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ISSUE 96
OCTOBER 2001

HYPER



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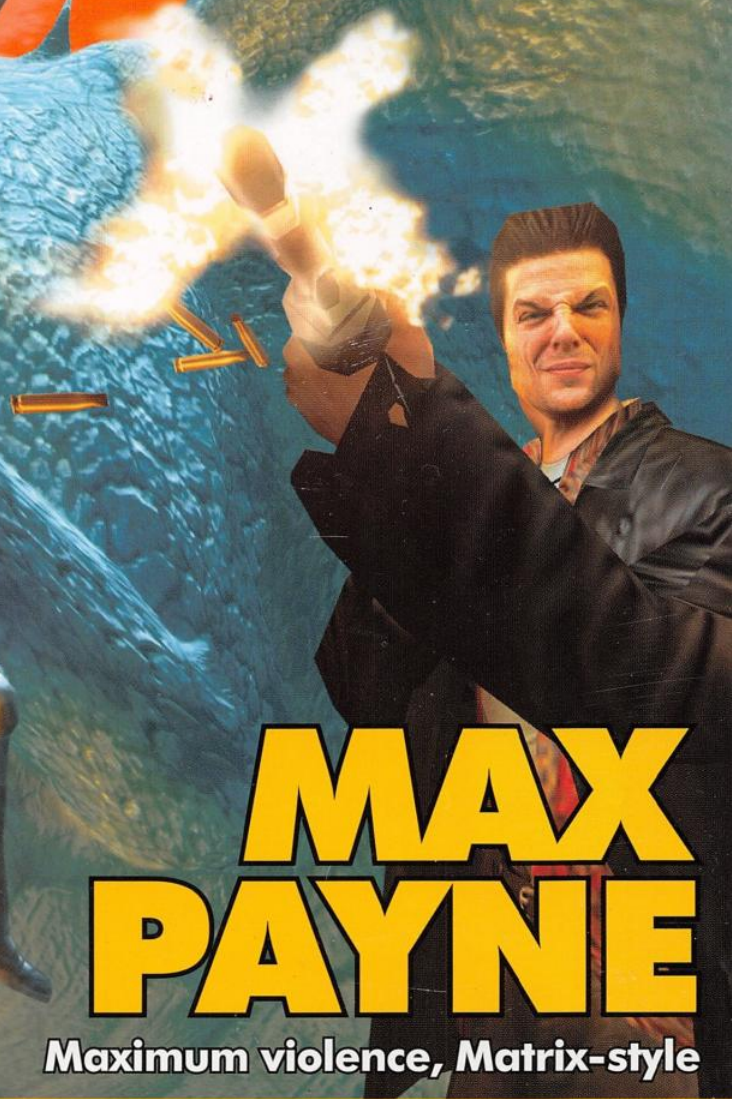
**METAL GEAR
SOLID 2**
The Creator speaks!

Reviews

- PC** Anachronox
- PC** Arcanum
- PS2** NBA Street
- PS2** Extreme G 3
- GBA** Bomberman
- GBA** Earthworm Jim
- PSone** Digimon World

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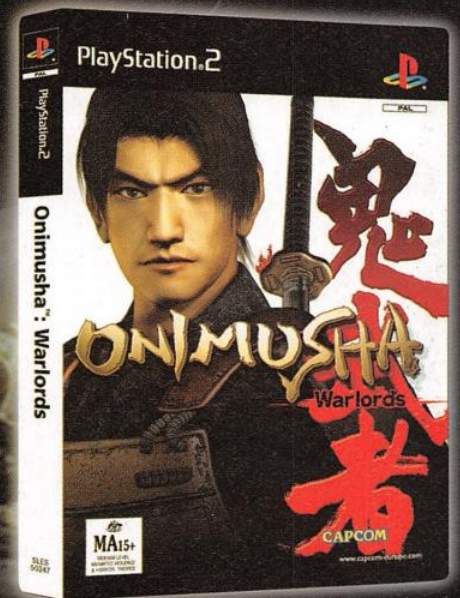
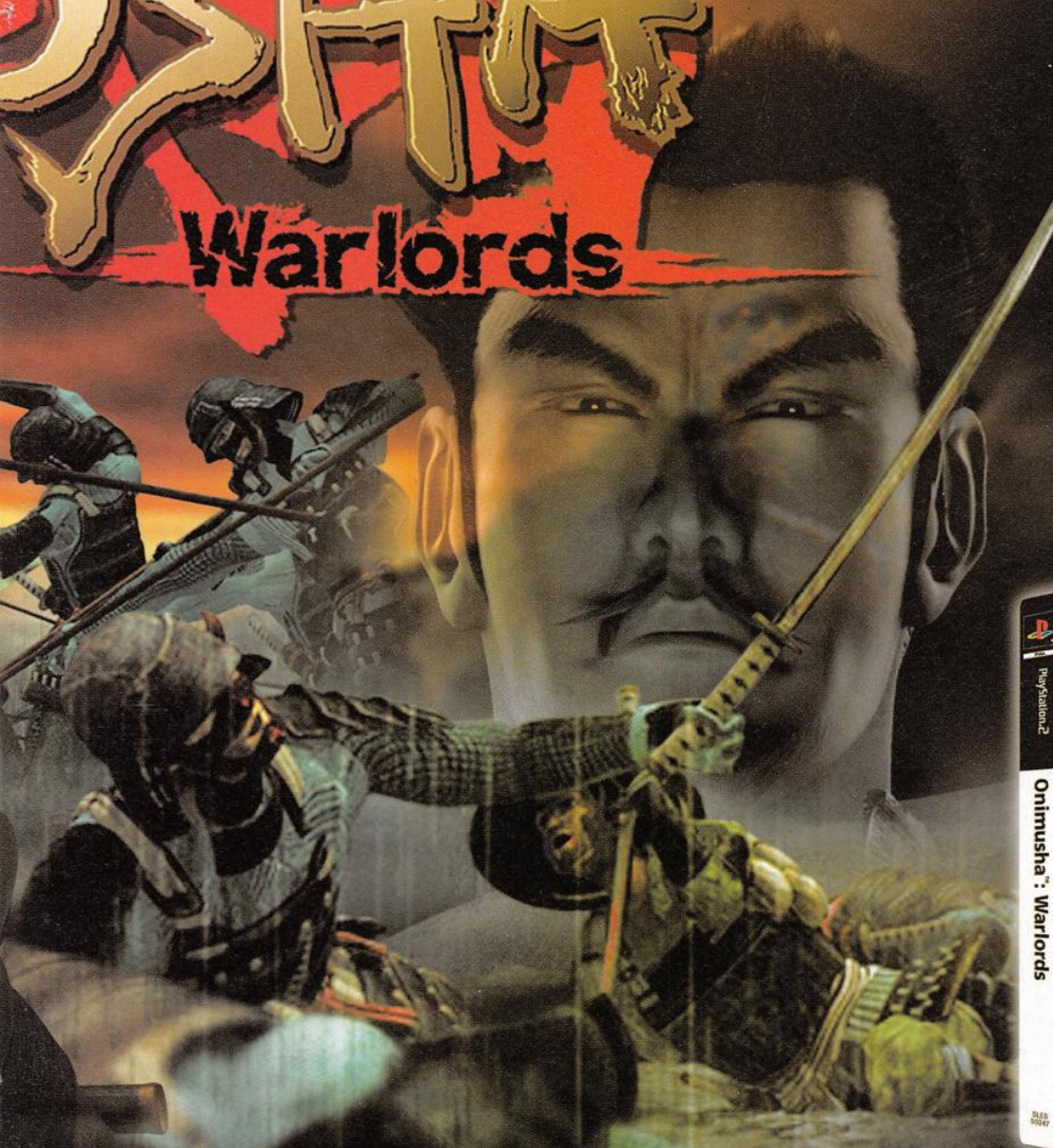
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TOUKICHIRO KINOSHITA YUKI MUSIC COMPOSER MAMORU SAMURAGUCHI WRITTEN BY FLAGSHIP GUEST CREATOR TAKESHI KANESHIRO
PRODUCER KEIJI INAFUNE DIRECTOR JUN TAKEUCHI WINNER BEST OF SHOW AWARD, SIGGRAPH COMPUTER ANIMATION FESTIVAL

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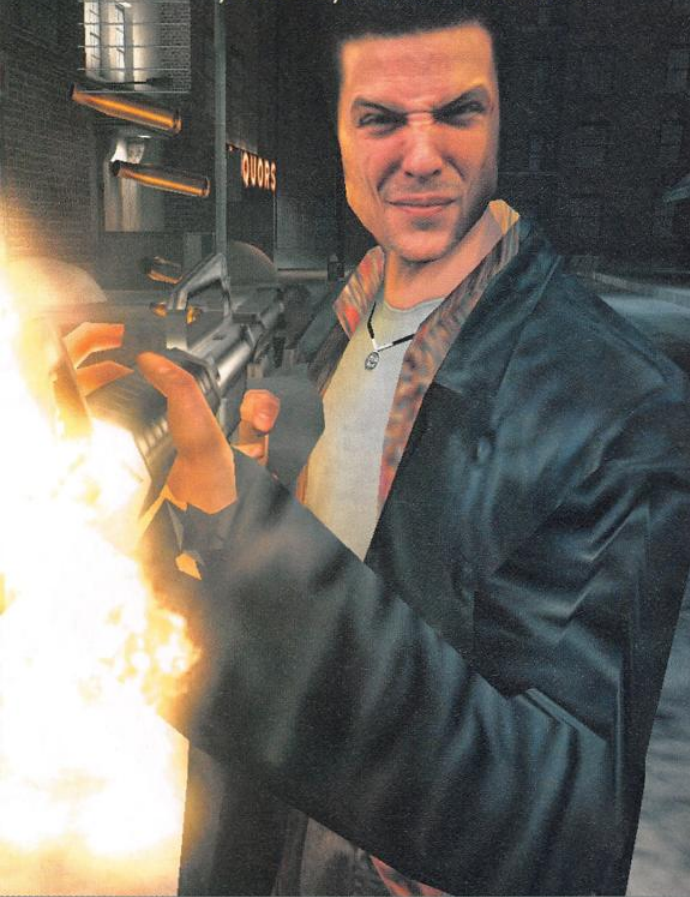
The PlayStation 2 gets equipped
for a brand new adventure...



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Our Game of the Month will blow you away... with two barrels!

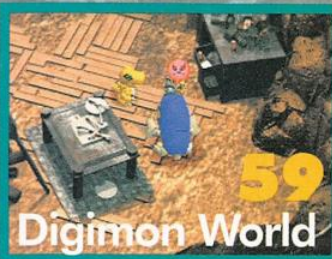
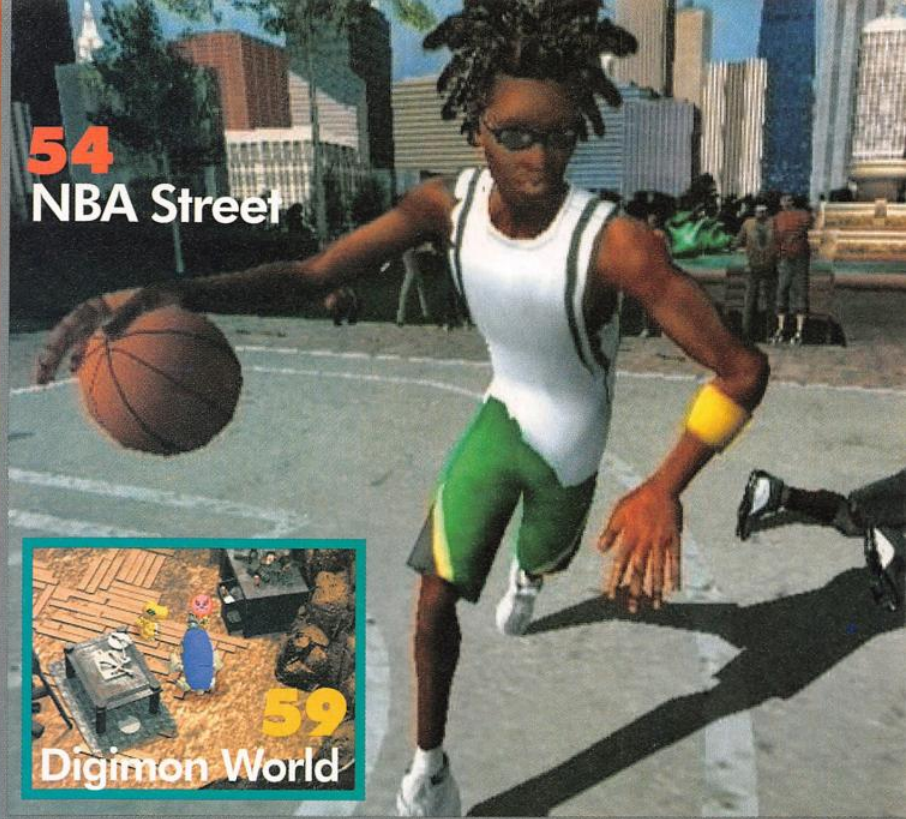


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Just subscribe to our brilliant magazine to go in the draw for this sweet prize!



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HYPER»



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WRITE TO HYPER!

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HYPE IT UP

Role Playing Games – this month we're swamped by them! Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance, Anachronox, Arcanum, Throne of Bhaal... and at a stretch, Gauntlet: Dark Legacy! There are also a whole swag of really promising RPGs on the production line – Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind, Pools of Radiance, Knights of the Old Republic, Neverwinter Nights... yes, the list goes on. And that's not even including the Massively Multiplayer ones. Hell, that's not even including the console RPGs on the way! The next few years are going to be great for gaming, there's no question about that. But they are going to be especially good for those of us who love to completely immerse themselves in the complex layers of a decent Role Playing Game.

Of course, if you'd prefer to shoot at something rather than talk to it, you might be turning straight to our Game of the Month this issue, Max Payne. Pain to the max. The only game that lets you leap down a flight of stairs in full dramatic slow-motion, with double pistols blazing John Woo style. It's corny, it's gratuitous, it'll have conservative leaders calling for the mass burning of all video games, and it's hella fun.

Personally, I think it's the Role Playing Games that concerned parents should be more worried about. I mean, do they realise their kids are living a virtual life dressed in chainmail underpants and cavorting with short, bearded men? Be afraid.

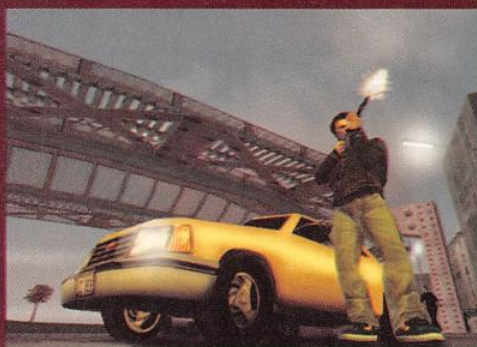
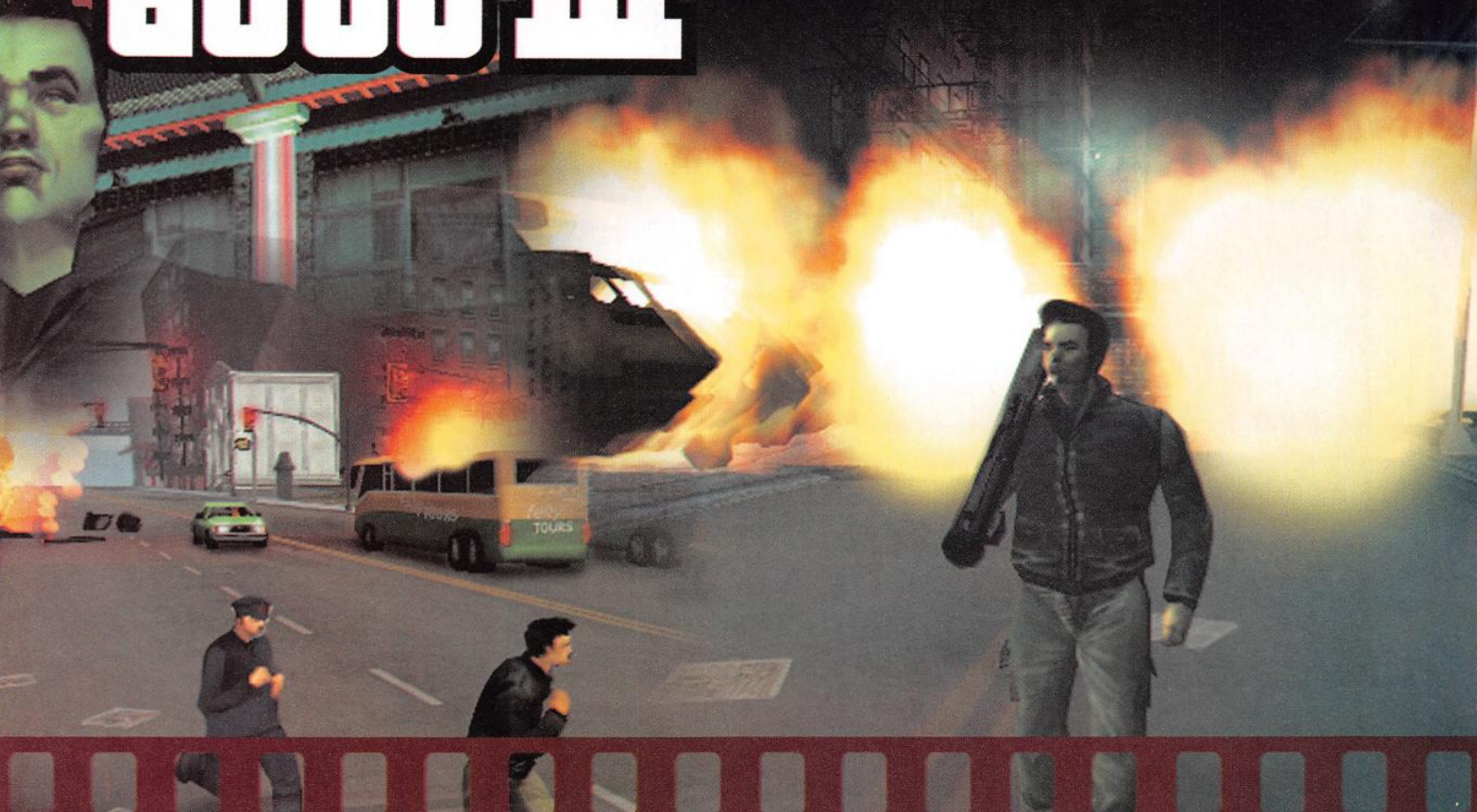
Eliot Fish >> Editor



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Note: Rockstar will be following IDSA guidelines for M rated games in the marketing of this game.
This game contains violent language and behavior and may not be appropriate for persons under the age of 17. It is a comic interpretation of gangster activity and the story, names and incidents portrayed herein are fictitious. No identification or similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual events is intended or should be inferred. Any resemblance is coincidental. The makers and publishers of this videogame do not in any way endorse, condone or encourage this kind of behavior.

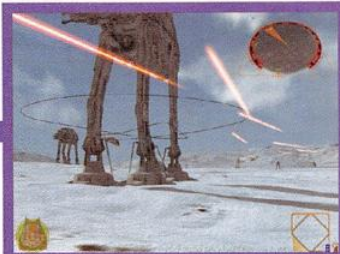
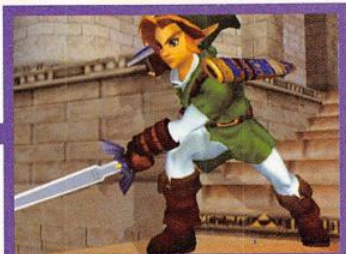


NEWS

IN THE NEWS

- XBOX & GCN launch details
- GBA Doom, Spyro and... Tekken!
- Warcraft III delayed
- The return of TRON

Nintendo's GameCube will kick arse. The Japanese units are only weeks away!



Xbox will also kick arse! Oh geez, it's a tough decision... get them both if you can!

Xbox & GameCube attack!

As the launches get close, the rumours heat up

Nintendo have confirmed that the GameCube will only be available in the colour purple at the Japanese launch on September 14. Okay, now that we've got that out of the way... let's talk numbers! Nintendo of Japan plan on having 500,000 GameCubes available on launch day, with 900,000 units rolling out over the rest of the year. In the USA, Nintendo plan on having 1.1 million GameCubes in stock from the month of November — not necessarily all available on day one of their US launch on November 5th. The big N forecast that they just might ship a whopping 4 million GameCubes by March 2002 — and that's before it's released in PAL territories. Oh, and by the way, if you want a

Japanese GameCube in any colour other than purple, you'll have to wait. Yes, there will still be other colours, but Nintendo want to slowly filter them through sometime after the initial launch.

Meanwhile, Matsushita have announced plans on releasing their DVD player/GameCube hybrid machine sometime in 2002 or 2003 in the USA, which could mean a long wait for an eventual Aussie release, if we get it here at all. Naturally, it will be quite an expensive machine, but it's gotta be one of the sexiest

pieces of hardware we've seen in a long while.

X MARKS THE SPOT Meanwhile, in Bill's backyard, Microsoft have repeatedly stated that the Xbox will not slip from its November 8th US launch date, regardless of the GameCube launch only 3 days before it. Microsoft are so confident, that they plan on having 800,000 Xbox consoles available on day one.

Recent Xbox news also confirms that final tweaking on the controller

has been finalised, and that Microsoft are now hard at work on some expensive TV commercials (that will no doubt do their best to shed that corporate image and make Microsoft look "cool").

There's even a nasty rumour that Microsoft are planning on playing hardball with Nintendo and launching their Xbox console on November 1st — a full week ahead of schedule — to get the jump on the Nintendo GameCube! As far as we see it, chances are this will turn out to be false — the result of pure rumour mongering. But as we get closer to the US launch for both new consoles, the media blitz is going to be absolutely sensational. Prepare to have your socks blown well off. It won't be long now...



Doesn't look much better on my PIII-733



GBA IS DOOMED!

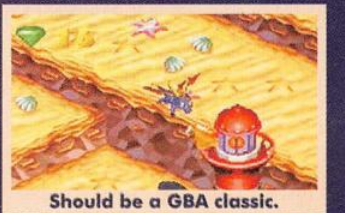
Id Software's First Person Shooter classic, Doom, has found its way to Nintendo's pocket wonder, the Game Boy Advance. Doom, which was released in 1993, changed the face of PC gaming, and now you can carry it around in your top pocket... freaky, eh? Doom may be known as a classic, but unfortunately the marketers still needed to try and explain the game on the box as "On-the-go intense 3D action". We've never heard of a shooter being termed "on-the-go" before, but whatever. The good thing is, by the looks of these screenshots, Doom for GBA is going to be astoundingly faithful to the original. Pixelated imps! Exactly how the original Doom looked when it was released. We can all look forward to blasting away Cyberdemons "on-the-go" sometime in October.

In other GBA news, the once Sony-only mascot, Spyro the Dragon, is set to appear in his first Nintendo game. Entitled, Spyro: Season of Ice, the game uses an isometric 3D view for the platforming, and third-person 3D flying sections for some aerial dragon fighting.

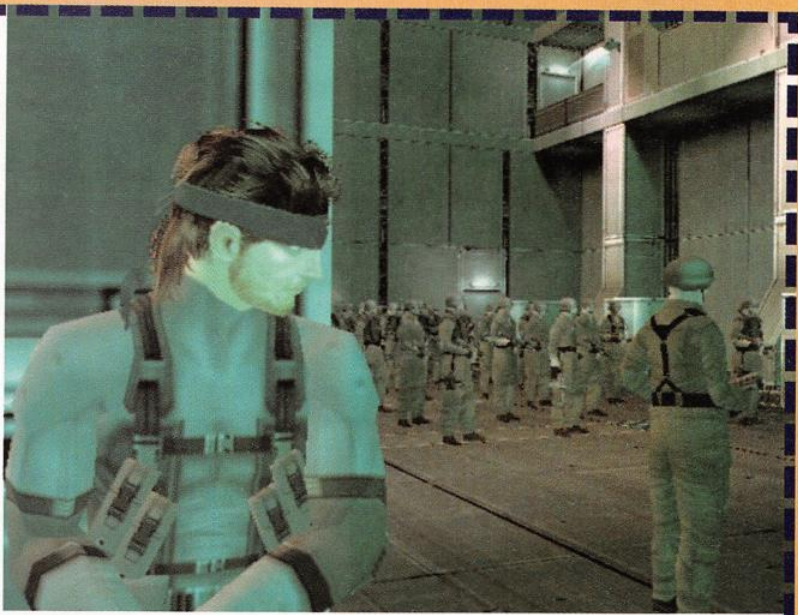
Oh, and what was that? GBA *cough* TEKKEN *cough*? Yep.



Spyro - smaller than ever!



Should be a GBA classic.



METAL CUBE SOLID?

Hideo Kojima, creator of the Metal Gear Solid series, has recently been quoted as saying "I personally have high hopes for the GameCube. I would like to make a game for GameCube."

This was in retaliation to certain US publications that quoted him (actually, he was most probably misinterpreted) as saying the Nintendo GameCube was for kids and immature people. So, does Kojima's new enthusiasm for the GameCube mean we'll see Metal Gear Solid 2 on Nintendo's next console? Well, not exactly. Konami, the publisher who handles the Metal Gear Solid license, have not announced any new Nintendo GameCube software yet, and Kojima did make a point of saying 'personally' in regard to his hopes for GameCube. However, it could simply be that Konami don't want to announce it at this point in time. There could be something in the pipeline, but we shouldn't pin any hopes on it happening.

In other GameCube software news, the cool-looking Action/RPG from Retro studios, Raven Blade, has been cancelled. Some staff have been laid off, and the remaining members of the Raven Blade team have been moved onto Metroid Prime. Raven Blade was actually looking pretty good, so this is certainly disappointing news. However, the bright side of the story is that more person-power has been put into making sure Metroid Prime is a killer release. So you gotta be happy about that.

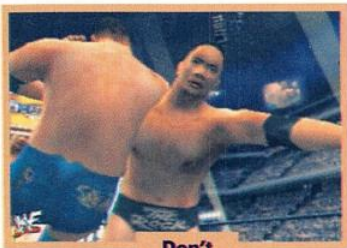
Stay tuned for some great Nintendo GameCube news next issue once the dust settles from Nintendo's very special Space World show in Japan. Oh, and when you receive your next issue of Hyper, the Nintendo GameCube will have been released in Japan! Just think! We'll be grabbing one of those babies and giving it a thorough work out. Ahh, the trials of games journalism. Heh heh heh.

CAPTION THIS!

Our monthly Caption This competition has made it to 23! Send all entries to captionthis@next.com.au. You must write CAPTION THIS PART 23 in the subject line, or else your caption may go unnoticed. Come on, folks. You still haven't made us belly laugh yet. And we really, really, need a good laugh. Please.



Come on, send in something funny!



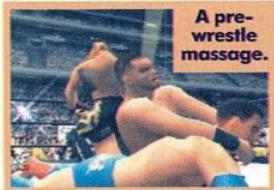
CAN YOU SMELL WHAT THQ IS COOKING?

Don't pick up the soap.



Coming to the PS2 just in time for Christmas this year will be **WWF Smackdown: Just Bring It!**, the third game in the Smackdown series. The game is being developed by the Japanese team, Yuke's, along

with **WWF: Raw is War** for the Xbox (look out for an inside look at this game in the next issue of *Hyper*). Yuke's are the developers responsible for **Sword of the Berserk** and **Royal Rumble** on Dreamcast and the original Smackdown games for PlayStation, so they've had plenty of experience with fighting games. Smackdown 3 is due in November.



A pre-wrestle massage.

SUPERCAR SUPERSTAR

The next game in the on-going TOCA series has been announced by UK developer, Codemasters. It's called **V8 Supercar Race Driver**, and it will be an all-original TOCA experience that strives to re-invent the driving game, rather than just upgrade an old engine with new bells and whistles. As series producer Gavin Raeburn stated, "It's no longer sufficient or exciting to deliver a new edition of a best-selling franchise that just recreates previous editions on a new format."

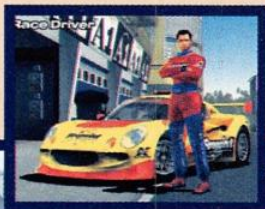
V8 Supercar Race Driver (called **TOCA Race Driver** in the UK), will include a character and plot driven narrative to take us beyond the typical "career mode", making for a far more compelling racing game. You will take the role of aspiring driver, **Ryan McKane**, and experience his high-speed life — on and off



Can you smell something?

the race track. The game will also introduce the **Finite Element Modelling** damage system, or **FEM** for short. The **FEM** damage model simulates the deformation of a car's structure over the duration of an impact, calculating how both the internal structure and outer bodywork of the car twists and breaks. This physics based approach gives different impact results every time depending on the exact conditions of the crash.

Codies already have 45 people on the dev team, and will deliver to the PC, PS2 and an unannounced platform.



TRON... OH, THE IRONY

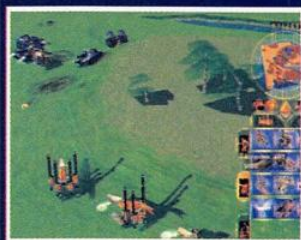
A new game based on the 80s movie about being trapped inside a videogame, **Tron**, is underway for the PlayStation 2. Disney Interactive have the rights, with plans to incorporate a fairly important online aspect to the game. Apparently there is a deal with Sony online to make the game exclusive to their network. Will we see light cycles? Those deadly frisbees? Jeff Bridges? Only time will tell.



WINNERS HYPER 94

EMPEROR: BATTLE FOR DUNE

1. Lineman, VIC
2. G. Harvey, NSW
3. J. Gray, QLD



ALONE IN THE DARK

Winning submissions published on page 74!

OVERFLOW

Word has it that **Raven**, the developers of the upcoming **Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast**, are also hard at work on **Quake 4** for **id Software**.

Torn, the anticipated RPG that was in development at **Black Isle**, had been officially canned. Apparently, not only was the **Littech** engine simply not turning out to be appropriate for the game, but the rumour is that staff were moved onto the development of **Icewind Dale II**.

After just three days on sale in Japan, **Final Fantasy X** sold 1.8 million copies, totally smashing any previous records — it is now the PlayStation 2's first double platinum game.

LucasArts confirmed that the **Nintendo GameCube** will see a **Star Wars: Episode II** game announced in 2002, the year of the movie's long awaited release. Oh, and **Jar Jar** apparently only has about five minutes of screen time.

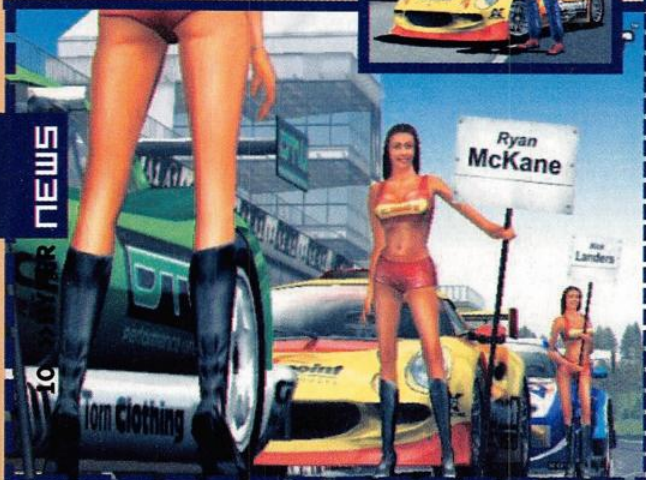
The sequel to **Shogun: Total War** is coming... **Crusaders: Total War** has been announced by **Electronic Arts**. Set in Europe during the **Middle Ages**, a period of 400+ years when all of Europe was in a state of almost constant warfare and violent upheaval. This is the period from the **First Crusade** to the **Holy Land of Jerusalem**, to the **fall of Constantinople** and the **Spanish Reconquista**.

Eidos recently took out a full page in the French paper **Le Monde** to apologise to French archaeologist **Jean-Yves Empereur**. Apparently a character in **Tomb Raider IV** who also bears the name **Jean-Yves** and who works as an archaeologist in **Egypt** (much like the real life **Jean-Yves Empereur**) is a little too close to home for the real deal. The real **Jean-Yves** says that the whole thing is more than coincidence, and we tend to agree.

Activision have obtained the rights to develop, publish and distribute games based upon **Steven Spielberg's** upcoming sci-fi film, **Minority Report**. The movie stars **Tom Cruise** and is scheduled to hit cinemas in 2002. The games will appear on the **PS2**, **PC**, **GBA**, **Xbox** and **GCN**.

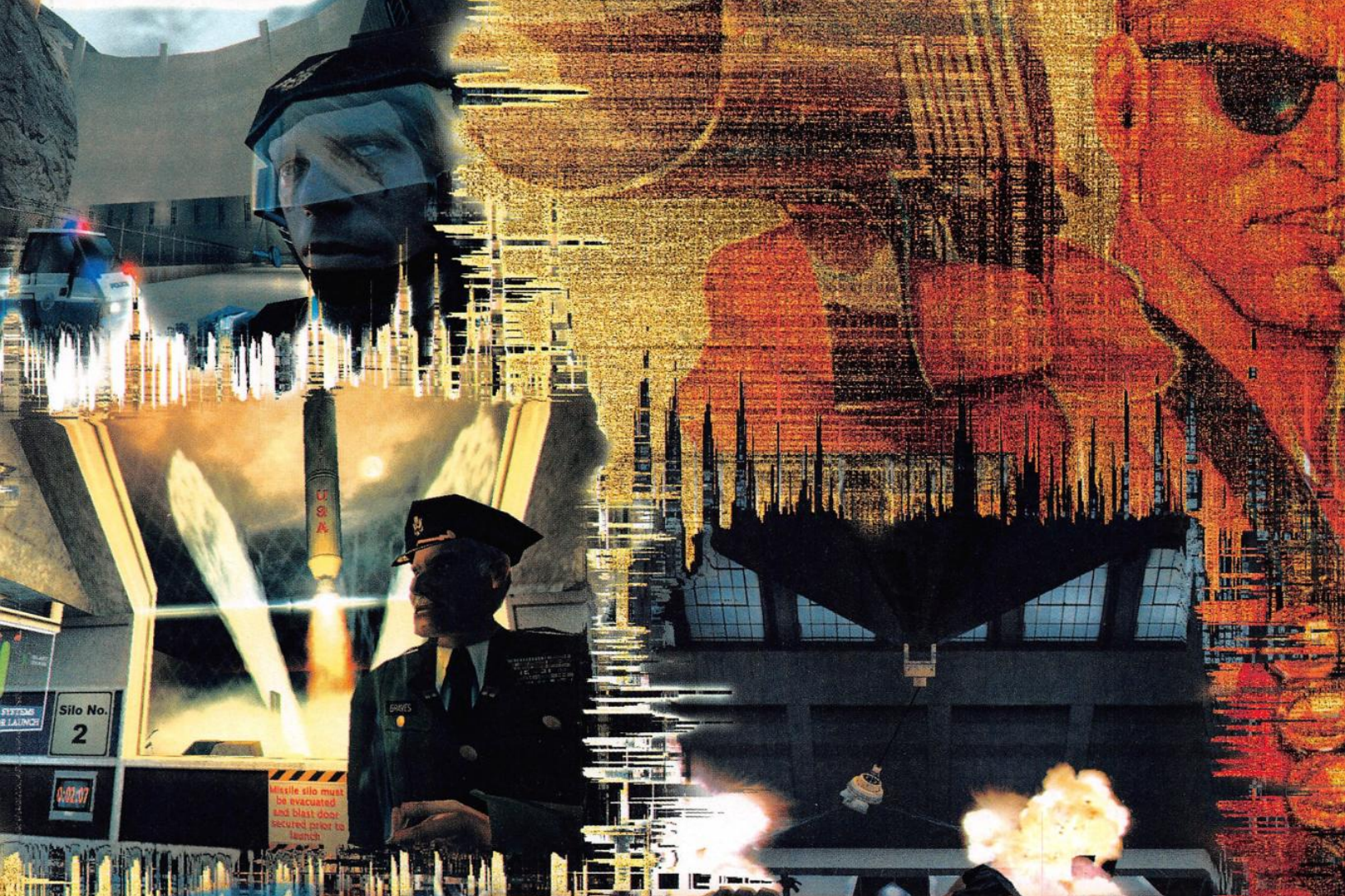
According to researchers from the **Harvard School of Public Health** in the USA, the **American Entertainment Software Rating Board** is giving its 'E' rating (similar to our G rating) to games containing a significant level of violence. Three out of five games rated suitable for children as young as six reward players for injuring or killing characters, according to their research. Geez, before we know it, you'll need to be over 18 to buy games... sigh.

The multiplayer component of **Return To Castle Wolfenstein** will be developed by another company other than **Grey Matter**, the folks behind the game. **id Software** have employed **Nerve Software** to handle the frag-fest portion of the code. Unusual, but there you go.

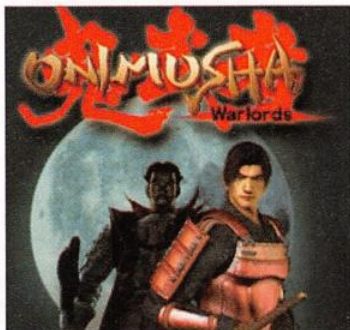


NEWS

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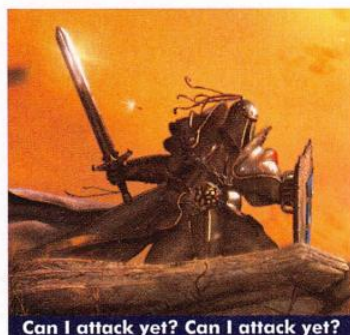


DUKE NUKEM FOREVER



ONIMUSHA LOCALLY RELEASED!

After some serious confusion regarding the fate of game developer Capcom's distribution here in Australia, we're pleased to report that THQ Australia will be releasing the Capcom PS2 games, Onimusha and Devil May Cry, amongst other future titles. The first game out will be the awesome Onimusha, which we reviewed in Hyper a few issues ago, scoring a whopping 90%. Go crazy kids!



Can I attack yet? Can I attack yet?

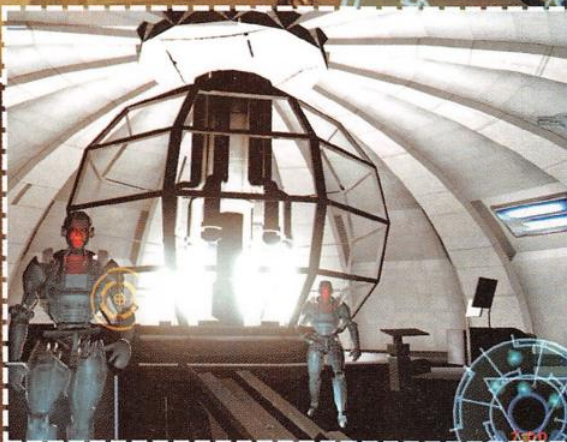
BLIZZARD FINE TUNE THEIR CRAFT

Blizzard have confirmed that their 3D RTS sequel, Warcraft III, will not see the light of day until sometime in 2002. The reason? Well, whilst not exactly specific, the press release stated, "Our goal at Blizzard is to make the best games possible. This means that we will not release a game until it's ready. While we could release an inferior product to meet a specific date, we instead choose to polish our games until they meet the superior quality that we know Blizzard gamers and our development teams expect."

They proceeded to promise, "We firmly believe that this additional development time will prove invaluable, ensuring that Warcraft III will expand upon the legendary gameplay experience previously found in the critically acclaimed Warcraft series." Good on them.

HOT!

ALIENS COLONIAL MARINES ON PS2! FIRST SCREENS!





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Danger awaits, hardy traveler, in the turbulent lands of Arcanum! Prepare potion or pistol, for armament is a must! Encounter more than 500 friends and fiends of the oddest sort on dozens of quests and campaigns. Travel alone through this massive realm,

or invite companions to join you online. And for those with discriminating taste, we sport the most advanced role-playing system ever created in this or any other reality.



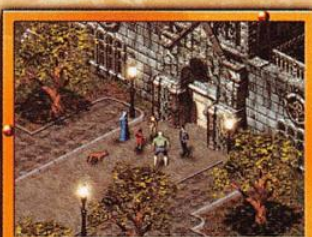
APPLEBY STEAM 1200



Choose dueling or discourse to carry the day in this epic tale. Many means exist to solve the dozens of quests found throughout this massive land.



Rewards await heroes and villains of hardy caliber and constitution! Earn Fate Points and enhance your Reputation among the denizens of Arcanum.



Create your own online campaigns with the Arcanum World Editor, a robust tool designed for the common folk.



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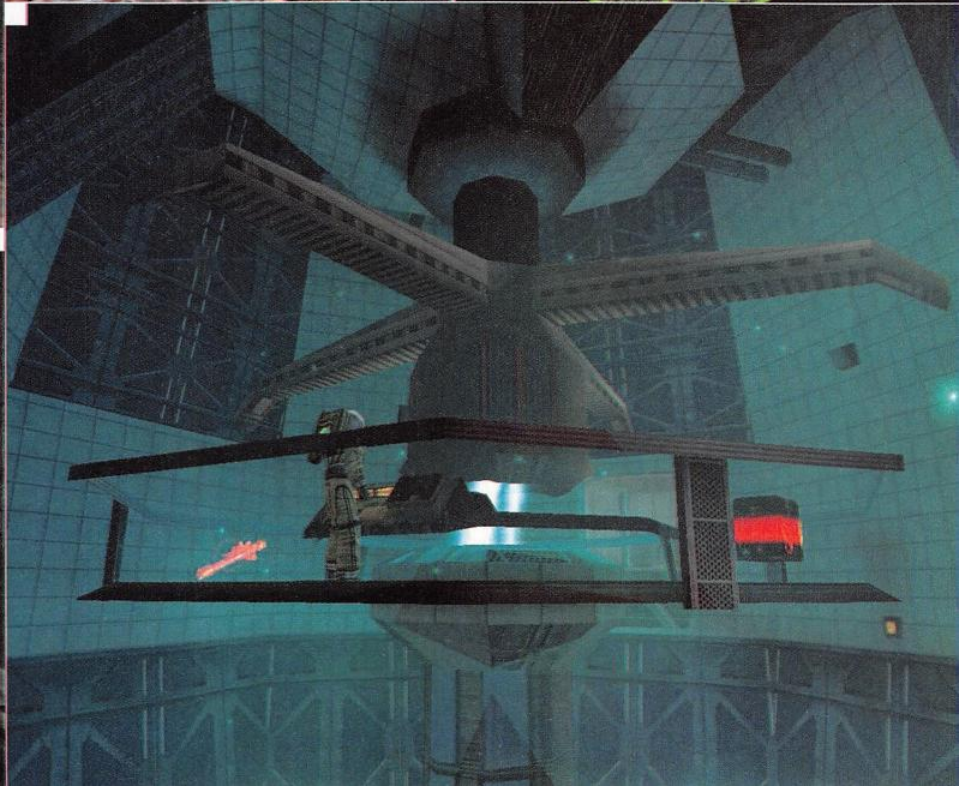


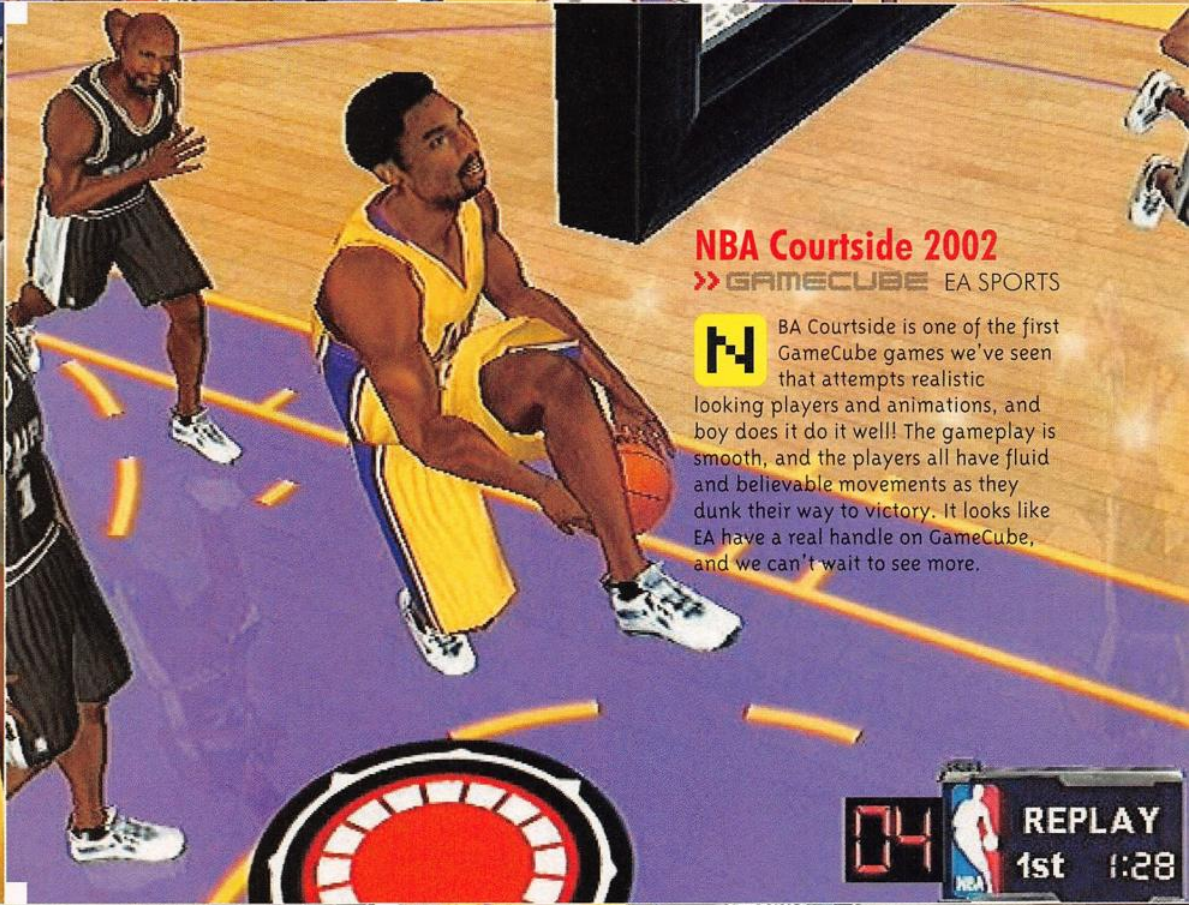
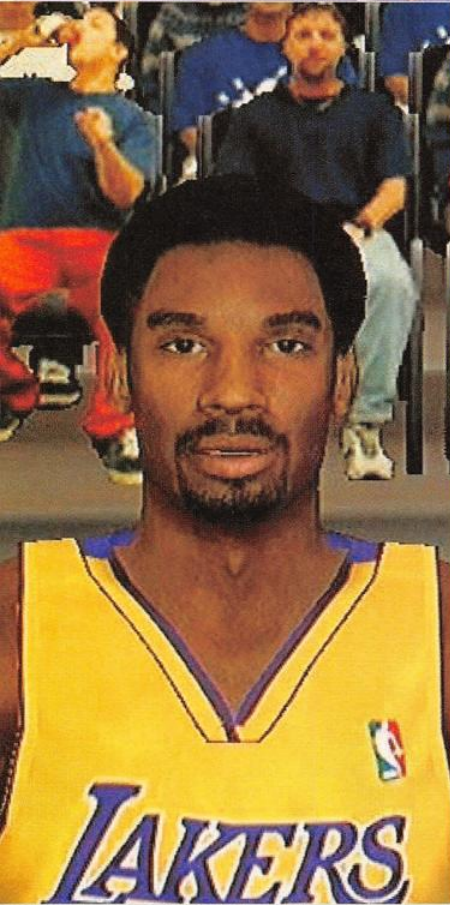


Command & Conquer: Renegade

PC WESTWOOD

 Welcome to ground zero in the war between GDI and Nod. If the Command & Conquer games just weren't "in your face" enough for you, then get a barrel load of this! Renegade is a first person shooter that puts you in the boots of a C&C secret commando who's out to cause as much havoc on the ground as possible. Explore on, around and inside all the popular structures and units from the RTS games!

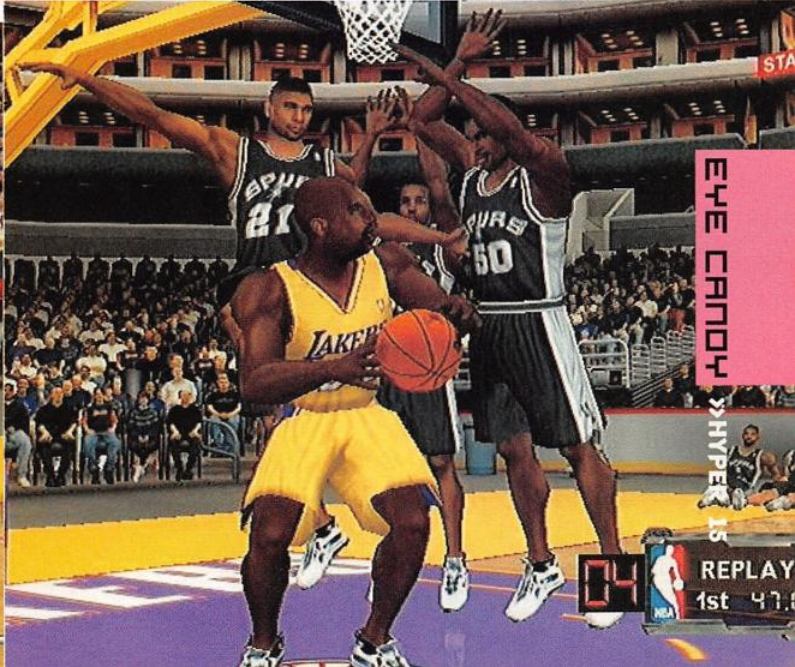
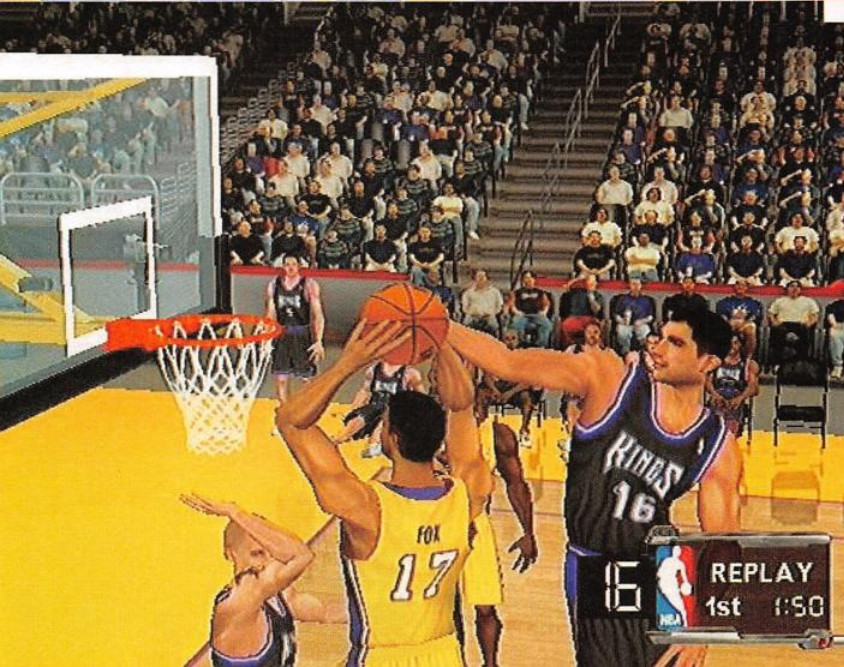




NBA Courtside 2002

» GAMECUBE EA SPORTS

NBA Courtside is one of the first GameCube games we've seen that attempts realistic looking players and animations, and boy does it do it well! The gameplay is smooth, and the players all have fluid and believable movements as they dunk their way to victory. It looks like EA have a real handle on GameCube, and we can't wait to see more.



THE CRONY
» HYPER IS



Solid Snake.
The coolest game
character ever?



RO

When it comes down to credentials, few game designers have as much clout as Hideo "Metal Gear Solid" Kojima. The man was at this year's E3 expo, and **Steve Polak** managed to snag the only interview he granted with the Australian press. Like many Japanese developers, he's a very quiet individual and finds his global status as a videogame superstar somewhat bemusing. However, he does acknowledge his superstar status, even if he doesn't quite buy into the hype.

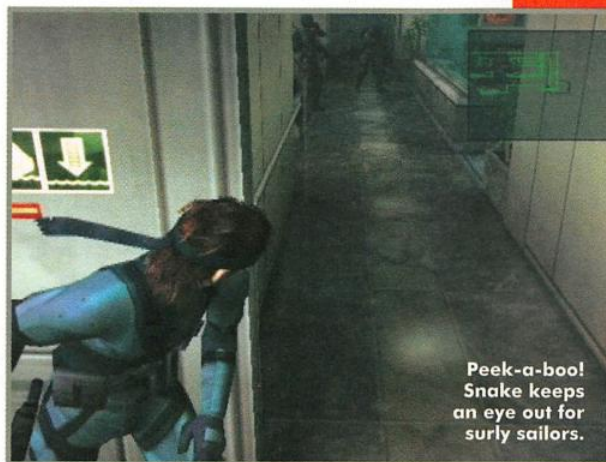
Kojima: I don't really feel like I star. I live a normal life I have a family and I don't think anything has changed since the game (Metal Gear Solid) became so successful.

HYPER: But you are a star to some extent, and this is largely because of those games. Why do you think they have been so successful?

Kojima: The game has been successful because it delivers suspenseful action, and this transcends language and different cultures. The stealth element is obviously a big factor too. Elements like the plot and the graphics have also been major reasons why the game has been so popular.

HYPER: What new elements will Metal Gear Solid 2 feature?

Kojima: We have new elements like location specific damage. When you fire a sleep dart it is more effective if you hit the person on the neck. The new camera system is also a major change, and we have put more work into the interaction with the elements



Peek-a-boo! Snake keeps an eye out for surly sailors.

- steam, water and the like. Also, guards are much smarter and will hunt you in groups, or run when they are caught by you.

HYPER: So will the game make its release date this year?

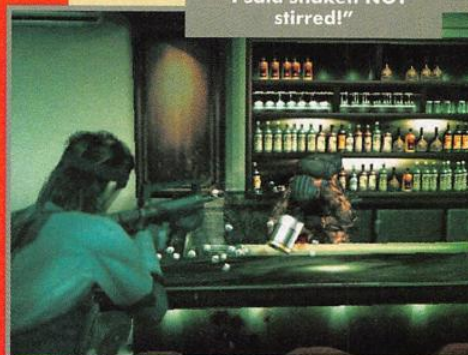
Kojima: Because it is the year of the snake (astrologically) we are going to release the game this year no matter what. (Recent news unfortunately puts this into question. — Ed.)

HYPER: The video trailer of the game is awesome. Can we really expect the gameplay to look this good?

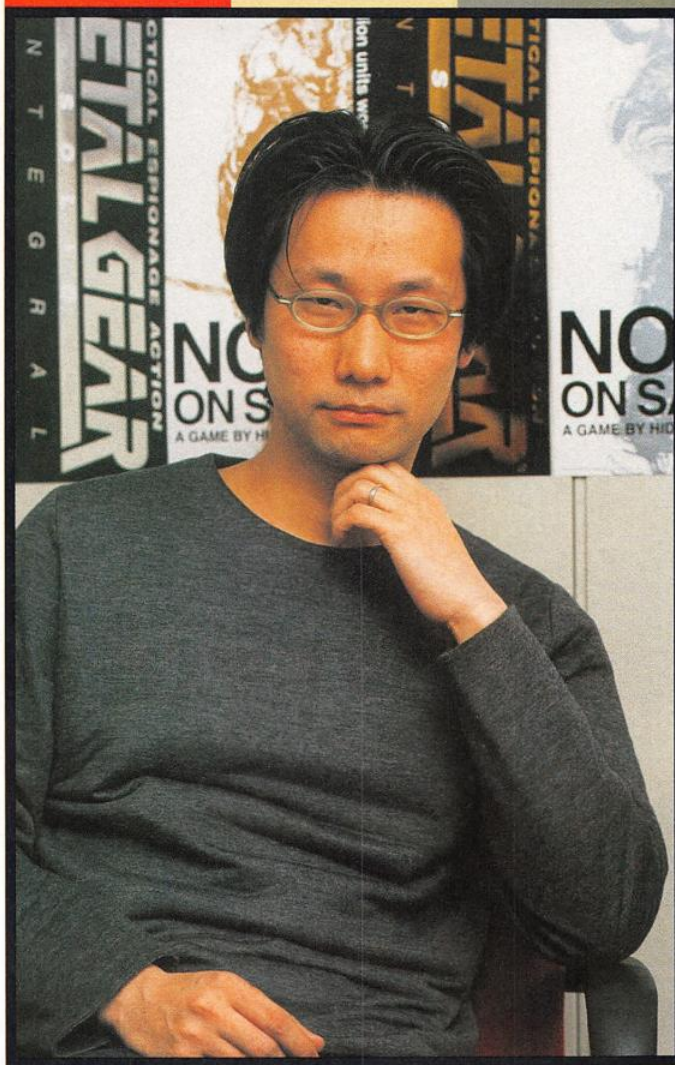
Kojima: The video trailers are actually showing real interaction. That is me playing the game, so you know that what you'll get in the finished version will look at least as good as this. Hopefully better.

HYPER: How much of the PS2's ability have you exploited with the game? What percentage of the machine's power would you suggest you are tapping into?

Kojima: With this, what you get is always the struggle between the amount of time you'd like to take to make a game, and the deadline and need to release it. If we had more years to complete MGS2 then the game would be a better game and use much more of the PlayStation2's power. However it would also possibly cost a lot more and maybe



"I said shaken NOT stirred!"

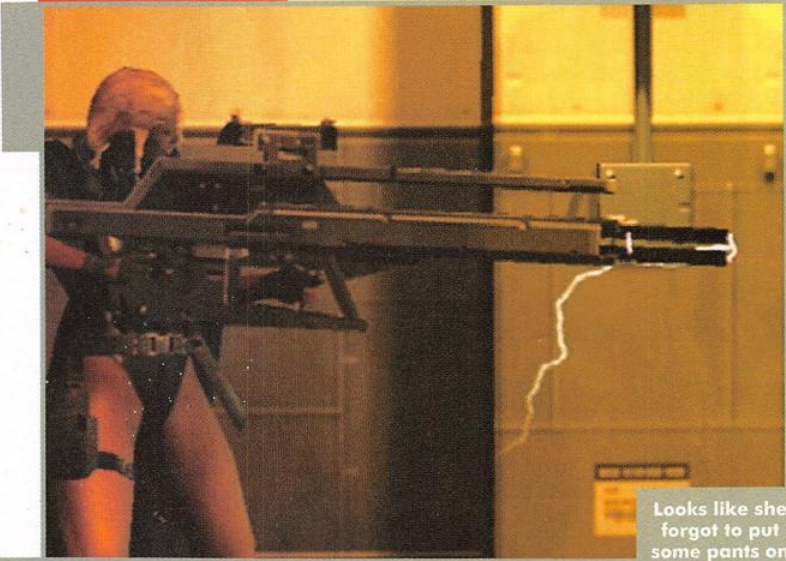


CK SOLID

INTERVIEW

>>HYPER 17

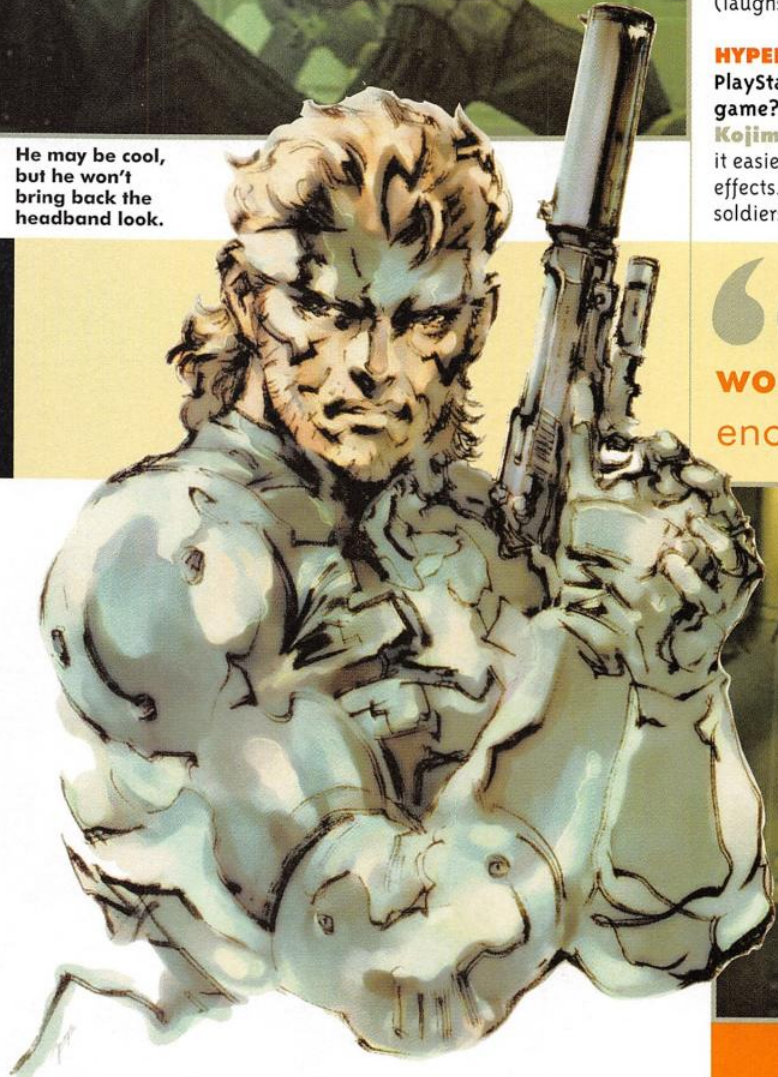
HIDEO KOJIMA TALKS PS2, SOLID SNAKE AND OUTER SPACE...



Looks like she forgot to put some pants on this morning.



He may be cool, but he won't bring back the headband look.



wouldn't be worth the effort. We need to strike a compromise and release the game that is as good as possible in the given time. The companies that do this best have more successful games.

HYPHER: What is the key thing you'd like to say to the many keen gamers about MGS2? What will be the most exciting aspect of the experience, and what do you think they should be expecting?

Kojima: The main thing I would say to the player is that we want them to feel like they are infiltrating a big organization and that they are very outnumbered. We also want the player to feel that there are lots of intelligent enemies out there, and that these must be dealt with using your brain and not always just shooting an enemy the first time you see them. We like the idea of using stealth very much indeed.

HYPHER: There has been little discussion of the narrative and the new player character what can you say about this?

Kojima: There will be a new character, the lady Ninja (Olga) and lots of new situations. The game features lots of possibilities and decisions for the player to make. The story is something you'll have to try and work out by playing the demo (laughs).

HYPHER: What has the power of PlayStation 2 made easier in the game?

Kojima: The PS2's power has made it easier to include all sorts of visual effects. We can also put more soldiers on the screen to provide a

challenge for the player.

HYPHER: How many polygons will character models be composed of?

Kojima: We don't want to say, but there have been many improvements.

HYPHER: Onto something more controversial. Much criticism has been levelled at the previous game in the series because it featured characters that smoke. What would you say in response to this criticism?

Kojima: I don't smoke. Neither do I say to the player that they should smoke. We included it in the game because we thought it would add character to the game, and we feel that sometimes people have taken it the wrong way. We do often say that smoking is bad in the game, so it should be obvious what our position is. Also you see smoking in movies and TV but don't go blaming the director of a movie for putting it in their work, so why feel differently about a game?

HYPHER: What has been the biggest challenge in making MGS2?

Kojima: The greatest challenge in developing the game has been meeting the expectations of players from around the world. We feel the pressure is on to make something truly world class, and this is an enormous responsibility!

HYPHER: Is it fair to say there is a sequel in the works? How will you be involved?

Kojima: Good question! (laughs) I will possibly submerge after the

“ We feel the pressure is on to make something truly world class, and this is an enormous responsibility! ”



game is released, and work on something fresh that isn't Metal Gear. If there is a sequel (wry smile), I'd rather work as an executive producer and let someone else drive the creative vision of the game. I have other ideas I'd like to follow.

HYPER: Like?

Kojima: I'm not sure exactly. I'd like to do something really innovative like work on a robot you can control which sees the real world and you have to guide it through challenges. This is just my pet idea. This is because I'd like to make games for the real world. No matter how realistic you make graphics the player will always know that what they see is on a screen and not real. With a robot it would be real and that idea excites me because it would be more fun. In Japan, robots and those sorts of things are becoming very popular.

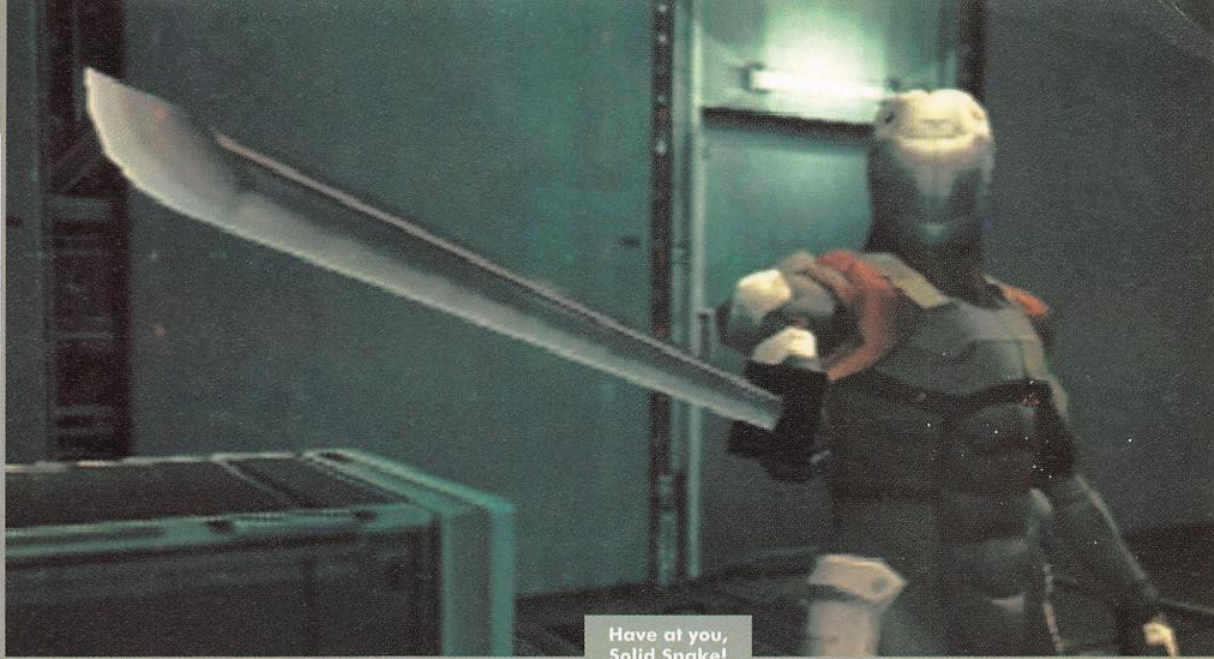
HYPER: How do you feel about living in Japan?

Kojima: I like Japan in many ways, but I don't feel the education system is fair. My son's education is a problem. In Japan they concentrate too much on the average abilities of the student. I'd like to see better students given more challenges.

HYPER: If you could have any single thing happen in life what would your dream be?

Kojima: My dream is to go into outer space with my son or to shoot a film from space.

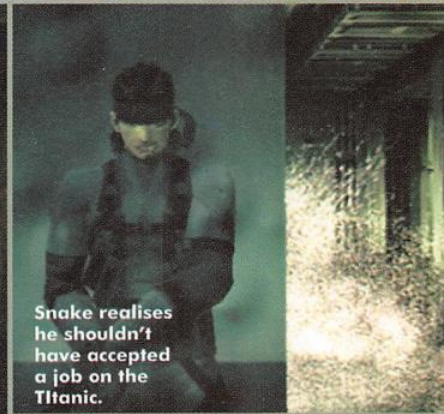
HYPER: Thank you very much for your time, Kojima-san.



Have at you, Solid Snake!



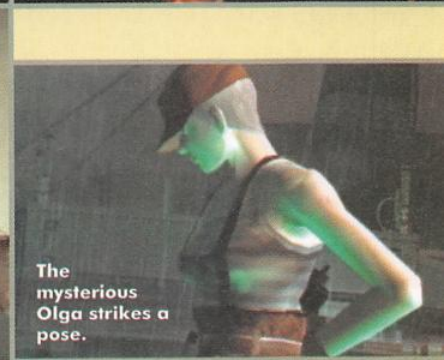
Lara just called. She wants her thigh holster back.



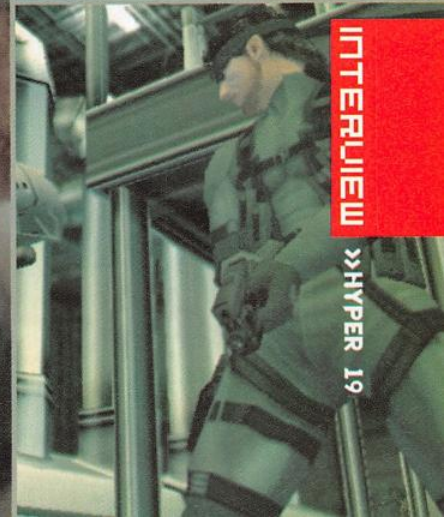
Snowe realises he shouldn't have accepted a job on the Titanic.

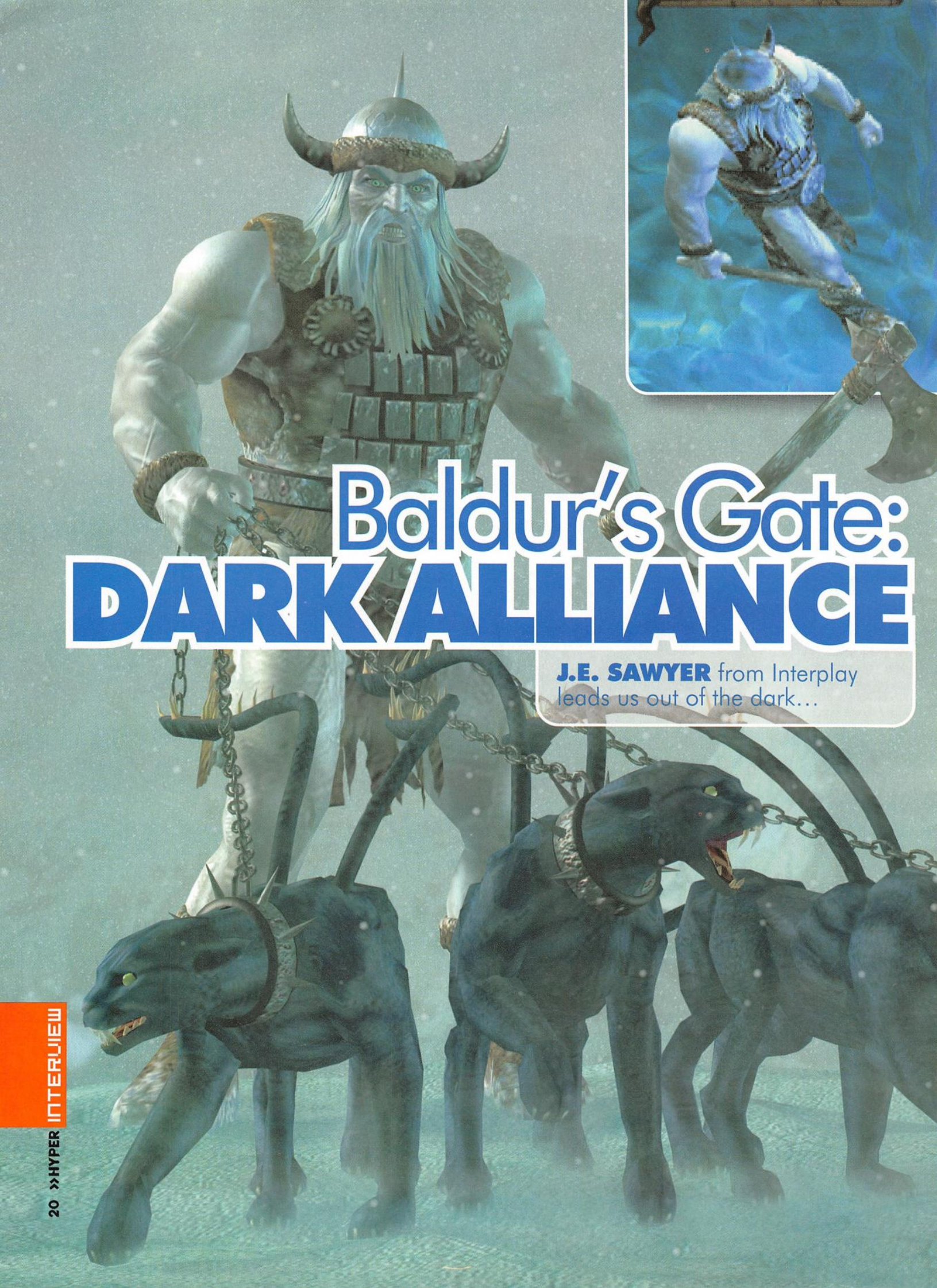


Snowe vents his frustration on a copy of Who Weekly.



The mysterious Olga strikes a pose.





Baldur's Gate: **DARK ALLIANCE**

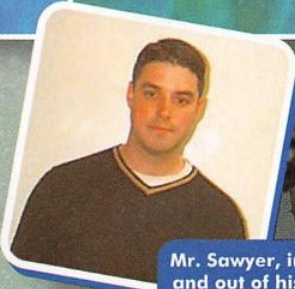
J.E. SAWYER from Interplay
leads us out of the dark...



Don't worry Miss Elven Sorceress, he's frigid.



Mr. Sawyer, in and out of his Interplay armour.



HYPER: So, can you give us a quick run-down on the game?

Sawyer: Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance has been developed by Snowblind Studios, and published by Black Isle and Interplay. It's going to be exclusively for the PS2 and has been in development for about a year and a half. It uses a tile based 3D engine that Snowblind have developed from the ground up. It's a very action oriented title. It's similar in its setting to Baldur's Gate and Baldur's Gate II but it doesn't otherwise tie in to the storyline. It's set in the city of Baldur's Gate and uses the third edition D&D rules adapted for the console.

You have a choice of three players - a human ranger, a dwarven fighter and an elven sorceress. You can play single player or two player co-operative - same screen. The rules are somewhat simplified, the interface is simplified - just to give it a shallower learning curve for beginning players. A lot of people are turned off the D&D games because of the system. Even the third edition rules can be a little daunting. So the interface is fairly streamlined... equipment is very quick and easy to go through.

HYPER: So, this an all new Baldur's Gate tale?

Sawyer: It's a fairly simple story, your character came to Baldur's Gate seeking fame and adventure. They get ambushed as soon as they reach the city and left for dead. In the course of trying to find out what happened to them and get enough money to survive, they become involved in a much larger plot that threatens the city.

It does retain dialogue elements and puzzles just like any other RPG, but the emphasis is obviously on action. All the characters that have dialogue have lip syncing and voice overs.

It's a third person isometric view, but you can rotate the camera with the right analogue stick, while movement is with the left analogue.

HYPER: But the camera zooms in for dialogue?

Sawyer: Yes, it automatically happens for dialogue, but rarely in other situations. Normally it just keeps that aspect ratio.

HYPER: So how big is this game going to be compared to the PC Baldur's Gate titles?

Sawyer: Probably a little more brief - 30 to 50 hours gameplay, about 50 levels, hopefully around 40 monsters, and 20 to 40 spells. Most of the monsters are just classic D&D - rats, plenty of the undead, zombies, skeletons, knolls, bugbears, Kobalds, beholders, white dragons, displacer beasts, frost giants, yetis, golems, dark elves... can't forget about the dark elves!

HYPER: How about the environments?

Sawyer: Yeah, all your classic environments - old cellars, sewers and crypts, a thieves guild, mountains, passes, swamps, castles, abandoned temples...

HYPER: How does the magic system work on the PS2?

Sawyer: Instead of using the spell memorisation system that

you find in D&D, all spells derive power from their mana source. Mana is in the upper left corner and you can replenish it with rejuvenation potions.

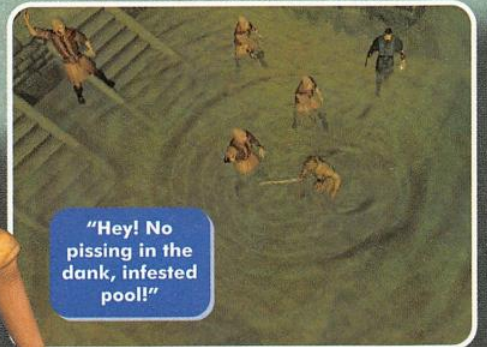
We've tried to implement as many of the third edition rules as possible, including the cold subtype, fire subtype elements, so if you attack a frost giant with fire I believe he'll go down faster.

HYPER: It's quite a pretty game. The water effects in particular are very cool.

Sawyer: Oh yeah. It's a nifty engine. It's got really nice heat distortion and real-time lighting effects. And all the changes that you make on your character are viewable in the world.

HYPER: Will the engine be used for any other games?

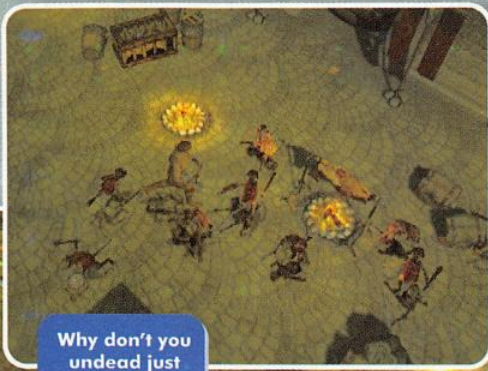
Sawyer: We hope so! People really like the engine. Graphically, it's very nice and apparently it's pretty easy to work with as well.



"Hey! No pissing in the dank, infested pool!!"



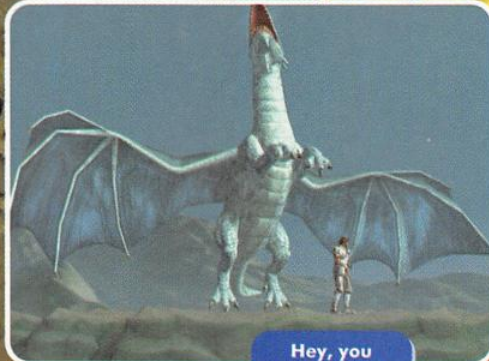
Woah, turn down that cigarette lighter, dude.



Why don't you undead just stay dead for goodness sake?



When she asked for a bow for her hair...



Hey, you stepped on his foot. Not good.



HYPHER: What kind of polygon counts are there on the bigger beasts? (The dragons have to be seen to be believed – Ed.)
Sawyer: I don't know off the top of my head but I believe several thousand.

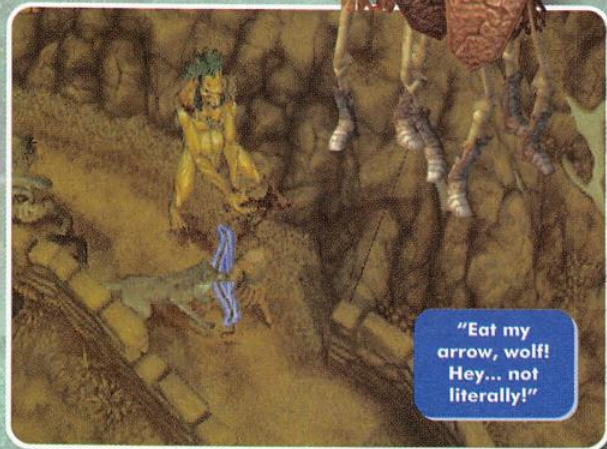
HYPHER: It seems like the game can handle a lot of action on screen. What's the largest battle scene you can have?
Sawyer: Well it's hard to say, but you can definitely have quite a horde. You can get up to several dozen creatures on the screen.

HYPHER: What kind of puzzle elements can we expect in



the game?
Sawyer: Fairly simple ones. There are some areas with traps, and a little bit – but not too much – platform jumping. You'll get a few puzzles like that. But they're randomised, which frustrates me because each time I go through it gets more and more difficult!

worked on the game?
Sawyer: Snowblind are made up of a bunch of console veterans from other projects and teams. They only have one other title under their belt which, I think, was a racing game for the N64. They're based in Oregon. It's 12 guys – 3 programmers and 9 artists, and they've done all this in a year and a half.



"Eat my arrow, wolf! Hey... not literally!"

HYPHER: The emphasis is very much on hack'n'slash action...
Sawyer: Yes, very much on physical action – not a whole lot of stuff to figure out!
HYPHER: Will there be any party play in the single player game? Will you be travelling with NPC companions?
Sawyer: No, it's focussed on just the one character. But you can play two player cooperative.

HYPHER: How has the team found the PlayStation 2 to work with?
Sawyer: Apparently they liked it a lot. They worked on the N64 before, then moved to PlayStation 2 and apparently they just love it.
HYPHER: Is it possible that Dark Alliance will make its way to other platforms?
Sawyer: There have certainly been a lot of questions about that but there aren't any planned ports at this time. But people have been very enthusiastic about the title, so we're expecting it to sell pretty well and we're hopeful that they can go on to make more.

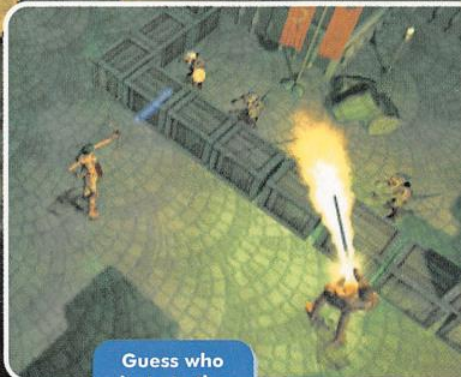
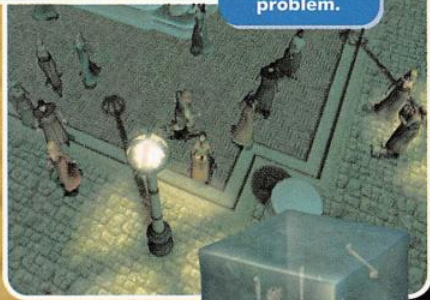
HYPHER: Could you tell me about the history of the team who

HYPHER: Thanks for your time.

Ahh monsters!
Beam me up
Scotty!



Meet the locals
and fix their
predictable rat
problem.



Guess who
just ate the
Hot 'n' Spicy
pizza?



HYPER'S HANDS-ON OPINION

PS2 owning gamers are finally seeing some real life breathed into the console. With games like Gran Turismo 3, Onimusha, Crazy Taxi, and Half-Life out now, and with Wipeout Fusion, Silent Hill 2, and now Dark Alliance coming later in the year, it's looking very appealing to be a PlayStation 2 gamer. Those of you looking specifically for the RPG experience can now look forward to a true AD&D game on their shiny black box – the perfect companion until that other great RPG, Final Fantasy X, arrives in March 2002.

THE EVIL WITHIN

The adventure begins in the port town of Baldur's Gate on the Sword Coast, familiar to some, but a mysterious place to all. This particular adventure, however, is not related to any of the previous games on the PC. This is an all-new story, exclusive to the PS2.

On your way through the woods, you and your family are ambushed by evil brigands, and your sister is abducted by lowly thieves. As you set out to rescue her from a possibly gruesome fate, you enter Baldur's Gate, only to become wrapped up within a greater quest for good. Over the course of three

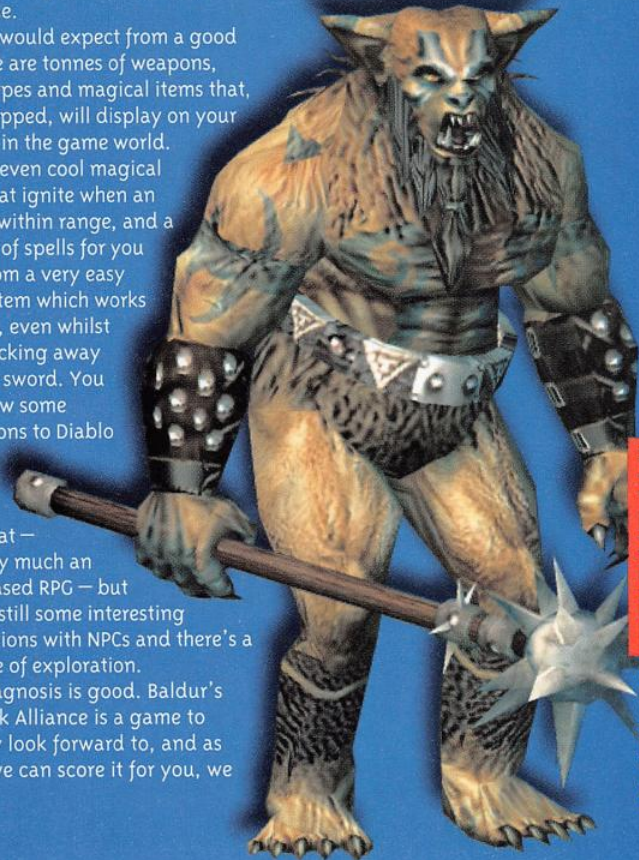
acts, your human, elven or dwarven character, each with their own abilities and spells, will grow in strength and wisdom, until you're prepared to face the evil within and claim your bittersweet vengeance.

After a few hours at the Interplay office, we were convinced that Dark Alliance is going to be a truly great fun game. Great care has gone into creating a believable and atmospheric representation of the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons world, and you won't be disappointed with the amazing detail that has gone into the game. The incredible water effects, the high-resolution textures and incredible dungeons are simply gorgeous, and when we slapped our eyes on the White Dragon, we were truly impressed. The animation was astounding – the tendons and muscles in the dragon's neck ripple under its shiny scales. Another boss that had us agape was the very cool Beholder, with its big gooey evil eye and slimy tongue writhing around in its mouth like a snake. There's certainly a lot of cool factor in Dark Alliance. Stuff that'll have you running to get your friends so they can take a look. Whilst your friend is there, they could even join you in a two-player co-operative quest

mode! If he's been playing Dark Alliance at home, he could even save his character onto memory card and bring it over to join you in your game.

As you would expect from a good RPG, there are tonnes of weapons, armour types and magical items that, once equipped, will display on your character in the game world. There are even cool magical swords that ignite when an enemy is within range, and a whole set of spells for you to cast from a very easy menu system which works on the fly, even whilst you're hacking away with your sword. You could draw some comparisons to Diablo II when it comes down to the combat – this is very much an action-based RPG – but there are still some interesting conversations with NPCs and there's a true sense of exploration.

The diagnosis is good. Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance is a game to definitely look forward to, and as soon as we can score it for you, we will. <<<



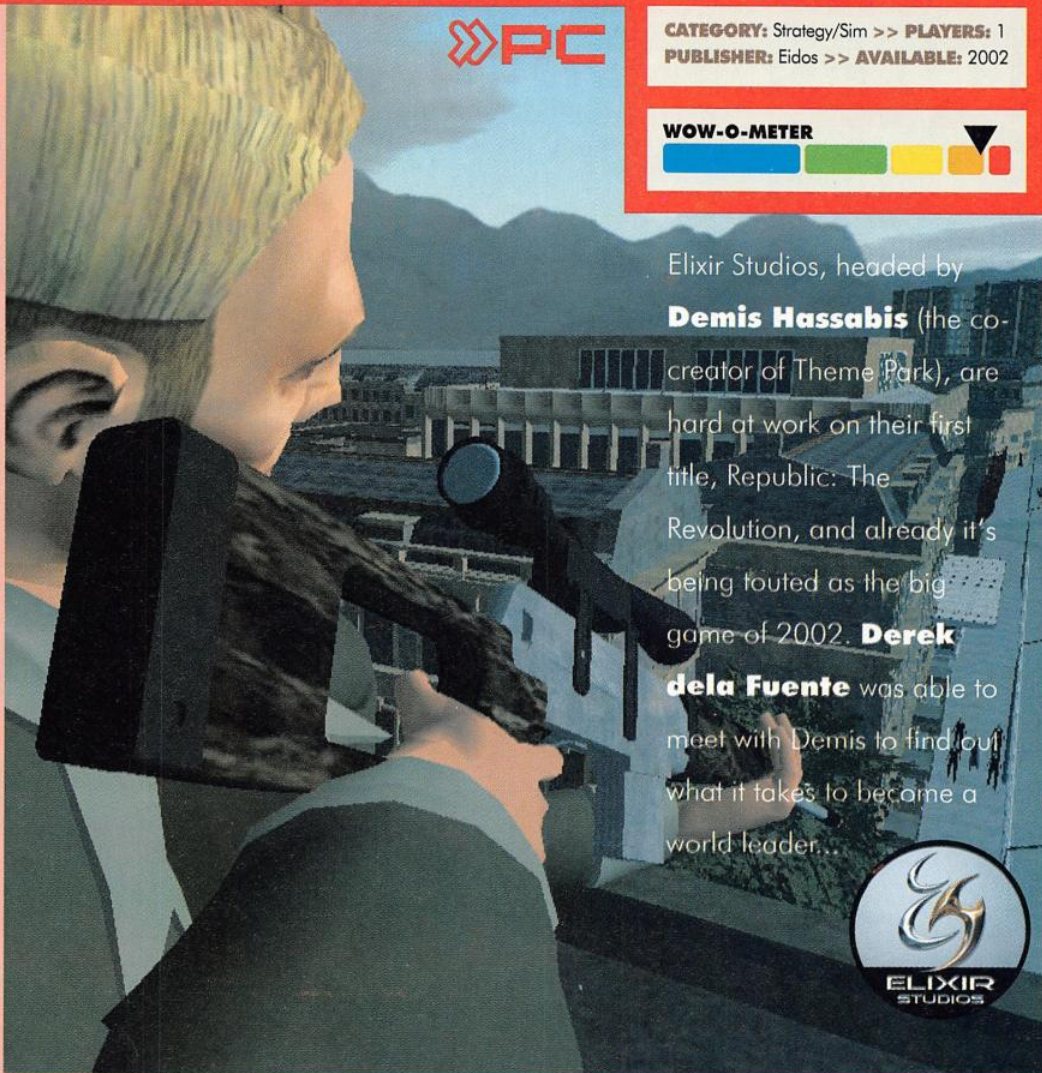


The concept of Republic: The Revolution (R:TR) is that you are a political leader whose main goal is to become President of a country. Elixir are aiming to create and simulate a whole country with a million living breathing people, all of whom have their own opinions, beliefs and individuality. The player, through the use of lead characters, must persuade the people to elect you to power. Mad, eh?

The game is set in Russia in the early 1990s — pretty much present day — the focus being on a small but fictional country called Novistrana (meaning new country). Novistrana is based on an Eastern Ex-European Soviet block republic, where there is a dictator in power just after the fall of the Soviet Union. You assume the

IT'S REVOLUTION,

INSIDE REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION



PC

CATEGORY: Strategy/Sim >> PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: Eidos >> AVAILABLE: 2002

WOW-O-METER



Elixir Studios, headed by **Demis Hassabis** (the co-creator of Theme Park), are hard at work on their first title, Republic: The Revolution, and already it's being touted as the big game of 2002. **Derek dela Fuente** was able to meet with Demis to find out what it takes to become a world leader...



role of a faction leader. At the same time as you are trying to get control of the country, there are 16 other factions, all vying for power as well: all trying to remove the same President and put themselves in his place.

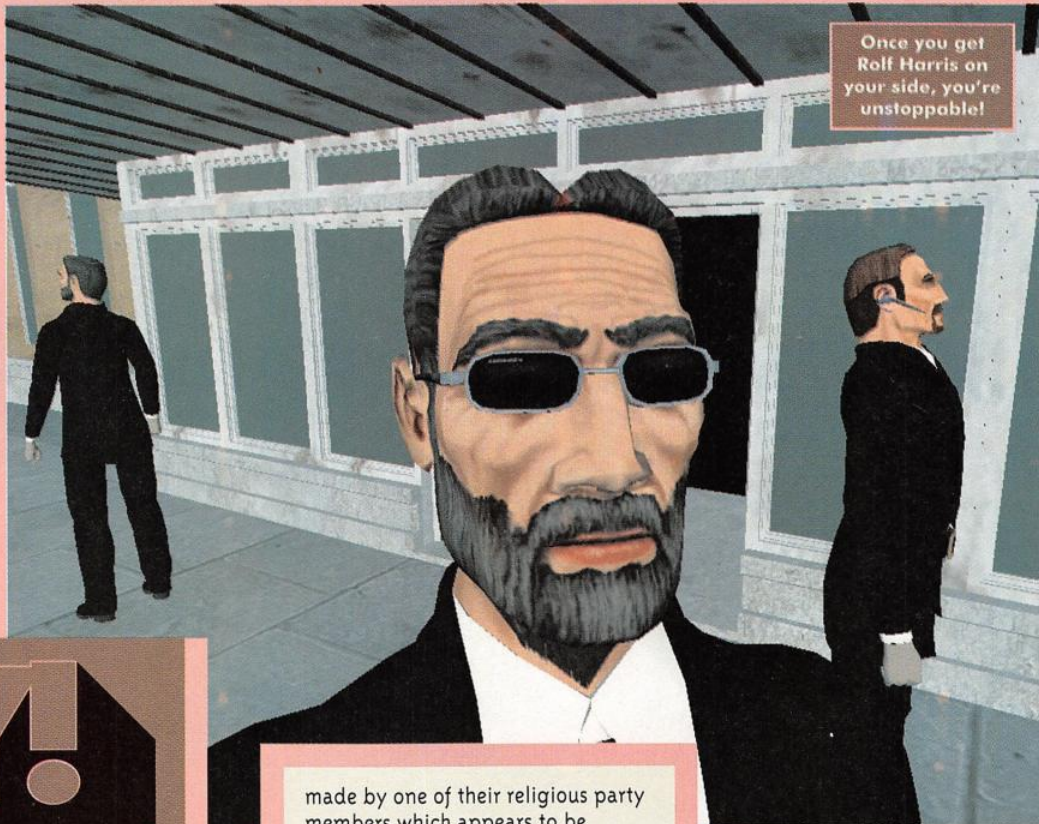
HOW THE HELL DOES THIS WORK?

Novistrana has 16 towns, four cities and a capital. You start off the game with a small power base in a little inconsequential town and must work your way up the power ladder. This will involve moving through a number of towns, making it to the capital, and then taking on the President himself. There are five major means to power — political, military, criminal, business and religion. Demis explains, "The five ways/actions came about after a lot of background work and research into what the team felt were the major regimes around the world. We do not make any judgement about this fact but are merely creating this realistic scenario for the player, which allows them to play the game in any manner they wish. The ways to achieve power and total rule can harness good and bad and we have tried to create the same settings and eventualities that would happen in real life. You can even combine a number of methods, which I am sure happens in real life, for any dictator to assume power.

"Depending on what kind of people live in a town or city we have

worked hard to create an exciting look," added Demis. "The graphics in the game, as you will see, are pivotal to creating the right backdrop for the players. The graphics engine we believe is far ahead of the competition. Republic is full 3D and we have our own tools and engine which will help us create large and detailed cities."

Berrysceno, the demo city, was small in area but impressive in terms of gameplay, being 2 kilometres square (final cities will measure up to 4 times that size, with the capital being X 16) but with a bustling game world. Within this one city are up to 10,000 citizens! "Every citizen has their own beliefs, be it political leanings, religious preferences and their own opinions on every major issue. They are, in fact, your judge



Once you get Rolf Harris on your side, you're unstoppable!

BABY!

and jury and watch the actions you carry out in their world and will decide whether they will support you or not. This is gauged on where you fit into their line of thinking. In essence it is a question of trying to portray yourself in the most attractive way to these people."

PULLING THE STRINGS

"At the start, you have only one key character, which is your right hand man. This character is an all-rounder and can pretty much do most things. As you move through the game you recruit other key specialist characters to your faction." With so many people in the Republic you will only find a handful of those that are important characters, including police chiefs, judges, and businessmen — people who have influence, money and power. If you recruit them to your cause you can ensure their influence and actions are specifically for you and your cause — like organising rallies and setting up businesses.

Also worth noting is that the character you play is actually part of the living world, so you must take care of your persona for he can be injured or killed. An example of one of the first situations/conflicts you could undertake after you have set yourself up as a nasty fascist leader, is where the opposing faction in the city is a religious force trying to win over the populous. By moving around the city you can pick up info — for example each day a speech is



made by one of their religious party members which appears to be influencing the people. The player can actually view this speech and watch the effect it has on the audience. The more skilful the narrative, the more people will stand and watch. Now if this is happening daily at varying locales then your power base could well be being eroded by these events. More speeches, more townsfolk changing alliances — the upstart is you will need to stop this. There are all kinds of ways to implement this action. What quickly becomes apparent is that this is a game of immense possibilities and eventualities. There is so much to do to change and create situations that even at the start of the game you can see something special in the making.

It goes without saying that the events, situations and confrontations are tailored within a superb AI engine (based on the theories from a book, *Crowd of Power*, regarding the reaction and behaviours of crowd masses) which will makes Republic stand out. Events in the game will not always go the way you planned and that is merely reflecting real life.

"All of the characters have their own AI stats which vary enormously and the player will be able to get character breakdowns via a number of ingenious methods including being able to run opinion polls!"

The one thing running through the whole of Republic was that every action could be broken down into smaller components and to document them all would take many pages. Indeed the Elixir game design manual was massive. One simple assassination could involve



Jake the Peg attempts to conceal his giveaway "extra leg".

many characters and events before the dastardly deed was done. The AI also has some nice random touches that give Republic true credibility. For instance, the hired hit man could miss and botch the task, and this would have many knock-on effects.

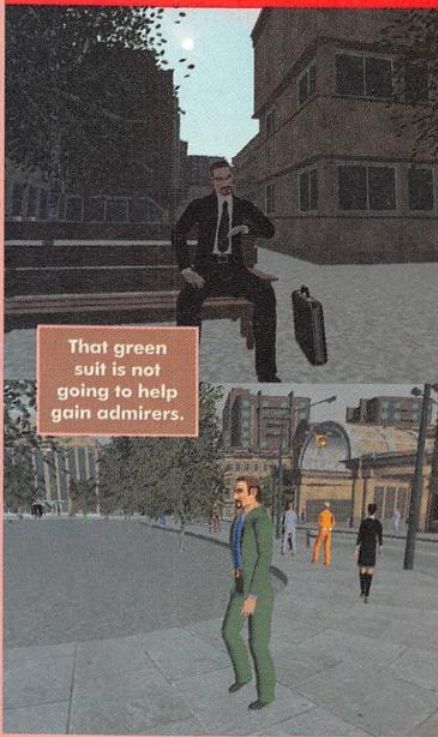
THE HAIRY PATH TO SUCCESS

The major events are superbly viewed onscreen via a number of intelligent cameras (you can bookmark cameras for quick reference and movement to locations). As well as being able to move cameras along rails (this needs to be seen to understand its clever adaptation) and pre-scripted animations giving the game a true cinematic feel. "The camera scripting tool we have innovated is very powerful and will target the current actors in the game and display the best possible view to the player to immerse them

But can you
perve on the
neighbours
across the road?

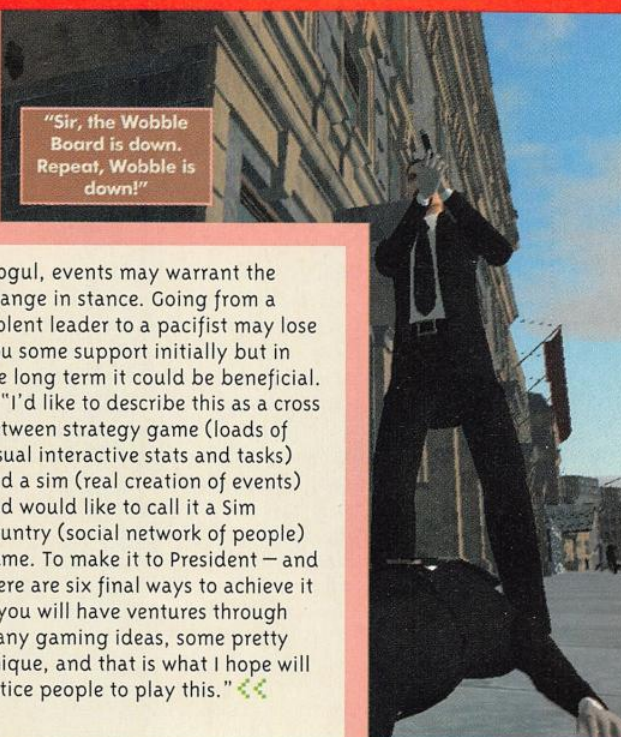


“ I'd like to describe this as a cross between a strategy game and a sim, and would like to call it a Sim Country (social network of people) game. ”



That green
suit is not
going to help
gain admirers.

in the story. Although Republic will be viewed as an intricate strategy game it relies on the player finding out what actions can be used - and these open up as you play - as well as needing to try and explore ideas, in some instances unsuccessfully, before you can gain success. You could well finish a game only using 50 actions, ensuring you will come back and play the game differently next time. Picking the right town to overthrow, getting to certain locales first, picking up the best characters to join your side, knowing which way to approach the game - be it aggressive with military force or a religious approach - these are all just a mere handful of ways to tackle the game. "Varying and mixing the strands and approaches to the way you play is the neatest aspect of Republic. From a religious leader to a business



"Sir, the Wobble Board is down. Repeat, Wobble is down!"

mogul, events may warrant the change in stance. Going from a violent leader to a pacifist may lose you some support initially but in the long term it could be beneficial. "I'd like to describe this as a cross between strategy game (loads of visual interactive stats and tasks) and a sim (real creation of events) and would like to call it a Sim Country (social network of people) game. To make it to President - and there are six final ways to achieve it - you will have ventures through many gaming ideas, some pretty unique, and that is what I hope will entice people to play this." <<>>

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魔屋

And all he had to do was rub his feet on the carpet!



Before too long, everyone was doing it. How trendy.



Owww, my flaming ring! It burns! It burns!

His Colgate ring of confidence gave him that extra boost.



魔



The Bonsai pruning club met here regularly.



After the original Diablo was finished, two members of the team — Ben Haas and Doron Gartner — left Blizzard to form Click Entertainment. Since then, their small but dedicated team have been hard at work on — what else — a Diablo killer!

So how exactly does one go about creating a Diablo killer? Well, Click seem to be making all the right moves. To start with, they've left behind the somewhat cliched dark fantasy world in favour of the twisted and rich muse of Japanese mythology. It's part Ninja Scroll and part Akira Kurosawa's *Throne Of Blood* — a combination that is hugely appealing and rich in possibilities.

detriment of the experience. Originally, all the characters, items and speech were going to be in Japanese, but that has been scaled back to a nice balance between authenticity and understandability. The storyline is centered around the rise of a Dark Shogun Warlord, his slaughter of almost all the inhabitants of the land, and the fight by the surviving four Daimyos of the region to stop him and his army of undead minions. You play as the surviving seven samurai of one of the Daimyos, each skilled in different disciplines. The seven samurai are:

- Berserker:** The melee king and master of the double sword technique.
- Brick:** Built like a brick shithouse, Brick is the strongest of the samurai and can break down walls and barricades.
- Ninja:** The ultimate intelligence gathering source. Poorly armoured, but fast and able to sneak into

THRONE OF DARKNESS

PC CATEGORY: Action/RPG >> PLAYERS: 1-35
 PUBLISHER: Sierra >> AVAILABLE: Late September

WOW-O-METER

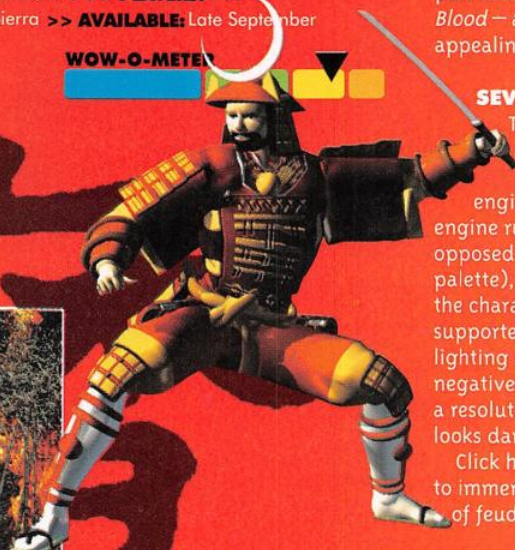
SEVEN SAMURAI

To bring this setting to life, Click have built their own proprietary graphics engine. On the plus side, Click's engine runs in 16-bit colour (as opposed to Diablo II's 8-bit palette), supports anti-aliasing on the characters, and has hardware supported effects like coloured lighting baked right on in. On the negative side, the game is limited to a resolution of 800x600... but it still looks damn nice.

Click have gone to great lengths to immerse the player in the world of feudal Japan... but not to the



The consequence of eating too much Wasabi.



enemy encampments.

Swordsman: Intelligent and incredibly deadly, the Swordsman is a strong all round party member.

Archer: A master of Kyudo, the Archer can disable foes from a distance allowing melee fighters to swoop in and clean up the mess. He's also skilled with the shuriken (ninja star), kabutowari (helmet cracker) and kunai (throwing knife).

Mage: Skilled in the art of "bandaido", he can heal party members, cast protective spells, curses and ranged combat spells. Very powerful.

Leader: The master swordsman and strategist, the Leader coordinates the group's actions.

You can only have four of the seven samurai out on the quest at any one time. Fortunately, you can teleport characters in and out of battle, but of course this will cost you ki energy, so it's not a move that can be used all the time. However, teleporting badly injured characters back to the castle automatically heals them, so you may be taking on wave after wave of hellspawn, but at least three party members will be able to rest up at any given time.

What's most appealing about the four person party is that you'll have a great degree of control over each of the four samurai. While you only actively control one samurai at a time, you can swap between them at will. In the heat of battle however, this is obviously going to get clumsy, so Click have implemented "play calls" — and this is one of the very cool new elements that Throne Of Darkness brings to the genre. In the tactics menu you're able to assign 12 predetermined commands/formations to hotkeys. These can be as simple as commanding your party to attack whoever you attack, through to specific battle formations. You can also command party members to act as a sentry or guard significant points. There are over 20 of these plays available, and not only will they be integral to getting the most out of the game, but once comfortable with them, they'll put a huge amount of power, flexibility and strategy in the player's hands.

FEASTING ON INTESTINES

As per normal, slaying monsters will reward the player with monster parts, weapons, armour and gold. Gold can be offered to the gods at certain shrines in exchange for spells. Spells are divided into four basic types, each with its own patron god. Water (Susano-o), Lightning (Raiden), Fire (Amaterasu) and Earth (Okuni-nushi). All spells use ki energy, and there will be around 30 spells per element, with each samurai having a largely unique set of spells to master.

In the course of the game, there are two NPCs that will be indispensable. First up is the Blacksmith. Unsurprisingly, his basic skills are the creation, repair and upgrading of items. The Blacksmith is also able to combine items with monster parts to create a custom weapon or piece of armour. The other invaluable NPC is the Priest. He's the potion master. The Priest brews up a variety of medicines for curing injuries, curses, poison and reviving ki energy, as well as offensive potions. Both the Blacksmith and the Priest can level up along with the playable characters.

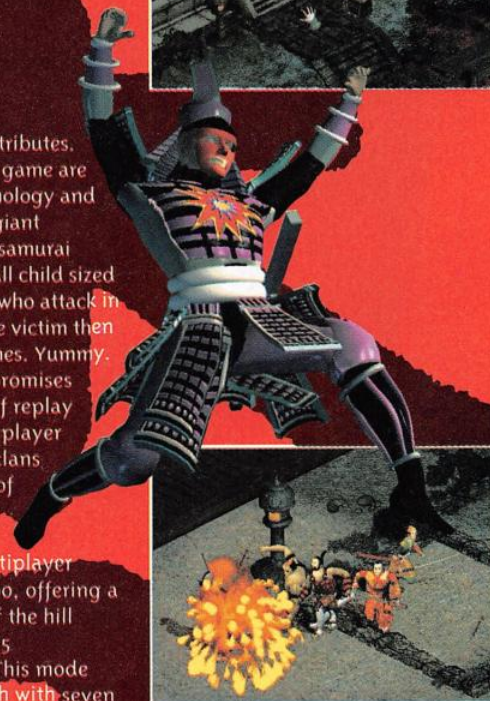
Each character will be able to use at least three types of weapon. Some of the weapons that will be available include the two-handed sword, short sword, katana, dagger, asymmetrical bow, staff mounted sword, halberd, iron staff, spear and throwing weapons. In addition, the blacksmith can combine weapons and items to create

weapons with unique attributes.

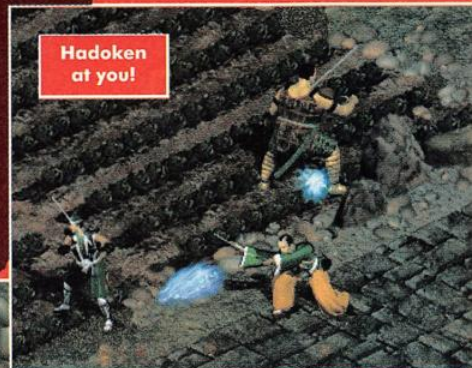
All the enemies in the game are based on Japanese mythology and look truly freaky. From giant dragons and possessed samurai through to Kappa — small child sized water spirits with shells who attack in mobs, overwhelming the victim then feasting on their intestines. Yummy.

Throne Of Darkness promises to offer a fair amount of replay value too. In the single player game each of the four clans has its own unique set of quests, many of which can be solved in multiple ways. The multiplayer angle should be cool too, offering a new take on the king of the hill playmode, with up to 35 simultaneous players. This mode sees the four clans, each with seven samurai, trying to defeat the Dark Warlord with his seven lieutenants and minions. It should be awesome playing as one of the dark lieutenants, since you'll be able to command the evil minions. Whichever clan defeats the evil Warlord first then takes over that position and must defend it for the next round. Action RPGing with depth to spare. ☺

"Frank, these threesome rendezvous can't go on."



Hadoken at you!

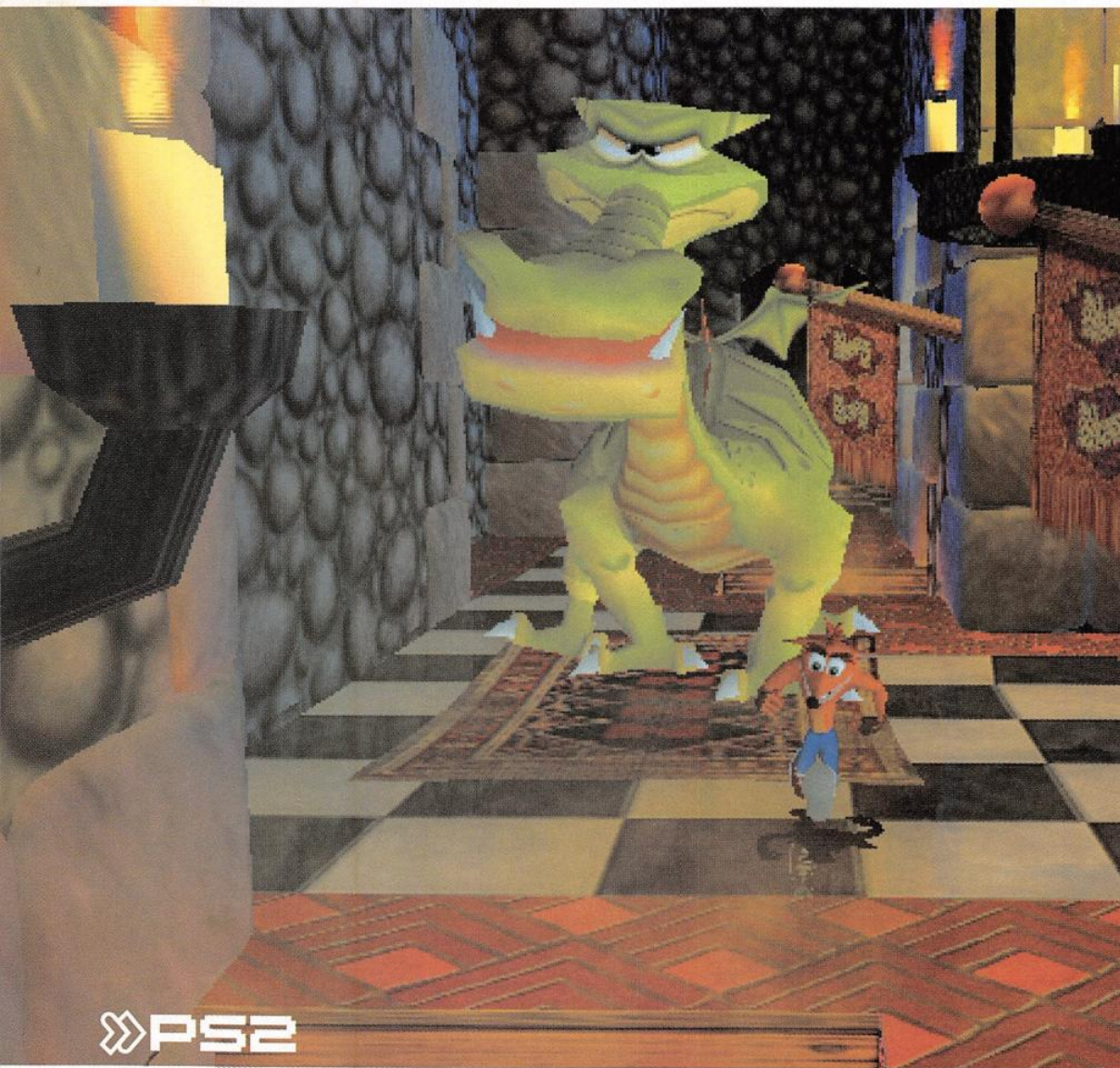


WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

Although it hasn't been announced, we're presuming that you'll also be able to play through the single player game co-operatively.

That throne must be so dark, they can't find it.

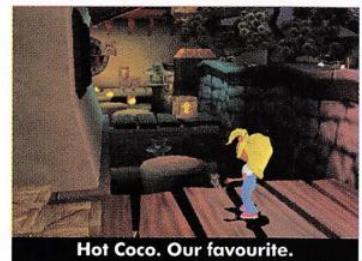




PS2

CRASH BANDICOOT: The Wrath of Cortex

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive >> AVAILABLE: November



Hot Coco. Our favourite.

Whilst there has been much talk of Crash Bandicoot debuting on other platforms, the PlayStation faithful will be pleased to discover that the bandicoot's first next-generation adventure will hit the PS2 before any other console. Before the year is up, the PS2 will be the platform for the fifth game in the series – and who knows when the Xbox or GameCube games will arrive.

So, how has our marsupial matured? Have Traveller's Tales (the UK-based developer taking over from Naughty Dog) remained faithful to the original concept of a wacky, crazy, cartoon platformer? Is it really going to be any good?

CRASH, REBOOT

To be honest, the original Crash Bandicoot games were a love or hate affair. Some gamers despised its linearity and restricted gameplay, whilst others thoroughly enjoyed the silly humour and solid platforming.

If you're wondering whether Wrath of Cortex may or may not be the animated platformer you've been waiting for, let us entice you with some details. Without a doubt this will be a polished product, and you just might fall for Crash for the very first time.

For starters, Traveller's Tales are fresh to the 'coot and their development team is pumped full of enthusiasm, which is already apparent in the detailed, polished graphics. These visuals will be the best yet, retaining the original's style, but giving just about everything a face-lift. There's better



How do ya like them apples?

animation in all the characters and enemies, larger and more populated environments, wider actual playing areas and it all rocks along at a solid 60 frames per second.

The game is simply one of the spunkiest looking platformers yet devised, with more variety than any previous Crash Bandicoot adventure. There's plenty of eye candy here. But whilst all this cartoony splendour is wonderful, the more important question remains... have they evolved the gameplay? Well, yes and no.

ROAMING FREE

Wrath Of Cortex offers us the most freedom of play than any previous Crash game, thanks to larger more explorable 3D landscapes and a serious injection of variety in game styles throughout the adventure. However, at the heart of it, this game still centers around the same Crash game mechanics – spin and

smash crates, collect the fruit etc. It's just done with so much more style and variation this time around.

Traveller's Tales are also piecing together plenty of mini-games to make the entire experience far more fun for those of us with short attention spans. What was I writing... ? Oh yeah,

Crash will pilot an aeroplane, amongst other vehicles, and some levels will require far more thumb-pad skills than the usual platformer, like rolling a huge ball around icy landscapes trying to avoid plummeting to your death. You'll also be given control over Coco (Crash's girlfriend) to explore the game, complete with her own unique levels, with her own unique abilities.

Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex is turning out to be the prettiest and most enjoyable Crash game yet, and the prospect of more lush platformers on the PS2 is A-okay in our book. <<

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
The banishment of frustrating 3D jumping puzzles.



THE SIMS: HOT DATE

PC CATEGORY: Sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts >> AVAILABLE: November



How that we've tried "livin' large" and had a "house party" or two, the time is right to send our sims out into the wilderness of the dating game... Yep, *The Sims: Hot Date* is the next expansion pack for the best-selling PC game of 2000 and 2001, *The Sims*. Just think *Sex in the City*, but with sims. *Sim in the City*, if you will. Anyone want to start making their little virtual Sarah Jessica Parker? Hmm... we get the feeling that maybe many of you have already.

DIM SIMS

At any rate, *Hot Date* gives us a chance to get back into the "swing of sims", before we launch ourselves into *The Sims Online* or *Simsville*. And who wouldn't want to have a go at trying to get into bed with our polygonal pals? Is it any surprise? Like everyone, even the sims are looking for luuuurve. *Hot Date* takes the level of voyeurism in the Sims to its next logical

conclusion — letting us peer into the awkward, nervous, sweaty-palmed social situation that is known as the "date". But this is far beyond just inviting your neighbouring sim over for a piece of cake or a dip in the swimming pool. *Hot Date* is all about the hardcore dating scene. Yep, we're talking nightclubs, bars, cafes... just about anywhere you would maybe expect to meet your Sim soul mate.

Hot Date will feature an entirely new downtown area for your Sims to explore and socialise in, including all these funky new venues where you can woo your prospective partner. It actually sounds like a bit of a rehearsal for the real-life match making that will inevitably take place with *The Sims Online*, but at least *Hot Date* will let you practise on computer controlled characters so you can get your moves right before you make a jackass of yourself in front of a real player.

EA plan to include over 100 new items, including a picnic basket you can take to the park for that romantic roll in the grass. There will also be an in-game dating service you can get your Sim to use if hanging out at the local shops doesn't seem to get you any action.

Best of all, there will be a whole swag of new actions to try out on your companion in *Hot Date*, from playing "footsies" under the table at dinner, to making a passionate pass at them on the couch. Many of

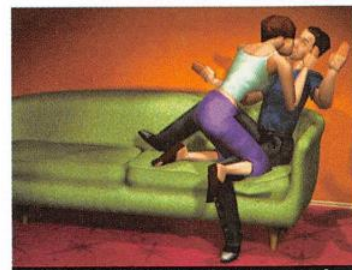
WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
An adults-only user-made mod... it'll happen, no doubt.

you might be hoping to witness some jiggy, dancing dooner action, but *Hot Date* won't quite go that far. Heavy petting is about as "hot" as it will probably get. At least in *Hot Date* you don't have to worry too much about what the AI will think of you in the morning.

Although, we gotta say, there's nothing quite worse than when a computer chews on your hard disk. <<<



Here, let me wash that lipstick off!



Give me back my chewing gum!



Oh no, their braces have locked!



This premium unleaded kicks!

SPY HUNTER

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Acclaim >> AVAILABLE: October

Any gamer over the age of 25 will probably remember the original Midway arcade game, *Spy Hunter* — that top-down fast and furious car romp accompanied by the slinky Peter Gunn theme. The aim was to go as fast as possible down a stretch of road, bonnet-mounted machine guns blazing, dropping oil slicks at your pursuers, whilst avoiding the enemy vehicles intent on seeing you burst into a fiery ball of scrap metal. You could even roll up into the back of a truck ala Knight Rider and have your chassis repaired — all at high speed.

Midway have taken this very cool game and transformed it into glorious 3D. Hour upon

hour of playtesting here at Hyper HQ can attest to the fact that they've done a remarkable job of re-creating the original game quite authentically, yet with the depth of a modern action game.

The car handling is great, with powerslides a plenty, and there's a stack of crazy weaponry to unleash upon your environment as you go speeding by. Multiple paths have been built into each mission, as well as an objective point system to ensure that there's tonnes of replayability.

Spy Hunter is a blast, and we're looking forward to reviewing the final product very soon.

WOW-O-METER



EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE

CATEGORY: Sport >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Virgin Interactive >> AVAILABLE: October

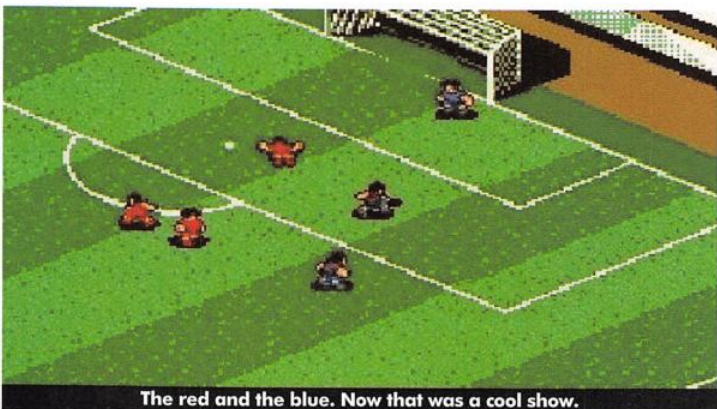
While we patiently wait for Konami to bring us International Superstar Soccer for the GBA, we can meanwhile waste copious sets of batteries on this tasty looking football sim from developer, Virgin Interactive.

Featuring sixteen fully licensed teams (which means full kits, players and stadiums), *European Super League* sports a familiar looking top-down perspective that will delight fans of that sexy little soccer game of old, *Sensible Soccer*. There will also be an alternative isometric camera perspective for those gamers who

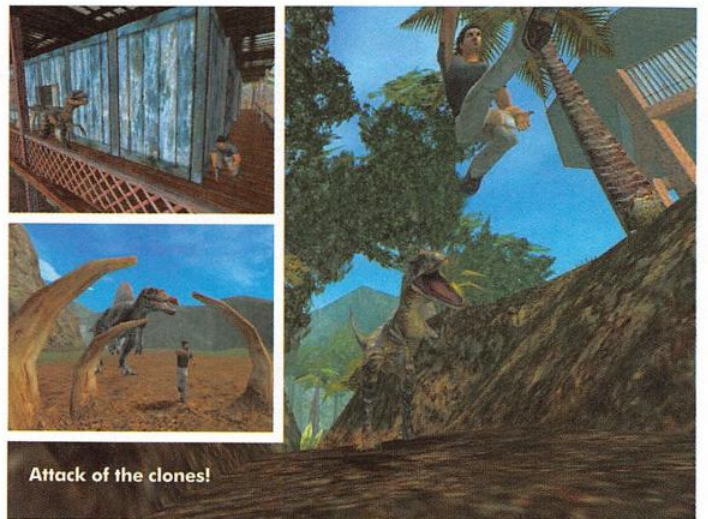
appreciate at least some vague attempt at a third perspective.

Naturally, with a link cable, *European Super League* has the potential to be one of those great simplistic and yet utterly addictive multiplayer soccer games. Although there is no confirmation yet of a possible four-player link up mode, we're hoping that two-player link-up is a no-brainer feature.

European Super League will be out before we know it, so we'll grab it and kick off a review real soon. *European Super League* is also set to appear on the Psone, PC, Dreamcast and GBC.



The red and the blue. Now that was a cool show.



Attack of the clones!

JURASSIC PARK III: SURVIVAL

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive >> AVAILABLE: November

With *Jurassic Park III* coming to cinemas this Christmas, it's no surprise that a bunch of new *Jurassic Park* video games are popping up on the release schedule. Well, if they're anything like *Dino Crisis 2*, then we say bring it on.

The first game is the PS2 action title, *Jurassic Park III: Survival*, which has an all-original plot that doesn't tie in with the new film at all. Instead, it revolves around a character and scenario created specifically for the game. You play a respected member of an elite scientific team who becomes stranded on the deadly dinosaur infested island, your mission being

to get off the island to safety and stop a bunch of DNA stealing terrorists along the way.

This is third-person, combat-focused action incorporating Resident Evil style puzzles and item collection with Tomb Raider-ish action and gunplay. The baddies include some truly terrifying dinosaurs, including the big new baddie from *Jurassic Park III*, the Spinosaur — bigger than a T-Rex, and twice as pissed off. You'll also be up against the raptors, the good old T-Rex and some nasty terrorists who are looking to pop a cap in your scientific arse. This is solid stuff, and we can expect it in mid November.

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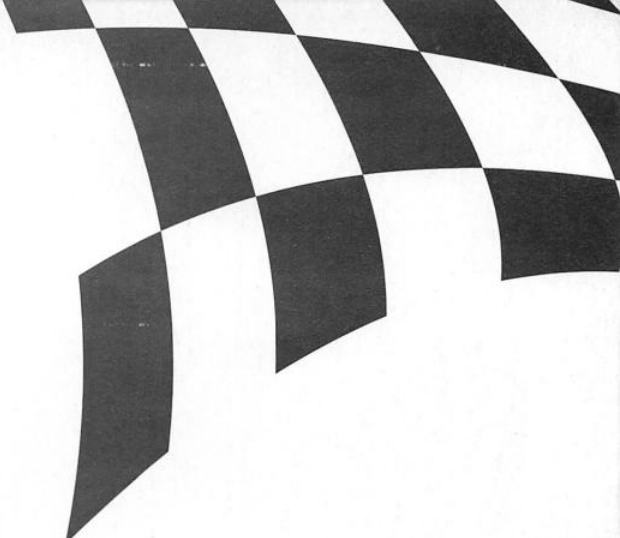
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Aliens Vs Predator 2

[HTTP://WWW.SIERRASTUDIOS.COM/GAMES/ALIENSVSPREDATOR2](http://www.sierrastudios.com/games/aliensvspredator2)

Life is little more than a series of questions that more often than not can't be answered. Why can't relativity theory be reconciled with quantum mechanics? Why does Hyper feel thinner than normal? Where have all the spittoons gone? In this world of queries and quagmires at least there's one thing that we can find out for sure — what would happen in a fight between humans, aliens and predators.

Sure, it's not our favourite kind of threesome (we'll leave the cross-species fetishism to the staff of PCPP), as frankly we'd prefer to know what would happen in a cat-fight between Buffy, Willow and Cordelia, but when it comes to war, this is a bitchin' match-up.

CRACK MARINES

The original *Aliens Versus Predator* game was developed by Rebellion, but the sequel is being handled by Monolith Productions, a development house with a bit of experience in the art of the first person shooter. Their list of games includes *Blood*, *Blood 2*, *Shogo* and *No One Lives Forever*. More importantly, David Stalker, the original game's producer, is back to look after this second game and ensure it's of the highest quality.

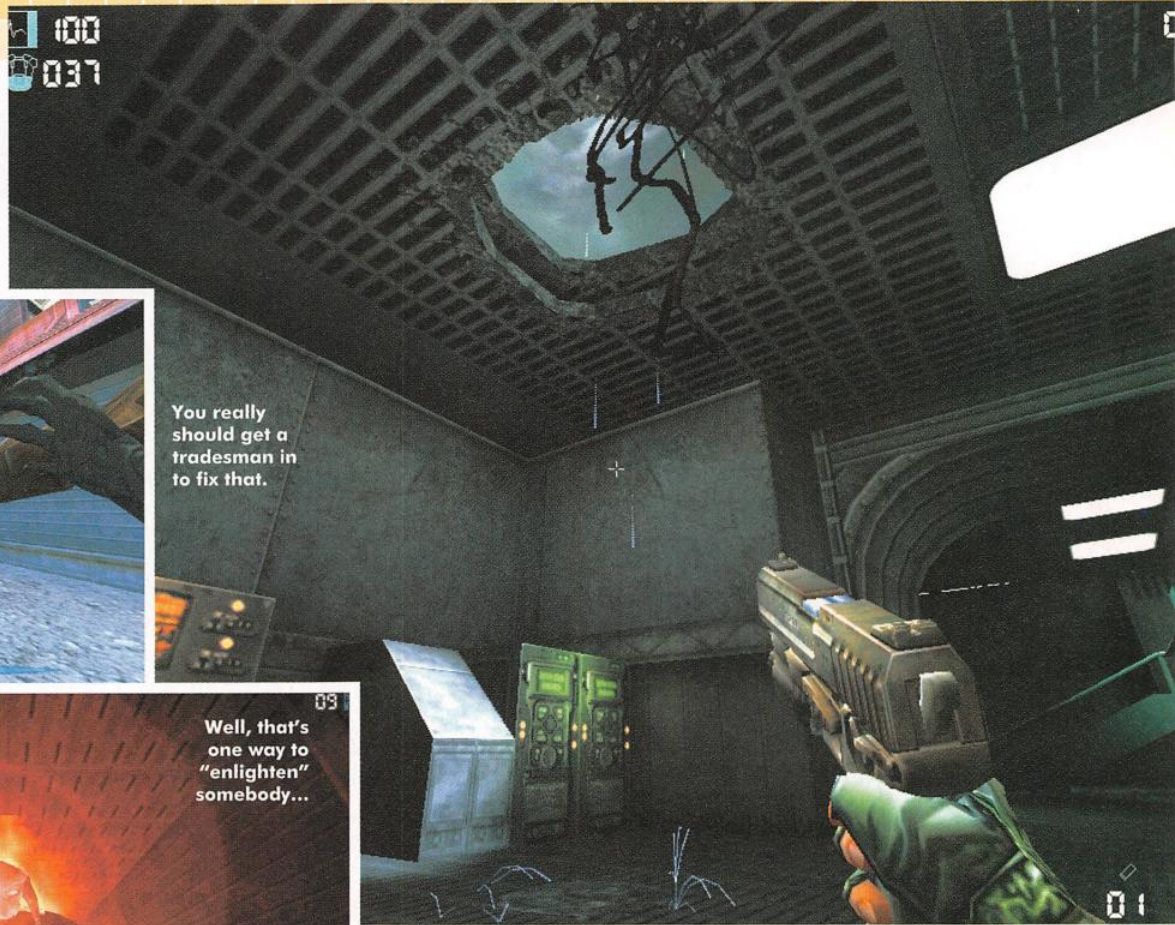
Running on a modified version of the Lithtech 2.5 engine, *AvP2* won't just look a lot better, but it's going to be a better game all round. The storyline is going to take a *Half-Life* (and its various expansion packs)

approach, weaving in three completely different sets of missions for each of the species — alien, predator and human (if you can call marines that) in the same place and timeframe. Although missions will intersect at various points, no missions will be shared between the species — only events. This means that each set of missions can be designed from the ground up to take advantage of each species' abilities, rather than the other way around. Thus, the marine's jetpack and predator's grappling hook won't be in this game, as they were only included in the original as a way of allowing the marine and predator to reach areas that the wall climbing alien could.

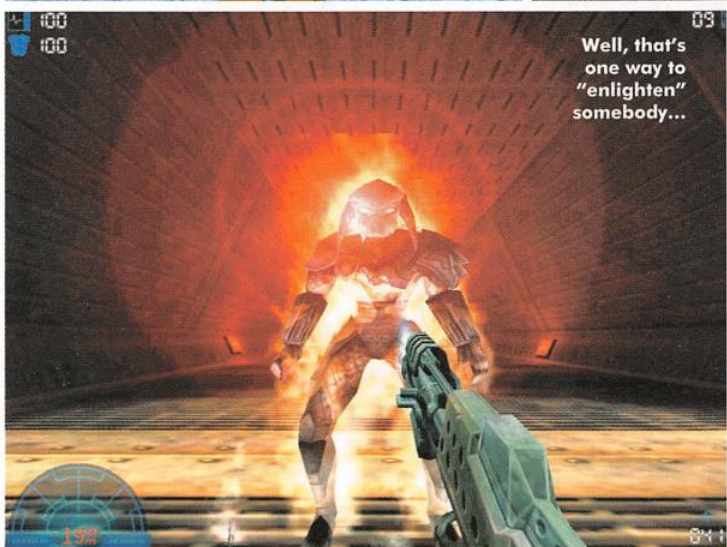
The game is set shortly after *Aliens* on the planet LV-1201. It seems there has been an alien hive there for an indeterminate number of years, so a slightly batty(boy) scientist named Eisenberg establishes a research center... with predictable results — the aliens escape and run amok. But adding to the cultural melting pot, it seems this planet is a favoured hunting ground of those interstellar tramps (come on, all that fishnet?) — the Predators. A crack squad of crack-head marines is sent in to crack down.

XENOMORPH CARNAGE

Monolith's aim is to keep the pants-wetting fear of the original at the same time as taking the missions somewhere new. So there'll be more



You really should get a tradesman in to fix that.



Well, that's one way to "enlighten" somebody...



Versus Mode

Games we'd like to see in the spirit of AvP:

- Mr T Vs The World**
- Kosta vs Bryce**
- Big Gay Al vs Smithers**
- Buffy vs Charmed**
- Nintendo Gamer vs Hyper**
- Conan O'Brien vs Jay Leno**

variety in AvP2 than just the dank claustrophobic corridors synonymous with the *Aliens* films. In addition to the research base, the alien hive and a space cruiser, some of the missions are even set in the great outdoors - on the surface of planet LV-1201 itself. It'll be interesting to see how well this works in the single player game, but the multiplayer game should benefit greatly. Indeed, it's the multiplayer game that has us the most excited (hence the game's appearance in Net Trawlin'). Pitting the three enhanced (from the original) species against each other in multiplayer deathmatch will be awesome - each is strong in their own unique way, and the potential depth of strategy that comes from having such radically different abilities sets opens the door for some of the best multiplayer combat ever. Plus, the sheer atmosphere of the game transforms what is just a game into terrifying and exhilarating warfare on an alien planet.

There'll be 12 multiplayer maps, including species-based team maps. There will be ten different characters to choose from in multiplayer mode - presumably this includes several specialised variants of humans. Think how brilliant teamplay will be in this game - setting out with a team of humans on a mission to wipe out all the aliens, but knowing that they will have positioned themselves strategically throughout the map. Or playing as the solitary stealth-based predator up against an entire map swarming with humans and aliens. It's going to be matching wits with other humans that will rock the hardest in AvP2.

The graphics are looking a whole lot better than the relatively primitive original as well. The atmosphere is going to be even more intense with more realistic looking characters, and effects like real-time lighting on the marine's shoulder mounted torch through to animated light maps and huge outdoor areas. We're really hyped about this one...

Radicalism...

MARINE - The marine character has lost the jetpack, but now has a kit to hack computer systems, a welding device that can cut through doors as well as seal them, and a shoulder mounted torch. In the weaponry department, a shotgun has been introduced (phew!), as well as a knife and a few new ammo types. The marine's storyline is a team-based affair, so there are a few different types of marine - Colonial Marine (these are then further split into specialist groups), Technicians (wussy scientists), Synthetics (perfect for parties and bahmitzvahs, these guys can do nifty tricks with knives), Combat Synthetics (a new illegal breed of robot highly skilled in combat), Mercenaries (Eisenberg's own crack troop - willing to kill anyone or anything they come up against).

PREDATOR - The Predators will come in two distinct types - light and heavy. The best new addition to its arsenal would have to be the net weapon that can be used to pin opponents to the wall. It also now has a doubled bladed spear that can fire dart-like projectiles, as well as a portable device to recharge weapons.

ALIEN - In addition to using your tail, claws and secondary jaws, the aliens will now have a pounce attack. Essentially though, the alien's abilities remain unchanged - it's all about speed, running on any surface, and brutal close quarters combat. There'll be the full complement of aliens too - from Facehuggers to Chestbusters, Runners, Drones, Warriors, PredAliens and the Queen.

LINKS

NASUBI

Nippon Television's (NTV) producers have absolutely never heard of the Geneva Convention. If they had, they wouldn't have treated poor Nasubi the way they did. They wouldn't have subjected him naked and shirtless to an apartment, alone with no food, furniture, household goods, or entertainment. They wouldn't have kept him there for over a year until he had run 110 miles to prove by combing his posture he could be content. They wouldn't have cut him off from the world and they would have told him that he was on national TV.

It all started one sunny day in January, 1998 with an audition. The audition consisted of showing last year's only infant needed for this challenge was back. A group of smiling candidates showed up, and among them was a young man whose stage name is Nasubi, which means eggplant. Nasubi was, by the way, and was chosen over other smiling young candidates for a mysterious "business related job". He was immediately identified and driven to a tiny one room apartment somewhere in Tokyo.

When he arrived at the apartment, he was chosen a strict diet of vegetables, a huge pile of postcards, and told to strip naked. The room was empty except for a cot, a table, a small table, a refrigerator, some postcards, and a few pens. There was not a crumb of food, a square of toilet paper, or any form of entertainment. Whatever he needed, he was to win by creating thousands of postcards into content. The producers left and Nasubi was on his own in his complete sensory challenge. Imagine what was going through his mind. How am I going to eat? Why are they doing this to me? How long will it take to get out of here? How have they thought he was in a bad episode of *The Prisoner*.

Nasubi won his first contest on February 9th. He got some jelly, a 1500 yen value, leaving him with 999 yen left to win. That day he ate food for the first time in two weeks! On February 22nd, he won a 3 kg bag of rice. Unfortunately, he had no cooking utensils. At first he tried eating it raw, but eventually devised a cooking method where he put it in an empty can heater a burner for an hour until it was "cooked". He ate about a half cup of rice a day using two pens for chopsticks.

POOR NASUBI!

www3.tky.3web.ne.jp/%7Eedjacob/nasubi.html

>> Okay, so it's quite a convoluted URL, but this is compulsory reading for anyone interested in, or scared by reality television. We won't give it away, but let's just say that our darkest fears about where reality television may be heading are pretty much "been there, done that" in Japan. Truly scary stuff... His official site is also at <http://www.ntv.co.jp/denpa/luck/>



PEER GROUP PRESSURE

www.openp2p.com

>> Napster's corpse may be stinking up the net, but the peer-to-peer (P2P) movement continues unabated. For up to date news, information and intelligent commentary on what's happening in this arena, check out OpenP2P.com. It's an excellent place to start for newbies, and a great site for experienced P2Pers.



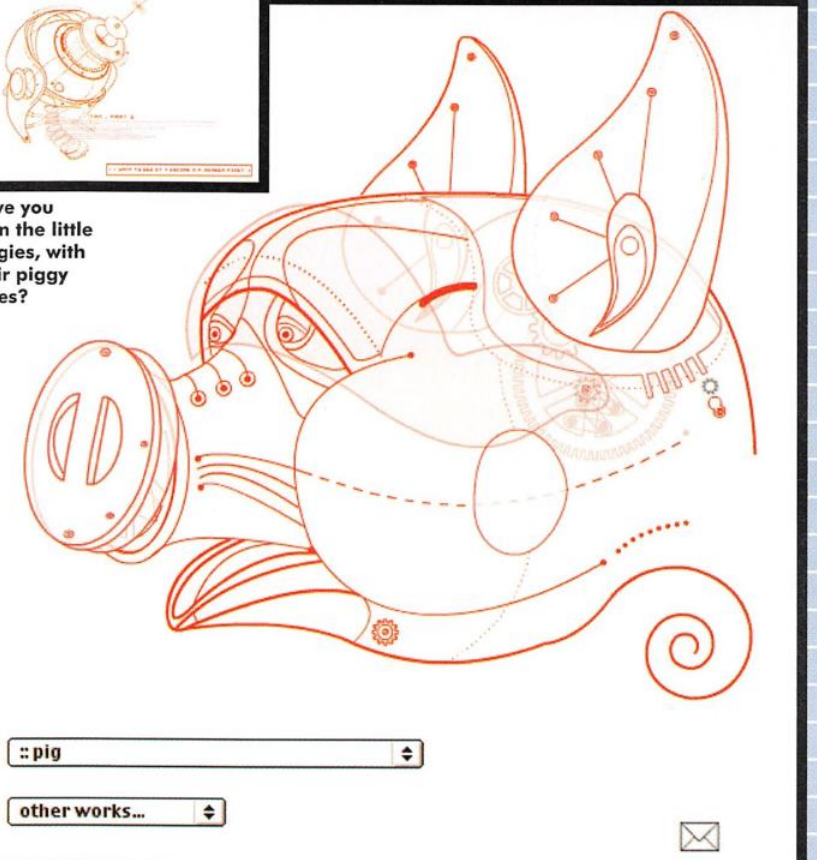
FAT BUDS IN DA HOUSE

www.viewaskew.com

>> *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* is heading to the cinemas later this year and it's looking hella-funny. We'd put the trailer on our cover disc... except we no longer have one, so you'll just have to go and download it yourself. Viewaskew.com is Kevin Smith's own site, and there's a heap of stuff for fans of *Clerks*, *Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy* and *Dogma* to dig, including behind the scenes pics, movies, interviews and much more.



Have you seen the little piggies, with their piggy wives?



FERIC

www.feric.com

>> If you're looking for something slightly left of centre and yet utterly brilliant to look at, then you must check out this artist's website. This is the warped mind of digital artist, Eric Feng, a designer and composer at SquareUSA, who worked on the movie *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*. This, his online portfolio, is an incredible display of imagination and creativity. Sign up and obtain access to more of his art.



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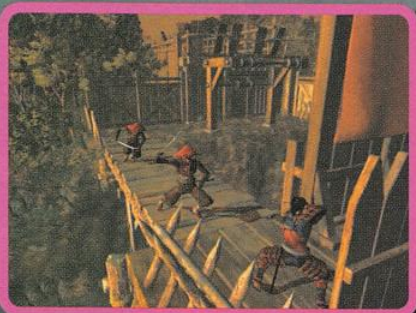
next

FOR UNREAL TOURNAMENT - TACTICAL OPS - CLAN WARS & INSTA-GIB
FOR HALF LIFE - FRONTLINE FORCE - THE OPERA & COUNTERSTRIKE V1.2

OUT NOW

WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE SEPTEMBER 25th



WIN ONIMUSHA WARLORDS!

FOR PS2

Back in our May issue we reviewed Onimusha and proceeded to tell you just how damn good it was – it received our coveted Game of the Month stamp, and scored a nice fat 90%! You NEED Onimusha – it's one of those great PS2 games that you can get your hands on right now, and thanks to THQ Australia, this Capcom delight could be yours. We have five copies to give away to the readers who can correctly answer this question:

»» What does Onimusha mean?

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



WIN BOMBERMAN TOURNAMENT & PINOBBE!

FOR GBA

Bomberman Tournament on the GBA is an absolute riot – this is a must-have GBA game! Pinobee is a cute platformer that you'll need to play, just so you can give your link cable a rest from all that Bomberman! Thanks to Activision, we have five copies of each game and five awesome Bomberman mugs to give away to five incredibly lucky readers! To win, you'll need to do thusly:

»» Write us a short rap about Bomberman.

Put your rap in an envelope with your name and address and send it to **DA BOMB**, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW, 2016.



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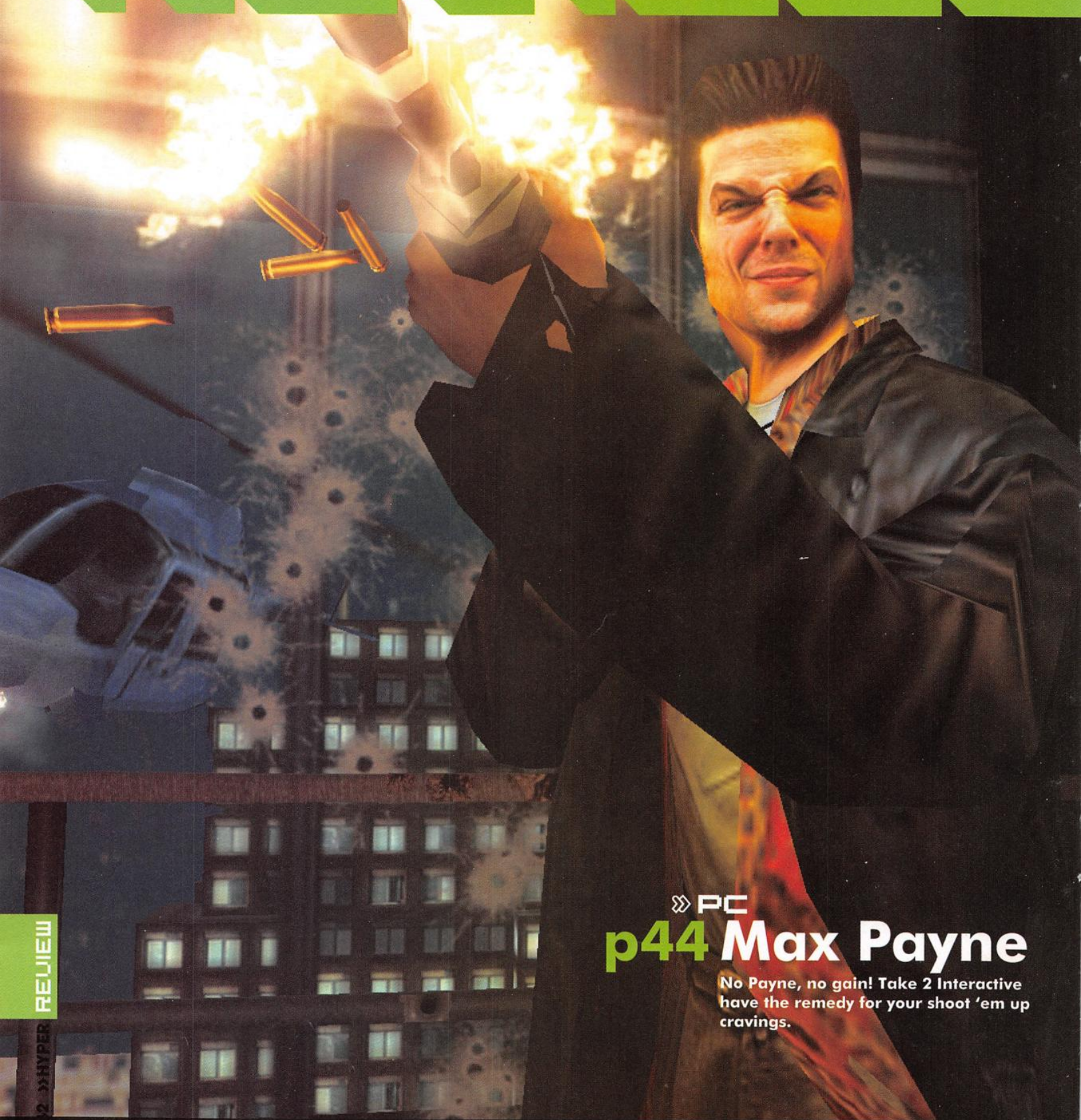
SEGA LOVES NINTENDO!

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this would happen!



NINTENDO GAMER ISSUE 2
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REVIEWS



» PC

p44 Max Payne

No Payne, no gain! Take 2 Interactive have the remedy for your shoot 'em up cravings.

REVIEW

» HYPER

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THE HYPER CREW'S TOP 5

Eliot Fish - Editor

1. Onimusha - PS2
"A must play PS2 game for Survival Horror fans."
2. Arcanum - PC
3. Max Payne - PC
4. Dark Alliance - PS2
5. Deus Ex SDK - PC

Cam Shea - Deputy Editor

1. Office Cricket - Hyper HQ
"If only I had time to play video games!"
2. Mario Kart Advance - GBA
3. Max Payne - PC
4. Paper Mario - Nintendo 64
5. Bomberman Tournament - GBA

Malcolm Campbell - Art guy

1. Castlevania: Circle of the Moon - GBA
"Almost as good as Symphony of the Night. The DSS card system is brilliant."
2. Final Fantasy IX - PSone
3. Final Fantasy VI - SNES
4. Max Payne - PC
5. Street Fighter III: Third Strike - DC

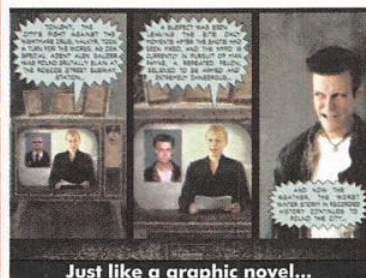
Kevin Cheung - Reviewer

1. Final Fantasy X - PS2
"Lulu is a babe."
2. Max Payne - PC
3. Mario Kart Advance - GBA
4. Diablo II: Lord of Destruction - PC
5. Tech Romancer - DC

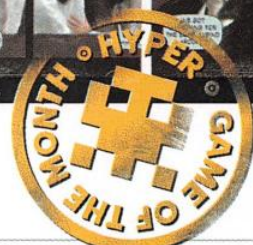
THE HYPER SCORING SYSTEM

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!



Max Payne



CATEGORY: 3rd person shooter >>> PLAYERS: 1 >>> PUBLISHER: Take 2 >>> PRICE: \$89.95 >>> RATING: MA 15+ >>> AVAILABLE: Now >>> REQUIRED: Intel/AMD 450, 92MB RAM, 3D card

CAM SHEA, mob deep and all that...

H Max Payne is a very cool game. It's also a walking cliché, observing all the established rules of the action genre, without pushing any boundaries in particular - aside from going for the "game that pays the most homage to John Woo and *The Matrix*" award. This isn't necessarily a bad thing mind you. If you're a fan of Martin Scorsese's mob films and John Woo's Hong Kong action flicks, or if you're just a fan of glorified violence in general, then Max Payne is the game for you.

BLOOD DRENCHED

According to the hype, the big drawcard for Max Payne is the bullet time effect. This is definitely the one "big new thing" that Max Payne offers to the genre, and it's an

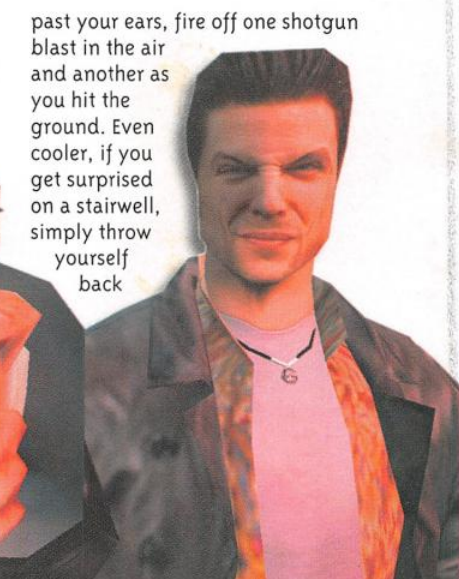
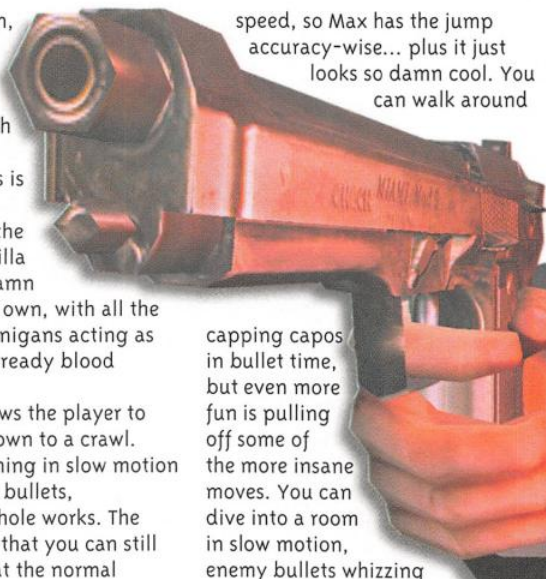
excellent addition, but it's certainly not integral to the game. Its value is very much cinematic, rather than tactical. This is actually a very positive sign for the game, as the vanilla Max Payne is a damn solid game on its own, with all the bullet time shenanigans acting as the icing on an already blood drenched cake.

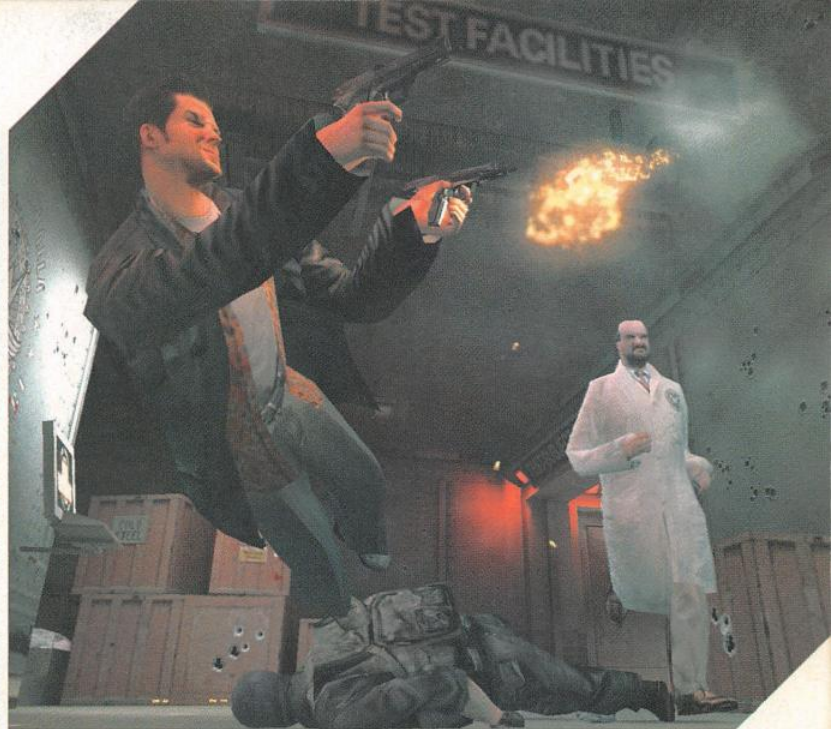
Bullet time allows the player to slow the action down to a crawl. Everything is running in slow motion - Max, mobsters, bullets, explosions, the whole works. The advantage being that you can still move your sight at the normal

speed, so Max has the jump accuracy-wise... plus it just looks so damn cool. You can walk around

capping capos in bullet time, but even more fun is pulling off some of the more insane moves. You can dive into a room in slow motion, enemy bullets whizzing

past your ears, fire off one shotgun blast in the air and another as you hit the ground. Even cooler, if you get surprised on a stairwell, simply throw yourself back





MC Bullet! It's Bullet Time!



Say hello to my little friend.

There's a huge amount of satisfaction to be had from attempting gunfights over and over, using bullet time in every possible way.

down the stairs in bullet time, firing the whole way down.

You can play through the entire game without using bullet time at all, and in many situations it's actually a hindrance more than anything. The standard "run for cover, pop out, shoot, pop back" is generally far more effective than diving out from behind cover getting a couple of shots off then leaving yourself exposed — especially on the higher difficulty levels. Even so, as far as garnish goes, bullet time is an awesome effect, and a huge amount of fun to experiment with. Bullet time isn't the only frill that Remedy have introduced to the genre. The camera also does a nice slow-mo pan around certain kills, and even follows headshots from the sniper rifle.

!!! Max Payne has been patched already. Grab it from <http://www.remedy.fi/>

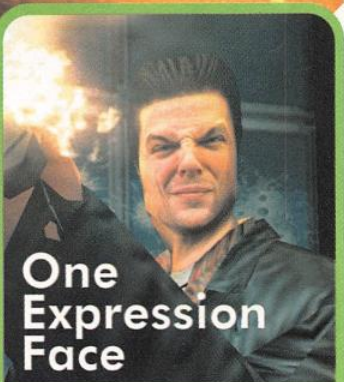
JUNKIES SUCK ARSE

Max Payne comes packing a storyline straight out of a HK action film. Three years before the events in the game, Max's wife and baby are killed, most probably by junkies on Valkyr — a destructive new drug on the streets. Max joins the DEA and goes deep undercover in a quest to discover which crew are running the drugs and to avenge the deaths in his family. Of course, he's framed, so both the cops and the mob want him dead.

The storyline is told through Max's own very film noir/hardboiled/ex-detective narration, complemented by some very cool graphic novel art — frames and all. It's an engaging technique, and you can almost forgive how run of the mill the story actually is. The

art is stylishly illustrated and even the voice overs are well done. Max (whose voice sounds remarkably like J.C. Denton from Deus Ex) is a walking cliché but the dialogue is slick and well delivered. Most of the supporting cast hold their own too... although there are some areas that could have been improved considerably — like the dodgy junkie scream. The game's score is appropriately dramatic and tragic, setting the mood nicely when used.

The narrative sets the tone of the game well and certainly gives the player more of an insight into the senseless violence than your average action game. Remedy have obviously tried to establish an empathetic connection between the player and Max — a necessary device for true immersion in the gameworld, but whether they've succeeded or not is debatable. The whole storyline

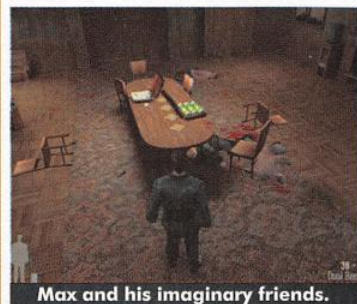


One Expression Face

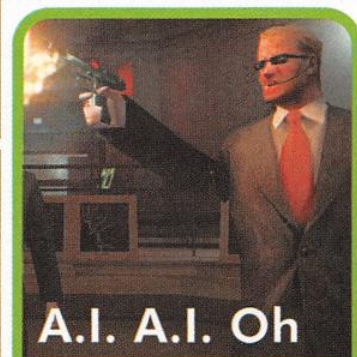
Much has been made of Max Payne's visuals, but in the years between first being wowed and the game's release, standards have risen considerably. Max no longer looks "photo-realistic", falling more into the "badly-digitised-one-expression-face-on-a-low-poly-head" category. Indeed, most of the facial textures, polygonal builds and animations are a little behind the times, whilst the environments look fantastic. Max in particular looks like he permanently has a carrot stashed in his date. At least you'll be able to get it running nicely on even a relatively modest system.



Burn baby burn, disco inferno!

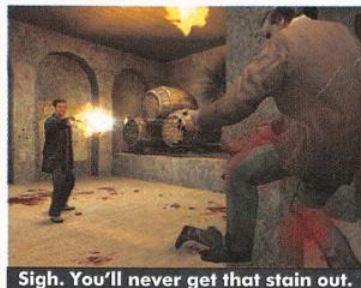


Max and his imaginary friends.



A.I. A.I. Oh

❖ Enemy A.I. is a mixed bag. Although it seems impressive in the heat of battle, the flaws in the A.I. can easily be exploited if you play the game in a more patient mindset. Watching the enemies roll one way and then the other over and over is comical... and a little sad. That said, there are huge numbers of guys to kill, so maybe it's a good thing they're not too smart.



Sigh. You'll never get that stain out.

revolves around the death of Max's wife and child, and the demons that plague him. In order to make Max more than a one dimensional character, Remedy have tried to provide a window into Max's mental state at various times throughout the game.

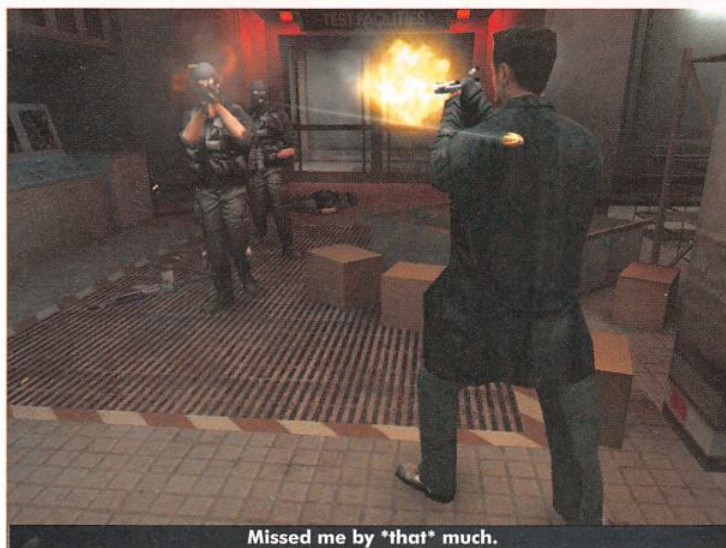
The two most significant examples of which are when Max is unconscious at the end of both the first and second parts. He finds himself running through his old house, hearing the screams of his wife and gunshots going off. The visual effect is very cool, each room has its own tone thanks to subtle

manipulation of colours and an expanded FOV which makes everything look out of perspective and surreal. Max even seems to move differently, running as if underwater. In both sequences he then finds himself in a dark world with narrow paths marked in blood and deep red snow falling. This bloody winter wonderland is undoubtedly a stunning visual scene. The problem is Remedy just don't do enough with it, reducing the gameplay to finding the correct path in the

maze. It feels half finished, with no real introspection. The second time around you find yourself in a repeating room where Max's drugged subconscious tells him he's in a computer game! This contradicts the purpose of the dream sequence entirely, jolting the player out of their immersion in Max's headspace and back to the reality that it's just a game. It's not like it's that bad an idea, but the execution was clumsy. To pull off a surreal and somewhat cheeky scene like this requires a delicate touch in the script and direction — a touch that simply wasn't there. Indeed, at this stage in the game I'd noticed that the script in general was slipping marginally in quality, as if time was short and the developers didn't have time to polish the dialogue and narration to an appropriate degree.

ILLUSION OF OPTIONS

Another downside often inherent in story-driven action games is that they're incredibly linear. Max Payne is no exception. There's the illusion of options but in reality there's only one way through each level. This is mirrored in how non-interactive the environments are in general. Sure, you can shoot an attaché case filled with money and the money will go flying, or you could press the button on a vending machine, but it's all very superficial. Similarly, the puzzles are very simplistic. Fortunately, although repetitive, the action is compelling enough that you probably won't care. And the movie influences really add to the game's enjoyment. One gets the feeling that every action sequence is an elaborate set piece from a film that must be executed perfectly. There's a huge amount of



Missed me by *that* much.



Max in particular looks like he permanently has a carrot stashed in his date.

satisfaction to be had from attempting gunfights over and over, using bullet time in every possible way, attempting every strategy until you execute the perfect kill and the whole scene appears seamlessly choreographed.

An element of the gun battles that people will either love or hate is the collision detection on the scenery. On one hand, it's quite realistic in that you can use the scenery as cover and your shots can miss if even a smallish object is in the way. On the other hand, the mobsters don't seem to have this problem, and your shots can miss even when the site seems to be on someone's head just because of the way the perspective works. Regardless, you get used to it, and the aftermath of a gun fight is something to behold, with walls riddled with bullet holes and bodies in grotesque positions. If

only we could add in some GeoMod goodness for a real Matrix gun battle where chunks are getting ripped out of walls, we'd be in heaven. Max Payne 2 perhaps?

PAYNE KILLERS

One area that we do have a major gripe with, however, is the technique that Remedy use regularly throughout the game where the player is dumped from a cutscene straight into a major gunfight. Since the cutscenes are unskippable, you'll hit autosave as soon as you're back in the game, only to die a split second later. Very annoying.

Max Payne is also lacking in longevity. The entire game can be completed in around eight hours. What Remedy have done to give the player extra value is in the difficulty settings. On a fresh install, you only have the easiest

difficulty setting available. Once you've beaten that, the next difficulty level opens up. So it may be possible to blast through the game on easy in a few hours, but rest assured the higher difficulty levels won't be a walk in the park. Even so, we'd have preferred the game to be longer in the first place, as there's only so many times that people will want to play through the same missions. Plus, you still can't skip the in-game cinematics second time through.

Even though it doesn't herald the dawn of a new gaming age, Max Payne is a very slick and hugely entertaining action game. Not only is it one of the first action games where the third person perspective really works, but it's also the ultimate mobster-film fantasy game. Forget Kingpin, Max Payne is the shiznit. <<



PLUS: Stylish – just like a graphic novel, bullet time rocks.

MINUS: Too short, too many crates. No Kung Fu moves.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

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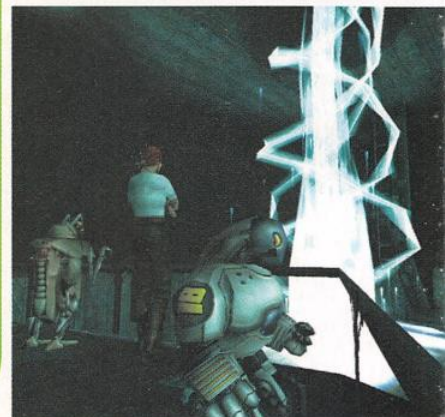
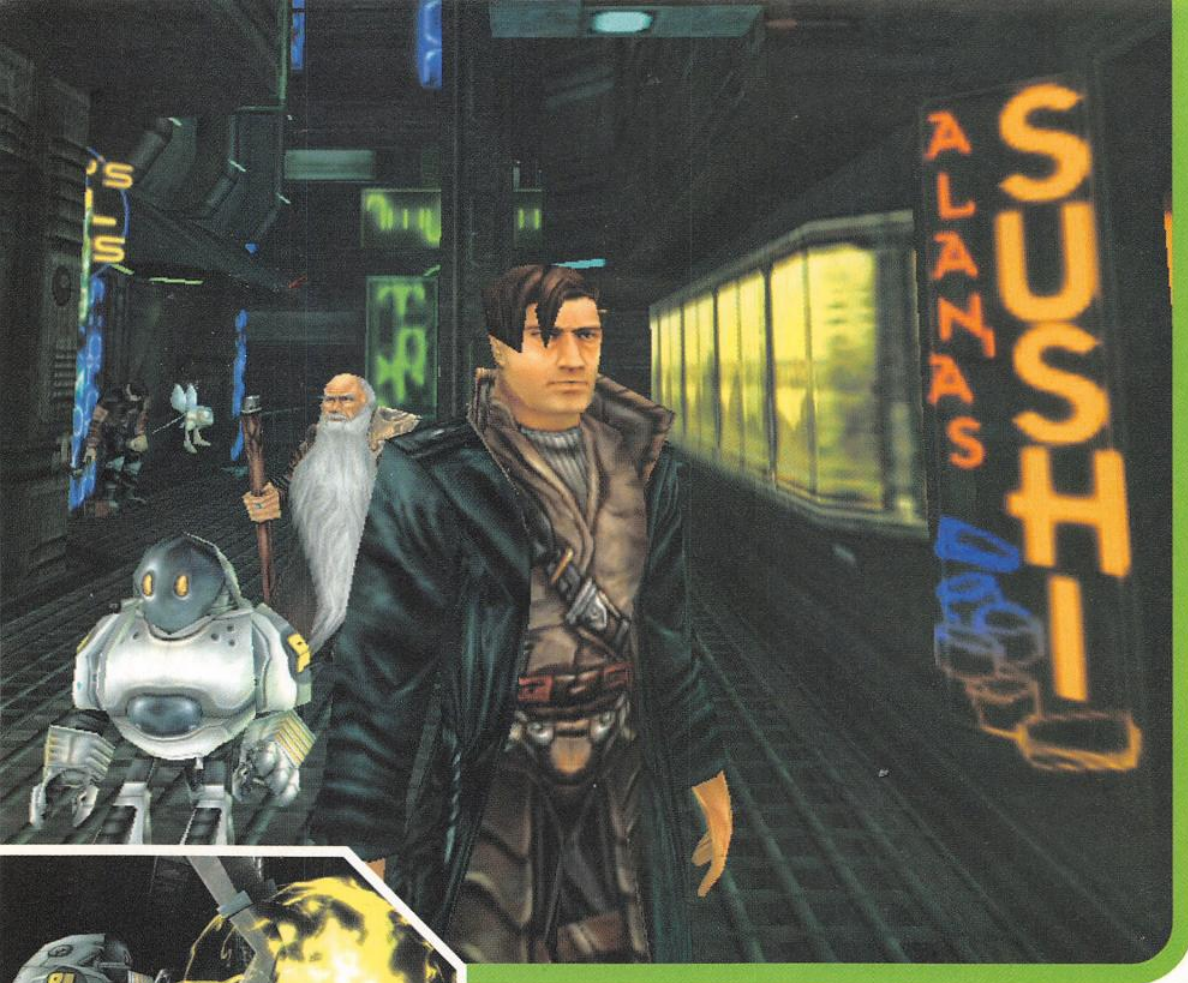
OVERALL

89

It may not change the world, but it will rock your world!

REVIEW

>> HYPER 47



Anachronox



CATEGORY: RPG/Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Eidos >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII-266, 64MB RAM, 3D card

DAN TOOSE wonders if his PC is impersonating a console...

For those who haven't spent time playing both PC and console RPGs, it's quite easy to point out the major difference between the two. PC RPGs traditionally have a complex combat engine, often real-time, quite unique to that game. Console RPGs almost invariably use a turn-based system, where you tend to choose an action, and watch to see what the result is, with each character taking their turn. With the growing popularity of franchises such as the Final Fantasy series, it's always been a matter of time till we saw a console style RPG on a PC that wasn't just a port of a PlayStation game... Ion Storm are the ones responsible, delivering their very Japanese-esque RPG, Anachronox.

THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR WALKING

Our story starts with a thug beating the crud out of a private investigator by the name of Sylvester Boots. This washed up investigator is in debt, and out of work, and is forced to scrape around the city of Anachronox in hopes of getting himself back in the black. His first job ends up leading him on an adventure that spans across six worlds, hooking up with a group of would be party members, giving him far more important issues to deal with than his black eye and bank balance.

To give you an idea of how long Anachronox has been in the works, you only need to know that it runs off a modified version of the Quake 2 engine. This leaves us with a means of moving around the various areas in a first person shooter style of control, but

in the third person (like in Heretic 2 for example). Of course, the Quake 2 engine is not cutting edge these days, and although poly counts for both the characters and the environments aren't that impressive, Ion Storm have done a great job at designing interesting levels. Add to this the humorous animations and facial expressions of the characters, and you've got a pretty decent looking game.

While the combat mechanics are very much a take on the console RPG format, something that stands out in Anachronox is the fact that the dialogue in the game is quite detailed, and often quite hysterically funny. A great deal of effort has gone into making encounters with other characters amusing, and it's odd to be playing a Japanese style RPG, that has so obviously been created with





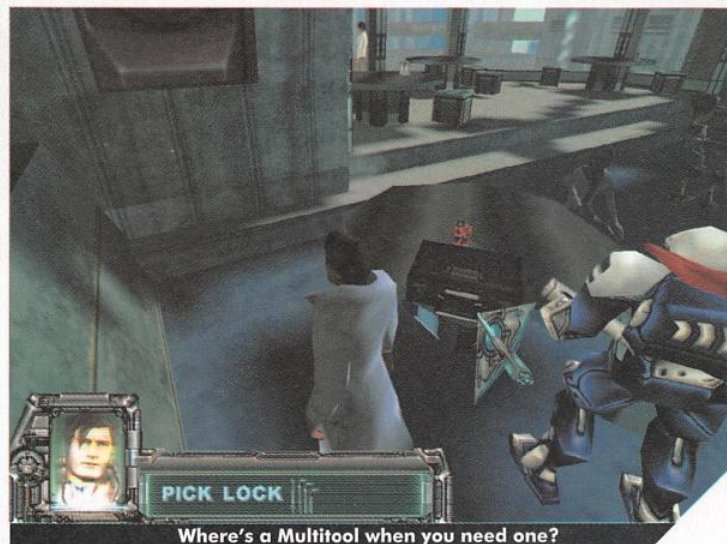
Mini game madness.



Just don't go looking for Strogg.



Zoom zoom zoom...



Where's a Multitool when you need one?

Meaningful Mini-Games

When you go to use one of your characters' non-combat skills, you are essentially presented with a mini-game, which you have to complete to execute the skill successfully. For example, Boots can pick locks, which involves using a kind of hot/cold meter on a combination lock. His trusty robot "PAL" can hack into computer systems, which involves choosing a series of tiles to connect two sides of a grid that has hidden bad spots. It's not mind blowing, but it's more interesting than a random check against a statistic.

Unfortunately if you need to travel to the far side of the "world" you're in, then that means **walking back the whole way.**

the English language in mind. Not only is the dialogue funny, but there's also a tonne of voice acting, which is of a very high standard, something that a lot of RPGs lack. The music and sound are also quite nice, with the variety of ambient tunes suiting the game perfectly.

If you really crave lots of combat in your RPGs, then Anachronox will feel like an adventure game rather than an RPG, because there are no random encounters to be found anywhere, and the planned encounters are few and far between. Most of the game is spent solving puzzles, through talking to the inhabitants of the places you travel to, or by using the special skills of your characters to dig up information out of things in the environment.

COLOURED BUGS

When you have a game where you have to travel back and forth through

an area to find the people or items you need to complete your current goals, being able to backtrack quickly is something we'd hope to see implemented. Unfortunately if you need to travel to the far side of the "world"

you're in, then that means walking back the whole way, with different sections loading up, and basically having you bored out of your brain. Some shortcuts to reach places you've been to would have been very welcome. This is a particular pain once you have more than three characters in your party, because you can only take three out at a time, and if you need the skills of someone you left back at your base of operations, then you have to waste time travelling to get them.

Further traits of Anachronox that scream "console RPG" include the Mystech "magic" system, which

utilises a variety of coloured bugs. This is extremely similar to the materia systems in Final Fantasy, or the magic

experience of Skies of Arcadia. It's not bad, it's just not original. The equipment for each character is also very console-orientated, with just the basics of weapon, armour, mystech (magic), and two auxiliary items for each character. Finding equipment upgrades aren't common occurrences, so if you crave statistical character development, this one might not be your cup of tea.

If you're a PC gamer who's never played a console RPG, or if you hate random encounters, then Anachronox will be a breath of fresh air for you. However, it hardly brings anything new to the style it has taken on, and in that sense, could have been a much better RPG. <<<

!!! Anachronox is the final game from the Ion Storm Dallas studios. Looks like Daikatana hurt.



PLUS: Excellent dialogue. Genuinely funny.

MINUS: Very light on combat. Slow start to the game.

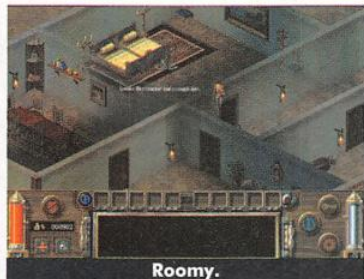
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

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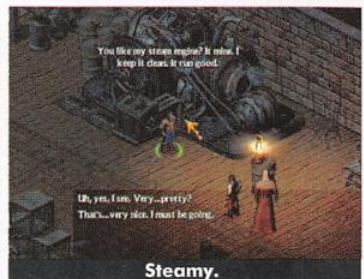
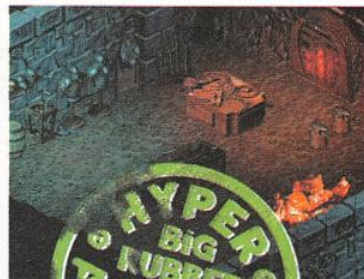
OVERALL

79

A console-style RPG that is light on combat, heavy on comedy.



Roomy.



Steamy.

Arcanum



CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Sierra >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: P200, 32MB RAM

ELIOT FISH likes to wear nothing under his armour...

Imagine a small, hairy dwarf. Now imagine a small, hairy dwarf with a double-barrelled shotgun. The question here is which would you rather be? It'd be fair to say that no one really wants to be a stumpy, hirsute stone cutter, but as soon as the double-shottie enters the equation it suddenly becomes all the more appealing, doesn't it? Or maybe that's just our twisted, RPG-exhausted brain kicking in... Gaming brains starved for a fresh new twist on a genre currently swamped with product.

Okay then, imagine an entire fantasy world at the time of the industrial revolution — a world bustling with many, many dwarves, orcs, ogres, elves and halflings, except they're brandishing rifles, wearing top-hats, appreciating fine art, and building crazy steam engines. Yes, this is the

world of Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magick Obscura, a refreshing take on the quest-drenched RPG.

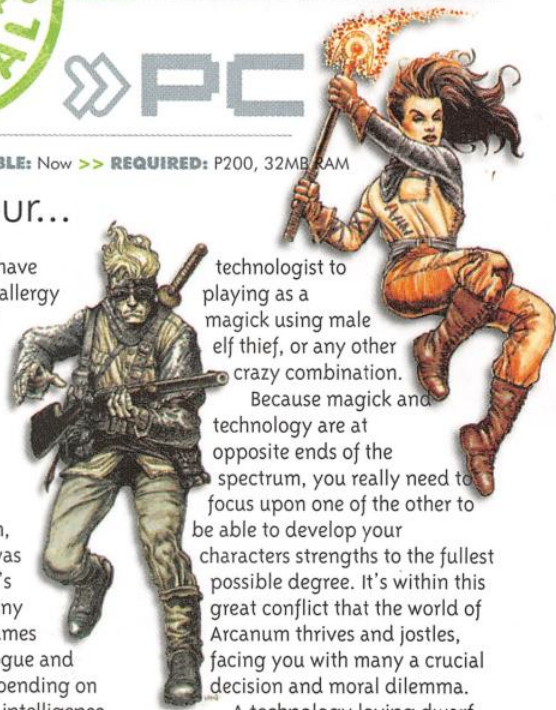
HAGGLE YOUR WAY TO VICTORY

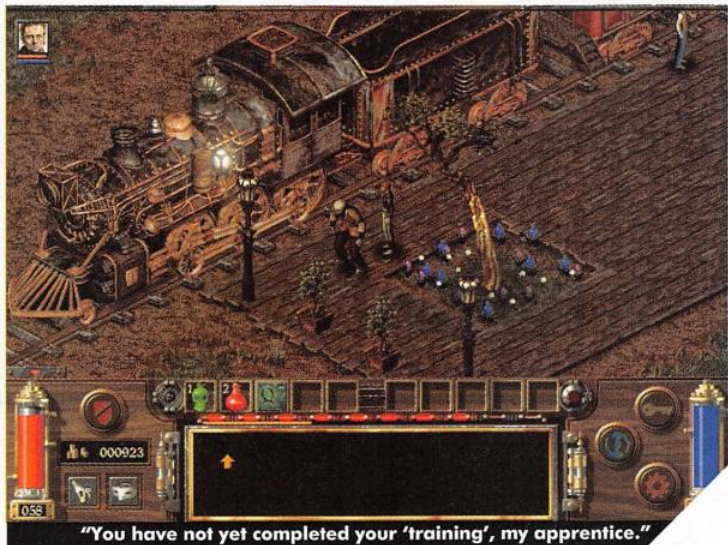
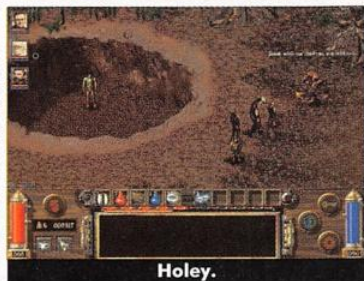
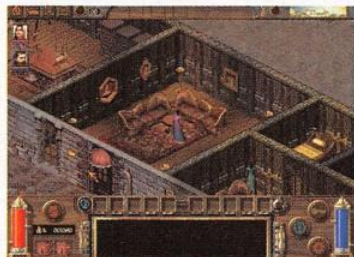
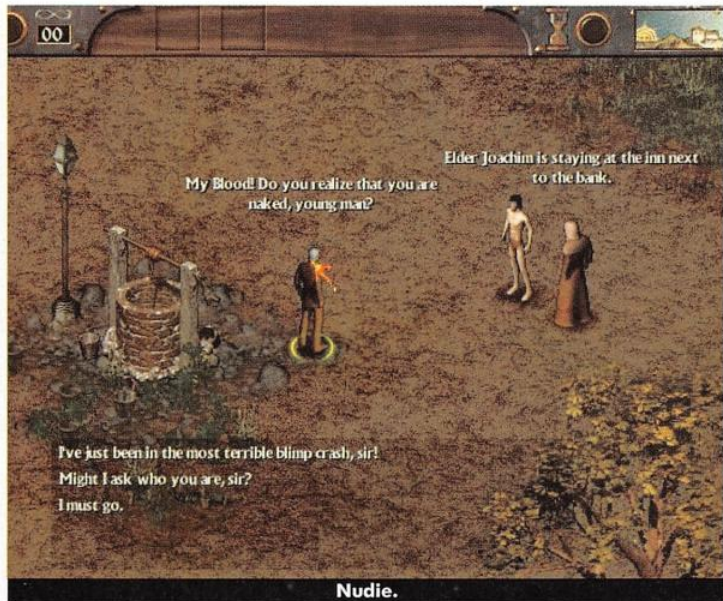
Arcanum is an RPG in the truest sense, with a character creation and development system that is one of the most open-ended, interesting and satisfying ever devised. There are a number of classic races to choose from (this isn't just an aesthetic choice, as you will be treated differently in the game depending on your race), and a plentiful number of back-stories that you can apply to your character during creation. The back-story you choose will change your starting skills and stats slightly, for instance, choosing to begin as an "escaped lunatic" gives you increased resistances but no money and a negative reaction

modifier, or choosing to have grown up with a magick allergy prevents you from using magic items but a 10% head-start in technological aptitude. In a way, the varied character creation is reminiscent of Fallout (which is no surprise considering that Tim Cain, who worked on Fallout, was also behind Arcanum). It's quite staggering how many character paths Troika games have catered for, as dialogue and quests will all change depending on your sex, race, looks and intelligence. This is a game you'll want to play through a second time, just so you can see how different the experience is from playing as a half-orc female

technologist to playing as a magick using male elf thief, or any other crazy combination. Because magick and technology are at opposite ends of the spectrum, you really need to focus upon one of the other to be able to develop your characters strengths to the fullest possible degree. It's within this great conflict that the world of Arcanum thrives and jostles, facing you with many a crucial decision and moral dilemma.

A technology loving dwarf gets very little benefit from magickal items, and a mage isn't going to be able to fire a gun to save his life, as these sides of the coin virtually cancel





See how different the experience is from playing as a **half-orc female technologist** to playing as a magick using elven male thief!

each other out. It's even true to say that a magical spell used offensively on a technologist would have nowhere near the effect intended, and a bullet fired at an elven wizard would be brushed off like a flea.

The complexities that arise from the combination of sub-quests, the customisable nature of your character, and the fact that all of this is somehow managed within an epic storyline, rich with history and mysterious twists, makes Arcanum so intensely playable and memorable.

DODGE DODGE DODGE

The combat system is complete with a broad magic system, traditional meleé fighting set-up and more advanced technological weapon system that includes firearms, traps and the like. With the option to play either turn-based or real time included, combat can be enjoyed in many different

ways. You also have NPCs to travel with you, much like in Fallout, who will generally look after themselves and maybe throw you the odd healing spell when needed. It's also possible to be scarred in combat, which can adversely affect your stats. Whilst characters can only make it to level 50, combat is still enjoyable after the thirst for experience points is quenched.

Some gamers might be initially disappointed with Arcanum's seemingly dated graphics engine, but it certainly has a style of its own that grows on you as your adventure expands. Animation is fairly basic, but the voice acting is generally very good and the character depth and story are so engrossing that the game really comes alive despite its limited character art (not everything your character wears is represented

visually in the game world). It must be said, that the wealth of items, weapons and armour in the game is almost overwhelming. The local general store has everything from headache tablets to shovels, boots, cameras, top hats and many, many more diverse and useful items.

Don't for a second be put off by Arcanum's threading of traditional fantasy through this industrial landscape. Not only is this a welcome relief from all the other medieval, fantasy and sci-fi tosh out there, but it achieves the same kind of lush game world that was once experienced in Fallout and Planescape Torment. It's not without its share of bugs, or niggling gameplay faults, but it is by far the best RPG we've played this year. <<<

!!! You can create your own custom character portrait! Just go to www.sierrastudios.com/games/arcanum for details.



PLUS: Massive game world, world editor, and multiplayer.

MINUS: A few general bugs, and your character maxes out too soon.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

85 92 94

OVERALL

93

A life stealer. Arcanum will turn you pale and skinny.



Tank rush? Try a Volkswagen rush!



Command the supply of sauerkraut.



Build really nice clean airports.

The Moon Project

CATEGORY: Real Time Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Pier 57 >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: Pentium 200, 32 MB RAM >>

JAMES COTTEE launches his own Allan Parsons Project...

 ou've gotta love those krauts. While the rest of the RTS industry are barking up the trees of irritating voice samples and 3D graphics for their own sake, German software houses are pushing the envelope of just how much complexity you can fit in a game still playable by human beings... failing that, Germans.

BLACK HOLE SUN, WON'T YOU COME

Topware Interactive have won critical acclaim for their Earth: 2150 franchise, and The Moon Project is the third and latest in the series. It follows the adventures of our old chums the Eurasian Dynasty and the United Civilized States as their jostling for Earth's post-apocalyptic resource base is complicated by the intervention of the Lunar Corporation. These three factions are all eager to start afresh on another planet, since the nuclear exchange of their last war knocked the Earth out of its orbit, on a collision course with the sun!

Of course, explosive force of that magnitude would render the planet

uninhabitable, but in the RTS genre, realism oft takes the back seat. As a field commander for one of these factions, you must build bases and units like you would expect, with a few gameplay features ignored by the designers at Westwood and Blizzard. Most significant of these is the support of a custom scripting language, where you can combine some simple programming skills with your grasp of tactics to automate your war machine.

By scripting the more mundane aspects of running your burgeoning empire, you can free up your tactical brain cells for abstract, strategic tasks. This is assuming you don't map out every aspect of your conquest in advance, a tempting task for the code cutters amongst us. Apparently this is a popular kind of Teutonic death-match, and at the very least adds value to your purchase. After you've beaten all the missions, you can then see if you can do it with your hands tied behind your back.

 Speaking of Black Hole Sun, Chris Cornell has joined Rage Against the Machine!

The complexity of regular human play is well served by the interface, with tabs for selecting any building or unit. The skill of the programming team is manifested most visibly in the graphics engine, which is forgiving on low-end hardware. Open GL is supported at the top end, for all the crispy textures you can handle. Many of the buildings and units look very similar, but the three sides can be differentiated easily. Gameplay exists in three dimensions, with deformable terrain, and even tunnel systems you can build beneath the Earth (or moon).

A SEMI-REALISTIC STAB

The Moon Project is a semi-realistic stab at a war of tomorrow, with skilled AI, customisable weapons platforms, and even true line of sight (if your men can see a flag, their morale and performance will improve. How patriotic!). Sure, it's difficult, but if you just want to tank rush then you can play Emperor all day. This is a deep game that rewards the time you invest in it. <<



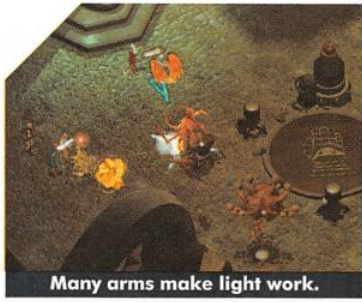
PLUS: Staggering depth, three big campaigns, low minimum specs.

MINUS: Long winded, difficult, looks a little bland.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
85 90 87

OVERALL
88

Epic strategy, but only for the hardcore.



Many arms make light work.



Thank god he's a level 12 arsonist.



Anyone bring the dragon repellent?



BALDUR'S GATE II:

Throne of Bhaal

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Interplay >> PRICE: \$39.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: Baldur's Gate II >>

GEORGE SOROPOS gets out his +4 mouse and keyboard...

The demon hordes burst through the barred doors like a tidal wave, almost swamping our position. A faint rustling in my trousers told me that one of our mages had just cast Ottoluke's Super Absorbent Panty Shield to protect us from any unfortunate accidents during the heat of battle. While our other mage, Mad Cyril, was busy preparing his trademark Bigby's Well Lubricated Fist. Old Cyril didn't like to hurt things much, but he could sure surprise the heck out of them.

BHAAL ME OVER

And so begins the final chapter in the saga of the children of Bhaal. Interplay's landmark series finally comes to a close, sort of, with Throne of Bhaal (TOB) and fans won't need too much convincing to go out and grab it. If you play BG2 online you'll want this just to get the improvements to the interface, the new character class and spells.

The Wild Mage is the new character class and their ability to channel and manipulate unpredictable energy is their key ability. Of course to use one

you'll have to start a new party, whether at the beginning of BG2 or TOB, and if you've managed to keep your group intact from the very first Baldur's Gate this may not be an appealing option. If a mage or cleric in your party has foolishly filled their book with spells at a particular level and can't learn any more they can now permanently delete some from their book to make room for more useful magics. Another useful feature allows you to disable pausing on the map screen for single player use, making it a bit easier to traverse long distances.

The most important new stuff however are the spells and high level abilities available to your party. One of the problems with taking a game based on the AD&D rules this far is that once you are over 20th level you are considered almost a demi-God and the rules don't allow for much growth beyond that point. To try and make up for this, Black Isle has included new special abilities for non-magic users and 10th level and Quest level spells for mages and clerics respectively.

!!! Neverwinter Nights is the next RPG to come from Bioware.

A KICK IN THE BHAALS

Speaking of levels, TOB has an eight million experience point cap which means that most single class characters can go as high as 40th level. But those eight million points are very hard to find. Your party

starts the game with around three million per character and by the end ours only had about six.

The designers of TOB have also been good enough to put some great humour in the game, one dungeon section plays like an old school text adventure and in another section you get to send a party of low level adventurers on a quest for you as a send up of the way most people play computer RPGs.

On the minus side of things, early on you are given access to your own 'pocket plane' of hell, basically a place where you can retreat to with the press of a button whenever you like. Being able to run away and heal takes some of the challenge out of the game, but TOB is still not easy. This game has the nastiest monsters yet seen in a Black Isle game! <<<



PLUS: Use your BG2 Characters, support for up to 40th level.

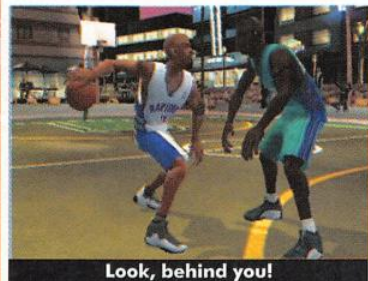
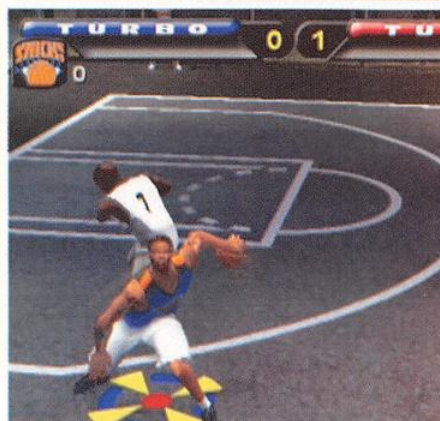
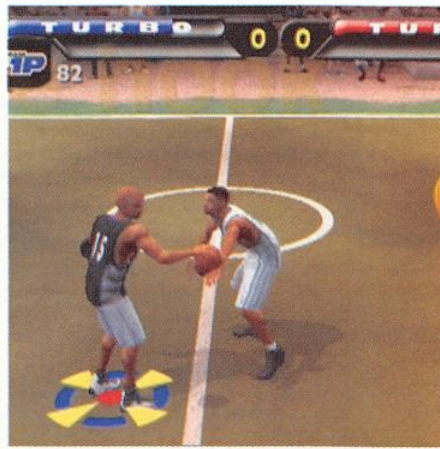
MINUS: Unfortunately, no surprises.

VISUALS 90 SOUND 90 GAMEPLAY 93

OVERALL

91

A satisfying conclusion to a fantastic RPG series.



NBA Street

PS2

CATEGORY: Arcade Basketball >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: EA >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now

GEORGE SOROPOS is hip to the street. Maybe.

If you ever wanted to hit the mean inner city streets of Pittsburgh or Chicago and take on the best ball players around while dodging drive bys and drug dealers then this is the game for you. EA's 'BIG' line of games got off to a rip roaring start with SSX and the sports giant has kept that momentum going with the release of NBA Street. Street follows the tradition of Midway's NBA Jam series of games and is designed around the concept of over the top fun rather than accurate simulation. It's a three on three contest with the winner being the first to clear out by two points upon or after reaching 21. It's mean, it's dirty and it's fun, fun, fun!

BIG AIR SLAM DUNK

Circuit City is the name of the main game mode and it lets you take a

team across several regions of the US and a bunch of different street courts. You start the game only having access to the standard NBA teams and Mr Michael Jordan. It's odd that the best player in the NBA is available straight away but there you go.

When you grind another team into the dust you can actually grab one of the five players available in that team to improve your roster or you can choose to use more development points for your created character. When you're finished with Circuit City you can move on to Hold the Court, a sort of survival game that rewards you with more player creation options like new skins. You can also learn the basics in Street School, a helpful and brief tutorial of the game.

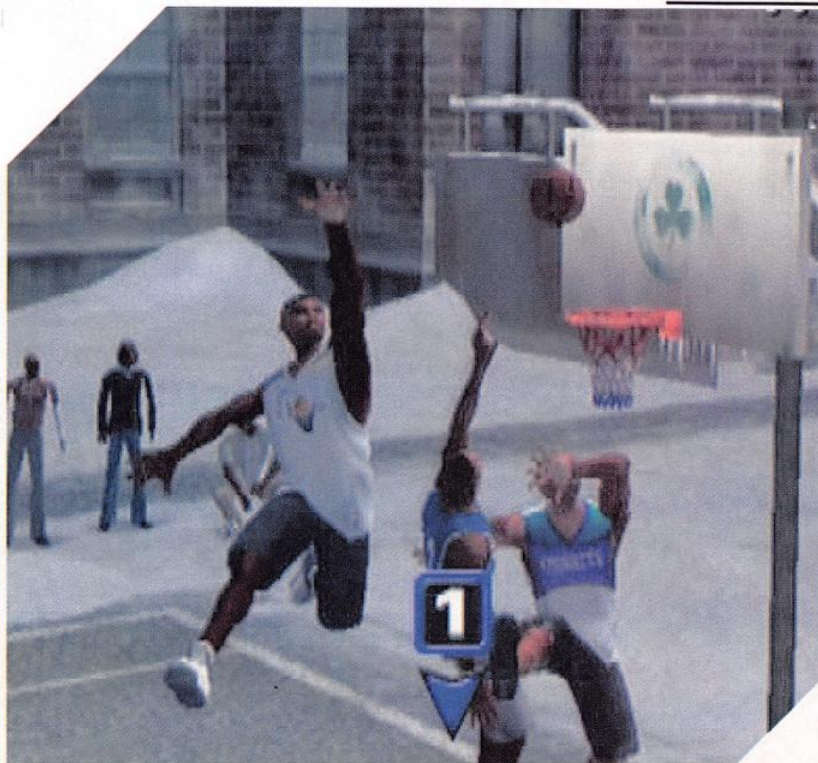
As we said before, Street is part of EA's 'BIG' range of games, like SSX. Of

course, real life basketball and snowboarding don't have a lot in common, but these two games share similar control schemes, relying on the four trigger buttons as a means to pull off tricks, or in this case, amazing moves.

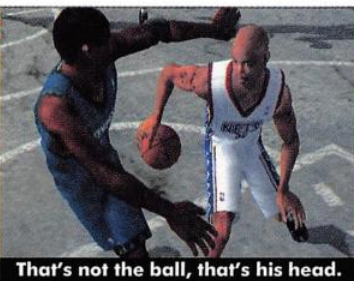
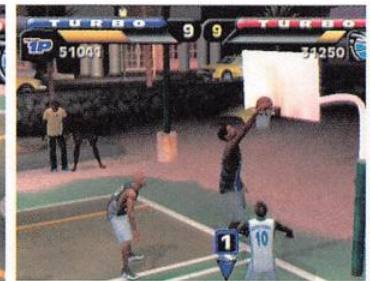
The stronger the tricks and the sweeter the combos you manage to complete, the faster the 'Gamebreaker' meter fills up. What does the 'Gamebreaker' do? It breaks the game open of course! If you make a Gamebreaker shot you'll gain a point or two and your opponent will lose a point or two. Close games can be turned around quickly using the Gamebreaker.



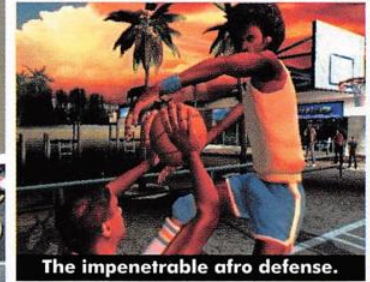
Another aspect of NBA Street that helps it stand out from the pack is the way that it handles blocked shots. In most basketball games, especially arcade-style ones, the most exciting aspect is the slam-dunk and these games are almost always much more enjoyable when you have the ball in your hands rather than when you're playing on the defensive. In NBA Street, blocked shots are a very important part of dominating the court, and coming up with a huge intercept or goal tend is every bit as enjoyable and rewarding as



Ooh, a header into the net. Stylin'.



That's not the ball, that's his head.



The impenetrable afro defense.



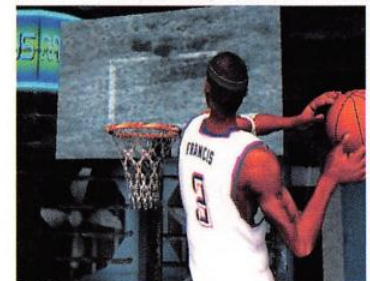
long range
750



breaking you off
3000



"Yes, I just had a manicure."



"The net's that-a-way!"

If you've beaten every basketball game and think that there's nothing left to offer you a challenge, NBA Street should surprise.

getting a big air slam-dunk. That's not to say that dunks no longer have any impact, the dunks NBA Street delivers pack a lot of punch and players will be able to do everything from two-handed reverse slams to big dunks and even pass it to themselves off of the backboard. The game also features a very simple ally-oop system where teammates will run for the hoop whenever they have an opening and all the player has to do is time the pass to the player. Getting a first-rate ally-oop is not only rewarding in itself, but when done with special moves can boost up that Gamebreaker meter more than anything else.

RUN RAMPANT
If you've beaten every basketball game out there and think that there's nothing left to offer you a challenge, NBA Street should pleasantly surprise you. While

it's easy to run rampant on the "easy" setting, this certainly isn't the case when you crank up the difficulty. When playing against strong computer-controlled opponents on the harder levels the computer will play much more intelligently and will try and boost up their Gamebreaker meter every bit as hard as you do. The games are extremely competitive and almost all of them come down to a tight finish. Another great feature is the create-a-player function, one of the best you'll find in any sports game as created players can be edited and changed at any time. Players are given the chance to upgrade their created player after each victory if they choose not to select one of the players from the team they've just beaten. What's more, the number of attribute points that can be won is directly related with

the number of trick points that the player earned while playing. One of the only complaints we can make about NBA Street is that it only supports one or two player action. This is one game that would have revelled in a four player mode and it's hard to see why one wasn't included. Even so, two player games are huge fun and easily the best way to play NBA Street. NBA Street is still a bit limited in certain areas. You can't change the number of points you need to win a game or play with a different number of guys per side. The game could also benefit from player-specific moves, as the only thing that differentiates one guy from another is his look and stats. When all is said and done, NBA Street is easily one of the most enjoyable basketball titles out there.

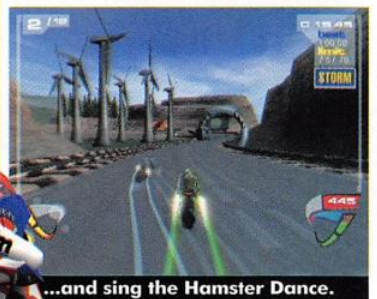
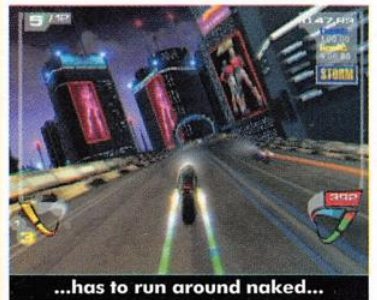
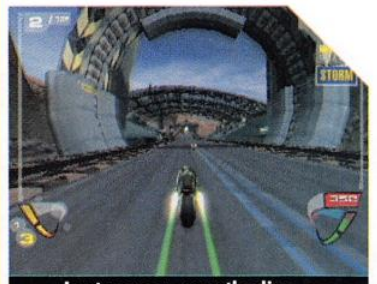


PLUS: Big fun gameplay, great moves, well polished.

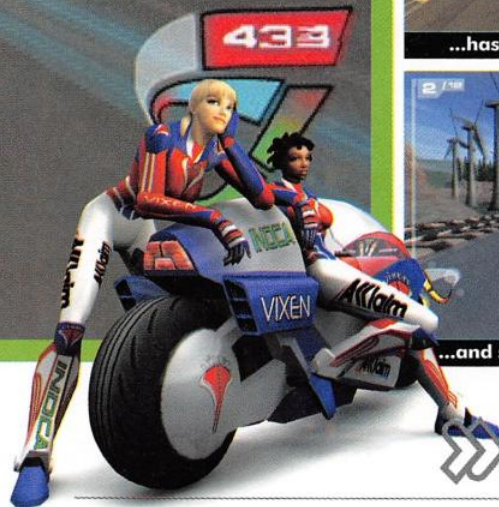
MINUS: Only one or two can play. Only a 21 point game.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	85	90
OVERALL		
88		

Brings back memories of NBA Jam... lots of fun!



Extreme-G 3



PS2

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

CAM SHEA tries to put Extreme-G 2 out of his mind...

The first thing you'll notice when perusing Extreme-G 3's menus, teams, dispassionate female voice-over and then racing action is just how much this game wants to be Wipeout Fusion. It really, badly, desperately wants to be Wipeout Fusion. And who can blame it? The Wipeout games are among the most seminal of the "next generation" (now "last generation") machines, and really set the benchmark for funky futuristic racing.

A HALLMARK MOMENT

Acclaim's Cheltenham Studios have done a good job with Extreme-G 3. Many of the hallmarks of the last two games — fogging, bouncing from wall to wall thanks to restrictive courses, and an appalling frame rate are things of the past. Of course, that's to be expected moving from the N64 to PS2, but it's just so satisfying cranking along at 50/60 fps (well, most of the time) with 11 other racers on the track and a view distance that allows you to see the entire course.

Extreme-G 3 is a pretty game in some regards — the course suspended

above the water is very cool, with far-off hi-tech castles and a nice underwater section. In fact, the environments are the visual highlight of the game. Closer to the action it's a slightly different story. Some of the weapon effects are awesome, as is the sonic boom, but a fair amount of design mediocrity creeps in too. The headlight effect for one is perhaps the worst we've ever seen, consisting of a fuzzy white haze that doesn't illuminate the surroundings, and is more likely to impair your vision than enhance it.

The track design is very much in the same style as Wipeout Fusion's — loop the loops, corkscrews, split paths, snake runs etc. There are some breathtaking moments, but also some infuriating aspects to the track design and the handling mechanics that should have been identified and improved during playtesting. For instance, every second course or so has a section where you drop down a stepped section of track. If you're slightly off course (and this is easier than you'd think given the twitchy

handling) you'll land outside the course and die. No, you're not placed back on the track ala Wipeout, it's game over. Very frustrating for a momentary loss of concentration.

WE CAN REBUILD HIM

!!! Sony's Wipeout Fusion is scheduled for November! Drooooo!

Acclaim have made some interesting changes to the overall layout of the game. There are your

standard arcade and league modes, as well as different speed classes, but what's really intriguing is the bike modification system. By winning races in the league mode you earn money that can be spent on improving your bike's components, including both defensive and offensive weaponry, engine power and various utilities that allow you to carry more weapons, shields etc. This is a nice addition and works well.

For those after a game to tide them over until Wipeout Fusion, Extreme-G 3 is a good option. It's hardly a classic, but is challenging enough, and most importantly, entertaining enough to be worth consideration. <<<



PLUS: Much better than the first two in the series. A good challenge.

MINUS: A few small changes would have made it much better.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 79 77

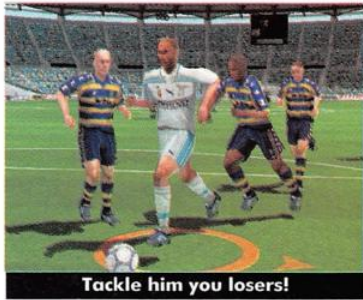
OVERALL

79

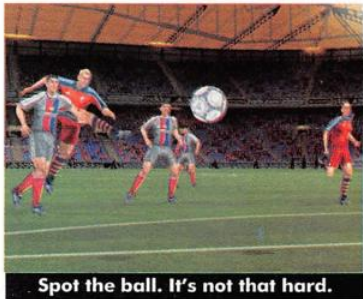
A step up for the series, but still room for improvement.



Kick it to me! Kick it to me!



Tackle him you losers!



Spot the ball. It's not that hard.



UEFA Challenge » PS2

CATEGORY: Sport >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Infogrames >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now

GEORGE SOROPOS gives this game a yellow card...

Infogrames took the bull by the horns when they decided to take on the combined might of EA's FIFA and Konami's ISS series with UEFA Challenge. Trying to find an edge over the competition they have enlisted the help of nine of the "best football players in Europe" as advisors to the game's development and come up with a package that tries hard to offer a real alternative to the old guard.

SLICED ORANGES

Unlike other titles, UEFA Challenge focuses more on passes and dynamic play rather than skill moves. In other words you won't be able to hog the ball, do twenty stunning moves to cut through your opponent's defenders, and then run around the goalie for a point. As in the real game you must be able to pass the ball with enough timing and skill to get around your defenders. On top of that, your passes are not always perfect, sometimes they will go straight to an opponent or go too far ahead of your team mate or off the field altogether. Because of this it is also important to keep an eye

on the radar to see where your players actually are as they will try and run into open space whenever they can.

UEFA's officials are also a bit more wary than in other games. Try playing loosely and you will pay the price. Almost any kind of sliding tackle will bring a penalty. If anything, UEFA Challenge's officials are stricter than the real thing and they are very effective at keeping the player honest.

In terms of appearance, UEFA isn't the most attractive Soccer title on the PS2, but it does boast a very high level of detail on the player's faces, complete with dirty looks and toothy grins. Though, a few mistakes have been made concerning the racial characteristics of a few players (ie wrong coloured skin!)

The field and stadium both boast high levels of detail complete with lights, security guards and TV Cameras, not to mention the waving fans and team flags. Weather effects are a nice touch too; snowflakes float over the camera and rain and hail barrage the players on the field. You

may also notice that the field even experiences wear and tear throughout the game!

SENSATIONS ON THE PITCH

Sadly where UEFA fails to live up to the real challenge (the one against FIFA and ISS), is in the all-important area of control. UEFA's response time to

Bring on FIFA 2002! That's what we really want boyeee. Oh, that and a GameCube for it.

commands is a little slow which can make playing the game an exercise in frustration. Sometimes your players will sit back

from the ball and wait for the opposing player to snatch it away. Your players' reactions after changing who you control are also too slow.

According to Infogrames, nine players from the UEFA League helped out with the game by "describing their sensations on the pitch" which the developers then apparently used to "reproduce these feelings in the game". So if your jockstrap starts to itch badly during the first half or if you feel like running off to the south of France with one of the Spice Girls, don't panic, it's all part of the game. <<



PLUS: Realistic overall feel, with teamplay being most important.

MINUS: Slow controls can be really frustrating.

VISUALS 80 SOUND 80 GAMEPLAY 75

OVERALL

78

Just another soccer game that doesn't really stand out.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 57



Hey dude, you left your head at home.



"We must find the lost gameplay!"



The mating habits of the blue emu.

Atlantis: The Lost Empire

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Disney Interactive >> PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

KEVIN CHEUNG opens the cryogenic chamber.



When it comes to videogames, Disney Interactive has rightly been at the butt end of many jokes. Its archaic marketing structure seems to think it can indefinitely drag out the life of its movies by delaying the release date of a game; that the appeal of its characters are so timeless that it can release a game over a year after the movie's theatrical release; and that kids can be repeatedly duped into buying any crap as long as a picture of Mickey is slapped on the cover.

PUSHING A CRATE

But now Disney seems to have wised up, and appears to be trying to make a serious name for itself in the videogames market. One need only look to the strategic alliances it's made over the last 12 months, like collaborating with Rare to make Mickey's Speedway USA, or teaming up with Squaresoft to create Kingdom Hearts. Disturbingly, the latter game actually looks like something worth paying good money for. And here's where Disney

is correcting another one of its mistakes: Atlantis is actually coming out perfectly in time with the movie.

Don't start reaching for your wallets just yet, though: while Atlantis has the look and feel of a very decent game, it's still just a game for small children. You'll gather this much from the long and unavoidable tutorial that goes through how to jump, punch, duck, and search — actions that require the push of only one button.

Atlantis is an action/adventure game, putting you in the role of the film's main characters as you go in a submarine and dive in search of the fabled sunken city. The core of the gameplay is formed by a need to periodically switch characters, as no one individual has the combined abilities of climbing a ladder, pushing a crate, flicking a light switch, or igniting an explosive fuse. In other words, Atlantis will pose challenges that can only be handled by one of the team members, much like Paratroid, Evo's Space Adventure, or even Donkey Kong 64 — only easier.

SPOON-FED

But like one of those infuriating little brats who spoil everything for you by trying to show off his 1337 gaming skills, Atlantis spoon-feeds you the solution to every new puzzle you encounter. Keys, trinkets and

magic books are often cleverly hidden face-up on a table or in the middle of the floor space. Courteous reminders that you shouldn't turn off the power before opening the main escape hatch will likely be followed by "Shut up, I might've derived some enjoyment from figuring that out myself".

But if an audience with an IQ of less than 50 is what Disney is aiming for, then one can't really complain. Atlantis wasn't designed with mature gamers in mind. At least mature gamers who still cling on to the hope that Disney will produce a game that does supreme justice to the heroes of their childhood memories will know what to recommend if a young, impressionable child is in need of a new game. <<

!!! Kingdom Hearts for the PS2 just might be the Disney game we've all been hoping for.



PLUS: Rock solid graphics and controls. Just like the movie.

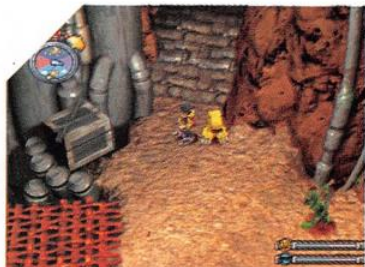
MINUS: Reveals the answers to its puzzles, spoiling the fun.

VISUALS 83 SOUND 80 GAMEPLAY 70

OVERALL

73

Kids who loved the movie have every reason to buy this game.



Training, eh? 20 push-ups you freak!



No, I don't have toilet paper on me!



Time for a spanking.



Digimon World

PSone

CATEGORY: Pet Breeding >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Bandai >> PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

KEVIN CHEUNG experiments with bad parenting...

While Nintendo reaps all the profits and kudos from Pokémon and finds new and better ways to milk it for all it's worth (as you would), one has to wonder how Bandai is feeling. You see, long before Pokémon ever existed, a Darwin Award actually went to a female driver who killed herself and her passenger because she answered the feeble calls for food from her egg-shaped virtual pet - which was attached to her car keys. No, it wasn't a Togepi that was responsible for the mishap. Back in those days, the virtual pet craze had only just started, and they were called 'Tamagotchi', made by Bandai.

POCKET MONSTERS

Digimon can literally be thought of as Tamagotchi 2.0. Instead of taking place in a fictional fantasy world, the human characters have actually been sucked into Earth's digital world, kind of like in *Tron*. The Digimon (short for Digital Monsters) are the animals that inhabit this digital world. Like Pokémon, you can own

them (but you can only use one at a time) and they can be trained to fight. They can even transform into larger, more powerful versions of themselves. However, if they get tired or beaten up, you don't just teleport them into a pokéball and run away to the local chop shop. That's the beauty of this RPG simulation - they follow you around like a real pet, and you actually have to feed them, nurture them, praise them and scold them in real time.

!!! Digimon World 2 is already out overseas, but we'll have to wait for it.

Digimon World assumes you've never seen the cartoon before (which incidentally is miles more interesting than Pokémon), putting you through the long-eared introductory motions of an FMV that shows how you were sucked into the digital world. You then name yourself, then your pet, then it's off on your quest to win the favour of all the Digimon on the island.

KICK AND BITE

Being an RPG, the presentation is (surprise, surprise) just like Pokémon, except in 3D. You wander around a world map from a mostly

top-down perspective, find your way between different locations, carry out sub-quests and mini-games, and with any luck it will culminate in completion of the broader mission at hand.

There are no separate turn-based battle screens. Everything happens in real-time on the world map, so if you chance upon a wild Digimon, you have to prepare your pet then and there for battle. As they kick and bite each other, you can even

take manual control to tell your Digimon what to do in its next move. If you win, experience is gained, your town gains a new ally, and your Digimon becomes stronger.

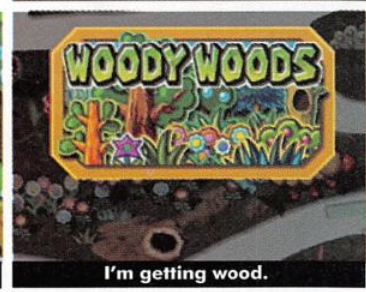
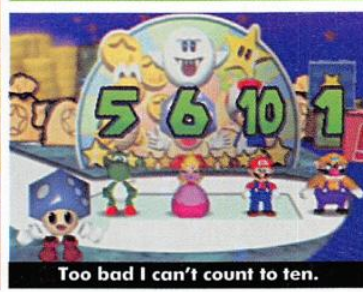
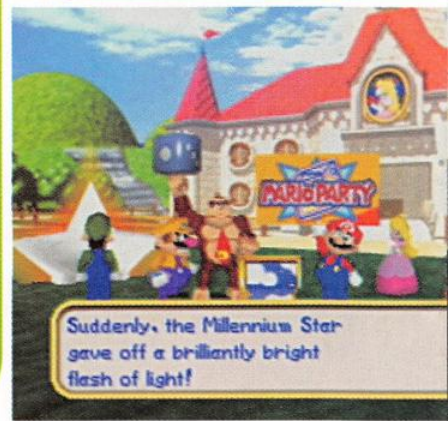
Despite the cheap looking fonts and grating sound effects, Digimon World does suitable justice to the television series. It's not a good thing that it's so similar to Pokémon on Game Boy, especially since the PSone is easily capable of so much more, but escaping this inevitable comparison would've meant (gasp!) coming up with brand new game concepts. <<<



PLUS: Mostly faithful to the animated series. All in real-time.
MINUS: The game runs along at a snail's pace.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
71	64	68
OVERALL		
70		
A quirky yet forgettable RPG. Only for fans of the show.		

REVIEW >> HYPER 59



Mario Party 3

» N64

CATEGORY: Mini games >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now

CAM SHEA believes that sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind...

You know, Mario holds like, the lamest parties. The music is always midi based, there's no alcohol (or disco biscuits), and the only food served is cake. Plus, they're the same theme every time — dress like an idiot. Mario always comes as a plumber, Peach as a princess, and Waluigi as Hamburgler. Just for once we'd like to see Mario let his hair down and go a little bit silly... which is exactly what he doesn't do in Mario Party 3.

LEVELS. IT'S ALL ABOUT LEVELS.

On pretty much every level Mario Party 3 is a little too similar to both the previous games in the series. Well, it actually looks a little different, taking more of a Paper Mario 2D cel shaded approach. The

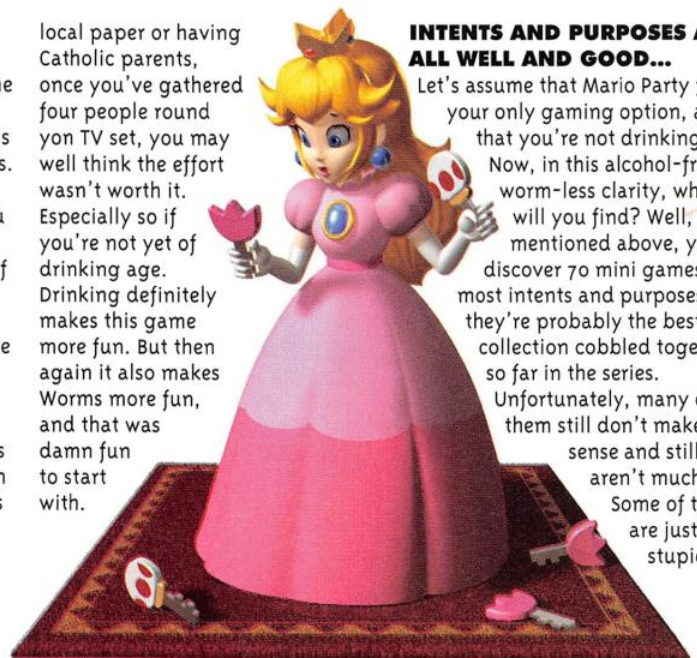
biggest drawcard for the game is that there are now 70 mini games to play as you progress through the game, which is a hefty number to be sure. Unfortunately, the game is still no good if you have no friends. And no, imaginary friends are no good. Nor is that cute girl that you met on the net, that in all likelihood is probably a member of NAMBLA. Indeed, amassing three friends (and the requisite controllers) to play the game in the first place is probably the stiffest challenge for most gamers. Fortunately, we had no problem, since we work in the same office as PC Powerplay, and for some reason those guys love console gaming as much as we do! Weird.

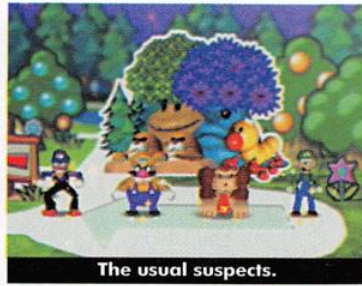
In any case, whether its through the dark arts, personal ads in the

local paper or having Catholic parents, once you've gathered four people round yon TV set, you may well think the effort wasn't worth it. Especially so if you're not yet of drinking age. Drinking definitely makes this game more fun. But then again it also makes Worms more fun, and that was damn fun to start with.

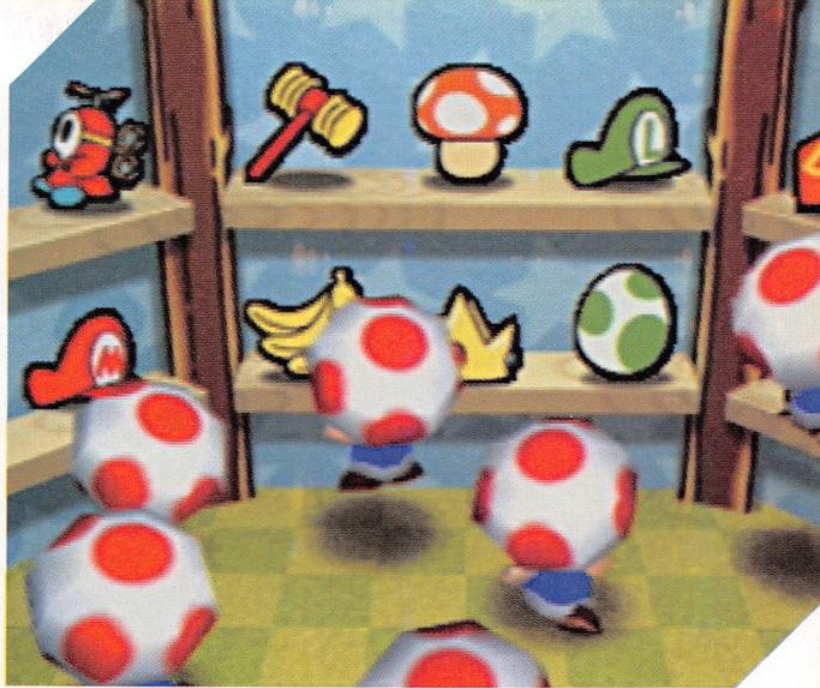
INTENTS AND PURPOSES ARE ALL WELL AND GOOD...

Let's assume that Mario Party 3 is your only gaming option, and that you're not drinking. Now, in this alcohol-free, worm-less clarity, what will you find? Well, as mentioned above, you'll discover 70 mini games. For most intents and purposes they're probably the best collection cobbled together so far in the series. Unfortunately, many of them still don't make any sense and still aren't much fun. Some of them are just plain stupid...





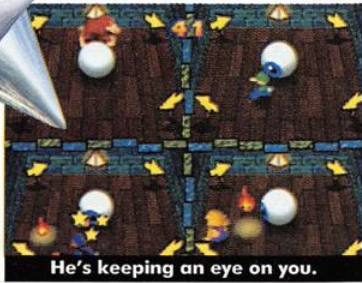
The usual suspects.



The lovechild of Toad and Rayman.

Obligatory storyline boxout

>> Mario Party 3's story will keep you engrossed to the bitter end. The whole game is a fight to win the millennium star – an ultra rare star that fell from the sky and is only made every thousand years... meaning there's only around 15 million of them already. In any case, whoever possesses the latest of the 15 million becomes the superstar of the Universe! The game is actually set inside a toybox of the star's creation. How the star managed to be uncoordinated enough to fall out of the sky, yet can still craft a toybox is beyond me. Nintendo logic I guess.



He's keeping an eye on you.

The biggest drawcard for the game is that there are now **70 mini games to play** as you progress through the game.



aside from the one where you're all on spacehoppers and you have to knock your opponents off the... oh no wait a second, that one was stupid too.

New characters for Mario Party 3 are Waluigi and Daisy, with Mario, Luigi, Wario, Donkey Kong, Yoshi and Peach returning. There are five different themes for the game boards covering all the basic clichéd categories (with the ice level being the exception... never seen one of those before!).

Gameplay-wise, there aren't many surprises. The item system is pretty cool, allowing you to buy items at certain spots on the maps, which can then be used to set traps and enhance your abilities, among other things.

!!! Beat story mode to get your character's head on Mt. Mariomore!

DUEL MODE

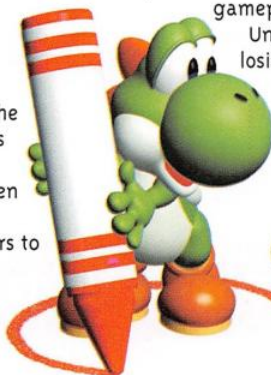
One of the new additions in Mario Party 3 are the five Duel Maps. These are one-on-one affairs, and a nice new gameplay variant to play when you're tired of Battle Royal. In Duel Mode, stars aren't

the focus – battles and control of the map are. The first person to land on a normal space then owns that space, so if the other player lands on it, they must pay a fee. You even hire computer controlled partners to help. With a little strategy, they'll stand between

you and your opponents, preventing you from taking damage, and dishing out attacks on your turn too. The catch is that these partners need to be paid a salary, so if you can't afford it, bad luck. Duel maps also have plenty of two player mini games and kooky random events to round the gameplay out.

Unfortunately, winning or losing still feels very random, so no matter how good you are at the mini games, there's still an incredible amount of sitting around waiting.

Enough with the waiting! Maybe it's time for a change, Nintendo. <<<



PLUS: Perfect if you're a siamese twin and so is your best friend...

MINUS: Does the world really need another Mario Party?

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
73 73 73

OVERALL
73

Above average, but this series is losing its appeal rapidly.



PS2

Gauntlet: Dark Legacy

CATEGORY: Action >> **PLAYERS:** 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: Midway >> **PRICE:** \$99.95 >>
RATING: M >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

Games from the 1980s seldom make for decent titles in today's videogames landscape. Like the N64 outing not so long ago, Gauntlet: Dark Legacy is just the same top-down shooter of old wearing polygons instead of sprites. Sure, there are a couple of new characters like the Jester, but the differences are quite token and aesthetic.

What's more, you can get away with simply mashing away at every button through the entire game. Never mind that health meter that's flashing at the bottom of the screen: provided you collect everything in sight, you're not all that likely to die no matter how many times you get hit or inflict damage on yourself.

The game's not all that impressive to look at either. It basically looks like an N64 game running at high resolution, and the characters have possibly the most retarded animations seen on the PlayStation 2. The sound effects are also a little tacky, though many are meant to have been sampled from the original Gauntlet.

However, as Hyper's lone defender of Robotron 64, and in deference to the game's faith to the original gameplay, this reviewer isn't going to judge Gauntlet: Dark Legacy on the basis of aesthetics. Although I finished the game wholly prepared to write the game off as utter nonsense, I realised that I'd actually burned through a large number of hours, which can only mean that it's at least worth considering for a rental to entertain a bunch of drunken friends.

Kevin Cheung

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
73	70	62	69



PSone

World's Scariest Police Chases

CATEGORY: Racing/Driving >> **PLAYERS:** 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Activision >> **PRICE:** \$79.95 >>
RATING: G8+ >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

When you steal a car and take a joyride you'd better beware that the long arm of the law is reaching out to take you down. Cons, crooks and car thieves are out of control and it's up to you to take them down in a desperate, dangerous and deadly show of force. I'm Sheriff John Bunnell and in the next half hour I'm going to show you that crime, corruption, car theft and crazy behaviour don't pay.

Activision's wild, wicked, way out and wacky new game is based on my experiences out on patrol on the roughest, toughest, meanest, most outrageous streets in America. Ride with me as we chase down gang bangers, car jackers, joy riders, booze hounds, drug runners and ball room dancers who will find out, one way or another, that no one escapes the long arm of the law. Play in the style of Driver and Driver 2 as you search the streets of America for those people whose crazy antics and reckless behaviour endanger the lives of all Americans.

Sadly the designers of WSPC have made one fatal mistake — and that's all it takes on these mean streets to mess up your day. Your police cruiser is too fragile and you take too much damage from the environment making it very, very hard to play the game without wanting to get tanked up on happy juice and tear through a few red lights.

George Soropos

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
75	90	65	70



PSone

Spec Ops: Covert Assault

CATEGORY: Soldier Sim >> **PLAYERS:** 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Take 2 >> **PRICE:** \$59.95 >>
RATING: M >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

If you've been hanging out for a game like Spec Ops: Covert Assault on your PlayStation, I feel really, really sorry for you. Why? Because it's such a pale imitation of all the great "soldier sims" available on the PC (SWAT 3, Operation Flashpoint, even Counter-Strike). The attempt to achieve the same kind of game with the limited technical abilities of the PlayStation is just a bad idea. It just can't be done very well.

Okay, so Spec Ops: Covert Assault is quite playable, but it's a pretty feeble gaming experience. Characters look basic, blocky and are animated quite poorly. The environments also look flat, bland and are hardly convincing. In terms of actual gameplay, it's possible to overcome the games shortcomings and enjoy a tense bit of action, but something will tell you it's not really worth struggling through this game all the way to the end. You can employ some basic tactics, but most of the time you'll be playing it as if you're a lone soldier, sneaking around the environment and getting the jump on the mostly brain dead A.I. enemies.

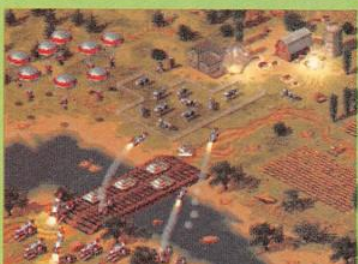
If the PlayStation is your only gaming platform and you love this kind of Tom Clancy style of gaming, then Spec Ops may bring you some enjoyable hours... or minutes. If you can avoid it though, your money would be best saved for something else.

Eliot Fish

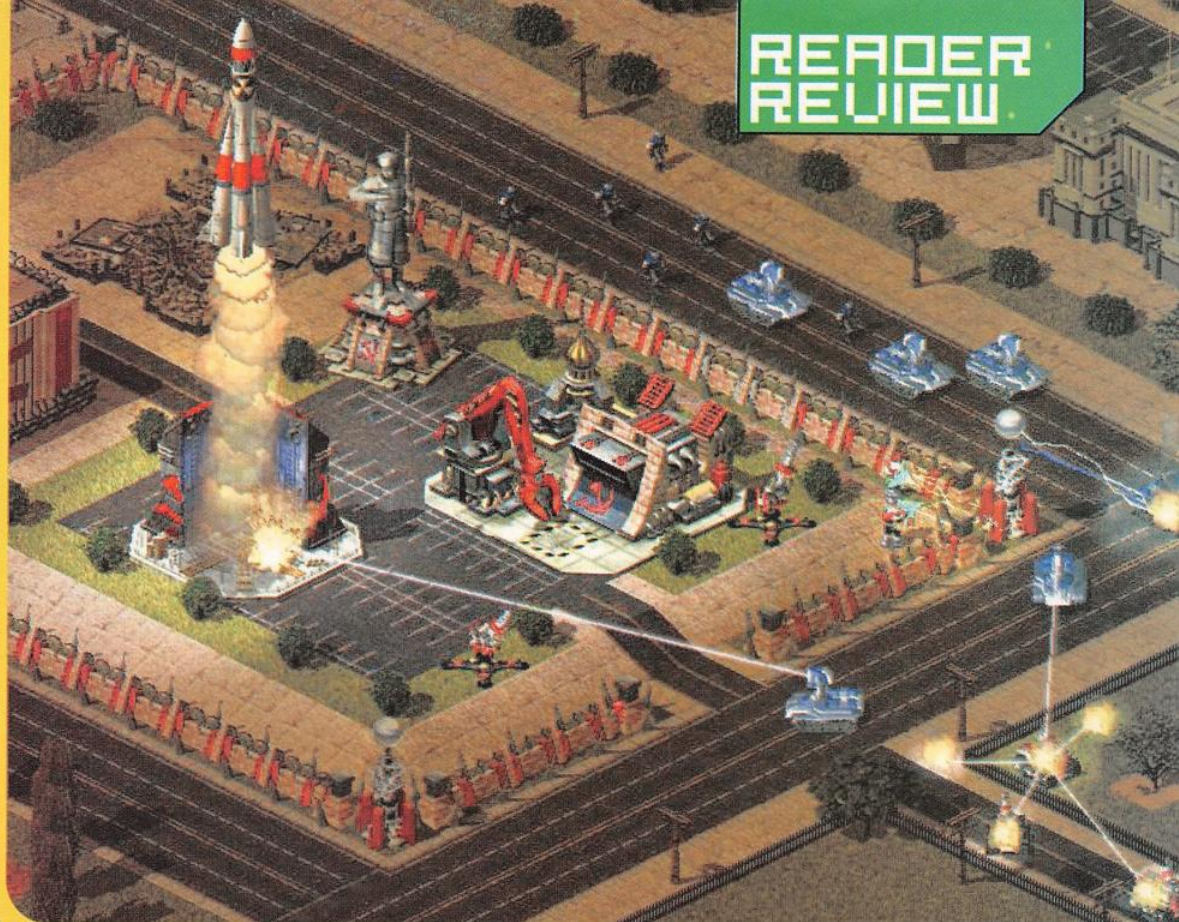
VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
64	62	60	65



Dubya keeps Kyoto protesters at bay.



Parachuting into a missile zone? Er...



Red Alert 2

PC

CATEGORY: RTS >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Westwood >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>
 REQUIRED: PII 266, 64MB RAM, 3D card (optional) >>

Hyper reader, **MUTTY**, checks for reds under his bed...

Any doubts you may have had in Westwood's ability to give us a quality RTS title after their ordinary effort with Tiberian Sun can be quickly erased after a few minutes of loading Red Alert 2 on your hard drive. Red Alert 2 is what Tiberian Sun should have been, and then some, and it is probably the last of the great 2D RTS titles we'll ever see on PC, with 3D strategy titles becoming the future.

WELCOME BACK COMMANDER

The C&C series are all about two sides fighting it out, and RA2's story is quite fun and entertaining to watch (albeit a bit goofy looking). All the missions in RA2 are seamed together with slick and well produced FMV, whether it be Romanov barking orders, the President giving speeches around the globe, or even the luscious Agent Tanya clad in snow gear (one of the finer moments).

RA2 is the first game in the C&C series which is actually nice to look at, although it's still 2D. Unlike Tiberian Sun's tiny and dark units and barren landscapes, the developers have really put some time into making sure RA2 looks lush and more to scale. Instead of just barren rock landscapes and flat snowfields, there are towering cities, bridges, and even real city locales, like Washington and the Kremlin.

Lighting is also used to great effect with explosions, night missions and nukes (giving a lush green glow on the surrounding landscape). Units are also easier to see, and are all a bit more to scale, as well as being animated very well. On the audio front, RA2 excels in giving the game far more character and personality, with each unit having a distinctive voice. Tanja's "shake it baby" and Yuri "I know your thoughts" are fine examples of this, and great to hear amongst all the action. Gun fire, explosions and screams of agony all sound satisfying, as well as the cool ambient environment sounds like the car horns and traffic in the cities, or the wind in the snow peaks add sustenance.

A POWERFUL NASTY SHOCK

Although most of the units you will already be familiar with, there are a few new and powerful units for each side. The Allies have light technology, harnessed in such weapons as the devastating Prism Tank, and the Chronosphere, which has been developed for the Chrono Legionnaire, who literally warps units or building 'out of time'. The Soviets are also well equipped, having greater numbers,

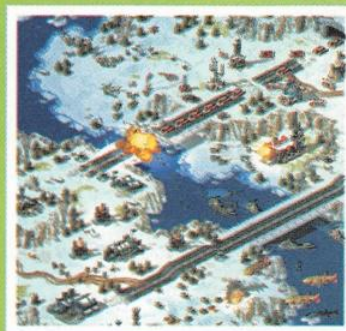
superior firepower, and also Yuri, a powerful troop who can use his mind to take control of most allied units making them yours instantly. Also, the awesome Tesla electricity technology, placed on a Tesla coil or Tesla troop, gives a powerful nasty shock. There are other new combinations in RA2, including the allied IFV, which is an anti-aircraft tank that changes roles depending upon which infantry you place in it. An engineer in an IFV makes a repair IFV and so on.

Garrisoning is a new feature, which allows further strengthening of positions by getting your troops to hide inside buildings, safe from harm. Neutral tech buildings such as airfields and hospitals can be captured giving you extra features such as paratroopers etc. Capture oil derricks for extra cash, even repair facilities.

The interface has had a few minor tweaks. Unit queuing is now infinite, and there are now 4 separate build tabs, as well as a functioning waypoint system and the ability to deploy units, such as the allied GI.

On the whole, RA2 is easily Westwood's best RTS title so far, with loads of explosive fun. ☺☺

!!! 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: The best C&C combat thus far. Looks damn fine too!

MINUS: Still 2D, and it's hardly original.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 88 91

OVERALL

87

For C&C fans. 3D RTS gamers might want something more.

Pinobee: Wings Of Adventure

GBA CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Activision >>
 PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

In the hallowed Japanese tradition of storylines that don't make any sense, Pinobee hits the mark beautifully. Taking a little from *Pinocchio* and a lot from Wu Tang Killa Bees, Pinobee is the tale of a robot bee who desperately wants to be good, but is genetically predisposed not to be. You see, Pinobee is missing something... a heart. Tragically, his creator was kidnapped before he

could complete little Pinobee. And without a heart, Pinobee is, err... a bit of a bastard. Thus, Pinobee must set out to rescue his creator (that's Grandpa Bee to you young whippersnappers), and to get some heart, literally.

Pinobee has a cool, and somewhat fresh set of abilities — including the bizarre dash move where Pinobee's head blows up like a balloon. He can also hover, auto target enemies and

climb walls. As you play through the game you'll collect various hidden cards. Complete a set and you'll earn a new ability. These range from giving Pinobee more dash moves to decreasing his damage when hit.

The levels are quite cool, and you'll come across a number of videogame staples such as cannons (ala *Donkey Kong Country*), bouncy mushrooms, bubbles and teleporters, but in combination with Pinobee's native abilities, it all combines into a fun platform experience. Plus, levels are huge and packed with secrets, so there's some replay value on offer. Pinobee is one of the more under-rated GBA titles. Yes, it is just another platformer, but it takes a different tack than most. If you're after a game to tide you over until *Klonoa* hits GBA, Pinobee could be just the ticket.

Cam Shea



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	77	83	80

Earthworm Jim

GBA CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Majesco
 PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Sorry guys, as much as we wanted to enjoy the old school antics of Earthworm Jim, it just doesn't hold up that well after all these years. If we were to over-analyse the reasons why, we'd say that the problem goes to the very core of the game design. Let's take a game from the same time period and overall genre like *Super Mario World*. *SMW* is still hugely

playable today because Mario/Yoshi have a very finely honed ability set that gave Nintendo tremendous scope for gameplay. The level design was so elegant that it's timeless. Earthworm Jim, on the other hand, derived its core gameplay from gimmicks, quirky scenarios and lush animations. The reason it was such fun was because there was nothing else like it and it

was packed with offbeat humour... not because it had great gameplay.

So in playing Earthworm Jim again, most of the advantages that the original had have been lost, and we're left with a mildly entertaining game that doesn't really add anything to the GBA's lineup. Further compounding things, this is at best a bare bones port. There aren't many levels, there are no interesting new playmodes and Earthworm Jim has lost one too many frames of animation in the transition. Oh, and a password save mechanism should be mandatory in this day and age.

Frank Dry



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	80	70	70



How will he worm out of this one?

Bomberman Tournament

GBA CATEGORY: RPG/battle >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Activision
 PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Right here baby - this is what the GBA was built for. Multiplayer shenanigans, and plenty of 'em. It may be old school, but Bomberman is as much fun as ever. But first, the non-multi part. Now I must admit that I never bothered playing the single player components on SNES, so I have no point of comparison, but we were pleasantly surprised by what Bomberman Tournament (BT) had to

offer in that arena. It's hardly a quest of Zelda proportions, but there are enough good elements that you won't feel ripped off.

As we mentioned in the preview last issue, Hudson have thrown in creatures called Karabon that you can build up and use to battle other creatures. They come in four basic attribute types (although you can cross breed), and the whole thing is very similar to Pokémon... except



without the depth. The Karabon even look like Pokémon, and the first one you pick up (Pommy) also has a nasty habit of saying "mew" which is a little too close to the pokébone for comfort.

BT is, of course, a multiplayer purchase first and foremost, and the multiplayer angle doesn't disappoint. There are eight arenas to bomb it out in, and all the classic items from past games have made it in - fire up, speed up, slow down, bomb kick, bomb up, punch, hellfire, line bomb and power glove. It's all good. Plus you only need a single cart! Get some friends together because this is the best multiplayer game on GBA at the moment.

Cam Shea



Yep, this is da bomb.



Bomb-a-licious.



Bomb the bass.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	78	88	88



Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

GBA CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Majesco >>
 PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Pitfall Harry... now there's a stupid name for a videogame hero. He sounds more like the lead character (played by Chevy Chase, or perhaps Steve Martin) in some dodgy eighties comedy, as opposed to being taken literally - ie. a man named Harry who falls in pits.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure (PTMA) was the 16bit sequel to the classic Atari 2600 game. Expanding

on the basic concept of a man running from left to right avoiding various pitfalls, such as falling into pits, PTMA innovates in several important areas. First of all, it stars Harry's son, the imaginatively named Professor Horatio Hufnagel (and his contrabulous fabtraption), err... no, sorry I read it wrong - Harry Jr. In any case, he's certainly an evolutionary step up from his dad,

possessing the ability to take multiple paths, climb ropes, use weapons and oh so much more. The terrain he finds himself in too is much more complex. There's a wide variety of animal and plant life, including monkeys whose brains can be feasted upon while still alive, snakes that can be used as fetching headbands, and pits that can be used as forts if you wish.

This is all well and good except that in creating a realistic, lush jungle environment, the developers have forgotten that it's no fun being forced to guess where to go. This is Pitfall's chief problem - levels are multi-level maze-like paths through the jungle and there's a lot of guesswork required to make it through - not fun with limited lives and no password system. Even so, Harry Jr's animations are excellent, and on the whole PTMA looks better than most of the other GBA platformers currently on the market.

Cam Shea



Looks like he fell into a pit.



Monkeying around.



I see sweet love in his eyes.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
84	78	70	71





The SNES had Mario, the Megadrive had Sonic, and in the early 90s the PC had its own platform champion. Join **JAMES COTTEE** to find out more. But only if you're keen...

COMMANDER KEEN

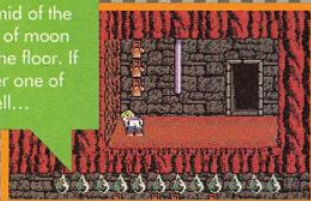
KEEN ON GAME BOY?

>> It's been years since Keen disappeared from the PC bargain bins, but he's now available on Game Boy Color! Commander Keen on the GBC is a decent translation of the Keen formula to the world's favourite handheld platform, with striking colours and unlimited blaster ammo. On the minus side, the levels are much more linear than the PC counterparts, and one can't help but feel that Keen would have been better ported straight to the Game Boy Advance. Keen on the GBA would be about as cool as getting Anna Kournikova for Christmas.



CHEEKY KEEN

>> There were many secret little tidbits hidden away by those crafty coders at id, but perhaps the most vulgar was this little Easter Egg in Keen 4. The level in the Pyramid of the Moons had a couple of moon shaped symbols on the floor. If you parked Keen over one of them, he would... well...



Everybody is familiar with id Software and games such as the classic Quake trilogy and the seminal shooters Doom and Wolfenstein 3D. But it may surprise some readers to learn that the crew responsible for some of the most violent and vulgar video games ever devised also created the most innocuous franchise ever to grace the PC. Commander Keen has been a fan-favourite for years, and through a fanatical user base, has made something of a comeback. But just who is Keen, and what is the source of his appeal?

KEEN AS A BEAN

The first Commander Keen game was coded by a trio of hotshot Texan programmers way back in 1990. Written in the spare time from their day jobs, it took only two and a half months to create a platform sensation. In a world where gaming power had swayed towards the Amiga and the 16-bit consoles, Keen delivered an unprecedented platform experience to gamers who might otherwise be bashing away at the forgettable Captain Comic.

Running smoothly on a 286, Keen delivered crisp 16 colour graphics and a unique gameplay style. Each level was vast, and populated with a wide variety of monsters. Keen could navigate his environment by jumping, or use his pogo stick to trade off maneuverability against jumping power. Once the game engine was in place, the first test of it was to plagiarise Super Mario Bros. Apparently the id boys submitted the code to Nintendo, and it was even played by Miyamoto himself, but since Nintendo didn't touch the PC, they ignored it...

Keen's setting was a breath of fresh air when compared to the stale, serious gaming matter of old. Commander Keen was the secret identity of eight year-old Billy Blaze, a genius grade schooler. He built his spaceship out of old soup cans, hence its name: the "Bean-with-Bacon Megarocket". The parts were pillaged from around the house, hence the use of a Nintendo joystick for the controls, and his mum's vacuum cleaner for the ion drive (with variable pile control).

The first Commander Keen story arc was the archetypal shareware trilogy. Episode one could be freely copied or downloaded from your local BBS, but volumes 2 and 3 could only be played with a clear conscience after handing over around US\$20 to the good folk at Apogee. In part one of the Invasion of the Vorticons trilogy, Marooned on Mars, Keen must recover four stolen parts from his spaceship and fend off hordes of alien nasties.

Part two, The Earth Explodes, saw Keen board the Vorticon mothership, where eight powerful ray-guns were

pointed at the Earth's most precious tourist spots, including sunny Sydney! The presence of baby Vorticons, complete with space-nappies, suggested that perhaps the Vorticons themselves were not the real enemy, but that a sinister Grand Intellect was pulling their strings from behind the scenes.

Part three, Keen Must Die, was the climax of this epic saga. Your task was to guide Keen on a single-handed invasion of the Vorticon homeworld, where you had to destroy every barracks, apartment block and kindergarten in your path. After butchering hundreds of the furry dog-creatures, and balking at their shocking taste in wallpaper, you came face to face with the Grand Intellect himself.

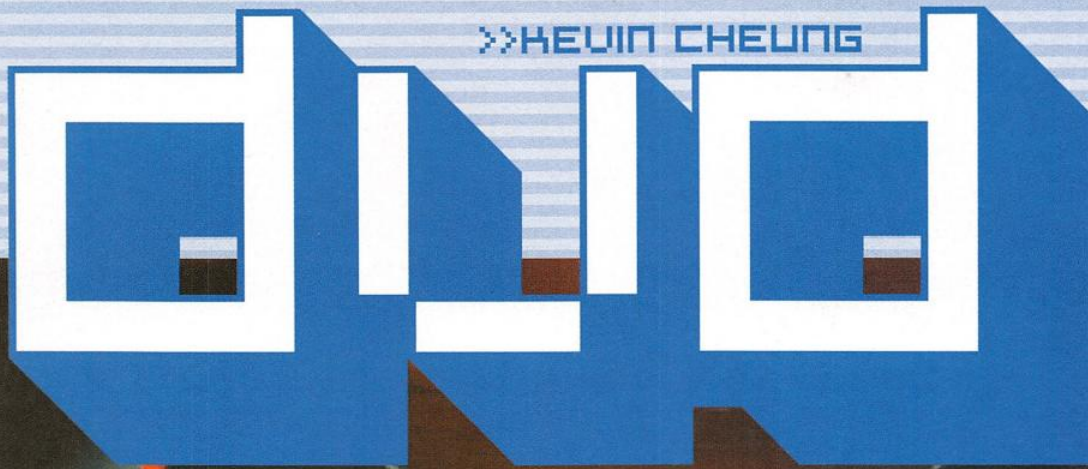
Who turned out to be... another eight year old kid! Mortimer McMire, AKA the Grand Intellect, was also the principal schoolyard foe of Billy Blaze. While Billy had an impressive IQ of 314, McMire's 315 meant he always had the edge over our hero, not only in mental arithmetic but in planet-destroying plots! Destruction of his ridiculous giant robot scored Keen the eternal praise of the Vorticon people, but was McMire truly vanquished?

TO EGA - AND BEYOND!

Episodes four through six kept the same play style, but enhanced the graphics into a pseudo-3D oblique view. Episodes 4 and 5 curtailed another McMire plot, this time to destroy the galaxy. Part six, "Aliens Eat My Baby Sitter", was a race against time for Keen to rescue his sitter from the ravenous Bloogs of Fribbulus Xax. While new gameplay heights were reached, some of the colour schemes were questionable at best.

The final installment of Keen on the PC came out in '93, and was a classic product of contractual obligation. "Keen Dreams" was a rush job produced for Softdisk, the previous employer of the id crew, and sported patchy level design, dodgy animations, and a sketchy premise. Keen had to liberate a dream realm dominated by nasty vegetables. Instead of his ray gun, Keen threw glowing rocks that would turn his enemies into flowers (?). He didn't even get to use his pogo stick! It was the beginning of the end.

Commander Keen changed the course of gaming history. Without the proceeds from his first adventure, Carmack and co. may never have had the cash to start up id Software. But now that the original id crew has fallen out, each pursuing their own vanity projects, the chances of a full-scale revival seem distant at best. Tom Hall, the man who came up with the Keen concept, is eager to bring Billy Blaze into the world of 3D. If only the rest of his homies were a little more... keen.



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!

2001: A Space Odyssey

WARNER HOME VIDEO, RATED M15+

Considered one of Stanley Kubrick's greatest works, *2001: A Space Odyssey* chronicles the development of human civilization through different stages in time. Each stage presents the alien monoliths that have been watching over us, first discovered at the dawn of time, then in 1999 on the moon, and then in the year 2001 by the crew of the SS Discovery. Since the film's first appearance in 1968, these themes have been analysed, documented and satirised most notably these



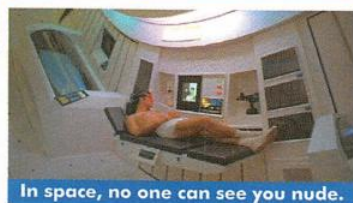
"Oh no, I'm gonna sneeze."



Ok, who slipped the LSD in my drink?



Open the pod bay doors, HAL.

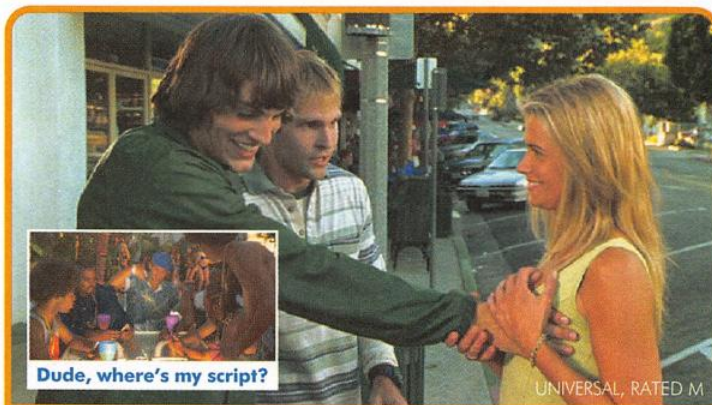


In space, no one can see you nude.

days in random episodes of *The Simpsons*.

This two-disc set is a real beauty for collectors, but not for any abundance of extra features. The second disc contains a digitally remastered musical score. The film on the movie disc is meticulously cleaned up, displayed in the original 2.21:1 aspect ratio, and the soundtrack remastered into Dolby Digital 5.1. The box set also comes with a collectable senitype 70mm film strip from the movie.

MOVIE: 9/10 **EXTRA:** 7/10



Dude, where's my script?

UNIVERSAL, RATED M

Dude, Where's My Car?

Sweet God, this movie sucks. Out of this, *American Pie*, *Road Trip* and *Tomcats*, *Dude, Where's My Car?* is the weakest link in this latest resurgence of the teen titty flick. Ashton Kutcher and Seann William Scott (who was incidentally in *American Pie* and *Road Trip*) are a pair of mindless hash fiends who lose their car after a night of wild partying.

As they retrace their steps, they come across one big-titted fantasy after another, including a 30 second breast-groping scene with

Kristy "I was the original Buffy" Swanson. Unfortunately, the jokes are all lame, repetitive and unfunny.

Perhaps the best feature of all is the commentary, where the two stars go absolutely ape-shit pointing out the tits on every actress on the set and how much arse they got to grab. They did not take the movie seriously, they knew it was trash, and they're actually good value for treating it that way. 8/10 if you're bent.

MOVIE: 4/10 **EXTRA:** 5/10

Unbreakable

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED M

Unbreakable stars Bruce Willis, and was written, directed and produced by M. Night Shyamalan — the same man behind *The Sixth Sense*. But if you pop this disc into the player expecting a follow-up to *Sixth Sense*, you will be in for a huge disappointment.

Unbreakable follows in the traditions of real-life superheroes as portrayed in comics like *Marvel*. It's a character driven tale about a lowly security guard (Willis) who slowly comes to accept his superhuman powers. His road to discovery is peppered with subtlety, weaving a plausible theory of hope and salvation into an all-too familiar world. With the help of a comic book enthusiast played by Samuel L. Jackson, the

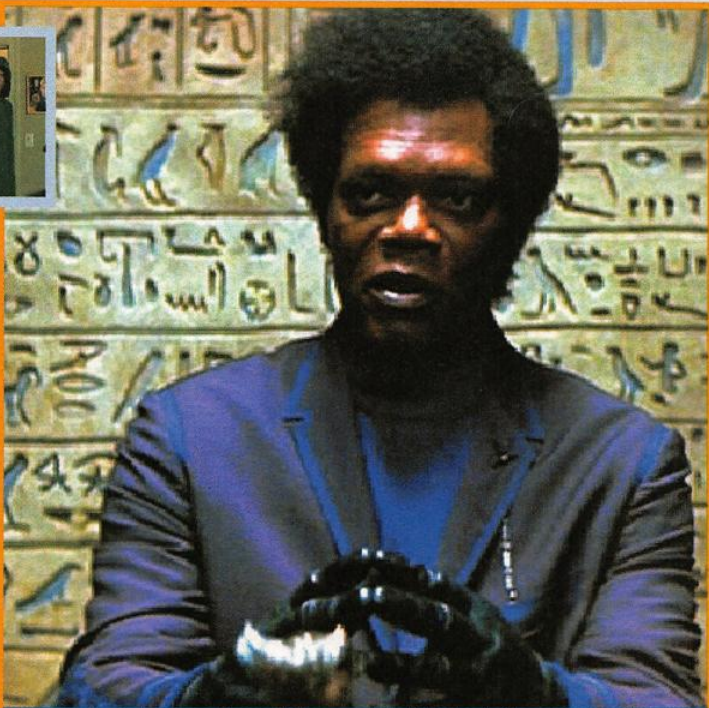


"But Dad, I wanted a PS2."

movie culminates in Willis taking his first steps towards righting society's evils.

Unbreakable is a slow paced, but very well scripted story. The disc comes with loads of extras — deleted footage, interviews with the cast and crew and so on — but it's missing the most basic feature most fans would be wanting: director's commentary.

MOVIE: 8/10 **EXTRA:** 7/10



"You refer to the prophecy of the one who'll bring balance to the Force?"



"I challenge you to a bout of insult arm wrestling!"

Superman 2

VILLAGE ROADSHOW, RATED G8+

Everything went downhill for Superman after the first movie. Although this sequel was shot concurrently with the first, director Richard Donner was dropped in favour of Richard Lester mid-production. Lester's difference in style is quite obvious, and not strong enough to suspend

belief in what's already a fairly ridiculous story.

General Zod and his cronies (who we saw imprisoned in the Phantom Zone in the first *Superman*) arrive on Earth. Their plan is to conquer the planet, but once they learn the son of Jor-El is in their midst, they stop at nothing for revenge. Conveniently, this all happens at a time

when Superman falls in love with Lois, reveals his identity, and turns himself into a human (presumably, to borrow a line from *Mallrats*, so he doesn't blast a hole through her back when he blows his load).

Apart from the theatrical trailer, there are no extra features whatsoever. None. And the movie's not even in Dolby Digital 5.1 — just plain stereo. Hugely disappointing.

MOVIE: 7/10 **EXTRA:** 1/10



"This 'kryptonite' juice tastes odd."



"Sorry, Supes. Batman was 'bigger'."

True Lies

COLUMBIA TRISTAR, RATED M15+

One of the last great action flicks from big Arnie before his career started to go pear-shaped. Schwarzenegger plays secret agent Harry Tasker. He's a member of a government agency that has license to do just about anything. As far as his wife's concerned, he's a computer salesman. Things get turned upside down when Harry suspects his wife of sharpening another man's pencil, and then unwittingly gets her tied up in a terrorist conspiracy.

It's a shame *The Last Action Hero* was panned outright by critics, because like that movie,



True Lies is just a barrel of explosive fun with Arnie taking the piss out of himself. The film also has some excellent comedy performances from Jamie Lee Curtis as Mrs. Tasker and Bill Paxton as the 'other man'. Also watch out for vampire-slaying babe, Eliza Dushku, who is almost unrecognizable as Arnie's daughter.

MOVIE: 8/10 **EXTRA:** 3/10



Rowrl.



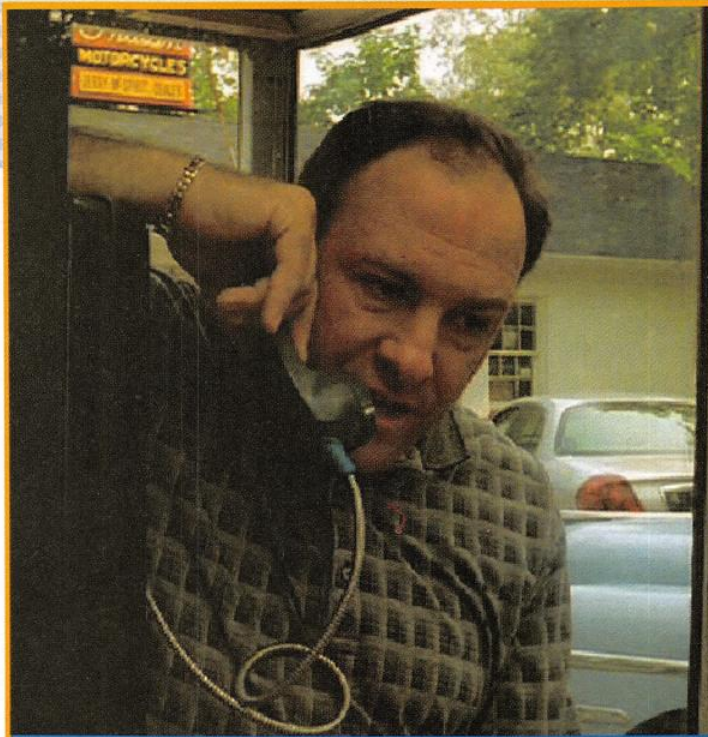
Eric Bana as the "Chopper".



"Are you liking my moofie?"



Turn that frown upside down!



"Listen, Telstra, and listen good. That 3 Gig cap is pissin' off 'the boys'..."

The Sopranos

WARNER HOME VIDEO, RATED MA15+

COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

Tony Soprano is a man with a lot on his mind. Apart from his two teenage children, domineering mother and the usual mid-life crisis concerns of the average 40 year-old male, Tony also has to deal with the pressures of his "other" family — the Mob.

The Sopranos is an outstanding television production, easily outshining the majority of other programs currently on offer. With its acerbic scripts, which are shrewd, often confrontational and always laced with an ironic sense of humour, *The Sopranos* depicts an American underworld that is engrossing and compelling.

The performances are first class, particularly that of James Gandolfini, who brings a rare complexity to the character of Tony Soprano. Tony is a man of questionable ethics who



"Oh you're closed? Sorry."

frequently engages in brutish acts of violence. He also, however, cares deeply for his family, is troubled by the immorality of his violent actions and is capable of conveying a sense of vulnerability (through his weekly sessions with a psychiatrist) that is irresistibly charming.

If you only buy only one DVD boxed set this year, make it *The Sopranos*.

Victoria Flanagan

MOVIE: 9/10 EXTRA: 6/10



Looks like they picked up Max Payne again too.

The Usual Suspects

COLUMBIA TRISTAR, RATED MA15+

The *Usual Suspects* is an intriguing and challenging film that cleverly manipulates the ideas of "truth" and "reality". It opens with an explosion upon a boat docked at San Pedro (incidentally also the name of our favourite cactus), just south of LA, which is believed to be carrying an '80s party load of cocaine. The only survivors are a badly burnt Hungarian man, and "Verbal" Kint (brilliantly played by Kevin Spacey), a crippled thief. Verbal is taken to the DA's office and interviewed about the explosion and events leading up to it, taking on the role of narrator for the film. Weaving in and out of the past and present, the non-linear construction is sharp and beguiling, and its final twist is guaranteed to leave you gasping for breath. Directed by Bryan Singer (*X-Men*) and featuring an outstanding cast — Gabriel Byrne, Benicio del Toro, Kevin Pollack, Pete Postlethwaite, Chazz Palminteri, Kevin



"Kiss me you fool!"



Fred felt he was being followed again.

Spacey and Stephen Baldwin, this double-Academy-award winning film is an absolute killer. Although the DVD is relatively lacking in extra features, it does include an audio commentary from director Bryan Singer which is lively and informative.

Victoria Flanagan

MOVIE: 8/10 EXTRA: 5/10

Vertical Limit

COLUMBIA TRISTAR, RATED M

If a quote can sum up the essence of a movie, then this line from *Vertical Limit* does the trick: "Did you think the mountain was gonna lift up her skirt and pull down her panties?" As you may have guessed, *Vertical Limit* is an action flick about mountain climbing. Set on K2, the world's second highest mountain, it's the story of a climbing expedition that goes wrong, and the rescue mission to save the three surviving climbers. *Vertical Limit* doesn't exactly have the most complex of plots, but if you like seeing massive avalanches and



"Do you like what you see?"

stunts then you'll find lots to enjoy. Keep an eye out for Australia's own Ben Mendelsohn playing a larrikin climber. His performance is one of the film's highlights. In terms of extras, this DVD is well-endowed. It includes audio commentary from director Martin Campbell, a 24-minute behind-the-scenes featurette, 7 Search-and-Rescue featurettes, as well as a National Geographic feature on mountain climbing. If only all DVDs could be this comprehensive!

Victoria Flanagan

MOVIE: 6/10 EXTRA: 8/10



"Eww, you could have worn undies..."



"Ooh, I shouldn't have gone dunking for those paddle pops."

ANIME



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Blood: The Last Vampire

CATEGORY: ACTION, SCI-FI PRODUCTION COMPANY: PRODUCTION I.G. DISTRIBUTOR: AV CHANNEL

If *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* were ever an anime, it would look something like this. *Blood* tells the story of a girl named Saya who works with an undercover agency to seek out and terminate vampires and demons. She poses as a schoolgirl at an American military base at Yokota, but without her special katana, she's forced to make do against the hideous beasts.

BLOOD LUST

Blood is a dark and gruesome affair, tastefully animated with more computer graphics than previously seen in any other anime. Some portions of the film almost appear to be live footage, but that's until the characters start moving around. The effect is surreal and mesmerising — call it a mix of *Serial Experiments Lain* and the *Samurai X* OAV.

Directed by Mamoru Oshii and

produced in Production I.G. (both known for *Ghost In The Shell*), *Blood: the Last Vampire* is blessed with great direction and cinematography, which produces a thick and watertight atmosphere that commands the full attention of your eyes and ears. Numerous subtle elements like shadows, snide looks, and even just plain silence are used to reveal a much deeper world of bloodlust. This is punctuated with some excellent action scenes.

Sadly, *Blood: the Last Vampire* is extremely short — it times out at an open-ended 45 minutes. Whether it's meant to be a complete film or a precursor to a TV series, *Blood: the Last Vampire* lacks a definitive story arc that would've given it a more satisfying sense of closure.



Liza Minelli has had to resort to this?

ANIMATION: 10/10 PLOT: 8/10 JAPAN-NESS: Low OVERALL: 9/10

Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water

CATEGORY: ADVENTURE, COMEDY, DRAMA
PRODUCTION COMPANY: GAINAX

Loosely based on Jules Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, *Nadia* is the story of a boy who helps a mysterious girl find the location of her homeland. The only clue they have is a trinket she wears around her neck — the Blue Water — which a trio of conniving and well-funded thieves are constantly trying to steal.

MECHA ME HAPPY

The series is set in the late 1880s, a period where every engineer worth his salt was trying to invent something new and unusual. We're first introduced to flying machines, then to moving stairs. From there it isn't a big step to jetfoils and a gigantic amphibious mecha equipped with a hot air balloon.

It's this method of half-heartedly suspending belief through mild progression that *Nadia* bears close



resemblance to Miyazaki classics like *Laputa: City in the Sky*. The characters are endearing and the settings are fascinating and fun to absorb.

Interestingly, *Nadia* is one of the earlier works of Hideaki Anno of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* fame. But don't let the shadow of *NGE* have any bearing on your expectations for *Nadia*. It's nowhere near as emotionally charged, and is probably closer in terms of production values and style to the *Lupin* films.

It's also been claimed in various circles that Disney's latest film, *Atlantis*, has some uncanny similarities to *Nadia* — the design of the main character for one. This will be interesting to keep tabs on, especially after the dodgy *Kimba/Lion King* affair.



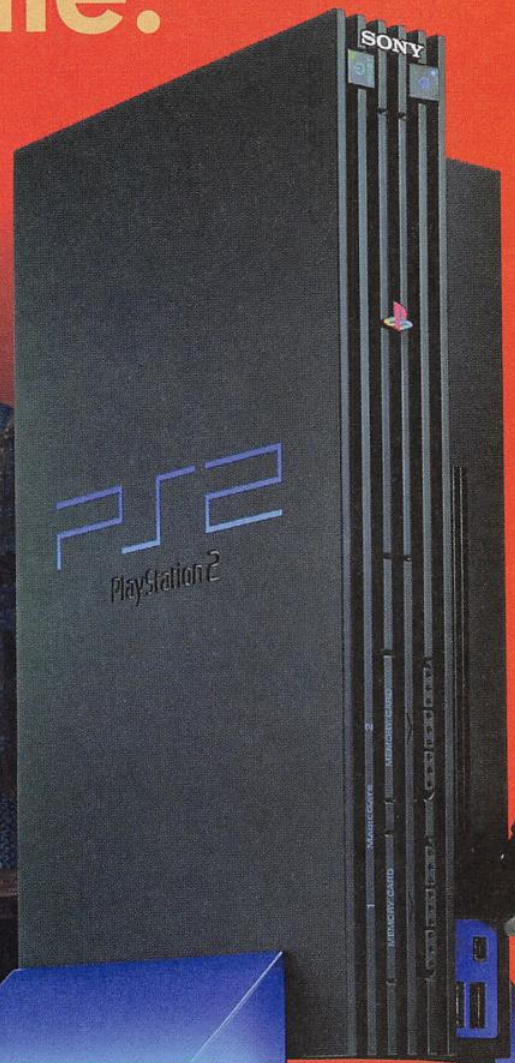
Kimba is still trying to get in on the act.



ANIMATION: 9/10 PLOT: 8/10 JAPAN-NESS: Low OVERALL: 7/10

PlayStation®2 

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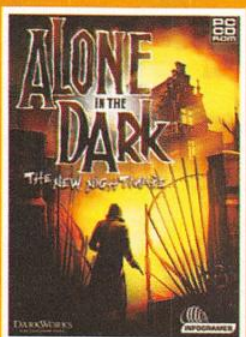


FIRST PRIZE
MAT BRADY from
HAWTHORNE, Qld

Long time Hyper reader, Mat Brady, claims first prize with this simply incredible piece of original art inspired by Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare. He draws, he scores!

ALONE IN THE DARK
COMPETITION
WINNERS

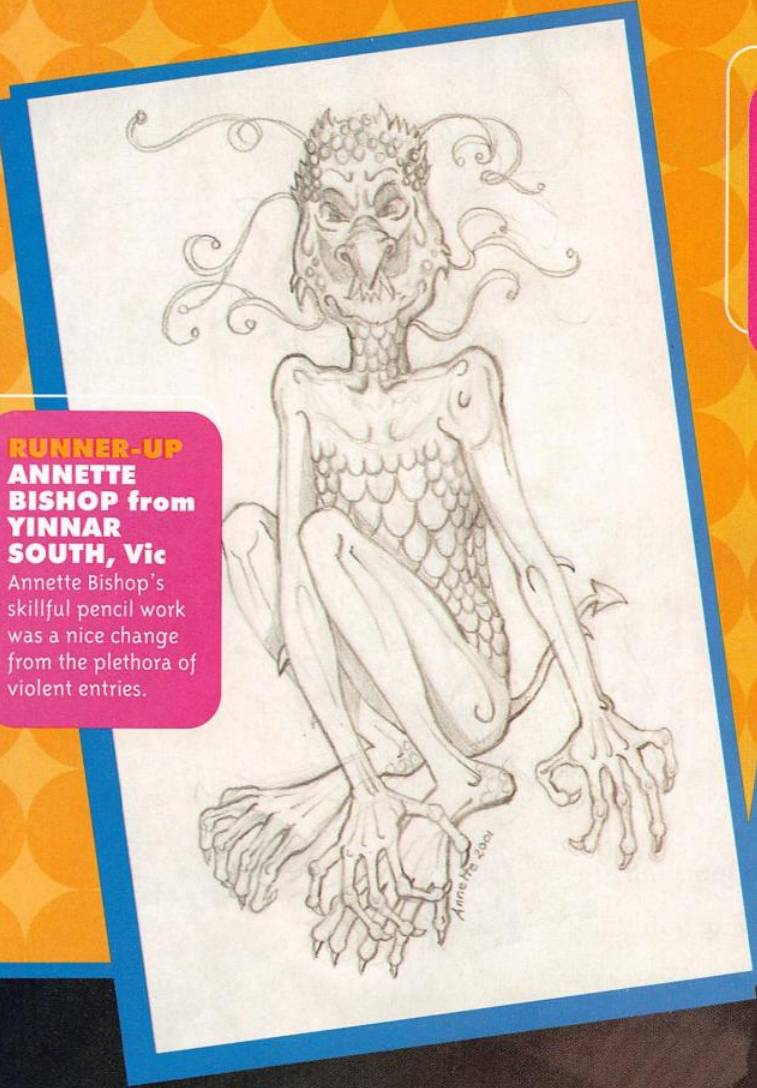
Back in issue 94, we challenged you all to send us some artwork depicting what you would find if you were "alone in the dark". The winners receive a copy of the game for PC and a t-shirt. Top stuff!



RUNNER-UP
ASHLEY LAWSON from
FERNY GROVE, Qld

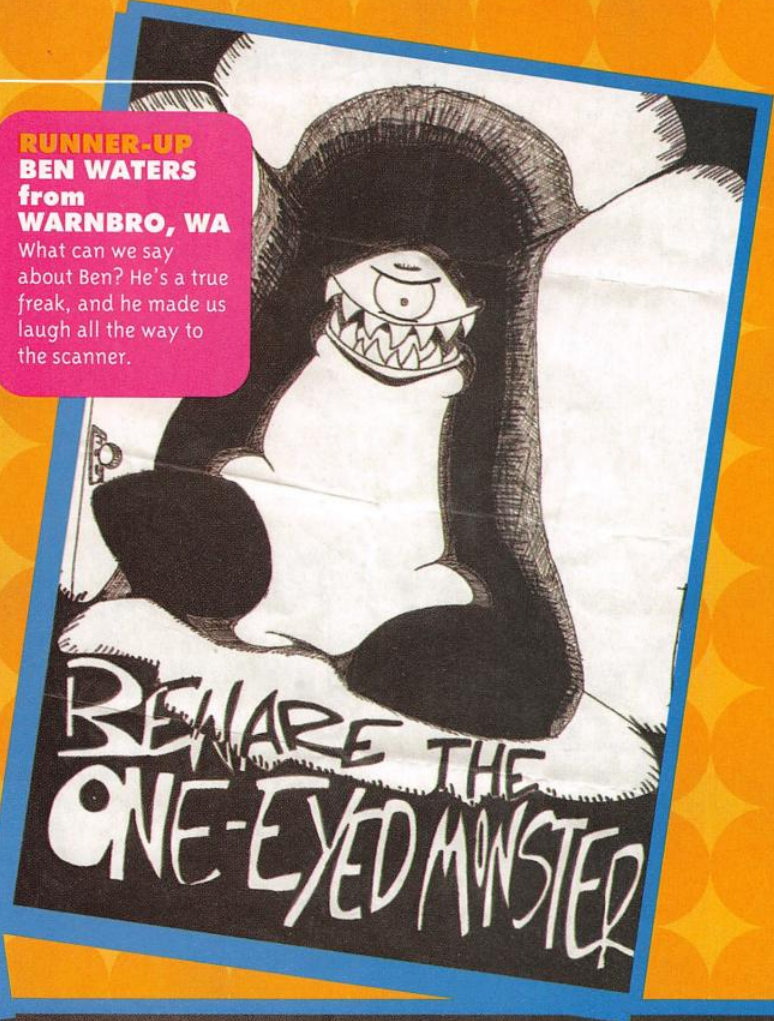
Ashley's gruesome creation won us over for its gratuitous use of bloooooood. Goey. Ooey. Icky.





RUNNER-UP
ANNETTE BISHOP from
YINNAR SOUTH, Vic

Annette Bishop's skillful pencil work was a nice change from the plethora of violent entries.



RUNNER-UP
BEN WATERS from
WARNBRO, WA

What can we say about Ben? He's a true freak, and he made us laugh all the way to the scanner.



RUNNER-UP
ANNETTE KWOK from
MOUNT COLAH, NSW

Another Annette wins a prize! This piece of semi-digital art came second to only Mat Brady's immense work. Great work Annette!

FORUM

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

Q. IF HYPER CHANGED ONE THING ABOUT THE MAGAZINE, IT SHOULD BE...?

This month we thought we'd give you, the reader, the opportunity to mouth off about what you don't like about Hyper and what you think you would change given the opportunity. Of course, none of you ever will get that opportunity, so sit back and fantasise away, suckers!



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...



"Is piracy destroying the games industry?"

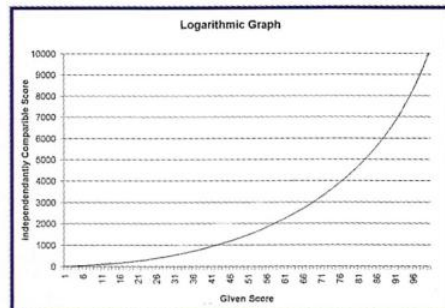
Responses will be printed in Hyper 98.

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.

MAKING A SCORE

Hyper,
You know how you only ever find games rated 70-97? Or for really bad ones, 3-10? The rest of the scale doesn't get used, right? You could make the scale logarithmic, meaning that as you got higher, the 'goodness' rating gets farther apart. For instance, there would be more difference between a game that gets 93 and a game that gets 94, than there would be between a game that gets 13 and a game that gets 14. Let's face it, you only ever give scores under 70 to games that are incredibly bad, and they end up getting scores like 13, or something else. I've enclosed a graph of how the rating system could work. See if you can figure out what's going on, ok?

bill
Peepage@senet.com.au



POSTER CHILD

Hyper,
Well, if something was changed, I think it should be the CD-Rom. Okay, so maybe it has changed, I mean like issue 94 had the last demo disc, and that's it. But now you can go back to the good old posters! The disc was like a free-special, right? Now that it's no longer going to be here, you can put free posters in the mag again. So I'll put it straight for you, "No More CD = Lots Of Posters!"

That's what I think, and that's what everybody wants!
Anthony Palmer
apalmer@vanuatu.com.vu

DOG DAY AFTERNOON

Hyper,
Well, I just think that if there was something you changed it should be throwing out the gaming charts as they serve no purpose for anyone whatsoever.

You should also put out the Reverse Engineering as I don't see the point in knowing about stuff that is older than me and most other Hyper readers. Instead, put a few more links into the Online

section of your mag.

I think that most Hyper readers would agree with me on this, please don't stop giving us those great discs, as I use them for playing with my dog.

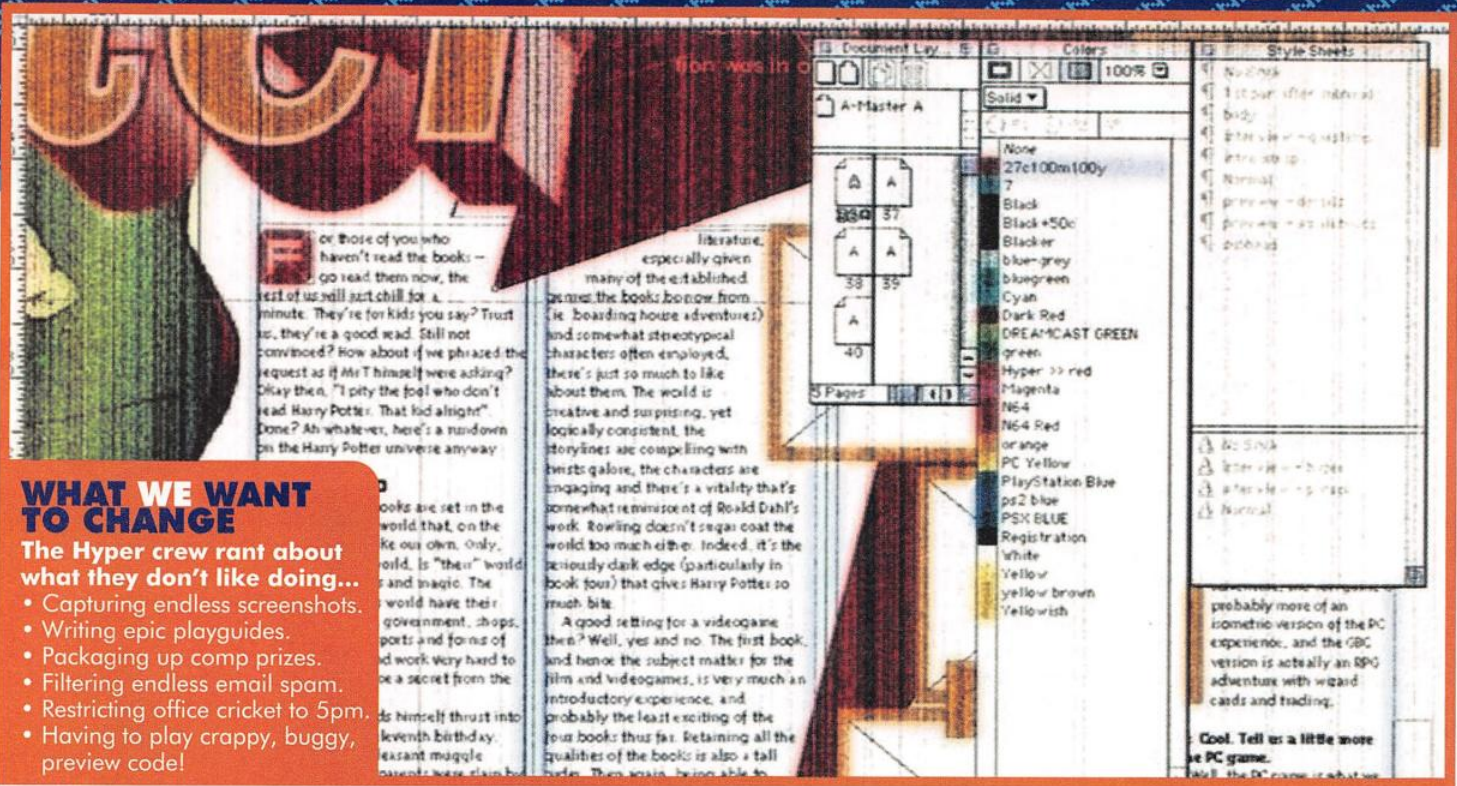
Sincerely,
Oscar
Yolipili@optushome.com.au

STICKY TRICKS

Hyper,
You know the strips of sticky stuff holding the CD on to the front cover? Every month I buy a new Hyper magazine and read it cover to cover. After I've finished, all that's left to do is peel off the sticky stuff, roll it up in a ball and flick it at my monitor. It's so exciting watching it unravel and roll down the screen. Hours of office fun! But, if you're a shocking shot like I am, you sometimes miss the screen. Even from a foot away! If the gooey missile flies past your desk and lands on the carpet, it's all over.

No more stick... No more fun... So, Hyper, we need more sticky strips. End of story.

Kevin
kevin.barnes@dct.com.au



WHAT WE WANT TO CHANGE

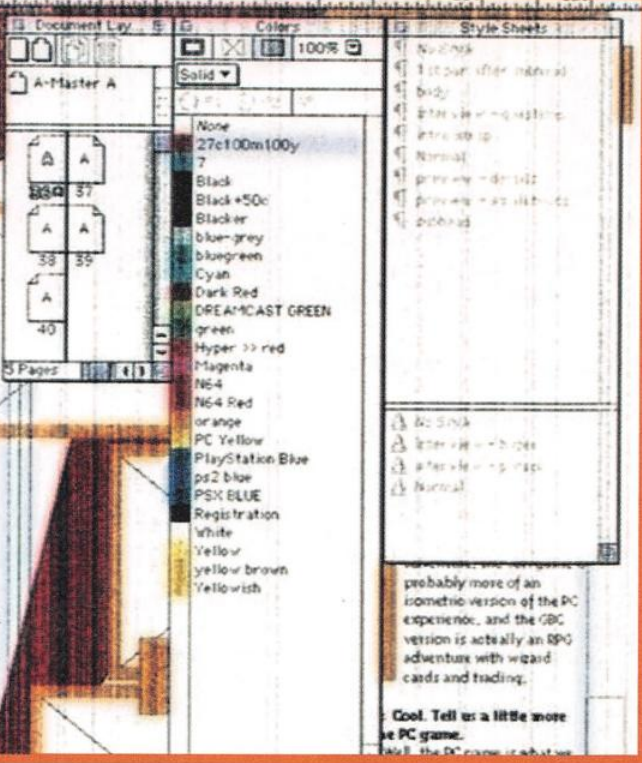
The Hyper crew rant about what they don't like doing...

- Capturing endless screenshots.
- Writing epic playguides.
- Packaging up comp prizes.
- Filtering endless email spam.
- Restricting office cricket to 5pm.
- Having to play crappy, buggy, preview code!

...of those of you who haven't read the books - go read them now, the rest of us will just chill for a minute. They're for kids you say? Trust us, they're a good read. Still not convinced? How about if we phrased the request as if Mr T himself were asking? Okay then, "I pity the fool who don't read Harry Potter. That kid alright?" Done? Ah whatever, here's a run-down on the Harry Potter universe anyway

...literature, especially given many of the established genres: the books borrow from (ie. boarding house adventures) and somewhat stereotypical characters often employed, there's just so much to like about them. The world is creative and surprising, yet logically consistent, the storylines are compelling with twists galore, the characters are engaging and there's a vitality that's somewhat reminiscent of Roald Dahl's work. Rowling doesn't sugar coat the world too much either. Indeed, it's the seriously dark edge (particularly in book four) that gives Harry Potter so much bite.

A good setting for a videogame then? Well, yes and no. The first book, and hence the subject matter for the film and videogames, is very much an introductory experience, and probably the least exciting of the four books thus far. Retaining all the qualities of the books is also a tall order. They would be impossible to



NAKED MODELS

Hyper,
There is one thing you should definitely change about your magazine. There should be a section in the middle of Hyper devoted to half-naked models. I'm being completely serious, every time I read your mag this is the only thing missing. It may have nothing to do with gaming, but who cares?

There are a whole heap of reasons to do this. First of all think of how many more people would read your mag. I guarantee that your reader base will at least double. You would also hold the title of being the only magazine in history to have readers that buy a magazine for the articles as well as the pictures.

I'd enjoy Hyper a whole lot more as well. It would also be a money saver for people that buy men's magazines for the pictures. You'll also be the only gaming mag (that I know of) to do it so you'll have the edge over your rivals. Just make sure that you don't show any nudity 'cause that will wipe out the

younger demographic and I won't be able to buy it, on the other hand it'll only be a two year wait, so I say go for it.

The only other thing I could think to change about Hyper is to make it cheaper, but that probably isn't possible. Anyway seriously consider it.
Nick
Hammstarr@hotmail.com

MORE PINEAPPLES!

Good question. Although mighty hard to answer considering the current standard of the mag (that's a compliment).

As I look over to my dilapidated pile of Hyper mags going right back to the SNES and Megadrive days, most without covers (of course it wasn't my fault. What are you on about?). The first suggestion that springs to mind is that Hyper needs to be bound.

After a quick check through my collection I've found that most of the recent issues are intact, BUT strangely enough, the Hyper 5th

Birthday issue - which is bound - is still as new. Cue eerie music...

I did have a second suggestion, but it came to me, an entire feature on Pineapples may not cater to everyone's tastes.

So fare thee well.
Bungholio
bungholio_69@hotmail.com

MORE STICKY STUFF

Well whatever you do, don't get rid of the goopy stuff on the cover that you stick to the CD. It's Great! The Newsagents always try to hide it by covering the CD with sticky tape, but HAH they cannot fool me, I know them's hiding goopy stuff! I love it! It can be rolled up into balls and flicked at people, it can be stuffed up your nostril and imitate a snot, or it can fall on the carpet and lose it's stickyness. Don't feed it to your pet though, they would make strange goopy turds that stick to stuff...

Yeah but apart from that, you can change anything, who cares! Just don't stop them goopy stuffs

coming man!
Nathan Douglas
dougduo@hotmail.com

SURVEY SAYS...

This is a great magazine and at first all I could think of was "Bring back the DEMO CD!!!" But since there isn't much to put on it at the moment here is my other suggestion.

What makes this such a great magazine is the amount of input you allow readers to put into it (Hyper Forum, Mail & Caption This!) What I'd like to see is a poll survey next to these sections. A survey or two each issue that is multiple choice. Eg. Which Next Gen gaming machine will you purchase?

- A: Ps2
 - B: GameCube
 - C: Xbox
 - D: All of them!!
- Also I'd like to see a bigger forum and Mail section. I know it's already big, but I can't get enough of it!
Keep up the good work!
TOMCAT



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MAIL

✉ HYPER LETTERS:

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

EVERYONE'S A WINNER

Dear Hyper People,

First off, I love the mag and especially the humour in it. I also enjoy reading the Reverse Engineering articles. Anyway could you please answer some questions for me?

1. How come you don't publish the subscription prize winners? In the terms & conditions of each subscription entry it says "the winner will be notified by mail and results published in issue xx of Hyper". I think you need to publish all the previous winners to prove you actually give out the prizes.

2. Why didn't you show any Dreamcast games from E3 in your E3 special in issue 94? The DC has many great games and still deserves a mention.

3. Is it true the Xbox will be multi-region?

4. And finally, When are the Xbox and the NGC due for release in OZ?

Thanks,

Matthew

E-mail address withheld

Hi Matthew,

1. If you're looking for winners... you

just haven't been looking hard enough. Ahem.

HYPER #91

South Park - 11 Volumes

Travis Henderick, Drouin VIC

HYPER #92

1st: Tim Whelan, Goulburn, NSW

Runners up: Leo Phillips, Clear Mountain QLD

Peter Szczepanowski, North Nowra NSW

HYPER #93

1st: Cameron Boyd, Swanbourne WA

Runners up: Frank Hall, Hamilton, NSW

Patricia Hobart, Ashtonfield NSW

2. You'd be shocked at how many games are being struck off the local release schedule now. Most of them won't even be released.

3. Very doubtfully.

4. We're expecting them early in 2002, but nothing is certain...

RAMMING IT HOME

Hyper,

As usual, you probably won't answer or print my questions. But this time I only have one!

The Xbox is meant to have all these

spectacular graphics, yet my outdated computer has twice the RAM!

Is the RAM less significant in a console? If so, how?

Cheers,

Dave

davem@austarnet.com.au

Dear Dave,

You would be correct in assuming that RAM is less significant in a console. Why? Because the hardware architecture of a console is very different to that of a PC. A console is designed purely for pumping out game code, and as a result, doesn't need as much RAM as a PC that is meant for multi-tasking. That's a very simple explanation, but hopefully it makes sense. The Xbox currently achieves more than a PC with a similar spec.

SONY?

Hi Hyper people,

Am I the only one looking at the price of PS2 games and wanting to tell Sony to get stuffed? I mean, really, average games that can be finished in a couple of days for \$99.00 or a half way decent game like Red Faction for \$110.00?

You have to wonder how much GT3 or MGS2 are going to cost. It wouldn't surprise me if Sony set the price at \$125.00.

Okay, I admit it, I am waaay old (40) and have been buying games for 20 years but pricing games at over \$100 is absolute bullshit.

I offer Monkey Island for the PS2 as an example. On the PC it's available for \$79, but on the PS2, \$99 for exactly the same game or Red Faction PS2 \$110 (if you shop around real hard), but on the PC it will sell for around \$80! Yeah, I know, the aussie dollar ain't worth much nowadays, but that's no excuse.

Congrats on the magazine, been reading mags forever and yours is one of the best, "obligatory groveling statement as required by law".

Regards,

Peter Jones

Ringwood North, Vic

Dear Peter, well, believe it or not, but video game piracy forces the prices of games up...

COMING UP ON 100 ISSUES

To the Editor,

Great report on the E3 show. First of all, one thing that is really disappointing to see in this day and age is people swearing allegiance to certain gaming companies. Those poor people are missing out on A LOT of great gaming. With all different and exciting games spread across the different consoles, you have to experience them all.

Anyway, now for the questions:

1. Around the Hyper office, what's the most popular Game Boy Advance game?

2. What is the most anticipated game at the moment around the Hyper office?

3. How much is the PS2 expected to drop in retaliation to the low prices of the other consoles?

4. Are u gonna have a real big issue with heaps of extras and stuff for the big 100th issue?

Anyway, thanx for your time,

Arley M

pollute_the_world@hotmail.com

Dear Arley,

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2.
2. We each have our own desired game. Personally, I'm counting the days to the release of the massively multiplayer RPG, Star Wars Galaxies, for the PC. As for Cam and Malcolm, they tell me: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 on PS2 and Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II on GCN, respectively.
3. Low prices of which other consoles? The Xbox and GameCube? Ha ha ha ha. They ain't going to be cheap here in Australia, my friend.
4. You bet we will.

MORE FANTASIES

Dear Seafood,

I'm a die-hard SquareSoft fan, and I was utterly disappointed after reading your review of The Bouncer in issue #94. It looked like such a cool game, especially since fighting and RPGs are two of my favourite genres. Ah well...

1. Do you know any of the FFX story yet?

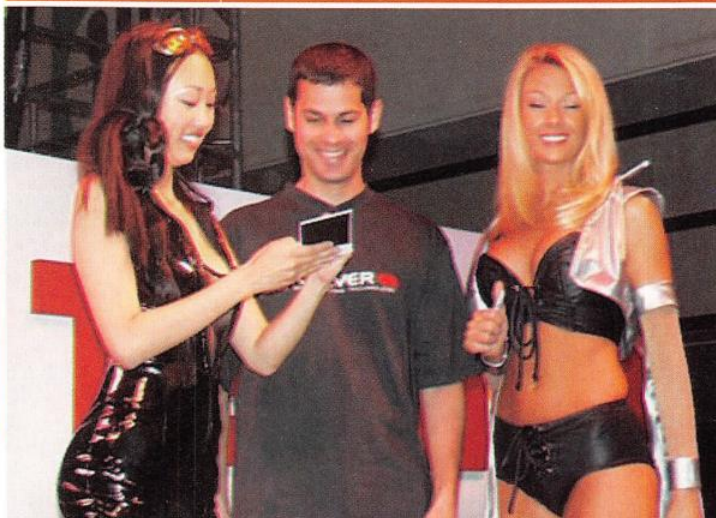
2. I heard that FFXI will be online-only. Is this true, or will it just have the option of online play?

3. Can you do an NTSC review of FFX like you did with IX?

CAPTION THIS!

PART 21 WINNER

Yes, your imaginations ran wild. **KUNAL SINGH** (aka the K-Man) is our winning reader caption this month.



"WOW! WHO KNEW A DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER COULD BE SO VERSATILE!"

BY CONNELL WOOD OF PLUFIM COMICS
HTTP://PLUFIM.KEENSPACE.COM

THE LEGEND OF
ZELDA
FUTURE'S PAST



Connell Wood cooked up this lightsaber equipped Link.

4. In issue #92 you mentioned Xenosaga. Have you heard any more about it since then? Being one of the few people who played the original Xenogears, I can't wait!

5. Having been to E3, can Cam recommend any upcoming RPGs for the 3 major consoles?

6. In Reverse Engineering can you write something about FFV? I'm playing this over again while I wait for FFX, and it's a great game. It actually invented the AP system that is still used in many Square games today, but it never got a western release until FF Anthology.

7. Will FF Chronicles be out in Australia?

8. If Square decide to go ahead with the Xbox, will that be the end of Square titles for the PS2?

9. What is the meaning of life? Hope you can answer all of these, and keep up the good work.

Kilavere

Email address withheld

Dear Kilavere,

Yes, pity about the Bouncer. They really dropped the ball on that one.

1. Yes, now that we have an import Japanese version of the game! Muhaha!

2. FF XI is definitely an online only game, and it will be on multiple consoles.

3. We're tempted. It's great.

4. Xenosaga is episode one of the Xenogears saga, of which Xenogears on PSX was episode five. It takes place 14,000 years before Xenogears. The game is being published by Namco, not Square, but the guys behind it worked on the original.

5. GBA: Golden Sun & Magical Vacation; PS2: Final Fantasy X, being the most obvious; GCN: Zelda or Phantasy Star Online; Xbox: Morrowind; Elder Scrolls III. The GBA RPGs will definitely give you that classic RPG fix if that's what you're after (think Secret of Mana).

6. We may just do that.

7. According to our release schedules, no, it won't get a local release.

8. Absolutely not! Square are historically a multi-platform publisher.

9. 42.

GCN FOREVER

I'll ignore the sucking up right now and just get right down to it. Any chance of a more recent console comparison (of course GameCube would have to win)? As a Nintendo fanboy... ahem... fangirl, I'm mighty impressed at all the games I have seen. So you lucky bastards saw Smash Bros. Melee in action hey? Well after I got over a week of weeping I realised something - why does Australia have to wait so long for games? I know we have to get PAL games, but how long can they take to translate some language and change versions to work on our TVs? Well I've been playing Tony Hawk 2 on GBA - have you been playing it? It's the best handheld game I've ever played! Anyhoo catch ya on the flip side,

Crystal J.

gcfreak@hotmail.com

Dear Crystal,

The reason PAL conversions can take so long to surface, is that all of Europe is PAL. This means that translations have to be done for every single different language in Europe, which can take a very long time. You may have noticed that many PAL games give you the option to select English, German, French, Italian and so on... it's easier for them to make one product which they ship everywhere, rather than multiple language copies. As for a console comparison, we may do something when they are finally all released. And yes, Tony Hawk 2 is the best handheld game we've played to date.

WHAT IS THE THIRD PLACE?

Dear crew members,

First let me say that I like reading your magazine. Now to the point,

BURN BABY BURN

Hyper,

I've been buying Hyper for about three years now and there seems to be no attention paid to the issue of trading burnt games. I reckon there has been one article about it that I have read. This is odd considering it is such an important part of the gaming industry. It affects everyone involved, from the developers down to the gamers.

The burnt games industry is thriving in my area, although I ain't saying nothing that's going to incriminate me or anyone I know, nor am I saying whether I agree with it or not. For me, until the gaming industry is on the brink of bankruptcy thanks to piracy it doesn't bother me. Buying pirated games appears to be the obvious option when buying games. You can either shell out close to a hundred hard-earned dollars or pay around ten.

Lots of people (including me) have paid a lot of money for games that were worth playing for about a week. The people I know only care about playing quality games and couldn't care less if the gaming industry suffers.

The main problem for developers is that there isn't anything that they can do. Right now developers make CDs that can detect pirated games but it's incredibly easy to find downloadable cracks to make this problem non-existent. I heard there is new software being implemented to combat piracy but there will no doubt be a way around this as well.

It looks like piracy will never go away, due to the inaction of the people in charge and the intelligence of those doing the trading. I've never heard Hyper's opinion on the matter, so what do you think?

Nick Hamm

Hammstarr@hotmail.com

Dear Nick,

It's simple. The more game piracy flourishes, the worse games will become. Why? Think about it. If a developer makes an incredible game, but it gets pirated and everyone plays the warez copy, the publisher of this brilliant game will not make much money and subsequently, the developer of the game will not be given any more money for another game. Either that or their budget for the next game is far less, and the next game as a result is an inferior product and so on. The less money publishers make on games, the less money they will put into making good games, and the less developers out there will get a go at bringing us good games. If piracy increases, so will the general crapness of the games available. Oh, and prices will go up. It SUCKS.



Gamester PS2 Dual Force 2 Wheel.

Don't forget to include your contact details in your letter. You've won a Gamester Steering Wheel!



what the heck does the marketing slogan for the PS2 mean when they say "PlayStation 2: The third place." I've asked all my friends (which is just 2) and they don't know what it means. Are the ad wizards trying to convey that the PS2 is the third best selling machine or in third place in the console wars? If that's the case, shouldn't I buy the machine that's in first place?

Sebastian

Sebastian_ramos@hotmail.com

Dear Sebastian,

The concept of the "Third Place" comes from the mind of film director David Lynch, the man behind those bizarre TV ads. Apparently it means

"a personal place with no rules, no maps, no boundaries". For a really in-depth analysis of the ad, check out this site:

www.geocities.com/mikehartmann/papers/ligot.html

Or, like you said, it could mean the position the PS2 will be in once the GameCube and Xbox are released...

CARTOON CHICKS

Godammit!

I have seen people, talked to people and I have nowhere else to go. HYPER YOU MUST SAVE ME! People think that lately I have had a very bad syndrome of Animated Porn! What the hell is wrong with me?

I can't stop thinking about naked cartoon chicks. I even registered with a goddamn website and have downloaded a cartoon porno game that I can't freakin' stop playing! Is it just me who's like this? Why the hell is my mind doing this to me? Oh god save me I'm getting nauseous. Gotta think happy thoughts... please Hyper HELP ME! From the depths I cry to you oh Lord Seafood, Mr Breakdancer, That guy Dan and Kevvy. I NEED HELP! What is your diagnosis? Any answers will be of help! Quick it's getting me again I'm watching it... hurry!!! NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.

Doggy Style
Knob4ya@hotmail.com

Dear Doggy,
For goodness sake, get a grip. Oh... no hold on, don't do that...

TRAWLIN' FAN

I just wanna say the "TRAWLIN'" section of Hyper is great. I'm a fan of online games. I have a few queries:

1. Is there an email address to send stuff about Trawlin' (game reviews and stuff)?
2. Can you guys also review free

online games? I think there are a lot of free online games that are worth being reviewed. Games such as Graal (www.graalonline.com), Alien Adoption Agency (www.webdocent.com), and RedMoon Online (www.redmoononline.com) are just some of those great free games.

3. Can you review the game Graal (www.graalonline.com), which is my favourite? I think that game will be great to be put on the Trawlin' section.

That's all I wanna say and keep up the good work guys! This mag rulz!

Lord K@ne
lordkanegraal@hotmail.com

Dear K@ne,
1. You can send Trawlin' ideas to freakscene@next.com.au
2. That's a nice idea, so keep an eye on future issues.
3. We'll take a look at it for you. Meanwhile, here's a screenshot.

AUSSIES RULE

G'day Hyper champs.
I just want to start by saying how freakin convenient a subscription is. You can dream about the no



Graal Online looks pretty cool - www.graalonline.com

fuss, cheap way to get the mag, but until you arrive from a crap day at school to see an A4 sized plastic wrapped object in your letter box that doesn't say "Open Road", you can't know the joyous feeling of getting that unexpected delivery every month.

I'm basically writing to say thank you, 'cos a while back you directed me to Game Spy for my online gaming woes and changed my outlook and respect for other Aussie gamers. Since then I have got a cable connection and a new computer and am ass whooping on American servers. I've played Aussie players and must say that the Americans have no idea, I have suffered more defeats in one session in Australia than in my entire online career. There must be something in the water in this country. I also lived in England a few years back and the only guy that could give me a run for my money or beat me was another Aussie.

For a country with such a small population our gaming community is rock solid. Australian gamers deserve a large pat on the back and some kind of giant cookie. We deserve more credit from the online community, I get constant crap about having cable, with egotistical, patronising Americans saying "Wow, you have cable in Ostraaaliaaaa?". They are laughing on the other side of their faces after I frag them constantly for the next hour.

Good work Australia and keep it up, the world won't mock us for long.

Reggie
Dural, NSW



Dear Reggie,
Mmmm... What was that about a giant cookie?

ON THE HORIZON

Hey Hyper Dudes,
Might I start by saying "great mag". I was just wondering about a preview you guys did, back in Oct 2000 on an RPG online game, Horizons. I have tried to contact their website without much success. I was hoping you guys might know how it is coming along, or if it has met an unfortunate demise.

P.S. Are there any other games of this nature coming out?

Thanks heaps!!!
Ando
shaun_anderson@optusnet.com.au

Dear Ando,
Check out the very comprehensive horizonsvault.ign.com. And yes, there are literally tonnes of online RPGs in development - are you nuts? Keep an eye on cool PC news sites like www.bluesnews.com for daily updates on games in development such as MMORPGs.
Horizons is but one of many, many, many, many games in development.

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HH4

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with AVSDA

TOP 10

PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Red Faction	Action
2	▲	Formula 1 2001	Racing
3	▼	The Bouncer	Adventure
4	▲	Crazy Taxi	Racing
5	▼	Rugby	Sports
6	⊕	ATV Offroad	Racing
7	◆	SSX	Sports
8	▼	NBA Street	Sports
9	▼	Tekken Tag Tournament	Action
10	⊕	Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Adventure

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Digimon	RPG
2	◆	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
3	▲	World's Scariest Police	Racing
4	▲	Tomb Raider Collectors Pk	Adventure
5	⊕	Looney Tunes Double Pack	Adventure
6	▲	WWF Smackdown! 2	Sports
7	▼	Time Crisis Project Titan	Action
8	▼	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Sports
9	⊕	Lion King 2	Adventure
10	◆	Alone In The Dark 4	Adventure

TOP 10

Game Boy Games Over \$40

W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Star Wars: Obi Wan	Action
2	▲	Pokemon Gold	RPG
3	⊕	Taz Dvl Munching Madness	Adventure
4	▼	Pokemon Silver	RPG
5	▲	Shrek FairyTale Freak Down	Action
6	▼	Zelda: Oracle Of Seasons	RPG
7	▼	Zelda: Oracle Of Ages	RPG
8	⊕	Matchbox Car Cnstrctn Zne	Strategy
9	⊕	Simpsons Tree Hse Horror	Adventure
10	▼	Donkey Kong Country	Adventure

TOP 10

N64 Games Over \$40

W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Pokemon Stadium	Action
2	⊕	Mario Party 3	Family
3	▼	Pokemon Stadium 2	Action
4	▼	Conker's Bad Fur Day	Adventure
5	▼	Banjo Tooie	Adventure
6	▲	Zelda: Majora's Mask	RPG
7	⊕	Mario Kart 64	Racing
8	▼	Mario Tennis	Sports
9	▼	Perfect Dark	Action
10	▼	Donkey Kong 64	Adventure

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$30

W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Diablo II: Lord Of Destrction	RPG
2	▲	The Sims	Strategy
3	▲	The Sims Collectors Edition	Strategy
4	◆	Diablo 2	RPG
5	◆	Operation Flashpoint	Strategy
6	▼	Half Life Blue Shift	Action
7	▲	The Sims House Party	Strategy
8	⊕	Sim Mania Pack	Strategy
9	◆	The Sims Livin' Large	Strategy
10	▼	Baldurs Gate 2: Bhaal	RPG

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Super Mario Advance	Adventure
2	◆	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
3	◆	Rayman Advance	Adventure
4	◆	GT Advance Racing	Racing
5	◆	F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Racing
6	◆	Pinobee	Adventure
7	◆	Castlevania	Action
8	◆	Krazy Racers	Racing
9	⊕	Tweety and Magic Gems	Action
10	◆	Top Gear GT Championship	Racing

TOP 10

All Full Priced Games

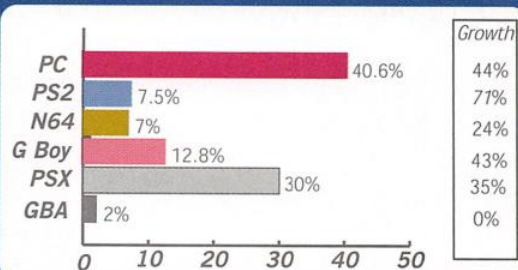
W/E 29 JUL 2001
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Diablo II: Lord Of Destrction	PC/MAC
2	◆	Digimon	PlayStation
3	▲	Super Mario Advance	GBA
4	⊕	Star Wars: Obi Wan	Game Boy
5	⊕	Pokemon Gold	Game Boy
6	▼	Red Faction	PlayStation 2
7	⊕	Taz Devil Munching Madness	Game Boy
8	▼	Pokemon Silver	Game Boy
9	▼	The Sims	PC/MAC
10	⊕	Shrek FairyTale Freak Down	Game Boy

MARKET WATCH

All Games by Platform

JUN v MAY 2001
RETAIL SALES



- ⊕ New Entry
- ◆ Non Mover
- ▲ Up from last week
- ▼ Down from last week

inform

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NEXT ISSUE

Hyper 97  On sale September 26

THE GAMING ARCADES OF TOKYO

Intrepid Hyper freak, Tim Levy, travels to Japan for the ride of his life!



WWF: RAW IS WAR!
AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK
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legend himself!



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PC-CDROM



CHAT



SEGA




ARCADE



NINTENDO 64

BATTLE REALMS™



EVERY WARRIOR HAS A NAME...