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ADVANCE WARS 2: THE THINKING GAMER'S GBA GAME



ISSUE 118  
AUGUST 2003

# HYPERSX



XBOX

HALO 2



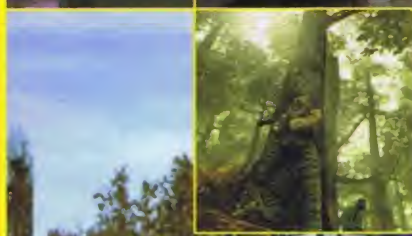
PC

HALF-LIFE 2

## GAMES OF THE FUTURE

What will you be playing a year from now...?

OVER 50 TITLES PREVIEWED!



PS2

GRAN TURISMO 4

next GAMING



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PlayStation 2



PlayStation 2



PAL



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# EVIL DEAD

## A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

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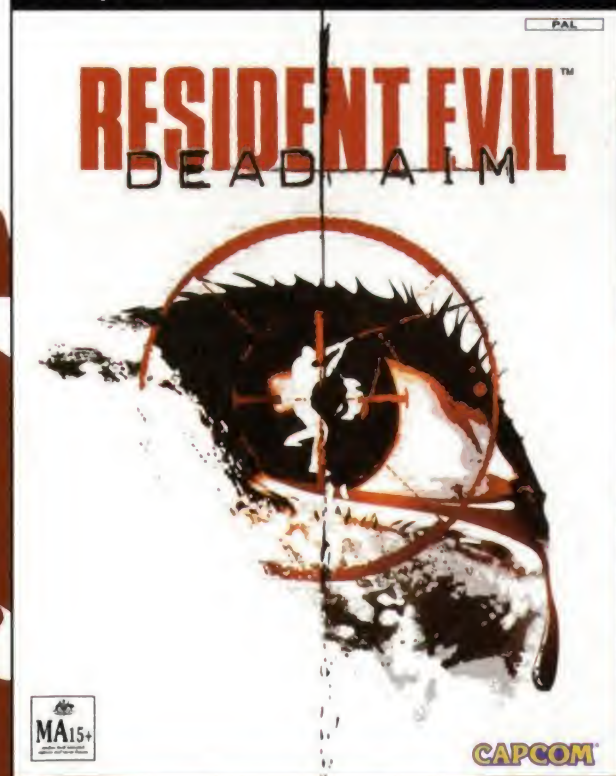
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EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

PlayStation 2



PAL



# RESIDENT EVIL™

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RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM

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# EVIL DEAD

## A FISTFUL OF BOOMSTICK

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### WRITE TO HYPER!

78 Renwick St, Redfern  
NSW 2016, Australia  
Ph: (02) 9699 0333  
Fax: (02) 9310 1315  
E-mail: [freakscene@next.com.au](mailto:freakscene@next.com.au)

### EDITORIAL

Editor: **Eliot Fish**  
Deputy Editor: **Cam Shea**  
Art Director: **Malcolm Campbell**

### ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager: **Joel Graham**  
E-mail: [joelg@next.com.au](mailto:joelg@next.com.au)  
Ph: (02) 9699 0349

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription Co-ordinator: **Mark Tesoriero**  
For all Subscription enquiries phone:  
(02) 9699 0320  
Email: [subs@next.com.au](mailto:subs@next.com.au)

### MANAGEMENT

Publisher: **Phillip Keir**  
Finance Director: **Theo Fatseas**  
Operations Manager: **Melissa Doyle**  
National Sales Director: **Sue Ostler**  
E-mail: [sue@next.com.au](mailto:sue@next.com.au)  
Ph: (02) 9699 0346

### PRODUCTION

Production Co-ordinator: **Monique Layt**  
E-mail: [moniquel@next.com.au](mailto:moniquel@next.com.au)  
Ph: (02) 9699 0300  
Fax: (02) 9310 2012

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### CONTRIBUTORS

Contributors: Daniel Staines, March Stepnik,  
Daniel Wilks, Kosta Andreadis, Brett Robinson,  
Tim Levy, Christopher Johnson, Shakil Ahmed,  
Frank Dry, Stephen Farrelly, Harold the  
Huntsman, Maria and Yarra.

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## EDITORIAL

»» When you cast your eyes across the stunning line-up of games in our huge previews feature, you'd think the gaming future couldn't look any brighter. Half-Life 2, Deus Ex 2, Halo 2, Doom III, Gran Turismo 4, F-Zero GX, Metal Gear Solid 3... and that's when you realise that most of the big games that we're all looking forward to so feverishly are nothing but sequels of great games that have gone before. Yeah, these iterations will still be special – there's no doubt about that – but where are the jaw-dropping original new titles? Surely this sequelrama can't continue indefinitely... can it? Has the industry given up any kind of creative crusade? Is it happy to just "keep pumping them out"? Will we be playing Metal Gear Solid 4 on our new PS3? Halo 3 on our new Xbox 2? Quake IV? Zelda again? Surely the day will come when these cash cows have finally exhausted all possibilities, and we're sitting in wonder in front of games like we've never seen before. We can only dream.

**Eliot Fish »» Editor**

# HULK

## UNLEASH THE FURY! OUT NOW

Following the events of the blockbuster Universal Pictures film, troubled scientist Dr. Bruce Banner and his alter ego, The Hulk, battle The Leader, a terrifying villain intent on unleashing a relentless army of gamma creatures.



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PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



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# NEWS

**IN THE NEWS:** New Sony gaming device ■ Console Wars 2 ■ Arnie chomps cigars ■ Bulletproof Monk screens ■ Blizzard crack down

## UNEXPECTED INFO!

# SONY UNVEIL THE PSX

## Huh? PSX? But...

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, Sony go and announce a brand new games system. Well, it's more a set-top box, really, and it's got nothing to do with the still-to-come PlayStation 3 (see our Coming In 2005 story below). In any case, Sony are pushing to firmly establish themselves as the entertainment hub of the living room, and they're getting everything right so far...

### SLEEK & SEXY

Dubbed the PSX (yes, we know the first PlayStation is known by that nickname – those labcoats at Sony must have really run out of ideas!), the new device can play PS2 (and PSone) games, features a DVD-R (that's a recordable DVD drive in

case you've been living under a rock), a 180GB hard disk, a TV-Tuner (yes, so you can record your favourite TV shows to DVD), memory stick compatibility, USB 2.0 and more features such as broadband connectivity. It's also finished in a very sleek and sexy chrome and white casing, that would look most fetching alongside the latest Bang & Olufsen audio sculpture... or maybe that should be Sony audio sculpture, right? The discs are even fed into a cool front-loading slot! Basically, who wouldn't want one of these? It really does appear to be a very smart collection of features – including gaming – in the one smart unit.

Technically, it won't run games any better than the current PS2

hardware, so don't expect a souped-up games console. But considering the system will feature a whopping hard drive, you could theorise that some game developers will make PlayStation 2 games exclusively for this PSX device, or at least games that have optional features that work on the PSX. Who knows what's possible? It's still early days yet, and the PSX is in final stages of development, meaning that some features may change – including the physical design.

The release is aimed at Japan for the end of this year, with Europe and US to follow. There's a very good chance that it will be released here in Australia, so keep your fingers crossed. No details on pricing are available at this stage.



Front loading disc... sexy!



Aww it's so cute.



Next to the biggest TV in the world.



## DON'T BE FOOLED!

### Evil UK pranksters...

An image has circulated around the internet of what is apparently a PlayStation 3 logo. The rumour goes that it was shown around at a meeting with RAM company, Elpida Memory. It looks official enough, but it was an old April Fool's joke executed by a certain UK PlayStation magazine. A handy reminder that the net can deceive.

## NEXT-GEN

# COMING IN 2005

## Console Wars 2: The Rise of the Machines

Nintendo has once again pledged to have their next games console ready for launch in 2005, promising to get it out before either Sony or Microsoft are ready to follow-up with PS3 or Xbox 2. An early launch appears to be the only way Nintendo can grab an early lead on the next generation of games consoles and ensure that they are not once again left behind in the dust of the other players.

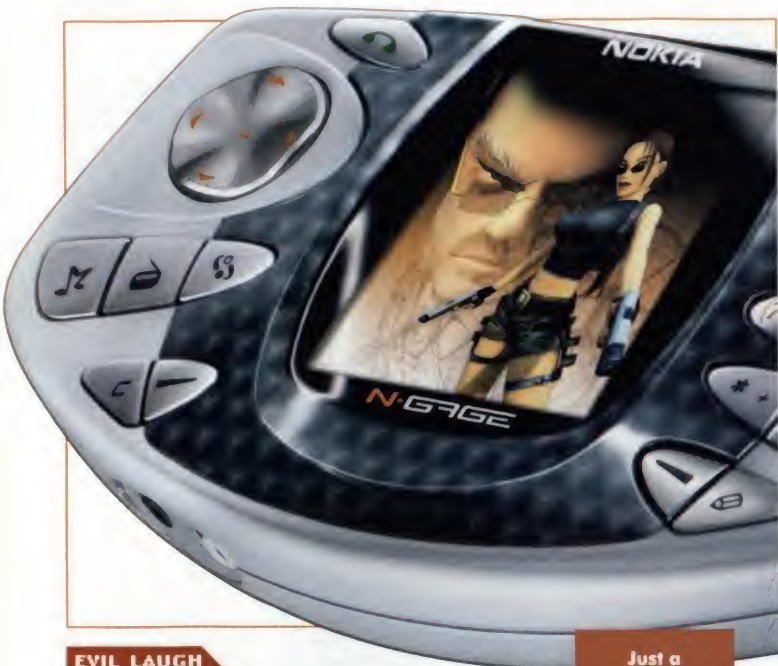
Some industry insiders are even

speculating that Nintendo could try to draw attention away from Sony's PSP handheld launch at the end of 2004 with a premature launch of their new console in Japan. This rumour would also jibe with the belief that Sony will launch the PlayStation 3 in 2005, as promised, leaving Nintendo no option but to aim at Christmas 2004 in order to stay one step ahead in market share.

What of Xbox 2? It's in the design stages already, but Microsoft has remained tight-lipped on when further

details will surface. Presumably, Microsoft would be in the position of ensuring the Xbox's reputation of having hardware more advanced than their competitors, by holding off the release of Xbox 2 until after PS3 and the successor to GameCube, to gain the benefits of advancements in PC technology. Whichever way you look at it, there's going to be another gruesome console war come 2005. And what was that little birdie saying about Sega...? Tweet tweet!





**EVIL LAUGH**

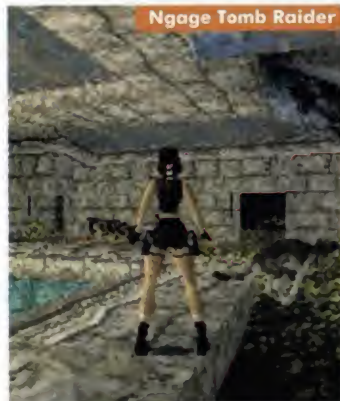
Just a placeholder screen pic that.

## NOKIA TAUNT NINTENDO

GBA just for kids?!

❖ Nokia N-Gage entertainment chief, Ilkka Raiskinen, has been quoted as saying "Game Boy is for 10 year-olds. If you're a 20 or 25 year-old, it's probably not a good idea to draw a Game Boy out of your pocket on a Friday night in a public place." Er, has he even seen the super sleek GBA SP? No doubt, Nokia are hoping that adults will perceive the pricey Nokia N-Gage to be a far cooler handheld gaming device to pull out of your pocket on a Friday night. Except, what will you play on it? The sublime strategy game, Advance Wars 2? No, that's on the "kids-only" GBA... How about a port of Tomb Raider? No thanks, Nokia. Unless they starting getting a better

understanding of the gaming market, the Nokia N-Gage is going to have a serious uphill battle.



**HACK-FREE**

## BLIZZARD BITES BACK

Cheaters shown the door

❖ In a bid to save their Battle.Net gaming network from once again falling prey to



dirty cheaters, Blizzard Entertainment has sniffed out and cancelled the accounts of around 112,000 users, which follows-up the spring clean they had in April when they cancelled some 130,000 accounts. Some users were even using map-hacking programs. That's about a quarter of a million users kicked off Battle.Net for cheating. Is there anyone left? Why can't people play online games for the challenge? Pathetic cheaters once again spoil the party.

**EXCITING!**

## INTRODUCING REAL TIME WORLDS

New Developer Ready To Rock

❖ Three high profile gaming veterans have combined their superpowers to start a new games development studio, Real Time Worlds, over in Scotland.

David Jones (the creator of Lemmings and the Grand Theft Auto franchise), has teamed up with Ian Hetherington (founder of Psygnosis and former chief of Sony Europe), and Tony Harman (former director of development and acquisition at Nintendo of America), to focus on delivering the latest gaming concepts designed by Jones.



WHO ARE WE?  
WHAT WE DO?  
WHERE ARE WE?  
HOW WE DO IT?  
JOB



There are two games in development by the new company, one of which is reported to continue Jones' GTA concepts into new territory. Sounds like we should all keep a sharp eye on what these talented guys are up to...

## CAPTION THIS!

Come on, make us laugh. Do your best. You can do it! Just send your funny screen captions to us at [captionthis@next.com.au](mailto:captionthis@next.com.au) with Caption This Part 45 in the subject line.



Mihihihih!



CHOMP...

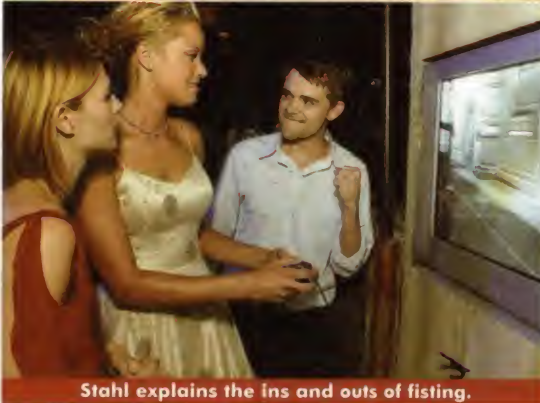
## HE'S BACK... AGAIN

Arnie Wheeled Out For Game PR

Hyper was on hand in Los Angeles when Atari revealed the upcoming Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines console game. Rubbing shoulders with Arnie, Claire Danes, Nick Stahl and the new Terminatrix, Kristanna Loken, we managed to squeeze the stars out of our eyes long enough to check out how the game is looking. With a release not scheduled until November this year, Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines should continue the current string of tie-ins that are proving to be a cut above the average movie-based videogame trollop. It should also help erase all those awful memories of the most recent Terminator product (it didn't really classify as a game) that was pumped out. T3: Rise of the Machines will also be in theatres in July.



Where's Danny DeVito?  
Awwwww...



Stahl explains the ins and outs of fisting.



The cigar is behind his back...

## E3 GAMES CRITICS AWARDS

Xbox Is Loved, Half-Life 2 Rules

At this year's E3 Games Critics awards, the Xbox wound up with four exclusive awards:

**Best Console Game:** Halo 2 (Microsoft Game Studios)

**Best Original Game:** Full Spectrum Warrior (THQ)

**Best Role Playing Game:** Fable (Microsoft Game Studios)

**Best Simulation Game:** Full Spectrum Warrior (THQ)

Other games to get awarded honours, include Half-Life 2 for PC (*Best of Show*, *Best PC Game*, *Best Action Game*, *Special Commendation For Graphics*), Soul Calibur 2 (*Best Fighting Game*), Gran Turismo 4 for PS2 (*Best Racing Game*), Rome: Total War for PC (*Best Strategy Game*) and Tony Hawk's Underground for all platforms (*Best Sports Game*). The Game Critics awards are voted on by over 40 editors from a variety of gaming press.

IT'S EVIL

## NONE MORE BLACK

New GBA SP Colour

Due to the enormous success of the Game Boy Advance SP, Nintendo are making a new colour available — Onyx (Black) will join the Colbalt (Blue) and Platinum (Silver) units on shelves nation-wide.

In Australia the Game Boy Advance and Game Boy Advance SP have achieved combined sales of over 300,000 units of hardware and over 700,000 units of Game Boy Advance software since launching in June 2001. And now you can buy the cool Spinal Tap model, it's even better.



AWESOME

## IS IT TRUE?

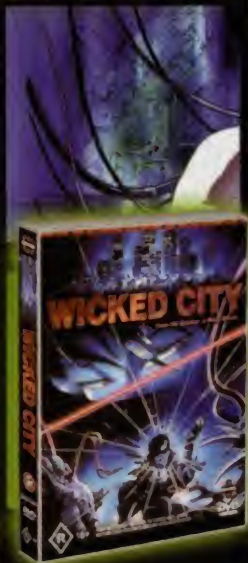
3D Chip For Game Boy Advance!

It has been reported in European gaming circles that Nintendo are set to reveal a special GBA FX chip at ECTS this year. The GBA FX chip, much like the FX chip that was designed for the SNES (remember Stunt Race FX?), is integrated into cartridges to allow game developers to pump out 3D graphics that the current hardware is incapable of. This will be crucial to the lifespan of the GBA, now that Sony has revealed its plans for the 3D capable PSP handheld in 2004.

THE CREATORS OF THE ANIMATRIX PRESENT THEIR MASTERWORKS ON DVD

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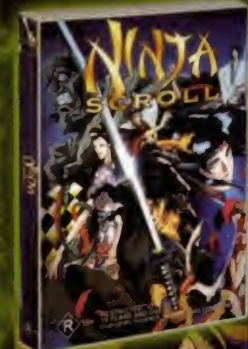
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**TWISTED**

## METALLICA THE GAME

### New Widdly Widdly Genre?

▶▶▶ Mammoth metal band, Metallica, has signed a multi-year agreement with Vivendi Universal, allowing the games publisher to make a vehicle-based combat game that uses Metallica's music and members' voiceovers and likenesses. Apparently, if you go buy their new album, *St. Anger*, you'll find a sneak-peek trailer of the game. It's time to ride the lightning!

OH... NO!

## NINTENDO KILL THE NES & SNES

### They were still making them?

▶▶▶ Nintendo has finally ceased its NES and SNES production. Not that any of us actually knew they still had the ability to manufacture new units of the classic

consoles, but there you have it. In Japan, people were still able to buy the 'Famicom' and 'Super Famicom', but as of September they will finally be no more. Sob.



**FINALLY?**

## GTA III: JAPAN

### Capcom bring the love

They love non-linear action games right?



▶▶▶ I bet you read that headline a few times. What we're saying, is that Capcom has signed an agreement with Rockstar games to finally bring Grand Theft Auto III to the Japanese market where it has never been released. Will it be as massive there as it has been everywhere else? We'll see...

**TECHY**

## EXPLORER STANDS ALONE

### Microsoft looks to integrate

▶▶▶ As Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser becomes more and more part of the Windows operating system, it looks like the current standalone browser has become a thing of the past. Brian Countryman, Microsoft's IE program manager, was quoted in an interview as saying that "...there will be no future standalone installations. IE6 SP1 is the final standalone installation." Microsoft claim that it is an essential step in ensuring PC security, although others would accuse them of once again attempting to corner the browser market by requiring any Windows user to use IE.

## OVERFLOW

Consumers may have noticed that both the Xbox and PS2 dropped in price last month, both consoles falling to a \$329 price point. Nice. However, we really think the time is right for the magical \$299 mark, don't you?

Games publisher 3DO filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in a Californian court last month. Looks like all those Army Men games finally took their toll. CEO, Trip Hawkins, is hoping for a complete sale of the company or all of its assets. Naturally, its share price fell a whopping 64% after the announcement.

Worst URL ever award goes to the new Half-Life 2 forum at Sierra:  
<http://community.vugames.com/WebX?13@7.xSb5byykX1o.o@.efda915>

Nintendo president Satoru Iwata has revealed that Nintendo are working on a new mascot to replace both Mario and Pokémon in the future. He stated that both Mario and Pokémon are "no longer up-to-date".

After this year's E3, Sony has had developers knocking down their door wanting to develop for their new PSP handheld device coming in 2004. A Nintendo vs. Sony handheld war in 2005? You bet.

## WINNERS

### Hyper 116

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**ANIME!**

## MANIFEST 2003

### Infinite Possibilities

▶▶▶ The Melbourne Anime Festival is on again! Come along to enjoy the Infinite Possibilities explored at Melbourne's only dedicated Anime Convention. Manifest features Screenings, Panels, Dealers, an Anime Auction, a Great Debate, Karaoke, Roleplay and competitions including Trivia, Cosplay, Fanfiction, Anime Music Videos and Anime Artwork.

Manifest is run by five Melbourne Anime Clubs - MACC, SAC, MAS, WWWA & LUNASY - as a way of promoting anime and manga to a



wider audience. So if you think

anime is restricted to Pokémon or Dragonball Z or weird stuff broadcast on SBS, then perhaps you should come along to see the true picture. And if you already know the true story, come along to expand your horizons. There will be something new for you to see.

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**Star Ocean: Till the End of Time**  
PS2 Developer: Square Enix



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



Lara's just around the corner! Heh.

**FINISHED**  
**GOLDEN TOMB**  
Finally, It's Done!

Lara Croft isn't just coming back to the silver screen in Tomb Raider 2: Cradle of Life, but her console adventures are finally going to continue in Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness. The game was reported to have "gone gold" last month, and should be hitting retail stores across the world – including Australia – as you read this. If you can show a little patience, we'll bring you a full review next issue.

# real

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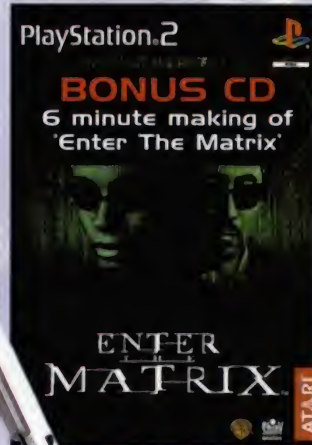
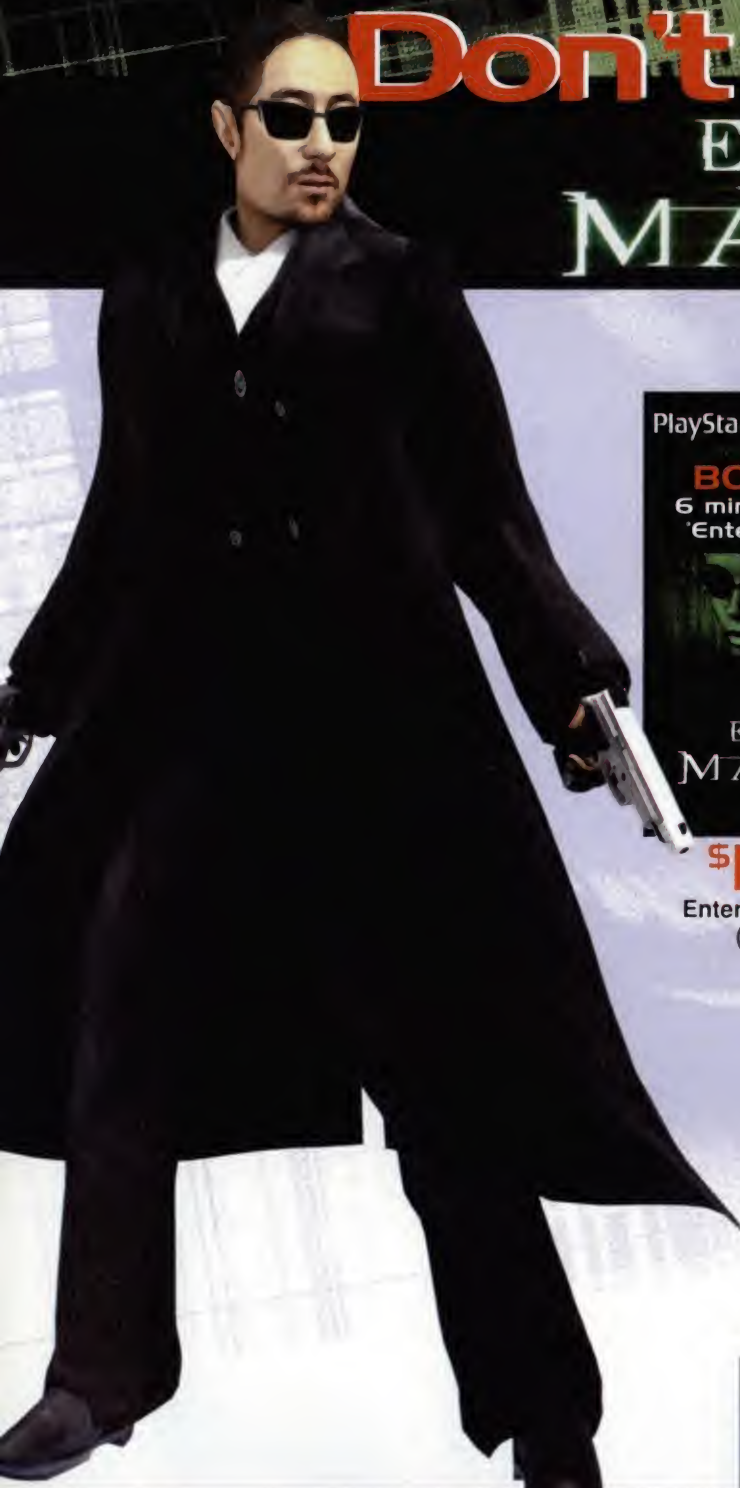
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# Don't Just Watch

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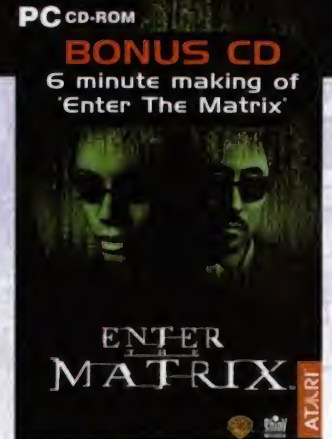
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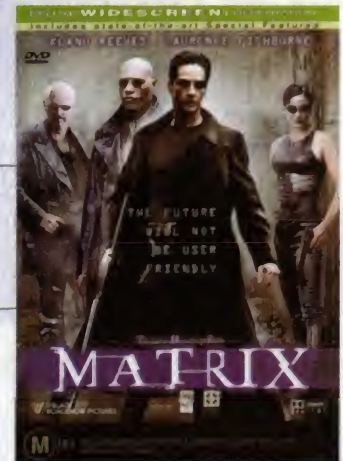


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# The Future

FEATURE

18 >> HYPER

Welcome to our yearly peep into the crystal ball of gaming. After much rubbing, caressing, fondling and peering, our ball has just managed to spit out all these great screenshots and tidbits on the best-looking games coming our way over the next 12 months! Sit back, grab a beverage, and get into it...

PlayStation 2



GRAN  
TURISMO 4



GRAN  
TURISMO 4

## Gran Turismo 4

**DEVELOPER:** Polyphony Digital

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec (GT3) is widely regarded as the finest console racing sim to date, so the prospect of a new title in the series understandably has gamers all over the world twitching in nervous anticipation. But how will Polyphony Digital (PD) top their last effort? The answer, unsurprisingly, lies in building on the foundation of the previous title — packing in stacks more content, adding online play, and striving towards a new level of realism.

### REAL WORLD RACING

Indeed, it doesn't matter how many courses, cars and options there are — it's the underlying mechanics that will give the game longevity for the hardcore fans. The good news is that for GT4, Polyphony Digital have done the first major overhaul to the car physics since the original GT! About time, as PD have found that they're clocking roughly a one second differential between the lap time of a specific car on a real world track versus the same car on the GT4 version of the course. In other words, they're getting damn close to a physics model and driving model that accurately simulates real world racing.

The team has also implemented much more realistic AI. Your opponents will be far less likely to barge into you when you slow down to take a corner, instead treating you (and your car) with a little more respect. They'll also avoid making the same mistakes over and over, making for a more competitive field overall. Of course, the real test for the AI will

be comparing it to racing in a field of skilled human opponents online.

Speaking of which, all we really know about online functionality right now is that races will take place in a field of six, and voice communication isn't supported. Hopefully we'll have more info soon, as we hope Sony and PD will really try and emphasise the community aspect of online, rather than just providing us a tool for finding races.

No matter what happens with online, however, GT4 is going to be huge. It promises to have the largest car count in the series thus far — over 500 in total, which is good news for gamers disappointed by GT3's 130 or so cars. The selection ranges from very early models to convertibles and modified street machines, all the way up to the latest prototypes. Disappointingly, however, there will once again be no car damage — mostly because it would be too much of a resource hog. While that's a shame, we're quite happy to keep our wonderfully rendered cars in pristine condition thank you very much.

Alongside this mammoth car lineup will be over 50 courses to compete on — from real world competition courses such as Tsukuba in Japan to street racing in New York and rally driving in and around the Grand Canyon. But how does it look in motion you ask? Well, "insert rapid stream of superlatives here" — yep, it looks fantastic. While not a huge leap from GT3, PD have managed to up certain aspects of the visuals noticeably, particularly environmental detail and lighting. The end result should be a game with staggering attention to detail in all areas. As if we expected any less...



GRAN  
TURISMO 4

FEATURE

» HYPER 19



RISE TO HONOR



RISE TO HONOR

## Rise to Honor

**DEVELOPER:** SCEA

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Videogames and kung fu are a natural fit. They were meant to be together, and yet no one has succeeded in making a game that truly captures the freeform fighting spirit and inventiveness of this entire branch of Hong Kong cinema. Fortunately SCEA has stepped up to the plate, and are going all out to deliver kung fu perfection. They've even recruited Jet Li to provide a face and voice for Rise to Honor's main character Yun, as well as to motion capture all the moves in the game. Sweet!

Fighting is totally freestyle, with the right analogue stick assigned to attacks, enabling you to take on multiple enemies on all sides and string together impressive looking combos. You'll even fight alongside an AI partner some of the time, with some over the top team attacks at your disposal. And of course no kung fu fighting system would be complete without counter attacks, evasive maneuvers and using the environment to your advantage. Gunplay will also play a role, but we're hoping that hand-to-hand is far more prominent.



RISE TO HONOR



SSX 3

ALSO ON:  
XBOX, GCN

## SSX 3

**DEVELOPER:** EA Canada

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● For the third game in the series, and first true sequel to SSX (c'mon Tricky doesn't count!), EA Canada have gone back to the drawing board. Where the previous titles were more like racing games, SSX 3 will be arcade snowboarding through and through, and a far more open ended experience than the previous games. For one, the entire game is set on one huge mother of a mountain, and as you progress through the game you'll gain access to higher and higher points (it has three main peaks), until eventually there'll be the option to board down the entire thing in one run. Not impressed? Then consider that doing so would take almost half an hour! That's a lot of mountain!

The play mode we're most looking forward to, however, would have to be the freestyle courses of Slope Style. EA Canada are working incredibly hard to give the player countless possible runs through each of these layouts, and the play mechanics to really take advantage of it. SSX 3 is technically impressive too — boasting a brand new graphics engine and a new take on the highly stylised visuals the series is known for. SSX is back baby!



SSX 3

## Legacy of Kain: Defiance

**DEVELOPER:** Crystal Dynamics

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● The Legacy of Kain series has always prided itself on having involving storylines and a good blend of gameplay elements. But for Defiance, Crystal Dynamics are shifting the focus towards out and out combat. Devil May Kain? Sounds about right. Fortunately, the CD team has two great protagonists to head up the slaughter — Kain and Raziel. This is the first game to feature both characters and although they're sworn rivals the entire world of Nosgoth is at stake so they join forces.

Well actually, they alternate forces, as the missions are split between them. The combat mechanics have been significantly changed to make battles against multiple opponents as intuitive as possible. The fighting engine is fast paced and intense, and each character will have his own unique combos, and hopefully fighting style. One of the coolest touches is telekinetic powers that can be used to hurl enemies off ledges and into walls from a distance (we suspect they'll also come into play when it comes to puzzle solving).

ALSO ON:  
XBOX



LEGACY OF KAIN



LEGACY OF KAIN

## Tony Hawk Underground

**DEVELOPER:** Neversoft

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● With every incremental improvement to the Tony Hawk franchise, Neversoft has been edging closer and closer to the series becoming stale. It's with a huge sigh of relief, then, that we can tell you that they're doing something radically different this time around. In fact, they're taking it to the "underground".

Tony Hawk meets GTA3 is probably the best way to describe THUG. In Underground you have an entire city (complete with a day/night cycle) to play in. You can jump off your board to run around, hop fences, climb houses and even drive cars. The idea is that you're the star (rather than the pros), so it's almost like a skate RPG.

Neversoft has gone all out with the customisation options too. You can scan your own face into the game (EyeToy? Online? We don't know yet), create massive city block skate parks, design your OWN TRICKS and even set up your own challenges. If this doesn't sound sweet enough for you, then how about skating with other gamers online? We thought so... drool. Fingers crossed Neversoft can complete such an ambitious project in only a year.

ALSO ON:  
XBOX, GCN



## Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

**DEVELOPER:** Konami

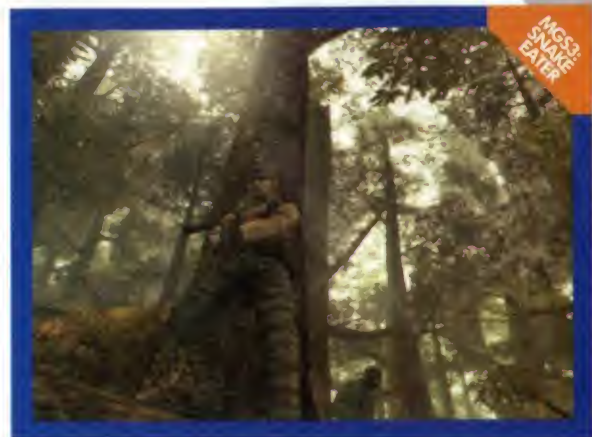
**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● And now for something completely different. Well, kinda. Hideo Kojima is finally taking the Metal Gear Solid series out of its gritty industrial setting and into the jungle. Konami has even built a brand new engine to bring the complexity of the jungle, as well as its bases, caves and mountains, to life. Although Konami are doing a good job keeping a lot of the game under wraps, from what we've seen it definitely looks like they're on track.

Most important, however, will be the changes to the gameplay that come along with the new setting. Stealth will obviously still be key, but it will take on a new form, with the wide open naturalistic surroundings giving Snake ample ways to take cover, or sneak up on enemies – from lying prone in the bushes to climbing trees. What will change the feel the most however, is the absence of a radar. As Snake Eater is a "prequel", the radar system – which was invented by Mei Ling, along with the codec – can't be used. In a jungle, where would Snake download the data anyhow? In its place will be a camouflage index that indicates how visible you are to guards. This will change depending on your clothes, your face paint, the surrounding jungle and how still you are. Another interesting element is that you'll need to hunt for food (hence the title), rather than just grab ration packs. And we still don't know if that really is Snake, or his father – of whom Snake is a clone – Big Boss.



MGS3:  
SNAKE  
EATER



MGS3:  
SNAKE  
EATER



MGS3:  
SNAKE  
EATER

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



## RISE OF NATIONS

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I-NINJA



I-NINJA

## I-Ninja

**DEVELOPER:** Argonaut

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

Argonaut Studios may have the dubious honour of being responsible for Croc and Croc 2, but they're set to make amends with the unique and amusing platform action of I-Ninja. You play as a super deformed ninja with a serious chip on his shoulder and a mean set of abilities at your disposal. It's all here — running along walls, grinding rails (cos ninjas always do that!), leaping, grabbing, climbing, swinging and hovering. Plus, getting busy katana style (comically carving your enemies in half we might add), and using projectiles like ninja stars, blow darts and eventually a rocket launcher. What we like about I-Ninja is that although it doesn't take itself too seriously, with a deliciously comical art style, your lil' ninja guy controls well and has just the right blend of abilities to bring something new to the action platform table. Could be a surprise hit.

ALSO ON:  
GCN



I-NINJA



CASTLEVANIA



CASTLEVANIA

## Castlevania: Lament of Innocence

**DEVELOPER:** Konami

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

Cast your mind back to Castlevania 64. Yeah yeah, we know the memories are painful, but as much as you might like to forget all about it, it does serve to illustrate how NOT to take the Castlevania series into 3D. Fortunately, Konami also know this, and have put Lament of Innocence into the capable hands of Koji Igarashi, a man who knows what makes Castlevania tick, and more importantly has publicly professed his dislike for C64. Phew!

So how is Lament looking? Very promising. This time you take up the whip of Leon Belmont, the very first vampire hunter of the Belmont clan, way back in the 11th century. He's responsive to control, and fairly intuitive and versatile in combat. All the staples of the series are back in terms of combat, and the magic system appears to pick up where Harmony of Dissonance left off, allowing you to modify weapons for unique effects. The big question is, though, will it still feel like a Castlevania game?

## Jak II: Renegade

**DEVELOPER:** Naughty Dog

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

Jak II: Renegade is set to literally dwarf the original game. The main world is an absolutely massive city that's 15 times larger than Jak and Daxter's gameworld! It looks stunning too, with character models made up of 15000 polys (as opposed to 4000 in the original), as well as new Naughty Dog tech that generates unique NPCs throughout the city, so you'll never see the same model twice!

There are four new weapons to use in the game, which will open up your abilities considerably. Better yet, you'll also be able to transform into Dark Jak, who has a different move set and weapons to use, as well as play out certain missions fighting alongside NPCs. Sounds interesting no? Naughty Dog are also boasting that the gameplay is entirely integrated into the storyline. In other words, you won't be performing irrelevant tasks — every mission is directly related to the story and designed to drive it forward.



JAK II



JAK II



JAK II



JAK II

## Wrath Unleashed

**DEVELOPER:** The Collective

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

Wrath Unleashed is the latest project from The Collective (Buffy on Xbox) in collaboration with LucasArts, and looks to be a unique blend of action, fantasy and old school strategy. The game takes places in a strange spirit world that consists of floating islands, where beings known as overlords fight for supremacy. There are four overlords — each with an elemental affinity, and over 25 mythical creatures that act as minions in battle.

Wrath Unleashed looks very much to be an old school tile-based strategy game from the map viewpoint, with units being positioned to try and control the map and its temples (which provide mana that can be used for spellcasting). When two creatures contest a single tile, however, the game switches to a fully 3D battle arena for the creatures to duke it out in brutal one-on-one combat. Experimenting with each creature's abilities and building up your ideal army should prove very compelling, as will multiplayer.

ALSO ON:  
XBOX



## Resident Evil: Outbreak

**DEVELOPER:** Capcom

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● If there's one thing Sony needs right now it's A grade games for their online service.

RE: Outbreak would have to be one of the strongest of the contenders, and after seeing it in action we're quite excited about the prospects of hitting Raccoon City with three friends. Yes, you're back in Raccoon City, but this time you play as one of eight ordinary citizens trying to escape the city and avoid infection. You even have a meter that indicates how infected you are by the virus. When it's full you'll turn into a fully controllable zombie... ain't life grand!

Players can help each other out, give simple commands and even rescue hurt NPCs by picking them up and carrying them to safety. Capcom are aiming to provide plenty of branching storylines depending on decisions made and presumably on the characters you're playing with, so hopefully longevity won't be an issue. One aspect that Capcom hasn't elaborated on yet is how much crossover there will be between online and an offline modes, and whether you'll be able to take your offline save and pick it up online with friends. We wait with baited breath.



# THE MAYANS WERE A POWERFUL RACE— MOST OF IT ATOMIC.



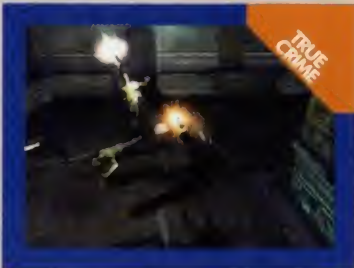
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TRUE CRIME



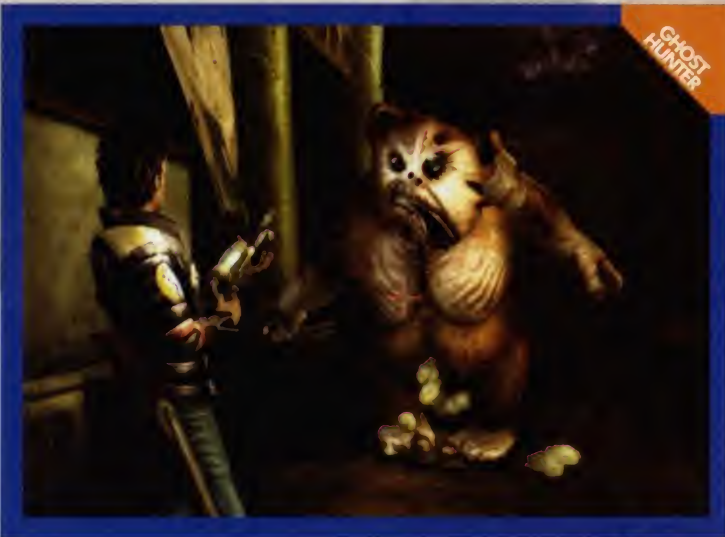
ALSO ON:  
XBOX, GCN

## True Crime: Streets of LA

**DEVELOPER:** Luxoflux  
**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

After three trips to LA the idea of authentically recreating 250 square miles of that pollution soaked hell hole sends a shiver down my spine, but that's exactly what Luxoflux (remember Vigilante 8?) have done for their GTA3-alike title True Crime. This is a game that revels in its epic scope. How else to explain the fact that you play an Elite Operations Division operative charged with taking down both the Russian Mafia and the Triads? Piece of cake!

With around 100 missions all up and a branching main narrative, True Crime will be a meaty slice of gaming. Like GTA3 you can cover ground on foot or in a vehicle, and in addition to the requisite gunplay the game also has a healthy dose of hand to hand brawling. Hopefully, the camera mechanics and targeting system will make things a little more straightforward than in GTA3, especially since there are so many more indoor locations. And did we mention True Crime will feature the vocal talents of Christopher Walken, Gary Oldman and Michael Madsen? Could be gold.



GHOST HUNTER

## Ghosthunter

**DEVELOPER:** Studio Cambridge  
**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

Ghosthunter casts you as Lazarus Jones, a Detroit cop fresh out of Police Academy (he graduated with Tackleberry and Mahoney) who becomes a Ghosthunter after discovering a deserted supernatural research center and accidentally unleashing the trapped ghosts into the world. In order to track them all down, however, Jones needs to be able to see the spectral world, so he bonds with a ghost... and to say things get really creepy from there on in is something of an understatement.

Armed with a variety of ghostbusting devices, such as Ghost Lassoes, Capture Grenades and Spectral Goggles it's up to Jones to uncover the mystery behind the research center, as well as to foil a group of ghosts who have one goal — to steal back life from the living. Ghosthunter runs on the Primal engine, and we were blown away by how detailed and atmospheric it's looking. Throw in Studio Cambridge's macabre sense of humour and Ghosthunter could have the whole package.



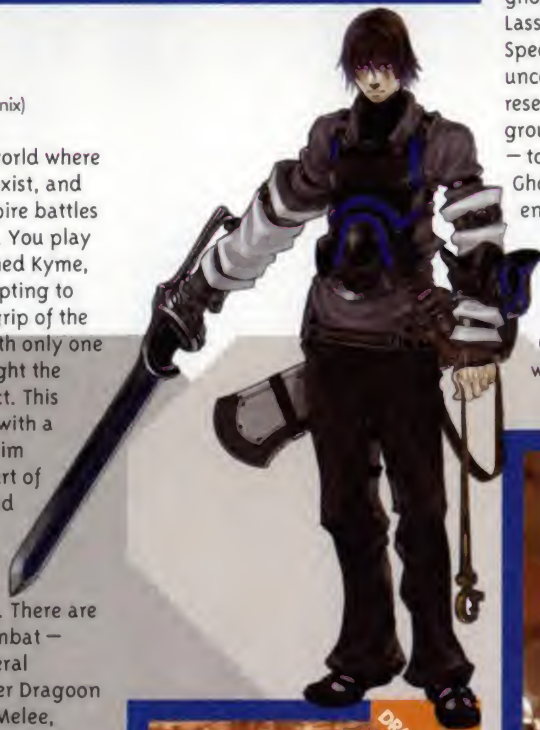
GHOST HUNTER

## Drakengard

**DEVELOPER:** Cavia (Square/Enix)  
**AVAILABLE:** 2004

Drakengard is set in a world where humans and dragons co-exist, and where the treacherous Empire battles the tree-hugging Alliance. You play as an Alliance warrior named Kyme, who is almost killed attempting to rescue his sister from the grip of the Empire. This leaves him with only one option to stay alive and fight the good fight — a dragon pact. This involves swapping hearts with a red dragon, and renders him mute, but they are now part of a greater entity, and bound together until death.

All this boils down to an excuse to give us a little variety in our action. There are three distinct types of combat — Dogfight, which takes liberal inspiration from the Panzer Dragoon titles (but isn't on rails); Melee, which pits you against hordes of enemies on foot (think Dynasty Warriors); and Strafe mode, which is dragon to ground combat. The scale is epic, with literally hundreds of troops to fight at any one time, but the real test will be how compelling the story is, and how well implemented the RPG elements are.



DRAKENGARD



DRAKENGARD



## Spider-Man 2

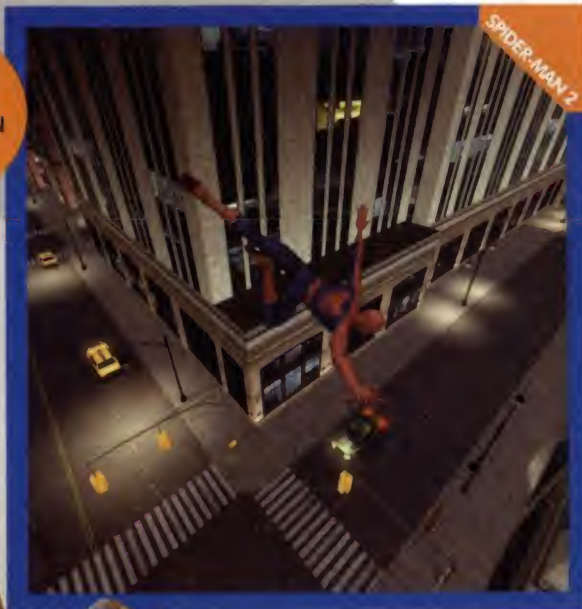
**DEVELOPER:** Treyarch

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● Good news, true believers! We've had a hands-on with Spider-Man 2 and came away pleasantly surprised. It looks like Activision really took the criticisms leveled at the original game to heart, as the sequel is well on track to being the definitive Spider-Man experience.

Absolutely everything has been improved. Manhattan feels like a living, breathing metropolis now, and you can go as high as the tallest building or swoop right down to just above the level of the traffic. Spidey sense is far more faithful to the license, allowing you to sense citizens in distress to pick up side missions, as well as enter a hyper-aware bullet-time mode with infinitely fast reaction times. Web slinging is much improved too, as you sling webs on alternate sides and even run along buildings to gain more momentum before boosting off. Even more importantly — your webs must actually have something to stick to now. No more swinging off clouds!

**ALSO ON:**  
XBOX, GCN



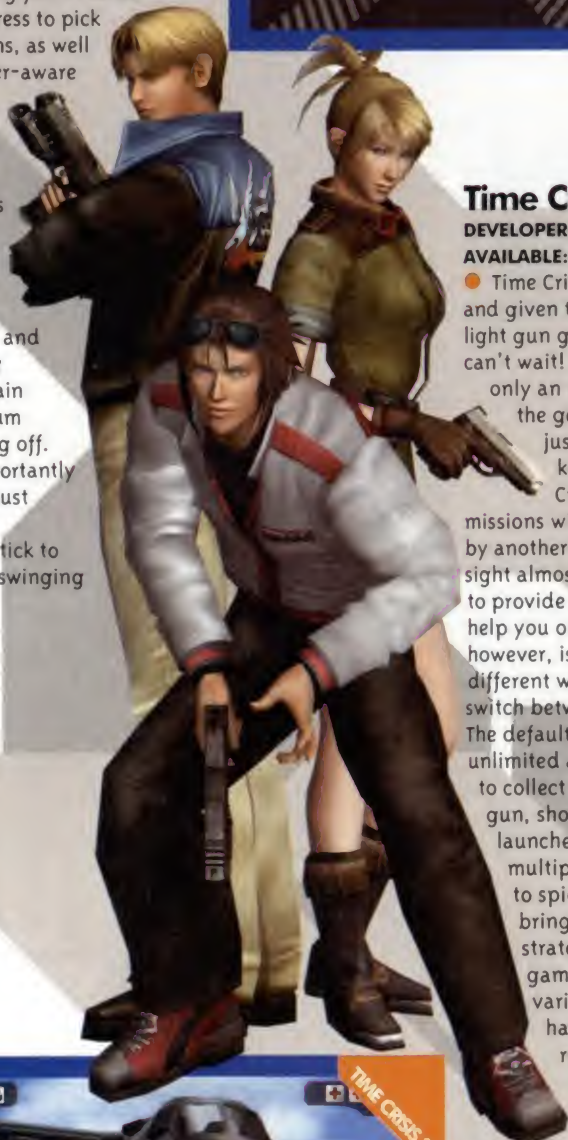
SPIDER-MAN 2

## Time Crisis 3

**DEVELOPER:** Namco

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Time Crisis 3 is coming home, and given that it's one of the best light gun games of recent years, can't wait! Although representing only an incremental evolution in the genre, Namco have made just enough changes to keep it fresh. As in Time Crisis 2, you go through missions with a partner, controlled by another player or by AI, who's in sight almost all the time and is there to provide both an obstacle and to help you out. New to the series, however, is the inclusion of four different weapons that you can switch between while taking cover. The default is the pistol, which has unlimited ammo, while you'll need to collect ammo for the machine gun, shotgun and grenade launcher. The introduction of multiple weapons really helps to spice the action up and bring some much needed strategy and longevity to the game. Factor in a greater variety of enemies (that now have health bars), some really dynamic environments and extra play modes for the PlayStation 2 version, and you have a compelling gaming concoction.



TIME CRISIS 3



TIME CRISIS 3



# WHERE WERE YOU DURING THE ROMAN MISSILE CRISIS?



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# Xbox

ALSO ON:  
PS2, GCN, PC



## Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

**DEVELOPER:** Ubi Soft Montreal

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

At a time when acrobatic moves and time bending have become a pop culture cliché, it's refreshing to come upon a game that uses these elements with such distinction and style that they are born again. Prince of Persia: Sands of Time is that game, and it excels in just about every area.

### THE DARK POWER

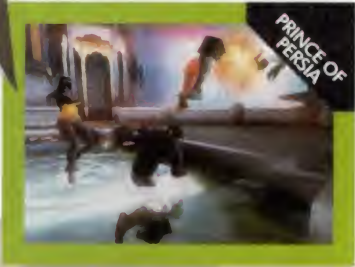
Those of you who are familiar with the franchise will be pleasantly surprised by just how much of the original game's soul has been captured in this sequel. Movement is gloriously fluid, allowing you to navigate the devious levels with ease — running along walls, swinging off poles and moving with the sure-footedness of a jungle cat. It's all very intuitive. Fights are similarly impressive, with a range of moves inspired by Crouching Tiger, Jet Li kung fu films and Capoeira.

All the lush animations and abilities are backed up by a very competent engine and art that seems richly steeped in the culture of the game's setting. There's even a slightly mystical quality to the

visuals, helped along by hazy lighting in places and a muted colour palette. What impressed us the most, however, is that the game manages to be highly cinematic, with sweeping camera movements and cinematic positioning, without compromising the gameplay one iota. Indeed, while we're on the subject of camera angles — the development team have four full time staff members looking after the camera alone, to ensure that it doesn't disappoint. God bless those pragmatic Canadians!

Adding further to the game's appeal is the integration of the "Sands of Time" across both story and gameplay. The basic backstory tells of a young prince corrupted by the dark power of a magic dagger, who accidentally unleashes a great evil over his father's empire, threatening the very fabric of time itself. Fortunately, this is a tale of redemption, and the Prince sets out to restore order. The only way to recover the sands is by killing all those who have been consumed by its evil power. Taking his cue from Buffy, the Prince needs to "stake" each victim with his dagger to finish them off and recover the sand, adding another dimension to fights, and letting the development team give the Prince some great finishing moves. The sands can also be used to aid you, allowing the Prince to wind time back if you make a mistake, or simply speed it up or slow it down when required. The sands also bless the Prince with visions of the terrain to come — giving you a very slick snapshot of the challenges ahead.

Simply put, this is going to be a must-have game, and it's no wonder — series creator Jordan Mechner has had a lot of input into the storyline and has also helped out in crucial areas such as in puzzle and level design. Combine the Mech-meister (as we affectionately call him around here) with the studio responsible for Splinter Cell and you have a sure fire hit. It also snatched the Game Critics award for Best Action/Adventure Game of this year's E3. And best of all, no matter which platform you own you'll be able to get a taste of the good stuff. Finally... the Fresh Prince is back on our screens!



## Need for Speed: Underground

**DEVELOPER:** EA Black Box

**AVAILABLE:** Early 2004

● With NFS

Underground, EA are taking the franchise in an all new direction. Simply put, this is a game for tweakers. The focus has shifted from being about the most exotic sports cars, and into the culture of taking readily available cars and hotting them up. Indeed, alongside the (expected) extensive list of car manufacturer licenses, EA have also secured 40 parts manufacturers, to truly give you a real world taste of this "underground" scene.

Reflecting this change of style, Underground's settings will be much more urban this time around, and game modes will range from drag races to non-linear checkpoint city racing. The single player mode will be driven by the quest to show your skills in the various elite underground racing circles. Also included will be 100 unique events where you can earn cash, unlock upgrades, cars, tracks and raise your "rep". Even at this early stage of development (the build we saw was 20-25% complete) the visuals are fantastic — incredibly fast and with sophisticated motion blur and juddering effects to convey the raw power at your fingertips. Bring it on!

**ALSO ON:**  
PS2, GCN, PC



NEED FOR SPEED



NEED FOR SPEED

## Full Spectrum Warrior

**DEVELOPER:** Pandemic Studios

**AVAILABLE:** Early 2004

● In the downtime between stamping through other countries securing their oil interests, US soldiers actually do a fair bit of "virtual" training, and Full Spectrum Warrior (FSW) is the latest piece of software designed for that purpose. Indeed, Pandemic Studios must finish the title for the military before they can turn their attention to tweaking the game for a consumer release.

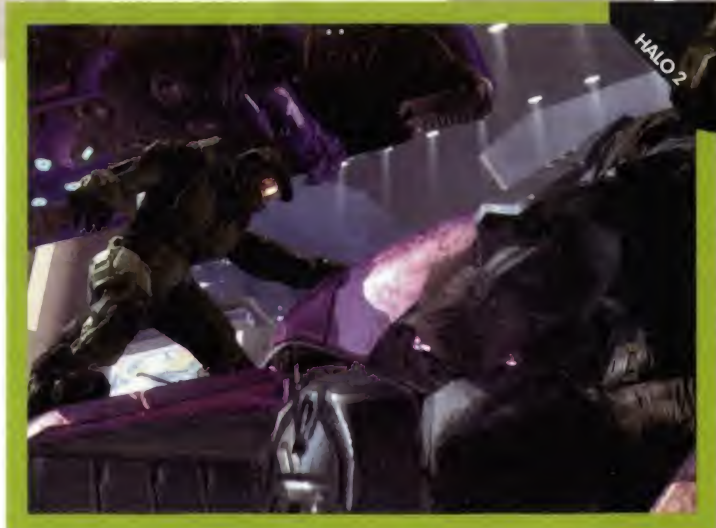
We've had a hands-on with the game, and came away quite excited about the direction it's taking the genre. Unlike many squad-based military "sims", FSW doesn't force you to rely on dodgy AI team members, instead giving you two teams of four and five apiece and extensive control over their actions. Team AI is based on US Army procedure, so realism is definitely the key here, and success or failure will come down to your tactical awareness and strategies. It's your responsibility to use each squad to provide cover for each other, and to get your men into good positions so they minimize danger when firing on a target. More on this one really soon!



FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR



FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR



HALO 2



HALO 2

## Halo 2

**DEVELOPER:** Bungie

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● Ah, sweet dependable Bungie! How we love you! Sorry for the fruity vibe so far in this preview folks, but seeing Halo 2 in action has had an incredibly energizing effect on us. Like waking up on Christmas morning and seeing your stocking full of all the presents you've always wanted! This title is going to rule the console FPS roost all over again, and considering all the online functionality that will be included we've had goose bumps for weeks! All we really know for sure so far however, is that the Master Chief is back, and Earth is under attack by the Covenant. The opening sections feature much more urban-based combat than the original. Expect massive city environments, where you truly feel dwarfed by the scale and the battle seems to be going on all around you. Also expect cool features like boarding vehicles as they're moving, toting twin pistols and even manning big chunky guns in the back of vehicles as AI teammates pilot them around. Check back for our interview with Bungie next issue!



SHADOW OPS



SHADOW OPS

## Shadow Ops: Red Mercury

**DEVELOPER:** Zombie  
**AVAILABLE:** Mid 2004

● Every so often it's nice to switch your brain off and indulge in a little mindless gaming action. Development house Zombie know this, and have set out to provide nothing less than a high impact, Don Simpson-esque gaming experience with Red Mercury. The Zombie staff members we spoke to cited the film Black Hawk Down as their primary inspiration, and they certainly haven't tried to hide it. Shadow Ops: Red Mercury is almost like stepping into the film, from the war-torn setting and scripted events through to the overall production values. This is the next generation of popcorn gaming people — highly cinematic thanks to lush visuals, and backed up by all sorts of impressive touches such as cyberscanned faces for hyper realism (they actually had some of the staff who helped work on the visual effects for The Matrix Reloaded and Spiderman), excellent rag doll body physics, and a full orchestral score. While Valve may be out to redefine the thinking man's shooter, Zombie are aiming to simply amp up the traditional shooter. We think there's room for both.

ALSO ON:  
PC



VOODOO VINCE

## Voodoo Vince

**DEVELOPER:** Beep Industries  
**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Sado-masochists rejoice — you now have a mascot! Say hello to Voodoo Vince, not your average platform character. He has been animated via the mysteries of magic and must search out and destroy "Cosmo the Inscrutable", who has kidnapped his creator Madame Charmagne. Obviously the path to her rescue is long (30 levels) and filled with all sorts of bizarre creatures to fight. And fight you will, in a manner of speaking. Vince can collect voodoo spells, which, when unleashed are both hilarious and very very cool. Vince will do things like chop himself in half with a chainsaw, thus chopping everyone else in the vicinity in half. Fortunately, Vince is a quick healer, whereas his opponents... aren't. Other spells are more comical, such as a giant cow falling from the sky and crushing him. In short, expect a twisted sense of humour and some highly detailed environments. The real test for Voodoo Vince, however, will be pairing this essentially gimmicky premise with solid and varied platforming. Still, ya gotta love the idea!



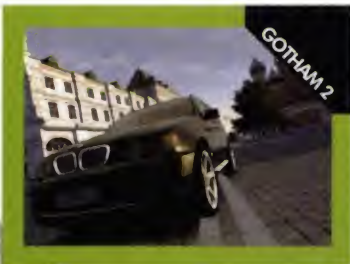
VOODOO VINCE

## Project Gotham Racing 2

**DEVELOPER:** Bizarre Creations  
**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● It's back to the scene of the kudos for Bizarre Creations. Project Gotham 2 is well underway, and having played it we can tell you that it's going to be every bit the full blown sequel fans have been craving. Perhaps the most exciting element in PGR2 is the Xbox Live component. Not only will you be able to compete with friends or rivals from around the world, but you'll also be able to download ghost races from other drivers, allowing you to see how you compare and to study different strategies.

The kudos system has also been tweaked. Bizarre Creations are promising a more level reward system that will have many more ways to earn kudos — both in terms of racing technique and in the game as a whole. The basic idea is to give drivers of all styles and skill levels a decent challenge. Oh, and as if any preview of this game could be complete without metaphorically dropping its jaw in amazement at the lush visuals! It's drop dead gorgeous dear readers! Nuff said.



GOTHAM 2



GOTHAM 2



GOTHAM 2



GOTHAM 2

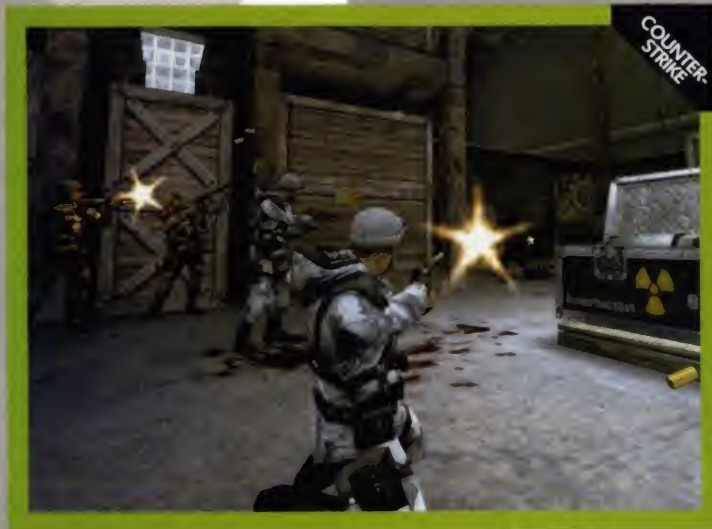
## Counter-Strike

**DEVELOPER:** Ritual Entertainment

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● The PC phenomenon that is Counter-Strike is finally on its way to Xbox, and looking very impressive. The graphics have received a much needed makeover (the original is pretty old after all), so character models and textures are far more detailed, and there's a lot more incidental detail — such as trees that sway and more sophisticated flashbang effects.

PC gamers will be at home in many of the maps here, but there will be a swathe of new console-only maps included too, not to mention single player missions from "Counter-Strike: Condition Zero". The basic game works in the same way as the PC title did, with cash rewards after each round, and a new and intuitive 360 degree menu system for buying weapons and ammo with said money. Our brief test has confirmed that using a controller makes for a very different Counter-Strike, but not necessarily a worse one. And hey, it'll be pretty sweet getting stuck into a 16-person fracas while sitting on the couch in front of a massive TV, AND in a controlled server environment to boot.



## Grabbed By The Ghoulies

**DEVELOPER:** Rare

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Games from Rare have been rather, well... "scarce" over the last few years. Are their glory days long gone? Or have they simply been hard at work on a number of stunning titles since Microsoft purchased the company? Well, if Grabbed By The Ghoulies is any indication, we're not sure what to think.

You play the game as a kid called Cooper and must bash your way through a haunted mansion. Movement is controlled with the left stick, while attacks can be dished out with the right (think Robotron). You can also pick up almost any of the objects in the environment to use as weapons. The basic gameplay is room to room, and across the game you'll encounter 25 different types of enemies, from skeletons to mummies and vampires. Perhaps the most amusing moments are when something jumps out at Cooper and freaks him out — requiring you to follow onscreen cues to calm him down.

Although a little underwhelming at first, Grabbed By The Ghoulies does look like good, simple fun.



## Conker: Live & Uncut

**DEVELOPER:** Rare

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Well, well, this is another strange decision on the part of Rare. Conker: Live and Uncut is the original Conker's Bad Fur Day, packing "better" (we use that word very deliberately) graphics and a number of scenes that were cut

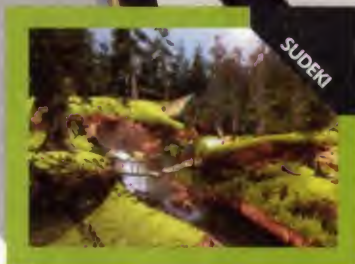
from the N64 version for reasons of obscurity, combined with a hearty focus on Xbox Live third person deathmatch modes. Indeed, it's the online play that looks most appealing. Rather than just doing run of the mill deathmatch scenarios, Rare are keeping things interesting with a focus on teams, stories, variety in scenarios and customisable options. Up to 16 players can frag at once, with two to four teams, across all sorts of scenarios, such as the four on four mode called "The Heist", where teams are competing with one another in a race to rob a bank. Another is called "Alien Base", and takes its inspiration from old school shooters by throwing wave after wave of aliens at your team. Should be good, messy fun.

## Sudeki

**DEVELOPER:** Climax

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Sudeki is a stunning-looking RPG coming soon for Xbox. The graphics engine has been built from the ground up to get the most out of the Xbox hardware, so expect to see lots of bump mapping, great lighting, epic scale and detailed facial animations. Sudeki's most unique attribute, however, is its combat system. Rather than the traditional turn-based approach, it features real-time combat, but with a twist. When you want to change weapons or select a spell, the action slows down to about 5% of normal speed in a bullet-time panning effect, with the menu interface laid over the fight scene. This means that you can still take damage, and hence must make your choices quickly, but it also keeps you in the action and brings more depth than is traditionally associated with action RPGs. Another exciting aspect will be the Voltron-esque party-based combination spells. These puppies will blow your mind!



SUDEKI



SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

## The Simpsons: Hit and Run

**DEVELOPER:** Radical Entertainment

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Whilst "The Simpsons: Hit and Run" could simply be a description of the way this license has been treated in the world of videogames, it's also a new game on the way. And the most surprising thing is, it doesn't look like complete bollocks! What we have here is a mission-based driving game (thank god it's not Simpsons Road Rage 2!) with on-foot platform sections thrown in for good measure. You can play as a wide variety of characters and will even be able to go inside classic Simpsons locations like the Simpson home, the power plant and the Kwik-E-Mart. The cast is once again lending their talent for the voice over work, but apparently (and this is the REALLY good news) some of the writers are also getting stuck into the script and (hopefully) the sight gags. There will also be plenty of Simpsons bonus material secreted about the game — it's about bloody time!

ALSO ON:  
PS2, GCN

## The Suffering

**DEVELOPER:** Midway

**AVAILABLE:** Early 2004

● Midway are leaping into the survival horror fold with their interesting new title, The Suffering. Rather than portraying you as a cop or someone with severe amnesia, in The Suffering you play the rather unlikely named Torque, a maximum security prisoner on death row. Just before he's due to be executed, the prison is overrun by the ghosts of executed inmates, and from there on the goal of the game will be to get out of there alive. As well as coming up against the (rather irritated) spirits of the dead, he'll also have to contend with other prisoners and guards. Fortunately, Torque'll have ten weapons (including the much prized videogame shiv!) to use, as well as a beserker mode that turns him into his vicious alter ego. Depending on which side missions you choose to complete, and how you approach the game (murder everyone? Or try to help other inmates out?) there will be multiple endings, so longevity shouldn't be a problem. Should be twisted and dark — just the way we like it.



THE SUFFERING



THE SUFFERING



SIMPSONS HIT & RUN



SUDEKI



SUDEKI

## Dead Man's Hand

**DEVELOPER:** Human Head Studios

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

It's about time for a Wild West revival wouldn't you say gentle readers? Human Head Studios certainly think so, and they're armed to the nines for the battle. To start with, they're using the latest Unreal engine technology from Epic, so you know the game is going to look hot. They're also planning on taking the player all over the West of the good ol' US of A, across a wide range of cool gun slinging scenarios. We're talking bar fights, shoot outs, battles on top of moving trains, running battles atop horses, stagecoach chases, and so on. The player will also have a "legend" meter, that, when filled, will let you pull off all sorts of death defying moves. Let's hope it's not just another example of bullet time! Oh, and in-between missions (and you'll often have several to choose from) hands of poker will be played. Win the hand and you can enter into the next mission with more legend, health, ammo and so on. Of course, you can always gamble again with bigger stakes. With more than 20 missions, Dead Man's Hand looks promising.

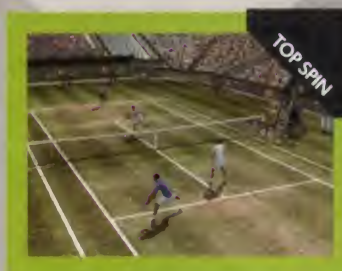


## Kameo: Elements of Power

**DEVELOPER:** Rare

**AVAILABLE:** Early 2004

Now that Rare has made the transition over to Xbox development, we bet there are plenty of you out there wondering just how it will affect the titles that were already well under way. Well, if Kameo is any indication, Rare are back on track. A few things have changed since last we saw Kameo. For one, when Kameo changes form, she is no longer seen inside the new creature (before you could see her inside, controlling it). This was probably altered to give Rare more scope for morphing Kameo into all sorts of crazy critters, and to help along the slightly more comical visual style. There will be 18 elemental creatures to morph into, each with their own unique abilities that will come to the fore for both combat and puzzle solving. Also interesting is that you'll have to capture each monster before you can use its form, which brings another element to the gameplay. We can't wait to have a long sit down with this game, because it will be the integration of puzzles with the various morphing abilities that will make or break it.



## Top Spin

**DEVELOPER:** PAM

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

Well, it had to happen. It looks like "our" Lleyton wasn't enough, and it has recently been confirmed that yes, Anna "have I ever won a tournament?" Kournikova has been confirmed for tennis title Top Spin. We suspect that it doesn't really matter who is in this one though, because Top Spin is looking rock solid. Every shot in the game will be at your fingertips, including a number of trick shots. Better still, if you pull off a few difficult shots in a row, you'll get into "the zone", increasing your proficiency on court. The emotive element is also being pushed in Top Spin, so you can pump your fist in the air, contest a call, or even throw your racket into the ground. Wimbledon this is not.

Top Spin is just one of a whole host of Microsoft published sports titles that are getting the XSN Sports treatment. What this basically means is that when the Xbox goes online (in this country) you'll be able to create leagues, challenge other players and track tournaments and player performances through XSNsports.com. Most exciting of all is a worldwide ladder, so you can truly establish yourself as a legend at the game.

PC

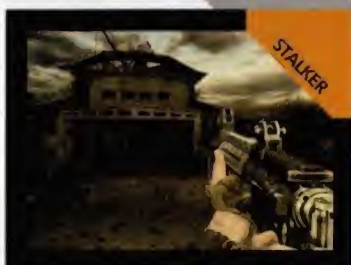


## STALKER: Oblivion Lost

**DEVELOPER:** GSC Game World

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● STALKER is an ambitious title from Ukraine-based developers GSC Game World, and is set in and around Chernobyl in an alternative near future. A massive explosion has rocked the area, not far from the original accident site, and before long the area affected by radiation and bizarre anomalies has spread to 30 square kilometres. There's definitely something weird going on here.



### SHOOT YOU ON SIGHT

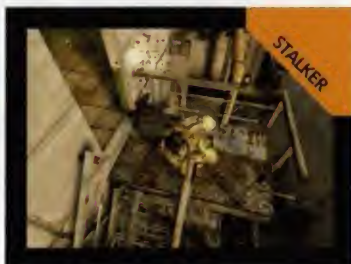
Several years later it is possible to venture a way into the affected area, now known as the Zone, but it's heavily policed by the military and is still a very risky proposition. Scientists have set up research stations on the borders, but the only non-military personnel on the inside are rogue mercenaries known as Stalkers that function almost as bounty hunters, searching out artifacts, technology, information and anomalous formations to sell to the scientists and on the black market. You (obviously) play as one such Stalker, and as you might have surmised, this is not your average shoot everything game.

Billed as a survival action RPG, the gameplay in STALKER allows for many

different approaches. While it will be possible to simply try and kill everything that moves, word of your unscrupulous attitude will get back to the NPCs, and other Stalkers will be far more likely to shoot you on sight. Just like you, their main goal in the game is to make some money and stay alive, so they won't put up with a bloodthirsty Stalker in their midst. Other approaches include a more diplomatic angle — exploring areas, talking and trading with other Stalkers and even joining factions. That said, the more Stalkers there are the more competition there is for contracts and so on, so combat is always going to play a significant role.

What has us so excited about this title is the concept of simulated life within the Zone. This is meant to be a dynamic, ever changing environment, occupied by around 100 other Stalkers — each with sophisticated AI, not to mention army troops, mutants and other animals. Having 100 other Stalkers with essentially similar abilities to you is a fascinating concept, and it will be very interesting to see how it plays out. It's a huge area too — the gameworld will actually comprise the whole 30 square kilometer area of the Zone around Chernobyl. The entire Zone won't be accessible at first — in addition to buying equipment, food and weaponry with money earned, you'll also be able to get protective suits that will allow you to reach previously inaccessible areas without, erm, dying.

The Zone contains everything from forests to underground labs, military bases and long deserted cities, but most fascinating of all will be the reactor area. The dev team actually took two trips to Chernobyl itself to take photos and learn the plant's layout, so it will be eerily true to life. Powering this ambitious concept is GSC's X-Ray engine, and after seeing it in motion we can confirm that it's truly amazing. The scale of the environments are breathtaking — overrun by vegetation and incredibly detailed, with a draw distance that you wouldn't believe. Another step towards photo-realism we think, and a real challenger to Valve's Source engine! The physics implementation is similarly impressive, adding up to an environment that not only looks real, but feels real too. And if GSC can nail the AI and dynamics of the world we are going to have something special on our hands.





## Judge Dredd: Dredd Vs Death

**DEVELOPER:** Rebellion

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● "Judging" from previous attempts at 2000AD related games, one could be forgiven for having a sense of "dread" when it comes to this license. Fortunately, however, Dredd Vs Death is shaping up to be the game that finally does the comic license justice. Running on an in-house engine called "Asura", developers Rebellion are calling the visual style "graphic novel rendering" as opposed to cel shading, and the game certainly has a look all its own. The dystopian cityscape is impressive — dark, oppressive and with skyscrapers as far as the eye can see, and yet still possessing the 2000AD wit, thanks to some hilarious gaudy neon advertising (such as one for turning your pets into stuffed hand puppets) and tongue-in-cheek humour.

Dredd has a "Justice meter" in the game, which goes up when you arrest and down when you kill, bringing a sense of consequence to your actions. The AI also sounds ambitious with perps reacting to the law (i.e. whether they will surrender or not) depending on their own motives/personality, as well as the number of people around etc. For those skeptics out there, 2000AD are almost next door to Rebellion's offices, so they've actually had a fair bit of input into the game.

**ALSO ON:**  
PS2, GCN,  
XBOX



## Half-Life 2

**DEVELOPER:** Valve

**AVAILABLE:** October (TBC)

● After seeing Half-Life 2 in motion, we're in a dysphoric state here at Hyper, with every hour until its release presenting a mental hurdle for us to struggle over in the wait for the game to be installed on our machines. Simply put, Valve are on track to inject new life into the FPS genre. This game is going to be a visual and gameplay tour de force.

What's most striking about Half-Life 2 is the freedom that players are given within the gameworld. Although heavily story driven and featuring plenty of scripted events, Valve are working hard to afford the player unprecedented interaction with a logically consistent gameworld. Block a door by pushing a table up against it, shut a gate on attacking droids or use an old radiator as a makeshift shield. Never before has a gameworld felt so very real. Pair this with first rate visuals courtesy of the Source engine, and highly sophisticated and adaptive AI, and you have a game worthy of the big rubber stamp in the making.

**ALSO ON:**  
XBOX



## The Sims 2

**DEVELOPER:** Maxis

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● The Sims was a fascinating look at being human — a study of happiness, fulfillment and routines. Especially routines. However, it essentially represented a static window into our world. One where we may get better at our jobs, or make new friends, but one where we never aged, where there was no real sense of closure. With The Sims 2, these are the issues that Maxis are tackling. You'll now be able to take sims through their entire lives, from birth to death, and each sim will have their own DNA that will be split and passed down to the next generation. If you thought you were attached to your sims before, just wait until they die (naturally that is!). Fortunately, if they've left behind offspring, a little piece of the last generation will remain — in looks and innate abilities.

Better still, actions will have long-term consequences. Choices made when your sim is a youngster will directly affect who they become later in life. Relationships are now more complex too, with your sims distinguishing between family, friends and lovers. Oh, and your sims will change physically to reflect their lifestyle. Bring on the beer gut!



## Space Colony

**DEVELOPER:** Firefly Studios

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● Fresh from their success with the Stronghold series, Firefly Studios are doing something a little different this time around, while still staying within their area of expertise. Space Colony is a cute title that combines elements of gameplay from The Sims with city building.

You run a space colony enterprise, and must establish bases on a whole bunch of planets, each with its own specific goal. To run each base you'll need to employ workers, and each has his or her own distinct personality. At the start of the game you'll only have a few employees, but later on you'll be trying to manage up to 20 characters — keeping each happy, trying to avoid conflicts, keeping the place clean and generally just trying to run the colony. You'll get to know each character well — what they're good at, and who they should avoid. Combine this with a host of alien species to deal with, missions involving space tourists and the managerial skill required to construct and manage the base as a whole and you'll have your hands full. Fortunately, the guys at Firefly aren't without a sense of humour, and despite whether it succeeds or fails, Space Colony will still make you smile.



## Vampire: The Masquerade - Bloodlines

**DEVELOPER:** Troika

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● Vampire: The Masquerade is a pen and paper RPG from White Wolf, set in its World of Darkness reality, where vampires exist and live among humans. Developers Troika are aiming to take this scenario into modern day L.A. (hello Angel!) for Bloodlines. The game will give you a choice between seven vampire classes, and access to 12 vamp powers (such as mind control, superhuman strength and invisibility) as you raise your experience levels and complete quests.

Oh, and rather than the usual isometric viewpoint common in the genre, Troika are using Valve's Source engine and presenting the game from a first person perspective. Despite this, Bloodlines will still very much be story-based, stat-based and played as an RPG. For instance, although you can use conventional weaponry, if you have poor ranged combat stats you'll be less accurate using your gun. Bloodlines will sport some of the tastiest graphics ever seen in the genre, and absolutely unmatched facial animation technology that will bring the characters to life like never before.

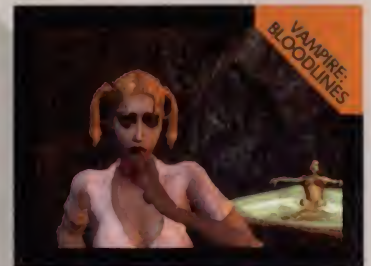
## Trinity

**DEVELOPER:** Gray Matter

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● Years ago, there were rumours that id Software would follow Quake 2 with a game called Trinity, using a brand new graphics engine. Somehow, those plans were ditched in favour of Quake III: Arena. Now, plans for Trinity have been resurrected by id Software under the guidance of Gray Matter Studios. No surprises then that Trinity is a First Person Shooter. The concept is that you've awakened to find yourself outfitted with a variety of impressive bio-augmentations, giving you the ability to run faster than normal, jump higher, utilise a variety of fancy visual modes and even warp time to take advantage of your opponents.

The game is set in New Orleans, allowing Gray Matter to design some environments that are a little out of the norm for your trad First Person Shooter. They're doing a bang-up job on the visuals so far, and along with the likes of Half-Life 2, Deus Ex: Invisible War and Doom III, Trinity is yet another reason to start planning that inevitable PC upgrade...



**ALSO ON:**  
XBOX

## Mythica

**DEVELOPER:** Microsoft Game Studios

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● Here's a new twist on the typical MMORPG — in Mythica, you play as a fallen warrior, recruited by the Norse gods to travel both the mortal and spiritual planes as an immortal... with an eventual view to becoming a god. Got your attention yet? But it gets better.

One of the most attractive design features in Mythica are the Private Realm modules. Ever been annoyed by other players when you're on a quest and your party keeps being disturbed? Well this is where the modules come in. They allow you and your party to accept a quest and take it on without outside interference — a bit like holding your own LAN. And when you're done, your party can just go back into the game's public spaces and into a more familiar MMORPG experience. Modules come in both Linear and Playscape varieties, which are basically story driven and more open-ended respectively. In addition to giving you and your crew quiet on your quests, the modules have the added bonus of allowing the developers to make the module quests much more personalised — scripted events, strong narratives and so on. More on this one really soon!



## Counter-Strike: Condition Zero

**DEVELOPER:** Ritual Entertainment

**AVAILABLE:** Late 2003

● As popular as Counter-Strike is, the truth is that hopping onto a server comes with a very steep learning curve for newbies. And given that the game is online-only right now, how is a gamer meant to learn the ropes other than via a baptism of fire? Well, Condition Zero is going to give them the opportunity. This is a brand new Counter-Strike product that comes with 20 single player missions, advanced bot AI and a significant visual upgrade. Each mission stands alone, rather than being tied into a main narrative, and across the missions players will experience a wide variety of game styles. The team at Ritual are also working hard to ensure that the bots you'll be playing with and against feel as real as possible — without providing too steep a challenge. The bot AI has been designed to work across all maps, rather than using tailored solutions for each map. To that end they'll learn from their mistakes, identify hotspots, and use different tactics depending on their class and skill level.



## Halo

**DEVELOPER:** Gearbox

**AVAILABLE:** September

● Roll up, roll up Hyper PC owners — it's almost time for you to get your fix. You may have scoffed in the past, but the truth is that Halo is a first rate shooter that's going to work a treat on the PC. How would we know? We've played it! And that's enough lip out of you, smart guy! So what do PC owners get in their Halo rendition? Well, the only real changes have been made in the multiplayer package. In addition to all the console maps, there are six new maps (that are considerably larger to take into account the increased number of players supported in PC multiplayer), three new vehicles and a new weapon. The new vehicles are a warthog with a rocket launcher on the back, a tank, and best of all — taking to the skies inside a Banshee! The new weapon is the fuel-rod gun that the Covenant use towards the end of the single player game. Importantly, there are options a plenty in the multiplayer sphere, from a wealth of playmodes all the way through to adjusting respawn times and vehicle availability.

# GBA GameCube



## Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles

**DEVELOPER:** Game Designer's Studio

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

It's been a long time, a decade in fact, but it seems that Square's Final Fantasy franchise will once again grace a Nintendo console. But Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles is not your everyday turn-based, sprawling, deeply cinematic, and character driven Final Fantasy RPG. Instead it opts for a more action-based approach, one that's structured, much less cinematic, with a cast of characters controlled by those closest to you — your real-life friends. You see, Crystal Chronicles has been designed from the ground up with GBA/GCN connectivity in mind, and it stands to be a great cooperative adventure where teamwork is essential.

### A NASTY KILLER FOG

Developed by Square Enix's subsidiary, Game Designer's Studio, Crystal Chronicles takes full advantage of Nintendo's often publicised — yet until now underused — connectivity between the GameCube and the GBA. With the right number of GBAs and prerequisite link cables, players are given direct control of one of four

different character classes — each with different abilities, strengths, weapons, et al. Without use of the Cube controller's secondary buttons (X, Y, Z) and the GBA's limited supply, controls have naturally been simplified — but thankfully without detriment to the depth of gameplay. The D-pad controls your character, whilst the A button is used to perform actions and the B-button to pick up items. Actions vary from a simple attack, to performing a spell, using an item, and curing a weakened teammate — and these actions can be cycled through during any point of the game via the L and R shoulder buttons. You can also charge up your actions by holding down the A button, and with direct control of a player specific coloured circle, you can precisely control and execute a powerful attack — all in real-time.

Working as a team usually means that you'll all be within close proximity at all times — and this will be enforced for the duration of the game thanks to a nasty killer fog sweeping across the land. To move freely, one player must carry a protective crystal at all times, which will project a small circular protective barrier in which the team can move about, without the added burden of a quick death. With the benefit of the GBA screen, players will be able to micromanage their character and view their stats without clogging up the TV screen, and to further entrench the concept of cooperative team play, only one player will possess a map of the playing field.

Don't have enough GBAs, cables or friends to play with? Not to worry, you can still experience this action-oriented adventure alone with a standard GCN pad — and have a ball. But with a substantial focus on connectivity — this will be one of the first titles to really sell itself based on the system link features between the GameCube and GBA. With the world broken up into specific stages that players complete in a specific order, Crystal Chronicles is definitely a drastic departure from the Final Fantasy norm. Thankfully, there are still plenty of bosses to battle, towns to explore and NPCs to interact with, so even with all of the changes there's still an epic adventure — sorry, fantasy — to be had.



## Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes

**DEVELOPER:** Silicon Knights/Konami

**AVAILABLE:** October

● The collaboration on Twin Snakes forms a virtual TriForce on its own as Konami, Nintendo and Silicon Knights are working closely together to bring a remake of the classic Metal Gear Solid to GameCube owners this holiday season. Dubbed The Twin Snakes, this remake is set to take the critically acclaimed story of the original MGS and revamp the gameplay with new moves and abilities lifted directly from its PlayStation 2 sequel — including the ability to drag bodies out of sight and switch to a first-person view when shooting. Twin Snakes features all the hallmark cinematic values that the series is known for, yet is — at this stage in development — slightly visually inferior to MGS 3 on PS2. With the stellar story intact, reworked gameplay and the fact that you'll get Metal Gear Solid 2 quality graphics, The Twin Snakes is a welcome addition to the GameCube's library. Finally, Nintendo fans will get to see why Snake is so adored on the other platforms. With the direct involvement of the series' creator, Hideo Kojima, and Nintendo's own Shigeru Miyamoto, there'll definitely be a lot of 'substance' with this GameCube version.



MGS: TWIN SNAKES



MGS: TWIN SNAKES

## F-Zero GX

**DEVELOPER:** Amusement Vision

**AVAILABLE:** September

● Competing against 30 racers, piloting an anti-grav racing vehicle, travelling at speeds rarely seen in videogames — all whilst trying to survive a complex roller-coaster ride of rises, falls, jumps and turns — F-Zero GX for GameCube is pure adrenaline.

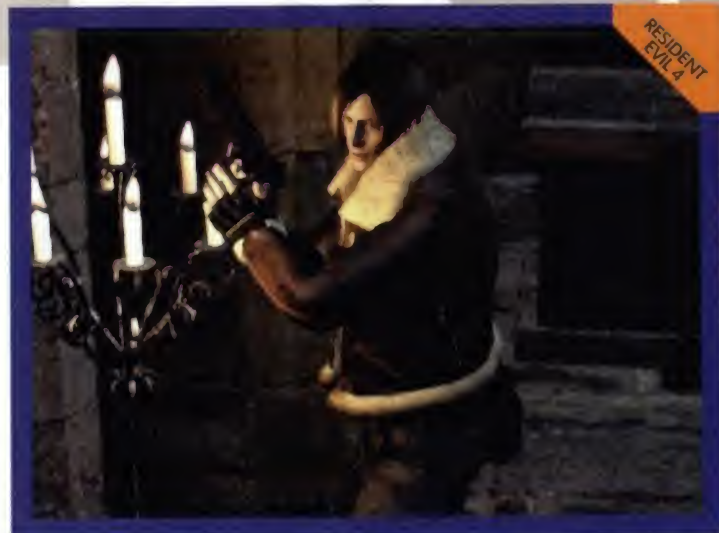
Developed in conjunction with Sega's Amusement Vision (part of the TriForce collaboration), this new instalment in Nintendo's premiere racing series is a sight to behold. F-Zero GX is fluid, challenging, and a game that takes the sensation of speed to a whole new level. It's also one of the most visually polished Cube games in existence, with spectacular course detail, slick lighting and other special effects. Veterans of the series will be right at home with GX's grand prix, versus, time trial and battle modes, but new this time around will be the Story Mode. In this mode you'll be in direct control over F-Zero's 'poster boy', Captain Falcon, as you complete missions, race against foes, and even customise your very own vehicle.



F-ZERO GX



F-ZERO GX



RESIDENT EVIL 4

## Resident Evil 4

**DEVELOPER:** Capcom

**AVAILABLE:** 2004

● The Resident Evil 4, real-time footage that we've been privy to features some of the most impressive visual effects of the current console generation. From the remarkable character models, detailed environments, dynamic lighting and shadows created by a lightning storm, to the curtains flapping wildly next to an open window — Resident Evil 4 even manages to one-up its pre-rendered predecessors.

With the transition to fully 3D environments, Resident Evil 4 allows for some genuinely impressive camera movements and dramatic angles, giving the old scare factor a slight nudge up the scale. Although this is not the first Resident Evil title to ditch the pre-rendered backdrops in favour of real-time environments, it is looking like the first title in the series to use this as an evolutionary step — one that may even break the shackles of the archaic control scheme that has plagued the series thus far. Yes, Resident Evil 4 is shaping up nicely.



RESIDENT EVIL 4



## Sonic Heroes

**DEVELOPER:** Sonic Team

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● The Sonic 3D outings so far have generally been hit-and-miss affairs with most criticism aimed squarely at the mismatched gameplay styles. For example, in Sonic Adventure 2, you went from the blistering pace of a Sonic level one minute to the much larger and slower Knuckle's treasure hunt the next. To rectify this problem, Sonic Team has decided that in the next outing for Sega's blue mascot, levels will combine all the separate gaming entities of the Adventure titles in one neat package. The Sonic Heroes in question are Sonic, Knuckles and Tails, and at any time of play you'll be able to switch between them and take advantage of their different abilities. If there's a huge boulder blocking your path, use Knuckles to clear the way; or if you find yourself at the bottom of a cliff, let Tails find a vertical solution to the problem. The gameplay in Sonic Heroes isn't merely selecting the right character to get through the next puzzle, as each level will feature multiple paths and routes to suit the hero of your choice.



## Viewtiful Joe

**DEVELOPER:** Capcom

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● In today's modern age of complex 3D gaming worlds and massively multiplayer do-dads, somewhere along the way the quaint simplicity of the side-scrolling beat-em-up has been left out of the equation. But Capcom's Viewtiful Joe is not your average button-mashing beat-em-up/platformer. With its colourful cast of characters, engaging gameplay and viewtiful cel-shaded graphics, Viewtiful Joe has style in abundance — which the playable demo at E3 made abundantly clear. In the real world he's just another movie fan, but once thrust into 'movie land' our regular Joe finds out that with the help of a special suit he too can become a superhero — and thus perform feats of strength, speed and grace. Press the L-trigger and you'll be able to slow down time, dodge bullets and even make helicopters fall from the sky (time slowed = propellers not being able to spin fast enough). On the other side of the spectrum, pressing the R-trigger will give Joe 'Mach Speed' allowing him to unleash a flurry of punches before enemies can bat an eyelid, and run fast enough to leave a trail of fire in his wake. Inventive.

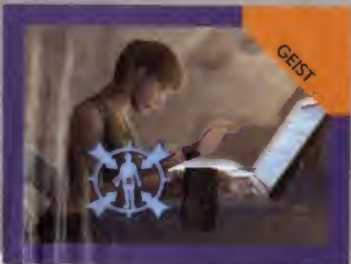


## Geist

**DEVELOPER:** n-Space

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● This new GameCube-exclusive first-person shooter from newly acquired developer n-Space features an undeniably interesting concept. Instead of a flesh and blood protagonist, players will be given direct control of a being from the afterlife — essentially, a ghost, spectre, spirit, or poltergeist. This means the player will be able to travel about the world without worrying if anybody's sizing up their package. But if being ignored bothers you, then just scare the crap out of a sexy office worker, possess her body, and feel safe in the knowledge that whenever you walk amongst a group of people they'll be checking out your buns. Well maybe not, but with limited knowledge given so far and only an early build of the game available — the potential for Geist is 'out of this world'. Heh. With both creative and technical input from Nintendo, we're pretty sure that n-Space should be able to create a great game around the themes of possession, fear, and stolen memories, without relying too heavily on its gimmick (see: Shiny's Messiah). Oh, and it's a first person shooter — figure that out!



## Pac-Man

**DEVELOPER:** Nintendo/Namco

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

Apparently Shigeru Miyamoto had a hankering (though of course he didn't use that word) to make a Pac-Man title for GameCube that used the connectivity features between the system and the GBA. The result may look like a direct port of the twenty year-old arcade classic (and in many ways it is), but with simply adding a multiplayer aspect of allowing one player to control Pac-Man and the others taking control of the ghosts, Pac-Man has been surprisingly reinvented.

The player who is Pac-Man will use their GBA screen to play, whilst the Ghost players stare at a split-screen on the TV, only showing each of them a view of the maze directly in front of their own ghost. The hunt for Pac-Man is then on. The game was used to demonstrate the connectivity features between systems at Nintendo's pre-show, and it looked like a lot of fun, with Miyamoto, Pac-Man creator Toru Iwatani, Will "The Sims" Wright, and NOA's George Harrison demonstrating it for the crowd. As it won't be released as a full priced piece of software, the jury is still out on how Nintendo plan to market what is essentially a quirky, and possibly short-lived, gaming experience.



## The Legend of Zelda: The Four Swords GCN

**DEVELOPER:** Capcom

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

Released late last year, the GBA port of the classic SNES title, Zelda: A Link to the Past, featured a multiplayer specific sub-game dubbed 'The Four Swords' that pitted players in a cooperative quest and race to collect as many rupees as they could. Four Swords for GameCube takes this basic premise and takes it one step further in a connectivity-centric title that has four players linking their GBAs to the GameCube to once again do battle with enemies, solve puzzles and collect rupees. The difference this time is that gameplay can shift from one screen to the another, so if you were to enter a cave while your friends are busy with enemies outside, gameplay will shift from the TV screen to your GBA screen where you could collect the treasure within – unbeknownst to those around you. Visually, the title may look similar to its SNES counterpart, but with the added grunt of the GameCube's hardware, hundreds of enemies appearing onscreen and countless rupees falling from the sky can be a common occurrence. Even the effects have been beefed up, with lighting techniques lifted directly from The Wind Waker. Cool!



## Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg

**DEVELOPER:** Sonic Team

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

Billy Hatcher marks the first original creation for Sega's Yuji Naka for some time, and it's certainly quirky. Essentially you'll be in control of Billy, a young kid in a chicken suit who'll nurse and hatch giant eggs – all wrapped up in a colourful, offbeat platformer from Sonic Team. During the course of the game you'll use these giant eggs to solve puzzles, squash enemies, feed them fruit (yes, fruit) and hopefully add the creature that lurks within the shell to your creature collection. Creatures aren't limited to chickens, as you'll be able to hatch penguins, seals, and use their abilities to your advantage. Even though it may be hard to grasp exactly how the game works, it's still a 3D platformer with levels, objectives and puzzles – just... egg related. Visually the title is very reminiscent to the Sonic Adventure series, and naturally, coming from Naka, the gameplay is fast, colourful and a lot of fun.





## The Legend of Zelda: Tetra's Trackers

**DEVELOPER:** EAD  
**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● Tetra's Trackers is yet another connectivity-centric Zelda title. The title plays out very much like a Zeldafied Treasure Hunt — albeit one starring The Wind Waker's Tetra and her band of Pirates. Each player, with their GBAs hooked up to the TV, race each other to complete tasks, collect rupees and to get stamps off the sequentially numbered Pirates adorning the playing field — in this case an island. Gameplay will predominantly take place on the GBA screen as each player competes in order to finish the fastest with Tetra providing play-by-play commentary on the TV screen, next to an animated map. Tetra's voice, however, is annoyingly American — dispelling any of that stylish Japanese Nintendo magic. Certainly not the sweet, cute and innocent Tetra we all know from The Wind Waker — so here's hoping it changes. The title, although fun to play, still begs the question: how will Nintendo plan on marketing these GBA/GCN connectivity-dependent games?



## Mario and Luigi

**DEVELOPER:** Intelligent Systems  
**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● Those looking for another dose of Mushroom Kingdom RPG gaming need look no further than Mario & Luigi. Nintendo's surprise GBA announcement of the show looks and plays very much like a spiritual successor to the N64 classic, Paper Mario, with a noteworthy addition — the ability to control two characters. With both Mario and Luigi at the player's disposal, the A and B buttons are used to control each brother's jumping, paving the way for some interesting puzzles and welcome platforming elements. Encountering an enemy will switch the game to the battle mode, which is turn-based, and much like Paper Mario, uses the A and B buttons to add an element of real-time gaming to proceedings. With both Mario and Luigi present, there's plenty of teamwork involved and plenty of puzzles, races and battles that require you to 'double-up' and take control of the Mario brothers simultaneously.



## The Sims

**DEVELOPER:** Maxis  
**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● At times, Nintendo's pre-E3 press conference felt a lot like a parade of celebrity gaming icons. Case in point: after Miyamoto welcomed Iwatani to the stage, he produced Sims creator Will Wright. Apart from thinking "who else has he got back there?" we were wondering what the man behind Sim City and the runaway success of The Sims could be bringing to the GameCube. The answer would come in the announcement of a new console and handheld Sims game that would feature extensive connectivity. For example, a Sim living in the GameCube world could download into your GBA to party, play, visit your friends and whatnot. Unfortunately, apart from that little nugget, very little information is yet known about this potential commercial smash hit.





## Fire Emblem

**DEVELOPER:** Intelligent Systems

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● Those of you who had the chance to play (or become slaves to) Advance Wars on the GBA, are no doubt looking forward to the sequel. The developers behind the popular RTS, Intelligent Systems, are also well known for another RPG/RTS series — Fire Emblem. Until now the series has only seen release in Japan, but thankfully the latest incarnation in the franchise is getting a western release. The parallels between this title and Advance Wars are instantaneously evident — from controlling an armed unit ready for battle to using the environment to your advantage, there's a definite resemblance. But add to this elements of a deeply engaging RPG, ripe with character micromanagement and appropriately adult-themed storylines and we have a winner. Finally we can see what we've been missing all these years. It's no wonder the series has a huge following over in Japan — it's slick, addictive and deeply rewarding. Much like Advance Wars, it will consume your life.



## Sword of Mana

**DEVELOPER:** Brownie Brown

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● Ever since the team behind the excellent SNES action RPG, Secret of Mana, left to form their own company, Brownie Brown, Square fans have been watching their progress quite closely. After a few Japan-only affairs, the developer is reworking the very classic that made them famous — Sword of Mana, a reworking of the epic story told in Secret of Mana and the quest to save the Mana Tree. Built from the ground-up and taking advantage of the GBA hardware, Sword of Mana only resembles its SNES counterpart in story, as the graphics, gameplay and overall structure have been redesigned. The interface, which uses the same "ring" shaped design as its predecessor feels just as natural as ever, and selecting items, spells and equipping your character is a breeze. With the reworked engine, the battles — although still real-time — feel different than those in the original, with the graphics and animation far more detailed. Sword of Mana is set for release later this year, and it's gotta be one of the most eagerly awaited GBA RPGs in yonks.



## Metroid: Zero Mission

**DEVELOPER:** Intelligent Systems

**AVAILABLE:** TBA

● With the memory of Metroid Fusion still fresh in our minds comes the news of a new Metroid title in the works for the GBA — Zero Mission. Could it really be a remake of the original NES Metroid classic? Displayed only in video form at Nintendo's E3 booth, the locations and levels displayed looked almost identical to those seen in the original Metroid, such as the opening elevator/morph ball sequence with outside rainy elements from Super Metroid thrown in for good measure. Samus herself will have new upgrades such as dash and super missiles, which should pave the way for more varied and complete gameplay. Nintendo have yet to release specific details regarding the title, so at this stage it looks like Zero Mission is almost definitely a remake with added areas, enemies and moves. With its reworked visuals that look every bit as good, if not better than Metroid Fusion and Super Metroid, Zero Mission could be another trophy in your GBA gallery.



# WIN WIN WIN WIN WIN

ENTRIES CLOSE AUGUST 6

## WIN GOTHIC III!

■ The first Gothic may not have been released here in Australia, but we've been blessed with the just-as-good sequel, Gothic II. It's a grand RPG with excellent NPC interaction and an addictive story. One of the best RPGs on the PC in absolute yonks. To win one of 15 copies we have to give away...

FOR  
PC

Send in a drawing of yourself as an RPG hero!

Send your artwork along with your name and address to: **Gothic Graphics, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.**

15  
COPIES  
UP FOR  
GRABS!



## WIN NEVERWINTER NIGHTS & SHADOWS OF UNDRENTIDE!

■ It hasn't taken very long for Neverwinter Nights to rapidly acquire a fervent fan base. There's good reason for that – it's one of BioWare's most stylish RPGs. Now the expansion pack, Shadows of Undrentide is here, and it's the brand new adventure you've all been craving. We have 5 very cool packs to giveaway, that include the original Neverwinter Nights and Shadows of Undrentide so you can enjoy this RPG and its expansion both for the very first time!

FOR  
PC

To be in with a chance to win, just answer the following question:

What is the other RPG series that BioWare are famous for?

Send your answer on the back of an envelope with your name and address to: **NeverWinter Pack, 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 and its agencies associated with the promotion. 2. Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 3. Competition begins 9am July 1 and entries close at 6pm August 6. 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 August 7 at Next Publishing 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 October issue of Hyper on sale September 3. 9. 15 winners will each receive Gothic 2 RRP\$99.95. Five winner will each receive NeverWinter Nights and Expansion Pack RRP\$99.95 & \$49.95. Total prize value is \$2248.75. 10. The promoter is Next Publishing ABN 88 002 647 645 of 78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016.

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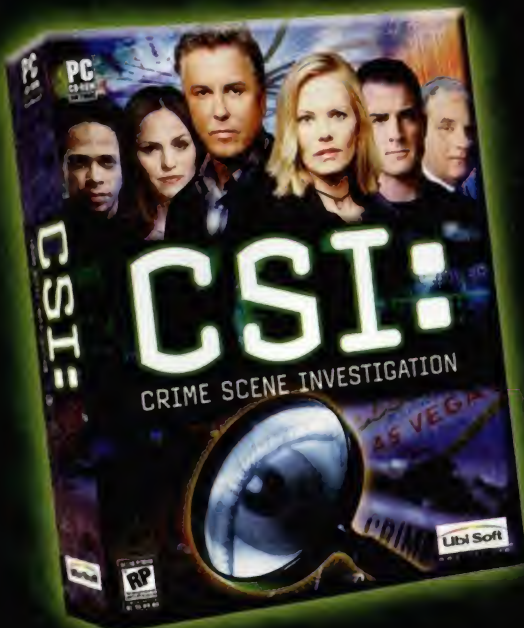


# CSI: CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

## CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

Hunt for the truth as Grissom, Catherine, and the entire CSI team stand ready to assist you. Go deep into the details of five brain-twisting crime scenes, and break down the evidence with high-powered forensic equipment and cunning wits.

Don't just watch the action. Live it.



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Follow the evidence  
Tuesday nights



# TRAWL



## The Matrix Online >> FRANK DRY

<http://thematrixonline.warnerbros.com>

**W**hat is the Matrix? Well, soon it will be a massively multiplayer online game if nothing else. A chance for fans to participate in a virtual representation of the virtual existence (ahh irony) that is the Matrix, picking up from where *Matrix: Revolutions* finishes off. Short of plugging that thing into the back of your head, this will be as close as you can come to actually being in the Matrix... unless we really are in a real-life Matrix. Conspiracy theorists sign up here.

### BATTLING AGAINST THE MATRIX

Matrix Online will be a truly persistent world where players will interact 24 hours a day, seven days a week (if you can afford it!). Taking on the role of an operative (ala Morpheus and Trinity et al), gameplay will solely take place within the Matrix, with no "real world" gameplay at all. It is assumed that the player's character

is plugged into the Matrix aboard a hovercraft somewhere in broadcasting range. Whilst we're slightly disappointed to not be facing off against an army of sentinels, exploring the surreal nature of the Matrix should be fascinating enough. Only the players will be "aware".

The environment will be an urban one — just like the films — containing nightclubs, subways, skyscrapers, dingy rooftops and traffic-laden motorways, where you'll be battling against the agents of the Matrix for the survival of humanity. In fact, the combat will be a key element of the gameplay experience in The Matrix Online. Consisting of a blend of kung-fu and weapons-based combat, the focus will be on recreating epic fights such as seen in the films. Just imagine multiple human players going in and out of bullet-time, leaping backwards off walls and pulling off slick hand-to-hand



moves. Can it be done in a MMORPG context? It's certainly an ambitious concept, so Monolith sure have their work cut out for them.

Every player will also have their own custom look, so you can tell the operatives from normal humans and agents. Basically, the characters getting about in the latest Armani, complete with dark sunnies, are guaranteed to be other human players taking part in the game. Players will be able to role-play together, spotting other operatives amongst the drab human NPCs, and revel in their secret superiority. Feeling "cool"





It's not bullet time, it's Hammer Time! Hoo haal Hoo haal



She must need a crowbar to get into those pants.

will be half the attraction of taking part in The Matrix Online. You're not just a stubby dwarf with a +1 axe in this MMORPG...

**SOLE PURPOSE BEING TO ELIMINATE**

Much like Deus Ex: Invisible War will feature a Biomod system, players in Matrix Online will be able to "fit" attribute slots with a variety of

abilities – making some players more proficient in kung-fu or acrobatics, and others more skilled with handguns and other deadly weapons. Senses can be enhanced, as well as reaction time and a mastery of the prominent bullet time feature. Amazingly, you'll somehow be able to swap these abilities with other players. What we are not aware of yet, is whether players can

take each other on, or even play as Agents with your sole purpose being to eliminate other player characters.

Whilst Shiny Entertainment were responsible for the Wachowski-approved console title, Enter the Matrix, The Matrix Online is being handled by Monolith Productions. It's still all very official though, with both Warner Bros Studios and the Wachowski brothers' company

EON Entertainment taking care of the story and content development, whilst Ubi Soft will be publishers and responsible for technical housekeeping.

With a beta test scheduled for sometime this year (more details on this can be found on the game's website), The Matrix Online should eventually launch worldwide in 2004, for the PC only. Grab the red pill.

# JOHN CALLAHAN'S QUADS!



BE PARALYZED WITH LAUGHTER!

*"When people laugh like hell then say, 'That's not funny,' you can be sure they're talking about John Callahan." PJ O'Rourke*



**Christopher Reeve lovingly refers to him as the Anti-Quad!**

John Callahan's QUADS! Tells the story of Reilly O'Reilly, a foul mouthed drunk who gets run over by a millionaire and rendered a quadriplegic.



As seen on SBS

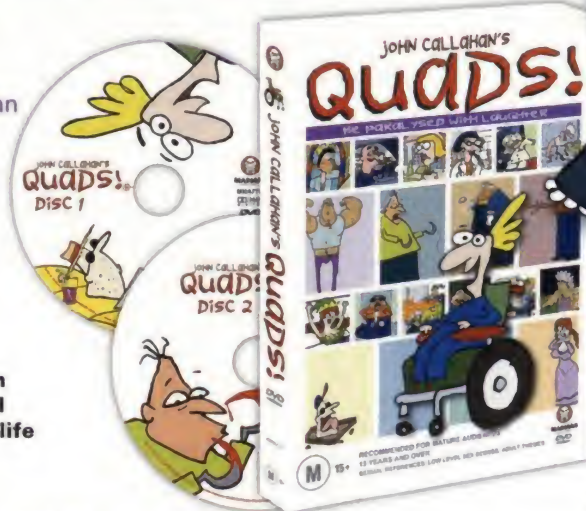
**Extras include:**

- 2 discs
- Interviews with creator John Callahan
- Rare cartoons from John Callahan

**YOURS TO OWN ON DVD TODAY**



Robin Williams soon to star in film based on John Callahan's life





**JACKSON GOTHER-SNAPE**

» Waking up to the crisp draft wafting in through the

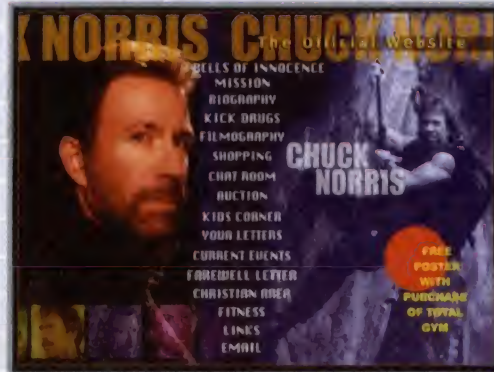
open window, the muted lighting across the bedroom suggests another grey day. As the alarm blares, your freezing nose warns you not to rise, just yet, and to accept any aural pain as necessary sacrifice. That's right, it's another chilly morning in our least favourite season, Q2/Q3.

What's this? Clearly the morning in question is one of winter for all but the most cane toad infested regions. Yet the internet, the chicken/egg of advanced globalisation, has told us otherwise.

Most of us would have hunted gaming news online. Many would have trawled through foreign sites, all of which, curiously in this global age, treat their audience like Hyper treats New Zealand – with very little geographic consideration. The debacle, and indeed it is a scenario of such catastrophe, has reached a point where now, for all but the narrow-minded northern few, 'summer', 'winter', 'spring', and 'fall' have lost all meaning. And don't believe that it ends when you log off – the disease infects and affects even our modern day experience. When the 2 Fast 2 Furious trailer booms in that inevitably familiar American tongue "this winter", the net-bred confusion may confound ("is he an American living in Australia perhaps, or just maybe they're actually referring to a Xmas release?") the obvious – that it is geared towards the simple 'me': a notion that the internet, in general, disregards. Well, unless you're a simple yank. Globalisation does not equal homogenisation, Uncle Sam (as my version of Word "autocorrects" the 's' to a 'z' in homogenisation... "sighs")

What then of our concepts and associations of 'winter'? Will, in time, they be lost (well, misused) altogether, as our day-to-day existences tie more closely to those virtual? Maybe, but for now, I just want the confusion to end: with specific month or quarter games release references. And to think I was finally beginning to reject Sesame Street's ridiculous 'white Christmas' insinences...

# Links



## CHUCK NORRIS OFFICIAL SITE

[www.chucknorris.com](http://www.chucknorris.com)

» This isn't one of those hackneyed "My First HTML" fan sites that currently litter the web concerning one Charles "Chuck" Norris, this is the real deal. To some he's a legendary film star, to others an iconic 'Texas Ranger' but behind the kicks, punches, and trademark chestnut beard is Chuck the Humanitarian, Chuck the 'All-American Good Guy'. From his 'Kick Drugs' foundation that has taught the youth of today to literally 'kick' drugs, to his obsession with fitness (buy his patented Total Gym exercise machine today!) – Chuck Norris is living the dream. Check it out.



## MARS CONSPIRACY

[www.lightsinthesky.homestead.com/301MarsFace.html](http://www.lightsinthesky.homestead.com/301MarsFace.html)

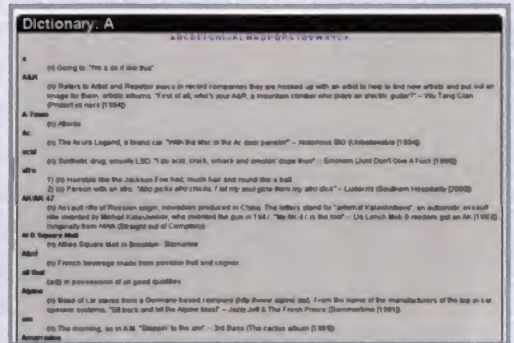
» You remember that photo that showed a face-like rock formation on Mars? It sent the general media into a spin where they consequently put their spin on the event – could there be life on Mars? Are we alone in the universe? That sort of thing. When NASA took new pictures of the aforementioned "face on Mars" it appeared to be nothing but a dull rock, and the face in question was merely the Sun playing a trick on us all. Lousy Sun! But don't be quick to blame the Sun, according to this site and its coloured text and pictures. The U.S. Government is trying to cover up the existence of the 'face' with phony pictures and old fashioned dishonesty. According to this site, the 'face on Mars' holds a direct relation with Ancient Egypt! Prepare to have your eyes opened – or if they're already opened, opened slightly further than usual.



## MIYAMOTO SHRINE - SHIGERU'S HOME ON THE WEB

[www.miyamotoshrine.com](http://www.miyamotoshrine.com)

» A man who needs no introduction (to videogame nerds that is), Shigeru Miyamoto – the man behind Mario, Zelda and more recently Pikmin. In the world of fan sites, when it comes to video game creators – and characters for that matter – the choices are pretty slim. They're certainly not treated like pop stars Spears and Timberlake, where the door to hundreds of photos, interviews, lyrics, biographies, and photo-shopped nude imagery are but a few clicks away. Instead we are treated to more solemn efforts like the Miyamoto Shrine, where you can find photos, interviews, famous quotes and biographies on The Great One – but (sadly - Ed) no photo-shopped nude imagery. Hah! I put that Ed comment in – me funny!



## THE RAP DICTIONARY

[www.rapdict.org](http://www.rapdict.org)

» Here's a web site that puts decades of rap lingo at your fingertips, and a resource big enough to turn any street fearing white-boy, me, into a lyrical scientist. Here goes:

"So peep this, I comes correct, smokin' a Scooby Doo, ain't afraid to peel a cap ups in you. I'm a straight up soilder born and bred, living off government cheese and ridin' my ghetto sled. Let me axe you dis, do you wanna ride wit me? Get high wit me? You ain't nuttin but a busta, cracker, no good slacker! Fool, I'm out. Off to gets me some nappy dugout." (See website for translation)

# Links

Box Office Mojo

SEARCH BY TITLE

BOX OFFICE

DAILY  
WEEKEND  
YEARLY  
ALL TIME

MOVIES A-Z  
STUDIOS  
DIRECTORS  
ACTORS  
GENRES  
FRANCHISES  
OSCAR  
FRANCHISES  
PELAYERS  
DERBY GAME  
MOVIE MATHS

Random Grey

## BOX OFFICE MOJO

Updated 6/9/2003 12:55 P.M. Pacific Time  
\*Foot 2 Furious\* revs to \$56,472,498 weekend...

LATEST UPDATES

6/9 WEEKEND: Top 60 - Actuals  
6/9 DAILY: Sunday, 6/8 (35 tracked)

6/9 ALL TIME: Domestic Grosses  
6/9 DAILY: Saturday, 6/7 (35 tracked)

6/9 MOVIE vs. Channel vs. Spider-Man  
6/9 DAILY: Friday, 6/8 (35 tracked)

6/7 ALL TIME: Fastest to \$100 Million  
6/7 YEARLY: 2003 Grosses

6/6 FRANCHISES: Pixar  
6/6 GENRES: Computer Animation

6/6 WEEKEND: Stragglers (179 tracked)  
6/6 DAILY: Thursday, 6/5 (83 tracked)

SPOTLIGHT (view all)



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## BOX OFFICE MOJO

[www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com)

Know what the highest grossing film of all time is? If you said *Titanic* you're dead wrong! By dead wrong we of course mean absolutely correct, because everyone knows that when it comes to Cinematic Cashish Makers™, *Titanic* is the (here it comes) 'King of the World'. But what about the 37th highest grossing film of all time? That honour belongs to the Robin Williams classic *Mrs. Doubtfire* which banked well over \$200 million, more than *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*! Indeed, it is a weird world we live in.



## THE UNLIKELY SOCIETY

[home.appleisp.net/~jgross/home.html](http://home.appleisp.net/~jgross/home.html)

Web comics are dime a dozen, but a web comic made entirely in Lego, is definitely a rare breed. Cue The Unlikely Society, a tongue in cheek Internet comic about a group of misfit superheroes, led by Ninja Rabbit, and their attempts to thwart the evil plans of the equally evil Starfish Head. With a cast that includes Apathy Boy, a boy who has superhuman strength but no will to fight (he watches TV instead), the prerequisite tough-as-nails female, Token Girl and the Monochromancer, whose superhero ability gives him the power to "drain the colour out of stuff" - how can you go wrong?



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»PS2

GAME OF THE MONTH

# Silent Hill 3

Konami show us their dark side, again.



REVIEW

48 »HYPER



# REVIEWS



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## GAME THEORY

DANIEL STAINES



»» What's in a name? Although Shakespeare probably would loathe to admit it, the answer to that question is "quite a lot, actually". Aside from their obvious functions, names (or nouns, if you'd prefer) also play a crucial sociological role in influencing and defining our perceptions of the entities and activities that they refer to. Homer was right – a rose probably "wouldn't" smell as sweet if it were called "crap weed".

And now to the point of this month's column – let's take a look at the name "game". As a blanket definition to describe the medium as a whole, I'm inclined to think that the term "game" does not do interactive entertainment any favours in terms of cultural validity. "Game" is not a term one often hears in conjunction with other socially significant nouns like "art" and "science". For most people, the word immediately brings with it strong connotations of inconsequential frivolity and triviality. It signifies something one does to pass the time between more important engagements. "Just a game," as they say – certainly not something to be engaged with on any serious intellectual or emotional level.

But it's not "just a game", is it? It is becoming increasingly evident that interactive entertainment is being unfairly stigmatised and stereotyped by the very words used to identify it. From the perspective of the general public, gaming is largely denied recognition on the individual level as a cultural enterprise that is just as if not more socially valid than other forms of entertainment such as cinema and music. And in terms of actual content, it is arguable that less adventurous developers and gamers are being fundamentally limited by their own understanding of what they're producing and playing. Games are supposed to have goals, games are supposed to have scores – games are supposed to be "winnable".

Obviously, some videogames are nothing more than exactly that – games. But is it right to let this rest as a blanket definition of our medium in a time when it is struggling to gain acceptance and validity in the eyes of the powers that be? I don't think so.

daniels@next.com.au

## HYPER CREW TOP 5

Eliot Fish – Editor

1. Gothic 2 – PC  
"Another RPG to keep me up all night. Yay!"
2. Splinter Cell – Xbox
3. Metroid Prime – GCN
4. Advance Wars 2 – GBA SP
5. Rygar – PS2

Cam Shea – Deputy Editor

1. Hanging with Shiggy at the Nintendo E3 party  
"The man is a god. And genuinely nice to boot!"
2. Half-Life 2 – PC
3. Prince of Persia – ALL
4. F-Zero GX – GCN
5. Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo – GBA

Malcolm Campbell – Art

1. Pac-Man – Arcade  
"My research for the Classics pages took longer than expected..."
2. Zelda: The Wind Waker – GCN
3. Metal Gear Solid 2 – PS2
4. Metroid Prime – GCN
5. Armored Core 3 – PS2

Daniel Staines – Reviewer

1. Metroid Prime – GCN  
"Is it just me or has Samus got some really sexy eyes under that visor of hers?"
2. Zelda: The Wind Waker – GCN
3. Pokémon Sapphire – GBA
4. Pro Evolution Soccer 2 – PS2
5. Project Gotham Racing – Xbox

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

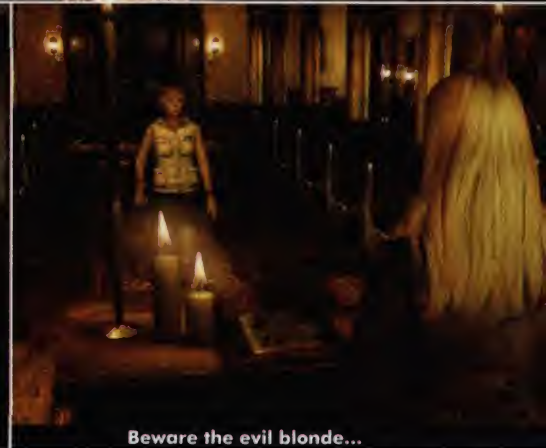
0-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
These games simply suck. A total waste of money!	Bad game design and possibly not even worth renting.	Average, verging on bad. This game is flawed, but worth a rent.	Good, verging on average. Maybe try before you buy.	Very, very good. This is a quality game, but not perfect.	Excellent and worthy of a Big Rubber Stamp. Buy it!



This Go Round ain't so Merry.



Gee, you're going to need some serious Ajax.



Beware the evil blonde...

PS2

CATEGORY: Survival Horror >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Konami >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

# Silent Hill 3

**MARCH STEPNIK** now has to sleep with a night light on.

**I**t's a Silent Hill 'thing' to display a warning to gamers that "there are disturbing and violent images" in the game. Silent Hill 3 (SH3) itself opens with "Some parts of this game may be considered violent or cruel." But a much more useful warning would be: "remember: Silent Hill 3 is only a game".

This could well become a handy mantra as you cautiously make your way through the world of SH3, because this is one terrifying game — heck, we'd even say it's a disturbing kinda game. It creates a level of tension so thick and palpable — and at times so absorbing — that you'll have to remind yourself that SH3 is, of course, simply a form of entertainment and you'd better snap out of it. This is a game that'll make you afraid of the dark again — how many games can do that to you?

## INSIDE THE BATHROOM

Of course, Konami has had some practice. Silent Hill for PlayStation and Silent Hill 2 for the PS2 are both exemplary titles in the survival horror genre, and we can now add Silent Hill 3 to the list of games that take your expectations and completely turn them upside down.

Taking a different route begun by the folks at Capcom with the Resident Evil series, the Silent Hill series has a decidedly more eerie, mysterious feel, with a much stronger emphasis on puzzle solving. Where Resident Evil feels more like a comic adventure (albeit a very scary one), Silent Hill plays out like an episode of Twin Peaks — presenting a series of bizarre twisted events where nothing is what it seems against a backdrop of the very ordinary, sleepy town of Silent Hill...

Except Silent Hill 3 doesn't begin

in the town of Silent Hill, and that's not the only difference this game displays to its predecessors. Firstly, the game's protagonist is a 17 year-old girl named Heather (the two previous heroes were both male and middle aged). Secondly, it begins in the confines of a multi-level shopping centre, not the great outdoors as initially featured in SH1 and 2. Also, there are a lot more monsters in SH3 — and therefore combat — than in the previous two games.

From a story-telling perspective, however, (Silent Hill games are loved as much for the characters that populate the world as they are for the emotional ride they take you on), there's one very subtle yet powerful difference — and this difference sets the tone that the entire experience unfolds with. Where Harry set off into the unknown looking for his missing





Never try to dye your hair on your own.



Where'd Professor X go to?



She can't afford real pets. How sad.



## SOMETIMES YOU WILL **JUMP OUT OF YOUR SEAT**, AT OTHER TIMES YOU WILL **SINK FURTHER BACK INTO IT**

daughter in the original SH, and James follows up on a lead that may lead to some answers surrounding his late wife of three years in SH2 (letters can arrive years late, of course...), Heather's motives here are less altruistic and more immediate, primal: to get the hell away from the creepy guy that's after her.

### **RAISES YOUR HACKLES**

Waking up from a dream sequence which marks the beginning of the game (now that's been done before), Heather makes a quick call to her dad at a public pay phone to let him know that she's on her way home. As she hangs up, a man in a trenchcoat approaches her, introduces himself as a detective and asks her to come with him. Heather, wary, tells the man where he can go and heads off to where he can't follow — the ladies bathroom.

This is where the game proper begins — inside the bathroom pondering plenty of questions — who does he work for and what do they want with me? Is he even telling the truth? You try the door back out again for some more answers, but no — you're playing Heather here and Heather doesn't want to face the detective again — so it's out the bathroom window to the world outside, and to escape.

Or is it? The one thing Konami do really well is keeping the player in the dark, both literally and figuratively. With SH3, Konami displays a thorough understanding of interactive horror storytelling, and the skill with which they execute this is remarkable. They realise that a curious player is a more attentive player, and a more attentive player, is much easier to manipulate — like putty in their hands. And

manipulate you they do — as you explore the world around you and witness its descent into a disturbing hell-state replete with nightmarish creatures, Konami are there, revealing the story piece by piece and setting you up to deliver some truly terrifying moments. Sometimes you will jump out of your seat, at other times you will sink further back into it; most times you'll simply be freaked out. Konami understand pacing very well — just as things have gotten peaceful and quiet again — bang! — something happens to you that shakes you to the core and raises your hackles.

### **HORRID AND NASTY**

This sense of vulnerability is a valuable tool in drawing an emotional response out of the player, but this feeling of helplessness can be too overwhelming at times. A lot of things happen at and



### **PICK A CHALLENGE**

>>>In acknowledgment of the terror this game inflicts on players, there are three difficulty settings to choose from. The easiest reduces the numbers of nasties to a bear minimum, slows them down and makes them easier to hit. The hardest does the exact opposite, while the medium option falls nicely in between. While Easiest is designed for beginner players, it also changes the feel of the game slightly to be more in line with the original game in the series: where fewer monsters populated the world. Irrespective of which difficulty level you choose, the creatures in SH3 will scare the shite outta you.



Always time for a bit of art appreciation.



There's nothing creepier than mannequins!



Heather aims for the goolies.

## REAL BRAIN BUSTERS

»» Puzzles are an integral part of the Silent Hill series, and Konami hasn't shied away from packing the game with some real brain busters. The hardest difficulty setting presents puzzles that require good general knowledge, and will thus require some real-world research in order to solve them. Those who choose medium will find that puzzles can be solved without outside reference, turning the puzzles into more visual ones. The Easy setting proves a walk in the park by removing some puzzles altogether, and is for real wusses.



to you, but not because of you (directly at least) — heck you don't even know what's going on! But there is something you can affect that you quickly discover, and that's the population of the horrid and nasty creatures. While your natural instinct would be to waste all the monsters in your path, you discover quickly enough that there isn't a lot of ammo available. So you soon adjust and pick your battle carefully, running past as many as you can. This is all good and well, but as there can be a fair bit of backtracking, you'll be doing a lot of running past monsters. Not an issue, you may be thinking — but it is when these monsters make some truly nasty and guttural noises. Combine that with a crescendo in bizarre ambient sound when you encounter enemies and you

have an aural cocktail that is highly disturbing. Save your ammo if you must, but bringing down those beasts brings respite in the form of simple silence. The audio is a strong component of the whole experience and is used to chilling effect throughout the game.

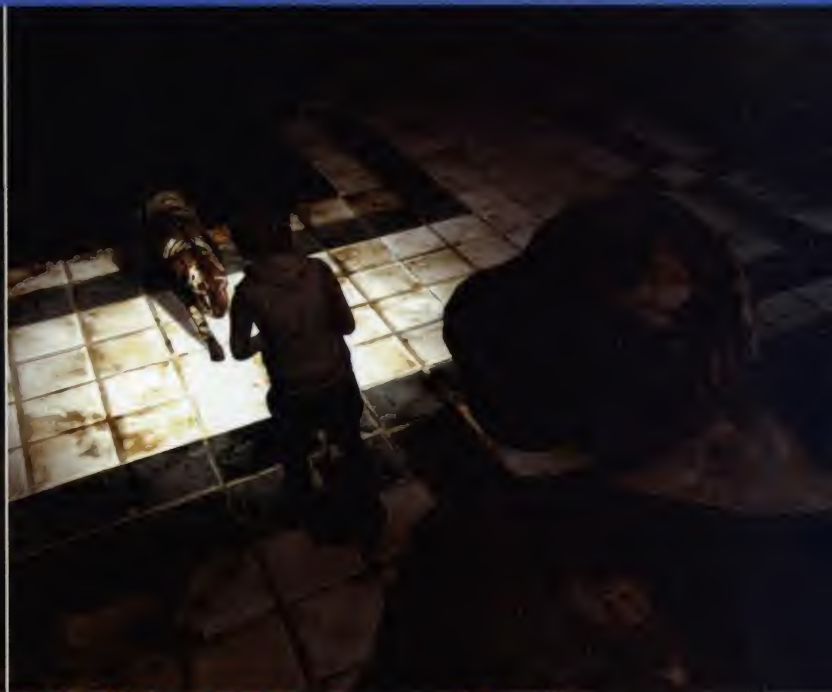
Visually, Silent Hill 3 is a work of art. Normal, everyday environments — shopping centres, offices and the like — produce a strong contrast to the disturbing environments that come. The design is excellent, and it's the subtleties that make all the difference. It's the way places lose their colour under layers of grime as you progress, or how your flashlight seems to be swallowed up by the encroaching darkness. It's also the placement of objects in the world — the incongruous positioning of blood-stained hospital beds in shopping centre hallways, or static-producing televisions that someone has forgotten to turn off, or a favourite — the decapitated (yes, decapitated and bloody) limbs of shopping display mannequins strewn around the place. What the? And the monsters themselves — truly freaky stuff! Closer inspection of

these reveals a hideous design blending real world elements with fantastic ones. Just where the hell have they come from?

## TRULY INTENSE

So far, this review has focused on the importance Konami has placed on setting the scene in SH3 and manipulating the player within it, but little on the actual content of the game. And that's deliberate: Silent Hill 3 is a game where ignorance is the best thing you can bring to the experience. So much of what makes SH3 so special is in discovery, and the unfolding of the chilling and most thrilling story. Know where it's headed or what's coming up and your attention to detail will slip —





Demtel's home surgery kit was a big seller.



Run like hell.



Heather starts the big clean up. Poor gal.



## YOU SOON ADJUST AND PICK YOUR BATTLE CAREFULLY, RUNNING PAST AS MANY AS YOU CAN



and this is a game where the magic lies in the details, and quite often the smaller ones. And previous details aren't important: you won't have to have played the previous two games to make sense of SH3, but those that have will be rewarded.

Silent Hill 3 is almost identical in presentation to SH2, and uses the same basic gameplay mechanics. But rather than be a case of same old, SH3 is a superbly crafted adventure that provides all the necessary ingredients for a truly intense experience bar one: and that's the player. But SH3 will only give if you give in return. The spell is so subtle that it can be quite easy to miss the point and see a fairly linear adventure game with some puzzle

elements and a sucky combat engine. It really depends on how you see it. We suggest turning out all the lights (hint: this game just doesn't work during the day), suspending your disbelief, and letting yourself fall under its spell as you get to the bottom of the disturbing goings on around you.

At one point in the game, a friend turned around and started blasting at an assailant taking Heather's flank. After emptying a few rounds, we both had a chilling realisation. This was no corporeal attacker — it was the real-time shadow that was growing as Heather moved away from the hallway's light source. And this is just a game.

Now that's the level of immersion you want. <<<

!!! It looks like Silent Hill 3 could also get a PC release. It will in the USA at least, but it's not on the schedule for Aus, yet.



**PLUS:** Challenging, engrossing, terrifying. Incredible sound.

**MINUS:** Dialogue still a bit stiff, the stress!

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

88 93 90

OVERALL

92

Disgusting! Horrific! We love it!



REVIEW

>> HYPER 53



I remember when this kind of thing cost 20c.

Rygar demolishes more precious Greek history.

Rygar's got worms, tee hee.

PS2 CATEGORY: Action/Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Tecmo >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

# Rygar

**ELIOT FISH** returns to his youth (thanks to the dark arts).

**M**any of you may be old enough to remember the side-scrolling arcade classic that was the original Rygar. A cool bunch of pixels — looking suspiciously like a cross between Conan the barbarian and Monkey — transported us to a fantastical land of myth and magic, where whipping demons in the face with a spikey shield thing was commonplace. Well, now you can whip things to death in full 3D. Joy!

## EXPLORE THE BIZARRE

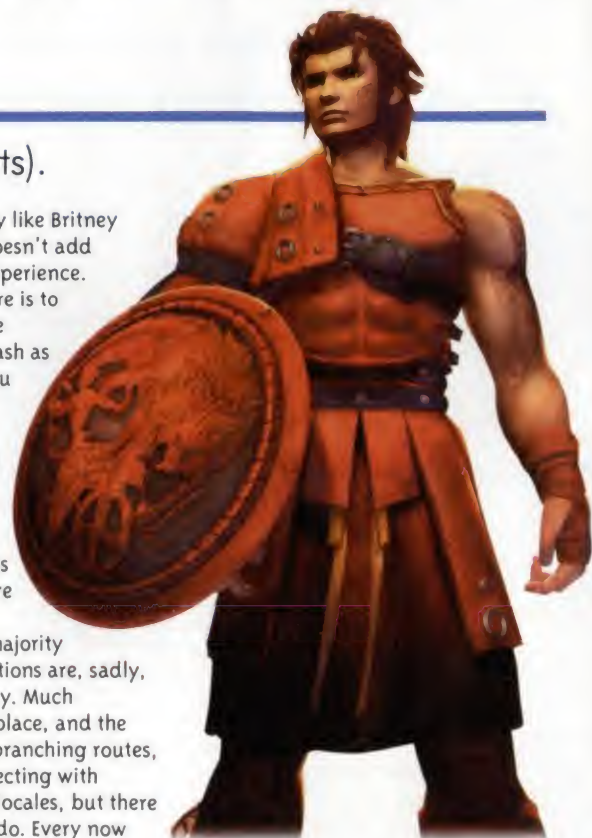
We're always sceptical about modern 3D remakes of classic 2D games. More often than not, they're pitiful attempts at recreating the same gameplay with a 3D engine (see Pac-Man 3D, Frogger 3D, Asteroids 3D and so forth), or they're complete remakes that do away with what was so great about

the original game in the first place (namely, the gameplay). So is it even possible for a 3D remake to succeed? You would think not, but games such as Maximo — the Ghost and Goblins remake — did manage to recapture what was cool about the original and yet offer gameplay that is palatable by today's game playing audience. Rygar, too, succeeds on many levels, and yet it also fails to make use of its enormous potential.

Now Rygar is a lot prettier, kinda like Squall from FF VIII, and many cutscenes ensue of him looking confused, or having the secrets of the universe revealed to him, but it all boils down to the fact that Tecmo have a good bunch of artists and want to show off a bit. The story is really pretty disposable, and whilst it allows them to make some slick cutscenes featuring a princess who

looks frighteningly like Britney Spears, it really doesn't add anything to the experience. Your main task here is to explore the bizarre locations, and smash as many things as you can with your "Diskarmor".

The original was all about seat-of-your-pants platforming action, but that has been sacrificed here for an attempt at atmosphere. The majority of the game's locations are, sadly, depressingly empty. Much exploration takes place, and the levels have many branching routes, sometimes reconnecting with previously visited locales, but there just ain't much to do. Every now





...\*Bank\* Ouch!



He's always going out and getting hammered.



Rygar can't stop Lord Seafood!



## IF THERE WAS MORE MEAT ON THESE GORGEOUS LOOKING BONES, THIS COULD HAVE BEEN A TRULY GREAT GAME.

and then nasty monsters will spawn, but it happens so infrequently, we can only assume that Tecmo wanted the player to feel...tense, or puzzled, or something. Stupidly, they must have forgotten to include the puzzles. You'll still have fun, though, seeing what you can smash with your Diskarmor. Much of the architecture will crumble to reveal a glowing orb or two, so your exploration is also part destruction crew. And when you finally do get a bit of creature bashing, it's really enjoyable stuff — with some truly cool Diskarmor moves, like swinging beasties around and hurling them into the walls.

### ROOM FOR CREATIVITY

What really saves Rygar from being a disappointment, is the fact that there

are many challenging boss fights to make up the majority of the game's action. There are plenty of them, and they all differ in size and challenge. You'll be relieved that finally some real gaming skill is required in the game in order to progress.

Rygar also has quite a few new skills largely stolen from other games, such as A) a dash-slide, B) the ability to push large stones blocking your path, and C) a jumping stomp for activating switches. Again, these moves are sadly never really made use of in any true

puzzles or action sequences, and you'll never really feel like there's any room for creativity with your character's abilities. But again, that has a lot to do with the fact that you spend so much time wandering about on your own with nothing to use your skills on.

Some of the level design is quite fetching however, and the cinematic camera angles really show them off nicely. Of course, the cinematic camera angles also make it annoying and frustrating to play the game (especially the level with the floating rock platforms, arrggh). Again we get the feeling that the artists working on the game were far better than the people behind the actual game mechanics and gameplay. Some areas look very cool and the boss designs are awesome, but the gameplay never really matches up to them.

Overall, Rygar is a pleasing remake that recaptures many of the funky elements from the old original, and yet fails to deliver a wholly satisfying experience. If there was more meat on these gorgeous looking bones, this could have been a truly great game. <<

!!! More official Rygar-ish stuff at the site: [tecmogames.com](http://tecmogames.com)



**PLUS:** Interesting exploration to be had, good boss fights.

**MINUS:** Large empty passages of very little gameplay.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

85 82 79

OVERALL

79

Not your average remake, and thank goodness for that.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 55



Tree felling in the future.



AC & DC paint the town red.



How many fingers am I holding up?

PS2 CATEGORY: Mech action >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: From Software >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

# Armored Core 3

**MARCH STEPNIK** is always looking to mech out with someone.

**T**he one thing in which the Armored Core series has excelled at is its attention to detail with mechs. You can hot up your 'armoured core' with hundreds of components spanning over a dozen different categories, and they all have a substantial effect on the performance of your mech in the field (in that paper-rock-scissors kinda way). Indeed, the focus on AC upgrading and maintenance is so strong that the series has been criticised for being too complex to the average gamer, and so has found appreciation by a dedicated core group of players.

## SWEAT AND TEARS

Missions are well varied, and some will call for more offensive power, others for more defensive qualities, while others still for better mobility (timed search and destroy missions

will require more powerful boosters, for example, while more aerial intensive missions beg for stronger hover jets and a more efficient generator). But the other reason you'll become so familiar with all the gear is the simple fact that combat balance is so absolutely contingent on how've you outfitted your AC. You simply can't get by on controller skill alone: it's all about spending plenty of time kitting out your mech with all manner of automatic offensive and defensive capabilities for combat. And it can be quite satisfying to thoroughly decimate your opponents with an AC that you've poured love, sweat and tears into.

And so Armored Core 3 comes to us in PAL territories a good 9 months after the US and more than a full year after Japan got their go. And what new features have been brought to the table for the AC

faithful? Well, a precious few, that's for sure. This release displays a very subtle evolution of the Armored Core mojo and more importantly, the developers haven't done a heck of a lot in making it more friendly to casual gamers.

The story is told through the mission briefings and email debriefings and while they are quite well written and hint at having to choose allegiances, From Software failed to capitalise on a robust loyalty system here. As a result you indiscriminately take missions from all factions without fear of any reprisal. Which is fine in context because AC3 is all about amassing wealth, so becoming politically involved will only reduce your remuneration.

The best paid jobs are missions offered by the corporations, and for a nice alternative players can battle

other famous AC pilots for prize money and elevated status. These short, focused skirmishes balance the more long-winded requirements of the story missions, and offer an increasingly larger kitty as you climb up the ranking ladder.

Most of your time will be spent in the 'Garage' though, where you can fiddle away with the intricacies of your AC. You've three ACs on offer and parts you buy can be interchanged between them at will -



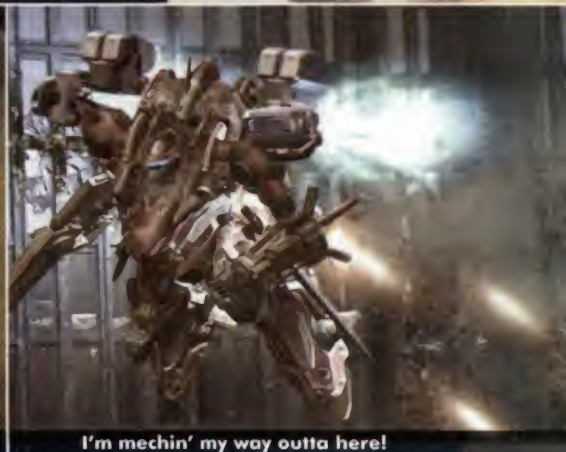




Go ahead. Mech my day.



Mech the sun come out.



I'm mechin' my way outta here!



## THE AC YOU START WITH MOVES LIKE A TANK AND PACKS A VERY LIMP-WRISTED PUNCH

the idea being that as funds increase, you can have three ACs fine-tuned for different roles. The interface is solid and all the stats are there - after a good dozen or so missions, you'll be tinkering with your ACs with ease.

### A LITTLE SNOOTY

AC3 gets two thumbs up in the features and customisation department, but the overall package is tarnished by poor game balance. The

!!! Armored Core 4 has been announced, so more info soon!



AC you start with moves like a tank and packs a very limp-wristed punch. Upgrading your AC becomes an urgent priority, since it's not but a handful of missions in and you're already requiring pricey, specific upgrade parts. Now, you're going to have to fulfil mission objectives efficiently because any damage your AC takes is automatically deducted from your fee, as is the cost of any ammunition used. What usually results is a substantially reduced reward for the mission you just completed, meaning that after the first handful of

utterly simple missions, things become very challenging very quickly - and not in a fun way.

And then there's combat itself. L2 and R2 buttons control view movement on the Y axis, and the response time is terrible. It will

require constant adjustment as you over-compensate, which never really becomes a lot of fun in the heat of battle, even with experience. It's absolutely criminal that they didn't utilise the right analogue stick for view control - at least for the beginner players out there. Compound that with the automatic weapons/defense systems and the cumbersome ACs at the beginning of the game, and the action at times seems well underdone.

Armored Core 3 is not a bad game by any stretch. Its major flaw is its difficulty at the early stages. If the guys at From Software can better balance this and spice up actual combat in the next iteration, the Armored Core series might well become unstoppable. But at the moment, there's only one way to play AC - with lots of time geeking out at what's under the hood. <<



**PLUS:** Great design, a mechanic's dream.

**MINUS:** Average combat and frustrating in the early stages.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY  
**85 80 70**

OVERALL

**72**

The best in the series thus far, but still not complete.

REVIEW

» HYPER 57



Argh he's using evil twee magic!



Let go of my hand, you're creeping me out.



Look out, a deadly broccoli turtle!

PS2

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Sony >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: TBC

# Dark Chronicle

**DANIEL STAINES** has never been one for sugar & spice...

**T**he word "twee" isn't used very often here at Hyper HQ, but during the course of playing *Dark Chronicle* we estimate it was used no less than thirty times to describe the action taking place on the TV before us. *Dark Chronicle* is just an exceedingly twee game. The bizarre cel-shaded visuals are twee, the story is completely twee and Max — the game's protagonist — couldn't be any more twee if he were the twee-hat wearing mayor of Twee Town. Oh yes, and for those of you wondering what the bloody hell "twee" means, please consult the ever-informative exclamation point accompanying this review. The exclamation point knows all and explains everything. All hail the exclamation point.

## DUNGEONS ONCE POISONED

Okay, so now that we're (hopefully) all up to speed on the twee

situation, let's discuss exactly what *Dark Chronicle* is aside from that. Put simply, this is an extraordinarily odd yet utterly addictive RPG that (like its predecessor) is actually very similar to an old SNES classic that went by the name of *Actraiser*. In *Actraiser*, you controlled a god that went around killing monsters and building towns in the areas that these monsters once infested. In *Dark Chronicle*, you control Max and his equally twee friends as they travel the world clearing out dungeons and building towns in the areas these dungeons once poisoned. This combination of seemingly disparate game genres looks strange on paper because it feels strange in practice. But that doesn't mean that it's unenjoyable. It's quite the opposite, actually.

Take dungeon crawling. Dungeons in *Dark Chronicle* can be anything

from a sewer to a lush tropical rainforest and basically consist of several discreet monster filled areas linked together by an overriding aesthetic theme. In these segments, progress is reducible to the three essential activities of killing monsters, getting treasure and finding keys — which, I'm sure you're aware, hardly constitutes a revolution in RPG game design. However, these tasks are happily made significantly more interesting and enjoyable by *Dark Chronicle*'s magnificent real-time

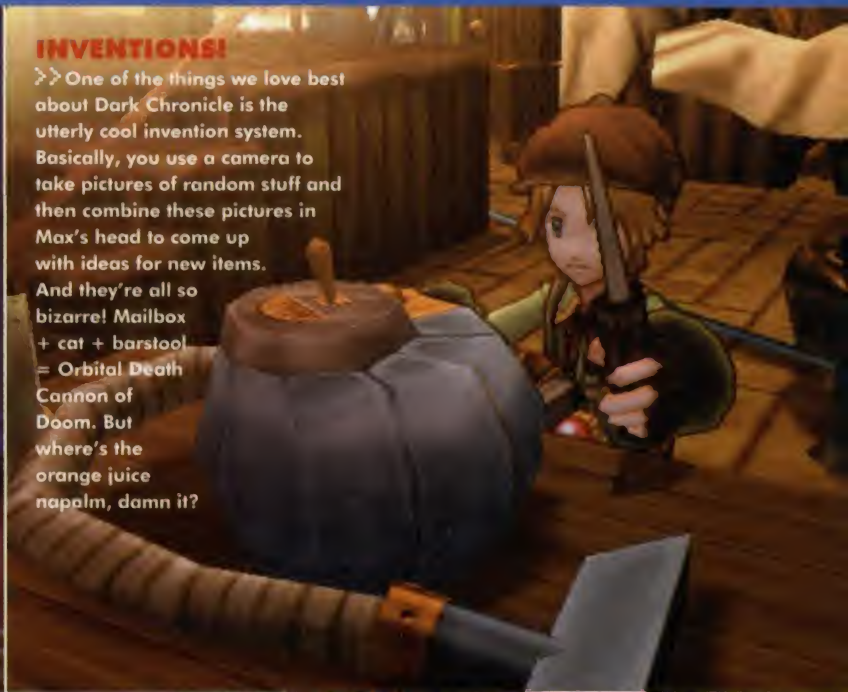
combat system and skilfully executed RPG mechanics.

Levelling up, for instance, is not simply a matter of bashing monsters until the numbers on one side of a backlash match the numbers on the other side. Players must instead select a particular weapon they'd like to focus on (each character carries two) and employ that weapon in combat until enough experience and items are acquired to allow for a "synthesis" upgrade. In order for this to be possible, one must collect and use particular treasure items to build



REVIEW

58 >> HYPER



### INVENTIONS!

>> One of the things we love best about Dark Chronicle is the utterly cool invention system.

Basically, you use a camera to take pictures of random stuff and then combine these pictures in Max's head to come up with ideas for new items.

And they're all so bizarre! Mailbox + cat + barstool = Orbital Death Cannon of Doom. But where's the orange juice napalm, damn it?



Where's your insane clown posse now, eh?



Oops, I dropped the thing labelled "bomb".



Careful, he has 2 giant pencil sharpeners.



## CONSTRUCTIONS ERECTED IN THE PAST OFTEN HAVE INTERESTING EFFECTS ON THEIR SURROUNDINGS IN THE FUTURE

up specific aspects of a given weapon and then utilise their experience points to perform the act of synthesis itself. Usually weapons will have two or more "synthesis paths" to follow, so players are free to choose what aspects they would like to build-up and direct their efforts towards appropriate goals. This results in a level-up system that is satisfying to use and enjoyable to experiment with – something other PS2 RPGs we could mention (Hello, Kingdom Hearts!) sorely lack.

### OVERTAKEN BY EVIL

Despite the fact that it's advertised as a major component of the whole experience, it is arguable that town building is really nothing more to Dark Chronicle than an enjoyable diversion from the game proper. The basic premise is that the entire world has been overtaken by evil

and you are required to rebuild it village by village. To do this, one must collect "geostones" – which are essentially ancient construction plans encased in a glowing rock – and then gather the necessary materials to construct a variety of different buildings and landmarks using the spider-like geomachine provided. In pure gameplay terms, this boils down to selecting something to build from a menu, making sure you've got the requisite materials and then clicking the area of the map you'd like to build it on. After a few embellishments such as chimneys and hedges have been added, you can go back down to ground level and observe the impact of what you've created.

This is where things get interesting because the influence particular

constructions have can be quite profound and it is in this way that the sim aspect of Dark Chronicle is skilfully tied to the main narrative quest. Also, because the story is split between two distinct time-periods, constructions erected in the past often have interesting effects on their surroundings in the future. It really is quite a lot of fun to experiment with this temporal aspect of town building and Level 5 should be highly commended for their clever originality in this regard.

Dark Chronicle is an excellent game. The narrative is tosh and the gameplay is prone to being overly linear and repetitious, but these are flaws that can easily be overlooked in the light of the many hours of pure fun Level 5 is offering here. If only all twee was as good as this. <<

!!! Twee (adj.) – Overly precious or nice. Sugary, cute or affectedly dainty.



**PLUS:** Finely honed mechanics, nice combat system, diverse.

**MINUS:** Can be a bit repetitive and linear, looks a bit odd.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY  
85 90 88

OVERALL  
88

A unique and incredibly entertaining RPG experience.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 59



Can I have your plastic surgeon's number?



Why is it called a "mini" gun exactly?



Don't enter the fart cloud of doom!

**XBOX** CATEGORY: Squad-based Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-8 >> PUBLISHER: Microsoft >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now

# Brute Force

**BRETT ROBINSON** goes looking for a few friends...

**E**ack in November of 2001, when the Xbox was launched in the US, Microsoft-owned developer Digital Anvil announced that it had begun working on a squad-based tactical action game. Months later, when further details (like a name) were revealed, various entities began hyping Brute Force as a Halo-killer in the making. Just how a squad-based tactical action game could be compared to a first person shooter was a little perplexing, but — healthy measures of scepticism aside — the prospect was nevertheless intriguing. Cut to the present, and now that we've had a chance to put Brute Force through its paces, we can tell you it's not a Halo-killer, but we can also humbly admit that those comparisons weren't so misguided after all.

## THE HEAT OF BATTLE

Obviously there are some major differences between Brute Force and Halo, but there are also striking similarities. In the visuals department, Brute Force is right up there with Bungie's masterpiece; its environments and character models are rendered in stunning detail and there are some terrific special effects to gawk at. Brute Force's control scheme, too, practically mirrors Halo's. Thus, if you're comfortable with Halo's interface you should be able to pick up and play Brute Force with little regard for the built-in tutorial, and even newbies shouldn't have any difficulty adapting to Brute Force's system, simple and effective as it is.

That's pretty much where the similarities between the two games end, though. Halo was all about single-handedly taking on a hostile

alien race, while Brute Force is slightly slower-paced and more cerebral, putting you in command of a squad of elite special forces operatives. You've got Tex, a Duke Nukem-like heavy weapons guy; Brutus, a reptilian warrior of the Feral species; Hawk, a recon specialist; and Flint, a cyborg sniper. Every character has strengths and weaknesses, prefers to be equipped with certain weapons, and possesses a special ability that proves useful in the heat of battle. For example, Hawk carries a cloaking device that temporarily renders her invisible, enabling her to sneak in amongst the enemy ranks and take out hapless individuals with her Energy Blade. Brutus can invoke his spectacular Spirit of Vengar power, which slowly restores his health and allows him to spot enemies concealed by fog or vegetation. Flint can take down

multiple targets in seconds using her auto-aiming capability, and Tex can go into a berserker rage, equipping two weapons simultaneously and dealing out wholesale carnage.

While controlling your chosen character from an over-the-shoulder perspective, you can issue orders (Cover Me, Stand Ground, Move To and Fire At Will) and switch between characters using the D-pad. Unlike SOCOM's incompetent buffoons, your squadmates in Brute Force are reasonably intelligent and very rarely get snagged on environmental objects. Four order types may seem limiting, but they offer a surprising degree of flexibility. As an example, you can coordinate an effective assault on an enemy base by sniping the perimeter guards from a higher elevation, then ordering your team forward to take the base, all the while providing covering fire from your

## GUNS GALORE

There are around 30 different primary weapons in Brute Force, including blasters, railguns, bio rifles, sniper rifles, shotguns, miniguns, pistols, assault rifles and rocket launchers. A few really stand out from the crowd in terms of performance, but for the most part – particularly when it comes to appearances – they're sadly quite generic. In contrast, the secondary weapons and gadgets are brilliant. There are four types of grenade, an awesome rolling bomb, land mines, thermal goggles and heaps more. All are a lot of fun to use, especially in multiplayer!



Stop or I'll blow dry your hair.



Looks like it's Ewok hunting season again.



Just wait until he uses those giant maracas!



## SNEAK IN AND SILENTLY TAKE OUT THE OPPOSITION, OR YOU CAN JUST CHARGE IN GUNS BLAZING

perch. You can order your team to wait outside the base while you sneak in and silently take out the opposition, or you can just charge in, guns blazing. Ultimately, it's up to you, and when a plan comes together, it's very satisfying indeed, but when things go wrong, it's disastrous. Fortunately, death in the Brute Force world isn't permanent; thanks to genetic replication, squadmates killed in battle can be revived for the next mission, though you'll have to live without their expertise til then.

### DESIGN AND EXECUTION

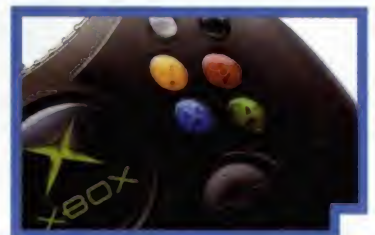
Brute Force's single player campaign is lengthy and challenging, offering a total of 18 missions spread across six very different worlds. The game's greatest strength, however, lies in its cooperative multiplayer support.

At any time during the course of the campaign, up to three other players can join you or opt out whenever they like; playing alone is fun, but Brute Force is infinitely more enjoyable with a bunch of mates. While a standard Deathmatch mode is also available, most players will find the innovative Squad Deathmatch mode far more compelling. In this campaign/deathmatch hybrid, players can take control of their own 4-man squads and pit them against the squads of up to seven other players, bringing the maximum possible number of combatants to 32. Admittedly, the framerate suffers in this mode, but the ever-important cool factor goes some way toward making up for Brute Force's limited (and much-

!!! According to the Brute Force website, new maps, character skins, missions and even whole campaigns will be offered via Xbox Live, but there'll be no online co-op or deathmatch. \*Sniff\*

lamented) Xbox Live support.

Brute Force does a lot of things well, but it also falters in some areas. A number of the missions you embark upon are outstanding in terms of concept, design and execution. Others, however, are less exciting, and an unfortunate few are excruciatingly tedious. And Deathmatch mode smacks of untapped potential, offering only two match types: timed and first to x frags. In the grand scheme of things, though, these deficiencies shouldn't be too difficult to overlook; the game delivers a great single player experience and a cooperative mode that's second to none. One of the best of its kind, Brute Force could be the perfect game to tide you over until the release of Halo 2. <<



**PLUS:** Multifaceted gameplay, fantastic cooperative play.

**MINUS:** A blast at times, tedious at others. Limited Live support.

VISUALS 90 SOUND 79 GAMEPLAY 83

OVERALL  
**82**

Brutal and brainy at the same time.

REVIEW

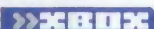
»» HYPER 61



Crap, he chose the yellow bike... \*sigh\*

Bob celebrates crossing the finish line first.

I think he fell asleep at the handlebars.



CATEGORY: Racing Sim >> PLAYERS: 1-16 >> PUBLISHER: THQ >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now

# Moto GP 2

**BRETT ROBINSON** is counting the days until Xbox Live.

**T**he way I see it, there are four types of games in this multi-billion dollar industry: the mainstream blockbusters that sell by the boatload; the mid-range products that achieve respectable sales; the cruddy titles acquired by only the foolish and the unlucky; and, finally, the undiscovered gems — those utterly brilliant games that deserve all the accolades and sales under the sun but, tragically, languish in obscurity. The original Moto GP fell into the latter category as it was one of the most popular games on the US Xbox Live network, yet widespread success eluded it. One hopes the same fate won't befall its successor, Moto GP 2: Ultimate Race Technology.

## ASTOUNDING EFFORT

By sporting game standards, Moto GP 2 is a pretty generous sequel,

offering much more than a FIFA-esque stat update. From the outset you'll be asked to create either a single player or multiplayer profile, and this complete integration of the Live service is a welcome and conspicuous addition to the series. Of greater import, though, is the introduction of the four-stroke 990cc motorcycles, which made their impressive debut at the start of the 2002 season. The standard two-stroke 490cc bikes are agile and can power through corners at high speed, but they lack the top-end grunt that's so important on the straights. In comparison, the four-stroke cycles are heavier and less manoeuvrable, necessitating a more measured approach to cornering, but their power makes them practically unbeatable on the straights. Power or precision: the choice is up to you, but no matter which bike type you

decide on, you're in for one hell of an exhilarating ride.

As for tracks, Moto GP 2 brings six new ones to the table, upping the total to 16. All are exacting recreations of their real world counterparts; a look at the game's wireframe graphics mode will reveal the astounding effort that has gone into their virtual construction. On the whole, the environments are much more detailed than in the original, but I'll get to the visuals later — Moto GP 2's Career and Stunt modes beckon. The latter gives you a selection of single-lap races where grabbing a position on the podium is secondary to pulling off wheelies, endos (front-wheel wheelies) and powerslides. Clean, stack-free racing is also rewarded, and the points are tallied at the end of each round. Build up enough points and you'll be able to gradually unlock the 2002

season's roster of 22 riders, but it'll probably be quite some time before you'll have access to the likes of Max Biaggi, Tohru Ukawa and series champion Valentino Rossi.

Career mode begins with the RPG-like creation of a custom character. After giving your bike a fitting paint job and donning some stylin' leathers, you'll be given 18 points to distribute between four attributes: cornering, braking, top speed and acceleration. The Training mode that follows will give you the opportunity to boost your character's stats by completing time-based challenges that range from slaloms and 180's to hot laps and skid pan trials. Should some of the challenges prove too difficult, however, you'll always be able to have another crack at them later. From there it's on to the real meat of the game, the Motorcycle Grand



Who said white men can't jump?



That's the bike rider butt cam.



It took a while to choreograph this.



## BIKES HANDLE IMPECCABLY AND THE SENSATION OF SPEED THAT THE GAME IMPARTS IS ABSOLUTELY PHENOMENAL

### MAGNIFICENT MULTIPLAYER

>>The mere thought of participating in 16-player online races should be enough to kick racing buffs' salivary glands into overdrive. Easing the pain of waiting for the domestic launch of Xbox Live, Moto GP 2 offers excellent split-screen and system link modes. The framerate during split-screen races is surprisingly consistent and the new Tag mode is fiendishly addictive. We reckon Moto GP 2 is worth picking up for its Career mode alone, but its fantastic multiplayer component is like an extra layer of topping on an already sumptuous dessert. Mmm...sprinkles.

Press A at a certain point during the credits and you'll unlock a bunch of cool mini games!

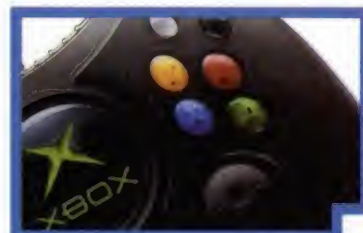
Prix, where you'll tackle course-specific challenges and take on 19 opponents in a furious battle for championship points.

### CODING WIZARDRY

Thanks to some coding wizardry on the developer's part, Moto GP 2's bikes handle impeccably and the sensation of speed that the game imparts is absolutely phenomenal. Mere words can't do justice to the feeling of screaming down a straight at 320km/h – in marketing parlance, you simply must try it for yourself. When it comes to visuals, Climax has again outdone itself: the bikes look absolutely fantastic, the riders and tracks are practically flawless, and the crash animations are visceral enough to spawn a lexicon of new four-letter words. With racing requiring such extreme levels of

concentration, finding time to appreciate Moto GP 2's graphics might be difficult, but the race replays will provide the perfect showcase; from certain camera angles, you'll almost swear you're watching actual Moto GP footage.

There's really only one caveat for potential buyers, and that's that veterans of the original might feel a little ripped off paying full price for what some have harshly labelled a mere upgrade. That possibility aside, Moto GP 2: Ultimate Racing Technology is well worth the price of admission, even if you couldn't give a rodent's hindquarters about motorcycle racing. Like me, you might well become a rabid convert of both the sport and Climax's little masterpiece. Stranger things have happened... <<<



**PLUS:** Fantastic single & multi player, and incredible speed.

**MINUS:** Lack of radical changes might disappoint Moto GP vets.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

92 85 90

OVERALL

90

The definitive motorcycle racing simulation.



REVIEW

>>HYPER 63



Hulk hate colour orange! Smash!



Come on Bruce, just Hulk out and stomp 'em!



Hulk performs some opera.

»GCN XBOX PS2

CATEGORY: Hulkmania >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive >> PRICE: \$99.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> TTC: Instantaneous

# Hulk

**CAM SHEA** is a greenie at heart...

**T**he Hulk is a pretty no nonsense license for videogame adaptation really. Fans of the Hulk expect to be able to smash stuff — lots of stuff, and to face off against some classic foes and umm... that's really about it. Even so, the science of creating a game that is simple, yet entertaining, is one that many development companies struggle with. Fortunately, Radical Entertainment seem to have reveled in the limitations of the license. No thinking required, just the aforementioned smashing stuff! Hurrah! They've essentially made Hulk out of an old school beat 'em up mould, but with the polish of the polygonal age, and it's a rather fun romp.

## CRACK ADDICTS...

The most striking aspect of the game is certainly the visuals. The cut-

scenes are rendered using a slick semi-cel shaded stylee to ensure that they stand out, while the in-game graphics are cartoony in a more traditional sense. It's all very crisp and colourful (except on PS2 which is quite washed out), and the Hulk is animated very well. To ensure that his strength and weight are conveyed, the environments are highly destructive. Even jumping on the spot results in the ground beneath the Hulk's feet cracking and breaking in a nice crater texture. This applies to pretty much any surface or object — it can either be destroyed, torn down outright, or at the very least cracked.

To get the destructive juices flowing, the Hulk has a basic, but proficient number of moves and options at his disposal. He has a range of melee moves, allowing for rudimentary combos, charged

attacks, sonic claps and ground pounding, as well as the strength to pick up huge boulders, tanks and other objects in the environment and use them as clubs and projectiles. The Hulk also has a "rage" meter. Get angry enough (by, surprise surprise, wailing on stuff) and you'll be able to unleash one of two special attacks — a great way to clear a room quickly. What really makes Hulk so much fun is the numbers of enemies that often attack — we're talking ten or more at a time. Wading through a swathe of bad guys swinging a forklift or huge metal pole just can't be beaten. It's also pretty amusing shielding yourself from missile toting tanks and guards by standing behind some of the bigger enemies and watching them haplessly hitting their own guys. Then again, if you time it well, you can literally punch

a missile out of the air, and send it back to meet its maker (or more accurately its sender).

## CRATERS AND BURNING WRECKAGE

All this stomping, smashing and crashing action is pretty contagious, and chances are that despite the simplicity of proceedings, you'll have a lot of fun with Hulk... at first. There are, however, a number of problems that prevent the good times from rolling for too long. One failing of Hulk is that it endlessly spawns wave after wave of enemies at you in some sections, so you can literally keep fighting for as long as you want. On the other hand, you can also ignore the enemies altogether and simply follow the path of the level, usually leaving them behind. Why not actually give the player a sense of





When I asked you to open the window...



Who's this? Grandpa Hulk?



Bruce pops a few valium.



## KILLING ENEMIES AND DESTROYING STUFF REWARDS YOU WITH RED AND GREEN ORBS

accomplishment by having set numbers of enemies for each area that must be killed before moving on? There would be nothing like the quiet after the storm of combat — especially when the entire area is almost leveled, with holes gouged in walls, the floor peppered with craters and burning wreckage littering the level.

Regenerating enemies aren't as bad as they sound, however, as objects in the environment spawn back in too, so there's always a steady stream of heavy objects to throw. Also, killing enemies and destroying stuff rewards you with red and green orbs — topping up your rage meter and health respectively, so hanging around for the fun of it rarely results in death. That said, the orbs take a little too long to appear

after you've killed someone, frequently meaning you have to turn around and go back to pick them up. Faster spawn times would have meant more streamlined gameplay.

!!! See if you can spot the Mountain Dew product placement in the game. It's not exactly subtle.

**MEET THE FEEBLE...** Another point of contention is the inclusion of the undercooked "stealth" levels that see you control the utterly feeble Bruce "Bana" Banner. These occupy roughly 20% of the missions in the game, and are pretty much as simple as the Hulk levels — everything you need to do is clearly sign-

### THE MENTOR/PROTEGE RELATIONSHIP

>>The basic gist of the game's storyline is that Banner is betrayed by his mentor Professor Crawford, who has found a way to distill the essence of Hulkiness into an Orb, which finds its way into the hands of the Leader. No, not the guy from "The Joy of Sect" Simpsons ep! Being the evil type, the Leader unleashes an army of "gamma" creatures on the world, and the plotline of the game essentially concerns Bruce and the Hulk pursuing the Orb and the Leader from San Francisco to Alcatraz and beyond. Revolutionary stuff.





Console destroyed.  
Betty is in danger!

Aww he busted the Xbox!



Chopper and Hulk together, Eric Bana is famous!



Bruce tries on some green mascara and blush.

## LOCK ONTO THIS, BIZATCH!

>>The controls in Hulk are generally pretty good, with a couple of exceptions. For one, you can't use the mouse in the PC version, and keyboard-only control is hugely cumbersome, so unless you have a good gamepad you're in for a hard time. Another annoying point is the R trigger lock on feature. It indiscriminately targets both enemies and objects, which is all well and good when you want to rip something out of the wall and throw it at an enemy, but it's rather laughable when you target an inanimate object with another inanimate object. Wouldn't it make sense when you're holding an object for your targeting to automatically switch to enemies only? This is especially annoying in the boss battles, as the boss is often off the screen, leaving you wandering around rather randomly, while he can still attack you.

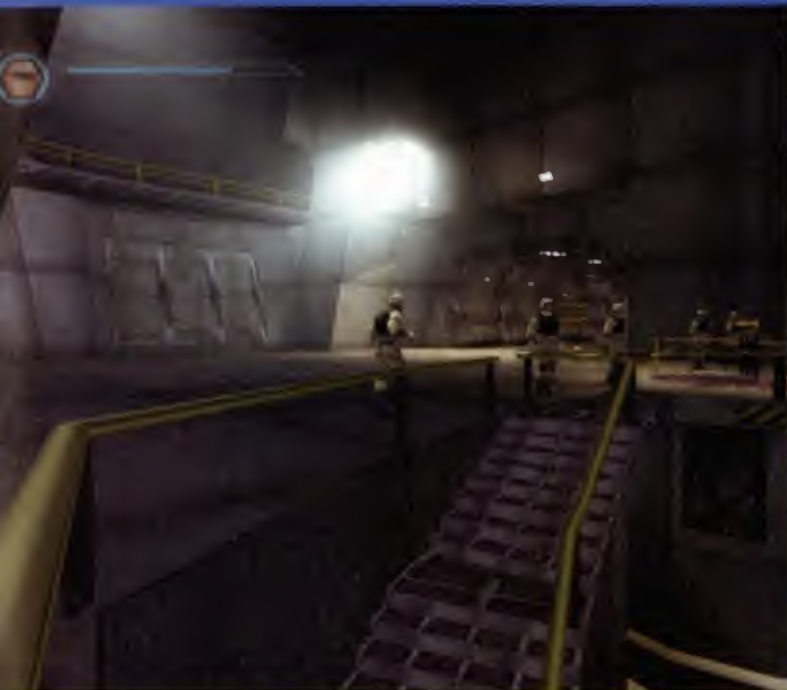
posted, and the path is essentially linear. The basic idea is good — smash everything with the Hulk, then take a break by sneaking into science labs and military installations to uncover information as Banner. To give you an idea, one level we quite liked was "Infiltration", which is set at night in the grounds of a military base. Banner has to creep his way in, with searchlights, guards and sleeping Gamma Dogs to avoid and fences to climb over. Although basic, the atmosphere of the setting and having a few different challenges proved quite appealing.

That said, it's obvious these levels were only included to bring a little variety to the game, as the stealth mechanics don't gel with the engine well at all. In the Hulk levels you're often getting shot at from off the screen, but it doesn't matter so much because once you know there's some clown with a rocket launcher hiding outside your field of view you can go and kick his ass. While the option to manipulate the camera in the Hulk levels would have been nice, it really doesn't detract from the experience. The fixed perspectives in the stealth

levels, on the other hand, pretty much kill them.

In the Banner persona, you're a complete weakling, so combat is almost entirely out of the question (amazing that he's such a pussy he can't even shoot a gun). Hence, the levels are all designed around "stealth", otherwise known as avoiding everyone. Unfortunately, avoiding everyone is made somewhat difficult by virtue of not being able to see your surroundings. You may be crouching behind a box, but unable to





When Hulk loses his load, it's not pretty.



Dental Hygiene must be at the bottom of his list.



Hulk gives his friend a foot massage.

## IN THE BANNER PERSONA, YOU'RE A COMPLETE WEAKLING, SO COMBAT IS ALMOST ENTIRELY OUT OF THE QUESTION



see what's going on a matter of meters away where a guard is patrolling. Banner also suffers from gross incompetence, so if you want to shift a box then climb up it and onto a roof, you have to ensure it's in exactly the right spot, or he'll refuse to do it. In all, these levels are either too simplistic or too frustrating to be much fun, and you'll be glad to get each out of the way and return to clobbering things.

### FASTER AND STRONGER

The Hulk levels do wear thin after a while, however, as the range of enemies is rather limited, with only a few core units and variations on those units. For instance, some human units carry machine guns, while others tote stun batons, grenades or even rocket launchers. Others carry massive shields — preventing you from hitting

them directly while they're up, but that's it. Similarly, there are a few types of "Gamma Creatures", from the Gamma Dogs through to two types of Gamma Guards. Robots also make an appearance, and you'll have to watch out for tanks and choppers, some of which can raise temporary force fields to prevent you from hitting them directly. More variety in the enemies definitely would have helped, as would enemies that actually provide a challenge to beat.

Speaking of which (not the most subtle of segues I know), the boss fights are a real let down. Call us crazy, but using the old "kick his arse then he somehow regenerates and comes back faster and stronger" tactic is a little cheap for our liking. This is the pattern for all the boss fights in the game. Deal

out some death, the boss comes back in a bad mood, repeat. What's most galling is that each of these waves requires the same essential tactics to win. The boss doesn't come back with new patterns or attacks — it's the same only faster. Booring. The fact that you can't see

!!! There's also a Challenge Mode that consists of several extra mini-games where you must either kill, destroy, or kill and destroy with time constraints. Now that's variety!

the boss half the time and that you often can't get a lock on (see "Lock onto this, bizatch!" boxout) doesn't help either.

Despite all this, it's hard to hate Hulk, which is particularly amazing given that it's a licensed title. It's not a game that will take long to beat, or that you'll come back to regularly, but if you go into Hulk expecting destruction aplenty and a nice old school experience then you'll be pleasantly surprised. Good, simple fun. <<

### REVIEWED ON:



**PLUS:** You'll relish the combat and level of destruction.

**MINUS:** Banner sections are tiresome.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

81 80 73

OVERALL

77

Banner is boring and the Hulk rules!

REVIEW

» HYPER 67



Tie your shoelaces or I'll blow your head off.



Where's Wally?



Ouch! Splinters!

PC CATEGORY: Strategy/Sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Eidos >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PIII 800, 128MB RAM

# Republic: The Revolution

**DANIEL WILKS** will do anything to get his way.

**R**ab grey tenements, colourful jumpsuits, uptight people hurrying to work, constantly looking over their shoulders for fear that the secret police may be watching - welcome to the beautiful republic of Novistrana, a former Soviet state held under the sway of a self-appointed despot, Karasov. Players take the role of a political upstart with a grudge against the current corrupt regime, determined to overthrow Karasov no matter the cost.

## OVERTHROWING THE GOVERNMENT

After having their parents brutally killed by Karasov's political cronies the player is made to answer 10 multiple-choice questions, the answers of which determine the four pivotal attributes of your political avatar. If you choose to firebomb the

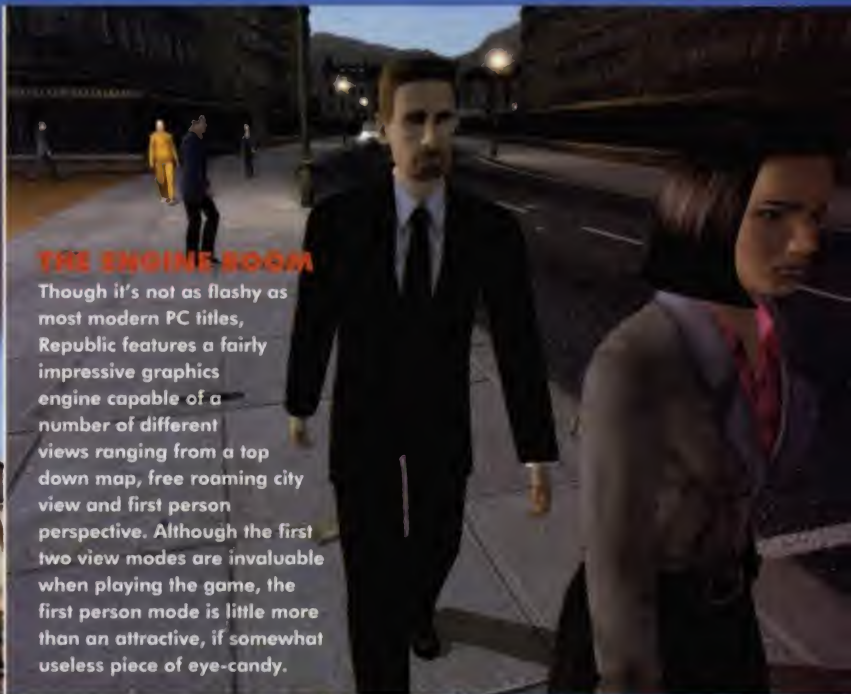
house of the local head of the secret police you're obviously more inclined to use force rather than diplomacy; whilst if you decide to spend an evening at the mayor's house seducing his attractive daughter you're more inclined to use influence and charisma to achieve your goals. After answering all of the questions, the player is given a final tally or their attributes - Status: the wealth and prestige of the character; Control: the character's ability to manipulate and scheme; Charisma: the level of charm and persuasiveness; Presence: the physical power of the avatar as well as their ability to lead; and Resolve: the measure of how dedicated to the cause the character is. Resolve is the only attribute that is full for the player at time of creation - there's really no point in becoming the leader of a political faction if you

have no real belief in the goals of the group now is there?

Players begin the game as political loners working out of a tiny headquarters somewhere in the suburb of Ekaterine, itself broken up into 12 neighbourhoods. During these early parts of the game the player only has access to two abilities, scout and recruit. Scouting gives the player information on different neighbourhoods and factions whilst recruiting brings more dissidents into your political fold. Recruiting characters is far and away the most important activity available to the player, as new recruits will bring new skills to the game. Recruit a thug and you'll now have the ability to threaten people and rough up political opponents, or recruit a businessman to increase your revenue and use your wealthy connections to make life hard for your opposition.

Each day in Novistrana is broken into three distinct parts, morning, midday and night - players are able to perform two actions per day cycle. Each recruited character can also perform two actions per cycle but will be dormant during one cycle (it seems that everyone apart from you has to sleep sometime). Simply put, the more allies you can recruit the more you can do in a day, with the ultimate goal, of course, being the complete political





### THE ENGINE ROOM

Though it's not as flashy as most modern PC titles, Republic features a fairly impressive graphics engine capable of a number of different views ranging from a top down map, free roaming city view and first person perspective. Although the first two view modes are invaluable when playing the game, the first person mode is little more than an attractive, if somewhat useless piece of eye-candy.



Come join my party, baby.



"They say you want a revolution, yeah-eh-eh..."



"You have 0 voice mail messages. Loser!"



## YOU'LL NOW HAVE THE ABILITY TO THREATEN PEOPLE AND ROUGH UP POLITICAL OPPONENTS

dominance of the suburb, then the city and eventually overthrowing the government of Novistrana itself.

### STAND ON YOUR SOAPBOX

To put it politely, control in Republic is somewhat less than intuitive, requiring far more effort to perform a task than you would expect. The first task that the player has to perform in Republic, recruiting new members into the faction, is a perfect example of this overly



complicated control scheme. Instead of simply choosing the character you want to recruit, clicking on their image and having to wait an allotted amount of time to "build" the character, Republic puts the player through their paces by making them choose a character, click on their portrait then click on their neighbourhood, then choose a place to have the meeting, then wait until both characters arrive at the meeting spot (the amount of time varies according to the movements of the character chosen) and then play through a mini-game to determine the loyalty of the character you're trying to recruit. It's understandable that the developers would choose to add a sense of realism to recruiting a character – otherwise the game would take on the feel of an RTS -

but it seems to us that you could safely skip all of the steps between clicking on the character portrait and playing the mini-game without compromising the sense of realism.

Republic plays something like a cross between the board game Diplomacy, and the cyberpunk strategy game Chaos Overlords, but instead of nuking other countries or firebombing the house of the local gang-leader you drop subversive literature in letterboxes, rough up the leader of a rival faction and stand on your soapbox and explain your views to a sceptical public. For anyone with the requisite patience (there is a lot of waiting after all) and with an interest in something fairly fresh in the world of strategy should not hesitate to pick a copy of this fascinating slice of fictional Eastern European life. <<

Check out the goings on at [www.novistrana.com](http://www.novistrana.com)



**PLUS:** Fascinating political intrigue, living world.

**MINUS:** Lots of waiting, overly complicated controls.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

82 78 89

OVERALL

80

The best political sim currently available, comrade.

REVIEW

>> HYPER 69



What? A chest of creamed corn?



Sir, there's a giant skull eating the plantation.



Gather round! Pilchards going cheap!

PC CATEGORY: Sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Take 2 >> PRICE: \$89.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >> REQUIRED: PIII 500, 128MB RAM

# Tropicico 2: Pirate Cove

**DANIEL WILKS** likes to shake his pirate booty.

**A**lthough a sequel to the successful banana republic sim, *Tropicico*, *Tropicico 2* forgoes the fictional South American setting of the first game in favour of a 16th Century pirate theme. The setting may be different but the sense of humour and easily accessible resource management remains the same, making for a fun and fairly deep plundering experience. Through a fairly hefty single player campaign or a massively replayable virtual sandbox style game, *Pirate Cove* gives players the opportunity to slap on their tricorn hat, peg leg and annoying parrot and live out their rum soaked dreams of being the scourge of the seven seas.

**TOO MUCH ANARCHY**  
From the outset it's pretty obvious that *Pirate Cove* isn't the most

politically correct of games - you're a pirate king - you live to take things that don't belong to you. To make things a little more morally ambiguous, aside from the pirates under your command, all your manual labour (building, farming and the like) is done by captured slaves. The vast majority of the game is taken up trying to balance the needs and wants of the pirates with those of the slaves. Whereas pirates thrive in anarchical environments replete with gambling, whoring and a good bit of violence, slaves prefer a more orderly environment with clearly defined rules, religion and peace - institute too much law and you may have a highly effective work-force but you can expect to see some fairly shirty pirates. Conversely have too much anarchy and your slaves will stop working and try to escape at every opportunity. When

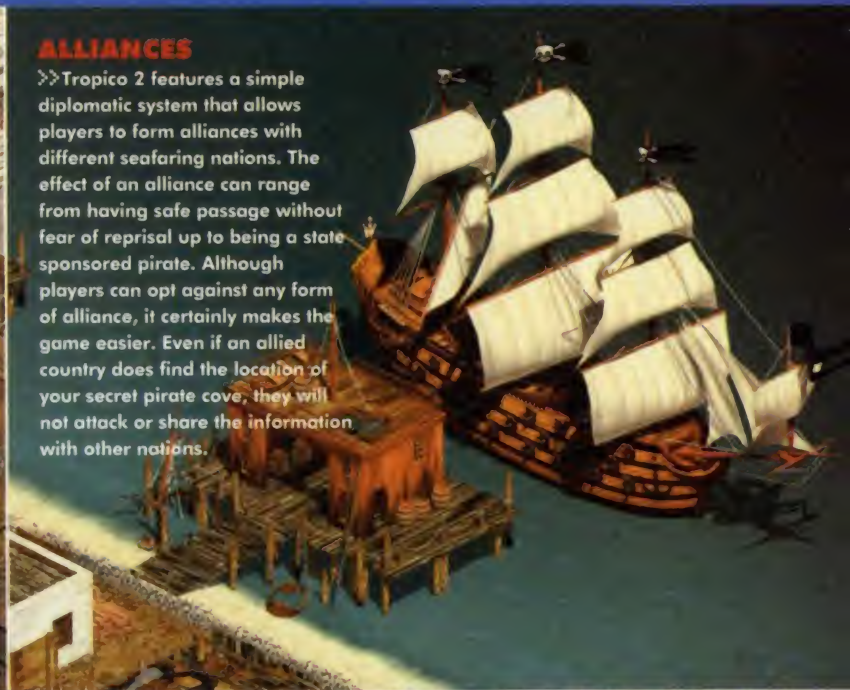
pirates go bad (sounds like a Channel 7 TV special) they will usually attack the nearest loyal target. Amusingly enough, although this usually ends with the player being one pirate down, the survivor will be all the happier for partaking in a little bit of murder and property destruction. If too many pirates become dissatisfied players could have a full-scale coup on their hands. If slaves escape and too many survive, you could face an insurrection a little down the track.

Ships play a dual role in *Tropicico 2* - not only are they your primary source of income from looting cargo ships and seaside communities, they also serve as the most direct way of keeping your pirates happy. Whilst players are not directly able to control naval combat they can set the level of aggression of the pirates to minimise risk and maximise

plunder. Special buildings also require the use of a pirate ship, as before you can build them you'll need to kidnap a skilled labourer from another colony with the ability to build that style of building.

**PARROTS AND PEG LEGS**  
The sense of humour in *Tropicico 2* is a little better defined than that of the first game, eschewing laugh out loud silliness for more subtle and amusing gags. The standard pirate





### ALLIANCES

>>Tropico 2 features a simple diplomatic system that allows players to form alliances with different seafaring nations. The effect of an alliance can range from having safe passage without fear of reprisal up to being a state sponsored pirate. Although players can opt against any form of alliance, it certainly makes the game easier. Even if an allied country does find the location of your secret pirate cove, they will not attack or share the information with other nations.



Excuse me, I'm looking for software pirates...



So, where shall we build the rollercoaster?



Can I get a one-legged parrot?



## IF SLAVES ESCAPE AND TOO MANY SURVIVE, YOU COULD FACE AN INSURRECTION

accoutrements that we have come to know and love - tricorn hats, peg legs and parrots - give captains equipped with them better skills. Tricorn hats automatically make anyone who wears them better able to lead their crew. Likewise, parrots and peg legs make pirates braver and more savage in combat. You won't find yourself having belly laughs too often but don't be surprised if after a few hours of playing your face

will begin to cramp up as a result of the fact that you've been grinning from ear to ear. Unfortunately Tropico 2 does have a few downfalls, most notably the tutorial - unless players have more than a passing familiarity with the original game they may have a hard time deciphering all of the information on screen. All of the information you could want to know about the game is contained within a

small box of text, making it far from helpful having to scroll endlessly to find what you need to know. At any given time, the screen will show the area the player is looking at, the satisfaction level of both pirates and slaves, money, time of day and the like - it can be a bit overwhelming unless you know exactly what you're looking at. Another annoying feature is that when a skilled slave used to build a specialty building completes their task they're automatically assigned to the nearest farm or other group activity. On the one hand, it's nice not to have to constantly check to see if there are any inactive slaves, but on the other it means you either have to click on every slave or wade through pages of information if you want to find that slave again to build another building. <<

Plentiful pop-ups await you at Tropico2.com



**PLUS:** Great sense of humour, pirates.

**MINUS:** Obtuse tutorial, can't directly control sea battles.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

75 80 80

OVERALL

80

One of those rare sequels that's better than the original.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 71

PS2



## DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>  
PUBLISHER: THQ >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>  
RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

**T**hree noble clans must unite to defeat the evil Yellow Turban menace in the newest and probably best instalment of the Dynasty Warriors franchise. There's nothing particularly subtle about Dynasty Warriors but getting involved in a massive melee with hundreds of AI opponents and allies is nothing short of an exhilarating experience.

If you haven't played a Dynasty Warriors game before, here's the basic gist of what's going on - 3D roaming beat 'em up action on massive battlefields with hundreds of enemies just waiting to be killed. Whilst the gameplay is fairly straightforward - choose your character and AI bodyguards and hack your way to victory - the game offers some significant replay value by offering nine characters to choose from, each with their own specific abilities, as well as four multiplayer modes, a free mode (in which you can play through any of the levels you have unlocked), a challenge mode with four tasks to complete for international ranking, the ability to create your own character and bodyguards, and an encyclopaedia with information on all of the items and characters you've come across detailing their actual place in Chinese history.

The only real problem with Dynasty Warriors 4 is one that plagues most games that support so many characters on screen at one time - slowdown. Although the problem is infrequent, don't be surprised if the framerate seriously drops in the middle of large battles.

Daniel Wilks

VISUALS **86** SOUND **80** GAMEPLAY **83** OVERALL **82**



Have at you! And you, and you...

PC



## GOTHIC 2

CATEGORY: RPG >> PLAYERS: 1 >>  
PUBLISHER: Atari >> PRICE: \$49.95 >>  
RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>  
REQUIRED: TBA >>



Busking is illegal, move along.

**G**othic 2 is very much the style of RPG that encourages the player to shape their character as they play. Yes, you have to decide to be either a Paladin, Mercenary or Magician at some point in the game, but you can still build your character as you see fit by spending the Learning Points you acquire when you level-up on specific attributes or skills. Do you want to learn how to skin an animal after killing it, or would you rather learn how to pick locks? The decision is always yours, and different NPCs that you meet will be able to teach you new and different skills. Interaction with NPCs is brilliantly handled, and these interactions really add incredible depth to what is a very good story-driven RPG.

Your actions, even whimsical ones, can affect the gameworld, and you'll soon discover that beating up civilians or sneaking into their houses can have nasty consequences. Even decisions you make during conversation with NPCs - such as insults - can have an effect on something later on in the game - or your future dealings with that character. Gothic 2 is a real role-playing game that forces the player to really stop and consider their actions every step of the way. With a satisfying mouse-combat system, and a decent scalable graphics engine, Gothic 2 is right up there with some of the most addictive RPGs on the PC.

Eliot Fish



VISUALS **84** SOUND **85** GAMEPLAY **92** OVERALL **90**

XBOX



## PRO CAST SPORTS FISHING

CATEGORY: Sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >>  
PUBLISHER: Capcom >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>  
RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: September >>

**A**pparently, this is Capcom's first ever fishing game - a landmark in the company's long grand history we're sure. However, if you played Get Bass on the Sega Dreamcast about four years or so ago, then you've virtually played Pro Cast Sports Fishing already. It's exactly the same kind of fishing game, except of course it's lacking the cool rumble-equipped fishing rod peripheral that the Dreamcast had. Shame about that Capcom!

Because a fishing sim is such a different videogame experience to what most of us are used to, there's something intriguingly addictive about the slow-paced challenge of tricking a fish to take your bait, and seeing how much you can reel in. Of course, just like real-life fishing, you can sometimes spend up to half an hour casting out and reeling in without getting a single bite, which makes you wonder just what the hell you're doing sitting in front of your TV and wasting your time in such spectacularly dull fashion. There just aren't enough role-playing elements, story elements or puzzle elements to make for a great sim. It's all a bit too... drab.

If you're one for quirky games, or you're a really big sports fishing fan, then there might be some amount of delight to get from a game such as this. For the rest of us, it's an amusing diversion that will only make you want to get out of the house and do something more worthwhile with your spare time.

Eliot Fish

VISUALS **53** SOUND **45** GAMEPLAY **56** OVERALL **59**



Bass in yo face!



>>PS2



## GHOST VIBRATION

CATEGORY: Action >> PLAYERS: 1 >>  
PUBLISHER: Atari >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>  
RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



Scared of this game? Terrified.

**S**omething spooky is happening — there's a sudden burst of ghost games getting released. Besides Ghost Vibration, we'll soon be playing Ghost Hunter, Ghost Master and then of course there's Ghost Recon... oh okay, maybe that one doesn't quite fit. In any case, someone is obviously possessed.

First up, we have to say that developer, Artoon (yes, of xxx fame), has created what are probably the ugliest character models of all time. Your lead character, George, looks like a cross between a pufferfish that's been put through a blender and some generic American teen (and we know how ugly they are). Then they've gone and stuck this poor sod on rails, so that the player has no control over them other than which direction they can "aim" in. The idea then is to suck ghosts out of existence, just like Bill Murray and friends did in Ghostbusters. As you push George forward, he does on-rails laps of the mansion, and when something ghostly happens, you aim in the right direction and suck out the evil ghost force. This game is just awful.

Any attempt to be spooky has failed miserably, and most players will probably just die out of pure boredom — as opposed to unnatural forces of spookdom.

**Eliot Fish**

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
60	57	54	58

>>XBOX



## RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

CATEGORY: First Person Shooter >> PLAYERS: 1-16 >>  
PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>  
RATING: M15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



Emperor Palpatine's sith class.

**T**ides of War is almost exactly like the original RtcW except that it's on the Xbox. The weapons are the same, the graphics are (almost) the same and the gameplay is the same. The only real difference is that this version includes a send-away coupon for a free novelty Hitler moustache. Okay, that's a lie. What there is, however, is a new co-op mode for two players and some redesigned levels. Surely that's just as enjoyable as making fun of history's greatest monster with funtime facial hair?

Well, all things considered, we probably would have preferred the Hitler moustache. RtcW wasn't a very interesting shooter to begin with, and unfortunately adding another player into the mix doesn't really spice it up to any significant degree. In fact, it's arguable that the game is actually LESS fun to play with a friend thanks to the grating frame-rate issues and cramped perspective necessitated by split-screen action. And everything's very brown too — lots of brown walls, brown floors and brown Nazis.

On the plus side, RtcW does come with full online functionality that includes a team-based multiplayer mode and downloadable content. As such, we'll be revisiting this title as soon as Live becomes available in this country to see if it's any chop. In the meantime, though, stick with Halo. **Daniel Staines**

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	80	70	75

>>PC



## THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR

CATEGORY: Sims >> PLAYERS: 1 >>  
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts >> PRICE: \$49.95 >>  
RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>  
REQUIRED: The Sims >>

**G**ee, talk about wringing the sponge for all it's worth. The Sims has just officially entered Army Men territory, with its sixth expansion pack, The Sims: Superstar. Ugh! They've also promised another expansion pack by the end of the year. Our question is: why? Why exhaust consumers' patience with what has fast become a rapidly tiresome concept, when you've got a full blown sequel (The Sims 2) coming out next year? Will anyone care by then after they've been beaten over the head with so many samey expansion packs?

Now that's out of my system... Superstar is loaded with new objects and new sims actions and interactions. The aim this time is to become as famous as you can possibly become, and this is achieved by strutting your stuff in Studio Town, and performing in front of other Sims. You can be a rock star, movie star or supermodel.

Of course, at the root of it all are the successful Sims game mechanics, so there's nothing exactly wrong with this expansion pack if you've just picked up The Sims and are looking for more fun. But for anyone who's played it to death already, then there's not much point in forking out for Superstar. It really is just more of the same gameplay, wrapped up in new graphics. Bring on the Sims 2 instead!

**Frank Dry**

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
84	85	70	72



The only place you'll meet models: in a game.

REVIEW

>>HYPER 75

PC



## COLIN McRAE RALLY 3

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >>  
PUBLISHER: Codemasters >> PRICE: \$89.95 >>  
RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>  
REQUIRED: PIII 750, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card >>

The first thing that hits you about Colin McRae 3 is the incredible resolution and steady framerate of the graphics - until you look a little closer. Whilst for the most part the game is nothing but eye-candy, for every beautiful car there's also a depressingly flat crowd or tree texture marring the landscape. That said, Colin McRae on PC is far and away the most graphically impressive version of the game, taking advantage as it does of the superior specs of most modern PCs.

Gameplay-wise Colin McRae is still an excellent example of a series of games that just gets better with each incarnation. Control is beautifully tight, even simply using the arrow keys, though serious rally fans will want to use a racing wheel.

Sadly, Codemasters made no attempt with this PC version to improve upon the console CMR3's failings. In fact, after all this time, it's still only a direct port of the Xbox version, even with the four-player split-screen option. How many gamers on PC will be able to connect four controllers? There aren't even any other multiplayer options! Heard of the internet, Codies?

The single-player component still suffers from a lack of play options, and all up as a PC version of the game, this just isn't good enough. If only they'd put some effort in.

Daniel Wilks

VISUALS **87** SOUND **84** GAMEPLAY **86** OVERALL **79**



Colin races Nicky to the hospital.

XBOX PC PS2



## INDY CAR SERIES

CATEGORY: Racing >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>  
PUBLISHER: Codemasters >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>  
RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



Stackarama!

There's something to be said for driving around in circles at really high speeds, and that is that it's obviously more fun in real life in a real car. As a videogame, it's not that much fun at all. The only part of it that might be fun in a game, is if you have some tremendous crash at those aforementioned high speeds and see your car get trashed. But is that a good enough reason to play?

What we're getting at, is that Indy Car Series has had a "fun by-pass". It's loaded with options for the single-player Indy Car freak, allowing you to race the Indy 500, as well as its own Indy Car series, with all the real Indy Car drivers and cars, stats and fiddly bits. But unless you're a hardcore Indy car racing freak, you're probably going to lose interest fairly quickly. There just aren't any fun options for casual gamers. In most sims this isn't really a problem, but Indy Car is such a potentially tedious real-life sport to watch, that possibly Codemasters should have considered livening things up a bit instead of everything being so dry and dare we say it, hardcore.

If you live and breathe Indy car racing, then this game is probably a dream come true. For the rest of us, there are more fun racing titles that we should probably be looking to spend our money on.

Frank Dry

VISUALS **83** SOUND **80** GAMEPLAY **76** OVERALL **79**

PC



## ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2: WACKY WORLDS

CATEGORY: Theme Park Sim >> PLAYERS: 1 >>  
PUBLISHER: Atari >> PRICE: \$29.95 >>  
RATING: G >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

As a self professed RCT freak, one would think that I would be a prime candidate to be seduced by a new expansion pack, but in actuality, Wacky Worlds is more of a punch to the face than it is a must-have addition. Simply put, Wacky Worlds addresses none of the issues that the fan-base has with the game, instead trotting out 17 scenarios based around a gimmicky premise. As you may have surmised, the new scenarios are meant to be wacky, charging you with creating theme parks at various significant locations on each continent. There's the Great Wall of China, the Australian outback, the Statue of Liberty... Maybe we're a little humourless when it comes to this, but surely sending thousands of vomiting, defecating and littering thrill seekers to Antarctica is in poor taste? And desecrating priceless Incan and Aboriginal sites also?

In any case, the new scenarios offer completely familiar, albeit entertaining gameplay, and a bunch of new rides and window dressing based around the new themes. Unfortunately, you're unable to actually do anything that we would deem "wacky", with only the items and rides appropriate for a particular theme being available at that location. So no cowboys in Antarctica. Damn. Not that it would help make this expansion pack any less redundant. Attention Mr Sawyer - we love your game, but we're getting sick and tired of playing a series that looks four years old and refuses to implement the in-depth options that fans crave. Cam Shea

VISUALS **60** SOUND **70** GAMEPLAY **60** OVERALL **60**



So wacky, hilarious and zany.



## HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1 >>  
 PUBLISHER: Atari >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>  
 RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>



I think his wig fell off.

**A**fter debuting on PS2, Xbox and PC, GameCube owners have had to wait a good six months for IO Interactive's well-received Hitman 2 to "hit" their platform. We're not entirely sure what this wait has been for, either. Hitman 2 GCN style is pretty much a direct port of the versions that have come before it. It looks a little better than it did on PS2, about the same as Xbox, and plays almost identically to both.

One major change that has been made, however, resulted from complaints from the Sikh Coalition (hey, that's the name of the Hyper breakdancing crew!). You see, there's a section of the game set in India, where Agent 47 has to go into a Sikh place of worship and umm... kill a bunch of people. This caused a furor, so in an effort to keep the peace, a bunch of changes have been made for the GameCube version to remove the offensive material. Aside from that, Hitman 2 is as it was on other platforms, which certainly isn't a bad thing.

Agent 47 is undeniably suave as the avenging assassin, and there are multiple routes and options open to the player at all times, fostering a good sense of freedom in the gameworld. Plus, unlike the original, you're able to save several times during missions, allowing you to try a number of approaches without having to worry about playing through the entire level all over again. Definitely worth a look for those who like a little stealth with their slaughter.

Ethan 'Bubblegum' Tate

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
83	80	84	83



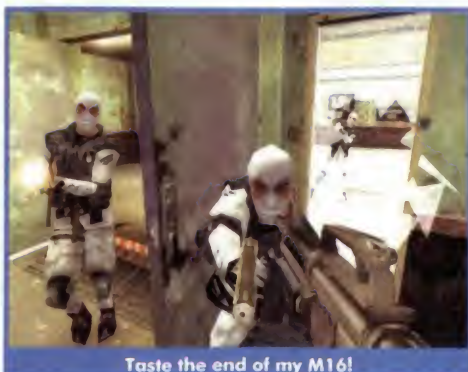
## SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II: DOUBLE HELIX

CATEGORY: FPS >> PLAYERS: 1-12 >>  
 PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>  
 RATING: MA15+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

**S**oldier of Fortune II was a pretty forgettable PC title, and now that it's come to Xbox it's er... a pretty forgettable Xbox title. As we stated in our PC review, some of the ingredients are good — squad based combat in particular is great fun, but there are just too many lazy aspects to the design. Objectives are tightly scripted, preventing the player from any real freedom in coming up with solutions (solutions? Shoot everything! - Ed), and although some levels (such as the jungles of Colombia) are nice and open, for the most part level design is achingly linear and uninspired. The lack of a co-op mode doesn't help the game either, nor do the depressingly average graphics. And while we're at it, why not one more whammy? The included mission generator may sound like a good idea, but all it generates are bland and boring areas stocked with some absolutely retarded AI opponents. BLAU!

That said, fans of straight shooters and excessive gore will probably enjoy cruising the 55 missions the game has to offer. And for console gamers, SOF II has another big attraction — Xbox Live support. There are 20 multiplayer maps included, and six game types — Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Team Deathmatch, Infiltration, Demolition, and Elimination. Once Xbox Live goes online in this country, SOF II will be a much more attractive proposition, especially given that online play was the best part of the PC version. For now though, there are enough great shooters on Xbox that you can safely give this one a miss. We'll re-evaluate it once we've tested it online. Frank Dry

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
75	79	78	77



Taste the end of my M16!



## WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED feat. Shaun Marray

CATEGORY: Wakeboarding >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >>  
 PUBLISHER: Activision >> PRICE: \$99.95 >>  
 RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

**F**irst thing's first: As far as extreme sports titles go, Wakeboarding Unleashed is a diamond in the rough. Now you might be thinking that that coal mine has been tapped dry, but you need to think again. You see, the formula has been right underneath Activision's noses. It just took them a while to see beyond the mounds of cash they're still counting from Mr. Hawk's success. To make a product in this genre stand out you need something new, something untried and something unique. This is what Wakeboarding Unleashed offers.

Unlike the [now] obligatory design based on Tony Hawk, Wakeboarding Unleashed is based on a new set of physics; hanging onto a cord behind a speedboat. What this does for gameplay is really something special. With the wakes left by the speedboat, players can launch themselves through slingshot physics high into the air to perform a multitude of tricks. The tight control you have over just how high, far and fast you go means you can also launch yourself onto grindable objects ranging from a nearby log to a far off rooftop. This becomes one of the best aspects of the game, as learning when to make your cord go slack or taut has absolute bearing on how well you perform your stunts.

Wakeboarding Unleashed has an objectives list with players looking for stranded animals, performing boat races and grinding indefinitely (among more). It's not a total evolution in the genre and it has a few glitches, but this is definitely something worth a look.

Stephen Farrelly

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
78	75	80	79



I can see my house from here.

# Advance Wars 2: Black Hole Rising

CATEGORY: Turn-Based Strategy >> PLAYERS: 1-4 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >>  
PRICE: \$79.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: TBA >>

**A**dvance Wars is firmly established as the thinking gamer's GBA game — the delights of turn-based strategy on a handheld! With its subtle chess-like complexities, puzzle-oriented maps and quirky cast of characters, it is the game most likely to blame for failing eyesight and acute RSI countrywide!

### A GAMING MEAL

Any concerns you may have had about having to go over old ground in this sequel can be cast aside. Advance Wars 2 is just so damn playable that you'll forget just how much you played the original, and you'll be cast right in all over again. Nintendo cleverly put the



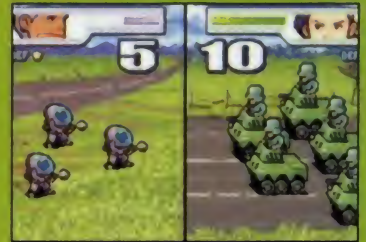
Attack that empty patch of grass immediately!



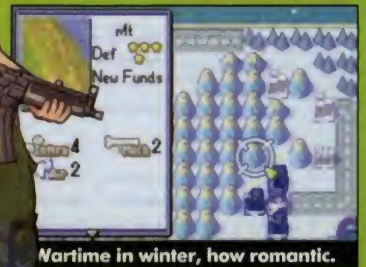
No relation to Neo Pets.



Andy delivers some Columbian cargo.



Let's see... our money on the tanks.



Wartime in winter, how romantic.



**SAMI**

She's got some serious hips there.



Change his hair to blue, yay!

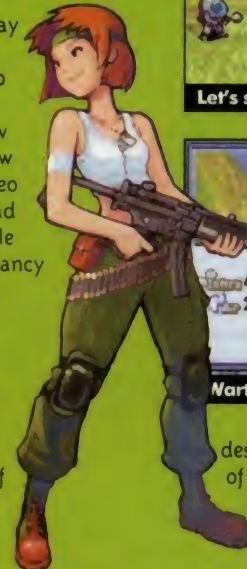
brush-up tutorial in the first few missions of the campaign too. Whilst the gameplay remains largely the same, lots of small improvements here and there make it a refreshing joy all over again. It's a blessing that the intrinsic gameplay qualities of the original are so good — it would have been pretty hard for Nintendo to screw this up. Thankfully, they didn't go to any great lengths to make any major changes to the original's tasty recipe. This is simply the second course in the best goddamn

gaming meal you've ever tasted.

New to Advance Wars 2 is link-up play for four-player battles (oh yesss, no more tedious hot seat!) and some new characters and a new unit — the deadly Neo Tank. Oh and the bad guys — the Black Hole Army — have some fancy secret weapons too!

### CHEER YOU UP

Delightfully, the campaign is packed with some very inventive little set-piece battles. Most of the battles have clever objectives, such as having to

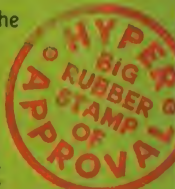


destroy a weapon on the far end of the map, having to simply hold out against oncoming hordes for a set number of days, or having to set a

successful ambush. Even better — you can choose which mission to play next, out of a number of available missions on the world map. If you get stuck, just play another and come back to it later. Sweet. There are also a greater variety of COs and CO powers (and Super Powers) this time around.

If you're new to this whole Advance Wars 2 thing, or for some reason the thought of a turn-based strategy game isn't all that appealing, then... wake up! Advance Wars 2 is probably the best GBA game you can buy right at this very moment. It's strategy with all the dull bits taken out. In fact, it's probably more an elaborate puzzle game than anything.

Instead of mourning the fact that Tactics Ogre is probably never going to get released here in Australia, just go and buy Advance Wars 2. It's sure to cheer you up. <<



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
84	83	93	93

»» GBA

# Crazy Taxi: Catch a Ride

CATEGORY: Cash Cow >> PLAYERS: 1 >> PUBLISHER: Atari >>

PRICE: \$69.95 >> RATING: G8+ >> AVAILABLE: Now >>

**T**ime to make some crazy money. Ranking right up there with the Silent Scope GBA title, this Crazy Taxi port is indicative of just how far a license can be pushed to make some extra cash, even if said license is completely unsuited to the platform in question. And "completely unsuited" is definitely the case here. Rather than take the sensible approach of reinventing Crazy Taxi

in 2D, or perhaps (and how's this for a revolutionary idea?) NOT PORTING IT AT ALL, Sega, Infogrames and developer Graphic State have attempted to pack the Dreamcast version of Crazy Taxi onto the GBA, just as it was.

Let's look at this objectively. This is a game series that has been in the arcades, on DC, PS2, Xbox and PC. Surely that's enough? How many people are there out there who

haven't played this game yet? And how could porting it to GBA possibly help? All it has done is rubbish the reputation of an already tarnished (from nasty ports, bad sequels and the upcoming film) series.

Although Catch a Ride is quite impressive from a technical standpoint — recreating the two cities from the DC version and filling them with traffic, the bottomline is that so much of what made the arcade and DC games fun has been lost. The frame rate is appalling — in the single digits for the most part, and although the sensation of speed is actually pretty good, the controls are poor, the environments are a pixelated mess, and Crazy Drifting is no longer any fun or even particularly useful. The only plus is the "music", which is completely monotonous lo-fi guitar noise... and now sounds nothing like The Offspring. Thank god.

Cam Shea



San Fran makes a man.



Just like real cab drivers...



Run him down! Run him down!

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
55	50	40	40

»» GBA

# Donkey Kong Country

CATEGORY: Platformer >> PLAYERS: 1-2 >> PUBLISHER: Nintendo >>

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

**D**onkey Kong Country is a bit of a tricky one to review in this day and age. It hit the SNES towards the end of its lifespan in 1994, and wowed gamers all over the world with its polished visuals. It was also a lot of fun, bringing back Donkey Kong to the collective consciousness in a safe, but solid platformer. Revisiting it now, however, reveals that it has lost

some of its allure. Its formerly state of the art graphics are now just competent, and the difference between the gameplay depth of this title and Nintendo's own platformers is abundantly clear.

Even so, that hasn't stopped us from logging a lot of time on this title. Although the levels are short and the gameplay is shallow, DKC still possesses a fair bit of charm.

Perhaps it's the ever-changing worlds, perhaps it's nostalgia, perhaps it's the barrel cannons, or perhaps it's the tag-team gameplay of Donkey and Diddy. In any case, Rare certainly did something right. New to the game is DK Attack, a time trial for any level you've already completed; Hero mode, which must be unlocked and is a tougher version of the single player game; and a couple of mini-games — Funky's Fishing and Candy's Dance Studio. Funky's Fishing is definitely the highlight, and an extremely addictive little game.

It's hard to recommend DKC, simply because there's very little here you haven't done before, and the game design and secrets aren't anywhere near as clever as in Yoshi's Island or Super Mario World. If you're a platform nut, however, DKC is well worth a look.

Cam Shea



Donkey protects his keg of Fosters.



Surely he's run out of banana recipes



He has super monkey lungs you see.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	80	75	78

GBA REVIEWS

»» HYPER 77

100% UNOFFICIAL

GAME BOY ADVANCE ACTION

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# ARCADE

>>TIM LEU4

with thanks to Galaxy World & Party Marty

## World Combat

KONAMI

**W**ith the world's stage being abducted by armed conflict lately (well, throughout history really), it only makes 'cents' to develop a game for the public to get a gun's eye view of what it takes to be a squad level soldier on the front line.

### ACTUALLY SKELETONS

Weighing in at \$30,000 (for the wide screen cabinet) — World Combat is unique in that it is the world's first four player light gun shooter. The assault rifle interface allows you to activate a scope through a button located on the butt of the gun. The gun also has a button so you can switch to either machine gun or rocket launcher (if you have them).

Unfortunately, one of the disappointments with the otherwise brilliant gun is that it is semi-automatic, which of course means you have to have a very strong trigger finger. One other thing — make sure you stand back from the screen, as the gun seems to have problems registering its aim if you are too close.

Starting your first mission with a beach assault, you find that your foes are actually skeletons. This is an interesting inclusion in that you are technically not killing anyone, cause skeletons are already dead — right?

The gun's magazine holds 30 bullets and is reloaded if you point the gun off screen. It's only fully reloaded if you point away for a couple of seconds, otherwise the gun reloads 15 bullets per second. Whilst reloading, you are also invulnerable. Getting the hang of being able to duck successfully, and when to duck (there are stages where it is best to take cover for a while — e.g. the beginning of Snow Mountain Stage) is the key to surviving this game. Often you will be shot at from the other side of the screen whilst you are focusing on the screen in front of you — so don't always rely on your squad members to necessarily be in control of the situation in front of them.



### BADASS WEAPONS

After taking the beach, you are faced with a branching stage selection. During each stage, points are won and promotions given up to the rank of Field Marshal. The player with the highest points becomes the 'leader' of the squad and is able to select which path to take. The leader is also usually awarded with an extra life.

All eleven stages take you through an interesting variety of situations and terrain ranging from snow to desert to jungle, a few urban environments as well as a night assault using night vision scopes. The pace is unrelenting and is punctuated by challenge stages where you have to shoot down missiles or bombs or stop waves of enemy soldiers from reaching a specific point.

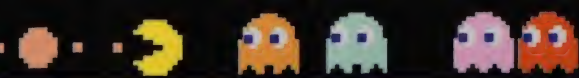
Also, there are sub-stages where you have to take out 6 special troops who are usually armed with badass weapons such as flamethrowers. World Combat's graphics are not as polished as Time Crisis 3 and can sometimes be a little muddy and underwhelming, though on the real battlefield, everything would be a little hectic and this is conveyed well with this game.

This is a great game to play with some mates. The only problem is that you may have a wait for all four guns to be vacated, because the game is immensely popular at the moment. Best you go and see what all the fuss is about and make an event of checking this game out.

### OVERALL

8.75/10



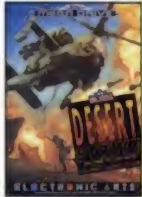


# the STRIKE series

» SHAKIL AHMED







## Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf

**RELEASED:** 1992

**DEVELOPER:** ELECTRONIC ARTS

**PLATFORM:** MEGADRIVE/SNES

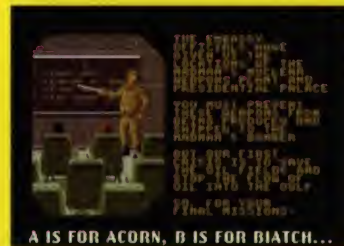
»» Ten years ago, the Gulf War was an unintentional cash-cow for gaming, and EA were smart enough to play on it – and break a few boundaries while they were at it. Desert Strike debuted as a semi-3D game, heralding isometric graphics, supplanting the usual head-on gameplay style with unique mission by mission based gameplay. Right from the start, you found yourself thrown into the middle of the action with complex mission objectives and no save-point. With only the flut-flut-flutting of your rotors and a silent co-pilot whose talents would add to your own to keep you company over the vast and empty desert scenery, your apache headed east to take out the nuclear and biological warfare capable forces of the Madman – a fat, middle-eastern dictator. Duh.

For its time, the helicopter movement was pretty revolutionary – left and right would turn you around on an axis, rather than strafe. Landing at friendly strips was automatic if you had a soldier to drop off (and a handy armour-booster). Weapon accuracy was the main flaw, however, along with the collision detection being a little off at times. It was particularly frustrating when you'd accidentally take out one of the rare fuel drums; a critical supply at regular intervals to keep your apache from falling prey to gravity.

Fuel wasn't all that was limited. Ammunition was a little easier to get by on, but supplies tended to be well-guarded by intelligent enemies who tended to fire first and ask questions later. Desert Strike has to have been one of the most challenging games out there, and much of the time you'd have found yourself sticking to a trial and error routine. On the fourth campaign, on a map exactly like the last three save for being in a different colour, you finally got to take out everyone's favourite Saddam-clone and end the nuclear and biological threat. It was a gaming experience that both the critics and gamers agreed was something special, and it still plays well today.



WEAPONS OF MASS PIXELISATION



A IS FOR ACORN, B IS FOR BIATCH...



A CLOSE UP OF SADDAM'S CHIN



CONFETTI BOMB HAS HIT ITS TARGET, SIR

## Three Strikes & they're out

Although most of us only remember the classic trilogy and the final touches of Kibaba's legacy, there were two other games in the series released on other platforms. Soviet Strike brought the chopper to the Sega Saturn with five photo-realistic 3D worlds and the first of Strike's new "living battlefields", with enemies changing their tactics and vehicles in response to your tactics. Nuclear Strike came to the Playstation with 3D accelerated graphics and stylish cut-scenes in 1997, and although the popularity of the series stayed strong despite the consistent "Swat the mad-man again!" plots, EA seemed to lose interest. The scene went quiet. The Strikes may have even ushered in a new era of semi-3D action games, but elite chopper games came fewer and further between.





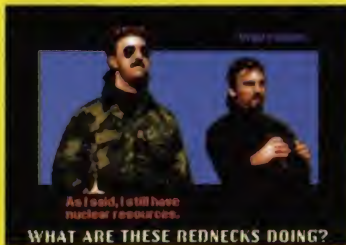
## Jungle Strike

**RELEASED:** 1993  
**DEVELOPER:** ELECTRONIC ARTS  
**PLATFORM:** MEGADRIVE/SNES

>> But Madmen have harems, harems bring forth sons plotting revenge against the U.S., and popular games bring forth sequels which can, on the rare occasion, outdo its predecessor. As it turned out, Tyrant Kibaba (who actually had a name!) was smart enough to smuggle nuke technology out before you came along, and now his son and the drug lord Carlos Ortega plan to paint the west in shades of irradiated pink.

Hotly contested as the best of the series, Jungle Strike hosted improved bitmapped graphics (particularly in the SNES port), the best cut-scenes of the series, gratifying screams from shot terrorists, and co-pilots whose skills actually began to make a noticeable difference. Controls were relatively easy to master, and the semi-clumsy yet elegant chopper feel, resulted in terrifyingly addictive gameplay.

The multiple vehicles with varying weapons had to be the best feature; from a new prototype Comanche, a hover-craft, F-117A stealth fighter through to an over-responsive attack bike, there was variety here in spades. Across eight campaigns, from Washington DC to the jungles, rivers, snow covered peaks, the Jungle Fortress of the South American drug lord, and the triumphant return home, Jungle Strike established the Strike games as masters of their class.



## Urban Strike

**RELEASED:** 1994  
**DEVELOPER:** ELECTRONIC ARTS  
**PLATFORM:** MEGADRIVE/SNES

>> So there you were, finally out of rehab for screaming "I'm outta fuel, I'm outta fuel!!" at 130 second intervals and enjoying a little oil-free sand, sun and surf in Hawaii, when yet another evil genius hopped up to make the news. H.R. Malone, a failed candidate for the American presidency, had gone and started a cult of his own for the dream of a safer tomorrow (and a mega-laser to write "Death to America!" in Lucida font across the grand canyon). Unfortunately, that dream meant more new and irritating foot missions taking you away from a now rather limited garage of apache, rescue chopper and chunky GAV. Maybe if you took out Electronic Arts HQ in the process they'd give you your attack cycle back and let you retire in peace.

The only real downer to the latest Strike was the vaguely isometric walk-n-shoot levels — horribly inferior to the rest of the game. The number of campaigns dropped down to five, but those five took you from Hawaii to the Baja Oil Rigs, Mexico to Las Vegas and to an underground base. Unfortunately, no one thought to include anything beyond a password save feature, meaning that if your house started burning down on the last level, you'd briefly contemplate life as a crisp and then get back to the task at hand; dropping the explosive Malone (Kibaba's son, rather, indubitably unhappy with his silicon-enhanced lips) on a rather short-lived super-weapon.<<



## The GBA hits a home run

For those of you who never played it and the proud folk who can claim to loving (and maybe even finishing) the classic, EA has recently released a near-perfect port of the decade-old Desert Strike from the Sega Megadrive to the Gameboy Advance. Be warned that — still — no one has thought to add a cartridge save, so you'll really want to be writing those passwords for each map down someplace. Anyone sick of most GBA games ending within a few hours will find themselves alternately cursing and praising the challenging but charming gameplay for days.



# Grand theft auto

RELEASED: 1997

**There I was,** taking a drive down memory lane in a rigged fuel tanker, primed and ready for the Liberty City police HQ. Drive in, flick the trigger, high-tail it out of there, claim a wad of cash. Pretty simple, really. Except that I forgot all about that little thing called inertia, and as I strolled out, a rather explosive cargo came rolling back out after me. A rather deadly reminder that the original Grand Theft Auto (1997) wasn't just any old car game...

## A SPICY CURRY

Here's the recipe: Grab a pinch of police, add a dab of gasoline, throw in 20 different cars to hijack – from Bugs to Banshees (and a couple of bikes to boot) – add hordes of innocent pedestrians and over 200 missions across three different cities, and then let the player choose how they want to play it. Now that's a spicy curry. Apart from the smash hit sequels it would generate, no other game allowed the player so much variety and freedom.

The controls were another story. You either hated them or... got used to them. Sure, the horizontal axis and X for acceleration, triangle for reverse – that was easy enough to get the hang of when driving. Footwork wasn't. And when you had a four-star wanted level and the cops after you for blowing up the orphanage outside their HQ with that rogue tanker, hopping about and avoiding bullets was near impossible. It only took one bullet to waste you back then, and a single "Tag, you're it!" from a copper could bust you at the most annoying of times. It would not all have been so frustrating, except that Rockstar didn't think to incorporate a save feature within levels, and each level took absolutely ages to complete!

Once you'd help your little 2D compatriot snag a few million, you'd move cities and be back to playing a small-time crook searching for a way up in the world. Every phone booth in town was your best friend, and every set of wheels out there a free ride to riches. And every passer-by a welcome target for one of the four weapons – a pistol, machine gun, flamethrower and rocket launcher.



## GLORIOUS PIXELATED BLISS

Still, while Vice City is the best alternative to a caffeine pumped milkshake (or whatever your poison be) around, you'll find yourself pretty content with the old classic if you pick it up again, at least for a while. Sure, the graphics aren't speccy 3D, but at least you get random beeper messages from ma, the disgruntled ex, the old pizza shop – and even the odd crime boss on occasion! The tradition of fantastic soundtracks even began here, as the radio blared up with music appropriate to the heisted car. And we must say, the one thing most sadly lacking in the 3D sequels is the glorious pixelated bliss you found yourself bathing in as your tank crunched passing traffic beneath its treads. Nowadays all it takes is a slight bump and you're a charred junk heap.

So... never got your hands on it? Although the original GTA has been offered as a free download before from the now defunct British 'Freelander' website, it's never been available in the full Monty. That is, until now. As a gesture of goodwill towards fans both new and old, Rockstar has released an updated version which should run just dandy on the latest OS and hardware. Be warned that it's a hefty 328 megs. Grab it from [www.rockstargames.com/classics](http://www.rockstargames.com/classics) <<

playstation

CLASSICS

>> HYPER 83



## HYPER'S TOP 10 MEGA-DRIVE GAMES



1.  
Sonic The Hedgehog 2  
- SEGA



2.  
Street Fighter II Champion Edition  
- CAPCOM



3.  
NBA JAM Tournament Edition  
- ACCLAIM



4.  
Madden '93  
- EA SPORTS



5.  
Jungle Strike  
- EA



6.  
Contra Hard Corps  
- SEGA



7.  
Phantasy Star II  
- SEGA



8.  
Revenge of Shinobi  
- SEGA



9.  
Castlevania: Bloodlines  
- KONAMI



10.  
Virtua Racing  
- SEGA



HON. MENTION  
Micromachines  
- CODEMASTERS



# The Last Ninja

RELEASED: 1987



**The Last Ninja** is probably the greatest game you've never heard of. An innovative and hugely entertaining mixture of martial arts action and isometric exploration, this criminally under-appreciated gem was released for the Commodore 64 in 1987 and quickly went on to become a magnet for critical praise and consumer enthusiasm. To quote the shameless bragging of developer System 3 (now Studio 3), The Last Ninja was "the most successful original game ever on the C64". It sold in excess of two million units worldwide, won almost every industry award available at the time and definitively proved to an entire generation of gamers that good design can overcome even the most severe technical limitations. It's a really bloody good game.

### THIS ONE WAS SPECIAL

Probably the single greatest testament to the magnificence of The Last Ninja that I can think of is the fact that I actually managed to play the entire game through to its completion. You see, my brother and I didn't own a disk drive for our C64 — so we had to play all of our games using the laughably shonky and inefficient Commodore tape-deck drive. Aside from being utterly unreliable, tape-deck games suffered from a data transfer rate so painfully slow that loading them from the command prompt often necessitated alternative forms of entertainment to pass the time. We're talking anywhere from ten minutes to half-a-friggin' hour here. And that's assuming the game didn't stuff up mid-load and force a restart of the entire painful process.

The Last Ninja came on two tapes and required several loading sessions per tape. It didn't come with any kind of save feature or password restart system, so completing the game meant playing through all six levels in one extended session. Are you starting to see where the whole "testament to magnificence" thing comes in yet? We sat through the loading screens, we endured the constant restarts, and we put up with the tape-changes and inexplicable glitches because The Last Ninja was just undeniably brilliant. A lesser game would've been reefed from the tape-deck and smashed against the lounge room wall after the first stuff up. Not this one. This one was special.

Consider, for example, the almost insane attention to detail System 3 lavished on every single aspect of their inaugural opus. For a game that ran on a machine barely capable playing Pac-Man, The Last Ninja featured



COMMODORE 64

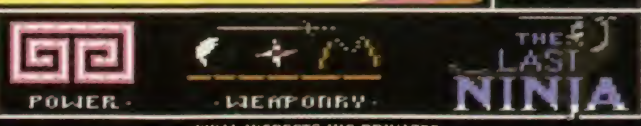
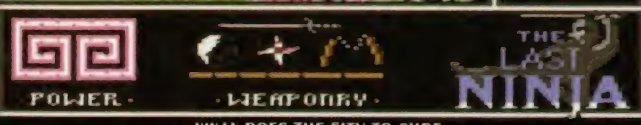
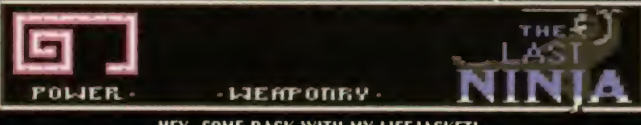
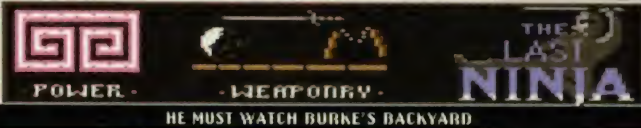


some truly awesome visuals and one heck of a complex combat system to back them up. Although little more than a vaguely human shaped black blob, the eponymous last ninja was animated with such finesse that it was almost possible to forget that he looked and moved exactly like every other human sprite in the entire game. And there were so many cool ninja moves he could do! He could forward flip, back-flip, throw smoke bombs and use ninja magic. He had four melee weapons, two projectile weapons and a wide variety of different ways in which to use each to inflict vast amounts of pain on gangs of hapless foes. He could do all of this and all you'd need was a dodgy single-button C64 joystick to control him. If that isn't ingenious game design, then we'll eat our homemade ninja masks.

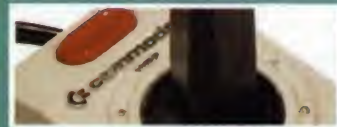
#### MILESTONES OF THIS MEDIUM

In terms of pure gameplay, there can be no doubt that The Last Ninja was at least half a decade ahead of the rest in terms of pushing the boundaries of existing technology. At a time when most games were still stuck in the mire of single genre paradigms, System 3 struck out and produced a title that blended action, exploration and puzzle solving with finesse and thus smashed the boundaries that had confined traditional game design up 'til that point. To this day, we are not sure exactly what kind of game The Last Ninja is. Like a lot of milestones of this medium, no single genre label seems to do justice to the breadth of its vision. The Last Ninja was an action game, it was a role-playing game, it was an exploration game ... it was all of these games in one because, ultimately, it was a REVOLUTIONARY game. The influence it exerts may not be as tangible today as it was ten years ago, but you can rest assured that any modern game developer worth his or her salt will have played The Last Ninja at least once.

Yes, it really is that important. Yes, it really is that good. If you haven't played this game, then do yourself a favour: download a C64 emulator, download the ROM and educate yourself. Classics like this should never be forgotten. <<



## HYPER'S TOP 10 C64 GAMES



1.

Zork  
- INFOCOM

2.

Boulderdash  
- FIRST STAR

3.

Elite  
- FIREBIRD

4.

Paradroid  
- HEWSON

5.

Wizball  
- OCEAN

6.

The Hobbit  
- MELBOURNE HOUSE

7.

Impossible Mission  
- EPYX

8.

Last Ninja  
- SYSTEM 3

9.

Chuckie Egg  
- A&F SOFTWARE

10.

International Karate +  
- SYSTEM 3

HON. MENTION

Bruce Lee  
- DATASOFT



# 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.



## Rules of Attraction

WARNER HOME VIDEO, MA15+

**W**ritten and directed by Roger Avery of *Pulp Fiction* fame, *Rules of Attraction* is something like the old nursery rhyme about the little girl with a curl right in the middle of her forehead - when it is good it's very, very good but when it's bad it's horrid. Set in an anachronistic null-time somewhere between the mid 80s and now, *Rules of Attraction* tells the intersecting stories of a group of disparate college students looking for love, sex, companionship and, ultimately themselves. Whilst this synopsis may sound a little twee the film is filled with clever camerawork and dialogue, including a few rather protracted scenes played out entirely in reverse. Although never plainly stated, *Rules of Attraction* plays out as kind of a prequel/sequel to *American Psycho* - one of the characters Sean Bateman refers to himself as an emotional



What about the rules of hat wearing?

vampire in his frequent Patrick Bateman-like asides and at one point receives a phone call from someone who he thinks is "Patrick" and spends the next few minutes in a quasi-philosophical discussion as to who "Patrick" actually is. James Van Der Beek is outstanding as Bateman and is ably supported by the rest of the cast. **Daniel Wilks**

**MOVIE: 7.5 EXTRAS:**



## Garage Days

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, RATED M15+

**D**irector Alex Proyas knows how to move a camera and loves a digital effect or twelve. But when you get a lingering shot of washing powder cascading out of its box from the point of view of the washing machine you suspect he has concerns about his basic material...

The concept - life in an untalented, undiscovered, young Newtown band - oozes potential. It looks great, the music's great, but the script is riddled with clichés, unfunny gags and, worst of all, ludicrous plotting. The band members can't raise \$240 each to put on a gig that could make their careers, yet they have mobile

phones, unlimited beer, and very cool clothes and apartments (not to mention jobs)...

The cast is uneven. Maya Stange as the focus of an unconvincing love triangle rises above the material, and Chris Sadrinna, Russell Dykstra and Martin Csokas get the comic style down. But Pia Miranda is terribly miscast as a neo-punk bass player and Kick Gurry (say it aloud and it sounds like cat vindaloo), while soulful and charismatic, keeps dropping the energy. Brett Stiller as the disturbed lead guitarist comes off worst, but that could be because his role as written is simply ridiculous.

No features, generic menu, **Christopher Johnson**

**MOVIE: 6 EXTRAS: 1**

# Y Tu Mama Tambien

MAGNA PACIFIC/DENDY, R18+

**T**his excellent Oscar Winner for Best Original Screenplay has been paired with a terrific "making-of" doco for a pristine DVD release. Both a remarkably intimate examination of friendship and a highly erotic road movie, *Y Tu Mama Tambien* is nothing less than a complete original.

Julio (the unbelievably cool Gael Garcia Bernal) and Tenoch (Diego Luna) are seventeen-year-old best mates living life to its utmost in Mexico City. Deciding they need a road trip to the beach, they manage to take along twenty-eight year old Luisa (Maribel Verdu), Tenoch's cousin's wife. Lust, and more, ensues...

Everything you want in a movie about late adolescence is here — the joints, the beer, the sex, the jealousy, the love, the cars, the secret codes... and the betrayal.



A sex change should solve that.

Alfonso Cuaron (currently shooting the third *Harry Potter*) elicits incredibly brave naturalistic performances from everyone. The settings — from Mexico City, down the coast to an incredible beach — are glorious and hugely exotic. The music rocks. The impassive narration provides all-to-real insights into male friendship. And Verdu is hot.

Watch it with a mate and laugh with recognition or watch it with a lover and get down afterwards. Either way it's a winner. **CJ**

**MOVIE: 7.5 EXTRAS:**



# Ring 0: Birthday

MADMAN, M15+

**A**lthough the saying goes that you can't catch lightning in a bottle twice, the truth with the *Ring* series is that the creative team couldn't catch lightning in a bottle three times — although the first two films stand as classic examples of modern Japanese horror, *Ring 0* fails to live up to the expectations set by its predecessors. This isn't to say that it is a bad film — far from it — just don't watch it expecting to be scared. *Ring 0* caps off the *Ring* cycle, telling the story of how Sadako came into her powers and why her anger is fatal, even from beyond the grave. With a death toll stemming back to the 50s when the curse could only be spread by reel-to-reel tape, *Ring 0* sees a sweet (though somewhat creepy)



Gee, what a "happy" birthday.

Sadako joining a theatre troop to help deal with her "problems". Unfortunately by this stage in the series the threat of a living Sadako cannot compare to her appearances in the first two films, leaving the film to play out something like a "before they were stars" TV special rather than the last part in one of the most impressive series of horror films ever made. **Daniel Wilks**

**MOVIE: 7 EXTRAS: 4**



"It's... time you showed me your ring."



Just sign here, and we'll start your Hyper subscription.

# Quads!

AV CHANNEL, M15+

**E**verything funny about physical disabilities in *Quads* would make most in the real world cringe. What you have is a rag-tag team of characters with every stereotype magnified ten fold for humorous acts of self-deprecation.

The series revolves around Reilly, a quadraplegic, who ends up in a wheelchair when one night, drunk and trying to flash a brown eye, he gets hit by a car driven by a rich man. Contrite for having taken away Reilly's mobility, the rich guy bestows upon him a choice mansion, which Reilly moves into straight away with his chakra-loving girlfriend and a motley crew of

mates with disabilities from hooks for hands to the king of all disabilities — a head with no body.

Before anyone brays about insensitivity, we should point out Reilly is loosely based on series creator John Callahan, who is also a quadraplegic and former alcoholic. You can watch a candid interview with Callahan in the extras and take away a few nuggets of wisdom that only experiencing adversity can give.

The first series is well executed in this double disc bundle, though including titles as I moved along the menu would have made saved me a calloused thumb and squinty eyes.

**Dina Oh**

**MOVIE: 10 EXTRAS: 5**

HYPERVISION

»HYPER 87

# Donnie Darko

AV CHANNEL, M15+

**D**onnie Darko marks writer/director Richard Kelly's first feature length film, another bright young director to watch, and a cinematic experience that has 'cult classic' written all over it.

There's drama, comedy, and even some horror - but throw in supernatural themes and wrap it up in a tale that deals with love, faith - and even time travel - and you begin to see why this is such a hard film to categorise. Set in the 80's, the film follows the exploits of the troubled Donald 'Donnie' Darko, a teen plagued by visions of a giant rabbit who spouts apocalyptic psychobabble. Donnie goes on to believe that the end of the world is but a few weeks away. This is definitely not your run-of-the-mill teen flick; the dense multilayered structure simply demands repeat



"I just got a job as a secretary!"

viewings. From the deft direction, to the wonderful score and equally impressive acting (including a star turn by Mr. Roadhouse himself, Patrick Swayze), this is a beautiful film. If you haven't seen it yet, here's your chance. A wealth of extras include two great audio commentaries, deleted scenes, music videos and even scans from *The Philosophy of Time Travel* - a book featured heavily in the film.

**Kosta Andreadis**

**MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 8**



# Kenny Everett's Complete Naughty Bits

UMBRELLA, PG

**I**f you remember watching Kenny Everett on the ABC all those years ago, then you're the prime target for this DVD release. *Naughty Bits* is really not much more than a fun nostalgia trip into the wacky humour of UK comedian Everett, and a lot of the jokes feel as dated as the slutty girl next door some twenty years on. What is brilliant though, is his seriously quirky delivery and some of the more outlandish comedic concepts that he brought to the TV screen. If you love the Young Ones and the Goodies, then not loving Kenny Everett would be somewhat mystifying.

Despite the fact there are long



sections of the Hot Gossip dancers that frankly go on for far too long, there is vintage Kenny Everett here such as Captain Kremen, Everett's various impersonations, and a few one-off skits that anyone with a funny bone will find hard to resist.

**Eliot Fish**

**MOVIE: 8 EXTRAS: 7**



"Oh goody, I just love speeding fines!"

# Lovely & Amazing

MAGNA PACIFIC, M15+

**G**iven the puncey title, it might be easy to mistake *Lovely and Amazing* for some kind of vacuous chick flick. And sure, it's about some girly themes like relationships and body image. But it's about so much more too - family, mortality, love, failed ambition, social isolation. The film involves the fraught relationships within a family of self-obsessed women, and tells the story of how they are forced to pull together when the mother becomes very unwell after a botched liposuction procedure.

It was originally the appeal of Jake Gyllenhaal which drew me to this film, but considering he doesn't make it on screen until halfway through, it managed to be quite involving even without his presence. This is largely due to Catherine Keener's portrayal of



You're meant to 'hold' your breath.

a cynical, disillusioned former prom queen, which is both funny and sad. Pathos is the order of the day. Certainly, it is quite difficult to like many of the main characters, flawed and selfish as they are, but it is equally difficult not to empathise with their experiences. All things considered, *Lovely and Amazing* is a pretty interesting film.

**Elizabeth Shea**

**MOVIE: 8.5 EXTRAS: 1**



It's meant to spell "BLAU".



# ANIME

## The Animatrix

PRODUCTION COMPANY: VARIOUS  
GENRE: SCI-FI

**N**ine short animated films, created by nine of the world's most prolific animation studios — predominantly Japanese, of course — *The Animatrix* provides a broader perspective on the inner workings of popular sci-fi world of the Matrix films. Four of them were freely available to download from [www.theanimatrix.com](http://www.theanimatrix.com), while *Final Flight of the Osiris* could only be watched in cinemas along with *Dreamcatcher* (incidentally one of the worst films of the year).

### HUMANS AND MACHINES

You'll notice the artistic similarities right away, particularly to modern art house favourites like *Aeon Flux*, *Ninja Scroll*, *Blue Submarine No. 6*, *Cowboy Bebop* — and yes, even *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* by the now defunct Square Pictures. The quality of the animation ranges from

"not bad" to "oh my \$#!%ing God". *Final Flight of the Osiris* is completely CG, and looks every bit as good as *Final Fantasy* did. Among the more traditionally animated features, *The Second Renaissance* rates as the best of the collection.

If it's Matrix mythos you're after, then *The Second Renaissance* alone makes this DVD collection worth the price of admission. The two-part story chronicles the events that lead to the war between humans and machines, drawing a haunting parallel with images of Nazi Germany. Sadly, bar the *Final Flight of the Osiris* (which is loosely tied to *Matrix Reloaded*), the other stories aren't quite as compelling.

Nevertheless, *The Animatrix* is a fitting successor to *Robot Carnival* in being a display of the diverse art form that anime has become. Together with a great documentary on the history of manga and anime, and a great soundtrack from the likes of Juno Reactor, this is a DVD that no *Matrix* fan should be without.

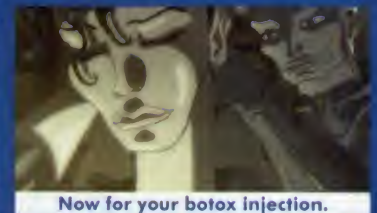
ANIMATION 8 PLOT: 8 OVERALL: 10



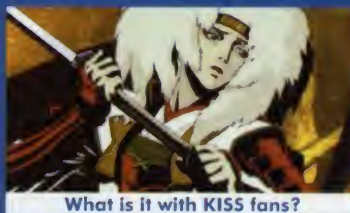
Pin the tail on the honky.



Monday mornings.



Now for your botox injection.



What is it with KISS fans?



Want to see my zippo tricks?

## Love Hina: Spring Movie

PRODUCTION COMPANY: PRODUCTION I.G.  
GENRE: ROMANTIC COMEDY

**A**nime enthusiasts can rightly roll their eyes at yet another paddling of the horse that just won't die. What was once a charming little romantic comedy that was punctuated by its zany characters and unexpected surprises is now formulaic and predictable. *The Love Hina Spring Movie* isn't going to do anything you haven't already seen before, save for one thing at the end (spoiler alert!): Naru finally admits to what we've known all along, that she's in love with Keitaro. Ah, sweet closure.

### GIANT MECHANICAL TURTLE

The road to this long-awaited confession from Naru is standard *Love Hina* fare. Keitaro, Naru and Mutsumi are sitting, yet again, for their entrance exams into Tokyo University.

They've failed a few times before, and you'd think Keitaro would know better, but he manages to daydream and then fall asleep through the exam, leaving just a few minutes to quickly fill in all the answers.

Convinced he's failed the exam, he leaves the Hinata Lodge for good, leaving behind all the friends he's made, including the object of his affections, Naru. Naru won't have a bar of it, though, and she chases him all the way to a remote island in the Pacific, followed close behind by Kitsune, Motoko, Shinobu and gang.

Madness ensues. Another girl enters the equation, and another giant mechanical turtle is on the loose. Keitaro's eventual realisation that he can be together with Naru all the same without being in Tokyo University makes it all seem inconsequential. With all the issues resolved, this hopefully marks a welcome end to the series.

ANIMATION 6 PLOT: 8 OVERALL: 7



You cooked fondue in my wok again!



There's a \*what\* on my head?



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### PS2 HULK PACK!

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- 1 x PlayStation 2 console
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- 1 x Hulk T-shirts
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## MAY WINNER

### HYPER 115 - DEF JAM VENDETTA & PLAYSTATION 2

John Tolentini, Four Mile Beach, Qld



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# FORUM

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

## Q. WHAT FILM WOULD MAKE A GREAT VIDEOGAME, AND WHY?

Well, we all know how many bad games there are out there based on movies. But surely, there are a number of great films that have gone sorely neglected for the old interactive conversion. How about *My Dinner With André*, *Russian Ark* or *Sliding Doors*? Okay, maybe not those ones... Well, we've let the readers decide anyhow.

And games to films? A great game-to-film idea would be a *Metal Gear Solid* movie with Solid Snake played by none other than David Hayter – the voice of Solid Snake in the games (see pic)! He could even write it (amazingly, Hayter was the scriptwriter on both *X-Men* films). A match made in heaven.



### HYPER FORUM

We all have a different opinion and the Hyper Forum is where you can get your thoughts out of your head and onto the page for all to see. Don't forget that we have a new topic every issue! The next topic of discussion...

“What is your favourite GameCube game to date, and why?”

Responses will be printed in Hyper 120

E-mail: FREAKSCENE@NEXT.COM.AU with Hyper Forum in the subject line, and the topic of discussion at the top of your response. Please note that very long contributions may be edited.

FEEDBACK

92 » HYPER

#### DIRTY GREAT STUFF

Let's face reality - most movies would (and do) make terrible videogames, and vice versa. More accurately, game developers tend to turn really great movies into shoddy, half-arsed games because their film tie-ins guarantee sales no matter how bad the product.

If we imagine a perfect world (where great movies are given the loving treatment they deserve to evolve into killer games) then the *DIRTY HARRY* series would be unbeatable.

I am old enough to know that Clint Eastwood is God, regardless of the fact he's way past his sell-by date. And if Eastwood is God, then *Dirty Harry* is the *King of Kings*.

Visualise a game utilising light-gun levels where you are able to blast away with impunity at dodgy-looking '70s crims just because someone poured too much sugar into your coffee.

Picture bone-crunching car chases up, down and over the impossibly steep streets of San Francisco before ramming your Chevy into the front of a supermarket and taking up your trusty

Magnum once more.

Clint invented the concept of delivering the snappy one-liner to a corpse he'd just blown away. He was doing this before that big Austrian called Arnie even started taking steroids. As such, Clint has earned videogame immortality.

Bonus weapons could include a harpoon gun (remember "Sudden Impact"?) while bonus characters could include Clyde the orangutan from "Every Which Way But Loose".

Thank you for your time. Remember kids, Clint is cool - even if he is only slightly younger than Abe Simpson. In his younger days, he ruled.

Andrew Harris

#### Feeling lucky, punk?

#### MAD IDEA

The best movie to videogame award goes to... (insert drum roll)... *MAD MAX*.

This game would have to have an 18+ rating if it's going to be like the original movie. With fried goose, leather Mel Gibson, mad bikers and explosive car chases, who could want more?

Miscellaneous Mel

#### POINTING & CLICKING

Alright, this is one of the best forum questions ever, I got 2 ideas. The first is more of a quick idea for a TV show game. The Simpsons - Virtual Springfield, everybody knows it blew. I say they totally redo that idea with today's standard of interactivity. Grand Theft Auto in Springfield with all your favourite lovable characters! You could be Bart, Homer, Snake... ANYBODY! And you can choose to live your daily life as Marge would or somethin', or you could go run amuck like Bart would. You could even go into any store you want, like the comic chop guys store! Hehe. Anyway, that's an awesome idea.

Next, a nice old-fashioned point & click adventure game, most likely by LucasArts cuz they are (were? - Ed.) the best at it, for the movie *Seven*. It'd be like full crime scene investigation adventure game with full gritty details and it'd just be crazy. You could be either Brad Pitt or Morgan Freeman.

Anyway... they're my ideas! Please print them.

Tony Montana

#### REAL TIME GAMEPLAY

Even though it's not really a movie, but a really long TV show, I think



'24' would make the best game. Imagine having this one big goal (like save the president or summat) and you have to accomplish it within 24 hours. You can save wherever and more importantly whenever you want but imagine it to be a GTA3 with 24 'real' hours and a huge goal. Or maybe just a game of Happy Gilmore would suffice?

Think aboot it...

**Richard P**

## POINTY CLICKY HORROR GAME

Hyper,

Most of Alfred Hitchcock's films or any Stephen King book-based films ('Psycho', 'The Shining', etc) should be considered to be made into some sort of pointy clicky game. Maybe like a combination of 'Forgotten' and 'Broken Sword'.

It will have to be kinda cartoony but sadistic and disturbing at the same time. You should be able to play as the psychopath and the victim. It'll be bloody gruesome fun.

**Jules**

## FURIOUS GAMING

Hey Hyper,

With the killer adrenaline rush, the slick cars and the hot chicks, The Fast and the Furious would have to be my number one pick for this question, and here's why.

The movie has everything you can think of bar charity donations; Stealth missions, gun missions, Jumping-off-trucks missions and of course the racing missions. You can also choose between characters - Dom (the bold dude) and Bryan



(pretty boy undercover cop). Each character's missions would be unique and the replay value would rock because doing a mission with (or for, if you play as Jesse/Mia and he asks you for a favour) Dom would involve getting tickets to race wars and stealing the DVD players and all the high tech stuff. With Bryan you get the Cop missions and try to get respect from all the other guys.

So, in conclusion, The Fast and the Furious (Only on PS2 & Xbox, the GCN just couldn't cut it) would kick a hefty load of arsecheek.

**JayJay**

## ATTACK OF THE CLONES

"What do gamers today want?", I find myself pondering. Flashy colours? Nah. Pumpin' choonz? Not quite. Buxom, scantily clad women? Almost.

No, what most gamers want today (so I believe) is plot complexity, and surely no film-to-game conversion could create so much complexity as one of ze incredible Arnie's greatest works, The Sixth Day.

This game would have it all, from enemies that constantly reappear as they are cloned, to those cool helicopter-slash-jumpjets, to those laser pistols that make that "peow!" sound, accompanied by a huge muzzle flash, and cleanly shear off parts of the human body. And just imagine how "wack" (do kids today still say wack?) the plot would be. You'd constantly come into contact with clones of yourself, supporting characters and enemies, until your mind would broil over and explode in a cataclysmic expulsion of brain matter. Phat.

So, either The Sixth Day or maybe a game adaptation of Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within. None of this RPG crap, just a survival horror-FPS (now THAT'S a genre!). The guns are hefty, all the interfaces would be designed like holograms, and imagine sprinting down a corridor from an enemy, only to have a phantom emerge from the floor! Damn that'd be sweet.

Well, I'll retire now back to the candy land of my mind.

'Til next time, good yeomen,

**Jackson Balme, A.K.A. Phazon Pirate**

## BANG BANG BANG

Hey Hyper,

With most movies these days containing nothing but lots of guns and gunfights, we really should be



looking towards films that will offer something a little different.

How about an ICO-esque game based on 2001: A Space Odyssey? Or a point-n-click adventure based on the Wizard of Oz? They could even make a game based on one of Woody Allen's crazy comedies!

Game developers really need to start thinking outside the box.

**Harold B**

## MORE HORROR

I'm surprised that there aren't more videogames about horror films. What about "Nightmare on Elm Street" or "Night of the Living Dead"? Sure they made The Thing and Evil Dead, but those games sucked.

**Blauman**

## RUN WITH THIS

Dudes!!

My favourite film of all time is Blade Runner. Now I know that they made that Blade Runner adventure game, but my question is: why stop there?! The Blade Runner universe is so cool!

They could simply make a third person action game where you play Deckard and have to run around the streets, trying to track down your bounty. Why not go get Harrison Ford to do the voice?! How awesome would that be?! If I could choose a developer, I'd get Ion Storm Austin to do it as soon as they finish up with Deus Ex: Invisible War.

**Tyrone R**

## PRINCESS BABES

Fully I think that Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure and Bogus Journey would make a sick videogame. You would have to travel in time, collecting famous people for your history project, and

this part would be action. Gengis Khan would kick butt!

In between it would be like The Sims - because you have to keep all the people happy. Joan of Arc, for instance, might not get on with Sigmund Freud. He would say she had penis envy and she would upside his head with her big (phallic shaped) sword!

And when the Princess Babes need to go to the toilet you had better pay attention or they will do it on the floor of the phone booth and everyone else would hate them! It would be so cool and would teach kids about history because Bill and Ted is completely historically accurate. Plus, there would be bonus levels eating ice cream at Ziggy Pig and playing chess against Death. This game is so hot it would program itself!

And just think of the sweet soundtrack Bill and Ted would have! Iron Maiden, Megadeth, KISS, Steve Vai and who doesn't love Big Pig? All my favourite bands would be in it! And the gameplay would rock. LITERALLY!

**Ted's Hairpiece**

## ER... WHOOPS

Hey Hyper,

I used to think that The Matrix movies would make excellent videogames, but Shiny proved me wrong.

**Anon**

## GRAAAH! GRAHHHH!

To Hyper,

This is a good question. I'm sure you will get many good responses. But will anyone suggest King Kong? Why has there not been a cool King Kong game? Did you know Peter Jackson is making a new King Kong movie after he finishes Lord of the Rings. I bet we will see a game of King Kong then!

**Ape\_Boy**

# MAIL

## ✉ HYPER LETTERS:

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

### TEACHING TORTURE

Hi Hyper dudes,

I have decided that the most corrupting thing I have seen in a computer game would have to be in the Sims on PS2. I didn't like my girlfriend who couldn't cook, so I locked her in a room and told her to feed herself. Kablam!!! She was set on fire and died in what I would have to say is the most gruesome and disturbing death in any game. BAN it I say!! Or at least bring in the R rating. I was appalled. Live long Vice City whoohoo.

Cya oh men of great sacrifice and most hilarious captions.

**Vija Pattison**

Dear Vija,

For a second there I thought you were talking about your real life girlfriend... but then I realised geeks don't have girlfriends.

games these days? All they are, are freakin' Star Wars sequels and kids' games. Whatever happened to the great point and click adventure series? And why the hell hasn't LucasArts made a damn movie for Monkey Island yet!? I can only hope that what the voodoo lady in Curse Of Monkey Island says is true.

**Guybrush:** Why do you keep popping up?

**Voodoo Lady:** I have a five game contract.

Anyway, bye (for now).

**Murray the really eeeeeeevil talking skull**

Dear Murray,

The next adventure game from LucasArts will be a 3D one, Sam & Max: Freelance Police. A reason to be excited is that they've gone and employed the blokes who worked on the original Sam & Max: Hit the Road.

### MONKEYING AROUND

I was looking through Hyperactive last night and a certain article came up that made me want to cry. It was the article about Monkey Island. Why don't LucasArts make any decent

### WHAT A RIP OFF!

Alright, here's the deal... I've been reading HYPER since the day that NMS suddenly disappeared off the shelves, and I don't usually write

Cam Shea  
Adventures in L.A.



American kids are doomed.  
A is for America, B is for bombs...

into these mail sections, but today is an exception because I am really pissed off...

Why am I pissed off you ask? It's because EB nearly ripped me off when I went to buy Zelda: The Wind Waker. They were expecting me and my brother to fork out \$150 for a copy of Wind Waker and the bonus disc... that's right, they were selling The Wind Waker for \$99, and the bonus disc for \$50 separately.

Now let's just get this right here for a second... Isn't the whole idea of a bonus disc that it is to be given as a bonus, or a gift, alongside the game?

What makes things worse is the fact that the guys at EB said that the games were pre-owned, and that was the reason why they were selling them separately. But hang on... if these games are pre-owned,

shouldn't they be sold at a cheaper price compared to their fresh

counterparts? Also, what are the odds of there being numerous pre-owned copies of The Wind Waker in one store only a fortnight after the game was released? If you ask me, I would say that EB are just selling the two discs separately to get a few extra \$\$\$.

So I just walked straight out of EB Warrawong, and probably won't ever set foot in there again, 'cause I have been ripped off there in the past, and don't want it to happen again...

Just a quick question... Is there any news on whether the arcade version of F-Zero (F-Zero AX I think it's called) will be released here in Oz?

Later...

**Matt**

Dear Matt,

That truly sounds dodgy. Don't worry, we made a call, and Nintendo

Connell Wood  
bought DOA:XBV  
for the volleyball



## CAPTION THIS!

### PART 43 WINNER

Our winner this month is **Jeremy Kellar** for his witty caption that's up there with the best of them. Well done Jeremy!



Look, just stand back and I'll try to break you out of this glass box.



# MAIL

with casual gamers – and casual gamers make up the lion's share of the gaming market. Basically, RPGs don't sell large numbers, aside from some rare exceptions like the Final Fantasy games. Australia is also a small market compared to the rest of the world. What happens is that when a publisher gets something like *Legia 2: Dual Saga*, A) they know it will probably only sell a small number of units, and B) translating the game's copious amounts of text or dialogue to English is expensive and time consuming. This results in the publisher (or distributor) deciding that it's not worth releasing here. All we can hope is that the RPGs that DO get released start selling a whole lot better.

1. Nope, *RE4* is still exclusive to the Cube.
2. We would hope so, but it's not on any release schedule.
3. Very early 2004... a long time to wait, eh?

## ENTER THE MONEY

Hyper,

Okay. I am a HUGE fan of *The Matrix*, but I am utterly disappointed by the poor quality of *Enter the Matrix*. Sure it has got some spectacular pieces in it, but it is so short, and unfinished. I refer to the hacking, among other things. It was meant to be very challenging and VERY useful. It takes a non-hacker about 30 minutes

to complete. The reason for this: They had to make it coincide with Reloaded so they had to leave it unfinished. The actual game only takes like 5 hours to complete on normal, it could have easily been longer. I personally feel the hacking system could have gone a lot deeper, all you get from it is a sword and new levels, which aren't that great. I am also disappointed at the amount of bugs in it. The game often freezes and the game screws up at times. How can a game that took 4 years to complete be so bad?

Here's an example: if you were to press R1 + L1 simultaneously in the

hacking system it says something like "Everything Has Been Unlocked. Remember To Remove This For The Final Version." If that doesn't show it's unfinished, nothing will. How can they forget to remove something like that?

It's all about money now, not the gamer. I just feel really ripped off.

**Camron Goldstein**

Dear Camron,  
It sounds like they're spending more



**Chad Layer impressed us mightily with his Ivy.**



**Cam & Steve tried to get Miyamoto drunk, but the man is like steel!**

time on the next one. Shiny's next *Matrix* game won't be out until the end of 2004!

## THE WORLD GAME

Good day to you all @ Hyper,

I get the impression that a fair few of the folks at Hyper are avid fans of the world game AKA soccer. What with references like that "separated at birth?" between SS Lazio's skinhead posterboy Jaap Stam and Hitman among others. As a football fanatic (and by that I mean soccer fanatic to those who might get confused) I give maximum respect and I have a couple of Questions.

Firstly, what are the favourite teams of the various editors, writers, art directors and other staff members? My favourite team is perhaps predictably Leeds United, but not just because of the talented Australian players they have, but also because they were the surprise packet of the 2000-2001 Champions League and came within a hair's breadth of challenging Bayern Munich in the final. Oh yeah, and my second question is what chance do you think there is that Konami will release Pro Evolution or Winning Eleven on Gamecube either here or at least in Europe or America, wherehence I could get it imported? If the answer is doubtful, then are there any avenues to harrass

them into doing so? Such is my desperation to play *Winning Eleven* in english on the 'Cube.

Thank You and goodnight.  
**Joe McMahon**

Dear Joe,

The Hyper crew support an interesting selection of English Premier League teams. Arsenal, Southampton and Blackburn Rovers. Associated workmates support Liverpool and West Ham. We'll let you rack your brains trying to figure out who the supporters are. Heh.

*Winning Eleven for GameCube is not on the local release schedule, but we had heard some talk of it happening, so fingers crossed!*

## GOOD GAMECUBE!

To Hyper,

The Nintendo Gamecube. Why, oh why does it fail to sell in this country? What is wrong with it? Nintendo has been releasing games lately that make *GTA3* look like *Primal*, *JSRF* look like *Blinx* and *Halo* look like Universal Studios. Nintendo seemed to have forgotten about the GameCube at E3, and have given the GBA all the attention. Please tell me that other people feel the same way about this as I do.

**Depressed Nintendo Fan**

Dear DNF,

With so much competition in the market, it was inevitable that one of the current consoles would lose ground to the others. There's nothing wrong with GCN. It rocks!



# The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

**TOP 10**

## PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Enter The Matrix	Adventure
2	◆	GTA: Vice City	Adventure
3	▲	Midnight Club 2	Racing
4	▼	The Getaway	Adventure
5	⊙	WRC 2 Extreme	Racing
6	▲	The Sims	Strategy
7	⊙	Devil May Cry 2	Adventure
8	▼	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Adventure
9	⊙	Silent Hill 3	Adventure
10	▼	Moto GP 3	Racing

**TOP 10**

## PlayStation Games Over \$40

W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	YuGiOh Forbidden Memories	Adventure
3	◆	Dragonball Z: Ult Battle 22	Action
3	◆	Grand Theft Auto Gltors Ed	Adventure
4	◆	Harry P Chamber Of Secrets	Adventure
5	▲	Digimon World 3	Adventure
6	▲	FIFA 2003	Sports
7	▼	Final Fantasy Origins	Adventure
8	▼	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Sports
9	⊙	Treasure Planet	Adventure
10	◆	Stuart Little 2	Adventure

**TOP 10**

## Game Cube Games Over \$40

W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	Legend Zelda: Wind Waker LE	RPG
2	▼	Enter The Matrix	Adventure
3	◆	Metroid Prime	Adventure
4	▲	Skies Of Arcadia Legends	RPG
5	◆	Resident Evil 3	Adventure
6	▲	Super Mario Sunshine	Adventure
7	▼	Resident Evil 2	Adventure
8	▼	Mario Party 4	Family
9	▼	Burnout 2	Racing
10	⊙	The Sims	Strategy

**TOP 10**

## Xbox Games Over \$40

W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Enter The Matrix	Adventure
2	⊙	Hot Box	Compilation
3	⊙	Brute Force	Action
4	⊙	Rtn Cstle Wlfenstein Tide War	Action
5	▼	V8 Supercars	Racing
6	◆	The Sims	Strategy
7	▼	Burnout 2	Racing
8	⊙	Red Faction 2	Action
9	▼	Moto GP 2 Ultmte Rcing Tch	Racing
10	▼	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Adventure

**TOP 10**

## PC Games Over \$30

W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	The Sims Superstar	Strategy
2	◆	The Sims Deluxe	Strategy
3	⊙	Rise Of Nations	Strategy
4	▼	Enter The Matrix	Adventure
5	◆	The Sims Unleashed	Strategy
6	▼	CSI:Crime Scene Invstgation	Adventure
7	▲	Sim City 4000	Strategy
8	▼	Vietcong	Action
9	▲	Age Of Mythology	Strategy
10	⊙	The Sims Vacation	Strategy

**TOP 10**

## Game Boy Advance Games Over \$40

W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	YuGiOh World Wide	Strategy
2	◆	Pokemon Ruby	RPG
3	◆	Pokemon Sapphire	RPG
4	◆	Harry P Chamber Of Secrets	Adventure
5	◆	Dragonball Z: Legacy Goku	Action
6	▲	Golden Sun 2: The Lost Age	RPG
7	▼	Zelda: Link to Past/4 Swords	RPG
8	◆	Sonic Advance 2	Adventure
9	⊙	Crash Bandicoot 2:Entrnced	Adventure
10	⊙	Marlo Kart Super Circuit	Racing

**TOP 10**

## All Full Priced Games

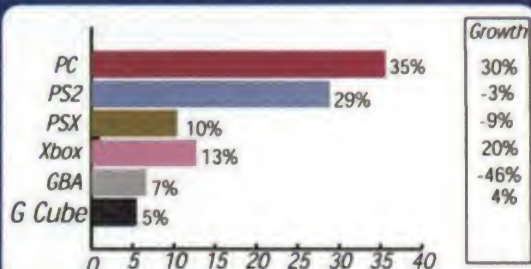
W/E 8 June 2003  
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Enter The Matrix	PlayStation 2
2	◆	Enter The Matrix	Xbox
3	◆	The Sims Superstar	PC/MAC
4	⊙	Hot Box	Xbox
5	⊙	Brute Force	Xbox
6	▼	YuGiOh World Wide	Game Boy Adv
7	⊙	Rtn Cstle Wlfenstein Tide War	Xbox
8	▼	Pokemon Ruby	Game Boy Adv
9	▼	Pokemon Sapphire	Game Boy Adv
10	▼	The Sims Deluxe	PC/MAC

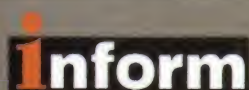
## MARKET WATCH

### All Games by Platform

May 03 vs April 03  
RETAIL SALES



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



Charts can be viewed at [www.informbd.com.au](http://www.informbd.com.au) as part of Inform's comprehensive database of online market intelligence, updated weekly



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