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AUGUST 2002

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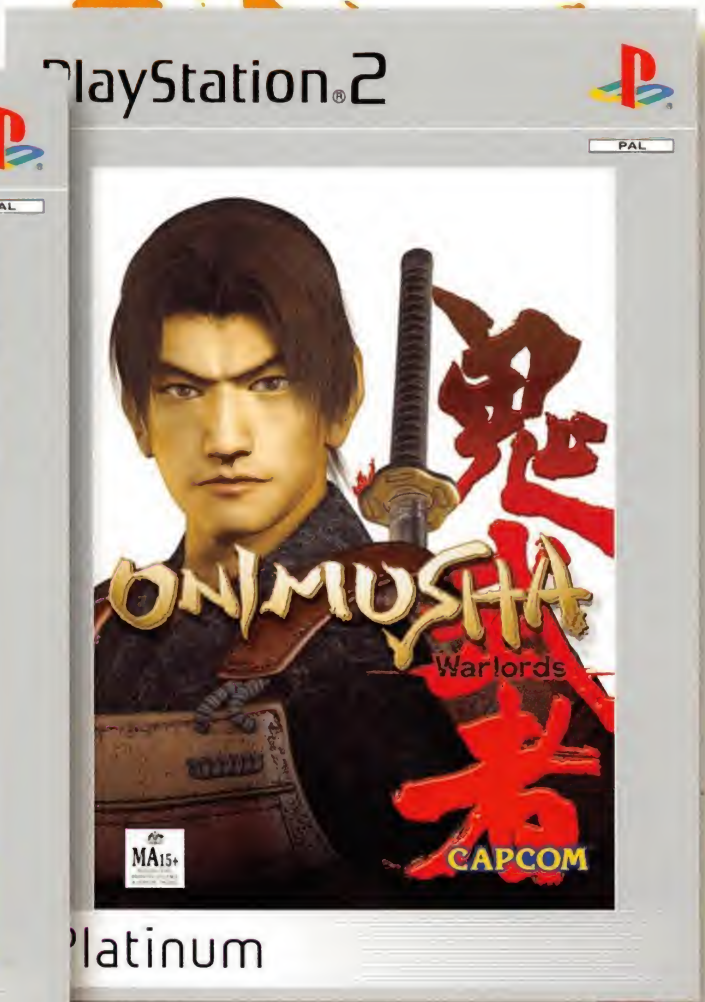
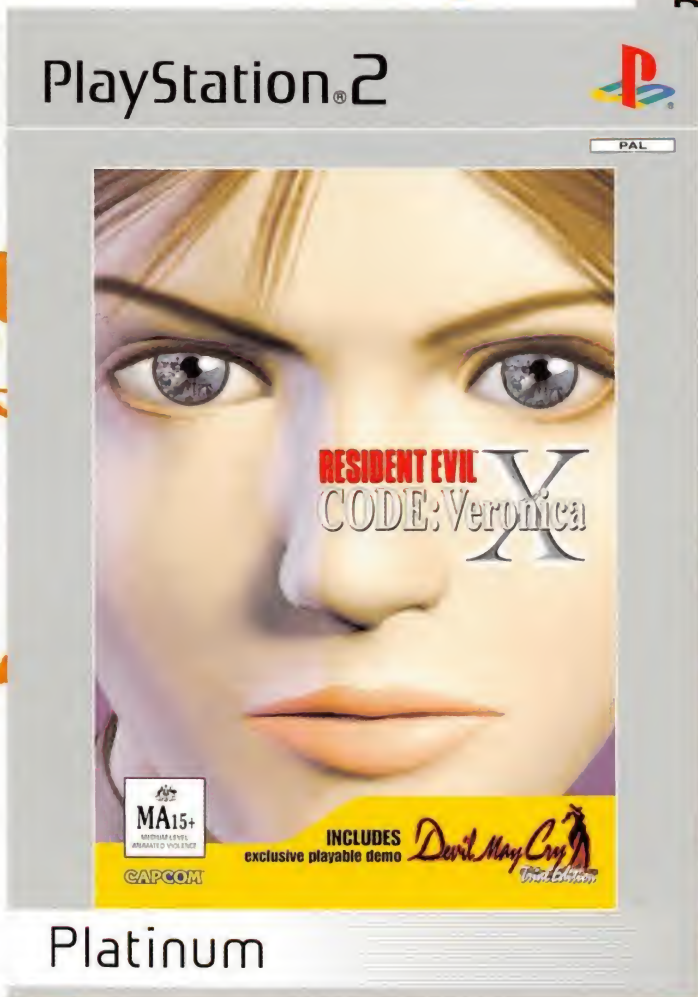
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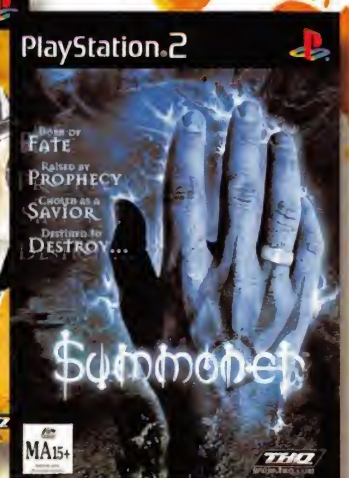
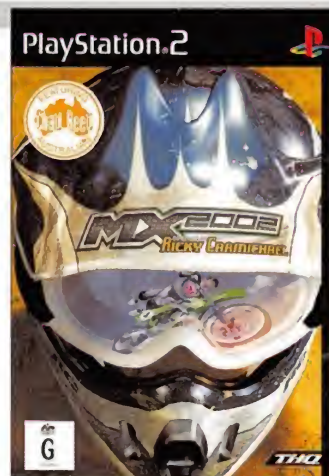
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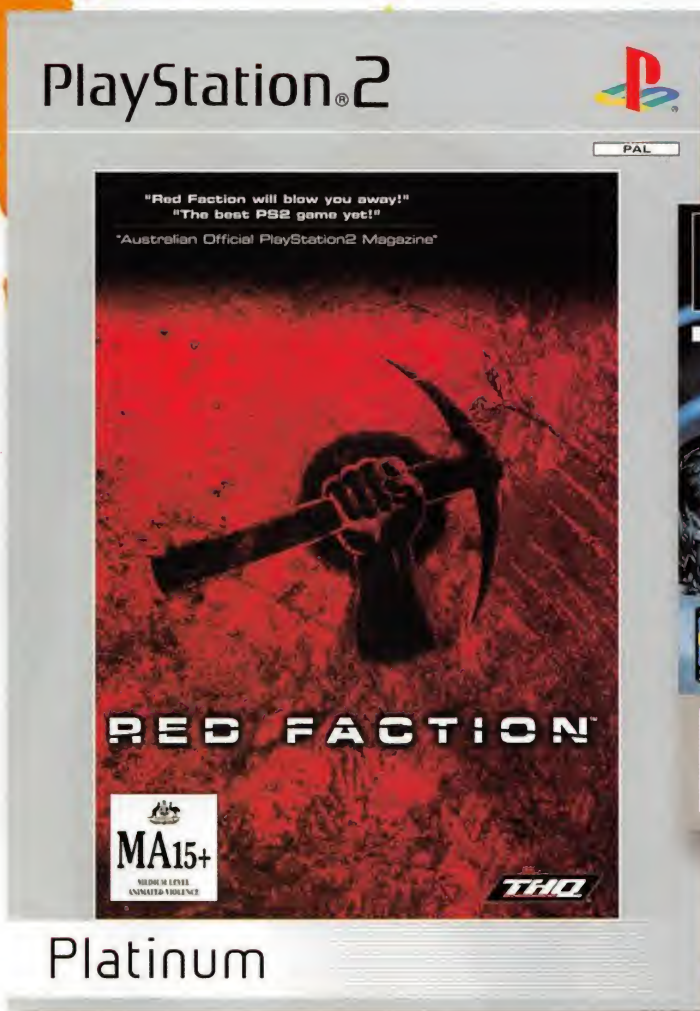


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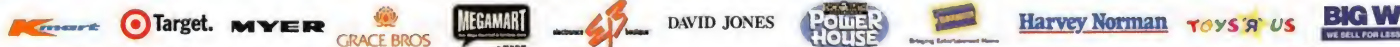
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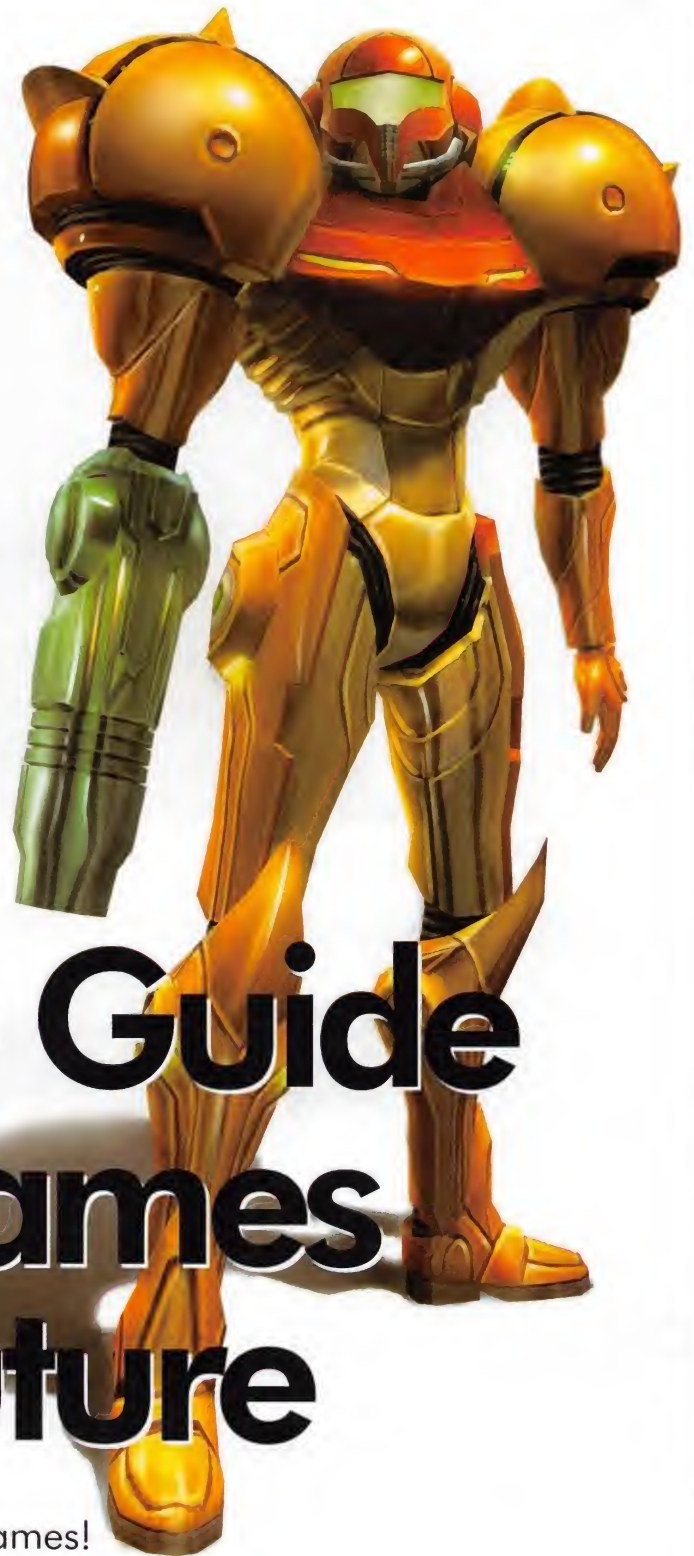


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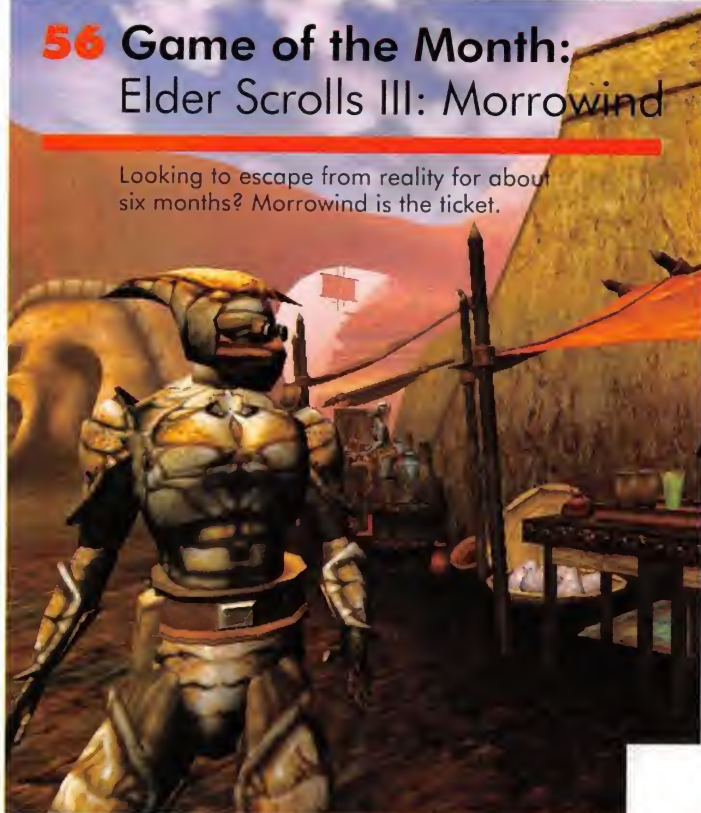
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HYPER»



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* This pic was kindly done for Mr. Fish in the style of Warcraft III by the sharpbrothers at sharpbrothers.com

EDITORIAL

» Well, we're a little over half way through 2002 now, and I think we're beginning to see the new systems really start to blossom. The next few years are going to be truly golden for us gamers – just flicking through the amazing previews in our huge feature is enough to make any grown man, woman, child or certified freak drool profusely over the amazing games to come. The strengths of each system are really starting to be defined, thanks to the games developers out there. Xbox seems to have the best outlook for first person shooters and racing games, PS2 has an amazing line up of adventure and action titles, and the GameCube is most probably going to have the stellar platformers and puzzle games. Of course, with so many of the big games being cross-platform, everyone will win out in the end. Just remember that if all else fails, the Xbox makes a good doorstop, the PS2 is a solid bookend and the GameCube is a handy paperweight.

Eliot Fish » Editor



WHAT

WILL

YOUR

LEGEND

BE?



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NEWS

IN THE NEWS: Online plans for the consoles ■ Win an exclusive Star Wars figure ■ SMS games shopping and more.



Xbox Live
With its built-in adapter ready to go, so are you.



Sony Online
How affordable will be the adapter add-on?



Nintendo
Will there be many online GameCube games?

Consoles get Wired

Online gaming plans unveiled

All three of the major players in the console arena have now announced online plans in one form or another. How long it will be before these plans impact on Australian gamers remains to be seen, with both Sony and Microsoft taking a wait and see approach for PAL territories. Nintendo have taken the smallest step out of the three companies towards online play, just as everyone suspected they would. Their attitude is that the online business model isn't there for Nintendo yet, but that shouldn't stop other developers making games for GameCube that can be played online. To that end, they are distributing software development kits to interested parties worldwide. They will also begin to sell both the Modem and Broadband adapters in the American market later this year. To make online attractive for publishers, Nintendo will not be charging royalties for revenues that publishers may make from games played through their system. The first online game available for GameCube will be Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II from Sega, and

it's unlikely Nintendo will announce any first party online titles for some time to come.

RAZZLE DAZZLE

Sony announced their online plans with some razzle dazzle at their E3 pre-show, where they actually set up an online game of Madden NFL between Daunte Culpepper of the Minnesota Vikings and Jevon Kearse of the Tennessee Titans. The link was from L.A. to Florida, with John

Madden himself looking on via link up. Sony's approach is basically a game by game system. Sony provide the networking hardware for consumers to purchase, which then hooks up to

middleware providers like GameSpy. Developers are free to determine their own model – whether they will charge for online play or provide it for free, but unlike Nintendo's approach, any revenue from subscription fees are split with Sony.

Microsoft's online service is called Xbox Live and is the most ambitious, the most comprehensive and most probably the easiest approach for the consumer. It could also be the

most expensive. Microsoft's approach is to offer the complete package. The tentative plan is that for a US\$49.95 fee you get their online software kit and a year of service. Xbox Live will have a host of advantages like managed servers, advanced match making services, headset support out of the box and

an easy way to find friends online and invite them to play with you. Microsoft is the only company of the three supporting nothing but broadband, and have a massive headstart because all the hardware is packed right into the Xbox – there's no need to buy extra add-ons to make it work.

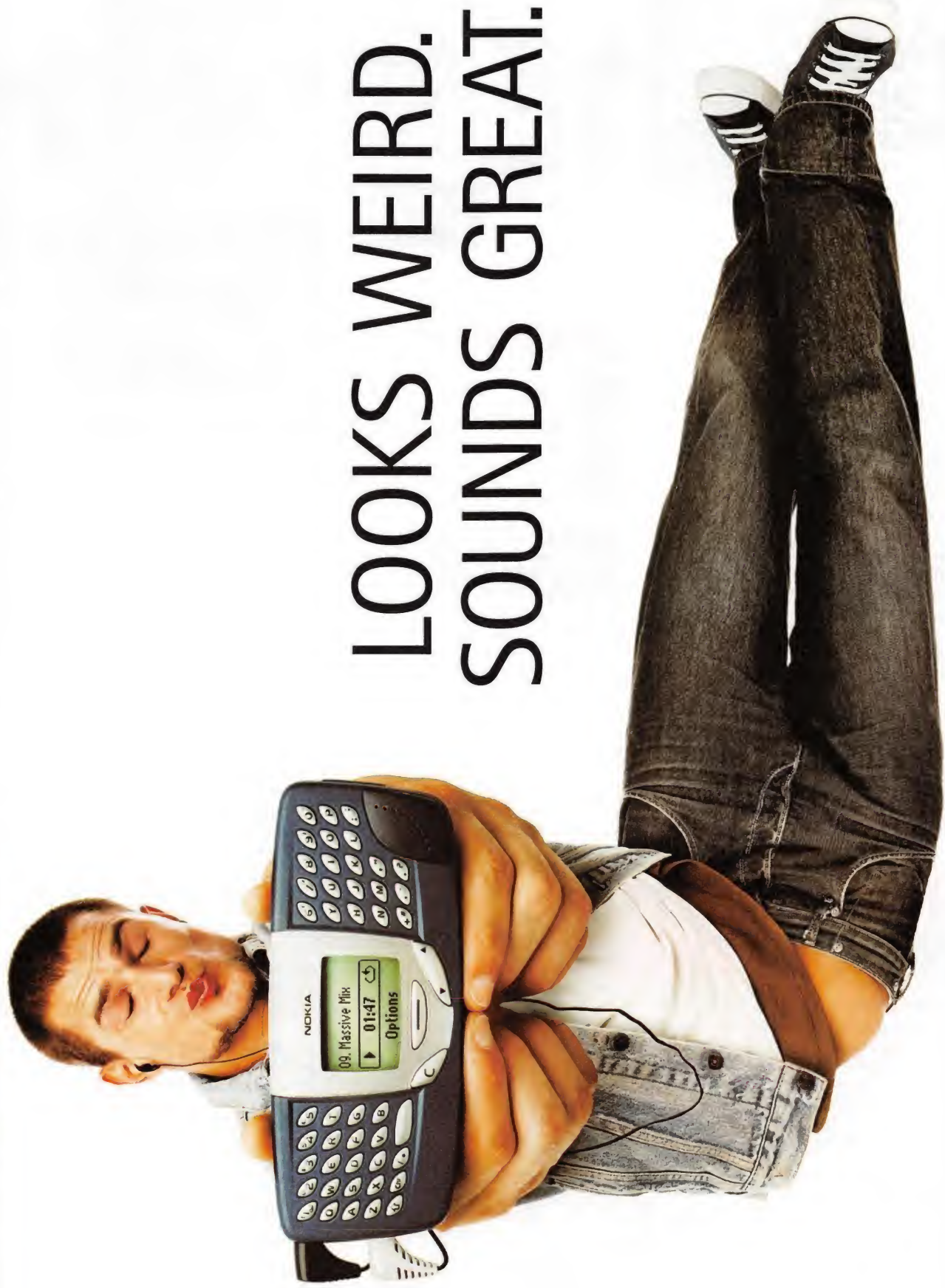
➤ Microsoft's online service is called Xbox Live and is the most ambitious

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 33 in the Subject line.



Pining for the fjords??!



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CAN'T EVERYONE JUST GET ALONG?

Why oh why must Nintendo and Square keep digging up the hatchet? During a recent Nintendo analyst's meeting, Nintendo allegedly made remarks about Final Fantasy XI's poor sales being due to it being an online game. Of course, Nintendo would take that position given their current lack of enthusiasm for online gaming. Given their recent partnership with Square, however, Nintendo should probably try to keep the peace. Following the remarks, Square's CEO Youichi Wada leapt to the defense of the game, claiming that it was pioneering new ground, and that Nintendo's comments could give people the wrong idea about the game. In actuality, Final Fantasy XI has experienced severe teething problems for a number of reasons — it requires purchase of an expensive HD, an internet connection and payment of a monthly subscription fee. Plus, server problems around the time the game launched in Japan prevented many users from even getting into the game. In other words, taking consoles online, especially those that require add-ons, is a bold and difficult new experiment for anyone — even Square. In other news, Nintendo's long standing president Hiroshi Yamauchi has finally stood down, making way for Satoru Iwata to take over the reigns. Yamauchi, who has served as president since 1950, will still remain on as director and executive advisor, and even commented on the GameCube Final Fantasy project as "ground-breaking software". Let's just hope Square and Nintendo can keep it together.



Nintendo and Square. But which is which?

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Shop 160 is a new text message service that allows you to buy games, music and DVDs at the touch of a button. Simply send a text message to Shop 160 regarding the game you're after, and they will get back to you almost instantly with the cheapest price they can find. Choose to buy, and Shop 160 will arrange purchase and free delivery for you. Sound cool? Check it out at www.shop160.com.au for more details.

WINNERS HYPER 104

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Steven Bell, Dapto, NSW.
Michelle Wallace, Goulburn, NSW.
B. Carew, Surry Hills, NSW.
C. Johnston, Fitzroy, Vic.

STAR WARS HASBRO PACK

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Runners-up: Milton Fay, Kingsgrove, NSW.
Mark Rutherford, Runcorn, Qld.
Joanne Emery, Dry Creek, SA.
Ian Hawkins, Helensvale, Qld.
Ryan McLoughlin, Ferntree Gully, Vic.

GAMECUBE & ROGUE LEADER

Congratulations to Jarrad Grigg, Bunbury, WA.

OVERFLOW

Our good source at Microsoft has confirmed for us that the newly designed Xbox gamepad, Controller-S, will be available in Australia later this year, probably by Christmas time. This is good news for anyone who has problems with the current Xbox controller. Our prayers were finally answered.

There's a good rumour that Sonic Adventure 3 is already in development at Sega for the Xbox and GameCube. Due most probably in 2003, there are even crazy rumours that Sega will include platform-specific cameos in each version — Blix the cat on the Xbox and a super monkey ball on the GameCube version!

Square are releasing two spin-off games from Final Fantasy X in Japan. The games will follow the post FFX stories of Yuna and Rikku. It's doubtful that these add-on games will come out in Australia.

Nintendo fans will remember that Star Fox 64 was called Lylat Wars in Australia. As we suspected but hoped was not the case, Nintendo seem to have decided that Star Fox Adventures will be called... Lylat Wars Adventures. Dumb, we know, but until we hear otherwise, we'll still be calling it Star Fox Adventures.

Optus@home cable have changed their pricing plan and introduced download limits, crushing the hopes of Aussies hoping to get hooked up with an unlimited downloads cable plan. As you might have guessed, the new default plan at \$79.95 per month has a 3GB limit, much the same as Telstra. If you want the maximum 10GB per month allowance, you'll have to pay a whopping \$305.95 per month. Anyone feel that this country just keeps going backwards when it comes to broadband services?

Nintendo seem pretty confident of late. President Satoru Iwata was recently quoted as saying that Nintendo will have 50 million GameCubes sold by 2005! He also objected to software price cuts, saying "it could destroy the industry".

WIN AN EXCLUSIVE STAR WARS FIGURE!

To celebrate the announcement of our Hasbro Star Wars prize packs winners, we're just crazy enough to give away more prizes! Hasbro would like to reward Hyper readers with an awesome opportunity to win a very special exclusive Star Wars action figure — Commander Jorg Sacul. Jorg who? If you read it backwards, you might realise it's an action figure of Star Wars creator George Lucas himself! This Star Wars figure is not for sale in any stores, and is only available to Hyper readers who enter this competition. This figure is priceless. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Star Wars collectors! Don't miss out!

Name another George Lucas film other than the Star Wars movies.

To enter, put your answer along with your name, address and if possible your email address on the back of an envelope, to: **By George!, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.** You can also email your entry to freakscene@next.com.au, with "By George!" as the subject line. Good luck!





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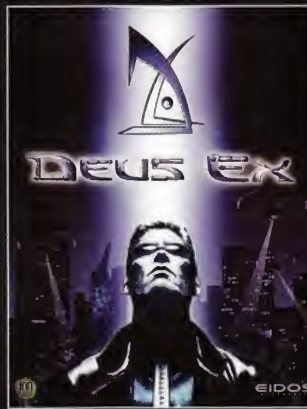
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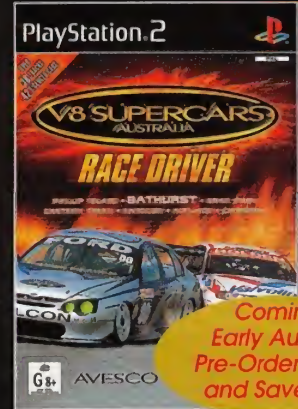
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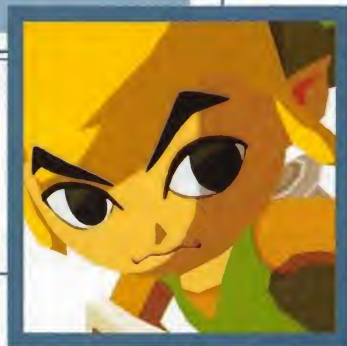
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GCM
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PS2
XBOX
PC

Welcome to the Hyper gaming forecast. We expect some heavy Xbox showers, clearing later for GameCube and strong winds of PS2. The temperature around PC will be hot with sudden bursts of GBA. Whatever you do, grab your umbrella, because it's a downpour of games!

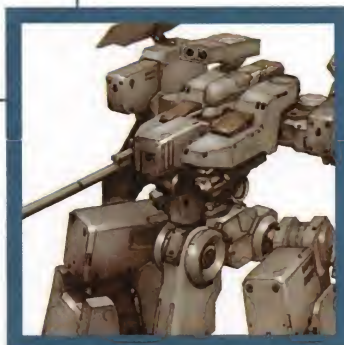


■ The next year or so of gaming is going to be quite exceptional. We have all three big console heavyweights with their hardware on the market, fighting it out to win over consumers; we have PC gaming entering a healthy new phase; and the Game Boy Advance has absolutely no competition but some astoundingly good games. Whilst many of you have already slapped your money down on a shiny new box of some description, there are plenty of you who still feel confused by the choice that's available.

Our gaming crystal ball seems to have delivered us with some accurate predictions in the last year or so... As we thought, the Xbox seems to be getting the lion's share of PC ports, dominating in the First Person Shooter category; the GameCube's strength still lies in its first party

software, and we're yet to see any great exclusive third-party support; the PlayStation 2 is powering along with real quantity of software; the PC is set to stay just one step ahead of console gaming as it always has, and the GBA looks like a better buy as every day goes by. We'll keep our gaming psychic hard at work conjuring up 2003 and beyond, and enjoy what we've uncovered so far...

This guide to upcoming games on all the systems should help you decide which gaming machine seems to be the one for you, and at the same time it should be a fascinating read for those of you who have bought your hardware and want to start counting down the days to a particular game. Start getting excited, because no matter which horse you back, it's ALL good...



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METROID PRIME

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Xmas 2002

Metroid would have to be one of the most revered series in Nintendo's back catalogue, and it's been a long time since Samus' last adventure. Retro Studios have had a tough assignment bringing the series into 3D, but fortunately (with a little help from NCL) they've done the concept justice. We've played through an entire level of the game, seen quite a bit more, and believe us — Metroid Prime is going to be awesome.

The move to a first person perspective does make the game more of a FPS than before, but it hasn't hurt the principles that the game is founded on — exploration, puzzles and combat. To differentiate it from more traditional FPS games, Retro have put together quite a unique control configuration, which forces you to re-learn the way to play this style of game, hence encouraging the player to take a fresh approach.

The decision to go with the "visor view" for the main perspective is proving to be a great one too, and Samus has a number of different modes you can switch between. Scan mode allows you to hone in on items of interest to gain information, as well as more utilitarian functions like unlocking doors. Combat mode is for shooting stuff (duh!), Heat Sense mode lets you go all Predator on the world, and X-Ray mode is useful for

seeing Metroids lurking inside aliens. The four visor views correspond to the four main directions on the D-pad, so switching is a breeze. Similarly, Samus can acquire four main blaster modes, which are mapped to the four main directions on the C-stick.

Keeping the spirit of the previous games alive, Samus' ability to roll up into a ball is heavily emphasised. Even from the limited amount we've seen, there seems to be plenty of different abilities in ball mode, and the level design is very much based around it. Fans will also be pleased to hear that the grappling hook comes into play.

While Metroid Prime isn't as visually sophisticated as games like Halo, the visuals definitely succeed in a stylistic sense. The frame rate is ultra smooth, enemies are well animated, and there are plenty of small touches — like the reflection of Samus' face inside the visor when you blast something up close. Enough to get the eye candy meter pumping.



1080 WHITE STORM

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: 2003

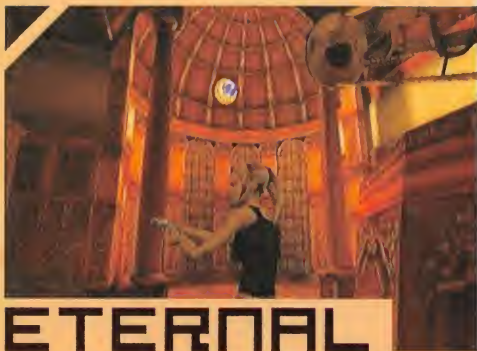
1080: White Storm is finally looking like a real game! Rather than taking the Amped approach, at this stage White Storm looks to be placing the gamer in more defined paths down the mountain. Although still very early, White Storm already has some great effects, such as a rock slide creating an avalanche behind you as you board down the mountainside, as well as good looking rippling in the boarder's clothing.



RESIDENT EVIL 0

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Late 2002

This game has been in development forever, but it is finally within reach and looking great. Technologically, Resident Evil 0 uses very similar techniques to the remake of the original Resident Evil, so it looks stunning. What will set this game apart though, is the setting — a speeding train and the stops along the way, and the fact that you switch back and forth between the two main characters at will, which should mean more interesting and interactive puzzles.



ETERNAL DARKNESS : SANITY'S REQUIEM

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Mid 2002

■ Eternal Darkness has been a long time coming. Compared to other titles that have been in development for a similar length of time, such as Star Fox Adventures, Eternal Darkness really can't compare visually. It's a pretty dull looking game. But looks can be deceiving, as this title is both adventurous in scope and huge in length. Although sharing much in common with survival horror games, the team is dubbing it more of a "psychological thriller". The storyline is tightly integrated into the game, and the development team are aiming to really screw with your head, blurring the line between what is real and what isn't within the game.



WARIO WORLD

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Xmas 2002

■ The Wario adventures on Game Boy and GBA have always had their own unique flavour, and this installment for GameCube is going to be no different. The game utilises a fixed camera perspective, and takes all of Wario's abilities into 3D for an interesting mix of puzzle based situations and action – just the way we like it. Wario World is also packed with personality, with Wario in particular looking great... it seems that Nintendo have paid particular attention to his grumpy face!



ALSO ON:
PS2

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER

PUBLISHER: LucasArts / DUE DATE: September

■ Who hasn't, at one time or another, wished they could be a Bounty Hunter? Well, now you can be! Bounty Hunter is being designed as an out and out action game, so don't expect anything too cerebral, but with all Jango Fett's awesome abilities – not least of which is jetpacking around the world unleashing deadly missile assaults, this should be one to look out for.

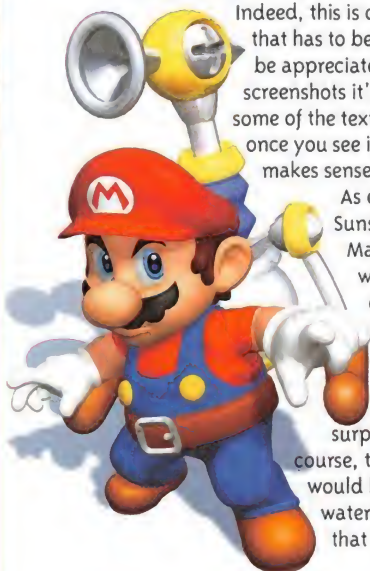


SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Shiggy and EAD have done it again – Super Mario Sunshine is all that and more. We've played through a number of levels from the new Mario adventure, and came away with the kind of warm fuzzy feeling one can only get from a quality first party Nintendo title.

Indeed, this is one of those games that has to be seen in motion to be appreciated. Just looking at screenshots it's easy to criticise some of the texture work, but once you see it running it all makes sense.



As expected, Sunshine builds on the Mario 64 experience with similar objective based gameplay, but the evolution is great enough that it feels surprisingly fresh. Of course, the biggest change would have to be the water cannon backpack that you've seen Mario

parading around with. In addition to using it to clean off the graffiti that litters the levels, it opens up a host of gameplay possibilities through its secondary mode. You can switch from a single hose pointing over Mario's head to twin hoses pointing at the ground. In this second mode you can use the device to hover through the air at any height, which gives Mario great scope for getting to hard to reach places. Miyamoto has said that there will be other, as yet unrevealed modes for the backpack too.

There are just so many cool things that Mario can do in Sunshine. His triple jump, long jump and butt stomp are back, as is his spin jump from SMW. He can boost jump back and forth between walls, climb mesh walls, climb trees and even ride Yoshi! Perhaps the coolest of the new additions though, are the tightropes criss crossing many of the worlds. Mario can, of course, walk across them, but if you time his jumps correctly, he can also use them to jump to incredible heights. Better yet, you can drop to hang off a tightrope and spin Mario around it and fling him off. The sense of freedom is fantastic. We can't wait!

NINTENDO GAMECUBE



TUROK: EVOLUTION

PUBLISHER: Acclaim / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Fans of the previous Turok games are sure to love this one. Although Evolution has a long way to go to reach the level of visual polish of many of its contemporaries, there's nothing quite like hunting dinosaurs with an arsenal big enough to destroy the Earth several times over. With some more polish, Turok Evolution could hit the spot.



ALSO
ON:
PS2
XBOX



ALSO
ON:
PS2

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS

PUBLISHER: LucasArts / DUE DATE: Late 2002

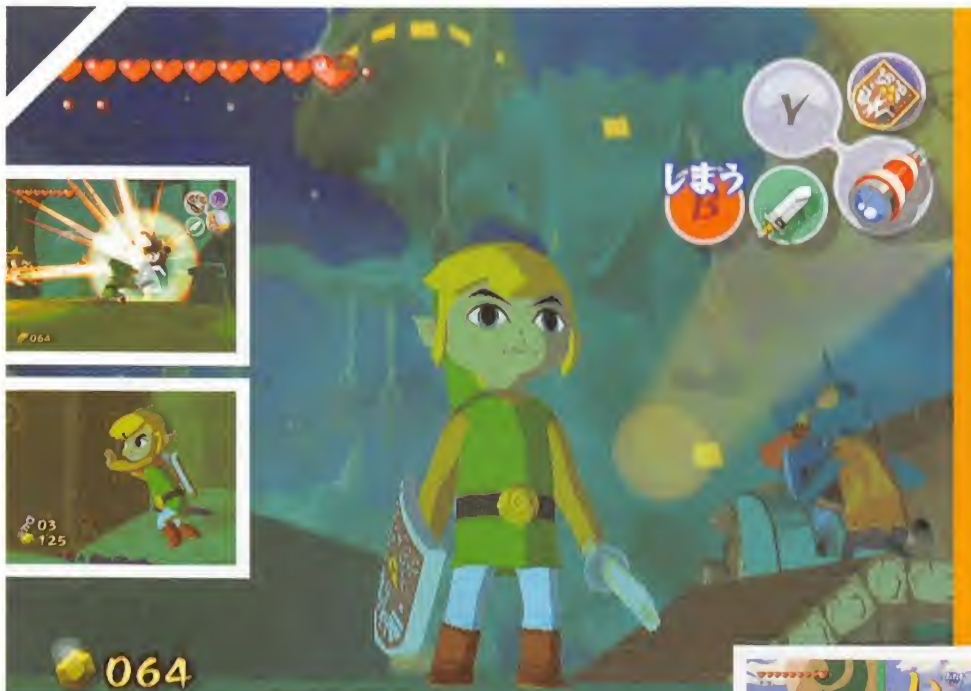
■ Starting out during the battle of Geonosis at the end of Episode II and moving on from there, Clone Wars from Pandemic is a vehicular combat game with limited third person action thrown into the mix too. You choose to play as either Anakin Skywalker, Mace Windu or Obi-Wan Kenobi, and can pilot a huge range of vehicles, from speeder bikes to Republic gunships. You will also have simple commands that you can give to your squads in the heat of the battle. Clone Wars looks simplistic, but fun.



SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

PUBLISHER: Sega / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Super Monkey Ball was the surprise hit of the GameCube's launch, and with the sequel it's obvious that Sega haven't run out of ideas. Quite the opposite in fact, as SMB2 takes the concept to a whole new level of creativity and monkey cruelty! With over 150 new levels and 12 mini games (six of which are improvements on old mini games and six are new, including Monkey Soccer and Monkey Tennis), Super Monkey Ball 2 is far more sophisticated visually and injects a huge dose of new gameplay into the mix too.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Early 2003

■ If anyone still doubted Miyamoto's decision to take the next Zelda into a cel shaded world, they must surely be appeased now. Zelda's first outing on GCN immediately feels comfortable, and the visual style has so much character and charm it's almost impossible to imagine it any other way. Playing Zelda is like watching an incredibly polished cartoon. Everything within the world is heavily stylised and utterly slick, whether it be the small sphere of light that emanates from torches in the dungeons, the sharp explosive red lines that explode during swordplay, or the purple and black puffs of swirling smoke that pop up after vanquishing a foe. Most importantly, using cel shading has allowed Nintendo to give the characters more personality than might have been possible using traditional techniques. Link in particular has a full range of facial expressions that really add to his charm. Oh, and his spin

attack is completely berserk now – especially since you can see his eyes in the center of the madness, wide open and fiery as he spins.

We've played a variety of levels from the game, covering a few different styles of play. From a traditional dungeon quest, to infiltrating an enemy fortress by stealthily sneaking around hidden under a barrel, to fighting an enormous boss, to piloting a sail boat through the most deliciously blue, smoothly animated waters you've ever seen, to exploring a small village chopping down long grass and trees,

and carrying out tasks for the villagers – everything about this game is polished and in keeping with previous games in the series.

Better still, Zelda on GCN will link up with Zelda on GBA. In fact, the GBA will appear as an item in Link's inventory, and selecting it will display a map of the world on the GBA's screen, and Tingle (from Majora's Mask) will appear to give you clues. Sweet!





STAR FOX ADVENTURES

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ Star Fox Adventures is looking better than ever. Rare have completely overhauled this game graphically, resulting in rich environments, smooth character animations and some great lighting effects. Fox looks awesome, complete with realistic looking fur and truly expressive facial expressions. He can earn a range of cool upgrades for his staff too, and the fighting mechanics are impressively solid. Please don't call it Lylat Wars Adventures, Nintendo.



ALSO ON:
PS2
XBOX
PC



PUBLISHER: Ubi soft / **DUE DATE:** Early 2003

■ XIII is based on a popular comic book series, and as such it has a legitimate claim to use cel shading to render the environments. Indeed, this is the first cel shaded FPS that we know of, and an excellent example to boot. In addition to a real world arsenal of weapons, the game introduces the ability for the player to use the "sixth sense". Basically what this means is that when you're concentrating, you'll be able to sense enemies or danger nearby. Cooler still, in keeping with the game's comic book heritage, dialogue and sounds are expressed in sound bubbles, so if you hear a guard behind a wall, you will literally see the word "tap" move along where his footsteps sound. XIII is coming to all major platforms and is looking great.

ALSO ON:
PS2
XBOX
PC



HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

PUBLISHER: EA / **DUE DATE:** November

■ No surprise to find another Harry Potter game on the way to coincide with the film is it? Well the good news is that Chamber Of Secrets is looking very good indeed, and will mirror many of the events from the film... gnome chucking anyone? It has also been revealed that this game will link up with a GBA version in some way.



ANIMAL CROSSING!

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ Animal Crossing is an evolved version of the addictive Japanese N64 release Animal Forest. It's an incredibly cutesy looking game, but one that Nintendo obviously felt deserved a wider market, and we'd have to agree. Indeed, this is the title that Nintendo are using to really push the interconnectivity between GameCube and GBA. Animal Crossing is touted as a "community building adventure", and takes place in a village where your character arrives and must start a new life. Thus, you'll have to find jobs, earn money and make friends. Although only one person can play at once, you can have up to four characters simultaneously living in the village, so you and your flatmates could all have a character, and co-exist in the village.

The village follows the GameCube's internal clock, so the game automatically goes through day and night cycles, season cycles and special things will happen on holidays.

Plus, if you don't play the game for a while, when you return the village will be overrun by weeds and

vermin. Like The Sims, one of the driving motivations in Animal Crossing will be to create your own living environment — build and add to your house, add new furniture and create new clothing for your villager. Each village will be somewhat unique too, so you can take your memory card to a friend's house and enter his village to interact with his unique characters and items.

It doesn't stop there of course. By connecting the new e-Reader to your GBA you will be able to swipe Animal Crossing e-cards to unlock rare items and trigger unique events. By connecting your GameCube to your GBA you will be able to travel to a hidden island and find a bunch of new items. You will also be able to customise objects on your GBA then import them into the game. Better still, hidden throughout Animal Crossing are classic NES games, which can be discovered, earned or unlocked through e-cards. Once you find one, you can then download it to your GBA and take it on the road.

The art style in Animal Crossing is simple but brimming with personality. However, it won't be the graphics that draw gamers to this title, but the gameplay. This one's going to be addictive!



NINTENDO GAMECUBE

ALSO ON:
PS2
XBOX
GBA



MORTAL KOMBAT: DEADLY ALLIANCE

PUBLISHER: Midway / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ After playing Deadly Alliance it's clear that there aren't going to be any great gameplay revelations coming to the Mortal Kombat series any time soon. Midway are sticking to what they know, so chances are you'll either love this game or hate it. There will be more than 20 characters in the final game, mixing in old favourites and new additions. The character models are actually looking good, as are the backgrounds... and the gore is as over the top as ever! As well as new moves, each character will also have a number of stances that can be cycled through with a single button.



MARIO PARTY 4

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Late 2003

■ Mario Party 4 was really an inevitability, but fortunately the move to a more powerful platform has injected new life into this franchise. To be honest, this is mostly through the revamped graphics — a higher level of detail, better animations and stacks of personality will certainly help sell this one. Game boards are considerably larger now, and with more layers available. Using specific items on the board you can shrink or grow your character, opening up new paths to take and special events. You all know what to expect — heaps of mini-games and great multiplayer fun.



ALSO ON:
PS2
XBOX

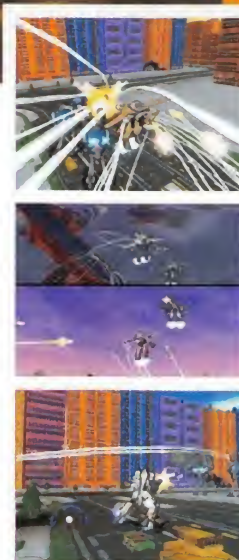
ROBOTECH: BATTLE CRY

PUBLISHER: TDK Mediactive / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ In the late 80s, Robotech was the shiznit. Fusing hardcore morphing mech battles with a soap opera styled storyline, it was one of those cartoons that we all remember fondly. There have been numerous games based on the license released in Japan, but none have captured the feel of the show all that well — until now. Coming from Vicious Cycle, and a development team comprised of rabid Robotech fans, this could be the game to do the show justice. Robotech: Battle Cry is an out and out mech combat game that puts you at the controls of a Veritech fighter in the battle against the Zentraedi. More importantly, it gives you the controls of a Veritech fighter — you can switch between the three forms at the press of a button. From Fighter mode (essentially a jet) to Guardian mode (half jet, half mech) through to Battloid mode (mech mode — you can hover and maneuver with ease), Robotech is all about giving you the versatility for any combat situation. Not only does it look cool transforming as you play, but each mode handles differently and has different tactical advantages.

Most battles will take place on and above Earth, with a selection of space battles also included to break up the action. Although the game is only based around the first season of Robotech, Vicious Cycles have made a concerted effort to include every single model of ship and mech from that period, so fans will feel completely at home.

Not only have Vicious Cycle worked hard to capture the feel of the series, but the look as well. Battle Cry looks great, sporting appropriate cel shading on the mechs, fully destructible surroundings and even the spiralling "spaghetti noodle" missile trails that were the signature of the TV series. Two player splitscreen should come into its own in this game too — dogfighting in the Robotech universe... does it get any sweeter?



CAPCOM VS SNK 2: EO

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Capcom Vs SNK 2 is definitely one of the Hyper crew's favourite 2D fighting games, so we were pretty stoked to find out it was coming to GameCube. Although this is pretty much a straight port, Capcom have taken a somewhat patronising approach to the GameCube demographic by including a dumbed down control scheme, where special moves are automatic through the C-stick. This is actually quite fun, even if it does drastically reduce the skill required in the game. Running on GCN this one looks great, and as soon as a good arcade stick is available, this will be a must have game.



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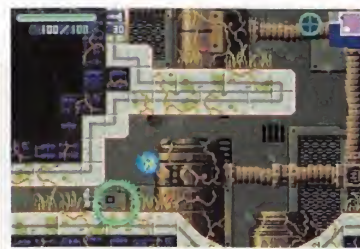
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GAMEBOY

ADVANCE

G B A



BOULDER DASH EX

PUBLISHER: Kemco / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Boulder Dash is a puzzle classic... as you'd know if you read our Reverse Engineering on it a little while back. As is the trend these days, Kemco and Vision Works have decided to resurrect Boulder Dash for a new generation. Your little boulder dude has some new moves now too, courtesy of powerups such as a mechanical arm for extra reach. Of course, the original will also be included on the cart.



GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Early 2003

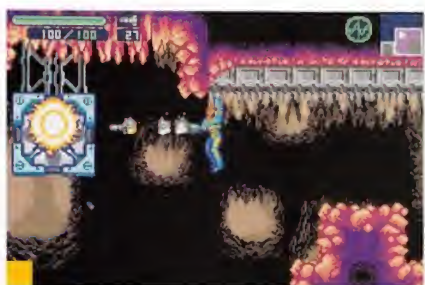
■ The Lost Age picks up where Golden Sun left off. Once again, it's a quest to save the world from destruction, with many cast members from the original returning, as well as plenty of new and unique characters. Camelot are promising a more expansive story than in the original, with a greater emphasis on Psynergy-based puzzles, not to mention heaps more Djinn to collect and a more open ended system for utilising them.



METROID FUSION

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Xmas

■ Two new Metroid games by the end of the year? Joy! Metroid Fusion takes the series back to its roots, and is being developed by the team responsible for the earlier games so you can rest assured this will be Metroid in its purest form. The storyline is already looking really cool and your character (it's not necessarily Samus!) has a whole host of new moves, so the gameplay will be deeper than ever.





DUKE NUKEM ADVANCE

PUBLISHER: Take Two / DUE DATE: Mid 2002

■ We won't even bother joking about Duke Nukem Forever... it's not really funny any more. But here's the good news - Duke Nukem Advance looks awesome! This is an all new game that is more advanced than just about any other FPS coming to the GBA. Using an advanced raycasting engine, it runs a treat, looks great, has mature themes, and is being developed by Australia's own Torus games!



GAME + WATCH GALLERY 4

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Early 2003

■ After unlocking Game & Watch guy in Super Smash Bros Melee, it seems like a good time to get excited over Nintendo's original handheld venture again. This compilation contains Rainshower, Boxing, Donkey Kong 3, Mario's Cement Factory and Fire Attack, plus extra hidden titles. Better still, the games look reasonable thanks to reworked graphics and some cute sprite animations.



CUSTOM ROBO GX

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: TBA

■ If Pokémon and Monster Rancher are a little too tame for you, then Custom Robo GX may be just what you're after. At its heart Custom Robo is about building arse kicking mechs for combat, but it has both an RPG element where you explore a futuristic city and a strategy heavy battle mode. Looks like a good balance. Let's just hope it comes out in Australia.

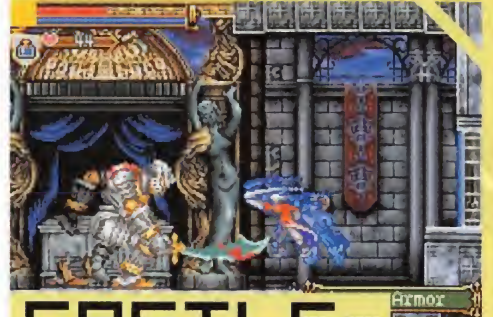
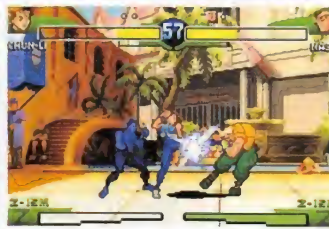


SUPER GHOULS 'N GHOSTS

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Super Ghoul's 'N Ghosts was a classic adventure in every sense of the word - a knight named Arthur, a damsel in distress and hordes of the undead in between. Capcom are injecting this remake with a little more juice - updated graphics, new levels, and even enemies from the other games in the series, so even those who played through it the first time around will have something to get excited about.

GAMEBOY ADVANCE



CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE

PUBLISHER: Konami / DUE DATE: Late 2002

Circle Of The Moon was an absolutely brilliant slice of gaming, and we have no doubt that Harmony of Dissonance will be no different. Set in the year 1740, you play as Jeust Belmont, and from what we've seen you're quite an arse kicker. Not only are Konami working hard to expand on the quality Castlevania brand of gameplay, but the graphics are being beefed up with even larger bosses and smoother animation. Plus, it will be much easier to see. Phew!



CONTRA ADVANCE

PUBLISHER: Konami / DUE DATE: Late 2002

The Contra series kicked some serious booty back in the 16-bit days, sucking gamers in with its intense action and callous creating difficulty level. Well, the series is back, Contra III more specifically, in the form of Contra Advance. It already plays and looks just as we remember it, and Konami have promised some all new levels, not to mention two player link-up co-op. Who would have thought running to the right could be so much fun?

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Mid 2002

This is a direct conversion of Street Fighter Alpha 3 Upper that hit Japanese arcades last year, and is definitely one of the best fighting games of all time. It's amazing seeing this game run on GBA — it hasn't lost much in the conversion, and Capcom have even managed to pack all 30 plus characters onto the cart. Link up play will be the highlight though.





SEGA SMASH PACK

PUBLISHER: THQ / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

Sega Smash Pack is a compilation of classic Sega titles. On one GBA cart you'll get Golden Axe, Ecco The Dolphin and Sonic Spinball. Not bloody bad eh? These were all bomb-arse titles back in the day, and getting all three for the price of one sounds pretty good to us. Fingers crossed there's a two player option for Golden Axe.



R-TYPE III: THE THIRD LIGHTNING

PUBLISHER: Phantagram / **DUE DATE:** Mid 2002

R-Type III is yet another SNES port, but once again, this is a port that we can forgive. At least, we'll forgive it if Raylight Studios can inject enough playtime in this baby to make it worth the price. From what we've seen, R-Type III is looking very faithful to the old game and should scratch your twitch sweet spot.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / **DUE DATE:** Xmas

Link To The Past still stands as one of the best console Action/RPGs ever made. Adding to the GBA experience, Nintendo are including an all new four player mode called The Four Swords. The coolest part is that the goal of this mode is to collect the most Rupees, but you'll need to cooperate to solve many of the puzzles. Better yet, only one cart will be needed for this mode.



YOSHI'S ISLAND

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / **DUE DATE:** September

We absolutely love this game. In fact, we recently played through the SNES version yet again in the office. Yoshi's Island is the pinnacle of the 2D platform genre, no doubt about it. Nintendo combined fresh ideas and great level design with a hand drawn crayon-like visual style that absolutely ruled. If you thought this one was just for kids, think again.



GAMEBOY ADVANCE

KIRBY

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Well look what we have here - a new side scrolling Kirby platformer! This new Kirby adventure is based on the animated TV series that's currently screening, so it should really be called "Kirby: The Animated Series: The game". All we know at this stage is that Kirby will once again be able to temporarily acquire the abilities of other characters, so puzzle solving should be fairly heavy in the mix.



DISNEY'S MAGICAL QUEST

STARRING MICKEY AND MINNIE

PUBLISHER: Nintendo / DUE DATE: August

■ Resurrecting classic SNES games is one thing, but a Disney licensed platformer? No thanks! This one is being published by Nintendo themselves, however, so there must be something to it... either that or Nintendo just want a Mickey GBA game that can link up with their Disney's Magical Mirror title on GameCube. Hmm.



SPYRO 2: SEASON OF FLAME

PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive / DUE DATE: September

■ Spyro's first outing on GBA wasn't without its charm, but it wasn't particularly innovative either. Whether Spyro 2 will be any different remains to be seen, but Digital Eclipse are at least working hard to put more wacky characters in! Indeed, in Spyro 2 you'll be able to play as four different characters, our favourites being Sheila the kangaroo and Agent 9 the space monkey. Sigh.



MEGA MAN ZERO

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ In the style of the Mega Man X series comes Mega Man Zero, a top notch side scrolling action game. This is one for the hardcore gamers, and as such the game keeps track of heaps of different stats like damage taken and enemies killed for a multi-faceted high score at the end. There's also a cool looking powerup system whereby you collect Cyber Elves!



LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY PRESENTS

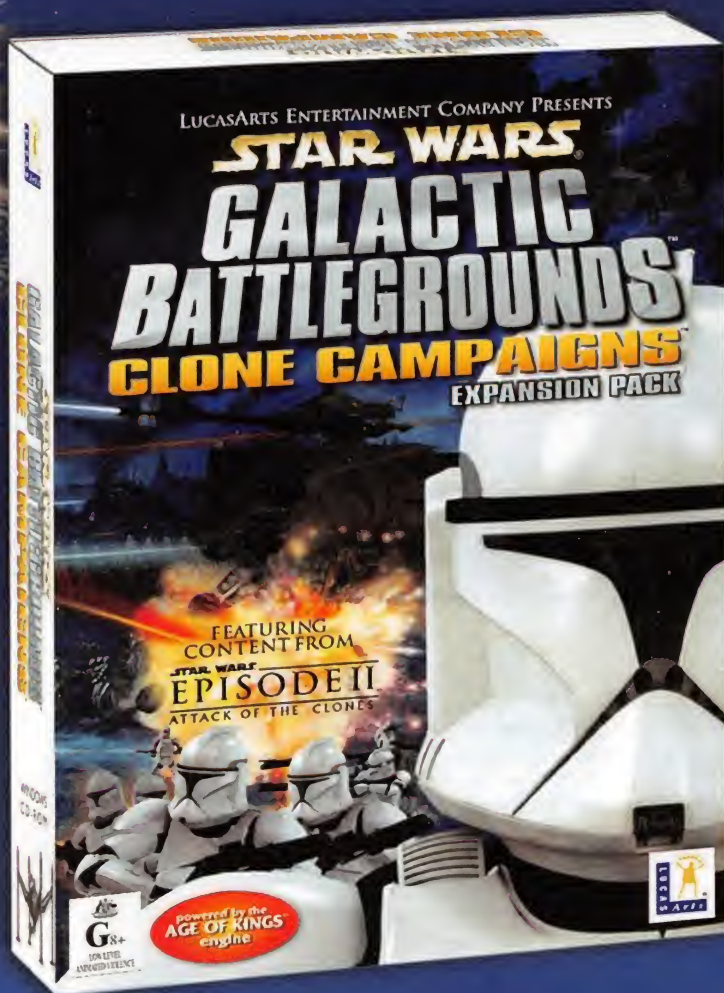
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SONY PS2

PS2



PS2
PlayStation 2



SILENT HILL 3

PUBLISHER: Konami / DUE DATE: 2003

■ The most twisted survival horror series continues. Konami are going back to the drawing board for the third installment, creating an all new storyline and cast of characters. They're aiming to improve on every aspect of the previous games to create a more intense atmosphere, more detailed visuals, better puzzles, greater firepower and most importantly, even more disturbing imagery. In fact, just glancing at the screens that have been released so far is enough to send a chill down your spine.



SHINOBI

PUBLISHER: Sega / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ It was about time Shinobi made a comeback, but never did we think it could be this much fun! The next gen Shinobi is being developed by the Sega division that created the original Shinobi titles, now known as Overworks, and they really have a handle on how to take the concept into 3D. Basically, the gameplay is all based around the versatility, speed and precision of a ninja's movements. To that end, Shinobi has a great range of abilities, including running along walls, darting and barrel rolling through the air, freezing enemies in mid attack, and generally kicking arse like only a ninja can. Perhaps the coolest new move, however, is the stealth dash, which leaves a holographic image behind and is great for disorientating enemies.

Speed seems very much of the essence in Shinobi. Overworks have introduced an interesting combo system whereby you have a limited amount of time between unsheathing and sheathing your sword. The more enemies you kill during that time the stronger your sword becomes. This then leads into strategic attack patterns where you take out the weaker ninja first to build your sword's strength, then take on the tougher guys.

Shinobi takes place in modern day Tokyo, fusing an interesting

visual mix between old style and modernity. The main character has been designed to be iconic, with a long red scarf trailing behind his head,

creating hypnotic patterns in the air as it swirls. The effect is amazing, and combined with his raw speed and dope arms-folded neutral stance, this is one compelling character.



ALSO ON:
XBOX
PC



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

PUBLISHER: Codemasters / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Colin McRae Rally is back and reasserting its dominance in the field of rally games. This next gen sequel is already looking amazing, sporting high poly car models, good view distance and great weather effects. But it's the gameplay that is the trademark of the series, and Colin McRae Rally 3 certainly doesn't disappoint, with realistic, yet intuitive handling.





DEVIL MAY CRY 2

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ In Devil May Cry 2, Capcom have decided to mix in old world Gothic with new school metropolis to form an all new beast. Featuring a game world twice the size of the original, a ramped up combat system, more abilities for Dante, and a female character to control, this one is going to be hot.



JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE

PUBLISHER: Capcom / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Based on Hirohiko Araki's famous anime, Jojo's Bizarre Adventure for PS2 is a fantastically stylish cel-shaded action game with a serious twist. Each character has unique "stand powers", such as the ability to change inorganic matter into organic or suck the moisture from people. The stand can also be summoned as a ghostly figure to fight for you. In gameplay terms this means a more puzzle-based action environment.



THE GETAWAY

PUBLISHER: Sony / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ The Getaway has been in development forever. It's no wonder really, as it's an ambitious concept. Set in the London underworld, The Getaway is a very gritty game, driven by a story that unfolds over an hour of high quality FMV. 40 square kilometers of London have been faithfully recreated for the game, and the gameplay mixes objective-based driving missions with combat on foot. Unfortunately, at this stage this title could go either way.



TENCHU 3: WRATH OF HEAVEN

PUBLISHER: Activision / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ What could be cooler than a ninja sim? Nothing, but the sad fact is that despite having two titles under its belt, the Tenchu series has failed to reach its potential. The last two games had hints of greatness, but were let down by camera issues and awkward controls. With the move to PS2, the Tenchu series could finally come into its own.

In many ways, Tenchu 3 will be the true sequel to the first game. It picks up shortly after the events of the original, with the player learning that Rikimaru did not actually die, and is resuming his quest. Ayame will also be playable, with her own mission path. Now that the series has moved to PS2, the environments are quite a bit larger than in previous games, giving

the player more freedom in approaching each situation. The emphasis is very much on stealth and style, as Rikimaru earns symbols through



cunning and efficient tactics. When all the symbols have been earned, Rikimaru gains a new skill. To make using the versatile and brutal abilities of a ninja a little easier, the team have worked hard to make the controls more intuitive. Every button on the Dual Shock is used, and the control is fully analogue, which should come into its own for stealthy movements. The team are really trying to ramp up enemy intelligence too, and to that end, your foes will be much more aware of their surroundings. You'll give away your presence through loud movements and other tactical errors.

Tenchu 3's fate is really yet to be determined, however. The version we played still had a way to go — particularly in the visual department. If the team can spend the next few months polishing every aspect of the game, then Tenchu 3 could finally be the ninja sim we've been waiting for.

SONY
PS2

TIME SPLITTERS 2

PUBLISHER: Eidos / DUE DATE: September

Free Radical set the standard for PS2 FPSs in the first place, but with Time Splitters 2 they're raising the bar far higher. Technically, the engine is excellent, keeping the action smooth and frenetic at the same time as producing a great looking game with some well implemented effects. In addition to the fantastic multiplayer game that one would expect (complete with online options), the big change is a compelling single-player experience.



ALSO
ON:
XBOX
GCN



ALSO
ON:
XBOX
GCN

DAVE MIRRA XXX

PUBLISHER: Acclaim / DUE DATE: Late 2002

Question: How do you go head to head with a million and one franchises in the extreme sports genre and manage to stand out? Answer: by adding in swearing and strippers, of course! With XXX, Acclaim are taking a completely different tack, throwing in heaps of toilet humour and foul language. And of course, money earned in the game can be used to unlock footage of real life strippers doing their thing. We'd be offended if it wasn't such a good idea!

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

PUBLISHER: Activision / DUE DATE: Late 2002

Tony Hawk 3 was a blast, but to tell the truth it wasn't the evolution in the series that we were thirsting for. The levels weren't truly next gen in size, and the career mode remained too limiting and artificial. Fortunately, Neversoft have gone back to the drawing board and redesigned the Tony Hawk series for the fourth game. While it's still not quite what we would want in an ideal world (a living breathing city and learning to skate from scratch), it's a damn good start and an indication that Neversoft and Tony Hawk aren't prepared to simply rest on their laurels.

The approach is somewhat more like an RPG. Once you enter an area to skate, there's no time limit. You can simply skate around busting tricks to your heart's content. Challenges within the level are activated by talking to various NPCs. You might see Rodney Mullen, for instance, busting some flat land tricks. Go over and talk to him and he will set you a challenge. Thus, the experience feels more like skating

and less artificial. The level size is truly a step up too, perhaps because you no longer need to be able to get all the way around a level within a time limit. The texture quality in the game has been upped somewhat too, creating a more rugged and realistic look to many of the surfaces. Animations have been improved already as well, with a much better sense of the skater constantly having to balance himself on rails and landings. Each skater's face is more detailed and they'll also get realistically banged up this time, with cuts and grazes appearing on their bodies. Oh, and props to Bob Burnquist for coming to his senses and returning to the franchise! The Tony Hawk series just keeps getting better!



WAR OF THE MONSTERS

PUBLISHER: Sony / DUE DATE: Late 2002

War of the Monsters is something of a departure for the team that brought us Twisted Metal Black. Taking inspiration from the classic Japanese Godzilla movies and violence in general, in Monsters you take control of one of ten towering behemoths (from a gorilla to a samurai robot) and go head to head with other freaks in fully destructible and interactive city environments. Should make an awesome party game.



ALSO
ON:
PC

TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

PUBLISHER: Eidos / DUE DATE: November

■ Tomb Raider is back, and at this stage it looks like nothing much has changed in gameplay terms for the franchise that we love to hate. Allegedly the story will be much more mature, and influenced by choices made when talking to NPCs. Lara's abilities will also evolve as the game progresses too. Let's hope Tomb Raider doesn't wear out its welcome... again.



CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER

PUBLISHER: Konami / DUE DATE: Early 2003

■ Contra is back baby! Sticking to deliciously 2D gameplay set on great looking 3D backdrops, this is one for the old schoolers. The Contra games were always stupidly difficult and Shattered Soldier looks to be no exception. Crazy firepower, twitch-based gameplay, bosses a-plenty and a two-player co-op mode make this one to look out for.



RATCHET + CLANK

PUBLISHER: Sony / DUE DATE: November

■ Insomniac (creators of the Spyro series) have been quietly beaver away on Ratchet and Clank for close to three years now, and the game is really coming together. It stars — who else — but Ratchet, a talented young mechanic, and Clank, a quirky little robot. The game is set in a very sci-fi world, where towering metropolises are constantly buzzing with life, where interstellar travel is commonplace and weaponry is completely over the top. Ratchet and Clank come together in a quest to stop the evil Chairman Drek and his army of Blargs, who are intent on creating a new paradisaical world by raping the best features of all the old worlds. It's not exactly an innovative storyline, but this is one

of those games with enough new twists on the action-adventure gameplay paradigm and enough polish to really suck the player in.

One of the most appealing elements in the game is the huge number of weapons and gadgets you can acquire — over 35 in all. Better yet, the game has a unique economic system whereby money found or earned from killing enemies and solving puzzles can be used to buy weapons and ammo. Thus, the player is actively rewarded for fully exploring and completing a level, while those that don't can still try to get through with minimal weaponry. Some of the gadgets you'll get to use include Magneboots and Hoverboards, but it's Clank himself who will come the most in handy. He can transform into a thruster pack, helipack and hydro-pack at the press of a button. Ratchet and Clank is quite amazing visually — rich in colour and epic in size, taking you from towering futuristic cities, to quaint villages overflowing with greenery and into dark polluted factories. And there's one theme consistent across all the worlds — firepower and lots of it. Sweet!



GUNGRAVE

PUBLISHER: Sega / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Sega's Gungrave is one of several million cel-shaded action games being developed at the moment, but already it stands out from the pack. The world is gritty, the lead character totally stylish and the weaponry intense. Plus, you're rewarded for racking up kills in quick succession with a combo score and special attack meter that fills up. This is one for the arcade shooter fans.



**SONY
PS2**



SLY RACCOON

PUBLISHER: Sony / **DUE DATE:** September

■ Sly Raccoon (or Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus, as is its full title) is the follow up title from Sucker Punch, the development house that demonstrated great potential with Rocket for N64. Sly Raccoon is the story of Sly Cooper, a raccoon coming from a long and prestigious line of thieves. Ironically enough, the family heirloom, a book called the Thievius Raccoonus, which details all the major techniques needed to be a great thief is stolen, and it's up to Sly to get it back. Perhaps the game should have been called "Sly and the Family Tome". Heh.

Sly Raccoon has a number of things going for it. The most obvious of which are the slick cartoon inspired visuals, which are deftly executed with great style and

humour. More importantly, of course, is the gameplay. Yes, it's essentially a 3D platformer, but Sly has an ability set that gives the player decent versatility. In addition to the standard range of moves, being a raccoon, Sly has great stealth, so you can keep his back to walls, peer out from behind them and use objects (such as barrels) for cover. He also has powerful binoculars to survey the path ahead and determine the best approach, and a sickle-like tool that doubles as weapon and hook for using overhead wires as flying foxes. He can also climb up pipes and other vertical surfaces, which, combined with his stealthy movement, has enabled Sucker Punch to create quite broad level designs and somewhat non-linear gameplay.

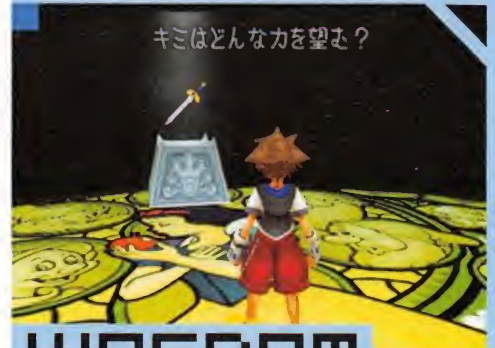
The strongest indication that Sucker Punch are on the right track, however, is that it seems that they've managed to put a cute mascot-like character at the heart of the game without it seeming lame. Kudos.



THE SIMS

PUBLISHER: EA / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ It's a wonder it has taken this long, but The Sims is finally coming to PlayStation 2, in a revamped form no less. The 2D graphics are gone, replaced by polygonal characters and worlds that look very good... although it will be interesting to see if some of the personality is lost. The game is now more structured, with level-based gameplay that takes your sim from living in a shack to a palace. There's even a two-player mode!



KINGDOM HEARTS

PUBLISHER: Square / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ The concept is completely bizarre — a Square RPG infused with popular Disney characters... and now that we've seen a bit more of Kingdom Hearts in action, it just gets weirder. Kingdom Hearts looks slick enough, but we're skeptical that anyone over about the age of ten would be interested. Time will tell.

**ALSO
ON:
XBOX
GCN
PC**



NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

PUBLISHER: EA / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ You all know what to expect from this one. Indeed, there's nothing strikingly different about this new addition to the Need For Speed series. That said, Hot Pursuit 2 is doing many things right — a large selection of play modes, cars and courses, and the visuals are coming along nicely, with detailed environments and good lighting effects.



NINJA ASSAULT

PUBLISHER: Namco / **DUE DATE:** Mid 2002

■ Time to get those G-Con 2s out of retirement, because Namco's arcade light gun shooter is coming to PlayStation 2. Ninja Assault is set in feudal Japan, and you play as one of three gun toting ninjas (whatever happened to shurikens?), each with their own attributes. Rather than a straight arcade port, Ninja Assault on PS2 will have some new features, including mini games and hidden levels. Truth be told, Ninja Assault doesn't look all that inspiring.



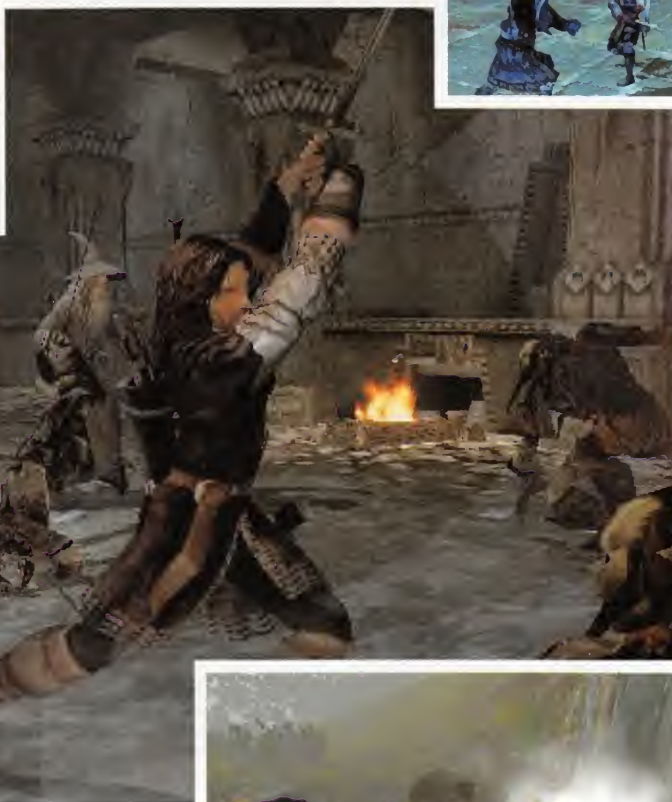
ALSO ON:
XBOX
GCN



SHAUN MURRAY'S PRO WAKEBOARDER

PUBLISHER: Activision / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ When this title was announced we were hugely skeptical, but having seen it in motion now, we have to admit Shaba games are doing a great job. Wakeboarding involves trailing behind a speed boat and using the wake it creates to get air and do tricks. This game not only looks smooth, creating freeform wakes to ride, a good sense of speed and lots of tricks, but it throws in rails and ramps to spice the gameplay up.



RED DEAD REVOLVER

PUBLISHER: Capcom / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ Red Dead Revolver is a third person action game set in the Wild West, packed with gun slinging, horse back riding, sheriffs, chewing tobacco, fisticuffs and varmints. How the gameplay stands up is still an unknown, but Capcom have certainly nailed the look - the visuals look straight out of a classic Clint Eastwood movie.



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

PUBLISHER: EA / **DUE DATE:** November

■ We've only played a snippet of EA's Two Towers game thus far, but it's already looking very impressive. The game's emphasis is very much on action and swordplay, and takes the player through all the major confrontations of the first two films. There are three playable characters - Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, with other members of the fellowship appearing in non-playable form during many of the battles. In fact, we've never seen a combat-based game that is so cinematic. Battles in Two Towers really manage to capture both the overwhelming odds of the scenes from the films, as well as the teamwork and camaraderie. The scenes are amazingly framed, with the action spilling over the screen as each member of the fellowship battles for the future of Middle Earth.



There will be 16 mission locations in The Two Towers, including the Mines of Moria and the walls of Helm's Deep, as well as five boss battles with the likes

of the Cave Troll and Saruman himself. While we can't say for sure at this stage how well the settings recreate the scenes from the second film, the characters themselves look spot on, as do the Orcs and other enemies.

Adding further to the game's cinematic feel, Howard Shore's Academy Award winning score will set the musical backdrop for the game. Let's just hope that Enya doesn't put in an appearance.

SONY
PS2



SOCOM NAVY SEALS

PUBLISHER: Sony / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ When the PS2 goes online, this will no doubt be one of the games that people will be attracted to. Navy Seals is basically like Counter-Strike, with a maximum of eight per side and a third person perspective. The game will come packed with a headset so you can talk to the other members of your team, and a really varied range of missions.



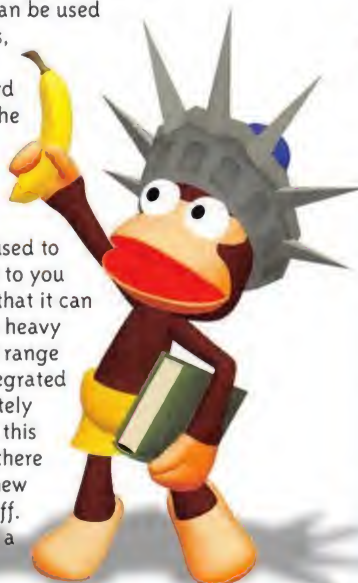
APE ESCAPE 2

PUBLISHER: Sony / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Who didn't love the original Ape Escape? It combined innovative controls (fully utilising the dual shock pad for the first time) with a hilarious concept — catching hundreds of escaped monkeys. Ape Escape 2 starts off like most great stories do, with a shipment of experimental monkey pants. No, we're not kidding! As you'd expect, along with the monkey pants, the character you control, Hikaru, accidentally includes a bunch of Peak-Point helmets with the shipment. When the monkeys put them on they become super intelligent, escape the zoo and vow to overthrow the humans. This is where you come in. Where Ape Escape saw you travelling through time, in the sequel, the levels take place all over the world, from Shaolin temples and castles to beachside resorts and a casino.

Ape Escape 2's gameplay continues very much in the same vein as the original. But this time around the monkeys are even more varied in their personalities and so are the techniques you'll need to employ to catch them. To that end, the nine monkey catching gadgets from the original return, along with three new ones.

There's a Water Pistol, which can put out fires, repair vehicles and powers certain items (windmills for instance). More intriguing is the Banana Boomerang, a device that emits a smell that drives monkeys wild. It can be used to attract monkeys, as a weapon and also to retrieve hard to reach objects. The last new gadget, however, is perhaps the coolest. The Magnetor can be used to suck metal objects to you and has such pull that it can lift Hikaru towards heavy metal sources. The range of gadgets are integrated even more completely into the gameplay this time around, and there are also a host of new vehicles to cap it off. This one should be a lot of fun.



ALSO
ON:
XBOX
GCN
PC



RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ One thing the Rayman series has always had going for it is just how very French it is. With Hoodlum Havoc, the French-fest continues, and we're loving it. The visuals are obviously French, the character design is oh so French, and even the audio has a French twang. Tres bien! In other words, Rayman 3 is looking as stylish and unique as ever, but it remains to be seen how compelling the gameplay is.



FINAL FANTASY XI

PUBLISHER: Square / DUE DATE: TBA

■ Who knows when we'll be able to play it, but Final Fantasy XI is already out in Japan and initial reports are mixed. The game world is absolutely huge, and the idea of questing with other gamers is hugely appealing. The downside is that the frame rate tends to chug quite badly, and there have been some serious server-side problems. FFXI will be an experience built around interaction with the world and the other players, and we really hope it makes it to Australia.



RED FACTION 2

PUBLISHER: THQ / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Red Faction was an overrated game in many ways — a stock standard first person shooter that was hyped because of its "revolutionary" Geomod engine which made no difference to the gameplay whatsoever. Fortunately, with Red Faction 2, your ability to deform the world will actually come into puzzle solving and item location. Let's just hope they have the storyline to back it up.

The Elder Scrolls III

MORROWIND



*"Arguably the finest
PC RPG yet"
- Hyper 93%*



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MICROSOFT XBOX



PANZER DRAGON ORTA

PUBLISHER: Sega / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ That Sega would choose Microsoft's console on which to revive one of its most treasured franchises is indicative of just how seriously the Japanese giant is taking its Xbox development strategy. Panzer Dragoon may not have the same level of brand recognition as a Sonic or Daytona (due in large part to its appearance on the ill-fated Saturn), but among the hardcore cognoscenti its name is synonymous with the qualities for which Sega is most cherished.

Like its predecessors, Panzer Dragoon Orta is an on-rails shooter where the player has only minimal control over his character's course, but unlimited firepower to ward off the relentless enemy hordes. You fly a dragon through a

selection of gorgeously vivid and stunningly realised landscapes, locking on to multiple foes before disintegrating them in dazzling showers of pixellated perfection.

That such a seemingly limited gameplay dynamic should be the cause of fervent anticipation may strike some as very strange. Yet Panzer Dragoon Orta transcends its genre constraints to become a thing of graceful, hypnotic, effortless beauty. Believe the hype.



KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

PUBLISHER: LucasArts / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ Famous for the seriously involved Baldur's Gate roleplaying series on PC, Canadian developer Bioware hopes to bring its magic to what will be one of the first RPGs on the Xbox. With the Star Wars license, it's certainly the most important. Bioware promises as much depth and interaction as found in BG2, though the early demo we've played suggests they're not yet there.



NINJA GAIDEN

PUBLISHER: Tecmo / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ From the makers of Dead or Alive 3, Ninja Gaiden is a sprawling fighting game with an emphasis on style. The eponymous ninja is constantly pitted against multiple enemies (at times more than a dozen) through both traditional Japanese settings and darker industrial environments. Acrobatic abilities, combos and context-sensitive moves feature prominently.



BRUTE FORCE

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / DUE DATE: 2003

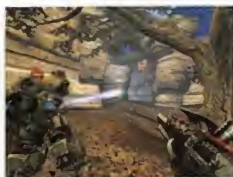
Following Halo, this is the next big action experience to be developed in-house at Microsoft Studios. Brute Force is a first person shooter where the player controls a quartet of characters. Strategy is called upon in deciding which character's abilities are most suited to the task at hand. A four-player co-operative mode will be the making of this game.



MECH ASSAULT

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / DUE DATE: 2003

An action-oriented update of Microsoft's own Mechwarrior series, Mech Assault promises over-the-top mayhem aplenty. Destructible environments (with every building a potential pile of rubble) rank high on the list of cool features, while a strong solo campaign and mech-on-mech duels courtesy of Xbox Live complete the picture.



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

PUBLISHER: Infogrames / DUE DATE: October

Building on the success of Unreal Tournament on PC, Epic and partner Digital Extremes hope to bring the same kind of online action to Microsoft's console thanks to Xbox Live. Team-based deathmatches (and variants such as Capture the Flag) are the featured modes of play. We'll see if it replaces Halo multiplayer when it launches with Xbox Live later this year.



BLINK

PUBLISHER: Sega / DUE DATE: 2003

If Panzer Dragoon hints at Sega's interest in the Xbox, then Blink is the game that confirms its commitment. Far from updating a proven classic (Panzer Dragoon Orta, Crazy Taxi 3) or porting a recent hit (Shenmue 2), Blink witnesses Sega creating a wholly original character to star in what is nothing short of the most wildly inventive platform game since Super Mario 64. And this is not just any Sega division either, but Sega Sonic Team, with the game's development headed by several veterans of the original Sonic the



Hedgehog, Burning Rangers and Nights.

Blink is a cat employed as a janitor at the Time Factory. He sweeps up rubbish with his TS1000 vacuum - sucking trash then blowing it back at enemies. The key to the game is, through the use of power-ups, Blink can pause, rewind, fast-forward and even

record the world to his advantage. Fall off a crumbling bridge? Simply rewind to before it happens and jump to safety. Need some more firepower? Need to make a particular tricky jump? Hit pause to bring the action to a standstill and just take

your time. Record yourself blasting some foes, then play it back and have the recorded figure fighting alongside you!



MICROSOFT XBOX



SPLINTER CELL

PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft / **DUE DATE:** 2003

■ Hailed as a Metal Gear Solid killer, the next Tom Clancy game does indeed slot nicely under the tactical espionage action banner. Evasion of enemy soldiers and silent takedowns are made easier thanks to an impressive graphics engine that boasts some startling lighting and shadows. The



third-person view makes the MGS comparison carry even more weight.



SHENMUE 2

PUBLISHER: Sega / **DUE DATE:** TBA

■ Due to the failure of the Dreamcast, particularly in Australia, Shenmue never garnered the commercial success it deserved. This is a conversion of the DC sequel, enhanced and expanded to take full advantage of the superior performance of its new host hardware. Our experience with it can attest to this being much more than a mere port. Whether it gets a release outside of North America is sadly up in the air at the moment.

STEEL BATTALION

PUBLISHER: Capcom / **DUE DATE:** TBA

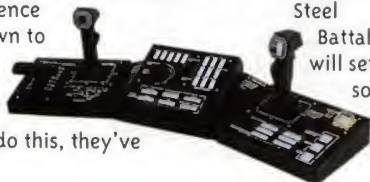
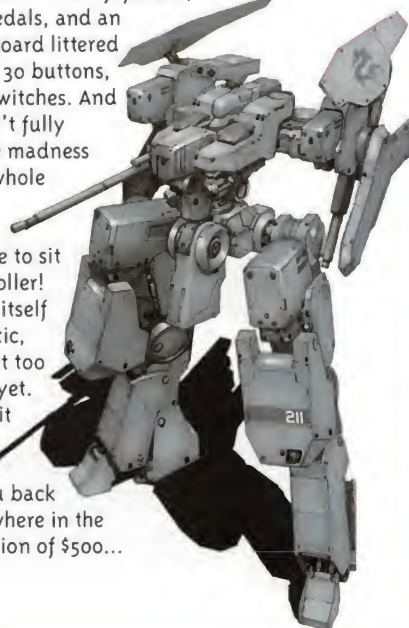
■ There's a fine line between genius and insanity. One glance at Steel Battalion and it's tempting to suggest Capcom may have stepped over this line. This is a game quite unlike any other.

But it looks just like any old mech game, we hear you cry. And, true, it does. You play the pilot of a giant mech, or Vertical Tank (VT), as Capcom has labelled them. There are over 20 mechs to play with through 12 levels consisting mainly of combat-focused objectives. In the near-future scenario, you're enlisted into a multinational task force deployed to overthrow a troublesome government. All fairly standard stuff, you'll agree.

Except that Steel Battalion is a serious mech simulation. Capcom is intent on delivering an exacting, painstakingly faithful experience that caters down to the most minute detail of piloting a mech. And to do this, they've

built a dedicated controller without which the game cannot be played. The controller has — wait for it! — two joysticks, three foot pedals, and an entire dashboard littered with around 30 buttons, knobs and switches. And if that doesn't fully illustrate the madness behind the whole project, get this: you actually have to sit in this controller!

The game itself looks fantastic, but don't get too excited just yet. Rumour has it Steel Battalion will set you back somewhere in the region of \$500...



QUANTUM REDSHIFT

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / **DUE DATE:** 2003

■ In the tradition of Wipeout comes this dazzling futuristic racer. It's still early days, but already Quantum Redshift is lightning fast, smooth as silk, and an unabashed joy to play. The locales are distinctive and magnificently rendered, while the handling is sublime and the array of weapons immensely satisfying. Certain to erase those memories of Wipeout Fusion in no time at all.

MORROWIND

PUBLISHER: Bethesda / DUE DATE: September

■ Already a massive success on PC, this is the first major roleplaying release on Xbox. Bethesda promises a huge world to explore, in which the player has the freedom to fashion a character of his own devising, accept or decline a multitude of quests, ally with a variety of factions, and generally experience the game however you wish. Check out the game of the month this issue for the PC review.



ALSO ON: PC



ALSO ON: PS2

DEAD TO RIGHTS

PUBLISHER: Namco / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ If Splinter Cell is rising to Metal Gear's challenge, then Dead to Rights has Max Payne fixed squarely in its sights. Namco's third-person shooter borrows liberally from Remedy's title, with the hero regularly shoot-dodging, rolling and diving with bullets spraying everywhere. A nice touch is the ability to grab an enemy and use him as cover while still picking off his companions.



TOE JAM + EARL 3

PUBLISHER: Sega / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ It's been ten years since they last appeared on Sega's Mega Drive, but it appears Toe Jam & Earl are as funky as ever. A co-op mode allows two players to attempt to retrieve the vital 12 Albums of Funk, stolen by those decidedly unfunky earthlings. Rhythm action elements complement the platforming, while randomly generated levels ensure vast replayability.



FABLE (PROJECT EGO)

PUBLISHER: Lionhead/EA / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Touted as the most ambitious RPG ever made, Project Ego remains something of an enigma. Graphically it is astounding — high poly models, bump-mapped environments and real time lighting combine for a visual treat. And the concept of your character's appearance morphing depending on your actions is intriguing. Spend a majority of time in the sun and your skin will become dark, wrinkled and leathery, for instance. Or specialise in the use of heavy weapons in combat, such as a broadsword or battle axe, and your muscles will develop at a rate

far greater than if you preferred to pursue thievery or magic.

As you progress, your growing fame will result in villagers approaching just to look at you, children adopting your chosen hair style, and audiences gathering wherever you strut your stuff in combat. The idea is to chart the player's progress, not just in the statistics (the levels and experiences points) of a typical RPG, but in immediate, visible and tangible ways.

The goal is to craft a tale where the player can choose to be or do whatever he wishes, and the world will respond to those choices in a natural way. The world doesn't wait for you to act; there's a story about to unfold, but it's up to you to decide to what extent you wish to become caught up in it.

However, much like the early previews of Black & White, it's easy to be suspicious that this is all hot air. As of yet, there's been no actual demonstration of any gameplay inside Project Ego. It sounds great in theory, but when's the practical lesson?



B. C.

PUBLISHER: Lionhead/EA / DUE DATE: 2003

■ Along with Fable, Intrepid's B.C. is the first fruit of Lionhead's satellite studios. It's the story of evolution in game form, as it traces the development of a tribe of primitive humans throughout prehistory. Building on concepts from Black & White, the player has to teach the tribe how to perform tasks and actions. Hopefully this will cater for unique experiences for each player.

MICROSOFT XBOX



DEAD OR ALIVE: EXTREME BEACH VOLLEY- BALL

PUBLISHER: Tecmo / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ When we first heard this announcement, we thought it was a joke. But, no, Microsoft and Tecmo are deadly serious about this DOA spin-off. Imagine the beach arena from DOA3, populated solely by the game's feminine assets, a ball, a net, and an allegedly realistic volleyball simulation. Flash of unadulterated genius or cynically sexist marketing ploy? You decide.



THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

PUBLISHER: Vivendi / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ While EA has snapped up the rights to produce games based on the recent film, Vivendi Universal owns the rights to the original books and is set to deliver the first, The Fellowship of the Ring, only on Xbox in time for Christmas.

First off, it's been the developer's intention to remain as faithful to Tolkien's vision (as opposed to Peter Jackson's) as possible. As such, they've scoured each page for visual references and brought each location to life with dedicated fidelity. The end result is an occasionally cutesy, yet startlingly detailed medieval world, almost like the new Zelda might have been if Miyamoto had not taken the cel-shading path.

The player assumes the role of Frodo and participates in what can adequately be

described as an action-adventure. There are creatures to eliminate, small puzzles to solve, and of course people to talk to throughout the journey to the river Anduin. Once Frodo has encountered Aragorn and Gandalf, he can call upon their assistance — the former's swordsmanship may be needed or the latter's magical power might be essential. It's a pity only three of the Fellowship have made it into the game as playable characters, since it's easy to imagine how others such as Gimli and Legolas would have added even more gameplay variety. Yet this neglect is sure to be compensated by the inclusion of many characters and incidents that didn't make it into the recent film. All up, a less gritty alternative to EA's Two Towers title.



MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / **DUE DATE:** 2003

■ Comparisons with GTA3 will haunt this Xbox rendition of the PC racing series wherever it goes. But they'll always fall wide of the mark. Midtown Madness isn't about crime, it's all about racing on the edge through dense traffic, city parks, crowded sidewalks and famous landmarks. The arcade physics suit the mood perfectly, while the destructible environments add to the fun.



KUNG FU CHAOS

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / **DUE DATE:** 2003

■ Super Smash Bros Melee has sold the Gamecube in both Japan and the US, so it's no surprise to see a clone up and running already on Xbox. Kung Fu Chaos features a cast of cute characters battling it out over a series of arenas inspired by popular movies. The dynamic environments mean the battle conditions change constantly, but the simplistic moves could limit the appeal.

PSYCHONAUTS

PUBLISHER: Double Fine / **DUE DATE:** 2003

■ From the warped brain of Tim Schafer, legendary creator of Grim Fandango and Full Throttle, comes this appropriately skewed action-adventure for the Xbox. Little has been revealed, save to say the player must jump into the minds of various characters and complete an array of devious tasks throughout a surreal platform-esque world.





DEATHROW

PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ The spirit of Speedball is alive and well on Xbox. Swedish developer Southend Interactive is recreating the brutal delights of this violent future sport with Deathrow. Games are won by any means necessary, whether that's through scoring more goals or crippling your opponents so they can't field a team. Supports up to eight players via link-up and, presumably Xbox Live.



WHACKED!

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ A party game, where four players duke it out across a series of combat-oriented mini-games? With Whacked!, Microsoft is attempting to rectify the mistake made with its dismal launch title, Fuzion Frenzy. Early signs are positive, thanks to a far more focused remit, tighter play mechanics, and much-needed overriding sense of humour. Surprisingly good.



GUN METAL

PUBLISHER: Rage / **DUE DATE:** TBA

■ One of a raft of mech games currently in development on Xbox. It's enough to suspect that Microsoft believes Japan's affection can be won through relentless waves of assault from giant robots. They may be right. In addition to a lurid colour scheme, Gun Metal adds a further twist of allowing the player's mech to transform from robot to fighter jet at the press of a button.



CRAZY TAXI 3

PUBLISHER: Sega / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ An uninspired update to a rapidly exhausting series. Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller sees Sega uncharacteristically bereft of creativity and content to recycle ideas without pause to innovate or indeed add anything even slightly new. It may well be the definitive version, but this is a game whose time has come and gone.



TAO FENG

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / **DUE DATE:** TBA

■ While Midway churns out another lame episode in the Mortal Kombat saga, that game's original creator John Tobias has been hard at work on a new fighter, Tao Feng. Immediately obvious are the vast arenas in which you fight, as the various fighting moves actually encourage players to move around, explore and make use of the interactive environments. Mortal Kombat vs Tao Feng? We know who we'd put money on.



HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3

PUBLISHER: Sega / **DUE DATE:** Late 2002

■ Where did the cel-shading go? Sega has ditched the 'toon look and reverted back to type for the latest iteration of its successful light-gun franchise. The emphasis is now on realism... well, as realistic as hordes of zombies can get. Branching paths further the replay value, while the new shotgun (which can blast multiple enemies) adds a minor tactical element to proceedings. Dropping the cel shading has sucked the appeal right out of this upcoming shooter.



MICROSOFT XBOX



ALSO
ON:
GCN



CRIMSON SKIES

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / DUE DATE: 2003

■ When you look at Microsoft's PC games range, this always appeared an obvious choice to undergo an Xbox conversion. Crimson Skies is a game of air combat set in an alternate history that parallels our own 1930s and 40s. It's no flight sim; the controls are accessible and allow you to take-off immediately into the dogfighting action. A slightly camp, Boy's Own Adventure humour prevails throughout.

GALLEON

PUBLISHER: Interplay / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Lara Croft creator Toby Gard continues to try to reinvent the 3D action-adventure with Galleon, a tale of pirates and platforming. The control system is unlike anything we've played before, and as such is more than a little off-putting at first. Persistence (and some friendly tips from Gard himself!) pays dividends, however, and soon you're wondering why all games aren't like this. A good bet for the Xbox's biggest sleeper hit.



PHANTOM CRASH

PUBLISHER: Phantagram / DUE DATE: TBA

■ Korean developer and publisher Phantagram has pinned its hopes on Xbox, with all its upcoming releases (Strident, Duality, Kingdom Under Fire) heading to the console. The best of the bunch is Phantom Crash, yet another mech action game, albeit one boasting more style than most and cleverly inspired by the classic Sega shooter Virtual On.



KAKUTO CHOJIN

PUBLISHER: Dream Factory / DUE DATE: TBA

■ Kakuto Chojin is a dark, gritty looking one-on-one fighting game from Japanese developer Dream Factory. Semi-realistic combat moves and some brilliant character models and breathtaking animation are the highlights. Dream Factory was responsible for Tobal (PSone) and The Bouncer (PS2), which either augurs well or bodes ill, depending on your perspective.



ALSO
ON:
PS2
PC



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

PUBLISHER: Konami / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ As expected, Konami has announced a version of Metal Gear Solid 2 bound for Xbox and PC. We assume this is what was previously being referred to as Metal Gear Solid X. This repackaged edition, featuring some special new scenes and a truckload of very cool-looking VR missions, will also reappear on PS2 and PC at some point. Rumour has it the GCN missed out because the game won't fit on a single GCN disc.

MALICE

PUBLISHER: Vivendi / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Once vaunted as a flagship Xbox title, the subsequent passage of time has seen Malice (from Croc and Starfox creator Argonaut) wane in appeal. It's now even revealed to be heading to PS2 (and probably GCN) as well. Xbox owners need not fret over the loss of an exclusive title, since Malice looks no more than a very ordinary and deeply generic platformer with chronic framerate issues.



ALSO
ON:
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PC



ALSO ON: XBOX



DEUS EX 2

PUBLISHER: Eidos / DUE DATE: 2003

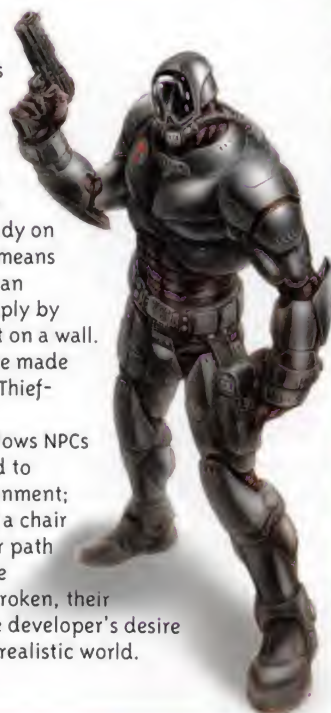
■ After winning countless Game of the Year awards for the original Deus Ex, developer Ion Storm would be crazy to alter the formula, so for this sequel the aim is to add more gameplay depth. Deus Ex 2: Invisible War won't contain as many missions or maps as the original, but it will boast a far greater degree of interaction and gameplay possibilities.

For a start, there's the branching story where all your actions have genuine consequences. At no stage will you be forced into allying with a particular faction, as in the first game. Instead, while the missions follow a linear structure, your objectives in each will change based on previous decisions.



An extensively modified Unreal Warfare engine allows locations such as London, Cairo and Seattle to be recreated in exquisite detail. A new realtime lighting system (already on a par with Doom 3's) means you can be alerted to an enemy's presence simply by seeing its shadow cast on a wall. Also, stealth tactics are made easier by the use of a Thiefesque light meter.

A new AI system allows NPCs to notice and respond to changes to the environment; from walking around a chair you've placed in their path to commenting on the window you've just broken, their behaviour reflects the developer's desire to build a believably realistic world.



LIONHEART

PUBLISHER: Interplay / DUE DATE: 2003

■ It may not be Fallout 3, but Interplay's latest RPG does utilise the Fallout rule set with its vast array of skills, perks and traits. The setting steers clear of D&D derived cliches, while the gameplay reportedly sits somewhere between the combat focus of Icewind Dale and the dialogue-heavy Planescape Torment.



EVERQUEST 2

PUBLISHER: Sony Online / DUE DATE: 2003

■ This visually arresting massively multiplayer RPG is proof that online-only games need not be graphical throwbacks. Verant claims to have addressed a host of issues concerning the original, yet the staggeringly high system requirements may well create its own problem for users. At least we've still got a couple of years to upgrade.



ALSO ON:
XBOX
PS2



BLACK HAWK DOWN

PUBLISHER: Novalogic / DUE DATE: Late 2002

Based on events in the film of the same name and depicting the American intervention in the war in Somalia, this is a squad-based military shooter, unsurprisingly enough. The battlefields are suitably expansive and the co-operative multiplayer sounds promising.



THE SIMS ONLINE

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts / DUE DATE: TBA

Run a virtual business, date a virtual partner, throw a virtual party. Whatever tack EA tries to use to convince us of the worth of The Sims Online, it remains difficult to view it as anything other than a glorified chatroom. Everyone has behaved politely in the small, controlled demos we've seen, but surely it's just going to be chaos when there's a million players involved.



AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / DUE DATE: Late 2002

Definitely a classy real time strategy game, Age of Mythology appears to offer enough that's new to warrant everyone's attention. Many familiar Age elements have been retained, yet the addition of heroes, myth units and god powers are intriguing. Our favourite is the one-use lightning bolt that can strike any enemy instantly dead.



FREELANCER

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / DUE DATE: TBA

A space sim where you can go where you want and do as you please? Freelancer is primed to be the spiritual successor to Elite. Developer Digital Anvil has cited Grand Theft Auto 3 as an influence, in the sense you can depart from the main story whenever you decide to wander off for some trading or piracy on the side.





ALSO
ON:
XBOX
(rumored)



DOOM 3

PUBLISHER: Activision / DUE DATE: 2003

■ id Software's continuation of their most famous franchise is a Doom game in name only. Rather than throwing hordes of enemies at the player, they've opted for fewer foes but bigger shocks. It's almost like a survival horror game played from a first person perspective. It works a treat, too.

The cramped, claustrophobic environments are short on draw distance, but high on texture quality, poly count and realtime lighting effects. Dimly lit corridors trail off into pitch black voids, while loading pauses occur every couple of

doors. Yet such a performance trade-off complements the gameplay perfectly. It's hard to complain when there's a frighteningly detailed zombie clawing at your face.

However, Doom 3 still has plenty of questions to answer. How will the engine cope with larger locations? How will the in-game cinematics (that switch from first to thirdperson) affect the flow of the action? And after Halo, can we really return to the tactless enemy AI of braindead zombies and demons?

Whatever the answers, it's going to be a thrill finding out. Expect the return of some very familiar Doom enemies...



MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR

PUBLISHER: Activision / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Bigger is better is the motto of Creative Assembly's second iteration of the Total War franchise. The strategic map is bigger and more detailed. The armies are bigger, with up to five times as many units on screen. There are more races, troop types, maps, commands, strategic choices, etc. Shogun was superb, but this should be even better.



C+C GENERALS

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Westwood's first foray into the field of genuinely 3-D real time strategy (and, no, Emperor's token effort doesn't count). The quite spectacular game engine looks to be the biggest innovation yet seen in the Command & Conquer series. Here's hoping they also adopt some of the recent strides its rivals have made in the gameplay stakes.





MECH-WARRIOR MERCENARIES

PUBLISHER: Microsoft / DUE DATE: 2003

■ Although bearing the Mech 4 name, this is a stand-alone title. Harking back to the Mercenaries spin-off produced for Mech 2, here you control a coterie of hired guns, proffering your services around the galaxy to the highest bidder. The free-form structure and squad-based action should prove a winning combination.



BATTLEFIELD 1942

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ Combining the vehicle control of Operation Flashpoint with the pace of Counter-Strike, this online combat is the ultimate playground for virtual soldiers. You can drive jeeps and tanks, pilot fighter planes or just run around on foot across a series of island war zones. A strong solo campaign benefits the multiplayer focus.



STAR WARS GALAXIES

PUBLISHER: LucasArts / DUE DATE: 2003

■ Although recently announced for release on Xbox and PS2, the first massively multiplayer Star Wars game is still a long, long way from being finished. Behind the graphically impressive engine, there's still a lack of discernible gameplay elements. Nevertheless, the lure of "living" in the Star Wars galaxy will no doubt prove irresistible to many.



NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

PUBLISHER: Vivendi / DUE DATE: Early 2003

■ Post-Half-Life, No One Lives Forever remains one of the best PC shooters. This sequel revives the adventures of espionage agent Cate Archer with a host of new gadgets, weapons, locations, a new co-op mode and a healthy dollop of 60s kitsch. The latest version of the Littech engine isn't exactly Unreal Warfare, but it does the job with some to spare.



ALSO ON:
XBOX
PS2

ALSO ON:
XBOX



EVE: THE 2ND GENESIS

PUBLISHER: CCP / DUE DATE: TBA

■ Iceland may not have produced terribly many noteworthy videogames, but the forthcoming Eve may prove there is indeed a first for everything. Drawing inspiration from the classic space-trading sim Elite, Eve is a massively multiplayer space adventure where players are promised the freedom to do whatever they wish. Conceptually and graphically, this leaves Westwood's hyped Earth & Beyond for dead.

SIM CITY 4000

PUBLISHER: Maxis / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ After the runaway success of The Sims, it's almost refreshing to see Maxis return to the series that kickstarted the whole Sim craze in the first place. Once again, Sim City 4000 lets the player return to the role of city mayor, managing a populace of thousands and overseeing taxation, public services and all manner of town planning. Like the earlier games, you have to monitor the well-being of your citizens and be careful to balance commercial and environmental interests in order to grow a thriving metropolis.

New features include a god mode, in which you have access to various natural disasters. Send a hurricane ripping through the downtown area or set some dilapidated tenements ablaze at the click of a button, all in the name of testing your city's efficiency. Elsewhere there's the inevitable cross-over with The Sims. You can import a Sim from that game and let them live in your Sim City (or of course, you can create a new Sim). These Sims act

as barometers of how well you're running the city. You can settle them in specific neighbourhoods to provide feedback on which needs are being met and which aren't. Maxis hopes this kind of intimate detail will give players greater emotional attachment to their virtual town. Naturally, the sadistic can still enjoy making their Sim's life miserable.



REPUBLIC

PUBLISHER: Eidos / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ In development for over three years now, Republic should be finished in time for Christmas. It's a political simulation set in a fictional Soviet nation where the player recruits allies to win favour and ultimately gain control over the state. Events can be manipulated in real time, while the non-linear structure allows you to choose the manner in which you ascend into power.



WORLD OF WARCRAFT

PUBLISHER: Blizzard / DUE DATE: 2003

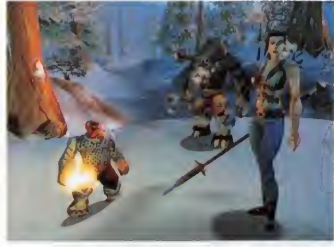
■ Of all the online worlds in development now, Blizzard's extension of the Warcraft universe appears to have the most substance. It's still early days, of course, but the quest and party systems as well as the plot demands of the larger world fiction appear to offer plenty of depth. Damn, it looks so pretty, too!



NEVER-WINTER NIGHTS

PUBLISHER: Infogrames / DUE DATE: October

■ The powerful toolset shipping with Bioware's next RPG is undoubtedly the highlight of the game. With it you can build your own campaigns, including towns, dungeons, NPCs, magic items and monster encounters. As Bioware says, if you don't like their quests, you can just make your own.



ALSO ON: XBOX



THE Y-PROJECT

PUBLISHER: Westka / DUE DATE: TBA

■ One of the more original first person shooters in development, The Y-Project pits mankind against a race of mutated insects. Players progress through missions by choosing which faction to ally with – military or scientific. In turn, these choices affect the tools the player has at his disposal to overcome each obstacle. Powered by the latest Unreal engine, it looks very tasty, too.



ALSO ON: XBOX PS2

BLACK + WHITE 2

PUBLISHER: EA / DUE DATE: TBA

■ While Lionhead is planning on adapting the original Black & White to Xbox and PS2, the genuine sequel is heading to PC, possibly even as soon as the end of next year. Many of the first game's concepts remain (good vs evil, the creature avatar), though there appears to be a decided shift towards more recognisable real time strategy aspects.





NEOCRON

PUBLISHER: CDV / DUE DATE: 2003

■ Attempting to combine the fast-paced combat of a first person shooter with the deep skill system and interaction of a roleplaying game, Neocron is incredibly ambitious. Think Deus Ex, but online and massively multiplayer. Think Halo meets Everquest played out on the set of Blade Runner. It's either going to be genius or a glorious failure, but it's too early to tell.



UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

PUBLISHER: Infogrames / DUE DATE: Late 2002

■ While we wait (and wait...) for Epic to reveal more (something, anything would be nice!) about Unreal Warfare, their friends at Digital Extremes are working on an update to the popular Unreal Tournament. Not to be confused with the admittedly very similar Unreal Championship on Xbox, UT 2003 is a genuine UT sequel, once again aimed squarely at online play and expanding on the success formula.

Like UC, Deus Ex 2 and Thief 3, UT 2003 uses the latest iteration of the Unreal engine. To this end, it's as technically polished and impressive as you might

imagine. On the early version we've played, the draw distance and texture and model detail are peerless.

The focus is certainly on team-play. New modes such as Bombing Run (similar to Team Arena's Harvester, but with basketball hoops!) are introduced, while old favourites like Domination have been fine-tuned. Many UT weapons return, some in slightly modified form, while again a bunch of other tools of destruction are new. The Tag Rifle, which calls upon a satellite-mounted laser to fire on opponents from the heavens, is certainly original.

Player movement has been tweaked to include double jumps, wall-jumping and a handful of special moves powered by adrenaline. Collecting frags in quick succession or via headshots builds your adrenaline meter, which can then be spent to vent even greater destruction.

With Doom 3 and Unreal 2 shipping with minimal multiplayer components, UT 2003 looks set to be your virtual future sport of choice in the coming months.



THE MOVIES

PUBLISHER: Lionhead / DUE DATE: 2003

■ In addition to Black & White 2, Lionhead is in pre-production on a film set sim, appropriately titled The Movies. You play as a movie producer

(who, let's face it, is "god" in the film biz) and are tasked with building your studio, commissioning scripts, deciding which films get made and which actors to use. Things get more hands-on when it comes to the actual filming, too. Promising, but don't expect to see it anytime soon.



COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO

PUBLISHER: Sierra / DUE DATE: TBA

■ Essentially a single-player version of the premiere online shooter, Counter-Strike, Condition Zero features a mission-based campaign focused (somewhat unsettlingly) around eliminating global terrorism. Squad-based tactical action is the order of the day, while the game is powered by an enhanced, yet dated, Half-Life engine.





ALSO
ON:
XBOX

MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER

PUBLISHER: EA / DUE DATE: October

■ Not to be confused with *Star Wars: Bounty Hunter* by LucasArts, this game is about a character called Mace Griffin (not to be confused with *Star Wars'* Mace Windu)... Hmmm is there a theme here? This game mixes first person shooter play with some space combat and running of intergalactic errands. Looks great for Xbox too.



UNREAL 2

PUBLISHER: Infogrames / DUE DATE: November

■ The single-player, planet-hopping follow-up to the original Unreal, this may well be the PC's answer to Halo. Developer Legend is hoping to balance plenty of memorable action set-pieces with the more random elements enabled by its squad-based tactics. This could be the game to revive the recently moribund FPS genre.



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FOR PC

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WIN THE MYST TRILOGY

FOR PC

In the wake of news that Myst is becoming a MMORPG in the form of Myst Online, we thought we'd give you guys and gals a chance to go back and rediscover all three Myst games at once! Thanks to Ubi Soft, we are giving five readers the chance to win the Myst Trilogy on PC. It comes in a very special collectors pack – all very spiffy eh what? To enter, just answer the following:

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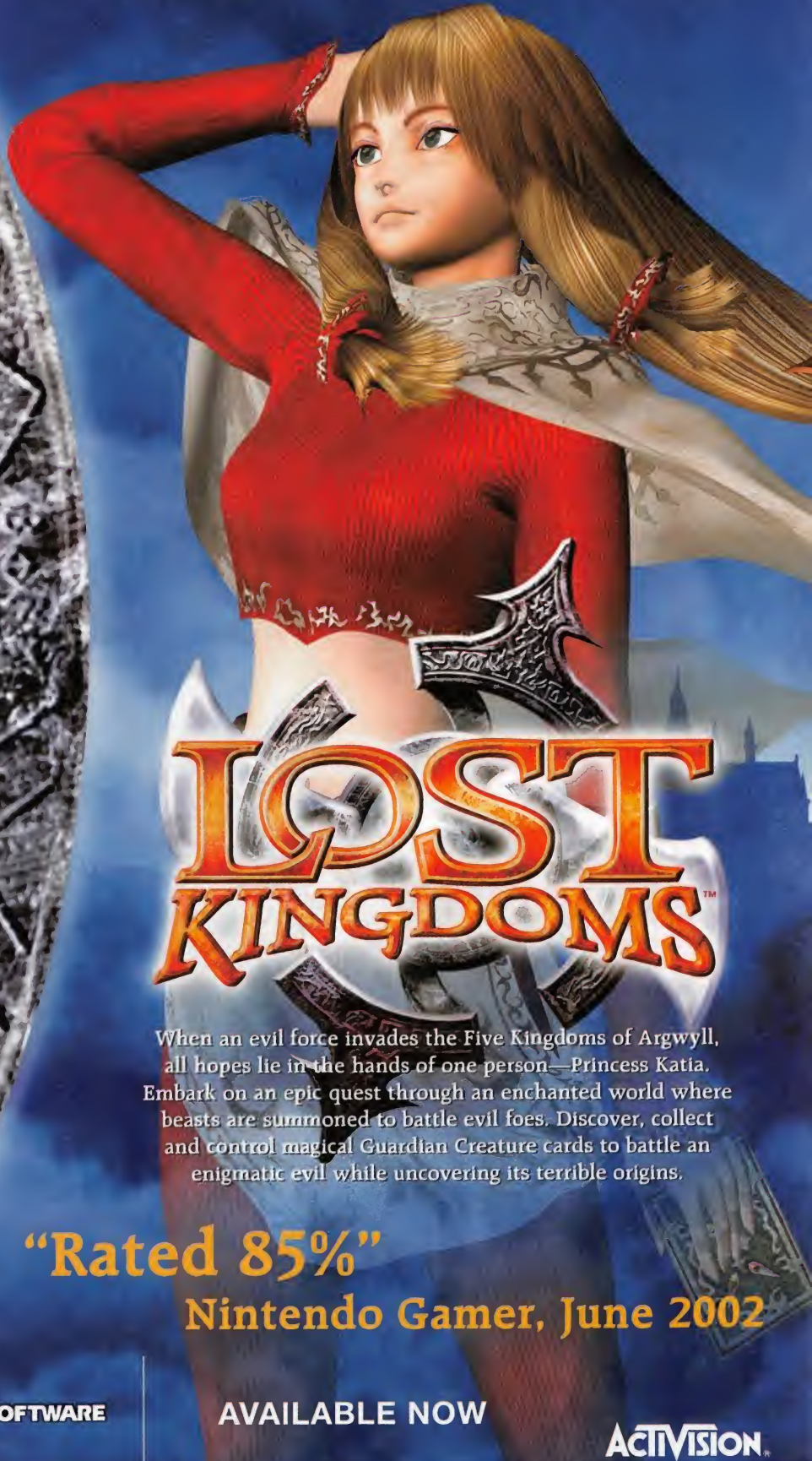
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“Rated 85%”

Nintendo Gamer, June 2002



FROM SOFTWARE

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ACTIVISION

REVIEWS

»PC

GAME OF THE MONTH

Morrowind

Role-play the rest of the year away in a land of dark elves, dark dungeons, and dark skies. Morrowind is here.

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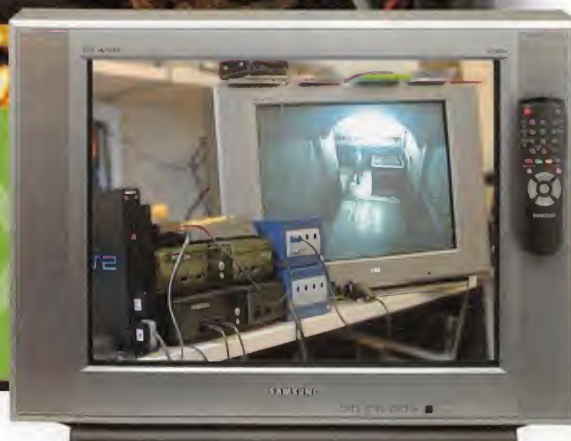
54 »HYPER

HYPERR

All console games are tested on the Samsung Plano CS29A200 TV.

SAMSUNG

ELECTRONICS



GAME THEORY

DAVID WILGOOSE



» E3 2002 suffered in comparison to last year's event only by virtue of lacking the revelation of new console hardware. With Xbox and Gamecube now known quantities, the focus shifted to the quantity and quality of the games. In this regard, to judge from the sheer number of solid, playable titles on display on all formats, it was perhaps the best E3 yet.

Many observers ranked the Xbox as the best performing console of the show. Whether this was due to it actually having the best games or simply the ease with which they surpassed everyone's initially low expectations is difficult to tell. Nonetheless, such debate hardly diminishes the remarkable breadth and depth of the Xbox games present at the stands of Microsoft and its third-parties. In addition to exceptional exclusives such as Blinx, Unreal Championship and Panzer Dragoon, nearly every third-party publisher was showing an Xbox version of each of its titles.

The same couldn't be said of Gamecube. Nintendo, of course, could boast the most frequented stand and several of the most promising games (namely, Zelda and Mario Sunshine) of the whole show, but the Gamecube presence elsewhere was decidedly lightweight. Unless things change quickly, it appears another Nintendo console could follow the tragic route of a thin release schedule propped up sporadically by stellar first-party franchises.

A thin schedule is the last thing Sony needs to worry about. Yet despite bragging about the end of the console war, an air of complacency surrounded the PS2 offerings for the rest of the year. Based on the vast range of games, it's still the only machine to get if you want just one console. But Sony will need more than feeble updates (Tomb Raider) and unimpressive tech demos (The Getaway) if they hope to maintain the momentum established last year. They can't rely solely on GTA4. Or can they?

Meanwhile the trend away from PC-only development continued. Many PC titles were announced as also heading to various consoles, while the total number of games was surely down on last year despite being supplemented by a fair amount of mediocrity from small-time publishers and independent developers.

hyper_game_theory@hotmail.com



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68



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THE HYPER CREW'S TOP 5

Eliot Fish - Editor

1. Morrowind - PC
2. Timesplitters 2 - PS2
3. Gitaroo Man - PS2
4. Final Fantasy X - PS2
5. MotoGP - Xbox

Cam Shea - Deputy Editor

1. Legend of Zelda - GCN
2. Super Mario Sunshine - GCN
3. Gitaroo Man - PS2
4. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 - PS2
5. Blinx - Xbox

Malcolm Campbell - Art guy

1. Gitaroo Man - PS2
2. Final Fantasy X - PS2
3. Yoshi's Island - SNES
4. FIFA World Cup - Xbox
5. V-Rally 3 - PS2

David Wildgoose - Reviewer

1. Thief III - Xbox
2. Pro Evolution Soccer - PS2
3. Advance Wars - GBA
4. Quantum Redshift - Xbox
5. Sly Raccoon - PS2

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!



PC

Morrowind



CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Bethesda >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: June >> REQUIRED: PIII 600, 128MB RAM, GeForce Pro or better.

ELIOT FISH goes missing for a few months...

There are role-playing games, and then there are platformers, action games and strategy games, masquerading as role-playing games. Diablo, for instance, gets coined an RPG but is an action/adventure game more than anything. The Legend of Zelda probably qualifies as an action/puzzle adventure rather than an RPG, and so on. The true meaning of the "role-playing game" has almost been completely lost. Until now.

SNIFFING AND SNOOPING

The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind is a role-playing game in the truest sense. As soon as you take your first step in Morrowind you are well and truly transported into the land that Bethesda have created for you. It's up to you how you build up your

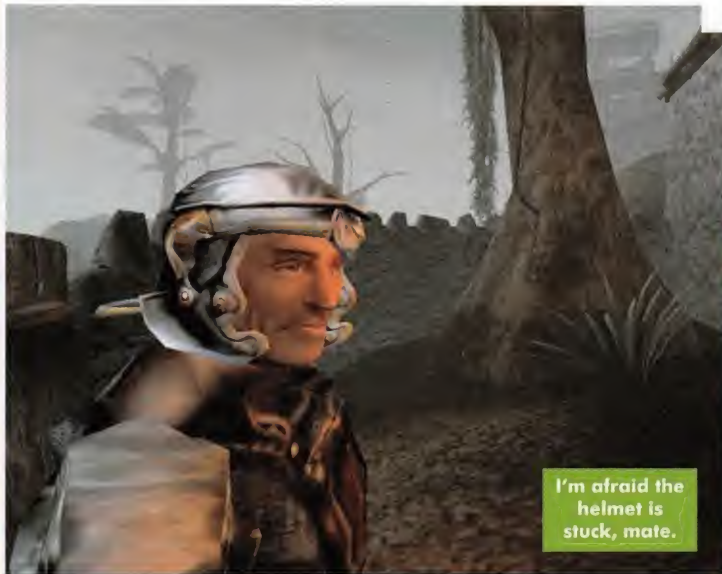
reputation in this land... do you want to be a renowned do-gooder? Feared assassin? Charismatic Alchemist? A backstabbing Mage with a Skooma habit? The many combinations of character types are finally achievable in this stunning new RPG. You will live and breathe this game.

This is the third game in the Elder Scrolls series, and it stays true to the concept Bethesda has championed of a huge go-anywhere fantasy world that is rich and real and memorable. Daggerfall, the second game in the series, was memorable probably more for the many bugs and glitches in it rather than the expansive fantasy land that it did a very good job of creating. Morrowind is not without its fair share of strange bugs too, but thankfully, none of them seem so critical that they will

prevent you from spending a few months of your life well and truly immersed in its world and loving every minute of it.

Upon first walking down the gangplank of the ship and onto the island of Vvardenfell, you'll get a small indication of just how much detail there is to enjoy in this game. Almost everything you pass the mouse over has a weight, value and description — even the spoons and forks on the tables, or the lanterns on the wall and the bread in the baskets. And yes, you can slip any such item into your sack to flog off at the local shop if your thieving instinct so desires... You will





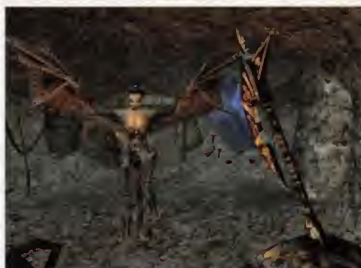
I'm afraid the helmet is stuck, mate.



Have at me? Hey, wait a second...!



Maxwell's earlier golden hammer.



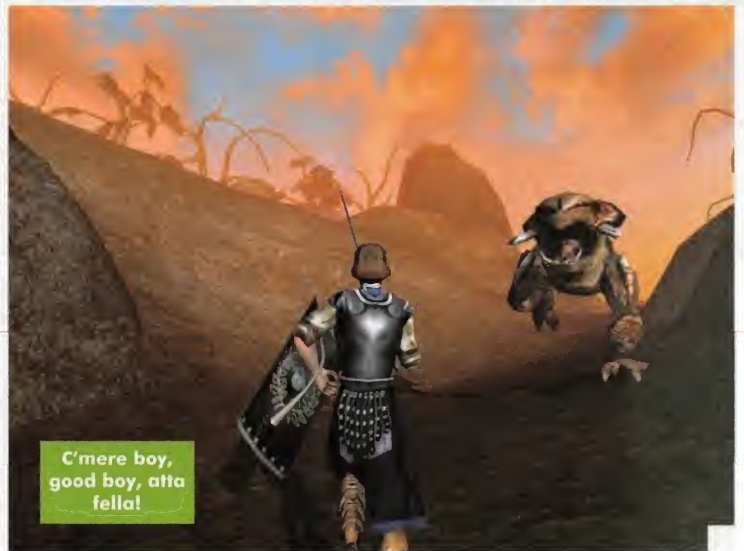
Is this a gothic nightclub or what?



How much for a foil?



You don't need to shout. Geez!



C'mere boy, good boy, attia fella!

literally spend your entire first weekend just sniffing around the first village, meeting people, buying stuff and snooping into everyone's personal lives.

SCREWING WITH CLASS TYPES

Character creation naturally comes first, and *Morrowind* allows you to tackle it three different ways. Either you can choose from a set class, answer a series of questions Ultima-style to determine your class, or whip up your very own custom class by selecting your starting skills — five major and five minor. You can even name your own class and the game will then bring it up in the odd NPC conversation. You can actually play as a big, beefy barbarian in

heavy armour who is actually a magic user; or as a stealthy thief who enjoys using a massively overweight two-handed axe rather than a traditional dagger. There are no limits here when it comes to screwing with traditional class types. You'll just have to work harder on certain skills if they don't come naturally to your race.

For instance, Bretons begin the game with natural magic bonuses, as do elves, so it makes sense to choose a race that roughly fits the character type you have in mind. Our money went on the Redguard; a race known to trust their own instincts and stick it out on their own as a solo adventurer, rogue or bounty hunter. Just the way we like it.

Do you want to be a renowned do-gooder? A backstabbing Mage with a Skooma habit?

You can, however, even change your mind halfway through the game and ignore your longsword proficiencies for a sudden interest in magic power. Or turn your back on your well-honed magic skills and take up archery. You can work on any of the available skills at any time, and they will level up the more you use them. If you didn't choose those skills at the beginning of the game, you're just going to have to work a lot harder to get them to a truly usable level. But again, the choice is there... Handing the player this kind of complete control over their character is what encourages the true role-playing. You can become whatever you desire.

A LOVING TOUCH

This is not a game for those with short attention spans. The land is

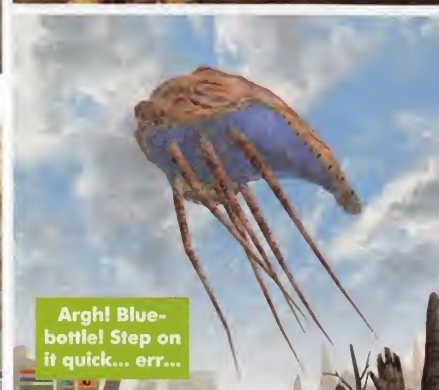
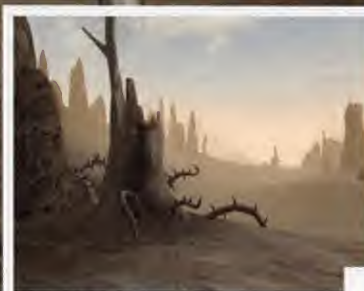
immense, the politics between races, classes and houses complex... hell, the game even involves reading books to enrich yourself with information on the different types of inhabitants, religions, and political problems. Of course, you don't need to do this kind of thing, but it's there if you want the info, and it certainly enhances the experience.

A loving touch didn't just go into the gameworld either, as Bethesda has even put some thought into the game's interface too — you can resize and move about all the pop-up menus on the screen, minimising the map when you don't need it, or expanding the inventory box so you can see everything you're carting around in your pockets without having to scroll. It's still lacking a few features (for instance the icons for armour and other items are hard





Easter Show
wood chopping
comp, circa 1066



Argh! Blue-
bottle! Step on
it quick... err...

to make out in high resolutions), but it's certainly quite user-friendly.

As you might expect, in creating such a huge gameworld that encourages non-linear questing, and the detail within that, Morrowind suffers from a few bugs — and even inexplicable crashes to the desktop. Hopefully, by the time you read this there might be a patch available, but we suggest that you at least read up on the game for some tips before you play (lowering the hardware acceleration in your AUDIO settings in Windows apparently helps prevent crashes on some configurations). It's even worth a visit to the website

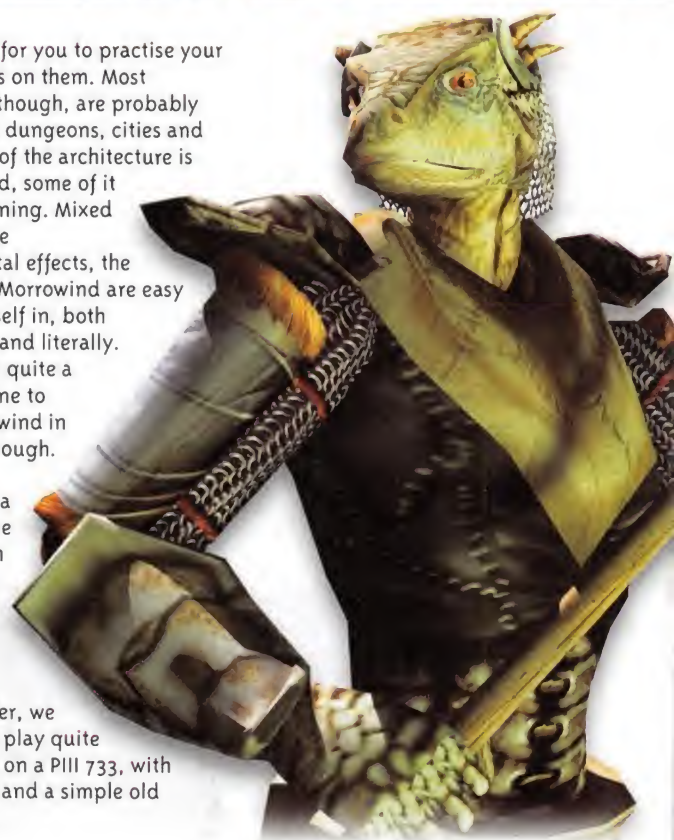
(www.elderscrolls.com) to take a look in the forums to see how other users have got around the hardware problems or quest bugs.

There are other more gameplay specific faults though, which just take the shine off the game a bit. For instance, dialogue topic responses more often than not are the same from different NPCs. It's a bit annoying to ask the same question to NPCs of very different races and classes, only to get exactly the same piece of dialogue text in response. You need to systematically click through the options every time you meet someone, just in case they respond differently. A minor quibble, probably.

FLAT OUT STUNNING

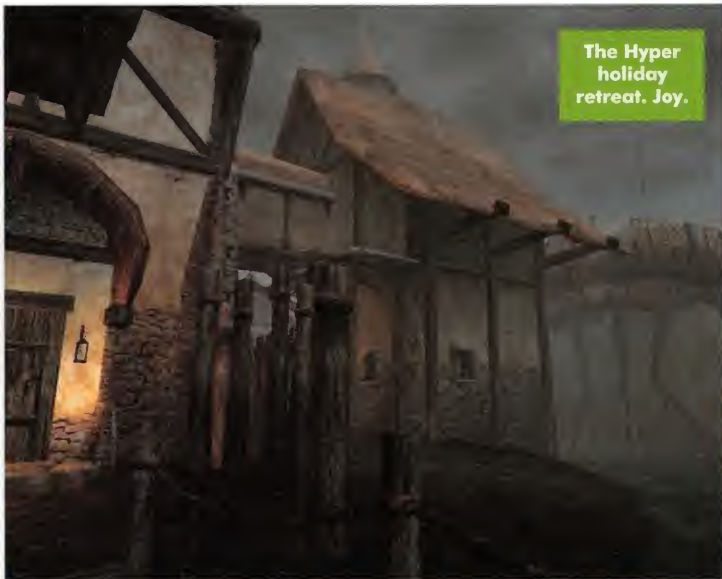
Certainly, there is no such repetition in the landscape. Moving from town to town on foot will reveal some stunning locations — lakes, caves, rocky outcrops, forests and more. Not only that, but the weather changes, the day slowly changes to night and strange creatures go about their grazing and foraging,

just waiting for you to practise your archery skills on them. Most impressive, though, are probably the amazing dungeons, cities and ruins. Some of the architecture is truly inspired, some of it flat out stunning. Mixed with the eerie environmental effects, the locations in Morrowind are easy to lose yourself in, both figuratively and literally. You do need quite a beefy machine to enjoy Morrowind in full glory, though. We would recommend a 1 Gig machine at least, with 256 MB RAM and a GeForce 2 or higher. Still, thanks to a fogging slider, we were able to play quite comfortably on a PIII 733, with 256 MB RAM and a simple old GeForce Pro.

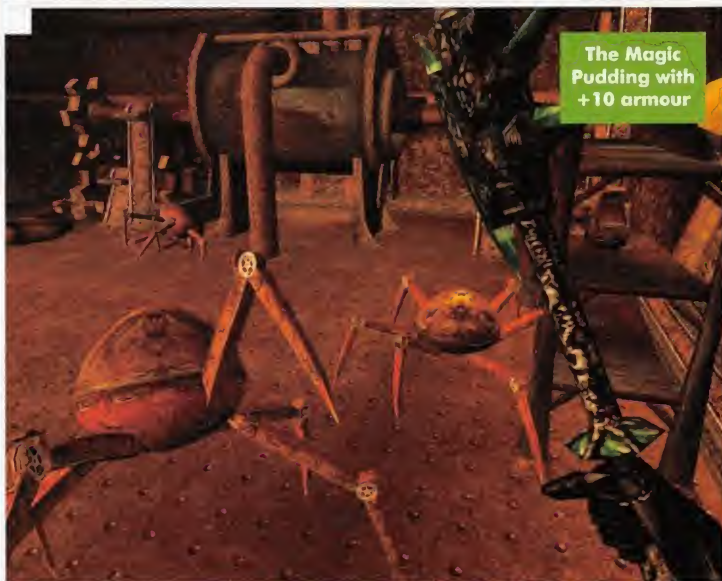


WHERE DO YA GET IT?

» Wondering why you can't find a copy of Morrowind at your local games store? The reason is that the Electronics Boutique retail chain have exclusive distribution of the game. You'll have to pop down to an EB store to buy it. It's the only place that stocks it.



The Hyper holiday retreat. Joy.



The Magic Pudding with +10 armour



These Sydney bushfires really suck.



Can you do me a felaifel?



Jabba the Hutt before he lost his legs.



I guess this is the blue light district.

!!! Download fan created plug-ins for the game at Morrowind Summit: www.rpgplanet.com/morrowind

It would have been nice if there was the odd occasion **where you want to run for your life.**

When it comes to the combat, Morrowind is possibly too easy. Unless you really stray far from your local surroundings, you never really get into anything over your head. It seems your character will always be capable of getting through a situation with a bit of thought, clever use of potions and a bit of auto-saving. It would have been nice if there was the odd occasion where you want to run for your life. Hacking and slashing with a sword, uses the old technique of moving your character in a direction to elicit a different type of attack (slash, thrust, swipe etc.). It works well enough, and your character's ability to dodge or block

attacks comes naturally from stats – or a good old hop out of the way. Magic users should be pleased, as there are many different schools of magic, and a huge number of spells in each. Your repertoire of earth-shattering magic can become quite huge indeed. Thankfully, players who prefer melee combat can also take on a school of magic that simply uses illusion magic to baffle instead of injure your opponents, or restoration magic that you can use to heal and restore your stats.

NPCs do have a bit of a habit of just walking around aimlessly or standing on the spot which is a bit of a shame. It would be nice to see them actually doing stuff, but at least you know where to find them when you need them. The animation of the characters and creatures is not

brilliant, but it's good enough.

Morrowind will not disappoint any PC gamer who loves a good RPG or fantasy romp. The sheer scale of the game will mean you'll spend weeks just working on small side quests, let alone the epic task of completing the game's ambiguous main story. It may not be action-packed enough for some, but you're looking for an RPG to last a lifetime, Morrowind might be just the game you're looking for. ❄️



PLUS: Huge, epic, atmospheric, mysterious, engaging.

MINUS: High PC specs required, many bugs and glitches.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

95 92 93

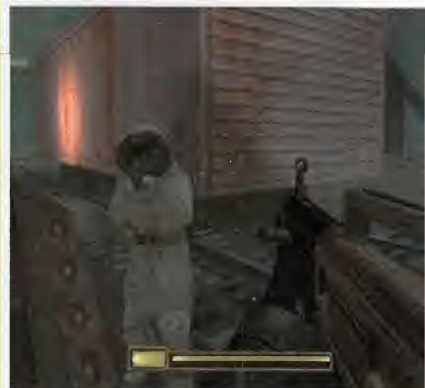
OVERALL

93

Morrowind is arguably one of the finest PC RPGs yet.

REVIEW

»HYPER 59



Soldier of Fortune 2: DOUBLE HELIX

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-32 >> PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PIII-450, 128MB RAM, 3D card

DAVID WILDGOOSE pops a few caps...

Raven Software is the artisan to id Software's artist; the valiant tradesman and the technical virtuoso. Year after year, the studio takes Carmack's latest wondrous piece of bleeding edge technology and bludgeons it into prosaic shapes. From the early days of Hexen to the more recent Elite Force and Jedi Outcast, Raven's history is littered with formulaic, assembly line shooters manufactured for an undemanding audience.

The original Soldier of Fortune followed this same route, sporting only a shameless predilection for explicit gore to distinguish it from the crowd. In essence it remained a generic corridor-based shooter that made no attempt to surprise players.

OLD-SCHOOL STYLINGS
With Double Helix, Raven has added several new elements to the franchise. The player now has the ability to employ stealth aspects in some missions and to fight alongside friendly AI in others. Perhaps the most innovative feature is the random mission generator that does exactly as its name implies with the promise of "infinite" replay value. Yet depressingly, although the effort to provide a different experience must be applauded, too often this sequel reverts back to type. Brilliance is supplied in moments yet rarely sustained, and all-too-quickly gives way to the same tired clichés that have driven the genre into a creative cul-de-sac in recent times. It's like Halo never happened. Ominously, the game's opening

mission gets things off to a lackluster start. It's told in flashback, depicting events of ten years prior, which may help to explain the old-school stylings of the level. The streets of Prague constitute the setting, but it's actually one long hallway with doors and roads conveniently locked and blocked respectively. You quicksave and quickload all the way through, memorising the position of each enemy and never employing any kind of creative tactics when grim persistence (and a slice of luck for those numerous instant death situations) is all



that's required. Veteran FPS players have tasted this vintage a hundred times before and — no — it doesn't get any better with age. Things pick up in the jungles of Colombia where the following missions are set. The comparatively open expanses here enable more diverse approaches. Soon you'll be darting from tree to tree, taking down most enemies from a distance before closing on the few stragglers. In general, such levels encourage an experience that's far more in keeping with the game's quasi-realistic atmosphere, and are thus far more enjoyable. However, the game fails by not delivering enough of this



Crates. They're such a comforting presence.



Looks like he's tired of waiting for the toilet.



I had to shut him up somehow.



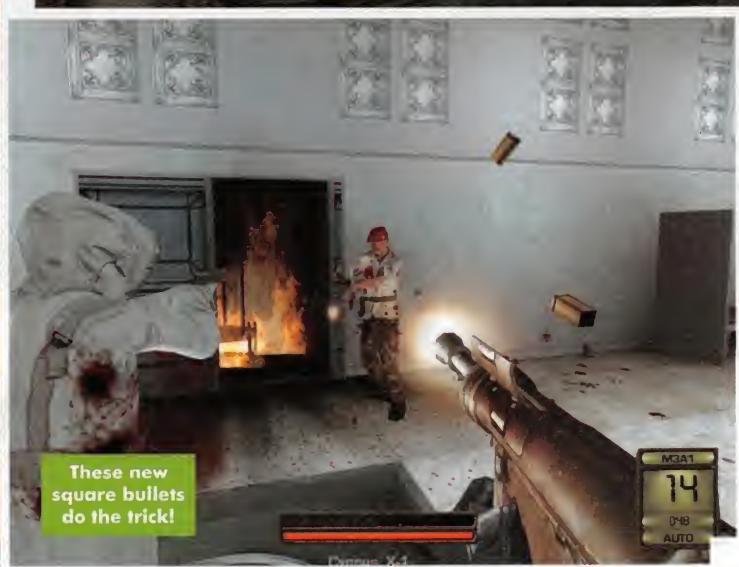
Eliot patrols the Hyper dungeon...



...and the Hyper rooftop...



...and punishes staff for late copy.



These new square bullets do the trick!

type of experience. One minute you're providing covering fire for your advancing squadmates, the next you're trudging through identikit corridors trying to figure out which of the countless number of doors is the one that actually opens and leads you to the next part of the map. When it works, Double Helix is fantastic; when it doesn't, it's desperately tedious.

HIT AND MISS

Nowhere is this hit-and-miss dichotomy more evident than in the new additions: stealth, squad-based skirmishes and the mission generator. The latter sounds like a great idea on paper. But in practice it results in bland, featureless areas and repetitive objectives. The novelty is definitely short-lived.

The stealth model is laughably primitive in that you never have any idea of just how stealthy you are. Nor do the enemy soldiers enter an AI state in between "unaware" and "full alert". And finally, stealth kills are problematic because the only available method (a knife in the

The stealth model is laughably primitive in that you **never have any idea of just how stealthy you are.**

back) gives frustratingly erratic results. Therefore, when stealth is required, the game turns into a trial-and-error situation of farcical proportions.

Conversely, fighting the enemy as part of a small company of marines is tremendously entertaining. They'll chat amongst themselves, offering encouragement and congratulations for particularly swift marksmanship. They'll give you orders along the way, so as you feel part of the team. They also give you the extra firepower to engage in firefights on a larger scale than you could feasibly handle on your own. All these factors make these missions so much more rewarding than the rest of the game. If only there were more of them.

If only there were more opportunities to be creative, too. The objective of each mission is tightly scripted — you must do things exactly the way the designer intended or it's game over. Such short-sighted design does its best to stifle the sense of immersion established by the well-realised environments and mostly impressive AI.

Soldier of Fortune 2 is a frustrating game. If Raven had concentrated its efforts into maximising the potential of the good ideas, it would have been an excellent title. Sadly, given its wildly up-and-down nature, it will leave you feeling unfulfilled.

!!! We're all praying Raven can do something decent with Quake 4.



PLUS: Whilst all the good levels are truly great...

MINUS: ...the bad ones are truly terrible.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	70	77
OVERALL		
78		

A solid shooter dogged by mediocrity.



Ooh there must be treasure there.



Man, the rest of your team is lazy.



"Anyone for a cup of tea?"

PC

Tactical Ops: ASSAULT ON TERROR

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-32 >> PUBLISHER: Microprose >> PRICE: STBA >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: P-200, 64MB RAM, 8MB 3D card >>

DAN TOOSE stopped retching just in time to write this review...

Once in a blue moon, I'll make an exception to the rule where by reviewers are not meant to refer to themselves, or to be particularly opinionated. This tends to coincide with me reviewing a game so shockingly poor I need to grab my soapbox, and sure enough, Tactical Ops: Assault On Terror is just such a stinker.

HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE

For starters, its name is a blatant attempt to cash in on the events of September 11. To capitalise on such a tragic event is utterly disgusting, and much of the industry have already proven that they agree. Numerous developers went as far as to adjust or delay games that might simply remind people of the events in New York.

My gripes with this game only begin with the highly questionable name though, and if the gameplay itself was worth your hard earned money, I'd probably be able to overlook the chosen title. However, Tactical Ops has to be the least appropriate name for this game, as there's nothing tactical about it at all.

This game is literally an Unreal Tournament mod (if you have UT, you can already download it for free), with the simple bonus of not having to buy UT to get it to run. Using the UT's engine, you'd expect to simply see similarities in the visuals and basic performance, but the first thing you see after loading up Tactical Ops is the old UT menu screen with a different graphic in the background.

Okay, so the interface is lazy, but how about the game? Well, there's no single player campaign to play through, just a series of missions with pathetically inadequate briefings. Well, maybe they are adequate, since all you really do in Tactical Ops: Assault On Terror is to run around try to plug enemies (either terrorist, or counter-terrorists) before they plug you. It's extremely easy to die in Assault On Terror, which may be realistic, but with maps and missions that hardly lead to any sort of intelligent team based play at all, this just serves as an annoyance.

THE CUPPA TEST

Remember Assault mode in UT? You had clearly defined objectives and maps that worked beautifully to make the whole scenario a balanced encounter between two teams. This is more like a free-for-all where some of the guys are on your side. With the run-and-gun style of play, it's quite possible for your AI buddies to run off and take out the opposition all on their own. What

sort of game allows you to win by walking off to go make a cup of tea? Why, a crap one of course, and this passed the "cuppa"

test with flying colours. Truly crap. The level design is unspectacular in the extreme, and although crisp and clean, this is the drabest game to use the Unreal Tournament engine to date. Those of you looking for a realistic modern day team based first-person shooter have many titles to choose from, such as Ghost Recon, Rainbow Six and Counter Strike. This is ultimately just a UT mod that's now been bunged in a box so you can pay for it, rather than download it. <<<

!!! Just save your cash for Counter Strike Condition Zero.



PLUS: Tonnes of weapons to buy.

MINUS: Almost everything else.

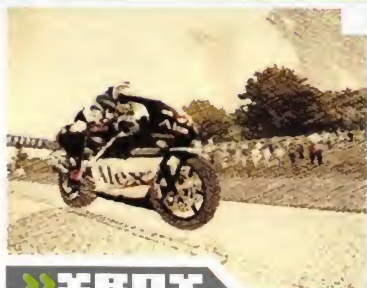
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

70 50 20

OVERALL

25

A total waste of time.



MotoGP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: THQ >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

FRANK DRY goes 'round and 'round...

Sometimes a good videogame can introduce you to subject matter that you might otherwise have chosen to ignore. Learn to love the game, and before you know it you've gone and become a big fan of the sport that it simulates. MotoGP is an example of a fine racing game that just might turn a few of you into big bike-loving rev-heads.

HIGH-SPEED THRILL

Whether it be on two wheels or four wheels, burning down a straight at 200 kilometers an hour is pretty damn exhilarating. MotoGP simulates this kind of high-speed thrill rather well — your immediate surroundings streak into a blur and you'll start to panic for the brakes. Especially as you just might be

coming up on a rather deadly hairpin. If you haven't raced a real motorbike before, then there's one thing to get used to when it comes to the brakes, and that's that there are both rear and front brakes. These have been assigned to both of the Xbox's shoulder buttons in the default configuration, with the two analogue sticks controlling steering, body weight position and analogue acceleration. In fact there are many, many different configurations to suit players of all styles, so there should be no complaints here when it comes to steering your iron horse around the track. But learning how and when to use your front and rear brakes becomes essential to snaking your way through the twisting circuits on offer.

MotoGP on Xbox is probably a

MotoGP fan's wet dream. Every famous circuit is playable, from Phillip Island in Victoria to Le Mans in France; and winning on these tracks can unlock highlights videos of the actual MotoGP on each track, complete with interviews with the real riders. In fact, each circuit is introduced with some fancy video footage shot in the city where the track is located — for that authentic flavour I guess. All the real riders are licensed for the game also, complete with mugshot and stats, so



you can play as your favourite (or create your own custom rider and build up your own stats Tony Hawk's Pro Skater style). Other unlockables include some seriously fun visual filters, from Toon (which renders the entire game cel shaded) to Wireframe (yes, you can race with all the visuals completely untextured) and Sketch (which makes it look like you're racing through a lead



pencil nightmare) amongst other interesting modes. This alone extends the replay value of the game immensely.

A BIT OF SPICE

The training mode in MotoGP is essential to understanding a bit more about how a motorbike works. You'll learn how to chuck a wheelie, do endos, perform burnouts and 180s and generally get to grips with your bike so you can mix it with the best out on the circuit. The challenges in the training mode are quite good fun, and it will prime you for the main attraction which is the Grand Prix mode itself. The Arcade Championship is also a fun way to challenge yourself without



You'll be on the edge of your seat when the pressure comes down on the final lap...

having to do too many repetitive laps of each circuit, limiting the race to merely three laps. You also earn points in this mode by pulling off various stunts in the course of the race, or simply by overtaking your opponents, which adds a bit of spice to the standard race.

The bike handling is excellent, and you'll eventually get a real feel for how to squeeze the most speed out of your chosen steed and how best to take corners. The developers of MotoGP have excelled in providing a game that simulates the sport whilst still making it accessible and fun. Slowly working your way through the pack can become quite hypnotic, and you'll be on the edge of your seat when the pressure comes down on the final lap to beat

Rossi who's just 50 meters in front...

Visually, the game is also quite excellent. Rainy days provide atmosphere with thunder, lightning and gorgeous sprays of water spouting from your opponents' rear tyres. You'll also appreciate the ability of the Xbox to render huge distances

without any drawn-in or pop up and yet still display detailed, high resolution textures and fancy effects like bump-mapping on the tarmac complete with sunlight reflections. There are lots of camera angles to play from, and the handlebar cam is quite sensational, if a bit disorientating to use.

All up, MotoGP is a very slick product, and a must-buy for motorbike racing fans. And who knows, you might become one. <<<

!!! MotoGP allows you to link together two Xbox units for a four-player race.



PLUS: A host of unlockables. Solid racing model.

MINUS: If you're not a racing fan, it might leave you cold.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 80 87

OVERALL

88

On yer bike.

REVIEW

>>>HYPER 65



Time for the Fisherman's Friend spell.



Confusing the enemy with fancy shit.



Blind Dates are a baaaad idea.

>> XBOX

Nightcaster

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

FRANK DRY is an insomniac anyway...

Nightcaster was one of the first games Microsoft showed us when the Xbox was still getting polished for launch. We didn't think much of it at the time, as it appeared to be nothing more than a very generic fantasy game based on — yawn — schools of elemental magic. Just like their other fantasy action game Azurik! What is it with the inability of so many western games developers to think outside of tired gaming clichés? Oh well. The pleasant surprise is that Nightcaster is better than it looks.

ABILITY TO DABBLE

You play the role of a young wizard out to restore sunshine and light to your homeland. You have the ability to dabble in four schools of magic — Fire, Water, Light and Dark. No prizes to anyone who guesses that the monsters in the game (yes, all of them) are coloured so as to represent a certain element, and yes, you have to use the opposite element to inflict the maximum damage. It's not like we haven't had to do this in every other videogame since the dawn of time. The way Nightcaster manages to put a

spin on things, is by having your attacks directed by an orb that can detach from the end of your staff. The orb is controlled by the right thumbstick, so essentially, you can move and shoot spells in different directions. Think Robotron, and you'd have the basic approach to gameplay down pat. Now stick this control scheme into a Gauntlet style landscape and you've got a fun combination that results in quite an addictive romp.

Exploring the landscape thoroughly is how you uncover power-ups and new spells for your spellbook. It's a simple reward system that keeps you playing, as there's always that desire to find a spell (or powerup a spell to a new level) to find out just how big and nasty they can get. The sound and visual effects for the spells are quite pretty and get more and more outrageous as you become more adept in the different schools of magic. There are area spells that trap monsters inside it, range spells so you can pester monsters from a distance, and more random spells such as the dark lightning which zaps any creatures within range.

BIG BOSS FIGHTS

Tactics start to come into play as you can cycle through your different elemental attacks on the fly, letting you target and kill the most bothersome monsters in a pack. You'll quite regularly become swamped with creatures, and the only way to stop them is to destroy their nest (ie. Gauntlet). Big boss fights pop up when your character enters a new "act" in the story. In fact, by the end of the game, you'll become an old, bearded and very powerful wizard.

One of the main problems with Nightcaster is that the gameplay remains within the same kind of boundaries for the entire length of the game — zap the blue monsters with the red magic, the red with the blue and so on. As a result, repetition sinks in and you'll find that persisting can become a little boring.

It's just addictive enough to keep you hooked, but only just. With just a little more thought and variety of play, Nightcaster could have been a truly memorable title. <<<

!!! Nightcaster has a Scottish flavour, as the lead designer is a Scot!



PLUS: Nice spell effects. Some funky monsters.

MINUS: The elemental magic system gets repetitive.

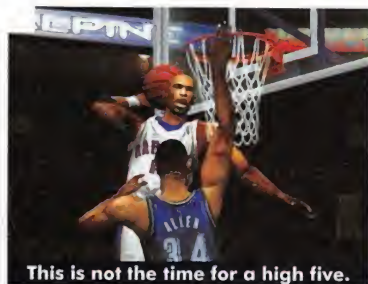
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

77 83 70

OVERALL

72

Not a bad way to spend a weekend or two.



This is not the time for a high five.



Those cornrows are making me hungry.



Mummy's boy pulls his socks up, eh?



XBOX

Inside Drive 2002

CATEGORY: Sports >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

DAN TOOSE is dribbling again...

Q Do you own an Xbox? Are you the victim of a Basketball Jones? If you answered yes to these two questions, then the good news is that NBA Inside Drive 2002 is here to fill the void created by NBA 2K2's absence, and NBA Live 2002's inadequacies.

INTELLIGENT DECISIONS

Developers High Voltage software have proven that their art department can mix it up with the best of them, as almost every aspect of the visuals in NBA Inside Drive 2002 is outstanding. The sensation of momentum and physics isn't quite as developed as seen in NBA Live 2002, but all other aspects of the graphics are excellent, in particular the stadiums.

Brilliant visuals are becoming par for the course these days though, and Inside Drive's real merits are in its gameplay, which offers plenty for both hoops fans, and novices alike. Basketball boffins will appreciate the ability to use real-time coaching options with the d-pad, the realistic AI featured in the higher difficulty settings, and controls that allow for a myriad of

moves. Those new to basketball will be able to have an entertaining game without having to learn the trickier elements of the game, and there are options to make certain elements such as shooting and free throwing more simplistic than usual.

Some features in the game go further to ensuring gamers don't need to follow the NBA to make some more intelligent decisions as to what to do with their players. Much like in 2002 FIFA World Cup, top players are labelled with a star when they have the ball, and other icons pop up, denoting the player as a great jumper, shooter, runner, etc. So it's easy for the player to tell when they're controlling someone who's likely to nail that tricky shot, or chase down the opponent making a long drive to the basket.

SNARL AND SLOBBER

Commentary does play a part in how atmospheric any sports titles ends up, and Inside Drive offers a mixed bag. On one hand, there's a brief pause before a player's name is called, which is just enough to ensure that it's

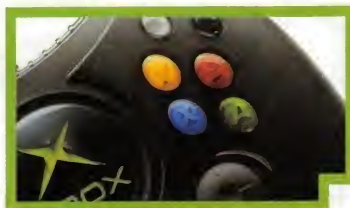
obvious the name is being loaded up. On the other, Kevin Colabro and Marques Johnson offer enough jokes throughout the game to warrant incontinence pants. Of course once you've heard the same joke a few times, the novelty wears off... Well, except for hearing M.J. snarl and slobber like a dog, that's special.

!!! If only Sega would release their NBA series here....

Besides the men on the mic, players pipe up with the occasional bit of trash talk, but the crowd is the real performer, cheering and shutting up at appropriate moments.

While enthusiasts of the sport will appreciate the depth in gameplay that Inside Drive offers, they'll be disappointed at the lack of modes in which to play. Exhibitions, Full Seasons and Playoffs are all that's on offer, with no mode allowing the player to develop a team through the years, nor any options to create new players with an editor, which so many games do offer these days.

As things stand now, Inside Drive is a more than worthy purchase for anyone who doesn't need a franchise mode in their hoops games. ❄️



PLUS: Great for experts and novices. Good AI.

MINUS: No franchise mode. Pauses in commentary.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

88 80 83

OVERALL

83

Gates got game? This game would suggest so.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 67



Gitaroo Man

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

CAM SHEA plays great air guitar so he got this to review...

A Gitaroo is a weapon. It's combat. It's war!" Well actually, it's more like a rock opera. Gitaroo Man is the latest entrant in the rhythm genre and it's a funky one. Take the theatrics of Queen, the gun policies of Ted Nugent, the trippiness of Pink Floyd, the storytelling of Parliament, spice the broth with The Who's Tommy, then simmer the whole thing in an infusion of Jap-pop kitsch and you're some way towards describing Gitaroo Man.

ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?

You play as U-1, a kid lacking in confidence who soon discovers he is of the legendary Gitaroo bloodline and must face his fears in a series of long and surreal battles against the axe wielding forces of evil. Just

touching the Gitaroo transforms both U-1 and his wise-cracking dog Puma into mechasized super hero versions of themselves, ready to rock. Of course, against this epic backdrop, Gitaroo Man is a simple tale. There's a poignant love story in there, as well as a very PaRappa-esque moral (I gotta believe!). And riding over it all is the kind of freakiness that we've come to expect from Sandoz Labs inspired Japanese developers.

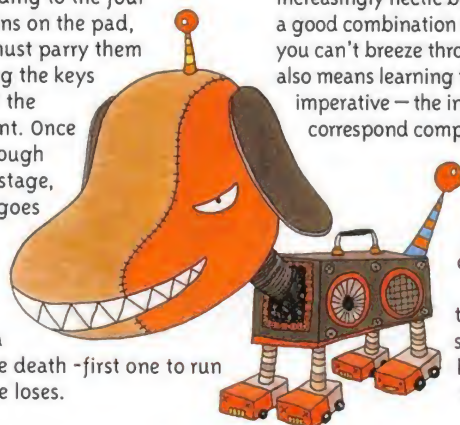
Each level has a few stages. The first is called Charge, because you generally start out with low energy levels and must lay down some rockin' licks to charge your power up. This is done by keeping the analogue stick's direction trained on the squiggly line running into the center of screen and pressing and holding the circle button when

there's a red section on that line. After that comes the Battle stage. In this section you alternate between laying down licks and blocking attacks from your opponent. The attacks come in from four directions, corresponding to the four face buttons on the pad, and you must parry them by pressing the keys as they hit the center point. Once you're through the Battle stage, the game goes into the Final stage, which is basically a fight to the death -first one to run out of juice loses.

What's cool about Gitaroo Man's gameplay is that it's quite a fresh take on the standard rhythm gameplay. There are several elements to worry about - tracking the line properly and timing your riffs, as well as the increasingly hectic button combos. It's a good combination and ensures that you can't breeze through the game. It also means learning the tune is imperative - the inputs on screen correspond completely to the

rhythm of the song, so knowing the melodies and riffs definitely help.

It's a relief that the gameplay is so engaging, but honestly, we'd probably still





like this game even if it wasn't — Gitaroo Man is just so entertaining. The cutscenes are a complete riot, blending soft focussed CGI with more traditional anime influences and a completely zany storyline. Once into the game, Gitaroo Man goes for a simple stylised look that isn't technically impressive, but has enough character that it doesn't matter. The selection of enemy Gitaroo wielders is excellent — our favourite being Mojo King Bee who's like a cross between The Simpsons' Disco Stu and Bumble Bee Guy, with a little Rasta Frog from PaRappa thrown in for good measure. The battle element is pretty cool too, especially watching U-1 leaning back into a heavy riff and firing off lightning bolt shots at the enemy.

EXTREMELY CATCHY

Rhythm games succeed or fail on the strength of the soundtrack, and fortunately Gitaroo Man features extremely catchy and diverse tunes. We were a little worried that there would be too much widdly widdly guitar masturbation, but this fear

Riding over it all is the kind of freakiness that we've come to expect from Japanese developers.

proved ill founded. From synth cheese-laced Jap-pop to filtered horn driven disco with soulful backing vocals to dubbed out mellow echoing reggae grooves, and even an acoustic love song, Eliot and I found ourselves compulsively humming the tunes all day long — definitely a good sign. The tunes also suit the settings well. For instance, the dub-fest is set with U-1 inside a giant mech called Woofer-Mazing slowly bounding around a low gravity planet — perfect for a spaced out dubby groove. Then there's the battle with pansy boy Gregorio III, set inside a large gothic church. The music is deliberately dramatic to suit the scene throwing in metal and strings, and wailing guitars going head to head with pipe organ stabs.

!!! We should also mention that even the voices have been localised well — comical but not annoying.

Gitaroo Man's only real weakness is that, like most rhythm games, it's a little too short — ten stages in all. That said, once you beat the story mode, you unlock the tricky Master's Mode, and there's plenty of replay value on offer for those who want to unlock all the figurines and get A grades on each level. It's also quite challenging in the later levels with tight rhythms needing to be tapped out and very quick

alternations between the different types of input. Another weakness is simply that it's difficult to stop your thumb slipping off the Dual Shock's analogue stick... but that's hardly Gitaroo Man's fault. In summary, Gitaroo Man has nothing in common with Steve Vai or Joe Satriani, and thus is hugely entertaining. <<<



PLUS: Catchy tunes, trippy everything.

MINUS: A little on the short side of things.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
85 88 80

OVERALL
84

If you're a rhythm game fan, you're gonna love it.



V-Rally 3

CATEGORY: Rally >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Infogrames >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE grinds his gears over this one...

Has the racing genre reached the point where the driving itself can get no better?

Certainly with the limits imposed by the current range of peripherals, even force-feedback wheels, the racing experience borders on generic among the top titles within each category of racing. If, therefore, this 'racing experience' is satisfactory, one must look to other aspects of the game to determine its value. The old career mode, increasingly implemented with RPG elements, NPCs and immersive, integrated, fictional worlds, appears to be the current trend among racing developers. Codemasters are paving the way, promising a "CarPG" in the form of Pro Race Driver, as well as significant interaction with the virtual Ford Focus team in Colin McRae 3. Yet V-Rally 3 has arrived first, and its

own career mode is grabbing the headlines.

V IS FOR VARIETY

Developed by the French Eden Studios, those behind the first two instalments, V-Rally 3 takes a significant detour from the first two, which pioneered the action-packed, arcade-style, living-room action rally extravaganza on the PlayStation and Dreamcast. The new title heads in the opposite direction, emphasising the realistic rally battle between road and car, and car and man.

Those looking for actual drivers and stages should stick to WRC. You'll find no one and nowhere you recognise here. This has granted Eden considerable creative freedom when it comes to designing stages, whose variety is one of the game's

highlights. They're still believable, but exhilarating at the same time. In a particular French stage you'll fly around the tops of a cliff, down into a town, and out in the woods, ducking and weaving around overhanging foliage. The number of stages is also good, with the range aided by the mirroring of many, and weather effects such as fog and snow which render would-be familiar stages unrecognisable.

Although the stages are rich in visual content and colour, the actual graphical quality leaves something to be desired. Trees and shrubs, although large in

number, are little more than flat sprites, simply ugly at close range.

In rainy stages, there are some slick reflections in puddles; it's just a pity there aren't any accompanying splashes to go with them. There are some more nice little graphical touches, like dirt on your windscreen (which actually makes it difficult to





race towards the end of stages), while the cars are fairly detailed and well-textured. The appearance however doesn't even approach Rallisport Challenge on Xbox, and is perhaps on par overall with WRC, although each has their own strengths and weaknesses.

The sound is a little hit and miss as well, with navigator comments that are sometimes off the mark, whether it is in terms of timing corner directions, or telling you to "keep it up!" when you just completed the last section slowest of the pack. The engine sounds are slightly bland as well, making it difficult for manual shifting without visual aids. When the car receives damage however, there are some great effects.

The damage system is excellent, with a series of potentially busted parts heavily affecting the way the car behaves. The challenge often comes from simply getting your car over the line — it's guaranteed that you will end up limping home with three wheels on more than one occasion.

It's guaranteed that you will end up limping home with three wheels on more than one occasion.

OFFICE-WORK SIMULATOR

V-Rally 3's main meal revolves around its career mode, where, depending on your performance, you are offered trials to compete for different teams. Each team has different rankings for morale, performance, budget and reliability, all of which can vary due to its performance. Similarly, you are ranked on velocity, consistency, goal completion and experience, which determine what teams offer you test-drives at the beginning of a new season.

News reports, job offers, and team directions all arrive to you via the email in your office, which, although lame and highly artificial, somewhat convincingly places your character within the V-Rally world, putting achievement in a realistic context and

ultimately making it more satisfying.

Thankfully, the game provides a consistent, believable driving model that not only demands concentration, particularly when there is a mid-stage change in surface, but also facilitates variety in the cars' 'feel'. It manages to welcome first-time players with open arms, but later rewards rhythmic, planned, controlled driving — in particular how a racer approaches the variety of bumps, buildings and signposts that litter the courses. The one letdown is the lack of support for acceleration and braking on the right analogue stick.

Overall V-Rally 3 is a top title, that will certainly please all but the most critical of gamers. <<

!!! Codemasters have the next move. Can Pro Race Driver beat V-Rally 3?



PLUS: Sweet career mode, stage variety.

MINUS: Bland appearance, no actual names.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

79 81 86

OVERALL

85

The top PS2 rally racer, but there's room for improvement.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 71



>> PS2

Aggressive Inline

CATEGORY: Extreme sports >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Acclaim >> PRICE: \$TBA >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: September >>

STEPHEN FARRELLY defends inline skating at all costs...

For the uninitiated, aggressive inline is an underground sport that falls broadly into the extreme sports arena. Its roots are deep and rich, while its livelihood is a story of triumph and oppression. Indeed, the term 'aggressive inline' was first coined to offer a new interpretation of the sport. For years, inline skating was ridiculed by skateboarders and freestyle BMX riders alike - we were stealing their tricks, getting in the way and for the most part, cramping their style. The angst and disdain felt by these groups was a burden to bear if inline skating was your chosen love - all the more reason to stand up and represent your form of expression.

TRULY HARDCORE

For the last ten years or so, inline

skating has seen both rapid growth and hasty decline. The decline came when Tony Hawk's Pro Skater rejuvenated an interest in skateboarding, bringing it to mainstream's attention bigtime. Activision quickly got to work on Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2, while Acclaim and a budding young developer known as Z-Axis were wading uncharted waters with a risky BMX venture. Dave Mirra pipped Mat Hoffman at the post, and it was on for young and old. First skateboarding, then BMX riding, soon surfing and even scooters would get their shot in the digital domain. Tony Hawk had opened the flood gates, but in all of this, inline skating was sorely missing. It took two consoles and three Dave Mirra games before Z-Axis was given the go-ahead for Aggressive Inline.

With all that background out of the way, Aggressive Inline is finally here and it's incredible. The best part is that it features truly evolved gameplay and design, so it's not just a triumph for inline skaters but for gaming too. Aggressive Inline offers the best level design seen in this type of game, period. Huge worlds where every conceivable object is ready for you to grind or bust air from. There are an infinite number of lines per level, and the truly hardcore won't be forced to take the same line twice throughout. The levels aren't just big either, they're tall. Each level of the game has multiple

layers to explore and skate in, making the quest for an endless line something well within reach. To that end, one of the best attributes of Aggressive Inline is its level counter system. Instead of being timed to complete specific objectives, all skaters need to do is keep a 'Juice Meter' active to continue play. This makes exploration and replay of objectives that much more enjoyable.

RPG BLADING?

Another strong aspect of the game is the way a skater levels up. Instead of earning stat points and gearing up specific attributes, skaters will earn





Just don't look up her skirt, mmmkay?



Jurassic Skate Park



Argh, my foot has melted.



Is that a games pirate?



Balancing the phat pants.



Now who stuck sparklers in my boots?

XP (Xperience Points) every time a trick is performed. Completing a line that includes several grinds means your grind XP will rise accordingly and - like an RPG - the raising of your XP in any one specific area will reward players with a level-up. What this means is that if you prefer to play the game like a street skater, your street attributes like jump, wall-ride and grind will increase more than your vert attributes like air, spin and flip. This gives the player the freedom to build their skater's skills in the way they want, and as you're not spending all your time looking for floating stat points, you feel more rewarded for having excelled in your particular area of interest.

Aggressive Inline succeeds in every way - it's evenly paced, gives the player great freedom and is hugely enjoyable. However, for hardcore inline skaters there are a few quibbles with its representation of the sport. Non-skating manoeuvres like the Vault and the Hand-Plant grind are ridiculous additions that help further the idea

You're not spending all your time looking for floating stat points, you feel more rewarded...

(among a lot of people) that aggressive inline is a corny pastime. The game also misrepresents a number of tricks. When approaching a grind surface on inlines, the side you jump on can determine the actual trick. The best example of this is that a soul grind (with your soul [sole] foot being the right foot) is just that provided you hit the grind surface on the right side. Jumping on or 'over' the surface from the left side, however, turns a soul grind into a top-side grind. Within the game this isn't accounted for, and as a result every time you should be pulling off a top-side grind you're doing a soul grind. Equally, the same happens when performing a McTwist. This trick has always been

!!! Aggressive Inline features three Aussie pros - Matt Salerno, Shane Yost and Sam Fogarty.

executed with a 540 degree of rotation. Aggressive Inline adds an extra 180 and brings the skater down fakie, another really annoying trick misrepresentation. These are only two examples and inline skaters will definitely find it annoying. Other problems with the game include some mixed up animations, links between air tricks look a bit stiff, while stacks, spins and some grinds are a bit off as well.

Putting aside minor issues, this is a fantastic first effort to bring the sport of inline skating into the world of gaming. Compared to past efforts Z-Axis have really matured as a developer and we can't wait to see what they can do with the inevitable sequel. <<<



PLUS: A true evolution for the genre. Thank goodness!

MINUS: Some first time teething problems are apparent.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

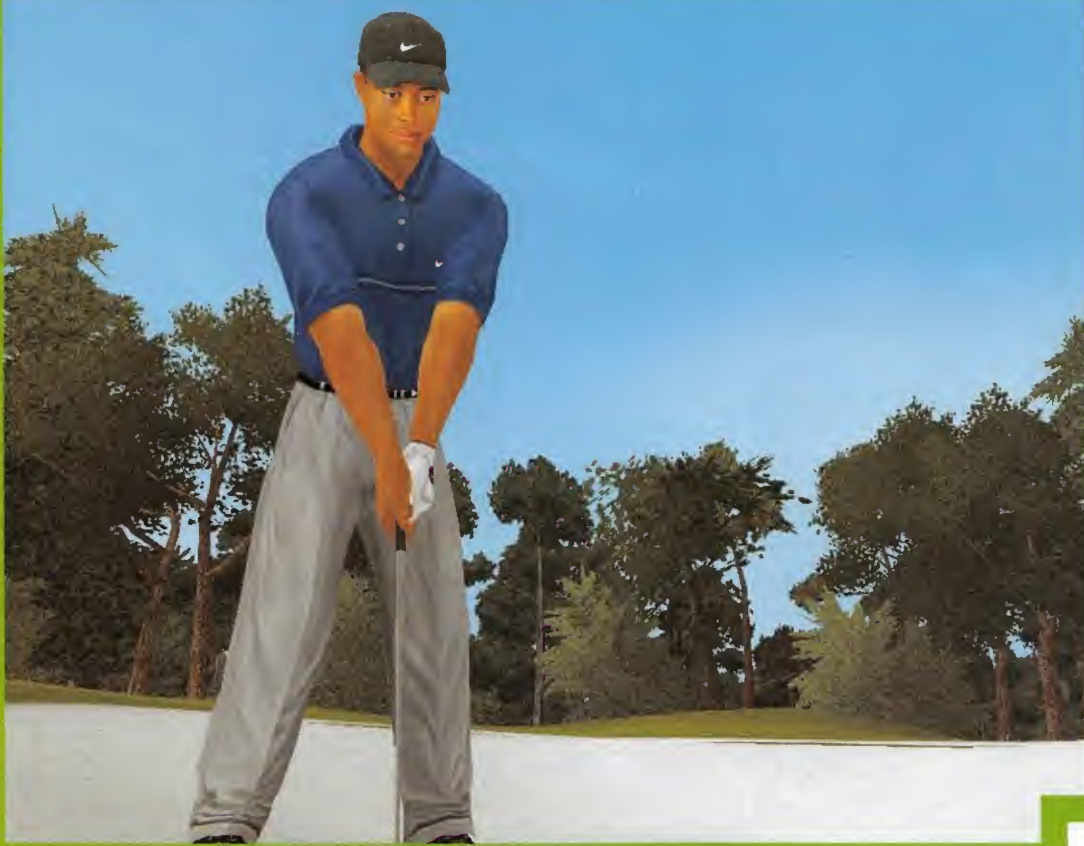
85 90 91

OVERALL

88

The Hawk finally has come competition...

REVIEW >>> HYPER 73



Just imagine the ball is John Howard.



plop Uh-oh.



Golfer by day, party animal by night.

PS2

Tiger Woods USA Tour 2002

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

FRANK DRY investigates this tee for two...

Over the years, golf games have just slowly evolved to incorporate better graphics, more accurate swing-o-meters, better ball physics and so on. No one has been willing to really put the videogame of golf under the knife, until now. Tiger Woods USA Tour 2002 does away with the swing-o-meter for good, and surprisingly, it works.

A SOLID WHACK

So how, pray tell, does one hit the ball? By "swinging" the analogue stick. This type of control has been tested before in PC games, with your club swing being simulated by a push of the mouse. However, it's never really worked. Somehow, EA Sports have implemented this control method with a game pad and after a bit of play, you'll be surprised at just how well it seems to play.

The HUD on the screen tells you how far it is to the pin, and when cycling through your clubs and shot type you can see how far particular shots will send the ball with a 100% power shot. You then pull back the analogue stick and then push it forward for a solid

whack. It's all about the back swing. You can tap the L1 button to add more power, or flick the analogue stick at an angle to add draw or fade. It sounds clumsy, but it works. When you've really nailed a shot at full power, the game goes slow-mo for a dramatic animation of your golfer obliterating the tee. When the ball is in the air, you can tap the L2 button and push the stick to add spin to the ball. So for instance, if you think it's over shooting the mark, you can add backspin.

THE SWEET SPOT

Putting is slightly different. Pulling the stick doesn't alter the power of your putter shot, but rather, where you place the aiming marker will determine how hard you hit the ball. If you aim way past the hole, it means you'll be adding that much power to your putt. Your caddy will give you advice on where to aim, based on how he reads the green, as there is no grid for you to judge the slopes of true distance. So based on his advice, you must place your marker where you believe is the best spot, and



then putt the ball. There's far more risk in this style of videogame golf, so it's probably truer to real life. You don't have the luxury of counting the inches on the grid and then nailing the swing-o-meter in the sweet spot.

There are many modes to play, including a tonne of tricky golf challenges that really make Tiger Woods USA tour loads of fun, as well as a serious golf game. You can play skins, stroke play, accept challenges from other golfers, play a tournament and more. To put the icing on the cake, the game looks absolutely splendid, with realistic golfers and gorgeous environments. A class act.

!!! Tiger Woods USA Tour 2003 is looking even better.



PLUS: A fun, challenging and unique game of golf.

MINUS: Some may not warm to the analogue stick method.

VISUALS 88 SOUND 82 GAMEPLAY 85

OVERALL
86

Fun, fun, fun 'til daddy takes the golfclubs away.



It's the framerate police! Shoot!



Super Spy... and Avon Lady.



Keeping watch on our Redfern alley.



PS2

No One Lives Forever

CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Sierra >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

FRANK DRY likes the hot leather catsuit...

In recent months, we've seen many PC first person shooters ported to the PS2. We've had Elite Force, Soldier of Fortune and now No One Lives Forever. I guess it's no surprise that so far none of these PC shooters have had a trouble-free conversion to the PS2. It seems the PS2 just can't handle these kinds of intense 3D games, yet developers still keep pumping them out, I guess because people keep shelling out for them hoping that they're as good as they were on PC. Well hate to be the bearer of bad news, but yet again, this is a good game but an unfortunate port.

ARCHER, CATE ARCHER

You play as super-spy Cate Archer in a pastiche of 60s spy films and TV shows. Mix James Bond with the Avengers and then get the Goodies to write the script, and you'd have No One Lives Forever. Maybe add a dash of Austin Powers for good measure. Just as we remembered from playing the game on PC, this game has great characters, a really funny script and some very entertaining ideas. The levels are well designed and fun, there's a

bunch of interesting and enjoyable weapons, and the shooter gameplay doesn't limit you to just linear corridor sweeping. The problem is that the limits of the PS2 hardware mean that the game just cannot play as well as it did on PC. The controls hurt the experience as does the frequent loading times and sometimes patchy framerate.

The game offers you an auto-aim which is very much needed, unfortunately. The game hasn't really been tweaked enough to account for the clumsy analogue stick aiming, and you'll find you have to stick with the auto-aim on many missions just so you can get through without having to replay the mission one too many times. On PC, it was far easier to get through the "twitch" levels where you really need to be fast and accurate with your aiming. On PS2, this kind of gameplay just feels watered down.

TRYING TO TAKE COVER

Compounding the problem, is the fact that many bugs and glitches have popped up in this PS2 version

that weren't in the original game. The clipping is atrocious at times, with enemies walking through pillars — and shooting you through them to boot, even though you're trying to take cover. The game also stopped responding at times for reasons we cannot fathom. Glitchy.

The game still looks almost as good as it did on the PC which is a bonus. Whilst everything is at a lower resolution, it doesn't hurt the overall impact of the very stylised visuals. The developers have also managed to keep about all of the incidental dialogue that makes exploring the levels and interaction with the NPCs that much more fun. In fact exploring the levels thoroughly is something that can actually reward you — it can be quite a challenge to find all of the hidden documents and intelligence files.

Overall, the original game has been spoiled by problems that have popped up in the porting process. There's enough of a good game here to make No One Lives Forever worth considering, but only just. <<

!!! No One Lives Forever 2 is coming to the PC real soon...



PLUS: Entertaining characters and interesting level design.

MINUS: Bugs, glitches and diluted gameplay.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 87 75

OVERALL

76

You'll be shaken but unfortunately not stirred.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 75



Virtua Striker 3 ver.2002

CATEGORY: Sports >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Sega >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

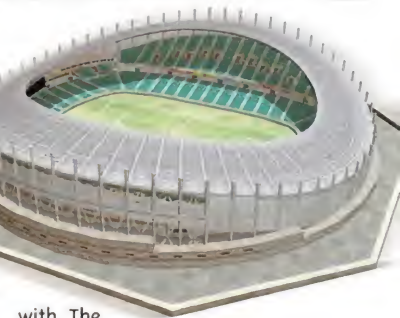
ELIOT FISH goes back to watching SBS...

It's World Cup fever as I'm writing this, and there couldn't be a better time to enjoy a spot of virtual ball kicking. Sega's long awaited Virtua Striker 3 for GameCube sounded like just the thing for soccer-mad Nintendo fans, and who could resist the ease of a good arcade version of the sport for a change? Well, here's some advice. Resist Virtua Striker 3 at all costs.

THIS IS SOCCER?
Thank god there are other soccer games available for the GameCube, because if this was it, there'd be a riot in the streets to match the worst soccer hooliganism the world has ever seen. Where to start? How about the controls... When on the offensive, you can execute a short pass, long pass and shoot. Player movement is

so stiff however, that pulling off any kind of smooth play is nearly impossible. Passing to teammates is down to pure luck, because the camera perspective is so close in you can't see where anyone is. Half the time you end up passing to the opposing team. And no, there are no camera options, so you're stuck with the ludicrously useless close-up view. If you have the ball, the best you can do is try to run with it and hope for the best. You can't weave out of the way of opponents though, as turning requires your player to stop for some reason and face in a new direction. To make matters worse, there is no sprint button. Pushing all the way over with the analogue stick is as fast as you can go, and yet, players on the opposing team catch up to you even if you're a good ten feet away

from them at full sprint. This leaves you with little option but to pass ahead and hope to regain the ball, or just pass back to your other players, even though you may have a clear run towards the goal. If you choose to shoot, you'll have to make do with the fact that there is no option to curve the ball — if you shoot, you shoot straight, so you somehow have to get yourself onto an angle to the goal if you want to try to angle it past the keeper. This also means that when you're taking a corner kick, the ball will go in a dead line the direction you're facing. When on the defensive, problems are even worse. It's bizarre that there is only one defensive move — tackle. And only one button to execute it



with. The difference between soft tackles, jostling for the ball and vicious aggressive sliding tackles is all down to the luck of what the computer decides when you press the button. Okay, well, it seems to decide on what kind of tackle by how close you are to the player with the ball, but you'll find that when all you wanted to do was challenge for possession, you're red-carded by the ref and sent off the field. In one match against the CPU, the CPU's team notched up a whopping four red cards against me



during the game, proving that the insanity of the tackling system isn't even avoidable by the CPU itself.

CUT THE ORANGES

Other than having to play the painful, frustrating mess that is the actual game, you can choose to enter the "road to international cup" mode. Here you take on the role of manager,



If only you could choose to cut the oranges at half time instead.

as well as player when a match comes around. Whilst in the office, you can arrange the schedule for the year, deciding on when to take an international tour and when to go into training or play exhibition matches to earn points. You can put each member of your team into specific training, deciding on individual skill and play style for that player. You'll have to struggle with player motivation, offers from rival teams for a match-up and eventually play

!!! We want Soccer Slam! We want Soccer Slam! We want Soccer Slam!

for the international cup. Virtua Striker 3 also has a player edit, allowing you to choose a name, face, height, build, skill and position amongst other options for each player. The problem is you'll have to play the game in order to make all this management and editing worthwhile. If only you could choose to cut the oranges at half time instead.

If you were in a games arcade and you put a dollar into a machine to play this game, you probably wouldn't be surprised it was bad and horrible to play – you'd assume that it was just designed that way to steal your money. Sucker. However, as a sports title for the Nintendo GameCube, this is truly unforgivable – especially coming from Sega. You'll have more fun doing household chores than wasting your time with this one. <<<



PLUS: The crowds look quite good.

MINUS: Just about everything else, I'm afraid.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

79 60 46

OVERALL

49

It has pretty colours.



NBA Courtside 2002

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

CAM SHEA claims that he hangs with Spike Lee courtside...

After receiving a lukewarm reception in other parts of the world, NBA Courtside 2002 has finally made its way out to Australia. This title is perhaps most notable for being the one and only GameCube exclusive title Left Field managed to get out the door before Nintendo dumped them as a second party developer. Fortunately for the gaming populous, NBA Courtside 2002 is by no means a bad game, sporting pick up and play gameplay, and enough depth to keep casual basketball fans entertained.

DEGREES OF ADRENALINE Left Field have implemented a relatively comprehensive and well thought out set of controls for NBA Courtside 2002. For instance, you

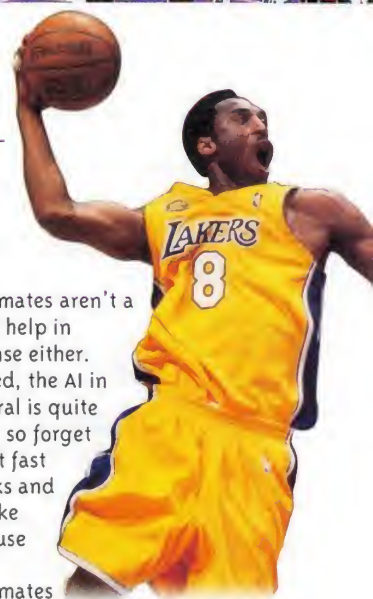
have the option to pass with either the B button or the C stick — the latter working a treat, and you can hold down the B button when you pass for a give-and-go. Also handy is the Z button, used in defense to double team a player and used in offence to call for a pick when you want a clear lane to the basket. You can also use the D pad to call plays and set up the way your team rebounds. Even better, the options for switching players in defense allow you to choose either the player closest to the ball or the player closest to the hoop — a nice touch. Adding in more arcade spice is a fancy trick button (what game would be complete without one?), and an adrenaline meter on the L trigger for extra speed. Since it's analogue you can use various

degrees of adrenaline which will result in different dunks etc. Another arcadey addition is a momentum meter that tracks which team is making all the shots. Fill the momentum meter up and you'll be rewarded with heightened skills for your players when you use the adrenaline boost.

Unfortunately, while Courtside plays a reasonable game of basketball, it falls short in a few key areas. For one the control isn't quite tight enough — especially in defense. It generally feels like you're blundering around when trying to play man on man, and although the inclusion of the R trigger to crouch defend is a good one, it's too slow to use effectively, as is the response time when you want to go up to block the shot.

Your teammates aren't a great help in defense either. Indeed, the AI in general is quite poor, so forget about fast breaks and the like because your teammates won't bother. NBA Courtside 2002 often feels a little too much like a one man show.

THE FANTASY DRAFT The game has the full NBA license, so all the teams, players and courts are featured in the game. It seems Left Field went a step further,





capturing even the boring minutiae that we thought only real life basketball patrons should be subjected to, such as the announcement that the stadium is a non-smoking zone. Cheers for realism, jeers for authenticity taken too far.

NBA Courtside 2002 has all the options you'd expect, and its Season Mode is quite fully featured, allowing you to go through anything up to an entire 82 game season with full stat tracking. Also cool is the fantasy draft option, which essentially gives you a dream team roster.

CREATE-A-FREAK

As with all good sports games these days, Courtside has a reasonable create-a-player mode, which will undoubtedly only be used to assemble freakish looking players to make the game nice and comedic. To this end, you'll be playing with an assortment of mutants in no time!

Your teammates aren't a great help in defense either. The AI in general is quite poor...

Another nice addition to the game is the Arcade Mode, which is a three on three game more along the lines of NBA Street, with exaggerated gameplay for more spectacular dunks and a faster paced game.

This is definitely the one that we have been throwing on for some multiplayer action here at Hyper HQ.

In terms of presentation, NBA Courtside 2002's menu interface feels pretty dated, coming across as quite try-hard and Nintendo 64-era in execution. The graphics on the court are reasonable but nothing to get all that excited about. We'd put NBA Courtside 2002 about on par in terms of detail on the court with what Electronic Arts' NBA Live series was doing several years ago on the PC.

Player models are a little blocky and top heavy making them look slightly dwarfish, while the face mapping gives the players an

authentic, if vacant, stare. Player animations are generally good but don't always link up all that well, while the court and real-time reflections look great.

There are some very glitchy elements to the graphics too – specifically when the camera zooms in for a replay under the hoop. It's a little unsettling watching the players twitching back and forth like they're having epileptic fits.

As an all-round package, NBA Courtside 2002 is definitely above average, and well worth a rent, just not one for the b-ball experts.

!!! The GameCube can do better than this. Pull your finger out, developers!



PLUS: Solid gameplay, good controls.

MINUS: Unspectacular is definitely the word.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
80	76	77
OVERALL		
77		

This will please casual fans, but not the hardcore.



Who's a grown up Smurf then?



XBOX

Azurik: Rise of Perathia

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Azurik is a dreadfully average game. Fulfilling the stereotype espoused by every Xbox naysayer, Azurik is a hideously American take on the Japanese action-RPG formula. In stark contrast to the elegant, taut design of the Zelda series, developer Adrenium Games has operated under the foolish belief that huge play areas equals interesting gameplay. The often immense environments our titular hero finds himself forced to explore are occasionally impressive in a "look at the size of this!" tech demo kind of way. But such moments are inevitably undone by the sheer ugliness of the visual aesthetic — again, living up to the stereotype. Add to this the fact that Azurik himself is coloured a garish blue and is animated with all the guile of an elephant in treacle and you're presented with a protagonist so unappealing it's difficult to sympathise with his plight.

The core play mechanics feature melee combat, platform jumping and a power-up method involving the elements of earth, fire, water and air. The first two are rendered awkward, if not entirely unplayable, by the aforementioned terrible animation — Adrenium appears to have realised this and made both aspects stupefyingly easy. Although a decent enough concept, the elemental power-ups are too contrived in their application to be compelling.

At present there are few games to challenge Azurik in its chosen genre on the Xbox. Which is unfortunate, because this simply isn't good enough. - David Wildgoose



The Sydney Mardi Gras Parade 2003.



XBOX

Circus Maximus

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Encore >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Not many people may remember a fun board game years ago called Circus Maximus, but that game was our first introduction to the thrills and spills of gladiator-themed chariot racing. The aim was to drive your chariot around a coliseum and take out your opponents in devious ways, whether it be by ramming their chariot or skewering them with an array of gruesome weapons. Both an intense race and in a way, a fighting game. The bad news, is that old board game is still far, far more enjoyable than this Circus Maximus game on Xbox. The videogame allows you to race not only in the deadly coliseum, but across the roman countryside, deftly steering your horses away from dangerous looking tree roots, fallen boulders and all manners of obstacles designed to fling your chariot off the edge of a cliff or into the side of a tree. Great concept.

However, the game just fails to deliver. The biggest complaint would probably be with the horrendous layout of controls. You have to steer, accelerate, make your gladiator dodge, attack and do all of these crucial things at the same time. It's a laugh at first, but the grin will very quickly slip from your face as you realise just how annoying it is to try and play the game properly. Visually, the game looks quite nice and the physics of the horses and chariot seem respectable enough (although we've never driven a chariot in real life, sadly), but the game is just lacking fun. The developers have got carried away with trying to implement too many ideas, without making sure that the basics were working well and that the game was consistent and rewarding to play. Kudos to the makers for trying something new at least. - Frank Dry



Disco fever!



PS2

Shadow Hearts

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Midway >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Someone, I don't know who — probably Oscar Wilde — once said, "Talent borrows, but genius steals". If he was right (and I must admit to finding the skewed logic perversely appealing) then Shadow Hearts is by definition genius. Midway's rampant ransacking of the Squaresoft roleplaying formula is astounding, if only for the developer's breathtaking bravado in even attempting it. Let alone actually getting away with it.

All the obvious Square-isms are present and correct. The hero, tormented by cringing teenage angst, and immediately unlikeable; the heroine, innocent yet holding dark secrets, and an object of desire (or lust) for "our" hero. As accompaniment, there's an awful script full of utterly inappropriate Americanisms, the repetitive strain of regular random battles, items and equipment with names and functions familiar to any Final Fantasy player, copious pre-rendered environments devoid of interactive elements, and a long narrative to follow down a linear path. Prepare yourself for countless moments of déjà vu.

But it's not bad news, per se. As the success of FFX has proved, the formula still works. It seems many gamers will forgive hackneyed gameplay if the story is sufficiently compelling. Here Shadow Hearts rises to the challenge, presenting a surprisingly dark tale, by turns macabre and unsettling.

Unoriginal and unspectacular, Shadow Hearts is inevitably a worthwhile yet far from essential purchase. - David Wildgoose

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
56	40	63	60

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
84	79	52	59

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
68	62	78	75

ARCADE

>>TIM LEVY

Solid Snake, what have you done with Tim?

Sogeki KONAMI

In Fantasy Land, James Bond is able to save the world using his charm, a martini, a Walther PPK and his penis. But in the real world, turning up to deal with hardcore terrorists with heaps of personality, some piss, a pissy pistol and your pissier would probably just piss the terrorists right off. In fact, the most desirable way to deal with smelly terrorists is upwind at a distance using stealth and a high powered sniper rifle.

NIGHT ATTACK

This desire for realism is what Konami R&D had in mind when they decided to create the third part of the Silent Scope series called Sogeki AKA Silent Scope EX (standing for EXtreme). To deliver the EXtra realism, Konami have created a new 'Viper' PCB to deliver flicker free, 'slow down' free graphics and opted for a larger screen and better 'wrap around' sound to make the experience more immersive.

The story line is yet another save the world scenario, but this is not apparent from the start. Terrorists

have started to take hostages and cause general mayhem, and as the game progresses, the story unfolds detailing a web of subterfuge and double dealings from within your own anti-terrorist organisation. A far broader range of sniper situations than the previous Silent Scopes occur including a night attack on a ocean liner (where you are shooting from a bobbing dingy), a hostage situation on a 747 (don't shoot near the fuel), a helicopter duel, a CBD street fight, visually scouring an urban location for hidden 'undercover' snipers, shooting moving vehicles from a helicopter and preventing the President from being captured from waves of terrorists.

The terrorists are far less static and often walk/run around, which is what you have to factor in along with the time it will take for your bullet to reach the target. This situation is very prevalent when you are firing from a moving vehicle/ aircraft or hang glider. One of the coolest inclusions is that on the stealth missions, if you miss your target, the terrorists will be alerted (ala Metal Gear Solid) and

will start to return fire.

Each stage has either an end of stage boss or a one shot opportunity to take out the last bad guy who is holding a hostage firmly in his grip. There are 15 stages in all, but you only have to play 8 to make it through to the end as the game branches out with the opportunity to choose 2 or 3 different stages which require different levels of skill to make it through.

BEAUTIFUL SPOTTER

Your health-o-meter/time gauge from the previous Silent Scope games has been replaced with a 'Condition Gauge.' Starting at a ranking of A+ and 100% condition, the meter/ranking slowly diminishes with time - and rapidly if you are shot, miss shots or fail a mission (miss a critical shot/shoot the innocent). But every time you hit an enemy's weak point, the gauge increases. The trick is to complete the missions as quickly and accurately as possible - but you knew that already. The enemies are highlighted by your beautiful 'spotter', but if you are eagle eyed (or



have played the games several times as the game IS on rails), then the terrorists can be taken out early, thus keeping your condition meter high.

The scoring system has also changed with points not only being awarded for a 'clinical' head shot, but also for distance and the time it took to take out your enemy. You are given a sniper rank and aptitude out of 1000 at the end of the game. To obtain a high rank requires a lot of kill skill.

So how much better is Sogeki than its predecessors? A lot better. With new inclusions/upgrades such as bullet cam, condition gauge, a wider variety of challenging sniper situations, better graphics, way better music, higher replayability, better enemy A.I. and that warm fuzzy feeling you get from helping save the world - you'll really be in sniper heaven. <<<

OVERALL

9/10

COIN-OP

>>HYPER 81

Star X

CATEGORY: Shooter >> **PLAYERS:** 1-4 >> **PUBLISHER:** Bam! >>
PRICE: \$79.95 >> **RATING:** G >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

God knows developers Graphic State must have been close to getting hit with a Nintendo lawsuit. Not only did they copy the basic blueprint for the SNES classic Star Fox, but could the name be any more identical? Of course, Nintendo of Australia wouldn't be concerned, because in this territory there's no such thing as

Star Fox... look out for Lylat Wars Adventures on GameCube later this year folks. We wish we were joking.

In any case, Star X is an on-rails shooter set across 22 levels of crapulence. Back when Nintendo released Star Fox on SNES, polygonal graphics were a revelation for the machine, and mightily impressive. Fortunately, Nintendo knew how to implement gameplay to go alongside those graphics. Star X is, once again, quite impressive technically for a GBA game, but its gameplay is less entertaining than the Golden Jubilee rock concert for the Queen. This is one of those games that should have remained a tech demo, as the gameplay wallows under the weight of terrible controls



Look out for the gonad bridge.



You'll get your "just deserts". Heh.



You can't even shoot down Slippy.



– never to see the light of day. Not only that but back when Star Fox came out on the SNES, polygonal graphics were new and interesting. These days, who cares if you can put together a polygonal shooter on GBA – technically impressive or not it looks like shit. Compared to what the GBA can do with side scrolling 2D shooters in terms of detail, without the gameplay to back it up, this one is a lost cause in all respects. – Cam Shea



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
73	70	40	52

Spider-Man

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

We love Spider-Man. The comics kicked arse and the movie has to be one of the best super hero films of all time. Of course, with great power comes great responsibility, and thus far developers have turned out reasonable games based on the license. Now it's the GBA's turn. There have already been a few

Spider-Man games on portable systems – a couple on GBC and one on GBA, and all competent enough. This latest effort is the best yet.

Last year's Mysterio's Menace GBA title was developed by Vicarious Visions (VV), but this latest outing comes from Digital Eclipse, and they pick up right where VV left off. The game takes place across a range of

large levels that vary in objectives between rescuing hostages and defusing bombs, to simply reaching the end of the level. The art style is very cartoony with exaggerated animations and big "thwack" and "thoom" sound effects displayed with every big hit during combat. Unfortunately, it's often difficult to distinguish between foreground and background objects, which can make things a little confusing. Aside from that, traversing the environments is a pleasure – Spider-Man can stick to and climb any surface, and using his web to sling about the place is very satisfying. Indeed, his go anywhere abilities are what make this game so much fun.

Like the film, the main villain of the piece is the Green Goblin, but you'll also have to take on Vulture, Shocker and Kraven in decidedly lukewarm boss battles. Digital Eclipse even managed to fit in some pseudo 3D web slinging levels, which, although not brilliant, are a nice diversion. Hardcore fans will love it. – Cam Shea



One bug outdoes another.



Spidey has a quick nap.



Pretty "fly" for a white guy, eh?

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
84	80	83	83



»»GBA

Dragon Ball Z: THE LEGACY OF GOKU

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Infogrames >>
PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

The Legacy of Goku is the first Dragon Ball Z game to hit our shores in a long time. It's somewhat fitting then, that it's an RPG that tells the whole Dragon Ball Z story from start to finish. In that sense, Legacy of Goku is definitely aimed at fans of the show. Unfortunately however, finding entertainment value in this game may be too much of a stretch

even for fans, thanks to its staunch linearity and average mechanics. The game opens with Goku and friends at the home of Master Roshi. Bizarrely enough, the first task in the game is to wander around the island and recover all of Master Roshi's lost jazz bass. We kid you not. It's a very bizarre way to open the game. Once the pron collection is back in place, the game begins, with Goku's



Can YOU find the buried pr0n?

son Gohan being kidnapped and inevitably the fate of the world hanging in the balance too.

Unfortunately, there's just nothing spectacular about this game. The "puzzles" in Legacy of Goku are as basic as they come and feel very worn indeed. The action is just as unimpressive. Rather than utilising a turn-based combat system, whereby some of the drama of the fights from the series could perhaps have been recreated, Goku uses a real-time Zelda style combat system. While there's nothing wrong with that, the execution makes combat quite tedious and lacking in strategy. An underwhelming game based on an over-rated anime. - Frank Dry



Deadly platforming. Maybe.



Let me guess, you're my father too.



Want to know who is "in da house"?



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
68	67	65	64

»»GBA

Thunderbirds: INTERNATIONAL RESCUE

CATEGORY: Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Infogrames >>
PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Thunderbirds are go! This is the first Thunderbirds game on GBA, although it bears much in common with the Thunderbirds GBC game from a couple of years ago. That's okay though, as the GBC game was a good one, and SCI have definitely worked hard to improve on it.

Unsurprisingly, International Rescue is definitely one for the Thunderbirds fans. The theme music greets you on the first menu, and although tinny, it will undoubtedly bring back treasured memories of early morning TV and marionette madcappery. Once you get into the game you'll discover that SCI have



Clearing a path for the Titanic.

tried to make this an all encompassing Thunderbirds experience, so there are a whole host of mission types that put you behind the controls of a wide selection of Thunderbirds vehicles. They're all here, including an R-Type influenced side scrolling shooter in TB1, a Desert Strike-like top down rescue mission in TB2, exploratory missions underwater in the TB4, submarine and underground in the Mole. Then there's racing in Lady Penelope's armoured FAB1 car and FAB2 luxury yacht. There's even an on-foot side scrolling platformer to top it all off!

Objectively, the various types of mission are quite simplistic and really only likely to please die hard Thunderbirds fans and younger



Dropping "care packages" for the UN.



What would a game be without crates?



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
69	75	75	73

HTHOLD

»»HYPER 83

The Elder Scrolls >>DAN TOOSE

When people talk about groundbreaking RPG games, names such as Ultima, Zelda, or Final Fantasy are those most likely to be thrown around. With Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind currently wowing RPG enthusiasts today, it prompts the question, "What were the other two games like?" Taking a look back at Arena and Daggerfall, the first and second instalments in the series, we discover just how far ahead of their time they really were.

IN THE BEGINNING - ARENA

It's 1993, and the PC RPG world is still tittering over the previous year's big one, Ultima Underworld. However, a far more ambitious RPG was about to come of age, which quite unjustly would never enjoy the same sort of acclaim as Richard Garriot's foray into 3D RPG gaming. The Elder Scrolls: Arena was that game, and it achieved far more than other more famous games ever did.

The more RPGs a gamer played in those days, the more they realised how most game developers just shunted them down a linear plotline

which worked within the context of the game engine that they've made... Invariably a clunky piece of crap that reminds you that your chosen genre of gaming is one of the uglier cousins of the family. Avoiding completing the main plot of an RPG usually meant hanging around doing very little, taking on random monsters to simply build your character up.

Bethesda Softworks' Arena was possibly the first game to deliver a non-linear plotline, and it did so the hard way. Excuses for having invisible walls that blocked your path had always been based around the limitation that it was simply impossible to allow the player to wander off and do their own thing. Bethesda decided to come up with the goods rather than excuses, and delivered an RPG with over 400 cities, thousands of square miles of wilderness to explore, and more sub-quests than you can poke a +2 codpiece at. What was more impressive however was that rather than being forced to do as you're told, Arena allowed you to go off and do whatever you wanted. With so many sub-quests, RPG enthusiasts finally had a game that let them go off and do what interested them, rather than play through yet another derivative storyline.

Besides its unprecedented breakthroughs in offering an open-ended adventure, Arena also broke ground in other ways. Visually, it



was exceptional for its time, with a basic 3D engine that allowed the player to spin around 360 degrees. That had been done before, but not with a full calendar year that catered for the seasons, time of day — the works. Combat was also very hands on, with the player holding down a button whilst moving the mouse to create different types of attacks.

Topping all this off were new levels of detail in the more traditional areas of RPG gaming. Eighteen character classes were available to choose from, which was unheard of (and rarely matched today), and picking different races started you out in different parts of the game. Even if you're of the school of thought that items make the character, Arena made the opposition look pitiful with its impressive collection of 2,500 magic items.

The only criticism that Arena really copped at the time was that it was fairly buggy, and in need of patching. This was in a day and age where the ability to patch bugs was new enough for most people to see it as a blessing. Unbeknownst to this

fledgling RPG series, this irritating itch would develop into something far more malignant in the years to come...

THE SECOND COMING - DAGGERFALL

It was late '96 and Quake had recently destroyed all concepts of how a 3D gaming engine should run. Bethesda released Daggerfall, the long awaited sequel to Arena, which continued to pioneer the RPG genre as its predecessor had done.

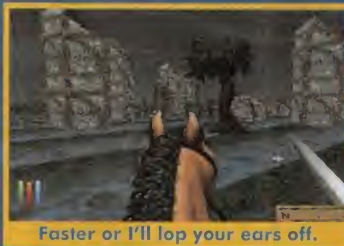
Still boasting the same non-linear gameplay Arena offered, Daggerfall's main advances were in gameplay mechanics, although a stupid amount of work went into fleshing out the world with countless villages, towns, cities, castles, dungeons and more. Most games boast that they have "hundreds" of characters to interact with, which seems inappropriate when Daggerfall featured 750,000!

To improve on the last instalment, Bethesda made the character development as open-ended as the





Graaaaaaaaaah!



Faster or I'll lop your ears off.



I've come for your corgis.



Bat soup for dinner again I guess.



The people you meet in public loos.



An early rendering of Hyper HQ.



exploration. Now players could create their own classes from scratch with their own bonuses and penalties, and were also allowed the same sort of creativity when it came to developing new spells.

Why let it stop there? Bethesda didn't, realising that being non-linear wasn't anything special unless you catered for those who wanted to try something seriously different. Thus, a means to be evil was necessary, and a guild system was introduced so the player could become a champion of nearly any vocation, noble or nasty. If that wasn't enough, there were ways to become a vampire, or contract lycanthropy and become a were-creature.

It was a time where shit-hot visuals were becoming a reality, and Daggerfall's 3D engine (the X-Engine used in Terminator: Future Shock) absolutely smoked all RPGs before it. The player had the same sort of movement capabilities Quake

offered, albeit at a less frantic pace. However, despite offering the best graphics the genre had seen, the bugs that had been a nuisance in Arena had multiplied like a cancerous nasty in Daggerfall. An endless series of patches were released for the game, in an age when people were getting sick of this fallback technique many had taken to using. It probably hurt Daggerfall's sales figures more than it should have.

THE LEGACY

So what did the Elder Scrolls series do for us besides pave the way for the stunning game that is Morrowind? More than anything these games laid the foundations for MMORPGs like Everquest, which are so derivative of these titles it's shameless. We were also left with two Bethesda side projects — the Tomb Raideresque Elder Scrolls: Redguard, and the direly buggy Elder Scrolls: Battlespire, which we won't go into... For your sake.



Hyper

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!

All scores out of 10



The Cup

MAGNA PACIFIC, RATED G

If you've been swept up in soccer fever for the last month because of the recent World Cup, then this DVD is the best way to celebrate its conclusion. *The Cup* is set in the most unlikely of places for a film about soccer - an isolated Tibetan monastery. Here, young boys are sent to become Buddhist monks, and are trained in the traditional values of the Buddhist faith by elderly teachers. Their lives are characterized by discipline and prayer, but

unbeknownst to the older monks, some of the younger students have developed a passion for soccer and will do anything within their power to be able to rent a satellite TV on which to watch the upcoming World Cup. *The Cup* is a surprisingly original and delightful comedy, which will win over soccer fans (and anyone else, for that matter) with its light-handed charm and gentle pace. Although the DVD doesn't include any bonus features, the film itself is good enough to make this a must-see. We guarantee that you won't be disappointed!



MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 0



The Tibetan squad with their new keeper, Bob, in white.



Catherine Zeta-Jones married THIS guy??

Wonder Boys

MAGNA PACIFIC, RATED M

Professor Grady Tripp is having a bad day. His wife has left him, his lover (the Chancellor of the university where he teaches English) has informed him she's pregnant, his editor has arrived to chase up Grady's long-overdue and as yet unfinished book, one of his female students is making friendly advances towards him and another, who is possibly a brilliant writer but also a compulsive liar, has just murdered the Chancellor's husband's beloved dog. *Wonder Boys*, directed by Curtis Hanson (of *LA Confidential* fame), is a funny, poignant and sad

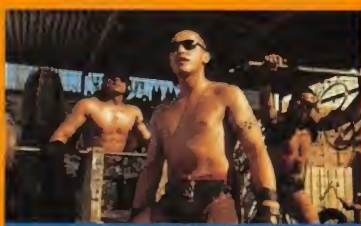
film about a man whose life once held a lot of promise, but is now slowly falling apart. Michael Douglas is perfect as the perpetually stoned Grady, who wonders if he'll ever be able to regenerate the success of his first novel, Toby Maguire makes an excellent James, the budding novelist, but our hats go off to Robert Downey Jr, who once again proves that drugs can greatly enhance one's acting ability. Extras include audio commentary by Curtis Hanson and interviews with the cast.

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 5

Once Were Warriors

MAGNA PACIFIC, RATED MA

Once Were Warriors made a huge impact when it first hit cinemas, making a name for its then unknown lead actors Temuera Morrison (now featuring in *Attack of the Clones* as Jango Fett) and Rena Owen. Morrison and Owen play Jake and Beth, a Maori couple living with their children in a housing development situated within a typical urban sprawl in New Zealand. Although they initially appear to be happy, it soon becomes apparent that there are a myriad of problems simmering beneath the surface - such as poverty, alcoholism, domestic violence and sexual abuse. *Once Were Warriors* skillfully captures contemporary Maori culture in crisis. The film is brutal at times, in its refusal to shy away from contentious issues, but because of this honesty is an extremely powerful and emotive piece of cinema. Bonus features



Legends of Wrestling 2



include brief interviews with Morrison and Owen and text bios of the cast. Worth watching purely for the impressive array of tattoos featured on certain members of the cast!

MOVIE: 7.5 EXTRAS: 2



Always a pleasure to meet a... guy with a bad mullet.



No wonder his wife keeps getting pregnant.

The Closet

AV CHANNEL, RATED M (RENTAL ONLY)

The *Closet* is a sharp and witty French comedy, starring two veterans of the French film industry, Daniel Auteuil and Gerard Depardieu. It also happens to be delightfully funny, which is always a bonus with films that have a serious agenda of social criticism. The issue being explored here is homosexuality, and how social attitudes to it have changed since the introduction of laws aimed at preventing sexual discrimination. The story's protagonist, Francois Pignon, is a quiet and unobtrusive man who discovers one day that he is about to lose his job. After confiding in a kindly neighbour, a plan is hatched to prevent his retrenchment: a rumour is spread around the office that Pignon is gay, thereby turning his impending



Depardieu the pusher.

redundancy into an act of homophobic persecution. What ensues is a hilarious series of events, as various people's perceptions of Pignon change dramatically on the basis of this rumour. Although the extras are a little light - cast and director bios, trailers for other films directed by Francis Veber - this is a great film that shouldn't be missed.

MOVIE: 7.5 EXTRAS: 2

Naked States

AV CHANNEL, RATED M (RENTAL ONLY)

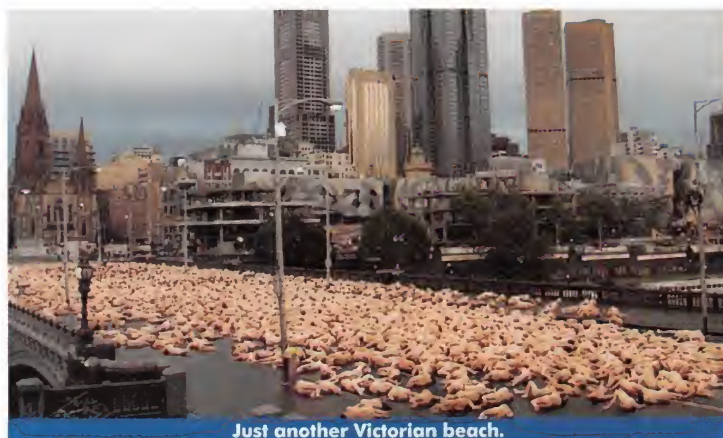
As some of you may remember, a photo shoot took place on a brisk morning in Melbourne last year involving a large number of people - all of whom, incidentally, were naked. The photographer in question was a guy named Spencer Tunick, and his photography of large numbers of nude bodies (in fields, strewn across national monuments, alongside freeways) has earned him a respected position in art circles, as well as a certain degree of public notoriety. *Naked States* is a documentary about Spencer and his project, also titled "Naked States", which involved journeying around the US and photographing naked bodies in each state. Tunick's photographs are often surprisingly beautiful, but this



Ever see *The Nude Bomb*?

isn't the main reason to watch this film. What is most intriguing about Tunick and his work is the reaction it engenders in people. Nudity, it would appear, is a complex subject, and Tunick's photography provokes a range of different responses. An interesting and provocative film, *Naked States* will have you itching to do public nudie runs - for art's sake, of course!

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 1

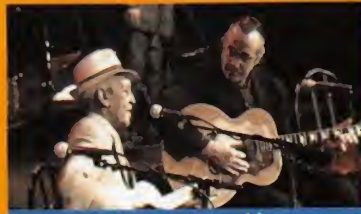


Just another Victorian beach.

Buena Vista Social Club

MAGNA PACIFIC, RATED G

Buena Vista Social Club is a wonderful, uplifting film about the type of Cuban music that had its hey-day in the 1950s and 60s. In 1998, the American musician Ry Cooder had the idea of hunting down some of the Cuban musicians whose work during these "golden years" had been all but forgotten. He managed to find a number of them in the most unlikely of places — shining shoes, playing for children in gymnastics halls, with some having given up performing for good. Ryder tracked them down and managed to get them into a recording studio, where the album, "Buena Vista Social Club", was born. Wim Wenders, the German director renowned for such masterpieces as *Wings of Desire*, captured the recording process on film, as well as charting the group's phenomenal world-wide success and interviewing members about their



I got them Viagra blues.



previous careers. Featuring some truly awesome musicians and a fabulous soundtrack, *Buena Vista Social Club* is an inspiring film which definitely proves that age is no barrier to rhythm and groove.

MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 6



THE ADVENTURES OF Ford Fairlane

RATED M

If you're under 20, you wouldn't know who the hell Andrew Dice Clay is. Back in the late 1980s, Dice was the white Eddie Murphy. His movie, *The Adventures of Ford Fairlane*, was meant to be his very own *Beverly Hills Cop*. Obviously, it didn't turn out like that.

Ford Fairlane focuses on Dice's character, Ford Fairlane - "Mr Rock and Roll Detective". He's been hired to track down the mysterious Zuzu Petals, who is connected with the mysterious death of Bobby Black (Motley Crue's Vince Neil). Long story short, the plot is an excuse for Ford to go to nightclubs, sleep with Swedish blonde hoez, make fun of Priscilla Presley and Ed O'Neil (Al Bundy from *Married With Children*)



Loc hopes the paycheck is a big one.

and slap Lauren Holly's ass.

Ford Fairlane is full of cameos - keep your eyes open for Robert Englund, Tone Loc and Morris Day. Extras? Just the trailer. Overall, packed with witty (and smutty) one-liners, but if you're not a fan of Dice, or sexist pigs in general, then you'll hate this movie. I loved it. - **Tony Montana**

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 1



What do you mean my dog would be good in a black bean sauce?

Fools Rush In

COLUMBIA TRISTAR, RATED M

Once upon a time there was a relatively unknown actor named Matthew Perry.

Way back in 1994, some TV executive took a chance with him and he was cast in a new US sitcom called *Friends*. Perry played a character called Chandler Bing, and while *Friends* wasn't exactly of the *Buffy* or *Sopranos* caliber, Chandler and his room-mate Joey had some great lines and managed to steal the show in most episodes. Soon, however, *Friends* became really, really popular. Perry got filthy rich, developed an addiction to painkillers (as you do), and at some point became convinced that he was a "real" actor. At this stage in his career, he foolishly agreed to make *Fools Rush In*. Most actors should probably steer clear of any



Cool you are not.

script that is tagged as belonging to the "romantic comedy" genre, as this label generally means that the movie will probably suck. True to form, *Fools Rush In* is not exactly Oscar material. Perry and Salma Hayek stumble through a number of predictable relationship crises but manage to come out on top. Banality at its best.

MOVIE: 4 EXTRAS: 0



"My memory card is broken."

ANIME

Oh! My Goddess: The Movie

CATEGORY: DRAMA/ROMANCE
PRODUCTION COMPANY: PIONEER

It's been three years since Belldandy, Skuld and Urd first graced the tatami mats of the Morisato household. The bumbling twit we knew as Keiichi is now well established as the lucky sod who shares his bed with Belldandy, the two now forming an unbeatable pairing in their college motoring club. They're up for this all-important race in a new-age style of motorcycle where, from the looks of things, whoever's in the sidecar does nothing more than hang on for dear life.

THE FATE OF EARTH

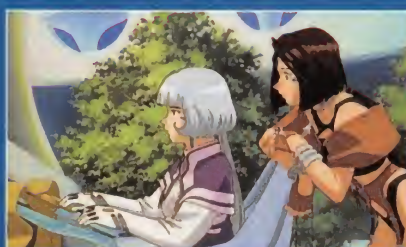
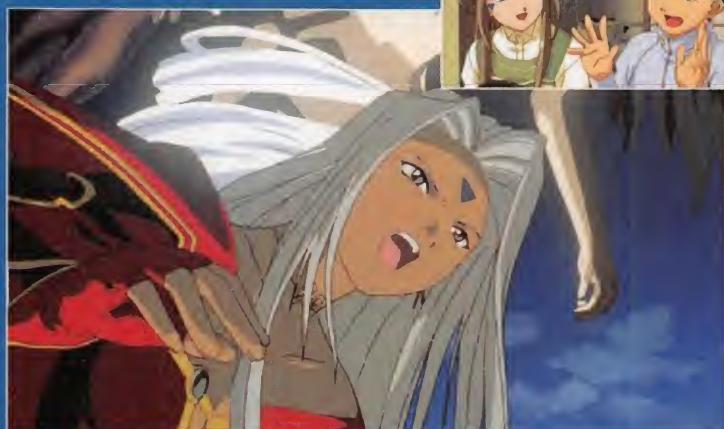
Everything goes wrong when Belldandy's mentor makes an unannounced return and causes her to forget her entire relationship with Keiichi. It then becomes a race against time for Keiichi, Skuld, Urd, and everyone in Yggdrasil to save

Belldandy's memory, as well as the fate of Earth itself. And the motorcycle race? Well, it's lost in there somewhere.

There are some brief moments of comedic brilliance in the first 15 minutes, which the film would've done well to maintain: there's no way it can recreate the empathy of their blossoming relationship from the original OAV. What we get instead is a misguided and at times sleep-inducing journey into Belldandy's past. The fight scenes and glimpses into the inner workings of Yggdrasil are fascinating, but highly uncharacteristic of the franchise and likely to alienate the fans.

This DVD features full Dolby Digital 5.1 support for both English and Japanese, and also comes with a bonus first episode of the new Mini-Goddess series.

ANIMATION: 8 PLOT: 4 OVERALL: 5



Gee, I used my Telstra 3GB limit in a day.



Unfortunate birthmark.

Jin-Roh: the Wolf Brigade

CATEGORY: DRAMA/ACTION • PRODUCTION COMPANY: PRODUCTION IG

Marketing personnel - you've got to love them. These are the people who've been selling the idea that Spriggan is the most anticipated anime feature film since Akira, and — mark these words — they'll dream up something equally idiotic for Jin-Roh. Jin-Roh is the latest in the growing collaborative portfolio between industry heavyweights Oshii Mamoru and Production IG (Patlabor, Ghost in the Shell, Blood: The Last Vampire). Anyone familiar with Oshii's work will know that his brand of storytelling lacks subtlety, cramming a litany of philosophical diatribe down our throats through monologues, soliloquies, and the unlikeliest conversations between supposedly sane human beings.

TWISTED ALLEGORY

Jin-Roh is no different, pitched as a

snapshot of a minor military conspiracy in an alternate Tokyo, but is in reality a twisted allegory of the children's fable, Little Red Riding Hood. The story centres on Constable Fuse, an elite member of the Capital Police who suffers a career meltdown and falls in love with a young woman. Concerns are intermittently raised about the threat of a counter-intelligence group called the Wolf Brigade, during which a conspiracy to dissolve Fuse's special unit is uncovered.

If you're at all proficient in the Japanese language, you'll know that Jin-Roh literally means "Man Wolf". And once it's revealed who the Red Riding Hood is, it's not a stretch to predict the final outcome. Without any likeable protagonists, Jin-Roh feels as

empty and soulless as Blood: The Last Vampire, except with an extra 100 minutes tacked on.

Jin-Roh is spectacularly animated, though, and the DVD comes with full DD and DTS support for both English and Japanese. The Region 1 Special Edition box set is great value with an added Extras disc and a soundtrack CD thrown in.

ANIMATION: 9 PLOT: 6 OVERALL: 7



It's a laugh-a-minute.




The Japanese Big Brother.



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FORUM

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Q. IF YOU COULD MAKE A SEQUEL TO A GAME, WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO DO?

Some obscure love crawled out of the woodwork this month with everyone pondering which old favourite is worthy of a next-gen sequel. It seems that rather than going for the obvious, many of you put some real thought in and dug out some interesting gems to take that one step further...



HYPER FORUM

We all have 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...

“What gaming peripheral would you want to see and why?”

Responses will be printed in Hyper 108.

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.

FEEDBACK

92 >>HYPER

JET FORCE GEMINI 2

Silence. Footsteps. Shriek!! Bang! (Explosions) Splatters and more explosions as blood flies all over the shop. Silence. Footsteps...

Such is the brilliance of walking through the bowels of a spaceship, being ambushed by a team of enemy soldiers - or in this case, hideous bugs - scrapping it out for a few seconds of intense anarchy and coming out victorious covered in green slimy bug entrails.

This is a treasure of a game called Jet Force Gemini. A game that sadly got practically no recognition. Personally I loved Jet Force Gemini on the N64. It had all the right elements for a third-person shooter, it had that certain RARE brilliance and actually had a half-decent story line. So I would love to see a sequel come out on GameCube. Okay so it was a bit too hard at times and many magazines that reviewed the game marked it down loads because it was simply too big. The thing is, I love games that take me ages to

finish, as the end feeling is of great accomplishment.

So I'd love to see more of this shooting action on the GCN, as there aren't really that many third-person console shooters on the market at the moment. I want - no, NEED more hectic blasting that I've been craving ever since I finished JFG!!

Damien Hicks
Neozneozoo@yahoo.com

GAROU EVEN COOLER

Sequels are really a double-edged sword in gaming. On one side you have excellent game series which get better and better with additional installments - Final Fantasy, Tony Hawk, and Zelda just to name a few. On the other side, you have the same old junk being carted out year after year with only the front cover (if that) changing - need I say anything other than Army Men?

The real purpose of sequels should be to keep what was cool about the original while also fixing its flaws and taking advantage of its unused potential.

That's why I'd have to go with Garou: Mark of the Wolves on this one, for a number of reasons:

1. Characters - SNK have always been great at character design, but Garou has one of the coolest rosters of fighters ever, especially Rock Howard, Gato, Grant and Kain Heinlein! Yet only 2 out of the 14 have had appearances in other games! After all the time Ryu and his shotokan pals have had in the limelight, these guys deserve more!

2. Fighting system - I think we're all getting a bit tired of the best of 3 one-on-one battle system. Maybe a 3-member KOF style would be more exciting. Or maybe a tag system? CVS-style tier system? Plenty of options here.

3. Learning curve - the original Garou didn't attract as much attention as it could have (I have NEVER seen a Garou machine at ANY arcade ANYWHERE) because it marginalised the casual gamers who just like to pop a buck into a Street Fighter machine and Hadoken their way to victory. Smoothing out the learning curve would help the sequel achieve the success the original deserved.

4. Just defense, T.O.P. and braking - these features set Garou apart from the rest of the 2D fighters out there. Imagine their possibilities expanded for a sequel! Like braking super moves, or T.O.P. exclusive MVC-sized combos!





The power of TIE Fighter.



GoldenEye, brings a tear to ours.



Garou - G-roooovy.

5. Story - putting the fact that fighting game stories are notorious for sucking extremely hard aside, the Fatal Fury saga could do with another chapter. Garou's story ended rather inconclusively, with Rock and Kain teaming up to go find Rock's mother, Marie. Maybe Marie could be a playable character in the sequel, or even a boss! Or how about the return of Geese Howard, the biggest badass of all time?

So that's why I would make a sequel to Garou - to keep what is already cool about the game, and make it cooler.

Sea Muir
Velaris43@hotmail.com

SNOW TYCOON

Well, there are heaps of great ones I can think of, but here's my top two. Firstly is Snow Bros. I used to love this game. The gameplay was superb, and multiplayer unbeatable. I'd like to see a remake of it, with awesome 3D graphics. Not a change of perspective however, still 2D gameplay with 3D graphics, like Donkey Kong Country. I was stoked to see the arcade machine



Snow Bros - ahh the happy times.

still kicking in a Coogee pool hall a few years ago. I hope it's still there.

Anyone in Sydney who hasn't played this great game should go there and give it a shot. It's the place a few doors down from Macca's across the road from the beach.

Next is Transport Tycoon. I don't really get into those strategy games normally, except for this one. I'd like to see a sequel that gives you even more control over all your transport, and has larger and more detailed graphics. The thing with this game is as soon as we figured out how you could cheat by trapping the opponents buses and blowing up their trains, I stopped playing it cause I couldn't see the point any more. So yeah, in other words make sure the sequel has no bugs in it.

Tommy Filippopoulos
Lazzy211@hotmail.com

RETURN OF THE TIE

Okay, most Star Wars games of late are not hitting the mark spot on, they are either too arcadey (not enough depth) or too heavily into one genre, e.g. space combat or FPS.

I reckon an excellent sequel would be one to TIE Fighter. This is still, in my opinion, one of the finest Star Wars games ever. It has depth, storyline and massive replay value. In the new version however, there should be various tangents to the storyline depending on how you play and there should be a campaign and battle editor/skirmish mode. Who wouldn't want to see how the 181st

TIE squadron goes against the Rogues? Needless to say, online multiplayer is a must. An unlockable option of flying other experimental craft would be cool, as well as say, being able to command a capital ship like a Star Destroyer. Sweet. I would never need to have another game again.

Jason aka Gameblor
jboggs@telstra.com

KONG AGAIN

I'd make a sequel to Donkey Kong 64, but this time I'd include more realistic characters, like Drunken Kong, the alcoholic ape slurring his words, calling Kremings jerks and making passes at Candy Kong until he gets kicked out of the banana bar. Other characters would include Geeky Kong, the four-eyed pimple faced monkey with his pants pulled up to his neck and about 67 pens stuffed into his shirt pocket. He could defeat enemies by running up to them and starting conversations about thermo dynamics, nuclear fusion and giggle about how he has a 'thing' for Lara Croft, until the enemies get so bored that they actually take their own life. Finally, we could have Wanky Kong, whose special move would be (SNIP - Ed.).

Steve Milich
Milich@picknowl.com.au



BOND, JAMES BOND

If I could make a sequel to a game, it would be a sequel to GoldenEye! This game kicks arse so hard that I can't keep it out of my brain! Perfect Dark tried, people even said it was better than GoldenEye though they knew they were lying to themselves, because we all knew it should have been better! Those six framed shields and constant, following you to your next life, blurry screens just weren't good enough! Most of the time they were only good for giving players a headache.

Anyway, to make a sequel to GoldenEye, I'd buff up the graphics, recreate the level designs (likely base them around a recent Bond movie), and modify the guns slightly, even throw in a few new ones. Giving Bond guns that are equal to Turok's hefty collection would be overstepping the mark a bit too much. The voice acting would be the voice of the actual James Bond, not of some 'James Bond' wannabe who thinks he has his Bond vocal technique down. All the other voices would be of actual Bond actors too, no doubt largely increasing the games production costs.

And that's it! A brand new GoldenEye for all to enjoy, with all the addictiveness, innovation, and replay value of the original. In other words, a game that achieves what Perfect Dark strived for, Bond style!

James McDermott
dirtchamber_@hotmail.com

MAIL



HYPER LETTERS:

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WHERE'S THE FUN?

All the new super-consoles are out now, and as I look through the list of games each system amasses, I'm noticing a disturbing trend: less and less of the games coming out today are exclusive to one platform.

The Xbox is "the world's most powerful console" according to Microsoft's media machine. The GCN has "unbelievable graphics". But what the gaming companies seem to be forgetting is that a console is not defined by its clock frequency, its memory, its bump-mapping or its ability to play DVDs. What gives a console its identity are the games that are available only on that system.

Think about it. If you're playing Mario or F-Zero, it has to be on a Nintendo. If it's Crash Bandicoot or Wipeout, it's on a PlayStation. The games might be similar, but there's enough difference between them to make playing them a different experience.

This is why I want to see more platform-exclusive games on the market. I think I must be the only gamer in the world who doesn't want to see Final Fantasy on all consoles;

I'd rather see the developers at Nintendo EAD or Microsoft put their heads together and come up with a new and completely different RPG that is just as good as FF. We'd potentially have three great RPG series on the market, and that's gotta be better for everybody.

When SNES and Megadrive owners argued that Mario/Sonic was better, they weren't arguing on the basis of their console's graphics or sound but the fun the games brought them. If there are not more platform-exclusive games soon, then that's all that our beloved consoles will be: different shaped boxes with different tech specs. And where's the fun in that?

Scott Stevenson
crashingleg@hotmail.com

Dear Scott,
There are definitely less exclusive third-party titles around these days. However, each system does have its first-party games, which is where the battle lines are being drawn. Nintendo are so much more identifiable for their strong first party characters, such as Mario and

Zelda et al. PS2 and Xbox both have a lack of strong character driven games, but exclusive third-party games of worth - HALO and Final Fantasy to name but two such licenses. There is still immense rivalry here, and you'll find that there are plenty of exclusives in the coming year.

ONE FOR ALL

Hey Hyper,

I was just reading the mail section of June Hyper (104) and came across (figuratively speaking) Mick Kelly's letter and I realised he brings up an interesting point. There are a lot of gamers my age (29) and up that have been gaming for years and are now in a situation where that they can afford to own more than one console. I have all three (GCN, Xbox, PS2) and can enjoy any A-grade title that is exclusive to each, but it also poses a problem (life is tough, I know). Many developers are putting games out on all three, so my question is this: You obviously review each game on its own merit but if the same game comes out on ALL THREE consoles (Soul Calibur 2 anyone?) will you let us know which console has the best version? Taking into account a comparison of graphics, frame rate (which shouldn't be an issue on "Next-Gen" consoles but still is), load times etc.

Hope you find this to be a valid question 'cause yours is the only mag whose reviews I read before going out to buy a game. Most other mags seem to like the gifts developers send them 'cause they give crap games good write ups.

Les
Lisandro@froggy.com.au

Dear Les,
We'll do our best to give the big reviews to the leading "version", or at least mention in the review which one we believe to be the strongest. For instance, I think we made it pretty clear that Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 was superior on the Xbox.

XBOX SHOOT OUT

Dear Hyper

I reckon your mag is one of the best in Australia for info on all

consoles and PC. Anyway I'm buying a new console and as you are the experts on all things gaming on all the consoles, could you tell me which console would be the best for First Person Shooters and action games? I am currently looking at getting an Xbox but I want a professional opinion on which console to get for the best FPS and action games.

Thanks for your help,
Sycoh
Sycoh@hotmail.com

Dear Sycoh,
For First Person Shooters you are right in considering an Xbox. It seems all the big PC FPS games are going to be on Xbox only... Unreal Championship, Deus Ex 2, Thief III, possibly Doom III, Duke Nukem Forever, SWAT and geez, it already has HALO! There are also others that will port to Xbox, like Turok Evolution, Max Payne (out now), Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter... the list goes on. As for action games, the PS2 is better overall at the moment, but the Xbox will pick up no doubt and if FPS games are very important to you then go with Xbox.

QUESTION TIME

Yo! Got a few questions for the best value games mag.

1. Are GTA3 and Virtua Fighter 4 being released on Xbox?
2. Is Golden Sun and Dragonball available on GCN?
3. Have you heard anything about a new Zelda movie?
4. Do Midway have any plans to make another arcade style basketball game?
5. I know you don't usually do this, but could you tell me the master (unlock everything) cheat for THPS3 on Xbox? (Not for me, my friend wants to know.)

One more thing, what's up with retail? Why are they saying \$329 is the 'sale' price for GCN? They claim the RRP is \$399. BUT IT AIN'T DAMMIT... calm blue ocean... calm blue ocean...

Matt Emon
Ultracrazy1@hotmail.com

Dear Matt, or can I call you Ultracrazy?

CAPTION THIS!

PART 31 WINNER

After about 100 emails telling us it was Mario getting rid of Toad once and for all, our winner is Ben Morrissey. He made us laugh.



"And we're still waiting for Mario's balls to drop."

1. Rockstar had once announced GTA3 for Xbox, but it seems that Sony have made them sign an exclusivity deal on the GTA license, keeping it on PS2 at least until GTA4. Virtua Fighter 4 is a Sega game, so there's hope they may do an Xbox port. Nothing official to go on though. Sega seem to be more interested in resurrecting other stuff for Xbox, like Panzer Dragoon.
2. There are rumours of a Golden Sun game for GCN, and Dragonball Z is out on GBA now.
3. Nope, it's bunk rumour at the moment.
4. Probably!
5. We don't have an "ultimate" cheat for the Xbox version. For PS2 at least, go to the cheats menu in the option screen and enter "BACKDOOR". Then pause the game during play to access a cheat menu.

NEED FOR SPEED

Hyper Crew,

My dad is interested in getting a new computer. The problem is he doesn't know what to get. He is interested in getting a Pentium 4, or a Pentium 1.5GHz. So, my questions are...

1. How good is a Pentium 1.5GHz, compared to other Pentiums??
2. What kind of 3dfx card should I get? I'm into gaming but my dad doesn't want anything expensive, but I want it to be a good one.

I hope you can reply to my questions.

Jeremy

jdhd@australiainmail.com

Dear Jeremy,

1. 1.5Ghz is the speed of the CPU. It's one of the faster Pentiums available, so if you're planning on getting a 1.5Ghz machine you'll be pretty happy, as that's pretty fast.
2. You shouldn't get any 3Dfx card! We assume you mean a 3D card in general (3Dfx is a brand). For a few hundred dollars you'd be able to get a GeForce 3 MX, or a good GeForce 2 which should deliver you some superb gaming. If you have to go ultra cheap, pick up a GeForce 2 MX.

ILLOGICAL, CAPTAIN

First off, let me get this off my chest; the Star Trek: Enterprise theme song is the worst theme song ever. It's like, christian rock or something! And there isn't even any horns! And if the token "but emotions are

illogical captain" character Tupal pouts and sticks her tits out anymore, her lips and breasts will fall off. Really, what logical motivation would a Vulcan have to be such a poser? And that captain what's his face! Smug bastard!

Okay, now that I've somewhat established my geek credentials; ICO is one the most sublime games I have ever had the pleasure of playing. It's so simple, yet so immersive and emotional. The castle architecture is like being lost in an M.C. Escher print, and the interplay between the two characters is beautiful to behold.

I just couldn't help wondering, how much further would technology have to progress before we can have an infinitely randomly generated game, once the initial theme is set? Imagine playing ICO through again and again, each time with a new architectural environment and puzzles. The computer would randomly create a new castle each time with new puzzles and so on (given that its a fairly basic concept), sort of like Rapid Racer's infinitely generated tracks, or the Worms series random battle grounds. It would make for a game that truly did last forever. Or is that just stupid talk?

David Brauchi

Hoggle@start.com.au

Dear David,

We agree that the intro to Enterprise is truly awful, including all the bits of human history footage flashing up during the cheesy song. It's most unlike Trek. Still, the show is pretty good.

ROYALE WITH CHEESE

Dear Hyper,

I've been reading your mag for a while now and I'm glad of it. I've found that most magazines which have a demo on the front cover tend to miss out on the point of being entertaining to read - PlayStation magazines anyone?

Anyway I'm writing to you to point out something. It's just that I'm a proud Xbox owner, but I feel there are some games in which the Xbox is lacking. Horror games. Ok there's Genma Onimusha and The Thing, then...?

It's my opinion that Capcom are stiffing Xbox. I mean they are the best company for horror games such as Devil May Cry, Onimusha and

AUSSIE AUSSIE AUSSIE

Hyper: Read it. Love it.

In the lead up to E3 there was lots of press about the plight of Aussie developers and the never ending "port" rut that seems to have bogged down any original Australian game concepts. The developers reasonably cry poor and are unable to fund their original ideas. It's a sad state of affairs when something so much more, transnational and potentially more lucrative than our film industry is generally brushed aside through lack of proper expertise. The film industry however does provide great learnings and definitely a possible model for furthering our foetal game scene.

Sure we could take a leaf out of the Australian Film Industry book and rely on suckle from government grants. But why doesn't Australia make games like Hollywood makes movie? Hollywood movies are not often self-funded, a producer is pitched an idea and then dependent on their reaction/talent they financially back a movie from funds garnered from investors outside the industry. It is this symbiosis that has allowed Hollywood to prosper for almost a century. And the theory is simple, let the makers make the movie while the producers get the money: you do what you're good at and I will do what I am good at.

Let me talk to my people.

Tom Hurst

Tomhurst@bigpond.com

Dear Tom,

We contacted Torus games based in Melbourne, and got their opinion on the matter...

Hi Tom,

Generally speaking, porting is a relatively easy way for developers to make a name for themselves in the publishing world. Developers may choose to take on porting work as a means of 'bread and butter' before they begin developing games with new licenses attached. As any business owner will tell you, you need a solid foundation before you can afford the risks involved in original and groundbreaking projects.

Grants through the Australian Film Commission are there for the taking for Game Developers. Torus Games hasn't been shy in applying for grants to develop prototypes in preparation for E3 and to show to the likes of Activision.

If investor funding is sought by Game Developers, then it is normally only sought on a project-by-project basis. The difficulty lies in finding investors who are willing to invest in the short term for comparatively low return - this kind of funding isn't normally attractive to investors, and those willing to invest in such a means are referred to as 'angel investors'. They may choose to invest for reasons other than strictly monetary return: maybe because they have interests in growing the business, or because they wish to add value to it for one reason or another.

Large, established organisations can explore the options available in venture capital funding, in which the investors seek long-term capital gain rather than immediate and regular payments. Individual projects such as video games can't really offer this, unless there is brand-building or IP ownership potential for the investors. Needless to say, this kind of funding isn't always readily available in our industry.

Tori White

Associate Producer, Torus

twhite@torus.com.au



You've won an exclusive 360 Modena Racing Wheel for PC! Replica of the wheel in a Ferrari 360 Modena.

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MAIL

Resident Evil, only to name a few. The thing is that Capcom make only one of their horror titles on Xbox, but make 3 or more titles on the GameCube and PS2 and I'm pretty pissed off about this! Are there any games Capcom are making officially for Xbox?

Thank
Cheese Burger
eden_93@hotmail.com

Dear Cheesburger, Capcom seem to have a preference for PS2 at the moment, but they do have a few cool games on the way for Xbox - they're just not "horror" titles. If you look at some non-Capcom stuff, you'll find there are a few cool horror games coming to Xbox... Yes, *The Thing is one*, so is *Buffy*, *Hunter the Reckoning*, *Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams* and of course, *Blood Omen 2* is out now.

STARCRAFT SECRETS

To Hyper,
 Like everyone else I'm excited about all the great games that are in the market at the moment and like most gamers I want to buy a lot of them. So, looking for ways to save money, I went to a Harvey Norman store during a sale and there was a Firestorm GameCube controller + Firestorm memory card. I was just wondering if this is a worthwhile buy for 50 bucks or will it just stuff up and not work? Some questions:
 1. Will there be any RTS games for GameCube?
 2. What about Starcraft on the GameCube?
 3. Will there ever be a sequel to Starcraft?
 4. Have any of you had any trouble with Civ3 on your PCs?

5. How do you take screenshots of games on a console?
 The last question has mystified me for a while so please reply.
 Thanks anyway.
 P.S. cool mag!
 Bye,
Scott Nelson
scott_nelson69@hotmail.com

Dear Scott,
 We haven't tested the Firebird yet, so "Caveat Emptor" my friend.
 1. Undoubtedly.
 2. Starcraft is getting on a bit.
 3. We hope so, and we have heard rumours that it is in development.
 4. No.
 5. We take a signal out of the TV and into a PC with a video capture card. Then record a small video clip of the game and select screenshots from it. In some cases we even use an S-Video cable and plug the console directly into the PC's capture card. For PC screenshots we use a registered version of HyperSnapDX.

JEDI LOVE

Hey Hyper,
 I'm 13 years-old and searching for some answers, so I'm asking you guys.
 1. Out of the GCN, X-BOX, and the PS2 which console do you say has the best upcoming games out of the lot?
 2. My computer doesn't take games that require 128MB RAM and a 3D card and that means I can't play games like Jedi Outcast and Spider-Man - mostly adventure and action games - so I usually only get RTS. (My com has 64MB RAM it's a Packard bell) what can I do?
 3. When is Clone Wars coming out?
 4. Did you like Rogue Squadron better than Rogue Leader?
 5. Who is your fav Jedi? (Matter of

interest).
 6. Do you guys play Galactic Battleground over the net? I do and it's awesome.
 Well I'd better leave before I start talking again.
 Catcha,
Jezz
jezz1989@hotmail.com

Dear Jezz,
 1. You'll have to take a look at our feature starting on page 14, and decide for yourself.
 2. Getting a new computer or some more RAM would be a good idea, don't you think?
 3. Star Wars: The Clone Wars is on our release schedule for mid September.
 4. Personally, I prefer Rogue Leader.
 5. Obi-Wan Kenobi.
 6. We're too busy making the mag!

BY THE POWER OF...

Howdy.
 For some time now I've been laughing at your small, comical captions on just about all of the pictures in the mag. And over time, I've also noticed that a few of them have had references to my favourite 80's cartoon, "Masters of the Universe".
 Now here's the bit that sounds stupid, but would make me (and I'm sure any other 80's kid out there) very happy, is a game based on the cartoon/ toy series. The chances of this happening at present are very slim, I know. But considering that Mattel (He-Man developers) are re-releasing the toy line again some time next year, and the cartoon may be re-aired on the Cartoon Network, it could become a possibility. Now, the idea that I have at the moment is: wouldn't it be great if there was a fighting game based on

the toy line/cartoon? It would be even better if Namco made it, and used the Soul Calibur engine.

Soul Calibur already looks like it has taken elements from the show, like the big green castle in some of the backgrounds which looks like Castle Greyskull. And when Sophitia puts her sword in the air, I swear she's going to say "For the honour of Greyskull". Yep... at this point you think I'm crazy, but I can dream can't I? If you want to see the new line-up of figures, go to he-man.org Thanks guys, keep up the good work. P.S. I really hope my mates don't ever read this. I'll never hear the end of it!!

H.
millerhayden@hotmail.com

Dear H.,
 Does your initial stand for He? Are we talking to the infamous He Man himself?! Wow! Er... anyway, as for your idea. Any game using the Soul Calibur engine sounds good to us. We can't wait for Soul Calibur 2!

MEDICATION

Hey Hyper crew! I've noticed - when many people write into Hyper they usually say 'I'm not going to spend the whole time kissing your butt' or something like this. I believe you deserve it Hyper, because you are the BEST gaming mag in Australia and possibly the world. They should tell everyone Hyper is the BEST! They shouldn't be aspiring to win the wheel. They should just make a damn good read. Just like you guys do. P.S. I'll go and take my pills now.

Michael

Dear Michael,
 Got any pills left? You know, sometimes deadline gets me down...

LATE ADDITIONS

Considering the number of gaming systems out there, sometimes we never get to review everything that comes into the office, especially if it's a port or niche title.

Late Additions is your quick reference guide to whether these games are worth getting. This way you have an even more complete guide to what's getting released on all the platforms. Enjoy!

TITLE	PLATFORM	CATEGORY	PUBLISHER	PRICE	RATING
Crash Bandicoot	Xbox	Action	Vivendi	\$99.95	OK
Legends of Wrestling	Xbox	Sport	Acclaim	\$99.95	BAD
Universal Theme Park	GCN	Er...	Acclaim	\$99.95	BAAAD
Goin' Quackers	GCN	Action	Ubi Soft	\$99.95	BAD
Atari Anniver. Redux	PSone	Retro	Atari	\$79.95	OK
Grand Theft Auto III	PC	Action/Racing	Rockstar	\$89.95	GOOD
Clone Campaigns	PC	RTS expansion	LucasArts	\$89.95	GOOD
Iron Aces 2	PS2	Air combat	Xicat	\$89.95	OK
Stealth Combat	PC	RTS	Cryo	\$89.95	OK

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with AVSDA

TOP 10

PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Final Fantasy X	RPG
2	◆	Grand Theft Auto 3	Adventure
3	◆	Metal Gear Solid 2	Adventure
4	◆	FIFA 2002 World Cup	Sports
5	▲	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	Sports
6	▼	Virtua Fighter 4	Action
7	◆	Crash Band 5: Wrath/Cortex	Adventure
8	◆	Dynasty Warriors 3	Action
9	⊕	FIFA 2002	Sports
10	▼	Max Payne	Action

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure
2	◆	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Sports
3	◆	Monsters Inc.	Adventure
4	▲	FIFA 2002	Sports
5	▼	Peter Pan	Adventure
6	◆	Who Wnts To Be A Millinire?	Family
7	◆	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Sports
8	◆	Syphon Filter 3	Adventure
9	◆	WWF Smackdown! 2	Sports
10	◆	Spiderman Enter Electro	Adventure

TOP 10

Game Cube Games Over \$40

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Super Smash Bros: Melee	Action
2	▼	Rogue Leader	Action
3	▼	Luigi's Mansion	Adventure
4	▼	Sonic Adventures 2: Battle	Adventure
5	▼	Wave Race: Blue Storm	Racing
6	◆	Burnout	Racing
7	▼	Super Monkey Ball	Family
8	▼	Tony Hawk Pro Skater 3	Sports
9	▲	FIFA 2002 World Cup	Sports
10	▼	Simpson's Road Rage	Racing

TOP 10

Xbox Games Over \$40

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Halo - Combat Evolved	Action
2	◆	Project Gotham Racing	Racing
3	⊕	Moto GP Ultimate Racing	Racing
4	▼	Dead or Alive 3	Action
5	▲	FIFA 2002 World Cup	Sports
6	▼	RalliSport Challenge	Racing
7	▼	Crash Band: Wrath/Cortex	Adventure
8	▼	Max Payne	Action
9	▼	Star Wars Obi Wan	Action
10	▼	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Sports

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$30

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Soldier Fortune 2: Double H	Action
2	⊕	Grand Theft Auto 3	Adventure
3	▼	EA Sports V8 Challenge	Racing
4	▼	The Sims Vacation	Strategy
5	▼	Star Wars Jedi Knight 2	Adventure
6	▼	The Sims	Strategy
7	◆	The Sims Hot Date	Strategy
8	▼	Medal Of Honor Allied Asslt	Action
9	⊕	Heroes Of Might & Magic IV	RPG
10	▼	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Dragonball Z: Legacy Goku	Action
2	◆	Super Mario World Adv 2	Adventure
3	◆	Mario Kart Super Circuit	Racing
4	◆	Sonic Advance	Adventure
5	◆	Star Wars Jedi Pwr Battles	Action
6	◆	Crash Bandicoot Big Adv	Adventure
7	▲	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure
8	▼	Super Mario Advance	Adventure
9	▼	Golden Sun	RPG
10	⊕	Jimmy Neutron	Adventure

TOP 10

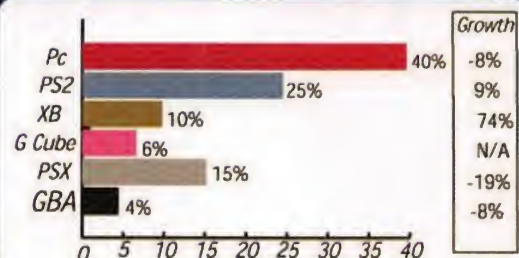
All Full Priced Games

W/E 6 June 2002
RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Super Smash Bros: Melee	GameCube
2	▼	Final Fantasy X	PlayStation 2
3	◆	Halo - Combat Evolved	Xbox
4	▼	Soldier of Fortune 2: Double H	PC/MAC
5	⊕	Grand Theft Auto 3	PC/MAC
6	▲	Dragonball Z: Legacy Of Goku	GBA
7	▼	Grand Theft Auto 3	PlayStation 2
8	▼	EA Sports V8 Challenge	PC/MAC
9	▼	Rogue Leader	GameCube
10	◆	Project Gotham Racing	Xbox

MARKET WATCH All Games by Platform

May vs Apr 2002
RETAIL SALES



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

inform

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Next Issue:



SHIGERU MIYAMOTO

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Hyper 107 >>>
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PLUS: Doom III interview
AND: The magic of videogame music - We delve into its past, present and future.



PlayStation 2

TAKE SOMEONE SPECIAL OUT



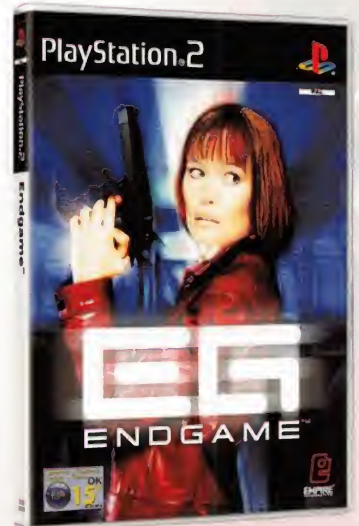
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