

... Rings for the Elven-Kings under the sky, Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone, Nine for Mortal

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ISSUE 109
NOVEMBER 2002

HYPERS

Special Collector's Edition

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

A never-before-seen look at the PS2 game & movie

32 PAGES OF
REVIEWS

V8 Supercars, Onimusha 2,
The Thing, Crazy Taxi 3, WWE Raw,
Eternal Darkness, Beach Spikers

ARE YOU
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VIDEO GAMES?

The experts & gamers speak out



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GTA 3 MEETS THE GODFATHER
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... Rings for the Elven-Kings under the sky, Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone, Nine for Mortal

Now doomed to die, I've for the Dark Lord on his dark throne, In the land of Mordor where the shadows lie.

"War is upon us and all our friends, a war in which the use of the Ring could give us surety of victory. It fills me with great sorrow and great fear: for much shall be destroyed and all may be lost. I am Gandalf, Gandalf the White, but Black is mightier still."

— Gandalf the White



THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS - EXCLUSIVE PICS FROM THE NEW FILM AND GAME

Come with us as we explore this exciting new chapter of evil wizards, hostaged Hobbits, talking trees and mighty warriors. Luckily, you get to play the mighty warrior...

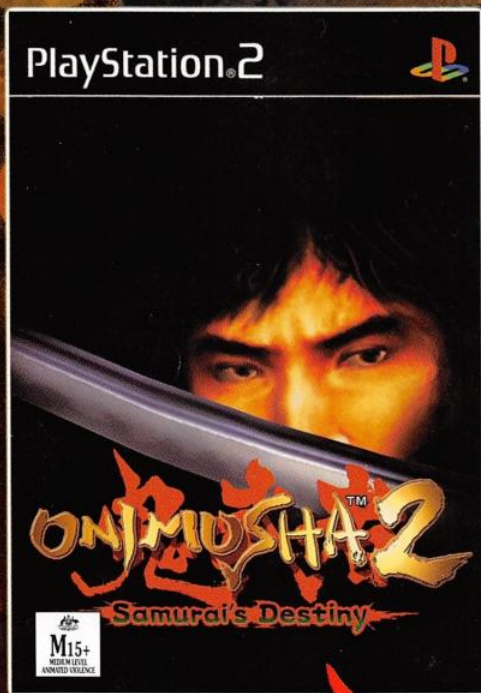
"I've for the Dark Lord on his dark throne, In the land of Mordor where the shadows lie."

"I've for the Dark Lord on his dark throne, In the land of Mordor where the shadows lie."

These stories

ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DESTINY

Available
OCTOBER

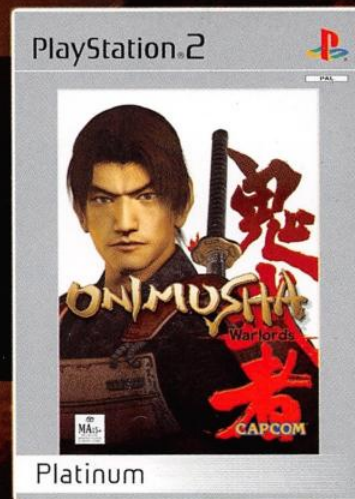


ONIMUSHA 2TM

Samurai's Destiny

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Available:

Onimusha: Warlords



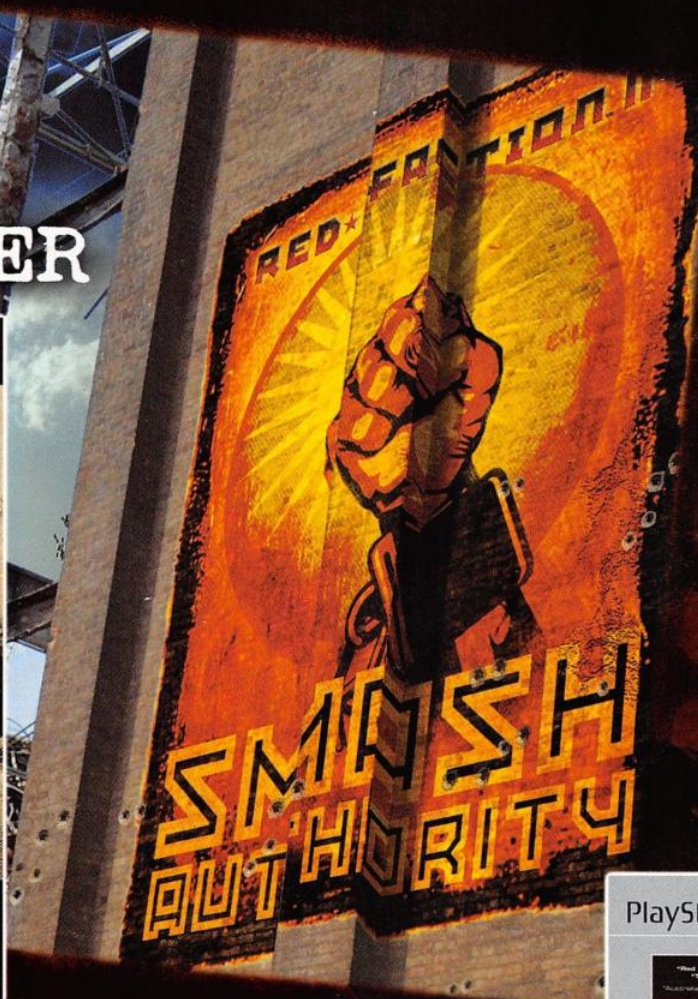
MA15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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are far from
over...

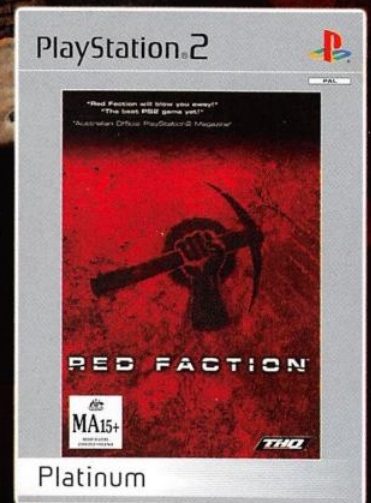
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RED FACTION II

Red Faction

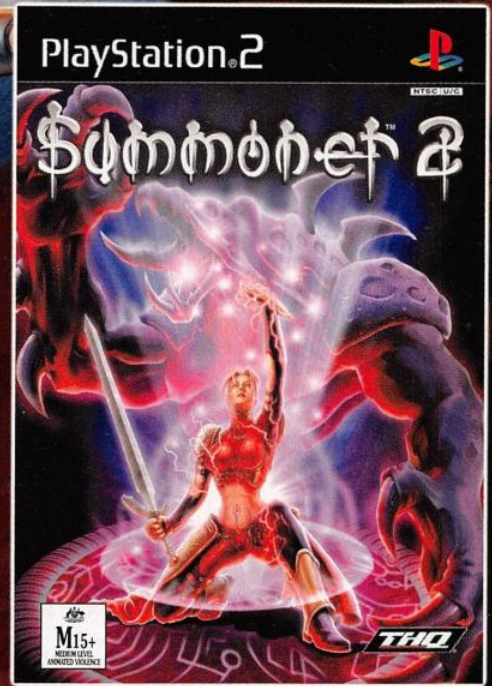


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SUMMONER 2



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originals...
now face the sequels.

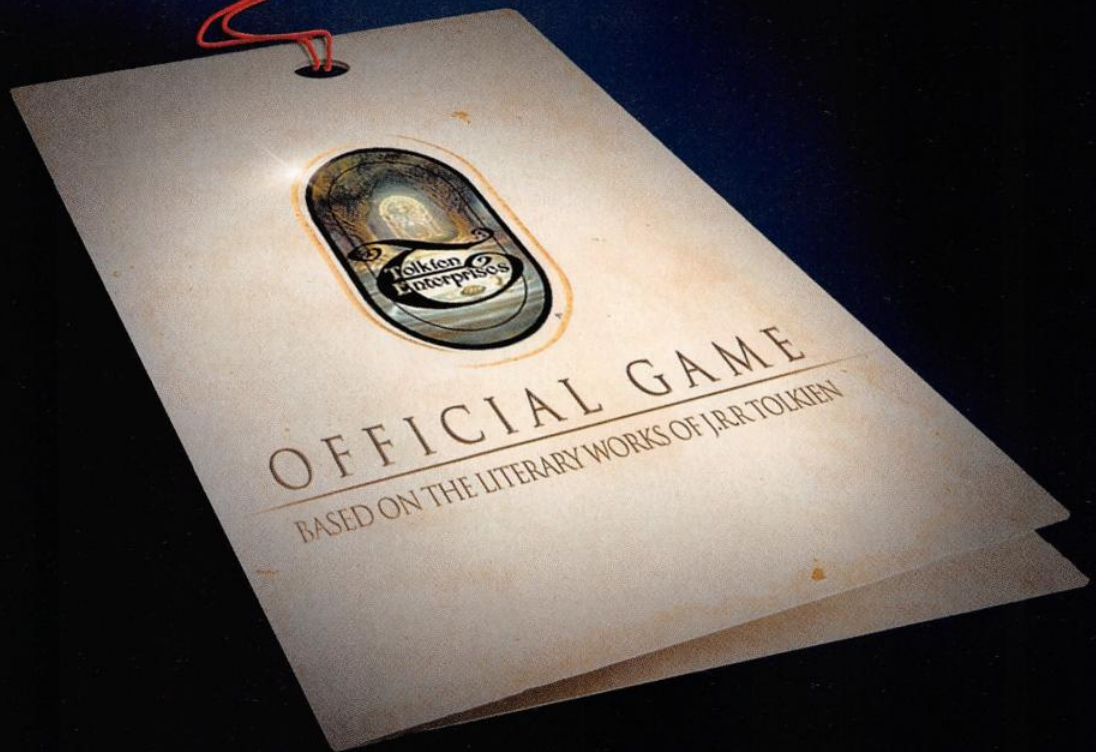
PlayStation®2



Summoner

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the LORD OF THE RINGS™

—+ THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING™ —+



CAST THE SPELL



SWING THE BLADE

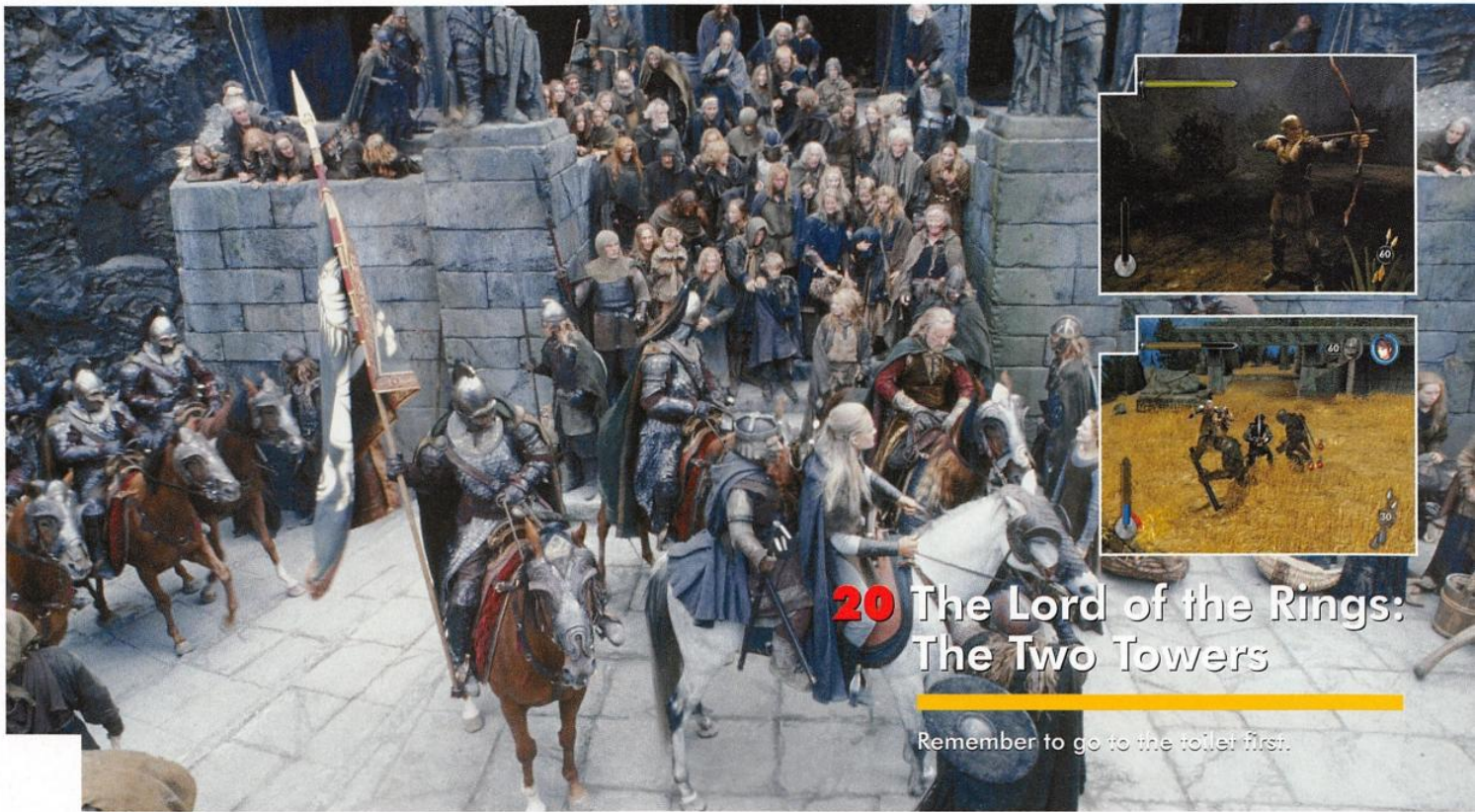


WEAR THE RING

PLAY THE GREATEST STORY EVER WRITTEN!

COMING SOON

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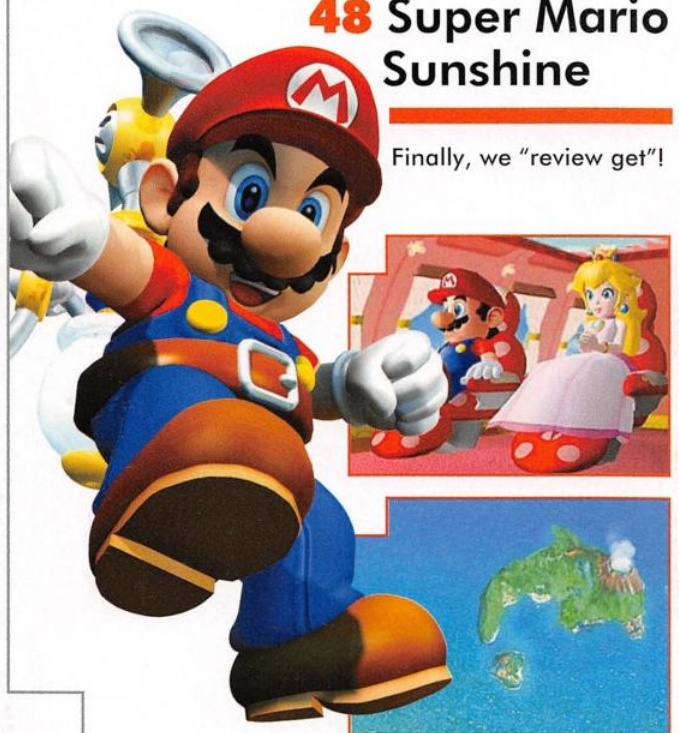
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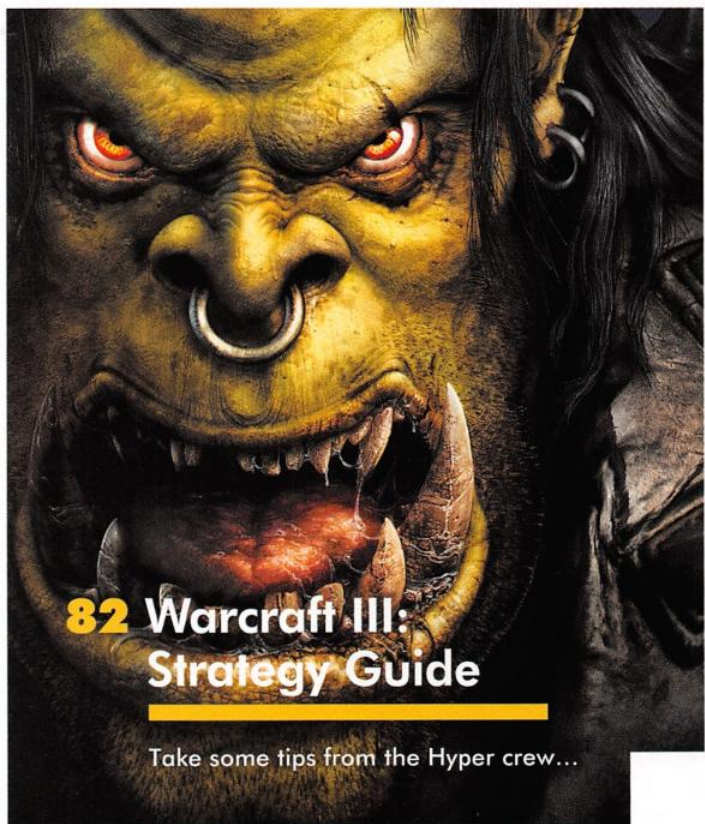


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Finally, we "review get"!



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HYPER»



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2002

WRITE TO HYPER!

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© Pierre Vinet / New Line Cinema



EDITORIAL

» Sometimes it's the simpler things in life that are the most memorable, meaningful or most captivating. Just sitting in the park and staring at trees can deliver an epiphany. Washing the dishes can bring on a zen-like calmness. Even playing Pong with a friend can still be exceptionally entertaining – with fresh copies of Unreal Tournament 2003 lying untouched in a pile.

This month, Mario returned to the scene. Super Mario Sunshine is without a doubt a flagship GameCube title, and a brilliantly fun platformer, but the simplicity of stacking units in the Risk-like Empire building mode of Medieval: Total War brought me the greater joy. I discovered a purity in the turn-based gameplay that was more enjoyable than even the challenging real-time 3D battles in the same game. Let's put the reins on this wild, charging 3D beast that is modern gaming and rediscover some of the basics. Played Chess lately?

Eliot Fish » Editor



NEWS

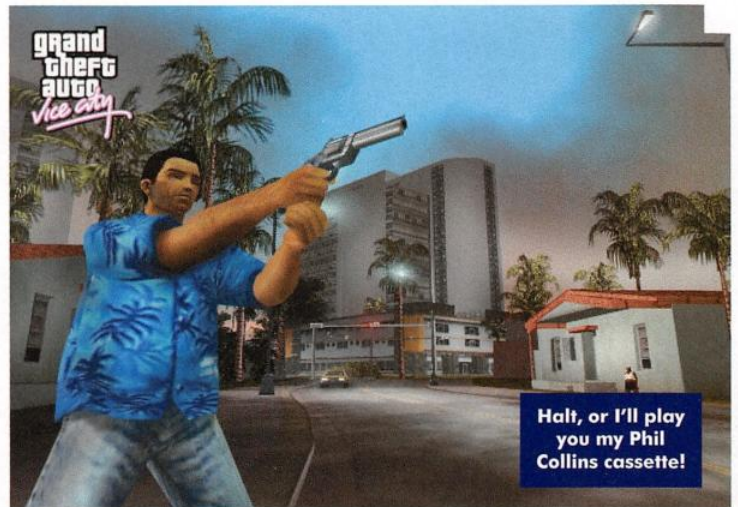
IN THE NEWS: GTA: Vice City ■ Greece bans games ■ Livid Festival ■ Xbox Live sniffs modchips ■ Rare where?!

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

The Flock of Seagulls are almost upon us!

Get ready to tease out that hair, slip on a tropical shirt, some reflective sunglasses and squeeze into some stone wash jeans. The latest news from distributor Take 2 Interactive is that the

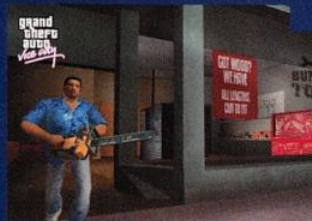
exciting follow-up to GTA 3, GTA: Vice City, will hit our Aussie games shops in the first or second week of November! After bringing utter mayhem to the streets of Liberty City, it's time to head down south, and make your mark on the glamorous metropolis of Vice City in the height of the 1980s.



Halt, or I'll play you my Phil Collins cassette!

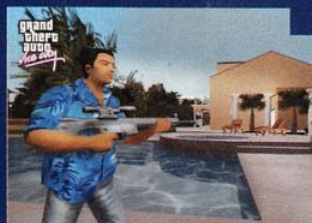
SAY HELLO TO MY NOISY FRIEND

Just take a look at some of the great new weapons you can get your hands on in Vice City!



The Chainsaw

When was the last time you watched Scarface, eh?



The Sniper Rifle

The ultimate party pooper.



The Screwdriver

When things need a little "fixing".

HALL & OATES... AND A CHAINSAW

You've been sent down to Vice City by your old boss, Sonny Forelli, but it doesn't take long for you to discover that the dirty rat set you up. He just wanted you out of Liberty City. Now you're out of cash, on the run, and you're back out on the streets of a brand new city looking for some jobs.

Rockstar North describe Vice City as "a huge urban sprawl ranging from the beach to the swamps and the glitz to the ghetto... the most varied, complete and alive digital city ever created". Instead of splitting the city up into two halves as they did in GTA 3, Rockstar have ensured that Vice City is simply one large city. In order to make your way around this huge landscape, you're going to need some new wheels...

New additions to the array of vehicles have us particularly excited. Besides a collection of new hot rods and luxury cars, you can now take a ride in a helicopter, hop on a motorbike and even ride a golf cart, amongst other crazy new transport options. You'll be avoiding rollerskaters along the beach, keeping your distance from bkie gangs or... running them all down in a semi-trailer. That's what we love about GTA so much. It's not long now, so start saving those dollars, hock your grandmother or start pestering the parents.



...the most varied, complete and alive digital city ever created...

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 36 in the Subject line.



Yeah, how ya like them apples.

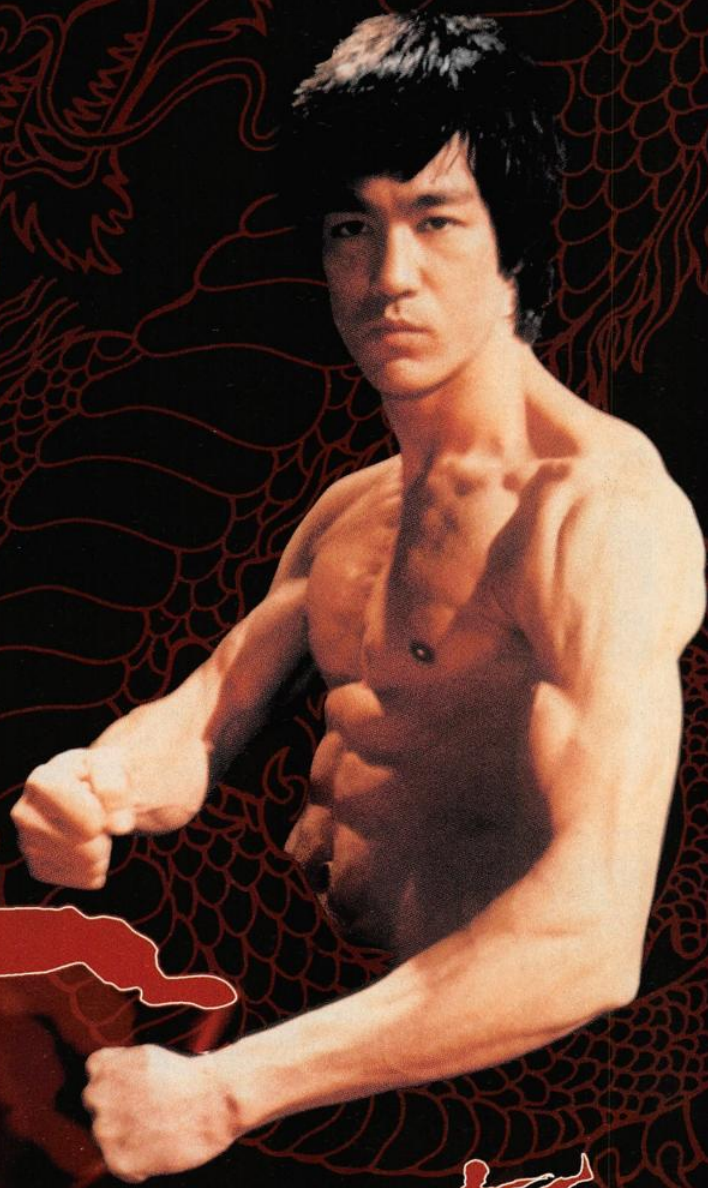


ONLY ON
XBOX



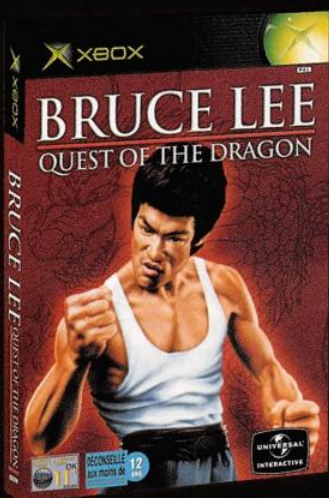
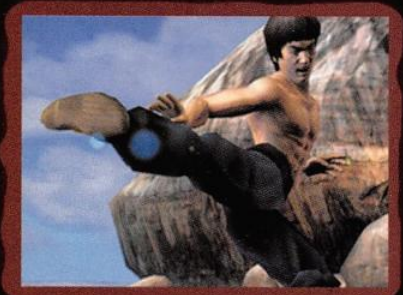
8 disciplines, more than
100 moves to master.

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BECOME A DRAGON!



龍

BRUCE LEE QUEST OF THE DRAGON



- For the first time ever, you can fight as the one and only Bruce Lee.
- In Quest of the Dragon, motion capture technology authentically recreates more than one hundred of Bruce's Jeet Kune Do moves.
- Designed exclusively for the Xbox, it's an action-packed fighting game where you'll battle hordes of thugs in an epic struggle for survival. Get ready for a fight of legendary proportions.
- Effectively fight multiple opponents Bruce Lee style with the enemy lock-on targeting system.
- Over 30 different enemies each with complex AI routines where enemies surprise, surround, and ambush you!
- Over 30 level areas across 3 continents of Hong Kong, England and San Francisco.
- Up to 8 different styles, including :Jeet Kune Do, Thai Kwan Do, Shaolin Dragon, Kick Boxing, Kung Fu and more.

www.universalinteractive.com/bruceleegames

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VIDEO GAMES BANNED IN GREECE

We're not kidding



In a display of stunning ignorance, the Greek government recently decided that the way to crack down on electronic gambling in their country was to outright ban all forms of electronic gaming. Yes, that includes playing Game Boy on the bus – you can now be arrested for that. Oh, want to play some Minesweeper that came with Windows on your lunch break at work? No, that's illegal too. Careful or your boss will call the cops. And don't even think about going home and playing some Mario on your GameCube in the privacy of your own home – IT'S ILLEGAL. Whilst Greek authorities insist that they will only pursue enforcing the ban on electronic gaming in public, such as videogame arcades, the legislation was not that specific. Sadly, the politicians didn't think they needed to make the distinction between interactive gambling and computer games.

Now, gamers in Greece have to do all they can to get the legislation changed so they can simply continue to enjoy their gaming. A Counter-Strike tournament that was to be held in Greece the week after the ban was enforced had to move the competition to Oslo. Yes, they had to go to another bloody country to simply jump around de_dust2 and type "LOL die!! CAmper I Ownxored JOO!!" (er, but in Greek, of course).

Our hearts go out to our Greek gaming brothers, and we pray that sometime in the very near future, something is done to change this piece of crazy legislation. Now, read this story again to fully comprehend just how staggeringly bizarre it all is.



XBOX LIVE TO SNIFF OUT MOD CHIPS?

If you read the fine print in an Xbox Live user agreement, you'd notice that Microsoft reserves the right to scan their network for users with modchipped Xboxs. Or at least it appears to reserve that right. The quote from the agreement states, "Microsoft may retrieve information from the Xbox used to log on to Xbox Live as necessary to operate and protect the security of Xbox Live, and to enforce this Agreement," going on to explain that the service may only be used by those with an unmodified system. Stamping out piracy is surely a good thing for the games industry, but what about those Xbox gamers who simply want to be able to import games only available in Japan or the USA? Should they be punished? Australian law currently believes that they should not be, so it'll be interesting to see what pans out once the Live service is up and running here in Oz.

On an unrelated note, Microsoft has just begun the beta test of the Xbox Live service in Japan. Hopefully, Australia isn't too far behind.

ANNEX 2002
presented by [inthemix.com.au](http://www.inthemix.com.au)

LIVID ALL THE ONE DAY DANCE MOVES

THE STREETS. U.N.K.L.E DECKS N' EFFECTS. NIGHTMARES ON WAX. GERLING. DYNAMO PRODUCTIONS. 2 DOGS. RHIBOSOME. KATALYST. ZEPHYR TIMBRE.

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VENUES

LIVID FESTIVAL KICKS OFF

Get down at Annex

Remember these dates: Brisbane, October 12; Melbourne, October 19; Sydney, October 20. These are the dates that the Livid Festival will be in your home town. Part of Livid this year will be the groovy Annex 2002, the all-day electronic music component of the festival featuring The Streets, Gerling, Nightmares On Wax, Zephyr Timbre, Katalyst, 2 Dogs and more. Check out www.livid.com.au for more info.

WINNERS

Hyper 107

WARCRAFT III

Alexander Henry, Flynn, ACT
D. Wilder, Jerrabomberra, NSW
A. Kovacevic, Langwarrin, Vic
Jera Robson, Nimbin, NSW
Adam Leung, Wantirna, Vic

STUNTMAN

Scott Gabriel, Latham, ACT
Jamie Campbell, Dundas, NSW
Thomas Davis, Bumie, Tas
Scott Gage, Ingle Farm, SA
W. Loughheed, Caboolture, Qld

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

Anne Erichsen, Tingalpa, Qld
Laura Jane Ahern, Morly, WA
Debra McPlee, Mt Ommaney, Qld
Charles Coté, Kenmore Hills, Qld
Tim McKenzie, Wheelers Hill, Vic

OVERFLOW

Rumours persist about the status of Nintendo developer, Rare. Recent developments include a rumour that they had been purchased by Microsoft, although at the time of going to print we have not seen any evidence of such. What a shock that would be! In any case, the rumours of Rare going multi-format continues to gain credence. Rare recently cancelled two upcoming games, Donkey Kong Racing (GCN) and Donkey Kong Coconut Crackers (GBA), their only two Nintendo licensed games.

To date, Blizzard has banned 20,000 "cheating" Warcraft III players from Battle.net. The players, who were using map hacks to win games, have had their ladder standings and play records deleted. Hopefully this should send a message out to cheaters that not only will you get caught, but you'll be made an example of.

The Chinese government has blocked the search engine, Google, from anyone who uses the internet. One apparent reason for the banning, is that a search on the president's name "Jiang Zemin" turns up a flash game called "Slap the Evil Dictator: Jiang Zemin" on the second page...

The Financial Times recently reported that Sony are preparing to release the PlayStation 3 in Japan in the year 2005. Apparently, it will be backwards compatible with all PS2 software.

Capcom have announced a new 3D fighting game called Capcom Fighting All Stars featuring characters from a number of their popular fighting games. Expect to see Ryu, Haggar, Nash, Ingrid, Akira, Chun-Li, D.D. and more.

Our latest favourite Japanese game title: From TV Animation One Piece – Secret Treasure of Phantom Island. Wow! It beats out Muscular Ranking (GCN) and GetBackers: The Deprived Infinite Castle (PS2).

BUILD THE BEST.

DESTROY THE REST.

UFC

THROWDOWN™

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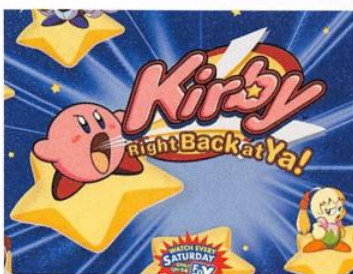
- GAMEPRO MAGAZINE



PlayStation 2



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KIRBY: RIGHT BACK AT YA!

Would you believe that's the name of Kirby's very own TV show in the States? Yep, *Kirby: Right Back At Ya!* has launched on the FoxBox channel in the USA. Kirby, who is apparently a "warpstar knight in training" lands on the planet "popstar" where he ends up protecting a bunch of villagers from the evil Night Mare Enterprises. The show even features characters "Fololo" and "Falala" based on the characters from the Adventures of Lolo NES puzzle games. Strangely, we really want to see this! You can find out more info at the official site: www.kirbykirbykirby.com



MORROWIND JUST GOT EVEN BIGGER

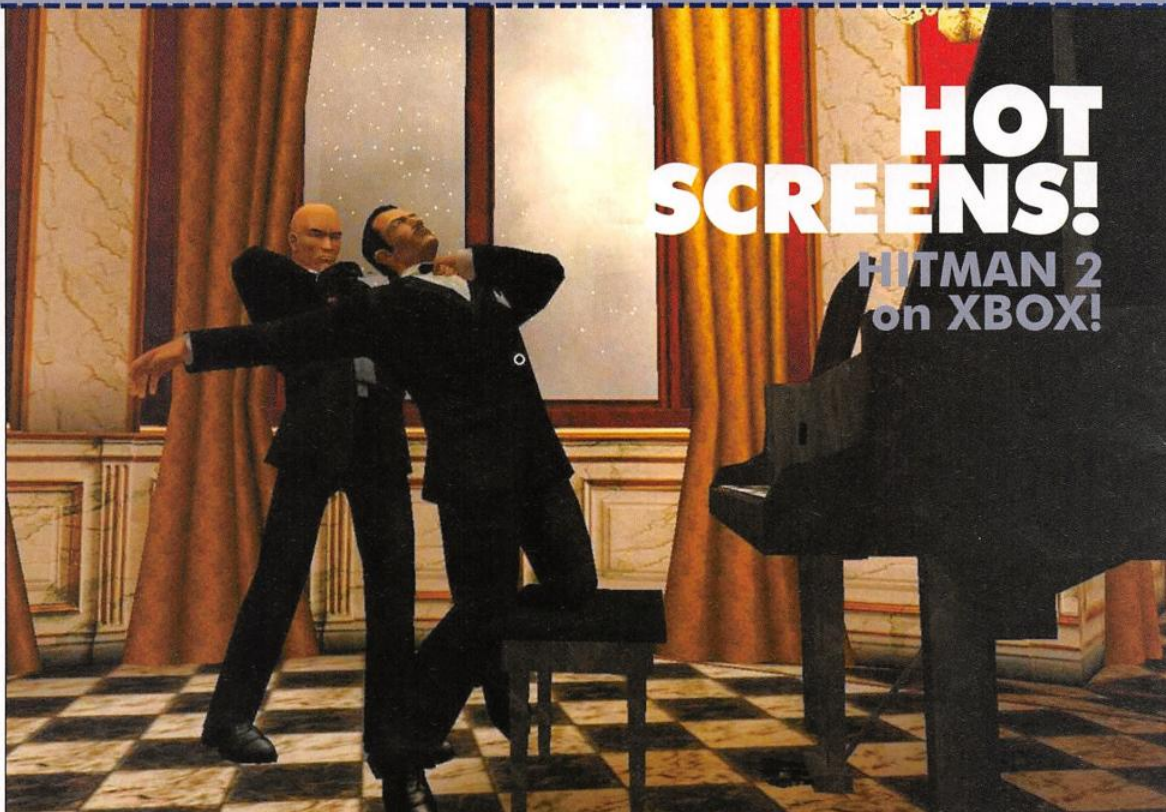
Tribunal expansion announced

Bethesda Software has announced the upcoming expansion for Morrowind, Tribunal. As if you need more of this game already! If you're the kind of freak who's already seen every inch of Vvardenfell, then rest assured that Tribunal will supply you with new epic-sized dungeons and even grander locations than ever before.

A ruthless new king has taken the throne, and no doubt he's up to no good (hence the "ruthless" bit). Your adventure will take you to the capital city, Mournhold, to the clockwork city of Sotha Sil and beyond. Even better still, Bethesda has improved the journal system so you'll never misplace that ageing courier mission you could never be bothered to fulfil. Amazingly, the expansion will be ready for Christmas (though probably not in Australia). Rejoice, though, because it's on its way!

HOT SCREENS!

HITMAN 2 on XBOX!



LATEST SCREENS!

CASTLEVANIA: HARMONY OF DISSONANCE on GBA!



Three new campaigns and a whole universe to conquer.

EMPIRE EARTH™

THE ART OF CONQUEST™

EXPANSION

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 25,000 BC 5000 BC 2000 BC 900 AD 1300 AD 1500 AD 1700 AD
 STONE AGE MIDDLE AGES IMPERIAL AGE

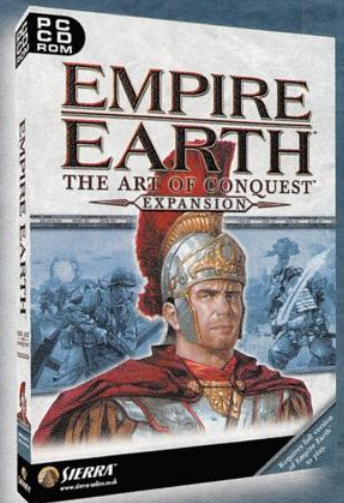


Empire Earth The Art Of Conquest: The Official Expansion of the PC Game of the Year*

18 new missions based in Ancient Rome, World War II and a new Space Age Epoch, featuring new terrains, additional combat units, upgraded lighting, water animations. PC Game of the Year honors*.



*from GameSpy.com



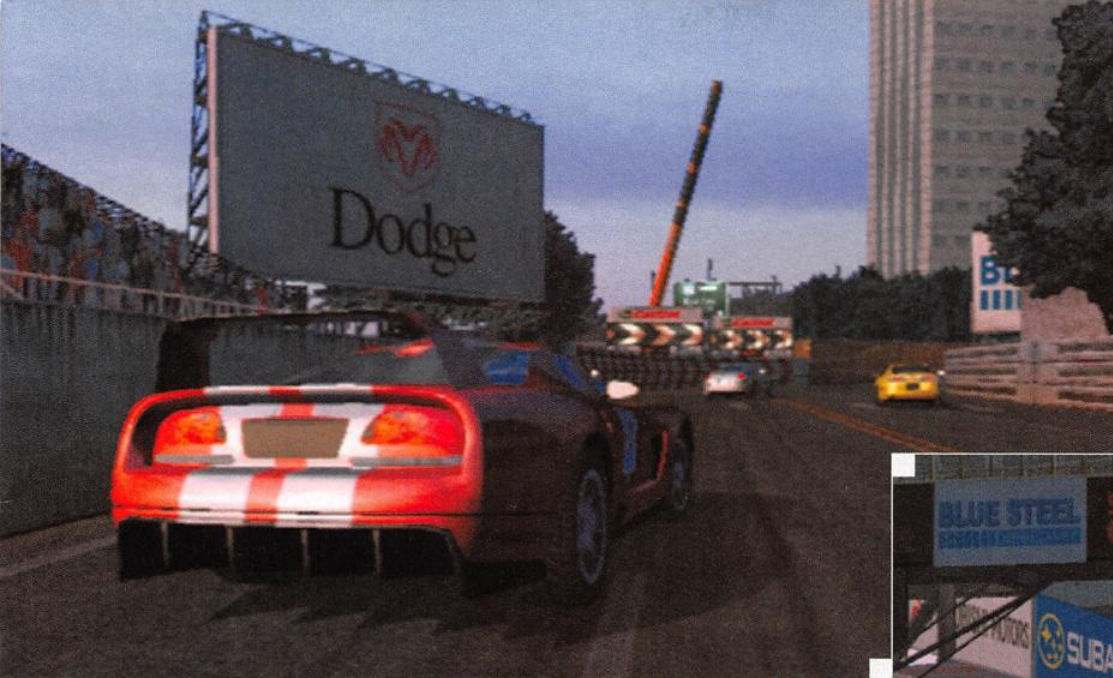
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DEAD OR ALIVE XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

TECMO

That's correct. We couldn't go a day further without giving you a gallery of Dead Or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball screenshots. I'd like to say we caved under pressure from our readers, but that would be telling fibs — not even the Hyper team can resist the allure of these virtual "athletes". Even Tecmo admitted that the idea came from a "Girls of DOA" image gallery they were going to release. And you know, the game might be worth playing too.





SEGA GT 2002

»»XBOX SEGA

Another Xbox game is lucky enough to get the eye candy treatment this month. Have a gawk at some of these tasty looking snaps from Sega's next GT title coming exclusively to the Xbox. Featuring more than 125 current and classic high performance vehicles and a full-blown career mode, Sega's second attempt at outdoing Sony's Gran Turismo just might blow our collective socks off when it finally sees the light of day... any day now.



SAVE \$10
When You Mention This Ad

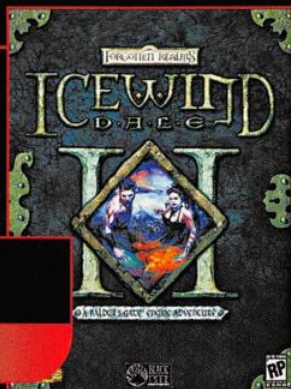


\$99⁹⁵

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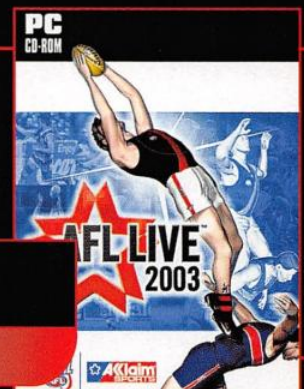
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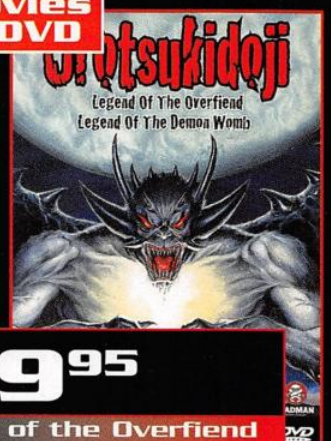
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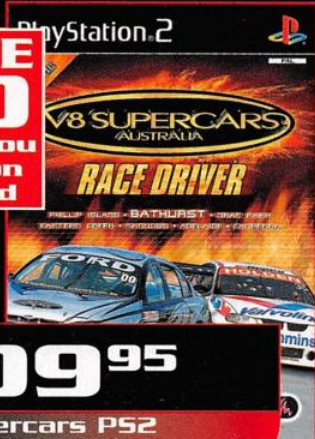
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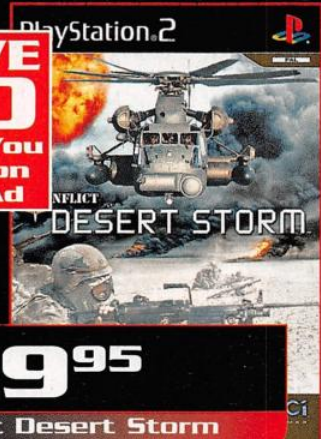
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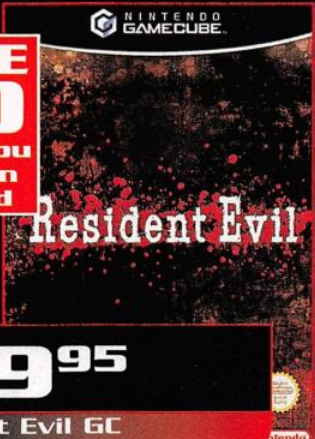
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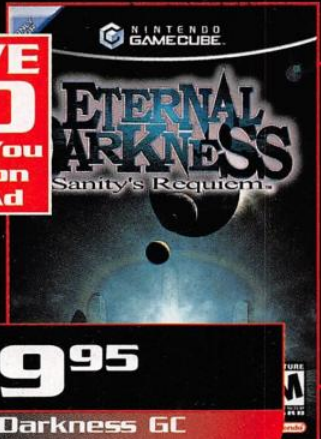
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One Game to Rule Them All

What's the best thing about this upcoming Christmas? No, it's got nothing to do with getting loads of presents, eating yourself stupid and lazing around the house. Just think. That's right – a new Lord of the Rings movie is coming out! Deck the halls with Orcs and Hobbits, fa-la-la-la la la-la la la! The second book in the Lord of the Rings trilogy, *The Two Towers*, is hitting the silver screen and to go with it will be a plethora of licensed product to fleece us of our hard earned gold pieces. One item that should probably sit at the top of your shopping list will be the Electronic Arts PlayStation 2 game, *The Two Towers*. Come with us as we explore this exciting new chapter of midgets with hairy feet and old men with big floppy... hats.

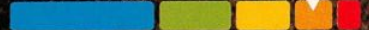
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

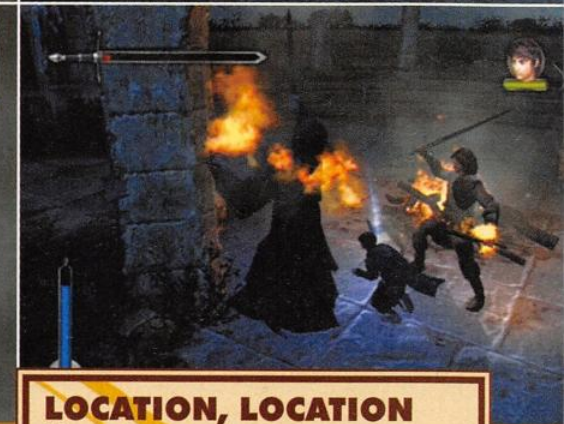
»» PS2

CATEGORY: Action/Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1 >>

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts >> AVAILABLE: November

WOW-O-METER





LOCATION, LOCATION

❖ The locations in the game are remarkable. They easily qualify as some of the best looking on the PS2. For pure mood and accuracy, this game rates through the roof. Let's take a look at some of the places you'll discover on your journey across the land.

Battle of Dagorlad

The last great alliance of men and elves on the slopes of Mount Doom.

Weathertop

The remains of the tower of Amon Sul, where the Ringwraiths attack Frodo.

Balin's Tomb

A tomb in the Mines of Moria, where the fellowship is attacked.

Amon Hen

On the western banks of the Anduin, where the company of the ring was broken at the end of the Fellowship of the Ring.

Fangorn Forest

Lying in the southern foothills of the Misty Mountains, where the Ents dwell.

Gap of Rohan

The great gap on the west of Rohan, the land of the Rohirrim.

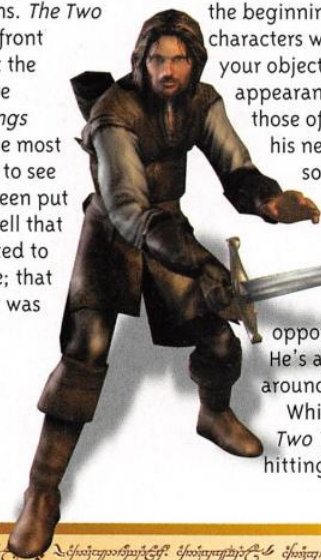
Helm's Deep

A refuge of the Rohirrim in the northern valleys of the White Mountains.

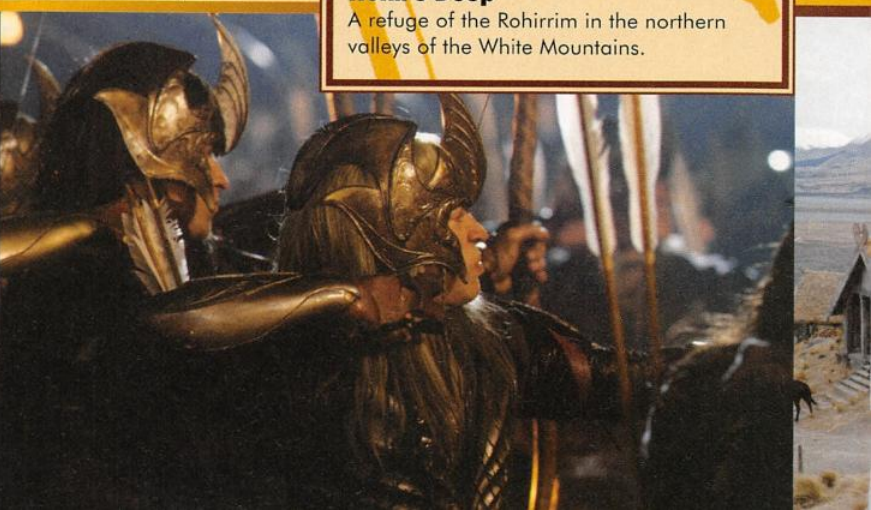
Much has been said of the exceptional level of detail in Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film adaption, and now Stormfront Studios can get a slap on the back for rising to the challenge with *The Two Towers* game. Like most other discerning gamers on the planet, we fear movie to game conversions like the black death itself, but every now and then a gem comes along that blows away our expectations. *The Two Towers* is one such game. Stormfront Studios has got it so right, that the thrill of feeling like you really are taking part in the *Lord of the Rings* couldn't be more joyful. Even the most cynical Tolkien fans will be able to see and appreciate the love that's been put into this action game. You can tell that Stormfront Studios were dedicated to "getting it right" with this game; that it was as important to them as it was to Peter Jackson when he went about putting Tolkien's words onto the big screen. So, where does the adventure begin? Let's start with the dwarf, the elf and the human.

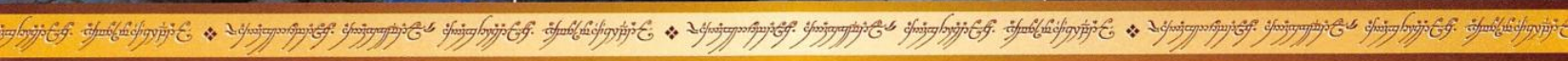
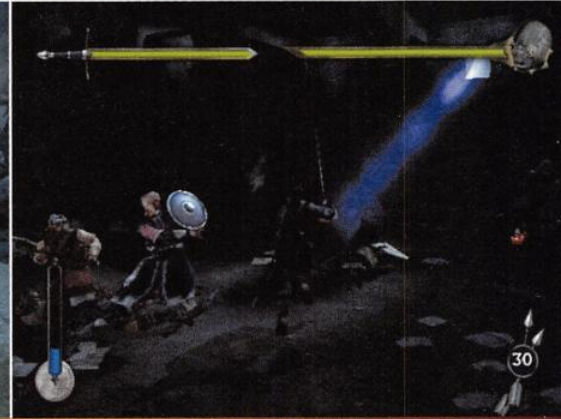
CAN'T HELP MYSELF, BAD HOBBITS

Out of the fellowship of nine characters (or eight if you count the death of poor old Boromir), *The Two Towers* will feature the three most skilled warriors as the playable characters – Aragorn with his bloody great big sword, Legolas with his bow (and a sword in each hand) and Gimli with his Orc-thirsty axe. You choose who you want to fight as at the beginning of each mission, and the rest of the characters will fight alongside you, depending on your objectives. Gandalf even makes an appearance (hopefully that wasn't a spoiler for those of you who haven't read the books) in his new role as Gandalf the White, to wreak some magical mayhem on the crowds of dirty-looking Orcs and Goblins. When Gandalf slams his staff into the ground and stuns the enemy with bolts of magical lightning, it's a sweet opportunity to put the finishing move in. He's a handy old fella to have hanging around, ain't he?



Whilst the game has been tagged *The Two Towers* to tie in nicely with the flick hitting the theatres in late December, the



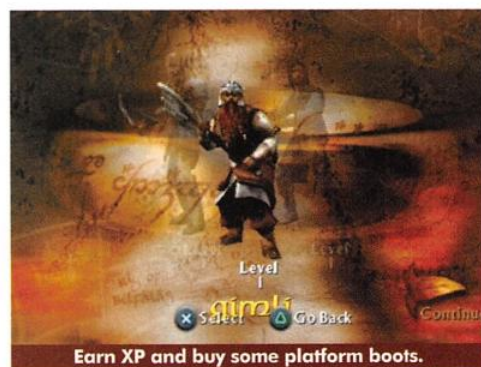


▶▶ You'll be grinning from ear to ear when you get a peek at some of the moments from the new film.

game also features all the events from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, allowing you to play through everything we know up to this point – and then a little bit beyond. As the game hits the shops quite a bit before *The Two Towers* film is out, we're guessing many a fan will be scrambling to get their copy of the game purely to see the gorgeous cut-scenes and settings

(including actual film clips) from the new movie. And you'll be in for a treat too. If you're a fan as much as we are, then we can guarantee you that you'll be grinning from ear to ear when you get a peek at some of the cool-looking moments from the new film. There are clips of the battle at Helm's Deep; Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli discovering Fangorn Forest and more... In fact there are some stunning segues from film footage to in-game engine cutscenes that are so stylishly blended together you'll sometimes miss where the game engine kicks in and the film fades out.

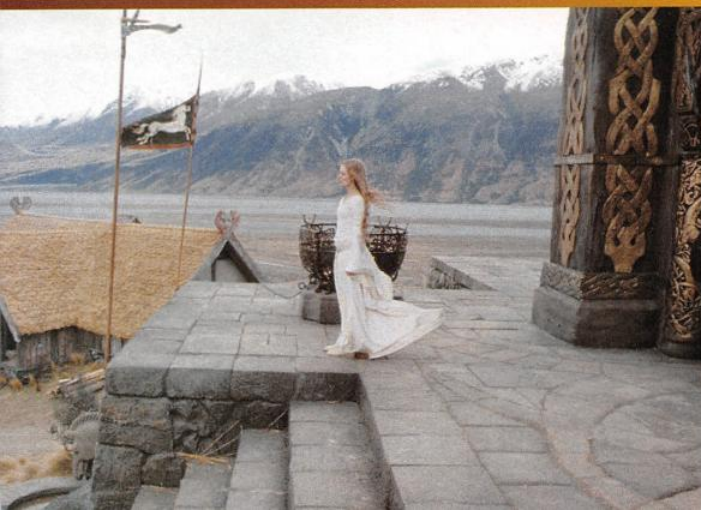
All the likenesses in the game to the actors are quite impressive, but rarely do you see your heroes up close. What will impress you is the level of detail in their costumes and the strikingly realistic animation. When Aragorn lunges forward with his sword, it's a beautiful sight to behold. This character is the epitome of cool – oh, no wait, that's Legolas. In any case, if you combo his strikes, he won't just repeat the same sword strike



WHAT'S ALL THIS THEN?

❖ Huh? There's another *Lord of the Rings* game for PS2 out there? Well, yes, of course there is. In fact there's one for Xbox also. Sierra has the rights to games based on Tolkien's written word, as opposed to EA's rights to the Peter Jackson screen adaption. This means a whole 'nother set of *Lord of the Rings* games to get stuck into. Break out the fireworks, Gandalf!

What Sierra has come up with is radically different to the Electronic Arts game. Whilst EA have gone the action route, Sierra's *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* is more of a traditional adventure and exploration game that follows the events of the book very closely. This means cameos from characters not in the Peter Jackson films, such as Tom Bombadil and the spooky Barrow Wights, as well as locations in Middle-Earth the film never took us to. If cleaving an Orc head in two doesn't tickle your fancy, then maybe the slower-paced adventuring of Sierra's games is for you. Our advice, however, is to save up and buy all the bloody games for the ultimate *Lord of the Rings* fix! You know you want to.





This street directory is no help!



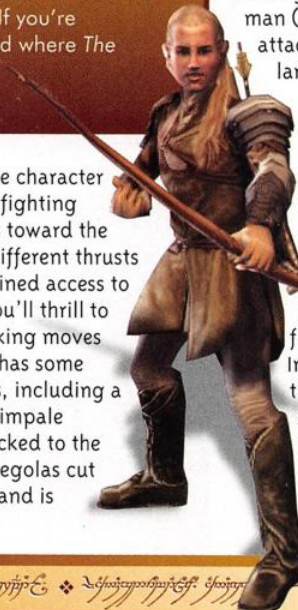
Well, it saves on a lawnmower.



BEGINNING OF THE END

As film directors do, Peter Jackson has taken some liberties with the source text. The screenplay messes with where the J.R.R. Tolkien books begin and end in order to deliver three nicely paced movies. As a result, fans may be confused with some of the content in the game. If you're expecting the game to end where *The Two Towers* book does, then think again...

animation over and over. The character steps into a shuffling sword fighting stance and takes small steps toward the enemy, stringing together different thrusts and swings. Once you've gained access to more moves and combos, you'll thrill to the style and depth of attacking moves for each character. Aragorn has some particularly lovely flourishes, including a good old overhead strike to impale enemies who have been knocked to the ground. Seeing the nimble Legolas cut loose with a sword in each hand is



Seeing the nimble Legolas cut loose with a sword in each hand is particularly exciting...

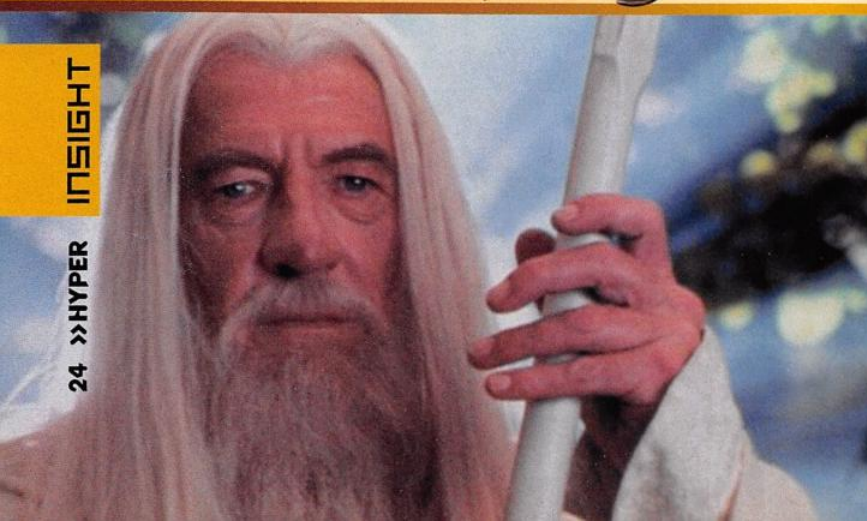
particularly exciting, and his acrobatic moves will make him a favourite all over again. If you're looking for pure grunt, then Gimli will be your man (or should I say, dwarf), as his twirling axe attacks can be brutal amidst the chaos of a large battle. And large battles are what this game does best. This is epic stuff.

From the moment you're dumped right into your first fight (which just so happens to be the "third battle of Dagorlad", the war that we get a glimpse of during the opening scenes of *The Fellowship of the Ring*) you'll be stunned at how many flailing limbs, twirling blades and firey arrows can make it on screen at once. In some of the larger battles in the game, there are probably a good fifty characters on screen at once, all taking part in the fight with you. Orcs run through the trees in the background at Amon Hen, Goblins scale the walls at Helm's Deep and

ambush you from the cliff tops on Caradhras. It gives the game the same kind of epic feel and scale that we enjoyed so much on the silver screen. Suffice to say your eyes and thumbs will be working overtime.

HE ALWAYS DRINKS HIMSELF LEGOLAS

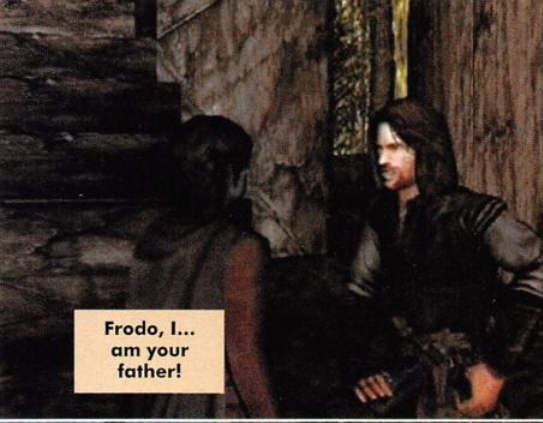
Killing a foe does more than just cleanse the land of one more minion of Sauron, it gives your chosen character skill points. Depending on how quickly and efficiently you kill your enemies (and whether they get a hit in on you), you'll receive a rating for the kill. Fair, Good, Excellent and Perfect kills are possible, each earning you more skills points respectively. At the end of the mission, the game tallies your kills in each category and gives you an overall rating, as well as piling on the total skill points and levelling up your character. At different levels, you gain access to new attacking moves, bow skills, better arrows, an increase in overall health and more tasty skills that you must purchase with your skill



INSIGHT

24 »HYPER

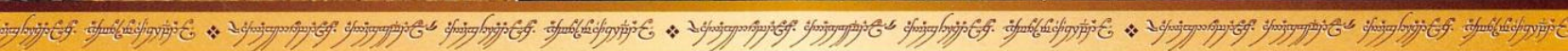




Frodo, I... am your father!



I get by with a little elf from my friends.



The level select screen holds many goodies.

points. Eventually, you'll unlock and own every skill for each character, making them exceptionally deadly in a fight. Legolas can enhance his bow and arrow skills to the point where you'll even prefer to back off and try to take down as many enemies as possible with your elite Elven archery abilities. Likewise, Aragorn can learn some rather impressive sword flurries and combos that make him quite a force to be reckoned with. A king in the making to be sure. We've heard that there's even a hidden unlockable character that will become available if

HISTORY NEVER REPEATS

If you haven't read the *Lord of the Rings* books, but love the film(s), here's a bit of help.

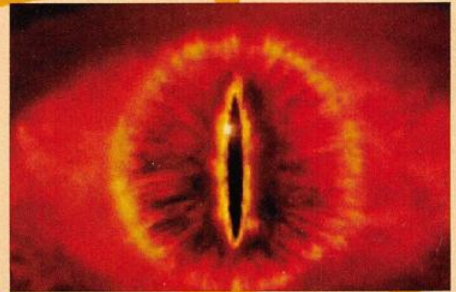
Aragorn Elessar AKA Strider: Heir of Isildur (the bloke who cut the One Ring from Sauron's hand). Ranger, adventurer and bearer of the sword of Elendil, he's also a king in self-imposed exile.

Legolas Greenleaf: A prince of the Silvan elves and son of the Lord of Mirkwood, who joins the Company of the Ring in Rivendell.

Gimli, Son of Gloin: A dwarf from the House of Durin, who also joins the Company of the Ring in Rivendell. He's also considered an "Elf-Friend" because he's mates with Legolas and Dwarves and Elves don't normally get on. Cute.

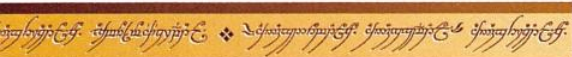
The One Ring: The greatest of the Rings of Power, forged in secret by Sauron, with the power to rule all the other magical rings in Middle-Earth and grant the wearer virtual immortality. It also transports the wearer into the Wraith world, making them invisible to others in the real world. With the One Ring, it seems that absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Saruman the White: Considered by Gandalf to be the chief of the Istari (an order of Wizards), as he is the eldest. Unfortunately, Saruman is corrupted by his own lust for power as he secretly covets the One Ring. He lives in the tower of Orthanc (one of the two towers, y'see) and lures Gandalf there under false pretenses and then tries to knock him off (fearing that Gandalf would want to claim the One Ring or stop him doing so). After Saruman is revealed as a traitor, Gandalf returns from his battle with the Balrog as Gandalf the White, effectively taking



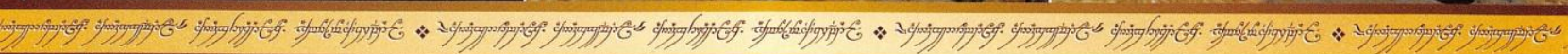
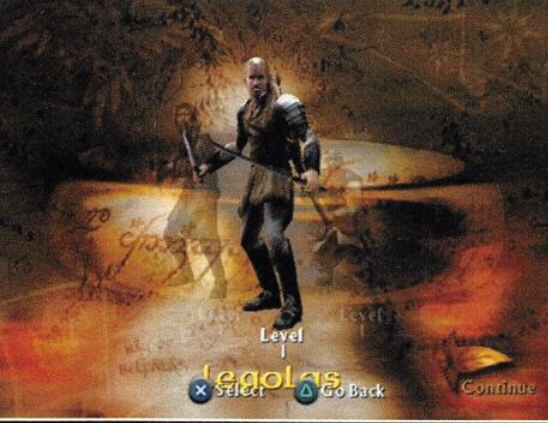
Saruman's place as the big cheese Wizard. Saruman plots from Orthanc and builds his army of Orcs in a bid to get the Ring before anyone else does, although it's considered that the uber evil guy, Sauron, is in fact controlling Saruman via a magical device in the tower called a Palantir, that allows Sauron to use Saruman in his quest to find the Ring.

The Eye of Sauron: The all-seeing eye of Sauron never sleeps. That's because Sauron is a being that can change form, and he's the ultimate bad guy, a dark lord. He lives in the dark tower of Barad-dur (the second of the Two Towers, got it?) in the evil land of Mordor and wants his One Ring back so he can rule Middle-Earth and kill off all those pesky humans, elves, dwarves, hobbits...



INSIGHT

>>HYPER 25



you successfully level up all the characters to the maximum.

There's incentive here for replaying some of the levels multiple times, not only with different characters, but just to experiment with different tactics for clearing away the trash. Can you patrol the path down Mount Caradhras to the entrance of Moria simply with a bow and arrow? How many perfect kills can Gimli achieve amidst the chaos of the battle at the Deeping Wall? More often than not, the odds are stacked against you, so gamers who enjoy a challenge will find *The Two Towers* a hearty meal. And if you have any kind of love for *Lord of the Rings* and the characters, this is the kind of game you'll come back to again and again just to bring alive parts of your imagination.

Now what would an action/fighting game be without some boss fights? As you might have guessed, the boss fights in the



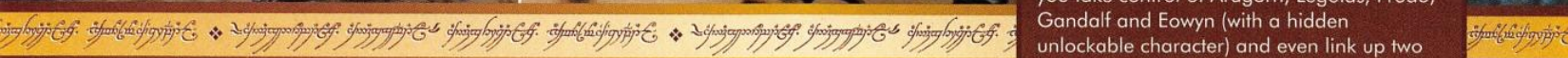
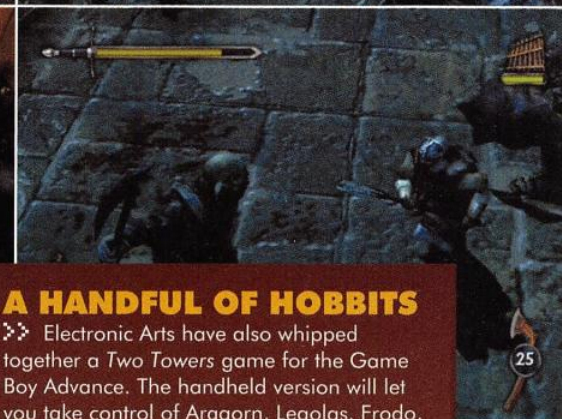
Stormfront Studios have carefully plucked the most dramatic moments from the films, and re-created them as various boss fights.

game remain within the context of the film's story line — there won't be any crazy new monsters or handy action game scenarios here. Stormfront studios have carefully plucked the most dramatic moments from the films, and re-created them as various boss fights. For instance, when you get to the mines of Moria, you'll have to defeat the watcher in the waters of the Sirannon before you can enter. We won't spoil any of the game for you, suffice to say you'll have to get your feet wet. Then there's the showdown against the Orc leader, Lurtz (a character created for the film adaption of *Fellowship of the Ring*) at Amon Hen. It's not just a button mash to victory by any means — you'll benefit from observing and making use of your environment. Also expect to have to take down the Cave Troll in Balin's Tomb; the

Ringwraiths on Weathertop; a bunch of Wargs and their riders on the plains of Rohan; and after you've fought your way through all the amazing set piece battles from *The Two Towers*, you may finally even have to face the corrupted wizard Saruman to see who's really the boss around here. Just how many levels are there in the fearsome tower of Orthanc?

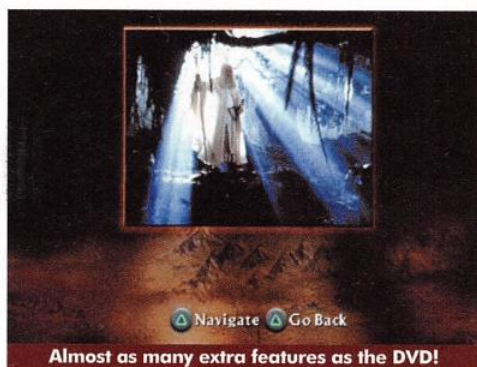
As EA's *Two Towers* product manager, Jonathon Harris, put it, "There are a variety of mission objectives in the game that are all tied to the story arc of the films. In some cases it may be to just get through an area, as is the case with Fangorn Forest. Other levels will include specific objectives such as protecting Frodo from the Ringwraiths at Weathertop, or saving villagers from the hordes of Uruk-Hai on the Plains of Rohan. All of this adds variety to the game experience, and allows us to showcase some of the cooler moments from the films."





A HANDFUL OF HOBBITS

❖ Electronic Arts have also whipped together a *Two Towers* game for the Game Boy Advance. The handheld version will let you take control of Aragorn, Legolas, Frodo, Gandalf and Eowyn (with a hidden unlockable character) and even link up two GBAs for some two (and possibly four) player action. As opposed to the all-out 3D fighting in the PS2 game, *The Two Towers* on the Game Boy Advance is more like a *Diablo* or *Gauntlet*-style game – slash 'em up action fused with RPG elements, played from an isometric perspective. You can equip your character via a classic paper doll system, choosing better armour, weapons and items such as shields to help you kick more ugly Orkish bottom.



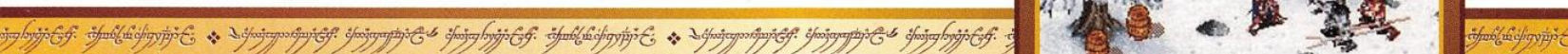
MORE BOOTY THAN SMAUG'S HOLE

Need an incentive to play every inch of this game over more than once? How about a mountain range worth of unlockables? *The Two Towers* is a veritable treasure trove of *Lord of the Rings* goodness. Indeed, happy times are on the menu when you successfully complete various levels in the game. If you thought the *Lord of the Rings* DVD came with special features, wait until you get a load of these. There are interviews with Peter Jackson, Ian McKellen, Elijah Wood, Orlando Bloom and more; loads of production art

from both the film and game; production photos from the set of *The Two Towers*; movie clips from the films and more. There's enough here to send any fan over the moon and back again.

New Line Cinema also approved the actors' voices to be used in-game, as well as Howard Shore's incredible Academy Award winning musical score. There is more than one occasion when the dramatic soundtrack kicks in at a crucial part of the game and the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. Coupled with the stunning sound effects, the game is quite an aural delight.

When you finally finish the game, you'll most probably be battered, bruised and in desperate need of some Lembas. But the adventure doesn't end here. As most of you will know, there's still a third and final film based on the final book in the trilogy, *The Return of the King*, to grace our cinema screens in 2003. A *Return of the King* game is already in development and will be released by Electronic Arts around the release of the final film. Rumours have it that it won't only be the PS2 to get the game, so expect possible multi-platform announcements in the future. But first things first... <<<





KINGDOM HEARTS

>> **PS2** **CATEGORY:** Action/RPG >> **PLAYERS:** 1 >> **WOW-O-METER**
PUBLISHER: Squaresoft >> **AVAILABLE:** December >>

What was turning into the ultimate nightmare for die-hard Square fans might just be turning out to be the ultimate aphrodisiac. Whilst it's still a little disturbing that Squaresoft, after their string of successful games (well, okay, there was one flop movie) would find some need to ally themselves with Disney — the home of everything icky-cute and fuzzy — a little time alone with Kingdom Hearts has us more excited and thrilled than say, retching into a bucket.

DISNEY. NO, WAIT IT'S GOOD. REALLY!

Kingdom Hearts could be the ultimate collection of every Square and Disney celebrity ever. From Final

Fantasy legends, Squall and Tidus, to the luscious Ariel (so I have a thing for mermaids), Winnie the Pooh, and even Jack Skellington from the Nightmare before Christmas — this is an embarrassment of riches. Even the voice acting hosts an array of stars. The main character — a 14 year-old boy called Sora, who finds himself lost in a strange world after a violent storm, suffering from bad fashion sense — is voiced by Haley Joel Osment (The Sixth Sense). Sora is separated from his two closest friends, Kairi (Hayden Panettiere, "Ally McBeal") and Riku (David Gallagher "Seventh Heaven"), with his only recourse of action being to join the Court Wizard Donald and Captain Goofy who are searching for

their lost King Mickey. As it turns out, wraiths called the Heartless are being manipulated by Disney villains, and are the ones responsible for the violent storm. Once the link is discovered, Sora, Donald and Goofy join forces to save their worlds.

What we've played of the game so far has been titillating, drool inducing, and otherwise simply stunning. Although many of your favourite Square characters may be less pixelated and more fluid from previous incarnations to the point of animation perfection, you'll find the occasional character looking mildly different and a tad more cartoonish. Squall, for instance, seems to have

lost a lot of his dramatic flair and intense bearing. All you Aerith lovers, however, will be overjoyed to see her resurrected and looking VERY cute in a familiar pink outfit; and Donald does the barely understandable quack just like we all remember.

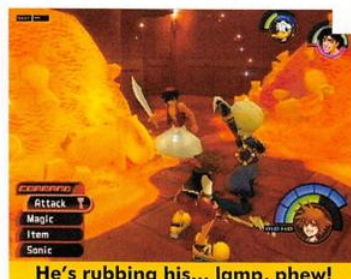
W**WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:**
 How about some information on Final Fantasy XII, Square?

If you don't like your company (i.e. Donald and Goofy) feel free to swap them for Cloud, Peter Pan, Aladdin and Ariel (shiver)

once you get the chance. Aerith isn't the only character that lives once more, as Ursula, Captain Hook and Jafar will most certainly assure you. Our only grunts of disapproval so far come from the fact that we haven't been able to grab a glimpse of Seifer or Sephiroth (yet...).

EXPLODING INTO BEACH BALLS

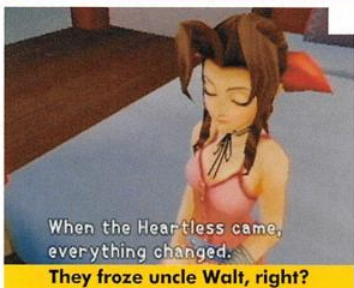
A difference from past Final Fantasy games (and more in the style of Secret of Mana and Star Ocean 2) is the change in the combat system from turn-based to real time action. Instead of controlling three or four characters, you're limited to the main





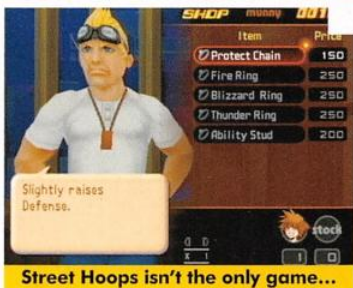
We've got a problem, Goofy!
But don't tell anyone...

As if people can't see for themselves...



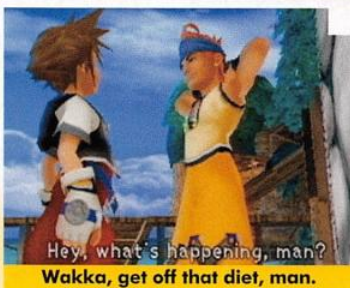
When the Heartless came, everything changed.

They froze uncle Walt, right?



Slightly raises Defense.

Street Hoops isn't the only game...



Hey, what's happening, man?
Wakka, get off that diet, man.



Cloud? No, I'm his sister!

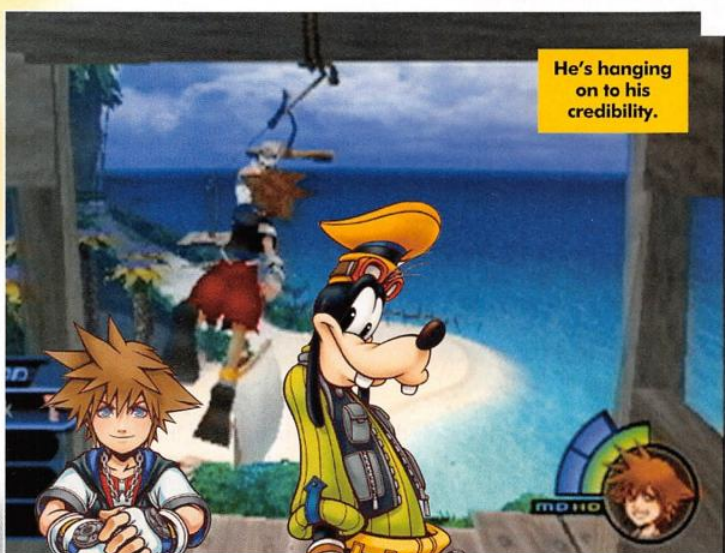
»» If you're not a massive Disney character buff, you may want to throttle the cutesy renditions thereof...

character Sora, but that's no bad thing. He's comfortable, easy to manoeuvre, and the Action Point system allows you to teach him new abilities. The ability to cast summons such as Tinkerbell, Mushu, Bambi, Aladdin's Genie and even Dumbo, brings up some wonderful eye-candy, although we don't know what to say about vanquished enemies exploding into beach balls...

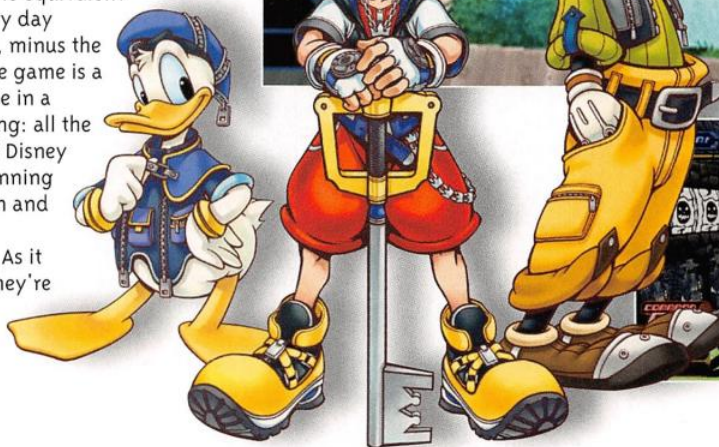
The biggest surprise is character generation. Yep, the Square we know that just loves to pigeonhole the main character actually give us a decent choice when it comes to choosing our hero's personality. An interactive questionnaire at the beginning of the game gives you the option to major your skills in magic, defence or attack, with a choice of two out of three weapons.

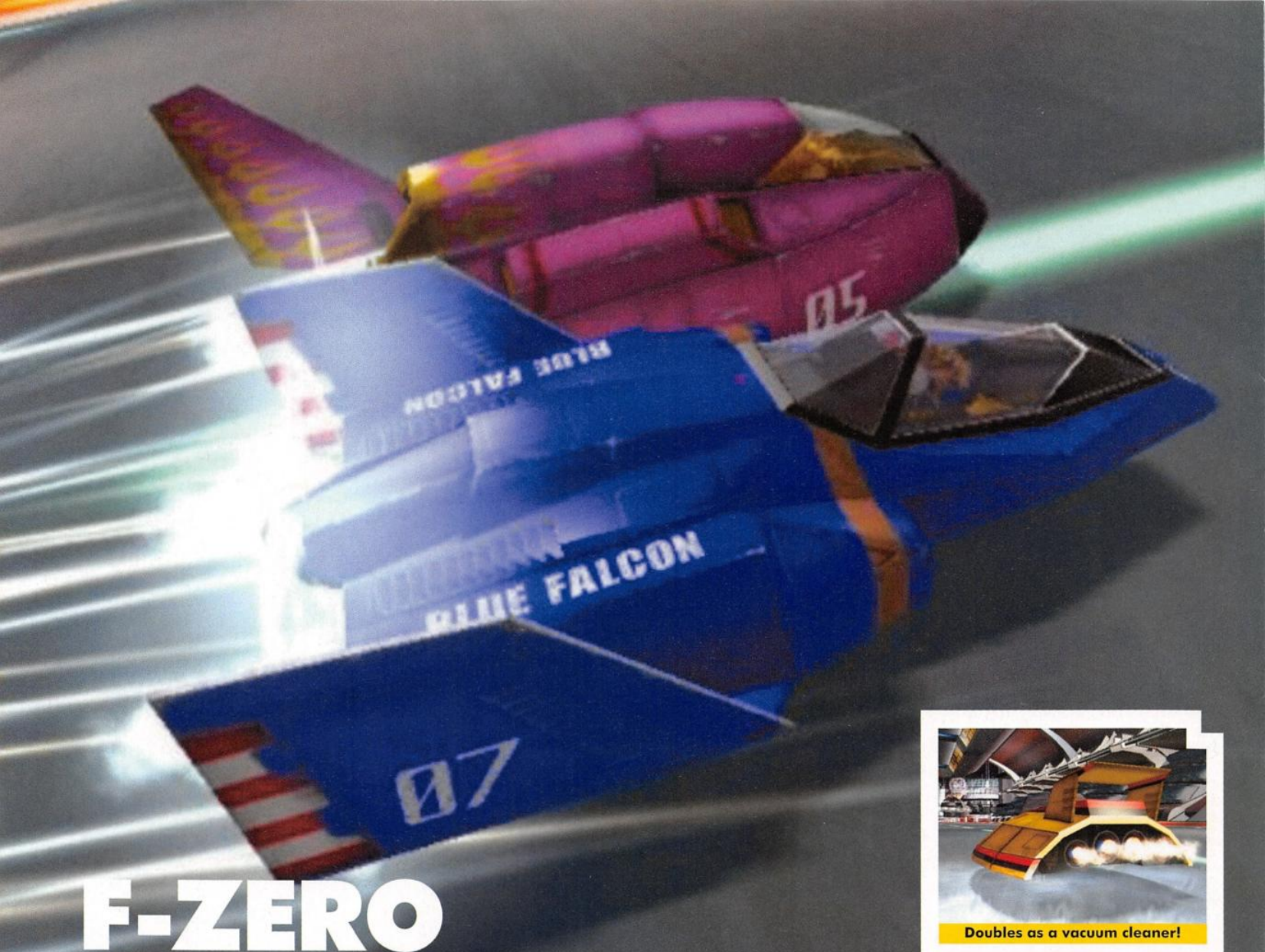
If you're not a massive Disney character buff, you may want to throttle the cutesy renditions thereof

in game, but that's only half the fun. The other half includes the amazing locations, enjoying new adaptations and abilities (such as growing fins in Ariel's underwater realm, or flying with Peter Pan over Neverland), the vast array of mini-games, and freaking out about fights with big name Final Fantasy characters like Squall and Tidus (which turn out only to be the equivalent of your every day pillow fight, minus the pillows). The game is a Square game in a Disney setting: all the grandeur of Disney with the stunning presentation and design of SquareSoft. As it turns out, they're about to steal our hearts. <<<



He's hanging on to his credibility.





F-ZERO

GCN

CATEGORY: Racing >> **PLAYERS:** TBA >>
PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> **AVAILABLE:** 2003

WOW-O-METER



The F-Zero series has been around for well over a decade now, moving from humble but important beginnings on Super Nintendo, through to an excellent sequel on Nintendo 64, a brilliant add-on that no-one played on 64DD and finally, a trip back to the old school on GBA. Now it's time for a truly next-gen sequel to F-Zero X.

EXPERTISE IN ALL AREAS

As we reported in our news section a few issues back, Nintendo are actually creating two versions of the game — one for GameCube, and the other for the arcade. And to ensure that both games live up to expectations, Nintendo have split

design duties with Sega's Amusement Vision, the team responsible for blessing the world with the superb Daytona USA back in the day (1994), and more recently the nutty antics of Super Monkey Ball. The less said about Virtua Striker 3, the better. Regardless, it's a smart move by Nintendo, ensuring expertise in all areas.

F-Zero on GameCube is going to eclipse any other version of the game easily. Not only will it have the speed, crazy course design and sheer intensity of the N64 version, but it will have the eye candy too. As great a game as F-Zero X was, to many it was a letdown in the graphics department, thanks to simple flat-shaded vehicles and dull surroundings. In contrast to the N64 version where there was basically the track and the ground below, in this iteration there are huge futuristic structures — gleaming towers of metal and glass, and imposing holographic mascots and billboards filling the skyline.

You can also see the course ahead and behind, looping and diving for miles around, and although the road surface itself is quite plain, the glowing neon green road markers and bright pink barriers on the side of the road look fantastic — and hypnotic in motion. Once again you'll be caning along at 60fps at impossibly high speeds, battling it out amongst a field of 30 anti gravity vehicles through tunnels, along pipes, off massive jumps and through loop the loops.

GRIMY AND WORN

The craft design is very much in keeping with the previous games in

the series, retaining somewhat primary colours and simple streamlined shapes. What will set the look of the vehicles apart in this game, however, will be the realistic reflections, transparencies and dirt mapping employed. Not only do the vehicles look grimy and worn but you can actually see the pilots inside the



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

The linkup between home and arcade as more than a gimmick.



Doubles as a vacuum cleaner!



Pull over son. Blow into this bag...

cockpits too. In a first for the series, you'll also be able to race from a first person cockpit viewpoint, in addition to a number of third person viewpoints. Looking along the track ahead you'll also see the engine exhaust blazing from each craft, and when you get close you'll notice a sweet heat distortion effect around it.

In terms of content, Nintendo have been typically tight lipped. You can almost definitely expect four player splitscreen to be included, given that it was present in F-Zero X. We would say that we're hoping that Nintendo will include a track editor, but the likelihood of that is very slim indeed. Instead, we'll just hope that Nintendo absolutely pack this game to the gills with courses. <<<



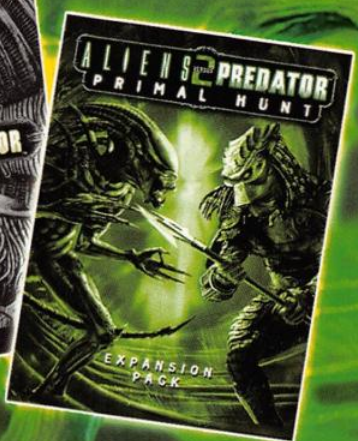
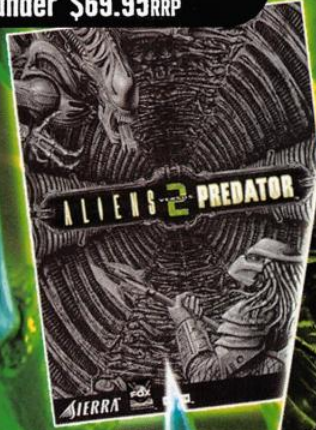
Falcon heads off for a bout of Melee

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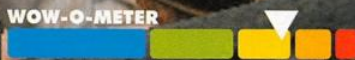


More terror, more tension, more action

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GLADIUS



GEN XBOX PS2

CATEGORY: Combat RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: LucasArts >> AVAILABLE: 2003

Gladius is a new title being developed internally by LucasArts, and it's looking like a refreshing change from their usual deluge of *Star Wars* titles. Instead of traveling to a galaxy far, far away, Gladius takes the player back to ancient Rome for a spot of gladiatorial turn-based fighting and RPGing.

IT'S A TRAP!

Gladius takes place in a time of fragile peace after a great war. Players assume the role of either Ursula, the daughter of a great barbarian king, or Valens, the son of a famous gladiator. Much of the game will be spent doing battle in the great gladiatorial tournaments, but later on, a quest to defeat an unholy menace will unfold and give you a chance to prove your battle skills even further.

The combat is turn-based and team-based, which will allow for rich strategy in battles if LucasArts can get the mechanics right. The concept certainly sounds appealing. Not only are you recruiting and training a team of warriors for

battle, but you'll also have a huge range of tactical options in combat – from outmaneuvering your opponents (we're assuming they'll be a grid based system for movement) to utilising the strengths of each of your combatants. Gladiatorial combat as the thinking man's game? Sounds cool.

To complement the melee combat, LucasArts are also implementing a magic system that should fit nicely with somewhat mystical undertones to the storyline. There will also be limited real-time aspects to the battles, with a power meter and button combos that you can execute during attacks to boost damage. Think of it as the action commands in Paper Mario only taken to another level.



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

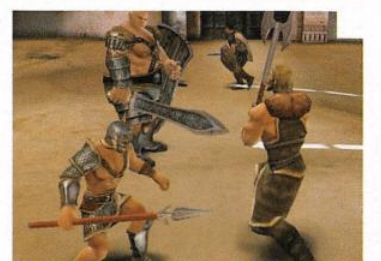
Well, it is set in an arena, so how about a few hidden Jedi characters like at the end of *Attack of the Clones*?

ANY EXCUSE TO MENTION PAPER MARIO...

The array of opponents you'll come up against range from typical beefcake gladiators through to more bizarre beings, such as surreal monkey men and tribes of blue skinned warriors. Between battles you'll be hand picking strapping young gladiators from around the world and training them. Fighters are divided into 16 unique classes, ranging from brawny melee fighters to magic specialists, and there are around 100 unique character types to choose from. Adding to this are hundreds of skills and over 400 unique items of weaponry, armour, shields and so on, so you have plenty of scope for customising your gladiators. The RPG elements are strong, as you and your team will



Russell Crowe's put on some weight!



Gladiators ready. Contestants ready.



learn new skills, gain experience, and level up your abilities. Thus, tactics won't just be necessary in the heat of combat, but also in an overall sense, as balancing the makeup of your side will be paramount. There will be a total of 20 arenas in the finished game, along with 12 other locations such as your training school, complete with obstacle course, dorms, various facilities and a vineyard – presumably for celebrating victories with amphoras of wine and an orgy or two.

From the deft use of lighting, shadow and scale through to incidental details like banners, flower arrangements and areas for dignitaries to sit, the grandeur and spectacle of gladiatorial combat is well conveyed. LucasArts should be applauded for trying something a bit different. <<<

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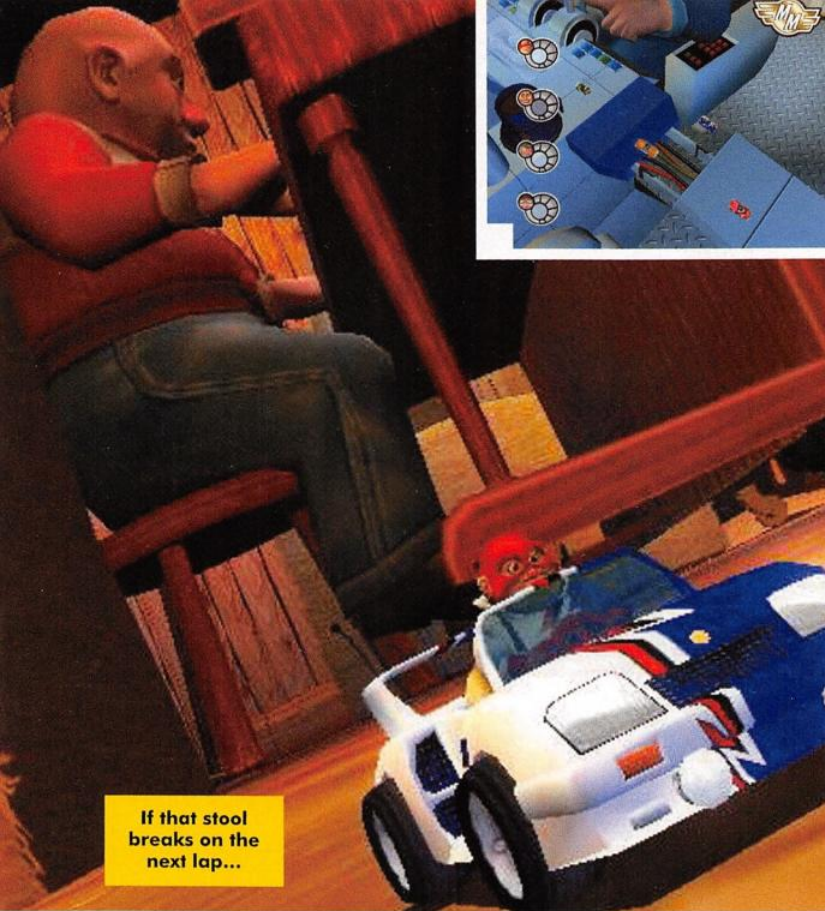
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If that stool breaks on the next lap...

>> PS2 / XBOX / GCN MICRO MACHINES

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: Infogrames >> AVAILABLE: TBA

The last outing for the Micro Machines series was V3 on PlayStation — an excellent, if somewhat structurally flawed game. What it did well, was to take the series into true 3D, with huge levels built with flat-shaded polygons, while retaining the same utterly addictive gameplay. And now the series we love to love is back! We recently received a build of the new Micro Machines game and are pleased to report that it's on the right track.

One of the things that sucked about V3 was the lack of personality. Remember the moronic lineup of characters, and their utterly pedestrian catch phrases? Well this time around, Infogrames have gone the obvious choice and made the characters a little more colourful. Whether it's the hick,

the Miami Vice beefcake, or the spunky space chick, things definitely have more character this time around.

The setting are more varied too. In addition to familiar locations such as around the house and in the backyard, the new Micro Machines also takes players onto crime ridden streets, into space age laboratories, out onto the farm and into a graveyard. Level design is mixed at this stage, with some courses being a real



hoot and some leaving us a little cold. However, with enough courses, a good points system, and hopefully a customisable multiplayer championship, this will be the ultimate party game all over again.

WOW-O-METER



>> PS2 GUNGRAVE

WOW-O-METER

CATEGORY: Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Sega >> AVAILABLE: Late 2002

Gungrave is a sweet looking shooter coming from Red Company and Sega. The first thing that will strike you about it is the distinctive graphical style. Yes, it is cel shaded, but the design is really grimy and fresh. Gungrave looks very much like an interactive anime, thanks in large part to the character designs by Yasuhiro Naito, creator of the Trigun series. Gungrave in particular is one cool lead character, especially since he carries a coffin on his back for his super attack.

The modus operandi of the game is shooting and lots of it. There's really not much more to it than that, but for brainless entertainment value, Gungrave may just be the fix

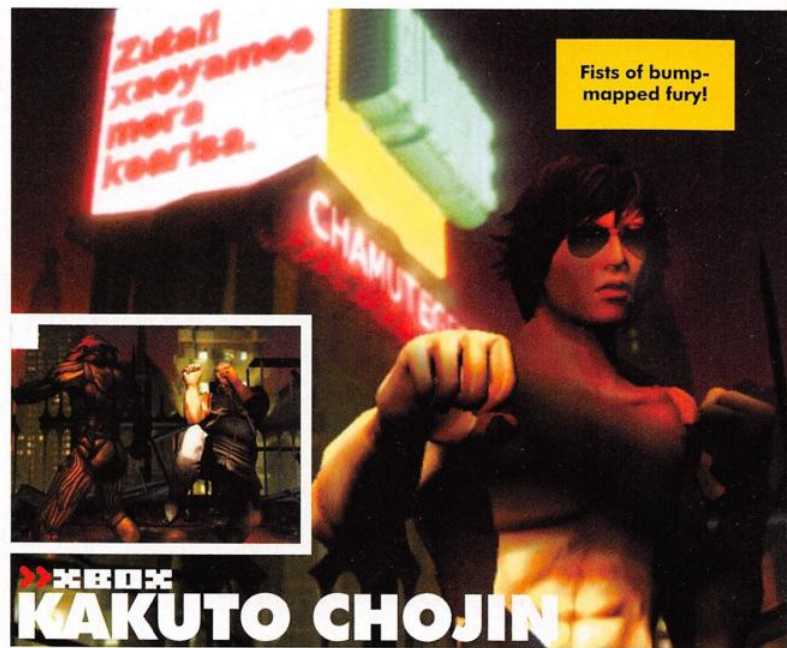
you're looking for. One unique touch is the points system. You have a "Beat" meter in the top right hand corner of the screen, which basically acts like a combo counter. The more stuff you shoot in rapid succession, the more the Beat meter builds. However, get hit or run out of enemies to shoot and the meter resets itself. The more old school arcade inclined will definitely get a kick out of this. Full review soon.



Carrying around that coffin's a bit pessimistic, eh?

INSIGHT

34 >> HYPER



Fists of bump-mapped fury!

>> XBOX KAKUTO CHOJIN

CATEGORY: Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> AVAILABLE: Early 2003

With a heritage that includes the Tobal series, Dream Publishing know what it takes to make a good one on one fighting game (note that we did not simply say "fighting game" as a broader definition would have included the appalling The Bouncer). Their latest project is Kakuto Chojin, a fighting game that started out as a tech demo over two years ago and has since been fleshed out into a fully fledged game.

In terms of fighting mechanics, Kakuto Chojin looks to put an interesting spin on the genre, with a low, middle and high attack system.

It also includes the requisite Matrix effects, this time for the KO move, where the action slows right down and the camera spins around the fighters. It's cliched, but damn it looks amazing! In fact, the whole game is an eye candy feast, running at 60fps and sporting amazing lighting and high poly characters. In fact, the engine that Dream Publishing has built is so robust that they're actually including a four-player mode with no loss in performance! Kakuto Chojin could be the next must-have fighting game.

WOW-O-METER

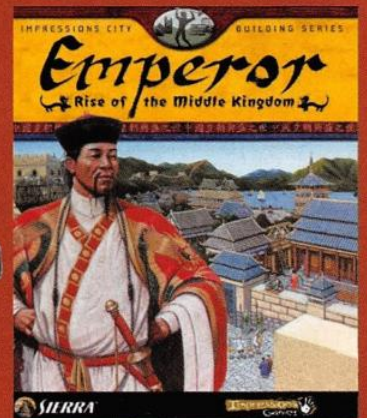


What's the best tools to
build China these days?



A - A well-oiled mouse
with two buttons?"

B - A Ming Dynasty
toothpick?"



WIN WIN WIN WIN WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE NOVEMBER 1ST

WIN HUNTER: THE RECKONING

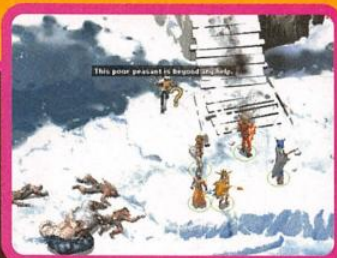
Hyper and Interplay need your help clearing the streets of lumbering undead. We'll give you the weapons and you guys and gals can cut loose on the rot-heads. We have five copies of Hunter: The Reckoning for Xbox to give away, so if you want to be in with a chance to win, answer the following question:

**FOR
XBOX**

☒ Name two of the playable characters in Hunter: The Reckoning.

*Vampire
Samantha
River
Alexandra*

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



WIN ICEWIND DALE II

10

**FOR
PC**

While Interplay were here delivering the Hunter prizes, we ordered our 19th level Rogue, Blunderbus, to pick their pockets. The result is five fresh copies of the brilliant Icewind Dale II for PC! Thanks Blundy! If you'd like to win a copy of this fabulous RPG adventure, then answer the following question:

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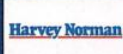
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GAMING IS
ADDICTIVE
Health Warning

It's Only a Game... Or is it?

VIDEOGAME ADDICTION

Can't get the "monkeyball" off your back? Find yourself needing to get "high" scores every night? Even tried downloading "patches" to help you through the day? You're not alone.

»» DAN TOOSE

Let's face it, you're holding a gaming magazine, and that would suggest that you have a keen interest in gaming, and why not? Games are fun. If they weren't, people wouldn't play them... Or would they? Compulsive behaviour often leads people to ignore basic facts about what they're doing, so is compulsive video gaming any different?

How many times have you intended to just finish the level you're on, only to find yourself wondering where the time went as the first rays of sunlight start pushing their way through your blinds? Most of your friends who are also into gaming might laugh when you tell them the answer, but a lot of other people won't. While it may make sense to put their lack of understanding down to a simple case of not having experienced gaming the way you have, maybe you should also consider that you could actually be displaying a lack of self-control, which is commonly considered a sign of an addiction.

Regardless whether or not you believe that video games are addictive, there's no debating that some people obviously take their gaming too seriously. Because of this, video game "addiction" is a subject that we as gamers need to be able to take seriously, even if that's just to be able to explain to someone why our favourite pastime may not be to blame.

the myths and preconceptions people might have about gaming addiction. While coming from very different backgrounds and situations, without talking to each other, they came to many of the same conclusions.

Professor Kevin Durkin

As part of the School of Psychology at UWA, Professor Durkin has been involved in several studies of young people and computer games, including interviews about their motives and experiences, observational studies in arcades, nationwide surveys, etc. His published works include 'Computer Games and Australians Today' (with Kate Aisbett), which the OFLC made extensive use of in their Annual Report for '99/'00.

Sue Morris

Sue is the editor of www.game-culture.com, a site that serves as a central information resource for academics, gamers, and publishers on the cultural aspects of gaming. She is also currently doing her PhD in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Queensland, with her thesis focusing on the FPS (first person shooter) scene.

"Baz" & "Jim"

Two avid EverQuest enthusiasts who spend the sorts of amount of time playing the game that would lead many people to deem them to be "addicted" to it. With EverQuest being the primary target of recent concerns regarding gaming addiction, they offer insight as to how the players of one of the "problem" games see the situation.

Is It Addiction?

"I can save and quit anytime I want to"

Addiction - *n*: being abnormally dependent on something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming

Part of the problem with a lack of understanding with gaming addiction comes about from the assumptions people make about what exactly is being implied. Most gamers would dismiss the idea that games are addictive by nature, because they know from personal experience that there are many games that they've played that they have no desire to ever play again (thanks, 3DO!). There are also many gamers who have no problems whatsoever keeping the amount of time they spend gaming in check, and they're playing exactly the same games that the so called "addicts" are.

"I think the whole term 'addiction' needs some dealing with. It's basically a medical concept that people have transferred to a lot of behavioural sort of things, and the word tends to be overused for anything that people just like a lot." — Sue Morris

With the term 'addiction' being thrown around so much, does research suggest that there is there any real similarity between excessive gaming, and addiction to drugs such as Nicotine?

"A critical difference is that when a 14 year-old starts smoking and gets hooked on Nicotine, we know that it will be difficult ever to get that person off that addiction. Whereas with computer games, what you tend to find is that young people may be wholly absorbed by them for a

THE PANEL

We've taken the thoughts and findings of both gamers and academics as to why it's more than just a game for some, and to highlight some of

period or phase of their lives, and then in the main they grow out of it. They might still remain interested in computer games, and still play them, but they're not going to be addicted in the same way as if they'd taken up smoking or other drug use." — *Kevin Durkin*

That doesn't mean that this is something that should just be left for non-gamers to worry about, because it's quite possible to compulsively engage in an activity that isn't by nature addictive. There's also the consideration that some games might have addictive qualities and others don't. Only by looking at a greater number of aspects of "the urge to game" can we hope to understand why we're having to deal with the term 'addiction' at all.

Worst Case Scenarios

"Game Over"

Of course, parents that watch their children spend every bit of their spare time playing computer and video games can hardly be told that they just don't understand, or that they should stop worrying about it.

A particular case that iterates this point is the suicide of Shawn Woolley. At age 21, Shawn took his own life, and he was playing EverQuest approximately 12 hours a day at the time. In this case, people such as Shawn's mother are blaming the game, stating that they believe it is addictive and thus dangerous.

Then there are other scenarios, which may not necessarily suggest that the individual playing the game was addicted, but clearly that they're taking some aspect of their gaming way too seriously. In the Philippines, Veronica Galang aged 17, died from a shotgun wound to the head at the hands of a schoolmate whom she had repeatedly defeated at a computer game at the local computer shop. Police stated that Veronica was shot after teasing her killer about his string of losses.

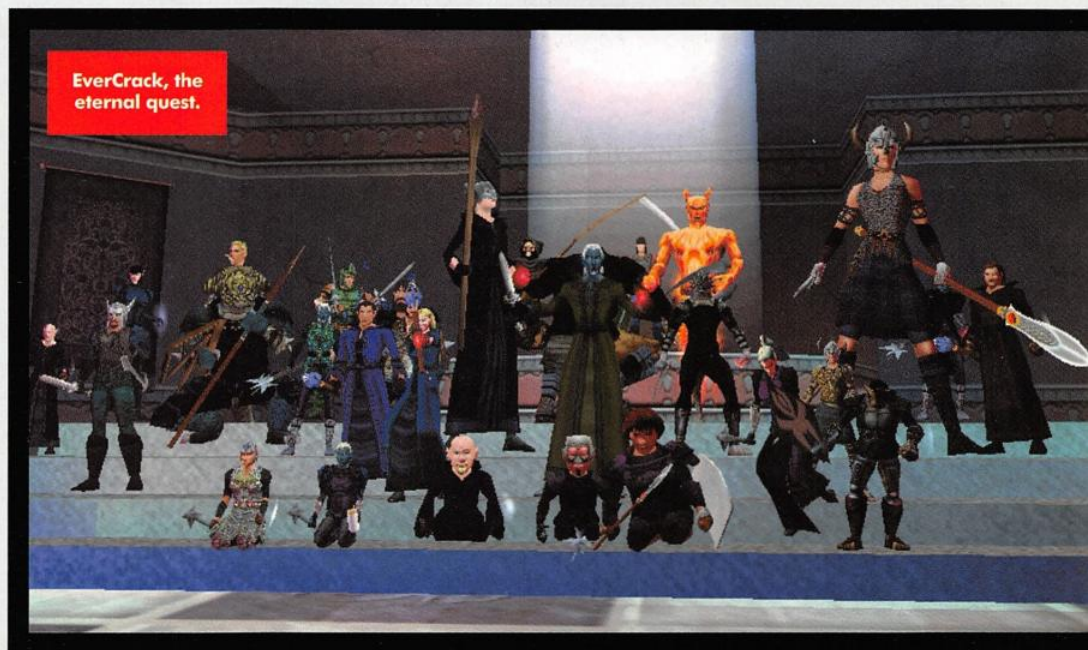
Despite how we as gamers may feel that video and computer games are used as a scapegoat for other problems, it's important that the gaming community addresses these problems seriously.

Police stated that Veronica was shot after teasing her killer about his string of losses.

Trying to laugh off a subject where death or insanity are involved aren't going to do the gaming community any favours when it comes to being judged or assessed by those outside of it.

There are support groups such as EverQuest Widows (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EverQuest-Widows/>) that are full of posts by people with legitimate concerns over how games are affecting their loved ones, or even themselves. However, since there are people who game on a regular basis without ever displaying any signs of addiction or compulsive behaviour, it's obvious that there's some aspect to some games that certain people are getting hooked on.

So, why does a game like EverQuest get tagged



EverCrack by the gamers who play it?

"I've been playing EQ for just over 3 years now, and lately spend an average of 40 hours playing a week. I think it's a lot of things, mainly the fact that there is no 'end' to the game really. The amount of content is so enormous that you'd never really get to see and do everything, especially since Sony/Verant keep adding content with expansions as needed.

"Some people keep playing just to hang out with friends, some people use it purely as an escape from their real lives as they feel the need. You have the complete casual 2 hour a week gamers through to the 100+ hour a week fanatics." — *Baz*

"EQ to me is like a sport, that is, the high end raiding guild aspect of the game (tackling the most powerful monsters, large scale challenges, etc). It has all the same challenges as sport, including your skill level, your teammates' skill, communication, dedication & motivation both from individuals and leadership. It also requires some degree of people skills to succeed in the game." — *Jim*

With a cross range of exposure to games, and with different people coming to play games such as EverQuest for different reasons, what questions should gamers who might get hooked on a game like this be asking themselves?

"If people are finding their gaming use excessive to the point where it is interfering with their lives, they need to be able to say to themselves, 'What is it I'm getting out of gaming that I'm not getting out of everyday life?' If you can identify that your gaming fulfils some need — for challenge, friendship, peace and quiet, whatever — and then find a way of achieving more of that in real life, your attraction to the game will often decrease." — *Sue Morris*

And what sort of things might it be that gamers are missing?

"There have been a few case studies of individuals that play games excessively for a while and when you get to know the individual closely you find that he or she is dealing with

some other problems. Quite often, for example, with adolescents it's some kind of social problem. Occasionally there have been reports of young teenage boys who have played excessively at a stage in their life where they might be interested in girls, but not having much success, or feeling very awkward in dealing with girls and so they divert their energies to playing computer games for a while. In some cases there are individuals with quite serious social difficulties who find solace in the computer game." — *Kevin Durkin*

The Moral Aspects

"Game Developers - Artists or Pushers?"

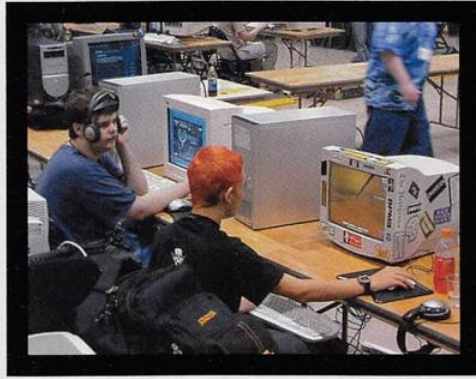
Regardless as to whether or not games are addictive, there are people who display signs of being addicted to various games. Is the developer to blame? After all, they created the product that the gamer is now dependent on in some way or another.

Considering the death of Shawn Woolley, does a company like Verant (makers of EverQuest) have a moral obligation to put an end to EverQuest so that this doesn't happen again? Or do other developers have to go to lengths to ensure that their games don't inspire habits that pass as signs of addiction?

To say that the answer is yes, is to suggest that game developers should design their products with a limited scope of involvement or enjoyment by the player. Considering that one of the most common complaints gamers (including those that show no signs of compulsive gaming behaviour) make about a lot of games is their lack of longevity, when a developer creates a game that can entertain gamers for months or even years, they're really just satisfying the demands of their customers.

If any group of people had a need to be concerned about whether or not EverQuest is at all to blame for these things, then surely the EverQuest community itself would have to be at the top of the list. But how do things look from the inside?

"The general opinion from EverQuest players was it wasn't the game that was at fault, but rather the mother looking for a scapegoat for her



son's problems. He was a guy with some problems and was an EverQuest fanatic, not a guy who had problems because he was an EverQuest fanatic." — **Baz**

"At the moment there are over 400,000 current subscribers and probably a million people in total that have played EQ hardcore at some stage. Out of those million, I think three have killed themselves where EQ has been blamed or associated with the incident in some way. When you take a sample size that big, you can't say 'EverQuest alone caused this kid's woes'." — **Jim**

But it's not just EverQuest subscribers who are questioning whether or not the game itself would be to blame for Shawn's demise.

"From all the evidence one can pick up in his case, it would appear that he had quite serious psychological problems anyway. Without being able to look carefully at his life and what was going on it's arguable that his involvement in computer games may actually have been a positive. Who knows? He may have committed suicide or done something dramatic earlier if he hadn't had that involvement to sustain him." — **Kevin Durkin**

Does research suggest that specific types of games will be more likely to inspire responses that people may see as addiction?

"It's not really clear. You get some anecdotal reports of particular games drawing people in, but then I think for any game that's successful in the market there will be some players who, for a while, might be described by their friends and family as 'addicted'. They're playing long hours, and they're obsessed by the game. But that could happen for almost any game type — as well as for many other hobbies and leisure interests." — **Kevin Durkin**

The Undeniable Uglier

There are some obvious no-brainer problems related to excessive computer game use:

- 1) Anyone sitting at a computer for a long period of time on a regular basis can develop all manner of problems with their posture, which in turn can create back and nerve pain. This certainly isn't limited to gamers, but it includes them.
- 2) RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) can take it's toll on anyone engaging in any physical activity on a day to day basis, with arthritis being a complaint for people who have spent a lot of time using keyboards or manipulating small devices (which a game controller would pass as).
- 3) It has been medically proven that a lack of exposure to sunlight can cause or contribute to depression. So despite the fact you might not want to go outside, if you do, you'll more than likely feel better for it.
- 4) A lack of sleep, or irregular sleeping patterns can contribute to depression.

At least the good news for compulsive gamers is that their gaming habits won't directly give them cancer. Many have been concerned over ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) and EMF (Electro Magnetic Field) radiation emissions from computer monitors and televisions, but at this point there has yet to be conclusive proof that the radiation emitted from such devices has any serious or noteworthy effect on people, with eye irritations and weariness being the only obvious side effects.

The Social Aspects

"False Friendships or Social Schooling?"

When someone starts spending an increased amount of time gaming, it obviously means they have to spend less time doing other things, and social activities are often among the first things to suffer as a result. But are their social skills really suffering — or improving?

Gamers have for years been stereotyped as being anti-social by non-gamers, but is that due to the gamers having any less of a need or urge to be sociable? Ironically, research appears to suggest that gamers are attracted to games for social reasons in the first place.

"A reason for a lot of younger people is the social element, that they enjoy playing with their friends, or occasionally with family members. Which once again is contrary to the initial assumption of many critics that games are in some way anti-social and are creating a generation of isolates. Quite the contrary, children enjoy playing games with others and discussing games with others. For many, it's an important motivation." — **Kevin Durkin**

With first person shooters also being played with fanaticism by some of the more avid gamers, and with the cliché concerns about violence in these games, it's one of the genres to come under the most scrutiny by the media. However the first person shooter community also comes with enough blatantly positive social activity that is so often ignored.

"My experience of playing on Australian servers at least, is that it's quite humorous. There are a lot of people cracking jokes, especially once

people know each other a bit and can take the piss out of each other's behaviour — it becomes really quite funny. I remember spending a lot of the time laughing with the people I used to play with. You can really judge people's characters by how they play in a deathmatch or a team game. You can often work out who's cool and who's an asshole very quickly by how someone plays." — **Sue Morris**

Of course, not all games are sociable, and with that in mind, does that mean that the people spending a lot of time on such games are being anti-social? Society doesn't tend to deem those that would spend a lot of time painting alone as being anti-social, and reading a book alone is generally considered a pastime of those who wish to enrich their mind in some way. Why is it that games are looked upon in a negative light in this regard?

"There are situations where parents see kids spending hours in front of a screen, and all they can see is things moving about the screen, and they can't see what's involved in the interactive side of it. Just seeing what's on the screen isn't necessarily that exciting and so it seems like people are engrossed in a meaningless pastime when it's actually more complicated than it appears." — **Sue Morris**

With people like Shawn Woolley obviously having suffered from some kind of unhappiness, it prompts the questions as to what could make a person unhappy by playing such a highly social game such as EverQuest.

"It depends on the reasons you play the game really. At the high end game it's very competitive and can cause very heated situations between players resulting in grudges, where rumours are being spread, and reputations grow or are ruined. Those who play more casually and socially make friends with most everyone in their travels. Some people haggle and are business like to varying degrees when trading in game goods." — **Baz**

If excessive video gaming could be a sign of depression, or the result of unhappiness in other elements of someone's life, is pulling such a person away from gaming actually going to help?

"It may not be that playing the game causes depression, but it may be a consequence of being depressed. We don't really know enough yet as to whether or not that's a good thing or a bad thing, but we do know that people who are depressed are better advised to be involved in some activity than just to sit there ruminating about their problems. So, although we need more careful research on the subject, it's arguable that computer games may help some people to cope with the symptoms of depression rather than cause them." — **Kevin Durkin**

The Physical Aspects

"The Cyber Athlete Physique"

Aside from the issues of how excessive gaming may affect our social lives or the ability to keep down a job, there's the issue of what gaming might be doing to your body. Spending excessive amounts of time in front of a TV or computer screen is recognised by most academics (and the bulk of society) as being bad for your health.

Game developers and publishers can hardly be criticised or held responsible on this point, as games almost always come with health and

epilepsy warnings at the beginning of instruction manuals. It's entirely up to the individual to heed these warnings, and contrary to popular belief, it would seem that many do.

"We actually found teenage computer game players, on average, have a slightly higher level of involvement in sport than non-game players. If you think about it, it's not that surprising because sports and computer games have in common the fact that they are games. So people who are attracted to games — who like skill, challenge, and competition — might try out both.

That's not to deny, of course, that there will be

>> Excessive videogaming could be a sign of depression, or the result of unhappiness in someone's life...

some individuals who play computer games and never exercise anything other than their thumbs. They would be well advised to consider balancing their lives — maybe find a gym with games linked to the exercise bikes!" — *Kevin Durkin*

Of course, not everyone falls into that category, as there are gamers that don't get much exercise at all. However, even the gamers that aren't leaving that much time for genuine physical exercise appear to be aware of the situation.

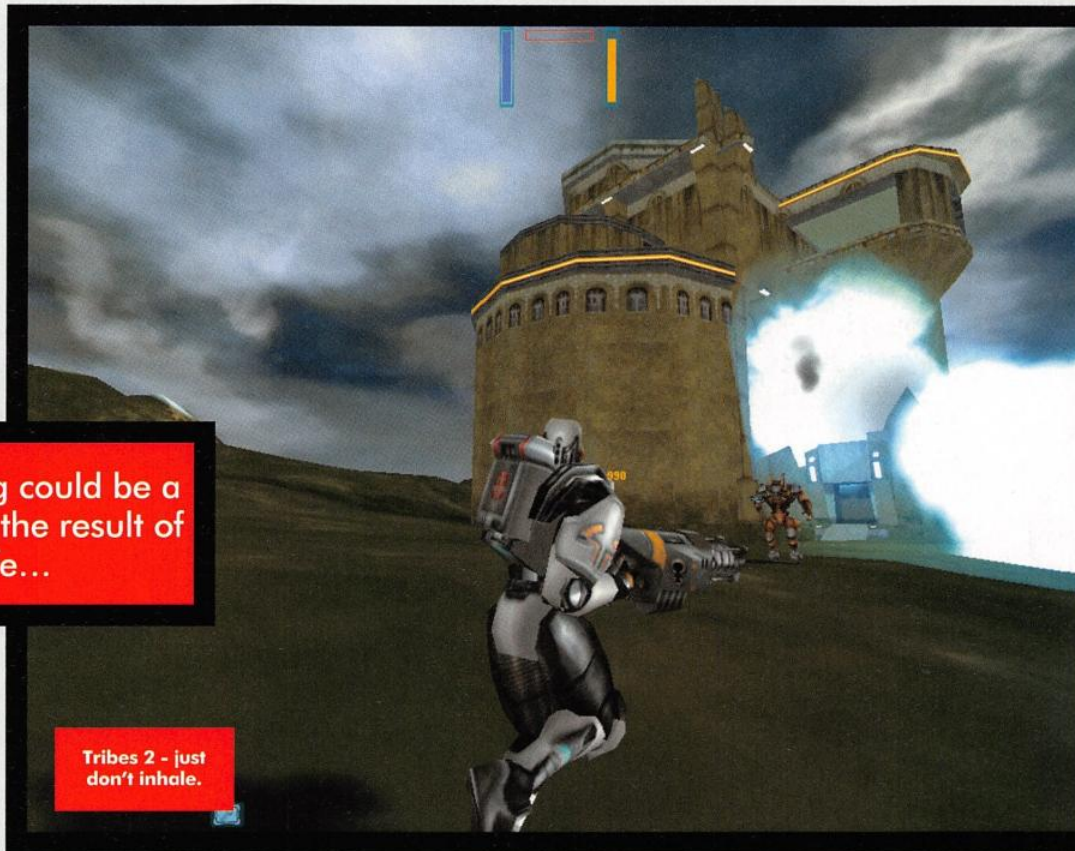
"I was just on 2 weeks holiday, mostly free of EverQuest and computers. I stayed at my mother's place the second week and my brother (17) made me realise how unfit I'd let myself become. He was me five years ago... Hence the diet and attempt to get fit again." — *Jim*

"Well, I'm not really fit and I always plan to change that fact but never do. It's more my lack of discipline than the fault of gaming. I stopped most of my fitness and sporting activities when I finished school, which was before any hardcore gaming. And nothing has really changed since then, I'm probably just classified as lazy in that department." — *Baz*

Level Up or Love Life?

"Games or girls?"

With a distinct minority of "obsessive" gamers being female, the few that do play games tend to find themselves in a social situation where they're surrounded by males, either in a real or a virtual sense. While not all the attention they might get will necessarily be desirable, they're certainly in a different situation to males that are living the gaming lifestyle, who run the risk of having problems in relating properly with women due to an underdeveloped social life. To highlight that this problem isn't solved by simply finding a girl that's into games, we spoke to "Venus", an attractive, outgoing woman with a solid gaming background. Having owned various gaming systems since she was 6, and playing games such as the Baldur's Gate series, it's evident that Venus is not the kind of girl who is put off by gaming itself. With that in mind, her comments give evidence to suggest that it's not what obsessive male gamers do that might negatively affect their love lives, but rather how much they do it. Her



relationship with her partner is now back on track after a difficult period.

HYPER: How much was your partner gaming, and how much is he doing now?

Venus: I hate Tribes, and I hate Tribes 2.

Although I own copies of these games. From four months into our relationship up until I was going insane at the two-year mark, he was spending every available moment playing these games and developing TAC (Team Arial Combat) scripts. Currently, my partner is not really gaming.

HYPER: How did this affect your relationship?

Venus: Badly. I was going to bed alone 4 days out of 7. I had to beg, nag, and hassle for him to come with me, and for most of this period our sex life sucked. It also caused a great deal of tension between us because I was going insane due to attention starvation, and was becoming very narky. He thought I was being a controlling freak for thinking that I deserved some time, or that we should actually leave the house together at some point. We fought a lot.

HYPER: Can you understand what your partner saw in the games he was spending so much time on?

Venus: Absolutely — he wants to be a game developer. What he loved about Tribes, in particular TAC (Team Arial Combat), was that it involved strategy, teamwork, and skill. The complexity of the game — and when there were enough players on the server, the intensity — made it engaging for him... Its what he enjoyed. It gave him a rush and he liked it because he was one of the best.

HYPER: Do you think excessive gaming has affected your partner's physical fitness?

Venus: In terms of basic strength or abilities, no... But in terms of his general health however,

yes. He'd be off colour, lethargic, only sleep 5 hours a night, have low blood pressure, etc.

HYPER: Do you think that many women find the lack of physical activity from guys who spend a lot of time gaming to be off-putting?

Venus: Yup, a definite turn off. What these guys do in their own time is their business, but when you date someone you can't keep gaming like they don't exist, you have to date them to keep them.

HYPER: How about in terms of social skills? Do you think some guys who spend an excessive amount of time gaming might be poor at dealing with women?

Venus: I think many of these guys are poor at dealing with people in general, of course only in face to face situations. However, I do know one or two who have plenty of male 'geek' friends, but couldn't make a move on a girl if their life depended on it. If you're alone and happy with your life revolving around gaming, then that's fine. It's a question of choice, but it's a problem if you ever long for real companionship.

HYPER: Now that he's going out more often with you, is that affecting him besides just improving your relationship?

Venus: Yes, I'd say he feels happier and has more confidence. Also, he's better at tolerating things that used to make him very annoyed or depressed.

Continue?

So is gaming addictive? It seems extremely hard to prove that it is, however it's very easy to point out that some people do end up taking gaming too seriously. Perhaps the answer lies not in whether or not you need to limit your gaming, but if your gaming is limiting you.

TAAAWL

>> ELIOT FISH

VISIT HYPER ONLINE AT WWW.HYPERACTIVE.COM.AU



Battlefield 1942

www.ea.com/eagames

Eattlefield 1942 is the first real attempt at an online first-person team-based World War II experience with all the tools of war finally at your personal disposal. You see, as opposed to just a World War II setting, this is a game that actually allows you to take part in the Battle of Midway, Normandy, Guadalcanal or other classic pieces of history – with up to 64 other players no less. Recreating history just became a hell of a lot of fragtastic fun; but of course, this time around maybe the bad guys will win...

PROVE YOUR WORTH

All four theatres of the Second World War are featured – Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Pacific Islands and North Africa – across 16 different huge maps. Depending on the battle you choose to take part in, there will be approximately 35 different vehicles to play with. Drive a tank across a North African desert, pilot a heavy bomber on a bombing run (or take the gunner's position), even go

hunting for ships in a submarine (or take the controls of one of the battleships) – there's more variety and usefulness from the vehicles in Battlefield 1942 than there ever was in other similar games (hello Operation Flashpoint). But it's not all about driving heavy tanks into the fray or transporting troops around in an APC. You'll have to prove your worth on the field of battle in a pair of muddy boots too.

There are five different armies to play for in Battlefield 1942 – the Russians, Germans, Japanese, British and US. Once you know whom you're fighting for, you'll then have to choose a specific role. Play as a scout/sniper, medic,

heavy weapons, engineer or the assault class, and set about playing your part in what needs to be a team effort if there's any chance of coming away the victor. Each of the classes starts out with a different weapon and equipment, such as a rocket launcher for the anti-tank/heavy weapons class as opposed to the lightweight pistol for the engineer. As each class has strengths and weaknesses, so do the variety of vehicles. Some heavy-duty tanks have immense firepower, but are slow and leave themselves vulnerable to attack. Smaller vehicles, such as the good old jeep, are fast and manoeuvrable, but lacking in any

real firepower. Gameplay balance is a big issue with so many different components on the battlefield, but getting it just right has been of utmost importance to the developer, Digital Illusions.

The main meat to the multiplayer game is probably the Conquest mode. This is a capture and hold style of multiplayer game, with teams attempting to guard various flags on the map from the opposing team. This mode requires the most well co-ordinated teamwork, with teams needing to keep track of multiple locations and spread the most talented players around the map to deal with the multitude of small tactically crucial locations.



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MS. INFORMATION



**AGATA
BUDINSKA**

» Don't you just love those reports that people have

compiled that tell you what people think about stuff? You know, "25% of those surveyed said they'd rather eat brand X if it were sold in a pink box than Brand Z in a blue box". They seem to be the bread and butter of things to report on at most online news sites, a sort of filler for when things are moving slowly.

What I want to know, is who decides what to run reports and statistics on. Especially the ones about the Internet; and I'd also like to know who pays for them. This is not a rhetorical question. If anyone knows, please tell me.

ACNielsen have been doing a bunch of stats (as they do) lately about ISPs' friendly factors and Broadband. Apparently more people now have Broadband or want Broadband. That is to say, more than this time last year – a lot more. There are probably a lot of reasons why, but an educated guess would say because there are new service providers and an increase in advertising. The last 3-4 months especially has seen the larger ISPs spend big in convincing us that Broadband is the way to go – that it's faster, doesn't tie up your phone line and doesn't cost a thing. Well, okay, maybe that last point isn't true. TV, billboards, busses, newspapers – all the popular mediums.

But why don't they make a report on how many people out there want Broadband, and can afford Broadband, but can't have Broadband? You know, people who aren't in a cable area, or who are on Pair Gained lines, or who live out in the country and are lucky to get a dialup speed of 19.2k? Or the people who are on Broadband, but feel they're getting ripped off having to put up with all the stringent download caps? I guess it isn't as interesting for the 'Powers that Pay' to know. Or maybe they have already made the report, but they don't think it's interesting enough for us to know. Or maybe it's there and we just have to find it...

happymealwithoj@hotmail.com



Other modes include the standard deathmatch and good old capture the flag.

SCRUMPTIOUS DETAIL

Digital Illusions have experience with this type of game before... much of the development team previously worked on Codename: Eagle for TalonSoft, a game set in an alternate 1920's Russia that also allowed you to pilot a variety of vehicles as an extension to the first-person shooter play. The many problems they encountered developing that game, such as buggy network code, has helped ensure that Battlefield 1942 suffers from none of the same inhibiting problems.

Interestingly, a brand new 3D engine called Refractor 2 is being used for the game, allowing for some seriously nice effects and

scrumptious detail. It can also handle immense maps, with some of the locations in the game being quite spacious for even a full compliment of 64 players. On top of the huge maps are the impressive draw distances. There's no dreaded fogging to spoil your sniping exercises, and no horrid pop-up to fly your plane into. Naturally, the minimum specs don't really tell the true tale... you WILL need a beast of a PC and a cable connection to get maximum enjoyment out of this title. For fragalicious gaming, we're thinking a Geforce 3, 256MB of RAM and a 1.5Ghz machine will be more realistic for enjoying what the game

has to offer.

In addition to all this multiplayer madness, Battlefield 1942 comes equipped with a beefy single-player campaign complete with AI controlled bots, so if you're not the co-operative type (or you're still using a crummy dial-up connection) there's something here for you too. None of the events in the single-player game are scripted either, so you can expect the enemy AI to play differently every time that you do too.

Oh, and let's not forget the console cousin – expect to see Battlefield 1942 on the Xbox sometime soon also. <<

LEMME AT 'EM!

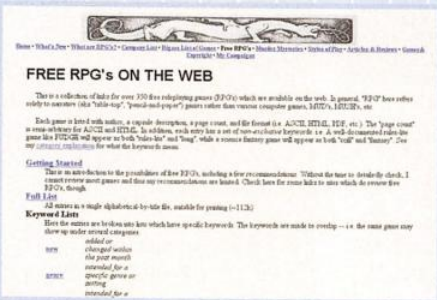
You can download both the Battlefield 1942 multiplayer and single player demo at: www.eagames.com.au/downloads.php



LORD OF THE RINGS OZ

www.lordoftherings.com.au

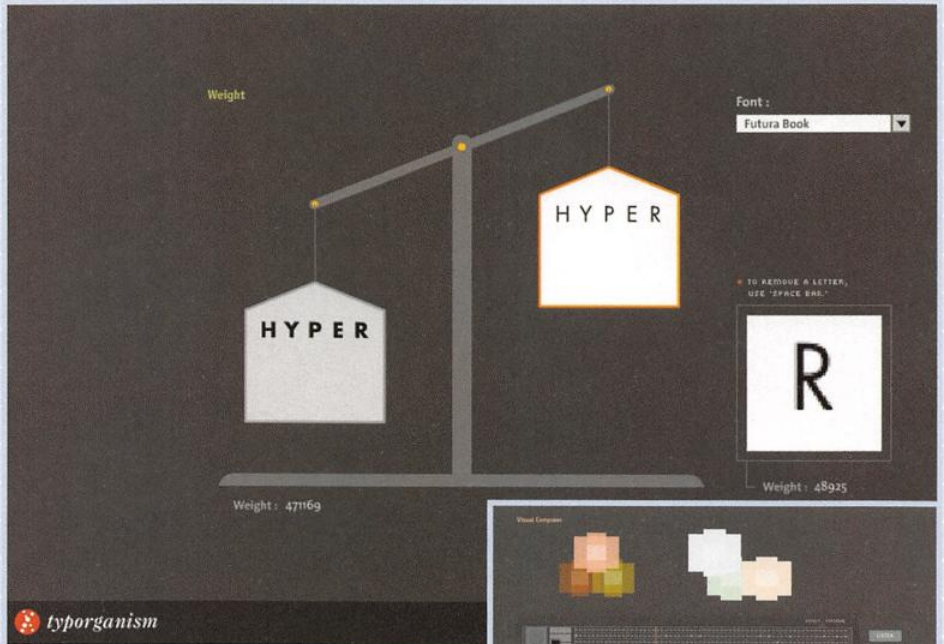
To tie in with our *Two Towers* feature this issue, head on over to this Australian *Lord of the Rings* website that has been put up since *Fellowship* came out on DVD. There are competitions to enter and more cool things to check out for local Aussie fans! There may even be some *Two Towers* content here in the coming months, so bookmark it now.



FREE RPGS

www.darkshire.org/~jhkim/rpg/freerpgs

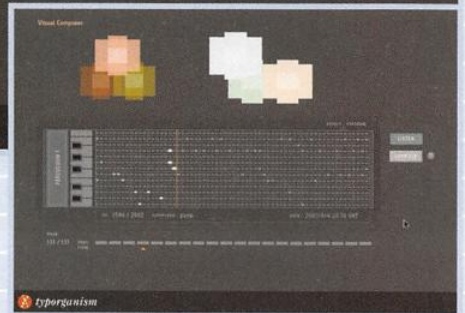
Choose your genre, be it Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Superhero or whatever turns you on, and then download and play away. Yep, this site hosts a plethora of pen and paper or "Tabletop" RPGs in a variety of formats (HTML, PDF) for your own private consumption — not the computer based MUD or MUSH kind. That's right, this is a collection of rule sets, supplements, maps and more.



TYPORGANISM

www.typorganism.com

To quote the website, "Typorganism is a series of communication experiments, exploring computational interaction design and interactive kinetic typography, based on the metaphorical notion of typography, 'Type is a life-form', which lives on the net, responds to users' stimulus, evolves through time, has intelligence, powered by computational algorithm... Type is an organism".



THE BRICK TESTAMENT

www.thereverend.com/brick_testament

The Rev. Brendan Powell Smith seems to have a bit of an unhealthy obsession with Lego for a holy man. Despite the fact that this may come across as an ultra religious website, the Lego re-telling of stories from the Bible are actually pretty hilarious and cleverly done, and there's something about it that seems somewhat tongue-in-cheek. Especially when the Reverend's personal page points out that his Religion is "None".



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA

www.glyphweb.com/arda

Here's a website that was more than handy for us this issue, making sure we got all the spellings of places correct in our *Two Towers* feature for one. If you need a source of reference for everything Tolkien, then this online encyclopedia in a nice interactive guide. It's an ongoing project, so it's not complete, but there's a wealth of information here to chew on.

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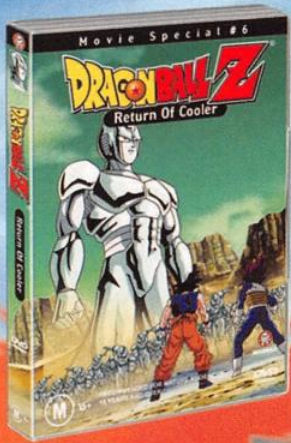


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REVIEWS

»GCN

GAME OF THE MONTH

Super Mario Sunshine

At last, a new next-gen Mario game! As always, the wait was worth it...

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GAME THEORY

DANIEL STAINES



» Last month in Game Theory, we briefly examined some of the advantages to be found in focusing on proprietary technology during the process of game development. This month we're going to take a look at the role design plays in game creation and what it entails for a developer willing to make it their number one priority.

First of all, it's worth noting that design is not yet fully established as an individual discipline in the gaming industry. Most studios, as Ion Storm's Harvey Smith sardonically commented, subscribe to the philosophy that design is something that can be done on the fly by team-members acting in other official capacities. This may hold true for the time being, but it is unlikely that it will continue to do so in the future. Video games as a whole are becoming more complex and this implies that developers are going to have to rely more and more upon singularly focused designers to keep their projects focused and cohesive.

This is the thing: the evolution of technology in games is only analogous to the progression of the medium insofar as design can take advantage of this technological advancement. Should every game made with the DOOM III engine turn out to be a Quake clone, then the only thing to have progressed in video games will be the technology upon which they are based. More often than not, the best games are those rare gems where design has guided the development of proprietary tools or radically reshaped existing technology for the purpose of realising ambitious goals. Games like Thief, Super Mario 64 and Deus Ex all come to mind at this point.

If developers want their products to stand out in an increasingly competitive marketplace, then they will have come to terms with the fact that programmers and texture artists are not the sole flag bearers for the future of gaming. In this industry at least, evolution is not merely a matter of chance – it is a process of design.

game_theory@whentitsdone.com

THE HYPER CREW'S TOP 5

Eliot - Editor

1. Medieval: Total War – PC
"I think I've grafted to the mouse and keyboard. Oh dear."
2. Pro Evolution Soccer – PS2
3. Hitman 2 – Xbox
4. Super Mario Sunshine – GCN
5. Star Wars: Rogue Leader – GCN

Cam - Deputy Editor

1. Office Soccer – Hyper HQ
"The cricket season is fast approaching, but World Cup fever still burns."
2. Super Mario Sunshine – GCN
3. Beach Spikers – GCN
4. Hitman 2 – Xbox
5. The Thing – PS2

Malcolm - Art guy

1. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 – PS2
"The re-vamped goal structure is a sensible change. San Fran level!"
2. Super Mario Sunshine – GCN
3. V-Rally 3 – PS2
4. Beach Spikers – GCN
5. Gungrave – PS2

Daniel Staines - Reviewer

1. Deus Ex: The Madame Chairman Project – PC mod
"The time of revelation is near..."
2. Summoner II – PS2
3. Onimusha 2 – PS2
4. Deus Ex: The Conspiracy – PS2
5. Hunter: The Reckoning – Xbox

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!

REVIEW

» HYPER 47



>> GEN

Super Mario Sunshine



CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

CAM SHEA basks in the super happy sunshine...

Nintendo fans your long wait is finally over. It's been six years since Mario 64, and almost one and a half console generations, but Nintendo have (at last!) returned to their most important franchise. Historically, Nintendo have had great success in meeting the rabid expectations of fans, but many felt that this would be the true test of the company. After all, Mario 64 was revolutionary — it redefined the way we played games and helped usher in the next generation of 3D games. Making a sequel in the shadow of such a critically acclaimed and important title is no easy task — even for Shiggy and co. Fortunately, Nintendo have risen to the challenge and crafted a game that, while it may not have the same impact, is

incredibly good fun and a more than worthy addition to the series.

WHAT A FLUDDY DUDDY

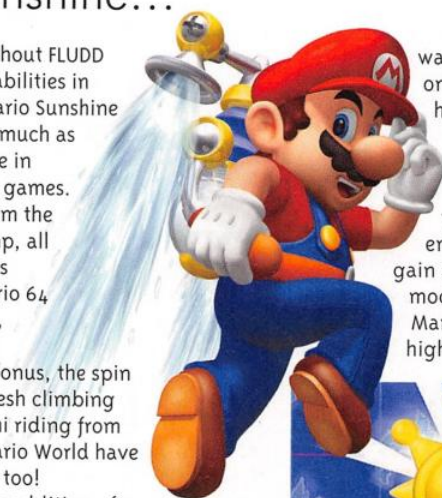
Sunshine takes place on Isle Delfino, a tropical resort where Mario, Peach and hangers on are hoping to take a well-deserved holiday. Of course, their plans go awry as soon as they arrive, as a Mario look-alike has wreaked havoc, splashing goop, monsters and graffiti all across the island chain. This has freaked out the "Shines", the little star shaped objects that provide the Delfino natives with power. Mario is charged with the cleanup job, thus setting the scene for another classic Mario adventure.

To aid Mario in his efforts, he's given a special device known as FLUDD, which sits on his back and carries a large reservoir of water.

Now, without FLUDD Mario's abilities in Super Mario Sunshine are very much as they were in previous games. Aside from the long jump, all his moves from Mario 64 are back, and as a special bonus, the spin jump, mesh climbing and Yoshi riding from Super Mario World have returned too!

It's the addition of FLUDD that gives Mario Sunshine's gameplay mechanics their own unique flavour. It's a multipurpose device that allows Mario to spray

water over his head in one mode, and to hover in the air in the other. Swapping modes is as easy as tapping X, and when you collect enough Shines you'll gain access to two other modes — one that allows Mario to rocket jump high into the air, and



Ooh, look at that!



I know what you need – platform shoes!



Extreme Sports have even infected Mario.



That was the biggest pigeon...



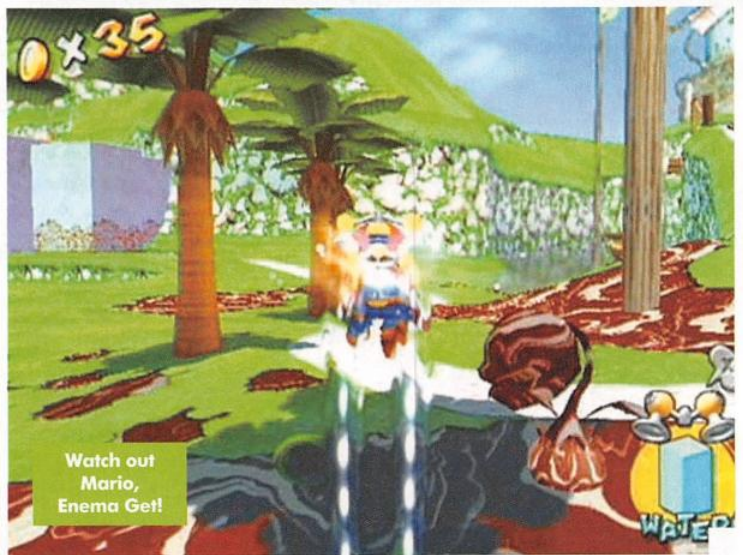
Mario's getting a bit fruity these days.



The gameplay is such a fine balance.



I've heard of crapping your pants, but...



Watch out Mario, Enema Get!

one that propels him along like a jet ski. It's the two default modes that you'll be using the most, however. The over-the-head stream is used in a huge number of situations, whether it be spraying graffiti to earn a blue coin, soaking villagers when they piss you off, cleaning up sludge, triggering plants to grow, using the stream to push objects around or using it to knock out enemies. As you can tell, the simple addition of a water spray has allowed Nintendo to throw in all sorts of new types of challenges, and promote a new way of thinking in relation to puzzles in the gameworld.

The ability to hover changes the way you think about getting around too, and makes controlling Mario feel a lot more freewheeling. Instead of demanding precision jump after precision jump the hover acts as something of a safety net, although there are still plenty of sections where your timing must be impeccable. Use of the other nozzles

!!! Yoshi comes in a variety of colours (depending on the fruit he eats). Try eating enemies with the different Yoshis - each results in a different type of platform.

SHIGGY'S SUPER HAPPY SMILE TIME FUN FACTORY

There really aren't that many fully-fledged levels in Super Mario Sunshine — seven in fact, with eleven shines on each, plus the hub town and the final level. Fortunately, Nintendo have managed to inject enough variety within levels to keep the player interested. For instance, level layouts change depending on which Shine you're trying to get. Thus, although the level in question may have the same basic geometry, it varies in terms of placement of tightropes, NPCs, enemies, sludge and so on. This is a nice way for

for FLUDD aren't as well balanced as they could have been. For instance, the jet ski feels like little more than a gimmick. A hugely enjoyable gimmick, mind you, but a gimmick nonetheless. It would have been nice if Nintendo had built more challenges specifically for it in the level design.

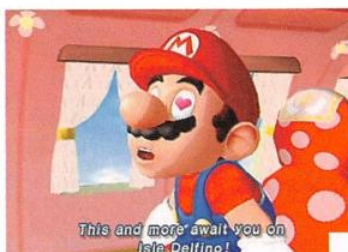
The ability to hover changes the way you think about getting around too, and makes controlling Mario feel a lot more freewheeling

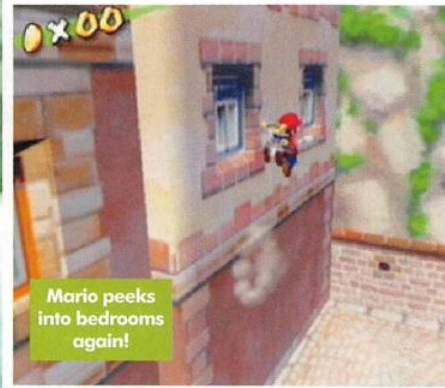
Nintendo to tailor a host of different challenges without having to build entirely new levels. It has allowed them to focus on what they do best — crafting gameplay.

Another way that Nintendo have varied the challenges on offer is through the warp levels. These are challenge areas created specifically for a single Shine Get, and consisting of long block-based

mazes hanging in the air. These really increase the range of challenge on offer, as most of the time Mario's backpack is stripped from him, taking the control method back to the old school, as they say.

As in Mario 64, the eight stories share many common elements across different levels. For instance, each level has a red coin hunt and a chase fake Mario challenge. Even





Mario peeks into bedrooms again!



I am FLUDD—a Flash Liquidizer Ultra Dousing Device. Mario gets horny just looking at it.



Cirque du Soliel here we come!



I swear he just stole coins from there!

though there are repetitive elements to the challenges within levels, the actual design of each level is very unique, running the gamut from a huge dockyard with ships, a towering metal infrastructure over the water and nasty oil slicks, through to an amusement park with pirate ships, a rollercoaster and ferris wheel.

The main hub world that acts as the portal to all the other levels is also very cool. It's a town filled with quaint old buildings, narrow cobble stone streets and a tropical vibe. Down by the water are rows of palm trees and a market where locals sell a whole range of fruit. There are even a couple of ferry services that take you from near the center of

town out across the water and past the tiny islands surrounding it. The main town is very much a level unto itself — there is so much exploring to do through the streets, in the underground tunnels, over the rooftops and out across the ocean too. Best of all, there are plenty of secrets and rewards for those that explore thoroughly.

CRAZY FIRE BREATHING SLIME POPPER EXTREME GUY

Super Mario Sunshine represents a bit of a stylistic departure for the series from Nintendo. The standard platform game world themes don't apply in this game, with the tropical vacation motif running the show. The design of the locals for one is very

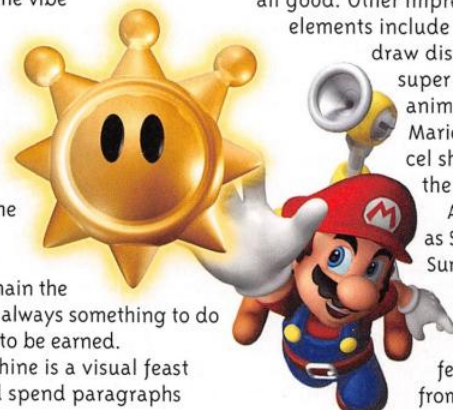
different to what we've seen in previous games. We think it makes a refreshing change. Sure, the fanboys inside us were yearning for the old favourites, but let's face it — the gameplay and music is all classic Mario, and instead of the Goombas and Koopa Troopas you may be expecting, you'll be going up against giant squid, manta rays and crazy slime poppers (yeah we made that last name up). We think that Super Mario Sunshine walks an excellent line between trying something new and keeping the vibe of previous games. To summarise - this is a very different looking Mario on the surface, but the principles behind the gameplay remain the same. There's always something to do and a reward to be earned.

Mario Sunshine is a visual feast too. We could spend paragraphs

analysing every individual element, and breaking down what works and what doesn't, but that would be beside the point. Mario's graphics as a whole are more than the sum of their parts. The tropical vacation theme is delivered masterfully, and the water effects in particular are stunning. Everywhere you look there's an eye-catching water effect, whether it be the spray from FLUDD, the distortion of objects seen through water, or the reflections of the environment off the water, it's all good. Other impressive

elements include the amazing draw distance, the super slick animations for Mario and the semi cel shaded look to the characters.

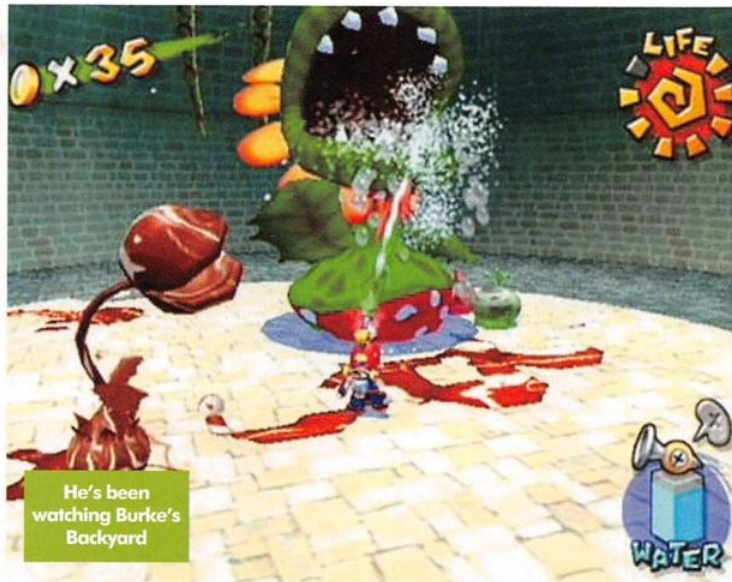
As entertaining as Super Mario Sunshine is, however, Nintendo have made a few sacrifices from their normal



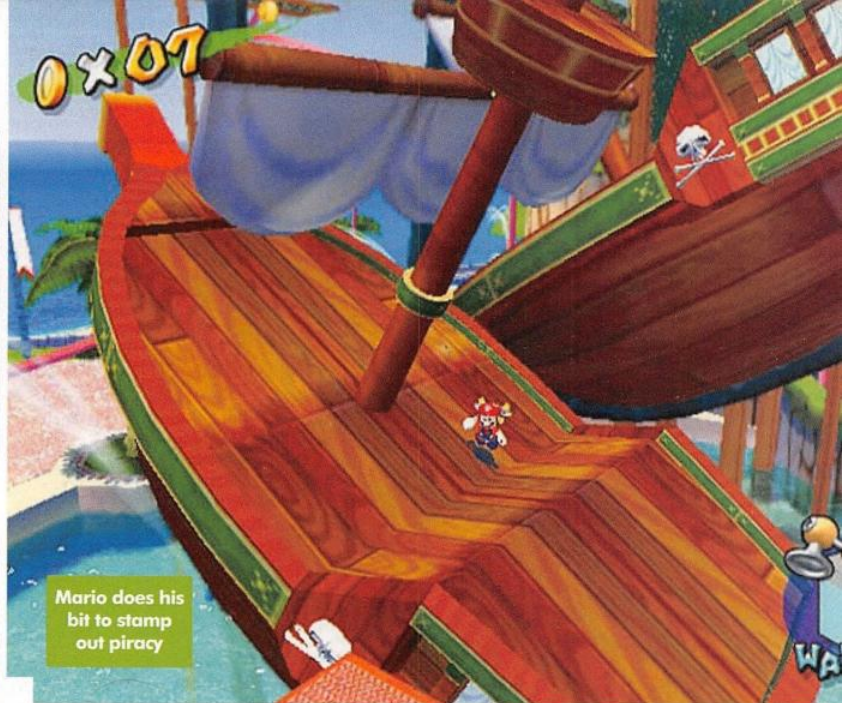
Master Mario, if you would.



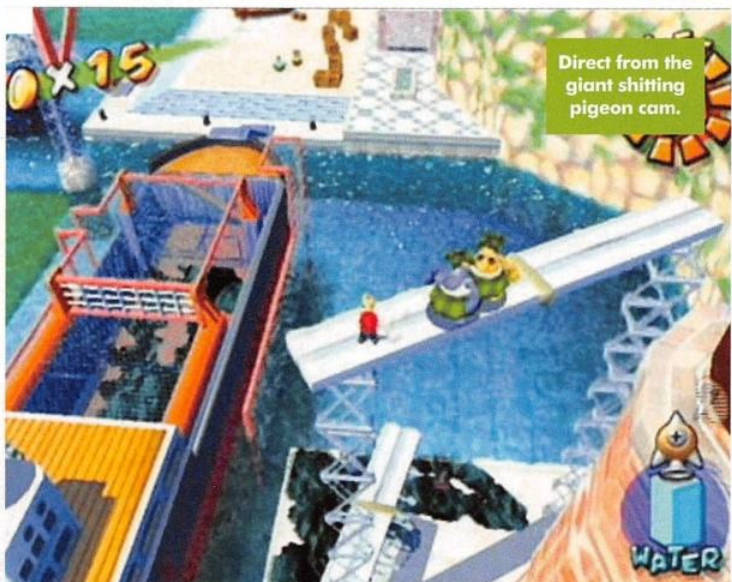
Behold this sketch of the perpetrator based on eyewitness descriptions.



He's been watching Burke's Backyard



Mario does his bit to stamp out piracy



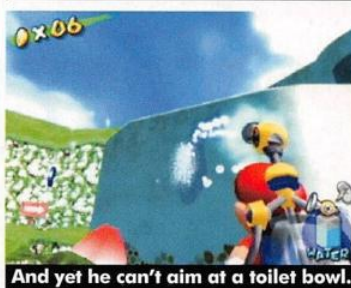
Direct from the giant shitting pigeon cam.



Sniffing jet fuel again, Mario?



Thank god for the brown undies!



And yet he can't aim at a toilet bowl.



WET GET!

impossibly high standards in order to get this game out on time. There are a few bugs here and there — such as holes in geometry that Mario can fall through, and the frame rate is not always as fluid as one might like. Indeed, the slowdown occurs at weird times when there's not that much going on. We really would have expected Nintendo to iron out such kinks before final release. Oh well, hopefully there's another Mario game in development already, without the time pressures and obstacles that new hardware often brings.

HAIR-PULLINGLY TRICKY

In contrast to Luigi's Mansion, Super Mario Sunshine is not short on challenge. The first 50 or so stars

There are still instances where the camera gets stuck on walls and screws up what you're trying to do

won't be too difficult, but finding all 120 will take a long time. Trust us. This is just what we were hoping for from Nintendo — a new Mario title that scales all the way from fun and easy, through to hair-pullingly tricky. One element that does bring the challenge down, however, is the camera mechanics. A

large degree of manual control is necessary.

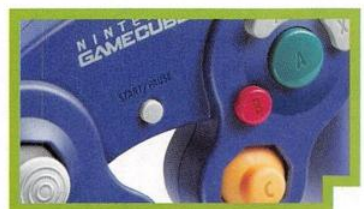


!!! Nintendo have included graffiti shaped as triangles, squares, circles and crosses for you to clean. A cheeky dig at the PlayStation controller perhaps?

yet there are still instances where the camera gets stuck on walls and screws up what you're trying to do. However you'll rarely get too annoyed with the game simply because the handling is sharp, Mario's abilities are well rounded and the vibe is infectious. One thing

is for sure — long-time Mario fans will love the challenge.

Newbies, on the other hand, be prepared, the game may look cute but it's a wolf in Shiggy's clothing. There's not much else to say other than — you must have this game! Super Mario Sunshine is a fantastic follow up to Mario 64 and one of the most entertaining platform games of all time. <<<



PLUS: A huge challenge awaits. Fantastic Mario gameplay.

MINUS: Character voices, easy final boss.

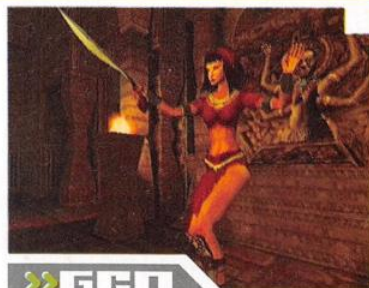
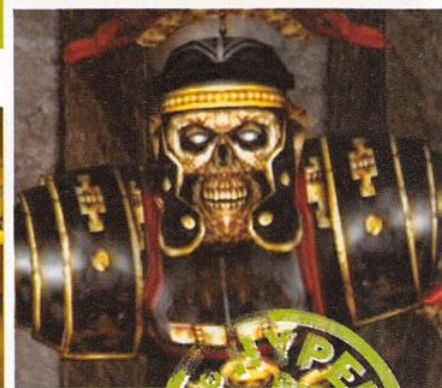
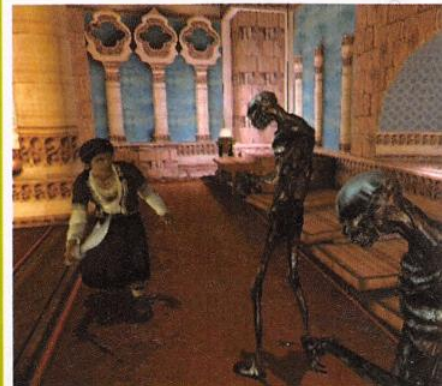
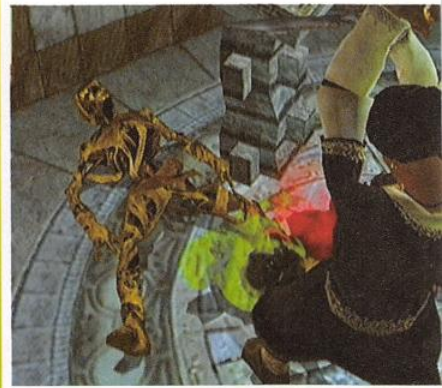
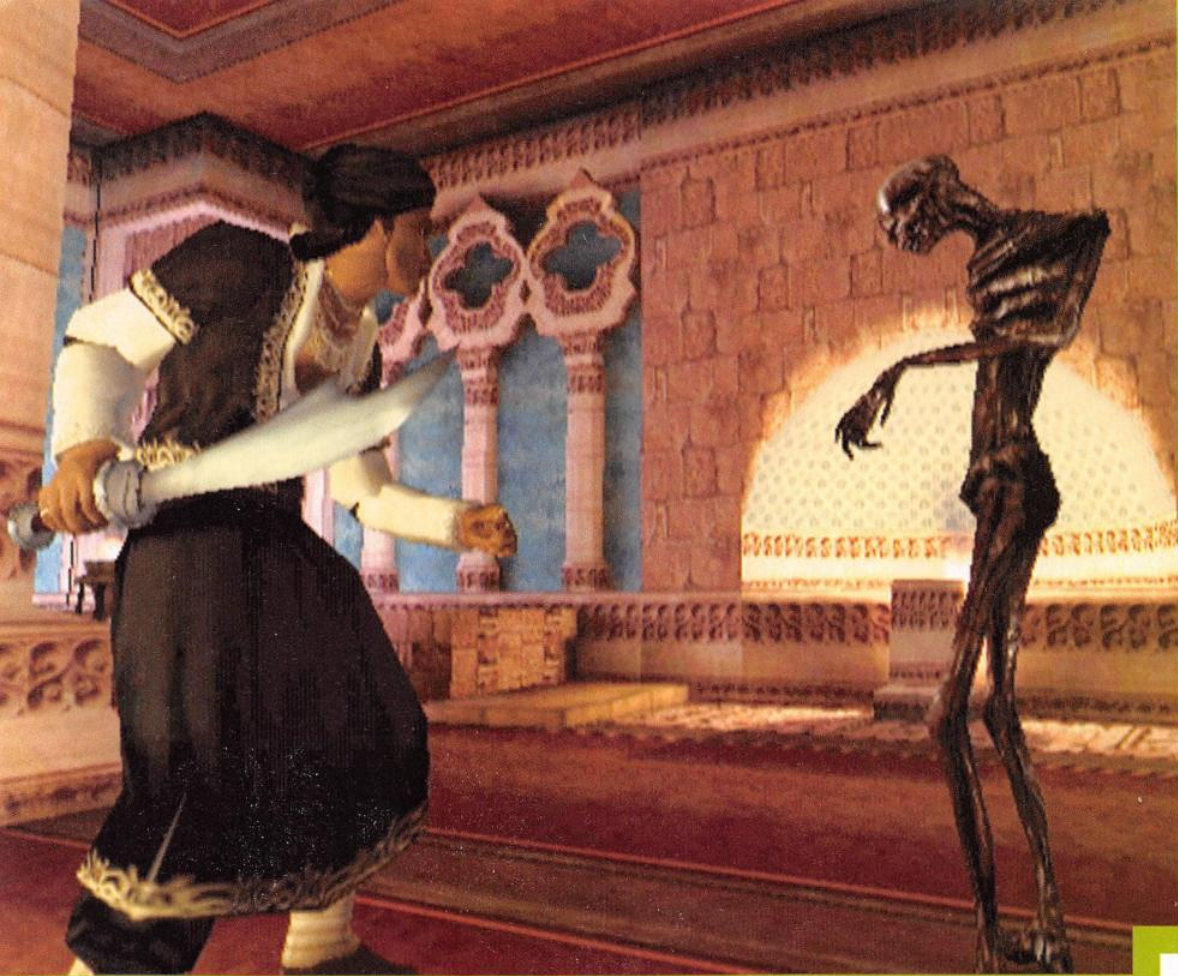
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 88 93

OVERALL

93

We've missed you Mario — welcome back!



Eternal Darkness

CATEGORY: Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: October >>

NARAYAN PATTISON is seduced by the power of the Dark Side.



Eternal Darkness may not have Grand Theft Auto 3's blatant sexual references or Soldier of Fortune's grotesque violence, but it's unquestionably the darkest subject matter Nintendo has ever dealt with. Nintendo may still be concentrating on the kids, but by publishing a game with more decapitations than the French revolution and characters that are led by their lust, the traditionally stubborn company is finally acknowledging the mature market.

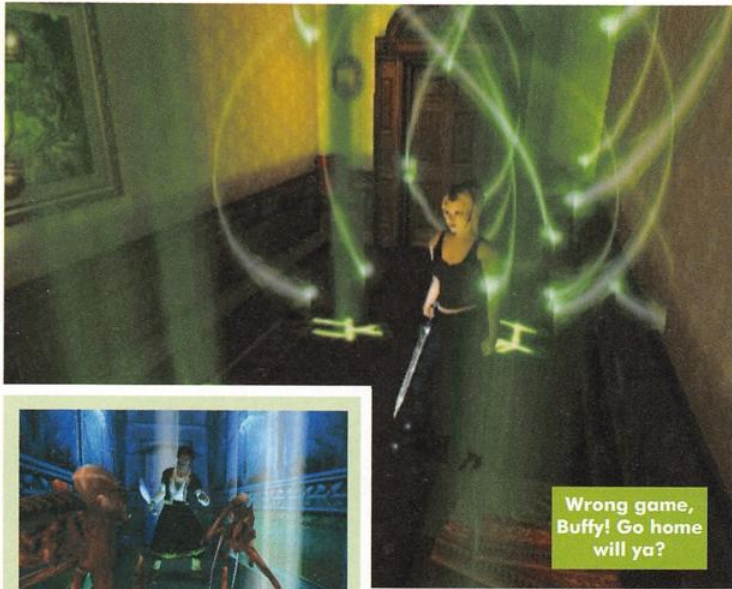
A DEATH IN THE FAMILY
This time-travelling psycho thriller unfolds through the eyes of plucky young lass, Alexandra Roivas. The game begins when Alexandra is drawn into the strange events surrounding the death of her grandfather. During her investigations, Alexandra will

uncover twelve chilling chapters of The Tome of Eternal Darkness, each one featuring a different playable character.
The constant switching between characters is one of the game's biggest strengths. In one chapter you will be slipping into the khaki fatigues of an Indiana Jones style archaeologist and exploring tombs filled with limping mummies, then in the next you will be fighting to escape the zealous grasp of the Spanish Inquisition. Each character also comes equipped with authentic weapons for their time period. Centurions carry their classic short swords and colonial hunters fire elephant guns that pack more of a kick than a bad shot of tequila.
Eternal Darkness shares obvious similarities with Capcom's survival horror series. Both games confuse

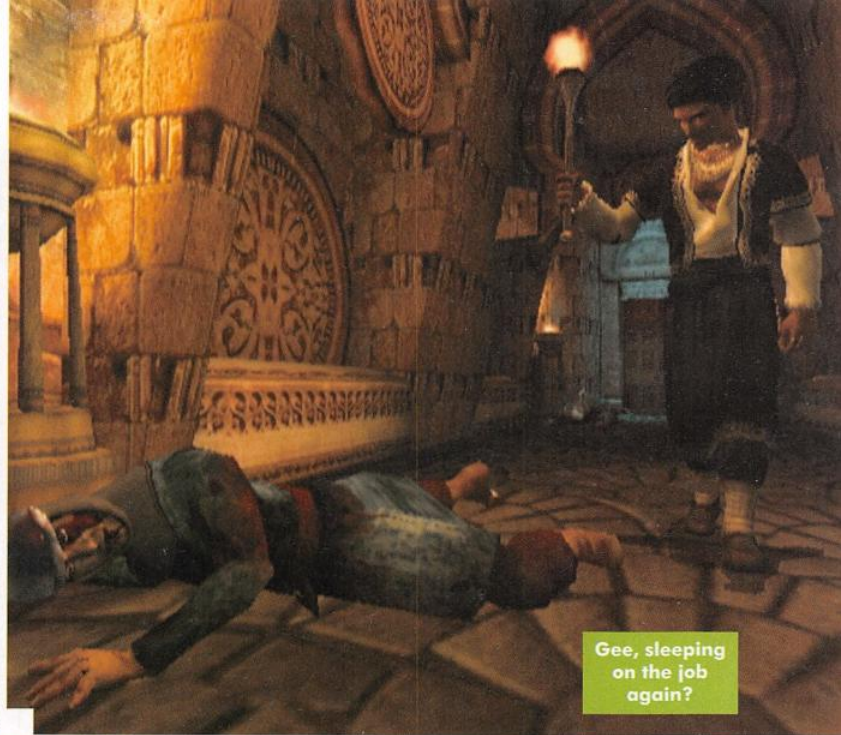
players with elaborate puzzles in between bouts of slaughtering the undead, but where Resident Evil relies on cheap scares and simple combat, Eternal Darkness employs a deep combat and magic system that is much more rewarding.
Magical runes are gradually gathered throughout the game, unlocking a variety of spells for use in combat and puzzle solving. Magical barriers can be erected, items can be enchanted, invisible objects can be revealed and lightning can fly from your fingertips. Once your magic abilities mature, it even becomes possible to summon your own pet monsters. Your first summon will involve a fire-spitting puppy-sized oddity, but before long, decaying zombies and behemoths with multiple heads will also be at your call.

Casting spells to protect yourself or attack monsters is pretty simple, but later, magic-related puzzles will really get your grey matter squirming. Being a puppet master and manipulating your own summoned beasts is the key to the most rewarding puzzles. Unleashing your killer monsters on unsuspecting foes or finding a hidden area by slipping through a tight spot with the zombie pup provides players with a real sense of accomplishment.

A STAB IN THE DARK
Thankfully, the game's non-magic combat is just as well executed as the victims of your practised sword thrusts. It's possible to triumph over rooms full of monsters thanks to the intuitive controls that allow you to instantly target desired body parts. Decapitating zombies is the most



Wrong game, Buffy! Go home will ya?

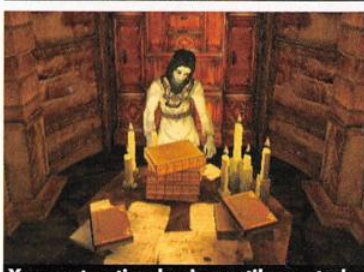


Gee, sleeping on the job again?



MAGIC HAPPENS

❖ The magic system in Eternal Darkness revolves around three different colours (red, green and blue). Key game events and the types of monsters you face will differ, depending on which colour you choose to align yourself with at the beginning of the game. After completing the game once it's possible to go back through the adventure another two times following the different alignments. The vast majority of the events will be the same but completing all three modes does unlock a cool new super ending.



Your not eating brains until you study.



That's not a knife! Oh. Yes. It is.



I told him to get some backbone.

efficient method because it frees you up to ignore your newly-blinded victim and concentrate on other threats, before returning to finish off the headless corpse.

As well as looking cool, the elaborate finishing moves that can be performed on fallen foes becomes an essential part of the gameplay. Whenever your characters encounter any of the ugly monsters in the game, a little more of their precious sanity trickles away. In order to avoid going insane, players must restore the balance in their minds by putting an end to the ghoulish freaks with grisly finishing moves. And just to make things interesting, foes will dissolve into vapour soon after they fall, forcing you to act fast to keep your sanity levels healthy.

The lower your character's sanity level drops, the more frequently you will suffer from vivid hallucinations of things like blood dripping down the walls, watching yourself slowly shrink to the size of a cockroach or facing an impossible number of enemies. While it is initially tempting to explore the game's wealth of insanity effects, it

Players must restore the balance in their minds by putting an end to the ghoulish freaks...

won't take too many disturbing hallucinations to convince you that it's better off staying as sane as possible.

Despite beginning life as an N64 game four years ago, Eternal Darkness uses the GameCube's power well to conjure up some great looking environments. While most of the models in the game don't look like they're throwing masses of polygons around, rich textures and a rock-solid 60 frames per second keep it looking pretty. It's also worth noting that the game fully supports Dolby Pro Logic II surround sound and features arguably the best soundtrack we've heard on the cube.

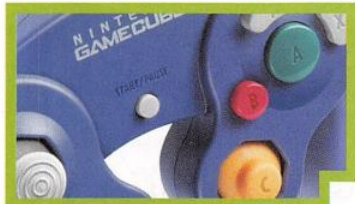
A couple of minor annoyances may put off some players, though. Starting

off with much more of a whisper than a bang, Eternal Darkness doesn't really get interesting until you're a good few hours into it. When it gets going it's great but the early chapters are disappointing.

!!! Eternal Darkness has foolishly been slated for release right after the new Mario and Resident Evil games, making it likely that this gem will go largely unnoticed by most people.

Although they occur in different time periods, it's also a shame to see many different chapters reusing the same locations two and three times.

People who felt cheated by the short and sweet style of Luigi's Mansion will be pleased to hear that it will take the average player up to 50 hours to see everything this game has to offer. Action junkies with short attention spans should look elsewhere, but patient adventurers will enjoy this more than any Cube release yet.



PLUS: The time travelling theme and the complex magic system.

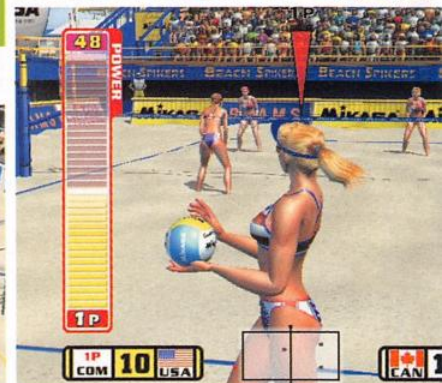
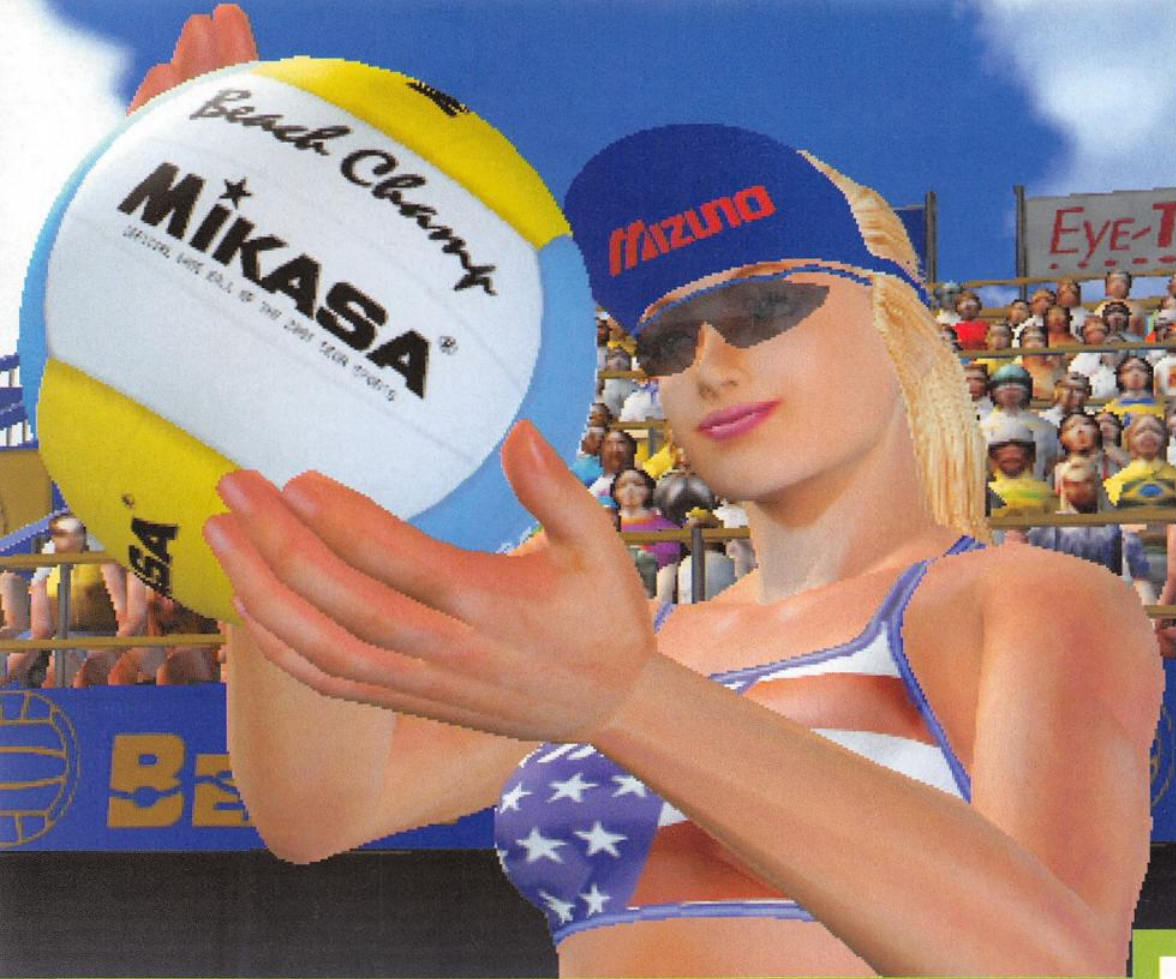
MINUS: Takes a while before the game's brilliance is uncovered.

VISUALS 87 SOUND 94 GAMEPLAY 92

OVERALL 92

The thinking gamer's Resident Evil!

REVIEW >>> HYPER 53



Beach Spikers

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

CAM SHEA creates the "Hyper-ettes" beach volleyball team...

When the name AM2 is mentioned, what comes to mind? Most likely you'd think of Yu Suzuki and the Virtua Fighter series, or possibly Shenmue. You might even think fondly of arcade gaming in general. In the future, however, the name AM2 may become synonymous with beach volleyball. Well, probably not, but the first entrant in the beach volleyball genre does come to us courtesy of that legendary Sega division. As is to be expected, they've crafted a pick up and play take on the sport that has just enough tactical options to result in a very rewarding game in both single player and multiplayer modes.

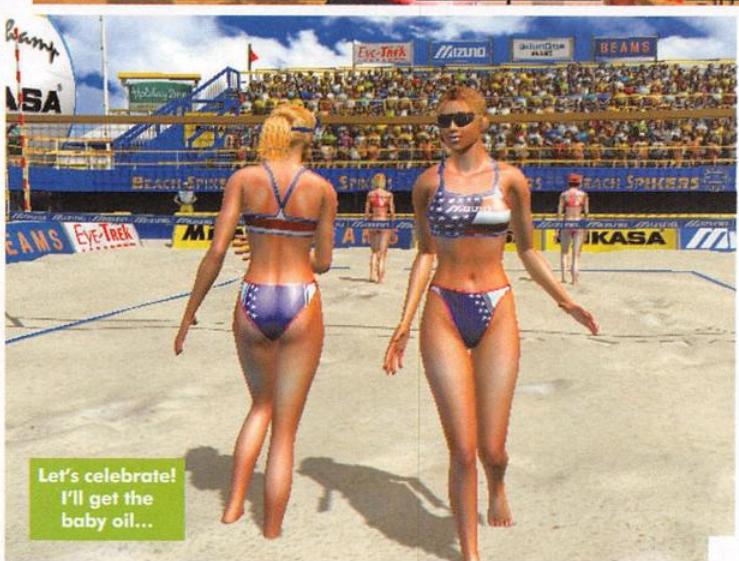
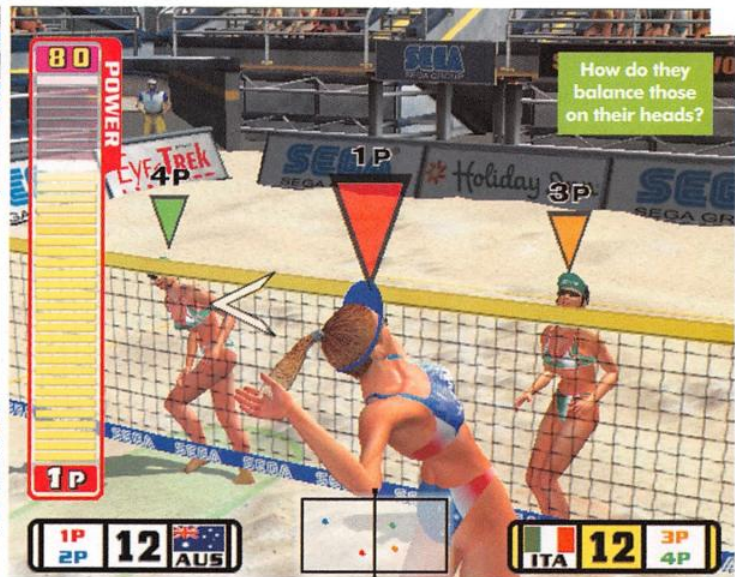
PERVERSELY SATISFYING...
The heart of the single player game is the World Tour mode. You can choose

one of 16 ready made teams, or in line with the inherent voyeurism of the game, create your own team. Perhaps the best aspect of this mode is the fact that you only control one of the players, with the other controlled by AI. At the start of the tour, your team mate literally has no skills, but as you progress you'll earn points that you can assign to her stats in the areas of serve, receive, attack, block, toss, power and response. This design means that for quite a while your partner is completely useless, and since beach volleyball is all about working as a team, you will suffer some humiliating defeats. However, there's something perversely satisfying about watching her skills grow and your games improve. It's just somewhat ironic that your initial learning curve is made all the more

steep through your partner's lack of skills. Varying numbers of stat points are earned for both losing and winning, as well as for how high your Teamwork percentage is. Teamwork you say? But you only control one player! Well, Sega have included the ability during time outs to offer encouragement, praise or even tell your partner off for bad play. If you're fair, the percentage score will go up, earning you more



stat points at the end of the game. It all reeks a little of sexy tamagotchi really, and is very arbitrary. However, it's an interesting addition nonetheless. As for actual gameplay mechanics, Beach Spikers is very straight forward. It's all about the bump, set and spike. The bump is when you receive the ball, the set is knocking it into the perfect position to spike it back into the opponent's court. The entire game can be played with the A button if you like, but to win matches you'll need to learn



OBLIGATORY MULTIPLAYER BOXOUT

As you might expect, Beach Spikers hits even greater heights in multiplayer games – it really is a blast with another three players. Once you get good, rallies in Beach Spikers can go on seemingly forever, and can definitely satisfy in the same way that a good tennis game does. There will be desperate lunges, dives, powerful shots frantically saved, shots blocked and coordination between team mates to try and out manoeuvre your opponents. And of course, it doesn't hurt that everyone on the field is in bikinis.

The triangle jugglers are on fire!!



Gimmie five! Oh whoops.

Horny teens won't be disappointed, as AM2 have packed the game full of girly hugs...



the B button and A+B button moves and mix your approach up with early returns, low sets, jump serves, feint spikes, blocks and so on. The strategies available aren't incredibly deep, but are varied enough to help make the gameplay very compelling.

There are a few downsides, however. The camera mechanics for one take some getting used to. The perspective is constantly swinging from one end of the court to the other, resulting in the problem that you can't actually see where your player is until the ball is about to be hit back to your side. A fixed perspective option would have been good. As it stands, positioning yourself is quite difficult, especially lining up to try and block a spike. We should also mention that blocking is very sluggish indeed – anticipation is definitely key. Another

downside is simply that there's really no way of knowing where your opponent is going to hit the ball, so often it comes down to guesswork and luck. Other more fixable issues we have with the game include the absolutely appalling announcer and music, and the sheer depths that Sega are willing to sell out to corporate sponsorship. Witness the Pringles/Nissan/Coke Stadiums and you'll see what we mean. It really is disgusting that AM2 are such corporate whores.

BOOTY, BOOTY BOOTY...

Beach Spikers is a decent package visually. The players are well modelled, sport expressive faces, move smoothly and cast real-time

shadows. The rich colours, good texture work and attention to detail creates a bright and appealing vibe. The sand is also well modelled,

!!! Beach Spikers has several Space Channel 5 costumes to unlock... mmm... Ulala!

starting out smooth and deforming realistically as players bound over it or dive into it.

Horny teens won't be disappointed as AM2 have packed the game with plenty of girly hugs, cuddles and "victory celebrations". That said, one can't help but feel that DOA Extreme Beach Volleyball will pack much more eye candy, not to mention go even more overtly for the horny teen market. For gamers, however, the level of bounce should be largely irrelevant – it's all about the gameplay, and Beach Spikers has it in spades. A must-have for multiplayer gaming nights. <<

PLUS: Simple, fun gameplay.

MINUS: Sad audio, sell out branded stadiums.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

85 61 83

OVERALL

83

Addictive gameplay and sex appeal in one. Good fun.

REVIEW

>>> HYPER 55



>>> PS2

V8 Supercars Race Driver

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

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE, the fastest Hobbit on the track.

V8 Supercars Race Driver is an inverted video gaming chameleon. And no, it's not hanging upside down. Whereas the traditional chameleon alters its spots to fade into the background, the inverted chameleon changes them so that it stands out, baiting in the poor, innocent consumer. V8 Supercars, you see, is also being released in the UK, branded as TOCA Race Driver, in America as Pro Race Driver and in Germany as DTM Race Driver. Of course, regional branding is a common practice to make a product more desirable for the local public, however in the case of V8 Supercars, the bold AVESCO branding is slightly misleading.

Holdens (although not some of the teams such as HRT) around Bathurst (which is finally done justice in a videogame) right out of the box, the main course – the career mode – is simply not designed specifically with the Aussie audience in mind. Sure, slightly misleading branding is not a crime, or even a flaw. We're just offering you a friendly forewarning to those expecting a true-blue Aussie ripper of a game. Thankfully, chameleons tend to taste quite delectable (quite like duck actually), and this one is no exception.

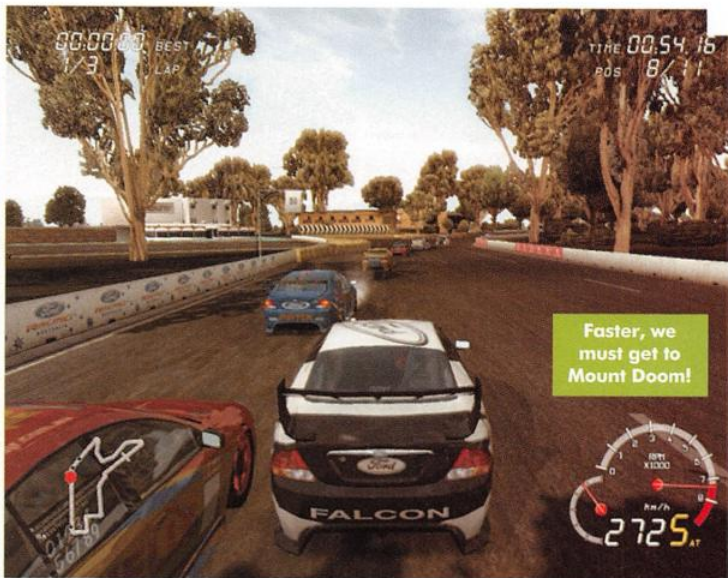
You are Ryan McKane, a young American racing driver (American audience... tick) trying to step out of both your hot-shot brother and legendary father's shadows. A struggling British Touring car team (British audience... tick) initially

takes a chance with you, and from there your career advances – ultimately discovering in excess of a dozen championships. Cut scenes between races introduce characters, and offer some relevance to your on-track performance. They are quite nicely made, although many are simply pointless fillers featuring some gummy pit crew guys running off the track, or pit girls just strutting around. Also, the lesser-willed of you might want to skip them, or you may be forever tortured by the characters' eerily undead eyes and alien hands. Unfortunately, the key scenes, where you clash with your brother, or meet an old friend of your father, are relatively pointless, as they fail to influence the actual racing. Only towards the climax of the career does it begin to get interesting, but by

then you'll be ingrained in the habit of skipping them, so it's unlikely you'll catch them.

Apart from the cut scenes, the career is painfully ordinary. You get offers from teams in six-race competitions from your tier at the start of each year, and with enough points, you become eligible for higher, more difficult tiers. Between seasons, drivers from around the world might challenge you for their





Faster, we must get to Mount Doom!



Uh-oh, we got Orcs on our tail.



When we dance, cheek to cheek...



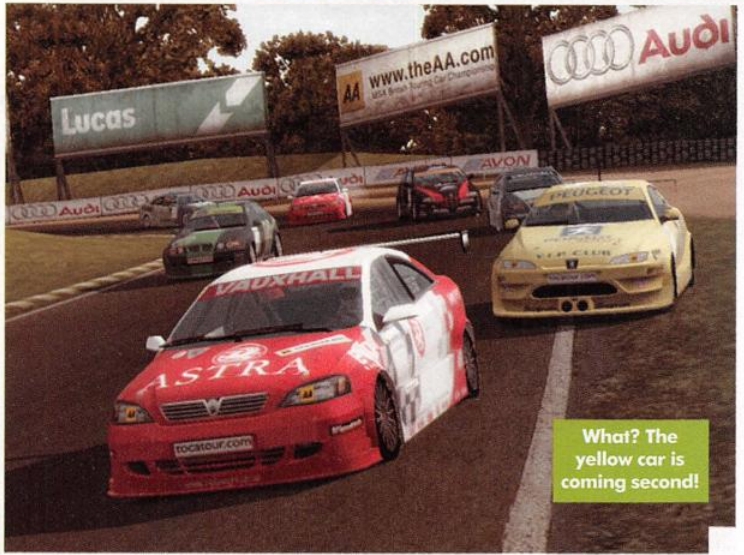
Twins. Can you tell them apart?



Looks like Gandalf is out of this one.



The pit crew in Lothlorien were fast!



What? The yellow car is coming second!

...witnessing a huge smash a few cars ahead is truly exhilarating – actually engineering one is sheer, **unmistakable gratification.**

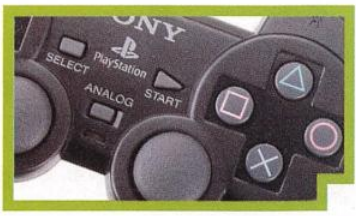
car (where is the logic in that?), while there are some special one-off events to keep things interesting. Unfortunately this mode, even with the cut scenes, is rather dry and lifeless. There is no loyalty, with each contract ending at the end of a season, and poor performance is not punished heavily enough. Even without cut scenes and story (and perhaps because), V-Rally 3's career mode was far superior.

RYAN 'BACK PAIN' MCKANE? The visuals have strong points, but are sucked down into mediocrity by occasional slowdown and regular pop-up. It's a real pity, because the cars themselves look great, with great detail in their styling and some subtle reflections (although

refreshed at half the frame rate). Yet the sheer colour of the tracks and cars, and a sky that is truly divine at sunset, create the visual richness that makes the game enjoyable to observe. The complex, realistic damage model, and the way debris stays on the track is also very nice. Witnessing a huge smash a few cars ahead is truly exhilarating – actually engineering one is sheer, unmistakable gratification. The experience is aided by some excellent sound effects, whether it be the whoosh of overtaking cars, the bumps and smashes of broken fenders and windscreens, or a reassuring – if a little repetitive – crew chief on the radio.

!!! Speaking of regional branding, in the USA, Beach Life on PC is called Spring Break!

The driving itself is very accessible, but also surprisingly subtle, especially when it comes to braking. The physics are consistent and believable offering a rewarding experience, and they also accentuate the difference in the range of cars in the game, whether it be whining front-wheel drive European tourers, or huge, powerful, unforgiving V8s. However, there are a few problems that detract from the game. These include corner distance markings that are difficult to read, a tendency for AI cars to crash in similar positions in tracks, starts where it is impossible to even keep up, predetermined grid positions for each championship, and a cockpit view that is not only tiny, but also offers zero sense of speed. Yet still, the game's plethora of cars and tracks and entertaining style of pack racing ensure this is a winner. Sure, the story is little more than a rear spoiler on a Hyundai Excel, and specific V8 content is at a minimum, but there are enough rewards and excitement to establish V8 Supercars Race Driver as the PS2's elite chameleon. <<<



PLUS: Range of cars, tracks.

MINUS: More pop-up than Spot Goes to a Party.

VISUALS 81 SOUND 89 GAMEPLAY 86

OVERALL **87**

The TOCA legend lives on!

REVIEW >>> HYPER 57



>> PS2

Onimusha 2

CATEGORY: Survival Chop-Chop >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Capcom >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

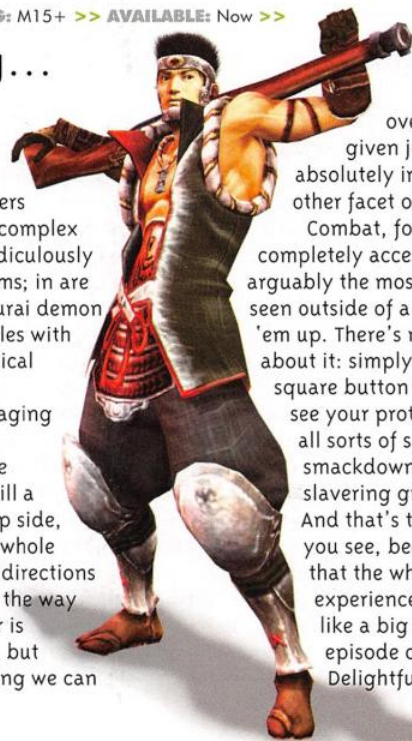
DANIEL STAINES has a "gift" for gaming...

If there's any lasting lesson to be taken away from playing *Onimusha 2*, it is this: 'necessary loss' boss battles are a stupid, stupid idea and should not be incorporated into a game for any reason whatsoever. Think about it: here you are against an enormously difficult boss that effortlessly kills you over and over and over again. Given that this isn't the final bad guy and that your character is nowhere near top level, you begin to become intensely frustrated at the extreme difficulty and, as a last ditch resort, switch the game onto easy mode just so you'll have a fighting chance. And that's when it all becomes terribly clear.

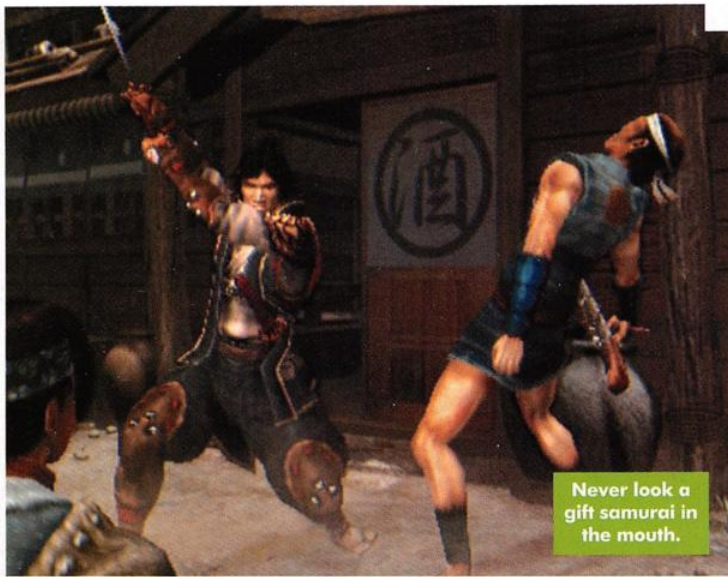
In order to facilitate a clumsy change of narrative focus, Capcom has made it so you have to lose in order to continue the game. But the thing is, you can't just stomach your lot and go out there to get the crap kicked out of you. No, no – it is instead necessary to put up a fight and deal a certain amount of damage before the inevitable humiliation is made manifest. *Onimusha 2* actually makes you fight for the right to lose and does so several times throughout the game. It is for that reason and that reason alone that it is not getting a big rubber stamp, because aside from that it is utterly brilliant.

There are so many reasons for you to buy this game that listing them all is a bit of daunting task, really. In a nutshell, *Onimusha 2* is survival

horror done right. Out are the repetitive zombie monsters and absurdly complex solutions to ridiculously simple problems; in are hardcore samurai demon warriors, puzzles with pleasingly logical solutions and strangely engaging RPG elements. Admittedly the controls are still a tad on the crap side, what with the whole *Resident Evil* "directions are relative to the way your character is facing" thing, but that's something we can



overlook in this case given just how absolutely intuitive every other facet of the game is. Combat, for example, is completely accessible and arguably the most enjoyable we've seen outside of a dedicated slash 'em up. There's nothing complex about it: simply pressing the square button repeatedly will see your protagonist whip out all sorts of satisfying samurai smackdown with which to fell slaving groups of goons. And that's the beauty of it, you see, because it means that the whole *Onimusha 2* experience inevitably feels like a big interactive episode of *Monkey Magic*. Delightfully Japanese 'ka-



Never look a gift samurai in the mouth.



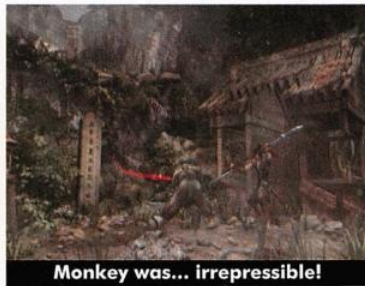
How 'bout this towel warmer for \$49?



Thanks for this great hankerchief!



40s, the gift that keeps on giving.



Monkey was... irrepensible!



Happy Birthday, foul demon!

Delightful Japanese 'ka-ching' sound effects mix with outrageous swordplay...

ching' sound effects mix with outrageous swordplay to make for big fights that are great fun simply because one never has to think about them. It is a welcome touch of old-school flavour that other games in this genre could certainly learn a thing or two from.

And just while we're on the subject of combat, it is worth mentioning that fighting never feels like a repetitive distraction thanks to Capcom's soul-gathering reward system. The way it works, basically, is that every enemy within Onimusha 2 houses a certain number of multi-coloured souls that are released upon death. Captured by holding down the circle button, each soul has a different effect on your character depending on its size and colour. Red souls, for instance,

yield experience points that can be used to pump up weapons and armour while purple souls will, after a certain number have been collected, turn the hero into a super powerful doom beast for a short time. Ultimately, this makes fighting an activity that is both fun and profitable – sucking yellow souls from the corpse of a fallen demon is just so much more enjoyable than merely picking up a health pack from yet another treasure chest.

CHRISTMAS AT MY HOUSE

Aside from all this fighting and soul collecting, Onimusha 2 also features a set of somewhat bizarre RPG

!!! It is no secret that Onimusha 2's protagonist – Jubei Yagyu – has been modeled on famed Japanese actor, Yusaku Matsuda. But did you know that Matsuda is dead and has been for some time now? No, didn't think so...

elements that seem utterly ridiculous at first but gradually grow to become strangely absorbing and addictive. In short, it's all about gift giving. Throughout the course of the game, you will find gifts that can be given to certain characters and, in return, they will give gifts to you. If they like your gift, you will get something nice. If they hate it, you'll get something crap. The trick is trying to guess which person will like which gift, thereby maximising your potential returns. It's a bit like Christmas at my house, except in Onimusha 2 there's a good chance of actually getting something other than socks and underwear.

All jokes aside though, gift giving is highly enjoyable and so is Onimusha 2 as a whole. Even with its fiddly controls and occasional dodgy boss battle, it is definitely quality and well worth your time and money. If only all survival horror was as fun as this. <<<



PLUS: Excellent combat, logical puzzles, gift giving!

MINUS: "Necessary loss" boss battles, annoying controls.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

85 80 90

OVERALL

88

Instantly enjoyable samurai slasher fun.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 59



>>PS2

The Thing

CATEGORY: Survival Horror >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Vivendi Universal >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

ELIOT FISH keeps an eye on Malcolm and Cam...

Trust no one. That's what Agent Mulder always used to say, right? Well, if you find yourself trapped in the Antarctic with a body-snatching alien, it's pretty good advice. Here's another bit of advice — go rent or buy *The Thing* and watch it before you sit down to play this game. Not only will it set the mood perfectly for what you're about to experience, but it'll help you get a lot more out of a gaming experience that just falls short of greatness.

IT'S CLOBERRING TIME!

Before you start wondering where the rest of the Fantastic Four are, let me explain. The Thing in question is an alien life form that assumes your identity once it's consumed you whole. Yep, this thing is so nasty, it

kills you gruesomely and then alters its cell structure to imitate you right down to your clothes (although how it does your clothes, which are not biological, is never really explained...). What this means is that your buddy who's been watching your back, who just so happens to have ducked out for a pee, might just return as a human-eating alien in disguise. It's no laughing matter. *The Thing* likes to promote the fact that the game is the ultimate in paranoid terror. Now, whilst the game is certainly going to make you jump out of your boots on many occasions, it somehow fails to deliver on the whole "who can you trust?" element that the marketing has so aggressively pushed.

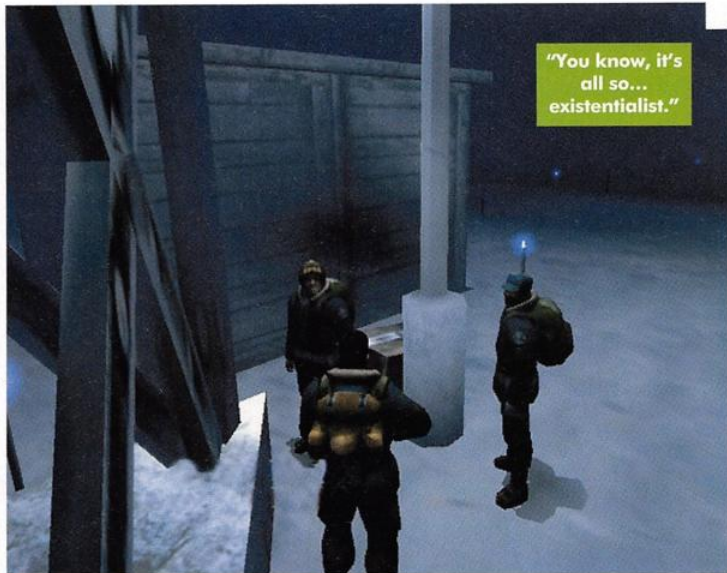
This is mainly due to the fact that *The Thing* is a heavily scripted

gaming experience. Basically, creatures jump out at exactly the same place and time, every time; Ceilings will cave in once you step in a specific location; Enemies only appear to attack you once you touch certain items; And finally, sadly, team mates transform into Thing creatures at specific moments in the game. Once you realise this, you'll scratch your head in bewilderment at why they bothered to include items such as the Blood Test syringes that you can use on people to determine if they are human or not. You can test team mates seconds before they are scripted to transform and attack you, but the test shows they are human. It makes a mockery of the whole concept. That such a crucial component to the film and premise of the game is

rendered utterly pointless, is a crushing disappointment. But there you have it. If you can get over this incredible flaw, then you'll probably go on to enjoy the game for some of its other thrills, such as the sense of foreboding that it does manage to deliver very well, and the crazy action.

A BIT OF A FRIGHT

You can guide up to three team mates at once, with the use of a very intuitive menu system. You can get engineers to fix broken control panels, get healed by a helpful medic and keep your flame-thrower equipped buddy at your side to help dispatch of the alien critters. Whilst the AI's pathfinding is pretty good (they never get stuck on objects or doors), their abilities in



When blind dates go wrong.



Ahh, screw it. I'll kill you all.



I think it was something he ate.



Hold on, I've got 20c here somewhere.



Oh sorry, I thought you were a thing.

Sometimes it's easier to get your team mates to wait behind whilst you waste the enemy yourself...

combat are a little questionable. Sometimes they'll do silly things like try to flame the enemy right next to explosive barrels (killing the lot of you), or even walk right in front of you when you're blasting away with your machine gun in an attempt to keep Things at bay. Sometimes it's easier to get your team mates to wait behind whilst you waste the enemy yourself, just to ensure they don't get themselves killed. Whilst sometimes you'll need to keep them alive to avoid mission failure, team mates come and go as the game goes on, and you never really get a chance to get attached to anyone in particular (sadly). Their inevitable transformations into aliens ends up being nothing much more than a bit of a fright the first time around, and then you're happy to waste 'em.

Besides, they weren't much help anyway.

There are no taxing puzzles in the game, other than getting control panels fixed or turning switches on and off, and as the game plays out in a highly linear fashion you'll never be stuck in any particular location for too long. Generally, progression is fairly easy, although you'll at times find yourself in need of ammo, and again thanks to the heavy scripting, sometimes you'll need to restart a whole level in order to conserve items for a tough battle you know comes up later on.

Combat is entertaining stuff, although we must say that the all-important flamethrower (seeing as you need to burn the Things to

finish them) is rather disappointing. It has an incredibly short range of fire (literally about 2 feet), and unless you're in first person mode when you fire it, the default aim is at the ground in front of you, resulting in many an occasion where you set yourself alight as well as your enemy. Not good. If you don't have team mates to stumble over, combat plays out in a much more enjoyable fashion, and sneaking down the desolate corridors waiting for some horrific mutation to shamble out at you is quite a joy.

The Thing could have been so much more. Had they included a truly random element of possible alien infection, so that you literally didn't know who to trust every time you picked

up the controller, then maybe this game could have lived up to expectations. As it is, it's a fun Survival Horror romp in a great, original setting (shades of *Half-Life* aside) that is fun to play with the lights off. Just expect a good dose of frustration with your fear. <<<

!!! Turn to Hypervision on page 86 for a review of *The Thing* DVD.



PLUS: Great atmosphere, nice looking graphics.

MINUS: Suspect team AI, highly linear and scripted gameplay.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

86 88 83

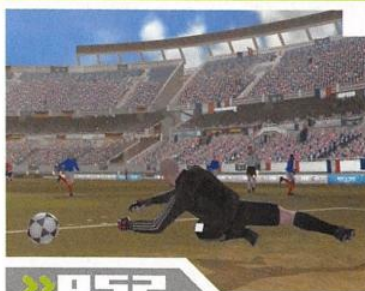
OVERALL

80

Despite its flaws, *The Thing* is still good, creepy fun.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 61



This is Soccer 2003

CATEGORY: Soccer >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: SCEE >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE steers Crewe to victory.

Each This is Soccer title, despite being a Team Soho-developed (as in The Getaway) Sony-published title, remains a rather low-key release. It could well be a different story in the UK, but here in Australia, FIFA — and perhaps increasingly Pro Evolution Soccer (if you guys care at all about quality) — dominate discussions about the beautiful game's games. It's a pity, because in This is Soccer 2003 we could well have a FIFA-beater. Ah, I remember the days when that actually meant something.

DERMOTT WHO, CAPTAIN

Having been developed in Britain, This is Soccer 2003 offers a very authentic approach to a game. Whereas FIFA (developed in Canada) might replicate the glitz and glamour

of the world game, and PES (Tokyo) takes on a very quirky Japanese attitude, TIS2003 tries to bring the genuine pommy game to the PS2. Harking back to the days of Sensible World of Soccer's glut of teams, TIS2003 covers at least several hundred sides (yet not Australia's clubs), and includes such global powerhouses as Crewe Alexandra and Ajaccio FC, all with correct players. Also, player ratings don't enjoy the emphasis that they receive in games such as FIFA or Pro Evo, encouraging you to develop a more realistic, personal relationship between you and your players — you judge each player by what he does on the pitch.

Yet by far the spirit of football is most evident in the quaint career mode. Starting out with a team in the schools league, your lovable Byron

Court (or London Nautical, or...) goes from strength to strength, playing on a muddy pitch adjacent to the foreboding local learning institution. This is classic Kevin Keegan's Player Manager stuff, with Johnny Noname banging in goals while Dermott Who marshals the defence. Sure, the less football-inclined of you might just look on in bewilderment, but this is what football is all about. The ultimate idealistic chance of taking your team of young nobodies through the divisions and up eventually into the professional ranks is the kind of drive every single-player mode in a sports game needs. Sure, there is plenty of room for improvement (how exactly can a school team play in the professional leagues?), but there is no denying that it provides a much-needed break from another World Cup

campaign. All we need now is for someone to go the whole hog and offer asphalt modes, beach soccer and one on one down at the park, and we could have the true authentic football experience.

As much as such lovable additions to the game win over old soccer romantics such as myself, there is no denying that what we have here is nothing more than a decent footballing game, with mediocre





Can you spot the sneaky advertising?



The brand new This is Socks 2003



Breakdancing went out in the 80s.



Look out for the... banana peel.



The unorthodox 1-5-4



There's no stopping 3-legged players.



"Hey, you can use this as a pillow!"

This is classic Kevin Keegan's Player Manager stuff, with **Johnny Noname** banging in goals while Dermott Who marshals the defence.

graphics and average sound. It plays more realistically than FIFA, but is only marginally a step up from TIS2002, which was substituted last December with the release of Pro Evolution Soccer. With PES2 due this November, unfortunately it looks like we might see a repeat performance.

THIS IS STICKY

That doesn't mean TIS2003 doesn't have some great aspects. Step-overs and other tricks are implemented very nicely, offering a method of beating players that cannot be instantly mastered. Thanks to a solid ball collision-detection system, timing and positioning are the essential variables determining whether a move is successful or not — as they should be. Meanwhile, other

players' movements with the ball are believable and fair, although certainly inhabit the stuck-to-the-feet end of the spectrum.

Unfortunately, the behaviour of your team mates when attacking leaves a lot to be desired. A lack of incisive runs or other off the ball movement means that your best chance of scoring on all but the easiest of difficulties is following a defensive mistake. Heading, too, is a mysterious, incomprehensible facet of the game that frustrates almost as much as the players' inability to deal with balls at anything but optimal head or ground level. Yet the major disappointment with the game is the lack of variety in pace of the game,

!!! We're slightly dismayed by the inclusion of the deliberate dive button. Funny though.

meaning action is sorely lacking.

Graphically, the models and animation are great at close range, with very nice detail on the faces, while the movement of players in scripted sequences such as half-time and for bookings is quite beautiful. However, during the game, the average pitch textures, basic crowd, as well as somewhat jerky, unnatural transition between animations just doesn't impress at all. The sound, too, is barely standard, with some uninspiring crowd noises and a commentator who has a habit of shifting from calm to blood vessel-burstingly overexcited in a flash.

This is Soccer 2003 is a fair soccer game. Although possibly suited to a more soccer-mad market, the game certainly offers some genre-leading components of which other developers should take note. It's just hard to recommend knowing that PES2 is just around the corner. Having said that, if you're after a bit of easy to pick up, fairly realistic footballing action, TIS2003 could be for you. <<



PLUS: Abundance of teams. Classic career mode.

MINUS: Average presentation.

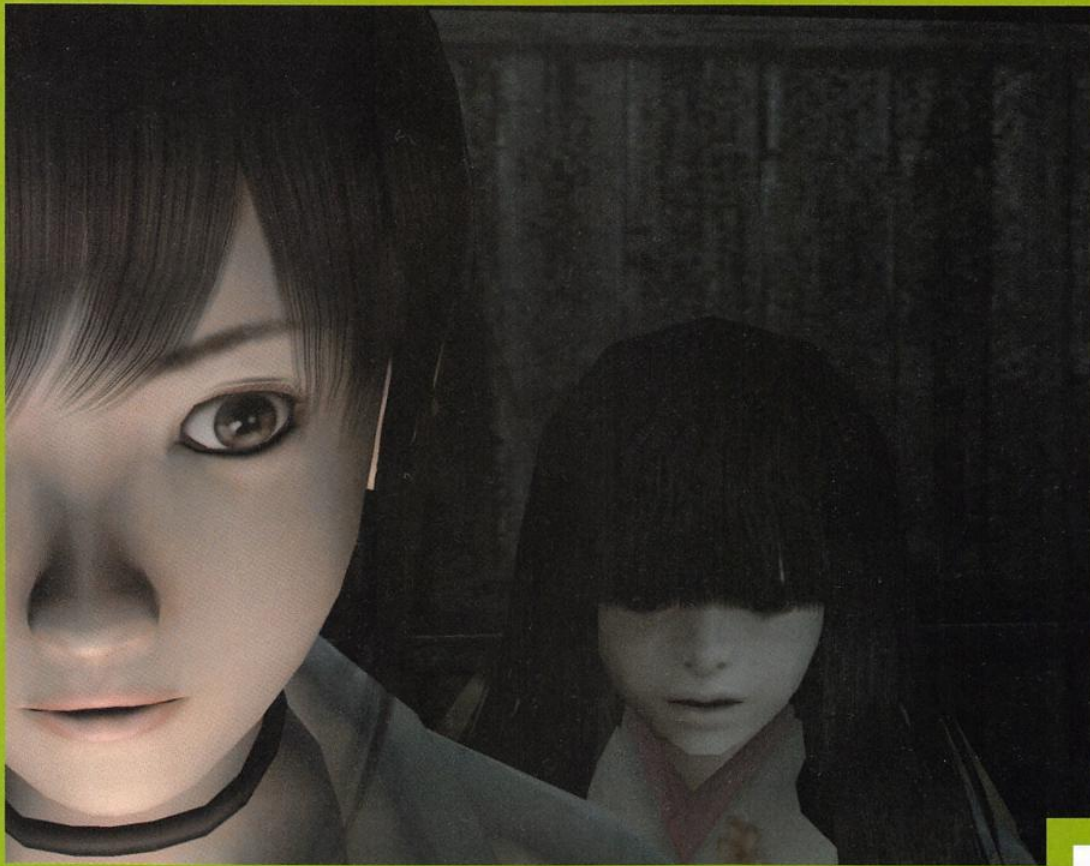
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

77 74 79

OVERALL

79

Suggests soccer in 2003 won't be all that brilliant.



If only this thing had a flash.



Quick send it to the Fortean Times!



I said say "cheese" not "Arrggghhh!"

PS2

Project Zero

CATEGORY: Survival Horror >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Tecmo >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

CAM SHEA has a Kodak moment...

With the recent remake of the original Resident Evil, many gamers have had the chance to immerse themselves in some classic survival horror action. Despite the extensive spit and polish Capcom lavished on it, however, it's still the same old gameplay. Not that there's anything wrong with that, mind you, but the domination of the Resident Evil series has made the genre somewhat stagnant. The Silent Hill games branched off from the template with an emphasis on the psychological and the grotesque, but post Silent Hill 2 you may be wondering when something new and interesting will come along. Well, the wait is over.

GENUINE FRIGHTS

Although Project Zero (known in other territories as Fatal Frame) is set in yet another abandoned old mansion, the similarities largely end there. This is a game whose approach owes more to classic horror films than to the zombie flicks that served as Resident Evil's inspiration. Project Zero is all about keeping you on the edge of your seat thanks to the spooky atmosphere and genuine frights.

The game's main protagonist is a young girl named Miku, but we're introduced to the storyline through her brother Mafuyu, who arrives at the mansion to investigate a famous author's disappearance. The game's tone is set wonderfully as you control Mafuyu through a grainy black and white prologue, before he succumbs to the evil presence and the focus switches to Miku.

Instead of toting a cache of high-powered weaponry, Miku's only defence against the undead spirits of the mansion is an antique camera. Fortunately, she can load it with a few varieties of "spiritual film" and despatch the ghosts into the next world with it. However, it plays a greater role within the gameplay, with many puzzles based around the wavering line between reality and illusion, and the camera's ability to perceive more than the eye can see. Instead of finding the key for a door, you may simply have to find the door itself by using your paranormal radar and taking a happy snap in the spot it's hidden. The puzzles become much

more esoteric than this of course, but the camera system helps keep them interesting.

ATMOSPHERE OVER GORE

Using the camera switches you out of the traditional third person fixed perspective and into shutter mode, a first person perspective where you're looking through the camera's viewfinder. It's a nice touch that lacks a little in terms of control implementation, but makes up for it by immersing you in the environment more. As novel as the camera approach is, however, it's the unrelenting feeling of disquiet permeating the game that sets Project Zero apart from the pack. The spooky setting, minimal use of music, nasty poltergeists, flashbacks to horrible events in the past, heartbeat pulse on the dual shock, and the anguish of the lost souls wandering throughout the

mansion all combine to make atmosphere king. Project Zero isn't for everyone, but jaded survival horror fans will relish the emphasis on atmosphere over gore. Turn the lights off and enjoy. <<<

!!! As far as leading ladies go, Miku is right up there.



PLUS: An all-enveloping spooky atmosphere.

MINUS: Some control issues.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

83 84 80

OVERALL

81

A refreshing new take on the survival horror genre.



Even the ball is a brother.



No, you can't go for a corner kick.



What kids are up to on the net today.



>>PS2

Street Hoops

CATEGORY: Street basketball >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

TONY MONTANA spends all his time on the net.

Elurring the lines between gaming genres can be a very dangerous task. Especially when it comes to sporting titles. Fans of sporting sims want to be drowned in stats, realistic physics and picture-perfect stadiums. Arcade fans just want to hit "Start", then play, without even worrying to look at the manual.

By definition, Street Hoops is more a sim than an arcade title, but that's only because the sport that it's representing has never been recreated in a video game before. That sport is street basketball — not to be confused with NBA hoops, fo' sheezy. If NBA Live is P.Diddy, Street Hoops is M.O.P.

NBA LIVE ON STEROIDS

Street Hoops is basically an AND 1 Mix Tape game (the AND 1 Mix Tapes are DVDs featuring the best street ballers in the US). There are no NBA players on offer, instead there are guys who go by the names of Booger, Hot Sauce and Headache. There's no NBA stadiums here either. You'll be 'balling in places like Rucker Park (NY), Venice Beach (LA) and Jackson Park (CHI).

We'll dive straight into the gameplay, and get to the fun extras

(Hello, platinum chain!) later. Street Hoops plays like NBA Live on steroids, but without any defence. And you know what? That is exactly how street basketball is played. The "guts" of street basketball is outscoring your opponent, not shutting them down.

The whole "no defence" aspect of street basketball is one thing that is not in Street Hoops' favour. Because it can be almost impossible to stop the CPU from scoring, and they can't stop you, the games become three-point shootouts. This is where betting on the games comes in handy.

PLATINUM CHAINS

That's right, betting on the games. And you don't just bet on the outcome of the match, you can bet on what team will have the most dunks, blocks, assists, who'll be leading at half-time and which player will score with the hottest hoiez (maybe not the last one). Even if you're losing by 40 points but you bet a grand that your team will have more dunks than the other guys, you can focus on dunking the ball every time down the floor, so you'll have enough money to buy a

platinum chain after the game.

That's right, a platinum chain. While I mentioned before that street balling is all about scoring, it's also about looking fly (kids still use that word, don't they?). That's why you're going to need to bet wisely so that your team can buy the dopest clothes and kicks. Lots of brands to choose from, like Snoop Dogg Clothing (Cam's choice), Rocawear, And 1, Ecco and Fubu (Eliot's choice). You can also get custom tattoos and hair styles.

(NOTE: Don't put cornrows on a white player.)

It might seem like I'm glazing over this topic, but the main drawback to

Street Hoops is the graphics. The players are rather plain and the courts, while authentic, don't look all that sharp. But because you can buy platinum chains, we'll forgive Activision on this one.

Street Hoops does an excellent job of recreating the whole streetball package. From the action, to the locations, to the music (DMX, Ludacris, Xzibit), it's pretty much all here. And did we mention that it's possible to buy platinum chains? Werd. <<<

!!! Everything you need to know is at streethoopsgame.com



PLUS: Fast-paced, no rules and platinum chains.

MINUS: A little shallow, visuals are a bit b-grade.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

70 85 85

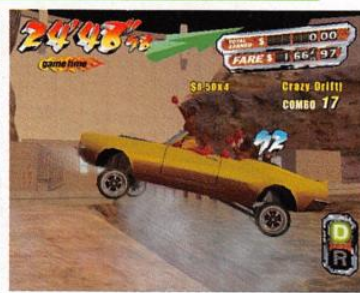
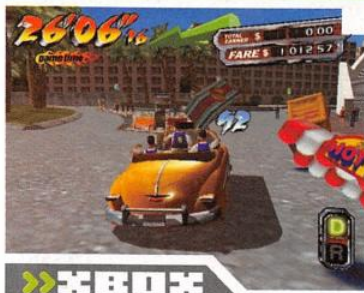
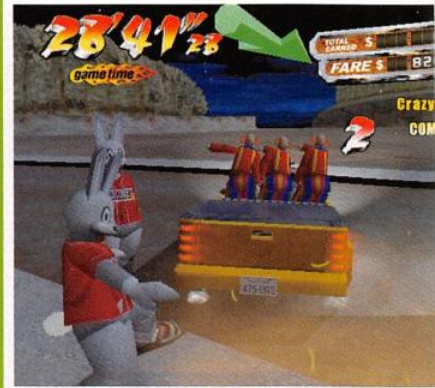
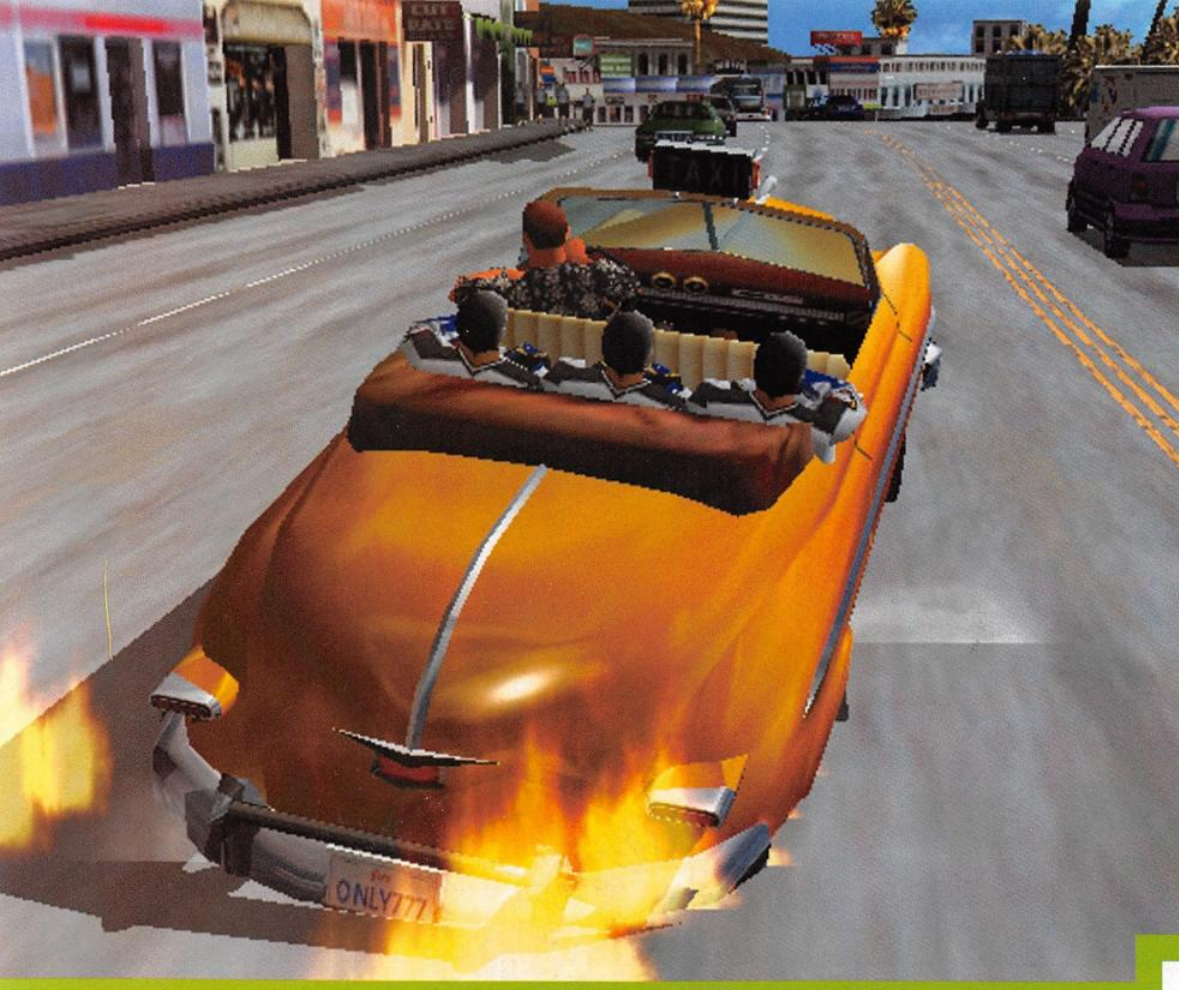
OVERALL

81

For those who like their basketball fast and tough.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 65



Crazy Taxi 3: HIGH ROLLERS

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

CAM SHEA rolls his eyes an unhealthy number of times...

Once upon a time, Crazy Taxi embodied a fresh new approach to the arcade racing game. It was bright and next gen in looks, featured a massive city, a unique premise and good controls. In short, it was a deceptively fun and compulsively addictive title. Two sequels later and this series is dead—at least in our eyes. Crazy Taxi 3 is a no effort sequel devoid of new ideas and interesting design.

THE OASIS IS A MIRAGE

Crazy Taxi 3 comes with one new city—Glitter Oasis, while the other two—West Coast and Small Apple, return from the first two games. The original city, West Coast, is still by far the most entertaining of the course designs in the Crazy Taxi series. Here's why. It managed to

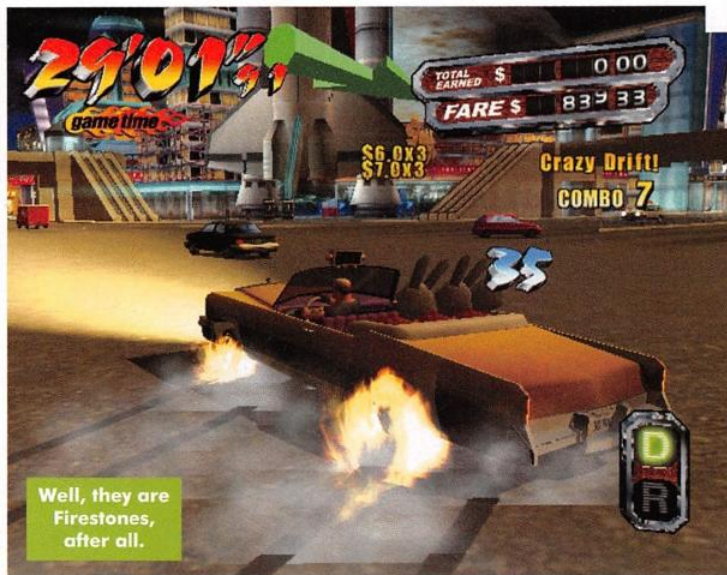
combine a huge layout with an array of genuinely unique areas, so that although it took a long time to fully explore, you could memorise every bend, every store and every hill. The design of the city synced in well with the premise of the game too, from the steep San Francisco style hills to the freeway traffic to weave through—it was truly memorable. And remember it Sega have. Not only was Crazy Taxi 1 ported to every system under the sun, but now the West Coast layout has popped up again in the third game in the series. Gee, we wonder if Sega are trying to compensate for something...

So how have Sega reinvented the franchise for Crazy Taxi 3? Well, they haven't. Glitter Oasis demonstrates a profound lack of understanding or

effort on the part of Hitmaker. The city is based loosely around Vegas, and we do mean loosely because Sega have opted not to try and capture the over the top architecture of hotels and casinos, or the general lunacy of the city. Instead, they've thrown in cut and paste buildings, grid map streets and a few bright lights. There's something profoundly boring about Glitter Oasis. Maybe the fact that it's set in the desert at night. The

city itself is small, the outskirts are mostly narrow windy roads enclosed by cliffs, and the section set in the Grand Canyon is just plain ugly. Sega have managed to create a featureless wasteland out of this setting—quite a stark contrast to the vivid and lively West Coast.





Well, they are Firestones, after all.



These guys are going to do a runner.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

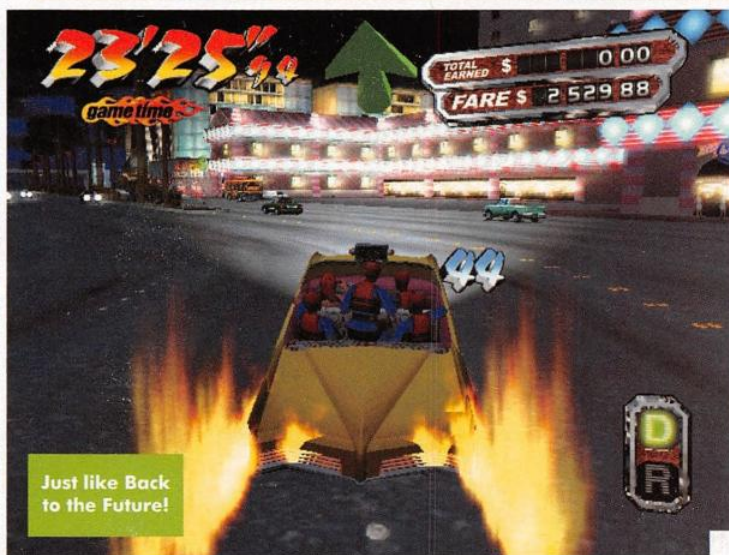
❖ Yet again, Sega have let us down in the soundtrack department. Granted, there may be some people out there who WANT to listen to that goddawful Offspring track AGAIN, but we certainly don't. The soundtrack has three tracks from three bands – The Offspring, Bad Religion and Citizen Bird, but that's not really the issue. What we want to know is – where is the option to rip your own soundtrack? Surely it can't be that hard to implement? Yet another indication that Hitmaker simply couldn't be bothered with this game...



Medical students... sheesh!



Just doing blockies 'round Hoyts.



Just like Back to the Future!

The new city looks awful. There's just nothing to **indicate the power of the Xbox.**

Worse still, Sega have not optimised this game for Xbox in any way, shape or form. The original city looks just as it did three years ago on Dreamcast, and the new city looks absolutely awful. There's just nothing to indicate the power of the Xbox. All the levels have slowdown, pop-up, and low poly everything. Oh, and some of the texturing is terrible – one look at the weightlifters and you'll swear that you're playing a PSone game.

FEELING OLD

In gameplay terms, where the original brought the Crazy Dash, Drift and Stop, and the sequel added the Crazy Hop move, Crazy

Taxi 3 really offers nothing new. There is no new move and the gameplay formula, particularly when paired with the awful Glitter Oasis level design, has really become stale. If Sega had put some effort into the port and upped the visuals, tweaked the handling, and above all, made it faster, then there might be some positives. Even playing West Coast again has lost a lot of its charm. Hitmaker have, to their credit, adjusted the layout to allow for use of the Crazy Hop and introduced multiple passengers, but this can't stop the game from feeling old.

One of the coolest elements of the first two games were the Crazy X challenges. These consisted of a host of increasingly difficult mini

games, such as picking up a series of passengers along narrow platforms over the ocean, through to knocking over a series of bowling pins, all within a time limit. For Crazy Taxi 3, Sega have come up with a mish mash of "new" challenges – many stolen from previous games, and many mind numbingly dull ones. There are 25 in all, and the difficulty levels are all over the place.

The audio in this game is almost as irritating as the gameplay. Putting aside the music (simply because we turned it off as soon as we booted the game up), the speech is terrible. The same grungy voiceover guy is back to tell you how much you suck, and in the game the passengers and cabbies never shut up, hurling abuse and making excuses like pussies respectively. In short there are people mouthing off every second of every game, and while that may fit the "attitude" that the game so desperately tries (unsuccessfully) to convey, it's hardly enjoyable. One thing's for certain, Crazy Taxi has worn out its welcome. Let it go Sega. <<<



PLUS: There's enough classic Taxi-ing for new Xbox gamers.

MINUS: All the new additions to the game suck.

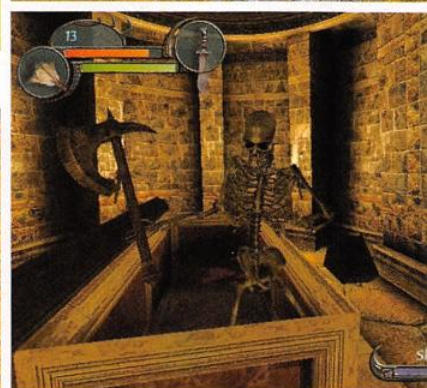
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

69 58 60

OVERALL

62

An uninspired sequel, but worth a look for newcomers.



>>> XBOX

Enclave

CATEGORY: Action >>> PLAYERS: 1 >>> PUBLISHER: SWING! >>> PRICE: \$99.95 >>> RATING: M15+ >>> AVAILABLE: Now >>>

DANIEL WILKS picks up his sword and takes out the trash.

The dust had cleared and the vast army of Celenheim had nearly been defeated. The forces of evil lead by the demon Vatar were moving in, ready to consolidate their victory and expunge the forces of good from the face of the world. Against all odds, the final hero to stand against the tide of darkness was a lone wizard, perched precariously atop a stony outcropping. With a power and savage fury that surprised all who witnessed, the wizard slammed the butt of his staff into the ground, intoning the terrible forces of nature itself. All became chaos - the skies grew as black as pitch and the ground blasted out gouts of fire. The ground cracked from the staff's impact, the growing rift soon reaching the demon Vatar. With a

final blood curdling bellow, the dark overlord tumbled into darkness. It was believed that both the demon and the wizard were gone forever, and life slowly but surely returned to normal. The battle became a thing of legend and everybody lives happily ever after.

BATTLE AFTER BATTLE

Well, not really. Enclave wouldn't be much of a game if the evil was defeated once and for all before the player even starts. If that were the case there would be nothing to do apart from farm and raise a family. We have nothing against farming Sims but we think you'll agree that swinging a sword and watching the blood fly is a much more satisfyingly visceral experience.

During development, Enclave was

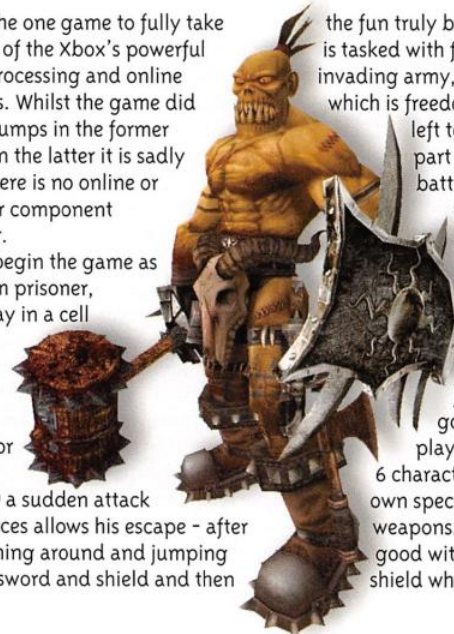
touted as the one game to fully take advantage of the Xbox's powerful graphics processing and online capabilities. Whilst the game did come up trumps in the former category, in the latter it is sadly lacking. There is no online or multiplayer component whatsoever.

Players begin the game as a Celenheim prisoner, rotting away in a cell awaiting execution. Luckily for him (and unluckily for the rest of Celenheim) a sudden attack by dark forces allows his escape - after a little running around and jumping you find a sword and shield and then

the fun truly begins. The player is tasked with fighting off the invading army, the reward for which is freedom. With nothing

left to lose you take part in battle after battle, solve simple puzzles and explore massive and detailed levels.

Throughout the game other characters will join the side of good allowing the player to choose from 6 characters each with their own specific skills and weapons. The Knight is good with a sword and shield whereas the Huntress





I think there's someone at the door, honey.



Never light up a cig in the outhouse.



Die direct-marketing guy!



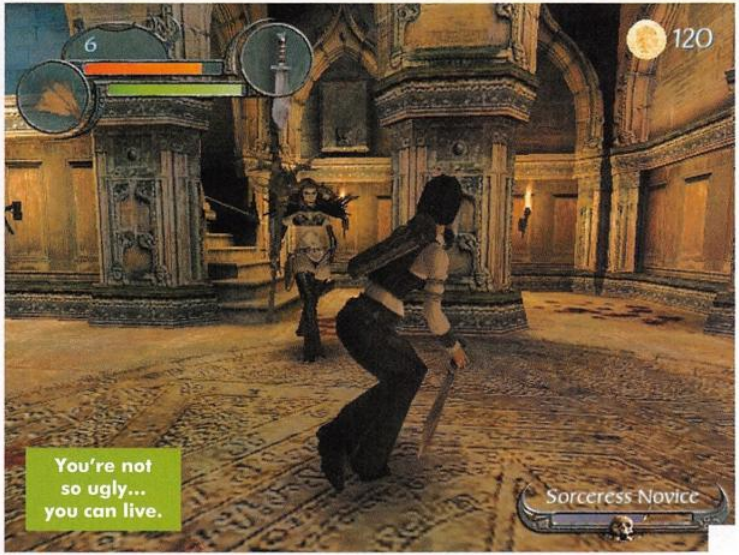
Killing by sunset. How romantic!



Oh no, he opened the Ark!



Have at blue!



You're not so ugly... you can live.

Sorceress Novice

Unfortunately the dumb AI also applies to many NPC characters that all seem to have trouble getting through doors.

excels with a bow and stealth. The Engineer can use grenades, the Halfling is good with an axe and is very nimble, the Druid can cast a range of attack and defense spells and the Wizard has access to massively destructive magics. The correct choice of character before a mission can drastically alter the way it plays. If you get sick of playing the good guys you can also play an evil campaign with characters and missions comparable to those of Celenheim.

CHINKS AND CLANGS

Each different weapon that can be used in the game (with the exception of missile weapons) has a simple one button combo system. When the

Knight is armed with a simple sword, two pulls of the right trigger will execute a fairly fast but weak two attack combo. Likewise three pulls of the trigger will unleash a slower but far more powerful sequence of attacks.

The control is nicely intuitive and works very well - this is a good thing because Enclave is hard. Really hard. Many of the creatures you fight are as tough, or tougher than the player, so you have your work cut out for you. The enemy AI is pretty dumb so it is possible to "confuse" monsters by jumping onto high platforms and peppering them with arrows as they stand around like idiots. This may seem like a game breaking feature but half the time it's the only way you'll stay alive.

!!! The developer Starbreeze, have a funky site: www.starbreeze.com

Unfortunately the dumb AI also applies to many NPC characters that all seem to have trouble getting through doors. Enclave also suffers from a poor camera which will often occlude half or the screen in third person mode making combat more guesswork than skill. It is possible to switch into first person mode, however, so the problem can be fairly easily overcome. We thoroughly recommend that you use first-person perspective indoors - it saves a lot of hassles.

Enclave is a gorgeous looking game with well-detailed and animated characters, some excellent textures and good monster design. Occasionally the frame-rate will drop and you'll experience some chugging, but the occurrence is rare. Sound ranges from excellent to mediocre - the voice acting is uniformly very good but most battle sounds come down to a series of metallic chinks and clangs.

Dumb enemy AI and the lack of in-game saves makes for a sometimes very frustrating experience and the lack of any multiplayer hampers any potential replay value. It's a real pity, because Enclave could have been great. ❄️



PLUS: Gorgeous graphics and well-designed levels.

MINUS: No mid-level saves, dumb enemy AI and poor camera.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90	79	79
OVERALL		
78		

Close to being a classic but significantly flawed.



The Rock makes armpit farting sounds.



Get a flamethrower, it's a Thing!



Proctology class is in session.

XBOX
WWE Raw

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

FRANK DRY knows that Raw isn't The Next Big Thing...

The last of the first generation of next-generation wrestling games (say that three times fast) is finally upon us. While Smackdown! 2 for PS2 came out of the stable post Invasion, still sporting the WWF name, WWE Wrestlemania X8 on GameCube is the first and only title to take advantage of the merger between WCW, ECW and the WWF. It is also the first game to change its brand name to WWE. WWE Raw on Xbox comes a little later to the party and stands - right from the get-go - as an old title in the ever-changing world of Sports Entertainment. It says WWE on the box, but this game was made before the change, and when you load it up, it's sadly still WWF. However, for fans of wrestling, the game has a lot of appeal with the many wrestlers that have since left the "federation" being completely playable.

POETRY IN MOTION

Raw definitely presents itself as a mixed bag of goodies and sour grapes. On one hand the game offers a reasonably in-depth Create-a-Wrestler mode as well as an

interesting and arguably innovative grapple system. On the other hand, its representation of wrestling - throughout - is weak at best. The Raw brand means nothing in the context of what the game has to offer, and the overall presentation of "attitude" is lost in the development of a game that comes across as a shallow and unrewarding experience for its target audience.

Wrestlers all have their unique entrances with only a few having their music altered slightly (probably because of licensing deals). For the most part, it all looks reasonably authentic. Character movements are good, but could have been handled better, but the flair and spectacle that is wrestling - with characters like The Rock, Stone Cold Steve Austin and more - is captured very well.

NO SHOWSTOPPER!

Signature moves are all in place and the game comes complete with a ton of generic and specialty actions that fans will love, but it's all short-lived.

In the ring music is reduced to a crummy electronic loop which is completely juxtaposed to what the wrestling experience is about and what Sports Entertainment represents. Equally, the gameplay system is executed in much the same way as Legends of Wrestling, where a crowd favourite will successfully secure a pinfall. The problem with this is, fan favourites like Stone Cold and The Rock are harder to beat than anybody else, which takes away any character stat strategies that should come down to attributes, turning the whole affair into a slug-fest of button mashing. You have to wait until the crowd is on your side before you can execute a signature move and win the match.

The unfortunate thing about Raw is that it lacks the depth and finesse to truly stand as a definitive wrestling game. That title still belongs to Smackdown! on PSone and No Mercy on the N64. It does feature wrestling that Xbox/wrestling fans may want to check out, but you should do that in the rental sense. Try before you buy. <<

!!! Former WCW enemy, Eric Bischoff, is now working with WWE Raw.



PLUS: An exclusive for Xbox with great intros.

MINUS: Mixed gameplay and a dated roster.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

82 68 71

OVERALL

73

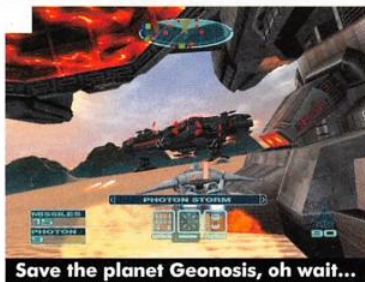
Brock needs to kick someone in the...



Yes, kill them all! Aiiieeee!!!



Look out sir, it's metal with guns!



Save the planet Geonosis, oh wait...



Gun Metal

CATEGORY: Mech Combat >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Rage/Majesco >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE mechs it in by deadline.

When the curtain eventually falls on the life of the Xbox, it's impossible to predict whether it will be met with applause, relief or disappointment. For that same curtain has only recently been pulled aside, and much about the performance is still to be revealed. Nonetheless, we can be sure that the Xbox will be remembered for one thing, and that's big motherfucking mech games.

Robotech: Battlecry, MechAssault and Steel Battalion are all due soon, and each looks mightily promising. However, Gun Metal, Rage's shiny new transformer battler, has beaten them all to the big robotic punch. Join me inside the cockpit...

WORST NAME EVER?

Not since classics such as Excitebike or Alex Kidd in Miracle World has Hyper witnessed the release of a game with such an astoundingly abysmal title. I suppose Gun Metal at least sums the game up nicely. You're humanity's last great hope in an epic war against a faceless enemy. Thankfully, you arrive well equipped. The Havoc suit, a 10 metre

high rifle-toting robotic beast with jet-transforming capabilities, is your saviour. Just think guns and metal.

There is no real story of which to speak, only a series of isolated missions, which are themselves rather tedious. A typical mission consists of protecting allied units and/or wiping out waves of enemy units using the jet and/or robot, in a rather small zone of battle. Considering the speed of the jet, the size of each environment is quite disappointing, as you can fly from one end of the zone to the other in around 20 seconds.

SLUG METAL

The controls are intuitive, yet distressingly sluggish. The major problem is the unalterable low aiming sensitivity, so turning is always the most royal of bitches. Sure, one may be piloting a gargantuan robot, but considering Rage's intent – that is, to offer an action-packed, arcade-like mech-combat experience – it's a serious flaw. The ambling control detracts from otherwise entertaining, dramatic, busy battles. Some are reminiscent of something you might

see in a Star Wars movie, with colourful effects and a range of craft.

The visuals are probably the game's strongest suit. The Havoc looks very sharp and detailed – particularly its animation, such as the transforming process or the opening of missile tubes in the robot's shoulders. I wouldn't mind seeing some leg animations that are flexible enough to stand naturally on the sides of hills, but I'll take the magnificent rocket trails and fitting, varied weapon effects as consolation.

The transformation ability does offer considerable variety to each situation, keeping things relatively fresh. Unfortunately, the game's rather dull missions, frustratingly slow robot controls and lack of depth, prevents this title from being the game it could have been.

Gun Metal is certainly entertaining enough if you're hankering for some quick and easy mech action, yet among the legion of upcoming mech titles it may well become MIA. <<<

!!! Download some cool screensavers and wallpaper at www.gun-metal.com.



PLUS: Crisp visuals, accessibility.

MINUS: Snail-like agility, lack of depth.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

84 79 70

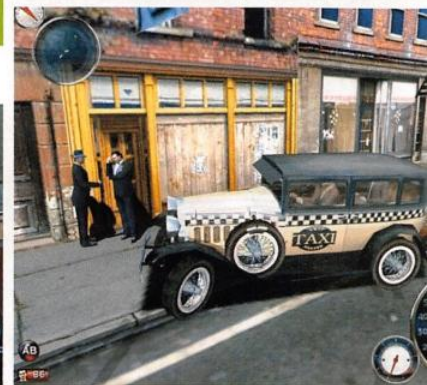
OVERALL

73

That's right, guns and metal.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 71



PC

Mafia

CATEGORY: Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Take2 >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: P3-600, 128MB RAM, 16MB 3D card

DAN TOOSE is still considered one of the gang.

Once upon a time, gangsters weren't annoying, puffed up kids wearing overpriced tracksuits. Back in the '20s and '30s they were all class, and countless movies and books have been devoted to these "golden days" of organised crime. There have been a few games based on the antics of the mob over the years, but none have been so polished as Mafia by Illusion Software.

SUPERIOR PRESENTATION

When humble cab driver Tommy Angelo finds two of Don Salieri's cohorts commandeering his vehicle, he is involuntarily drawn into the criminal underground of the fictional city, Lost Heaven. Mafia starts in 1938, with Tommy confessing his antics to a detective, with each particular tale forming one of the twenty missions

that make up the game. Each mission itself combines retro racing action and a 3rd person shooter, with a tonne of cinematic polish to top it all off.

Mafia bears more than a vague similarity to Grand Theft Auto 3. Both games present the player with a 3D cityscape, which they can traverse by foot, or from behind the wheel. The main difference between these two titles is that GTA3 offers freedom of choice, while Mafia offers superior presentation. The progression through Mafia's missions is totally linear, with no options to go work for someone other than Don Salieri. Thus, if you get stuck on one, it's not like you can work on something else for a while and come back to it.

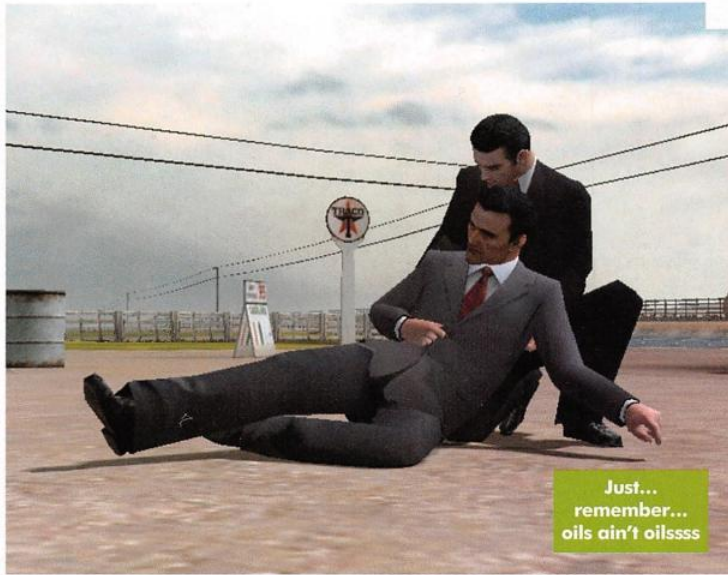
The missions themselves are quite diverse, ranging from publicly executing someone who has opposed

the mob, through to sabotaging a race vehicle to fix a bet only to have to enter and win the race itself to save the family business. Using an overlay map which pops up at the touch of a button, the player can enter a car and drive all over the metropolitan area of Lost Heaven, and jump out to continue on foot wherever they please.

Each mission includes a variety of cut scenes, which feature some of the most impressive motion capture, lip sync, and facial animation to grace a computer game. Besides a lack of regular blinking, each character's face manages to frown, smile, and convey emotion in a convincingly lifelike manner. Once this is combined with both clever direction of the camera angles, plus the natural-looking animation provided by the motion capture, Mafia's cut-

scenes come together in a way that actually improves the game rather than simply dragging it out.

Outside of the cut-scenes, Mafia's visuals don't quite leave the opposition for dead, but they're still worthy of praise. On the road, the urban landscape of the '30s is quite impressive, especially how it delivers the sense of being in a living city with all the other traffic and pedestrians about. The lighting and weather effects are excellent, although it all comes at the cost of a somewhat short draw-distance. Not being able to clearly see all the buildings at the other end of a bridge you're driving on highlights the issue. Things look far more impressive once Tommy is indoors, where the level of detail in the environment is more comprehensive, and the frame rate is understandably



The gunfights bear a similarity to those in Max Payne, **minus the bullet-time feature.**

healthier as well. Thanks to the 3rd person perspective, the gunfights bear a similarity to those in Max Payne, minus the bullet-time feature.

QUEST FOR CASH

All aspects of Mafia's sound are excellent, with the exception of the repetitious music of yesteryear. From the voice acting, down to the tell-tale sound that the goon you're in a gunfight with has just emptied his magazine, everything sounds peachy.

The combat in Mafia is standard fare for a third/first person shooter, with the emphasis being on realism rather than heroism. If you burst into a room to take down four armed gangsters, you're unlikely to come out again. Melee weapons are included, such as knuckle dusters and baseball bats, but the majority

of the time, Tommy will be turning to a pistol, shotgun or a Thompson to get the job done.

As a driving game, Mafia has surprisingly impressive physics. It's a far cry from being a racing simulator, but the way the various vehicles move has a solid, realistic feel to it. Vehicle deformation is included, and handled nicely. Battered wheels wobble as they spin, and the player can see and feel how that is affecting the car's performance.

Even though Mafia delivers solid gameplay in both the driving and shooting elements of the game, there are a few sticking points that make themselves apparent over time. For example, the times you're racing to get someplace fast or shooting at

someone from your car are loads of fun, but most of the time, being behind the wheel is simply an exercise in virtual driving. There's nothing fun about having to discreetly drive across town for the umpteenth time. Another issue is the police in the game, who can magically spot when you're going one mph over the limit. It's unrealistic considering the period the game is set in, and a drag to deal with.

Free Ride mode gives Mafia some longevity, allowing the player to go and do whatever they please around Lost Heaven. Without

missions, this becomes a simple quest for cash, earned by doing things like speeding and taking down gangsters. This feels more like GTA3 than the main story mode does, and provides that open ended element that the main game lacks.

All things considered, Mafia is a quality piece of entertainment that manages to combine two gaming genres into an epic tale of gangster adventure. <<<

!!! More info on the game is hidden at mafia.godgames.com.



PLUS: Excellent storyline and cut-scenes. Believable missions.

MINUS: Driving around ends up getting dull.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
87 80 88

OVERALL
88

Mafia is more than just GTA3 in a Fedora.



Medieval: Total War

CATEGORY: Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII 350, 128MB RAM, 3D card

ELIOT FISH goes on a (not really that holy) crusade...

Quick, build a brothel. We need to find out what those Polish emissaries are up to here in Wessex. They'll try to impress the girls with their bloated tales of espionage (chortle) and we can funnel the information back to the king. We should also see if there's an assassin available to tail them out of here and bump them off once we've got the information. And can you check on how the siege of that fort in Anjou is coming along? Surely their provisions are low. It should fall any day now. Sigh... There's so much to do, and I haven't even stepped onto the battlefield yet.

RALLY THE TROOPS

Medieval: Total War is probably exactly what fans of the original Shogun: Total War were expecting.

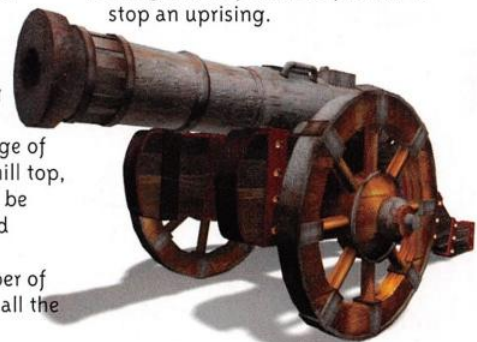
That is to say, that once you invest a few hours getting to grips with the game you'll find yourself well and truly hooked. You'll play a bit more, figure out how to play it properly, and then you'll find yourself not hooked, but well addicted. That addiction then turns into something more along the lines of obsession. Eventually, the game possesses you, and you'll be hard pressed finding a way to quit out of it and get some sleep. Thank goodness it auto-saves occasionally, because I couldn't even bear to distract myself long enough from my campaign across Europe to open the main menu and save my game.

Another thing fans of the original Shogun will notice is that Medieval Total War looks pretty much the same as its predecessor. Sure, the 3D

battles now look a bit nicer, but generally, not much has changed on a surface level. The units are still made up of cute pixels, the combat interface and menus are almost identical and the terrain — despite now being set in a stunning array of different landscapes, from lush English countryside to barren Egyptian desert — doesn't pack much visual eye-candy over the original Shogun. But that's okay. When it comes down to it, you'll be worrying more about your troop morale, the strategic advantage of hiding some archers up on a hill top, and whether your cavalry will be able to take out a few hundred charging armoured camels.

There are now a huge number of different unit types thanks to all the

different playable factions — from the English to the Muslims, Italians, Danish, French, Polish, German and so on. Many factions even belong to a different faith, so ruling a province that was once Muslim with English Catholics will take a hefty garrison, the building of a church and a bit of bible bashing by leaving a bishop there to preach, to stop an uprising.





Weather report from Tim of the Bailey.



This polo match is out of control!



Keep in-breeding your royalty.



Run, Forrest, run!



When Lord Seafood arrives, we attack!

When you're responsible for **thousands of troops on screen** at any one time, you tend to take these things kind of seriously.

ARGH, ROUT THE TROOPS!!
A great deal of your time will be spent on the European map, training up units, managing trade and taxation, building a variety of beneficial buildings (such as the aforementioned brothel) and strategically moving your battle-hardened generals around in order to defend or attack your ever encroaching enemies. There are

alliances to make and break, borders to secure, technologies to invent and plenty more to do in the turn-based map mode that you can play the game without having to manage any of the 3D battles personally (you have a choice of letting the computer resolve it if you really want). It's like Risk meets Civilization. But why you wouldn't want to manage the battles personally would be a mystery, as it's on the battlefield where a lot of the depth and enjoyment can be found. Organising your troops into a variety of strategically beneficial formations, considering the advantages of the terrain (troops fight better downhill for instance, and it expires less of their energy,

plus archers have better range), and even taking the weather into account is all crucial to winning a battle. When you're responsible for thousands of troops on screen at any one time, you tend to take these things kind of seriously. You can't just grunt rush. A thousand sloppy cavalry can be laid to waste by a few hundred shielded spearmen working in clever formation. The command rating of your generals will also have an effect on how well your

men fight, and whether they lost morale or not depending on the size of the opposing force. And it's with this beautiful combination of turn-based strategy and real-time tactical warfare that Medieval Total War very easily manages to infect your brain until NOTHING ELSE MATTERS. Medieval Total War doesn't sport a fancy new 3D engine, try to seduce you with some mystical storyline, or let some b-grade Hollywood actor to lend his voice talents — and thank god for that. It's brilliant just the way it is. <<<

!!! After fleeing from one of the battles, my king gained a reputation for being a "good runner".



PLUS: Both halves are strong enough to be separate games.
MINUS: Troop pathfinding can be dodgy. The tutorial is pitiful.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
82 84 92
OVERALL
91

Lots to get your teeth into, and it tastes goood.





Predator goes hunting for gameplay.



PC

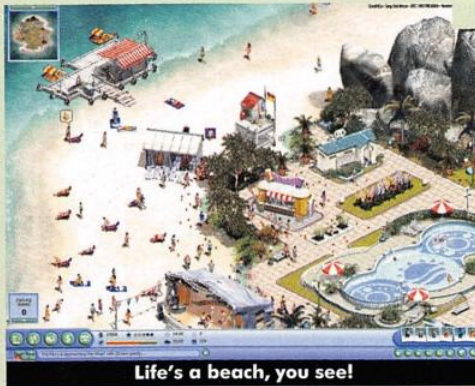
Aliens Vs Predator 2: Primal Hunt

CATEGORY: FPS >> **PLAYERS:** 1-16 >>
PUBLISHER: Fox Interactive/Sierra >> **PRICE:** \$TBA >>
RATING: M15+ >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>
REQUIRED: AVP2 >>

What went wrong? Aliens Versus Predator came along and won a few fans, then Aliens Versus Predator 2 came along and won over even more fans with its thick, creepy atmosphere and tense action. Now Fox Interactive have gone and employed the developers who made the abysmal Kiss: Psycho Circus and asked them to pump out an expansion pack. Who should be surprised then that it sucks? Psycho Circus was rank, and Primal Hunt is equally as poor.

For fans of AVP2, you'll want to know that there are four new multiplayer maps (which are all incredible examples of lame design), three new single-player campaigns (consisting of nine missions full of horrendous examples of quick save/quick load gameplay. Yes, that's only three missions per campaign) and a bunch of new characters, weapons, creatures and story. Our biggest gripe with the bulk of the gameplay, is that it's just mindless fragging, with glitchy spastic AI, and none of the tension and well-paced action from either of the two original games. Packing levels full of enemies and having them rush at your face might have worked in Serious Sam, but it doesn't work in Primal Hunt, and only serves to aggravate. There's really nothing in this package that makes up for the b-grade gameplay on offer, and sadly, we'll just have to sit and wait for Aliens Versus Predator 3.

Game over man, game over. - **Frank Dry**



Life's a beach, you see!



PC

Beach Life

CATEGORY: Sim >> **PLAYERS:** 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Eidos >> **PRICE:** \$89.95 >>
RATING: TBA >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

Are you 'avin it? Are you off your tits? Are you sorted for pills'n'wizz? Do you think a white glove, whistle and glow sticks are legitimate fashion accessories? Do you fit any other gurning British clubber stereotypes? Then this may be the game for you.

Beach Life takes the standard sim game and plants it into an Ibiza-esque holiday resort setting. If you've played games like Rollercoaster Tycoon you'll know what to expect, just add alcohol, clubbing and totty, and take out err... most of the rides. Your goal is to earn money by running a slick and hip resort. At your disposal are a wide variety of structures such as restaurants, jacuzzis and clubs, a selection of staff to hire, and control over everything from the price of accommodation and a meal at the restaurant, through to the hourly rate and working hours for your staff.

It all adds up to a fun - if somewhat uninventive - experience. We would have liked more hands-on options, such as greater scope in landscaping and customising structures. Also, you have to unlock the more advanced buildings and staff in the campaign mode before you can use them in Sandbox mode. This may turn off people who are already experienced in the genre, and who just want to start from scratch with the full tool set. It also makes the game feel really limited early on. Even so, Beach Life makes a good entry-level game for the genre. We also dug the soundtrack featuring the likes of Laurent Garnier, Afro Medusa and Kinobe (and the ability to import your own mp3s into the playlist) and the very slick Naked Music style menu presentation. - **Cam Shea**



That's what you call a mental block.



PS2 GCN XBOX

Tetris Worlds

CATEGORY: Puzzle >> **PLAYERS:** 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: THQ >> **PRICE:** \$TBA >>
RATING: G >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

Tetris, it just won't die. I guess it's the world's first undead puzzle game. Yes, zombie software. Look out, it's coming to feast on your brain.

In this incarnation of Tetris, there are a bunch of different modes to the vanilla Tetris, with six variations in all. These include Hot-line Tetris, in which you get big points for clearing lines at specific points in the grid, and Sticky Tetris, where blocks of the same colour stick together, vanishing once you've jammed 25 in together. The variations do help give the game a bit of longevity, but it all still boils down to Tetris in the end. If you don't want a copy of Tetris on your shelf to pick up and play every now and again, then there's no real reason to pick this one up. Until the next time this game comes lumbering out of the graveyard... - **Eliot Fish**

VISUALS **84** SOUND **88** GAMEPLAY **60** OVERALL **62**

VISUALS **75** SOUND **82** GAMEPLAY **70** OVERALL **72**

VISUALS **65** SOUND **62** GAMEPLAY **85** OVERALL **70**

ARCADE

»»TIM LEVY

Beach Head 2000

VR VORTEK

Hunkered down in your puny gun turret looking out over a beautiful beach vista, a huge invasion armada suddenly looms onto the horizon. After lovingly caressing your heavy twin machine guns, patting your trusty surface-to-air missile launcher and kissing your 105mm anti-tank cannon, you turn to find that your crew have fled and the bunkers down the beach have been deserted. Cowards! Being the brave, brain-washed patriotic defender of your Mother (or Father) Land you are — you grit your teeth and prepare to fight to the finish, defending against wave after wave of faceless soldiers and their cruel yet kool weapons of war.

MOW THE POOR FOOLS DOWN

What 2D Galaga did for us in 1981 is what 3D Beach Head 2000 could do for us in 2002. The Virtual Reality headset interface is a stroke of genius. Prior to the invention of this headset, one would have to don VR goggles which weren't so comfortable, had pimple and sweat residue from the previous user, and made you feel slightly vulnerable to any dodgy characters that may be lurking in the arcade back in the 'real' world. The latest headset is far more durable, user friendly, still gives you full freedom to turn 360 degrees and has the advantage of the double joystick configuration for

TIPS: As soon as a stage begins, start shooting air missiles randomly straight ahead of you. Usually a few will find incoming targets because they are heat-seeking missiles.

Take out the troop landing craft first (with the troops still in them), instead of the tank landing craft, with your cannon. It is easier to take out one tank later than 20 soldiers with your machine guns.



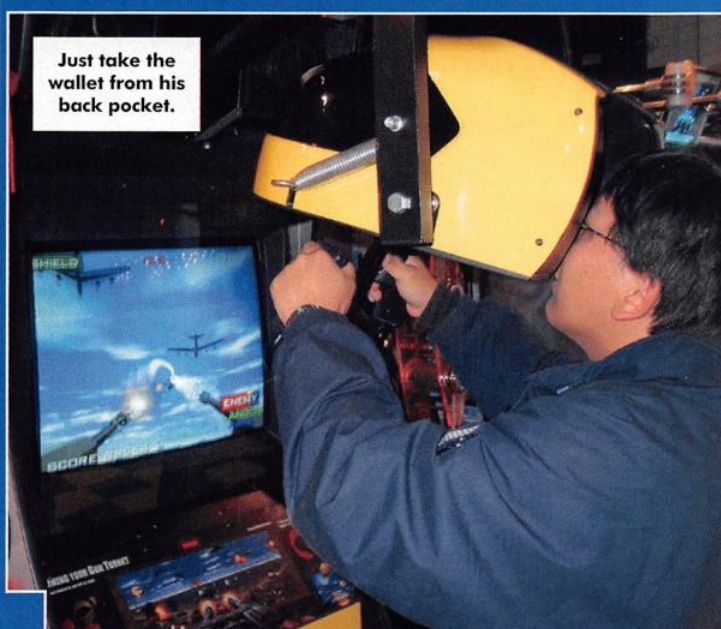
that "I AM in a gun turret" feeling.

The game itself is based on the classic shooter style and has you defending against numerous combinations of sea, land and aircraft. Starting off with 3 troop-landing craft disgorging 60 soldiers, you mow the poor fools down easily with your machine guns. The next stage has you use surface-to-air missiles against helicopters. Tanks attack next stage, and before you know it, you are taking on fighter and bomber jets, assault troop helicopters, armoured vehicles, ships and even B-52 bombers.

To clear each stage you have to take out the prerequisite number of both air and land enemy. You begin the game with three minutes and each time you clear a stage, you can earn a small amount of bonus time for accurate shooting/speed. But otherwise, the clock continues to count down 'til your three minutes is up. On top of that, if you let the enemy in close, they will chip away at your health with their missiles, shells, bullets, grenades, rockets, bombs and other stuff designed to hurt you a lot.

HEAD ON THE BEACH?

Unfortunately, there is no stage jump or difficulty setting and if you have played the game a few times then it may take a while for you to reach the



higher stages where the beach is looking a lot like Bondi Beach on a Christmas day (but with soldiers trying to kill you), and the skies are looking like an air traffic controller strike over a major airport (but with Military Planes trying to kill you).

Beach Head 2000 has also been released on PC to wide acclaim — as using a mouse is no substitute at all for the arcade interface (see: Silent Scope on console). The game can also become repetitive, as you never move from the static beach location. Otherwise, this is all-action, slightly addictive, has great use of "frontline" sound effects and is a must play for any war buff — especially if you enjoyed the opening scenes of the beach landing in Saving Private Ryan. <<<



OVERALL

7.5/10

(9.5/10 for the interface)



COIN-OP

»»HYPER 77

Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf

CATEGORY: Golf >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: EA >>
 PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

EA's Tiger Woods franchise has finally made it to Game Boy Advance with one course intact — the TPC Stadium Course at Sawtooth in Florida. The graphics engine is reasonable, conveying a decent impression of 3D from behind the player and a relatively intuitive top down presentation for putting. However, unless TPC is the only golf course in

the world with no trees or shrubs, Tiger Woods on GBA is definitely missing some important graphical elements. The lack of flora leaves the game looking very bare indeed, and takes some of the skill out of playing each hole.

The PGA Tour Mode features 12 pros to choose from, although only Woods has been motion captured. Tiger's digitised animations are



Tiger remembers his dear old par.



Like a tigerrrr...



quite reasonable, although it looks a little odd when he freezes at the end of the stroke. The other pros are represented by a generic golf guy, complete with a slightly wonky swing.

The gameplay is very simplistic, but perhaps necessarily so. The entire game can basically be played with a single button, and the only real skill required by the player is timing the three clicks required on EA's patented swing-o-meter. You

rarely need to change clubs, occasionally need to adjust the direction you're aiming, and will sometimes change the player stance (which effects distance and how much the wind will move the ball around in the air). It's mostly a matter of simply hitting the A button, so the challenge is relatively short-lived, especially considering there are only 18 holes in the entire game. The inclusion of a four-player linkup mode helps somewhat, but ultimately Tiger Woods is a fleeting experience. - Cam Shea



It's. The. Eye of the tigerrr...

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
73	72	76	75

Punch King

CATEGORY: Arcade Boxing >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Acclaim >>
 PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Oh dear, oh dear. How many games can this title rip off in one go? The title screen, for instance, features two characters squaring off against each other that are pretty much identical to Honda and Guile. And getting into the game, it's immediately evident that Punch King is very heavily influenced by Super Punch Out. But is it as much fun?

As in Super Punch Out, your character is a green haired freak, and aside from the versus screens you never see his face, just the semi-transparent back of his head as he dukes it out in the boxing ring. There are 12 opponents to face all up, running the gamut of stereotypes,

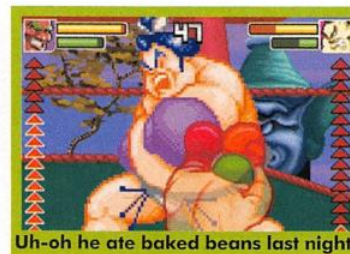


from the big nosed, big mo'ed Brit, to the Australian Mick Ayers, who's special move is called "G'Day? G'Night!". Cringe. And of course, the American adonis is the number one ranked fighter. However, props must go to whoever decided to feature a character named Afrika Bambattaya. Very cool.



The gameplay itself consists of hooks, jabs, uppercuts, body blows, blocks, ducks and feints. Unfortunately, from the word go Punch King is somewhat unbalanced and overly tricky — a training mode would definitely have been

appreciated. You won't start winning bouts until you realise that most of the gameplay revolves around watching your opponent's pattern of movements and simply waiting for strategic moments to clobber him. In all, this is quite an unbalanced product that lacks enough options to sustain interest. You're better off getting out that old Super Punch Out cart again and saving the cash. - Cam Shea



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
70	72	68	69

» GBA
xxX

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

The subhead for this game is "A new breed of secret agent". Pity it isn't "a new breed of licensed videogame". Chortle. Most of the game is spent in side scrolling shoot 'em up levels. These are relatively well executed – large and multi-layered, with plenty of secrets and pickups. Unfortunately, the action itself is laughably simple. The vast majority

of enemies you'll come up against throughout the game can't actually hit you when you're ducking. Hence, you can simply walk along in a crouch and remain mostly untouchable. In addition to this, health refills are way too regular. You will almost never die in these levels.

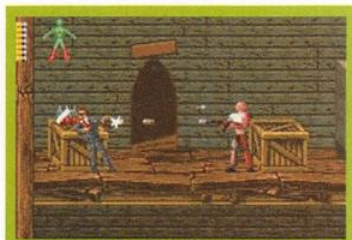
However, you will die in the other brand of gameplay on offer – a Road Rash style racing mode. You know the



I remember Road Rash... *sigh*



I remember Shinobi... *sigh*



I remember Double Dragon... *sigh*



I remember Metal Slug... *sigh*

deal, follow the road, avoid the cars, try and beat up other bikers. Oh, and pick up fuel every bloody ten meters. Hang on a sec, that wasn't in Road Rash. Well, it is in xxX and it ruins the racing sections. Your bike chews through petrol at a ridiculous rate, so you constantly have to run over the petrol drums placed regularly along the road. This mode had potential, but thanks to this element, the fun is entirely sucked out of it.

xxX has the dubious honour of feeling like a million other games from this and previous eras. Granted, it's far from the worst, but the inspiration levels are pretty low. One enemy is even named "Crazy Fire Breathing Extreme Guy" in the manual! Oh, and incidentally, the "time to crate" in the first level is around three seconds. We were disappointed that the game didn't open with the player bursting from a crate, but this is still quite respectable. - Cam Shea

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
70	74	68	68



» GBA
Disney's Magical Quest

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >>
 PRICE: \$TBA >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: TBC >>

Of all the Super Nintendo platformers to bring back from the dead, Magical Quest seems like an odd choice. Especially from Nintendo themselves. The Capcom developed 2D platformer wasn't exactly heaped with praise the first time around, but here we are, staring down the

barrel of a GBA re-release. What to expect? Solid, if somewhat uninspiring platform antics. You can play as Mickey or Minnie (Minnie is a special bonus for the GBA version – wow!) and the gameplay consists of the usual head-bonking, platform jumping, pick up and throw stuff abilities.



Mickey almost creamed himself



Never trust strangers on the web.



Minnie? That's Mickey in drag.

One of the more interesting things about the title is that later on, Mickey (let's face it, why would anyone play as Minnie?) gets the ability to change outfits. Much like an Elton John or Peter Allen concert, changing outfits is integral to the piece. Mickey the Sorcerer can fire projectile magic and swim great distances underwater; Firefighter Mickey can use his hose to put out fires and push blocks around; Climber Mickey has a rope and hook that he can use to climb mountainous areas. Now, in theory, once collected, you can change between these outfits at will, which should lead to some cool puzzle-based gameplay. Unfortunately, it doesn't live up to potential.

Capcom have also added in four

party games for each of the costumes that can also be played in two-player link mode with a single cartridge. There's no escaping it, however, these are tedious – as is the rest of the game. - Cam Shea

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
76	76	70	71





When was the last time you weeded?

>>SHAH AHMED

Shi-no-bi Adj: stealing (into); spy; sneak thief; surreptitious visit to house of ill repute.

Perhaps inspired by the success of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* at the box-office, or just the spasmodic return of a fad, there seem to be a large number of ninja/samurai themed games in development across all platforms. On Xbox and PS2, *Genma Onimusha* has been a stunning success, and is being followed suit by *Tenchu*, *Ninja Gaiden* and *Ninja Assault* as the public's enthusiasm attempts to outdo the developer.

But there is no greater tribute to the legacy of the magical Japanese art of stealth and battle than the *Shinobi* series. From 1987 to 1995, over 9 *Shinobi* games and multiple ports, Sega repeatedly pitted Joe

Musashi and his descendants against the world-threatening Zeed corporations, arming them only with the art of stealth and Ninjitsu magic.

INSERT COIN

The original 1987 *Shinobi* was one of the original games released on Sega's Mark III arcade platform and was at the cutting edge of technology for its time. The storyline was simple, as with all *Shinobi* games — the children of five world leaders had been kidnapped, and it was up to you to save them. The game was so successful that it was converted to every platform available at the time, and was among the first to use a side-scrolling environment, featuring first-person action sequences where you threw shuriken at enemy ninjas on screen if you beat the right boss or freed the right prisoner (it varied from version to version). The action

sequences remained a popular point throughout the series, but the arcade-style "one hit means instant death" policy wasn't, and was phased out in the home version and sequels.

The *Revenge of Shinobi* (TROS) in 1989, also known as *Shinobi II*, helped define the MegaDrive/Genesis as the leading 16-bit console of choice. It featured multi-scrolling gameplay, parallax backgrounds and a host of sprites and dynamic areas as Musashi returned to save his girl. Throughout the series, the composer of choice was Yoko Koshiro, and she first outdid herself with TROS. Although *Shinobi* on the MegaDrive was a success, Sega decided to make a second episode of *Shinobi* on the Master System, with *The Cyber Shinobi* (1990), also called *Shinobi Part 2*. This was more of a pure beat-em-up, with slightly better graphics

and music. The main ninja was the original Musashi's grandson, and the enemy likewise, *CyberZeed*.

Around the same time, Musashi's dog Yamamoto made his first appearance in the arcade version of *Shadow Dancer* in 1989, as they brought down the NeoZeed Corporation. The dog was an original idea that became hugely popular and saw another in the series converted to a host of platforms, including the MegaDrive again. *Shadow Dancer II — The Secret of Shinobi* (1990) left the duo seeking revenge for a murdered friend and battling a giant lizard (ring any bells?) as they wandered through an action-packed New York with superb differential scrolling.

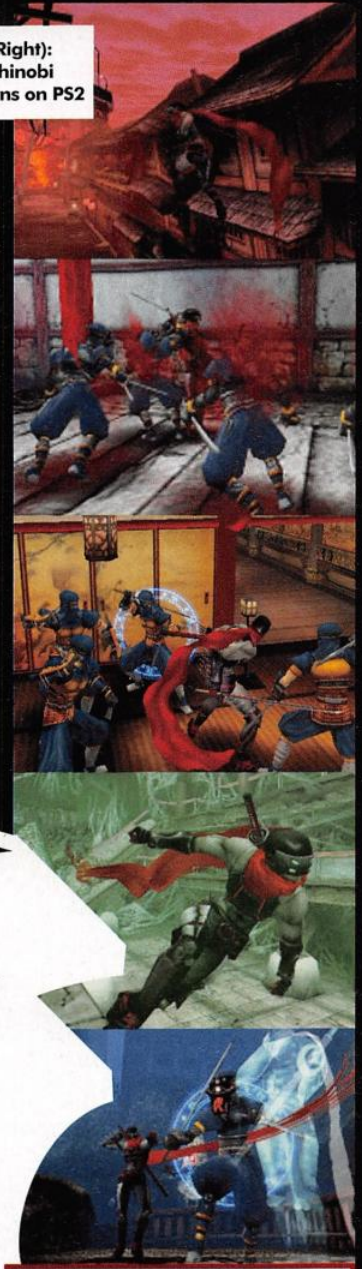
The *G.G. Shinobi* (1991) and *The G.G. Shinobi Part 2* (1992) aptly named for the new portable Sega Console, the GameGear, that they



Yes, quite a traditional name, "Joe".



(Right): Shinobi returns on PS2



were made for, liberated a new ninja with each completed level. It was a blend of adventure, bigger levels, more thinking and the old action, and as always, was a success.

Shinobi III – Return of the Ninja Master (1993) was the last episode for the MegaDrive, based on Shinobi II, allowing Joe to run, perform a flying kick and jump up a wall. Taking graphics at the time to the fullest, it used zooms and distortions better than its predecessor. The obvious next step would have been bringing Shinobi to 3D, but the last we saw of it was on the Sega Saturn in 1995's digitised Shinobi Legions, still in 2D. While it was one of the best action games for the Saturn, perhaps because of the failure of the Saturn as a console, the love for the Musashi line on the developers' side, at least, seemed to finally fade

away, despite the last line in the game: "to be continued..."

TO SLICE OR TO DICE, THAT IS THE QUESTION...
 Finally, however, Sega looks set to take up on that promise as it unveiled the next Shinobi at E3 2002. You are Hotsuma, living in a post-apocalyptic Tokyo and cursed with a vampiric katana you acquired by killing your brother in a struggle for the control of your clan. You're also equipped with a long billowing red scarf reminiscent of Kane, a bucket of shuriken for the slow-moving, ninjitsu magic, stealth moves, lock-on attacks, wall climbing (as



in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) and the ability to run as a blur, leaving illusions of yourself behind to confused enemies. Should you perform a neat combo, the game cuts to a cinematic scene of the enemy's bits and pieces falling to the ground.

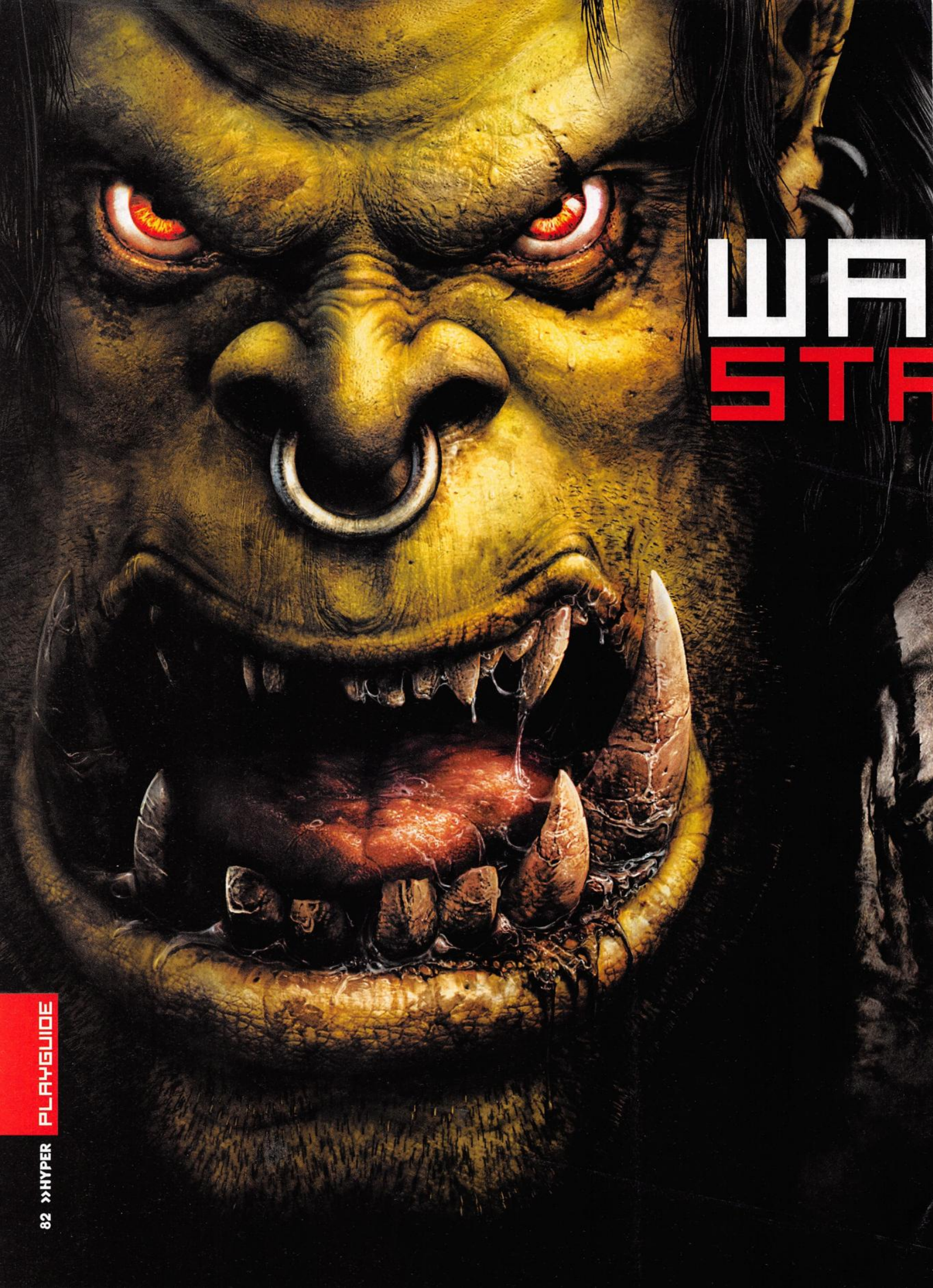
With each new gaming platform it brought out, Sega brought out a new Shinobi game, but with the failure of the Saturn, the arcade classic was almost lost. It feels good to see the original ninja pose once more, but Sega looks about to begin a new series with a new lineage. It seems the original Shinobi story has come to a close – a mild disappointment for all die-hard Musashi fans. ❖❖

ONE STARS

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WAR STARS

PLAYGUIDE

>>JOHN DEWHURST

STARCRRAFT III STRATEGY GUIDE

They're still playing StarCraft. Go to your local internet café and see that they've not given up on the Terrans, the Zerg or the Protoss. They spent too long perfecting their rushing techniques to give up on them NOW. But they will. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow but someday, everyone who played Starcraft will abandon it for the next big thing: Warcraft III... or maybe Starcraft 2. This is why getting in on the Warcraft III ground floor now is so important. Whether you're playing the Campaign game or fighting it out over Battle.net, the principles of play remain the same. What follows is a race-by-race dissection of this modern day RTS gem that shifts attention away from masses of swarming zerglings, towards smaller squads of more varied units. The Wisdom starts Right Here.

Rule 1: Expand and Don't Stop

■ Regardless of the race, regardless of the situation, the minute you hit the ground, start building and

BILL ROPER SUPERSTAR

In Korea, Starcraft isn't a game, it's a lifestyle. On a recent press tour, Blizzard's Bill Roper was mobbed in shopping centers by screaming fans of Starcraft: teenage girls, their boyfriends and anyone else there. Starcraft is well known by young and old in Korean society. And their players? The best there is... see you at the Cyber Games!

gathering resources. A well-fortified, well-developed base and an army to operate from it are all expensive things to produce. You need the resources NOW. If starting from scratch, build your main base structure as close to a gold mine as possible, have enough workers to work the mine (about five) and to gather lumber. By the time you've built the watch towers, the armoury, the lumber mill, the Heroes' Altar as well as all the units you wish to deploy, your gold mine will probably be running pretty low. Don't be afraid to move your town during the course the game. Keeping on top of the gold requirements is essential to success. Besides, you can produce from the structures in an old town while gathering from a new mine.

Rule 2: Spend, Spend, Spend

■ It may be tempting to hoard gold but it's far better to be producing the unit or upgrade before it is actually needed. Queue unit production for foot soldiers and magic users that are needed. If you find your gold stocks soaring and no way to use them, upgrade your armour or weaponry. Upgrade your keep, to make tougher units available. This is especially true when you have a good host of warriors wandering around the map and nothing much happening back at the town — upgrade units' abilities, like the spell-casters' mana regeneration or useful things such as the Orcs' Pillage. Gold's no good when your men are dead, so spend big, spend wisely.

Rule 3: Get a Hero or Two

■ Heroes are essential to success in Warcraft III. In the Campaign, you



ARTHAS SAYS:
"I'm a big whining girly man that everybody hates."

can't play without Arthas, Jaina, Tyrande, Thrall, Grom or Furion but it's possible to simply not produce any in multiplayer. Don't kid yourself — you need their special powers. Heroes support the troops around them, with their spell casting abilities and with latent effects, such as increased defenses or improved mana regeneration for units in close proximity. Even though they eat up a good portion of the food cap, don't think they're non-essential.

Each race has a number of different kinds of Heroes. The melee-style Heroes include the Orc Blademaster and the night Elves' Demon Hunter. These will be in the front line and want to be the focus of combat. They can take more hits than lesser units and dish it out as well. The Undead's Dread Lord and the Alliance Paladin are Heroes that support troops on the ground, either by weakening the enemy or by healing allies. Build your troop selection around your Hero selection. If you choose an offensive Hero, balance that with some spell-

casting units to counter magic attacks. A physically weaker magic using Hero needs more frontline troops to allow him the room to move. Lastly, establish what kind of Hero you have. If they're primarily a Strength based Hero, use upgrade items that increase strength. If their an Intelligence Hero use upgrades for Intelligence and so on.

Rule 4: Get Fighting

■ Heroes level up steadily through the course of the Campaign game, so that you don't even think about it too much. In multiplayer, it's a different story. Leveling up your Hero characters is essential to success. You have to go looking for a fight so that they gain experience and access to the more powerful spells and



abilities. This is where exploration comes in. Take your hero and supporting units out into the map and look for some Creeps to battle. Don't know what they are? Creeps like Trolls, Furbolgs, Murlocs and Wolves are NPC units in the game scattered about the map, designed for the very purpose of gaining experience. As an added incentive, they often defend useful structures like Goblin Merchants, Mana Pools or Fountains of Health. The higher level your Heroes attain before facing the enemy, the better placed you'll be.

Rule 5: Use the keyboard, dammit!

Where turn-based strategies are leisurely, studious affairs, Real Time Strategies are all about split second decision-making and sharp reflexes. Know what the shortcuts for all the commands are; if you don't, turn over your game manual and use it for reference. The use of hotkeys to call up groups of units is absolutely essential. Know how to attack a non-threatening target (that is A), know how to cycle through your town structures (that is Backspace).

Many abilities can be auto-cast but some cannot. This is why you should be using your mouse clicking skills for, rather than drag selecting a bunch of units to move into the fray. Using the Ensnare ability of the Orc Raider quickly can be the difference between heading off an aerial assault and dessimation.

TRICKY MISSION

Chapter 6: The Culling

The race against Mal'Ganis to bag the most peasants can be tricky. The first thing you need to do is build a blacksmith, a lumber mill and upgrade your Town Hall to a Castle. You need those Riflemen and Knights, you see. Churn out enough Knights and Rifleman for a hotkey group, then enter the South Eastern section of Stratholme to avoid Mal'Ganis (if possible). Begin knocking down houses and attack the people before they turn undead – they're softer that way. Use the Fountains of Health intermittently and victory will be yours.



HUMANS

The Alliance of Humans, High Elves and Dwarves are the easiest race to get to grips with and possess a good range of defensive and offensive abilities. There are no weaknesses in their line up, with strong melee, ranged, aerial and magic abilities. The flipside is that they don't excel in any particular area, either.

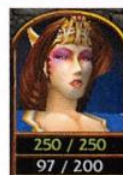
The Humans have a number of useful features incorporated into the structure of their towns that make expansion and defense a little easier. The first thing is that more than one peasant can aid in the building of structures. This means that your early building can be that much quicker, with an extra peasant to swing a hammer. Secondly, the Town Hall has a Call-to-Arms feature that converts all of your peasants into militia, to head off a surprise attack. They aren't the strongest fighters and unaided will be squashed by a concerted attack but ten or so militia are certainly enough to save a Town Hall until the cavalry can return home. The range of towers is good as well, with Guard and Cannon Towers making for some formidable base defence.

When amassing a Human strike force, start with a frontline of Footmen followed up by the ranged attack of the Riflemen. If possible, research the upgrade of Defend for Footmen as it will stop your first line of attack being wiped out by ranged attackers (think Night Elves). A handful of Sorceresses can use

Polymorph to slow up the nasty units (think Abominations) and Priests can heal up your frontline. Knights are strong in numbers, especially to clean up the nasty units and Gryphons, if well defended, can punish ground melee units that lack an aerial attack.

Which Hero?

Beginners will like the Paladin due to the Healing and Resurrection spells that keep even an ill-formed troop alive longer. The Mountain King is a useful defensive Hero due to the Thunder Clap which slows enemy units and the Storm Bolt – an excellent enemy Hero impairer. The Archmage is good for other spell casting units, raising their mana regeneration and can summon the powerful Water Elemental.



SORCERESS SAYS:

"For End of the World Spell, Press Alt, Ctrl, Delete."

Which Units Do I Avoid?

Steer clear of the gyropcopter. While good for scouting out the map, it's attack and defense is just too low to match up against an enemy attack force. Steam Tanks knock down buildings super-quick but have no other use. Build at your discretion but it's probably better to go for a Mortar Team with their splash damage.





UNDEAD

■ The Undead Scourge are initially slow in establishing a new base but once the Blight is present Acolytes can summon a town pretty damn quickly. The result is that fewer Acolytes are needed compared to other races. Resource gathering is speedy with the Undead, even with a minimum of Acolytes and Ghouls.

Defensively, the Scourge is strong. Firstly, the Blight regenerates the hit points of Undead units who are standing on it. Secondly, the basic farm building, the Ziggurat, can be upgraded to Spirit Towers to defend against air and ground units. Use Shades to patrol around your base for an early warning of attack.

Ghouls are the weakest of the low-level melee fighters, so you'll need a

swag of them. Research and use the cannibalise ability to restore hit points following battle. The ghouls are balanced slightly lower because of the Necromancer's ability to raise skeleton warriors. As battle progresses, nearby Necromancers should be drawing skeletons from the ground to use the spent forces of the enemy against them. Meat Wagons are near to mandatory, not least because they can dump dead bodies for use by a Necromancer. This ghoul and Necromancer combination is the key to the Undead's swarming tactics being effective.

It is with this strength in the frontline that stronger units can step into the fray. Abominations are excellent at rattling an enemy's line —



NECROMANCER SAYS:

"Right-click for Hot Undead Action"

they dish out the violence and can soak up a lot of damage before falling.

The Undead are not strong in the air — especially early on. Gargoyles must move in considerable numbers to be effective. Make sure you have Crypt Fiends with the Web ability to counter the air power of other races.

Which Hero?

■ The Death Knight functions very much like the Human Paladin (wonder why...?) and is good at the simple task of keeping units alive. His Animate Dead ability is a little less useful than Resurrection though. The Dreadlord's Carrion Swarm and Sleep abilities are excellent ways to stall strong enemy unit. The Lich is definitely for highly skilled users. He's so soft, he'll be cut down quickly if strong enemy units get to him but his Death and Decay spell is excellent at bringing down structures.

Do I need these Units?

■ The Banshee is most useful for the Possession ability but the Anti Magic Shell is also a benefit. The Frost Wurm is an awesomely powerful air unit but is slow and without a host of gargoyles to give cover, will fall to ranged attacks. It's a big investment to lose, so use carefully.



Get the rest of this guide in **Hyper Hints, Cheats & Playguides Volume 10**, on sale **October 16**

TRICKY MISSION

Chapter 8: Under the Burning Sky

The key to this mission is preparation. Build a swag of Spirit Towers all around the altar where Kel'thuzud is waving his arms and support them with Acolytes for repairs and Meat Wagons. Keep your groups hot keyed and ready to swing where they're needed. In the interim between waves of attacks, send your strong units to the fountains of health to regenerate. Building a second base near the Gold Mine to the South East is an option but you'll need to be alert to early attempts to destroy it.

DVD

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



Spider-Man

COLUMBIA TRI-STAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT, M15+

When it was announced that Sam Raimi was to direct *Spider-Man*, a movie license that had been tied up in litigation for nearly 10 years, it was a safe bet that more than one fan was skeptical. After all, the project was initially James Cameron's love child, and he'd been a fan of the comics his whole life. But, Raimi did have a lot to offer. He'd directed *Darkman*, a very comic-inspired film with tight direction that had just the right amount of everything, and naturally, the kitsch and camp that came with Xena (another Raimi product) did suit the comedic style and elements so prevalent in *Spider-Man*'s 30 odd year stint as a superhero.

As the film went into production, fans questioned many of Raimi's directorial decisions; like the casting of Tobey Maguire as Peter Parker, the Power Rangers-esque suit of the Green Goblin, the organic web-shooters over Parker's original invention of mechanical web shooters and fluid, and not

surprisingly the list went on. However, when the film hit cinemas across the country, it was welcomed with open arms. Raimi's direction proved that *Spider-Man* was indeed ready to swing — seamlessly — around the skyscrapers of New York city, it also proved that not every comic book film had to rely on its visual flair to keep movie goers in their seats. The emotive element of the film was spot-on and Tobey Maguire fit the role of geek Parker and unlikely hero Spidey perfectly. In short, the film delivered.

Australia is set to receive the DVD package of the greatest comic book film ever (seriously), and what we're getting is a treat. Expect to see everything every fan has ever wanted — behind-the-scenes, commentary and more. The list of features is absolutely huge, and comic aficionados need look nowhere else for their Spidey fix than this DVD. A must buy.

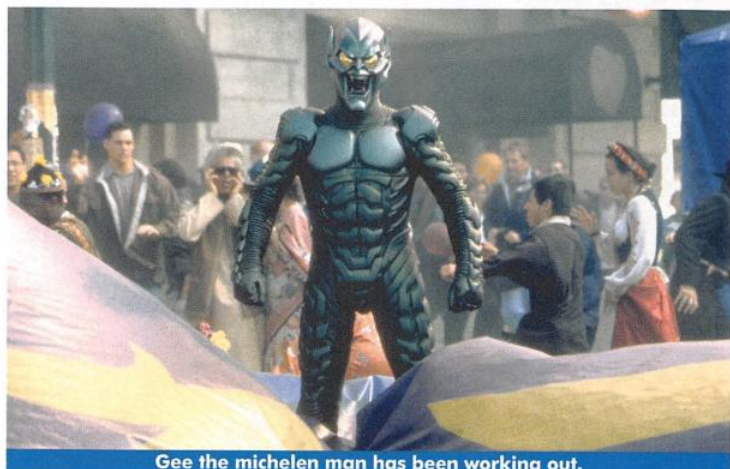
MOVIE: 9 **EXTRAS:** 9



MJ, she was the school Dunst.



Shyeah, like that's Tobey Maguire.



Geet the michelen man has been working out.

WIN A SPIDER-MAN DVD PACK!

■ To celebrate the DVD release of one of the coolest movies this year, we have 5 Spider-Man DVD packs available for giveaway. Each pack contains a Spider-Man hat, T-shirt, watch and DVD, valued at \$135! To be in with a chance to win, answer the following question:

Name the actor who played the Green Goblin in Spider-Man.

Put your answers on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it to:

Free Spiders, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.



The Thing

UNIVERSAL, MA15+

Director John Carpenter (*Escape From LA*, *The Fog*) earned quite a reputation after delivering this freaky film – his first for a major movie studio – and it's since gone down in the history books as a classic piece of gorey horror. Loosely based on a short story called "Who Goes There?" (and an earlier 1951 movie, *The Thing From Another World*), this "re-telling" is as intriguing as it is repulsive. *The Thing* may have lost some of its fear factor over the years, but it'll definitely gross you out. It's the ultimate paranoia trip.

An ancient alien life-form is dug out of layers of ice in the Antarctic and proceeds to kill and assimilate whoever it can get its tentacles on. The hostile alien life-form alters its own cel structure until it looks



Cam's a different person when he's drunk.



Careful or your beard will catch on fire.

exactly like its last meal. The result is that you don't know who's a "thing" and who's not... until it's too late. The tension in the film arises from the fact that neither the scientists nor the audience know whom to trust. It's the perfect concept for a survival horror game, so it's no surprise it's become one. Amazingly, the special effects are still horrendously gorey and shocking, which is a huge feat considered they were created back in 1982 when bits of rubber, glue and artificial slime were the only ways of creating human intestines and the jaws of aliens.

Kurt Russell is the only notable star, but on a whole the acting and script are solid enough to make the film believable to a point and certainly very watchable, which is the most important thing for such an outlandish concept. Without a doubt, you should get *The Thing* and watch it before you pick up your PlayStation 2 controller to continue the horror...

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 5

TRUST NOTHING FEAR EVERYTHING



"This game is going to scare the crap out of you"
- Gamespy

"The action is leaps and bounds ahead of anything you've seen in a Resident Evil title"
- Game Informer (USA)

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The Young Ones

ABC DVD, RATED M15+

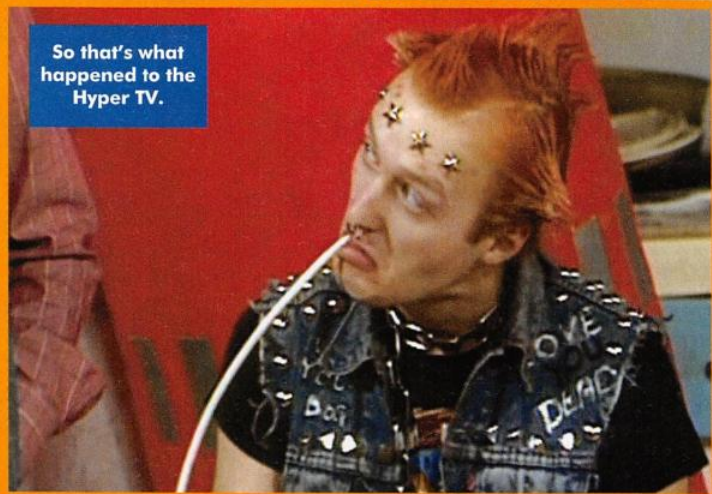
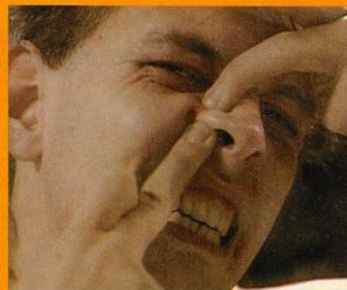
Elieve it or not, but it's been 20 years since *The Young Ones* first aired. Although there were only ever twelve episodes made, *The Young Ones* left an indelible mark on British comedy. And even now, it's as riotous as ever — a totally anarchic sitcom, packed with toilet humour, slapstick, pop culture references, unrelated sketches and political and social satire. The characters (with the possible exception of Mike, depending on personal taste) are still hilarious, with Rik and Vyv's comic timing and interplay in particular still as memorable as ever. And Rik's yellow dungarees will NEVER not be funny.

Of course, *The Young Ones* shows its age in many ways — constant rantings about Thatcher's Britain, hippies, Genesis and Cliff Richard are certainly reminders. As are the

bands that perform on the show. Even so, this is all part of the charm for fans, and a cool snapshot of British anti-culture at the time.

This DVD contains the six episodes from Series 1 (Demolition, Oil, Boring, Bomb, Interesting and Flood) and NOTHING ELSE. In the states you can buy a three DVD box set with every episode, plus featurettes and pilots for both *Bottom* and *Filthy Rich and Catflap*. Here, on the other hand, the BBC has the cheek to label "scene selection" as a special feature. YOU COMPLETE AND UTTER BASTARDS! Fans have seen the episodes a million times, we want the extras! We want audio commentary from the writers and actors! FASCISTS. Great show though. — Cam Shea

MOVIE: 9 EXTRAS: 0



So that's what happened to the Hyper TV.

Ali G, Innit

UNIVERSAL, MA15+

Sacha Baron Cohen is a genius. Despite how you may feel about Ali G's current mainstream success, the fact of the matter is that Cohen has comedy running through his veins. Ali G actually started out on the British sketch comedy program the 11 O'clock show, and this DVD is a collection of highlights from that period. This is Ali G in somewhat embryonic form, not quite the polished playa he came to be, but just as sharp as ever. In fact, if anything, *Innit* is even more raw than Ali's later stuff. Sure, he's unlikely to be interviewing anyone you've heard of before, but across the 20 interviews featured on this compilation, you won't stop



Ali approves of the doggy style.

laughing... well except to spark up a phat spliff of course. Innit is a couple of years old now, and some extras for the DVD conversion would have been nice, but this is still a must-have for fans. See how it all started and big him up. — Joey Tekken

MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 0



The Bottom lads stumble in the back door of Hyper HQ.

THE VERY BEST OF Bottom

ABC DVD, RATED M15+

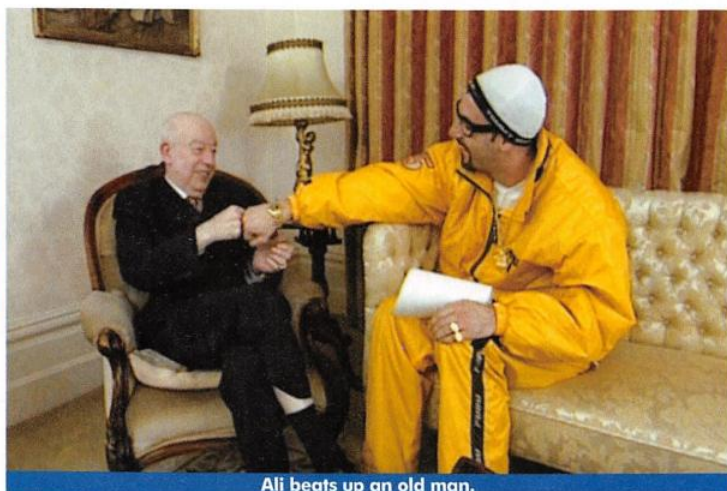


Around ten years after *The Young Ones*, Rik Mayall and Ade Edmondson went on to make *Bottom*. It's quite a different kettle of fish to *The Young Ones*, being far less pop culture orientated and even more focussed on vulgarity. The move away from a four-piece ensemble cast limited the show's scope somewhat, but even so, it's hard to resist the charms of these two talented comedians. As far as slapstick and ultra violence goes, Rik and Ade are definitely the masters. This time around they play Richard Richard and Edward Elizabeth Hitler. Richie is a manic depressive

desperate loser virgin obsessed with sex, and Eddie is a drunkard with a penchant for violence. So you could say that there are definitely shades of Rik and Vyv in these characters.

There are five episodes on this DVD (chosen from the 18 that were made during 1991-1995), and the only extras are an additional five minutes in "Holly" that were cut for length reasons rather than censorship, and a photo gallery. Who the hell looks at the photo galleries? Great show though. — Cam Shea

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 1



Ali beats up an old man.

ANIME

Neon Genesis Evangelion: DEATH & REBIRTH

CATEGORY: SCI-FI • PRODUCTION COMPANY: GAINAX/PRODUCTION IG • LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR: MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT

Closure. We finally have it. Well, at least some of it. Being around five years old, the ground-breaking series that was *Neon Genesis Evangelion* is, for all intents and purposes, old news; yet it is the series that (aside from the abominable *Dragonball Z*) we continue to get feedback on. Being such an old series, *Evangelion* has been analysed and dissected to the nth degree, where there is as much conjecture and even a believable universe beyond the basic TV series as the *Star Wars* fantasy world.

THE HUMAN STRUGGLE

This is the movie that played out like a Sonata with several movements; where famously, many patrons began leaving the cinemas before *Rebirth* even started because they thought the movie was over. The *Death* portion is a largely redundant re-telling of the previous 26 episodes, with virtually no new footage whatsoever. *Rebirth* is a

much shorter, but hugely satisfying cliff-hanger, telling what the final six episodes should've told but for Gainax completely running out of funds (hence the use of recycled and live footage towards the end of the series). This is where the Human Instrumentality Project is revealed in full, where SEELE finally double-crosses NERV, and where all the philosophical metaphors of the human struggle become unbelievably literal.

It goes without saying that no matter what we say about it, anyone who hasn't already obtained a copy of *Death and Rebirth* in fan-subbed or VCD form is going to buy this release. From an industry standpoint, the final sales figures will give a little closure to the cynical price negotiations that were intended to rape the fans of as much money as possible, which lead to the long delays in the release of this film. The wait now begins for *End of Evangelion*.



Are your Macleans showing?



Not hers, they all fell out I think.

ANIMATION 7 PLOT: 8 OVERALL: 8

eX-Driver

CATEGORY: ACTION • PRODUCTION COMPANY: BANDAI VISUAL

In the not too distant future, traffic systems will be automated, cars will be driven through AI, and all of it will be monitored and controlled by a GPS system that's managed by a well-funded and resourced government agency. If you want to go somewhere, you line up at a vending machine, pick the kind of vehicle you want, and voila: an AI-chauffeured vehicle will roll up. Unfortunately, every so often, an AI car will go haywire (reminiscent of *Patlabor*, actually), causing all sorts of traffic chaos. It's then up to the skilled drivers of old-fashioned gasoline cars to save the day. Known as eX-drivers, their job is to outrun and out-maneuvre any rogue cars, disable their AI systems, and bring the car to a halt.

COMPLETE NONSENSE

The story concept alone holds little water when you start critically deconstructing this futuristic world. Why aren't there any fail-safe devices on these cars? Where are the kill-switches? Why is the AI so easily corrupted and exploitable? And why on earth are the eX-drivers a pair of beautiful high school girls? None of it adds up, really — it's all just a poor excuse for a few car chase scenes.

Created, designed and story-boarded by Kousuke Fujishima (*You're Under Arrest, Ah! My Goddess!*), *eX-Drivers* is even more misguided and indulgent an adventure than Kenichi Sonoda's *Gunsmith Cats*. Where Sonoda poured all of his love for conventional firearms into *Gunsmith Cats*, Fujishima



spoils us (and himself) with racing mechanics, stabilisers, brake fluids, suspension, the Subaru Impreza, the Lancia Stratos, and other vaguely exotic cars. It's extremely cool for all of 30 seconds, by which time you'll realise the story is complete nonsense.

He takes Viagra to boost his ex-drive.

ANIMATION 7 PLOT: 3 OVERALL: 4

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As Christmas draws nearer, there's something you need to make sure you have. That's right – a next-gen console to play with! We want you to be in with a chance to have this brand spanking new **Xbox**, with an improved **Controller-S**, a **DVD remote** so you can watch movies and a copy of the best Xbox game, **Halo**. It's the ultimate pack! Not only that, but we want you to have Hyper on your doorstep every month, before anyone else can buy it, for less than the cover price. How do you achieve all this? Just subscribe – and all this could be yours! It's really that easy.

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- 1 X Controller-S
- 1 X DVD remote

- 1 X Halo game
- 3 Runners up will win an Xbox game and a special Xbox poster.

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Hyper 106
(PlayStation 2 & Gitaroo Man)
Brad Starick, Mitchell Park, SA



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FORUM

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

Q. WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF HYPER MAGAZINE AND WHY?

A tough question, we know. From the sweet smell of gloss on the front cover to the crazed etchings of the reader art, Hyper magazine has something for everyone. There are those who adore the Eye Candy every issue, and those who tear the music section out with their teeth. Some of you still lament the passing of Hypermart, and others thrill to the mystery of what's coming up next issue on our final teaser page every month. What kind of Hyper reader are you?



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...

“Hyper: the Game. What would it be like? (pictures welcome)”

Responses will be printed in Hyper III.

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.

TEKKEN IT TO THE MAX

I'd have to say the captions. They just crack me up, they're so damn funny. You could print 100 pages of just screenshots with captions and I'd be happy with my purchase. Other than that, I'd have to say the artwork and layout. Hyper has never looked more brighter and colourful, yet it still manages to not look like a children's book.

Keep it up guys... and more captions please!!

Steve Milich
milich@picknowl.com.au

FREAK CENTRAL

I would have to say that my absolute favourite part of your magazine would have to be the mail. Some of the letters you guys receive are amazing... It just goes to show you that there are some really messed up people out there. Please realise that I do not imply this to every single person who writes in, it's just a select few.

Example: in issue 86: Some person wrote in about the "Sonegato Sphere" some sort of crazy new console he thought up (yes it is going back a while but anyway) I was like "LAY OFF THE CRACK!!!" now if you read this, Niteshock (who came up with the idea) no offence is intended.

Thanks for your time.
Sincerely,
Jimmy

ENGINEERING HAPPINESS

Favourite part of Hyper, that is a hard question. I could say your screen captions with the many "have at you" and "you're too something to live" or the legendary Hyper CD that quickly vanished after the E3 2001 issue.

Special mention should go to the humour, as well as the last part of the book, the Next issue page. Without that I would never know what to expect next issue, even if it is sometimes untruthful (Hey, steady on! — Ed.)

However my favourite, which I and perhaps others think that deserves it's very own one off book, is Reverse Engineering. Every month, two or sometimes four pages filled with classic games and hardware of the past. I know it means nothing to some of you and I bet you would rather have the space filled with something else, but to me it reminds me of an era where having your name at the top of the three letter scoreboard meant everything. Gameplay was always miles ahead of graphics (you didn't care what

they looked like) and sound from the NES, C64 or anything else sounded like a 500 piece orchestra.
Nworld NMC

THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

The first thing I do every time I get my brand new Hyper, is turn over to the 'Contributors' space in the "Editorial" section. Unless some readers haven't realised, there is always a little surprise at the end of the credits. I love it! Little things like this really hold a special place in my... okay, maybe I'm taking this too far, but still, it's really fun reading it every month.

Anthony Palmer

YAY FOR ANIME

I have seen this sort of question before... It is similar to asking what chapter of a book do you like or what scene in the movie do you like. To be an absolute fan, I would have to say I love this magazine as a whole. But for the purpose of this question, I'd have to say the anime section. Despite having only 2 pages, sometimes 1, I still find the anime section the best part of your magazine. I believe that this is partially due to the lack of anime in

Australia. With Neon Genesis Evangelion: (End of Eva; Death & Rebirth) and other classics pending, your magazine is the best for this genre's coverage.

Surrounded by peers who only know anime because of Pokemon, Digimon, Dragonball Z and any other mediocre anime I feel very enlightened that every 4 weeks that there will be 2 new Japanese anime DVDs to be reviewed. I applaud you for covering that genre and you ought to be commended for it.

By the way, you have my utmost admiration for excluding the Music section of this magazine and instead covering "videogame music/composers". That was a blessing.

Overall, cheers to Eliot, Cam and Malcom!!

Vladimir Boskonovitch

P.S. Who the hell is Heihachi's nappy?

SHORT AND SWEET

Dear Hyper,

The reviews. It has to be the reviews. Unbiased, witty and with the benefit of years of gaming experience — there is no-one better in the magazine industry for getting a clear view on what game to buy than you guys.

Keep up the good work,
Phillip English

SHORTER AND SWEET

My very favourite bit of the mag is all the reviews. Cause when I get a PlayStation 2 or something like that, I know what the really good games are. You're the best mag in the world.

Luke Eeles

ALL THE LITTLE EXTRA BITS

Howdy Hyper,

I think I might be railing against common opinion when I say this, but my favourite parts of the magazine are the columns and all the little extra bits like that, which you stuff into the mag every month. Even the music section I find is a fresh read and a nice addition to all the gaming stuff. Basically, I reckon you guys have the most entertaining "non-gaming" sections out there, for one of the gaming mags. The other thing I really like, is that your

mag isn't condescending, and your reviews and stories aren't just ripped straight from British or American mags (like some other so-called Australian gaming mags), so please don't stop! Weird I know, but that's what I really like about your mag.

Shinji Barrett

AUSTRALIAN REVIEWS

My favourite part of Hyper would probably be the reviews, and the quality of them. Don't get me wrong, I love the anime section, and some of the features you guys do (like the game music one in issue#107) but your reviews have always gone from strength to strength over the years. They are informative, and actually talk about the game and its content, unlike reviews in other magazines that just talk about things that are unrelated to the game (Nintendo Gamer, I'm looking at you).

Better yet, they are reviewed by Australian gamers, and who better to inform Australians about what a game is like. The reviewer's sense of humor also seems to be reflected in the reviews, making for a much more enjoyable read.

Keep it up guys!

**Andrew
icepak@wiredcity.com.au**

LATEST & GREATEST

I have to say, my favourite part has to be the 'Reviews' section.

It holds all the information on all the latest and greatest (and some not so great) games on the market.

Issue 107, PERFECT! Loved it!

It had a heap of info devoted to WarCraft III, NWN, and Lost Kingdoms!

Great work, keep it up eh?

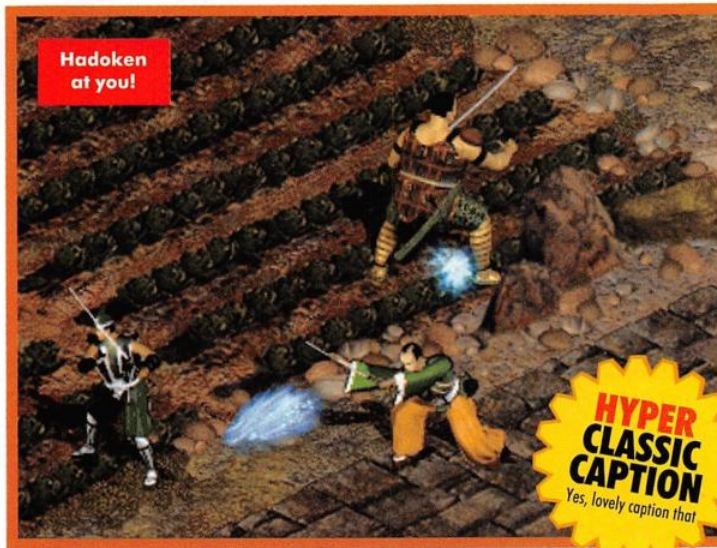
Morphix

HUMOUR + GAMES

My favourite part about Hyper Magazine would have to be how you guys use humour while reviewing games, or responding to letters sent to you. It's great how you guys always make a joke out of something, even if it IS serious.

Keep the humour up guys! That's why people buy your magazine!
Humour + Games = Great Fun.

Peace,
**punishment o
punishment_2001@hotmail.com**



MAGIC LINKS!

Hey Hyper,

it amazes me that after about 8 years of buying your mag, I still enjoy the Net Trawlin' section for the links. For 8 long years, you guys manage to continue showing us cool websites! How do you do it??

Brian Davies

IT'S A SECRET, SHHH!

Hyper,

The reason I luv yer mag, is that it's like being part of a cool club. Not everyone one at my school knows yer mag, but that's what I like about it. I know I'm cooler than they are. I get Hyper, and I piss myself laughing at the jokes, and wisely take your advice on what games to buy, whilst some of my friends buy their official PlayStation

mag and just complain about it. I don't show 'em Hyper, because I don't want everyone to start acting like they knew about you guys all along, and boast that your mag was always the best. Hyper rules. Stay cool, guys!

Masked_Hamster85

BATHING HABITS

Every issue I turn straight to the games chart. I like to see where my favourite games are and if people are buying it. After that, my second favourite bit is to read all the funny letters and your responses. Heh. Then I read the news and previews and save the reviews for last! Sometimes if you have a cool story, like the one on music in games, I save it for when I have a bath so I can soak and read. Er, so yeah.

Skot J.



FEEDBACK

»HYPER 93

MAIL



HYPER LETTERS:

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

WOW-O-METER

What means what? Is the blue good or the red? (Me, myself can't decide, I look so good in blue but red's such a pretty colour...)

childsnake

*Dear Childsnake,
Surely, it's not that hard is it? A game in the red is hot, and a game in the blue leaves us cold.*

KISS YOUR ARSE

Dear Hyper,

I ain't here to kiss your arse and try to win letter of the week so let's get to the point, these questions need answering!

1. When is the release date of WWE SmackDown: Shut Your Mouth (PS2)?
2. Do you have any clue when Godzilla (G-cube) will come out?
3. Can you or will you do a review on Smackdown: Shut Your Mouth?
4. Last year, the PlayStation2 magazine was awesome, but since it got taken over by some other company all the cool stuff's gone. They used to have this create your own game thing were people send

in a drawn covers and information on a game that they designed, Do you think you could do this? (Some of the designs were really good.)

Anyways, sorry for taking your time. See ya Homies.

**From Player
Player_800@hotmail.com**

Dear Player,

1. *The game will be out in November.*
2. *Mid-November, woo-hoo!*
3. *Yep, we'll bring you a review (possibly next issue). So, shut your mouth!*
4. *So, you've seen the light! We won't steal their ideas, but rest assured that moving onto Hyper was a mighty fine decision!*

DEATH AND REBIRTH

To the crew at Hyper.

Firstly I hope you pick this letter, email, whatever, from the huge strand and maybe print it. I have a question to ask. In your last issue you had an article about the Melbourne Anime Festival (which I gladly would have attended had I been informed earlier) you

mentioned the special release of the *Neon Genesis: Death and Rebirth* DVD. Does this mean to say that the movies have FINALLY been released in Australia? If so, I would go to wherever I could purchase it with my saved up money. Please, please let this be so... please? And if in the unfortunate event that they still haven't been released here, is there any word on it happening soon?

Yours Sincerely,
Jeremy Wells

*Dear Jeremy,
Neon Genesis Evangelion: Death and Rebirth is out now, and you should find it in most stores that stock Anime. It's being distributed by Madman Entertainment.*

DEAR HYPER,

You deserved capital letters bcuz I think you are cool! I recently got a GameCube and I'm very happy! I've got Burnout & Super Smash Bros. Melee. I've got enough money to get a new Cube game and a new Advance game. I don't know what to get so I was wondering if you have any suggestions? I'm into racing, adventure, RPGs & shoot em ups amongst other types. Now for the questions:

1. In your review of Smash Bros. you said that if you worked hard you'll unlock the coolest feature. What is that?
 2. Can you give me more information on the Metroid games cuz I know nothing about them!
 3. The stupid Dept. of Education in the A.C.T made it so I can't go to your site, I'm pissed off about this and I was wondering if you have any suggestions on fixing this problem? (I don't have the internet at home so I have to use the school's comp!)
- Well I better go now and do some work at school (yeah right!) till next time...

**Steven O'Dell
steven_rulz@hotmail.com**

*Dear Steven,
Get Super Mario Sunshine, Resident Evil or Eternal Darkness.*

1. *Well, in our opinion, you just can't go past the Game & Watch guy.*
2. *We have, and we will continue to do so!*

3. *Tell them that Lord Seafood will come down and kick their arse. Why have they blocked our site? It could be that it's been filtered unintentionally, so why don't you ask them?*

THE GIMMICK WEARS OFF

G'day,
In issue 107, Tim Levy reviewed the arcade coin-swallower 'World Kicks' — yet another game that evolves the interface between player and machine. This comes on top of the driving, dancing, drumming, shooting, flying, fishing, skiing and boxing sims already renting space in the arcades. As impressive as the technology is, I've gotta say I'm getting sick of it. I'm really not sure these developments represent an imaginative approach by the creators. These games look pretty enough and the interface usually gives a seemingly authentic experience of driving or cutting the rug or whatever, but the gimmick wears off.

About ten years ago there appeared to be a lot of hype and excitement around the virtual reality concept, and to me, these arcade sims are a legacy of that vision... a 'simulated reality' rather than entertainment that absorbs you into something unreal.

For me, the fun of playing games involves a sense of escapism that has a unique concept (like future-sports games e.g. Speedball), or at least a sense of charisma (Earthworm Jim)... or bloody anything that jolts the imagination a bit. When I go into an arcade now, I first look at the joystick-operated machines (and usually find fighting games), to search for something that compensates for average hardware with a creative idea. Great games, including arcade games, can be played with a joystick and 2 buttons. I just wish the developers would see this and push themselves to produce entertainment which is interesting and different.

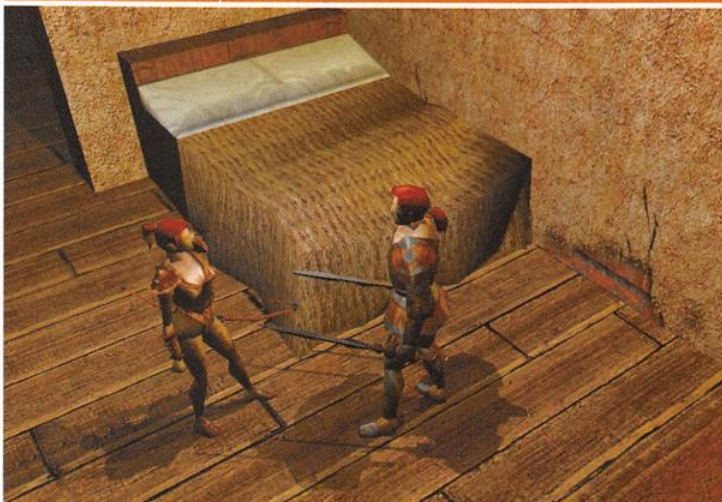
**Danger Frost
dangerfrost8@hotmail.com**

*Dear Danger Frost,
We hear you. Unfortunately, there are plenty of people out there who*

CAPTION THIS!

PART 34 WINNER

Our winning caption this month comes from reader, **Sudad Abbas**. Now get those dirty thoughts out of your head!



"Maybe we're taking this sadomasochism thing too seriously, Honey."

SONIC



Mark Sawyer sent us this wicked Sonic. Nice work fella!

just want to kill five minutes, and hopping on a novelty machine for a laugh is all they're looking for. As a result, those machines make a tonne of money. Arcades aren't really a great place for "serious" gaming anymore, other than fighting games. Let's face it, the people who make those machines don't want one person on there for 20 minutes - they want 20 people on that machine in one minute (each pumping in \$2). Luckily, home consoles are virtually as powerful as arcade machines these days, and deliver far more intense, solo experiences.

ADVENTURES IN IRONY PART XVII

How's it. Dr. Rudi here, y'know I often get letters from Nintendo fanboys telling me they often find themselves curious about games on other consoles. Being loyal to corporations is vital for today's economy, believe me I am a doctor and the benefits of prescribing the most expensive drugs are many.

But do not despair, for there is a way for you to satisfy your curious urges without compromising your integrity. Here's how. Firstly, buy a PlayStation 2 (second hand would be best). Then get it mod-chipped (you need only look as far as your local newspaper to find a place that'll do

this). Finally you buy pirated (or back up) versions of those games you've been itching to play.

Now, it is important to get pirated games because few people know that all console makers actually lose money on every console they sell - it is the games which are profitable, through licensing fees paid to the console maker or directly through first party titles.

So when you buy pirated games, not a cent goes to the console maker (in this case Sony) and by not giving them a cent you're not supporting them. If you're not supporting them, then you are still loyal (to Nintendo).

So don't despair, get out there and have cake and eat it too.

Oh and if you think your fanboy friends won't understand, just hide it from them as if it were a porno. Bye now.

Dear Dr. Rudi,
You're the only segment worth watching on that TV show, did you know that?

UPTIGHT ABOUT UPRIGHT

Yo Hyper!

You are the best mag in the WORLD! No, really!

I recently bought a PS2 & MGS2.

MAKING GAMES

Dear Hyper,

For the past couple of years I have been a regular reader of Wizard, the American comic magazine, and in one of their issues they did a feature on schools and courses around America that people could enrol in to study comics in the hopes of getting into the industry. My question is, have you ever printed or thought about printing a similar article regarding schools or courses that people here can enrol in to study computer games?

I myself am lucky enough to be enrolled at the Academy of Interactive Entertainment, in Canberra, studying Computer Game Development, and consider it one of the best things I have ever done. And I only found out about the school when I inadvertently came across a link to the Australian Game Developers Conference website while surfing for gaming news.

I'm sure there would be many people who would be very interested to know about places they can go to give them a better chance of getting a foot up in the industry.

Thanks for hearing me out, and keep up the good work.

Darkwolf

Dear Darkwolf,
We've been planning that for a while actually. Now that I know some of you would really like the info, we'll do it. Keep an eye on future issues.



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

Don't forget to include your contact details in your letter.

THRUSTMASTER

<http://au.thrustmaster.com>
Wheel valued at \$99.95.

The first thing I could say when I played it was WOW! I also recently heard something bad about the PS2 though. It turns out that if you keep your PS2 in the vertical position the disc can shake around and after prolonged use the disc can BREAK!!

I hope you take this advice because I don't want you guys to have to buy a new game.

Cya later,

supertroopers@hotmail.com

Dear Supertroopers,
You can put that down to myth and rumour. We've never heard of that happening, ever.

QUESTIONS FOR ALL

To the lords of Australian gaming, HYPER. I humbly ask these questions:

1. What would be defined as the perfect game in terms of gameplay, sound and graphics?
2. I'm a true die-hard fan of Tekken and was planning to buy Tekken 4. But after your review, my thoughts are not clear. Should I buy it or just get TTT? Maybe I should abandon my ways and consort with a new fighting game power such as Soul Calibur 2 or Virtua Fighter 4.
3. Are you going transnational? It would be a good idea, as you can tell those big wig Japanese game companies what the backwater

community thinks about their games so that they could change them.

4. Should I get the Lord of the Rings FOTR on DVD now or just wait for the special extended edition?

Please answer these questions with all of the knowledge and wisdom that is HYPER.

Vonifictuos

Dear Vonifictuos,

1. Oh, an easy question to start with I see. Geez... Do you expect me to answer that in 25 words or less?
2. You can go to your local arcade to play Tekken 4 and see if you like it. We would certainly encourage you to play Soul Calibur 2 (even the original Soul Calibur) and VF4, as others consider them to be equally as brilliant. In our opinion, they're even better than the Tekken games.
3. Hyper has no plans to be distributed outside of Australia and New Zealand. Luckily, most of the game companies read us anyhow.
4. We're waiting for the special extended edition, but be warned that the movie will be across two discs, and you won't be able to watch the film without the extra 30 minutes of scenes every time you put the DVD on. For fans, I'd say the special edition will be the preferred choice - you get those funky bookends too.

MAIL

UNREAL QUESTIONS

Your mag rocks. Anyway, I have some really important questions m'kay? So please answer them.

1. Is Unreal Tournament 2003 coming to Xbox?
2. Is Unreal 2 coming to Xbox?
3. How much do u think the head set will be for the Xbox, and will it be clear and not slow down multiplayer games wile u r talking?
4. Will there be a mouse for the Xbox?
5. I was wondering if I play online with Halo or UC will I have to download patches all the time because the developers didn't finish the game properly?

Seeya,

Monkey Man

Dear Monkey Man,

1. No, that's why they're releasing the Xbox exclusive Unreal Championship. The games appear to have many similarities.
2. Yeah, it's a possibility, but it hasn't been announced.
3. We're not sure about the performance of the headset on an Australian Xbox Live service, as there's nothing in place to test yet. We won't use the USA as a source of reference, because the broadband infrastructure there is completely different (and superior) to ours. Pricing will come soon enough.
4. We haven't seen an official one yet, but third parties will probably pump one or two out when there's a need for one.
5. Probably not, but theoretically, it may be possible for game companies to offer "upgrades" to certain Xbox games that you would download direct to the hard disk. We'll see...

EXPLODING HEADS

Hey there Hyper,

Just gotta tell you your mag rocks



Darryl Leech crafted this great Lord of The Rings piece. Cute Hobbit feet!

heads and shoulders above the rest.

Anyway, I just have a few questions, before my head blows up in a pile of red stuff, cause I want answers so bad.

1. What is the best snowboarding game on PSONe?
2. In your opinion, what are the five best PSONe games ever??
3. Is the special WarCraft III pack, with DVD and book and stuff worth the extra 60 bucks? And is the coffee table book in it any good. (cause I'm into drawing and stuff and need some cool pics to copy).
4. Will a P3 450Mghz, 64meg Geforce 2 mx440, and 256 Megs o' Ram last me for a while in terms of playing the latest games?

Josef

Dear Josef,

1. Cool Boarders 2 might be what you're looking for, but really, none of them were terribly good.
2. Let's see now... Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy VII, Colin McRae Rally, Wipeout 2097 and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2. With big ups to Abe's Oddysee.
3. For some, it will be. You'll just have to decide if it's for you. Sadly, no one has sent us the coffee table book that you're speaking

of, so we can't comment!

4. That's not a bad set-up. You'll find your processor is the thing slowing you down with 3D games though. See if you can upgrade it and you'll be laughing.

XBOX OR GAMECUBE?

Hey what doin,

I have somethin' that I really need to write in about because of something I have seen in another mag that disturbs me greatly. This thing was that they gave Deus Ex for the PS2 only 88%. The score is not the thing that disturbs me (well it kinda does since it is such an awesome game), what disturbs me is the reason why they gave it that score. The reason, get this, was because it wasn't mainstream enough. I mean what the frigg is that for a reason! I am so glad that u guys don't mark games down for that reason.

1. I'm getting another console soon and I have a choice of the Xbox or GameCube. Which one do you think has the better lineup of games coming?
2. Do u think Nintendo might package the GC & GBA together in the future?
3. Are there any new Wing Commander games coming out? I

have just been playing the series again recently and would love to see a next gen update.

4. Was it my imagination or were there more letters in the latest issue than usual?

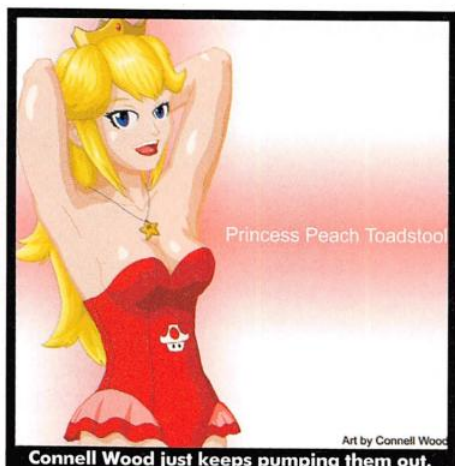
Cheers,

Jason

P.S. I am sick of the PC whingers that complain about not being able to use a mouse and keyboard on consoles. WHAT A BUNCH OF WANKERS!

Dear Jason,

1. Both consoles have a pretty tasty line-up of games, but they are certainly very different in style. It should be easy to decide which console is right for you. To help, consider that GameCube has the awesome Mario, Zelda and some Square games coming, whilst the Xbox has some more PC style games - Splinter Cell, Doom 3, Unreal Championship and Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic, to name a few... And maybe even some Rare games.
2. It's a good idea, and we hope that they do!
3. Not as yet, but the game's creator, Chris Roberts, has been working on Freelancer for Microsoft and it looks like Wing Commander on steroids.
4. We might have squeezed a few extra in. Maybe.



Princess Peach Toadstool

Art by Connell Wood

Connell Wood just keeps pumping them out.

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

TOP 10

PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 1 September
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	V8 Supercars	Racing
2	◆	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action
3	◆	Grand Theft Auto 3	Adventure
4	◆	Gran Turismo 2002 Concept	Racing
5	◆	Final Fantasy X	RPG
6	◆	Spider-Man: The Movie	Adventure
7	◆	Vampire Night	Action
8	▲	Smash Court Pro Tournament	Sports
9	▼	Metal Gear Solid 2	Adventure
10	▼	Crash Band 5: Wrath Cortex	Adventure

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 1 September
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure
2	▲	Who Wants To Be Millnaire?	Family
3	▲	Delta Force Urban Warfare	Adventure
4	▼	Digimon Rumble Arena	Action
5	▲	Final Fantasy Anthology	RPG
6	⊕	Final Fantasy IX	RPG
7	▼	Barbie Explorer	Adventure
8	⊕	Peter Pan	Adventure
9	◆	Digimon	RPG
10	◆	Triple Pack	Compilation

TOP 10

Game Cube Games Over \$40

W/E 1 September
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Super Smash Bros: Melee	Action
2	◆	Pikmin	Action
3	▲	Bond 007 Agent Under Fire	Action
4	▼	Sonic Adventures 2: Battle	Adventure
5	▼	Luigi's Mansion	Adventure
6	◆	Rogue Leader	Action
7	◆	Spider-Man: The Movie	Adventure
8	▲	Simpson's Road Rage	Racing
9	◆	Super Monkey Ball	Family
10	▼	Lost Kingdoms	RPG

TOP 10

Xbox Games Over \$40

W/E 1 September
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Halo - Combat Evolved	Action
2	▲	Project Gotham Racing	Racing
3	▼	Hunter: The Reckoning	RPG
4	◆	Bond 007 Agent Under Fire	Action
5	◆	Spider-Man: The Movie	Adventure
6	◆	RalliSport Challenge	Racing
7	▲	Dead or Alive 3	Action
8	▲	Max Payne	Action
9	▼	Crash Band: Wrath Of Cortex	Adventure
10	⊕	Aggressive Inline Skating	Sports

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$30

W/E 1 September
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	WarCraft 3	Strategy
2	◆	Neverwinter Nights	RPG
3	▲	Tom Clancy's Sum All Fears	Strategy
4	▼	The Sims Vacation	Strategy
5	▲	Sports Triple Pack	Compilation
6	▲	EA Sports V8 Challenge	Racing
7	◆	The Sims Hot Date	Strategy
8	⊕	Medal Honor Allied Assault	Action
9	▼	Soldier Fortune 2: Double H	Action
10	▼	The Sims	Strategy

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 1 September
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	◆	Golden Sun	RPG
6	▼	Super Mario Advance	Adventure
7	▼	Star Wars EP 2	Adventure
8	▲	Crash Bandicoot XS	Adventure
9	▼	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure
10	⊕	Spyro Season Of Ice	Adventure

TOP 10

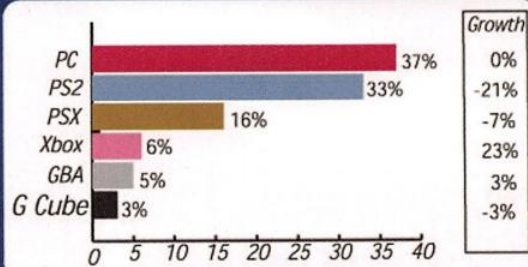
All Full Priced Games

W/E 1 September
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	V8 Supercars PS2	PlayStation 2
2	◆	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	PlayStation 2
3	◆	Grand Theft Auto 3	PlayStation 2
4	◆	WarCraft 3	PC/MAC
5	◆	Gran Turismo 2002 Concept	PlayStation 2
6	◆	Halo - Combat Evolved	Xbox
7	◆	Neverwinter Nights	PC/MAC
8	⊕	Dragonball Z: Legacy Goku	GBA
9	▲	Tom Clancy's Sum of All Fears	PC/MAC
10	▼	The Sims Vacation	PC/MAC

MARKET WATCH All Games by Platform

July vs Aug 2002
RETAIL SALES



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



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



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Next Issue:

#top

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**IT'S TIME FOR YOU
TO DECIDE! THE TOP
50 GAMES OF ALL
TIME READERS POLL!**

PLUS: PART 1 of the HYPER CHRISTMAS BUYER'S GUIDE

ALSO: Hitman 2, Silent Hill 2: Inner Fears, Unreal Tournament 2003, Timesplitters 2, Pro Evolution Soccer 2, Colin McRae Rally 3, Age of Mythology, Starfox Adventures, Sega GT 2002 and much more...

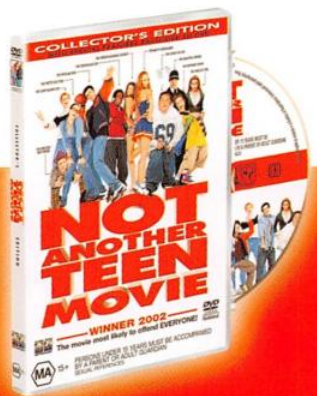
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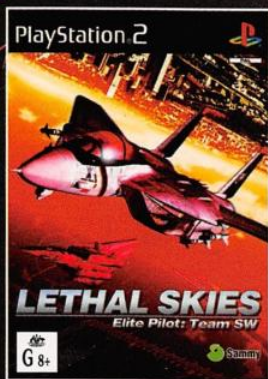
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Pure combat. Pure action.**

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Engage multiple enemies in a variety of death-defying missions.



PlayStation 2



Asmik Ace Entertainment Inc.

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THQ