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HYPER »

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STAR WARS DEMOLITION

PlayStation has its dark side

SHENMUE

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88

contents

16 EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS!

Everything you wanted to know about Star Wars: Demolition, Summoner
and Player Manager 2001, but were too afraid to ask. So we asked for
you! Hyper gets personal with LucasArts, Volition and Manchester United's
Sir Alex Ferguson!

STAR WARS

WIN!

88 A PENTIUM 4 GATEWAY PC

Gateway™

HYPER >>

contents

38
SHENMUE
DREAMCAST GOODNESS

Sega reveal one of the most artistically gorgeous games ever made. Is this as good as the Dreamcast can get? Find out in our full four page review.

66
TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES —
HERE WE GO AGAIN...

Lara Croft, assumed dead, is back in another Tomb Raider adventure on PlayStation. Is it time to retire Ms. Croft once and for all?

REVIEWS 38

62

44

54

69

50

75

70

46

60

HYPE IT UP

The Dreamcast has boldy tackled the year 2001 with a stunning adventure game that you just might have heard of... **Shenmue**. This is the kind of game the PS2 probably needed at launch. It's innovative, original and absolutely gorgeous, like nothing before it. If adventure games aren't your style, then how about the shatteringly good Metropolis Street Racer? The **Dreamcast** this month has nothing but style. Makes you wonder why some people are so quick to write it off in the face of 2001's hardware. Sure the **PS2**, **Xbox** and **Gamecube** will be more powerful platforms in the long-term, but the Dreamcast has had quality games and we're really yet to see anything on the other platforms that show as much polish and originality.

We'd also like to welcome back Lara "the undead" Croft to our cover this month... Lara has copped a lot of flak over the years, but she's still a pretty cool gaming icon and **Tomb Raider 5**, whether you like it or not, is good gaming. If she bothers you, just imagine that it's Angelina Jolie staring up at you! Oh, did I mention that next issue we will be reporting from the set of the Tomb Raider movie in Cambodia?
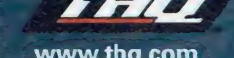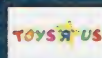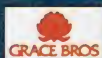

ELIOT FISH >> EDITOR

METROID FOR GAMECUBE... CONFIRMED!

One of the most anticipated games for the Nintendo Gamecube would have to be the return of Metroid. The Metroid games have appeared on both the NES and SNES but somehow never saw the light of day on the N64, despite its huge success. After the unveiling of the Gamecube at Spaceworld in Japan, the buzz was high that Metroid was a done deal for the next Nintendo system, due to a short slice of footage showing Metroid's heroine, Samus, charging down a hallway to the delights of the packed crowd.

Even though Nintendo keep stressing that no Gamecube games are "official", one of their developers, Retro Studios (based in Austin, Texas), have put up an advertisement on their website, searching for high-level programmers to work on the next Metroid title for Gamecube. Whoops. A new Metroid title for the Gamecube is going to be very carefully guided by Nintendo to ensure that it's one of the system's greatest releases. The system will sell for that one title alone. But will Shigeru Miyamoto, Metroid's original creator, return to have a hand in its creation? We can only hope so.

Over in the UK, Rare are advertising for programmers to come in and work on Perfect Dark for Gamecube. Well, they won't say it outright, but the ads they are using have a big picture of Joanna Dark and a blurb on how she needs "constant attention to keep her at the top of her game" followed by a list of jobs available. A little obvious, no?

SAMUS ROCKS

RETRO Studios

Wanna program the next Metroid game?

Retro Studios is looking for additional senior level programmers to help us create *the* game everyone's anticipating for Nintendo's Gamecube.

Do you play well with others? Are you ready to take gaming to the next level and develop for the hottest, next generation gaming system on the planet? Do you want to be part of a hand picked group of the industry's brightest people, brought together to create the most innovative games the world has yet to see? If you answered yes, Retro Studios is the place for you!

Partnered with Nintendo, Retro Studios, Inc. is a well-capitalized, stable and exciting video game company located in Austin, Texas — "one of the top five places to live in America". Our facilities are second-to-none in the game industry. We have an impressive complex that includes a massive top-notch motion capture studio for full-range realistic 3D animation, as well as an awesome on-site theater with high-resolution video projection and digital surround sound.

I'VE SENT MY APPLICATION ALREADY

CAPCOM'S NEW SURVIVAL HORROR FOR PS2

Devil May Cry is the name of the next Survival Horror game from Capcom, soon to be winging its way to a PlayStation 2. The creator of Dino Crisis and Resident Evil, Shinji Mikami, is the brain behind the project which was originally meant to be a next-generation Resident Evil title. Rather than a game full of lumbering zombies and bad voice acting, this time around it's demonic hellspawn and... bad voice acting.

The lead character is an arse-kicking hero by the name of Dante, who seems to have some kind of demonic blood coursing through his own veins. This gives him certain abilities above normal humans, in a vampiric kind of way. With a huge sword strapped to his back ala Cloud from Final Fantasy, a pair of handguns ala Lara Croft and a hairstylist from Soul Calibur, Dante looks like one of the ultimate hybrid heroes.

Hopefully set for a mid-2001 release in the US, let's pray that an Australian release date for Devil May Cry (the name may change) follows shortly after.

TAKE THAT YOU CIRCUS FREAK!

CAPTION THIS! PART 15

Get your witty thinking caps on and get scribbling away on a funny caption for this month's screenshot. Send your captions to freakscene@next.com.au with Caption This 15 in the subject line... or whack it on the back of an envelope and post it to Caption This 15, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.

25 | 38 FA

READER HILARITY

XBOX DESIGNS A HOAX

A number of supposed pictures of the Xbox have been leaking onto the web with the information that they were hacked out of Microsoft. Whilst they certainly look authentic, Microsoft have confirmed that they are definitely not the Xbox, and that the system's design will be unveiled sometime early in 2001.

To clear up any confusion with some readers, the current Xbox image of the silver X that we use in Hyper is simply a mock-up casing for the development kit which Microsoft have released to the press to use until the final console is unveiled.

THE PSONE LCD SCREEN

Long before Sony have been able to say anything more about the PSone's upcoming LCD screen, third-party peripheral manufacturer, Pelican, has released their own mini-screen for the PSone in the USA. Attaching to the inside of the PSone's CD lid, the LCD screen provides an image quality equal to most TVs, albeit in a teeny viewing area measuring only a few inches. Still, this is funky cool and definitely a first for the PlayStation. There should be more information on a local solution early in the new year, along with more info on the WAP adaptor.

OVERFLOW

Is Max Payne going to bite the dust? 3D Realms' Scott Miller posted on the 3D Realms website, stating that the project was cancelled. Bizarrely, Mike Wilson at Gathering Of Developers has stated that "Max is alive and well, and will be kicking your ass next year!" It seems that Scott Miller posted the controversial message simply to stir up some commotion in frustration over all the false rumours on the internet. Odd man.

Yep, the long-awaited Quake 3 Arena: Team Arena demo was released to a slobbering mass of Quake fanatics last month, however we regret that the demo missed our CD deadline (which was last month – duh). Next issue folks! Hey, we're upset too. Sniff.

Havas Interactive have confirmed that Half Life will also be coming to the PlayStation 2! Gearbox Studios will be handling the conversion, the same company that have brought Half Life to the Dreamcast. Gearbox are boasting that the PS2 version will now be the most advanced version of Half Life out there...

Nintendo have confirmed that they will ship 1 million Game Boy Advance units at the end of March 2001 in Japan. However, they will still manufacture standard Game Boy Color units depending on public demand.

Nintendo of Japan and Randnet announced that they will be shutting down the 64DD network in February 2001, a service which provided Japanese N64 64DD users to access the internet. Due to a lack of interest and user support for the network, the shutdown of Randnet can be viewed as the official death of the 64DD in Japan.

Bizarre Creations, the developer behind the awesome Metropolis Street Racer (MSR) on Dreamcast, are already hard at work on a brand new next-generation title, codenamed Smokescreen. Smokescreen will be an action title, but not a first-person shooter according to their website.

Following the cancellation of the Voodoo5 6000 video card, 3DFX have announced that they will cease development and manufacturing of high-end video cards. 3Dfx will now concentrate on providing chipsets for third-party manufacturers as well as using its purchase of GigaPixel to spread its technology to set-top boxes, cellular phones, game consoles and handheld PCs. You can bet the heads of Nvidia are rubbing their hands together.

THIS IS FOR NOT KILLING JAR JAR WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE!

A FRIENDLY GAME OF LASER TENNIS

OBI-WAN CANCELLED

In a disturbing turn of events, LucasArts has confirmed that Obi-Wan, their follow up to Jedi Knight, has been cancelled for the PC. In their press release, they announced that the game would still see the light of day, but on a next generation games console instead. Speculation on the reasons behind the decision run rampant, from LucasArts looking for the big dollars, to an internal review of the title exposing that the game would be a poor follow up to Jedi Knight and that console gamers would be less discerning. So what's it going to be? PS2, Xbox or Gamecube?

HELP SEGA RULE THE WORLD!

Segagaga is the name of a bizarre game that is being developed in Japan for the Sega Dreamcast. In this RPG/Sim, you work for Sega and your mission is to help Sega conquer the games industry in less than 3 years by recruiting talented developers to work on in-house games titles amongst other duties. This is no joke. You have to improve Sega's market share from 10% to 100%...

SHENMUE 2 ON TARGET

You may only just be booting up the first Shenmue in your Dreamcast, but part 2 is just around the corner. Shenmue's ending leaves the game open for Shenmue 2 which has always been part of the original game's development. Shenmue 2 should arrive in Japan later in 2001, with hopefully a Christmas 2001 release for Australian gamers.

Shenmue 2 is rumoured to be a whopping 6 GD-ROMS, with improved visuals and more interactive gameplay, such as the free battles. If you've seen Shenmue in action, then you'll be drooling for Shenmue 2 too.

WOAH, SOMEONE GIVE THIS GUY A MINT!

INTEL PENTIUM 4 ARRIVES

The P4 is based on Intel's NetBurst micro-architecture, building upon the P6 core which has been at the heart of the P-II and P-III. The new features include Hyper pipelined technology to improve clock rates, a rapid execution engine, new streaming SIMD Extensions 2 instructions, a new high-bandwidth system bus architecture and basically, enough new features that you'll be needing a new motherboard if you want to upgrade.

Initial reports are that the P4 innovates but doesn't really show a significant performance boost from similar PIII and Athlon set-ups. It could just be slightly ahead of its time, so how the P4 will improve PC gaming may not be seen until sometime late in 2001 when Intel start pushing towards the 1.5 to 2 GHz mark.

intel inside
pentium 4

ACTUAL GAME FOOTAGE

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VENGEANCE

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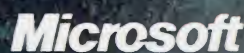
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news intelligence

AGDC 2000

ON THE FIRST WEEKEND IN NOVEMBER, THE AUSTRALIAN GAME DEVELOPER
CONFERENCE 2000 WAS HELD IN MELBOURNE. HYPER HAD STEPHEN FARRELLY
ON HAND TO BRING US BACK THIS SPECIAL REPORT.

Attend AGDC 2000!
Melbourne 3-5 November

Join a powerful group of attendees of Australian game developers as well as national and international interactive entertainment companies at this year's AGDC. This is the only opportunity to get access to the most influential and targeted audience in the Australian gaming community.

We're sparing you the expense of attending other international events by bringing the biggest stars in game development to you. Don't miss this unique opportunity to learn from the some of the most experienced developers in the business in your own backyard. To see our complete list of speakers and topics, click here.

Attend three days of courses, workshops, keynotes at the conference program. Check out the booths at the Exhibition. In your spare time, join other developers at the parties, dinners and events. No other event in Australia offers you the same experience as AGDC 2000.

At AGDC 2000 you will be able to:

- Attend courses taught by some of the leading developers and vendors in the world

WWW.AGDC.COM.AU

FOR THE SECOND TIME, AUSTRALIA PLAYED host to an important event held specifically to entice developers from both home and abroad to boost the Australian Games Development industry. The Australian Game Developer Conference (AGDC) is an Australian initiative that was devised to help young programmers, designers and the like, show off their talents and market themselves to the big boys, as well as help unite established Australian developers. The conference also gives development houses a chance to invite publishers to peruse the development scene. This is very healthy for the Australian industry which is on the rise thanks to the ever depleting Aussie dollar. Many big names were at the conference sizing up our game offerings and there was a lot of talk about the value of setting up shop here. After all, the talent coming out of our universities and TAFEs is of an

extremely high caliber. We also have some already well established Australian development houses (Infogrames Melbourne House for one) that are more than making a name for themselves in the lucrative games industry. And it's cheap. Everything a publisher or developer could look for in a potential site for future business. Although the AGDC is in place to promote the technical side of the industry, it is also a show for big talk. Microsoft was there, as well as delegates from Sony, but more importantly so was Hyper, and we've got you covered on everything from Microsoft's sales pitch, to the Matrix 2! Just read on and you'll understand...

TALENT AND DIVERSITY
The fact that the Australian Government backs this initiative all the way is a very good sign, and is perhaps a reiteration of just how important Australia is in the

grand scheme of things. The conference was held in Melbourne this time around (Sydney last year) at the Melbourne Exhibition Center. This was a fitting venue with plenty of room to house the different developers, it was also equipped with a huge lecture hall. It was here that the big names gave their spiels, and it was also here that the smaller guys talked about and forewarned the students of the grueling future they were undertaking. Aside from the big names of Microsoft and Sony, some of the smaller names that attended were developers such as Rat Bag who were showing off their Difference engine. Electronic Arts was also there running a reel of the many games they've developed for varying platforms, but more so to plug their Gold Coast studio. The little known development house Evolution were showing off their impressive 3D platformer, Spotswood and Eric, that they were hoping

RATBAG SPIN US OUT

TAKE A LOOK INTO OUR FOGGY GAME DEVELOPING FUTURE

to pitch to Next Gen systems. SSG, 3DFX and a multitude of other very important businesses also attended the show. It was very exciting to see such talent and diversity under the one roof.

Seamus Blackley from the Seattle Xbox team stole the show with his impressive speech about Microsoft's future hand in the industry with the looming Xbox. He talked about how the machine was being developed with designers in mind, pitching the architecture as a 'design first' system that had great specs that could truly help designers realise their gaming visions. "The Xbox is designed by software guys who love games," he said. "The hardware was an unfortunate detail. It is a platform designed by artists."

Blackley also announced their Xbox Incubator program and Independent Developer program. The demo that followed was very impressive indeed. An amazingly detailed Japanese garden that was swarming with hundreds and hundreds of butterflies. It was very surreal and very beautiful. If Blackley's enticing words didn't win the audience over, then the demo reel certainly did. One thing is for sure... Microsoft is a force to be reckoned with.

MATRIX 2?!
Various Technical teams were there as well. Maya were showing a looped reel of the amazing CGI technology they provided to software teams around the world for movies, games and television alike. A lot of stuff from Squaresoft was shown, including scenes from the up and coming Final Fantasy film. The first time this reel was played, it attracted the attention of everyone at the show, a huge crowd gathered around the digital screen to watch as we were treated to some of the best visuals they had ever seen. Stuff from ILM and Westwood was there, as well as awesome footage from what looked like Matrix 2 (mind-blowing). Jet Li was looking very Neo-ish and it left us wondering if we just saw the coolest sneak peek ever. The murmurs from the crowd were all positive and it truly slammed home just how serious this event was.

By Sunday evening, everyone at the conference was very tired, thanks to the Friday night cocktail party and the Melbourne Zoo dinner. But the consensus was that the show was a success, and many people came away from it feeling very confident about Australia's role in the industry and just how important it was that things like the AGDC get the support and coverage they deserve. Kudos to Trent Ward for heading up a great weekend. Here's hoping next year's event is even bigger and attracts more and more media attention and some even bigger game industry heavyweights. ■

WE WON'T ALLOW ANY AUSTRALIAN GAME TO HAVE A SINGLE BUG

NO REALLY, WE HOPE BLUE TONGUE DO BIG THINGS

Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within

MOVIE

SONY PICTURES

Here's something a little different. This might not be a game, but it's certainly eye candy! The Final Fantasy movie, still due in mid-2001, will boast some of the best computer graphics you've ever seen. Take a look at this artistry.

Gran Turismo 3

PS2

SONY

GT 2000 has been re-named GranTurismo 3, if only for the fact that it's now being released in 2001. However, the longer development period has meant that the game has evolved considerably from the GT 2000 we saw at E3 2000. GT 3 looks quite amazing in every respect.
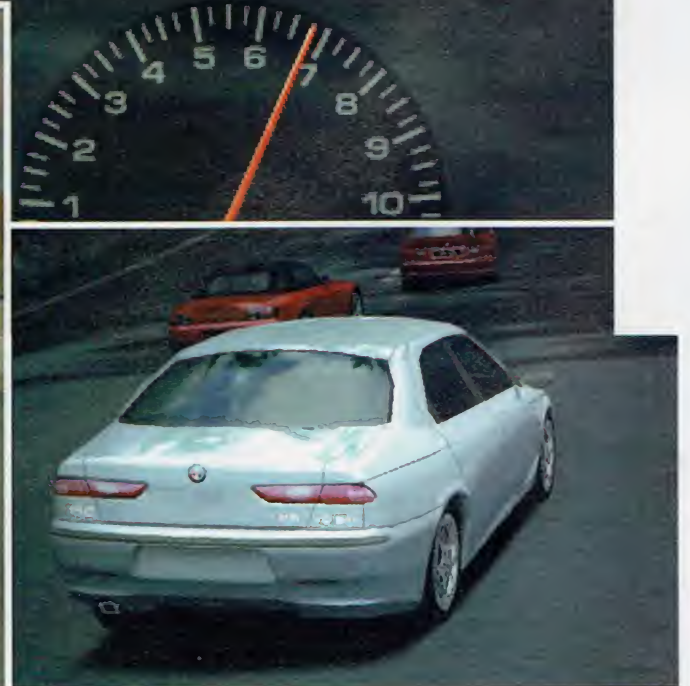
A chat about **Star Wars: Demolition** with Mike Gallo of LucasArts.

THE WARS GET DIRTY!

Who would ever have thought of a demolition-style vehicle combat game set in the **Star Wars** universe? Well, LucasArts decided it was a good idea, roped in the Vigilante 8 team, Luxoflux, and here it is. Hyper send out a probe droid for more information...

HYPER: *Is making a Star Wars game a daunting task? Are you worried about not pleasing the big Star Wars fans?*

MIKE GALLO: It is extremely difficult because we're trying to make sure that we're doing justice to the license, AND meeting the expectations that a Star Wars game has from the moment it's announced. If we tried to please everyone we would never ship a game!

Everything that we work on is agonized over... "How will the fans accept this?" "What will the casual Star Wars fan think?" If you take a look at the product, there are a lot of things that are in there strictly for the fans. The game must be fun and do justice to the license. That's really what we're here for isn't it?

HYPER: *Why is a Twisted Metal-style Star Wars game a good idea? What makes it fun?*

MG: Well, as I mentioned, we're trying to do fun games that fit in the universe. A few years ago no one would've thought of doing a racing game with Star Wars vehicles. Episode I gave us podracers... So, why couldn't Jabba have a "demolition" tournament?

HYPER: *What kind of Star Wars vehicles did you consider, but not include in the game - and why?*

MG: Pretty much everything that we discussed from the beginning is included. We were going to have BoShek and the Lar's Family speeder, but ultimately decided to replace him with a much cooler character/vehicle. We did have a lot of discussions on what Boba Fett would use. In the end, we felt it was better to have him with just his jet pack.

HYPER: *Is it "restricting" having to stick to the Star Wars universe and its rules?*

MG: We were able to do just about anything we wanted. Of course there are certain expectations since Star Wars is a family franchise, so we couldn't have some of the innuendo as seen in the V8 series.

HYPER: *You invented new Star Wars characters for this title - did you have to get George Lucas' approval?*

MG: All of the new characters and vehicles have to go to the Ranch for approval just like every other licensee. There is a great group of people in the licensing group that work on all of our approvals.

HYPER: *Who came up with their names and their look?*

MG: The names were a cooperative effort between LucasArts and Luxoflux, but the look was basically up to Luxoflux.

HYPER: *What are some of the games the Demolition team worked on previously?*

MG: Well, the game was developed by the same team that did Vigilante 8 1 & 2. Obviously the game engine is basically the same, with enhancements to make it fit better with the Star Wars universe (everything hovers for example). I think that we've done some nice things to streamline the interface and added a couple of interesting new game modes. The weapon system is a little different because there is no ammo, and we only allow 1 "mounted" weapon at a time. The weapons all use power, and we have a power bar that can be regenerated using special areas in each level. We only have 1 mounted weapon because we wanted to make it a little easier for the average player to just pick up and go. Each weapon can be charged up to 4 levels, so that means you really have 8 different weapons available at any time.

HYPER: *Are you all big fans of the movies? Looking forward to Episode 2?*

MG: I've been a fan for a long time. The Empire Strikes Back is in my top 5 movies of all time!

HYPER: *Will you get to work on an Episode 2 game?*

MG: That's to be determined. I already have a full plate once Demolition is finished, but I'd like to in some capacity!

HYPER: *What are the differences between the PSX and Dreamcast versions of Demolition?*

MG: The Dreamcast version has all new models and textures. We've done a little more with the damage to the vehicles on the Dreamcast. For example, you'll see animated sparks on the damaged vehicles only on the Dreamcast. It also runs at 60fps.

HYPER: *Will we see Demolition on any other platform?*

MG: There's nothing planned at this time.

HYPER: *What's was an average day working on Demolition like?*

MG: Hectic! We had a lot of work to accom-

STAR WARS
DEMOLITION
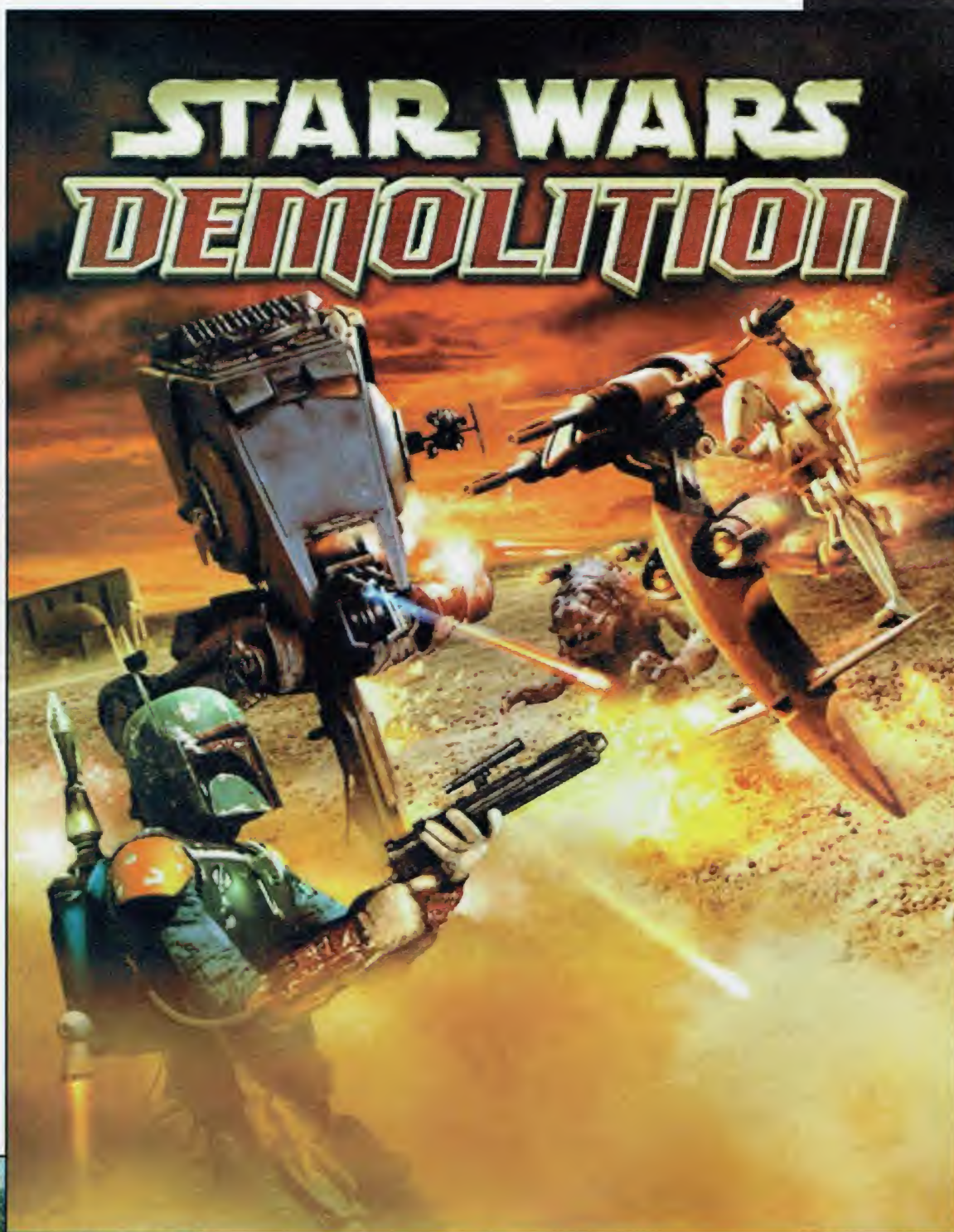
plish in a relatively short time frame. In the end it's worth it! We have a pretty good game on our hands that I think will surprise a lot of people!

HYPER: *What do you think of the upcoming super consoles? What will the games be like on them?*

MG: It's going to be very interesting! I think that you'll really see some stuff in the next couple of years that will blow you away graphically, but the real test will be to see how the stories and gameplay matures in that same time period. With all of the power in the PS2, Xbox, Gamecube and Dreamcast it's going to be great time to be making games!

HYPER: *Is there secret stuff locked away in Demolition? What can you tell us?*

MG: I can't say anything yet. We do have 3 special characters/vehicles and a couple of interesting special modes... heh heh!

HYPER: *Thanks Mike! May the polygons be with you.*

SUMMONER

Volition talk about RPGing, the PS2 and Summoner 2…

If you've wrestled yourself a PS2 and love a good adventure, you've no doubt slapped your dollars down for the RPG, Summoner. Hyper's Eliot Fish caught up with Volition's Assistant Producer, Anoop Shekar, to find out a little more about the PS2's very first RPG.

HYPER: Summoner is the PS2's first RPG - how do you guys feel about that? Does it make you nervous?
ANOOP SHEKAR (AS): I think that we were more excited than nervous. We knew we were making a fun and interesting game. We just hoped that people would see it that way. Looking at the early feedback it seems as though we succeed.

HYPER: What kind of RPGs did you look to for inspiration when developing Summoner?
AS: Seeing as there were so many RPG fans on our team (both console and PC) we wanted to incorporate elements of many of our favourite RPGs within Summoner. Games like Final Fantasy, Planescape Torment, Vagrant Story and many others were all inspiration for Summoner.

HYPER: Was there a pressure to live up to PSX RPG giants like Square?
AS: Certainly there is a given amount of pressure to create games that are as good, if not better than your competition. Square has the advantage of having large development teams and a great deal of experience, but we wanted to make a game that was different than any of the other console RPG's out there. Since Summoner is so unique I don't think we will be directly compared to Square games and we will have created a market of our own.

HYPER: Was Summoner always a multiple character game or did you have other concepts originally?
AS: When the early drafts of the story were written we always had multiple characters accompanying Joseph. They went through different concepts and versions, but we felt that having multiple characters in the party would give the game more depth, both through the story and gameplay.

HYPER: What is involved in keeping a balance between the four evolving characters in terms of levelling, magic, weapons etc?
AS: The main balance we created was to give each of the main characters a specific subset of skills that would be appropriate to their character types. Flece, for example is a thief, so she has many thief oriented skills (sneaking, backstabbing, lock picking, etc.). There is some crossover between the different characters but in general, each character has quite different skills giving them each a different role in battle.

HYPER: How did the combat system come about? The chaining concept has been seen in another PSX title, Vagrant Story. Tell us why it's cool.
AS: When we designed the combat system originally, it was going to be used on a PC, but when we moved it over to the PS2 we felt it needed to be more interactive and more exciting. Our solution was to implement the chain combat system. Vagrant Story did have an influence, but the chains that we created are unique to each character and are built upon each other. We feel that the chain system is cool because it gives a level of interactivity to the player and allows them to influence the outcome of a battle without making the character's stats obsolete.

SHE'S "STOLEN" MY HEART!

YEP, THE HYPER OFFICE

LOOKS LIKE HE'S READY TO RAVE AT SOMEONE

Q & A

HYPER: *The environments in Summoner are very large and impressive – were you worried that the cities were too confusing to explore?*

AS: The cities in Summoner are quite large, but we did provide a map for players to look at so they won't get too lost. One of the cool things about RPGs is being able to explore vast areas and see what you can find.

HYPER: *The story certainly progresses in a linear fashion – what are the limitations when it comes to adding "extra" sub-quest stuff for the player to discover?*

AS: I don't think that having a linear story limits the types of sub-quests for players. Probably the only limiting factor is that certain quests need to be completed by a specific point in the game, otherwise they become obsolete.

HYPER: *What's it like play-testing a complex game such as Summoner? What sorts of things do you discover?*

AS: It can be very daunting to have to test a game that has the size and scope of Summoner. However, we had an excellent QA team both here at Volition and at THQ. The game certainly could not have come out anywhere close to on schedule had they not worked extra hard. Of course, they found some great bugs that were quite odd. One bug that comes to mind is that Joseph is supposed to lose max Hit Points temporarily when he has a summon available, but for a while, even when the creature was unsummoned Joseph would permanently lose those Hit Points.

HYPER: *In what main areas do the PS2 and PC versions differ?*

AS: The main differences between the two versions are the interface (mouse and keyboard for the PC) and there will be multiplayer for the PC, as well.

HYPER: *How did you find the PS2 to program for? What's good and what's bad about it?*

AS: The PS2 brings it's own unique challenges to programming (as with any other new console). It's great at pushing polygons, that's for sure. As to its specific shortcomings, I'm not sure, since I'm not a programmer and I didn't work directly with the hardware.

HYPER: *Are you interested in other platforms? Xbox and Gamecube?*

AS: We are looking at other platforms to determine their viability, but at this time I cannot say whether we will be making games for those systems.

HYPER: *What cool stuff was taken out of the game against the team's initial wishes?*

AS: There were many different locations that we wanted to have in Summoner that never made it into the final game. There was a city called Angenu which was known as the "City of Blood". However, due to time constraints we had to cut it early on. There are several things like that which we will hopefully see in the future.

HYPER: *So, we will see a Summoner 2?*

AS: If the game sells well then there's a good possibility that there will be a Summoner 2. We certainly have ideas for a sequel.

HYPER: *Is Flece the coolest RPG Thief ever?*

AS: I think that's something each gamer needs to decide on their own. I certainly am partial to her sneak then backstab combination. :)

HYPER: *Thanks Anoop.*

AS: Bye!

GRRRRRRR!

ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2001
THE MANAGER'S MANAGEMENT GAME

THE REAL PLAYER MANAGER

MANCHESTER U. 1
CHELSEA 0

12:05

PUT THE HOSE AWAY! THIS IS NO TIME TO WATER THE PITCH!

Alex Ferguson's Player Manager 2001 finds you choosing your favourite team to manage through the four English professional divisions as well as the F.A. Cup, the Worthington Cup, the Auto Windscreen Trophy (for teams in Divisions 2 and 3), the Champions League and UEFA Cup, assuming you qualify. Many licensed games only use the name of the person in question but in this case, Alex Ferguson really did have an input into the game. Anco, the developers, spent time showing him the game and listening to his remarks, resulting in a 20-page transcript that they used for reference. "He particularly liked the tactics designer and showed us Man United's typical strategy against tough opposition," says programmer Steve Screech. "It proves Player Manager 2001 is a strong game because Ferguson never works with number two. To compete in the sports game market you need some heavy hitters, and Alex is certainly one of those."

IT'S TRUE TO LIFE

Player Manager 2001 boasts a wealth of technical improvements over its predecessors: an all-new 3D game engine, with over 50 major changes and new features programmed in to enhance the menu system, speed up the pace and improve accessibility of in-game options. There are 122 new player motion captures alongside new player models and texturing; motion blending and new player dynamics deliver true-to-life representations of tactics as each game is played in real-time; and a new control system.

Anyone who has played a management game knows that statistics play a big, big part in the scheme of things. Shooting skills, heading ability, passing, tackling, stamina and goalkeeping are now joined by three new stats: spirit, match fitness and confidence. Blend these together with the right tactics and you may, just may, have a winning combination (remember that these stats can both increase and decrease as seasons progress).

"If a player transfers from York City to Arsenal, his attributes don't increase simply because he now plays for a better team. They only change through playing," adds Screech helpfully. No doubt that same player's wage, reputation and value would improve, though. Going back to tactics, one useful addition to PM 2001 is the option to try out new formations and strategies on a non-league side before a vital game with the ability to change these strategies at the press of a button, allowing for a swift response to opposition tactics. There is also the useful post-match graphs and statistics which give an at-a-glance guide to how well each tactic worked. "The first Player Manager game had an option of controlling individual players, hence the name, but that facility isn't in this particular version." Every player in every squad has an in-depth Optima rating, messages from talent scouts around the globe are relayed back to you and even Sir Alex himself gets in on the act by giving you a special management rating at the end of each season.

NO BORING COMMENTARY!

One thing most players of football management games are divided on is the inclusion of in-game commentary:

THE NEXT INSTALMENT OF THE HUGELY SUCCESSFUL PLAYER MANAGER SERIES IS TO BE RELEASED SOON FOR PLAYSTATION, PS2 AND PC, ONLY THIS TIME IT HAS A REAL HEAVYWEIGHT BEHIND IT: **MANCHESTER UNITED MANAGER, SIR ALEX FERGUSON.** HYPER'S UK MAN ON THE MOVE, DEREK DELA FUENTE, STOPPED THE LEGEND HIMSELF FOR A CHAT ABOUT HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH THE GAME.

some like, some don't, but don't expect any John Motson style banter here. Steve Screech explains why: "We find that most players would switch off commentary if they could, as it's repetitive and boring. We prefer to save the space in the memory for something more important."

With clubs notorious in changing shirt colours every few years, Anco has thoughtfully included not only a full kit designer but an edit facility for the way a player looks. Also deemed fit for inclusion is the recent trait of players trying to con a referee: if you think some footballers are prone to diving, wait till you see these. A 10 for theatrics is no problem!

For those familiar with the Kick Off brand, you'll be pleased to know that the classic camera view from that game will be one of nine views in all, along with a zoom facility. These camera views are different to the three match modes available: 3D, text commentary with scanner, or quick watch. For PlayStation users, a second memory card will allow you to both watch and then store replays of games for future reference or showing off to your mates. Now what does the man himself think of all this…?

SIR ALEX FERGUSON SPEAKS…

HYPER: *What are your thoughts on the Australian footballing scene? They appear to have some top-notch players but are not making any real impact.*
AF: They have a great tiered system in all sports in Australia, which allows individuals to progress and improve. Australia also produce very athletic footballers that play all over Europe. It obviously takes longer to create a team, but they are certainly heading in the right direction.

HYPER: *Have you ever been here in Australia?*
AF: Yes, the first time was in 1967, then again in 1985. In that gap I saw remarkable changes. I found Sydney to be a very enterprising city that was quite vitalising and I also enjoyed visiting Melbourne.

HYPER: *Do you own a PlayStation or PC and have you played Player Manager?*
AF: No to the first question and yes to the second.

HYPER: *Have you ever put in the Manchester United team in Player Manager, added their formation and been pleased with the outcome?*
AF: Yes, we beat Ipswich Town 1-0 at home in my first game with a goal from Dwight Yorke!

HYPER: *What is your favourite dream team from past or present and if you could buy one player to play in the current team, who would it be?*
AF: Real Madrid of the late 50's/early 60's would be the team and the player can only be Pele.

HYPER: *Did your son have a computer/console and did he constantly ask for games?*

West Ham — Set piece designer

The Shot

SET PIECE FREE KICK 1
SET PIECE FREE KICK 2
SET PIECE FREE KICK 3
SET PIECE FREE KICK 4
FREE KICK 1
FREE KICK 2
FREE KICK 3
FREE KICK 4
CORNER 1
CORNER 2
CORNER 3
CORNER 4

START | 1 | 2
THE SETUP | THE PASS | THE SHOT
SHOOT | PASS | CROSS | CHIP

SAVE SET PIECES | LOAD SET PIECES | TEST

PHWOAR! MORE EXCITING THAN A FERRET IN YOUR TROUSERS!

TECHNICAL STUFF

MANCHESTER U. 1
CHELSEA 0

HIGH ALTITUDE TRAINING

"OH GOODNESS, I SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN MY TEXTURES!"

AF: Yes, my main memories are of expensive Christmas Days!

HYPER: *If the rewards were right, would you ever consider managing a team like Gillingham and do you believe you could make a difference with such limited resources?*
AF: I'm retiring in two years - I've done my time!

HYPER: *How did you become involved in this game?*
AF: I was approached by ANCO and after having a proper chance to have a look at the game, I was more than happy to get involved.

HYPER: *How close do you think a computer game can get to simulating real life football management?*
AF: It is always very difficult to recreate real life situations and emotions on a computer, but the overall detail attached, in particular, to the tactical side of the game is very impressive and certainly takes you a step closer to the real thing.

HYPER: *Does the game give you the chance to try out tactics you would be too nervous about trying in real life?*
AF: Not really, I never approach things with a 'trial and error' attitude.

HYPER: *Likewise, if you came up with a winning strategy in the game, would you be tempted to try it out with the real squad?*
AF: I don't think so!

HYPER: *Single most important aspect of football management?*
AF: Decision-making.

HYPER: *Which clubs other than Man United, would you most like to manage?*
AF: None.

HYPER: *Best player worked with?*
AF: Eric Cantona - he brought so much to the club in so many areas. Not just during the 90 minutes but also his approach and dedication to training and improving.

HYPER: *Is it necessary to have been a player before becoming a manager?*
AF: In my opinion, yes.

HYPER: *Are you looking forward to retirement and will you miss football?*
AF: I will miss the daily contact with the players/staff etc but I am also looking forward to having time on my hands to do other things. I will still go to football matches - I have done for 50 years and I can't see that side of it stopping.

HYPER: *Thanks for your time!*

phantasy star online

"Character creation gives you the ability to alter everything from your costume through to your hairstyle…"
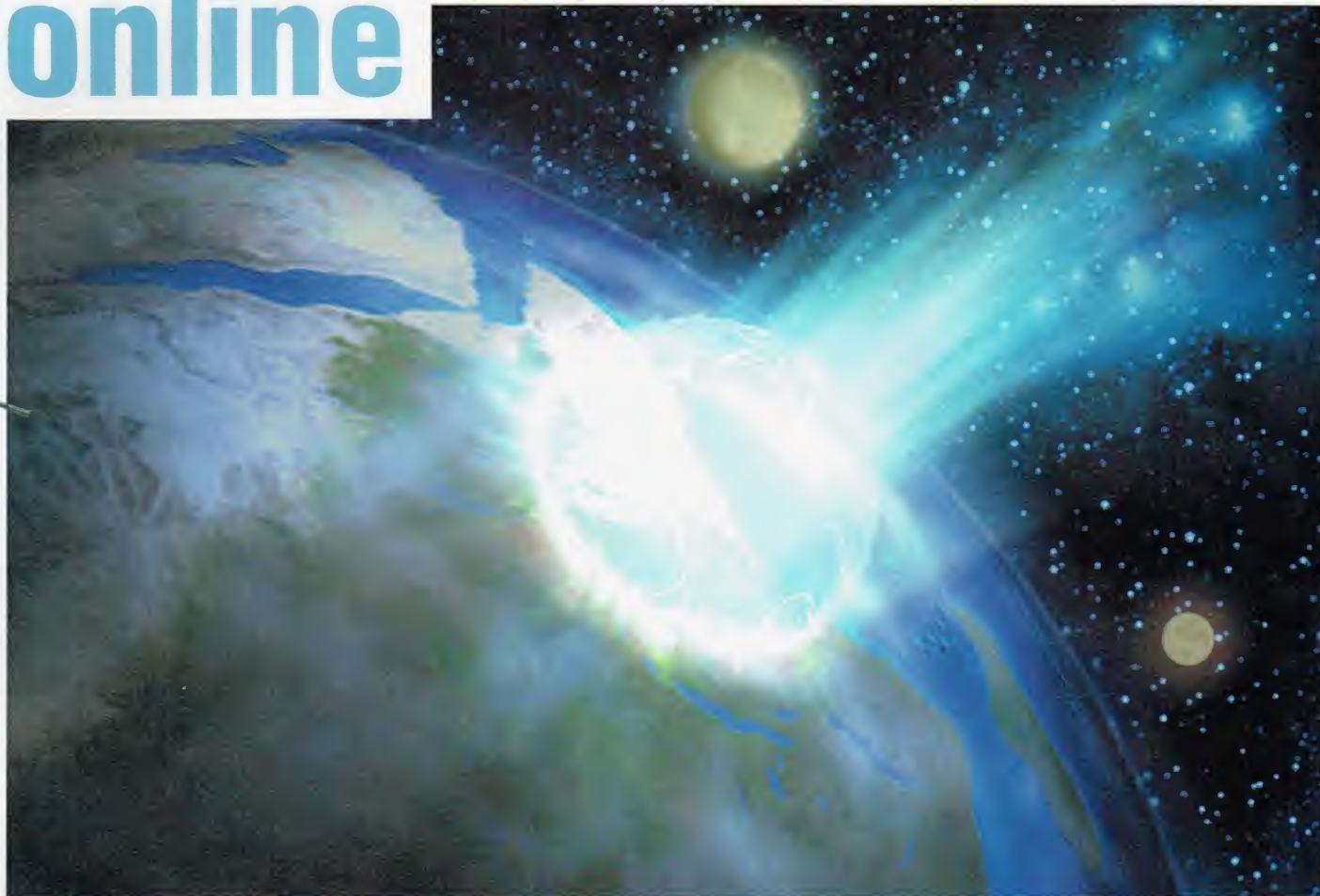
A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, THE IDEA OF PLAYING A massively multiplayer RPG on a console was pretty far fetched, but with the Dreamcast's online capabilities, Sonic Team have been working on just such a title, Phantasy Star Online. Unlike the old Phantasy Star games, which were far more traditional Japanese RPGs, PSO uses a fast paced real-time interface, making it play like a 3D version of Diablo, rather than the turn-based style used in Everquest. However, like Everquest, PSO offers a large 3D world to explore, and what a gorgeous world the folks at Sonic Team are creating for us. Lush environments both indoors and outdoors play host to 3D characters toting lightsabers, laser rifles, and spectacular magical powers… and of course the various monsters they're up against. The screen shots make it pretty clear just how gorgeous a game we're talking about here.

HIGH-TECH WEAPONRY

PSO is set on a planet called Ragol, which is a proposed site for colonisation for the people of a dying world. A ship named Pioneer 1 is sent to Ragol to set up the "Central Dome", which is essentially the base of operations on the planet. As Pioneer 2 arrives into orbit seven years later, the dome explodes, and contact with the first settlers is lost. This leaves us with a future-fantasy scenario, with high-tech weaponry and spacecraft, co-existing with magic.

Players can choose from one of three main character classes, Hunters (melee experts), Rangers (ranged weapon experts), and Force (magic users). Each class is again split into three variants, offering more diversity. Character creation gives you the ability to alter everything from your costume through to your hairstyle, to help make everyone look distinct, which is important in a game with so many players logged on at once.

Sonic Team are gearing much of Phantasy Star Online to revolve around teamwork, and players can form into parties of up to four, rather than no limit, which makes it a lot more manageable for the developers to create encounters and challenges that are suited to the party at hand. Some puzzle elements will require players to work together to get the job done, and it goes without saying that there will be countless situations where one character alone could not hope to take on all the monsters before them.

So players can communicate properly with other folk from around the globe, PSO will feature a simple translation system that will allow players to say a series of commonly used phrases and instructions, that will come out in the other players' native language (assuming they speak Japanese or one of the main European languages). You'll also be able to arrange to meet people at a certain time, as the game uses a time system called "beats", of which there are 1000 in a day. This is a simple means of having everyone use a single time zone.

THE GLOBAL SCENARIO

Recent demonstrations of a PSO demo have taken place in Japan, and the result was a fast moving game with no apparent lag problems. How this will hold up on a global scenario obviously remains to be seen, and probably won't be known till we see a local release here, or get word on how things are working in the US, or the UK.

WOW-O-METER
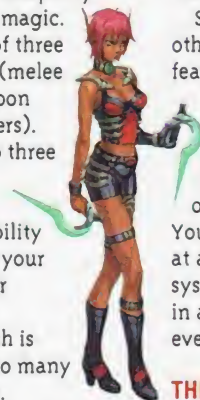
KILL IT! KILL IIIIT!!

"HEY, YOU COME HERE OFTEN?"

"BY THE POWER OF GREYSKULL!"

こんにちは

こんにちは

YEAH, WHAT HE SAID

There are still uncertainties as to what the situation will be here in Australia, purely because Sega have not released details on how the networking will work for this title, but the plan has always been for a global game. Phantasy Star Online will feature single player gaming, which is something massively multiplayer RPGs have not had to this day, but Dreamcast owners should be far more interested in the prospect of participating in the first online console RPG. At least this ensures you'll still have a decent game to play in the event that lag is a problem for us here.

Phantasy Star Online is looking awesome from what we've seen, with amazing visuals, a fast paced real time combat system, and gameplay that not only encourages teamwork, but actually requires it, there seems much reason to be excited about Sonic Team's next RPG. All that really remains to be seen is how well the game will play for us down here, and if Everquest and Ultima Online are anything to go by, whether or not there will be an ongoing fee to keep playing the game. Due for release in Japan just before Christmas, the local release should be early in 2001. ■

freedom ridge

"Our focus at Mythos is on the gameplay."

WILL SOMEONE JUST SHOOT IT?!

DEVELOPMENT HOUSE MYTHOS IS HEADED BY Julian Gollop and has a long and proven record of writing top selling games right back to Chaos and Rebelstar Raiders on the Spectrum. They developed the original UFO: Enemy Unknown, the original XCOM games and Magic & Mayhem.

The Dreamland Chronicles: Freedom Ridge (DCFR) builds upon the experience Mythos gained when developing the XCOM games, and it looks like we're back to fighting off those alien hordes. At present they are way past the half way stage with DCFR - a strategy game set in the future. Mythos spoke with Hyper's UK correspondent, Derek dela Fuente...

SPACE INVADERS
Our story begins shortly after an alien invasion in which mankind has been defeated after a short and bloody war. For reasons, which become evident as the player progresses through the game, enclaves are left to the surviving humans where they attempt to scratch out a living. The player heads up the 'Terran Liberation Army', and initially finds weapons and equipment in the old abandoned military bases, which still contain all manner of equipment from handguns to F16 aircraft, and Chinook helicopters. If all goes well, you may be able to muster enough forces and firepower to wipe out the Sauran invaders and free the surviving human population.

Julian Gollop from Mythos explains what we're dealing with. "Freedom Ridge is a strategy game. There are elements of resource management but these are minor. The player can find equipment and research ways to produce new equipment or use captured alien technology. Success at defending the enclaves will affect the number of candidates available for recruitment as new troops. The Saurans' aggression depends upon how much of a threat you become to them so there is almost always a chance for recovery. As you progress through the game, your scientists may discover the reason for this strange Sauran behaviour. Starting out, you get an initial base and can recruit a small squad. There will always be at least one ammo dump and deserted military base in the vicinity of your base when you start."

TAKING CONTROL
The user controls his own squad and the game has two main elements. The strategic element of the game is controlled through the geosphere - a rotatable, zoomable view of the planet Earth, which accurately reflects the day and night cycles. Here the player dispatches aircraft to intercept alien craft or to drop troops off at sites of interest. The sites include alien crash sites, abandoned bases, human enclaves, and later Sauran 'terraforming' factories, power stations or bases. Once a squad of troops is dropped off at a site, the player may enter the tactical component of the game where they control their squad of troops in a full 3D environment. Mythos added, "We haven't decided on the maximum number of troops yet but expect it to be more than 12."

The differing members of the squad and their proficiency in various skills were also explained. "We have detailed experience models and squad members can be trained too. You have more than just troops to consider with their specific weapons skills; there are the psi skills from the Reticulans or Men in Black, research skills for your scientists, medics, etc."

The tried and tested isometric view has not been used, the game is fully 3D and unlike most 3D environments this one is fully modelled in terms of physics. Houses will collapse if you take out too much from the walls but there is nothing to stop you blowing a hole in the wall and using it as a door. Unlike most RTS games that either use 3D just for the visuals or are too complex to control for most players, the player will feel in complete control the whole time as a result of the turn based play and simple and intuitive controls.

The technology issue was answered with consummate ease by the team. "Our focus at Mythos is on the gameplay. However, we are working actively with the guys at NDL and Telekinesis to

WOW-O-METER

"YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR INVADING THE EARTH AND STUFF."

10.00/6

10.00/39 60/70 Deviation: 3.93

ensure that the 3D environment and the physics offer better visuals and effects than anything that has been seen before. We have the additional advantage from the turn based play of being able to use excellent camera shots - 'directors cuts' providing the most exciting and satisfying views of the action."

DO OR DIE
Is it possible to sum up the game? "I can't reduce a game, which is this accessible and deep, to a simple list of selling points. The tactical combat is incredibly tense. The simple interface and total realism of the environment make the player intensely aware that they control the fate of their troops and gives them incredible freedom in developing their tactical skills. The realistic and familiar equipment contrasts wonderfully with the half-known truths about the Reticulans and The Men in

Black. The player gets a real sense of satisfaction as they discover the secrets behind the different alien factions and turn them to their advantage. The Geosphere realises the megalomaniac incumbent in us all as you spin and zoom in on different areas in the world. You decide whether to ally with the Enclaves or leave them to suffer the alien incursions. You decide how to spread your bases across the globe as you drive back the Sauran menace. Through research and experience you discover their strengths and their critical weaknesses. A satisfying tactical combat can be complete in as little as fifteen minutes but saving the world could take anywhere from 30 to a hundred hours of immersive gameplay." ■

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
Some aliens that don't make us want to puke.

HERE'S OUR MONTHLY LOOK AT WHAT'S ON THE WAY IN 2001

PC

FALLOUT TACTICS

STAR TREK: AWAY TEAM
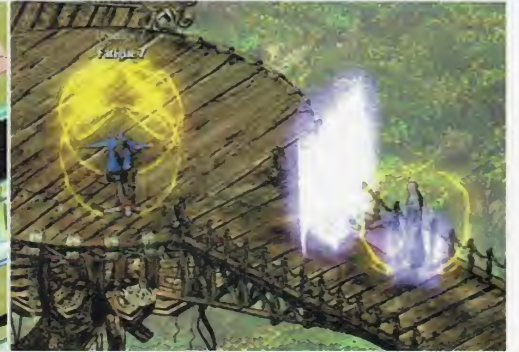
ARCANUM

PS2

METAL GEAR SOLID 2

SKY ODYSSEY

RED FACTION

DREAMCAST

SOUL REAVER 2

SONIC SHUFFLE

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

NINTENDO 64

MICKEY'S SPEEDWAY USA

AIDYN CHRONICLES

CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

PLAYSTATION

LIBERO GRANDE 2

SIMPSONS WRESTLING

INCREDIBLE CRISIS

Shadowbane

THE ONSLAUGHT OF ONLINE GAMES continues. Some time next year we'll be graced with WolfPack Studios' foray into the market, Shadowbane. Shadowbane plonks us into a medieval fantasy world in an age of strife, where the gods have forsaken their people, tyranny and chaos run rampant and generally things aren't very pleasant.

At heart Shadowbane is an online game much like we're used to. Players can set out for adventure to gain wealth or experience by clearing the lands of its nasties. Yet as we've come to expect from each new online competitor, there's an impressive draw card unique to Shadowbane...

A CLASSY SELECTION

The range of available character-types one can choose to play as is pleasingly vast. A majority of the races we've come to know and love are available in some form or another with a few new hybrids added for good measure. Class selection takes things much further. There are only four main classes to pick from: Fighter, Healer, Mage and Rogue, yet these merely categorize the healthy list of available subclasses. Just using Fighters, as an example, can mean more specific roles such as a Barbarian, Crusader,

Q3/UT STUFF
MODS
Chaos UT GOTY

Chaos is a mod that has proven popular since the days of Quake2. A version is on the cards for Quake3 but for the moment UT players are lucky enough to see it converted to the Unreal engine first. This is mainly due to the fact that it needed to be finished in time to make it into the 'Game of the Year' re-release of Unreal Tournament. ChaosUT is a very polished and fun twist to conventional deathmatch. New weapons of mass destruction abound, from the trusty Crossbow and hybrids of other familiar guns to a variety of more insane arms. A couple of real
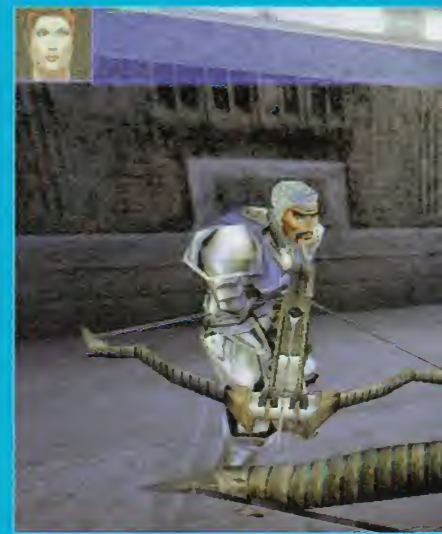
show stoppers are the Gravity Well, which sucks everyone it's vicinity to their deaths, or a giant ED-209-like sentry gun which literally mows down anyone in sight. Proximity Mines in Chaos hilariously have a mind of their own, bouncing around the map after their targets. Of all the weapons however, the standout one would have to be the meaty looking bastard sword. It more or less copies the Lightsaber from Jedi Knight, being great for carving the enemy at close range with careful use of secondary fire letting you repel enemy attacks. To top everything off, developers Chaotic Dreams have provided nine awesome new levels specifically designed for enhanced carnage. Excellent LANing fun to be had! http://www.planetunreal.com/chaotic/
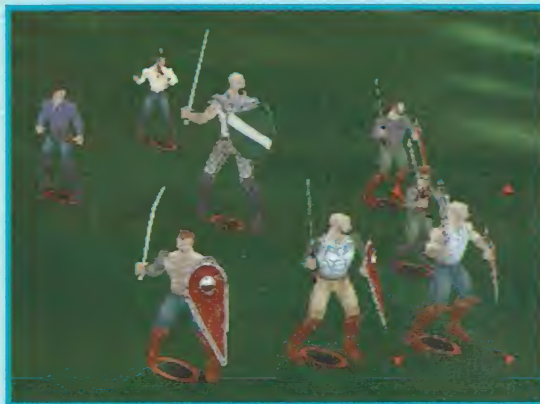
Ranger, Templar, Warlock (strangely enough) or a Warrior. Each class can then diversify even further by mastering separate disciplines (i.e. Archer, Beserker or Undead Hunter). Players are even allowed to delve down the path of Lycanthropy! With so many options to decide on when creating a character, it seems almost possible to tailor your own unique identity in Shadowbane.

So how exactly does Shadowbane intend to wrest the gaming population from Everquest? Well, on top of the generic fantasy game aspects we're used to, WolfPack aim to take gameplay to a new level by implementing a strategic warfare platform for Guild Vs Guild wars. The idea is to go beyond encouraging group based play, relying on player interaction on a grand scale. Guilds will be the backbone of what this title is all about. They'll actually have the ability to build and fortify their own towns, including keeps and castle walls! The guild system in Shadowbane isn't quite as straightforward as in other games. Perhaps more appropriately guilds aren't

just a motley crew of players, they consist only of characters under the same profession (i.e. Thieves guild, Rangers guild). However larger guilds can rule a number of sub-guilds, thus broadening their abilities. In the long run if they play their cards right, guilds may eventually gain enough influence to grow into City-states, Kingdoms, and even Empires.

POLITICS AND INTRIGUE
In order to expand their power base, members will deal with all manner of politics and intrigue, allying themselves with other guilds or ultimately going to war. With this in mind, the developers are working on

NOTHING LIKE LAYING SOME GOOD CABLE

Q3/UT STUFF
MODS

TALLY HO!

UT Models & Skins

A few decent user-made models for UT are starting to creep onto the scene. Some of the more notable ones being a conversion of Q3's visor model and JC Denton from Deus Ex. Check out the links below for all the latest models and skins as well as tutorials on creating your own.
http://www.unreality.org/thelawgiver/

http://www.utskins.com/

Assault Bonus pack

This 1st class bonus pack produced by Eavy provides several excellent, award-winning new assault maps. The quality of each map is so good it could pass as official 'out of the box' work. Something to note when trying these new missions is that they really tend to require a hefty machine to cope with the level size. Playing on an aging p3 500 w/128 MB RAM proved to be an almost excruciating experience. That aside, if Assault is your thing, this is definitely the way to go.
http://www.planetunreal.com/eavy/assault.html

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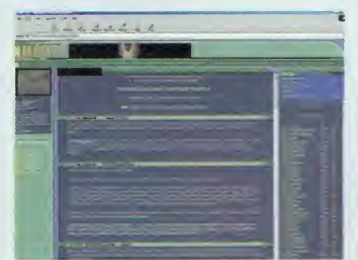
an intricate combat system, supporting various army formations and even use of siege weapons! One look at the screenshots and it isn't hard to imagine the chaos that could erupt in such massive battles.

Adding spice to all of this, the effectiveness of magic will vary in different parts of the world. Areas where magic is weaker will obviously be favoured by warrior guilds, where they would gain a noticeable defensive advantage over any opposing spellcasting factions.

For those who find playing under the reign of a guild isn't their cup of tea, the option is always open for you and a group of friends to hire yourselves out as mercenaries, doing services for whichever power offers the highest bid. Alternatively, players can simply stick to fighting the denizens in their province's local dungeons to gain XP.

Shadowbane is really sounding like a delightfully ambitious title. The melding of typical online RPG elements with strategic warfare is an idea that is certainly sparking plenty of interest in the online gaming community. Right now it's arguably the most anticipated online game in production. Lets hope it lives up to expectations. ■
http://www.shadowbane.com/
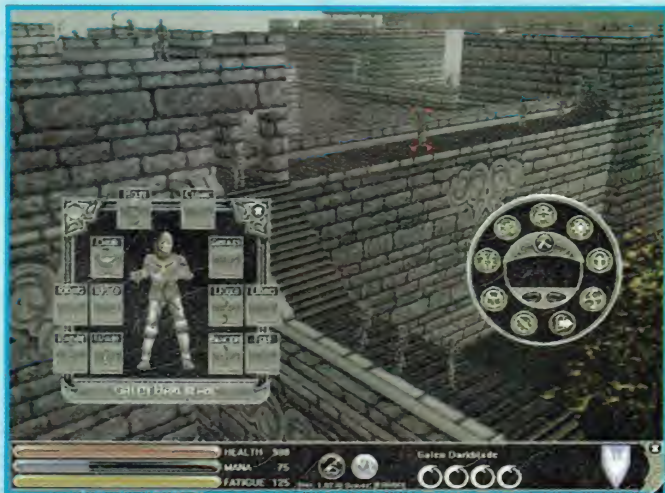
WWW

Space Station Orbital Tracking

It has quietly been in orbit for a fair while now actually, but with the recent addition of a crew, interest has risen about the new space station. For those of you who are curious, this site shows exactly where around the globe the space station is at any given time. So now you'll know when to bother checking the night skies for it.
http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/realdata/tracking/index.html

Southern Cross cable

Zoom! Last month, Southern Cross Cables completed a new high-speed cable connection between Australasia and America. The two-year project involved laying 30,500 kilometers of cable on the ocean floor doing a round trip from Sydney, to New Zealand, Hawaii and finally hitting the US. The result of all this is an astronomical increase in available bandwidth. Where previously we were linked to the states via a 1-Gigabit connection, the latest installment improves on that 12,000% with a 120-Gigabit link (160Gb from Hawaii to the US). To give an idea of what all these numbers mean, apparently the new bandwidth on the whole will be fast enough to download two full-length motion pictures every second! All this is obviously excellent news for gamers in particular. Pings to the US will be far lower, likely making even international FPS matches a viable concept. This couldn't have come at a better time with Australia slowly but surely moving into the high-bandwidth era. For more detailed info check out the Southern Cross site at: http://www.southerncrosscables.com/

GETTING GIDDY WITH IT

Third Dawn

ULTIMA ONLINE WOULD HAVE TO officially be the granddaddy of MMORPGs. It actually came out way back in 1997. Despite its age and despite being technically superceded by Asheron's Call and Everquest long ago, the game is still amazingly popular. Although they're heavily into

development on a sequel, Origin intend to prove to their loyal subscribers that there's plenty of life left yet in the old fella. That proof comes with word of an all-new expansion, UO: Third Dawn.

GLORIOUS 3D-NESS!

Third Dawn won't be any ordinary expansion. As far as new areas to explore, monsters to kill and new items to find is concerned, this expansion provides. The real drawcard however lies in the fact that Origin is giving UO's aesthetics one heck of an overhaul. From a world that, for the moment, consists solely of sprites, the developers intend to transform its creatures, characters, items and even the terrain into 3D. Buildings will remain 2D however. That's right, every monster and even your own character will bask in the glory of motion-captured animated 3D-ness! Adding to the new graphical features is a particle system for rendering magic and other special effects, predictably now adding a 3D accelerator to the list of requirements for play. Rest assured, this won't affect people who log on and don't own the expansion — everything will still run fine for them in 2D. The graphics aren't the only things to be enhanced however. The guys at Origin are making an effort to rework a lot of the music and aging sound effects as well.

Besides the 3D upgrade, Third Dawn will present gamers with an extra world to pillage. Ilshenaur, said to be the name of this new land, will play host to thirteen new creatures, all of whom incidentally react to your character's

alignment. Goodly creatures will pounce on evil-aligned players and vice versa. And in what sounds like as a smart move, Origin have marked these lands as 'adventure only'. Meaning that while you can run around carving up creatures all you like, you won't be permitted to set up a house. Anyone who has played UO in the past will understand the reasoning behind that decision. Houses were not only a cause of lag, but they tended really make a mess of the landscape.

By now Third Dawn should be going through some form of beta testing. So it's probably safe to assume that fans will be able to grab hold of a copy early next year. UO has certainly come a long way since release. The last expansion all but solved any player killing issues, and now with such a wonderful graphical update on the way and promises of more to come, UO could go well on for another three years. ∎

WINWINWIN DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

Entries close January 23rd.

FOR PS2

Dynasty Warriors II is a brutal slash 'em up on the PS2 that puts you in charge of a huge army, armed to the teeth and ready for blood. Thanks to THQ, we have these great prizes to give away. The first prize will win Dynasty Warriors II for PS2, the Gladiator SE: DVD, and a Samaria Sword letter opener. Five runners up will win a copy of the game. To be in with a chance to win, answer the following question:

>> Which country is Dynasty Warriors set in?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope with your name and address and send it to: WIN THE WAR, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER AND ALICE

FOR PC

Need something to warm your PC these holidays? Thanks to Electronic Arts Australia, we have some gourmet gaming for you and your CPU. No One Lives Forever is a first person shooter in the style of Austin Powers and James Bond that's sweeping the world with its brilliance. We'll be reviewing this great game next issue, but for now, you can win one of three copies! Then there's American McGee's Alice, the trippy and surreal action/adventure that a true feast for the eyes. We also have three copies of Alice to give away. Three lucky readers can win both games! To win this great pairing, answer the following question:

>> Who wrote Alice in Wonderland?

Stick your answer on the back of an envelope with youir name and address and send it to ALICE FOREVER, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.

SHOOTY

SCARY

DREAMCAST

SHENMUE

PAGE 40

HYPER
GAME
OF THE
MONTH

Avenge the murder of your father in this epic tale exclusive to the Dreamcast.

38 >>HYPER

REVIEWS

DC **PC** **N64** **PSX** **PS2**

Green for Dreamcast
Yellow for PC
Red for Nintendo 64
Dark Blue for PlayStation
Light Blue for PlayStation 2

44

46

56

60

THE HYPER CREW'S TOP 5

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING THIS MONTH

Eliot Fish – Editor

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 – Dreamcast
"It's an addiction. I need it 24/7."
2. Dead Or Alive 2: Hardcore – PS2
3. No One Lives Forever – PC
4. Hitman: Codename 47 – PC
5. Chicken Run – Game Boy

Cam Shea – Deputy Editor

1. Dance Summit 2001 – PS2
"Kitty N may not be back, but baby still got back."
2. Shenmue – Dreamcast
3. Jet Set Radio – Dreamcast
4. Banjo Tooie – Nintendo 64
5. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 – Dreamcast

Kevin Cheung – Reviewer

1. Dance Summit 2001 – PS2
"I can't get the music out of my head, somebody heeeelp me."
2. Madden 2001 – PS2
3. Guilty Gear X – Dreamcast
4. Escape From Monkey Island – PC
5. Blair Witch Volume 1 – PC

SHENMUE

>> **Dan Toose** enters Yu Suzuki's epic adventure masterpiece... and emerges with two thumbs up.

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Adventure/Action/Fighting
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	Sega
PRICE:	TBA
RATING:	M
SUPPORTS:	PAL 60HZ, VGA, vibration pack, VMU

NINTENDO CAN ATTRIBUTE MUCH OF their success to the efforts of Shigeru Miyamoto, and Sega have a couple of developers that they also should be very thankful for having on their team. One is Yugi Naka, creator of the Sonic series, and the other is one of the greatest game developers of all time, Yu Suzuki. The man responsible for a great cross range of titles, such as Space Harrier, Outrun, and the Virtua Fighter series, has headed up development of a Dreamcast title that redefines what we can expect in an adventure game, as it brings other genres into the mix, leaving us with a title that offers a very complete gaming experience... Shenmue.

NO-BRAINER LOVE INTEREST
Sega's epic adventure tells the tale of Ryo Hazuki, the son of a Japanese martial arts expert who is murdered by a mysterious Chinese man who has come for a strange mirror his father has been keeping for many years. Ryo decides he must avenge his father, but he has little to go on, other than the fact the Chinese man, Lan Di, arrived with some goons in a black car. Ryo must explore the areas around Yokosuka to discover why his father was murdered for a stone mirror, and how he can face Lan Di to avenge his father. Ryo is not alone though, as he has the help of Fukuhora, his father's disciple, his mother, and Nozomi, his gorgeous classmate who thinks rather highly of him (the no-brainer love interest).

The thing that makes Shenmue so complete is that the game seems to adapt to the situation at hand. While most of the game is spent in a "Free Quest" mode, looking around in a third person mode, much like in Tomb Raider, it breaks into frequent cut scenes, action events, and even fights. The way the game branches into these different modes is fairly seamless, and
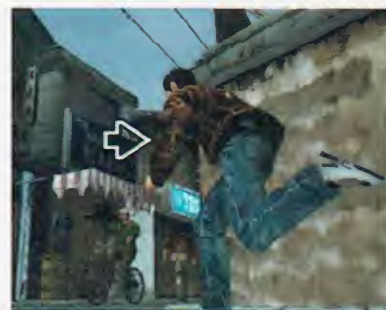
"LOWER...LOWER... AHHH, THAT'S IT!"

INSERT PUSSY JOKE HERE
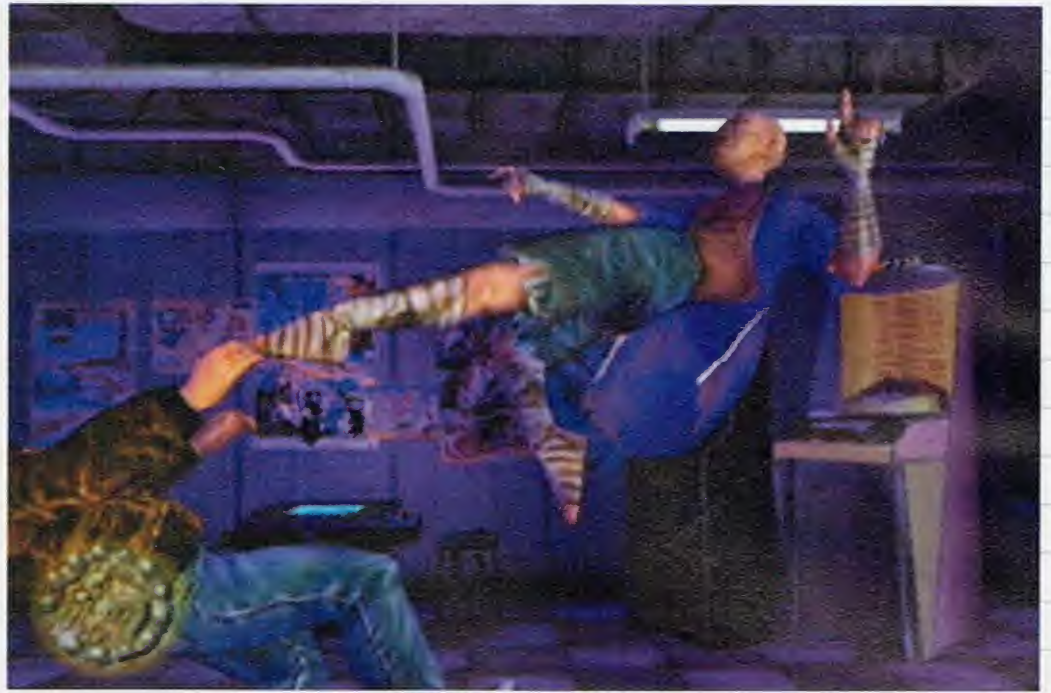
THE POWER OF AN UNWASHED FOOT

FIRST PERSON TO LAUGH LOSES

RYO TICKLES THE INFORMATION OUT OF HIS ENEMY

"BABY, YOU HAVE SUCH SEXY POLYGONS"

provides a nice free flowing adventure for you to progress through.

Visually, Shenmue smokes every game like it, and pretty much every game unlike it as well. Regardless which element of the visuals you're looking at, Shenmue delivers and then some. Each character has been carefully modelled and textured, with major characters having a few more polygons thrown in, and some more attention paid to the way the textures line up, etc. Each character looks good, not only in stills, but also in the way they move. AM2

obviously spent a mammoth amount of time doing motion capture for all the various scenes in Shenmue, from the simple conversations, through to the action sequences where people stumble and fall realistically. Even the smaller details have been carefully reproduced too, like blinking, and small facial twitches that help convey emotions during dialogue.

It's hard to say if the environments in Shenmue are more impressive than the characters, but regardless, they are stunning. Shenmue delivers what appears to be a real, living, breathing world, which doesn't seem to leave anything out, including the garbage
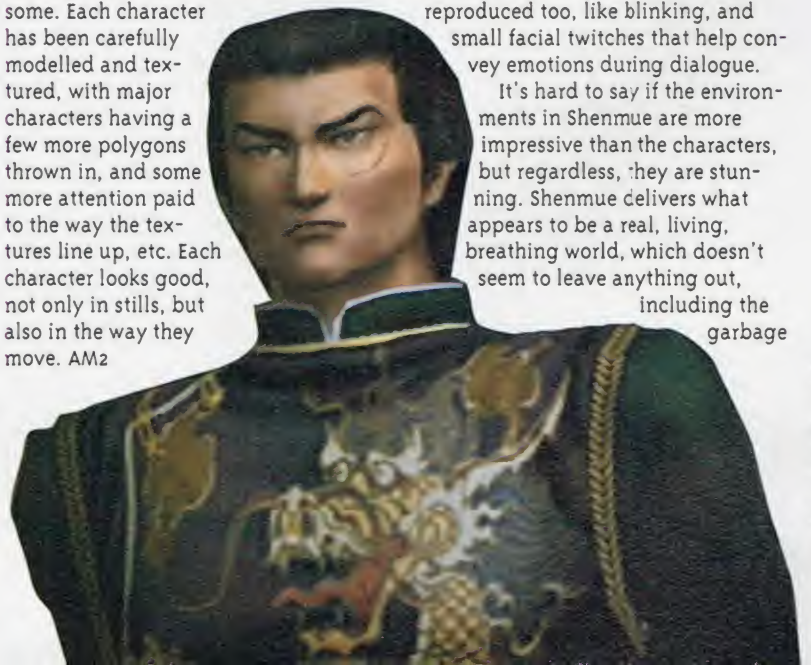
RYO SNEAKS INTO ANOTHER SCREENING OF "NAUGHTY NURSES 12"

"EAT GUCCI, CREEP!"

in the alleyways. We've seen games with a lot of detail before, but Yu Suzuki and his team have been uncompromising when it comes to the level of not only visual detail, but also interactivity in the world around you.

A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE

While in Free Quest mode, you can look at everything around you, and if there's something you can do with the object you're looking at, you can zoom in, pick up, open, or manipulate the object in question. This goes all the way to walking into your bedroom, turning to the desk, and going through its drawers. That may not sound riveting, but it makes visual puzzles far more intuitive than in most adventure games.

Much of Shenmue is spent talking to people, in an effort to learn more about Lan Di, or those connected to him, and just like in real life, you often have to make appointments to meet people, or sometimes simply have to show up somewhere you expect to see someone. In this sense, time plays a very important role in Shenmue, along with its less important role of making the sky look the right colour and

brightness. Besides the realistic lighting of night and day (including street lights that come on at 7pm), where would a game so hell bent on creating a real world be without realistic weather effects? The answer doesn't matter, because Shenmue has those too.

A large part of the reason for the lengthy delay for Shenmue was the massive amount of speech that had to be voice acted all over again for an English-speaking audience. With the exception of a few minor characters who sound like they're on truth serum, the voice acting in Shenmue is first class, and helps you develop an affinity with the characters in no time.

As the son of a Jujitsu master, Ryo has learned more than a thing or two about self-defence, and it's a good thing, because he has plenty of people after him. Ryo is still young though, and has a lot to learn to become strong enough to face Lan Di. You can stumble across new moves while practising, and also be taught new techniques, by other people, or by scrolls. The depth doesn't stop there though, as you have to develop each move you have learned. You can do this by practising or sparring with friends like Fuku-san.

As you progress through the game, you're reminded of the fact Ryo lives in the real world, where money is a necessity. Besides being able to buy things with his allowance, Ryo can eventually get a job to earn a more impressive income, by making the right connections down at the warehouse district. That may not sound

A RANGE OF MODES

Besides the main mode (Free Quest mode), Shenmue has a range of game modes to suit different situations.

FREE BATTLE MODE

Shenmue features a combat system that feels like a strange cross between the Virtua Fighter series, and Sword of the Berserk. The controls feature buttons for kick, punch, block, throw, and one that puts you into a free movement (running) mode. The thing that makes the combat something like Sword of the Berserk is the fact you're often facing off against many opponents at once... SEVENTY at one point! As you learn new moves through the game, you can implement them in Free Battle Mode, and you will also notice that moves you have practised will be more effective as you develop them to higher levels of mastery.

This combat system is consistent enough to be considered far more than a novelty thrown in on top of an adventure game, and is a major part of Shenmue as a whole.

QUICK TIMER EVENTS

Not every moment of action warrants breaking out into Free Battle mode, sometimes because the conflict at hand is too short to require a whole fight, or because the problem at hand doesn't involve fighting at all. Enter the Quick Timer Event, which basically is a simple reflex test to see if you can guide Ryo through a situation properly. On the up side, this offers diversity, which always makes for good gaming. The down side is that the gameplay here is very reminiscent of Dragon's Lair, where you simply tap a direction or a button at a given point of time. Not only that, but if you fail a QTE, you simply have to repeat it, which takes away the element of consequence, and keeps things kind of linear. Having a whole heap of non-important sub quests that use QTEs would have made their inclusion appear less of a novelty.

MINI GAMES

These events are not important in terms of finishing the game, but definitely help add some spice and variety. Ryo will find various video games and amusement machines in arcades, rec rooms and the like. Some basic games such as darts are available, but Sega fans will get more of a kick from being able to play the arcade versions of games such as Hang On, and Space Harrier. Thanks to the Internet passport disc, you can upload your high scores to compete against other Shenmue owners. Other little games pop up for one off instances, such as taking a shot on a pool table for a bet. Every mini game that comes around has its own instructions, so you're never dumped in the deep end trying to figure out what to do.

WE WON'T BORE YOU WITH A BLOW BY BLOW ACCOUNT OF THIS SCENE...

PROOF THAT BAD GUYS DON'T FLOSS

"GO AND CHANGE. YOU'RE TOO STYLISH FOR 1986!"

too exciting, but rest assured that AM2 have ensured that doing your job will never really feel like work.

NOT HARD, JUST REALLY GOOD

A nice touch to put the icing on the cake for this 3 GD-ROM adventure is a 4th disc — the Shenmue Passport. This GD-ROM allows you to view all the movies you have unlocked, listen to all the in-game music you have heard (you can find tapes within the game to listen to), get instructions and briefing from various characters (showing off the stunning 3D character modelling), and also allows

you to get online to go through character profiles, and a host of other information.

Shenmue's only real downfall is that it doesn't explore many opportunities for non-linear gameplay, as you are essentially pushed in the right direction. In this sense, if you're a hardcore adventure gamer after a real brainteaser, Shenmue won't deliver, but the same could have been said about Final Fantasy VII for RPG fans... It wasn't hard, just really good.

Sega may be calling this a new genre of gaming "FREE" (Full Reactive Eyes Entertainment), but it's really just a game that incorporates multiple

gaming styles, and brings them together smoothly, which is usually where most games that attempt this come unstuck. Shenmue is a joy to play, with intuitive controls, variety in gameplay, and a plot that sucks you in and keeps you addicted to the very end, where you'll no doubt do what we did and curse that you don't have part 2 ready to play right then and there. This is a class game that everyone out there should be able to appreciate. If you own a Dreamcast, get this game. If you don't, go check this game out, it may just make you want one. ■ .

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
96	90	89

OVERALL

94

A wonderful blend of gaming styles that results in one of the most amazing adventure games ever made.

METROPOLIS STREET RACER

HAVE AT YOU

YOU'VE TEKKEN A

>> He's back. **Jackson Gothe-Snape** hurtles across the deadline...

HYPER BIG RUBBER STAMP OF APPROVAL

THE DELAYED GAME THEORY STATES that, if a game is held back for a year or more it will, without doubt, be a stinking pile of lukewarm faeces. With good reason therefore, gamers' heads dropped lower and lower with each news item detailing a further delay of what was once the racer to beat all racers. Bizarre Creations' supposedly revolutionary new game, Metropolis: Street Racer became lost in the haze of the Dreamcast driving scene to all but the true believers. As we find ourselves a year after its supposed release, it would appear that the believers have indeed been praying. For this game is holy, and brings forth a religion destined to enchant millions.

THOU SPEEDEST

The religion in question goes by the name of Kudos, and it is on this that a player's progression depends. The Kudos system can only be explained by the title's motto: It's not how fast you drive, it's how you drive fast. The game is split into 25 chapters, each of which contain around 10 separate quests. These fall under different categories, either a hot lap, timed run, challenge, one on one, street race or championship. There is a specific aim for each one, and only if these are reached can Kudos be obtained. Kudos are awarded for both skill and style, but also taken away for collisions, so a balance must be sought. All this racing occurs around some 270 courses in detailed replicas of London, Tokyo and San Francisco, all of which are raced at the actual time of day you play the game. Thus if you're up late, Tokyo will be covered in a sheet of darkness, as it's in a similar time zone to Australia.

The only area where the long delay seems to have caused a problem is in the somewhat poorer image quality than in current generation titles such as Le Mans. MSR does still look superb,

This Lap 41.732 — Fastest L
4th LAP 1of5

JACKSON GOES CRUISING FOR CHICKS

LUCKILY, HE'S SAVED THE "SUB-WOOFER" POWER UP UNTIL LAST...

WHERE DID THOSE PROGRAMNERS LEARN THEIR INGLISH?!

"HEY, SOMEONE STOLE MY ROOF!"

but its graphical strength lies in the sensation of speed created by the multitude of trackside objects as well as road textures. Cars are very recognisable, but lack polish, while weather effects are competently reproduced, yet are by no means top draw. All things considered though, the game is a treat to watch, and maintains a solid framerate, while the experience of charging down Tokyo's narrow back alleys in a pre-dawn fog with my TT's 4th gear is an absolute joy.

HOLY HOTWHEELS

If nothing else, the visuals suggest that Bizarre Creations' have made a concerted effort to be unique, particularly when it comes to replicating the cities. Everywhere you look there is tremendous detail, and although the locations are devoid of life, when different courses pass through the same landmark, you truly get a sense of awareness and place in a realistic area — an experience few other games can provide.

This uniqueness on behalf of the developers continues into the region of sound, where they have made an ambitious attempt in both car-based and soundtrack areas. In the most part the effect is fantastic, but sometimes it just sounds a little too artificial, like the booming echo of your engine in narrow streets or the whoosh (in *full* stereo) of the trees as you fly down London's St. James's Park. Engine effects otherwise are great, and listening to the variations in engine noise after unlocking cars is a treat. The soundtrack takes the form of city-specific radio stations, and provides a good range of tunes, ranging from jazz to Japanese pop. The radio ads and presenter ramble between tracks adds novelty value, and immersion to a degree, but after a few hours you will most likely have set up your own playlist of the tracks on offer, if you're still listening to the music at all.

There is a good selection of vehicles, but only after spending hours unlocking them through performance in special races or completing chapters. An estimate of the total number would have to be around 50, but includes novelties such as Cabs and even a ride-on lawnmower.

The cars' physics are consistent and somewhat realistic, without being overly anal. Powerslides are the name of the game, so the handbrake features heavily. The best part about the handling is the satisfying learning curve, and ability to get familiar enough with the feel of the cars to acknowledge the subtle differences from car to car, and to take a particular car on as your own, even though it may not be the fastest.

The physics' model suits the whole tone of the game, and the concept of Kudos. There is enough realism to do the cities justice, while still allowing for ridiculous automotive antics. The Kudos system is perhaps a little too vague and complicated sometimes, and can also be rorted, but it is truly refreshing, and makes this title stand out above a mammoth DC racer crowd. The game is just so likeable and easy to take on, it even won me over, and I consider myself to be far more a simulation-fan. Add to this the most comprehensive two-player mode I have seen and we have a winner. So much for the Delayed Game Theory, this baby has brought Kudos into our lives, and taken us into the promised (some time ago) land. ■

YOU'VE TEKKEN A Penalty!
LOOKS LIKE OUR TEKKEN JOKES MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO SEGA!

PLUS
Inspired. Offers plenty.

MINUS
A little too different for some gamers.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90	91	93

OVERALL

92

Unique yet... complete. A Dreamcast must-have.

TIME SPLITTERS

>> Four-way action on the PS2? No it's not a porno, as **Kevin Cheung** discovered...

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	First Person Shooter
PLAYERS:	1—4
PUBLISHER:	Eidos Interactive
PRICE:	TBA
RATING:	M
SUPPORTS:	PS2 Multitap

THERE ARE NUMEROUS REASONS WHY many people don't like console-based first person shooters. No mouse. No floating point performance. Bad controls. Yet there are just as many reasons others enjoy them — creative weapon designs, simplicity of interface, eye candy. The new generation of videogame development being heralded first by the Dreamcast and now with the PlayStation 2 has the potential to cross that divide. Can the PS2 actually have a successful FPS on launch?

PERFECT EYE

With a development team comprised of veterans from the GoldenEye and Perfect Dark teams, it's easy to spot the creative similarities. The levels 'feel' like Perfect Dark. The ancient Egyptian tombs in the game bear striking resemblance to GoldenEye. There are even the cheeky stats like 'longest killing spree', 'heat shots', 'most kills in 3 seconds', and so on. What's immediately apparent is that developer Free Radical isn't going for the super PC-style detail of Q3A, but is rather sticking with their atmosphere-rich Perfect Dark style, except without the fog and vicious over-filtering.

The results are utterly fabulous — 60 unhindered frames of glisteningly smooth motion per second, perfect clarity and depth of vision, and an army of bots trying to frag your arse.

The controls work surprisingly well.

The left analogue thumb stick is used for strafing and moving forwards and backwards. The right stick is for looking around freely. As compared to the Nintendo 64 and Dreamcast controllers, which are restricted to a singular analogue stick, these navigation controls are a decent compromise with the traditional keyboard and mouse set-up.

The R1 button is for primary weapon fire and R2 for alternate fire, which most players should take to quite readily as it's virtually identical to how one would place his or her fingers on a mouse. Having the triggers configured to the right hand also seems a lot more intuitive than the left-handed trigger set-up of the Nintendo 64 controller.

GOLDEN DARK

Challenge Mode is the mode for single player gamers who want some longevity and challenge. The bot blasts are increasingly difficult, so start doing your finger exercises.

WHEN YOU DISCOVER THE JOYS OF A FOUR-WAY, YOU'LL NEVER GO BACK

JUST STOPPING FOR AN IRIDOLOGY CHECK-UP

HITMAN YOU AIN'T BUDDY

FRANK LOST HALF A GRAM FROM THAT CARELESS ELBOW BUMP

HEY, WOULD YOU GUYS GO A THREE-WAY WITH ME?

Time Splitters takes place in three different time periods. There's the 1935 Tomb (Raider) theme, the 1970s Chinese theme, and the 2005 Cyberden. Each time period has a series of missions that can be played through in single player mode as either Captain Ash or Lady Jayne.

As far as single player modes go, Time Splitters is rather dull. Fetch item. Take it somewhere. Fetch some other doohickey. Take it someplace else. Visually, there's enough detail for you to actually marvel at the surroundings — the first level of the Tomb, for instance, looks like it came straight from the set of The Mummy, complete with flickering lights and hieroglyphics on the wall. But once you're done looking around, it's just a case of marching from one corridor to the next in search of an open space, killing a token hapless guard, and then advancing through the next series of corridors.

Multiplayer mode, however, is where the real fun unfolds. There's the basic deathmatch, Capture the Bag mode (read capture the flag) and Bag Tag, which most closely resembles the Capture the Chicken mod for Q3A. Basically players fight for longest overall possession of the bag - the catch is once you've got the bag, you can't shoot anyone. Other great multiplayer modes can be unlocked (through single player mode) like Escort and Last Stand.

There are a few mechanics that fans of both PC and console persuasions will have to get used to. Firstly, it doesn't take much to kill someone. A few well-placed bullets from a bog-standard pistol is all it takes. Secondly, the auto-aim is very generous. Combined with the fact that the multiplayer maps aren't all that spacious and filled with dead ends it means very fast frags and lots of carnage. Campers and snipers aren't likely to last long. It's a good idea to set the frag count much higher than the default settings.

The level designs are a mixed bag. The levels feel cramped, mostly because they rely on long corridors to move from one open
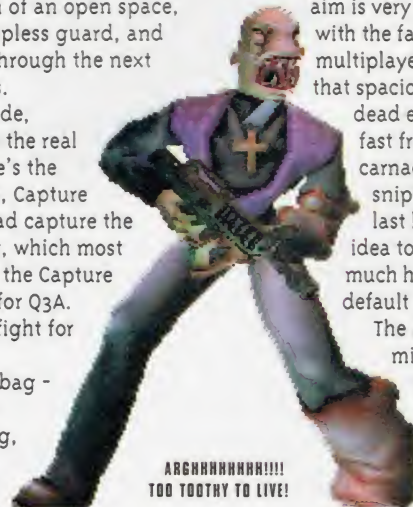
ARGHHHHHHHH!!!!
TOO TOOTHY TO LIVE!

I LOVE THE SMELL OF NAPALM IN THE MORNING... AFTERNOON... EVENING...

LOOKS LIKE THESE GUYS STARTED THE THREE-WAY WITHOUT ME

space to another. It's also worth mentioning again how frustrating all the dead ends are. The majority of them are mini-rooms with either health or an extra weapon inside — the scarcity of actual corridors leading to other open spaces making it somewhat pointless to devise a memorised route.

Thankfully this is something that can be remedied in the Map Maker mode, which is so elaborate yet simple to use that it is bound to take up countless design hours. Unfortunately, this means that quick quality deathmatches straight out of the box are unlikely.

BIG BADABOOM

Weapon design is touch and go, but let's first put things in perspective. The members of Free Radical were involved with GoldenEye and Perfect Dark, both of which were landmark games that introduced sniper rifles,

automated sentry guns, X-Ray rail guns, machine guns that can be turned into a bomb, and John Woo-style two-handed gun play. PC-based first person shooters across the board have borrowed these concepts.

Yet in Time Splitters, the weapons stash isn't quite as exciting. What do you get? A rocket launcher that fires four at a time in alternate mode. Plasma rifles with a UT-inspired flak grenade in alternate mode. Blunderbusses, M-16 machineguns, and other period weapons, mostly bullet-based. Extra weapons can be unlocked as progress is made, but none that offer any fantastic options. Without the portrayal of the same kind of crucial weapon quirks as you'd find in Counter-Strike like reload times and rate of fire, it adds up to an extremely straightforward firefight with minimal strategy.

Bear in mind, though, that the weapons are still fun to play with. The frantic pace at which this game runs, especially in four-player split screen mode, is what's most important; and it wouldn't have worked were it not for the fact that the weapons can be used to create some wanton destruction. It's just that with the shadow of Perfect Dark lingering, one can't help but yearn for more. At least they kept the two-handed guns.

On balance, Time Splitters is a first person shooter that excels in many important areas, but at the same time has some crucial flaws. On one hand, the motion is incredibly smooth; the deathmatches are fast, frantic, and addictive fun; the control system has been well implemented; and the Map Maker mode is a Godsend. On the other hand, straight out of the box the levels aren't very well designed and the weapons could have been better. Time Splitters isn't the A1 system seller we were hoping it would be. It's the next best thing — a game you absolutely must own if you've got a PlayStation 2. ∎

SPLITTING HAIRS OVER CUSTOM MAPS

Time Splitters features a Map Maker mode that allows players to create gigantic multi-level maps that can be saved to the memory card. As compared to map makers for Q3A and Unreal Tournament, this is a hugely simplified exercise — though that's not to say it's easy, as there is a system to be learned.

Custom levels are mapped on a massive grid, where players have control over three main categories: tiles, items, and lighting. Tiles form the basic structure of the level. The CPU provides a large selection of possible configurations within a 3x3 grid such as tunnels, T-junctions, cross-roads, trapezoidal walls, and so on. There are also larger multi-level rooms with different platform, exit, and ramp configurations — all you have to worry about is pressing the L1 and L2 buttons to make sure you've lined up all your doors on the right level. Tiles can also be set to follow a certain theme, such as industrial, futuristic, slums, and so on.

Item management lets you place weapons, health, and armour at almost any position on each individual tile section. Each tile section also has a lighting indicator, which can be changed to display different colours or configured to flash, flicker or pulsate at different speeds.

Once you feel you're done, you can preview the level and then save it for future use.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2

> We've discovered that **Kevin Cheung** is quite deadly with a Samaria letter opener...

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Action
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	THQ
PRICE:	$99.95
RATING:	G
SUPPORTS:	Dual Shock 2, 8MB Memory Card

ELIOT AND CAM GET SMACKED ABOUT FOR A LATE DEADLINE

I F YOU'RE WONDERING WHY THERE ARE such amazing thematic similarities between THQ's Dynasty Warriors 2 and EA's PS2 war simulation, Kessen, it's because they both originated from Japanese developer Koei. However, unlike Kessen, this game firstly takes place in feudal China, and secondly it is an action game that simulates historic battles in real-time, placing you right in the middle of the action as one of the main characters.

THE HAN SOLO DYNASTY?

Dynasty Warriors 2 is set in the tumultuous period right after the Han Dynasty when no clear ruler could be found for China. When one group attempted to seize power, another two equally powerful factions rose up to prevent it. This split in the empire resulted in a war that spanned many years; a war that produced some of the most ingenious military tactics that are still being used in modern warfare. For many generations, these famous battles between the Three Kingdoms have been retold in comics and books that span dozens of volumes, and it's very common to see heroes like Guan Yu (red face, beard, green robe) standing as porcelain figures in Chinese restaurants. If Hollywood ever made a film of the war on the same scale as Gladiator or Braveheart, it would kick serious arse.

The Tale of the Three Kingdoms, no matter what form it takes, is understandably very popular in the Asian videogame markets; but Western markets have rarely seen them since

they're mostly hardcore strategy titles. There were a couple of exceptions, though. The first Dynasty Warriors surfaced briefly around the same time as Bushido Blade and was a head-to-head 3D fighting game.

In this case, Dynasty Warriors 2 is a 3D scrolling beat 'em up that's set in a number of real and fictional campaigns. Even the opening FMV is based on an actual Three Kingdoms story. The crew of an advancing fleet of ships was suffering from seasickness. A double agent convinced the ship captains to link their ships together with wooden planks and chains so that their synchronised movement in the water reduces motion sickness. Once word of this got out to the enemy army on the land, a hail of flaming arrows was sent to burn down the entire fleet as one.

Sadly it doesn't get anywhere near as elaborate as that during gameplay. Each level in the game is a massive playing field filled with several thousand troops — half on your side, the rest for you to slaughter. The CPU coordinates the movements for each individual battalion, which is updated in real-time and can be viewed at any

Wondering what happened to the first Dynasty Warriors?
It never got released here, so don't waste a day going looking for it...

QUI-GON JINN AND HIS TWIN BROTHER, BOB

WHEN HADOKENS GO BAD

YOU SHOULD HEAR THE "AUSTRALIA'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS" STYLE SOUND EFFECT

time for your own purposes — such as helping out a battalion that's pinned behind a defensive gate.

Your role is basically to run around and fight as you deem fit to win the campaign. While your weapon is capable of doing some incredible damage on a wide scale, you won't survive for long by running straight into the fray. You should stick with your army and let them provide you with a little cover. Along the way you can expedite the opening of key gates by killing the general who's garrisoned the area; or prevent further enemy reinforcements by taking out the battalion guarding their entry point. You can even use your bow and arrow to take out the archers who snipe at you from the top of unreachable towers.

THINK LIKE A BOWLING BALL
What distinguishes Dynasty Warriors 2 from any other modern scrolling beat 'em up (like Beserk on Dreamcast) is the sheer scale of the game. The levels are of an unprecedented size, taking a good five minutes to run between opposite corners of the map. Between those corners are encampments, guard towers, cliffs and mountaintops, temples, castle structures, and so on. It's also no exaggeration that there are thousands of warriors running around on the field. With a time limit of 100 minutes per level, it's not uncommon to rack up a kill count of over 1000.

However, like Beserk, Dynasty Warriors 2 suffers from a distinct lack of moves. There are only a handful of combos numbering in two, three or four hits; complemented by a super move (via a super meter) and a few openings for juggles. At some points in the game you'll be able to exercise your archery skills, or even ride a horse that plows through whole brigades like a bowling ball, but that does little to dull the monotony of 100 minutes' worth of repeating the same combos over and over.

Still, Dynasty Warriors 2 manages to captivate. And it's not for the menial novelty of unlocking extra levels and characters — it's because the game is slightly original and offers a very decent challenge. This is something that can't be said of many of the PS2's titles. On the other hand, much as many old-school gamers would like to see it, a resurgence of the Golden Axe style of gameplay isn't likely to happen. Enjoy it while it's around. ∎
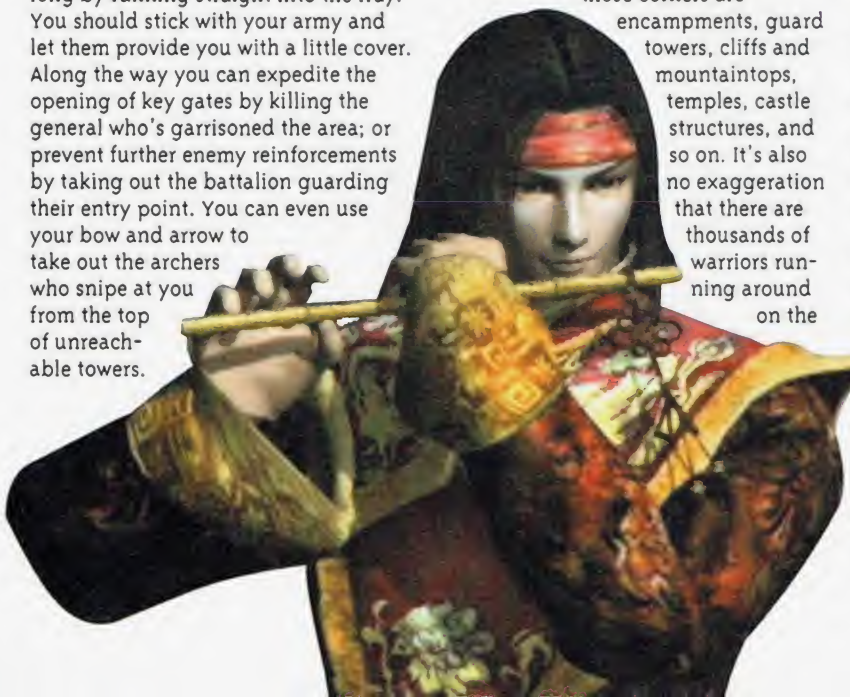
PLUS
Gigantic maps and level designs. It's tough enough for you to keep coming back.

MINUS
Not enough moves. The use of fog to hide characters in the background can be deceptive.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90	82	78

OVERALL
81

Think Golden Axe, only 300 times bigger. It's very challenging, but slightly monotonous.

SMUGGLER'S RUN

>> **Cam Shea** takes time out from his Columbia >> Florida run...

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Nefarious Racing
PLAYERS:	1–2
PUBLISHER:	Take 2
PRICE:	$99.95
RATING:	G

WELL HOW ABOUT THAT? A PlayStation 2 launch title with originality to spare. Yea and verily tis a good thing! This is the sort of game we crazy kids dream about - smuggling contraband across national borders all for the green.

Smuggler's Run is essentially a very simple game, but for all the right reasons. Rather than confusing things with an overly complicated control setup or convoluted gameplay, Smuggler's Run lets the environments, AI and brilliant physics bring the depth to you.

GAMING IS THE DRUG BABY

At its core, the game is basically arcade racing across massive terrains - similar to those in the recent PC title Insane. The visuals aren't exactly mindblowing, using relatively bland texture sets and barren environments, but their sheer size is amazing — if you can see it, you can drive to it. Best of all, the draw distance is magnificent. You really get an impression of scale when tooling about these environments. The physics too are superb. Developers Angel Studios have walked that fine line in creating intuitive physics that feel realistic, but also have plenty of arcade influences thrown in to the benefit of the game.

Missions vary in objectives, but all conform to one of a few basic types.

There are "pick up and drop off contraband" runs, there are point to point races against competing smugglers, and there are team games where you and a squad are trying to beat the opposition to the pickups and drops. There are also a couple of other variations thrown in for good measure, like destroying communications towers, and recovering booty from the cops.

Smuggler's Run proves to be a very challenging single player experience right from the word go. Whether you're racing against the clock, jostling with other smugglers, or trying to outrun the cops... or some combination of all three, you'll have your work cut out. The cops, in particular, are aggressive bastards who rarely let up once they're on your tail. They'll come at you in packs and generally have faster vehicles too, placing the emphasis entirely on your skill and usually a healthy dose of luck to get through.

PUTTING THE JOY IN JOYRIDING

The main single player game is the mission mode, with over 30 missions to play through. These are generally chal-

"YOU'RE NOT TAKING THAT MAPLE SYRUP OVER THE BORDER YOU DIRTY CANADIAN SMUGGLER!"

THAT'S ONE WAY TO BEAT THE HEAT

SOON AFTER, THE COPS FOUND THE ICE HOCKEY TEAM IN THE BOOT

lenging and fun, but they do tend to get a little samey, and must be completed in a strict order, raising frustration levels when you get stuck on a particular mission. Even so, there are a couple of other playmodes in which to relieve those tensions. "Joyriding" is an exploration mode – choose a map and a car and go for a burn, without worrying about time limits or the fuzz. There's also "Turf Wars", which is broken into three varieties of smuggling games, where you have a fair amount of control over the game parameters. This mode is particularly good fun in multiplayer games, but unfortunately these are limited to two players.

The sound effects and music are good, and we're particularly enamoured with the announcer, and the way she always calls you baby. Yeah yeah it sounds sad, but there's something very cool about this very retro, very black voice over. Plus, for a game that revolves around getting booty, it's nice to see them pack in a little more of that sweet sweet "boo-tay".

Ultimately, Smuggler's Run will be remembered as yet another game that almost had it all... but didn't. It's certainly worth a look, as you will without doubt enjoy countless hours of suspension smacking, drug smuggling mayhem, but it's around the time that you start to get really good that you'll realise that the concept simply hasn't been explored as far as perhaps it should have been.

The Turf Wars game mode in particular, holds so much promise, but the options aren't expansive enough to really leave the long term gamer satisfied.

Our biggest gripe, however, is probably that there are only two maps to explore. Granted, they are absolutely massive, and you can return to the Canada/US map in winter for some extra slip and slide action, but it would have been nice for the developers to at least include a few smaller and more varied maps for multiplayer games.

Even so, Smuggler's Run is a fresh and fun title that's well worth a play, it's just a pity that the concept has so much untouched potential. ■

THOSE DASTARDLY MAPLE SYRUP SMUGGLERS!

Oddly enough, the two borders that serve as the flashpoints in the game are Mexico/US and Canada/US. Mexico makes a lot of sense (eh ese!), with plenty of real life parallels, but Canada? Forgive our ignorance, but what could you possibly want to smuggle from Canada to the States? A sense of dignity? Intelligence? After much umming and ahhing, the only thing we could think that might be smuggled is comedy talent, because let's face it, all the best American comedians are actually Canadians anyway!

PLUS
Original, with a great physics model.

MINUS
1-2 player only. Unexplored potential.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	84	85

OVERALL

84

Smuggler's Run took us by surprise with its high impact, car-crushing gameplay. Good fun.

Has any boxing game bettered the awesome Super Punch Out on the SNES? Now that was a classic…

YOU'RE HOOVERING CANVAS DUST, BOY!

SO HOW DO YOU THINK HE GOT THE NAME AFRO?

SO FAST, HIS FISTS ENTERED A SPACE TIME CONTINUUM

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2

>>> With a blinding uppercut, **Kevin Cheung** makes his point…

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Boxing
PLAYERS:	1-2
PUBLISHER:	Midway
PRICE:	TBA
RATING:	M
SUPPORTS:	Dual Shock 2, 8MB Memory Card

THE ORIGINAL READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING was a welcome breath of fresh air. For years, developers like EA Sports filled the boxing genre with dry, realistic sims, failing to realise that they were neglecting an entire generation raised on the triumphs of Rocky Balboa. Midway filled that void with Ready 2 Rumble by providing brute strength and comic violence. Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 is their follow-up.

HOW'S YOUR FATHER

Previously, Ready 2 Rumble presented a cast of fighters from around the world who beat the living snot out of each other, with bruises, welts and teeth being knocked out in real time. Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 is essentially the same thing, with only a handful of cosmetic changes to character designs and just as many changes being made

to the substantive gameplay.

The four-button configuration is used for four basic jabs — left or right, high or low. Variations on those body blows come from pressing the D-pad in a certain direction, such as uppercuts, hooks, headbutts and so on. Blocks and dodges are performed with the right shoulder buttons.

A decent hit will reward players with letters along the bottom of the screen, which eventually spell the word "Rumble". Mash down on the shoulder buttons, and a fighter's rate of attack won't be dependent on the stamina bar anymore — a few quick combos should easily floor the opponent. As distinct from the first game, though, fighters can accumulate more power on top of the first "Rumble", which can be even more devastating. Fighters can also be bounced off the ropes for laughs.

BEAT IT, JUST BEAT IT

What fans and newbies alike will enjoy about this sequel is the characters. It's possible to unlock fantasy fighters like Michael Jackson and Shaquille O'Neal, and even the Clintons. The novelty of beating up celebrities is great when playing with friends (where's Dicky

Wilkins?), but even the fictitious game characters have some value, especially Mama Tua, mother of Salua Tua.

Interestingly the pace has been slowed down, the rhythm with which fighters dance around the ring and throw their punches being nowhere near as fast as the original. Fans of the fighting genre often see this as a good thing, as it requires more skill and timing than the lightning-paced button mashers.

But Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 isn't that deep. Aside from the one-off punches, there are only a few basic dial-a-combos to memorise. The learning curve is 30 minutes at maximum, and before long you'll either be wishing for more moves or at least for the action not to be so patronisingly slow.

Graphically there's very little to distinguish between the PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast versions, or even the original Ready 2 Rumble. With that in mind, Ready 2 Rumble Round 2 is just a better version of the original, hardly worth considering as a sequel. It's definitely worth checking out if you missed the first game, but owners of the original will be disappointed. ■

PLUS
Real-time bruises and jiggly bits of flesh. Very easy to get into.

MINUS
Gameplay has undergone virtually no change. Slower pace may be a detractor to fans of the original.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
88	85	80

OVERALL
80

On its own, it's a rowdy beat'em up that everyone should enjoy. If it were marked as a sequel, it would score zero. Think harder Midway!

X SQUAD

>> He remembers Funky Squad, but X Squad?
Eliot Fish investigates...

"SO, DOCTOR JONES, WE MEET AGAIN!"

TERMINATOR 2 HAD NO INFLUENCE. SUUUURE.

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Action
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts
PRICE:	$99.95
RATING:	M

ASH TRIES TO SNEAK PAST BY POSING AS A COTTON BUD

I N THE SPIRIT OF SYPHON FILTER, ONE AND Winback comes EA's squad-based third-person shooter, X Squad. The potential for a gripping, in-depth and exciting tactical shooter on the PS2 is there, but has X Squad managed to live up to the expectations of this next-generation console?

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR X-MEN
You are Ash, the squad leader of a crack team of troops attempting to liberate some hostages deep within a vast scientific complex overrun with terrorists. It's the year 2037, so naturally, you have a weird-ass white hairdo gelled into place like the Statue of Liberty. You and your frightening hairpiece have control over the other three members of the team — Mr. T, and two Lara Crofts with different hair colour. Okay, cynicism aside, it turns out that the characters in X Squad are a pretty generic bunch of game characters. If you can find any true personality there, then let us know. Otherwise, we're resigned to the fact that not a lot of thought has gone into the character creation, story or level design. X Squad really is a paint by numbers action

game, although it's not a total loss.

For starters, the controls in X Squad feel great. Ash can be controlled with the two analogue sticks, allowing you to move and look around the environment with true ease, the shoulder buttons implementing rolls, strafing, leaning around corners and the buttons giving you access to menus and squad commands. Once you get to grips with it, it feels quite natural to run in one direction and aim and shoot in the other. Getting a target on your enemies would be a disaster if it weren't for the auto-aim that's available. The environments are so dark, and enemies so distant, that the flashing green indicator and auto-aim lock making getting a hit on the plethora of terrorists fairly easy. The enemies are such deadly shots that it's rare you can get very close to one without a bullet lodged in your towering silvery quiff. What results, is a fair bit of sneaking around corners, looking anxiously for the green indicators to lock onto a terrorist hiding in the shadows, as opposed to actually pin-pointing the enemy with your eyes. Rattling off a few rounds of lead into your opponents can be quite a bit of fun,

X Squad would have been that much cooler with a split-screen co-operative mode. Damn. We should make games.

"HEY ASH, YOU LEFT PORN ON MY BROWSER AGAIN."
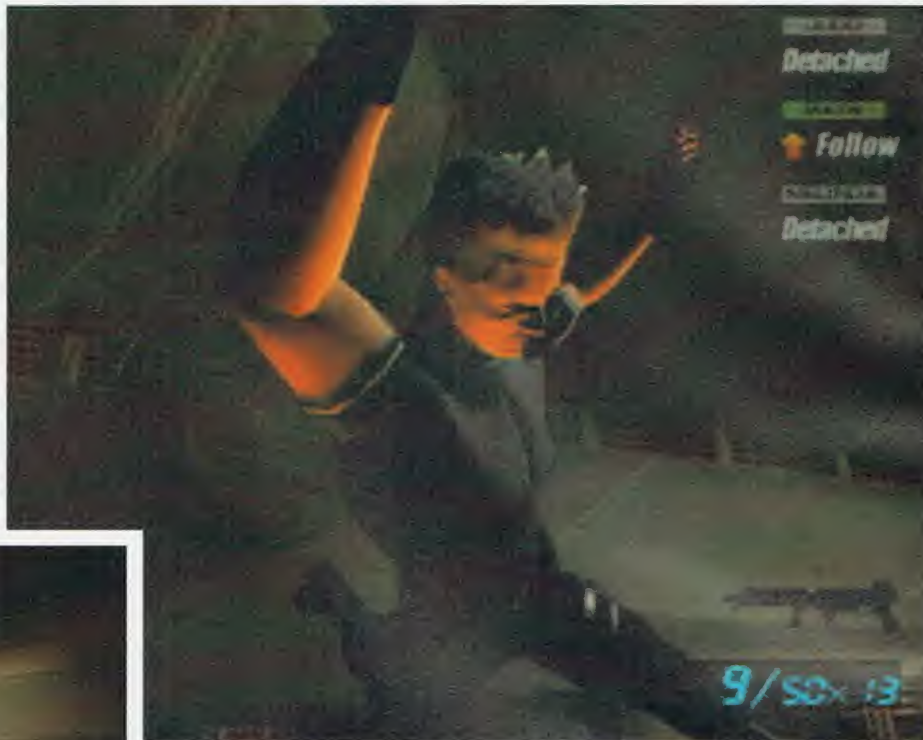
ASH TRIES TO STUN THE ENEMIES WITH A SPOT OF BREAKDANCING

TAKE THAT YOU STUPID CORNER!

LETS HOPE HE WORE THE ASBESTOS UNDIES

because the weapons in X Squad are all pretty pleasing to the ears and eyes. You'll be doing a bit of switching around due to the limited ammo, plus trading weapons between characters, as well as sharing around the med-kits and energy packs for your futuristic body shields. All up, the action is quite fun, if entirely predictable as the game wears on.

FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS, DAMNIT!

The squad you're stuck with in X Squad are, unfortunately, as good with taking orders as your little five-year old sister is playing Flight Simulator 2 WWII Pacific Theatre. You have a variety of verbal commands, such as "recon", "stealth" and "follow" amongst others, but the results you achieve with these commands and rarely terribly useful. Even though you have three team members with you, you're sometimes only accompanied by one team member, even though the other two were with you seconds before in the cut-scene. Where exactly

did they find that alternate route to the exit? Maybe it's for the better anyhow, because in terms of offensive power, you're probably better off on your own. Facing off against the bosses with your deadly squad is quite frustrating. Sometimes they seems to run around simply trying not to die, whilst it's up to you to unload your gun into
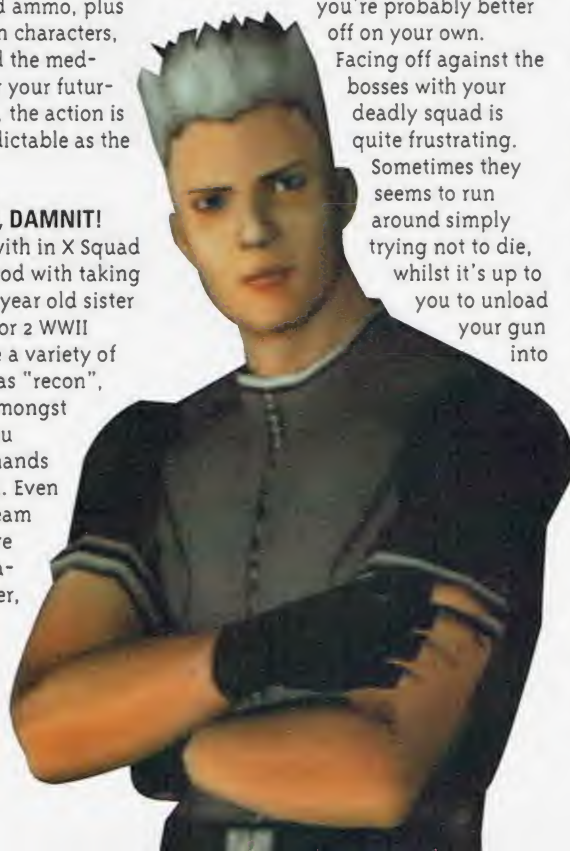
the bad guy who's bothering you. Likewise, you can send a team mate ahead to "clear the area", have them go out, shoot off a few rounds, tell you it's "clear" and then enter the room to find enemies standing there with their guns cocked. Thanks a lot.

The level design in X Squad is also generic and bland, with lots of corridors and empty rooms with your main objective usually being to find the elusive door switch. Visually, the best thing about the game is the way your character is animated, and some of the cool effects from the weapons and scattered fire. Otherwise, X Squad really doesn't do anything to take advantage of the emotion engine or anything else the PS2 has to offer. Sure it looks better than the PSone, but by golly it'd be pretty scary if it didn't. It's just not up to the potential of the machine and not far enough above what we've seen achieved on consoles already.

X Squad is only half way there, with some good controls and deadly fire-fights. The overall package however, is an uninspired third-person action game that fails to deliver the tactical action its name implies. ■

PLUS
The action can have you feeling pretty tense as you explore.

MINUS
No story to get you going and really quick to finish.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
83	84	69

OVERALL

69

Some nice ideas that have gone to waste. Maybe a sequel could deliver the real goods?

STARSHIP TROOPERS

>> **Adam Duncan** straps on his Mortein-launcher...

IT'S ALREADY 3 YEARS SINCE STARSHIP Troopers hit our theatres. So it's been quite a wait -if anyone has actually been waiting- for the game to arrive. With so little hype concerning this title and with all movie-to-game conversions rousing that inevitable skepticism it's pleasing to note that Aussie developers Blue Tongue have churned out quite a tasty little game. Do you want to know more?

KICKING ALIEN BUTT

Starship Troopers (ST) is a real-time strategy title that sticks tightly to the story of the film, setting the player in the 23rd century amidst an intergalactic war against those lovable Arachnids. With Buenos Aires having been obliterated by a bug-guided meteor it's now officially payback time! Assuming the command of a squad of mobile infantry you and your men storm out of a dropship onto Klendathu soil with all-too-itchy trigger fingers.

Organizing your squad before a mission is cool. Everything about your team is configurable, from their equipment and weapons to their names. And there is an intricate RPG-like experience system that lets your troops' abilities improve as they rack up the kills. Gradually your men will move up the ranks, being able to wear new armour and wield beefier weapons, which subsequently lets them dish out more destruction. All this helps to attach you to each individual as you progress, knowing that if any die you'll have to replace them with an inexperienced trooper.

Each mission thankfully involves more than just shooting everything that moves. To succeed you'll need to stem the flow of enemies by blowing up bug-holes, undertake the familiar rescue and escort type tasks and even capture alien specimens for research. Actual combat is usually a straightforward affair. The arachnids charge you and you mow them down. Strategy does play a part, but not necessarily as big a part as you might expect from, well, a 'strategy' game. Resource management -if you can call it that- is restricted to the conservation of your limited ammo supply. This can be managed by learning the various vulnerabilities of each bug and by avoiding unnecessary fights. However there are a healthy variety of soldier-types to bring onto the battlefield, such as artillery, scouts, engineers and even troops who wield psychic powers. All of whom combine to make gameplay a little more colourful. In the end, what ST lacks in tactical depth is made up for by its simple ability to stay fun and challenging.

DIDN'T THEY TEST FOR BUGS?

Controlling the action is fairly simple. Movement and formations are easy to execute, and in fact the interface on the

YOUR FRIENDS WON'T BUG YOU

Those of us looking forward to getting some friends together for a bit of multiplayer action are sadly going to be out of luck. For a feature so expected in a game of this genre to be totally left out is just plain odd. The developers likely came to the conclusion that with the lack of any significant tactical aspects in the game, multiplayer might have been a pretty dull affair. As a result, ST's longevity is ultimately hurt, big-time.

BETTER TELL BLUE TONGUE WE DISCOVERED A BIG BUG

"WALKING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND"

I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT...

THE DAY WE OVERCLOCKED THE HYPER PC A LITTLE TOO MUCH

whole is quite solid except for a couple of issues. Camera control is almost spot-on, barring the inability to properly look towards the sky to watch for flying insects. It also would have been nice to be able to zoom out of the action a little further. Another gripe concerns Blue Tongue's choice to leave out a mid-game save option. Instead you get a couple of 'continues' from the spot you failed. An inconvenient substitute.

Individually, each troop isn't exactly the most graphically detailed of units you'll find in a game. It's when you see the whole squad in action against the bugs that the game blends into a lovely collage of carnage. From the very first mission the game shows off some special treats. At night the squad leaders light up the area with their head-torches and the canyons shake as various Terran ships cruise overhead, doing well to make you feel like the war goes beyond just your platoon of men. Even more captivating is the sight of the giant bugs, you know the ones who shoot blue stuff out their rear-ends... The scale of those behemoths is captured very well. And as you'd expect, you get to use the tactical nuke-launcher to take the brutes down. Blue Tongue certainly did a top-notch job at bringing every detail of the film to life.

What's more, a lowish-end PC seemed to have no trouble pulling off a smooth frame-rate with all the bells and whistles turned on. The audio side of things isn't quite as spectacular however. The sounds of battle do their job well enough, yet the quality of the

music - typically army-beat stuff - grew monotonous in short order.

Admittedly, it's not the most cerebral of titles and certainly the neglect of multiplayer makes it hard to recommend Starship Troopers over other great games like Ground Control or Dark Reign 2, but when it comes to single-player at least, this is one of the more entertaining RTSs out there.

PLUS
Thrilling firefights, interesting missions, nice environments.

MINUS
No multiplayer, simplistic combat strategy.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	80	70

OVERALL

82

An entertaining translation of the film that ultimately lacks depth.
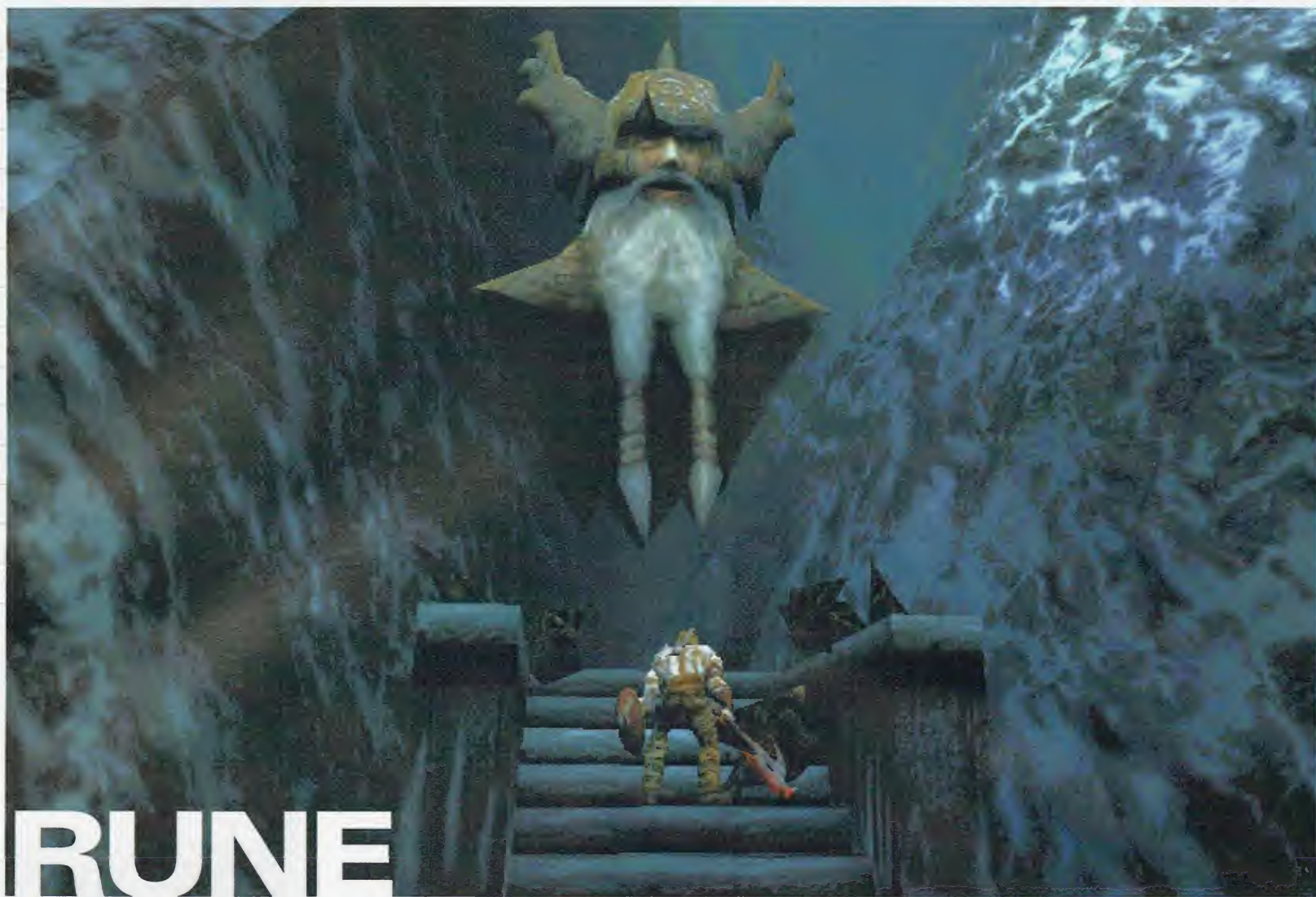
RUNE

>> **Rosco P. Coltrane** is the man in the leather undies for this one…

"HERE, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY AXE."

WHAT'S TALL, PALE, UNCOUTH AND boasts three horns? A Viking warrior of course. In this context a Viking warrior named Ragnar. Truth is Vikings didn't actually wear helmets with horns on them, that idea came from the costume designers of longwinded German operas but what the hell, they look funny.

It's been quite a while since the development team that put together the Hexen and Heretic games had a new release to show off and fans of those games have had to bide their time and hope something new would come along. Rune is a natural evolution of those earlier games, incorporating the melee style of combat and magic powers into a first person shooter environment.

SMASHING HEADS

The story begins with a very atmospheric intro sequence that cleverly kicks in when Ragnar and the lads head off to smash some heads after hearing of a raid on a neighbouring village. The evil Loki is using his minions to break free of his prison in order to challenge the elder Gods again, but Odin has other plans and guess what? You're it!

The developers have limited the weapons available to help you on this quest to melee style hack and slash types. Swords, Maces, Axes and the like are the main implements and there is three of each type, accessible by hitting their corresponding number keys several times.

Of course this wouldn't be the successor to the Hexen legacy if there were no magic and those powers are provided to you with each new weapon type that you find. The different spells in the game,

DIDN'T ANYONE BRING A DAMN TORCH?

"AVON CALLING!"

you see, are connected to a particular kind of weapon. For example a normal Axe will cast an invisibility spell, as long as you have enough spell energy, while a Goblin Axe will change into a throwing axe as long as the spell lasts.

Unfortunately there is an inherent weakness in such a system that the developers really should have avoided. Basically, the requirement to change weapons to use a particular spell is just pathetic, especially in multiplayer combat where you want to be able to do things as quickly as possible. It means that you sometimes have to have an inappropriate weapon selected to use a spell leaving you vulnerable and bloody frustrated.

The ability to block attacks with your shield is a nice touch that is somewhat reminiscent of a console style of aesthetic and handy when you know how to use it. It can be quite fun in multiplayer games to be able to time your blocks and hits so that your opponent never hits you but you hit him every time!

HAVING A SLASH
The best feature of Rune however is the level design, which is intricate and creative. There is one section where your character is taken on a bug-back ride through some awesome scenery, a labyrinth of caves and tunnels which obviously took a long time to make but which you pass by very quickly. The maps also have a lot of interactivity, reminiscent of classics like the

Duke Nukem series.

There is one slightly odd thing about the levels though, for a Viking game you spend an awfully long time running around the pits of Hell and a very short amount of time in actual snow and ice.

It's often a bad sign when a patch is released for a game before the game is even in the shops and such a thing has happened with Rune. The 101.zip patch is needed to fix some minor bugs but we didn't have any problems with crashes or getting stuck on things while we played and the game is really pretty solid.

From a multiplayer perspective Rune

is not for everyone. The nature of melee combat combined with the somewhat stupid way in which magic power is used up very quickly make playing online an experience probably only suited to the devoted fan. Gamers used

HANK JUST WISHED HE HAD A BALLGOWN AND A DASHING PRINCE ON HIS ARM

to the action of games like Unreal Tournament and Quake 3 may get bored with Rune rather quickly.

Rune is a well put together game but perhaps more thought should have been put into the weapons and magic to make it more exciting as a multiplayer experience and to inject a bit more variety into the single player game. ■

PLUS
Great levels, good atmosphere.

MINUS
Melee style gameplay can get monotonous and not as much fun in multiplayer. Magic linked to weapons a bad idea.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	75	80

OVERALL

80

Close but no cigar.
The weapon and magic system hold this game back from being great.
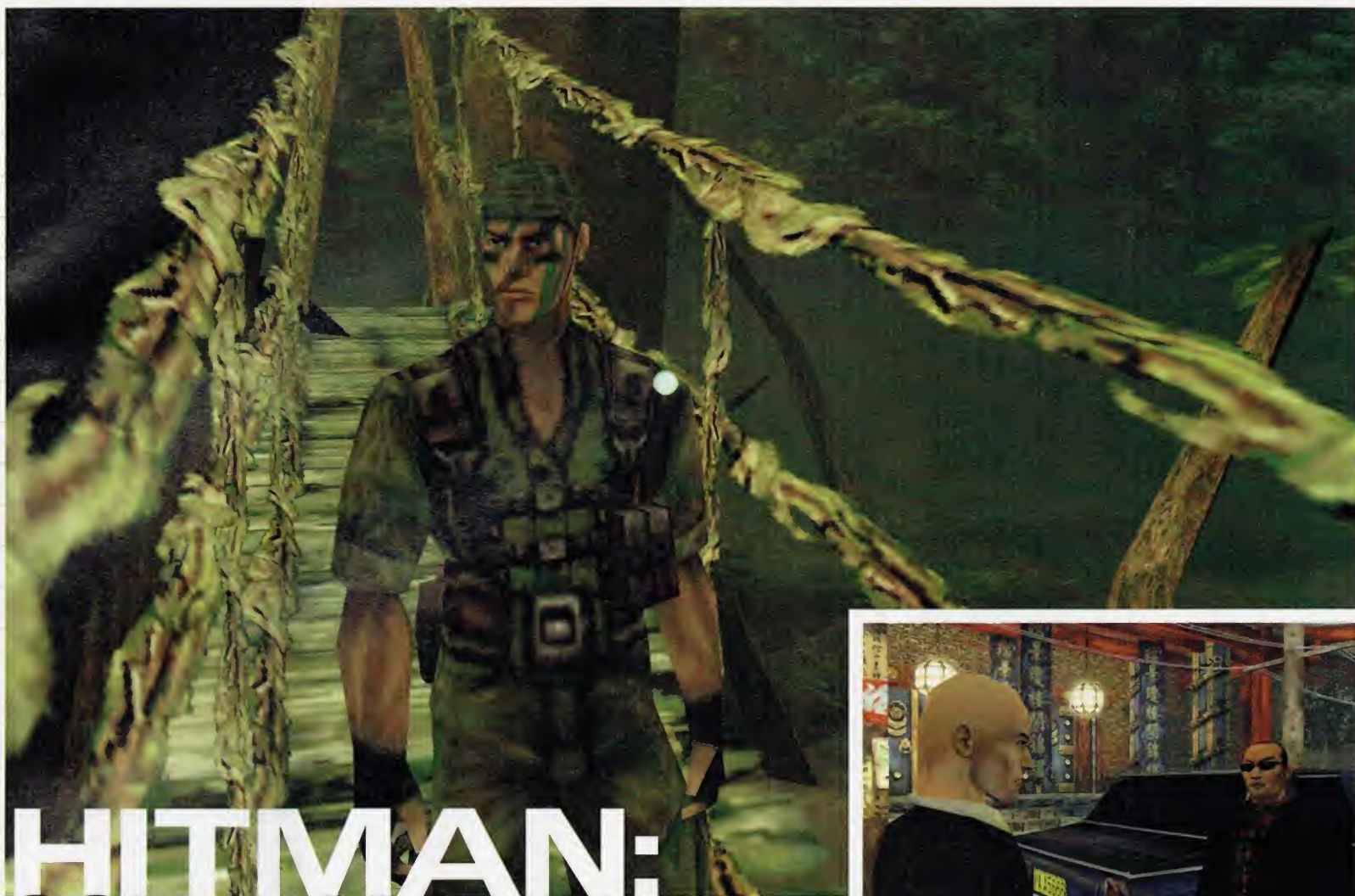
HITMAN:
CODENAME 47

"HEY, WEREN'T YOU IN 'THE KING AND I?'"

>> **Eliot Fish** has spent years trying to have a hit, man.

TRY STEALING HER DISGUISE, HITMAN!

T HE THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER CONTINUES its ascent in popularity, whether it's as a result of boredom with the first-person perspective or an attempt by developers paranoid of the interactive violence issue to remove the player one step from committing the atrocities on screen. Is playing a professional assassin in Hitman any more acceptable because it's some bald american guy doing the killing, and the "meat cleaver to the head" action isn't being viewed in first-person? Is the universe REALLY flat? Hey, do we really care? Hitman is a lot of fun, regardless of the brutal nature of his profession, so let's get into it.

SHOOTING SHIT UP

The third-person perspective has never been ideal for shooters due to the inherent camera perspective problems that arise. However, Hitman is the first game that achieves its goals with the minimum of problems. Staring at the back of Hitman's chrome dome is actually never a problem, so you'll be more intrigued by the barcode tattooed on the back of his neck than wishing his head was out

of the way of what you're shooting at. Basically, you get hired to accomplish a series of missions that only a crafty professional could achieve, however it's not until much later in the game that you find out exactly why you're doing what you're doing.

A lot of attention to detail has gone into creating Hitman's environments, giving the player a true sense of exploration as you plan out your approach to the job at hand. From a complex chinese restaurant, complete with brothel, garden and private cliff-side living quarters to a plush sprawling hotel with everything from a florist and bathhouse to ballroom and rooftop, Hitman's environments really give the game a real-world feel. But because the environments look so good, it's a little disappointing that so many of the detailed interiors are so non-interactive. Unlike most other shooters, you can't actually interact with much other than doors, mission-specific items and objects and people. A little more irrelevant interactivity (working light switches, telephones, opening cupboards, fridges etc.) would actually have brought the

YOU MIGHT REMEMBER NE FROM SUCH HITS AS...

HITMAN HAD TO WHACK INDIANA JONES FOR THAT ONE

ANTHONY WARLOW ALWAYS HAS DINNER IN CHINATOWN BEFORE HIS PERFORMANCES OF "ANNIE"

DOCTOR, I HAVE SPOTS BEFORE MY EYES

world to life that much more.

Much of the game is incredibly linear, and you pretty much have to proceed through the mission objectives in a strict order and use items in only the fashion they were created to be used. The only freedom is in how you approach these goals. Disguised in the uniform of your enemy, you can walk right in the front door and choose to whip out your guns when you've taken good note of where everything is. The only problem with stealing someone's clothes, is that it leaves a bloody, naked body lying around. The solution is to drag your victims into open sewers or empty rooms and hope they don't get discovered. Alert messages pop-up on screen when guards or even just civilians discover your dirty work elsewhere in the level, so you

always know how alert the enemy is to your presence within their walls. You'll allow a few failed missions along the way, just so you can experiment with and examine your surroundings. For instance, getting inside the brothel in the chinese restaurant can be achieved by chatting to the barman, or by quietly garrotting one of the chinese bodyguards and stealing his uniform.

BUST A CAP IN YO ASS

Trial and error actually plays a pretty big part of Hitman, as the way the missions are constructed, you sometimes have to try things out first to see if they work. Unless you're very careful, it can be quite easy to find yourself under fire and once everyone is after your hide, you sometimes have to resign yourself to starting over.
The missions

are not hugely elaborate, but there can be plenty of complications, and you'll be playing missions over and over just to get things to go your way. The big problem is that Hitman is another one of those games that has abandoned any save function. You literally have to start the mission from the beginning if you die, or choose to "continue" from somewhere else in the level. The problem with continuing is that you've died as a result of being shot to pieces and respawning in a level full of alert guards out for your blood isn't always the best alternative.

As far as the AI is concerned, it's a mixed bag. The way guards are aware of the player is brilliant, and as soon as you pull out a gun, civilians run screaming. Characters' heads also turn eerily as you walk around, following your every move as if there's something not quite right about your appearance. Once the shit hits the fan, guards call each other for back-up and make some attempts at avoiding your fire, however, they'll quite happily shoot each other in the back if you line them up properly... unfortunate.

The fire-fights are probably one of the games most entertaining aspects, but you'll actually want to avoid them most of the time. The less attention you draw to yourself the better. That's not to say that there isn't a terrific amount of action, and you'll find it's pretty tempting sometimes to let loose your frustration and just whack everyone in sight. But the game rewards you more

for avoiding the aggressive approach... unless you're left with no alternatives.

The fact that you have to replay missions over and over just to come up with a correct solution steals away a lot of Hitman's fun factor. If more time had been spent on making the missions less strictly linear in structure, Hitman would have been far more successful.
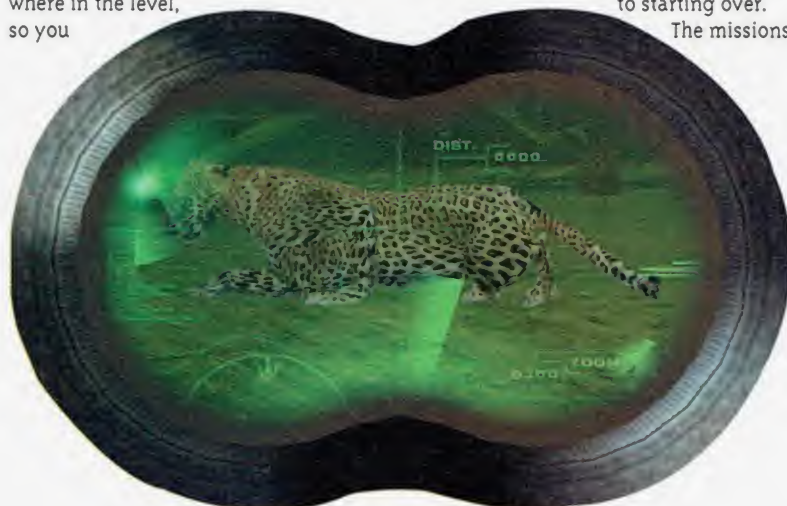
PLUS
Great graphics, great shoot-outs. Playing dress ups is fun.

MINUS
A tad repetitive in nature and the lack of a save option gets frustrating.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
92	90	83

OVERALL

83

Hitman is addictive, but feels a little shallow overall.

PROJECT IGI

>> When a Ruski goes mad and steals a nuke, it's time to send in the Welshman.
Gareth Jones is the closest thing we could get.

I N THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED JOHN Carmack and his buddies, who created Wolfenstein 3D and then Doom and then Quake. And there was much rejoicing. Other game developers noticed this rejoicing, and soon enough there were more first person shooters on the shelves than there were animals on the Ark. And there was more rejoicing, but not quite as much as before.

Different aliens or people to shoot, different settings in which to shoot at them, slightly different weapons to shoot with, and more and more real people to shoot at and be shot by. But it was all getting a little bit stale, and tired, and same-y. The people cried out for something new, something at least slightly different. And lo, the developers (eventually) listened.

THIEF WAS GREAT WASN'T IT?
Like the dawn of a new and slightly different age, the new shift in FPS games came along — the re-emergence of the strategic single player game with titles like Half-Life and Thief: The Dark

Project. Yea verily, again much rejoicing ensued, and again other game developers noticed this rejoicement. Counter Strike came out of nowhere to become immensely popular, Delta Force set the standard in realistic combat simulations, and now little known development house Innerloop is wading in to the market with Project: IGI.

IGI is short for I'm Going In, an apt description really - 'I'm' meaning 'by my self' and 'going in' meaning 'going to take on everyone'. You take on the role of David Llewelyn Jones (a good Welsh name if there ever was one), a retired SAS operative now working freelance for the British and American governments.

You're called in when a crazy ex-KGB Colonel decides to add a few bucks to his retirement fund by stealing a nuke and blackmailing the Russian government for $100 million by threatening to make Chernobyl look like a fire in a water factory. So it's off to Russia we go, as you follow the evil KGB dude around a series of Russian bases to find
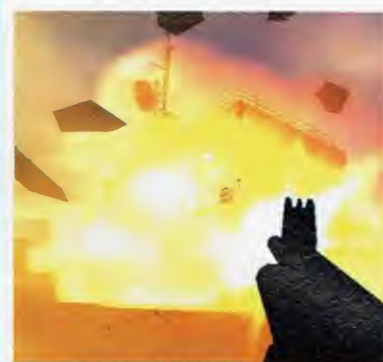
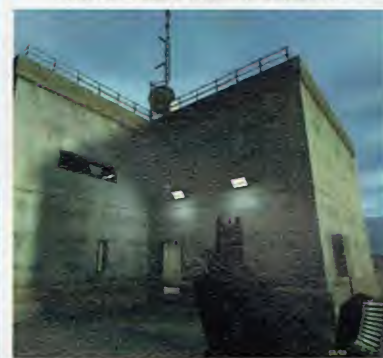"RUSTR8ORUG? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?"

THAT SPEED SUIT SURE IS POPULAR

THAT'S NOT A KNIFE... OH WAIT, YES IT IS

ELIOT DOES HIS BEST TO SABOTAGE THE 2DAY FM TRANSMITTER

BOOM BOOM SHAKE SHAKE THE SCREENSHOT

THE OUTER PERIMETER OF HYPER'S REDFERN HQ

the nuke and stop a very big explosion.

Stealth is always very important in your travels, but this is no namby pamby Thief-alike. There are guns aplenty and a body count high enough to rival your average Arnie flick. Innerloop actually went out to a firing range to test out all the weapons available in the game just get the authenticity down right. Generally, you start each mission with only a few guns at your disposal; a Glock 17, a combat knife, and a silenced H&K MP5. Dead enemies don't have much use for their guns anymore, so as you shoot your way through the missions you'll find yourself making badguy's brains explode with AK-47's, Dragunov sniper rifle's, Spas 12 shotguns, Uzi's, 'Minimi' HMG's, the awesome 'Jackhammer' shotgun, as well as the nifty odd anti-tank weapon such as the LAW 18, proximity mines, flash grenades and more.

The realism of the game is quite well implemented. Weapons 'kick', it's very easy to die, reloading takes a fair amount of time, enemies hide and duck for cover and sneak up on you, surfaces are accurate in that you can shoot through thin wood but not concrete, and weapons don't have a large range

(save for the Dragunov). There are a few issues with the AI being a bit stupid at times, and sometimes they appear from thin air behind you, but for the most part

IGI succeeds in evoking a very realistic atmosphere, yet it's still very enjoyable to play.

Innerloop previously developed the flight sim Joint Strike Fighter back in 1997, and they have modified the engine from this game for IGI. If you have a powerful enough machine and video card, the detail and polygon count of the characters and your surrounds is most impressive, and Innerloop have included a slider bar for those encumbered with less than top-of-the-line computers which still provides more than adequate detail and prettiness.

NO SAVE OPTION? ARGH!

Now, let's get to the contentious bit — during the missions you are not able to save your game. The argument 'for' runs that this increases the realism and really gets the adrenalin pumping; If you screw up, you die, just as you would on a real mission infiltrating a base filled with enemy soldiers toting machine guns. The argument 'against' says that replaying the same mission over and over and over and over again because you keep dying at the

really hard bit near the end actually reduces the realism markedly, and makes the game anything but gripping and adrenaline-laden — in fact just the opposite. With Project IGI, it's hard to fault the developers for going down the 'no saving' path; unlimited saves during a game like this really does turn the game into a series of very small encounters and can ruin the fun and the flow of the game completely.

However, IGI is a very hard game — it requires a heap of planning through your overhead satellite display, some very fast reflexes and good vision, patience, skill, and at times a lot of luck too. Add to this that the missions are generally quite long, and often what could conceivably be split into two missions (two main sets of objectives) is set down as one single mission. It's no exaggeration to say that one mission in particular was replayed over forty times by this reviewer. Now, I don't claim to be the world's best FPS gamer but I am pretty good, and after starting through the same mission, the same starting enemies walking through the same paths, reacting in the same way, shooting at me from around the same corners...well, my impressions of Project IGI went downhill rapidly. Perhaps save points during missions would have been a good idea, or maybe a limited number of saves during a mission might have worked, but as it stands it can become very frustrating

and does detract from the enjoyment of the game.

This is still a top quality game from Innerloop, and Project IGI is an excellent example of how to meld realistic stealthy action with just plain balls-out shooting fun. If you're becoming a little bored with just running around various levels in Deathmatch and blasting anything and everything that moves, IGI can provide an almost perfect bridge between the ultra-realistic combat simulations and the fun of, well, just shooting at stuff. Recommended. ■

"LICK MY BOOTS."

DEAD AND YET... NOT DEAD

TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

>> **Gareth Jones** tries to fit into Lara's shorts one last time. It's not a pretty sight.

! Next issue in Hyper, we talk to Angelina Jolie herself on the set of the Tomb Raider movie!

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Third Person Adventure
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	Eidos
PRICE:	$89.95
RATING:	M

THE IMPACT OF THE ORIGINAL TOMB Raider (TR) cannot be overestimated — it is still a landmark title in the history of gaming, and shall ever be so. There were other preceding games that offered the same kind of gameplay, the same sort of experience, but TR was the first to package together a different kind of gameplay to the usual "kill everything that moves, run out the exit" style. It included a raft of puzzles, traps, and challenges geared more towards the thinking gamer rather than "he (or she) who has the best reflexes".

Since the original went on to sell in massive numbers around the world and establish Lara and her two friends as kitschy pop culture celebrities, the Tomb Raider series has gone from strength to strength. Well, in terms of sales, anyway.

FIFTH STRIKE AND YOU'RE OUT?
For the games themselves, nothing all that radical has changed as Lara

evolved into a megastar and the inevitable sequels were pumped out by a now very rich and successful Core Design. For those who have followed Lara through her previous travails, each new game in the series has seemed like coming back to a warm and welcoming environment. Sure, there's always new maps, enemies, puzzles and challenges — but the premise of the game remains the same, the game engine remains the same (though each incarnation's engine has been slightly improved), and for the most part the controls and actions remain the same too.

Of course, for all that is good about going back to a warm and welcoming game, there's a downside too. After a while, it can all become a little stale and, well, same-y, and one way to keep players coming back for the sequels is to increase the difficulty of the gameplay. The original TR had its fair share of really hard sections to complete, but since then the series has

"FOR THE LAST TIME... IT'S NOT COW PRINT! ARGH!"

LARA'S GOT BACK
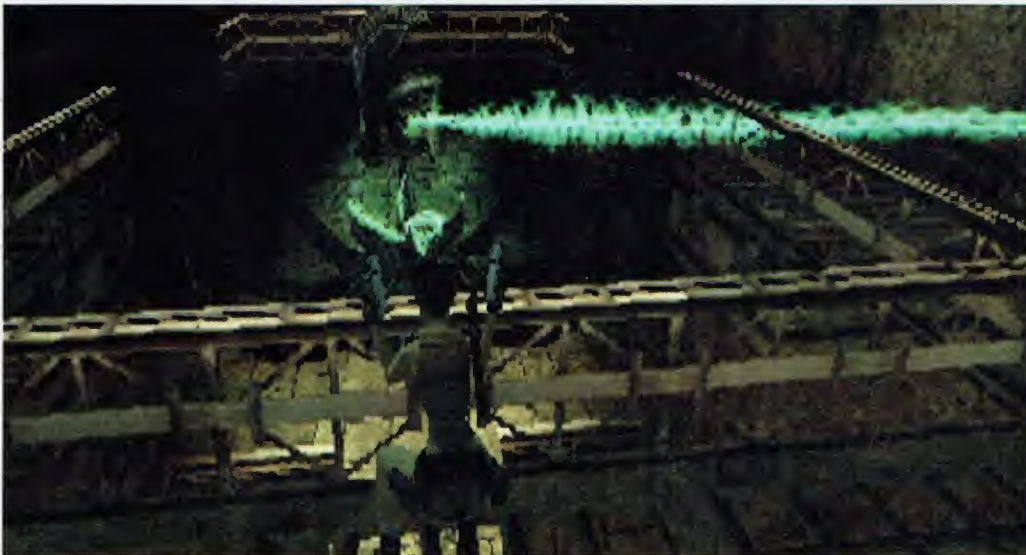
"CAN'T A GIRL HAVE SOME PRIVACY?"

"THE MATRIX? I'VE NEVER SEEN IT."

just gotten harder and harder — the previous in the series, The Last Revelation, was insanely hard in so many places and will have left many a fan more than a little frustrated.

So is this, the last Tomb Raider game ever to appear on the PSX, yet harder still? And what's the deal anyway — Lara and her two forward-mounted friends died in The Last Revelation, didn't they? Actually, as it turns out...maybe. Well, probably. At least possibly. Oh look, I dunno, ok? It's all very confusing — there's a movie, there's bound to be new TR games for the next-gen consoles, but if you were expecting TR Chronicles to fill you in on just what happened in that Last Revelation you're going to be disappointed.

ZOMBIE CROFT

She might have died, she might have made a miraculous escape. It doesn't really matter to the plotline of Chronicles, you see, because the story is told in a series of flashbacks through

Lara's closest friends. The game begins at Lara's funeral, at the always magnificently appointed Crof: Estate, with the aforementioned friends; Jean Yves, Winston, and a priest, sitting together and having a chat about Lara's past exploits. Each person relates a different adventure that she bounced her way through as we slowly dissolve, crappy TV sitcom stylie, back to those exploits, and here the game begins.

There are four missions in Chronicles, including one set on 'Black Isle' in Ireland where a young 16 year old Lara is faced with a horde of the undead attempting to nibble her with only a priest along for comfort. In a very family friendly move, as young Lara you have no access to weapons at all, and you are forced to, well, run away a lot. But also, you're forced to think through the puzzles and challenge-oriented tasks rather than go around blowing away the bad guys. Strangely, there's also a decent smattering of horror sequences in this section — hanging

"NOT... COW... PRINT!" BLAM!

ALWAYS LAYING DOWN ON THE JOB

"NOW, WHERE'D I LEAVE MY EYES?"

victims swinging in the wind as you pass by, foetid ghouls jumping out from dark corners and so on.

Naturally, some of the challenges in this section are very tough, especially the timed challenges where you're required to execute a series of r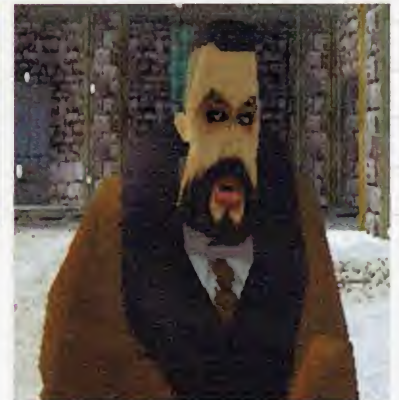unning, jumping, crawling, ducking and diving maneuvers within a certain period of time that Core so love to throw in on a regular basis. You'll have to get pretty damn used to the high pitched scream of young Lara as she plummets to her death, hitting start and selecting 'load game' and trying again. Still, for veteran Tomb Raiderers you should revel in the challenge, or at least be used to it by now.

LARA AND A BOTTLE OF VODKA

There's also a Russian U-Boat to journey through, with Lara kitted out in her winter military fatigues facing a host of Ruski bad dudes. I liked this section the best of all, mostly because of the James Bond-style feel of the adventure. Rather than pushing an arcane combination of switches in some crusty old tomb you get the feeling that it's just Lara, secret agent, up against hordes of nefarious bad dudes with the requisite big bad dude (who in this case actually looks a lot like Davros of Dr Who fame) with plenty of action, running and shooting. There's even an underwater wetsuit-clad chase and escape scene too.

The movie homage doesn't end there though, the Tower Block chapter has a distinctly Mission Impossible feel to it, as you wind your way through a futuristic tower block (well, duh!) with a number of puzzles featuring hi-tech alarm systems, robots firing laser thingies at you, the odd helicopter buzzing you from above and plenty of sneaky spy-style maneuvers to pull off.

Tomb Raider purists won't be disappointed though — there's still some good 'ole tombs to raid, this time in Italy, starting in the Rome Opera House and then moving ever downwards into the good old brown and grey tombs. It's in this section that you'll probably notice just how much the graphics have improved and how far the team at Core have pushed the PSX since the original TR. Compared to modern PCs, Dreamcasts and the PS2, the graphics are nothing to write home about, but in terms of what the PSX is capable of Core really have done an exemplary job of making the best of what's available. Lights pulse and flash, the character movement of both Lara and her enemies is well done, and the scenery is always pretty to look at too.

NO NUDE CODE

But, when all is said and done, this is just another Tomb Raider episode (not that there's anything wrong with that, of course). Slightly better graphics, some new areas to explore and enemies

to face, the odd new weapon (including a nifty sniper rifle) and abilities to use but as with the other sequels, it seems more of an upgrade than a stand-alone game. Core still just seem content to milk the very last drop out of the nice and safe franchise rather than push themselves to really give gamers the most they can from the undeniably popular Tomb Raider 'universe'. TR Chronicles is good enough to sell in major numbers (and it will, regardless of what this review says), there's always the pubescent tumescences of drooling boys with a healthy fascination for large bobbling breasts to market towards, the game is still attractive and approachable to a mainstream audience of 'non-serious gamers', and for those that have bought themselves the first four in the series - well, why stop now?

It has to be said though, that if Core really pushed themselves, maybe took a chance and moved the series in a new direction, adding more than just cosmetic changes and new levels... sure, they might completely screw it up and end up with a terrible game. But they also might make something wildly better, newer and more enjoyable too. Perhaps the next episode of Tomb Raider, the one with the completely new engine, making use of the power of the next-gen consoles and PCs will be the one that is actually a full blown standalone game. Maybe.■
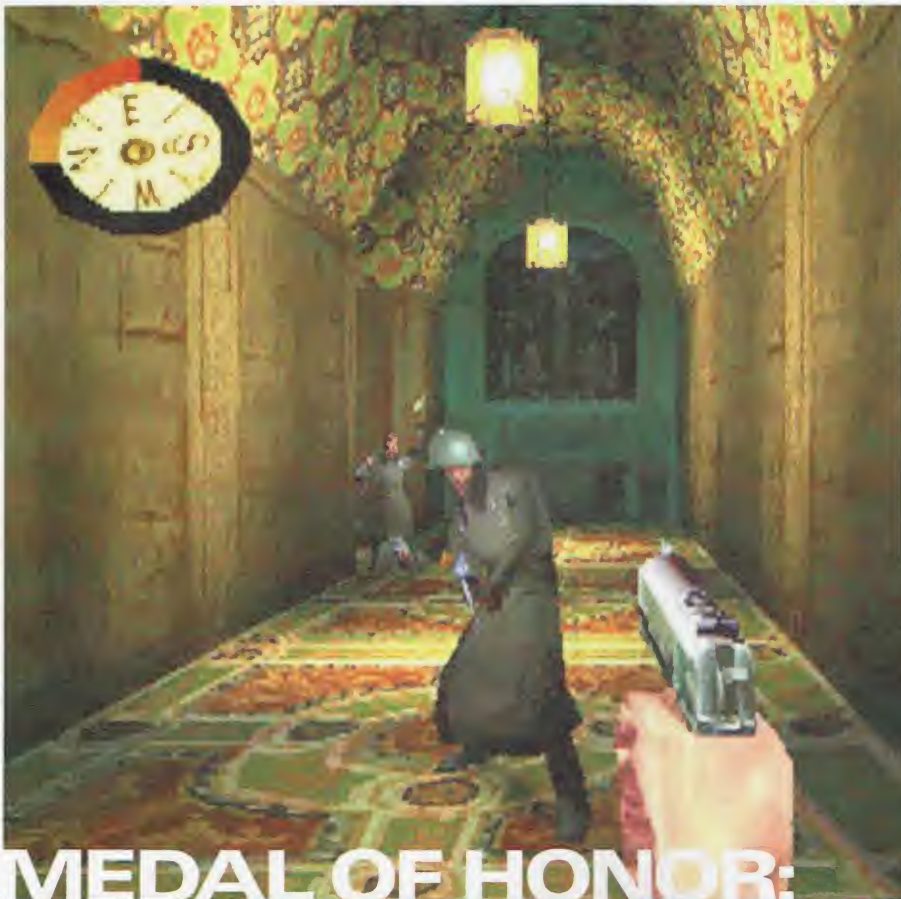
PLUS
Slightly prettier, a few tweaks here and there, more of the same good old Tomb Raidering fun.

MINUS
More of the same Tomb Raidering fun. Nothing all that new, and even more difficult than those previous.
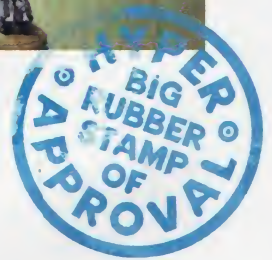
VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
87	72	84

OVERALL

82

She bounces, she wiggles, she jumps, she shoots. Again.

MEDAL OF HONOR: UNDERGROUND

HYPER
BIG RUBBER STAMP OF APPROVAL

YOU'RE TOO PIXELATED TO LIVE!

>>> Since **Martin English** lives in the past, we felt it only fitting he should review this WWII title…

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	First Person Shooter
PLAYERS:	1 – 2
PUBLISHER:	EA
PRICE:	$79.95
RATING:	M

LIKE MANY SODDEN CITYSIDERS, AFTER spending a week contending with the longest period of rain God has ever spat down on Sydney, I was ready to kill Nazis. Blame the Nazis, I thought. Drench them in a torrent of their own blood, I thought. "Why don't you just calm down and play Medal of Honor 2 instead?" suggested Eliot. And both myself and disgraced war criminal Conrad Kallej are glad I did.

NAZIS. I HATE THOSE GUYS.

If Medal of Honor (MOH) made you smile, MOH2 will make you grin. If MOH made you frown, maybe you'd better just go off and sit in a corner at the bottom of a septic tank where you rightly belong. For some odd reason, first person perspective games on the PlayStation have always had difficulty besting their PC competitors, even when the latter machine couldn't faithfully

reproduce ports of the 32-bit's third-person action games like Resident Evil. But EA did their darndest to subvert a long standing tradition of First Person bodyness with MOH and the sequel successfully builds upon its appeal, this time including a multiplayer mode.

If ever there's been a good excuse to murder your fellow human being, it's in the context of war. And plugging the enemy with bullets in MOH2 is very fun indeed. Although the concept of subjectively selecting a limb or torso and, ahem, popping a cap in it may be poached from Goldeneye, it provides just as much evil joy here and is a feature that should be henceforth included in every single videogame to be produced. Ever. Even future Pokémon titles. Especially future Pokémon titles. Anyway, where was I? Ah yes, the killing. Enemies may be shot in the head, legs, arms, the ever-popular groin, and my personal favourite, the armpit.

You start off as the sister of a resistance member in occupied France working to hijack a truck full of arms. When the whole thing turns fouler than the idea of kissing Juan Antonio Samaranch on the anus, you're forced

to carry on taking orders from HQ and see plenty of action in due course. Fighting your way through hordes of bloodthirsty Nazis, all wishing they had the same kind of armour that allows you to take repeated shots to the chest and face, it's obvious that EA aren't looking to confront gamers with anything new.

With respect to AI, MOH2 is a mixed bag of tricks. Most of the time the enemy will act as though it had a reasonable zest for life. Once spotted, you can expect the Nazi scum to run to the nearest corner and duck, poking their guns around the corner for the occasional pot shot and dive out the way when you shoot back. Sometimes though, they act with suicidal stupidity, ignoring spurts of gunfire and explosions that should probably arouse the concern of a trained killer. They may even watch you re-load and fire, as if learning how to do it for the first time themselves.

Graphical glitches spring up in unusual places too. Some programmers at EA have decided to screw with physics - leaving bullet holes lingering in mid-air, permitting the walls to bend and allowing the player to suffer epileptic fits when the clipping messes up their crawl space. Aside from these marginal oversights,

for which I blame the Nazis under EA's employ, the game gives you a firm taste of what a marvelous time one can have while engaged in warfare. ∎

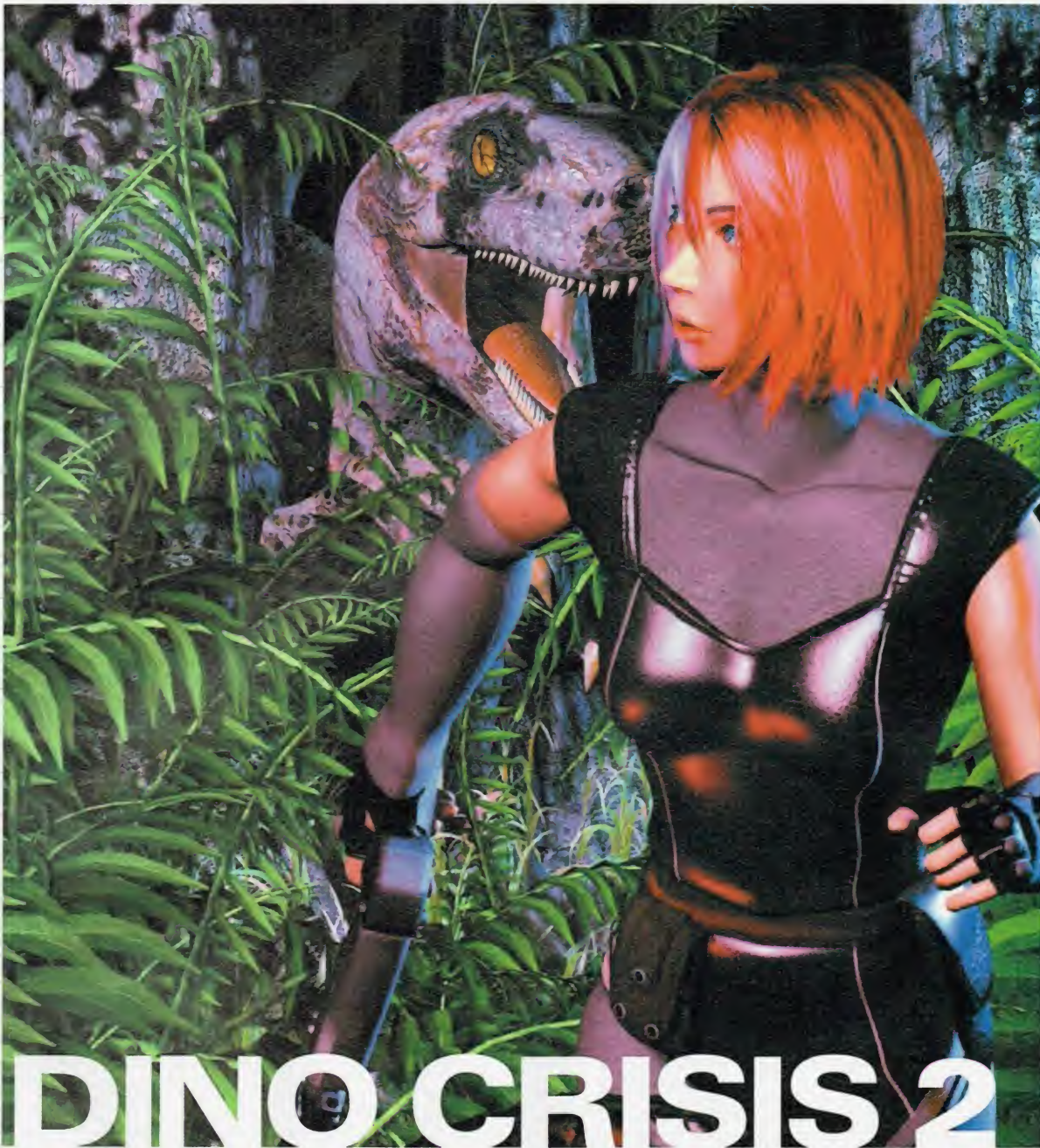### PLUS
More of that good Medal of Honor gameplay.

MINUS
The PlayStation is aging every day.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
84	86	89

OVERALL
90

Awww shoot – it's a stiflin' rifle-run.

"I HATE IT WHEN YOU READ OVER MY SHOULDER!"

THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL A WRONG TURN

DINO CRISIS 2

>> **Kevin Cheung** makes sure there's no T-Rex on the soundtrack...

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Action/Adventure
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	Capcom
PRICE:	TBA
RATING:	M

"NICE DINO, NIIIICE DINO..."

RESIDENT EVIL MEETS JURASSIC PARK. That's the basic idea behind Shinji Mikami's Dino Crisis. While it innovated the genre of survival horror somewhat by making the backgrounds completely polygonal (thus making camera movement possible), numerous questions still remained as to whether it was too much of a straight rip-off of Mikami's more well-known series, Resident Evil. With criticism in hand, Capcom have come back with a surprisingly well-thought out sequel.

DINO CRISIS: THE LOST WORLD

Dino Crisis 2 picks up a short while after the conclusion of the original game. The search for the third energy revolution continues in earnest, but not without the unfortunate consequence of the entire island facility being overrun by prehis-

toric reptilian beasts. How dinosaurs and fuel have anything to do with each other is anyone's guess.

With the entire complex compromised, the Tactical Reconnoitering and Acquisition Team (TRAT for short) is sent to mop up and rescue any survivors. Unfortunately, a pack of velociraptors get the jump on our intrepid soldiers and they are all shredded into lunchmeat, with the exception of two who managed to get away. They are Regina and Dylan, the former having been the star of the original Dino Crisis. Almost perfectly mirroring the plot of James Cameron's Aliens, the rescue mission turns into a desperate race for our two survivors to get off the island with their hides intact.

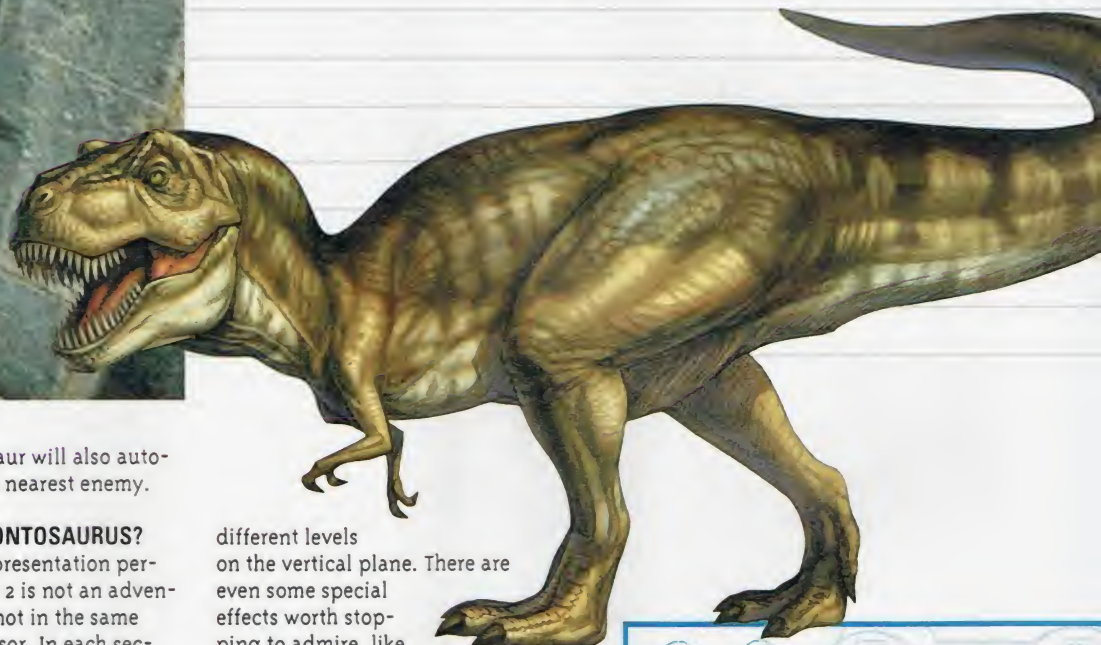Those of you who are familiar with the Resident Evil games and the original

WHERE'S A WHIPPERSNIPPER WHEN YOU NEED ONE?

YEP. HE'S F**KED.

R...U...S...T...R...8...O...R...U...G... MUHAHAHA!

Dino Crisis will be in for a shock: this game is very fast. The game switches between controlling Dylan and Regina as progress as made, with the basic goal of each level being to get from point A to point B without being killed.

The backgrounds have gone from polygonal to pre-rendered. Each time your character moves on to a new background screen, or if an old screen refreshes, the CPU will send three or four hungry dinos your way, which you have to kill or avoid. With the right shoulder button depressed, the Square button will fire your primary weapon, typically a high-powered shotgun. The circle button activates your secondary weapon — for Dylan it's a fat Gherka knife, for Regina it's an electric prod. To facilitate the speed, the R2 button can be used to instantaneously spin 180 degrees. Pressing the R1 button in preparation

of shooting a dinosaur will also automatically target the nearest enemy.

DO YOU THINK BRONTOSAURUS?

From a design and presentation perspective, Dino Crisis 2 is not an adventure game, at least not in the same style as its predecessor. In each section, players rack up points for every dinosaur killed. More points are awarded for combos (killing consecutive dinosaurs without being hurt) and counters (shooting a dinosaur just before it gets you). These points can be traded as virtual cash at the various save points in the game, where you can purchase medipaks, ammunition refills, extra clips, and new weapons.

The focus is therefore on your skills and reflexes as you mow down the reptilian hordes, while at the same time keeping tabs on your ammo. The fact that this skill is rewarded with better weapons of destruction suggests that Dino Crisis 2 is in fact a shoot'em up game with a decent story and a few basic puzzles to solve.

The move from polygonal to pre-rendered backgrounds wasn't a bad move at all. In fact, the artistry that's gone into them creates a much more believable atmosphere than the warping, pixellated surroundings of the original. Trees and shrubbery cleverly hide the entry points of the dinosaurs, who run and jump ferociously across

different levels on the vertical plane. There are even some special effects worth stopping to admire, like the mist that hangs low in the rainforest area.

But no matter how serious Capcom tries to make the events, it's impossible not to laugh at some deliberate game-related quirks that stick out from the congruity of the rest of the package. Strategically placed medipaks in the middle of the forest, keys from two separate buildings that activate a switch on the other side of the complex to unlock a door elsewhere, a Tyrannosaurus Rex with a Phantom of the Opera complex... it's not meant to be taken too seriously.

Nobody expected the Dino Crisis series to take a turn in design of this nature. It's fast, it's frantic, sometimes scary, and excellent shooting fun. Capcom were smart in doing away with the lethargic process of suspense thrills through cinematography, as dinosaurs theoretically aren't slow movers like zombies. Too bad the game is a little on the short side, but like all good shoot 'em up games, there's definite value to be had in replaying the game for a better performance. ■

TAKE THE PS2 CHALLENGE

For best visual results, anyone who has one should play Dino Crisis 2 on a PlayStation 2 with smooth textures switched on. Especially against a pre-rendered background, the smoother polygonal characters are much easier on the eyes and generally more enjoyable. On a straight PSone, the dithering and rendering creates an awful blur-o-vision effect during certain animations.

PLUS
Excellent new game design, loads of things to shoot. The visuals are great. The PSone ain't dead yet.

MINUS
Not a very long game, but not surprising for a shooter.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
87	88	88

OVERALL

88

An nice variation on the survival horror formula. Dino Crisis 2 is a worthy sequel.

71 »HYPER

STAR WARS: DEMOLITION

>> **Eliot Fish** forgot to fill up the tank with midichlorians...

KILL THOSE MUPPET FREAKS

JABBA LIKES TO LET IT ALL HANG OUT

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Vehicle Combat
PLAYERS:	1-2
PUBLISHER:	LucasArts
PRICE:	TBA
RATING:	M

R2 HITCHES A RIDE

A VEHICULAR-BASED COMBAT TITLE SET in the Star Wars universe is an odd decision. Sure, the Star Wars characters and vehicles are damn cool, but the thought of a Battle Tank going up against a bounty hunter on a speeder bike just sounds... wrong. A Snowspeeder up against a Landspeeder? How would that work? I mean, it's implausible even for a space fantasy universe. Well this is a videogame, so we'll let them get away with it. But what we won't forgive them for, is thinking that we'll just suck down this uninspired game because it has Star Wars slapped on it.

ANGER LEADS TO BEER

Luxoflux wrapped up their Vigilante 8 engine and stuck it in a postpak to LucasArts who then decided to turn it into a Star Wars combat game. On paper, this sounds like it could be truly cool. Unfortunately, the real world result is that LucasArts have virtually done nothing new with the engine. If you've played Vigilante 8, you've played Demolition, you just have to deal with the fact that Vigilante 8's music wasn't as cool.

Seeing as this is arena-based combat, you would assume that your "vehicle" — whether it be Aurra Sing's Swoop Bike or Wade Vox's Landspeeder — would be well equipped to tackle the fast-paced chaos that will ensue. Unfortunately, the controls seem clumsy, and due to the absence of reverse or strafing controls, it can be a pretty frustrating game in the thick of it.

The controls are really only part of the problem, as the weapons and powerups don't really do anything terribly interesting to the game. The weapon effects are all visual, as opposed to actually changing the way you approach each different vehicle during combat. In each vehicle, you can charge up your main laser to four different settings. It takes a while to charge up your guns, so you must decide whether to pepper the enemy

MAYBE ILM COULD FIX THIS IN POST PRODUCTION

QUICK! TO TOSCHE STATION FOR SOME POWER CONVERTORS, FINALLY!

A BATTLE TANK LAYS THE SMACKDOWN ON A HAPLESS PASSING GUNGAN

STILL THE MAN... OR HELMET AS THE CASE MAY BE

THE HOOD-MOUNTED TRACTOR BEAM FINALLY PAYS OFF

with weak laser fire or take a risk by saving up for your "special". Most of the specials home in to some degree, so it's not always a wasted shot if you're a little off target. Actually, things can get so chaotic when there are more than two combatants, that there's more luck involved in the combat than there should be. What seems to play best in Demolition is when you're simply having a show-down against one other opponent, so with that in mind, the two-player game has some merit. This is the only way you can truly be tactical in combat.

A bunch of different play modes help to offer some variety. Battle (straight out carnage), Tournament (a series of duels), High Stakes (betting credits on yourself to win) and Hunt-A-Droid (blast as many droids within the time limit) are all variations on the same concept. Zoom around and try to survive your assailants.

BEER LEADS TO SUFFERING
In terms of sound and visuals, the Star Wars feel has been captured well, which certainly makes it harder for a hardcore fan to resist the temptation to play the game for hours just to unlock the extra

vehicles. LucasArts do know how to bring the Star Wars universe to life very well, and the detail in the vehicles, sounds, music and arenas is great for fans, but the novelty wears off as soon as you play the game for extended periods of time. The fun factor simply isn't there and the PlayStation just can't handle the visuals well enough. The texture draw-in is pretty shoddy, and if you look just ahead of your vehicle you can see the detail literally popping up in front of you. There's no doubt the Dreamcast version will be a lot better than this. We hope. In any event, Star Wars: Demolition isn't interesting or innovative in any sense of the word and whilst it's okay for short bursts of gaming, you'll be casting this one aside pretty quickly. Now that LucasArts have cancelled Obi-Wan on PC, and after experiencing their last few Star Wars titles, it seems that they really don't know what to do with the license any more which is kinda sad. ■

US NTSC VERSION USED FOR THIS REVIEW

PLUS
Star Wars in full effect.

MINUS
Frustrating, dull and unoriginal.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
72	82	65

OVERALL
70
Even hardcore Star Wars fans may find it hard sticking with this one.

73 >>HYPER

DISGRUNTLED READERS RAID THE HYPER OFFICE

DIE MR. WHIPPY, DIE!

THE WORLD
IS NOT ENOUGH

>> **Stephen Farrelly** never says never to a Bond game...

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	First Person Shooter
PLAYERS:	1–4
PUBLISHER:	EA
PRICE:	$99.95
RATING:	M
SUPPORTS:	Mem Pak, Rumble Pak, Expansion Pak

HEY, I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T PISS ON HIM IF HE WAS ON FIRE

WELL IT FINALLY HAPPENED. AFTER years of complaining about the lack of a follow-up to the successful Goldeneye on the N64, Bond fans finally have another 007 game to sink their teeth into. Does it stack up to the standards set by Rare? Read on to find out.

IN THE BEGINNING
There is no question that Rare is one of the best developers in the world. The success of their titles is proof enough, but none of their games have quite stood the test of time like their genre shaping Goldeneye. Rare set the standard for first person shooters in the console market with this landmark game, adding mission objectives and a level of stealth and cunning that had never been truly utilised in games before. It wasn't the mechanics however, that made Goldeneye the classic that it is. It was James Bond that boosted its charm. The idea of being the immortal James Bond was too much for

gamers to pass up and once word had gotten out that Goldeneye was one of the best first person shooters available...well you know the rest!

The Turok series tried to encapsulate Rare's features within its own polygonal worlds, only to ultimately fall short of the pedestal Goldeneye had been erected upon. The Quake games never translated very well to consoles as with Duke and Hexen. It wasn't until Rare themselves released their follow-up title, Perfect Dark, that Goldeneye was shifted from the number one spot (although many fans of Goldeneye will dispute that last statement). Perfect Dark had all of Goldeneye's extras plus a ton of it's own, but the game was still missing that all important element that Goldeneye had... it was missing James Bond. Rare had been offered the license to Tomorrow Never Dies only to turn it down in favour of furthering development of their own creation. Thus TND finished up on the PSX and left a sour taste in the mouths of anyone that had

THAT'S THE LAST TIME YOU TAKE THE LAST PEPSI

HERE, LET ME" ADJUST" YOUR TIE FOR YOU

MULTIPLAYER MADNESS

No N64 first person shooter, and especially one carrying the Bond license, is complete without a multiplayer game. TWINE offers a series of cool scenarios, weapons, gadgets and levels for you to kill your friends in, as well as the ability to unlock character skins in the single player game. Scenarios include:

ARENA Which is a basic combat stage with no real objectives other than winning.

TEAM ARENA The same as arena but with teams of two vs. two.

CAPTURE THE FLAG Two teams once again. Each team must go out and steal the other team's flag. Bringing the flag back to your own start point scores your team points.

CAPTURE THE BRIEFCASE The same as capture the flag, only if your briefcase is gone when you return the stolen one no points are given.

KING OF THE HILL A scenario where a coloured area of the level is the 'hill'. Stay in this area for a certain amount of time while fending off enemies will award you points.

TEAM KING OF THE HILL Same as king of the hill only with two teams.

UPLINK Three uplink units will be scattered throughout a level and two teams will have to seek them out. Touching the uplink means that it is in your team's possession. Try and maintain possession of all of the uplinks to win.

LAST AGENT STANDING Each player has a set number of lives. Once all your lives are gone you're out of the scenario. Try to be the last agent standing.

GOLDEN GUN Not too unlike the Goldeneye version of this scenario, players have to seek out the golden lighter, golden cigarette case and the golden pen, once all of these are in your possession you can get the Golden gun, which of course has a lethal one-shot kill.

ANOTHER HITMAN WANNABE

been swept away with the brilliance of Goldeneye. Bond fans were screaming for another N64 incarnation. The success of the films the games were based upon ushered the need to create another Bond movie, starring the one and only James Bond, Pierce Brosnan (that's my opinion and I'm

sticking to it!) in The World Is Not Enough. MGM/UA once again approached Rare about furthering their Goldeneye success, but work on Perfect Dark was too far gone to begin development on another game. EA snapped up the license and recruited the talented Eurocom to see if they

couldn't cash in on the success of the million plus seller, Goldeneye.

GUNS, CARS AND GIRLS

Right from the word go, it's apparent that Eurocom studied the Goldeneye game very closely. Using Rare's masterpiece as a template was the first step in trying to better it. This is conveyed in the game very obviously as the engine plays almost exactly like that of Goldeneye. Eurocom have however, tapped into the graphical qualities that the N64 is capable of and given Bond a complete face-lift. TWINE has an amazing coat of detail sprayed over it, and watching the film closely you can see that Eurocom have painstakingly modeled the game as close to its silver screen brother as possible. Small details like computer mouses and character uniforms or clothes are all recreated in TWINE as they appeared in the film. Voice-acting has also been implemented, and although the only original film member present is John Cleese (who played 'R' in the movie)

ELIOT AND CAM DO THEIR BEST TO SMUGGLE THE XBOX OUT OF MICROSOFT

THAT POLE MUST HAVE SAID SOMETHING PRETTY NASTY

DON'T SHOOT TILL YOU SEE THE WHITES OF HIS EGGS, OR SOMETHING

the other voices are all very close to home, especially M. You could swear that it was Judy Dench in the sound studios casting her lines. It's all very authentic.

TWINE has 14 levels for you to tackle as 007, each level containing three difficulty settings, agent, secret agent and 00 agent, perhaps a homage to Rare. Agent being the easiest level is a breeze and could see you seven missions in within an hour or so. This is also due to the sheer lack of enemy AI in the game. Where Perfect Dark had enemies that reacted effectively and efficiently, TWINE's bad-guys stand around as though they are a part of the background. This is possibly the biggest flaw in the game and could see many an experienced gamer thirsting for more of a challenge. An example of the poor AI is shooting guards that are standing next to other guards. You could use the very loud Magnum and watch one of the guards topple over in a theatrical death sequence, while the other guard continues to stare into space none-the-wiser. This is also a problem when using Sims in the multiplayer game. They are just as dumb and a very easy kill creating absolutely no challenge.

Despite the lack of depth in enemy AI TWINE does offer a lot of action packed levels that can keep you on your toes most of the time. A level that comes to mind is MI6, Bond's headquarters. As with the movie, someone has set off a bomb in the building and it's up to you to save the day. Excellent particle and sound effects create the atmosphere of explosions while the screen shakes to give you the sensation of actually being there. It's touches like this that help you overcome the game's shortcomings.

GO EXPLORE SOME HOLES

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
TWINE is a game of very unbalanced proportions. It looks and feels great, there is absolutely no loss in frame-rate no matter how many polygons or effects are on screen at once, and the game engine easily keeps everything running at 30 frames per second, something Rare had problems with despite a constant tweaking of their engine. An excellent addition to the game that helps to create a great gaming experience, but TWINE is still missing some very important features. For example, the Bond theme is nowhere to be heard. This is yet another facet of the Bond mythos that has become almost as famous as the man himself. And to have a game that has been designed to play as close to the movie as possible completed without the Bond theme at the start-up screen to welcome you to it is just an absolute crime. Eurocom and EA have not commented on the reasoning for the lack the Bond theme, its all a mystery. Another annoying feature is the fact that the cartridge has to actually load the cut-scenes. This can become a tedious aspect and will have many a player skipping the scene all together. Loading in this type of game simply should not be an option and

this is what happens when you don't use real-time sequences. Again however, the game makes up for this with its cool mission objectives. Goldeneye introduced level by level mission objectives to help break up the gameplay and add more of an explorative feel to it all. TWINE shines in the objectives department and will have you disarming bombs, setting up taps on phones, rescuing hostages, avoiding civilian casualties and turning on sprinkler systems to name a few. Most of the objectives will be accompanied by Q gadgets that the Bond movies are famous for and will introduce you to R (John Cleese) as he and Q give you everything you'll need.

IN THE END
The lack of the Bond theme and relative ease at which you can finish the game make this another failed attempt at toppling the king. That isn't to say that there isn't a lot of fun that can be had with TWINE. Goldeneye's brilliance has made it a given that any game based on the Bond franchise or simply an N64 first person shooter will ultimately be compared to it, and when the dust settles, it's still Goldeneye that comes out 'onatop'. ■

Ammo Collected

PLUS
Nice graphics and consistent frame-rate.
Stays true to the film.

MINUS
Enemy AI lacking, load time, no Bond theme.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
88	85	80

OVERALL

84

TWINE on the N64 is better than the PSX version, but it's not quite a classic.

WIZARDS & WARRIORS

PC

WIZARDS & WARRIORS IS A CLASSIC RPG, which comes as no surprise, since D.W. Bradley, who has been working in the role-playing genre since the pencil-and-paper days, wrote it. Gamers have been looking forward to this one for four years, and aside from a few minor bugs, for fans it was worth the wait.

This is a deep game, promising weeks of gameplay. The number of quests and sub-quests you can be sent on and the massive size of the various temples, castles, and dungeons you have to make it through will have you clocking up some serious time. There are four initial roles that a character can have — warrior, wizard, priest, or rogue — but by joining a guild, you can train team members for elite and powerful roles like barbarian, ninja, and monk. It's a pretty standard RPG set-up, and maybe a little old-school, yet it somehow sucks you in.

The game combines real-time and turn-based fighting and the intended result is a combat system that lets you hack away at foes in action-game fashion, allowing for you to stop and plan out a strategy if you desire.

However, the game is played from a first-person perspective, yet you are actually controlling six different characters... so it feels a little clumsy.

Despite some graphical flaws and technical drawbacks, Wizards & Warriors is by and large a good RPG. It overcomes its rather unoriginal find-the-magic-sword premise by delivering a story that's intriguing and complex. If you can deal with some less-than-thorough instructions, this is a game that will keep you incredibly busy.

RYAN MCKAY

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	RPG
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	Activision
PRICE:	$89.95
RATING:	M
REQUIRED:	PII-233, 64 MB RAM
DESIRED:	PII-400, 128 MB RAM, 3D Card

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
79	82	78	80

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

PLAYSTATION

BULLETS MAY TRACE HIS SHIFTY OUTLINE ON the big screen, but whenever Bond tries any fancy shit on my modest 34cm television (in colour!) during his videogame outings, they smack square into his temple. And his forearms. And his calves, stomach and pancreas. But while living up to the reputation of everybody's favourite misogynist is tough for the player, it's twenty-seven times harder for software designers. Goldeneye was worth the bags under your eyes. Tomorrow Never Dies wasn't worth the contents of your foreskin, displaying the efforts of a team who probably wrote off vodka martinis by the gullet-load and called it "research". This time, EA have flown somewhere between the two extremes by combining the successful innovations of the N64's 007 with the doddering technology of the PlayStation and forgetting TND exists.

At best, it looks like Goldeneye at its worst - a tremendous achievement for the system! Fun foreign machine guns litter the levels along with plenty of bad guys just itching to be freed from the mortal coil. R's gadgets show up, um, right on cue, including wristwatch grappling-hooks, pen bombs and cell phone tasers. There's the odd bit of skiing and gambling sewn in to alleviate the thumb strain from those areas where you absolutely, positively have to kill every mother-flogger in the room. And between stages you get to see all the top FMV action sequences from the film at half the frame rate, huzzah! At one point, a glitch in the program allowed me to be inside of Denise Richards, making this the perfect PSX Bond experience.

MARTIN ENGLISH

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Action
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	EA
PRICE:	$89.95
RATING:	M

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
77	78	79	80

WWF NO MERCY

NINTENDO 64

PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING IS A PRETTY strange phenomenon. What's even stranger, is that it's massively popular. What is wrong with you people?! It's fake I tell you! Fake! They're not really hitting each other! Sigh. People know this, and still they go and watch it. Well, WWF is back on the N64... again.

Now you can take control of your favourite wrestling "actor" and virtually virtually hit people all over again, and you know, we have to admit, that as a game, WWF No Mercy is hella fun.

Rope in a few of your friends and start a four-player brawl like the bunch of lycra-clad beefcakes that you are. Wrestling games are always great fun for a multiplayer laugh, and WWF No Mercy is probably the most competent example yet. But multiplayer aside, this is the first wrestling game that will give the single-player wrestling fan days upon days of things to do other than just mash their buttons. There are some excellent story modes, loads of things to unlock, and some truly hilarious moves to get a handle on. There are a whole series of new backstage areas to continue the fights in, and some new inanimate objects, like tables, to incorporate into the fist-flinging madness. The game seems to glitch out every now and then, but it's almost a tradition now that wrestling games have dodgy clipping amongst other faults. The meat of the game and depth of play modes is what you'll come back for.

For those of you who really enjoy wrestling games, and we know you're out there, then you can't go past WWF No Mercy for your N64.
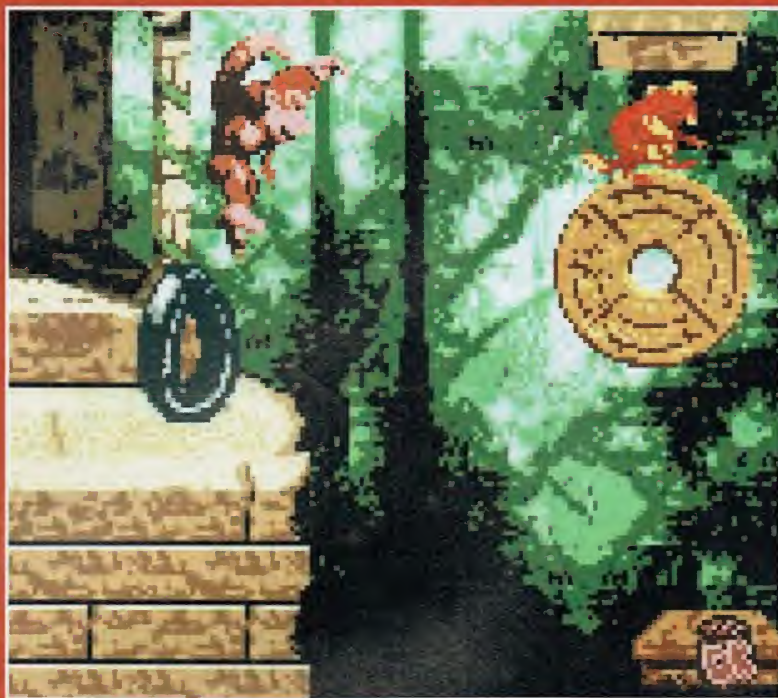
FRANK DRY

AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Wrestling
PLAYERS:	1–4
PUBLISHER:	THQ
PRICE:	TBA
RATING:	M
SUPPORTS:	Controller Pak, Rumble Pak

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
82	78	85	86

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

AVAILABLE:	Nov
CATEGORY:	Platformer
PRICE:	$59.95
PUBLISHER:	Nintendo
FORMAT:	Game Boy Color Only
SUPPORTS:	2 player Link Cable game

It's amazing what they can do these days... give kids bionic ears, build space stations in orbit, get PC CPUs over 1 Gigahertz and now, port SNES games to the Game Boy Color. Only a few months ago we were playing crappy black and white beat 'em ups on the Game Boy, and now we're playing a full-colour, almost-perfect SNES port of Donkey Kong Country. It almost makes me want to weep tears of gaming joy... or something.

DONKEY, DIDDY AND RAMBI, OH MY!

The Hyper crew remember when Donkey Kong Country hit the Super Nintendo console. It was the first time graphics on the SNES looked almost truly 3D, with a lovely rendered Donkey and Diddy Kong rolling about plastic-looking environments. Not only did it look better than any SNES game we'd seen to that date, but it had magic gameplay that we now also associate with Rare. It was platforming, but it was loaded with secrets, mini-games and some tough levels that required some real gaming skill. In short, a classic 16-bit game. Ahh memories. Well, now it's here again on Game Boy Color, and it's almost every bit as good as we remember... although, we must admit, the intervening years have seen a few truck-loads of brain-cell abuse.

The story is simple. Someone has gone and stolen Donkey Kong's banana stash, so it's up to Donkey and Diddy to traverse the jungle and get them back. Yep, collecting bananas is your main objective. Thankfully, the baddies have left them hovering in mid-air all about the place — how thoughtful! Donkey and Diddy only appear on-screen one at a time, unlike the SNES version, but you can still switch between them if you desire, and if one gets knocked out, the other takes over. Game Boy limitations no doubt. Still, this is a small sacrifice, as the majority of the gameplay is intact.
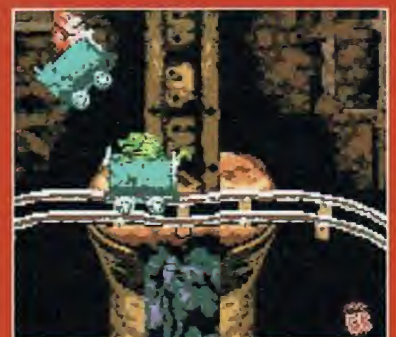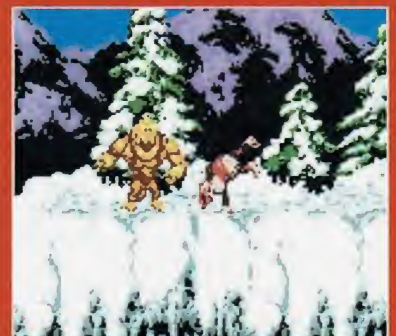
A BUNCH OF ANIMALS

There is so much to do in Donkey Kong Country. Each level has a variety of secrets, whether they be bananas hidden out of view, or hidden cave entrances which can be exposed by using a TNT barrel or smashing it whilst riding on the back of Rambi the Rhino. You see, if you collect the right icons, you are awarded the ability to utilise one of your jungle friends to accomplish something which would not normally be possible as Donkey or Diddy. These kinds of variations to the standard platforming formula help to add longevity to a game which is already bursting with tricks and traps. There always seems to be something you can't solve on first inspection, giving you incentive to fully explore the levels.

The Game Boy does a brilliant job of delivering almost as good an experience as we had on the original SNES game. It looks remarkably close to the SNES title, and is probably, technically the best Game Boy title yet. There are bonus games to distract you from the main adventure, as well as a Link Cable two player mode, although the two player games are just variations on the mini-games. But that's no huge drama.

If you want a brilliant platformer for your Game Boy Color, then this is it. The best ever.

ELIOT FISH

9/10

Amuse World

EZ2Dancer

could be around the corner.

As equally impressive as the music selection are the visuals that are displayed on a ginormous 51-inch monitor. The background visuals accompanying the vertically progressing 'dance step indicator bars' range from manga-esque lovey dovey images to way tripped out - 'it's like we're flying through a technicolour vortex...man'. Whatever the visuals, they all seem to have a sense of non-tackiness about them.

The game can be played in easy, hard or real modes as 1 or 2 player, or as 'club' mode where both sides of the machine are used by the one player or by a well co-ordinated couple.

>> Whilst steering, shooting and manoeuvring in arcade games have traditionally been controlled by the hand, only recently has the near forgotten foot been used as the primary controller for numerous games, such as skiing, skateboarding and the current trend- dancing. After successive waves of the original Dance Dance Revolution Games (DDR 4 has just been released) and a plethora of others, a new take on the dance genre has occurred where not only the feet are used, but the hands as well. This now forces the exponent to behave more like a groov'n disco dancer instead of a tights wearin' prancer ie. Michael Flatly of the 'no hands allowed' Riverdance fame.

GET FUNKY Y'ALL
There are over fourteen sensors on Ez2Dancer that will really push your

co-ordination and rhythm skills to the maximum. Depression activated sensors are located in the floor of the duel player console, whilst motion sensors are located at the front of the console for 'foot sweep' moves and other motion sensors are located higher for the hands.

Superb instrumentation aside, the game hosts a wide range of music styles to dance to such as drum & bass, techno, R&B, hip hop and house. Many of the tracks are actually of fairly fine quality and it is a relief to hear tunes that are available to the Australian music market as opposed to commercial tinny techno found in the Japanese 'idol' orientated music market. Unfortunately, the game STILL hasn't included any polkas, waltzes, fox trots or jazz ballet but the unwritten word is that a 2-player dirty dancing (Lambada - the *forbidden* dance) game

STRIKE A POSE
Irrespective of the fact that many arcade users are not so into the dancing games, it is the inclusion of the motion sensors which are revolutionary to the arcade industry. Just think, in the near future, motion / speed detectors will be able to be used in 3D fighting sims where foot stances (distribution of weight) are registered using the floor pads, whilst the speed (power) and direction of blocks / kicks and punches are registered by the motion sensors. So instead of waiting for the 2D vertically progressing bars of the dancing games, there would be, say, a 3D fighter's fist rapidly moving towards you on a horizontal plane, which if you blocked at the right moment, would effectively open your opponent up to a well placed counter-attack.

Whatever the future holds for the arcade user, all we can hope for is that the arcade industry can hold the increasingly popular home console market at bay by continually amazing us with innovative interfaces and designs which would be uneconomical to own for a console user. ■

:: A Real **Dancing** Simulator ::

*Click ~ me^^*

EZ2Dancer ™

Truly the king of the arcade.

SCORE

9/10

(10/10 for the motion sensors)

Thanks to Paloma for the assistance — Luv ya!
All games in Arcade Mode can be found at GALAXY WORLD.

In 1992 there were two big powers in the computer game industry, the British and the Americans. However, a deceptively simple horror tale was about to change all that, introducing the world to the fledgling French games industry and the games industry itself to the work of one H.P. Lovecraft.
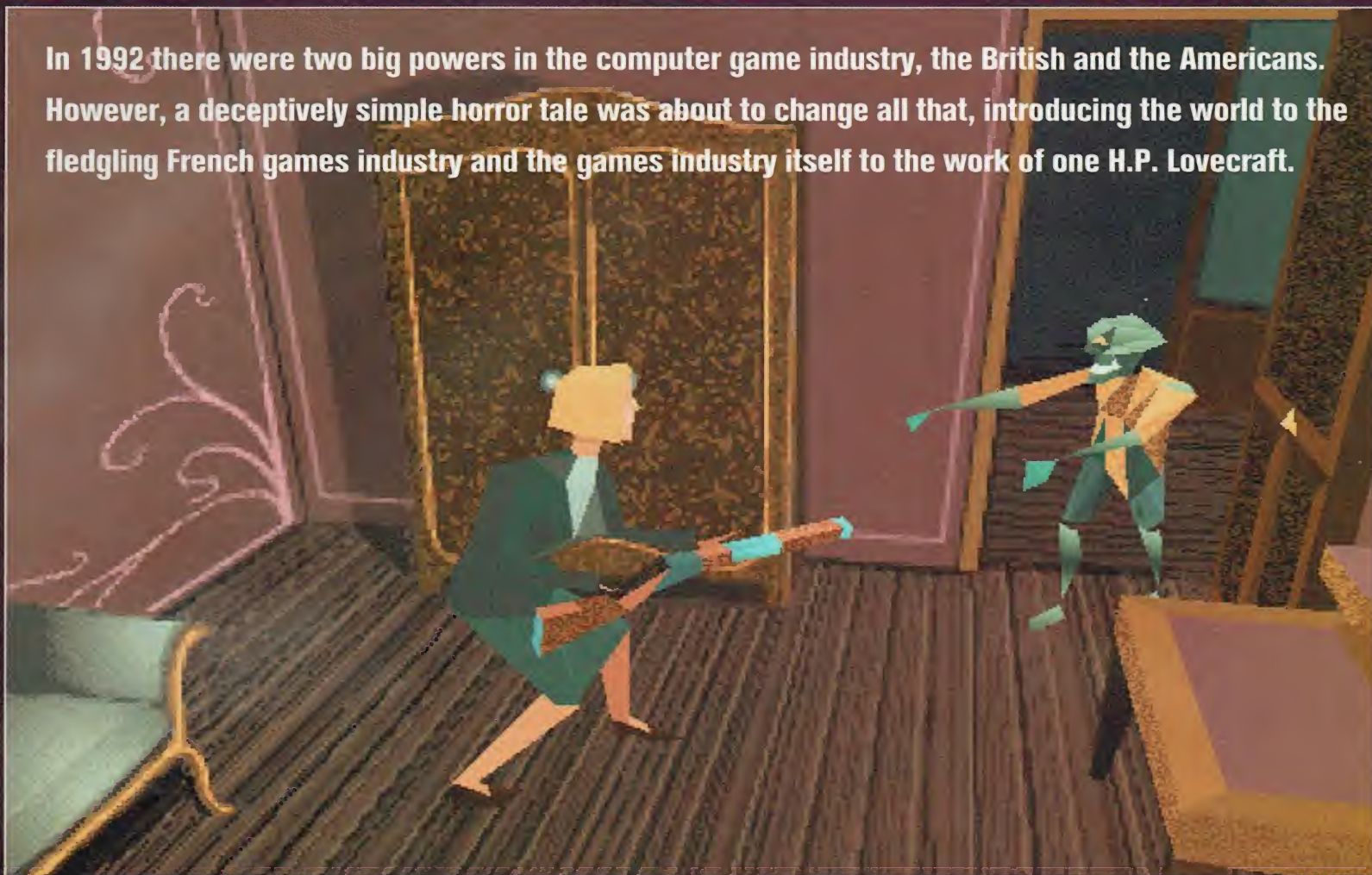
ALONE IN THE DARK

H.P. LOVECRAFT HAD ALREADY BEEN immortalized in game form by the pen and paper RPG 'Call Of Cthulhu' by US company Chaosium and his imaginary world was ripe, as they say, for an interactive makeover. Luckily for gamers, the fresh and open minded French company saw the potential that others had ignored and jumped in to create a truly unique adventure series.

CARNBY KO'S LARRY

Lovecraft's Cthulhu is a bizarre and creepy reality where 1920's America is under constant threat by the denizens of an ancient and bizarre otherworld. This older-than- Human civilisation is populated by beings known simply as 'the Old Ones' of which Cthulhu is the oldest and most dangerous. These creatures wield immense power and see mankind as nothing more than a temporary infestation of their planet, as bugs underfoot.

Two of those bugs happened to be supernatural private eyes Edward Carnby and Emily Hartwood. Carnby and Hartwood weren't the rail gun toting, wise cracking, tank top wearing protagonists that we've become used to, far from it. In the world of Cthulhu, man is an insignificant wart with barely enough power to shampoo one of the old one's armpit hairs let alone actually hurt them.

PRETTY POLY

Instead of the standard 2D graphics established by developers such as LucasArts as the norm for the genre, those wacky French went for it and produced a polygon based 3D engine that had gamers of the day very excited indeed. In fact the screenshots on these pages show that all of the older Alone titles still look OK. The character models are a bit simplistic by modern standards but when you compare the overall look of the games to competing titles such as the Leisure Suit Larry series it's obvious that they were quite ahead of their time.

Alone In The Dark was an adventure game and therefore based around puzzles and conundrums to exercise the player's mind. However Infogrames realised that this may be a bit dull for gamers raised on action arcade games and so came up with a concept that used some action elements as well as puzzles, and which eventually paved the way for a new action/adventure hybrid genre.

Admittedly the two fisted parts of the first Alone title were a bit clumsy, spinning around in time to aim your gun at some creepy monster behind you was sometimes a frustrating experience, but they ultimately helped heighten the suspense and terror of the storyline. A fact which didn't escape Capcom when they made their first installment of Resident Evil, a very popular series which owes much to Alone In The Dark.

PIRATES IN THE KITCHEN

Once the first adventure in Decreto Mansion was over it wasn't long until Carnby found himself on the trail of some kidnappers. In Alone in The Dark 2 Carnby is hired to find one Grace Saunders, who it turns out was nabbed by pirates intending to sacrifice her using a pagan Voodoo ritual to prolong their lives.

Alone 2 stepped away a little from its' Lovecraftian roots and relied more on gunplay to provide the game's excitement. This was still no shoot em up though and the developers learnt to keep the player on their toes by providing very little ammunition for their weapons. Sound familiar? Yep, another idea pinched by Capcom for the Resident Evil series! The story just didn't have the impact of the first game however and fans were a bit disappointed at having to deal with machine gun toting pirates in Hell's Kitchen instead of the unspeakable evil of Cthulhu.

So Infogrames changed tack again and the third Alone title returned to a more puzzle oriented style though, as always, combat still played an important part. Alone 3 took place in the aptly named town of Slaughter Gulch, right next to Murder Village and south of Torture Town. Alone 3 was by far the biggest in the series taking up a whopping 35 Mb of hard drive space but sadly by this time the engine was looking a bit tired compared to competitors such as the original System Shock and Infogrames were being criticised for not doing enough work to update their game.

BUT WAIT THERE'S MORE...

We recently ran an article on LucasArts' contributions to the world of adventure gaming and were able to finish it off with the good news that Monkey Island 4 was on the way. Thankfully we can do the same again as Edward Carnby will indeed be returning very soon in Alone In The Dark 4, this time on all formats.

The new adventure begins with Carnby's best friend, Charles Fiske being found dead off a mysterious island near the coast of Maine. Carnby's investigation quickly leads him to Fiske's fatal search for three ancient tablets (expired Panadols perhaps) that have the ability to unlock an incredible and dangerous power, as well as sooth a mild headache. Surely our friend Carnby isn't just going to sit around swapping fishing stories with the locals is he?

The new game's release has been delayed slightly but according to the developers at Darkworks, "We need to make sure that the result matches up to our ambitions and we have to push the PlayStation format to its limits. We are adding bits, checking impact and scariness of the special effects as well as refining the cut scenes. Everything must be perfect. The game's framework

remains the same. There are still two characters, but we still have to rework the combat sections, to add special effects and sound effects for extra elements of added surprise."

Whether they will be able to recapture the essence of that great first title is unknown but they can at least be confident that many fans of the series are waiting to find out. ∎

DVD

DVD is the format of choice for anyone who's serious about their home cinema experience. Once you enjoy the rich visual splendour of an all-digital picture, there's no turning back. This issue we have another pile of the latest reviews and some fantastic Anime. Find the couch, kick back and let Hyper help you decide what you should be watching…

"FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN... BRING ME YOUR STAMPS."

RUSSELL GETS IN TRAINING FOR FENDING OFF PAPARAZZI

Gladiator

DREAMWORKS SKG

M

Ridley Scott's masterfully woven tale about a Roman general driven into slavery who rises against the tyranny of the Emperor to become the saviour of Rome is hands down the best film of the year. Russell Crowe gives a memorable performance as general Maximus Decimus Moridius who fights selflessly for the glory of his country and to avenge the death of his wife and son.

The video transfer is near reference quality, and the sound will obliterate anything in your collection — the DTS 5.1 surround (a rarity for Region 4) is pure sonic bliss, especially as the thundering bass ripples right through you during the opening 15 minutes and the Battle of Carthage. There are surprisingly few extras considering it comes on a second disc, but the diary of Spencer Treat Clark and the Treasure Box collage of every unused scene is must-see material.

EXTRAS: **8**/10 | MOVIE: **10**/10

"HONEY? IT'S ME OR THE PLAYSTATION!"

COME SNIFF MY PETALS

American Beauty

DREAMWORKS SKG
MA15+

Lester Burnum, the central character in American Beauty, is a man on the edge. Dysfunctionality colours every aspect of his life: he no longer sleeps with his wife, and she has resorted to an affair with a local real estate agent; he is unable to communicate with his teenage daughter; and he is about to lose his long-time job as an editor.

While watching his daughter at cheerleading practice, he experiences a spiritual epiphany. The sexual feelings which arise within him for one of the other pubescent cheerleaders, Angela (a friend of his daughter's), are the catalyst for Lester's decision to change his life, and to escape the downward spiral into which he is rapidly falling. Desperate to inject "feeling" back into his existence, Lester attempts to manipulate his life into something that is possible for him to live again — and ultimately discovers that although the beauty in life can be obscured at times, it is up to us as human beings to change the way we look for it.

The vivid colour palette of this film works beautifully on DVD, where the images are bold and vibrant — just check out the dream sequence with Mena Suvari lying on dozens and dozens of blood-red roses. The DVD also includes a 20-minute featurette and commentary from director Sam Mendes and writer Alan Ball. Destined to be a classic.

VICTORIA FLANAGAN

EXTRAS: **4**/10 | MOVIE: **9**/10

Ghost Dog

ARTISAN

R

If there's anything more pathetic than a white man who thinks he's an African American, it's an African American who thinks he's Asian. Forest Whitaker plays samurai wannabe gun-for-hire Ghost Dog, who falls out of favour with an Italian 'family' after the boss' daughter witnesses one of his hits. After the family trashes his home, Ghost Dog resolves under his samurai code to kill everyone responsible.

Aside from the obvious criticism of Western culture, Whitaker's performance is a modern but slothful reinterpretation of the samurai code, held together by readings from the Hagakure. There are a few moments of dark humour, like an Italian man singing and dancing to Flava Flav, but you really have to be in the mood if you're to enjoy this movie at all.

EXTRAS: 6/10 | MOVIE: 7/10

HOW THE MOVIE WILL LOOK AFTER A FEW BEERS

"THAT'S THE SECOND BIGGEST RING I'VE EVER SEEN!"

Shanghai Noon

TOUCHSTONE PICTURES

PG

Jackie Chan stars opposite Owen Wilson in this fish-out-of-water 'east meets west' comedy. Lucy Liu is a Chinese princess kidnapped and brought to the American Wild West. Chan is the Imperial agent sent to rescue her. Wilson is an outlaw with a heart of gold who helps him in his quest.

Ultimately nothing stands out. The jokes are never funny enough, the action scenes never quite do it, and Lucy Liu needs more screen time. It does have its moments, though. There won't be anyone from a non-English speaking background who won't appreciate the humour of watching a Chinese man asking two American Indians for directions to Carson City, who then say to each other, "he's saying it slower, like that's going to help".

EXTRAS: 6/10 | MOVIE: 4/10

DON'T CRY, AT LEAST IT WASN'T "MR. ACCIDENT"

Pitch Black

UNIVERSAL

MA15+

A bunch of colonists crash land on a remote planet. Members of their group get picked off one at a time by mysterious aliens that hide in the dark. Once the obvious is laid out for them - that the aliens are nocturnal – it's a race to get off the planet before a 20-year eclipse seals their fate as tasty alien snacks. Alas, they were too late.

In pitch darkness, with terrifying aliens all around them, their hopes of getting off the planet rest on the shoulders of a bloodthirsty convict who surgically augmented his eyes so they'd be constantly dilated. He can see in the dark.

Filmed in Australia, Pitch Black is part Aliens, part Terminator. It relies on artistic direction to generate suspense, meaning less thought has been put into the plot — which explains why the ending is a tad weak.

EXTRAS: 7/10 | MOVIE: 7/10

THAT GUY HAS A WOODY

I... AM YOUR FATHER!

BUZZ SPOTS A WOODY IN ACTION

Toy Story 2

DISNEY

G

The folks at Pixar are Gods. And they know it. And in spite of the fact that virtually every Disney sequel like The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride turned out to be a turkey, their efforts on Toy Story 2 turned out to be a pleasantly enjoyable experience for everyone, including the cynics.

This time around, Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) is stolen by a dealer in rare toys, but his incarceration allows him to meet other cowboy-related toys in his series. Woody begins having second thoughts about going home, all the while Buzz Lightyear (Tim Allen) launches a daring expedition to rescue him.

The key here is that the movie is filled with gags and impossibly drool-worthy computer graphics. The scene of the toy dealer asleep on his couch alone is a treasure trove of fine detail. What we wouldn't give now for a sequel to A Bug's Life…

EXTRAS: **7**/10 | MOVIE: **9**/10

Looking for Alibrandi

VILLAGE ROADSHOW

PG

Looking for Alibrandi is about a young Italian-Australian girl (Josie Alibrandi) in her final year of school. The film deals with Josie's search for a sense of herself - exploring what it's like to be a "wog" in contemporary Australian society; what it's like to be illegitimate; what it's like to be a scholarship student at an exclusive school; and what it's like to be confused about love. It's easy to see why the book on which this film was based has been part of the HSC syllabus for the past couple of years.

Packed with relevant social "issues", and infused with a highly-charged emotional content, there are times when this film can feel so politically correct that it grates. Despite this "PC" overload, the performances in Looking for Alibrandi are what keeps it from degenerating into melodrama - especially Pia Miranda's portrayal of Josie.

VICTORIA FLANAGAN

ARGH, IF I HAVE TO HEAR THAT LO-TEL SONG AGAIN…

EXTRAS: **3**/10 | MOVIE: **6**/10

The Whole Nine Yards

VILLAGE ROADSHOW

M

It appears that The Whole Nine Yards is supposed to be a satire of gangster/mob-inspired films, with the complicated plot turns and twists and portrayal of characters who only reveal their true colours at the very end. The only problem is that the satire in The Whole Nine Yards isn't particularly clever - mobster parodies are generally better left to experts like Elmore Leonard.

The performances are wooden and overdone (Matthew Perry is still playing Chandler — a character that doesn't work outside an ensemble setting; Bruce Willis can never seem to get away from John McClane; and Rosanna Arquette and Natasha Henstridge are just plain awful). The extras included on the DVD include a commentary from director Jonathon Lyn, theatrical trailer and interviews with the cast. Approach this DVD at your own risk.

VICTORIA FLANAGAN

EXTRAS: **2**/10 | MOVIE: **2**/10

DON'T WORRY BRUCE, WE THOUGHT HUDSON HAWK WAS ACTUALLY PRETTY GOOD!

ANIME >>

Samurai X

CATEGORY: ACTION/DRAMA

PRODUCTION COMPANY: STUDIO DEEN/SPE VISUAL WORKS

Also known as the Rurouni Kenshin OAV, Samurai X chronicles the life of Himura Kenshin, a famous assassin who fought in the rebellion against the Tokugawa Shogunate. With only scraps of historical fact and imaginative storytelling to fill in the gaps, Kenshin's life as an assassin begins after he is taken in by a kindly swordsman who teaches him the Mitsurugi technique of swordsmanship. Kenshin leaves his teacher to fight in the rebellion.

Unlike the TV series, this OAV is deadly serious. So much so that the artistic direction, animation quality and musical score have been improved to the point of flawless beauty. The story brilliantly weaves together the conflicting interests of social politics and the desire to enjoy life — that Kenshin lives a life of murder under the direction of men who write their own justice. But somewhere in all the bloodshed, Kenshin finds hope through the love of a woman who suffered by his blade.

I am totally in awe of this series. The quality of the traditional cel-based animation is breath-taking from start to finish, on one hand making good argument against the total adoption of CG, but on the other hand capturing the essence of Feudal Japan with elegance and charm. It is truly a thing of beauty, and certainly the best of its kind since Ninja Scroll.

ANIMATION: 10 | **PLOT: 8** | **JAPAN-NESS: MEDIUM** | **OVERALL: 10**

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"HONEY? THAT WEED KILLER ISN'T WORKING."

GUESS THAT WASN'T AN ASPIRIN TABLET AFTER ALL...

BUDGET BEARD TRIMMING

Kite

CATEGORY: ACTION, DRAMA

PRODUCTION COMPANY: GREEN BUNNY

"GIVE ME THE FAIRY FLOSS OR I'LL SHOOT!"

This is literally an animated reinterpretation of La Femme Nikita. Sawa is a young girl whose parents were brutally murdered. She's taken in by the police detective investigating the crime, who trains her to be his personal assassin and sex toy over the coming years. Now fully trained, this movie gives us a look at Sawa as a killing machine, and how she exacts revenge on her parents' killers.

Designed and directed by Yasuomi Umetsu, who was also responsible for Megazone 23 Part 2 and Shin Gatchaman, this wholly contained 45 minute film seems lacking in substance. There are glimpses of brilliance in the way the hum-drum story is fleshed out. Her gun is an extremely cool device, and the direction for each of her professional hits make for some great action scenes. However, the story is so short and well known that it simply doesn't offer enough to satisfy. Little effort is made to elaborate on the characters — their complete lack of development leaving the plot an empty shell.

Kite is definitely not worth buying, but still worth a rental if just to see the slick action scenes. Just don't get drawn in too much by the possibility of schoolgirl booty.

ANIMATION: 7 | **PLOT: 5** | **JAPAN-NESS: LOW** | **OVERALL: 5**

DANNY ERASES ALL THE INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE
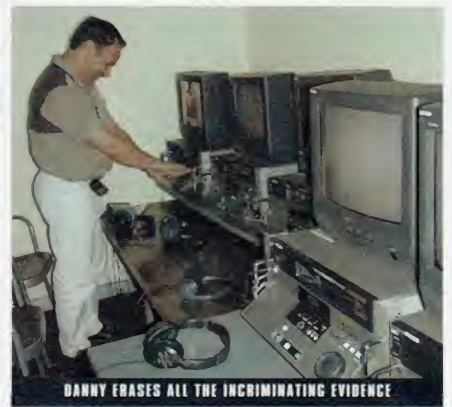
THIS CREW GETS PAID MORE THAN WE DO

SARAH - NAKED FROM THE WAIST DOWN. FULLY NAKED CAM, JUST OUT OF SHOT. PHEW!

"HEY, KIDS! I'M ONE CHEESY BASTARD!"
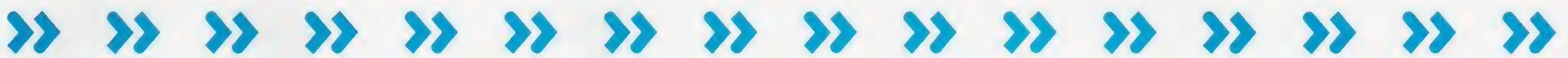
A DAY IN THE LIFE

You've seen the show… but have you seen the making of the show? Well, while Eliot and I stop to catch our breath… now's your chance. Courtesy of the Hyper digicam and some TV-inspired "larger than life zany-ness", we present a behind the scenes look at the genesis and production of the long awaited Hyper TV. The trials. The tribulations. The blood, sweat and tears. Or more accurately – the caviar, the monocles and the extreme self-importance.

CAM'S REVIEW TECHNIQUE: PLAY FOR 5 MINUTES. STROKE GOATEE. RIP OUT CARTRIDGE. CRY. DOWNLOAD MP3S FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.
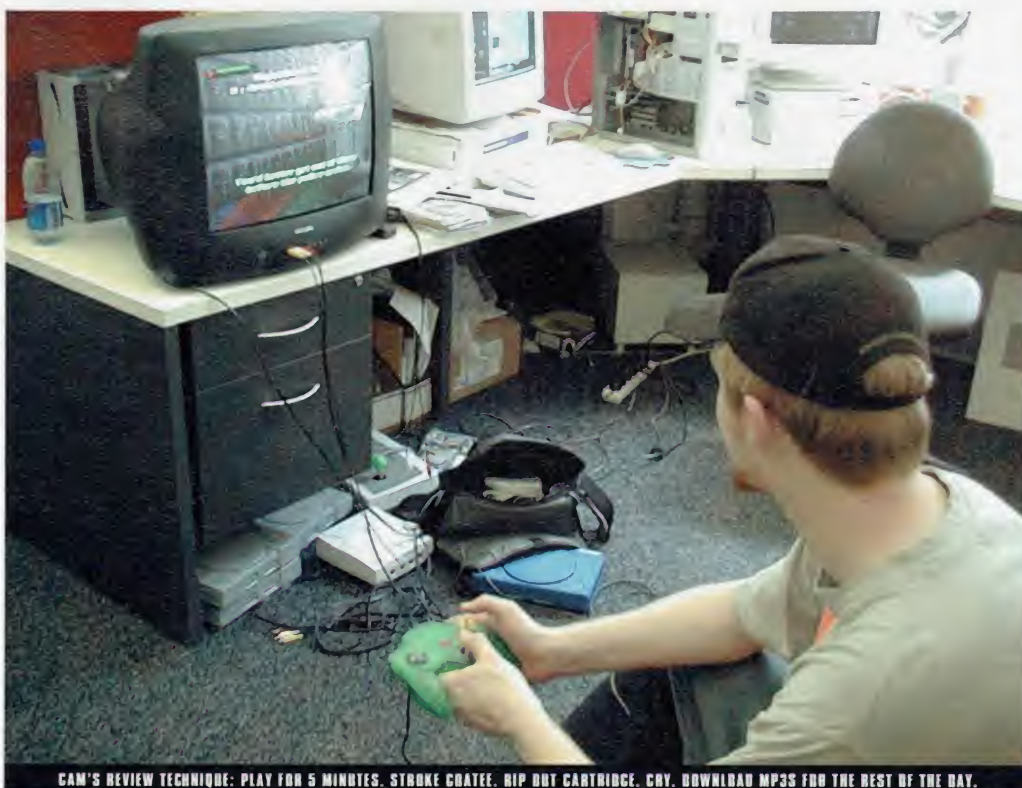
CAM AND STATION'S JAMES COTTEE. GIVE THEM A DIGICAM AND IT'S ALL OVER.

CAM'S PRIVATE OFFICE. VOGUE LIVING EAT YOUR HEART OUT!

ON AIR STUDIO 2

LOOK - THERE'S BUFFY! SOMEWHERE.

DANNY IS ASKED TO WAIT OUTSIDE WHILE CAM PUTS HIS KISS MAKE-UP ON

THE FOX KIDS TEAM — DANNY AND ANNETTE — FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING OUR MUGS ON TV. FORWARD ALL COMPLAINTS TO THEM.

PART 2: HYPER TV

FROM THE HUMBLE CARTRIDGE TO THE BIG SCREEN

GEEZ, HOW'D WE MANAGE TO BREAK ALL OF THAT?

"WOULD YOU LIKE FRIES WITH THAT?"

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hyperactive 3.1

what's on the CD

This is a seriously packed cover disc, with demos, movies,
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PC DEMOS

FIFA 2001 DEMO

REAL MYST DEMO

STUPID INVADERS DEMO

■ FIFA 2001
EA SPORTS
REQUIRED: P166, 32MB RAM, 3D CARD

Step out of the stands on onto the pitch with EA SPORTS' latest incarnation of the best selling FIFA Soccer Series, FIFA 2001.

■ MOHO
TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
REQUIRED: P266, 32MB RAM, 3D CARD

MoHo is an all-action arcade style game set on a unique future world.

■ REALMYST
CYAN
REQUIRED: PII-450, 64MB RAM, 3D CARD

A 3D re-creation of the best-selling computer game.

■ RESIDENT EVIL 3
CAPCOM
REQUIRED: P166, 32MB RAM, 3D CARD

Just days after surviving the grisly disaster at the mansion lab, Jill Valentine, resigns from S.T.A.R.S. and attempts to escape a nightmarish city in ruins.

■ RUNE
GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS
REQUIRED: PII-300, 32MB RAM, 3D CARD

Get your axe out and make some friends.

■ STUPID INVADERS
UBISOFT
REQUIRED: P200, 32MB RAM, 3D CARD

Five strange aliens, one tiny spaceship, and a whole heap of trouble!

PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CD?

THE HYPER COVER DISC

...lities, patches and some great mods.
...ace. Cool, eh?

GAMEPLAY MOVIES

■ MUNCH'S ODDYSEE – XBOX

This brand new clip shows just how cool this game is going to be. Lucky for the Xbox!

■ EVERQUEST: SCARS OF VELIOUS – PC

Check out the latest add-on for Everquest without installing a thing!

■ AIDYN CHRONICLES – N64

Coming early in 2001, this adventure is looking deep and satisfying.

■ EVIL DEAD – PSX

Here's the full intro to the Evil Dead game, complete with Bruce Campbell voice-over.

■ SAMBA DE AMIGO – DREAMCAST

Here's a strange clip from Sega of their new maraca sim. Just imagine what the player must be doing...

■ SMACKDOWN2 – PSX

Wrestling fans will love this snippet of big, beefy mayhem.

■ TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES – PSX

Lara is back. Again. Just imagine Angelina Jolie whilst you're watching this clip.

MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

AIDYN CHRONICLES

EVIL DEAD

BUT WAIT... THERE'S MORE

If you use the "explore the CD" option in the menu, you'll discover the patches and utilities folders, as well as the movies folder. This month we've squeezed on...

PATCHES

- ■ **Grand Prix 3**
- ■ **Red Alert 2**
- ■ **Rune**
- ■ **Half-Life Opposing Force**

UTILITIES

- ■ **Direct X 8.0**

MODS

■ INFILTRATION
Unreal Tournament

Infiltration is a military modification for Unreal Tournament. Boasting well over 20 weapons, five different player classes, and three new game modes, Infiltration is one of the most ambitious mods ever created.

■ COUNTER-STRIKE
Half-Life

Counter-Strike modifies the multiplayer aspects of Half-Life to allow more team-oriented gameplay. Maps have different goals, such as hostage rescue, assassination and more.

This month we read your responses to our question from Hyper #86…

Naturally, many of you would love photorealism to happen, but it's nice to see that the general consensus was that gameplay should not be forgotten in the process.

HYPER FORUM

Everyone has a different opinion and the Hyper Forum is where you can get your thoughts out of your head and onto the page for all to see. Don't forget that we have a new topic every issue! The next topic of discussion…

? **"CAN DREAMCAST SURVIVE THE CONSOLE WAR?"**

Responses will be printed in Hyper 96.

E-mail: FREAKSCENE@NEXT.COM.AU with Hyper Forum in the subject line, and the topic of discussion at the top of your response. Please note that very long contributions may be edited.

SHOULD GRAPHICS BECOME PHOTO-REALISTIC?

ALL ABOUT IMMERSION

I think they should. Games are about immersing people in a world where they can do something they might not be able to do in real life (which is why there are so few 'going to school' games out there). The better the graphics, the better the immersion I say. I'd just hate to be the poor bugger who has to painstakingly create the photo-realistic graphics.
STEVE
milich@picknowl.com.au

BREATHE IN…

To argue if graphics should become photo-realistic we must first ignore the scare-tactics and paranoia that surface every time an issue on any topic with some chance of it turning into something bad is brought up as an argument against.

What I'm getting at, is that there are bound to be — as I write this rant — other readers who are writing their rants saying "we won't know real life from a game". As Hyper addressed on many occasions, if this ever does happen, in any case, in such a way that it could endanger lives, it is no longer a game. If photo-realistic graphics come into our lounge rooms and have negative effects, they will be addressed by the government. Game violence is becoming an issue in America and as we read in Hyper #85, the Xbox is going to become more family friendly. So for those scared out there, the gaming industry doesn't control us, we control it. As soon as games become dangerous the government will intervene.

Photo-realistic graphics should be introduced if it is first made safe. By safe, I mean it won't have mentally damaging effects on gamers, eg. Take an image of your grandmother and frag her in Unreal VII or whatever is out by then, then do it for real to see if it would be any different. Okay, maybe that's a crap example, but you know what I mean.

If photo-realistic did get introduced on such a massive scale, ie. Real reality, developers should not release a flood of crappy games that boast PR graphics that have no gameplay. What has always mattered is gameplay, what matters right no is gameplay and what will always matter is gameplay. Developers must ask the question, will photo-realistic graphics make this game worthwhile? Will it add to the experience? Or will it take up too much time and effort and destroy the good intentions in a push to sell, sell, sell?

Well, I'd love to continue this rant, but I just played one of my Dreamcast discs backwards and let's just say I found out why I woke up cuddling a rocket-launcher with Granny's charred cardigan draped over it.
Yours,
AARON_DOKM

CHUNKY BLOCKS AND BLIPS

YES, YES, YES. For a long time we've been waiting for games graphics to catch up with the cool ads, labels and front covers seen on many video games. My friends and I used to (they just pay me out now) compare the cool, awe-inspiring pictures on the labels and ads of games, especially Atari2600 games, with the cheesy graphics that were nothing like the label. Who out there hasn't been sucked into playing a game because of the cool labels or in-depth stories that went along with a new game? Just think old BASIC programs eg. "You're piloting a helicopter gunship flying cover for a truck convoy of medical supplies…"- Chopper Command. They promised so much, but you would ultimately end up with chunky blocks and blips.

If there were photo realistic graphics, we wouldn't be disappointed. No more muppet-like athletes like in AFL '99, or dodgy digitised photos. I know some games might turn out to be like a feature length FMV, but who cares? You could finally blow up realistic people. And it can help in blurring the line between fantasy and reality just that little bit more ;-)
MICKEY JUICE
Albury, NSW

DEREALISATION

Hyper,
Photorealism in games is definitely where a lot of games designers are going, made easier with new and cheaper technology. It is being demanded by gamers who seek deeper immersion in the games they play. Many comment on being "in the zone" — whereby a player will spend hours on end playing a game, with no sense of the passage of time, the need for a nutritious diet or the need to use the toilet. Psychiatrists term this "Depersonalisation" or, alternatively, "Derealisation".

With the demand for photo-realistic graphics, along with advances in artificial intelligence of game characters, sound etc. then gamers will experience greater immersion. Hence, many more will experience "the zone". In susceptible people, as with those taking marijuana and other drugs, psychosis is a possibility, including Schizophrenia. I've seen it before, having been a Psychiatric nurse. It's a fine line... who knows who is susceptible?

I myself enjoy photo-realistic graphics, though game manuals say — take a break for 15 minutes or so for every hour you play. Eat well, exercise, get outside, talk (face to face) with REAL people! Game on,
ROBERT
Warnbro, WA

OOH SCARY

Dear Hyper,
There's no doubt in my mind that game graphics should be photo-realistic. Why? Because games are all about immersion and escapism. How much more escapist can you get, than to be totally convinced by your virtual surroundings? Maybe one day soon we'll also see head-gear peripherals come back into fashion when you can "look around" the graphics as if you really were there inside it. Imagine a First Person Shooter with this kind of realism! Okay, maybe that would be kind of freaky, but I bet you the demand would be there. Character animation would naturally have to be as realistic as the textures and modelling of course, otherwise the effect wouldn't be very real after all. Then there's AI... would the AI be realistic? It seems that there's a lot more to consider than just the graphics...
BOMB-ASS
St Kilda, Vic

FANTASTIC CHARACTERS

The main allure of video games are that they are just that, games. We play them because they are an escape from reality. So when I want to play a game, I want it to be as removed from reality as it can possibly be. Try as hard as they might, graphics are never going to be able to look as realistic as real life itself. So why not try to be what real life can never be?

Film studios pump millions of dollars into their costume and makeup departments to create fantastic characters, often so unconvincing it's painful. (Jim Carrey as The Grinch? Yeah right. Farscape? Uhhhh. John Travolta in Battlefield Earth? I rest my case.) But in the realm of the videogame anything can be possible. Characters can look like anything we could ever imagine, interact in fantastic environments and do things impossible in the real world we have to live in, bound by the annoyances of physics, matter, money, and time. Hell, they can even be 2D.

Games can be anything we want them to be. Why make them a substitute for everyday life, when they can be an alternative.
BRIAN CLAYMORE
Parramatta, NSW

>> "DOWNPOUR" COMES TO US FROM DANIEL, VIA EMAIL. TOP WORK.

CAPTION THIS!

PART 13 WINNER Our Escape From Monkey Island screenshot sure did get those creative juices going. Well, we think they were the creative juices. The winning caption comes from Brenden McGrath, via email.

THESE GAME BOSSES ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE INTIMIDATING

RETURN OF THE GOBLIN

Hey guys,

As I was sitting alone, playing with that Rubik's cube in my head, I came up with a thought that made me giggle like a school girl and I thought you might like to hear about it.

You know those porn mags that have sections especially for people to send in nude pictures of their girlfriends? Well, I had just decided that having a section like this in your magazine would make it the single greatest value for money purchase on earth, (if it isn't already) when I remembered that your magazine is slightly too... erm...wholesome for this.

It was at this point I had the thought of people sending in pictures of their consoles nude (God knows they're the closest thing we have to a companion). Heeheehee.

Oooooh, c'mon, don't waste me like that, it would be funny!! C'mon guys! You know it would be funny! Oh dear God, I never realised the insane amount of time I have on my hands...

Oh, well I'm going to go and try to work out that Rubik's cube in my head and if I'm struck with any other pure gold ideas like this one I'll give you a buzz.

BAR A.K.A "ASSGOBLIN"
crazyboutcows@hotmail.com
P.S. Last time I wrote you, you asked me how the hell I got the name AssGoblin. Well, the uncanny truth is I'm the tooth-fairy's cousin and I'm a special goblin in your life. When your ass gets wobbly and falls out, you put it under your pillow and I collect it, replacing it with a dollar.
P.P.S. That was secret code for "My brother slapped me with that name last year."

Dear AssGoblin,
You're one freaky mother.

POKÉMON SEX!

Hyper,
This e-mail is on the subject of Pokémon.

For starters, how do Pokémon multiply? I mean, where are their hoo-hoo dillies and cha-chas? This could be used in conjunction to send the message of sex education to the young kiddies. Imagine, PG-rated Pokémon episodes! Featuring low level sex scenes!

"Mummy, what are those Pokémon doing to each other? Does it hurt them?"

And here are some upcoming equally shit products those greedy buggers at Nintendo will surely authorise, to add to the mountain of crap that kids will no doubt buy.

Snorlax Pong Bounce the ball off the Snorlax's fat $#% to try and get past the opponent and win.
Nidoran Counting Game Hence the term %$ing like rabbits. 2, 4, 8, 16...
Plaster of Paras Exactly the same, just with a $ % Pokémon on the packaging.
Charmeleon Zippo Lighters For the 'older' (10-12) Pokémon fan.
Persian kittens! Poor kitties, with the charm stuck on their foreheads. The latest craze!
Ekans/Arbok rubber snakes! Hooray! 'Scare' your little brother and your grandma!
Nidoking/Nidoqueen sex toys! Hmm, I hope Nintendo aren't reading this actually. They may gain some ideas. ARRRGGGGGHHH!!!! The Pokémonania is as strong as ever!
NITESHOK
niteshok@hotmail.com
P.S. If you're wondering, I knew all the Pokémon names because I was a former fan turned 'bad'.

Dear NiteShok,
You again? Sheesh, keep your dirty thoughts to yourself! One thought of JigglyPuff's jigglies and that was it...

OKAY CAM, TIME FOR A "DANCE-OFF"

Hi dudes,
I've got a couple of questions I'd like to ask.
1. I've heard rumours that the Nintendo Game Cube has the ability to play Nintendo 64 carts. Is this true?
2. What do you think about this game? You choose a crew of break dancers and go around USA battling it out with other crews. My friends and I reckon this would be a cool game.
3. Do any of you dudes break dance?
4. Are there any break dancing games out or in the process?
5. In Goldeneye, there is an island with a boat beside it. Is there any way to get across?
Thanks Dudes,
KRAZY B-BOY
lithros13@aol.com

Dear Krazy B-boy,
It's strange, we were spinning on our heads when your e-mail arrived.
1. Uhhh... no.
2. Uhhh... no.
3. Uhhh... no.
4. Uhhh... no.
5. Uhhh... no.
Actually we don't have a clue about the last one, but geez it was funny.

Dear Scott,
Right on ma man. Wuurd up. Oh...
whoops!

HYPER WHILE YOU WAIT

Has anyone ever told you before that your magazine is perfect for reading down at the laundromat when you have to keep an eye on your washing? I have to do this so no one nicks my Goodies or Jackie Chan t-shirts.
TIM CHMIELEWSKI
timchmielewski@hotmail.com

Dear Tim,
You mean we're a better read than Woman's Day? Alriiiight!

POOFY DOOFY MARIO GAMES

Dear Hyper,
I just thought I'd share with you my thoughts on the variety of games nowadays. Whenever I eagerly walk into my local game store praying I'll find a copy of a new original game, I end up leaving miserably with suicidal thoughts of games such as Doom XVIII and Mario Party 69 (now there's an interesting concept — Ed.). Anyway,

TOP TEN REASONS...

Aloha,
I would just like to give you 10 reasons why Hyper is better than any other tosh.
10. The material of the cover is grippy, so the magazine won't fall out of your hands when you're in the can.
9. There are more pages of games than gay ads.
8. It's colour coded, so illiterates know what page to turn to, to see the pretty photos.
7. Gives the latest news without talking crap.
6. Has many sections where readers can write in and share their Gestapo crap with everyone.
5. The captions are as funny as a baby with a staple gun (heh).
4. Got more funky artwork than... a lot of funky artwork.
3. Kickass playguides that kickass.
2. It comes with a CD with GOOD stuff on it...
1. ...And it's as cheap as Chinese fireworks
P.S. Answer me this question. Do you think Mac computers will ever be accepted as games machines?
signing out,
FIR3ST4RT3R

Dear FIR3ST4RT3R,
Ten reasons why you are a freak...
10: Ahhh... forget it.

HYPER HOMEBOYS

Hey there Hyperions...
I have just had an experience. Just chilling in the afternoon, watching Beauty & the Beast with my Mum (don't look at me like that - I'm on swop vac) and they were talking about what was worse for the kiddies; sex or violence. What they mentioned was those "Nintendo thingies" that turn kids into bullies!
Now, the simple fact that they didn't know what the actual consoles were (especially the Nintendo; the most kid-friendly machine out there) and granted, they did mention TV and movies, but none mentioned what I think is the cause; the American homeboy culture. Take a look at the kids at schools who stir things up, and look at what they wear, how they talk; the influence is obvious. Now, I'm not blaming one certain media for this, it comes from TV, movies, music... But the one copping the blame is the one that generates the least of that mindset - the videogame industry! The last game that I saw that actually had that sort of influence was Wu-Tang Taste the Pain on the PSX - and that sucked anyway!
So, I say simply, make sure you cover all the angles and look at the whole picture before assigning the blame, people!
SCOTT GAGE A.K.A WHITESHADOW
whiteshadow@telstra.com

what I'm trying to say is that games seem to have been cut down to a few groups. First Person Shooters, Sport sim games and poofy doofy Mario games.

What happened to the days of point and click adventures (which I personally think rock), games such as Broken Sword and Leisure Suit Larry? Ever since games became 3D, point and click games have been a thing of the past. If you ask me, it's more important for a game to have a good storyline than graphics. So all you First Person Shooter designers, get off your asses and make us something original and new (like Deus Ex – damn that's a fine game). Stop sending us copies of Doom in disguise.

HAZZ
Tasmania

Dear Hazz,
If you want a good point and click, get Escape From Monkey Island. It may not have any pointing and clicking, but it's the same kind of

gameplay that you're obviously after.

SHEEP!

My dumb friend mentioned a game is being released in America. He claimed that it's the best game ever made.

However, judging by the name it doesn't sound all that great at all. The game's title is 'Sheep' and that's about all I know.

Can you please give me your expert opinion on that 'Sheep' game.

VLADMIR BOSKONOVITCH
vladmir_boskonovitch@hotmail.com
P.S Can you please give it a score out of 100?

Hi Vladmir,
Sheep has been on the release schedule for a while. It's by Empire Interactive, and it's essentially a puzzle game. Go to http://www.saveoursheep.com/ for more info on it.
We haven't got it so we can't score it. Sorry!

THE AWESOME GAMERA

Folks at Hyper,
I was casually reading through issue #86 and I stumbled across the Black and White interview. Lo and behold, who was present in one of the pictures but the king of monsters, the one and only Gamera, the giant flying turtle.

And I began to think... I got lost in thought you might say... it was unfamiliar territory... why aren't there more monster games? The only ones I can think of are that funny one with Lizzy the Lizard [no, not the Paralympics!], the funny giant rat and a gorilla of some sort. Monster Rampage World Tour or something.

The other one was King of Monsters, this weird fighting game that appeared on the Megadrive. You could pick from a giant beetle, a giant lizard, a giant wolf, a giant... you get the picture. There was also a funny giant superman. And you had big fights all over cities. You got bonus points for trashing buildings by hitting them with your

opponent. There's a concept that pisses all over Tekken Tag, Soul Calibur and Street Fighter for my money.
GOLEY
goley@hotmail.com

Dear Goley,
Wow, you understood the caption! Well done, lad. Impressive.

ROLL IT AND FOLD IT AND FOLD IT AGAIN

Hyper,
"PLEASE DO NOT BEND" - Who would have imagined printing four words on the front of my personally delivered, sealed copy of *Hyper Magazine*, would result in no more creased and ripped pages? Ha! Now there's no excuse for not subscribing.
TAM LAC
lac@chariot.net.au

Dear Tam,
We love readers who do our advertising for us.

inform

The Official Australian Games Chart
Compiled by Inform in association with AVSDA   October 2000

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price PC Games
(>$29.95 inc. GST)

Position		Game Title	Game Type
1	⇔	Baldurs Gate 2	RPG
2	⇧	Age Of Empires 2	Strategy
3	⇧	Sim Mania Pack	Bundle
4	⇧	The Sims	Strategy
5	✪	Cmmd. & Cnqr. Red Alert 2	Strategy
6	⇧	Cmmd. & Cnqr. Tiberian Sun	Strategy
7	⇩	Diablo 2	RPG
8	✪	Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Adventure
9	⇩	Sydney 2000	Sports
10	⇩	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price PlayStation Games
(>$39.95 inc. GST)

Position		Game Title	Game Type
1	⇔	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
2	⇔	TOCA World Touring Cars	Racing
3	⇔	Tony Hawk's Skateboarding	Sports
4	⇩	Sydney 2000	Sports
5	✪	Spiderman	Adventure
6	✪	Cmmd. & Cnqr: Red Alert	Strategy
7	✪	Formula 1 2000	Racing
8	✪	Need For Speed 4: Hi Stakes	Racing
9	✪	Medal Of Honor	Action
10	✪	Syphon Filter 2	Adventure

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price N64 Games
(>$39.95 inc. GST)

Position		Game Title	Game Type
1	⇔	Perfect Dark	Action
2	⇔	Pokemon Stadium	Action
3	✪	Mario Tennis	Sports
4	⇔	Mario Party 2	Family
5	⇧	Goldeneye 007	Action
6	⇩	Donkey Kong 64	Platform
7	⇔	Super Mario 64	Platform
8	⇩	Mario Kart 64	Racing
9	⇧	Super Smash Brothers	Sports
10	⇧	Pokemon Snap	Family

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price Dreamcast Games
(>$49.95 inc. GST)

Position		Game Title	Game Type
1	✪	Virtua Tennis	Sports
2	⇧	Hidden & Dangerous	Strategy
3	⇧	Sonic Adventures	Platform
4	⇧	Marvel Vs Capcom	Action
5	⇩	Resident Evil: Code Veronica	Adventure
6	⇩	House Of The Dead 2	Action
7	✪	Powerstone 2	Action
8	⇩	Dead Or Alive 2	Action
9	✪	WWF Royal Rumble	Sports
10	✪	Worms Armageddon	Strategy

Top 20 Best Selling Full Price Games - All Formats

Position		Game Title	Format	Position		Game Title	Format
1	✪	Pokemon Gold	Gameboy	11	⇩	Tony Hawk's Skateboarding	PlayStation
2	✪	Pokemon Silver	Gameboy	12	⇩	Sydney 2000	PlayStation
3	⇩	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	PlayStation	13	⇩	Pokemon Red	Gameboy
4	⇧	Baldurs Gate 2	PC	14	✪	Mario Tennis	N64
5	⇩	TOCA World Touring Cars	PlayStation	15	✪	Spiderman	PlayStation
6	⇧	Age Of Empires 2	PC	16	✪	Cmmd. & Cnqr. Red Alert	PlayStation
7	⇩	Pokemon Yellow	Gameboy	17	✪	Pokemon Pinball	Gameboy
8	⇩	Perfect Dark	N64	18	✪	Super Mario Brothers Deluxe	Gameboy
9	⇧	Pokemon Stadium	N64	19	⇩	Sim Mania Pack	PC
10	⇩	Pokemon Blue	Gameboy	20	✪	Mario Party 2	N64

A V S D A
Australian Visual Software Distributors Association Ltd

✪ -New entry
⇔ -Non mover
⇧ -Up from last month
⇩ -Down from last month

NEXT ISSUE
ON SALE JANUARY 24th

EXCLUSIVE!
HYPER VISIT THE SET OF THE TOMB RAIDER MOVIE!
WE TALK TO ANGELINA JOLIE ON LOCATION IN CAMBODIA

BANJO TOOIE
ARRIVES AT LAST

PLUS
10 REASONS WHY THE NINTENDO GAMECUBE WILL ROCK!

ALSO...
ANOTHER PACKED
PC COVER DISC,
THE LATEST PS2
REVIEWS AND
XBOX NEWS!

HYPER >>

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