show crude squareness; hardly any of the effects pop off of the screen; and the action is not nearly as dynamic as one would expect from something bearing The Matrix namesake.

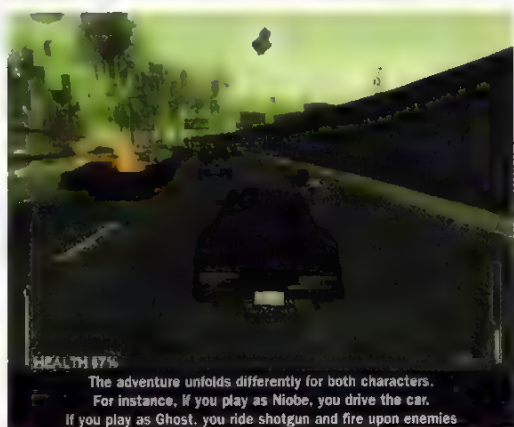
The gameplay is riddled with flaws as well. For every strength that the game showcases, a weakness counteracts

it. Pro: The hand-to-hand combat is explosive, fluidly animated, and overflowing with impressive Matrix-inspired maneuvers. Con: The combat is limited to two buttons, a sparse number of moves, and blindly flailing works just as well as any strategy that you can concoct.

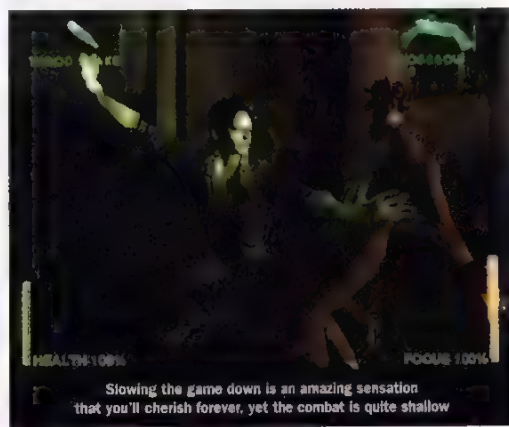
Pro: Activating slow motion while pulling the trigger on a firearm produces mind-blowing bullet trail effects. Con: You really have no control over aiming. It usually targets the closest enemies, but there are times where it pinpoints an enemy a floor below you, as opposed to the imminent threat directly in front of you. Pro: To avoid repetition, the game changes gears and unleashes car driving and hovercraft flying levels. Con: Both of these gameplay alterations are equipped with atrocious controls, obscure mission objectives, and very little in terms of entertainment. Pro: You'll salivate whenever a story break appears. Con: It takes a good 20 seconds to load a cinematic.

In a purely gaming sense, *Enter the Matrix* is mediocre at best. At most, it's a 7.5 out of 10. This type of game has been done better numerous times over. On the other hand, if you are a diehard fan of the films, it doesn't get much better than this. It's a 9.5 out of 10. The Matrix vibe is in full effect, and I can give you my personal guarantee that you won't be able to put it down until you've seen all of the new footage. The question is: Will you choose the red or blue pill? – REINER

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SHINY ENTERTAINMENT ■ DEVELOPER INFOGRAMES ■ RELEASE MAY 15

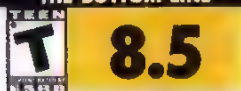


The adventure unfolds differently for both characters. For instance, if you play as Niobe, you drive the car. If you play as Ghost, you ride shotgun and fire upon enemies



Slowing the game down is an amazing sensation that you'll cherish forever, yet the combat is quite shallow

THE BOTTOM LINE



- **Concept:**  
The perfect companion to the Matrix films; featuring never-before-seen, live action footage filmed by the Wachowski brothers
- **Graphics:**  
The slow-motion effect and stylish movements mimic the material in the films, but everything else leaves much to be desired
- **Sound:**  
A heart-pounding score, and dialogue by the cast
- **Playability:**  
Cool moves, but the movement is a little sticky and targeting is completely out of your hands
- **Entertainment:**  
If you're a Matrix fan, it's impossible to put down
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderate

## SECOND OPINION

Three years from now, what will we think of *The Matrix* game? We'll probably look back and say things like, "Yeah, those driving levels really did suck butt." Or maybe, "Why did they put in the arrow? Why not just design the levels a little more coherently, and let us figure it out?" But right now, the music, cutscenes, and ability to dispatch unsuspecting cops in extravagant and creative ways really are thrills that I haven't had in a while. All of that, and the immensely gratifying movie footage made my enjoyment of the game so extreme, that it took an entire weekend of thought to decide that in reality (pun intended), the game has some big problems from a technical point of view. On the other hand, I really had a blast and I think that most Matrix fans won't be disappointed, especially in this high-tension time when the movies are coming out.

LISA – 8.5





**"The nonstop action Chaos Legion exhibits is unparalleled."**



Score well on a level to get more experience

Each Legion is very unique

Arcia's moves are totally different from Seig's

PLAYSTATION 2

# CHAOS LEGION

HAVOC WITH HELP

**D**evil May Cry 2 didn't live up to its predecessor, and Chaos Legion is both the cause and the cure. DMC 1 producer Shinji Mikami (also of Resident Evil fame) is heading up this game. It can best be described as Dynasty Warriors meets Guardian Heroes, meets Mega Man. Odd, yes; but read on, won't you?

Chaos Legion treads the fine line between strategy and button-mashing like an expert tight-rope walker. Main character Sieg does his share of sword swinging, to be sure; but without his loyal Legion summons, he's toast. These seven groups – with feel-good names like Hatred and Blasphemy – each possess unique powers and abilities. For example, Guilt consists of close-quarters swordsmen that work best against living monsters, while Malice features arrow-slinging allies that thrive while blasting mechanical foes from a distance.

Legions have multiple uses. When called upon, they can passively guard Sieg or be commanded to attack nearby enemies. However, when they're not invoked, your character is faster and causes more damage per strike. In this state, Legions may assist you with one button press. For example, the claw-wielding Flawed will jump on the heads of baddies, burrowing their talons into monster skull.

The more you use a certain Legion, the more experience they gain. Between stages, you can level them up – who doesn't love doing that? This may bring about an increase in their numbers, or can even give new abilities to Sieg himself

(better lock-on, double-jump, etc.). Like Mega Man, a boss can be a cakewalk or a pain, depending on which Legion you use against him. Later in the game, you unlock the ability to revisit conquered areas.

The good-versus-evil sermon the game preaches will have you wondering who's on which side, but its Japanese style of storytelling may not find many fans on these shores. Seig is no angel. His arch-rival Delacroix is also his closest friend. The gun-toting Arcia, who's only playable in one level until you beat the game, isn't quite so deep – she's merely seeking revenge against her family's killer.

The nonstop action Chaos Legion exhibits is unparalleled in next-gen games. There are almost always dozens of enemies for you to dispatch. Once your Legions increase in size and strength, the battles become even larger in scale. This wouldn't be possible in Devil May Cry's pre-rendered worlds, but the camera has problems of its own. Other complaints include not being able to stop your combo, slow loading, and an inability to defend when enemies perpetually blast you.

Is this what Devil May Cry 2 should've been? Despite many similarities, I think that's comparing apples to oranges. Chaos Legion does carry on Capcom's – and Mikami's – pedigree with pride. The RPG elements add a great level of depth. I predict this game will garner a legion of fans; make sure you're one of them. – **JUSTIN**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** JULY 8



The Power Legion make good bodyguards



You killed Seila, but why?

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
**T** **8.5**  
ESRB

- **Concept:**  
More action than you can shake a sword at – hence your Legion allies
- **Graphics:**  
I'm surprised things don't slow down when the battles get hot and heavy. A lot of the 3D environments look similar
- **Sound:**  
Good voiceovers and music that really suit the mood
- **Playability:**  
Your standard sword-swinging controls. Commanding your Legions is as easy as can be
- **Entertainment:**  
This is an action game with depth. Leveling up is fun, and the combat is intense
- **Replay Value:**  
High

**SECOND OPINION**

I am reticent to claim that Chaos Legion is superior to Devil May Cry. Most gamers exalt DMC to a class all its own because of the ambition and innovation that went into its creation. Chaos Legion focuses purely on nonstop action with a more constrained approach; you might call CL a next-gen Final Fight. The game quickly ushers players from one area to the next, constantly forcing them into new engagements. Since CL plays almost exactly like DMC, the action manages to remain entertaining throughout. However, Seig (the hero) lacks an extensive move list and enemies are often repeated. Even with the inclusion of Legions (monsters that fight at your side), gameplay occasionally grows tiresome. Fortunately, the adventure doesn't last too terribly long, making CL a solid weekend excursion.

**CHET - 8.25**

REVIEWS



**"Interaction within the environment and the board game movement and structure are tedious and archaic."**

PLAYSTATION 2

# UNLIMITED SAGA

FUN TURNED TEDIOUS

**A**s a huge fan of RPGs, I appreciate that developer Square continues to explore the genre outside of precedents set by Final Fantasy. At the forefront of this experimentation is the SaGa series. Each of the three titles scarcely resemble one another, which I believe is simultaneously its main asset and weakness. In the case of SaGa Frontier (the previous game), this trial resulted in a wonderfully unique experience – one that I wish carried over into Unlimited SaGa. However, the end product, in more ways than one, could be best described as an error.

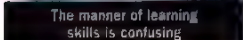
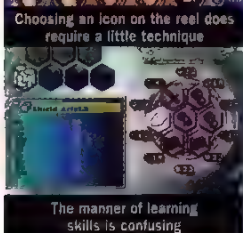
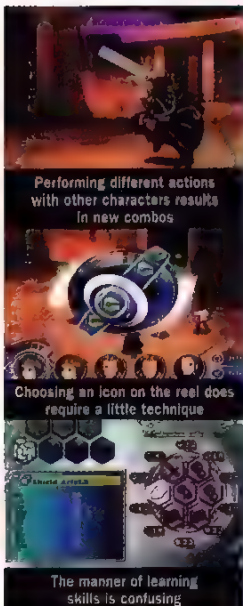
Foremost, the plot, even by industry standards, is trite at best, and often times convoluted. Players begin their journey by selecting one character from a list of seven. Although their paths intertwine throughout, each scenario differs greatly, thereby presenting the possibility of a wonderfully epic tale and an insane amount of replay value. Unfortunately, each story usually consists of themes and events gamers have seen in RPGs for years. However, it's not hackneyed plot that bothers me, it's the way in which Square conveys it. The main task is often unclear, and the numerous peripheral adventures hardly relate to

anything. At the same time, if you opt to disregard many side quests – a normal reaction to busy work – you quickly become disillusioned with the game's grandiose feel and presentation and see it for what it is: shallow.

Fortunately, depth begins to enter the picture once combat commences. Players can engage battles with up to seven characters at their disposal. Each turn allows for five actions, making elaborate five-hit combos feasible. Once you select your tactics, a slot reel appears that contains various icons designating different levels and types for that action – normal, critical, etc. Furthermore, players can learn a whole host of weapon techniques, skills such as negotiating and swimming, and endless forms of magic. If acquainting yourself with the skill tree and combat system proved to be significantly less tedious and confusing, I would undoubtedly enjoy Unlimited SaGa much more.

Interaction within the environment and the board game movement and structure are tedious and archaic. In the end, only the most persistent players will appreciate this game; but even those gamers will probably be hard up to find enough rewards to justify the effort. – **CHET**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SQUARE ENIX ■ **DEVELOPER** SQUARE ■ **RELEASE** JULY 1



**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
TEEN  
**T**  
6.5

- **Concept:**  
The idea that more is better – gone wrong
- **Graphics:**  
The character models are nice, but they lack even a respectable amount of animation. The environments consist of mere boards
- **Sound:**  
The music is catchy and appropriate
- **Playability:**  
Almost everything about the interface is confusing and cumbersome
- **Entertainment:**  
The game has some depth to its combat and offers plenty of gameplay, but the said tedium prevents much enjoyment
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderately Low

**SECOND OPINION**

Square Enix's attempt to breathe the new life into the role-playing genre is an experiment that has gone horribly wrong. Although the majority of content is uniquely crafted, Unlimited SaGa can best be summarized as a train wreck of innovative ideas. Dungeon exploration unfolds like a board game. In such, rather than immersing players in detailed worlds, your character simply hops along a flat board. When you hit a certain square, something happens. Never before have I encountered a design that detaches the player from the world and story so quickly. Tack on the fact the tale is divided between seven characters, which produces a confusing, garbled mess of a plot, and you're looking at one of the least attractive RPGs in quite some time. I do like the timed slot reel attacks, but it's a rare glimmer of light in an otherwise dark game.

**REINER – 6**



"I shudder to think that inspiration may have been drawn from Steven Seagal's *Under Siege* movies."

PLAYSTATION 2

# RESIDENT EVIL DEAD AIM

DEAD IN THE WATER

**D**ead Aim transcends genre definition with a unique gameplay amalgamation that combines the third-person action and rich exploration aspects of Resident Evil with the traditional arcade-styled light gun shooting of The House of the Dead. This obscure video game brew not only sounds like a garbled mess, it plays like one as well.

The title really starts off on the wrong foot. Seeing that the story of Dead Aim takes place on a luxury cruiser makes me believe that Capcom is struggling to come up with new concepts for Resident Evil. First a train...now a boat. I shudder to think that inspiration may have been drawn from Steven Seagal's *Under Siege* movies. In the past, Resident Evil's campiness was matched by its jump-out-of-your-seat suspense and vomit-inducing gore. Neither of these elements are expressed in Dead Aim. As if it couldn't get worse, Dead Aim also lacks the necessary tone-setting elements for a survival horror game. For instance, you won't freeze in your tracks as you enter a dimly lit hallway, or feel your heartbeat race over nerve-racking ambient sounds. All of the environments are well lit and look amazingly pristine.

The only element that really fits into the Resident Evil world is how character movement is handled. Seeing that the series has struggled in this area, I wouldn't necessarily say this is a good thing. The character turns so slowly that you feel like

you're steering the Exxon Valdez. A strafe maneuver has been added to make combat a little less frantic, but as a whole, the gameplay package is very clunky. Tack on an awkward first-person shooting component, and you can see where the troubled gameplay falls completely apart. Even when using the Guncon 2 accessory, the transition between third-person and stationary first-person is touchy and next to impossible to master. Once first-person is activated, you can't move and fire at the same time. If you try to move, it reverts back to third-person. Yes, I know this is how every RE is stylized, but it's a flaw that has only gotten worse with time.

I do like the fact that you can pick up as many healing-related items as you see fit. I pray that this becomes a mainstay not only in the Gun Survivor series, but for Resident Evil in general. I also appreciate the difficulty level that Capcom has incorporated. For instance, you rarely find yourself engaging just one creature. They usually attack in droves. If you have shotgun ammo handy for moments like these, watching bodies fly across the screen proves to be an incredibly amusing event.

It seemed like a good idea to blend these two genres, but Dead Aim really needed to be one or the other. If you have a Guncon 2 (which is probably collecting dust), it's definitely worth a look; but take a good long gander at it before laying down your hard-earned cash. — **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE



6

■ **Concept:**  
A full-on Resident Evil/shooter hybrid that shows great potential, but ultimately leaves little to be desired

■ **Graphics:**  
The environments are barren, and the lighting just doesn't fit a game of this caliber

■ **Sound:**  
Missing tone-setting ambience, but it does have the same great campy dialogue

■ **Playability:**  
Not being able to move and shoot is idiotic

■ **Entertainment:**  
It's not scary...not necessarily gory...and far from enjoyable

■ **Replay Value:**  
Low

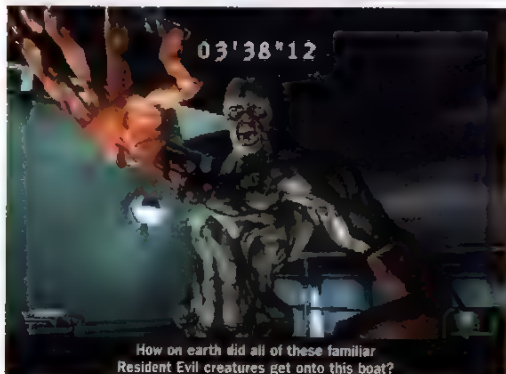


When a zombie grabs you...

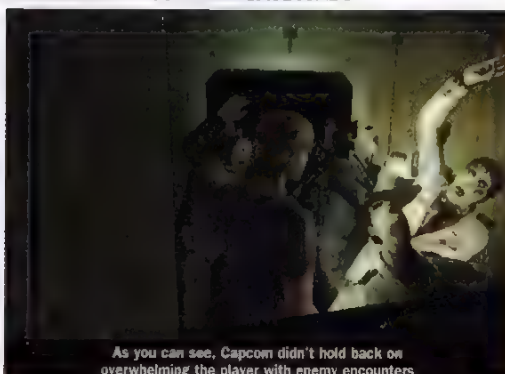
...you can knock it away

True to the Resident Evil name, control switches between two characters

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 3



How on earth did all of these familiar Resident Evil creatures get onto this boat?



As you can see, Capcom didn't hold back on overwhelming the player with enemy encounters

SECOND OPINION

In the sequel to Resident Evil Survivor, Capcom continues to toy with its patented survival horror formula, with decidedly mixed results. In theory, I like the idea of jettisoning RE's choppy control scheme and combat, but this is not the way to do it. Basically, the bulk of the game plays just like any other title in the series, but switches to a first-person House of the Dead-style view when you start firing your weapon. Is it cool? Not really. It's jarring to have your perspective changing every few seconds, and the aiming and character movement is too slow to give the kind of thrills you expect from a good shoot 'em up. With or without the Guncon 2, it's difficult to navigate through the masses of zombies the game throws at you, and the sheer number of enemies detracts from your feeling of suspense — which makes this an RE title that doesn't even manage to scare you.

MATT — 6.5

## REVIEWS



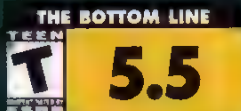
PLAYSTATION 2

# X2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

## A BAD MUTATION

**F**undamental gameplay mistakes and atrocious designs run rampant through every inch of this miserable PlayStation 2 application. If you're not pulling your hair out over the little things like enemies shooting through walls; you'll likely burst a blood vessel or two over the aggravating free-flowing camera, finicky combat controls, sticky character movement, bizarre stealth mode, and one-dimensional scope of the level and mission designs.

There are a handful of clever ideas expressed within this game, such as the concept of retracting your claws to activate Wolverine's accelerated healing factor, nostalgic costumes, and the visually impressive proximity-based stealth kill system – which is reminiscent of the techniques used within The Mark of Kri. As exciting as these elements may be, when the game feels like it's duct-taped together, the joys that it brings to the table are short lived. It really does feel as though developer Gene Pool threw everything together at the last minute and rushed it out the door to retailers. It's one of those games that is plagued to the point that makes it way too frustrating to play. — REINER



- Concept:** A brawler that fully taps into Wolverine's mutant abilities and combat prowess.
- Graphics:** The stealth kill animations look fantastic; but the environments are merely static, the lighting is not very impressive, and the effects are 32-bit-esque.
- Sound:** A brilliantly orchestrated score and top-rate spoken dialogue by the likes of Mark Hamill and Patrick Stewart.
- Playability:** Every little movement feels too loose or a little off the mark. This of course leads to a painful gameplay experience.
- Entertainment:** There are some great ideas at work here, but they didn't come together in the end.
- Replay Value:** Low.

### SECOND OPINION

How did Activision mess up Wolverine? It starts with the Strikes, which aren't even combo based, but are predicated on your position in relation to foes. The problem here is that they are detected infrequently. Furthermore, the lock-on is also frustrating. These are just a few ills of a game that is poorly designed pretty much from top to bottom.

KATO — 6

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** GENE POOL/WARTHOG ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 15



PLAYSTATION 2

# AUTO MODELLISTA



PRECISION HANDLING

**I**f you're surprised that Capcom is putting out a racing game, you'll be absolutely shocked once you actually get your hands on this one. Auto Modellista's driving is distinctly geared towards the hardcore sim-race set, despite the way the game looks graphically. While I enjoy this aspect of Modellista, the speed lines are more novelty than anything else – and I don't think that they make things seem faster.

As a rule, you go faster when all four tires are squarely touching the road. Hit the gas at the wrong point and you'll compromise your traction and find yourself in an over or understeer situation. Sounds simple, but you'll have to learn it like the back of your hand to be successful on the track. Toward this end, the game's garage provides a wealth of parts and helpful explanations on when to use them. Modellista requires coordination of driving technique and knowing your car, its parts, and the type of track you're racing at all times.

The game's pacing is easier than GT, letting you fill up your garage pretty quickly – which is great fun since you can race your stable online. Here you really get to see garages come into play, as you'll have to have all of your 250-plus horses in a row to keep from being blown away by some punk kid and the souped-up ride he's put together. My only major complaint with the game in general is the sometimes poor AI and the laughable bumper car collision. I would also have liked longer career races, less repetitive tracks, and a larger field of competitors. As it stands, however, Capcom has quietly built a sort of bite-sized Gran Turismo that is solid in its own right. — KATO



Speed lines are one of the graphical touches that spruce up the cel shading

This rainy course makes corners even tougher

Customization is the key to winning...

...and it helps make your garage look cool, too

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING (1 TO 8-PLAYERS ONLINE/BROADBAND ONLY)  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 26

### THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**

**8**

- Concept:** Capcom comes out with a Gran Turismo wannabe in disguise.
- Graphics:** It's not just flat color plates. Check out the shading on the autumn leaves course and you'll be amazed.
- Sound:** Hardly noticeable.
- Playability:** Read your emails and use the easy tune-ups for valuable handling and driving tips.
- Entertainment:** I have a feeling that this game will be more frustration than fun, but sim fans will have something to chew on.
- Replay Value:** Moderately High.

### SECOND OPINION

Auto Modellista is a strange one, to be sure. It's not that this is a bad game – it's most certainly a quality racing title – but I can't quite figure out why Capcom thinks this curiosity is going to appeal to. I definitely approve of the developers' much-publicized use of cel-shaded graphics. You've never seen a racing game that looks like this, and I can't remember being this dazzled by what was happening on my television screen for quite some time. I think a lot of people are going to be surprised that under this cartoonish experience lies not an arcade racer, but a sim that emulates Gran Turismo's depth of customization, car selection, and a huge number of ways to tweak your ride's appearance. Still, the control (especially the ploughing drift) and the low level of difficulty will put off most hardcore driving gamers.

MATT — 7.75



PLAYSTATION 2

# DOT HACK VOL. 2: MUTATION

DOT HACK EVOLUTION?

**B**andai has split what would normally be a single, epic RPG adventure into four \$50 installments. What keeps me from screaming "rip-off," however, is the fact that I do actually want to continue playing.

If you're not the sort to dive into leveling up and battling for obscure items and the joy of trading them, then you're on the wrong bus. Between taking care of my party and developing combat strategies to deal with the real-time action, melees are full of the joy of victory and the agony of defeat. This is especially true the higher your level, although newcomers to the series can dive right in without playing the first Dot Hack. For those returning, your saves from the first will work.

The camera is still bad and the dungeons desperately need a makeover. It may sound unrealistic to expect those things from what's not a true sequel, but Bandai has yet to convince me that it couldn't have just combined these first two volumes into one title. — **KATO**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** BANDAI ■ **DEVELOPER** CYBERCONNECT2  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 13

**SECOND OPINION**

Dot Hack is still fun in this (expensive) second installment. Kudos to Bandai for delivering an episodic series in one console generation, but it exposes potential problems: mainly, striking a balance between newbies and veterans of the series. It can't be all things to all gamers, but it gets an A for effort.

**JUSTIN - 7.5**

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
 T **7.75**

- **Concept:** Make gamers pay for a \$50 sequel — without any real enhancements
- **Graphics:** There's nothing here that makes the formula better or worse
- **Sound:** Hear that? It's the sound of cash registers ringing
- **Playability:** Battles require a good amount of strategy, but the camera is a pain in the neck
- **Entertainment:** Even away from the storyline, there's still a lot to get involved with
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High



PLAYSTATION 2

# EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

HACK 'N SLASH ASH

**G**ames based on this classic have been universally awful, featuring too ambitious an attempt at actual puzzles and other survival-horror standbys. *Evil Dead* shouldn't imitate *Resident Evil*, people!

Playing in a third-person perspective, Ash is stuck in Dearborn with a legion of Deadites, a chainsaw, and a decent arsenal of upgradable weapons.

The screen can fill with over 50 zombies at a time, which makes the hack 'n' slash action nearly frantic. Rightfully, this game is all about crappy one-liners and wasting a horde of dead guys in the most bloody manner possible. In that regard, it's mighty good.

But, being picky, it's easy to get lost and want to just give up, as health is in short supply toward the beginning. Boomstick isn't out to change the world, but it does excel at what the movies do best: making mass bloodletting entertaining as hell, and all at a handy \$20 price point. — **LISA**

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** VIS INTERACTIVE  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 25

**SECOND OPINION**

A *Fistful of Boomstick's* technology isn't impressive, but it certainly does a great job of capturing the campy violence of the movies. Overall, the gameplay and adventure is rather simple. However, I can't deny how satisfying it is to slice through Deadites with a chainsaw attached to one arm, and a shotgun delivering death on the other. Fans will love it, and for others it's at least worth a rental.

**ANDY - 7.75**

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
 M **7.75**

- **Concept:** Put out an *Evil Dead* title that is just the best parts of the franchise: blood, guts, and one-liners
- **Graphics:** With an entire city to roam around in, the backgrounds can be a little bland. Particle effects rock, though
- **Sound:** Bruce Campbell? Do I have to say more?
- **Playability:** The camera is nice and tight, without the motion-sickness inducing swing à la *GTA III*
- **Entertainment:** Killing zombies and not much more. But, there are a heck of a lot of 'em
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

PLAYSTATION 2

# G1 JOCKEY 3

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 27



Like *Gallop Racer 2003*, this is a damn good horseracing game. However, I can't see gamers having more than one filly in their stables, and this one loses by a neck. Its racing is a tad more

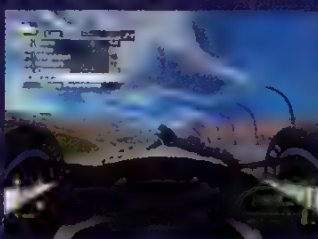
complex, and I like the workouts. I think *Gallop's* career mode is better, though, with its jockey attributes. I'd rather own the horses than play as a freelance jockey like you are in *G1*. Also, there is no horse raising or gambling here, but the names are better and steeplechases are fun. *Gallop* is the favorite, but *G1* is far from destined for the Elmer's glue factory. — **JUSTIN**

E 8

PLAYSTATION 2

# INDYCAR SERIES

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 20



In America, NASCAR is king, but Indy fans will be warmed by the fact that Codemasters has tried its best to give you the full treatment complete with the real drivers and tracks. Graphically,

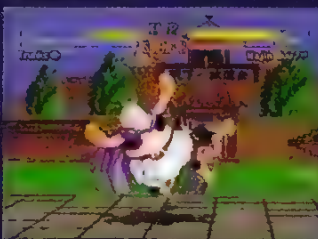
this game is an ugly stepchild, but it does have a great sense of speed. It's truly exciting when the AI cars gets loose in front of you and cause a huge pile-up for you to race through. Unlike NASCAR, rubbing isn't racing, which goes hand-in-hand with the game's strict damage model. Otherwise, *IndyCar* is a pretty vanilla racer that will have limited appeal outside of the grandstands. — **KATO**

E 7

PSONE

# DRAGON BALL Z ULTIMATE BATTLE 22

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRADES  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25



Before you chastise me for being an ignorant butthead who doesn't get *DBZ*, just try, for a second, to look beyond your seemingly lascivious obsession with the *DBZ* world. If you can, you'll realize

*Ultimate Battle 22* does more wrong than right. Foremost, its lack of ambition will grossly overwhelm anyone familiar with the series of games. What's more, the control is stiff and imprecise; and the number of gameplay modes is pathetic. — **CHET**

T 5



"I can't state strongly enough how much of a blast this game is at this very specific point in time."

GAMECUBE

# ENTER THE MATRIX

FAN BOY HAVEN

I know for a fact that hundreds of thousands, if not a small handful of millions, of you will plop down \$50 for Enter the Matrix and be perfectly amused. This is excellent, and honestly, the entire point of video games. A while from now, the glow of new Matrix material will wear off the title, the movies will be out, the DVDs with 60 bazillion hours of extra features will have released, along with maybe a trade paperback or two. What will the game hold then? Hefty sprinkles of seriously good material, and an unfortunately plump pile of piddly problems.

Let it be known, though, that when the Matrix is good, it is very good. The soundtrack, for example, has the best parts of Matrix techno alternating with periods of near silence. Racing through a skyscraper while evading agents really is better with the sound on loud. Go ahead, risk your deposit, anger your neighbors, or scare your mom; it's completely worth it.

Animations are also excellent due to the extensive motion capture work of the game's stars. With the cartwheel-off-of-a-wall trick looking as good as it does, I assert that the disproportionately large amount of time spent on animation was well worth it. With regard to bullet time, even though other games ripped the move off long ago, the concept is clearly at home here, and doesn't feel like such a gimmick.

On top of all that, there's Shiny's ace in the hole: an hour and a half of cinematics tying the game into the movie. These scenes are mostly on the short side, but have nearly equivalent production values to the films.

But then, there are downfalls. The driving really is as bad as watching an *About Quilting* marathon on Discovery with a stinky relative that talks too much about your personal life. Thankfully, there are blessed few of them.

Besides that one truly miserable downfall, the other problems are what will ultimately make Enter the Matrix merely an okay game that benefits greatly from its movie license. Levels are designed to make you run up as many flights of stairs, around as many boxes, or between as many precariously perched storage shelves as a single human can tolerate. Not being able to switch your target is just plain awful and the load times are long enough to let me answer a few emails between stages.

Despite these (admittedly major) shortcomings, I can't state strongly enough how much of a blast this game is at this very specific point in time. Later, we can gripe; but now we can run for the hard line like a freakin' madman, and love every second. — LISA

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T 8.5

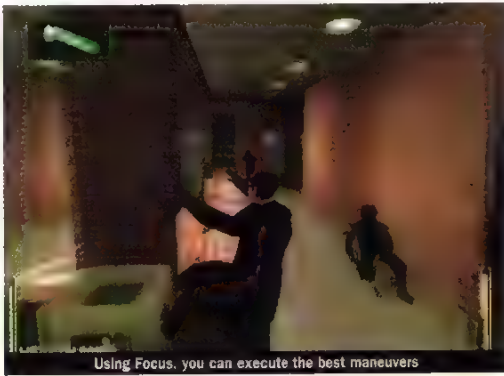
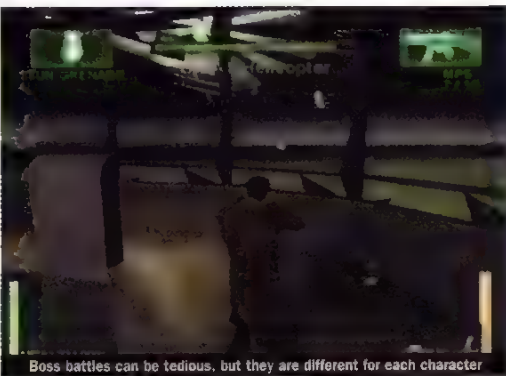
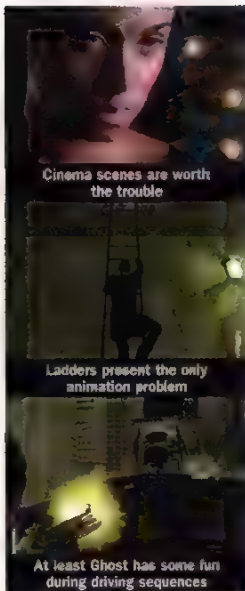
- Concept:** Work with the Wachowski brothers and make a straight-out action game full of extra footage that ties into the forthcoming films
- Graphics:** Animations are smooth and offer a lot of variety
- Sound:** Thumping soundtrack that you can't help but be pulled into
- Playability:** Because there just aren't as many buttons on the GameCube controller, a few layout options would have been handy
- Entertainment:** You can run up walls and dodge bullets. You need more?
- Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Enter the Matrix is not a bad game; it's just a mediocre one with a lot of cool cutscenes and extras. For those of you that live and die by every little bit of minutia of the films, the footage contained in this game is more than enough of a reason to put down your fifty bucks. Make no mistake — these extra scenes are very entertaining, exhibiting all the production values of the films themselves, and flesh out the backstory of two minor characters from *The Matrix Reloaded*. Unfortunately, the game that Shiny built around these scenes is plagued with most of the frustrations that are common to third-person action games (aggravating boss battles, boring and pointless driving sequences, poor targeting and camera work, and collision issues galore). While the fighting animations are cool, you've pretty much done everything after 20 minutes, and — unfortunately for this game — you've already seen many of these tricks before in Matrix-inspired titles like Max Payne and Shinobi.

MATT — 7.5

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER SHINY ENTERTAINMENT ■ DEVELOPER INFOGRAMES ■ RELEASE MAY 15





LEFT 21

- Earth Stomp
- Dual Restore

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T**  
ESRB

**8.5**

- **Concept:**  
An RPG that borrows elements from card games like Yu-Gi-Oh
- **Graphics:**  
They're nothing spectacular, but they certainly aren't bad
- **Sound:**  
The music is actually quite pleasant, but the voices aren't great
- **Playability:**  
Mapping cards to the face buttons works wonderfully
- **Entertainment:**  
The card game elements add a lot of depth, and since it is a real-time RPG, the action always remains exciting
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderate

SECOND OPINION

From Software is notorious for releasing the same game over and over again. Given the fact that *Lost Kingdoms* was a great game to begin with, I really can't complain about *Lost Kingdoms II* being the same game with new cards and different maps. In this respect, one can't help but be disappointed that From didn't try to make a more robust title; but at the same time, if you couldn't get enough of the first one, you can always whet your whistle with this refill. The 100 new cards (expanding to over 200 in total), and the new monster transformation ability – which allows you to take on a beast form – do expand upon combat strategies and generate a degree of replay. Diehard fanatics of the original will certainly get something out of it, but I can honestly say that my entire experience with *Lost Kingdoms II* felt like déjà vu.

REINER – 8

GAMECUBE

# LOST KINGDOMS II

A KINGDOM MAINTAINED

**C**reating a dungeon crawler is, in a manner of speaking, analogous to walking a tightrope. The inherent structure of the genre requires a relatively deep character-growth experience and compelling maps, but demanding too much or too little in either of these areas will promptly send the player plummeting into the most banal reaches of gaming.

*Lost Kingdoms II* excels at this balancing act. Players battle enemies with a set of cards; as you would in *Pokémon* or *Yu-Gi-Oh*, but in real-time. So, there are literally hundreds of cards to collect, create, and evolve. Furthermore, each card is divided into two categories: its elemental type and manner of attack. Some creatures function like summons, while others execute one move instantly and disappear. Although combat sounds complicated, most players will find it simple after a level, yet rich enough in its subtleties to remain engaging throughout.

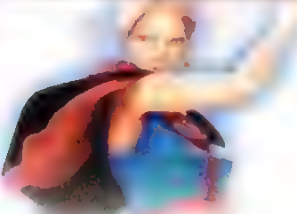
Since you can only bring a single deck consisting of 30 cards into any level, each stage never feels too long or overwhelming. This constraint permits just the right amount of enemy encounters and only a few objectives and secrets. As a result, players get to enjoy a large variety of levels, puzzles, and monster types.

From Software clearly understands the delicacy of the balance that it successfully achieved in the original, which might be the reason it didn't make any significant changes with this edition. Outside of the enhanced graphics and menu system, and a couple of small additions to gameplay, *Lost Kingdoms II* isn't very distinct from its predecessor. In fact it's so similar, that it feels more like an expansion pack than a true sequel.

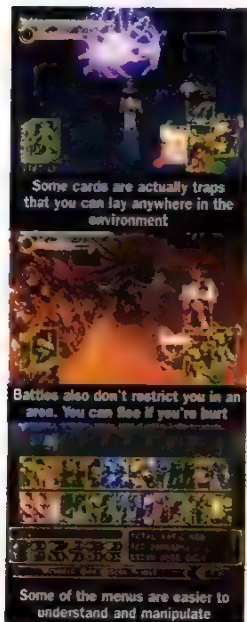
The developer also refrained from fixing any of the game's problems. Foremost, the story, dialogue, and voice acting are adequate at best. The plot, in particular, is thinner than the DVD it's copied on – making it difficult to really become involved with the characters and the plight of the heroine, Tara. Plus, the camera requires a little too much micro-management during intense battles, so it's difficult to keep track of everything happening onscreen.

Nevertheless, fans who weren't satiated the first time around will definitely have an equally enjoyable experience with its successor. If you have yet to play this series and like card games or RPGs, *Lost Kingdoms II* is a no-brainer. – CHET

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER FROM SOFTWARE ■ RELEASE MAY 13



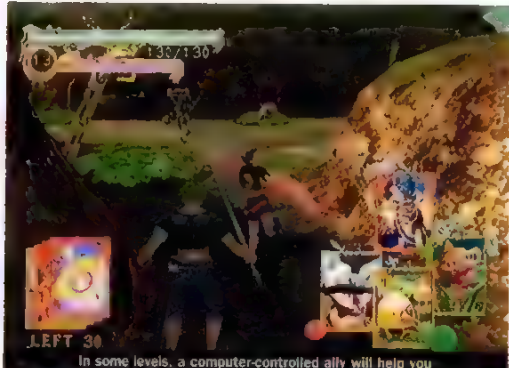
**"If you have yet to play this series and like card games or RPGs, *Lost Kingdoms II* is a no-brainer."**



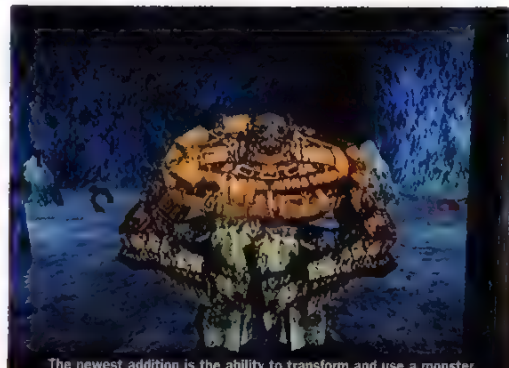
Some cards are actually traps that you can lay anywhere in the environment.

Battles also don't restrict you in an area. You can flee if you're hurt.

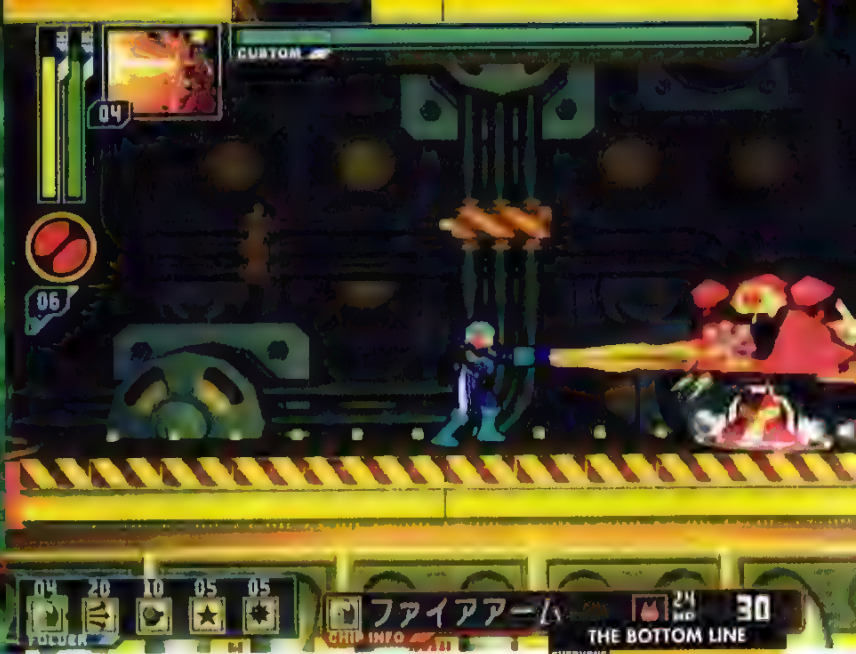
Some of the menus are easier to understand and manipulate.



LEFT 30 In some levels, a computer-controlled ally will help you.



The newest addition is the ability to transform and use a monster.



“...this Mega Man hybrid comes up short in a number of key areas.”



Series staples like the pipe glide make a return.



He must be really happy to see you!

Worst enemy design ever!

GAMECUBE

# MEGA MAN: NETWORK TRANSMISSION

## TRANSMISSION LOST

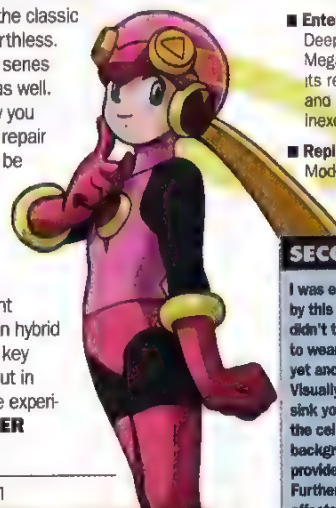
**N**etwork Transmission borrows elements from Mega Man's most accomplished adventures and combines them to forge an inclusive and unique gameplay package. The expansive chip system from Battle Network is in full effect, but the gameplay itself harks back to the series' more traditional side-scrolling roots. It's an attractive amalgamation that generates a wealth of interesting gameplay elements.

Unlike the typical Mega Man gameplay formula, you won't be limited to just a peashooter and an assortment of weapons that you've accumulated from boss battles. As you progress through levels, you'll collect attack chips – which will allow you to unleash over 100 different combat maneuvers. As you can probably imagine, this enhancement really opens up the gameplay and allows users to customize the arsenal that they believe will best suit the enemy types and boss for a specific level. Offensively, you are able to assemble a variety of short-range moves, such as different sword attacks; or projectiles that include explosives, multi-angle shots, and ricochet abilities. Mega Man rarely takes to the defensive, but you actually have the option to equip a shield if you feel that you're taking too much heat.

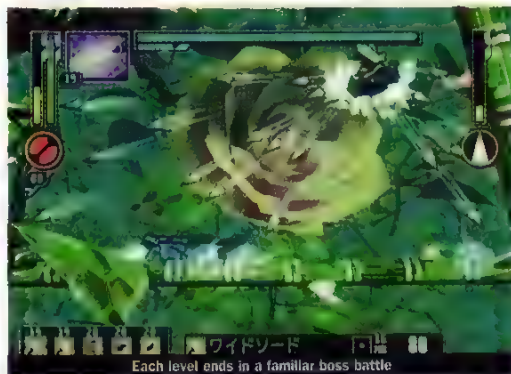
Certain chips also hold additional properties. You are able to upgrade the blue bomber's jumping ability and number of hit points. The problem that this game runs into is that it clings too tightly to the tried-and-true Mega Man formula. Your selection

of armaments is certainly diverse, but the gameplay and stage progressions are as straightforward and limiting as the old 8-bit titles. Outside of the flashy cel-shaded graphics and expansive arsenal, this is the same Mega Man we've been playing since the mid-eighties. To make matters worse, the basic mechanics, like jumping and sliding, are not as precise as they should be. To ensure that gamers tap into the broad range of offensive maneuvers, the classic peashooter attack is next to worthless. The balance that has made the series enjoyable is noticeably absent as well. Bosses may be tackled any way you please, and if you have enough repair chips with you, every stage can be marched through halfheartedly.

I wasn't overly enthused with Arika's work on the Street Fighter EX franchise, and while I admire the complexity of combat and vibrant graphical details, this Mega Man hybrid comes up short in a number of key areas. It's definitely different, but in ways that are detrimental to the experience you'll have with it. — REINER



■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER CAPCOM ■ DEVELOPER ARIKA ■ RELEASE MAY 21



Each level ends in a familiar boss battle



The expanded arsenal offers a variety of attacks

EVERYONE  
**E** 6.25

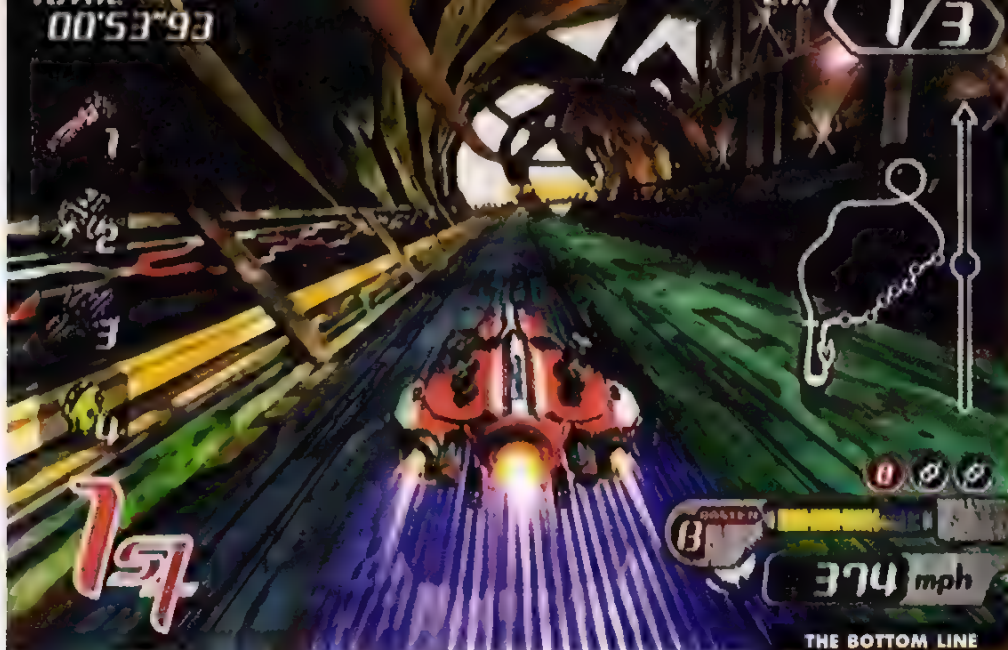
- **Concept:** Traditional side-scrolling Mega Man gameplay with a hint of role-playing
- **Graphics:** The cel shading has a certain flair to it, and it works in Mega Man's favor
- **Sound:** Ear-piercing Japanese rock ballads and obnoxious spoken dialogue
- **Playability:** Side-scrolling running and gunning with 100 attacks and upgrades
- **Entertainment:** Deeper than most Mega Man games, but its repetitive nature and lackluster play is inexcusable
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

### SECOND OPINION

I was extremely intrigued by this game early on, but it didn't take long for the kuster to wear off and leave me with yet another Mega Man game. Visually, there's quite a bit to sink your teeth into. Apart from the cel shading, Capcom's backgrounds are alluring and provide nice faux-3D touches. Furthermore, the dazzling effects for something as simple as explosions brought a smile to my face, as did the variety of enemies. My kudos also extends to the gameplay, but it doesn't get far. While I love the variety of the chips, the randomness of it all is annoying. The game's situations aren't impossible, but the weapons I like don't always show up. While peripheral things like getting email are enjoyable, because this Mega Man is a basic side-scroller like all the rest, and the action itself isn't endearing, you aren't left with much to hold the game up.

KATO — 6.75





GAMECUBE

# TUBE SLIDER

## PLEASE DON'T MESS UP BONK

**A**fter racing just the one track, everyone except me could identify a generic futuristic racer implicit in the way Tube Slider looks and plays. Out of mere love and nostalgia for a company that spoiled my childhood with sundry fond memories – Bonk, Military Madness, Y's Book I & II, Blazing Lasers, and more – I'm reticent to label NEC's return a disappointment. In denial, I raced one track after another and slowly but surely came to accept everyone's presumption.

However, Tube Slider is a technically sound product. Throughout the experience the control remains precise, the graphics never suffer from slowdown or pop-up, and the AI offers challenge without seeming unfair.

Tube Slider simply fumbles in its design. Since NEC created all 10 tracks out of one long twisted tube, you don't get enough variety. Furthermore, the absence of walls permits you to blast through each race with little restraint. Although some stages demand a little technique so far as some turns should be taken in a certain manner, the game doesn't penalize you nearly enough for recklessness.

I hardly see any reason to waste your dough on Tube Slider, especially when Wipeout Fusion and Kinetica put it to shame. If you've been fervent to play NEC's latest, just rent it. To NEC: Make Bonk next, please. Thanks. – **CHET**

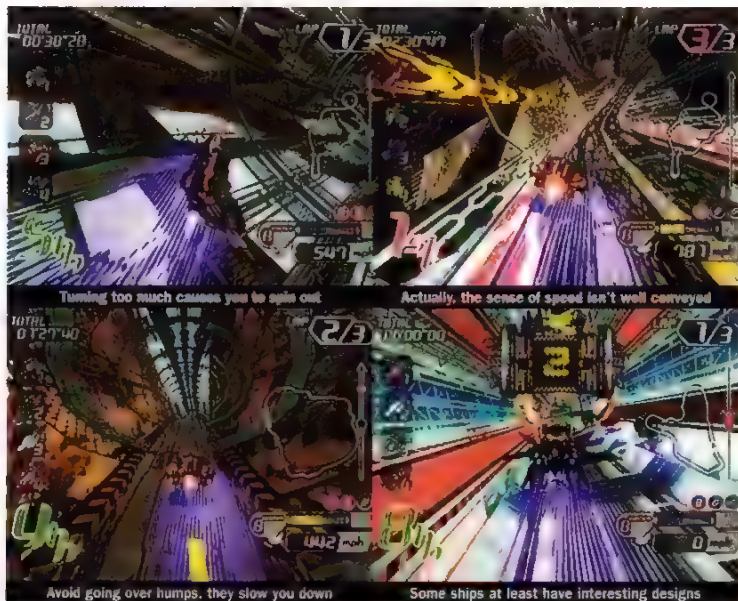
THE BOTTOM LINE  
EVERYONE  
**E** 6.5

- **Concept:**  
A futuristic racer that only further strengthens the stereotype that these titles are generic
- **Graphics:**  
Sharp and clean, but unspectacular
- **Sound:**  
The music is the most generic techno I've ever heard
- **Playability:**  
It almost plays itself, which is good for control's sake, but bad for the fun factor
- **Entertainment:**  
It plays decently and looks okay, but its lack of technique makes it bonng
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderately Low

### SECOND OPINION

NEC's return into the video game market is not exactly going to set the world on fire. Although there have been some solid entries in the "futuristic racing" sweepstakes over the past few years, the genre is struggling to find a place for itself in this generation of consoles. I doubt that Tube Slider will do anything to change this trend. It's a competent game, and I like the fact that you do seem to be ruled by some sort of true physics system, but there really isn't any sense of speed or excitement here. Outfitting the vehicles with side-thrusters to enable performance of drift turns was a good idea, but you can cruise to victory without ever really having to master the technique. Also, it appears that your speedometer has been tampered with by some shady used-car salesman. If I was going 500 miles per hour, I'll eat Reiner's leather Batman thong underwear.

MATT – 6.5



■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NEC ■ **DEVELOPER** ND CUBE  
■ **RELEASE** APRIL 16

## REVIEWS



STRIKE!

GAMECUBE

# X2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE

**L**et's start with the good stuff here, because I want X2 to be good. Patrick Stewart does some handy voice acting. And, um, the fighting animations are good. Well...um...okay, now I'm stuck.

Moving on, while the animations are nice, the combat controls make it most advantageous to just smash the punch button over and over. Any other move has an inexplicable lag after execution – a perfect time for the enemy to start bashing your head in! Then there are the one-hit kills. They're cheap and placed fairly far into levels. Guess what? You get to play this part again! And again! One more time!

But where X2 really makes its rushed development cycle known is the camera, collision, and enemy AI. I actually had to beat up thin air – as an enemy was clearly shooting at me, but there was only a flickering trace of the militiaman holding the gun. Consistently, Wolverine would get stuck in corners, tunnels, doors, or staircases. During my battle with Sabertooth; he, the camera, and I got so wedged into a wall that the inside of Sabertooth and the ceiling were the only things shown on screen.

Now, I will certainly admit that X2 had great promise, but now it's too late to capitalize on what Gene Pool clearly wanted to achieve. – **LISA**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T** 5.75

- **Concept:**  
Set out to make a Wolverine game, get license, rush to finish in time for the movie, produce butchered version of the original vision
- **Graphics:**  
Water and snow stick to the camera. That means that the graphics are good right?
- **Sound:**  
It took all of 20 minutes before I turned the "music volume waaayyy down"
- **Playability:**  
Sadly mundane fighting, horrible camera, and miserable level design
- **Entertainment:**  
Urg! Uuuurrrgh! Uck!
- **Replay Value:**  
Moderately Low

### SECOND OPINION

To quote the real-time Wolverine head in the corner of the screen, "Urg! Uuuurrrgh!" From the hindering camera to the uneven Strikes, this game's got the musky scent of Wolverine urine all over it. I admit, the Strikes are a good idea, but I dislike their fundamental execution. I would prefer old-school combo inputs, and that's not all that would help this title. To paraphrase Storm: Do you know what happens to a bad X-men game? The same as every other bad vid.

KATO – 6

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION  
■ **DEVELOPER** GENE POOL ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 16



Medics are essential for a balanced team in multiplayer



The X-Shepard sports a chain gun for long-range assault



The flame effect is absolutely gorgeous

XBOX

# RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

## WUNDERBAR!



It may have been on PC first, but Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War just feels like it belongs on Xbox. For PC fans, no controller will ever compete with the mouse and keyboard, but Nerve Software did an admirable job of creating a control scheme that works perfectly with a game pad. Plus, Nerve managed to add some nice new content to the entire package, so Xbox owners wouldn't feel like they were getting another PC hand-me-down.

For those of you unfamiliar with the PC game, Return to Castle Wolfenstein is yet another masterpiece from the madmen at id software and Grey Matter. It follows the tale of B.J. Blazkowicz as he uncovers a Nazi plot to use the powers of the occult to rule the world.

While Tides of War does include the entire PC game, it also adds a one- to two-hour prologue that leads seamlessly into the existing adventure. Along the way, you will also notice the addition of some nice Xbox extras, including a shotgun, some new baddies – namely the X-Shepard, a robotic dog that pays homage to the original Wolfenstein 3D – and the Occult Priest who spews lightning from his fingers. You'll also marvel at the fluid and reflective Xbox water effects and an awesome co-op mode that lets you team up on the single-player missions.

As a solo experience, Tides of War is a terrific game. I completed it on PC and still thoroughly enjoyed playing it again on the Xbox – especially since it looks fantastic in 480p on an HDTV and sounds even better if you have a 5.1 Dolby Digital setup. The score can be a tad repetitive, but the sound effects are phenomenal. You can hear the chatter of Nazi soldiers or the footsteps of nearby enemies as if they were almost in the next room of your home.

The single-player experience is just the beginning of what makes Tides of War so special. Featuring complete Xbox Live and system link support, up to 16 players can experience four different multiplayer modes as either the Axis or the Allies (see below). There are even four character classes to keep strategy just as important to a team's success as its ability to aim and shoot. In other words, while the single-player experience is certainly one of the best the Xbox has seen, the multiplayer mayhem is in a league of its own. If you love Xbox Live, you need this game.

Without a doubt, Tides of War is one of the most impressive console FPSs – displaced only by the almighty Halo. It may be a port, but the added elements make the package well worth the price of admission. I can't recommend it enough. – ANDY

### MULTIPLAYER MODES:

**Objective:** The Axis and Allied teams each have a set of objectives that must be completed in a defined time limit.

**Stopwatch:** Same as Objective mode, but the teams switch sides each round and must defeat the previously posted time.

**Checkpoint:** All the various checkpoints located on the map must be held simultaneously by the same team.

**Elimination:** Also known as deathmatch. Kill or be killed.

### MULTIPLAYER CLASSES:

**Soldier:** The standard infantry class. It's the only class that can use the Mauser and Panzerfaust

**Engineer:** This demolition expert is the only class that can repair MG42 gun emplacements, and it has unlimited access to dynamite.

**Medic:** This support class can regenerate health as well as drop health packs for teammates. The syringe can also revive fallen teammates.

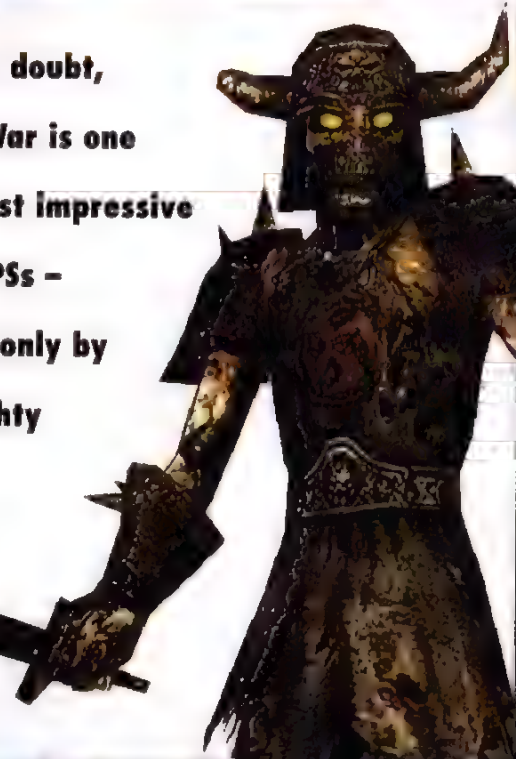
**Lieutenant:** The lieutenant has the ability to generate ammo packs for teammates, as well as call in airstrikes by placing a target in his binoculars.

■ STYLE 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 16-PLAYER VIA XBOX LIVE OR SYSTEM LINK) ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION  
■ DEVELOPER ID SOFTWARE/GREY MATTER/NERVE SOFTWARE ■ RELEASE MAY 6

**GAME OF THE MONTH**  
**RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN:**  
**TIDES OF WAR**



**"Without a doubt, Tides of War is one of the most impressive console FPSs – displaced only by the almighty Halo."**



Even in coop, the X-Criatures are a pain in the keister



"Occult Priests? I thought you said Judas Priest!"



The Panzerfaust is deadly in multiplayer



LOOK SCORE LIVES HEALTH AMMO  
 1 2100 3 17 12

Complete the single-player campaign to unlock the original Wolfenstein 3D

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
 MATURE  
**M 9.25**  
 OVERALL GRADE

- **Concept:**  
Killing virtual zombies and Nazis is fun!
- **Graphics:**  
Crisp and clean, the Xbox delivers the PC experience in spades
- **Sound:**  
The action music gets a tad old, but the sound effects rock in Dolby Digital
- **Playability:**  
Console first-person shooters are tricky to get right without a mouse, and Tides of War hits the nail on the head
- **Entertainment:**  
There is a reason why id Software is the king of the FPS, and this game is proof. The best FPS on Xbox since Halo.
- **Replay Value:**  
High

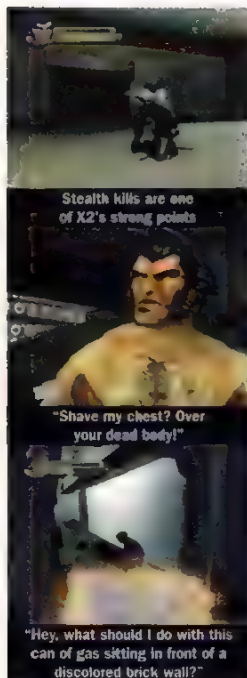
**SECOND OPINION**

This is definitely an excellent game for any system, but it seems particularly at home on the Xbox, where its owners can enjoy the crisp graphics and excellent sound only this system can offer. The undead story arc was annoying when this game released on PC, and I still find it hokey; but the co-op play is excellent (even if there is a bit of slowdown from time to time), and the online options are fun for those of you who have Xbox Live. Unfortunately, this game has nothing on Halo. I know, you've heard this numerous times before, but it amazes me that a game which is now almost two years old still blows everything else out of the water. Wolfenstein does have nice models and what seem to be accurate ballistics effects, but FPS veterans will most likely have a "been there, done that" feeling as they play. Yes, it's a great game, but I've played better.

**KRISTIAN – 8.5**

STRIKE!

"The game's complete lack of refinement and polish... renders all of its strengths irrelevant"



XBOX

# X2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

## A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

These are the type of reviews I hate writing. I saw an early version of this game in development when I was in Manchester visiting developer Gene Pool, and it struck me as a title that had the potential to be the X-Men action game we've always dreamed of. The team seemed like they were genuinely excited about making a comic-based title and had a bunch of interesting concepts for how to make a good one.

Many of these good ideas did make their way to the final version. Foremost is the Strike system, which allows you to pull off amazing finishing moves with a few simple button presses. These tactics can be performed on up to three opponents simultaneously. Strikes are definitely the highlight of Wolverine's Revenge and add a lot of interest to the otherwise suspect brawler combat.

Stealth-oriented gameplay is another big part of the package; and, sadly, does not measure up to current standards. This is due largely to the game's complete lack of refinement and polish – a flaw that renders all of its strengths irrelevant. Collision problems plague Wolverine's Revenge; and you'll find yourself getting shot at through walls, falling through platforms, and being stuck on invisible obstacles. The awesome Strikes are equally erratic, as it's often difficult to massage your character into the tiny spot where you're able to pull off a move before the enemy



THE BOTTOM LINE

**T** 5.5

- Concept:** Combine stealth, brawler action, and a cool strike system into the ultimate X-Men action game
- Graphics:** Looks a bit sharper on Xbox, but it's not a head-turner
- Sound:** Features an excellent score, sound effects, and campy voiceovers by Mark Hamill and Patrick Stewart
- Playability:** Nearly every aspect – from special moves to simple collision detection – is very erratic
- Entertainment:** All the elements for success are here, but without any of the necessary polish
- Replay Value:** Low

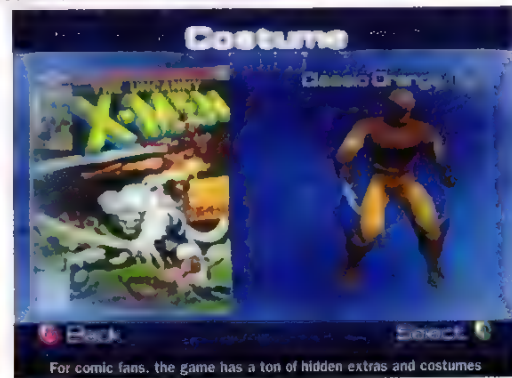
turns around and starts blasting you. This is especially aggravating in stealth levels, where simply being detected will force you to restart. By the time I reached an intensely irritating boss battle with Wendigo, I simply didn't have the patience or will to continue – and I doubt you will, either. I could go on by detailing other problems with hit detection and the lock-on strafe during combat, but I think you get the idea.

It's too bad, because I definitely see where Gene Pool was going with this game. I suspect that this product had to be rushed out in order to ship alongside the upcoming movie, robbing the developer of time that could have been spent fine-tuning the gameplay. Wolverine is definitely one of the coolest action heroes in history, and he deserves a game that lives up to his name. While I appreciate all the hidden goodies (like fact files on X-Men lore and classic costumes), the suitably campy storytelling, and cameos by classic villains; I really can't recommend this game to any but the most ardent fans of the comic series. I would also warn those expecting this to be an adaptation of the X2 motion picture, as this game's plot does not coincide with the film's. Hopefully, Wolverine and Gene Pool will get the opportunity to right this series with a more satisfying sequel. Until then, X-Men fans are in the familiar position of waiting for the title that will give their heroes a proper video game treatment. – MATT

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER GENE POOL ■ RELEASE APRIL 15



Wolverine's Revenge has some awesome Strike animations



For comic fans, the game has a ton of hidden extras and costumes

### SECOND OPINION

Welcome to Bad Game Development 101. Despite a good deal of unlockables, fancy combat maneuvers, and adequate graphics, X2 falls miserably to be anything but disappointing. I've come to expect much more from Activision's licensed products over the years. The gameplay and level design lack common sense and fluidity, plain and simple. Missions are both shallow and confusing. One mistake often results in death – followed by tedious backtracking. Every time "Game Over" shows up on your screen, you'll want to leave this smelly beast behind and find something better to do. Adding to the time wasting is Wolverine's excruciating healing power – a good idea gone bad – which was done much better in The Getaway. In fact, X2 attempts knock-offs of many popular games (Metal Gear Solid, Mark of Kri, etc.) and falls short at every turn. No sir, I don't like it.

JUSTIN – 5.25

## WORLD RACING

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ MEDIACTIVE  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 21



World Racing attempts to have a deep career mode like Pro Race Driver, but that really just means that it keeps a bunch of meaningless stats like Performance, Placements, Skill,

Fair Play, and Discipline based on how you drive. By the way, why the hell is it tracking my "fair play" and "discipline" anyway? This ain't the frickin' Boy Scouts. As far as the racing goes, it's nothing special, lacking any sense of speed or excitement. As with most poor racing titles, the control is only solid in the first-person view – the mark of mediocrity. Extra points taken off for unnecessarily confusing menus. – **MATT**

**E** 5

## FURIOUS KARTING

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ATARI  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 19



I've never heard of developer Babylon Software before, and after playing Furious Karting, I know why. Obvious jokes about the name and a case of dyslexia aside, this game screams

mediocre from start to finish. I will admit that there are some cool driving physics in this title, since you can shift your weight to lean into turns with the right stick. However, the single-player side features some of the worst characters ever made and the story mode delivers dim-witted dialogue like this nugget when you win: "What did you eat? Rhino for breakfast?" Ugh! Split-screen multiplayer is about this game's only saving grace. And in case you were wondering, there is no Xbox Live support, but it does allow for custom soundtracks. – **ANDY**

**T** 6

## STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION (1 TO 8-PLAYER ONLINE)  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASFILMS  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 22



The Xbox version is the fastest ship in the Clone Wars fleet. Not only have the graphics been enhanced to include self-shadowing, bump-mapping, and a steady framerate;

the multiplayer component now features online play that supports up to eight players per map. The diversification in gameplay styles – which switch between a hovertank, dropship, speeder, and more – creates a fairly enthralling single-player package, but the Xbox Live material makes it look meek in comparison and steals the show. The online festivities include amazingly addictive base-versus-base battles, and all-out human-versus-CPU wars. Even if you've already played the GameCube or PlayStation 2 incarnations, this late bloomer is worth investing in. – **REINER**

**T** 8.5

## MOTOGP 2

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING (1 TO 16 PLAYER ONLINE)  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ  
 ■ **RELEASE** MAY 20



Don't get this game confused with Namco's MotoGP series. Just know this – THQ's Moto is the better of the pair. From the analog gas and dual brakes to the smoother control, this title makes your adrenaline spike and pushes your bike to the redline. It also looks every bit as good as Namco's, courtesy of its textures, weather effects, and spine-crushing crashes. Although the career is simply a season of races, I like the challenges – especially since they teach you useful racing lines for the courses. – **KATO**

**E** 8

## GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 16



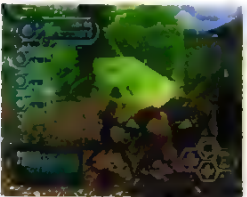
Like the movies, this game incarnation doesn't try to excel at anything except making its monsters attractively cheesy and the gameplay decently exciting, if only slightly too mindless. Although Destroy All Monsters lacks

the technique and depth to make it a serious contender among other titles in the genre, fans will find it immediately gratifying and more than playable enough to hoot over for a weekend. – **CHET**

**T** 7.5

## PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EPISODE I & II

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/RPG (ONLINE)  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 15



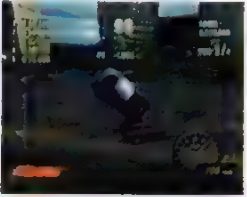
Phantasy Star plays exactly like the GC version, but with the inclusion of a headset – which definitely enhances the experience. Coordinating strategies, calling for help, and merely chatting creates an atmosphere

more conducive to team-based gaming. While online play offers a refreshing element that console gamers will undoubtedly enjoy, the gameplay itself is a bit ordinary: Go to a new world, find treasure, beat the boss, buy new junk. – **CHET**

**T** 8.5

## BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT DEVELOPER'S CUT

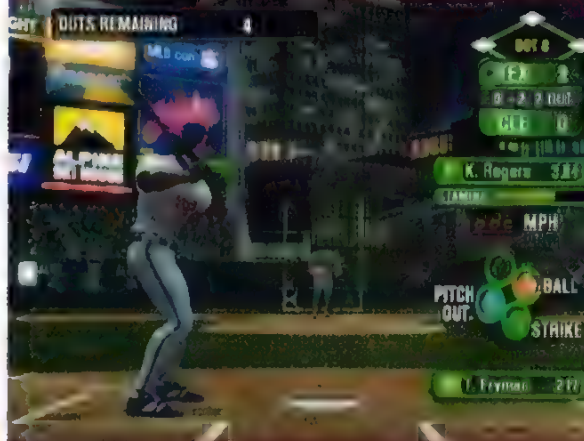
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 29



It's good to see that somebody finally took the inevitable step of calling an enhanced port a "developer's cut." I doubt this will be the last time we see this marketing lingo. Basically, Burnout 2: DC is

still the same great, over-the-top arcade racer that was released for GameCube and PlayStation 2, with a few new features – some great (more Crash mode courses) and some pretty worthless (an online high-score board on Xbox Live). Either way, it's a title you should check out if you haven't already. – **MATT**

**E** 8.5



XBOX

## MLB INSIDE PITCH 2003

A DOUBLE-A EFFORT

**M**uch like Anaheim's rally monkey, I cheer for the underdog. On that same note, I also throw my feces at things that frighten or aggravate me.

Inside Pitch just happens to be one of them. While Microsoft can thump its chest over the fact that this is the only baseball game releasing this year with online play, this unique component is wasted due to numerous problems stemming from gameplay.

I can honestly say that the CPU AI knows nothing about the sport. With two outs and a runner on third, I dripped a grounder to the shortstop. Instead of throwing the ball to first to end the inning, he tossed it home. I simply ran back to third, which later

resulted in the scoring of four runs. Illogical actions along these lines are the norm for Inside Pitch. To make matters worse, the batting/pitching interface is a joke. Not only are the points on the pitching grid fixed to a degree where you can't place your pitches; the ball physics appear to be moon-based – which basically means that unless you have snail-like reflexes, you'll hit every pitch.

Things get worse: There really is nothing noteworthy in the frontend, either. Doing its best 16-bit impersonation, you can only play one season. That's right... just one. As if I need to go on, just do me a favor and avoid it like you would taking a shower with Mike Piazza. – **REINER**

### THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

**E**

5.5

■ **Concept:** Microsoft's inaugural release strikes out looking, and gets sent back to the minors.

■ **Graphics:** Gorgeous stadium details, but lackluster on every other front. The animations are simply atrocious.

■ **Sound:** Decent commentary by Joe Buck and Tim Lincecum.

■ **Playability:** The batting/pitching interface is a complete joke. Players can dive 10 feet in the air, and the CPU AI is way off the mark.

■ **Entertainment:** No franchise mode or fantasy options, but you can play it online.

■ **Replay Value:** Low.

### SECOND OPINION

Much like Microsoft's NFL Fever, Inside Pitch looks fairly decent, but fails to accumulate even a modest amount of acceptable gameplay. What is with the floaty ball physics? I don't get it. It's every gamer's hope that the development team behind the game they've purchased pays attention to these things – but this one didn't. I do like Joe Buck and Tim Lincecum as the commentators, but no one beats Bob Costas.

**KRISTIAN – 5.5**

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT  
 ■ **DEVELOPER** MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** MAY 22

## REVIEWS



XBOX

# ROLLER COASTER TYCOON OFF THE TRACKS

This is one of the most pathetic jobs of porting a PC game to the console I have seen in this horrid little life of mine. God almighty, I really can't believe the depths to which Roller Coaster Tycoon on Xbox sinks. For one, this is a really, really old game, and without the benefit of a high-resolution PC monitor – the graphics are simply laughable. Take a look at some of the ground and water textures, and you'll swear you're playing The Legend of Zelda on NES. Remember sprite graphics? Wow, they were cool; and, thanks to Roller Coaster Tycoon, you can use the Power of Xbox™ to see them again!

Of course, looks aren't everything, so Roller Coaster Tycoon packs a personality that matches its hideous exterior. There's a difference between a console and a PC game, and this title makes no concessions to the fact that you aren't playing with a keyboard and mouse. Nearly everything is hard to do, and you can barely see what's going on due to the numerous huge windows that take up three-quarters of the screen. To make matters worse, the tutorial is nothing more than a demo with an Xbox controller superimposed over it. Yes, this is a classic of the strategy genre, so there is a lot of depth here if you've got the endurance to find it. In my opinion, that would be like swimming through an ocean of pus to find a six pack of Chicken McNuggets. – **MATT**



- **Concept:** Infogrames needs gas money, ports ancient PC hit to Xbox
- **Graphics:** Completely out of date
- **Sound:** Circus music and screams
- **Playability:** Offensively counter-intuitive; be prepared to study your manual like a physics major during finals
- **Entertainment:** The vastly superior original PC version is selling for only \$15
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

### SECOND OPINION

I have never given a game this low of a score, but Roller Coaster Tycoon on the Xbox is easily the least fun that I've had...well, ever. Graphics that literally made my eyes water with pain and controls that halt any depth of play by making most tasks impossible earn this title a place on my list of things that hell is surely made of.

LISA – 1.25

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** CHRIS SAWYER/FRONTIER ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 26



XBOX

# EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK GROOVY

I met Bruce Campbell a few months back when he toured Minneapolis to promote his autobiography. As he signed my copy, I inquired about *Fistful of Boomstick* and he openly told me, "It's actually a good game." I doubted him, assuming he was guided by expedience, but *Fistful's* quality proves his integrity and reminds me (again) of the error of hastily judging anyone.

Deviating from the disaster that was *Hail to the King*, VIS takes an action-oriented approach to gameplay, drawing inspiration from titles such as *Devil May Cry*. The rich combat usually pits Ash against a dozen or more Deadites – who he can pummel with a host of weapons, magic, and combos. Because different arms and spells permit unique attacks, and since Ash receives numerous weapons, the action element keeps you engaged.

When not decapitating and dismembering zombies, you'll be solving puzzles. While they are usually interesting, they tend to become a source of frustration because of one glaring flaw in *Fistful's* design. The game often forgets to indicate clearly what your objectives are for any particular puzzle.

Nevertheless, FoB holds its own as action title. If you happen to be a fan of *Evil Dead* or Bruce Campbell, its faithfulness to the films' essence makes it a must-buy. – **CHET**



- **Concept:** It's *Devil May Cry* in an *Evil Dead* setting
- **Graphics:** The number of onscreen enemies is impressive, but the actual models and environments are mediocre
- **Sound:** Bruce Campbell's one-liners will please fans
- **Playability:** Surprisingly, the control and camera work almost flawlessly
- **Entertainment:** Although the game's design is a bit flawed, the action element and the extra features make it more than worthwhile for fans of the genre and films
- **Replay Value:** Moderate



You can impale enemies with you saw...

...and blast them off with your gun!

Boss fights are also included

The Arcade mode features even more Deadites onscreen

### SECOND OPINION

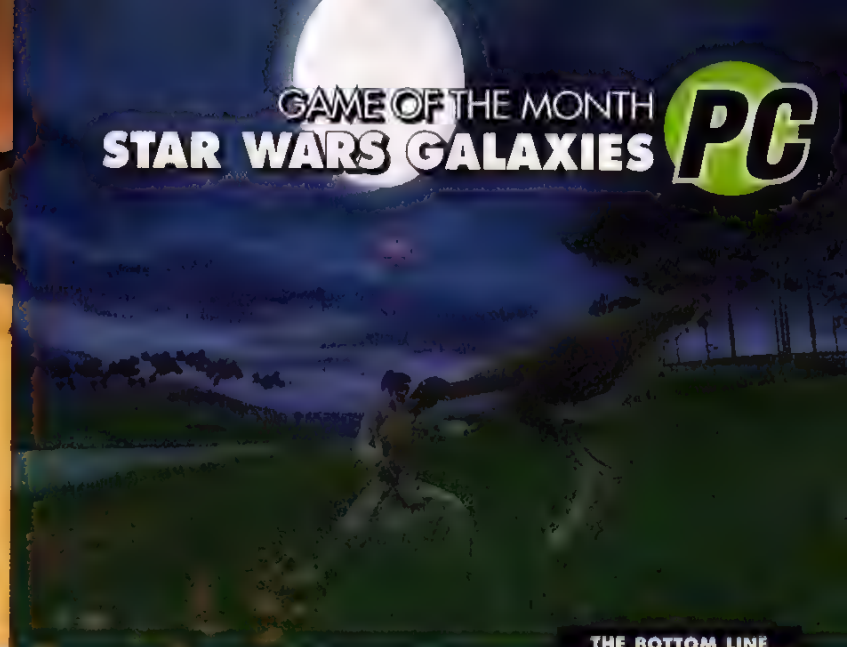
A *Fistful of Boomstick*...more like a *Fistful of Crap!* As you might gather, I absolutely despise this game. The shallow combat, slow pacing, and vile graphical details combine to create one of the most unsavory Xbox titles in recent memory. Much like *Enter the Matrix*, fans of *Evil Dead* will get a kick out of Bruce Campbell's voiceovers and the ties it has to the films. The plot is definitely campy, and the Xbox hardware is pushed to the limit by the massive amounts of blood and severed limbs; but there's no denying the fact that the gameplay induces instant narcolepsy. Yes, you play as the legendary Ash but I'm certain you'll feel more like an Ass if you make the mistake of playing this game. There are better games to be had. There's a reason why it's only \$20, people.

REINER – 5.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** VIS INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** MAY 26



GAME OF THE MONTH  
**STAR WARS GALAXIES** **PC**



**"...the development team has put together a glistening diamond in Galaxies that surpassed my lofty expectations."**



"No pictures, please. The flash makes my Wookiee nervous."



Admiring a Tatooine sunset



"Look out, lion! Those birds are trouble!"

PC

# STAR WARS GALAXIES: AN EMPIRE DIVIDED

BELIEVE

If there has ever been a game that has amassed an unbelievably enormous following not months, but years before its eventual release, it's Star Wars Galaxies. In fact, I know people who have not only organized their own guild for Galaxies; but they've set up an elected office hierarchy and mission statements; decided which planet they'll eventually inhabit; allocated professions; and not one of them had played the game for even an instant when all of this was decided. Scary, no? Luckily for them, Galaxies has delivered in spades.

Characters start as they always do in this type of game – weak and green. After a decent tutorial, you're able to choose which planet to start on, and then it's up to you to make your way in the galaxy. There's help available for noobs, but you'll be climbing up skill trees before you know it; and the trees are a big part of this game's bread and butter. The sheer amount of skills and professions is luxuriously high, and will necessitate a large time commitment from players to advance consistently. After deciding what you want to do with your life, you'll need to choose a side: Rebel, Imperial, or Neutral. Although you don't really have to make a conscious effort to be neutral, it's simply too much fun to pick an allegiance and scour the planet for your foes to be passed up.

The potential for incredible PvP (player vs. player) and role-playing experiences that this particular game brings

is incredible. Imperial raids, Rebel ambushes – it's all there for the experiencing if you're so inclined. In addition to the huge gameplay possibilities, Galaxies also excels graphically. Sure, the draw-distance is a little slim; but the structures, units, and environments are absolutely incredible. I'm not lying when I say that this is one of the best-looking PC games I've ever played – in any genre. The assorted worlds pulse with ambient life, and each player has the ability to customize their appearance so much that they can become uniquely distinguishable from everyone else.

Systematically, the menu and interface structures are suitably ergonomic and functional and give ample opportunity for players to customize them to their liking. I especially enjoy the inventory assembly, as you can organize your gear without really needing to think about it. Basically, Galaxies has the best of all worlds – controls, graphics, sound, and subject matter. Fans of the films are already peeing their pants in anticipation, and for good reason. Although the game has suffered a number of release setbacks and has had its scope reduced from what was originally expected, the development team has put together a glistening diamond in Galaxies that surpassed my lofty expectations. In short, even if this game had nothing to do with Star Wars whatsoever, it would still be amazing. – **KRISTIAN**

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 25



There's plenty of ambient lighting to oggle



It'll be harder for this player to hit his target while running

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T**

**9.5**

- **Concept:** Immerse yourself in the world of Star Wars and stay there
- **Graphics:** This is one of the best-looking games I've ever seen – never mind that it happens to be an MMO
- **Sound:** Those instantly recognizable melodies from the films are incorporated into this title seamlessly
- **Playability:** Getting a grasp on the high points doesn't take long at all
- **Entertainment:** Break up with your significant other, quit work or school, and stock up on food. Your life is over
- **Replay Value:** High

**SECOND OPINION**

On the surface, Galaxies is quite impressive. The interface is fairly intuitive, the graphics are the best I have seen in an MMORPG, the sound is spectacular, and the number of options is staggering. Not only can you spend two hours creating your character with all the preferences and variations at your disposal, but when you are finished, you actually have a unique and personalized look. Unfortunately, I found the game, like the recent movies, to be too shallow in many areas. Since you primarily work on skills or professions and not the classic leveling-up of your character, I found myself fairly uninterested in the game elements and more interested in seeing Star Wars stuff. If you are a hardcore fan who can tell the difference between a Twi'lek and an Ugnaught, you are going to love every minute of this game. If you are just a casual fan like me, the game is good, but not as gripping as EverQuest.

**ANDY - 8**



PC

# POSTAL 2

THE LOW ROAD

I consider myself a fairly easygoing guy — there's pretty much nothing in video games that has outright offended me, and as you know, this industry gives its customers plenty of opportunity to get riled up. Then, *Postal 2* came out. For the first time in memory, I was actually insulted by something I saw onscreen. Surprisingly, the offending item has nothing to do with the typical *Postal* ultra-violence. I know the next logical step would be for me to tell you what it was, but it's simply not suitable for print — even in this magazine. In any event, there's a refreshing non-linearity to *Postal 2*, as you're usually given a list of things to do during the day, but you decide when they get done. If you want to sit in a dark alley and shoot people as they walk by for 20 minutes, feel free — but your victims will pull out their own weapons and fire back more often than not. The gore is decidedly high-end, and being able to pee on things is funny, but unless you're psychotic, it'll probably get old after a couple of hours. If there was ever a game where the ESRB system should be enforced to the fullest extent of its power, this is it. — KRISTIAN

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
MATURE  
**M 7.5**

- **Concept:** Kill people in a number of different ways, repeat until you're sick of it.
- **Graphics:** Surprisingly nice texturing, but most everything else is pretty bland.
- **Sound:** The best part of the game is hearing Gary Coleman scream in the midst of a homicidal rage.
- **Playability:** Not having to worry about reloading is a nice touch, but the hit detection needs work.
- **Entertainment:** Some will love it, and some will absolutely hate it. It didn't get an "Intense Violence" rating for nothing.
- **Replay Value:** Low.

**SECOND OPINION**  
Postal 2 has a new level of violence with a twist — you don't have to kill. I did my best to avoid rage. A guy cut in front of me at a store, and I waited until after my purchase to kick him in the face. My first 187 occurred only after a cop found my hiding space after I ran. The world bears some resemblance to those in the *GTA* series, but you're normally a bystander in the chaos, rather than the cause. It's a little sloppy, but *Postal 2* will make you laugh. — JUSTIN — 8

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** WHITMAN INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** RUNNING WITH SCISSORS ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 14



PC

# TROPICO 2: PIRATE COVE

A BUCCANEER BROUHAHA



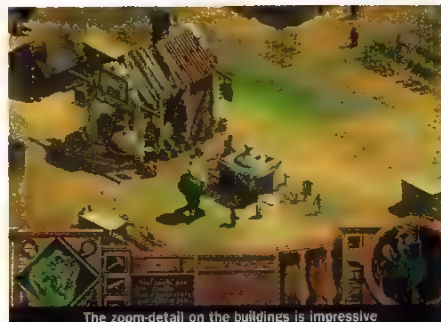
**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
TEEN  
**T 8**

The first *Tropicco* offering was a bit wittier, and a touch more engrossing, but the Pirate theme is done as well as possible in this title. I enjoy the amount of possibilities available to you in terms of how many different ships you're able to build, what you can do with them, how you treat your island population, and how your skimmed money stash carries over into the next scenario. What is lacking is variety. Not only variety in gameplay, but variety in subject matter. I'm going to say what everyone's thinking: Pirates are played. True, *Tropicco 2* has made an excellent game out of a subject matter that's becoming about as original as a Jay Leno monologue (we just can't get enough of those Clinton jokes, pal!), but I can't help thinking that there are a number of other time periods and settings that would have been a better fit.

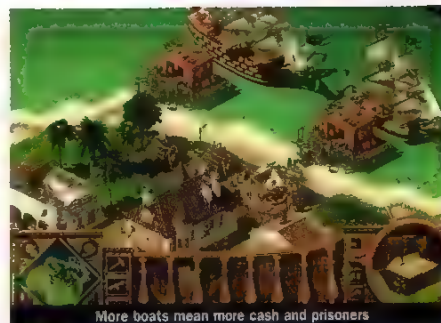
One thing to remember before you think I'm getting too down on this game is that, even though I've heard "Avast!" one time too many, *Tropicco 2* is a blast to play. I couldn't pull myself away from it — there's an irrepressible charm to its architecture that true fans of this type of title will be powerless to resist. So shine on, you crazy *Tropicco* diamond; you have yet to disappoint. — KRISTIAN



Raiding settlements brings captives — your island's workforce



The zoom-detail on the buildings is impressive



More boats mean more cash and prisoners

- **Concept:** Amass a huge hoard of gold while keeping your pirate citizenry happy, your captives scared, and your head off the chopping block.
- **Graphics:** Appropriately crisp for an island sim title, but not a noticeable improvement over the first *Tropicco*.
- **Sound:** An unassuming score, and decent effects.
- **Playability:** This isn't a game for beginners, which makes it an excellent buy for the rest of us.
- **Entertainment:** If you have an addictive personality, stay away.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

**SECOND OPINION**  
Micromanaging the livelihood of a pirate civilization is an interesting premise for a sim game of *Tropicco's* caliber. Much like the first entry in the series, this sequel strikes a perfect gameplay balance between the economic engine and construction tools. It's quite easy to get into, and the uniqueness of the content is strong enough to keep you playing until you've seen everything. Ordering random executions, enslaving the English, and stashing your precious booty are just a few examples of how diverse and unique the gameplay truly is. Graphically, the detail is definitely on par with other games in the genre, but there isn't a wealth of animation for either buildings or characters. I loved *Tropicco*, and this sequel, while not as comedic in its delivery, is just as enjoyable. Its originality is second only to gameplay depth. — REINER — 8

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** FROG CITY ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 8





THE BOTTOM LINE  
TEEN  
**T** 6.75  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC/MAC

# SHADOWBANE

SAME OL'

It's a difficult proposition to release a medieval-themed massively multiplayer RPG these days – a difficult proposition at best. If you're a developer, you have to think to yourself, "Okay, what hasn't been done?" That question alone could fry your brain, but striking the perfect balance between including things which have worked in other games, and making your title seem fresh and new has to be daunting to say the least. The Shadowbane team has attacked this problem with control in mind; as in, players control the world. If you want to start your own guild, town, business, whatever, you're able to do it. There's a lot of appeal in being able to effectively shape your playing environment, but the nuts and bolts of actual gameplay come up short for this release.

Foremost, the interface leaves much to be desired. I don't like the fact that the display windows are attached to a grid system, and the menus themselves are clunky and feel cheap. The graphics are on par with what you'd find in similar titles, but the server stability is lower than I'm comfortable with. The combat and chat systems seem to be adequate, and the experience apparatus will satiate the level-hounds out there; but all told, Shadowbane is decidedly average. – KRISTIAN



Many different weapon and armor styles are scattered throughout the game

If these people are part of one group, all of the experience and gold gathered throughout their time together is split between them



Like in all RPGs, dragons are not to be trifled with

Particle effects galore!

■ **STYLE** MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT  
■ **DEVELOPER** WOLFPACK STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 1

■ **Concept:**  
A persistent world title with a medieval theme that attempts to give players more control over their environments

■ **Graphics:**  
Nice player models and weapon assortments, but poor draw distance

■ **Sound:**  
Like any MMO, it's interesting for about three hours; then it's time for the radio

■ **Playability:**  
I didn't like the interface structure whatsoever, but the camera was pretty manageable

■ **Entertainment:**  
A great game for people who want to invest a lot of time in something

■ **Replay Value:**  
High

## SECOND OPINION

For each thing that Shadowbane does well, four or five things are done poorly. From mediocre graphics to perhaps the most annoying user interface ever made, Shadowbane frustrated me on many, many levels. The basic gameplay and character development is pretty standard and entertaining fare, but trying to play the game with its annoying camera that is unable to find the right mix of details and playability, had me ready to punch a hole in my computer monitor. I will admit that the city building, player vs. player, and guild functions are nice touches, but in the end I just couldn't forgive all the game's insufficiencies.

ANDY – 6.75



PC

# MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR - VIKING INVASION

SKØL, VIKINGS!

The Total War franchise is simply unsurpassed when it comes to large-scale warfare, and Viking Invasion gives you even more leeway in terms of assorted units and strategic flexibility. With Creative Assembly's trademark attention to historical detail, VI's increased play capability lends a seldom-seen aura of believability to each battle you command and each building you construct. Unfortunately, some seemingly basic maneuvers and unit AI seem to have been overlooked yet again.

Foremost among these problems is the phenomenon where I'll have a line of troops maybe 10 wide and six deep clash with an enemy detachment, and the people in the rear of my formation simply run into the back of those in front of them. There's no wrap-around command for some reason, so there's only one line of action, and your unit's size is severely compromised. Alternatively, there are many more skills and abilities that your generals will learn through battle, and the political scene seems to have been fleshed out quite nicely. Viking Invasion is an excellent buy for those who love its forefathers and is still the best in its class. – KRISTIAN

THE BOTTOM LINE  
TEEN  
**T** 8.75  
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

■ **Concept:**  
Slaughter the pathetic Christians and pilfer their loot!

■ **Graphics:**  
No change here; you'll still see a striking number of units onscreen at once.

■ **Sound:**  
New battle sounds and music take this category from being decent to excellent.

■ **Playability:**  
It's an expansion – the only thing you need to get used to are the new units and their abilities.

■ **Entertainment:**  
A strategy gamer's dream. If you have the time and inclination, you'll love this game.

■ **Replay Value:**  
High

## SECOND OPINION

The god-building component doesn't offer quite as much freedom as titles like Emperor, and a few problems in the real-time combat keep it out of WarCraft's league. But, Medieval: Total War combines the two genres well enough to create an experience that will enrapture an audience who enjoys Risk-style games.

CHET – 8.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8 PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION  
■ **DEVELOPER** CREATIVE ASSEMBLY ■ **RELEASE** MAY 6

# REVIEWS



GAME BOY ADVANCE

## DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

NINTENDO AND RARE, IN HAPPIER TIMES

In light of the two companies' recent marital divorce, Donkey Kong Country is a bittersweet reminder of the days when Rare and Nintendo were the Eminem and Dr. Dre of video games, producing chart-topping hits with each new release. I still remember the day I went to a friend's house and saw this game playing on his SNES. I was simply blown away by the visual splendor and could never look at my Genesis the same way again.

Years later, this faithful reproduction demonstrates that this DKC's gorgeous pre-rendered graphics have not dimmed with age. Thankfully, neither has the demanding platforming gameplay. However, if you're prone to frustration, you'll be happy that one of the new enhancements to this port is the ability to save mid-level. Also, there is a challenge mode that lets you try to post the fastest time through a level, a feature inspired by the Crash Bandicoot series.

The other extras aren't nearly as useful — especially the dreadful new fishing and Bomani minigames. But really, why worry about the garnish when the main dish is so tasty? There's a certain intensity of action and sense of urgency that only a 2D platformer can deliver. This game is a great way to rediscover that feeling for yourself. — **MATT**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** RARE ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 9

**THE BOTTOM LINE**  
EVERYONE  
**E** 9

- **Concept:** An enhanced re-creation of one of the best 16-bit games ever.
- **Graphics:** Even today, you'd be hard pressed to find 2D graphics this amazing.
- **Sound:** DK's never had the colorful tunes to match the Mario series.
- **Playability:** A challenging throwback to the days before health bars.
- **Entertainment:** Play it for the first time, and it's again — best play!
- **Replay Value:** High.

### SECOND OPINION

Donkey Kong Country is one of the few games that can be considered both old-fashioned and groundbreaking. The vibrant graphical details haven't tarnished a bit, and the thrilling platforming gameplay works just as well on the GBA as it did on the SNES. Even today, this revolutionary platformer is next to impossible to put down.

**REINER - 9.25**



GAME BOY ADVANCE

## WARIO WARE, INC.: MEGA MICROGAMES

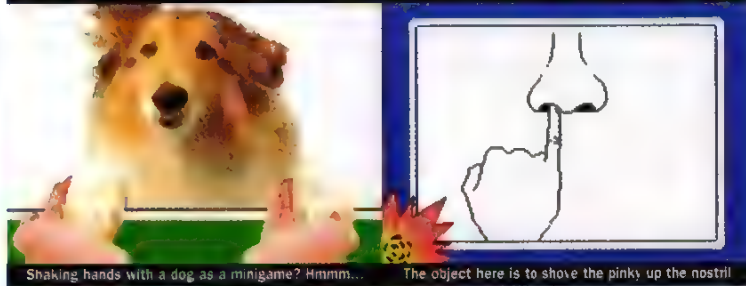
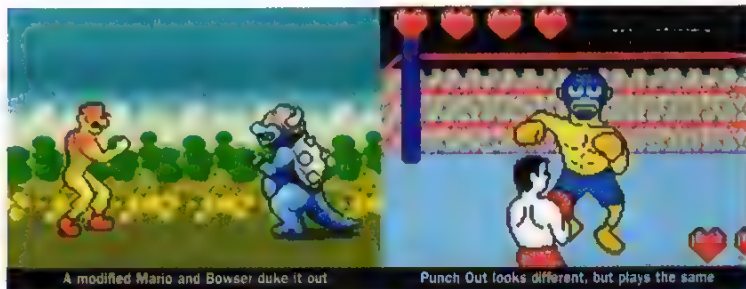
FIND THE MAGGOT!

Searching for a maggot with a magnifying glass is merely one of the many games you'll enjoy in Nintendo's latest, and strangest, piece of work. Although the premise and gameplay offer nothing original to gamers (you compete in a series of elementary minigames), the presentation wholly epitomizes the term quirky.

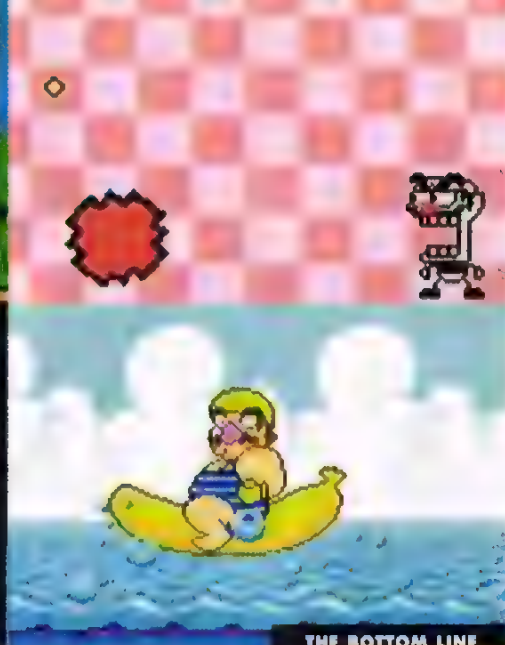
Other scenarios require you to shake hands with a dog, lull a cat to sleep, brush someone's teeth, cut a steak, count frogs, and photograph flying squirrels; just to name a few. Fans will appreciate that Nintendo also borrowed small excerpts from its other franchises like Donkey Kong and Punch Out, and converted them into minigames.

The variety of game types is respectable; but, because they suffer from extreme simplicity and last for roughly five seconds, they lack any depth. Lots of shallow elements thrown together does not create an absorbing experience. Furthermore, players must approach each minigame without any tutorial, making trial and error the norm.

If anything, snag a used copy just to see how insane Nintendo has become in recent years. With Cubivore and Wario Ware under its belt, I wouldn't hesitate to have Nintendo become the first company ever to be committed if it threatens to release another such title. — **CHET**



■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** MAY 26



THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E** 7.5

- **Concept:** Nothing new; an amalgamation of various minigames together in one package.
- **Graphics:** The quality is high; the presentation is bizarre.
- **Sound:** The music is excellent; consisting of funky, off-beat tunes, some of which have voices!
- **Playability:** An easy format: move and jam the action button.
- **Entertainment:** It's fun for a couple of hours, but its shallowness will keep you from playing after that.
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low.

### SECOND OPINION

Wario Ware is so basic and stupid that it's genius. We have all seen every one of these games before in some form or another, but the presentation is so streamlined and smart that it makes this mish-mash of minigames feel new and innovative. Plus, because the onslaught of games happens at such a rapid-fire rate, it's perfect for anyone with a short attention span or just looking to fill a quick five minutes. Waiting for the bus or a late friend will never be the same again, since Wario Ware is a perfect time killer. It may not be the next Tetris or the greatest game ever made, but it is addictive and a perfect fit for anyone's library since it is so easy to play at any time.

**ANDY - 8**



GAME BOY ADVANCE

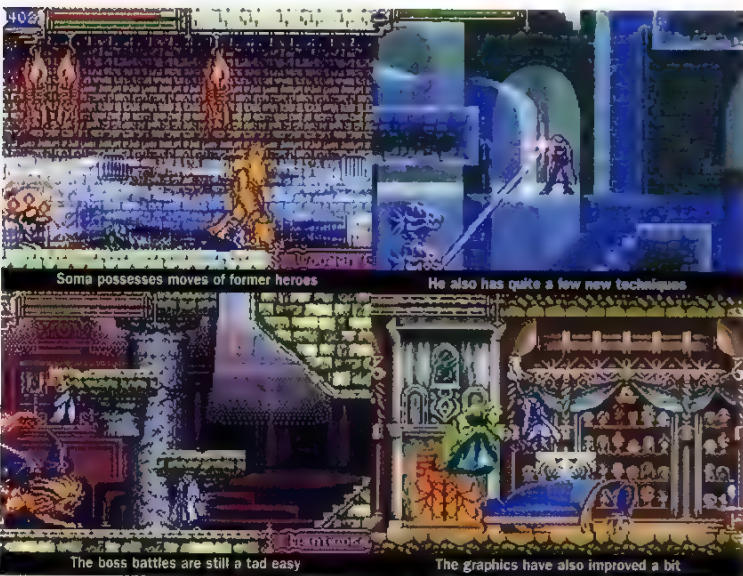
# CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW

SUPERIOR GAMING

Each new Castlevania title so completely exemplifies the beauty of the sprite-based action game. It offers gameplay comparable in depth and excitement to quality next-gen products, but its simple 2D presentation reminds you that you're enjoying something undeniably artificial. It puts on no pretentious airs of being anything more than a damn fine video game. Yet, *Aria of Sorrow* totally enraptures me in its world, more so than most environments made up of seemingly obscene numbers of polygons.

This so-called (by me) Castlevania magic is the result of the rich universe Konami continues to cultivate in conjunction with an addictive interactive experience. Much like its predecessors, *Aria* charges players to explore a large castle and eliminate enemies, while discovering various weapons and learning new techniques and spells. Fortunately, it offers at least one marked difference. Instead of acquiring knives, swords, crosses and such for the secondary weapon, you can learn an enemy's attack. This means that our hero, Soma Cruz, can cause damage by squirting water like the lizard men!

Despite the absence of any significant innovation, *Aria of Sorrow* still manages to strengthen the series' reputation. However, if Konami truly cares about this franchise, its next Castlevania project ought to make originality the number one priority. — **CHET**



Soma possesses moves of former heroes

He also has quite a few new techniques

The boss battles are still a tad easy

The graphics have also improved a bit

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI  
■ **RELEASE** MAY

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
**T**  
9.25

■ **Concept:**

The same as the previous three with a new magic and technique system

■ **Graphics:**

Konami still manages to improve the graphics with each incarnation. I'm stunned

■ **Sound:**

This time around, the music and (especially) the sound effects are of decent quality

■ **Playability:**

Moving your character around is effortless, and the menu system still remains deep yet user-friendly

■ **Entertainment:**

It's nothing terribly new, but I don't mind. The formula is still enjoyable and addicting

■ **Replay Value:**

Moderate

## SECOND OPINION

Konami keeps proving that Castlevania is one of the best video game series of all time, and that 2D is anything but dead. Not straying far from the formula of PSone's *Symphony of the Night*, *Aria of Sorrow* nevertheless does its own thing by way of *Soul Sets*. These give you status upgrades and extra power-ups; but more importantly, they put all subweapons a button-press away — thus eliminating a lot of backtracking. Per usual, roaming around Dracula's castle is an unending pleasure. Level design is of the highest caliber; the pacing is once again perfect; and I'm glad to see a wider variety of weapons. The GBA SP means that you'll never squint at a Castlevania title again, which is all the more reason to pick up this game. Igarashi has done it again.

JUSTIN — 9.25

GAME BOY ADVANCE

## YU-GI-OH! WORLDWIDE EDITION: STAIRWAY TO THE DESTINED DUEL

BEARABLY PONDEROUS

Yu-Gi-Oh Worldwide Edition: Stairway to the Destined Duel is up there on the list of "Longest Titles For A Mass-Market Product In Recent Memory," but it's also a pretty deep update of the popular 2002 release, *The Eternal Duelist Soul*.

Mainly, the point of this title is to update the rules so they reflect the alarmingly popular card game, offer text in six languages (English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese, and Italian), and bump the number of included cards to a whopping 1,000. Each package also comes equipped with three limited edition cards that can be unlocked in the game. Just enter the code at the bottom to have access to that monster on your GBA.

The only major failings of *Destined Duel* are hard to get around on Nintendo's handheld genie: lackluster graphics during duels, freakishly bad sound, and the two-cartridge requirement for head-to-head play. Still, the game is painfully addictive and will certainly be a good investment for fans of the series. Those who don't yet know Yu-Gi-Oh might want to take in the title as well, because it really will grow on even the uninitiated over age six. — **LISA**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE  
**E**  
7.5

■ **Concept:**

Update the handheld card game with current rules and extra cards

■ **Graphics:**

A little more interest in the duels would have been nice, but the character meetings and close-up card views are welcome

■ **Sound:**

Don't bother even trying to enjoy the "soundtrack." It's miserable

■ **Playability:**

Once you learn the rules selecting actions and organizing cards is a snap

■ **Entertainment:**

Extremely, ridiculously high fun for fans of the series. The rest of the world will quickly succumb to its charms as well

■ **Replay Value:**

Very High

## SECOND OPINION

This is a fairly unimpressive update to an otherwise ordinary card game. Outside of the new city map, expanded card deck, improved AI, and increased gameplay speed, there's very little to note as new or in the slightest way different. Fans will love it, but it doesn't have the mainstream appeal for the masses. You really have to know your Yu-Gi-Oh to appreciate it.

REINER — 6.75

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI  
■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 15

## REVIEWS

### GAME BOY ADVANCE

#### MUPPETS: ON WITH THE SHOW

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TDK MEDIACTIVE  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 13



I will argue that *Muppets Take Manhattan* is a grossly underrated feature film experience, but this does not mean that all Muppet products

are created equally. *On With The Show*, for example, is a collection of sub-par minigames each featuring some puppet all-stars. We've got Chef smashing rats with a skillet, Gonzo stunt driving, and Beaker messing with the beakers. While the cameos are amusing, the games just aren't much fun. — LISA

E 5.5



### THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN  
T

8.5

- **Concept:** Bite-sized stealth that exceeds expectations
- **Graphics:** Very detailed, the graphics are some of GBA's best
- **Sound:** I had to play it again to remember the sound, so that should tell you something
- **Playability:** There's a lot to do with the small number of buttons, but you're never confused
- **Entertainment:** It's an all-around great handheld game, which *Splinter* fans should pick up — especially with the added content
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

### GAME BOY ADVANCE

## SPLINTER CELL

HONEY, I SHRUNK SAM FISHER!

If you had told me that *Splinter Cell* on the Game Boy Advance was going to be an innovative title which expands on 2D gameplay, I would have called you a nihilist and thrown a bowling ball into your abdomen. But it's true! This is a clever, contagious game that matches the thrills of its next-gen brothers.

Small Sam has a number of abilities and ammunitions. You'll rappel down buildings, use zip lines, and hide in darkened spaces. Locked doors bring about some timed minigames, and weapons include sleep-inducing gas grenades and silenced pistol rounds. Of course, the "thump-you-upside-the-head" move works when your limited ammo supply is depleted. Night-vision comes in handy sometimes, but the coolest addition is the roving camera — which you can use to scour ahead of a level, or to detect the range of security cameras.

The levels aren't overly complex and are definitely linear. However, stealth has never been done so well on a handheld (including GBC's *Metal Gear*). It's slightly rudimentary to duck under the view of security personnel, but it adds a well-done dynamic to regular action games. Picture *BlackThorne* with modern gadgets, and you're on the right track. Its connectivity with the GameCube *Splinter* is another feather in the title's cap. I like the cut of its jib, and I'm guessing you will, too. — JUSTIN

### GAME BOY ADVANCE

#### THE LOST VIKINGS

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PUZZLE  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT  
 ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 25

Back when these crazy Norsemen first appeared in 1992, *The Lost Vikings* had a unique team puzzle-solving-meets-action-game dynamic that made it a standout for its time. While I certainly have fond memories of this classic, the years haven't been kind. The puzzles are still fun and challenging, but the constant switching of characters can wear on your patience. I know it goes against the classic remake code, but it would have been nice to see some new commands that allowed you to instruct idle Vikings to converge on your position or simply move as a pack. It's fun, but doesn't quite live up to the legend. — ANDY

E 7

### GAME BOY ADVANCE

#### MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK 3: BLUE AND WHITE

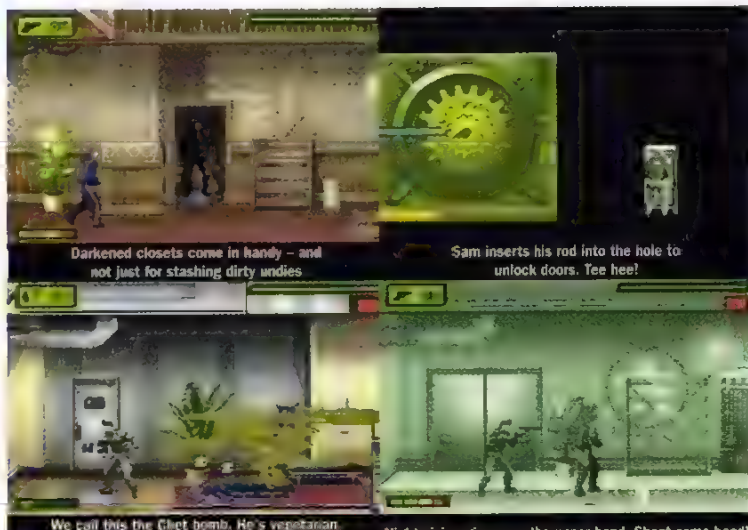
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM  
 ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 24



Capcom saturated the market with *Mega Man*'s side-scrolling adventures, and unfortunately, the *Battle Network* franchise seems to be suffering the same fate. Bereft of

any originality, *BN 3* plays almost exactly like its predecessors, except Capcom will release two versions of the game (*Blue and White*), each of which contain exclusive material players can obtain by linking up and trading. To its credit, *BN 3* still proves to be worthy of play, but next time around, Capcom will need more than a *Pokémon*-style gimmick to remain fresh. — CHET

E 8



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT  
 ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 29

### SECOND OPINION

*Splinter Cell*'s espionage-driven gameplay may seem like an unlikely candidate for the Game Boy Advance. Yet, despite the technical limitations, this handheld proves to be just as engrossing as its console brethren. If you can picture a high-tech Prince of Persia with a stealth kick, you have a pretty good idea of how the gameplay unfolds. Each level blends precise platforming exercises with a fair share of sneaking. The arsenal of moves that you have at your disposal is quite extensive. You can shimmy along pipes, duck into shadows, perform Sam's patented split jump, take human shields, rappel down walls, and even activate surveillance equipment like night vision/thermal goggles. With responsive controls and the highest of quality displayed within its character animations and background detailing, the bite-size version of *Splinter Cell* is a necessity for your handheld.

REINER — 8.75

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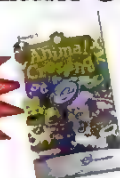


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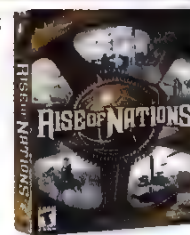


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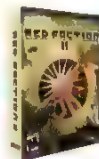


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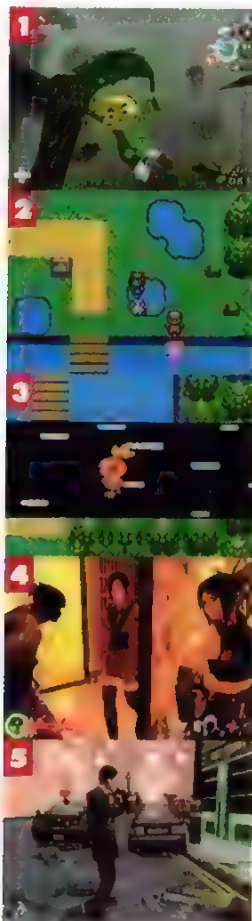


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# CHARTS

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 March 2003  
Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	N/A	<b>The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker</b>	GC	10	Mar-03	\$50
<p>Hmm....where are all you punks that ripped on "Cel-da" now? Probably buying a copy of The Wind Waker as we speak, or lining up to kiss Miyamoto's sacred booty - that's where! Woo-hoo! Zelda in da house! Whoopie whoop! Go Zelda, it's your birthday! Boo-yah! Blip, blip, blipity-bloop! U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!</p>						
2	N/A	<b>Pokémon Ruby</b>	GBA	7.25	Mar-03	\$30
<p>You guys again? Damn. Just when you thought it was safe, Nintendo's Pocket Monsters are back with a vengeance. Ruby and Sapphire's success prove that A) There are still a few kids that haven't jumped ship in favor of Yu-Gi-Oh, B) Those kids still don't mind paying for the same damn game Nintendo's been shoving down our throats since the '90s, and C) Pokémon have no genitalia. Odd.</p>						
3	N/A	<b>Pokémon Sapphire</b>	GBA	7.25	Mar-03	\$30
<p>Good things come in threes, but Pokémon always comes in twos. Does that make it a bad thing? Certainly not for Nintendo, which has taken control of the top three spots on this month's charts. Will it last? Who knows? Back in the day, these Ill' critters would hog up the top five spots for years at a time. We're curious to see if they still have that kind of staying power.</p>						
4	N/A	<b>Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven</b>	PS2	9	Mar-03	\$49
<p>The return of Sega's Shinobi didn't light the charts on fire, but it appears that Tenchu is still near and dear to the hearts of America's gamers. We suspect that it has something to do with the fact that Tenchu's gripping stealth gameplay captures the true essence of the shadow warrior more than Shinobi ever did. Either that, or the fact that nobody likes long, red scarves that much.</p>						
5	1	<b>The Getaway</b>	PS2	9	Jan-03	\$40
<p>Bilmey! What's an English thug to do? First Mark Hammond gets his butt kicked by a swishy little kid, then a gang of cartoon animals dish him out a vicious beatdown. Then, adding insult to injury, some ninja take him down one more notch.</p>						

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	SCORE	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A	<b>Def Jam Vendetta</b>	PS2	8.5	Mar-03	\$50
7	2	<b>Grand Theft Auto: Vice City</b>	PS2	10	Oct-02	\$50
8	6	<b>Xenosaga: Episode 1</b>	PS2	9.75	Feb-03	\$50
9	4	<b>Yu-Gi-Oh! Duelist of the Roses</b>	PS2	8	Feb-03	\$49
10	N/A	<b>MVP Baseball 2003</b>	PS2	9.25	Mar-03	\$50
11	N/A	<b>Driver 2 Advance</b>	GBA	7.75	Oct-02	\$20
12	19	<b>SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs</b>	PS2	9.5	Aug-02	\$60
13	N/A	<b>Dynasty Warriors 4</b>	PS2	7	Mar-03	\$49
14	N/A	<b>NBA Street</b>	PS2	9.25	Jun-01	\$20
15	7	<b>Yu-Gi-Oh! Dungeon Dice Monsters</b>	GBA	8	Feb-03	\$30
16	N/A	<b>Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec</b>	PS2	9	Jul-01	\$20
17	3	<b>The Sims</b>	PS2	9	Jan-03	\$50
18	20	<b>The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past</b>	GBA	9.25	Dec-02	\$30
19	N/A	<b>Ace Combat 4</b>	PS2	8.5	Oct-01	\$20
20	12	<b>Ghost Recon</b>	PS2	8.5	Dec-02	\$49

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	<b>Dragon Quest Monsters: Caravan Heart</b>	GBA
2	N/A	<b>Netsuchu! Pro Baseball 2003</b>	PS2
3	N/A	<b>The Second Super Robot Taisen</b>	PS2
4	N/A	<b>Made in Wario</b>	GBA
5	N/A	<b>Final Fantasy X-2</b>	PS2
6	8	<b>Pokémon Ruby</b>	GBA
7	9	<b>Pokémon Sapphire</b>	GBA
8	N/A	<b>The Legend of Zelda: The Triforce Gods</b>	GBA
9	N/A	<b>Soul Calibur II</b>	PS2
10	1	<b>Shin Sangoku Musou 3</b>	PS2



## GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	<b>Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War</b>	Xbox
2	1	<b>The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker</b>	GC
3	N/A	<b>Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow</b>	GBA
4	2	<b>Midnight Club II</b>	PS2
5	3	<b>NBA Street Vol. 2</b>	PS2
6	N/A	<b>Star Wars Galaxies</b>	PC
7	1	<b>Dark Cloud 2</b>	PS2
8	N/A	<b>Splinter Cell</b>	GBA
9	7	<b>Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven</b>	PS2
10	N/A	<b>Enter the Matrix</b>	PS2



## PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service Kristin Barnett-VonKorff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PR. CE
1	1	<b>Command &amp; Conquer: Generals</b>	Jun-02	\$47
2	N/A	<b>Freelancer</b>	Jun-02	\$39
3	6	<b>The Sims Deluxe</b>	Mar-02	\$41
4	N/A	<b>Rainbow Six: Raven Shield</b>	May-02	\$49
5	9	<b>Battlefield 1942</b>	Sep-02	\$47
6	7	<b>The Sims Unleashed</b>	Jan-02	\$29
7	N/A	<b>Zoo Tycoon</b>	Jun-02	\$28
8	2	<b>Battlefield 1942: Road to Rome</b>	Jun-02	\$19
9	3	<b>SimCity 4</b>	Mar-02	\$49
10	N/A	<b>Flight Simulator 2002</b>	May-02	\$24





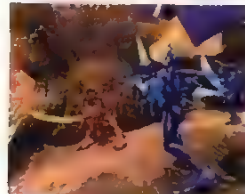


# NEW RELEASES ALWAYS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS.

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
<b>PLAYSTATION 2</b>		
8/12/03	Alter Echo	THQ
7/1/03	Ape Escape 2	Ubi Soft
6/24/03	Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony
8/19/03	Armored Core: Silent Line	Tommo
6/23/03	Big Mutha Truckerz	Empire Interactive
8/5/03	Chaos Legion	Capcom

## ALTER ECHO

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 12



Speaking of altering things, *Alter Echo* intends to do exactly that! This single-player title is seeking to change the way gamers look at brawlers. Game Informer had the opportunity to play an early version of this game at our offices recently,

and we were impressed with both its scope and features. As we mentioned earlier, *Alter Echo* is a brawler—even if *Outrage* representatives resist giving it that classification. While we saw many of the usual staples a game of this ilk must use to be successful (complex combo strings, differentiated weapons, crazy environments, etc.), there were a number of innovations present as well.

6/24/03	Charlie's Angels	Ubi Soft
5/27/03	Chessmaster	Ubi Soft
8/19/03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft
9/15/03	Daredevil	Encore Software
8/12/03	Dot Hack: Vol 3 Outbreak	Bandai
7/22/03	Downhill Domination	Sony
7/15/03	Dragon's Lair 3D	Encore Software
5/26/03	Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ
6/23/03	F1 Career Challenge	Electronic Arts
7/28/03	Freaky Flyers	Midway
6/23/03	Freestyle MetalX	Midway
7/22/03	Fugitive Hunter	Infogrames
9/15/03	Gladius	LucasArts
7/22/03	Great Escape	Take 2 Interactive
6/16/03	Groovender: Slot Car Thunder	Encore Software
5/14/03	Gunfighter 2: Return of Jesse James	Ubi Soft
5/27/03	Hulk: The Hunter	Vivendi Universal
8/19/03	Hunter: Wayward	Vivendi Universal
6/18/03	Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts
5/20/03	IndyCar Series	Infogrames
6/30/03	Italian Job The	Eidos
7/15/03	K1 World Grand Prix	Konami
9/1/03	Kengo 2	Ubi Soft
6/17/03	Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal
8/1/03	Madden NFL 2004	Electronic Arts
6/24/03	Magic Pong: The Quest for Color	Tommo
8/1/03	Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	Infogrames
8/4/03	MotoX	Konami
7/1/03	NCAA Football 2004	Electronic Arts
8/12/03	NCAA GameDay 2004	Sony
9/2/03	NFL Blitz Pro	Midway
8/12/03	NFL GameDay 2004	Sony
6/17/03	Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom
5/27/03	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision
9/9/03	Risk	Infogrames
9/9/03	Road Kill	Midway
9/1/03	RPG Maker 2	Tommo
6/10/03	RTX Red Rock	LucasArts
8/1/03	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder 2	Activision
8/9/03	Silent Hill 3	Konami
7/1/03	Smash Cars	Metro3D
8/26/03	Soul Calibur II	Namco
5/20/03	Speed Kings	Acclaim
7/28/03	Splashdown 2: Rides Gone Wild	THQ
7/1/03	SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	3DO
9/1/03	Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK Mediative
6/17/03	Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim
6/24/03	SX Superstar	Eidos
6/24/03	Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	Square Enix
6/3/03	Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision
9/10/03	Warhammer 40K: Fire Warrior	THQ
9/9/03	X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal
9/9/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
<b>PSONE</b>		
7/22/03	ATV Mania	Take 2 Interactive
8/1/03	Madden NFL 2004	Electronic Arts
6/17/03	Motocross Mania 2	Take 2 Interactive
8/12/03	NFL GameDay 2004	Sony
8/26/03	SUV Mania	Take 2 Interactive

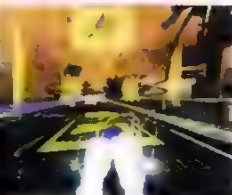
Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
<b>GAMECUBE</b>		
9/1/03	1060 White Storm	Nintendo
5/27/03	Aquaman: Battle For Atlantis	TDK Mediative
6/10/03	Army Men: Sarge's War	3DO
6/25/03	Charlie's Angels	Ubi Soft
9/1/03	Chessmaster	Ubi Soft
9/1/03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft
6/2/03	Cubix Robots for Everyone: Showdown	3DO
8/25/03	F-Zero	Nintendo
7/28/03	Freaky Flyers	Midway
6/23/03	Freestyle MetalX	Midway
9/15/03	Gladius	LucasArts
6/16/03	Groovender: Slot Car Thunder	Encore Software
5/27/03	High Heat Baseball 2004	3DO
6/17/03	Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos
5/27/03	Hulk: The	Vivendi Universal

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
6/30/03	Italian Job The	Eidos
8/1/03	Madden NFL 2004	Electronic Arts
6/30/03	Mario Golf	Nintendo
6/17/03	Mega Man Network Transmission	Capcom
6/17/03	Minor Trend Lotus Challenge	Xicat Interactive
7/1/03	NCAA Football 2004	Electronic Arts
9/2/03	NFL Blitz Pro	Midway
9/9/03	P.N. 03	Capcom
7/15/03	Rally Championship	Encore Software
9/9/03	Road Kill	Midway
5/27/03	Shrek: Super Party	TDK Mediative
6/17/03	Sonic Adventure DX: Director's Cut	Sega
8/26/03	Soul Calibur II	Namco
6/24/03	SX Superstar	Acclaim
5/20/03	Top Angler	Xicat Interactive
6/23/03	Wano World	Nintendo
8/19/03	WWE Wrestlemania X9	THQ
9/9/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
<b>XBOX</b>		
8/12/03	Alter Echo	THQ
5/27/03	Aquaman: Battle For Atlantis	TDK Mediative
6/23/03	Big Mutha Truckerz	Empire Interactive
5/27/03	Bloody Roar Extreme	Konami
5/27/03	Brute Force	MicroSoft
9/1/03	Chessmaster	Ubi Soft
6/6/03	Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge	MicroSoft
6/17/03	Dakar Rally 2: World's Ultimate Rally	Acclaim
9/15/03	Daredevil	Encore Software
9/15/03	Deus Ex 2: The Invisible War	Eidos
8/5/03	Dino Crisis 3	Capcom
6/12/03	Dronez	Metro3D
5/26/03	Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ
9/2/03	Fila Tennis Champions	Xicat Interactive
7/28/03	Freaky Flyers	Midway
6/23/03	Freestyle MetalX	Midway
9/1/03	Fuel	Dreamcatcher
7/15/03	Ghost Recon: Island Thunder	Ju Soft
9/15/03	Gladius	LucasArts
7/22/03	Great Escape: The Groovender: Slot Car Thunder	Take 2 Interactive
6/16/03	Group S Challenge	Encore Software
5/27/03	Hulk: The Hunter	Capcom
6/10/03	IndyCar Series	Vivendi Universal
6/30/03	Italian Job The	Infogrames
8/19/03	Last Ninja The	Eidos
6/2/03	Loose Cannon 1	Vivendi Universal
6/17/03	Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Ubi Soft
8/1/03	Madden NFL 2004	Vivendi Universal
6/3/03	Midnight Club II	Electronic Arts
6/3/03	Midtown Madness 3	Take 2 Interactive
8/1/03	Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	MicroSoft
5/20/03	MLB Inside Pitch 2003	Infogrames
5/20/03	Moto GP 2	MicroSoft
8/4/03	MotoX	THQ
7/1/03	NCAA Football 2004	Konami
9/2/03	NFL Blitz Pro	Electronic Arts
9/3/03	Ninja Gaden	Midway
6/10/03	Outlaw Volleyball	Tecmo
6/17/03	Pirates of the Caribbean: Road Kill	Vivendi Universal
9/9/03	Pirates of the Caribbean: Road Kill	Bethesda Softworks
8/1/03	Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder 2	Midway
7/1/03	Shayde	Activision
6/17/03	Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix	Metro3D
8/26/03	Soul Calibur II	Activision
5/20/03	Speed Kings	Namco
7/1/03	SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Acclaim
6/25/03	Star Wars: Knights of Old Republic	3DO
6/24/03	SX Superstar	LucasArts
6/24/03	SX Superstar	Acclaim
6/24/03	Top Angler	Xicat Interactive

## F-ZERO

■ **FORMAT** GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST 25



There can be no doubt that *F-Zero* is one of the most highly anticipated GameCube titles on the horizon. The sense of speed as your vehicle rips around the assorted tracks is terrifying, and the courses themselves look absolutely gorgeous. Mute City, for instance, leaps to life with impossibly large dips and hills, as well as death-defying turns and eye-popping ambient scenes. Some of your favorite vehicles are also available in updated form. Blue Falcon is now Captain Falcon. Dr. Stewart will pilot Golden Fox, and a host of other familiar body types will take to the tracks. Look for more info on *F-Zero* later this summer.

5/23/03	Unseen, The	MicroSoft
6/3/03	Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision
9/1/03	WWE Raw 2	THQ
6/10/03	X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal
9/9/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
<b>PC</b>		
6/2/03	Age of Wonders: Shadow Magic	Gathering of Developers
7/14/03	Anarchy Online: Shadowlands	Funcom
9/9/03	Battlefield 1942: Secret Weapons of WW II	Electronic Arts
6/23/03	Big Mutha Truckerz	THQ
6/10/03	BloodRayne	Mayesco
6/17/03	BMX Team DK	Infogrames
6/16/03	Call of Duty	Infogrames
6/17/03	City Racer	FishTank Interactive
7/1/03	Commandos 3	Ubi Soft
9/2/03	Crusaders Kings	Eidos
6/3/03	Dark Age of Camelot: Gold Edition	Strategy First

Release Date	Title	Publisher/Distributor
6/16/03	Dark Khan	Take 2 Interactive
6/30/03	Deus Ex 2: The Invisible War	Eidos
7/15/03	Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp	Digital Leisure
6/2/03	Duke Nukem Forever	Take 2
5/20/03	Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind Bloodmoon, The	Bethesda Softworks
7/29/03	Epic Chess	Vivendi Universal
8/5/03	Etherlords II	Strategy First
6/2/03	Evil Twin: Cyprien's Chronicle	Ubi Soft
8/5/03	Fire Department	Infogrames
7/29/03	Flight Sim: 2004 Century of Flight	MicroSoft
9/2/03	Ghostmaster	Vivendi Universal
7/1/03	HalfLife 2	Vivendi Universal
9/1/03	HalfLife: Counter Strike Condition Zero	Vivendi Universal
7/1/03	Hao	MicroSoft
6/24/03	Harpoon IV	Ubi Soft
7/22/03	HomeWorld 2	Vivendi Universal
5/27/03	Hulk The	Vivendi Universal
8/26/03	Kawasaki Racing	Infogrames
8/12/03	Lon Heart	Vivendi Universal
7/1/03	Lock On: Modern Air Combat	Ubi Soft
9/9/03	Lords of the Realm III	Vivendi Universal
5/19/03	Medal of Honor: Platinum Edition	Electronic Arts
6/3/03	Midnight Club I	Take 2 Interactive
5/22/03	Midnight Outlaw: Nitro Edition	ValuSoft
5/20/03	MotoGP 2	THQ
6/17/03	Neverwinter Nights: Shadows of Undrentide	Infogrames
6/16/03	One Must Fall: Battle Rounds	Ti Snergy
5/19/03	Planetside Online	Verant Interactive/989 Studios
6/16/03	Republic: The Revolution	Eidos
5/20/03	Rise of Nations	MicroSoft

## GLADIUS

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX/GAMECUBE ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 15



With each passing month, we can't help but grow more excited about *Gladius*, LucasArts' most ambitious project outside of the *Star Wars* universe. Once you enlist a character, you'll have complete freedom to customize him or her as you see fit. There are over 100 character types, whose color and names can be altered; more than 1,000 items, hundreds of skills, and 400 unique weapons, helmets, and shields. In total, LucasArts anticipates that it will take roughly 35 hours for most gamers to finish. And, since there are two protagonists with distinct storylines, you can easily double that number. To increase the replay value even further, up to four players can battle against each other in an exhibition mode, or work together in the game's cooperative mode!

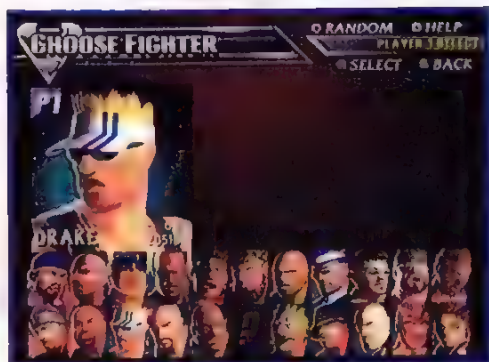
5/20/03	Rugrats Go Wild	THQ
6/30/03	Savage	IGames Publishing
6/4/03	Serious Sam Gold	Global Star Software
7/15/03	Space Age	Digital Leisure
6/24/03	Star Trek: Elite Force 2	Activision
6/16/03	Star Wars: Galactic Collector's Edition	LucasArts
6/18/03	Star Wars: Galactic Empire Divided	LucasArts
6/2/03	State of Emergency	Take 2 Interactive
6/2/03	Team Fortress 2: Brotherhood of Arms	Vivendi Universal
7/1/03	Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	Eidos
8/15/03	Tom 2.0	Monolith
6/24/03	Warcraft III: Frozen Throne Expansion Pack	Vivendi Universal
7/15/03	Who Shot Johnny Rock?	Digital Leisure
6/3/03	Will Rock	Ubi Soft
9/9/03	XIII	Ubi Soft

## GAME BOY ADVANCE

6/23/03	Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising	Nintendo
7/1/03	Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Electro Source
6/19/03	Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Return of the Dark King	THQ
6/9/03	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubi Soft
6/9/03	Donkey Kong Country	Nintendo
6/24/03	Dragon Ball Z: Legacy of Goku II	Infogrames
6/2/03	Freestyle	Electro Source
6/2/03	Grand Theft Auto III	Electro Source
6/3/03	High Heat Baseball 2004	3DO
5/27/03	Hulk, The	Vivendi Universal
9/9/03	Ice Nine	Bam Entertainment
6/23/03	Jet Grind Radio	THQ
5/19/03	Lego Drome Racers	THQ
9/9/03	Lizzie McGuire	Disney Interactive
8/1/03	Madden NFL 2004	Electronic Arts
6/24/03	Mega Man Battle Network 3: Blue	Capcom
6/24/03	Mega Man Battle Network 3: White	Capcom
7/7/03	Monster Truck Madness	THQ
6/2/03	Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed	Electro Source
7/14/03	Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	THQ
7/1/03	Pirates of the Caribbean	TDK Mediative
6/2/03	Road Rash: Jailbreak	Electro Source
1/31/03	Rocket Power Gravity Zone	THQ
5/27/03	Rugrats Go Wild	THQ
5/19/03	Sega Arcade Gallery	THQ
8/1/03	SimCity	Electro Source
6/11/03	Simmons Road Rage	THQ
6/10/03	Space Channel 5: Ulaia's Cosmic Attack	THQ
7/15/03	Spy Kids 3	Disney Interactive
6/24/03	Stuntman	Infogrames
7/15/03	Top Gear Rally	Kemco
5/26/03	Wario Ware, Inc.: Mega Microgames	Nintendo
7/29/03	Woody Woodpecker: Crazy Castle 5	Kemco

# SECRET ACCESS

## PS2 PLAYSTATION 2



### DEF JAM VENDETTA

Choose Battle mode and pick any type of match. At the character selection screen, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and quickly (we emphasize quickly) enter any of the following codes.

- Arii - X, □, △, ○, □
- Briggs (alternate costume) - X, △, ○, □, ○
- Carla - X, □, X (x3)
- Chukklez - □ (x2), △, X, ○
- Cruz - ○, △, X (x2), ○
- D-Mob - □ (x2), △, □ (x2)
- Dan G - X, ○, X, ○, □
- Deebo - ○ (x2), X (x2), △
- Deja - ○, ○, ○ (x2), X
- DMX - ○, X, ○, △, X
- Drake - △, □, ○, X (x2)
- Funkmaster Flex - ○, △, ○ (x2), □
- Headache - △ (x3), □, ○
- House - △, X, △, ○, X
- Iceberg - □, △, ○, □, ○
- Ludacris - ○ (x3), □, △
- Manny (alternate costume) - ○, □, ○, □, ○
- Masa - X, ○, △, □ (x2)
- Method Man - □, ○, X, △, ○
- Moses - △ (x2), □ (x2), X
- N.O.R.E. - ○, □, △, X, ○
- Nyne - □, ○, X (x2), △
- Omar - ○ (x2), □, △ (x2)
- Opal - ○ (x2), □ (x2), △
- Peewee - X (x2), □, △, □
- Peewee (alternate costume) - X, △ (x2), □, ○
- Penny - X (x3), △, ○
- Pockets - △, □, ○, □, X
- Proof (alternate costume) - X, □, △, □, ○
- Razor - △, □, △, ○, X
- Razor (alternate costume) - □, ○, X, △ (x2)
- Redman - ○ (x2), △, □, X
- Ruffneck - X, □, X, △, ○
- Ruffneck (alternate costume) - □, ○, △, X, □
- Scarface - ○, ○, X, △, □
- Sketch - △ (x2), ○, □, X
- Snowman - △ (x2), X (x2), ○
- Spider (alternate costume) - □, △, X, □, ○
- Steel - X, △, ○ (x2), △
- T'ai - ○ (x2), □, X, ○
- Tank (alternate costume) - X, △ (x2), ○ (x2)
- Zaheer - △ (x2), □, X (x2)

"The Game Molester"  
Washington, D.C.



### CHAOS LEGION

A chaotic game needs some crazy codes to enhance the chaos. Unfortunately, these are of the lame sort.

**Bonus Options** - Unlock the Extra option by finishing the adventure on any difficulty setting.

**Hard Difficulty** - Beat the game on Normal to unlock the Hard difficulty setting.

**Play as Arcla** - Complete the game under the Normal difficulty setting.

**Super Difficulty** - Finish the game on Hard to open the Super difficulty setting.

"GI Droid"

(location unknown - last seen infiltrating Activision stealing what looks like screens of Spider-Man 2 and Tony Hawk 5)



### AMPLITUDE

Input all of the following codes during gameplay.

- Alternate Field Shape** - L3 (x3), R3 (x3), L3, R3, L3
- Maximum Combos** - In Freestyle mode, get a friend to hold □, △, and ○ while you move the Left Analog Stick quickly.
- Monkey Gems** - L3 (x4), R3 (x4), L3
- Motion Blurring** - R3 (x4), L3(x4), R3
- Random Gem Positions** - X (x2), Left (x2), R3 (x2), Right (x2)

Jawaharial Nehru  
Calcutta, India

### JURASSIC PARK: OPERATION GENESIS

You must enter all of the following codes during gameplay. Furthermore, you have to be pretty quick about it. If you find a code isn't working, just keep trying. It should activate after a few tries.

**All Research** - Press Down (x3), Left, Right, L1, Down, and Up to make everything researched.

**Crash** - Press L1 + R1, and repeatedly tap Up, Down, Up, Down to explode one of your cars.

**Dial-A-Twister** - Press Left, Up, Right, Down, and L1 + R1 to bring a twister.

**Driveby** - Press R1 + L1, Left, Down, and Right (x2) to shoot from the safari cars by using the camera.

**Extinction Event** - Press L1, R1, Down, R1, and L1 to kill all dinosaurs.

**Gimme Some Money** - Press L1 + Up and then L1 + Down to get \$10,000.

**Hot One** - Press R1 + Down and R1 + Down to cause a heat wave.

**Impossible Mission** - Press R1, Right (x4), and R1 to unlock all missions, exercises, and sites.

**Isla Muerta** - Press R1 (x3), L1, and Right to make the make the dinosaurs look like the living dead.

**Market Day** - Press L1 + R1 and then Down to make your finances zero.

**Mr. DNA** - Press R1, Up, R1, Right, L1, and Down to set all excavated dinosaur DNA to 100%.

**No Red Tape** - Press L1, R1, Left, and Down (x4).

**No Twisters** - Press Left, Right, release L1 + R1, and then press L1 + R1 again.

**Oh No!** - Press Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, and R1 to kill all tourists.

**Open To The Public** - Press Left, Down, Right, Up, L1 + R1, and L1 + R1 to freely select three dig sites without any stars.

**Rampage Time** - Press L1 (x3) and Left (x3) to stress out all carnivores.

**Welcome To Melbourne** - Press R1 (x2), L1, R1, Down, Up, and Down to cause stormy weather.

**Where's The Money** - Press L1 + R1 + Down to restock your market with fossils.

Dennis Kucinich  
Cleveland, OH

## PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

## XBOX XBOX



## MLB 2004









If you find yourself bored with this game, like we are, try inputting these codes for a bit of fun! Pause during gameplay and enter the codes. Your controller will vibrate to indicate a correct code entry.

- Big Ball** – L1, L2, L1, L2, Up, Right, Down, Left  
**Big Bodies** – Up, Down, Left, Right, L1, L2, R2, R1  
**Big Heads** – Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Right, Down, Left  
**Fast Players** – Left, Right (x2), Left, L1, R1 (x2), L1  
**No Bodies** – R1, R2, R1, R2, Up, Down, Left, Right  
**Programmer Names** – R1, R2, Right (x2), Left (x2), L2, L1  
**Slow Players** – Left (x2), Right (x2), R2 (x2), L2 (x2)  
**Small Heads** – Up, Down, Up, Down, R1 (x2), L1 (x2)

*"The Rhino"  
Toledo, OH*

## NBA STREET VOL. 2





Enter these codes in Pickup mode after choosing a name. The bottom of the blue box will say "Enter Codes Now." Hold L1 and input the following sequences.

- All Quicks** –   
**Always Legend Trails** –   
**Big Heads** –   
**Easy 2 Pointers** –   
**Hard 2 Pointers** –   
**No Counters** –   
**Street Kids** –   
**Unlimited Turbo** – 

*Sarah Newman  
Fargo, ND*

## X2 WOLVERINES REVENGE

What a disappointment, eh? These codes will at least alleviate some of the tedium if you happened to pick this game up before reading our review. Enter all of the codes at the Main Menu. A sound will indicate a correct entry. For the Cheat Menu code, pause the game and you'll see it as an option.

- Cheat Menu** –   
**Level Select** –   
**Unlock All Cerebro Files** –   
**Unlock All Costumes** – 

*Talvin Singh  
London, England*

JURASSIC PARK:  
OPERATION GENESIS

You must enter all of the following codes during gameplay. Doing it quickly is a necessity, too. If one is being difficult and won't work, just keep trying. It should activate after a few tries.

**All Research** – Press Down (x3), Left, Right, L, Down, and Up to make everything researched.

**Crash** – Press L + R, and repeatedly tap Up, Down, Up, Down to explode one of your cars.

**Dial-A-Twister** – Press Left, Up, Right, Down, and L + R to bring a twister.

**Driveby** – Press R + L, Left, Down, and Right (x2) to shoot from the safari cars by using the camera.

**Extinction Event** – Press L, R, Down, R, and L to kill all dinosaurs.

**Gimme Some Money** – Press L + Up and then L + Down to get \$10,000.

**Guaranteed Immunity** – Press Up (x2), R, L, Up (x2) to prevent dinosaurs from getting sick.

**Hot One** – Press R + Down and R + Down to cause a heat wave.

**Impossible Mission** – Press R, Right (x4), and R to unlock all missions, exercises, and sites.

**Isla Muerta** – Press R (x3), L, and Right to make the dinosaurs look like the living dead.

**Market Day** – Press L + R and then Down to make your finances zero.

**Mr. DNA** – Press R, Up, R, Right, L, and Down to set all excavated dinosaur DNA to 100%.

**No Red Tape** – Press L, R, Left, and Down (x4).

**No Twisters** – Press Left, Right, release L + R, and then press L + R again.

**Oh No!** – Press Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, and R to kill all tourists.

**Open To The Public** – Press Left, Down, Right, Up, L + R, and L + R to freely select three dig sites without any stars.

**Rampage Time** – Press L (x3) and Left (x3) to stress out all carnivores.

**Welcome To Melbourne** – Press R (x2), L, R, Down, Up, and Down to cause stormy weather.

**Where's The Money** – Press L, R, L, R, and Down (x2) to restock your market with fossils.

*Brett Scott  
Dallas, TX*

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL  
MONSTERS MELE

Hold L + B + R (in that order) at the Main Menu and then release B, R, and L (in that order) to open the code entry screen. Enter the following codes. A monster's roar will indicate a correct code entry.

**Boxing Ring Level** – 440499  
**Godzilla 2000** – 637522

*Dyg Doug  
Los Angeles, CA*



## STATE OF EMERGENCY

Enter each code during gameplay in a one-player game. Like us, you'll find that these codes make the game more raucous, and therefore more fun!

- AK-47 Rifle** – Left, Right, Down, R, Y  
**Big Player** – Black, R, White, L, Y  
**Bull** – Right, Right, Right, Right, A  
**Decap Punches** – White, L, Black, R, X  
**Flame Thrower** – Left, Right, Down, Black, B  
**Freak** – Right, Right, Right, Right, B  
**Grenade Launcher** – Left, Right, Down, Black, X  
**Hand Grenades** – Left, Right, Down, R, X  
**Infinite Ammo** – White, L, Black, R, Y  
**Infinite Time** – White, L, Black, R, B  
**Invincibility** – White, L, Black, R, A  
**Little Player** – Black, R, White, L, A  
**M-16 Rifle** – Left, Right, Down, R, B  
**Mini-Gun** – Left, Right, Down, Black, Y  
**Molotov Cocktails** – Left, Right, Down, R, A  
**Normal Player** – Black, R, White, L, B  
**Pepper Spray** – Left, Right, Down, White, X  
**Rocket Launcher** – Left, Right, Down, Black, A  
**Semi-Auto Pistol** – Left, Right, Down, White, Y  
**Spanky** – Right, Right, Right, Right, Y  
**Tazergun** – Left, Right, Down, White, B  
**Teargas Launcher** – Left, Right, Down, White, A

*Reuben Rim  
Long Island City, NY*



## PRISONER OF WAR

Enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheat – as if you really care or own this title.

- All Levels** – GER1ENG5  
**Always Display Current Event** – SHOWTIME  
**Display Location of Barracks of Officer** – JOE  
 Note: The radar will show the direction to your barracks in chapters 2 to 5.  
**Display Peripheral Vision Radar** – KAZ

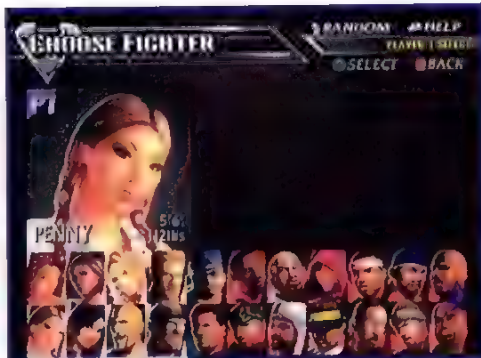
*Nick Andros  
Boulder, CA*

### ROLLER COASTER TYCOON

Go to a guest and change his or her name to the following names to give that guest a personality. If you wish to achieve a desired effect with multiple guests, simply enter the same name but change the name's case. For example, if you wish to have two guests with the name Chris Sawyer, the second guest's name should be CHRIS SAWYER.

- Artist Guest - Simon Foster
- Fast Go-Karts - Damon Hill
- Faster Go-Karts - Michael Schumacher
- Guest Pays 2x Entrance Fee - John Mace
- Hungry Guest - Tony Day
- Increase Guest Happiness - Melanie Warn
- Note: Keep doing this to increase your park's rating.
- Photographer Guest - Chris Sawyer
- Pick Pocket - Richard Tan
- Slower Go-Karts - Mr Bean
- Waving Guest - Katie Brayshaw
- Wow Thinking - John Wardley

"Daddy Fat Sax"  
Memphis, TN



### DEF JAM VENDETTA

Enter Battle mode. At the character selection screen hold L + R + Z and quickly input the following button combinations.

- Aril - A, Y, B, X, Y
- Briggs (alternate costume) - A, B, X, Y, X
- Carla - A, Y, A (x3)
- Chukklez - Y (x2), B, A, X
- Cruz - X, B, A (x2), X
- D-Mob - Y, B, Y, A, X
- D-Mob (alternate costume) - Y (x2), B, Y (x2)
- Dan G - A, X, A, X, Y
- Deebo - X (x2), A (x2), B
- Deja - X, Y, X (x2), A
- DMX - X, A, X, B, Y
- Drake - B, Y, X, A (x2)
- Drake (alternate costume) - A, B (x2), X (x2)
- Funkmaster Flex - X, B, X (x2), Y
- Headache - B (x3), Y, X
- House - B, A, B, X, A
- Iceberg - Y, B, X, Y, X
- Ludacris - X (x3), Y, B
- Manny (alternate costume) - X, Y, X, Y, X
- Masa - A, X, B, Y (x2)
- Method Man - Y, X, A, B, X
- Moses - B (x2), Y (x2), A
- N.O.R.E. - X, Y, B, A, X
- Nyne - Y, X, A (x2), B
- Omar - X (x2), Y, B (x2)
- Opal - X (x2), Y (x2), B
- Peewee - A (x2), Y, B, Y
- Penny - A (x3), B, X
- Pockets - B, Y, X, Y, A
- Proof (alternate costume) - A, Y, B, Y, X
- Razor - B, Y, B, X, A
- Razor (alternate costume) - Y, X, A, B (x2)
- Redman - X (x2), B, Y, A
- Ruffneck - A, Y, A, B, X
- Ruffneck (alternate costume) - Y, X, B, A, Y
- Scarface - X, Y, A, B, Y
- Sketch - B (x2), X, Y, A
- Snowman - B, B, A (x2), X
- Splder (alternate costume) - Y, B, A, Y, X
- Steel - A, B, X (x2), B
- T'al - X (x2), Y, A, X
- Zaheer - B (x2), Y, A (x2)

Justin "Loving" Lee  
Minneapolis, MN



### GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE

Hold L + B + R (in that order) at the Main Menu and then release B, R, and L (in that order) to display the code entry screen. A monster will roar, which means that the code was accepted.

- All Cities - 480148
- All Buildings And Objects Throwable - 756287
- Destroyah - 537084
- Disable Energy Power-ups - 413403
- Disable Freeze Tanks - 841720
- Disable Health Power-ups - 562142
- Disable Mothra Power-ups - 134615
- Disable Rage Power-ups - 119702
- Extra Damage By All Players - 817683
- Extra Damage By Military - 308929
- Extra Damage By Player Four - 286552
- Extra Damage By Player One - 511012
- Extra Damage By Player Three - 212454
- Extra Damage By Player Two - 815480
- Gigan - 616233
- Godzilla 2000 - 225133
- Invisible Players - 316022
- King Ghidrah - 877467
- Mecha Godzilla - 131008
- Mecha King Ghidrah - 557456
- No Damage For All Players - 505634
- No Damage For Player Four - 286552
- No Damage For Player One - 843901
- No Damage For Player Three - 188522
- No Damage For Player Two - 706149
- Orga - 202412
- Player Status Always Displayed - 135984
- Regenerate Energy - 492877
- Rodan - 104332
- Small Players - 174204
- Small Player Four - 795735
- Small Player Three - 895636
- Smog Mode - 913963
- Toggle Military Response - 256806
- Unlimited Energy For Player Four - 291680
- Unlimited Energy For Player One - 677251
- Unlimited Energy For Player Three - 603696
- Unlimited Energy For Player Two - 435976
- Unlimited Rage For Player Four - 451242
- Unlimited Rage For Player One - 649640
- Unlimited Rage For Player Three - 548053
- Unlimited Rage For Player Two - 122224

Ray Padilla  
Irvine, CA

### V-RALLY 3

The first name in the following codes is given first and the last name proceeds it.

- Fiat Cars - 21051975 PTITDAV
- Jelly Cars - 07121974 FERGUS
- Realistic Physics - WHEEL REAL
- Small Cars - 01041977 BIGJIM
- Small Cars And High-Pitched Commentary - PALACH (last name only)
- Smashed Cars - 25121975 PILOU
- Stretched Cars - Gonzales SPEEDY

"The Armchair Quarterback"  
Canton, OH

### X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Enter the codes at the Main Menu. A sound indicates correct code entry. If you purchased this title and hate it, these codes will help you to the end. To access the cheat menu, pause during gameplay and you will see the option at the bottom of the list.

- All Cerebro Files and FMV Sequences - X, L, X, L, X (x2), R, L
- All Costumes - X, L, X, L, X (x2), L, R
- Cheat Menu - X (x2), L (x4), X (x2), L
- Level Select - X, L, X, L, X, L (x2), R

Kyoko Yamashita  
Torrance, CA

## 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.

Send To:  
**Secret Access**  
Game Informer Magazine  
724 North First Street, 4th Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
secretaccess@gameinformer.com



**WWE CRUSH HOUR**

This is perhaps the worst game ever to bear the WWE (or WWF) name. Here's a code that lets you unlock a hidden, washed-up wrestler.

**Kevin Nash** - At the character selection screen press L, X, Z, Y. He will be the last character.

Clark Wayne  
Gotham, Metropolis



**X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE**

At the Main Menu enter the following codes. A sound indicates a correct code entry. Pause during gameplay to reach the Cheats Menu.

**All Costumes** - B, X, B, Y (x3), L (x2), Z  
**Cheats Menu** - B (x2), X (x2), Y (x2), X (x2), L (x2), R (x2), Z  
**Level Select** - B, X, B, Y, B, X, L, R, Z

Howard Phillips Lovecraft  
Providence, RI



**RED FACTION 2**

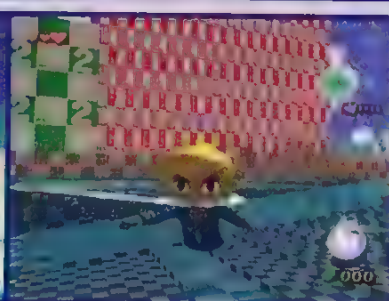
Enter all of the following codes at the Cheats screen under the Extras menu.

**All Cheats** - Y, X, B, X, Y, A, B, A  
**Fat Mode** - X (x4), B, A, X (x2)  
**Master Code** - B (x2), A (x2), Y, X, Y, X  
**Infinite Ammunition** - Y, B, A, X, Y, X, A, B  
**Infinite Grenades** - X, A, X, Y, A, X, A, X

Adin Ballou  
Cumberland, RI

**CODE OF THE MONTH**

**THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER**



**Basic Textures And Enemy Test** -  
 MBZQ-VJJT-WX6HV  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 4H85-XCHW-7UR1J

**Basic Textures And Evil Chars** -  
 5GKJ-BG5E-C99XN  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 JHA7-H8M2-J687P

**Basic Textures And Gen Test** -  
 AAAC-DU2K-49T65  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 VH57-6NKH-KGYD1

**Basic Textures And Item Test** -  
 WJXU-5DPP-632UG  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 XEBA-9F1Z-6CD4M

**Basic Textures And Roll Call** -  
 C6WR-20N3-CW7JP  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 VXAF-QD6P-06H8G

**Basic Textures And Swingers** -  
 CK20-AEK6-5R4N3  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 JKU2-JACA-WTBE1  
 56H6-ZHYZ-9HBC8

**Basic Textures And Switch** -  
 DZRG-7N69-FWU0D  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 Q4B0-T9KG-407ZJ

**Basic Textures And Warp** -  
 DGP6-73K1-VTFVZ  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 G81M-KKDM-UET07

**Basic Textures And Warp Jugs** -  
 QZRK-HZVX-0V3TM  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 CVH8-K6FZ-6NQXH

**Dungeon With Pigs** -  
 YRXZ-D9MJ-BOJDY  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 FWA9-GFAZ-VDWEV  
 1X90-8QQU-REZG3

**Snow Chamber** -  
 OPT7-4XBO-ZB8CY  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 Z6V3-XCB2-AFUVV  
 EED8-FYHH-F4564

**Standard Room** -  
 8C25-BFOY-32KDV  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 U4X4-FED7-M6NXG  
 6DUA-3ZM9-JJ01X

Matt Maguire  
Richmond, VA

These codes are for use with the Action Replay. If you do not own one, you can not access this stuff. To play in any of these various test maps, only input one set of codes at a time (besides the master code).

**Master Code (Must Be On)** -  
 6BUE-CTGY-M9VB5  
 RUVW-AT9M-05YVU

**Basic Island** -  
 ZY1N-AGX5-MMCY0  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 3Z3C-ZZVX-C21YN  
 1X90-8QQU-REZG3

**Basic Island With Dragon Boat** -  
 KMRE-XXPH-VEUWH  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 Z6V3-XCB2-AFUVV  
 GMEE-ZUJH-BUWFM

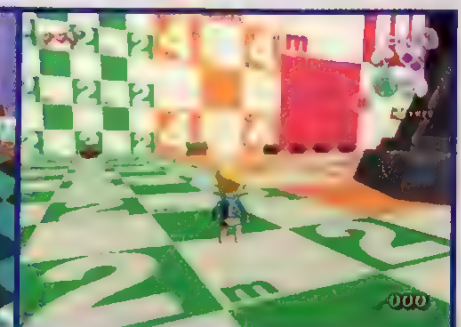
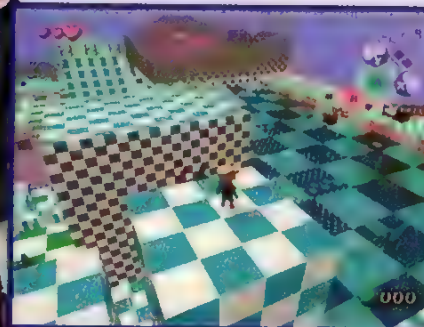
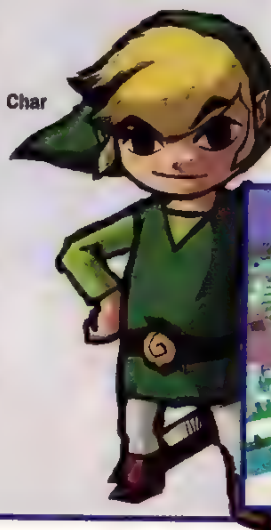
**Basic Textures** -  
 MN9C-MW6B-D7KA5  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 JKU2-JACA-WTBE1  
 XYVY-4Y6B-9221N

**Basic Textures 2** -  
 4Y2H-AQZC-RED2R  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 WA9T-M9BA-KVQ77

**Basic Textures And Char Interaction Test** -  
 236T-Z3BK-RC29V  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 PKT0-K5X5-Z5368

**Basic Textures And Char Test** -  
 5C70-M4PH-EYJH3  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 XBQC-QXB6-Q4EHP

**Basic Textures And Chests** -  
 7JJ2-MDC5-J92ZD  
 94HP-XPXH-WQXF7  
 POQ4-Q62V-X8RDW  
 5GG6-4KVK-AVB1D



# CLASSIC GI

## ZORK AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE TEXT ADVENTURE

In a day and age when the PlayStation 2 is commonly considered a graphically under-powered console, the games on display in the pages of Classic GI must seem to be painfully archaic to some of our younger readers. As primitive as ancient arcade units like Pac-Man and Defender appear, you might be surprised to learn that one of the most influential PC titles ever made (and number 70 in Game Informer's 100th Issue Greatest Games of All Time list) actually had no graphics whatsoever. While you might not have heard of Zork, gamers that cut their teeth in the early '80s no doubt have fond memories of Infocom and the company's seminal text adventure – a title that laid the foundation for Myst, the RPG genre in general, and almost any game that incorporates a depth of storytelling or puzzle-solving.



Here is the iconic Zork logo

Like so many legendary projects, Zork was the product of a close-knit group of friends. In this case, it was a group of computer enthusiasts who had attended MIT in the mid '70s. This group of both former and current students included the people that would make up most of the core of Infocom's text adventure empire: Marc Blank (Zork, who now works for Sony Bend on the Syphon Filter series), Dave Lebling (Zork), Joel Berez (future Infocom president), and Tim Anderson (Zork).

These young programmers were obsessed with gaming, something that was not uncommon among the tech-oriented populace of the MIT campus. "There was always a big tradition at the Lab for Computer Science at MIT of playing games," recalls Blank. Their interests were piqued by a variety of digital pursuits, including a game called Maze, a simplistic first-person shooter that predated Doom by over 15 years and could be played on a local mainframe network complete with real-time chat functions

that wouldn't be commonplace for years. Also, Blank and friends created a quiz program based on the then-hot Trivial Pursuit board game which could be played by anyone hooked up to the government's ARPANET network, the direct precursor to the Internet that linked several of the nation's most prestigious universities and military facilities.

However, there was one game in particular that sparked the interest of the LCS crowd – a text-based online game known as Colossal Cave Adventure. Although it featured no graphics, the game's text recognition capabilities and complex puzzles made it much more engrossing than the simple arcade games of the time. Within a fantasy setting, players explored an imaginary world by typing commands directly into their computer, relying only on their wits to solve several difficult puzzles.

"In 1977, we first saw the Colossal Cave game, and it just blew us all away," comments Blank. "A number of us had played Dungeons & Dragons before, and this game was just terrific. When we were done with it, which didn't take very long, it was kind of a letdown, because there were no other games like it. We were sad because there weren't any other games like it to play, so we decided to make our own."

Although they loved CCA, they felt they could improve on the engine technology, which allowed players to use only brief, two-word commands.

"The first thing we wanted to do is make the problems more interesting," said Blank. "The fact is that it's very hard to figure out how to solve a problem when you're limited to two-word commands. The range of things you can do is very limited. The feeling was that allowing people to use more complete sentences would lead to better problems. Improving the parser [the part of the program that could read the players commands] wasn't done as the goal, but as a means to creating better puzzles and more interesting stories – and less frustrations, less playing the 'guess the word' game."

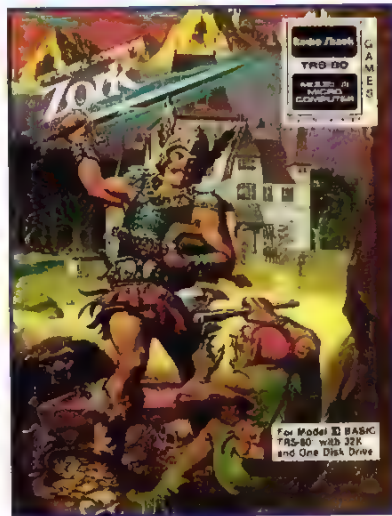
To this end, Blank and his friend Dave Lebling worked long hours on an improved parser. The result was a system that worked much better than CCA's,

and allowed for the flexibility and player creativity that would be the hallmark of Zork and Infocom's text adventures. Zork was soon a hit on the ARPANET, and became a favorite of students and government employees that had access to the large PDP-10 mainframe computers that the game ran on.

Right around the time that Zork was reaching its zenith as the favorite pastime among America's technological elite, several of the former MIT lab rats had decided to form their own software company. Dubbed Infocom, the firm began to brainstorm ideas for its initial entry into the marketplace. Although many wanted to concentrate on business software, Blank and his Zork contingent convinced the others that it might be possible to port the game over to the newly released generation of home computers, most importantly the Apple II and Texas Instruments TRS-80.

"I came into the group with Joe Berez, and said that there was a chance that we could take the game we had on the mainframe and get it to work on some of these new machines," said Blank. "Basically, this group of people came together as Infocom and this was the first idea that came up, that this could be done. We ran with it. It was quite a challenge getting this game that was over a megabyte on a mainframe down onto an 80K floppy with 30K of memory. But, we considered that a good challenge. We broke up the game into three pieces, because it would have been way too big. After about six months we actually had Zork I on the TRS-80 and the Apple II. Those were our first products. The company was very small then; there were only three full-time employees. We made the discs, had them printed, and stuffed them into envelopes. It was very primitive."

Zork established the new company as a force in the nascent PC game market. As Infocom grew, more former MIT acquaintances began making text adventures, at first on a part-time basis, and then as full-time employees when the budgets allowed. With more and more fresh talent on board, the games began to grow in terms of both quality and range. Although Zork would always be the flagship franchise, a great effort was made to expand to other genres, including science fiction (Planetfall), romance (Plundered Hearts), and detective fiction (Deadline). Later, at the height of the text adventure phenomenon, former Infocom tester Steve Meretsky would collaborate with humorous sci-fi



The original cover art for the TRS-80 version of Zork

hero Douglas Adams on a game adaptation of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

Infocom's ingenious puzzles and finely drawn characters garnered a fanatical cult following, one that persists to this day on Internet fan sites like brass-lantern.org. In Planetfall, when beloved sidekick

# GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Matthew Redman

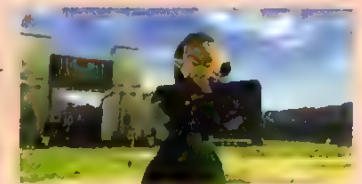
Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.



## THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME

■ FORMAT NINTENDO 64  
■ PUBLISHER NINTENDO

If there is one game that I'll remember playing all the way up until the day I die, it will no doubt be The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. Everything about this extraordinary title stands above and beyond any other game I've ever played. Nearly every aspect of Ocarina of Time – the storyline, graphics, amazing sound, and outstanding controls – was the best it could be.



The millions of people that have played this once-in-a-lifetime game know of the incredible sprawling landscapes that help make Hyrule so great; from the mysterious Lost Woods to the mesmerizing Lake Hylia, from the treacherous Haunted Wastelands to the rugged Death Mountain – as well as the dozens and dozens of secrets that are hidden throughout the enormous world.

Even if I didn't feel like going into a temple or doing something that the fairy Navi told me to do, there's a boatload of minigames that kept me occupied for hours on end – like the horseback archery at the Gerudos Fortress or going through an immensely complicated trading process. When I did feel that I needed to continue with the game, it never once left me disappointed. I explored the interior of a colossal talking tree and the insides of a whale, and that was still when I was just a child. Once I acquired the Ocarina of Time and Master Sword and became an adult, I battled everything from a fire-breathing dragon to evil twin sisters.

I could go on for hours about the weapons, dungeons, enemies, and characters that I encountered along the way; but since I can't, I'll just leave you with this: Anyone that is a fan of Zelda or video games in general should do themselves a favor and sit down with Ocarina of Time.

Floyd the Robot died, many fans were actually brought to tears by the loss. While the text adventures lacked any visual punch, arcade heroes like Pac-Man and Frogger could hardly foster this type of strong emotional connection with their audience.

Chris Charla, a producer for Xbox and GBA developer Digital Eclipse and former editor-in-chief of *Next Generation* magazine, was one of these devoted Infocom fans. His interest in interactive fiction continues to this day, driving him to program BASIC text adventures in his spare time.

"Yeah, when everyone else was playing Atari I was playing Zork on my Apple II," reminisces Charla. "It was the first game I ever played, in 1977 when I was six. I definitely liked arcade games, but the Zork games and the Infocom games in general were just somehow deeper. Pac-Man you could play and play; but, with a Zork game, you'd be stuck on something and be at school and all of a sudden think, 'Oh yeah, now I know what to do!' You'd be constantly thinking about the game."

Fans like Charla drove Infocom to great success throughout the mid-80s. By December of 1983, Zork stood atop the Softsel sales charts, and no less than nine other Infocom games were present in the Top 20. In 1984, the company tallied a very impressive 10 million dollars in sales. Sadly, this prosperity was not to last.

Infocom was always conceived as a broad-based software publisher, and much of the money raised by the games division was being funneled into the business software wing and its highly anticipated database Cornerstone. As business production ramped up, many of the game programmers felt that the company was losing interest in the very thing that had made it a power in the industry to begin with.

When Cornerstone was finally released, it actually won praise from the press and proved to be more sophisticated and easy to use than much of its competition. However, Infocom did not have either the budget or know-how to crack this competitive new market segment.

"The games were always very profitable and they paid for us to hire more people and ramp up the business side," recalls Blank. "At the end of the

day, the Cornerstone database was awesome; it was actually ahead of its time. But, by the time it came out, the competition were companies the size of Microsoft and Lotus. These were 50 million-dollar companies; we were a 10 million-dollar company that was trying to do two different types of product lines. It was very difficult. I think we underestimated how hard it was to compete in the business market. At the end of the day, we didn't have the money to compete – taking out ads in the *Wall Street Journal* was a bit out of our league. Eventually, it brought the company down."

With the business side tallying up huge losses, and the sales of Infocom games sagging in the wake of a host of newer, more graphically intensive adventure titles, the company was eventually sold to Activision in 1986. Although the Zork name would live on, the age of the text adventures was over. Still, fans of the genre maintain that there is something special about the Zork experience.

"Infocom's ads used to say, 'The best graphics are in your mind.' I think that's true. It's like when you read a book, you make up a picture in your head based on the descriptions in the book. Watching a movie is a totally different experience,

because you're just observing what's already there. If you play a graphic adventure like Clock Tower 3, it's a really fun game, but you know what all the rooms look like; you know what the characters look like. That is what you get out of text adventure; I think it involves your mind a little more deeply than a graphic adventure."

Blank, for one, recalls his days at Infocom fondly and remains proud of the work he did in pioneering a new style of gameplay. "I'd like to think that somewhere that the idea of interactive storytelling,

going way back to the original Dungeons & Dragons, is appealing in some way," comments Blank. "I think that games today have different aspects of it. For instance, persistent, massively-multiplayer games where you have a persona and go on quests has aspects of it. I still think that the concept of participating as a character in a world and a story is very powerful, and I think that text adventures were just one step along the way."



Science fiction legend Douglas Adams (left) was such a fan of Infocom that he collaborated with Steve Meretsky (right) on a game adaptation of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

This feature could not have been written without the excellent article "Down From the Top of Its Game: The Story of Infocom, Inc." written by Hector Briceno, Wesley Chao, Andrew Glenn, Stanley Hu, Ashwin Krishnamurthy, and Bruce Tsuchida

## THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

This month in 1994, Sony confirmed that it planned to bring its newly announced PlayStation game console to the United States. The CD-ROM-based system would be the Japanese electronics company's first foray into the world of video games. The PlayStation was the result of Sony's aborted partnership with Nintendo, during which the company had been working on a prototype CD add-on for the Super Nintendo.



After severing its alliance with Nintendo, Sony decided to take its experience and create its own system. Although many were skeptical, the PlayStation grew to be the most successful system of the 1990s, giving Sony a stranglehold on the video game market, which it maintains today with the PS2.

NES

## DÉJÀ VU



RETRO RATING  
**6.75**



Being one of the first point-and-click puzzle titles on NES is certainly a bonus point for *Déjà Vu*, but the pace will be nearly unbearable for even the most patient puzzle junkie out there. Starting the game with only the bare facts – you have a puncture wound in your arm and absolutely no idea of who you are – explains (literally) the name of this game. The interface offers a list of commands that you can attempt to execute on any item or person in view. While the options take up the bottom half of the screen, your notebook and the room view occupy the top half. Since any sort of graphical prowess can only be displayed on one-fourth of the screen, it feels a little bland, which is a bit of a letdown. The other drawback is that your pointer drags across at an undeniably poky rate, which makes you constantly aware of having to control the darn thing. Sadly, the story and premise won't make up for the slow pace for most people, but this title's historical significance warrants a replay for those who are fans of the genre.

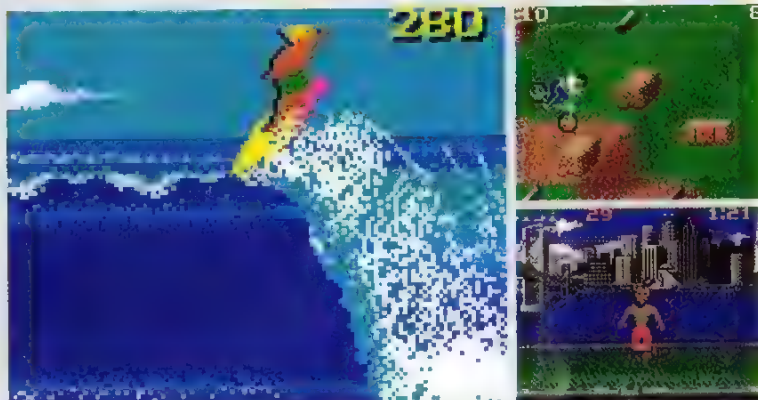
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SEIKA CORPORATION ■ **DEVELOPER** ICOM SIMULATIONS, INC ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1989

ATARI LYNX

## CALIFORNIA GAMES



RETRO RATING  
**7.75**



Once California Games released on the Lynx and other platforms (NES, Commodore, and Sega Master System among others) in the late '80s, extreme games finally gained prominence in the world of video games. *Skate or Die* helped, but California Games gives you the ability to go at it in four different sports: BMX, surfing, skateboarding, and hacky sack (footbag). Skating the halfpipe is pretty lame, but the other three are extremely entertaining. Surfing has a strange but intuitive control scheme and sweet-looking waves. BMX makes you flip all over a hilly course littered with obstacles and a foreground/background mechanic. Footbag lets you kick around on the San Francisco shore, trying to nail seagulls with your beanbag and rack up combo points. Each of these events can be played while taking a quick potty break, but have the lasting power to keep you fulfilled through a long flight. Let the Games begin.

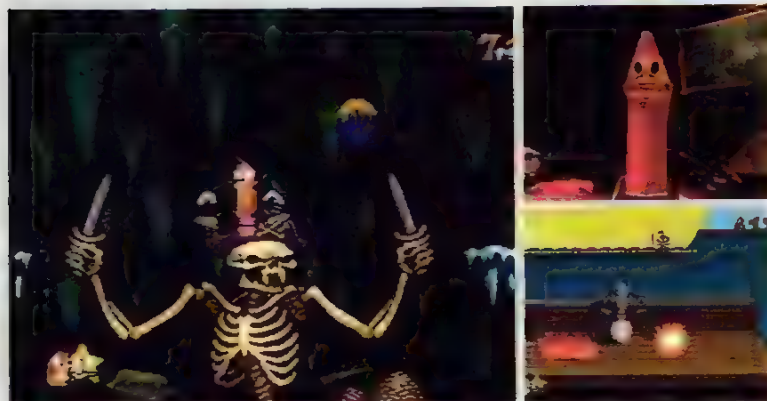
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ATARI ■ **DEVELOPER** EPYX ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1989

SEGA CD

## WILD WOODY



RETRO RATING  
**3**



With the audio power of the CD format, Sega managed to craft some great music to go along with this tremendously putrid platformer. With all the talent at the company, who would've thought the mighty Sega would put out a game starring a pencil with an attitude? Naming him Wild Woody was akin to the poison arrow frog's red markings: It's an obvious sign to stay away from it. Woody can draw certain sketches to reach new areas and distract enemies. He can also use his eraser ass to rub out bad guys and special sections of the level's wall or floor. What would've been even cooler for the gameplay, however, would have been making ol' Woody jump consistently and swiftly – as opposed to the unpredictable, limp style he exhibits. The enemies are annoying, damage is unavoidable, and the cutscenes are awful. We'd rather have pencils jammed under each of our fingernails than have to endure more Wild Woody. He tries to be hard, but this is one of the most impotent games in the Sega CD's pathetic library.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1995

PSONE

## STAR WARS: REBEL ASSAULT II



RETRO RATING  
**7.25**



Lying somewhere in between the hits and misses of the Star Wars video game experience is *Star Wars: Rebel Assault II: The Hidden Empire*. It uses full-motion video to replicate the look of the movies, with digitized actors used in-game as well as featured in cutscenes. The result is varied and dated. While the game does a good job of bringing Star Wars to life (right down to the bad acting), *Assault II*'s use of video hampers the freedom of some levels as they are reduced to being duck-and-shoot affairs (although the blaster marks on walls are a nice touch). Space combat is done on a rail, but can be challenging. In the end, there are other Star Wars games that do better with *Hidden Empire*'s mix of action without the restrictions of video, but this arcade-like title is at least fun – something that isn't always the case with Star Wars-related products.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCASARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** FACTOR 5 ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1996





NES/PSONE

# FINAL FANTASY

This guide is based on using a Warrior, Thief, Black Mage, and White Mage.

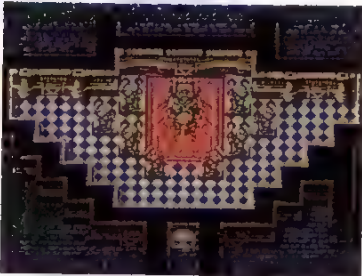
## CORNELIA

Get armor and weapons for everyone. Also, be sure to obtain Fire and Cure for one of your characters. Talk to the king and then go level-up to at least three. Try to get all of the magic you can. Purchase an adequate supply of Cures, plus a few Antidotes and Sleeping Bags.

## TEMPLE OF CHAOS

First, go to the left and enter the room just to the south. Now walk north and get the items inside the room. Don't worry about the area to the east; the rooms are locked. Leave the temple, return to the town, load up on supplies, and save. Return to Chaos and walk straight up and talk to the person!

## BOSS - GARLAND



Attack with your Thief and Warrior. Cure with the White Mage, if necessary. Finally, use your Black Mage's Fire attack and you will beat Garland easily. In the castle, talk to the princess to get the Lute. Head back to the hotel, save, and cross the bridge.

## PRAVOCA

Go northwest and you'll encounter a cave called Matoya. Get the items and leave. Travel east and you'll encounter the town of Pravoca. Buy anything new you can, then go rest at the Inn. Go to the northwest area of the town and speak to the pirates. Beat 'em up and you'll get the pirate's ship. Fight to earn some money to buy Leather Gloves and spells. We suggest at least getting the Invisibility spell.

## ELFHEIM

Get on your ship! Go southwest to the land of elves. Once you reach the village, you'll be able to obtain strong weapons and armor, and purchase level 3 and 4 spells. Spend time getting all of the best stuff and getting at least all of the level 3 magic. Enter the castle and talk to the elf that watches over the prince. Before you leave, be sure to have at least 20 Antidotes. Go west and then north. Enter the Western Keep. Leave the castle, heading slightly east, and then traveling south the rest of the way. You'll encounter the Southern Marsh, which displays a hole in the ground. Enter it.

## MARSH CAVE

Go north to reach B2, where you'll find three rooms with items. Return to B1 and travel south this time. Enter the room and head down the hole to B2. Continue south and then east. Open the door and exit through the other on the opposite side. Descend the stairs to B3. This area contains 16 rooms, which are sectioned off in four rows by four columns. We will designate the room closest to your character Room 1, and the room farthest from your character Room 4. Room 5 is just under Room 1 and Room 8 is directly beneath Room 4. The following rooms contain items: 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11. Room 10 houses the Crown, which is guarded by wizards.

## BOSS - PISCODEMON



These guys do serious physical damage, so cast any defensive spells like

Invisible or Shield on allies with lower HP. Use physical attacks with your stronger characters, as well as Fire 2 or Ice 2. Return to Western Keep and present the Crown to the King.

## BOSS - ASTOS



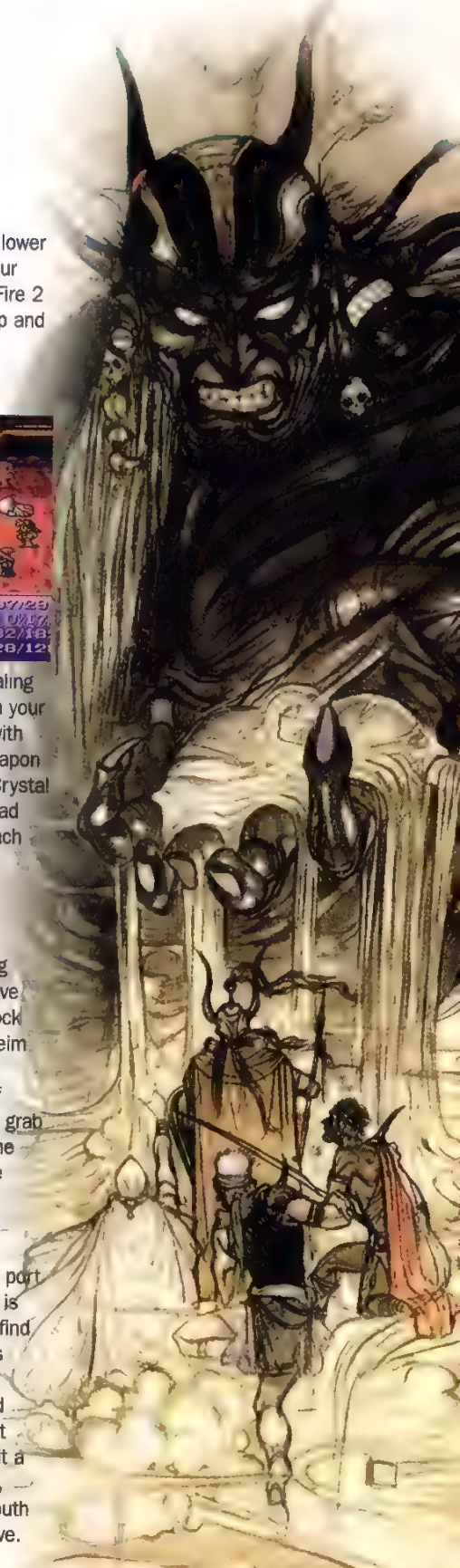
Cast Ice spells on him, while healing and casting defensive spells with your White Mage. You can also heal with your Warrior classes, as their weapon attacks are negligible. With the Crystal Eye, return to Matoya's cave. Head north on your ship, and you'll reach Cornelia. From there, the cave is north across the bridge.

## MATOYA'S CAVE

Take the Jolt Tonic to the sleeping prince in Elfheim, and you'll receive the Mystic Key. Now you can unlock the doors in Cornelia castle, Elfheim castle, Marsh Cave, Dwarf Cave, Western Keep, and the Temple of Chaos. Head to Cornelia last and grab the Nitro Powder locked behind the door in the upper-right area of the castle.

## MELMOND

Head west and you'll encounter a port with a cave called Duergar, which is slightly to the south. Enter it and find a dwarf wearing a green hat. He's waiting in the western part of the cave. Hop into your ship and head west through the passage you just made. Continue west and you'll hit a port. Deboard and enter the town, Melmond. Grab supplies. Head south to the peninsula and enter the cave.





## TERRA CAVERN

Travel east and descend the stairs to B2. Follow these directions (each direction represents one room) to get through the maze and reach B3. From the stairs, go down, up, down, down, right, down, up, down, down, down, down, up. Go east and then north. Take the path west, which will then lead you south. Take the next path east. You'll encounter a room with a blue bat, who just happens to be Vampire. Open the chest to get the Star Ruby. Exit Terra Cavern.

## TITAN'S CAVE

Travel north. Once you pass the thin strip of land, head southwest and you'll run into the cave. After passing Titan, go south and steal treasure from the room. Head north and exit through the stairs. Travel south and enter Sage's Cave. Speak to the sage and he'll hand over the Earth Rod. Return to Melmond to get spells and anything else you might need. Now, go back to Terra Cavern.

## TERRA CAVERN

Retrace your steps back to Vampire's lair. Exit through the other door and head north to the stone plate. Use the Earth Rod. Descend the stairs. Use these directions in B4 to get to the next area: left, up, left, down, left, up, left, up, up, left, down, down, up, up. From the stairs of B5 go down, up, up, up, down, down, left.

## BOSS - LICH



Attack him with your warriors. You might also want to heal with one of your warriors, since their attacks are relatively weak against Lich. The spells Fire 3 and Dia 3 work very well against him, but be sure to heal with your White Mage if necessary. Also, it would be prudent to cast Steel on your strongest warrior so that you can do decent physical damage. Go to the yellow circle behind the gem.

## CRESCENT LAKE

Go to Melmond and board your ship. Head south and then west around the tip of the continent. From there, continue west. When you hit land on the other side of the world, proceed south. You'll come to a port. Deboard and go west. Enter Crescent Lake town. Get spells, items, and equipment. On the east side of town, you'll find a bunch of sages. Speak with them to get the Canoe. Go to the west towards Mount Gulg.

## MOUNT GULG

Don't even attempt this dungeon unless your characters are at least at level 17, and you have 99 potions. Head west over the lava to the stairs to reach B2. Head west again. If you pass through the doors to the north, you can get treasure, but we don't recommend it unless your characters are around level 18 or 19. In B3, simply head to the east, and you'll reach the stairs to B4. Head southwest and you'll encounter stairs back up. Back at B3, go down, left, down, and then left - now you're back at B4. Follow these directions to reach B5: left, down (all the way), right, down, right, down, left. To reach the shrine room, follow the southwest path.

## BOSS - MARILITH



Attack with your warriors, and perhaps heal with the one that is weaker. Cast Invisible and Shield (or Shield 2, if you possess it) on your characters, starting with the weaker ones first. Afterwards, use your White Mage to heal. Finally, with your Black Mage, cast your most powerful magic, but at the start, cast Haste and Steel on your strongest warrior. After seven or so turns, you should defeat her. Return to Crescent Lake. Travel north and you'll encounter an inlet which contains a port. Deboard and head southeast. Sail on the river and take the northern water route. You'll soon come across the Ice Cavern.

## ICE CAVERN

Head down the first set of stairs you encounter in B1. Go down and then left to reach the stairs for B3. Climb the next set of stairs and you're back at B2. Take the path around. You'll encounter cracks in the floor. Fall through them and you'll land in B3. Go south, angling southeast. Enter the door. Head south and then east and you'll find a room with three chests and more cracks. Fall once more. Get the Levystone. Fall again and head southeast to the stairs. In the next floor, you'll find the stairs out of the dungeon to the northeast.

## CARDIAN ISLANDS

Head to Crescent Lake and go south. Follow the river south and you'll find a desert a little to the west. Use the Levystone here. Fly west until you see the Marsh Cave and then fly south. Stop at the islands with caves on them. Land on the island with the forest and two caves. Enter the southern cave. Speak with Bahamut. Board the ship and fly west until you see the castle surrounded by mountains. We suggest landing near the patch of desert.

## CITADEL OF TRIALS

Speak with the sage and enter the door in the northwest corner. Walk out the door and touch the pillar. Touch the next pillar and then the bottom one. You'll come to another room with two pillars; hit the bottom one. Proceed down and run through the next teleporter. Touch the one on the right. Head right and proceed down the first path until you find the pillar against the wall directly in front of you. Once you get the Rat's Tail, return to Bahamut. He'll allow you to change classes.

## WATERFALL

Fly east. When you reach a desert with a small patch of trees at the northern end, land the ship. Walk to the center of the patch of desert west of the trees. Purchase one Bottled Faerie. Just to the east is a river. Sail up it until you encounter a waterfall. Enter it. Follow these directions to reach your destination: up, left, up, left, and up. Take the upper-left path and then immediately head all the way down. Talk with the robot and get the Warp Cube.

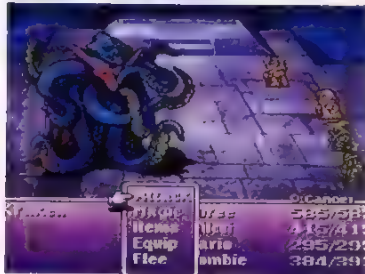
**GAIA AND ONLAK**

Find the large desert with a tower in the middle. To the northeast you'll discover a town closely surrounded by mountains. Enter the town of Gaia. Go to the pond at the northern end of town. Release the Faerie and speak with her to get Oxyale. Return to the airship and fly to the area of the waterfall. Enter the town of Onlak just to the east. Speak to the woman in the southeastern part of town. Ride the barrel.

**SUNKEN SHRINE**

Head north and then east until you see stairs that lead to 4F. Head to the southwest corner, where you'll find stairs taking you to 5F. Go to the room that is at the far northwestern section (you have to cross a narrow strip of land to get there). Go to the town and save. Return to the Sunken Shrine. Now, walk to the upper left area. Take the stairs to 2F. Travel north until you reach the stairs to 3F. Ascend the stairs to 4F. Proceed to the lower right-hand corner to reach 3F again. Go through the door, pass through the room, and take the stairs to 2F. Run to the upper left side of the screen. Take the stairs to 1F. Head left, up, left, and then down. Enter the huge room, and walk to the left side. Exit the big room and travel north. Enter the door to reach the boss.

**BOSS - KRAKEN**



Attack with your fighters, casting Steel on them. Cast Shield 2, and then continue to heal and cast other defensive spells like Nullce with your White Wizard. For the remainder of the match, cast Bolt 3 with your Black Wizard.

**LEFENIA**

Go to Melmond and talk to Dr. Unne in the upper right-hand corner. Go to Pravoca. From there, fly north to the desert with the tower in the center. Land at the tiny patch of grass just

north of the lake and travel all the way south to the town of Lefenia. Speak to the people on the right side to get the Bell. Return to the airship and land near the tower. Enter the tower.

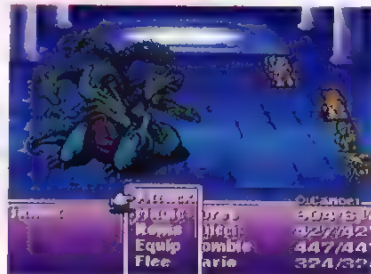
**MIRAGE TOWER**

Go in the door above you. Turn left and enter the door directly below. Take the stairs to 2F. Follow the path around until you reach a break in the wall. Keep going around until you encounter the stairs at the north end of the middle ring. On 3F, head down and through the door. You'll be teleported.

**FLYING FORTRESS**

Walk outside the room and head north until you find a mirror, which transports you to 2F. Walk straight down and you'll reach the teleporter for 3F; but if you want to get the Adamantite first, you can find it in the room in the bottom left-hand corner. Head left and take the teleporter just to the south to reach 4F. This floor is a repeating maze. Follow these directions to pass it. Go down, down, right, and right.

**BOSS - TIAMAT**



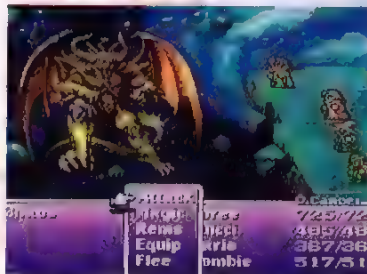
Cast Shield 2 on everyone, then cast NulAll on your White Wizard. Afterwards, continue to cast other defensive spells. Use your Black Wizard and cast Steel and Haste on your fighters. Finally, use your Black Wizard's Saber, and fight with him, too. Unfortunately, his offensive magic inflicts minimal damage. Fly to Crescent Lake and speak with the 12 sages. Head to the Temple of Chaos (the temple in the beginning of the game).

**TEMPLE OF CHAOS**

Walk straight into the center of the room ahead. Examine the black orb to transport back in time. Head down all the way and then go right to reach 2F. Run right and up the stairs to 3F. Walk

all the way down and then right until you see a door in the middle. Enter the room and go straight up. Play the Lute. Head down through the door and travel towards the upper left-hand corner of the screen to reach 1F. Go to the left and you'll encounter stairs taking you to B1. Proceed until you reach the right-hand corner of the screen. Just before you descend the stairs, you'll fight Lich, who should be easy. From the stairs, head north and enter the door. Go around to the other side; pass through the door. Head south and quickly turn west. Before you head downstairs, you'll fight Marilith. Go through the door on the right and proceed down the bottom path. Enter the door and head south. Go through the door, follow the pillars north, and enter the door just to the right. Walk towards the center of the room near the three stone tablets. Now go south. When you get to the stairs, you'll fight Kraken. Go to the upper-right section of the room; descend the stairs. You'll fight Tiamat along the way.

**BOSS - CHAOS**



Cast Haste and Steel on your Knight, and do the same for your Ninja. If you have the Excalibur, he will do the most severe damage. With your White Wizard, cast supporting spells throughout the match, but at the beginning, be sure to at least Cast NulAll and Shield 2 on everyone. Now, with your Black Mage, simply cast your strongest spells on him, noting that it's unlikely that you'll be able to inflict any ailments.



## R/C MICROSIZERS AUTO MODELLISTA

**Manufacturer:** Hobbico • **Website:** microsizers.com  
**List Price:** \$29.99

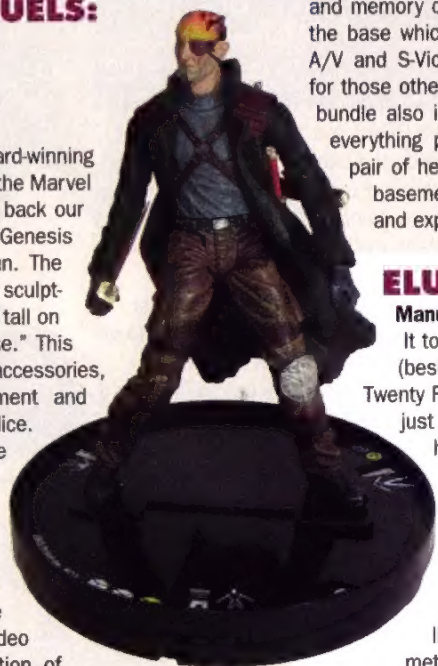
R/C Microsizers have been popular enough to keep them out of stock in many retailers during the Christmas rush last year, but now there's a gaming-related reason to hunt them down. Hobbico has gone and made an Auto Modellista kit for the wee rides. This set includes a MicroSnap 2.2 motor (the original sets had a 1.6 motor), remote control featuring a handy Turbo Blast button, and four bodies (the yellow Toyota Supra, blue Mazda RX-7, and the Nissan Skyline in red for the R32 and grey for the R34). These cars, like all Microsizers, can have the suspension, steering, engine, or tires upgraded with inexpensive add-on parts. Most of the office ended up cooing at the things like they were puppies. Then, we screamed insults at each other about "how much I am totally killing your car!"



## SHADOWRUN DUELS: SERIES ONE

**Manufacturer:** WizKids Games  
**Website:** wizkidsgames.com  
**List Price:** \$14.99

WizKids, the makers of the award-winning HeroClix action game based on the Marvel and DC universes, are bringing back our favorite cyberpunk RPG of the Genesis and Super NES era: Shadowrun. The new characters are impressively sculpted and stand around six inches tall on their included "combat dial base." This handy disc stores all of their accessories, the tape measure for movement and attacking ranges, and a set of dice. Each of the six characters in the first series sport up to 17 points of articulation and the accessories can be swapped among each character, changing their attributes in battle. Since there's no news on the horizon of a new Shadowrun video game, this HeroClix reincarnation of the series is a nice throwback.



## TRON 2.0 FIGURES

**Manufacturer:** National Entertainment Collectibles Association  
**Website:** necaonline.com  
**List Price:** \$14.99

NECA (National Entertainment Collectibles Association) has created some really inventive and well-crafted merchandise for Disney in the past, particularly with Tim Burton's opus, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Now, they're taking advantage of that relationship to put out a nice, four-piece series based on the forthcoming Tron 2.0 video game (and maybe the movie, if there really is a higher power in this universe). Featuring figures for Jet Bradley, Mercury, IC Regular, and Thorne; each piece has between 10 and 13 points of articulation, disk weapon accessories, and a display stand. Even cooler for those with the equipment, they all glow under a black light. Finally, a use for black lights other than crime scene investigations or lighting up your velvet Doors poster!



## MULTI-MEDIA DOCKING STATION

**Manufacturer:** dreamGEAR • **Website:** dreamgear.net • **List Price:** \$49.99

What do you get the friend who has everything, but just had the joy of a new PS2 left on their doorstep? Well, we're here to help by suggesting the Multi-Media Docking Station by dreamGEAR – a clever combo unit that puts together the most frequently purchased accessories into one sexy little package that matches their precious PS2. The stand allows for the system to be aligned vertically with up to eleven DVDs or games nestled beside it. Below, four controller and memory card ports are integrated into the base which holds a small handful of A/V and S-Video inputs on its backside for those other systems lying around. The bundle also includes a remote to handle everything plugged into the unit and a pair of headphones. Seriously though, even though you still live in her basement, don't get this for your mom. She probably prefers flowers and expensive soaps.



## ELUMINX ILLUMINATED KEYBOARD

**Manufacturer:** Auravision • **Website:** eluminx.com • **List Price:** \$99.99

It took the American military to make this neat little gadget possible. The fruits of their labor (besides \$85 toilet seats) is some nifty electro-luminescent technology ultimately developed by Twenty First Century Technologies Inc. and licensed to Auravision for public distribution. Although just skirting a price tag of one crisp Benjamin is a hefty sum for most people; those who game will appreciate the soft, cool glow of the internal luminescence. To accommodate a more discerning public, the slim-line keyboard will be available with sapphire, aquamarine, tourmaline (red, for those folks that don't read ladies' catalogues all day), and citrine (orange, you dolt) lighted keys. Cases can be had in bone, black, or metallic. A USB version due out this fall should work with most keyboard-enabled PS2 games like Tribes 2.





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YOU ARE BRUTUS.

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The year is 2340 and more than fifty star systems are populated with colonies. But when an alien invasion threatens to put every living organism on the endangered species list, the Confederation of worlds must dispatch its elite special forces unit, code-named Brute Force. That's you. As Brute Force, you command four separate intergalactic mercenaries. The trigger-happy assault trooper, cyborg sniper, stealthy assassin and feral alien are all played by you. As you guide these shooters through 20+ missions and 6 exotic worlds, your knowledge of squad based combat will be severely tested. Depending on the danger at hand, you'll need to utilize the right Brute Force member for the job. Whether you play alone or in co-op mode, the battles escalate, the plot thickens and the violence gets addictive. It's an experience of such epic proportion that it could only exist on Xbox. Good luck. To all four of you.

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# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HELL

SUMMON YOUR NERVE. CONTROL THE FATE OF ALISSA, AN ORDINARY GIRL AS SHE FIGHTS THE FORCES OF EVIL AND UNLOCKS THE MYSTERY OF HER ANCESTRY IN THIS CHILLING EXCURSION INTO TERROR! YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE!

The title "CLOCK TOWER 3" is rendered in a stylized, metallic font. The number "3" is significantly larger and more ornate than the words "CLOCK TOWER". The background of the title features a large, glowing clock face with a red hand, surrounded by dark, jagged, and bloody textures. The overall aesthetic is dark and horror-themed.

## CLOCK TOWER 3



Blood and Gore  
Violence

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PlayStation 2



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