

ISSUE 111
JANUARY 2003

STAR FOX ADVENTURES REVIEWED • FIFA VS. PRO EVO 2

5 XBOX SYSTEMS TO WIN!

HYPERS



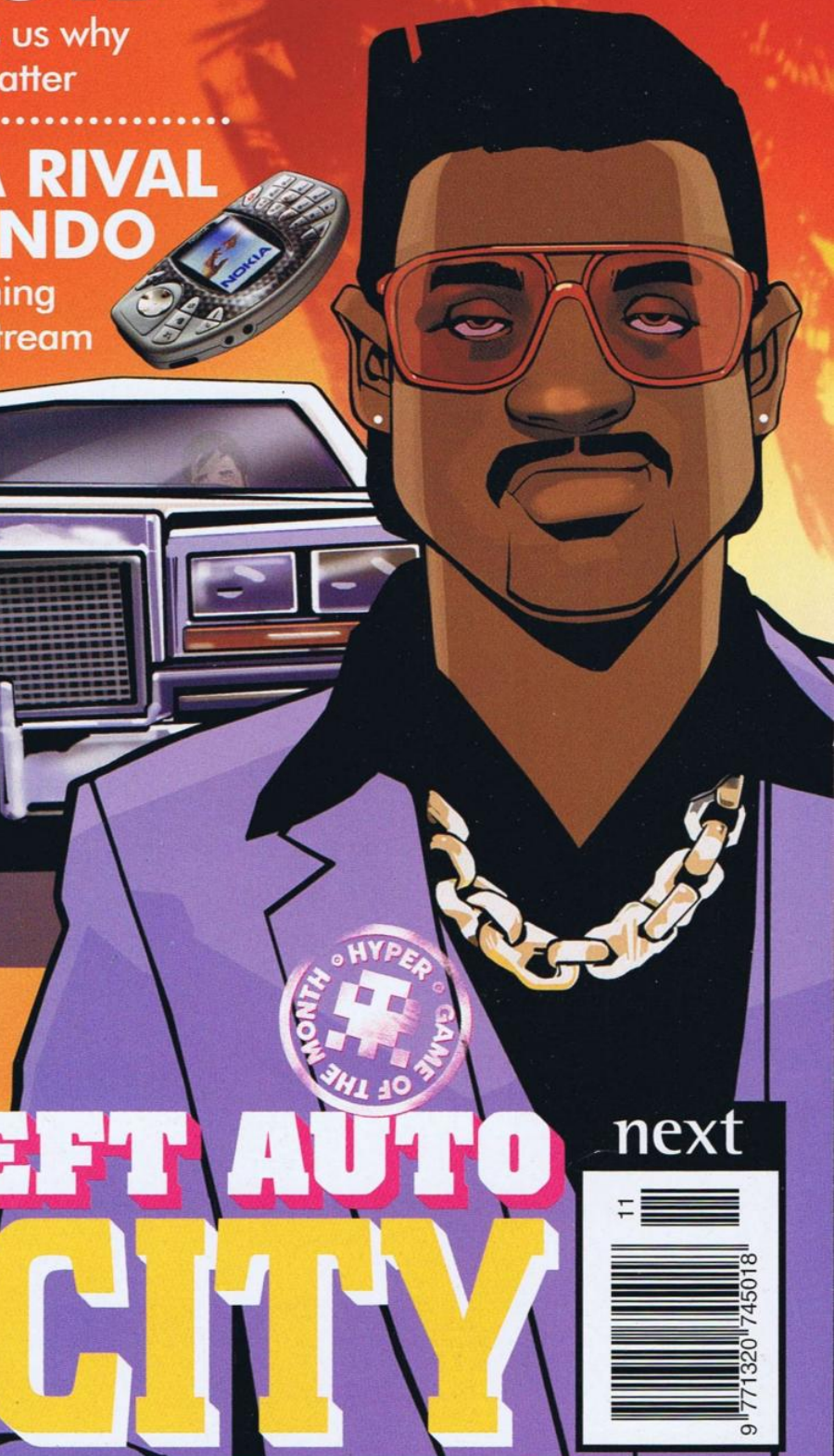
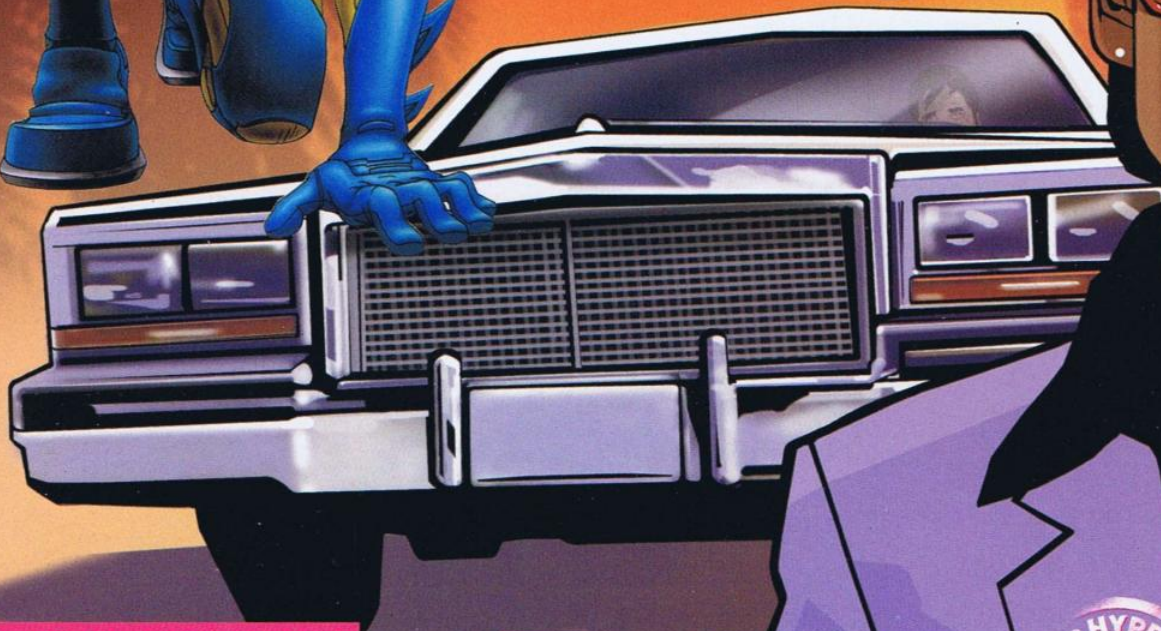
SPLINTER CELL
SAYONARA SNAKE
PC & Xbox espionage excellence

SAMUS RETURNS
METROID

The GBA shows us why size doesn't matter

NOKIA RIVAL
NINTENDO

Mobile gaming goes mainstream



IT'S A JOYRIDE!

It'll sell a million PS2s this Christmas, and it's the only game you'll ever need

GRAND THEFT AUTO
VICE CITY

next

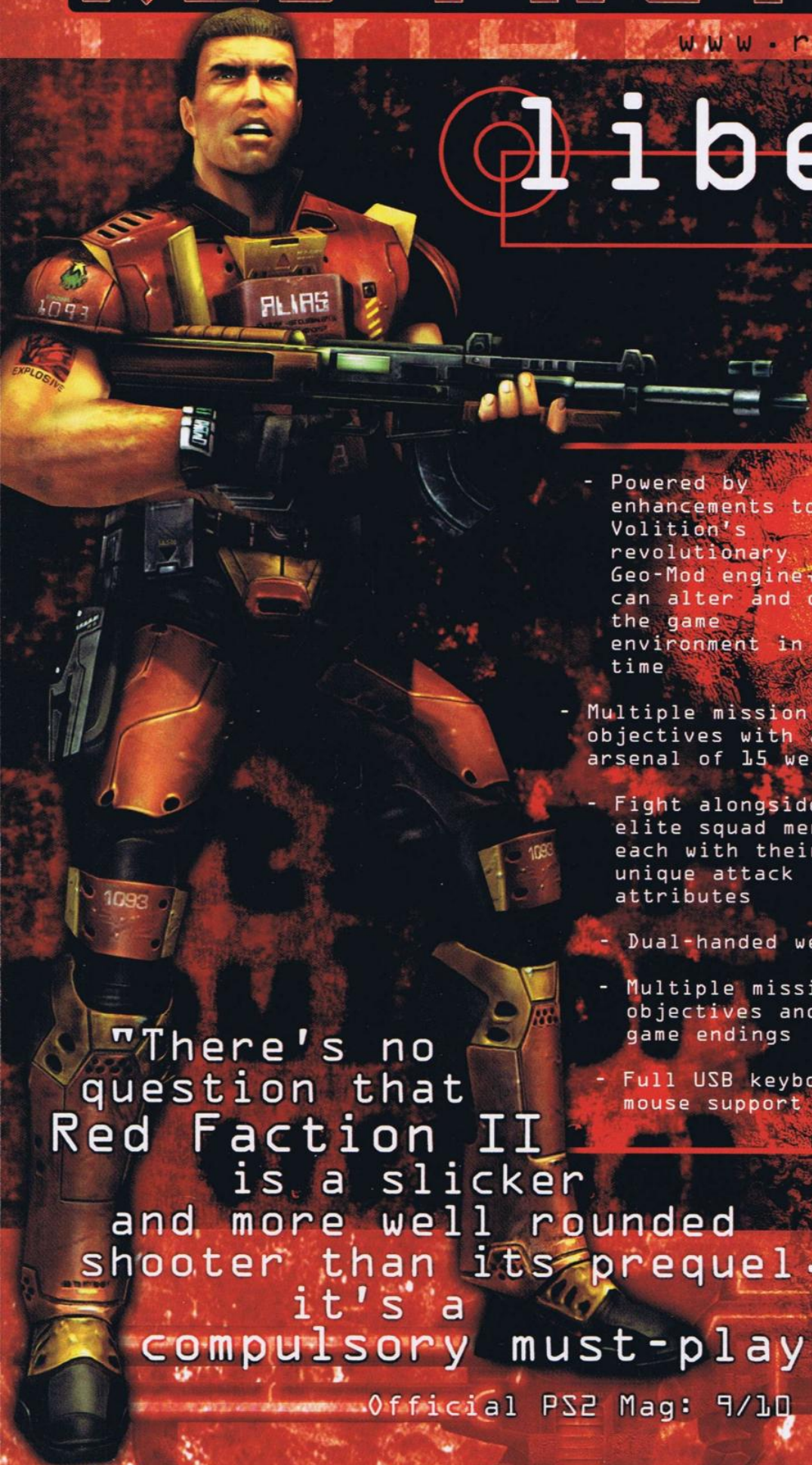


REVIEWS: HITMAN 2 • BLINX • 007 NIGHTFIRE • CLONE WARS • TWO TOWERS

RED★FACTION II

www.redfaction2.com

liberate



- Powered by enhancements to Volition's revolutionary Geo-Mod engine, players can alter and destroy the game environment in real-time

- Multiple mission objectives with an arsenal of 15 weapons

- Fight alongside 5 elite squad members each with their own unique attack attributes

- Dual-handed weapons

- Multiple mission objectives and game endings

- Full USB keyboard/mouse support

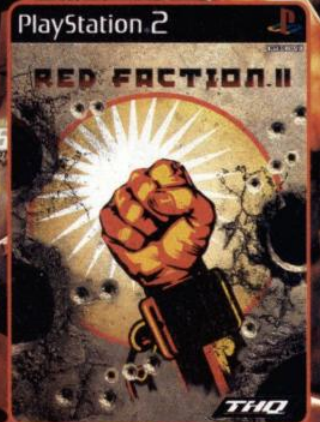
"There's no question that Red Faction II is a slicker and more well rounded shooter than its prequel... it's a compulsory must-play!"

Official PS2 Mag: 9/10

MA15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

november 2002

your PS2



PlayStation 2



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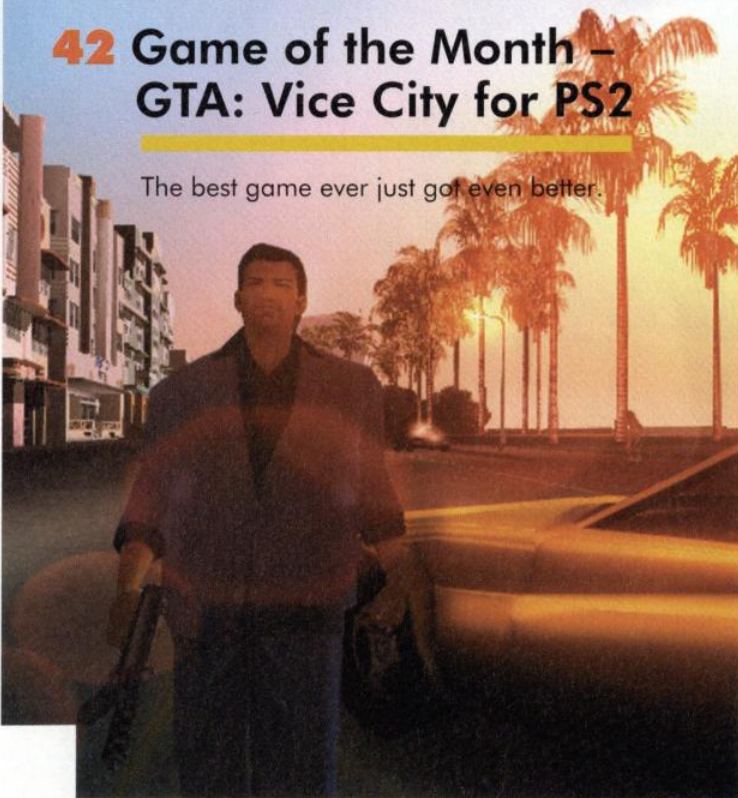


18 Hyper Christmas Buyers Guide Pt.2

All the stuff you really wished you were getting for Christmas!

42 Game of the Month – GTA: Vice City for PS2

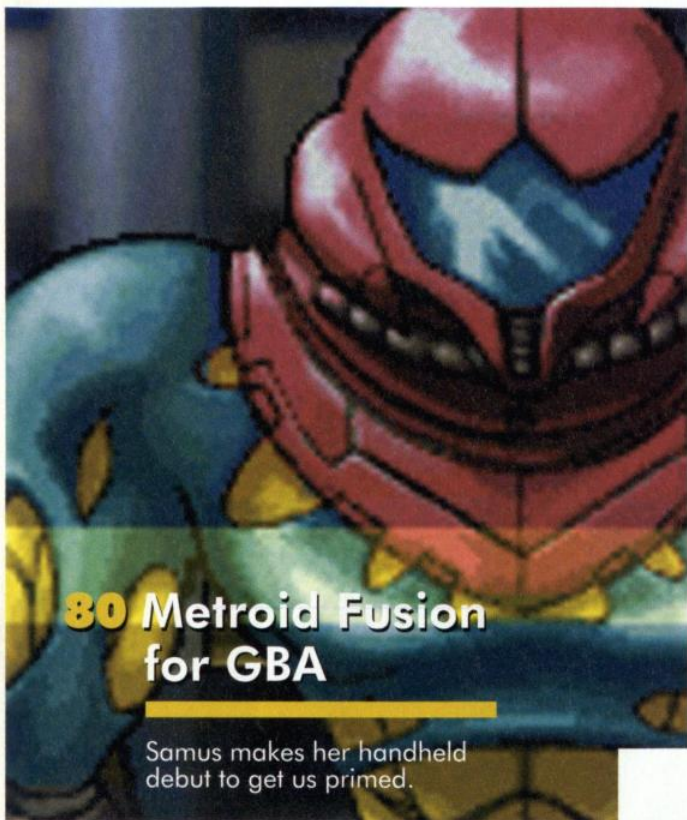
The best game ever just got even better.



56 Star Fox Adventures for GCN

Rare's final GameCube game. Sob sob.

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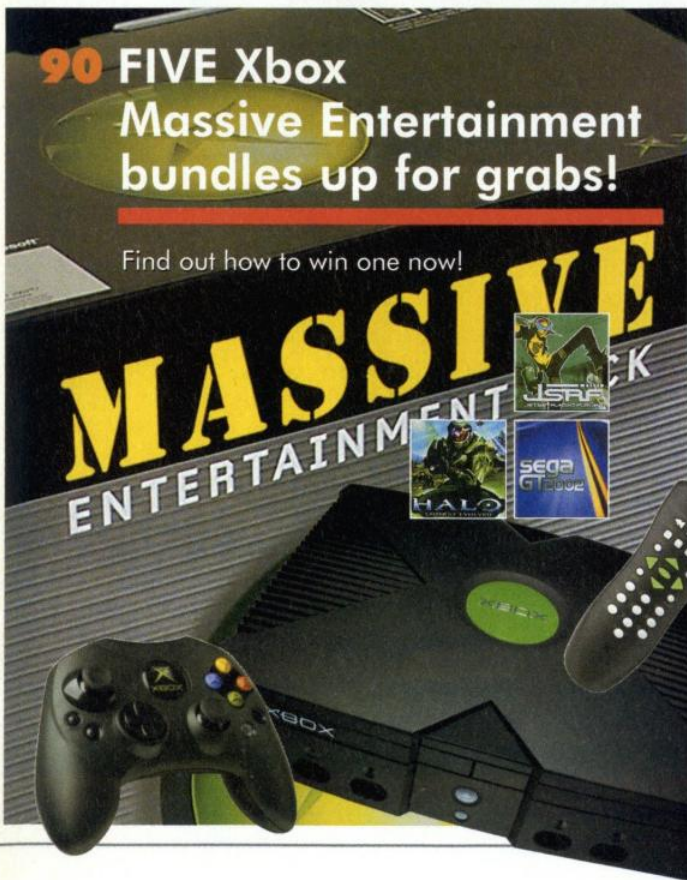
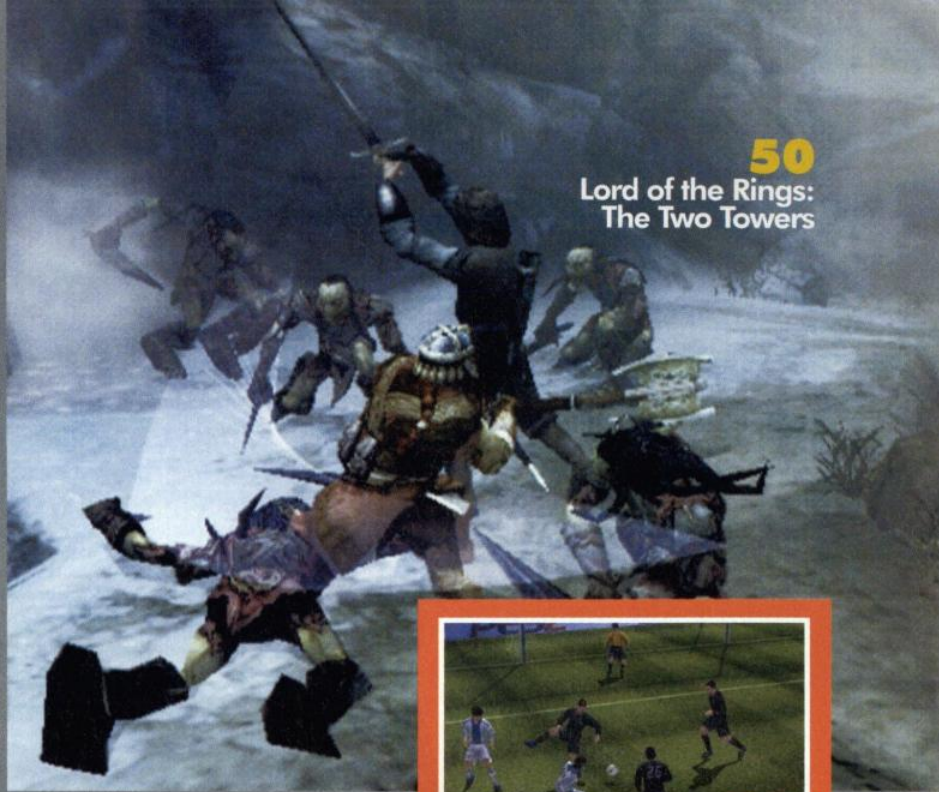
80 Metroid Fusion for GBA

Samus makes her handheld debut to get us primed.

90 FIVE Xbox Massive Entertainment bundles up for grabs!

Find out how to win one now!

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HYPER»»



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EDITORIAL

»» How is one expected to deal with everyday duties such as going to work, eating, remembering to sleep, breathing – that sort of thing – when GTA: Vice City is nestled inside our PS2's disc drive? It's no use getting someone to hide it from you, because then you have an excuse to play Pro Evolution Soccer 2 twenty four hours a day. There must be a better way to put a stop to this socially destructive piece of software. We need to call up 3DO and have them flood the games warehouses with more copies of Army Men – that should stop copies of Vice City getting into the hands of our children. Maybe we could try and get the dog to eat it – God knows he has a taste for other inedible objects, like essays. Possibly, we could even get Microsoft to buy Rockstar and have them recall all copies of Vice City to prevent normally hardworking plebeians all over the world staying home from the office to ride motorbikes up into places motorbikes aren't really meant to go. Ahh, damn it. I guess there's no escaping it. We'll all have to surrender ourselves to the hypnotic wizardry of Rockstar North's Best Game Ever(tm), and be done with it. Damn you Rockstar, damn you! Now, where did I park that Infernus...?

Eliot Fish »» Editor



SPYRO™

ENTER THE DRAGONFLY



PlayStation 2

GAME BOY ADVANCE™



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NEWS



IN THE NEWS: PS2 Online Service ■ Nokia N-Gage ■ Nintendo fined ■ First ever FFX-2 screenshots

ONLINE GAMING

PS2 TO FINALLY GO ONLINE

Aussie PS2 Broadband Network Plan Revealed

Mid-2003 is the proposed date for Sony to take the PS2 online in Australia. The PS2 network gaming service already has over 100,000 gamers online in Japan, and is slowly picking up steam in the USA with thousands of regular players taking each other on in Madden NFL 2003 and SOCOM: Navy Seals. Sony has formed partnerships with a number of broadband ISPs in order to deliver the service here in Australia. It's a good thing they didn't simply rely on the greedy and unreliable Telstra.

MORE ARENAS THAN TINA'S WEDDING

A broadband gaming pack which includes the PS2 Ethernet Network Adaptor, an as yet unannounced online game and a start-up disc which will contain demos for other upcoming online games will be available to purchase from retail stores and ISP outlets. This pack will sell at the price of a regular PS2 game, which is great news.

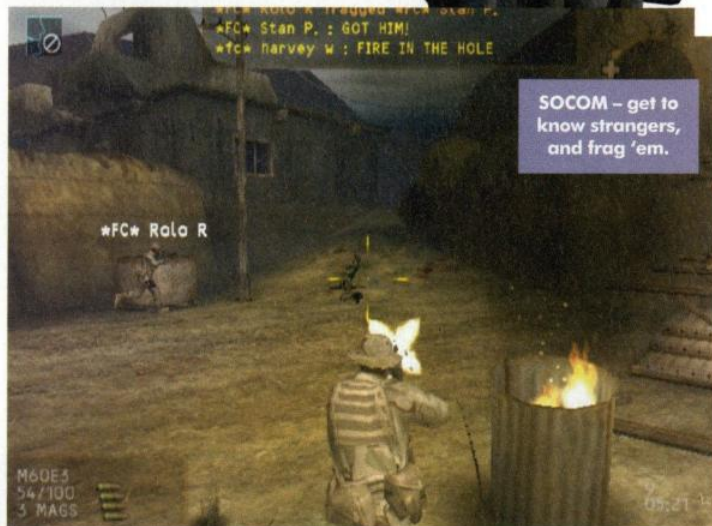
The first wave of online PS2 games here in Australia that have been confirmed by SCEA include SOCOM: Navy Seals, Hardware: Online Arena, Destruction Derby Online Arena, Twisted Metal Online, Frequency 2, My Street, ATV Offroad, This is Football, Everquest PS2, Tony Hawk 3 & 4 and World Rally Championship Online. We can't help but notice

that Final Fantasy XI is not in the list, which leads us to suspect that the troubled game may not even see the light of day in PAL territories.

Chris Deering, President of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe promises, "PlayStation 2 owners with broadband internet access will be able to purchase a Network Adaptor and immediately start playing a great selection of multiplayer games online. It will be simple to set up, exciting to play and affordable. Our philosophy is to have a very diverse and inclusive platform that will enable content companies, games publishers and ISP portals to provide consumers with the broadest selection of new online experiences and entertainment from a variety of sources."

Whilst the service in the USA also included the ability to connect via a dial-up modem, Australia is restricted to broadband only, which whilst disappointing for some, is the only realistic option for online gaming. You will also not need the PS2 Hard Drive for the service, and Sony has in fact not revealed when the HD will be available.

Sony will look to recruit gamers to help them test the service from au.playstation.com for an initial trial period in early 2003. We'll knock on wood and hope that everything goes smoothly, and that we truly will be plugging our PS2s into a broadband network come Winter.

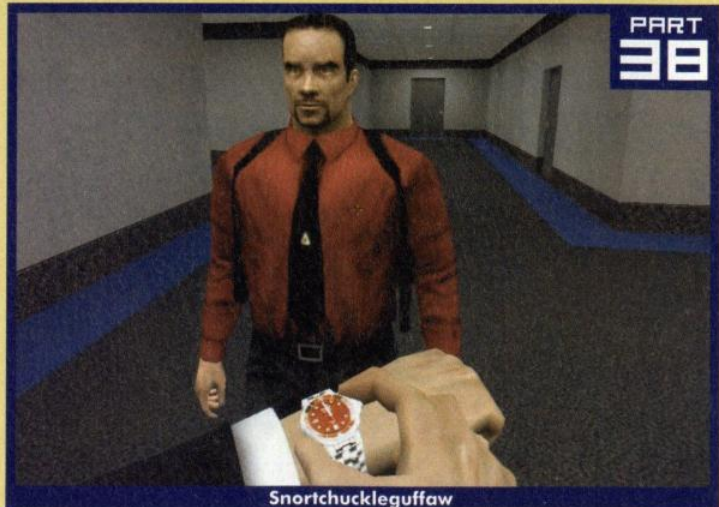


“It will be simple to set up, exciting to play and affordable.”



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 38 in the Subject line.



Snortchuckleguffaw



Gimmie your PS2 password!



No campers allowed.

Sometimes the only way to defeat a Predator is to become one.



METROID FUSION



Out November 29. Only on **GAME BOY ADVANCE**

NINTENDO.COM.AU

RR3635/H

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TECH SPECS

Modes: GSM/GPRS 900/1800/1900

Key Features: Java, Colour Screen, MMS, Polyphonic Tones, Bluetooth, Built-in Speakerphone, WAP Microbrowser, Symbian OS

Don't forget it's also a mobile phone!

MOBILE GAMING

ENGAGING GAMING!

Nokia to rival Nintendo?

Nokia are releasing a new GBA-style mobile phone dubbed the N-Gage. With a cartridge-type slot for memory cards, the N-Gage will run on the Symbian OS and be focussed around game playing. The phone has been designed to look remarkably like the Game Boy Advance, with the 5 and 7 buttons slightly raised like the GBA's A and B buttons. Sega have also apparently signed on to produce games for the device, which will come on the small memory carts as opposed to being downloaded to the phone. There's no price or date yet, but we'll bring you a review in the near future in our hardware section. On a side note, Ericsson are also continuing development of a 64-bit gaming handheld called Red Jade, so more on that one too when solid info comes to hand.

OVERFLOW

A leaked Alpha version of id Software's Doom III has made the rounds of the internet lately, sporting three playable maps and the E3 demo. Naturally, id Software are outraged by the leak, which appears to have been the fault of one of their technology partners. The game is still early in development, and judgements on the quality of the game should not be made based on this very early pirated code.

Mindfire Entertainment, the company that holds the rights to produce feature films based on the House of the Dead and Crazy Taxi games, have just snapped up the rights to produce a film based on Sega's Shinobi license. The film is already slated for release in 2004.

In the United States, Electronics Boutique managed to sell 500,000 copies of Grand Theft Auto: Vice City on the very first day of release. Hee hee. Sweet.

Some unexpected news at hand: Rare have started work on a Massively Multiplayer Online RPG for the Xbox, involving members of both the Conker and Perfect Dark teams.

Sony has already announced that development has begun on both an expansion pack and a full-blown sequel to their new PS2 action title The Getaway. We can't help thinking it's a slightly over confident move, considering that the gaming public has not yet passed judgement on The Getaway.

Nintendo has revealed a title for their Zelda Gamecube game. In Japan at least, the game will be known as The Legend of Zelda: Winds of Takuto, and will be released over there on December 13.

Sega AM2 may possibly reconsider development of Shenmue 3 if sales for Shenmue 2 on Xbox continue to be as poor as they are.

A live action fantasy adventure Pac-Man MOVIE? You'd better believe it...

We have heard that Artoon has already begun work on a sequel to their time-travelling cat game, Blinx. If they read our review, maybe they'll think a little harder about this one.

Nintendo are releasing a sweet silver GameCube over in Japan this Christmas! You can even buy a matching silver WaveBird! We hope Nintendo Australia bring us some cool colours like this.

The upcoming Pokémon games for Game Boy Advance have been confirmed to have no compatibility with previous Pokémon Game Boy titles nor Pokémon Stadium on N64. It's a whole new (poké)ball game now.

We have heard that Panzer Dragoon Orta for the Xbox will feature old classic Panzer Dragoon levels as bonus missions when you finish the game. What a nice nostalgic touch from Sega.

Good news for PS2 fans – Sony have currently completed development on roughly 50% of the upcoming Gran Turismo 4.



SAMUS SECRET

Metroid Prime's prizes...

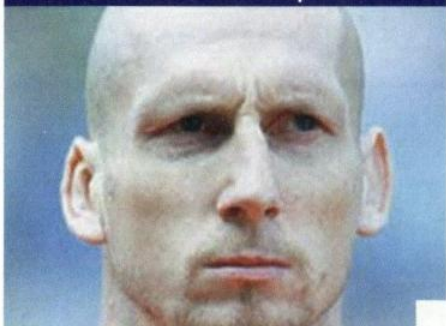
Play through Metroid Prime on the Nintendo GameCube and you'll be treated to a very special treat. The original NES Metroid game is fully playable! The catch is that you'll have to play through Metroid Fusion and use the link cable to unlock it.



Hitman's Agent 47

↑ SEPARATED AT BIRTH? ↓

Lazio centre-back Jaap Stam



BIZ NEWS

NINTENDO CAUGHT PRICE FIXING

Mario slaps a fine on Mario

The European Commission has fined Nintendo 149 million Euros (that's almost half a billion Aussie dollars... yikes) for colluding with its distributors to maintain artificially high price differences in the EU between 1991 and 1998. This was the fifth largest fine ever imposed for any anti-trust infringement. The European competition commissioner, Mario Monti, stated "Every year, millions of European families spend large amounts of money on video games. They have the right to buy the games and consoles at the lowest price the market can possibly offer..." and went on to criticise Nintendo for, basically, price fixing. Some games were up to 65-67% cheaper in the UK than in countries such as Spain and Germany. Ouch. And yes, that guy is really named Mario!



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CHEERS!

NINTENDO HERE FOR THE LONG HAUL

After a bit of industry speculation that the GameCube was Nintendo's last piece of hardware, and that they might have been considering switching solely to software development like Sega, the rumour has been crushed. Nintendo's American VP, Peter MacDougall, stated that development on successors to both the GameCube and Game Boy Advance were already underway. "Nintendo is in the software business — to stay. Nintendo is in the handheld business — to stay. And Nintendo is most certainly in the home console business — to stay," MacDougall enforced.

WINNERS

hyperactive

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

Nick McFarlane, Bentley WA

SPIDER-MAN

Jon Duff, Redhead, NSW
Angela Ruhland, Victoria Pt, Qld
Bronwen Morey, Bulleen, Vic
James Dolby, Pennant Hills, NSW
Nan Sawyer, Paddington, Qld

Hyper 109

ICEWIND DALE II

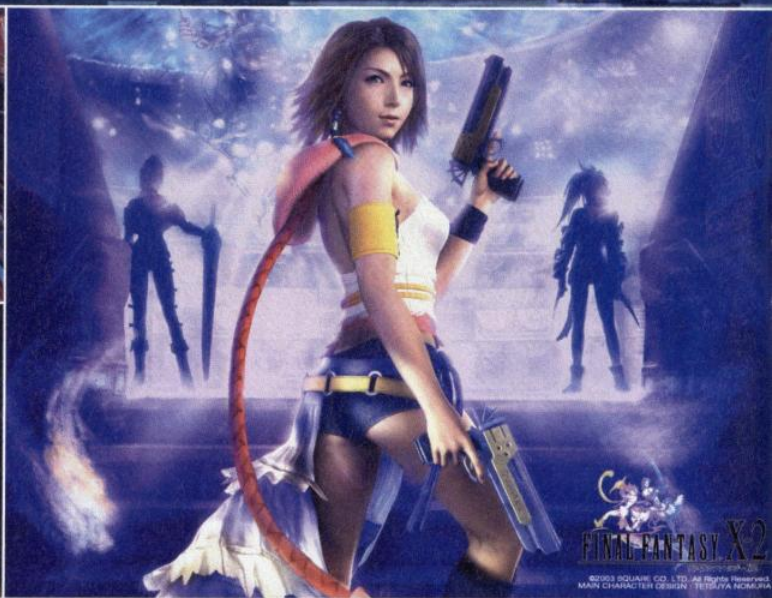
Syvanne Pereira, Glenmore Park, NSW
Paul Karp, Lane Cove, NSW
Debbie Watson, Highgate Hill, Qld
Bruce Graham-Hill, Rochedale Sth, Qld
Evan Armstrong, Greensborough, Vic

HUNTER THE RECKONING

Glenn Walden, Pennant Hills, NSW
Rob Emery, Logan Central, Qld
Ashley Jones, Ellalong, NSW
C. Marrant, Gordon, NSW
Darryl van Vugt, Flagstaff Hill, SA

CONVERSE

R. Willis, Trevallyn, Tas



FIRST SCREENS! FINAL FANTASY X-2 ON PS2



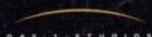


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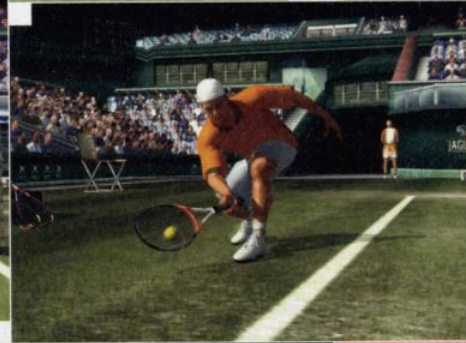


MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

XBOX MICROSOFT

The insane cross-city "chase 'em up" that is Midtown Madness is making the transition from PC to Xbox. Midtown Madness has always been a very arcade-style experience, and thus suits the console environment perfectly. Paris and Washington D.C. are at your mercy as you tear around causing utter panic in the streets with your knack for dangerous driving. With over 30 different vehicles, it looks like fun, and hey, it's pretty too, no?





TOP SPIN
 >>> XBOX MICROSOFT

Microsoft has finally tried their hand at an in-house tennis game, and Top Spin is the result. Coming fully loaded with Xbox Live capabilities, Top Spin will actually allow online players from all over the world compete for the ranking of number one! Featuring 16 tennis superstars plus the ability to create your own player, Top Spin looks sweet! Expect it around the middle of 2003.

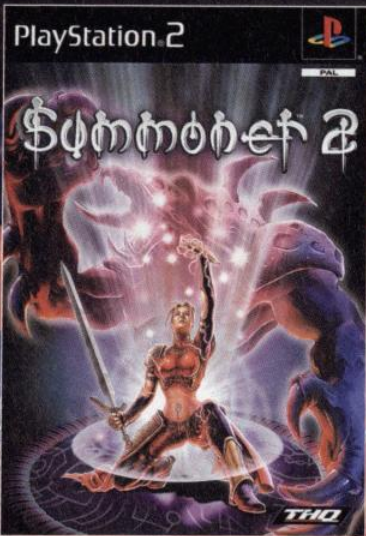
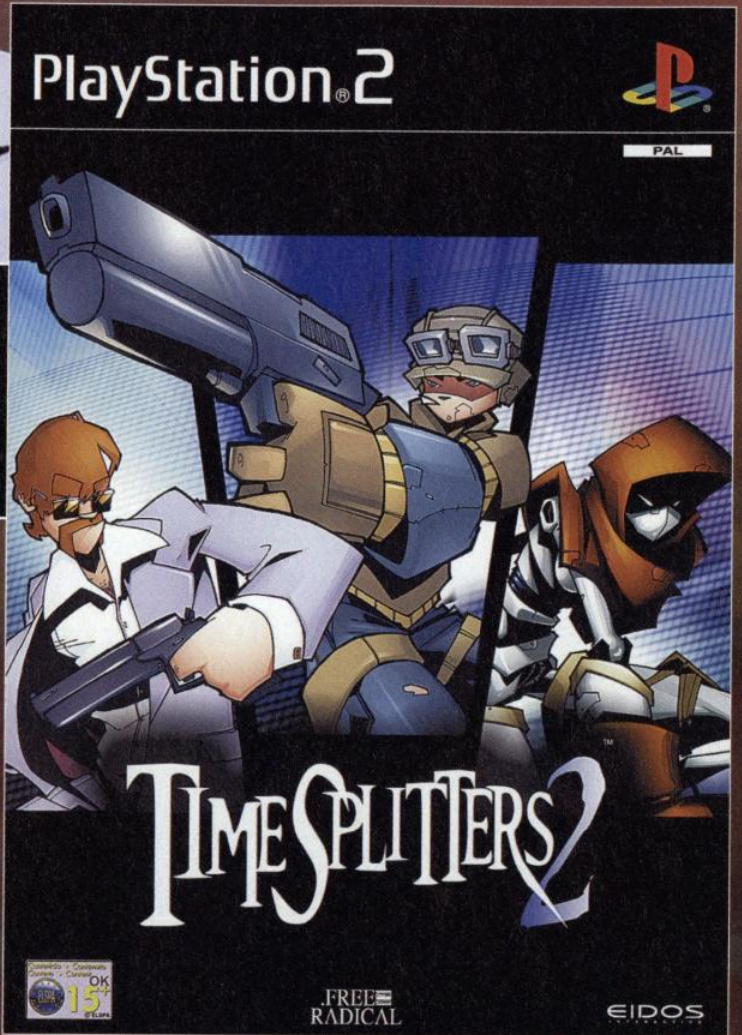
EYE CANDY

THE BIG GAMES



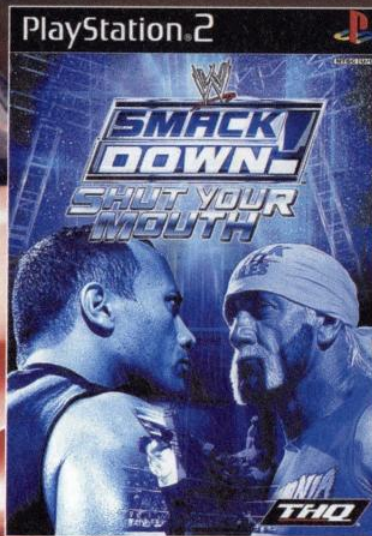
\$99⁹⁵

TimeSplitters 2 PS2 (M15+). Features sleek animation, superb single and multi-player options, well designed, focused levels and superior action. 11064



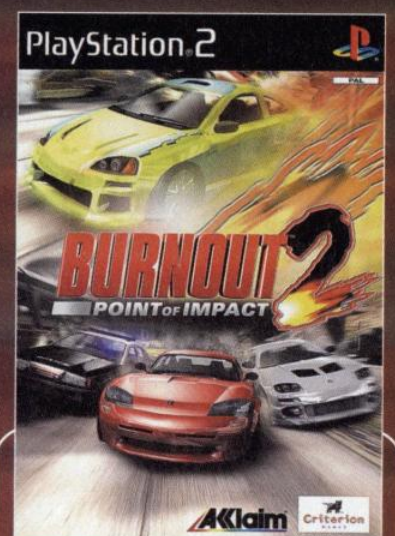
\$99⁹⁵

Summoner 2 PS2 (M15+), THQ90049



\$99⁹⁵

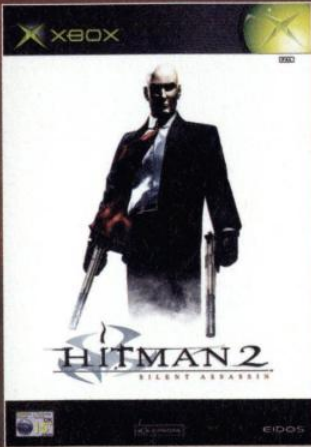
WWE Smackdown! 4: Shut Your Mouth PS2 (M15+), THQ90056



\$99⁹⁵

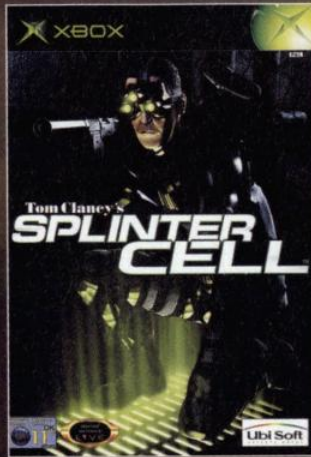
Burnout 2 PS2 (M15+), 33141

XBOX



\$99⁹⁵

Hitman 2
XBOX™
(MA15+). 11060



\$99⁹⁵

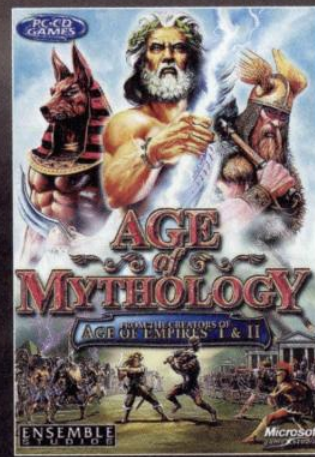
Splinter Cell
XBOX™
(M15+). 1128114

PC



\$89⁹⁵

Battlefield
1942 PC
(M15+). 509804



\$99⁹⁵

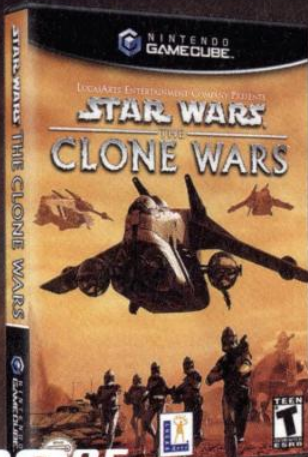
Microsoft® Age
of Mythology
PC (G8+). MSC2835

\$149⁹⁵

Microsoft® Age of
Mythology
Collectors Edition
PC (G8+). MSC2836



NINTENDO GAMECUBE



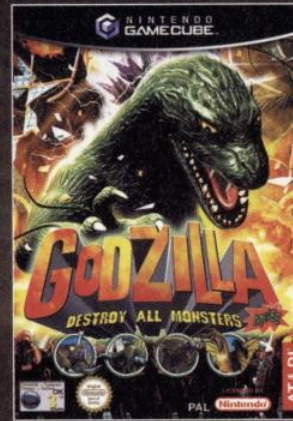
\$99⁹⁵

Star Wars: The Clone Wars
GC (M15+). 531228



\$99⁹⁵

Bond 007: Nightfire
GC (M15+). 5314593



\$89⁹⁵

Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters
Melee GC (G8+).11102

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HYPER :D CHRISTMAS BUYERS GUIDE PART 2



Welcome to Part 2 of Hyper's illustrious Christmas Buyers Guide. In this issue we'll be taking you through some of the hottest gadgets and freshest technology that's hitting the streets before Christmas... and some quirky cool shit too. As we said last issue, we won't be covering stuff that we've already showcased in our Hardware section, but hey, there's so much funky stuff out there that it doesn't matter! Enjoy...

DVD RECORDERS

Panasonic DMR-HS2

RRP: \$2799

■ Now this is what we're talking about! You see, we love the idea of hardware like TiVo that allows you to record TV shows to a built-in HD, but we're also suckers for the allure of DVD Recorders, so why not just put the two together? Fortunately, Panasonic did! Their new DMR-HS2 can both record up to 12 hours on 9.4GB DVD-RAM discs, 6 hours on DVD-R discs, and can hold up to 52 hours of high quality video on its 40GB HD. It's win win dammit! Well, actually, there is the little matter of the cost - this thing doesn't come cheap. Even so, this is one of those hybrid devices that will truly work, giving you the flexibility you need - nay, you demand - for editing, cataloguing and storing The Simpsons. Heheh.





TELEVISIONS

SONY 80cm AR SERIES FD TRINITRON WEGA

Sony Trinitron AR Series
RRP: \$2999 (KVAR34M36 model)

■ New from Sony is the AR series of WEGA TVs. As many of you know, within the mainstream consumer market (i.e. with the exception of manufacturers like Grundig) Sony make some of the best TVs, and the WEGAs are up at the top of the pile.

This is the perfect gaming TV – a huge 80cm ultra-flat screen, excellent colour definition, amazing image clarity and sharpness, and minimal glare and reflection. The 80cm AR series WEGA also comes with new technology that Sony have developed called DTE (Digital Texture Enhancer) that uses a digital processing system to further enhance picture detail and clarity. As for other details, the sound is quite awesome with TruSound enabled for two speaker surround sound emulation. The remote also features luminous buttons so say goodbye to fumbling around in the dark.

Plus, as you would expect, the KVAR34M36 comes with component input so you'll never have to put up with interlaced DVD playback and gaming. There's also S-Video inputs at the front and rear, one A/V input at the front and three at the rear, and audio out and monitor out at the rear. Very very slick indeed.

SPEAKERS

Logitech Z-680

RRP: \$899

■ You may remember many an issue ago how impressed we were with Logitech's Z-560 4.1 Speaker system. Well, the good news is that Logitech have a new system coming out in time for Christmas and it's a worthy successor to the Z-560s.

The new Z-680s are a 5.1 system with Dolby Digital and DTS hardware decoding. It also supports Dolby Pro Logic II, so when paired with DVD movies, music, PS2, GCN or Xbox it will always sound great. With 450 watts of RMS power, these speakers aren't to be sniffed at either. Just like the 560s one of the aspects that most impresses us about these speakers is the power of the subby. It's more powerful than the Z-560's with an eight-inch, long throw subwoofer driver with a flared base port, and produces a deep, rich bottom end that rarely distorts. We

drove it very hard indeed during our tests, and can confirm that bassheads will love it.

The satellites are very much as they were in the 560s, and the addition of the nicely designed center channel speaker rounds out the setup very well. As for inputs, this system is pretty much ready to go. We're talking digital optical and coaxial, as well as six channel analogue ins. There's even an input jack at the front, in case you want to plug in your mp3 portable (or similar device). The control center has also been considerably redesigned, resulting in a much more aesthetically pleasing silver panel, complete with a little LCD display allowing you to select input and decoder. If we were to pick faults with the system, we'd point out the annoying length of time it takes to switch between effects, and the rather plain looking remote.

Even so, just like the 560s, the system is THX certified, so there's a guarantee of performance and sound quality right there. Indeed, when it comes to sound quality and versatility the Z-680s are amazing value for money.



PHONES

Nokia 3650

RRP: TBA

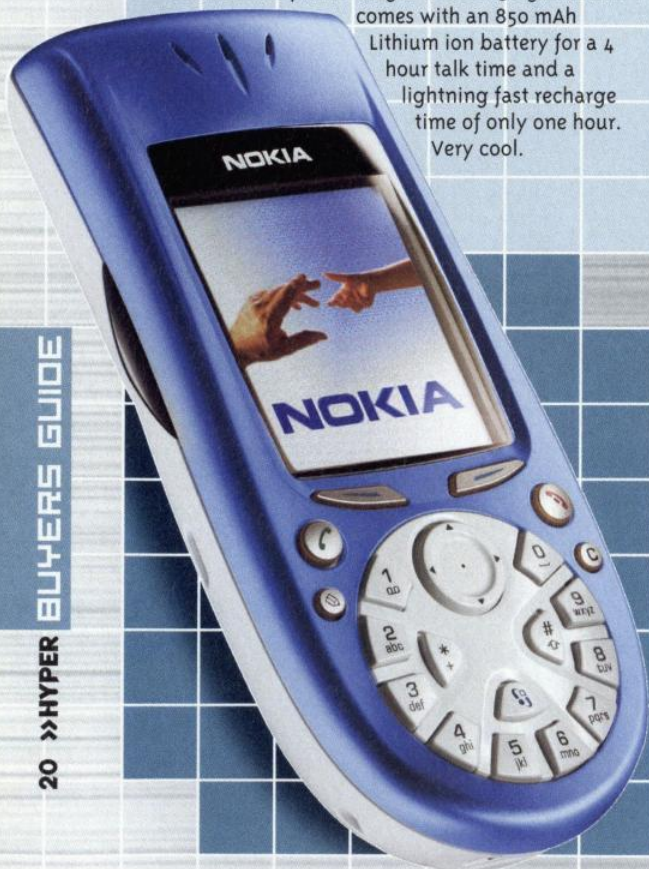
■ This Christmas there are two phones that truly deserve your attention if you're after cutting edge technology and a wealth of features — the Nokia 7650 and the Sony Ericsson P800. Of course, we've already covered them extensively (see Hyper Hardware section issues 103 and 105). Rather than tread familiar ground, we thought we'd look at a lower profile phone that also excels. In fact, in some areas the 3650 is even more cutting edge.

For starters, the 3650 is one hell of a funky looking phone, with an interesting rounded base, circular number pad and glossy silver sheen. The 12-bit colour screen is huge too, displaying 176x208 pixels. Plus, users can buy a whole range of snap on covers for further personalisation.

As is rapidly becoming standard in mobile phones (thanks to the introduction of MMS and of course, the ongoing process of device convergence), the 3650 is feature rich, and has an integrated VGA digital camera that captures at 640x480. It supports video capture and playback (through the Series 60 version of the RealOne Mobile Player) and playback of streaming video (through HSCSD and GPRS). The phone has 4MB of internal RAM, but you can expand that through the 3V MMC memory card slot. You can also web browse through WAP 2.0 and XHTML.

The 3650 runs on the Symbian OS, and you'll be able to download Symbian and Java apps to the phone. Other features include infrared and Bluetooth support (including multiplayer games over both), voice dialing and voice recording, and of course, polyphonic sound. The 3650 supports both midi and wav ringtones, so now you can truly irritate any other people within earshot. The phone weighs a mere 130 grams and comes with an 850 mAh

Lithium ion battery for a 4 hour talk time and a lightning fast recharge time of only one hour. Very cool.



HANDHELDS/PDAS

Fujitsu Siemens Pocket LOOX

RRP: TBA

■ Fujitsu Siemens' Pocket LOOX is currently one of the best handheld/PDAs on the market. It's based on the Pocket PC platform and runs on an Intel PXA 250 400Mhz XScale CPU, with 32MB ROM and 64MB RAM built in — plus an integrated SD/MMC memory slot, as well as a Compact Flash type II slot.

The LOOX comes (as does seemingly everything else on the planet) with integrated Bluetooth, which packs a very impressive range of up to 100 meters. The unit supports a huge range of Bluetooth profiles and has very easy to use software, so it's all very straightforward. Plus, the LOOX even has a nifty hardware switch at the top of the unit for turning Bluetooth on and off. It also comes packing USB 1.1, a headphone jack and an IR port. The face of the unit has shortcut buttons for Calendar, Contacts, Tasks and Today apps, and a very useable D-pad for navigation. The unit itself looks sleek but once you turn it on you'll fall in love — the 240x320 16bit

reflective touchscreen TFT display is awesome.

The Pocket LOOX is based around Microsoft's Pocket PC 2002 software, with plenty of excellent applications. In addition to the normal stable of Pocket PC apps like Pocket Excel, Pocket Word, Pocket Outlook, Pocket IE and Windows Media Player, you get a CD of bonus apps that allow you to do things like save a ghost image of your OS/RAM onto a memory stick, send and receive faxes, encrypt folders, and choose between a standard mode and power saving mode of operation.

There's also an GSM/GPRS plug-on module on the way that can turn the device into a phone (the speaker is positioned at the top in the center and the microphone is in the bottom right, and the Calendar and Tasks buttons are coloured green and red for when used like this). Combine all this with excellent battery life, and you have a nifty handheld.



Palm Tungsten T

RRP: TBA

■ The Tungsten T is the first in a new wave of devices from Palm. It's part of Palm's effort to get back on top of handheld technology and compete with the Pocket PC platform, and we must admit we're quite impressed.

This is the first Palm based on OS 5.0, the first to have integrated Bluetooth 1.1, and the first to run on the new ARM hardware architecture. It's powered by an OMAP™ 1510 processor from Texas Instruments running at 144MHz (the previous fastest Palm ran at only 33MHz), with 16MB RAM. 16MB isn't really much for this kind of device, but at least you can expand its capacity through the SD slot. The 320x320 screen runs at quadruple the resolution of previous models, and is beautifully crisp, with warm colours and a great backlight.

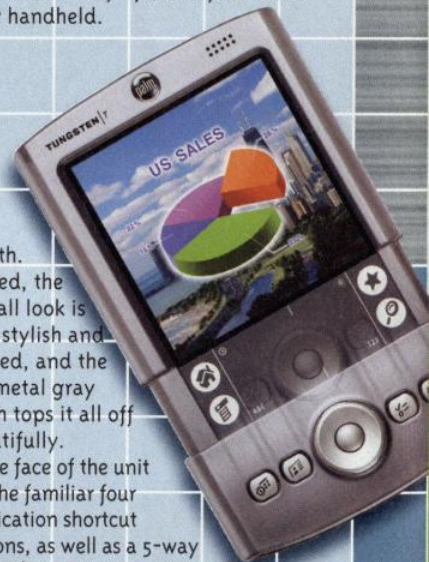
The first thing that you'll notice about the physical design of the unit is the sweet slide down function that reveals the graffiti handwriting area. It's a nice touch that means when you don't need the graffiti pad, the unit is very compact indeed. The stylus is funky too, with a spring-loaded top that you click in to make it pop out to

full length.

Indeed, the overall look is very stylish and refined, and the gunmetal gray finish tops it all off beautifully.

The face of the unit has the familiar four application shortcut buttons, as well as a 5-way D-pad (i.e. the center click in). On the left side is a voice recorder button and headphone jack, and the top has the infrared receiver, Bluetooth port, power button, slot for the stylus and SDIO compatible SD and MMC expansion slot.

The suite of software that comes with the T is good, although at the moment there's no video player, mp3 player or instant message client. Expect these shortcomings to be fixed soon. There's nothing strikingly new about OS 5.0, but as far as usability goes, Palm is once again at the forefront. Palm are back in business baby, and we pity the fool who don't like T.



MP3 PORTABLES

Bang and Olufsen BeoSound 2

RRP: \$1,400 (including headphones)

■ Bang and Olufsen. You may have heard of them. They make top-end equipment for the home, be it TVs, speakers or sound systems. They're renowned for amazing style in their designs, as well as superior quality... and inevitably a superior price tag. For our buyer's guide, Bang and Olufsen were kind enough to send us their new portable mp3 player to test. Despite their kindness, we can't lie to you, our dear readers - they've seriously dropped the ball on this one.

The only thing the BeoSound 2 has going for it is relatively slick industrial design. It's obvious that no one actually thought the design of this thing through. Let's go through the checklist. What's the best thing about the top mp3 portables today like the iPod? Huge storage space. Rather than giving us a zogig drive B&O have given us a 128MB MMC card. What else is great about the iPod? Well, navigating through all your music is a breeze thanks to the LCD screen and slick interface. Oh oh, someone at B&O forgot to put an LCD on! In other words, you have no idea what track is playing - you're driving blind throughout the whole experience. Luckily you can only really fit an hour and a half of music on the card, otherwise it would be a very confusing experience. The other great thing about the iPod is value for money. Yes, it is expensive, but it stores a heap of music, is very versatile and it looks so slick.

The BeoSound 2 also looks slick, but for what it actually does, it's ridiculously overpriced. The unit alone is \$1,250 - without headphones. They're an extra \$150 on top, nudging the cost of the system up to \$1,400. And if you want to get a little more storage space, you're looking at close to another grand for a 512MB card. So we wouldn't recommend this to anyone... but we have to admit that it is a sexy looking unit. And although we prefer phat bin style headphones, B&O's are pretty tasty. They don't actually sit right in the ear, rather just outside, and have three sets of moving parts so that you can rotate and lengthen them to sit comfortably. In all, however, the BeoSound 2 is an example of a product that's all style and no substance.



THE REAL DEAL

iPod

RRP: (20GB) \$1045

■ If it's a portable mp3 player you're after then you really ought to look no further than Apple's iPod. It's now available in a 20GB model AND a Windows version (with a Fat32 formatted HD no less), so there's really no excuse - this is the top of the line when it comes to portable mp3 players. Plus, you can use it as an external Firewire drive.

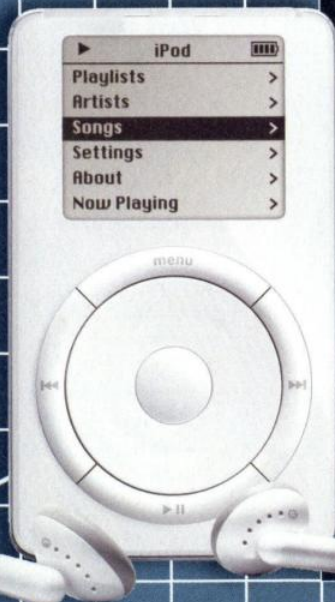
We love it.

Nomad Jukebox Zen

RRP: (10GB) \$799

■ The only other products that can really stand up to Apple's iPod are from Creative. First up is the Nomad Jukebox Zen, which comes with 10GB storage and a casing that is highly "reminiscent" of Apple's iPod, but ultimately nowhere near as slick, and a little cheap looking. RRP is \$799, and there's a 20GB model on the way.

Also available is Creative's Jukebox 3, which comes with either 20 or 40GB storage. Again, the iPod wins out over this one in terms of style and usability, but if you need more storage, the 40GB option is still a good one. Plus, the Jukebox 3 sounds great thanks to the sound quality of 98dB SNR.





HANDY CAMS

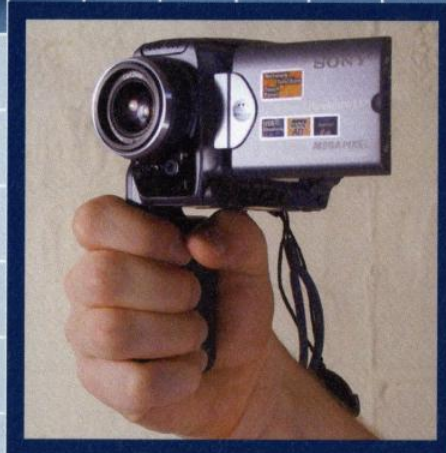
SONY DCR-IP55E

RRP: \$3999

■ Wow. This thing is tiny! Getting Sony's new handycam out of the box felt a little bit like picking a newborn baby out of its cradle, it's so tiny and cute. Sony have kept it small in part thanks to the new-ish format that the camera uses — MicroMV. The tapes are miniscule, something like 30% of the size of the Mini DV format. The standard was designed for both its size, but also for ease of integration with PCs and digital editing in mind, as video is recorded in Mpeg2. Each MicroMV cassette even has 64K of internal memory which lets the camera know how many clips there are, where they were recorded, how much space is left on the tape and so on.

MicroMV is written at 12Mb/s, or half that of DV, so when transferred to your HD the video is significantly smaller. Fortunately, picture quality isn't compromised all that much, and thanks to a higher density PB technology and double scan data reading system, you get much higher accuracy in data reading and transfer to your PC. Indeed, picture quality is roughly equal to DV, with more than 520 lines of horizontal video resolution and good still images (1152x864), plus mpeg audio layer 2 stereo sound.

The DCR-IP55E comes with a touch screen 180,000 pixel precision viewfinder LCD and even a stylus pen, so most of the menu navigation and setting changes are made through this interface. You can even frame a shot then touch the area of the LCD that you want to focus on. One interesting element of the camera's design is the handgrip that swings down from the camera's side — it's comfortable and



also makes keeping the camera steady easier. The handgrip also serves a double purpose, storing the Infolithium battery. Unfortunately, the downside of this design is that the camera requires two hands to access the functions you'll need.

Another neat touch is that this model has network connectivity options, including Bluetooth wireless, so given a Bluetooth enabled phone or PDA, you could transfer pictures from the camcorder and email or MMS them to friends. Realistically though, it's easier to simply download the contents of the flash card to your PC and do it that way. Other features of the camcorder include a Carl Zeiss F1.8 Vario-Sonnar video lens, Super Steady Shot, a 10X optical zoom and a 120X digital zoom.

Two words of warning though. Firstly, this camera takes a little getting used to because of its size. Not everything is easily accessible. Secondly, get yourself a FireWire card if you're going to buy this camera. USB streaming is a pain in the ass — it's much easier to dump video using the FireWire link. The FireWire is bi-directional too, so not only can you archive from MicroMV to your PC but you can dump the edited footage back onto the tape. Definitely worth a look.



COFFEE

Krups Novo 4100

RRP: \$695

■ Every gamer needs a good source of caffeine, and Krups make the best home coffee machines around. Krups espresso machines start from around \$100 but for the seriously coffee inclined, the Novo 4100 is THE solution. This is a highly advanced coffee maker with an electronic control panel, LED indicator lamp, ThermoBlock heating system, memory function and a hot water facility that lets you pre-warm cups or prepare tea. Perfect espresso or a frothy latte to keep you awake into the wee hours are just a large amount of money away... doh.



DIGITAL CAMERAS

Digital cameras have been steadily gaining popularity over the last few years, and as is usual for any new and significant technology, quality has been going up and prices have been coming down. In fact, good quality digital cameras are now within the reach of pretty much everyone. Screw that though, we thought we'd look at the top end ultra-schmick cameras that we wish we had the money to buy! Also, for those of you who have digital cameras but don't have the means to print out your happy snaps properly, we highly recommend doing it through www.ofoto.com — it's painfree, reasonably priced and they offer a variety of services.

Canon Powershot G3

RRP: \$TBA

■ The third generation of Canon Powershots have finally arrived, and as you would expect, this leading digi cam range is stronger than ever.

On raw specs along, this is a highly desirable camera. The Powershot G3 has a 4 Megapixel CCD sensor (meaning snaps up to 2272x1704), a 35-140mm 4x optical zoom lens and an f/2.0-3.0 aperture (the largest of any Powershot to date). Canon have also developed a new proprietary digital signal processor called DIGIC (Digital Imaging Integrated Circuit) for better image quality, faster processing speeds and even movie clips up to three minutes long at 320x240.

This is just such a feature rich camera. You can select picture sensitivity from 50 to 400 ISO, as if you have the full range of film loaded at once. There are thirteen image quality settings including three JPEG compression levels, or you can save the image in the uncompressed RAW file format for later processing. Or how about the FlexiZone AF/AE that allows you to change the focus to off-center objects without repositioning the camera? Or 12 EOS-based shooting modes so you can customise the camera to suit your shooting style? It's all there.

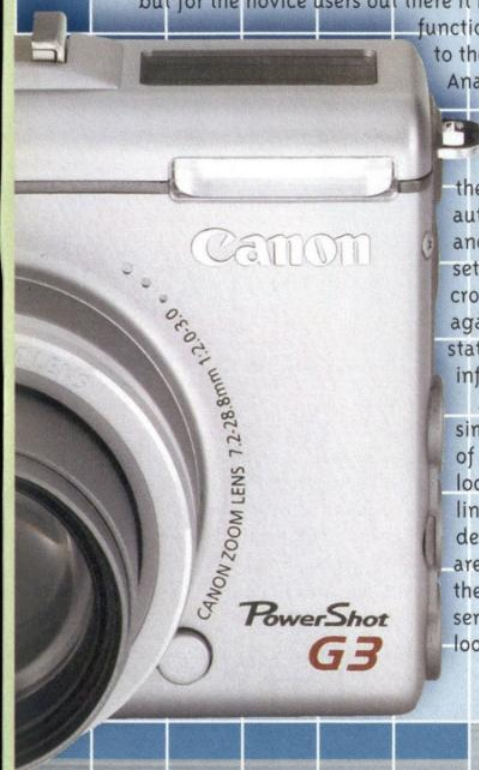
The 1.8 inch LCD monitor works a treat too, and get this — when it's flipped and rotated out for self portraits it displays a correctly oriented mirror image of the scene so that you can position yourself in shot naturally.

The Powershot G3 is an excellent mid to high range solution, but for the novice users out there it has all the automated

functions you could need thanks to the iSAPS (Intelligent Scene Analysis based on

Photographic Space) system. Simply press the shutter halfway in, and the camera determines ideal auto focus, auto exposure and auto white balance settings by analysing and cross referencing the scene against 60 years of Canon's statistical photographic information. Full on eh?

Although bearing many similarities to the G2 in terms of design, the G3 definitely looks slicker, thanks to better lines and a less rounded design. Important functions are also easier to access than they were on the G2. For serious quality it's hard to look past this one.



WATCHES

Nike Triax Watches

■ We included Nike's range of Triax watches way back in our last buyer's guide, and little has changed — we still think they're the funkier looking watches money can buy. The latest models are very slick indeed, our favourites being the Triax Stamina (Super) for its ultra slanted streamlined styling (US \$129), the Triax 50 LX (US \$125) and the Triax 35 (Super) (US \$89). Like Flavour Flav you need to know what time it is.



ALSO COOL

Sony MVCCD400

RRP: \$2199

Sony DSCF707

RRP: \$2599

■ Other picks for top of the line digital cameras include the ultra funky Sony MVCCD400 (4 Megapixel, Carl Zeiss lens, 3x optical zoom and burns images to 156MB mini CDs) which retails at \$2199, and the Sony DSCF707 (5 Megapixel, Carl Zeiss lens, 5x optical zoom) which retails for \$2599.



HARBOUR CLIMB

RRP: \$150

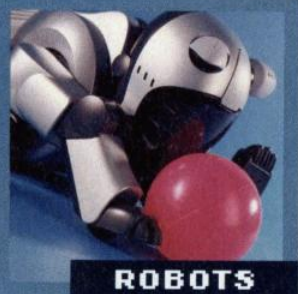
■ Every so often it's nice to get out of the house, and when you do you might as well make the most of it. For Sydney-siders, the Bridge Climb makes for a nice change of pace, and we had the chance to sample the climb a few weeks ago... in our own little

group thankfully free of annoying American tourists.

At \$150 a pop it's not cheap, but it's a pretty full-on experience. You get kitted up in a huge hall, get the safety spiel and practice climbing before even going near the damn bridge. The whole thing takes a little over three hours, with a group setting off every ten minutes from the crack of dawn until dark.

It's actually quite a leisurely stroll going up the arch, as the incline is quite slight, and you're so securely strapped in. The view from the top is quite stunning, but here's a hint, when the guide urges you to look excited for the group photo and put your arms out like you're singing YMCA — don't. You'll look like a dick.





ROBOTS

AIBO

RRP: (ERS-210) \$3000

■ AIBO has been around for a few years now, starting out with the humble but impressive ERS-100 series, then moving on to subsequent generations. At the moment, it's the ERS-210 and ERS-210A that are available (the 210As have a new advanced CPU above the 210), and the level of speed and interaction over the first generation is certainly impressive. Plus, they're available in a variety of colours (gold, silver, black, white, and red). You can also now set up a wireless network for wireless interaction between your PC, network and AIBO.

Of course, the fun doesn't stop at just buying an AIBO, as there are a host of cool memory sticks that are available. For instance, the "AIBO Recognition" pack for the ERS-210/210A Series gives you an instantly fully mature pet (so it can move around confidently and recognise all 75 voice commands) with some seriously advanced functions. For instance, should AIBO's batteries be running down, it will detect this and move over to its Energy Station (sold separately) and charge itself before going back to an autonomous existence again. You can also tell AIBO to recharge with a voice command.

Cooler still, with the Recognition software you can teach AIBO to recognise your face and voice, so it will obey you and you alone even when in a room full of people. AIBO can also take up to 20 digi pics using its built in camera which can then be downloaded onto your PC. You can also buy a "Speed Board" for your AIBO. It's shaped like a skateboard and using voice commands you can direct AIBO around and even save routines for playback later. Oh the hilarity!

Our favourite AIBO would have to be the ERS-220, however, which is a redesigned, more futuristic looking AIBO. Also available are the ERS-311 and ERS-312, which are basically cutesy AIBOs.

METAL MICKEY!

■ It's the future of AIBO and robot pets that has us the most excited, however. In the near future is the very exciting SDR-4X bipedal robot from Sony. In the prototype stage at the moment, the SDR-4X is very exciting thanks to advanced features and eerily humanoid form. For instance, it has two CCD colour cameras so it can use parallax to judge depth perception. It can recognise individuals from their face, even against a complex background. It can even recognise individuals from the tone of their voice. It has 7 internal microphones so it can detect the direction of a sound source. It has 28 joints and can walk on irregular and tilted surfaces and can even correct its posture when pushed. It can recognise speech and learn new words not in its dictionary (gangsta bot here I come!). And most amusing of all, by inputting musical and lyrical info into the robot it can sing with full

vibrato and alleged emotion. Not to mention move to the music. In short, the SDR-4X will be like having your very own Metal Mickey! Nice segueway from our original Christmas Buyer's Guide eh? Another one to look out for is the ER1 kit from Evolution (evolution.com). It will be available early in 2003 and will provide a truly useful and customisable robot experience. Exciting stuff.



REASON 2.0

MUSIC

RRP: \$999 (PC/MAC)

■ Propellerhead Software's Reason 2.0 is probably the coolest, most intuitive piece of music software available. This thing is a virtual studio rack, complete with a real-time sequencer, and all the tools you need to start making music from the get-go. Reason 2.0 comes with synths, drum machines, samplers, effects – with full support for a Midi keyboard if you want to use one. The interface has been designed like the actual hardware – all the sliders, pots, knobs and switches can be seen and fiddled with, plus you can look at the rear of all the virtual hardware and re-patch it the way you desire with funky little virtual patch leads. Plus, all your front panel actions – filter adjustments, pitch bending, gain riding or panning – can be recorded and automated in the Reason sequencer. Just keep piling on the machines until you run out of channels on the mixer, and then just create a second mixer and so on!

Whilst Reason 2.0 lets you create electronic music and play with loops to your heart's desire, it doesn't allow recording of real audio – so no recording vocals or live instruments. Even so, this package is astoundingly well-priced for just how professional the tools are and how amazing the results are. Highly recommended for anyone serious about creating music on their computer.

CLOTHES

GAME SKINS

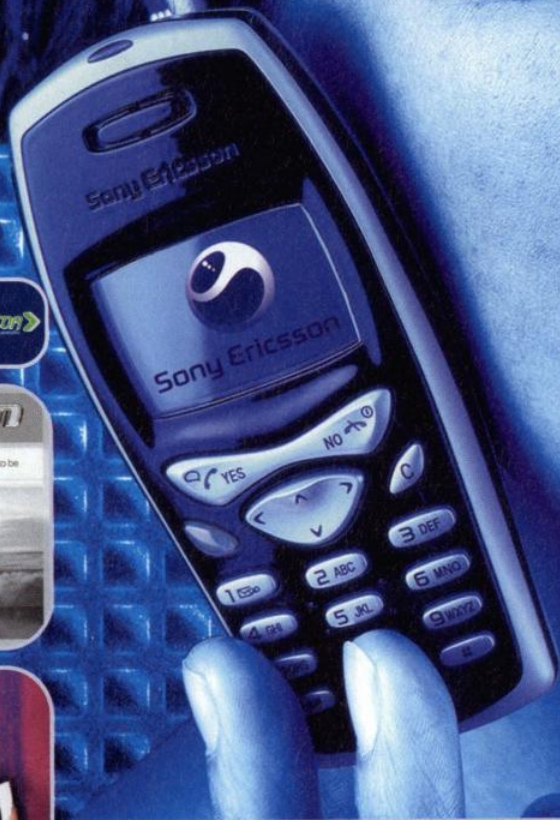
■ If you really want to prove what a geek you are, then the shirts over at Game Skins (www.game-skins.com) are definitely the way to go. Some cross over the line between cool and lame, such as the WSAD shirt, but others, such as the "hadoken" shirt are undeniably funky. Of course, the coolest shirts of all are our custom Hyper Team shirts – for Hyper staffers only. Of course, if we get enough interest we may be able to make them available to our readers... and don't worry, they're heaps cooler than the old Hyper shirts.





Sony Ericsson

T200 brings Sony Music to your ears



The Sony Ericsson T200

With EXCLUSIVE Ringtones* from Sony Music artists Selwyn & Shakaya

Other features include:

Powered by Generator

- Blue Mobile Internet Button
- Maximum Messaging
- Triple Band
- Games & Picture Phonebook

*Ringtones are not a true depiction of music quality.



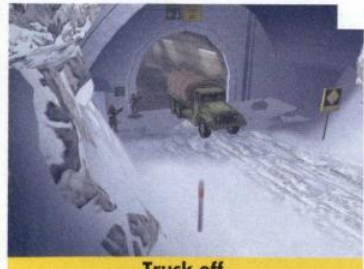
XIII



PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-multi >> PUBLISHER: UbiSoft >> AVAILABLE: March 2003

Yes, another cel-shaded game. But don't turn the page yet! There's a very good reason for this — XIII is based on a comic book series of the same name that's big in Europe (just like David Hasselhoff, okay?), so the cel-shaded look in this instance is fully justified. It's meant to look like a comic book. Trust us. XIII promises to be far more than just the realisation of a novelty concept.

HUNTED BY THE FBI
XIII producer Julien Bares goes on to explain, "The whole experience of XIII is more than just cel shading. A



Truck off.

more generic term could be that we use 'comic rendering' as we also use additional techniques to create a graphically aesthetic world; like using 'sharp shadows' and very original SFX". You see, underneath that cel-shaded exterior is a shooter that actually utilises the Unreal II engine technology. This is very much the serious, mature shooter. Whilst the majority of the game does have that cel shaded look, other more impressive visual effects become apparent as you begin exploring and experimenting with the environment. Beautiful shadows, smoke effects, and a slick, smooth



Just hide in the shade of that cel.

playable engine. In fact, despite its over-the-top presentation, subtlety and stealth play a very big part of the action. Continuing in the comic book style, the sound in the game is also represented visually. The enemies' footsteps pop up on the screen as "tap, tap, tap" and when you blow things up, a big "Boom!" pops up on the screen, just as if you are witnessing a comic book come to life. It's a whole new experience. But the reasons for all of this brings us back to the comic book in question, XIII.

The story line is based on the first five XIII comic books. You are a character only known as XIII, although the problem is, you don't really know who you are. The game begins with you finding yourself washed up on a beach with severe amnesia. All you know is that you're being

hunted by the FBI and the US army, and the president has been shot. Luckily, you appear to have been trained by the military, as you have quite exceptional skill with a variety of weapons. Just think The Bourne Identity. The game will slowly reveal itself to you through a variety of strange flashbacks, and the introduction of a collection of helpful characters will give you the edge in determining what it is you should do next. Oh and we probably don't even need to mention the conspiracy theory, do we?

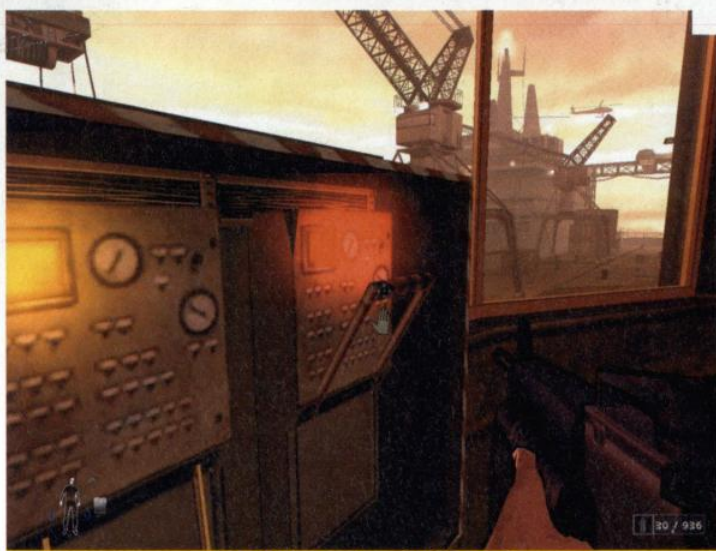
WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
Maybe they'll pack in the comics with each copy of the game?



DEADLY WEAPONS ON HAND
You're not just any ordinary specially trained deadly secret agent with total memory loss, however. "We have developed a unique gameplay system we like to



No more babies for that guy...



Oh, it's just so tempting! Go on!



Give his dentist something to fill...



Er, you're meant to pop the cork.

Oh, and we probably don't even need to mention the conspiracy theory, do we?

call Commando Gameplay", explains Julien Bares, "XIII is so well trained he has the ability to turn any situation into his advantage. For example, he has a sixth sense which acts like a radar when enemies are near, and he can also utilise some of the more inanimate objects found within the different levels as weapons, such as a broken bottle". Finally, a game lets us give a virtual bad guy a good glassing.

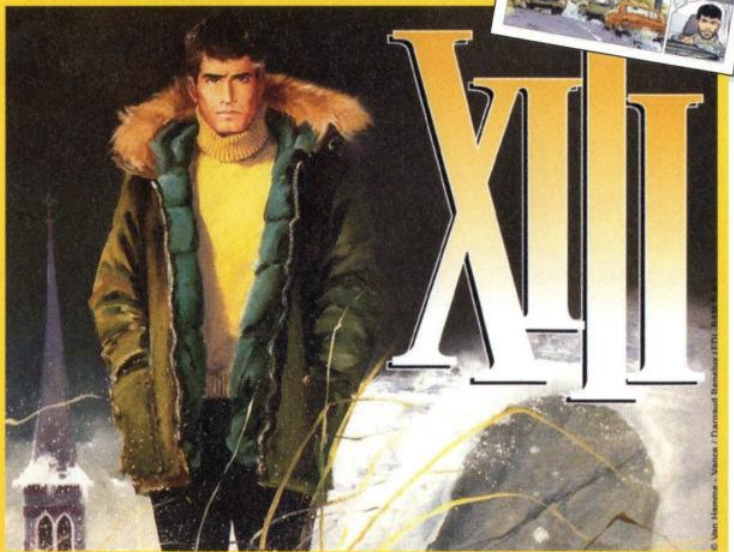
Thankfully, some more traditional deadly weapons will be on hand - you'll also be able to wield a Beretta pistol, an M16, an AK-47, a crossbow, a good old shottie, a tasty sniper rifle and more. If you feel so inclined, you can even use another human as a bullet shield. How considerate of your fellow man, eh?



With the game seeing release on a variety of gaming platforms, the inevitable question arises - what's the difference? The main difference will be with the multiplayer opportunities on each platform. The PC will undoubtedly provide the more flexible experience, allowing for more players for one (possibly up to 32) and hopefully a map editor. The Xbox version will include LIVE support for online play, including an interesting new capture the flag variation involving two-player teams. One player has the nasty job of dashing out into the open to capture the flag whilst their team mate takes an advantageous position with a sniper rifle and does their best to provide them with cover. Both the PS2 and GameCube versions at this stage will only offer split-screen play. <<<

MEANWHILE...

>> The XIII comic is a cult series created by Jean Van Hamme and William Vance. Nearly 6.5 million copies have been sold in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and other non-French speaking European countries. The story follows the plight of a man known only as XIII, caught amidst a grand conspiracy and unaware of his own true identity.



INSIGHT

>> HYPER 27

GORGEOUS

TOM

BIGBOAT

GORGEOUS

RED DEAD REVOLVER



PS2

CATEGORY: Third Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: Capcom >> AVAILABLE: Early 2003

WOW-O-METER



This town ain't big enough for the both of us. I suggest you get back on that flea-bitten nag and ride outta here, otherwise I'll see you in the main street at high noon, partner... Of course you could just get me drunk at the saloon and we'll forget all about it." Ahh, the western — there hasn't been a good gunslinging game in years. Capcom are trying to change all of that with Red Dead Revolver, a game that looks guaranteed to have our trigger finger getting profoundly itchy.

I'M GONNA MAKE YA DANCE!

You are "Red" a gunfighter who was brought up by the local native American Indians after your parents were slaughtered and robbed of their possessions by a band of desperados. Now you're all grown up and seeking slow, satisfying vengeance on all

the street scum out there for all your childhood traumas. You're a little bit Clint Eastwood, a little bit John Wayne — or if you prefer, you're a little bit country, a little bit rock and roll. (Huh?! — Ed.)



So, do you think you're the fastest gun in town? Red Dead Revolver is going to test your quickdraw with its high-pace third-person action.

You'll have to prove your worth with pistols, shotguns, whips, dynamite and even in hand-to-hand combat. You'll have to ride and fight on horseback, utilise stealth (yes, you'll have to leave the spurs at home) and interact with a whole host of characters with unique personalities and inter-personal relationships.

Hunting for varmints in the detailed 3D environments will take place from a rather unique third-person perspective,

in fact the targeting system is something quite unusual. Great pleasure can be derived from targeting different parts of the enemy's anatomy to see how they react, with a handy shoulder button targeting mode. You can crouch behind a barrel and scout out an area before you attack. You can even select multiple targets, and then unleash a flurry of shots with some nifty quick draw manoeuvres. The game plays out just like something out of a classic Hollywood western.

BIG BOOTS

Environments include a ghost town, a gold mine, a good old train chase, and heavy doses of atmosphere from wind-swept plains to a rainy deluge and the fall of night. But the whole game won't just be traipsing around in your own big boots, as most interestingly, Capcom are planning to include a four-player multiplayer mode for some not-so-friendly shootouts with your friends.



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

How about getting a good tar and feathering at some stage?



DAMN! HE'S TOO FAST!

Maybe you're just toooooo slow.



Take your finger out of my pistol.

A standard deathmatch mode is planned at this stage, but who knows what kind of creative multiplayer opportunities could be cooked up with such a cool, gritty western theme.

As Red Dead Revolver gets closer, we wonder whatever became of Activision's PS2 title, Gunslinger. After debuting at E3 back in 2000, Gunslinger has vanished into the pit of development hell, clearing the way for Red Dead Revolver to be the first bit of rootin' tootin' gunslinging on the PS2. <<

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ACTIVISION



TIME 0:33

SCORE 53485



PS2 GEN XBOX SHAUN MURRAY'S PRO WAKEBOARDER

CATEGORY: Extreme Sports >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Activision >> AVAILABLE: Early 2003

WOW-O-METER



Las Vegas is a burning furnace in the desert, a dusty stretch of nothingness unbroken for hundreds of miles except by the unlikely glitter of the strip, and the equally unlikely glitter of Lake Mead. It was here that we got our chance to watch the world's best wakeboarders in action, and a fitting prelude to one of the best looking action sports games on the horizon.

STEELY SKILLS

Launching on Gamecube, Xbox and PS2 next year, Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder takes the incredibly technical water sport and literally unleashes it — allowing you to

perform tricks tethered behind a towboat, or letting go of the tether and coasting, jumping, spinning and grinding your way back to the boat. It's this ability to "let go" that opens up the gameplay possibilities in Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder.

At Activision's preview event, we were lucky enough to spend the morning playing the game and chatting with pro wakeboarders Dallas Friday, Darin Shapiro and of course, Shaun Murray himself. The sport's burgeoning success in Australia, the US and beyond has propelled these guys into the realms of Tony Hawk, Kelly Slater, Mat Hoffman et al, but they still have the energetic enthusiasm of amateurs, albeit tempered with steely skills.

The athletes discussed, with that same enthusiasm, the huge amount of input Activision gave them during the game's inception and design. The game's producer, Jeff Poffenbarger, explained that during

production, he would be towed along on an inner tube, just in front of a flipping, whirling Shaun Murray, exclaiming "If you want to know just how hard this sport really is, try being towed along about two feet in front of them while they're doing it!"

EMINENTLY JUMP-ABLE

Graphically, the game's a stunner. The calm waters of world-famous lakes (as well as a few totally fictional waterways) are brilliantly recreated, and totally realistic. The

smooth animation of the wakeboarders is utterly convincing, easily on par with Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, and the wildly re-imagined

shores help break up what could be a wet, but monotonous visual style.

The levels are festooned with grindable rails (from houseboat decks to piers), huge ramps, halfpipes and local geology that just happens to be smooth and



"Meh, let's just leave him up there."

eminently jump-able. This dense mix of surface, objects and obstacles becomes even more frenetic when you let go of the tether. The object then is to ride and grind and jump enough to maintain the momentum you need to find the boat again. Catching that tether at the last second is quite a feeling.

After seeing the athletes do their thing on the dead-calm waters of Lake Mead later that day, it became very apparent that Shaun Murray's Pro Wakeboarder not only beautifully recreates the look, feel and antics of the sport, it massively expands on the basic principles to make an accessible, enjoyable-looking title that fans and non-fans alike will be able to enjoy. <<<

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
How about an online racing option for the PS2 and Xbox?



Help, I can't let go of this thing!



Party at My Place.

Why is it called
Alter Echo?
Echo... Echo...



PS2 XBOX ALTER ECHO

CATEGORY: Beat 'em up >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: THQ >> AVAILABLE: Early 2003

In this day and age a beat 'em up has to have a unique concept in order to stand out, and Alter Echo from Outrage Games has just that. Alter Echo stars the unfortunately named main character "Nevin", but Nevin isn't your ordinary beat 'em up avatar. He comes equipped with a Polysuit that allows him to morph between three distinct attacking forms. The default is a twin sword wielding warrior, while the others are a stealthy insectoid assassin and a huge mech armed with cannons and grenade launchers. No matter which form he's in, Nevin's head pokes out the top of the character build, which makes for unsettling viewing — having the face of a human atop an alien looking combat suit.

The morphing is cool, but Nevin can also freeze time in order to



unleash devastating combos. When a special attack is triggered, the screen goes dark, and you must enter in moves in time with the pulse on screen. The more attacks you chain together before missing the timing the more devastating the combo. The attacks are truly spectacular and the system isn't as disjointed as it perhaps sounds. This time dilation system is also used for solving puzzles.

If Outrage Games can introduce more non-linearity to the levels and progression, plus iron out some control and camera issues, this will be a very special game.

WOW-O-METER



PS2 RESIDENT EVIL ONLINE

CATEGORY: Survival Horror >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: Capcom >> AVAILABLE: Late 2003

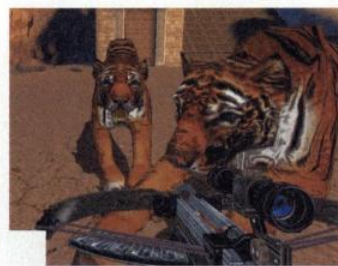
Where Resident Evil Zero will explore the possibilities of single player co-op in the RE world, Resident Evil Online will take the concept several steps further with simultaneous four player online action. There will be eight playable characters, but no STARS members. Instead, the cast will be made up by Raccoon City locals such as a plumber, cop and journalist, each differing in the areas of attack power, speed and stamina.

It will be interesting to see what kind of blend of action and puzzle solving Capcom will be going for with this title. After all, the idea of traipsing around with a squad searching for a key or an obscure

puzzle solution could get old very fast. If the emphasis is more on strategic visceral combat with plenty of team options, on the other hand, this could be an awesome experience.

Sony Europe recently announced definite plans for a PS2 online rollout across Europe and Australia in early 2003, so we'll definitely be online by the time this game hits late in 2003. Will this be one of the killer apps that will woo gamers over to the PS2's online offering? Only time will tell, but at this stage RE Online looks very promising.

WOW-O-METER



Will we meet his
brothers, Hard
and Grunge?

WILL ROCK

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> WOW-O-METER
PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> AVAILABLE: TBA

Here's a novel premise — a FPS that takes you back to ancient Greece and pits you against gods and mythological creatures. Okay, so the idea isn't exactly innovative, but there's something about Will Rock that has caught our attention. Perhaps it's the fact that the main character's name is Willford Rockwell (just as Lenny's name on The Simpsons is Lenford), a name so ludicrous it cracks us up at the mere thought. Indeed, Will Rock as a game title is also endearingly silly, and has presumably been chosen so the publisher can proclaim that the

game "will rock".

Developed by Saber Interactive, Will Rock runs on its own proprietary 3D engine and boasts nicely detailed environments. One of the more interesting elements in Will Rock's gameplay is the assortment of weapons, including the Medusa Gun and Acid Rifle that allow you to inflate and melt enemies. Also promising is the ability to "shatter" certain objects in the environment, which will hopefully put a new GeoMod style spin on the puzzle solving elements. Looking good.

This is for never
answering my
ICQ messages!

INSIGHT

32 >> HYPER

COME OVER AND
GET HAMMERED.



Featuring

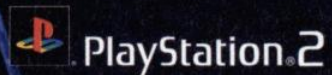
NO DOUBT's

Gwen, Tony, Tom and Adrian as the
voices of Malice and her cronies!

MALICE

BIG HAMMER, EVEN BIGGER ATTITUDE.

COMING SOON



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WIN WIN WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE JANUARY 8

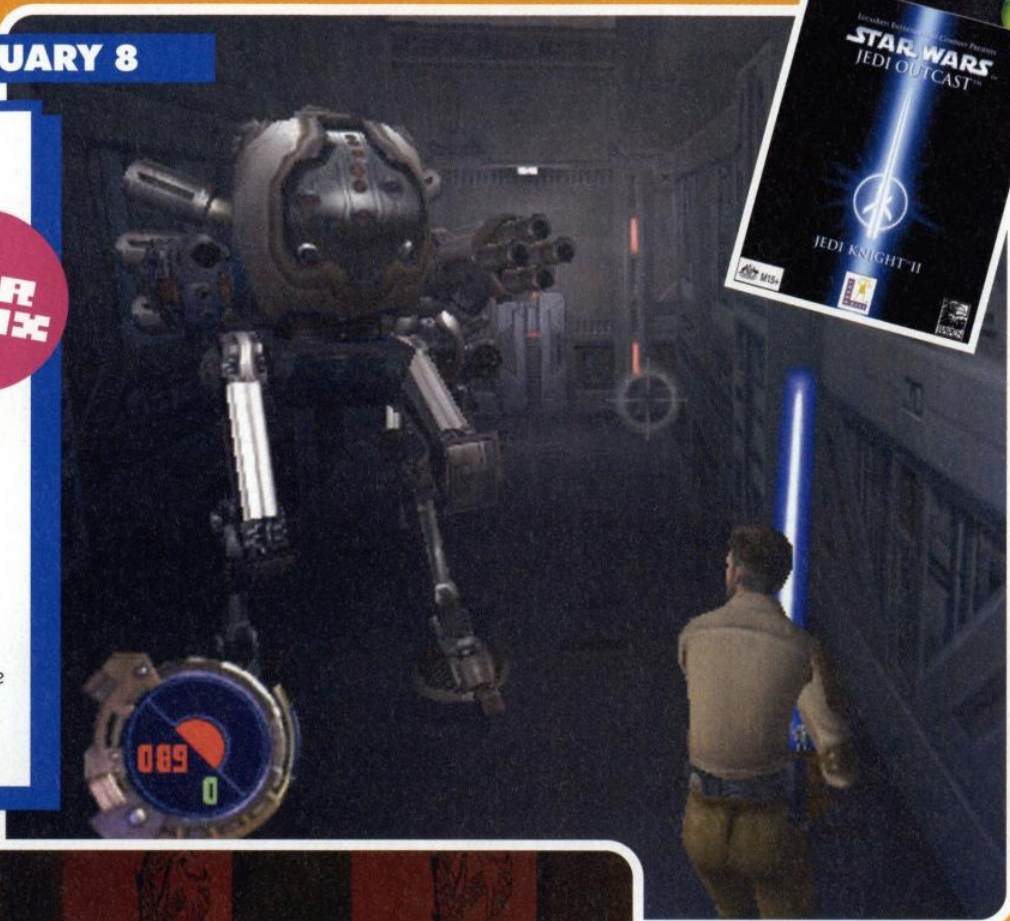
WIN STAR WARS: JEDI KNIGHT II!

■ It looks as if the Force is with the consoles as well. Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast has just been unleashed for Xbox and GameCube after a very successful run on PC. The console versions include a bonus single-player mission, an exclusive multiplayer option, and the ability to save anywhere at anytime. We have FIVE copies for the Xbox system to giveaway, so if you want a chance to win, answer the following question:

FOR
XBOX

▶▶▶ Name the actor who has been cast to play Bail Organa in Episode III.

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



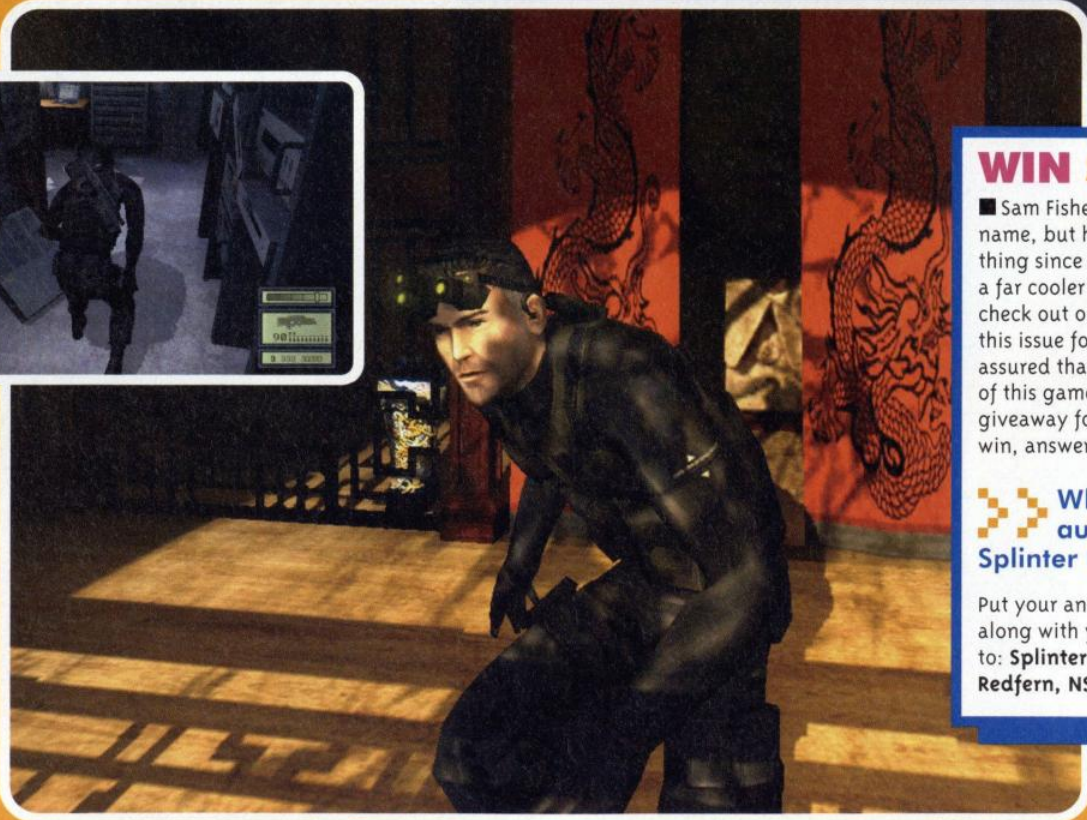
WIN SPLINTER CELL!

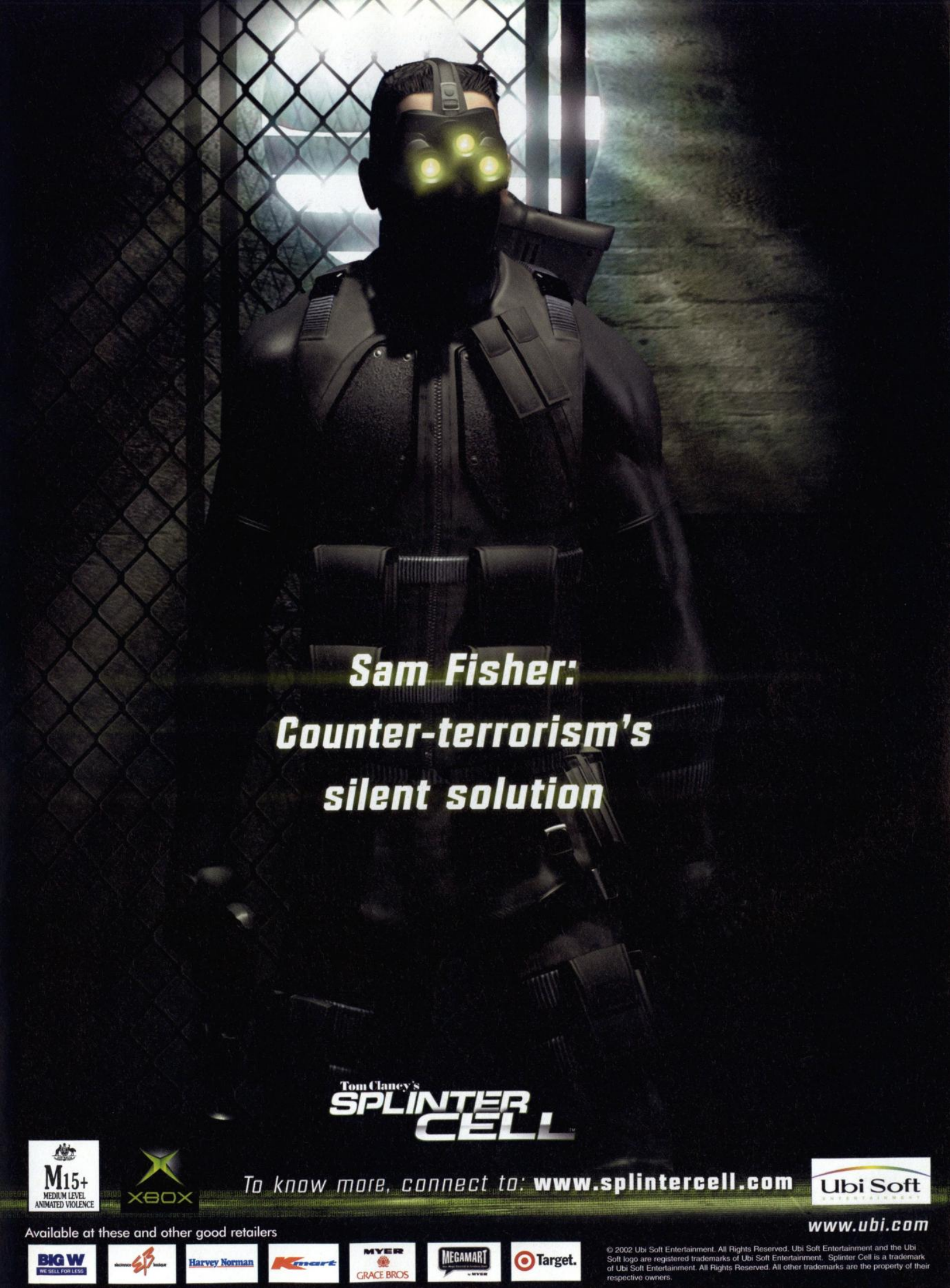
■ Sam Fisher might be an unassuming name, but he's actually the best thing since Solid Snake (now that's a far cooler spy name, no?). Just check out our Splinter Cell review this issue for the goods, and be assured that you want to win a copy of this game! We have FIVE copies to giveaway for Xbox, so to be in with a chance to win, answer the following question:

FOR
XBOX

▶▶▶ Which famous espionage author helped create Splinter Cell?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and post it to: **Splinters ouch!, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.**





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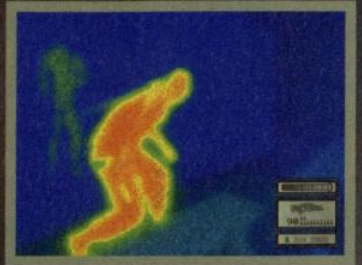
MYER
GRACE BROS

MEGAMART
BY MYER

Target

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SPLINTER CELL



Better dust off your balaclava – UbiSoft's Splinter Cell is infiltrating Xbox systems all over the world. We intercepted a satellite transmission from UbiSoft's Montreal studio to find out a few more top secret details on the game.

Who is Sam Fisher?

Our hero is a black ops specialist known as "Sam Fisher". He is ultra-trained, and has a lot of experience as an ex-Navy Seal, ex-CIA agent, and ex-NSA specialist. He is now in his late thirties, working for Third Echelon, a hidden cell operating secret field missions for the NSA, that are not acknowledged by the US government. Little is known about Sam, but his experience and top training make him deadly efficient.

Did you work with Tom Clancy to develop this character?

Tom Clancy was more involved in the story and the main concept of the game than in the creation of this character. We've created Sam Fisher following Clancy's guidelines, but the history of Sam Fisher, his personality, his look and the unique style of his animations have been created by the development team. However, Clancy validates everything so, all aspects of the game need to fit into his style; every detail needs to be justified.

Can you tell us a little more about the game's backstory and plot?

Rogue president Kombayn Nikoladze of former-Soviet Georgia declares war on the United States using techniques of Information Warfare - technology empowered terrorism and propaganda. The U.S. military, trained to fight armies on physical battlefields, is powerless against the coordinated, remote terrorism dubbed a "High-Tech Vietnam" by world media. Sam Fisher, field agent for black ops NSA sub-agency Third Echelon stands alone on the invisible frontline of battle.

How much of an influence have the many Tom Clancy games had on Splinter Cell, and have any other games inspired you?

Typically, Clancy's environment is made with a strong geo-political and military conflict, with high tech gadgets and communication devices inspired by existing material in development in the US army, with a big terrorist threat and a hero that gets involved and needs to save the day...

These ingredients were perfect to create previous Clancy games and were a great inspiration to build Splinter Cell. Intensity, realism and stressed action are still part of the game, but the implementation in Splinter Cell is different than previous titles. We wanted to create a new kind of crisis that justifies the creation of a new special force: a solo agent supported by a small group of strategists. Our goal was to make a new genre with gameplay closer to the Thief series and the MGS series.

How many weapons have you included?

Sam has a classical 5.7mm pistol, and versatile F2000 rifle, which is a modular assault weapon system, presently being tested among certain Special Operations groups in the U.S. It offers semi & fully automatic rates of fire. When equipped with a FCS (Fire Control System), the F2000 becomes deadlier and more accurate at longer range. It can also be equipped with a launcher that can fire conventional grenades,

sticky shockers, flares, or items like non-lethal rounds and reconnaissance tools like laser cameras and other "special devices".

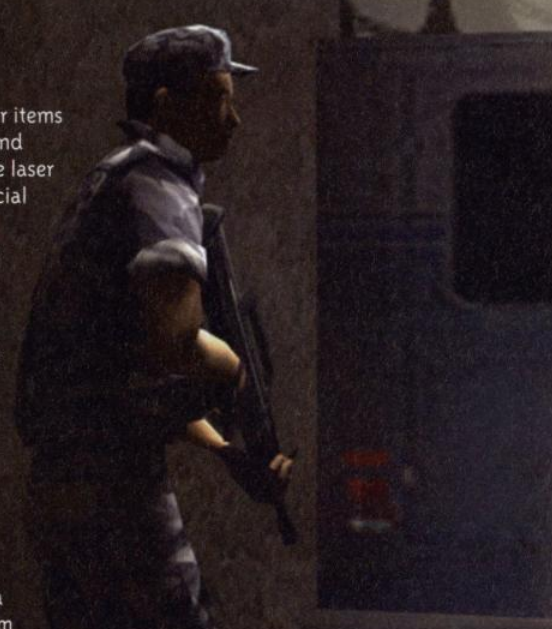
Sam can also acquire and use any of his enemies' weapons (13 different weapons in total) each with unique behavior.

When modeling the weapons and equipment, did you research by playing with real guns, grenades, etc.?

In the very beginning, a few members of the team worked with our local police department Special Forces and have tried different kind of weapons. But, as the game main focus is not on weapons, but more on gadgets and special movements, we've spent more of our research time on these aspects.

Is Sam's F-2000 based on a real weapon? How many of the game's weapons and gadgets really exist in the real world?

Almost all of them are based on actual prototypes being tested right now by different military organizations, the rest we've created solely for gameplay purposes. Remember that the events taking place in Splinter Cell are set in a "day-after-tomorrow" timeline, so any prototypes being tested now will





become tools-of-the-trade in a few years. As for which gadgets are real and which aren't... well, that's classified.

How will your approach to game design ensure that stealth is essential during the game; how will cunning over muscle be encouraged?

There are many parameters that will balance this aspect. Stealth gameplay is very cool, but sometimes, you may get more satisfaction with a well-aimed sniper shot. Most of the time, depending on the objectives of a mission, the player has the freedom to decide if he wants to be fully stealthy or if he wants to shoot enemies he's allowed to shoot. The rule is simple: if the

player decides to shoot people, it makes his life harder as he needs to hide the bodies! Also, a shot or a missed shot may make extra noise and this may alert the guards. The player will decide himself the level of challenge he wants.

Will it be possible to minimize your casualties or approach your missions as a pacifist? Will there be non-fatal ways of neutralizing the opposition?

Fisher can slowly sneak behind an enemy, grab him to gently interrogate him (with a pistol on his head) or knock any enemy down with a weapon smash. Also, Fisher can use gadgets like the shocker that will throw (with the launcher of his F2000) a small device that will spread an electric shock, or throw a Ring Airfoil that will also neutralize even the toughest guards...

What's it been like developing for the Xbox?

We wanted to radically change the way lighting and shadows are usually computed in videogames. The Xbox specs like depth shadow

mapping, the pixel shader and vertex shader were very helpful for a game like Splinter Cell where those lighting effects are part of the gameplay (stealth). On Xbox, we've been able to create a new "global" lighting system. The classical way of doing lights in videogames relies on placing them in the levels, simulating reflection on textures and then adding shadows to simulate realistic environments. We wanted this new system to be automatic and dynamic in all the levels. Now, we can have full interaction with the environment, and provide very nice gameplay with the shadow of enemies and with your own shadow.

What do you think will make Splinter Cell stand out from the many other tactical action and stealth combat games out there? I think that the initial interest will come from the outstanding graphics and from the cool gadgets Sam can use. Then, once people try the game, they'll discover all the actions & moves Sam can do and all the interactivity he can have with the environment. <<<

TREASON



» SHAKIL 'SHAK' AHMED

Warlords IV

Warlords IV: HEROES OF ETHERIA

www.ssg.com.au/warlords4

It's been awhile since Strategic Studies Group seemingly abandoned its best selling turn-based strategy Warlords series and the loving fans thereof, turning instead to Real Time Strategy in Warlords BattleCry and BattleCry II, encouraged by the success of Warcraft and its ilk. Not that it did poorly at that, for BattleCry and its sequel were very successful, but both were a venture away from traditional Warlords ground. It was only a matter of time

(die hard fans will have waited almost six years — Warlords III: Dark Lords Rising was released in '97) for the next instalment in the series, and the much-anticipated Warlords IV: Heroes of Etheria finally hits the shelves in Quarter 1, 2003.

WARLORDS OF MIGHT & MAGIC?

SSG promise an open-ended, dynamic and non-linear campaign, where you may choose any 'one' hero and any of the six sides to

battle over all of Etheria and its 140 different units and creatures. Each available race, be it Sirians (Human), Dwarven, Elvallye (Elven), Orc, Undead or Volturan (a race more evil than the undead, they say — the Burning Legions with a slightly cooler temperament, we say) has its own tech tree and set of unique units. Not only that, but your hero improves after every battle, learns spells in higher cities and obtains crystals to cast them, and may be used in campaign, skirmish or multiplayer. Think of a blend between Diablo, Warcraft III and Heroes of Might & Magic, throw in a pinch of innovation, and there you have it.

At first glance, it's tempting for the uneducated to derisively shrug off SSG's Warlords IV as a 3DO Heroes of Might and Magic clone. Indeed, there seems to be a thinning line between the Warlords and HoMM series, and in the case of HoMM IV and Warlords IV, the distinction between the two seems non-existent. Where Warlords once ruled for its more-fun-than-Risk type

strategic value and ruins exploration, HoMM owned the fields of down and dirty tactics, chess type or otherwise, and city-management. Now, however, it seems Warlords is moving further into city micro-management and tactical unit command, and HoMM is stretching into larger scale conquests.

A closer look notes a few rehashed Warlords classic and Warlords Battlecry features, and a few new ones as well that could leave fans of both series either

LINKS

WARLORDS UNIVERSAL

www.ok.kz/dark
Warlords Universal, one of the original Warlords sites — for downloads, tips, tactics and leagues across the entire series.

THE FIFTEEN LAWS OF WARLORDS:

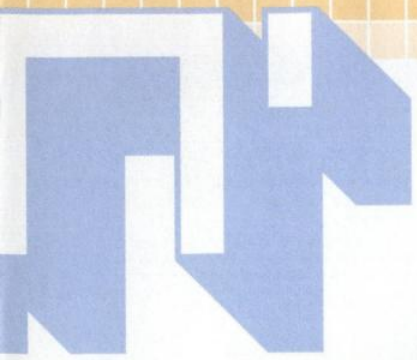
www.tiktok.com/pages/game_addictions/94.01.05_warlords.html



Lightning never strikes twi-ARGH!



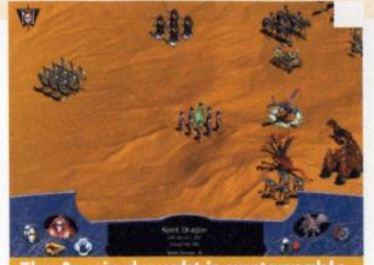
It's a Christmas Winter Wonderland!



Hyper HQ and the servant's quarters.



What I'd give for an ice cream!



The Aussie drought is unstoppable.

hoping for joy – or in frustration. Aptly defined as a blend between Warlords III and Warlords BattleCry, Warlords IV will indubitably confuse at first, and hopefully bedazzle soon after. The game-time system will play as a blend between real-time and turn-based, with you and the AI actually taking simultaneous turns (i.e. concurrent actions) with a common end-turn. At which point we're given a few moments to muse over our mistakes in the last turn and fret over



what might happen in the next set of actions, while Warlord II & III league and ladder fans will curse over the lack of Play By Email support. Warlords should be playable by anywhere between 2 to 6 players concurrently over a network, though.

GET DOWN AND DIRTY

Although Warlords boasts an all-new engine, apparently the majority of graphics will be borrowed from Battlecry 2 as well, which is no bad thing. It's from Battlecry that the concept of an open ended

conquer-the-world campaign comes, allowing for the conquest of side-quest type provinces with special bonuses. Another big unique factor is the introduction of advanced diplomacy into the game, enhancing the RPG aspects thereof.

A first for the series is the ability to build cities in some scenarios, and upgrade individual buildings within, much like in HoMM. Administrative systems upgrade towns and cities, although there can only be one capitol, and the higher 'level' a town, the bigger its benefits, range to gather nearby resources and capacity to hold an army. Various units also have particular prerequisites, such as Bronze Golems and Catapults requiring a Foundry, and upgrades requiring assorted other buildings.

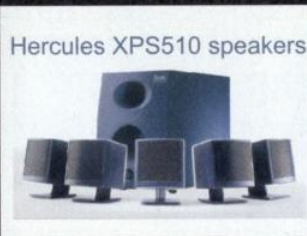
Not so warmly welcomed, however, is the news of tactical combat. Units can stack to form armies as per the older Warlord games, but when an encounter occurs, the screen changes to a tactical map bearing an uncanny resemblance to that used in HoMM IV. While some of us have been clamoring for this ability to get down and dirty with our troops, SSG is also including an option to let battle results be predicted by modified dice rolls as per the way things used to be. Not that any of us really ever take the chance.

It might seem dubious to loyalists on either side of the extremist factions of turn-based or RTS strategy border, but given SSG's track record, they're worth the risk. And if it doesn't work out, there's always Battlecry 3. <<

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MS. INFORMATION



AGATA BUDINSKA

»» Many people would probably agree with me

if I said that the whole Dot Com era started to die off around 99/00. Different people will give you different reasons that they think caused it all to fall apart. I'm not going to join that fold by putting in my two cents. Instead, I'm going to draw your attention to something that's really, for want of a better word, nifty.

Well, actually, a couple of things.

Ever wondered how some of the more popular web sites make their moola? Banner ads? Sponsorship? Pay services? Selling stuff? Well, yes these are the main things, but apparently there's a new way for your site to get a bit more attention and a bunch more cash. Get your own branded Visa card.

There's always the Yahoo! Visa, that let's you earn Yahoo! Points. Use it to pay for your Yahoo! Dial up account, as well as other goods both on and offline. Not a fan of Yahoo!? How about an Amazon.com Visa card instead? That'll earn you points towards buying stuff from, funnily enough, Amazon.com. Both Visa cards are offered by First USA, so don't expect to be able to walk up to your local Westpac and ask for an application form. The closest we have here is the Telstra/Quantas Visa – handy for travellers who make lots of phone calls. I'm sure others will follow suit – I mean wouldn't it be cool if when asked "Cash or Charge" you could answer "Google it"?

Speaking of which, Google are also supplementing their search engines income by selling Google brand Search Appliance's (perfect for any corporation!). Apparently these are like having your own company database sifted Google style. I wonder if it'll have an 'I'm feeling Lucky' option?

Anywho, It's good to see that even a virtual business can expand itself and think outside the square... Even if that square turns out to be a plastic rectangle.

LINKS



B3TA

www.b3ta.com

»» They love the web, they really do. B3TA is home of the Weblog that has links to all sorts of curiosities from across the web, and a messageboard that creates a host of entertaining images in the tradition of Something Awful's comedy goldmine, B3TA is a good value pitstop on the SIH, so make sure you stop in to fill up on good times.



MR BLING

www.mrbling.com

»» Ever wanted to get some gold caps to impress the rest of your crew? Well, just log on to Mr. Bling and get the contact details for their Bling Shop – they're only over in California after all.

THE CRESCENDO



PAPER SCISSORS ROCK
The slow-building nature of this gambit makes it a very elegant opening series.

DENOUEMENT



ROCK SCISSORS PAPER
The Denouement is the mirror of the Crescendo and uses a "cooling-down" approach. When used in tandem with the Crescendo the result is often a baffled opponent.

FISTFUL O' DOLLARS



ROCK PAPER PAPER
This move took the 1967 RPS World Championships by surprise and is arguably still one of the great surprise offensive moves.

AVALANCHE



ROCK ROCK ROCK
A subtle, yet aggressive gambit. Was the first of the Triple Gambits developed in the early 1890s (the others being The Bureaucrat and Toolbox).

WRPS

(WORLD ROCK PAPER SCISSORS STRATEGY GUIDE)

www.worldrps.com

»» Think Rock Paper Scissors is simple, huh? A kids game. A novelty, even. Well, the World Rock Paper Scissors strategy guide is out to prove you wrong! Learn the fine art of advanced tactics such as Cloaking, Paper Clipping and Priming the Chump. Use their Online Trainer, read the WRPS FAQ, or learn gambits such as the Avalanche (rock, rock, rock) or Scissor Sandwich (paper, scissors, paper). Soon, you'll be a RPS master!

RATHER GOOD

www.rathergood.com

»» The lair of the crab of ineffable wisdom. Rather Good is a page that could one day grow into something as infamous as Something Awful. It's a "load of stuff... that will probably crush your will to live" according to the creator. It hosts those rock and rolls kittens (surely you've seen those, and if you haven't we take it you haven't used the internet in about a decade) as well as Swearing Buffy, Mr. Stabby and more. Hours of fun to be had here. Just be careful what you click on... some of the humour is somewhat "mature". Ahem.



She's got a chicken to ride



REMEMBER WHERE THE GAME ENDS

ACTIVISION



PlayStation 2



activision.com

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RALLY FUSION™



00.01.05
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REVIEWS

»PS2

GAME OF THE MONTH

44

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

Does it get any better than this? We think not.

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GAME THEORY

DANIEL STAINES



So the powers that be have refused to consider the possibility of an R classification for Australian games again – what a surprise. Unsurprisingly, the official reasons given by the cultural dinosaurs responsible for this latest slap in the face dig up the same decaying rationale technophobes have been using to defend their insultingly absurd position since the early nineties. They are arguments intended to convince the ignorant and, trust me, only the ignorant would find them convincing.

For example, let's take a look at the idea that games should not be considered for an R rating simply because of their inherent interactivity. The standard logic here is that games differ from books, television and movies in that they involve a higher level of consumer participation and are therefore more likely to have strong behavioural effects on those that enjoy them. Games deserve stricter classification guidelines because they feature a personal feedback loop not present in other forms of media. Movies are about passively observing action on screen – games are about your actions and the consequences they entail.

Now, while most of us would agree that games should indeed be classified differently because of their unique nature, but it in no way follows that Australian gamers should be denied adult content because of this differentiation. What is needed is a sliding scale whereby the adult content in games is judged in the context of the overall product and what kind of behaviour it encourages in the player.

Why should BMX XXX be banned because it depicts skanky strippers taking off their clothes? These (ridiculous) sequences act as a reward mechanism – the only behaviour they encourage is to play the game with more skill. The limited interactivity of the arguably immoral content is a moot point because it does not overtly advocate undesirable behaviour in the player. If the interactive component of gaming is what really worries our watchdogs, then perhaps they should actually take the nature of said interactivity into account when deciding what we can and can't play.

Send all questions and queries to:
game_theory@whentitsdone.com



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HYPER CREW TOP 5

Eliot - Editor

1. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City – PS2
"I wear my sunglasses at night, so I can, so I can..."
2. Pro Evolution Soccer 2 – PS2
3. Championship Manager 01-02 – PC
4. Burnout 2 – PS2
5. The Two Towers – PS2

Cam - Deputy Editor

1. A Wide Variety Of Funky Tech Gadgets
"Ha ha, I got to play with all the cool stuff in the buyers guide this month. Then I had to send it back. Sob."
2. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City – PS2
3. Metroid Fusion – GBA
4. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 – PS2
5. Unreal Championship – Xbox

Malcolm - Art Guy

1. Pro Evolution Soccer 2 – PS2
"We ♥ Dynamite Shooter! Run Boys Run!"
2. Onimusha 2 – PS2
3. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City – PS2
4. Animal Crossing – GCN
5. Ikaruga – DC

Jackson - Hyperactive Guy

1. GTA: Vice City – PS2
"I love you."
2. Pro Evolution Soccer 2 – PS2
3. TimeSplitters 2 – Xbox
4. Project Gotham Racing – Xbox
5. Eastside Hockey Manager – PC

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!



» PS2

GTA: Vice City

CATEGORY: Best Game Ever >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Rockstar >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

ELIOT FISH schedules a few months off work.

I didn't really need to write this review, did I? You're all going to buy this game anyway (or already have). Oh well, humour me and read this anyway.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City transcends your average videogame release. It's an event. It's the arrival of shrinkwrapped good times and golden memories; the key to a huge virtual playground of insane fun.

GTA is the kind of videogame that gamers would once fantasise about creating themselves: "If I ever made a game, I'd make it so you could do whatever you want, whenever you feel like it!" What might have once been considered naive idealism, has actually been made a playable reality by Rockstar North (formerly known as DMA Design). This is a videogame that is so predictive in

design, it allows the player to truly express themselves.

THE SAME GIDDY THRILL

You all know the drill — GTA caters to your gaming moods. Depending on your mood, you can play fast, play slow, play dirty or play within your own perception of what is fair. Some days you feel like listening to funk, other days it's hard rock. Some days you feel like going on a rampage and plowing a truck into a small crowd, other days you just want to play the skilful and efficient mastermind. How you play, is up to you.

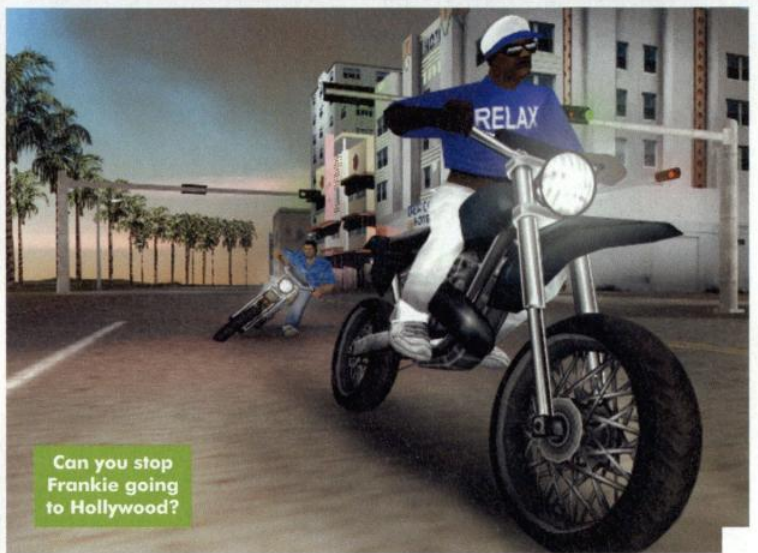
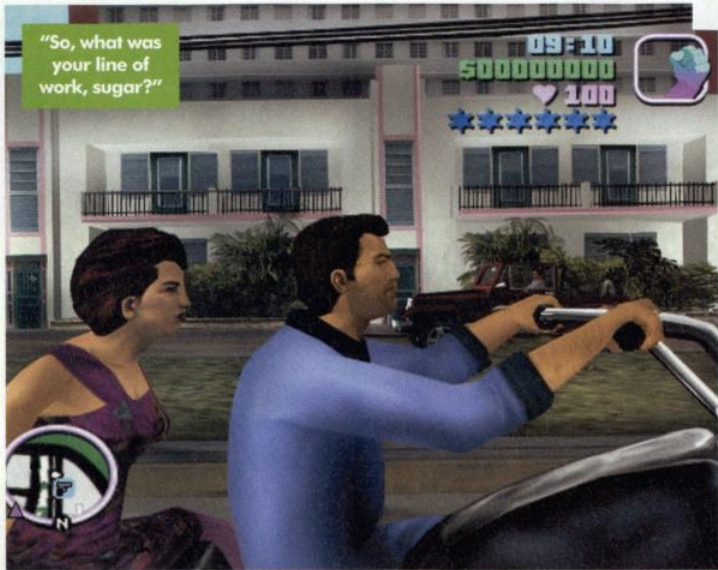
What you probably just need to know, is how Vice City stacks up to its now legendary predecessor, Grand Theft Auto 3. Well, as you should know by now, this is NOT a true sequel. GTA4 may come along another day. And yet,

amazingly, Vice City IS an improvement upon GTA3, simply because it delivers almost everything the first game did, but with more tools at your disposal, more music and talkback to chuckle to, and it's all wrapped up in a smoother, tastier looking package. The result, is an improvement upon the best game ever made. Amazing, huh?

What is difficult, is coming to terms with the fact that even before playing Vice City, you have seen almost all of it before. That is, this is still essentially

the same game as GTA3, but with new missions and some new toys. It's difficult to accept it, but you won't feel the same giddy thrill playing Vice City as you did when you first fell in love with GTA3. The sense of discovery and true wonderment at just what the game allowed you to do can't be re-lived. Those tingly feelings when you wanted to grab your friends to take a look at something you'd just discovered about the game can't really be delivered a second time, because we now know what to expect. We





know the game is going to let us commit insane, crazy, hilarious acts. We expect it. What some of you may experience, is an initial feeling of disappointment – especially if you were expecting to be wowed all over again. Once you accept the fact that this is an extension of GTA3 and not a reinvention, you'll come to realise that Vice City is as good as, if not better, than GTA3. You won't find a better bang for your buck out there. This is it.

A WHOLE NEW PLAYGROUND

So what's new? Well, take a look around. You're in Vice City. This is Miami in the 1980s. Babes cruise by on rollerskates, gangs linger on street corners listening to Grandmaster Flash, and just take a look at yourself – stone-wash jeans and a cheesy hawaiian shirt!

Vice City is a whole new playground waiting to be exploited. In stark contrast to Liberty City's hilly terrain and distinctly flavoured ethnic quarters, Vice City is mostly flat and a more homogenous array of buildings and citizens. Sure there are identifiable areas, but on your first few jaunts

you'll notice just how samey a lot of Vice City is. To a point, this is to the detriment of the game. It was easy getting to know Liberty City because you'd turn a corner and the city would suddenly feel so different and unique. Vice City is like the Gold Coast – it's repetitive and soulless in many ways. It's a shame to say it, but Vice City is probably not as geographically interesting as Liberty City. But, really, that is all on the surface. You'll actually discover that Vice City is packed with more back streets, alleyways, rooftops and higglydy-piggily sneaky bits that despite its bland exterior (in comparison to the rollercoaster layout that was Liberty City) there's actually far, far more to do in Vice City. When you factor in that you can also walk inside some of the buildings, you realise just how long it's going to take you to discover everything the city has to offer. Thanks to the inclusion of a new map system, you'll also never get lost in its corridors of highrises and odd back streets.

If you thought experimenting with the variety of vehicles in Liberty City was fun, then just wait until you can

 We know the game is going to let us **commit insane, crazy, hilarious acts**. We expect it.


unleash mayhem on Vice City with all these new toys. Your first new thrill will be getting to know the motorbikes – they handle beautifully and can get into the strangest places thanks to their size. You can also chuck wheelies and stoppies (and get rewarded for it) and bail off the back of them. It's a brilliant addition. Then there are all the new cars, and of course the variety of boats, helicopters and planes. Yes, you can pilot them all.

We were mildly disappointed in the way that a lot of cool stuff is thrown at the player very early on in the game. Back in Liberty City, it felt like you really had to earn the better vehicles (hell, you had to unlock the other island to get the best cars), but in Vice City there are hot-rods right under your nose from the first

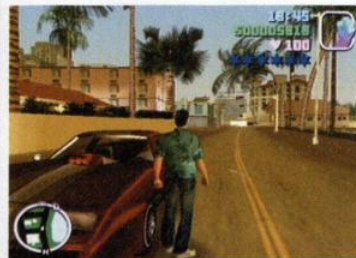
mission. We were at least hoping it would take a while to find a cool motorbike, but no, they literally put it right in front of your face barely minutes into the game. The same goes for other new toys. You'll play with it them sooner than you'd think. It almost felt like Rockstar were so eager for gamers to see all the new cool stuff they'd put in, that they made it a little

too easy to experience a lot of it early on. We did prefer the way GTA3 made you really have to work for these new experiences, but, oh well. Luckily, there are plenty more things to look forward to in the game. Like riding in the Motocross arena, for starters...

If side-missions were your bag in GTA3, then you'll be pleased to know that not only are the hidden packages, vigilante, taxi, ambulance

 Our tip – turn off the "Trails" in the visuals options. The game looks much crisper this way.

I need to take my boat to the doctor, quickly!



I should retire and write kids books.



Where'd I leave my prosthetic leg?!



I'll be eating pizza for weeks!



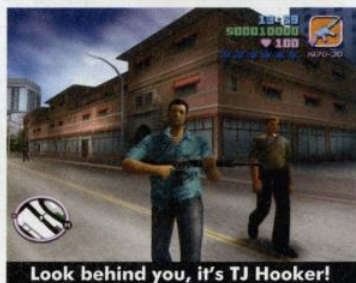
Missed me by *that* much.



Want me to wash your windscreen?



Not bad Sonny, how's Cher?



Look behind you, it's TJ Hooker!



IT'S A MAKEOVER, HONEY!

Yes, Vice City looks much better than GTA3. This is crisper, more colourful, faster and smoother. The characters look better, and the cars look gorgeous. Sunlight now reflects off the bonnets and the cars have a better damage model - yes, you can smash them up with weapons! Despite all the improvements, there are some quirky side-effects. Control now feels faster, and a tad overly twitchy as a result, and sometimes the world textures don't load in fast enough making the buildings and the road look a little screwed up at times.

and fire fighting missions back, but you can now also do pizza delivery and even sell ice creams from a "Mr. Whoopie" van (although you'll need to buy the ice cream factory first).

WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHIN'

Yes, now there's actually something to spend your ever-growing bank balance on. Many locations have a small spinning house icon that will tell you just how much it will cost to buy that particular establishment, and doing so will, amazingly, mean that you can actually earn money later in the game from the property that you've purchased and take on a few extra side missions. This new addition to the game adds a whole new perverse dimension to the gameplay. Now you'll not only want to have a huge array of crazy vehicles in your garage, but you'll want a huge array of crazy garages in a variety of locations around the city! It also makes you feel like you really are becoming a crime lord when you own half the city.

Another improvement in Vice City is the way the story missions are

integrated into the game - it's much more focused than GTA3. This really enhances the impact of the story itself, and you'll get to know the characters far better than in the previous game. Cutscenes are more involved, and there's far more speech overall. Your own character, Tommy, now has much more to say thanks to actor, Ray Liotta. He'll yell at people as he pulls them out of their cars, or mutter obscenities to himself as he accepts a degrading mission or two. It's quite hilarious.

Finally, as if we really needed to tell you, this is the best videogame soundtrack ever. We really mean that. There are so many classic songs in the game, you'll be grinning and singing along and just wondering how they could have afforded it. If you were a fan of GTA3 (and come on, who wasn't?) then you must get Vice City if you haven't already. As you might have guessed, we've only been able to scratch the surface of what's in the game with this review. Despite a few minor flaws, you'll get addicted all over again, and rediscover why you loved the previous game so much. Another classic. <<<



PLUS: Soundtrack, huge array of new toys, better visuals overall.

MINUS: Fewer story missions, twitchy controls, loading times.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

92 96 97

OVERALL

95

It's a long, long wait for the next GTA game now.

007™ nightfire™

www.007.com.au

YOU HAVE 60 SECONDS TO SAVE THE WORLD.

GO!



You'll need a car, a very fast car, **tick** a V12 Vanquish with tons of gadgets,

enough gadgets, **tock** to help you blow up a space station, or jump out of a plane and **tick** stop a secret military force, before breaking into Mayhew's estate,

but don't pat yourself on the back **tock** too much because **tick** that was only one minute, and there are still 1,400 left in the day **tock**.

Sixty seconds of Bond's world. It's more than most people do their entire life.



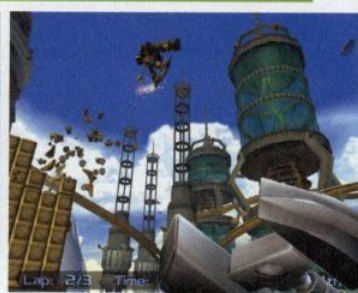
PlayStation 2

PC CD



eagames.com

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Ratchet and Clank

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

ELIOT FISH gives his thumbs a workout.

Sony's first party platformers are turning out to be disturbingly consistent. Spyro the Dragon was arguably the first really good one, and since then we've had Ape Escape, Jak and Daxter, now Ratchet and Clank, and soon we'll be playing the fine looking Ape Escape 2 and Sly Raccoon. Whatever the secret formula is that Sony have passed on to their developer partners (in this case it's Insomniac Games), it's a good one. Let's hope they continue to perfect it.

DAYS OF DIGGING

Ratchet is another one of these crazy Sony marsupial hybrids. Sony just love these ambiguous animals, eh? We assume he's some kind of intergalactic rat, seeing as his name is Ratchet (we'll do our best to

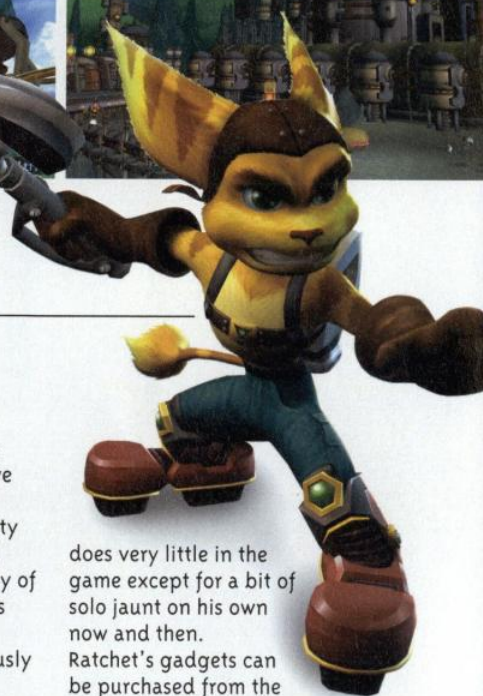
refrain from the rat shit jokes). Clank is his little oddball robot partner whose best talent is simply imitating Teddy from Spielberg's film, A.I. This pair make up an unlikely crime-fighting duo, but they're charmingly created and continue the current fine tradition of Sony platformers having excellent animation, scriptwriting and voice talent. When a game looks as good as Ratchet and Clank does, it takes a while playing to really dig beneath the glorious surface to discover what kind of game it really is. Beauty is only skin deep, as they say.

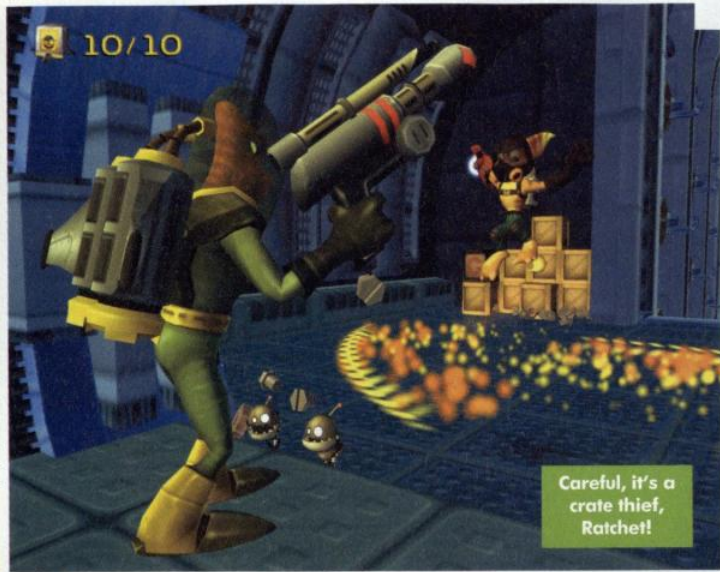
Well, after three or four days of digging, you'll have uncovered quite a little treasure. Ratchet and Clank sports fairly non-linear platforming design, a huge array of

gadgets to play with, and some challenging levels that will prove tricky for most gamers on the planet. With the aid of your dusty green spaceship, you can travel back and forth between a variety of planets, uncovering the gadgets and special items needed to continue adventuring in previously explored locations. It's not as intricate as a fine Nintendo platformer such as Super Mario Sunshine, but it sports a fair level of complexity that's above average for much of the platforming tripe that's released on the market these days.

Ratchet has a wrench that he uses as a melee weapon (although it can manipulate the odd device) and can pull a huge array of tools out of his pants when needed. Clank just kind of stays strapped to his back, and

does very little in the game except for a bit of solo jaunt on his own now and then. Ratchet's gadgets can be purchased from the many Gadgetrons scattered throughout the game, and slowly allow you acquire a nice array of weapons. It ain't free, though. You'll have to cough up nuts and bolts (some crazy space currency, I guess) that seem freely distributed all over the levels for you to collect "coin" style. They make a satisfying clinking noise when collected too. I guess some rich bastard has a hole in his space trousers.





10/10

Careful, it's a crate thief, Ratchet!



Don't let them harm your beloved crates!



Clank's big brother, Clunk.



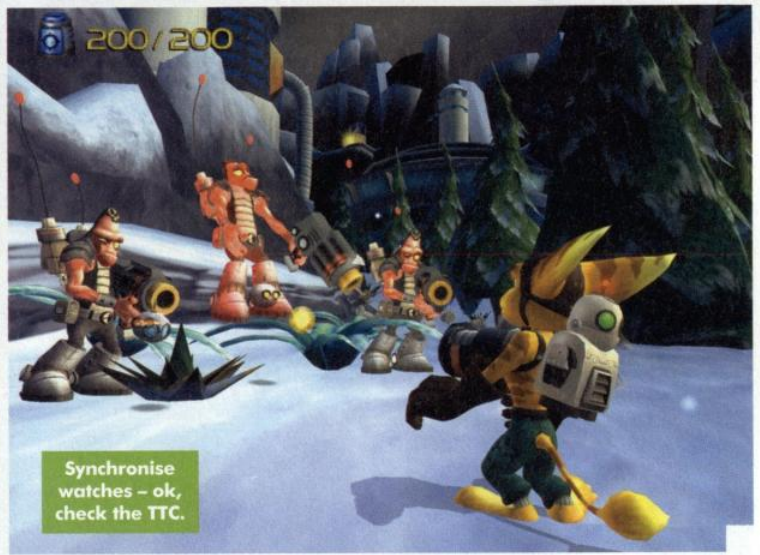
Clank is such a freeloader!



Zapped right in the nuts (& bolts).



Once we deliver these crates, we'll be rich!



Synchronise watches - ok, check the TTC.

It sports a fair level of complexity that's above average for much of the platforming tripe that's released on the market these days.

Buying gadgets simply gives the player a variety of options in combat; you can literally settle on a few weapons of choice and stick with them throughout the game, but the range of gadgets helps to add much needed variety to the gameplay. From flamethrowers to vacuum cleaners - it's all here.

CLANKING NUTS AND BOLTS

Ratchet and Clank really gets your brain working at times. Items such as the Trespasser reveal some nifty little lock picking puzzles, aligning lasers in a certain combination to open up doors. Then there's the variety of jumping techniques, such as the rotor-aided long jump, that you'll need to figure out when are essential to use. Mini games such as

the challenging Hoverboard race also help to keep you interested, proving that a real effort has been made here to entertain and not just settle for generic play.

For all its charm and inventive level design, Ratchet and Clank still seems to feel a little bland at times, and much of the beating up of enemies is a tad too easy to accomplish. You could play through certain areas with your eyes shut, as there's a fair chunk of "been there done that" platforming. Levels sometimes feel just a little too sparse in their interactivity, and whilst the game looks amazing and highly detailed, sometimes you'll be running

!!! "Time To Crate" in Ratchet and Clank is only a mere 4 seconds!

through doing not much more than busting crates to collect more clanking nuts and bolts. Thankfully, there's quite a chunk of really good thoughtful platforming to combat these dull bits.

Ratchet and Clank does also seem a little light on offering tantalising delights just outside of the reach of the gamer, instead opting for more obvious and accessible level design. There are very few hidden locations and not as much backtracking and rediscovery as there could be with the interplanetary travel that's implemented in the game. Chances are, most people will be transfixed by what Ratchet and Clank has to offer. It's definitely full of character, charm, humour and it's no tiptoe through the tulips either. It comes close at times to being a game that could stump most hardcore gamers. Despite the odd bland moment, Ratchet and Clank is an inventive treat that is a more than worthy addition to your platforming collection. <<<



PLUS: Slick game engine, entertaining characters, tricky.

MINUS: Somewhat easy at times, AND a tad frustrating.

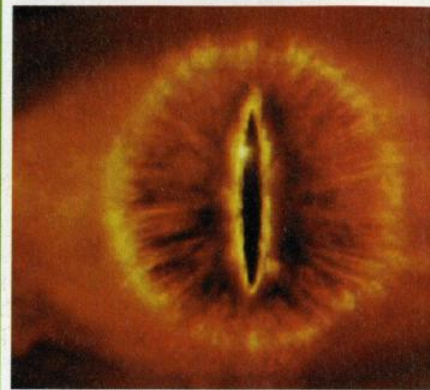
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 85 84

OVERALL

83

Makes us look forward to the next Sony platformer.



The Two Towers

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

ELIOT FISH carves a few Orc heads... Whoo-hoo!

All we really ask from a movie license these days is that it doesn't blow chunks. It's pretty rare when one doesn't, and it's even more surprising when a movie licensed game turns out to be a polished piece of gaming that has us refusing to put down the controller. Luckily, *The Two Towers* has turned out to be one of the good ones. It successfully does everything it sets out to do: It makes you feel part of the movie, it entertains you, it makes you ogle the pretty graphics, and then it delivers a host of *Lord of the Rings* goodies for you to unlock. Hoorah!

awesome Cave Troll scene from *The Fellowship of the Ring*? How about the battle at Helm's Deep that we've all read about in the books, and will finally see realised in an epic way on the big screen this Christmas? There are so many cool set piece battles that it makes perfect sense to devote an entire game purely to these moments of intense action. I guess we'll leave the adventuring for mushrooms for another day.

After the very first level in the game (in which you play as Isildur during the critical battle against Sauron, that results in the dark lord losing his beloved One Ring), you can choose to fight as Aragorn, Legolas or Gimli, in your bid to save the lands from darkness. Frodo fans will have to make do with watching him running about trying not to get

hacked in two. But really, who cares about playing as the little Hobbits — we all wanted to be Aragorn, Legolas or Gimli after watching Fellowship of the Ring anyway, right? Well, maybe not hairy little Dwarf Gimli, but you get the idea.

The characters each have slightly different fighting styles. Aragorn is a master of decisive sword attack combinations, Legolas is fast with a bow and handy with a pair of Elven swords, and Gimli is unbeatable with his hefty axe. Replaying each of the levels with a different character is surprisingly fun — the action is fast and furious, and never fails to give you an adrenaline rush — so playing through the game a whole three times with each character is actually something that's quite appealing.

All the character models and

locations appear to be incredibly faithful to the films — the fight against the Ringwraiths on Weathertop looks perfect, Amon Hen appears suitably lightly forested, and the atmosphere in Balin's tomb even has that blue haze. The chaotic battle on the Deeping Wall towards the end of the game is so epic, it has us pretty excited to see how it all looks in *The Two Towers* on the silver screen.



HOBBITS ON HOLIDAY

The Two Towers is all about replicating the amazing action sequences from Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* films. Who can forget the



Gimli's got an axe to grind, you see.



It's ok Gandalf, the ring is in my ring.



Er, look your shoe laces are undone!



Orcs torture Legolas for Haircare tips.



Gandalf uses his Omo attack.

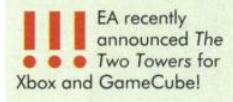


Aragorn finally weeds his garden.

Unlockables include small interviews with much of the cast, concept art to drool over...

ORTHANC YOU VERY MUCH
 Gameplay is pretty much hack and slash. By combining button presses, you can string certain combos together and put together a fair variety of effective attacking moves. You'll have to utilise a different approach with some of the enemies, such as breaking their shields before you can attempt to chop them down, but most of the time you'll be frantically waving your weapons about in an effort to keep the hordes at bay.
 Completing levels does reward you with experience points, which you can then choose to spend on new melee combos, or you can spend it on pumping up the power of your arrows and so on. The game doesn't really go much deeper than this. But the appeal of *The Two Towers* is in the

authenticity of the level design and its honourable depiction of the *Lord of the Rings* characters and creatures. If you're a fan, you'll certainly get more of a buzz out of the game than the average gamer on the street. Taking on the boss monsters – such as the watcher of the lake – is guaranteed to get your geek-o-meter peaking. There's also a small amount of thrill to be had through picking off some scrambling orcs with some well-timed shots from your bow, or from deftly dodging a brutal clubbing from a Cave Troll. You'll never have a problem with the controls, which are mostly smooth and responsive.
 The game is certainly a feast for the eyes – from sweet transitions from actual film clips into in-game



EA recently announced *The Two Towers* for Xbox and GameCube!

engine cutscenes, to the beautifully modelled environments, *The Two Towers* takes the PS2 to some new heights. Sometimes the framerate does drop a few notches, and there's the odd occasion when it literally seems to crawl for a few seconds, but it's never really that bothersome, and generally the game looks and plays great overall.
The Two Towers will also reward you for your persistence. Unlockables include small interviews with much of the film cast, concept art to drool over, plus a secret character and bonus levels, with a final level that plays out very much like a challenge mode. It's not easy!
The Two Towers may not deliver any terribly unique or original gameplay, but it's good solid fun and a very pleasing concoction of *Lord of the Rings* cool stuff. It certainly delivers way more than the usual movie tie-in experience, and thus it continues a certainly level of quality that seems associated with Peter Jackson's new trilogy. <<



PLUS: Authentic visuals, nice animation, all-out action.

MINUS: Not a terribly deep game. Hack your way to victory.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
93	90	83
OVERALL		
84		

An all-action addition to your *Lord of the Rings* collection.



Get those sunnies off you wally.



Use the Force, Goalkeeper.



Where are your handbags, lads?



Here 's the cross... or chickendance.

PS2 XBOX GCN PC

FIFA 2003

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

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE sends in the cross...

For the FIFA faithful, each year's EA football release comes ever closer to recreating the beautiful game. Thanks to its established name, the brand is synonymous with soccer, and has been for almost a decade now. However, a malevolent force is rising. For the last few years, Konami's ISS Pro Evolution/PES series has eaten into FIFA's market share, and forced gamers and critics alike to reassess FIFA's value.

OH MR SHEEN

It's a scenario with interesting implications for old FIFA. In a world without Pro Evo, a world that Xbox, Cube and PC owners inhabit, the FIFA series generally offers a satisfactory portrayal of football. With EA's trademark dedication to real leagues and player likenesses, FIFA is often a worthy purchase. Sure, it's unplayable for those that have seen the Pro Evo light, but for the majority, FIFA is pretty sweet. The 2003 version is certainly an improvement over 2002 FIFA World Cup, but it remains some distance behind PES2.

Having purchased an EA Sports game, you can be fairly confident

you will enjoy a nicely polished, comprehensive sporting package. FIFA 2003 is no exception. This year's version focuses on their Club Championship — a mythical 18 team league bringing together Europe's biggest team names, along with their stadiums, chants, player likenesses and accurate kits, even including shirt suppliers like Adidas. More than a dozen other national leagues still feature, but their participants lack the attention to detail given to the elite clubs — a disappointing development considering the edit mode has been scrapped.

Where FIFA 2003 comes out top of the class is with its in-game presentation. A realistic camera view, great crowd visuals and appropriate use of colour gives the game a façade accurately mimicking a late night showing on SBS. There's the usual range of camera modes and game

speeds, allowing you to create the precise experience you demand. However, the game's major strength is its ability to recreate the armchair fan's typical experience of a top-class football match. This power

immediately associates FIFA 2003 with our footballing perceptions and therefore validating its gameplay, at least initially.

LACKS THE ACCURACY

Unfortunately, FIFA's animation can be truly unbelievable at times, to the detriment of the game. Players' movements are often jerky, while passes and shots are typically unleashed from impossible body positions. Players behave too unrealistically, both in terms of their movement and positioning, while the game's 'EA way' mechanics of mass-appealing exclude those desiring a more subtle experience. Add to this the fact that goals are typically scored from similar scenarios — that is, shots from in front of goal within about 15 yards — and the more discerning football gamer will not be satisfied.

However, the game is still consistent, and good in multiplayer. It just struggles to recreate the subtler nuances of the world game. Xbox, Cube and PC owners could do worse, but PS2 owners cannot go past PES2. <<<

!!! PES2 has far superior head-tracking of the ball.

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Splendid superficialities.

MINUS: Inability to recreate true football.

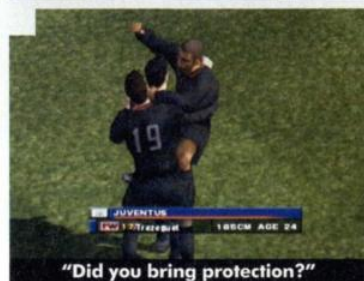
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

84 82 75

OVERALL

77

Improved over 2002. Maybe Worthington Cup winners.



PS2

Pro Evolution Soccer 2

CATEGORY: Sweet Soccer >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Konami >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE puts his hands on the cup.



Fro Evolution Soccer and its ISS ancestors were never given the releases they deserved in this country. It was always FIFA this, FIFA that, oow a new FIFA, my FIFA is bigger than yours etc. etc. Well, hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King. Pro Evolution Soccer 2 (PES2), the pinnacle of electronic entertainment sporting achievement, is the game you should own this Christmas.

NALDORINHO, CHECK

Sure, a selection of only 40 club sides, each of which lack their correct team names (Man Utd = Aragon, Juventus = Piemonte) might turn some players off. These clubs' squads are also depressingly out of date, and the kits are generally inaccurate. Equally distressing are the licensing problems, which have meant that every Dutch player in game has been named "OrangesXXX", where XXX is a number. Even some other nations' players don't have correct names, such as those from Brazil, the Czech Republic, Wales and Senegal — instead Giggs is Gigs, and Ronaldinho is Naldorinho. The menu

system is complicated, particularly within the stubborn edit mode, replays are only available after goals, and the commentary is disastrous.

Yeah, we're talking Game of the Year material, as you can evidently see. But Pro Evolution Soccer 2 is such a special game, it even manages to articulate the noblest of gaming commandments. It preaches gameplay over graphics, fun over frills and quality over quantity. PES2 is proof that the gamers' ideal is a realistic ambition. We would still like KCET, the game's developers, to get their licensing, menus, accuracy and everything else sorted, but such is the game's deep magnificence, that playing the game will take you on a clichéd ride through Hollywood teen romance. PES2 is the ugly boy/girl with that heart of gold, that you are just destined to fall in love with. And we're talking happily ever after here.

New to the sequel is a more intricate Master League mode, which now features a third division and a more complicated transfer system where your club can loan, and even

get rejected by would-be signings. There's also a great new training mode featuring drills that rank you on your performance.

HUMPING MEN, CHECK.

But, above all, PES2 provides a deeply satisfying, ever-changing game of football. From the dismissive wave of a striker just caught offside, to the homoerotic goal celebrations, the game is spot on. But it is the way KCET have managed to replicate players' movements through an awesome animation range, making PES2 the definitive football experience.

Longtime ISS/PES players might be disappointed at the relative ease of dribbling compared to previous versions, shifting the balance of play towards the attack. It's not any worse than any previous versions, it's just different, and should allow rookies to enjoy the game more. There are still the same limitations with set pieces, among some minor gameplay quibbles, but this remains the best sports game out there, such is the power of playability. Football fans and fools alike — this is the one. <<

Now go camp out at sigames.com for CM4 news.



PLUS: Football's most convincing and intricate recreation.

MINUS: A minor plenty. See paragraph two.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

84 76 94

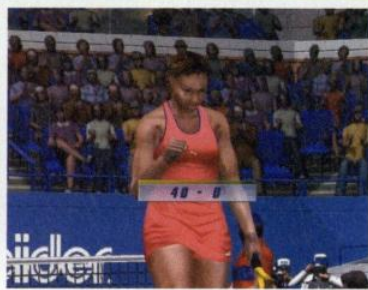
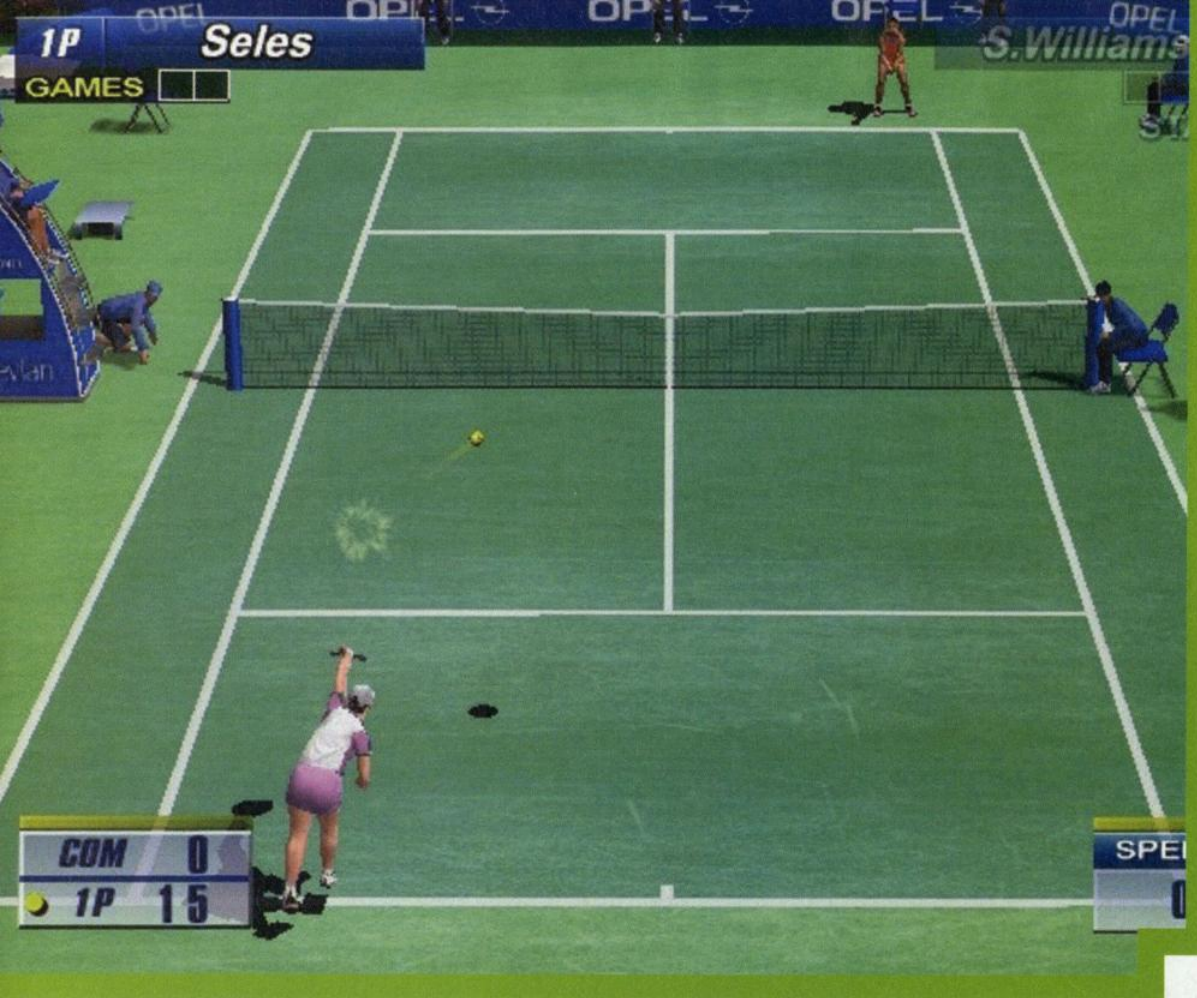
OVERALL

93

The winner.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 53



Virtua Tennis 2

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

FRANK DRY hammers one down the line for Hyper.

Let's face it, there aren't any good tennis games available for the current crop of consoles. There are one or two fairly decent games, but nothing that comes close to the thrills of Mario Tennis on the N64 or Virtua Tennis on the Dreamcast. Finally, for those of us who buried their Dreamcast long ago, Virtua Tennis 2 is here for the PS2.

DON'T TOUCH MY BALLS, BOY Virtua Tennis 2 is quite different to its predecessor. For starters, it appears that rather than build upon the startlingly good visuals they had to begin with in the first Virtua Tennis, Sega have fiddled with the game for the sequel and the result is that it doesn't look quite as good. Whilst player likenesses are eerily

accurate in many of the lingering camera close-ups, all the players now look more blocky and somehow less realistic looking than they did in the first game. The animation, however, is still superb and at times it really does look like an actual tennis match.

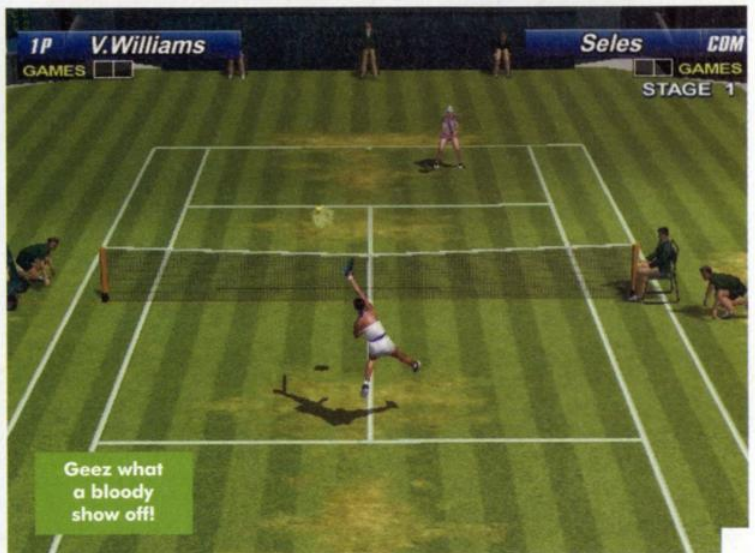
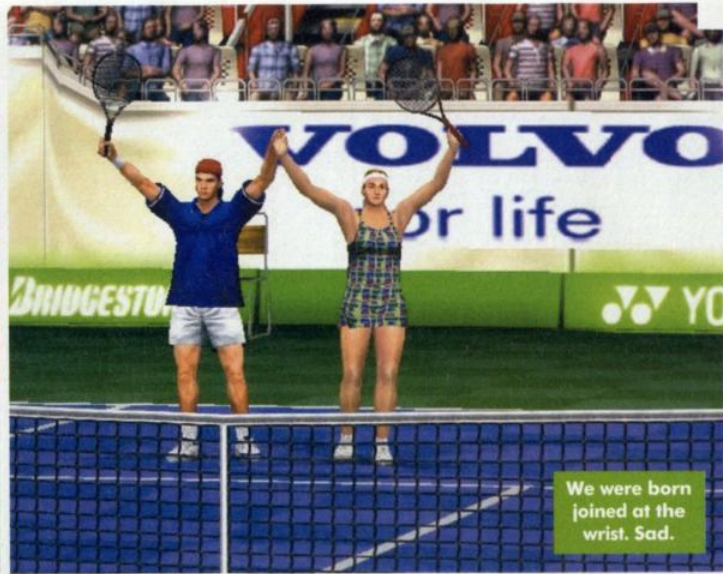
Despite the slightly mutated looking players, which is a strange step backwards, the speed of the flowing animation makes for a very accessible and easy to pick up and play tennis game - which is very much like the original Virtua Tennis. You hardly need to even know what the controls are - just grab a controller and after a few rallies you'll have it down pat. Celebrity players in the roster include Rafter, Kafelnikov, Haas, Enqvist, the Williams sisters, Moya, Davenport,

Pierce and more. It's a top of the line collection which should keep any true tennis fan happy, despite the unfortunate absence of Agassi, Hewitt, Kournikova and that other spunky one.

Select from Tournament play, Exhibition match and World Tour - the career mode of the game. You start out by creating a male and female player (yes, you have to manage both) and then take them

on to mini-game training and enter yourself in matches as they become available (as long as you qualify in ranking). The player creation is really pretty limited - there aren't many heads, hair, clothes or accessories to choose from. As for stats, well, you have to work on those yourself by training them up. You can inspect a global map of the world and take part in volley training, stroke training, footwork





If you have a multitap, then you're in for some seriously competitive doubles matches.

training and serving training in the guise of delightful mini-games such as serving and knocking down bowling pins, or stomping cans underfoot as you keep returning a ball against a wall. All this training improves stats in particular areas of skill (serving, volleying etc.) with the player being rewarded with more stat points if they complete the mini-game successfully.

As you're improving your stats, you remain ranked 300th in the world, and it's up to you to enter yourself in tournaments as they come along and win prize money and up your ranking. Prize money can be used to buy new gear, pay a celebrity player a fee to be your partner in doubles and so on. A bit of a problem with the world tour mode, is the fact that it feels like

hours will pass before a match comes along that you're qualified for (i.e. a match that allows players ranked as low as you the chance to enter). You'll soon get sick of playing the mini-games over and over and seeing matches on the map that you're unqualified for.

FAST AND RESPONSIVE

When you do enter a tournament, you don't even have to battle out through the stages. You start off in the semi-final straight away, leaving only about four games per "tournament". Luckily, you can play the other modes in the game as your custom characters.

Multiplayer, as you would expect, is a blast. The players move so well -

with fast and responsive controls - that you can really pull off some crazy, furious matches. If you have a multitap, then you're in for some seriously competitive doubles matches.

Virtua Tennis 2 does lack a certain amount of colour or style, though. The game overall feels a little charmless and lacks the kind of personality in play that's apparent in Nintendo's great Mario Tennis games. The game does tend to play a little too safe, and could do with some more crazy arcade moments in play when

you know you can really set up a super-smash or deadly slice to win a point. As it is, you can get in position and do your best, but sometimes the result is too "realistic" to be as exciting as a console tennis game really has the opportunity to be.

Still, as it stands, Virtua Tennis 2 is probably the best next-gen tennis game you can get your hands on for the PS2, and an awesome multiplayer game. <<<

!!! Xbox owners can look forward to Top Spin by Microsoft.



PLUS: Responsive play, satisfying long rallies possible.

MINUS: Bland presentation and a little light on features.

VISUALS 83 SOUND 69 GAMEPLAY 85

OVERALL 81

Solid, satisfying and sometimes surprising tennis.



Pity the guy standing on the sidewalk.



The Hyper car. Sweet.



This windscreen is so dark I can't see!



Sleek, stylish, sexy... zzzzzz.

PS2

Auto Modellista

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

CAM SHEA wonders what Capcom were smoking...

A racing game? From Capcom? Yes, it's true, Capcom have taken a break from their usual diet of fighting games and survival horror masterpieces to branch into new territory. You've read our preview, you've seen the screenshots, but guess what? The end result is not what we were expecting.

BLING BLING

Auto Modellista is not, we repeat, not an arcade racer. Instead, Capcom have taken a semi-serious route. Hop into the main gameplay mode, the aptly named "Garage Life", and you'll see what we mean. In this area you can do everything from selecting a garage to work from, to choosing and tweaking your cars, and even checking your emails (it's a glorified tutorial system really).

The roster of officially licensed cars on offer is moderately impressive, with many top manufacturers included, and more to unlock as you play. Once you've chosen a car you can completely customise its paint job, adding stripes down the hood, making the rims a little more bling bling, and picking your preferred

fluffy dice size (maybe). Then there's the tune-up menu, which is surprisingly in-depth, allowing you to not only tweak all the important settings but to even choose the make of many components. For those who just want to get out and race there's also an easy tune-up option that breaks it down to grunt up front versus top speed and drift versus grip, and lets you tune your car for specific courses.

The main racing mode consists of a series of cups to work through, and each win brings a veritable bounty of unlocked booty — new car parts, new tuning levels, new paint job options and so on. But how does it race? Well, compared to the likes of GT3, Auto Modellista is definitely lacking the sensation of real world physics and handling nuances, but it's definitely not an arcade game either. Despite the option to adjust your car's drift, this is not a game where powersliding is really possible. Instead you'll have to learn the courses and apply liberal

use of the break. There's a small but reasonable selection of tracks, ranging from cliched Japanese city settings through to downhill runs along narrow hairpin heavy roads.

SPEED LINES

It's the look of the game that's obviously the selling point, however. The cel shading on the cars is absolutely brilliant, and the speed lines that build up as you near top speed combined with the sharp plumes of smoke that spray from your wheels as you lose traction help give Auto Modellista a very edgy anime styling. Ultimately, however, the look simply doesn't mesh with the actual gameplay on offer. If Capcom had gone all out and offered up Ridge Racer style gameplay, it would have been a match made in

heaven. As it stands we have a racer that certainly offers a challenge, but doesn't really succeed in being any fun. Auto Modellista had the potential to be amazing, but has wound up being rather dull. <<<

!!! Capcom hyped this game as one of the first PS2 online racers, but once again we've missed out. There may be an online version for Oz sometime next year.



PLUS: Looks sweet, good customisation options.

MINUS: Appallingly cheesy announcer that never shuts up.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

86 59 71

OVERALL

76

Capcom really missed a golden opportunity here.

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Star Fox Adventures

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Rare/Nintendo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

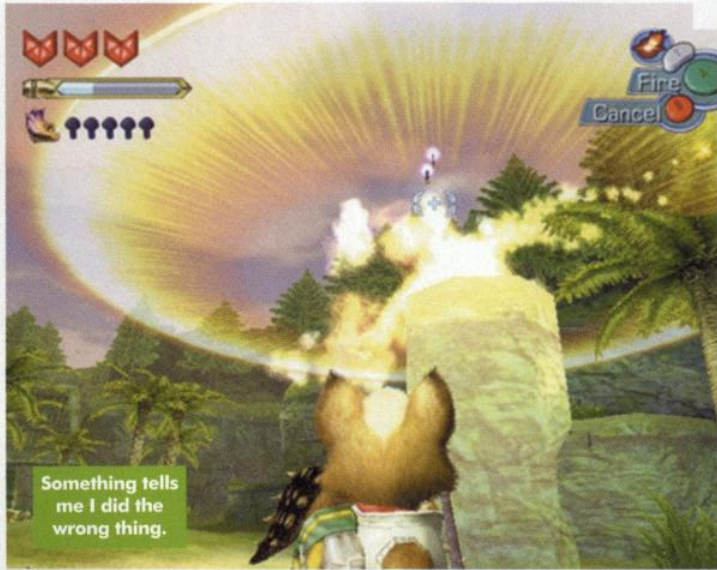
STEPHEN FARRELLY slicks back his vertex shaded hair.

So here is Rare's first and last game for GameCube, the product of a four year long development cycle, and perhaps a swansong for Rare's relationship with Nintendo. Indeed this game has everything we've come to expect from collaborated projects between the two companies, it is, in its entirety, a grandiose game, an undertaking that feels somewhat epic, and not because of the story but because of its impact on the gaming community. This, for all intents and purposes, could be the last 'real' Rareware game we see.

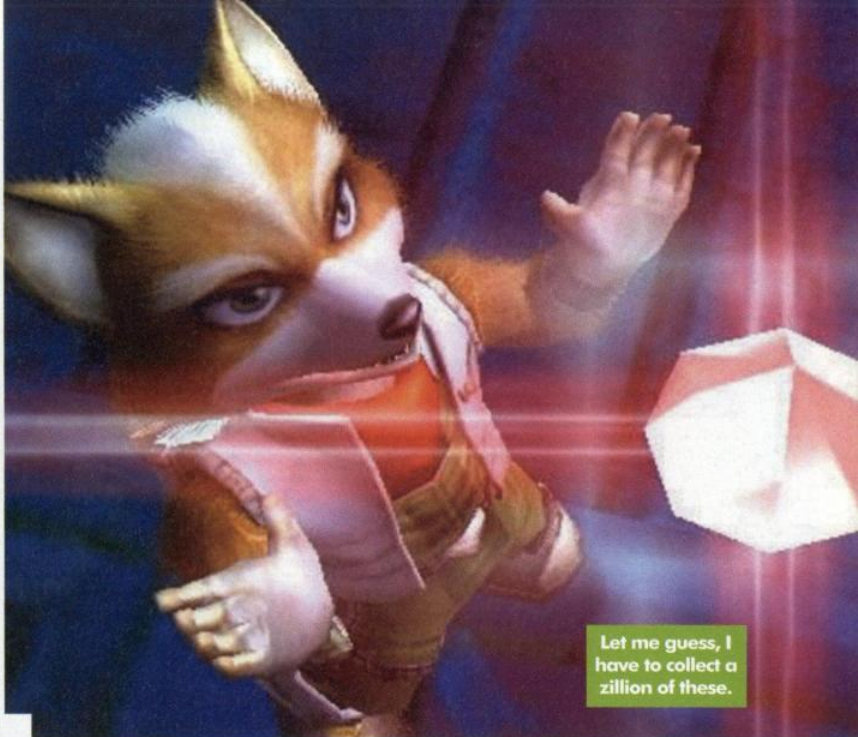
with the Legend of Zelda series. The game was also due to arrive on the N64, some three years ago. A word with Miyamoto and Iwata, however, saw the game switch platforms, and main characters. Where once you were going to be able to play as either Krystal or Sabre, now you had the famous Fox McCloud of Star Fox and Lylat Wars fame. Naturally, the story had to be changed and that annoying Slippy had to be added, but beyond that the project was in full swing and poised for launch with the GameCube. As you all know, the GameCube launched and Star Fox Adventures was nowhere to be seen. In typical Nintendo/Rare fashion, a level of polish was being layered onto Star Fox of the likes we've not yet seen on the GameCube.

CUNNING LIKE A FOX
SFA nests snugly in the Star Fox timeline as an adventure beginning eight years after the events of Lylat Wars. Fox McCloud and co. are alerted to distress calls from the faraway world of Dinosaur Planet. Having very little money and desperately needing work, the team accept the job and Fox heads towards the planet. All of this comes about because of one General Scales, a tyrant of the scaly kind who has ripped the planet's Spellstones from their temple which has caused Dinosaur Planet to literally tear apart. Eventually you'll discover that you have to return the four Spellstones to their resting place and bring Scales to his knees to free Dinosaur Planet and return it to the utopia it once was.





Something tells me I did the wrong thing.



Let me guess, I have to collect a zillion of these.



Pretty colours, feeling sleeeeeeepy...



Fox probes someone's ring.



You were in the Neverending Story!



Can't I have a bath in private, Fox?



Fear my pointy... stick... thing.

Completing side-quests and mini games is more of a chore, and an obstacle in the way...

Overall the story is quite engaging, but what drives this game is linear and yet logical design. Everything is accessed through a hub and Fox works his way around the planet through interaction with the varying characters that inhabit the world. This tends to detract from the Zelda style gameplay Rare has tried to capture, as completing side-quests and mini games is more of a chore, and an obstacle in the way, rather than a fun indulgence. Getting from A to B is almost forced upon you and at times it feels like you're rushing through the game. The experience is fun, but Rare should have re-evaluated this approach to help extend the game's longevity.

Overall, the gameplay is along the lines of the Legend of Zelda games

on the N64. Fox has an automatic jump, a targeting system, and the puzzles throughout are very reminiscent. Pick this item up, place it here, push this block to unlock that door, it's all very familiar and always logical, which at times makes the game somewhat easy. In fact, the hardened gamer could finish this title in around 15 hours if they were so inclined, but there is some longevity in it for people not trying to rush through.

HUNGRY LIKE A FOX

The crux of the game is definitely the visuals, which is something we've come to expect from Rare. Dinosaur Planet is teeming with life and the textures throughout are always different, colourful and vibrant.

!!! The next Rare game you'll see is Kameo on the Xbox. *sniff* *sniff*

Visual effects are strewn about the place in an almost insane manner, and at times you really feel like this place could exist. The water is stunning to look at, with environmental mapping that distorts the reflected surroundings, Fox included. It really is an achievement. On top of all this, the fur effect used to bring Fox to life is one of the most amazing things I've ever seen in a console game, and it's not just present in cut scenes, the effect is applied in-game, all the time. This becomes the biggest driving point behind the progression of SFA, as all you'll want to do is see the next level Rare has lined up for you, it's just that stunning.

Being the last Rare developed game on the GameCube, SFA should have a special place in most Nintendo fans' hearts. Some players may find the gameplay a little too simplistic, or be annoyed at the lack of Arwing flying missions, but at its heart, SFA has that certain Rare charm that will make it hard to resist. <<<



PLUS: Fox McCloud is cool. Zelda-ish gameplay. Slick visuals.

MINUS: Aside from visuals, nothing innovative. Too linear.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

94 90 82

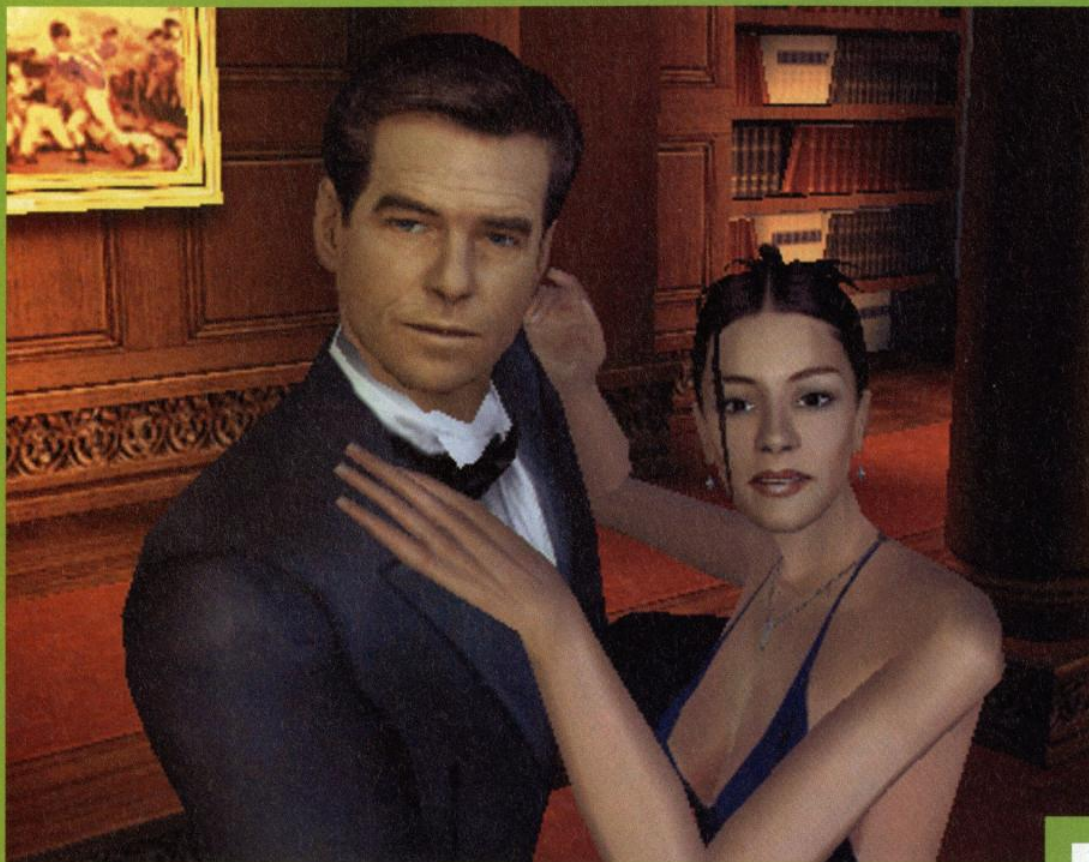
OVERALL

82

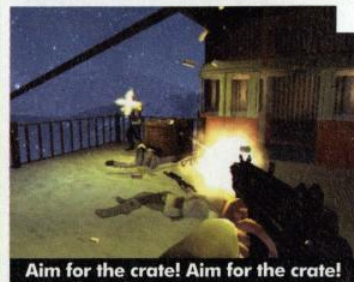
Another one down, now bring on Samus Aran!

REVIEW

HYPER 59



Nothing is "safe" from Bond, ho ho!



Aim for the crate! Aim for the crate!



Hey! This dispenses PEZ!

GCN XBOX PS2 PC

James Bond 007: Nightfire

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

CAM SHEA probes Bond's sweet arsenal...

EA haven't had a huge amount of luck with the Bond license thus far... well, not in terms of critical success at least. The last Bond FPS (Agent Under Fire) was lambasted by this very magazine for holding the gamer's hand too much, leading to a linear, dull experience. It was a game fit only for the newest of newbies.

Well, the good news is that for Nightfire, EA and Eurocom have shifted their approach somewhat. Although Nightfire is still guilty of handholding at times, it's much more along the lines of what Goldeneye graduates want — classic Bond scenarios, multiple ways to approach each situation and polished gameplay.

BOND, ALAN BOND

Right from the first mission (after the opening action sequence and classy credits have rolled) this game is imitatively Bond. From the starting point in the opening level you're presented with a number of options. Should you hop into the back of that passing truck and let it take you into the castle? Should you edge along beside the icy path sniping the

guards along the way? Or should you slide down into that ravine, pick up the armour, then use the grappling hook to pull yourself back up to the road on the other side? The freedom to experiment and approach goals in several ways makes the experience much more engaging, even if the choices are still within boundaries.

Nightfire is a very slick production all round. Missions take place in a wide variety of unique and well-realised locations, each with its own gameplay blend. The industrial compound for instance is huge and decrepit, and the focus is almost entirely on sniping. The office block, on the other hand, requires the player to avoid or simply knock out the guards while sneaking around. Other levels are more simple run and gun affairs. The level design mix is good and you're unlikely to get bored (although you will get frustrated — hello super human invisible snipers!).

SHAKEN, WEEEELL SHAKEN

The levels look great too, with real depth in the colours, some excellent texturing and a smooth anti-aliased

look. The game engine stutters occasionally when zoomed right in with the sniper rifle, but it's nothing too shocking. Bond looks pretty damn close to good old Pierce too (although he sounds nothing like him!) and the enemies you'll come across are also highly detailed. There have been some shortcuts taken, however, in terms of recycled NPC models but it's a minor gripe.

Complementing the FPS gameplay are a number of racing sections that were developed separately by EA Canada. These feature the Aston Martin

V12 Vanquish from Die Another Day, a snowmobile and a sub (in a homage to The Spy Who Love Me).

They're a nice diversion and are well implemented. As is

the multiplayer component — 13 modes, a wealth of maps and options, and a smooth split-screen frame rate.

Criticisms? The game could certainly give you more freedom to use your gadgets. Also, non-essential secondary objectives would have been nice to complement the sparse number of primary objectives. Even so, this is a real return to form. <<

Best Bond line in the game? "Anything can be penetrated with the proper tool". Subtle.

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Slick design, good pacing, lots of fun action.

MINUS: Bond only gets laid about 20 times.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
87	83	86

OVERALL

86

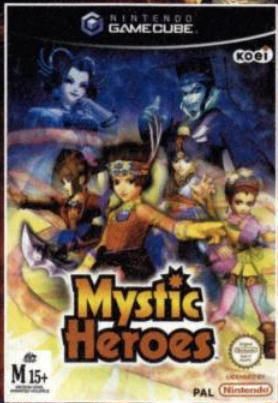
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Mystic Heroes

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GCN PS2

Star Wars: The Clone Wars

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

ELIOT FISH tries to pretend the prequels aren't crap.

It's funny how the decline in quality of LucasArts games almost coincided with LucasFilm's unleashing of the tepid first movie prequel upon *Star Wars* fans. At the time it seemed that all around us, *Star Wars* was deteriorating into something that was a mere mockery of its once great self. Both *The Phantom Menace* and the associated games seemed to be made by people who just didn't really have a clue why the fans liked *Star Wars* in the first place. There was something wrong at both Lucas camps, something very wrong indeed.

Now, here we are in 2002, and whilst *Star Wars* fans are still not being delivered satisfying experiences in the theatre, the games have taken a small step up.

WINDU CLEANER

Pandemic Studios have taken care of the day to day duties on this one for LucasArts, re-inventing all their Battlezone 3D experience for a blast of *Star Wars* vehicular combat. Now you know why all the good guys and bad guys drive around in hoverships. This is very much run-of-the-mill

action fare, that, if stripped of its *Star Wars* coverings, would be overlooked by most gamers. Luckily for Pandemic, they get to draw from a cast of well-loved characters, cool *Star Wars* spacecraft designs and have John Williams provide the soundtrack, giving Clone Wars just that little bit of an edge.

The overall impression we get after playing through Clone Wars, is that Pandemic wanted the game to be as chaotic and relentless as possible, to somehow capture what fans would expect of something as legendary as the Clone Wars. To that effect they have succeeded admirably, as there are some truly crazy battles in this game. You'll be swamped in laser fire, dodging what appear to be hundreds of droids, and coordinating your attack on multiple targets in some very cool craft.

CLONE COMBO

It's quite thrilling at times, and when you're flying the Republic Gunship over the plains of Geonosis at the beginning of the game, you'll get that

"ooh this is just like being in the movie" feeling. Unfortunately, there are many moments throughout the game when you get that "ooh this is just like playing *Shadows of the Empire* again" feeling, and the "ooh this is just like playing a brick submerged in chewing gum" feeling too.

For all the cool moments — like hurtling through a junkyard on the back of a speederbike — there are some horridly lame moments, such as pretty much every single time that you're on foot and doing lightsaber stuff. Control over your character in these bits is truly dire, and you'll be clumsily mashing your way through these bits, just to get back to the far more intuitive and well-balanced vehicular combat.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars is simply a mixed bag. The game has some great looking graphics, but the frame rate slow down is at times chronic. The same goes for the gameplay — it's truly hit and miss stuff. *Star Wars* fanboys will want to add it to their collection immediately, but the rest of you should approach with caution. <<

!!! Filming of Episode III begins in Sydney at Fox Studios early 2003.

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Frantic shoot 'em up action. Good use of music.

MINUS: Obi-Wan sounds more like a gay butler than McGregor.

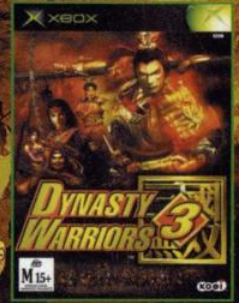
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

83 85 74

OVERALL

78

A real mixed bag with a few great action moments.



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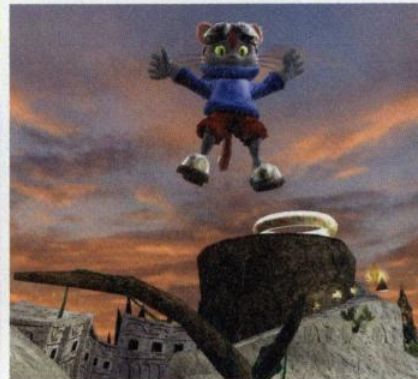
New features!

Choose from two different colour variations of each character's costume! / Increased number of game saves! / Even more difficulty levels!

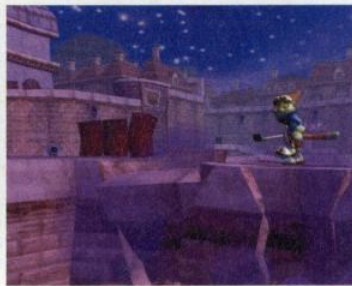


AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 2002





XBOX



Blinx: THE TIME SWEEPER

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

DANIEL STAINES rubs his eyes and blinks.

Elinx: The Time Sweeper is a game built on a gimmick and that gimmick is time. As it happens, this gimmick has turned out to be a very successful tool in garnering the interest and attention of the global gaming community. One only has to take a cursory look at the reports from E3 2002 to see the kind of frothing, anticipatory excitement Microsoft managed to work up with their little vacuum carrying cat. Ominous cries of 'Mario killer' filled the air as gamers everywhere looked to the Xbox as a new bastion of creative game design. From the perspective of many of us, this game appeared to be nothing less than a glimpse of the future.

Well, if Blinx is the future of gaming then kill me now because I

don't want to be alive when all games end up as frustratingly bad as this.

CRUMBLES TO DUST

That's right: despite all our excitement, despite all our expectations, despite everything we hoped for, Blinx has turned out to be utter cack. It is a frustrating, tedious and derivative platformer that fails to deliver anything remotely interesting outside of the essentially artificial ability to control the flow of time during play. We say this ability is artificial simply because there is very little in the game's design to make this four-dimensionality anything but something one uses when it is explicitly evident that they have to. A bridge inexplicably crumbles to dust, so you use rewind to bring it

back up again. There's a switch that needs to be held down, so you employ the record button and make your mirror image stand in the proper spot while you move on. Pre-set puzzles such as these permeate the entirety of Blinx's adventure and their constant repetition effectively disintegrates any sense of achievement that might have been found in solving them. They are, in a word, boring.

Now, if Artoon had designed Blinx so that the player could creatively and successfully experiment with time-

control, then we wouldn't have much to gripe about. As it stands, however, Blinx's levels are almost uniformly boring in their design and allow very little opportunity for one to advantageously toy around with time. Of the secrets that can be discovered by controlling time, most are either desperately obvious or simply not worth going for due to their distinct lack of desirable rewards. Money is never in short supply, trash to shoot at enemies





Just remember, curiosity killed the cat.



Don't blink or you'll miss it.



What's new pussycat?



What was the TTC, Blinx?



Can we forwardwind to the end?



Blings, the hip-hop cat.



Can we rewind and get our money back?

In order to control time, Blinx must collect combinations of time crystals...

via vacuum can be found all over the place and time crystals ... well, let's just take a moment to talk about time crystals, shall we?

In order to control time, Blinx must collect combinations of 'time crystals' by either finding them scattered about or by shooting monsters. There are six types of crystal, five of them corresponding to time control and one 'extra-life' type. There are four crystal slots and at least three of them have to be filled with the same crystal type to reap rewards. If I get three rewind crystals and one pause crystal, for example, then I will get a rewind powerup that takes up one of a set number of time control slots available (four crystals gets you two powerups). But if I pick up, say, two fast-forward crystals and two record

crystals then I will get nothing and the crystal slots become empty again. Sounds easy enough, right?

ACCIDENTALLY STUMBLE

Well, it isn't. Because Blinx's third person camera is so amazingly bad, you will find yourself constantly picking up crystals by mistake and getting useless combinations as a result. Consequently, one ends up frustrated at the ceaseless string of unavoidable errors and bored by the fact that no crystals are left to collect and therefore no time controls powerups are to be had. The problems are only compounded further during the game's many monotonous boss battles where the camera focuses

!!! Did you know that Naoto Oshima, the man responsible for Sonic, was the main brain behind Blinx?

relentlessly on the boss in question and one is forced to run around blindly in the hope they don't accidentally stumble on an undesirable crystal in the process. Of course, most of the game's problems can be surmounted without the use of time control, but without this shallow enhancement it becomes all the more obvious just how utterly bland Blinx really is.

It may sound like we've put the boot in a little hard during this review, but you can rest assured that Blinx hasn't copped anything it doesn't deserve. It is a poor game with heinous faults that are only illuminated further by the fact that they are underpinned by what is arguably one of the most inventive and exciting concepts seen in recent video game history. Indeed, if there is any lesson we can take away from Artoon's efforts, it is that good ideas are necessary for creating enjoyable games, but definitely not sufficient. Not by a long shot. <<<



PLUS: Excellent concept, looks pretty good at times.

MINUS: Poor concept implementation, terrible camera.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
84 75 59

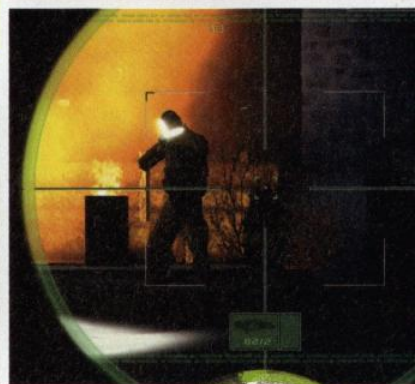
OVERALL

61

Blinx is a fabulous theory gone terribly wrong in practice.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 65



XBOX PC



Splinter Cell

CATEGORY: Tactical Espionage Simulation >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

BRETT ROBINSON is blown away blowing people away.



For proud owners of Bill's big black box, the past few weeks have been exciting (or frustrating, as the case may be) indeed. The sudden influx of A-grade games — among them, *Morrowind*, *MechAssault*, *Sega GT 2002* and *Hitman 2* — is admittedly something of a mixed blessing, particularly when it comes to bank balances. However, a significant number of Xbox owners still seem to be impatiently waiting for the next big thing: a game that can match the excitement, the beauty and the intensity of *Halo*. Well, my friends, that game has finally arrived, and no, it's not *Halo 2*!

POWERFUL WEAPONS

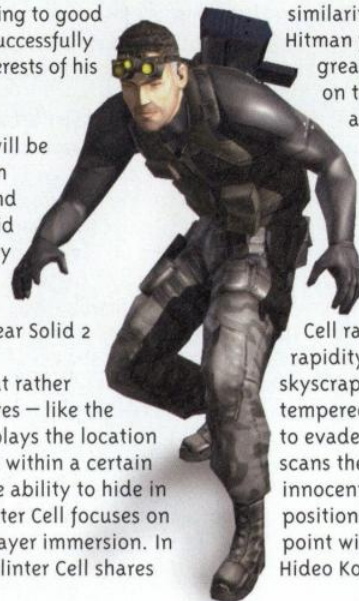
Brimming with political intrigue and the kind of high-tech gear that puts James Bond's gadgets to shame,

Splinter Cell is typical Tom Clancy fare. An aggressive faction seizes power in the former Soviet state of Georgia, and targets the US with a devastatingly effective 'information warfare' campaign. With its army incapable of dealing with an opponent who attacks not with bullets, but with cutting-edge communications technology and skilfully crafted propaganda, the US is forced to deploy one of the most powerful weapons in its arsenal: Mr Sam Fisher.

An extraordinary man with a rather ordinary name, Sam Fisher is an ex-Navy SEAL, ex-CIA agent and ex-NSA operative now working as a black ops specialist for an organisation called Third Echelon. Tasked with undertaking covert missions in locations as diverse as Myanmar, Russia and the US, Fisher must put his

skills and training to good use if he is to successfully protect the interests of his home country.

Invariably, comparisons will be drawn between *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear Solid 2*; after all, they have much in common. But where *Metal Gear Solid 2* offers players interesting, but rather 'gamey' features — like the radar that displays the location of every guard within a certain radius, and the ability to hide in lockers — *Splinter Cell* focuses on realism and player immersion. In this regard, *Splinter Cell* shares



similarities with the *Thief* and *Hitman* franchises, which place great emphasis on stealth, on the timing of actions, and on precise aiming.

In *Metal Gear Solid 2*'s favour, its breathtaking cut-scenes are a tough act to follow. But when it comes to gameplay, *Splinter Cell* rappels with frightening rapidity down the side of a skyscraper, bursts through a tempered-glass window, rolls to evade a fusillade of bullets, scans the crowded room for innocents, and neatly positions a jacketed hollow-point within the frontal lobe of Hideo Kojima's masterpiece.

Where's Snake when I need him?!



DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

Sam Fisher wears night vision and thermal goggles that enable him to see clearly in low light conditions, and to detect the heat signatures of nearby adversaries. He carries a surveillance camera jammer, and a 'snake cam' capable of peeping under doors. Fisher also packs a silenced 5.7mm pistol, and the modular F2000 assault rifle. Capable of single-shot and full-auto fire, the F2000 is also designed to launch a variety of secondary munitions, ranging from retrievable miniature spy cams (complete with pan and zoom) to electrocution rounds. From frag and smoke grenades to mini cams that attract enemies with a sound, then dispense knockout gas! Whatever you do, don't get on his bad side.

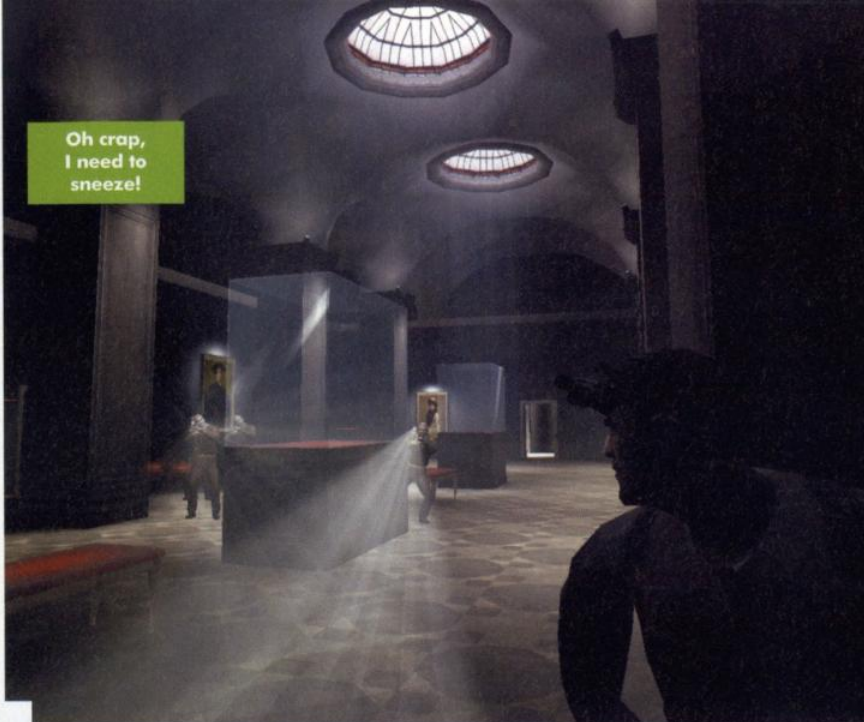


My last girlfriend taught me this.



If I'm not at eye level, he won't see me.

Oh crap, I need to sneeze!



This daylight saving always screws me up!



There's nary a cringe-worthy line of dialogue to be found. **What more could anyone want?**

NOT-SO BLISSFUL SLUMBER

Incidentally, many of the above-mentioned actions are part of Sam Fisher's very extensive (not to mention spectacular) repertoire. Thanks to his physical versatility, the game's exceptional lighting system, and the interactive and complex nature of the Splinter Cell world, Sam can approach any situation in literally dozens of different ways. Thus, under the player's careful guidance, Fisher can shimmy up and down exposed pipes, sneak up on or slink past patrolling sentries, and perform his trademark 'split jump'. Add a simple handgun to the equation, and Sam can interrogate hapless civilians for pertinent information (before pistol-whipping them into not-so-blissful slumber), 'encourage' ranking officers to activate retinal scanners (and pistol-whip them for good measure), shoot

out security cameras from around corners, and use captured adversaries as human shields. In a welcome change from MGS2's unwarranted restriction, it's possible to shoot back at enemies while using their comrades as makeshift kevlar vests.

Splinter Cell's phenomenal dynamic lighting system is unquestionably the most advanced in existence. Natural and artificial light sources behave exactly as they do in real life, illuminating darkened areas and casting shadows in real time. This has a tangible and very dramatic effect on the way the player must approach each mission. Most of the light globes and fluorescent tubes in the game can be destroyed with bullets or thrown objects, creating

havens of darkness in which Fisher can escape detection or stash the bodies of downed foes. And from certain angles it's possible to spot the shadows of enemies concealed behind objects and approaching from around corners, but obviously these strategies work both ways.

Splinter Cell's visuals are clearly worth writing several dissertations home about, but as they say, a screenshot is worth a thousand words. The game's audio is of an uncommonly high standard, with an

atmospheric score that actively adapts to the action on screen. Refreshingly, the voice acting for the major and minor characters

weighs in at the upper end of the scale, and there's nary a cringe-worthy line of dialogue to be found. What more could anyone want?

Featuring sumptuous visuals, a swag of awesome weapons and gadgets, and — most importantly — excellent gameplay, Splinter Cell has emerged victorious in the battle for tactical espionage supremacy. <<

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Multifaceted gameplay. AI that is genuinely 'I'.

MINUS: Occasional clipping of dead bodies through walls.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

95 91 93

OVERALL

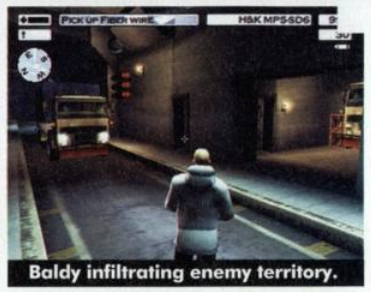
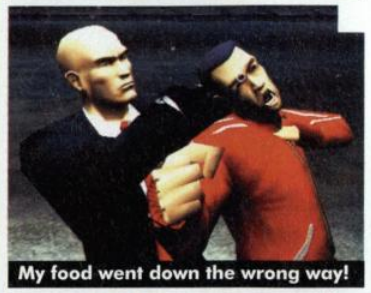
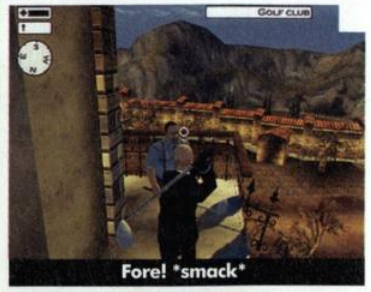
94

One of the finest Xbox games released this year.

REVIEW

» HYPER 67

!!! If and when Xbox Live launches in Australia, Splinter Cell upgrades will be available for download.



XBOX PS2 PC

Hitman 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

CATEGORY: Third Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

DANIEL STAINES decides whether this is hit or miss.

For all those cynical naysayers out there who think that developers don't care about gamers and never listen to their concerns, behold Hitman 2. This game not only manages to remedy almost every single problem suffered by its ubiquitously maligned predecessor, it also makes a good fist of providing an enjoyable freeform experience quite unlike any other available on the Xbox. It's not perfect, of course, but it does show that Io Interactive listened when we sent them all those nasty letters about the first Hitman. The squeaky wheel gets the grease as they say — especially if said squeaky wheel swears a lot and threatens to strangle people in their sleep.

STEALING HIS CLOTHES

So how exactly does Hitman 2 improve on its predecessor so dramatically? Well, first of all, it allows you to save at any time throughout the mission. Those of who have played the first game will know that there is nothing quite so annoying as having to do an entire

mission all over again simply because of one stinkin' little mistake. In Hitman 2, however, one may carefully plan a course of action and then save the game before trying it out in practice. So not only can you simply reload if everything gets a bit loopy, but you can keep trying alternative courses of action until you hit upon one that fulfills your desired practical and aesthetic requirements.

We use the term 'aesthetic requirements' because killing is all about style in Hitman 2. Despite his decidedly macabre motivations (or perhaps because of them), you will find yourself irresistibly ensnared by the cool charm with which the game's protagonist carries out his gruesome business.

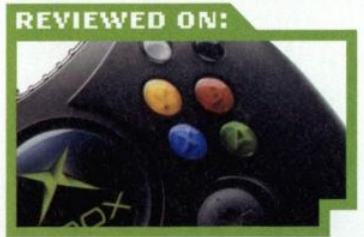
Strangling a waiter and stealing his clothes after mercilessly dumping his body into a frozen river would not be so endlessly entertaining if Agent 47 simply did it like any of the halfpenny crooks you'll likely see loitering outside of Hyper HQ. To the well-trained hitman, killing is not a crime but an art and this is reflected in every single murder committed.

DOING THE DEED

Of course, actually getting into a position where you can successfully commit your crime is a lot easier than doing the actual deed itself and this is precisely the main problem with Hitman 2. For while it is entirely possible to concoct expansive plots for every mission, it is often difficult to tell how these schemes are going to work in the field because of the NPC's erratic AI. This problem is alleviated somewhat by the new save functionality mentioned above, but you'll likely get sick of having to reload and come up with new plans simply because its impossible to predict how a given guard is going to react in a specific set of circumstances.

Experimentation is generally good fun, but only when you can experiment within a reliable set of variables. Sadly, this is not really the case with Hitman 2. Aside from that minor irk, though, this game is very good indeed. It's on all platforms 'cept GCN, so check it out when it comes your way. <<

!!! Get all obsessed about the game (or something) at www.hitman2.com



PLUS: Exceedingly stylish, freeform gameplay.
MINUS: Erratic AI, some environments are a little plain.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
84 80 85
OVERALL
85

Definitely a 'killer app'!
Ho ho ho!



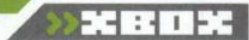
Is there a roadmap in the glovebox?



My cat attacked my face last night.



I'm outta control, gonna die... aiiie!



Quantum Redshift

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

CAM SHEA ponders time, space and anti-gravity racing...

Coming to us from a future where driveable air hockey puck racing constitutes the sport of choice, Quantum Redshift is a game of blazing speeds and wacky characters. Yes, this is the first Xbox anti-gravity racer, but instead of leaving us delirious with pleasure, it has merely demonstrated just how hard it is to make a great game in this genre. There's nothing massively wrong with Redshift; it just fails to make the leap from solid to inspired.

BUMPING INTO WALLS

Developers Curly Monsters have certainly got the speed aspect down — the game runs at 60fps the whole way. Unfortunately, speed must be combined with handling that's tight enough to navigate the courses, and in this respect Quantum Redshift doesn't quite deliver. There simply aren't the same nuances to the handling that a game like Wipeout has. Bumping into walls is a fact of life with this title, and the faster the speed class, the more this happens. Sloppy control is compounded by track design that lacks polish — the slick racing lines that racing fans crave

aren't quite there. There's nothing all that captivating about the course design either. There are no boost pads, loop the loops or anything innovative to keep you coming back.

The weapon system is the epitome of dull too. There are three types of pickups on the track, colour coded to the button on the pad that triggers it. Yellow is for shield, blue is for laser and red is for homing missile. While we see what Curly were going for here — an elegant system that's balanced for offence and defence, it just doesn't work. The system is too simplistic and it gets really boring using the same three options over and over.

Worse still, you're only racing in a field of six! That's simply not good enough for a game in this genre, especially when compared to 30 in F-Zero X and 16 in Wipeout Fusion. Perhaps Curly Monsters wanted to keep the competitor count small to fit the character-based nature of the game. Well, it was a bad decision because the cut scenes add nothing to the game and are cringe-inducingly contrived.

!!! Curly Monsters also made NGEN Racing for PSone (70% in Hyper #82)

EARN MORE CASH

The upgrade system is one of the better implementations in Quantum Redshift. After a race you're awarded cash based on a number of factors, which can be spent on upgrades in weapon power, turbo time (you can turbo boost for this amount of time per lap) and shield strength. You can then go back and race the course again to try and beat your previous score and earn more hard cash.

On first glance this is an impressive looking game. It has crisp graphics, great water effects and lashings of speed. It's not long, however, before you realise just how generic the visuals actually are. Bump mapping and the like can be very effective when used with subtlety, but in Redshift's case the effect is splashed all over the place and it actually makes the game look worse. Sometimes, less is more, guys.

As critical as this review is, we didn't hate Quantum Redshift. It's just hard to get excited about a game that is so darn average. <<<



PLUS: Fast, high-framerate racing. Upgrade system.

MINUS: Average racing mechanics. Contrived story.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

81 68 69

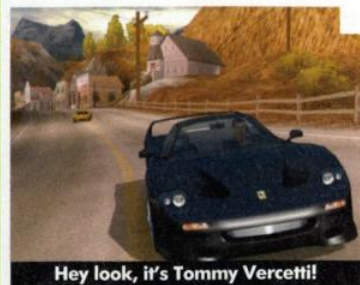
OVERALL

70

Quantum Redshift is just another generic futuristic racer.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 69



Hey look, it's Tommy Vercetti!



Ya can't catch me coppers!



Okay, maybe you can. Dang.

XBOX PS2 GCN PC

Need for Speed: HOT PURSUIT 2

CATEGORY: Driving >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: EA Games >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE reckons speed kills.

The Need for Speed series has always been a favourite amongst arcade racing fans. There is something soothing about whipping around mountaintops and flying through autumn forests in a stunning supercar. In fact, so soothing is the Xbox version of Hot Pursuit 2, that it resembles the softest, sleep-inducing lullaby, sung by the fairest of mothers – Yankee cock rock included.

AH, CANYONS.

The environments are unspectacularly familiar, with those mountain vistas, seaside towns, powerful waterfalls and canyon cliffs making up much of the scenery. Having said that, there are some nice dramatically picturesque moments, as you look out through the flashing lights of a police car to a sunset over the ocean. Textures are generally clean, if unspectacular, but the real attention-seekers are the cars. Nicely modeled, their appropriately restrained real-time reflections work well, although they seem to refresh slower than the game's framerate – similar to what was seen in Project Gotham. The different racing times of

the day offer some variety in colour and atmosphere, and effects such as smoke and skids are, as you would expect, good. The sparks have nothing on Burnout 2 though.

The EA Trax stubborn music settings prevent you from extensively customising the game's soundtrack in-game, forcing you to endure certain songs you will not enjoy. You can use your custom Xbox soundtracks, but in this age of hard-drives and extended playlists, the kind of integrated music options seen in Gotham should be standard, particularly for a game that is intended to be hip and fun.

The game's major goals are split up into either Hot Pursuit or Championship Mode. Each offers a branching set of 33 races, where access is only gained to each subsequent tier by completing the previous challenge. Car choice, for the most part, is limited to a handful for each race, and points are awarded based on performance. It's all fairly standard, but does mean that you will never get stuck on a single bitch of a race.

PROD IN THE GREY MATTER

What is severely disappointing about the game however is its lack of speed. It honestly feels as if you are stuck in a low gear. The odd patch of slowdown is actually a godsend, as the much-needed prod in the old grey matter keeps you awake. While the higher cars are marginally more entertaining, what truly irks is the lumbering maneuverability (using that term infinitely loosely) of even the supposedly nimblest of vehicles. When the police start ganging up on you, the generally monotonous winding roads can truly frustrate, as each brush with the law feels like déjà vu. Roadblocks and choppers dropping explosives (only in America...) break things up a little, but it's all in vain, as the sluggish gameplay extracts your interest.

In true EA tradition, a development culture of excess results in plenty of tracks and cars. More than a dozen tracks, laps of which mostly take more than several minutes to complete, and around 50 fully licensed cars, mean there's plenty to uncover if you have the patience. Time for bed. <<

!!! Developed separately, the PS2 version of the game is actually faster!

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Attractive assortment of cars, tracks.

MINUS: Sluggastic racing.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 77 67

OVERALL

70

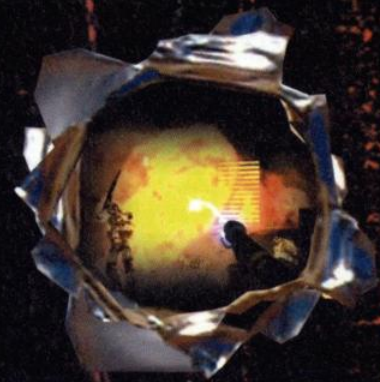
Needs more speed.

DIE HARD

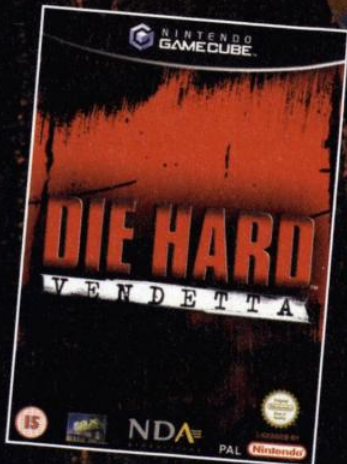
TM

V E N D E T T A

IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE PAY BACK



**"ACTION THAT VASTLY
SURPASSES THE
CLASSIC GOLDENEYE!"**
- GAMESPY





PC

No One Lives Forever 2

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Sierra >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PII 500, 128MB RAM, 3D card

Make mine a blue key says **JOHN DEWHURST.**

Let us, for a moment, boil down some Shooters to their mere essence to see the one thing that we know them to be. Quake would be the Fast one; Half-Life would be the Story one; and No One Lives Forever (N.O.L.F.) would be the Comedy one. A Groovy, Cat-Daddy style shooter complete with fake moustaches, groovy tunes, funny accents and zany weaponry. The sequel to 2000's smash hit, subtitled A Spy in H.A.R.M.'s Way, it continues the tradition of gags and bullets.

A LITTLE FROM COLUMN A...

If anything, this game LIVES for the stereotypes: the 60s haircuts, the Austin Powers soundtrack and pastel colour show, the ruthless villain with an overbearing mother, and the Get Smart inspired gadgets. How about

the stereotype of the ball-busting, sexually dominant female action hero in Cate Archer? That line sure isn't bucking any trends these days. So does N.O.L.F. 2 offer anything new or is this a day-glo retreat?

The two big claims to fame for this title are the all-new engine and the improved AI. The game looks impressively detailed thanks to the Jupiter Engine, a modified version of the latest LithTech. Environmental effects like waterfalls, vegetation and even snow are wonderfully produced. The characters generally look very good too. The same cannot be said for the facial expressions. Slimy villains lack any kind of menace and the distant gazes of wronged heroines come off as blank stares. It is distressing to note that FFX (on the "primitive" PS2 no less)

sports some far more compelling facial animation. And that's not a new game.

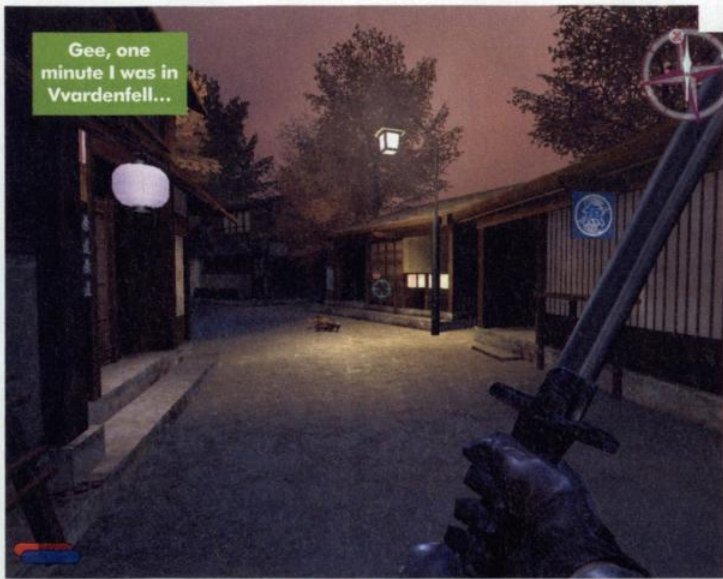
The AI features interaction between various enemies to co-ordinate attacks, alert others to disturbances and generally respond in different moods depending on the situation. None of this will be apparent if the gamer plays this game the way FPS titles are usually played: with guns blazing. In close combat, enemies respond in the way we're accustomed: returning fire and ducking for cover, perhaps sounding an

alarm and retreating when sufficiently hit. So they act like any other common-or-garden FPS enemies.

The weakest link in this chain is the game design. At no stage are you encouraged to slow down your pace and search for more detail or interact more carefully with the environment.

This area of play is tragically one dimensional. There is only one way to interact with the world: the right mouse button. No matter what the section of the map you're faced with, if you can do something with it, the right





Gee, one minute I was in Vvardenfell...



Taking out the trailer trash.



It's cheaper than liposuction...



Stop that Karaoke, NOW.



What is it with one-legged characters?



Stop or I'll pelt you with snowballs!

mouse button will automatically select the appropriate tool/weapon/comedy prop and carry out the action. Whether it's picking a lock or decoding a message, the same scrolled bar treads across the screen until the action's finished. The game encourages the player to move quick since these are non-events. Linear is an understatement: levels are poorly disguised one-way routes through exotic locales. The scenery is lovely but a quick pace is necessary to avoid that ghost town feeling.

KILL THEM ALL...

So it's a tragedy that if the game is played Dirty Harry style, it becomes quite monotonous. The steady rhythm of half-hearted sneaking, punctuated by abrupt chords of enemy alarm at your presence, followed by multiple deaths and a return to sneaking becomes decidedly dull. Harder settings are more satisfying - perhaps the only way to play this game is to Kill No One, or as few enemies as possible.

Far more challenging and perhaps rewarding, a persistent sneaking

It's possible to lure enemies around corners with dropped coins, make them slip on bananas...

approach allows you to observe the AI in motion. It's possible to lure enemies around corners with dropped coins, make them slip up with bananas and so on. A keener awareness of your whereabouts (Where's the hiding spot? Armour?) also makes for more involving play. It's a pity the game doesn't push you in this direction except by the death penalty.

Gathering experience through meeting mission objectives and finding secrets allows the skills of Cate Archer to be upgraded. Abilities like Weaponry, Armour, Searching and Evasion can be improved in this way. It's a pity that bonus points are awarded for the most menial of tasks: finding four pages of a diary in a level, searching filing cabinets for useless

"intelligence" that are often half-hearted attempts at humour. It doesn't encourage the player to formulate new tactics or attempt to understand the game any better - if anything this kind of repetitious play should be downplayed not promoted. It's role-playing half-baked which is probably the intention.

N.O.L.F. 2 fails to bring anything compellingly new to the gamut of First Person Shooters. That said, it's a light-hearted, highly playable game and the recipe of hammy gags, slapstick comedy, 60s memorabilia and easy gameplay will ensure its mainstream success. It's not a bad place to start for the absolute beginners but FPS hardcores will find it stunningly lightweight on anything but Realistic setting. Maybe that's for the best. <<<

!!! We're really waiting for Sierra to get Half-Life 2 out, eh?



PLUS: More oddball adventures of Cate Archer.

MINUS: No additions to a familiar formula.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

83 78 83

OVERALL

82

Competent FPS but it's the same old recipe.

REVIEW

>>> HYPER 73



Here's a storm – of bullets, har har!



Astronomy class is in session.



Okay... let's check the "TTC" ...

PC

Iron Storm

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Wanadoo >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Patience, PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card. >>

FRANK DRY rewrites history and lives to tell the tale.

We love alternate history games. The possibilities are endless, just think: A world where John Howard never won the Prime Ministership, Jar Jar Binks was created for the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers instead of *Star Wars*, Duke Nukem Forever was released for PC, and *Hyper* magazine was a monthly knitting journal. How good would that be? Well, *Iron Storm's* premise is a little less spectacular. In this case, it's simply a fantasy scenario that World War I never ended, and fifty years on, that war is still being waged.

MURKY BROWN

First up, let's make a point of highlighting how ludicrous minimum specs for PC games have become. As you can see on this review, the manufacturer suggests a PIII 500 as a minimum. Well, sure the game will install and boot-up on a PIII 500, but good luck getting any kind of actual playable performance. We tried *Iron Storm* on a PIII 733 to begin with, and had to abandon that for a PIII 1.5Ghz machine with a GeForce 3 to get it to look and perform as good as we had

expected in the first place. This is a proprietary 3D engine by 4X studios, dubbed the Phoenix 3D engine, so I guess we'll cut them some slack that it's a bit of a performance hog – just don't believe what you see written on the box art these days, eh?

The year is 1964, and World War I has continued to rage to the point where technology is becoming dangerous enough to do some serious damage to the planet. Yes, someone is about to get their hands on nuclear devices unless they can be stopped. In steps the player to turn the tide of the war. You begin the game in some murky brown bunkers, and before you know it you've been given your first truly important mission. But at first, you wander around the place, interacting with people and things, get some weapons and get a handle on how everything operates.

PECULIAR DESIGN

Sadly, *Iron Storm* is the first game in about 50 years to not have WASD as the default movement controls, so you'll find you have to pause and

remap all the controls to make the game somewhat easier to handle. Arrow keys? Come on guys! You'll also notice just how ugly many of the character models are, and how silly some of the animation looks. And then it's on to the action...

As you progress through your first few missions, you'll enjoy the interesting looking "alternate history" terrain and the somewhat peculiar design of the maps. Then you'll start wondering why it's polluted with such aggravating gameplay. The weapons on offer are nothing worth writing home about, and shoot-outs with enemy troops feel haphazard and even clunky, mostly due to the bizarre enemy AI.

Whilst the developers have obviously tried to remain original, the result is a collection of mission objectives that sometimes make little sense. Puzzles are obscure and shoot-outs are usually bland affairs. There's also a hefty dose of save/reload gameplay here that just begins to piss you off.

Iron Storm is ambitious, but there isn't anything here to celebrate. <<

!!! Not to be confused with PC developer, Ion Storm.



PLUS: Interesting alternate history premise and atmosphere.

MINUS: Mediocre everything else. Multiplayer servers will be lonely.

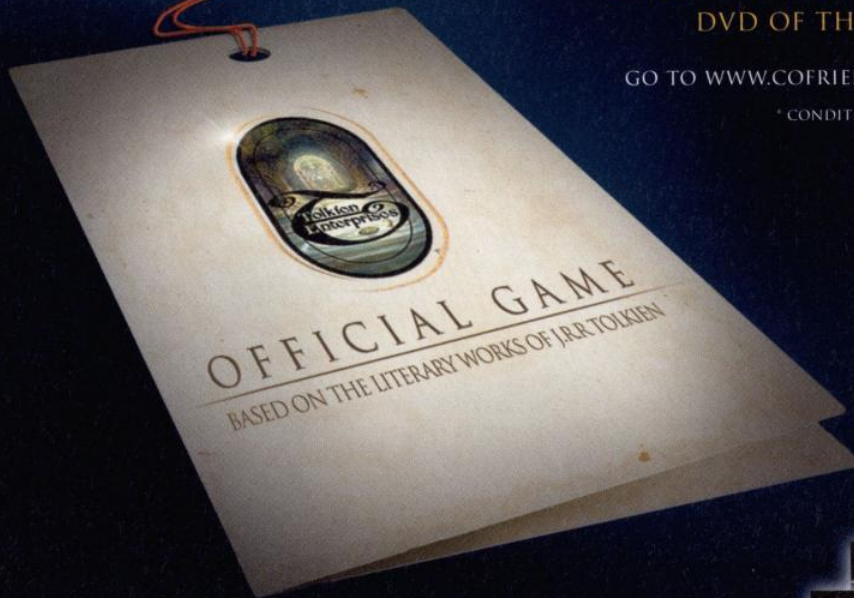
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
79 80 67

OVERALL
70

Great idea, unfortunate execution.

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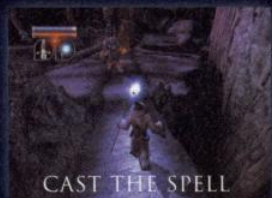
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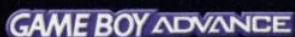
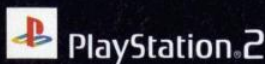


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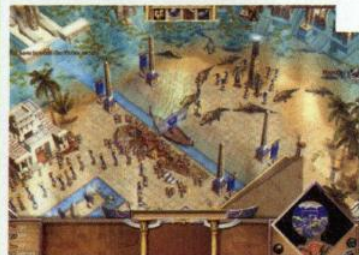
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The dragon's throwing up again, Bob.



We won't win the America's Cup in that!



Aww, what a nice present...

PC

Age of Mythology

CATEGORY: Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: PG >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

DANIEL STAINES has convinced us he's god-like.

It is evident right from the start that Age of Mythology does not make any significant departures from the well-worn paths of its predecessors. Sticking to familiar territory, series creator Bruce Shelley has taken the finely honed RTS mechanics of his previous games and added a list of new features that work 'with' the established formula instead of 'on top' of it. In that sense, AoM is more a step sideward than a step forward for the franchise as a whole, but that fact shouldn't bias you against playing it. It is, after all, a truly excellent strategy game and the best Age of Empires title to date.

SPICE TO THE MIX

The most noticeable of all the new additions is of course that which the game derives its title from — the mythology. This comes in the form of gods, heroes and creatures of myth. Gods act as benevolent overseers, granting the player tremendous power provided said player remembers to garner their favour by constantly performing the appropriate deeds. Depending on what society is being

used, one is given a specific 'big' god at the start of every scenario and then required to chose from a variety of underlying gods during the course of advancement.

What makes all this interesting is the fact that these gods come part and parcel with special once off abilities that can be used during combat to significantly alter the course of a given encounter. One can, for example, turn the tables of a fierce battle by engaging the enemy's strongest units and then using Aphrodite's curse power to turn them all into defenceless herd of swine. This potential for precisely this kind of dramatic shift lends a certain kind of unpredictability to every scenario and opens the door from some truly impressive strategic options.

TWO HOSTILE OPPOSITES

Heroes and creatures of myth, while not as dramatically influential as gods, also add their own interesting brand of spice to the mix and can often make all the difference between victory and defeat. Heroes are one-of-a-kind, especially strong versions

of normal units that can resurrect themselves provided that their scene of death is within the vicinity of other allied troops. They are also the only unit that can effectively challenge the creatures of myth — gargantuan monsters capable of mass destruction — and it is often the interplay between these two hostile opposites that makes the combat in AoM just that much more engaging than the standard RTS fare. Trust us when we say there is nothing quite so exhilarating as watching a resurrected hero save an entire offensive by killing a rampaging

Cyclops. It is pure magic.

And that special brand of magic moment is precisely why AoM is a game no self-respecting strategy buff should pass up on. Sure the underlying gameplay is essentially identical to that featured in Age of Kings, but since when is that a bad thing? This game is old-school RTS excellence for today's gamer and will deservedly take its place as one of the greats of the genre. Ensemble has done it again. <<<

Get all your downloads at www.ensemblestudios.com



PLUS: Solid strategy mechanics, god powers, lengthy campaign.

MINUS: Fairly unoriginal stuff.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 85 90

OVERALL

90

Polished strategy gaming par excellence.



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GAME BOY ADVANCE



PlayStation 2





Have at you, assortment of small pixels!



PC

Divine Divinity

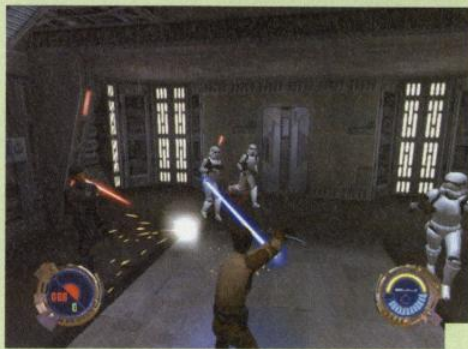
CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: CDV >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>
 RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

If imitation is truly the sincerest form of flattery then the makers of Diablo, Nox, Darkstone, Baldur's Gate and countless other action/RPG games should be positively glowing. Divine Divinity is not so much a game in its own right as it is a homage to all the best parts of the games that have come before. Combine the combat and skills of Diablo with the sheer size of Baldur's Gate and you already have a good idea what's in store for you. Running over 1000's of pre-rendered screens, Divine Divinity is a truly massive game, boasting somewhere in the vicinity of 100 hours of play if you want to immerse yourself in the myriad of sub-quests that litter the hero's path.

Players take the role of the Divine One, a newly awakened saviour destined to unite the races and blah, blah, blah, you've heard it countless times before. The clichéd plot is but one indicator of what Divine Divinity is lacking — character. It's fine for a game to have countless hours of playing time but when everything contained within is portrayed by the broadest cliché, then all but the most dedicated RPGers will quickly find their attention focussed elsewhere. Add to this a very awkward though incredibly comprehensive inventory system and you have a game that isn't particularly inviting to those new to the genre, which is a pity because when you cut through the dross, Divine Divinity still has a lot to offer. If you can look past the fact that the game brings nothing new to the table, Divine Divinity should keep dedicated RPG players full for quite some time. - Daniel Wilks



Hey, now I can reach that broken lightbulb.



XBOX GCN

Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast

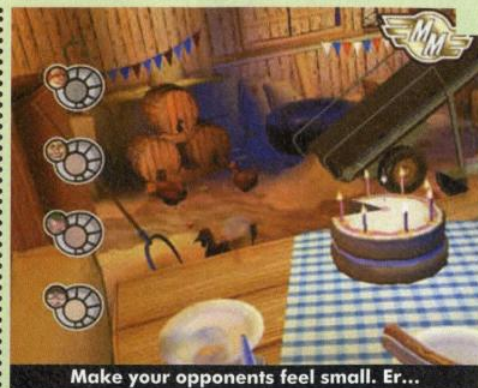
CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
 PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>
 RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

When it was originally released for the PC many moons ago, Jedi Knight II was touted by many as being a worthy continuation of the esteemed Dark Forces series. Given the obvious similarities between PC and Xbox hardware, it should come as no surprise that this port is perfect in every conceivable way and therefore deserves very high praise indeed.

Focusing on the adventures of former Jedi turned rogue turned Jedi again, Kyle Katarn, Jedi Outcast's single player campaign is irrefutable proof that nothing good ever happens fast. For while the first few levels of Kyle's struggle with the imperial remnant are fabulously dull shoot 'em up affairs, things pick up considerably once the good 'ol light saber is introduced and Force powers become available for use. Seriously, there is nothing more enjoyable than bursting into a room full of Storm Trooper and Force Pushing them all to the floor just before slaying their commanding officer with a graceful saber slash.

However, the real fun is to be found in Jedi Outcast's multiplayer component, which is nothing short of incredible. Picture if you will a bleak Saturday afternoon where you, your best mate and 10 very skilful Jedi bots engage in the biggest damn light saber fight you've seen since the Phantom Menace. Sith fill the air with cackling lightning, Jedi vanish into nothingness and everywhere the rainbow dance of saber blades continues unabated.

That, my friends, is fun. Please, don't do yourself the injustice of missing out on it. You'll regret it if you do. - Daniel Staines



Make your opponents feel small. Er...



PS2 XBOX GCN

Micro Machines

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

Well, the Micro Machines franchise is back... except with a whimper rather than a bang. Infogrames Sheffield (as opposed to series creators Codemasters) have developed this one, and while they've done a "good" job, this game should have been much better.

What we have is basically Micro Machines V3 part 2 without any of the changes that so desperately needed to be made and a whole heap that didn't. From the beginning: Worst FMV intro sequence ever. Worst menu music ever. Worst choice of new features to add to a successful franchise ever (you now have a jump button and a powerslide button — why god why?). Most useless weapons ever. And above all, worst mascot ever. There's this big fat bald guy that pops up all over the game and frankly the sight of him naked in the bath has scared me for life.

Most unforgivable of all, however, is the omission of any kind of gameplay options. Why can't we adjust the rules for victory in multiplayer races and create our own custom multiplayer championships? Would it be that hard to implement? As it stands the scoring system leads to long and tedious races and the only way to avoid dud courses is by staying in single race mode. And speaking of dud courses, where have the school room courses gone? In fact, where are all the courses? There are only 16 all up and although they look great, there are really only a couple that will be stayers in multiplayer.

Micro Machines isn't a complete loss. There are plenty of single player modes, the new Bomb Tag multiplayer mode is fun, the graphics are crisp and colourful, the water effects are very nice and there's plenty to unlock, but it's just missed opportunity after missed opportunity. - Cam Shea

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
76	74	80	75

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	90	88	89

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
82	55	72	68

ARCADE

>>TIM LEVY



Hold on... Did he really just ask me to bend over?

Raizin Ping Pong TAITO

TIPS: In the two-player mode, it is best not to swing too wildly, cause you might take each other out with the bats (thanks Marty).

It's Tokyo in the near future, a place where space is at a premium. All sports that require large tracts of land have been outlawed. Table tennis, nude jelly wrestling, dancing with computers and carpet bowls are some of the very few surviving popular sports left.

With the help of the Yakuza, a Street Ping Pong Tournament has been set up to decide who is the champion of champions. The Yakuza love the gambling angle of the tournament and the cops dig the entertainment, so the go ahead has been given to use locations such as the Airport, a Subway Station Platform, the middle of the main intersection at Shibuya Shopping District and a rooftop overlooking an Amusement Park. Let the tournament begin...

PROBABLY HAS CRABS

All ten contenders are fully-fledged freaks with exceptionally diverse

fashion sense and varying strengths and weaknesses in their Power, Cut and Drive abilities. For example, 99 Dan a.k.a 'The Pongers' is a mysterious masked guy garbed in a skeleton jump suit from the 'Secret Society of the Frontal Cut', (he obviously has the best cut abilities).

After defeating an opponent, he looks menacing, gives an intense martial salute and then timidly scratches his groin area because he probably has crabs. Or the samurai 'Yoroy', after defeating an opponent utters "How dare you show your face here with such lack of skill. Have some dignity" All this fare has been seen in many a fighting game, yet the Raizin Ping Pong characters have that special charisma that make you not only play the game for the challenge, but also to see all the characters' funny little quips and quirks.

Controlling your character is from a first person perspective, with the

special motion sensor bat giving you the ability to cut (chop diagonally down), drive (chop diagonally upwards) and smash (hit fast). Changing direction of the ball is via how long you wait to hit your shot. But without overcomplicating things, if you have real table tennis abilities, they will translate well into this game. In fact, it is a great trainer for real exponents of Ping Pong, as due to the bat's motion sensors, it weighs considerably more than a real bat, which in turn really gives your arm muscles a real workout.

TENS OF MILLIONS

Ultimately, the game boils down to a reflex duel. Just when you are getting into a rhythm, your opponent will do a slow shot and you swing too early. Or at times, you hit the ball too late and too high which gives your opponent a 'chance shot' to do a Special Move, which is usually unstoppable. You

get 5 misses per game, with an extra chance being won after defeating an opponent.

Table Tennis, requiring faster reactions and more delicate muscular co-ordination than any other sport (including jelly wrestling), is enjoyed throughout the world by tens of millions of people on a casual basis. A high percentage of these players are from Asia, and it is interesting to note that it is China's national sport with over 4 million tournament level players. With this in mind, Raizin Ping Pong would be a hit in the Asian countries, and whilst being a bit harder to find in Australia, if found, it is well worth a look for the novelty value and the game's excellent graphics. <<<

OVERALL

8/10

Metroid Fusion

CATEGORY: Action/Exploration >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >>
PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Until now, Nintendo seemed to be in a groove where they were content on merely porting over their older games onto their newer handheld. Case in point: the Super Mario Advance series and the upcoming Legend of Zelda title. Thankfully, with Metroid Fusion, Nintendo opted to spend the effort to create an original Metroid outing for the GBA, instead of re-releasing an older title. Outside of Miyamoto's own creations, the Metroid series stands as one of the most popular Nintendo franchises amongst the old school gamers, one that dates back to the glory days of the NES and SNES. Aside from blending classic side-scrolling action, shooting, exploration and puzzle solving, Metroid Fusion also sees a return to the darker side of things for Nintendo with an emphasis on a mature story and atmospheric Science Fiction.

ALIEN RESURRECTION ANYBODY?

Metroid Fusion is the fourth title in the series and one that sees some drastic changes, not only to the setting but also to the female heroine, Samus Aran. It seems that the eradication of the Metroid species on their home planet of SR388 has had an adverse effect – the multiplication and resurgence of an unknown



Samus it always was.



Ballsy, for a woman.



A Zaxxon minigame?



Are you my mother?

and ancient organism, dubbed the 'X' Parasite. Whilst escorting researchers on the surface of the planet, Samus gets infected by the parasite which multiplies within her suit as well as her body. Unable to remove her trademark Power Suit in order to save her life, doctors propose a radical treatment that involves using genetic extracts from Metroid cells. The result is the fusion that the game's title alludes to, Samus is reborn with a mixture of Metroid and humanoid DNA, something that will affect the course of her life from here on out. Her recovery is dramatic, it seems that Metroids are the only known 'X' Parasite predators, so now Samus is unaffected by the parasites and its up to her to get rid of them.

Metroid on the NES was revolutionary because it pioneered dual-scrolling gameplay, both vertical and



These new solariums are great!

horizontal. This allowed for intricate level design and expansive levels that on the player's part required a lot of exploration and intuitive back-tracking. Metroid Fusion continues this trend with gameplay taking place on a derelict space station that features many sectors and environments of all sorts. Through the help of a navigational computer called Adam, you'll be given specific mission objectives related to the 'X' Parasite and various suit upgrades. The approach may seem a little linear at first, especially when compared to the earlier Metroid titles, but the clever level design and complexity help recreate the classic Metroid 'feel', with the focus firmly set on exploration and intuitive level progression. It all helps to establish the title as a worthy sequel to Super Metroid.

BEEF UP THE NOSTALGIA FACTOR

Shooting has always played a huge role in Metroid titles, but this time with the 'X' Parasite running rampant, Samus' Metroid DNA allows her to absorb the parasitic remnants of enemies, which provide a small energy boost. Samus' other abilities are both old





Don't look down, Samus...



She's just so dashing.

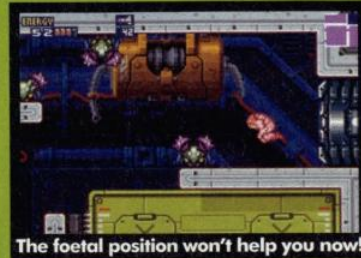
and new, with many classic suit attributes returning such as the Morph Ball. Through the course of the game, players will acquire various types of missiles, bombs, and suit upgrades such as more energy tanks, a speed boost, high jump ability and the screw attack. New abilities Samus has from the get go include climbing and hanging, which help add some meat to the platforming portions of the game. The abilities are attained at a pacing akin to all classic Nintendo adventure titles, with players eased into learning Samus' vast array of moves. In no time you'll be shooting, morph-balling



Spider-Samus!



Samus meets her half-sister... eww.



The foetal position won't help you now!

and bombing your way around the space station like a mad man, or mad woman as it were. Visually the title is very reminiscent of Super Metroid, yet the animation and overall

aesthetics show the GBA's hardware advantages over its 16-bit counterpart. Nintendo have also employed their vast knowledge of the system (well they did create it), with a clever use of colour and contrast used throughout, to make

sure things are always clear and vibrant. This fact is made even more impressive due to the fact that, visually, Metroid Fusion is very much a dark game. On the sound front, the GBA's mono speaker unfortunately doesn't do much to recreate the audio work put into this title, so headphones are a must. The ambient musical score and the expansive sound effects library are all of the highest quality, and the inclusion of classic Metroid cues and sound bites beef up the nostalgia factor considerably.

Metroid Fusion isn't a long game by any stretch, its pretty short and sweet actually, but the inclusion of multiple endings, GCN connectivity and the fact that the game features some of the most impressive level design since the SNES era, makes this a must buy for all GBA owners. Nintendo definitely haven't lost their touch when comes to creating brilliant 2D games, as Metroid Fusion serves as one of the GBA's finest pieces of software and a title that is as challenging as they come.

- Kosta Andreadis



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
87	90	95	93

»GBA

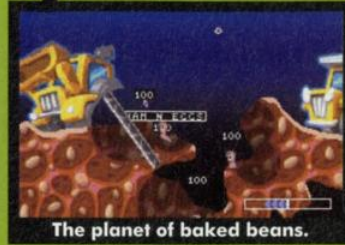
Worms World Party

CATEGORY: Action strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Worms World Party on GBA proves two things. Number one — there's definitely potential for this series to work on the GBA. Number two — Team 17 didn't care enough about the end result to bother. At first glance, this game shows great promise. Moving your worms around the map is nice and straightforward, and the terrain looks relatively faithful to the series.

It's not long, however, before the lazy, glitch-ridden nature of this port becomes apparent. Here's a brief list of just some of the problems we experienced.

Walking up to a worm on the edge of a cliff and using the prod... only nothing happens. Grave inconsistencies when using the shotgun. Barrels that fail to explode. Landscapes that are sometimes



The planet of baked beans.



Got worms? How awful!



Big Wormy Stuff.



impacted by explosions, but mostly not. Hits that have no visible reaction. A completely unreliable ninja rope that now zaps you up at speed, but fails to let you release it a little to start swinging when caught on a ledge.

Even fundamental stuff like mathematics go haywire in this game, like when fifty is meant to be subtracted from your score of forty, but instead you find your worm now HAS fifty. Or how about a bazooka to the face from point blank range doing eleven damage? The scoring is just totally arbitrary in this version, and solid scoring is one of the most important things in Worms — justice or bitter irony must be delivered consistently.

It's not just the glitches either. It's the sheer laziness of the developers. The absence of flames is a

disappointing omission that makes the game feel much more simple. The big impact weapons like the super banana bomb are a complete joke now, and it's almost impossible to make out the highlighted item on the weapon select screen. The list goes on and on. A real disappointment. — Cam Shea

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
69	68	59	60

»GBA

Moto Racer

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

The original Moto Racer (on PSone or PC) would have to be one of our favourite arcade games of the last generation, thanks to its great mechanics and insane speed. The less said about the sequels the better, mind you, but fortunately this new portable version of the classic racer very much captures the essence of the original game.

For a start, the engine is quite amazing, allowing for lots of hills, drops and jumps. Often you can actually see the track winding away in the distance and the other riders on it. The sensation of speed is also excellent. All up this would have to be one of the most advanced racing engines to be seen on GBA thus far.

As in Moto Racer 3, the game is



The Wiggles go outback.



Moto Racer ruins the local chessboard.



Warning, chicken stew ahead.



He's wheelie good at this.

divided into three styles of racing — Cross, GP and Traffic, and features Single Race, Championship and an excellent Progression mode. Cross and GP modes are great fun, with GP in particular feeling just like the original — nailing lines around corners at top speed then turbo boosting out into the straight. The turbo boost is also accompanied (just like in the original) with a high pitch rev whine that really helps add to the impression of speed.

The Traffic races are the real letdown of the game, however. The cars all drive in the same direction, weave all over the place and basically just take the fun out of the game. Moto Racer is about racing lines and turbo boosts, not about cars getting in your way. Indeed, considering that Traffic courses take up one third of the total courses on offer — six out of eighteen, it's a major bummer. Still worth a look though. — Cam Shea

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
85	84	85	84



Colin McRae Rally 2.0

CATEGORY: Rally racing >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >>

PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

After the mildly disappointing Colin 3, Colin 2.0 on GBA represents a return to the more feature rich McRae rally games of old. Although still lacking a proper career mode, and the absence of ghost time trial races is disappointing, there's definitely enough content to excite rally fans.

For instance, in addition to the requisite Rally mode Championship,

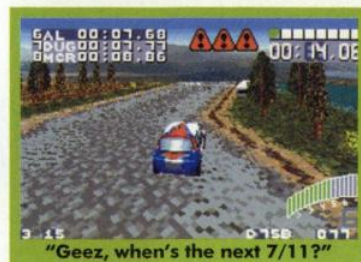
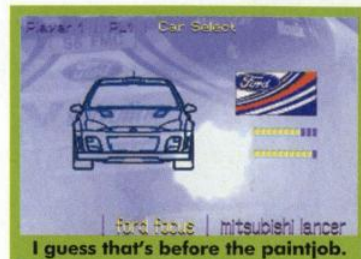
which takes place across six different countries against a field of 16 unseen drivers, we're pleased to report the inclusion of an Arcade Championship mode, where you race circuit-based courses in an actual field of four. Plus, you can race the arcade courses against your friends in link-up mode with only one cart!

In gameplay terms, Colin 2.0 is obviously somewhat dumbed down,

but the handling still feels great and has enough depth to keep rally fans amused, in part thanks to the significant difference in handling across different surfaces. For instance, on 100% tarmac you can be much more attacking, really leaping into corners and driving aggressively. When it's a mix of mud and gravel you have to be a little more guarded, whereas when you're racing on snow and ice... it's just plain frustrating. And happily, Nicky Grist is there to guide you along the courses — yes, speech.

Colin McRae Rally 2.0 utilises old faithful mode-7 scrolling, and your view distance is very limited. Then again, the game is nice and fast, and the inclusion of a polygonal car model has allowed for realistic looking physics as it teeters on two wheels around corners and sometimes even flips. You'll also notice mud splatter on the car too, which is a nice touch.

The biggest negative in 2.0 is the lack of hills, which makes each course feel rather samey and hurts the long-term gameplay a little. All up though, this is a great portable rally title. - Cam Shea



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
83	85	85	84

Street Fighter Alpha 3

CATEGORY: Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Capcom >>

PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

The GBA has already had the excellent Super Street Fighter II Revival, but now it's time for the Alpha series to make an appearance. And what an appearance it is. Street Fighter Alpha 3 is a damn fine recreation of one of our favourite games in the series, and is a testament both to

the GBA hardware and to what a dedicated development house can do with it.

Developers Crawfish (the UK development house famous for their amazing tech demos and games like Ecks Vs Sever... and less so for stinkers like Ready 2 Rumble) have done an impressive job staying true

to the PSone and DC versions of Alpha 3. There are 37 playable characters — an amazing count for a cartridge based game. The sprites are quite small but the vast majority of frames of animation are intact for each character, all the backgrounds are there, all the "isms" are included, AND there's a wealth of play modes to enjoy, including the excellent World Tour mode. World Tour mode brings much needed longevity to the single player game, with objective-based bouts, and experience point/customisation rewards.

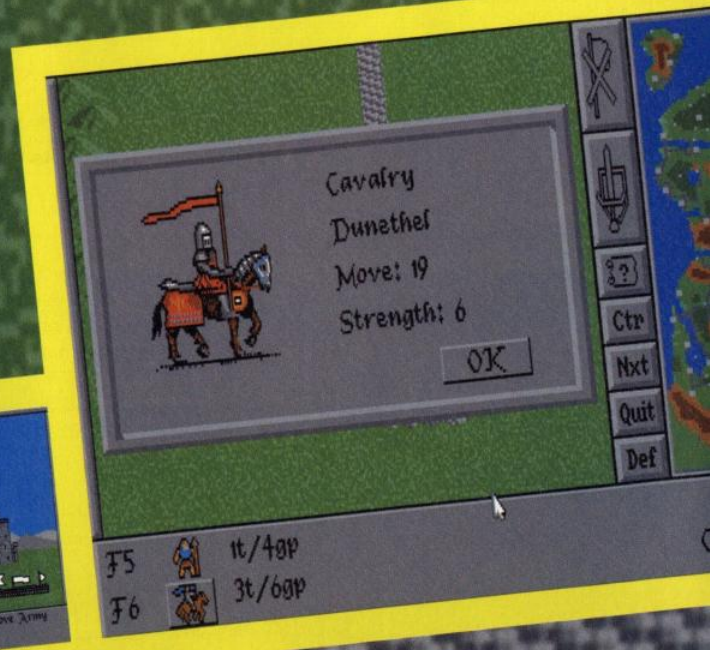
Two-player link-up is also supported, making this a must-have package for Street Fighter fans... well, almost. We mentioned above that this game is a testament to the GBA hardware, but it's also yet another game that makes us wish that Nintendo had simply kept the SNES button layout for the system. Simply put, having



four buttons will always compromise Street Fighter's gameplay to some degree. What Crawfish have done is to have light and heavy mapped to two buttons with medium activated when you hit them both together. Fortunately, it's a system that works well once you're used to it. Highly recommended. - Joey Tekken

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
87	80	88	85







THE

It's hard to believe we've overlooked this particular lot of homegrown talent so far, but that might be because unlike most subjects of the R.E section, Warlords just doesn't have that ancient and perhaps occasionally 'dead' feel about it (and no, we're not talking about the Atari 2600 pong-type Warlords relic). Twelve hours after having freshly dusted off a mysteriously labeled 'Warlords' floppy in the arcane box of curios, I was still struggling to free myself from the grips of the Strategic Studios Group turn-based strategy classic and cursing the brilliance of Steve Fawcner, lead designer on the Warlords series since the beginning, and the creator of the fantasy realm of Illuria, the setting for the first three Warlords games. He's also the

SHAHIL 'SHAK' AHMED

mastermind behind the musical scores for the past nine years of SSG games. In 1989, Steve sent an early Amiga version to SSG, who took up the game, supplied a little help programming, and in 1990 Warlords was released on PC and Amiga. Macintosh and Atari ST versions followed soon after, and at the time the graphics used on the Apple were state of the art.

THE MAKINGS OF A HERO

Once upon a not-so-mystical time, long before any Heroes of Might & Magic walked the earth, there were heroes of a simpler nature. Mercenaries. They walked forth and battled one another under the command of eight mighty warlords – the angelic Sirians, the mighty Storm Giants, the vicious Orcs of Kor, the resilient Grey Dwarves, the proud Horse Lords, sea-faring Selentines, noble and nimble Elvaille, and the dark and broody Lord Bane. These powers weren't simply defined by their colour and names, for each had their own advantages and disadvantages, determined by

location, starting gold and military types. Production of four different levels of units was possible, from pikemen and archers to pegasi and wolf riders. Small armies could be made up of stacked units, improving the outcome of a battle or the chances of a hero surviving the ruins scattered about the land. Indeed, powerful allies, piles of gold and useless information could be found at temples, ruins or libraries out in the middle of nowhere.

The sides were playable either by a human or at one of four AI difficulty levels. At Knight level, the AI was at its easiest, with enemy heroes rarely searching ruins and not stacking units until further into the game. The Baron level had the enemy prioritising ruins, and any allies they'd find would immediately attack neutral or unprotected castles. As Lords, the AI made extensive use of navies and flying units, and at the highest level, Warlord, your enemies would make use of their funds to upgrade castle defenses and their units would begin taking advantage of temples and other upgrades. The ultimate challenge was considered to be playing as the poorly located Sirians against seven Warlords, but nothing beats the unpredictable workings of a human mind, and once you'd beat it at its hardest, it was time to move on to Warlords II, and with the Deluxe edition, Play By eMail.

THERE'S MORE FROM WHERE THAT CAME FROM!

Now employed by SSG, Steve set to work on a sequel of his massively successful brainchild. In 1993, the "classic" edition Warlords II hit the stores, and with better graphics, a multitude of scenarios, army units, game maps and hero quests, it was an even bigger hit. A scenario and map builder was soon to follow, and subsequently a horde of custom user maps stormed the net. In 1994 the "deluxe" edition on CD-ROM became all the rave, the package including many user made scenarios, the scenario builder, slightly improved graphics and better AI.



Perhaps the most loved aspect of Warlords II Deluxe was the challenge that the PBEM option offered. This allowed up to eight humans to battle for Illuria and the other scenarios, emailing each other on the game's turn by turn basis. Leagues and ladders of the powerful still float about on the net, though now they are mostly ghost sites, and those who still remember are either busy playing one of the Warlords progeny or off sulking in the corner, alienated since the succession of Warlords III by the RTS Warlords: Battlecry. Whether Warlords IV will bring back the thunder remains to be seen. Unfortunately for those of you who have suddenly become enthusiastic about Warlords and Warlords II, they're not yet in the realm of Abandonware (the big online library of ancient games people have mostly forgotten). However, this piece of gaming history is well worth the hunt, be it on eBay or second hand stores, and we doubt Warlords IV will take away any of the classic's charm. <<

ONE STARS

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REVERSE ENGINEERING

»HYPER 85



Reviews

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 are out of 10.

Amelie

DENDY/MAGNA PACIFIC, M15+

Amelie is an utterly charming film from acclaimed French director Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Delicatessen* and *City of Lost Children*). It tells the story of Amelie (played by the immaculately cast Audrey Tautou), a highly introverted, lonely young woman who has grown up starved for affection, and has retreated into

her own vivid imagination. She soon conspires to surreptitiously bring some happiness into the lives of those around her, and to build up the courage to approach Nino (played by French director Mathieu Kassovitz), the man she is infatuated with.

Right from the opening sequence *Amelie* has a seductive, irrepressible effervescence. Jeunet has abandoned the gritty dark worlds of previous

films and painted an airy and rich visual canvas that suits the playfully imaginative script perfectly.

Amelie is technically top notch thank to an A grade DVD transfer and solid Dolby Digital 5.1 mix but it's a pity that the same can't be said for the extras. Once again we've missed out on the 2 DVD set and are lumped with an inferior local DVD release.

The only significant extras are the trailer, brief out-take reel, brief storyboard comparison, brief making of featurette and some PC desktop images. Missing is a featurette on the visual style; Q&As with both the director and cast; a 20 minute chat with Jeunet; and lengthier versions of the Australian extras. Not only that, but Jean-Pierre Jeunet's director's commentary is nowhere to be found, which is especially bizarre because he recorded French AND English versions — both of which can be found on other releases. Surely the commentary track is now a standard



Aw, she's a coffee addict, just like us!



Facial Twitch = Weak Nerves
Ahhh, high school flashback...

feature? The fact that one exists but was not included is a kick in the teeth. If you really want the commentary, you'll have to import the 2 DVD version, otherwise kick back and enjoy one of the more surreal and touching films of recent times. - Cam Shea

MOVIE: 9 **EXTRAS:** 4



I like looking back at people's faces in the dark!

And throwing popcorn into their mouths! Er... right?

Star Wars: Attack of the Clones

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, PG

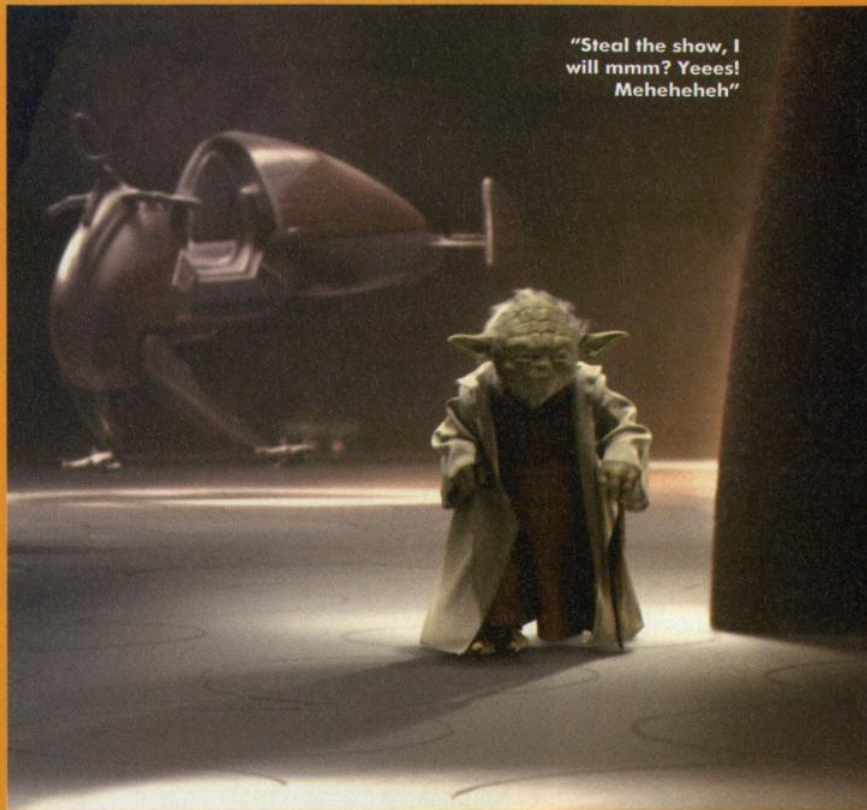
The second episode in the prequel trilogy has made it to DVD with all the intergalactic bells and whistles we now expect from Lucasfilm. Even if you thought the movie was a bit like watching a TV daytime soap with incredible CGI, this DVD package is a top notch offering that is packed with must-have special features — much like *The Phantom Menace* DVD. Cheesy movie, but a great DVD. There are a whole stack of deleted scenes (with completed effects shots, although they're not terribly exciting ones), lots of documentary shorts on the "making of" process, commentary from Lucas and others, plus a very cool special effects breakdown so you can see just how they made half of this amazing looking film. The stuff



"I've been cut from the film? Phew!"

on how they created Yoda is particularly cool, even if the end result was more cartoonish action than believable characterisation. Naturally, the visual and audio quality is probably the best in the business, and if you have a decent home cinema set-up, this DVD will totally knock your socks off. This truly is a flawless piece of digital candy that is stunning to experience. Shame the same can't be said about the film. - **Frank Dry**

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 8



"Steal the show, I will mmm? Yees! Meheheheh"

Rabbit Proof Fence

MAGNA PACIFIC, PG

Fhillip Noyce's stylish tale of the Stolen Generations has been given first-class DVD treatment from Magna Pacific.

The simple story of three girls who escape the Moore River Settlement and, over nine weeks, follow the (world's longest) fence back to their mothers and homeland is told largely through Christopher Doyle's awesome cinematography and Peter Gabriel's haunting, timeless score.

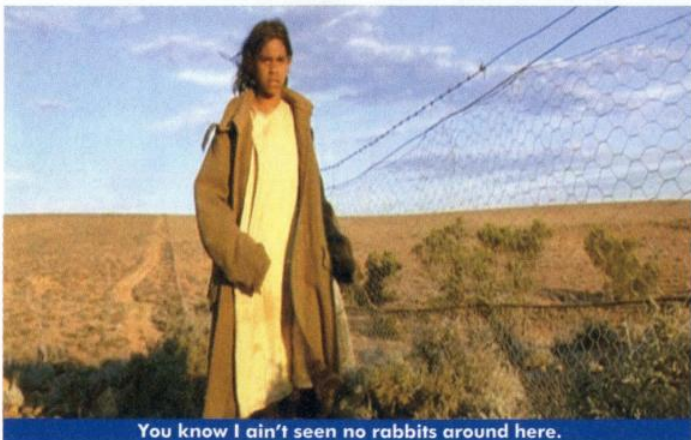
What's great about this release is the absorbing documentary, *Following The Rabbit Proof Fence*, which documents the search for three Aboriginal girls to play the leads. We observe the whole process, from Noyce travelling all over the country by light aircraft to



Once a not-so-jolly swagman...

various Aboriginal communities, through the girls' selection, the (intense) challenges of teaching them to act, and ultimately their work on set. I'd actually recommend watching the doco first to fully appreciate the challenges, and riches, of the film. Afterwards, check out the unusually substantial and informative interviews with all the major creatives, including Gabriel. - **Christopher Johnson**

MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 8



You know I ain't seen no rabbits around here.



My name is Inigo Montoya, you killed my father, prepare to die.

The Musketeer

MAGNA PACIFIC, M

The ludicrous idea behind this unnecessary adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* is to combine the talents of fight and stunt choreographer Xin-Xin Xiong (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) with the swashbuckling genre. The resulting fight sequences are laughably unauthentic, as eighteenth-century musketeers combine long rapiers with martial arts! Rather than invigorate traditional swordplay, this phoniness makes the fights silly and dull.



You're part of the rebel alliance...

The talentless Mena Suvari looks and sounds like she should be at the mall, while the newcomer and soon-to-be has-been Justin Chambers shamelessly copies the inflections of Cary Elwes in *The Princess Bride*. Stephen Rea, Tim Roth and Catherine Deneuve, all in small parts, look extremely embarrassed. Like the fights, the style is all over the place, with American, English and French accents all struggling with dialogue that is half faux-classical and half modern Californian.

The production design is impressive, and expensive-looking, which only makes you wonder who in their right mind put up the dosh for this travesty in the first place.

Features include a lame documentary and worse interviews. - **Christopher Johnson**

MOVIE: 3 EXTRAS: 2

ANIME

The End of Evangelion

CATEGORY: SCI-FI/MECHA
DISTRIBUTOR: MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT

At long last, five years and a whole *Cowboy Bebop* series plus movie later, Australia has come to the end of the road in its journey through *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Scripted to the last word in its philosophical sermon about life, existence, and the longings of the collective human psyche (at least as envisaged by Hideaki Anno), humanity brings itself to the brink of self destruction as SEELE and the United Nations complete their destruction of NERV.

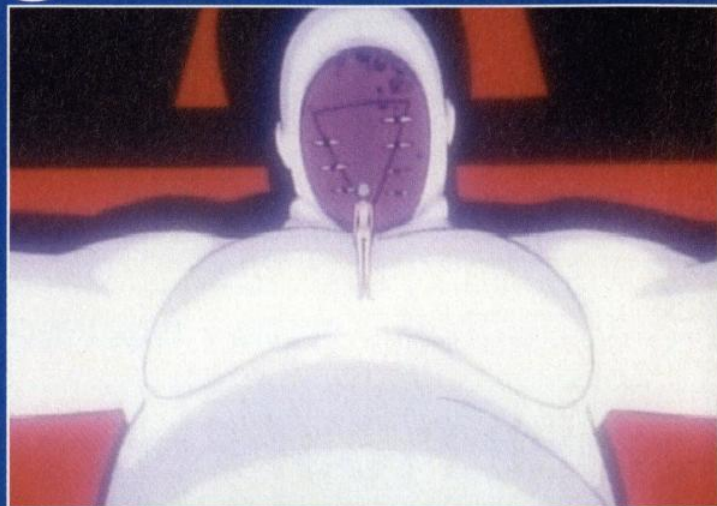
Everyone dies. Everyone. But not without going down fighting. Their last impassioned gasps for life bring a final, sobering closure to their personal struggles. There is no glory, but an acceptance of their failures and mortality, which serves not only to heighten our empathy for their deaths, but also to emphasise the message behind Shinji and Asuka's survival of the

ordeal. They alone survive as the rest of the world becomes a single consciousness, leaving them to carry on the human existence as we understand it as a modern Adam and Eve pairing. Which is ironic in many ways.

PSYCHO ANALYSIS

Not everyone will like *End of Evangelion*. It's not a pretty ending, and a great deal of time is spent wallowing in the recesses of Shinji's fragile little mind. He's classically withdrawn and indecisive, even with the world exploding around his ears and the fate of humankind placed so obviously in his hands. It's a wonder how anyone can find him a likeable character at the end.

But if you've seen older Gainax films like *Wings of Honneamise*, you'll know that they'll adhere steadfastly to their themes and ideologies rather than pimp out to the demands for more mech action or fan service. So to paraphrase an old politician, it's the ending we had to have.



Soggy Sao, a family favourite.



These dustbusters will come in handy.

ANIMATION: 7 PLOT: 8 OVERALL: 8

Boogiepop Phantom

CATEGORY: SUPERNATURAL/HORROR
DISTRIBUTOR: MADMAN ENTERTAINMENT

There's a serial killer on the loose, but it's not of the kind that your average cops or federal agents will be able to catch. After a mysterious light momentarily knocks out all the electricity in the city, the Boogiepop Phantom has become an urban legend as it stalks highschool students who are resolved to death and the futility of life.

Yet conversely, as viewers, the Boogiepop Phantom could simply be interpreted an elaborate metaphor for the inner workings of suicidal teens who have given up hope in life. One by one, the Boogiepop Phantom takes a new victim, continuing the sub-plot of an investigator's on-

going search for a serial killer. And they all die bloody, horrible deaths, with fear etched into their faces.

Boogiepop Phantom is ethereal and abstract – it will perform as much of a mind-job on you as *Serial Experiments Lain*. It will fascinate angst-ridden teens in search of a new mode of expression, likely disturb everyone else's sensibilities, yet remain powerfully captivating throughout.

Driven by themes, metaphors, and bizarre visual and sound cues (a lot like *Eternal Darkness*, actually), that make for some great horror elements, *Boogiepop Phantom* bears some resemblance to *The Ring*. No, not the new American one, but the original Japanese film, except there's an even greater fascination with the nature and identity of the killer.



Argh, this Vanilla Coke tastes awful!



Looks like their Hyper is late again.

ANIMATION: 8 PLOT: 8 OVERALL: 9

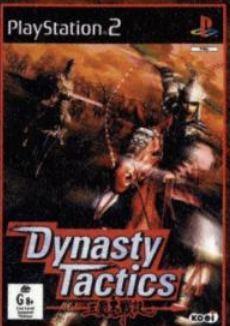


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AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 2002

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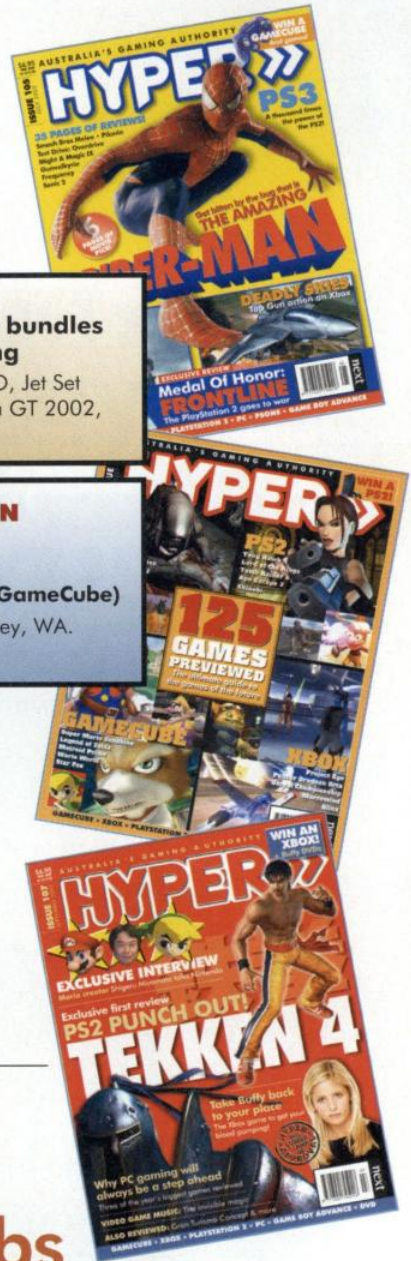
You know it's Christmas when Hyper comes through with an amazing chance to win something very cool. **Microsoft** have recently announced their **Massive Entertainment bundle** which packs an **Xbox system** in with **Jet Set Radio Future**, **Sega GT 2002** and **HALO** – oh and throw in a **DVD remote** pack as well – all for only \$459! To be all Santa-like, we're offering FIVE subscribers the chance to win one of these bundles, simply by subscribing or re-subscribing to Hyper this issue. Yes, **FIVE Xbox Massive Entertainment packs** are up for grabs! Get in quick!

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FORUM

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

Q. HYPER: THE GAME. WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE?

Some would say that every day here at Hyper HQ is a game, and maybe they would be right. Every trip to the coffee machine, indoor soccer pitch and reception area to pick up packages of games is mental warfare I can tell you. Really, you should pity us. Ahem. Anyhow, it was very entertaining reading this month's readers' opinions on what a virtual Hyper would be like. So I present to thee, a fresh batch of crazy ideas...



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...

“Is not having an R18+ category, really that bad?”

Responses will be printed in Hyper #13.

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.

BALL LICKING

If I were to make a game about Hyper I would no doubt choose to make a sim version of the Hyper office. The game would span over a year and would be broken up into month long sections or levels. Basically what I'm saying here is that it would be a sim about producing a monthly gaming magazine complete with deadlines, industry delays and changes and even an annual trip to E3. But not just an ordinary mag my friends, no, this is Hyper. The greatest mag in the cosmos. At least building it up to that point would be the object of the game.

Obviously I would like to include virtual versions of the Hyper crew from past and present and they would all interact with each other as they might in real life. Certain characters won't get along, creative disputes could run rife but it would all be forgotten over a 12 hour long, pizza fueled gaming session. At the end of each month the quality of the mag is rated and a score is given. Feedback from the readers would no doubt determine what kind of rating you would get as would the monthly sales and advertising dollars the mag generates. If the people are happy then the publisher is happy and if the publisher is happy then

the editor is happy and that means the reviewers are happy and so on.

However this does bring me to my last point, by making a virtual sim of the day to day happenings of the Hyper office you remove all mystery that surrounds it. Youngsters everywhere who believe that magazines like yours are magic (I used to) would be greatly disappointed to discover that the mag they look forward to each month is made by a bunch of 20 something pot heads, computer nerds and freaks. And besides, who the hell would want to buy a game about making a magazine and working in an office? I already work in an office, fair enough not doing something as interesting as writing about games but the last thing I want to do is work all day then go home and play a game about work.

So in answer to your initial question, "Hyper: the game. What would it be like?" It would lick balls.

Sincerely,

Kieran Turner

OFFICE CRICKET - YES!

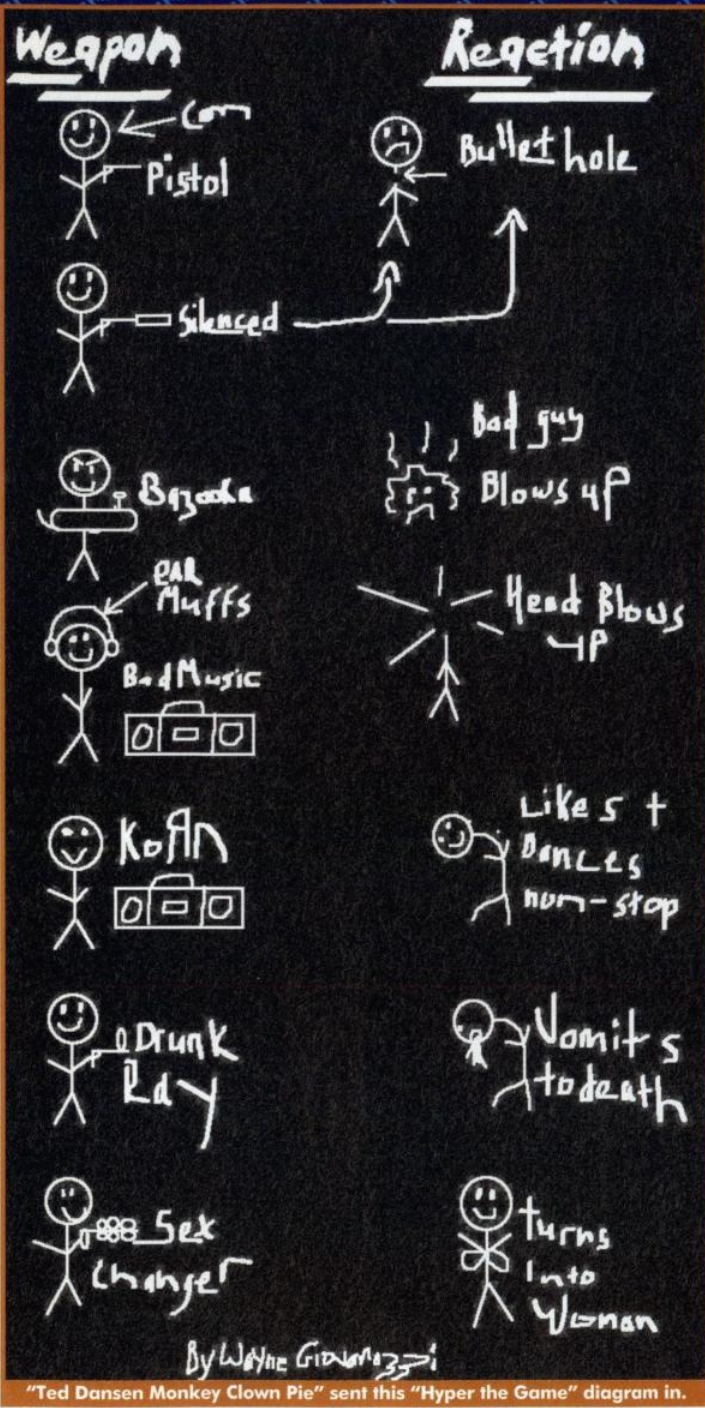
Well this game will be multi platform and will be all in one building and have a nice selection of characters, each with specific abilities. You would have to work on

the magazine and try to beat your competitors. Bad guys will appear and you will have all kinds of special attacks and magic spells and weapons and monsters to summon. There will be a huge variety of mini-games like office cricket and controller throwing. And it'll also have the "Hyper" meter, the more red cordial and coffee you drink the higher it goes and then when it reaches the top, your character will go into hyper mode. Enemies will get thrashed and work done at lightning speed.

I dunno, I'd buy it for the laughs.
From Ghatto the "Real Gamer"

LABEL HIM CRAZY

Okay my game doesn't have a name yet, but I'm thinking along the lines of Sim Hyper or Theme Hyper or maybe Hyper HQ Tycoon, I just have to check copyrights. Basically it's a cross between a really bad RPG and a word processor, but hear me out before you label me crazy. You begin as a new recruit in Hyper HQ and are presented with 10 demos to play and then review. The reviews are done in a format similar to Word or Publisher, and must include captions, a tag line, score, plus and minus and an overall thought.



"Ted Dansen Monkey Clown Pie" sent this "Hyper the Game" diagram in.

Upon completing enough reviews for a magazine, your edition is rated with points being deducted for missed sections e.g. multiplayer aspects, or awarded for things like technical jargon. Your score determines the pay you receive and you use this pay to purchase more demos for the next review. The complication comes thus, different Hyper employees specialize in different areas and trying to write a review that could be better written by another member results in all your letter e's turning into j's and such. You must then locate this employee and gain their favor in order to have them write a review for you. The games you purchase with your pay determine your area of expertise and others may come to you for reviews resulting in

bonus pay. Also one of the guys may have hoarded all the PS2s and you must please them before you can play the demo - no demo, no review. Things can be simplified by having pedestrians outside write reviews for a cut of your pay, but they may steal the game or provide a shoddy review resulting in your termination. Kinda "The Sims" meets real life.

Poppin' Fresh

ALIEN INVASIONS, AND DRUNKEN CAM

Hyper the game.

You could choose from 3 people: Eliot, Cam or Malcolm, each with their own special ability. Anyway Hyper has been taken over by aliens and Eliot, Cam and Malcolm have to

save Hyper. You fight throughout 20 levels killing aliens and collect captions. Once u get enough captions you break loose with special abilities; Eliot using a pen and impaling aliens in the head, Cam gets drunk and runs round slapping like a girl and Malcolm paints the aliens until they go insane.

Once you have beaten the game you unlock a secret character, Ms. Information!

Well thanks for your time,
Corey Wakefield

STOP ME IF YOU THINK YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE BEFORE...

Hyper the game would be like Hyper, only it's Hyper on fire, going 130 miles per hour through a hospital zone, being chased by helicopters and ninjas, and the ninjas are all on fire too...

Bograt

OFFICE SOCCER - DOUBLE YES!

Here is my idea. It would be a sports sim. The sport is... OFFICE SOCCER! When you start off you could have a typical office and then as you get through the game you could unlock better offices. For example, you start off with a small columnist's office and then work up to maybe the Oval Office, and you could unlock bonus offices like the Hyper HQ. Then you could practice your strategy in a home study. Now to the players. Each would have special stats and abilities. For example, Eliot could have a special skill called "Editor's Block" where he grabs something and puts it in the goal so the other team can't score for a short time. And the teams would be pairs of people from the Hyper Team. Hope you like the idea.

NEO_SEPHIROTH

BIG HYPER STUFF

Dear Hyper,
The Hyper Game would be of the musical hybrid, where you would have to take control of Eliot or any of the Hyper Team and thrash out Big Heavy Stuff tunes by keeping in time with your button presses and

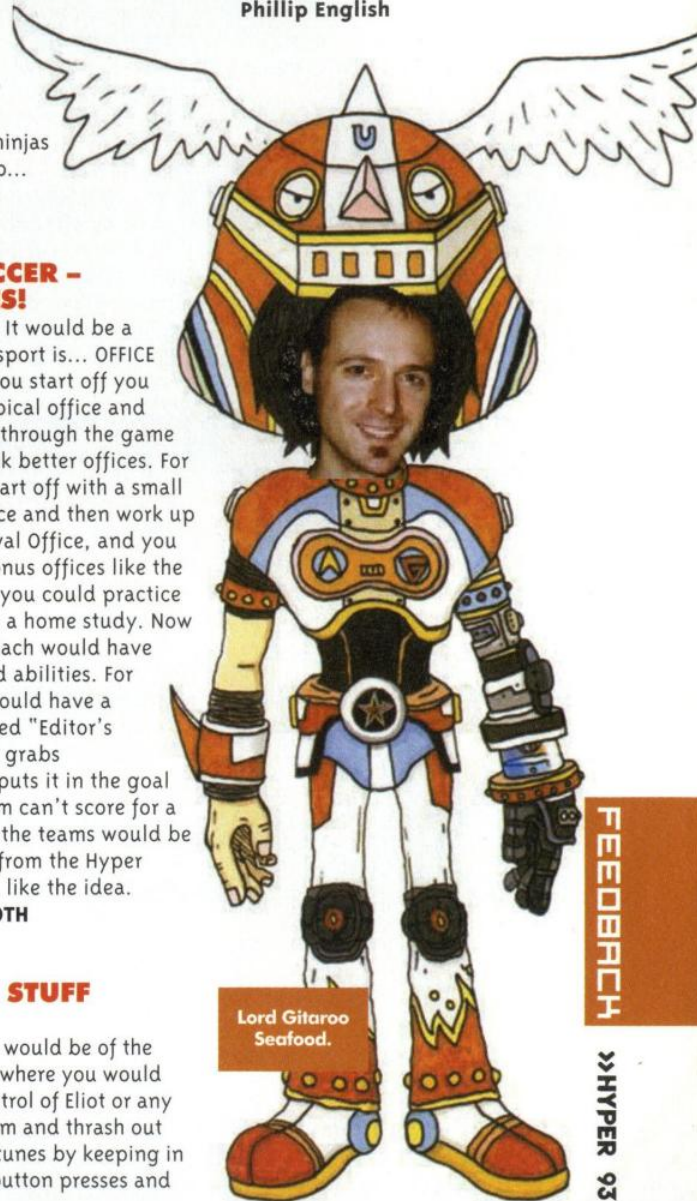
directions (i.e. Gitaroo Man). After completing a series of riffs, your character would go into a stage requiring expert button mashing and frantic screaming to keep off impending deadlines and tasteless captions.

The boss battles would entail large scale Godzilla-style versus matches between your character and various other insane Japan created monsters (Megalon anyone?).

Of course, finishing the game would unlock the secret characters. These would be the various 'contributors' that Anthony Palmer pointed out in issue 109. This game would sell like hotcakes. Like mouldy crusted hotcakes, but hotcakes none-the-less.

[Picture enclosed of main character]

Phillip English



MAIL

✉ HYPER LETTERS:

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

OLD ASS FREAK

I hate to say it, but I'm made at times to feel somewhat ashamed for being in my mid 20s and still playing videogames. Playing my GBA on the train and feeling like the old ass freak that I'm pretty sure I'm not. Hanging out for Xbox, GameCube & PS2 games like when I was 12 and living for Commodore 64.

In my age bracket (around 22 to 30) we grew up with the birth of video games, and due to their simplicity at the time they were targeted at children and weren't the widespread phenomenon they are now, so people have never before been in this position of truly enjoying videogames for over half of their lives. We are the aging pioneers my friends!

By the time that kids now are in their mid 20s, videogames will be looked at differently, and attitudes shall shift as the upper end of the age scale will be reprazentin' the gaming action. But till then, let us feel like doo-nads, GBAs in hand, GameCubes, Xboxes & PlayStation 2s in our homes and our love for games in our hearts, coz no one will love

em for us... (and Amigas, C64s, Ataris, Intellivisions, Master Systems, MegaDrives, NESs, SNESs and the rest in our closets, hearts and for the unappreciative & non-sentimentalists, garage sales).

Well, that's off my chest, thanks!
Jenny Demonlord

*Dear Jenny,
How do you get in all that gaming AND torture souls in the pits of Hell? Amazing.*

DOOMY DOOM DOOM

Dear Hyper,
Congrats on your top magazine. It's a top effort.

I gotta couple of questions that I think you guys can answer.

1. Has anyone won a prize from your magazine who lives in NZ (because I'm from NZ)?
2. You know with the PSone how you could play with only the white and yellow plugs that go into your TV, can you do the same with the Xbox?
3. In issue 109, you mentioned that Doom 3 was coming to Xbox. Do you know when it will be released?

Seeya,
ootz

P.S. In issue 109, I noticed that Barbie Explorer was number 7 for the PSone on the game charts. What do you do in that game? Do you get to explore Barbie?

*Dear ootz,
1. I think so... you can still win if you live in NZ, if that's what you're worried about.*

2. You sure can, it just makes the audio mono.

3. When it's done. Late 2003? As for Barbie, well, I think that's best left up to the imagination! Or maybe not... plastic... eww.

IT'S ONLY A FLESH WOUND

Hyper,
In Issue 109, in the opening sentence of the *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* insight, you stated that the LotR film adaptation contained "exceptional detail." Hmm...

In the first film, after Boromir takes 3 bolts to the chest, followed by that evil Orc leader guy with the massive hairdo losing his head, you see Aragorn running from the Western side of the screen to the fallen Boromir (at the Eastern side)... and... A STUPID DEAD ORC ACTOR RAISING HIS HELMETTED HEAD FROM THE GROUND. "What the?!?" You may not ask, but it's there. Just watch that section and see for yerself. He's lying on his side, facing the camera, positioned slightly SW of the center.

You didn't expect the film which possesses "exceptional detail" to have such a stupid error, eh? You thought it was perfect. Well it ain't. Hehe. This 16 year-old seems to possess a skill of pointing out insignificant errors in games and films that any other child/adult may miss. Apart from that minor flaw, the rest of the film is fantastic, yeah, one has to say something like that (otherwise you get tagged an outcast, *sigh*). Well, that's all I have to type, until the second film comes out. MACK MACK! I don't know. Exceptional detail... almost...

Michael Zhu

*Dear Michael,
You anal bastard! Have you considered that the Orc isn't dead? Huh? What if he's looking up to see where he's been wounded, or maybe he's amazed the blow didn't kill him and is looking around to see if it's safe to get up. Use your imagination!*

RRRRR MATEYS

Hey guys,
Bad news! (Dave Mirra) BMX XXX has been banned! AHHH! No topless chicks on bikes. Damn. And Vice City is being censored here in Australia so it falls under MA15+ rating, coz we don't have R18+. I hate the government! They are supposedly taking out a sex scene and the strip club. It's not fair!! And we're getting it later than the rest of the world. I guess I was lucky to get the uncensored version of GTA3 but now the government has wised up and are too strict! We can choose what we want to play not the GOD DAMNED government! Ooh I'm angry.

Slimjim

*Dear Slimjim,
An R18+ category for games was recently re-reviewed and yet again knocked back by the powers that be. Of course, if you really want, just order an uncensored copy from the UK over the internet.*

IT'S PRETTY RARE

Dear Hyper,
I'm a first time writer long time reader and I was just wondering if your Yoda-like pals could answer my questions about Gamecubing.

1. Is it true that Rare will be leaving Gamecube? If so does this mean no more Donkey Kong?
2. When will Mario Kart cube be coming to Australian shores?
3. When will NBA Street be out in stores?
4. Is any of the *Lord of the Rings* series coming out on Game cube? Please say yes.

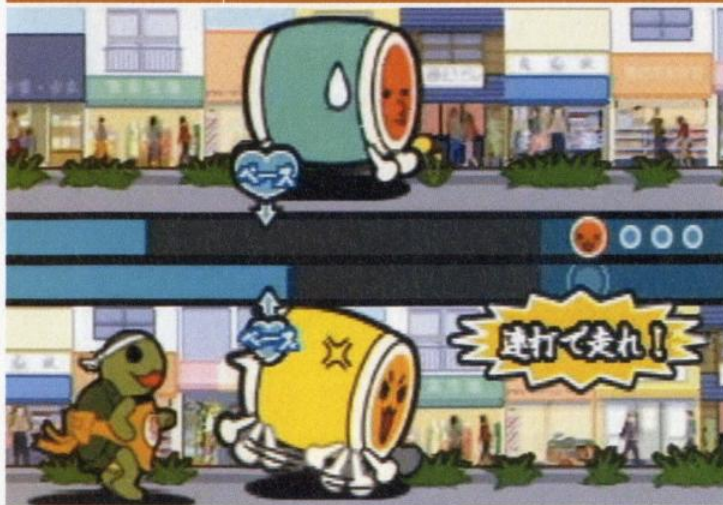
Thanks for taking the time to read this letter. I know how hard you guys work to keep this magazine the most popular mag in Australia.

Jared Pantsios

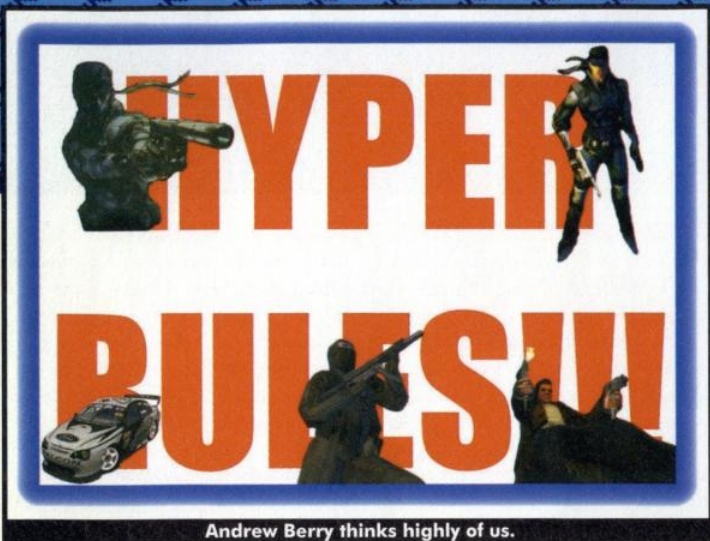
CAPTION THIS!

PART 36 WINNER

This month's winning caption comes to us from **Ryan Gillies** of NSW.



Classic memories of the old children's story, 'The Tortoise and the Beer Keg' come flooding back.



Andrew Berry thinks highly of us.

Dear Jared,

1. Oh it's very true. Microsoft own Rare now. However, the Donkey Kong character is owned by Nintendo, so Nintendo will continue to make Donkey Kong games, fear not.
2. We can't tell you yet!
3. Street Hoops GCN is out this December.
4. Yes. The Two Towers EA game is coming out on GameCube.

FFVII ON PS2?

Hey guys at Hyper!

I was readin' this forum, right, and I saw something that I am really interested in!!! OK, ready? Someone said that FF7 might be coming out on PS2!!!!????? Now this is REALLY amusing!! And some of the replies were sayin' it might be true!! PLEASE

give as much information on this as u can and PLEASE print this letter!!! It would lift the WORLD off my shoulders if u do!!

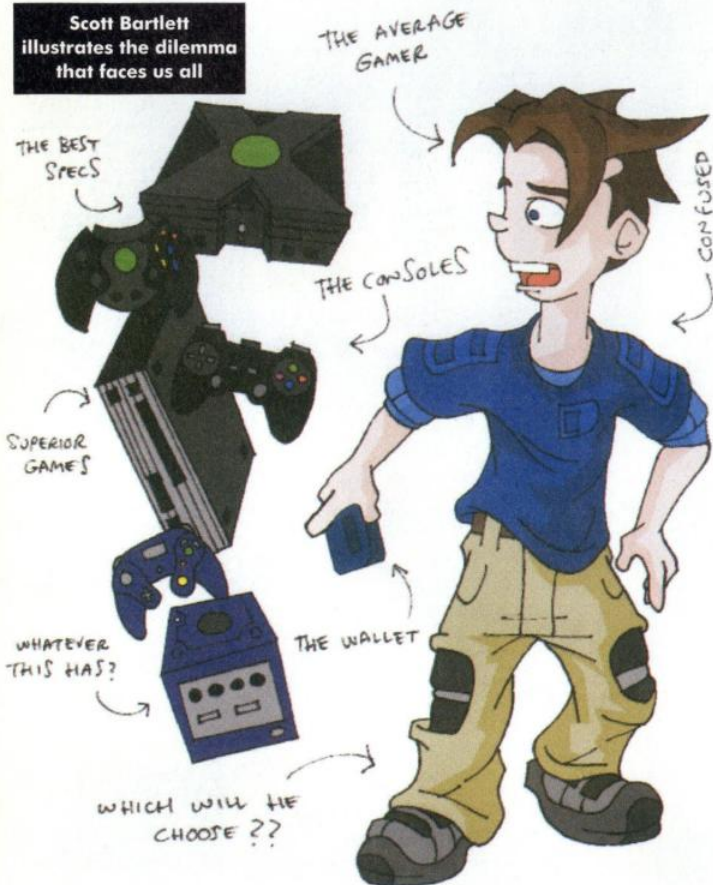
Thankz for readin' this letter guys and keep up the FANTASTIC mag!!

Matthew

Dear Matthew, FFVII is already out for PS2. That is, you can play PSone games on the PS2, so anyone can buy the old PSone version and play it on the PS2 already. I guess that's not what you mean, though.

The truth is, yes, we have heard a rumour that Square are considering making a direct sequel to FFVII for the PS2, yes. Not a remake, but a sequel. Like how they are doing FFX-2 now to continue Yuna's story from FFX. It's not 100% certain though.

Scott Bartlett illustrates the dilemma that faces us all



RESPECK

Dear Hyper,

Great Mag, I can't stress that enough, it's a nice low price and is full of useful information so I can stay one up on all my geek friends. But enough with the blatant sucking up, onto the real purpose of my letter.

I'm writing about the obvious and tasteless use of the wave of paranoia caused by the events of September 11 for profit by gaming and media companies alike. With games such as the official U.S. Army Training game available as well as CONFLICT DESERT STORM Tactical Ops: War on Terrorism and Delta Force: A Merry Romp in Afghanistan. This is an obvious attempt to make money out of something that has destroyed so many lives and affected so many more. And what about channel Nine's recreation of flight 93? "Oh, it's to show respect for those who were on board" More like it's to show respect for the ratings. All I'm trying to say is, I can understand showing the memorial without ads (therefore no profit), but making a re-enactment and making games related to the subject is just tasteless and disrespectful and someone needs to realise that and do something about it.

Thanks,
TINMAN THE GREAT

Dear Tinman,
At the bottom of it all is greed.
Greed, greed, greed. We won't be greedy - have a wheel!



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.

TECMO CONSPIRACY

Hey Hyper dudes,

Hello to all. Remember last issue in Eye Candy, you mentioned Tecmo got the idea of developing the volleyball game from the image gallery they were already onto? Well, when I went to Electronic Boutique at Garden City in October, I saw two guys staring at a shelf and giggling, so I had a peek and WOAH, there lay the Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball 2003 Calendar. Yeah, I know what I'm hanging in my room next year. It was retailing at about \$30, but I only had 25 on me.

My point is: All you DOA girl fans out there (Inc. me), run down to your local EB or game specialty store with 30 or so bucks, and you might get lucky. Anyway, Hyper, is that what Tecmo was on about, or is it something else, like a fully interactive CD filled with DOA girls' official pictures, sketches, fan art, demo FMVs (aka Soul Calibur training demo), complete with zoom, PC compatibility, personal data file of each girl, and a clip of their normal life, perhaps?

One way or the other, I'm glad they made the first move, think of the others who will follow in their footsteps - Soul Calibur, Final Fantasy, Resident Evil. (Dazed off)

By Evafreak

Dear Evafreak,

Yes, we imagine the Tecmo interactive gallery idea was pretty close to what you've suggested. You can be sure though that the volleyball game will have plenty of unlockable "cutscenes".

CRUSHED... NOT!

Hey all you dudes at Hyper (which is a seriously cool mag), I have some questions that have been bugging me for ages. Could you please answer them?!

1. After Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles, will Square be making any more FF games for the Gamecube?
2. How many discs in FFX?
3. Do you think in a year from now PS2 will be considered old?
4. Which console has more developers, GCN or PS2?
5. How come soooo many games are for XBOX and PS2, but not GCN? Is it because of the disc that GCN uses?

PLEASEEE publish my letter as it's my first one and if you didn't, my spirit would be crushed!

Sujan Sivapalan

Dear Sujan,

1. We only know that Square have more GameCube games planned.

MAIL

2. Just the one disc for the game, but it comes with a bonus disc of interviews and extra stuff.
3. Possibly not... it's continuing to sell well, and there are so many more games on the way. Some Xbox games will begin to look more advanced in terms of graphics, though.
4. PS2, probably.
5. There are quite a few developers who believe they will make more money by making a game for the PS2 or Xbox based on the number of consoles sold worldwide and/or the age group they want to market the game to.

DEAR HYPER

I'd just like to say well done on printing the article in this month's issue on videogame addiction. It was a well written and informative piece, especially with the different viewpoints of the psychologists and gamers. Also good work with the videogame music piece as well.

A few questions before I go:

1. Now that RareWare is wholly owned by Microsoft, who gets the rights to games like Conker, Perfect Dark and Banjo-Kazooie?
2. Will GTA3: Vice City be released on PC?
3. And finally, when is Burnout 2 going to be released?

Cheers,

Poin

Dear Poin,

1. Conker, Perfect Dark and Banjo Kazooie are actually all Rare characters, so Microsoft now has the rights to future games based on those characters.
2. We're expecting so, yes. Although, I'm not sure if GTA3 sold terribly well on the PC for some reason.
3. Burnout 2 is out now for PS2, and will be on Xbox and GameCube in April 2003.

MULTI-PLATFORM REVIEWS

Hi gents,
I've been a regular reader of HYPER for many years. Having owned many different consoles as well as a



Josef Heks painted up this Hulk for us. Incredible!

PC. You've saved me many a dollar when a game I've wanted has been reviewed by you as crap.

(Thank you). BUT!!! after reading issue 110 I've got a gripe which I hope will be construed as constructive criticism.

Your index shows 9 PS2, 4 Xbox and 3 GCN games have been reviewed. Many of these games are available across platforms.

But nowhere in most of the reviews is this noted. E.g. Game of the Month

Timesplitters 2 is also available on Xbox. If I

was looking to buy a console on the weight of your reviews I would easily have picked the PS2 due to the higher scores of the games reviewed. With HYPER being an independent source of opinion, where the game title is printed the available platforms should be noted and the version being reviewed stated so prospective buyers can make a more informed decision. I'm not trying to enter into the console debate about which is better I merely think we should have as much information as possible so we can all enjoy ourselves as much as possible. (Isn't that the most important thing?) Whew. Other than that, still the best mag.

Lee Rodgers

Dear Lee,
Funny you should write us a letter about this. You see, it never used to be a problem, but now there really are a crapload of games coming out on all the systems. We actually realised we needed to change things after we took a look back over the last issue and realised we hadn't made it clear about Timesplitters 2, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Burnout 2 and so on.

From now on, we'll continue to score each game for the platform it is reviewed on, but we'll indicate which other platforms the game is available for under the heading - as you can see this issue on the reviews. We're always improving Hyper even if you think it can't get any better! Thanks to reader input, we'll continue to be the hardcore gamers' mag of choice, eh?

OFLC - THE DARK SIDE?

Am I insane? Quickly children! Run for your Hyper issue 107. Now turn to page 11 (the Star Wars advert). Now, when you squint you will realise that Jedi Starfighter on PS2 is G8+. Fair enough... but now look at Jedi Starfighter on XBOX... it's rated Teen!

Now the point of these ramblings is, does the XBOX version contain additional, more "darker" content? Or do I have another reason to lose faith in the OFLC? Or simply is this paranoia been spurred on by a simple misprint?

On the same note is the OFLC required to reassess ports (even though they could be EXACTLY the same?). Please, I'm slowly drowning in a pool of cold sweat... I hear the voices... raaaaaaahhh!

Excellent magazine by the way.

Regards,

Andy

Dear Andy,

They just used the NTSC box art for the one labelled "Teen" - there's no Teen rating in Australia!

BACK TO BASICS

In the editorial for Hyper #109, you talked about going "back to the basics". I agree. With increased technology, games are becoming more life-like. Yet, they lack the depth that games on the Saturn and SNES achieved. Example: Lufia 2: Rise Of The Sinistrals is the only game that has made me cry. Ever. And even after I've finished the game 8 times, I still play it over and over and over again. I haven't seen any 64, or 128 bit game that someone would repeatedly play.

So maybe we should take a step backwards and achieve the gaming greatness we once had.

RAWkor

Dear Rawkor,

It's amazing how some videogames can provoke such emotional responses in people. The Hyper crew know a few people who were moved by Final Fantasy X for instance.

And take Mortal Kombat, we find that makes us cry every single time we play it...



We bet Connell Wood is looking forward to DOA Beach Volleyball

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

TOP 10

PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	V8 Supercars	Racing
2	⊕	FIFA 2003	Sports
3	▼	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Racing
4	⊕	Time Splitters 2	Action
5	▼	Hitman 2	Action
6	⊕	Colin McRae Rally 3	Racing
7	▼	Grand Theft Auto 3	Adventure
8	⊕	Starter Pro Pack THPS3	Sports
9	▼	Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action
10	▼	Burnout 2	Racing

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Lilo & Stitch Trble In Pards	Adventure
2	◆	Stuart Little 2	Adventure
3	▲	Jonah Lomu + WTC	Compilation
4	▲	Digimon Rumble Arena	Action
5	▼	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure
6	⊕	FIFA 2003	Sports
7	▼	Barbie Explorer	Adventure
8	◆	World's Scariest Police	Racing
9	⊕	Final Fantasy IX	RPG
10	⊕	Internatnl Cricket Captn	Sports

TOP 10

Game Cube Games Over \$40

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Super Mario Sunshine	Adventure
2	◆	Super Smash Bros: Melee	Action
3	◆	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Racing
4	◆	Resident Evil	Adventure
5	⊕	FIFA 2003	Sports
6	⊕	Sega Soccer Slam	Sports
7	▲	Luigi's Mansion	Adventure
8	▼	WWE WrestleMania X8	Sports
9	⊕	Rogue Leader	Action
10	▼	Pikmin	Action

TOP 10

Xbox Games Over \$40

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	⊕	Hitman 2	Action
2	⊕	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Racing
3	⊕	Deathrow	Sports
4	⊕	Conflict Desert Storm	Action
5	▼	Halo - Combat Evolved	Action
6	▼	Buffy The Vampire Slayer	Action
7	▼	Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Sports
8	▼	The Thing	Adventure
9	▼	Blinx	Adventure
10	▼	WWE Raw Is War	Sports

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$30

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	◆	The Sims Unleashed	Strategy
2	▲	The Sims Deluxe	Strategy
3	⊕	Rollercoaster Tycoon 2	Strategy
4	▲	Battlefield 1942	Action
5	▼	Unreal Tournament 2003	Action
6	▼	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Racing
7	▼	Everquest Planes Of Power	RPG
8	⊕	FIFA 2003	Sports
9	◆	Empire Erth Art Of Cnquest E	Strategy
10	▼	WarCraft 3	Strategy

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	▲	F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Racing
2	▼	Yoshis Island: SMA 3	Adventure
3	◆	Kuru Kuru Kururin	Action
4	◆	Dragonball Z: Legacy Goku	Action
5	◆	Super Mario World Adv 2	Adventure
6	◆	Mario Kart Super Circuit	Racing
7	◆	Stuart Little 2	Adventure
8	◆	Jimmy Neutron	Adventure
9	⊕	Shrek Swamp Kart Speedway	Racing
10	⊕	Harry Potter & Philosopher	Adventure

TOP 10

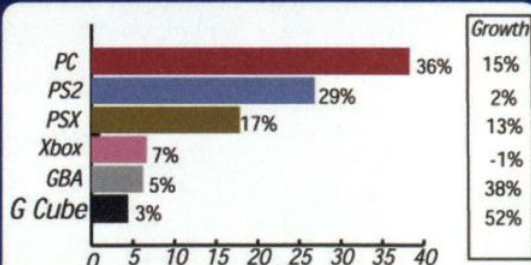
All Full Priced Games

W/E 3 November
2002 RETAIL SALES

1	▲	The Sims Unleashed	PC/MAC
2	▼	V8 Supercars	PlayStation 2
3	⊕	FIFA 2003	PlayStation 2
4	⊕	AFL Live 2003	Xbox
5	▼	Need For Speed Hot Pursuit 2	PlayStation 2
6	⊕	Time Splitters 2	PlayStation 2
7	▼	The Sims Deluxe	PC/MAC
8	▼	Hitman 2	PlayStation 2
9	⊕	Colin McRae Rally 3	PlayStation 2
10	▼	Grand Theft Auto 3	PlayStation 2

MARKET WATCH All Games by Platform

SEP 02 vs OCT 02
RETAIL SALES



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

inform

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



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A large, orange, multi-eyed alien creature, possibly a Xenomorph, is shown in a dark, industrial setting. The creature has a large, segmented head with several glowing orange eyes and a body covered in a textured, orange material. It is positioned in the center of the frame, looking towards the viewer. The background consists of dark, metallic structures and a grid-like ceiling.

Next Issue:

2003 - IT'S COMING RIGHT FOR US!
The upcoming gaming year previewed

Hyper 112 >>>
On sale Jan 1

MILLA JOVOVICH

MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ

A secret experiment. A deadly virus. A fatal mistake.

RESIDENT EVIL



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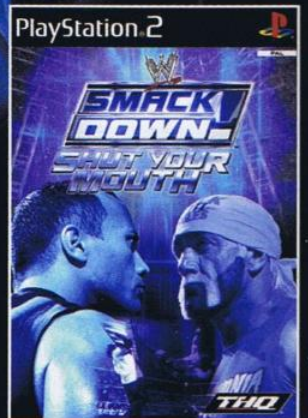
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PD4307

WE BRING THE WHUPPIN'



YOU BRING THE ASS!™



PlayStation®2

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