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E3 NEWS: NEW PLAYSTATION HANDHELD FOR 2004

EXPANDED CLASSIC
GAMES SECTION
This month: Final Fantasy

ISSUE 117

JULY 2003

HYPER

FIRST LOOK!

PC &
XBOX

PC Gaming Enters A New Age
— And The Xbox Tags Along!

HALF-LIFE 2

GCN

REBEL STRIKE
The Last GameCube Smash?

PS2

GRAN TURISMO 4
Sony Hit The Realism Barrier

22 GAMES REVIEWED

SOUL CALIBUR II • ENTER THE MATRIX
TAO FENG • RISE OF NATIONS
MIDNIGHT CLUB II • VIETCONG
WILL ROCK • GTA: VICE CITY ON PC

WIN YOUR OWN GAME BOY ADVANCE SP & GAMECUBE!

next
GAMING





Presents

THE ULTIMATE IN

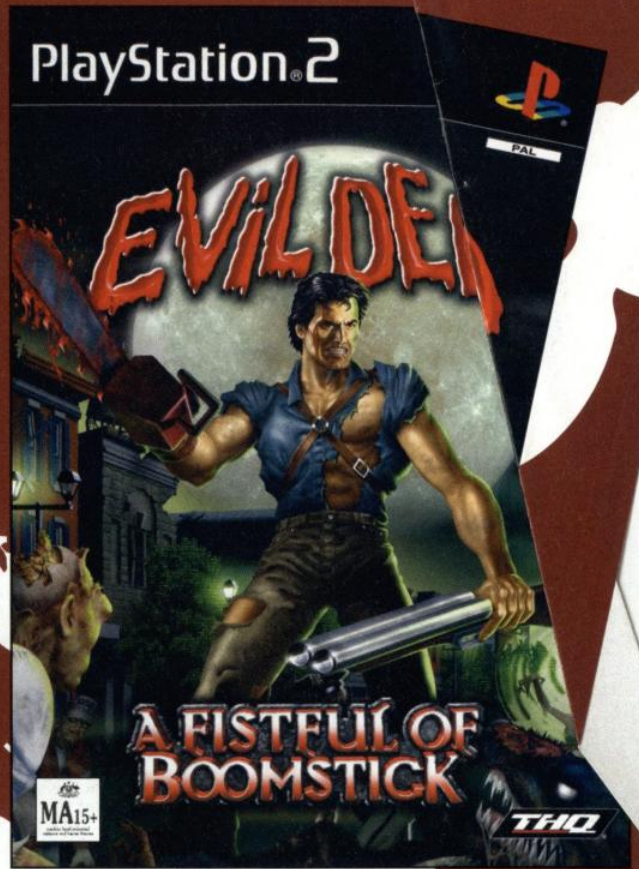
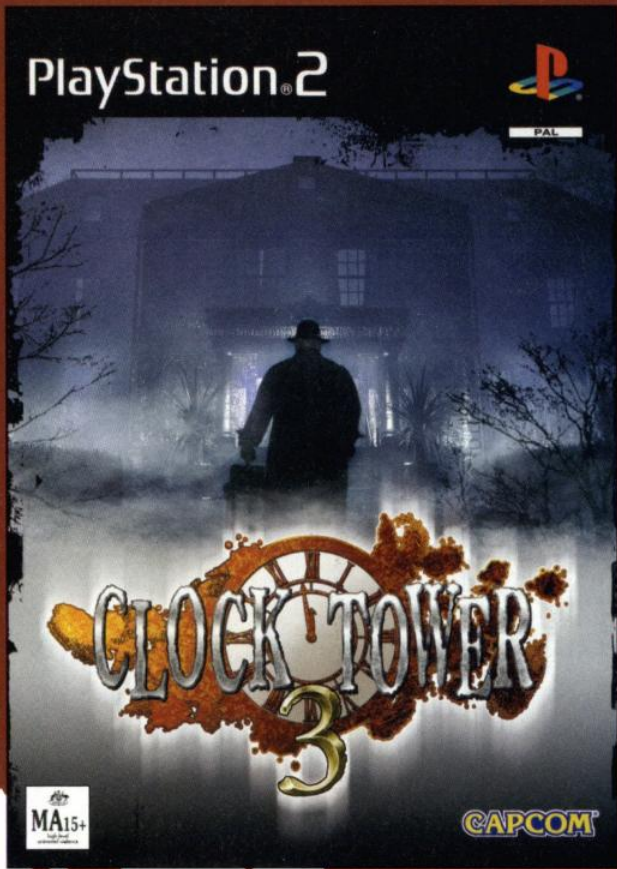
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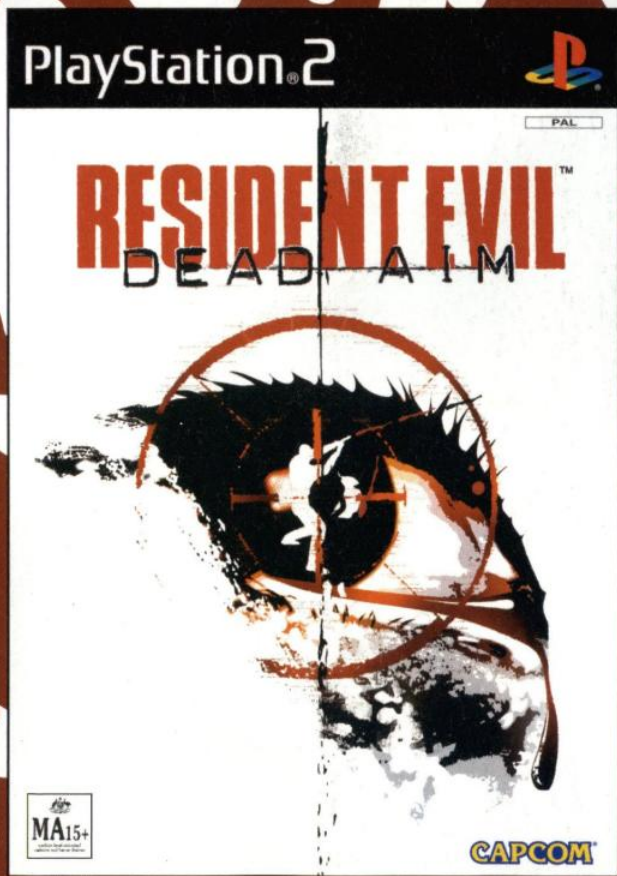
PlayStation®2



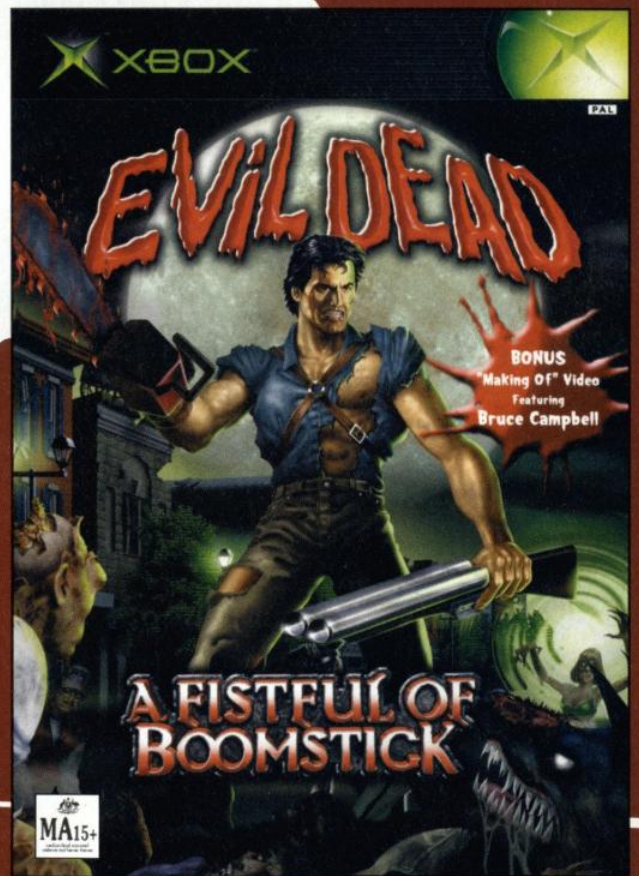
CLOCK TOWER 3



RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM



EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK



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16 HALF-LIFE 2

Gordon Freeman returns in the full-blooded sequel we've all been waiting for



CONTENTS



18



24



22



27



44

06 Editorial

08 News

The hot E3 announcements, the latest industry gossip, and your first look at some delicious new games.

16 Previews

HALF-LIFE 2 — PC
Valve Software want us to return to the role of Gordon Freeman. How can we say no? Also previewed: Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Lionheart, Star Wars: Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike, Pro Beach Soccer and more.

30 Q&A with Blizzard Entertainment

Bill Roper spills the details on Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne, StarCraft: Ghost and more.

34 Hardware

Heard of the Sony EyeToy? You'll never look at PS2 games the same way ever again...

36 Win Win Win

38 Net Trawlin'

Online gaming wouldn't be much without the humble Mod. This month we take a look at some of the coolest new user re-inventions available.

42 Reviews

GAME OF THE MONTH — SOUL CALIBUR II

A multi-platform knockout! Also reviewed: Enter the Matrix, Midnight Club II, SOCOM, Shadowbane, Rise of Nations and much more.

75 Arcade Mode

The humble pinball machine back a comeback this month.

76 Classic Mode

Final Fantasy, the blueprint for most contemporary console RPGs, gets revisited by our resident retro freak.

80 Cheat Mode

86 Hypervision

The latest DVD releases reviewed, plus the hottest in Anime.

90 Subscriptions

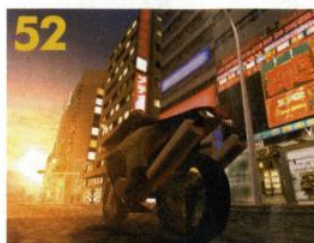
Win a GameCube and GBA SP with Splinter Cell for both!

92 Hyper Forum

It's the readers' soap box. This month we discover your favourite Xbox games!

94 Mail

98 Next Issue



52



56



70

PS2

- 44 Soul Calibur II
- 48 Enter the Matrix
- 52 Midnight Club II
- 64 SOCOM: US Navy SEALs
- 68 X2: Wolverine's Revenge

XBOX

- 56 Tao Feng
- 58 Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis
- 69 State of Emergency
- 70 Burnout 2: Point of Impact

GAMECUBE

- 60 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
- 69 Evolution Worlds
- 70 Skies of Arcadia Legends

PC

- 62 Rise of Nations
- 66 Shadowbane
- 68 Crime Scene Investigation
- 68 Vietcong
- 69 Will Rock
- 70 Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

GAME BOY ADVANCE

- 72 Splinter Cell
- 72 Lost Vikings
- 73 Contra Advance
- 73 Virtua Tennis

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EDITORIAL

»» The smell of overcooked burgers, sweat-soaked games t-shirts, fresh stationery, soiled underpants... Ahhh, E3, the annual games expo that takes place in Los Angeles. It's where minds are blown, reputations are destroyed, developers boast/blatantly deceive, games do the talking, and we games journalists get our most exciting info of the year. Just turn to the news section for some of the hottest news that came out of the event, and return next issue for a comprehensive run-down of the hottest games coming our way in the next 12 months. It's staggeringly good stuff.

You'll also notice a few changes this issue. Yep, we've done a Spring clean (even though it's not Spring – that's how dedicated we are) and made our great mag even better. More previews, more news, a larger classic games section, and even more reviews (22 this issue, in fact)! We've also given the scores a slap of paint to highlight games that score above 80 and 90 percent. It's the little details that matter, right? Spesh.

Eliot Fish »» Editor



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NEWS

IN THE NEWS: Hot game announcements ■ Sony handheld for 2004 ■ Xbox Live update ■ Halo hits PC ■ First Look screenshots

IT'S SEQUEL MANIA

HOT NEW GAMES REVEALED!

The Gaming World Rocked With Announcements

A few weeks ago, Los Angeles was the place to be, with this year's E3 Expo taking place in the big fat convention centre. Thousands of gaming journalists (including the Hyper crew) were privy to some of the coolest unreleased games ever, as well as witnessing some very exciting new game announcements.

This month in news, we're going to take you on a quick tour of the biggest games that were revealed, as well as some of the hottest news that has the games industry yabbering. Next issue, we'll bring you hands-on impressions and more in-depth looks at some of the games, but for now we'll reveal to you some of the biggies...

PS2

GRAN TURISMO 4

Sony are pulling out their ace card one more time, with the announcement of number 4 in the hugely successful Gran Turismo series. This game will be huge all over again, with expanded off-road racing, a gazillion new cars and features up the wazoo. Look for it in 2004 (and our preview next issue)!

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Those who saw the bizarre trailer will be very intrigued to find out just what Snake (or is it Big Boss?) is doing in a jungle, running from wild wolves, diving off waterfalls and yes... eating snake. In any case, Metal Gear Solid 3 is coming to the PS2 exclusively, and we'll have lots more impressions for you next issue.

RATCHET & CLANK 2: GOING COMMANDO

Ratchet is back, and this time he's tougher, harder and up for a greater challenge. Insomniac games began work on this before Ratchet & Clank even shipped, and they're dedicated to creating a far more impressive game than their first very worthy R&C release. Very cool.

CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

Whilst we were initially disappointed that Konami decided to take Castlevania back into 3D, our first impressions of Lament of Innocence are that they've totally nailed what we loved about Symphony of the Night and that this could be one of the coolest PS2 games ever.

Also announced: Legacy of Kain: Defiance, Resident Evil: Outbreak, SSX3, Maximo Vs the Army of Zin and more next issue!



Gran Turismo 4



Gran Turismo 4



Castlevania



Ratchet & Clank 2



Metal Gear Solid 3



Metal Gear Solid 3



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XBOX

HALO 2

Well, it's not like we didn't know about this game already, but from what we saw at E3, Halo 2 is going to blow away all your expectations. Absolutely sensational. Our full report on this amazing game next issue.

CONKER: LIVE AND UNCUT

One of Rare's first Xbox titles, Conker: Live and Uncut will be another big Xbox Live game, allowing multiple players to go head to head in a tongue-in-cheek third-person shoot 'em up game.

COUNTER-STRIKE

One of the most popular online PC games ever is making it to the Xbox. Just imagine how cool this is going to be on the Xbox Live network!

STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO

Exclusive to the Xbox will be this Star Wars squad-based combat title. Set in the Clone Wars, you'll be taking charge of an elite group of Republic commandos (as seen in *Attack of the Clones*) and going in to bust some Geonosian arse (amongst other dirty aliens).

Also announced: Grabbed by the Ghoulies, Sega GT Online, Terminator 3, WWE Raw 2, 007: Everything or Nothing and much more next issue!



Halo 2

GAMECUBE

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES

Yes! GameCube fans can rejoice in the fact that Metal Gear Solid has been remade for GameCube with MGS2 quality graphics. Not only that but you'll get Metal Gear Solid 2, too! Hence the twin Snakes.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Capcom have got us excited about Resident Evil again, and after endless incarnations that's saying something. Resident Evil 4 is oozing style, and genuine scariness. We'll have hands-on impressions for you next issue.

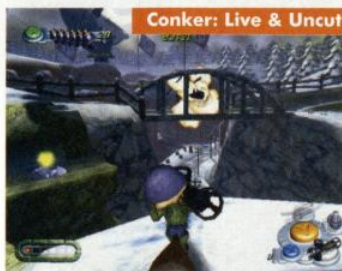
CUSTOM ROBO

Ever wanted to build your own giant robots and then watch them destroy each other? Well, Nintendo like the idea too. Featuring RPG elements, and hugely customisable "Robos", up to four players can duke it out on the screen ala Super Smash Bros Melee.

STAR FOX 2

Get in your Arwing and take to the skies! That's what we want from Star Fox, Namco! Yes, this is being developed by Namco and Nintendo, and puts Fox McCloud back in the cockpit of a number of vehicles... as well as third-person ground based shooter action.

Also announced: Super Monkey Ball 3, Metroid Prime 2, Mario Party 5, and many new Game Boy Advance games. More next issue!



Conker: Live & Uncut



Counter-Strike



Star Fox 2



Resident Evil 4



Custom Robo



Sam & Max: Freelance Police

PC

HALF-LIFE 2

For the low-down on this earth-shattering sequel, just go check out our first look preview on page 16! What are you waiting for? It's only the best game ever!

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE: BLOODLINES

In development by Troika Games (Arcanum), this first person Action/RPG continues the Vampire the Masquerade series, powered by the phenomenal Half-Life 2 engine. Considering what a tasty little game Arcanum was, Bloodlines could just be the first truly absorbing first-person shooter with traditional RPG elements.

OPERATION FLASHPOINT 2

The first game was a beautiful experience, and we just can't contain our excitement at the potential that a sequel holds. Set in South-East Asia, Africa and central Europe, the game will be based on conflicts that took place around the year 1970. More next issue!

SAM & MAX: FREELANCE POLICE

Thank god LucasArts dropped the third-person action game concept and went back to the drawing board... Freelance Police will be a 3D adventure game (hey, they did it well with Grim Fandango, remember?), taking us back into the wacky world of Sam & Max! Genius!

Also announced: Middle-Earth Online, The Matrix Online and more next issue (my goodness it's going to be huge issue!)



Half-Life 2

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MINI PSX?

SONY ANNOUNCE HANDHELD

PSP to launch late 2004

It was inevitable wasn't it? After more than a decade long stranglehold by Nintendo with the Game Boy, Sony are going to challenge them in the handheld market with their newly revealed "PSP" (PlayStation Portable), scheduled to launch at the end of 2004 (still a tentative date).

Sony's Ken Kutaragi introduced it by saying, "This is the Walkman of the 21st century", and he just may be right. Whilst we don't yet know what the device will look like, we do know that it will use Universal Media Discs, which are 1.8GB optical discs in a mini-disc style cartridge housing — the

capacity for 2 hours of DVD-quality FMV. The back-lit screen will be larger than the GBA at 480x272 pixel resolution, and the PSP, on paper, could have the ability to outpower the original PlayStation in polygons and NURBS. 3D handheld gaming truly will come of age. We imagine that Nokia are in panic mode with the N-Gage already.

The PSP will also come with a USB port for connectivity with a number of Sony devices, with the PS2 being the most obvious on the list. More details on the PSP handheld will come to light over the coming months, so stay tuned.



Tetra tells it like it is.

SP-CIAL

GCN MAKES WAY FOR GBA?

Nintendo Focus On Handheld

If there was one thing to be gleaned from Nintendo's E3 conference, it was that the focus is clearly on the GBA and connectivity functions, as opposed to any amazing new, original first party GameCube titles. Nintendo spent more time discussing the merits of the GBA and its upcoming software, than they did talking up the future of GameCube. They announced a new version of the Sims for GBA and GCN, that will allow you to trade your sims between the two versions; and many new GCN/GBA titles that require both systems to play. For



instance there will be two new Zelda GBA/GCN titles, Tetra's Trackers and another Four Swords, with each player plugged into the GCN with a GBA; a Pac-Man remake involving four players connected to the GCN — one with a GBA; and lots of inter-connective Pokémon. Lots of GBA goodness.

GameCube fans can be comforted by the fact that there were some very cool third-party games announced for GCN: Rogue Squadron III, Resident Evil 4, FF: Crystal Chronicles, MGS: Twin Snakes and more. We'll have a full run-down in our next issue.



SEPARATED AT BIRTH?



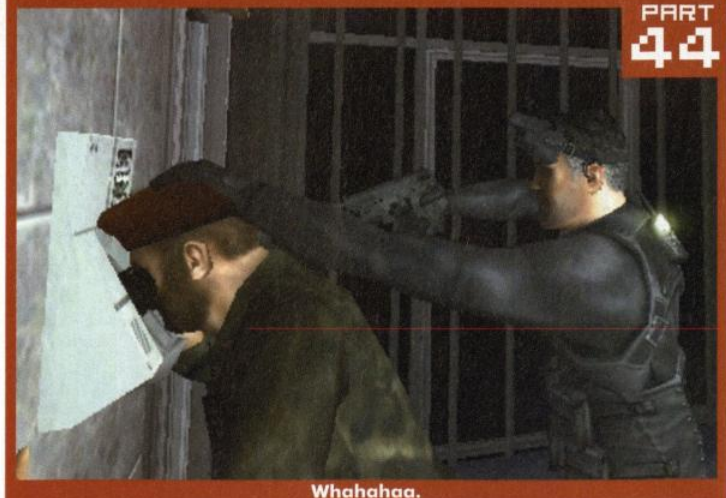
Jackson Gothe-Snape: Hyper writer



Frodo Baggins: Ring bearer

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 44 in the Subject line.



PART 44

Whahaaa.

MIX IT UP

XBOX LIVE UPDATED

Will Australia Get Version 2.0?

In the United States, Xbox are upgrading their Live service to include a host of new multimedia features. For starters, there will be a global chat room, so you can log on and socialise without even needing a game in the Xbox. See who's online, what games they want to play, and then boot up the game of your choice. You can even chat with

other players real-time, outside of a game, making Xbox Live a virtually cost-free long-distance telephony service! There will also be a new dashboard app — the music mixer.

It will be curious to see if Microsoft launch any of the new features when Xbox Live begins in Australia, or whether we'll start with the vanilla service first.



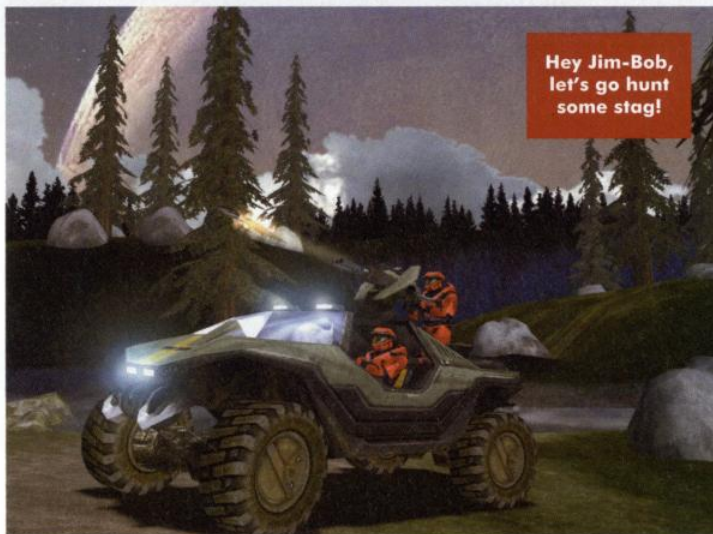
Picked up a plasma grenade

BIG BLAU

HALO HITS PC

How It Was Originally Intended To Be?

It's bigger, more beautiful, and better. Halo for the PC is just around the corner, and it's packing a ferociously exciting Multiplayer mode, amongst other delicious improvements. As the game was originally announced for PC and Mac many moons ago, it seems we're finally seeing the release of the game as it was originally intended. Halo on PC is going to rock the online gaming world. Watch this space.



Hey Jim-Bob, let's go hunt some stag!

GOOOOAL

EA SPORTS ONLINE

A PS2 Exclusive Service

EA Sports has surprisingly sworn allegiance to the PS2's online network. Their upcoming EA Sports online games will be exclusive to Sony's online gaming service.



If only Pro Evo was online...

The nine EA Sports online titles to be released in the USA will be FIFA Football 2004, NBA Live 2004, NHL 2004, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004, Madden NFL 2004, NASCAR Thunder 2004, NCAA 2004, NCAA March Madness 2004 and another, as yet unnamed game. Naturally, we here in Australia won't get them all (who wants to play endless variations of NFL anyway?), and we look forward to seeing what EA Sports have planned for our local PS2 broadband gaming network.

Naturally, Xbox Live will be combating this with the highly-rated Sega online sports range.

WINNERS

Hyper 115

X2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

Cathy McShane, Alice Springs, NT
Lord Family, Frankston, Vic
Colin Bonnick, Maryborough, Qld
John Kelses, Meadow Heights, Vic

TOM CLANCY'S RAVEN SHIELD

Alec McGeary, Howrah, Tas
Tim Chevally, Ulmarra, NSW
Tegan Pereira, Glenmore Park, NSW
Tyler Dean, Flagstaff Hill, SA
Darryl Marlow, Victoria Park, WA

OVERFLOW

One of the highlights of E3 was Nokia's great idea to present the N-Gage with lively "hip street rappers", who took to the stage and rapped about how "cool" the N-Gage was. Worst. Marketing. Decision. Ever.

At E3, Microsoft and Sony both announced price drops for their consoles. We can only hope those tasty price drops will make their way to Australia!

Nintendo confirmed at E3 that they are already in the design stages for their next console. They promised that they would be first out this time around with their GameCube successor, beating Sony and Microsoft to the punch with their respective PS3 and Xbox 2 systems. We really hope they turn things around.

Action movie director, John Woo (*Face/Off*, *Mission Impossible: 2*), has started his own games development studio, Tiger Hill Entertainment. The newly-formed company has signed a partnership deal with Sega to publish the titles.

Blizzard has confirmed that their upcoming MMORPG, *World of Warcraft*, will also ship for the Mac (hopefully at the same time, right?!)

The world's first Playboy game is coming to the PC and consoles. Yep, you get to be your very own Hugh Hefner and saunter around in your bathrobe, in *Playboy: The Mansion*. Naturally, the game will contain nudity. Heh.



NO WAR!

PS2 GETS ANOTHER EX

Invisible War To Go Unseen?

Contrary to our preview last issue, Deus Ex: Invisible War will NOT be released for the PlayStation 2. Instead, there are rumours that Ion Storm has been secretly hard at work on a separate game set in the Deus Ex universe exclusively for the PS2. Whilst nothing was confirmed at E3, we believe the rumour to be true, and at least Deus Ex will be returning to the platform in some form or another.



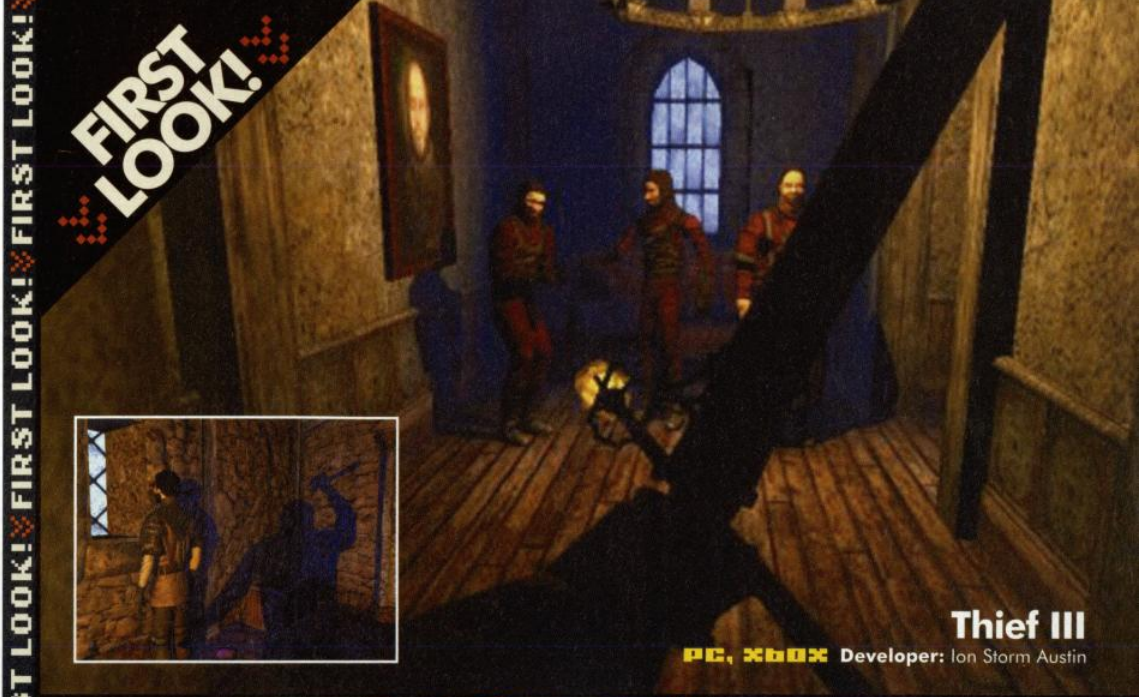
NO NICKY

COLIN READY FOR ONE MORE

Fourth Time The Charm?

Codemasters are going to churn up some dirt one more time with the announcement of Colin McRae Rally 04 for consoles and PC. The game will even be ready for a release at the end of the year. Codies have gone back to refine the championship, single race and multiplayer mode, as well as pump up the graphics another notch.

FIRST LOOK!

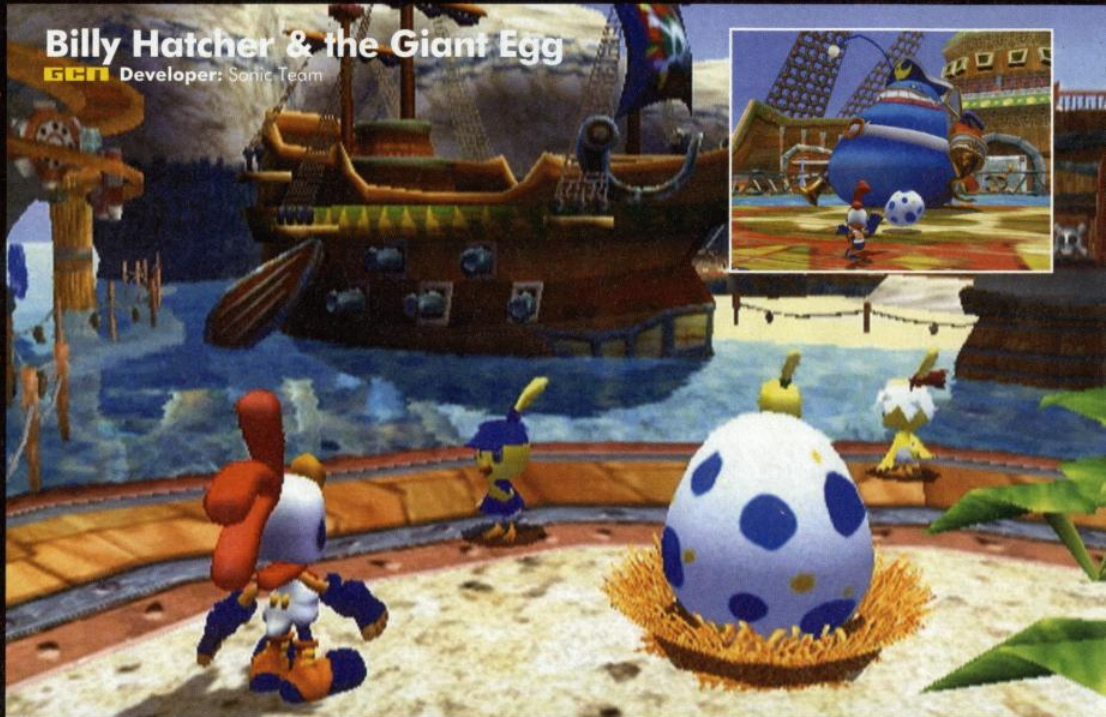
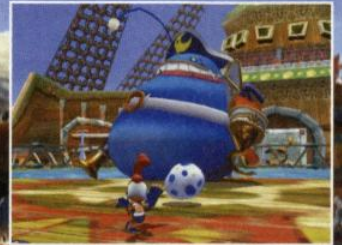


Thief III

PC, XBOX Developer: Ion Storm Austin

Billy Hatcher & the Giant Egg

GCN Developer: Sonic Team



Tribes: Vengeance

PC Developer: Irrational Games

PHI



Battlestar Galactica
PS2, XBOX Developer: Warthog

CAM

GALACTICA

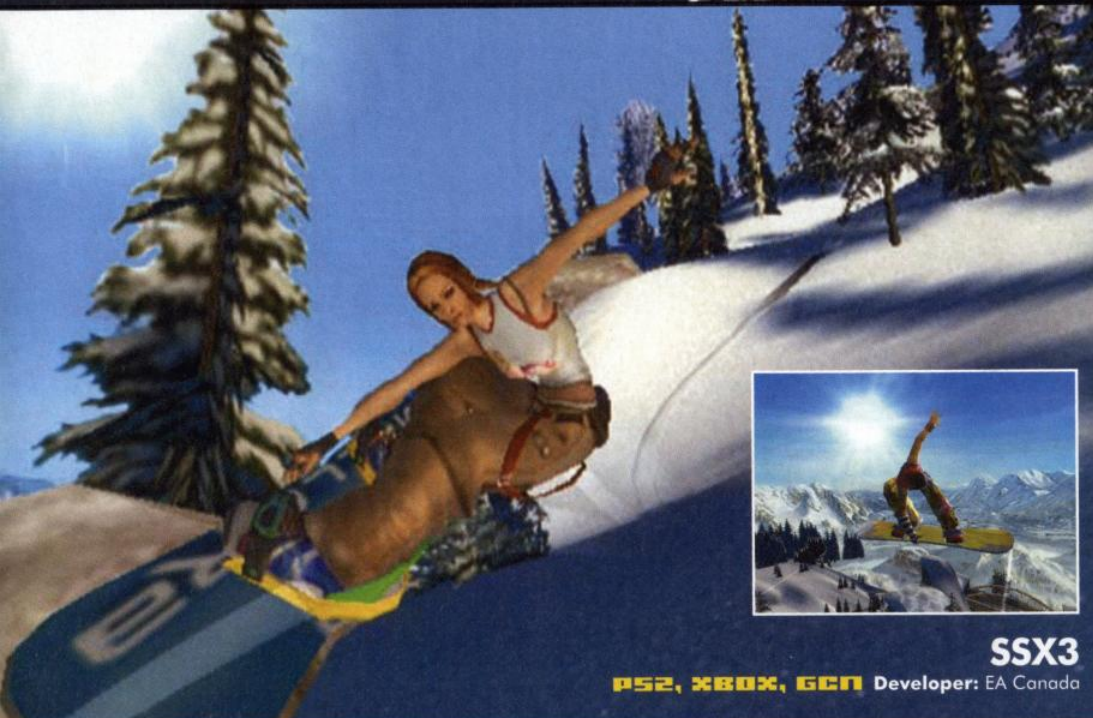
FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK! FIRST LOOK!



GRAMES!
ATARI
REBORN

Except It's Not Atari. Confused?

Infogrames, the french games publisher, have changed their name to Atari. How can they do this? They own the name. Whilst Infogrames are in no way connected to the original Atari company, they bought the brand name a few years ago in a take-over and began marketing a few of their games under the Atari brand. Now, their whole company, which has been known as Infogrames since it began in 1983, will simply be known as Atari. A little misleading for consumers? Probably just a good business decision by Infogrames... er, sorry, Atari.



SSX3
PS2, XBOX, GCN Developer: EA Canada



Metal Arms: Glitch in the System
XBOX, GCN Developer: Swingin' Ape



OPEN UP!
ESCAPE
FROM
WOOMERA

Aussie Adventure Controversy

A small unknown Australian games developer has been given a government arts grant to continue work on their controversial PC adventure game, Escape From Woomera. As you can imagine, this has pissed off Philip Ruddock, the immigration minister who was central to the whole detention centre drama. "We expect people to be upset," one of the game's creators said in The Age. "But there's been a lot of focus on the victimhood (of detainees) and we really want to focus on the bravery and heroism of these people." Players will be encouraged to try and escape from the detention centres, in a fully 3D modelled environment based on actual real-life details gleaned from detainees, television footage and reports on daily life in the centres. We want to play!

NEWS
>> HYPER 15



HALF-LIFE 2

» PC » XBOX

CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Sierra/Vivendi >> AVAILABLE: October >>

WOW-O-METER



You may have heard of this one. The gaming world is ablaze with news on the sequel to what is debatably the biggest PC game of all time, because that unlikely hero, Gordon Freeman, is back — crowbar and all.

Whilst it seemed lost for a few years in development, the truth was that Valve Software were building a brand new 3D engine for their inevitable sequel, and the aim was to revolutionise once more and not just pump out a cash-grabbing retreat. It came like a bolt out of the blue for the industry, but Valve just knew how to keep a good secret. Half-Life 2 will be upon us this year. Can you believe it?

THE ALIEN MENACE

Just announcing the game and releasing some basic details seems to be all that Valve really feel like doing for Half-Life 2 at the moment. It's certainly a very different tactic in promoting such a big game — these days a game is announced at least 15 months before it's planned

on coming out, with a slow dripfeed of screenshots and gameplay features until it culminates in its release. But not Half-Life 2.

Valve are promising that the game will see release as soon as September 30th in the USA, and yet they're still tight-lipped about most of the gameplay features, and getting hands-on with the game is proving difficult. Are they wary of over-hyping the game? Or are they simply enjoying the fact that they've just dropped the biggest gaming bomb the industry has ever seen, and now they want to sit back and watch the world go crazy for their new Half-Life creation? Well,

hopefully we'll know by the end of the year. All signs point to another classic First Person Shooter.

As scientist-cum-commando Gordon Freeman, the player will be thrust into a scenario of alien invasion. Now Gordon Freeman is working for the G-Man (the mysterious suit who observed your actions through the original Half-Life), and you've been paired with a new female character, Alyx, who's mother was killed during the events of the first game. Some familiar faces return in the form of the stylised scientists and security guards, plus the alien menace that plagued you in the Black Mesa

research facility. In fact, these aliens appear to be wreaking havoc to the surface world, and again the task of restoring peace (and delivering destruction) falls at your feet.

Most of the game will take place in a fictional European location named City 17, and you only need to look at the screenshots to see just how good it looks.

FAR MORE SOPHISTICATED

The Half-Life 2 engine certainly looks quite robust. Visually, it sports some very impressive texturing and high-poly character models, as well as some quite startling water effects and realistic lighting. The animation

PREVIEW

16 » HYPER



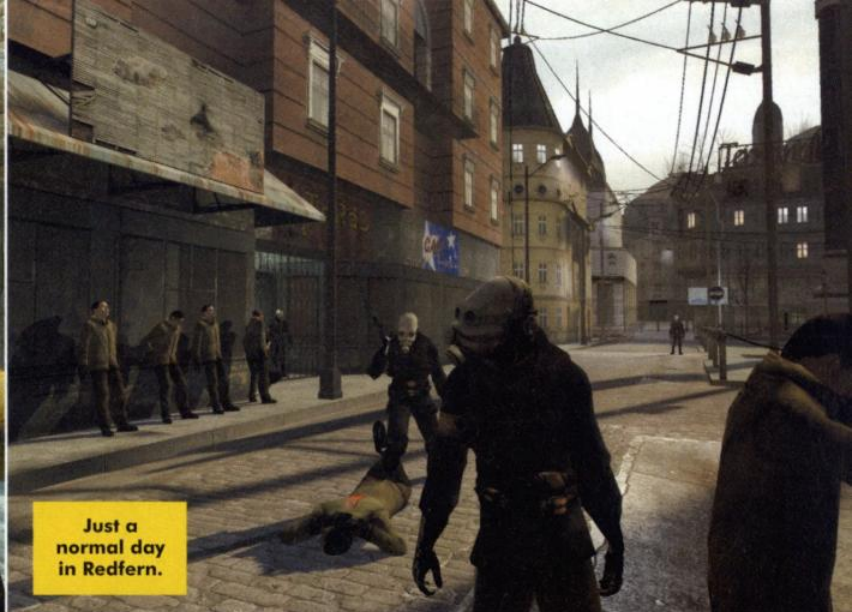
The nerdy scientists are back!



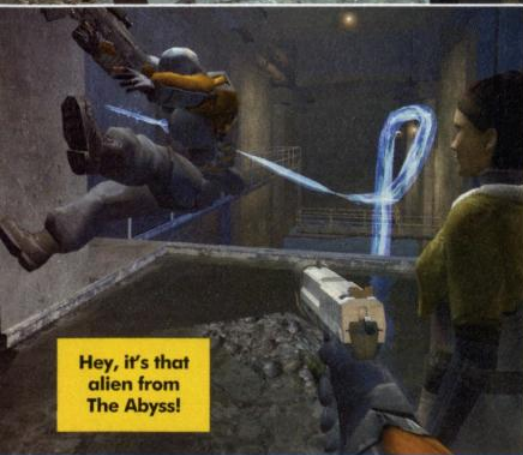
Alyx, sporting super-realism.



The other nerdy scientists are back!



Just a normal day in Redfern.



Hey, it's that alien from The Abyss!



VALVE HAS DECIDED TO MAKE HALF-LIFE 2 MORE MOD-FRIENDLY, AND INCLUDED WITH THE GAME WILL BE AN EDITING TOOL NAMED "HAMMER"

has also taken a major step forward with complex facial expressions and lip-synching on characters now available in-game. We'll know more about the technicalities once Valve decide to cough up a bit more info further down the track. For now we only know that despite the engine looking incredibly demanding, it will scale itself in complexity depending on your PC hardware, and Valve are boasting some very minimal hardware requirements for playing the game. As long as you've got a fairly new video card,

you might be able to play the game on as little as a PIII 733 (according to Valve, that is).

The Artificial Intelligence in the game will get your CPU working over-time though, as Valve has hinted that the game won't be as heavily scripted as the original Half-Life, requiring far more sophisticated artificial intelligence to keep the player on their toes instead. As with the original, there will also be no cutscenes, as everything story-driven will take place within the Half-Life 2 game engine.

Since Counter-Strike, arguably the most popular Half-Life mod devised, Valve seem to have taken some of the concepts from that mod and brought them into the sequel. Vehicles will now be used in both the singleplayer and multiplayer game,

and the game will also offer quite a few multiplayer options and modes. Valve has also decided to make Half-Life 2 more mod friendly than the original, to encourage more successful spin-offs such as Counter-Strike — included with the game will be a Half-Life 2 editing tool named "Hammer" that should encourage everything from map-making to mod development. And if you were wondering what the story was with Team Fortress 2, then you can be rest assured that it's coming — now that the switch to the Half-Life 2 engine has been made,

the Team Fortress 2 team have been sworn to secrecy, to not give away the goods on the brand new Half-Life 2 engine.

Will we be playing Half-Life 2 by the end of the year as Valve and Sierra promise us? Well, after many years in quiet development, we believe that the game is as ready as they say it is. Gordon Freeman is back. <<<

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

We'd like to see you smile - so more on Half-Life 2 next issue!



PREVIEW

» HYPER 17





MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!

>> **GCN**

CATEGORY: Kart Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

WOW-O-METER



Nintendo has finally unveiled the latest game in the Mario Kart series, and even though we knew it was coming, it's hard not to be excited. After all, this is one of gaming's most treasured franchises, and the bringer of much multiplayer mirth and merriment. So what can we expect from it?

RIDICULOUSLY HUGE

Well, the "Double Dash" says it all really, as the biggest change is that there are now two characters to a kart, working cooperatively with each other. How does it work? The character at the front handles the actual driving, while the character at the back is in charge of items. On the character selection screen, you first choose your driver, then the character you want in the rear — and then you choose your kart! In a first for the series, you can actually

have characters in different types of karts — say, put Mario in Bowser's mobile, or put Yoshi in Mario's red speedster. The kart handling and speed is tied directly to the type of kart you choose, not the characters you select.

As for the number of characters, well there's a ridiculously huge cast. From what we saw there was at the very minimum, 16 characters to choose from to begin with, including Mario, Luigi, Bowser, Wario, Waluigi, Peach, Daisy, Donkey Kong, Diddy Kong, Baby Mario, Baby Luigi, Yoshi, Birdo and more. There's bound to be plenty more characters to unlock too, given notable exceptions like Toad (what's a Mario Kart game without a hallucinogenic mushroom character dammit?).

Strategy is going to play a much larger role in this Mario Kart, there

are special items that each specific character can use. This is where it starts to get interesting, because you can swap the roles of your team members on the fly during races. This means that when a character at the rear picks up an item, you can then switch them to the driver's seat and have your other character with a free item slot read to pick up another power-up. Then you can strategically decide when to

employ the items in your possession, by switching between the characters. As you might have guessed, the character determines what type of special item can be picked up. For instance, having Bowser at the rear will allow you to pick up special spiky Bowser shells, but if you switch Bowser back into the driver's seat and put Mario in the rear, Mario won't be able to release the spiky shell, but instead use his own unique items.



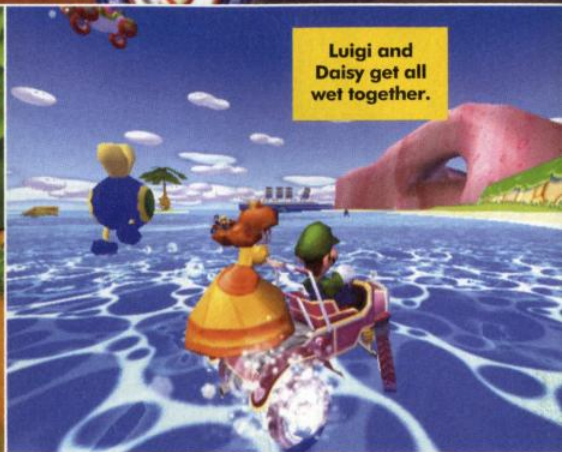
Mario dishes out some blau.



Luigi serves up a shell surprise.



He's hoping to get blazed by Daisy.



Luigi and Daisy get all wet together.



IT'LL BE INTERESTING TO SEE JUST HOW MUCH ACTION THERE IS FOR THE PLAYER STUCK AT THE BACK OF THE KART

GETTING STUCK INTO IT

Even cooler is that you can pull up next to your opponent, and if you have a free slot, steal the item out of their hands! Muaha! Most of the time we expect that both characters will be controlled by a single player, but given Mario Kart's party

game reputation, two players will be able to share the duties during massive eight player LAN sessions with two

linked GameCubes. Swapping places rapidly during a race could prove great fun, but it will be interesting to see how much action there is for the player stuck at the back of the kart. As you'd expect, four player split-screen will be included, so one player can control both characters at once in a standard four-player game.

We're also particularly hyped at the prospects for Battle Mode. Given how disappointing MK64's Battle Mode was, the idea of getting stuck into it with much more advanced item capabilities is incredibly exciting. It also opens the door for a huge range of mini-games within Battle Mode. We must note though, that at this stage, a Battle Mode hasn't been confirmed.

The art style in Double Dash certainly looks cool. There are a variety of cool custom kart designs — we particularly like Donkey Kong's DKC-style wooden barrel racer,

Koopa's cute shell design and Mario's slightly hotted up racer. The graphical highlight, however, are the environments themselves. There's a tropical location that seems somewhat inspired by Delphino Isle in Sunshine, with cobbled roads, big boats in the water with blue skies above, palm trees and quaint buildings. There's also the familiar speedway style courses (the more tarmac the better we say!) and they look fantastic, rendered with very Yoshi's Island style art — smiling mountains in the

background, mushrooms and daffodils by the track watching the racers go by. The framerate is also smooth as a baby's backside, although we were initially slightly disappointed by the actual racing speed of the game which doesn't seem to be quite up to the hair-raising acceleration of previous Mario Karts. <<<

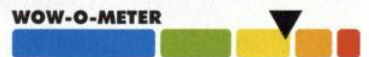
WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

Some unique new play modes, other than the championships and potential battle mode.





LIONHEART: LEGACY OF THE CRUSADER



PC CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
 PUBLISHER: Black Isle >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

In many ways, contemporary PC roleplaying games are a heck of a lot more sophisticated than their counterparts just half a decade ago. There's the rich support for user-created content being offered (thank you for NeverWinter, Bioware) and the much-touted and quite prolific leap from singleplayer adventuring to the wiles of massively multiplayer online virtual slaying. And there is, of course, the graphical splendour that RPGs are dressed in these days (Oh, Morrowind, how you make us blush!).

But there's one level of sophistication lacking in nearly all of the latest release PC RPGs (even if by virtue of design, in the case of massively multiplayer). Something that isn't obvious, or even essential to the RPG...

DISJUNCTIONAL

"[The] current gaping hole is the single player, story driven experience. There just hasn't been one for a while that was really amazing," says Chris Parker,

producer at Black Isle Studios, the RPG division of Interplay Entertainment, under the guiding hand of Black Isle, wants to change that with Lionheart. Black Isle has been responsible for two excellent story-driven RPGs - Fallout 2 and the absolutely essential Planescape: Torment. Reflexive find themselves in some very capable hands, indeed.

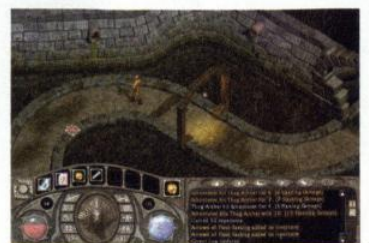
And it starts with the back story. Lionheart is a fantasy RPG, although not strictly in the tradition of Dungeons and Dragons. Set in Europe during the Renaissance, Lionheart has a rich tapestry of history to draw from. Not only are there real world locations in the game (Lionheart starts in Barcelona), but historic groups and events too, as can be expected in 16th century Europe. It's a time of brutal power: the Spanish Inquisition has a subversive yet powerful hold throughout Europe, while the Knights Templar and the Order of Saladin continue their tenuous relationship. And the Spanish Armada is about to launch its doomed attack on England.

But Lionheart's Europe is an alternate one. Four hundred years prior to the events of the game, during the Third Crusade led by King Richard (II) the Lionheart, Dick unwittingly managed to tear a hole in the fabric of reality. Called the Disjunction, what resulted was the introduction of magic - and some new races - to Earth. This divergent break in history has resulted in an intriguing setting: a world entirely familiar, yet strangely unique thanks to the taint of magic.

At the heart of it though, Lionheart is a good, honest, God-fearing RPG with many a stat and skill to manipulate. To create a game with that many different styles of play, Reflexive has enlisted the use of the S.P.E.C.I.A.L system used in Fallout 1 and 2. Standing for Strength, Perception, Endurance, Charisma, Intelligence, Agility and Luck, the system allows for any number of skills and feats to be built upon the scores in each of these core abilities.

For example, a player with a higher strength score will do more damage in

hand-to-hand combat, while a high perception score allows for better accuracy. Charisma will be the focus of diplomatic players - those who choose to progress through the story through dialogue and as little bloodshed as possible. Reflexive has also catered to those that prefer the more subversive approach, perhaps with the best implementation of sneaking in an RPG yet: not only will a high score in agility and sneaking allow you to avoid detection, a successful sneak will be rewarded with experience points as he or she passes a hostile. This should lessen - if not remove altogether - the need for thief characters to go on a slaying spree to level up.



The deadly S-bend. Smelly.

Select Your Traits: (optional)

- Arrows for Words
- Ascetic
- Fast Metabolism
- Finesse
- Gifted
- Good Natured
- Heavy Handed
- Nasty Disposition
- One Hander
- Renaissance Man
- Small Frame
- Studios Tinkerer

V Add Remove A

Skilled

Damage

Select Spirit



Select Your Tag Skills: (choose three)

- Divine Magic: Divine Favor
- Divine Magic: Fortitude
- Divine Magic: Protective
- Divine Magic: Smite
- Fighting: Evasion
- Fighting: One Handed Mele
- Fighting: Two Handed Mele
- Fighting: Unarmed
- Thieving: Diplomacy
- Thieving: Find Traps/Secret I
- Thieving: Lockpick
- Thought Magic: Electrical

V Add Remove A

Fighting: Ranged Weapons
Thieving: Sneak

	✓	+	\$
100	0	0	0
100	0	0	0
100	0	0	0
100	0	0	-8
100	0	0	-8
100	0	0	-8
100	0	0	0
100	0	0	0

Previous Begin

"Stat me up, stat me up I'll never stop"



LIONHEART IS A CLASSLESS RPG, MEANING YOU COULD HAVE A SWORD-BRANDISHING, MAGIC-WIELDING DIPLOMATIC THIEF IF YOU WANTED.

POWERFUL AND UNIQUE

Another flexibility of the S.P.E.C.I.A.L system is the freedom players have in choosing skills. Lionheart is a classless RPG, meaning that you could have a sword-brandishing, magic-wielding diplomatic thief if you wanted. The only penalty here is that you won't be particularly strong in any of the respective skills.

While Reflexive will reward Jack of all Trades players with the ability to see more of the breadth of what Lionheart has to offer, specialist players will also find an incentive to play. With the game nearing completion, Reflexive has been until recently fleshing out the many side quests in the game — some of which will only be accessible to highly skilled players with sworn affiliations. These will reward players with powerful and unique items, as well as a more detailed exposition of the game's sub plots.

And it's this attention to the world and the way players can interact with it that offers the most promise. Reflexive have populated the world with a number of real world historical figures — some major, some minor, and some just cool. Galileo and Nostradamus prove controversial. Leonardo da Vinci is revered, as is Shakespeare. These characters all have a role to play in the game, so some of them

will be protected from the threat of the gung-ho player. Others will be fair game. As Iron Hardie, Lionheart's Lead Designer and Co-producer muses:

"For some reason, the first time I saw one of the other designers kill Shakespeare and then raise him again from the dead to become his mindless servant... it brought a smile to my face. A Shakespearean zombie just struck me as funny."

How cool is that? <<<

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
If the dialogue is as good as Fallout and Planescape: Torment, we hope they have the voice acting talent to match.



WHERE WERE YOU THE DAY THE NUBIANS SET FOOT ON THE MOON?



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SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

>> PC >> PS2 >> XBOX

CATEGORY: Air Combat >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: LucasArts >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>



WOW-O-METER



Way back in 1991, Totally Games released Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe for the PC. It quickly went on to win a slew of game awards and establish itself as the World War II air combat sim to beat. Since then, Lawrence Holland's Totally Games produced the incredible X-Wing series, which established itself as the space combat sim to beat. Now in 2003, the upcoming release of their long awaited WWII follow-up, Secret Weapons Over Normandy, threatens to reaffirm why Totally Games make the best air combat action games in the industry. Can you be trusted with the most dangerous secrets of the war?

observing wind conditions, it'll be about how well you can stick on an opponent's tail during a screaming dogfight, and how well you can pull off a barrel-roll in the heat of the moment. Basically, it'll be all about the truly exciting (read: terrifying) aspects of wartime air combat.

With such a pedigree of games behind it, Secret Weapons Over Normandy (let's call it SWON for now) is guaranteed to be a refinement of some of the best air combat the PC and consoles have ever seen. With the focus this time around on the consoles, you can be assured that there will also be a multiplayer component — and

what's better than pestering your friends with a hail of machinegun fire? Of course, co-operative play will also be a large — and compelling — component.

The single player game revolves around a secret band of pilots (of which you belong) who are determined to thwart the Third Reich's control of the skies, although you'll also be faced with tackling the Japanese as well. You'll have to work your way up through the ranks, taking on more and more daring missions, eventually piloting more than 20 different types of aircraft including the P-38 Lightning, P-51 Mustang and the

legendary Spitfire. By the end of it, you'll be the allied forces' hot shot pilot — the only one really capable of saving the day...

BALLS OF FIERY DEATH

Secret Weapons Over Normandy will consist of roughly 30 missions, some involving air-to-ground attacks as well as intense dogfighting missions. You'll also be involved in a variety of different combat theatres over Europe — and other territories, such as North Africa and China-Burma-India — making for some very tasty scenery and landscapes. Both day and night missions will be on offer, as well as

PREVIEW

22 >> HYPER

THRILLS AND SPILLS

Secret Weapons Over Normandy promises all the high-action, thrills, spills and drama of a dogfighting sim that does away with all the technicalities of piloting an aeroplane. Basic flight skills will be needed, but this game won't be about monitoring dials and



He has his joystick gripped firmly.



A safe hiding place, eh?



"I think we're burning the tail off."



>> BY THE END OF IT, YOU'LL BE THE ALLIED FORCES' HOT SHOT PILOT - THE ONLY ONE REALLY CAPABLE OF SAVING THE DAY...

varying weather conditions. Chasing German fighter planes through the clouds is stunning, and once they explode in balls of fiery death, even more so.

The PC version will be most notably different with the inclusion of a mission builder. Just like most other classic air combat games of the past, you'll be able to create your own scenarios – say, pit yourself against a squadron of enemy bombers, or see how you fare in a one-on-one against an enemy pilot with increased skills.

All the sounds in the game have also been carefully constructed, with the aeroplane effects coming directly from actual recordings of WWII aircraft. Voice overs will be supplied by professional actors, with the Japanese pilot chatter coming from Japanese actor, Mako, famous for his work in Tora! Tora! Tora!

Totally Games have such an incredible reputation for delivering quality in this genre, that we're slipping on the gloves and pulling down the goggles already. Chocks away! <<<

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
Kick-arse multiplayer modes may be the key to the success of SWON.



Old cameras are quite bulky...

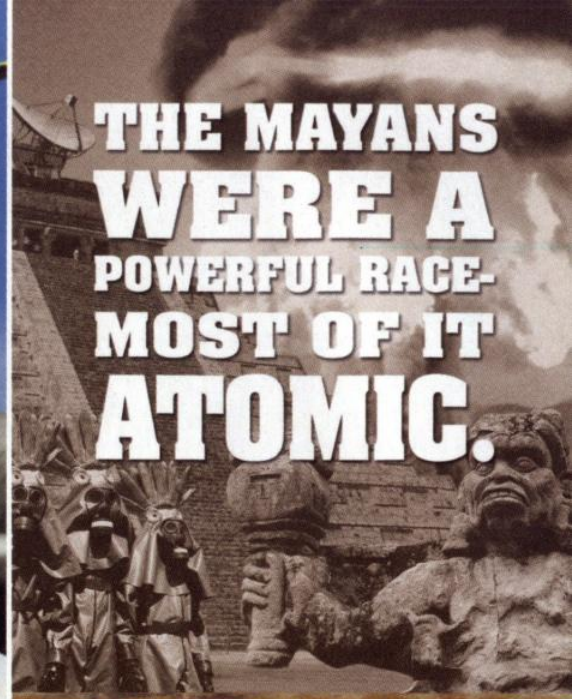


"You call this a joyflight?!"

TOTALLY AWESOME

Totally Games have an impressive portfolio of games:

- Battlehawks 1942** – PC (1988)
- Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain** – PC (1989)
- Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe** – PC (1991)
- X-Wing** – PC (1993)
- TIE Fighter** – PC (1994)
- X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter** – PC (1997)
- X-Wing Alliance** – PC (1999)
- Star Trek Bridge Commander** – PC (2002)



THE MAYANS WERE A POWERFUL RACE- MOST OF IT ATOMIC.



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ROGUE SQUADRON III: REBEL STRIKE



CATEGORY: Action/Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
 PUBLISHER: LucasArts >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

WOW-O-METER



A third Rogue Squadron title from Factor 5 is something of a surprise. It seems everyone — including us — thought that the *Star Wars* movies had been well and truly plundered by Factor 5 and LucasArts, and all possible set piece battles exhausted. If anything, we were expecting a brand new *Star Wars* adventure that took us into original new territory, with new plot lines, and all-new *Star Wars* scenarios. Incredibly, Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike takes us back once more to the classic trilogy and the familiar action sequences from the films. Hoth enough for ya?

A BIT OF LIGHTSABER SURGERY

The most important change to the series with this third installment, is the introduction of third-person character action. When starting the game, you'll be able to choose between Luke Skywalker and Wedge Antilles. Luke's missions will be more ground-based, and more directly taken from the film's famous action sequences. You'll be

running through the corridors of the Death Star, hopping onto a speeder bike in the Endor forest, and even hoisting yourself up to the belly of an AT-AT for a bit of lightsaber surgery as Luke did in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Choosing to play as Wedge will place you more in the thick of starfighter combat, involving missions that take place slightly outside of what we got to see in the films. For instance, Wedge will even find himself crash landing on the planet Geonosis — the location of the massive ground battle at the end of *Attack of the Clones* — surrounded by 40 year-old Batteredroid debris. Well, I

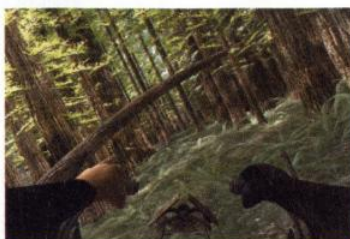
guess there's a fair amount of original action scenarios in the game after all... Naturally, it's Luke's missions that will have most fan boys (and girls) salivating. Who hasn't dreamt of infiltrating Jabba's palace to rescue Han Solo, or recklessly speeding through the giant trees of Endor? And surely we've all wanted to stomp around in our own AT-ST (and maybe even fry a few Ewoks by "accident"). And we imagine that hopping on the back of a Tauntaun will be somewhat different to zooming over the hills in the snowspeeder again! It'll be an all new Hoth.

Of course, there will still be plenty of space combat, but to freshen it up

for the third time through, Factor 5 have added co-op play. Two-player co-operative split-screen certainly gets our imaginations going for the gameplay possibilities in the final game, and Factor 5 plan on including the entire Rogue Leader game as a bonus multiplayer co-op mode! By the Force, that is incredible value! Multiplayer won't stop there though, as there are also plans for a variety of 2 and 4 player modes revolving around dogfighting skills, and capture/hold scenarios.

BACK TO THE FALCON

Everyone loved the awesome bonus levels in Rogue Leader, and Factor 5



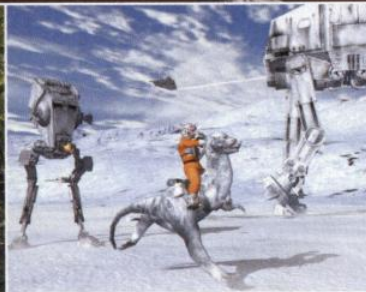
Luke & the hidden rebel plantation



"You're shooting at me, Luke!"



Player 1 has the force (feedback)



FACTOR 5 PLAN ON INCLUDING THE ENTIRE STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER GAME AS A BONUS MULTI-PLAYER CO-OP MODE

are very aware of this. They even know just how overly difficult it was to unlock the extra missions without cheats, and thus the bonus missions in Rebel Strike will be easier to unlock, and as a result there will be more of them too.

Probably the coolest unlockable mission may turn out to be the rescue of Princess Leia from *A New Hope*. It starts out with Luke (that's you) and Han — dressed in Stormtrooper uniforms — accompanying your "prisoner" Chewbacca to the cell block where the Princess is located. Once the bantha turd hits the fan, you'll be shooting at Stormtroopers and running through the corridors of the Death Star (beautifully modelled based on set plans from the Lucasfilm archives), in a bid to make it back to the Falcon in time to escape. Let's hope Obi-Wan got that tractor beam disabled for you, eh?



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

You know, we'd really like to see Rebel Strike make it onto multiple platforms...

There's even a bonus mission in which you must pilot a lone A-Wing through the intense dogfights during the climactic space battle of *Return of the Jedi*, and fly it into the bridge of the Super Star Destroyer kamikaze-style — just like in the film! Or how about the mission that will allow you to take control of Han Solo, and blast your way back to the Falcon in the maze-like tunnels of the rebel base on Hoth, Princess Leia in tow? Rebel Strike is shaping up to be the ultimate *Star Wars* game yet — and after the sensational *Rogue Leader*, that's saying something! <<<



WHERE WERE YOU DURING THE ROMAN MISSILE CRISIS?



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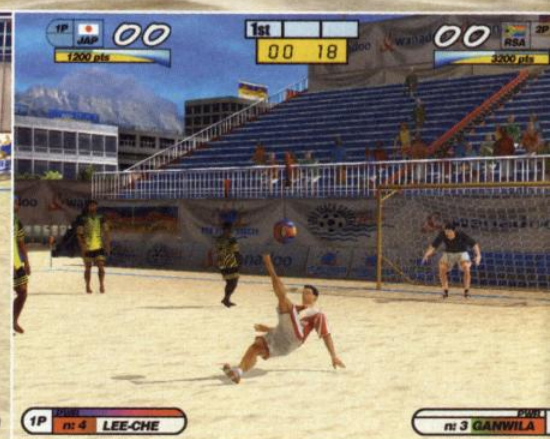
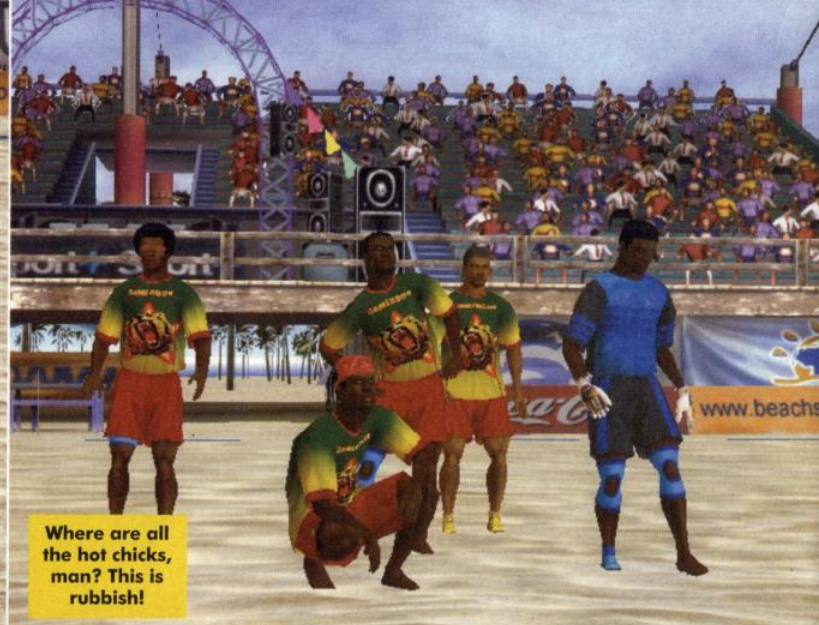
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PRO BEACH SOCCER

>> PC / PS2 / XBOX / GBA

WOW-O-METER

CATEGORY: Brazilian Soccer >> PLAYERS: 1-Multi >> PUBLISHER: Wanadoo >> AVAILABLE: Mid 2003 >>

PREVIEW

26 >> HYPER

What does a Brazilian soccer variant have in common with Lleyton Hewitt? They're both in upcoming games from a development house by the name of PAM. Haven't heard of them? That's not surprising really, given that their past project highlights are Mister Nutz (which we vaguely remember on SNES and Megadrive) and Ronaldo V-Football on PSone. That said, they're turning their fortunes around, with two strong titles on the way - the Xbox tennis title Top Spin, and the multiplatform romp Pro Beach Soccer.

THE SAND ENDS UP EVERYWHERE...

Believe it or not, but Pro Beach Soccer isn't the result of combining Soccer Slam with DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball. It's also an actual sport (convenient eh?), and as you can imagine, taking soccer out of its green pasture context and whacking it onto a beach makes for a very different style of game. We're talking a much smaller "pitch" (37m

by 28m), five man teams (including the goalie) and unlimited subs. It actually sounds like a pretty exciting sport, with real life games averaging a shot on goal every 30 seconds, and an average of 11 goals per match. In short, it's flamboyant, athletic and perfect videogame fodder.

But can PAM translate all this excitement into responsive, rewarding and varied gameplay? Well, they're on the right track. They actually got two of the stars of the Spanish team (striker Ramiro Figueiras Amarelle and goalie Roberto Valeiro Mato) in to do motion capture for the game, even going so far as to cover the floor of the motion capture studio with sand! It has also been designed under the watchful eye of the BSWW, which should lend it credence in Beach Soccer circles. Oh sorry, the BSWW is the worldwide Beach Soccer Federation. As if you didn't know that already!

From what we've seen the play modes will be pretty standard. The

most interesting are: Tour Mode, where you take on the 32 best teams in the world over a full season... assuming there ARE 32 teams in the world; Survival Mode, which pits you against 14 teams in a row; and the Competition Editor, which allows you to create your own leagues and tournaments... and hopefully edit some delightfully risqué player and team names while you're at it.

BRAZILIAN... JUST THE WAY WE LIKE IT

Games take place in four stadiums - Rio, Marseilles, Bangkok and Venice Beach, all of which have been realised well. Players look reasonable too, and although there aren't any babes, Pro Beach Soccer still has a hint of DOAXBV about it, with plenty of details to give players personality, such as sunglasses, funky hair styles, bandanas, coloured sun block, earrings and possibly a wide selection of anklets. As long as we don't have to worry about whether a pink dog collar or an uzi would be a better gift to get Ricardo on our

team, we'll be happy.

Another exciting element in Pro Beach Soccer is the inclusion of "DJs playing hot tunes" (according to the press release) who also, incidentally, provide colour commentary! Is there anything DJs can't do? Best of all, expect sass mouth and jackin' beats in equal measure, as "they aren't shy... about playing hot tunes to back up their remarks". Word. We dare say Andy Gray and John Motson should get their decks out and start practicing right now, or they'll be left behind in this brave new world. Who says there's no room for innovation in videogames anymore?



Hey guys, check out my pedicure.

»» PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC / GBA

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: EA >> AVAILABLE: Late 2003 >>

With *The Return of the King* hitting cinemas later this year, it's no surprise to learn that a videogame adaptation is also on the way. It's being developed by EA's Redwood Shores studio, and headed up by the producer from *The Two Towers* game, Neil Young. The team is planning on creating a more expansive experience than the last game, with less of a simplistic hack'n'slash sensibility, and more adventure elements. To this end, they're committed to greater character development in the game, more interaction with the environments and more choices for players to make.

In addition to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, players will also be able to play as Gandalf, Sam and Frodo... and probably more. Most exciting of all, however, is the inclusion of co-op play, a feature sorely missing from *The Two Towers*, and one that will truly add to the feeling of being part of the fellowship. Also hugely encouraging is the very close relationship the development team have kept with the film's production team — they've had a window into the film every step of the way, and that's a very valuable commodity for ensuring authenticity.



Careful or he'll use his Magneto powers on you.



»» PS2 DOG'S LIFE



CATEGORY: Simulation >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: SCEE >> AVAILABLE: Late 2003 >>

Back in 1982, a couple of guys named David Braben and Ian Bell wrote a little game called *Elite*. You may have heard of it. Since then, Braben has gone on to form the development house Frontier, and his latest project looks very interesting indeed. *Dog's Life* is an action adventure game that casts you as a dog named Jake who has to travel across the USA and foil a dog-napping plot.

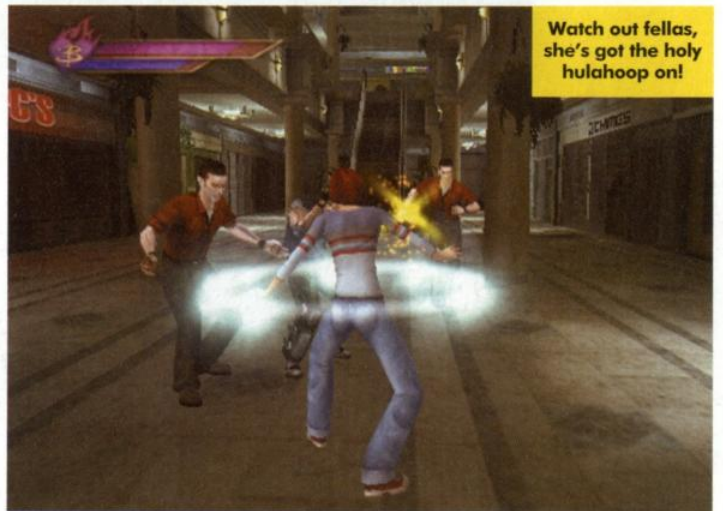
You'll have a full range of doggy abilities at your disposal, from digging, swimming and begging, through to fetching, hunting and marking territory. Most interesting is the inclusion of "Smellovision" — a first person "dog's eye view" where the world is seen in sepia tones with smells standing out as colours. Sounds cool eh? With over 20 different breeds of dogs to play as and with, *Dogs Life* will also have a fair portion of strategy. You'll need help from humans to achieve certain goals, but they won't want to help you if you're stinky and poorly groomed, so looking after Jake is a must. Original.



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Come on spot, where'd you bury my GameCube?



Watch out fellas, she's got the holy hula hoop on!

»» PS2 / XBOX / GCN BUFFY: CHAOS BLEEDS

CATEGORY: Action/fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Vivendi/Fox Interactive >> AVAILABLE: Late 2003

After the sterling job that The Collective did with the original *Buffy* game, it comes as something of a surprise to find out that Eurocom will be handling the next title. Less surprising, however, is the move from Xbox to multi-format.

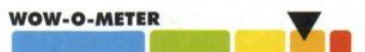
Buffy and Angel are now on different networks, we kinda doubt it. Playing as Angel would certainly be cool though! The other big change is the inclusion of

Like the Xbox title, *Chaos Bleeds* is going to play out like a "lost episode" from the show — sometime during Season 5 in fact. This time around, Buffy won't be the only playable character — you'll be able to play as Willow, Xander and Spike. The press release also says Angel, but given that he only returned for an episode or two in this season, and also that

extensive multiplayer modes where you can play as both members of the Scooby Gang and as vamps. These include One on One Combat, Domination, Last Man Standing, Team Survival and Bunny Catcher (that's gotta be Anya related). We'll have more info on this one soon — fingers crossed it isn't a quick fix sequel.



Standing, Team Survival and Bunny Catcher (that's gotta be Anya related). We'll have more info on this one soon — fingers crossed it isn't a quick fix sequel.

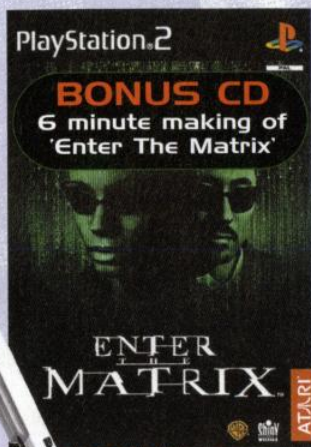


PREVIEW

»» HYPER 27

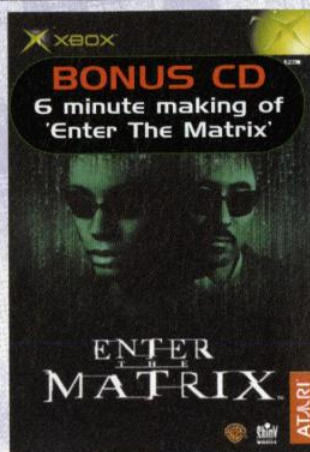
Don't Just watch

ENTER THE MATRIX™



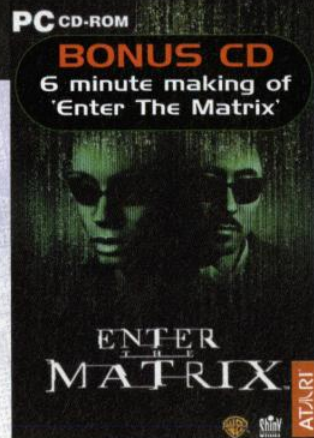
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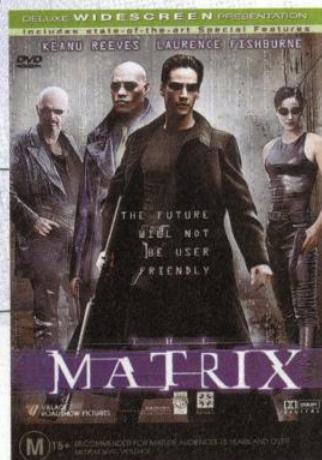
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P2XIMWRE



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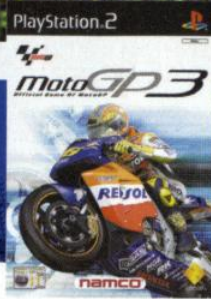
Harvey Norman

PlayStation 2



\$99⁹⁵

Midnight Club II PS2 (G8+).
1081PS2



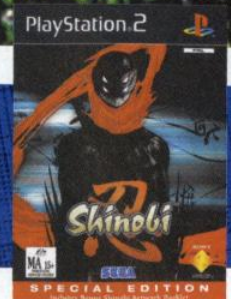
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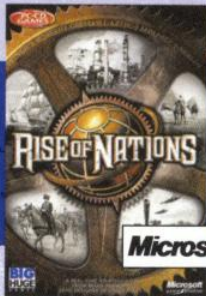
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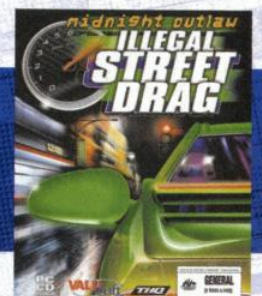
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A BEAUTIFUL DAY

A Q&A WITH **BILL ROPER**, VICE PRESIDENT OF BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT, ON WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE AND MORE...





FOR A BLIZZARD

HYPER: So, tell us about *The Frozen Throne* - A little about what's in it, the development period and any little spoilers you can give us for the future.

Bill Roper: Well, *Frozen Throne* is our expansion for *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos* and we're really looking forward to improving every possible aspect of the game. We're really taking that term "expansion" to heart by expanding the game in every way at the same time - more heroes and units; every side has an individual new hero and two new units. There are also five hireable heroes - any side can hire them to fight alongside the player. Two new campaigns, new tile sets, new editor and cinematic sequences. New music, entirely new support for things like clans and guilds on Battle.net.

We've tried to take every aspect of the game and kind of broaden and deepen it at the same time. We've got a lot of fantastic feedback in the last month during the Beta test from people, and they agree with us that by doing what we're trying to do with the expansion pack is really making a new play experience. For people who have played a lot of *Warcraft III* I think the expansion will offer them a whole range of brand new gameplay opportunities.

HYPER: With the advent of the new heroes, what type of powers and abilities can players expect to be seeing?

BR: Each of the new heroes have their own set of spells and skills and a lot of those are new ideas. There are also a lot of new items the heroes can get - both the old heroes and the new heroes. Each of the races also now get their own special kind of shop, a store that they can build themselves as part of the technology tree that has items that are common to all the races as well as items that are unique to that race.

We've also added some new types of things that the player can find. One of those is runes, for example - they apply different effects to not only your hero who touches them but also to anyone who is around him. Basically there are a lot of things in the expansion pack that are really very different. The player built shops not only have common items, they also have race specific items. The runes, like I said have an effect on all of the units around them, for example like a giant healing spell on all the units or regenerating mana and things like that. There are a lot of things that players will be able to find tactically. It really makes the gameplay much, much improved. I think it's going to be a really exciting thing for people when they get it.

HYPER: Can you give us a little teaser of the plot, as well as some of the details that bridge the gap between *Reign of Chaos* and *Frozen Throne*?

BR: Well the expansion storyline takes place pretty much right after *Warcraft III* finishes. The *Frozen Throne* campaign follows the Night Elves, the Humans and the Undead. Their storyline deals with the fact that the big, bad, evil Night Elf hero from *Warcraft III* and the leader of the Undead, basically, are both racing against each other to find and claim this ancient artefact of



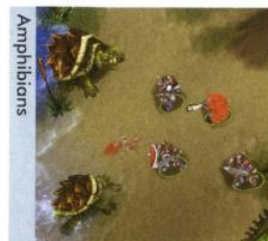
>> THE HUMANS, AS USUAL, ARE KIND OF CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, TRYING TO DEFEND THEIR LANDS AND STOP BOTH SIDES...

great power, the *Frozen Throne*. The Humans, as usual, are kind of caught in the middle, trying to defend their lands and stop both sides from attaining this goal. It's a really nice expansion of the story and goes into a lot of detail about motivations. I think there's a lot of nice work in sort of maintaining shades of grey - not everyone doing the same things for the same reasons on the same side - it will keep you guessing. The Orcs have their own campaign and not only does it tell its own story, it's also built differently.

The *Frozen Throne* campaign for the other three races is built in very much the same way we built the campaigns in *Warcraft III* - it is a continuing story that we see



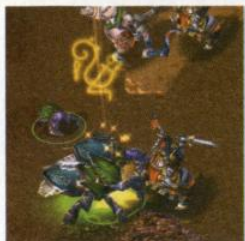
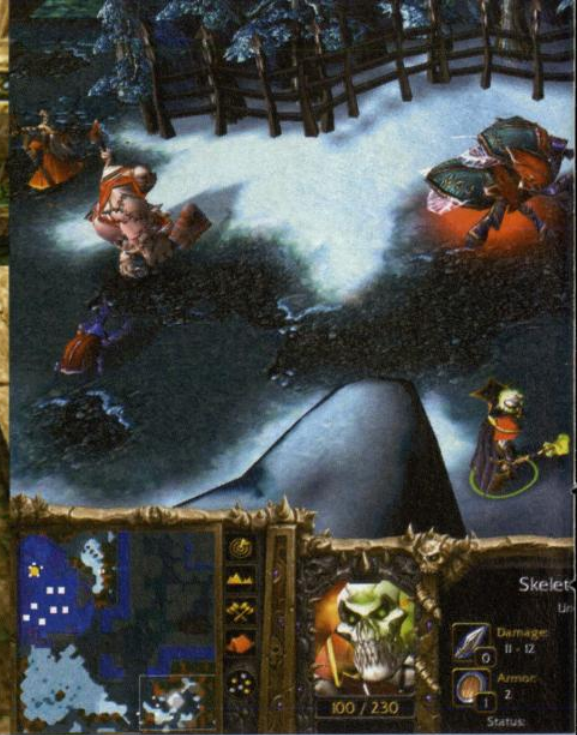
Creeps: the Makrura



Amphibians



A rare glimpse at the imposing Lord Seafood.



Undead Hero: Crypt Lord



Den of Wonders

sequentially through the eyes of the different races; has a cinematic at the beginning and the end, and tonnes of in-game cinematics.

The Orc campaign, however, is very different in that we made a lot of changes to our editor and one of the things we wanted to do was show off those changes with what we have in the Orc campaign. For example, a new thing that you can do with the editor is to actually link maps. By that we mean that changes on one map can affect things on another map. You can be playing on one map and find a gateway that's locked - being held shut by magical forces and the only way to open that gate would be to find the source of the magic. Then you might be on another map and you

HYPHER: Can you give us some clue as to what the new tile sets and creeps are?

BR: Well, all of the new tile sets have their own creep types. Probably one of the biggest ones that features very heavily in the Frozen Throne storyline is the Naga - they're kind of a new major threat that has been raised up from the depths of the ocean. Of course, now that the Burning Legion has been defeated, he needs more allies, basically to help him achieve his goals and so he uses the Naga to do this. They're really fleshed out and there's a lot of background for them. We had fun creating this new evil race to be used in telling the story for the expansion set.

All of the tile sets have their own creeps - special little monsters players can chase around and hunt for XP for their heroes. There's also three new tile sets. One of them is kind of a snowy/ice, interior/exterior combination. There's enough there to build some outside areas but there's a lot of emphasis on interiors with that tile set. One of the things we wanted to do with that, really, was a response to what we'd heard from fans, in that they wanted to have more tile sets available to make things like towns and cities and dungeons. More types of intense, I guess, one-on-one type maps. Things that they tend to push when making more RPG style maps.

There's also the "Sunken Ruins" tile set, which is built specifically to work very well with rivers and oceans and have a lot of water run through it. We've also introduced ships with the expansion set - just like the Zeppelin for the Goblins, you'll be able to go out and hire a transport or some destroyers, so we wanted to bring in some of that naval element that appeared in Warcraft II as well.

HYPHER: What types of new units are being introduced and why

have these specific units been chosen?

BR: Well, each side gets two new units, so there's actually eight new units in the game. They're pretty broad ranging in effect - I think the commonality they share is that we designed them around trying to fill in holes in strategies. An example of that would be the Dragon Hawk, which is a new unit on the Human side - it's specifically designed to fill in the hole the Humans had which is that it was difficult for them to actually siege islands that had the heavy tower defence. They really didn't have a good way to bust through towers from the air, so what we did with the Dragon Hawk is that they have a special ability to cast this kind of fog that specifically doesn't allow mechanical units to fire. If you had a bunch of archers there they still wouldn't be able to get in, but if you only left catapults, the humans would be basically able to slip in through the fog without the towers being able to spot them.

The Orcs have a very difficult time early in the game with healing because they don't get healing abilities on their units until much further along in the progress of their technology tree, so their new hero actually has a healing spell which works very differently to the other healing spells that are in the game. It's been really nice to be able to balance things out a little more, but maintain that flavour and character for all the different races and try to make sure that not only are new strategies opened up but that if there was a hole that stopped players from playing strategically then maybe we've filled that as well.

HYPHER: Have there been any changes made to multiplayer? New game modes and the like?

BR: The game will be similar in some aspects and different in

»» THERE'S ALSO THE SUNKEN RUINS TILE SET, WHICH IS BUILT SPECIFICALLY TO WORK VERY WELL WITH RIVERS AND OCEANS...

find this big, powerful Arch-Mage and when you defeat him that then unlocks the gate so you can then go back to the other map and go through that gateway. That's something we've never been able to do before.

HYPHER: So players will be able to use all of the new editor tools that you used to put together the Orc campaign?

BR: Players themselves can use everything that we built the Orc campaign with. We really tried to push that as much as possible by having solely in-game cinematic sequences with all the files accessible so people will be really able to see it almost as a big tutorial on how to do a lot of this stuff - and everything we do with the Orc campaign players can do for themselves.





others. We are making some changes in the way that we are going to be able to host tournaments for example. We know that there are a lot of people that have been really getting into ladder matches and really thrive in the competitive nature of the game. We're trying to provide some different ways for people to not only experience that but also group themselves for it. We really have a lot of tournament-based advancements in the game over at Battle.net that will be rolling with the launch of the game. We also have a way on Battle.net for people to organise themselves - we have the ability for people to form clans and guilds. Basically a group of people can apply to be a guild - members can appoint officers with a special tag next to their name that's unique on Battle.net so no one else can have that tag. The tag gets shown when they're in chat room, they get their own private chat room that has their guild name that only members of the guild are allowed to access - unless you're invited in of course.

We're even going to have a separate ladder for guilds that shows their power ranking - it's not directly a competition of how many times this guild beat this other guild, it's more about what's the overall power ranking of that guild.

We've been running that in the Beta a little bit and people are really enjoying the fact that they can organise themselves and they have these bragging rights. It's going to be a great way to make some of the multiplayer games more meaningful.

HYPER: So what does Blizzard have in store for us in the coming year or so?

BR: The next two big things on our plate are Starcraft: Ghost, which is a console title for all three of the next-gen consoles. It's a tactical action game set in the Starcraft universe featuring a Ghost unit - hence the reason why it's called Starcraft: Ghost. It should be something that's really exciting. We really love that style of game and when we started working on it the only other game of that type out there was Metal Gear Solid. We've

seen and played a lot of great games in that genre, and we find that really exciting because it shows that it's really interesting to a lot of people. Hopefully we can provide something that's going to get a lot more people interested as well.

HYPER: You do have the added bonus of setting the game in a universe that is more than a little beloved in the gaming community.

BR: I think really the best thing for us in that regard is that it really gave us a deep story and history for us to work with before we even started laying out ideas for this game. There was already a lot there. We knew what we wanted to do but we weren't exactly starting from scratch. There were almost too many things to pick from to start with. It was more a case of how do we pick the material that we want to focus on rather than where do we start.

The other big thing we're working on is World of Warcraft, our massively multiplayer game set in the Warcraft universe. Our big goal for that is to go to Beta this year. We're not really sure how long the Beta test period will last - one thing we've always said is that we want to leave absolutely as much time as necessary to get through the Beta so that when it's done it's actually done. People are going to be paying to play, so we want to make sure they're paying to play a complete game. It's something that's very different for us. It's a really massive undertaking with a huge team. It's really almost what all of us got into doing this for - creating a living, breathing, permanent world for people to play in and we can change content constantly. We can keep working on it, making it bigger and better and it's really an exciting genre to be getting into.



HARROWAAR

EYETOY

Price: \$TBA **Available:** July

» In an industry where gimmicky peripherals are released on a regular basis, it's refreshing to see Sony come up with a device that's both innovative and great fun to use. The EyeToy is a web-cam add-on for the PS2 that literally puts you in the game. If you thought people looked silly in front of Dance Dance Revolution in the arcades, then you're in for a rude shock, because EyeToy takes it to a whole new level. Fortunately, however, you can do it in the comfort of your own home, and remember: in the middle of a drunken party, nothing looks stupid.

STEALING BEER

And that's what EyeToy is all about. This is a party game if ever we've played one. The software that comes with the device is called "Play" and is basically a collection of 12 mini-games (three are available from the start, with the rest being unlockable) spanning a variety of wacky subject matter. It's all very light-hearted, with cartoony characters evaluating your performances, and player profiles that utilise happy, sad and silly photos of your noggin. We also like the fact that a picture is taken to accompany every high score.

As you can see from the hilariously cringe-worthy screenshots Sony supplied us, this technology is definitely not aimed at the hardcore gaming crowd. Quite the opposite in fact, this is a very deliberate attempt to expand the user base of the PlayStation 2. It's a very effective attempt too. We have plenty of non-gamers who work here at the Hyper HQ, and since getting the EyeToy have had a steady stream of people dropping by to play Kung Foo, and even bringing their friends by to have a go. There's something very appealing about interacting with a game using wild gestures and seeing yourself on-screen.

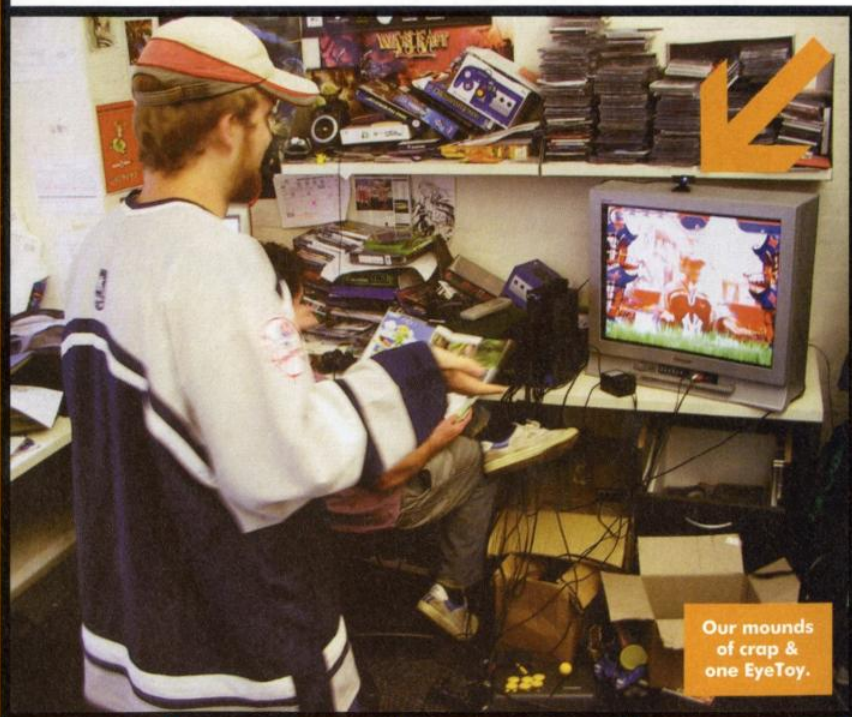
The office has also been a good testing ground for the technology. Ideally, you'd want to play with a plain background, but even against the very busy (in other words messy) setting of our office, the EyeToy worked very well – fortunately you can adjust the sensitivity depending on how much clutter is in the

background. And we also found it makes a good security cam to ensure no one is stealing beer from our bar fridge.

PRETTY DAMN TRIPPY

Although the screenshots may lead you to believe this game will only be a hit with grannies and young girls, the appeal is actually very broad. Not only is it a great game to put on at parties, but the stoner set will love the playroom effects. There are 13 to unlock all up, and some of them are pretty damn trippy. Our favourites are: Rainbow, where your movements on screen leave a phosphorescent rainbow trail behind that gradually fades; the seizure inducing Nervous, which makes you look like you're twitching and moving in spasms; Underwater, which puts you in an aquarium complete with bubbles, fish and undulating perception; and Bees, which shows off the tracking technology by having your every movement pursued by a hive of bees.

As fun as Play is though, we really hope that Sony have some other titles in development, because the EyeToy has huge potential. We'd also like to see Sony encouraging other developers to incorporate the technology in some way – even if it's something simple like taking a pic of your head and placing it on a character model in a game. With the PS2 going online, having personalised characters could really add to the online gaming experience. Regardless, kudos to Sony for trying something new.



Our mounds of crap & one EyeToy.



BEAT FREAK - Put your hands over the speakers as the CDs reach them. Simple really, and with some good tunes too. We must point out, that the EyeToy is nowhere near as clear as these mock-up pics make out.



KUNG FOO - Punch, elbow, kick (if you can manage it), headbutt and dragon punch the enemies before they get too close. Hands down the office fave, with great board breaking bonus rounds too.



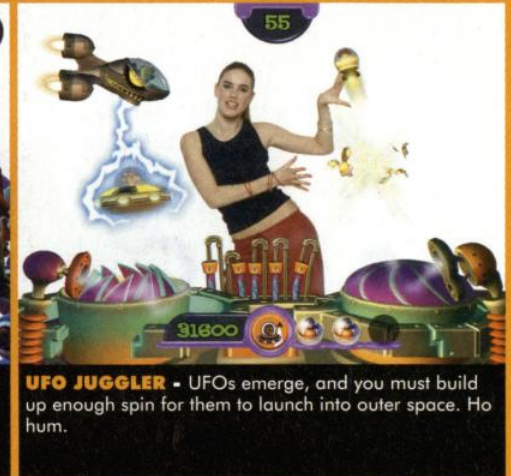
WISHI WASHI - Wash the sudsy windows as fast as you can, and clear as many as possible in the time limit. Limited appeal makes this one a little wishy washy really.



KEEP UPS - Use your head to keep the ball in the air. Great idea in theory... needs better collision detection in practice.



BOXING CHUMP - Take on Big Robo Bro, and avoid his guard to land hits. If granny can do it, so can you.



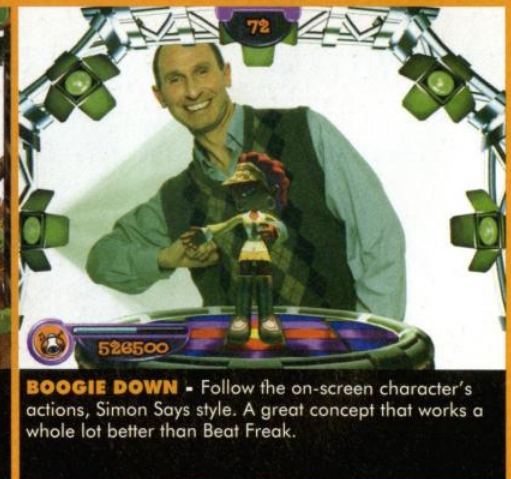
UFO JUGGLER - UFOs emerge, and you must build up enough spin for them to launch into outer space. Ho hum.



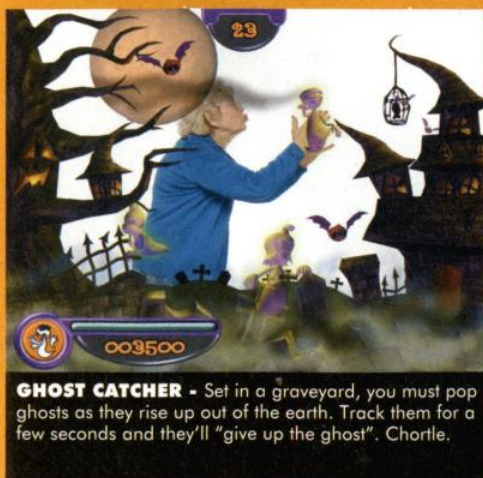
SLAP STREAM - Slap away the cursed rat men, while avoiding the good guys. Harder than it sounds cos your elbows tend to get in the way.



PLATE SPINNER - The name says it all really. Spin the plates atop the poles, and foil the evil monkeys too.



BOOGIE DOWN - Follow the on-screen character's actions, Simon Says style. A great concept that works a whole lot better than Beat Freak.



GHOST CATCHER - Set in a graveyard, you must pop ghosts as they rise up out of the earth. Track them for a few seconds and they'll "give up the ghost". Chortle.



MIRROR TIME - Characters appear in four corners of the screen, and you must unlock some of them and avoid others. The trick is that the screen can flip upside down and invert.



ROCKET RUMBLE - A fun fireworks game where you try and chain together like-coloured explosions.

WIN WIN WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE JULY 9

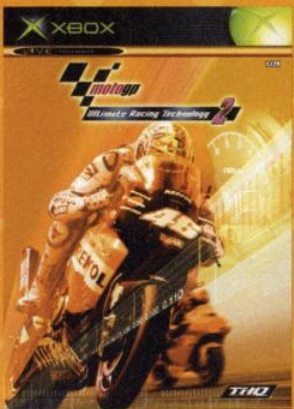
WIN RISE OF NATIONS!

■ Rise of Nations by Big Huge Games is a solid strategy title, giving you a taste of different eras in human history, and this month we want you to be in with a chance to win one of 10 copies we have to give away! Just answer the following question:

FOR
PC

What was the last Microsoft RTS game released?

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



WIN MOTOGP 2!

■ The original MotoGP on Xbox was an absolute treat – a great sim, great arcade game, and it looked sensational to boot. The good news is that the sequel is just as good, if not better! If you'd like to win one of five copies we have to giveaway thanks to THQ, just answer the following question:

FOR
XBOX

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

Terms & Conditions: 1. Entry is open to residents of Australia and New Zealand except employees and immediate families of Next Publishing Pty Ltd and its agencies associated with the promotion. 2. Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 3. Competition begins 9am May 27 and entries close at 6pm July 9. 4. In determining eligibility the judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 5. The winner will be drawn at 9am July 10 at Next Publishing Pty Ltd 78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016. 6. Prizes must be taken as offered and are not redeemable for cash. 7. The promoter is not responsible for misdirected or lost mail. 8. The winners will be notified by mail and results published in the September issue of Hyper on sale August 6th. 9. 5 winners will each receive a MotoGP2 game worth \$99.95. 10 winners will each receive a Rise of Nations game worth \$99.95. Total prize value is \$1499.25. 10. The promoter is Next Publishing Pty Ltd ABN 88 002 647 645 of 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.



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MODs

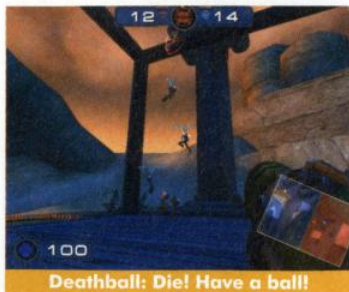
>> SHAHIL
'SHAH' AHMED

In the past few years, online editing communities have sprung up as the new big thing. Realising how such communities extend the life of their product, developers are now lending a helping hand with editing packages — even going so far as to release games that are little more than a framework for communities to create MODs with. But don't be fooled by the Half-Life MODding craze — MODs aren't just about new and more exciting ways to spatter blood 'n' guts. We've got something for everyone here...

Desert Combat BATTLEFIELD 1942

www.desertcombat.com

■ ...But mostly blood 'n' guts, ya pansies (no, we don't really mean that). Feel like flying the F-117 stealth bomber? Taking out the A-10 Thunderbolt II (aka the Warthog, for those who didn't know) with a F-16? Or just running over a sniper's toes in a Humvee with a not-so-happy gun mount? From choppers to missile launchers, funkier knives to the anti-tank SMAW, Desert Combat throws a new and otherwise retooled



Deathball: Die! Have a ball!



Children of the Night: Spooky!

BF1942 game at you — and it's only 80 free megs. You don't really need us to tell you to get it, do you?

Day of Defeat HALF-LIFE

www.dayofdefeat.com

■ Day of Defeat is an award-winning multiplayer teamplay WWII Half-Life MOD, featuring a host of available classes such as paratrooper, sniper, machine gunner etc. in a number of Axis vs. Allies scenarios. Yet another from the Half-Life line of successes of the past few years, it's already available in stores, or as a hefty 173 meg download. Major differences include that the retail version has new maps that won't see an immediate online release, but the updated particle system, weapons and other additions not yet in the online version will be released in patches shortly to ensure compatibility. Although it isn't as speccy or diverse as Battlefield 1942 (in fact, the Half-Life engine looks more than a tad dated by comparison), it excels for balanced, realistic close combat. Most importantly, it'll let you get a little life out of your dusty old Pentium yet.

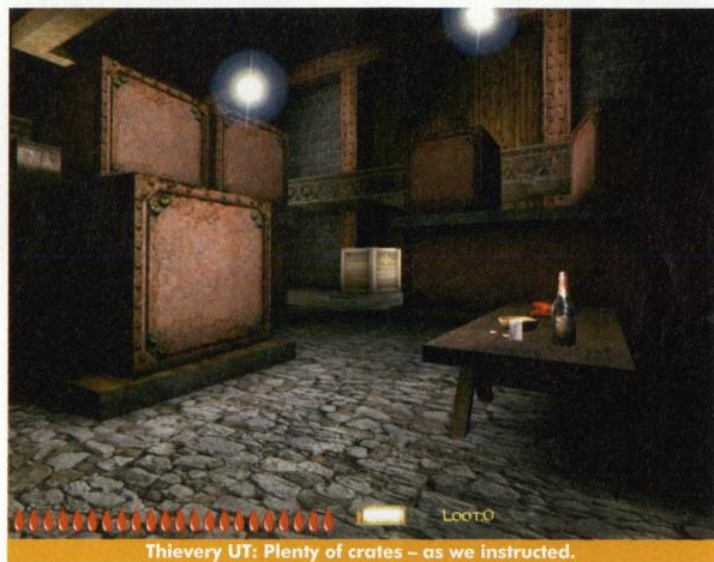
Matrixed Reality/ Kung Fu MOD

MAX PAYNE

<http://matrixedreality.maxpaynehq.com>

<http://kungfu.maxpaynehq.com>

■ Max Payne was brilliant — artistic flair, beautiful direction and visuals, addictive gameplay — it's only vice was its brevity. Seeking more levels? More guns? Just more Max? Okay, okay, so maybe these two specific MODs don't really add more than a level or two each. But hell, it's worth it all to pull off Neo's twirly spins in the lobby or dojo. Not to mention the absolutely brilliant wall flips, roundhouse-kicks, body juggling, a new Neo skin and another fifteen guns or so — among a bunch of other things. Yowch! If you own Max Payne, you owe yourself the smallestish



Thievery UT: Plenty of crates — as we instructed.



Day of Defeat: You too can experience the horror of war!

downloads — if you liked Max before, you'll love him now. For more drool worthy bits and pieces for Max, including many new level MODs, check out www.maxpaynehq.com.

physics, complex AI and an improved acoustics system make for a unique MOD. You can play as thieves after loot or as opposing guards, and more modes of play are currently in development.

Thievery UNREAL TOURNAMENT

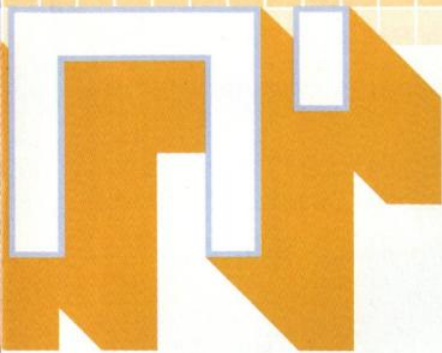
www.thieveryut.com

■ Absolutely stunning, this conversion of UT from frag-fest to a pseudo-medieval slink-around-and-poke-in-the-eye-fest may very well get UT that much closer to the legend of Thief. Creeping, leaning, mantling, climbing, interactive objects, new weapons and better

Shadowlords & Dreamcatcher Series NEVERWINTERNIGHTS

<http://adamandjamie.com/nwn/>

■ Not too happy with the main NWN campaign and bored with what you managed to sift out from the thousands of player-created MODs out there? Chances are you missed out on these gems. If you're into good storytelling, choices that



actually make a difference, turns and twists keeping you on your toes, or just feel like you're low on mojo juice, try grabbing all nine MODs of the campaign series. In fact, the Dreamcatcher series awards no XP for combat, for us role-playing lovers.

The contrasting genre-parody of the Penultima campaign is similarly impressive and perhaps the best known NWN module series out there. You can learn more about it at <http://pixelscapes.com/penultima>

Children of the Night

MORROWIND

<http://thelys.free.fr/barbosa.htm>

A head above the most popular MODs available for Morrowind is the two part epic Children of the Night: 'The Adventure Begins' and its sequel, 'Quest for Ariela'. What begins as an innocent gander with a lovely, romantic (though slightly gothic) young bard accompanying you to Balmora turns into dark and mysterious conspiracies that take you across Morrowind — and beyond. Far longer than it sounds, CotN clocks in at 40+ hours of gameplay, a few hundred new NPCs, 3 new land masses, new companions and over 30 side-quests. Heck, there's even a new romance option if you play a female PC.

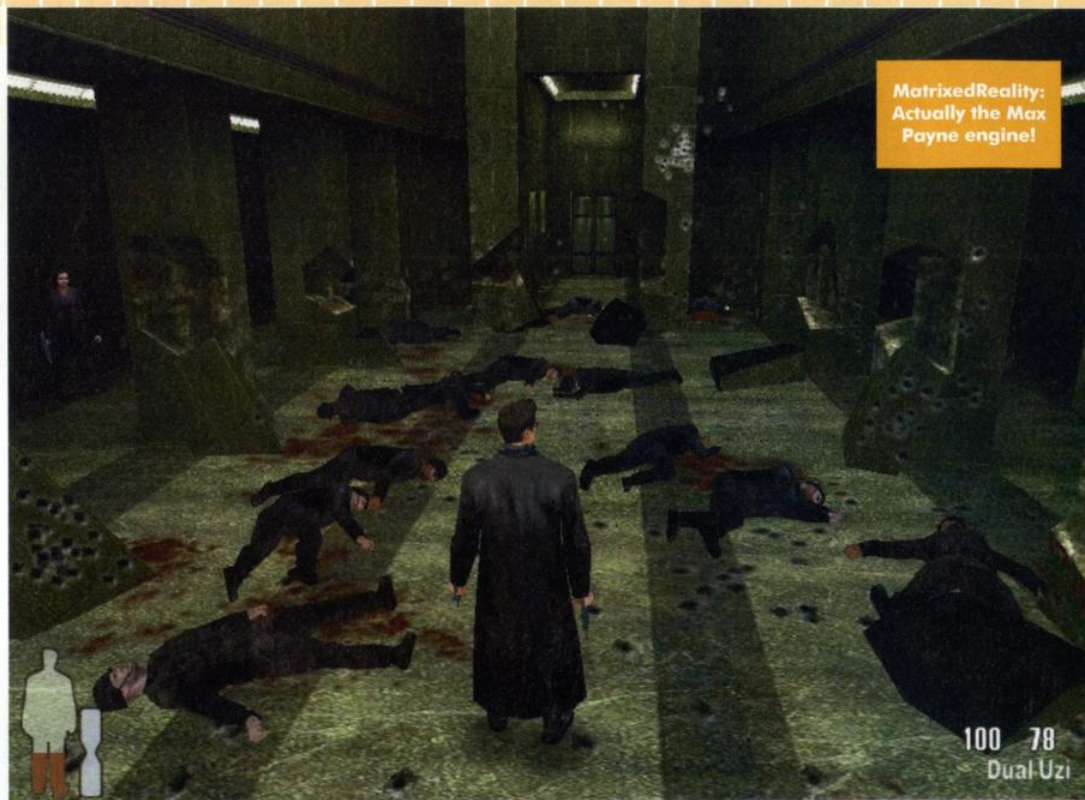
Deathball

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

www.deathball.net

Back to the gore. The 'completed MODs' scene for UT2003 is still a little dry with its somewhat recent release, but Deathball just might be catchy. Your favourite new first person shooter just turned... uh... first person sports game. That is, a blend of soccer, American football, lacrosse, handball and just a smidgen of war.

Armed with a downgraded melee weapon, a ball launcher and a set of rules that ain't like no fusbball you've played before, you're chucked out onto a football pitch. Basic rule of thumb: ball goes in net. Go download it while you wait for Atlantis: Fight for Earth (atlantis.beyondunreal.com) — you'll be fine.



A good reason to get out that copy of Max Payne...



Better than Enter the Matrix after all? Nah...



Desert Combat: Hoon around on the beach. Then kill people.



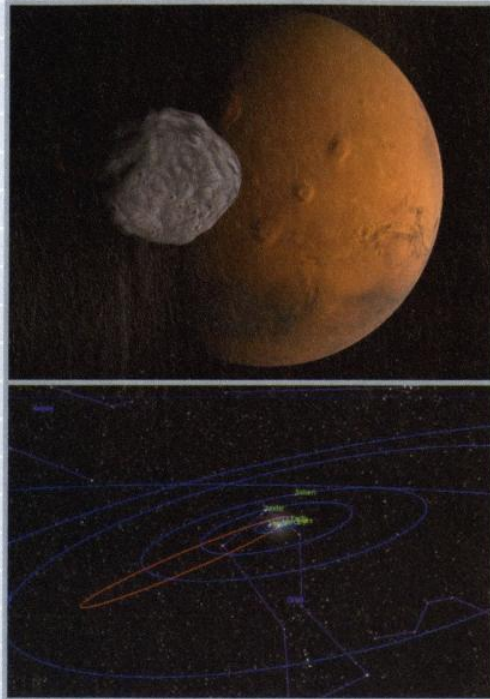
**JACKSON
GOTHE-
SNAPE**

»» Google is beautiful: such a humble page, quick-

loading, obvious. A white background – the wonder! Soundly formed, raised concrete, reassuringly depressible buttons. Even the inevitable clutter is efficient, undisruptive and coolly nostalgic. There appears not a claustrophobic scroll bar in sight. But, most comforting of all, the page is powerfully symmetrical – like one of those finger paintings you'd do in primary school, which you'd fold over to create butterflies, and trees, or clouds. The ones that psychiatrists use as a delivery van for patient's thoughts.

They're called inkblots. I know, because I asked Google. While the word initially escaped my keyboard's grasp, the culmination of psychiatrists, butterfly, symmetry and picture in a lively Google reSearch brought to me the knowledge of everyone on the internet. It wasn't the first time either – any question you may have, any query that pains, Google, like a great prophet, the classical oracle, can help. Carl Winslow was the fat dad in Family Matters...see? Simply, it is the greatest entity our world has ever known. Essentially omnipresent (okay, so only 3,083,324,652 pages) and near-omniscient, Google is the centre of the internet, the centre of the world, as it gleefully infers from the centre of its page.

Yet, like the creation of the Earth with its purpose to discover the ultimate question only after determining the answer (42...naturally), saddling Google's might can frustrate. Whereas the search engine was designed like an inverted funnel, offering many results from a small inquiry, attempts to ascertain a lonely shard of information requires the insertion of several often elusive answers to find the question. Yet, once broken in, Google can both inspire and inform. It sits, generous and content - the wise fisherman of the internet.



CELESTIA

www.shatters.net/celestia

»»Ever wanted to explore the universe in 3D? Now you can, thanks to the amazing Celestia program. All travel in Celestia is seamless; the exponential zoom feature lets you explore space across a huge range of scales, from galaxy clusters down to spacecraft only a few meters across. Celestia even runs on modest PCs, needing only 64MB of RAM and a Pentium as minimum – though you naturally need a 3D accelerator. There's also a Mac version!

Googlism for: president bush

president bush is headed to ohio again
 president bush is sworn in
 president bush is helping more people than ever before
 president bush is up to the job
 president bush is killing
 president bush is making a difference in the lives of hispanics
 president bush is 'killing' space exploration
 president bush is doing to help
 president bush is talking
 president bush is clueless about
 president bush is escorted from the pentagon by secretary
 president bush is deepening us ties
 president bush is renegeing on promises
 president bush is moving to stem california's power crisis
 president bush is ready to

GOOGLISM

www.googlism.com

»»Now that the Google search engine has become the most popular internet tool on the planet, we knew it wouldn't take long for a few sites to capitalise on its popularity. Googlism is a funny site that will filter out Google results into short snappy sentences, so that they represent what Google "thinks" of those persons, topics or objects. Try doing a search on President Bush, for instance, and you'll find out that "President Bush is smarter than Al Gore" and "President Bush is attacked by a pretzel". Go on, just check it out and you'll see what we're on about.

GENERAL ZOD.net
 Truth. Justice. Zod.

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Zod on "Insurance"
 General Zod shows that you will no longer have a need for standard insurance coverage.

Zod on "Christmas"
 General Zod has decided to allow you to celebrate this holiday... with some changes.

Buy a ZOD Tour Shirt

"DIE MORTAL OPPONENT! DIE AS YOU DESERVE TO!"

GENERAL ZOD

www.generalzod.net

»»Kneel before Zod. Go on, do as he tells you! Anyone who's seen Superman II will remember Zod as the lead villain in black leather – the guy who tried to take over the planet with his two cronies, Non and Ursa. Well, Zod is back, and it's time you showed him the respect he rightfully deserves. Get his thoughts on life, let him help you with your personal problems, and see how he's settling in here on planet Earth... sorry, Houston. Now, kneel!

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES

FOX
 HOW TO PLAY START

TIME: 45 SCORE: 100

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

www.konami.com/tmnt

»»Konami has launched a webpage to promote their upcoming Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles games. The reason to check it out, is a funky little flash game they've included on the page. Go shuriken crazy in the time limit and see how many bad guys you can whack. Pretty crap, really, but it's nice to see that the Turtles are coming back.

Links

tokyopia

updates impressions

Latest Updates

Tomonobu Itagaki talks DOAX, DOA4, underage girls, and nuclear missiles
Posted Monday, April 24, 2006 by Justin

Originally published in the Winter edition of 2D's Xbox Nation Magazine, you can now read the full, unabridged and unexpurgated interview conducted with Team Ninja head Tomonobu Itagaki here. Caution: some maddest entries.

TOKYOPIA

www.tokyopia.com

»Tokyopia was born from the desire to put a real community online. The founders are a close-knit circle of friends living and working in the Japanese media and video game industry. We are journalists, artists, designers, editors, composers... and everything in-between." An interesting games site with a twist, Tokyopia has regular articles on the state of the Japanese gaming industry, as well as the odd bit of news and interviews. They promise that there will never be any advertising on the site (!!), and that Tokyopia will be an organic proliferation of ideas and opinions on gaming. If you're looking for something different, this is worth checking out.



C-64

www.c64.com

»Who hasn't loved the Commodore 64 at some point in their lives? Okay, maybe quite a few of you. Well, maybe you missed out. The C-64 days in the 1980's were some of the most golden of all gaming times. Well, thanks to C64.com you can go back in time and re-visit a whole selection of classic C-64 games. This site has got it all – a search database, forums, and a bunch of C-64 emulators to satisfy your curiosity. Re-ignite that C-64 lurve!



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REVIEW

42 >>HYPER

>>PS2 XBOX GCN

GAME OF THE MONTH

Soul Calibur II

Namco give us proof that the soul still burns.

48



60



62



73



REVIEW INDEX

PS2

- 44 Soul Calibur II
- 48 Enter The Matrix
- 52 Midnight Club II
- 64 SOCOM: Navy SEALs
- 68 X2: Wolverine's Revenge

XBOX

- 56 Tao Feng
- 58 Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis
- 69 State of Emergency
- 70 Burnout 2: Point of Impact

GAMECUBE

- 60 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
- 69 Evolution Worlds
- 70 Skies of Arcadia Legends

PC

- 62 Rise of Nations
- 66 Shadowbane
- 68 Crime Scene Investigation
- 68 Vietcong
- 69 Will Rock
- 70 Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

GAME BOY ADVANCE

- 72 Splinter Cell
- 72 Lost Vikings
- 73 Contra Advance
- 73 Virtua Tennis

REVIEWS

GAME THEORY

DANIEL STAINES



Get ready to break out the Clearasil and angst ridden goth rock, ladies and gentlemen, because the growth hormones have finally kicked in, and gaming – our beloved little tyke of an industry – has gone and hit puberty. What was once a bumbling, innocent little child amongst the grown-ups of entertainment media is now a loud, brash and rebellious youth full of arrogance and itching to push the boundaries of common sense and good taste.

Embarrassing experiments in adolescent creativity are everywhere. Over the past year or so, we've seen games so absurd and poorly conceived that they could only have been produced by an industry struggling to come to terms with its own identity. BMX XXX, State of Emergency and DOA:XBV are perfect examples of that attention craving, misdirected rebelliousness that one instantly associates with pimply fifteen year-olds and their "edgy" System of a Down t-shirts. The industry, having endured ten years of finger wagging moralising from the powers that be, is out to challenge the rules. And like all good unruly youths, it's mostly making an arse of itself.

Take American McGee, for example. To my mind, American McGee's work is the gaming equivalent of scrawling pentagrams and Nine Inch Nails logos in the margins of your 10th grade maths book. The man himself reminds me of a moody goth girl I used to hang out with in high-school. She used to sit alone at lunch time and write really awful poetry and song lyrics about how dark and bleak everything is. None of it was really any worse than what Mr. McGee was churned out thus far...

But – hey – it's certainly not all bad. Gaming's growing up and products like Deus Ex, Silent Hill and the totally awesome looking Half-Life 2 are examples of that burgeoning maturity. Soon we'll be the patrons of a truly adult industry with its own identity and sense of purpose. We just have to deal with a few growing pains first, that's all.

Note the new email address. Until next month...

daniels@next.com.au

HYPER CREW TOP 5

Eliot Fish – Editor

1. Midnight Club II – PS2
"I feel the need for speed (and two cups of coffee and a jolt)..."
2. Metroid Prime – GCN
3. Betrayal at Krondor – PC
4. Shadowrun – SNES
5. Wario Ware Inc. – GBA SP

Cam Shea – Deputy Editor

1. Mario Kart: Double Dash!! – GCN
[plans on stealing it from the E3 showroom floor]
2. Wario Ware Inc. – GBA SP
3. Soul Calibur II – PS2
4. Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike – GCN
5. Doom III – PC

Malcolm Campbell – Art

1. Metroid Prime – GCN
"Complete immersion. Is it raining in here?"
2. Midnight Club II – PS2
3. Final Fantasy X-2 – PS2
4. Soul Calibur II – PS2
5. Last Blade 2 – DC

Jackson Gothe-Snape – Reviewer

1. War of the Monsters – PS2
"Brief and rough. Try it today!"
2. Zelda: The Wind Waker – GCN
3. Burnout 2 – Xbox
4. Midnight Club II – PS2
5. Championship Manager 4 – PC

THE HYPER SCORING SYSTEM The Overall Score – what's it all about?

0-49

These games simply suck. A total waste of money!

50-59

Bad game design and possibly not even worth renting.

60-69

Average, verging on bad. This game is flawed, but worth a rent.

70-79

Good, verging on average. Maybe try before you buy.

80-89

Very, very good. This is a quality game, but not perfect.

90+

Excellent and worthy of a Big Rubber Stamp. Buy it!

REVIEW

»HYPER 43



Knife to meet you.



She's ex-Riverdance you know.



Oooh the Hyper HQ stage!

» PS2 XBOX GCN CATEGORY: Fighting » PLAYERS: 1-2 » PUBLISHER: Namco » PRICE: \$99.95 » RATING: M15+ » AVAILABLE: TBA

Soul Calibur II

CAM SHEA thinks life should be soulful...

Soul Edge on PlayStation caused quite a stir when it was released in 1997, but it wasn't until Soul Calibur on Dreamcast that this series truly took the fighting game genre by the balls. And if Soul Calibur II is anything to go by, Namco have no intention of letting go.

OPTIONS UP THE WAZOO...

Soul Calibur II represents a much smaller leap forward for the series, but improves on the original in just about every area, so we're hardly complaining. The controls are the same as before, with four buttons corresponding to horizontal attack, vertical attack, kick and guard. Once again you can also side step and eight way run. The ingredients may be simple, but it's amazing just how rich the results can be.

Soul Calibur II has an extensive range of play modes, but most of

them are standard for a modern fighting game. In the Original menu there's Arcade, Versus Battle, Time Attack, Survival, Team Battle, Versus Team Battle and Practice. You know what they're all about, and of course, for the single player, these modes are only an appetiser. The real meat of the game lies in the Weapon Master (WM) mode. This isn't exactly a new play mode, as it takes inspiration from the Edge Master mode in Soul Edge and Quest mode from Soul Calibur. It's presented as a world map, and you move from location to location doing battle, often with specific parameters.

Unlike the Edge Master mode, however, you can change characters at will. This is something of a disappointment, as Soul Edge had a quest for each character, and much of the depth of the game came from taking each and every character

through it and earning all their weapons. Character selection also makes the "unique scenario" fights a whole lot easier. Let's say you have a fight where you can't guard. In Edge Master you'd have to work out the best way to do it with the character at hand. In Soul Calibur II all you have to do is switch out to a character who is uncompromising in attack. In short, Weapon Master mode doesn't have quite as much depth as we were hoping for.

It is, however, good fun playing with varying conditions. Some of the scenarios you'll come up against include getting blown about by the wind, sinking into quicksand, gradually having your health drained, getting 20 hits in 20 seconds, winning by ring out, juggle damage only, and our favourites — the ladder matches. In these you fight against several

opponents in a row with only one life (or sometimes half) and only minimal health recovery after each bout... and possibly limited time. Tasty. Each Chapter in the Weapon Master mode also tends to have a dungeon to explore fight by fight, and these are probably the weakest element of the mode as they quickly get repetitive and tedious.

It's in Weapon Master mode that almost all the game's unlockable content is found — and you'll need to play through it several times to unlock everything. This is where you unlock the five hidden characters — Sophitia, Seung Mina, Yoshimitsu, Charade and Cervantes, get extra costumes, unlock various modes and earn gold to purchase weapons with.

SEGWAY AHOY!

Speaking of which, each character has 12 unique weapons designed



HYPER OVERLORD

» In addition to gold, playing the WM mode also rewards you with experience points. As you gain more and more experience points your character levels up, revealing some truly hilarious titles, such as Platinum Overlord and our favourite, the ultimate level: Grand Edgemaster of the Basilisk. Pity you don't learn to speak Parseltongue when you reach this level, eh?

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Class

Lv.1 Newcomer

Exp

300 +300

Gold

600+600



The Frisbee team do their workout.



I told you the floor was slippery.



Kilik has a hard, red rod.



IT'S IN WEAPON MASTER MODE THAT ALMOST ALL THE GAME'S UNLOCKABLE CONTENT IS FOUND

specifically for them (including one "wacky" weapon with silly sound effects) to unlock and then purchase. Although some are just aesthetically different, the weapons can have subtle effects – you might do more damage, take less damage, have longer reach, gain health from attacks, lose health when you attack but inflict greater damage, or do block damage. You get the idea. While many of the weapons have pros and cons, a few have advantages without any real loss... so are a bit cheap to use.

There is just so much to unlock via the WM mode. There's an unlockable "Extra" play mode for every standard play mode in the game – although the only difference is that you can use WM weapons in these modes. There's a Character Profile mode where you

can choose the character, spin the camera around them, check out their stage, listen to each and every voice sample, check out their facial animations and read their profile. There's also a Demo Theater that houses the ending text for each character, and a Weapon Gallery that shows off the extensive selection of weapons each character can wield.

You can buy artwork in the shop to view in the Museum, there's Battle Theater where you can pit any two characters in an AI fight, and let's not forget our favourite – Exhibition Theater. Yes, it's back! Exhibition Theater lets you watch skill demonstrations for each character (once you've unlocked them) and is rather sweet. Not only does it highlight each character's particular style and use of weapon, but it's a testament not only to the

quality of animation but to the sheer grace of many of the fighters.

Of course, don't let the allure of all this unlockable content distract you from the real reason to buy Soul Calibur II – multiplayer. Simply put, the entire single player structure pales in comparison to the longevity you'll get out of playing this game with friends. Best of all, just like the original, there's something for everyone – newbies and Grand Edgemasters of the Basilisk alike.

A LINK TO THE PAST...

One of the most hyped elements in Soul Calibur II is the appearance of exclusive characters on each



!!! Soul Calibur on Dreamcast is still better than most current fighters.

platform – Link on GameCube, Heihachi on PS2 and Spawn on Xbox. We've played all three, and unfortunately will have to be diplomatic in our conclusion – they all have pros and cons. Let's start with Link. He actually looks relatively at home with the other characters and it's



The missing link (that's Astaroth...)

Heihachi is going to kick his puffy-sleeved arse.

Nightmare's living nightmare.

SYSTEM COMPARISONS

>>Unlike the visual upgrade that Soul Calibur received for its Dreamcast debut, Soul Calibur II isn't that far off the arcade version. But that's hardly a bad thing. The arcade game was based on Namco's System 246 hardware, which is in turn based on souped up PS2 hardware. It's interesting then, that the PS2 version is the weakest link visually. It just goes to show that Namco didn't take the easy way out when porting the game to other hardware configurations – they worked hard to optimise it for each platform. Three cheers for Namco! Whilst the PS2 is marginally behind the other systems on visuals, it also loses out on load times. We're used to near instantaneous load times in Namco's fighting games, but on PS2 the pause is highly noticeable and quite annoying – especially if you're playing a series of quick bouts in WM or Team Battle mode. Even more galling is the couple of seconds it takes the PS2 version of the game to load up the character art (replacing the silhouette) on the character select screen. The other systems are much faster. The PS2 is also the only system to suffer from slowdown. It's only very occasional, but it's there. On the audio side, Xbox is clearly the winner. The Xbox version supports Dolby Digital 5.1, and if you've got a home theater setup you'll be blown away. Sound effects in the game are great, with all the clangs, swooshes and shrieks of battle adding beautifully to the spectacle. The music is once again reasonable, but nothing to get too excited about. Oh, and the "Welcome to the stage of history" guy is present and accounted for. It wouldn't be the Soul series without him!

undeniably cool to see him all grown up and kicking some serious ass. He has a good range of moves, including some classics, such as the spin attack and projectiles

like arrows, bombs and his trusty boomerang. You can even purchase classic Zelda weapons such as the Gilded Sword from Majora's Mask. Mmm... sweet. We're not too sure about his projectile attacks, however. While it is cool to launch an opponent into the air and combo the hit with a projectile, it just doesn't quite fit.

Heihachi is also a strange choice. One would think that a prerequisite for a character in a weapons-based fighting game would be... weapons. Oh well, Heihachi fits reasonably well anyway, and Tekken fans will get off on having

him in the game. He's quite a powerful character too, a little faster than he is in Tekken and with some effective distance covering moves that help make up for his lack of range. Oh, and thank god he doesn't have his nappy outfit on in this game.

Spawn looked like the worst choice of the three on the surface, but has turned out to be much better than we expected. He fights with a short axe, moves faster than one would assume, and has some devastating moves. Nicely done Namco.

In all, the three exclusive characters are cool, but we definitely prefer some of the other new characters. New to the Soul Calibur II roster are Cassandra, Yunsung, Raphael, Talim and Necrid. Cassandra is Sophitia's younger sister and fights with a short sword and





FIGHTING MECHANICS

As a whole, the fighting system is an excellent refinement from Soul Calibur. Moves are wonderfully fluid, and unlike many other fighting games, SC II doesn't force you to rely on preconceived combos, but allows you to create as you go, fueling wonderfully intense, and at times highly strategic bouts. The introduction of new characters like Talim are also welcomed, as they offer great rewards for players willing to learn the art of defense and counter attack. Parries are now simpler to pull off too, with only low and high guard impacts this time around. That said, you'll need good reflexes to get the timing right. The addition of walls in some of the arenas is an excellent touch too. They're nowhere near as cheap as the walls in Tekken 4, instead bringing more strategy to battles and allowing for some cool juggle and wall stun combos.



Maxi's got the hots for Ivy...



Don't worry about Maxi - he's armless.



Catfight!



IT'S A TESTAMENT NOT ONLY TO THE **QUALITY OF ANIMATION** BUT TO THE **SHEER GRACE** OF MANY OF THE FIGHTERS

small shield. Yunsung is a student from the same school as Hwang, but like Cassandra is definitely no clone of his role model. Raphael is a jaunty fellow who fights fencing style with a lightning fast rapier. Talim is a cute Filipino teenager with twin bladed night-sticks. She moves with great speed and relies on evasions, guards and counters to do maximum damage. Necrid is the Todd McFarlane creation, and utilises a wide variety of moves from other characters.

We love the way he materialises various weapons into his hands. Of course, backing up the cast of newbies are some truly classic characters — and they've been tweaked extensively too! The rest of the roster is Mitsurugi, Taki, Kilik, Xianghua, Maxi, Ivy, Nightmare (formerly known as Siegfried), Astaroth, Voldo, Sophitia, Seung Mina, Yoshimitsu, Charade (pretty much the same as Edgemaster) and Cervantes.

suppleness. The wonderfully vivid weapon trails that are the hallmark of the series look as good as ever, and Namco have also ensured that there are plenty of smaller details for the discerning eye to enjoy.

The arenas have taken a real leap forward too. Not only is there more variety to their size and style (some are completely enclosed, some have a couple of walls), but there's a lot more going on too. Whether the bout is set in a brilliant Thai palace, atop a windmill, in a stately library, or inside a shrine with a yin/yang symbol on the floor and a courtyard outside, each stage is brought to life with vivid colours and atmosphere.

What more do we need to say? Irrespective of which system you own, Soul Calibur II deserves to be played. A worthy sequel and wonderfully entertaining fighting game. <<<

!!! Default difficulty is set to Normal, which is stupidly easy. Fortunately, there's Hard, Very Hard, Ultra Hard and Extremely Hard to contend with above it.

LOOKING FANTASTIC...

No matter which system you play it on Soul Calibur II looks fantastic. Overall, Xbox

probably has the visual edge, followed (very) closely by the GameCube, with PS2 pulling up the rear. Each character is exquisitely modelled thanks to a high poly count and some quality texturing, and moves with both authority and



REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Super smooth fighting, gorgeous graphics, Taki's nipples.

MINUS: Weapon Master mode could have been more compelling.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

94 90 95

OVERALL

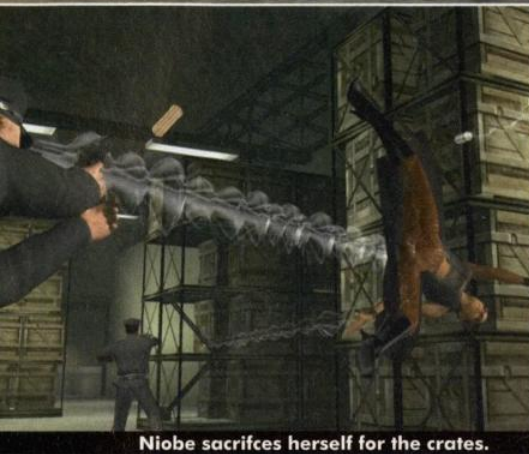
94

Brilliant. Simply brilliant.



REVIEW

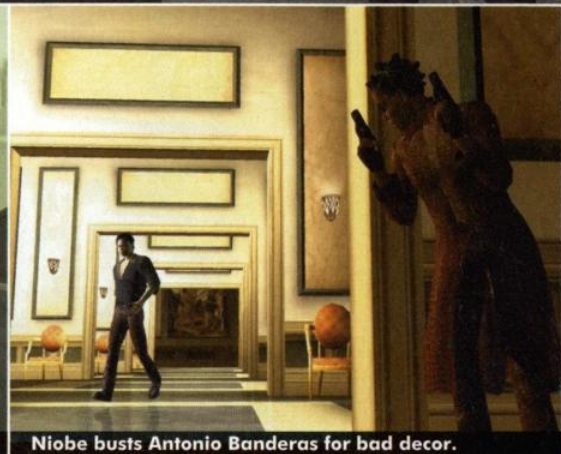
>>> HYPER 47



Niobe sacrifices herself for the crates.



New on Australia's Worst Drivers...!



Niobe busts Antonio Banderas for bad decor.

»»PS2 XBOX GCN PC CATEGORY: Action »» PLAYERS: 1-2 »» PUBLISHER: Atari »» PRICE: \$99.95 »» RATING: M15+ »» AVAILABLE: Now

Enter the Matrix

MARCH STEPNIK takes half a blue pill and half red...

As it turns out, it's a genuine invitation. For when you first jack into the grid in *Enter the Matrix*, you'll be struck with just how faithful the whole experience feels to the universe as presented in the film. Of course, that'll primarily be a result of the slickly produced FMVs that introduce the two playable characters — Niobe and Ghost — at the beginning of the game, but it doesn't stop at that. From the dialogue delivered by the characters to the way they move and the things they can do, *Enter the Matrix* is a game that will constantly reward all those *Matrix* aficionados out there that have been waiting patiently ever since the release of the first film in 1999 to immerse themselves in their favourite virtual reality.

ENTER...

This is a tight game, ladies and gentlemen, but heads up: if the films

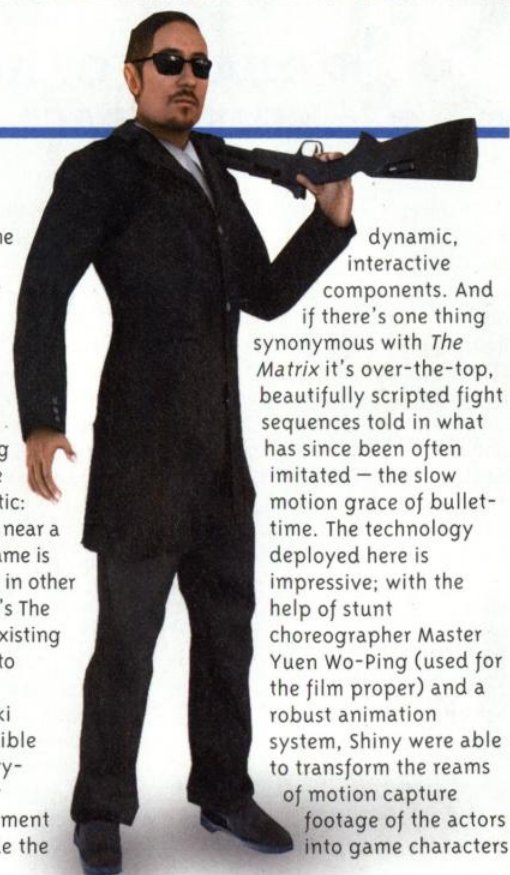
do nothing for you, it's more than likely that the game won't either. And that's because rather than being the films' next of kin, *Enter the Matrix* comes close to being a film in its own right. This is most obviously evidenced in the afore-mentioned FMVs and the game-engine cinematics featured liberally throughout: exclusive sequences written and directed by the creators of *The Matrix* themselves. Sure, there's plenty of action to be had during proceedings, but even the player-controlled action has a strong cinematic effect to it.

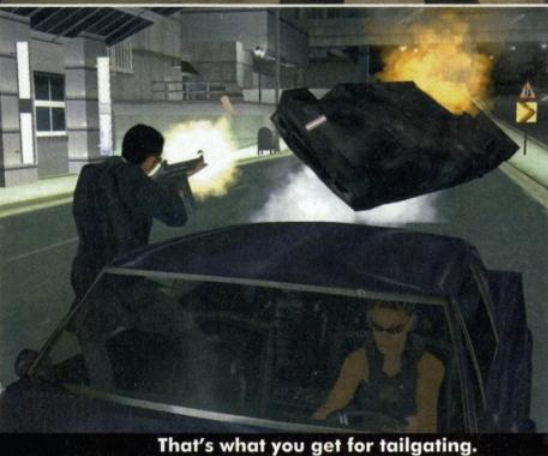
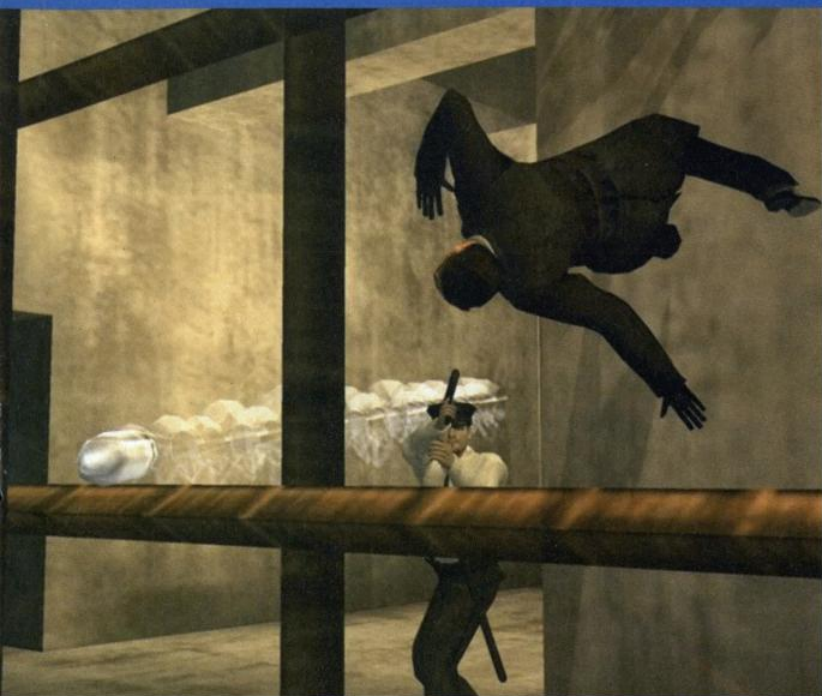
And how's this for authenticity in the telling of this tale - while filming *Matrix Reloaded* and *Revolutions*, the Wachowski brothers would shoot the one hour plus of dedicated footage for the game in between takes. That means the same actors, same writers, same directors, same crew and the

same sets as used for the movies, were used for the FMV. The end result is game footage that is indistinguishable in quality from what is seen in *Reloaded* and (to be seen) in *Revolutions* — thumping soundtrack and all. The implications are fantastic: the anticipation as you near a FMV sequence in the game is palpable, more so than in other games in the genre (EA's *The Two Towers* — with its existing film footage — springs to mind). Beautiful stuff!

While the Wachowski brothers were responsible for producing the story-based content of their game, Shiny Entertainment was enlisted to provide the

dynamic, interactive components. And if there's one thing synonymous with *The Matrix* it's over-the-top, beautifully scripted fight sequences told in what has since been often imitated — the slow motion grace of bullet-time. The technology deployed here is impressive; with the help of stunt choreographer Master Yuen Wo-Ping (used for the film proper) and a robust animation system, Shiny were able to transform the reams of motion capture footage of the actors into game characters





That's what you get for tailgating.

Niobe gets revenge on her hairdresser.

I'll help you dislodge that chicken bone!



THE END RESULT IS GAME FOOTAGE THAT IS **INDISTINGUISHABLE IN QUALITY** FROM WHAT IS SEEN IN **MATRIX RELOADED**

that give a visually complex yet solid martial arts performance.

LAST FLIGHT OF THE OSIRIS

Enter the Matrix tells the story of two of the secondary characters around Morpheus, Trinity and Neo — the pilot Niobe and the weapons master Ghost — and their role in the struggle against the oppressive Matrix itself. Events in EtM begin just after (and in response to) the distress call of the Osiris — the story told in the short animated feature *The Last Flight of the Osiris* — and intertwine with the events portrayed in the film, *Matrix Reloaded*. While most of the game centres around Niobe and Ghost's exploits, their paths do intersect with the main characters', so there are plenty of scenes in the game that tackle some of the more

important plots of the film.

As previously mentioned, the cutscenes are fantastic and an excellent reward for progressing through the game. However, there is a catch — they're not self-standing, and assume a good knowledge of the concepts and characters of the films proper. So if you've not seen either of the two released films, not a heck of a lot of the game will make sense. That's true even of those who've only seen the first *Matrix* movie — the ideal way to play EtM is after having watched both *The Matrix* and *Matrix Reloaded* in full.

As for the gameplay itself, EtM is structured in a straightforward enough way. You play through a mission, watch a cutscene, then hit the next mission. At the beginning of the game you choose to play as

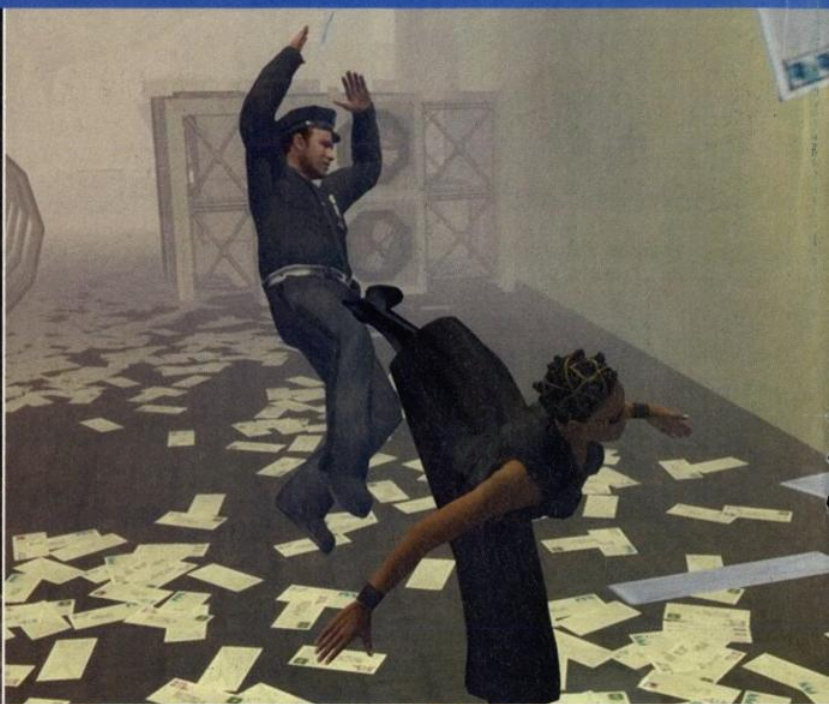
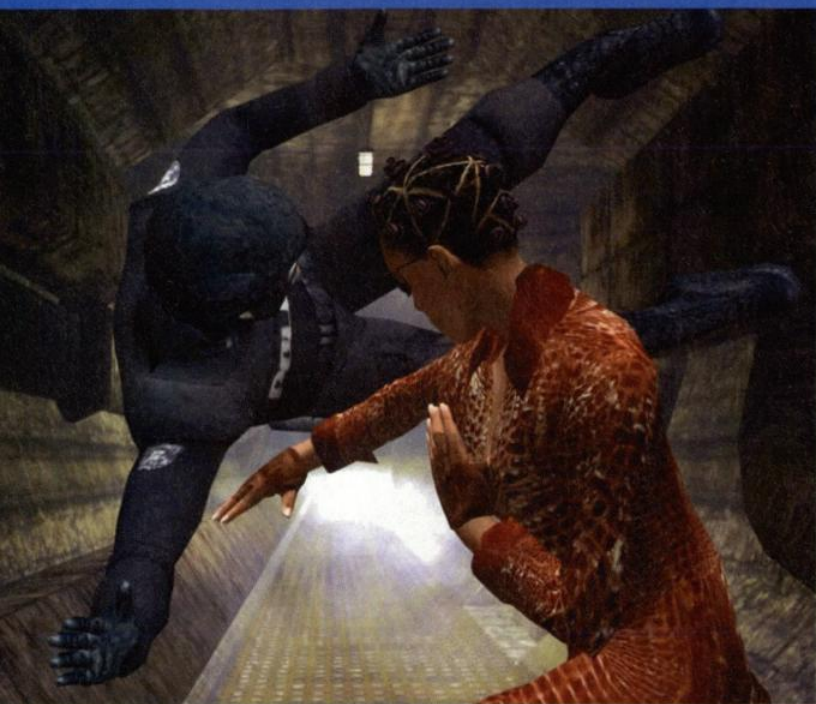
either Ghost or Niobe, with your choice dictating which parts of the same levels you will play through in the game. The other consequence of character selection is found whenever your character reaches a driving level, which are scattered throughout the game for an alternative to the third-person action scenes. Every time you enter a vehicle, Niobe will act as pilot while Ghost will serve as marksman.

The first mission of the game sees you in the matrix, racing against the clock to infiltrate a post office (and sorting plant) and retrieve a package meant for the Zionist freedom fighters. Of course, the place is crawling with security and they won't let you waltz in and out at your leisure. Being skilled freedom fighters, Niobe and Ghost have a vast array of hand-to-hand combat moves in their repertoire



which are accessed by three buttons on your control pad — the kick, punch, and defend button. Used in conjunction with the analogue stick, players can perform such feats as choke-holds, throws, counter-throws, foot-sweeps, and disarming moves. These moves are fine for besting a small number of opponents at a time, but when you find yourself up against more

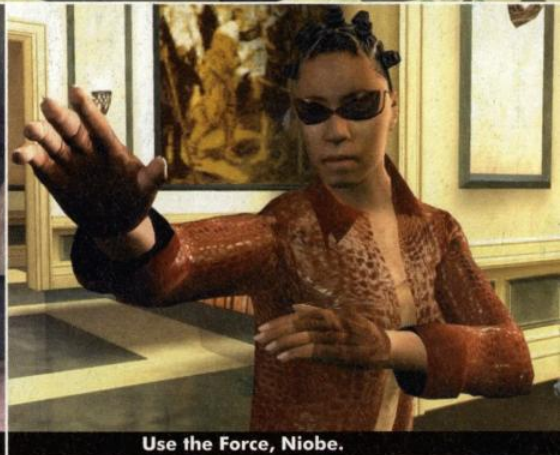
!!! Haven't seen the Animatrix? Check out: www.theanimatrix.com



It's Hammer Time! Er bullet time, I mean.



Kung Fu resolves everything. Everything.



Use the Force, Niobe.

skilled, better equipped or simply a larger number of opponents, things become very challenging.

THE WHITE RABBIT

Which is where Focus — the game's star attraction — comes into play. Hitting the Focus button (which drains your current available store of Focus as you use it) speeds you up — but in gameplay terms, everything slows down, giving you time to react to the happenings on screen. Focus makes you harder to hit, and opens up a whole new selection of special moves for use, taken straight from the first film. Your abilities are not all offensive either — focus introduces a range of evasive manoeuvres. Running on walls anyone?

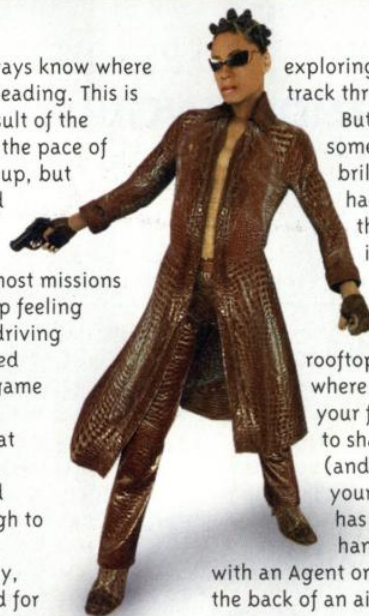
While weapons are a necessity in the game (focusing whilst arms increases your accuracy to a deadly proficiency), EtM encourages hand-to-hand combat all the way; every enemy you fell increases your Focus stores, above what you naturally regenerate.

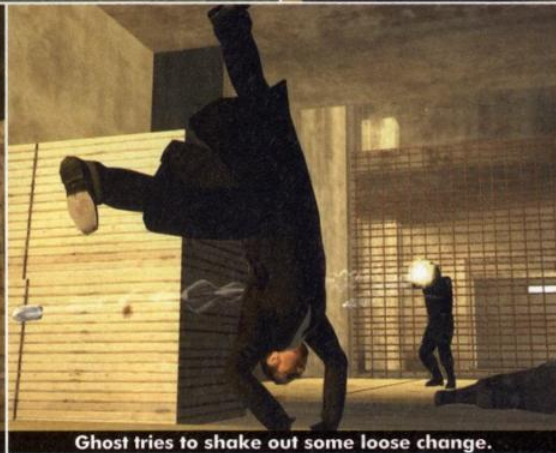
On many levels, EtM is so exquisitely polished. But it's not all perfect. Level design is a substantial let down. There's absolutely no way you can get stuck in this game: even with the mission compass turned off at a higher difficulty setting, the linear structure of the environments (especially in later levels) and the lack of interactivity within them (you'll lose count as to how many locked doors you come across)

means you'll always know where you need to be heading. This is obviously the result of the decision to keep the pace of the game on the up, but surely they could have come up with a happy medium? Also, most missions ultimately end up feeling samey, and the driving missions peppered throughout the game for variety are underwhelming at best. Thankfully, they're short and infrequent enough to cause any major annoyance. Lastly, there's no reward for

exploring off the beaten track through the game.

But then, there are some absolutely brilliant moments to be had in EtM. Remember the lobby fight scene in *The Matrix*? You'll recreate that more than once in the game. There's a rooftop escape scene, where you'll have to use your focus and prowess to shake the pursuing (and lethal) Agent off your tail. A boss fight has you engaging in hand-to-hand combat with an Agent on a lowered ramp at the back of an airborne transport





Late night in the foot fetish club.

Ghost tries to shake out some loose change.

I didn't know Chopper was in the Matrix!



ENTER THE MATRIX IS, AT ITS ESSENCE, A VERY SIMPLE AND DECIDEDLY LINEAR ACTION GAME

plane, with success only coming when you knock his sorry arse out of it. Once you become proficient with the combat system, there's the exhilaration that comes with storming into a room at normal speed, hitting the Focus button just to fire your weapon, and watching as a bullet or two ripple through air and into your target — where you release the Focus and watch as your opponent drops in real time. Doing this in quick succession against

numerous opponents is just magic. The combat system rocks.

RED VS BLUE

And not least of all is hacking. Once you've created a save game file, you choose the hacking option from the main menu and embark on a DOS-style hunt for easter eggs. It's surprisingly fun, in a geeky sort of way, and most rewarding. Among the extras you'd expect (work it out for yourselves!), the real prize of working through it all is the ability to unlock a two player dojo arena to fight in!

Thematically, the film *The Matrix* was all about breaking through illusion and getting to the all-elusive and absolute "truth" of the matter. So in the spirit of the movie, let's put the blue pill aside and swallow that lil' red suckah...

And the truth of the matter is that for all the technical and artistic wizardry displayed, Enter the Matrix is, at its essence, a very simple and decidedly linear action game, based on a blockbuster movie franchise and designed for a mainstream audience. But as Cypher, the reluctant freedom fighter who turned against Morpheus in the original film, quite dramatically lamented: illusion can be far more attractive than reality. So lets go for the blue tab instead...

And the illusion? \$#@*#! Brilliant, is what. You'll ultimately forgive the limited nature of EtM's gameplay for the relentless experience it delivers twice through: once as Ghost and once as Niobe. This is pure *Matrix*, ladies and gentlemen, in playable form. An interactive movie, if you will. Armed with that knowledge, your choice should be simple. <<

!!! Don't forget, Matrix Revolutions will be out in November!



REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Hell fun combat system, beautiful presentation.

MINUS: Very linear structure, shite driving bits.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 90 79

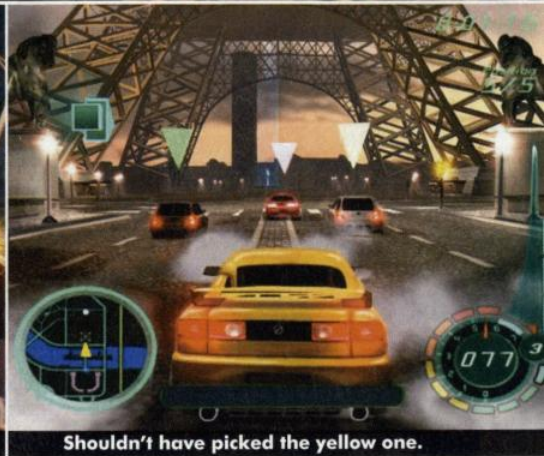
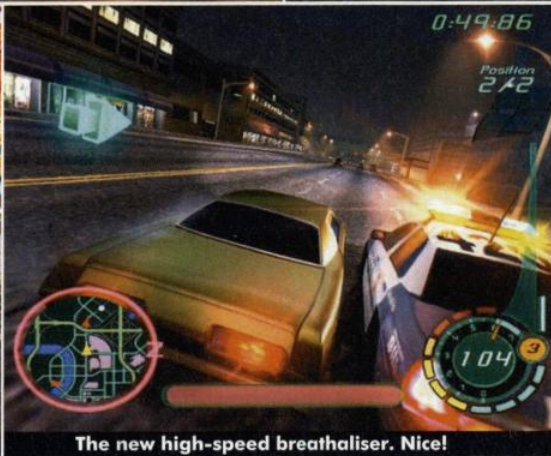
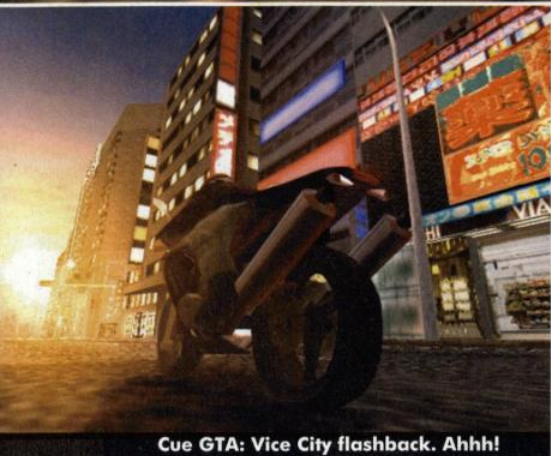
OVERALL

80

Step right up folks, you really can enter the matrix.

REVIEW

» HYPER 51



Cue GTA: Vice City flashback. Ahhh!

The new high-speed breathaliser. Nice!

Shouldn't have picked the yellow one.

PS2 XBOX PC CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Rockstar >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now

Midnight Club II

ELIOT FISH has never seen a game go so fast.

What a difference a hit game makes. Since the cash injection that was Grand Theft Auto III and Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Rockstar Games has been reborn. Some of you may remember the awfully mediocre Midnight Club, and as a result may be very wary of this sequel. However, Rockstar has learned a lot over the last few years, and Midnight Club II is proof that they've picked up a few new tricks.

A PASSING TRUCK

The street racing concept has been around over the years in many forms — Midtown Madness, San Francisco Rush, Need For Speed, Tokyo Highway Challenge — all pretty good games, but none of them really encapsulating what gamers expect from the concept of racing through innocent traffic at breakneck speeds. Either they were

too linear, didn't have decent traffic or AI, or simply suffered from poor course design. The original Midnight Club was one of these offenders — just another wannabe street racing game that failed to deliver. Burnout and Burnout 2 are the only two games that have successfully provided seriously hair-raising speed in recent memory. Well, all that has now changed with this sequel. Midnight Club II is all about sensational speed, tension, thrills and spectacular carnage. This is the best racing game in... well, yonks.

Beginning in the freeway riddled maze that is Los Angeles, the career mode is a steady learning curve for all the cool car tricks that can be taken advantage of during the game. You'll unlock everything from a basic Nitro boost, to a nifty handbrake kick-start and weight-shifting techniques to get your car up onto two wheels. As you

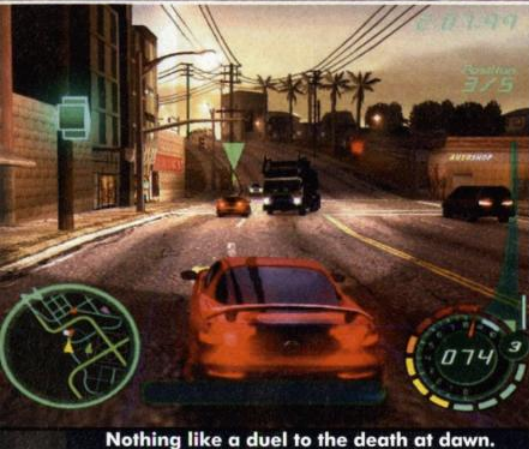
meet different racers and agree to take on their challenges, you'll not only win their cars, but slowly learn all the nooks and crannies of each city — much like you had to with GTA. Knowing where you are in the city becomes a necessity with the longer, more non-linear races.

The maps have been designed extremely well, and you can see the GTA influences quite clearly. Every which way you look there are hidden jumps, nifty shortcuts and crazy architecture that is begging to be experimented with. You'll pass objects and think, "Could I do a jump off that?"

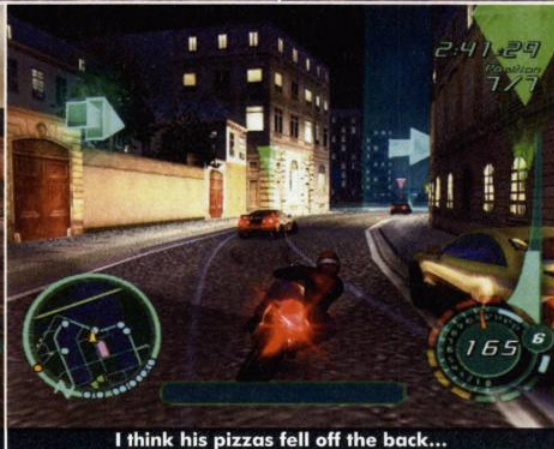
Races are also very well plotted through this architecture for the maximum in challenge, thrills and spills. You'll be replaying many of your races over and over until you determine the perfect route to victory, but that's half the fun —

every time you try, you get that much closer. It says something for the game's gameplay balance that the difficulty level can be so high, and yet the addictive nature of the game stays so strong. You'll be weaving your way through traffic, negotiating a series of horrendous corners, and then nitro-boosting your way down a straight — praying that a passing truck doesn't stray into your path. It's as intense as a racing game can probably get.

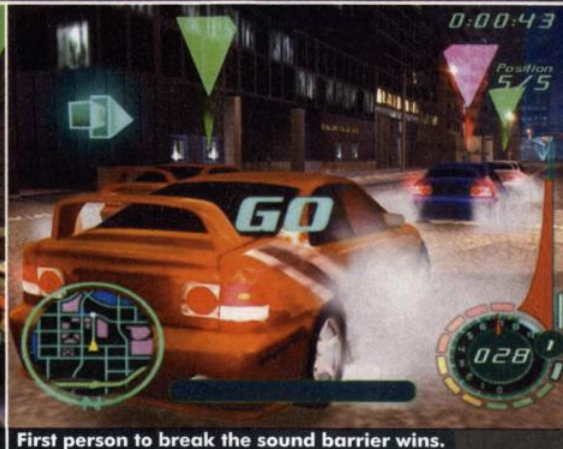




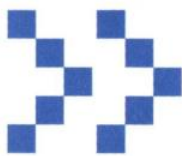
Nothing like a duel to the death at dawn.



I think his pizzas fell off the back...



First person to break the sound barrier wins.



EVERY WHICH WAY YOU LOOK THERE ARE HIDDEN JUMPS, NIFTY SHORTCUTS AND CRAZY ARCHITECTURE

TENTH OF A SECOND

The car and bike handling doesn't attempt any realism, but the tight arcade responsiveness of the controls suits the game perfectly. Once you unlock a few driving techniques, and get a better car (or bike), you'll really start to experience some extreme speed and develop your precision driving. The controls have been tweaked to perfection, and learning when to apply the

!!! If you care to use one, the game supports the Logitech driving force wheel.



handbrake becomes an art form. The AI opponents and cop cars can also be quite aggressive, and you'll find yourself winning races by only a tenth of a second in some cases. The thrill of pipping the opponent AI is something to be cherished.

The game also comes with a race editor, so you can concoct your own relentless checkpoint race in the city of your choice — including the weather type, time of day, and the amount of traffic. It's a fun diversion that definitely helps to extend the game's longevity. Create it, save it, and then challenge your friends on it. Multiplayer out of the box only supports a two-player split-screen mode, but the game also comes with online support for future PS2 broadband play for up to eight players.

Midnight Club II is an impressive

feat for the PlayStation 2. The environments sport impressive detail, there's a huge amount of traffic and there are always at least six opponents on your tail. Considering the speeds that are achievable, you really have to hand it to Rockstar San Diego for what must be some very skilled coding to get this all pumping out of the PS2 without a hint of slowdown.

Whilst we played Midnight Club II to death here at Hyper HQ, we found ourselves coming up with many cool gameplay variations that Rockstar really could have included had they put a bit of thought into offering more variety from the pure checkpoint racing. How about some daring one-on-one challenges, chase and smash missions, or pedestrian hunts? Oh well, maybe that'll be in Midnight Club III. <<<

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Intense high speeds, huge jumps, great course layouts.

MINUS: No variation from the checkpoint racing theme.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

86 87 92

OVERALL

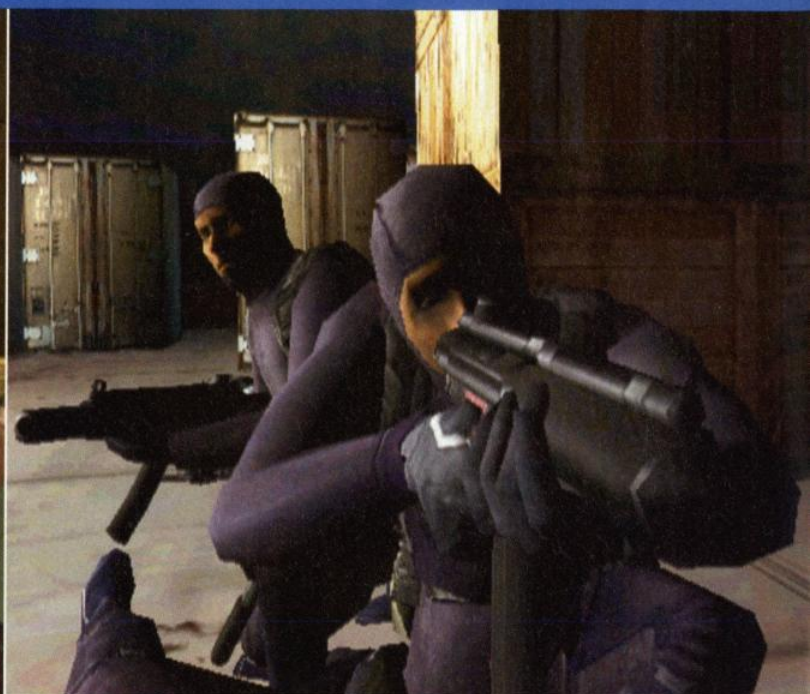
90

All racing games should be as intense as this.

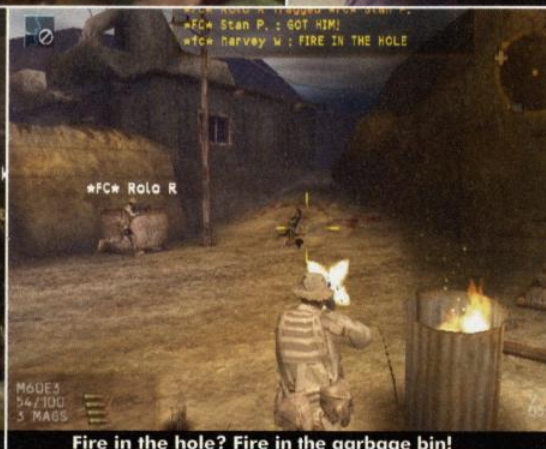


REVIEW

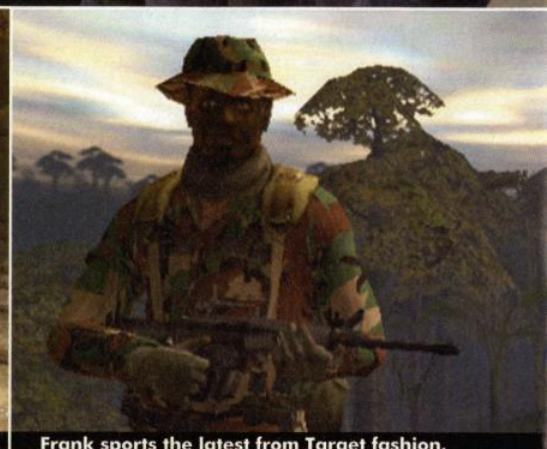
>>> HYPER 53



Hey guys, we're online... somehow!



Fire in the hole? Fire in the garbage bin!



Frank sports the latest from Target fashion.

PS2 CATEGORY: Tactical Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-16 >> PUBLISHER: Sony >> PRICE: \$139.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

SOCOM: US Navy SEALs

BRETT ROBINSON is talking to his PS2 again...

Let's get one thing straight — SOCOM: US Navy SEALs was designed, from the very beginning, to be played over Sony's multiplayer network. But since Sony has yet to grace our fair shores with a homegrown version of this network, that leaves us in a bit of a predicament and again raises questions about the wisdom of launching multiplayer titles before they can be...er, multiplayed. So why are we reviewing a game that can't be played the way it was meant to? Because, as we were shocked to discover, SOCOM's single player mode is uncommonly robust, masterfully combining elements from games like Splinter Cell, Ghost Recon, Syphon Filter and Metal Gear Solid 2. It's not just a bunch of cobbled together tutorials or a handful of 'instant action' type missions; on the contrary, SOCOM's

single player component is a full-blown 12-mission campaign.

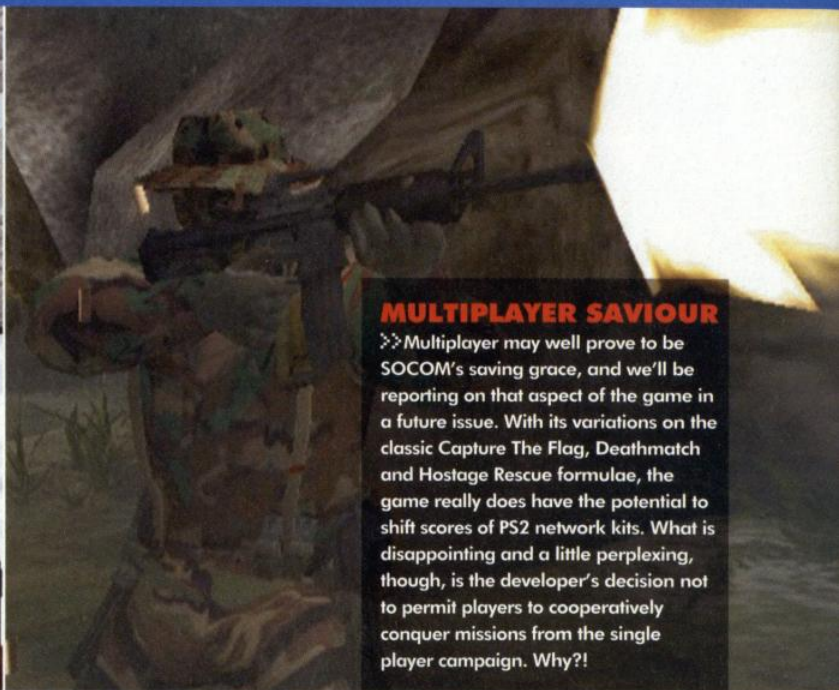
HOOOYAH!!!

As 'Kahuna', the leader of a four man SEAL team, it's your job to protect the interests of the US government and (in theory at least) the rest of the world. The PS2-controlled 'Boomer' and yourself comprise Able Element, while Bravo Element consists of operatives 'Spectre' and 'Jester'. In the course of your missions, you'll have direct control over Boomer and Bravo Element, and while in the first couple of missions it'll be possible to get by using 'lone wolf' tactics, learning how best to deploy your teammates will be critical to success later on.

SOCOM ships with a headset that'll allow you to issue voice orders to your squad, and it's a very funky piece of kit. Because the

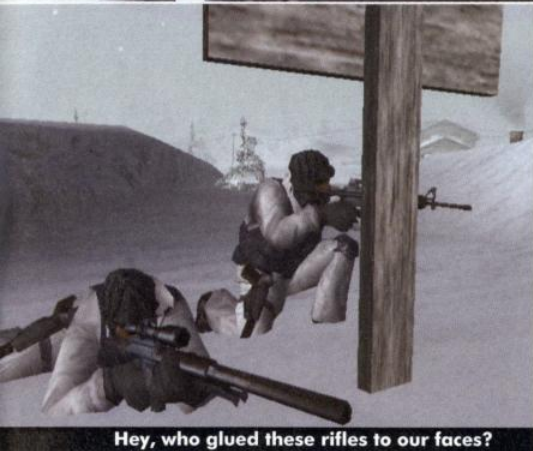
main aim will be for players to communicate with each other over the PS2 network, we can't report on how well it works in an online capacity yet. In the single-player game, however, SOCOM's voice recognition really makes you feel as if you're "in the game", with your teammates reporting back to you in the earpiece whilst you bark orders. By depressing the controller's circle button, you can order Boomer and Bravo Element around using simple cues like "Bravo: weapons free" and "Able: breach and clear". If looking like a telemarketer yelling at a TV isn't your bag, however, you'll be able to use the circle button to select commands from a menu tree. Why you'd want to do that is beyond us, though, as we quite like the idea of verbally signing the death warrants of countless adversaries.

Although SOCOM's hybrid firstperson/thirdperson shooter controls will take a little getting used to, the game boasts one of the most intuitive interfaces around. From a graphical standpoint the game may not win any awards, but the multitude of small details — like footprints left in snow and the cool hand signals flashed by your fellow operatives — really flesh out the SOCOM world. It's obvious that a lot of work went into the game's audio: the weapon effects are completely authentic and the denizens of the various mission zones all converse in their native languages. Less impressive, however, are the voices of your teammates, whose overly exuberant shouts of "HOOPYAH!" over the radio network are completely inappropriate and bloody annoying. Still, giving credit where credit is due, SOCOM's developer has

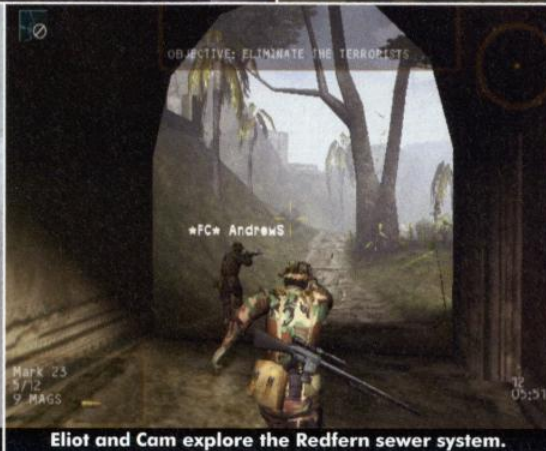


MULTIPLAYER SAVIOUR

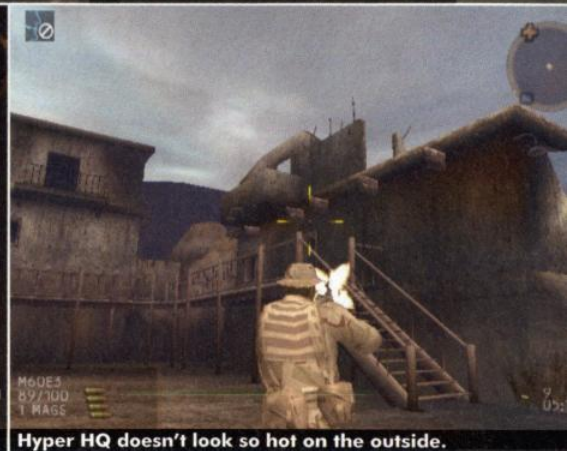
>> Multiplayer may well prove to be SOCOM's saving grace, and we'll be reporting on that aspect of the game in a future issue. With its variations on the classic Capture The Flag, Deathmatch and Hostage Rescue formulae, the game really does have the potential to shift scores of PS2 network kits. What is disappointing and a little perplexing, though, is the developer's decision not to permit players to cooperatively conquer missions from the single player campaign. Why?!



Hey, who glued these rifles to our faces?



Eliot and Cam explore the Redfern sewer system.



Hyper HQ doesn't look so hot on the outside.



WHEN ASSESSED SOLELY ON THE MERITS OF ITS **SINGLE PLAYER CAMPAIGN** SOCOM: US NAVY SEALS IS **DISAPPOINTING**

created some of the most convincing combat environments of the genre, and in the early stages of the campaign you'll be drawn into the world in a way few similar titles can.

BLUNDERS ARE BEARABLE

What will inevitably boot you back into reality, though, is SOCOM's artificial intelligence, which barely qualifies as such. Teammates and adversaries get hung up

!!! We'll bring you a full run-down of the Sony online network in an upcoming issue!



on environmental objects with alarming regularity and both sides frequently choose the wrong weapons for given situations. Boomer and the lads from Bravo Element are particularly troublesome, often firing their weapons without permission and — worse still — letting off rounds from unsilenced weapons when absolute stealth is called for.

Basically, if there's even the minutest chance of Bravo Element and Boomer doing something wrong, they will! These blunders are bearable in the earlier missions, when

such mistakes rarely have fatal consequences, but on more challenging assignments cock-ups such as these frequently result in mission failures. We'd like to offer reassurances that SOCOM is a fantastic game in spite of its

abysmal AI, but in all honesty we can't. So frustrating and downright infuriating are these problems that they overshadow many of the game's positive attributes. It's a crying shame, really, as SOCOM could've become a system seller.

When assessed solely on the merits of its single player campaign SOCOM: US Navy Seals is disappointing, and all the more so because it gets so many things right. As such, gamers with no intention of subscribing to Sony's network should probably give it a wide berth. Those who plan to sign up for a network account have got some serious deliberating to do — SOCOM: US Navy SEALS is by far the most popular game on the overseas networks, which is encouraging to say the least. Still, there can be no harm in adopting a wait and see attitude, and at this stage that's exactly what we'd do. <<



PLUS: Immersive, lengthy and challenging campaign.

MINUS: Your enemies are stupid, but your mates are stupider.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 79 73

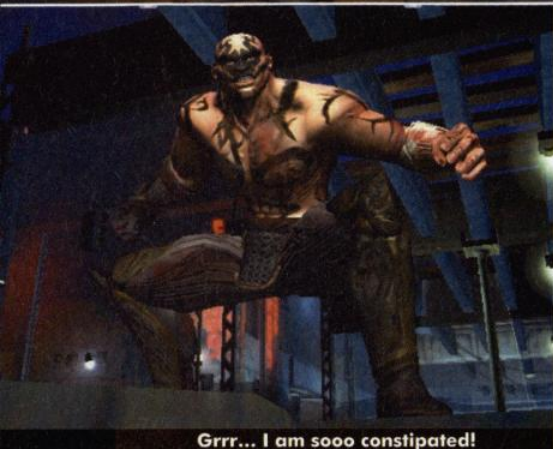
OVERALL

75

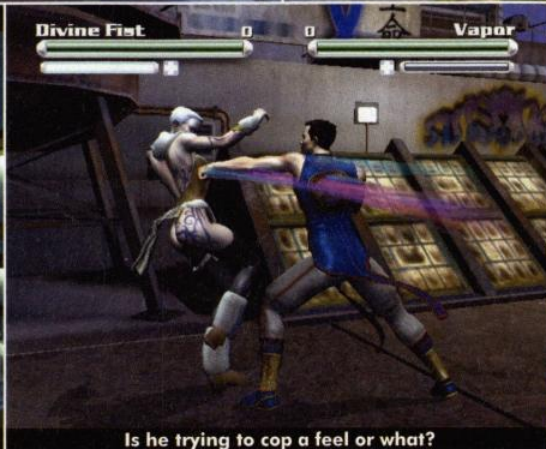
A potential classic hobbled by sloppy AI. More's the pity.

REVIEW

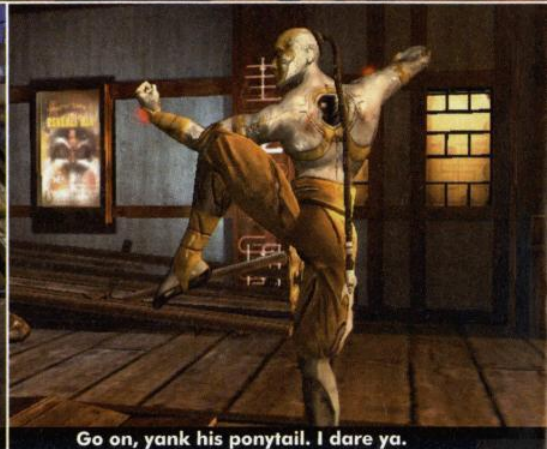
>> HYPER 55



Grrr... I am sooo constipated!



Is he trying to cop a feel or what?



Go on, yank his ponytail. I dare ya.

XBOX CATEGORY: Fighting >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus

DANIEL WILKS goes into the lotus position...

Take equal parts DOA 3, Tekken and Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance, whack them in a blender and hit frappé and you'll wind up with a game like Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus - which isn't such a bad thing. Common sense tells us that if it ain't broke, don't fix it, and cliché tells us that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Studio Gigante obviously paid attention to these teachings, as Tao Feng incorporates the graphical splendour of DOA 3 and the intricate combos and juggles of Tekken with the brutal impact of Mortal Kombat.

KEY TO IMMORTALITY

Things are not good in New China - two rival factions, the heroic White Lotus and the evil (boo-hiss) Black Mantis each have one half of a mystical Yin-Yang symbol believed to be the key to immortality.

Naturally these two factions must beat seven shades of Si out of each other. Controls are very simple with the face buttons controlling punches and kicks, white and black controlling Chi attacks and taunts respectively, the right trigger controls wall and pole attacks and the left trigger regenerates limb damage when your Chi meter is charged up.

Although far from revolutionary, Tao Feng does feature some innovative new additions to the genre - most notably the level of environmental interaction and the ability to break your opponent's limbs. Each of the 13 well-designed maps features a number of interactive objects - walls, crates and poles. By holding down the right analogue and moving the d-pad in the direction of the object, players can perform either jump

attacks from walls or crates or swinging attacks from the poles. By keeping up the offensive and bashing your opponents into the many destructible objects on the maps it's possible to break your opponent's limbs. Breaking an arm means that punches only do 50% of normal damage whilst breaking a leg decreases movement speed and kick damage by 50%. The only real way to avoid limb damage is only to block when absolutely necessary and keep on the offensive.

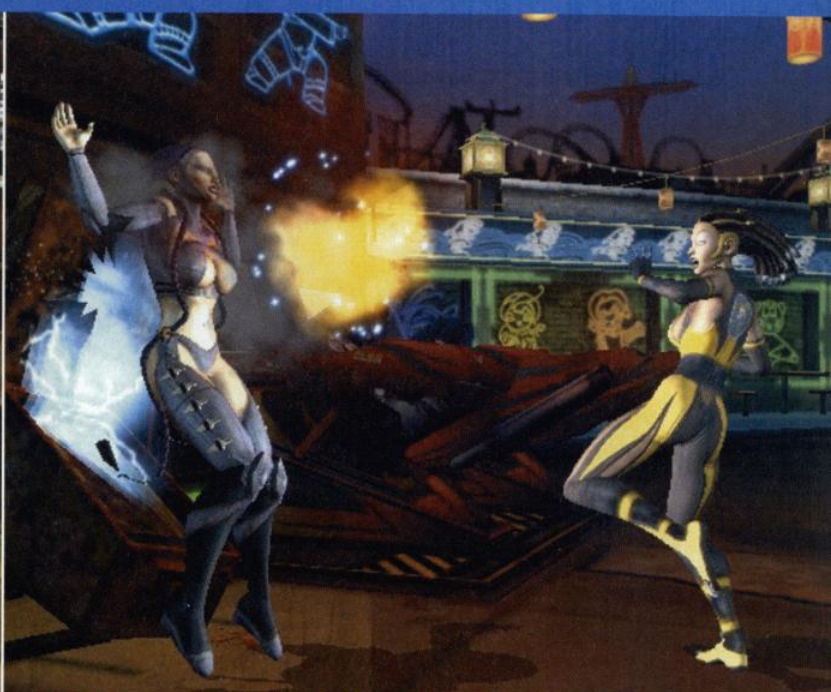
Combat is really based around combos so you'll definitely get your money's worth out of the training mode learning all of the standard attacks for your character - then you have the pleasure of finding all of the many hidden combos. Each character also has access to three character specific Chi moves - powerful and spectacular attacks

that require the Chi meter to be fully charged. Of course you need to fight to charge the meter.

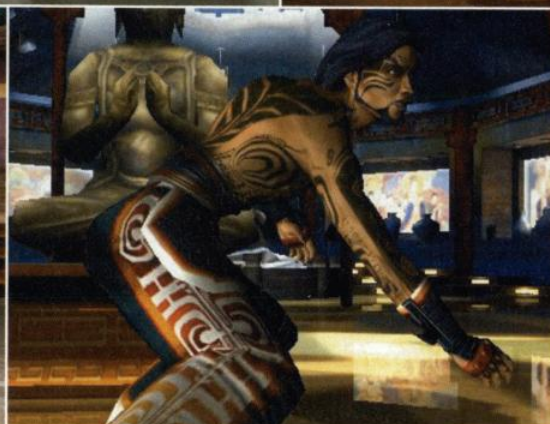
MAKING BRIEF FORAYS

Tao Feng's Quest mode is one of the most detailed stories you're likely to find in a fighting game. Each faction needs to find six special magical artefacts to achieve their goals. Of course, every artefact is broken up into six pieces meaning that to finish the quest the player must





Cue Silverchair's "Freak".



In New Zealand they call me "Fancy Pants".



Butt-cheeks of pure power.



YOU'LL BE PULLING YOUR HAIR OUT IN FRUSTRATION WHEN YOUR LAST OPPONENT BEATS YOU SENSELESS

RAUNCHY RENDERING

» Tao Feng is a gorgeous game with models easily on par with those seen in DOA 3 (though not as realistic). Each character oozes personality and the bruises and bloodstains that appear after a knockdown look truly painful. Don't judge the character animations from your first few fights in Tao Feng. Single attacks and short combos look rather stilted - only when you learn some of the longer combos or more intricate moves will you see the true beauty of the engine. Environmental attacks (knocking the opponent into destructible objects or wall/pole attacks) also feature some truly special animations. Pay close attention to Divinity on the pole - you usually have to pay a \$20 door charge in Kings Cross to get that kind of action.

fight every enemy with every character. If you want to beat the quest mode for both sects this means you're going to have to participate in 72 fights (plus an extra two for the big boss character). That's a lot of fighting.

Each battle in the quest mode is prefaced by a few words from the leader of the respective sects, Master Sage or Wulong Goth (no prize for guessing which one is the bad guy) - that's a surprising amount of voice acting for a fighting game. Whilst the quest mode may seem overly easy to begin with - you can beat the first few fights without breaking a sweat let alone a nail - things get tough real quick. With each successive win the AI becomes a lot tougher. You may be able to beat the first few fights on your first try but trust me - you'll be pulling your

!!! Look out for news next issue on Dead or Alive Online for Xbox!

hair out in frustration when your last opponent beats you senseless for the 20th time in a row.

Unfortunately the payoff for beating the Quest mode is pretty lacklustre - some boring FMV and a dull and overpowered new character. Aside from Quest, Tao Feng features a versus mode and the obligatory survival mode. There's a lot of fun to be had in versus, as the game is easy to pick up and learn the basics, hard to put down and deceptively tactical. Due to the

lack of any round timer, matches will frequently go for five or more minute with each player making brief forays to gauge their opponent's weaknesses. Limb damage also ensures that no one can turtle up and simply defend until they find an opportunity to attack. <<<



PLUS: Looks Fantastic, solid fighting mechanics, quest mode.

MINUS: Sometimes very frustrating, some slowdown.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

91 83 81

OVERALL

80

Easy to learn and difficult to master.

REVIEW

» HYPER 57



Eat, my pretty!



Well, here's enough food for the T-Rex...



Steve Irwin checks out the specimens.

»»XBOX PS2 PC CATEGORY: Theme park sim »» PLAYERS: 1 »» PUBLISHER: Universal »» PRICE: \$99.95 »» RATING: G8+ »» AVAILABLE: Now

Jurassic Park: OPERATION GENESIS

FRANK DRY likes to keep dinosaurs in his backyard...

It's great when we see an Aussie developer get their game out on the world stage in such a big way with such a big license. Blue Tongue Software are the folks behind Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis, an ambitious 3D dinosaur park management sim, complete with first person dino-sniping bits, and you can see that their technology is solid. It pains us though, when we have to tell an Aussie developer that the game at the heart of it just isn't very good.

LOCK UP THEM RAPTORS

Inspired quite clearly by the likes of Theme Park and any other park sim you care to mention, Operation Genesis is based on the thrilling concept of maintaining a fully functional Jurassic Park — something they never quite managed in the movies. Get the public in, herd them

around the dinosaur enclosures — even let them walk amongst some of the friendlier creatures — whilst you spend time in your research lab working on the dino genetics. It's any fan of the movie's dino dream. And because it's an official Jurassic Park game, you'll see cameos from the characters from the films, which is nice.

Unfortunately, playing this kind of sim game with a control pad is anything from ideal. There is a serious amount of menu switching in this game, something that becomes very tiresome with the control pad, as you fumble through screens and menus to get into the nitty gritty. It's somewhat un-friendly for the user, and we can only imagine that the PC version is far more enjoyable for the mouse and keyboard option. In any case, the game is still somewhat tiresome in the way it pedantically requires you to amass knowledge on the dinosaurs,

and the science behind keeping them happy and healthy in the park, when all you really want to do is have more fun. Playing the game sometimes feels like doing school work, as opposed to having a ball messing around with the dinosaurs, as you'd imagine it should be. There's just so much to goddamn read. Even the parts where you get to hop in the chopper, hunt down the rogue dinos and tranquilise them, turn out to be pretty run-of-the-mill. It can be quite interesting reading up on all the dinos, and planning on how you need best care for them. There's also nothing more hilarious than removing a section of the wall and seeing the Raptors tear your visitors to shreds, but it's not something you should do if you want your park to succeed. If you play the game by the book, there's a big element missing here: fun.





He's an ankle biter alright.

Why do the toilets have to be off-island... grumble.

Sir, we have loose raptor. Somewhere.



YOU NEED TO BUILD THE **PARK FROM SCRATCH**, AND PLANNING WHERE TO BUILD NEEDS TO BE **CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT**

DISCOVER DINO DNA

As your scientists discover dino DNA from all

corners of the globe, you can start to breed your own dinos for the park. But you need to build the park from scratch, and planning where to build everything –

from the entrance down to the raptor pens – needs to be carefully thought out, or you'll have a dino disaster on your hands.

On this Xbox version at least, the camera simply didn't zoom out enough for our liking, and although it's workable, we would have preferred to see far more of the island in one go in order to plan where everything would eventually go. There's a certain amount of trial and error in the game that just shouldn't

be there for a sim of this type.

Considering that this is a genre that has been pretty well refined over the years, it's a little perplexing that Operation Genesis could feel so unintuitive. At least there's a tutorial to help you get to grips.

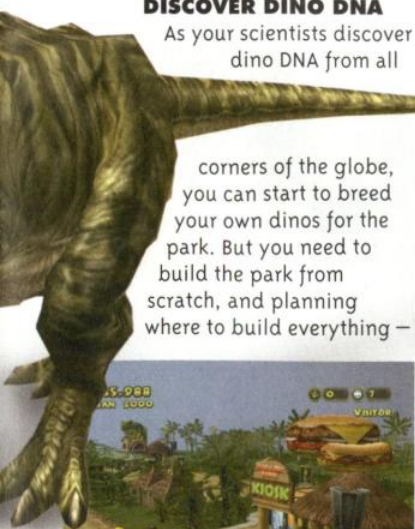
The sandbox mode is easily the most fun, as you can create a very different island every time you start up a game. But the mission mode is

quite lacking, and there really needed to be more depth here to avoid the inevitable boredom that sets in once you've played around with the game

long enough that you run out of motivation to play.

Still, this is one of the better Jurassic Park games, and if you're a fan of the films or a dinosaur aficionado, you might still want to check it out. <<<

!!! Did you know that another Jurassic Park movie is in the works?



PLUS: Lots of dino info for lovers of those big brutal beasts.

MINUS: Clumsy controls, lacking in adventurous fun.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

78 70 58

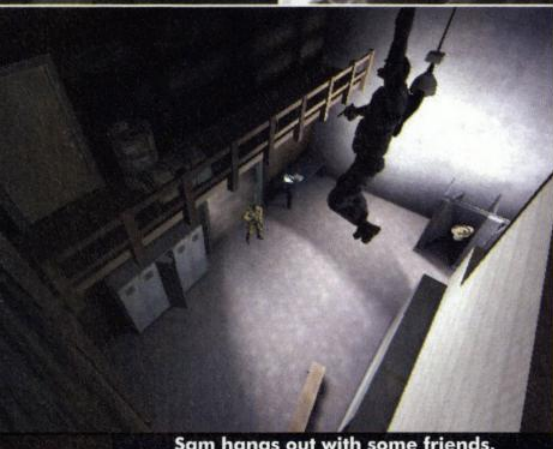
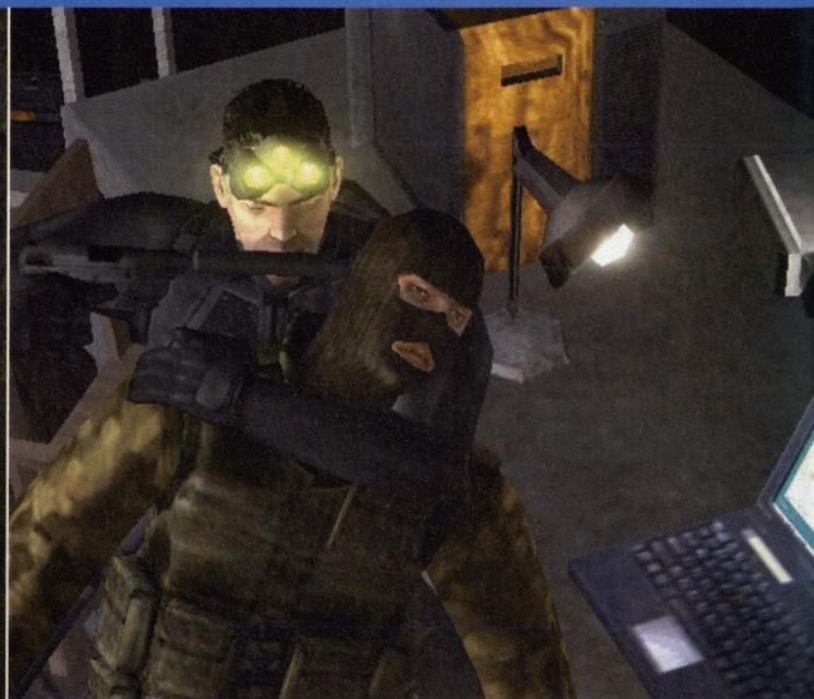
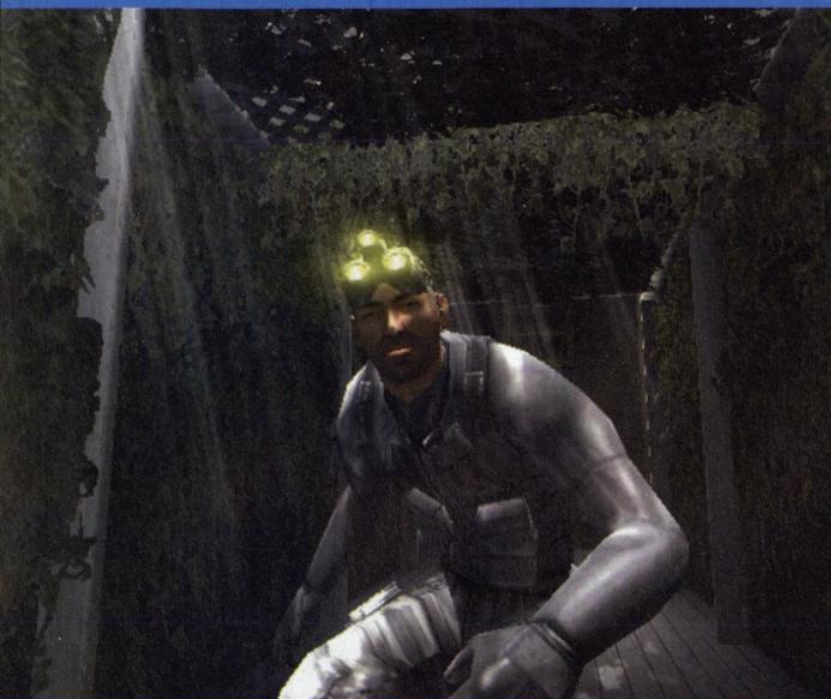
OVERALL

60

Not a great sim, but interesting to mess with the dinosaurs.

REVIEW

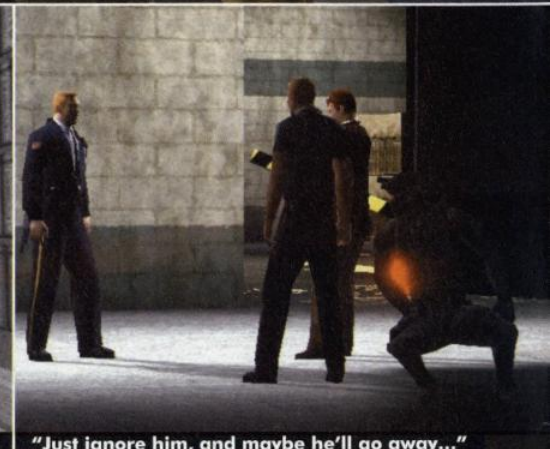
>>> HYPER 59



Sam hangs out with some friends.



The special "dog vision visor".



"Just ignore him, and maybe he'll go away..."

»GCN PS2 CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

FRANK DRY fires his sticky-cam into the girl's toilet.

With its thoughtful pace and gadget-packed gameplay, *Splinter Cell* on Xbox was an instant hit. Thus, it's no great surprise that PS2 and GameCube owners must be very happy to see the game make it to their beloved machines. But along with the glee comes no small amount of anxiety: does *Splinter Cell* still play as well in these two ports? Does it look as good as the Xbox version? Only Hyper's infiltration of videogame technology can tell.

TOM CLANCY? CHA-CHING!

Not surprisingly, the story for *Splinter Cell* reads just like a Tom Clancy novel, but without the lengthy and yawn-worthy segues. You play Sam Fisher, a rugged, experienced agent in the field of counter-espionage in the year 2004, and your job is to save the United States from the maniacal tin-pot Rogue State with oil - this time Georgia.

Splinter Cell is not a new formula. It's largely driven by the story, the objectives are standard videogame repertoire, and the cut-scenes between missions serve to add to the game's atmosphere. Where *Splinter Cell* excels, however, is in the super-spy world of gadgets, stealth, and the counter-espionage catchphrase, 'covert operations'.

This is a game that takes itself very seriously, and it is the authenticity of actions that is a key aspect of the gameplay. Missing is the fantasy-like scenario like infests a game like *Metal Gear Solid 2*, and instead we're taken into a game of spy-play which is not unlike what is probably really taking place somewhere in the world as you read this.

While the level design is different in places to the Xbox version, the character actions and essential

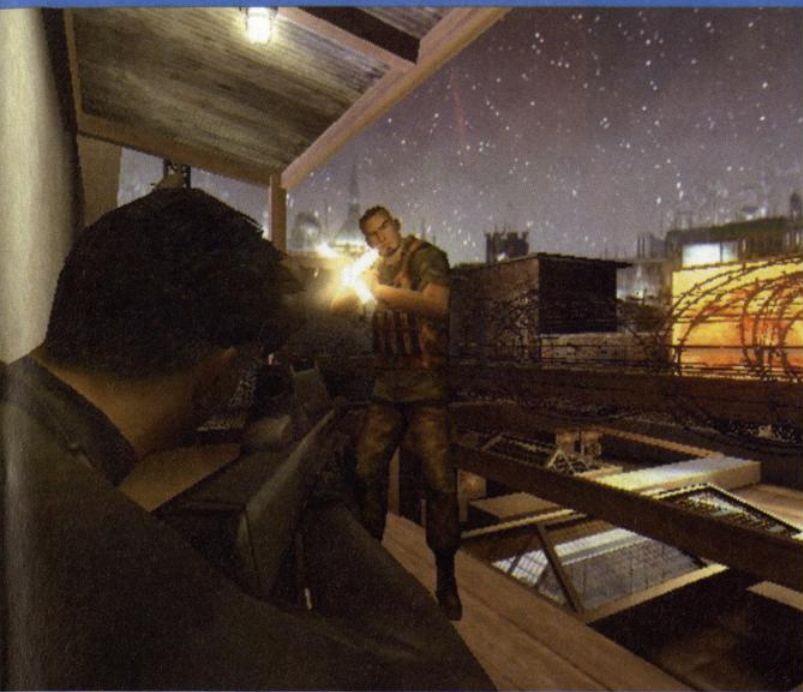
gameplay remains the same. You can sneak, jump, scale fences, rappel down walls, shimmy along pipes and slide down poles - all actions that are used to emphasise the fact that *Splinter Cell* is not just about running around shooting people. Sneaking up behind unsuspecting buffoons and knocking them out becomes standard operating procedure.

Gadgets also abound in this game. Not gadgets like, say, helicopters that come out of overly large top hats, but useful gadgets such as infra-red and thermal vision, an optic cable to peek under doors, lock picks and

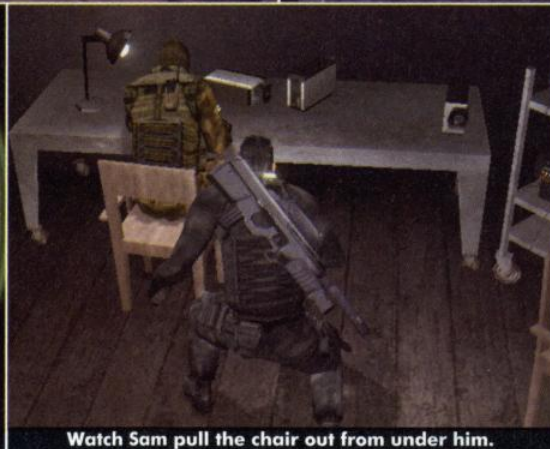
assorted paraphernalia you pick up along the way, like stun darts. The various gadgets play a vital link to your success and the re-designed inventory menu gives you easy, fumble-free access to your entire arsenal, lethal or otherwise. In fact, the set-up for *Splinter Cell* has a shot of authenticity mixed with a dash of videogame necessity. Each mission contains

a number of save points so you are avoided a large degree of tediousness, and further checkpoints help to minimise the torture of repetitiveness. To accentuate the stealth required for different missions you have an alarm counter. In some

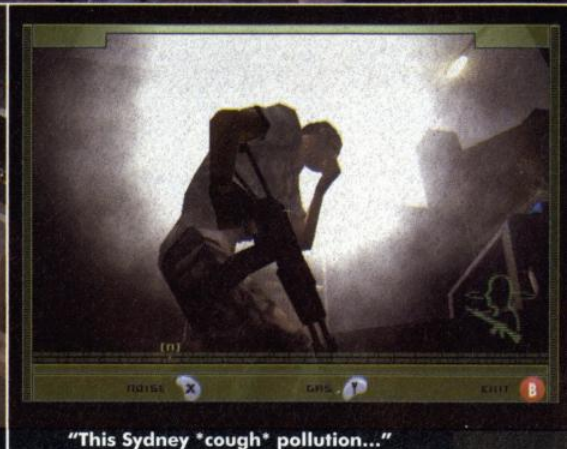




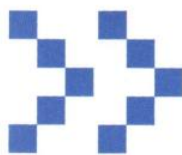
Now say "cheese"!



Watch Sam pull the chair out from under him.



"This Sydney *cough* pollution..."



NOT GADGETS LIKE, SAY, HELICOPTERS THAT COME OUT OF OVERLY LARGE TOP HATS, BUT USEFUL GADGETS

missions you can raise three or four alarms before the mission is compromised, while in more sensitive missions you can't raise any. The constant radio contact you have with your handler will keep you updated on your status.

THE GBA'S CONNECTED TO THE...

The much talked-about GameCube-to-GBA connectivity for Splinter Cell is used to give you access to a

!!! A review of Splinter Cell on GBA can be found on page 72.



GBA map that shows your limited surroundings as well as enemies and other threats within a certain range - and as such will alert you to their presence with a handheld 'beep'. The GBA also gives you access to a sticky bomb that can be fired and detonated remotely using the GBA, which gives you the opportunity to take out large groups of people. The GBA connectivity hardly makes the GameCube version, but it does add another dimension to it, which while useful, does not richly deepen your Splinter Cell experience.

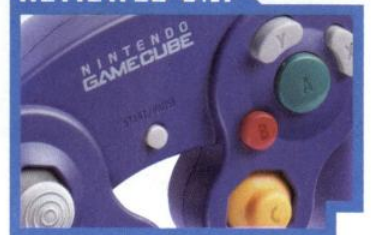
In terms of graphical flair, both the PS2 and GameCube versions look quite remarkable - if you didn't have the Xbox version sitting right next to them to allow for a visual comparison, you'd be damn impressed. Neither are quite as

impressive as the Xbox version, but the differences are so subtle that most people won't even notice. The game still looks damn good.

If we were to gripe, then we'd point out that Splinter Cell's level design is too linear for a game that appears to encourage experimentation. Even Sam Fisher's variety of moves sometimes feel like nothing much more than an illusory repertoire - they're usually only useful when it's obvious they are required. Trial and error quickly replaces expectations of super-spy brilliance.

Overall, both the GameCube and PS2 versions are exceptional ports, and stack up very nicely against their Xbox predecessor. Splinter Cell is still one of the best espionage games yet. <<

REVIEWED ON:



PLUS: Not your standard third-person action/adventure.

MINUS: Linear, involving trial and error gameplay.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

92 91 93

OVERALL

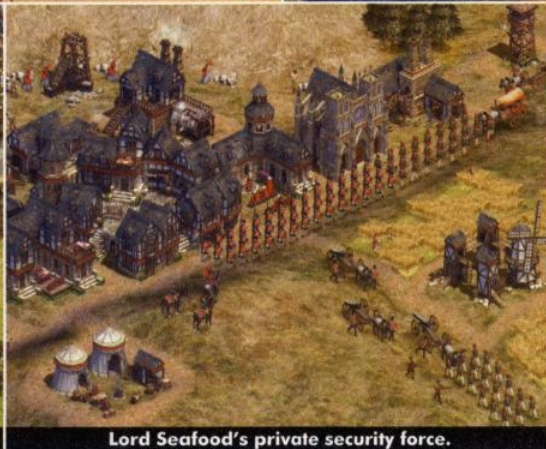
93

Equally as good as the Xbox version.



REVIEW

» HYPER 61



Hey weren't those guys in C&C: Generals?

Lord Seafood's private security force.

We've come to commandeer your corn crop.

PC

CATEGORY: Nu Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PIII 500, 128MB RAM

Rise of Nations

FRANK DRY exercises his brain for once...

More than any other genre, strategy games have deluged PCs. There are many subtle shades of strategy across the spectrum and there's a tendency to see many of them in the same way. Now there's many ways to spark a fancy — perhaps you create excitement in a wonderful universe like Blizzard with Warcraft. You might want to make the thing altogether cerebral, like Sid Meier did with Civilization. It sounds awfully glib but it seems someone has finally tried to bridge these two themes, a gulf that spans not only turn-based and real-time play but also deeper issues of control. That someone is Brian Reynolds (who worked on the stunning Civilization II), and Rise of Nations is the game.

WITH THE CLOCK ON

Well, it's a kind of bridge. It's more like a cable car really that swings

back and forth across the chasm, spending time on either side. At points, you're reminded of the structure building decisions of Civ (do I build a temple or more barracks in this city?), at other times there's the thrill of cutting down an approaching army with a swag of Arquebusiers. While the cable car crosses the gap, quite often it spends a lot of time on the RTS side.

Real Time Strategy means resource gathering, of course, and all commodities are treated as quantifiable amounts. So wealth, lumber, metal, food and even knowledge are numbers flying up as you amass the means to produce more units, produce more powerful units and expand across the globe. Unlike Warcraft where these resources run out, Rise of Nations features bottomless seams of

precious metal, seas that never stop spilling fresh fish and forests that never wither from deforestation. At its most basic, the game features all the boundaries that RTS games set: unit caps, limitations to advanced unit types, incentives to use a broader cross-section of troops.

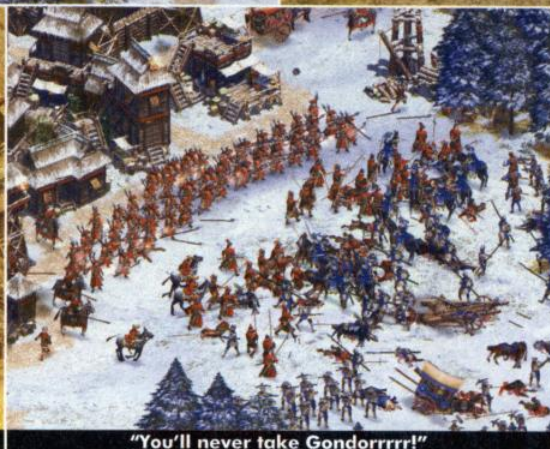
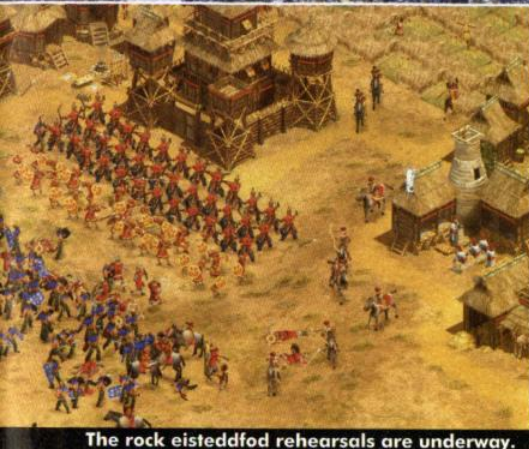
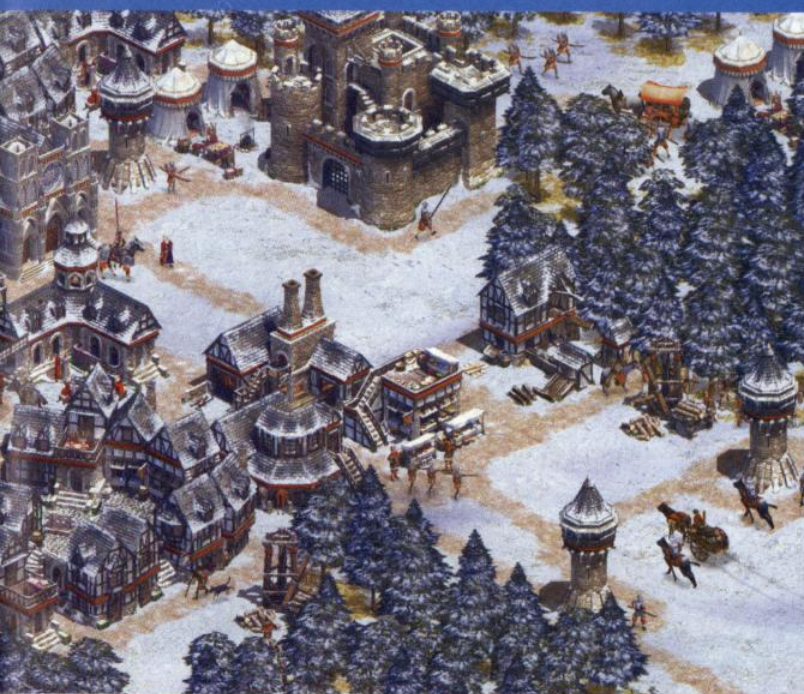
The main criticism of turn-based strategy is its complete lack of pace. As in chess, the whole idea is to wait for your opponent to turn. This fails modern gaming on one point: How do you market this to the online crowd? The answer is of course to make a game that unfolds like a turn-based strategy with the clock on.

There's more than a little of the Civilization heritage at play in Rise of Nations. Constructing Wonders of the World in cities increases various stat attributes. Some will double your production of food, or increase

the influence of temples on your national borders, others will grant free upgrades following the research of new units.

Wonders are also big targets on the map, taking up physical space around a city and requiring a good number of workers to produce. Stacking many workers to hasten production is a viable option in Rise of Nations but the corresponding risk to their defense perhaps is not.





The rock eisteddfod rehearsals are underway.

"You'll never take Gondorrrrr!"

"What are these? Giant marshmallows?"



CRUSHING SOMEONE IS STILL FAR MORE SATISFYING THAN BUYING A REGION OF LAND FROM THEM

A STRAIN ON HEALTH

Lifted almost wholesale from Civ III is the idea of national borders and territory. Cities "create" friendly territory. Cultural influence like temples and such effect the growth of this influence. In Civ, crossing borders amounted to a declaration of war. War is well and truly on in Rise of Nations, so the effect had to be more subtle. The resulting concept is that of Attrition.

Invading units suffer due to their alien surroundings. Unprepared units, that is, a horde of warriors that lacks the support of a Supply Wagon, incur Attrition damage when on enemy soil. Facing the Russians, this may be called the Russian Winter attrition! A glowing red circle below a unit's feet lets you know they're taking damage. In the real world, unfriendly surroundings do put a strain on health and

equipment so this makes good sense. A better reason is that it will curtail some less creative styles of play, particularly online.

Like Civ and even Empire Earth, Rise of Nations presents the entire span of human development, from pre-history through to the present day. Each of the eighteen playable races has a unique architectural design. For example, the Chinese buildings are all curvy roofs and lanterns, the Spanish feature sun-burnt brick and the British have a stately sort of vanilla flavour. Each race also has unique units that are of benefit in different eras of history. The Chinese have Fire Lances and Manchu Infantry, the Spaniards boast the Scutari and the Tercios and the English have the King's Longbowman, the Lancaster Bomber and the Black Watch. Add to this racial traits that benefit

historical tendencies. The Spanish are good seafarers while the Germans have some nasty tanks. The aim is to provide as wide a palette as possible to play.

I don't think anyone has been able to make a truly balanced strategy game yet as far as battle and diplomacy. Combat is still far more interesting than diplomacy and trade. Although the two have become necessary tasks along the way to conquest, crushing someone is still far more satisfying than buying a region of land from them. So it's no great surprise that this is also the case in Rise of Nations. If anything, the game reminds me how of I used to play Civ II. That is, with a judicious use of all avenues of the game that was ultimately a very aggressive bloodlust style of battle. Spies used to sabotage buildings, building up large armies and seeing



how far across a continent they could tramp before the defenders held them back.

THE VIOLENT JIGGLE

As we've come to expect from games published by Microsoft, Rise of Nations looks and sounds extraordinary. The unit animations are detailed and life-like, from an idle worker's slump on the ground



"Sir, we must defend the Hyper penthouse!"

Haven't they heard of town planning?

"Ahh let's all just get drunk on sake!"

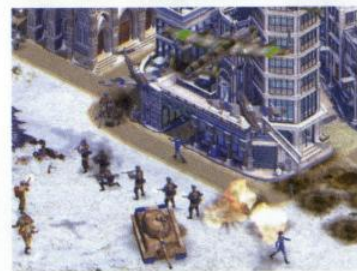
to the awkward canter of a caravan as it moves between trade destinations. The architecture of the various town structures is very satisfying, even though they feature little in the way of animation once constructed. Battle movements are crisp and useful. The violent jiggle of your siege unit, the Bombast, as it launches a cannon ball into a

building, the determined slow march of pikemen, the arcing and drifting movements of your Fighters as they move through the skies. Environmental features too make the world exciting, from the lap of the seas to the grazing of native animals (rare resources to be plumbed). All these things add to the experience. The music is also very compelling, if

repetitive, given the long hours that will be involved.

It can be tempting to think that a "serious" game like this one would be more strategically involved than a "lighter" fantasy game like StarCraft. In fact, this isn't the case. Apart from issues of attrition and territory, Rise of Nations uses much that is familiar to real time strategy and so it should. There are maybe a dozen units that the player can build at any one time, filling out the ranks from foot soldiers, to ranged attackers like archers, to mounted and armoured units, siege weapons and air power. If you're lucky enough to play a map that requires their use, naval units can be used as well.

The more you play Rise of Nations, the more you come to the conclusion that it is a lot simpler than expected. The Civilization connection is a bit of a red herring. The thing is, because everything is happening in real-time, it's impossible for all the intricacies of management to be fully explored. You need to be able to advance research, build a new city and deploy units, with half an eye on the battle at the other side of the screen.

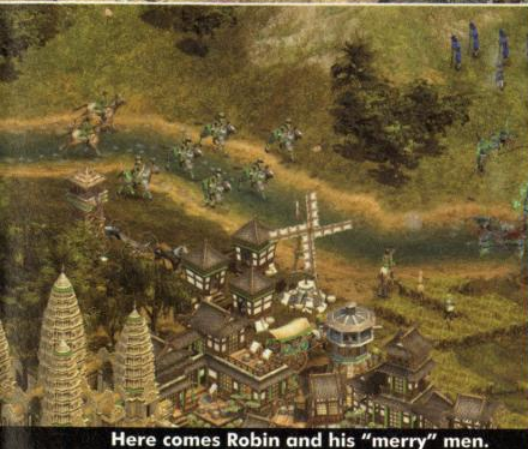
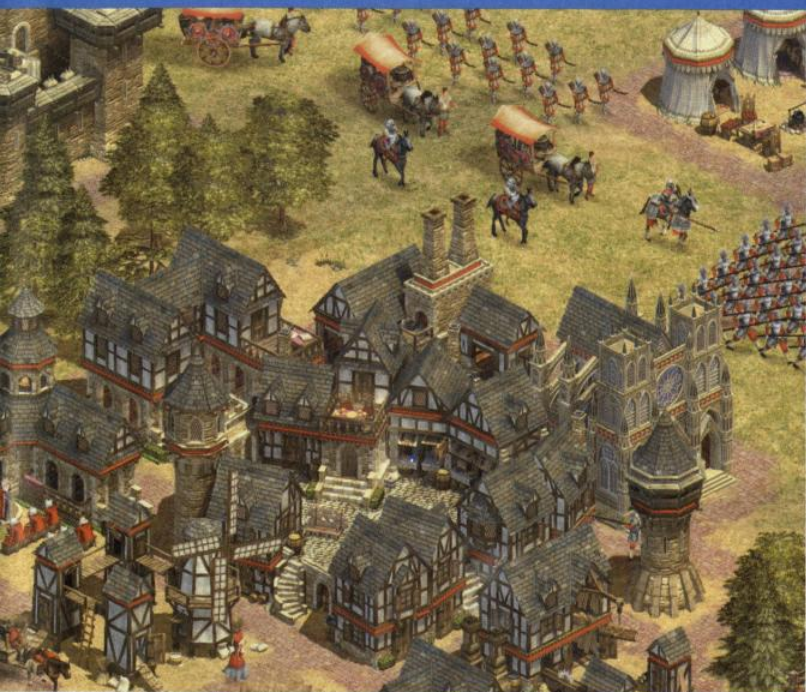


So processes are trimmed to their leanest which means that often you can be doing repetitive activities with little concept of a reason why, other than the fact that this is what you DO in an RTS: research, expand, build more tanks.

PALATABLE STRATEGY

With no tech tree, research becomes much less pivotal to strategy. You

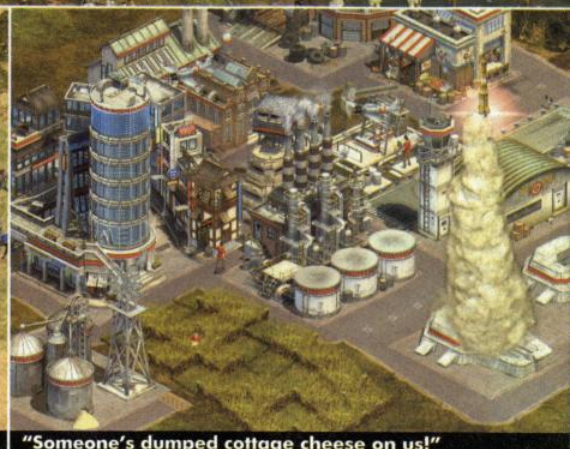




Here comes Robin and his "merry" men.



"We'll fight you with these giant toothpicks! Gaah!"



"Someone's dumped cottage cheese on us!"



APART FROM ISSUES OF **ATTRITION AND TERRITORY**, RISE OF NATIONS USES MUCH THAT IS FAMILIAR TO **REAL TIME STRATEGY**

need to research but it makes no difference which way you go — there's no resulting effect on government, for example. More often than not, research in each of the five categories is about even as the cost to pay for one in the extreme is prohibitive. Regardless, with the population cap associated with one kind of research and the number of towns that can be built associated with another, any kind of proper expansion needs to follow a fairly set path

of research early on, anyway. What emerges is an RTS that makes use of some real time elements presented in a traditionally more turn-based setting.

The game works as an RTS first and then the other influences help out. And this is as it should be. There's no point in introducing a high level of detail if the means to play it doesn't help. This is an example of good game design not crowding the player — no matter what the publicity

tells you is actually going on.

If you hoped as we did, that Rise of Nations would somehow cure the ills of turn-based strategy (interminable endgames, for one) without suffering any ill effects, then this game will be tinged with disappointment for you. If on the other hand, you're looking for a decent RTS strategy game that's easy to get into and which you will get a large number of hours play from, Rise of Nations is a good choice.

In true Microsoft style, Rise of Nations is palatable strategy. It looks like a million bucks and there's many hours in it, but there's no more strategic depth here than in Warcraft III. Rise of Nations is a welcome addition to the halls of strategy gaming, not quite living up to the promise of a real-time Civilization game, but heaps of fun nonetheless. <<

Yes, go to www.riseofnations.com for more RTS goodness.



PLUS: 18 nations, strong visuals, good strategy gaming.

MINUS: A bit light, repetitive actions, needs more depth.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 90 85

OVERALL

89

A solid, enjoyable RTS experience.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 65



Have at you, MMORPG geeks!

Just like a chat room... only you need to upgrade.

The poor 56k player wanders to his death.

PG CATEGORY: MMORPG >> PLAYERS: Massively multiplayer >> PUBLISHER: Take 2 >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

Shadowbane

DANIEL WILKS makes a massive amount of friends...

Shadowbane is an odd duck in the world of Massively Multiplayer games - disarmingly simple to begin with and incredibly brutal and unrelenting once your character reaches 21st level. Be that as it may, Shadowbane is actually an excellent example of the genre, giving players huge areas to explore, massive monsters to fight and the best PvP action to be found outside a first person shooter.

WORSE FOR WEAR

The world of Shadowbane is a bleak one - some time in the past, an apocalyptic event almost wiped life off the face of the planet. This event also cut the survivors off from the land of the dead, tying their souls forever to "Soul Trees" around which towns and cities have formed. When a person "dies" they simply wake up

under their tree feeling the worse for wear for a short while. It's up to players to influence the direction of the world by first levelling up, joining a guild and maybe becoming powerful enough to create and maintain your own city. You read that right - Shadowbane gives high level players the opportunity to make a permanent mark on the game world by building their own city.

Like the rest of the game, creating a character is a simultaneously simple and infuriating process - although all the character detail you could ever want is available to you in game, not all the information is available at the time of character creation. It's all well and good to give florid RPG like explanations for statistics, runes (special skills) and skills but when the game is essentially based around the levelling treadmill it would be far handier to have some actual hard

figures to fall back on. Don't be surprised if you create your dream character and log into a server only to find that they are, for all intents and purposes, useless. Luckily, players are allowed to create up to five characters and can delete unused characters as many times as they like.

Another frustrating aspect of character creation is the fact that three of the races are restricted to new players, being available only to players who have held an account for a few months. Whilst it's not too bad, it does alienate new players somewhat and it wouldn't come as a complete surprise if developers Wolfpack were to make these races available to anyone in a future patch. The real strength of character creation is that it gives players a lot of range to create the character they want to play. After a bit of trial and error you should be more than happy with your choice.

GROUP FRIENDLY

When characters initially log into a server they must choose a safe town (no PvP possible) to be their base and from there to level 21 it's pretty run of the mill XP farming. Each area is surrounded by areas filled with monsters or relative difficulty - for the first few levels players should concentrate on killing the snakes and spiders that live nearby all the towns, graduating slowly to lizard men, grobolds and then venturing





SIEGE THIS!

>>>The true nature of Shadowbane becomes apparent when you get involved in one of the massive Guild wars - waiting patiently for the catapult and trebuchet teams to breach the outer wall of the keep so you can storm the halls, slaughtering all that dare oppose you. Siege combat and guild wars are the shining crown of Shadowbane. Every player has a role - warriors and barbarians acting as tanks, ploughing through the enemy. Wizards and other offensive spell users acting as artillery. Assassins and scouts sneaking through the darkened halls looking for hidden commanders or silently killing powerful characters. Healers, keeping the good guys alive and making sure the bad guys are easier to kill. It's an amazing experience.

Virtual Greenies?

Bad weather outside, and inside your games.

We're playing for keeps. Starting with this one.



DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU CREATE YOUR DREAM CHARACTER ... ONLY TO FIND THAT THEY ARE USELESS.

out further to take of bandits or the denizens of the swamp. Although most MMORPGs necessitate grouping for effective levelling, Shadowbane seems to be the most group friendly of the lot. Instead of dividing the XP evenly amongst the characters, each member of the group lowers the XP gained by a small amount - a monster worth 5000 XP to a solo game may be worth 4500 to every member of an 8-

person group. Once the player reaches 21st level they are booted from the safe area and must choose a freehold city (not player run) and fend for themselves. What was once an easy run on the XP treadmill is now a minefield of PvP action and some insanely tough monsters. The only way to survive at higher levels is to join a guild and find yourself some burly friends. Higher levels (50+) also necessitate the player making their way to one of the player run cities as only they have the type of skill trainers and shops to meet player needs.

Following the trend of the rest of the game, Shadowbane's interface effortlessly mixes the intuitive and obtuse. Basic control is very similar to Diablo and related games. Players click on the ground where they want

their character to go, double clicking on objects or monsters to interact or attack. Windows can be opened for virtually any in-game information of skill but it will take some time to learn what each of the windows are for and their use (if any).

Whilst nothing spectacular, the spec built Arcane engine pumps out some decent looking graphics and manages to keep the frame rate playable even with hundreds of players on screen at once.

Like most other launch MMORPGs, Shadowbane has problems with lag, server crashes and congested servers but the core of the game, intense PvP action that really effects the way the world works is sure to appeal to fans of massively multiplayer games. Given a few months to iron out the wrinkles and stabilise, Shadowbane could become a serious contender for the best MMORPG out there. <<

Want to join up? Check out www.shadowbane.com for more info.



PLUS: Excellent PvP action, sieges, massive melees.

MINUS: Server crashes, brutal, iffy character creation.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

75 81 83

OVERALL

77

Shadowbane has the potential to be a contender.

REVIEW

>>>HYPER 67

>>PC



VIETCONG

CATEGORY: FPS >> **PLAYERS:** 1-Multi >>
PUBLISHER: Take 2 Interactive >> **PRICE:** \$89.95 >>
RATING: M15+ >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>

The Vietnam War has long been a taboo subject for computer games. Perhaps it's because America doesn't overly like to publicise a war they didn't win. Maybe there was just no market for it before. Whatever the case, 2003 is seeing an influx of Vietnam based games - Line of Sight, Men of Honour and the superb Vietcong.

As Sergeant First Class Steve Hawkins, players are pitted against all of the horrors that the Vietnam War can throw your way - booby traps, snipers, midnight attacks, unfamiliar terrain, tunnels and an army of undisciplined but highly motivated warriors. Although Vietcong doesn't really bring anything revolutionary to the genre, it excels in mission design and atmosphere. From the first moment when you swoop over the Vietnamese highlands in a Huey to the dulcet tones of "Hey Joe", you'll be hooked. Excellent multiplayer modes ensure you'll be playing the game long after you've finished the single player campaign. Without resorting to any of the modern video card tricks (vertex and pixel shading), Vietcong renders some very impressive looking environments using a mixture of relatively low polygon objects and high resolution textures. It may not be destined to go down in the history books as the game that revolutionised the genre, but for solid single and multiplayer enjoyment, Vietcong is hard to beat.

Daniel Wilks

VISUALS 88 **SOUND** 90 **GAMEPLAY** 86 **OVERALL** 87



"Can someone turn off that bloody Hendrix?"

>>PC



CSI

CATEGORY: Puzzle >> **PLAYERS:** 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> **PRICE:** \$89.95 >>
RATING: M15+ >> **AVAILABLE:** Now >>



"Yes, I'm related to William Shatner..."

Any fan of this high-rating US TV show will attest to just how addictive it is. It has a stylish blend of forensic science, drama, mystery and humour that all boils down to a very fun piece of TV. Unfortunately, the game doesn't deliver the same thrills.

All the ingredients for success are here. The game features the voices of the cast members, some fairly decent visuals, and an interesting menu system for cataloguing your evidence, forensic tools and access to various necessary locations - such as the lab, the cops and the murder scene, amongst others. Where the game falls down is its lack of real interactivity and puzzle solving. You collect evidence from the scene, sometimes requiring you to use the right tool in order to detect it and collect it - such as squirting some of that stuff that reveals blood stains, or using a sniffer to pick up samples of fumes. Back at the lab, you then run these through the computer or look at them under the microscope, but in reality all you really end up doing in the game is clicking through all the available options in the right order. You don't really have to do any of the investigation yourself, and solving the crimes is so easy, a monkey could do it simply by pressing the buttons until they get the right ones in the right order.

CSI might be fun to check out if you love the show, but it seems to be aimed more at the casual gamer who doesn't want to have to use their brain when they play a PC game. **Eliot Fish**

VISUALS 72 **SOUND** 75 **GAMEPLAY** 56 **OVERALL** 58

>>PS2 / GCN / XBOX



X-MEN 2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

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

Logan, the coolest of the X-Men makes it to the PS2 just in time for the movie... a little too soon perhaps. For all the potential that the character Wolverine offers for strong action gaming, Wolverine's Revenge is half-baked.

The groundwork is there. Wolverine's abilities can be used in exciting ways. Retracting his claws allows regeneration of health on the fly, Stealth mode (R2 on the Dual Shock) allows his sense of smell to lead him to enemies and secrets and he has a battery of special Strike moves.

Battle calls for the kind of mashing that results from never quite feeling in control. In certain positions, Wolverine can pull off powerful combos but there's little logic to when this is possible... just wait for an on-screen cue. Collision detection is simplistic, discouraging the use of different tactics. Oh and once, Sabretooth fell through the floor and ended up on the ceiling above Wolverine. Disappointing.

This game was rushed out to coincide with the release of the feature film and certainly missed a couple of rounds of bug fixes. That doesn't explain the clumsy combat mechanics though. Wolverine's revenge really should be on the developers of this woeful buggy piece of tie-in merchandising. As boxed beta code, it's not without its moments, but buyers beware.

John Dewhurst

VISUALS 79 **SOUND** 82 **GAMEPLAY** 59 **OVERALL** 60



SNIKT

>>GCN



EVOLUTION WORLDS

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Final Fantasy, Phantasy Star Online, Skies of Arcadia, The Legend of Zelda... despite the fact that there still aren't enough true RPGs on the GameCube platform, there's simply no room for a game as stinky as Evolution Worlds. Based on a series of games on the Dreamcast, Evolution Worlds is a dungeon crawler with a tedious experience points system and dull turn-based combat that's wrapped up in kiddie crap.

Unfortunately, the game is old-school in the sense that it retains everything bad from RPGs of the past and doesn't innovate or refine any of the enjoyable aspects of the genre. As far as the kiddiness goes, you'll find yourself cringing at the weak story, cutesy bland characters and utter lack of originality. Environments sport bad textures and few polygons... you just get the feeling that much of the content was ported over from the Dreamcast without any effort to re-design it for GameCube. Whilst some of the characters' animation is not too shabby, the game looks pretty ugly overall.

The only thing that makes Evolution Worlds appear at all interesting, are the CyFrames. The CyFrames are mechanical weapons that are essentially a substitute for a traditional RPG magic system — the more experience you gather, the more moves can be unlocked from the CyFrame, and the more impressive its effects. You can also upgrade it with parts to give your character access to new skills. But really... why bother? **Frank Dry**



Are we there yet? Are we there yet?

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
59	75	55	57

>>XBOX

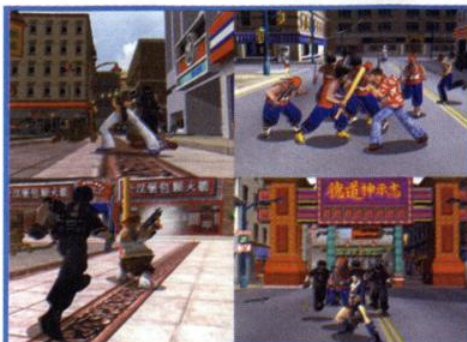


STATE OF EMERGENCY

CATEGORY: Smash 'em up >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>
PUBLISHER: Rockstar >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

State of Emergency on PS2 was an over-hyped piece of rubbish. Fun for about five minutes, or if played whilst completely drunk while your friends egged you on. In a bid to improve things somewhat for the Xbox release, Rockstar went back to see what they could improve or add to the game. Rather than starting from scratch (which might have been a better idea), they decided that adding multiplayer would redeem the game somewhat. Well, they were only half right.

Basically, the single player game still sucks. The new multiplayer modes, however, do have a certain appeal. If you regularly have multiplayer sessions with your friends, then there would be a point to investigating this. A minimum of four players is really needed for maximum amusement, as you go head to head as teams or solo, in a variety of chaotic play modes: Deathmatch, Chaos, Survivor, and Last Clone Standing. Sadly, the entertainment value really does come out of laughing at the game with your friends, or laughing at how badly your friends are doing in the match, rather than any real enjoyment from gameplay. The controls are still buggy, there are still only a limited number of environments, and the game still feels very much a b-grade release. **Frank Dry**



Four-player boredom. Sweet!

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
70	72	59	59

>>PC



WILL ROCK

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >>
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft >> PRICE: \$49.95 >>
RATING: M >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Okay, we have two questions for the developers of Will Rock. Why does Will crawl throughout the game? And since when did Twisted Sister (TS) become cool? To elaborate on those queries, the perspective of the main character seems to be about two feet above the ground, so either he has stumps for legs or (Postal 2 style) Gary Coleman is somehow involved. On the music front, going into the game or pausing unleashes a TS glam rock track with the memorable lyrics "I wanna rock" repeated about a million times. God, it's painful. We knew as soon as Ubisoft announced the title "Will Rock" that rockin' out would be involved, but at no stage did we think that it could get as bad as Twisted Sister. Leave it in the 80s guys!

The game itself can be described with the following Hollywood style pitch. "It's Serious Sam Vs Zeus". Despite drawing extensive inspiration from Serious Sam, Will Rock does have a few tricks up its sleeve. The engine is pretty slick and incorporates some cool technology such as objects that shatter and morph in real-time. This is highlighted by the weapon selection that lets you set enemies on fire (and watch them burn away to nothing), freeze and shatter them, spray acid on them, and so on. There are also some cool enemies such as minotaurs whose gibbs morph into smaller minotaurs.

Will Rock just doesn't have the rhythm in its mayhem that made Serious Sam so much fun. It does come at a budget price, so it's worth a blast if you can afford it. **Cam Shea**

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
76	70	72	74



Always aim for the crown jewels.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 69

PC



GTA: VICE CITY

CATEGORY: Action/Racing/Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Rockstar >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>
REQUIRED: PIII 800, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D Card >>

I can hear the cheering and jubilant celebration already. Yes, Vice City has finally made it to PC, and unlike the Grand Theft Auto III port, this is a slick and solid conversion that really stands out as a must-buy for anyone keen to reinvigorate their PC gaming.

Thanks to the high-resolution of modern PCs, Vice City looks better than it did on PS2 — and you can also see how Rockstar have tightened up some of the flaws they obviously had to live with when they shipped the PS2 version.

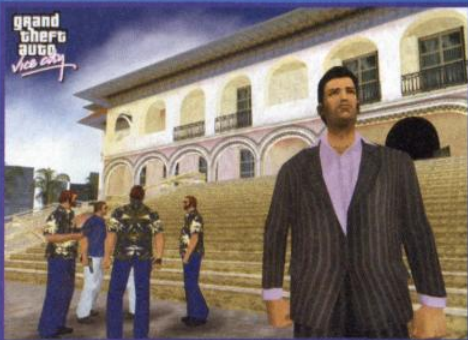
Naturally, there are no more loading problems, for one! The ability to control the game with mouse and keyboard also takes a lot of the frustration out of the game, and makes it that much more an enjoyable experience. Even cooler, is that you can plonk your own MP3 collection into a folder for your very own custom Vice City radio station; one that plays your own music 24/7. A nice touch.

As far as the actual gameplay goes (mission structure et al), nothing has changed from the PS2 version — this is an identical game. All the improvements are purely technical, but hey, that'll do nicely. If only they'd worked on that pineapple-up-the-butt character animation.

Eliot Fish



VISUALS 89 SOUND 95 GAMEPLAY 95 OVERALL 95



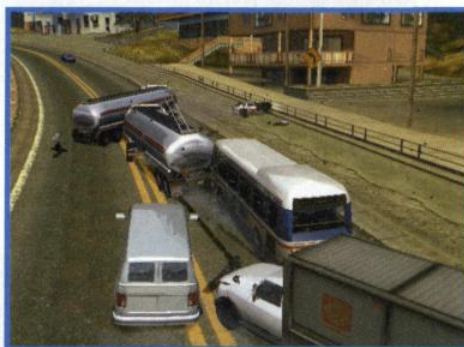
"Have you seen his suit today? *snigger*"

XBOX GCN



BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>
PUBLISHER: Acclaim >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



Frank's going to be late for work...

One of the best racing games on the PS2 has finally made it to the other consoles — Burnout 2: Point of Impact is simply sublime, and it's just as good all over again on Xbox and GameCube. To get straight to the point, just go buy this game now. Why? Well, okay then, read on if you must!

The single-player game is one of the coolest, most hair-raising and intense championships ever, and it'll have you grinning with glee as you swerve in and out of on-coming traffic, finger twitching over the boost button. The sensation of speed and the cinematic crashes are endlessly fun. On the Xbox, there's Xbox Live support built in so you can upload your high scores and see how you rank against other gamers in the world, plus there are about a dozen extra crash junctions than there were on the PS2 version in both the Xbox and GCN versions! If you didn't know it, the Crash mode is where you have to plough your car into other traffic to cause the most expensive pile-up possible. It's one of the most popular games in the Hyper office, and frankly we're getting sick of people still asking us if they can have a go! Burnout 2 is total quality.

Just get it. Frank Dry



VISUALS 87 SOUND 83 GAMEPLAY 90 OVERALL 92

GCN



SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >>
PUBLISHER: Sega >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>
RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Some of you may remember that Skies of Arcadia was originally released for the Dreamcast a few years ago. It was a delightful romp, and probably was savagely underrated at the time. Well, now the Legends have made it to the GameCube, and we must thank Sega for adding a quality game to the GameCube's fairly shoddy selection of RPGs.

Skies of Arcadia doesn't feature a terribly original RPG storyline — most of the Japanese RPG clichés are present — but it's so carefully constructed, that you can't help but be charmed by the amount of work that developer, Overworks, has put into the creation of the world and its denizens.

Combat is resolved with a turn-based system, and whilst it's somewhat enjoyable, more work should really have gone into this aspect of the game. There isn't quite the depth here of something like Final Fantasy X or even an RPG like Fallout, and you'll find that random battles can become a bit of a chore. Also, it's a shame that nothing has been done to upgrade the graphics for the GameCube — the hardware is ashamedly underused — and the game still wears its Dreamcast origins on its sleeve. Thankfully, the overall experience is one of an addictive and amusing RPG with a great deal of personality. A worthy RPG to lose yourself in. Frank Dry

VISUALS 80 SOUND 75 GAMEPLAY 85 OVERALL 84



"Gee, can we turn the air conditioner on?"

REVIEW

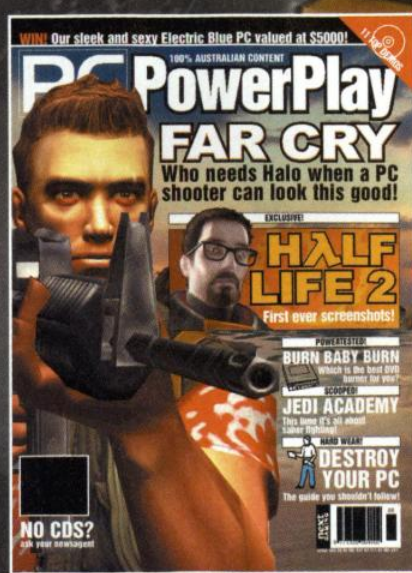
70 >>HYPER

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>>GBA

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft >>
PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

The GBA version of Splinter Cell crams the 3D experience of Sam Fisher's jaunt into a 2D side-scrolling affair, but at the same time manages to keep Sam's array of spy-type maneuvers and the essence of his covert operations.

While aspects of the stealth gameplay come off well in the GBA conversion — such as rappelling down walls and negotiating obstacles — some aspects come a

little undone. One of the biggest challenges of the console version of Splinter Cell was the ability to sneak up behind opponents and lay them out cold, but in the GBA incarnation your ability is severely limited by the inability to hide behind regular objects such as bookcases or even corners, and a clumsy view of your environment. In fact, the only places you can hide are in specific spots built into the levels for you. That said,

Splinter Cell does a great job of converting the console experience. Parts of the game take on a mini-challenge aspect, such as picking locks or cracking safes for which you must beat a timer, with the puzzles getting more difficult as you progress. The thermal and night vision goggles also make their way to the GBA for negotiating laser obstacles and, as you would guess, unlit passages.

The story carries over nicely for the GBA version and while the depth of stealthy operations isn't recreated in full, it comes off as a somewhat delightful spin on a standard platformer. This handheld Splinter Cell experience offers unique challenges, obstacles to navigate and is wrapped up in well-created 2D environments. Worth a look. **Andrew Bulmer**



Sam tries out for Spider-Man 2.



Sam finds the president's cannabis.



He used to be a table dancer...

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	78	82	82

>>GBA

The Lost Vikings

CATEGORY: Viking sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Vivendi >>
PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Most people know Blizzard for the likes of Diablo and Starcraft, but back in the day (before they became Blizzard actually), they were also an accomplished console development house. Case in point — The Lost Vikings. This SNES title was a clever take on the platform/puzzle genre, and a good choice for resurrection on GBA.

The main twist is that you control three characters, swapping between each at will. The three characters are: Erik the Swift, who can run, jump and bust through certain walls; Olaf the Stout, who carries a shield that can be used to block attacks, float from heights and held above his head for Olaf to jump from; and the swordsman Baleog the Fierce, who is the only character

that can actually take out enemies, both from close quarters and from range. The levels are built around puzzles that require the abilities of all three characters to get through. Indeed, unless you get all three to the exit you'll have to restart.

It was certainly a clever game design ten years ago, and still plays well today, but ultimately The Lost Vikings on GBA is a pretty pedestrian port. For such an old game that has probably suffered at the hands of emulation, the port had better offer something new — even if it's just updated graphics. The Lost Vikings does no such thing, and is even a slight step backwards thanks to the often awkward controls. Even so, a solid puzzler. **Cam Shea**



It's a diabetes nightmare!



Where are the Village People auditions?



We're just three horny old men.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
68	69	80	79

» GBA

Contra Advance: The Alien Wars EX

CATEGORY: Old School Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Atari >>
PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

Cast your mind back ten years ("cue fuzzy flashback effect") to the age of the 16-bit consoles. Back in this prehistoric time, side-scrolling shooters walked the earth with impunity. No one questioned their authority, as they were truly at the top of the evolutionary ladder. In this wild landscape, one series stood especially tall — Contra. It ruled with an iron D-pad, dispensing death for

the slightest mistake. The only way out of the treacherous land of Contra was through rote learning. You had to memorise every enemy's appearance and attack pattern, then take them out execution style. It was a brutal time.

It was also undeniably satisfying to get right... but the videogame ecosystem has changed drastically since. Will such simplicity and intensity be enough to keep the

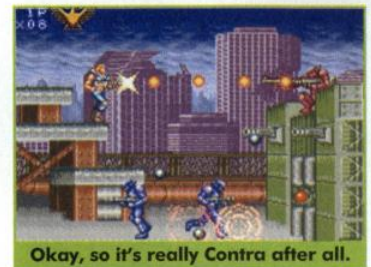
modern gamer happy? We don't think so, especially when a port is this slapped together. What Konami have done is given us a straight port of Contra III on SNES - minus the mode 7 overhead sections. In other words, without the sections that actually broke the action up a bit. It's inexcusable that they simply couldn't be bothered getting these levels working on GBA. Instead, they've pasted in a couple of levels from the Mega Drive's Contra: Hard Corps game, and they stand out like a sore thumb. Adding insult to injury, there's only six (admittedly long) levels all up, and no battery save — only a spleen burstingly long password system. At least there's a two player link-up co-op mode to enjoy... if you can find a friend with the game mind you. **Cam Shea**



Look out, it's the T-800!



Only John Connor can stop the robots!



Okay, so it's really Contra after all.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
73	70	67	68

» GBA

Virtua Tennis

CATEGORY: Arcade sports >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Sega >>
PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

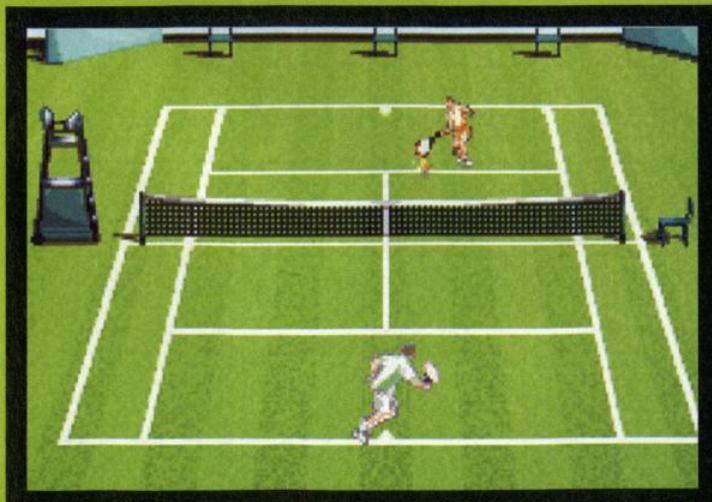
Virtua Tennis plus GBA equals Virtua Tennis-lite right? Not necessarily. Fans of the series will be pleasantly surprised by Virtua Tennis on GBA, as it manages to capture the gameplay of its console cousins remarkably well. It takes a little while to get used to the digital control, but you have an impressively wide range of shots at

your disposal. The game is also quite forgiving in terms of player placement and shot timing, but just like the console versions, the better you anticipate the more accurate your return will be.

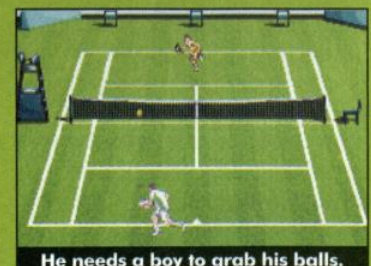
The meat of the game lies in the involving World Tour mode. In it, you create a character (even adjusting his/her looks and main strength — power, control, footwork

or stamina) and take them from unknown status into the upper echelons of the professional circuit. Fortunately it's not all about competing in tournaments. There are also eight mini-games at "training camp" to test your skills, and they range from straightforward to rather bizarre. Completing mini-games gives you points you can use to level up your player's stats, introducing a good level of pseudo-RPG to proceedings. Combine this with link-up multiplayer and you've got a whole lotta gameplay to enjoy. Pity there's no single cart link-up.

On the downside, the visuals are probably the least impressive part of the package, as the player sprites are blocky and don't move all that fluidly. The GBA can definitely do more than this. Still, with gameplay this tasty, you're unlikely to notice the visuals anyway. **Frank Dry**



Hit the target... it's not that hard.



He needs a boy to grab his balls.



Player 1 tries his golf swing.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
73	77	87	86

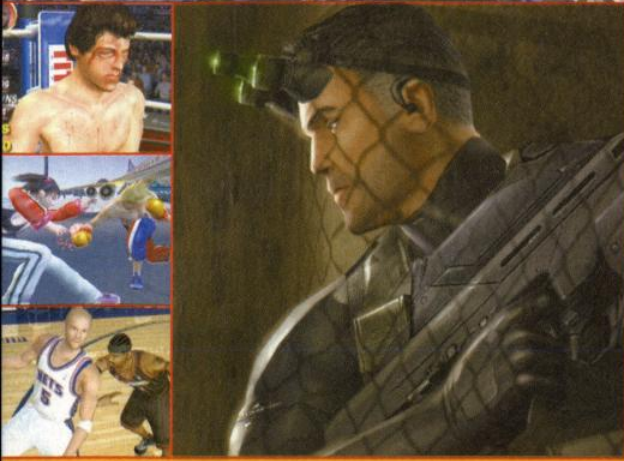
GBA REVIEWS

» HYPER 73

SIM CITY 4



GTA:
VICE CITY



METROID
PRIME

SPLINTER
CELL



BUFFY

KINGDOM
HEARTS



NEED SOME HELP?

Hints Cheats
and Playguides

ON SALE NOW

ARCADE

>>TIM LEVY

Monopoly

STERN PINBALL

In 1934, well before the coming of the cathode ray, people had to keep themselves entertained the old fashioned way at home by playing cards, collecting stamps, whittling sticks, getting drunk, listening to the radio, having old fashioned sex, and of course, playing board games. One of the few board games to have successfully stood the test of time from those Great Depression days to these current Happy and Gay days is the irrepressible MONOPOLY.

LAND GRAB MODE

Supposedly invented by a Quaker woman from Virginia to demonstrate the evils of extreme capitalism and how increases in land value benefited only a small minority of landlords at the expense of the renting or high mortgage owning majority, the game has gone on to be the most popular board game ever, with over 200 million sets being sold in over 80 countries and in 26 different languages.

So with the popularity of the game firmly entrenched in the public's capitalistic hearts, Stern Pinball decided to employ the artistic talents of Pat Lawlor (of Addams Family, Twilight Zone and Fun House pinball fame) and his team of mechanical and programming engineers to give us a Monopoly-themed pinball machine.

Borrowing the best bits from his past successes, Pat has created a pinball machine that doesn't disappoint. The overall goal of the game is to get your 'piece' (remember the racing car, top hat, dog etc) around the game board (moving via shooting ramps and targets) collecting properties and locking balls to get yourself to multiball stage, which is where the highest points and jackpots lie. Once you own all the properties and all modes have been completed — which is no mean feat for any Pinball Wizard — the game goes into 'Land Grab' mode, where you get unlimited

balls for 35 seconds and attempt to place as many houses and hotels on your properties as you can.

BETWEEN THE FLIPPERS

The game has a lot to shoot for. There are 4 ramps, 2 loops, 3 flippers, numerous turbo bumpers, 'ABC' lanes, 3 ball capture holes, multiplier targets and numerous other objectives. Unfortunately, there are also the obligatory dead ball side channels, which, have got to be one of the cruelest inventions to any game ever.

Like most games, the way to learn is to play, and it will take several goes of Monopoly to get the hang of it. But before you know it, you will be recreating those classic pinball scenarios such as the 'You're on your last ball, you've only got half a million points to go to the 6 million point 'REPLAY' with only one final ramp to activate multiball and you shoot, and the ball goes up the ramp and reaches the apex, lingers there for a brief second and then proceeds to roll back down the board and 'straight down the guts' (a.k.a between the flippers). This situation also triggers the use of the classic multilingual pinball term called "Noooooo...

Arrrrrgggggghhhhhhhhh!" Which brings us to the only main complaint about the game - the TILT meter. The tilt meter seems to be unusually high on this game and to be able to tilt a pinball machine a little should be a given, as controlling gravity and the destiny of a metal ball is a very kool feeling.

So while this game is never going to be as popular as the board game Monopoly, the game is a great four player or single player game which is worthy of playing for an hour or two at a time — a minor classic. <<<

OVERALL

9/10

Thanks Galaxy World & Party Marty



Tim has his moneybag on we see...

SOME MONOPOLY TRIVIA

- More than five billion little green houses have been "built" since 1935.
- Dunhill has manufactured a set with gold houses and silver hotels worth \$50,000.
- The longest game in history lasted 70 straight days.
- The longest game in a bathtub lasted 99 hours.



COIN-OP

>>HYPER 75

Final Fantasy: THE EARLY YEARS



>> DANIEL STAINES

CLASSICS

76 >> HYPER

AUSTRALIA, 1996. Sony's original PlayStation had just been released and the gaming world was abuzz with the possibilities this leap into the world of next-generation console technology would bring. Word on the street was that a huge 3 CD RPG was in the works... developed by a company that hardly anyone in this country (or any PAL territory) had heard of before. Square



or something like that. They'd done Secret of Mana on the Super Nintendo, apparently. That was pretty good. Maybe they'd do a good job with this — what was it called? Final Fantasy? The preview screens certainly looked promising.

And then — BLAU — the bombshell hit. For a generation of casual gamers sucked in by the cash-fuelled Sony hype machine, Final Fantasy VII was a revelation. RPGs were suddenly cool. For a while there, Aussie gamers simply couldn't get enough of Square. FF VII's video sequences, in particular, got a lot of people very excited indeed. Just look at how Tifa's beach-ball breasts jiggle — how realistic! If all PSX games were going to look this good, then we were in for a treat indeed.

But then there were the questions. The questions that any hardcore Square fan — such as myself, for example — found insanely annoying. Questions like "why is it called Final Fantasy VII when this is the first one?" Needless to say, FF VII was NOT the first Final Fantasy game. There were six others before it, all of them were on Nintendo platforms and not a single one was ever released in this country. In this special retro feature, we're going to take you on a tour through these relics of gaming history: the first six Final Fantasy games.

So, let's start at the beginning, shall we?

Final Fantasy

JAPANESE RELEASE: 1987

WESTERN RELEASE: 1990

PLATFORM: NES

Put bluntly, the original Final Fantasy was a blatant attempt by a failing company to save its skin by capitalising on the success of another product. The company was — obviously — Square, and the product they were hoping to emulate was Enix's then hugely popular NES RPG, Dragon Quest. The basic directive issued to everyone working on this game was simple: look at what Enix did, copy it and then improve on it. Square didn't want to take chances — this game was Square's last hope, their ultimate gamble... their "final fantasy". Hence the meaningless name.

A HUGE SUCCESS

Happily, however, fantasies can sometimes come true and FF turned out to be a huge success for Square. It featured what was — at the time — an involved narrative of unprecedented proportions, more characters than you could poke an 8-bit stick at and a surprisingly solid turn-based battle system that arguably set the standard for every console RPG to come. Oh yes, and it was the first FF game to feature Hinorobo Sakaguchi's incessant "mother earth/vitalist/gaia" moralising. You may have noticed some of that in the movie. Well, provided you weren't laughing the whole time.

Of course, if you play the original FF now, you'll find it to be absolute rubbish. But you know, at the time it was something of a revolution. People — Japanese people — were simply stunned at just how BIG the game was. Even the Americans, who are notoriously stupid when it comes to buying good games, took a shine to this little gem when it was released on their shores three years later in 1990. In fact, it actually sold BETTER in the States than it did back in Japan. Some commentators have claimed that the West wouldn't have seen ANY FF's if it weren't for the success of the first one in the US. We're inclined to think that's a bit steep, but we can't doubt the tremendous influence this game has had. It is most definitely what one would consider a landmark in the history of video games.

RED MAGE GAVE HIMSELF A +20 IN KNOWLEDGE: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEEDED TO BECOME C.E.O. OF WIZARDS OF THE COAST.

IT'S MINE! ALL MINE! ALL THE FREE EXP. IN THE WORLD IS MINE FOR THE TAKING!!!



8-bit Theatre

Run by nerd-god Brian Clevinger, 8-Bit Theatre is one of the web's most entertaining and popular gaming comics. It's getting a mention here because its protagonists are sprites taken right out of the original FF and because it is an insightful and funny satire of the standard RPG clichés that Square employ with gleeful abandon. So check it out: www.nuklearpower.com



FINAL FANTASY: AND SOME UNIMAGINATIVE CHARACTER NAMES, DANIEL!



FINAL FANTASY II: PIXEL OF THE MIND'S EYE

Final Fantasy II

JAPANESE RELEASE: 1988

WESTERN RELEASE: 2003 (FF:Origins)

PLATFORM: NES

Although it's very similar to its predecessor in terms of presentation and narrative, Final Fantasy II features several key improvements and additions to the original that reserve a special place for it in the history of the franchise. It is arguable that THIS is the game where FF as we know it today really began to take shape.

ACTUAL NAMES

Of the additional features Square introduced in FF II, the newfound focus on character development was arguably the most important in terms of shaping FF games to come. The narrative in FF II was far more structured and relevant to the gameplay than that featured in the original game. Also, the now famous "level-up-by-killing-monsters-over-and-over-and-over-again" experience system was streamlined here and began to closely resemble that which we are used to today. And the main characters had actual names this time! They weren't very good names, but they were certainly better than "Black Belt" and "Red Mage".

Also — and this is quite cool — FF II saw the first appearance of the now ubiquitous "Cid" moniker. In case you don't know, the name "Cid" has appeared in every FF game since... well, since II. Now, if that isn't a FF milestone, then I just don't know what is.

Final Fantasy Origins

In yet another attempt to milk the franchise for all the money it could possibly bring them, Square has recently released Final Fantasy: Origins for the PSone. Containing the two ports of the Wonderswan remakes of FF I & II along with the obligatory new CG movies, FF:O is a worthy purchase for the FF enthusiast looking to live a little history without resorting to the shame of an emulated version. The only problem, though, is that both games feature "updated" graphics that somehow lack the campy character present in the NES originals. But hey, that's just our opinion.

HYPER'S TOP 10 SNES GAMES



1.
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
— NINTENDO

2.
Super Metroid
— NINTENDO

3.
Yoshi's Island
— NINTENDO

4.
Chrono Trigger
— SQUARE

5.
Shadowrun
— BEAM SOFTWARE

6.
Super Mario World
— NINTENDO

7.
Secret of Mana
— SQUARE

8.
Final Fantasy VI
— SQUARE

9.
Super Mario Kart
— NINTENDO

10.
Pilotwings
— NINTENDO

HON. MENTION
Super Star Wars
— LUCASARTS

Final Fantasy III

JAPANESE RELEASE: 1990

WESTERN RELEASE: N/A

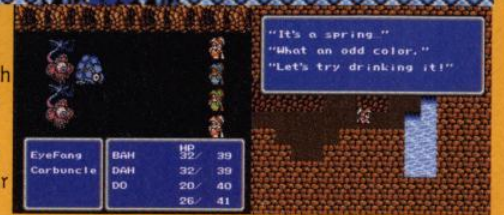
PLATFORM: NES

Final Fantasy III was the last FF game released for the NES and, although technically superior to its two predecessors, is the least impressive FF game to appear on that platform. There's nothing wrong with it, per se — it just lacks the innovative flair the previous games featured. There simply isn't anything about it that could be considered a cornerstone for things to come.

ONION KNIGHT

Well, okay, there is the interchangeable job system. FF III was the first FF game to feature a semi-flexible character creation system in that it let players develop their protagonist's skill according to particular disciplines or "jobs". So, instead of each character having a set role, players were free to mix and match according to their own strategies. Snazzy, yeah, but nothing really spectacular and this opinion is evidenced in the fact that this system was eventually dropped from the FF games in favour of more robust character generation tools like Materia and Guardian Forces.

FF III's narrative, though quite long, was far too similar to that featured in the original game to be anything other than forgettable. And, for some inexplicable reason, all the player characters in the game were named "Onion Knight". We're not joking — this is what they were called. No, we don't know why. Maybe Square got lazy... lazy and very, very stoned. Actually, come to think of it, that would explain a lot about this game.



FINAL FANTASY III: ATTACK OF THE TALKING CRYSTALS

Final Fantasy IV

JAPANESE RELEASE: 1991

WESTERN RELEASE: 1991

PLATFORM: SNES

Final Fantasy IV is important for two main reasons. The first is that the advance to Super Nintendo hardware was the first major technological leap the series had ever made. Since then, FF has crossed two more platforms and will soon be appearing on a third and fourth, but this is where Square proved to the world that they were a developer capable of dealing with change.

ABILITY TO ADAPT

A lot of Japanese developers suffered from the transition to the 16-bit future, but Square showed it had it where it counted. This ability to adapt the familiar to the new has served them well over their history and is largely responsible for the company's continued success.

The final reason for FF IV continued importance is that it is the first FF game to have introduced the extraordinarily successful Active Time Battle system. This system, which sees combatants attacking according to their stats and not some pre-defined offensive order, has been a mainstay of the FF series ever since its introduction here and has only just recently been dropped in FF X. But we hear that FF X-2 is going to be chock full of that old-school ATB action, so there you go.



FINAL FANTASY IV: ROMANCING THE CRYSTAL

Final Fantasy V

JAPANESE RELEASE: 1992

WESTERN RELEASE: 1999 (FF:A)

PLATFORM: SNES

»» As far as FF games go, Final Fantasy V is a bit of a joke, really. It looks terrible for a SNES game, it sports one of the most convoluted character development systems ever conceived and the narrative... wow, the narrative is just really absurd. That's the only way to describe it. Think we're exaggerating?

CRY FOR MERCY

Okay, then how's this for absurd: the main bad guy is a giant, malignant tree named X-Death — which, you must know, is a moniker derived from "excessive death". So, after fighting through 30 hours of really tedious storyline, you are rewarded with the privilege of fighting a big version of that which sustains all life on Earth. Peter Garrett would not be pleased.

On the plus side, though, is Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh was FF V's "under-villain" and he really was quite disturbing in his persistent, calculating insanity. Oh yes, and he had a super attack that would make you cry for mercy every time he used it. In addition to Gilgamesh, the previously mentioned character development system was quite powerful if one could be bothered to exploit its inherent advantages, but doing so often required hours upon hours of tedious levelling up. That happens in pretty much every FF game, we know, but it was especially pronounced in V. Particularly in the game's "dungeons", which were actually just long halls of endless random encounters. No, this is definitely not a game Square should be proud of.



FINAL FANTASY V: THE EXCESSIVE DEATH STRIKES BACK

Final Fantasy VI

JAPANESE RELEASE: 1994

WESTERN RELEASE: 1994 (as FFIII)

PLATFORM: NES

»» Wow, where to begin talking about this... this MASTERPIECE of old-school role-playing brilliance? With Final Fantasy VI, Square took everything they'd done right with the first five games and improved them by a factor of ten. And then they added a big bagful of other cool shit and produced what is — in this writer's opinion — the best FF game ever made. Big call, you say? Trust me: it's a call that FF VI is more than capable of living up to.

EMOTIONAL TURMOIL

The first thing you notice about FF VI in comparison to its predecessors is just how dark and industrial it is. FF grew up with this game, turning away from the childish fantasy clichés that permeated the previous titles in favour of a darker, more adult narrative peppered with philosophical debate and emotional turmoil. Most of the characters (and there were many) were well-developed, multi-faceted personalities that put their FF predecessors to absolute shame. Kefka, the relentlessly nihilistic villain, is easily one of the best video game bad-guys ever. The malicious glee with which he poisons a whole town of innocent people to death is both childishly amusing and disturbingly psychotic. Kefka kicks some serious arse.

Technically, FF VI outshines its SNES siblings significantly. The graphics are some of the best ever produced on a 16-bit system and the music is still widely regarded as Nobuo Uematsu's best work to date. The 16 minute long final boss theme, 'Dancing Mad', is particularly brilliant. But then, pretty much everything in this game is brilliant. Everyone should play it. Absolutely everyone.



FINAL FANTASY VI: RISE OF THE MASTERPIECE

HYPER'S TOP 10 NES GAMES



1.

The Legend of Zelda
— NINTENDO

2.

Zelda II: The Adventure of Link
— NINTENDO

3.

Super Mario Bros
— NINTENDO

4.

Castlevania
— KONAMI

5.

Metroid
— NINTENDO

6.

The Adventures of Lolo
— NINTENDO

7.

Punch Out!
— NINTENDO

8.

Double Dragon 2
— ACCLAIM

9.

Kid Icarus
— NINTENDO

10.

Contra
— KONAMI

HON. MENTION
Metal Gear: Snake's Revenge
— KONAMI

CHEAT MODE

Ready to bust those games apart? Yeah! Cheat until the cows come home and then cry yourself to sleep at night about how crap you really are at videogames! Or something...

PS2

NBA Street Vol. 2

When "Enter Codes Now" is displayed in Pickup Mode, you enter these codes:

- Street Kids: Hold **Li** and press **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE**.
- No Counters: Hold **Li** and press **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE**.
- Always Legend Trails: Hold **Li** and press **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE**.
- All Quicks: Hold **Li** and press **TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE**.
- Unlimited Turbo: Hold **Li** and press **SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE**.
- Easy 2 pointers: Hold **Li** and press **TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE**.
- Hard 2 Pointers: Hold **Li** and press **TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE**.
- Big Heads: Hold **Li** and press **CIRCLE, SQUARE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**.

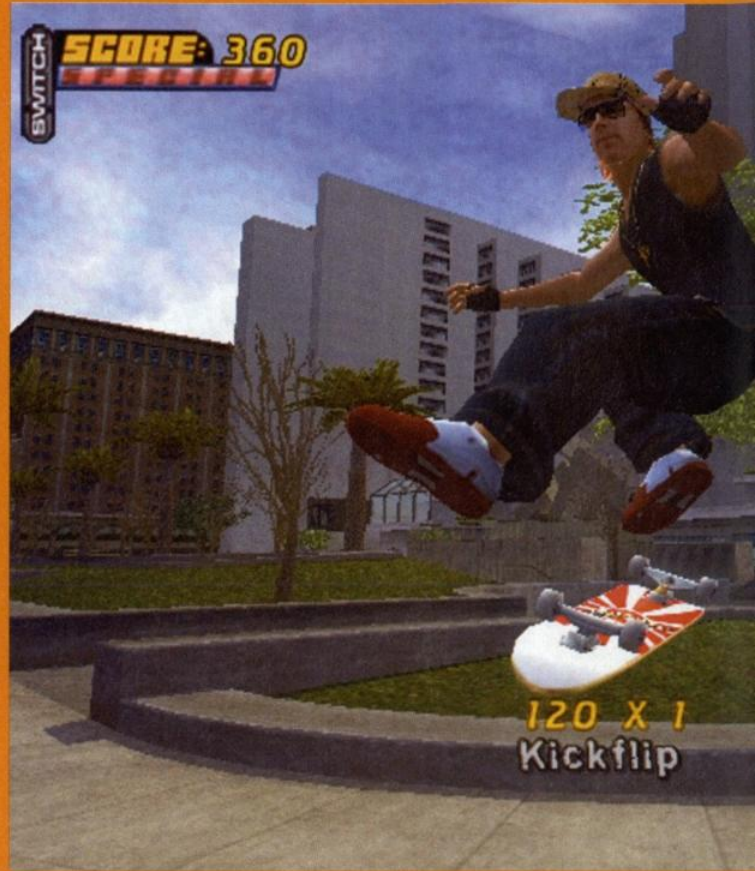
Colin McRae Rally 3

When you begin your game, you are given a bonus code. Use the corresponding cheats that are relevant to the code you have.

Cheats for Access Code 0976
 All Cars: **MKCLLB**
 All Difficulties: **WSNXZU**
 All Parts: **FHPCNU**
 All Tracks: **ODIATU**
 Baja Buggy: **NQFIPE**
 Battle Tank: **LHZWOH**
 Hovercraft: **IURUOT**
 Jet: **GOBUUR**
 RC Cars: **WWBDBU**
 Super Focus: **OQJZZY**

Cheats For Access Code 1154
 All Cars: **WWACNU**
 All Difficulties: **AUNAMA**
 All Parts: **UZVLLB**
 All Tracks: **XWUDBU**
 Baja Buggy: **PHOUOT**
 Battle Tank: **ZIIUUR**
 Hovercraft: **MHXIPE**
 Jet: **LOWWOH**
 RC Cars: **AQVATU**
 Super Focus: **UYNFVA**

Cheats For Access Code 1432
 All Cars: **FMGUOT**
 All Difficulties: **UXNKFB**
 All Parts: **KEZIPE**
 All Tracks: **RVNUUR**
 Baja Buggy: **VURCNU**
 Battle Tank: **ZSSDBU**



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4

UNLOCK ALL CHEATS

At the Cheats menu, enter the phrase "**watch_me_xplode**" to unlock all cheats.

ALL ON SPECIALS

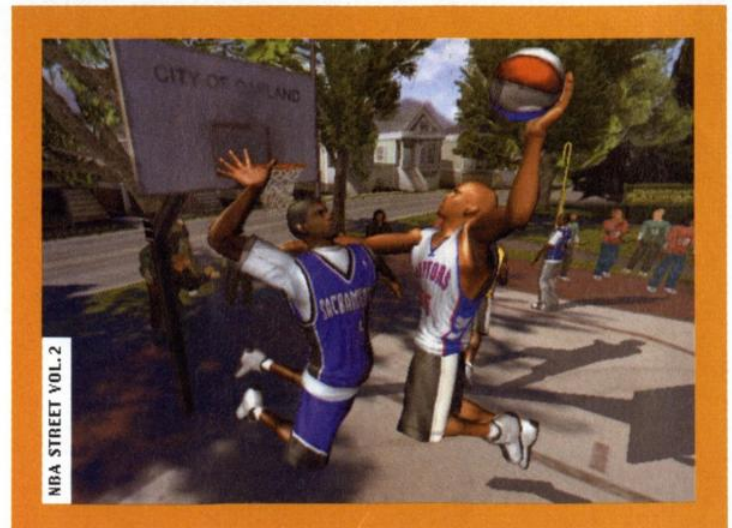
Enter **DOASUPER** on the cheats screen.

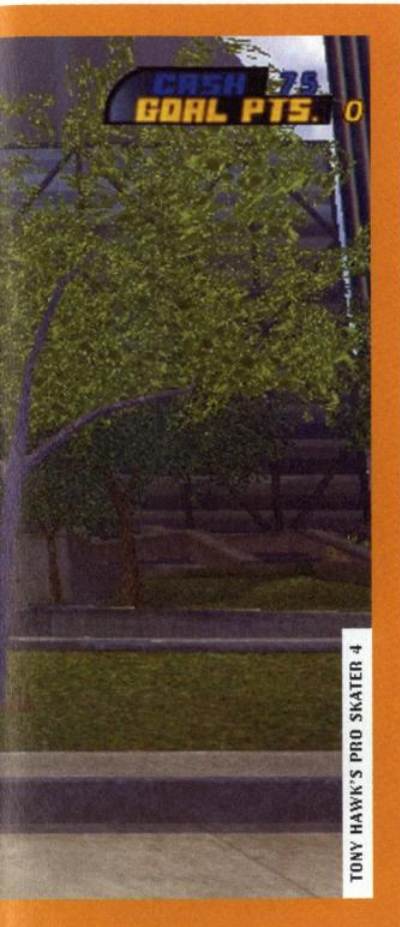
FLAWLESS MANUALS

Enter **MULLENPOWER** at the cheats screen.

FLAWLESS RAILING

Enter **SSBSTS** on the cheats screen.





Jow
Kenzo
Kevin Mulhall
Kraken
Lindsey Hayes
Lisa G Davies
Little Man
Marilena Rixfor
Mat Hoffman
Matt Mcpherson
Maya's Daddy
Meek West
Mike Day
Mike Lashever
Mike Ward
Mr. Brad
Nolan Nelson
Parking Guy
Peasus
Pete Day
Pooper
Rick Thorne
Sik
Stacey D
Stacey Ytuarte
Team Chicken
Ted Barber
Todd Wahoske
Top Bloke
Wardcore
Zac ZiG Drake

UNLOCK DAISY

In order to unlock Daisy you must get 100% in the game (including finding all gaps) and have earned \$100,000. Or enter (o)(o) in the cheat menu.

UNLOCK EDDIE FROM IRON MAIDEN

To unlock Iron Maiden's mascot, Eddie, simply save up \$9,000.00 and buy him in the Spend Cash section. Eddie has two special airs and one special grind.

UNLOCK JANGO FETT

To unlock Jango Fett, simply save up \$9,000.00 and buy him in the Spend Cash section. Jango has two special airs and one special grind.

UNLOCK MIKE VALLELY

To unlock Mike Vallely, simply save up \$9,000.00 and buy him in the Spend Cash section. Mike has two special airs and one special grind.

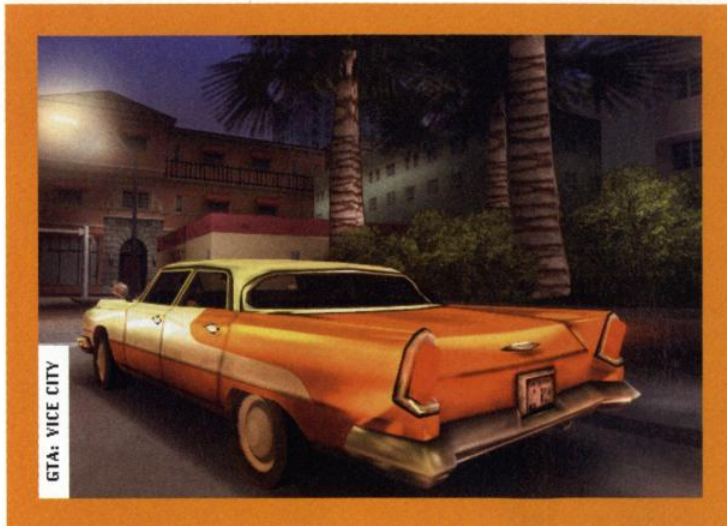
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

INSTANT ARMOUR CHEAT

To get body armour instantly, press these buttons during gameplay: **R1, R2, Li, X, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, UP.**

ATTRACT A CROWD

To have a crowd follow you around wherever you go, enter this code during gameplay: **CIRCLE, X, Li, Li, R2, X, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE.**



FLOATING CARS

To make cars float on water, enter this code during gameplay: **RIGHT, R2, CIRCLE, R1, L2, SQUARE, R1, R2.**

WEATHER GOD

To change the weather, enter these codes:

- Normal: **R2, X, Li, Li, L2, L2, L2, DOWN**
- Rainy: **R2, X, Li, Li, L2, L2, L2, CIRCLE**
- Foggy: **R2, X, Li, Li, L2, L2, L2, X**
- Overcast: **R2, X, Li, Li, L2, L2, L2, SQUARE**
- Sunny: **R2, X, Li, Li, L2, L2, L2, TRIANGLE**

INSTANT HEALTH CHEAT

To get instant health, enter this code during gameplay: **R1, R2, Li, CIRCLE, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, UP.**

EASY CASH

Once you move into the Starfish Island mansion, you will have gang hanging around to do your bidding. As you are their boss, you can beat them to a pulp without any retaliation. Naturally, some of them will be carry some handy cash.

LOW GRAVITY CHEAT

During game play, press **RIGHT, R2,**

CIRCLE, R1, L2, DOWN, Li, R1. Press **UP** while you accelerate to make the car hover off of the ground.

MAKE ALL CARS EXPLODE

To make all cars explode at once, press **R2, L2, R1, Li, L2, R2, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, L2, Li** during gameplay.

MEDIA LEVEL CHEAT

Press **R2, CIRCLE, UP, Li, RIGHT, R1, RIGHT, UP, SQUARE, TRIANGLE** during play to display your media level.

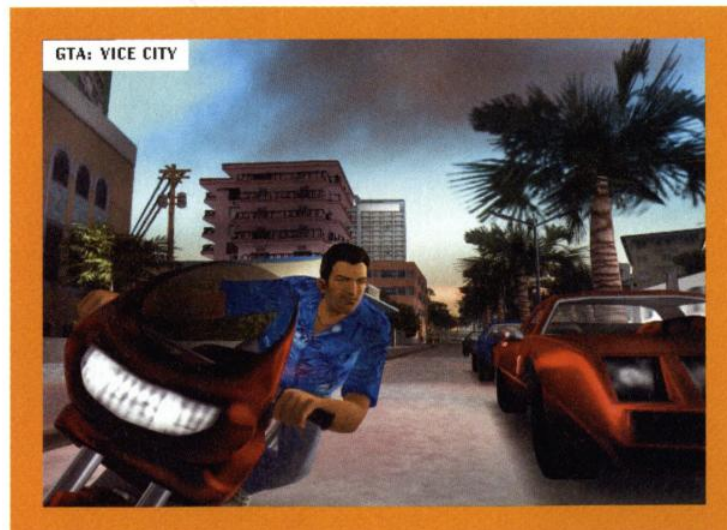
PSYCHO PEDESTRIANS

To make the pedestrians go psycho, enter this code during gameplay: **DOWN, LEFT, UP, LEFT, X, R2, R1, L2, Li.**

PLAY AS DIFFERENT CHARACTERS

To make Tommy look like another character in the game, enter one of the cheats listed below during gameplay.

- Red Leather: **RIGHT, RIGHT, LEFT, UP, Li, L2, LEFT, UP, DOWN, RIGHT**
- Candy Suxxxx: **CIRCLE, R2, DOWN, R1, LEFT, RIGHT, R1, Li, X, L2**
- Hilary King: **R1, CIRCLE, R2, Li, RIGHT, R1, Li, X, R2**
- Ken Rosenberg: **RIGHT, Li, UP, L2, Li, RIGHT, R1, Li, X, R1**



- Lance Vance: **CIRCLE, L2, LEFT, X, Ri, Li, X, Li**
- Love Fist 1: **DOWN, Li, DOWN, L2, LEFT, X, Ri, Li, X, X**
- Love Fist 2: **Ri, L2, R2, Li, RIGHT, R2, LEFT, X, SQUARE, Li**
- Mercedes: **R2, Li, UP, Li, RIGHT, Ri, Right, UP, Circle, Triangle**
- Phil Cassidy: **RIGHT, Ri, UP, R2, Li, RIGHT, Ri, Li, RIGHT, CIRCLE**
- Ricardo Diaz: **Li, L2, Ri, R2, DOWN, Li, R2, L2**
- Sonny Forelli: **CIRCLE, Li, CIRCLE, L2, LEFT, X, Ri, Li, X, X**

SLOW MOTION

To make everything go slow-motion, enter these during gameplay: **TRIANGLE, UP, RIGHT, DOWN, SQUARE, R2, Ri.**

SPEED UP TIME

To make everything go faster, press these during gameplay: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, Li, SQUARE, Li, SQUARE, SQUARE, SQUARE, Li, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE.**

TURN CARS BLACK

To make all cars black, press these during gameplay: **CIRCLE, L2, UP, Ri, LEFT, X, Ri, Li, LEFT, CIRCLE.**

TURN CARS PINK

To make every car a shade of pink, press these during gameplay: **CIRCLE, Li, DOWN, L2, LEFT, X, Ri, Li, RIGHT, CIRCLE.**

UNLOCK INFINITE SPRINT

To get infinite sprint, complete Level 12 of the ambulance mission. Tommy will then be able to sprint indefinitely without getting tired.

UNLOCK RHINO (TANK)

To unlock the awesome Tank, enter this code during gameplay: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, Li, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, Li, L2, Ri, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE.**

UNLOCK TAXI BOOST

Once you have dropped off 100 people during Taxi missions, you will unlock Boost, which allows you



to jump using the **L3** button whenever you're in a taxi.

UNLOCK TRASHMASTER

To unlock the garbage truck, press these during gameplay: **CIRCLE, Ri, CIRCLE, Ri, LEFT, LEFT, Ri, Li, CIRCLE, RIGHT.**

WEAPONS CHEAT

During gameplay, press the following for all weapons: **R2, R2, Ri, R2, Li, R2, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, UP, LEFT DOWN, RIGHT, UP.**

Def Jam Vendetta

UNLOCK ALL CHARACTERS

On any non-Story mode character select screen, hold **Li + L2 + Ri + R2** and enter the following codes to unlock that character:

- Arii: **X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE**
- Carla: **X, SQUARE, X, X, X**

Chukklez: **SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, CIRCLE**

Cruz: **CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, X, CIRCLE**

D-Mob: **SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE**

Dan G: **X, CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, SQUARE**

Deebo: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, X, X, TRIANGLE**

Deja: **CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, X**

DMX: **CIRCLE, X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE**

Drake: **TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, X**

Funkmaster Flex: **CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE**

Headache: **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**

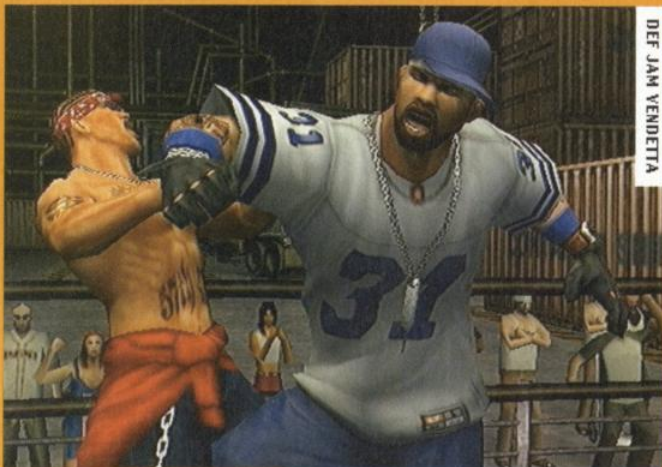
House: **TRIANGLE, X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X**

Iceberg: **SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**

Ludacris: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE**

Masa: **X, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, SQUARE**

Method Man: **SQUARE, CIRCLE, X,**



DEF JAM VENDETTA





ROCKY

T'ai: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, X, CIRCLE**
 Zaheer: **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, X, X**
 Briggs: (alternate costume 1) **X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**
 Briggs: (alternate costume 2) **X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, X, CIRCLE**
 D-Mob: (alternate costume) **SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, SQUARE**
 Drake: (alternate costume) **X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE**
 Manny: (alternate costume) **CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**
 Peewee: (alternate costume) **X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**
 Proof: (alternate costume) **X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE**
 Razor: (alternate costume) **SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE**
 Ruffneck: (alternate costume) **SQUARE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE**
 Spider: (alternate costume) **SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, SQUARE, CIRCLE**

UNLOCK DEEBO AND OMAR
 To unlock Deebo and Omar, beat the Story Mode with all four of the default wrestlers.



X2: Wolverine's Revenge

UNLOCK EVERYTHING
 Press **X, L, X, L, X, X, L, R**, at the Title Screen to unlock everything. You will know it has been entered correctly when you see "Level Select" appear in the Main Menu.

Rocky

DAMAGE/SPEED CHEATS
 These codes increase punch damage and speed. Enter them in the main menu.
 Damage - hold **R**, press **RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, UP, LEFT, L**.
 Speed - hold **R**, press **DOWN, LEFT, DOWN, UP, RIGHT, L**.
MAX STATS
 To have max stats for all boxers, go to the main menu and enter this code: **LEFT, UP, UP, DOWN, RIGHT, L** while holding the **R** button

TRIANGLE, CIRCLE
 Moses: **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, SQUARE, X**
 N.CIRCLE.R.E.: **CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, X, CIRCLE**
 Nyne: **SQUARE, CIRCLE, X, X, TRIANGLE**
 Omar: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE**
 Opal: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE**
 Peewee: **X, X, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE**
 Penny: **X, X, X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE**
 Pockets: **TRIANGLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, X**
 Razor: **TRIANGLE, SQUARE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, X**
 Redman: **CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, X**
 Ruffneck: **X, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE**
 Scarface: **CIRCLE, SQUARE, X, TRIANGLE, SQUARE**
 Sketch: **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, X**
 Snowman: **TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE, X, X, CIRCLE**
 Steel: **X, TRIANGLE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE**



X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

UNLOCK ALL BOXERS AND ARENAS
 Unlock all the boxers, statues and arenas by doing this at the main menu: hold **R**, press **UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, LEFT, L**.

WIN A FIGHT CHEAT
 On the main menu, hold **R** then press **RIGHT, RIGHT, LEFT, LEFT, UP, L**. While fighting in movie mode, get an instant win by pressing **BLACK + WHITE**.
UNLOCK MICKEY GOLDMILL
 Beat Movie Mode while playing through on the Champ setting.

UNLOCK THE GOLD CLASS TOURNAMENT
 Beat the Silver version of the Knockout Tournament.

UNLOCK THE ROCKY STATUE
 Beat Movie Mode while playing through on the Contender setting.

UNLOCK THE SILVER CLASS TOURNAMENT
 Beat the Bronze version of the Knockout Tournament.

Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2

UNLOCK ALL LEVELS
 Go to the cheats screen and press **X, B, B, X, L, L, Y, UP, DOWN, RIGHT, UP**.

V-Rally 3

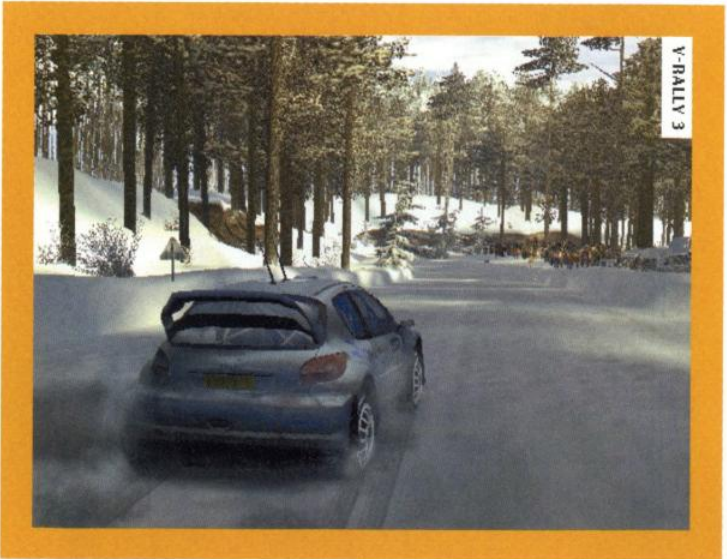
SHOWROOM FOLLIES
 At car select, use the **right joystick** and hold **LEFT** or **RIGHT** to open the corresponding door on the car; hold **UP** to pop the bonnet, and **DOWN** to pop the boot.

FLOATING CARS CHEAT
 Use **210741974 MARTY** as the name.

NON-VIBRATING JELLY CARS CHEAT
 Use **07121974 FERGUS** as a name.

PANCAKE CARS CHEAT
 Use **21051975 PTITDAV** as a name.

SMALL CARS CHEAT
 Use **01041977 BIGJIM** as a name.



V-RALLY 3



THE TWO TOWERS

SQUEAKY COMMENTARY CHEAT

Use a blank first name and use **PALACH** as the last name.

STRETCHED AND SKEWED CARS CHEAT

Enter **Gonzales SPEEDY** as a name.

WRECKED CARS CHEAT

Use **25121975 PILOU** as a name.

TimeSplitters 2

FAST RELOAD

Instead of reloading normally, go to the next weapon in your inventory, then return to the previous weapon. It will be reloaded already.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

GET FREE EXPERIENCE

To get 1000 free experience points, pause the game, then press and hold **L** and **R**. Then press **A, DOWN, DOWN, DOWN**.

INCREASE SKILL LEVELS

To increase your skills, pause the game and then press and hold **L** and **R**. Then enter the button presses below to increase your level skill:

Level 2: **B, RIGHT, B, RIGHT**

Level 4: **Y, UP, Y, UP**

Level 6: **X, LEFT, X, LEFT**

Level 8: **A, A, DOWN, DOWN**

RESTORE HEALTH

To restore health at any point during the game, pause, and then hold **L**

and **R**, and press **Y, DOWN, A, UP**.

ULTIMATE CHEATS

Once you finish the game, you will unlock some cheats. Pause the game, then press and hold **L** and **R**. Then enter the codes below to enable the corresponding cheat:

- Invincibility: **Y, X, A, B**
- Infinite Ammo: **X, B, A, Y**
- Devastating Attacks: **X, X, B, B**
- Small Enemies: **Y, Y, A, A**
- Slow-Mo: **Y, B, A, X**

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon

UNLOCK CHEAT MODE

To unlock Cheat Mode, finish all objectives in the single player missions. Once Cheat Mode is unlocked, you'll be able to use the codes listed below:

BIG HEADS

Hold **BACK** and press **A, X, B, Y, A** during gameplay. A message will confirm correct code entry.

CHICKEN HEADS

Hold **BACK** and press **X, X, Y, A, B** during gameplay. A message will confirm correct code entry.

FLAT CHARACTERS

Hold **BACK** and press **B, A, X, Y, A** during gameplay. A message will confirm correct code entry.

GOD MODE

Unlock Cheat Mode, then press and

hold **BACK**, and press **X, X, A, B, A**. You will not be able to complete the game with this cheat enabled.

HELIUM MODE

Hold **BACK** and press **X, A, Y, B, X** during gameplay. A message will confirm correct code entry.

HIT A HIGH NOTE

Hold **BACK** and press **X, A, Y, B, X** during gameplay. A message will confirm correct code entry.

Bronze Star - Accomplish **15** kills.

Silver Star - Accomplish **20** kills.

Distinguished Service Cross -

Accomplish **25** kills.

Congressional Medal of Honour -

Accomplish **30** kills.

SLOW MOTION

Hold **BACK** and press **Y, Y, B, X, A** during gameplay. A message will confirm correct code entry.

TEAM GOD MODE

Unlock Cheat Mode, then press and hold **BACK**, and press **B, A, Y, Y, B, A, X, X, X**. You will not be able to complete the game using this.



Freekstyle

UNLOCK EVERYTHING

To unlock everything, enter **LOKSMITH** at the Codes screen.

FASTER-FILLING FREEKSTYLE METER

To make your Freekstyle meter fill faster, enter the phrase **FIRESALE** at the Codes screen.

FREEKOUT ALWAYS AVAILABLE

To allow for Freekout tricks at all times, go to the Codes screen and enter the phrase **ALLFREEK**.

FULL METER FOR EVERY TRICK

To fill up your meter with every trick you land, enter the phrase **MO BOOST** at the Codes screen.

UNLIMITED BOOST

Get unlimited boost by entering **FREEBIE** at the Codes screen.

INVISIBLE BIKE

To ride around on nothing but air, enter this phrase at the Codes screen: **FLYSOLO**.

RIDER WEARS HELMET

To make each rider wear a helmet, enter the phrase **HELMET** at the Codes screen.

SLOW MOTION

To turn on a slow motion effect, go



GHOST RECON

to the Codes screen and enter the phrase **WTCHKPRS**.

LOW GRAVITY

Go to the Codes screen and activate this cheat: **FTAIL**.

UNLOCK ALL BIKES

To unlock all bikes, go to the Codes screen and enter this phrase: **WHEELS**.

UNLOCK ALL CHARACTERS

Enter the phrase **POPULATE** at the Codes screen to unlock all riders.

UNLOCK ALL OUTFITS

To unlock all outfits, enter the phrase **YARDSALE** at the Codes screen.

UNLOCK ALL TRACKS

To unlock all tracks, enter **TRAKMEET** at the Codes screen.

UNLOCK INDIVIDUAL RIDERS

To unlock each individual, go to the Codes screen and enter his/her corresponding phrase:

Clifford Adoptante: **COOLDUDE**

Mike Jones: **TOUGHGUY**

Jessica Patterson: **BLONDIE**

Greg Albertyn: **GIMMEGREG**

UNLOCK TRACKS

Unlock these tracks by enter the corresponding phrases at the Codes screen:

Burn It Up: **CARVEROK**

Gnome Sweet Gnome: **CLIPPERS**

Let it Ride: **BLACKJAK**

Rocket Garden: **TODAMOON**

Crash Pad FreeStyle: **WIDOPEN**

Burbs FreeStyle: **TUCKELLE**



Sonic Mega Collection

LEVEL SELECT FOR SONIC 1

At the main title screen, press **UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT**. Hold **B** to go to the Level Select and Sound Test screen.

LEVEL SELECT AND DEBUG MODE FOR SONIC 2

To select levels in Sonic 2, go into Sound Test Mode. Play these sounds: **19, 65, 09, 17**. Hold **X** and press **Start**. Once you get to the title screen, hold **B** and press **Start** to see the Stage Select feature.

To get Debug Mode, play songs **01, 09, 09, 02, 01, 01, 02**, then **04**. Hold **B** while selecting a stage by pressing **Start** to get Debug Mode.

LEVEL SELECT AND DEBUG MODE FOR SONIC 3

To get to the Level Select in Sonic 3, press **UP, UP, DOWN, UP, UP, UP** after you hear SEGA, but before the main screen appears.

Once you enter the code correctly, Level Select and Sound Test will appear on the title screen when you press Up. To get Debug Mode to work, hold **B** and select a stage with **Start**.

SECRET STAGE ON SONIC 3

Enter the Level Select code, then go to Sound Test. Play the following sounds: **01, 03, 05, 07**. Move to Special Stage 2. Once it's highlighted, hold down **B** and press Start.

SONIC 1 DEBUG MODE

To unlock Debug Mode for Sonic 1,

press **UP, X, DOWN, X, LEFT, X, RIGHT, UP, X, DOWN, X, LEFT, X, RIGHT, X**. After this, hold **B** and press **Start**. Once in the game, press **A** for Debug Mode.

• Restore health (team): **chthealteam**

• Weapon select: **chtweap** (0-30)

Postal 2

CHEAT LIST

Press the tilde key to bring up the console. You need to enter **SISSY** to enable cheat mode.

God mode - **alamode**

All weapons - **packnheat**

Extra ammo - **payload**

All weapons/god mode -

iamsolame

Extra doughnuts - **piggytreats**

Extra money - **jevsforjesus**

Extra dog treats - **boyandhisdog**

Extra catnip - **iamtheone**

Extra cats - **lotsapussy**

Extra health pipes - **jones**

All radar items - **swimwithfishes**

Rocket camera - **fireinyourhole**

Body armour - **blockmyass**

Gimp suit - **smackdatass**

Police uniform - **iamthelaw**

Full health/medkits - **healthful**

Clipping - **ifeelfree**

Flight mode - **likeabirdy**

Vexx

MEDIUM SUPER MOVE

Vexx can do a slower, more powerful version of his 3-hit combo. By pressing attack at a slower pace, and holding it on the last blow, Vexx does a moderately powerful uppercut that refills more of his special meter. Use **R** to use the super move at the right time.



Vietcong

CHEAT LIST

Press the tilde key to bring up the cheat console. Type **"giftfrompterodon"** to activate the cheat mode. Then type one of the phrases below to activate the cheat.

• Enemies don't do damage:

chtkostej

• Enemies wear masks: **chtcannibals**

• Get grenades: **chtgrenades**

• Quickfights: **chtallqf**

• Refill ammo: **chtammo**

• Restore health: **chtheal**



Burnout 2: Point of Impact

UNLOCK NEW CARS

To unlock the cars below, complete the corresponding goals:

Custom Compact: Beat Custom Series Qualifier.

Custom Coupe: Get all gold medals at Split Second Grand Prix.

Custom Muscle Car: Beat Pursuit 6.

Custom Pickup Truck: Beat Pursuit 5.

Custom Roadster: Get all gold medals at the Point Of Impact Grand Prix.

Custom Sports Car: Get all gold medals at the Speed Streak Grand Prix.

Custom SUV: Beat Pursuit 4.

Gangster Car: Beat Pursuit 3.

Hot Rod Car: Beat Face Off 1.

Japanese Muscle Car: Beat Face Off 2.

Oval Racer: Beat the car in Face Off 2.

Police Car: Beat Pursuit 1 and destroy the criminal's car.

Super Car: Beat Face Off 4.



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.



One Hour Photo

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED M15+

Mark Romanek's stylised character study and mood piece is visually interesting and extremely well acted; pity it's so predictable.

Romanek has stated that he wanted to make a "lonely man" film in the spirit of *Taxi Driver*, and in that he has succeeded. Robin Williams' Sy Parrish is a very lonely man. Middle-aged, unmarried and seemingly friendless, Sy lives for his work — developing other people's photos at a huge suburban shopping complex called SavMart. In particular he likes developing the photos of the Yorkin family — mum, dad, and young Dylan. They seem to have everything: big house, dog, yard, and smiles. Their photographs are soaked in self-satisfaction.

Sy doesn't smile — except when in the company of the Yorkins or their photos. He's desperate for the kind of happiness the Yorkins seem to

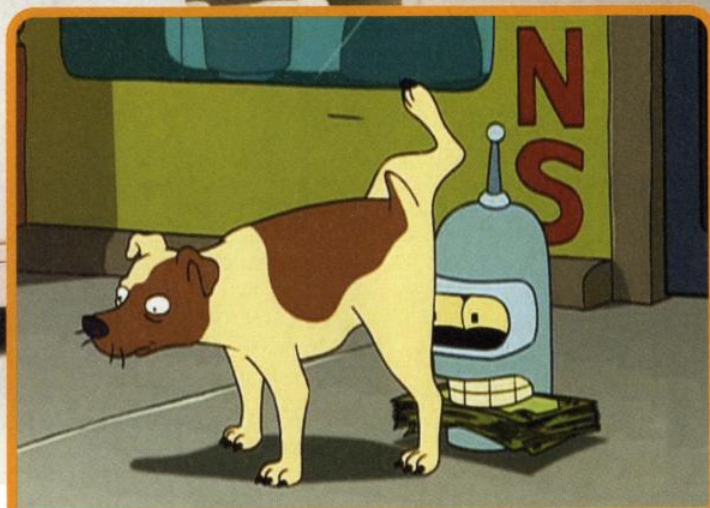
have in spades, and, as the film opens, he's beginning to crack.

Williams can't seem to play a character without making him sympathetic, and I suspect that's why he was cast; the real villain here is not Sy, but the soulless, generic, humdrum, banal SavMart. Suburbia, consumerism, and the mall have conspired to render Sy's life meaningless and sad; his growing misbehaviour seems almost reasonable for someone who's a little off-kilter to begin with.

Romanek makes the mall as bland as possible, filled with florescent lighting, no windows, and lots of white. He also deploys a low, annoying hum, and the result is claustrophobic and creepy. He's made a grim, quiet, modern cautionary tale, but mood alone can't sustain a pretty tired premise.

Unforgivably, there are no extra features! **Christopher Johnson**

MOVIE: 6 EXTRAS: 0



Futurama SEASON 2

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED TBA

This four DVD set comes packing 19 bundles of futuristic animated goodness, and although not every episode is a killer, as a whole *Futurama* just keeps getting better. There are some truly classic episodes in this season. "A Bicyclops Built For Two" has some of our favourite scenes, with its hilarious depiction of the internet (nothing but porn and ads that

attack you) and gaming in the year 3000, not to mention a spot-on parody of *Married With Children* (Leela IS voiced by Katey Segal after all), but pretty much every episode has something that'll crack you up. Who could forget Bender selling his body, Fry eating breakfast cereal off his own head, the Gender Bender, evil robot Santa, Flexo, the Robot Mafia, the much-appreciated killing of Hanson, and the excessive nudity that seemed to become a standard in this season?

As with the DVD release of season one, the pick of the extras are the episode commentaries, as they consistently feature a large slice of writers, directors, animators and voice talent. There are also storyboards, trailers, deleted scenes and an animatic. Well worth owning. **Cam Shea**



It stops you going bald. Honest!

MOVIE: 8.5 EXTRAS: 6.5

Buffy SEASON 6

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED TBA

Fox have been very proactive in getting Buffy out on DVD, and we're already up to season 6 - definitely one of the strongest seasons since Angel left town. Buffy is resurrected from the dead, but doesn't really want to be back, the three mega-geeks Warren, Andrew and Jonathan attempt to become super villains, Xander leaves Anya at the altar, Buffy and Spike get biz-ay, and Willow becomes addicted to dark magix. Two of our favourites episodes from this season would have to be "Once More, With Feeling", the infamous Buffy musical, and "Normal Again" where Buffy begins to believe she has been in an insane asylum for the last six years and her adventures as the slayer are all part of an intricate web of delusion. Season 6 also has a particularly



Sondheim eat your heart out.

memorable conclusion, with Tara's death sending Willow into wicka beserker mode, almost resulting in yet another apocalypse.

There are plenty of extras to enjoy. "Once More, With Feeling" in particular gets the royal treatment, with fantastic commentary from writer/director Joss Whedon, a making of featurette, and even karaoke for several of the songs! Great stuff. **Cam Shea**

MOVIE: 8.5 EXTRAS: 7



The Outer Limits

MGM, RATED M15+

Like all great sci-fi series' from the 60s (The Twilight Zone, Star Trek) The Outer Limits played upon the fear of the unknown, and not just in terms of social change, but also changes in technology that have and continue to impact our society to this day.

Each volume contains eight episodes on two disks of the B/W originals with no features whatsoever (unfortunately). Regardless of this though, if you're a true Outer Limits fan, you'll find yourself in flashback heaven with classic episodes such as Corpus Earthling, where living rocks control humans by absorbing themselves into the victim, or Nightmare, where a team of

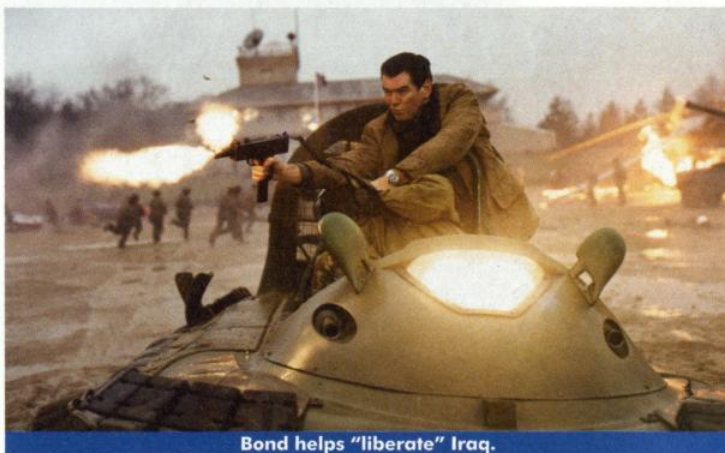
soldiers are sent to an alien world only to be captured and experimented on by the natives.

Even though the story lines are outlandish, certain episodes have inspired current filmmakers such as James Cameron, and Steven Spielberg offering an idea of the imagination involved. The series was revived in the early 90s with better production values and story lines that were more relevant to the era, here's hoping in the near future these revised episodes will also be released on DVD. For the time being though, fans of the 90s series (like myself) can step into the monochrome and creepy world that is The Outer Limits. **Laurence Bennett**

MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 0



What happens when you play games for 20 years.



Bond helps "liberate" Iraq.

Die Another Day

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED M15+

Everybody loves a good Bond film, but *Die Another Day* only just manages to qualify as such. Don't get us wrong, there are some decent action scenes, reasonable villains (Zao comes close to being the next Jaws courtesy of his diamond encrusted face) and an interesting set up for the storyline, but the film lacks a convincing flow. There are some painfully cliched moments too, like when Jinx (Halle Berry) is strapped to

a table with a slow burning laser about to cut through her head. Oh, and the scene where Bond surfs a tidal wave? Cringe. Still, if you can switch your brain off, this film has pretty much everything we've come to expect from Bond - a super weapon launched from a satellite, sweet car chase scenes, plenty of gadgets, loose women and some of the worst double entendres ever.

Die Another Day comes with enough features to please even the most die-hard Bond fans. In addition to two sets of commentary tracks accompanying the film, there's a second disc packed with behind the scenes featurettes, music videos, trailers, multi-angle scenes, before and after comparisons of digitally altered scenes, photo galleries and DVD-ROM content. **Frank Dry**



"You're entirely made of silicone?"

MOVIE: 6 EXTRAS: 7

The Transporter

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED M15+

How did this ever get made? *The Transporter* is truly wretched. An eighties-style actioner, it's one of those movies where bad guys sit around in huge mansions wearing suits and playing cards all day, and everyone knows martial arts.

Jason Statham (*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch*) puts on a truly dire American accent (for no logical reason) as Frank, a "transporter" who, ridiculously, lives in a cliff-top chateau in the South of France, and transports illegal goods, no questions asked. When he is hired to transport a young woman (Shu Qi) he finds himself caught up in the type of trouble that has men in suits firing bazookas at his house...

The music is abominable, the martial arts scenes are uninspired, the plot is ludicrous. Worse still,

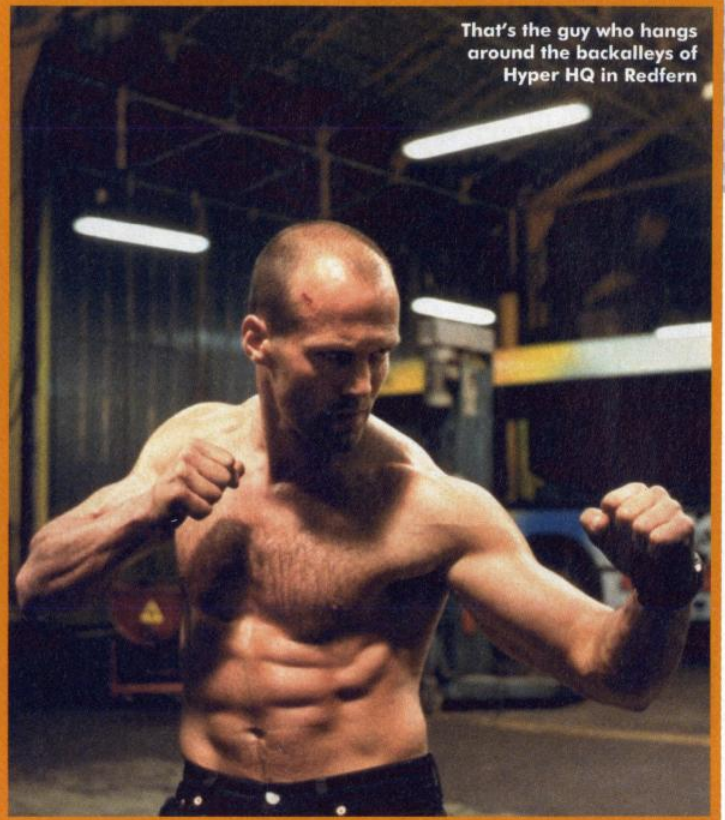


That'll stop you singing NSYNC

there's very little action until the end! Statham smirks like a bad Bruce Willis parody, and Shu Qi is simply appalling. The acting in *Final Fantasy* was better.

Movies simply don't get much worse than this. It's so bad it'll make you angry. Thankfully there are no special features. **Christopher Johnson**

MOVIE: 1 EXTRAS: 0



That's the guy who hangs around the backalleys of Hyper HQ in Redfern

Beneath Clouds

MAGNA PACIFIC, RATED M15+

Iván Sen's debut feature tells the slight tale of two young people heading to Sydney. Lena (Dannielle Hall) is a light-skinned Irish / Aboriginal girl who's run away from home to look for her white father. Vaughn (Damian Pitt) is an Aboriginal boy who's escaped from a low-security prison to visit his sick mother. They meet on the road and travel together, sometimes walking, sometimes getting lifts from strangers or friends.

The trouble is that this is pretty much the whole film. There are many beautiful shots of the Australian landscape (and clouds in particular) but very little substance to the story. Hall and Pitt make attractive leads but they're simply

not experienced enough to carry the weight of an entire feature film on their shoulders, especially with very little dialogue. The film is mostly made up of meaningful looks, which on these actors' faces aren't that meaningful.

Every policeman in the film is portrayed, simplistically, as spitefully racist. There is no real ending, and, ironically for a road movie, no real journey. The film certainly has a few things to say about the continuation of racism in modern Australia, but ultimately it's a case of style over substance. The cinematographer (Allan Collins) is the real star here.

Trailers are the only feature.

Christopher Johnson

MOVIE: 5 EXTRAS: 1



Nothing like a bit of toad porn.

Cane Toads: An Unnatural History & The Natural History of the Chicken

UMBRELLA ENTERTAINMENT, PG

You simply can't go wrong with this hysterical double feature from documentarian Mark Lewis. His use of animals to bring out the wacky wonders of the human race is always inspired, and these films are two of his best.

Cane Toads (1987) was his first and finest achievement, the cornerstone of his career, and it remains one of the funniest documentaries of all time. We learn of the introduction of Cane Toads to Queensland in the early twentieth century as a failed controller of the cane grub, their breeding patterns, their poisonous self-defenses, and of the humans who love them, hate them, keep them as pets, run them over deliberately, and of those who boil them down and drink them as a hallucinogen.

History of the Chicken (2000) was made in the United States and introduces us to various breeders and lovers of the noble fowl. It also recalls great chickens of history, including Mike, who lived for eighteen months after his head was cut off!

Both films are riotously funny. The cinematography is gorgeous and Lewis gets a lot of mileage from horror music and dramatic recreations of actual events. Ultimately, though, it is the amazing assortment of human subjects Lewis has assembled that are so compelling. A director's commentary for *Chicken* gives a good insight into his methods.

Very highly recommended.

Christopher Johnson

Cane Toads
MOVIE: 10 EXTRAS: 6

Chicken
MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 6



The actors have this bad habit of looking at the camera...

ANIME

Cowboy Bebop: The Movie

PRODUCTION COMPANY: SUNRISE
GENRE: ACTION

It doesn't have nearly as much fanfare as other 'blockbusters', but for older anime viewers, *Cowboy Bebop* represents a new high water mark in panache and good taste; a fusion of style and mature, laid-back storytelling that only a person who understands that life never works out as planned can appreciate. A self-contained story that takes place towards the latter end of the television series, *Cowboy Bebop: The Movie* serves as something of an origin story as well.

PURSUIT OF NEW BOUNTY

Industry darling, Yoko Kanno, provides a fresh new score that sometimes meanders treacherously close to '80s rock, but always comes back to the ultra-hip *Bebop* style. The movie isn't a brilliant technical achievement by any standard — nor is

the story about a bio-terrorist who spreads his evil with microscopic nanobots. What fans will really appreciate, though, is that the movie provides more of what they loved most about the series: the pursuit of new bounty by the protagonists, glittered with all the irony, drawbacks and even humour of the vicissitudes of life. Spike Spiegel's 'shrug it off and smile' attitude is likeable as ever, which goes a long way to punctuating any moment he actually takes to something seriously.

Of course, all the other established favourites have their role to play. The fight scenes are nicely choreographed, Faye Valentine is inspiring and free-spirited, and Ed is still as fruity as ever. Best of all, it's not completely necessary to have seen the television series in order to appreciate the film. In fact, the complexity and depth of the characters and their setting will likely compel you to watch the series from scratch!



"How did you manage to get THAT stuck up there?!"



Please don't point that thing at me.



Backalley plastic surgery.

ANIMATION 9 PLOT: 7 OVERALL: 8

WXIII

PRODUCTION COMPANY: BANDAI VISUAL
GENRE: DRAMA, SCI-FI

This is the third movie in the *Patlabor* series, and it isn't what you'd expect it to be. While fans will have become familiar with Shinohara, Izumi, Ohta and crew in the television series and the first two movies, this third movie is more of an offshoot or spin-off that takes place within the *Patlabor* universe. The result is the opportunity to test new modes of intellectual storytelling, which for the most part works remarkably well in the context of the *Patlabor* world.

COVER YOUR EYES

Veteran cop, Kusumi, and his youthful partner, Hata, are assigned a case involving a series of Labor-related accidents. The story is told from their perspective, being purposely and effectively character driven, and the facts behind the case they are

investigating unravel before us as they discover them. You'll really get drawn into their world, all their little insecurities, and the differences in their lifestyle. It makes the final revelation all the more shocking (cover your eyes for the rest of the paragraph if you don't want to see the spoiler): that they've been tracing the footsteps of a monstrous biological weapon codenamed WXIII, or Wasted Thirteen.

The production values of this feature film are simply awe-inspiring. So much attention to detail has been poured into the film that even the simple things — like the trail of water left by a car's windscreen wipers in the rain — are worth gaping at. The surround sound, too, creates a brilliant atmosphere, especially with Yoshimoto Ishikawa's haunting musical score. Best of all, unlike other over-marketed CG love-fests like *Blood: The Last Vampire*, this movie runs for a decent length. Thoroughly absorbing.

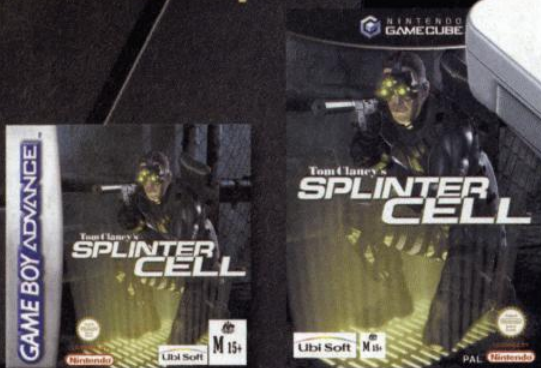


Here honey, I brought your incontinence pads.

ANIMATION 10 PLOT: 8 OVERALL: 9

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Tom Clancy's
SPLINTER CELL



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- 1 X GameCube – RRP\$299
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APRIL WINNER

HYPER 114 - XBOX SYSTEM, YAGER & FLIGHT JACKET

Ben Slinger, Mount Evelyn, Victoria



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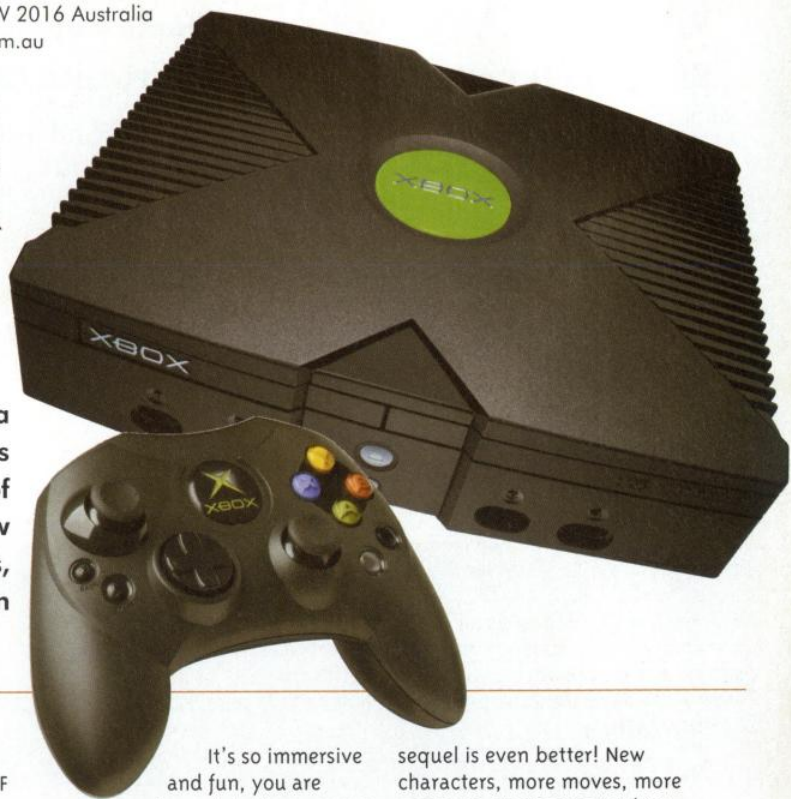
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FORUM

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

Q. WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE XBOX GAME TO DATE, AND WHY?

There's no doubt that the big black box has been a successful addition to the console market. Microsoft has proved the naysayers wrong with a healthy collection of great software and some stunning first party titles. Now that the Xbox has been with us for just over 12 months, we thought we'd find out what your favourite games on the system are.



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...

“Will online console gaming be successful?”

Responses will be printed in Hyper 119.

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.

SPECIAL SEGA

Jet Set Radio Future. That's right. JSRF is not only the best Xbox game but also probably the best game I've ever played (apart from MGS and Half-Life). I know most will wonder what the hell I'm on, and what I see in a ridiculous Japanese funky-skating-graffiti game, and why I don't say Halo or Splinter Cell. Well, to fully appreciate this game you first must finish it completely. When I reached the final ending video I was very emotional, knowing that the most funky and enjoyable game I had ever played had come to an end.

Sure the game gets frustrating (VERY frustrating) but the satisfaction in finishing it and saving the coolest place on earth – Tokyo – makes you feel special. The second part is to finish it and go buy or borrow other games and play them to death. Then one day when you're bored you decide to have a crack at getting the rest of the graffiti souls and you re-discover the world of JSRF, and that's when you realise it's the best game in the world.

It's so immersive and fun, you are drawn into the awesome world of neo-Japan and no matter how much you complain about the cheesy music you still know in your heart that it's easily the most awesome game. Apart from that it also has HUGE levels in which you can occupy yourself for yonks, outstanding visuals, mostly

awesome music and overall it is so fun. JSRF is the best game on Xbox and one day you will ALL realise its beauty. Peace out.
Dave

THE SOUL STILL BURNS

“The Legend Will Never Die.” We all remember that famous line from the one and only Soul Calibur on Dreamcast, now we can lay that old horse to rest and in its place comes a new challenger and my fave Xbox game to date – Soul Calibur 2.

I loved the original and this

sequel is even better! New characters, more moves, more weapons, gorgeous graphics (especially in 720p) and the best sound effects I have ever heard in a fighting game.

I have played all the major fighters on the Xbox and Soul Calibur 2 creams all of them. This game has so many things to unlock its not funny, most of which have to be bought by winning gold through Weapon Master mode.

Working through Weapon Master mode is one of the most rewarding things this game has to offer. You start out with fairly easy opponents and then gradually they get more and more difficult as you progress. You even get the chance to play hidden characters which cannot be played in the standard Arcade mode, but I'm not going to give too much information away...

Anyway, I hope I didn't make this sound too much like a review but I just can't get enough of this game. Previously my favourite was Halo and it's still one of my all-time favourites but Soul Calibur 2 is a totally different game and cannot be compared. And who doesn't like Soul Calibur?

Thanks
Cary Pichler



GREEN SWIRLS

Hey Hyper,

My favourite Xbox game to date? Well there are heaps that I could choose from but in the end it would have to be the incredible Halo. Not only did Halo have everything, but the amount of things that you can do in Bungie's masterpiece is glorious. It would take years to explain the amount of tactical and crazy things my friends and I have done in the game, most of the time resulting in my mates losing their temper from non-stop selections of the 'revert to saved' option. Doing barrel rolls and back flips in jeeps, doing rendezvous in co-op mode are just awesome to look at. And there is nothing better than having your mate drive a jeep and having you drop from a banshee landing in his gunner seat and cutting down every covenant arse you can find. The list for Halo goes on. Apart from this, honourable mentions would go to Morrowind, Deathrow, and Mortal Kombat Deadly Alliance. And of course, making your own custom soundtracks. The awesome green swirls can make you dizzy. Hyper rules keep up the awesome work.

MUDVAYNIAN

HALO, OF COURSE

Hey Hyper

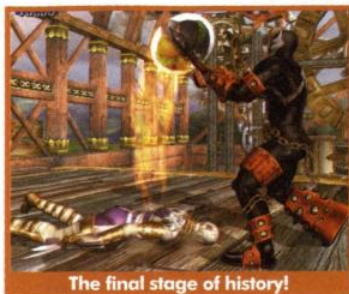
I would have to say that my favorite Xbox game would have to be Halo. I hate first person shooters (except for GoldenEye) made for consoles and the PC because they are all the same kind of gameplay. Halo on the other hand is cool because there is more to it than just blasting your way through rooms and blowing up enemies. Though Halo is not one of the best games made, it sure as hell is one of the best Xbox games out. Bring on Halo 2!

Heero yuy

TAKE A GUESS

Hello Hyper,

Since getting my second Xbox at Christmas last year not so many months ago along with the new 51cm



The final stage of history!



They should just call the next one BLAU.

TV, there have been games and games of Halo going on, not just between my bro and I, but my friends even my dad gets in on the fun. Sometimes it is all out blood gulch (*insert gun loading sound here*) and it is non-stop all the way. With the capability of the link cable, I have just recently been told how to link up two Xboxs and am about to get that up and running so that all hell will break loose when my friends and I play. There will be heads rolling on that day my friends, you can count on that blau blau blau (*insert screaming sound here*).

So as you all can probably guess, my favourite game is Halo, and I say... "Long live the master chief" and I cant wait for the next one to come out...

CJC

IT'S A PHOTO FINISH

My Favourite Xbox game to date.

There can only be 2 games that stand out for my fav box. They would have to be Halo and Splinter Cell. It took a while to decide (this included reading their reviews and playing them through again) which was the better game. I finally chose the exclusive Halo, due to its ongoing linkup gameplay.

It just keeps amazing me how exciting each game can be, whether you have Blood Gulch capture the flag, or prisoner odd ball or even Battlecreek king of the hill with rockets only. Of course I have at least 5 or 6 people playing. Sometimes my friends and I have Halo parties that

go through the night of endless fun. I just can't stop raving on about it. It's so damn good.

The only negative points on this issue was I gave time up playing Halo to dispose of Jackson Balme (how could you say that?) and that Halo 2 would be delayed until 2004. Damn that to hell, now I have to wait another year for it. Oh well as long as I can keep playing linkup Halo to fill the void.

Spruce Moose

SPLINTERS FEEL GOOD

Dear Hyper,

Besides the fact that there's no room in our entertainment cabinet for my Xbox in the living room, I still enjoy it enough to drag it out of the cupboard and plug it all in almost every day. In fact, I think I probably use it more than I use my GameCube which I put with pride of place underneath the TV in the cabinet. Where for art thou, GameCube games?

I spent a stupid amount of time playing Halo, but I think my favourite Xbox game is easily Splinter Cell. This game looks awesome and is hell fun to play — because you can experiment with how you kill the bad guys. There are so many different ways of approaching it. It really puts you in the mood.

I can't wait for Splinter Cell 2 (please tell me they're making it?), so for now I'll just keep practising my Sam Fisher skills.

Vicious Baby

THE FUTURE RULES

I gave this month's topic serious consideration before answering back, and of the four games I own (Halo, JSRF, Blinx and Mechassault), I felt Jetset Radio Future deserved the crown. The backdrops were absolutely spectacular to behold, and the diversity between them was pretty cool too. And the graphics, no words can describe the coolness. My friends all said it sucked due to repetitiveness and lack of storyline. I told them about how they could unlock cool characters at the end like Zero Beat and Yoyo's dog, they didn't even know who Zero Beat is! Knobheads. Anyway gotta go, Simpsons is on. Cheerio.

Oliver Chaseling



FEEDBACK

»HYPER 93

MAIL

✉ HYPER LETTERS:

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

XBOX LIVE XPENSIVE?

Dear Hyper,

Could you please tell me whether it would use up a lot of Mb when playing on Xbox Live? As most broadband ISPs charge according to usage, it would be useful to be able to estimate about how much we need to pay to play Xbox Live games, say for an hour. I know it varies, but even a rough estimation would be good.

Thankyou,

Benjamin Chui

Dear Benjamin,

Good question. Unfortunately, it's pretty difficult to answer. Microsoft has supplied information that leads us to believe that data transfer with Xbox games is slightly lower than your average online PC game. We'll be able to test it for you soon.

HYPER LISP?

Dear Hyper

First off, great mag. Secondly, could you please answer these 3 completely unrelated questions which have been bothering me for some time?

1. How come you always refer to the girl in Final Fantasy VII as Aerith? When I play the game she is called Aeris. What's the deal with this?

2. Why is the PS1 referred to as a PSX at times? What does PSX stand for?

3. Was there ever a game called Metal Gear on the SNES? I heard somewhere that there was.

Thanks for your time and I hope you continue to make a great mag.

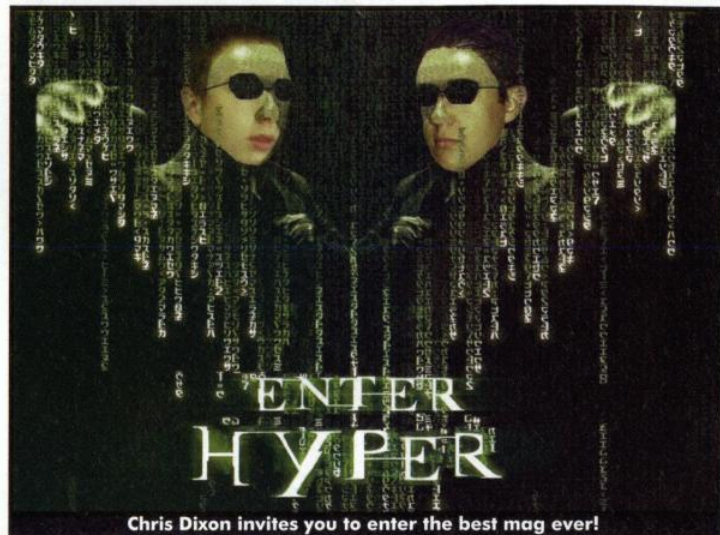
From Barret

Dear Barret,

1. Aerith is the direct translation from the Japanese version of the game, whilst the character was re-named Aeris for the English versions. We don't know why she was re-named, but we like Aerith better.

2. Another long time mystery! There are conflicting stories for how PSX became Sony's official way of shortening PlayStation. Supposedly, Sony used "PSX" whilst the machine was still in development, and it just stuck. Some say Sony may have originally intended it to stand for Xperience or Xperiment, but simplified it to PlayStation. But the PSX remains to this day.

3. It's like this: Metal Gear was on



NES (and MSX, C-64), Metal Gear 2 was on MSX2 and Snake's Revenge was on NES. Then there was Metal Gear Solid on PSX and so on.

THE BLAU MYSTERY

Hey Hyper,

What the hell does BLAU mean? I first noticed it in your review of Serious Sam, and since then this strange word has plagued your mag. Also, will GTA 3 or Vice City be released for Xbox? Please say yes.

What is up with you giving Lord of the Rings: Two Towers 83 freakin' percent!!? It has got to be one of my all-time

favourite games. I personally had no problems with this game other than it was too short!

Well, there's my 2 cents.

P.S. You guys really should bring back the cover CD.

Timesplitter_X

Dear Timesplitter_X,

BLAU is a Hyper creation, we admit. We just found ourselves saying it all the time when we did something cool in a game, something exploded or someone beat someone in a fighting game etc.

We're getting word that the Grand Theft Auto games will be ported to the other platforms sometime in the future.

As for The Two Towers - yes, it was a little on the short side, and when it comes down to it, it was pretty much just a beat 'em up.

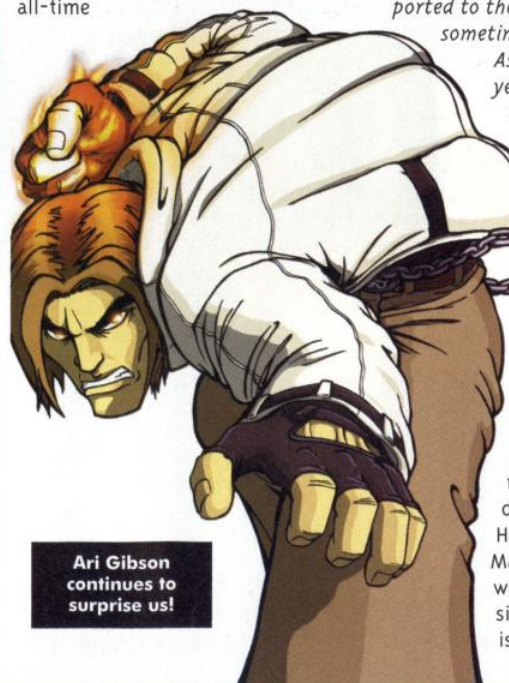
CAPTION THIS!

PART 42 WINNER

Hyper reader, **Matt Green**, was quick off the mark with the winning caption this month... even if it was a little cheesy, ho ho!



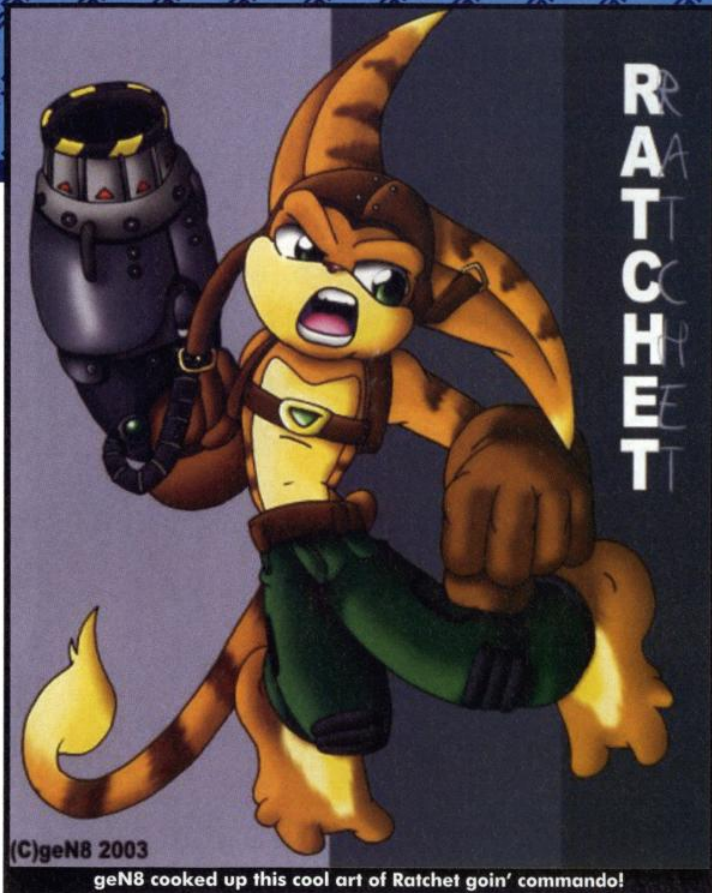
**You want more cheese on your pizza?
I'll give you more cheese, damn it!**



Ari Gibson continues to surprise us!

MASTER OF MIRRORS

I would like to know if the producers of Halo know that they made a mistake on the Halo game box and disc. I just realised a couple of days ago that on the Halo disc it shows Master Chief in the warthog on the right side of the jeep and he is driving. but that is



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(C)geN8 2003

geN8 cooked up this cool art of Ratchet goin' commando!

not possible because the driver sits on the left side of the jeep and it is proven on the back of the game box. could you pass this on to the producers.

Thanx. Yours sincerely,
A Halo gamer

Dear gamer,

All that has happened, is an artist has "flipped" the image that appears on the disc. It's been reversed either by accident or because it looked better on the disc that way.

GOOD MANNERS

Hey Hyper,

I was reading your mail section recently and I came to the conclusion that you are running out of intelligent readers. *COUGH* Jimmy Holster *COUGH* Issue 115 *COUGH*. C'mon Jimmy, the captions are great! I'm 17 and even I got the uncle Fokker joke. But back to the point... As you seem to be running low, I felt the need - no, the responsibility - to fill a section of your letters page with my wisdom.

Firstly, how are you? I'm guessing you don't get that much (I work in a supermarket, I have the same feeling) You doing all right? Not feeling dizzy or anything? Good stuff. Secondly thanks for all the help with the games, you're the reason I didn't buy The Getaway and all those other big name sacks-o-shit. (Can I say that?) Just a hint, how about a list of all fairly recent

reviews (like a year's worth) and their corresponding issue. I get so irritated when I can't find the right issue. Finally, I know you were expecting this, just a few short questions.

1. Is Star Wars KotOR coming to any other consoles? I really need to play this. 2. And, does my butt look big in this?

Spanks,
Tism

Dear Tism,

We're fine, thanks for asking.
1. Knights of the Old Republic is only on Xbox and PC. Because the game was delayed by LucasArts, we couldn't bring you a review this issue, sorry! Next issue!
2. Biggest. Butt. Ever.

LEVEL-UP YOUR LEARNING

It recently occurred to me that games these days just aren't educational. Now, I know that if I take a trip down to my local video game reseller that I can easily find a copy of "My First ABC" or "Maths Attack", but I'm not referring to those types of games. I'm referring to mainstream games. Why can't the games we all play on our computers and consoles slip in tiny tidbits of wisdom for those hungering to increase their general knowledge?

For example, perhaps some of the recent racing games could have sneaked in some helpful real life driving hints for those struggling

LETTER OF THE MONTH

ATARI GOODNESS

Hyper,

A few weeks back me and 2 of my mates went out for a few drinks. We'd get to a place, have a drink, get bored, then move on. Until we came to "metropolis" in North Sydney. We knew it sucked, but we needed to rack up as many spots in one night as we could, and besides, it was on the way. Now I wouldn't recommend this venue to anyone, unless of course you're after some serious arcade action on an original Space Invaders arcade machine.

I don't know if it was the 2 dollar drinks, or the fact that Baby Got Back was on high rotation, but we managed to stay for an unprecedented 45 minutes. We were hysterical (possibly from the red beans and rice), and we swore at that moment that we would go thirds in a Space Invaders sit-down arcade machine. Well, two weeks later we went one better. I successfully bid on 2 Atari 2600 machines (1 for me and 1 for my mates) and am now the proud owner of over 15 games.

After getting the unit, and playing Space Invaders, Combat, Chopper Command, Outlaw, KungFu Master and Freeway, it got me thinking - I've really missed gameplay. Now I'm not going to go on about how the new games are missing this all important ingredient, but when you have a bunch of mates sitting around yelling at a game like Outlaw, most of which admit they hate gaming, you realise that these games rely solely on gameplay. All this retro-ness has started something. Two weeks after getting the 2600, I bought an Atari Lynx. 1 week later, a Nintendo 64 with Goldeneye.

Now Hyper-crew, I need a favour. I rely on you guys a lot for my gaming decision making (sometimes I don't listen and I always regret it) so I was wondering if you would even consider making a top 5 or 10 list for every console ever made? I reckon that would be pretty cool.

Thanks,
Brett

Dear Brett,

I still regret selling my Atari 2600 & my Commodore 64. At least I was smart enough to keep my SNES! Enjoy the quality gaming. Your idea for a top 5 on every console ever made is a nice one. We just might do that...



You've won a Microsoft® IntelliMouse® Explorer for PC! Best. Mouse. Ever.

The IntelliMouse® Explorer is an ergonomic optical mouse with five re-programmable buttons and an excellent feel for serious gaming!

16-year-old learners. Or why not use the overwhelming amount of war games to finally explain to some of us (myself included) which order the army ranks go in.

Hell, even a game like DOA: XBVM could offer some pointers for those tricky spikes. It's obvious that no one plays educational games these days, and with all the complaints from worried parents that games rot the brain, there must be a solution. And there is: subliminal (educational) messages! Well anyway, this letter made a lot more sense this morning when I was half asleep, so you'll have to bear with me.

Sleep Deprived

Dear Sleep Deprived,
Educational games? Please God, no! Aiiiiieeeee!

DAIKATANA REVISITED

Dear Eliot,

Recently I've seen a lot of people slagging off Microsoft, because it took over Rare, or because Windows is on most computers now. These people don't seem to realise that Microsoft is a business, and the idea of a business is to make profit. So every time Microsoft makes a decision, it is because it benefits the company. It's not going to do something so that its share price falls is it?

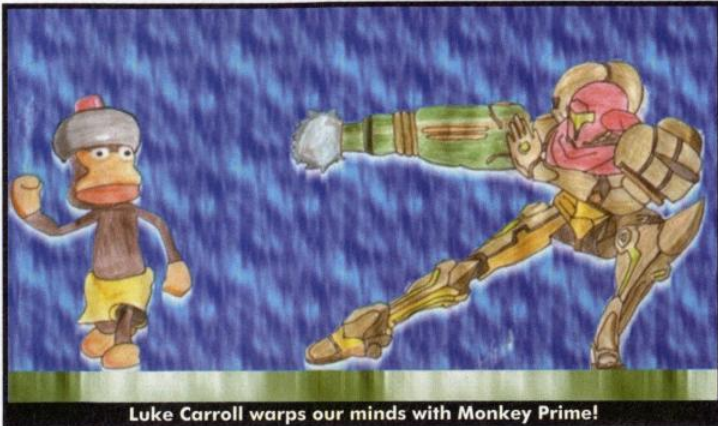


Graeme Wigginton
Links us up. Nice one...

FEEDBACK

»HYPER 95

MAIL



Luke Carroll warps our minds with Monkey Prime!

I guarantee that 90% of all Microsoft haters have Windows, or use Hotmail or Messenger. Hypocrites.

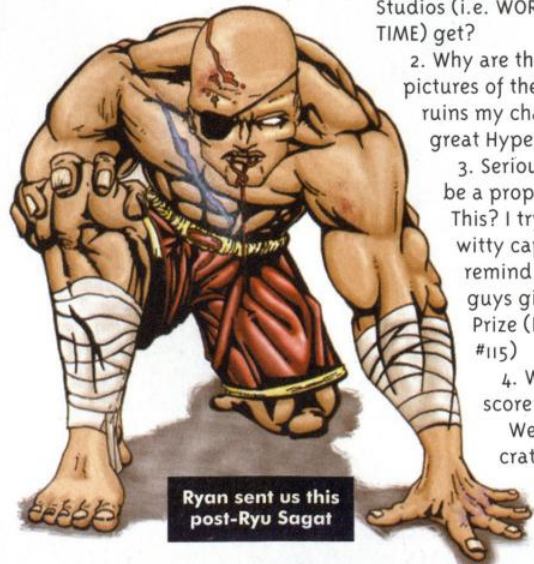
On a more positive note, I just want to say thanks for your review of Splinter Cell. I bought the game solely on your review (something I don't usually do), and have to say it's one of the best I've ever played.

And just a quick question, did you review the game Daikatana? Lots of people (including your magazine) say it's shockingly bad, but I don't remember a review. Why was it crap?

Cheers
Phillip

Dear Phillip,

Daikatana was a classic example of a game that gets caught in development hell. It was endlessly delayed (and probably endlessly re-designed), and when it finally saw the light of day, you could tell that it was a game that should have been released about three years earlier than it was. We fear the same will happen with Duke Nukem Forever.



Ryan sent us this post-Ryu Sagat

SICK OF STEALTH

Hein Hyper!

Out of the three magazines I bought last month, yours was the best. Your magazine tops the official magazine by a factor of ten - they must be paid to turn a blind eye or something. The Getaway - 9/10? Seriously, I've got one important thing to discuss and a few questions to ask.

First off, stealth is being over-used in my opinion. From the great (Splinter Cell, MGS2) to the good (Tenchu, Sly Raccoon) and the somewhat middling (Harry Potter), there is simply too much stealth. I don't have anything against stealth - Splinter Cell is too good to describe - I feel everyone's cashing in on it just to make their games sell. We used to like action-packed games such as Doom and TimeSplitters but now we want sneakiness, not alerting people to our presence, yada yada yada - I've done it to death. If there is any game out there that can make a balance between being sneaky and fragtastic action, I want it.

1. What score did Universal Studios (i.e. WORST GAME OF ALL TIME) get?
2. Why are there never any pictures of the Hyper crew? This ruins my chance to do some great Hyper-related fan art.
3. Seriously, shouldn't there be a proper prize for Caption This? I try to come up with witty captions only to remind myself that you guys give out a stupid No Prize (Pete Barker's letter, #115)
4. Will a game ever score over 97%?
Well, as they say, crates out,

Rob Ward



Mark Withington managed to melt our hearts with this one.

Dear Rob,
We agree - developers are using stealth now as a marketing tool, rather than deciding if their game actually needs it.

1. We snapped the disc in two before we could write anything. It would probably score 0%.
2. Because we're all so good looking you'd think we were some stupid boy band or something.
3. What's wrong with a no prize? You greedy kids, actually wanting something!
4. We hope so!

EASY READING

HYPER,

I'd like to shed some light for a reader in issue #115 regarding your humour, or apparent lack of. I'm 25 and have followed this magazine since its birth and enjoy the humour immensely. I think however, the reason I've stuck with HYPER, is because as an old school gamer and collector, I can relate to the HYPER

style of writing. Not because I'm childish or crude, but because I understand other gamers. I get the "fokker" jokes and the "have at you" puns, and wouldn't have it any other way. I am a hardware nut and buy various mags for PC gear and other related items, but only for the info. I look forward to my Sunday arvo read each month's HYPER as there is no "elite" bound bias to any hardware or cheap digs at other people's likes/dislikes.

HYPER rate the games hard and don't feed you B.S. It's like listening to a well-humoured mate telling you the facts. I like to call it easy reading at its finest. By the way, It takes very NON-amateurish people to keep a mag running for so long and make you feel so comfortable while reading it. I am a writer myself and know a good format when I see it.

Keep up the good work guys
Phracta

And with that we bid you farewell until next month! Blau!

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

TOP 10

PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | ▲ | GTA: Vice City | Adventure |
| 2 | ▼ | Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell | Adventure |
| 3 | ◆ | Grand Theft Auto 3 Ptm | Adventure |
| 4 | ▲ | The Sims | Strategy |
| 5 | ▲ | V8 Supercars | Racing |
| 6 | ⊕ | X-Men Wolverines Revenge | Adventure |
| 7 | ▲ | Devil May Cry 2 | Adventure |
| 8 | ◆ | Medal Of Honor: Frontline | Action |
| 9 | ▼ | Harry P Chamber Of Secrets | Adventure |
| 10 | ⊕ | Need For Speed HotPursuit 2 | Racing |

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | ▲ | Grnd Thft Auto Collectors Ed | Adventure |
| 3 | ▼ | Harry P Chamber Of Secrets | Adventure |
| 3 | ◆ | Dragonball Z: Ult Battle 22 | Action |
| 4 | ⊕ | YuGiOh Forbidden Memories | Adventure |
| 5 | ◆ | FIFA 2003 | Sports |
| 6 | ▼ | Stuart Little 2 | Adventure |
| 7 | ▼ | Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 | Sports |
| 8 | ▲ | Tomb Raider 3&4 Cllectors Pk | Adventure |
| 9 | ▼ | Final Fantasy Origins | Adventure |
| 10 | ▼ | Space Chase Pack | Compilation |

TOP 10

Game Cube Games Over \$40

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | ◆ | Metroid Prime | Adventure |
| 2 | ⊕ | X-Men Wolverines Revenge | Adventure |
| 3 | ◆ | Sonic Mega Collection | Adventure |
| 4 | ▼ | The Sims | Strategy |
| 5 | ◆ | Super Mario Sunshine | Adventure |
| 6 | ▼ | LOTR: Two Towers | Adventure |
| 7 | ◆ | Mario Party 4 | Family |
| 8 | ▼ | Resident Evil Zero | Adventure |
| 9 | ▼ | Medal Of Honor: Frontline | Action |
| 10 | ▼ | Starfox Adventures | Adventure |

TOP 10

Xbox Games Over \$40

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | ◆ | V8 Supercars | Racing |
| 2 | ◆ | The Sims | Strategy |
| 3 | ▲ | Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell | Adventure |
| 4 | ⊕ | X-Men Wolverines Revenge | Adventure |
| 5 | ⊕ | NBA 2K3 | Sports |
| 6 | ▼ | Medal Of Honor: Frontline | Action |
| 7 | ⊕ | Crash Band: Wrath Of Cortex | Adventure |
| 8 | ▲ | Kung Fu Chaos | Action |
| 9 | ▼ | Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon | Strategy |
| 10 | ▼ | LOTR Two Towers | Adventure |

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$30

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | ⊕ | Vietcong | Action |
| 2 | ▼ | The Sims Deluxe | Strategy |
| 3 | ▼ | The Sims Unleashed | Strategy |
| 4 | ▼ | Sim City 4000 | Strategy |
| 5 | ▼ | C & C Generals | Strategy |
| 6 | ◆ | Harry P Chamber Of Secrets | Adventure |
| 7 | ▲ | Delta Force: Black Hawk Down | Adventure |
| 8 | ▲ | Age Of Mythology | Strategy |
| 9 | ▼ | The Sims Hot Date | Strategy |
| 10 | ▼ | Chmpnshp Mnger4 2000/01 | Sports |

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | ◆ | Pokemon Sapphire | RPG |
| 2 | ◆ | Pokemon Ruby | RPG |
| 3 | ◆ | Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age | RPG |
| 4 | ◆ | H Potter Chamber Secrets | Adventure |
| 5 | ◆ | Dragonball Z: Legacy Goku | Action |
| 6 | ▲ | Zelda: Link to Past/4 Swords | RPG |
| 7 | ▼ | Sonic Advance 2 | Adventure |
| 8 | ◆ | Yoshis Island: SMA 3 | Adventure |
| 9 | ⊕ | Game & Wtch Gllery Advnce | Compilation |
| 10 | ▼ | Mario Kart Super Circuit | Racing |

TOP 10

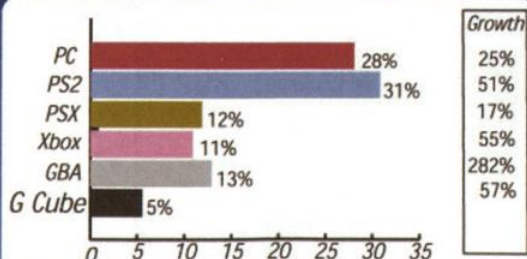
All Full Priced Games

W/E 4 May 2003
RETAIL SALES

- | | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | ⊕ | Vietcong | PC/MAC |
| 2 | ▼ | Pokemon Sapphire | Game Boy Adv |
| 3 | ◆ | The Sims Deluxe | PC/MAC |
| 4 | ▼ | Pokemon Ruby | Game Boy Adv |
| 5 | ◆ | GTA: Vice City | PlayStation 2 |
| 6 | ▼ | Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell | PlayStation 2 |
| 7 | ▲ | V8 Supercars | Xbox |
| 8 | ▼ | Grand Theft Auto 3 Ptm | PlayStation 2 |
| 9 | ◆ | The Sims Unleashed | PC/MAC |
| 10 | ◆ | The Sims | PlayStation 2 |

MARKET WATCH All Games by Platform

April 03 vs May 03
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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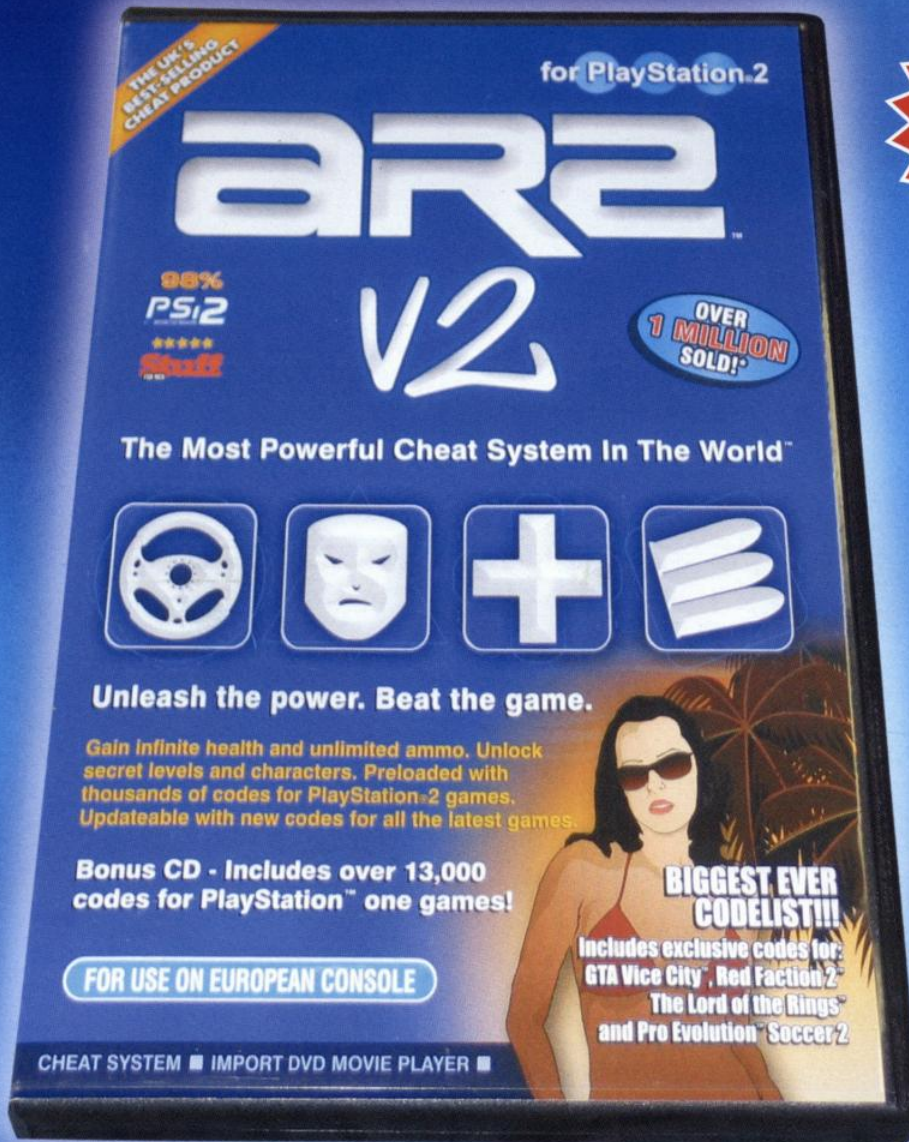
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