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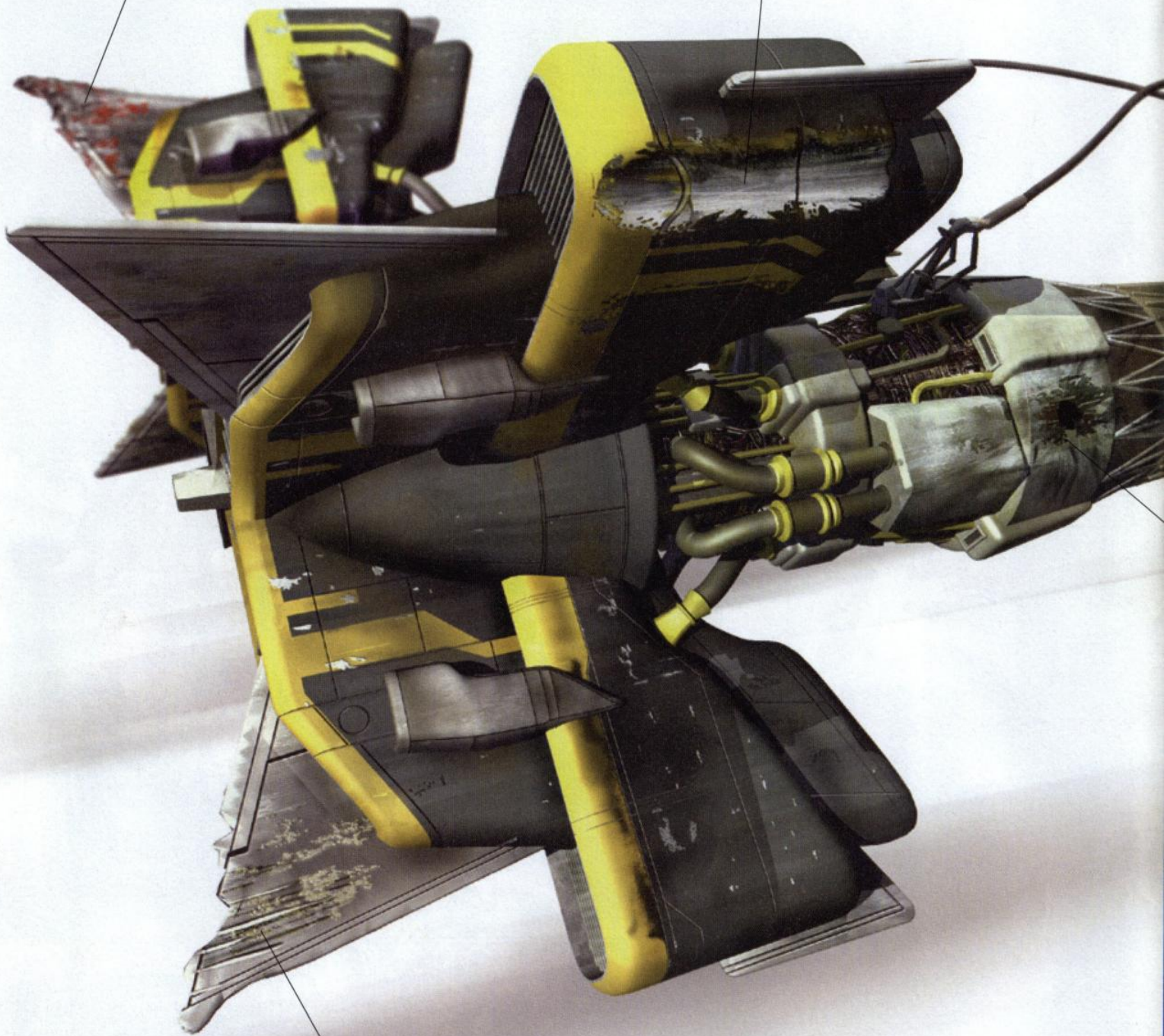
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Shrapnel impact at 600+mph.
Mon Calamari.

Swapping paint with Skywalker,
Tatooine.



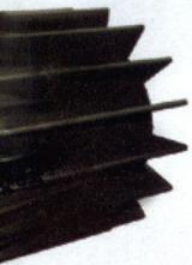
Turbo-boost slice between canyon wall and Dud Bolt,
Sullust.

PlayStation 2

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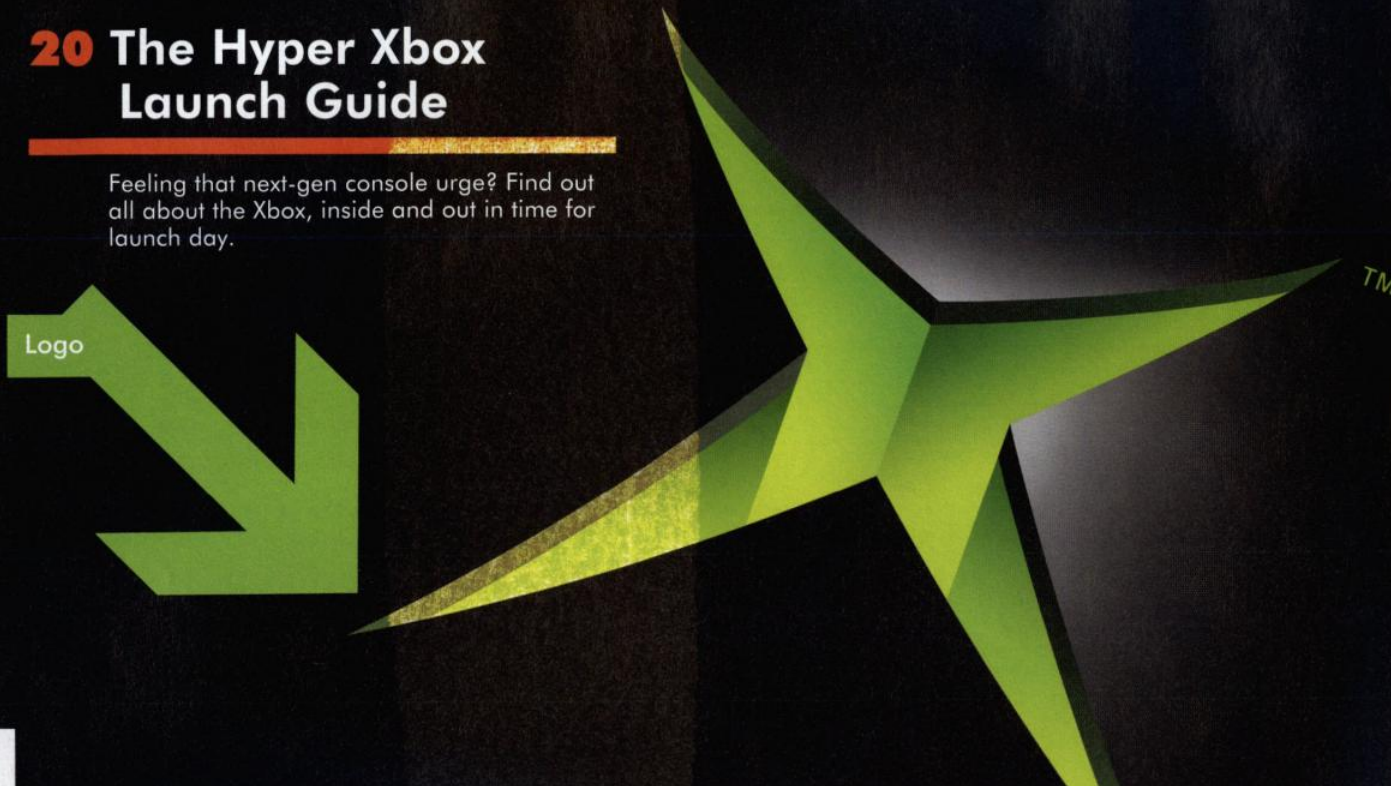


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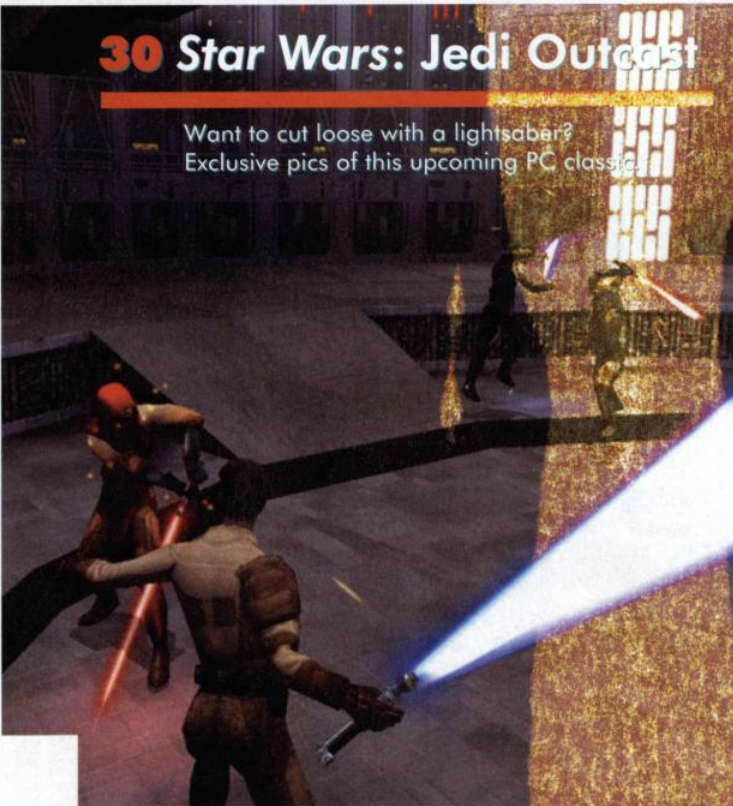
Feeling that next-gen console urge? Find out all about the Xbox, inside and out in time for launch day.

Logo



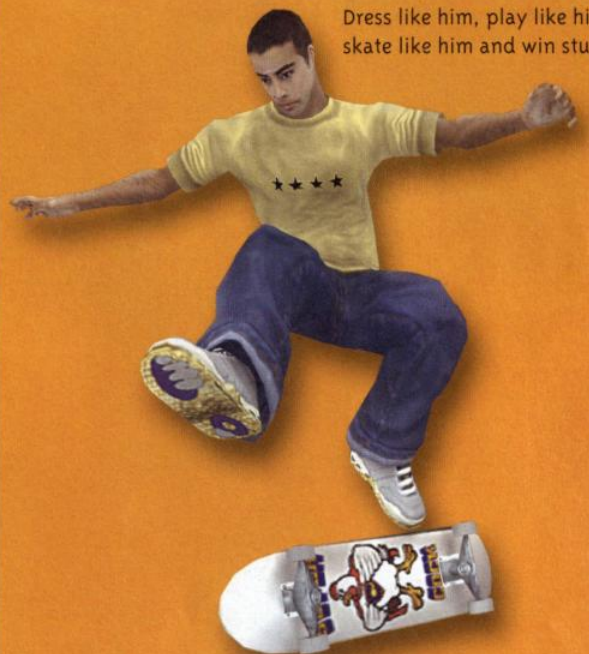
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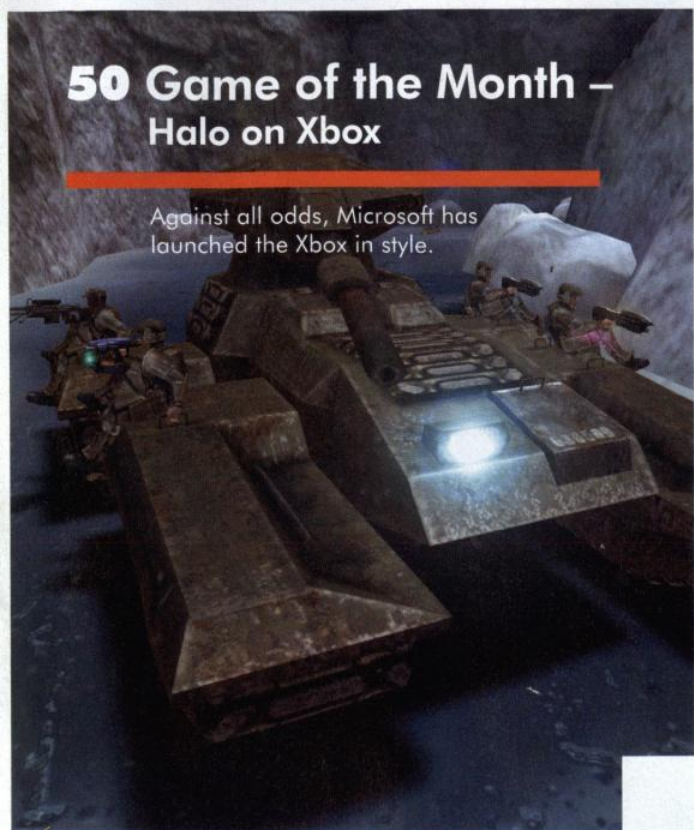
Dress like him, play like him, skate like him and win stuff!



TS

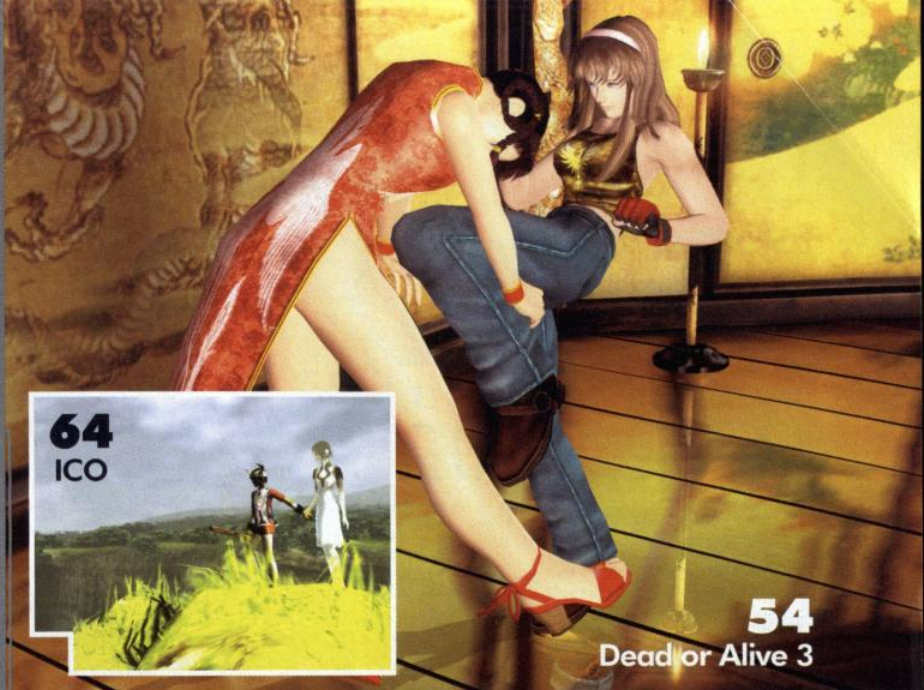
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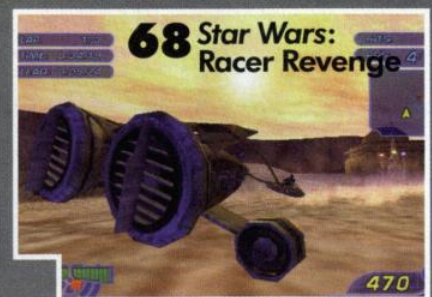
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Sonic Advance



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2002

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EDITORIAL

» Whenever a new console launches, there's always a healthy debate at Hyper HQ about how to score the new generation of games. It's tough making sure you don't get too carried away. Especially when you're ogling the next-generation capabilities of the Xbox – it's so easy to be a sucker for eye candy. As a result, the tendency is to score high, but that leaves little room down the track for the inevitably better second and third generations of software. However, even after careful consideration, there are so many big rubber stamps on the Xbox launch titles this issue, we're running out of ink!

We know you'll all start comparing Xbox scores with PS2 scores and vice versa, but what you have to remember is that you can't just start comparing apples with oranges. Games are generally ranked according to other games available on the same system, with only a slight influence from what is available on other consoles or on the PC. As long as you guys don't get carried away with unhealthy allegiances to specific systems, then we'll all enjoy our gaming a lot more, and for a lot longer.

Eliot Fish » Editor



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NEWS



IN THE NEWS: GameCube release date ■ Resident Evil the movie ■ GeForce 4 already! ■ Doom 3



May 17, \$399

Nintendo finally come clean on GameCube

As soon as Nintendo Europe lifted the lid on the European GameCube launch, Nintendo of Australia let the press releases fly — the GameCube will be here on May 17! Hitting the shelves at \$399, the GameCube will launch with 20 games; Nintendo's first party launch titles will be Luigi's Mansion and Wave Race: Blue Storm, with third party titles consisting of killers such as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, Star Wars: Rogue Squadron II — Rogue Leader and Super Monkey Ball. On launch, Aussies will be able to choose between the indigo or black GameCube. Hopefully, other colours such as the funky orange and white will be available sometime down the track.

To coincide with the arrival of the GameCube, Nintendo are dropping the price on their Game Boy

»» To coincide with the arrival of the GameCube, Nintendo are dropping the price on their Game Boy Advance

Advance handheld to \$160. This should encourage Nintendo fans to make sure they have both systems for the inevitable link-up scenario in the near future with games like Sonic Adventure Battle 2 and Kirby's Tilt 'N Tumble, where the Game Boy Advance becomes an extension of the GameCube. Happy times... Happy Times.



...and Clones attack the GBA!

»» May 17 won't just be the launch of the GameCube, but the premiere of *Star Wars: Episode II — Attack of the Clones*. THQ are releasing the Game Boy Advance game based on the movie, and it seems to hark back to the good old days of Super Star Wars. Featuring side-scrolling lightsaber action, swoop-bike racing and space combat, players can choose to play as Obi-Wan Kenobi, Anakin Skywalker or Mace Windu. *Attack of the Clones* for GBA just might be another reason to buy the newly-reduced in-price handheld.



Mace Windu gets like Gladiator.



Kenobi and Jango swap numbers.





CRAZY FACT

Squaresoft has sold over 4 million copies of Final Fantasy X worldwide. Staggering.

FINAL FANTASY X © 2001 SQUARE CO., LTD. C



UNREAL 2

Here's a pic of Unreal 2, because it's cool.



GEFORCE 4 MAKES WAVES And Trees, And Monsters...

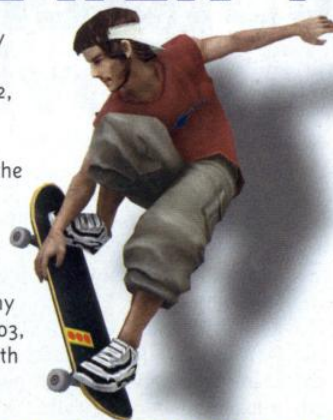
It seems like just yesterday we were drooling over the arrival of the GeForce 3 cards, but the fourth generation of nVidia video cards is here already. The brand spanking new GeForce 4 comes in three flavours, each designed to cater to a different kind of user. The best of the lot — the GeForce 4 Ti 4600 and 4400 cards — carry the nfiniteFX II engine, built for advanced 3D graphics work and the extreme high-end gamer. The nfiniteFX II engine can achieve unprecedented levels of character animation, and potentially deliver three times the performance of the GeForce 3. If you've got the money, this card will pump 1.23 Trillion operations per second, has a 10.4GB per second memory bandwidth and can handle full-screen anti-aliasing at performance levels never before seen. Your eyes will bleed! The GeForce 4 will naturally come in a cheaper, less hardcore MX model.

Some of the games already specially designed to take advantage of the GeForce 4 include Comanche 4, Elder Scrolls 3: Morrowind, and Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault. Expect plenty more on the way, and we'll test this baby out as soon as we win the lottery.



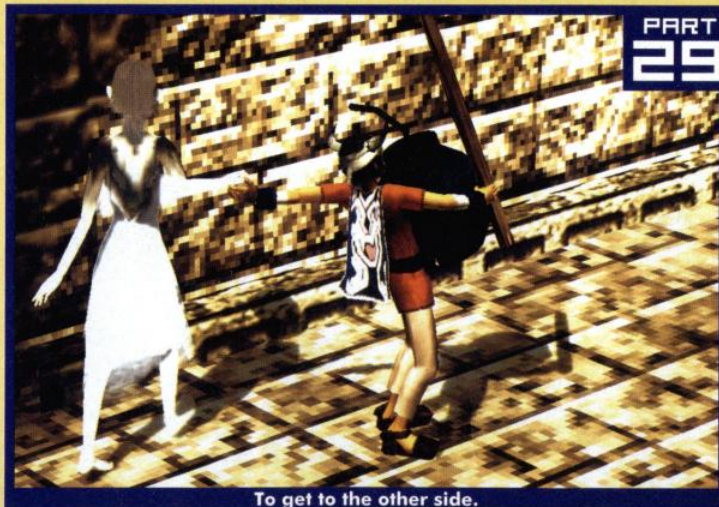
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

Just when we're swamped by Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 for Game Boy Advance, GameCube, PS2, PC and Xbox, Activision have announced their commitment to bring Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 to the next-gen consoles. Neversoft will once again helm the project, promising to take the game to "an all-new level of interactive entertainment". The release for Tony Hawk 4 is down for sometime in 2003, so we can safely enjoy a year's worth of Tony Hawk 3 in the meantime.



CAPTION THIS!

Hey there faithful readers — think you have the wit to make the Hyper team chuckle? Then think of your best caption for this screenshot and email it to Captionthis@next.com.au with Caption This Part 29 in the Subject line.



To get to the other side.



Joan of Arc ain't bad with a firearm.



RESIDENT EVIL: The Movie

Coming our way this year from Sony Pictures is Paul Anderson's feature film based on the Resident Evil games. Paul Anderson is the director who brought to life "cough" *Mortal Kombat* "cough" and *Event Horizon*, so he's no stranger to scary sci-fi or videogame-based movies.

Resident Evil will not feature Chris or Claire Redfield, but instead, S.T.A.R.S. members Alice (Milla Jovovich) and Rain (Michelle Rodriguez) who are sent in to contain a deadly virus that has accidentally been unleashed in the top secret labs at the Umbrella Corporation. As you might have guessed, all the staff in the building have been transformed into an army of flesh-eating zombies (yay). The place is also crawling with killer zombie dogs and other familiar creatures from the games, such as the deadly Lasher! Alice and the S.T.A.R.S. team have to somehow get rid of the virus and save the planet — all in three hours. To make things worse, a super A.I. called the Red Queen seems to have gone out of control and will do its best

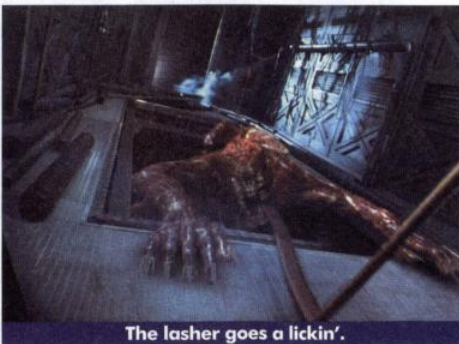
to trap and kill the S.T.A.R.S. team in the lab.

Some of you may remember that originally, legendary horror movie maker, George Romero (*Night of the Living Dead*) announced that he would be writing and directing the *Resident Evil* movie adaption. Sadly, it never happened, as Capcom didn't like the ideas he had in his script. Hmm... we wonder if a videogame company really knows what it's talking about when it comes to filmmaking — especially seeing as faithful videogame movies have all turned out to be dross. Anyway, the film was handed over to Paul Anderson so all is not lost.

Resident Evil has received an "R" rating in the USA, so you can expect to see a similar classification here (bummer for those under 18). The R rating is a good indication that the film isn't going to pull any punches, so you can be guaranteed that this is going to be a scary, gory, zombie-chopping fright-fest, just as you imagine a movie based on Resident Evil should be! Oh, and Slipknot have songs on the soundtrack. I guess you can't win 'em all.



Bad time to run out of ammo.



The lasher goes a lickin'.

WINNERS HYPER» 100

CRAZY 100TH ISSUE PRIZE PACK

Vaughn McDonald, Enmore, NSW.

SILENT HILL 2 & TV

First Prize:
C. Marrant, Gordon, NSW.

Runners-up:
Rodney Mayhew, Qld
William Stirling, Vic
Dale Verkek, SA, Jera Robson, NSW



OVERFLOW

Remember *Postal*? The game that got banned for allowing players to gun down innocent civilians? Well, *Postal 2* is in development by those crazy developers, Running With Scissors. *Postal 2* will, surprisingly, use the Unreal Warfare engine — a big change from the top-down 2D cartoon style of the original. We can't wait to see what happens when this game gets released...

Icewind Dale II has finally been confirmed 100% by its developer, Black Isle. The game will again use a modified version of the Infinity Engine, but there will be more items, weapons, armour and spells than ever before. You can find out more info at icewindz.blackisle.com

Continuing in sequels news, Volition has announced that *Summoner 2* is in development for the PlayStation 2. The game will feature an all-new battle system and it will continue on directly from the end of *Summoner*.

NFL Fever 2002 on Xbox predicts Superbowl! Xbox.com have been running NFL games in NFL Fever on the Xbox to see how well the game's stats and AI predicts what eventually will happen in real life. Incredibly, last month, the NFL Fever 2002 artificial intelligence not only predicted the New England Patriots historic upset of the St. Louis Rams, it also predicted that the Pats would win the game on the last play of the game by the exact score of 20-17. Wow.

Could the crazy world of *Grand Theft Auto 3* be making its way into the sphere of massively multiplayer gaming? There are rumours that Rockstar, whilst working on *Grand Theft Auto 4* for next-gen consoles, are considering a massively multiplayer *Grand Theft Auto* playworld, where players can gang up and go hooning in cars and generally cause crazy mayhem against other players in the streets of some huge virtual city. We pray this is the case.

Midway have announced *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance* as the official title of the new next-gen fighter. Strangely, they only announce the game as coming to the GameCube, Game Boy Advance and Xbox... no PS2. Sony fans rejoice!

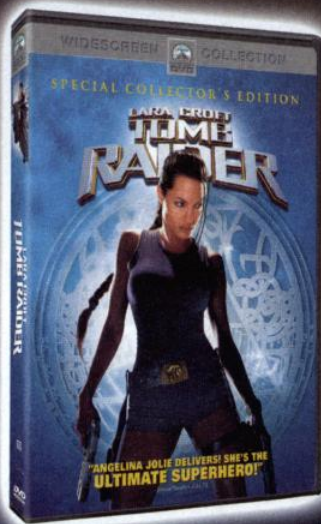
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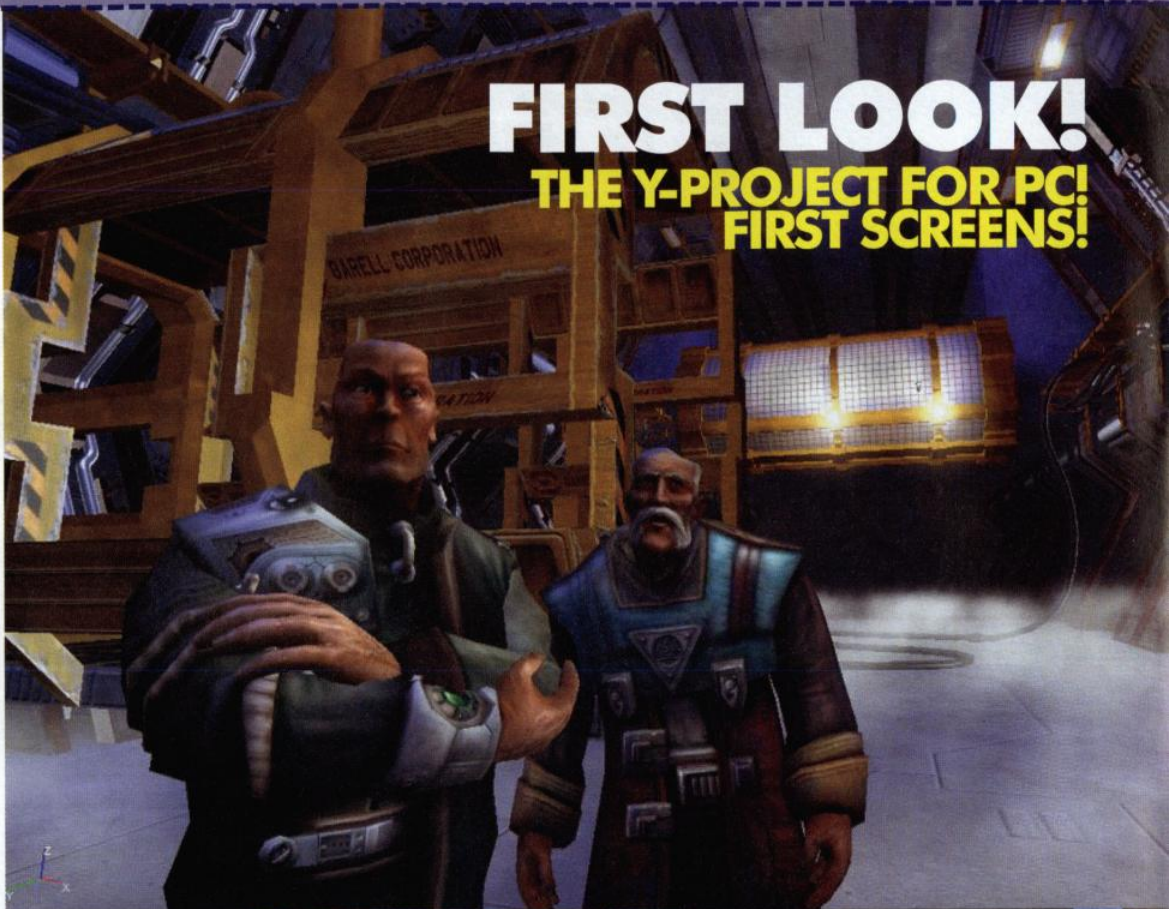
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SHOCK NEWS! DOOM 3 TO HAVE PLOT

John Carmack of Id Software was recently quizzed on how development on the next Doom game is coming along. He had some interesting things to say about the long-awaited sequel, from the fact that some characters are averaging over 500,000 polygons in their original form, to the fact that "Unlike everything we have done before, the new Doom actually DOES have a real plot, and I think it is going to be presented well. I don't really expect most people to believe us at this point, but wait and see...". It looks like we might have come a long way from Quake's 'find the key' gameplay motivation. We will see, John, we will see...



BILL GATES JOINS LINKIN PARK In A Promotional Partnership That Is...

"We're huge fans of Xbox," said Linkin Park guitarist Brad Delson. "We've been playing it since before it came out, and we're excited about the opportunity to include Xbox in the first Projekt: Revolution tour."

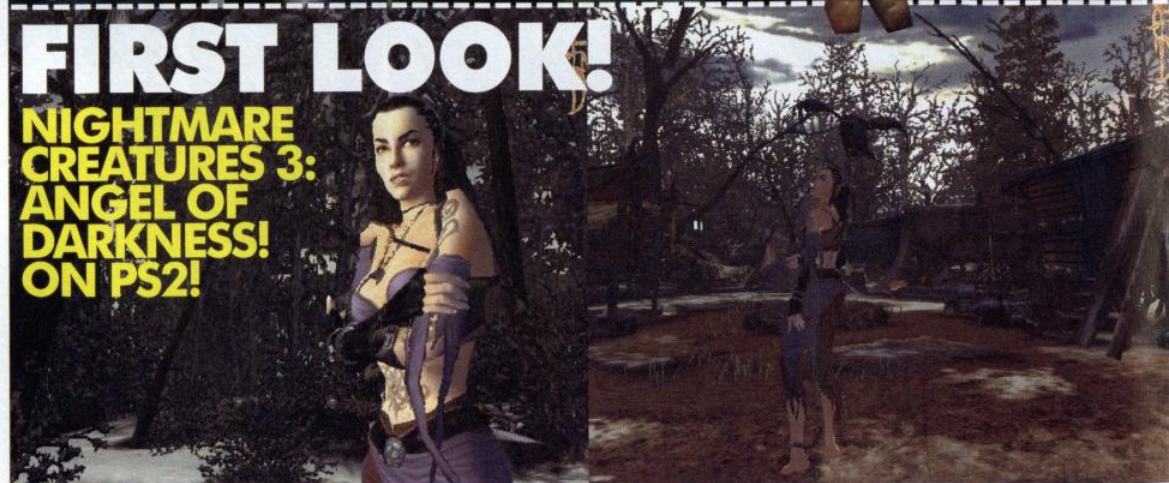
Yes, that's right, on Linkin Park's Projekt: Revolution Tour, Xbox will be plastered all over the event with Linkin Park even giving away signed Xbox systems.

"This is the ideal, synergistic relationship between artist and brand," said Eric Cohen, executive vice president of The Stronghold Group. Synergistic, eh? If only Linkin Park were cool!



FIRST LOOK!

NIGHTMARE CREATURES 3: ANGEL OF DARKNESS! ON PS2!



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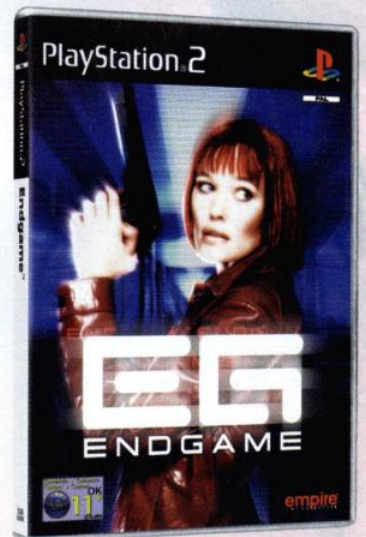
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BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY

» GCN HUDSON SOFT

E Bloody Roar: Primal Fury will be among the first wave of fighting games for the Nintendo GameCube. The game takes the intense Bloody Roar fighting action to new heights with new characters, new arenas and new special attack moves that are exclusive to this version. Who said bestiality was dead?



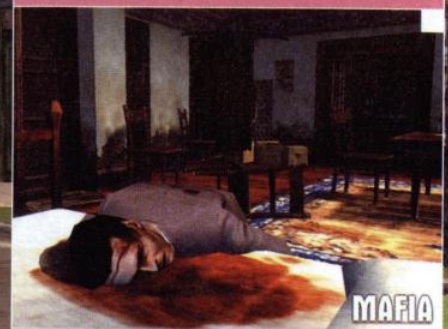


MAFIA

» PC/XBOX/PS2

TAKE 2

Ever wanted to work for the Don? And we don't mean on Burke's Backyard. Mafia puts you in the shoes (hopefully not cement ones) of a gangster who's out to prove himself in the ganglands of the 1930's. Be a hitman, a getaway car driver and more... could this be Grand Theft Auto 3 all over again, but with sepia tones? Check out the gruesome shots.



EYE CRYING

» HYPER 17

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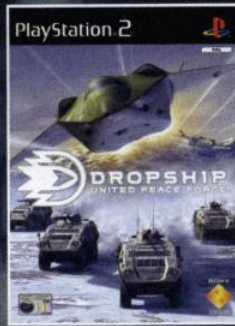
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Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty PS2 (MA15+). Prepare for a roller coaster ride of heart-stopping plot twists and dramatic gameplay as Solid Snake returns for another serve of tactical espionage. Currently lauded as the best looking PS2 title, you'll be awestruck by the mind-blowing graphics, intense fight scenes and unsurpassed attention to detail. This is a must-have addition to your PS2 collection. 8430



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Monsters Inc PS2 (G). 9316022



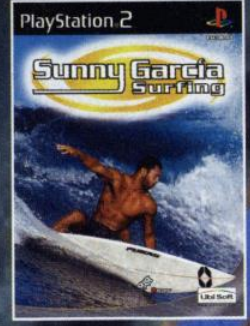
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Dropship United Peace Force PS2 (M15+). 9321224



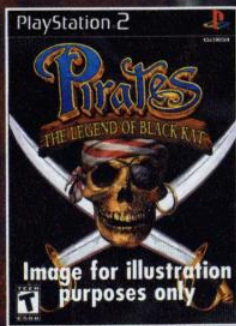
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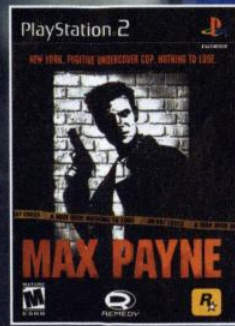
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Sunny Garcia Surfing PS2 (G). 428237



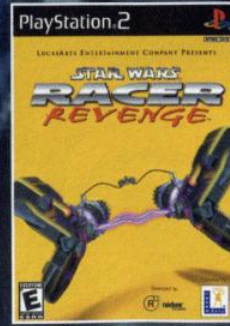
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Pirates: The Legend Of Black Kat PS2 (G). 4614182



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Max Payne PS2 (M15+). 0914PS2

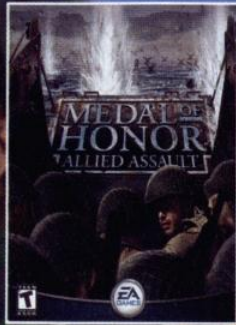


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Racer 2 PS2 (G8+). 461082

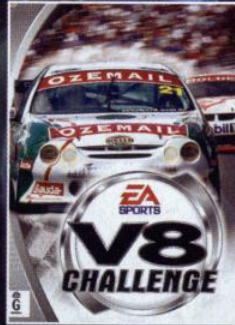


SOMEONE GETS HURT



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Medal of Honor: Allied Assault PC (MA15+). 5014324



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EA Sports V8 Challenge PC (G). 500997



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Command and Conquer: Renegade PC (MA15+). 5014180



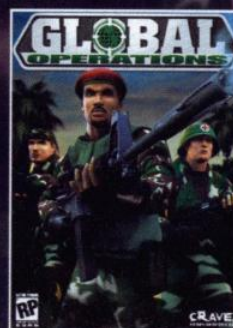
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Microsoft® Flight Simulator 2002 PC (G8+). MSC2845



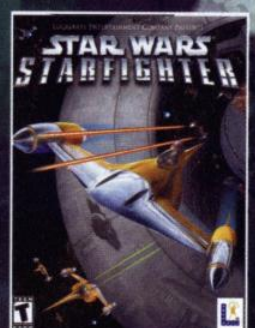
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Master of Orion 3 PC (G8+). 10766



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Global Operations PC (MA15+). 5014394



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Star Wars: Starfighter PC (G8+). 501007

Harvey Norman

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The Hyper Xbox Law

The money or the box? Chances are you've decided on the box... the Xbox that is! Well, this is the month you've been waiting for. March 14 is the day. Want to know exactly what you're investing in? Here's our complete hardware breakdown and guide to Xbox goodness.



Launch Guide

Microsoft's entry into the console market is quite a historic moment for the games industry. Rumours that Microsoft were planning to try and break into the console arena first arrived in late 1999; by early 2000 it was confirmed, and now it's here on retail shelves all over the world. Although some of you may feel that the Xbox represents another grab by Microsoft to dominate the consumer dollar, we'd prefer to view it as more competition for Nintendo and Sony — not to mention more games to play — which can only be a good thing.

HISTORY LESSON

You may have forgotten that the PlayStation was Sony's first console. Like Microsoft, they were newcomers to the console market and the industry never thought they could get it right. Cynics chuckled at Sony's attempt to tackle the

legendary gaming giants of Nintendo and Sega. Of course, now the Sony PlayStation is the world's most recognised gaming console and we're already playing with the PlayStation 2, the current market leader. The cynics were well and truly silenced. The big question now is whether Microsoft can pull off the same kind of videogame system fairytale.

The Xbox has had a great launch in the USA, and since the mid-November 2001 launch has sold in excess of 1.5 million units, with an impressively high hardware/software ratio. It will also have launched in Japan by now — a much tougher market to crack, but again Microsoft have been doing many things right. The Japanese launch price is 34,800 yen, or around AU \$520, and the Japanese market has also received a redesigned, much smaller controller and some Japan-specific launch titles.

However, you're probably all wondering how

the Xbox will fare in the smaller Australian market. Launching on March 14, and retailing for \$649, the launch line-up is massive: Halo, Dead or Alive 3, Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding, Project Gotham Racing... the sheer number and quality of the first party titles is impressive enough. Throw in a pile of third party games like Jet Set Radio Future, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 and Genma Onimusha — just to name a few — and you're looking at one awesome line-up of launch games. Whilst we could only review the games that made it to us by our print deadline, you can expect a huge number of Xbox reviews coming to you every issue; the release schedule is that impressive.

To accompany all these great games, we thought it was necessary to take a closer look at the hardware, peripherals, and possibilities that this new system offers. Just what will the Xbox really be capable of?

Inside the Box

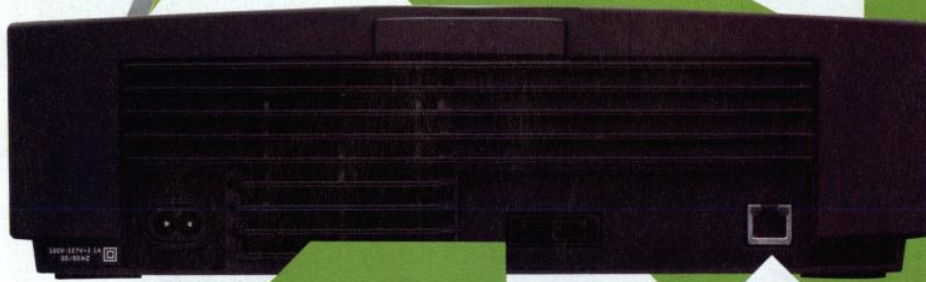
HARDWARE, PERIPHERALS AND BLISTERING POWER

Having experienced the Xbox hardware first hand for many months now, we can say we're very impressed with this system – and to think that this is only the first generation of games. With time, the Xbox is going to do some phenomenal things. Let's see why...

THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Running on a 733Mhz custom Intel processor, with a 250Mhz NV2A nVidia GPU and 64MB DDR RAM, the Xbox doesn't sound powerful in comparison to the specs of a top-of-the-line PC, but given the unified nature of the design (ie. that it's entirely optimised for playing games) it's very powerful indeed.

The nVidia GPU is undoubtedly the heart of the machine and its most advanced element; and well it should be, as the GPU handles so many important tasks. While the 733Mhz processor is mostly concerned with calculations like physics, A.I. and pathfinding, the GPU handles all 3D related tasks. In terms of power and features, the Xbox GPU sits between the GeForce 3 (NV20 chipset) and GeForce 4 (NV25 chipset) architecture, hence the name NV2A.



AV out

Ethernet

Drink coaster

DVD tray

Disc eject and Power on/off

Perhaps the most important element of the NV2A architecture is the nFiniteFX engine. This allows developers to build their own custom special effects and visual styles using the system's programmable vertex and pixel shading abilities.

X VERTEX SHADING - will allow developers to shade, warp and deform surfaces in real-time. This means complex effects like realistically rippling water, skeletal animation systems and amazing facial animations - when a character smiles dimples might appear, or if a character furrows their brow it will actually result in lines in the model's forehead. Plus, where GeForce 3 cards have only one vertex shader, the Xbox GPU has two - meaning most operations can be completed in a single pass and performance is significantly boosted.

X PIXEL SHADING - calculates effects for surfaces in the game one pixel at a time, and allows the Xbox to render, colour, light and shade over 2 million pixels per frame at 60fps. Developers can also create their own per pixel effects, and give their game the unique styling that they want.

The Xbox GPU also has an improved method of anti-aliasing. You're no doubt familiar with this term - aliasing is the jagged edges that appear on polygonal objects. The way this is eliminated is by blending the colour of the pixels at the edge to make lines look smooth. The Nintendo 64 had built-in anti-aliasing, but this was responsible for the very blurry look of the graphics, and the PS2's early games suffered visually thanks to a lack of anti-aliasing. In the past, anti-aliasing was performed by using a technique called "supersampling" which often came with a major performance hit. The new technique has been dubbed High Resolution Anti-Aliasing and uses "multisampling", where the final pixel colour is calculated in multiple samples inside the GPU, allowing anti-aliasing with almost no performance hit.

BELLS AND WHISTLES

Other hardware supported graphical effects include:

X TEXTURE COMPRESSION: One of the reasons Dreamcast games looked so great was built-in texture compression. Sega led the charge, and now both Microsoft and Nintendo have followed suit. Texture compression is necessary simply because very detailed textures obviously take up a lot of room, and there's only a finite amount of RAM available in modern consoles. Texture compression allows the game to keep the texture quality high, but at a fraction (1/6th) of the size.

X BUMP MAPPING: One of the most obviously used effects in the first generation of Xbox games is bump mapping - one look at Shrek and you'll know what we're talking about. Bump Mapping gives 2D textures artificial depth. This is achieved by adding shadows at a very small scale to the textures. Best of all, the nature of the shadows can be manipulated to give the surface very different styles of 3D illusion (for instance the shadows for a pebbly surface would be very different to those for a woody surface).

X REFLECTION MAPPING: Built into the GPU is real-time reflection mapping, where a mirror-like surface will accurately reflect the objects around it. This can clearly be seen at work in Project Gotham Racing (although the frame rate on the reflections is quite low). Best of all, the reflections can have additional texture passes on them just like normal texture mapping.

X MULTIPLE TEXTURE PASSES: The Xbox supports four texture passes every frame. In other words, the first pass creates the scene, leaving the other three free for effects like bump-mapping, reflection mapping and light mapping. All at 60 frames per second!

HDTV SUPPORT

X The Xbox is largely future proof thanks to its support for High Definition TV. In addition to outputting at NTSC and PAL resolutions, it's also capable of outputting at 1280x720 and 1980x1080 in 16/9 - the HDTV standards. And since this is built into the GPU, gamespeed shouldn't be affected too significantly. If the games look this good on our current low resolution TVs, imagine how good they'll look at higher resolutions on the HDTVs of the future. We should also mention that several different sets of output cables will be available at launch. From the lowly RF adapter, to the RCA leads that come as standard, through to S-Video leads and Component Video and Optical Digital Audio, no matter how high tech (or low tech) your set-up, you should be covered.

SOUND

X The Xbox isn't just a graphics powerhouse - it takes games to new aural heights too. Once again, nVidia have provided the chipset, known as the MCP-X (Media Communications Processor). It supports 256 simultaneous stereo audio channels (this basically means how many separate sound channels it can generate at once), Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound and 3D positional audio. It's actually the first console to support Dolby Digital 5.1 in-game (PS2 only supports it in FMV and DVD playback, and the Gamecube doesn't support it at all). We should also mention that the MCP-X chipset looks after the Xbox's networking too!

Like the Gamecube (and its Factor 5 developed technology), the Xbox also supports dynamic soundtracks via Direct Sound. This provides a structure so that developers can dynamically change the music in their games depending on what's happening. Essentially, the sound capabilities of the Xbox are yet another excuse to set up your own home theatre system. For those of us who don't yet have such a set-up, the Xbox also has tools so that games can be built to give an illusion of 3D spatial sound from only two speakers. Nifty eh?

ra controller
ports (3 & 4)

the Hard Drive

HOLY GIGABYTES, BATMAN!

Having a hard drive built into the Xbox is really going to have a big impact on console gaming. The 8GB hard drive will be responsible for features such as almost-instantaneous loading times — game content can be transferred to it while the user plays, then when the machine needs the information, it can be accessed and moved into RAM very quickly. As an example of the speed, DVD access times are up to ten times slower than that of a hard drive.

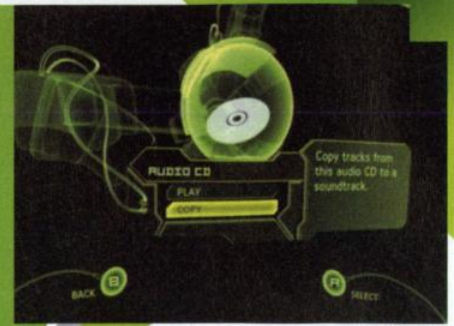
Another cool aspect of having a hard drive will be doing away with memory card management thanks to the amount of permanent space at your disposal. Rip CDs, create hundreds of Tony Hawk skate parks, download user-created content or game updates — such as extra chapters for a FPS, extra worlds for RPGs and zero-day team rosters for sports games — it's all good. Plus, developers will be able to create epic gameworlds that truly evolve over time, and thanks to the hard drive, you'll be able to store all those changes, no matter how large.

At a development level it means that game makers can take advantage of the benefits in every game that they make — as opposed to say, PS2 developers, who know that only a percentage of owners are going to have the optional hard drive, so will have to hold back on making hard drive related features integral. Basically a hard drive means more options for the developer, and more power for the user.

RIPPING YOURSELF A NEW ONE

Ripping a CD to the Xbox hard drive is incredibly easy. Simply pop an audio CD in the Xbox's drive and it will go to the (well, duh) audio CD screen, where you have a choice between playing the CD or copying it. When you copy it to your HD you have the option of putting it in a new "soundtrack" category, which you can name so you know what album/style of music it contains. Copying the music off a CD takes about a quarter of an hour, so you'll need to set aside a fair amount of time to get a decent collection together. Once you have, however, it's very straightforward to go into games that support it (such as Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding or Project Gotham Racing) and create your own custom soundtrack. The difference this small feature makes to playing games is huge — finally you can play with the exact vibe that you want!

At present, however, the CD ripper is pretty rudimentary — there are no bit-rate options whatsoever, nor a choice of compression format (no surprise there — hello WMA!). We can only hope that Microsoft have chosen a system that will result in true CD quality sound — especially considering the awesome home theatre sound capabilities of the hardware. Also lacking is any kind of track naming system, although one assumes that once the machine goes online, CD info will automatically be downloaded so that you have all the track-names at your disposal. Or at least we hope it will do that...



Networking & Online

A ROSY MULTIPLAYER FUTURE?

Although it isn't the first console to come with online capabilities built in, the Xbox should be the first to do it properly — broadband all the way. It will also represent the first chance for many Australian gamers to take their console online. As of going to press, Microsoft's online plans for Australia aren't all that clear, but not unsurprising given the mess that Telstra have created. You can, however, still play Halo online if you already have a cable or ADSL account, thanks to Gamespy and some nifty software they've created. For full details check out www.gamespy.com, but rest assured we've tested it and it works very well indeed (although you'll really want to be on Optus Cable to avoid lag). You can literally fool your PC into thinking it's a server and host your own Xbox games. You could also set up a 16-player network (across four Xboxes) using Link Cables and a standard ethernet hub. We'll save an in-depth examination of the Xbox's online capabilities for a future issue when Microsoft's plans are out in the open.



the Controller

THE XBOX CONTROLLER

THE BIG BLACK DOORSTOP

For such an important component of any console, we're quite disappointed with the Xbox controller. In fact, it's the single biggest problem with the system, and even though Microsoft have repeatedly talked about the amount of testing and research that went into the controller's design, we simply can't believe that gamers wouldn't have found anything wrong with it, because we sure have. The D-pad is clunky, poorly designed and unresponsive, the buttons on the face are too close together and aligned in an unintuitive direction, and the controller itself is just so chunky (although this is subjective depending on how big your hands are).

It ain't all bad, though. The analogue sticks are excellent, the triggers feel nice and seem very sturdy, and Microsoft have sensibly put two slots in the back, so you can have a memory card and the headset plugged in at once. Also cool is the three-metre cable between console and controller, and the breakaway safety node that means even if you accidentally yank the controller back sharply the node will detach — stopping the unit from falling off its perch. Very useful (although we suspect it would take a team of Egyptian slaves to move the Xbox off its perch). We're still a bit mystified by the Xbox bubble in the center of the

controller, however. It serves no practical purpose, and to be honest, just looks tacky. Why not put that space to good use? We've already suggested a pop-o-matic dice-rolling bubble for use in traditional RPGs (We suggested what?? — Ed.), but how about an LCD screen or something that isn't a space filler?

THE JAPANESE CONTROLLER

HOLD ON, WHY DIDN'T WE GET THIS ONE?

Knowing that Japanese gamers are more petite than their fat American friends, and also that they would not accept a controller that one developer described to us as "like holding two potatoes", Microsoft redesigned the controller for the Japanese market. The result is very reasonable — a much smaller, much more functional controller. The button spacing is far superior, the D-pad is a little better, and the controller as a whole sits more comfortably in the hand. Although it's not the most aesthetically pleasing controller we've ever seen, our advice is to pay the extra and get import Jap controllers if you need more than one.



the Peripherals

GADGETS AND THIRD PARTY SOLUTIONS

In addition to a good range of Microsoft peripherals, the third party peripheral manufacturers are also going hell for leather. Thrustmaster, Mad Catz, InterAct and Gamester are all making a range of peripherals for the Xbox. For a complete list of the officially licensed peripherals check out www.xbox.com/System/catalog.htm.

Thrustmaster Modena 360 Racing Wheel

MANUFACTURER: Thrustmaster

PRICE: \$149

HYPER VERDICT: "An okay option if you absolutely must have a wheel to play Project Gotham with. The leg supports work well, but it's a little overpriced for the quality of construction."



FireStorm Programmable Gamepad

MANUFACTURER: Thrustmaster

PRICE: \$59.95

HYPER VERDICT: "A very viable alternative to the first party controller. Pity it apes the button layout."



Memory Unit

MANUFACTURER: Microsoft

RRP: \$59.95

HYPER VERDICT: "Essential for taking save games around to a friend's house without having to lug your Xbox too!"



DVD Movie Playback Kit

MANUFACTURER: Microsoft

RRP: \$49.95

HYPER VERDICT: "The remote works really well, and is an essential purchase if you're planning on putting together a home theatre set-up."

Joybox Converter

MANUFACTURER: TBC

RRP: Available on import (for around \$30)

HYPER VERDICT: "Allows you to plug your PS2 Dual Shock controller into your Xbox. Useful but hardly essential."



Game Commander

MANUFACTURER: Microsoft

RRP: TBA

HYPER VERDICT: "This isn't available at launch so we'll have to keep you posted. Has the potential to make online team-based games even better!"

Link Cable

MANUFACTURER: Microsoft

RRP: \$29.95

HYPER VERDICT: "Great for head-to-head Halo sessions, but PC boffins may just plug their Xboxes into their home LAN."

HYPERWARE



LOGITECH Z-560

Logitech

Price: \$499

»» We don't often review PC speakers in our hardware section, but this issue is a little different because over the last couple of weeks we've had the pleasure of hooking Logitech's new Z-560 system up to the Hyper PC (otherwise known as "Cam's Jukebox"), and have come away very impressed. The system consists of four satellite speakers, a chunky sub and a control module that sits on your desk. It has a very slick look to it, with the subwoofer commanding instant respect, and nice techy looking satellite speakers (once you've taken the grills off mind you).

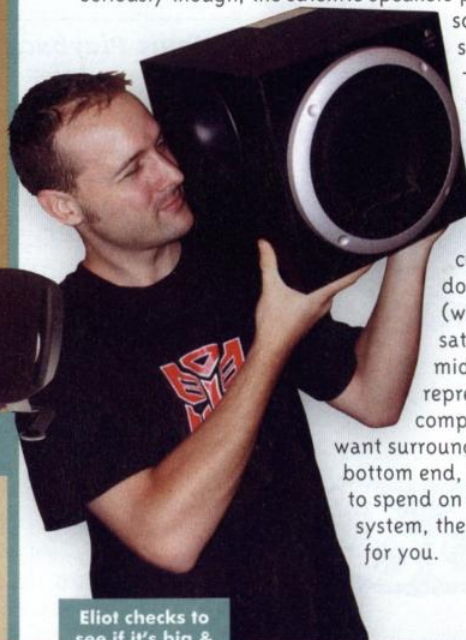
To take full advantage of these speakers you'd want a 4-channel sound card (we recommend Creative's new Audigy range) to produce true 4.1 surround sound, but for those of you with an old Soundblaster Live card (or something similar), the Z-560 also has M3D Matrix Technology which will create the illusion of four speaker surround from 2-channel stereo sources. It works quite well too.

RUGGED TESTS

For a system that costs less than \$500 we're hugely impressed with the Z-560's sound quality, but don't take our word for it - they're Lucasfilm THX certified. What this means is that they've had to undergo a series of rigorous tests in sound performance (including bandwidth, frequency balance, minimum peak sound pressure levels and the ability to play to their rated output level), interface and quality of construction. Better still they've undergone a series of rugged tests in the Hyper offices in the all-important areas of gaming, hip hop, house, techno, jungle and punk. They passed with flying colours, even blitzing the very tricky "Big Heavy Stuff-ability" exam that Eliot took a day off to personally supervise.

Seriously though, the satellite speakers produce a crisp, clear sound-band and the subwoofer is simply amazing - powerful, unsettlingly deep and never distorting. Our old system used to annoy the entire office but with the Z-560 in action we achieved an even higher rate of co-worker complaints. Hurrah! The only downside with the Z-560s (which is true of most satellite/sub setups) is that the mid-range could be better represented, but we're not complaining. In short, if you want surround sound and a meaty bottom end, but don't have the money to spend on a component-based system, the Z-560 is just the system for you.

The louder the bass is the better, I say.



Eliot checks to see if it's big & heavy at least.

TECH SPECS

- Total power output - 400 watts RMS
- Satellite speaker power output - 212 watts RMS (53w + 53w + 53w + 53w)
- Subwoofer power output - 188 watts RMS
- System frequency response - 35Hz - 20kHz
- 8" diameter "long-throw" subwoofer with wood enclosure
- THX certified

ARE

iMac TECH SPECS

Processor and memory

- Power PC G4 processor (700 or 800 MHz) with Velocity Engine
- 256K on-chip level 2 cache at full processor speed
- 100MHz system bus
- 128MB or 256MB of SDRAM exp. to 1GB

Storage

- 40GB or 60GB Ultra ATA hard disk drive
- Choice of three optical drives:
 - **CD-RW drive** (writes CD-Rs at 24x, CD-RWs at 10x, reads CDs at 32x)
 - **DVD-ROM/CD-RW Combo drive** (reads DVDs at 8x, writes CD-Rs at 12x, CD-RWs at 8x, reads CDs at 32x)
 - **SuperDrive** (combination DVD-R/CD-RW drive; writes DVD-R discs at 2x, reads DVDs at 6x, writes CD-Rs at 8x, CD-RWs at 4x, reads CDs at 24x)

Display

- 15-inch (viewable) TFT active-matrix liquid crystal display
- Typical viewing angle: 120 degrees horizontal; 90 degrees vertical

Graphics support/ Video

- NVIDIA GeForce2 MX
- 32MB of dedicated Double Data Rate (DDR) video memory
- Output resolutions: 640x480 at 60 Hz, 800x600 at 75Hz, and 1024x768 at 75Hz

Communications

- Built-in 56K V.90 fax modem
- Built-in 10/100BASE-T Ethernet
- Built-in antennas & card slot for optional 11-Mbps AirPort Card; IEEE 802.11b compliant

Audio

- Built-in speaker or Apple Pro Speakers (9 watts each)
- Internal 18-watt digital amplifier
- Headphone jack
- Built-in microphone for speech recognition and audio recording

Keyboard and mouse

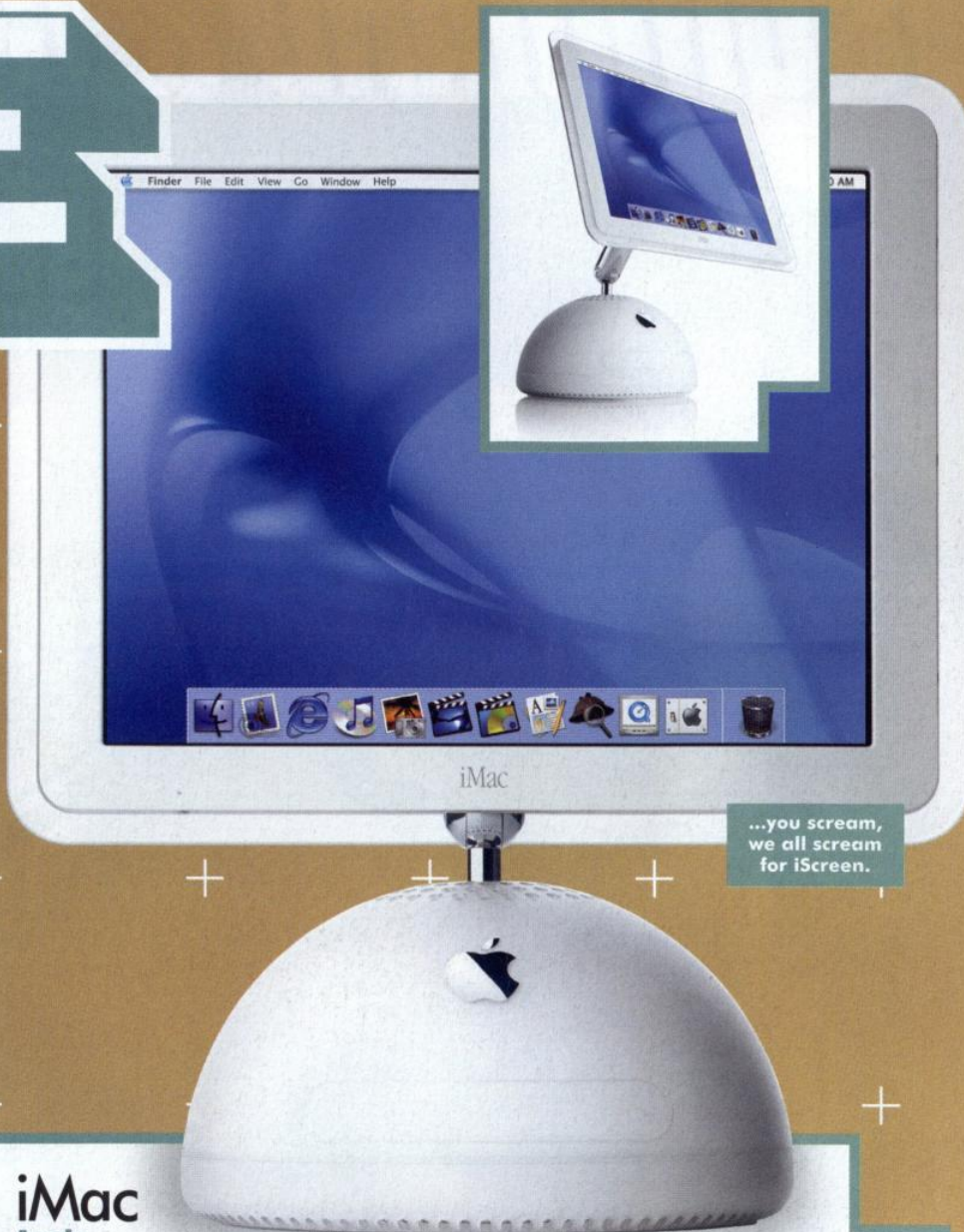
- Apple Pro Keyboard with 15 function keys, 4 arrow keys (inverted "T" arrangement), audio controls, and media-eject key; two built-in USB 1.1 ports; two-position tilt
- Apple Pro Mouse with optical sensor

Peripheral connections

- Two 400-Mbps FireWire (IEEE 1394) ports; 8 watts shared
- Three USB 1.1 ports (shared on two 12-Mbps controllers); two USB 1.1 ports on keyboard

Size and weight

- Height: 12.95 inches (32.9 cm) minimum; 20.0 inches (50.9 cm) maximum
- Width: 15.1 inches (38.3 cm) minimum; 16.3 inches (41.5 cm) maximum
- Depth: 10.6 inches (27.0 cm) minimum; 16.3 inches (41.5 cm) maximum
- Diameter of base: 10.6 inches (27.0 cm)
- Weight: 21.3 pounds (9.7 kg)



...you scream,
we all scream
for iScreen.

iMac Apple

Available: Now **Price:** CD-RW Drive - \$2,995 • Combo Drive - \$3,495 • SuperDrive - \$4,195

Although Apple only occupy a niche position in the desktop market, they continue to set the standards for design in the industry. The original iMac represented something of a watershed in design terms, giving the personal computer personality, and starting the transition of the desktop computer away from the drab grey box. The latest iMac design is every bit as cool as the previous one, but in a more understated hi-tech way. What's significant about the new iMac from a design/aesthetics point of view is the interplay between the monitor and the base. It's a beautifully balanced design, with the monitor and its smooth gliding motion acting very much like a limb. So symbolically it's an extension of your body... either that or an extension of your desktop lamp.

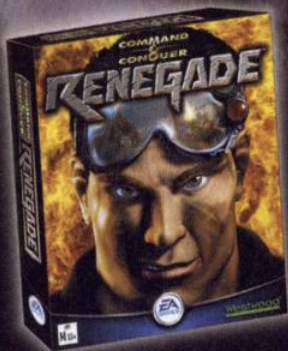
CRANKINGLY FAST

The entire unit is very small, with the base only 10.6 inches across, and every centimetre of space inside utilised fully (including a circular logic board). It comes in three models that vary in clockspeed, HDD size, RAM and optical drives. The optical drive range is definitely the most exciting thing about the various models, however - even the most basic iMac has a crankingly fast 24x burner. For those willing to shell out the extra cash, it's the SuperDrive (both CD and DVD burner) at the top of the range that has us most excited. Finally, DVD burners are becoming cheap enough to come as standard with hardware!

The only disappointing element to the design is the 15 inch screen. It's very high quality certainly, and produces an excellent picture quality, but with the price of LCD technology becoming truly affordable, it's a shame that the top of the line model doesn't come with a 17 inch monitor. Perhaps this would compromise the balance somewhat, but it would be nice for gamers who also dabble in graphics apps. Regardless, the new iMac is very competitively priced, and is one of the funkiest pieces of kit we've seen in a while. Give us one, Apple!



COMMAND & CONQUER™




M 15+

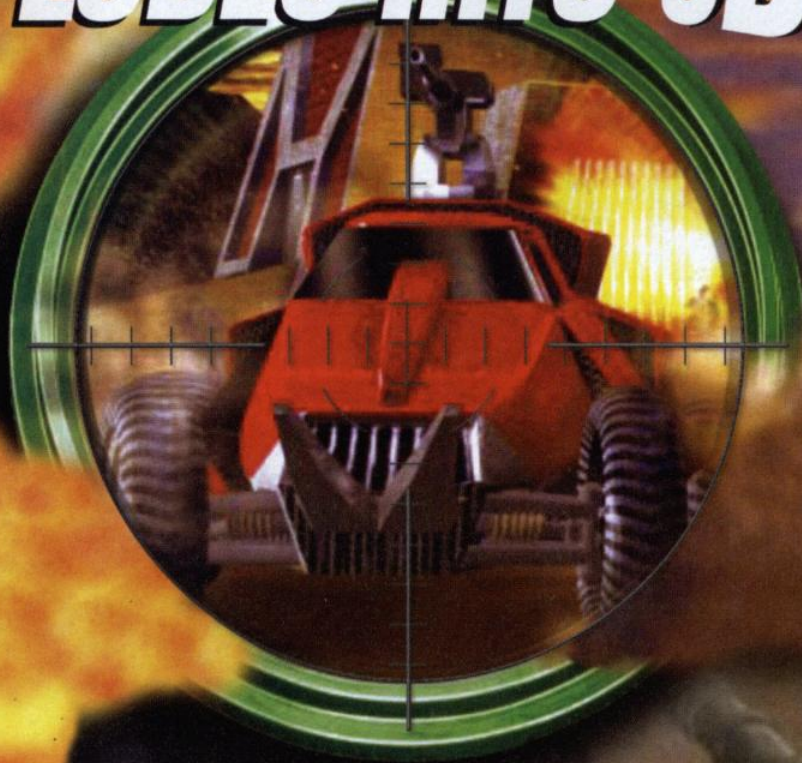
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Dish out the damage in either first or third-person.

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Destroy the enemy team as GDI vs. Nod in our exclusive multiplayer 'C&C' mode.

**COMMAND
&
CONQUER**

RENEGADE



JEDI KNIGHT II: Jedi Outcast

PC

CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> **PLAYERS:** 1-64 >> **PUBLISHER:** LucasArts >> **AVAILABLE:** TBA

WOW-O-METER



Most PC gamers on the planet will agree that Raven Software have a lot to live up to with Jedi Outcast. Having been granted the job of delivering a sequel to LucasArts' Jedi Knight (which was a sequel to the original Dark Forces), Raven have been stuck with the task of delivering gameplay on par with two absolute classic PC games. At the same time, they have to build a convincing Star Wars world that will convince the hardcore fans. Luckily, Raven have had LucasArts to guide them in the ways of the Force.

NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS

Dark Forces and Jedi Knight boasted exceptional level design, and almost for this reason alone, they became PC classics. Both games thrilled the player with hidden delights of exploration and intimidated them with levels of immense scale and atmosphere. On top of that, the locations had the gritty feel of the Star Wars universe. If ever there was a hurdle for Raven, it was going to be in the level design. If Jedi Outcast turns out to be a linear trudge-fest, they will have successfully

ruined an award-winning license.

So far, locations in Jedi Outcast range from the bars of the bounty hunter riddled Nar Shaddaa to remote Imperial outposts in the depths of the planet. There will also be more familiar Star Wars locales such as Cloud City (complete with the carbonite freezing chamber) and a Jedi Academy on Yavin 4.

The lightsaber combat system in Jedi Outcast looks to be a huge improvement over the simplistic slash attacks in Jedi Knight. Raven have redesigned the combat system, albeit with the same third-person camera perspective as Jedi Knight. However, Raven have added more

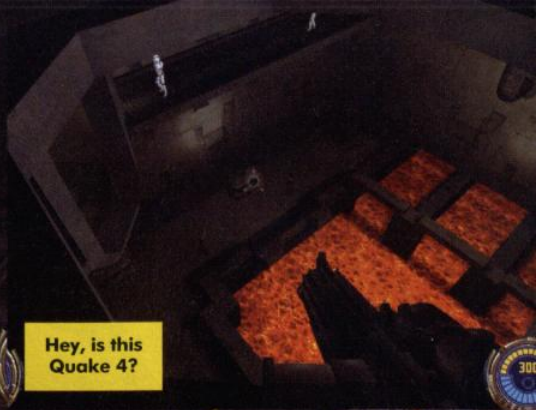
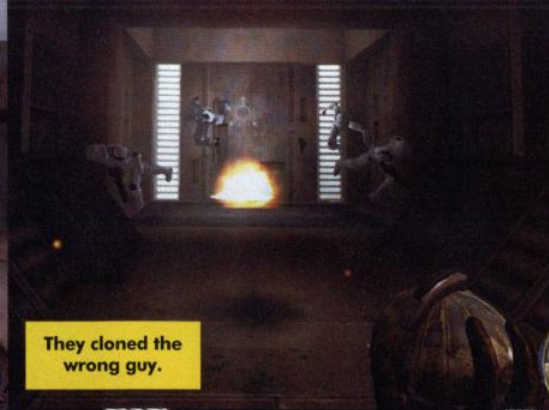
moves that involve Force powers, so that you can now hurl your saber like a boomerang and have it carve up your target before returning to your hand.

More emphasis has been put on using the lightsaber in general — you are a Jedi after all — though you can still blow things apart with the trusty blaster.

LET THE WOOKIEE WIN

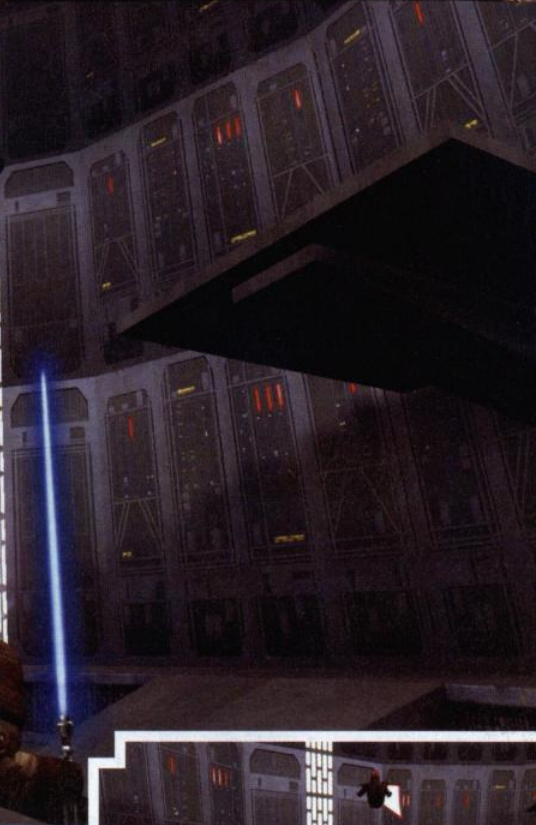
New acrobatic moves have been included to really make you feel like a skilled Jedi post *Episode One's* frantic lightsaber action scenes. Your character, Kyle Katarn, will be



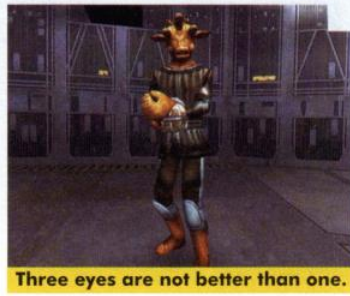
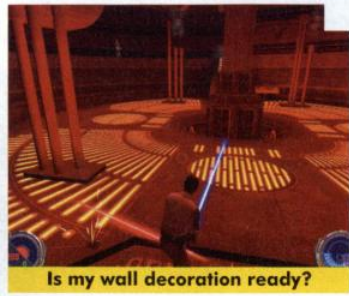
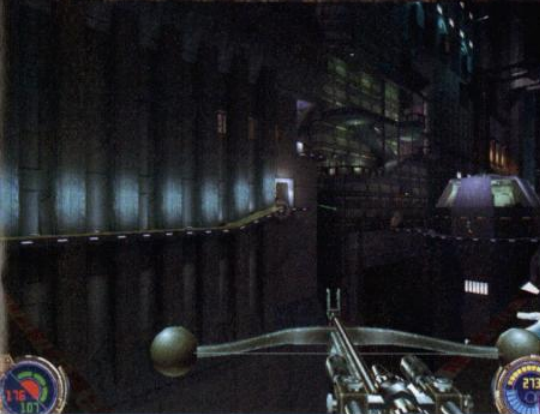


They cloned the wrong guy.

Hey, is this Quake 4?



So be it... er, "I33t_Jedi82"



BEST LIGHTSABER EFFECTS EVER!

»» Jedi Outcast is set to have the best lightsaber effects in any Star Wars game to date. As you slash it around, the lightsaber doesn't look like just a coloured stick with sound effects, but an actual humming blade of light that blurs through the air. As it touches the ground, doors or walls, the lightsaber also leaves a white-hot burning scar across the surface it's dragged across. Looks like there's at least a few hours worth of screwing around with the lightsaber for kicks here!

Is my wall decoration ready?

Three eyes are not better than one.

able to do somersaults, leap from walls and perform powerful Force jumps to access out-of-reach areas, and the enemy AI has been improved to the point where lightsaber-wielding foes will be able to follow you no matter how acrobatic you get. It's sounding like Jedi Outcast will be the most convincing "Jedi Sim" yet.

If there's anything we have reservations about, it's that Raven have been making so many shooters (Soldier of Fortune 1 & 2, Voyager: Elite Force) that they may have exhausted all their good ideas, and be tempted to regurgitate ideas from their previous games or replicate scenarios from Dark Forces and Jedi Knight in an attempt to please the fans. The previous two games were all about delivering some truly innovative new experiences, and in an overcrowded and tired marketplace full of shooters, Jedi Outcast is going to have to be stunningly good to stand out from the crowd. We hope the Force is with them. <<<

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
Let's hope Raven keep Jedi Outcast moddable.



Attack of the bad ping times.



Move along, move along.



TUROK: EVOLUTION

»» **GCN/XBOX/PS2** CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Acclaim >> AVAILABLE: November 2002

Fans of this series on the N64 will no doubt have been upset at the announcement that after the third story installment and fourth game, the franchise would in fact end. However, due to the sheer demand, specifically from non-N64 owners, Acclaim Studios Austin have once again picked up the Turok mantle, and even went so far as to invite games jourmos from around the world out to Austin Texas to check out just how alive and kicking this series is.

LONG LIVE THE CONFEDERATORS...

Turok: Evolution, according to Dave Dienstbier (lead designer), is the

Turok that Acclaim Studios Austin has always wanted to make. The game is a prequel, story-wise, and puts you in the boots of the very first Turok. The story takes place during a battle between American Indians and the Confederate army. The fight is bloody and messy, and in the midst of battle, two leaders emerge to combat one another - Tal-set, an American Indian warrior and a Confederate General, and the two stumble upon a cave. Both injured from battle, their blood falls to the floor, somehow activating an ancient gateway to another realm - the Lost Land.

The game begins once this FMV prologue is over, and as Turok you'll be brought back to the jungles that

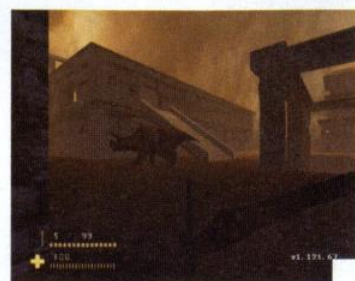
originally made the series so popular. This time, however, the level of detail is astounding, and the lush forests and wildlife will truly come to life. Prehistoric insects buzz about your head and the likes of snakes, tiny lizards and other reptilian life cross your path. As you watch wildlife walk amongst the surroundings you'll see bushes rustle, leaves float to the ground and dirt paths trampled.

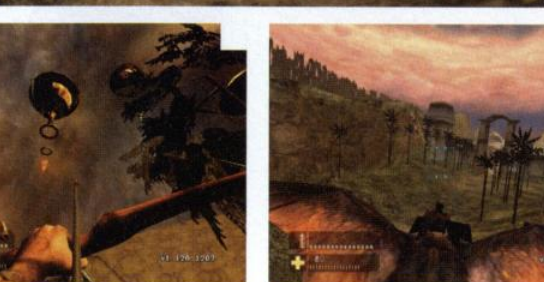
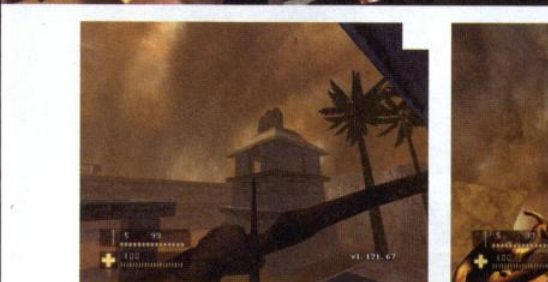
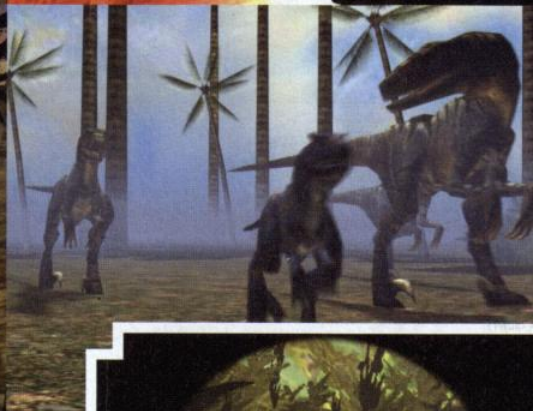
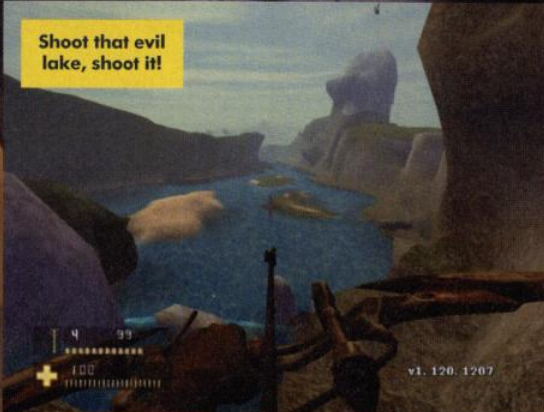
It's the larger dinosaurs that will really blow your mind though - these things are simply amazing and create an imposing sense of scale. They're beautifully bump-mapped too, and on the Xbox (the only version we've seen so far), the visuals are so sweet that you'll be closely examining objects Halo style to simply admire the realism. As Turok, you can interact with this lush land in some cool ways that can give you strategic advantages in different parts of the game - you can topple trees onto enemies or to

create a walkway across a canyon. Another new addition to the game is flying. After all, why cross a canyon when you could fly over it? This is something the team originally wanted in Turok: Dinosaur Hunter on N64, and you can now take to the skies on the back of a pterodactyl. Flying sections range from forced flying (no turning back!) to full 3D boss levels.

BIG F**K-OFF GUNS, AND LOTS OF 'EM

The Turok games have always been about big guns, and Acclaim are set to deliver again. They've chosen not to show off too many of their new weapons yet (they're waiting for E3), but what we saw and were told about sounded awesome. Remember the Cerebral Bore from Turok 2? It's ba-ack, only this time it's called the Cerebral Swarm and can now target multiple enemies!





Attack that evil cloud, attack it!

Kill that hateful sky, kill it!

Paul McCartney and wings.

Er... check your wingspan, dude.

Peek-a-boo!

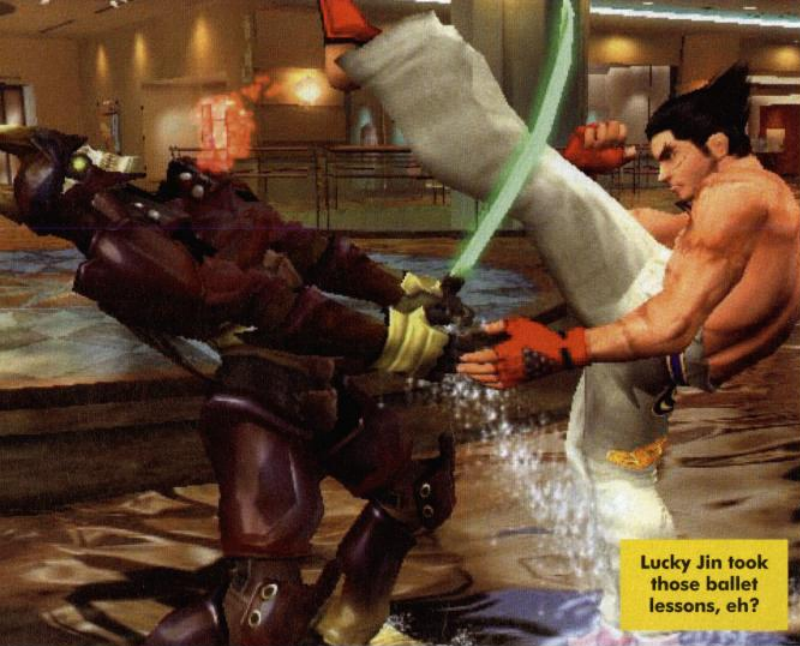
Very nice indeed. Another cool weapon, or gadget if you will, is a metallic creepy-crawly device that has a mounted camera. You can walk it up to enemies and emit a gas that will poison them or you can simply blow it up, much like the Spy-Cam from Perfect Dark. On top of all this Turok still has his trusty Bow, and with its secondary function you can now zoom a massive way in on an enemy to shoot them with a poison-tip arrow. The result is an unpleasant death for the recipient as the poison makes them keel over and vomit their guts up. Visceral - just the way we like it.

Acclaim are promising a huge adventure, filled with intricate story elements told through three major FMV sequences (start, middle and end) and a huge array of in-game cut scenes. The game's levels will be massive, and the exploration elements will be the most rewarding the franchise has ever offered. So far, Turok:

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE: Hopefully no Jurassic Park clichés... please!



Evolution is looking very impressive, and even in an early state of development, it was easy to see that Acclaim are throwing plenty of resources behind it. Dave Dienstbier has promised that the game is being optimised for every console, and that the core engine they've built, is both revolutionary (for being able to develop for all three systems), and easy to build from. Due for release later this year, Hyper should have some more detailed updates on the gameplay come E3. Until then, sit back and be happy about Turok coming to YOUR console. <<<



Lucky Jin took those ballet lessons, eh?



TEKKEN 4

WOW-O-METER



PS2

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

The latest in the uber-successful Tekken series has far from taken the world by storm, losing out in arcades worldwide not only to Virtua Fighter 4, but also to Tekken Tag Tournament, its very own predecessor. However, the home version is likely to be as popular as ever, as all the niggling issues with the arcade become infinitely less annoying when you're playing for free. With the addition of actual 3D arenas (with walls), larger player models, the position change and just-frame, plus completely revamped juggle physics, even a veteran will find plenty to do in the home version.

Plus, Namco are legendary for not only A grade console ports, but also for packing the console versions with plenty of extra modes. Tekken



The first rule about Fight Club...

Force Assault is the bonus game mode (along with all the usuals), and looks to take Tekken 3's Tekken Force to the next level with better environments, more enemies to fight at once and a more 3rd person viewpoint. Tekken 4 is shaping up to be a monster hit on PS2, so let's just hope that a 60Hz option is included in the PAL release, because we sure don't want to play another inferior version of a Tekken game.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2

WOW-O-METER



CATEGORY: Frag Fest >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Epic >> AVAILABLE: TBA

Wow! How many games are there coming out under the Unreal umbrella? We've already given you a look at the hot new Xbox title Unreal Championship, and next issue we'll be getting down and dirty with Unreal II, but that's not all. Unreal Tournament II is also in the works, and it's being developed by Digital Extremes, the same dev house behind Championship.

Information is thin on the ground at the moment, but it's already clear that the design styles are strikingly different. Championship is going much more for the hardcore mech-marine look, whereas Tournament 2 is taking the Quake III approach and

presenting a motley collection of freaks. We mean that in the nicest possible way mind you, as the cast is looking great, and there'll be somewhere around 50 individual characters to choose from.

The game will be set across 30 separate environments, and in gameplay terms it's sounding a lot like Championship. We have our fingers crossed, however, that after making a big point about customising Championship's gameplay specifically for console, that Digital Extremes will make a similar point for Tournament II and the PC market. More info as soon as we can.



Man, this is no time for an afternoon nap.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

GBA

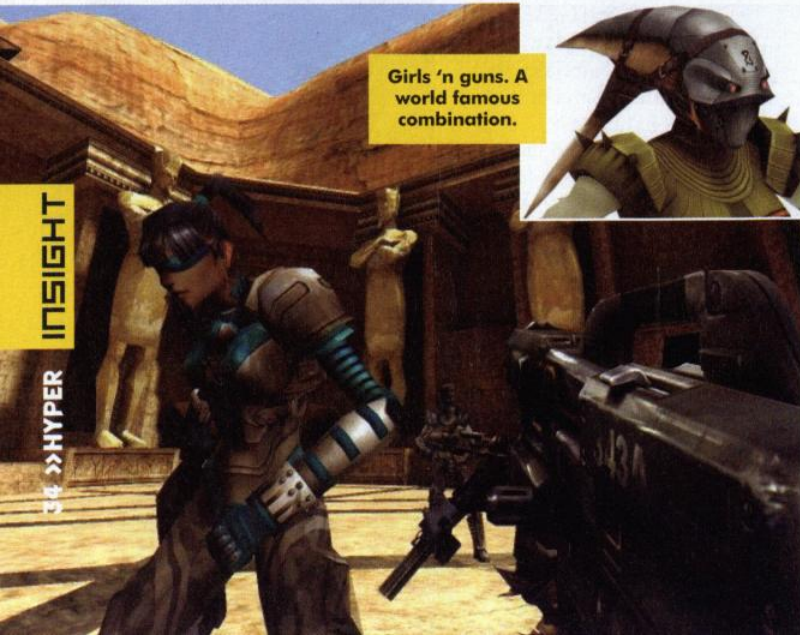
CATEGORY: Skating >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Activision >> AVAILABLE: March

We all know that Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 NOT coming to the GBA is about as likely as Will Smith NOT becoming the first black president of the USA (trust us, we've been to the future, it's gonna happen). So, lo and behold, the game is about to hit shops Australia-wide, and it's looking very exciting indeed.

Vicarious Visions are working hard to improve on the last game, both technically and in terms of options. On a technical level, the skaters are no longer gourard shaded, but properly texture mapped, which means the team has also been able to include a "Create-a-skater"

mode. The game will feature at least six courses from its console big brother. Confirmed to be in the game at the moment are The Foundry, Suburbia, Rio, Los Angeles, Airport and Tokyo. And here's the really good news — the levels in Tony 3 are several times larger than in Tony 2, and like the PS2 version, many are equipped with traffic and pedestrians! Oh, and other skaters too. Yes, the single most anticipated feature for this game has been included - you'll be able to link-up with three friends and play a host of multiplayer modes! Bring it on!

WOW-O-METER



Girls 'n guns. A world famous combination.

ASSUME POWER



x b o x . c o m . a u

WIN WIN WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE APRIL 5TH

WIN HALO!

Why not kick off your Xbox purchase with a free game from Hyper and Microsoft? We have five copies of the incredible Halo to giveaway to some lucky readers. Why not get the best Xbox launch game the easy way... the free way!

To win a copy of Halo, just answer the following question:

What is the name of the player character in Halo?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it off to: Hello Halo, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016. Good luck!



FOR
XBOX



WIN STAR WARS: RACER REVENGE!

Anakin's now a grown man (well, kinda) but he still loves burning up the Tatooine desert in his hot-rod pod racer. Racer is back in this PS2 sequel, and it's better than it ever was. If you want to win one of five copies we have to giveaway, then answer the following question:

What would be a better title for Star Wars: Episode II?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it to: Prize Poodu, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016. May the prizes be with you.

FOR
PS2



LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY PRESENTS

STAR WARS

EPIC FIRST-PERSON ACTION IN THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE
THE LEGACY OF *DARK FORCES*™ AND *JEDI KNIGHT*™ LIVES ON!



JEDI KNIGHT™ II: JEDI OUTCAST

Check out www.lucasarts.com for the latest *Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast* movie trailer.



PC
CD
ROM

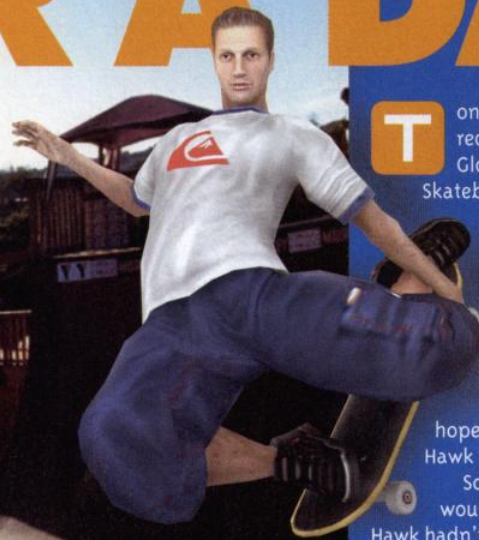
ACTIVISION®





TONY HAWK FOR A DAY

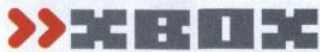
Ever wondered how to gear yourself up like the world's greatest skater, Tony Hawk? Well, painful body tattoos aside, it's not hard to get the gear, grab a deck and start working on your skating skills. On the next few pages, you'll see how we convinced Tony Hawk's official clothing and accessory sponsors to gear us up with their latest stuff. Check it out...



Tony Hawk himself was recently in Australia for the Global World Cup Skateboarding event in Melbourne. The event was held on February 16-17 at the Rod Laver arena in Melbourne Park. Hyper was there, and next issue we'll be bringing you some news on the event, and hopefully a chat with the Hawk man.

Sometimes we wonder what would have happened if Tony Hawk hadn't offered his services to Neversoft in the development of the original Tony Hawk game on PlayStation. Tony played the game whilst it was in development and gave the team useful advice on how to make it more and more realistic and believable for hardcore skaters. The result as we all know, was one of the best PlayStation games in the history of the console. So what's next for the series besides the long-off Tony Hawk 4? In a few short weeks, we'll be getting our hands on more next-gen versions of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, all with their own small pros and cons. Here's what we can expect...

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



CATEGORY: Skating >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: Namco >> AVAILABLE: TBA

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 on Xbox is shaping up to be the definitive version of this much-loved game. In addition to all the courses, moves and mechanics in the original, this version will have an Xbox only course, four player link-up play, and a new hidden character. As in Amped, you'll also be able to rip your own soundtrack for the game, which will be a boon for those of us who don't want to listen to Motorhead's Ace Of Spades for the four billionth time. Unfortunately, Tony Hawk 3 on Xbox won't have online

play, but in all likelihood neither will we! Even so, it's quite a disappointing omission given that the PS2 version supports it. One thing you can be sure of, however, is that this will be the most visually impressive version of the game on the market.

We may have missed out on Tony Hawk 2X in Australia, but only a few weeks after the system's launch, Xbox freaks will be able to get their hands on the best Tony Hawk yet.

WOW-O-METER



Tony waves for his fans.



Special Grind

NOSEGRIND TO PIVOT
2,284



He's really tempting fate there...



Clicking his heels with joy!



First to break an arm wins.



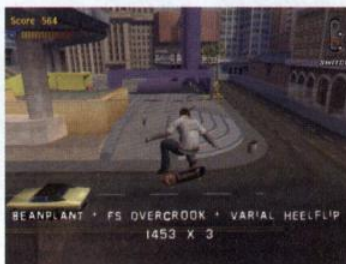
Soon to become a Face Plant.



Cool... except for the cut-off pink shirt.



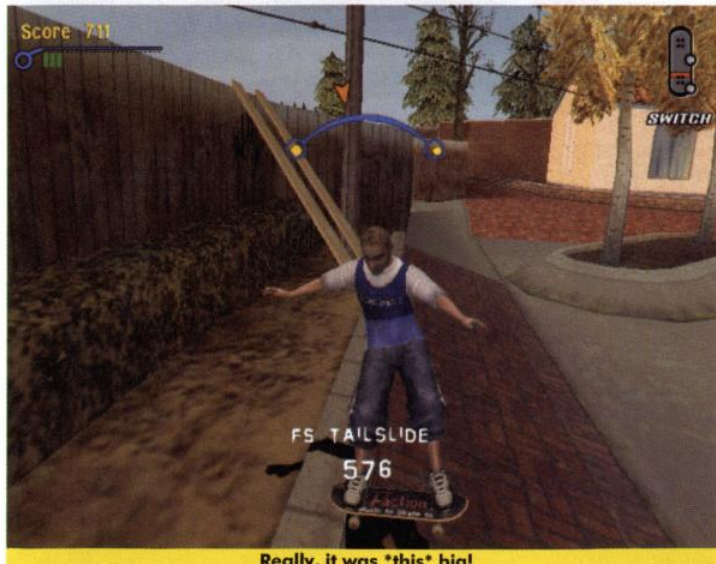
The new Luna Park in our dreams.



He's got nothing on Michael J. Fox.

HANDHELD HEAVEN

>>> Much like the beauty of Tony Hawk 2 on the Game Boy Advance last year, Tony's third handheld outing is going to be a stunner. Just check out the preview we have for you on page 34!



Really, it was *this* big!



CATEGORY: Skating >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Namco >> AVAILABLE: May

The GameCube version of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 is really the black sheep of the Tony Hawk family. Pushed out in time for the GameCube's US launch, it's not exactly a showcase for the series, suffering from some serious frame rate issues. On the other hand, it's prettier than the PS2 version, benefiting from the GameCube's texture compression in the form of more vivid colours and sharper textures, and also showing off marginally improved animations. We're all hoping that

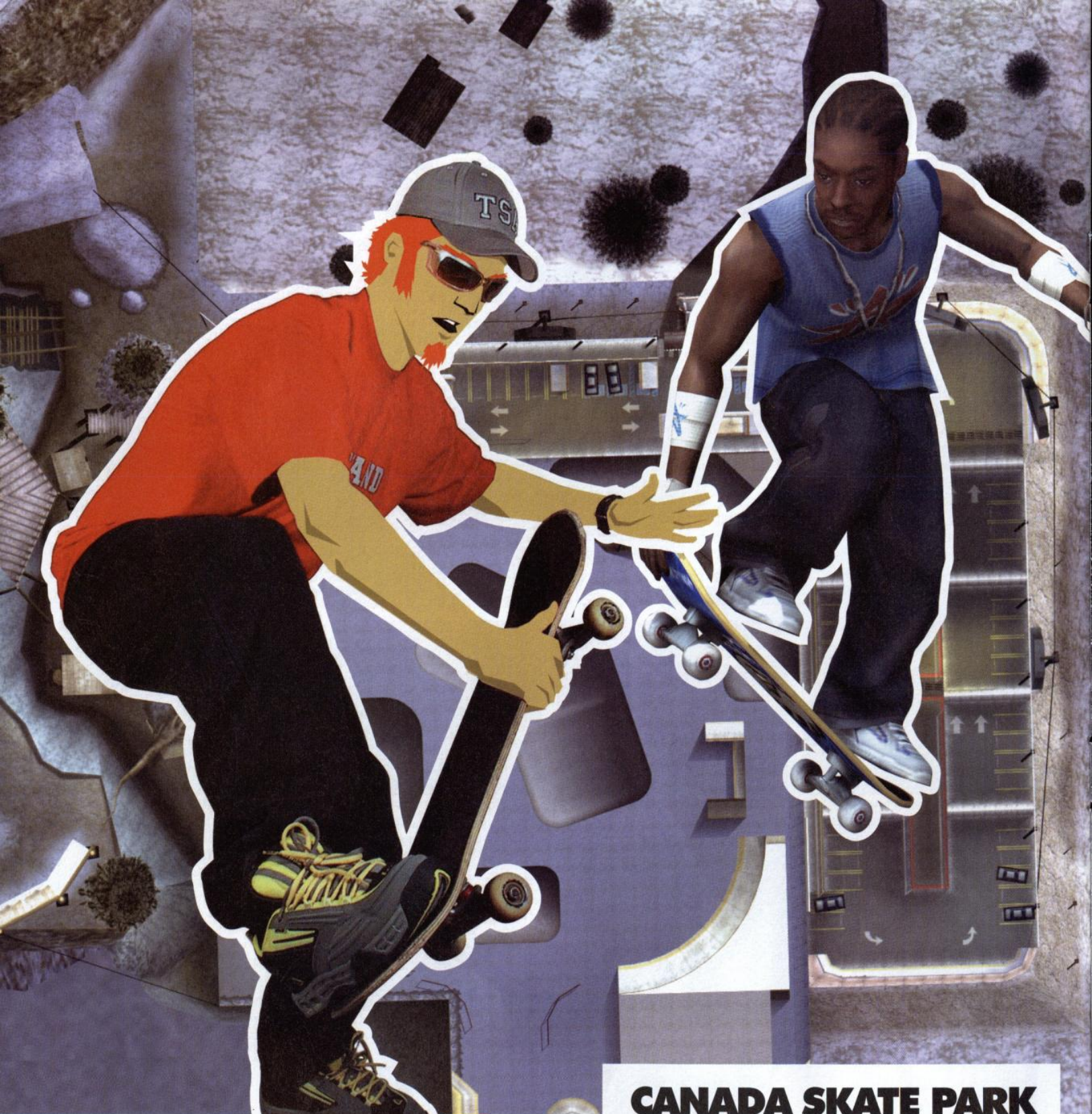
the frame rate problems will be fixed up for the PAL release, but that's not all that likely. Despite the problems, Tony Hawk's awesome gameplay still shines through in the GCN version, and the control pad works very well indeed. For Nintendo fanboys, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 on GCN will be a good purchase.

WOW-O-METER

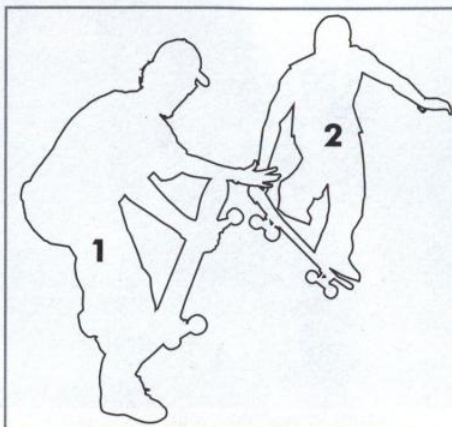


TONY HAWK

>>HYPER 39



CANADA SKATE PARK



1. Cam Wears:

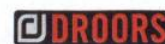
Cap by TSA
 T-Shirt by TSA
 Jeans by Droors
 Transit shoes by Airwalk
 Titan sunglasses by Arnette

2. Kareem Wears:

Textures by Neversoft

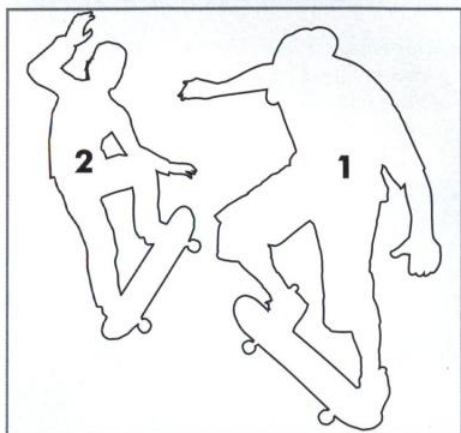


TRUE SKATE APPAREL SINCE 1981





LA EARTHQUAKE



1. Steve Wears:
 Cap by Steve.
 T-Shirt by Droors
 Shorts by Droors
 Titan sunglasses by Arnette

2. Jamie Wears:
 Textures by Neversoft



WIN THE ULTIMATE TONY HAWK PACK! CLOTHES, GAMES, DVDS AND MORE!

Because we're the best gaming magazine on the planet, we're going to offer Tony Hawk Skateboarding fans the coolest prize pack ever. Just lay your eyes on this awesome collection of cool stuff...



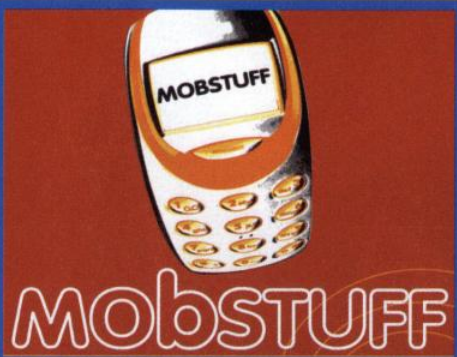
Droors make great streetwear. Win this wheat Tee worth \$44.95. Thanks to General Pants Co.



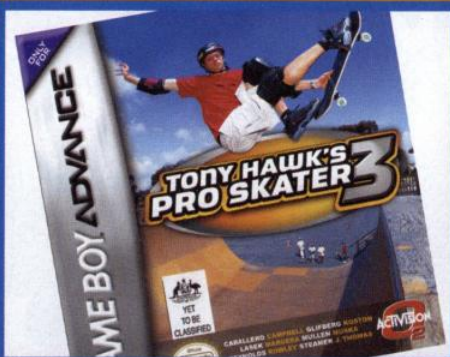
Arnette TITAN grilamid sunglasses rock. First prize wins a pair worth \$149. Thanks to Arnette.



These Droors Atlas jeans are stylin'. Win this pair, worth \$99.95. Thanks to General Pants Co.



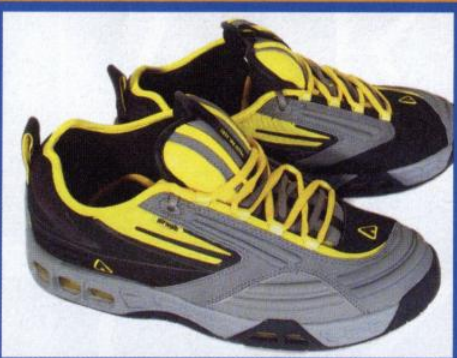
Mobstuff are the coolest way to customise your mobile phone (see page 47). Win a Tony Hawk graphic and ringtone!



The hottest handheld game available. Each of the 5 winners will get a copy! Valued at \$89.95.



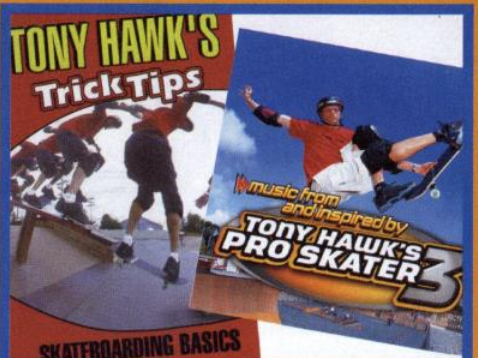
TSA also make some funky streetwear. You could win this great Tee worth \$44.95, plus a TSA cap valued at \$49.95.



Airwalk are responsible for these ultra-cool Transit street shoes worth \$180. Cam wanted to keep these babies.



TSA have also offered these great Cargo shorts, as featured on page 41. Valued at \$107.95.



Win a Tony Hawk Trick Tips DVD worth \$34.95. Plus a Tony Hawk 3 music CD worth \$34.95. Thanks to Kaleidoscope & Warner Music.

FIRST PRIZE:

- Droors t-shirt
- Droors Jeans
- Airwalk Transit shoes
- TSA Baseball Cap
- Arnette Titan Sunglasses
- Mobstuff personalised mobile phone graphic and ring tone
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 for Game Boy Advance
- Tony Hawk's Trick Tips DVD Vol 1 from Kaleidoscope
- Music From and Inspired by Tony Hawk 3 CD from Warner Music

APPROX. PRIZE VALUE: \$690

SECOND PRIZE:

- TSA T-shirt
- TSA Cargo shorts
- Airwalk Transit shoes
- Mobstuff personalised mobile phone graphic and ring tone
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 for Game Boy Advance
- Tony Hawk's Trick Tips DVD Vol 1 from Kaleidoscope
- Music From and Inspired by Tony Hawk 3 CD from Warner Music

APPROX. PRIZE VALUE: \$525

3 RUNNERS UP WILL WIN:

- 1 Mobstuff personalised Tony Hawk style graphic and ring tone
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 for GBA

To enter, you need to send in a photo of yourself pulling off a skateboard move. The coolest photos will win. Be creative, but don't hurt yourself. Send your photo, along with your name, address and phone number to:

Tony Hawk Competition, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016.

ENTRIES CLOSE APRIL 5



TONY HAWK

Photo: Jeff Taylor

arnette.com

arnette



THE FULLBACK



TERRA



Global Operations

WWW.GLOBALOPSGAME.COM/

Earking Dog studios are the guys behind CounterStrike Beta 5, the improved version of the famous mod developed in conjunction with Valve Software (the creators of Half-Life) and Gooseman, the freak who developed the original CounterStrike. Since completing that project, Barking Dog have been hard at work on another multiplayer game cut from the same cloth. Global Operations, or Global Ops for short, could turn out to be more than just the re-hash of CounterStrike we thought it was turning out to be. In fact, it may just have us uninstalling CounterStrike once and for all, as Barking Dog have taken the whole concept even further. Global Ops could be the ultimate team-based "good guys vs. bad guys" challenge...

DIE, YOU CAMPER SCUM!

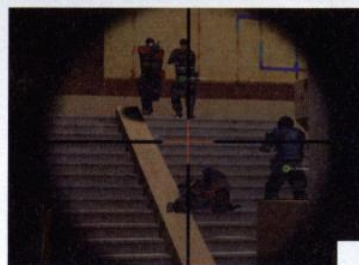
There will be seven specialty classes in Global Operations; Commando (a general purpose soldier), Medic, Sniper, Heavy Gunner, Demolitions Expert, Reconnaissance and the

Intelligence Officer. Much like Team Fortress or Return to Castle Wolfenstein, the class based system encourages true hardcore team-play. No longer can players run off and just do their own thing. To be successful, you're going to need a balance of classes, which means that co-operation and a blending of those talents will be the only way to fulfil the round's objectives. Much akin to CounterStrike, different objectives will include territory control, VIP rescue, assassination, bombing and capture the object.

Most interesting of the new classes would be the intelligence officer. This player doesn't actually take part in the action, but rather, they view the action from a safe location and give tactical orders to the team based on what they think needs to be done. The Intelligence officer can



split their screen four-ways for different views of the game from the perspective of their own players. This way, orders can be given to the team to go and help out ambushed team-mates, or to proceed to waypoints selected by the Intelligence Officer. It may even be able to spot campers and other troublemakers from some of the security cameras that will be present in some of the maps, only accessible by the Intelligence Officer. This adds a whole new dimension to the team-based experience, and most importantly, it should help to



bring together players and make them play more co-operatively; it makes more sense for a team to take the advice of a player who has a better tactical overview of the map.

THE MOD SQUAD

Providing support for up to 24 players, Global Ops will be the stage for some pretty epic firefights, but one of the coolest additions to such a multiplayer focused title, is that you can practise offline with bots. Just how effective their A.I. is remains to be seen, but the inclusion of bots is a bonus in itself regardless, as it's a feature that is becoming increasingly ignored by developers.

The map design certainly seems to have taken a few cues from



MS. INFORMATION



»» With a whole gaggle of ISP's about to join in the DSL fun, you'd think existing providers

would make their prices more competitive, right? Wrong. As anyone using Telstra Broadband will know, as of the 1st of March, prices are going up.

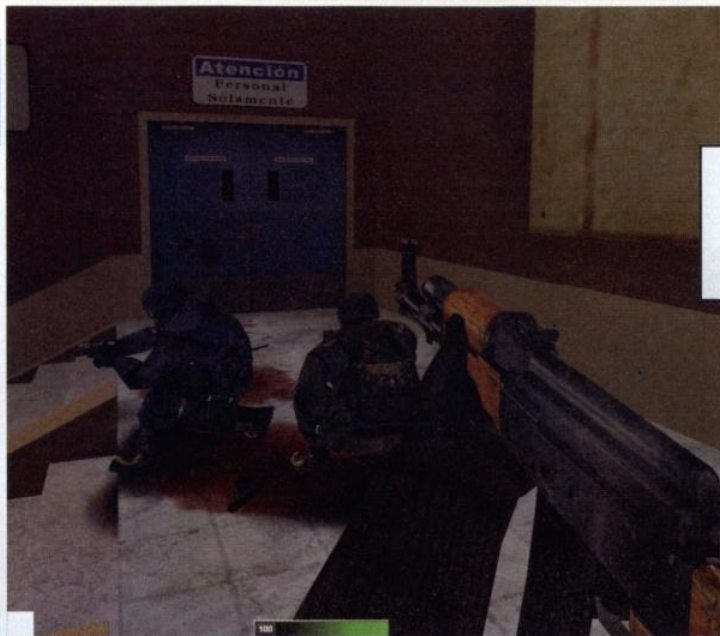
Perhaps it's an effort, like they say, to make it fairer on low end users. Although, you've got to think - how many people really use less than 3gig a month when they've got so much speed at their fingertips? Apparently enough to warrant a 300mb cable plan, priced at \$54.95, which is more than double your average 'Unlimited hours' dial up plan. Most of these plans usually have comparative download limits, if not higher. And if you are only downloading 300mb a month, what would you need the speed for?

If you're a sceptic like me, you can't help but think it's to entice new users to Broadband where they'll soon realise that things download rather quickly, and they can download that new browser or Star Wars: Episode II trailer in record time. This way they'll either end up forking over large sums of cash in excess usage or they'll upgrade their plan. Sneaky, huh? Who knows what other Broadband providers will bring us in the future. Competitive prices? Friendly service? A stable network?

In terms of lower prices, one argument that I've heard is that prices are as low as they can be, whilst the ISP is still providing customers with free technical support and content laden homepages. Don't forget advertising too. Shouldn't there be a way to avoid this? Just like people who know how to service their cars save money by not visiting a mechanic, shouldn't those who can service their own connection issues get the same opportunity?

Move to Hawaii and you do - FlexNet (www.flex.com), Hawaii's first ISP, offers cut rate Internet service without technical support. To quote their homepage "You've Got a Mind. Time to Exercise It."

Opinions to: budinska@another.com



Just scoping things out.



Monkey was... irrepresible!



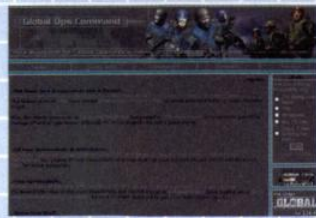
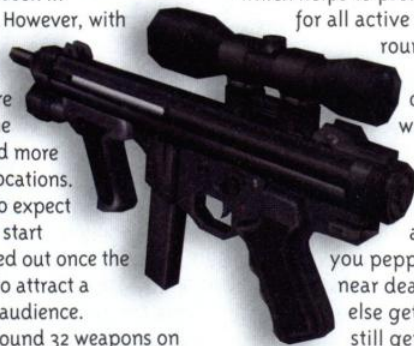
some of the weapons effectively. Using a heavy machine gun if you're not playing the Heavy Gunner class, will result in a spray of horribly inaccurate bullets. Likewise, the heavy gunner won't know how the hell to use a sniper rifle. Of course, you can only attempt to use non-specific weapons if they're found in the field. You will only be able to purchase the relevant weapons for your player class.

Unlike CounterStrike, if you die during a round in Global Ops, you can be respawned into the map, which helps to prolong the gameplay for all active players and make rounds slightly longer. Another cool difference with Global Ops, is that the game managed to keep track of assisted kills, so if you pepper someone to near death but someone else gets the kill, you'll still get some credit!

Global Operations should be available by the end of March. <<<

CounterStrike. There are missions set on big tankers, nuclear silos and in the streets of Mexico and other foreign locales that look eerily similar to areas you may have seen in CounterStrike. However, with 13 maps shipping with the game, there should be some interesting and more original new locations. You would also expect that maps will start getting churned out once the game begins to attract a decent online audience.

There are around 32 weapons on hand, but depending on your speciality, you may not be able to use



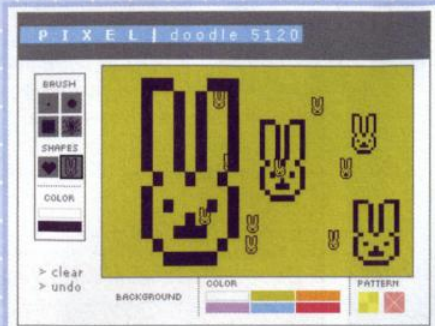
FAN SITES

Global Ops Command

www.globalopscommand.net/

If you want to see what the online community think of Global Ops, then you should definitely check out the fan scene at GOC. There are message boards and more Global Ops goodies planned...

LINKS



Attack of the Pixelated Bunnies.

THE 5K

www.the5k.org

➤ One of the coolest places on the internet, The 5k is an ongoing competition for computer geeks to create art, programs, games – whatever they desire – in but 5k of code. In fact, the rules state that "All HTML, script, image, style, and any other associated files must collectively total less than 5 kilobytes in size and be entirely self-contained (employing no server-side processing)." Judges vote on each entry in a number of different categories and narrow them down to a top 10 for the year. You can visit now and see who won for 2001. It will astound you what some people can do with only 5k...



LEONARD NIMOY SHOULD EAT MORE SALSA

www.lnsemsf.com

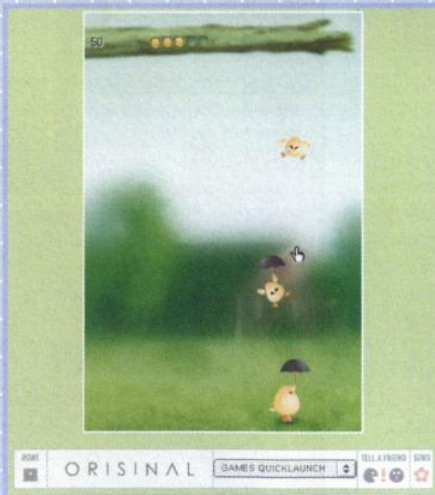
➤ We don't know why he should, but according to this website, Mr. Spock needs to consume more hot beans. Just check out the gallery to see the hilariously crummy photoshopped pics of Nimoy with bowls of salsa. Thankfully, this site has a few other things to offer. Bean me up, Scotty.



JIG INTERACTIVE

www.jigint.com

➤ Check out the online Shockwave based games that this company develops. Not only is there a quirky style here, but some of these original puzzle games are maddeningly addictive. Try your hand at Puny Plumber, Lobotomy Bots, Mind Reader and lots more. It's not as easy as it looks! You can even throw cream pies at annoying politicians or corporate bigwigs in the very funny Pie In Your Eye!



CHICKEN WINGS ARE NOT FOR FLYING

www.orsinal.com/games/chicken.htm

➤ This is a cool flash game that requires you to shoot umbrellas up to falling Chickens so they can float to safety. Simple, but very nicely designed. You can load other games created in a similar style from the pop-up menu. Stylin' and a nice break from whatever it is you're doing.



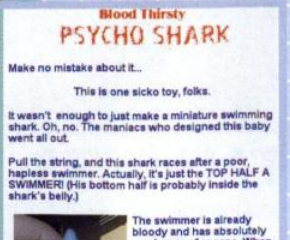
THE STUPID STORE

www.stupid.com

➤ Ever wondered where on earth you can buy some of that toilet bowl lip gloss? Need to get your lover a Chocolate Love Monkey for Valentine's day? How about grabbing one of those hot new Talking BBQ Spatulas... yes, the Stupid Store has every kind of useless, dumb present you could hope for. Go nuts at the Stupid Store! Our pick of the month would have to go to the Walking Sushi or the Psycho Shark.



Stupid, yet somehow... beautiful.





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TONY HAWK ARTISTS

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BETWEEN ANGELS	PAPA ROACH	123321
SMOOTH CRIMINAL	ALIENT ANT FARM	123369

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MY MIND'S SEDATE	SHIHAD	900171
MONSTERS	SOMETHING FOR KATE	900176
BEAUTY QUEEN	LASH	900177
STEP BACK	SUPERHEIST	900178

SATELLITE	ONE DOLLAR SHORT	900179
GRAVITY	SUPERJESUS	900180
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WAKE UP	RATM	123193
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PURPLE HAZE	JIMI HENDRIX	123298
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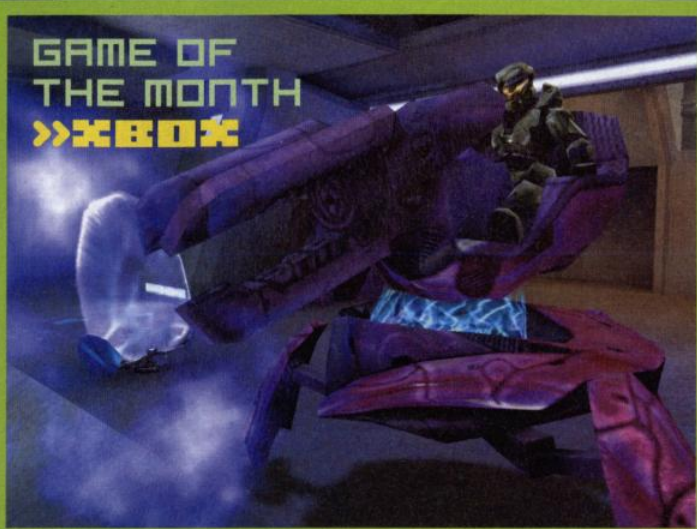
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REVIEWS

GAME OF
THE MONTH
»»XBOX»»



Halo

Microsoft has silenced all haters with this stunning launch game. Find out why Halo is the best console shooter ever on page 50.

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JUNK

JAMES
COTTEE



Editor's Note:
Game Theory will
return next issue.

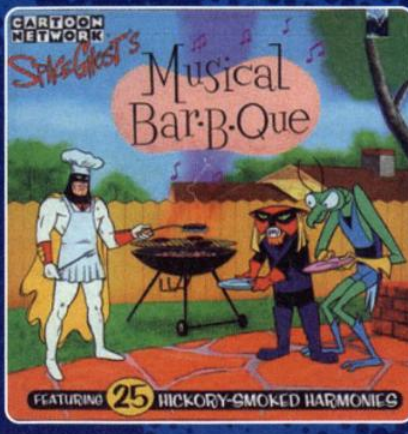
» Pay per view. Such a deliciously perverse concept. Everybody wants something for nothing, but when you do pay, you appreciate it all the more. Values vary from place to place, such as in primitive England, where subjects must buy a licence to watch free to air TV. In Australia, we have traditionally found the idea of paying for TV offensive, but in the few short years since its introduction, cable has become essential.

Who still watches free-to-air? Tune in, and one only finds shows for the old, the poor, the very young, and the easily manipulated. What has always been a cultural wasteland is now a radioactive wasteland overrun by giant man-eating rats. TV schedulers have degenerated from stupid to insane, squandering their few remaining gems in baffling timeslots. The only things still worth watching are SBS, Rage, and Austext on Channel 7.

Cable, on the other hand, has flourished into a wondrous cornucopia of viewing delights. No matter who or what you are, there is a channel custom-built for your needs. And it's not just recycled dross from the pre-cable era. There is a staggering array of exclusive content available, whether your taste is modern, ultra-modern, or post modern. In terms of raw quality, there're gems like Invader Zim, Batman of the Future, and Cowboy Bebop. All are mind-bendingly good stuff.

But for ultra-retro insanity, there are very strange new shows like Space Ghost Coast to Coast. Space Ghost, muscle-bound, death-ray shooting hero of the 60s, fronts a surreal talk show with his defeated space-foes suffering under his demented hosting technique. Then there's Harvey Birdman, Attorney At Law, the mediocre Hawk Man rip-off who runs a high-profile law firm. And you can't go past Sealab 2021, which somehow fuses Sex & the City with Seaquest DSV. These shows, and others like them, bend the mind and enrich the soul. Once an oddity, cable is now a necessity. No price is too high for TV this good.

Junk mail (but no junk mail) to
jcottee@bigpond.net.au



THE HYPER CREW'S TOP 5

Eliot Fish - Editor

1. Jet Set Radio Future - Xbox
"This could turn out to be one of the best games this year."
2. Genma Onimusha - Xbox
3. Virtua Fighter 4 - PS2
4. Statbuilder - PC
5. Sid Meier's Sim Golf - PC

Cam Shea - Deputy Editor

1. Jet Set Radio Future - Xbox
"Does gaming get any funkier than this?"
2. Amped - Xbox
3. Serious Sam: SE - PC
4. Virtua Fighter 4 - PS2
5. Worms World Party - PC

Malcolm Campbell - Art guy

1. Jet Set Radio Future - Xbox
"In the words of Poison Jam: 'Graaar Gah Gah GRRRAARRRR!' "
2. Pikmin - GameCube
3. Virtua Fighter 4 - PS2
4. ICO - PS2
5. Sonic Advance - Game Boy Advance

Frank Dry - Writer

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 - PS2
"You don't know the power of the Darkslide."
2. Madden NFL 2002 - PS2
3. Project Gotham Racing - Xbox
4. Super Monkey Ball - GameCube
5. Tetris DX - Game Boy Color

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!



Halo



CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-16 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: March 14 >

ELIOT FISH destroys a few thousand aliens.

The Xbox may not yet have a familiar mascot, or a powerful license in the same league as Mario, Sonic or Metal Gear Solid, but it does have some exceptional launch games. You can criticise Bill Gates and his monstrous corporation that is Microsoft until the cows come home, but the simple unavoidable fact is that the Xbox is loved by game developers world over for its familiar PC-like architecture. It's easy to get powerful results from it without breaking a sweat. In the long run, that probably means that there's never going to be a shortage of Xbox games. We just have to hope that the majority are as well executed as Halo.

CONTROL FREAK

Is it fair to begin comparing console games with PC games? When

GoldenEye was released on the Nintendo 64, everyone agreed it was the best first-person shooter they had seen on a console, but those same people would agree that you simply couldn't compare it to the far superior PC shooters such as Half-Life or Quake. The simple fact remained that consoles were not powerful enough and lacked the suitable control set-up to deliver the same kind of experience that a PC could. On PC, environments are bigger, the textures are better, the AI is better, the games run smoother... the list goes on.

Since then we've seen Red Faction, Timesplitters and even Half-Life itself on the PlayStation 2, and yet, they still haven't matched the scope of current PC shooters. Deus Ex, anyone? Well, Halo is the closest

a console has ever come to matching the PC experience. If you negated the fact that it's played with a control pad, Halo easily leaves some PC shooters in the dust. The years of hard labour by the staff at Bungie are right there before your eyes. The game is stunning... but naturally, not perfect. No game ever is.

The greatest criticism of any console shooter is usually the control pad with its clumsy analogue sticks and shoulder buttons. If you're used to playing shooters with a keyboard and mouse, it's always going to take time to



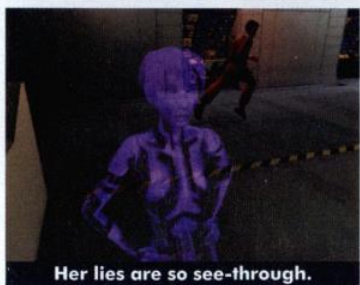


LORD OF THE RING

>>The Halo is a huge artificial alien object, terraformed on its inside surface. On ground level, it appears much like an actual planet, but the mystery remains as to what it was constructed for. The alien covenant consisting of a number of different alien races are trying to beat you and your marines to seize control of the Halo and discover its more sinister purpose. Why is it here? What does it do? When you do find out, it's not pretty...



A rarely seen warthog mating ritual.



Her lies are so see-through.



adjust to this new way of aiming and manoeuvring around the environment. There have been a few console shooters now that have settled on the perfect set up — the left stick for moving forward, backward and strafing left and right; the right stick for turning and looking around; the shoulder buttons for shooting and the buttons of the face of the pad for using items, cycling through the inventory, jumping, reloading, or whatever it is the game requires. If you've played one or two games with this interface, then you'll be well

equipped for Halo. It's clearly the most intuitive control scheme for this kind of game with a control pad. Bungie have refined the controls so well, that any issues you might have had with previous games are probably out the window. The control has simply been tweaked to perfection, with all the options you could want in the configuration menu to ensure that the game feels the way you want it to. The "looking/turning" speed is probably slower than most games, but makes it far easier to be more accurate, as you're never overshooting your target with a flick of the stick. Disorientation simply never seems to occur, because Bungie have gone one better with the controls in Halo.

At the very beginning of the game, the obligatory training mission is actually a cleverly disguised controller set-up. As you get your bearings and figure out which stick does what, you're asked to target some coloured lights on a wall. As we all know, some players like to invert the controls, and the

clever thing at this point of Halo, is that the game simply detects if you've pushed down to look up or vice versa. So simple, it makes you wonder why all games don't offer the player this kind of guidance. With this obvious controller hurdle out of the way, the rest of the game is smooth sailing. Before you know it, the Xbox control pad feels like the grip of the gun itself.

KILLING STUFF

Halo differs from other shooters in the fact that you can only carry two weapons at the one time. Rather than this being a drawback, it actually forces the player to be more tactical about the way they tackle a firefight. Naturally, you can retrieve and switch weapons at any time — so long as there are dead bodies and dropped weapons around. This rotation of weapons also means you're more likely to utilise all the weapons in the game at some stage, rather than just sticking to one you have a fancy for.

The weapons include the default pistol (with a handy 2X zoom), the



assault rifle (a highly enjoyable meaty gun), the shotgun (with a nice hefty spread), the sniper rifle (with a 4X zoom and gorgeous scope effect), the devastating rocket launcher (not much ammo around for this baby, but you'll find out why), the alien energy pistol (which can be charged for one powerful burst), the alien rifle (which fires successive rounds of blue plasma), the needler (which fires red shards that home in on the target and explode) and two types of grenades. Of course there is also the heavy-machine gun in the back of the warthog jeep, and the alien gun turrets to keep you busy too. There's a lot of variety here, and gunfights never become tiresome.





The galaxy's biggest half-pipe.



HOW TO KILL FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE...

»» Halo scores big in the multiplayer department. With over 20 different game types to choose from, multiplayer in Halo is never going to get boring. Starting with good old deathmatch, you can play everything from capture the flag, king of the hill, tag, team deathmatch and another 10 or so original multiplayer games designed by Bungie based on Halo's weaponry and vehicles; such as having one player invisible, or everyone with sniper rifles. You can even simply race against each other in Warthog jeeps. On top of this, you can customise your very own multiplayer game using a handful of simple settings. Incredible. The options don't stop there. Choose from two-player to four-player splitscreen, or link two Xbox systems together and have an eight-player team game, with the four-players of each team on different screens. If you have enough friends, Xboxs and TVs, you can even link together up to four Xbox systems for a massive 16-player game via the system's built-in ethernet capabilities. Oh, and you can play through the single-player game co-operatively with a friend (although only in split-screen). Good, eh?

Besides the stunning graphics, one of the more impressive features of Halo is the enemy AI. All your opponents in this game feel truly alive. The small alien grunts stick behind cover, fight in packs, run for their lives if they feel over-powered and react to their situation vocally, which is always amusing. Throw a grenade amongst them, and they'll yell "Grenade!" and all dive for cover. If you slap one with a plasma grenade (the kind that sticks), they might yell "Ahh! Get it off me! Get it off me!" before exploding in a spray of purple goo.

Then there are the bigger, more powerful aliens that have no problem in being far more aggressive and deadly. These range from the Elites armed with rifles and energy shields, to the Hunters with plasma rockets and a ferocious tendency to run right at you and batter you to a pulp. Elites can even sometimes be camouflaged; the only way of spotting them being the translucent, predator-type cloaked effect shimmering through the environment.



The alien TV crew captured everything.



"I got one! I got one!" Great kid...

Every shootout in Halo requires brains. The enemies are far too well equipped to deal with you if you run in like Rambo. You'll be edging around corners, looking for cover and desperately hunting for an extra ammo pack, making the main bulk of the action in Halo tense and terrifically exciting. There are no real puzzles here; just the pressure of surviving through hordes of aliens intent on wiping you out. Just wait until you encounter the species called the Flood... the game becomes almost Doom-like in its relentlessness.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE INCREDIBLE

Some criticism has been levelled at Halo since it launched with the Xbox in the USA. Some say that the game tends to collapse into repetitiveness, or that the gunplay devolves into clearing out endless generic rooms of bad guys. Forget all that. It's true that at two distinct points in the game, the level design and environments you are exploring become repetitive, but the fact is that the firefights within those

environments are never the same. Halo never stops being fun and challenging. Sure, some of the rooms may all look the same at times, but what you're actually doing in those rooms never stops being utterly gripping. The other fact is that once you've passed through the odd repetitive section, Halo doesn't fail to floor you with a stunning set-piece battle in a huge out-door environment, or present you with a dilemma that allows you to be creative in your solution. You won't stop playing Halo, believe me. It's quite awesome in its scope. It's all in the small details that Bungie have achieved.

The player physics may feel floaty at first, but then you realise how essential it is to getting around the environments. You'll spend hours in the game just screwing around with grenades (in particular, blowing dead bodies into the air and seeing how far you can propel them), and hooning around in the variety of vehicles. There's a lot of love in Halo, and it shows. This is the kind of game you'll be dragging your

AT YOUR DISPOSAL!



Warthog Jeep

The warthog can take up to three players – one driving, one riding “shotgun” and the other behind the mounted machine gun on the rear. In the single-player game, the AI controlled marines will take up whichever position is free. Crazy, jumping fun.



Ghost

The Ghost is one of the covenant vehicles, and performs much like a speeder bike. It has laser guns, but you wouldn't want to be up against too much competition. The bonus is that it's fast and agile.



Banshee

The Banshee is the covenant's fighter craft, allowing you to hop in and fly up into the sky. Its guns are powerful enough to make it a fairly effective attacking vehicle, and its insane fun doing crazy suicidal dives at your enemies.



Scorpion Battle Tank

Piloting the tank gives you control over the main rotating cannon plus a machine gun turret. You can drive in one direction and shoot in the other. The main cannon is capable of obliterating anything you point it at. Blaul



Luke... I am your father...



Looking for a McDonalds drive-thru.



How'd he fit that in his backpack?



Groovin' in his best blue disco suit.



Protecting the local public loots from vandalism.

There's very little to say other than **you've never seen anything like it** on a console.

friends over to see, so you can show off some cool thing you've figured out how to do.

To just briefly touch upon Halo's graphics... well, there's very little to say other than you've never seen anything like it on a console. The Xbox's custom nVidia chip (similar to what we're seeing in the GeForce 3 cards on PC) has allowed Bungie to include some incredible eye candy. Surfaces are bump-mapped so they look rough, lumpy or coarse, metallic surfaces give off a subtle reflective gleam, textures are so detailed they look better the closer you look at them... you'd be amazed with this game if you were looking at it on a high-end PC, let alone a console. As a result of the pure size of the environments and the special effects contained therein (not to mention

!!! Bungie still insist that they will bring Halo to the PC and Mac.

the cracking AI), Halo sometimes suffers from choppy framerates – especially when there's a massive firefight consisting of 20 marines, 20 aliens, vehicles and everything else. The game plays pretty consistently at 30fps otherwise, and whilst the slowdown is disappointing, it never ruins the gameplay. Your overall impression of Halo's visuals will be that they're freaking amazing.

Halo really is a fantastic achievement. Bungie have cooked up a hugely entertaining sci-fi shooter that not only looks unique, original and is as gorgeous as the screenshots would have you believe, but is also one of the most fun shooters we've ever played. It looks like the Xbox system is here to stay, in a big way. <<<



PLUS: Incredible graphics. Rich sound. Gripping action.

MINUS: Frame-rate drops. Some repetitive environments.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

97 92 95

OVERALL

96

The best console shooter ever, by a long shot.



Dead or Alive 3 >>> 死或生3

CATEGORY: 3D Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Tecmo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: March 14

DAN TOOSE is well known for his "drunken style".



Once upon a time, Tecmo created a 3D fighting game based on the Virtua Fighter 2 engine. That game was Dead or Alive, and despite featuring an absolutely sterling counter system, it was best known for its ample bosom. Then DOA 2 arrived years later, and sent jaws dropping with stunning visuals and revolutionary multi-tiered arenas. Now we see Dead or Alive 3, which has helped Microsoft no end, by showing off the Xbox's superior graphical capabilities, and more importantly, giving them a quality fighting game for the system's launch.

PRODUCING MORE DROOL

The first thing you notice about a game is its visuals, and when a game looks as good as DOA 3 does,

it can win someone over before they even pick up the controller. With the possible exception of Halo, this is the best looking game on any system to date. That may sound like a bold call, but once someone sees DOA 3 in motion, the amount of detail in both the characters and the environments will redefine their concept of visual excellence.

All of the arenas in DOA 3 look stunning, but a couple of them highlight just how freakishly detailed this game gets. Of all the nature-bound settings, the forest level had the Hyper office producing more drool than any other. Besides the incredibly natural landscape and amazing model and texture detail, it's the little things that impress, like watching the leaves

shake loose from a tree when someone is slammed against it. Follow the leaves to the ground, and

you'll notice just how many polygons are being devoted to carpeting the forest floor, and each individual leaf can be knocked about. In other stages, water ripples, snow flies up as bodies move through the powder, and objects crack and break as victims are slammed against them.

Then there are stages with far less subtle touches, in particular the Hong

Kong level, where you can not only knock someone through a tower window down onto the street, but if you line them up with the flashing neon signs

down the side of the building, you get to see them take down the lot in an agonising shower of glass, sparks and metal. While





NEW KIDS ON THE PLONK

»» Three new faces appear in DOA 3, plus the return of Bayman from the original DOA. Brad Wong serves as the token drunken master, who has arguably the most confusing fighting style to face up against, due not only to his wobbly movement, but also his extra stances that launch into more moves. Hitomi is the daughter of the karate instructor who taught Ein (now known as Hayate), and as such, will suit those who used him in DOA 2. Last, but certainly not least is the peroxide vixen Christie, who serves as Helena's butler, but is of course, an assassin hired to kill her. Her snake style kung fu is extremely effective, and she is one of the strongest characters in the game.



Breakdancing is cool again it seems.



Come sit on papa's knee...



most fighting games look like they're following an unnatural set of rules due to ring outs and no-go areas, DOA 3's arenas make the battles look like something out of an action film.

A host of dynamic lighting effects in the arenas help to highlight just how impressive the characters now look as well. At a glance they look quite similar to how they did in DOA 2, but once you get a look at how the light plays on the fabric of their clothing, it will become apparent how much work has gone into improving the visuals across the board. About the only area that doesn't appear to have come very far is the combat animation, besides

less discernable clipping, and a more natural look to the way characters are belted into solid objects. That's okay though, because DOA 2 featured the best animation in a fighting game till now anyway. Counters and strikes still look spot on at a constant 60 FPS.

BOOBY-TRAPS

Besides the somewhat out of place Aerosmith track featured for the intro, DOA 3 has a variety of apt combat music, and more importantly, sound effects that match the entire goings on within the game. With so much going on, the fact that nothing seems to sound odd is a testimony to Team Ninja's efforts.

Some might look at Dead or Alive 3 and say that there haven't been any significant changes to the gameplay, but to do so would be quite unfair on Team Ninja. For starters, there are three new characters; and while that's not a huge amount, the Virtua Fighter series has offered us only two new characters with each version. So many of the characters in the Tekken

series are blatantly derivative of each other that you could consider it to have fewer characters than its line-up suggests.

Also keep in mind that DOA 2 introduced multi-level arenas, which broke away from the horribly predictable square arena scenario with ring outs. The arenas in DOA 3 host many more environmental features to interact with, such as pillars of ice to smash your opponents through, trees, rocks, you name it. Maybe an arena with nasty dynamic booby-traps would make a nice bonus, but for anyone into the actual fighting, it would prove more of a novelty (or even an annoyance) than an improvement.

If anything should have been added to DOA 3 it's a quest mode. Don't get me wrong, this game isn't lacking any of the standard options in fighting games today, but it's somewhat bizarre that even though the whole world gave the mission battle mode in Soul Calibur such a huge thumbs up, we've yet to see anything like it since. It would be the perfect way to allow the player



to unlock extra outfits, or alternate endings, or simply add longevity. Battle scenarios would have been easy to come up with, like "Must knock opponent to bottom level of the arena", or "Opponent only damaged when hit against an object or wall." There ya go Team Ninja, those two ideas are on me.

A LOT BETTER LOOKING

Team Ninja have added a feature into the training mode that allows you to learn each individual move, and rewards you with an extra outfit once you successfully perform all the moves for each character. Dead or Alive 3 also now offers multiple arenas to play the tag-team mode in, as opposed to DOA 2's singular





WHO'S THE BOSS?

❧❧ No, it's not Tony Danza, although quite frankly, he would have made a better final boss character. Some might think my upcoming rundown of Omega (the boss) is a serious spoiler, but you won't be reading anything that you wouldn't find out for yourself within ten minutes of playing the game anyway, so here's one of the few bits of bad news for DOA3

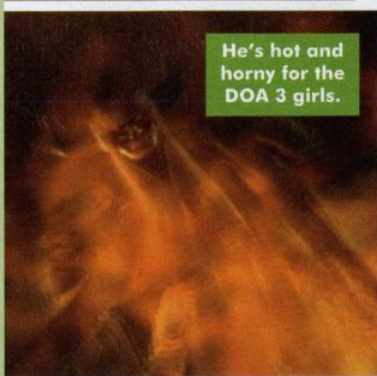
For starters, the perspective for the boss showdown is essentially "over the shoulder", which provides a cinematic, yet frustrating viewpoint of the situation. Movement becomes quite unintuitive as a result.

The whole image is also distorted by heat, or waves of mystic energy, or some equally unsatisfactory excuse to completely blur out what could have been a stunningly gorgeous finale.

What's worse is that Omega has an extremely repetitive attack routine involving energy blasts and basic swings of his sword that take next to no time to break down. This makes him much easier to beat than the last few opponents you face before him, which is quite backwards. A less exotic opponent with superior speed, power, and a wide variety of moves would have been much better.

tag arena. Both have been done before, but at least Team Ninja are addressing issues rather than ignoring them.

About the only gameplay element that really needs some work is the character balance. Put simply, some characters are far more dangerous than others. When you have a fighting game engine that allows every character to counter, the faster characters have an immediate advantage, because the heavy-hitters attack more slowly, and are thus easier to counter. That's not to say the larger characters are useless, but they require a lot of



He's hot and horny for the DOA 3 girls.



"I'm sorry, did I bump you?"



It's the little things that impress, like **watching the leaves shake loose from a tree** when someone is slammed against it.

skill when facing a fast character in the hands of anyone halfway decent at the game.

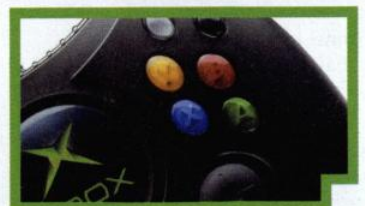
Not that the game can be blamed for such an issue, but the buttons on the Xbox controller do not suit this game too well at all. If you're going to collect fighting games for the Xbox, you really should keep an eye out for 3rd party controllers that are more suited to hitting different buttons in rapid succession.

So does Dead or Alive 3 set new standards for 3D fighting games? The answer is yes and no. There's no doubting that DOA 3 looks better than any other fighting game to date on any system, so in that regard it has raised the bar.

!!! You can bet your booties that Team Ninja are hard at work on Dead or Alive 4 for the Xbox...

However, there's nothing amazingly new or innovative about the gameplay compared to DOA 2, and those who didn't dig its predecessor will find DOA 3 to be more of the same, just a lot better looking.

It would be brutally unfair to write off the game for its relatively minor gameplay tweaks, because the bottom line is that it's a fast, fluid fighting game, that features all the standard fighting game modes, plus a tag team mode that doesn't envy Tekken Tag one bit. The Xbox already has an excellent 3D fighting game that should keep all but the most hardcore grumblers satisfied till Soul Calibur 2 shows up. <<<



PLUS: Stunning graphics. Great multiplayer party game.

MINUS: No major gameplay improvements over DOA 2.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

97 84 88

OVERALL

90

For a first generation game, this is gorgeously good.



PlayStation 2

Love and Battle in the Three Kingdoms.
A magnificent Historical Fantasy.

KESSEN II

決戦

MORE DYNAMIC BATTLES, MORE DRAMATIC ACTION

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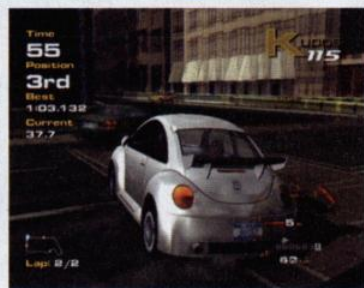
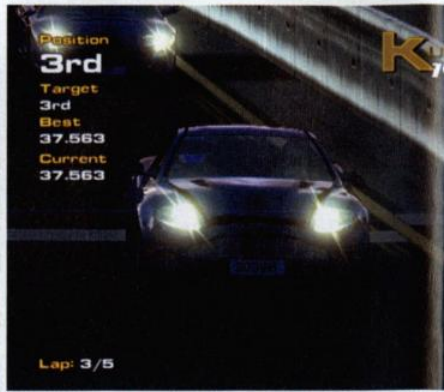
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Project Gotham Racing >> XBOX

CATEGORY: Style simulator >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: March 14 Babeel >>

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE is a true man of style.

Everyone loves the launch of a new console — that is, unless you happen to be a racing fan. Launch racing titles are generally rushed, formulaic rehashes that only see the light of day because every launch needs one (RRV, Sega Rally 2 anyone?). Yet with the launch of the Xbox, something different has arrived. Project Gotham Racing is the 'almost-sequel' to Metropolis: Street Racer on the Dreamcast — a game that refreshed a genre by emphasising style over speed. Is the follow-up to a refreshing game still as satisfying second-time around? Thanks to Bizarre Creations' tremendous refinement of the concept, as well as the addition of key new features, the answer can only be a firm yes.

A VITAL FEW SECONDS

The Kudos system used in Project Gotham Racing, for those who don't know, rewards the driver for sliding around corners, getting up on two wheels, air and the like. In the game's deepest mode, the Kudos Challenge, most of the 9 different race types you'll discover over 12 rounds consist of driving as Kudosly-inclined as possible to clear them. There's also quick race and arcade mode, which are, for once, actually just as fun and rewarding as the main event, especially since unlocking cars and tracks can be done from all modes.

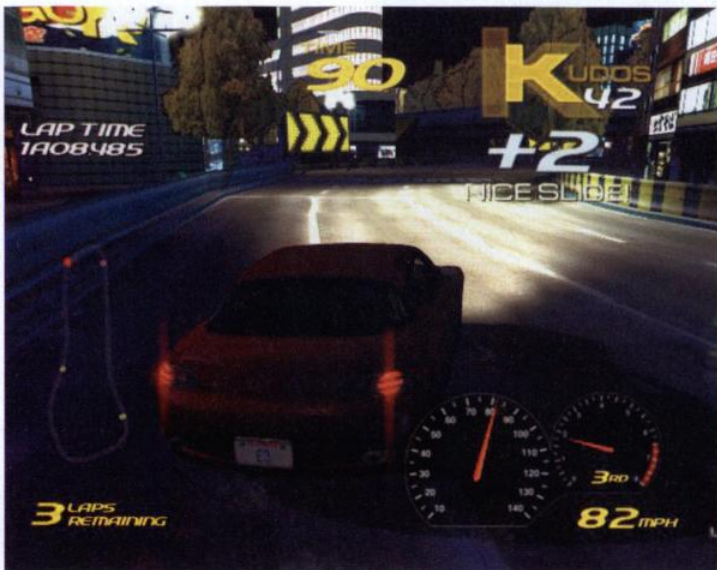
Yet whether it's the narrow courses or admittedly poor AI, racing other cars just isn't Gotham's strong point. Project Gotham Racing is best played alone on the track

weaving through cones and sliding round corners — linking Kudos 'tricks' in an almost Tony Hawk type way. As you pull off another sweet corner or pass through cones, your Kudos score stays on the screen for a vital few seconds. If you continue to grab more Kudos bonuses while your score is still on the screen, you'll rack up long Kudos strings. Of course, if you crash, you'll lose the whole string.

New to Gotham is everybody's favourite city New York, which joins Tokyo, London and San Francisco as the game's settings. Each city is well chosen and provides a different racing challenge over the

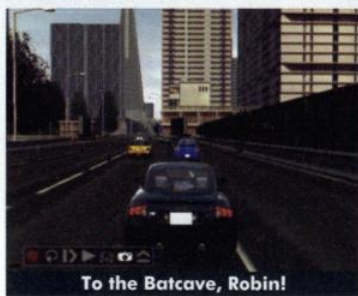
50 or so circuits that can be found in each city. That's right, there are 204 different tracks in total, and although some may only differ by a couple of corners, this variety is arguably the main reason the game remains fairly fresh throughout. Although there are less than 30 cars, you get very intimate





SLIDING TO THE BEAT

Project Gotham Racing offers the most complete array of aural options yet seen in a racing game. Like in MSR, each city has its own radio stations, many of which actually exist. Complete with presenters, these stations play some of the game's 60 different tracks, depending on your location and the station's style. Although there is a fair range of tracks, with artists as well known as The Chemical Brothers and Gorillaz, the game also offers full integration with the Xbox's fabled music ripping capabilities, so you'll never need to complain about your driving tunes.



with most of them due to the nature of the racing.

The car modelling is by far the graphical highlight of the game, as each vehicle is superbly replicated. Real-time reflections on the cars are neatly used, although they do seem to run at an awkwardly lower framerate than the rest of the image. The room for improvement continues into the texturing, where some textures such as gravel truly disappoint, especially when stationary. The damage, although great to see included, is a little weak, as it neither looks spectacular nor influences gameplay. Meanwhile, although the cities' architecture can be complex at times, it is common for flat buildings to dominate the scene. Seeing as a lot of the scenery and circuits come from MSR, it seems as if the pressure on the developers to get their baby out in time for launch took its toll, and some elements weren't as polished as the cars. Nonetheless, it all runs smoothly and gives a good sense of speed.

With a Ferrari F50, you will have to be at your absolute best just to keep the beast on the track.

MOST EXCELLENT REWARDS

The Kudos revolution would be fruitless if the game's handling wasn't up to scratch. Bizarre Creations have thankfully done a fine job in offering a driving model that is consistent and rewarding. Such a model is essential for highlighting the variety in the cars, even between models with similar ratings for acceleration, handling etc. As one progresses through the game and unlocks more and more cars, the challenge comes not from perfecting each corner as it had been with the slower cars — with a Ferrari F50, you will have to be at your absolute best just to keep the beast on the track.

If you are both patient and skilled enough, Gotham offers serious longevity, but few will get to the end. It's hard enough passing through the

game obtaining bronze medals, but then there are the gold medals, and novelties such as the extra car paint jobs and helmets to unlock.

Project Gotham Racing is truly a great game because, by using a most excellent rewards system, Bizarre Creations have perfectly emphasised the aspect of driving that everybody loves, but is pointless in any other competitive context. The game's Kudos mechanics are so finely balanced that within minutes of first playing, the novelty of Kudos will wear off and

the realisation will strike you that you have discovered a game that has managed to create an art form out of hooning. Kudos to Bizarre Creations — launch title or not, this machine is worthy. <<<

!!! Bizarre Creations have now used two comic book cities as titles.



PLUS: At last something different! Sexy cars. Music options.

MINUS: Graphically, a bit rushed. May prove frustrating.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 93 92

OVERALL

91

Makes racing fun!
Batman not included.

REVIEW

>>>HYPER 59



Amped

>> XBOX

CATEGORY: Snowboarding >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: March 14 >>

CAM SHEA loves carving up white powder...

Amped is one of the strongest of Microsoft's internally developed Xbox launch titles. It's a game that, although flawed and unfinished in some ways, shows off many of the benefits of the console, as well as capturing the thrills of the sport of snowboarding.

Where SSX Tricky was mostly a racing game with tricks thrown in as an afterthought, Amped takes more of a Tony Hawk freestyle approach. This is solo, trick-based gameplay, just the way we like it.

PHAT COURSES

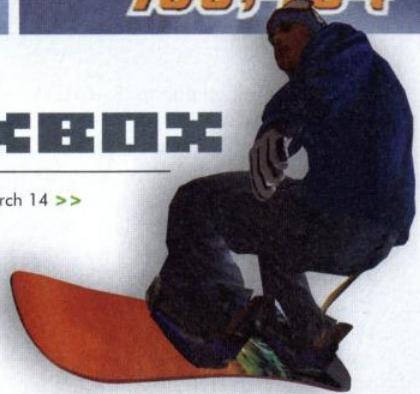
Controls are straightforward and on the whole work well. The A button is used to tweak in the air and adjust balance on grinds. The black button

is used to change camera perspectives, whilst the white button is used to skip to the next audio track. To bust flips and spins you press the left analogue stick in a direction just as you release the jump button on a lip. Then to do grabs in the air you can either use the face buttons or the right analogue stick. The right stick works well in this capacity although it feels a little weird at first. It's all pretty simple really, and the only major problem you'll encounter is actually due to the design of the controller — it's very easy to overshoot the B button (because it's so damn close to the A button) and accidentally change your viewpoint when you're trying to do a grind. All the gameplay is based around busting tricks and grinds, so there's no time

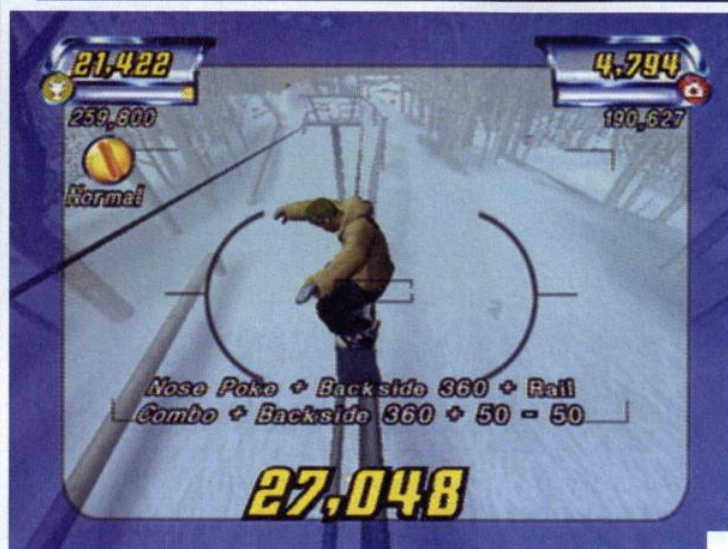
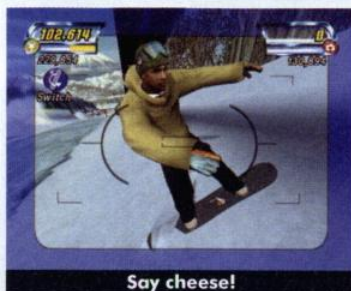
limit to get to the bottom of the mountain, just phat courses littered with ramps and rails for you to attack any way you see fit.

Amped takes a very cool approach to the career mode, starting you out as an unknown boarder at the bottom of the world rankings. Gameplay is based around getting high scores on your runs, getting media attention (by doing tricks in front of the cameramen positioned strategically throughout the courses), beating pro boarders and showing off for sponsors. All these different styles of challenge within the career mode help to keep Amped interesting, without resorting to aping Tony Hawk's flawed career mechanics.

Beating the various high scores and challenges earns you a number



of rewards. Your world ranking steadily rises, you unlock new tricks, new clothes, new gear and also stat points. The progression of the game is really satisfying... at first. Unfortunately, once you've unlocked everything, taken as a whole there really aren't enough courses, and in some ways the later courses aren't worth the effort required to get to them. That said, some of the runs on offer are bloody huge and design-wise there's good variety and balance. Slope Style, for instance, is a relatively confined artificial "park" style environment packed to the gills with rails, stairs, jumps and a deadly frozen river. At



the other end of the scale, Altibahn is basically an untouched wilderness — massive long carving runs, huge air, large drops and almost no man made elements.

The environments in Amped are almost worth the price of admission alone — this is the first snowboarding game that actually delivers on a proper free-roaming experience. Although you don't literally have an entire mountainside at your disposal, it often feels like it. Oh, and pop up? None of that here! Amped really cranks along too — it's obvious that it's running on Xbox. 50/60fps all the way, and once you've moved your stats up a few notches the sense of speed gets quite intense. The character models look fantastic too, in all their vertex shaded, bump-mapped, high poly count glory.

SINKING INTO THE SNOW

So why isn't Amped getting a Big Rubber Stamp you ask? Well, despite its redeeming features it's one of the glitchiest games we've played in quite a while. Talk about needing another couple of months

Some of the runs on offer are bloody huge and design-wise there's good variety and balance.

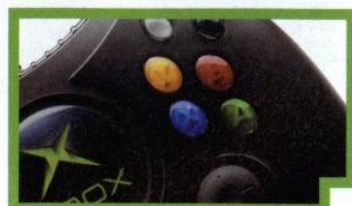
of polishing! There's nothing too major, just lots of niggling little issues that detract from the overall experience. It's especially annoying once you reach a certain level of proficiency and start to string together some smooth runs to find that some of the game mechanics are inconsistent. It's mostly the rail sliding that's a problem, and for such a large component of the game it's annoying that you can't always rely on it.

There are a host of other annoyances, mind you. Always losing out in any contact with other boarders is annoying given that you often can't avoid it. More frustrating is the way your boarder re-positions himself after a stack. More often than not it's to your detriment and makes getting your

momentum back harder than it should be. Also frustrating are the illogical differences in flip mechanics. Normally when you hit a jump and do a forward flip you press up on the left stick, regardless of whether your stance is normal or switch. But for some reason if you're trying to do the same off a grind and you're facing switch, you'll do a backflip. It's only a small thing, but it's another inconsistency that simply shouldn't be there at all, and has a negative effect on your immersion and enjoyment.

It's a testament to Amped, however, that even with these flaws and glitches, we've still had such a good time with the game. Highly recommended for Xbox owners. <<

!!! Amped comes with an amazing 150 original songs but ripping your own soundtrack is simple — we found Gravediggaz and Smif'n'Wessun worked a treat!



PLUS: Huge mountains to explore, almost no loading time.

MINUS: Glitches, limited long-term appeal.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

92 89 85

OVERALL

88

The first great next-gen snowboarding game.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 61



Waterworld 2: Costner's Revenge



Hey, this ain't no pleasure cruise.



Get Isaac to mix up some cocktails.

Bloodwake



CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

FRANK DRY goes looking for the Love Boat.

F vehicle-based shoot 'em up where a hate-filled hero joins a gang in order to avenge the death of his friends, and the villain turns out to be his brother? That could be any one of dozens of games Hyper has reviewed before. The difference here is that Bloodwake happens to take place in water, in a boat. Woo. Hoo.

CAPTAIN STUBING ON DECK

Told through a combination of comic book art, text and audio narration, players are introduced to a fictional oriental waterworld fraught with factional warfare between pirate clans. Players are invited to take the role of young Shao Kai as he works through the ranks of the Shadow Clan, taking on jobs that range from destroying enemy shanties to collecting treasure and protecting cargo ships.

The plot is of very little significance. Most of the level types and game modes are a case of "we have a game engine, what can we do with it?", and the story is thrown in as a token thread to loosely hold everything together. To that end, Bloodwake is just a water-

based shoot 'em up with lots and lots of game modes. There are races, four-player deathmatches, obstacle courses and so on. There are also weapon pick-ups, new boats and levels to unlock; Bloodwake takes what's chiefly a limited genre and stretches it for all it's worth.

Now, you're all thinking "Twisted Metal Black on water", right? Well, at least Twisted Metal Black never bored us with cheesy narrative — it just put you straight into the action. Bloodwake, on the other hand, tries so hard to impress that it's almost offensive. The hero is unsurprisingly American, with a voice that's a combination of Jack Nicholson and Leonardo the Ninja Turtle. Villains and other shifty characters are all Asians, pottering around on gun-laden shanties that could pass for carrying illegal boat people. The whole game takes place in a wild frontier of oriental waters, virtually out of a Vietnam War film. The busy love interest is British. The backward cultural stereotypes propounded throughout leaves one wondering

what kind of intellectual wasteland the developers live in.

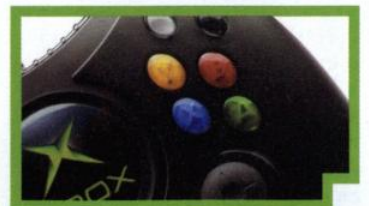
NEXT STOP, ACAPULCO

The fire fights can become hugely chaotic, with rockets, chain guns, auto cannons and torpedoes flying in all directions. Control is made trickier by the presence of waves and the wake left by other boats (which is made more interesting in choppy seas with rain), which will toss you about. Impacts against rock faces and other boats are unfortunately unconvincing — your boat simply won't overturn, and there are times when the boat will have its nose pointing

perpendicularly towards the sky for several seconds. On the upside, the water effects are excellent. The same can't be said for the rest of the game's visuals.

Bloodwake isn't a lousy game, but on any other format it would likely have found B-grade status. That's certainly not what we'd expect of one of Microsoft's own games. After all the rhetoric about exacting new standards in original game design, how did this make it past the approval process? <<

!!! Stormfront Studios used to make Nascar games for EA Sports.



PLUS: Clean water effects. Loads of stuff to unlock and blow up.

MINUS: Unimpressive visual detail. Ridiculous storyline.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

79 76 69

OVERALL

69

Hardly impressive. Bloodwake is better in multiplayer.



Transworld Surf

>> XBOX

CATEGORY: Surfing! >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Infogrames/Atari >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

FRANK DRY wears his wetsuit to the office for some reason.

Admit it. Every time you see a surfing game on the retail shelves, you privately mutter to yourself "why do they bother?" We've all tried one at some point, hoping for something enlightening, but always come away disappointed. It's not that they're all crap — some are actually okay — it's just that the genre is limited by its very nature. Creating realistic water is a lot harder than many people realise; and given that we are talking about surfing against a series of waves, it's not like we're talking about the kind of variety you'd get on a Tony Hawk skate park. Some things are just better enjoyed in real life.

TREACHEROUS WAVES

That's why Transworld Surf is such a special game. The water is incredibly realistic, and the control is balanced enough to provide all of the basic Tony Hawk-style tricks and manoeuvres without making the game ridiculously easy or mechanical. These niceties will go largely unnoticed even for experienced gamers unless they immediately switch off Transworld Surf and compare it to, say Sunny

Garcia Surfing. It's only then the improvements are obvious.

Transworld Surf has an unbelievable sense of atmosphere. You can almost feel the water nipping at your ankles. You're always aware of where the shoreline is, and the waves will rise and curl according to the topography below — giving you the option of surfing on calm, high or treacherous waves. The initial procedure of paddling up and riding along the wave won't raise many eyebrows, but if you gain a little speed and cut back, you'll be struck by the awesome sight of a monstrous barrel of water bearing down on you. With clever angles and a smooth frame rate that doesn't let up, it's times like this you're thankful for the brown underpants.

But more than offering just visual glamour, every wave has a texture and character, with varying peaks, barrel sizes and crests that behave very naturally as you cut through them. Players can perform the standard jumps and stunts using the

shoulder buttons, and it's here that the Tony Hawk brand of control really works well.

RIGHT UP THERE

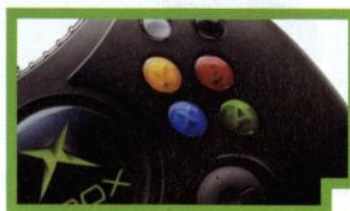
With such an excellent gameplay environment in place, the character stats and different board properties actually make a meaningful difference to how one should approach each level. There are around 13 celebrity surfers, ranging from Tim Curran and Cory Lopez to Rochelle Ballard and Christian Fletcher.

Obviously Kelly Slater's not in there — that franchise is owned by Activision.

Game modes are also very thoughtful. Pro Tour championship modes, free surf, and single sessions are devoid of the ridiculous obstacle courses that were seen in Championship Surfer and Sunny Garcia, letting you enjoy the full surfing experience as it was more naturally intended.

If you appreciate extreme sports games, then you'll find that Transworld Surf is right up there. <<

!!! We particularly liked the "Shark Attack" in the game. Ouch.



PLUS: Realistic-looking water, with extremely natural physics.

MINUS: Objective-based levels are a little lame.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

86 84 79

OVERALL

80

Finally, a surfing game that the industry can be proud of.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 63



ICO

PS2



CATEGORY: Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Sony >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Late March >>

According to **CAM SHEA**, ICO is our 101st reason why gaming rocks.

ICO is the story of a young boy (Ico) and a young girl (Yorda). It's a classic tale really — boy grows horns so is locked away in an impossibly huge, impossibly eerie deserted labyrinthine fortress. Boy escapes from cell and rescues strange otherworldly luminescent girl trapped in giant birdcage. Girl is helpless and attacked by shadow demons. Boy rebuffs aforementioned demons and decides to help the girl escape.

This is the basic premise for ICO, a game that will suck you into its world and immerse you like few others. In ICO, nothing is explicitly spelt out for the player. It's an almost dialogue-less game, where the world around you is experienced through the senses, not through teaching or objectives.

HORNY BOY GAMING

To achieve this, ICO's play mechanics are simple and elegant. You're given a set of realistic abilities, and must use them to get through the awe-inspiring environments the game throws at you. Ico has only a basic range of moves and no inventory, but he's quite mobile — he can climb ropes, shimmy along ledges and fight off the shadow demons. Yorda, on the other hand, is a babe in the woods, but is the only one who can open the strange totemistic stone barriers blocking the way. Left to her own devices, she'll simply stay in one place, and eventually be carried away by the shadow demons that are relentlessly pursuing her. So Ico must find a way to guide her through the world, which isn't as

easy as it sounds, as they speak different languages and she's far more restricted in what she can do.

Yorda can't be controlled directly, but you can hold her hand to guide her, and call her to you if separated. It's an ingenious concept, and it's this unlikely symbiotic relationship between Ico and Yorda that drives the gameplay. Most puzzles require Ico to use the environment fully to unlock a simple path forward for Yorda. Whether that be scaling a giant windmill in order to open a drawbridge, or simply leaping from a rope onto a high ledge and then reaching down to pull Yorda up, ICO is really compelling.

In terms of the actual puzzle mechanics, ICO doesn't do anything new. They're mostly old favourites like "pull the lever to open the door"

or "push the crates into place". However, looking after Yorda adds a whole new dimension, and the amazing environments and dream-like atmosphere make even these most clichéd of gameplay mechanics unforgettable.

EFFERVESCENT GAMING

The size and scope of the world in ICO is breathtaking and used to full effect. At all times you're simply dwarfed by the enormity of it all, yet the mechanics are so solid that you also feel like this is a world that can be conquered. Further emphasising the scale, the camera tracks the player from a high vantage point, shifting and swinging around depending on the surroundings, and keeping the characters small on screen. Fortunately, using the right



A horse is a horse of course of course.



Ohh a girl in a cage. Dance for me!



A bridge over troubled Yorda.



"Just do a double jump...!"



SHADOW DEMON SHOWDOWN

» Ico only picks up a couple of basic weapons throughout the game, and only has standard attacks. There are numerous varieties of shadow demons, however, and they're quite crafty in their methods to lure Yorda away from you. They'll try to trick you by playing games, or overwhelm you with numbers, so although it's simple, the combat is a lot of fun.

Ico the character is a **brilliant, understated piece of design** - there's real humanity in his face.

analogue stick allows you to pan the camera around and scope out your surroundings, and the zoom button allows you to get in close for precise movements or to examine objects in the distance. There are a few issues with the camera, and the lack of a first person look button is disappointing, but in all it's an excellent and unique way to present the game.

The characters are animated masterfully and with real personality - the tug of war between Ico and Yorda in particular as he pulls her along is captured perfectly. Ico the character is a brilliant, understated piece of design - there's real humanity in his face, and Yorda is simply stunning. They're both characters that you know nothing about, but empathise with

immediately. And as the game progresses and she grows to trust Ico, Yorda becomes more and more animated. She moves around independently and starts to give you clues too, calling to you and pointing at anything you should pay particular attention to. In one outdoor scene she even chased birds around on the grass! Great stuff.

ICO is a game possessing great artistry and presence. It's easy to lament the derivative nature of the games industry at times, but every so often a game like ICO comes along to snap us out of our jaded funk. ICO is an adventure game like no other - stripped down and minimalist in approach, yet unbelievably rich. Simply put, this is a game with soul. <<<

!!! Ico doesn't have a health bar of any sort, which is really refreshing. The only way to die is by falling from an excessive height or by letting Yorda get captured.



PLUS: Simple and compelling with an amazing sense of aesthetics.

MINUS: Some camera issues, no invert option on camera stick.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

91 90 92

OVERALL

92

ICO is a surreal, immersive & poetic gaming experience.



Maximo

PS2



CATEGORY: Action Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Capcom >> PRICE: \$104.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

MALCOLM CAMPBELL strips down to his boxers.

In days of old, when video game genres like "survival horror" and "2D beat-em-up" were a mere blip on the horizon, Capcom were making arcade games that stood out from the crowd. Ghosts 'n Goblins was one of them, known for its lush graphics, spooky atmosphere and difficulty setting stuck on Bloody Hard. Seventeen years after its release and fourteen years after the sequel, Ghouls 'n Ghosts, Capcom have updated the series on PS2 with Maximo. Let's take a trip down Memory Lane, shall we?

FOUR SCOLLOPS AND A DOLLARS WORTH OF CHANGE
Capcom Digital Studios have gone further than just drawing inspiration from the classics. It's quite apparent from the opening level that they have

created Maximo with the sole intent of returning players — and please excuse the phrase — to the Old School. For example, consider the following points: Gameplay in Maximo is all about collecting coins, finding power-ups, fighting monsters and opening treasure chests. At the end of each world is a boss who, true to form, has one exploitable weakness. The plot revolves around rescuing four damsels in distress and ultimately Maximo's own beloved, Princess Sophia. Pretty basic, right?

This in itself presents a problem. Take away the rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia and will the game stand on its own merits? Thankfully yes, but those searching for the next evolution in videogames won't find it here. Maximo is a highly polished and

enormously fun 3D platformer in the tradition of the classics, simple as that.

INSERT COIN TO CONTINUE

There are many traps and pitfalls (no pun intended) of the 3D platformer genre that Capcom Digital have managed to avoid when making Maximo. There are none of the control issues that plague so many other games and camera problems are also rare and easily dealt with. No complaints about dodgy game mechanics either - smacking skeletons with Maximo's mighty sword is incredibly satisfying, as are the

clangs and clashes of shields and armour.

Contrary to current platform law, where the biggest threat is usually an inanimate crate clearly marked "Explosive", Maximo is refreshingly difficult. The Undead hordes will pop out of the ground in surprise attacks, use their shield if they have one and in general display the kind of vicious AI not often seen in modern platformers. They're quite often difficult to kill as well. The skeleton pirates in the Ice level are easy to knock down, but performing Maximo's jumping finishing move





Boxer shorts of +4 biffa.



It's too hot for armour anyway!



Have at you, bones!



Max goes digging for E.T. cartridges



GUEST APPEARANCES

Maximo sees the return of many elements from *Ghosts 'n Goblins*. Most obvious is our hero's preference for wearing nothing but boxers under his armour (you can even buy new shorts!) but there are many more. The blue crows perched on gravestones are back, as are the venus fly-trap plants, zombies and missile-spitting towers. Evil wizards appear to turn Maximo into an old codger or baby and treasure chests will magically rise out of the ground if Maximo jumps in the right spot. And the spooky music is back, fully orchestrated!

Every world has a huge number of **power-ups and secrets** to obsessively track down.

is risky, due to the cutlass that skewers their undead torsos.

The high difficulty level is not just restricted to the enemies either. Save points are only located on the central hub levels and require a hundred gold coins to do so. Yep, that's right, YOU HAVE TO PAY.

Continuing the game isn't just a matter of pressing Start either - the Grim Reaper must be paid off, and his price gets higher as the game progresses.

SEARCHING FOR TREASURE

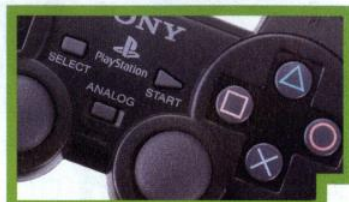
Thankfully the difficulty level is just hard enough to make progress satisfying and rewarding. This is due in no small part to the stylish graphics and excellent level design. Every world has huge number of power-ups and secrets to obsessively track down.

!!! Arcade classic Defender is also being re-made, in 3D of course.

Susumu Matsushita, responsible for the cover and character art on Japan's favourite gaming magazine Famitsu, has created an excellent cast of characters, keeping the humorous yet slightly macabre edge of *Ghosts 'n Goblins*. It is a shame then that there aren't a

greater variety of enemies. The undead hordes quickly become all too samey, especially considering the wide variety of monsters in *Ghosts 'n Goblins*. Sadly, Maximo's missing the pain-in-the-arse red demons of the original, and the spear-throwing spectres that looked like flying hot dogs are nowhere to be seen.

While Maximo may prove too difficult, simplistic or repetitive for some, others will see it as a return to gaming's pure basics. Those with a bad case of nostalgia will love it. <<



PLUS: Highly polished. Captures the atmosphere of the original.

MINUS: Not very ambitious. Difficulty may prove frustrating.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

92 88 91

OVERALL

90

A return to platforming that isn't patronisingly easy.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 67



Star Wars: Racer Revenge

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

>> PS2

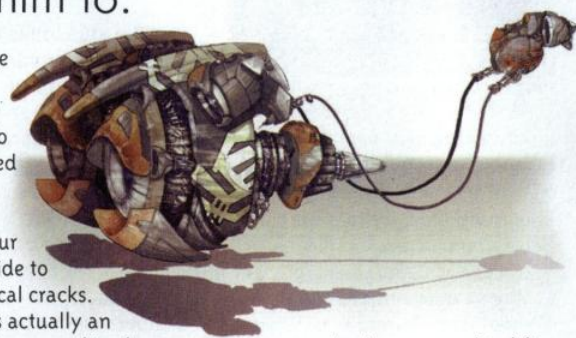
ELIOT FISH does what Jabba the Hutt tells him to.

To think that *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* came out three years ago kind of boggles the mind. We're now already two months from seeing *Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, and no doubt, playing a whole slew of new *Star Wars* games, but it seems like just yesterday we were weeping quietly into a beer over the childish dilution of a once incredible movie series. But that's a whole other story, eh? Anyway, we're back again in *Star Wars* land, and here's the first of the next wave of games — *Racer Revenge*, the sequel to the original *Star Wars: Racer* on Nintendo 64, Dreamcast and PC. This time around, LucasArts have handed the job over to Rainbow Studios, the folks that brought *Splashdown* to the world. Not a bad job they've done with this license, either.

ANI, GET YOUR GUN
The first thing that slaps you in the face like a wet bantha, is the fact that the podracers and pods look fantastic. Rainbow studios have made some beautiful 3D models here and even the animation on the character select screen is great. Not all the pods and podracers are available from the beginning of the game. You can start with Ani Skywalker, but you actually have to unlock favourites such as Sebulba, Gsgano and a host of others before you can play as them. Even better is that hidden away in the game are playable pods for Watto, Darth Maul and Darth Vader, which is very cool. As for how the pods handle in the game, well there have been some

big changes to the actual gameplay mechanics in *Racer Revenge*. No longer do you need "sharp turn" options, or the ability to fling your pod racer on its side to slip through vertical cracks. However, this is actually an improvement. All you need to do now is steer left to right, learn to decelerate when necessary and use the thrust sparingly to go as fast as you can without blowing your engines. The stripped down controls actually makes it easier to slip into "the zone", as you only need to concentrate on taking

corners. You don't even need to lift or dip the nose of your engines as you did in the original to clear gaps — this time the tracks are designed in such a way that crazy jumps and steep dives take place almost automatically. Add to that some incredibly aggressive new opponents. The AI in *Racer Revenge* literally tries to ram you into walls and take you out, but you can do the



!!! We were surprised as any to find out on the official *Star Wars* site that there is Podracing in *Episode II*.



Stay away from those couplings, eh?



Ben Hur 2401



When Muppets collide.



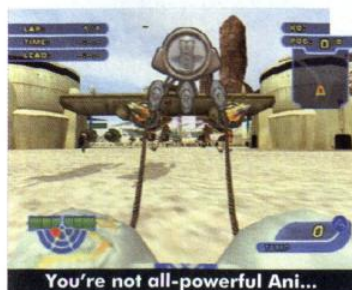
It's getting pretty hot back here...



same to them and even earn money for obliterating your foes during the race. Actually, races in this sequel could be summed up with the words "faster, more intense".

IT TAKES TWO TO JANGO

The track design in Racer Revenge is probably the weakest link. Whilst some are hair-raising and thrilling – such as the now "movie-perfect" design of the Boonta Eve Classic – others are murky and full of so much over-the-top alien decoration that you can't even tell which way you're meant to go. The bonus is that every track has multiple paths to choose from with some very cinematic moments.

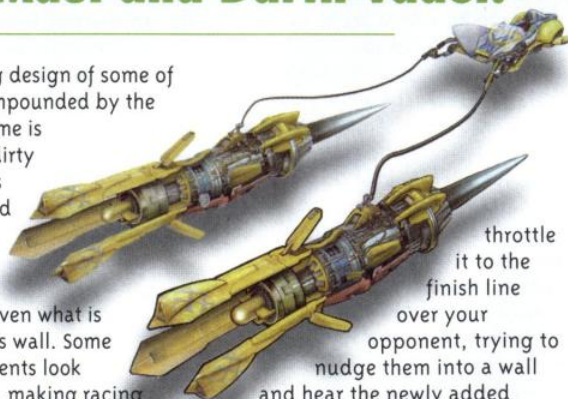


You're not all-powerful Ani...

Hidden away in the game are playable pods for **Watto, Darth Maul and Darth Vader.**

The confusing design of some of the tracks is compounded by the fact that the game is plastered with dirty looking textures that make it hard to tell what is a tunnel entrance or a wall decoration, or even what is floor and what is wall. Some of the environments look downright ugly, making racing them an assault on the eyeballs. The circuits really do range in quality from "brilliant" to "sucks". Thankfully, there are enough decent circuits for the whole game not to be a write off.

As a treat, the split-screen two-player is fantastic fun. Not only is the speed as good as the single-player, but it's fun being able to



throttle it to the finish line over your opponent, trying to nudge them into a wall and hear the newly added announcer give you updates of what's happening in the race as you play.

Racer Revenge is going to really please fans who wanted the game to be just like what was depicted in the movie; but this isn't a racing game that'll satisfy everyone. It's a massive improvement over the original, so that's a good thing. <<



PLUS: Unlockable art galleries, ball-tearingly fast racing.

MINUS: Camera perspective problems with some pods.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

85 90 83

OVERALL

83

Whilst still suffering a few flaws, fans will love this.



Say hello to my... BIG friend.



We should stop meeting like this.



Lara Croft's Bizarro twin?

Drakan: THE ANCIENTS' GATE

CATEGORY: Action Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Sony >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: March 15 >>



DAN TOOSE finds out if this series is dragon on.

F sygnosis had really stumbled onto something when they created Drakan: Order of the Flame for PC. Countless fantasy stories have had tales of people riding dragons, and the idea of riding one in a videogame has always held appeal for many. The effect was, and still is, outstanding, as Drakan: The Ancients' Gate by Surreal Software allows PlayStation 2 gamers to get a taste of this medieval action adventure series.

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

Drakan II sees Rynn & Arokh face a new dilemma, with a mystical race calling themselves the Desert Lords basically insisting that humans take their place in the "natural order of things", which of course means travelling to distant lands, battling weird and wonderful monsters, both on foot and in the skies.

While Drakan II isn't going to send jaws dropping with amazing visual detail compared to some other PlayStation 2 titles, the engine that drives this game is very solid, and the amount of area that's visible at times will impress.

Rynn and the other creatures in the game are very nicely animated, and on the whole, the game looks great, it's just a case of having to accept somewhat simple detail in the environments to allow for the ability to be able to see so much once you hit the skies.

Those that played the original will probably welcome the use of an experience system that allows Rynn to choose whether to advance her skills in melee combat, ranged weapons, or even magic. Items and spells have a level of proficiency requirement, so choosing to specialise in one area may make you weak in another.

Quite frankly, unless you choose to be quite strong in melee combat, you're going to find the game hard going. One gripe that must be had on this front is the lack of special moves and combos in a game that is so combat orientated. Games like Severance on PC handled this quite well, and there's no reason why Surreal couldn't have included it in Drakan: The Ancients' Gate.

CUT THE MUSTARD

This time around, Rynn can buy weapons and armour from shops in the more civilised areas, which offers more security than simply hoping to find something good during your dungeon romps. Dealing with Arokh, and the various speaking creatures through the game tends to result in some amusing dialogue, adding some character and humour to the game.

Your quests are for the most part, creature or item hunts, rather than actual brainteasers. To help break away from a linear feel, there are numerous secondary quests, where you can take up optional missions,

and increase your power to face the main tasks at hand.

Drakan ultimately provides a solid epic adventure, which should take well over 20 hours to play through, which is quite long for a game of this nature. Aerial combat from Arokh's back remains the true joy of the game, and will suck many into the world that Surreal have created. It's not a huge progression for the series, but it's a solid action adventure that should entertain. <<<

!!! Like dragon-riding? Read The Chronicles of Pern then!



PLUS: Excellent dragon combat. Plenty of quests to play through.

MINUS: Needed more depth to the melee combat.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

84 85 82

OVERALL

84

A successful journey to the PS2. Well worth a look.



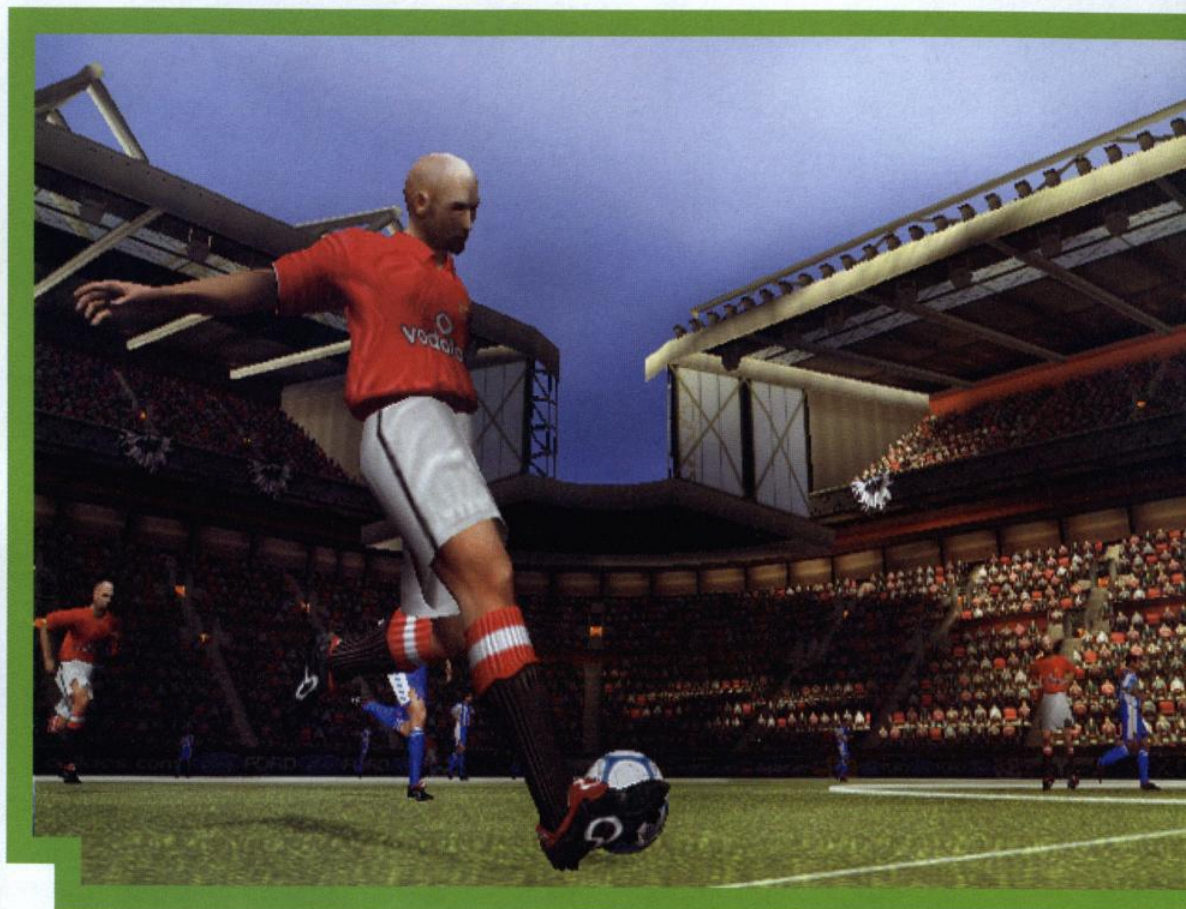
Kick it to me, kick it to me. Dumb ad.



"You put your hands on your hips..."



Ow.



UEFA Champions League

SEASON 2001/2002

CATEGORY: Sports >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Take 2 >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

>>PS2

DAN TOOSE is in a league of his own.

Silicon Dreams have made things tough for themselves by releasing a new football title right after two absolute corkers have arisen in the form of Konami's Pro Evolution Soccer, and EA's FIFA 2002. Not only are they facing the new kings of gameplay and graphics respectively, but they've also decided to pick a small niche for themselves by choosing to focus solely on the UEFA Champions League.

BEHIND THE TIMES

UEFA's first stumbling block comes in the fact that it simply doesn't look as good as what else is on offer. Up close, the player models look quite impressive, and the game runs very smoothly. However, the visuals suffer from interlace flickering quite badly in parts, and the players seem to lose definition once you play the game with a useful camera angle.

With games such as FIFA 2002 offering fantastic animation, which smoothly takes the players from one situation to another, UEFA Champions League looks a little behind the times. Tackles often simply don't look right compared to both FIFA and

Pro Evolution, and players can often be seen standing about in situations where they should be on the move.

Pro Evolution Soccer has proven that control is what football fans crave, which is unfortunate for UEFA Champions League, because it simply doesn't offer the same sort of intuitive control or feel. Things such as clearance kicks going the wrong way, or tackles continually pushing the ball all the way to an opposition player become very annoying.

RELIVING PAST GLORIES

However, UEFA does offer a couple of elements that are quite frankly welcome changes from the norm. The after touch, while looking a tad unrealistic, allows you to curve the ball intuitively with the analogue pad, and complete those freaky shots and passes that the real Champions League players do all the time. Free kicks and penalties also present a control system that's more akin to the usual putting system in golf games, where the ball goes where you want it to, so long as you time things right. It's a welcome

change in a genre of gaming that changes so little. Despite these merits, it doesn't make up for a control system that doesn't feel anywhere near as good as what else is on offer.

There's a part of this Man U fan that quite frankly loves the Champions League, purely because it gives myself, and other followers of the more successful European clubs a chance to see their chosen team play against the best in the world. However, there's a larger part of this football fan that is accustomed to being able to pick almost any European club, or national team in games such as this. Being able to pick all the previous Champions League winners is not really that much of a plus unless you're a codger who's into reliving past glories.

UEFA Champions League hasn't got the same sort of polish, options and playability that its two main competitors do. Silicon Dreams should have started from scratch, rather than cling on to their dated football game engine. <<

!!! From the menu you can select to watch highlights from the last season.



PLUS: Can play as the legendary European sides of old.

MINUS: Inferior in comparison to Pro Evo Soccer and FIFA 2002.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

73 65 67

OVERALL

68

Too many flaws, and inferior to other games available.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 71



Warlords Battlecry II

>> PC

CATEGORY: RTS >> PLAYERS: 1-6 >> PUBLISHER: Ubisoft >> PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII-300, 64MB RAM >>

STEVE POLAK is always crying in battle. Weeping actually.

Relentlessly we have pointed, clicked, harvested resources, amassed armies, built bases and waged real time strategy war. The genre has seen many games steal a brief moment in the limelight, and some have even brought with them new features, or more recently, a new perspective in the form of a 3D view.

However, for all of the razzle-dazzle of the new 3D RTS brigade, the genre still remains essentially true to the same basic formula. This is why the Australian developed Warlords Battlecry II works so well and why we couldn't give two rats' bollocks that the game is not in 3D.

TROLLS, WIZARDS, SUCCUBI
There is a lot to like about Battlecry II. Whilst the game only sports

marginal visual improvements over the original, what has been improved makes it great all over again. Small details like the new particle effects and the well-animated creatures (especially the zombies which drop their heads and pick them up again!) are more than welcome. However, these small visual improvements aside, Battlecry II does have a lot of cool gameplay features. For starters, an interface that is slicker than an infant's intestinal deposits and best of all, our old friend 'Mr AI' has been off in the gym, bench pressing his guts out while looking at our photo on the wall, dreaming of the day he can smash our face in.

The new stuff sees you controlling more races than before (there are now 12), with cool new units such as a landscape dominating uber unit

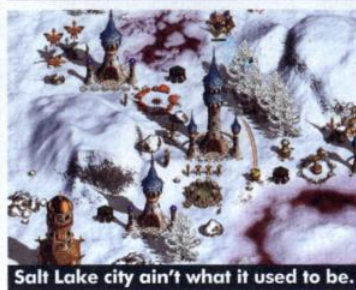
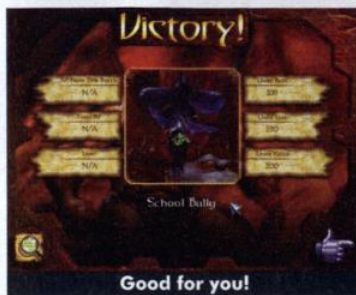
called a Titan, which costs heaps to build but literally takes an army to stop. The new races are the Daemons, Fey and Dark Dwarves. Of the new races, the massive winged Daemons really stand out — they are incredibly powerful with their whips and summoning ability — perhaps too much so for multiplayer — but they are a lot of fun in the single player game. There are also the spiders the Dark Elves control, which kill enemies and lay eggs that hatch into baby spiders that fight for you. Then you've got the trolls, wizards, succubi, wraiths, death knights... I could go on.

No longer is there a single predetermined path through the single player campaign. Now you choose your affiliation and attack

territories on a map (similar to the way you marshalled armies in

Shogun). Claiming territories entitle you to a





better income, which you can then use to buy artefacts which will aid you in battle.

WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO...

Success comes through the use of unique hero units which develop special abilities throughout the game. Using these heroes, you need to capture resource-generating mines (much like the way priests convert buildings to your side in Age of Empires). You can also capture several new building types that let you recruit elemental creatures — daemons and dragons — and then there are 'quest' huts you can visit where you are given riddles



The massive winged Daemons really stand out – they are incredibly powerful with their whips and summoning ability.

or missions to complete for bonuses (like extra warriors or magic items).

The interface is one of the best RTS GUIs (for the acronym conscious) to date. There are roll-over help messages for just about everything and you can automate the building of units with an endless variety of queue options. You can also set up your units so that they adopt any one of a number of AI routines. Units can scout, avoid combat, guard units, or go on a rampage attacking everything in site. There is even a 'cowardly' setting which sees units flee an area when attacked. This is great for helping badly wounded troops survive.

Even better, magical units cast their spells automatically, and

generally make smart decisions about when to use spells and even defensive spell use (like heal etc). This makes spell combat much more useful in the game as you don't have to trigger all of the magic yourself.

Battlecry II also sports special difficulty modes which give you more experience in a mission, but penalises you in that your save games are lost or even your character is permanently lost if you get killed. This risk/reward approach is a great idea.

This is a really solid effort. Some might shrink from it because of the lack of variety and the fact that the game is very much based on the original, however, there is a lot of good gaming here. <<<

!!! There have been seven games in the Warlords series now.



PLUS: A lot of variety, easy to get the hang of and great replay value.

MINUS: Not that original, though there are some nice tweaks.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

76 83 85

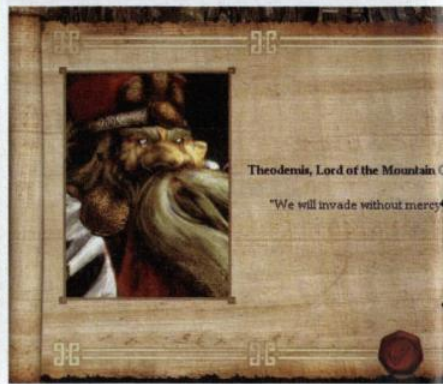
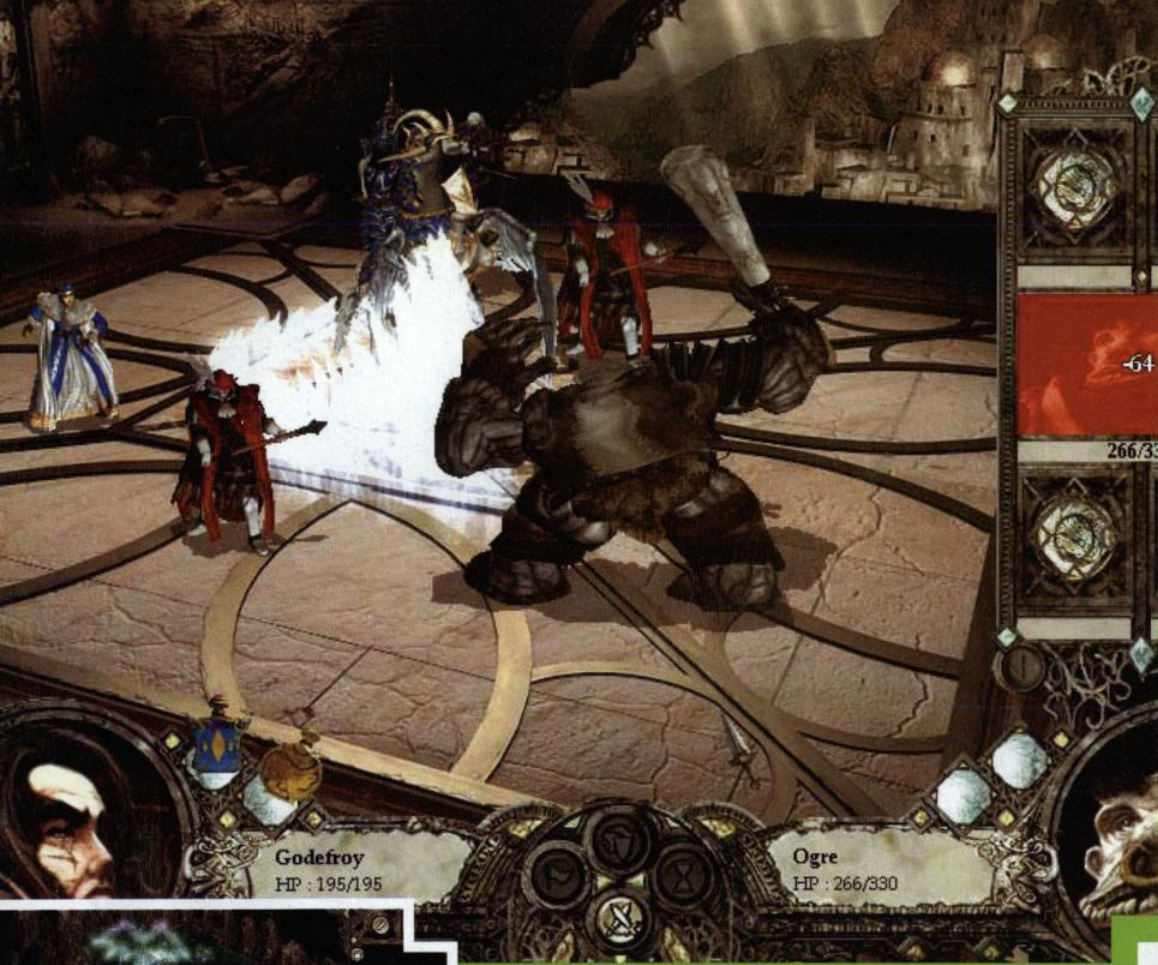
OVERALL

84

The hardcore RTS fan should be pretty happy with this effort.

REVIEW

>>> HYPER 73



Disciples II: DARK PROPHECY **PC**

CATEGORY: Strategy/Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Strategy First >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII-233, 32MB RAM

ELIOT FISH commands the undead hordes. He also played this game.

R In first inspection, Disciples II looks like a Heroes of Might & Magic clone — and in many respects it is — but the irony here (without boring you too much about the process of making a monthly videogames magazine) is that we're reviewing Disciples II to fill the pages that Heroes of Might & Magic IV would have filled if it had arrived on time for our deadline. Lucky for us, Disciples II is probably a better game than Heroes IV will turn out to be anyway. Not to dis Heroes IV prematurely, but Disciples II: Dark Prophecy takes the same concept and fills it with so much more character that we're well and truly hooked. This is one of the most addictive fantasy strategy adventures we've played in a long time.

TRANSFORM THE LAND
Disciples II offers a robust single player experience with the choice of a full "saga" mode and separate unique quests. The game also offers multiplayer, but the pay off here is the single player game. Upon choosing to play a new saga, the player must decide whether to play as the Empire (the angelic good guys), the Mountain Clans (Dwarves), the Legions of the Damned (Hellspawn) or the Undead Hordes (zombies, ghosts and more freaky undead creations). First you choose a "lord" character to command your troops in battle. In the case of the undead, you can choose from a Lich, Death Knight or Nosferatu, each one with different abilities in combat. These lords can also equip artefacts, orbs,

scrolls and a variety of other talismans that improve attack or defense ratings, as well as perform functions such as casting spells, healing your units or resurrecting them. A simple paperdoll system allows you to equip your lords with their cool doohickeys and get more intimate with their stats. The troops you get to lead into combat range from basic grunts that only attack an adjacent space to ranged units like archers, magic users, deadly creatures with multiple attacks and support units (such as acolytes). These units can be upgraded throughout the game to more and more powerful troops if they acquire enough experience in battle and you have erected the required upgrade buildings at your "home base". For instance, you

could build a vile pit that turns your undead fighters into the more deadly zombies and so on. Every unit has a unique upgrade path, and sometimes you must choose between two upgrades — instead of zombies, you may have chosen for your soldiers to progress as Templars. The variety here, and how you take advantage of it, really affects your success in combat, which we'll get to later. Naturally, everything costs gold, so in order to make all these improvements, you need to get out there and transform the land (in the undead case, turning it into a barren wasteland) which converts various resources on the map, funneling resources into your pockets. You can also get gold from finding treasure on the map and



looting locations, much like in the Heroes of Might and Magic games.

The game is turn based, so each party only has a certain number of movements each turn, with some lords having more movement points (such as the Nosferatu on horseback). The coolest unit would have to be the thief. This guy goes out on his own, sneaks around poisoning enemies on the map, spying on your opponent to give you access to information on their armies in the field and even luring the leader of a party to a duel, sometimes crippling an opponent's units and leaving them vulnerable.

SAVAGELY ADDICTIVE

Combat is simple, but lots of fun. The party you take into battle really determines the outcome based on unit strength alone, as once combat is initiated it really comes down to who has the more powerful units rather than how you attack your enemies. The combat is so simplistic that you don't even move around the screen — unit positions are determined by how you've stacked

A simple paperdoll system allows you to **equip your lords with their cool doohickeys...**

them in the menu. Thanks to the variety of units and their attacks, there are always new combinations to try, and of course, the spells and various magical artefacts have a huge impact on how successful a battle is. This is raw strategic play.

Your overall chances at success in completing your distant goals really comes down to how well you command the map, where you decide to plunder and how well you use your funds to best build your armies and keep your captured towns defended. Each town can build its own units and employ new lords, but getting the money flowing is the tricky part.

Unlike the more random nature of the Heroes of Might and Magic games, Disciples II has a strong story line, and with repeated play you discover that

certain things will always be triggered, allowing you to backtrack and figure out how to best prepare yourself for the events that kicked your arse the first time. This is how the game becomes so savagely addictive. You're always thinking of better ways to combine and manage your units, or more tactical ways around the map that won't run you into as much trouble. The game is no walk in the park, and re-loading and trying out different tactics seems

to be a common occurrence. Of course, this is what results in the "one more go" scenario.

Disciples II should satisfy most fantasy gaming lovers. You'll be playing this so much, that before too long you'll look like undead yourself. <<

There is also a Disciples card game. You can find out more info on it at www.disciples2.com



PLUS: Gorgeous artwork in the map and units.

MINUS: Sometimes maddeningly difficult. Sometimes predictable.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

87 89 85

OVERALL

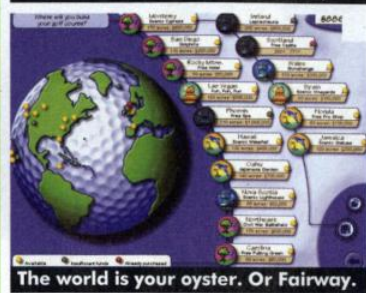
86

Fantastic fantasy gaming.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 75

Haggis Hill CC
July 2015



Sid Meier's Sim Golf

>> PC

CATEGORY: Sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: EA >> PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII 300, 64MB RAM

ELIOT FISH has nightmares about *Caddy Shack*.

Sid Meier — you may remember him from such games as Sid Meier's Civilization and Sid Meier's Civilization II and Sid Meier's Civilization III... and Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri. Gee, likes the sound of his own name, doesn't he? Well, if you thoroughly enjoy all things Sid, then Sid Meier's Sim Golf is probably going to be a must-buy for you. Rarely is a game this simple, charming and addictive, whilst still having enough depth of play to rank it higher than most of today's shallow "tycoon" games. Sim Golf is so much more than the box would lead you to believe.

MMM... SAND WEDGE

Utilising an interface ripped straight from EA's other Sim blockbuster, The Sims, Sim Golf is instantly intuitive to use if you've spent any time in Simville. The menu in the bottom left allows you access to all aspects of the game, from course creation to fiddling with the sim golfers. The simple top-down 2D graphics could be called old-school, but they're immensely functional and at times even stylish.

The emphasis here is on the "build, experiment and play" gameplay, typical of sim and tycoon games. As you design each hole, golfers will come to your club and play on it, paying you money each time they finish. The more imaginative and playable your hole, the more fun the golfers will get out of it and eventually your club will start accruing members and attract tournaments.

As usual, it's important to keep your golfers happy with food, drink and easy access to the course, but unlike other tycoon games, you don't have to dwell on these kinds of side details. The focus really is on designing good golf holes, beautifying them, and then playing on them with your own Pro. You can't just throw holes together though... because you really need to know what makes a good game of golf.

TWEAKING AND FIDDLING

You'll constantly be tweaking and fiddling with your courses, as the rewards in Sim Golf come from

understanding and evolving your holes depending upon what is needed. The pacing in the game is excellent. Overall, of course, it's still about making money. If your course is no good, golfers will simply not pay to play and you'll slowly go into irrecoverable debt and go down the tubes. You can access all sorts of stats on every aspect of your course, which really helps in the overall construction of a profitable and fun golf course.

For fun, you can pair golfers in your clubhouse and send them out, hoping that they'll form friendships and have a "happy ending" which improves the attraction of your course, as well as giving you a more intimate dealing with the golfers swarming all over the course. You can even edit their names, professions, clothes, looks and better still, their dialogue. Everything a sim golfer may say in the context of a game can be edited. I love seeing my Pro say, "That f**kin' rocks, mate!" when he hits a good shot. <<

!!! Like The Sims, you can download new courses, golfers and stuff from the website.



PLUS: Addictive, charming and encourages creativity.

MINUS: The novelty could wear thin sooner than you'd like.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
75	79	85
OVERALL		
85		

Sid Meier has hit another hole in one!



You should look where you're flying.



Bada-bada-bada-bada!



Wait a sec, those *are* ants.



IL-2 Sturmovik

>>PC

CATEGORY: Flight Sim >> PLAYERS: 1-32 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII-400, 128MB RAM, 3D card

DAN TOOSE tells us how this flight sim shot down his social life.

When most people think of World War II aircraft, they think of planes such as the "Spitfire" and "Messerschmitt". However, if you were Russian, you'd probably be thinking "Sturmovik", their armoured anti-tank marvel of the skies. Oleg Maddox and his team were enthused enough about the armoured ground-attack aircraft to spend five years developing IL-2 Sturmovik, and it shows. This is quite clearly the best WWII flight combat simulator to date.

SPRECHEN SIE DEUTSCH?

IL-2's action predictably takes place around the Russian front, where you can choose to fly as either the Russians or the Germans. There are 31 types of Russian, German, and American planes to fly, and another 40 types of aircraft that appear throughout the game. IL-2 also features a huge line up of ground and naval units that actually participate in combat, resulting in a WWII gaming experience that's about as authentic as you can get.

Visual realism has to be IL-2 Sturmovik's greatest trump card, as

it makes all other flight sims before it look butt ugly. European Air War was stuck at 640x480, but IL-2 allows you to crank up the detail to freaky levels should your hardware permit it. Whether you're having a look around your cockpit, watching the sunshine off a river snaking off into the distance, or checking out your paint job, it all looks stunningly realistic. All this eye candy is delivered at a surprisingly healthy frame rate. Quite frankly, anyone who has a serious complaint about the visuals in IL-2 is delusional git with a PC that doesn't cut it anymore.

The realism doesn't stop with the audio-visual splendour, which is hardly surprising considering a whole bunch of the development team have graduated from Russian aviation institutes. There are a large number of options affecting the realism of the game, so whether you're an actual pilot, or a dreamer who's played too much X-Wing vs. TIE, you'll be able to tailor the game to suit your ability.

!!! There's a campaign generator available at www.il2center.com called IL2gen, which makes creating a long campaign in seconds a snap.

SIMULATION FREAK

If there were a weakness to IL-2 Sturmovik, it would be its lack of a dynamic campaign system, which we've seen in games such as European Air War. However, there are two mission builders, one quick and easy, the other more detailed and comprehensive.

If you crave an ongoing narrative between missions, be warned that IL-2 Sturmovik is all about being a great flight sim, rather than telling a great story. You do at least keep records of your pilots' careers, and earn medals, just don't expect them to come with a handshake from your CO.

Whether you're a die-hard simulation freak, or just someone looking for a combat flight sim that looks real and plays well, IL-2 Sturmovik has plenty to offer. With IC: Maddox Games and the flight-sim community constantly adding more aircraft to fly, and more missions to take on, IL-2 Sturmovik should keep virtual pilots happy for a long time to come. <<<



PLUS: A-grade visuals and physics. Authentic aircraft.

MINUS: No dynamic campaign.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

94 88 93

OVERALL

93

This one comes from Russia with love.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 77



Serious Sam: THE SECOND ENCOUNTER

CATEGORY: FPS >>> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >>> PUBLISHER: Take 2 >>> PRICE: TBA >>> RATING: MA15+ >>> AVAILABLE: Now >>> REQUIRED: PII-300, 64MB RAM, 3D card

CAM SHEA doesn't see any need for seriousness...



In the space of just a year, Croteam have gone from being an unknown group of guys to cult heroes. Serious Sam proved that a small independent team from anywhere in the world (Croatia in this case) can still make their mark. It also proved that there's ample room for Doom-style shooters in this day and age. No troublesome puzzles or thinking, just refreshingly tight, action packed gameplay.

THINKING IS OVER-RATED ANYWAY...

The Second Encounter is really only an extension of the first game, but it's enough of an extension to make it a more than worthwhile purchase. The game engine is even more impressive this time around. It still plays to its strengths — massive arenas and incredible game speed, but the environments are far more varied and alive. Where the original Sam was basically only set in ancient Egypt, The Second Encounter keeps you on your toes, moving from mountainous tropics to a lava world, and even a frozen ice

stage. The levels also have a few new tricks up their sleeve like bounce pads, slippery surfaces and tricks and traps galore.

The weaponry is extensive and well balanced, with new additions that help change the flavour of combat. The grenade launcher is perhaps the best grenade launcher in a game ever — it's like a scaled down rocket launcher really, with the advantage that you can bounce your shots off walls. Also new are the chainsaw and flamethrower, which rock when some serious room clearing is called for. The best new addition, however, is the sniper rifle. Sure, it wouldn't be a modern FPS without one, but once again Croteam have implemented it impeccably. It has incredible zoom and power, and is the perfect complement to the massive outdoor terrain. Even cooler is combining the sniper rifle with the speed boots so you can easily out-pace the enemy onslaught; lining up shots as you strafe rings around them.

THE CRATE BUG

Perhaps the most endearing thing about Sam is that the developers obviously have a sense of humour. Take the opening movie sequence — Sam has boarded the alien spacecraft and is on his way to take on the evil overlord Mental on his home planet Sirius, when what should happen but the game's development team run into the craft, causing it to crash. Not only are the team depicted as bigheaded weirdos, but they're RIDING CRATES! Yes, after all the press from sites like Old Man Murray, Croteam have caught the crate bug and worked it into the game! Sweet!

Second Encounter is proof that with the right attitude and technology, old school gameplay still has a place amongst more cerebral offerings. This game is uncompromising in its commitment to constant and utterly compelling action. You're literally taking on hundreds of enemies at once, and on anything above the normal difficulty setting the game is near impossible. <<<

!!! Second Encounter is more like an expansion pack. Serious Sam 2 is in development.



PLUS: Co-op rocks. Nothing but blau!

MINUS: Only for lovers of twitch gameplay.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

86 81 85

OVERALL

85

Like a punch in the face and a shot of adrenaline in one.

are you hyperactive?

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PLAYSTATION



MAC



PC-CDROM



CHAT



SEGA



ARCADE



NINTENDO 64



Luridan	6	CELES	990
		SETZER	403
		GAU	816
		CYAN	1134

You know what I see? Seven chicken burgers...



Bloompire2	EDGAR	1222
	CELES	1219
	SABIN	1111
	CYAN	1098

PSONE

Final Fantasy VI

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: Squaresoft >> PRICE: \$29.95 >>
 RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: March >>

Final Fantasy VI (FF6) first appeared on the NTSC SNES in 1995. Uniquely, FF6 has a mature and involving narrative like the later FF titles but lacks the whiz-bang visuals that even Australians have been able to enjoy since Square embraced the PSX. To update this oldie, Square has added some fancy cutscene movies a la FFVIII that just don't work - if anything they make the game look OLDER.

Despite its pixelated ugliness, FF6 is well worth playing. It boasts the largest cast of playable characters yet in the series, a staggering 14! The cast is wonderfully varied and the whole saga is paced so that each can chase their personal golden fleece for a while. Touching and heartfelt, the stories of Terra, Cyan, Locke and the rest are shamelessly affecting and truly satisfying. But the best character in the game is the villain: Kefka. A malicious little brute, he's the bastard you love to hate. And without him the entire world wouldn't transform halfway through the game...

FF6 features espers (including Ifrit) that teach magic when equipped, individual battle skills for each character (including some Street Fighter style moves), the always infuriating random battle system and probably the most beautiful 16-bit soundtrack ever.

For those who love a cracking game regardless of its looks, this is a bargain priced retro RPG gem. The younger, more sceptical gamer will see through the FF7-style cutscenes and mock the inferior visuals. They really should get back to Golden Sun anyway. Did we mention this comes with a PS2 demo for FFX? - **John Dewhurst**

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
50	90	80	80



It's an eye-straining frenzy that's for sure.



XBOX

Fuzion Frenzy

CATEGORY: Party game >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
 PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>
 RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: March 14 >>

Although the Mario Party games out-stayed their welcome by a sequel or two, the blueprint for the console party game was a good one. Take some friends, throw in a huge number of wacky mini-games, then garnish with a selection of popular mascots for an evening of competitive gaming. Since Mario Party, we've had the very reasonable Crash Bash, as well as the "worst ever Sonic game", aka Sonic Shuffle.

The Xbox may be the new kid on the block, but it already has a party game. Unsurprisingly, given the lack of available Microsoft mascots (although beating the crap out of the MS Word paperclip might have been fun), Fusion Frenzy isn't the typical bright and happy party game. Instead, it's a party game with 'tude. The characters are all hip young things with (not very) phat pants and even phatter slang. The visual style is "day-glo futuristic" - kinda gritty but with plenty of neon colours. The graphics do the job but aren't really a showcase for the Xbox's hardware, especially considering the occasional slowdown in really weird places, which just shouldn't happen with a game like this.

The first thing Fusion Frenzy does right game-play-wise is to ditch the whole board game concept, and concentrate on the mini-games themselves. There are 45 mini-games in all, and all things considered, it's a reasonable line-up. As you'd expect, some are boring and many just plain annoying, but if you have an Xbox, four controllers and three friends Fusion Frenzy is a pretty commendable take on the party game concept. It's a pity you can't create your own custom tournaments, but finding a few mini-games you and your friends all really like and sticking to them isn't a bad option. - **Cam Shea**

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
70	68	70	70



Shrek has his mind set on scrambled eggs.



XBOX

Shrek

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: TDK >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
 RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: March 14 >>

Platformers. Love 'em or hate 'em, they're here to stay. Games based on movie licenses, ditto. Generally, when these two worlds collide bad things happen. Reviewers toss game discs across rooms, people lose eyes... it all ends in tears. There are, mind you, occasional exceptions. Unfortunately, Shrek on Xbox isn't one of them... but it sure is pretty. TDK seem to have been determined to pack in as many hardware supported visual effects as possible into this game, and it shows. Shrek has a real "holy crap this is like a cartoon world brought to life" vibe about it, and as a technical showcase it's quite impressive.

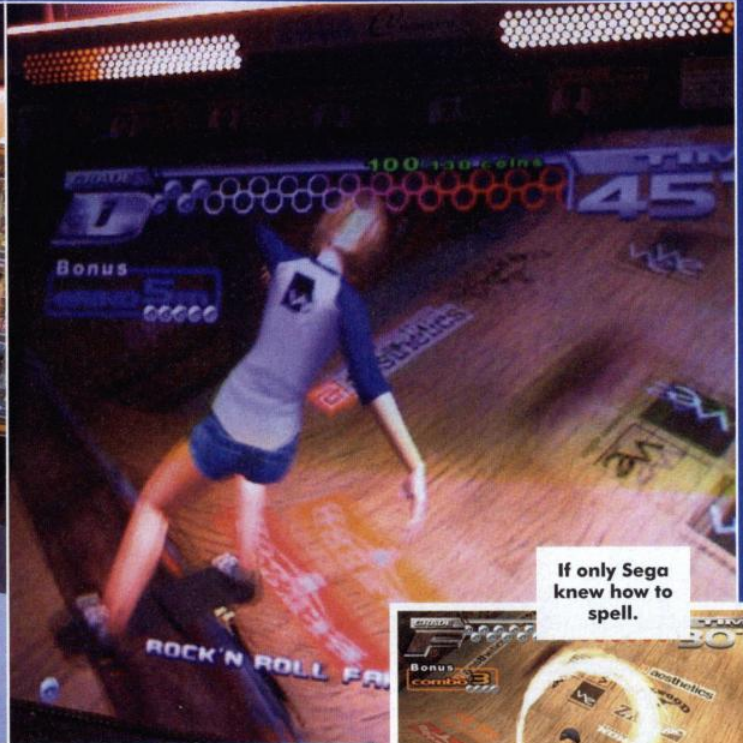
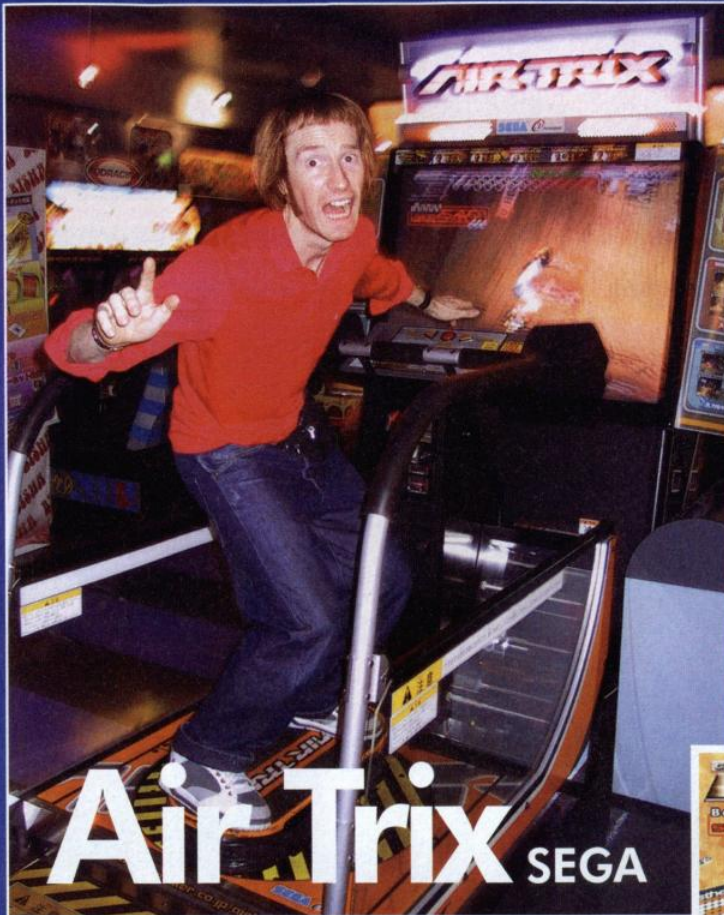
The game itself follows a predictable model. Shrek has a whole host of abilities, including burping and farting (which can be combined to create rudimentary rocket jumps) and must complete six objectives per level. The levels are steeped in fairy tale lore, and TDK have obviously had fun coming up with settings and objectives. On the very first level you have to find Little Bo-Peep's sheep and return them to their pen - by drop-kicking them, no less. However, the big bad wolf is also running around, and once you return one to the pen, he'll jump the fence and drop-kick it back out, so it becomes like a mini-game. Another objective is "fart on the magical dancing cow"... don't ask, but it's pretty hilarious.

Unfortunately, the objectives get tiresome very quickly, as there's no real variety or ingenuity - collect this, fart on that. Combined with small, poorly designed levels and a complete lack of puzzle-solving elements, Shrek's gameplay just isn't well thought out. Worth a rent for eye candy. - **Cam Shea**

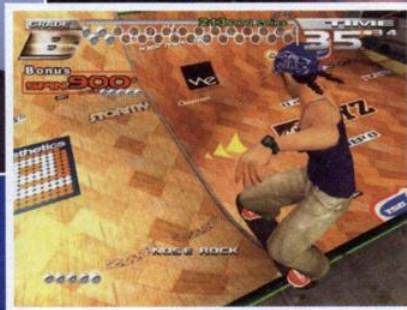
VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
89	75	69	69

ARCADE

>>TIM LEVY



If only Sega knew how to spell.



Air Trix SEGA

Last century (1997), Sega released the skateboarding game Top Skater, which was essentially a point to point driving game with tricks and without a car. The courses were adorned aplenty with ramps, jumps, rail slides, obstacles and some dope half-pipe sections. As the dope half-pipe sections were one of the highlights of the game, Sega has decided to devote an entire game to the Art of Ramp Riding and have reused the original innovative skateboard interface to bring low impact skating back to the arcade.

KICK THE TAIL

After selecting one of 5 different skaters, each with their own special moves (you have to find them through experimentation), you have the option of choosing either a tutorial mode or 2 sets of stages to complete. It is best to choose the tutorial mode as not only does it get you used to what is in store, but

it doesn't restrict you from continuing on the 'real' stages.

Trix (tricks) are pulled off in a variety of ways. You kick the tail at the top of the ramp to get air, then repeatedly kick back or forwards and/or spin the tail around to link combos. To do grinds, approach the lip of the ramp at an angle and press the nose down. To snap out of the grind, you just kick the tail. Make sure the board is facing forward when you land or ala Tony Hawk, you will lose your trick points as well as the speed/momentum to get extra air.

Trick points come in the form of coins, and to make it to the next stage/ramp, you have to rack up a pre-set amount of coins within the required time. As the game progresses, the ramps become larger, wider and more complex, with the ability to soar from one ramp to another (another highlight of the game). Supposedly, extra characters are able to be unlocked,

though the codes, or the 'time release' factor hadn't been available upon the Australian release.

I GOT MY HALF PIPE

Not only is Air Trix a test of physical dexterity, but also of stamina. If you make it through at least 2 of the ramps, you'll find yourself sweating like a guy who has run a marathon through a desert in a full body wet suit. So dress lightly.

With the advent of the Tony Hawk Skate Series on console, it is easy to realise that T.H. would not have had the semi-cult like status it deserves if the game was limited to half-pipes only. Although Air Trix is a good game and should be played at least a few times by any self respecting arcade fan, you can't help but feel that Sega got it right first time round with Top Skater - as

variety is definitely the key. However, the real thrills are when you start to get some giant air and you finally work out exactly how to pull off a succession of complex death-defying moves. This game probably won't make it big time on the home consoles, but maybe the interface could act as an inspiration for either a kick-ass controller attachment (albeit only affordable by 'born with a silver spoon in mouth' kids) or even coax Activation to create an arcade port of Tony Hawk (wishful thinking).

OVERALL

8/10

Tekken Advance

GBA CATEGORY: Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Namco >>
 PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Namco stirred our interest in Tekken Advance from the very beginning, originally out of curiosity as to how exactly they intended to do it. How do you take an advanced 3D fighting game engine and fit it on a cartridge smaller than your big toe? Well, now the answer is revealed, and it's a pretty simple solution... Strip it down, make it fun. No more, no less.

THANKS JOEY TEKKEN!

"Stripped down" is a rather understated way of putting things. The now famous limb-by-limb controls of traditional Tekken have been halved, leaving us with only a punch and kick button. In order not to clog things up, throw has been relegated to R, and the fourth button is reserved for tag in the 3 on 3 Battle Mode.

The thing about this, though, is that it works really well. All the most important moves have been accounted for (although some with very weird new animations) including Tekken Tag's move list, and those that didn't make the cut



are very unlikely to be missed by your average casual gamer. This way, the game has maintained the most enjoyable parts like the juggle system and only lost parts that were more important to the two-player game.

Graphically, Tekken Advance immediately catches your attention. It looks just amazing. Upon closer



The second rule about Fight Club...



C'mere you.

inspection you will realise the resolution isn't the greatest — the characters are just very cleverly drawn 2D sprites that mimic their 3D-rendered models quite well — but the illusion is quite convincing to say the least.

On the down side, once things start moving, the choppy frame rate is more apparent. Thanks to the storage limitations of the cartridge and the need for animation frames instead of merely rendered models moving through programmed animations, a lot of corners have had to be cut. The roster is seriously lacking at only 10 selectable characters and one unlockable character. Animations double up to save space, so it looks pretty goofy, but this is a portable version after all.

Tekken Advance boils down to one thing: This is all about the one-player game. If you enjoy the game engine and juggle system of Tekken then you will have fun here. Not much compares with pulling 4 EWGFs with Heihachi on Hwoarang. And if you understood that sentence, then you should check out this game. — Bryce McDonough



Now that's called "taking a dive".



I am big man!!



VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY OVERALL

87 85 89 86

Sonic Advance

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Sega
 PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



GBA <<

Well this is definitely a first for Nintendo fans. Sonic the hedgehog, long-time mascot of Sega, lands on Game Boy Advance and with it brings up so many memories of bickering in the schoolyard over how much better Megadrive was than SNES (or vice versa). Can Sonic reclaim the side-scrolling throne he so rightly deserves?

JUMP AND SPIN

Sonic epitomises what two-dimensional platforming is all about. Fast and furious, the speed was always Sonic's drawcard, and it's refreshing to drop into the Spinball and launch through a 360 degree loop in the very first stage. Sure Sonic went 3D some time ago, but this is more than just retro gaming — whilst we're not here to debate 3D Vs 2D, let's just say there is room for both, good or bad.

Sonic Advance feels downright perfect. Jump and spin... it's all he ever needed. His tag-along gang (now consisting of three others — Tails, Knuckles and Amy) all have their own attributes to help them keep up with the blue speed-demon, but perhaps simplicity is best. Either way, they are all there, and you get to play through the whole game separately with each character. The levels are identical, but thanks to their differing talents, new areas for exploration may be much easier to find with some characters. Knuckles, who can glide interminably, and climb walls has the easiest time finding bonus lives and secret areas. Tails has the ability to hover with his spinning tails which can be very useful, whilst Amy just wanders around whopping everything with her massive hammer. On top of this, they each have individual abilities in multi-player making character selection quite important. Speaking of multi-



Running rings around the competition.



Sonic. He's the lord of the rings.



She's always flipping for Sonic.



player, Sonic supports both single cartridge and multi-cartridge four player games, though naturally more options and modes are available with several cartridges. Definitely not the only reason to pick up a copy, but considering it's something you get for free on top of the normal game, who can complain?

Also crammed in the cart is the Tiny Chao Garden, more pet-simming in case you're not tired of it yet. The mini-games are fun, and looking after your eggs can be just about the most addictive way to

lose an afternoon. Furthermore, Sonic Advance is compatible with the GCN link cable to link up with Sonic Adventure 2 Battle on GameCube to further your Chao-ing.
 - Bryce McDonough

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
89	85	89	90

Wizball

The single greatest game on the Commodore 64 was all about balls. **JAMES COTTEE** takes a look at one of the most colourful games ever made.



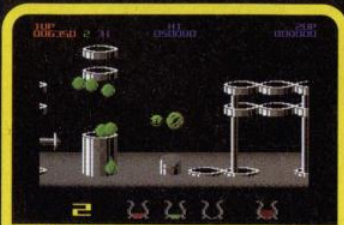
ZZAP 64, one of our favourite old games mags.



These pixels are hurting my eyes.



This game is wizard!



Mind if I play with your balls?

Wizball was one of those rare genre-busting games that defined the ideals of a generation. Sure, it had wonderfully scaled gameplay, engaging and pacy level design, revolutionary graphics, and sublime sound, but Wizball was more than the sum of its parts. It drew the player into a strange world with its own logic, and its own rules. It was the world of acid rock album covers, of panel van art, of the strange cartoon shorts they used to play on Sesame Street. The game made the player a part of the world of Wizball, and took them on a strange journey to the limits of endurance.

BALL-SHAPED

The plot was standard storybook fare, with the evil wizard Zark stealing all the colour from the land, leaving it a grey, alien-infested wilderness. Playing the Wiz, you would step into your laser-spitting, hyper-spatial ball-shaped battle pod, and vie to free the colours for good citizens to use once more.

The game started by throwing you in the deep end. With no power-ups on the board, all your Wizball could do was bounce up and down and shoot. Tapping gently to the left or right would set the ball spinning, and the rate of spin would determine the angle of incidence upon which you'd bounce along, and the corresponding counter-spin to bring you to a halt. The very first stage was a controlled environment where you would practice zapping strange knobby aliens to get bonus bubbles. The first upgrade eliminated the spinning, the second the bouncing.

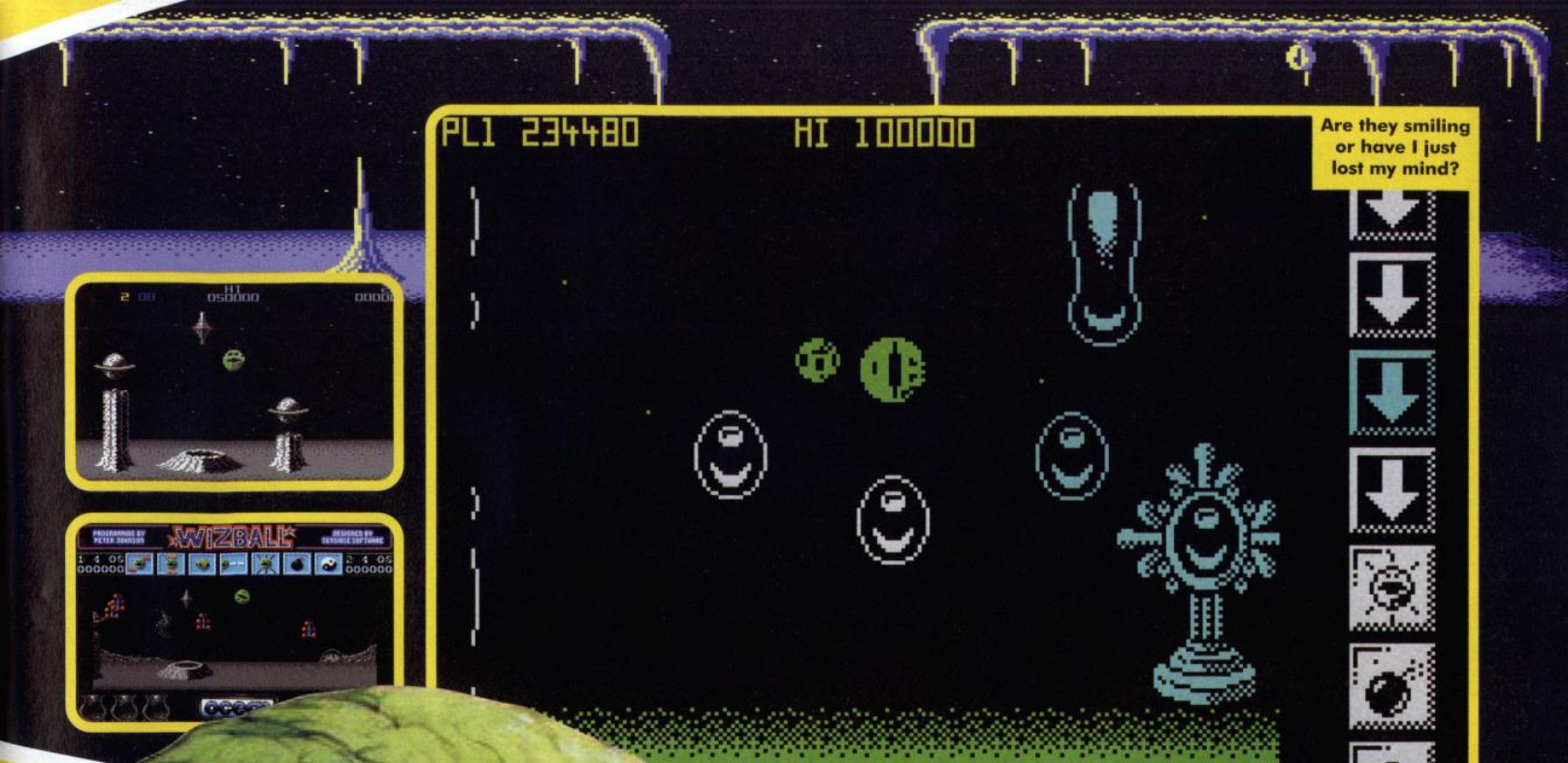
You'd lose all your powerups upon dying, making for one more reason to watch your arse. After a few laser upgrades, you activated the catelite, and the real game began. For only the catelite could collect the colour drops that would restore colour to your world. After shooting the violent colour blobs that roamed the landscape, you would send the cat out to collect their precious inky blood before it spilled upon the ground. Red, green,

and blue ink would fill up the three bins at the bottom of the screen, and when the correct mix for the level you were on was filled, you'd warp out and enter the ultra-trippy bonus stage.

Each of the eight stages had three colours missing, and each stage only had one native colour of blob. Thus the onus was on the player to explore the pipes that would take you between stages, Mario style, and collect the right mix to work your way to the very end. Fortunately, you didn't have to face this addictive task alone, as Wizball was one of the first games to truly support co-operative play. Player One would control the Wizball, and Player Two the Catelite, making for hours of frenzied esprit de corps in a game already dripping with quality.

SINK OR SWIM

In addition to the seminal Commodore version, there were ports of Wizball written for the Spectrum, the PC, the Amstrad, the

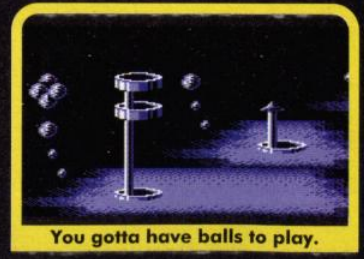


Thomson MO5, the Amiga and the Atari ST. All of them suffered from the translation. The Spectrum had the bare minimum in hardware power to make a game as complex as Wizball function. The PC version only supported CGA graphics, and since it predated sound cards looked and sounded like something the cat dragged in. Even the mighty ST and Amiga didn't quite get the formula right. Sure, they had sound and

vision to spare, but the exquisite synergy of the native version just didn't translate. Sensible Software would survive for more than another decade. The master coders who made Wizball went on to write the stunning Cannon Fodder, and the hugely successful Sensible Soccer series. But ultimately, this proud software house, like so many others from the 8-bit era, went the way of the dodo. Wizball was perhaps the single

finest game made for the Commodore 64. There are others that rival it in popularity and cultural significance, but Wizball above all else represents the freewheeling attitude of game programming in a bygone age. When new ideas were welcomed with open arms, and any game, no matter how strange it seemed at first, could sink or swim on its merits. With development budgets now in the millions, few publishers dare to risk bringing something as visionary as Wizball to market. Lucky for us, emulators exist so we can still play it

on modern PCs (as long as you own the original, riiiiight?). Download it right now and give it a try. Sure, the first five minutes are hard. But before long, the hours will pass in a flash. As if by magic! <<<



You gotta have balls to play.

REVERSE ENGINEERING

>>>HYPER 85



DOWNLOAD

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!

Tron 20TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S EDITION

DISNEY, PG

Tell a person that your movie idea is about a man who's sucked into a computer game, and who discovers a society of programs within cyberspace, fighting a rebellion against an all-powerful Master Control Program, and you're likely to be laughed off as some kind of techno-geek. But since that movie was made 20 years ago in the form of *Tron*, it's all perfectly okay.

Tron was years ahead of its time, inspiring a generation of gamers through its futuristic character design and videogame concepts. The Discs of Tron



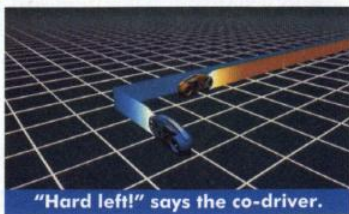
I'm feeling a little off colour today...



I am the ruler of all pixels!



Fancy a game of frisbee?



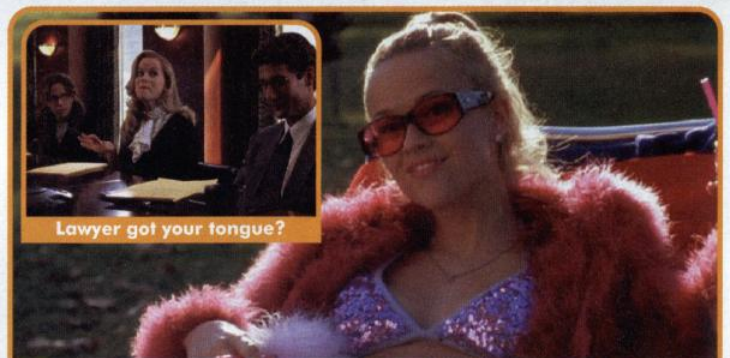
"Hard left!" says the co-driver.

**HOT
IN AMERICA**

might just be a fancy version of Pong, and *Extreme G 3* could pass off for the light cycles, but we've yet to see anything nearly as cool as the hover tanks.

This 20th Anniversary Collector's Edition comes on 2 discs with a whole 5 hours worth of bonus material. It includes a making-of documentary, deleted scenes, commentary from the cast and crew, storyboards, and the full Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

MOVIE: 8/10 **EXTRA:** 9/10



Lawyer got your tongue?

Legally Blonde

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, PG

Elonde bimbo, Elle Woods (played by Reese Witherspoon) is dumped by her college boyfriend after he qualifies to enter Harvard Law School and determines that Elle is, well, just too embarrassing to be seen in public with. Grief-stricken, Elle endures the torture of sitting through the LSATs, and then makes it into Harvard Law herself to prove that she is indeed good enough for him, and hopefully win his heart back. Of course, the few weeks respite in their relationship was enough for the boyfriend to find a

new fiancée, played by Witherspoon's *Cruel Intentions* co-star, Selma Blair.

Directed by Australian hotshot Robert Luketic, *Legally Blonde* is a clever if predictable comedy. Although Witherspoon plays the part of an airhead perfectly, she also does a great job of conveying the journey of self-discovery and change that Woods is going through. Commentary from cast and crew, deleted scenes and making-ofs make up the extras.

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

Planet of the Apes

20TH CENTURY FOX, M15+

Stylish and brilliantly presented, this Tim Burton remake of *Planet of the Apes* is a disappointing film transformed into a truly excellent DVD. Mark Wahlberg plays a US astronaut who crash lands on a planet where apes apparently rule, and humans are treated as wild animals capable of domestication, as you would a dog or cat.

The focus on action opens no opportunity for Burton to explore his critique of modern religion, nor for the actors to get into their characters; but the action scenes are stylish and well directed, the set designs lavish, which is characteristic of Burton's work. The thoroughly confusing ending doesn't help, though.

A great effort has been put into the extra features, though, with a massive 13 hours worth of material. There's commentary from Burton, who isn't



Marky Mark thinks up some rhymes.



You guys can be my Funky Bunch.

much improved over his *Edward Scissorhands* mumbling effort. Six documentaries are also crammed into a second disc. Lastly, the 3D GUI is very impressive – a step beyond every other DVD on the market.

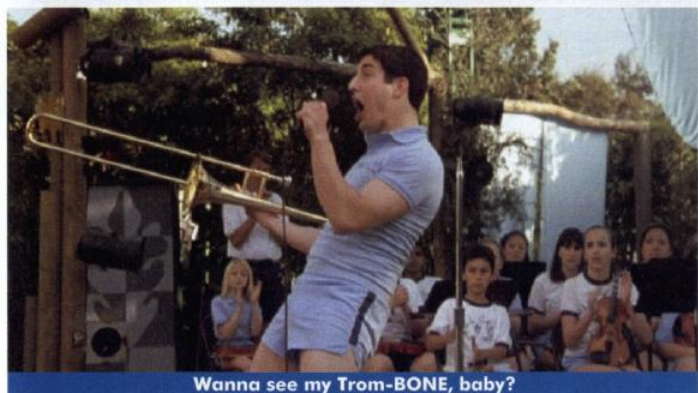
MOVIE: 6/10 **EXTRA:** 9/10



Stop monkeying around.



We lost the humans, sir. But we found some bananas!



Wanna see my Trom-BONE, baby?

American Pie 2

UNIVERSAL, MA15+

If you thought the man-chowder drinking scene in *American Pie* didn't break the boundaries of teen grossness, then *American Pie 2*'s golden shower scene where Seann William Scott proclaims that he can 'taste the bubbles' (he thought it was champagne) is the funniest scene in living memory. Or it could be the lesbian chicks getting three of the leading lads to grope each others' bottoms and kiss open-mouthed in return for

some girl-on-girl action.

American Pie 2 is, surprisingly, a very worthy successor to the original. There are many unbearably funny moments, particularly in this 'unrated' version which contains a few extra snippets of footage that makes the jokes all the more disgusting, but at the same time priceless. *American Pie 2* takes place one year after the original where the gang get back together for their first end-of-year party. Relationships have changed, but they all remain sexual deviants in one way or another.

Comes with behind-the-scenes featurettes, outtakes and deleted scenes, screen tests from the original film, and commentary from the cast and crew.



Not too much acting involved here.

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

Kiss of the Dragon

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, MA15+

Ey rights, after *Romeo Must Die* and passing up plum roles in *Crouching Tiger* and *The Matrix Reloaded*, Jet Li should've well and truly settled into carrying entire films on his shoulders. He seems much more relaxed in *Kiss of the Dragon*, his dialogue more fluid, and his acting a little more natural and believable. Well, at least as compared to *The One*.

In *Kiss of the Dragon*, Li plays a Chinese secret agent who is double-crossed by his French counterpart, and is left to fend for himself in Paris after being framed for a high profile assassination. Bridget Fonda, an American prostitute with a heart of gold, helps out our stranded martial arts master as they work together to bring down the corrupt



Pyjamas just don't frighten me.

cop at the centre of all the trouble. Oh, and there's a small novelty to the otherwise brilliant fight scenes: Li's character is a master of acupuncture. Needless to say, rubbish story, decent action.

Comes with great commentary from the cast and crew, plus some interesting featurettes on martial arts choreography.



MOVIE: 6/10 **EXTRA:** 7/10



Knock knock. Who's there?

Jurassic Park III

UNIVERSAL, M15+

Jurassic Park used to be a name that was revered in the film industry. It was a memorable tale that drilled home the message that dinosaurs were once living, breathing creatures that roamed the earth, with groundbreaking CG effects that made you really believe you were looking at dinosaurs.

Now, it's a cheap and nasty B-grade suspense-thriller. For *Jurassic Park III*, the makers somehow rounded up well-known actors like Sam Neill, William H. Macy and Tea Leoni, and put them in a ridiculous rescue tale that serves no other purpose than to keep the franchise alive. Macy and Leoni are basically a couple of parents who dupe Neill on to the dino-infested island to rescue their son.

By rights they should've all been eaten for sheer stupidity, but instead they live to discover that the velociraptors have learned to



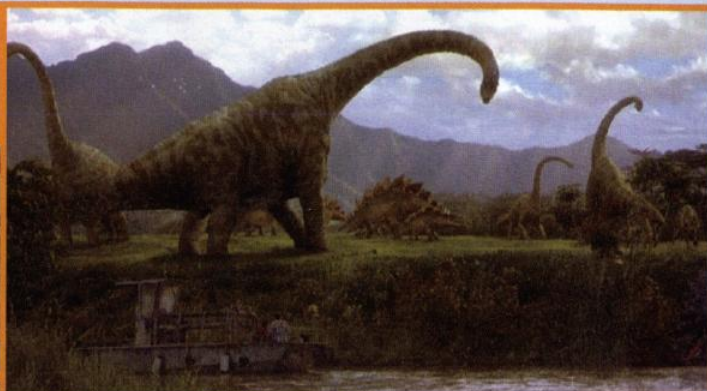
"Ansett is back in the air!"



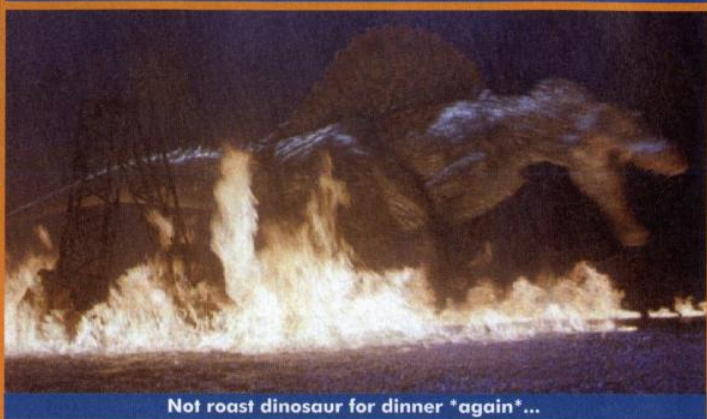
A dino crisis if ever there was one.

communicate, and that pterodactyls have broken out of that cage. And that can only mean one thing: they'll be back for *Jurassic Park IV*.

MOVIE: 5/10 **EXTRA:** 7/10



The dinosaur with the crazy neck.



Not roast dinosaur for dinner *again*...

A Knight's Tale

COLUMBIA TRISTAR, M15+

Hipping at the heels of Russell Crowe, Australia's 'other' poster boy favourite, Heath Ledger, stars in this medieval tale about a peasant squire who passes himself off as a nobleman, and wins the heart of the people through England's extremist sport of jousting. It's a clash of old-fashioned values against modern sensibilities, sermonising the message that nobility is a virtue and not a birthright; that women are the equal of men; and that we can change our fates if we try.

It's quite a ridiculous story. The opening few minutes, for instance, depicts a jousting competition against a backdrop of several hundred extras pounding their fists and feet against the wooden floorboards to the beat of Robbie Williams' rendition of We Will Rock

You. Absurd? Yes. But it's a load of good tongue-in-cheek fun. He enlists the help of Geoffrey Chaucer (depicted as a naked gambling bum in this film), who forges official documents in exchange for some food, clothing and good company.

Ledger is animated and charismatic throughout, bringing out both the funny and serious sides of the story. The antagonist, played by the ever intense-looking Rufus Sewell, is a jousting bad-boy who personifies all the 'old values' that Ledger stands against — such as treating women and horses as chattels. They're also competing for the affections of a fair maiden of the church, who for some reason looks more Mediterranean than English (but we'll let that slide).

The DVD comes stocked with an excellent range of extra features.



Help! I can't breathe in this thing!

There's audio commentary, behind-the-scenes featurettes, interviews with the cast and crew, and several deleted scenes that probably wouldn't have fit in with the movie's themes.

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



Have at you with a big pointy stick!



Just point my horse in the right direction and I'll be fine...

ANIME

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Crest of the Stars

CATEGORY: SCI-FI
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: BANDAI VISUAL

There are a lot of things that are wrong with the concept and design of *Crest of the Stars*. That the 'universe' this story takes place in is like *Dungeons & Dragons*, except in space, is just a bit much. There are hapless humans, arrogant galaxy-conquering elves (for whom the creators have even dreamt up their own language), and an interstellar war about to break out between all the humanoid factions.

INVADING ALIENS

However, *Crest of the Stars* is a series that grows on you within two episodes through its compelling story and direction. Based on an original manga by Hiroyuki Morioka, *Crest of the Stars* follows the story of Jinto Lin, a prince regent whose father sold out



his entire planet to the invading alien forces of Abh (the elves). With the Abh now the rulers of his planet, he is forced to keep his title a secret from friends for fear of retribution; but if he is to succeed his father, he must serve in the Abh military.

Jinto is teamed up with Lafiel, whom we later discover to be an Abh princess serving her mandatory military service. The two are forced to flee their mother ship when a war is declared, and they must rely on each other to survive.

Crest of the Stars is as much a sci-fi adventure as it is a character-driven cultural journey, with a hint of *Romeo & Juliet*. Thus far it's turning out to be a very good series, and shouldn't disappoint.



Cue John Williams music.

ANIMATION: 7/10 **PLOT:** 9/10 **OVERALL:** 9/10

Gatchaman Collection

CATEGORY: SCI-FI, ACTION
 PRODUCTION COMPANY: TATSUNOKO PRODUCTION COMPANY

Toriginally released in 1994, this three episode OAV marked the twenty second year since the release of the original *Gatchaman*, also known as *G-Force* and *Battle of the Planets* to the West. There wasn't much to this release, save a fully revamped and updated art style to show off the team of scientific ninjas in a newer, stylised fashion to bring them back to their former glory.

MOMENTS OF NUDITY

If it's art you're looking for, the new *Gatchaman* OAV will impress. All the characters of old look tougher, edgy and grittier; their costumes more futuristic, but at the same time retaining that all-important theme of resembling a bird. Their Phoenix ship, though, has undergone a complete overhaul and looks nothing like the old versions. The evil Galactor leader is even more androgynous than before (as if that were possible),

and being that we live in more liberated times, there are some brief moments of nudity involving the female lead (as if we need that).

The story on its own is fairly slow and predictable by today's standards — the Galactor Empire is renewing its efforts to subjugate human civilisation with its massive alien army, and it's up to our heroes to fight giant robot dragons, travel to undersea bases, and take on entire armies by themselves. There's some minor character development in the form of characters behaving like martyrs, and others seeking unanswered questions about their past and their families — ultimately none of us should really care for any of it. After all, we're just here to see a bunch of fancy ninjas kick some arse; and unfortunately, there isn't really enough of that to come away fully satisfied.



It's coming right for us!



How are you gentlemen!

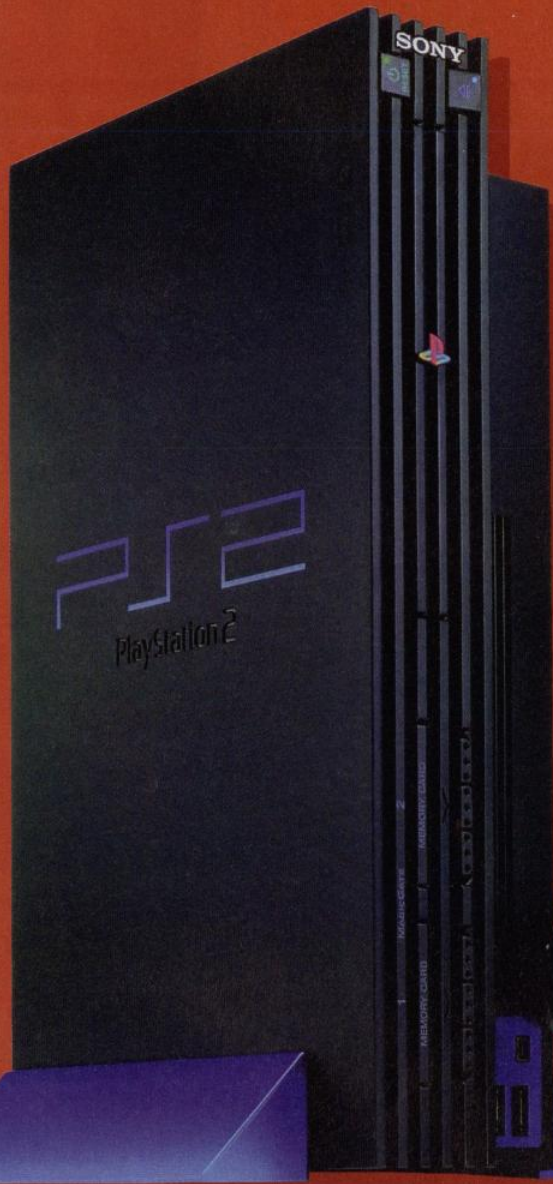
ANIMATION: 8/10 **PLOT:** 6/10 **OVERALL:** 7/10



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» HYPER 89

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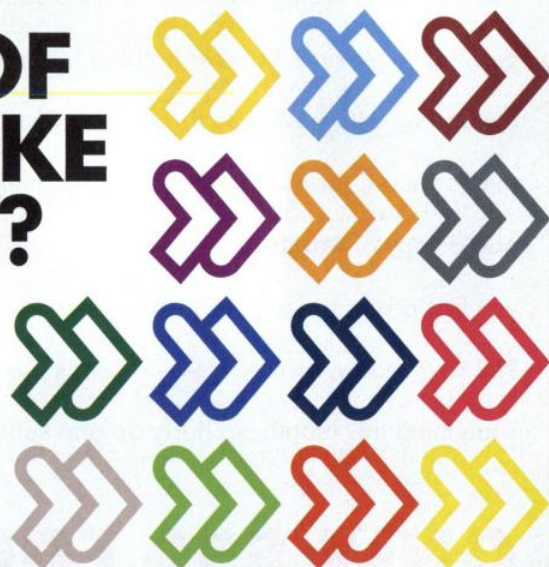
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FORUM

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

Q. WHICH SECTION OF HYPER DO YOU DISLIKE THE MOST AND WHY?

Now we know that this is probably the toughest Hyper Forum question yet – seeing as the entirety of our gaming bible rocks – but it looks like some of you have some kind of criticism of what we do. How dare you! No, really, it's nice to get honest feedback from our readers. Otherwise, we wouldn't be so goddamn great every month! But is our Music section really that bad? It's better than 2 pages of ads, right?



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...

❓ "If the consoles were celebrities, who would they be and why?"

Responses will be printed in Hyper 104.

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.

ANIME AHOY!

Dear Hyper,
Now Instead of bitchin' and moaning about the absence of the cover disc and that goopy stuff which people seem to have a scary fascination with, I'm simply going to say the word – Anime. But don't get me wrong, it's not because I watched Pearl Harbor or anything like that. Rather, my main gripe with this section is that only one measly page is dedicated to this wonderful pastime. Surely there are more than two worthwhile titles released locally every month?!

Also I have only recently found an appreciation for this intellectual stimulant but firmly believe it contains some of the most entertaining and thought provoking material ever made. However info on this medium seems hard to come by, which leaves me wondering why the excellent Hyperactive.com has never kept a back catalogue of all the best Anime titles available for uninitiated fools like myself. I think your website would greatly benefit from such a diverse subdivision, even if the reviews were taken straight from print. And if you're skeptical about the level of interest in Anime why not run a net poll and let the readers decide?

Paul Simao
p_simao@hotmail.com

MORE ANIME?

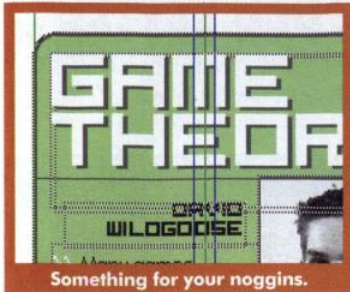
Dear Hyper,
Great mag, all sections of the magazine are great except for one that I say is pretty useless for a gaming magazine. It's the music section that should be taken off and be replaced by more reviews of Anime.
Kim Nguyen
Kiiiiimakazi@hotmail.com

MORE THAN JUST A THEORY

I think that more thought should go into asking more useful and imaginative forum questions. That is Number 1 definitely. Secondly, the section on Game Theory is a really great idea. It should take up at least a page or double page in my opinion, and be more in-depth. This is very important because this would really make your magazine even more unique. I think that most people that buy Hyper are more



We never knew Anime was so popular with you guys and gals...



Something for your nogginns.

than casual gamers otherwise they wouldn't be concerned about keeping up to date with anything. Hyper Game Theory rules!
Tommy Filippopoulos
Lazy211@hotmail.com

WEBSITE WOES

There is nothing I can find that is bad about Hyper magazine. BUT (don't think you're getting away with it), the website that goes by the same name is a disappointment. I mean, the below feeble cheats section has less cheats in it than there are condom machines in the Vatican. Then there are the dismal sections for each of the systems. What I'm saying is, maybe you should do a little bit of work on it. Oh, and what about when you changed the site between issues, so that I was left stranded trying to find the site to see if you'd done anything with it since I was last there. It caused much chaos as I yelled at the "PIECE OF S%#T COMPUTER" because "I COULD LOAD A F%#KING PANZER TANK INTO A MATCHBOX FASTER THAN IT CAN LOAD A SINGLE F%#KING WEBSITE!!! AAAAAARRRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHH HHHHH!!!!!!!"

Tinman
Nevershakeaniguana@hotmail.com

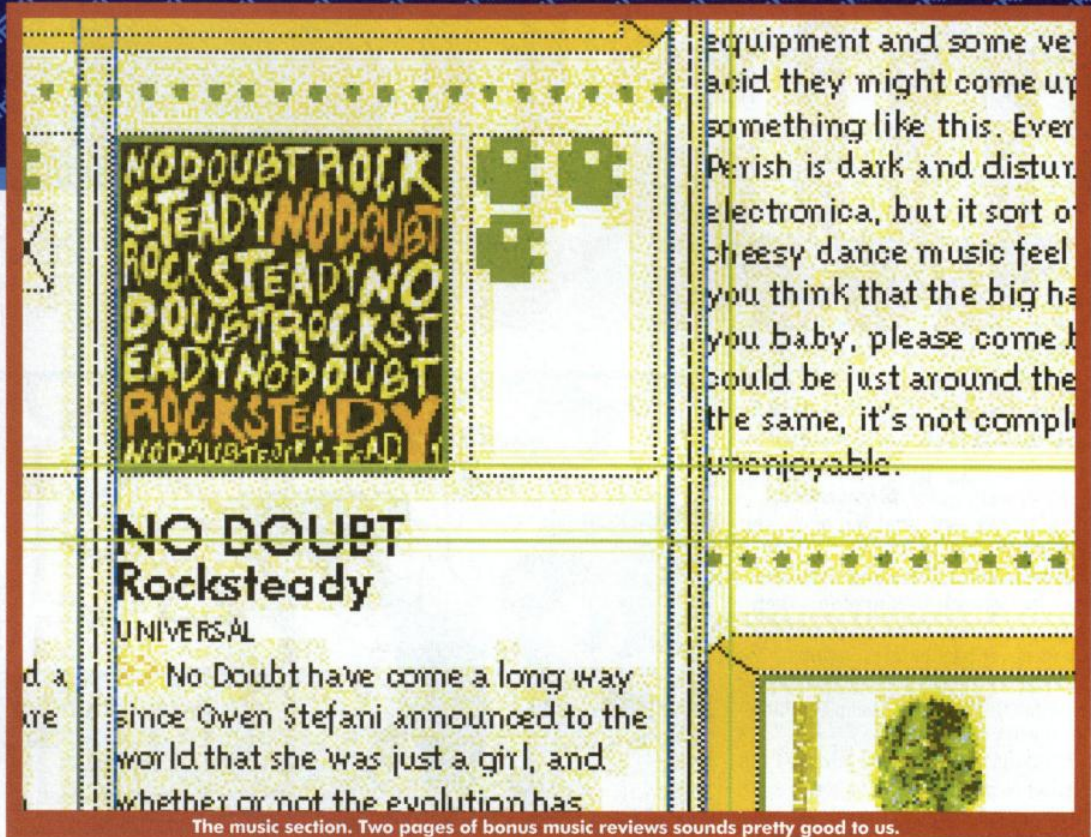
JUST DITCH IT

The rationale for including a Music Review section is tenuous at best. Yes, I know that games include soundtracks, but using the same logic, let's have a recipe column because all gamers eat! Ditch it, guys.

Alan Smith
E-mail address withheld

MUSIC IS CRAP

I hate the Music section. Not the concept of it, but the fact that nearly all the music reviewed is crap. I mean, the majority of the bands I have not even heard of, and have



The music section. Two pages of bonus music reviews sounds pretty good to us.

trouble understanding how these bands are supposedly popular and achieve high rotation on the airwaves.

Music tastes are more acute than most forms of entertainment, but that should not preclude Hyper from reviewing all styles, including pop. Something like Kylie's recent album - clearly one of the most anticipated albums of last year, and personally, her second best ever (after Rhythm Of Love) - was ignored. And what about the track selection on Madonna's recent "best of" album (too short, and missing Nothing Really Matters), and so too, god forbid, on Steps' Gold compilation? Sure, their cheesy name and style cringes badly, but facts are, they have produced some great pop songs in the past and this album could be one of the quintessential albums of all time. I'd like to know!

So what is the purpose of the section? To provide a review of current mainstream music releases or maybe just the Hyper crew's favoured latest releases? If you had that attitude to games, we'd get nothing but feature reviews of each Quake point-release patch. If none of the Hyper crew wish to subject themselves to a form of music that does not suit their tastes, then get some contributors that have those tastes. Otherwise, the section is waste.

The Warrior
Warrior@alphalink.com.au

CAPTIONING

Captions. There is nothing wrong with the captions themselves; there

just should be more of them. So every screenshot has a caption. Other than that though, everything seems to be in order. So I may as well take the opportunity to say, "you need more goo!"

Gary Walker
old_fartz@hotmail.com

AUSTRALIA'S BEST GAMING MAG

Although Hyper gets better with each issue, and the new look is great, there is one section I don't particularly like. The music section.

This simply has no purpose in Australia's Best Gaming Mag. It is impossible to cover all tastes in music (me being prone to the lure of Metallica...) in 2 pages. I propose that you remove this section and instead put a mini 'What we're listening to' section with the 'What we're playing' section. I feel this would be enough to inform readers of your latest music preferences.

I'd like to see the two pages spared from the music section go to more letters and news...

Keep up the good work.
Seele
seele_j3_2k@hotmail.com

GEEZ. THERE'S MORE...

I personally think that practically the whole Hyper magazine is pretty cool, except for the Music review section. The music Hyper review just isn't my type. Now I'm not saying I am one of those pop music fans who listen to crappy groups like NSync

equipment and some very acid they might come up something like this. Ever Perish is dark and disturbing electronica, but it sort of cheesy dance music feel you think that the big ha you baby, please come b could be just around the the same, it's not compl unenjoyable.

or the Backstreet Boys. Nor female singers like Christina Aguilera (sorry if it was spelt incorrectly) or Britney Spears. So I'm just saying that other people might like the music review section, but basically this music isn't my type.

Beef Sandwich
henry_chickenfeed@hotmail.com

DO NOT BEND

Well this isn't exactly 'in' the mag but all subscribers know about this. The "PLEASE DO NOT BEND" written on the cover sheet is obviously not big and flashy enough because month after month my Hyper is folded in half and rammed into the mailbox resulting in a crease down the middle and the back cover usually gets ripped.

I think the only way this could be solved is if my Hyper shouts out "warning! warning!" every time it senses some foldage approaching or if you make the cover out of some unbendable magical alloy.

Seriously, I looked through the mag and couldn't really find anything that made me go 'bleargh!' I guess the only thing I can think of is that there doesn't seem to be any competition in the Hyper Forum. Maybe you could have an 'Opinion of the Month' where they win a free game or something like that.

Keep up the good work.
Steve Milich
milich@picknowl.com.au

MAIL

✉ HYPER LETTERS:

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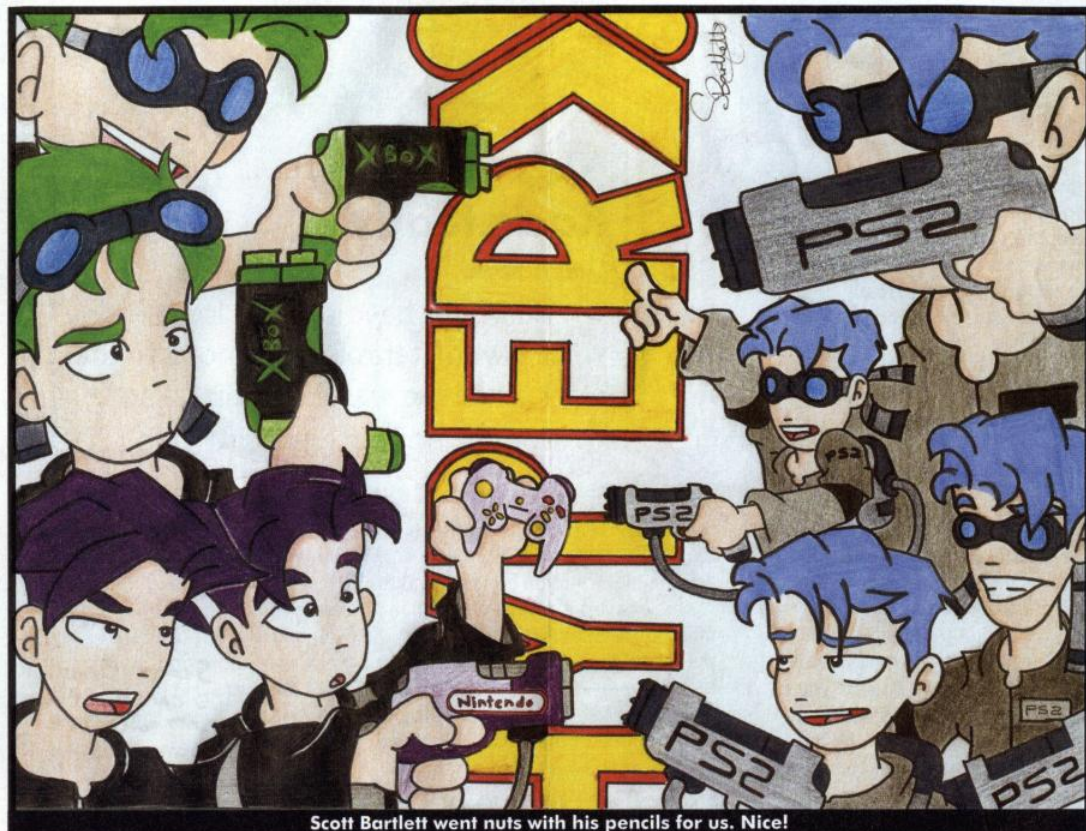
DA FUNK SOUL BROTHER

About three weeks ago, I was standing with a group of friends at school, waiting for our teacher to turn up. We were chatting about the latest consoles, and as usual there were two sides, Sony and Nintendo (me being loyal to Nintendo). Then all of a sudden, I had a thought that I had never had before... FUNK LOYALTY!

What the hell had I been thinking all these years? I was so emphatuated with Nintendo that I had only played a Sony once or twice in my lifetime. I'd missed out on all the greats - e.g. Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy, WipeOut, Tomb Raider, etc.

And now that I look back I'm not happy with my decision to go 64. All the games are childish and the graphics are cartoony, plus the fact that I haven't played my 64 for three months, makes me think that a PlayStation may have been a better choice.

So, for all of you gamers who only use one console due to loyalty, DON'T. Test other platforms, and



Scott Bartlett went nuts with his pencils for us. Nice!

CAPTION THIS!

PART 27 WINNER

Our winning caption comes from David Willett of Shellharbour in NSW. Very cute, David.



"We'll have that loose tooth out in no time!"

then you can decide which is best.
Interactive_sponge
the-portion@hotmail.com

*Dear Interactive Sponge,
Look on the bright side... you can buy a PSone real cheap and get all those old classics even cheaper. Hell, we still get the old SNES out every now and again. Good games never die.*

THE GAME: THE MOVIE

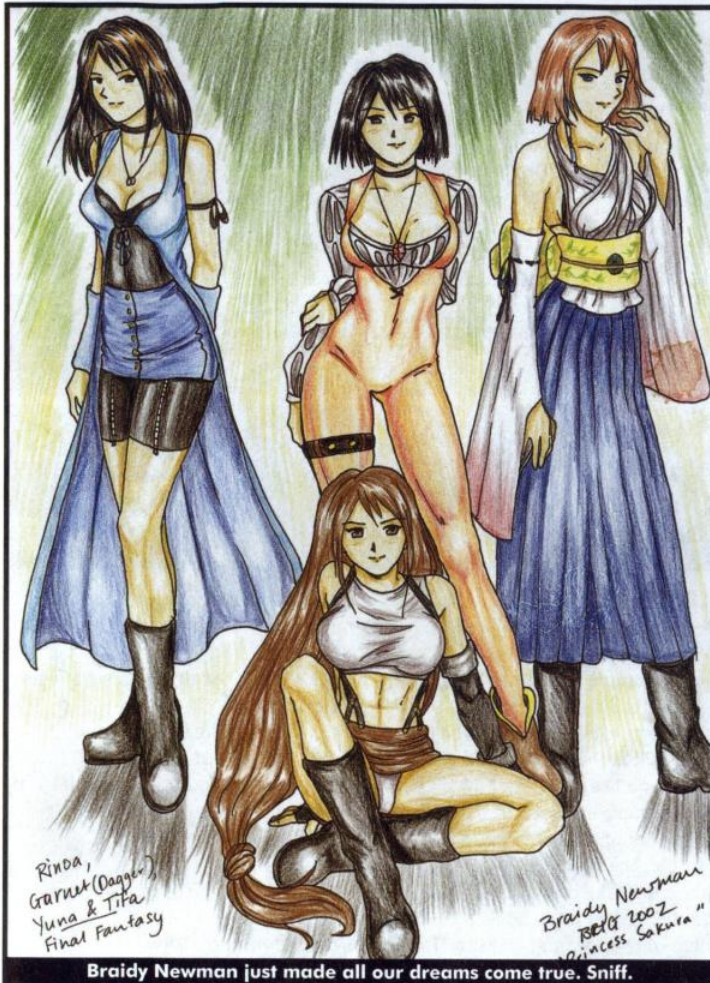
Dear Hyper,

First, great magazine, you are the best since NMS (not that I'm a Nintendo freak who hates all other gaming machines). Second, my message. They've done it to Mario Brothers, they've done it with Tomb Raider and, to some extent, Final Fantasy. I'm talking about movies. The three aforementioned games all have movie counterparts (I use this term loosely for *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* as it was not like the FF games (NO CHOCOBOS, AND IT WAS ON EARTH)). If they could make movies of these epic games, why not with others? Namely: Homeworld,

Mechwarrior, Homeworld Cataclysm and Perfect Dark. These are incredible games and deserve to be put on the silver screen. Of course, sideplots and characters will be needed for the Homeworld games. Here are my reasons. Homeworld: the first real-time strategy game in 3 dimensions. Cataclysm: Homeworld's sequel. Perfect Dark: only one or two flaws and these were swallowed up in the good points of the game. Last but not least, Mechwarrior: also known as Battletech. This series of 100-ton robot destruction came from the Battletech books and card game and I believe that it deserves a movie. This is the 3rd e-mail I have sent you, print it ASAP, or all of the Hyper staff will slowly begin to turn up dead with severe burn marks to the back of the head.

Goodbye,
Anthony Wilson
E-mail address withheld

*Dear Anthony,
What makes a good game doesn't necessarily make a good movie. Just look at Street Fighter. Or Mario Bros.*



Braidy Newman just made all our dreams come true. Sniff.

Actually, game to movie ideas are usually tragic no matter who is involved. The next cab off the rank looks set to be Resident Evil, and we're hoping it's somewhat better than Tomb Raider...

GRRRRRL

Hey guys!

I'm a 15 year-old gal who loves your mag. I've been a fan from issue #87. I know... I know I'm just a newcomer but when you've read each issue at least 10,000 times each...well you get the message!

Anyway I was reading issue #100 and I was somewhat discouraged to find that there were about 2 female workers at Hyper. Now I'm no feminist chick, it's just that it kinda put a damper on my "dreams" of working at Hyper or any other mag where you get to be the first to preview games not even released yet and then get to tell the country what it was like! I mean cool! You guys must love your jobs. I know there is a lot more to your jobs than that (which is why your mag is so cool)

but the point is my dream job is a little harder to get than I had first anticipated. And don't say that I'll change my mind about my dream job because I'm not someone who has impulses about these things. I mean, I'm a 15 year-old girl who loves Final Fantasy and The Sims and loves reading about games for consoles I haven't even got.

I have a single question... what do I have to do to qualify for a job like yours?

Faithful reader,

Katherine

Kevil666@hotmail.com

Dear Katherine,
The industry we are in generally employs people based upon experience in the chosen field - whether it be as a writer or designer. If you're interested in being a games journalist, then start working on your writing, start developing your own style, and keep on reading magazines to get an idea of how features and reviews are structured. If you're good enough, you can start getting work as a freelance writer on a local paper or for websites

NARROW-MINDED

Dear Hyper Crew,

Throughout the years I have heard so much pissing and moaning about the issue of Nintendo making kids only consoles, and I thought it high time I put my two cents worth into the matter. I enjoy playing both Sony and Nintendo consoles and would buy an Xbox if I had the dosh. Firstly the fact that Resident Evil is now a Nintendo only franchise seriously weakens the argument that it is a kids company. Nextly (if "nextly" is a word), the unavoidable fact is that young kids play video games, and that Nintendo is smart enough to cater for them, the others rarely are. The PS2 and Xbox are aiming for the mass market: male teenagers and twenty-somethings and in doing so use every trick in the book to ensnare us (myself included). Flashy ads and so-called "mature gaming" are but a few. Sony and Microsoft have their classics and cater for many genres that Nintendo doesn't, but in many cases, all that results is a lackluster title wrapped in sugar coated "mature coolness" (SSX Tricky anyone?). But Nintendo has managed to create games that can (and should) be enjoyed by all ages. I am 16 and enjoy explosions and gunfights as much as the next man, but have yet to play a "Mature" game (bar Metal Gear Solid 1 & 2) that can compete with the "childish" gameplay offered in the past two Zelda outings and Mario 64 (I haven't played Halo!). They are classic games that hold more appeal than Lara's boobs. Nintendo does not necessarily aim their market at kids they just enable kids, as well as everyone else to experience their games, and by doing so create huge sales of these games; evidence enough that Nintendo caters for everyone (except for driving and fighting fans). So stop complaining and play the games you want to play, but don't badmouth other games that you may just be too narrow-minded to appreciate.

Max

maxc59@hotmail.com

Dear Max,
Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto recently hinted that Nintendo are going to focus on making more games, and have them come out more often, but that as a result the games will be shorter and easier. It's an interesting new approach. Would you prefer your GameCube to have less games, but have the gameplay last longer, or have more games but have them easier to finish? Maybe we need to ask the forum this sometime soon...



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and start to build up a resume which will help you to get better jobs. Eventually you may have the experience to qualify for a bigger, better job on a magazine like ours. Whilst going to university is certainly helpful, a talented enough writer will be able to get work through raw talent alone. Good luck!

TASTELESS?

To the Editor

As a long time Hyper reader (I still have issue 1 stashed away) I know that the vast majority of what you guys produce is great. Objective reviews, interesting articles and funny comments make your mag one of the best video game mags I've read.

However occasionally I'm annoyed at the sometimes crude comments

made. I think it annoys me more, as your humour is usually genuinely clever and I don't think you have to resort to undergrad humour. After receiving issue 100, before even reading it, I immediately renewed my subscription. However after a few minutes of reading, I started to rethink my subscription; the blasphemy in the Editor's comments, the callous comment about John Newman (guys, that was a man violently murdered and you come out with, "At least we got some publicity before he went"). These things tend to blemish your otherwise fine mag.

Cheers,

Matt

Matthew.Grocott@dva.gov.au

Dear Matt,
Sometimes we like to see how far we

MAIL

can push it with our humour. In some cases, I must admit we stray into tastelessness. At least in Hyper there's no corporate Nazi editing what you read, eh?

SPRING CLEANING

Dear Gaming Gurus,

Congrats on a fantastic 100th issue and the astounding poster with all of the issue covers. I actually remember the first issue and just the other day when spring cleaning I found a copy of HYPER 18 and a copy of MEGAZONE. I've been subscribing for a while and love the Reverse Engineering and Anime sections (and of course the bit about the games).

Anyway, this letter is mainly for "Louman" issue 100. I agree with you on the subject of 2D fighters, there are hardcore 2D freaks out there but we are few and far between. A good 2D fighter is a rush to play and an almighty

achievement to play well. CAPCOM rocks and I'm looking forward to my first bout of CAPCOM Vs SNK 2.

Before I go I'd like to thank the HYPER team for putting me onto FF ANTHOLOGY. I imported it and also FF TACTICS. I urge any RPG nut to get a copy of FF TACTICS as it's the purest example of gameplay I've seen in ages. Oh and ANTHOLOGY is still better than 80% of RPGs out there now.

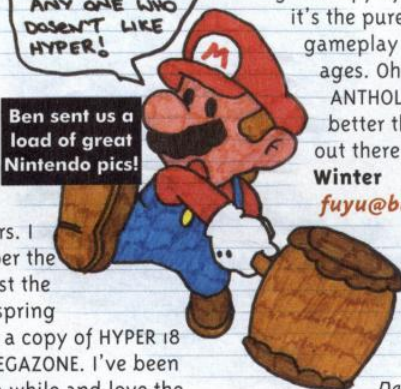
Winter
fuyu@bigpond.com.au

P.S. Bring back the goopy stuff as my girlfriend hates it.

Dear Winter,
Sony have released the SNES classic, Final Fantasy VI, for the PSone (compatible with PS2) at a low price - only \$29.95. How awesome is that? For a while there it looked like Anthology would be released locally, but it seemed there were problems in the PAL conversion. At least we get FFWII! Unfortunately, the goopy stuff has been entirely consumed by us.

I'LL DEAL WITH ANY ONE WHO DOESN'T LIKE HYPER!

Ben sent us a load of great Nintendo pics!



Sheamus Duggan revives Alex Kidd. Cool.

XBOX ROX

Hey Hyper

I am e-mailing because I'm sick of people putting down the Xbox. In Hyper (ala picture of burning Xbox) and on the internet. Most of the reasons that they bag it is because they don't like Bill Gates. I mean, not many people like him but that's not a good enough reason to insult a console. The system looks awesome - take a look at Hyper's Top 10 Most Wanted games list in issue 100. Half of them were appearing on Xbox! Think about it - Jet Set Radio Future, Dead or Alive 3 and Halo are all exclusive Xbox titles and they are going to rock!

I say, don't talk crap about it before you've tried it first.

Cya from Some Random Guy
Outfishin@bigpond.com

Dear Some Random Guy,
Once people start playing Xbox games they'll realise it has just as much worth as the PS2 or GameCube. Just take a look at some of the scores for the launch games this issue. Everyone would have to agree it's a strong launch.

7 QUESTIONS

Dear Hyper,

I have a few questions:

1. Who at Hyper is the best at Counter-Strike? I think Eliot because he is Editor and he has power.
2. Is Hillous Lesslie male or female? I just don't know.
3. Do you think that console shooters are awkward to play?
4. I really hate the way broadband internet is going, it is expensive and out of reach for many people, I was wondering what you think?

5. Is Unreal Championship coming out for any other console than the Xbox?

6. What is the difference between PC and Mac?

7. Can you pretty please with sugar on top put the cover CD back on? Not only would it help sales it'd give Bryce something to do.

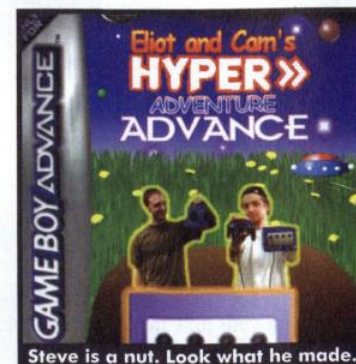
Thanks for your time,

Polarbaer

Polarbaer007@hotmail.com

Dear Polarbaer,

1. Yes, I am. But that's because I'm the only one of us who plays it!
2. Next time (s)he comes in, I'll look.
3. They are awkward at first, but after a bit of play you can get used to it. Though not all console shooters have good controller set-ups...
4. Australia is the arse-end of the world for broadband. You can thank Telstra for how bad it is, both in performance and pricing.
5. UC is exclusive to Xbox.
6. The operating systems primarily, but this is too complex to go into here. You'll find more info online.
7. But if Bryce did the CD, you'd get nothing but endless Tekken mpegs.



Steve is a nut. Look what he made.

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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 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	Gran Turismo 3	Racing
2	▼	Max Payne	Action
3	◆	Cricket 2002	Sports
4	▲	Jak & Daxter Precursor Lgcy	Adventure
5	⊕	Sunny Garcia Surfing	Sports
6	▼	Dropship - United Peace	Simulator
7	⊕	James Bond Agnt Undr Fire	Action
8	▼	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Sports
9	⊕	Monsters Inc	Adventure
10	▼	Devil May Cry	Action

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Harry Potter	Adventure
2	◆	Monsters Inc	Adventure
3	◆	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Sports
4	◆	Who Wants To Be A Millnre?	Family
5	◆	Syphon Filter 3	Adventure
6	⊕	Breath Of Fire 4	PG
7	⊕	20 Games Pack	Compilation
8	▼	FIFA 2002	Sports
9	▼	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
10	▼	Digimon	RPG

TOP 10

Game Boy Games Over \$40

W/E 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Harry Potter	Adventure
2	◆	Pokemon Crystal	RPG
3	◆	Monsters Inc	Adventure
4	▲	Pokemon Gold	RPG
5	▼	Pokemon Silver	RPG
6	▲	Pokemon Yellow	RPG
7	◆	Zelda: Oracle Of Ages	RPG
8	▼	Zelda: Oracle Of Seasons	RPG
9	⊕	Shrek FairyTale Freak Down	Action
10	⊕	Mario Tennis	Sports

TOP 10

N64 Games Over \$40

W/E 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
2	◆	Conker's Bad Fur Day	Adventure
3	◆	Pokemon Snap	Family
4	▲	Donkey Kong 6	Adventure
5	▼	Zelda: Majora's Mask	RPG
6	▼	Perfect Dark	Action
7	◆	Banjo Tooie	Adventure
8	▲	Star Wars Battle For Naboo	Action
9	▼	Pokemon Stadium	Action
10	⊕	Pokemon Puzzle League	Family

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$30

W/E 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Medal Of Honor Allied Asslt	Action
2	◆	Harry Potter	Adventure
3	▼	The Sims Hot Date	Strategy
4	▼	The Sims	Strategy
5	⊕	Sid Meier's Sim Golf	Sports
6	▼	Empire Earth	Strategy
7	▼	Return To Castle Wolfenstrn	Action
8	⊕	Civilization 3	Strategy
9	▼	The Sims Collectors Edition	Strategy
10	▼	Diablo II: Lord Of Destructn	RPG

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	Monsters Inc	Adventure
2	▼	Mario Kart Super Circuit	Racing
3	▲	Harry Potter	Adventure
4	▼	Super Mario Advance	Adventure
5	◆	Spyro Season Of Ice	Adventure
6	◆	Wario Land 4	Action
7	▲	Golden Sun	RPG
8	◆	Advance Wars	Strategy
9	▼	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
10	⊕	Rugrats Castle Capers	Adventure

TOP 10

All Full Priced Games

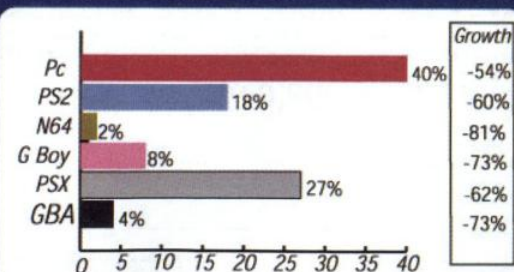
W/E 3 Feb 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Medal Of Honor Allied Asslt	PC/MAC
2	▲	Gran Turismo 3	PlayStation 2
3	▼	Harry Potter	PlayStation
4	▼	Max Payne	PlayStation 2
5	◆	Monsters Inc	PlayStation
6	▲	Harry Potter	PC/MAC
7	◆	Harry Potter	Game Boy
8	▼	The Sims Hot Date	PC/MAC
9	▼	Cricket 2002	PlayStation 2
10	◆	The Sims	PC/MAC

MARKET WATCH

All Games by Platform

Jan Vs Dec 2002
RETAIL SALES



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

inform

Charts can be viewed at www.informbd.com.au as part of Inform's comprehensive database of online market intelligence, updated weekly



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Next Issue:

DUNGEON SIEGE

We go exploring the long-lost tombs of RPG escapism with Chris Taylor of Gas Powered Games.

PLUS MORE XBOX REVIEWS

Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee, Genma Onimusha, Jet Set Radio Future and more...



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