



ISSUE 92 JUNE 2001

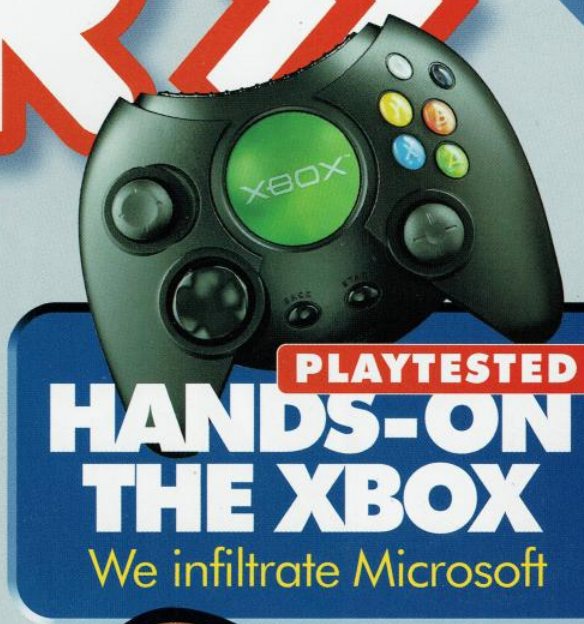
HYPER



MONSTER!

BLACK & WHITE

Is this the game of the year?



PLAYTESTED
HANDS-ON
THE XBOX
We infiltrate Microsoft

REVIEWS

- PC** Fallout Tactics
- PS2** Zone of the Enders
- PS2** Evergrace
- PS2** Bombad Racing
- PSone** Time Crisis: Titan
- DC** Grandia 2



Plus: NEWS FROM THE **GAME BOY ADVANCE** LAUNCH IN JAPAN!

Also:
THE BEST 16-BIT GAME WAS...?
Readers respond



X-RATED



IS YOUR CD MISSING?
Please ask your newsagent

CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

Adults Only gaming is here...

PAPER MARIO

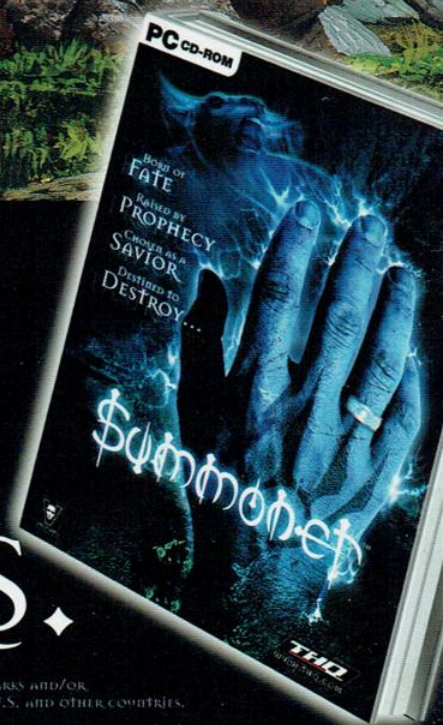
Nintendo's N64 RPG smash!

IN A WORLD RULED BY DESTINY...



AND TORTURE BY CONFLICT...

SAVIORS CAN BE DESTROYERS.



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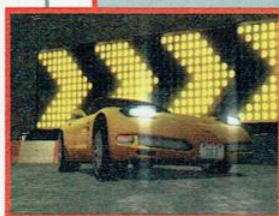
WINDOWS 95/98



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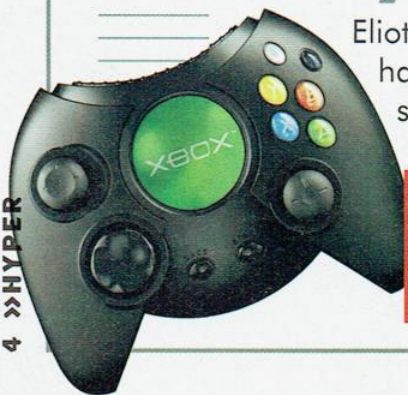
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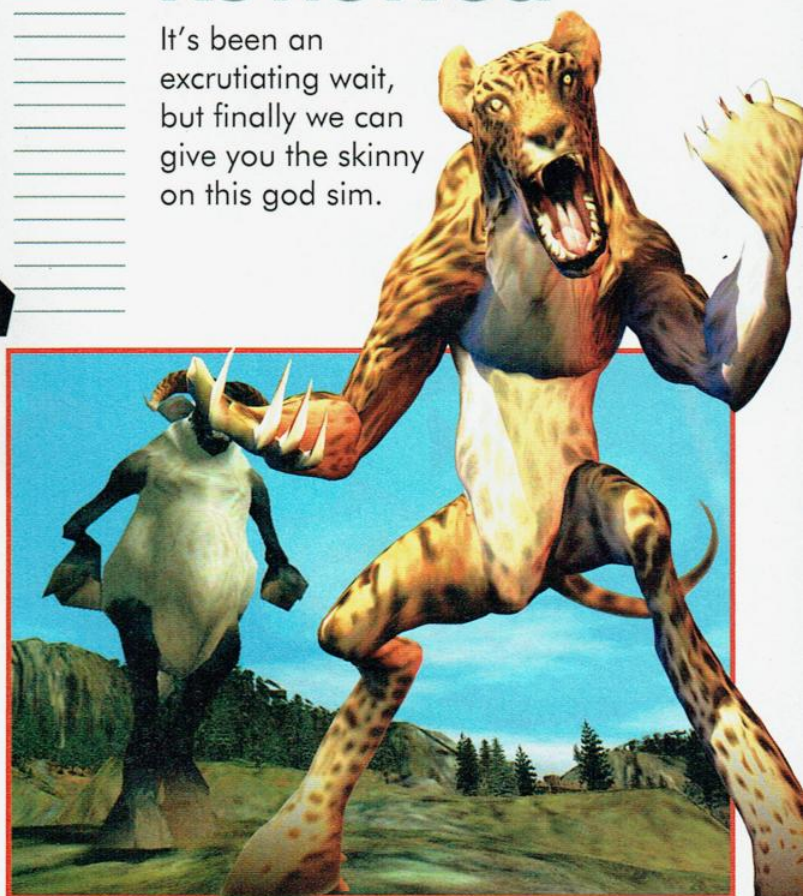
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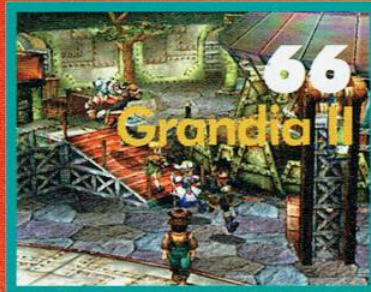
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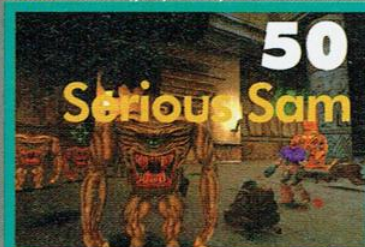
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HYPER»



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HYPE IT UP

>> Now that I've played with the Xbox, my attention has turned to Gamecube. That's not to say I think any less of the Xbox, it's just that Gamecube... well, let me explain.

I want to wrestle with its funky weird controller; I want to sniff the purple plastic and pop open the lid incessantly; I want to pick it up and throw it around, like the small portable cube it is. Basically, I want to revel in being a kid again.

The Xbox is a mighty fine looking piece of gaming hardware, and certainly I'll be lining up for one, but it also reminded me that I'm now a mature gamer who cares about DVD playback, NVIDIA chipsets and polygon power. The Gamecube is the other side of the coin. Some call it Nintendo remaining "kiddy", but in a way it's more of a grasp on a gaming innocence. Nintendo aren't forcing tech specs down our throats; they're not even touching the more mature DVD market. Nintendo are just promising us great games. Games devoid of cynicism, extreme violence and extreme sports.

Nintendo's history brings with it a certain sense of joyous wonder, of magical adventures yet to be had. But hey, I still want to blow the brains out of some aliens in Halo on the Xbox.

I think what I'm getting at, is that we may not be seeing an oncoming console war of giant proportions, but rather the release of two consoles that know their own potential markets well and will cater for those distinctly different audiences with great success. The magical characters of Nintendo and the hardcore nature of Microsoft's Xbox could co-exist in peace. Don't fight it my brothers and sisters.

Eliot Fish >> Editor



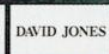


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NEWS

IN THE NEWS

- Sega on Xbox
- Final Fantasy X
- Crazy Taxi 2
- Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- XenoSaga



Tokyo Game Show 2001

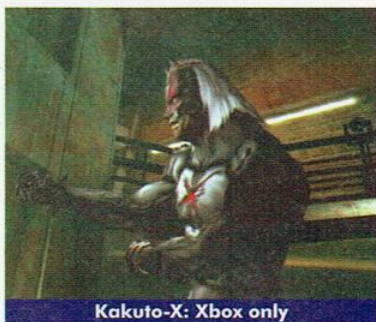
Microsoft announce their Sega partnership and woo developers

XBOX IN JAPAN

Sega to develop for Xbox!



Dead Or Alive 3: Xbox only



Kakuto-X: Xbox only



Air Force Delta II: Xbox only

Eill Gates' keynote address at TGS revealed Microsoft's Japanese Xbox development studio, which is committed to making Xbox a success in the crucial Japanese market. Heading up the Xbox studio is Toshiyuki Miyata who formally managed Sony's PlayStation development studio in Japan. Microsoft realize that if some of the big Japanese developers won't yet commit to the Xbox, the answer is to open their own first party studio and hire experienced Japanese programmers to design games specifically for that market.

Microsoft won't have to do it alone of course. Slowly, but surely, Japanese developers are signing up. Amazingly, Tecmo announced that Dead Or Alive 3 would be exclusive to the Xbox! It's this kind of support that is going to help the Xbox garner big attention in Japan.

Konami showed Air Force Delta II, along with X-Games Snowboarding 2 and Silent Hill 2 X. Metal Gear Solid X was not on show, but it was confirmed that the game is still in development. Unfortunately, there was a bit of talk that Konami have been pressured by rival console companies to slow down their Xbox support. We hope they don't get

bullied into dropping Xbox development.

Idea Factory were another Japanese developer that showed Xbox support. One of their titles was called X-Chaser and looked to be a 3D action adventure set in a futuristic world where swords are still the weapon of choice. They also had a card-trading game called Neverland Saga, but we don't expect to see a release for this one outside of Japan.

One game that got a lot of attention was a title codenamed Kakuto-X, a fighting game from Dream Factory, who made the fighting games Tobal

❖ Tecmo announced that Dead Or Alive 3 would be exclusive to the Xbox!

and The Bouncer for SquareSoft. The visual quality of the game was astounding, with some truly fluid and believable character motion. We can't wait to see a playable version of this title, as the demo reel was impressive to say the least. Let's hope that it's more Tobal than Bouncer, eh?

It looks like we'll now be waiting for E3 to see if there are any more big announcements regarding the Xbox in Japan. SquareSoft signing on is naturally the big announcement that we're all still crossing our fingers for.

One of the biggest announcements at the Tokyo Game Show was that Sega have 11 games in development for the Xbox, some of which will be exclusive to the Microsoft console. Some of the Sega titles we can expect to play on the Xbox include a new Panzer Dragoon game (which will be a shooter, not an RPG), Jet Set Radio Future (which might allow gamers to copy their own music tracks to the Xbox hard drive for in-game play), Sega GT 2, Gun Valkyrie and a rumoured Sonic title amongst others.

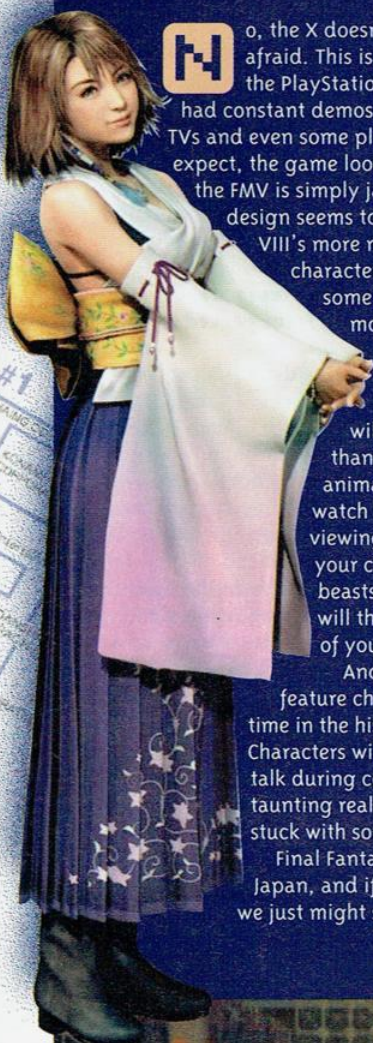
"Having Sega on board with Xbox is a huge win for gamers around the world," said Robbie Bach, chief Xbox officer. "The creative artists at Sega not only are going to deliver great Xbox games, they will help us establish the benchmark for great Xbox gaming experiences both on and offline."

We already know that Sega have announced some awesome games for the PS2 (Virtua Fighter 4, Crazy Taxi), however the Xbox does have the edge technically, hopefully meaning we could see all these titles and more in their finest incarnations on Xbox.

At this stage, the Sega announcement is fantastic for Xbox, but the PS2 still has the bigger A grade titles.

Final Fantasy X

Square's epic PS2 RPG debuts at TGS



o, the X doesn't have anything to do with Xbox I'm afraid. This is the long-awaited Final Fantasy X for the PlayStation 2. At the Tokyo Game Show they had constant demos playing on some lovely wide screen TVs and even some playable copies on the floor. As you'd expect, the game looks absolutely gorgeous. In fact, the FMV is simply jaw-dropping. The character design seems to be a return to Final Fantasy VIII's more natural, human looking characters, although there are still some bizarre and freakish monsters, as well as

Chocobos, Moogles and some fantastical locations. We discovered that summons will work differently in FFX, and thankfully, the long-drawn out animated sequences (that are great to watch but annoying after repeated viewings) will only play the first time your character, Yuna, summons her beasts. The creature you summon will then be a controllable member of your party during the combat.

Another change, is that FFX will feature character voices for the first time in the history of Final Fantasy. Characters will talk in cutscenes and even talk during combat (well, it'll be more like taunting really). Let's hope we don't get stuck with some horrid American voice-overs.

Final Fantasy X will be out this year in Japan, and if we're all good little Aussies, we just might see it in time for Christmas.



This guy is so poor he can't even afford to buy the other leg for his pants!



sexy cars, sexy wheels, sexy streets, sexy roadside billboards, sexy puddles of water

Gran Turismo 3 update

Amid fears that the game had suffered yet another slippage, GT3:A-Spec was another hot PS2 game that was given an airing at Tokyo Game Show. Still on track for a June/July Australian release, there were no shocking revelations here, we were just reminded that this game is looking great and is going to be

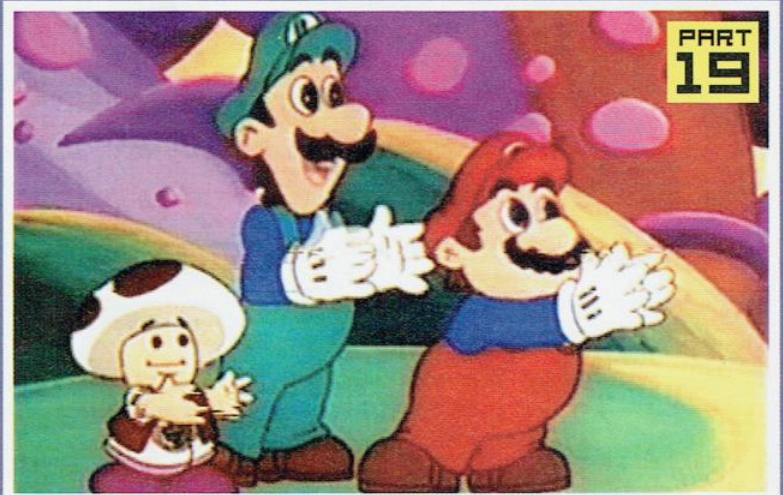
huge. SCEI have been loading up the visuals with some very impressive lighting and special effects, and every month the game has been delayed has only meant improvements to both the visual and mechanical aspects of the game. So we're all happy. Bring it on! Gran Turismo 3 will be released with a pack-in GT Force Wheel.

CAPTION THIS!

Our monthly Caption This competition has been getting too big for our mail-server to handle! But what the Hell, keep 'em pumping in...

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You must write CAPTION THIS PART 19 in the subject line!



PART 19

MAKE US LAUGH HERE



not the safest way to shave, but oh well

Crouching Graphics, Hidden Gameplay

Chow Yun Fat rocks. Michelle Yeoh rocks. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* rocks. Time for the spin-offs then. Games based on CTHD will be coming to all the big platforms (PC, PS2, DC, GC and XB) thanks to Taiwanese firm Vista Group. The console versions should be out early next year, but we could be playing the PC version by the end of the year! Vista Group are also planning a cartoon series and a full length animated film based on the film. Truly scary stuff.



POKEMON DELAY FOR GBA

In news from Japan, Pokémon won't be hitting GBA until 2002, but early indications are that it's going to be huge! Naturally. Also, NCL's Atsushi Asada confirmed that a number of Nintendo classics are indeed on their way to GBA. Titles mentioned, but not officially announced, were Super Mario Bros 3, Super Mario World, Yoshi's Island and Yoshi's Story! In US Nintendo news, NOA's director of game development Ken Lobb recently revealed that the Metroid game in development for Game Boy Advance is in fact an all new game, and not the port of Super Metroid many of us were expecting. Cool!



lose virtual weight in Happy Diet!

WEIRDEST GAMES EVER!

Where else in the world but Japan could you buy a game called Roast Meat Magistrate? Tokyo Game Show unveiled some of the craziest games titles we've ever heard in Hyper's history. Here's a list of the funniest game titles mentioned at the show... we can't even begin to imagine what these games are all about!

PSone

- Roast Meat Magistrate
- Happy Diet
- One-Piece Mansion
- Monster Farm Jump!
- Major Wave 1500 series: Captain Love
- Sentimental Graffiti
- Restaurant of the Sky: Hello Project Version

PS2

- Hamster Club-i
- Love Songs
- Flower, Sun & Rain
- Velvet File Plus

Dreamcast

- Fish Eyes Wild
- Love Hina - Smile Again
- Happy Lesson

WINNERS HYPER 90

BATTLE FOR NABOO

- P. Durney, NSW
- J. Hobbs, QLD
- A. McMillen, QLD
- A. Brown, WA
- D. Moldovan, NSW

EVERQUEST: DELUXE EDITION

- A. Brokenshow, SA
- N. Daymond, WA
- B. Muller, QLD
- B. Humpage, VIC
- D. Chapman, SA



OVERFLOW

A complete no brainer, of course, but we've learnt through reliable sources that Turok is coming to Gamecube, and that development is well underway. Hooray! I guess...

No Doom 3 at E3? That's what we've heard.

Since the Dreamcast version of Half-Life has suffered delay after delay, Blue Shift will now hit both DC and PC around June. This all-new episode is played from the perspective of a Black Mesa security guard, and will be a standalone product for PC; ie you don't need the original Half-Life to play it. If you do own the original though, Blue Shift comes with a High Definition pack that will upgrade the weapons and characters in any version of Half-Life to spanky high res models. It also comes with Opposing Force packed in.

It's official - Game Boy Advance is coming down under on June 22! Recommended retail price will most likely be \$179.95, which is, considering how bad the Australian dollar is right now, very reasonable. At this stage we don't know how many units will be coming into the country. Let's hope we don't end up with sloppy seconds.

Sony's PlayStation 2 recently pushed past the 10 million units shipped worldwide mark. According to Sony, Japan has snorted up 4.65 million units, North America has skulled 2.76 million, and Europe has inhaled 2.63 million. Sony expect to reach 20 million by the end of the year, and have upped their production to around 1.5 million a month!

Not only is it bloody hot over there, but Saudi Arabian kids now have even less opportunity to be cool. An Islamic edict has been issued by Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority banning Pokémon! And get this - any child caught with Pokémon trading cards or videogames will be shot on sight! GASP! Okay, so we made that last part up, but it's still pretty harsh don't you think? I mean, Pokémon doesn't enslave the minds of children, take all their pocket money and teach them to gamble... does it?

Acclaim are world renowned for their ability to prophetically identify undersaturated genres in the world of videogames, and then to capitalise on that foresight. They've done it again, but this time in the world of sports. Eliot and I know Lacrosse well, having played it at our all-girls boarding school in Britain in the Forties. We've been yearning for an "extreme" take on what we know is a crazy kool sport, and thanks to Acclaim that take is just around the corner. "Blast Lacrosse" will be to Lacrosse what NBA Jam was to basketball. Let's just hope Acclaim can out-extreme the other Lacrosse contenders "Big Up Yourself Lacrosse" and "The Lacrosse PSone Massive".

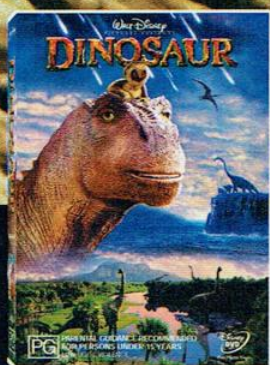
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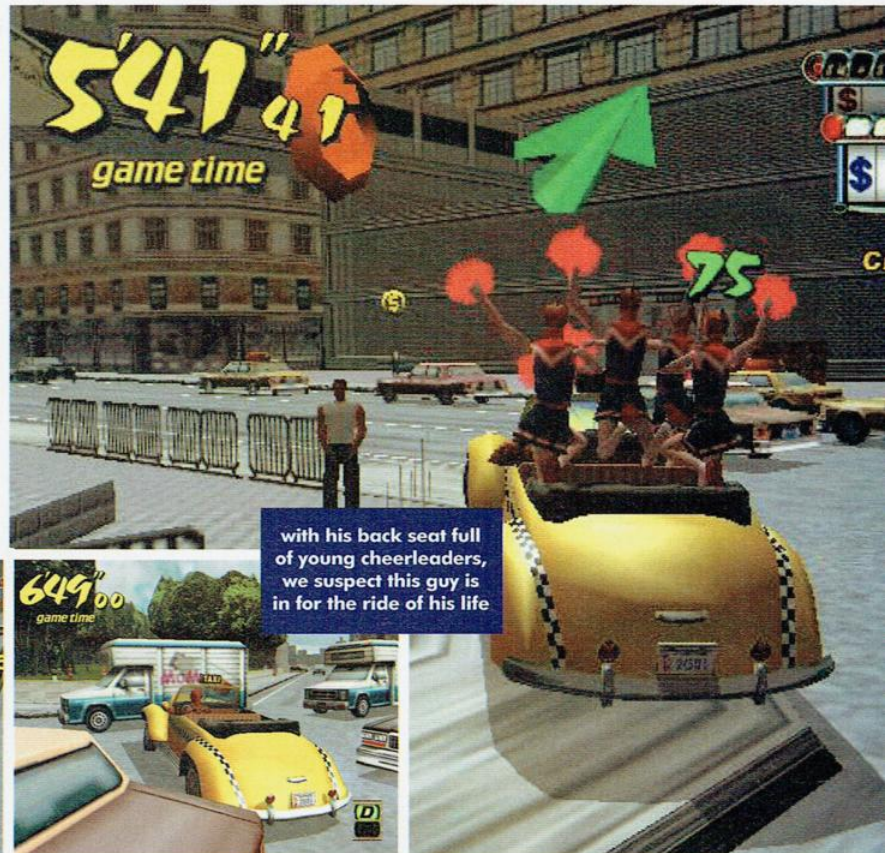
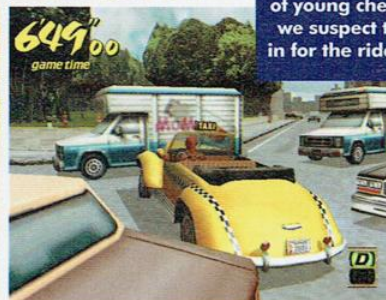
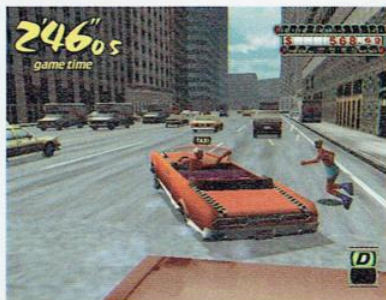


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Crazy Taxi 2 Woo Hooo!

Seega Hitmaker have sent us some screens of the upcoming Crazy Taxi 2 for the Dreamcast. It's no secret that the first Crazy Taxi was one of our favourite Dreamcast games when the system hit our shores, so we're pretty jazzed about the sequel.

Crazy Taxi 2 will allow you to make even bigger jumps, get on top of more buildings and even carry around up to four passengers at once, all in the streets of Noo Yawk. There will even be a four-player splitscreen mode. Hold on to those Dreamcasts!



with his back seat full of young cheerleaders, we suspect this guy is in for the ride of his life

MOTOR HEAD BANG

Metallica - the Sultans of Swing, sorry no that's not right. Metallica - the Disco Divas. No, still not right. Metallica - the err... Kill 'Em All guys (that's better), will be contributing their song "Fuel" to the soundtrack for Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open. Also featured in the game are Fear Factory's "Acres Of Skin" and "Byte Block", Digital Assassins' "Get Up", "The Plague" and "Lock It Down", 303 Infinity's "Fear Factor", and Un Loco's "Panic" and "Nothing". Good lineup eh? That's one pretty high profile and high-octane line up. We can hear the widdly widdly gu tars already.

XENOSAGA RPG FOR PS2

One of the greatest games never to be released here would have to be Xenogears. Those of you who had the pleasure of playing it will be excited to learn that Namco and Monolith have revealed that their top secret PS2 RPG project is to be called XenoSaga, and will be a prequel to the warped Xenogears. Heading up the game's development team is Tetsuya Takahashi - the man behind the original. The Japanese gaming public will probably be playing it at the end of the year. We should probably be starting a petition.

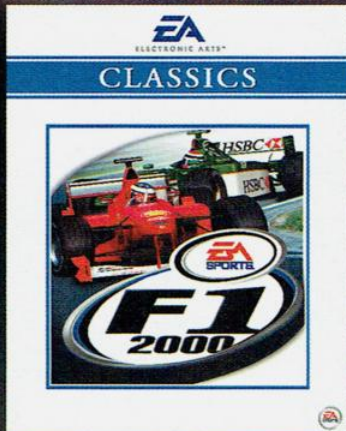
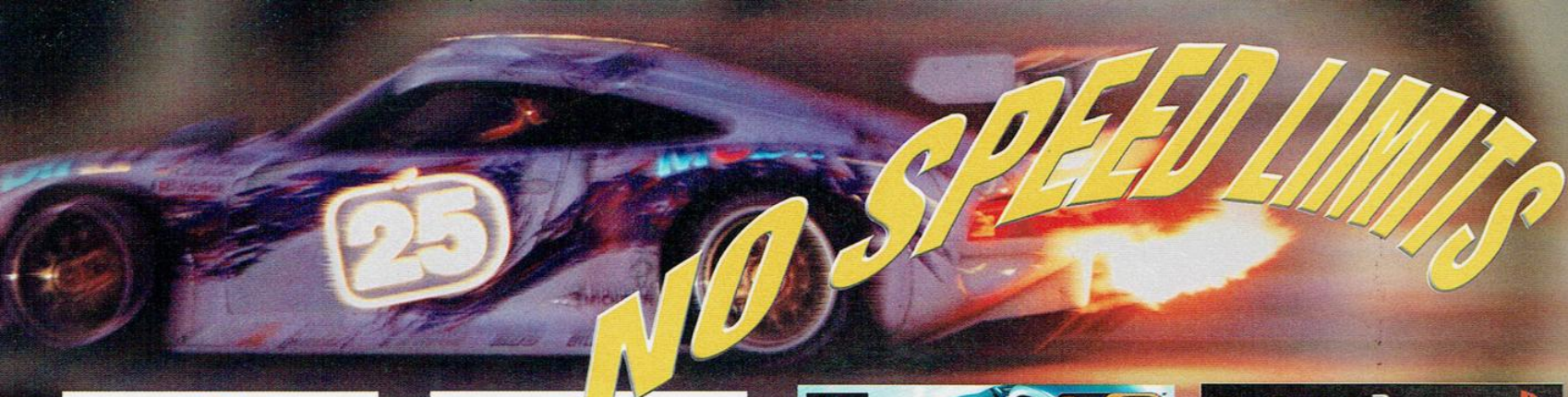
VIRTUA FIGHTER VS TEKKEN GAME?



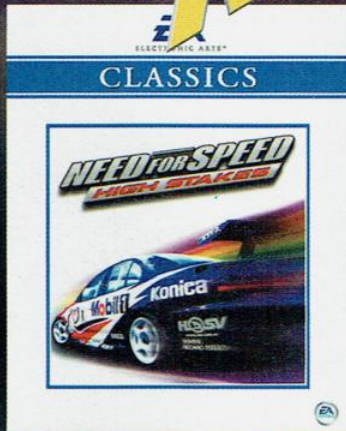
We've had SNK Vs Capcom, but the cross-over dream for 3D fighting fans would have to be Virtua Fighter Vs Tekken. Never going to happen? Well think again. Recently, Sega and Namco jointly paid for a two-page spread in Japan's Nikkei newspaper. On one page of the PS2 advertisement was Akira and on the other Jin. Nothing was actually revealed in the ad, but we're hoping it's a pre-announcement teaser. Forgive us if this issue is printed up and hits the stands after something gets announced.



too good to be true?



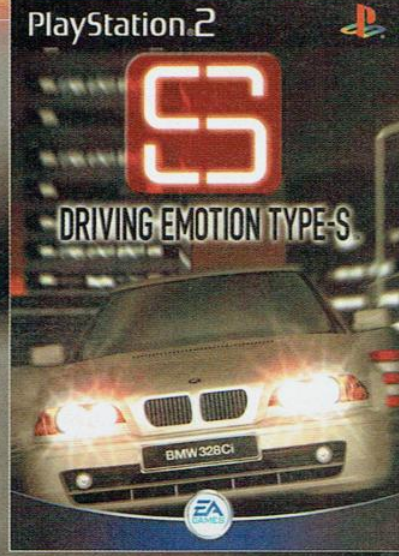
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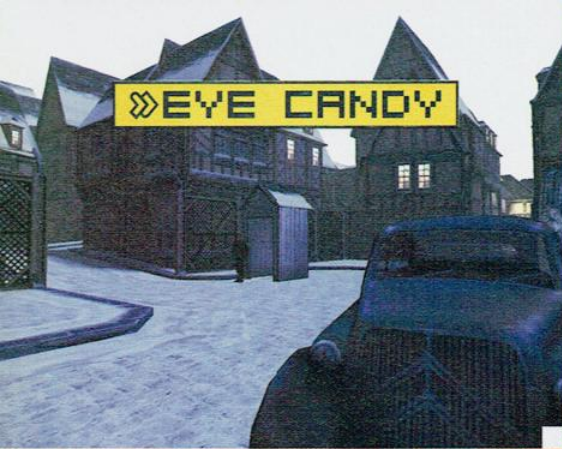
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 • Fyshwick • WODEN PLAZA **BRISBANE METRO** • ASPLEY OPEN 7 DAYS • QUEEN STREET MALL, CITY (Computers/Electrical only) OPEN 7 DAYS NOW OPEN • BROWNS PLAINS NOW OPEN • CARINDALE • EVERTON PARK OPEN 7 DAYS • INDOOROOPILLY (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • MORAYFIELD NOW OPEN • MT GRAVATT OPEN 7 DAYS (Computers Open Mon-Sat) • OXLEY OPEN 7 DAYS • GOLD COAST OPEN 7 DAYS • TWEED HEADS SOUTH OPEN 7 DAYS **QUEENSLAND COUNTRY** • AYR (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • DALBY (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • HERVEY BAY NOW OPEN • INNISFAIL (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • NOOSAVILLE OPEN 7 DAYS • KAWANA WATERS OPEN 7 DAYS • BUNDABERG • CAIRNS OPEN 7 DAYS • GLADSTONE OPEN 7 DAYS • MACKAY OPEN 7 DAYS • ROCKHAMPTON NORTH • TOOWOOMBA • TOWNSVILLE • WARWICK NOW OPEN **MELBOURNE SUPERSTORES** - OPEN 7 DAYS • CRANBOURNE NOW OPEN • DANDENONG • GREENSBOROUGH PLAZA (Computers/Electrical only) • KNOX TOWERPOINT NOW OPEN • MARIBYRNONG • MOORABBIN • NUNAWADING • PRESTON • SOUTHLAND (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN **VICTORIA COUNTRY** - OPEN 7 DAYS • ALBURY • BALLARAT • BENDIGO • GEELONG • HAMILTON (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • MILDURA • MOE (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • SALE NOW OPEN • SHEPPARTON • SWAN HILL (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • TRARALGON • WANGARATTA (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • WARRAGUL (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • WARRNAMBOOL • WONTHAGGI (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN **ADELAIDE - METRO** • ENFIELD OPEN 7 DAYS (Computers/Electrical Open Mon-Sat) • MARION OPEN 7 DAYS (Computers/Electrical Open Mon-Sat) **SOUTH AUSTRALIA - COUNTRY** • WHYALLA OPENS MARCH **PERTH METRO** • BELMONT (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • CANNINGTON • CITY WEST OPEN 7 DAYS • FREMANTLE (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • JOONDALUP • MADDINGTON (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • MANDURAH NOW OPEN • MIDLAND (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • MORLEY (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN • O'CONNOR • OSBORNE PARK • PORT KENNEDY • WARWICK (Computers/Electrical only) NOW OPEN **WESTERN AUSTRALIA COUNTRY** • ALBANY • BUNBURY • BUSSELTON OPEN 7 DAYS • GERALDTON • KALGOORLIE • KARRATHA • PORT HEDLAND (Computers/Electrical only) **NORTHERN TERRITORY** • DARWIN OPEN 7 DAYS **HOBART METRO** - OPEN 7 DAYS • HOBART CITY • GLENORCHY • ROSNY **TASMANIA COUNTRY** - OPEN 7 DAYS • LAUNCESTON • BURNIE • DEVONPORT • ULVERSTONE (Computers/Electrical only) www.harveynorman.com.au (Computers only)

» EYE CANDY



MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

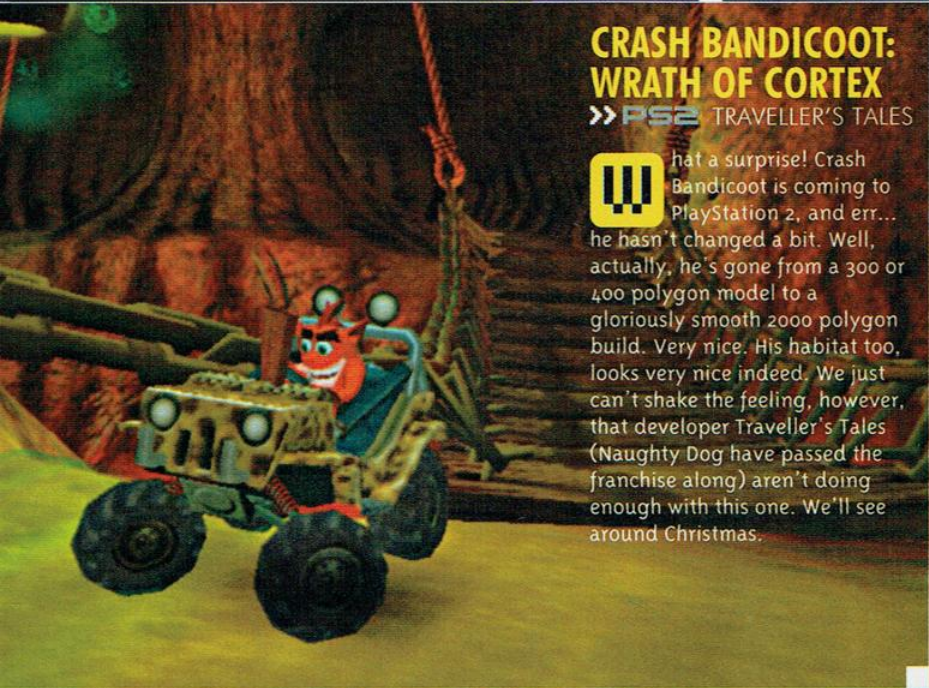
» PC DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE

The Medal Of Honor games on PlayStation were blessed with fantastic gameplay... but not much else. So what would happen, if you paired that gameplay with some of the sweetest visuals the Quake 3 engine has ever produced? Take a look, start drooling and get ready to storm the beaches at Normandy, hang with the French Resistance, sneak into a Nazi sub pen and a whole lot more... this game will rocket!





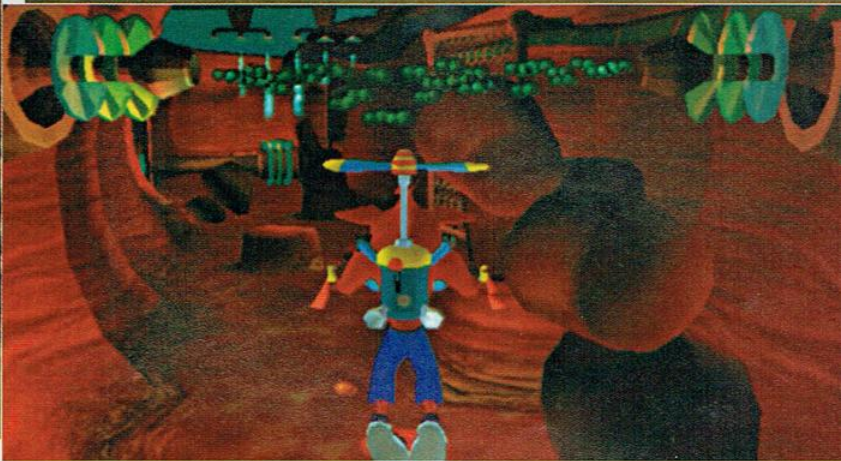
» EYE CANDY



CRASH BANDICOOT: WRATH OF CORTEX

» PS2 TRAVELLER'S TALES

What a surprise! Crash Bandicoot is coming to PlayStation 2, and err... he hasn't changed a bit. Well, actually, he's gone from a 300 or 400 polygon model to a gloriously smooth 2000 polygon build. Very nice. His habitat too, looks very nice indeed. We just can't shake the feeling, however, that developer Traveller's Tales (Naughty Dog have passed the franchise along) aren't doing enough with this one. We'll see around Christmas.



» HYPER 15





GAME BOY ADVANCE HITS JAPAN!

Hyper's Japanese correspondent, **AMOS WONG**, was in the frontline for the Game Boy Advance launch. Here's the inside word on how Nintendo's new handheld created a frenzy...

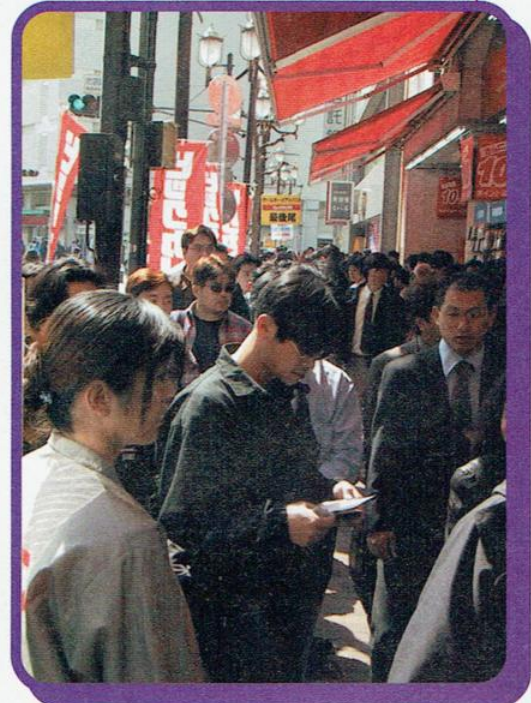
GAME BOY ADVANCE™
ゲームボーイアドバンス™

It may not be representative of Japan as a whole, but lining up for the next big thing - in Tokyo at least - is a given. Whether it's a once obscure restaurant (profiled on one of the many variety shows), a new shopping centre or snack chain - announce it and the crowds will come. Nintendo's latest was no exception. Fuelled by appearances at various high profile events and heavy TV advertising during pre-launch fever, estimates placed pre-orders of the Game Boy Advance around 2.7 million; the company boasted production of 1.5 million units during April and May, increasing the rollout to 2 million per month afterwards. Big bickies.

CAMPING OUT
In true Tokyo tradition, Game Boy Advance virtually sold out on March 21 when it finally hit the shops. Unsurprisingly, eager gamers camped outside major electronics stores in Akihabara, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro starting the night before. Always a great opportunity for queue-spotters - mostly press, admittedly. With

some shops opening early in response to the overwhelming reception, Shinjuku reportedly sold out by late morning, while in Ikebukuro (ten minutes away by train) the crowds lasted past noon. Bic Camera - the largest store in the area - set up a sales counter on street level, in an effort to divert a potential in-store crush (they employed the same tactic for the PS2 launch last year). Which was a very good idea, considering at sales peak the line stretched for 200 metres! Nevertheless, activity inside remained hectic, with many punters circling the software stand and checking out the packaging.

BLARING THE NEWS
By mid afternoon in Akihabara on the opposite side of Tokyo, stock of the hardware had pretty much run out. Forlorn stands littered the front of some stores along the main drag with only software to offer. Sold out signs were stuck up, adding that the next shipment date was unknown. Yet amazingly, even at 4pm a single shop Laox (part of a huge chain in the area) still had units on offer and was blaring the news over its





Launch day shock!

Well okay, that may be a bit of an exaggeration. But the total lack of playable demo units on show did come as a surprise. Even in Tokyo's electronics hub Akihabara, not a single display unit could be found to play with. Anywhere. It's a contrast to other handhelds like Bandai's Wonderswan Colour or even SNK's Il-fated console, both of which had stalls in certain stores. But then again at this stage, GBA hardly needs the lure of a demo unit to attract customers. The sales figures attest to that.



shopfront speakers. Unlike many other establishments, GBA posters and brochures featured prominently – PS2 advertising dominated most other places, as the sure-fire hit Biohazard Code Veronica Complete was shipping the following day. Inside Laox, it was wall to wall GBA posters as well on the second floor: buyers had to get a ticket from a staff member next to the escalator, before forming multiple lines to the counter. The crowd was largely made up of people in their twenties to businessmen.

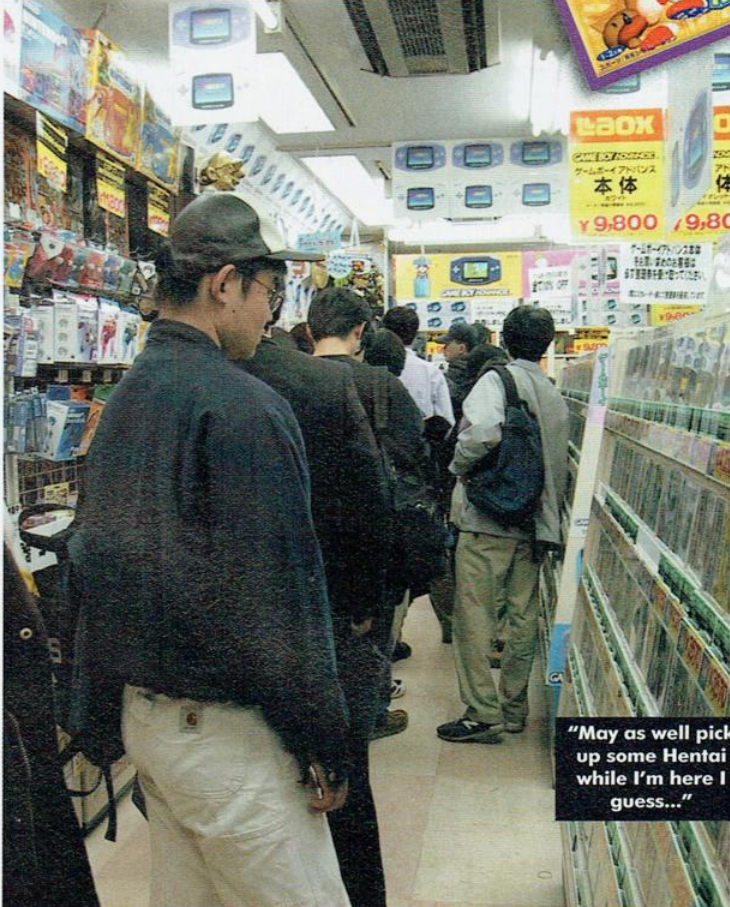
IT'S A SURPRISE!

While stores further out of the way also took orders, some in areas like Kaihim Makuhari (ironically where the Tokyo Game Show is held) refused and claimed they'd be receiving less than five units...if even that! At department store Ito-yokado in west Tokyo, Junko was picking up a unit she'd reserved. "It's for my son's birthday next month," she says, adding that he doesn't know about it yet. "It's a surprise." When asked what game she was planning to buy, she replied "I have no idea." Fair enough, as

getting one's hands on the hardware was the top priority!

Until the next issue of local Japanese gaming bible Famitsu hits the streets, it's hard to tell which software title sold the best. Early reports mention F-Zero, Sega's Chu-Chu Rocket and Super Mario Advance as likely contenders. Being a portable console, the popularity of the rechargeable battery and charger was a no-brainer.

With multiplayer battles possible through one cartridge (perhaps the Game Boy Advance's most outstanding feature besides graphics) the link cable was another hot seller. After the launch day dust had settled, 650,000 GBAs were sold and Nintendo are busily preparing another 400,000 units to hit the shops by the end of March. If the pre-launch reservation reports were accurate, they'll also be snatched up in no time. Within one year, the big N are aiming to shift a whopping total of over 24 million units worldwide – what a number eh? Just in time for the release of the next generation Pokémon title that will utilise the E-card reader peripheral. Of course, the crowds will come again. <<>>



"May as well pick up some Hentai while I'm here I guess..."

Coming to a GBA near you!

Here's a peek at some other GBA games we haven't yet told you about...



Bomberman Story



Breath Of Fire



Dark Arena



Dodge Ball Advance



F-14 Tomcat



Fire Emblem



Konami Krazy Racers



Game Boy Wars Advance



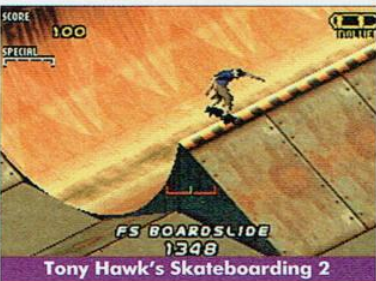
Winning Post



iridion 3D



Spiderman



Tony Hawk's Skateboarding 2

How do they compare?

GAME BOY ADVANCE

CPU: 32-bit ARM with embedded memory

SCREEN: 2.9" TFT reflective screen; 240x160 resolution; 40.8mm x 61.2mm screen size; 32,768 possible colours; 511 simultaneous colours in character mode; 32,768 simultaneous colours in bitmap mode

SIZE (mm): 82mm(L) x 144.5 (W) x 24.5mm (D)

WEIGHT: 140g

POWER: 2 AA batteries

BATTERY LIFE: 15 hours

SOFTWARE: Cartridge format; Game Boy & Game Boy Color compatible

GAME BOY COLOR

CPU: 8-bit Z80

SCREEN: 160x140 resolution; 32,000 possible colours; 56 simultaneous colours

SIZE: 75mm (W) x 133mm (H) x 27mm(D)

WEIGHT: 138g

POWER: 2 AA batteries

BATTERY LIFE: 10 hours

SOFTWARE: Cartridge format; Game Boy compatible



one happy customer re-lives all his Super Mario Bros 2 memories



EMPIRE EARTH

PC CATEGORY: Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-16 >> PUBLISHER: Sierra >> AVAILABLE: August

WOW-O-METER



From its first showing at E3 in 2000 to a fleeting glimpse at the European Computer Trade show in London last September, the hysteria and praise for Empire Earth continues to grow. This game is so detailed in both content and story line, and is still growing, that we can only begin to touch on what is on offer.

WAR - HUH, GOOD GOD!

Empire Earth's ethos is focused on the tribulation of war, and this as one of the constants of human civilisation. History has always seen us in conflict, from battles between tribes to the mechanised warfare of the twentieth century. The whole scenario of war in

many guises is displayed within Empire Earth, plus a lot more. Stainless Steel Entertainment has a proven track record, and with the added influence of an Age of Empires designer, this stylish RTS looks a sure fire epic that will take gamers through the past, present and future of armed conflict.

Stainless Steel has already commented that they see Empire Earth cutting across the whole gaming spectrum, with die hard strategy fans as well as first time gamers finding it appealing. From what we've seen, the game is designed intuitively, with a nice learning curve that will quietly

kick in. A special focus on in-game learning scenarios keeps the game simple, and tutorial missions allow the most novice of players to jump right into the fun.

Empire Earth is shaping up to be like Age Of Empires 2, but with much greater scope. The game is divided into 12 historical Epochs and players can choose to play any span of time — from one Epoch to all twelve. The object of the game is to turn your simple tribe into the dominant empire.



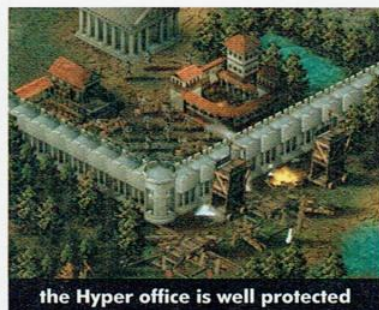
WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

Personality.

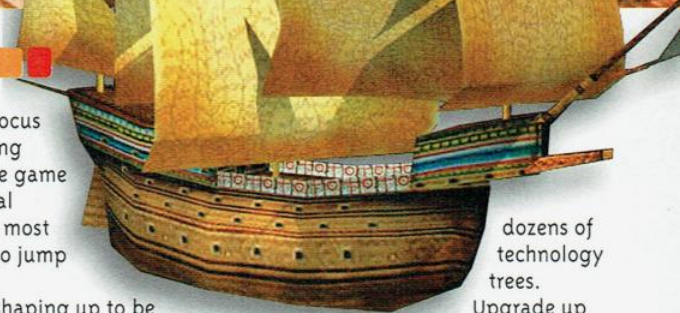
There's a risk that Empire Earth could feel more like a history lesson.



do what I say, or you're glue!



the Hyper office is well protected



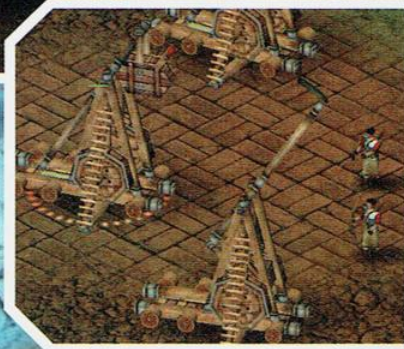
dozens of technology trees.

Upgrade up

to ten separate

attributes for each of 150 types of military units. The depth, detail and looks are shaping up to put Empire Earth well ahead of the RTS pack.

Fight land, air and sea battles, construct countless war machines including siege towers, trebuchets, nuclear submarines, stealth bombers and intelligent mechanised robots. There's plenty of scope for everyone, whether you're a history nut or future tech fanboy. How about carrying out a night attack with a column of Patton's tanks? Better still, command French Grenadiers in the Napoleonic Wars. Send Alexander the Great's army in to cause havoc! Convert the heathens of an enemy state, and capture and enslave an opponent's citizens. Force rivals into submission through diplomatic means, or construct



islands in the stream, that is what we are

Wonders of the World that give your civilisation awesome special abilities. Numerous scenarios let you reshape the course of history.

Huge random maps with numerous terrain types provide the ultimate replayability, and multiple game options, including an emphasis on multiplayer, offer a wide variety of game play experiences. The features and options on offer are truly impressive.

you will be able to carry them over. There are about a dozen technology tracks for improving various aspects of your civilisation, such as infrastructure, defence, health, food production, along with a diversity of resources in the game, which are of importance for the period you are playing in. Food, wood and water are important, but as you progress other resources gain far greater importance.

Each map will contain all the necessary resources for the growing civilisation. Each of the civilisations in Empire Earth will have the potential to access each and every technology. Which ones a player decides to

research depends on his strategy. In the scenarios, limits may be placed on what the player can and cannot research, depending on how the scenario designer wants the scenario to play out. Rest assured, however, that these could be the longest battles/campaigns you will ever undertake.

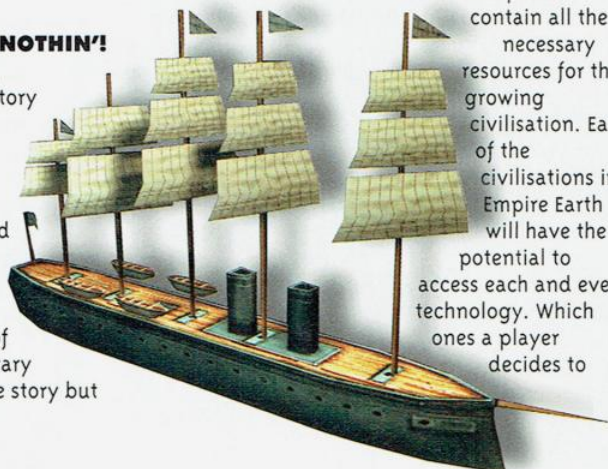
Empire Earth has a lot of options but simplicity and functionality are crucial elements for any user interface. The basics of Empire Earth's UI can be learned quickly, while the more

'advanced' features are there if people want to make use of them.

Empire Earth is a real-time strategy game that is so immense that the release of late 2000 has now turned into mid 2001, and the game is still growing daily. Stainless Steel want to get everything right, from the fast paced combat action to the resource management, and even a day/night cycle. Looking hot. <<<

ABSOLUTELY NOTHIN'!

Each campaign, complete with story and objectives, will see you follow a civilisation through a period in history. The resources of the player at the beginning of a scenario will vary according to the story but



all your base are we sick of that yet?



drowning the giant female stone golem



OPERATION WINBACK

PS2

CATEGORY: 3rd person stealth 'em up >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: KOEI >> AVAILABLE: TBA

WOW-O-METER



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
This game being so good that it tides us over until MGS2!

Operation Winback is undoubtedly one of the Hyper crew's all time favourite N64 action games. Now that the PS2 semi-sequel is getting close to local release, we sent Derek dela Fuente along to speak with Toru Ogawa, the game's producer, to find out how it's shaping up.

Perhaps the first question we should ask is, why bring Operation Winback back? "Looking at the current PS2 line-up, I think there is plenty of room for a quality third person shooter that balances stealth and gunplay." True true. So how does the game differ from the original? "The majority of the game remains quite close to the original version. Our focus has been mainly on improving the look and feel of the game, and adding things such as the one and two player 'bot' modes and complete voice acting for all of the event scenes localised into English, French and German. Location-wise,

we've added some new multiplayer maps as well. The main character's actions are the same, but we've managed to clean up a lot of the problems such as fogging and slowdown that plagued the original thanks to the new hardware."

It looks like the team haven't updated the graphics a great deal, but they've worked hard to ensure the game won't slow down, even when you're surrounded by eight enemy soldiers. The draw distance has also been improved considerably.

The gameplay will be very similar to the original, with the same set of real life weapons and gameplay options. "If you're really good, you can finish the game taking out lots of enemies, or hardly any at all. I think more than objectives, the game gives players choices on how to approach different situations in the game."

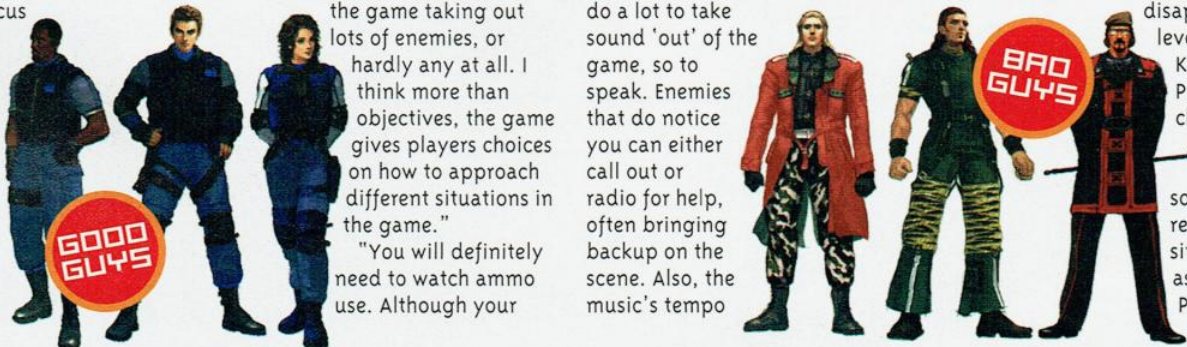
"You will definitely need to watch ammo use. Although your

standard handgun features unlimited ammo, you're going to want to keep some of the heavier firepower for the hordes of enemies you'll come across." And of course for fans of deadly accuracy: "Except for the bosses, all enemies can be taken out with a single headshot, regardless of the weapon."

Similarly to Metal Gear Solid 2, sound also plays a prominent role. "Sounds you make can alert enemies to your presence. A patrolling guard will stop and face your direction if they hear gunfire. In other instances, footsteps on metal flooring can alert the guards. In a number of instances, using cover and items such as your silencer equipped handgun effectively do a lot to take sound 'out' of the game, so to speak. Enemies that do notice you can either call out or radio for help, often bringing backup on the scene. Also, the music's tempo

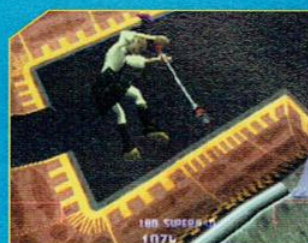
varies depending on how much life you have remaining. The combination of this increased tempo with an empty clip and surrounded by enemies is quite nerve-racking. I love it. There is great narrative, which is intertwined in the action - things like taking cover and deciding whether to blow stuff up or not. That's always fun. In some places, a well-placed rocket or C4 can save you time and frustration. We leave those types of things to the user to figure out though."

We've played the final Japanese version here at Hyper and were disappointed at the level of optimisation Koei made for the PS2. Hopefully the changes made for the game's local release will go some way towards remedying this situation. Full review as soon as we get PAL code. <<<



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compos, grind ledges, high-flying wires, barrells
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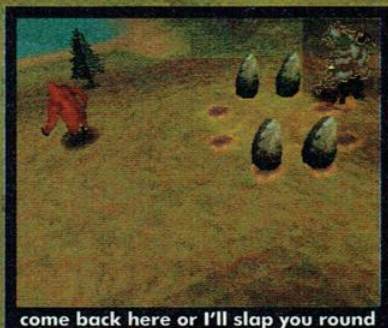
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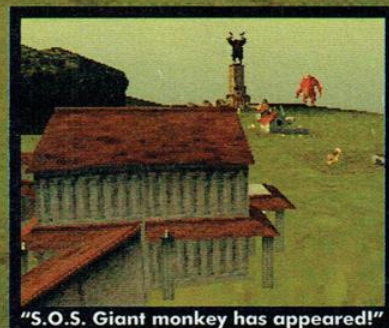
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the game's interface is pretty handy



come back here or I'll slap you round



"S.O.S. Giant monkey has appeared!"

BLACK & WHITE

PSone

CATEGORY: God Sim/Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts >> AVAILABLE: TBA

WOW-O-METER



As you all know, the process of converting games from PC to console is a very tricky one, especially when there is a large processing power differential. Such is the case with this conversion of Black and White.

EBONY AND IVORY

In order for the game to work on PlayStation, developers Krisalis are building everything from scratch, making (often drastic) changes where necessary, yet trying to stay true to the core vision of the game. "The biggest problem we faced was fitting the PC landscapes onto the console," says Simon Pashley, lead programmer on the project. "With experimentation and optimising the rendering engine, we managed to hold a whole

landscape in memory with half the level of detail. They are much smaller though, being about 5% of the PC size." The inhabitants too, have received a PlayStation makeover.

"The people are pre-rendered sprites, not 3D animations, as this saves on CPU animation but at the expense of video RAM. We have over 2,000 frames of advanced quaternion animations for the villagers."



The interface has also been considerably reworked for the PlayStation port, taking into account the huge differences between control through a mouse and keyboard, and control through a game pad. The console game, for instance, will show a



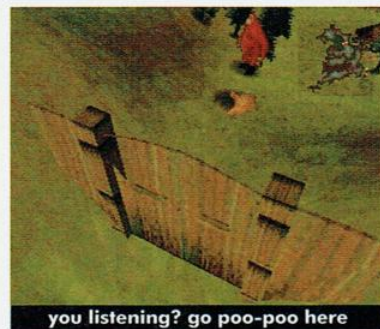
WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

We're simply hoping that the ageing technology in the PSone doesn't kill the gameplay.

'belief' figure on screen. This is a measure of the faith of the inhabitants in you as their god. There will also be a scanner viewable at all times. "Whereas the PC has a zoom function enabling you to see your position within the landscape, this facility isn't available on the PSone so a scanner is the best method to keep tabs on your position."

CHALK AND CHEESE

As far as the actual gameplay is concerned, Black & White on PSone will have 25 quests as opposed to the 100 or so on PC, taking place on three landscapes - each of which will be at the maximum size possible. All of the quests will be accompanied by text and speech, although even the text has had to be simplified to leave room for the game. To compensate, Krisalis have added facial icons to go alongside the text. "It was decided to add this because the level of detail we have available is much lower than a PC." The 'gesture' system, too, has had to go through a radical overhaul. 'Gestures' are the shapes made when using spells and magic. On a PC it's a



you listening? go poo-poo here

simple task to draw a fire circle using the mouse, but much more difficult with a control pad, especially during a battle. To this end, Krisalis have designed shortcuts using an easy combination of buttons.

With all these changes, it's clear that the PSone version of Black and White will be a very different "beast" from the PC. We'll have to wait until the end of May, however, to truly know whether it's good... or evil. <<<

MONSTER RANCHER 3

CATEGORY: Monster Dude Ranch >> **PLAYERS:** 1-2
PUBLISHER: Tecmo >>> **AVAILABLE:** TBA

WOW-O-METER

Look. It's pretty simple really...

In the Worlds before Monster Rancher, Primal chaos reigned, Gaming sought order. But the console can fly only when its software has grown. The four worlds formed again and yet again, As endless aeons wheeled and passed. Time and the pure essences of Gaming, The Miyamotos of the Earth, And the powers of the East and the West All worked upon a certain game - old as PlayStation, And it magically became playable. That first game was named Thought, Tecmo Da Buddha, the Father Buddha, Said, 'With our thoughts we make the world.' Elemental forces caused the game to be released, from it then came a stone cold Monster. The nature of Monster was irrepressable!

Or something. This is the first Monster Rancher game for PS2, and it's taking a very similar tack to the previous titles, with the addictive "nurture, breed, battle" gameplay in full force, as well as the unique "data DNA" system that allows you to create a monster by having the game read any CD/DVD.



a monster hangover



princess mononoke before puberty



kids shouldn't be watching this



BLOODY ROAR 3

CATEGORY: Fighting >> **PLAYERS:** 1-2
PUBLISHER: Namco >>> **AVAILABLE:** TBA

WOW-O-METER

While you could say that the plethora of sequels appearing on the PlayStation 2 are becoming a "bloody bore", at least this one has a demon twist. The Bloody Roar series has never had a particularly high profile, mostly because it's never really hit the heights of the Tekkens and Virtua Fighters of the world. Bloody Roar 3 looks to maintain that trend, but we really like what we've seen anyway. The gameplay is super-fast, with a high mash-factor and some ludicrous

combos. As before, each combatant has the ability to turn into a powerful beast form, in which they can execute their deadliest special attacks. These are quite amazing - creative, fluid and dripping with graphical juice. Whether Bloody Roar 3 will make it to Australian shores is hard to say, but we'd be missing out on a pretty cool fighting game if it doesn't.

WOW-O-METER

EARTHWORM JIM

CATEGORY: Platformer >> **PLAYERS:** 1
PUBLISHER: Majesco >>> **AVAILABLE:** August

WOW-O-METER

Towards the end of the 16-bit era when gamers were thinking they'd just about seen it all, Dave Perry's twisted mind belched forth a game that helped reinvent the platformer genre, as well as proving once and for all that cruelty to animals can be fun! Earthworm Jim was the game, and the protagonist was an earthworm whose exoskeleton gave him hardcore fragging power. Up against the nefarious Pscrow, Jim used his own segmented body in much the same way as Indy uses his whip, latching onto things and generally whipping up a storm across some surreal and clever levels. Blessed with immense character,

Earthworm Jim excelled thanks to its bizarre humour. From dropping a fridge onto a seesaw that catapulted a cow into the stratosphere, through to snot bungie jumping and some of the weirdest characters this side of Japan, Jim was both fun and playable.

Courtesy of Pipe Dream Interactive, the original Earthworm Jim game is on its way to the GBA. The GBA version will also include a variety of (hopefully multiplayer) mini-games. Some levels from the sequel would also be cool. Earthworm Jim will be on sale a few months after the GBA's launch.

WOW-O-METER



jim does his best to fight off the tequila makers

INSIGHT



cute, but he'll kick your arse



it's not hard to fall for this game



strike a pose



バグン 夢見も黒き旅人、クロノアよ、ひとつロロに力を貸してやってくんか。



PS2

KLONOA 2

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: Take 2 >> AVAILABLE: TBA

The sequel to Klonoa is out in Japan, and is in the process of being translated for Western audiences. Das ist ein groovy beat, ja? We've had a bit of a tweak with the Japanese release, and have to say that it rocks hard. Before going any further, however, put the idea of radical changes in gameplay out of your mind. This is very much a no effort sequel — it's still 2.5D, you still grab and use enemies, you still jump along platforms and you still fight bosses that have a circular path around them. That said, it's a winning formula, and the move to PS2 has brought some very sweet effects with it.

There are some fantastic bouncy platform sections where you're launching miles into the air and the camera will switch to a top down view to further convey the impression of height. There are also some very cool automated sections (very much like in Sonic) where you're shot out of a cannon and the camera pans all the way around your beautifully cel shaded character. The soundtrack is also spot on, with some areas being set to laid-back freestyle jazz! To put it simply, Klonoa 2 won't change the world, but it will make it feel warm and fuzzy.

WOW-O-METER



trust no one, not even us! well, maybe us.

MAJESTIC

CATEGORY: Online Adventure/Mystery >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: EA >> AVAILABLE: TBA

WOW-O-METER



PC

Majestic is an experiment in using the interactive technology that we use every day, such as web browsing, fax, phone and email, to create a game where the line between what is real and fake is very difficult to discern.

A solitary 1Mb download will be all you'll need to begin the game. Events in the gameworld occur in real-time, whether you're logged on or not. Based on a conspiracy theory/mystery storyline, gameplay has you talking with NPCs, discovering clues, keeping an object inventory, and using some lateral thinking to progress. The difference is, of course, that it will seem more like doing actual research

on the net than playing a game on your hard drive. You won't be handed clues on a platter either. There will be a search engine that you'll need to use to glean web addresses — some real, some elaborate fakes.

What will really make the concept come alive will be things like getting an insider to do some investigative work for you, and having a physical fax waiting for you the next day. Or how about a mysterious message on your voicemail "You don't know who I am, but I may be able to help you". The developers are also promising to dynamically throw current events into the story, to make it all feel even more real.



hadoken!



Ken finally gets that wisdom tooth out

SUPER STREET FIGHTER 2 ADVANCE

CATEGORY: 2D fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Capcom >> AVAILABLE: August

WOW-O-METER



GBA

Why, oh why, Delilah? You'd think we'd be doing the happy dance at the news that classic Street Fighter action is coming to GBA. Well, we are... but in a more subdued manner than we would be had Street Fighter 2 Turbo been announced. You see, in our minds, SF2T was the superior title in the pre-Alpha era, and definitely the game we most want to carry around in our oversize novelty pockets.

Even so, despite its weedy sound effects, Super Street



Fighter 2 Turbo brought with it new characters (Cammy, T Hawk, Fei Long and Dee Jay), new super moves thanks to the turbo bar, and an updated graphical style. Capcom have some challenges ahead with this title, not just graphically, but also in keeping the core Streeties gameplay with only four buttons instead of six. We're pretty confident that they can pull it off, and we'll be joyfully hadokening all contenders with the link cable later this year.



THE DUKES OF HAZZARD

DAISY DUKES IT OUT

Looks like them Dukes are stirrin' up Hazzard County's backroads again!



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LOOMING

Hyper's monthly peek at games that are in development and set for a release later this year.

PC



Zoo Tycoon

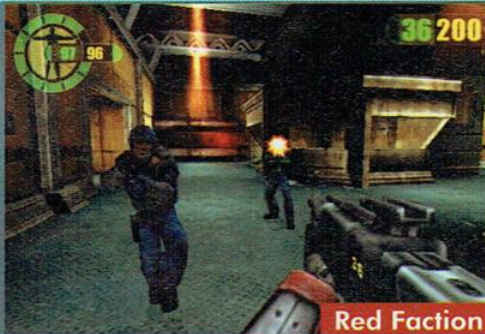


Torn



X-Com: Enforcer

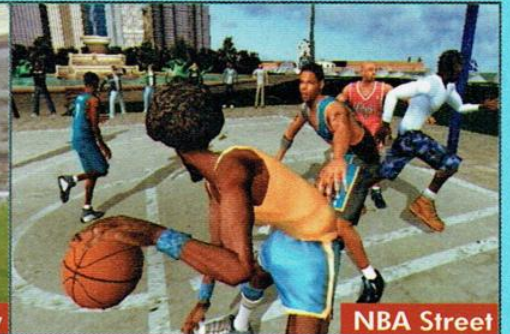
PS2



Red Faction

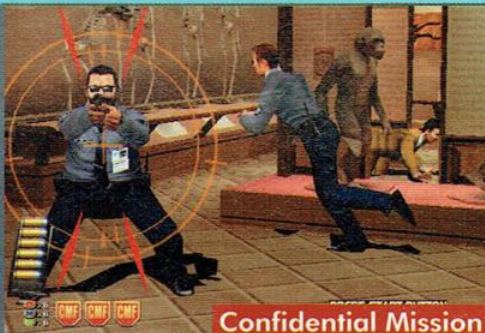


EA Sports Rugby



NBA Street

DREAMCAST



Confidential Mission



Exhibition of Speed



Floigan Brothers

GAME BOY ADVANCE



Klonoa: Empire of Dreams



Final Fight



Fortress

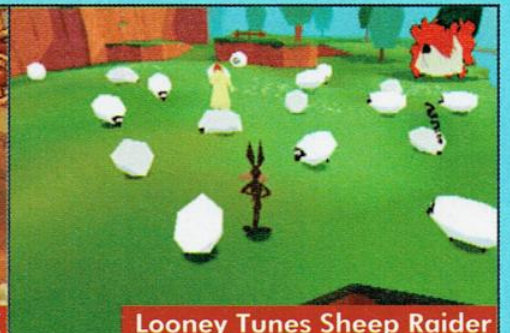
PSONE



Tales of Eternia



Metal Slug X



Looney Tunes Sheep Raider

WIN WIN WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE MAY 23RD



WIN STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER

FOR PS2

You know how much we loved Starfighter on the PS2 — it scored 90% last issue! LucasArts have brought us some frantic dogfighting action with all the graphical power of the Star Wars movies beaming out of the PS2, and it rocks quite hard indeed. If you'd like to win a copy of the game, as well as a cool bonus Darth Maul CD case, then answer the following question:

» What would be a good title for Star Wars: Episode 2?

The best entries will be judged by the Hyper team and five winners will score these great Star Wars packs. Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it to: **The Freebies Strike Back, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016. MTFBWY!**

WIN FREESTYLE SCOOTER & A RAZOR SCOOTER!

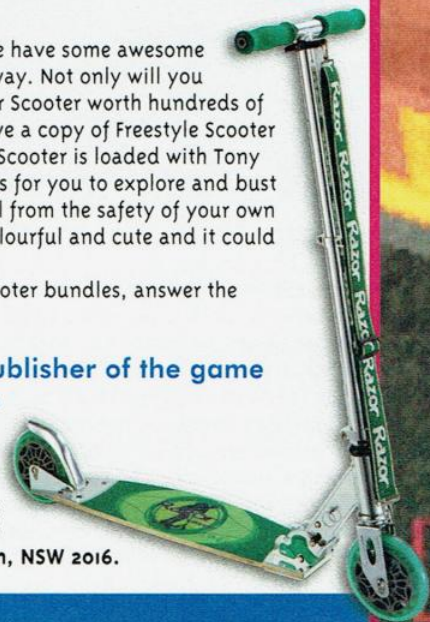
FOR PSone

Thanks to Ubi Soft, we have some awesome scooter packs to give away. Not only will you win your very own Razor Scooter worth hundreds of dollars, but you'll receive a copy of Freestyle Scooter for the PSone. Freestyle Scooter is loaded with Tony Hawk style environments for you to explore and bust wild scooter tricks in, all from the safety of your own living room. It's fast, colourful and cute and it could be yours.

To win one of five Scooter bundles, answer the following question:

» Name the publisher of the game Freestyle Scooter.

Put your answer on the back of an envelope and send it to: **Free Scooter, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016.**



HAAROWA

Each month in Hyper we will be bringing you information on the latest gaming peripherals for all the systems, as well as funky gadgets, new technology and other items of electronic coolness. This issue we've investigated some PSone LCD screens, the latest Wingman stick and the very stylish Pogo.

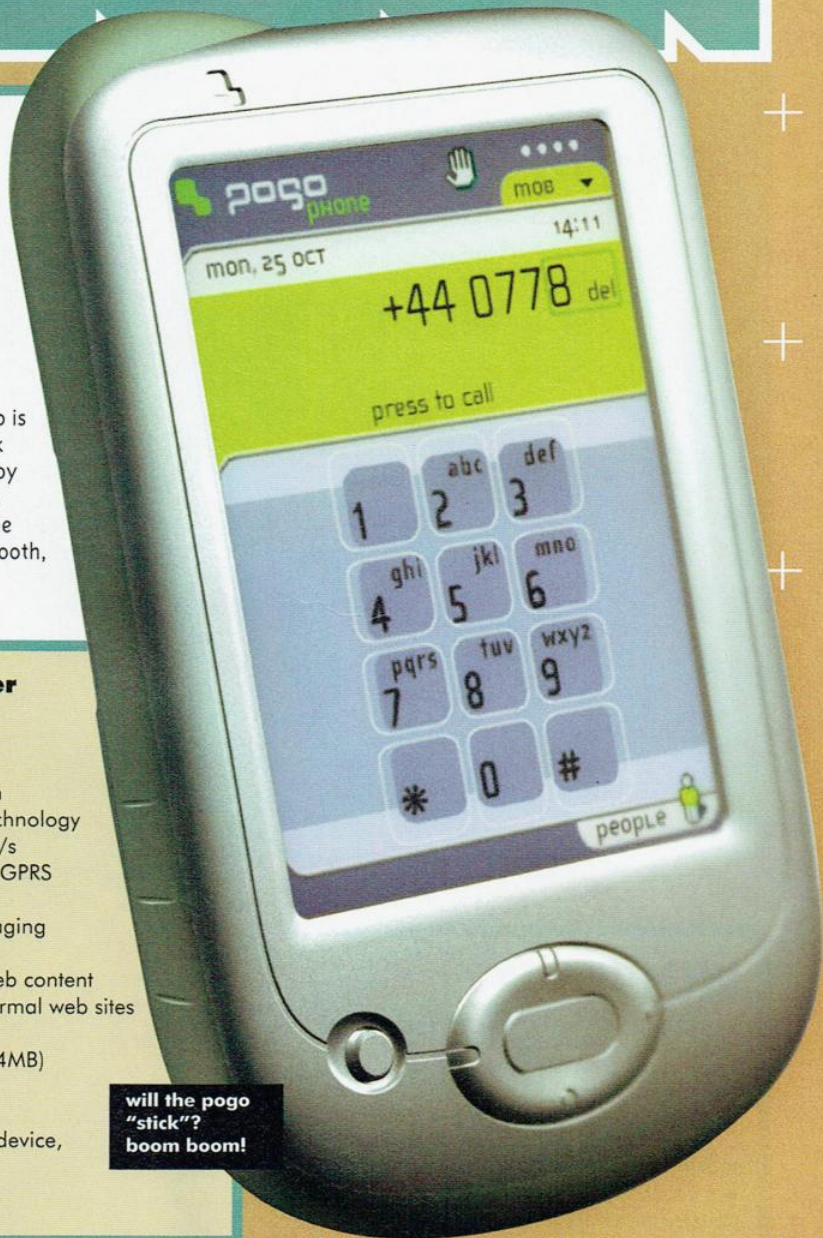
POGO

Pogo Available: Late 2001 **Price:** \$TBA

>> This very funky looking gadget combines a phone, PDA and web device in one, and is designed to bridge the gap between today's wimpy WAP technology and tomorrow's 3G goodness. Pogo is the name (yeah we don't think much of it either), but this baby definitely looks like one of the best all-in-one solutions on the horizon. It may not have Bluetooth, but we like it. Check it out at www.pogo-tech.com

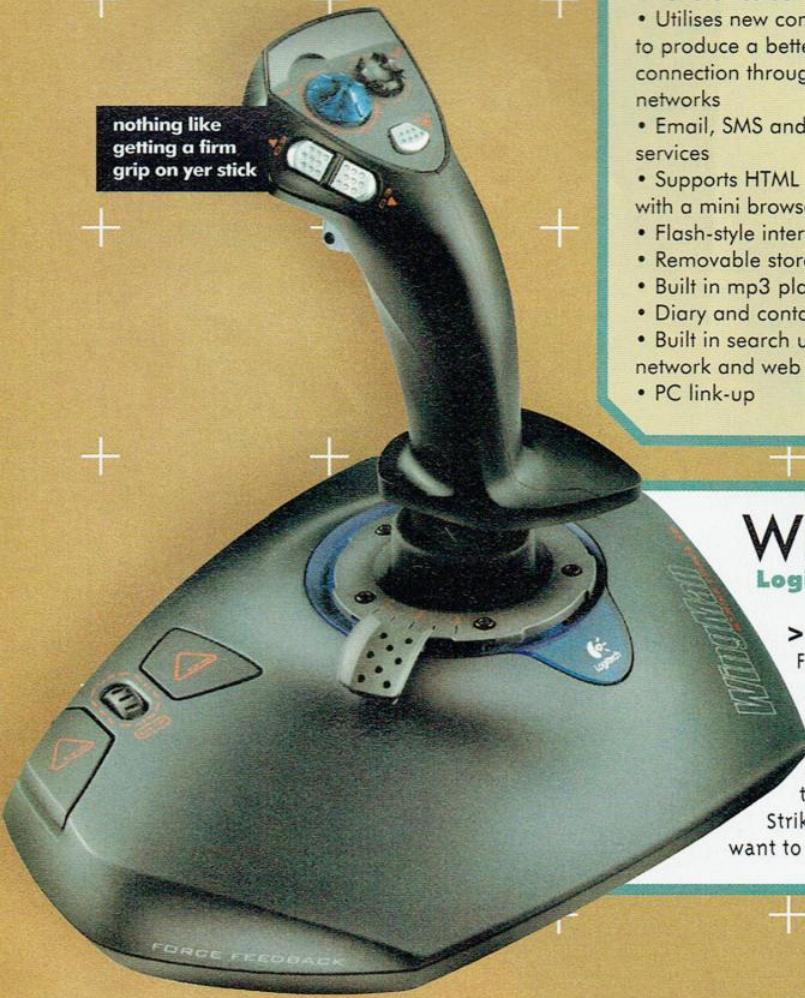
Some of Pogo's funkier features are:

- Mobile phone with a fully customisable interface
- Fat 3.8" colour touch-screen
- Utilises new compression technology to produce a better than 56kb/s connection through GSM and GPRS networks
- Email, SMS and other messaging services
- Supports HTML and Flash web content with a mini browser to view normal web sites
- Flash-style interface
- Removable storage (up to 64MB)
- Built in mp3 player
- Diary and contact list
- Built in search utility for the device, network and web
- PC link-up



will the pogo "stick"? boom boom!

nothing like getting a firm grip on yer stick



WINGMAN STRIKE FORCE 3D

Logitech Available: Now **Price:** \$199

PC

>> For gamers wanting "maximum power, realism and control", the Wingman Strike Force 3D is a very solid solution. This is a force feedback joystick that doesn't look like one... ie big and clunky. In fact, it takes up 25% less space than Logitech's previous model. Fortunately, it doesn't sacrifice any of the throbbing feedback in the process. As for features, the Wingman has everything you'd expect, including a twist handle, two eight-way switch hats, high-precision throttle, nine programmable buttons and a three function programmable wheel. Retailing at \$199 with Freespace 2 packed in, the Strike Force 3D is good value for money, particularly if you want force feedback but didn't want to lose your desktop space in the process.

WAREZ

PSone LCD SCREENS!

Even though the Game Boy Advance is here, the idea of your funky PSone being truly portable is certainly appealing. Sony have announced that they will definitely be releasing an LCD monitor add-on, but they haven't revealed when or for how much. All is not lost, however, as a number of third party hardware/peripheral makers have come to the rescue.



no you can't watch TV on your PSone

XL SCREEN-MATE

Thrustmaster
Available: Now
Price: \$TBA

>> First up is Thrustmaster's XL Screenmate. It's larger than any other model, sporting a 5" screen, as opposed to 4", and it has the better feature set of the two models as well. The screen is backlit and PAL/NTSC compatible so you'll be able to plug it into PlayStations from any region. There are built in speakers either side of the monitor (which, to be honest, aren't the best, but they're probably on par with your average TV) as well as a headphone jack for those who like an extra level of immersion. Of course, one of the chief advantages of the screen is the portability factor, and to that end it comes with a car adaptor power cable so you can plug your PlayStation into the ciggie lighter in your car and play Driver while you're driving (use your feet to steer - Ed). Then, at the end of a long day of gaming in the car, in lectures and at home, you can fold the screen down onto the PlayStation, keeping the whole package quite small.



WILD THINGS

>> Coming straight outta Wild Things is a peripheral range set to make your PSone a truly portable beast. First up is the LCD Monitor. Nothing too out of the ordinary here. Wild Thing's screen doesn't quite have the features or size of Thrustmaster's. Complementing the LCD, however, is a PSone battery pack! It sounds like a great idea, but here's the catch -

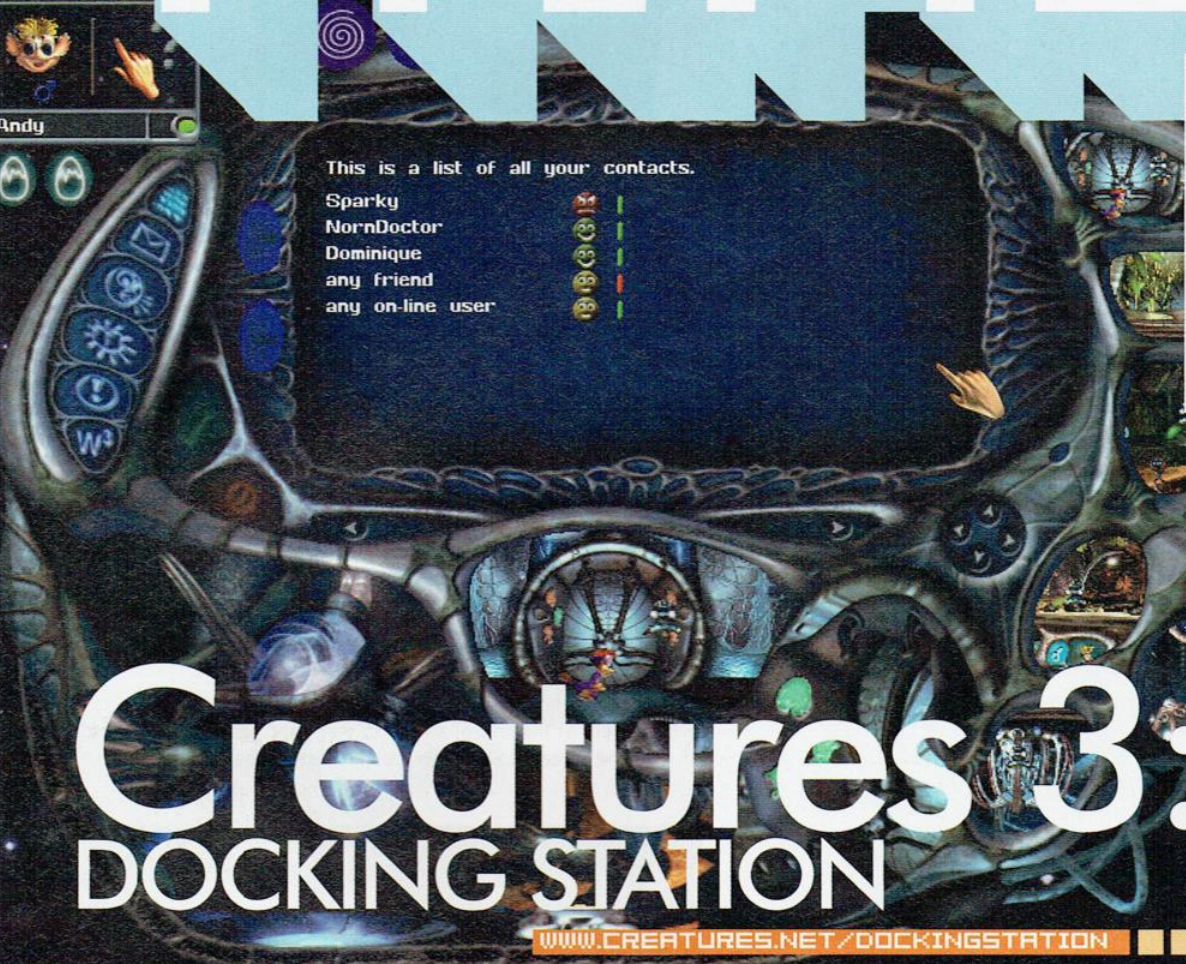
it looks like a mini vacuum cleaner and is about the size of a football. Portable this is not. Still, if you can be bothered lugging it around, you can charge it up in your car's cigarette lighter for three hours play-time. Wild Things are also selling a monitor magnifier (much like the Game Boy screen magnifiers), headphones and a backpack to help carry the whole ensemble around. Not bad if you're a hardcore PlayStation freak.

now the PSone is portable... maybe.



TARAWALL

Docking Station



Creatures 3: DOCKING STATION

WWW.CREATURES.NET/DOCKINGSTATION

The Creatures series of games are among some of the more interesting explorations into "artificial life" available for consumers. By taking a scientific approach — modelling biological and genetic systems so as to allow emergent behaviour, as opposed to dictating what actions are taken in what situation — the line between genetic experiment and game become blurred. Although the game itself takes place in a side-or 2D world (2D is

much easier to deal with than 3D), it's open ended and complex. Your creatures (Norns) have their own neural network that forges pathways (ie learning) in a manner analogous to the human brain, plus they have their own internal organs and digital DNA. They can learn, "think" independently, and breed. Random mutations have even been built into breeding, so that offspring may gain a natural advantage or disadvantage. In all, it's quite a cool little world that Creature Labs have created.

BREED WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Of course, an online community has sprung up around Creatures to talk, develop and inter-breed creatures. Now Creature Labs are taking the next logical step and simplifying interaction in the online community through their new downloadable Docking Station software. It's designed to make finding and trading with other Creatures users much simpler. It may, however, mean a lot more.

One of the main purposes of the Creatures world is to explore the notion of digital evolution. The basic idea is to mimic the properties of actual life at as deep a level as possible, in as convincing a manner as possible, then let the systems take care of themselves — with you playing God as you see fit. Unfortunately, even though you could easily download another person's creature from the net and inject it into the game, you were drawing from a relatively limited gene pool. With the

Docking Station, Creatures will go into evolutionary hyperdrive, allowing fans to locate and trade Norns in real-time... instead of relying on Creatures that have been posted on websites.

A central server will even keep a database of information on each individual Creature traded, allowing users to check out stats, including which Creature has the most mutations, which has lived for the longest, and even genetic backgrounds. With trading of genetic information becoming very easy indeed, mutations that occurred will have a greater chance of being passed on. In fact, not only will this be a vehicle for accelerated evolution, but it will be a relatively guided evolution, as you'll be able to find Creatures with mutations that you want. Sounds cool to us.



NET NEWS

DOES WAP SUCK?

>> Whether you call it WAPathy or WAPlash, you wouldn't be alone in thinking that the current WAP technology is way over-hyped. Why would anyone use a sloooooow (1/6th the speed of your 56K modem), pay per minute service so they can read the latest news on a screen that makes Game Boy's LCD look huge? We don't know, but there are plenty of companies out there trying to explore the format's potential.

At www.cellmania.com you can check out the results of the Wappy Awards, where the top 10 WAP sites (from an initial 11,000 mobile applications) were announced. You may be pleasantly surprised.



SPACE - THE FINAL COPYRIGHT FRONTIER

>> We may be living in a global village, but the Motion Picture Industry is determined to keep everyone shoeboxed in their own region. Hence the current system of regional coding in DVDs. You're not alone if this system has frustrated you. It's even frustrating astronauts. Indeed, the DVD players on the International Space Station, which were originally designed as Region 1 players, have now been modified to play all regions. You can get all the latest news on the International Space Station at <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/station/>.

THE ULTIMATE OFFLINE EXPERIENCE...

>> Ultima Worlds Online: Origin has officially been cancelled by EA. Yep, Ultima Online 2 isn't going to happen! EA and Origin Systems have made the decision not to create and release a product that will compete with their already successful MMORPG, and instead will be focusing their energy on expanding the Ultima Online world and experience.



mix genes, create a super race! muahahah!

PLEASE, NOT THE URINE SAMPLE...

In true Creatures style — everything about the potential trade can be analysed. When receiving a Creature from someone else online, you can put it into quarantine and check it for



domestic violence already?

bacteria, which can then be eradicated. Of course there are more routine checks that enable you to determine whether this digital immigrant is truly a welcome guest — you can check health levels, fertility and trace any toxins in the bloodstream. It's not quite as cold and clinical as it sounds though, as you can feed the little bugger while he's being checked out.

If you've never experienced the Creatures world for yourself (and at this point we should say that as cool as the games are, they're certainly not for everyone — you'll need time, dedication and great patience to

enjoy them), you won't need to buy Creatures 3 to enjoy the Docking Station. It can be used in conjunction with the game or as a stand-alone (again, increasing the available gene pool

a huge amount). If used in conjunction with Creatures 3, the Docking Station will come with new Norns, objects and areas in the world.

It's only a 20MB download, so if you want it, point your browser in this direction <http://ds.creatures.net>

LINKS

Flatblack Films

www.flatblackfilms.com

>> Being the tech-freaks we are here at Hyper, the upcoming feature length animated film *Waking Life* has really caught our eye. It represents a very cool evolution in digital film making. The creative process began with the film being shot on DV with real actors. The scenes were then transformed to this surreal style through clever new software and talented artists. Indeed, each artist was responsible for a different character, so each has that artist's stamp, creating an interestingly piecemeal, yet cohesive, work.

Waking Life isn't a film that you'll see headlining alongside *Matrix 2*, however. We're expecting a small independent release... but if you can — see it. Apparently this is the first feature length animated film made by an independent American studio EVER!



Find Sounds

www.findsounds.com

>> Find Sounds is a next-gen search engine for the ear. It allows you to find sound effects and samples on the net, not only through a word search like "fart", but also by finding similar waveforms. You can give the site a sample to analyse, and it will search for something similar. Not really all that useful, but a cool glimpse at where search engines are going.

Pill Report

www.pillreports.com

>> Little Johnny "Dead Man Walking" Howard may be ramming his zero tolerance stance on drugs down the Australian public's throats, but we here at Hyper are very much in favour of the "harm minimisation" approach — ie, people are always going to do it, so let's make sure that they know how to do it as safely as possible and get educated along the way.

With this in mind, we reckon if you're going to bosh pills, you should know what substances are actually in them. This forum-style site explains what different pills (and "batches" of pills) actually contain. Simply log in to your area (Australia/NZ) and check out what is doing the rounds and what other people have thought. You can even do searches by a number of criteria. Plus, to earn a nine or a ten ranking, the pill in question must be tested with EZ-Test as further proof of quality. You can also order your own testing kit from www.ez-test.com.

Electronic Frontier Foundation

<http://www.eff.org>

>> Who's going to protect your digital rights when the bytes hit the fan? The Electronic Frontier Foundation, that's who. This non-profit organization was formed as a watchdog for the ordinary digital citizen, and their stated mission is to preserve digital free expression, privacy and identity. This was the group that organised free legal defense for Jon Johansen, the 16 year-old Norwegian that helped create DeCSS — the decoder algorithm that allowed DVD content to be viewed on Linux based OS, as well as jumpstarting the DVD rip scene. The legal upshot of the DeCSS case could have grave consequences for the future of digital copyright and freedom of speech. With this in mind, you should also check out <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/dst/DeCSS/Gallery/>, a site designed to illustrate "the absurdity of Judge Kaplan's decision that source code can be legally differentiated from other forms of written expression".

>c12

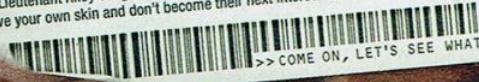
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***ALIENS ARE OUT TO STRIP THE WORLD OF CARBON.
THE REALLY BAD NEWS IS YOU'RE MADE OF IT.***

The carbon isotope C-12 that we're made from is the very key to life itself - but the trouble is human flesh also makes first-rate alien food. Your mission as resistance leader Lieutenant Riley Vaughan is to send the alien forces packing, whilst making sure you save your own skin and don't become their next interstellar snack.

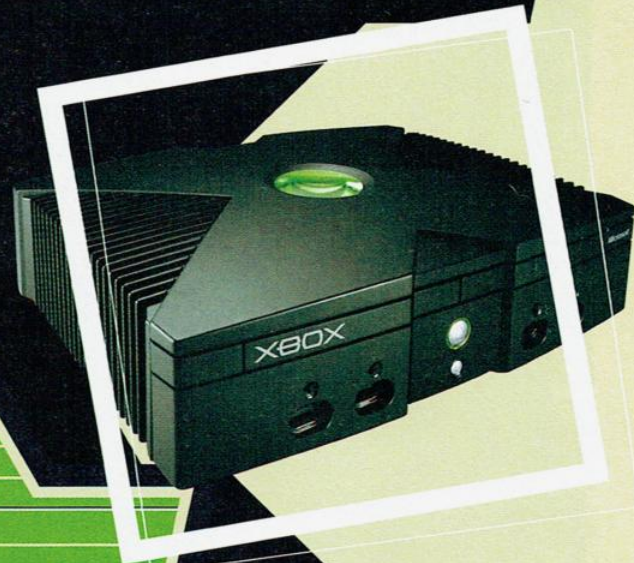
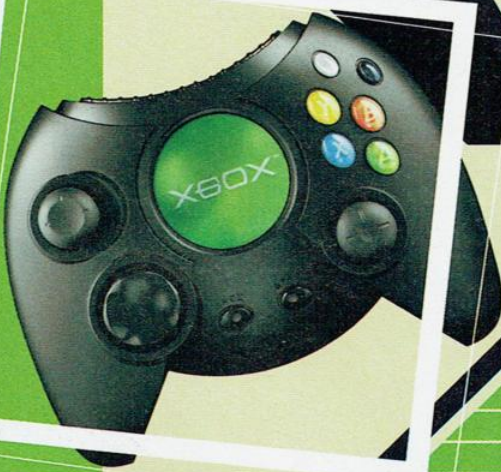


DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION



>> COME ON, LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF >>

www.au.scee.com/c12 >>



BOX OF TRICKS

ELIOT FISH WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD TO PLAY THE XBOX...



S

eattle is cold. It's no wonder that everyone there either starts a coffee shop or becomes a computer programmer. On arrival at

Microsoft's immense headquarters, no one was complaining that we were going to have to stay inside all day out of the frosty wind, packed into a small dark room all alone with a mysterious black box of tricks.

Gamestock 2001 was the first time Microsoft had allowed the gaming press to actually get hands-on with the Xbox and play some of their first-party titles that are still in development. There was a good selection of titles here to showcase some of the strengths of the Xbox,

with every developer on the day praising the console's immense graphical grunt. There was certainly lots of eye candy being pumped out of the widescreen HDTVs Microsoft had set up for the day, but was there any real depth of gameplay here behind the plethora of polygons? Are these games that promise a new console gaming experience?

Well, I'd love to answer both of those questions with a big "YES!", but the reality is that this was only a taste of what is to come. After playing the eight Microsoft Xbox games on show, we may not have witnessed a paradigm shift in game design, but we were shown a selection of unfinished games that show a lot of potential.

Games that - in an unfinished state - already promise more thrills than the games that were available in the PS2 lineup.

It's more games that break from the formula that we really wanted to see from Microsoft at Gamestock, and there were only hints of that amongst the titles on show. For instance, the snowboarding game, *Amped*, looks like it will be the first snowboarding title in a long while to break away from the formula and offer us a new style of experience. But there were other titles on the day that failed to offer the same kind of innovation.

Looking on the bright side, if Microsoft are searching for a killer game to have at launch, they have

two very close contenders in *Halo* and *Munch's Oddysee*. Both games stunned everyone at the show, and they're "first party" no less.

After getting dragged off for a game of pool with (name drop alert) Lorne Lanning and Alex Garden, I couldn't help but feel that Microsoft know exactly what they must do, even if the games they showed us didn't break any rules. The talent they have behind the scenes is quite staggering, and when the Xbox launch comes around, I'll be one of the first lining up to see what they finally deliver.

HALO

CATEGORY: Shooter

WE SPOKE TO: Joseph Staten, Director of Cinematics

ON GAMERS' EXPECTATIONS:

"A lot of people have said 'oh I thought Halo was meant to be this go anywhere, do everything kind of game', but it's definitely mission based. We're really trying, in each of the missions, to build in a lot of flexibility in terms of how you can solve the primary objective.

"In gameplay, when you're on your two feet, you'll always be in first-person. When you transition to a vehicle, you'll be brought out of first-person into a third-person perspective. People were complaining that the player movement was too slow when you're walking about the island. But I think that's sort of the point. If you want to traverse the big open spaces, you're going to have to find a vehicle. Not only are you more powerful and more protected in a vehicle but you move a lot faster."

ON THE VEHICLES IN THE GAME:

"Vehicles in Halo are really, really survivable... it's not like Tribes where you build them, they blow up, you build another... it's going to take a lot to take out a vehicle. If you get hit by a deadly Covenant mortar shell, instead of being destroyed, the vehicle will fly up into the air or get flipped and players get ejected. We

ON XBOX MULTIPLAYER : "In multiplayer, imagine a splitscreen... up in the left-hand corner some guy is going to be in a flying vehicle, you're going to be driving the jeep in another corner in the third-person, whilst some other guy rides shotgun in the first person and you'll have a gunner in the back playing in another corner in first-person. You'll all be switching around in the middle of battle, like if the jeep gets shot and you all rush to a new position. It should be really fun and dynamic."

ON THE ALIEN AND HUMAN AI: "In terms of the gunner in the back of the jeep, the AI will always be calling things out to you, telling you when he doesn't have a good line of sight, he'll tell you to find him a target, he'll tell you when you're driving too fast, he'll tell you when you're getting close to a waypoint. The AI will be chatting to you and give you good, solid information.

"The AI is pretty smart — each individual alien race is going to behave differently. For instance... the coolest part about Half Life was when

of military hardware. Humanity's fate is in your big, green, armoured hands.

"We really like the idea of having to set yourself up before a mission and either you're dead or you're successful. You feel elite, because you've been smart. We are never going to have little health pods that you run across... you get your weapons and stuff from killing others, but there won't be magical shit that flies out of their bodies."

ON THE XBOX HARDWARE: "We never thought we could have something this big on the PC and we never really could, even if we were really tricky. Everything is bump-mapped, everything's lit, really high-res lightmaps, it's really great. The great thing about the Xbox is that the GPU just handles all the rendering and we have this CPU that's pretty fast to handle all the AI...and that's just glorious. We can have these really big set piece battles. It's just something we could never

do on the PC. I hate plugging the Xbox as much as I do... but it's true! I believe in the power of the box! The Xbox is like a really, really great PC geared totally for gaming."

ON PC AND MAC VERSIONS:

"At this point there is no PC version of Halo, there is just the Xbox version. We're not even gonna think about the PC version until we all sleep for about a month afterwards! PC and Mac gamers should have hope though, we have some ideas."



"I hate plugging the Xbox as much as I do... but it's true! I believe in the power of the box!"

- Joseph Staten, Bungie (Halo)

want vehicles to be a huge multiplier in terms of how powerful you are and how much arse you can kick."

ON THE WEAPONS IN THE GAME:

"We could make a tonne of weapons, but we really want people to get familiar with and really use everything to their fullest. The AR for instance, is just so punchy and cool. It's inaccurate, kinda like the AK in Counter-Strike, so it's all about burst fire. We're hoping people will get really attached to this small number of really, really good weapons. And by small number I mean more than five or six... oh and all the weapons have unique melee attacks as well."

you first saw the Marine, he did something totally different, he just totally kicked your arse and you were so afraid of him. He was just really different and you weren't prepared to fight him... in Halo, we really want to ramp up the AI in that way.

"We really want each alien you encounter to behave fully differently, the Covenant is really great for that sort of thing, because it is this conglomeration of alien races... each one is unique."

ON THE HALO EXPERIENCE:

"Halo is all about simulating the battlefield of the future. You are mankind's most sophisticated piece

ON BEING READY FOR LAUNCH:

"We're definitely a launch title. Graphically, we're 95% of the way there. The AI is about 75% of the way there... we're really working hard on the mission building and the multiplayer is progressing at the same pace. We have about 30 guys working on Halo now, and now it's all about building in greater functionality."

HYPER VERDICT: Playing the Halo demo was a joy. The controls were intuitive and accurate, immediately vanquishing the fears we had for playing the shooter on a console. Driving the jeep around the island was captivating enough, and then you get into the fire fights... Halo have me goosebumps.

You won't see anything like Halo on the PC for years. Why? Because if they translated it perfectly, the minimum specs would be a PIII 733 with a GeForce 3 video card. That's the Xbox for you.

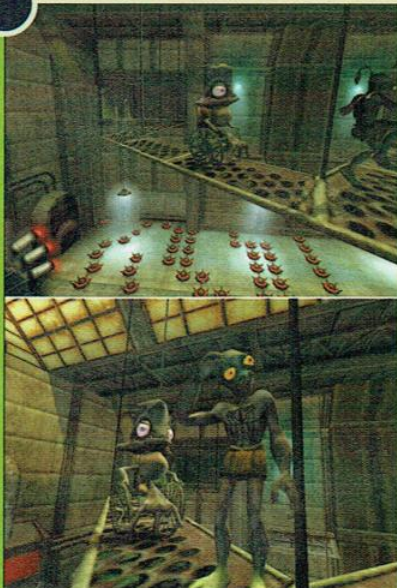


MUNCH'S ODDYSSEE

CATEGORY: 3D Platformer



Munch's Oddysee couldn't be in better hands. Creator, Lorne Lanning, is one of the more inspirational figures we've met in the games industry. And he wears big cowboy boots.



WE SPOKE TO: Lorne Lanning, Oddworld founder

Lorne Lanning, the founder of Oddworld, took us through a playable level of Munch's Oddysee and the game couldn't be looking any better. If we were to rank our excitement of the Xbox titles on show at Gamestock, Munch would come in second only to Halo.

What was most impressive was the game's incredible visual power combined with the fast, dynamic control of the characters. As a duo, Abe and Munch are a pretty dynamic team, especially when Munch gets in his wheelchair or Abe slurps back a powerup and flits around the screen like an insect.

It also seems to be an important part of Oddworld's design philosophy to permeate the minds of gamers with true empathy for their videogame counterparts. As Lorne Lanning explained to us, "These are stories that we want to tell, it's about characters that have dilemmas. Our characters certainly aren't the muscle-bound superheroes that we want to be, they're the poor sad schmucks

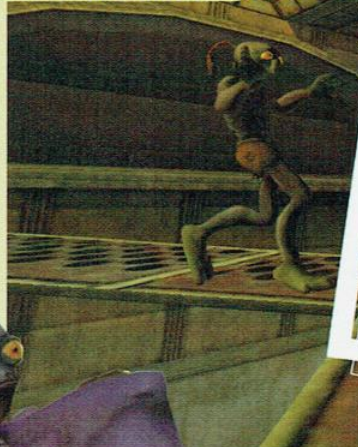
that most of us really are."

ON BEING A LAUNCH TITLE FOR AN UNPROVEN PLATFORM:

"It's a big risk. To want to make a game like Munch's Oddysee on Xbox, we have to think 'look at the opportunity that we can really set the bar. Look at how we can build great stuff for this generation of hardware. If we can come out with a title that might not return the glorious numbers that we want, because the installed user base isn't there yet, but it'll help sell the hardware... You have to say 'we are willing to break even on this title, so we can make something great and then exploit the technology later and make better games faster.'"

ON THE XBOX HARD DISK:

"The hard drive, well, we're still seeing how to maximise it. It'll definitely make for better save features and things like that, but to exactly what extent with Munch's Oddysee is yet to be determined. The excitement for us is really



with the CPU & the GPU — the environment and the way it's structured."

ON DELIVERING EMOTION IN GAMES:

"I think the future of games, is like the present in music — there's a vast variety of different flavours. The future of prime time games

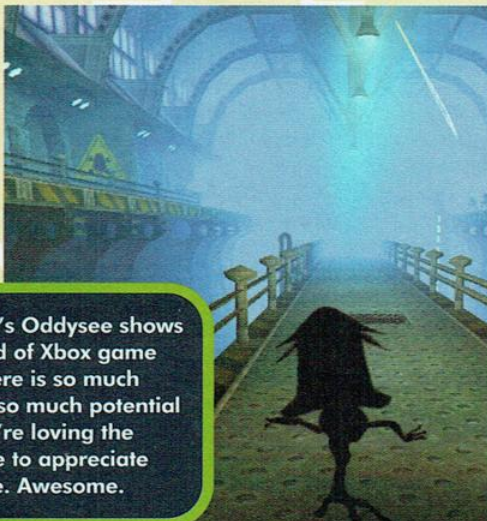
maan!' It proved we (gamers) really do care about stuff and it doesn't have to be hokey to pull it off."

ON UNDERLYING THEMES IN HIS GAMES:

"I think I share the feelings of a lot of indigenous cultures, which is... man sort of fell from grace in the mythological scheme of things because he attained self awareness. Y'know, knowledge bit him in the arse. The Native American's look at animals, and they say the animals were put here by the spirits to show us how we need to live. The wisdom that's lost when we genocide the landscape and the

"The Xbox is the machine that is allowing designers to **manifest more of their vision.**"

- Lorne Lanning, Oddworld (Munch's Oddysee)



— the big frontrunners that are character driven — is that you'll need more and more emotional components, because if you don't it'll be like what happened in the movie industry — if you don't have a great story and great characters, typically, it doesn't do well. The games industry is headed to that same position. The reaction we got from you guys today when Munch was eaten by the Scrabs was really heartening for me to see that everyone was like 'ahhh noooo,

ecosystems is tragic beyond measure. Especially when we live in a world that's addicted to pharmaceuticals, of which 99% of their ingredients come from plants! Our appetite for materialism in this world has put a terrific strain on things that we could be learning so much more from. We're still living in a world where we learn more from creatures by chopping them up, than we do from just witnessing them.

"It's not about being a tree-hugger, it's about understanding the impact on the system that grew us. Y'know, I have no problem with meat. What I have a problem with, is meat that is grown so cheap that it wipes out rainforests so that someone can sell a happy meal for 99 cents."

HYPER VERDICT: Munch's Oddysee shows true vision. This is the kind of Xbox game that will sell the system. There is so much charm in the characters, and so much potential in the clever 3D levels, that you're loving the game before you even have time to appreciate just how amazing the visuals are. Awesome.

AMPED

WE SPOKE TO: Carl Schnurr,
Program Manager

ON OFFERING SOMETHING NEW TO THE GENRE: "A lot of alternative sports games in the past make you select different modes from within an interface environment, but we wanted you to be able to select your mode while you're riding. You make the choice right there. If you want to go over and ride the halfpipe, you just go to it. If you want to do rails, it's right there. If you want to do jumps... anything you want to do it's right there, you don't have to decide within an interface. It's a freeride atmosphere combined with the freestyle element of

CATEGORY: Snowboarding

tricks and 'show off' performance in front of pro-athletes, sponsors and media in order to build a career and become that ultimate, superstar in snowboarding."

ON CREATIVE GAMEPLAY: "A lot of games have been about 'do the right tricks'. We have taken it about two or three steps further, where it's 'do the right tricks, at the right time, at the right place'. You need to know 'hey, there's a photographer over there, I need to perform my best right at that moment."

HYPER VERDICT: Amped has such great potential to liberate the snowboarding genre from its current shackles. SSX on PS2 has nothing on what Amped promises to deliver. Exploring the mountain was a heap of fun, even if the character animation and trick mechanics were incomplete when we played it. This could be what Tony Hawk was to skateboarding games.

ON CREATING A BELIEVABLE EXPERIENCE: "We already have under contract, flown and ready to be built, versions of Vermont's



Stratton resort, Brighton in Utah and Snow Summit in California. Those are the three main resorts, and then we have some urban settings where you can go out and perform for a photographer. "We've got 12 of the most influential freestyle riders in the world, all signed up for this game. In fact, they include Jeremy Jones from Forum Snowboards, from K2 Snowboards we have Travis Parker and Bobby Meeks, from M3 Snowboards we have Mikey LeBlanc and Mitch Nelson. We've been very careful to select the riders we're

using, because we're not just using their name. A lot of these guys provide input on the game. They say 'look, that rail isn't right.' Or 'I want to be able to ride up this roof over here and do a trick off of the roof.' So we put that in for them. We're also licensing with the top snowboard companies like Burton, K2, M3, clothing like Sessions, we also have music from independent core labels, like Lobsta records... people like that that allow us to really portray not only the feel of snowboarding, but the sounds of the core of the sport."

ON THE POWER OF THE XBOX: "The Xbox has enabled us to do the stuff that you can't do on any other format, to be honest."

The mountains are huge and feature all sorts of cool things tucked away behind trees for you to discover. Exploration is a key.

WE SPOKE TO: David Osbourne, Lead Designer

ON THE NIGHTCASTER EXPERIENCE: "Nightcaster is a spell combat game, it has its heritage in the traditional shooter, but we harness the power of the Xbox to pull off graphical intensity with the play control of a sprite game, but in these huge 3D worlds. We just wanted a bright, clean, colourful fun-looking game. At its heart it's a fun shooter. This is purely action, but there is a story line and non-player characters in there."

NIGHTCASTER

CATEGORY: Fantasy Adventure / Shooter

ON THE XBOX GRAPHICS CHIP: "The Xbox allows us to do lovely particle effects, smoke, you can see details like the flags waving, the boat rocking... we can do so much. Now take a look at the character - we're talking 5,000 polygons just on this one guy. It gives you a great feeling of character. Xbox just gives us the ability to go to town! It gives us the ability to pull off huge creatures,

massive poly counts, environment mapping, bump mapping, specular highlights - it's just a joy. "The Xbox has the power to give a lot of character to the bad guys, which is rare, especially in a game as abundant as a shooter when you have things piling at you. There are numerous idle animations and death animations in all of them."

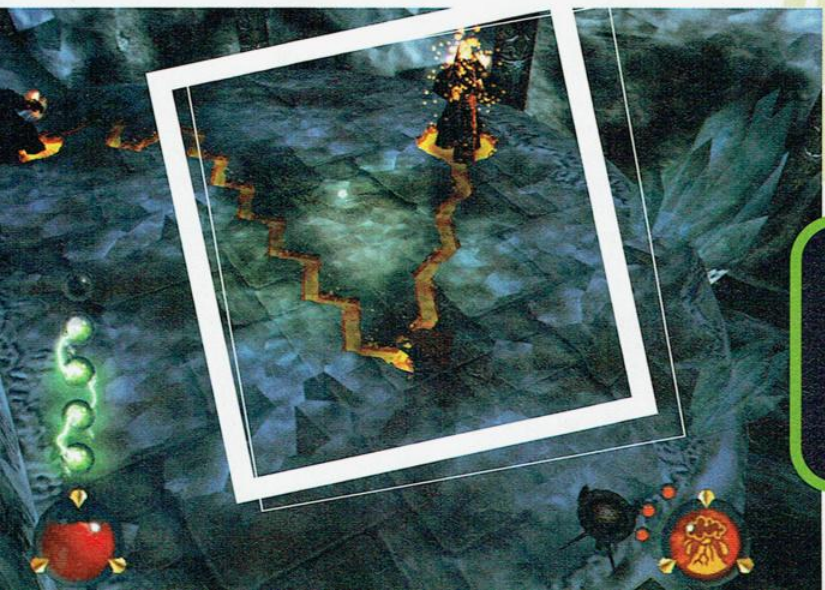
ON SPELLS AND STORY: "There are four magical schools in the game, fire, water, light and dark. They work in contrast to each other. Likewise, all the creatures in the game, of which there are 50 different types, they all have magical affiliations also. There are also hats and capes

that give you certain tactical advantages and disadvantages in the combat. You start the game as an adolescent and as the game progresses you age until you're an old man who's weak, but with really strong magic."

HYPER VERDICT: Hopefully, VR-1 will simplify the concept behind Nightcaster, as the magic system seemed clunky to use in amongst the high-action combat. Certainly, there are some original concepts here even amongst all the obvious plagiarism (Robotron, Gauntlet), and Nightcaster could still turn out to be lots of fun. At this stage though, it doesn't seem to really offer anything new to get us truly excited enough to want to get an Xbox to play it.



One analogue stick controls movement, and the other controls a magic orb. Weird.



(codename)

PROJECT GOTHAM

CATEGORY: Racing

We may have all played *Metropolis Street Racer* on Dreamcast, but the Xbox version will literally be streets ahead.



"Look at the detail on this car... **16,000 polygons!** More than three times what you're seeing on other consoles."

- AJ Redmer, Microsoft Racing Group

powerslides to the way they use the driving line. As AJ Redmer states "We are committed to delivering attitude in racers on Xbox. This game will feature high performance vehicles, in photorealistic cities, exploiting the power of the box, rewarding gamers for style and daring." Redmer also points out that the cars look amazing, and they do. "Look at the detail on this car...16,000 polygons! More than three times what you're seeing on other consoles."

choose from over 20 different cars, compete on more than 300 city-based circuits and take part in over 100 individual racing challenges. The game will retain the "Kudos" system from MSR, rewarding players for their driving skill and style, from neat

WE SPOKE TO: AJ Redmer, head of Microsoft Racing Group

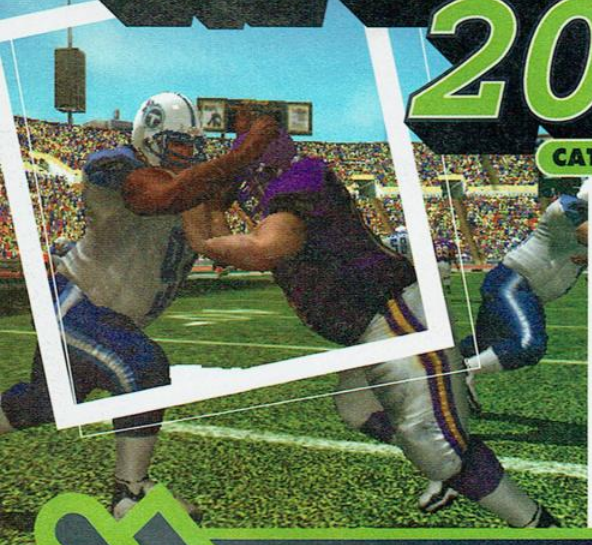
ON EXPANDING UPON THE RACING EXPERIENCE: "There is something to be said about flair and attitude in gaming, but what about racing games? It doesn't have to be just about crossing the finish line first. Gamers want to be acknowledged for style, margin of victory, for setting the bar, calling

their shot and delivering on how fast they say they can drive. Gamers get it. Bizarre Creations gets it. And Xbox gets it." So says AJ Redmer, the head of Microsoft's racing group who is overseeing the development of the first Xbox racing title. Codenamed Project Gotham, this is UK developer Bizarre Creations' way of bringing the excellent Dreamcast title, MSR to the Xbox. Players will be able to

HYPER VERDICT: Whilst what was shown at Gamestock was more of a tech-demo for what the final product could look like, a visually superior version of MSR with all sorts of gameplay enhancements will be a very appealing racing title for the Xbox and certainly an extremely solid starting point for racing games on the system. It looked puuurdy.

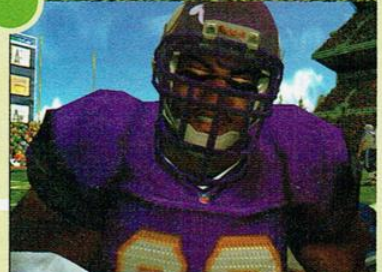
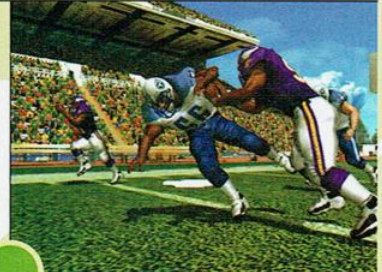
NFL FEVER 2002

CATEGORY: American Football



is an obscene amount of detail here, from reflections off the helmets of players, to realistic player shadows, great weather effects, highly-detailed player models (down to the moving eyes of the quarterback as he scans the field for a receiver) and some really great animation displaying all sorts of bone-crunching moves.

There will be stadiums for all 31 NFL teams, and players can take part in 25 seasons, unlock Super Bowl championship teams and challenge the greatest NFL teams of all time. There will also be the Dynamic Player Performance Model, which means that your players' skills will improve with experience on the field. The lead designer on the project, Pat Cook, has experience on 12 other NFL titles, so there's a good chance that NFL Fever 2002 won't make any of the mistakes of its predecessors.



HYPER VERDICT: The jury is really out on this one. From what they showed us, NFL Fever could be both great and also horribly average. There was just nothing we could tell beyond the fact that the graphics were really nice, although the animation was a little sketchy. If smooth controls, a nice camera system and some great AI get implemented, then yeah, we can't wait!

We were definitely impressed with the visual power of the game, but it was disappointing that the AI was not fully implemented for us to experience some of the actual game in action. For starters, there



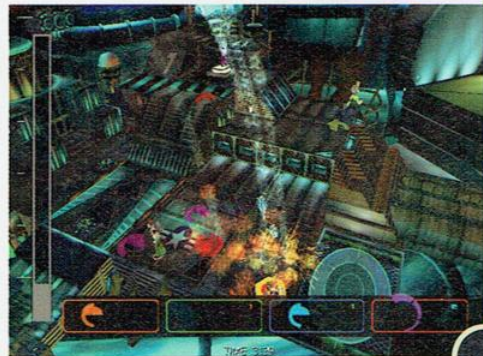
FUSION FRENZY

CATEGORY: Party Game



button.

This quirky, off-beat game, with its roots in traditional arcade-style gameplay, was a really refreshing addition to the Xbox games on show, and



Another game that looks incredibly confusing in screenshots, but dead simple when you're sitting in front of it.

>>> Fusion Frenzy is a very Japanese-styled party game that takes place in a funky sci-fi setting for up to four players. If Microsoft are keen to get the Xbox to appeal to a broader more mainstream audience, this is the kind of game that could do it for them.

Fuzion Frenzy is so straight-forward that you can pick up the controller and immediately start having some clean, simple fun whether you're a hardcore gamer or just a casual "I play Tetris" kinda gamer. All you need to use is the analogue stick and one

we really liked it a lot. Nick Adams of Blitz Games was on hand to explain to us that there would be over 45 different mini-games over six separate arenas. That's a hell of a lot of variety, and enough to keep any bunch of gamers happy for a long time, especially when you can happily play the one mini-game for about half an hour, over and over again, just as we did. It's fast-paced, head-to-head gaming and it's the "Fantavision" of the Xbox line-up.

HYPER VERDICT: Bring it on! We had great fun playing Fuzion Frenzy, and that damn David Wildgoose from PC PowerPlay kept beating me in a cool little water race. Grrr... I'll get you next time David, when we pick up our copies of Fuzion Frenzy next year! Can you tell we liked it?



AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure

>>> Azurik: Rise of Perathia is an ambitious third-person action adventure that lets you explore a fantastic 3D world and beat up on the denizens within. Hardly an original concept for a game, and sadly it seems that quite a bit of inspiration has been lifted almost directly from other 3D action games — Soul Reaver on PlayStation for one. The game seems so entrenched in past formulas that it even relies on a clichéd elemental structure to the worlds — Fire, Water, Earth and Air. Yawn. You can't blame Microsoft for wanting a safe bet, but it's games like Azurik that could drag the Xbox down. The Xbox needs to innovate, not replicate.



There seems to be no desire at Adrenium games to take this incredible looking 3D world, and provide the gamer with anything other than the usual hack and slash action and ledge-climbing that we're all too familiar with. But before we get too gloomy, we must admit that Azurik is an absolutely stunning game to look at. The detail in Azurik himself is astounding, right down to the eyeballs rolling about in his head. The development team at Adrenium is also committed to bringing some truly elaborate environments to the screen for us to explore. From low-lying mist, to swarms of bugs (with their own AI no less) and organic-looking structures, Azurik may just turn out to be something special.

"We wanted to make the most **immersive, expansive** action adventure game ever done."

- Matthew Stipes, Lead Designer



HYPER VERDICT: If Adrenium can turn the gameplay in another direction, it could transform Azurik into a great addition to the Xbox launch line-up. Whilst there was no issue with the controls, the gameplay in Azurik is what seemed so uninspired. If weren't for the amazing visuals, we wouldn't have sat and played Azurik for as long as we did.

Azurik was actually one of the most visually impressive games at the show.

GAMESTOCK 2001

● a Post
● Mortem

Kevin Cheung gives us the big picture on Microsoft's first entry into the console market.

After the dust of Gamestock 2001 settled, the consensus regarding the Xbox is that it's living up to expectation. It pays to remember, though, that this industry-wide expectation is one that has been spoilt and amplified over the last 12 months by the hysteria of next-gen syndrome. Dreamcast versus PlayStation 2 debates rendered moot by Sega's withdrawal from the hardware department, the seemingly continual line of high profile flops on the PlayStation 2, flagging financial reports from major developers... living up to expectation was a much needed pick-me-up for the increasingly anxious industry and consumer groups.

BOXING CLEVER

Microsoft is well on its way to cultivating a healthy stable of software for its much-vaunted competitor to Sony's PlayStation 2 and Nintendo's Gamecube. The Xbox's combination of killer hardware and programmer friendliness, which should have been a no-brainer strategy for any technologically focused company, is already bearing

some fruit. Some of the game demos shown at Gamestock 2001, running on half the specifications of the final product, are already head and shoulders above the standards achieved on the PlayStation 2.

This is just part of the strategy being employed under Microsoft's 'by gamers, for gamers' mantra. Over the course of the last year, our interviews and conferences with Microsoft personalities like J. Allard and Seamus Blackley have left us with no doubt in our minds that they are serious gamers who are doing everything from the ground up to make the Xbox as perfect and stable a gaming platform as possible. As gaming enthusiasts, this remains, strangely, the one comforting thought, amidst all the commercial and marketing uncertainties that are bound to crop up between now and its local release in early 2002.

Case in point: Microsoft's controversial decision not to include a DVD remote control in the Xbox package should not have come as a surprise to anyone who understood their ideal of making the Xbox a strict games machine. Does it matter so much to gamers if Microsoft stands to make or lose money because of this decision? Remember, this is the same organisation that, in issue #85, commented that the only benefit of a games machine being a multimedia set-top box is marketing hype. I rather admire the way it is sticking to the principles of its ideal. Even Lorne Lanning (*Oddworld Inhabitants*) was heard bemoaning the trend of individual game developers being treated like rock stars.

PANDORA'S BOX

But this alone doesn't guarantee success for the Xbox. It's not just a case of getting the product out there and letting the chips fall where they may. Microsoft does, after all, have to make money from this enterprise. And they're aiming high. They want the Xbox to be successful on a global scale; for it to set the new bar of mainstream recognition that's actually equivalent, or even beyond, television and movies. According to Ed Fries, "we are on the cusp of cracking open the broader mainstream market. Breaking out is not about the girl market or the online market. It's more like books and movies... to create entertainment and art". And if the games are taken seriously, videogames just might inherit its rightful place as a mainstream art form.

This is where Microsoft's broader strategy doesn't quite add up. Art and mainstream rarely, if ever, mix. Various developers skirt the issue by saying that art is either kitschy or mainstream, and that they might as well aim for the mainstream. What they do seem to be avoiding,

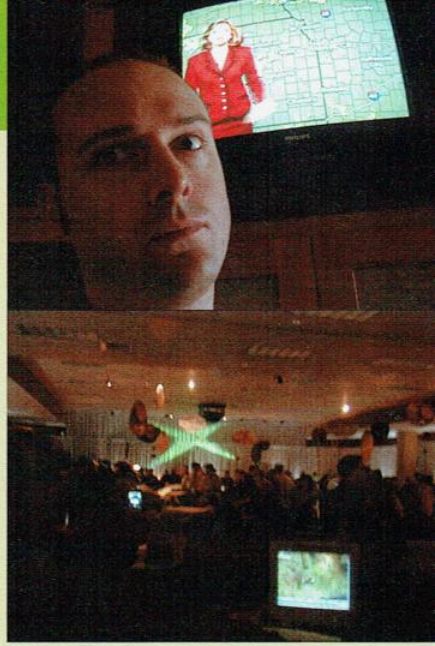
however, is the possibility that they may alienate some of their core gaming audiences.

Joseph Staten (Bungie) probably put it best: "I don't think it's just about making 'art', it's about making art that isn't just stuff that you'd find hidden up in the back wing of MOMA (Museum Of Modern Art). You want it to be some really great thing that everybody can understand immediately when they look at it. I understand where Ed Fries is coming from, I think he's right, I think we want to make something that's artistic that people understand is really complex and beautiful and really compelling, but at the same time it's really accessible and people can understand it easily. There is a contradiction there, but, I mean there are some really beautiful things in Halo."

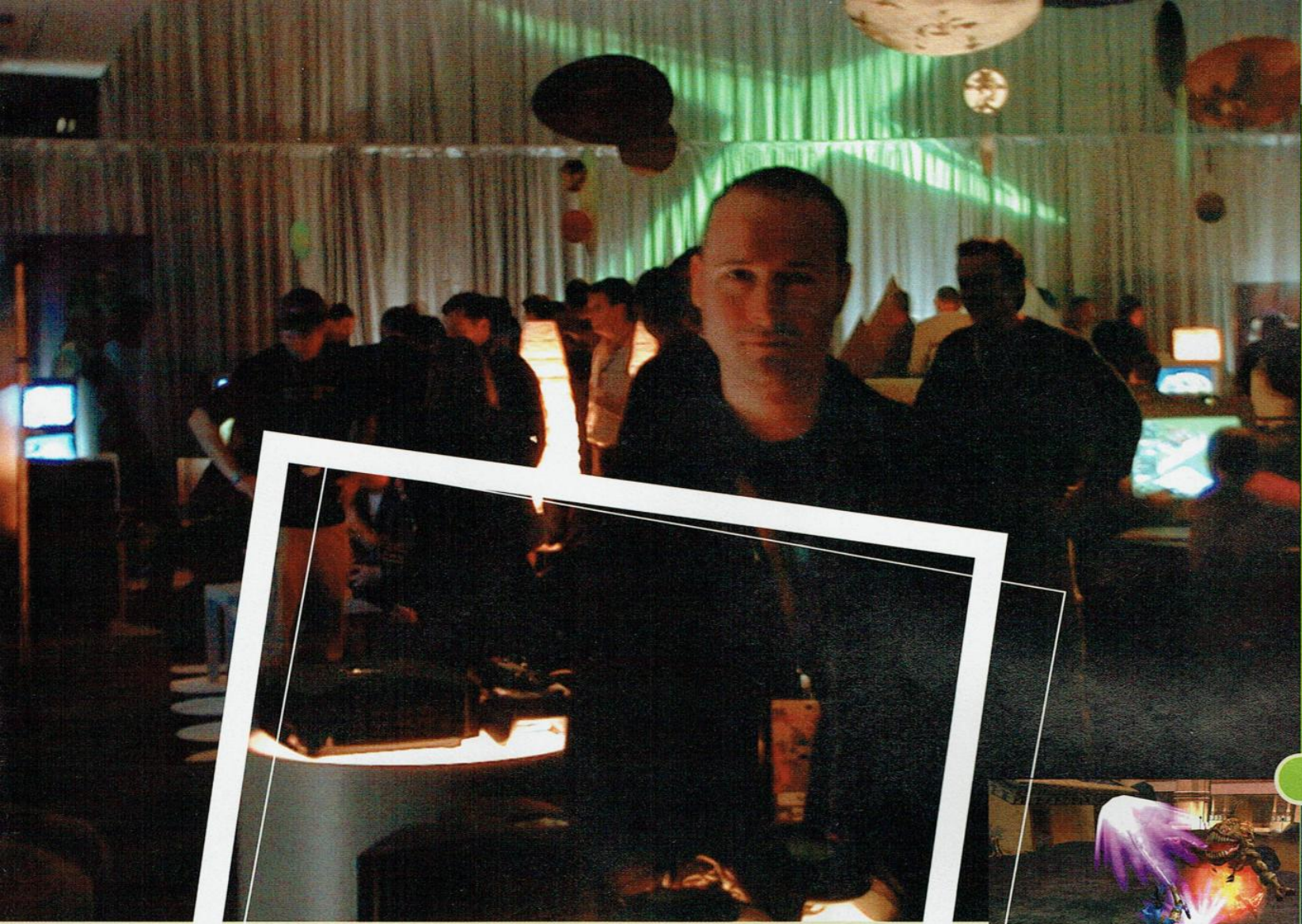
And with that, Joseph proceeded to explain how the controls of Halo would be accessible to the casual gamer. All the usual tweaks like turning sensitivity, button assignment and inverted crosshairs could be altered in the options menus, which is where the hardcore gamers would naturally look.

MICROSOFT MOOLAH

With that largely academic dichotomy aside, what's at least obvious is that the plentitude of money and resources at Microsoft has allowed its game developers to push whatever they do — art or otherwise — beyond what most companies are capable of. Just listening to Alex Garden (Relic Entertainment) gushing about the future of games will give you an idea: "There's an important distinction to be made here. Games are about fun. Story is about art. Games are about having fun and enjoying ourselves and I think that we've used fun to help mask the shittiness of the stories we've been telling for a long, long time. Now we've got both... that's the direction in which we're moving. After making *Homeworld*, I got a lot of letters from people saying 'hey, your game



What you're looking at here is another glorious shot from Halo, with [inset] the happy mug of a Bungie employee. Smile!



Hyper Editor, Elliot Fish, stands in the spooky green glow of Gamestock. Oh, and what's that console in front of him there...? Ahhh, the Xbox.

changed my life', or, 'it really inspired me'. That's when I started to think, 'hey I'm really in a position to make an impact on people', as bizarre and freaky as that is. There's an opportunity for us to make very powerful stories and to change people, but we should not confuse games that are fun, with stories that are (emotionally) moving. We're looking at two different art forms here, and storytelling is only one component of our art form. If it was the year 2047 and a giant mega-corporation was battling to control the remaining checkers on the board, it wouldn't be any better than it is right now. Y'know Checkers is a compelling game without having a story behind it."

A BOX OR A CUBE?

But what about the Japanese market? Everything that was Xbox-related at Gamestock was decidedly American by nature and design (understandable since this was Microsoft's show), but the proverbial monkey on the Xbox's back was, and still is, the lack of 3rd party commitment from Japanese developers. Is it that important? Ask yourselves this: how many of your favourite console games were made in the USA or Europe? How many of them were Japanese? At this time of

writing, Konami is the only company that has committed itself to the Xbox. Without Namco, Capcom, Sega, or Squaresoft in the equation, the Xbox is staring at a black hole in a critical sector of the market.

It's not as though Japanese gamers aren't keen on the Xbox, though. Our Japanese colleagues attest that the PlayStation 2 is the market leader only by default, and its lack of variety in the 'killer apps' department isn't exactly buoying the market.

That's why the biggest news at Gamestock was the announcement that Microsoft has established its own Japanese development house, Microsoft Kabushiki Kaisha (MSKK). The team comprises a number of relatively high profile members of the Japanese gaming community, namely Toshiyuki Miyata (formerly of Sony Computer Entertainment Japan), Shige-hisa Kojima (Metal Gear Solid), Yuko Araki (sound engineer, Popolocrois), and Hirohiko Iyoku (graphic designer, Legend of Dragoon).

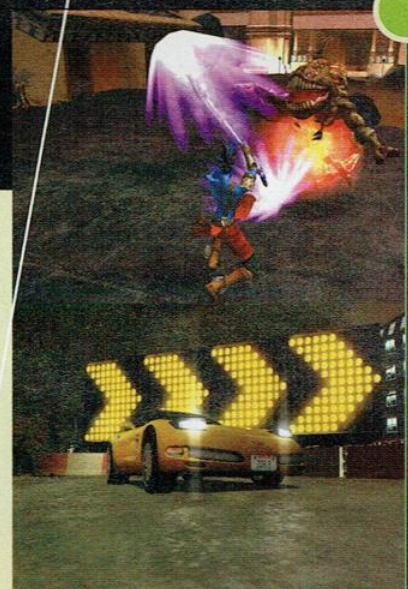
This is a smart move on Microsoft's part. Playing 'What's My Line?' between Japanese developers and their expectations of the Nintendo Gamecube could very well produce nothing. By creating their own in-house department, they're not only forcing the issue and making the best of a bad situation, they're

demonstrating that they will and have made serious long-term commitments to the success of the Xbox. They're not about to pull out on a whim. This can only be interpreted positively by the industry at large.

KEEPING CONTROL

While we're on the subject of the Japanese market, I honestly don't know what the fuss is about with the Xbox control pad. My hands are comparably sized (being Chinese and all), and I found that the controller fits as perfectly and as comfortably in my hand as a Dreamcast controller. Obviously, comfort is the product of button placement. In that regard, the Xbox controller is stacked. There are four main action buttons placed for easy access by the right thumb. The translucent green orb in the middle of the pad does nothing — it's simply a plastic hemisphere affixed to the pad by an adhesive. The D-pad on the left is placed way too low to be used properly and I get the feeling many developers are investing unnecessarily in the second analogue stick.

But hey, we're starting to get into semantics here, which is why I'll stop. Gamestock was all about showing off potential, and if all goes well for Microsoft in the road ahead, the Xbox will be one glorious piece of gaming equipment. <<



REVIEWS

p46 **BLACK & WHITE** » PC

Train giant turtles to throw villagers in the sea and sit on sheep! Does it get any better? Lionhead Studios finally deliver their sublime slice of sim gaming.



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THE HYPER CREW'S TOP 5

Eliot Fish - Editor

1. Fallout Tactics - PC
"Hard to resist, even if it needs some serious patching."
2. Kengo - PS2
3. F-Zero Advance - Game Boy Advance
4. Mario Tennis - Game Boy Color
5. Star Wars: Starfighter - PS2

Cam Shea - Deputy Editor

1. Worms World Party - PC
"Massively multiplayer thy name is Worms World Party!"
2. Paper Mario - N64
3. Black & White - PC
4. Serious Sam - PC
5. Super Mario Advance - GBA

Malcolm Campbell - Art guy

1. Final Fantasy IX - PSone
"...but FFX looks so much better"
2. Jet Set Radio - DC
3. F-Zero Advance - Game Boy Advance
4. Guilty Gear X - DC
5. Metal Slug X - PSone

THE HYPER SCORING SYSTEM

The Overall Score - what's it all about?

- 90+** Excellent and worthy of a Big Rubber Stamp. Buy it!
- 80-89** Very good. This is a quality game, but not perfect.
- 70-79** Good, verging on average. Try before you buy.
- 60-69** Average, verging on bad. This game is badly flawed.
- 50-59** Bad game design and possibly not even worth renting.
- 0-49** These games simply suck. A total waste of money!

HYPER

All in-house PC previews and reviews are done on Gateway computers.

www.au.gateway.com





Black & White

PC

CATEGORY: God sim >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PIII 400, 64MB RAM, CD-ROM

JUSTIN HOFFMAN comes back to Earth for long enough to play God.

I know what you want me to say. You want me to say that Black & White is the greatest game in the universe, better than anything anyone has ever seen before, a new kind of game, a redefinition of gaming, simply the Holy Grail of games. Well it isn't. I'm sorry, but it really isn't.

Black & White is a good game, in fact it's a very good game, but it's good in the same way that Age of Empires II is good, it's merely the best example of something that's been done before. Which means what we're saying here is that Black & White is the best little people management game ever, and in many ways that's disappointing.

THE HAND OF GOD

But let's talk about the game for a while. Black & White sees you take the role of a god. Not God, as in the big

guy, the Creator of the Universe guy, but a god, more like one of the Olympian gods like Poseidon or Apollo. A hugely powerful entity, capable of amazing feats, but still very much limited by the world around him.

Black & White begins with a young family headed down for a pleasant day at the beach. The parents are in love. The child is bored by the parents being in love. A voice-over suggests that an innocent world has no need for a god. The bored child decides running down to the beach and frolicking in the shark-infested waters is preferable to watching his parents being in love. The parents, on seeing the sharks closing in on the boy, panic, and rather than rush in and save him, fall to their knees and pray for divine intervention.

Cut to hyperspace. A huge boiling comet thing streaks through the ether,

finds the world, transforms into a giant hand, and plucks the child from the sea. And thus, Eden's newest god is born.

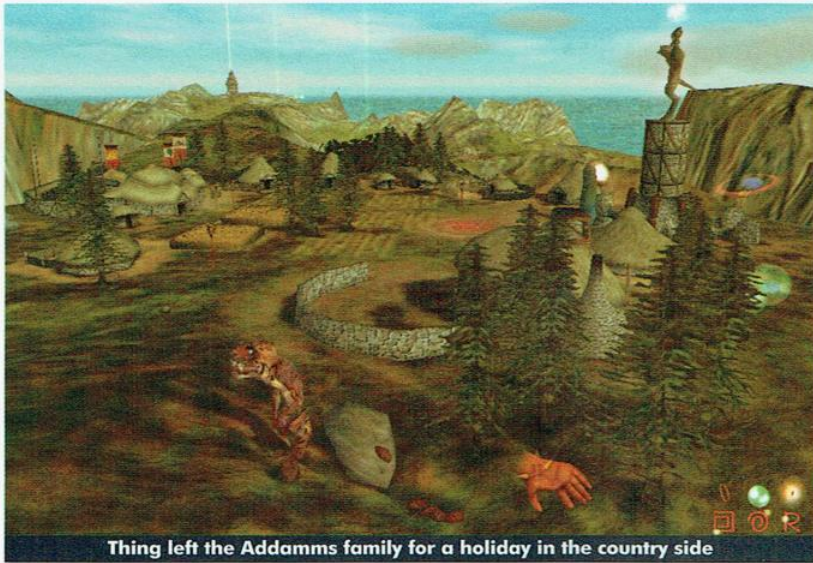
The hand, a 3D animated mouse pointer, is your only way of interacting directly with the world. You use the hand to drag around the landscape and change the view direction, zoom, and angle. Eden is made up of a series of islands, like in Giants: Citizen Kabuto, and each island is one level in the game. Built on each island are several villages, which either believe in the player, in the opposing gods, or believe in no god at all and are ripe for conversion.

THE BELIEF SYSTEM

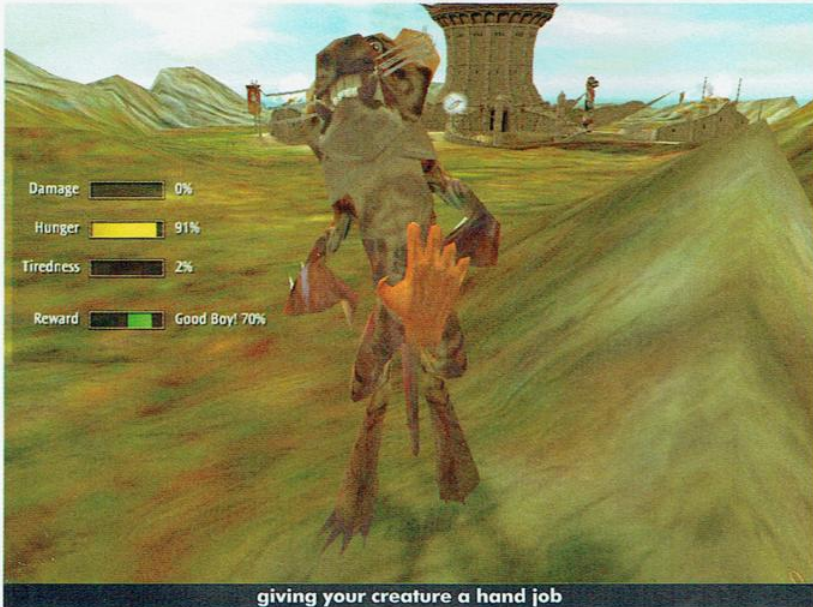
Black & White is all about belief, and about controlling belief. The objective of the game is to be the only god in the world. Unfortunately there are several

other gods already living on Eden, and as long as people believe in them these gods have power. To defeat them, you must convince the little people that you are a far more impressive and worthy god, so they will believe in you. Once no more people believe in a god, his temple becomes vulnerable, and you can use a selection of highly destructive spells (or miracles as they are called) to destroy the temple and banish the god from the realm.

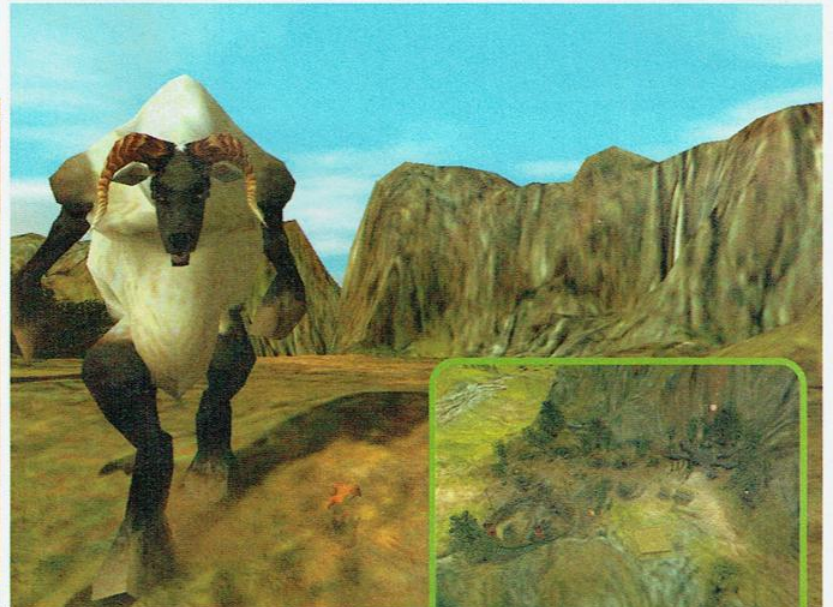
This main overriding objective of Black & White creates a very interesting play dynamic. Rather than simply building an army and smashing everything that gets in your way, in order to control more territory



Thing left the Addamms family for a holiday in the country side



giving your creature a hand job



You can really **beat the living crap** out of the poor little guy until he's all bruised and crying.

you must impress little people so they will believe in you. Each village has a sort of belief sink, represented by a number which floats above the centre of the village when you click on it. Every time you perform a divine act - be it setting fire to their storehouse with a lightning miracle or growing their crops with a miracle shower - the villagers will believe in you a little bit more, and the amount of belief required before the village converts will go down. Conversely, if an opposing god performs acts in your village, the amount of stored belief will go down, and you'll have to think up something clever to impress the little people so they believe in you some more. Tossing a bunch of them into the sea is my favourite.

THE DARK SIDE

Of course, people are well known for adapting very quickly, so it's not good enough to just do the same thing over

and over again. Dropping a fifty-tonne boulder on the village creche and feeding the little children to the fishes gets boring after the fifteenth time. A variety of divine acts impresses people far more than one or two predictable miracles.

In fact, after many hours of diligent play, I discovered the most effective way to impress people is to do something really cruel - like set fire to their homes - and then follow it immediately with something kind - like put the fire out with

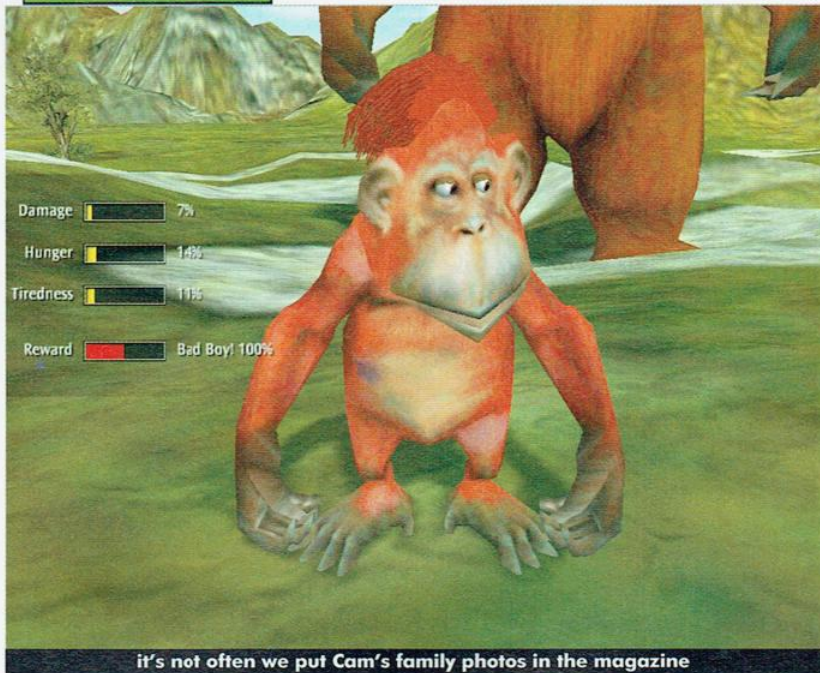


a miracle shower. This kind of schizoid behaviour really impresses them. After all, the game is called Black AND White, not Black OR White.

Which brings me to player alignment, the whole crux of the game. Every act has a moral value attached to it. Saving people from drowning is seen as good, while dropping superheated boulders on wheat fields is seen as evil. The game keeps tabs on how good or evil you are, and as you progress the world will morph to reflect your alignment. This is most clearly seen in the 3D hand, which gets

Finding your feet

>> While it's mostly a very strong title, Black & White is let down by the control method. In an effort to keep the cursor in the middle of the screen for most of the time - rather than moving to the edge to scroll - you must click with the left mouse button and drag the ground toward you. To rotate, you need to move the hand to the edge of the screen and click and drag up and down. To tilt, you need to move to the top and click-drag. To zoom, click both buttons and drag up and down. It's all a bit confusing and unwieldy. We decided to do a bit of an experiment on Malcolm, so we put him in a room with a fairly low-powered PC and a slightly dodgy mouse, and within twenty minutes he was clawing at the door screaming to be let out. Although that might not have had anything to do with Black & White...



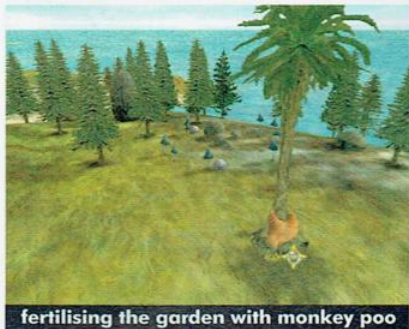
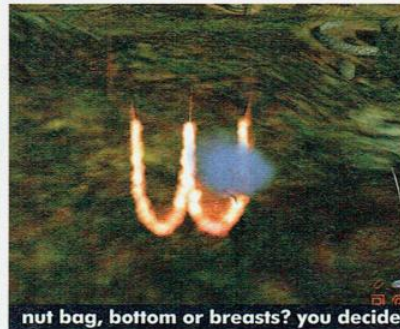
it's not often we put Cam's family photos in the magazine



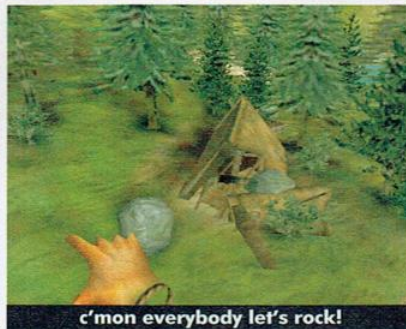
nut bag, bottom or breasts? you decide



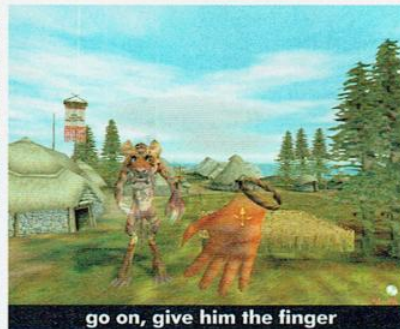
this swirl will be blue for the PAL release



fertilising the garden with monkey poo



c'mon everybody let's rock!



go on, give him the finger



Gods at play

>> Multiplayer Black & White is quite an experience. You can take your creature online and battle through persistent realms against other gods. Or on a LAN you can play a skirmish game, where you simply have to take over all the villages on an island to win. The interesting part of this is that your creature still learns and grows even while he's playing multiplayer games. So any new miracles he learns in a skirmish, he will then be able to use in the singleplayer game or online. Any damage he takes in singleplayer or online will be reflected in a skirmish game. And any growth or alignment change will carry through from singleplayer to multiplayer games. Nifty.

progressively more claw-like the more naughtily you behave.

Unfortunately, it's really hard to be truly evil. Because everything you do has an alignment value, basic game tasks like collecting wood and building houses are seen as good, so if you go around actually fulfilling mission tasks like establishing a village, you will become a good god. Also, from time to time the game presents you with little side quests, which usually involve helping a little person out of some kind of predicament. If you complete the side quest, you get a reward. Unfortunately, all the quests ask you to do good things.

If you do the evil thing - such as drown a bunch of sailors you are supposed to be helping - you don't get the reward. What this means is that if you play trying to get the most out of the game - the most rewards, bonuses, powers etc - then you will almost always be a fairly good god.

BRUISED AND CRYING

Fortunately, there is a way of getting around this alignment bias, and that's by using your creature. Very early in the game you are presented with a choice of three creatures: a cow, an ape or a tiger. The cow is supposed to be very compassionate and perfect for a good god. The tiger is naturally predisposed to maiming and smashing things, and would work well for an evil god. The ape learns very quickly and could go either way.

Your creature starts off very young, and not too large, being only four or five times bigger than a villager. However, feed him up and he will start to grow until in the later stages of the game he towers above every other living thing in the world and is second only to the gods in terms of power and strength.

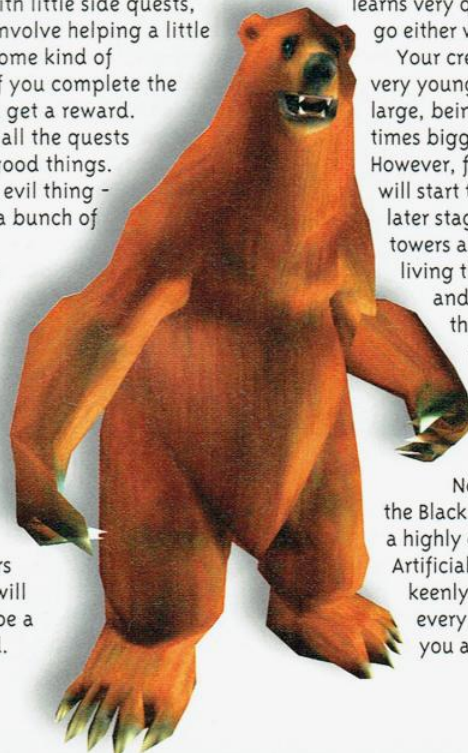
A little bit like a tamagotchi and a lot like the Norns in Creatures, the Black & White creature is a highly complex learning Artificial Intelligence that keenly watches your every move and mimics you and eventually

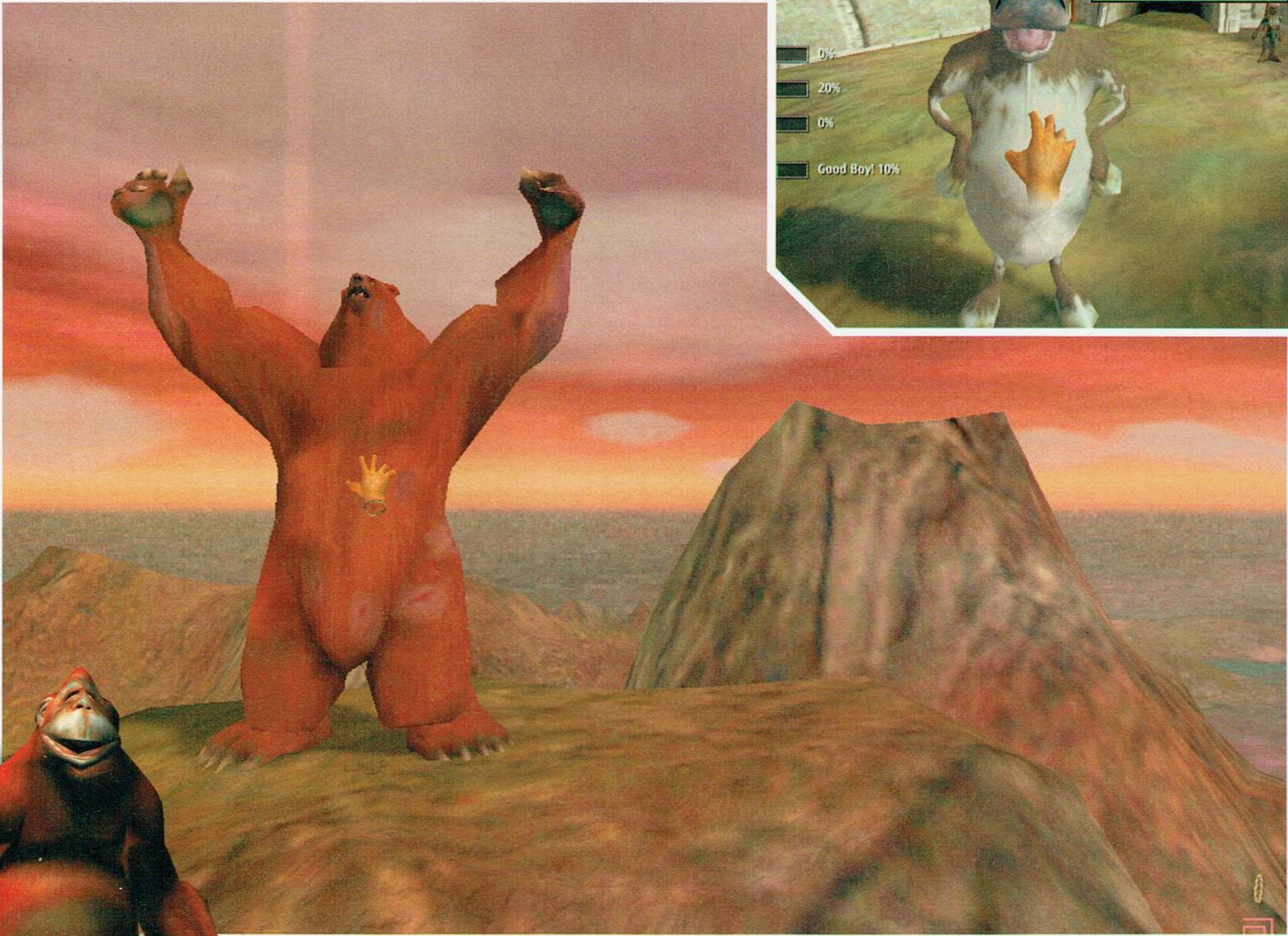
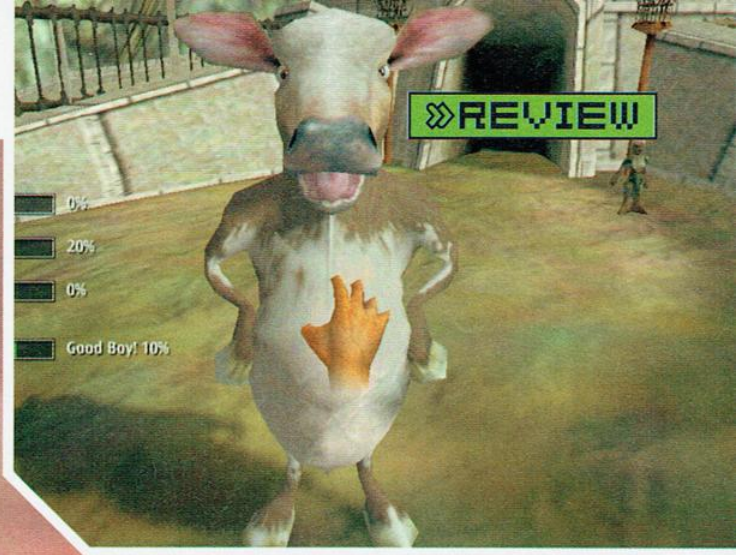
starts to try things out for himself. You can direct his learning by giving him tickle rewards or spanking punishments. Once again though, there is a slight bias, although this time toward cruelty, because while tickling your creature is kind of a slow way to reward him, you can really beat the living crap out of the poor little guy until he's all bruised and crying.

TIE ME UP TIE ME DOWN

The game also supplies three leashes you can attach to your creature to aid you in teaching. The leash of learning allows you to focus your creature on certain objects and game tools such as the village storehouse, and if he sees them being used long enough, he will eventually figure out how to use them himself. For instance, once he learns a few miracles, and then learns how to use the town totem, when he wants to get some miracle power to cast a few destructive spells on a neighbouring village, he will raise the totem (which calls people to worship) wait until the mana has charged up, then select a spell and unleash it on your enemy.

To learn miracles and aggressive behaviour, attach your creature to the aptly named leash of aggression. This will encourage him to go about stomping on things and learning how to fight. Black & White includes a limited beat-em-up mode where your





My creature will go and find a field full of sheep and then practice throwing them at the nearest cliff.



creature and his opponent (usually another god's creature, although I did meet an ogre at one stage) stand in a magical circle and beat the snot out of each other. Finally, the leash of compassion encourages your creature to do good things, like grow foods, heal sick villagers and generally make the world a better place. Oddly though, in the early parts of the game the creature seems like a bit of a burden. It's difficult to figure out what his actual purpose is. Most of the time you will be too busy building houses and collecting wood to spend time teaching your creature, so he will get bored and wander off to do his own thing. My creature, for instance, will go and find a field full of sheep and then practice throwing them at the nearest cliff. I kid you not, I don't know why he decided

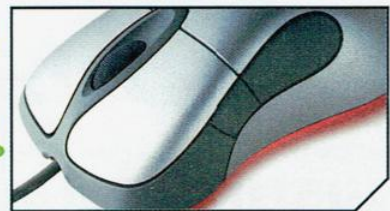
this would be fun. He must have seen me trying to figure out if I could juggle stuff. You can juggle stuff, by the way.

BLACK & WHITE = GREY?
So these are the main elements of Black & White. When they're taken together and merged into a complete game we get something that's certainly very very good, but hardly revolutionary. Black & White is basically a little people management game driven by the quest for more territory and eventually domination and victory over a game map. It looks very similar to Giants from a distance, and very similar to Populous: The Beginning close up. In fact, a good description of Black & White would be Populous Plus.

Disappointments include the amount of interactivity in the game world. Peter

Molyneux, lead designer and sort of a god in and of himself, promised that we would be able to do "anything physically sensible" in the game world. In the end, this turns out to be nothing more than picking up rocks and trees, and throwing things around. Also, the game has turned out to have a level-based, dominate and destroy play dynamic, just like any RTS you can think of.

You should definitely pick up a copy of Black & White and spend a lot of time playing it. But don't expect to have your world changed by it. All the hype from Lionhead Studios and from Electronic Arts says "Black & White: Discover Who You Really Are." Well, this game helps you discover that while you'll enjoy the world's best little person management sim, you'll still find it quite easy to tear yourself away for a few quick levels of Serious Sam. <<



PLUS: The creature, the world, the spells. Charming.
MINUS: The controls, the hype, the come-down.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
93	85	93
OVERALL		
93		
Very good, but not god-like.		

!!! Got a funny Black & White screenshot? Send it to freakscene@next.com.au and we'll print the best!



Serious Sam

PC

CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: GOD >> PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PIII 500, 64MB RAM, 3D card >>

JUSTIN HOFFMAN is somewhat less-than-serious most of the time...

Serious Sam is a trad shooter, developed in Croatia, which aims to bring a return to the wholesome gameplay values of such twentieth century titles as Doom and Duke Nukem 3D. We've already seen two technology tests for this game, and it was the engine - and the engine's ability to generate fifty or sixty enemies at a time - that really impressed.

Like so many Sam fans, I'd followed these technology tests for this fantastic first-person shooter as they were released over the Net, so when Cam called me up and said he had the final review code, I rushed eagerly into the Hyper office to see just how this blastfest turned out.

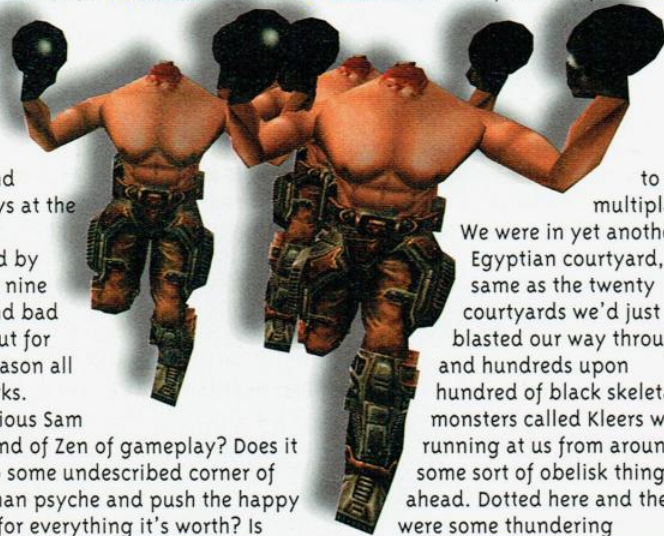
SUICIDAL SAM

By all rights, Serious Sam should be a mediocre title. There are fewer than 25 levels, only a dozen or so different enemies, a handful of very familiar weapons and not much to do in the game except blow apart wave after wave of suicidal opponents who exhibit all the tactical subtlety of an inexpertly flung house brick. But for some reason, Sam is the best fun we've had in ages. Get in, sit down, load up the shotty and start blasting away. Instant accessibility, instant gratification. Sure, the levels are just big open spaces and square corridors. Sure, the enemies just teleport out of nowhere and run at you screaming. Sure, the game design begins and ends with the tactic of throwing nine

thousand bad guys at the player, followed by another nine thousand bad guys, but for some reason all this works.

Is Serious Sam some kind of Zen of gameplay? Does it tap into some undescribed corner of the human psyche and push the happy button for everything it's worth? Is this a collective subconscious thing, whatever that means?

Whatever the reason, for me at least, Serious Sam was best encapsulated on that day I came into the Hyper offices



to play multiplayer.

We were in yet another Egyptian courtyard, same as the twenty courtyards we'd just blasted our way through, and hundreds upon hundreds of black skeletal monsters called Kleers were running at us from around some sort of obelisk thing up ahead. Dotted here and there were some thundering Werebulls and enormous, green-ball-shooting Beast Normals. Harpies were shrieking in the sky. Beheaded Kamikazes were screaming. Eliot and I were sweating and our fingers were on



Kamikaze Bombers, Old Style

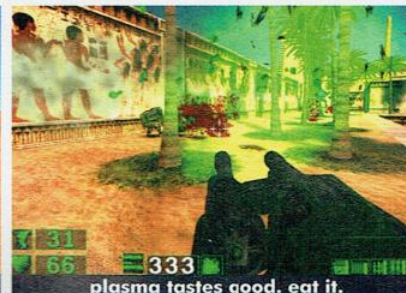
>> Apart from every other thing, Serious Sam has the greatest enemy design of any shooter ever. The Beheaded Kamikaze is what we're talking about here. This guy runs straight at you carrying two bombs raised high above his neck-stump, screaming his lungs out. How can he scream without a head? Who cares. When fifty of these guys are running at you at a time and you're just spinning, spinning so they can't flank you, there's no time for such abstract thought. It's all about the bloodlust. It's all about exploding headless screaming Kamikaze dudes. Serious.



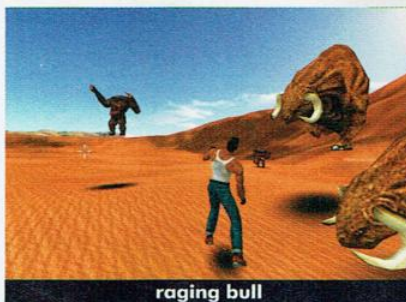
hey, can't we just talk this over?



just don't piss them off



plasma tastes good. eat it.



raging bull



cannon fodder - literally!



c'mon, give your granma a hug

Is Serious Sam some kind of Zen of gameplay? Does it tap into some undescribed corner of the human psyche and **push the happy button** for everything it's worth?

that fire button, and that's where they stayed, all day. We never came up one time for air. Every time we looked around, another hundred things came swarming out at us. I glanced across at Eliot's screen, where he stood a little to the side of the swarming tangle of alien bodies hell-bent on tearing me limb-from limb. The green bolts of my plasma gun were pounding into the ranks, Kleers shattering, throwing bits of bone into the sky, Werebulls lost in a sea of blood, Biomechanoids wailing as their enormous metal limbs melted and Kamikazes exploding with a final yell. And Eliot said, "This is the most amazing thing I've ever seen".

There you have it readers, the editor of Hyper thinks Serious Sam is the most amazing thing he's ever seen (hey, wait a second! - Ed). And it is a pretty amazing game.

Sam has been sent back in time to defeat the forces of Notorious Mental, some kind of shadowy alien Artificial Intelligence, fraught with deadly purpose, or something. This involves running around Ancient Egypt blowing stuff up. That's all you need to know to be able to appreciate this game.

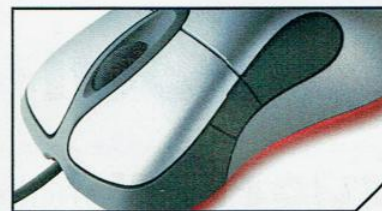
SHAREWARE SAM

Those of you looking for an in-depth immersive gameplay experience that will last for hours and really enrich you as a spiritual being, are probably not going to get too much out of Serious Sam. The original design brief had a vast variety of enemies spread across four distinct worlds, but continual delays have seen the game world cut back to just Ancient Egypt, with only a

!!! Serious Sam this issue, Tribes 2 next issue. We can't have all the good shooters at once now, can we?

few different monsters. Once you've played the first three levels, you've seen pretty much all the environments the game has to offer. And when you get to the end of the singleplayer, you do feel a little as if it's just been the shareware first episode, like the good old days of Doom.

But forget all that negativity. Play alone, play it four-way split-screen, play it online co-operative or deathmatch, however you play Serious Sam you'll love it because it has the purest gameplay yet. If it moves shoot it, if it moves fast shoot it repeatedly before it shoots you. Okay, in some ways it's just space invaders with prettier graphics, but hell, I think the PC has been crying out for something like this for ages. Get it!



PLUS: Hordes of cannon fodder. The game comes with a level editor.

MINUS: No brain required. Budget price overseas, full price here.

VISUALS 86 SOUND 80 GAMEPLAY 90

OVERALL

85

If you've only got 5 minutes to spare, make sure it's with Sam.



Fallout Tactics

» PC

CATEGORY: Tactical Combat >> PLAYERS: 1-18 >> PUBLISHER: Interplay >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII-266, 64MB RAM >>

ELIOT FISH makes Brahmin steak with his Avenger Minigun...

If you never played the sprawling, post-apocalyptic RPGs that were Fallout and Fallout 2, you've sadly missed out on some of the most absorbing, detailed and hilariously fun gaming in recent years. Mutated cattle, prostitutes packing AK47s, dumb guys in big powered armour, drug addicted street kids, rabid pets and of course, the extreme violence... it's like Mad Max with Quentin Tarantino writing the screenplay. Dark and brutal, yet with really funny dialogue. So here we have another Fallout game, except this is not Fallout 3, but a spin off tactical combat game developed here in Australia by Micro Forté. Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel, is a game that focuses solely on the vicious, bloody combat that takes place in the wastelands...

EAT LEAD, MUTIE
 "I've never seen anyone make point and click look so difficult!" One of the many hilarious taunts you'll receive during combat in Fallout Tactics if your shot misses its target. All the charm, character, environments, items, weapons and thankfully, the silly humour has been retained from the other Fallout games and it's never been better. Even though the focus is on combat, there's still an intriguing story here and the wastelands are still populated with all sorts of crazy characters. The detail in the gameworld has never been as good as it is in Fallout Tactics, and we're now in the position where we can really interact with the environment to our advantage in the combat.

Utilising a group of trained initiates, one of which you create and name

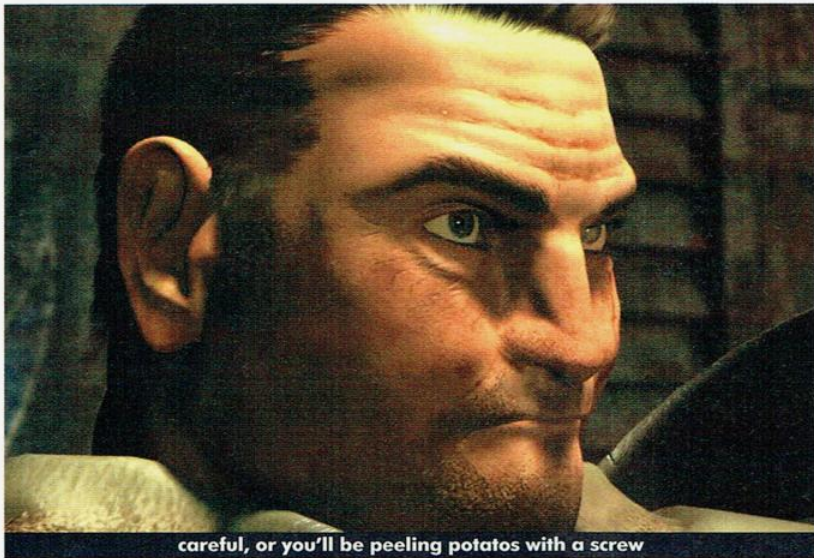
yourself, you'll be set an array of increasingly complex missions, loaded with opportunity for you to experiment with all sorts of wonderful combinations of skill, weapons and planning.

Your characters have a full set of skills, just as in the previous Fallout RPGs — in fact, the character development is virtually the same, and you can slowly develop your team in any direction you choose, eventually having a good sniper, medic, demolitions expert, master of stealth and melee weapons and any

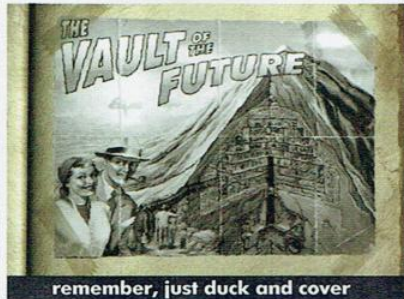


other kind of combination you can come up with. Juggling up to six characters at once, you'll thank the Gods that there is a turn-based option.

You can spend hours tackling with particularly difficult situations until you figure out the most satisfying way of doing the job. It can become truly addictive if you're the kind of gamer who is quite anally retentive about how well your characters turn out at the end of the mission, and how well you handled the multiple objectives. How successful you are in combat,



careful, or you'll be peeling potatoes with a screw



remember, just duck and cover

the finest used car salesmen in the wastelands

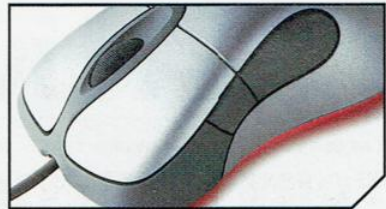
At times you'll wonder if you really aren't **playing an RPG**, which is actually quite delightful for fans of the Fallout games.

really comes down to how specialised your characters are with certain fighting skills and how well you manage them. It's no good putting the medic in the frontline when he can hardly hit the side of a barn. The nice thing about Fallout Tactics is that you can just try whatever you think will work. Do you want to lob a grenade through that window? Have your sniper try to shoot that distant petrol barrel and take out some sleeping raiders? Can you use stealth to sneak up and free that prisoner? And will your medic be able to live through this fire-fight with his shitty gun skill? As the story develops, your missions begin to have real weight and purpose, leading you from skirmishes with raiders, to explorative missions deep within dormant military bunkers to find specific items. At times you'll wonder if you really aren't playing an

RPG, which is actually quite delightful for fans of the Fallout games. **I'M RIDING SHOTGUN** Vehicles also play a part in some missions, and eventually you can pile your party in an APC and burn through town. The vehicles aren't invulnerable though, so not only will you need a skilled "pilot" but someone who can also repair the thing. Fallout Tactics isn't without problems though. There are lots of annoying bugs in the game that will hopefully be addressed in future patches, plus there seem to be a few general oversights that tend to frustrate. There are many times when you'll limp back to base with your characters suffering all sorts of physical injuries that affect your

!!! As hopelessly addicted as we are? Then head on over to <http://www.joinbrotherhoodofsteel.com/>

abilities, but for some reason, the chief medic there offers no option to heal your characters, even after telling you he can! He'll happily sell you medical items and the like, but you'll angrily wonder why he can't just fix your crippled arm or remove your bandages seeing as you're in the mid-mission safety of your own base. Illogical. It's disappointing how many small niggly errors were left in the game. Errors in design that sometimes stick out and make you think "how could they not fix that?" Despite all these gripes, there's plenty to enjoy here and if you have a hankering for a slower-paced, tactical and tricky game, then Fallout Tactics just might be what you're looking for. As addictive as an armful of "Buffout".



PLUS: So funny at times you'll laugh out loud. Multiplayer also.
MINUS: More buggy than a Sydney sewer in summertime.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	90	78
OVERALL		
80		

It's hard not to love the Fallout universe. You'll be up all night...



NBA Live 2001

PC

CATEGORY: Sports >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: EA Sports >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: P200, 32MB RAM >>

TONY MONTANA isn't dribbling this year...

Since when did NBA Live 2001 become the red-headed stepchild of EA Sports' range of sporting sims? Madden 2001 and FIFA 2001 both had significant upgrades from their predecessors, but for some reason NBA Live has been forgotten. And if it wasn't bad enough that the PC version is lacking a major upgrade, both the PC and PS2 versions are also missing several features that are in the PSone version. That's right, not the PS2 version, the PlayStation ONE version.

FAKE-TO-MAKE

Alright, I might be stretching the truth just a little, there's only one feature that's missing, and that is the "Challenge" mode, where you need to perform different tasks (usually within the flow of a normal game) to unlock

different cool features. These challenges range from the very simple — like grabbing a certain amount of rebounds — to the very tough, such as creating a player from scratch, using him for an entire season and making him the MVP of the league. It really adds a lot of replayability to the game, and PC gamers that have the PSX version will miss this feature.

However, the real problem is the way that the PC version has de-emphasised the "post game" that was so well done in the PSX version. And by post game we don't mean scoring with the groupies after scoring 30 points on Luc Longley. Post game refers to how the bigger players score their points close to the basket. In most cases the big fellas will score with various hook shots and fake-to-make moves, yet for years in NBA Live

they've either been dunking the ball or shooting a ridiculous looking jumpshot from right under the hoop.

The PSX version fixed this, with most of the shots from close range being realistic layups and hook shots, yet in the PC version it's back to the bad old days of having guys either dunk the ball or most probably miss a totally easy shot from point blank range. If you haven't played the PSX version, you most probably won't notice this, because it's how it's been in the Live series since the year dot. Those of you that have played the PSX version will be tearing your hair out.



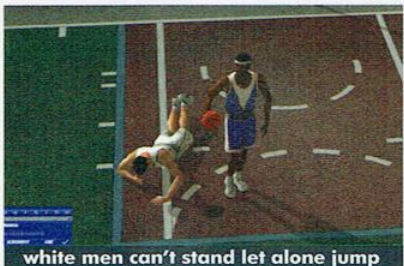


PS2 poor like PC?

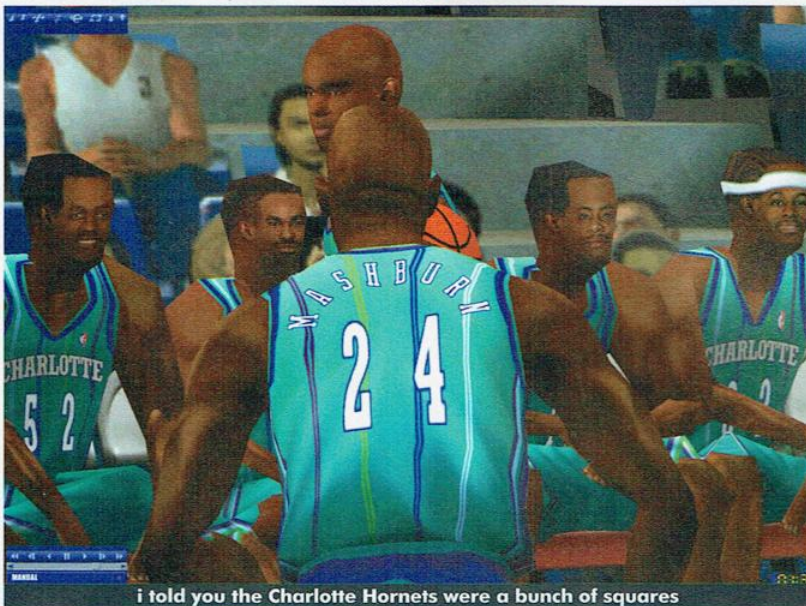
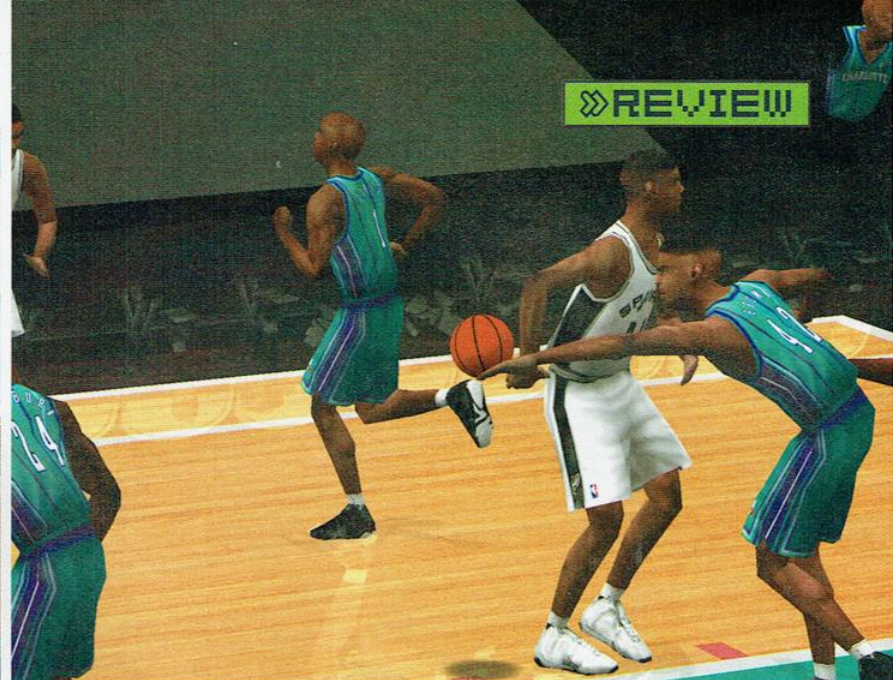
>> "The PSX version dribbles upcourt and blows by three defenders! He's looking to pass, and passes to the PC version, who almost dribbles off his foot, but keeps the ball in play. The PC version throws an alley-oop pass to the PS2 version...oh no, this is horrible. The PS2 version has taken a spill in mid-air, landing on his head, that's a nasty fall..."

That's right, NBA Live 2001 on PlayStation 2 doesn't really come up to scratch. The animations are very jerky, the graphics are less than stellar and the gameplay is cheaper than yo mama.

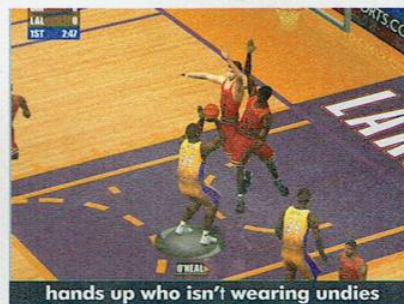
It's a shame, because there's so much potential in the game, and it's just going to waste. Even the little details – the details that EA Sports usually take care of – aren't there. How come the players on the bench in Dreamcast's NBA2K can stand up and cheer when the guys on the court are performing, but they can't in Live 2001? How come the crowd looks so pathetic? How come the crowd is so quiet? Why does Shaquille O'Neal look like he'd have trouble beating Cam in a bench-pressing competition? Oh, and the loading times are the worst we've seen in quite a while. At least EA have given themselves lots of room to improve for next year.



white men can't stand let alone jump



i told you the Charlotte Hornets were a bunch of squares



hands up who isn't wearing undies

❏ If you were to run Live 2000 and 2001 side-by-side, you'd have trouble **telling the two apart.**

Essentially, this is exactly the same product as last year with slightly better graphics. Even the rosters are already out of date, as the game was released right after the trading deadline in the NBA (for those of you that don't know, the trading deadline is in February and is the last day trades can be made until the off-season, and generally at least 10 players are traded on this day). So that means that Dikembe Mutombo is still with Atlanta, Toni Kukoc is still with the 76ers and Juwan Howard hasn't made his way from Washington to Dallas. What's going on EA Sports? I thought if it was in the game, it was in the game.

OK, SO IT'S NOT IN THE GAME There haven't been too many changes in the visuals from last year either. In

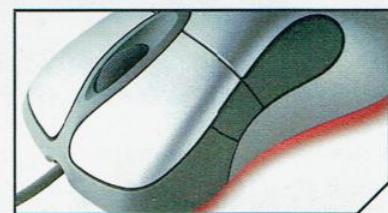
fact, if you were to run Live 2000 and 2001 side-by-side, you'd have trouble telling the two apart. The players' faces look a little sharper, but that's about it. Oh, and there's a new cutscene where before each game you'll see the home team run on court. The only team's intro worth watching is the Lakers' one though, as the players literally bash each other onto the court. Another disappointment is the create-a-player mode. If anything, this has gone backwards from 2000 to 2001. There are so few options to choose from there's really no point.

Commentary is exactly the same as last year, and we mean EXACTLY. The music tracks are pretty sweet though, especially "Do the Freak" by Bootsy Collins. Everybody get funky up! Also,

!!! We were shocked and surprised to find that NBA Live 2001 doesn't work on Windows 2000. Say what?

while the AI has improved slightly, the game still lacks balance. For instance, your teammates all seem to suck, badly. If you don't get the offensive rebound yourself, you can be sure as hell your CPU-controlled teammate won't make the effort to jump up and grab it. Meanwhile, your opponents are all hustling and going for every loose ball. Very annoying.

In the past I've recommended to people to get the annual updates of EA Sports titles, even if the changes are minimal. This time, I can't do it because the changes are barely noticeable. If you've got Live 2000, there is no reason to own Live 2001. Just get an updated roster patch and you've actually got an IMPROVED Live 2001, as the rosters will be more up to date. ❏



PLUS: It's still the number one basketball game on the market.

MINUS: You bought it last year. It was called NBA Live 2000.

VISUALS 89 SOUND 87 GAMEPLAY 78

OVERALL
80

There's just not enough to differentiate it from Live 2000.



F1 Racing Championship

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII-233, 32MB RAM, 3D card >>

GEORGE SOROPOS keeps his eyes on the road and his hands upon the wheel...

Ue're already well into this year's Formula 1 racing season and the new rule modifications are having a noticeable effect on each team's performance. Sauber are having trouble adjusting to the new 'school safety zone' speed limits placed within a 100 meter radius of Jenson Button while McLaren have pushed the new aerodynamic rules to the limit by trialing a new 'swing wing' package inspired by the F-111 strike aircraft.

The truth however is that change in Formula 1 occurs very gradually and presenting a new F1 game to a discerning public becomes a matter of getting the little things just right and making sure that your product is better than all the others. Ubi Soft's F1 Racing Challenge has some very illustrious competition in the form of

Microprose's Grand Prix 3, and seeing that most gamers interested in F1 racing already have that title sitting on their hard drives is there any real reason to invest in another?

ADJUSTABLE ELEMENTS

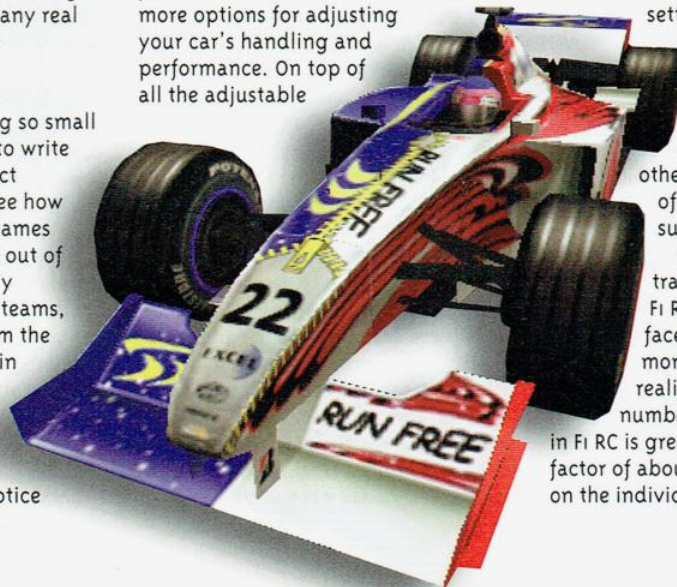
With the F1 game genre being so small there is really no other way to write this review other than a direct comparison to GP3 so let's see how Ubi's effort holds up. Both games depict the same 1998 season out of the box, both games are fully licensed and contain all the teams, logos and drivers (apart from the inclusion of John Newhouse in GP3) and both completely fail to have sexy umbrella girls standing next to your car before the race starts.

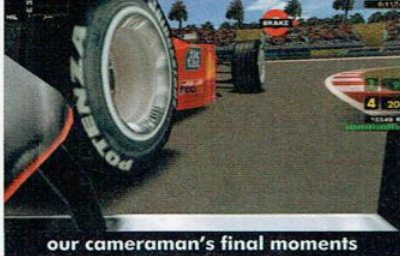
The very first thing you notice

about F1 RC when you poke through the menus is that it has all the same features as GP3 but includes even more options for adjusting your car's handling and performance. On top of all the adjustable

elements in GP3, F1 RC (sorry about all the acronyms but they make things easier) has a differential lock factor setting as well as parallelism and camber adjustments. The diff. lock will effect your car's acceleration and turning performance while the other two effect the tracking of your wheels on the road surface.

Once you get onto the track the visual splendour of F1 RC hits you smack in the face. F1's circuits are much more detailed and fully realised than those in GP3. The number of 3D trackside objects in F1 RC is greater than that of GP3 by a factor of about five to ten, depending on the individual track. Most of the





F1 RC on the PS2

>> The console version of F1 RC is a very different beast to its PC brethren. It's essentially a completely different game. The track designs are all different with none of the intricate detail of the PC version evident. But the real difference comes in the handling of the cars. Ubi have, for some reason known only to them, gone for a simplified approach to car handling without giving hardcore players any option to make it more realistic. Even with driving aids turned off it's very hard to spin your car and turns are made easy by the very sedate cornering performance of the vehicles. Basically all the fun has been taken out of the racing leaving behind a very dull, simplified Clayton's Grand Prix game.

extra detail comes in the form of buildings and grandstands full of people but comes at a price. With F1 RC and GP3 running at the same resolution and with similar detail levels GP3 runs faster due to its simpler track designs.

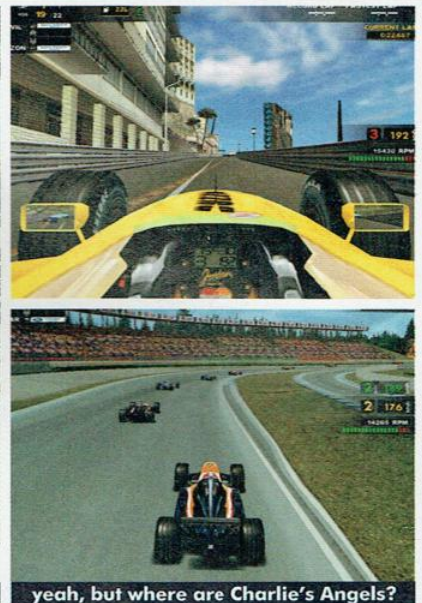
CONNECTED TO THE ROAD

There is a real contradiction here though, and as you have probably already noticed from the screenshots, F1 RC has a very dodgy looking cockpit view. Compared to the excellent cockpit in GP3, Ubi's effort looks positively primitive and it's very hard to understand why such a good-looking game would have such a crappy looking in-car view. It looks very much like it belongs in a 32-bit console game.

F1 RC supports newish graphic effects like anisotropic filtering and



try not to make F1 noises with your mouth when playing this game



yeah, but where are Charlie's Angels?

Both completely fail to have sexy umbrella girls standing next to your car before the race starts.

environment mapping but with these on, particularly the environment mapping, the game slows down enormously and requires major grunt to run at a playable framerate. Seeing as how you don't really notice these things when you're racing it makes you wonder why the developers didn't spend less time on appearances and more on substance.

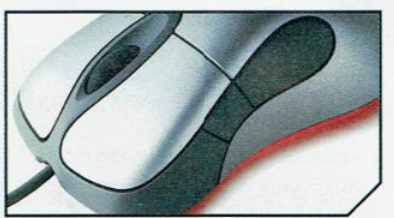
The real issue in any comparison however is the game physics and driving characteristics of each title and it's here that 3 years of Geoff Crammond's work shines through. F1 RC just can't compete with Microprose's title in terms of giving the player a real feeling of driving an F1 car. GP3 gives the player a sense of being connected to the road in a way

that F1 RC can't match let alone beat.

Another area where F1 RC fails to improve over GP3 is in its implementation of your opponent's AI. Cars seem to hit you more often in F1 RC making unplanned and annoying exits from races a more regular occurrence. Not that this doesn't happen in real F1 racing mind you, but it shouldn't happen as often as it does in Ubi's new game.

To be fair this is easily Ubi's best F1 game to date but in a genre as restrictive as this, where designers don't have the luxury of adding a few new weapons or an RPG storyline to spice things up, you have to be better than what has gone before to get noticed and unfortunately for Ubi, GP3 is still the best. <<<

!!! F1 Racing Championship is the first F1 game to feature Jacques Villeneuve.



PLUS: Overall, it's probably the best looking F1 game so far.

MINUS: Driving experience doesn't match GP3.

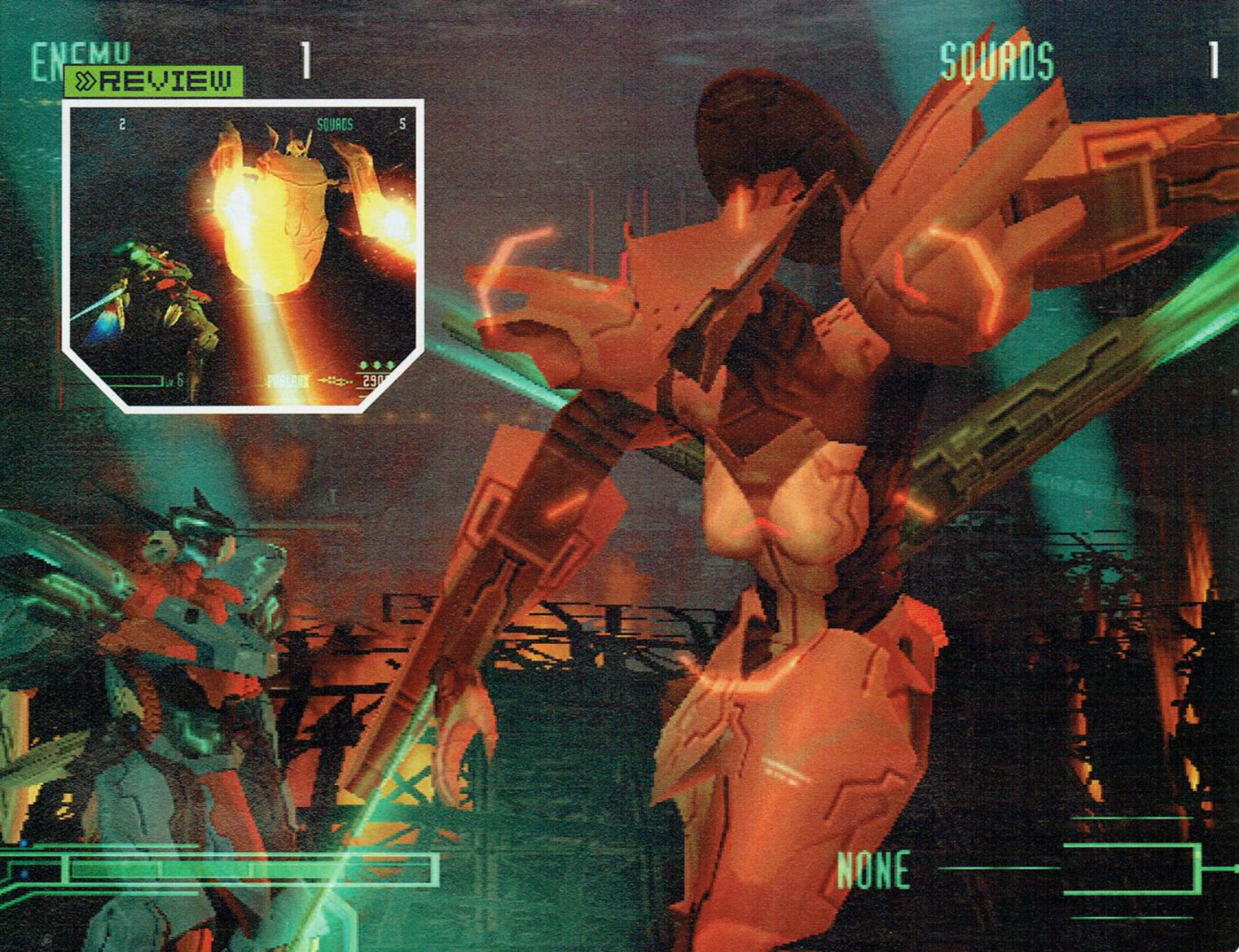
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 75 80

OVERALL

85

A good game from Ubi Soft, but not the best in the genre.



Zone of the Enders

PS2

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Konami >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

KEVIN CHEUNG didn't buy this just for the demo disc... honest!

If you're the kind of person who thinks Neon Genesis Evangelion is one of the best animated series ever made, then this is just your ticket. Zone of the Enders (ZOE) is an ambitious new mech combat game from Metal Gear Solid creator, Hideo Kojima. Not that his involvement should in any way inflate expectations for the game, it happens to come packed with a fully playable demo of his much anticipated projected, Metal Gear Solid 2.

Although ZOE falls within a niche that's characterised by games like Virtual On and Armored Core, Kojima actually terms his game a "Robot Animation Simulator" — a rather subtle disclaimer of its brand of gameplay.

SHIELDS UP!

Unlike its contemporaries, ZOE doesn't focus on heat management or special

robotic manoeuvres like torso twisting or pointing the guns up and down. It does the complete opposite by making what's seen on screen appear just like the dynamic battle scenes that are seen in similar anime like Macross, Gundam and Evangelion.

This approach prompted a rethink of the usual control systems. In order to control a flying mech, the left analogue stick moves you forward, backwards, left and right. If you're locked on to a target, left and right are used to strafe. The triangle button is used to gain altitude, the X button is to descend, and the right analogue stick (when not locked on) is to rotate the entire screen around you.

The R2 button is used generally for boosting around in any direction. The R2 button doubles as an energy charger when no direction is pushed,

allowing you to launch devastating energy balls. The L1 and L2 buttons toggle between targets and flying in free space, giving you relative freedom to fight or flee. The Square button fires the main guns, but is also used for rockets and melee weapons depending on how close you are to the enemy and how quickly you're moving. Firing while boosting from a distance will launch a clustered laser blast; up close, you'll pull out your sword and slash at the enemy. The



Circle button shoots secondary weapons like Phalanx guns and Javelins that can be cycled through on the D-pad. R1 activates the shields.

When up close, the Circle button doubles as — believe it or not — a grab and throw move.

I LIKE TO WATCH

ZOE's control interface is remarkably intuitive. With a little practice, it's easy to fly headlong into an enemy patrol, zigzag at frightening speed through laser blasts and rockets, come within spitting distance of an enemy robot, and



Here's why you'll buy ZOE

>> This game comes packed with a fully playable level of Metal Gear Solid 2. It all takes place on a boat, starting with a death-defying bungee jump from the George Washington Bridge by Solid Snake, and culminating in a shootout with Russian femme fatale, Olga. Straight through it can take as little as 3 minutes to finish, but if you explore every aspect of the demo, from checking out rain droplets and shooting holes in pressurised tubes to hiding in lockers (and kissing the poster girls) and shooting a guard in the nuts from under the fruit shelf, you'll be kept busy for weeks.



Zig-zag at frightening speed through laser blasts and rockets, come within spitting distance of an enemy robot, and send it crashing into a nearby building.

send it crashing into a nearby building. You can then send down a hail of bullets or move in with your trusty sword to finish the job before it recovers. It's simply amazing to watch.

Sadly, when it comes to describing ZOE as a game, that's all you really do. Actually, you do it a few hundred times. But as far as structure goes, these enemy encounters are strung together by a series of narrative full motion video sequences, telling the story of young Leo Stenbuck as he is caught in the middle of an invasion by an aggressive band of so-called freedom fighters. His hometown reduced to rubble, Leo stumbles upon



an Orbital Frame (ZOE-speak for 'mech') called Jehuty, which he uses to fight the invaders.

The story is presented as a 3D anime, which quite frankly looks awful. Leo and his mates are uninteresting and generic, and the English voice acting is truly appalling. There are no subtitling options either. Leo's personal angst and girly 'Ikari Shinji' screams smells suspiciously of a straight Evangelion rip off. It's no wonder, then, that Konami intends to release an animated series based on the events prior to ZOE later this year.

Ultimately, it's the lack of things to do that lets ZOE down. It only seems that way because the controls are so simple — but that's why the

!!! Your snake certainly will get solid when you see the incredible intro on the MGS2 demo disc.

jaw-dropping choreography of the battles aren't possible on any other mech combat game. Konami has thrown in a few token puzzles like finding pass codes, disabling certain buildings, and rescuing people — but they only served to accelerate the game's extreme linearity, which amounts to around 3 days of gameplay. That's where the "Robot Animation Simulator" disclaimer comes into effect. It was, after all, 'intended' to play out like a cartoon.

As it stands, ZOE is a bit too shallow and repetitive for our gaming tastes. It needed more sub-missions, more power-ups, super-moves to earn, more mission requirements; and more than just the reputation of Hideo Kojima. <<<



PLUS: Amazingly intuitive control interface. Wow, it looks like anime!

MINUS: No depth to the missions; linear to a fault. Terrible voices.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

84 77 75

OVERALL

78

ZOE needed a lot more depth to its missions, options and gameplay.



Evergrace

PS2

CATEGORY: Action/RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Crave >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

GEORGE SOROPOS is ever graceful...

Evergrace is the story of Darius and Sharlene. Darius is a hot young medical lawyer who combines his life-saving surgical skills and courtroom genius in the world's first legal firm/medical center. While Sharlene is his kung-fu fighting, PhD educated fighter pilot. Together they tackle immigration rackets, drug smugglers and even the occasional art theft but always have time for a pratfall and a giggle at the end of every episode.

MINI-SKIRTS

Well that would be interesting wouldn't it? Unfortunately it isn't true. Evergrace is actually just another tale of revenge and betrayal, love and loss and all those other syrupy things Japanese game developers love to go on about. Darius is a marked man, he has the 'Crest' on the back of his hand, a foul

curse which causes total strangers to exclaim 'He has the Crest on the back of his hand!' everywhere he goes. Sharlene is Darius' neighbor and has also found herself consigned to the same fate, though she gets to wear mini skirts and fluffy bunnies in her hair.

The use of two characters is actually one of the few interesting aspects of the game. The designers didn't do it just to be fair to the fairer sex but because it has allowed them to do something a little different with the structure of the game. Unlike other similar titles, Evergrace doesn't want you to choose one character and play all the way through the game with him or her; both are needed to help each other at critical points so the player actually has to develop and use both characters as they work their way through.

Another area where Evergrace diverges from the RPG norm is in character development. Your two alter egos do not gain experience or go up 'levels' as they battle the game's beasties. Instead they gain Palmira pieces, used as money, and items which allow you to crank up their stats: Strength, Resistance, Intelligence that sort of thing.

Palmira is Evergrace's version of FFVII's materia. You whack it on your weapons and armour to give them magical



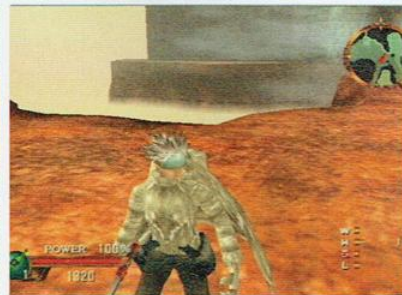
powers, attack or defensive powers. The pieces that monsters drop, when you hit them hard enough, are used to repair, upgrade or buy equipment at shops.

Shops exist in the crystals that populate each area, usually one to a location. These crystals also house the game's save points and allow you to swap characters at will. You'll need to visit the shops often as your equipment takes damage at an alarming rate and needs constant repair, something that becomes a bit annoying after a while.

The shopkeepers also fancy themselves as fashion critics. Each wearable item actually shows up on your character when you equip it and if the



i was just in the mood for some calamari too



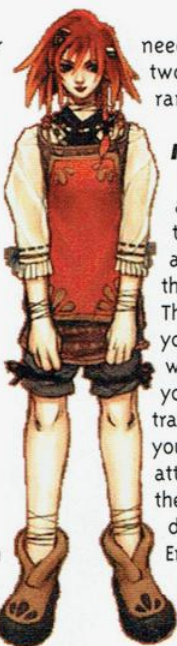
i'm sorry, did i HURT YOU? *SMACK*



watch out, she's a master chef

Depending on the weapon you have equipped your attacks can be varied by **applying different pressure to the attack button!**

shopkeeper likes the cut of your jib he'll give you a discount! If you've played any console RPGs, or even Pokémon, you'll be familiar with the concept of elemental strengths and weaknesses inherent in monsters and weapons. Evergrace takes this idea to new extremes, making most of its monsters very finely tuned to particular elements. You might be whacking the bejesus out of one kind of critter but suddenly find yourself in trouble when something new appears, not taking any damage at all from your attack. For this reason Evergrace provides space for an auxiliary weapon which can be whipped out quickly when



needed. That way you can have two weapons that cover a wider range of the elemental spectrum.

MASH TO BASH
Your physical attacks use energy that subtracts from an indicator bar in the interface menu. This energy bar is also your hit point indicator, in other words the more permanent health you develop (part of the Stamina trait) the more energy you have at your disposal. It's important to attack when your energy is high, the higher the energy bar the more damage your attack will do. Energy regenerates quickly so it's not too hard to keep your attacks strong.

!!! For a more traditional Zelda-esque RPG, all eyes are on Sony's offering Dark Cloud, coming soon.

Evergrace also uniquely uses the PS2's analogue pad. Depending on the weapon you have equipped your attacks can be varied by applying different pressure to the attack button!

The puzzle content in action RPGs is usually high as a way of making up for the lesser degree of story depth but this is not the case in Evergrace. Puzzles are few and far between and usually as obvious as a brunette on Home and Away.

While not being on a par with classic console RPGs such as the Final Fantasy series, Evergrace is still a decent RPG for the PS2 and has enough interesting features and gameplay to keep the player absorbed 'til the end. Quite a good fill in while you wait patiently for FFX! <<<

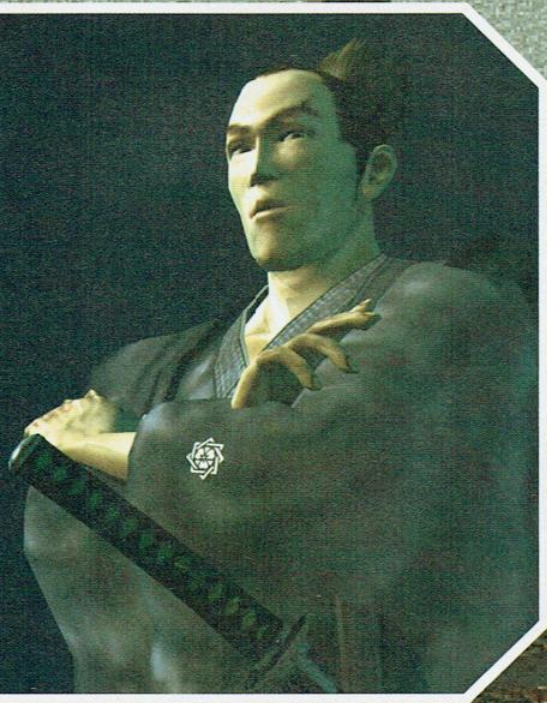


PLUS: You probably can't get a better RPG on the PS2 at the moment.

MINUS: Lack of strategy makes combat a bit dull.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
84	80	79
OVERALL		
79		

If you must have a PS2 RPG now, then it's worth a look.



Kengo: Master of Bushido

CATEGORY: Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Crave >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

» PS2

ELIOT FISH conquers the self to conquer his opponents.

If the enemy thinks of the mountains, attack like the sea; if he thinks of the sea, attack like the mountains." — Book of the Five Rings. Deep, huh? How about this one: "The undisturbed mind is like the calm body of water reflecting the brilliance of the moon." — Jubei. Are we getting you in the mood? Kengo: Master of Bushido is best experienced by role-playing the Samurai; so get your clogs on, find the nearest waterfall and sit down for some soul-searching, then come back and read this review. Okay? You'll thank us later.

THE PUSH OF A BUTTON

Kengo is the PS2 incarnation of the Bushido Blade series that was a cult hit on the PlayStation. Whilst it is not a direct sequel of any kind, it has been developed by the same team and so

naturally inherits the basic design theory of the Bushido games. This is a simulation of training and fighting as a Samurai warrior, from flailing about with a wooden sword to killing your opponent with a single, well calculated move. Unlike the earlier Bushido Blade titles, Kengo concentrates purely on the schools of sword fighting. In a way, this is an example of how the developers have simplified the Bushido Blade concept to possibly cater the game to a more mainstream audience. Whilst it seems limiting at first, there's a lot of underlying depth here.

Kengo has a slow and fairly steep learning curve and only gamers who have a healthy attention span will appreciate the attention to detail and get the most out of this game. Casual gamers will probably get bored within

five minutes when they discover that they can't just pick up the controls and execute some exaggerated finishing move that decapitates their opponent with the push of a button. Hell, you don't even get to use real swords until after a few hours of gaming.

Kengo requires you to train your character to the point where he CAN kill with one blow, but the path to victory is a pretty long, drawn-out one. In the end, it's all pretty satisfying, but a lot of gamers won't like the deliberately slow pace and the emphasis on training up stats and playing defensively to learn new moves.

YES, MY MASTER

Kengo's "career" mode puts you in the robes of an apprentice who must

ultimately become the master of his school and defeat all the opposing Dojos. You must win bout after bout of successively tougher opponents, accruing new moves and swords along the way. You character begins as a sluggish, untalented piece of walking sashimi and you'll have to diligently use the

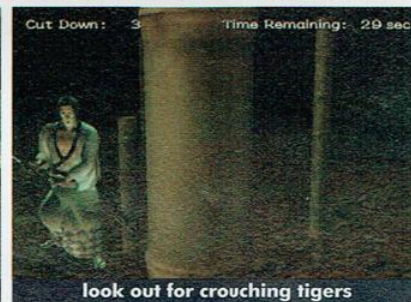
training exercises to buff up your skills to the point where you can finally overwhelm the tough opponents. Striking a post (by pressing increasingly complex button combos) increases your attack power, whilst racing through a bamboo forest cutting down the

!!! You can put your character into the Tournament Mode and play against friends for experience.





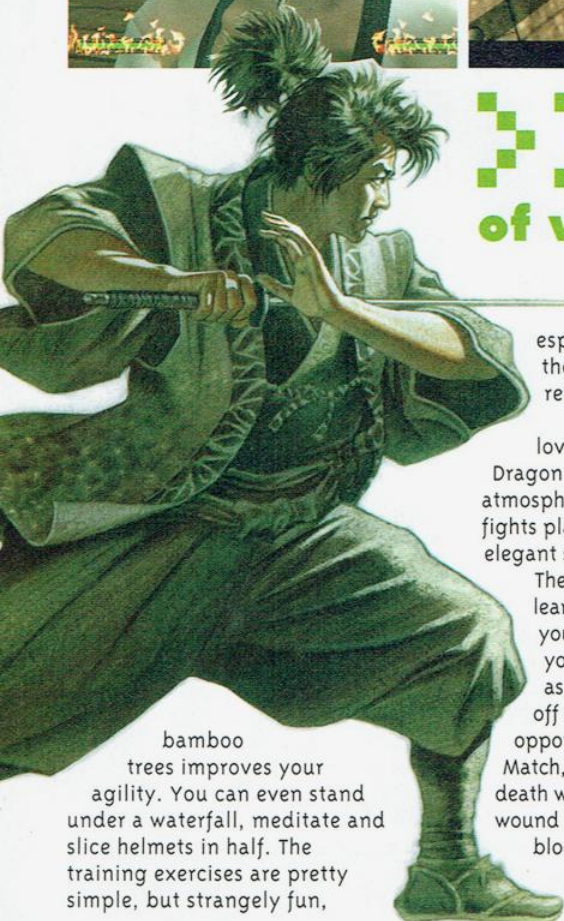
"hey buddy, if a tree falls in the forest... er, hello? Are you even listening?"



have at you candle!

just like black & white, lots of spanking

look out for crouching tigers



bamboo trees improves your agility. You can even stand under a waterfall, meditate and slice helmets in half. The training exercises are pretty simple, but strangely fun,

You character begins as a sluggish, untalented piece of walking sashimi.

especially as you get better at them each time and get rewarded in the process. Anyone who has seen and loved *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* will probably love the atmosphere of Kengo, and a lot of the fights play out like some of the elegant sword fights in the movie. There are so many moves you can learn and then string together in your own custom combos, that you'll get addicted to learning as many as you can, by facing off against more and more opponents. There's also the Imperial Match, in which you fight to the death with real swords, and a nasty wound can have you collapse from blood loss, losing you the match. Kengo probably needed a stronger story, maybe even

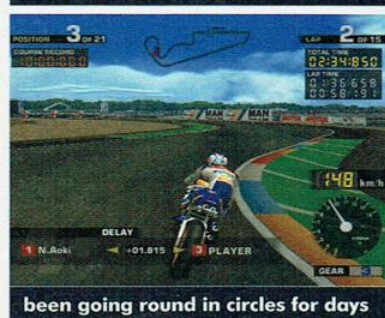
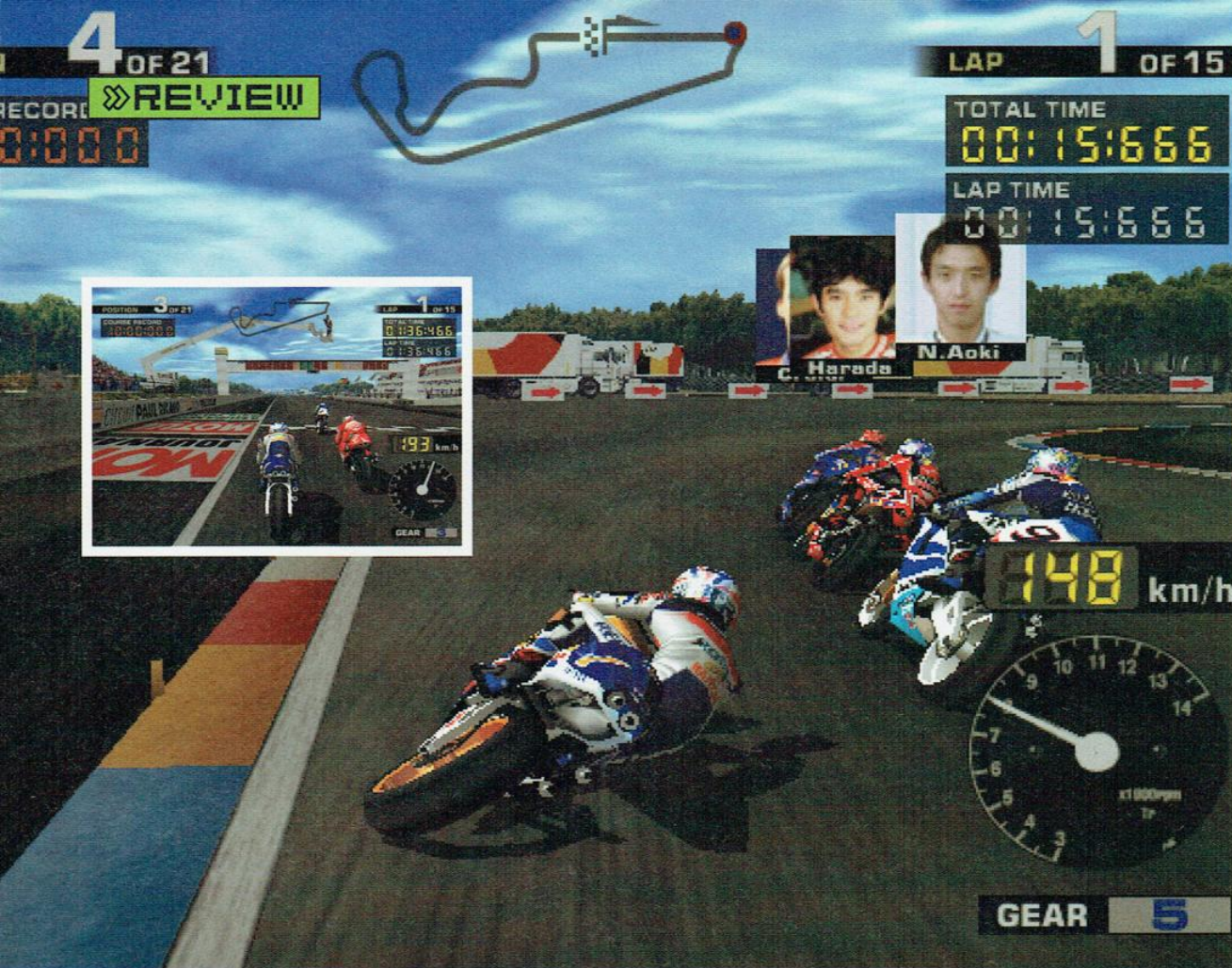
an adventure mode for the single player game, but it is still an addictive and satisfying game to lose yourself in. The controls feel slightly awkward at first, but you'll eventually warm to them. The multiplayer side of the game is not quite as strong as it could have been, as the game does not have enough variety to maintain an entertaining battle mode. Deaths can come quickly, and without other weapons or characters with vastly different personalities and costumes, it gets repetitive pretty quickly. Kengo's strength really lies in the single-player story mode. Whilst the sword fighting won't appeal to everyone, there's an absorbing game here for gamers who are looking for a change of pace and something a little out of the norm. <<<



PLUS: Plenty of moves, very tactical swordplay.
MINUS: Needs more variety, can get repetitive.



Compelling once you get addicted, but not for everyone.



Moto GP

PS2

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Namco >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

OWEN JEFFRIES comes to grip with GP racing with a little help from Honda Racing GP boss **JEREMY BURGESS**...

There's no doubting the programming skills at "Headquarters Namco" if this latest offering is anything to go by. Obviously Namco wanted to produce something special at least with regards to a full on motorcycle racing game. With Moto GP, they have certainly succeeded on virtually all counts. Racing along at a never ending 60 frames per second, this virtual replica of 500cc Grand Prix motorcycle racing is simply astounding for its sheer amount of visual realism. Also, being the GP freak that I am, and wishing to provide the most accurate review of this game, I enlisted the help and advice of Honda Racing's Team GP Boss, Jeremy Burgess or "Jerry" as he is known in racing circles. The fact that JB also helped Mick Doohan to his record 5 World Championships, made me feel he is THE guy who should know what it takes for a good GP racing sim.

!!! Namco have two Xbox titles in development. Could MotoGP be one of them? Bikes & USA = SS

environments. Take the Jerez circuit in Spain for example. As JB had just returned from testing in Spain, he should know more than anyone else if the game's graphical representation was in any way remotely similar to its real life counterpart. As I expected, when I sat JB in front of the game, the look on his face said it all. As Jeremy put it, "If a rider were riding around Jerez, this is exactly what they would be seeing". Jeremy went on to say, "Even the track camber is spot on! This is definitely the most realistic representation of GP racing or any other racing game for that matter, I've yet seen." JB also didn't make any secret of the fact that the team's favourite game when on tour is Formula One on the PlayStation. "After seeing this game however, there's no doubting that this will be our next acquisition along with a PS2 console". Powerful words indeed... I do hope Mr. Honda San has deep pockets. But then again this is Honda Racing we're talking about. With an enormous racing budget at hand, I somehow get the feeling JB and the rest of the Honda GP team will get their PS2 and Moto GP game real soon!

ON YER BIKE

The game itself, while being the best GP sim I've seen so far regardless of platform, it still comes up lacking in a couple of departments, with the most notable being the constant "flickering" and lack of true anti-aliasing. The only good part about it is that at least it doesn't appear to be very prevalent when using the on-bike view. Unfortunately having said that, with arguably the best replay mode I've yet seen in any game, this really does let the side down. The other gripe is that there are only 5 tracks. Yes, that's right, no Philip Island! I simply can't believe Namco didn't choose to implement all the tracks from the championship season. Irrespective of whether I choose to exhibit some Australian "bias" re Philip Island, I still feel that all the tracks should have been included at least for gameplay's sake. If Namco choose to do this with Moto GP 2 for example, then I'm going to feel mightily ripped off I can tell you!

Still these two points aside, Moto GP is close to an absolute classic in every sense of the word, and it's definitely one of the best PS2 racing games around. <<<



PLUS: Real life factory teams and riders, amazing graphics and replay.

MINUS: Bikes could do with more set up options such as spring rates.

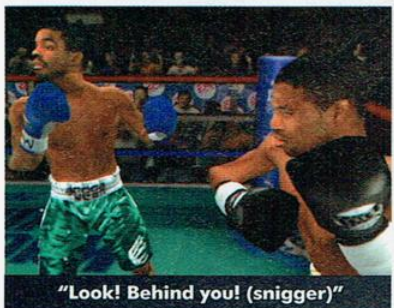
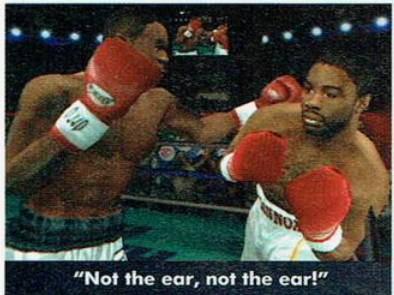
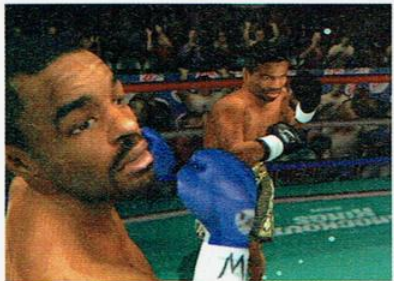
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 90 75

OVERALL

80

Almost, but not quite the ultimate GP racing sim.



Knockout Kings 2001

CATEGORY: Sports >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: EA Sports >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

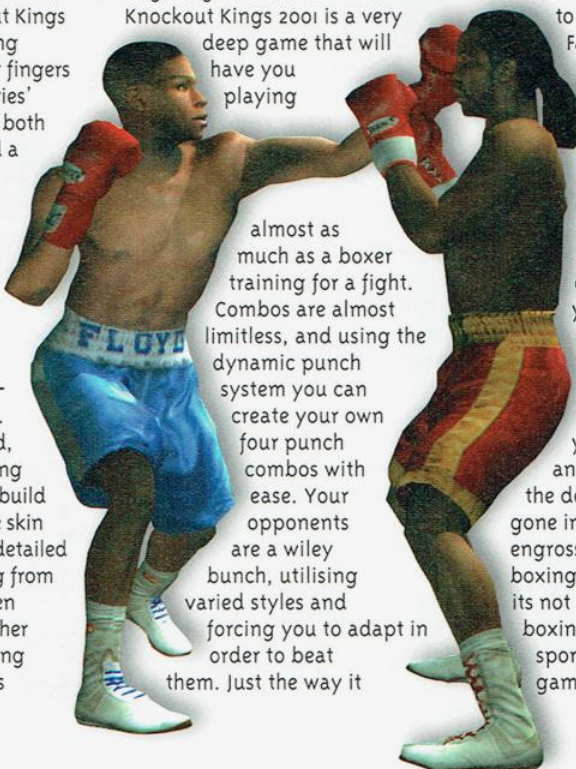
MICHAEL GRIESSER loves youse all...

E boxing has always been popular in Australia. Whether it's Jeff Fenech, Kostya Tszyu, Jeff Harding or Anthony Mundine in a fight, everyone flocks down to the pub to see the blood, sweat and tears of a good ol' slugfest. With last year's Knockout Kings (KOK) being a very underwhelming affair, boxing fans have had their fingers crossed for some time that the series' first appearance on PS2 might be both a realistic boxing simulation, and a fun game. Seems EA caught the vibes because KOK 2K1 might just have found the balance we've been waiting for.

GET YOUR KOK OUT AND PLAY WITH IT

Let's get the most obvious improvement out of the way first - Knockout Kings 2001 looks superb. Even with the huge roster included, you'll have no difficulty recognising the boxers. Each boxer's physical build has been captured nicely, and the skin textures that have been used are detailed and very appropriate - everything from hairs on chests to tattoos have been included to add authenticity. Further details such as mouthguards getting knocked out, and cuts and bruises

appearing on the boxer's faces, add to the atmosphere of a real fight. Most of the motion capture is also superb, with only the slowness of movement around the ring and the lack of facial animations letting the game down.



Knockout Kings 2001 is a very deep game that will have you playing

almost as much as a boxer training for a fight. Combos are almost limitless, and using the dynamic punch system you can create your own four punch combos with ease. Your opponents are a wiley bunch, utilising varied styles and forcing you to adapt in order to beat them. Just the way it

should be. They'll even go "below the belt" on occasion... but that's okay because you can respond in kind.

EA'S KOK TAKES A BEATING

There are a variety of gameplay modes to get stuck into. Our favourites are Fantasy Fights, where you can pit all-time greats against each other, such as Lennox Lewis versus Muhammad Ali, and the excellent Career Mode. In Career Mode you can create a boxer and take him from dirty rings in Fort Worth, Texas all the way to Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas. It's quite an involving mode, allowing you to train extensively between fights to learn new moves and generally up your skill levels.

Knockout Kings 2001 is an absorbing title that will have you gaming for the full 12 rounds and more. Boxing fans will relish the detail and work that has obviously gone into the game, especially the engrossing Career mode. Some non-boxing fans may get a little put off as its not as fast as Tekken, but hey, its a boxing game. If you're a boxing or sports fan and you don't get this game, give yourself an uppercut.<<<



PLUS: No Anthony Mundine, in-depth career mode.

MINUS: No Anthony Mundine, drab commentary, maybe too slow.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 79 88

OVERALL

87

The best boxing simulation yet. A must-buy for fans of the sport.



Grandia II



CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> SUPPORTS: VMU >>

GEORGE SOROPOS relishes the goodness of Dreamcast...

It's the oldest of stories. Good versus Evil, Light versus Dark, Coke versus Pepsi, Smarties versus M&Ms, Buffy versus Charmed...that sort of thing. Okay, now imagine I'm that guy who does the voiceovers at the cinema "And into this world steps a band of heroes. Fighting for the light...but tempted by the dark. Heroes whose fates are forever tied together. Heroes whose destiny is the destiny of their world. Heroes who look like they belong on a float in the Gay Mardi Gras."

DID YOU SAY SCHOOLGIRLS?

Japanese RPGs, we love 'em. 13 year-old school girls with impossible hairdos and the firepower of a whole platoon of US Rangers; sullen heroes tortured by the memory of their family/brother/pet Emu brutally molested by a certain Rugby

League player with wandering fingers; and of course the inevitable freak who joins the party in order to discover what it's like to hang out with 13 year-old school girls and sullen, tragic heroes.

The original Grandia was the Sega Saturn's tour de force RPG. It was so popular it even managed to boost the sales of the Saturn, which was dying a rapid and painful death at the time. Something Sega seems to have made a habit of unfortunately. Many of you may be much more familiar with the version released for PSone last year, virtually identical to the original and still a fantastic game, 6-7 years after it was designed!

If you were lucky enough to play through Grandia then its sequel needs virtually no explanation. It's almost identical in every way, except for the story of course. The game interfaces,

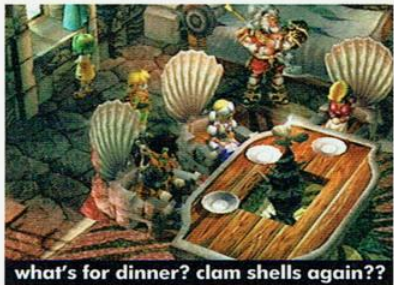
combat interface and world map interface are the same, everything is pretty much as it was with no Final Fantasy style tinkering with the combat system, or anything else for that matter.

If you're unfamiliar some explanation is in order. Combat in Grandia II is turn-based as is usual in these sorts of games. The implementation however is quite different to the Final Fantasy titles and has a more 'real-time' feel. Each character has a set Initiative Point level which determines how fast their combat gauge runs down. A character can initiate an action when their gauge reaches a set point, but unlike the FF games, that action is also timed on the gauge. In other words, even after an enemy has initiated an attack and if your timer is in the right place, you can still block, or even force him to back



down by using a critical attack.

Huh? Okay, lets say a big slobbering bright purple scrubbing brush attacks you, it's been known to happen... Your timers start counting down and the scrubbing brush reaches his attack point first. He starts up a special attack that takes a long while to build up. Meanwhile your timer has reached the attack point and to counter your opponent you initiate a faster critical attack. Your timer reaches the end first because your attack is faster and you



Okay, lets say a big slobbering bright purple scrubbing brush attacks you, it's been known to happen...

whack old scrubbo over the head canceling his special move and sending his attack timer back 2/3 of the way. Ha ha! Take that you big purple bristly thing!

DERANGED ROOSTERS

Grandia II departs from the normal RPG cliches in other ways as well. In adventure areas of the game you can actually see all the enemies arrayed against you. There are no random encounters, you can't run around like a deranged rooster trying to get into battles to up your experience levels. All the critters in a level are right there when you arrive and this places quite a different complexion on the game. In order to get your characters and finances well developed you have to make the most of what's available instead of putting yourself through untold hours of tedious, repetitive combat. This is one area where the Grandia series is head and shoulders above the rest.

Character advancement is done a bit differently as well. There's the expected experience point system to increase your levels but, like its predecessor, the most fun comes in allocating the special and magical coins collected from dead opponents to your weapon and magical skills. Your party will collect skill books during their travels and each of these contain certain abilities locked in their covers. Spending special coins will unlock these abilities which can then be assigned to any character on top of their innate weapon skills. Magic is learned in a similar way. The spells can also be upgraded by spending more, which means killing more critters.

In every sense Grandia II is simply an extension of the original, but with sexy graphics. It can't really be said that Grandia II makes full use of the Dreamcast's power but RPGs aren't

really about mere polygons and frame rates. Certainly after being spoiled by Grandia II's lush visuals it will be hard to return to playing similar games on the PSone. Grandia's world is rendered entirely in 3D, as opposed to the usual painted backdrops. Again, if you're familiar with the original this will come as no surprise as it had a 3D

gameworld as well, even on the Saturn! With the higher resolution possible on the DC, Grandia II's gameworld becomes a much more interactive and interesting place than if it had all been painted.

Grandia II is not really a next-gen RPG but rather a traditional RPG on a next-gen system and as far as we are concerned there's nothing wrong with that, old school RPGs are what made the genre popular after all. We like Grandia II and hope to see lots more like it! <<<

!!! In our opinion, Grandia II is a better buy than Fantasy Star Online, simply for the single player.



PLUS: Next-Gen graphics, great game design and it's a Sega RPG!

MINUS: Could have made more use of the DC's power, typical RPG fare.

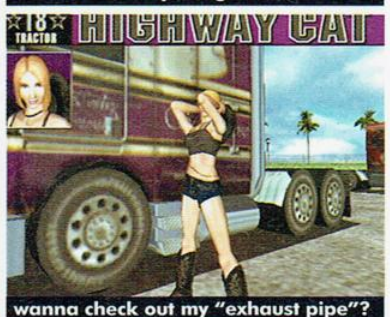
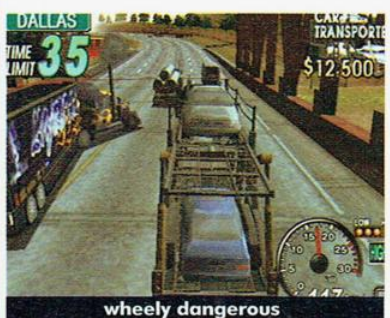
VISUALS 90 SOUND 85 GAMEPLAY 93

OVERALL 90

An adorable slice of adventuring. Get it if you can.

TIME LIMIT 1:02

FUEL TANKER \$11,570



18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker



CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Sega >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >> SUPPORTS: Wheel, VMU >>

Hot wheels of burnin' lurve. ELIOT FISH honks his horn...

Ereaker breaker, this is Rubber Duckie, you got yer ears on? You'd better drop the hammer down, 'cause we got nightcrawlers on super slab 76 and a bear in the air. Listen, I've got some bubble trouble and need some motion lotion, so careful of the paper hanger good buddy. Catch you on the flip flop... out." All your fantasies of being the king of the road just came true in 18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker! Who doesn't want to be the guy who brings home the bacon? And I'm talking five TONNES of bacon!

CHECKING MY EYELIDS FOR PINHOLES

It was pretty hard to not notice Sega's 18 Wheeler cabinet at the arcades. The big cab and nice fat wheel, the exhaust pipe and boomin' sound — it was the kind of thing that drew people in hordes and it delivered some truly fun arcade gaming. 18 Wheeler on the Dreamcast is immediately at a disadvantage, because it's hard to capture the whole thrill of the arcade experience in your own home, alone, on a TV nowhere near the size of

the arcade screen and on top of that you're driving with a twiddly little control pad. If none of that bothers you, then you'll be pleased to know that the game itself is arcade perfect. The Dreamcast does a remarkable job of replicating the huge thundering trucks, detailed smashable environments, blaring cheesy rock and CB chatter and even the sensation of speed and momentum you get from a semi-trailer travelling at over 100 Kph. Unfortunately, the other thing that Sega replicated perfectly was the poor handful of levels from the arcade version. You can finish 18 Wheeler in half an hour. Now, that may sound pretty cheap, but each level is full of multiple paths to the checkpoints, fantastic scripted action (like a huge

!!! A handy Art Gallery is included, and Capcom sure know how to make purty pictures

twister tearing up houses and throwing cars around), and some pretty challenging gameplay if you pump up the difficulty level. You'll love every minute behind the

wheel, and you'll enjoy replaying over the four levels in the arcade mode many times. But once you've kicked the game around for a while, you'll probably see no reason to go back to it. There is a

versus mode, where you can race against a friend for fun, plus a "parking" mode which challenges you to race around a track and park your truck at intervals under the time limit, but 18 Wheeler doesn't cut the mustard in the longterm.

TEN FOUR, RED RABBIT

Your truck will smash through just about anything, even other cars on the road. So don't let anything stand in your way — not even your "rival" who will do anything to slow you down so that he can reap the profits of crossing the line first. The tracks are fantastic, each one loaded with stuff for you to drive through, over, around and with secrets for you to discover too. The multiple paths really add a lot to the enjoyment of the game, as each one isn't just an alternate route. You'll face falling rocks, unfinished road-work that sends you hurtling to the freeway below and even the dangerous hills of San Francisco.

If Sega had added a whole new bunch of levels for this Dreamcast version, 18 Wheeler may have been a must-buy. As it stands, it's a game that you'll love to death for a very short period of time. <<<

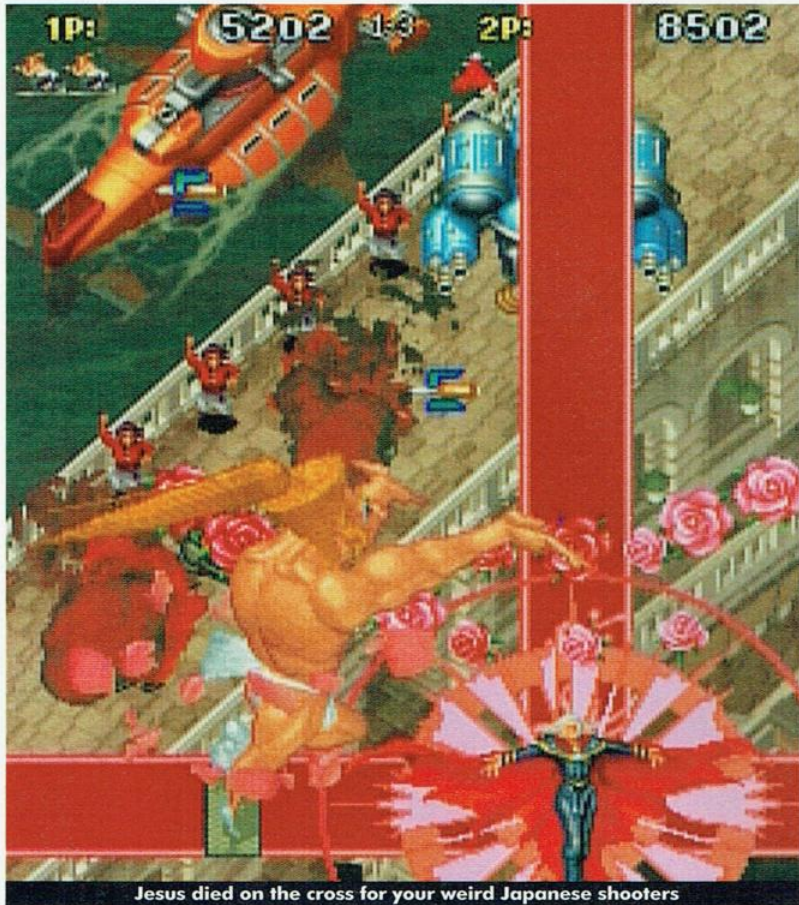


PLUS: Great visuals, fun gameplay. All the thrill of the arcade machine.

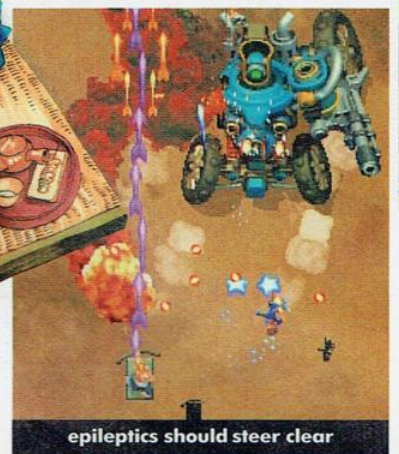
MINUS: Shortlived. No controller configuration.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90	76	85
OVERALL		
75		

We love 18 Wheeler, but it's hard to justify the price tag.



Jesus died on the cross for your weird Japanese shooters



epileptics should steer clear

Gunbird 2

CATEGORY: Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Capcom >> PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

MALCOLM CAMPBELL puts down the paintbrush.

Ahhh, ye olde vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up. A relic from days of yore, when all a gamer needed to worry about was how many smart-bombs he or she still had in their arsenal. Surely Gunbird 2 will remind us all that gaming isn't all about juggling inventory screens, or cursing uncooperative team-mates? Surely we'll all be charmed by the apparent simplicity of dodging tiny projectiles, while tackling bosses the size of city blocks? Surely Capcom and Psikyo have made a game that captures the magic of the classics while incorporating exciting new features? Nope.

RABBITS & ROBOTS

It all starts with promise. The ability to switch the screen configuration will please those wanting to turn their TV on it's side for that true arcade experience, while the seven levels of difficulty cater for all levels of skill. But more on that later...

Five selectable and two hidden characters, all drawn in that beautiful Capcom anime style, are playable. A witch with comical rabbit sidekick, a robot reminiscent of Huitzil from

Darkstalkers and a pudgy flying carpet-riding Arabian prince are among our heroes, with Morrigan making her ubiquitous guest appearance. Each character has their own unique power-ups, bombs and close range attack (though the latter is virtually useless) that matter little to the way the game is played. It's all just cosmetic enhancement and unfortunately the extent of any attempt at originality.

The levels and steam-driven enemies are all hand drawn 2D in a style that, while looking quite pretty, is sure to evoke a strange sense of deja vu. This would be excusable if Gunbird 2 had some creative gameplay to distract the player, but after a short stretch of enjoyment it soon becomes apparent this too is lacking. One or two uninspiring mid-level bosses appear, but no surprising set pieces break up the action. Shoot, dodge, dodge, shoot. Shit, there's hardly even a single dramatic pause. After a criminally short length of time the end-of-level boss appears. Virtually ALL of these follow the same formula - destroy the battleship

behemoth and from the ensuing explosion springs an even tougher mech boss. More predictable than a Tomb Raider sequel.

GAME OVER

To top things off, Gunbird 2 is insanely difficult. Playing on the Hard (or even Normal!) setting means 99% of the game involves dodging the asteroid-belt of enemy fire only to find that there was no way through it to start with. Add to this the problem of frequently

being unable to distinguish your character from the chaos and things soon become too frustrating to continue. Maybe Capcom thought this would add to the game's longevity, but it sure doesn't make it fun.

Since the popularity of the shooter declined there have been a number of titles that have breathed new life into the genre. While it's encouraging to see companies still willing to make them, releases like Gunbird 2 aren't doing anyone any favours, least of all the fans clamouring for new shooters. Hopefully Capcom's upcoming Mars Matrix will be a return to form. <<<

!!! A handy Art Gallery is included, and Capcom sure know how to make purty pictures



PLUS: The artwork is the usual top-notch Capcom fare.

MINUS: Frustratingly hard. Not enough levels. Boring bosses.

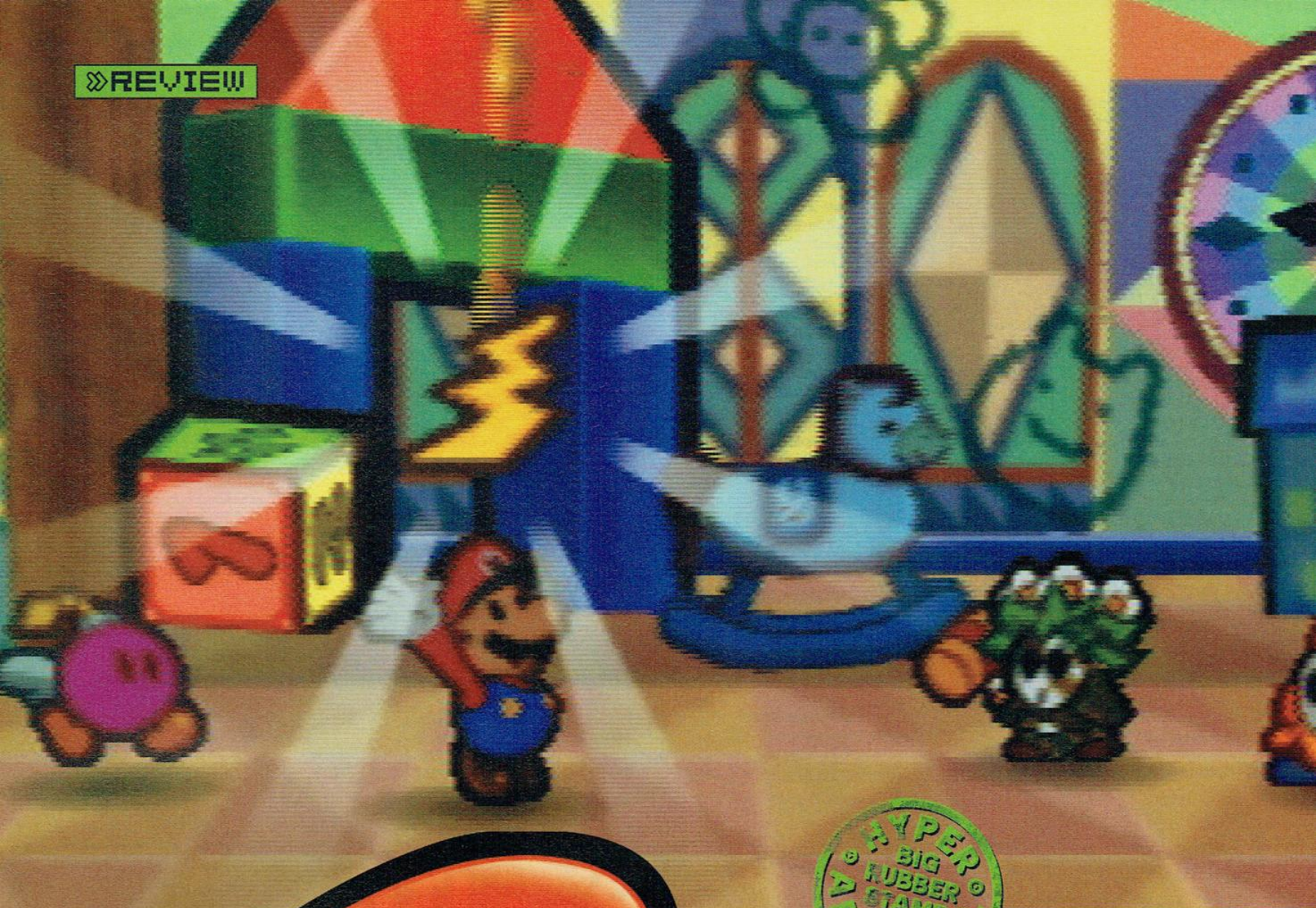
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

88 75 65

OVERALL

70

Sadly, nothing here to give starved fans much sustenance.

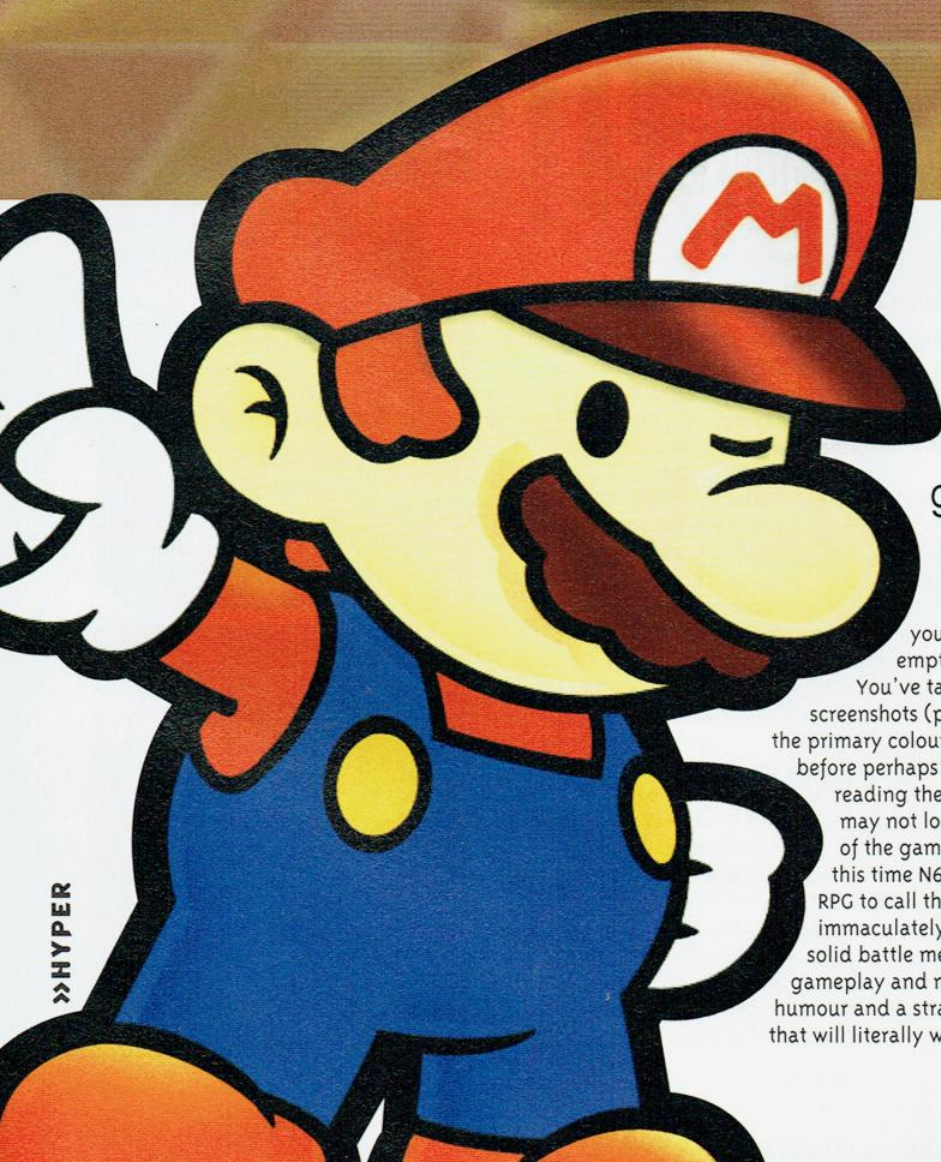


» N64

Paper Mario

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> PRICE: STBA >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

Paper Mario is "cutting edge" gaming, or so says **CAM SHEA...**



» HYPER

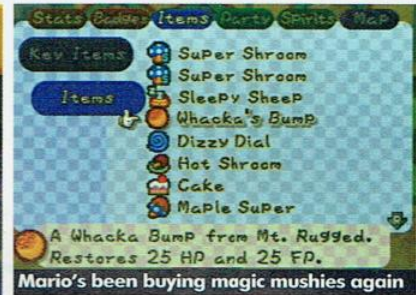
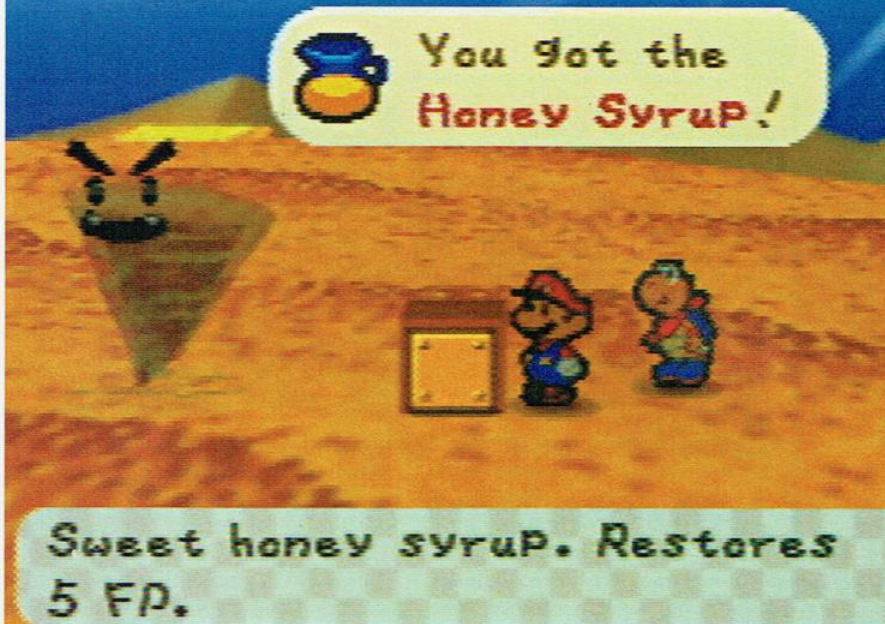
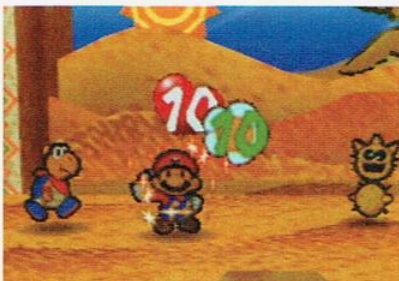
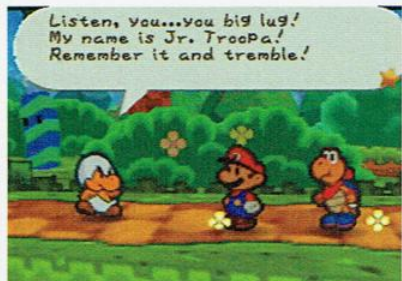
No doubt before arriving at the text for this review, you've already made a pre-emptive sweep of the page.

You've taken a cursory glance at the screenshots (partially blinding you with the primary colours and cute widdle critters) before perhaps doing a double-take upon reading the score. This is no error. It may not look it, but Paper Mario is one of the games of the year, and after all this time N64 owners finally have a true RPG to call their own. Paper Mario is an immaculately conceived game, with rock solid battle mechanics, compelling gameplay and missions, a great sense of humour and a strange 2D/3D graphical hybrid that will literally wrap you up in its world.

NINTENDO'S GALAXY OF STARS...

As always, Nintendo's team of scriptwriters have broken new ground with the storyline in Paper Mario. It seems that Bowser has stolen the "Star Rod" from the "Star Spirits" in "Star Haven", which gives him the power to grant wishes, essentially making him invincible. Rod in hand, Bowser has kidnapped the Star Spirits, raised Princess Peach's entire castle into the sky, and taken her hostage. You must rescue the seven Star Spirits, to create the "Star Beam", the only object powerful enough to allow Mario to get it on with Bowser. All in all it's quite a star-studded lineup.

The name of the game comes, of course, from the paper-thin styling of the graphics. The gameworld is built in 3D, but all of the inhabitants and structures are 2D in appearance. Indeed, the overall look could best be described



When you enter a building the closest wall simply falls down into the screen giving you an unobstructed view inside.

as a combination of Super Mario RPG and Yoshi's Story. The graphical style of Paper Mario may look simple, but in actuality there are many different elements woven cleverly together. From a gameplay perspective, it has allowed Intelligent Systems to keep the visuals clean and concise whilst mixing in many of the advantages of 3D. It has also made Paper Mario one of the most unique looking games so far, with pop-up storybook elements that work a treat. For instance, when you enter a building the closest wall simply falls down into the screen giving you an unobstructed view inside. Another engaging feature is that (like Parappa) when characters turn around you can clearly see that they're paper thin. Oh, and Nintendo have outdone themselves with the minimal, but endearing facial animations for the various characters.

COMIN' ATCHA LIKE CLEOPATRA...
Intelligent Systems have come up with a delightfully simple, yet ingenious set of play mechanics for Paper Mario, borrowing elements from a host of other RPGs (most notably, the Square developed Super Mario RPG on SNES, of which this game is a semi-sequel), giving the gameplay a huge amount of scope. In true RPG style, Mario has plenty of stats to pay attention to and build upon. Obviously there's your health, represented by Heart Points (HP), but there are also Flower Points (FP) which allow Mario to use special abilities, and Badge Points (BP). Badges are one of the most compelling elements of the game (and will prove very familiar to anyone who's played Japanese RPGs). As you

progress through the game you'll earn or buy badges, each of which comes with a specific ability. One may boost your HP by five, another may give you a new hammer attack and another may allow you to jump on the heads of spiked enemies without taking damage. Different badges require different numbers of spare badge points in order to be equipped. At the start of the game you have a measly three badge points, five HP and five FP, but with every 100 star points you collect you have the opportunity to raise either your HP, FP or BP. Star points are mostly acquired through winning battles, and the 100 points system is a real incentive not to run past enemies.
Another element that comes into play are the Star Powers. After beating

!!! Here's a handy hint: If you fancy a spot of in-game gambling, help out the old Koopa in Koopa Village.

Achtung Action
>> Paper Mario's battle system is very much turn-based, but fortunately, has a compelling real-time element as well. Using the Action Commands, you can influence the outcome of an attack by your party or on your party. There are a variety of different ways that Action Commands can be executed, all of which are explained very clearly within the game. Generally, when an enemy attacks, if you hit the A button just before you're hit, your damage will be reduced. Similarly, there's an Action Command for every attack. One may require you to hammer the A button to build up the strength of the attack, whereas another may require you to press the A button just before you touch the enemy. The use of Action Commands is invaluable in the game, and adds a much-needed level of interaction in the battles.

Mario Party

>> In addition to the great badge system in the game, Paper Mario is given extra depth through your ever-expanding party. By the end of the game you'll be travelling with eight other freaks, each with their own invaluable set of abilities. You can only select one to physically travel with you at any one time, and you can also only use one in battle at a time. This prevents the screen from getting too cluttered as well as adding extra strategy to the game, forcing you to choose which character may most come in handy at any one time. For instance, some characters in Toad Town may not even want to talk to you if you're walking around with Boo the ghost. On the other hand, walk around with Parakooa and if he meets a character he has mail for, he'll deliver it - often earning you a Star Piece. You'll need to switch between characters to beat certain puzzles as well. For instance, you may need Parckooa to carry you across a gap, then Bombette to blow up a cracked section of wall.

As you play, you'll also discover powerups that allow you to permanently supercharge one of the members of your party. This makes their attacks more powerful as well as giving them new moves. If you take the time to explore all areas properly, you'll have every single character super-charged before you know it.

Here's a quick rundown on the various party members you'll acquire and why they're useful:

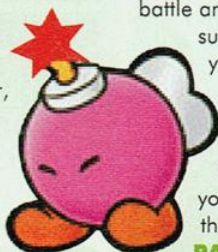
GOOMBARIO: For a stumpy mushroom head, this plucky kid is a'iite. Goombario was named after Mario, and is more of a "Minister For Information" than an S1W (although his "headbonk" move can do some damage). His el-primo ability is the "tattle", which can tell you all sorts of useful information about the enemies you're fighting, including attack, health and defense points. He'll even give you advice about which attacks may work better than others. His abilities can also be used outside battle for general information about your environment.

KOOPER: The Minister For Getting Down and Getting Busy. Thanks to his ability to curl himself up in his shell and fling himself



along the ground at enemies, Kooper's strength lies in ground attacks. Outside battle, Mario can use Kooper to attack or retrieve objects just out of reach.

BOMBETTE: This chick is a blast... literally. As a bob-omb, a race that blow themselves up to show their appreciation, her bomb-astic set of abilities will come in handy both in battle and outside. If you see any suspiciously cracked walls in your wanderings she may well be able to blow a hole in it revealing a secret area or item. In battle she'll go down on your enemies and blow them... away.



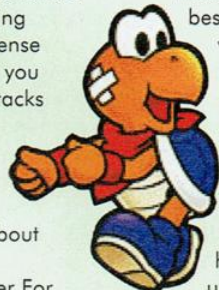
PARAKARRY: This forgetful blunderbuss is a flying postman who specialises in air attacks. Outside the battlefield, he receives and delivers mail. In battle he busts powerful projectile shell attacks.

BOW: The spoilt lady of Boo's Mansion, Bow joins your party on the quest to beat Tubba Blubba, the fat-ass ghost face killer. Bow is useful in battle both offensively and defensively, as she can hide Mario, preventing him from getting hit, as well as delivering a "chicken head biatch you think you all that" nasty slap attack.

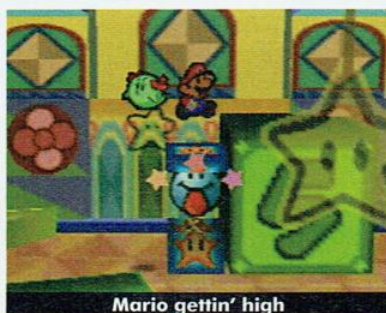
WATT: You'll pick Watt up inside Shy Guy's Toy Box. She can light up dark rooms and reveal hidden treasure chests. She can charge up Mario's attacks in battle as well as delivering some nasty electrocution attacks herself.

SUSHIE: More accurately Sashimi, as this fish doesn't come on a bed of rice. With Sushie you can go for a swim and even dive beneath the water for a short period. Sushie's best attacking move is the tidal wave.

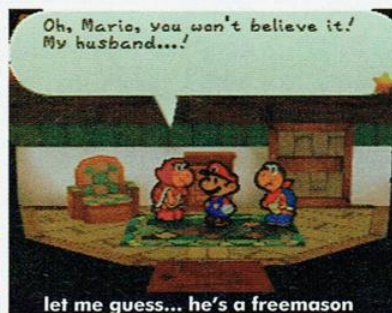
LAKILESTER: The final party member in Paper Mario, and the "Monkey" of the game. Lakilester can hop in his cloud and fly you safely over dangerous sections of ground. He also has the ability to float for an unlimited period of time. In battle he can protect Mario from attacks, as well as unleash a barrage of spiny egg attacks.



Press repeatedly!
don't worry, we're good with repetitive hand movements



Mario gettin' high

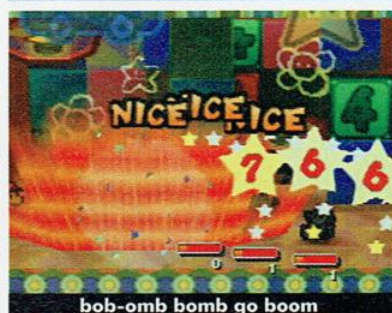


Oh, Mario, you won't believe it! My husband...!

let me guess... he's a freemason



beware of the PlayStation, Mario!



bob-omb bomb go boom

By the end of the game you'll be travelling with **eight other freaks**, each with their own invaluable set of abilities.



The strongest! And the coolest! Behold the glory that is the great Evil King Bowser!!

ooh i'm scared



Mario's Swiss hideaway where he takes all his "friends"



Items	Party	Spirits	M
Dodge Master	2	2	2
Happy Heart	3	3	3
Happy Flower	3	3	3
HP Plus	3	3	3
HP Plus	3	3	3
FP Plus	3	3	3
Power Plus	6	6	6
Defend Plus	6	6	6

Badge this badge

>> Badges can be earned in a number of ways. Some are hidden, others will be given to you as a reward for performing a task, and yet others can be purchased. You'll only ever be able to have a small percentage of your badges equipped at any one time, so you'll want to customise your selection depending on the environment.

the first boss, the Star Spirit you rescue gives you the ability to refresh your HP and FP by five. You can only do this every few battles, however, as your star meter must be full (it gradually recovers with each move). Beat the second boss and you'll be rewarded with a longer star meter and the "focus" ability which allows you to recharge your star meter a whole lot faster. Thus, with each Star Spirit you rescue, you gain a new ability and your star meter gets longer.

Add to all this a party system where each party member brings with them their own unique abilities, not to mention an extensive item system, including healing items and attacking items, and you can see there's a fair bit of gameplay breadth. Perhaps the only criticism we can level at the game is that you can't get powerful enough. I must have more power! With all those badges it's a real shame that your badge points max out at 30. I reached that stage just over halfway through the game. It would have been cool to be able to level up indefinitely so that you could have a huge number of badges equipped at any one time.

THE SECRET PAPER SOCIETY...

While the storyline is typical Mario fare, the constant humour stops the game from becoming too sickly sweet. There are plenty of in-jokes, references to pop culture (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles anyone?), hilarious subplots (such as Luigi's jealousy of Mario and Bowser's secret lust for Princess Peach), not to mention wacky characters. There are also enough mini-quests to undertake and mini-games to play that you can easily meander away from the story for hours on end. The amount of time I wasted getting Tayce T to cook various combinations of items, just to see what happens is disgusting. As with every Mario game, Paper Mario is jam-packed full of secrets. From mysterious clues about hidden objects in the desert, a mystic in the desert town, a travelling quiz show, two hidden game rooms, badges and star points hidden all over the place, and some very cool gags in Boo's Mansion (check out the NES Mario room, complete with sound effects, music and everything).

Paper Mario is an enchanting game, and we'd recommend it to just about anyone. Mario does it again! <<



PLUS: Great play mechanics, compelling, imaginative.

MINUS: Will prove too cute for some. Limited level-up potential.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 81 92

OVERALL

90

Nintendo come through with the goods – a true RPG for the N64!



Conker's Bad Fur Day

» N64

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

JAMES COTTEE wrote the book on antisocial behaviour...

To say that the N64 market is mature is an understatement. With the number of worthwhile games in development approaching zero, and the Nintendo party faithful already counting down to the Gamecube, esteemed second party developer Rare are right to assume that there's little to lose in experimenting at this late hour. Thus by the same stroke of logic which made Eidos ask "Why don't we do Resident Evil, only with lesbians?" Rare asked themselves "Why not do a platformer, only with sex and violence?"

HARD DRINKING

Why not indeed? The kids who rushed out and bought N64s five years ago have grown up, considering themselves too hip and street for Mario Line Dancing or whatever Nintendo's cooking up next. Desensitised to

violence from thousands of hours of Goldeneye, they're ready to push the envelope of vulgarity to new extremes, something that brings the sensibilities of their cherished Viz comic books to life. They're ready for Conker.

On the surface, he's the archetypal cartoon squirrel. Huge eyes, big bushy tail, the sort of creature Disney would have singing and dancing in a made-for-video abomination. But his perpetually innocent expression and squeaky voice belie the darkest side of human behaviour: English lad-ism. Conker is a lager lout, hard drinking, hard spewing, yet still recognisable as human. Aimless, shiftless, pointless, white trash in search of a dump. But you can't get mad at him, he's only a product of his environment...

At a cursory glance, Conker's Bad Fur Day resembles any number of

platform games. From a third person perspective you control an adorable anthropomorphic character in a cartoonish world of whimsy. One progresses by mastering the controls and solving spatial problems in the game environment. Victory only comes once a number of themed worlds have been conquered: Horror, pre-historic, sci-fi, feces...

Feces? Yes, the magic ingredient that sets BFD apart is toilet humour, a field in which the British are still world leaders. All the adorable characters you'll meet in your quest swear a blue streak, and most speak in broad cockney accents, which is even more disturbing. Sure, Conker is on a quest to collect a million dollars and become king of the realm, but the real objective is to probe every last human taboo imaginable, and they don't stop at butchering the English language.

SAUCY SQUIRREL

Sex! Not just sexism, but honest-to-God reproductive activity! There's not only a sunflower with the biggest knockers you've ever seen, but a swarm of pollen loaded bees that want to do nasty things to her stamen!

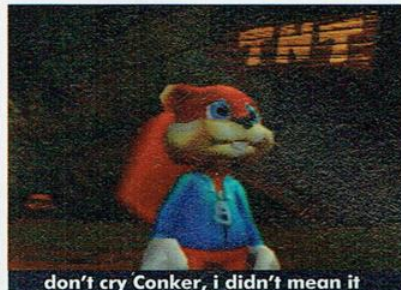
Violence! Enemies don't just fall over, flash a few times and vanish. You'll see violent dismemberment, huge bloody gibs spewing forth with torrents of crimson vitae. Horrible, lingering, screaming death, via electrocution, drowning, even explosive decompression, a perennial favourite.

Bodily functions! Not only are there entire levels that revolve around crap, but you'll see the most violent defecation in any video game ever! Then there are the levels where Conker has to urinate on enemies to destroy them. Fortunately these scenes are

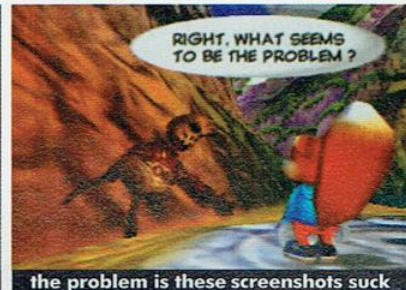
I KEEP THE LOT.
SEE YA!



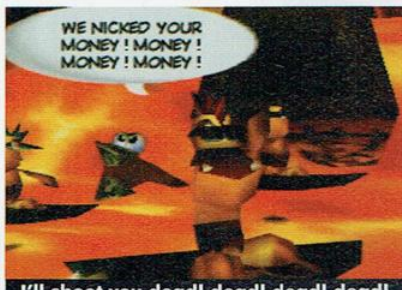
how about you in my blender



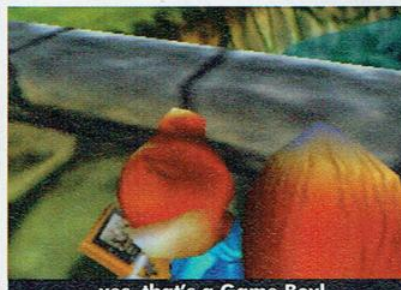
don't cry Conker, i didn't mean it



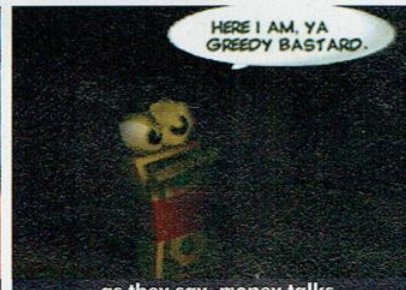
the problem is these screenshots suck



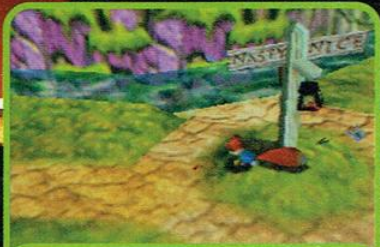
I'll shoot you dead! dead! dead! dead!



yes, that's a Game Boy!



as they say, money talks



Snuff movies

>> Conker's Bad Fur Day has cinematic references coming out of its arse. Protracted cut scenes plunder the popular culture of the past few decades, including, but not exclusive to: *Star Wars*, *Dracula*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Apocalypse Now* and much, much more. The scene in *Saving Private Ryan* where they storm the beach is re-created in loving detail, and the *Matrix* rip-off has to be seen to be believed. The part where Neo and Trinity shoot up the lobby makes for some interesting gameplay, as you actually get to re-create the "bullet-time" effect, cartwheeling in slow motion as hot lead leaves elegant shockwave patterns in the ether.

viewed from behind, but there's no question what's going on. He comically tanks up on grog, a zipper is audibly opened, and it's all downhill from there. And all those regurgitation fans out there can take heart; Conker violently vomits all over someone's leg before even the first cut scene is past. Conker is fallible, believable, perhaps even lovable. He certainly goes boldly where no video game mascot has gone before.

There's nothing wrong with BFD, per se. The graphics engine is rock solid, with vast environments, no discernible fog, and classy use of textures. The music responds to your location, and the in-game help system is context sensitive too. Ordinary platform action scenes are greatly outnumbered by specialised mini-games, presenting a great mix of obtuse challenges and varied gameplay types. Indeed, the game design borders

Conker violently vomits all over someone's leg before even the first cut scene is past.

on the post-modern, with twists and turns that challenge pre-conceived notions of genre based gaming. Technically, Conker can't be faulted. But it's not the longest game in the world. The average Nintendo veteran could conquer it within a week. With a price tag of a hundred bucks, the cost-conscious gamer will ask what *Bad Fur Day* will give them in terms of longevity. Well, there's the obligatory multi-player mode. Half a dozen odd play modes based on the different worlds explored in the course of play. This spit-screen mayhem is passable, but hardly comprehensive. Those in search of the ultimate in multiplayer action should cast their eyes over *Perfect Dark*, if they haven't already.

Aside from that, *Bad Fur Day* offers a priceless opportunity: The ability to

impress your friends. That's right, once completed every scene in the game is accessible from the main menu. From there most of the humorous cut scenes can be accessed directly, or with a minimum of effort. Thus the combined gross-out effect of the entire production can be condensed into a few kudos-accumulating minutes.

!!! Will Conker make a return on the Gamecube? Well, it all depends on how well it sells doesn't it...?

And that's it. After playing through an excellently crafted yet short platform game, you're basically left with an interactive joke book.

And the thing about jokes is that they're only funny once. *Conker's Bad Fur Day* will give many hours of quality gaming to anyone who buys it, but all good things come to an end. Like the N64 itself, Conker has a finite shelf life, even in the privacy of your own home. <<



PLUS: Polished gameplay, staggering vulgarity, sense of humour.

MINUS: NOT FOR KIDS, rather short.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 90 87

OVERALL

85

The N64 goes down fighting, belching, swearing...



Time Crisis: Project Titan

CATEGORY: Light Gun Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Namco >> PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

CAM SHEA asks the PlayStation "You feeling lucky punk?"



Our trusty G-Con has been sitting in Hyper's Gringotts vault gathering dust for far too long, so the arrival of a new Time Crisis title was cause for celebration. It wasn't long into the game, however, before a sinking realisation began to form... this really wasn't what we were expecting. Maybe it's because the PlayStation's getting on a bit now. It's no longer the chipper, fresh faced young lad that we once knew. In fact, with the likes of the PlayStation 2 and GeForce 3 cards on the market, it's rapidly falling into the "been there done that" category.

Even so, Namco proved two years ago with R4, that as a company, it still had the programming skills to tease more than we ever expected out of the machine. With their high quality control in mind, we were expecting a

sequel above and beyond the original Time Crisis. Unfortunately, what we've got here is yet more confirmation that developers no longer see the PlayStation as any kind of priority.

ANOTHER 48 HOURS...

Project Titan hasn't even been developed by Namco. Instead, they've handed development duties on to the little known Flying Tiger Development, the company that handled the high profile ports of Mortal Kombat Trilogy, Rampage World Tour and Eternal Champions for Saturn, not to mention Golden Nugget for PlayStation. This game shows that they should probably stick to ports.

Project Titan is by no means a bad game, it just achieves far less than the original Time Crisis did. Instead of two play modes (arcade and original),

there's only one. Instead of a new graphics engine, it's essentially an identical one. Instead of new sound effects and music, we have what sounds suspiciously like the exact same sound effects and music.

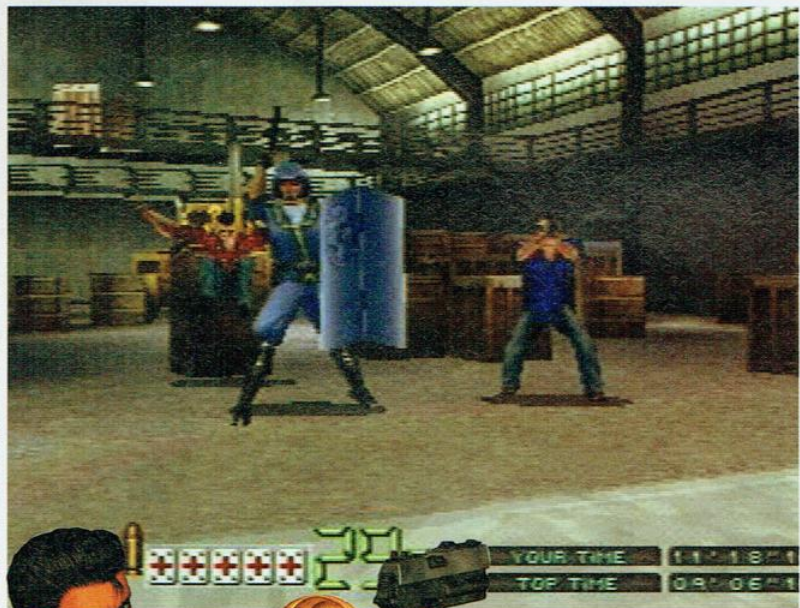
Unsurprisingly then, we also have the same bad guys. Wild Dog and Kantaris are back. Wild Dog has gone all Evil Dead on us, surgically implanting a gatling gun where his arm (that apparently was blown off in the last game... I mustn't have been paying attention) used to be — a good move. Kantaris has now taken to wearing a swimming costume at all times — also a good move. And remember the President from the first game? Well, after wasting all that time saving his daughter, the old bastards gone and got himself assassinated. And no, that president's name was not George W.

Bush. Damn. But the plot thickens, because [GASP] he was killed by a Richard Miller lookalike! From this point you have 48 hours to clear your name before being turned in. Time to say "I'm gettin' too old for this shit" and go shoot some more low poly bad guys!

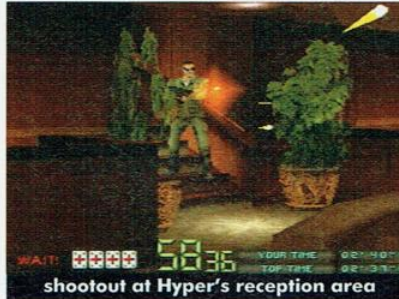
SPUD-GUNS

As you know, Time Crisis innovated with its use of the foot pedal, bringing





he must have had a nasty vindaloo



shootout at Hyper's reception area

So what does Time Crisis: Project Titan offer to a sequel-weary gaming public? More of the same largely.

greater strategy into the light gun arena. Time Crisis 2 (arcade only) allowed for co-operative play. So what does Time Crisis: Project Titan offer to a sequel-weary gaming public? More of the same largely. One nice addition

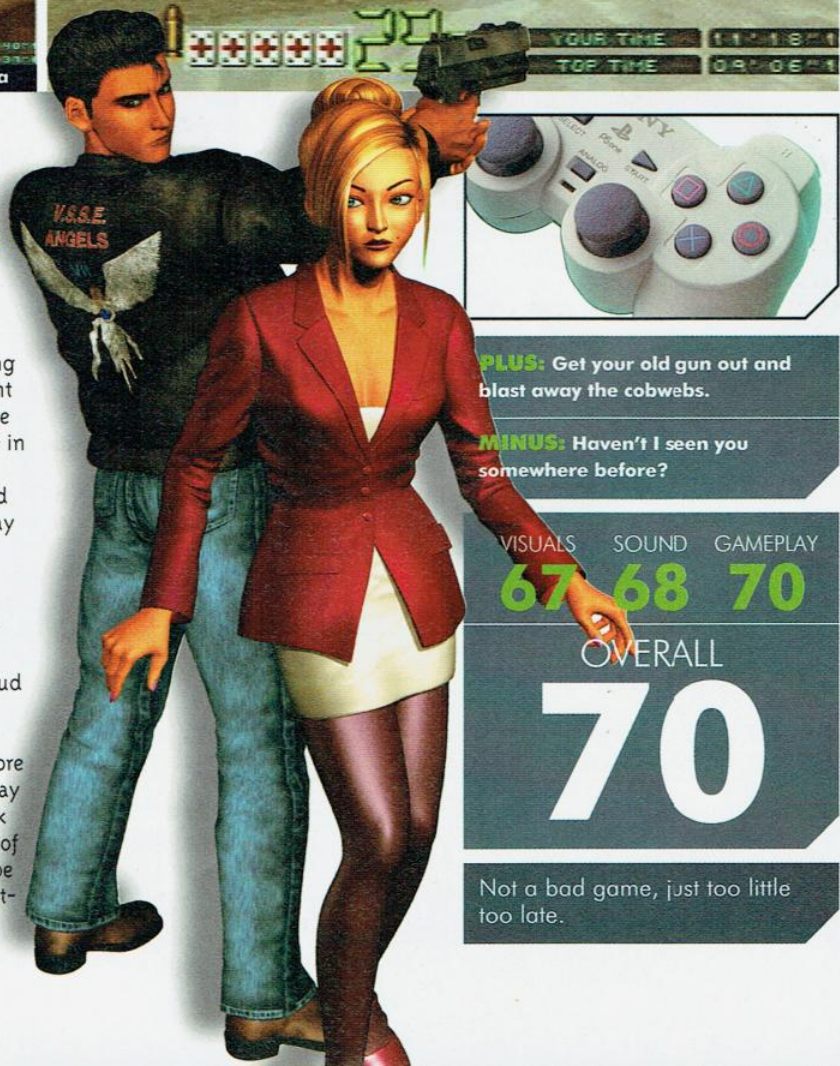
Namco go loco...

>> It's quite strange that Namco didn't decide to port the arcade sequel. The PlayStation may not have been up to it, but let's face it, Time Crisis 2 looked old school when it hit the arcades, and most of us thought that it was a conscious decision by Namco to keep it within the range of the PlayStation.

is the ability to switch between hiding spots. If arrows pop up pointing right or left during play, shoot on that side of the screen and you'll creep a little in that direction. Unfortunately, while this is certainly a good idea, it's used far too infrequently, coming into play exclusively during the boss battles.

As for other changes, there aren't many. The environment is slightly more interactive, but still not to any noticeable degree. Enemies are still colour coded, and those slow-ass spud gun toting blue guys still haven't learnt how to shoot straight.

If you're absolutely desperate for more Time Crisis action, then Project Titan may not be such a bad purchase — just think of it as an expansion pack. For the rest of us, who were expecting more, let's hope Namco have got a true sequel on a next-gen system up their sleeve. <<



PLUS: Get your old gun out and blast away the cobwebs.

MINUS: Haven't I seen you somewhere before?

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

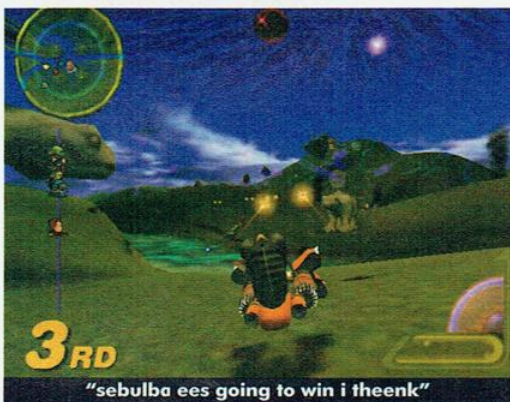
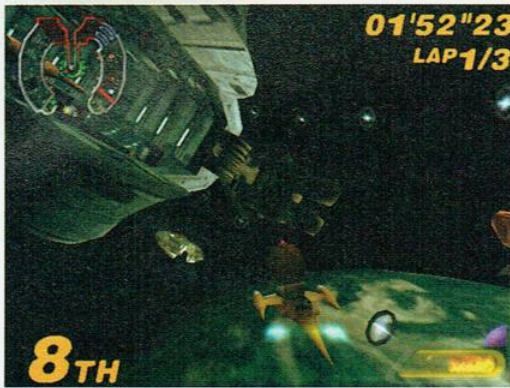
67 68 70

OVERALL

70

Not a bad game, just too little too late.

» REVIEW



Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
 PUBLISHER: Lucas Learning >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
 RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



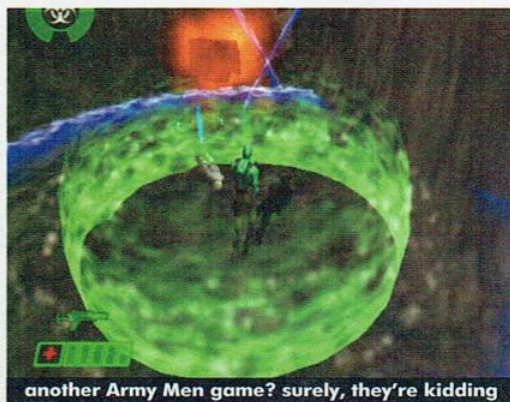
LucasArts had Super Bombad Racing hyped up at last year's E3 as the Star Wars answer to Mario Kart. Muppet Babies-like Star Wars characters with deformed heads, racing around a variety of environments from Episode One sounded like it could actually be quite a bit of fun, even if it was bleeding the kart racing genre dry.

Super Bombad Racing is your generic karting game (oh, alright, you're hovering), in which you pick up a variety of powerups... yadda yadda yadda. For starters, the title is definitely for younger gamers, hence it is being published by Lucas Learning, not LucasArts. The only way this game could have been a success, is if the track designs were fantastic and the powerups were innovative. Sadly, neither is the case. There seem to be only nine playable tracks (although you can race them mirrored also) which can easily be finished with a few hours of game time.

The other modes include a Team mode, which seems pretty pointless (you and your friend can try to cross the line first for your "team" to win. Basically, it's the same as a normal race, you're just not competing against each other.) and the Arena mode, which is the battle mode of the game. As far as a battle mode goes, it seems strange that it includes the same racing powerups (how do you knock out opponents with a turbo boost?) which purely comes down to survival — and sitting in the corner of the map can result in you coming first each time. Young kids or casual gamers might get something out of this one, but for the rest of us it's better left alone.

Eliot Fish

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
75	80	65	67



Army Men: Green Rogue

CATEGORY: Shite >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: 3DO >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>
 RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



The 3DO company seems to be operating as though they were back in the late Eighties when quantity of titles was more important than quality. How else could you explain the huge up-chuck of titles being released using the Army Men franchise?

The latest is Army Men: Green Rogue. How do I even begin to describe the sheer vomitousness of this game? Does anyone remember that short lived genre of games 'on-rails' when CD ROMs were the biggest news in the PC world?

They were like digital versions of those ancient arcade racing games that had a looped belt with a road drawn on it and a plastic car attached to a spike which moved left and right when you moved the steering wheel. Everything just rolls on by and you have to do your best to avoid/shoot them before they pass.

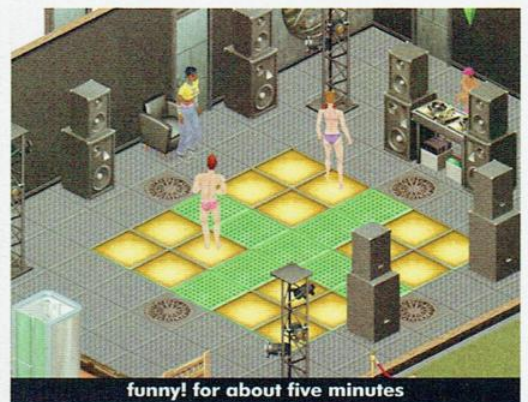
Well that's Green Rogue in a nutshell. If someone had told me that a company would release an 'on-rails' game in 2001, on the PS2 no less, I would have laughed at them. Up until the moment I received this monstrosity at least.

Basically you move your Green Rogue left and right while he walks and you shoot your gun. Did I explain that well enough? Perhaps you'd like to read that again, just go back to the start of the last sentence.

Essentially, this is a Game Boy title with delusions of grandeur.

George Soropos

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
60	60	10	30



The Sims: Houseparty

CATEGORY: Sims add-on pack >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: EA >> PRICE: \$39.95 >>
 RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >>
 REQUIRED: The Sims, P233, 32MB RAM >>



Those crazy Sims are at it again! This time your feisty doppelgangers are mixing on the wheels of steel, puffing on a hookah pipe, wearing "phat" clothing, and riding mechanical bulls. Yes, it's the Houseparty expansion pack, featuring three new "party" themes. Personally, we don't see much logic behind including Country and Western as a theme (probably some insider joke about how Will Wright has a "Nashville Nights" shirt or something), nor for that matter the Hawaiian theme (probably some insider joke about how Will Wright wears grass skirts around the office or something). And of course, the "rave" theme is a little on the patronising side — it's not 1994 anymore Maxis! And where are the glow sticks and gurners?

Even so, it's all in good fun for The Sims, and Houseparty expands on the social side of the game quite a bit. Block rockin' parties are now one phone call away, and entertaining the party crowd is relatively easy thanks to useful new inclusions like the ability to hire caterers, serve "mood enhancing" punch, hire male or female strippers to jump out of cakes, and encourage everyone to dress up with the costume trunk. All up there's over 100 new objects... but little else.

This expansion pack really is of a "free download" caliber, as it doesn't offer enough to radically change the game as a whole. So what if you can hold big parties? It's still a lot of work, it's still only one small component in the lives of your sims, and it still gets boring fast.

Cam Shea

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
83	81	70	72



burning up, burning up for your luurve



Crouching Xiangfei, Hidden Iori

King of Fighters '99: Match of the Millennium



CATEGORY: Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: SNK >> PRICE: N/A >> RATING: N/A >> AVAILABLE: On Import >>

Cross dressers and badly dressed megalomaniacs? It's just another day at the Hyper office, as **PATRICK BUDMAR** finds out...

There are only two companies that dominate the 2D fighting arena of gaming. No, it isn't Midway with Mortal Kombat and it isn't Rare with Killer Instinct. It's Capcom and SNK, the two Japanese gaming giants who have set their mark on the 2D fighting game genre. However, while Capcom was off releasing spin-offs from its Street Fighter II franchise, SNK came out and released a truly innovative fighting game — King of Fighters '99. The series has been receiving an update with every passing year, and the latest release on the PlayStation is the '99 edition, Match of the Millennium.

SAME OLD, BUT GOOD!

I'll get straight to the point. King of Fighters '99 (KOF99) is no different to its predecessors, playing exactly the same as an SNK fan would expect it to. This time, there is a whooping 32 characters to play and fight against, making this one of the biggest fighting games to date. Old favourites like Benimaru, Iori, Terry and co are back while the Orochi team (Yashiro, Shermie, Chris) have been ditched for two extra versions of Kyo and three new characters, one which is from Real Bout 2. However, unlike KOF98, which was a "best of" collection than an entirely new game, this game has a new storyline and a new end boss.

The story is like your regular Hollywood blockbuster. Some guy

dressed like a 70s pimp daddy is out to rule the world. Not only has he got a powerful influence under the King of Fighters tournament, but he has managed to get a DNA sample of Kyo Kusanagi, last year's champion. He has now cloned an entire army of Kyos out to take over the world. Believe me, this guy makes Gendo Ikari from Evangelion look like a paper delivery boy. He's mad, and he knows it. Great!

Unlike Street Fighter where you choose a single fighter, you get to choose three to make your team. You choose the order you want your fighters in and when your first fighter gets KO'd, your second one picks up from where you left off, and so on. This battle system makes the matches last longer and adds a bit of strategy when it comes to setting the order of your fighters.

The fighting remains unchanged from KOF98 except for the "striker" that SNK has added to this version. Now you are able to choose four (!) characters, with the first three taking part in the fight while the fourth one can be called to do an attack. This works like the backup "partner" you had doing an attack in X-Men Vs Street Fighter EX.

I'M NOT GETTING OLD! YOU ARE!

The arcade machine is running on aging NeoGeo hardware, yet the graphics don't show it. The characters look sharp and detailed while the backgrounds will blow you away with their detail. However, due to the PlayStation's RAM constraints, some of the character animations have been cut out. They're only noticeable if you really look or if you're a complete die-hard of the arcade game.

The sounds and music are arcade perfect, as you would expect, and the controls are spot on. The only bummer is the somewhat long loading times in between bouts. But the image gallery full of concept art and pictures makes up for it. Even though this game was only released in Japan, all of the menus are in English. Only the story is in Japanese, which kind of sucks.

If you're after an awesome 2D fighting game, then this is it. It's fighting at its best. The KOF series wouldn't exist unless it was popular, and when you play this game, you'll understand why. KOF2K is already making the rounds in the arcades, so here's hoping it makes it to the PS2. <<

!!! Okay, so this game is pretty old, and hey, we may not agree with the score, but that's what Reader Reviews are all about! We look forward to reading more of what YOU think. Keep sending your reader reviews to freakscene@next.com.au with READER REVIEW in the subject line.



PLUS: An arcade-perfect translation of a great fighting game.

MINUS: Loading times slow down the action in between bouts.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 85 94

OVERALL

91

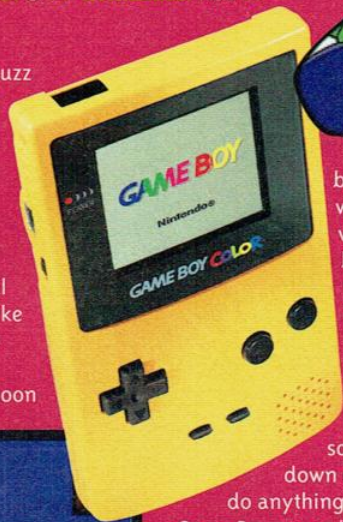
A religious experience.

» REVIEW

Buzz Lightyear of Star Command

CATEGORY: Action >> **PLAYERS:** 1 >> **PUBLISHER:** Activision >>
PRICE: \$49.95 >> **RATING:** G >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>
SUPPORTS: GBC only >>

It's games like Buzz Lightyear that make us look forward to the Game Boy Advance with even more enthusiasm than we already had. Why? Basically, so that we never have to play awful little Game Boy games like this one ever again. The game looks like it was knocked up in an afternoon



by some half-asleep work experience kid who knew he wouldn't be returning after the weekend to take any of the blame.

Somewhere in between the sloppy, frustrating controls and the poor blippy sound are the flat, top-down graphics that don't do anything to help the ageing Game Boy prove it's capable of so much more. Buzz is drawn pretty simplistically, the level environments aren't too flash either, and there just isn't anything here to really catch your eye. As Buzz goes racing through the level, you'll also have a hard time getting him to accomplish any move with even the slightest finesse. The

controls just don't give you the opportunity to employ any skill at all, as you'll be cursing and bashing at the controls as things just keep going wrong. The game has been designed as a frantic shooter, but we think it's created an all new genre — the table steadier. That is, you'll find this cartridge more useful for propping up the leg of a wobbly table than as a piece of interactive entertainment.

I guess Buzz Lightyear has been pitched at the younger gamer, being on the Game Boy and all, so maybe take that into account. However, there are plenty of Game Boy games that will give you so much more bang for your buck that we really can't help but advise you steer clear of this one.

Frank Dry



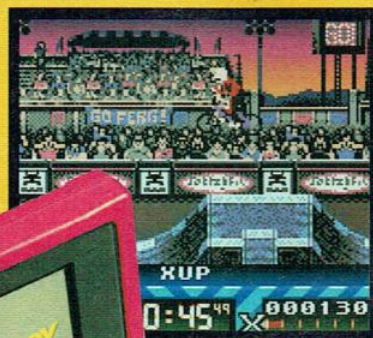
Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking

CATEGORY: Stunt Biking >> **PLAYERS:** 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Activision >> **PRICE:** \$49.95 >>
RATING: G >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>
SUPPORTS: GBC only

Ie've played games like Tony Hawk, MTV Sports BMX and MTV Skateboarding on the Game Boy and slowly come to the conclusion that these games just don't work on a handheld. Performing extreme sports stunts or tricks on the Game Boy

simply gives you no sense of achievement due to the usual simplistic two-button control, and the sad spectacle of a few blobby pixels popping a trick. Imagine our surprise then, when Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking turned out to be surprisingly playable, complex, visually impressive... and fun!

Some kind of roto-scope animation has been used to recreate the strangely fluid and realistic bike movements in your little bike champ, which immediately hooks you in and gets you playing. The control system is surprisingly complicated and it takes



quite some time to get a handle on how the controls actually work (unless you are patient enough to stop and read the instructions... and you may as well smell the roses too, while you're there).

Depending on the speed you are moving at (there is an indicator bar), your guy can pull off a variety of different tricks through tapping the A or B button in combination with a d-pad press. There are plenty to moves to learn, and the game starts you off with a long tutorial that tries to teach it to you all at once. You'll be trying this over and over, which gets a little

frustrating at first, but once you nail the moves, you can start to freestyle on your own and build up a little repertoire.

The game all plays from a side-scrolling perspective, but you can move "down" into the field of play, instead of just sideways, which is kind of clumsy but at least opens up the levels for more variety on the small Game Boy Color screen. With something like 50 tricks to learn, and some pretty bright and colourful levels, Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking is a successful title that'll give you a challenge, and that's rare for the Game Boy these days.

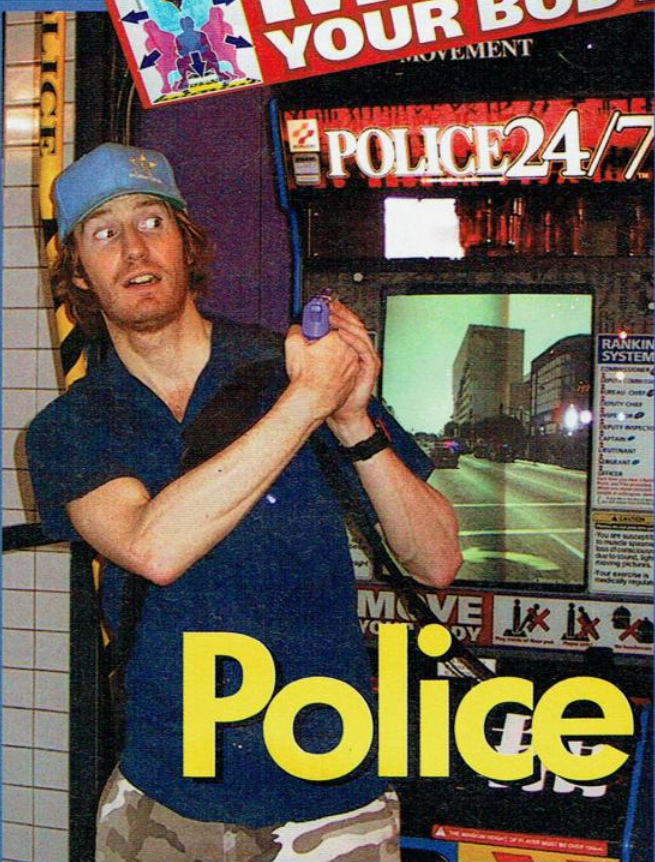
Frank Dry



CATCHING YOUR MOVEMENT COIN-OP

ARCADE

MOVE YOUR BODY



Police 24/7

KONAMI

E bullets hurt. In a gun fight, it is strongly advised (by your doctor) to avoid getting hit by ANY bullets ANYWHERE on your body. To counter being hit by bullets, it is best to seek cover behind objects that are very solid such as concrete walls or strong wooden tables and definitely not behind objects such a glass windows or beach towels.

If there is nothing to hide/cower behind, it is best to crouch down low (for a smaller target) or play dead and wait for the enemy to walk past and then shoot 'em in the back. Whilst there are no video games which allow you to utilise the 'play dead and wait for the enemy to walk past and then shoot 'em in the back' technique, Konami has come up with a way to

introduce a bit of 'duck and weave and find cover' to the arcades with the use of a ground breaking new sensor system which detects body movement.



bad guys. shoot them. shoot them goood.

BLAM BLAM BLAM
Seemingly like any other light gun shooter at first, Police 24/7 places you in the role of a rookie officer who is joining in a raid on a night club (during the day) in the Los Angeles' Little Tokyo region. There is a gang of arms dealing Yakuza inside the club and as you will soon find this gang is virtually a small army that will see you pursuing them all over LA.

and over to Shinjuku in Tokyo, Japan. After busting through the front door, you are confronted by three dudes who are just dying to shoot you, so with your best smile on, you physically lean to the left. As you seek

cover, the screen changes your viewing perspective in relation to where your head is. The bullets thud into the police shields you are hiding behind. Moving rapidly to your right, you burst out from cover and blam blam blam, take out the three now ex-alive Yakuza dudes.

Each stage is comprised of small 'battle points'. As each battle point is cleared, you are promoted a third of a rank until you reach the tenth rank of 'commissioner'. On attaining certain ranks you are rewarded with bonus time or lives. Otherwise, if you are shot you are returned to officer rank. If you shoot any innocents (a.k.a people who like to stand in front of your gun), you are demoted a rank and precious time is wasted.

GET RANKED, MOFO
The point score system utilized in 24/7 is very elaborate. Not only is time and accuracy taken into account, but also Bravery - the amount of time spent

covering behind objects (which is also where you reload your gun), and Intelligence - if you enjoy running headlong into a hail of bullets.

After the completion of each game, your score appears with an encrypted code that allows you to be able to check and enter your ranking on the internet.

Konami has once again taken it to the next level. Almost alone they have revitalized the arcade with the most innovative interfaces to date with their music "Beat" games such as drum, guitar, keyboard and dance games and now this superb shooter. Police 24/7, although no graphical masterpiece, has a very high level of replayability which means you may want to bring a wheelbarrow full of coins to your next visit to the arcade.

9.5/10

All games in Arcade Mode can be found at Galaxy World arcades.

HYPHER 81

I GOOFED!!
THE LORRY
STARTED TO MOVE!



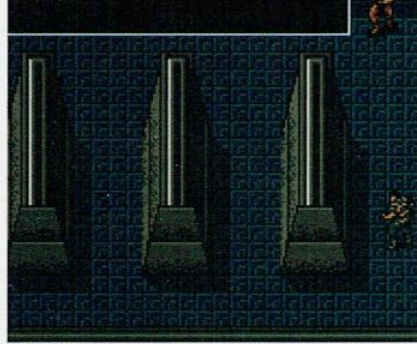
TRANSCIEVER



HELLO! THIS IS DIANE...
THE DOORKEEPER.
MR. ARNOLD
IS INVINCIBLE!
ESCAPE!



I'M
MACHINE GUN KID!



THIS
LEAD
THE
...



REVERSE ENGINEERING

MSX

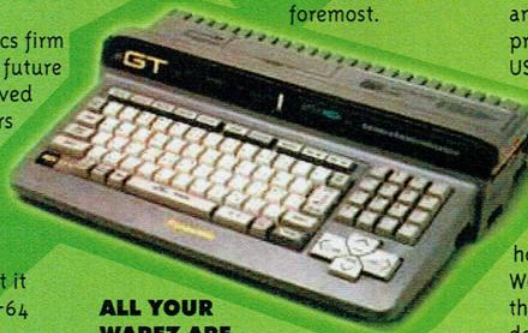
The Xbox isn't Microsoft's first dabble in the world of gaming. In 1983 they sold MicroSoft eXtended BASIC to ASCII Corp, allowing them to create a flexible standard for 8-bit home computing. Join **James Cottee** as we look at a games platform that changed half the world. Even if it wasn't this half...



The home computer market of twenty years ago was very different to the entrenched, stagnant consumer choices we see today. No dominant standards had been established, and every electronics firm and his dog had a vision for the future of home computing. Some believed CP/M would go on forever, others put their faith in the newcomer MS-DOS, and some fruits even believed that GUIs were viable. Many machines had nothing more under the hood than a proprietary version of BASIC, but it didn't do the Spectrum or the C-64 any harm.

Living in an age where manufacturers squabble endlessly over what the ultimate standard of set-top-box should be, it might seem inconceivable that in 1983 more than two dozen firms agreed on a format of 8-bit computer. The visionary at the

Japanese company ASCII was Kazuhiko Nishi, and his dream was not only to create the computer equivalent of VHS, but to ensure that it was a Japanese cultural institution first and foremost.



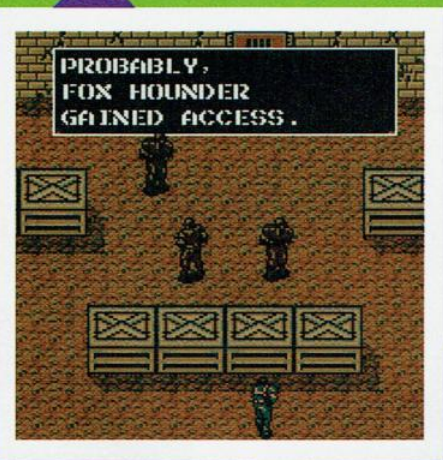
ALL YOUR WAREZ ARE BELONG TO US

While it was feasible at the time to develop a 16-bit machine, he decided that making the best possible 8-bit computer would be easier and more affordable. And so it was that the MSX became a hit across half the globe.

Japan and Korea took to the device through cultural synergy and its support of their complex pictographic character sets. Europe loved its masterful design, and Latin America and the USSR took to its rock bottom price. The missing link though was the US, which ignored the format after the first generation of machines. This left the MSX community in cultural isolation, with new software and hardware primarily coming out of Japan.

The result was a cutting edge home micro-computer in many a Western home that was running riot in the fantasy land of Japanese game design idioms. While the current wave of Japanese consoles may have made us blasé to them, several of these genres would doubtless have confused our ancestors:

- RPGs concerning little people with big heads.
- Space shooters where teenagers



Snake, before he got all famous and stuff



confront foppish space princes. Schoolgirl management simulators ...and so on. Even the generic anime chicks with huge bulging eyes must have been a shock.

Still, the MSX was a fertile ground for innovation. Solid Snake made his debut in Metal Gear, and other Japanese classics like Bomberman, Parodius and Metal Slug were showcased on the system. While there were ports of popular Euro titles like Head Over Heels, the games department, especially with the debut of the MSX2, was firmly entrenched in the world of Japlish.

STRONGER. FASTER. BETTER.

The thing which set the design of the MSX apart from arguably more successful machines such as the C-64 was an upgrade path which gave the machine an effective life of almost 15 years. Where other backwards compatible products like the Commodore 128 and the Atari 7800 served only to bore the gaming public, each new upgrade to the MSX standard was eagerly awaited by the party faithful.

Starting with the MSX1 standard in 1983, the concept soon evolved to the MSX2 (1985), the MSX2+ (1988) and the

MSX Turbo R (1990). While the first generation machines were yet another keyboard-shaped system powered by the Z80 chip, it was more upgradable than most, with add-on cartridges adding useful features like video capture. One of the more spectacular add-ons was a desktop docking station for the SpectraVideo MSX, which had two built-in floppy drives and was as big as an IBM PC. Standard in later models was support of IDE, and even SCSI hard disk drives!

It was also one of the first machines to support Genlock; one such MSX was even used on the Mir Space Station! Numerous sound card add-ons were also available, upgrading the audio power from cheesy synth to home studio quality synth. The standard memory varied from one manufacturer to the next, but most models could take extra capacity on board, some up to a dizzying four megabytes! Truly a

technical leap for what was still essentially an eight bit machine.

MSX CRIME?

The later models were only sold in Japan, as the primary manufacturers lost interest in foreign markets. Sony, JVC, Sanyo and others continued to bring out new models and accessories, but by the late 90s the dream was over. The MSX had straddled the worlds of PC and console gaming for too long, and as each surged ahead in new directions the MSX was forgotten.



A loss for some, it was truly a tragedy for the Japanese gaming enthusiast. For a society that values cultural purity above all else, the loss of their last indigenous computer platform was a crushing blow. This is the same country that not only has zero immigration, but even looks down on imported rice. For them, the PC now dominant in the home and office was a gaijin pretender, running barbarous American software on filthy

Yankee chips. Were it not for Japan's burgeoning dominance of the console market, the shame would be unbearable!

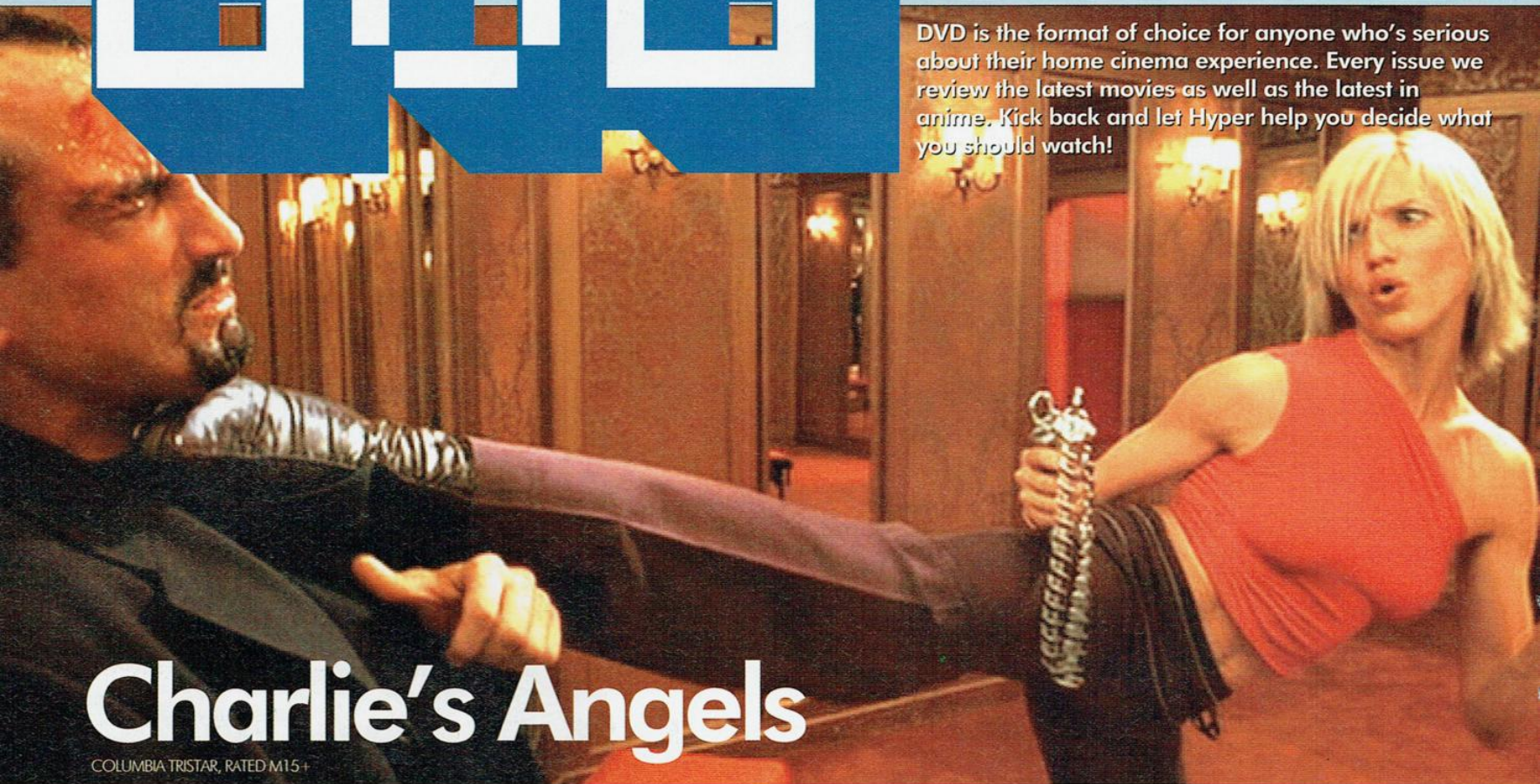
MSX CRIME?

While the MSX was never really part of the Australian computing landscape, it would do us good to sit and ponder what the Western world has lost as well. While each new model of MSX gave more power and flexibility to the consumer, today's PC is in danger of going backwards. The big record labels and software companies are quite concerned that ordinary home users can burn their own CDs, and DVDs, and whether they contain pirate material or not, these firms are doing their best to have burners banned.

The day may come when even owning your own hard drive will be against the law. The tail is wagging the dog, with human creative potential being arbitrarily limited by corporations immune to the influence of man or government. This may sound weird, but one day things may devolve to the point where the MSXs that remain are the most powerful home computers in the world. If you've got one, keep it under lock and key.



DVD is the format of choice for anyone who's serious about their home cinema experience. Every issue we review the latest movies as well as the latest in anime. Kick back and let Hyper help you decide what you should watch!



Charlie's Angels

COLUMBIA TRISTAR, RATED M15+

Charlie's Angels is all celebrity and no substance, but who can say no to a big budget movie starring three incredible babes and Bill Murray?

Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu star as the dynamic trio in a secret crime-fighting organization funded by Charlie Townsend. Granted, the plotline has as many holes as a block of Swiss cheese, but like *The Fifth Element*, it's an impressive showpiece of rich, velvety colours, smart cinematography, and continuous *Matrix*-style action scenes. Sound is also pretty good, its mix of iconic musical

styles from the last three decades adding punch and character to every scene. Funny that "Smack My Bitch Up" was left out of the CD soundtrack. At least they kept "Baby Got Back".

This DVD comes loaded with making-of featurettes that delve into various aspects of production like stunts, choreography and set designs. This is great value for film buffs, but one can't help but feel a bit ripped off by the fact that the Outtakes and Bloopers segment is just the end credits footage without, well, the credits.

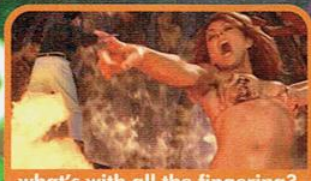
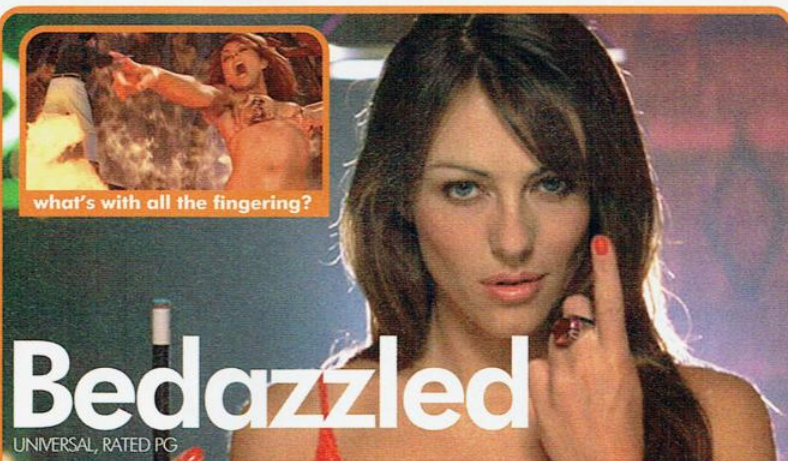
MOVIE: 6/10 **EXTRAS:** 6/10



here, i've got these stamps...



run! it's the acting police!



Bedazzled

UNIVERSAL, RATED PG

It's usually a delight to watch anything *Ghostbusters* veteran Harold Ramis is involved in. His comedy days with Bill Murray and his knack for creating a little human drama (*As Good As It Gets*) should be the right combination for an easy-going comedy like *Bedazzled*. But truth be told, *Bedazzled* sucks.

This remake of a Dudley Moore classic sees English beauty Elizabeth Hurley hamming it up in male fantasy costumes as the Devil. When she discovers that super-geek Brendan

Fraser is madly in love with a co-worker who isn't aware of his existence, she grants him 7 wishes for anything he wants in exchange for his soul.

The movie starts out intelligently, but quickly degenerates into a preachy, Christmas Carol-styled tale that plays on awful social stereotypes. That is, professional athletes have small dicks, rich and intelligent men are gay... you get the idea. Were it not for all the sexual innuendo, you'd think it was a kids flick.

MOVIE: 3/10 **EXTRAS:** 5/10

Titan AE

20TH CENTURY FOX, RATED PG

There are some definite shades of *Independence Day* in Don Bluth's latest animated flick, except in this movie, the Earth and everything on it is actually blown to pieces. 15 years on, it's a race against time to find a ship called the Titan, which can save humanity from the diasporas of drifting shanties. It's either that or letting the dreaded Drej push the human race to certain extinction.

The vocal talents of Matt Damon, Drew Barrymore, Bill Pullman, and Janeane Garofalo are a nice complement to the excellent combination of CG and traditional cel animation. It's Bluth's direction (not quite anime but not sugarcoated Disney rubbish) that makes *Titan AE* enjoyable viewing.

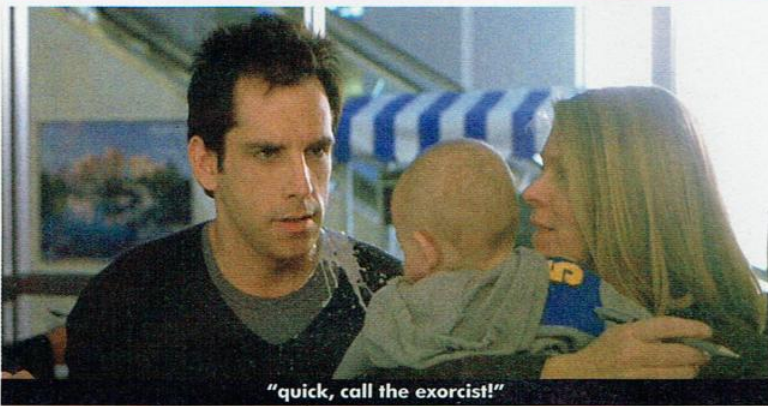
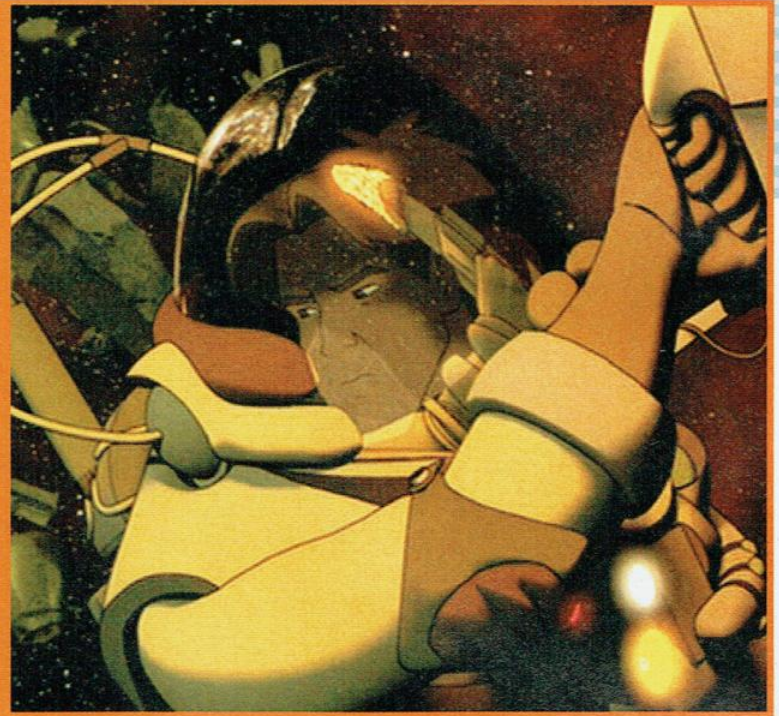


is he showing her something?



Unfortunately, that didn't stop *Titan AE* from becoming the biggest animated flop of all time, which is not surprising considering most of the Western world can't fathom the concept of an adult-oriented cartoon without thinking of something kinky.

MOVIE: 7/10 **EXTRAS:** 6/10



"quick, call the exorcist!"



Meet the Parents

UNIVERSAL, RATED M15+

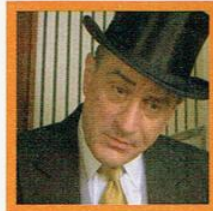
Casting agents must have jumped for joy at the success of *Analyze This*, because Robert De Niro is positively ripe for comedy — at least for as long as his typecast seriousness lasts. In *Meet The Parents*, he plays an overly suspicious ex-CIA agent. Ben Stiller must win him over if he's to have any chance of proposing marriage to De Niro's daughter.

What ensues is a sequence of hilarious, cringe-inducing disasters like losing the family cat, the lie detector test, and setting the altar on fire. The family dinner scene, in

particular, is meticulously built up and then executed with the comic brilliance of a Simpsons episode. There's something in this film for everyone, especially those who can empathise with meeting the father of Daddy's little girl for the first time.

The featurettes, deleted scenes and outtakes are all pretty standard, but considering how reclusive De Niro is, it's a bit of a thrill that he and Stiller are featured on their own commentary track.

MOVIE: 8/10 **EXTRAS:** 7/10



Almost an Oscar Winner



Big Heavy Stuff go nuts

Almost Famous

DREAMWORKS

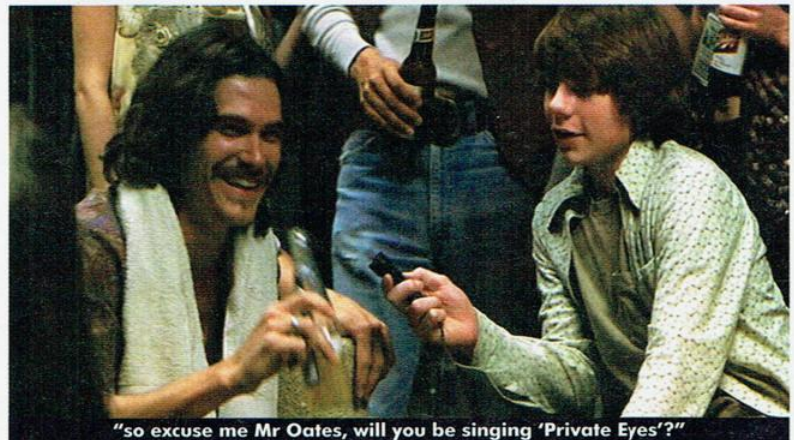
Almost Famous is a coming-of-age story about 15-year old William Miller, who is given the opportunity of a lifetime by Rolling Stone Magazine to go on the road with fledgling rock group, Stillwater. Based on Cameron Crowe's true-life story, William Miller is an endearing portrait of wide-eyed naivety as he experiences the wild lifestyle of famous musicians, which is given greater effect by the continual presence of his over-protective mother. As Miller delves deeper into his project, he discovers there's more

than just the music to write about. There are the raving fans, the girls, the wild parties, and the moral decadence that he grows to dislike.

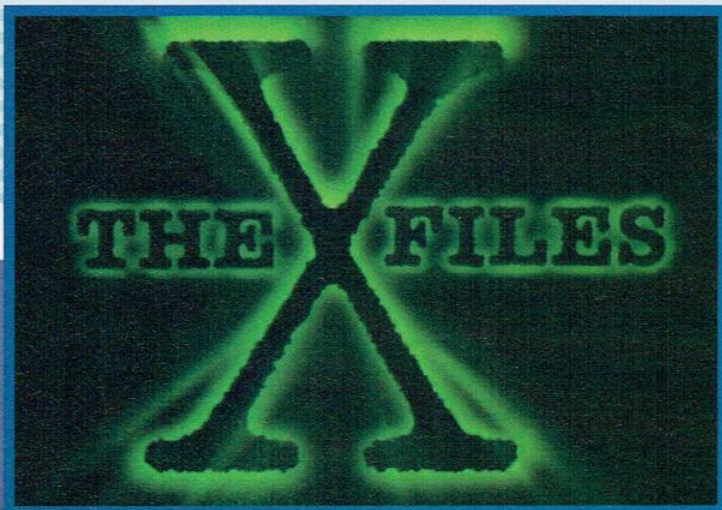
Almost Famous is an engaging film from start to finish, irrespective of whether you can identify with the 70s era. Hollywood sweetheart Kate Hudson may have all the attention with her Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress, but there are loads of other actors to watch like Anna Paquin, Jason Lee and Fairuza Balk.



MOVIE: 9/10 **EXTRAS:** 3/10



"so excuse me Mr Oates, will you be singing 'Private Eyes'?"



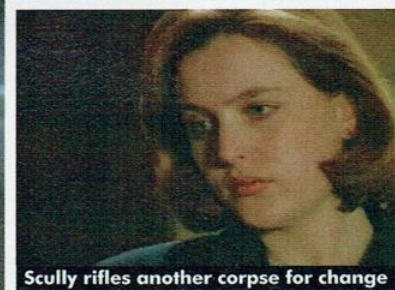
The X Files

SEASON ONE BOX SET (COLLECTORS EDITION)



FOX INTERACTIVE, RATED M

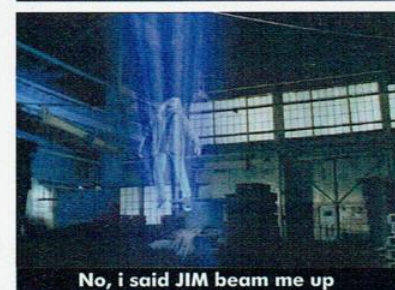
Duchovny takes his Dennis Hopper fixation a bit too far



Scully rifles another corpse for change



er... it's just a... weather balloon...



No, i said JIM beam me up



"and then there were these gnomes..."

The 1990s had its fair share of televisual highs and lows. Television's general theme of "crapulence before all else" continued, but a renaissance of sorts also occurred, plucking itself free of the clammy, garish grip of the 80s and giving birth to some creative, quirky cult television. Some of the highlights were *The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld*, *Northern Exposure*, *Twin Peaks*, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, and of course, *The X Files*. Compared to today's lineup of inane "reality television" like *Survivor* and *Temptation Island*, not to mention the sad parade of has-beens somehow worming their way back into our TV guides (Ted Danson springs to mind), the 90s might well be remembered fondly. If you're yearning for some entertainment to fill the void between *Buffy* and *The Simpsons* (we would include the utterly brilliant *Family Guy* in that list too, but it looks like two seasons were all Fox could handle), then fear not, for DVD salvation is at hand.

MULDER THIS OVER

This *X Files* DVD set is actually quite breathtaking - consisting of 7 discs, which include the pilot, all 23 episodes from Season One, deleted scenes from the pilot, behind-the-scenes footage, a mini documentary, and interviews with creator Chris Carter about his 12 favourite episodes from the season. Not bad, and the material stands up very well.

Indeed, the first season of the *X Files* is difficult to surpass in terms of television ingenuity. The episodes are clever, the undercurrent of Government conspiracy is relatively subtle (rather than the over-handed way in which it permeated the later, less well-crafted seasons), and the sexual tension between Fox Mulder and the delicious Dana Scully is beautifully constructed. It's the series which introduced us to Mulder's government source, Deep Throat, and those lovable paranoiacs with a penchant for Scully, the Lone Gunmen. For *X Files* fans, this Boxed Set is a must have - although the \$190 price tag may put you off (and perhaps rightly so).

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE, MAN

I feel that I should confess at this point that I have only recently started watching *The X Files* again, after being perturbed by the escalating levels of hysteria which ensued after Chris Carter allowed David Duchovny to write some episodes himself (Major League Baseballers as aliens... c'mon! What are you smoking?). The reason I've returned is thanks to the awkwardly-charming Robert Patrick, whose portrayal of John Doggett is a much-needed contrast to the Spooky Mulder persona. I'm beginning to get hooked all over again, and this Collector's Edition DVD has certainly helped me "want to believe". I've been reminded of how great this series really was when it first appeared on our TV screens back in 1992, and my fingers are crossed that Doggett can recreate some of the magic which made the *X Files* of several seasons ago a not-to-be-missed television phenomenon. See where it all started - primo *X Files* viewing.

Victoria Flanagan

MOVIE: 8/10 **EXTRAS:** 7/10

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Card Captor Sakura

COMEDY, DRAMA
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: CLAMP



See what it says in 'Production Company'? It says Clamp. Know what that means? It means *Card Captor Sakura* is shoujo anime — anime for girls, though there are a surprising number of guys who watch it too. Titles like *Sailor Moon*, *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, *Magic Knight Rayearth* fall into this category. *Card Captor Sakura* is one of the more recent sensations to sweep across Japan.

GIRL POWER

Sakura Kinomoto is an energetic, imaginative, and mischievous little fourth grader. The daily dramas of her rivalry with her older brother, the crush she has on her brother's friend, and the suspiciously lesbian advances of her classmate are rudely interrupted when she opens a magic book and causes the Clow Cards therein to be lost in space and time. The Beast who guarded the book (it's actually a cute little animal with a high, squeaky

voice) had accidentally fallen asleep, but seeing as Sakura's partly responsible, he charges her with the responsibility of recovering the magic cards. That's why he transforms her into a Card Captor.

Armed with a magical baton, Sakura must track down the cards before they bring certain doom upon the world. Each card contains a magic power, given physical form usually as a giant beast. Sakura can then harness the magical powers of each card she captures, and use them to capture other cards.

Expect loads of comical silliness — it's less emotionally charged than *Utena* and has more comedy, so it's much easier to absorb. Animation is superb, with loads of scenes that are bound to attract the "kawaii!" cat calls from the girls.

ANIMATION: 8/10 PLOT: 7/10 JAPAN-NESS: High OVERALL: 7.5/10

Gundam Wing: Endless Waltz

SCI-FI, ACTION, DRAMA • PRODUCTION COMPANY: SUNRISE/BANDAI ENTERTAINMENT

The story completely defies logic. Exactly one year after the events of the *Gundam Wing* television series, Heero, Duo and the gang willingly abide by Queen Relena's extremist policy of ridding the Earth of all weapons of war. But rather than keeping their Gundam's in orbit or in a space hangar, they resolve to send them into the Sun! Enter

Mariemaia, a clone of the original daughter of the real Trowa, who leads the outer colonies on an offensive to reclaim ownership of Earth. This, it seems, was the original intent of Operation Meteor from the TV series.

NEW TOYS FOR THE BOYS

This movie will make absolutely no sense to anyone who hasn't finished watching the TV series. There isn't much to this movie. In a nutshell, Earth is left defenceless after the Gundams are sent to the Sun. When the invaders arrive, it's a race to retrieve the Gundams before they hit the Sun and repel the enemy before they undo the



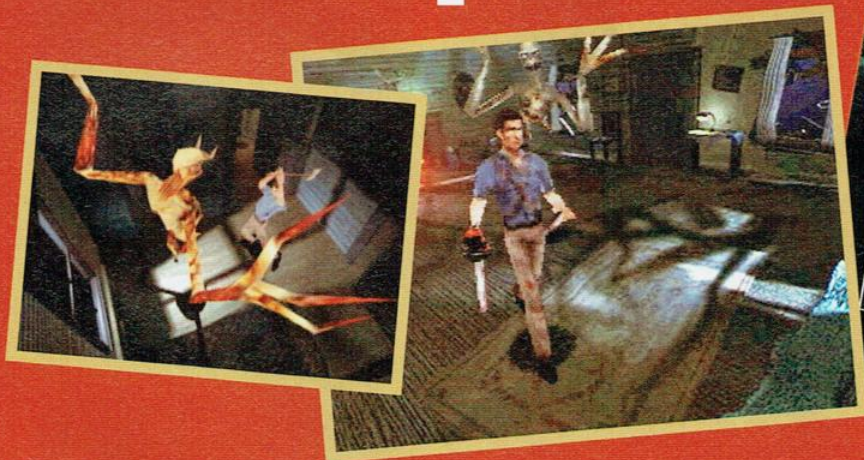
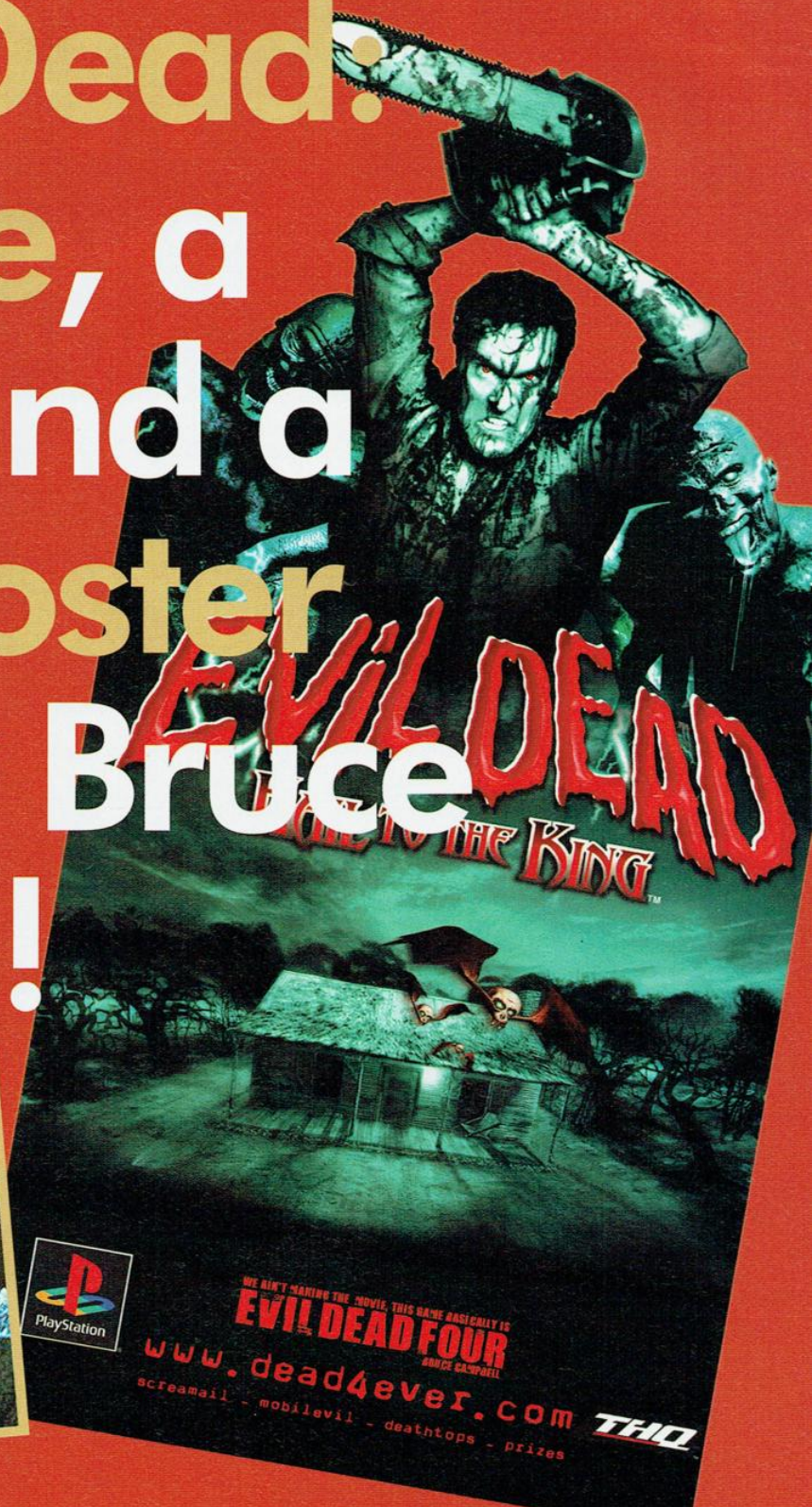
poseable arms! only \$159.95! buy now!

fragile year-old peace accord. The theme of the humanity repeating its mistakes over and over like an endless waltz is extremely weak, as this movie wastes most of the time trying to bring some closure to the subplot of every single pilot. There are five of them, and none are dealt with to any great depth.

It's no surprise that they should save the day. What's unbelievable is that even though the experience should've taught them that the price of peace is eternal vigilance, they go ahead and destroy the Gundams anyway. Are they mad? No — it just means Bandai needed to a few new limited edition model Gundams to put on the Japanese toy shelves.

ANIMATION: 8/10 PLOT: 4/10 JAPAN-NESS: Low OVERALL: 5/10

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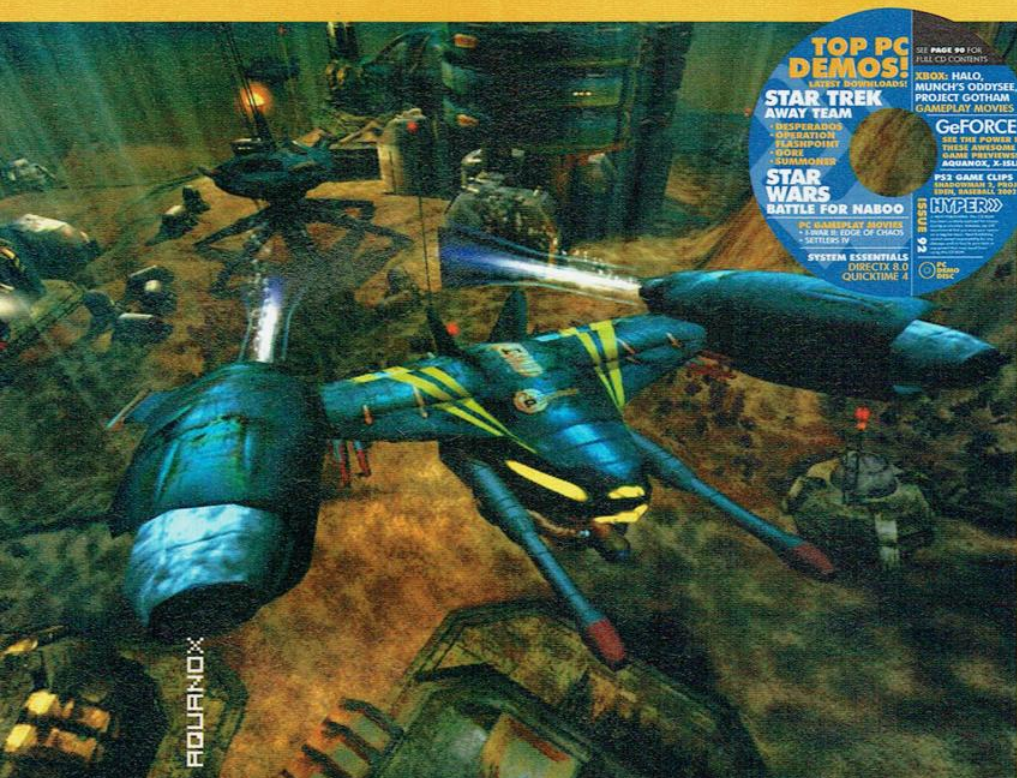
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Gameplay Movies

GEFORCE 3 IN ACTION!

Aquanox - This is a stunning little movie showing the power of the GeForce 3 in action. In the depths of the ocean, Emerald "Dead Eye" Flint explores some incredible underwater worlds.

X-Isle Dinosaur Island - X-Isle is an amazing 3D world, swarming with big dinos. What you're seeing in this clip is the in-game engine, not pre-rendered stuff. Incredible!

PC MOVIES

I-War II: Edge Of Chaos - One hundred years have passed since the end of the first Independence War, and far from the riches of Sol and the core systems, trouble is brewing.

Settlers IV - This preview lets you see Morbus and the Dark Tribe in action for the first time. It also introduces the Dark Tribe in some pre-rendered footage. Dig those settlers!

PS2 MOVIES

Project Eden - Due to severe overpopulation, the planet Earth's diameter is increasing with the growth of towering mega-cities, each inhabited by millions of humans. Project Eden puts you into this grimy, futuristic place. Can you get out?

All Star Baseball 2002 - Acclaim is preparing to take American Baseball to the next level on the PlayStation 2 with All Star Baseball 2002. Have a look at the preview and see for yourself.

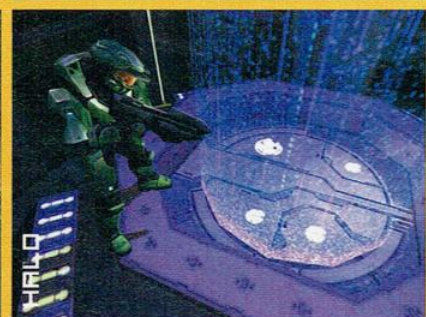
Shadowman 2 - Enter the dark world of Mike LeRoi. Voodoo hero. ShadowMan. Go in armed with your amazing voodoo powers and unleash your wrath. Sneak peek!

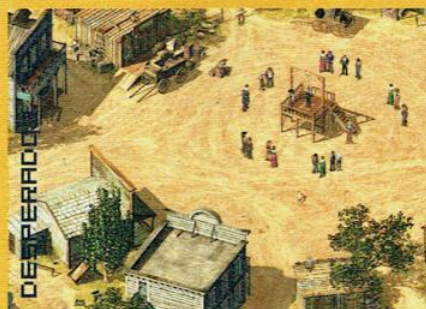
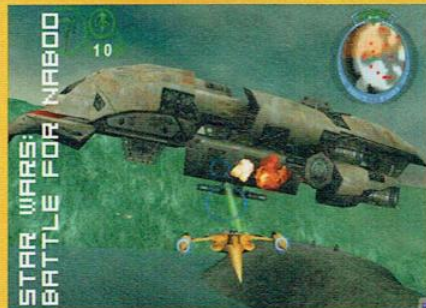
BONUS! XBOX MOVIES

Some exclusive movies our spies have smuggled over to us featuring Halo, Project Gotham and Munch's Oddysee. There's no sound with these 3 previews but they showcase many reasons why you should invest in the Xbox. Have a look and let us know what you think.

Utilities

DIRECT X 8.0a
Quicktime 4





Game Demos

STAR TREK: AWAY TEAM

Activision • Required: P2-233, 32MB, 3D Card
 Star Trek: Away Team puts PC Gamers in command of an elite Starfleet command team assembled to uncover a web of conspiracy that entangles the Federation, Romulans, Klingons and even the Borg. Make it so!

OPERATION FLASHPOINT

Codemasters • Required: PII 350, 64MB, 3D Card
 Operation Flashpoint brings the player the most complex war game experience ever. In this demo you play as a part of an infantry squad. Your squad's mission is to neutralise the hostile forces in a small area of one of the islands in the game.

GORE: THE ULTIMATE SOLDIER

4D Ruler • Required: P2-300, 32MB, 3D Card
 Gore is a first-person shooter being developed by 4D Rulers Software, Inc. The storyline moves the player through three different episodes: post-apocalyptic Earth, medieval Earth, and an alien homeworld. *NOTE: Should you encounter any problems, install the patch from the /PATCH folder on the CD.*

SUMMONER

THQ • Required: P2-300, 64MB, 3D Card
 Summoner is a dark fantasy role-playing game that originally debuted on the PlayStation 2. Now it's here in an enhanced form for PC adventurers to consume like the hungry, axe-wielding brutes that they really are. Go in search of magical rings and defeat the hidden evil!

STAR WARS: BATTLE FOR NABOO

LucasArts • Required: PII 233, 64MB, 3D Card
 Flee into the remote reaches of Naboo to discover the stormy swamps, snow-covered mountains, and ancient ruins that lie beyond the populated cities. Dogfight in narrow ravines in a Naboo starfighter, navigate mine-laden rivers in a stolen Trade Federation gunboat, and chase droid forces across the fields of Naboo in a heavy STAP. A port of the Nintendo 64 game.

DESPERADOS

Infogrames • Required: P2-200, 32MB, SVGA
 You control the bounty hunter, John Cooper, and use your gunslinging skills to capture the famous Mexican bandit, El Diablo. You'll have to crawl, climb and use your quick wits if you wish to capture El Diablo dead or alive. Similar to Commandos.

PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CD?

Every Hyper cover disc is fully tested and scanned for viruses. However, due to the incredible array of PC hardware out there, we can't guarantee every demo will run on your PC without problems. Please check the readme files with each demo if you are having problems with a demo. If you suspect the CD is faulty, you can e-mail hypercd@next.com.au with your problem. If your CD is faulty, a new CD can be posted to you free of charge.

hyperactive 3.1

SADISTIC VISIONS

Did I hear someone mutter "E3" under their breath? Yes, I think I did. In fact, it seems to be all we're hearing about at the moment. Well the biggest annual electronic party is approaching and we are being inundated with pre-E3 news and promises of spellbinding stuff this year.

With the huge array of hardware and software just around the corner, everyone will have their eyes firmly on Los Angeles mid-May to see what goodies are... good. Can they all possibly live up to our over-expectations? Of course not! Which is half of the fun... watching some loser cry as the game he has been waiting for since 1999 turns out to be a bigger flop than Ray Martin's singing career. Hehehe...

"D&D THE MOVIE' WAS COOL!"

So you like movies huh? Well, seems you're in luck. Hyperactive has recently expanded to include the 'Hypervision' section from the magazine, and will keep you on your toes with the latest on Anime, HK Cinema, and even the odd boring Hollywood slop. Thanks to the DVD capabilities of the PS2 there are thousands more gamers out there seeking the ultimate in movie-watching, and we don't want anyone to accidentally hire Wing Commander or anything...

And the best part? We can now truly share our consoles with the opposite sex... and be considered cool!!!

Bryce McDonough
 Hyperactive Producer
 brycem@next.com.au



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www.hyperactive.com.au

FORUM

✉ **HYPER FORUM:** 78 Renwick St. Redfern, NSW 2016 Australia
E-mail: freakscene@next.com.au

Q. AND THE BEST 16-BIT GAME WAS...?

Gee, talk about opening a box of worms. All we wanted was some fond memories, some misty-eyed tales of gaming goodness, and before we know it we're bombarded with essays on why you can't choose just one...



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...

"THE WORST GAME I'VE PLAYED IS...?"

Responses will be printed in Hyper 94.

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.

THIS GAME HAD IT ALL

Chrono Trigger. It's as simple as that. This game had it all; graphics, sound, character, gameplay and anything else you want to throw in. The battle system was also a blessing, what with all the single techs, dual techs and triple techs, the way you could attack enemies standing in a straight line with a flamethrower or something similar, the area damage, everything about it kicked arse. The characters had just what they needed, character. With all the multiple endings, the ability to use anybody as your main character later on in the game, and all the NPCs made it so involving. The music also ruled, with a different tune for every occasion. Lastly, the graphics — considering this was a SNES game the graphics were gorgeous. Overall, this game rocked and is the



reason I still play my SNES. Screw getting a PS2, do yourselves a favour and buy a second hand SNES with this game for \$25 and save a fortune.

Cheers

Thomas Grey-Parkinson
zsick4u@start.com.au

IT'S A SECRET...

Seiken Densetsu 3. I'm sure this name will have no meaning whatsoever for most people, but to me it is the greatest 16-bit game EVER! Perhaps I should start by explaining what game it actually is. Remember a game called Secret of Mana? The truth is, Secret of Mana is actually the sequel to a Game Boy game called Seiken Densetsu. So, Secret of Mana is Seiken Densetsu 2. And those of you who are quick will have already realised that Seiken Densetsu 3 (SD3) is more commonly known in America and here as Secret of Mana 2 (SOM2).

Squaresoft are SMART. You see, they made a sequel, and added new, cool features, and ditched old, annoying

features. They took an excellent game and improved it. The result: what I believe is the best RPG ever.

The game was never released out of Japan though, and never translated either. But through the miracles we call 'SNES ROMs', there are now translated versions of this game floating around the net. This game has everything!

Sound: Excellent sound. The music is catchy, fitting, and really sets a great atmosphere for the game.

Graphics: By far the BEST I have seen for any SNES game. Although the characters are 2D Sprites, they are detailed, well animated, and look generally cool.

Lastability: At the start of the game you select a team of 3 characters out of 6. Varying your team can have major differences on the game. Using different characters results in different story lines.

Playability: The controls are easy, and suitable. The levels are well thought out, and the style of play is great. What more can I say other than this game rocks!?

Peter
evans_peter@hotmail.com

BY A NOSE

Not an easy question by any means, there were a lot of stellar games back then. For me, it would be between Secret of Mana and Super Metroid. Secret of Mana had the whole multiplayer thing going for it (why I bought my first multi-



Lise: Elliott! Where are you!?

i'm right here, sweetheart... relax



i'd remember this well, if i wasn't an alcoholic

tap), and had a good mix of action and role playing to boot, plus cool weapons and a killer story line (I was 14, or so at the time, so I think I'm excused). I'd have to say that Super Metroid wins by a nose though, but I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because it was such an epic game (at the time). Or because it's an example of what can be achieved with a little extra time and effort on the developers part, something which is getting harder to find these days.

Spike
pikey_99@hotmail.com

P.S. If anyone can clock Super Metroid in under 1:40 (or 1:56 with 100% item rate) drop us a line and I'll pay homage to the god of all things Metroid.

REVOLUTIONARY POLYGONS

Another World (or Out Of This World for OS gamers).

It used revolutionary polygon graphics instead of sprites, which made the animation look amazing. It also used this technique to tell a story (which also was a rarity at the time) by including dramatic cut-scenes throughout the entire game (not just at the start and end) making it the first real attempt at being an interactive movie. And where Half-Life was praised for including secondary fire on its weapons, AW had three modes of fire 8 years before it: Normal fire, energy shield and big whoppin' death beam. However what really made AW great was that it was an involving, clever and incredibly entertaining experience. Eric Chahi's one man achievement still holds up even today.

Mat Brady
Matbrady@powerup.com.au

TOILET BOWL

It has to be Micro Machines 2 Turbo Tournament on the Mega Drive. The two extra controller ports in the cart were a gift from multi player heaven. The score retaining memory feature also held us to it long after the 32 bit generation had started as there were still fractions of seconds to be shaved off lap times, when a party play game couldn't be had. The lack of CD related load times make this little beauty superior to its next generation sequel. What other game would have grown men racing a mini dragster around a toilet bowl or offering advice to newbies like "turn right at the second cup cake"?

Jeremy
jjkinsula@bigpond.com

LOVING THE STALKER

Landstalker on the Mega Drive... any RPG fan who played this instantly fell in love from the awesome opening sequence which was reminiscent of an Indiana Jones movie. Impossible jumps... great animations... hundreds of items... sprawling "Three Dimensional" Dungeons... But most of all the characters were more developed than many main characters in most modern games. Duke Mercator was sinister and as the main bad guy was not all that evil but controlled by greed, which made



him seem more realistic... The wizard Mir always had some new info to give you if you dared venture back through his castle... And Kayla, Wally and Ink were always along to provide the comic relief in their blundering attempts to thwart you of the jewels. And the Dungeons... who could forget Greenmaze, Kazalt or the optional quest where you were turned into a dog by a witch. No game I have played in the last 5 years has beaten the gaming experience that was Landstalker...

peZ
lancer@smartchat.net.au

SUPER SONIC

I can remember being 9 or 10 years old and wanting a Mega Drive. I'd played a SNES and a bit of Mario, but it didn't give me that sugar-rush-esque feeling of what was, is, and shall be the best 16-bit game, 'Sonic The Hedgehog 2'.

Great visual, contagious music (Casino Night Zone, anyone?), utterly silky smooth gameplay. A game so fast that Sonic would frequently disappear off screen. Yeah baby, that's what it's about. Play it by yourself or with a friend, any time (despite arguments over who would be Tails). Yeah it rocked and it still does. I urge you, pick up your controllers and relive those moments. You could call it retro if you must...

Regards,
Paul Gusta
Paulgusta_mk_2@hotmail.com

THE FINAL WORD

Now come on Hyper - what kind of forum question is that to ask? Are you intentionally trying to start World War III? Million-way cult battles will erupt! Many will be struck down with psychological stress related



ah the memories... all hazy and weird

disorders attempting to choose which game they liked the best. You lot are obviously trying to sow complete and utter anarchy into the world's population. But honestly, which sane man is game enough to name a single title that stands above all the rest?

Games such as: (in no particular order, of course) the Castlevania series, the Final Fantasy series, Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, Killer Instinct, the Kirby games, the Megaman series, Unirally, Chrono Trigger, Super Mario World, Super Metroid, the Donkey Kong Country series, all the Bombermans, Zelda and Starfox, just to name a select few, were and still are all amazing games. That is why I bought them all; because I couldn't choose between them then, and I can't choose between them now. And I think that no one else should either. Eternal legends such as Miyamoto have poured heart and soul into incredible games that are as playable today as they were then, and it is not fair to judge them.

And so, in direct answer to your question:
"And the best 16-bit game was... diplomatically left undecided."
Thank-you and Goodnight.

MATT
Ponokies@hotmail.com

MAIL



HYPER LETTERS:

78 Renwick St.
Redfern, NSW 2016
Australia
E-mail: freakscene@next.com.au

INDREMA DREAMER

Dear Hyper,

A while ago when I was reading one of my friend's N64 Gamer magazines, I came across a page where they interviewed Cam Shea. They asked him which mag he liked better: Hyper or N64 Gamer. Do you know what he said? He said that he liked N64mag better!

Anyway I got a few questions to ask...

1. Have you got any info on the Indrema console?
2. Don't you think that there should be another brand of console? Because there are mainly only two brands, and Sega are beginning to fall!
3. Why did you change the look of your mag?
4. I'm only 12, but is there any software out there that enables you to make games?

Well, love the new look, bye!
**"Yahoo_12"
Address withheld

Dear Yahoo_12,
Do you really think Cam would say

that? Those cheeky N64 Gamer guys made it up.
1. The Indrema is hardly a dedicated games console. It's a set-top box that connects to the web, with gaming capabilities running on Linux. The number of games you can expect to see on the system will probably be able to be counted on one hand. Unfortunately, virtually no developers have signed on to make games for it. You can find out more information at www.indrema.com, but really, you'd be silly to consider it as a potential games machine.
2. There are more than two... we have Sony's PS2, Nintendo's Gamecube and Microsoft's Xbox all going head to head this year. It's going to get nasty.
3. Because we love you.
4. Actually, yes there is! There isn't enough space to explain it here, so we'll have to direct you to http://www.gamedev.net/ If you're serious about making games, this might be a good starting point. If

Yes, the Indrema will be the most powerful digital clock in existence!



you're looking for something simpler, you'll have to trawl for some crappy apps...

MOST UNDERRATED CONSOLE EVER

Dear Hyper,
The recent news regarding the Sega Dreamcast has left me disillusioned with the gaming community. I find it baffling that a console so good, with so many original and fun games, is unable to be a serious contender in the upcoming system wars. Gamers out there have let one of the best things ever to happen to the gaming industry slip through their fingers.

Even when comparing it to the next-gen consoles, I find it hard to fault the Dreamcast. It has great, exclusive franchises and fresh, innovative games. Yes, the graphics may be decidedly primitive when compared to footage of the Xbox and the Gamecube, but it's the gameplay that matters, right? I'm beginning to think that the "gameplay before graphics" phrases that gamers around the world spout may be used simply to make themselves look good.

I do find solace in the fact that games will continue to be produced for the next 18 months, and that Sega, as a development company, will continue to exist. I guess the Dreamcast will go down in history as the most underrated console ever.

Yours sincerely,
Adam "Evapilot" Daymond
Evapilot2000@hotmail.com

Hi Adam,
Yes, the Dreamcast has been given the raw prawn, so to speak. We've kicked, screamed and sobbed, but it seems there's now very little we can do about it. Sega are going to kick arse in the software business though... so while we lose a console, we gain all their great games on another system of our choice.

XBOX OR GAMECUBE?

Dear Hyper,
I just had a few questions to ask you.
1. When is the Xbox and Gamecube coming out?
2. How much will they cost?
3. Out of those two consoles which should I buy?
Thanks,
Cybershock
Cybershock86@hotmail.com

Hi Cybershock,
1. They will both be released in Australia in early 2002 at this stage. But things can change, and we wouldn't be too surprised to see the Xbox get moved up to a 2001 Christmas release. We'll see.
2. There have been no announcements on price yet from either company. We can hopefully see them both launch at a cheaper price than the PS2.
3. Oh come on now. You want us to make a decision before we've played both systems' games? Both consoles look very strong. It's going to be a tough decision we think.

A BILLION QUESTIONS

1. When is Shenmue 2 out in Australia and how many disks will there be?
2. Do you know any of the storyline to MGS2?
3. In MGS2 who is the woman fighting Solid Snake with a knife?
4. Does MGS2 have any VMFs in it?
5. Can you please get me Hideo Kojima's e-mail address so I can write to him?
6. Do you ever get sick of playing games?
7. I've heard that you can buy a DVD with the MGS2 trailer on it. Is this true?
8. It said in one of your mags once that there will be a MGS game for Xbox. Is this true or are they stopping at MGS2?
9. How much will the Game Boy Advance be when it comes out and will it be worth buying?

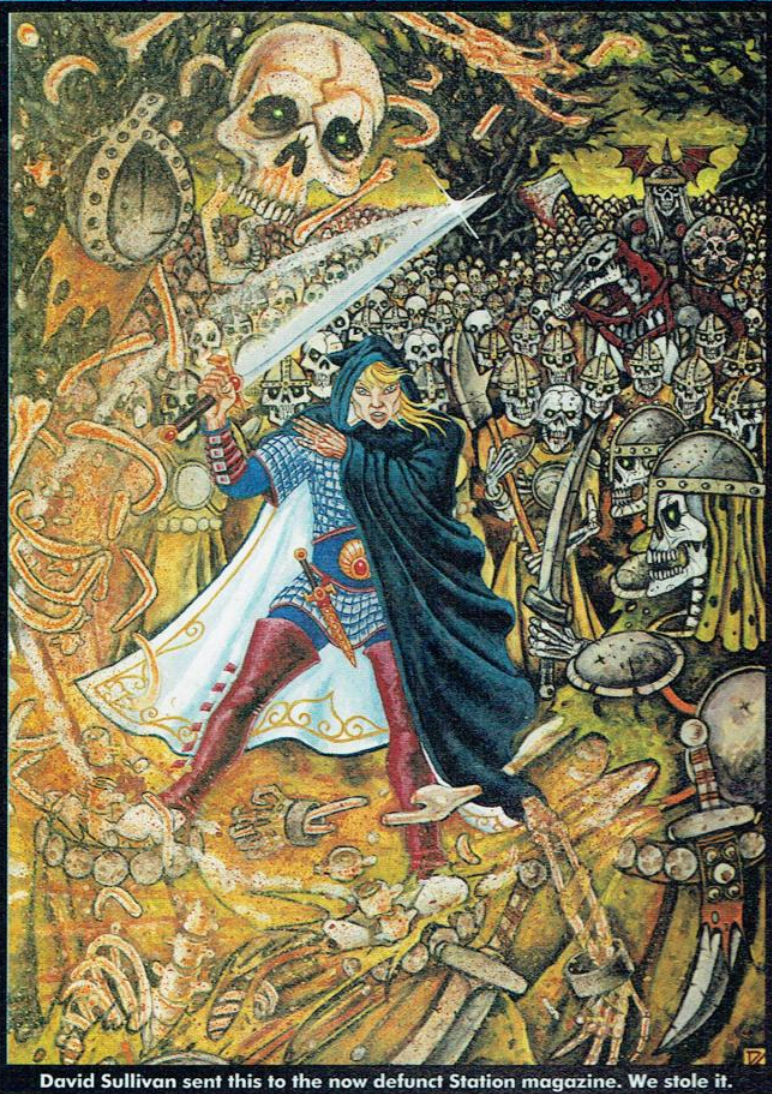
CAPTION THIS!

PART 17 WINNER

Thanks to Toolboy (toolboy77@hotmail.com) we have our caption of the month. Looks like Nintendo are trying to get rid of their "kiddy" image...



"Monicachu, I choose YOU!"



David Sullivan sent this to the now defunct Station magazine. We stole it.

Thanks,
Chris Dowling
 Email address withheld

- Dear Chris,
1. Shenmue 2 is not on any local release schedule yet. Sorry!
 2. The Metal Gear Ray is now what everyone is after...
 3. That's Olga. Mmm... hairy armpits.
 4. Do you mean FMVs? Yes, and they rock, baby.
 5. Sure, it's snake@hotmail.com. Geez... are you serious?
 6. Of course. Especially when nothing but crap gets released for months... we still have to play all the bad games too, you realise. Sigh.
 7. You can't buy it here, but you can get it in Japan.
 8. It's 100% true. The game is dubbed Metal Gear Solid X and we'll know more about it at E3 at the end of May.
 9. Nintendo have confirmed the price will be \$179 and it will be released on June 22nd.

DEAD DREAMY

Dear Mr Fishman,
 I woke up one morning and found that my trusted Dreamcast had run away. I searched high and low until

my journey eventually took me to the destitute part of town. I called for dreamy again and again but to no avail. I knew I would have to go into dead man's alley. I stepped into the darkness and was immediately assailed by an Atari Jaguar, asking if I had any loose change. I pushed him aside telling him if he was going to pretend he was 64-bit then his was a fate well deserved.

Deeper and deeper I crept into the dank alleyway constantly aware of the gangs of 3DOs eyeing me from the meager warmth of their makeshift fires. I walked and walked until I eventually came across a sight that sickened me. An old Saturn lying dead in a dumpster. It had been brutally ravaged by Vicious Untruths and left to die by an Uncaring Parent Corporation.

I had almost given up all hope of ever finding my dreamy when there he was being loaded into the back of an ambulance. He was battered, bruised, sore and unconscious. The ambulance driver told me that dreamy had taken a serious blow and that his future was uncertain. I asked who did this. Was it a band of PS2s or was it one of those snooty PCs? The man answered me with three of my oldest enemies. Bias,

IS GAMING LOSING ITS GRIP?

Dear Hyper,

I have been noticing a gradual decline in my interest to PLAY video or computer games recently.

When I was younger, in the glorious 16-bit days, I was a gaming MONSTER, playing any forking thing that got in my way. But as 32 and 64-bit moved in I played less and less, the only exception being the N64 launch. Occasionally, a spectacular game caught my eye that I played through to see the credits. Metal Gear Solid for example was one of them. As of now the ONLY game I want, er sorry, DYING to play is Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty. I am buying Z.O.E. and a PS2 just to play the demo over and over. But I have narrowed down my lack of interest to a few things:

ONE: The Computer Generated Introduction. This is completely false advertising and gives the player, before actual gameplay, a misleading preconception of what the game looks like. MGS did not do this which worked tremendously well and too many developers choose to use it.

TWO: Gaming Magazines. I will say that I am not a gaming addict, I am however a gaming magazine addict. Simply, I cannot go a day without flipping through one. At work, at home, it doesn't matter. I NEED THEM! Generally I would rather read a mag than play a game! (that works for you!).

THREE: Mainstream Gamers. With two small, dedicated games shops closed in the last six months in my area, people do not go to a games shop to hire a game anymore. They go to video shops. Where they can get a range of things quickly and easily showing mainstream gaming is killing the thing that spawned it. Hardcore gamers. Consequently I do not have a place where I can hire Dreamcast games anymore.

FOUR: Underdeveloped titles. Frankly, an extremely high majority of games developed today are disappointing due to the developer getting it out quickly and not taking the extra time to add special touches. Small touches make a good game great.

FIVE: Unoriginal titles. How many more PSX Tomb Raider titles do we need before we bomb Eidos? One? Good! I am SO sick of seeing her ugly polygonal face I could scream. A game today that breaks free from the mold and does something new is a rarity. Shenmue, Jet Set Radio, MGS all did it and without a doubt Super Mario 64 did it.

Has anyone got a solution for me? Because the only one I know happens to be a sequel and is also the most anticipated game on the planet.

Sincerely,
Shaun Johnson.
 buggo_@hotmail.com

Dear Shaun,
 You're not alone in your feelings. I think the industry is at a crucial point and hopefully the Xbox and Gamecube are platforms that can bring us new, original and innovative games, because frankly we're all getting bored to death with the recycled ideas that keep getting trotted out.

That's also why the Game Boy Advance is so appealing... it's a return to the 16-bit gameplay many of us loved so much, when a game had to rely on strong gameplay, not insane 3D graphics, to be a success. I think the excitement over the Game Boy Advance says it all. We're hungry for gameplay, as we've slowly been starved for something truly great. Both Microsoft and Nintendo know that their graphical power will not be enough this time.



Gamester PS2 Dual Force 2 Wheel.
 Don't forget to include your contact details in your letter.
 You've won a Gamester Steering Wheel!

FEEDBACK

Misinformation and lack of Consumer Support. They left me feeling alone and disheveled.

I shed a few tears which I promised I wouldn't do any more after the demise of my Mega CD, 32x and Game Gear. They were all so young and full of promise. Let me ask you this question... Do you know where your console is?

Heston
Clifford_rob@hotmail.com

Dear Heston,
We're crying into our lunch here.

MORE PS2 FEEDBACK

I'm in denial.

What can I say? I'm a 26 year-old graphic artist from Melbourne and I'm the proud owner (cough...cough) of a PS2. My problem relates to the playback of DVDs - the skipping, the stopping and the crashing that was talked about by Roach1976 last issue.

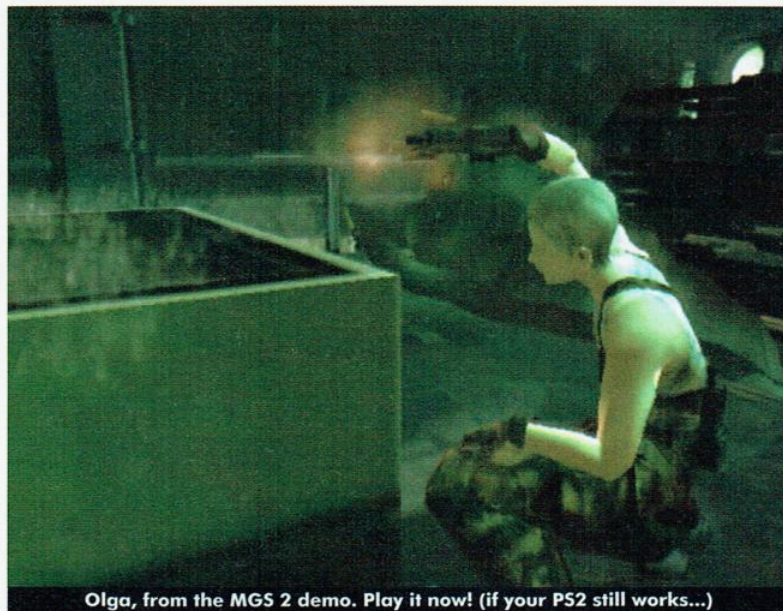
I convinced my girlfriend that we needed a PS2 because of its cool ability to play DVDS. This was a perfect

reason for me to spend \$750, she could watch DVDs and I would make my eyes bleed playing SSX and TimeSplitters. There was no way on Earth I could have wangled it otherwise.

But after watching a few movies, strange things started to happen. A really important plot scene would arrive and then 'bing' ... "Cannot Read Disc" would appear. This would lead to much cleaning/rebooting (whilst swearing) of the disc only to be faced with it skipping the scene or bombing out again on successive tries.

Now I don't know about other people, but I'm sure there's many more of you, who like me, are in denial. I don't believe it. I can't believe it. Let me know. My girlfriend now hates renting DVDS, hates my PlayStation 2 and I can't play my games because to get back at me she watches 'Bold and the Beautiful' and listens to N'Sync.

So SONY, please listen. Save me from crappy soap operas and awful music. Hey guys, at least send me back my warranty that I faithfully sent but never saw again.



Olga, from the MGS 2 demo. Play it now! (if your PS2 still works...)

Breaking into sobs, (sob, sob, sob)...
Jase
jaseherezoo@yahoo.net.au

"Diamond Weapon"
the_pickle77@hotmail.com

Hi Jase,
Yep, okay, there's something definitely up with the PS2. Apparently, gamers in the UK have had problems trying to play the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo disc due to something actually wrong with the PS2s, which has got to hurt. We'll try to get an official word from Sony.

Hi Diamond,
Have you taken your medication like the good Doctor told you to?

NEW LETTER

Hyper,
Some questions for you...
1. Why can't you make a Mac-compatible demo disc? We're not all Windows users.
2. How will the Gamecube compare to the other next-gen consoles? ie graphics, price, games.
3. Why don't they make more RPGs for the N64? Zelda's pretty much it.
4. Why do bad things happen to good people?

Bye,
Ford Prefect
E-mail address withheld

Dear Ford Prefect,
have you got your babel fish in? Good.
1. If you're wanting to watch the gameplay movies, you can still do so on a Mac - just open up the disc on your desktop and you'll find a folder with the movies in it. You'll need Quicktime 4 or Windows Media Player for Mac. If you're talking game demos, I'm afraid we don't currently have plans to offer Mac demos.
2. Gamecube looks awesome. Nintendo make some of the best games on the planet. Hopefully we'll be able to bring you some hot news in the next few issues.
3. Check out Paper Mario this issue, and Ailyn Chronicles next issue!
4. Well, it's simple. I... argghh HELP!!!

MGS2 CONSPIRACY

Hi there,
In your fantastically playable CD, I was excited to find the MGS2 movie trailer, but found it odd when I watched it. It seemed to me that there were two main characters in the game, I mean two good guys infiltrating the boat! If you watch the movies more closely, it definitely looks like there are TWO Snakes. Look closely at...

- A) The credits and how there looks like there are two Snake lookalikes.
 - B) When the dude runs down the corridor and the big gun fight on top of deck (about 7 mins) there's one dude moving forward shooting running down stairs and one dude running down stairs within 10 milliseconds of each other and the sound doesn't stop. It seems to be the same clip of movie (dubbed over perhaps).
 - C) The faces in close-ups seem to be oddly different.
 - D) 8 min 15 secs into the film there is someone saying "brother" to snake.
 - E) It says "Sons of Liberty" where there would only be one, right???
- Well I had my say, later!

Harvey Norman

SAVE 15%*
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Harvey Norman would like to offer readers of Hyper an exclusive discount offer on the titles appearing on the Official Australian PC, Playstation or N64 Games Chart. Simply complete the coupon & take it into any Harvey Norman store to claim your discount.

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* Limit of one per person. Original voucher must be presented & completed to claim the discount. Discount applies to regular store pricing. Not redeemable or transferrable for cash. Offer ends 25th May. Customer details may be used for further promotional activities.

HH4

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price PC Games

(>\$29.95 inc. GST)

Position	Game Title	Game Type
1	↔ The Sims	Strategy
2	↑ The Sims Livin' Large	Add On
3	↓ Sim City 3000 Unlimited	Strategy
4	↑ Sim Mania Pack	Strategy
5	↓ Sim Mania For Kids	Strategy
6	↔ Cmmnd & Cnqr Red Alert 2	Strategy
7	↔ Quake 3 Arena	Action
8	★ Age of Emp. 2: Conqueror's Exp	Add On
9	↑ Age of Emp: Collector's Ed	Strategy
10	★ Icewind Dale	RPG

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price PlayStation Games

(>\$39.95 inc. GST)

Position	Game Title	Game Type
1	↔ Final Fantasy IX	RPG
2	↔ Driver 2	Racing
3	↔ Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
4	↑ Crash Bash	Adventure
5	↓ Spyro 3 Year Of The Dragon	Platform
6	↓ WWF Smackdown! 2	Sports
7	↑ Medal Of Honor Underground	Action
8	↓ Tony Hawk's Skateboarding	Sports
9	↑ TOCA World Touring Cars	Racing
10	★ Simpson's Wrestling	Sports

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price N64 Games

(>\$39.95 inc. GST)

Position	Game Title	Game Type
1	↔ Bond: TWINE	Action
2	↔ Banjo Tooie	Platform
3	★ Donkey Kong 64	Platform
4	↔ Pokemon Stadium	Action
5	↑ Mario Tennis	Sports
6	↔ Mario Kart 64	Racing
7	↓ Zelda: Majora's Mask	RPG
8	↓ Super Mario 64	Platform
9	★ Super Smash Brothers	Action
10	★ Goldeneye 007	Action

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price Dreamcast Games

(>\$49.95 inc. GST)

Position	Game Title	Game Type
1	★ Shenmue	Adventure
2	↑ Marvel Vs Capcom 2	Action
3	★ Soul Calibur	Action
4	★ House Of The Dead 2	Action
5	★ Sega GT	Racing
6	★ Jet Set Radio	Adventure
7	★ Crazy Taxi	Racing
8	★ Bass Fishing	Sports
9	★ Metropolis Street Racer	Racing
10	★ Sonic Adventures	Platform

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price PS2 Games

(>\$49.95 inc. GST)

Position	Game Title	Game Type
1	↔ Moto GP	Sports
2	↔ SSX	Sports
3	↑ F1 Championship Season	Sports
4	↓ Tekken Tag Tournament	Action
5	★ Knockout Kings 2001	Sports
6	★ Oni	Adventure
7	↓ Dead Or Alive 2	Action
8	↓ NBA Live 2001	Sports
9	★ Time Splitters	Adventure
10	★ Madden NFL 2001	Sports

Top 10 Best Selling Full Price Games - All Formats

Position	Game Title	Format
1	↑ Donkey Kong Country	Game Boy
2	↑ Super Mario Brother Dlx	Game Boy
3	↔ Pokemon Gold	Game Boy
4	↑ Pokemon Yellow	Game Boy
5	↓ Pokemon Silver	Game Boy
6	↓ Final Fantasy IX	PlayStation
7	↑ Pokemon Red	Game Boy
8	↑ Pokemon Puzzle Challenge	Game Boy
9	★ Mario Tennis	Game Boy
10	★ Pokemon Blue	Game Boy

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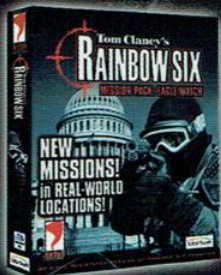
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