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PLAYSTATION HANDHELD REVEALED



123 JANUARY '04

HYPER

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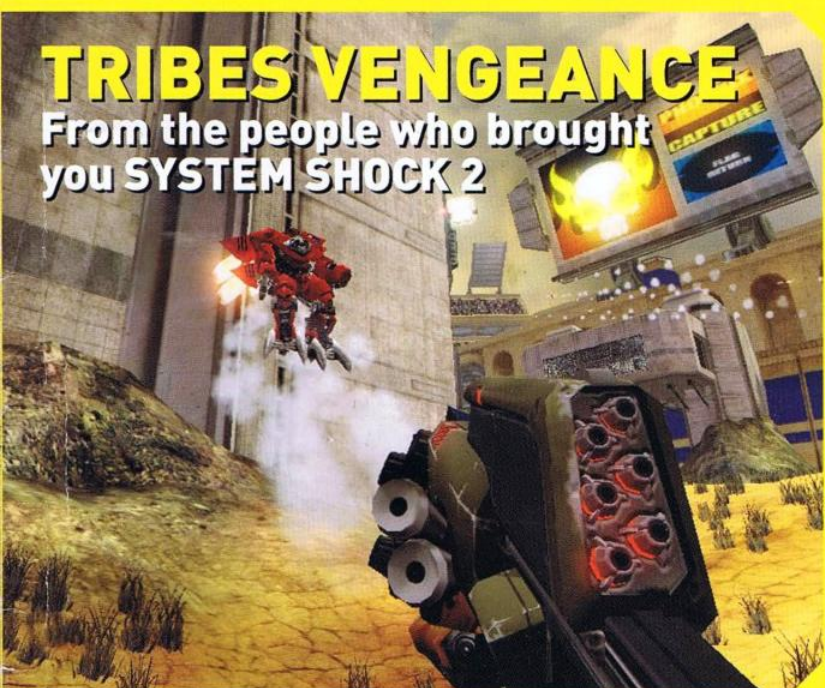
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FINAL FANTASY X-2

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23

next GAMING

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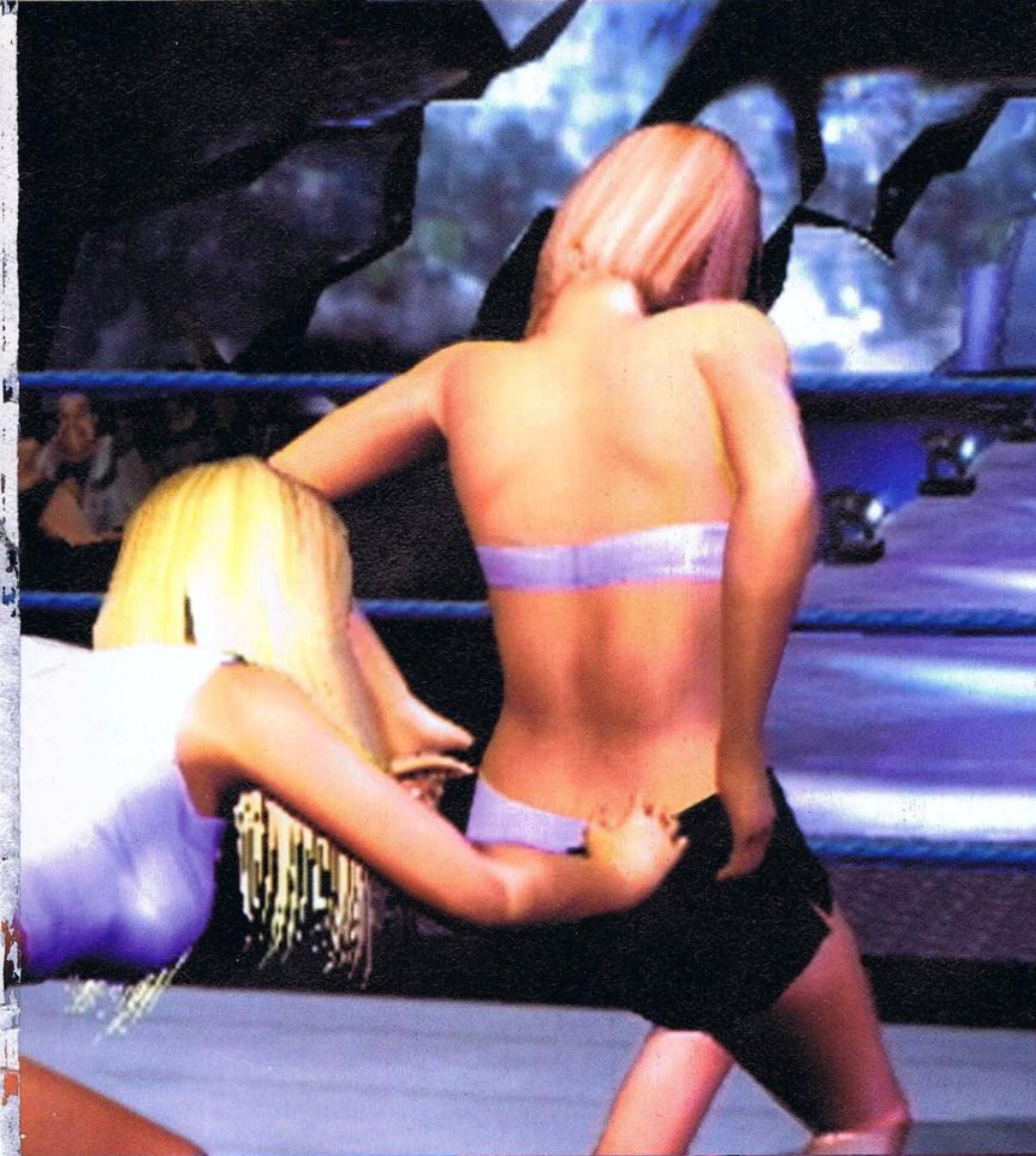
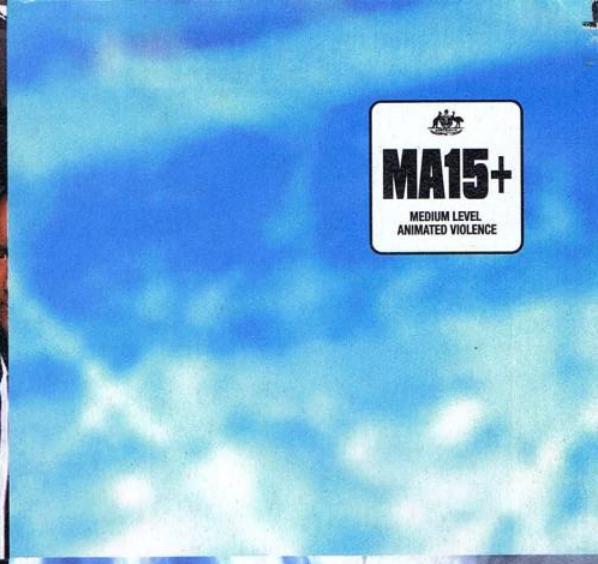


PlayStation®2 NOVEMBER 2003



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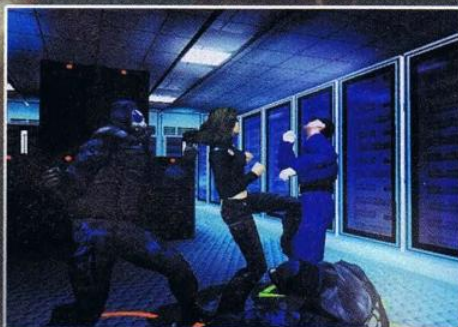




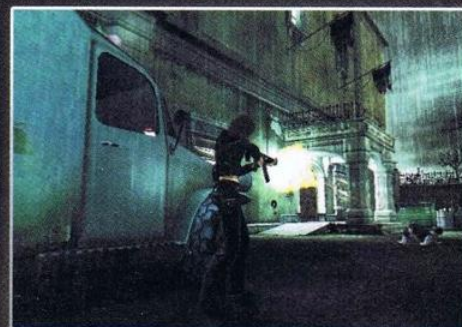
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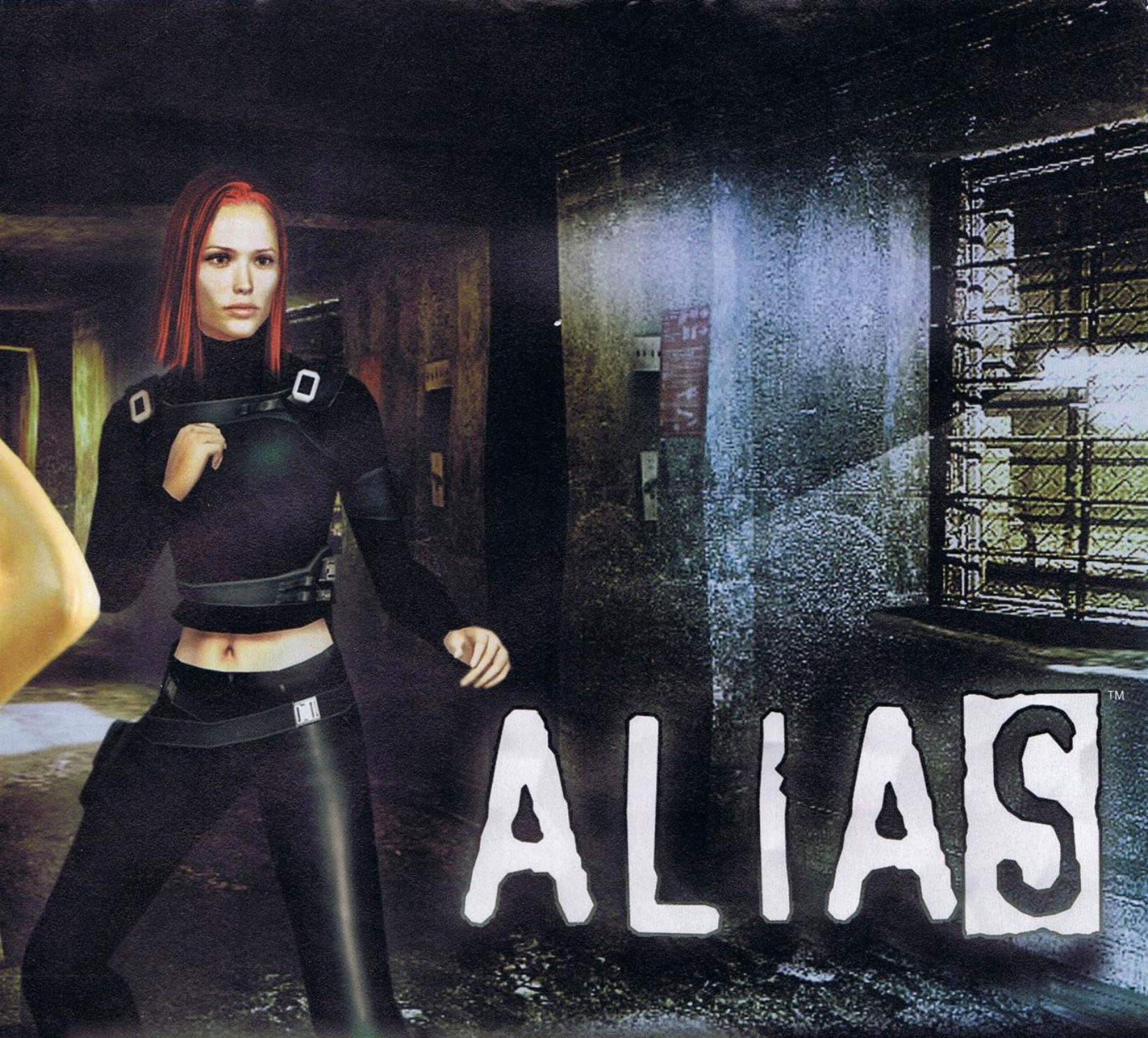


Marshall Flinkman-designed spy gadgets

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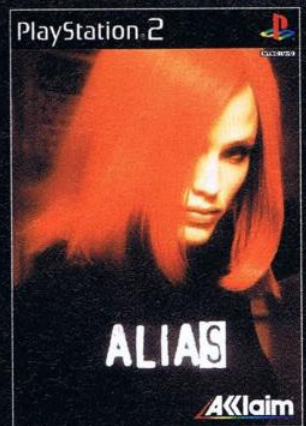
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REC

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IN CARCER CITY, NOTHING MATTERS ANYMORE AND ALL THAT'S LEFT ARE CHEAP THRILLS.

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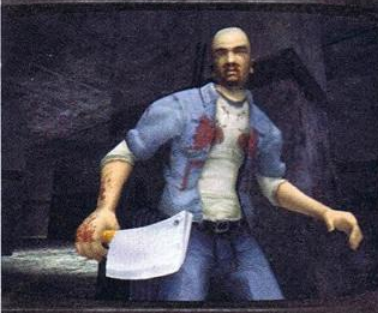
THEY GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE BACK. NOW, THEY ARE GOING TO HUNT YOU DOWN.

YOU AWAKE TO THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN PANICKED BREATH.

YOU MUST RUN, HIDE AND FIGHT TO SURVIVE.

IF YOU CAN STAY ALIVE LONG ENOUGH, YOU MAY FIND OUT WHO DID THIS TO YOU.

THE FINAL CUT



R



TCR - 00:32:05:45

R



R



R



PlayStation 2

MANHUNT

REC →
SAVE ←



R



R



R



R

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52 PRINCE OF PERSIA
The pinnacle of 3D action?



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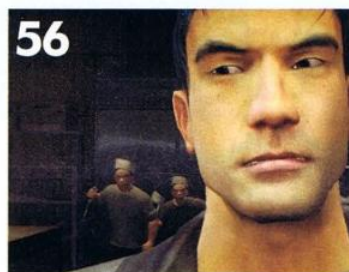
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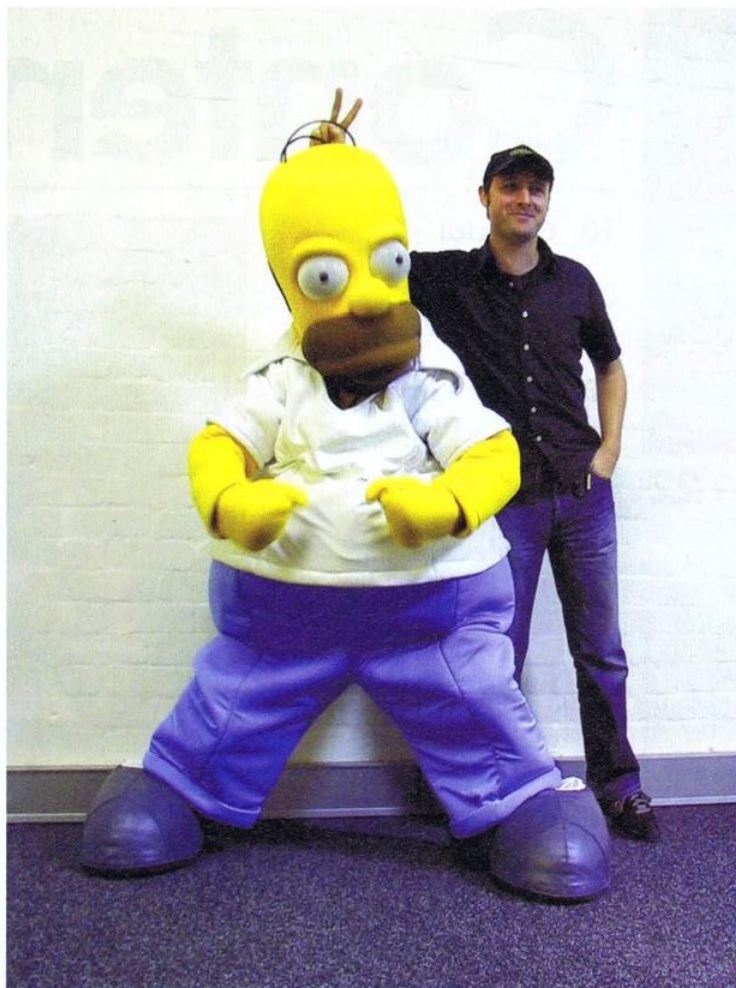
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Being in charge has its perks, but you also have to do stupid shit.

EDITORIAL

»» Before you flip through this issue in disbelief... Yes, I know that there are a swag of big games not reviewed this month. It was one of those crazy Novembers when all the good stuff arrived too late to make it in print (we finish Hyper up about 4 weeks before you read it every month). Sadly, it means that there's a crate-load of cool reviews piled up for next issue, even though you can probably go out and buy the games now... Tony Hawk's Underground, Call of Duty, Beyond Good & Evil, Deus Ex: Invisible War (probably out by the time you read this, damnit!), Castlevania: Lament of Innocence and a whole lot more. But hey, you care enough about our opinions to wait for the reviews next issue, right? Right?! Waaah! We could have reviewed them in an unfinished state, but that just wouldn't have been right... ahh we're so good to you, dear readers. In any case, next issue will be just as bumper as this one. Have a great Christmas or whatever it is you celebrate, and see you then!

Eliot Fish »» Editor

Become a local hero...at the expense of your mates.



Race your Enzo Ferrari around the streets of Sydney in Project Gotham Racing 2. Shred the slopes of Mount Buller in Amped 2. Wipe your opponents off the court like only Lleyton Hewitt can in Top Spin. With over 230 games now available on Xbox, these three provide a blend of mind blowing game play and exhilarating Australian flavour. Experience what it feels like to defeat your friends on home turf.



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News >>

IN THE NEWS: PSP ■ Xbox 2 ■ Cadbury Mario Kart Double Dash Challenge report ■ Splinter Cell 2 multiplayer screens and more

Not just handheld, but pocket sized



SLEEK

SONY'S PSP REVEALED

Prototype design surprises all

☒ Sony's PlayStation Portable (PSP for short) was unveiled in mid-November by the head of Sony's games division, Ken Kutaragi, at their Corporate Strategy Meeting in New York. Whilst only a render of a prototype design, it is likely very close to what the final handheld will look like (otherwise they wouldn't have shown anyone this design, surely). Sleek is most definitely the word.

DESTINED FOR SUCCESS

Just take a look at that screen. That is the biggest, widest, coolest screen we've ever seen on a handheld (roughly 4 inches across), and if the final product is this impressive then we'll be a bunch of very happy gamers indeed. The next thing that

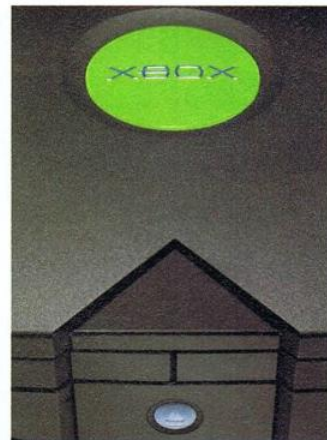
grabs our attention are the flat buttons and directional pad. Whilst the standard PlayStation buttons look like they will click in softly, or possibly even be touch sensitive, the d-pad is perplexing. It was reported that the device would feature an analogue stick of some kind, and yet it doesn't appear to be possible in this incarnation. In any case, it also seems odd that the d-pad is situated on one of the side curves of the unit, which again only leads us to believe that it is either touch-sensitive or that this design is indeed yet to be finalised.

We're not certain where the 1.8GB UMD discs will be inserted, but it seems that on the rear of the handheld, the central area emblazoned with the logo might slip

off as does the back of a mobile phone. You can see the fine line indents on either side of the logo which indicate a moveable section.

Kutaragi also stated that Sony eventually plan to add "telecommunication features", which could well be the deathblow to the Nokia N-Gage. "PSP will not be one kind of product," Kutaragi insisted. "Rather, it is a platform of related devices with the capacity to add or subtract features."

Whichever way you look at it, the PSP seems destined for success – riding on the PlayStation name and coming from the consumer electronics giant that is Sony, it really could be the gaming equivalent of the Walkman.



SALTY

BOX OF CHIPS

IBM & ATI help out with Xbox 2

☒ Everyone wants to know what Xbox 2 will be like, but the reality is that the console is so early in the design phase that no one really knows anything yet... except for the Microsoft boffins of course. What we DO know, is that Microsoft plan on designing their own custom chips this time around.

With the first Xbox, Intel and graphics giant Nvidia sold chips to Microsoft that were based on semiconductors those two manufacturers were selling to the PC market. This off-the-shelf technology then allowed uber-geeks to turn their Xboxs into custom PCs or hack the 'box more easily. With Xbox 2, Microsoft has licensed graphics technology from ATI (who provided graphics technology for the GameCube), processor technology from IBM (who are also partnering with Sony on PS3) and chipset technology from Silicon Integrated Systems (SIS). Microsoft will now use that technology to fashion their own custom Xbox 2 hardware, which will ensure that more power can be squeezed out of the system. Expect to hear a lot more on both Xbox 2 and PS3, and hopefully the next Nintendo system, in 2004.



LIVE
EA EA OHHHH...
 EA promise to Live a little

As gamers everywhere have discovered, EA's games this Christmas feature multiplayer support for only the PlayStation 2. Despite Xbox Live offering the more advanced online console gaming service, EA has declined to include support for the system in their games — a decision that seems to be doing them more harm than good. Sony might be happy, but consumers are livid. Articles on IGN (www.ign.com) decry the lack of Live support and Penny Arcade (www.penny-arcade.com) wrote, "While multiplatform games provide at least the illusion of choice, antics like this completely pierce that notion. The Xbox and GameCube

versions are incomplete." In the midst of all this madness, Chip Lange, the new head of EA Sports Nation spoke to IGN and promised that "...both Microsoft and EA, if you talked to them, would say that we're hoping that we can figure out a solution so we can get there. There's certainly no bad blood there, and the good thing is, we're talking." Of course, that still leaves out the GameCube, however with no online gaming service for the Nintendo console it might be fair enough that it's not in EA's plans. At least we can cross our fingers and hope that we'll be playing EA Sports games on Xbox Live in 2004. Right, EA?



NEXT
CONSOLE RUMOURS

Nintendo promise a new machine soon!

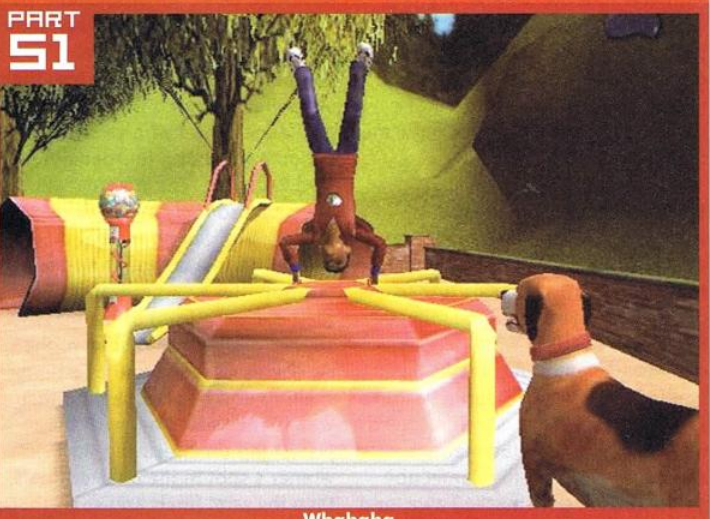
Nintendo are preparing to unveil a brand new gaming product at the E3 expo in Los Angeles next year (that's in May to be exact). But they insist that it is not a new version of the Game Boy Advance or the GameCube! What is this mysterious new gaming device that Nintendo have been secretly working on, and can it help resurrect their dominance in the console market? Nintendo promise it is unlike anything we have seen to date. This new console will launch in Japan next year, and already gamers everywhere are salivating at the thought of what they could be playing next year!

WINNERS

- Hyper 121**
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04
 Josh Hobbs, QLD
 Ben Wynn, NSW
 Brian Binskin, NSW
 Jason Hopkins, SA
 Scott Emerton, NSW
- AIRSTYLE CONTROLLER**
 Darren Chong, NSW
 Martin Yeaman, NT
 Brendan McKeown, SA
 Keiran Stibbard, NSW
 Marco Brunato, NSW
 Fred Cox, QLD
 Chris Stanwix, TAS
 Simon Beiers, NSW
 Ryan McLoughlin, VIC
 Patrick Pigett, NSW

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 with Caption This Part 51 in the subject line.



PART 51

Whahaha

[right] Our winner, Maurice, is the poor bloke getting his butt pinched by Mario



CADBURY MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH CHALLENGE

The winner reports in...

It's not often that I get to spend the weekend being flown to Melbourne, staying in a class hotel, and getting chauffeured around town, so winning Hyper's recent Mario Kart Double Dash Challenge competition was a pant-wettingly exciting situation to be in. Sightseeing aside though, my trip was all about one thing; getting to play one of the hottest unreleased games of the year, and on Sunday, 19th of October, Nintendo's Mario Kart Double Dash challenge gave me that chance.

SLIGHTLY FRIGHTENING

The day of the challenge itself was cold and wet, but it hardly seemed to matter. Plenty of locals turned up, and the venue (Village Cinemas Knox) was bustling with anxious gamers all clamouring to get their hands on Mario Kart Double Dash. To say that the game was well received would be an understatement. Attendees crowded the GameCube demo units in gobsmacked awe, and even other high profile unreleased

titles such as F-Zero GX and Rogue Squadron III didn't get a look in while the new Mario Kart was on offer. After playing it for some time myself it's fair to say that Double Dash certainly seems to be a real return to form for the series, feeling much more similar to the SNES Mario Kart than its 64-bit equivalent.

After managing to pry their hands free of the demo units, the competitors were ushered into their seats and prepared for the challenge. Those who've seen the Super Mario Bros 3 tournament in Fred Savage's "The Wizard" will have a reasonably accurate, if slightly frightening mental picture of just how the competition played out from this point onwards. Taking their places in front of the massive 28 metre wide V-Max screen, the competitor's raced four at a time, shelling and banana peeling their way to the finish line, with the fastest lap time securing the winner's spot in the quarter finals, then the semi finals and so forth. Or at least that was the idea.

>> Maurice Branscombe

Somewhere between the opening heats and quarterfinals the timekeepers seemed to lose it, placing many racers that performed poorly into the finals and leaving some of the better racers out of the competition. Within seconds of the announcement more than half of the cinema had lined up at the announcer's desk to complain. Being quick to act Nintendo let some of the most irate ejectives back into the comp, narrowly avoiding causing a riot of Coke and Triple Decker addled youngsters.

Once the rabble had dispersed the tournament continued without further controversy. Taking out the top spot was 22 year-old Stephen Macrae, whom the MCs had dubbed "the barefoot bandit", owing to him playing out the whole competition without footwear. With that the lights dimmed, the MCs bid us all farewell, and the competition, and an unforgettable experience, came to a close. Many thanks to Nintendo and Hyper for making it happen. I owe you one.



[below] Maurice and Challenge winner Stephen "Barefoot Bandit" Macrae



The Fast and the Mischievous



NEW THIS XMAS



Battle for the chequered flag with Crash, friends and foes. Use missiles, bombs, tornadoes and more to pass or blast up to 4 friends in multiplayer mode. Race to win... using any means you can.



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE SP.

GAME BOY ADVANCE





SHIGGY

HELLO FROM NINTENDO

Just dropping by to say hi...

On our recent trip to Japan to visit the Tokyo Game Show and hang out at SquareEnix, the Hyper crew dropped by Nintendo HQ to drop off a copy of Hyper's 10th Birthday issue and a copy of sister-publication, GBA world to none other than Shigeru Miyamoto himself. Here you can see the friendly guard on duty at the Nintendo main gate happily clutching our Aussie gaming goodness. Moments later, Shiggy pulled up in a red (Nintendo coloured?) van. Coolness!



CUTE

FASHION CONSCIOUS GAMERS

Handbags for your handhelds

The English leather specialist, Mulberry, have manufactured an exclusive leather "carry case" for the Game Boy Advance SP in the UK. The case sells for £49 at selected Mulberry stores in England, and will no doubt be snapped up by British gamers desperate to disguise their geekiness as a fashion accessory. Or something. Check it out!

16 HYPER»

FIRST LOOK!

Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow
 Xbox Developer: Ubi Soft Montreal Publisher: Ubi Soft

0
15
STICKY CAM

Vultures
 Xbox Developer: Grin Inc Publisher: CDV



OLDIES

SEGA SELLS ROMS

New online service for 16-bit classics

Over in Japan, gamers continue to get their hands on some pretty damn cool offers. The latest is news that Sega has started an online service called "Sega Game Hongo" for distributing ROMs of their old 16-bit games!

For the cheap monthly rate of about AUS\$12, users will be able to download an unlimited number of ROMs, with 30 games available at launch and 10 new games added every month. Sega also plan on offering forums and chat functions for retro-gaming enthusiasts to meet and discuss classic console games, amongst other planned subscriber services.

The games available on Hongo at launch are: 16t, Alien Storm, Arrow Flash, Bonanza Brothers, Chakan: The Forever Man, Doki Doki Penguin Land, E-SWAT, Ecco the Dolphin, G-LOC, Golden Axe II, Gunstar Heroes, Hyper Marble, Jewel Master, Labyrinth of Mystery, Party Quiz Mega Q, Phantasy Star II, Puddle Fighter, Putter Golf, Puyo Puyo, Shadow Dancer, Shining in the Darkness, Sonic the Hedgehog 2, Sonic the Hedgehog 3, Sonic & Knuckles, Sonic Race, Space Harrier II, Super Thunder Blade, Sword of Vermilion and The Ooze.

Naturally, the big question well all want to know is whether Sega will offer this service outside of Japan. Well, typically, at this stage it looks like it will exist for Japanese gamers only, but we would like to think that this kind of service will also start to catch on with other games publishers. It's nice to see that at least Sega are aware that old games are still worth caring about.



OVERFLOW

Rockstar's *Manhunt* will support the PS2 USB headset. Whilst the game doesn't feature voice support or online functions, using the headset with the game will result in the Director's commentary to your player going directly through your headset, making the experience that much more "personal". Cool.

SquareEnix are releasing a new PS2 Action RPG in Japan called *Fullmetal Alchemist*. Not exactly a triple A title from the SquareEnix crew, but it would still be nice to see this get a local release.

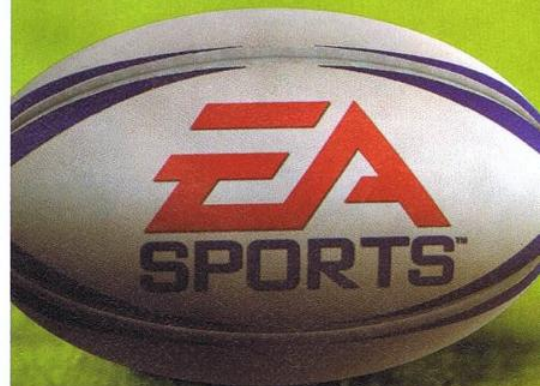
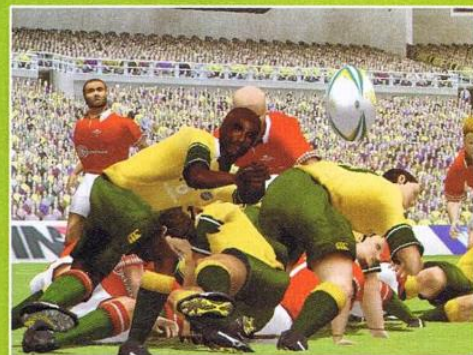
Trinity, the first person shooter to be published by Activision next year, has now officially been cancelled, along with a sequel to *Street Hoops* and another Shaun Palmer's *Pro Snowboarder* title. Oh well, we'll live...

Final Fantasy XII, the long-awaited continuation of the beloved series, has unfortunately slipped from its mid-2004 Japan release date to late 2004 or possibly even an early 2005 Japan release, meaning (based on the previous FF games and their PAL release dates) we won't see it here in Aus until either late 2005 or early 2006! Arggh!

Nintendo has already shipped approximately 5 million copies of *Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire* in Japan. Zounds!

Rockstar have confirmed that a brand new *Grand Theft Auto* game (will we possibly see *San Andreas* as predicted?) will be released for the PlayStation 2 at the end of 2004. Meanwhile, we're waiting for the Xbox *GTA* double pack to be released locally...

PASSION



EXCLUSIVE TO THE...

PlayStation 2



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FINAL FANTASY X-2

All-female lead characters. Faster battles. Outfits that act as job classes. Mission based adventure. A true sequel. Hyper travelled to Tokyo, Japan to meet up with the Division One Development Team at SquareEnix HQ to talk about Final Fantasy X-2 – the first Final Fantasy game to revisit a previously told story – to get the low down on what inspired this unusual experiment.

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: RPG / **PLAYERS:** 1 /
DEVELOPER: SquareEnix
AVAILABLE: 2004 /



HYPER: Was it the director's idea to make a sequel, or was it the scenario writer's idea to make a sequel — to do more with the story?

NK: We had no intention of making a sequel to Final Fantasy X in the first place. Final Fantasy X International was released in Japan, which had a bonus disc called the Eternal Calm, which featured a really short episode concerning Yuna and what happened after she defeated Sin. But around that time the company asked if we could make a sequel to FFX, and that's when we started moving — thinking of ideas, what we thought we should include in FFX-2.

HYPER: What's the biggest challenge with making a sequel and not a stand-alone Final Fantasy?

MT: The first challenge was making a direct sequel in the Final Fantasy series. And the biggest challenge was how to drastically change the game system and the atmosphere within the Final Fantasy series. Compared, for example, to other game titles — sequels to a certain series tend to be similar (in the battle systems, and the menus for example), so the biggest challenge was how to drastically change that and offer something different.

HYPER: Why did you decide to do something completely different from the typical Final Fantasy style with this sequel?

MT: First of all, it's not completely different. We reused the engine, graphics and maps from FFX, so we had ample time to think of the game and the scenario systems that we wanted to include — the most obvious result is that we have the mission based system in FFX-2. We felt compelled to make the change from FFX. Since it was a first sequel in the FF series, we didn't want to make it the same system as FFX, because then that would be very tedious for players to play, let alone tedious for us as developers to make.

[Yoshinori Kitase walks in, obviously late.]

HYPER: FFX was a finished product. Was there enough material to do X-2? Was it quite difficult to create the sequel in regards to a finished story?

NK: It was very hard. It was very difficult to find and create another story based on FFX without plot holes.



HYPER: For example?

NK: Well, since the big boss of FFX — Sin — was defeated, there were no big bosses to defeat anymore. That was one obvious challenge.

Well, we didn't have much problem in building the main flow of the story itself. But since there are a lot of guidebooks published out there in the public, there are minor details concerning each of the characters. We sometimes had to look up the published guidebooks to compare these minor details, so that the main scenario in FFX-2 doesn't clash with what's been published externally.

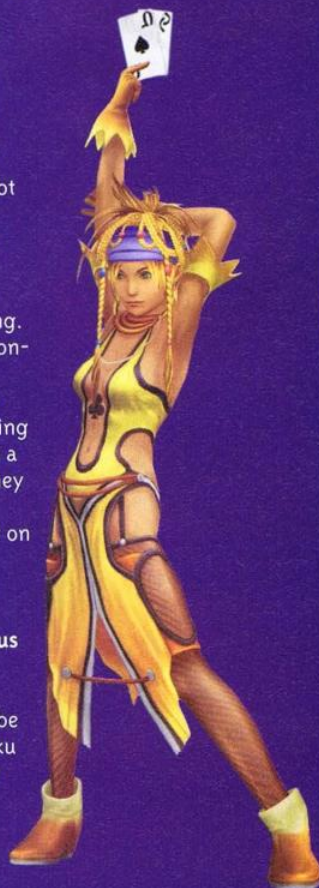
HYPER: Were you worried what fans would think, with FFX-2 being so different from FFX?

MT: In making FFX-2, we read comments from lots of the Final Fantasy fansites. One of the main criticisms that the Final Fantasy series has been receiving is the linear structure of the events and scenarios. Players haven't had a lot of freedom to do what whatever they wish — there was always one linear scenario for the main characters that the player had to follow in order to get to the ending. With FFX-2, we adopted the mission-based system, where players are able to choose whichever mission they want to clear. This is something that the fans have been dropping a lot of hints about — how happy they would be if there was a lot more freedom in FFX-2. So we took that on board as a challenge for FFX-2.

HYPER: One of the obvious differences with FFX-2 is the focus on female characters. What brought you to that decision?

YK: We thought the guys would be happy — being able to watch Rikku and Yuna and Paine change their dresses.

In Japan, our strongest response came from females,



Division One Development Team members present:

[left] Motomu Toriyama — Director, gives direction to the entire team, but his main concern is the event section of FFX-2.

[middle] Yoshinori Kitase — Producer, worked on all Final Fantasies since FFV.

[right] Nojima Kazushige — Scenario Writer, wrote the scenarios in FFX-2.

POWER



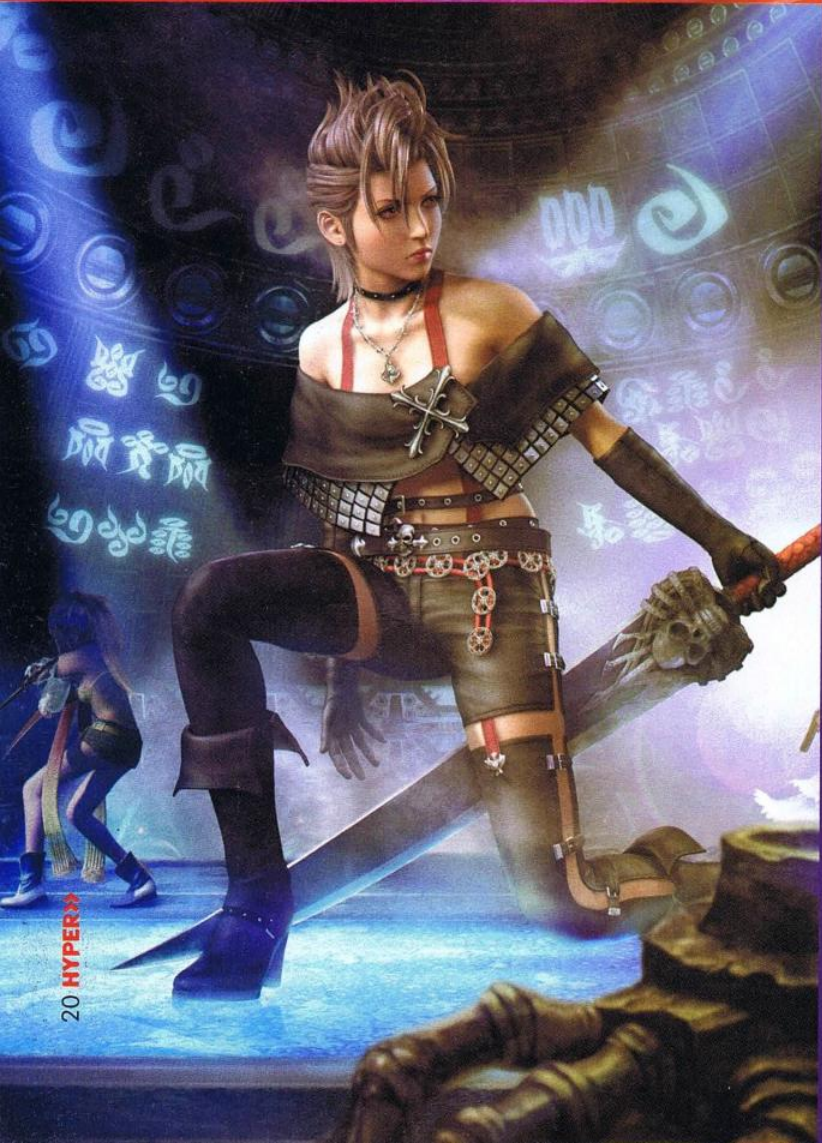
EXCLUSIVE TO THE...

PlayStation 2

EA
SPORTS
RUGBY
2004

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especially girls from 10-15 years of age. We had a contest so that people out there as to what dress spheres they could add into FFX-2, and we were inundated with responses. We were very happy, of course, though not surprisingly the guys didn't get involved in that aspect as much.

HYPER: And the male reaction in Japan?

YK: We had very positive reactions from the public, there were no negatives. Japanese audiences accepted and enjoyed the drastic changes found in FFX-2. Hollywood — with the recent trend in films with strong lead characters — has facilitated greater acceptance and appreciation of female leads.

HYPER: Final Fantasy games are usually quite heavy — FFX-2 looks like a much lighter game, and it looks like you had more fun with it. How did this come to be?

YK: Whenever we start a new project, we're always told from up above that we shouldn't be restrained just because Final Fantasy has been presented in a certain way. Over the years, players have developed a sense of what FF is — and if it goes in a different direction from what they're used to or what they expect, then they're really disappointed.

We feel that, as game producers and as creators, we should be able to have the freedom to do what we want, and be free from all of the restraints that the users pressure us into. In a sense, we wanted to express that with FFX-2: that we have the freedom and that we are able to change the Final Fantasy series despite the restraints that we have. But if you look at the game, there are many similarities with past Final Fantasy titles. We wanted to show that in context, we were able to change the FF series, show it from a different perspective, give it a different atmosphere.

HYPER: How challenging was it to develop the open-ended nature of FFX-2 as compared to the previous, more linear Final Fantasys?

NK: Although FFX-2 is considered a free game where players are able to go to any location or clear any mission at the same time, it's divided into five chapters. It was harder to program than FFX, but we

didn't have too much trouble doing that. Since it was a free system, we had to provide a lot of scenarios so that players can make their own decisions throughout the game. So the real challenge was generating all those missions.

HYPER: Freedom seems to be the main theme of FFX-2. What do you believe is the main theme of FFX-2? What is the purpose of Yuna in FFX-2?

YK: Well, the main theme of FFX-2 is actually change. The freedom that the players encounter in FFX-2 is one of the changes that we wanted to show, compared to FFX. At the end of FFX, we see that Yuna has changed the world of Spira — in FFX-2, its two years after the downfall of Sin. We see that the whole of Spira has changed. The characters are changing — or they're trying to change, adapting to the changing environment around them. So although many things have changed — the menu system, the battle system — many things have also remained constant due to the staff's desire to keep things in the spirit of Final Fantasy. So FFX-2 is a direct result of all of this.

HYPER: Give us an example of how Yuna has changed since FFX.

YK: In FFX, Yuna was someone who sacrificed herself for other people. Everything was for the people, for Spira. In FFX-2 she finally comes to the realisation that she wants to live life on her own. While she has that desire, there are certain characteristics about her — like in FFX, whenever she saw someone in trouble, she just had to help them out — holding her back. In order to put a stop to that, along with the proposal from her friend Rikku to join the sphere hunter gang in FFX-2, she's changed her physical appearance so that she could start off fresh, to find her own self and to enjoy life. That's where the journey

>>> IN FFX-2 SHE FINALLY COMES TO THE REALISATION THAT SHE WANTS TO LIVE LIFE ON HER OWN



starts. And that's why she changes the way she dresses.

HYPER: You seem to have successfully created three lead female characters, which is a rare thing in this industry. Were there any problems with developing the three lead female characters?

MT: Since the clear majority of the staff involved in the making of FFX-2 were all males, in their mid-thirties, they always had the worry of whether they would be able to create a game focused around female characters, but on many occasions they asked for advice from the opposite sex and other female staffers.

HYPER: What kind of advice?

YK: They were very helpful [laughs all round]. They often criticised certain aspects of the dress sphere system and the outfits – that they were too sexy. They also criticised many aspects of the scenarios – that girls don't think or act like that.

HYPER: Final Fantasy X was a very long game. Did you consider shortening FFX-2 or were there pressures to make this another epic adventure?

YK: In FFX-2, players are allowed to select missions. If they select only the missions that have to be cleared to finish the game, then it's about half the size of FFX. But if players choose to explore the world, then it's very much larger than FFX.

HYPER: A bit more of a fun question: which Final Fantasy is your favourite and why?

YK: My favourite was Final Fantasy VII. The task of developing a Final Fantasy on a new platform left a very strong impression. All that potential at the time was exciting!

NK: FFXVII left a strong impression because it was my first FF. But my favourite is the one that was universally disliked: FFXVIII. I'd like to do something about that – but it's already been released!

MT: Final Fantasy VII also left a strong impression [laughter]. But FFX was my favourite – with the addition of voices, and the new camera angles were really dramatic. I loved it.

HYPER: Which of the three leads in FFX-2 is your favourite and which is your favourite outfit?



YK: Yuna as the gunner.

NK: Paine as the warrior.

MT: Rikku as the Black Mage, since she has a mini-skirt on, and since that battle pose/clothes change is so cute.

HYPER: Was Kitase involved in casting the English voices?

YK: Toriyama was involved in some of the selection of the English voice actors. But there wasn't much work needed there because all of the recurring characters are voiced by the same actors as in FFX.

HYPER: Are there any cool extras or features in the PAL release that aren't in the Japanese version?

MT: There are no additional bosses or content – but the lip-synching has been enhanced, and all the movie scenes have been enhanced too.

HYPER: Any plans for FFX-3? Could this become a long running Final Fantasy X series?

YK: We're not thinking about it at this point.

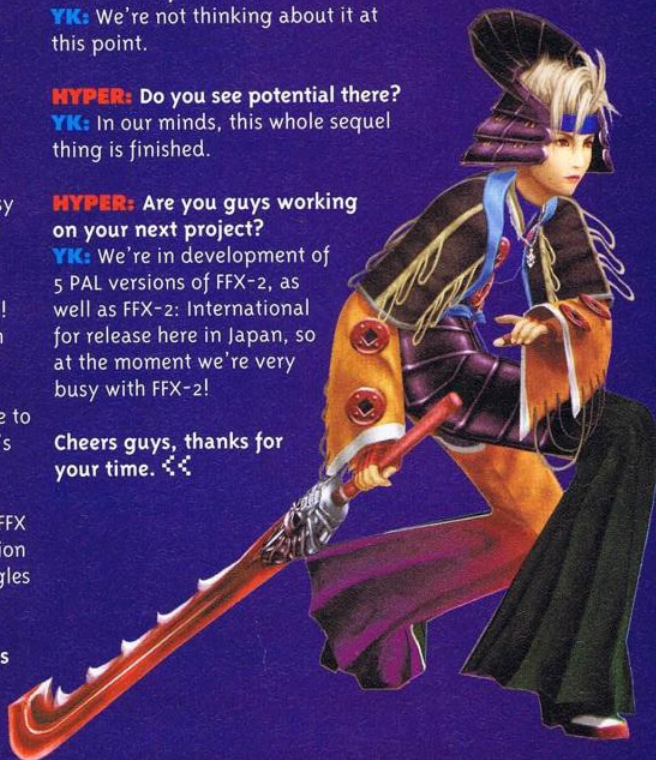
HYPER: Do you see potential there?

YK: In our minds, this whole sequel thing is finished.

HYPER: Are you guys working on your next project?

YK: We're in development of 5 PAL versions of FFX-2, as well as FFX-2: International for release here in Japan, so at the moment we're very busy with FFX-2!

Cheers guys, thanks for your time. <<

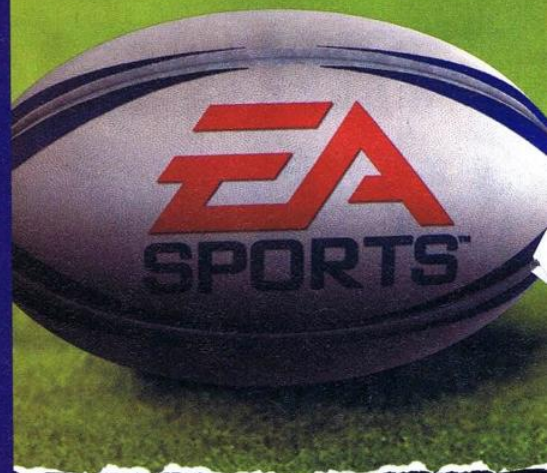


PRIDE



[above] One of the main story threads concerns the rise of a new faction on Spira called the Youth League, led by Nooj (that's him on the left with the rifle).

[below] New girl Paine as a Samurai. Other Dress Spheres include Dark Gunner, Animal Trainer and Gambler.



EXCLUSIVE TO THE...

PlayStation 2



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TRIBES VENGEANCE

Throw a rock into the air and when it falls there's a good chance it will land on a games journalist who will tell you that Tribes and Tribes 2 are great games - it's a well known fact. It's also a well-known fact that the Tribes series thus far has been one of the most newbie-inaccessible games franchises to date, such is the level of dedication required to learn the ropes. If you've ever seen a game of Tribes running you'll be familiar with the action known as "skiing"; sliding down the side of mountains to gain the speed necessary to assault the enemy's base or achieve higher, longer jumps. Whilst the players make it look easy, skiing in Tribes is much like skiing in the real world - the pros make it look easy but for the rest of us it takes some time to work out the fine details. This is perhaps the reason why Tribes never hit the popularity of the likes of Quake 3 or Unreal Tournament.

22 HYPER >> ONE OF THE SCARIEST

Even more interesting than the fact that a new Tribes game is being made is the fact that it's being made by Irrational Games, the Australian

based developer responsible for Freedom Force and System Shock 2 amongst others. Aside from giving Hyper a little jingoistic pride, the idea of Irrational Games doing a game set in the Tribes universe is a brave and controversial choice indeed. Irrational are known primarily for their strong plots and single player games, things not usually found in Tribes. Up until now the plot of the shooters could be best described as there being two sides, both of which are heavily armed and aren't too fond of each other. That's it, more of an excuse for action than any real plot. It comes as a real surprise then to discover that Vengeance has a strong single player campaign (not simply a tutorial for multiplayer) with a script written by Ken Levine. The name may not be familiar to most of you but rest assured it's something to get excited about - Ken Levine is the genius behind the script of System Shock 2, one of the scariest and best plotted/paced games of all time.

INTO A JUMP PACK

In the single player game, players will initially take control of a young

female warrior and sports star, struggling against an agency responsible for the death of her family. In a decidedly compelling move, Tribes Vengeance is set to present its action in a chronologically non-linear way with players jumping through time periods and settings, playing different characters at various ages. One example we were given of this creative spin on time is a flashback mission in which the main character

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCM / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: FPS / **PLAYERS:** 1-Multi / **DEVELOPER:** Irrational Games
AVAILABLE: 2004 /

WOW-O-METER

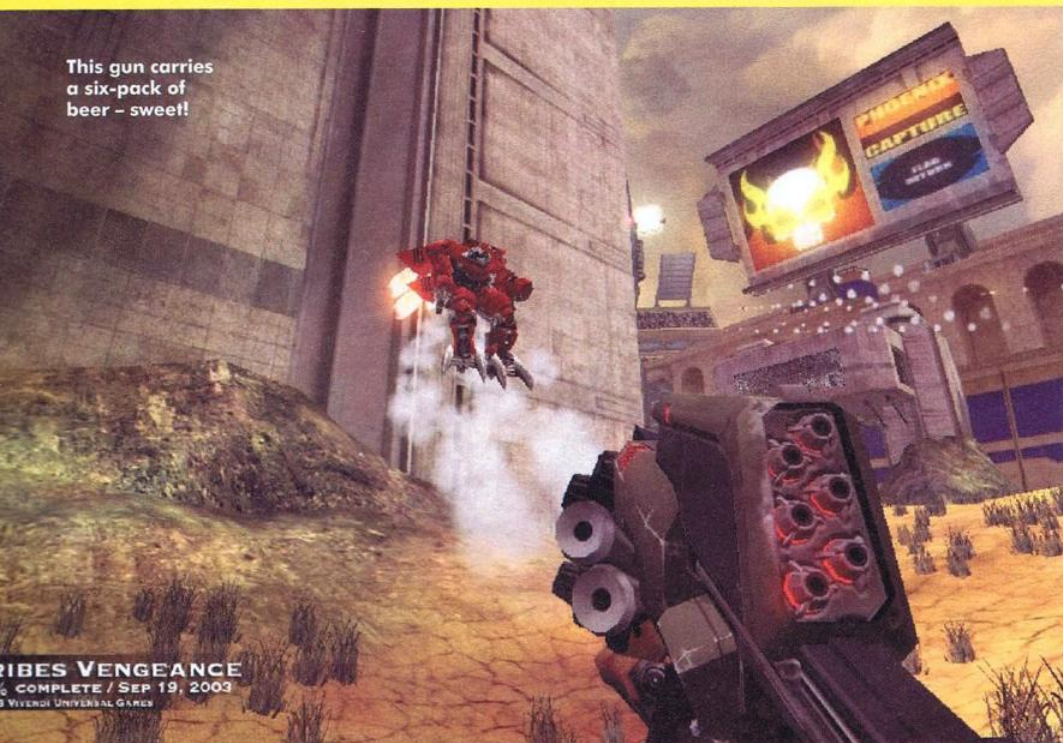


WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

We suspect that it will probably happen, but what about console versions?



This gun carries a six-pack of beer - sweet!



TRIBES VENGEANCE
COMPLETE / SEP 19, 2003
UNIVERSAL GAMES



remembers the death of her parents. Players will play through the level as a five-year old version of the character, incapable of doing anything aside from run and hide until a loyal retainer straps her into a jump pack, a piece of equipment synonymous with Tribes. Due to the fact that the child is five and the pack is set for someone much bigger and therefore heavier, flying in this level is set to be a new and challenging task.

On the multiplayer front, Tribes Vengeance looks like a whole new ballgame as well. Gone are the huge and rather dull outdoor maps typical of Tribes 2, replaced instead by a variety of smaller (though still quite large) and varied maps with settings ranging from tundra to cave systems to ruined cities or sports arenas. Online/LAN play is

set to support 32 players, a number that may sound a little small in today's 64 player revolution, but Irrational assures us it's been kept down to 32 players as a maximum so they can create maps that both small and large numbers of players can have fun on.

What we've seen so far of the Unreal powered game looks absolutely stunning, with beautiful textures and the bones of some really impressive animations. Whether or not Vengeance will be able to bring what is essentially a niche shooter out into the public eye remains to be seen but we look forward to finding out when the game is released mid 2004.



>> GONE ARE THE HUGE AND RATHER DULL OUTDOOR MAPS TYPICAL OF TRIBES 2

PURE RUGBY

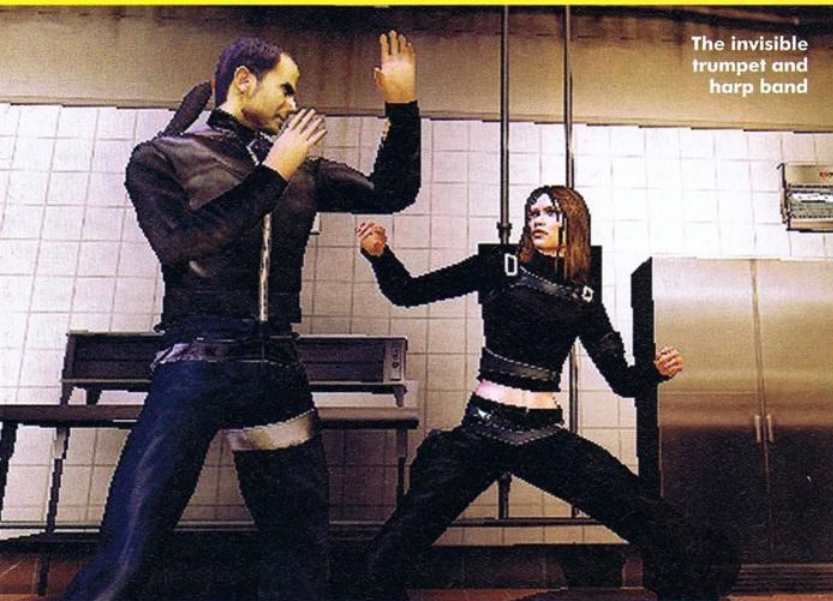


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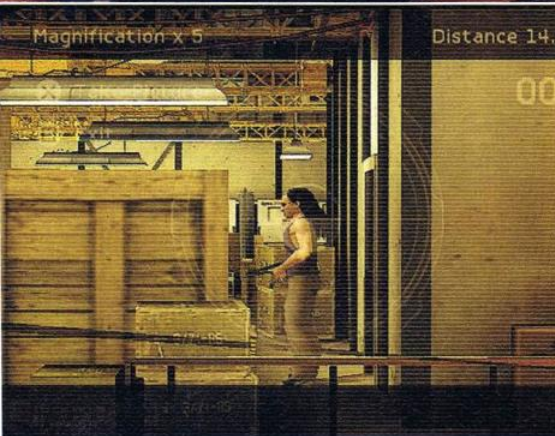
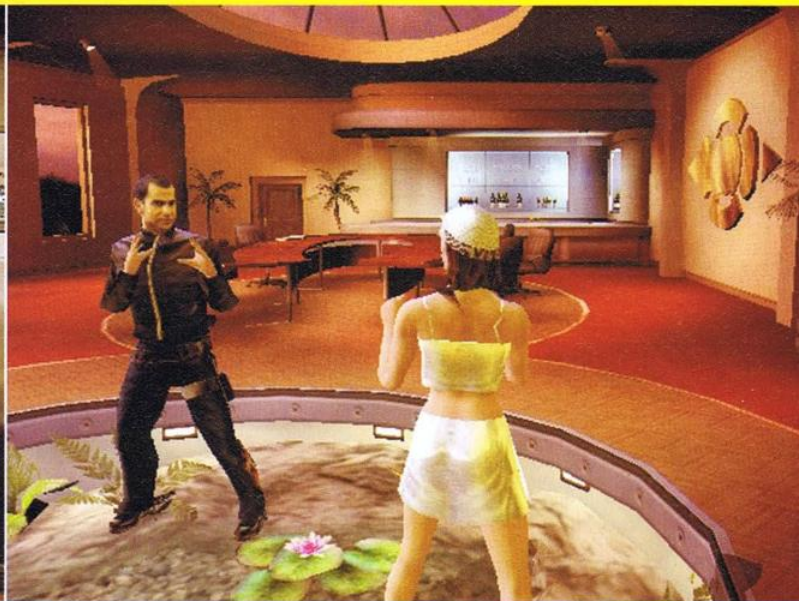


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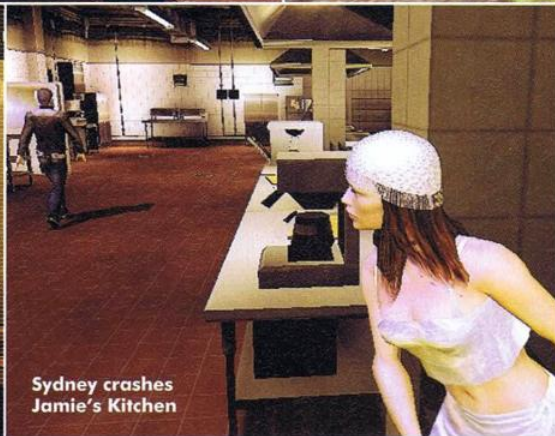


The invisible trumpet and harp band

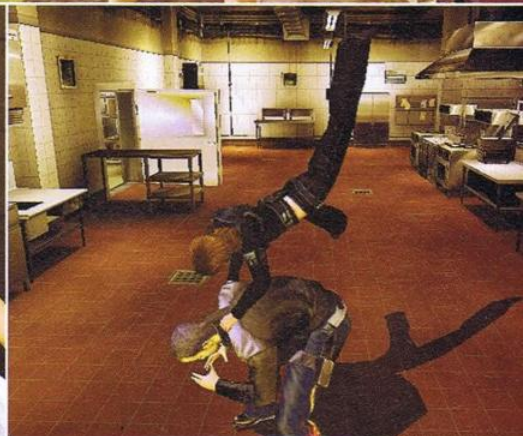


Magnification x 5

Distance 14.00



Sydney crashes Jamie's Kitchen



ALIAS

☞ We all know that the transition from TV to game is never a particularly easy one but every now and then a show comes along that captures the imagination of the viewing public. In recent years we've had the phenomenal success of *Buffy*, the cult addiction to *Dark Angel* and now *Alias* is tearing up our screens and doing more than its part in winning the ratings war. Each of the shows has a number of things in common - they all feature smoking hot women kicking a crapload of arse, with themes of loss, regret, love and redemption. They're also now all games.

QUASI-MYSTICAL WIDGET

This is where the similarities end, as the first *Buffy* game was a minor triumph in third person action, whereas the less said about the dull *Dark Angel* the better. Although there is obviously a lot of work to go on the *Alias* game from the code we have seen, it shows the potential to be one of the good ones.

As could be expected, players will take the role of Sydney Bristow, 20-something undercover agent working for the CIA. The game appears to take

place some time in the second season after the fall of SD6 with Syd tracking down the escaped Sloane and yet another Rambaldi device. For those of you not familiar with the series, she's after the bad guy and a quasi-mystical widget that may have the power to do something really nasty.

Also like the show, this single player game will see players jetting around the world to such locales as Saudi Arabia, Romania, Rio de Janeiro, Hong Kong and Monte Carlo.

CHOKO THEM

Although hand-to-hand fighting plays a role in both the game and TV show, stealth and the effective use of gadgets will also play a major role. Although it seems likely that players will be able to fight their way through most of the levels, Syd can also sneak, make costume changes, and perform a number of different stealth takedowns, including the now familiar neck break. You'll even be able to drop from a height to take out enemies or choke them with their own weapons.

As far as combat goes, *Alias* will feature a number of simple combos as well as a number of disarms.

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GBC / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure /
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Acclaim
Cheltenham / AVAILABLE: Early 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

Jennifer Garner deliver the review code to us personally.

Much of the environment should be interactive so you should never have a problem finding a weapon either.

Although the graphics we saw were yet to be finalised, they do feature some excellent animations and faces. All of the major characters are voices by the actors from the series and it's sounding pretty good so far. One interesting feature of the graphics engine is the use of split screens to show Syd's current position as well as approaching enemies or plot specific events. At the current stage of development there do seem to be some clipping and camera problems, but those should be cleared up by the time the game is released. <<<



SIERRA ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

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THE PRELUDE TO THE LORD OF THE RINGS™

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THE ADVENTURE BEGINS THIS CHRISTMAS

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OFFICIAL GAME
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COMING
DECEMBER 4TH



DONKEY KONGA

When we heard Nintendo were teaming up with Namco to produce a new Donkey Kong game for GameCube, we didn't expect... this. Not that we were really that disappointed — or surprised — but it would have been fantastic to get a new Donkey Kong platformer, maybe even featuring Mario, like the good old days. Ah well, we can put those dreams aside for now and take a look at Donkey Konga, the latest in a long line of very popular "rhythm" games.

PAN! PAN!

Ever since Donkey Kong Country on the SNES, Donkey Kong has been imbued with a new-found personality. He's gone from the grumpy boss monster to the lovable crazy, Homer Simpson-esque oaf who really has a heart of gold, or bananas, if that's more valuable to apes. Slapping his big goofy grin on this game gives it a certain level of charm, and

we're sure we wouldn't be quite as interested if it was called Princess Peach's Percussion Party or something along those lines. Just look at the screenshots... this game is going to let you really monkey around like a true chimp. Whoo hoo! With its unique bongo-drum controller peripheral, Donkey Konga will not only make you have a laugh whilst you're playing it, but your friends can sit back and laugh at you at the same time. Just don't believe them when they say they're laughing "with" you. It'll be their turn eventually, so start warming up your gorilla jokes.

As is the case with most rhythm games, the idea is to slap the bongos in time to the shapes passing across the screen, as accompaniment to some jungle grooves straight from the mind of some wacky Japanese composer. Although we suspect the PAL version will have a few licensed pop tunes. Maybe you'll be slapping away to Britney Spears... oh geez, let me rephrase that...

BONGA! BONGA!

Up to four players will be able to take part in the mayhem, which certainly earmarks Donkey Konga as a potential party game masterpiece. But if banging away on a small set of plastic bongos (hey, why didn't they call it Donkey Bonga?) doesn't really go the distance for you, then you'll be relieved to know that the music games are also broken up by crazy little Donkey Kong mini-games. If you remember the vine-swinging game from Ape Escape, then you'll have an idea of what you can expect from this other ape-inspired game.

Expect to see appearances from all our Kong friends; Diddy Kong, Tiny Kong, Cranky Kong, Lanky Kong, Chunky Kong, King Kong (okay we put that one in)... We just hope that the timeless Donkey Kong Rap from Donkey Kong 64 is one of the songs in the game to play the bongos to. If not, then the Hyper crew will be utterly devastated. Well, not really. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX GCN / PC

DETAILS

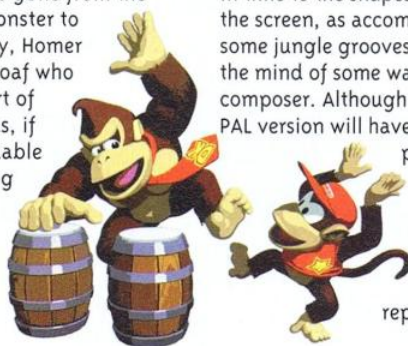
CATEGORY: Rhythm / PLAYERS: 1-4 / DEVELOPER: Namco AVAILABLE: 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

How will four player work with only one bongo peripheral? Let's hope they provide support for the standard controller...





Jack slingshots one of his boogers

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

☞ If you caught Tim Burton's animated treat, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, back in 1993, then you'd know of the gangly Jack Skellington and his bid to reclaim Halloweentown. The movie featured fantastic animation (for its time) and a delightful sense of humour, both of which we pray have been captured in this videogame conversion that's coming ten years after the fact.

Naturally, you play as Jack the pumpkin king and wield magic against all sorts of kooky and spooky enemies in this atmospheric action adventure. The game certainly has a *Medievil* (PSone)/*Maximo* (PS2) flavour, complete with all the Tim Burton style twisted architecture, and we can only hope the game has the same amount of creative energy

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 XBOX GCN PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure /

PLAYERS: 1 /

DEVELOPER: Capcom /

AVAILABLE: 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



invested in it as the film did. There's no word yet on whether any of the voice talent will return, and we're a little unsure whether the game will feature the same kind of musical numbers as the film did, but this is one to look forward to for sure.



SINGLES: FLIRT UP YOUR LIFE

☞ Ever wanted to play a version of the Sims that was all about simply getting jiggy with your housemate(s)? Always wanted Electronic Arts to release another expansion pack such as "The Sims: Sex Escapades"? Well, then this Sims clone that's coming next year is the game for you. Singles is being developed over in Germany where they're obviously more comfortable with allowing digital companions to get on with a bit of rumpy-pumpy.

Yes, the aim with Singles is to develop a healthy relationship between male and female housemates to the point where they strip off and get busy between the sheets. Of course, there will be hours and hours of managing their bathroom and

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 XBOX GCN PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Horny sim /

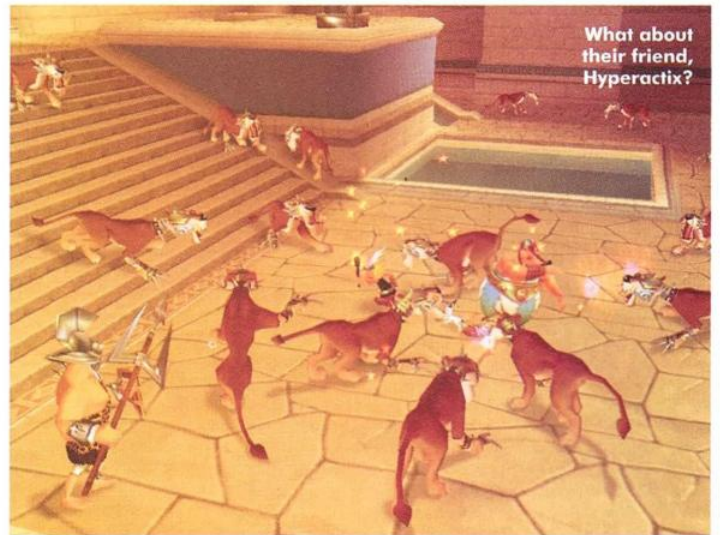
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Rotobee /

AVAILABLE: 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



eating habits first... No doubt this game will be hugely popular with Sims fans who are tired with the overtly family-oriented EA game.



What about their friend, Hyperactix?

ASTERIX & OBELIX XXL

☞ Many a school library lunchtime was wasted reading Asterix & Obelix comics, and we can now look forward to many a night at home on the couch wasted playing them in this upcoming videogame. Take on over 70 romans at once as you control both Asterix and Obelix in this wacky adventure based on the comic books (lovingly created by Goscinny and Uderzo) over 6 huge levels. Get your hands on a magic potion and you'll have the power to knock back whole legions of soldiers, making for some pretty dynamic beat 'em up challenges.

Hopefully the hilarious cast of characters from the comics will make an appearance, including Geriatrix, Fulliautomatix, Getafix,

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 XBOX GCN PC

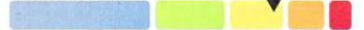
DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action / PLAYERS: 1-2 /

PUBLISHER: Atari /

AVAILABLE: Early 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



Vitalstatistix, Cacofonix, Unhygienix and so on (and no we're not making those names up). Visually, they've really nailed the look of the characters, and the game seems to have that vibrant, colourful charm of the comic. We're really looking forward to this one, and praying it won't suck.

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE: INFERNAL CRUSADE

Knights of the Temple — also once known as the working title, Templar — is a title in development by Swedish studio, Starbreeze. This baby is all about the 12th century crusades from which many a conspiracy theory has emerged — were the Knights Templar really protecting the Holy Grail?

In this game at least, you are Paul de Raque, Knight of the Temple, as you set out on a holy crusade across a forbidding, medieval Europe to join your order in the Holy Land. Armed with your sword, axe, bow and shield, you must fight with all your strength to complete your journey, for saving the future of the world is your ultimate goal. Stopping an evil bishop who is intent on opening a gateway to Hell is at the top of your list of things to do, but we're sure you'll be waylaid with other duties across the 25 levels. Realistic medieval sword fighting has been promised, so you can look forward to some dirty fighting amongst the Divine powers and special effects.

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action/Adventure /
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Starbreeze /
AVAILABLE: TBA /

WOW-O-METER



Come on, it's
only a flesh
wound!



play with yourself...



Redbull gives you wings... and acne

SHINING SOUL II

The Game Boy Advance is finally delivering all those 16-bit style Action RPGs that many gamers hypothesised would end up on the handheld system. Just take a look at our Sword of Mana review this issue for starters, and now take a look at Shining Soul II... This is a continuation of the Atlus RPG that debuted on the GBA last year. Whilst the first instalment wasn't the greatest of games, this sequel looks far more promising.

Now there are eight character classes, with the four new jobs being Priestess, Dark Wizard, Ninja or Brawler, making for far more interesting combinations of characters and skills. There's also a brand-new co-operative mode, allowing you to play the game with a friend. The link-up also allows for trading items, weapons and armour and cool colosseum battles against your mates. There will also

AVAILABLE ON:

GBA N-GAGE

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action RPG / **PLAYERS:** 1-2 / **DEVELOPER:** Atlus / **AVAILABLE:** TBA /

WOW-O-METER



be proper side quests in Shining Soul II to allow for the discovery of rare items and to extend the life of the game. We're pretty keen to see this one turn out well.



WHIPLASH

The game formerly known as Prince... er sorry, Chain Gang, is now going by the wacky title, Whiplash. The story revolves around two animals (Spanx the weasel and Redmond the rabbit) who are chained together and attempting to escape from a laboratory where they're due to be experimented on.

As we all know, animal testing is bad, but thankfully a videogame about it might be lots of fun. The fun part being that you'll get to rain grief upon the nasty scientists in sick and twisted ways. Spanx even gets through the game using Redmond as his weapon (attached to his wrist with a chain, no less) by shoving him down toilets, dousing him in toxic fluid and freezing him

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action/Platformer / **PLAYERS:** 1 / **DEVELOPER:** Crystal Dynamics / **AVAILABLE:** TBA /

WOW-O-METER



into a cube so you can smash at enemies. Enemies such as the Hazmats, Mad Scientists, and even a rather dodgy-looking cafeteria lady. Whiplash looks inventive, funny and sports some very polished comic-book style presentation. Hopefully we'll get some hands-on time with it soon.



Not a Citroen Xsara WRC in sight...

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

Following in the footsteps (or is that tyre tracks?) of Colin McRae, comes Richard Burns Rally, a new rally sim on the way from brit developers, SCI. Richard Burns, is of course, the world champion and has been Britain's top driver for the past three seasons. In the game, you'll start out in Rally school and get trained by Richard and his co-driver in all the skills you'll need to go out there and become the world champion yourself.

The aim of this game seems to be to offer a truly realistic simulation, including spectators who will even help roll your car over should you flip your four-wheels near a crowd! Cars featured will include the Peugeot 206, Citroen Xsara T4 and Subaru Impreza 2003. There will

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Rally sim / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 / **DEVELOPER:** SCI / **AVAILABLE:** TBA /

WOW-O-METER



also be a host of official circuits from Japan to Finland and the French Alps.

SCI seem to be pretty confident, as they promise the most realistic driving physics yet, and "unprecedented photo-realistic graphical quality". We'll see!

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 03/04

Whilst it didn't arrive in time for a review this issue, the routine yearly update to the Championship Manager football management series should be hitting shops by the time you're reading this. 03/04 is quite an important update to the series, after CM4 introduced the controversial 2D match engine, allowing you to watch your team pass the ball around. At release, CM4 was a horridly buggy mess, though still quite the entrancing game that it is. After 5 patches, we're now staring at the super-duper 03/04 release – which is sold as a separate entity – with more than just a handful of glitch fixes and menu nips and tucks. 03/04 introduces a completely revamped training screen, which now appears to be far more intuitive and user-friendly; more interactions with the players and media (such as declaring your club's interest in a certain player and dealing with the fan and media reaction); player screens that now highlight which stats are increasing

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Sim / **PLAYERS:** 1-Multi / **DEVELOPER:** Sports Interactive / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

WOW-O-METER



due to training and much more, including a fully updated player roster. This should be it, folks. 03/04 should be the game we hoped CM4 was when it was released. Check it out – and a review next issue.



Looks like a spreadsheet, but it plays like heaven

Middlesbrough

0

0

Overview

Match Stats

Action Zones

Fixture Details

Date: Wednesday 31st March 2004 (Today)
Competition: English Premier Division
Venue: The Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough
Rules: No player restrictions
5 subs named, maximum 3 used
Weather Forecast: Wet 7°C
Arsenal News: Ashley Cole suspended



Middlesbrough Stats

Player Ratings

Latest Scores

Lauren traps the ball nicely



Z600 real satisfaction

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V-RALLY 2



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Jedi serve others rather than ruling over
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PASSING THROUGH UNSCATHED.

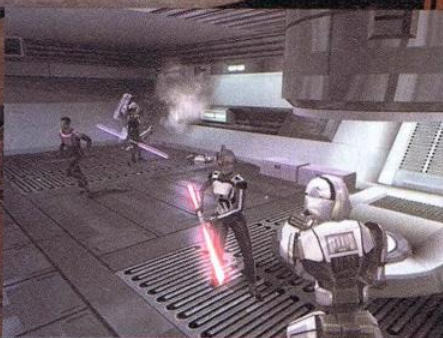
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The dark side is stronger than the light.

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RAA

OCCASION

>> CAM SHEA

RARE



The highlight of Hyper's recent excursion to France for X03 was undoubtedly talking to Ken Lobb and James Veevaert. Although not working within Rare, Ken has a ten-year history with the company, having come to Microsoft from Nintendo where he oversaw all of Rare's projects. He is now the Studio Manager of StudioX, which encompasses Rare, Lionhead, the teams working on PGR2 and Rallisport Challenge 2 and Oddworld. James too has unique insight into the workings of the company, liaising exclusively with Rare on all their Xbox titles. So, what's up with Rare now that they've moved onto Xbox development? Let's find out...



HYPER: You've seen Rare change as a development studio over a long period of time — ten years. How has their focus changed now that they're working on Xbox? What are the differences inside the company?

Ken Lobb: My impression is that there's none. At Nintendo we allowed Rare to run very independently. They made the games they wanted to make, literally we didn't tell them to do anything. We never asked them to make a certain type of game, or certain types of changes beyond the obvious stuff. At Microsoft we've given them that same freedom. It was part of their interest during the acquisition — it was very important to them, that they could remain as Rare, not become Microsoft — a one time Rare group of guys. They're where they've always been; they make the games the way they want just like they always have.



[above] Word up! It's Kameo!



KAMEO

HYPHER: How hands on are the Stamper brothers within Rare these days?

Ken: Very.

HYPHER: They're still very much at the helm?

Ken: Oh yeah. And just as, if not more excited, than I've seen them in years. Over the last year or year and a half at Nintendo, when the option was coming up, they knew what was happening, so they started having to focus a little too much on business. And to them, their business is making great games, so when they're happiest is when they're not focusing on someone buying them! Y'know, they're focused on 'how do we make Ghoulies the best game it can be' and let's spend 120% of our time doing that. But right now they're very happy.

James Veevaert: There's been a real revitalisation within the studio itself and right now one of the things they're most excited about, along with Microsoft, is Xbox Live. So they've been extremely passionate about getting back into games, getting back into the technology in terms of where they think the console business is headed. And Xbox Live they've really determined as a key central point in terms of where games are headed. They're very excited. In fact, all our conversations with Chris

Stamper — it'll be, literally, 11pm UK time and he's calling me saying "oh, I was just trying this in this game, and it's amazing". The level of passion and the level of diving into the games they're doing now and how much time they're spending on Live is amazing. I guess because of broadband connections in the UK, he's always going back to the office to play until late into the night.

Ken: Yeah it's funny, I had to call him about a month ago and I get this kind of quick "can I call you right back?" Five minutes later he calls me back "sorry, I was playing Mech Assault"! He couldn't cut out on his teammates in the middle of a game.

HYPHER: Alright, well, I guess the obvious question is — what can you tell us about Perfect Dark?

Ken: Perfect Dark is in development. It was announced last year at Xoz. When it's time to see it you'll see it. When it's ready to be shown you guys'll see it. Rare like showing their game when it speaks for itself.

HYPHER: That's one of the things we respect about Rare actually. The fact that they are so secretive, and the fact that even when a game is well into development — if they're not happy with it, they'll pull the plug. It's very refreshing in this industry.

James: For all intents and purposes E3 was a real distraction for them, because the process a team goes through to pull a build together for show purposes is really challenging. They have to do a lot of things, cut a lot of corners and actually assemble a lot of items that they normally wouldn't do in terms of a normal development process, and so from their point of view both Kameo and Ghoulies — and even Conker for that matter — E3 was too early for them. They still complied to do it but if you see the evolution of where Ghoulies is now and you saw the video for Kameo last night, and when you hear more about Conker in the next few months you won't believe it — it's incredible. The level of progress and excitement, just like we've been able to watch from start to finish, and the changes that have taken place are just incredible.

HYPHER: Tell us a little more about the strengths of Kameo, and the evolution of the game throughout the development process.

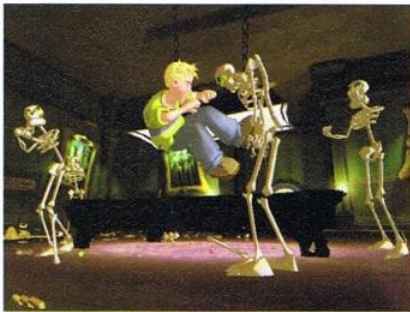
Ken: Well, by having the number of monsters they have in that game and the unique variants in their abilities, mixed with the idea that you can combine them... that's one of the cooler things about what's going on with Kameo. Besides the fact that each of the monsters all fight differently and that gives you

the ability to deal with different enemies in different ways.

James: Tim Stamper has been spending a great deal of time thinking about Kameo over the past couple of months. And one of the changes that you're going to find, when you hear more about the game is the fact that they're taking the level of monsters — that used to be just, an incredible amount, almost 100 in the game, and they've scaled it back, saying they want to have more concentration on this experience of the monsters in the game. Instead of going for a Pokémon-like experience, let's make it more of a concentrated action/adventure-like experience, where each of these monsters does more interesting things.

HYPHER: And are more integral to the gameplay...

James: Absolutely. So that way you can see the combinations, like leaping through a halfpipe then changing to an ice gorilla then something else, to perform a manoeuvre. So he's looked at that and said it's that moment to moment gameplay experience that's really going to be important to Kameo — how do we help drive that forward? And I think last night's premier video was a real result of that effort that's been coming together over the last couple of months. There's been just a



[above] Just like Lionel Ritchie – dancing on the skeleton. Oh wait, that was ceiling, wasn't it...

SIMPLE OLD SCHOOL GAMEPLAY TURNED INTO THIS INTRICATE PUZZLE, IN A WAY



GHOULIES

tremendous amount of buzz internally at Redmond and across the European offices about where Kameo's headed. Same thing for Grabbed by the Ghoules. It's the most recent evolution in terms of the game – and when you spend some time with it, you'll realise that the simplified gameplay mechanic you saw at E3 has really evolved to add a lot of things later on in the game that are really challenging. It's not just about going in running and punching, it's now about problem solving and finding 15 different ways to finish a room. Sometimes there's going to be things you have to do that you wouldn't necessarily think of – using enemies to fight enemies, using anti-power ups, figuring out delay tactics. It's no longer just about fighting.

Ken: Although it never really was. It's one of the reasons they like to hold stuff back. You take a game, especially like Ghoules, which is room-based, and you're not going to show 20 rooms at E3 because no one's going to get there. You have to show four or five, and in the end what was shown were two or three of the more simplistic rooms and then one that was maybe too hard because you haven't been trained yet at what you need to do to finish that room. But when you put them in order and you see the subtle way that Rare teaches you, then that's really when the

beauty of Ghoules comes out. There are a couple of rooms in particular in that game that just amaze me – the depth of what seems like such a simple situation. You're in a room, the doors are locked, there's a certain number of enemies that come in a couple of waves and a certain number of pick-ups and weapons lying around the room. And depending on what you do, you have one of the hardest things you've ever played all the way down to – a six year old would be able to finish it if you told them to do this, hit that guy, now do this and so on. That's what the genius of Ghoules is – kind of simple old school gameplay turned into this intricate puzzle, in a way. It gets really complex the further you get into it, where you have to use combinations of power-ups. You can't just rely on the mechanics of just fighting, fighting, fighting. Now it becomes problem solving. So it's a game that really educates the player in the process from start to finish. And you really feel like you've accomplished something when you finish it, and the storyline is great, the humour within the game is really fun. So it's a combination of all these elements, but the bottom line is that it's a Rare game. And that's the real jewel, plus it's their first game for Xbox.

James: Even from the designer's perspective, there's a trick to every room – a simplified way of figuring

it out. And once you get the solution you think 'of course, I should have thought of that'. It's that second level of intuition that you don't always have but you should have. The signature of a Rare product is that it's a game for all audiences, and you can play it in a number of different ways, and be challenged at very early levels and challenged at the very end levels. It's a game that families can play together – and for me that's the mark of a great game.

HYPER: Aside from personal experiences, how do you determine how a game will be received by different age groups?

James: Microsoft has usability testing facilities. It's really great, and that's one of the big benefits for Rare with Microsoft is the fact that we have the ability to test a game extensively and bring in groups of people to come in and play games and look at different aspects of the experience. So they brought in groups of kids and groups of adults, and we thought the kids were going to have a hard time. But what we got with the data was really similar, in terms of how kids attack the rooms and how adults attack the rooms. The rooms that adults were getting stuck in were the same that kids were getting stuck in. And the kids were actually

finding their way better, because as an adult you have a logical way of trying to process, whereas kids are so intuitive in terms of how they attack the game.

HYPER: How did the Microsoft deal affect the development of Ghoules and Kameo?

James: Both games have been in development for about a year and a half. Microsoft, as you know, acquired Rare in September 2002. Both Ghoules and Kameo were in development at that time. Both were in development for GameCube, but they pretty much scrapped most of the work that was being done for the GameCube and started over with Xbox development kits. So both products have been in progress since that time.

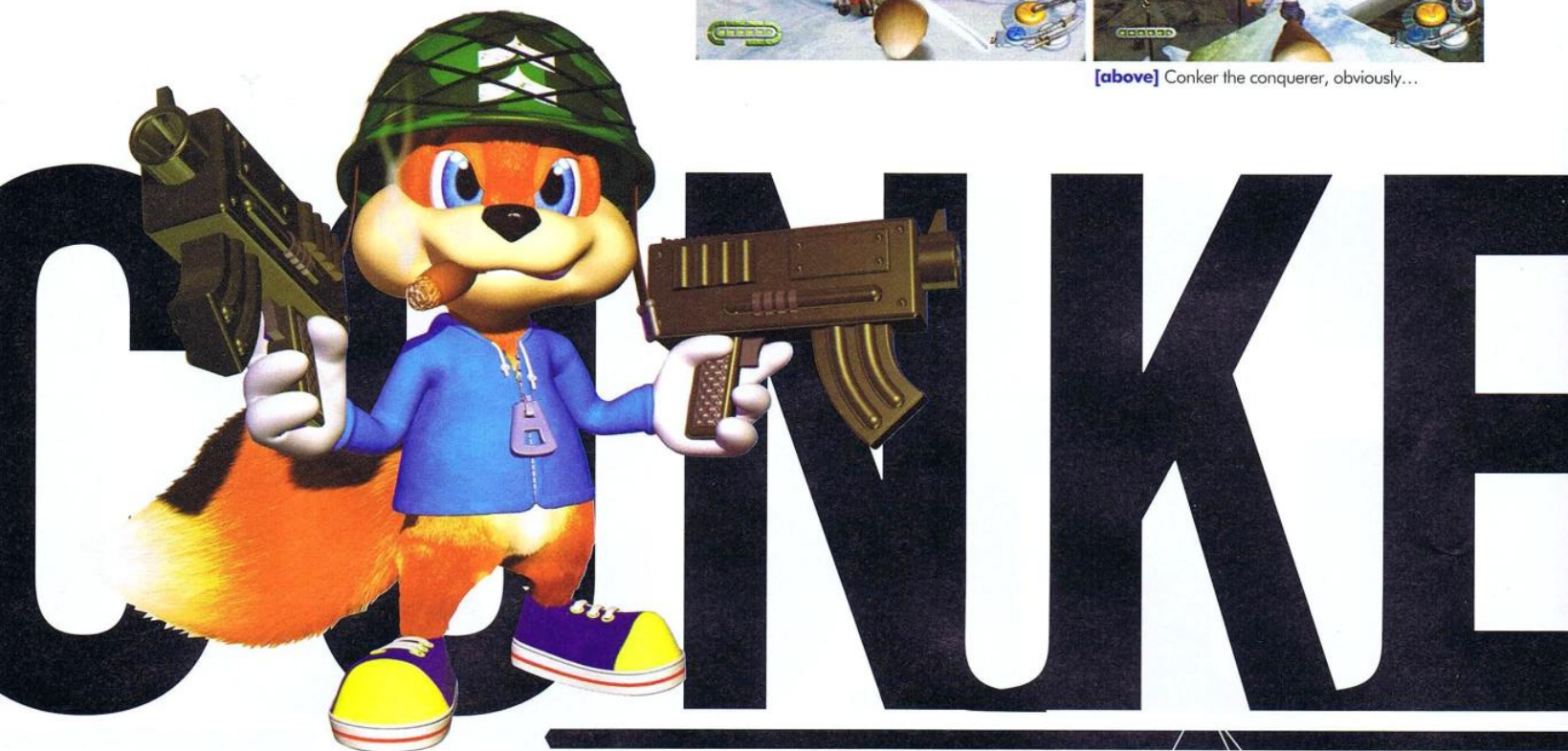
HYPER: How did Grabbed by the Ghoules come about?

James: Grabbed by the Ghoules is from the team that did Banjo Kazooie and the team that did Donkey Kong Country. The project leader at the time (at the end of making Banjo Kazooie) had been thinking – and strangely enough I talked to him about this. They looked at the American cartoon Scooby Doo and they thought this is really funny the way these characters move about, the way they interact. They saw several episodes where they were going

WHEN YOU SEE THE ARTWORK THAT'S BEING DONE FOR CONKER NOW, IT'S UNBELIEVABLE



[above] Conker the conquerer, obviously...



through a haunted mansion and liked the comical aspects of it. So they kicked around the idea how can we combine this young, fun approach yet add some adult elements into it to make it a little bit twisted, a little bit strange, a little bit Rare if you will. And so they started playing around with that idea and experimenting with a comical haunted house, yet at the same time having some really adult aspects to it. When you play Ghoulies you'll realise there's a lot of humour that's built in for adults, yet at the same time the graphic style really caters for young players. So they were trying to figure out a way of doing both things. So that was an idea that formulated around that team and they kept working with it and working with it and refining it. So it just evolved naturally into this product. You'll see when you play through the game if you actually go through and work through all the bonus challenges they have a special gallery book that will actually show you some of the unseen edited versions or unseen rooms that were actually never used in the game, which are really exciting. You get to watch the evolution of the game.

HYPHER: And how about Kameo?

James: That was an idea where they basically wanted to tell an epic fairy tale. They wanted to come up with a creative approach of - how do we

take this central character and create a new mechanic, yet at the same time make a game that's for all audiences?

They liked the concept of the Earth elements and thought about building monsters around it. What would that approach be like? So they kept experimenting artistically. The artwork in Kameo is phenomenal from my point of view. They wanted to build upon all the elements and see - wouldn't that be interesting if we drive the monsters based on the natural elements of the Earth. And so that's how that idea formulated. Then they started creating the fiction and the history behind Kameo.

HYPHER: Moving on to Conker. Why revisit this game? Is it because the Xbox has a slightly older demographic?

James: Well, there's a couple of things. Conker was developed towards the end of the N64's life right? So it wasn't necessarily the optimal time to release the game. The Conker team, when they looked at Xbox Live, like we were saying before, Xbox Live is really central to the Rare strategy of moving forward. So they thought Conker represented the first opportunity to take Live functionality and Live gameplay and take an IP that they already have, and really do something interesting with it. And Conker really does suit the current Xbox demographic, which is very

Halo-esque. The mature, multiplayer gaming audience, where it's very much about first person shooters and about action games. So Conker seemed to fit right down the middle of that, plus there was a lot of unedited and uncut - thus the name - gameplay content that we could include. Plus, when you see the artwork that's being done for Conker now, it's unbelievable. So they were able to go back, take a look at a lot of the art elements, rework them, add a bunch of details that weren't there before, and balance out and experiment with the multiplayer modes. And that's why you're not seeing anything about Conker right now. The team is so busy that they didn't want to cut away and make a build, because it would hurt the progress of what they're making right now. You'll hear more about it in the next couple of months and you'll see why they're taking the time doing what they're doing. With the new multiplayer modes - if you think about what's hot today in multiplayer gaming, Conker's absolutely going to encapsulate a great deal of that.

Ken: And Conker's single player game was genius. There were players that just dabbled in it, and never saw the Matrix scene or the Saving Private Ryan scene. So what we have is a team that's super passionate about making an online game. So we're able to make Conker 2, so to speak,

and have it be just online. But if you think of what a lot of people have done with online multiplayer games, what you end up with, is a big multiplayer game, but then when you play it by yourself, it's a big multiplayer game with bots. And this team is like - look, we have this great asset, which is Bad Fur Day, which not a lot of people played all the way through. I mean, it sold really well by most publisher's standards, but by Rare's standards it was, y'know, one seventh of Goldeneye. So they're like, rip it apart, whole new engine, all new art, and then throw in Bad Fur Day with some of the stuff that didn't make it in because of schedule or was cut out because of content. So if you've played Conker before - first of all it's gorgeous, controls better, runs faster and has some extra content you've missed. If you've never played it before and you're buying it because multiplayer is going to be so great, then here's a one player experience that's not just bots.

James: And everything about E3 is no longer relevant - we can tell you that. The entire look and feel of Conker has evolved since E3, and that's why you're going to be greatly surprised when you see it in the next couple of months!

HYPHER: Cool. Thanks for your time guys! <<

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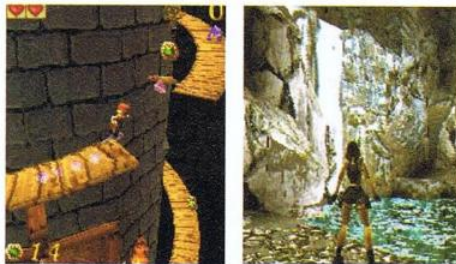
Brace yourselves gentle readers, as this review may be a rocky ride. Standing atop the page, you can expect to tumble down a mountain of criticism, but also catch air off kicker ramps of positivity. In other words, the rumours you've heard are true — the N-Gage isn't quite what we were hoping for, but by the same token, perhaps it's not quite the devil device that some have made it out to be. Let's take a ride.

ERRORS IN DESIGN

Starting out with aesthetics, there's no denying that this is a larger-than-average piece of equipment. Whether you like the look is up to you, but the good news is that it sits comfortably in the hand, is fairly light, and features an impressively responsive D-Pad.

Nokia have made some serious errors in design though. For starters, making the screen vertical rather than horizontal is a strange decision that defies the conventions of videogaming. Outside puzzle games and arcade ports, this could definitely be detrimental to gameplay. Compared to the GBA, the screen's quite small too. Then again, at least it's nice and sharp, with good contrast and colour representation.

The lack of shoulder buttons is also a missed opportunity, leaving you fumbling for buttons on the number pad in some games. Also odd is the placement of the phone speaker and receiver on the side of the unit, forcing you to hold it side on when making a call. This, unfortunately, results in looking like a dick. In fact, whenever I answer my N-Gage the people



[above, left to right] Pandemonium, yep that old game; Tomb Raider, again.

around me generally start laughing. Not a good sign.

Perhaps the most criminal design decision of all, however, is to force you to turn off the phone, take off the back of the unit and remove the battery in order to switch games. You then have to put the battery back, replace the back cover, boot the phone up (which is considerably longer than for most — a good thirty seconds) and go into the game. Not only does this waste almost two minutes of your time, but juggling batteries and flash cards on public transport would be a nightmare.

For a device designed largely for playing games, it also seems quite baffling to us that the N-Gage doesn't come with any games installed. We're not asking for anything too elaborate — just some small games to give us a feel for the unit before we shell out for actual games. The irony really is delicious — every mobile phone in the history of man comes with at least one crappy game already installed, yet the first phone designed primarily for



playing games doesn't.

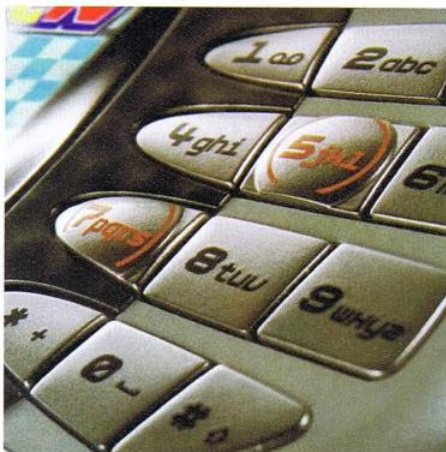
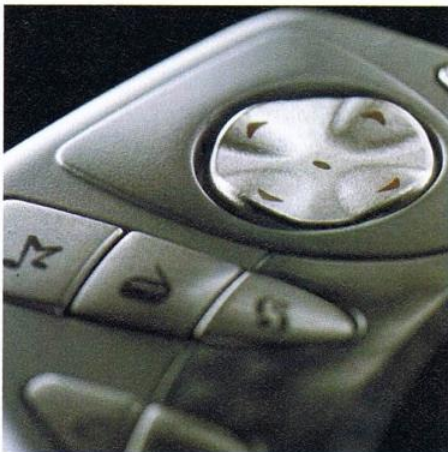
The N-Gage launched with about seven games, but as of going to press, Nokia were only able to get us three. Given the slaggings that many of the launch games received online we're left wondering whether they really didn't have any press copies... or if it was simply damage control. In any case, to test the unit we were given Sonic N, Tomb Raider and Pandemonium.

VISUALS AND PLAYABILITY

It's very clear that in comparison to all other mobile phones, the N-Gage is way ahead in terms of gaming. Both Pandemonium and Tomb Raider demonstrate competent 3D, and Sonic N shows that the system can move at a pretty decent rate in 2D too. In all, the N-Gage games remind us of first generation PSone titles... and not only because half the games are just that.

Whether you want to play these titles is another matter altogether. Pandemonium was always a poor man's Klonoa and really should have been left where it belongs — in the bargain bin. Tomb Raider's a little more debatable. It actually looks quite faithful to the PlayStation original, but the frame rate and convoluted controls (gee, shoulder buttons sure would come in handy!) don't help matters much.

[left] When you zoom in, it doesn't look so bad!





Sonic runs pretty nicely, but again, pales in comparison to newer efforts like Sonic Advance 2 on the GBA. It also highlights the restrictions of the screen ratio, with the default view being heavily letterboxed, so that you can see more of the course. Switching to the much prettier full screen mode sacrifices visibility, leaving you with a choice between visuals and playability. Damn.

It's rather amusing that Nokia have focused so heavily on pushing 3D gaming on their system, because until the hardware is powerful enough to do it properly, the games will always compare unfavourably to other gaming platforms. Nintendo's portable system is proof that people are still happy to play beautifully crafted 2D games, with a smattering of 3D on the side. Perhaps Nokia are now realising the same thing. Either that or they're lamenting that they didn't put a damn GPU in the thing.

If you already have an N-Gage, however, and are wondering which of the launch titles is worth getting, our advice (although based on limited play-time) would be Tony Hawk, thanks to its good wireless multiplayer options. Mind you, you'd need a friend with an N-Gage and the game too. Could be a tricky proposition.

JUGGLED AND RE-PLUGGED

In the realm of general functionality, there are a bunch of things that the N-Gage really has going

for it. For starters the range of ring tones that come with the phone are excellent. There are stacks of them, and the sound quality is quite decent. Also positive on the audio front is the included FM Radio tuner – the reception is excellent and the software is very user friendly, allowing you to auto tune, then name and save your favourite stations. For some reason, however, you can only activate the radio when the headphones are plugged in... even through from there you can switch to the external speaker.

Indeed, we suspect that Nokia are assuming that users are almost all going to use the included headphones. How else to explain the baffling piece of design that results in users looking like they're listening to a taco when they make a call? Mind you, if you're using the headphones you can add yet another thing to be unplugged, juggled and re-plugged when you want to change games.

The N-Gage also lets you transfer mp3s from your PC to the unit. The only problem is that there's almost no free memory. Thus, in order to record from the radio or transfer music from PC, you'll need to purchase a spare MMC, which is yet another thing to juggle in and out if you intend on playing games. For the price of entry the phone really should come with a 16MB flash card. <<

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Comfortable to use, bluetooth has great potential for multiplayer, good FM radio function, good ring tones and wallpapers, cute game boxes!

MINUS: No Mac software support, no external volume control, small screen, small in-built memory, no shoulder buttons, bad design for changing games, taco flavoured phone calls, no camera, gaming chews through the battery, sluggish response on many menus.

OVERALL

N-Gage is stuck in no-man's land. At this stage, we can't recommend it as a gaming device or a mobile phone. The future looks bleak.

Hardware >>

To complement our N-Gage review, we thought we'd take a look at a couple of top of the line phones to see how they compare in both gaming capability and phone functionality.

SHARP GX20

RRP \$1049

✦ The GX20 is the latest Vodafone Live! exclusive phone, and we have to say — it's really impressive. Those of you with GX10s can pretty much just toss them in the bin the improvement is so huge. The interface has been completely revamped, and the screen is amazingly sharp (no pun intended), packing in 240x320 pixels into a space only marginally larger than the N-Gage's 176x208 screen. The image quality on the GX20 is leaps and bounds ahead of the Z600 and the N-Gage, and its 16-bit colour palette is on par with the Z600, but higher than the N-Gage's 12-bit.

NICE AND INTUITIVE

Using the GX20 is a pleasure. Adjusting from a Nokia mindset was very straightforward, and the options available are all nice and intuitive. There are plenty of features that raise this phone above others we've used too. For starters the camera is about as fully featured as we've seen on a phone. There are two focal lengths — near and far, as well as three resolution options and two detail settings. At the top resolution (480x640 — as opposed to 288x352 on the Z600) the pictures turn out admirably. There are a number of retouching options, and you can also set a delay (allowing you to get into the shot) as well as set it to "external mode" which lets you shut the case and use the external display as the viewfinder — perfect for self portraits.

There's even a "flash" of sorts — a light next to the camera that is used as both an icon for charging, and a flash for taking photos. You can even set it to a host of different colours (including "disco" that rapidly flashes through them all). Although it's a little gimmicky, the feature worked better than expected. Sending pics via MMS and email is also simple, as is emailing from PC to the phone (to send a wallpaper for example). And let's not forget the option to record video with sound. Gear!

There are a host of small touches that really help make the GX20 feel polished too, such as alternate frames on the main menu icons when you select them — giving the illusion of

a little animation and making things feel a little more interactive. So what's it missing? Well, the addition of bluetooth would have been nice, as infrared doesn't really cut it any more.

PAN PIPES

Hand in hand with the GX20 is the Vodafone Live! service... and we're a little less impressed by it. Accessing it is as simple as pressing a button, but it's a little disappointing that you're charged for pretty much everything. Even reading the latest news costs money. Since we weren't paying for our test model though, we went nuts downloading ring tones and games and graphics. To this end Vodafone really need to implement some quality control on their service. The ring tones were rather poor, with tracks like JT's Senorita and Sweet Child of Mine sounding like McDonald's muzak renditions. Sweet Child should never, we repeat never, feature pan pipes! NES quality sound for \$3.30 a pop? Hmm.

Games were a little more reasonable... provided you know which ones are good. The pricing structure is \$5-\$7 for a game (although some offered a trial version for \$1), with the likes of Mini Galaxian, Puzzle Bobble and Bubble Bobble being reasonable value for money. Paying for excrement like 3D Darts and Ministry of Sound: Dance Nation, however, is a crime. Worms was perhaps the worst of the lot though — the CPU hit itself with its own bazookas over and over again, grenades miraculously fell through solid earth, and there was

no way to tell which worms were on which team. Vodafone really should have some standards, otherwise people won't want to risk wasting their money again. <<



[above] Cam tries out his new lime green electric shaver.



HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: A screen to die for, nicely integrated feature set, excellent camera options.

MINUS: No Bluetooth, Live! needs quality control and more free content.

OVERALL

The best next-gen phone we've used to date.

SONY ERICSSON Z600

Phone RRP \$869 • Gameboard RRP \$59



[above] Your choice of two covers - one ugly, one boring!



+ The Z600 is the new flagship model for Sony Ericsson, but unfortunately it isn't as desirable as the GX20 in our eyes. For starters, the screen resolution is a paltry 128x160 pixels, leaving the presentation looking decidedly fuzzy. The overall feel of the unit is good, however, and slightly more sturdy than the GX20 — producing a really satisfying click when it opens. The buttons also feel great. Whether you like the operating system or not is really a matter of personal choice, and although I'm sure it becomes second nature after a while, I found adjusting to the Z600 rather painful. Even when you understand the way it works, there's still a slight delay on button presses and the menu system is a little counter intuitive at times.

A GREAT IDEA

The Z600 is a little shorter than the GX20, but also a little chunkier. For the style conscious, its front and back panels are exchangeable, but we think the silver option is the most sleek. Like the GX20, the Z600 has an external LCD. It's small and monochrome, but serves its purpose well, with a very easy to ready time display. Pity that it doesn't have the extra functionality that the GX20's does.

The Z600 also has a camera with two resolution options — 120x160 and 288x352. It has a night mode, as well as a number of effects — black and white, negative and sepia, which add a little fun to the experience (and will be familiar to users of the T610). The area that the phone does excel in is sound — the quality is perhaps marginally better than on the GX20.

The Z600 comes with a number of games installed. Sony Ericsson weren't able to confirm at the time of going to press just what games they would be (aside from V-Rally 2), but we'll tell you about the games that were on the test model as no doubt one or two of them will make the

cut. Now, normally the games that come with a mobile wouldn't be of all that much interest to us, but the Z600 has taken an interesting tack towards luring gamers in. Rather than go the Nokia route and design a phone around games, they've released an add-on that is literally a controller that snaps to your handheld. It's a great idea, but do the hardware and software stack up?

POTATO ROLLING

The games that we got are: Alien Scum, Honey Cave 2, Minigolf and V-Rally 2. Alien Scum is a very poor Space Invaders clone, nuff said. Honey Cave 2 sounded kinda dirty, but turned out to be a very poor side on jump and shoot game, where you play some kind of machine gun toting honey loving warthog (or at least that's what it looks like to us). Minigolf got us a little excited, especially after the excellent flash minigolf that had done the rounds of the office, but alas, it wasn't to be. Whoever decided that having an accuracy bar in a mini-golf game should be spanked. And not in a nice way. And last of all is V-Rally 2, which has about as much in common with rally driving as a potato rolling down a hill. Think Hang On but with a whole lot less visual pizzazz and no real handling. Still, we did laugh out loud when it became apparent that the game has a grand total of two sound effects.

Worst. Sound effects. Ever.

Unfortunately, it was a little difficult to test how responsive the controller was... simply because the games themselves were so poor. From navigating menus and playing the available games, however, we'd have to

say that a SNES controller this is not. It's adequate but not great. We'll re-evaluate it if some good Z600 games come our way. <<<



HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Nice design, Bluetooth, Gameboard has potential.

MINUS: Low resolution screen, counter intuitive menus, bad games.

OVERALL

Stylish, but a lot of missed potential.

WinWinWin >>

Entries close January 6th

Win Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines on PS2!

>>>He's back... on console! While he isn't staring lovingly at a map of California, Arnie is busy kicking arse as the Terminator. Rise of the Machines is hitting consoles this Christmas, and we have a cool Terminator pack to give away, as well as prizes for the runners-up. If you want to get your hands on Arnie and the sexy Terminatrix for some action figurine fun, then answer the following question:

Who directed Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it to: **SkyNet Sucks, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016.**



FIRST PRIZE:
1 x Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (PS2)
1 x 20cm Terminatrix Figurine
1 x 20cm TX Figurine
1 x 20cm T-850 (Arnie) Figurine
1 x Atari T-shirt

FOUR RUNNERS-UP PRIZES:
1 x Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (PS2)
1 x Atari T-shirt

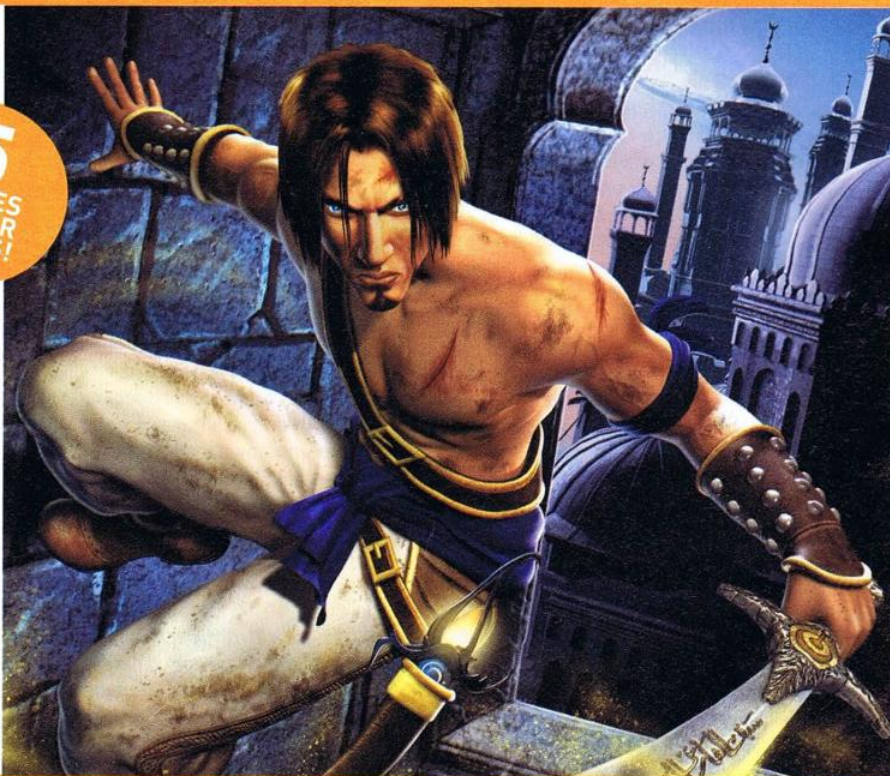
Win Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time on PS2!

>>>Gee, the Prince is back too! Who woulda thunk it? He's transformed from his 2D pixel state to a gorgeous 3D character capable of some truly breathtaking acrobatics. You want this game! Ubi Soft and Hyper want to offer 5 copies to some lucky readers if you can answer the following question:

5 COPIES UP FOR GRABS!

Name the man who created the first Prince of Persia game.

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address and send it to: **Princely Prizes, Hyper, 78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016.**



1. Entry is open to residents of Australia and New Zealand except employees and immediate families of Next Publishing Pty Ltd and its agencies associated with the promotion. 2. Only entries completed with these terms and conditions will be eligible. 3. Entry is by mail only. 4. Competition begins 9am November 25 and entries close at 6pm January 6, 2004. 5. In determining eligibility the judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 6. The winner will be drawn at 9am January 7, 2004 at Next Publishing Pty Ltd 78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016. 7. Prizes must be taken as offered and are not redeemable for cash. 8. The promoter is not responsible for misdirected or lost mail. 9. The winners will be notified by mail and results published in the March issue of Hyper on sale February 4, 2004. 10. 5 winners will each receive Prince of Persia for PS2 (RRP\$99.95). 1 winner will receive 1 x Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines for PS2 (RRP\$99.95), 1 x Terminatrix Figurine (RRP\$50), 1 x TX Figurine (RRP\$50), 1 x T-850 (Arnie) Figurine (RRP\$50), 1 x Atari T-shirt (RRP\$29.95). 4 runners-up will each receive 1 x Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines for PS2 (RRP\$99.95) and 1 x Atari T-shirt (RRP\$29.95). Total prize value is \$1299.25. 11. The promoter is Next Publishing Pty Ltd ABN 88 002 647 645 of 78 Renwick St, Redfern NSW 2016.

LORDS of EVERQUEST™

LORDS – LEADERS – LEGENDS
A revolutionary RTS experience awaits you.



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"Lords Of EverQuest wants WarCraft III's head on a plate."

- PC Powerplay October 2003



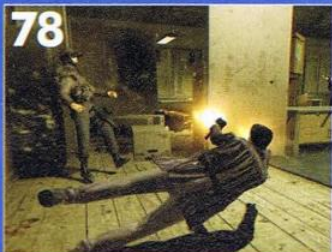
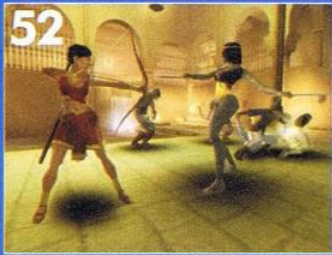
UBISOFT™



48 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

You'll forget any other sports game exists...





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Reviews >>

Game Theory

DANIEL STAINES



>> The most obvious and important advantage games have over other entertainment media is that they are interactive. Interactivity operates on a variety of levels, some of which are quite abstract and entirely different to simply manipulating objects and pressing buttons.

Interpretation, for example, is a form of interactivity. Whenever a player attempts to assign motives to a character in a game or tries to predict what's going to happen next, they are actively interpreting elements of the game they're playing and interacting with it on a cognitive level. To get a good sense of what I'm talking about here, load up a copy of The Sims and watch one of the "conversations" that take place between your little Simizens. Semantically, the conversations are garbage – just meaningless noises randomly attached to equally meaningless visual imagery. But to a player watching and interpreting these conversations within the context of the game, they're extraordinarily meaningful. "Oh," one says, "that little peace sign must mean they're talking about politics. That'd be right. After all, my Sim is an opinionated little bastard."

In fact, it's arguable that this kind of interpretation is precisely what makes The Sims a game that appeals to such a wide audience. The ability to interpolate motives and emotions into "normal people" going about everyday domestic duties is something that almost anyone can do, but the same cannot be said for a gun-toting hero abandoned on a demon infested space-station.

This raises the interesting question of whether or not ambiguity is an asset for game design. After all, the reason one can so easily interpret what happens in The Sims is because all the events are contextually ambiguous – players essentially take the base materials offered by Maxis and craft their own unique experience out of it. Could the same kind of thing happen in a more traditionally structured game? Would a narrative that features characters with well-developed but intentionally ambiguous personalities be more involving than one with personas that are easily categorised and understood?

I'd be inclined to say "yes". System Shock 2, for example, featured one of the most engaging narratives yet seen in a videogame despite the fact that the player never actually "meets" any of the characters involved in it. All that we get are snippets of audio diaries and a context to place them in – the rest is up to the imagination. For the most part, System Shock 2 isn't scary – what the player thinks while playing it is.

Until next month,
daniels@next.com.au

HYPER CREW TOP 5 GAMES

Eliot "Left Back" Fish

1. Pro Evolution Soccer 3 – PS2
"Time to edit a full Southampton squad..."
2. Call of Duty – PC
3. Championship Manager 03/04 – PC
4. Mario Kart: DD!! – GCN
5. Counter-Strike – Xbox

Cam "It's fun to play together" Shea

1. Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga – GBA
"Brilliant if not a little lacking in Wang."
2. Max Payne 2 – PC
3. Mario Kart: DD!! – GCN
4. Call of Duty – PC
5. Prince of Persia – Xbox

Malcolm "1-0" Campbell

1. Pro Evolution Soccer 3 – PS2
"Fixed player mode is a revelation."
2. Mario Kart: DD!! – GCN
3. Soul Calibur 2 – PS2
4. Return of the King – PS2
5. Castlevania – PS2

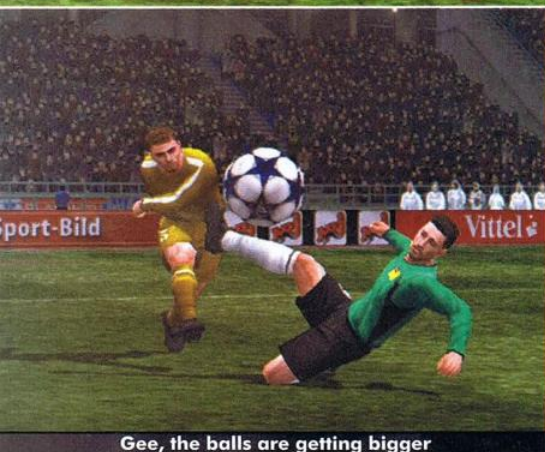
Frank "The way I like my gin" Dry

1. Prince of Persia – PS2
"I'm hypnotised by those combat moves..."
2. Mario Kart: DD!! – GCN
3. Project Gotham Racing 2 – Xbox
4. Bombastic – PS2
5. Ghost Hunter – PS2

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 great game, but not perfect.	Excellent and worthy of a Big Rubber Stamp. Buy it!





Gee, the balls are getting bigger

Now Simon Says "Freeze!"

That keeper just wants to hug everyone...

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE never walks alone.



48 HYPER>>

Like tinea in your grandfather's shower, the Pro Evolution Soccer series is infectious. From the shadows of FIFA, Pro Evo has slowly emerged in the last two years to stand head and shoulders above its rivals. Because, like tinea from your grandfather's shower, the magic of Pro Evo grows on you. Initially, control might appear unresponsive, licenses lacking and the game slow, but over time an appreciation of the game's subtle recreation of soccer, itself a finely balanced, diverse game, should convince every rational gamer.

PRO EVO 2004

See, unlike tinea in your grandfather's bathroom, Pro Evolution Soccer 3 is the best game in its series, the best sporting game ever created (better even than FIFA on 3DO!), Hyper game of the month, and undoubtedly one of the games

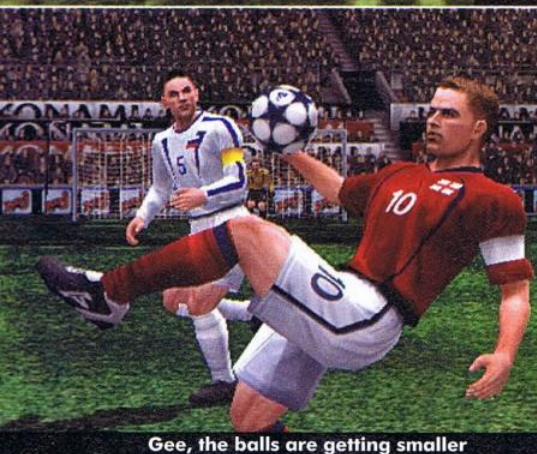
of the year. It is an achievement in gameplay refinement, the most intellectually and physically challenging title ever made as well as the most compelling multiplayer title you could want. However, like licking tinea fungus from the floor of your grandfather's shower while he stands next to you naked, on paper it appears a little bit screwed up. But... licenses? Good commentary? High-quality new features? Who needs em!? It is a testament to the power of good old gameplay that Pro Evolution Soccer 3 remains so grand a game.

Don't get fooled by the dramatic title, Pro Evolution Soccer 3 is simply a yearly update to the series. While EA get bagged for their yearly sports releases, Konami can escape the not-so-formidable wrath of gaming journalists. Annual Christmas releases? Cynical, some might say (others, perhaps, realistic). The

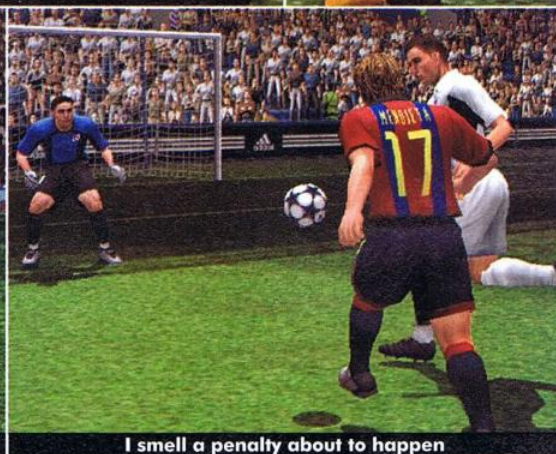
point is, between Pro Evolution Soccer 2 and Pro Evolution Soccer 3, not much has changed. It is still basically the same game — old players will be able to make the transition with ease. Gameplay has been tweaked, sure, while presentation has been improved and a few cute additions have been made. The textures in particular are much sharper, blur filters add polish to replays, and the animation is aesthetically another dramatic leap forward. But Konami knows full well that if it's not broken, then there's no need to fix it. The fact that Pro Evo 2 was the game we removed from our PS2s when we inserted Pro Evo 3 says stacks. If you're still concerned, don't be. The game is very definitely a whole new challenge, and the additions, even if they are small and sometimes poorly implemented, make PES3 an undoubted must-buy.

THIERRY HENRY'S FEET

But let's start with the bad stuff. Firstly, the same old license garbage means that only six of the 62 club teams (there are around 70 nations), and many nations' players in the game have incorrect names. While many are obvious (Smicer for Smicer, Harston for Hartson), many are not (Farzel Menst for Van der Meyde). This has knock-on effects for the commentary, which has to revert to referring to players only by their number. Likewise, team kits are also inaccurate, as are many player likenesses. In true bewilderingly inconsistent Pro Evo fashion though, six club teams are fully licensed, featuring accurate sponsors, kits and names. Great, if you're a Feyenoord, Juventus, Roma, Milan, Lazio or Parma fan. Frustrating if you're not. And don't give me that shit about these quirky names adding character to the game. Play



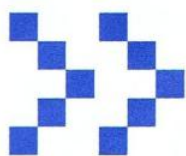
Gee, the balls are getting smaller



I smell a penalty about to happen



Ouch! Time for another nose job...



YOU CAN GUESS WHERE JAMIE CARRAGHER WILL PUT A **BACKHEELED, LEFT-FOOTED THROUGH BALL**

TIME TO PUT AWAY SWOS

There's no escape from the glory of Pro Evo: PES3 is coming to PC. It's a straight port of the PS2 version, meaning the graphics aren't as sophisticated as PC users might come to expect, but after playing on Pro Evo on TVs for years, by gee she's crisp. And give these freakish online soccer communities just a few hours and they'll come out with so many unofficial patches with proper kits, and names, and competitions, that PES3 on PC could become the version you simply must own. You'll just need a Dual Shock 2 style PC gamepad...



Milan versus Juve and it's hard to go back to crappy Merseyside Red in Mrs. Houllier's knitted red jumpers.

Apart from that, it's only really the menu system gremlins and the length of replays (you can't save that classic 60 yard ball that leads to Kewell's wonder strike, only the strike itself) that will irk everybody. We'd like to see the ref, linesmen — sorry, assistant refs — and bench players in the game. We'd like some full leagues, and more club teams. We'd like the option of taking quick set pieces. We'd like better commentary — PES3's is more precise in its description of the game but also more repetitive. But that's about it — nothing major. For a football fan, it's close to perfect. For the rest of you, it could be the best advertisement soccer has ever known.

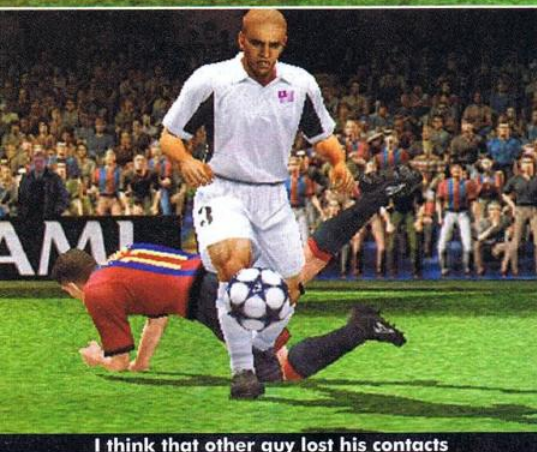
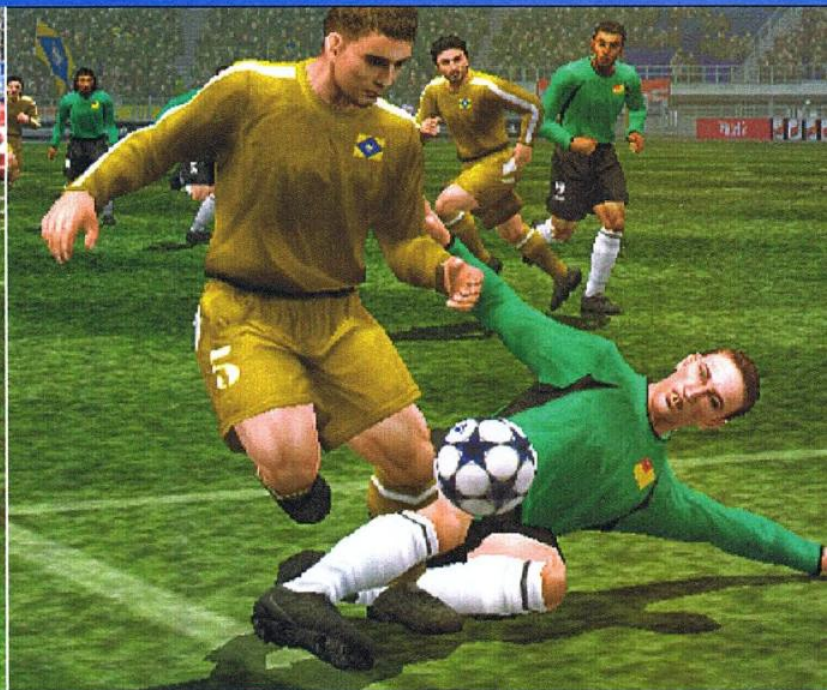
!!! You can buy some lovely Pro Evolution 3 merchandise at www.konami-europe.com

What makes Pro Evolution Soccer so incredible then? Primarily, the learning curve that comes with such an essential simulation of a sport. As if you were playing soccer yourself (you know, on grass), initially you'll be able to do all the basic stuff: pass, kick, tackle. You won't be very good, but you'll get by. Over time, you'll begin to understand the subtleties in control, swarming in defense, instant mid-height crosses, different running speeds, and the excellent player balance/stability system. As confidence grows, 360s spins, 30-yarders and bicycle kicks will become more common, but always will you have to work for goals. What is the most crucial factor in the game's greatness though is the control system's predictability. Solid, realistic physical principles determine the

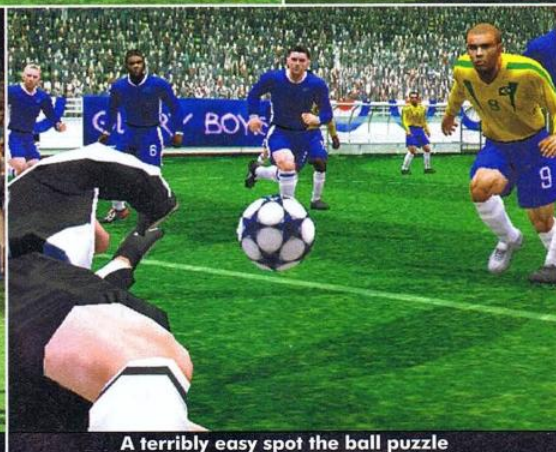
success of button presses, meaning you can guess where Jamie Carragher will put a backheeled, left-footed through ball — that is, consistently at Thierry Henry's feet. Intuitive is the only way to describe it. Players will only perfectly complete commands when under no pressure, and with succinct, timed button presses. Chuck Olof Mellberg up your arse, and as you'd expect your control and accuracy will be compromised. The best example is shooting, where even the simplest tap ins can be skewed wide if you go a little mashtastic with your dual shock. Make no mistake, Pro Evolution Soccer has the most rewarding, comprehensive, and satisfying control system of any game on any system.

AS GOOD AS GAMING GETS

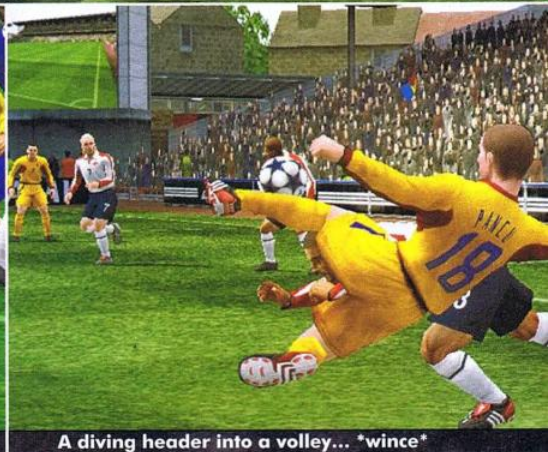
Likewise, intelligent, footballistic AI gives you the chance to use a range of workable strategies that suit your game and the style of your players in both attack and defense. Use the new version's 'forwards press' quick tactic setting, and punish the opposition's defensive mistake, then simply sit back in your own half and hit it long to Jan Koller (sorry, 'Kemar'). But, as good as the AI is —



I think that other guy lost his contacts



A terribly easy spot the ball puzzle



A diving header into a volley... *wince*

NEW MEANS GOOD, YA?

Here's a selection of the new additions. The good and the bad...

ADVANTAGE RULE

Good: Sometimes works.
Bad: Mostly doesn't.

HANDBALLS

Good: They're in real life. Goodo then.
Bad: Annoying, unfairly biased towards the defense, and unnecessary.

REPLAY AT ANY TIME

Good: Watch yourself smash the crossbar in slow-mo, even if you don't score.
Bad: You can't go back to it after the whistle has gone, and they're so damn short!

GOALIE CONTROL

Good: Better for dispatching long through balls. Classic in multiplayer.
Bad: Twitchy controls. And the AI will always be better than you.

FIXED PLAYER SYSTEM

Good: Libero Grande done properly. Just watch the offsides!
Bad: Nothing, this is serious glory in 8 player.



PES SHOP

Good: Offers a material excuse for playing more.
Bad: We'd play anyway. And a roster edit option should be unlocked from the start.

MANUAL PASS SYSTEM

Good: More precision in weighting balls.
Bad: You're supposed to click R3 in now. Stoopid Konami.

WEFA MASTER LEAGUE

Good: A better illusion of the European league network. Even more compelling than last year – the first few seasons are the most demanding, rewarding gaming experience we've ever had by ourselves.
Bad: Division ladder not high enough. Minimal management. It's not real. Promising young players get too good too easily.

it will press for equalisers, send keepers up for late corners, sit back and defend a lead – it is multiplayer where PES3 offers the most reward. With friends, there is no reason why you should stop playing Pro Evo 3 before PES4 arrives.

Some might be disappointed to hear the balance of the game has swung back towards the defense from the dribble-happy PES2 system. The result is a game that forces you to play it around more. We tend to like it. Particularly the way the AI defenders cluster around the top of the box means that clean shooting opportunities are now much more difficult to discover. Add to that volleys now being much easier to strike, and shots in general having a little bit more zip, and we're in heaven. And though the new, somewhat stubborn manual passing system (now, a click of R3 is required) will force veterans to relearn new controls, it promises to add more precision to your distribution.

This is a game everyone – football fans, serious gamers, girlfriends, even grandfathers – must play. It is about as good as gaming gets. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Soccer / **PLAYERS:** 1-8 / **DEVELOPER:** KCET / **PUBLISHER:** Konami / **PRICE:** \$99.95 / **RATING:** G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Refined gameplay with less emphasis on pace than PES2.

MINUS: Quite a lot actually. But we still love you.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 80 95

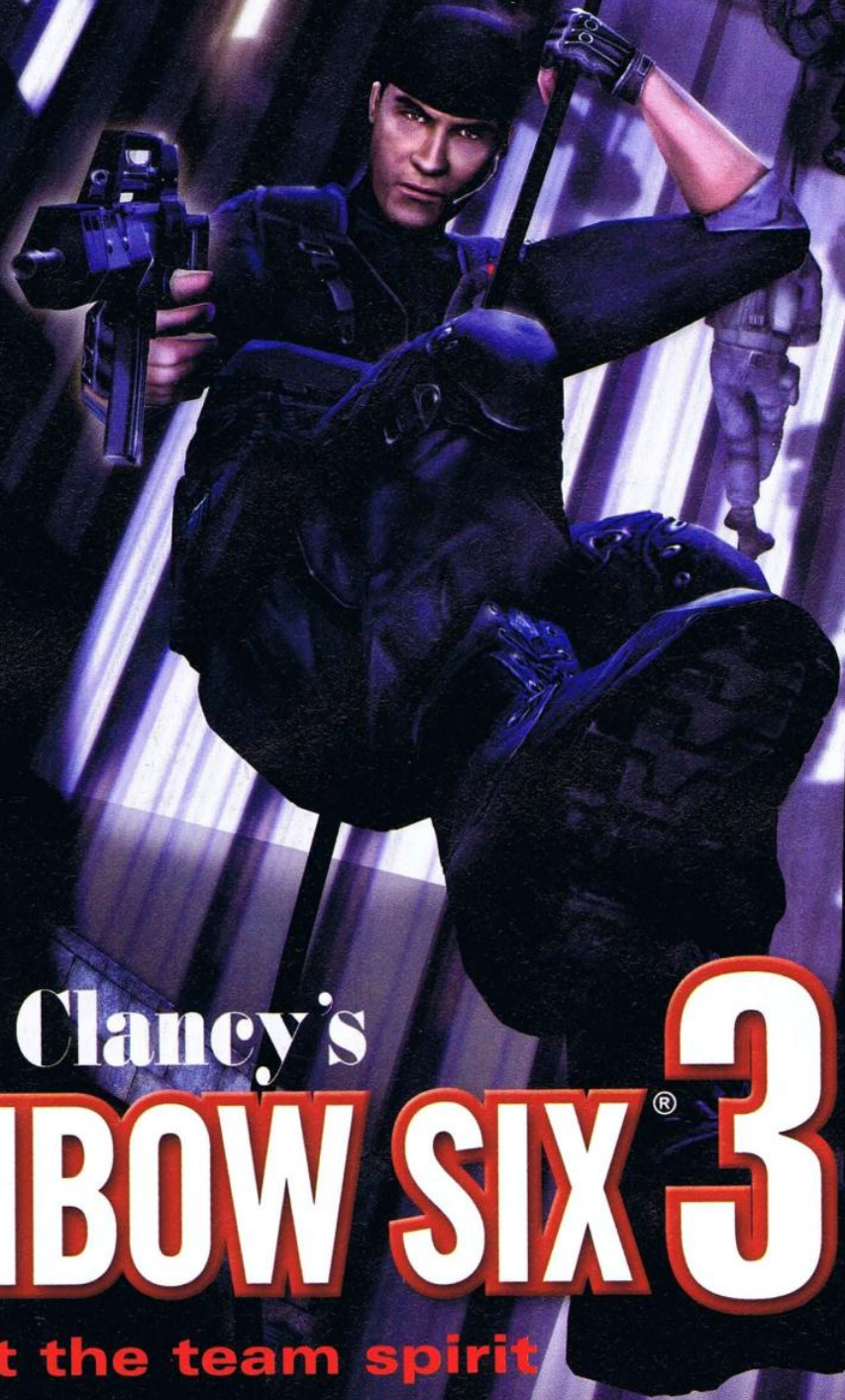
OVERALL

93



Pity the fools that never get to play it.

LEAD THE BEST !



You're the commander of **Rainbow Six**, an **international elite SWAT team**. With the **new voice communication system**, use your microphone to control your fellow agents and accomplish your mission **together**.

Tom Clancy's **RAINBOW SIX 3**

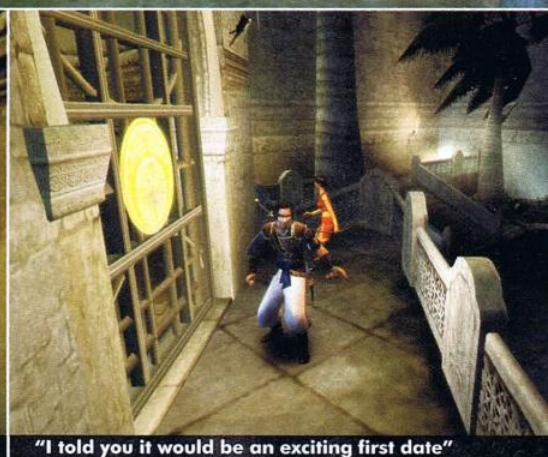
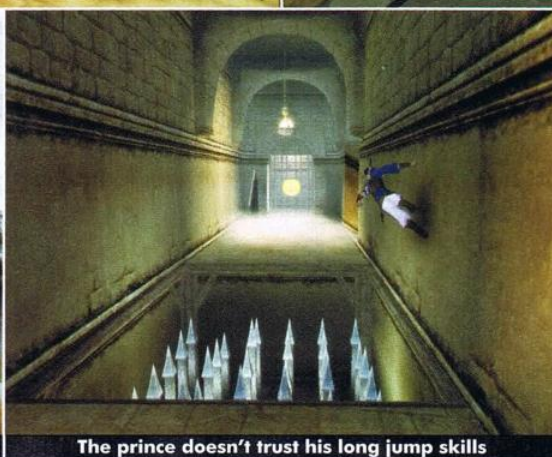
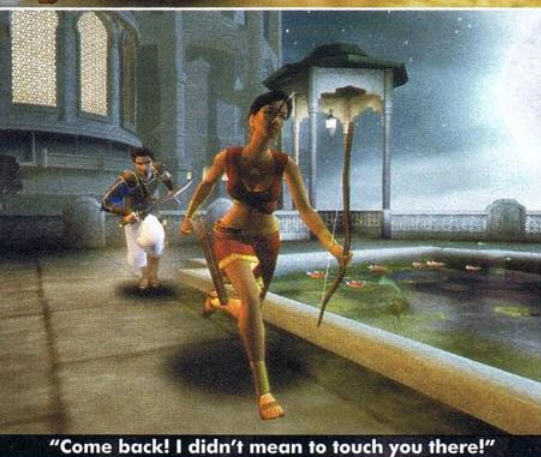
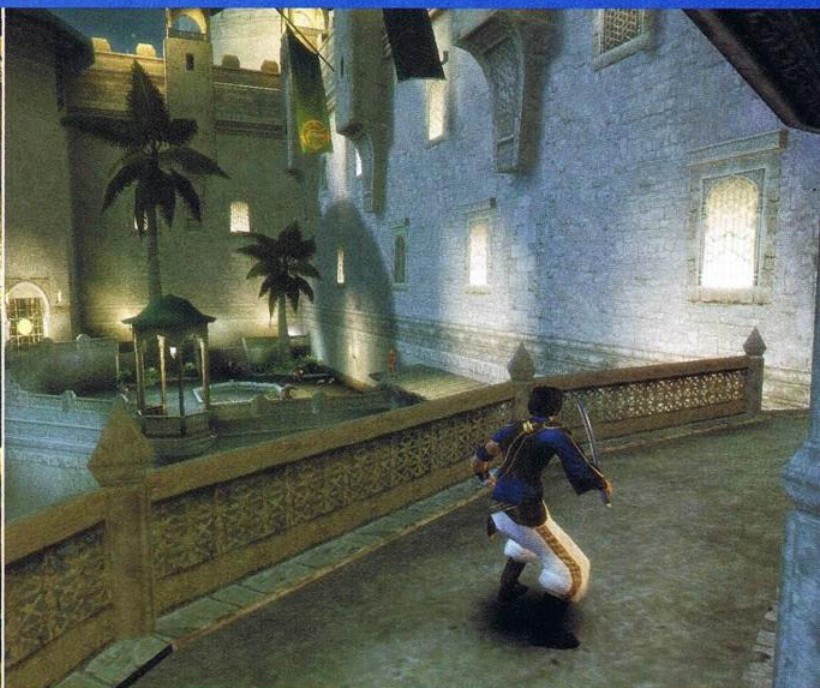
Get the team spirit



www.rainbowsix3.com



UBISOFT



"Come back! I didn't mean to touch you there!"

The prince doesn't trust his long jump skills

"I told you it would be an exciting first date"

PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME

PHILIP KENAN wishes he moved as realistically as the Prince.

Aside from being a powerhouse distributor and publisher of gaming titles, Ubi Soft is quickly shaping up to be a developer of note as well, with recent releases such as Splinter Cell, Raven Shield and now Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time. You've seen amazingly lifelike yet simultaneously stylised animations in Splinter Cell, the malleability of time in Blinx, third person hand-to-hand combat in the likes of Oni or Buffy, bullet time in Enter the Matrix or Max Payne, and the general puzzle solving aesthetic in Tomb Raider or earlier iterations of the Prince franchise. What you haven't seen, however, is one game that presents all of these tropes in such an incredibly polished way that the whole thing seems totally unlike anything else you are likely to have played. The end result is an incredible experience that, although

sometimes frustrating, is always immensely playable and compelling.

A NUMBER OF OBSTACLES

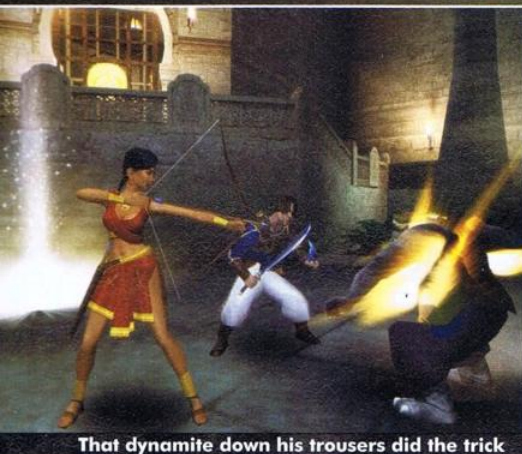
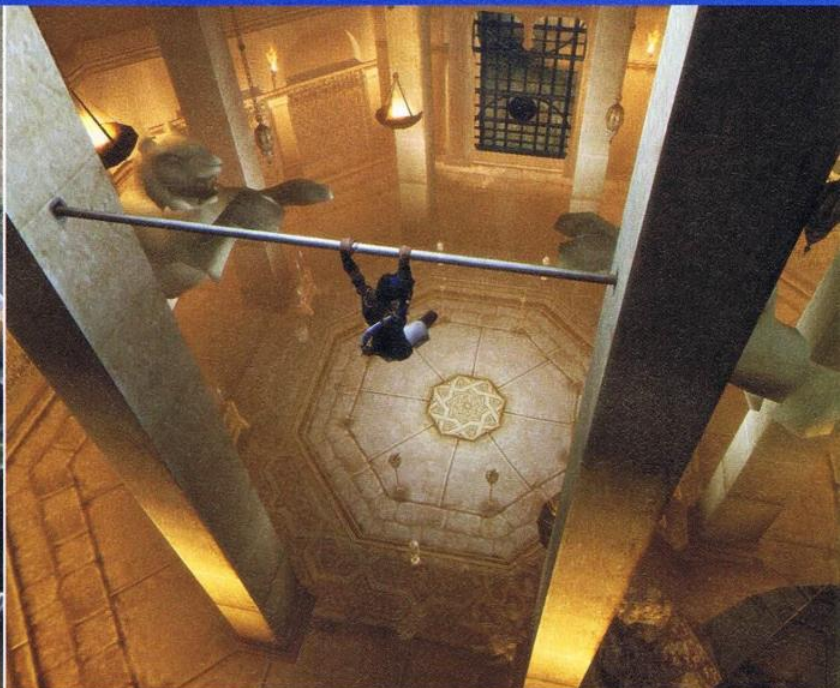
When the first Prince of Persia was released way back in 1989 there was a lot of hullabaloo in the gaming press about Jordan Mechner, and how he filmed his brother prancing about and then painstakingly rotoscoped the whole shebang to achieve the uncannily lifelike animations. Although the amazing animations have returned in this most welcomed follow up, you won't find any rotoscoped footage hidden anywhere, as all of the amazing work has been animated by hand. Aside from showing how far computer animation has come in the last 14 years, the hand drawn animations mean that the Prince isn't simply limited to realistic physical actions, although they do

make up the bulk of his abilities. Aside from running, jumping, climbing and fighting, the Prince can now run up or across walls for short distances and even launch himself off said walls to reach hard to access areas or one of the omnipresent flagpoles just aching to be swung from.

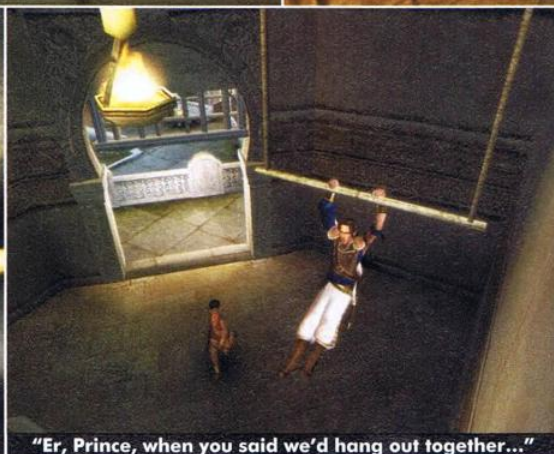
Each level challenges the player to brave a number of obstacles ranging from drop-away floors to traps and bottomless pits, requiring the judicious use of all of the Prince's abilities. It's unfortunate that there is only one way through all of the levels, but the size and intricacy of the puzzles more than make up for this. Although the prospect of navigating through the highly dangerous terrain can seem a bit daunting at first, Ubi Soft have added a nifty little feature along with their save points. At the beginning of each new area the



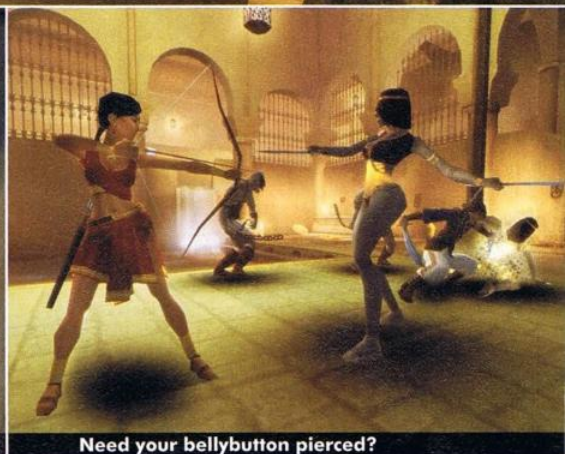
player is given the opportunity to save (something that they really should do at any given opportunity). Aside from just saving the data of the player's current status and location, the save also flashes up a fast motion highlight of some of the tasks that need to be performed to beat the coming area. These videos are immensely helpful and never give too much away, instead informing the player just enough to whet their appetite and make them stay up way past their bedtime to play the next level.



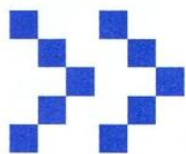
That dynamite down his trousers did the trick



"Er, Prince, when you said we'd hang out together..."



Need your bellybutton pierced?



THE PRINCE COMES INTO POSSESSION OF A MAGICAL DAGGER WITH THE ABILITY TO STOP OR REWIND TIME

CAN'T LIVE WITH 'EM...

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time has an excellent and evocative soundtrack but unfortunately it sometimes overshadows the wonderfully acerbic voice acting prevalent through the majority of the game. After setting all of the evil in motion it quickly becomes apparent that up until being thrust into the limelight as a saviour, the Prince led a pretty self-absorbed, cushy life. Do yourself a favour and turn down the music so you can hear some of the Prince's wonderfully bitter diatribes about life, the universe and especially his lovely female sidekick.



FATAL SWORD BLOWS

Combat plays quite a major role in The Sands of Time and highlights one of the finest technological achievements in the game. After the first few levels, the Prince comes into possession of a magical dagger with the ability to stop or rewind time. Much like a wooden stake is used against vampires, the dagger is a finishing move and absorbs the titular sands of time possessing many of the enemies. Once the dagger is charged with enough sand, the player can freeze opponents for easy killing, slow time or even rewind about 15 seconds. The latter ability, aside from being incredibly useful for negating deadly falls or fatal sword blows is quite a technical achievement considering that the PS2 has no dedicated storage device unlike the Xbox, the

!!! Whilst you can only play POP on PS2 this year, expect to see some other versions in the new year...

console that first introduced the idea of playing with time to such a degree in Blinx.

Although Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time isn't the Prince's first foray into the world of 3D - that dubious honour goes to the terrible and justifiably forgotten Prince of Persia 3D - it definitely showcases what is possible with the combination of a new school

graphics engine and old school gameplay. Hopefully Ubi Soft will add more to the Prince of Persia canon in coming years and with any luck a certain other developer with a series of action games about a busty ponytailed English woman will take some notes. <<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Ubi Soft Montreal / PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Visually amazing, intricate level design, slick animation

MINUS: Some camera problems, linear

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

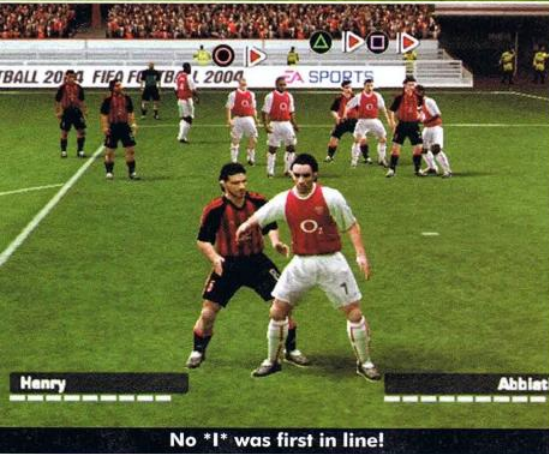
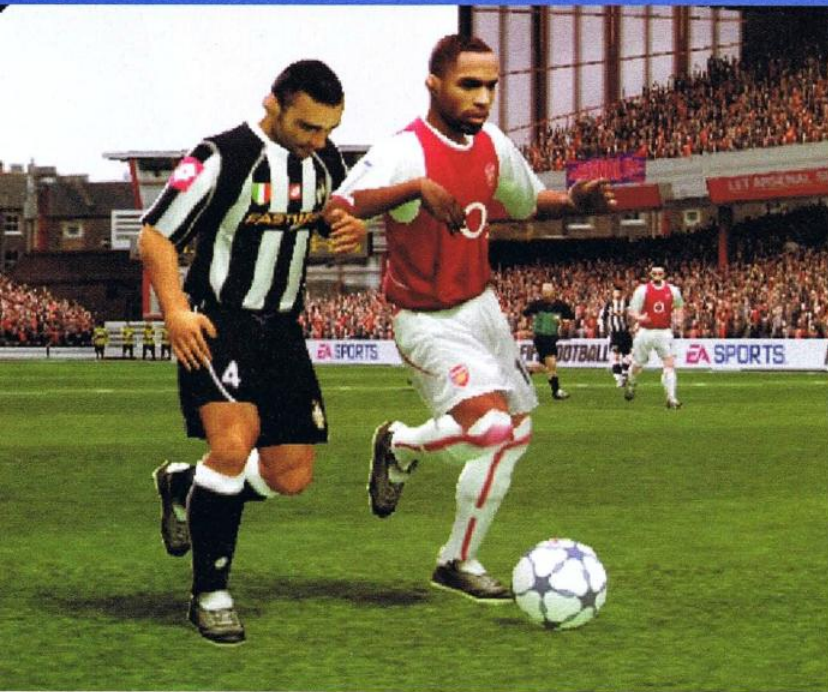
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OVERALL

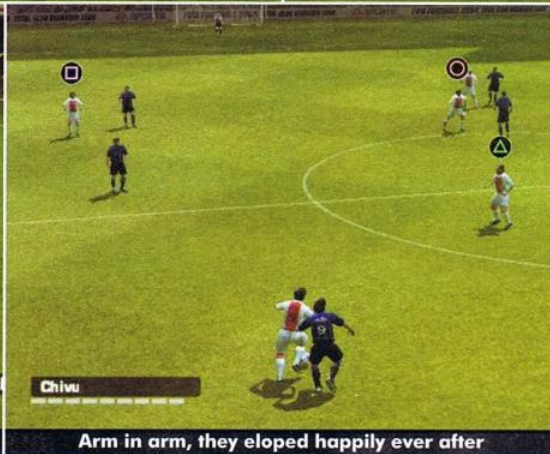
93



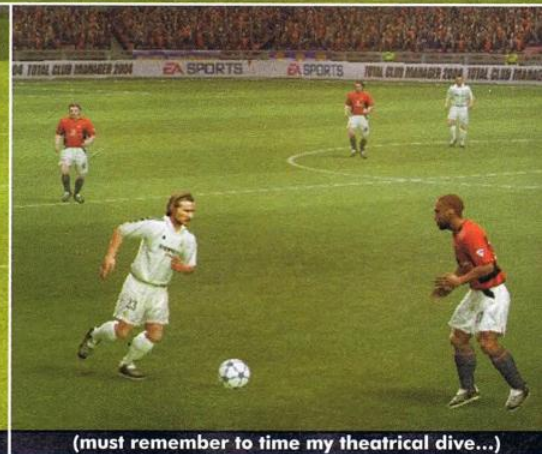
This is how all 3D action games should be.



No "I" was first in line!



Arm in arm, they eloped happily ever after



(must remember to time my theatrical dive...)

FIFA 2004

FRANK DRY goes back to playing FIFA '98...

OFF THE BALL
We hear it all the time, "I'm going to buy FIFA because I want the real players". But what exactly are you getting? Yep, the kits are perfect, the player likenesses are on the whole pretty accurate, the teams are all named correctly and all the stadiums are modelled on the real-life venues. But when the camera perspective is zoomed out to a playable angle, those likenesses and licensed kits are rendered moot, and you're left with

the gameplay. The real question gamers should be asking is "does it play a good game of football?" Sadly, the answer would be no.

FIFA 2004 introduces the "Off the Ball" system. Much like EA's Madden series, this highlights your teammates on the field and links them with a button on your controller. This allows you to — in theory — select a player you're going to pass to, and move that player into space to receive your pass. Yep, that means that whilst you're controlling your own player who is in possession of the ball, you then move a separate player with the other analogue stick into a desired position. We get the feeling this system was created because EA couldn't write AI that would make runs, move players into space and generally play intelligently. With the off the ball system, you have to do it all by yourself.

!!! FIFA 2004 does have an excellent & varied soundtrack.

GLITZ AND GLAMOUR

Well, we persisted with this method for a number of days, and our verdict is that it just doesn't play well. As soon as you take your eyes off the player you're controlling, you tend to get tackled, or your passes don't complete. EA have attempted to counter this problem by slowing the speed of the game down to give you time to make the play. But from the zoomed out angle the game becomes slow, clunky and awkward. There isn't even an option to increase the game speed (they removed it in this version). Even so, you can still hold down the shoot button from almost anywhere outside the box and still score like Cantona, even if you're a second division no-hoper. Is it worth persisting with this unrealistic gameplay because the Man U kit has a Vodafone logo on it? Buy FIFA this year you'll discover the harsh truth. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Sports / PLAYERS: 1-4 /
DEVELOPER: EA Sports /
PUBLISHER: EA Sports /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Fully licensed.
MINUS: Poor menu design, off-the-ball control, the pick-up-and-play element has gone.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
90 85 70

OVERALL
72

FIFA 2003, ironically, is a better game than this one.

Like exploring?

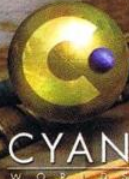
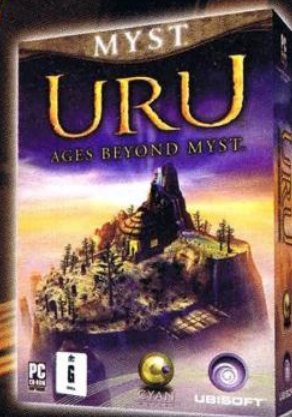


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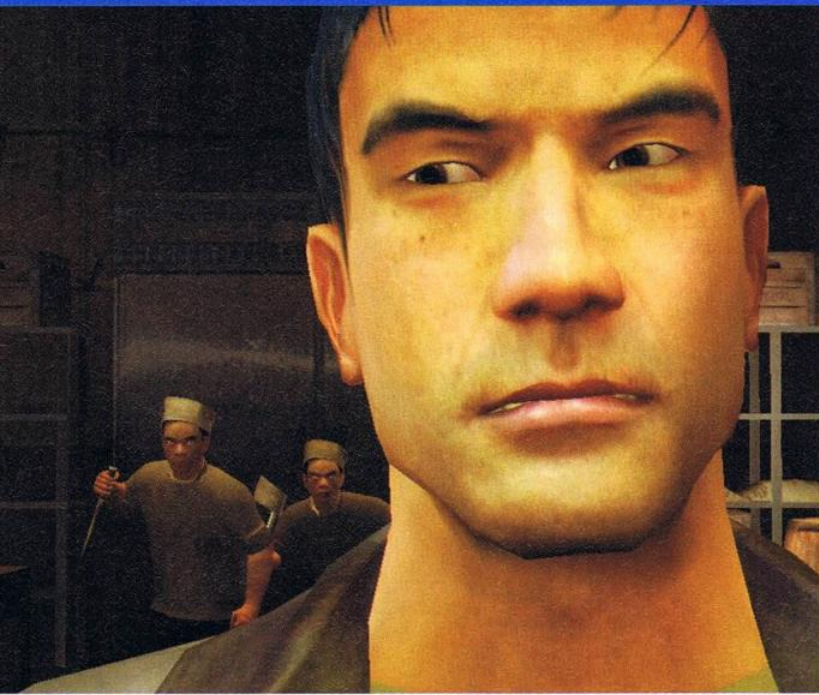


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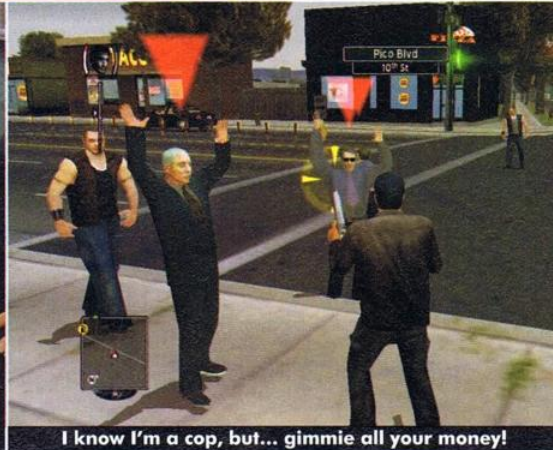


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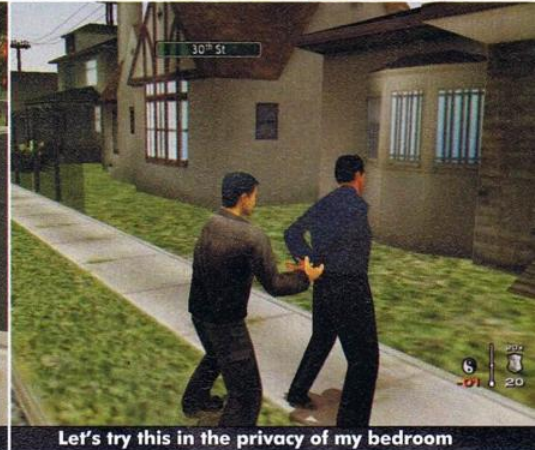
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No cleavage action for the FBI agent...



I know I'm a cop, but... gimme all your money!



Let's try this in the privacy of my bedroom

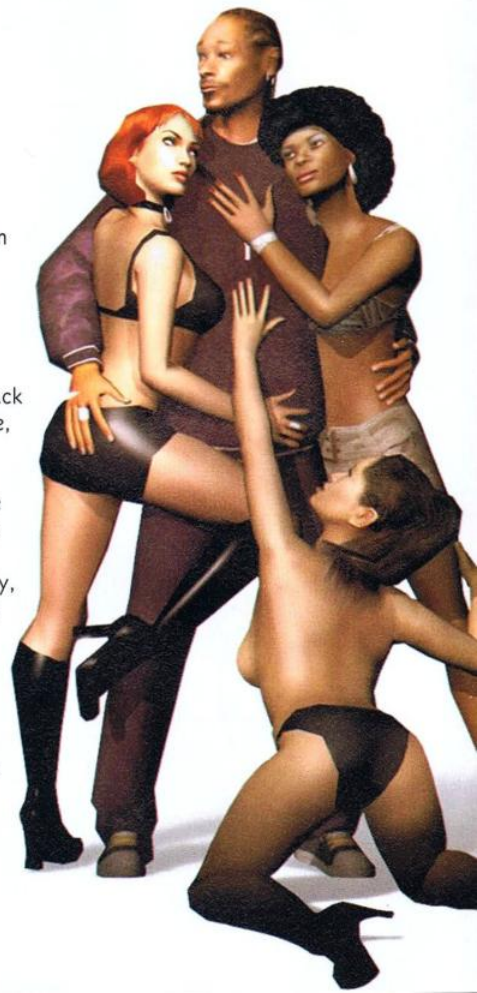
TRUE CRIME STREETS OF LA

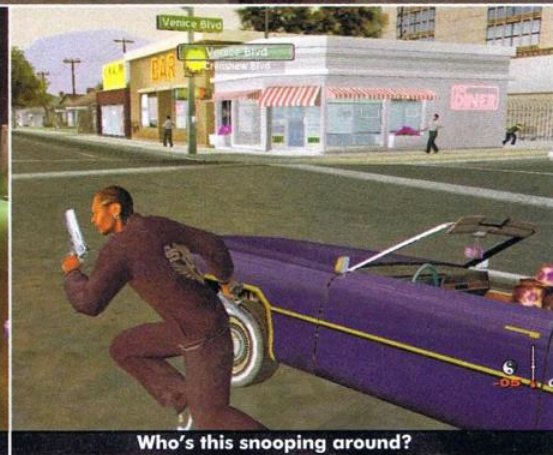
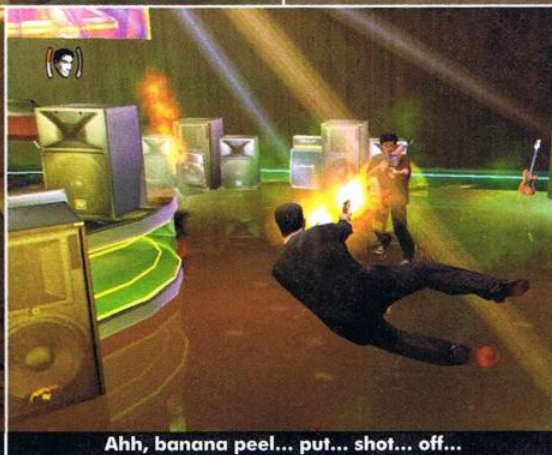
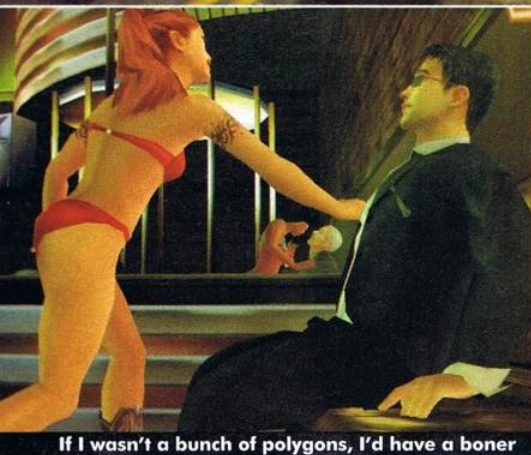
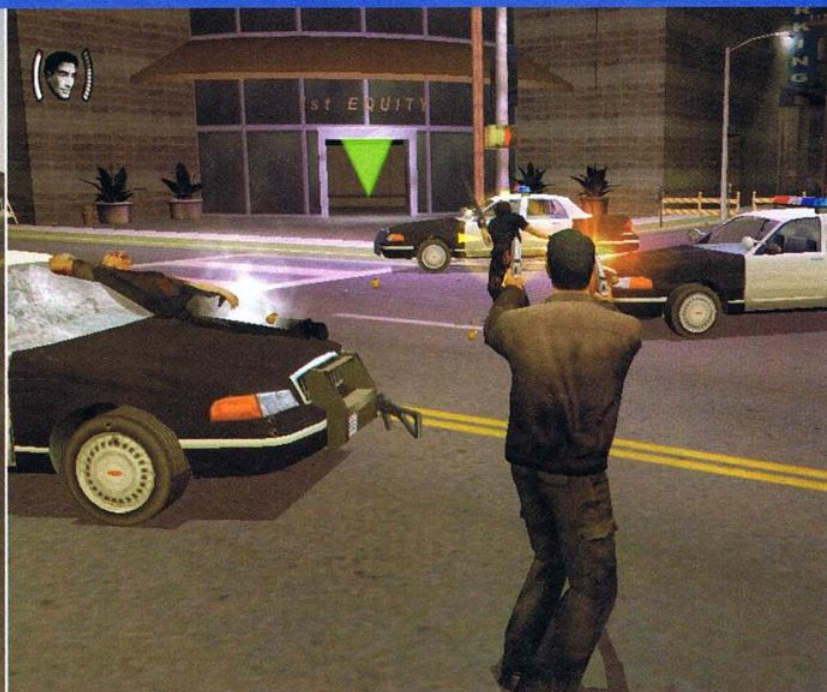
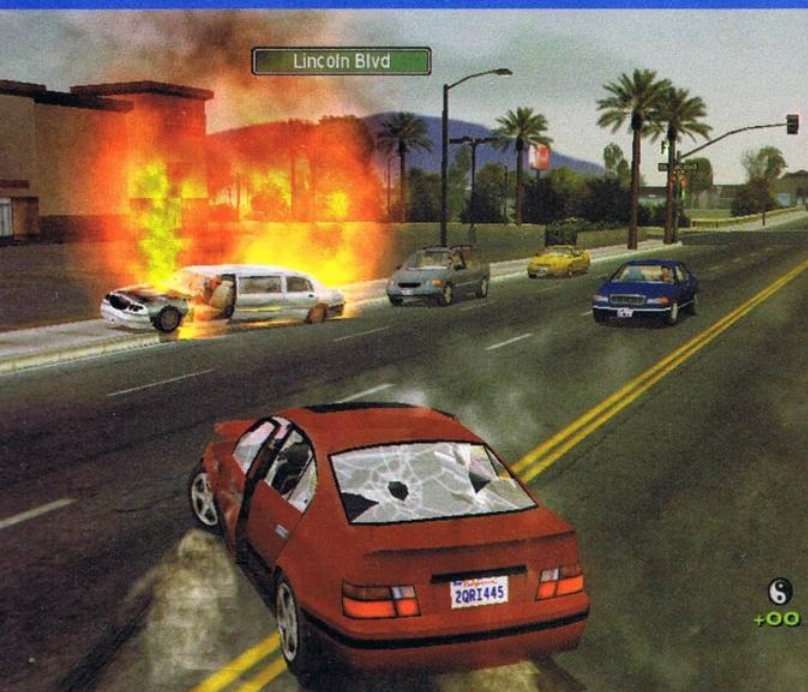
JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE is the office kingpin...

Following Grand Theft Auto 3's outrageous success, we haven't quite received the overwhelming numbers of clones it once appeared were inevitable. Sure, many games have taken cues from Rockstar's masterpiece, but no one has managed to better it. Gameplay-wise, the illusion of non-linearity has defined titles such as Jak II and Tony Hawk's Underground, and many titles have since tasted the waters of controversy. Clearly, though, it was the balance between rewarding gameplay and irrepressible image that led to GTA3's dominance. So as other publishers try to extract portions of GTA and insert them into their own titles, Activision has other ideas. True Crime: Streets of LA is GTA3 plus Matrix kung fu, big name actors and artists, and bullet-time. It is a cringe-worthy imitation, and as much as we hate to admit it, it's really quite fun.

KING KANG Thankfully, True Crime is much prettier than Vice City ever was. With vibrant use of colour, and a busy urban environment modeled competently, developers Luxoflux have managed to impress. Destruction is the name of the game, and as trees fall, lamp-posts explode, ceilings crumble, glass shatters and vehicles ignite, you'll be cackling at such devastating splendour. While the game's distance focus blurring lessens the clarity of the graphics, a deflated tyre's heaving shower of sparks, or the flare of a head-on vehicle's lights create a level of intensity and intricacy in the visuals that puts Vice City to shame. The engine can even produce some crisp, expressive cut-scenes with its sharp character models. The standard of actors enhance the game's polish, as characters are voiced by reputable Hollywood

names such as Christopher Walken and Gary Oldman. Although the script bubbles along with personality, it's all renegade cop/sassy female sidekick stereotype. The game earns accolades in effects and soundtrack as well, with the booms of gunfire, the Hong Kong pow of the fight sequences, the extensive West Coast hip-hop soundtrack and the cries of Kang and the pedestrians assisting the intensive visuals in creating an illusion of a living city, and underline the player's role in all its obliteration. Yet at the heart of True Crime there exists a great absurdity. For as satisfying as destruction might be (unlimited ammo says plenty), only at designated times can you really throw caution to the wind. As a member of the Elite Operations Division, your character Nick Kang has an

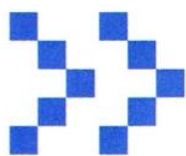




If I wasn't a bunch of polygons, I'd have a boner

Ahh, banana peel... put... shot... off...

Who's this snooping around?



AS SATISFYING AS DESTRUCTION MIGHT BE, ONLY AT DESIGNATED TIMES CAN YOU REALLY THROW CAUTION TO THE WIND

obligation to serve the city, and not decapitate its citizens. Killing innocents makes Kang a 'bad cop'. And before you all start thinking about the potential with a badge and no questions, at different points in the game's story you'll need a 'good cop rep' to proceed.

While the city is huge, its mostly flat geography and endless residential areas hardly make for interesting commuting. GTA always encouraged exploration, but True Crime's empty backyards and dearth of jumps mean you'll want to get back to taking down crims as soon as possible. But herein lies another True Crime paradox. For while the fun lies with the guns, you'll have inadvertently run over so many pedestrians on the streets, that the only path to good karma is through beating and arresting these crims. Which would be fine, except for the fact that fighting success is

more a result of quick button mashing than anything else. Thankfully, the story sequences provide the meat of the game, but still, too often these are inconsistent and brief. The stealth elements in particular are horrible — worse, even than those in the Hulk.

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR

But True Crime's biggest problem? The long-time nemesis of the gamer: the loading screen. The apparent incapability of the engine to offer a transition between interior and exterior without the need for loading severely restricts the game's potential. While smashing furnishings and fixtures in an indoor brawl is quite splendid, the adrenalin seeps away as the fight's climax is followed by a dozen seconds of thumb twiddling.

But — and this is thanks primarily

to the game's grounding in open-ended gameplay — many missions enable the player to use all the initiative he or she likes. Automotive homicide works just as nicely as a bullet-time style precision drive-by. Though the police pretense does restrict this freedom to a degree, there's still mounds of fun to be had chilling in LA. Completing a mission, and cruising off to Venice Beach to the sounds of Snoop Dogg, you will get caught up in the big badass LA cop tone of the game, even if most of True Crime's sheen is transparently corporate (the wittiest

!!! Yep, Snoop Dogg is a hidden playable character in the game.

it gets is a 'Jockstrap' mock Rockstar billboard). Play it, enjoy it, and curse it. This is the Jerry Bruckheimer videogame — predictable and formulaic, but just a little bit fun. It's no work of art, but you could do a lot worse. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action / **PLAYERS:** 1 / **DEVELOPER:** Luxoflux / **PUBLISHER:** Activision / **PRICE:** \$99.95 / **RATING:** MA15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Mr. Sheen in presentation.

MINUS: Too much loading. Badasses or not, cops are lame.

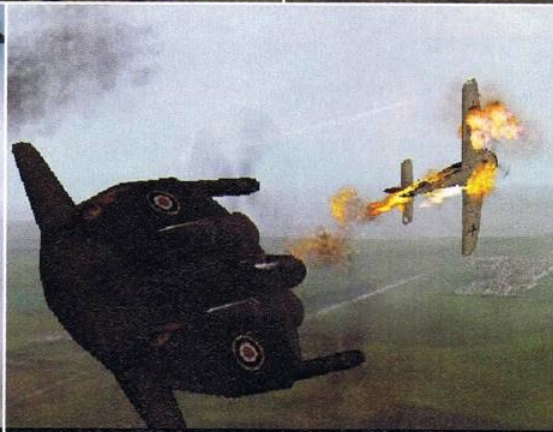
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 93 81

OVERALL

84

True Crime: proving how great GTA3 actually was.

I think I'll go watch *Flying High* instead

Dumbest aircraft design ever?

Cigarette lighter must have been faulty

SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

DANIEL WILKS says, "Nazis, I hate those guys."

H Larry Holland and the team at Totally Games are kind of like the unknown soldiers of gaming. Most people have heard of Carmack or Newell, and the great Shiggy goes without saying, but Holland and his crew are relative unknowns - unknowns who created such classic games as *X-Wing*, *TIE-Fighter* and the first game in the *Secret Weapons* series, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*.

Now the boys are back, tackling familiar ground with an accessible, rollicking arcade style combat flight sim set in a quasi-fictional part of WWII that sees a special group of Allied fighter pilots roving the sky destroying Nazi weapons development, bombing priority targets, shooting down wing after wing of German and Japanese planes and generally making life a living hell for anyone in the Luftwaffe.

QUITE A FEAT

Secret Weapons Over Normandy presents players with 15 lengthy missions, each with numerous objectives and 23 aircraft to pilot. The planes aren't simply limited to fighters as well - throughout the various missions you may find yourself behind the yoke of a Wildcat or Hurricane shooting down enemy fighters or flying a ponderous IL-2 Sturmovik bombing a tank column to clear the way for a Russian tank advance. Whilst it's all well and good to feature lengthy missions with multiple objectives, developers should take note to give players something to do between objectives. A number of the *Secret Weapons* missions feature objectives on opposite sides of the map, necessitating a couple of minutes (literally) of straight flying to get to the next goal, most of the time with

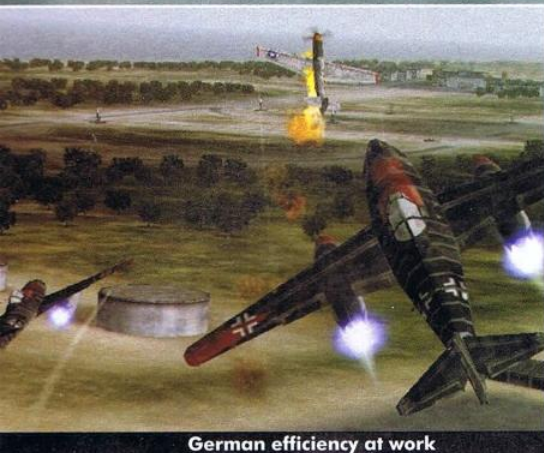
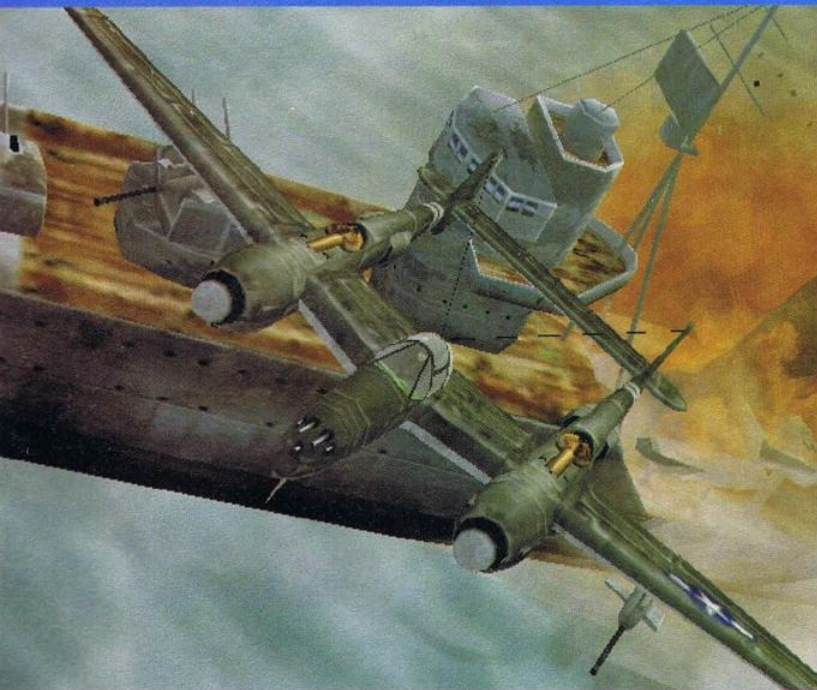
nary an enemy in sight. To add insult to injury it's not a rare occurrence to get to the objective to either have the mission fail because you were too slow or to be routed on to the next objective as your wingmen have already completed the objective you were on your way to.

One of the real highlights of *Secret Weapons* are the introductory cutscenes that precede each of the 15 missions. Although simple in design they work perfectly to convey the serious yet simultaneously "boy's own" nature of the game. The combination of archival still footage, CG animation and letters to home works a treat and really help to bring the whole game together. The in-game graphics are generally less spectacular with some quite low-resolution planes, dull landscapes and unsatisfying explosions yet they somehow manage to come together and churn out

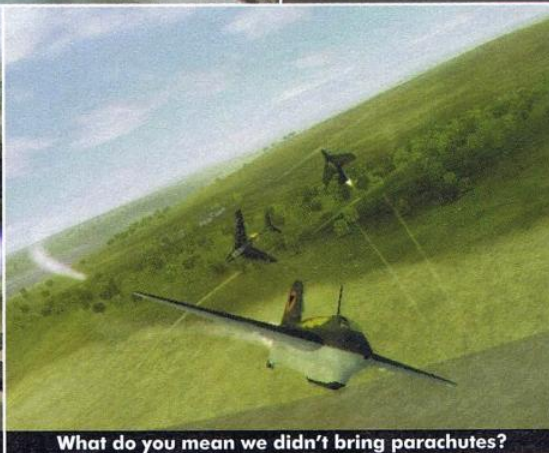
something quite appealing. One of the more interesting (if somewhat pointless) features of the game is the ability to record and replay 15-second snatches of the action at any given time in the game. Ultimately this feature serves no real purpose aside from some pretty cool bragging rights, and from a technical point of view it's quite a feat.

HORDES OF AXIS WARPLANES

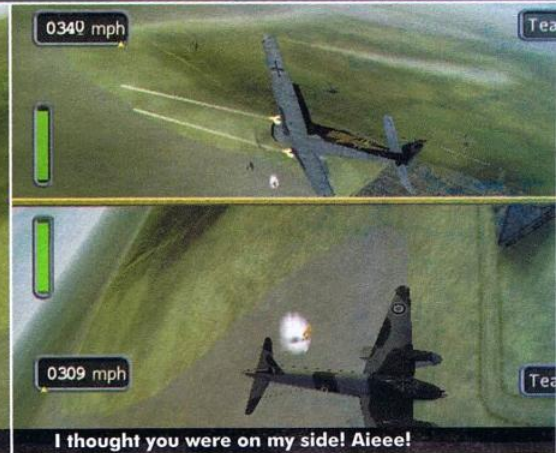
Probably the biggest setback facing *Secret Weapons* is the control system. Although it offers three permutations of both of the basic control setups all these really do is change the basic button configuration. Both the standard arcade style controls and advanced flight sim style just don't feel right. Using a single stick in a combat flight sim just doesn't seem to have enough precision to help in shooting down hordes and hordes of



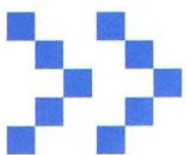
German efficiency at work



What do you mean we didn't bring parachutes?



I thought you were on my side! Aieeee!



IN OUR BOOKS, A MULTIPLAYER OPTION IS FAR MORE PREFERABLE THAN A LEVEL EDITOR ANY DAY OF THE WEEK



ONE FOR DUBYA

Why is it, that after the lengthy preamble detailing how England was the only country to manage to defend against Germany's blitzkrieg and to counter-attack Churchill created a special group of pilots made up of members drawn from all over Europe and even a few (note the word few) Americans, players end up in the role of an American? Honestly – the war is in Europe, it's about a British spearheaded operation but you still have to play an American? Is the Yank market really that fickle that they wouldn't buy a game that doesn't feature one of their own countrymen?

Axis warplanes. Unfortunately the options allowing the player to use both sticks for control don't fare much better with the right stick (meant to control yaw) seeming to strafe rather than perform its function. These problems become apparent as early as the first mission of the game, which sees players striving to shoot down a wing of slow but powerful German Stukas before they blow up an Allied flotilla, a task you'll have to try multiple times due to the lack of any pinpoint accuracy needed to shoot down an enemy flying ace. Strange as it may sound, this inaccuracy doesn't hinder multiplayer at all, as both opponents are saddled with the same drawbacks making for an even playing field.

Combat flight sims often work better on the PC than on a console (due to the range of peripherals

available) but Secret Weapons over Normandy is one of those times where the console version is far more preferable. Why? Secret Weapons on consoles comes bundled with a 2 player head to head multiplayer option whereas the planned PC port will forgo multiplayer altogether in favour of a level editor. In our books, a multiplayer option is far more preferable than a level editor any day of the week. The console version of the game features eight multiplayer maps and numerous game styles to keep you happy.

Unfortunately Larry Holland and his team have failed to recapture lightning in a bottle (unlike the sterling X-Wing and TIE-Fighter) with Secret Weapons Over Normandy but what we are left with is still a highly playable, if somewhat frustrating combat flight sim. <<<

!!! The greatest warplane ever was probably the British Spitfire...

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Flight Combat / PLAYERS: 1-2 / PUBLISHER: LucasArts DEVELOPER: Totally Games PRICE: \$89.95 / RATING: M15+ AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Great planes, excellent cutscenes, long missions.

MINUS: Iffy controls, frustrating, long flight times.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 79 78

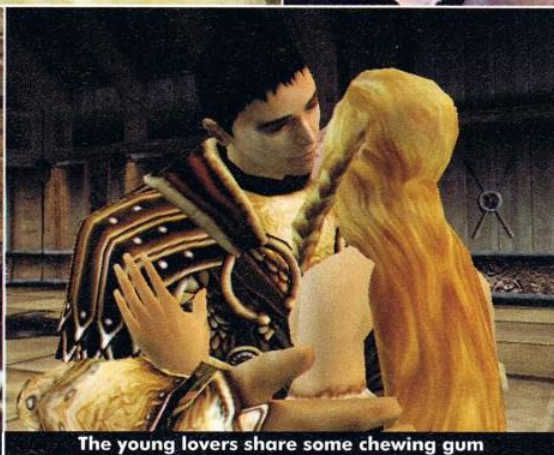
OVERALL

79

An enjoyable airborne romp.



Should have used some surface spray



The young lovers share some chewing gum



Yes, it's time to have at you... have at you all!

GLADIUS

DANIEL STAINES enters the arena and prepares for the worst...

60 HYPER>>

Gladius is a game based on a whole bunch of good ideas. Establish, develop and maintain your own gladiatorial school — that's a good idea. Recruit warriors from a myriad of different races and use combat experience to learn powerful offensive, defensive and magical skills — that's another good idea. Travel across the globe and participate in gladiatorial leagues, tournaments and championships — yep, that's a pretty good idea too. However, as anyone who's played Blinx or The Sims Online can attest, good ideas don't always make for good games. It takes a lot of hard work and design savvy to transfer appealing theory into playable reality. Given LucasArts' track record of late, one would be forgiven for being a little sceptical in this regard. After all, RTX Red Rock sounded pretty good on paper and it turned out to be little more than

mediocre in practice. Could the same thing have happened to Gladius?

DEEP AND SUPREMELY ACCESSIBLE

Well, yeah, it could've — but the important thing is that it didn't. Gladius is actually a really cool game. I know that calling something "cool" is hardly the most professional brand of game criticism on the planet, but that was the word we kept using while we were playing and there really doesn't seem to be anything more appropriate. It's just so COOL that Gladius is as much fun as it sounds. LucasArts has taken a great game concept and fleshed it out with a huge variety of equally well-conceived and skilfully implemented features. This isn't just a Final Fantasy Tactics knock-off with new textures and weapons — it's a deep and supremely accessible

RPG/strategy hybrid that takes the context of its setting and realises it with a set of beautifully constructed game mechanics.

An average game day in Gladius will see you hiring mercenaries, training recruits, maintaining veterans, buying weapons and supplies, participating in leagues and entering tournaments. A busy day will have you doing all that as well as some side questing, world-map trekking and random encounter fighting. The feeling of industriousness is constant and it imbues one with a real sense of responsibility and involvement, developing to the point where you can actually become quite harried and frustrated if your school isn't performing as well as it could be. This is what we mean when we say that Gladius realises its setting through game mechanics. You don't feel like you're in charge of a school

of arena warriors because the background narrative and character models told you so. You feel like you're in charge of a school of arena warriors because ... well, you're in charge of a school of arena warriors and you have to deal with the host of responsibilities that entails.

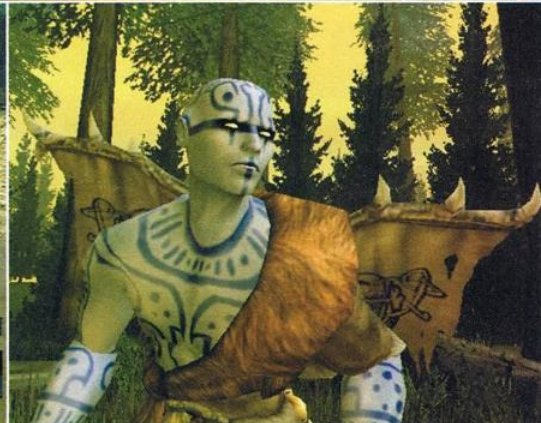
However, managing your school and its gladiators is only one half of the Gladius experience. The other half is the actual gladiatorial combat itself, which comes in the form of an easy-to-learn yet surprisingly deep turn-based battle system that fans of games like Final Fantasy Tactics, Advance Wars or Tactics Ogre will immediately be familiar with. Basically, there's an even number of specialist units on the field at once and each one can perform up to two basic actions or one special action per round. Special actions consume "action-points" that are accumulated at the rate of one a



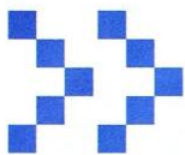
Those could take someone's eyes out



It pays to have a freakin' fat friend



The guys tattooed me whilst I was passed out



THE hardcore and the patient will relish its **DEEP MANAGEMENT AND COMBAT GAMEPLAY MECHANICS**



OH DARLING, THAT HAIR'S SIMPLY AWFUL!

Unlike a lot of other turn-based tactical games, *Gladius* comes with a nifty character editor that you can use to customise your character's appearance quite significantly. Hair, skin colour, clothes – it's all here. I tried to make my warrior princess look like my girlfriend. It was... unsuccessful. Apparently, spectacles and arena combat just don't go well together. Who'd have thought?

turn. When these two elements are combined with a context sensitive damage system (attacks from the side and back do more damage), the result is a brand of extremely addictive and enjoyable tactical gameplay perfectly suited to a console. Playing *Gladius* is as easy as pie, but mastering it is a matter of patience and skill.

CHURNING OUT THE FUN STUFF

Not everyone will have the patience necessary to uncover the deeper depths of *Gladius'* gameplay though. If there's a bad thing to be said about this game, it's that it is a tad on the repetitive side. Developing your school entails entering dozens upon dozens of leagues and tournaments and the combat begins to feel formulaic and predictable as a result. LucasArts have done an

admirable job of trying to alleviate this problem by introducing a variety of different gladiatorial gametypes such as King of the Hill and Destroy the Monument, but the fact is that most of these boil down to the basic task of hitting your enemies with everything you've got until victory is yours. At any rate, this is a flaw that can easily be overlooked with a reasonable amount of patience and persistence. And trust us, *Gladius* is definitely

a game that's worth sticking to. Superficial gamers may find themselves turned off by its repetitiveness, but the hardcore and the patient will relish its deep management and combat gameplay mechanics. It's uplifting to see such a good idea done justice and it's nice to know that LucasArts are still capable of churning out the fun stuff when they want to. <<

!!! There's a cool co-op mode for up to four players.

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Strategy/RPG /
PLAYERS: 1-4 / DEVELOPER:
LucasArts / PUBLISHER: LucasArts /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Accessible and deep combat, robust management mechanics.

MINUS: A bit repetitive, sometimes looks a little bland.

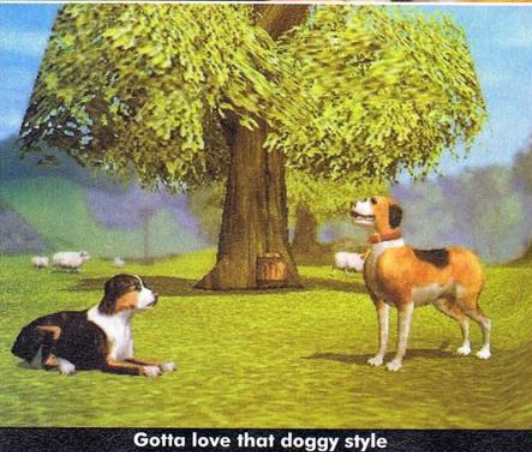
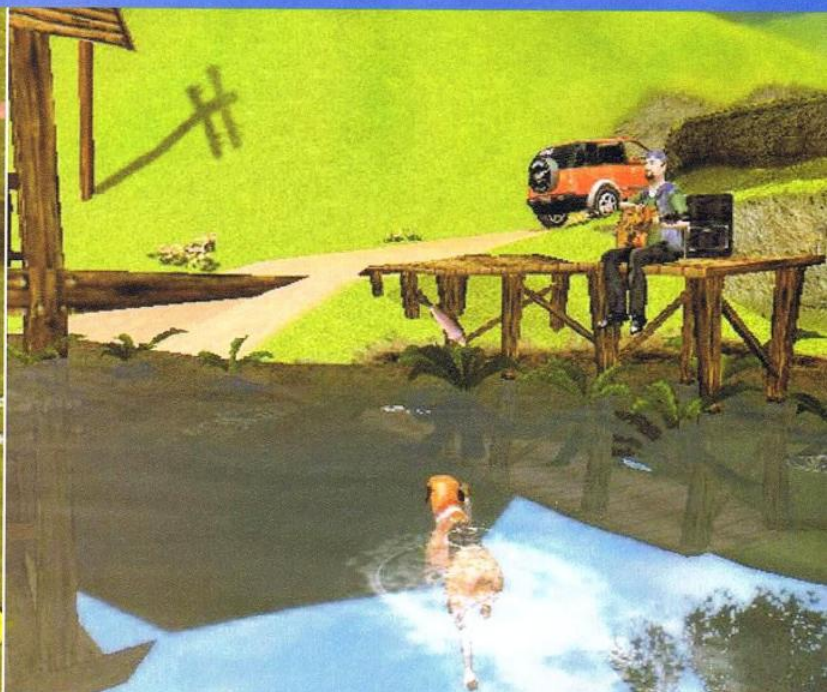
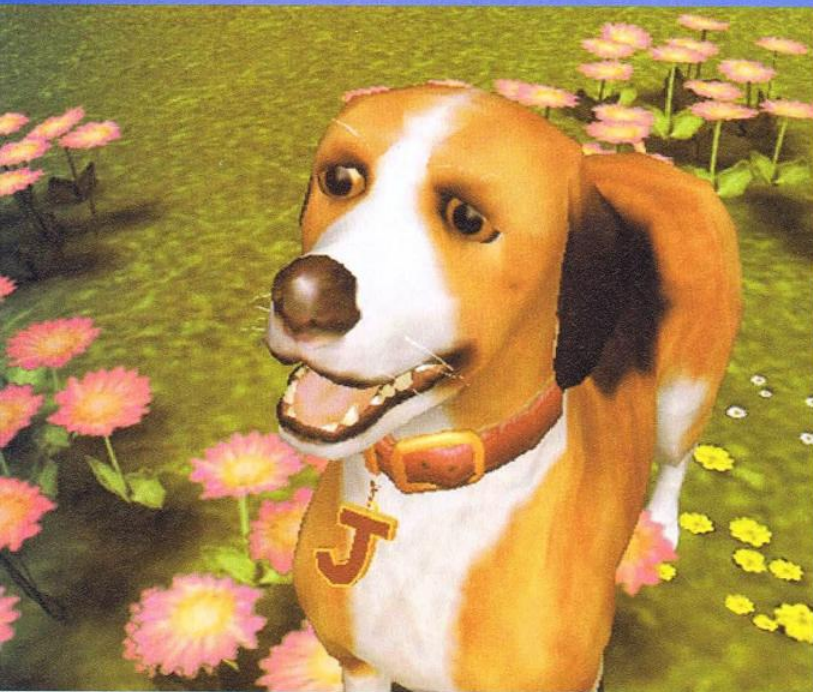
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

78 80 90

OVERALL

88

Deep and rewarding tactical gaming



Gotta love that doggy style



That is one obvious stink up ahead



That's not snow... it's pigeon shit.

DOG'S LIFE

DANIEL STAINES is our only house trained reviewer...

Originality's a funny thing sometimes. In an industry like interactive entertainment, where "me-too" clones are a dime a dozen and risky creativity is often frowned upon by the suits with all the money, originality of the kind we see in Dog's Life should definitely be applauded. I mean, it's a game where you're a dog and you go about doing dog things. You can track people and animals by their scent, you can dig up the ground looking for bones and you can chase cats and chickens around all over the place. You can even pee on a person's leg if so inclined.

SMELL-O-VISION

There really hasn't been a game made that's quite like this one and it makes for a very interesting play experience ... for the first half-an-hour, anyway. You see, the problem with Dog's Life (DL from now on) is that it isn't very fun for very long. Originality aside, it is definitely one of the most repetitive

and linear games we've ever played. The goal of the game is to get your doggy-girlfriend back from a trio of evil dogcatchers who intend to use her and the other canines they've captured for nefarious purposes. This is achieved by making your way through a variety of towns and powering up your dog — a mongrel named Jake — by finding bones to eat. And this is where we come to the repetitious part.

Generally speaking, there are two ways to get bones. The first is by going into "smell-o-vision" and collecting a set number of multicoloured scents that are scattered about each area. For what it's worth, smell-o-vision looks great and does an excellent job of making one "feel" like a dog. Unfortunately, however, the actual task of collecting scents is unchallenging and remains essentially the same throughout the entirety of the game's very brief lifespan. There's

a scent, you walk up to it and — bang — scent collected. Repeat this about a thousand times and you've encapsulated approximately seventy percent of DL's gameplay.

David Lucas (of Cowboy Bebop fame) provides the voice-over for Dingo.

BONING UP

The other thirty percent consists of quests and mini-games that you can also complete to obtain bones. Quests, such as they are, are all essentially variants of the "find this and bring it back to me" formula and are almost as repetitious as collecting scents. The mini-games — which include digging holes, racing other dogs and marking your territory with urine — are fun for a while, but quickly lose their appeal when you discover that the same ones are in just about every level you go to.

As a dog simulator, DL is a fabulous piece of work. And as a kid's game, DL is also excellent. More seasoned gamers, however, should be wary. <<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Adventure/Simulation /
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Frontier /
PUBLISHER: SCEE /
PRICE: \$89.95 / RATING: G /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Amazing art style, fun and rewarding gameplay ideas.

MINUS: Quirkiness could initially turn some people away.

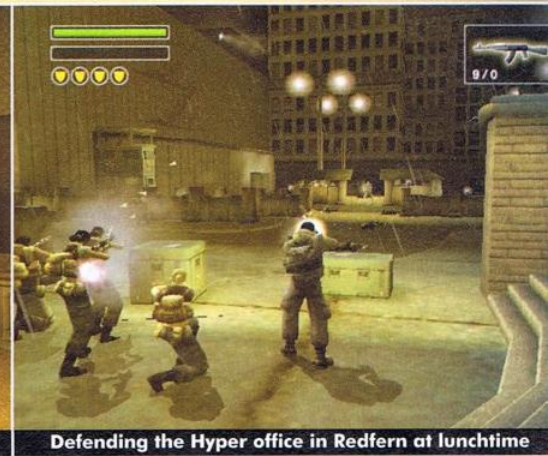
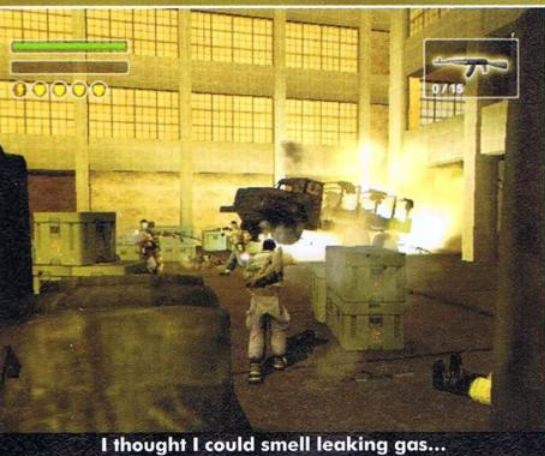
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 83 70

OVERALL

75

An average game with a great concept.



I thought I could smell leaking gas...

He really hated that painting, I guess

Defending the Hyper office in Redfern at lunchtime

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

BRETT ROBINSON celebrates his freedom...

Freedom Fighters' setting is an interesting one indeed – a kind of alternative reality in which the Soviet Union is the reigning global superpower. Chris Stone is a New York plumber whose bad day suddenly gets a whole lot worse when the Soviet armed forces decide to pay the US a surprise visit. The Soviets say they're there to liberate American citizens from their corrupt leaders, but Chris isn't having a bar (or pipe) of it. It's your job to lead Chris and a band of like-minded patriots on a crusade to send those Commie bastards packing. Reckon you're up to the task?

A NEW YORK PLUMBER

The mission system is where Freedom Fighters makes its most welcome break with convention. The story is divided into a number of chapters, with each chapter covering your actions in a specific geographical region. You're presented with a map of the current region and a list of

objectives – for example, blowing up some bridges to the east, capturing an ammunition dump in the south and destroying a heliport by the harbour. You're free to tackle these objectives in any order, but the game operates on a dynamic logistics system. Consequently, demolishing the heliport will clear the ammunition dump and bridge areas of Hind gunships, capturing the ammo depot will give you access to more weapons than you'd normally have, and blowing up the bridges will prevent armoured personnel carriers from delivering reinforcements to the region. It's a brilliant system that opens up a whole spectrum of tactical possibilities, particularly when you move on to larger regions later in the game.

Instead of assigning a certain number of rebels to your squad for each mission, Freedom Fighters makes

use of a terrific little recruitment system. You're rewarded for achieving objectives and performing good deeds – like sacrificing a medpack to heal a wounded civilian – with Charisma Points. As you accumulate CP's you'll be able to convince more urban warriors to join your cause, up to a maximum of 12 fighters.

!!! www.jesperkyd.com
Official website of the talented man behind the Freedom Fighters and Hitman soundtracks.

COMMIE ARSE

The command system itself is quite simplistic, but that's fine because your squadmates are perfectly capable of looking after themselves. They'll take up positions behind barricades or debris, man machinegun emplacements and generally kick Commie arse with very little input from you. Most impressive is Freedom Fighters' representation of urban guerrilla warfare. It's gritty, it's intense, and every street-by-street battle of attrition feels utterly authentic. <<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Squad-based Shooter /
PLAYERS: 1-4 (Xbox & PS2 only) /
DEVELOPER: IO / PUBLISHER: EA /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: MA15+ /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Awesome combat, terrific mission system, molotov cocktails!

MINUS: Loses some of its impact on the easier difficulty settings.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 90 86

OVERALL

87

Enlist now – you won't regret it.



How he's balancing I just don't know



Whoops, wrong turn... oh crap!



Cue avalanche...

SSX 3

Q. WANG takes time off the court to go snowboarding...

First things first. If you're a snowboarder, then go get Amped 2. SSX 3, like the previous games in the series, is not really a snowboarding game. It's actually a racing game with tricks, set on snow. Of course, that's not necessarily a bad thing, and there are plenty of people out there who liked the blend of gameplay elements in the last two games.

ONE HUGE MOUNTAIN

With SSX 3, EA Big have come to the development process with a new graphics engine and a slightly different approach. It's certainly a more competent game, spanning a wider array of gameplay, with everything from racing and half-pipe comps to slopestyle and miscellaneous challenges. The entire game takes place on one huge mountain, but you'll need to unlock the three peaks in turn, so there's a familiar progression system at its

heart. There's also the much talked about ability to board all the way down the mountain from the highest peak in a half an hour run. It's cool, we'll give them that, but ultimately the freedom isn't quite what you'd expect, since despite the many short cuts, some sections are actually very restrictive, with deviations resulting in going "out of bounds".

And although the course design is a step above previous efforts, it's still not one of the development team's strongest areas.

Aside from the whole mountain concept, the other big change in approach is in incorporating more freestyle snowboarding. To that end, EA Big have included a combo timer and board press system. When you land a trick a timer pops up on screen and if you can launch into a new trick before it runs out the two tricks are chained. The combo

system is strengthened by the ability to board press (butter) in between tricks to keep the combo alive. It's a good idea that works relatively well, allowing for some cool slopestyle areas that are littered with ramps and grinds.

!!! Wow, an entire SSX review without once saying the word "uber"... oh, damn.

ON THE MOON

The gameplay is much the same as it was before. It still feels like boarding on the moon, with ridiculous airs and a very floaty feel. It's still very forgiving most of the time, so you can land sideways, and if you release from a trick early enough your rider will automatically align himself to land. In other words, this is a game that anyone can pick up and play. Fortunately, it also has a stack of longevity, with heaps to unlock, countless shortcuts to discover, and player stats, tricks, music and more to buy. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Racing / PLAYERS: 1-2 / DEVELOPER: EA Big / PUBLISHER: EA / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Good, lightweight fun.

MINUS: Chuggy framerate on PS2, more garnish than substance.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

83 88 79

OVERALL

83

A little fluffy, but the best game in the series.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS... WHICH DEMON-KILLER WILL YOU BE?



Buffy the vampire slayer™

CHAOS BLEEDS



BATTLE AS BUFFY & 5 OTHER
FAVOURITE CHARACTERS.



STORY BASED ON A LOST EPISODE
OF THE TELEVISION SERIES.



MULTI-PLAYER CHAOS WITH
SUPPORT FOR UP TO 4 PLAYERS
ON THE SAME SCREEN.



- UNIQUE WEAPONRY AND OVER 150 CHARACTER-SPECIFIC SLAYER MOVES AND COMBINATIONS-NEW EVIL CHARACTERS SUCH AS ZOMBIE GORILLAS
- BONUS FEATURES:
• INTERVIEWS, CAST PHOTOS, OUTTAKES, AND MORE!
• IN COLLABORATION WITH SERIES CREATOR JOSS WHEDON

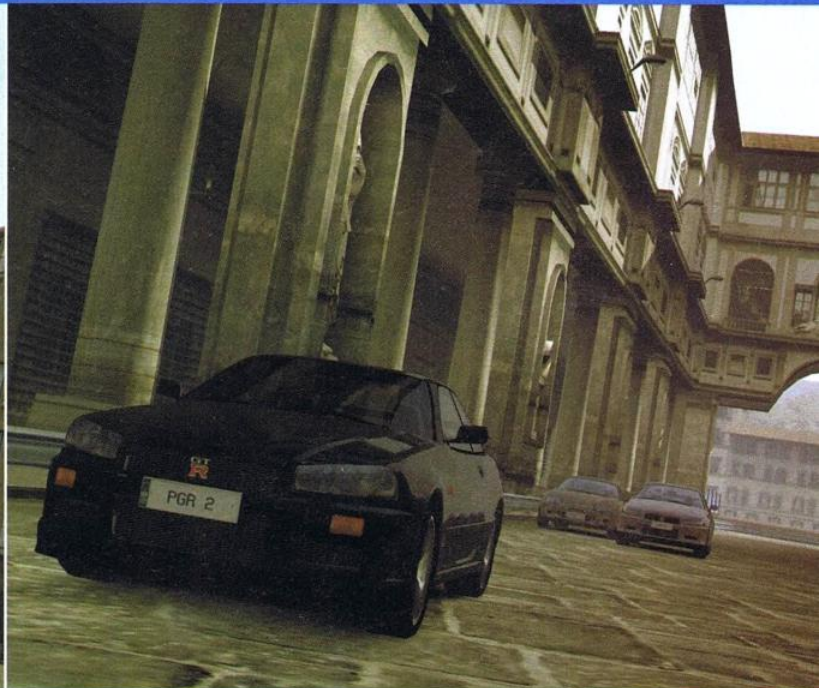
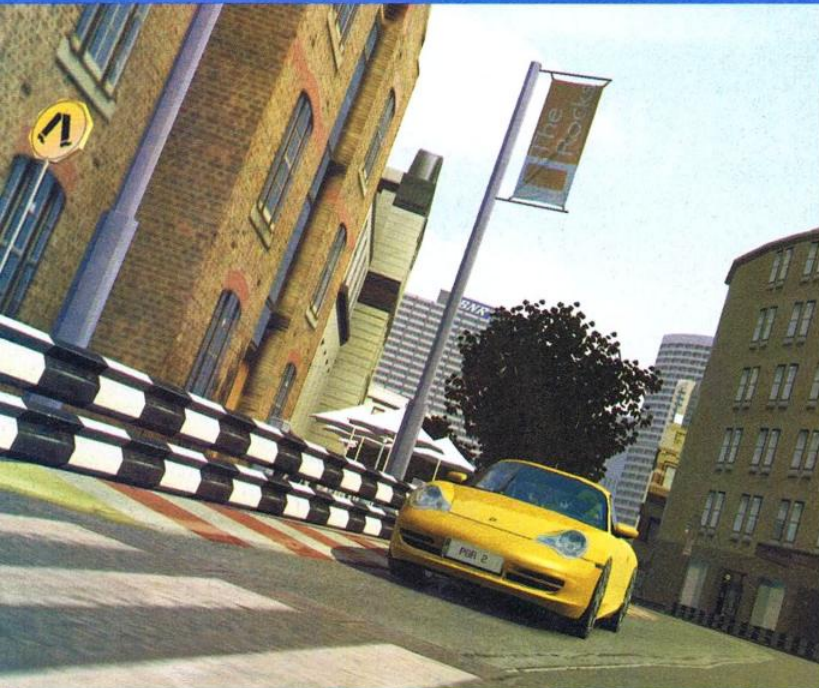
PlayStation 2



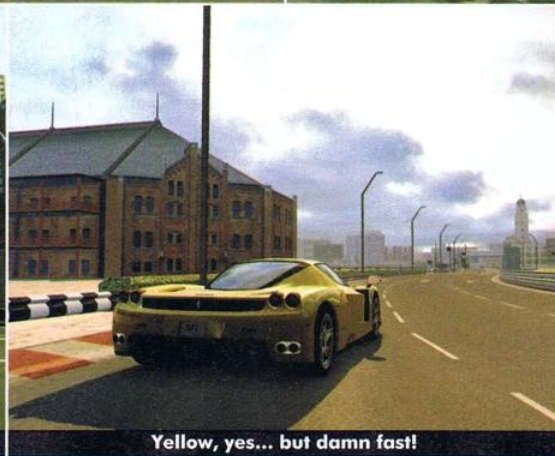
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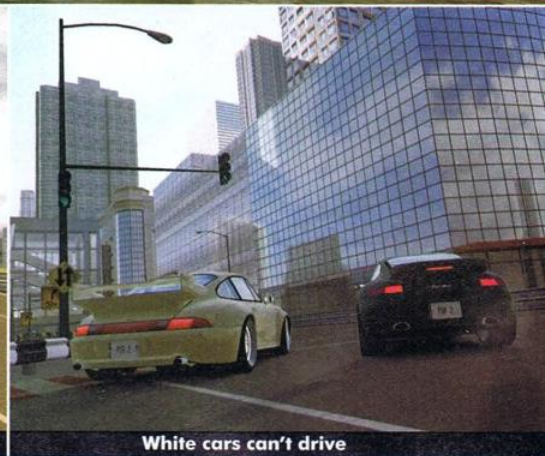
SLAY 'EM.. TODAY!



Just imagine the screeching tyre sound



Yellow, yes... but damn fast!



White cars can't drive

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE goes in search of "great line"...

H The Dreamcast's Metropolis: Street Racer carved out quite the niche back in 2001. At that time, we'd all recognised Gran Turismo 2 as the yardstick when it came to serious console racers. But M:SR was as close to GT2 as Mario Kart was. Suddenly M:SR decreed racing isn't about winning, it's about being the coolest. The application of the game's measure of style, Kudos, was a little rough, but it was a novel, compelling title. In 2002, when Bizarre Creations were willingly pulled under Microsoft's wing, they squeezed out the best racer for the Xbox launch, in the form of Project Gotham Racing. Similar to its Dreamcast predecessor, Hyper praised it for the refinement of a fresh concept, "A game that has managed to create an art form out of hooning".

FRILL HER UP

But Gotham 2 isn't going to receive the same level of generosity for the

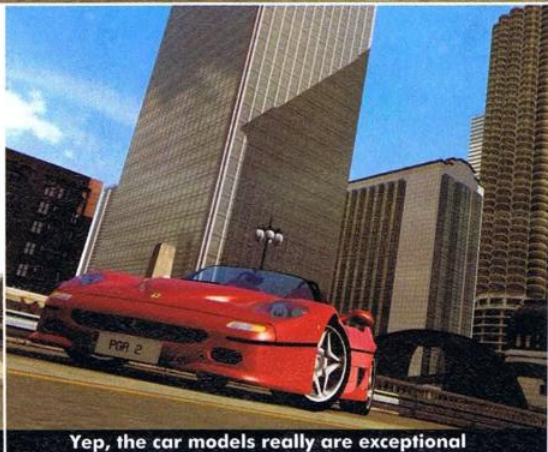
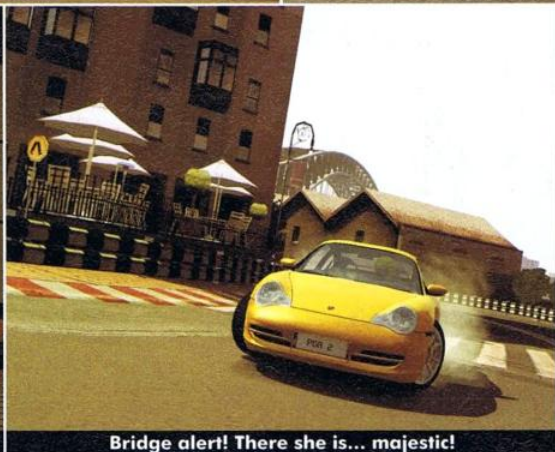
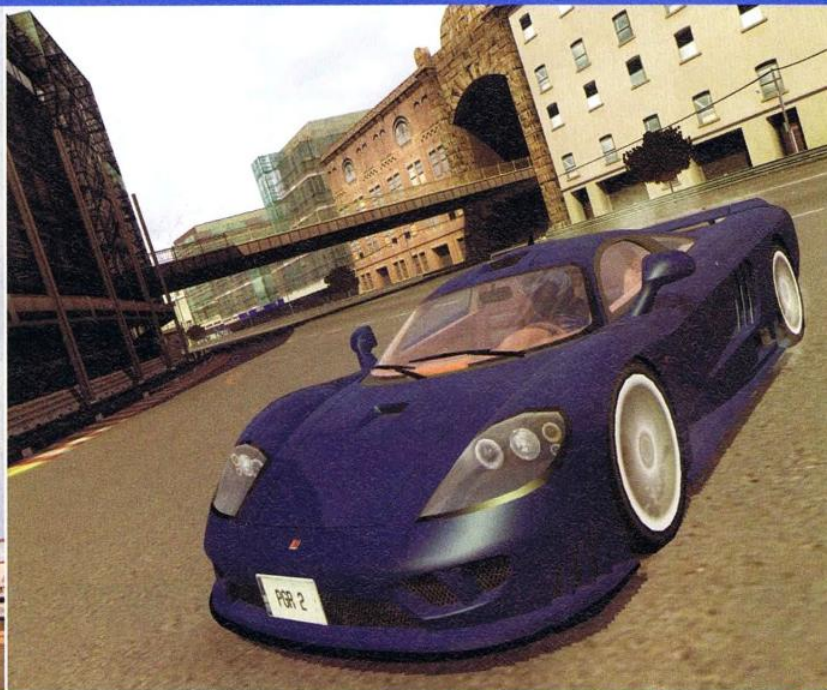
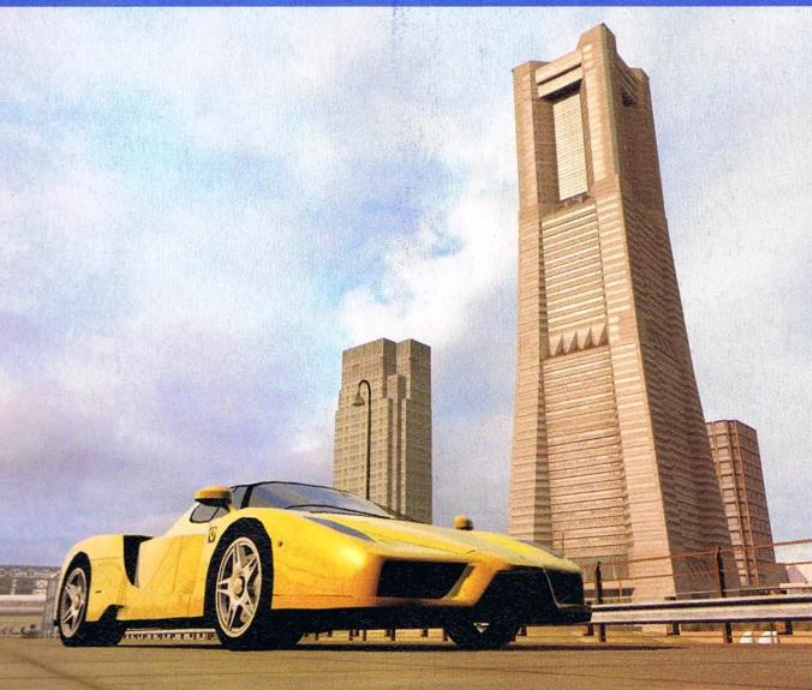
novelty of its concept as Gotham was afforded. Kudos is an established norm now, as Need for Speed Underground's stylistic rewards rip-off attests to. So here's the bad news: the racing in Project Gotham Racing is an almost identical experience to the original Gotham. There are better graphics, more cities, more vehicles, different progression structures and more music, but this plays very much the same. That is, the opponent AI and narrow courses make street races frustrating, the cities are pretty yet eerily dull, the event formats are identical, and pulling Kudosly moves is only actually relevant in Cone Challenges. Though attempts to offer rewards for different styles of racing are made with the incorporation of the abstract 'Good Line' reward, its inconsistency means that in Cone Challenges you wouldn't want to rely on hitting

good lines to link massive combos — something judged so ambiguously will only lead to frustration when thousands of Kudos are involved. We'll stick to slides, thank you very much. Meanwhile, though repetition is minimised through Gotham 2's introduction of car classes, many of the events could be seen as unremarkable stuffing to draw the game out. Still, the overwhelming number of events (14 tiers in World Series, 60 Arcade races and close to 200 Time Attack events) makes this a behemoth of a racer, and provides the first indication of what Gotham 2 is all about: frills.

Gotham 2 is simply bigger, broader, stronger and with a better haircut than its predecessor. Refinement has been made with the structure of the game, particularly to enforce a greater exploration of the game's vehicle catalogue: now the Kudos World Series is divided into

car class-based tiers, Arcade mode has no vehicle select option, and the Time Attack mode has one challenge for both each car and course. Meanwhile, Live functionality invades every menu screen (in a good way), promising eight player races, collisions, full voice, friend list-compatibility and considerable flexibility in setting up games: we can't wait to try it. Instantly uploading your times to global leaderboards means no longer do you race in a vacuum — that lap you

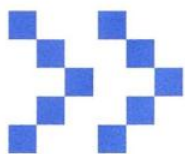




Could I take this for a test drive? Muahah...

Bridge alert! There she is... majestic!

Yep, the car models really are exceptional



ENGINE NOISES ARE DIVERSE AND SATISFYING, TRACKS ARE OF A CONSISTENTLY BRILLIANT GRAPHICAL STANDARD

just did: it's the seventh fastest in the world, ever. This extra level of competition should also reaffirm the measure of Kudos in events such as Time Attack – hopefully Kudos and speed will be sought equally. Add to this four-player split screen and system link and Gotham 2 has multiplayer down.

SOMEHOW MORE IMPORTANT But the polish continues throughout the package. Never does it appear the game has been rushed in any way. Menus are clean, options are extensive, engine noises are diverse and satisfying, tracks are of a consistently brilliant graphical standard, and three radio stations in each of the eleven cities means some 400 tracks included with the game. We particularly like the cute Showroom mode, where you can wander in first person around a building looking at all the game's

cars motor-show style. The suspiciously empty 'Xbox Live' room in this building points directly at downloadable cars. We like it, even if the first-person movement makes us physically sick. The car models in particular are brilliant – tailgating the car in front you'll be amazed at the clarity of the textures and lines up close. As good as the cities are though, it's all a little bit too 28 Days Later for our liking – the only movement you witness is the odd blowing newspaper or flock of birds, accentuating the eerie tone. At least the drivers are visible in the cars. Of particular note is the appropriate usage of colour in each city. Stockholm's grey chill contrasts strongly with Sydney's vibrant Rocks sun. Sydney? Oh yes, if you've missed our previous coverage, Gotham 2 uses Sydney's

!!! The Sydney radio stations include MMM, 2-Day FM and NOVA.

Rocks area as one of its locales. Accuracy is good, and though you're restricted to north of Wynyard, and west of the Quay, it makes us feel somehow more important than we actually are. So, are we convinced by the magnitude of the package? Thankfully, the returning Gotham racing experience is solid and rewarding, consistent and predictable, with a supreme vibrating function that actually helps you judge your level of traction. In the end, we've played it before... but never like this. Gotham 2 is a superbly polished title, filled with a huge array of events, courses and vehicles. Even without Live it's great, but Live gives meaning to your success. A Christmas must-buy, and the best racing package on Xbox. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Driving / PLAYERS: 1- multi (Live) / DEVELOPER: Bizarre Creations / PUBLISHER: Microsoft / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G / AVAILABLE: Now /

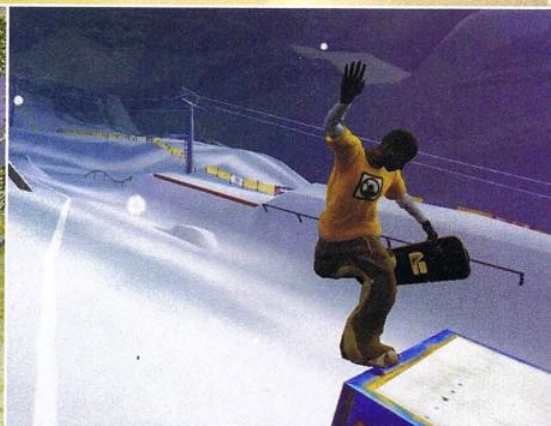
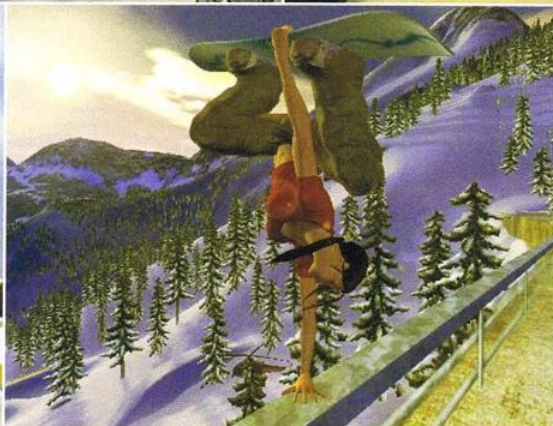
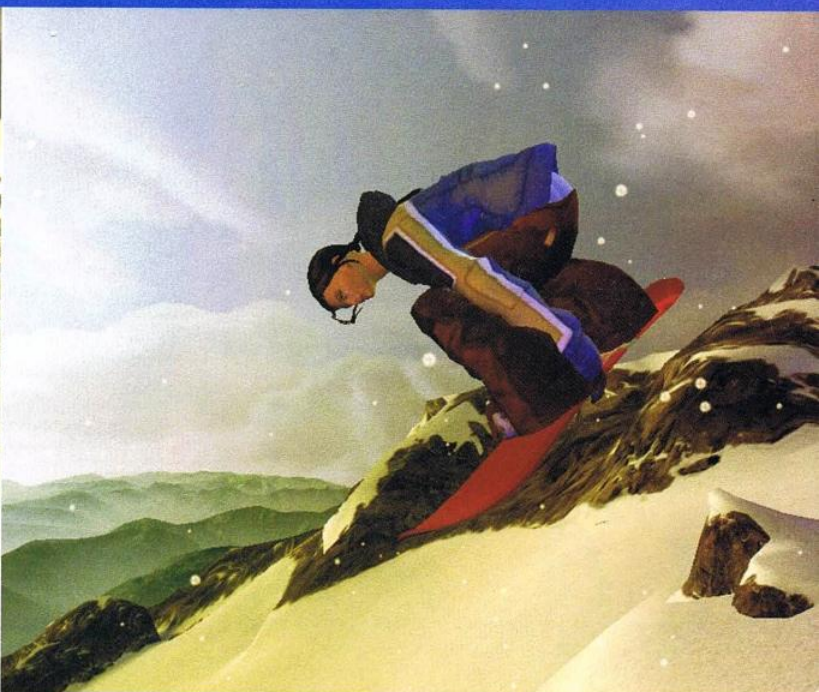
HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: A monster of a game. Great use of Live.
MINUS: Little advance in racing from Gotham.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
93 91 87

OVERALL
92



A superb package brought to life by Live.



He'll be grinding with his face in a minute

Hey my hand has frozen stuck!

I thought there was something stuck to my shoe

AMPED 2

CAM SHEA's gettin' agro off this kicker...

H Two years on from *Amped*, and nothing much has changed in the world of videogame snowboarding. No other game has come close to capturing the freeform boarding and wide open mountains of the original, but the question is not whether the sequel can deliver more of this powdery goodness, but whether Microsoft Game Studios can iron out the kinks in the play mechanics from the original.

SIMPLE BUT STYLISH

Bet first, let's talk about what's new, what's improved and what you can expect from *Amped 2*. The main structure of the game is much the same as in the original. You create a character for Career mode and try and take him or her up the world rankings. This is achieved through high scores, showing off for the media, impressing sponsors, performing on photo shoots, winning events and taking

pros out in one-on-one challenges. All these elements represent separate goals on each mountainside, and there are several difficulty levels for each to be unlocked and beaten. As you work your way through the challenges and unlock more slopes to ride on, your ranking will steadily rise and you'll earn stat points to allocate to both your board and your rider. So far, so similar.

The actual gameplay hasn't changed a great deal either. The left analogue stick is still used for steering, spins and flips, while the right analogue stick is used for grabs, the triggers are used for tweaking, and the face buttons are used for jumps, jibs and lip tricks. The most significant change to the controls would have to be the implementation of buttering. Buttering is much like manualing in *Tony Hawk*, so you move the left stick up then down, or down then up and your boarder will start balancing the

board on either the tail or the nose. It's a sweet movement in freestyle snowboarding today, and we thought it would work well in *Amped 2* to help link tricks and build up large combos. And indeed, when you mean to do it, buttering is a solid addition. The problem is, however, that the game is so sensitive to slight movements on the left analogue stick that you'll find yourself buttering when you're simply trying to steer the damn snowboard. This isn't just frustrating — it's a massive flaw that often ruins the flow of the game and can destroy your chances in events like sponsorship demos, where streamlined boarding is important.

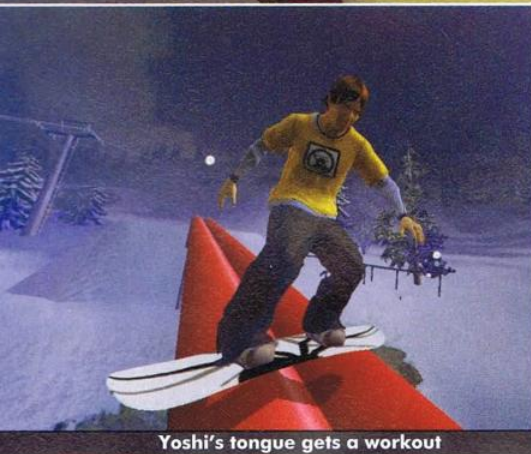
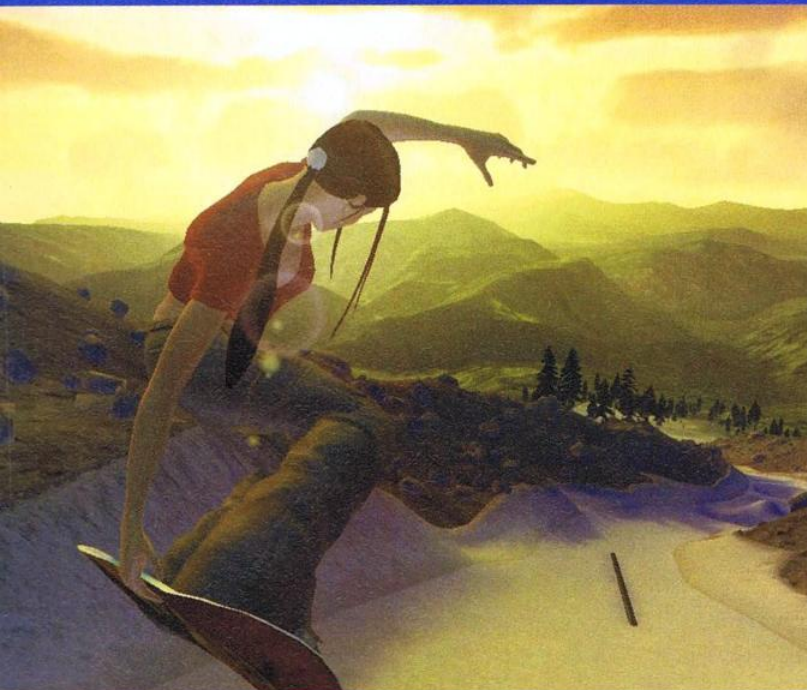
Another change in *Amped 2* is the "steez" system, otherwise known as "style". The basic idea is to reward boarders more for simple but stylish tricks over the usual crazy and convoluted maneuvers. Thus, the aim is to gracefully spin or flip, rather

than going for maximum rotation, as well as busting sweet tweaked grabs and jibs. Landings also have a bearing on your trick scores too, with stomped landings giving you bonus points.

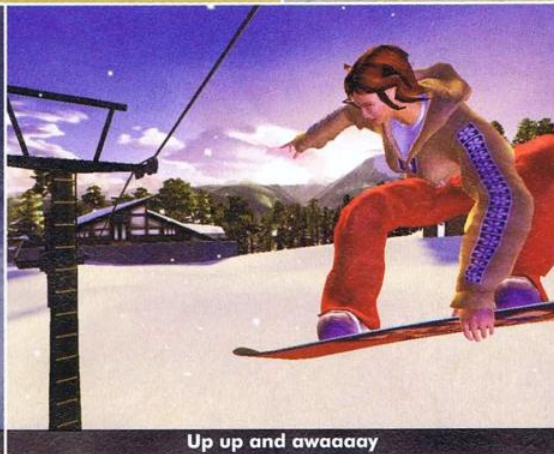
The other new addition to *Amped 2* is the inclusion of snowskating. If you haven't seen a snowskate before, they're slightly larger than a skateboard, with a second smaller deck underneath with metal edges for cutting in the snow and a rubbery grip on top. So yes, no bindings, just you, your shoes and the snowskate. It's a pretty funky new sport, allowing for kick flips, shove its and a different style of boarding. The snowskate courses are generally mini-parks within the other courses, and certainly help break up the action.

GREAT COURSE DESIGN

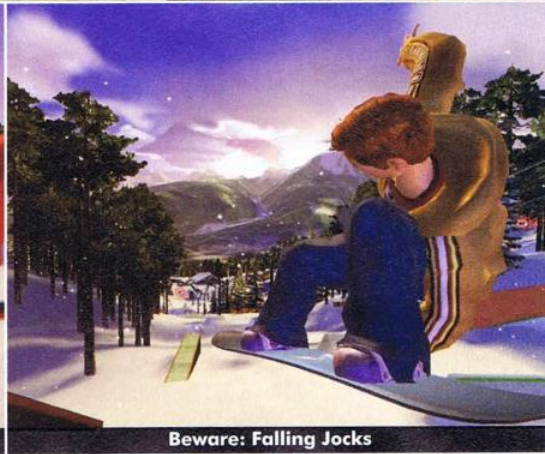
Like the first game, the biggest strength of *Amped 2* is in the course design. It really does feel like having a



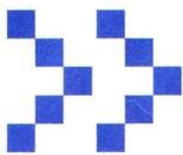
Yoshi's tongue gets a workout



Up up and awaaaay



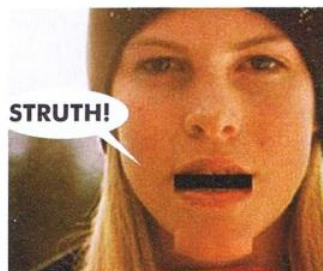
Beware: Falling Jocks



NO BINDINGS, JUST YOU, YOUR SHOES AND THE SNOWSKATE

SHREDDING... AND GRATING

Amped 2's soundtrack is outstanding, with over 300 alt-indie tracks, plus support for custom soundtracks. Pity the same can't be said for some of the voice acting. Hearing Australian pro Torah Bright spout stuff like "no shrimp on the barbie for you", "stone the crows" and "choice bro" is rather embarrassing. The bizarre noises that sponsors make are also very grating.



mountain at your disposal – there are countless alternate lines, and you'll very rarely find yourself going out of bounds. The emphasis on freestyle snowboarding also means that courses are absolutely packed with half pipes, kickers, rails and potential combos. If anything the course design is even better than in the original, and the selection of locations span everywhere from Utah to Australia. Yep, Australia's own Mt Buller is in there, and having gone boarding there only a few months ago we were pleasantly surprised by just how faithful many of the locations (such as the village) look in the game.

Unfortunately though, the great course design is married to somewhat unreliable gameplay, where you can never be sure just how the game will react. Sometimes the landings are really forgiving, sometimes they're

overly tough. Sometimes you can come off a jib sideways, sometimes you can't. Sometimes the game will count a grab then butter then jib as a single combo, sometimes as separate tricks. It all feels a little glitchy to be honest – just like the original did – and we're really disappointed that MGS weren't able to get a little more consistency in the game mechanics. It's not like the game is ruined, but it does feel like skill can only get you so far, with the final outcome being at the whim of the game.

While the visuals may not have the style of a game like SSX 3, Amped 2's realistic depiction of environments and boarders suit the freestyle focus of the game, and the draw distance helps further emphasise the scale. The lag-free online play simply sweetens the deal. <<

!!! Amped 2 is another XSN Sports title, so now there's really no excuse not to go get Xbox Live!

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Snowboarding / PLAYERS: 1-8 / DEVELOPER: MGS / PUBLISHER: Microsoft / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Wicked course design, online play.

MINUS: The butter system almost ruin the game.

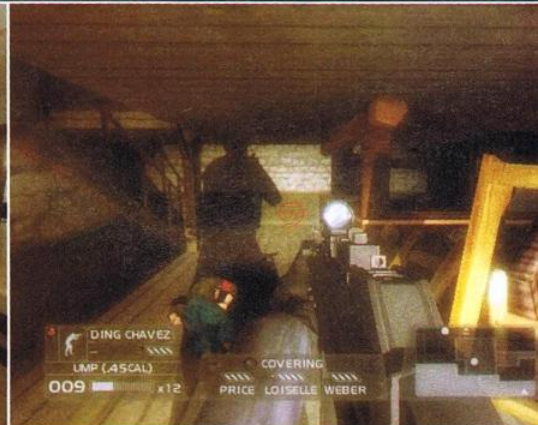
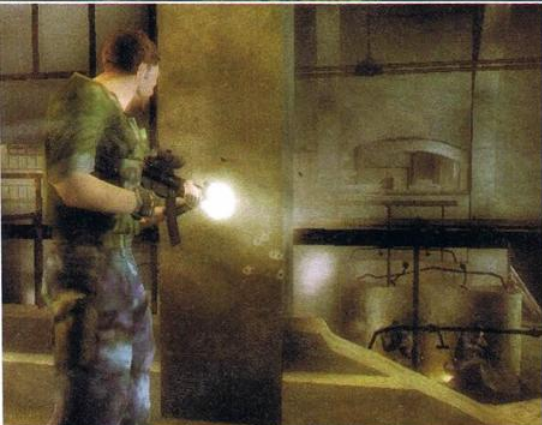
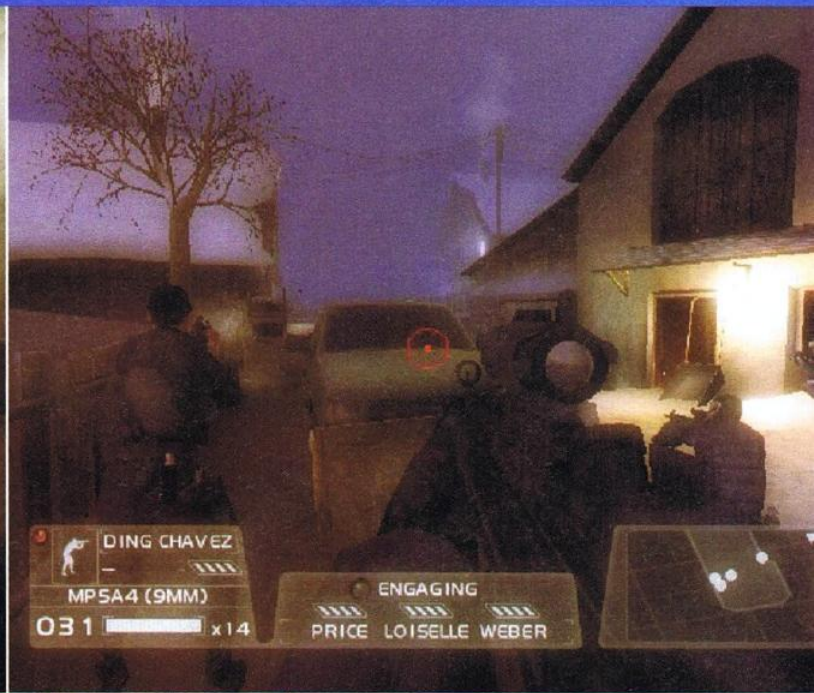
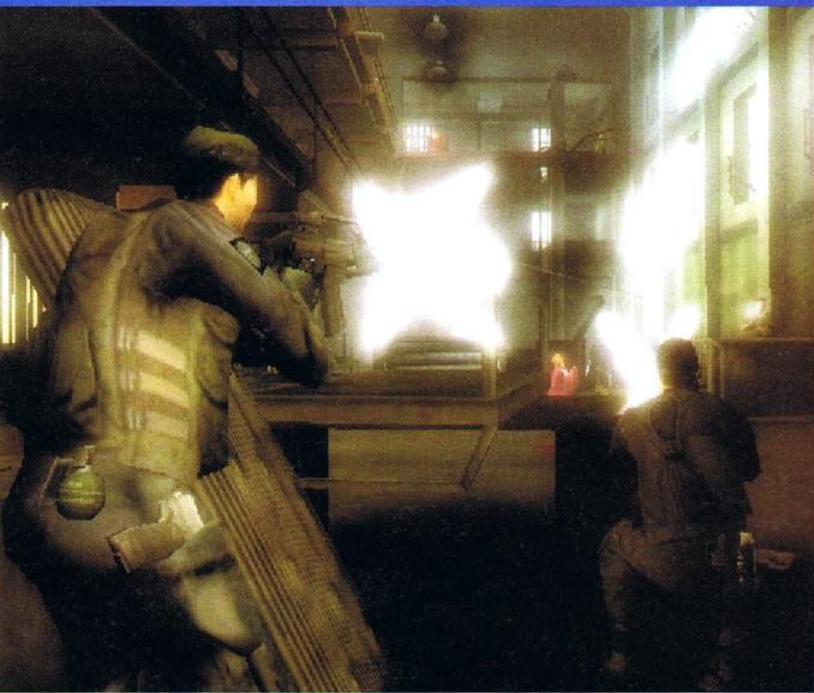
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

86 86 84

OVERALL

86

Amped 2 keeps the series balanced on the cusp of greatness.



Who stuck this flashlight down my gun barrel?!

Hey guys, can we stop for a coffee soon?

Shoot, shoot! Oh, it's my shadow, sorry...

RAINBOW SIX 3

BRETT ROBINSON wonders what's at the end of the rainbow...

70 HYPER >>

You have to feel sorry for the members of Australia's counter-terrorism units. In other countries, counter-terrorism operatives spend all their time killing terrorists and rescuing hot women held hostage by terrorists. But with no terrorists in Australia to kill, the most exciting thing our operatives get to do is fly over Sydney in Blackhawk helicopters. The rest of the time, our boys in black are stuck down on the shooting range, where they struggle not to nick the ears of the Bob Carr hostage cutouts when firing at the terrorist cutouts. It is therefore fortunate that our operatives have access to games like *Rainbow Six 3* — without them they'd undoubtedly get very bored. And as we all know, when people with access to flashbangs and claymore mines get bored, it's only a matter of time before someone loses an eye.

TRUTH BE TOLD

Just to clear up any confusion, *Rainbow Six* isn't a direct port of the PC's *Rainbow Six: Raven Shield*. True, there are some similarities between the two games, and some shared content (sound effects and some objects and textures, for instance), but there are also some significant differences. In a first for the *Rainbow Six* franchise, *Rainbow Six 3* finally does away with the antiquated pre-mission planning phase, which means you can now pick your primary and secondary weapons and other gear, then jump straight into a mission. Like *Raven Shield* and *SWAT 3*, *Rainbow Six 3* features an intelligent reticle system that allows you to issue squadmates with orders corresponding to the object the reticle is pointing at. Where *R63* goes one better, however, is in its support of voice commands.

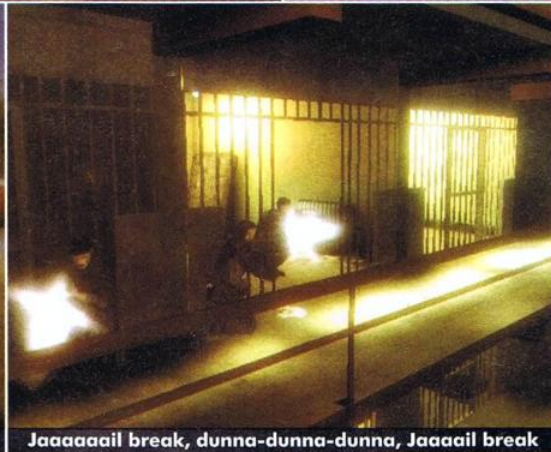
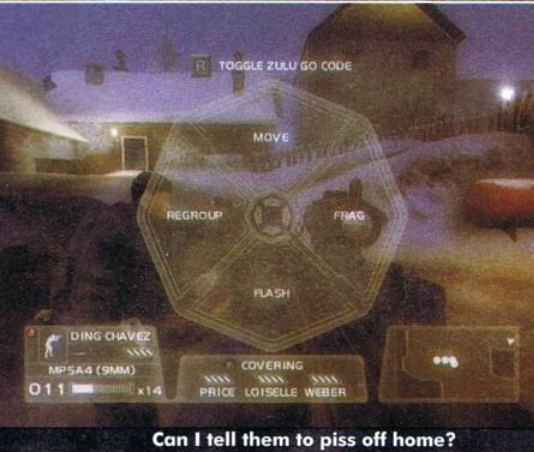
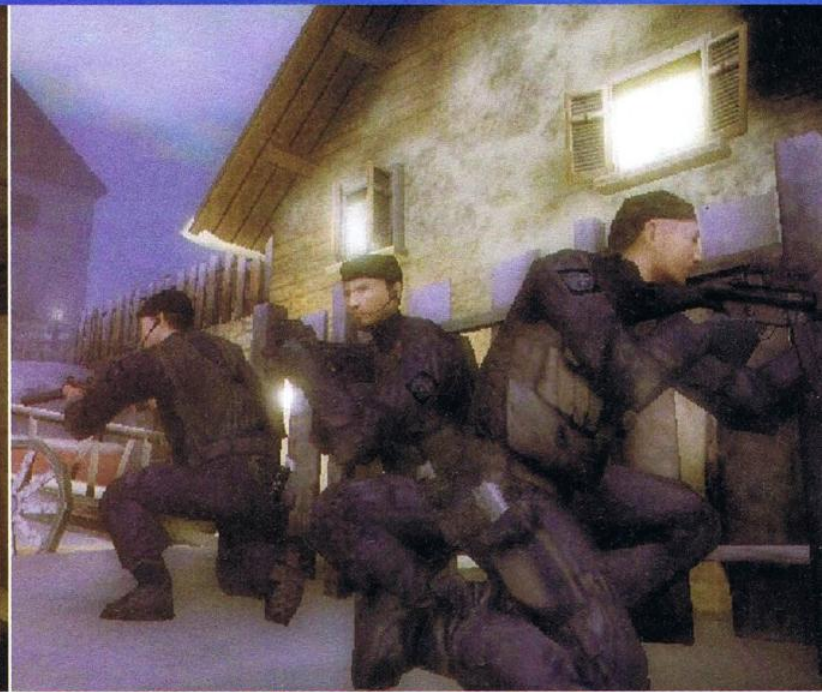
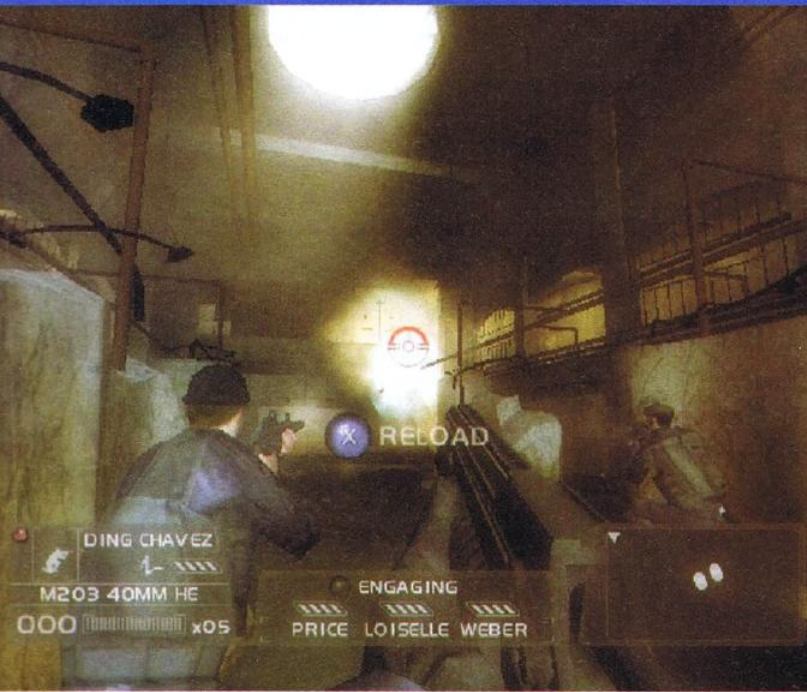
Because it's so skilfully implemented, a lot of players will

love *Rainbow Six 3*'s voice command system — particularly those experiencing the technology for the first time. Using a headset, you can order your fellow operatives to blow open locked doors, clear rooms of terrorists, etc. You might have to put on a bit of a Yank accent to ensure your squadmates comply with your instructions, but that's a small price to pay when you consider the advantages a headset affords. It's more convenient to issue orders verbally than it is to use the controller, there's the obvious cool factor and the ability to communicate with other combatants in multiplayer, and there are extra orders that only those with a headset can issue. Truth be told, if you don't own a headset you won't be missing out on a hell of a lot, but *Rainbow Six 3* represents the best excuse yet to go and get one.

While you're buying a headset, you might want to think about investing

in some patience or maybe even a punching bag, because *Rainbow Six 3* is one of the most challenging tactical shooters we've ever encountered. In fact, it might well be too difficult for the average gamer. Even on the easiest skill level, those cursed Tangos will all too frequently hand you your arse on a silver platter, and on the medium and high difficulty settings you'll have a tough time just surviving the first two minutes of a mission. But there's nothing wrong with games that can't be mastered overnight, and

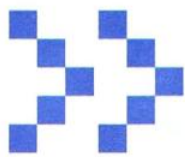




Can I tell them to piss off home?

Jaaaaaail break, dunna-dunna-dunna, Jaaaaail break

Someone rubbed vasoline on my TV...



NEVER BEFORE HAS AN OPERATIC RENDITION OF AVE MARIA BEEN USED TO SUCH DRAMATIC EFFECT

to Rainbow Six 3's credit, you'll always feel compelled to come back for more, in spite of the frustration it's very capable of engendering.

TRULY IMPRESSIVE

Graphically, Rainbow Six 3 lacks the wow element of games like Splinter Cell, but its absolutely superb weapon models and painstakingly detailed environments are more than adequate compensation. And when it comes to flashbang, teargas and thermal imaging effects, the game certainly doesn't disappoint. What could be cooler than popping on your thermal goggles, picking up the heat signature of a terrorist standing on the other side of a door, and firing a trio of bullets through that door and into that terrorist's torso? That's right, nothing! Rainbow Six 3 also boasts some truly impressive audio — the weapon sounds are the best we've heard, and on a number of occasions

we were utterly floored by the impact the soundtrack had on our play experience. Never before has an operatic rendition of Ave Maria been used to such dramatic effect.

Rainbow Six 3's single player campaign offers a total of 14 missions, with plenty of interesting objectives and some incredibly fierce firefights to become embroiled in. What hurts the game's single player component is the fact that the developer elected to hard-wire the position of every terrorist and hostage in the campaign. Rainbow Six 3's longevity suffers quite badly as a result, and this poor design decision is all the more perplexing for the fact that the terrorist and hostage positions are semi-randomised in the cooperative version of the campaign. On the topic of multiplayer, Rainbow Six 3 features

!!! In order to accurately simulate their effects in-game, development staff subjected themselves to numerous teargas and flashbang assaults. Now that's dedication!

three distinct multiplayer modes: cooperative, deathmatch and team deathmatch. In co-op mode, you and three mates can tackle the campaign missions or embark on terrorist hunts, while in the latter two modes it's possible to battle it out with up to 16 other players. We can tell you now, you won't have any trouble finding fellow Aussies to fight with on Xbox Live; this game is going to take off here in a big way.

In spite of its serious learning curve and unforgiving terrorist AI, Rainbow Six 3 has a terrific 'pick up and play' vibe to it. It's by no means a perfect game — if you're after a game that's genre-shattering, you'll invariably be disappointed — but if you're in the market for a quality tactical shooter, Rainbow Six 3 is the game to own. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Tactical Shooter / **PLAYERS:** 1-16 / **DEVELOPER:** Red Storm / **PUBLISHER:** Ubi Soft / **PRICE:** \$99.95 without headset / **RATING:** MA15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Squad control, awesome firefights, incredible audio.

MINUS: Single player marred by static terrorist positioning.

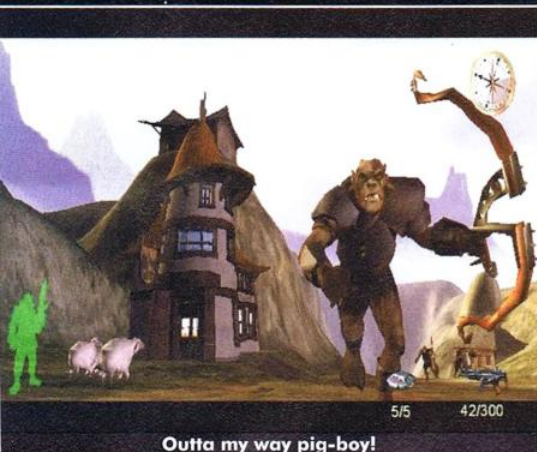
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

88 90 86

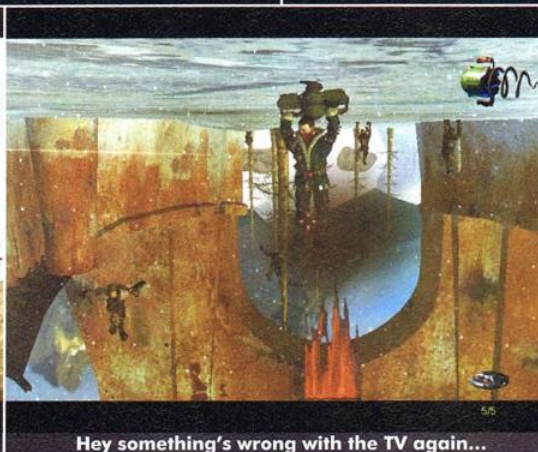
OVERALL

87

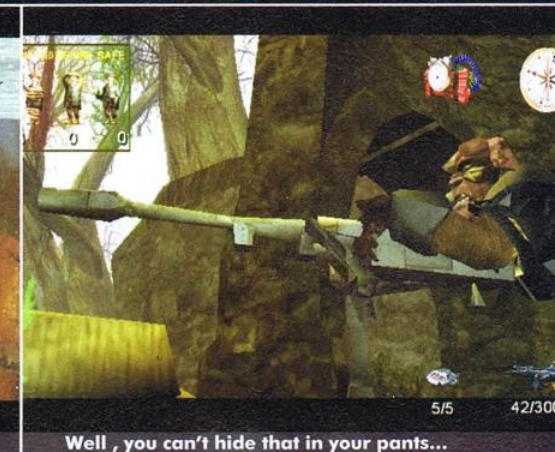
More of that classic Rainbow Six goodness.



Outta my way pig-boy!



Hey something's wrong with the TV again...



Well, you can't hide that in your pants...

ARMED & DANGEROUS

ELIOT FISH is armed and dangerous every morning through Redfern.

Take the lunacy of Monty Python, combine it with the outrageous action of *Serious Sam*, and you have the makings of *Armed & Dangerous*, this new third-person shooter from LucasArts. A truly bizarre cast of characters will accompany you on one of the strangest console games ever put together. This is a videogame that makes no attempt at realism, continuity, logic or plausibility, and benefits greatly as a result.

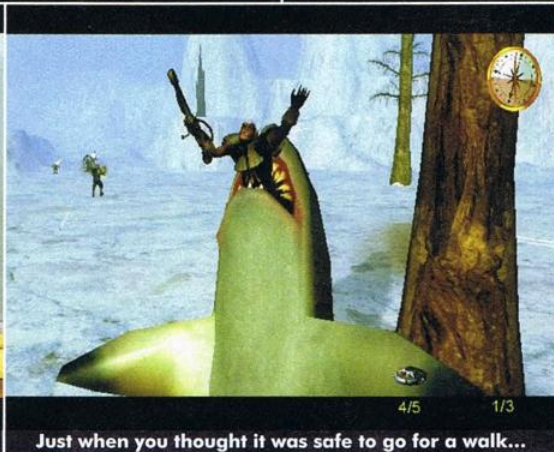
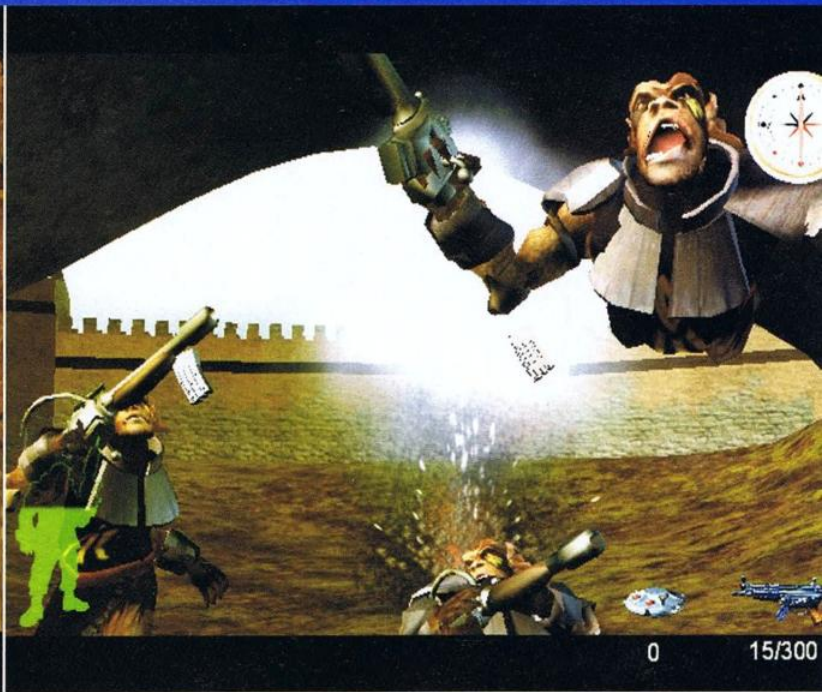
THAT WAY LIES DEATH, SUFFERING AND WEAK BEER

Gameplay is primarily third-person shooter fare, with some of the most gratuitous action we've seen in a game of this type. Buildings, trees and various other objects are all destructible, allowing your character to let loose with some pretty furious firepower. You'll spend most of your time defaulting

to the chunky machine gun, but *Armed & Dangerous* features some of the coolest weapons yet. Take the Shark Gun, for instance, which when fired sends an ominous dorsal fin along the ground that hunts down enemies, eventually gobbling them up in a *Jaws*-like shark attack that'll take you by surprise every time you witness it. There's also an incredibly long-range sniper rifle that can pick off enemies situated on the other side of a level, sticky mines that wreak havoc, an awesome black hole bomb that sucks whatever it can out of the level and a nicely powered rocket launcher and personal mortar gun. Then there's the infamous (already?) Topsy-Turvy weapon that when stuck in the ground, will rotate the entire landscape upside down so all the enemies fall away into the sky. Once rotated back the right way, they all fall back down to their death. Funny.

As is the case these days, the shoot outs are broken up with the odd giant turret to commandeer, as well as some quirky levels including one where you have to defend a village from hundreds of rushing grunts with a big cannon and machine-gun. Destroying everything is usually the task at hand (although you usually have side objectives), so unleashing this array of weapons on the oncoming hordes of enemies is a lot of fun. Some small buildings act as enemy spawning points, much like gauntlet, requiring you to take them out as soon as possible or encounter far more resistance that you'll be willing to stomach. The action is repetitive, but because there are such a variety of weapons, it's entertaining to try a different approach each time you have to replay a section of level — something which you'll unfortunately have to do many times.

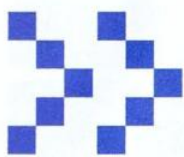




The black hole of happiness and good times

Just when you thought it was safe to go for a walk...

Gee, there's nothing left to blow-up...



SOME LEVELS ARE RELENTLESSLY DIFFICULT, WITH ENEMIES CONTINUOUSLY RESPAWNING WHILST YOU'RE BOMBARDED...

The reason for this is that some levels are relentlessly difficult, with enemies continuously respawning whilst you're bombarded by long range weapons or being picked out by distant snipers. Because the only save points are at pubs (yep, the beer drinking venue kind), you'll have to play some frustratingly long sections of levels over and over again (I'm talking up to a dozen times) just to eventually survive the barrage of enemies the "right" way. Yes, the game is all about total and utter carnage — but even that kind of gameplay ends up just pissing you off after you have to play through for the umpteenth time. There's never a moment of peace to assess your surrounds — you're getting hammered every second of the game, which might make the experience unnecessarily frustrating for less-experienced gamers.

TEA-SIPPING ROBOT

As an Xbox game, *Armed & Dangerous* is visually disappointing. Levels are large, and chaos ensues, but most of the elements look fairly low-poly, and some of the textures are rather ugly, with some horrid seams and mismatched sections. The frame-rate seems to struggle most of the time too, and control feels twitchy and jerky. The between level cutscenes, whilst hilariously scripted, are damn awful to look at with some bad compression artefacts and dirty looking colours. Let's hope the PC version (which wasn't finished in time for review) looks substantially better, considering the top video cards currently available.

As we mentioned though, the script is very funny, and the

characters are all suitably over-the-top. There's Qi-11 the hulking tea-sipping robot, Jonesy the explosive expert (who looks like a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle in disguise to us), Rexus the virtually useless Seer, and the character that you play as — Roman. It's like the Young Ones meets Monty Python's *Holy Grail*, and it makes the game that much more entertaining. In fact, if it weren't for the humour, ludicrous mission objectives and silly weapons, *Armed & Dangerous* would be in danger of coming across as a rather forgettable blast 'em up. As it stands

however, it's an entertaining and strangely addictive game that would be worth checking out if you're an action nut who just loves to sit back and watch all sorts of things explode. <<<



Planet Moon, the developer, previously brought us the wacky *Giants: Citizen Kabuto*.

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action/Shooter / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Planet Moon / PUBLISHER: LucasArts / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Full-on action, lots of crazy humour, unlockables.

MINUS: Disappointing graphics, difficult, poor animation.

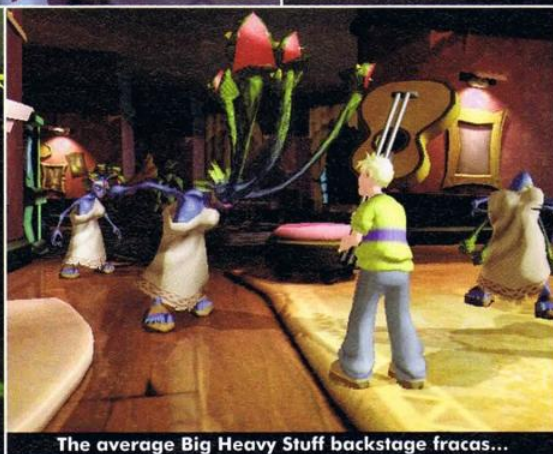
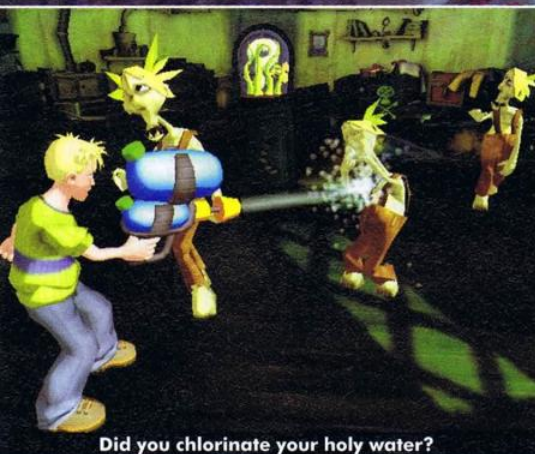
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

77 85 78

OVERALL

79

You'll have a love/hate relationship with this one.



Did you chlorinate your holy water?

The average Big Heavy Stuff backstage fracas...

I get the feeling he's in no rush to help her...

GRABBED BY THE GHOULIES

ELIOT FISH checks to see if his ghoulies are bruised...

Well it may not be what we expected from Rare's first Xbox game, but there are good reasons why *Grabbed by the Ghoulies* is what it is. This was originally intended to be a GameCube game, and it's quite obvious that Rare were targeting a younger Nintendo audience. Since its transition to Xbox, Rare might have changed parts of it, but this is still just a stylish game for the less-demanding – or younger – gamer.

GOOFY COMIC BOOK ROMP

Rare have a knack for making a game appealing, regardless of the content. As soon as you boot up *Ghoulies*, you'll be treated to a very slick intro and some cool animated menus. There are small artistic touches here that make you realise *Ghoulies* was a labour of love. You'll have your pants charmed off as you progress into the first tutorial style level. Sure, it's a bit kiddie, but darn it if you won't crack a smile.

There's an old-school British computer game vibe to *Ghoulies* that is hard to explain. If you grew up playing Commodore-64 or Amiga games such as *Dizzy* and *Atic Atac* (a game actually made by Rare for the Spectrum back in 1983), then you might understand the style that *Ghoulies* seems to harken back to. It's a lighthearted, kooky, goofy comic book romp.

Ghoulies employs a simplistic control scheme where you move with the left stick and attack with the right stick – almost *Robotron* like in execution. The difference is that you can pick up various objects with the A button and then swing them around as a weapon. Old chairs, brooms, paintings, pool cues, potted plants and so on, can be utilised as weapons to bash the various spooky creatures with. This is the core of the gameplay.

HUMOUROUS SET-PIECES

The action is fairly mindless, but manages to be entertaining in the way it's presented. Great looking environments, colourful and well-animated monsters, lots of humour, the odd puzzle, and a variety of powerups keep you playing *Ghoulies* longer than you might expect. The game just looks so

gorgeous that you'll be tempted to see what's around every corner. Whilst the locations are incredibly varied, the gameplay here is pretty repetitive, and progression through the house and its surrounds is somewhat linear. The game has been designed to lead you through various humorous set-pieces until it reaches its conclusion. This is mildly made up for by the inclusion of bonus challenges and unlockable features. An incredibly slick piece of work, but maybe too "young" for some. <<

Next for Xbox should be *Kameo*, followed by *Conker...*

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Action/Puzzle /
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Rare /
PUBLISHER: Microsoft /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Humour, slick presentation, visuals, Rare easter eggs for fans.

MINUS: A bit too linear, simplistic gameplay.

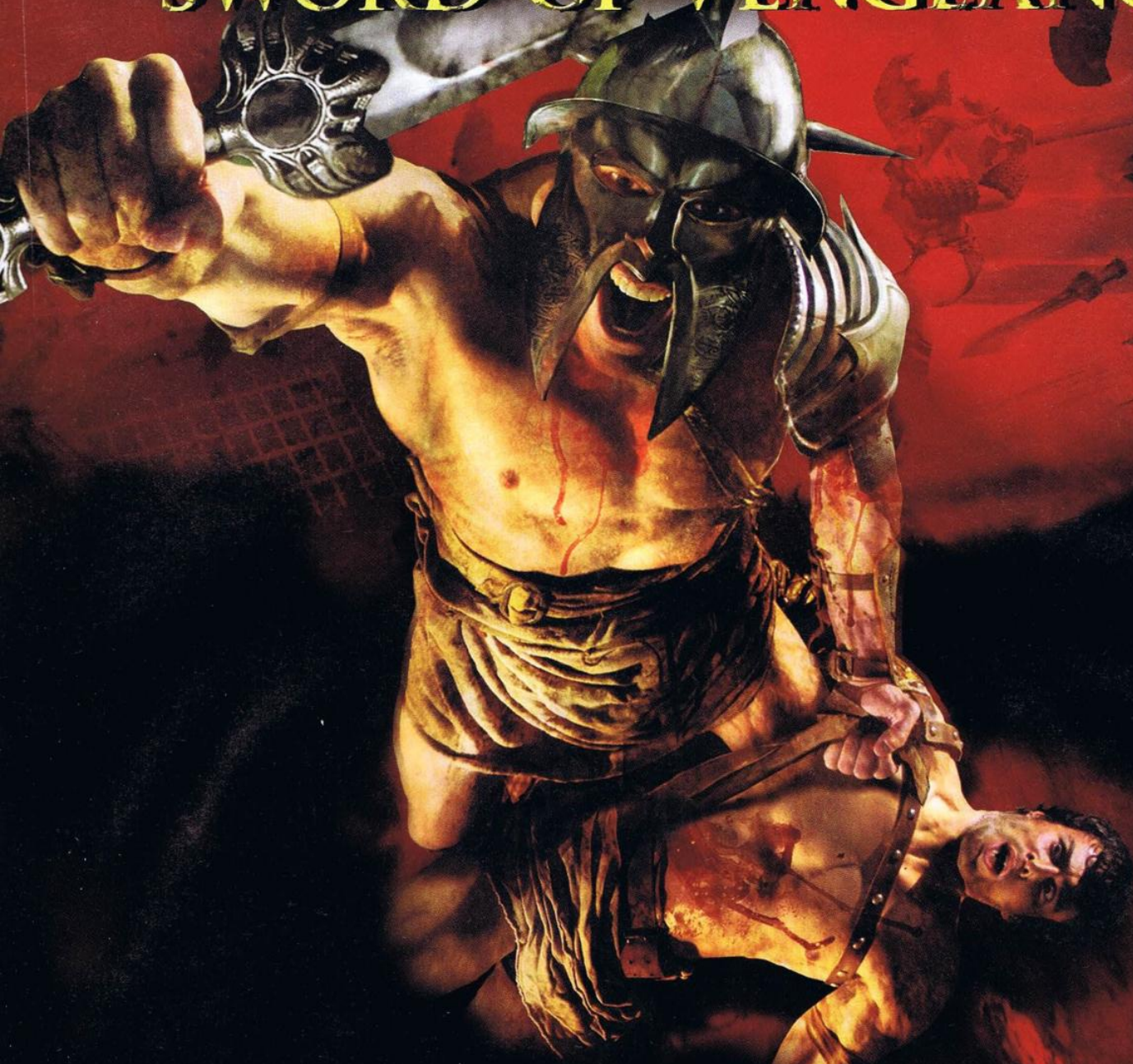
VISUALS 93 SOUND 85 GAMEPLAY 75

OVERALL
79

Charming, slick and funny, but too easy and repetitive.

GLADIATOR

SWORD OF VENGEANCE



A warrior slave...
Chosen by the Gods...
Rome needs a Champion!



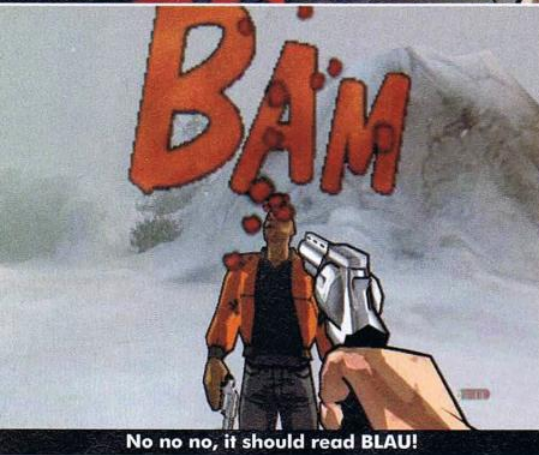
PlayStation 2

XBOX

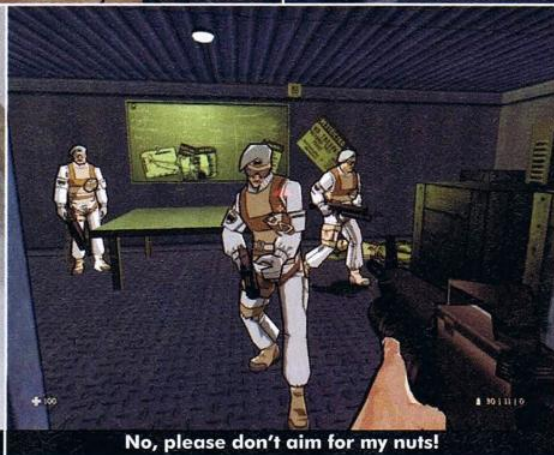
PC CD-ROM

Acclaim
www.acclaim.com

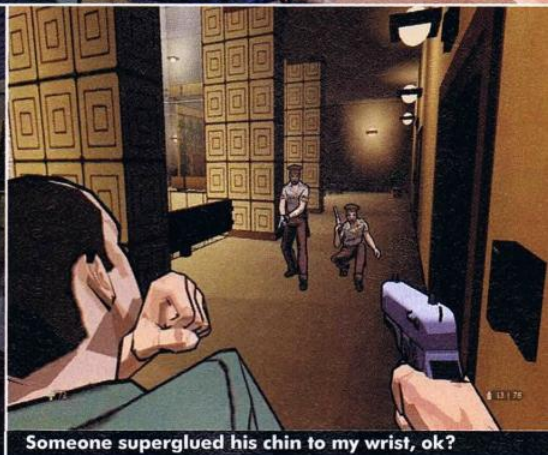
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No no no, it should read BLAU!



No, please don't aim for my nuts!



Someone superglued his chin to my wrist, ok?

XIII

PHILIP KENAN really hopes he's not number 2...

Under the glossy, painfully hip cel-shaded surface, XIII is nothing more than a fairly standard (though solid) first person shooter. But the combination of the amazing aesthetics and the FPS backbone is something far greater than the sum of its parts. Based on a long-running Belgian series of graphic novels, XIII tells the story of the titular XIII (or more precisely a man pretending to be XIII), a member of an insidious worldwide conspiracy with members numbering from XX all the way down to I. As the faux-XIII, players must kill their way across the globe, slowly uncovering the massive conspiracy and regaining lost memories in a mix of FPS action and stealth gameplay.

BARE-HANDED IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

Ubi Soft has done a good job with the basic game mechanics, so they

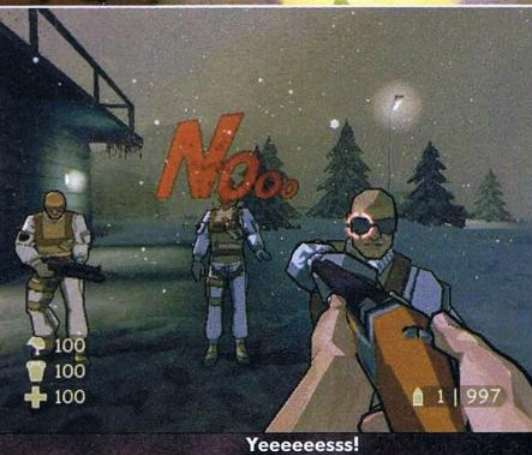
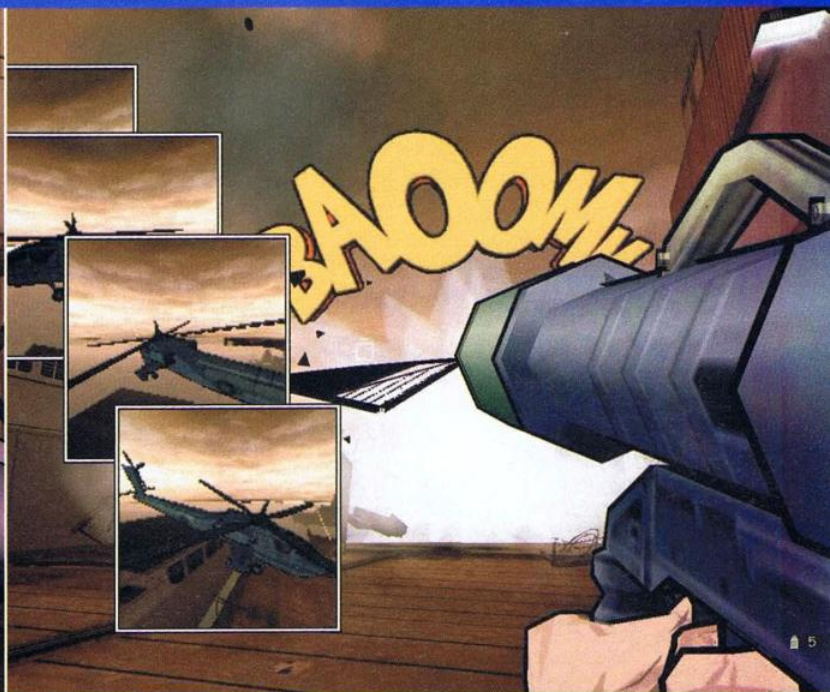
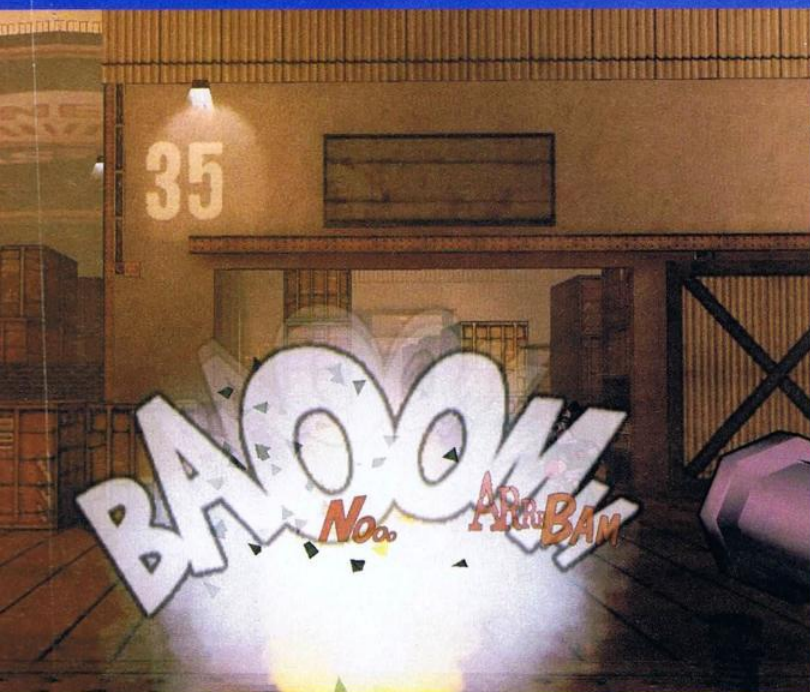
have something fairly solid on which to hang the real star of the show, the graphics. Although there is the occasional glitch, the AI is steady for the most part and utilises cover well, a commodity there is absolutely no shortage of in the huge levels. The level design is nice and diverse with locations ranging from alpine villas to the interior of a bank and pretty much everywhere in between. Most of the FPS levels require the player to adopt a number of tactics such as stealth, sniping and shooting to succeed, ensuring that the action is varied enough to keep your attention for the long haul. Level design and event scripting really shines during the stealth segments of the game with a real standout example being a level in which XIII is incarcerated in an insane asylum. The level begins with the (anti)hero having to walk between two

guards, making sure to stay between them or risk a fatal beating (a feat within itself), then having to take out two guards bare-handed in the laundry room when they attempt to show XIII what happens to little fish in a big pond. The sense of accomplishment felt after completing this level is something that has to be experienced to be believed.

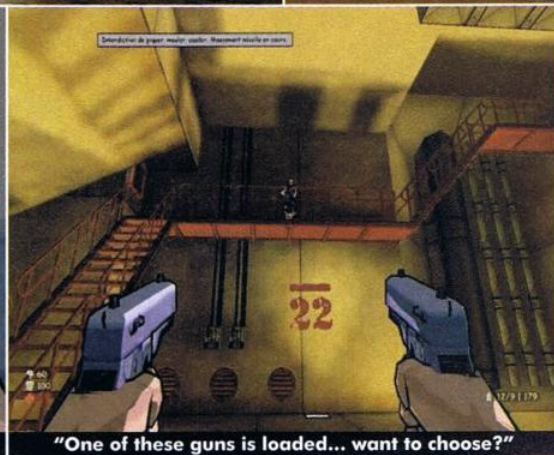
LESS DISRUPTIVE

The look of XIII perfectly captures the feel of a comic book. Thick black lines highly reminiscent of comic book inking surround all of the characters and objects, whilst the bright colour scheme looks like the four colour printing process used in most comics and graphic novels. Instead of being happy with sitting on its laurels, XIII takes the comic like appearance a step further by featuring an overlaid

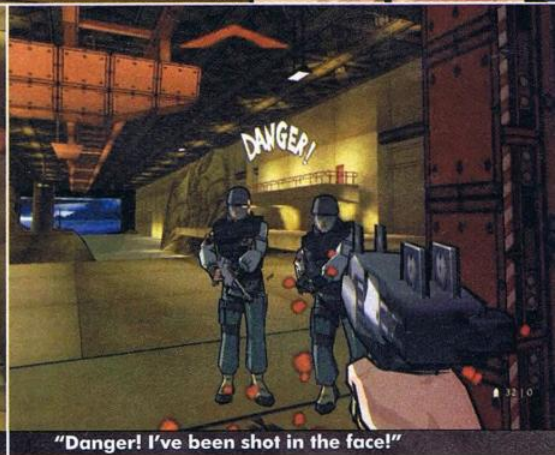




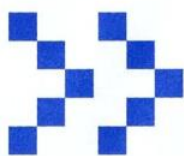
Yeeeeeeesss!



"One of these guns is loaded... want to choose?"



"Danger! I've been shot in the face!"



THICK BLACK LINES HIGHLY REMINISCENT OF COMIC BOOK INKING SURROUND ALL OF THE CHARACTERS

CAREER KICKSTART

David Duchovny provides the voice for the game's hero and does a wonderful job at it as well. He injects just the right amount of cynicism and wonder into the role to make the character of an amnesiac soldier surgically altered to look like a dead member of an international conspiracy if not believable then a little less hard to swallow. The use of Duchovny also points to one of two things, that either Ubi Soft had quite a respectable budget in developing the game or alternatively that Duchovny, having done nothing of note since leaving the X-Files, is willing to do anything for a buck.

Want to check out one of the XIII comics? Try your local alternative book store.

panel structure and onscreen onomatopoeia - words that are the visual representation of sounds, like BANG! or AARGH!, both of which make quite frequent and quite welcome appearances. Individual panels pop up on screen to signify special events such as enemies approaching, story specific conversations or achieving a stealth head-shot. Whilst these small panels are less disruptive to game flow than FMV, they do cause a few problems of their own, most notably obscuring part of the screen for a couple of seconds at a time. The onomatopoeia on the other hand is perfectly implemented and actually very useful. The "sounds" come in very handy during the stealth levels as watching the sound of a guard's footsteps can give you a very

accurate representation of patrol routes and timing.

Whilst the single player game is only quite short, clocking in at about 10 hours, XIII features a quite robust multiplayer element featuring all the old standbys as well as a few welcome new features. Aside from capture the flag, deathmatch and team deathmatch, XIII features Sabotage, a game that plays something like the bombing maps in Counter-Strike but with three bomb points instead of just one; and Power-Up, a mode that does away with the standard weapon and armour pickups, replacing them all with anonymous crates containing secret prizes. It's not too deep but for quick action it's hard to beat. Multiplayer features excellent bot support so don't worry if you can't get online. Overall, XIII is a pretty darn entertaining package. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: FPS / PLAYERS: 1-Multi / DEVELOPER: Dargaud / PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft / PRICE: \$89.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now / REQ: PIII 700, 128MB RAM, 3D card

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Amazing graphics, onomatopoeia, David Duchovny

MINUS: Short, panels, AI sometimes glitchy

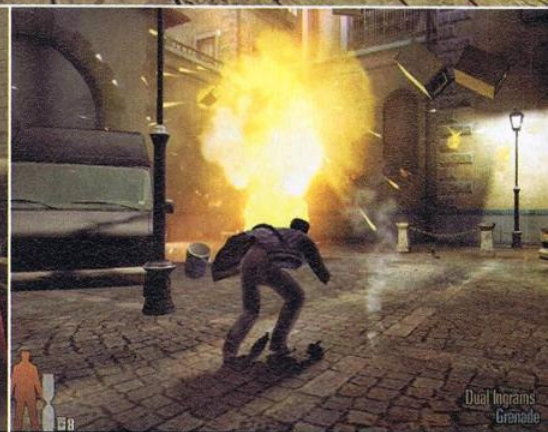
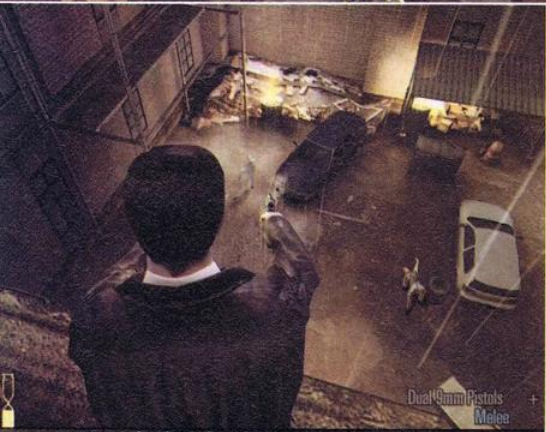
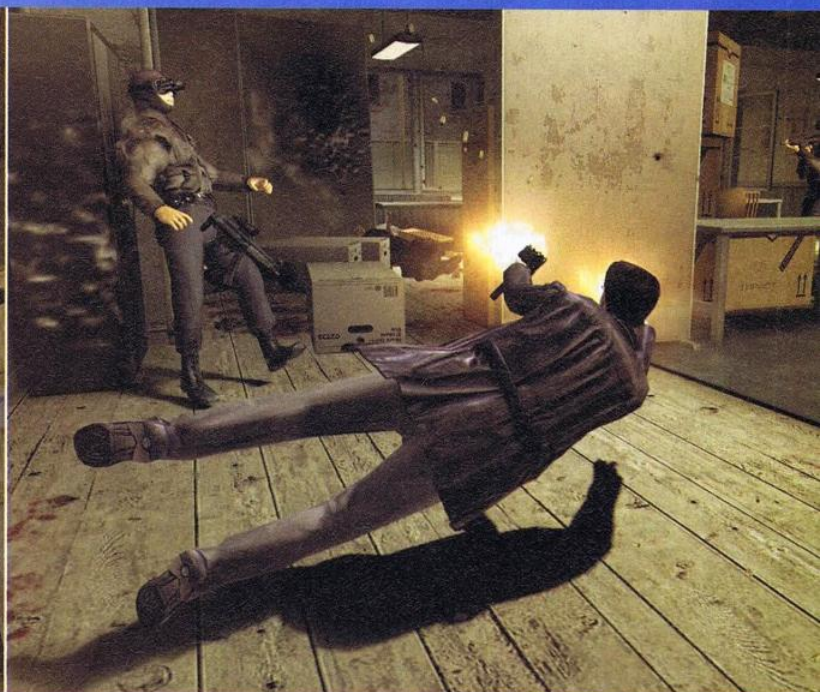
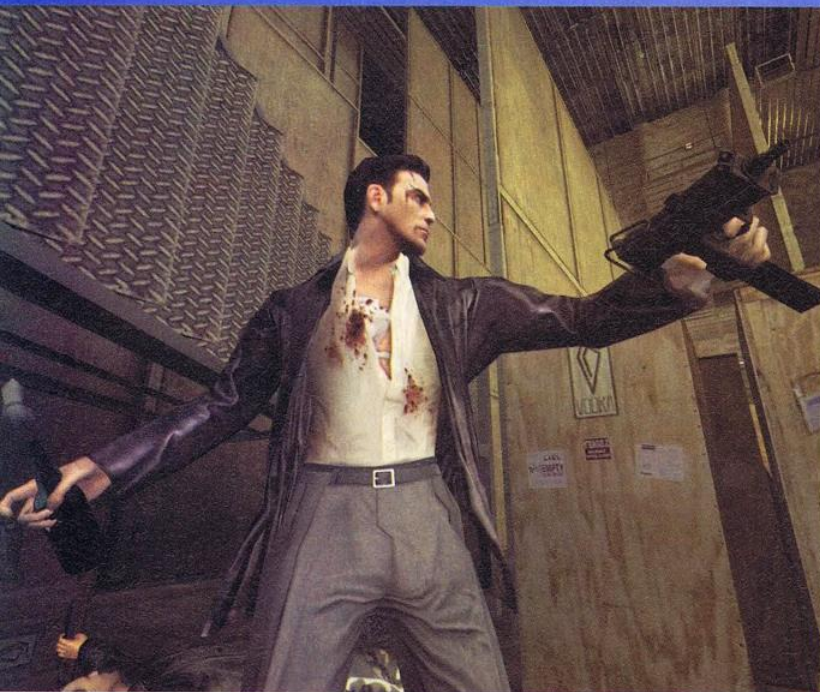
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

91 87 85

OVERALL

86

Bring on XIII part 2



Not only that, but he's spitting on them too

"That's 6 months in this cell I've had to wear this outfit"

Max Blau 2: The Blau of Max Blau

MAX PAYNE 2 THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

CAM SHEA wrote this review in bullet time...

With a name like Max Payne, it should come as no surprise that the world would conspire against you. Twice. It should also come as no surprise that after your family's brutal murder, your best chance for a new relationship would be with a vigilante murder suspect. Yes, this is the life that Max's sadistic parents pushed upon him. And yes, Max Payne 2 really is a "film noir love story".

IF ONLY THEY'D GONE WITH MAX POWERS...

So where's Max at now? Well, after the debris settled and the blood congealed from his last kill-athon, Max returned to the NYPD. Trouble with a capital T wasn't far away though, and before he could say "everything ripped apart in a New York minute", the bodies started dropping. Max Payne 2 is very heavy on narrative, and the storyline's

twists and turns are involving enough that we won't ruin it for you here.

Like the original, Max Payne 2 is a very short game, but chances are you're going to enjoy every moment you spend with it, because Remedy have really buffed this title up to a Mr Sheen shine. The first thing you'll notice is the visual evolution from the first game. Max looks far more human now (although we must say we miss his grimace), while the streets, warehouses and apartments of New York sport incredibly sharp texture work, and are modeled with just enough incidental objects and detail to feel realistic. More significant, however, is the implementation of the havok physics engine (the same one being used in H-L 2). This means environments that are filled with objects that behave relatively realistically, and rag doll physics that don't look goofy.

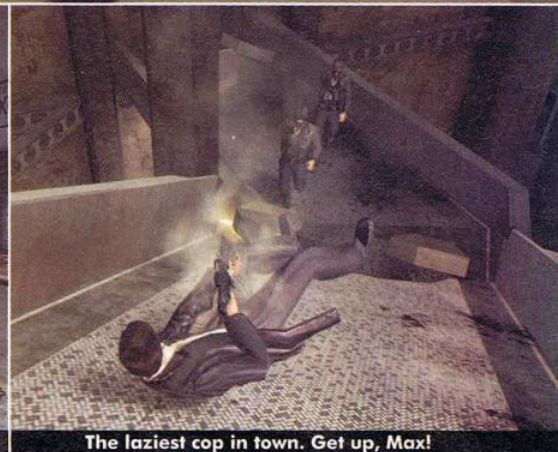
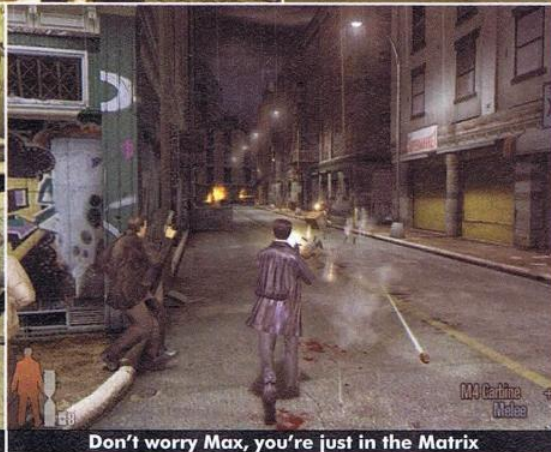
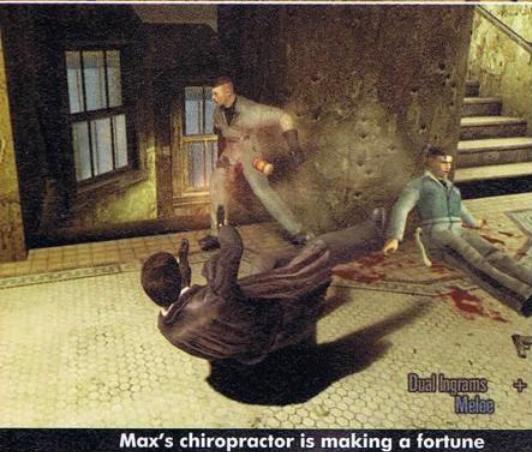
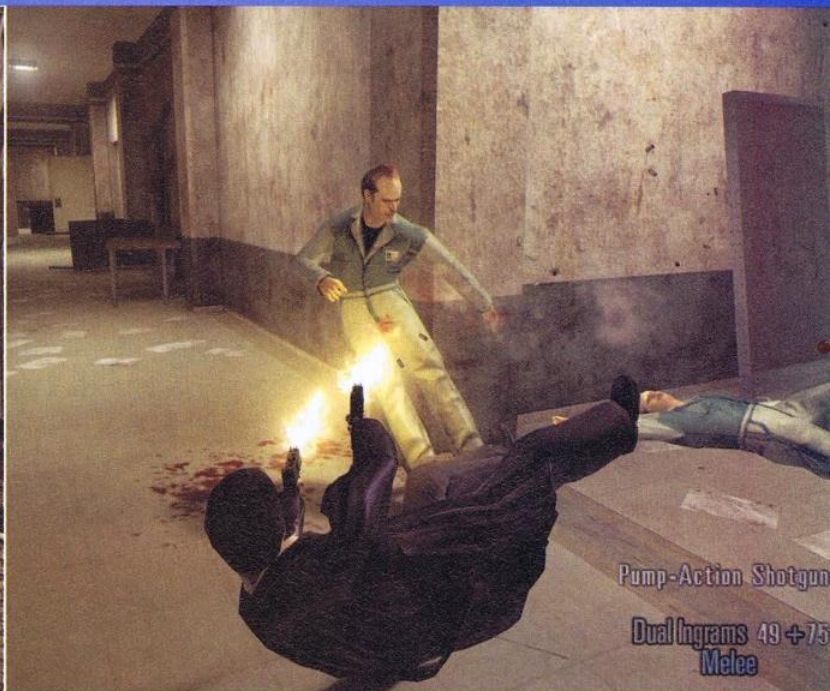
This far more sophisticated

physics engine goes hand in hand with a much richer bullet time experience. The game's colour palette switches to a sepia tone when you go into BT, and although still all in slow motion, the longer you use it, the more Max's weaponry ramps up towards a normal rate of fire (accompanied by some fantastically warped gunfire sound effects). Thus, you're encouraged to use bullet time extensively, and there's less of a focus in using the slow-mo dives - although that's still obviously a large part. Max also has great new reload animations in bullet time, with the camera quickly panning around him, showing off his super slick pose, and the bullet casings arcing through the air. But by far the best thing about bullet time second time around lies in the exaggeration of the already excellent physics engine. With certain weapons, you can literally juggle guys, or shoot

them up two flights of stairs while you charge behind. Cooler still is starting a juggle with twin Ingrams then switching out of bullet time to see the guy go flying across the room in real-time. Or tossing a couple of grenades into an area, then switching to bullet time and watching the bodies and objects fly.

The physics certainly lend an air of cinematic beauty to proceedings, but we're still a long way from a truly interactive world. Most rooms are designed so that in the event of a





Max's chiropractor is making a fortune

Don't worry Max, you're just in the Matrix

The laziest cop in town. Get up, Max!



THIS FAR MORE **SOPHISTICATED PHYSICS ENGINE** GOES HAND IN HAND WITH A MUCH **RICHER BULLET TIME EXPERIENCE**



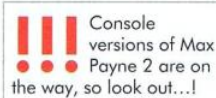
TOUCH YOURSELF...

Throughout the game you'll be given the chance to eavesdrop on some hilarious conversations, as well as check out a range of TV shows. Take the time to follow them – they're classic. Perhaps the most entertaining is "Dick Justice" a 70's style retelling of the original Max Payne, starring a bizarro Max with a massive afro, although "Lords and Ladies", "Captain Baseball Bat Boy" and "Address Unknown" aren't without their charm too.

firefight, lots of stuff will go flying, but the reality is that most objects are fixed in place and indestructible – you can't even shoot out the lights.

DIGGIN' THE SCENE WITH THAT GANGSTA SLOUCH...

Outside of bullet time, the combat in Max Payne is much the same as it was. There are a few nice new inclusions, such as the ability to select grenades and molotov cocktails as secondary weapons, as well as being able to dive forwards and backwards and stay prone on the ground firing until your clip's empty. There are also sections where you're accompanied by one or more NPCs, but these sequences are too short and too few. In terms of firepower, most of the old favourites are back, such as the legendary dual Ingrams, but the best weapon of the lot is probably the



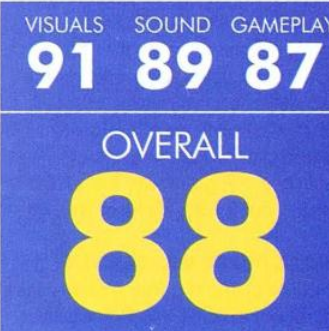
Striker – an automatic shotgun that's a destructive joy to wield.

The level design is mostly excellent, and nicely varied thanks to lots of different environments (including an awesomely creepy funhouse) and objectives like providing cover or escorting an NPC. That said, the level design is not so exceptional that Remedy couldn't have easily come up with some more levels to fill the game out. Or perhaps opened up the existing levels up a little. As it stands they're overly linear, and filled with doors that will never open. And that's the main downside in Max Payne – it's very straightforward, and if anything it's shorter than the first game. Oh, and it goes out with a decidedly average boss battle. Even so, any game that you finish then immediately begin again on the next difficulty level is surely worthy of purchase. <<

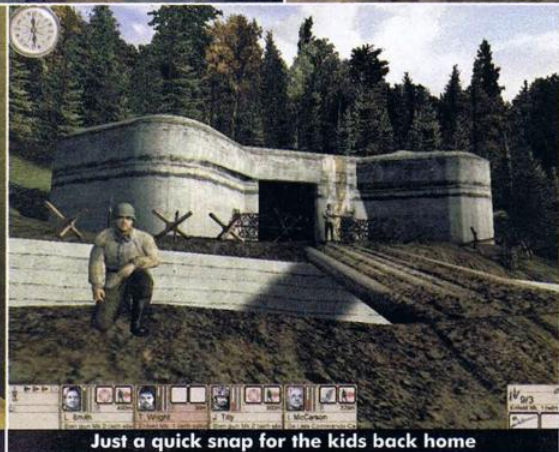
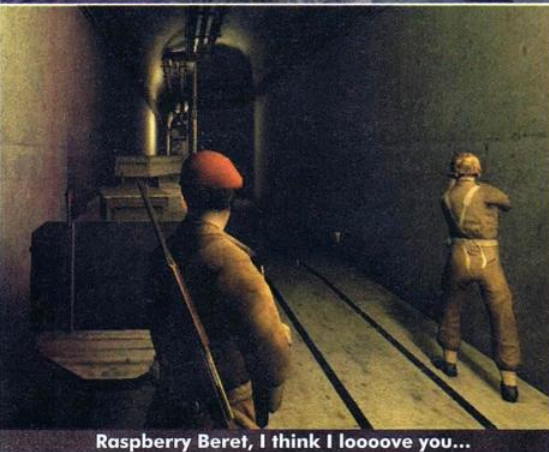
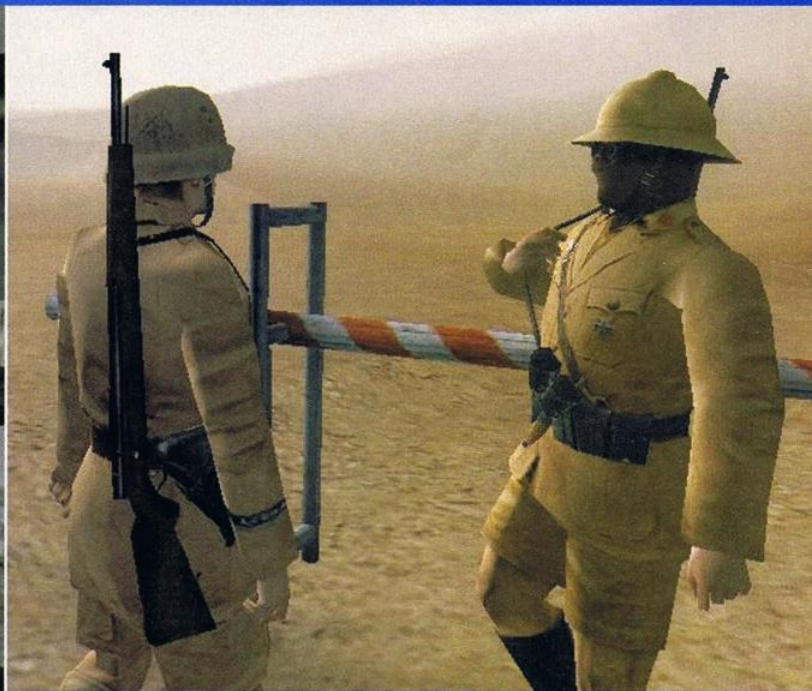
AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Shooter / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Remedy / PUBLISHER: Take 2 Interactive / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now / REQ: PIII 1GHz, 256MB RAM, 32MB 3D card /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Detailed visuals, havok, awesome surround sound, striker.
MINUS: Too short, essentially the same formula, no multiplayer.



Unlike the N-Gage, this is a top notch Finnish production.



Raspberry Beret, I think I looove you...

Just a quick snap for the kids back home

That's it, hairy! Time for a shave

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS 2

What **DANIEL WILKS** keeps hidden is very dangerous...

WWII is a popular setting for fiction — it has been since the advent of the erroneously named "war to end all wars". As far as FPS or third person shooters go, WWII comes in only slightly behind science fiction as the most popular setting, with such luminaries as *Battlefield 1942*, *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* and *Call of Duty*. *Hidden & Dangerous 2*, the sequel to the game that put developer Illusion Softworks on the map, is yet another game to tread the already well-worn paths of the Second World War, unearthing a lot of clichés along the way but also carving out a little niche of its own.

THOSE MOST DASTARDLY

As in the original game, players take the role of an elite SAS (Special Air Service) squad, charged with performing the tasks too tough for other soldiers to handle, and tackling those most dastardly of

enemies, the Nazis (as well as some Italians and Japanese). Each of the 20 missions sees players choosing four soldiers from their pool of recruits to lead through the objectives. As well as being able to jump control between the different characters, *Hidden & Dangerous 2* emphasises the tactical aspect of warfare through a tactical view that allows players to position their AI companions and set aggression, movement and the like. An RPG style skill advancement system represents the experience your troops get in battle and ensures that you use the other soldiers effectively instead of simply using them as cannon-fodder. These skills: Health, Strength, Endurance, Shooting, Stealth, First Aid and Lock-Picking, represent the specialities of various soldiers so when choosing your team you can balance each character with the others. Whilst most of the skills

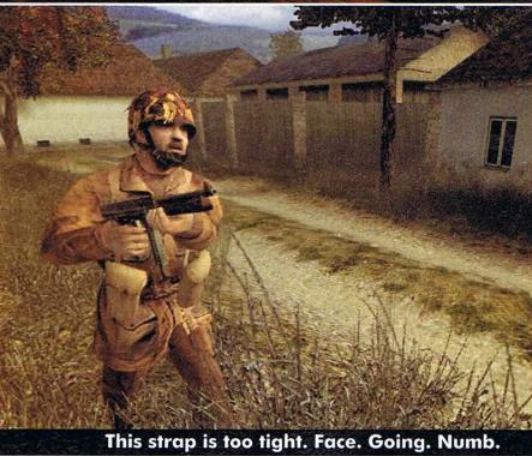
are always useful, Lock-Picking in particular is odd in its inclusion — its use so infrequent that it could very well have been included with Stealth, giving room for more in the way of Shooting skills. It seems a little weak to have one universal shooting skill, making anyone with a half way decent skill an equally good infantryman, machine-gunner or sniper. Aside from this little gripe, the party balance system works well, with the player first being given the mission objective and then choosing their men and equipment.

One thing holding back the playability of *H&D2* is the overly complex control system. Though most games use the jump key as default for climbing, *H&D2* features a separate climb key, something that takes more than a little getting used to. Likewise the mouse scroll wheel dictates the speed of the character rather than the more

typical weapon switching. The AI for both companions and enemies is good for the most part but becomes spectacularly unstuck on occasion with soldiers shooting at houses, trees or other such hideous enemies or simply wandering around in circles. Aside from human soldiers, *H&D2* features a number of vehicles, all of which can be used.

STUCK IN DOORWAYS

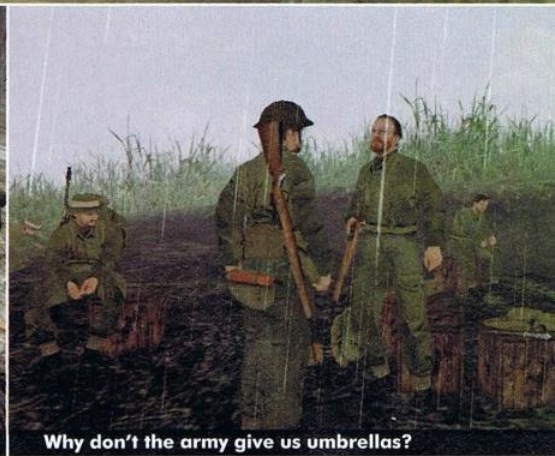
Hidden & Dangerous 2 utilises the LS3D engine to power its vastly improved graphics. Better known as the engine that powered *Mafia*, LS3D gives the game a nice and polished look as well as allowing for some good vehicle physics and such clever features as ricochet damage and shooting through certain objects such as thin wood and cloth. Unfortunately, the engine looks quite dated compared to today's games, even those using modified versions of even older



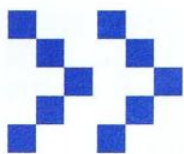
This strap is too tight. Face. Going. Numb.



The latest rage - Eight Wheel Drives



Why don't the army give us umbrellas?



WHILST MOST OF THE SKILLS ARE ALWAYS USEFUL, **LOCK-PICKING IN PARTICULAR IS ODD** IN ITS INCLUSION

A REAL RESPECT

Hidden & Dangerous 2 enters the pantheon of recent PC releases to truly go to town with sound. The game features a superb orchestral soundtrack that perfectly compliments the on screen action and effortlessly segues between the different styles of play. Sound effects are equally good with some excellent weapon effects, especially the massive and deadly BAR. Although excellent, the soundtrack and effects pale in comparison to the voice acting that manages to tread to fine line between realism and parody without ever becoming a joke. Although the game features a number of wildly clashing accents they rarely sound jockey, instead serving to solidify the idea that the developers have a real respect for the source material.

engines such as Call of Duty and its Quake 3 core. Much of the foliage (aside from some key pieces) in the many jungle environments are rendered with fairly chunky and sometimes hideous 2D sprites and the engine seems to have a general problem with indoor environments. Indoor camera angles make play quite difficult as they often pan to an area with little or no view of the action. Houses also seem to cause problems for the very erratic AI, with soldiers frequently becoming stuck in doorways.

For those players who do not relish the idea of leading a group of men through the various missions, Hidden & Dangerous 2 features a lone wolf mode allowing you to play through each level solo. Whilst not nearly as satisfying or mind numbingly frustrating as using squad based tactics, the lone wolf mode should

satisfy anyone's craving for action. There's also an even more action-packed mode that necessitates that players must kill every enemy soldier on the map before progressing to the next level. Aside from single player gaming, Hidden & Dangerous 2 comes with three online modes, a simple free-for-all deathmatch, an

objectives based game and a territory capturing mode much like those seen in Day of Defeat or Battlefield 1942. Unfortunately the net code seems to be fairly rough at the moment, often dropping players out of a game or not even allowing them to connect in the first place. Rest assured though, when you do finally manage to connect into a game it's great fun. One question that must be asked is why H&D2 doesn't have a co-op mode, as the game seems perfectly designed for one. <<<



Website here:
www.godgames.com

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Tactical Shooter / **PLAYERS:** 1-Multi / **DEVELOPER:** Illusion Softworks
PUBLISHER: GOD / **PRICE:** \$89.95 / **RATING:** M15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now / **REQ:** PIII 1Ghz, 128MB RAM, 3D card

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Accessible squad based combat, diverse, addictive.

MINUS: Some clipping issues, buggy, not enough Wang.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

77 85 78

OVERALL

81

Not quite as strong as the original Hidden & Dangerous.



Mario should know to never hitchhike

Go towards the light...

Shelling out some damage

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!

CAM SHEA ponders the wisdom of “double your pleasure, double your fun”...

One of the most revered series in gaming is back, and the good news is that this is just what Doctor Mario ordered. Double Dash!! builds on the strengths of Mario Kart 64, while considerably tightening the level design and audio-visual experience, as well as introducing a few cool new features along the way.

HI, I'M DAISY

The biggest change is obviously having two characters per kart. This influences the game in a number of ways. First up, it means that the cute quotient of DD is near breaking point. So...Many. Cuddly. Critters. More significantly, it alters the strategy of the racing nicely, allowing both characters to carry items and for you to switch front and rear characters on the fly, thus choosing which powerup to use first, or even switching to the character without an item just as you run over an item box. There are also

several ways to steal items from other teams, which adds even more strategy to proceedings.

The characters you choose also determine the specials available, and this is where things will get heated on the character select screen, because some unique abilities are far more useful than others. In fact, there are a couple of specials that seem designed to backfire (such as DK's huge banana or WaLuigi's bombs). Others are damn cool though, such as Baby Mario and Baby Luigi's Chain Chomp, which is a huge Chomp that drags you around the course, knocking aside anyone it hits. There's also Peach and (Hi I'm) Daisy's shield, which protects your kart until it's hit by something, and will then give you that item. Aside from the specials, the items are much the same as before, without the triple shell pickups that can protect

your kart, or the ability to trail items behind your kart as a shield. One nice touch is the inclusion of item settings for versus games, where you can choose between several item selections, from Basic (very few powerful items) through to Frantic (lots of powerful items and ensuing mayhem). It would have been nice to turn specific items on and off, but at least there's limited control.

The characters are divided into three classes — light, medium and heavy, and the pairing you choose will determine the kart choices available. It's the kart that determines your speed, acceleration and weight, and there are plenty to unlock, not to mention a couple of extra racers too. Unfortunately there's no indication of each kart's stats on the multiplayer selection screen, which is a major oversight. Even so, once you've settled on your kart of choice, you'll discover that Double

Dash!! has perhaps the best handling in the series so far. The powerslide mechanics are as deep and satisfying as ever, and the mini-turbo boost out of corners has returned.

Complementing the refined gameplay mechanics are a great selection of courses. It's a little annoying that all three cc classes are open going into the game, because if you're like us you'll go straight to 150cc, meaning you'll still have to go back and do the 50cc and 100cc to unlock the Special GP (and beyond!). Oh well. The courses have everything you'd expect, as well as some cool new themes. DK Mountain for instance, is a brilliant romp through a jungle environment, punctuated by being launched from a barrel cannon up to the top of the mountain, followed by a crazy ride back down over bumpy terrain with boulders on your tail, several hairpins and a rickety bridge to traverse.



Luigi sold his mansion and lives in a car

Donkey Kong just rolled a "banana delight"

Yoshi's still on that mushroom diet



THE ALWAYS TRIPPY RAINBOW ROAD IS BACK AS WELL, AND A LOT MORE EXCITING THAN IT WAS ON N64

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

One cool new feature in DD is the option to race co-op with one human player in front and one in the back. The player at the front steers, while the guy at the back launches items, as well as using the shoulder buttons to barge left and right. The rear player even controls mini-turbo boosts on powerslides. Of course, you can switch positions too, but both players will have to press the Z trigger to do so, ensuring that there's no swapping when players aren't ready.



A YOSHI SHAPED ISLAND. SWEET!

As you'd expect, the courses take place across a whole host of track surfaces, each requiring its own driving style. We particularly like the motocross style jumps and corners of Waluigi Stadium, the slightly tighter handling on ice in Sherbert Land and the very challenging quick sand and hurricanes of Dry Dry Desert. The always trippy Rainbow Road is back as well, and a lot more exciting than it was on N64.

Testament to the design skills of the team at Nintendo, the courses are also visually lush. Nintendo have once again forsaken detail for art and style, and each course is brimming with personality. There are some fantastic animations in DD too, with characters leaning into powerslides, juggling items and flipping around one another to

swap seats. You'll also laugh out loud the first time you see the rear character get knocked out and dragged along behind the kart! Setting the tone is a selection of catchy new tunes — typical Nintendo midi fare, but we defy you to play this game for any length of time and not come away whistling!

Seasoned Mario Kart fans won't take long to unlock all the available

!!! There's no option to have a three or four player Grand Prix, so you'll have to manually select each course.

courses, leaving us thinking that the game would benefit greatly if it had another four or so courses (there are 16 in total). Even so, Double Dash!! will keep you going in multiplayer competition almost indefinitely — it really does shine as a four (or eight if you have the crossover cable) player game and runs as smoothly as you'd expect. Shine get! <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Kart racing /
PLAYERS: 1-8 / DEVELOPER: EAD /
PUBLISHER: Nintendo /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPHER VERDICT

PLUS: Great course design and multiplayer gameplay. Waluigi.

MINUS: No four-player GP. No Watoad.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

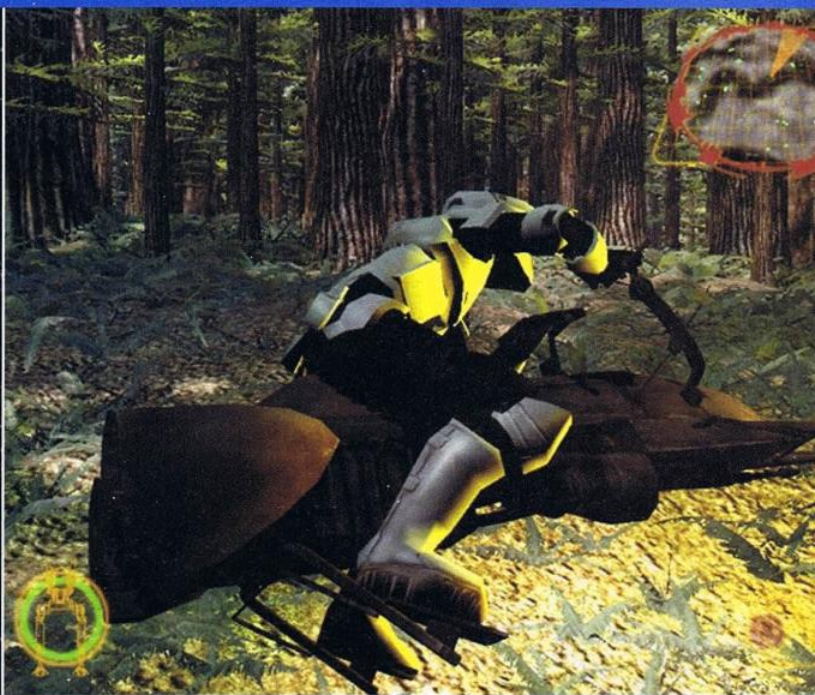
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OVERALL

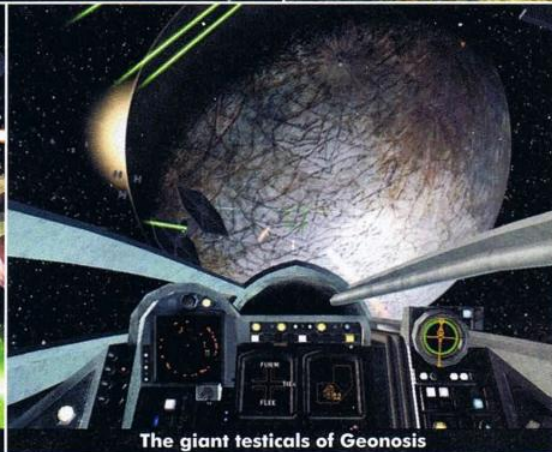
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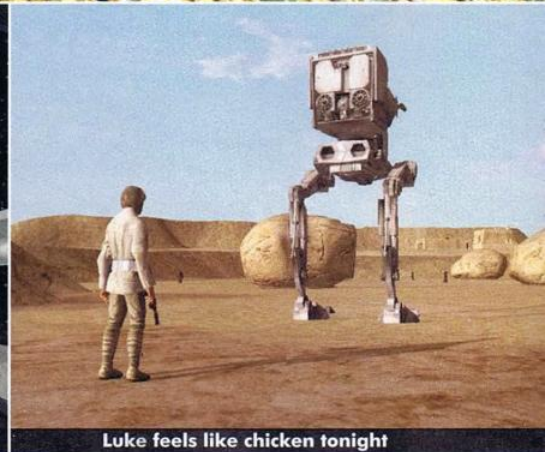
Get some friends together, cos Mario Kart's back!



Missed me by *that* much!



The giant testicals of Geonosis



Luke feels like chicken tonight

STAR WARS: REBEL STRIKE

ELIOT FISH wonders when they'll release the Rebel Strike: Special Edition.

W The Rogue Squadron games, of which Rebel Strike is another installment, have never failed to impress. They were great on N64, Rogue Leader took our breath away when GameCube launched, and we've been rubbing our hands together in glee ever since that day for this continuation of the Original Trilogy goodness. Well, we've had our fill of what Rebel Strike has to offer, and we can only ask: What the hell happened Factor 5? You bunch of scruffy Nerf herders!

MASHING THE A BUTTON

Spacecraft combat is what the series has always been about, and up until now it has been executed with such amazing style that gamers everywhere would probably continue to buy more and more of the same. Admirably, Factor 5 weren't going to just sit on their collective arses and rake in the cash

— they decided to try and do something different this time around.

Almost half of Rebel Strike involves missions "on-foot". That is, you play as Luke, Wedge and Han, and you run about various locations and shoot your blaster, commandeer laser turrets and so forth. Some of these levels are recreations of scenes from the films — such as the Death Star rescue of Leia, the skiff battle from Return of the Jedi, Han's infiltration of the Imperial Bunker on Endor and more. Whilst Factor 5 have once again nailed the visual look of the movies to an incredible level of detail, these on-foot missions just quite simply suck. The gameplay is laughable. For example, the level on Dagobah where Luke trains in the Force with Yoda consists of the most dire linear jumping puzzles since Pandemonium on the PSone. You'll almost cry tears at how

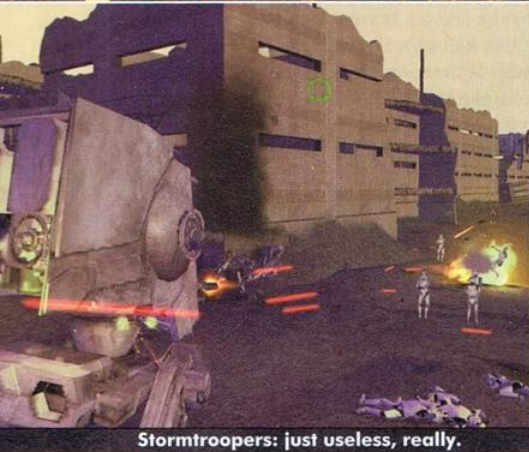
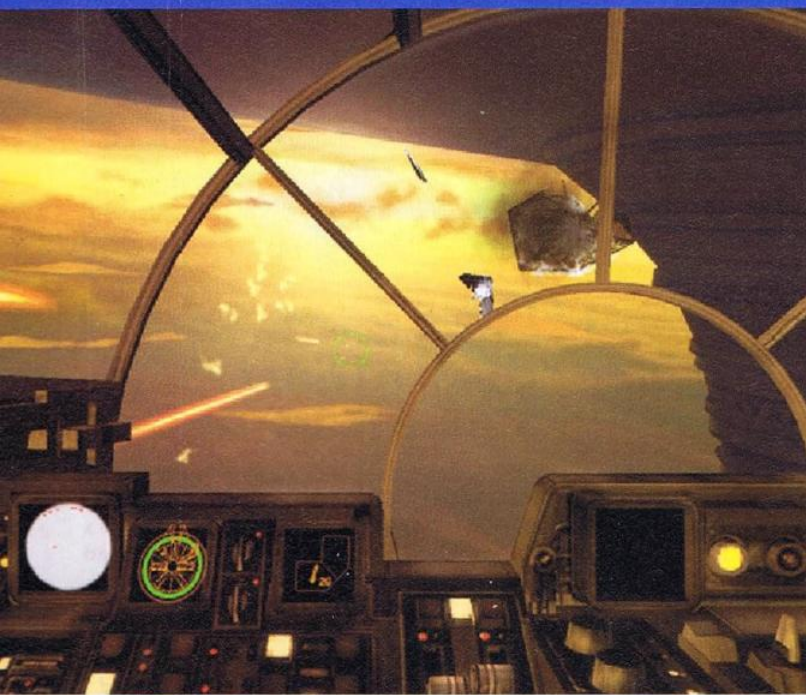
disappointing it is. The controls and camera are bad, and mashing the A-button is generally all that's required for the most part. If it weren't for the amazing graphics, you'd think it had been designed for the Game Boy.

Some on-foot missions come close to being interesting, such as the level from Empire Strikes Back where Luke takes out AT-ATs with thermal detonators and then defends the escaping Rebels — but the enjoyment comes purely from the spectacle of re-living the scenes from the films. The actual gameplay is extremely poor.

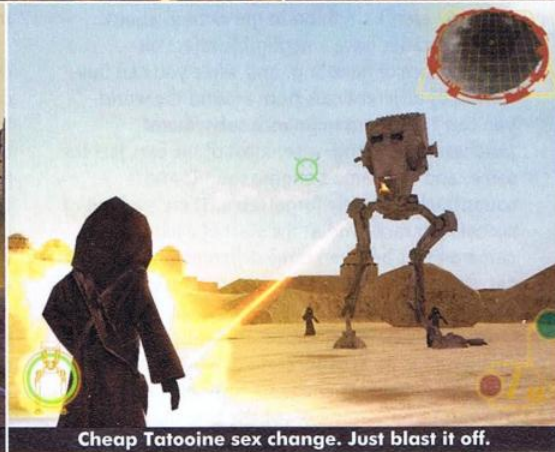
Then there are the other ground missions where you pilot an AT-ST and even an AT-AT. Whilst it's a fanboy thrill to imagine that you're marching these things around — and of course it's cool to check out the cockpit view — the game mechanics are laughably poor. The AT-ST, for

* does mannerism*





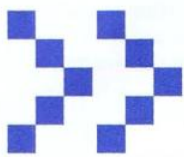
Stormtroopers: just useless, really.



Cheap Tatooine sex change. Just blast it off.



"R2... get off my foot."



ENJOYMENT COMES PURELY FROM THE SPECTACLE OF RE-LIVING THE SCENES FROM THE FILMS

instance, is a nightmare to control, and blasting tiny Stormtroopers running around at your feet loses its novelty value pretty quickly.

One of the other more anticipated ground missions, the speeder bike chase from ROTJ, relies purely on the graphical "wow" of how great the Endor forest looks as it speeds past. In terms of how fun it is to play, well, it's not fun at all. It's another example of how Factor 5 have been content this time around to rely on gimmick rather than offer any substantial gameplay.

SWARMS OF TIE FIGHTERS

Overall, the ground-based missions are a great disappointment, no matter how well they capture the feel of the movies. Factor 5's 3D engine just isn't cut out for anything other than space combat, and Rebel Strike's ground missions make this glaringly obvious. But it's

not all bantha poodu, however. The space combat missions that have been included in Rebel Strike are reminiscent of the intense missions in Rogue Leader, and you'll once again love every minute you spend in the cockpit taking out swarms of TIE fighters and pounding capital ships with proton torpedos. However, there's nothing here we didn't do in Rogue Leader, and this is simply an extension of the same bunch of ideas. Asteroid field here, force-field needing disabling there, ten million TIEs to shoot over there...

One of the more positive additions to Rebel Strike is the brand new co-operative mode, allowing you and one other friend to tackle missions from Rogue Leader, as well as go head-to-head in dogfights complete with your own wingmen. If you have friends around to play with, then

this aspect of the game makes up ever so slightly for the single player game.

Overall, Rebel Strike still offers a challenge in the sense that it's once more irritatingly difficult to gain Gold Medals on the various levels. You'll really want to earn those medals this time too, because there are many more unlockable missions and vehicles this time around,

including an arcade mode where you can play both the original Star Wars and Empire Strikes Back arcade cabinets in their full

original glory. We also love the disco Star Wars theme... Original Trilogy fans might be tempted by Rebel Strike because of the game's incredibly authenticity, but if gameplay is all that matters to you then you might be wise to give this one a miss. <<<

!!! Some missions feel like an excuse to show footage from the films.

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action / PLAYERS: 1-2 / DEVELOPER: Factor 5 / PUBLISHER: LucasArts / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Incredible graphics, original Star Wars arcade games, co-op.

MINUS: Ground missions, poor character control and camera.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 91 70

OVERALL

75

Get back in the cockpit, please!



AGE OF MYTHOLOGY: THE TITANS

Every time a Hyper reviewer gives a Microsoft game a good score umpteen people accuse us of selling out. So leave it to those boffins at Microsoft Games to release one of the best expansion packs to come along in ages, ensuring that our credibility drops.

Although the title makes reference to the Titans, they are not in fact the new race introduced in the expansion. Instead the game introduces the Atlanteans, a very accessible new race somewhat like a cross between the Greeks and Egyptians but with far older gods. Aside from the new race, Titans also gives players a new 12-part campaign, 18 new human units, ten powerful myth units and 12 new god powers. You may not be able to play them but the titular Titans still play a major part in the game as villains. Killing one requires either a totally concerted effort or another (friendly) Titan. Although single player remains largely true to the original game, multiplayer contains a controversial new feature that many players may not like. One of the new buildings available allows players to train human units into heroes, making them a match for nearly any other unit on the field, effectively making most myth units redundant. How this will effect online play remains unknown but we wouldn't be surprised to see a number of servers advertising that they do not support this feature.

Daniel Wilks

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: RTS / PLAYERS: 1-4 / DEVELOPER: MGS / PUBLISHER: Microsoft / PRICE: \$49.95 / RATING: G8+ / AVAILABLE: Now / REQUIRED: Age of Mythology /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
88	85	89	84



Bigger than Ben Hur



GROUP S CHALLENGE

Put simply, Group S Challenge is a Gran Turismo 3 clone, and not in a "similar though subtly different" kind of way, but in a "we're cashing in on your hard work, please don't sue us" kind of way. Yes, this would have to be one of the most flagrant appropriations of design we've ever encountered. Which might be acceptable if Group S was in some way superior to GT3, but unfortunately it's not. The menu system is similar but annoying to navigate, and the graphics certainly aren't anything to get excited about. Parts upgrades have a negligible effect on performance or handling, and while you can buy dozens of different cars from around the world, you can't sell them to finance subsequent purchases. Handling-wise, most of the cars feel the same, and the game's engine sounds and soundtrack are really forgettable. There's a limit of six cars per race, and at the start of each race the camera flicks between three different views of your car. Worse still, in many places the font is identical to GT3's. That's right, they even copied the font.

One truly baffling aspect of Group S Challenge is its arcade-style driving model. Why the developer chose to copy every attribute of a game except the one that made it such a runaway success is beyond us. Granted, Group S Challenge isn't the worst racing game we've ever come across — far from it, in fact. But when there are so many great racing titles already available on Xbox, there's no reason to even consider this. Brett Robinson

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Racing / PLAYERS: 1-2 / DEVELOPER: Capcom / PUBLISHER: Capcom / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: G / AVAILABLE: Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
78	68	64	62



What does the S stand for?



SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

Let's dispense with the lengthy synopsis of SWAT: Global Strike Team's plot. Just think of SWAT: GST as a Tom Clancy game with a conscience. You'll still go in, kill a bunch of bad guys, maybe defuse a bomb or rescue a hostage, then get out. But if a suspect surrenders to you, you'll be reprimanded if you rough him up or put a round through his head. Best to handcuff him and move on, then — and maybe leave a teargas canister under his nose.

Like Rainbow Six 3, SWAT: GST allows you to order around your fellow operatives using the control pad, or lets you use the Xbox Live headset to issue verbal commands like "enter and clear" and "arrest that motherf-cker" (not an official phrase, but one that works). It's a system that functions admirably, but unfortunately there's little incentive to use it. By its very design — which seems to be aimed at tactical newbies — the game encourages you to play it like a slightly more complex than average FPS, instead of like a serious tactical shooter. Consequently, you'll often feel that your two squadmates are just along for the ride, considering you'll only have to use either of them on a handful of occasions.

SWAT: GST certainly isn't a bad game — it just isn't a particularly good tactical shooter. Approach SWAT: Global Strike Team in the correct mindset and we're sure you'll be pleasantly surprised by what it has to offer.

Brett Robinson

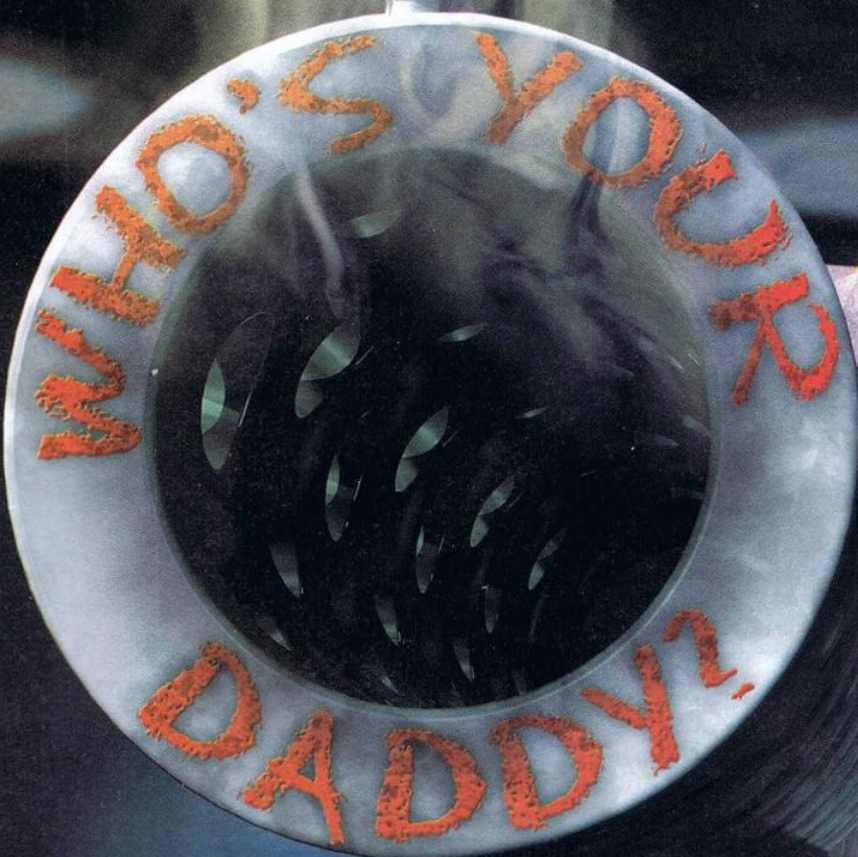
AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Tactical Shooter / PLAYERS: 1-2 / DEVELOPER: Argonaut / PUBLISHER: Vivendi / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: MA15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
87	79	76	75



Argh, green acid in my eyes! Aiiieeee!



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a warm welcome
to evil bots everywhere.

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- Official Australian Xbox Magazine

Publisher	Developer	Rating	Platforms

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BUFFY: CHAOS BLEEDS

Although the original Buffy game on Xbox wasn't perfect, it was a damn good attempt to recreate the show in a videogame, and a solid foundation to expand upon for a sequel. Why then, is Chaos Bleeds such utter rubbish? Why were the original developers The Collective ousted to make way for Eurocom? Could it be because the publisher wanted a quick turnaround on the sequel? It certainly feels like it, because Chaos Bleeds is a big step backwards.

Instead of deepening the combat system by expanding on Buffy's already excellent set of moves, Eurocom have taken the easy way out and simply expanded the roster of people you can play as. You can now use Buffy, Willow, Xander, Spike, Faith and Sid the dummy. It all smacks of a quick fix solution to make the sequel appear to offer more, when in fact each of the characters is half-baked. The game is also burdened with incredibly contrived puzzles and platform sections that serve little purpose other than to drive the player mad with rage.

The visuals don't do the game any favours either, with bland texturing, terrible animations, a sketchy frame rate, and creepy looking lip and eye movement on characters during dialogue. And we won't even start on the rampant camera issues. There are even some truly amazing oversights such as vampires jumping in through windows from the SUNNY street outside... *sigh*.

Cam Shea

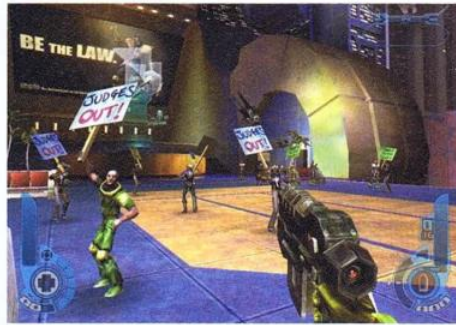
AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Licensed game / **PLAYERS:** 1-6 / **DEVELOPER:** Eurocom / **PUBLISHER:** Vivendi / **PRICE:** \$49.95 / **RATING:** G8+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
69	85	60	65



Can you help me get this shoe off?



JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH

It's not often that we hear of a game developer purchasing the rights to a comic book series, but the folks at Rebellion are now the proud owners of the 2000AD license. For the most part Rebellion has put that license to good use, delivering an enjoyable albeit mediocre FPS into the waiting hands of console and PC gamers.

What differentiates Dredd vs Death from other shooters is its law enforcement theme. You're Joe Dredd, Mega City One's most infamous Judge, and you have the power to instantly apprehend, try and sentence any criminal who crosses your path. It's a largely thankless task, but one made infinitely more satisfying by the firepower at your disposal and the cool one-liners you get to spout on a regular basis.

While the game's levels are fairly linear, their huge size makes it easier to believe you're dispensing justice in a city with a population numbering in the hundreds of millions. Surprisingly, running around killing countless bad guys and arresting anyone left alive never gets boring, and the game's ranking system offers an effective incentive for mostly doing things by the book.

In addition to its 11-mission campaign, Dredd vs Death offers arcade, two-player cooperative and four-player adversarial modes — all in all it's a decent enough game with just enough longterm appeal to keep it afloat.

Brett Robinson

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: FPS / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 / **DEVELOPER:** Rebellion / **PUBLISHER:** Vivendi / **PRICE:** \$99.95 / **RATING:** M15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
68	79	78	76



Am I playing Doom 3 here?



SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

Hit & Run isn't a great game by any stretch of the imagination, but it does have a whole lot going for it that previous titles like Simpsons Wrestling (shudder) and Simpsons Skateboarding (double shudder) didn't. And it's simple. It's something that you'd think would be obvious. It's got THE SIMPSONS.

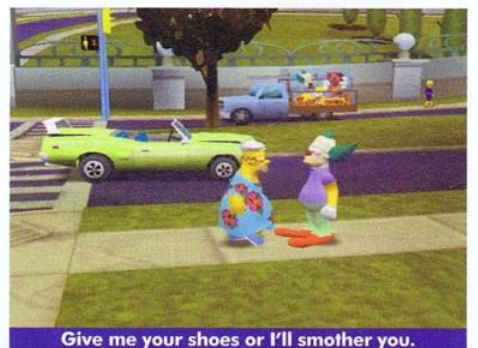
The aforementioned games may have had Simpsons characters, but they essentially had no Simpsons content. Hit & Run, on the other hand, has all the stuff that Simpsons fans want to see in a game — an extensive virtual rendition of Springfield with most of the landmarks you'd expect, a huge cast of characters, a storyline with lots of good dialogue and throwaway lines, and lots of sight gags for the train spotters. In our first session of play, for instance, we saw Frostillicus in the Quick E Mart, visited Apu's garden in the shade, checked out the Larry the Looter arcade machine, saw Lard Lad Donuts, laughed at a sign for a Brad Goodman seminar and took a Stone Cutters shortcut. We'd even bought Fat Homer's mumu from King-Size Homer, and kicked Flanders repeatedly in the head. Good times.

All this Simpsons hilarity is tempered somewhat by the actual game, which is very run of the mill. It's mostly mission-based driving, so you'll be collecting stuff, racing against people or trying to ram other vehicles. There are some on-foot platform sections mixed in too, but at its core this is as simple and repetitive a game as they come. Worth a rent for fans. Cam Shea

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Licensed game / **PLAYERS:** 1 / **DEVELOPER:** Radical / **PUBLISHER:** Sierra / **PRICE:** \$89.95 / **RATING:** G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
72	85	70	74



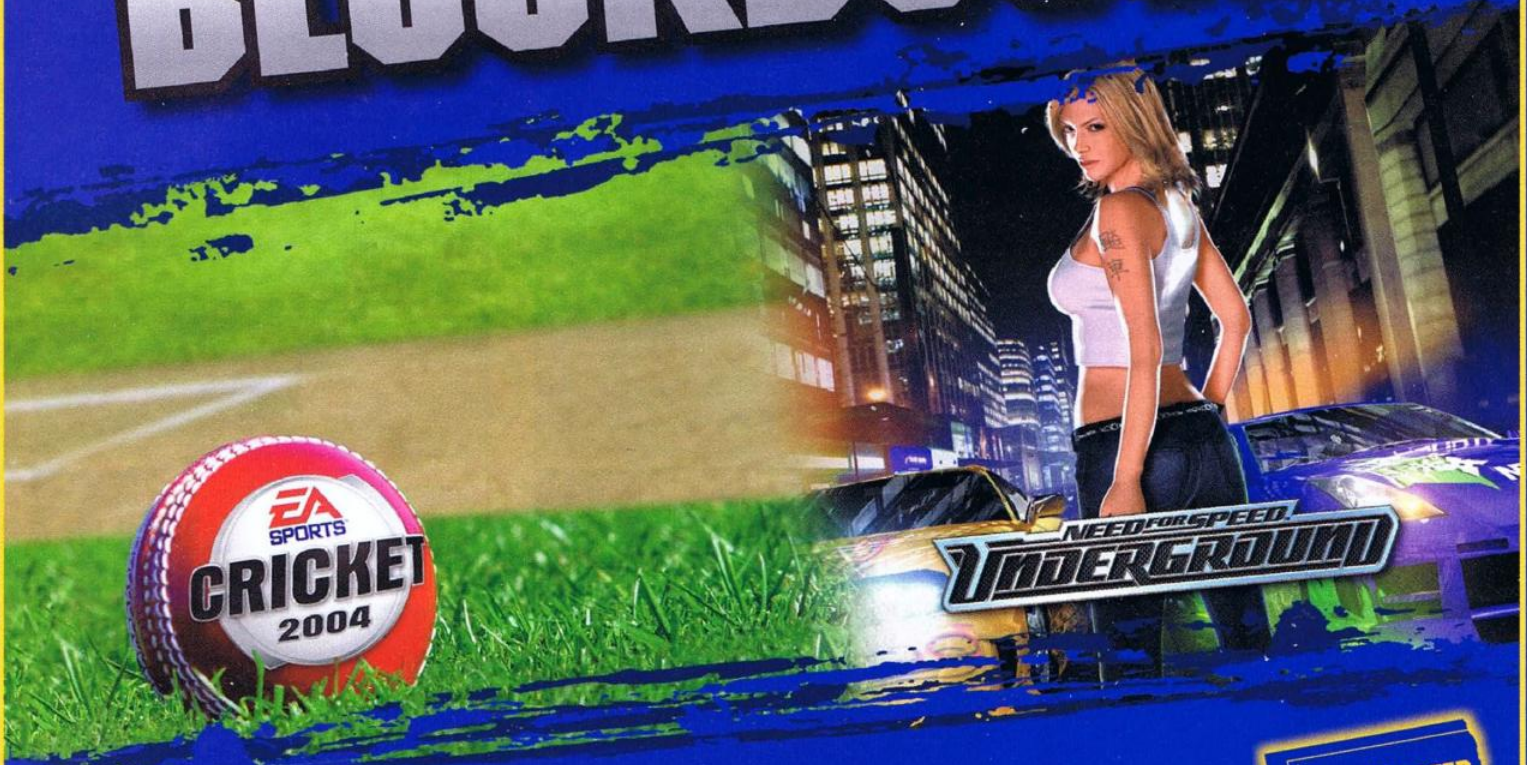
Give me your shoes or I'll smother you.



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BATMAN: RISE OF SIN TZU

W Poor Batman. For such a cool comic character (live on the Dark Knight) he's never had a decent videogame to call his own. Actually, his buddy Superman should probably have more reason to be upset, but hey, Superman is just lame anyway. Batman, at least, can look pretty damn cool if an artist puts his mind to it, and in this game, he looks pretty cool.

Rise of Sin Tzu is based on the animated series, and they've done a pretty good job at capturing that dynamic cartoon look, which is suitable enough for this fairly standard beat 'em up. The new villain, Sin Tzu, isn't too shabby either, so all the elements are there for a fun game, right? Well, not really. The fundamental component – the gameplay – is just too repetitive. It's a mash-fest. It looks pretty, and some of the combos are cool, but it's just not very interesting to play. The gameplay never progresses beyond your basic beat 'em up action, and you'll want to move onto something else pretty quickly. Which really makes us wonder whether this is a game that was aimed at younger gamers in the first place. Especially at the extremely good price of \$49.95. Experienced gamers will get bored quickly, but maybe pick it up for your younger siblings.

Frank Dry

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Beat 'em up / **PLAYERS:** 1-2 / **DEVELOPER:** Ubi Soft / **PUBLISHER:** Ubi Soft / **PRICE:** \$49.95 / **RATING:** G8+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
83	80	65	69



EYETOY: GROOVE

W With EyeToy: Play selling like hot cakes the world over, it comes as no surprise to see Sony knock up a new piece of software for the device. Remember the Boogie Down mini-game from Play? Well, Groove is essentially that mini-game spun out to an entire disc. The basic premise is very much like the litany of dancing games that continue to spew forth from the pits of hell, but instead of following the cues with your feet you're using your arms. The better you time your movements the longer you play and the higher your score. Simple really, but is it enough to sustain an entire game?

Well... maybe. The gameplay has a little more to it now thanks to the inclusion of arm sweep movements in addition to just hitting the "rhythm zones" with your hands. As you'd expect, the strength of Groove lies in its multiplayer options. There are quite a few modes, from the points based "Battle Groove" where you and friends take it in turns, to "Team Sync" which is a two player co-operative game where the game throws a crazy amount of commands at you. Perhaps the best mode, however, is "Tournament" which consists of four mini-games to compete in.

It's good lightweight fun really, and even comes with a calorie counter so your mum can legitimately pass gaming as exercise. Perhaps the strongest element of Groove is the licensed soundtrack Sony have put together. However, overall, Groove only has limited novelty appeal.

Frank Dry

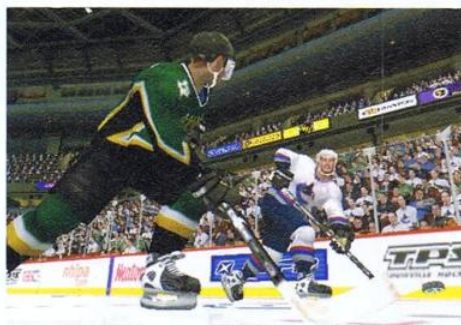
AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Dancing / **PLAYERS:** 1-2 / **DEVELOPER:** Sony / **PUBLISHER:** Sony / **PRICE:** \$79.95 / **RATING:** G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
70	84	65	70



NHL HITZ PRO

W The NHL Hitz franchise has always been to ice hockey what NBA Jam is to basketball: an exaggerated and extremely simplified interpretation of a complex sport that forgoes depth in favour of accessibility and a "party game" atmosphere. A REAL hockey fan wouldn't be caught dead playing it.

Well, that could all be about to change. With NHL Hitz Pro, Midway has attempted to combine the lightweight arcade-style gameplay of previous titles in the franchise with the hardcore depth of a more serious hockey sim. Sports games that try and please everyone like this usually find themselves skating on some frighteningly thin ice, but Hitz manages to pull it off for the most part.

The way it works is all quite simple. Basically, before going into the game proper, you choose whether or not you want to play on "Hitz" or "Pro" mode. Hitz mode sets all the options sliders around the wackier end of town, increasing game speed and doing away with pretty much every rule that differentiates hockey from brawling on ice. Pro mode – as you'd expect – does the exact opposite. Happily, the engine is wonderfully adept at handling both styles of game and players are free to tweak option sliders to their own preferences. Basically, this is ice hockey any way you want it.

Although it's no ESPN, Hitz is a fine game and highly recommended for those who see the serious side of hockey but recognise the fun to be had in a fast-paced slugfest.

Daniel Staines

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Sport / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 / **DEVELOPER:** Midway / **PUBLISHER:** Acclaim / **PRICE:** \$69.95 / **RATING:** G8+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
88	90	85	88



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MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA

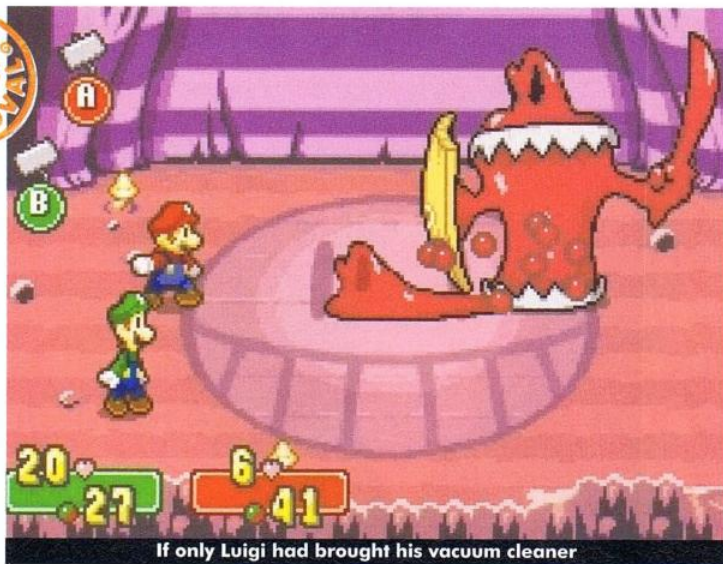
Superstar Saga is the unofficial sequel to two of my favourite games — Square’s Mario RPG on SNES and Intelligent Systems’ Paper Mario on N64. This time around, it’s Japanese developers Alpha Dream who are the zany folks responsible, and they’ve done a fantastic job.

The biggest change from Paper Mario is that rather than leaving Luigi behind to tend to the housework, he’s reluctantly been dragged along. Thus, you control both characters at once, using one of the more unique control solutions we’ve seen in a while. The L and R buttons toggle through various options, which are then executed for Mario or Luigi using the A and B buttons respectively. For instance, select jump for both characters and you can jump up small ledges one at a time. Then there are the team-up moves that require the brothers to be in a particular order. Put Mario at the front for instance, and Luigi can jump off his back to reach higher ledges, or he can hammer his head to shrink him down to mini-Mario who can then fit through small holes. There are a whole host of abilities to learn, and these have enabled Alpha

Dream to include basic, but engaging puzzles.

Combat is turn-based and quite similar to Paper Mario, incorporating plenty of action commands to keep the battles interactive and less wooden than other console RPGs. Although we miss the more extensive party mechanics of Paper Mario, there’s still plenty of depth here thanks to double team moves and several levels of action commands. The real strength of the game, however, lies in the personality and humour laced throughout the world and dialogue. No one seems to know who Luigi is, for instance, and there’s stacks of self-referential humour for long-time Nintendo fans to enjoy. Another classic from Nintendo and friends.

Cam Shea

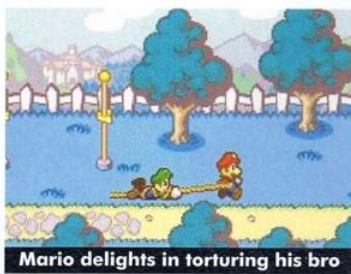


If only Luigi had brought his vacuum cleaner

DETAILS

CATEGORY: RPG / **PLAYERS:** 1-2 / **DEVELOPER:** Alpha Dream / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **PRICE:** \$69.95 / **RATING:** G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
84	84	90	90



Mario delights in torturing his bro



Luigi is on the drugs again

SWORD OF MANA

If you cast your mind back to the Super Nintendo, you may recall the Action RPG entitled Secret of Mana. Now, developer Brownie Brown have returned to deliver a brand-new mana game, Sword of Mana. But the similarity to Secret of Mana really only lies in the title and some of the monster and character designs. This RPG is a more traditional Action RPG, and very much a story-driven experience that should appeal to just about any 16-bit Action RPG lover.

The land sprawls in multiple directions, giving the player the feeling that some real exploration will be needed to find your way about — you’ll stumble into caves and be prevented from continuing any further until you go back somewhere else and obtain the magic to do so, for instance. Combat is classic action style, with your character able to choose from a variety of different weapons to run up and beat the monsters with — although the addition of the bow and some ranged magic attacks allows for more variety. You can also level up your character across a combination of different class

types, allowing you to become a beefy melee man or agile wizard type. Of course, you can also choose to play the game as a girl also, taking you through a different, yet concurrent, story path. There’s even the obligatory Pokémon style additions, such as the Hot House where you can plant and grow strange fruit and veggies to temper your armour and weapons with.

It’s a little on the easy side, but a fun adventure, and despite some poor AI pathing problems (actually your AI companion is pretty useless altogether) this should tide you over until we get a new Zelda or something better.

Frank Dry

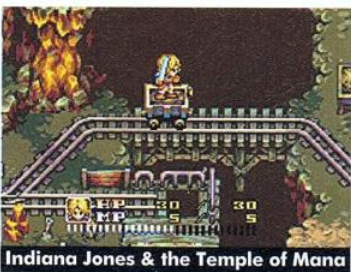
DETAILS

CATEGORY: RPG / **PLAYERS:** 1 / **DEVELOPER:** Brownie Brown / **PUBLISHER:** SquareEnix / **PRICE:** \$69.95 / **RATING:** G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
86	86	84	84



Careful, this boss is a little batty



Indiana Jones & the Temple of Mana



Lucky he brought the magic bonbon

TOP GEAR RALLY ADVANCE

☞ The Game Boy Advance is definitely a marvel machine, but it's not often gamers can take up the portable device and get stuck into some serious driving action. Sure, Mario Kart for GBA was an awesome addition to the series, and GT Advance, Colin McRae and V-Rally have pushed the handheld along, but there hasn't really been anything a serious racing fan could sink their teeth into. Until now.

Top Gear Rally Advance is a rare breed of game where technical limitations work in favour of the product, producing a simple but streamlined rally experience.

The game is simply breathtaking to behold — over 200 polygons per rally vehicle complete with textures and specular lighting. Add to this, an outlandish attempt at capturing rally driving conditions and courses, and you begin to see the measure of Tantalus Games' abilities. Weather conditions, road surfaces and a number of tuning options add a layer of depth to the game, and the abundance of gameplay options only make all of the aforementioned that much sweeter.

The racing may get repetitive after extended play, but like any great rally game, mastering the controls will take a while, and there's some sweet two-player link-up to enjoy if a friend also has the game.

There's not much more we can say about Top Gear other than it handles like a dream, runs without a hitch and is a barrel of fun. If you're a rally driving fan, then you probably can't do much better on the Game Boy Advance, if you're a casual racing fan, this game will still ignite a fire in your belly, and it's Australian developed to boot!

Frank Dry



The tricky single tyre manoeuvre

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Racing / **PLAYERS:** 1-2 /
DEVELOPER: Tantalus Games /
PUBLISHER: Kemco / **PRICE:** \$69.95 /
RATING: G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
85	80	82	82



Uhh, is that a cliff edge?



Mmmm gravel. Crunchy.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

☞ With all of the hype surrounding the impending release of Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time on all formats, the Game Boy Advance version seems to have been forgotten. While we always knew a version of the title would end up on the handheld, we didn't really know whether it would be something new or a port of the original games.

So how does the Game Boy Advance version of Prince of Persia run? The game itself is challenging to play and fun on many levels, but as a whole, it's difficult to put aside the fact that the GBA version is a generic — and weak — platform game. The Prince can perform many acrobatic moves — all fairly similar to those in the console game — such as flipping around poles, running along walls, plus the general flips and jumping moves that are available from the outset. After a brief introduction to the Prince's moves, you'll be given the Dagger of Time. Once you have the dagger you can collect the energies of wasted bad guys to use later on in reversing time. There's also a great deal of swordplay that pays homage to the Prince of Persia games of old,

and these are interesting to take part in, as are the well thought-out puzzles — all with elements similar to the sort of thing you expect from a Nintendo title. But as a whole, the elements don't really gel.

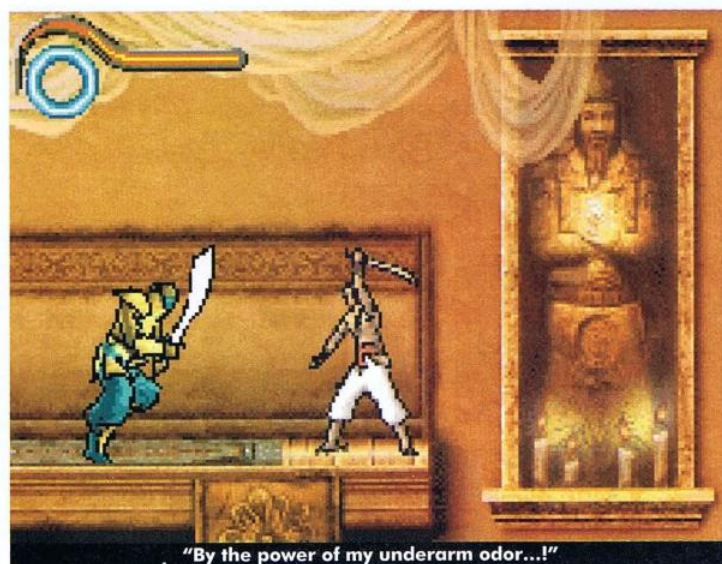
If you're keen to get as much out of the Prince's return to prominence as possible, the Game Boy Advance version should be the last place you look. In the marketing world you have to cover all bases, and sometimes, it seems, not all bases need be perfect. Look out for the console versions, and if your curiosity still gets the better of you, hold onto your receipt after you pay for the handheld version — just in case.

Frank Dry

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Platformer / **PLAYERS:** 1 /
DEVELOPER: Ubi Soft Montreal /
PUBLISHER: Ubi Soft / **PRICE:** \$69.95 /
RATING: G / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
57	65	68	63



"By the power of my underarm odor...!"



Prince does his morning yoga class

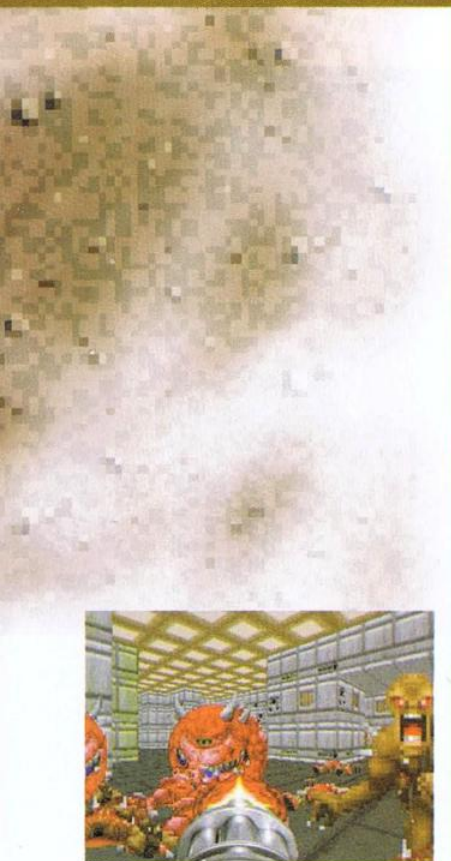


These new Nike boots DO help!

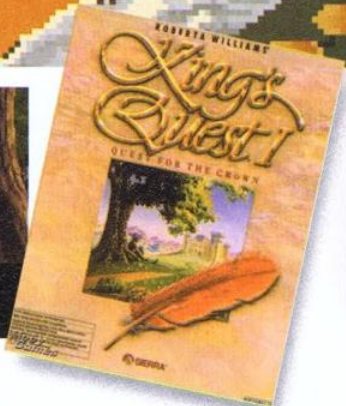
ABANDONWARE Piracy Or Preservation?

>> Daniel Staines

Given that videogames have only been a mass-market entertainment medium for just a little over twenty years, it's funny that there are already large communities devoted to the distribution and preservation of so-called "forgotten classics". Yet, that is precisely what the abandonware community does. Using the web as their primary means of distribution, abandonware aficionados stockpile huge collections of old and obscure games and upload them to their websites for free public consumption. This, they claim, is an act of historical conservation, allowing today's gamers to gain a full appreciation of the importance seminal classics such as *Sim City* and *Karateka* played in the development of videogame culture. After all, if the publishers and developers responsible for these gaming milestones have simply abandoned them or are no longer existent, then surely it is incumbent upon the fans to take up the reigns of responsibility and "keep the memory alive"?



[Above] With Doom 3 coming out, you can bet that the original Dooms will never be abandoned
[Top Right] Monkey Island – difficult to buy, impossible to download.



Perhaps. In this month's Classics feature, we are going to briefly explore the concept of abandonware as well as taking a look at the legal and ethical issues that surround its existence. Oh, and of course there'll be a best-of-the-best abandonware websites guide for those of you interested in pursuing some old-school goodness yourself. However, we should point out rather explicitly that this article does not amount to an endorsement of abandonware by Hyper. Hyper neither condones nor condemns the practice of distributing material that is no longer available yet still technically under copyright. This feature is purely observational and objective – so don't go blaming us if the ESA breaks down your door and hauls you off to court for distributing copies of Monkey Island.

And now that the obligatory legal disclaimer has been dispensed with, we can now move on to an examination of what abandonware is and what it means for the parties involved in it...

SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS ABANDONWARE?

Well, that's a bit of a tricky issue. At the time of writing, there is actually fairly heated debate within the abandonware community as to what the term abandonware "officially" covers. Originally, it was decided by several of the big abandonware hubs such as TUOL.org and the Abandonware Ring that the term abandonware would denote any game that is older than five years old and no longer available on store-shelves. However, this created something of a problem, as publishers habitually re-released their old games in classics box sets and abandonware as defined above consequently conflicted with their commercial interests and bought a lot of unwanted legal attention onto the community as a whole. Furthermore, even though I can't buy DOOM from K-Mart anymore, I can easily acquire it online – either through classics game stockists or second-hand via eBay. The actual

physical presence of a particular game in stores doesn't necessarily define its availability elsewhere.

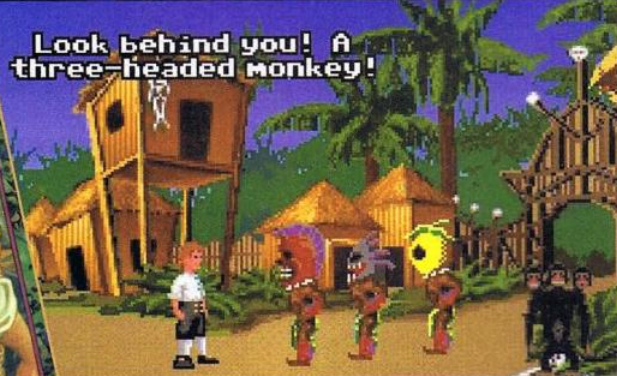
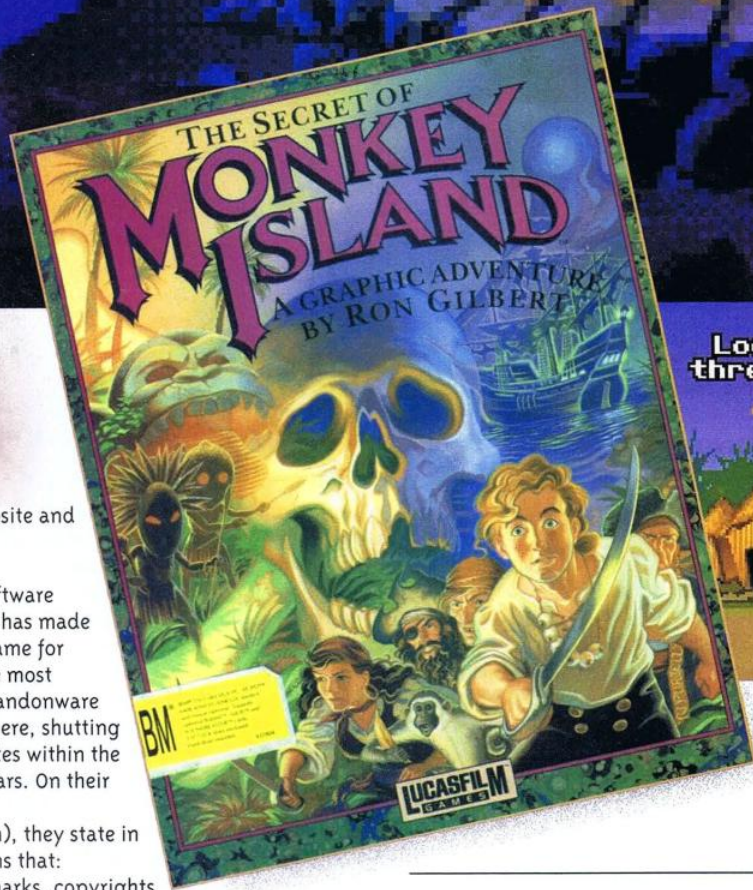
Another popular definition asserts that abandonware covers games made by companies that either no longer exist or no longer officially support the titles in question. Once again, however, this definition is obviously problematic. Simply because the company or individual responsible for a particular game isn't around anymore, it doesn't mean that the rights to that game aren't actually owned by someone. Copyright, after all, doesn't expire for seventy-five years after it is originally established. The person responsible for M.U.L.E is dead, but EA still own the rights to the game itself. Additionally, it is extremely rare that a company will come out and "officially" announce that it no longer supports one of its games in any way shape or form. Usually, old games are simply left on permanent hiatus under the hope that they will one day be potentially profitable

again – either as licenses or as part of a compilation of some sort.

Most reasonable people in the abandonware community agree that a strict definition of the term itself is untenable, and instead proceed on a basis of reasonable assumption tempered by a willingness to add or remove games from "the big list" of available games. Can we reasonably assume that the free and unofficial distribution of a given game is not going to worry that game's publisher? Yes? Then let's call it abandonware – it really is as simple as that.

IS ABANDONWARE LEGAL?

Usually not. Despite the claims of a good number of uninformed webmasters, abandonware is never legal unless the parties distributing the games have obtained the express permission to do so from the copyright holders. So, unless Sierra actually tells an individual that they're allowed to freely distribute that copy of Leisure Suit Larry, they are breaking the law when they put



[Above] It's still one of the best games we've ever played. Humour, adventure, humour, three-headed monkeys, humour, crafty puzzles, oh and it was sooo funny...

it up on their website and so are you if you download it. The Entertainment Software Association (ESA) has made something of a name for itself as being the most fanatical anti-abandonware association out there, shutting down scores of sites within the space of a few years. On their official website (www.theesa.com), they state in no uncertain terms that:

"Unlike trademarks, copyrights are not considered abandoned if they are no longer enforced. Copyrights do not enter the public domain just because they are no longer commercially exploited or widely available. Therefore, the copyrights of games are valid even if the games are not found on store shelves, and copying or distributing those games is a copyright infringement."

And we all know what copyright infringement is, don't we? That's right: illegal.

IS ABANDONWARE WRONG?

This is a trickier question. Although abandonware is technically illegal, the proliferation of huge abandonware sites all over the internet suggests that the publishers who own the copyrights to the games being distributed don't actually care about them as much as anti-piracy bodies like the ESA would have us believe. Normal warez sites will be lucky to last more than a month these days, but there are several abandonware sites

that have lasted for over five years and are still going strong. Typically, the webmasters of these sites claim that they are even doing publishers a favour by freely distributing product that would have otherwise been forgotten, garnering attention for their brand as well as any newer games they may have recently released into the marketplace. Even though it's shaky in a legal sense, one can't but feel that there's a certain appeal to arguments like this.

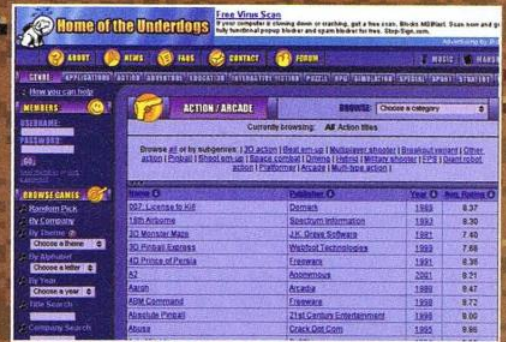
Of course, the ESA and friends disagree emphatically. Their basic rebuttal to points like the one above is that all piracy — old or new — is bad simply because it "undermines respect for the intellectual property rights upon which software companies are built". So, if you pirate Sim City, what's to stop you from pirating The Sims while you're at it? To us, this argument appears to be a little weak around the knees. It seems unlikely that a fondness for old games will necessarily lead to a

websites

HOME OF THE UNDERDOGS

www.the-underdogs.org

Simply put, Home of the Underdogs is THE abandonware site to visit. Not only do they have scores of abandonware to download, but they also sport extensive information on issues pertinent to abandonware and the community that supports it. Incidentally, the ESA (then under the name of IDSA) have tried several times to shut down this site. Obviously, they've failed.



THE ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE ASSOCIATION

www.thesea.com

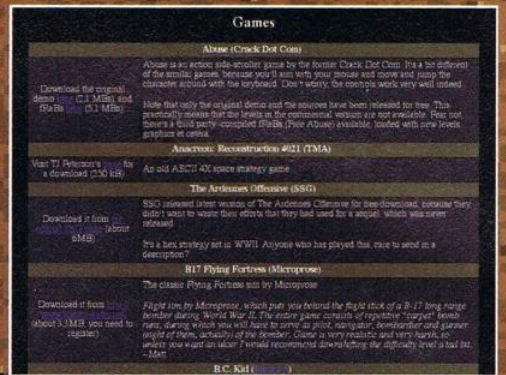
The ESA is probably the most active anti-piracy body in the gaming industry at the moment – at any rate, they're certainly the most stringent. This website contains tonnes of information on everything related to software piracy, including warez, ROMs and – obviously – abandonware. Although they come off as being mildly self-righteous at times, this organization is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in the legal technicalities that surround games and copyright law.



LEGAL ABANDONWARE

legallaw.cjb.net

A site dedicated to the distribution of "legal" abandonware – i.e. games and software that have been officially released into the public domain by the companies or individuals that own them. Sites like these are a rarity, but they're important if abandonware is going to be established as credible in the eyes of official software piracy bodies. Essentially, what legal abandonware does is play the game by the rules – and that is an important first step in convincing software companies that abandonware is not about piracy and encouraging them to release more old games into the public sphere.



THE SOFTWARE AND INFORMATION INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

www.siiia.net

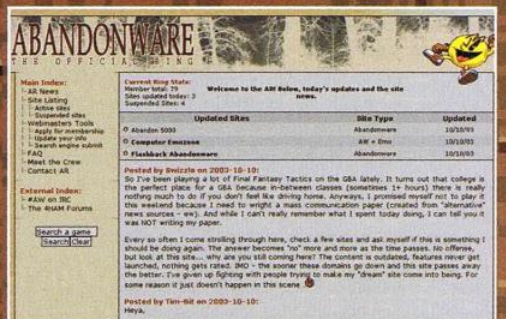
The SIIA is essentially to application software what the ESA is to games, running extensive anti-piracy programs and compiling informative statistical analyses on the effect piracy has on the software industry as a whole. This website, though rather dry in places, is an absolute goldmine of information on piracy, with studies, graphs, interviews, FAQs and a whole bunch of other useful stuff. They also conduct studies on topics other than piracy, so it's worth checking out even if you don't care about the copyright laws that pertain to downloading the original Secret of Monkey Island.



THE OFFICIAL ABANDONWARE RING

www.abandonwarering.com

The name says it all, really. If you're looking for a particular game or abandonware site devoted to one genre, then you really can't go past this place. In addition to a "find a game" search engine and huge abandonware site listing, The Official Abandonware Ring also maintains an informative FAQ as well as a stringent policy on what abandonware is and is not. Oh, and the webmasters are some of the oldest and most respected members of the abandonware community, so they know what they're talking about.



rabid lust to pirate everything wholesale. This slippery slope is a bit too steep to be credible.

At the end of the day, there is no clear-cut ethical status for abandonware. Although organisations like the ESA are clearly legally correct, many gamers (and even some developers) would argue that their almost fanatical anti-abandonware policies are only going to obliterate history and harm the cultural integrity of interactive entertainment while yielding no noticeable advantage for the copyright owners they're supposedly protecting.

We're not going to say either side is right here. What we are going to do is provide you with a starting point from which to draw your own conclusions. What follows is a brief compendium of relevant sites – some abandonware, some not – that you might like to visit in order to fully appreciate the issues surrounding this debate. <<<



[above] Oh look, Hobbit sunbaking pedestals...



[above] I don't think these Orcs are willing to have a chat

Middle-Earth Online

//www.middle-earthonline.com

>> Daniel Wilks

W The time is ripe for a massively multiplayer RPG set in Tolkien's Middle-Earth, with the films about to reach their conclusion and the franchise reaching what could possibly be an all-time high. Developer, Turbine (also responsible for Asheron's Call 2), have taken on the task of translating Tolkien's masterwork to the PC and at the current prototype stage of development it's looking remarkably good. Recently, a group of games journalists were privy to a demonstration of the code in Singapore and the polished product we saw belies the fact that it's still at least six months off.

LEARNING AND UNLEARNING

As is fitting with the mythos, players will be able to create their characters from one of the four main races - Man, Elf, Dwarf and Hobbit, and can create classes using a malleable system that won't lock them into a set progression path. The character creation system also allows for a good deal of differentiation between avatars, as players can choose from a number

of body types, faces and hair styles. One of the more interesting aspects of character creation and progression we were shown was the learning and unlearning of skills. Each quest the player undertakes may require a specific set of skills to complete, but instead of having to either put the quest off until the player has levelled up enough to learn the skill or simply avoiding the quest all together, Middle-Earth Online gives the player the ability to unlearn some of their skills over a period of time and learn the new skills required. Whilst this ability takes some time during play it also works whilst the character is dormant (the player is offline) so a player can log on, decide to change skills, log off and have the character all set with the new abilities next time they log on. We're not too sure about the exact mechanics of this feature as yet but assume that during the

advancement process the player will be awarded some malleable skill points that can be switched between different skills without effecting the character's core skills.

Story-wise, the game will be set during the Fellowship's race to destroy the one-ring, although players will not be able to play as any of the existing characters.

There is a chance you may bump into one or two of them on your adventures, however.

A GOOD DEAL OF PRIVACY

On a more technical note, Middle Earth Online is set to ship with a feature called Private Encounter Technology that should hopefully cut down on instances of players





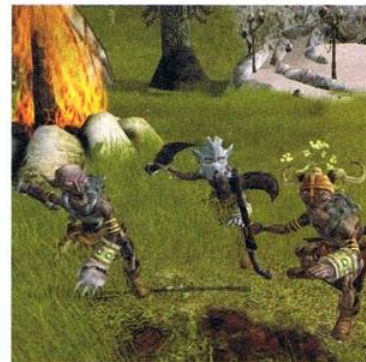
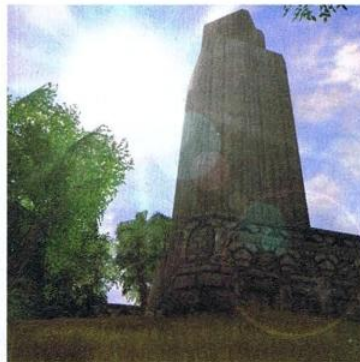
[above] You guys really should have a holiday and get a tan

having to camp out to finish a quest or have their glory and XP stolen by a group of idiots who swoop in at the last minute and deal the fatal blow. Whenever a player enters a quest that uses Private Encounter Technology the server will spawn a separate quest area separate from the main game world. Aside from offering up a good deal of privacy, more than one of these private areas can be spawned at once meaning there should be little or no wait for other players wanting to do the same quest at the same time. Probably the most interesting aspect of Middle-Earth Online is that Turbine is looking to accentuate the role-playing aspect of the game and actually turn it in to a massively multiplayer interaction experience rather than a game that simply involves hunting down experience points and leveling up. Although this claim has been made numerous times before, it actually sounds believable coming from Turbine, especially considering that one of their major goals with the engine is to allow many characters to appear

on screen at once; not simply for large scale combat but also for groups of characters to congregate and interact in the towns dotted across the world.

Although built around a version of the engine that powered Asheron's Call 2, Middle-Earth Online far surpasses the look of the latter game and features some of the best animations and water effects yet seen in an MMORPG. Hopefully, by the time it is released, the engine will be fully optimised to run on an average system, as it would be a shame to see a game with so much potential struggle due to overreaching system requirements.

It's still at least six months away, but Middle-Earth Online is looking as though it's going to be a force to be reckoned with in the booming genre of MMORPGs, due in equal parts to the beloved setting and the incredible looks and potential of the game. There has been no official word as to when a beta test is planned, but rest assured we'll let you know when it happens.



[top right] Eliot, Cam and Malcolm form a Goblin clan. Beware, travellers!



JENNY
Class: Wizard
Race: Gnome

>Happy go lucky Gnome seeks others for encounters in junkyard. Gnome swinging experience preferred:-)

You can find **JENNY**@Church of Brell, Norrath.



A unique EverQuest online experience available exclusively on PlayStation®2.
www.eqoa-game.com



Back of the Net

JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE



Through previous Back of the Nets, I have tried to reconsolidate the faith in the theoretical potential of the

internet. You know, microchip in the head kind of stuff. After a rough few years where e-business crumpled, and broadband pick-up was slow to take off, it seemed the internet had (has?) stagnated. But take yourself back to 1997, when the internet's hype and promise were irrepressible. Everything seemed possible, and the internet promised to change lives. Unified communication was coming, as telephones, television, radio, films and print media were all set to be superceded as information platforms.

Print media? That's right. The very lifeblood, the wellbeing of magazines such as this one were being brought into question. Admittedly, they have a point, especially for a technology-related magazine such as Hyper, where things move so quickly. See, the internet exposed magazine production procedures as painfully time-consuming, meaning news is only luke-warm by the time it reaches you. Similarly, the democratic nature of the internet has handed all those people who once thought they could review games better than us a voice, with reviews often appearing before Hyper hits shelves.

So why bother with Hyper? Apart from a few notable exceptions, internet sites remain of a generally low quality, in terms of both copy and design. Add to this the net's unreliable audience measures and immature advertising structures and we see that the internet is very much still a frontier land, as magazines remain material, concrete, tangible, and, essentially, manageable.

Because of this, the internet simply does not enjoy the prestige of print publication, in the eyes of those who makes games, promote games, or, most importantly you, the gamers. We are the priority, meaning exclusive features and interviews are the norm. Sure, down the line things will inevitably change, but we'll also have hover cars. It's an old adage, but a goody: while now you can read the internet on a laptop on the toilet - you can't wipe your arse with a motherboard. The internet will flex its muscles in time, but magazines are here to stay.

Links

>> Kosta Andreadis



Scout Walker - Karma Sutra

www.scoutwalker.com

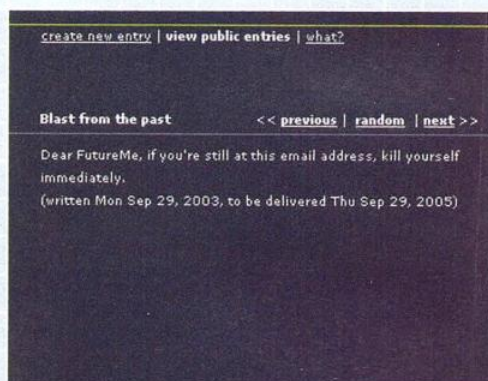
>> The Karma Sutra, a filthy instruction manual on how to be naughty with another person or imaginary friend is essential reading for depraved perverts and politicians everywhere. And it isn't just Indians and Christina Aguilera who are dirty ("pauses to assess the genius of that joke") as the Galactic Empire seems to be getting in on the 'act'. You see the Imperial Army's arsenal of ground attack units, in particular the Scout Walker - are very similar to slick haired Europeans, in that they're sex maniacs. Far more limber and far less clumsy than the Star Wars films make them out to be, Scout Walkers can bend their way into many a position and can amply cover the whole spectrum of the love making process as dissected here.



World Beard and Moustache Championships

www.worldbeardchampionships.com

>> I've always said that if you're going to compete at the world level, it should be at the World Beard and Moustache Championships (the WBMC), because nothing says man like a beard. And by that token nothing says beard like some of the pictures on this site. Although the jury is still out on grooming beards and mos with product, give me the free flowing Santa-Clause-come-ZZ-top-esque beard any day of the week. Which brings me to er, me - you see I have what is commonly referred to as a 'face that cannot grow a beard'. So to me a site like this makes the tears run down the silky smooth cheeks that adorn my genetically impaired face.



Send an Email into the future

www.futureme.org

>> Like the title says this website will allow you to send an email to any address on a specific date in the future. So if your name was Justin Timberlake or Avril Lavigne you could send an email to yourself in the year 2006 that states something along the likes of, "Currently I'm enjoying a successful career where people envy and look up to me, I hope it lasts forever." Which would be kind of bittersweet in a way as in the year 2006 you could put your crack pipe down and think back to the days before the soft drink execs and marketing committees put you in your place when you decided to do it your own way, free of contracts and consequently talent.



Videogame Music Midi Game

yamauchi.selwerd.nl/~d3/midigame

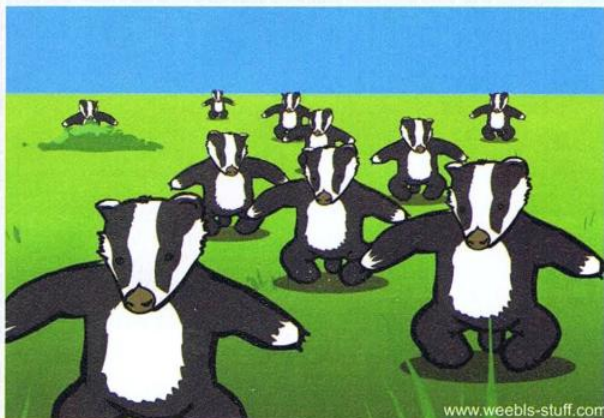
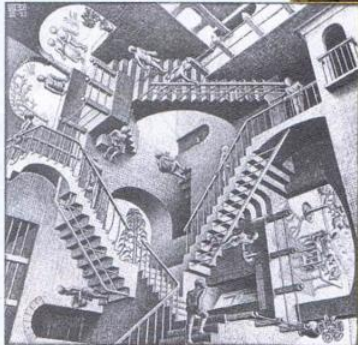
>> Before the days of licensed music interfering with the gaming experience, it was often left up to a single person and a very limited synthesizer to try and create a soundtrack to the hectic on screen action. The result was some of the most catchy and instantly recognisable pieces of music of the last twenty years. So much so that the familiarity of the fanfares created by Koji Kondo for both Zelda and Mario, are pretty much on par with those of John Williams (Star Wars, Indiana Jones etc.). This website plays out various classic videogame pieces, in MIDI, leaving it up to you to try and remember what game it's from to score the most points.

Links

Escher's Relativity in Lego

www.lipsons.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/escher/relativity.html

» Escher's classic implausible rendition 'Relativity' is probably the most well known piece from the renowned graphic artist. Part of pop culture it has appeared in everything from The Simpsons to David Bowie's autobiographical feature film Labyrinth, and now it's in Lego! No matter how cool something looks as soon as it's converted into Lego it elevates to a whole new level of coolness, and in this case a 9.8 "heyyy" reading on the Fonzometer™. You have two choices, 'Right-click Save As' or 'Right-click Set-as-Background'.



Flash – The End of the World and Badgers!

members.cox.net/impunity/endofworld.swf
www.weebis-stuff.com/data/toons/badger.swf

» Flash animations, much like bread, are a staple of the web surfing diet. If you find dietary analogies a little too timid then this 'cocaine-and-whores-binge analogy' will paint a better picture. Flash animations and the web mix well, just like coke and whores. Which brings us to this two links for the price of one (a twofer) flash animation extravaganza. First up is The End of the World, a subject dear to my post-apocalyptic robot mechanical heart in a funny tale on



the superpowers and their missiles. Next up is the hypnotic 'Beaver Song' featuring many beavers, mushrooms and a scary snake.



MURDOK
Class: Shaman
Race: Troll


>Tetchy Troll seeks adventurous type for Goblin whipping. No time wasters:—(

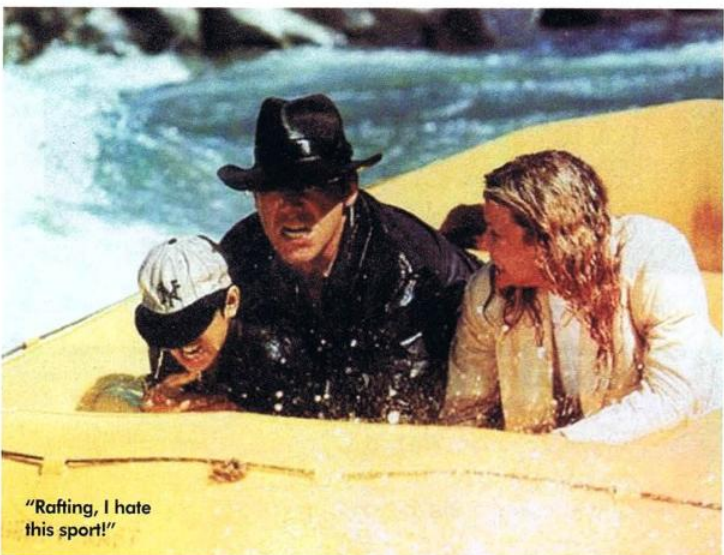
You can find **MURDOK**@Snotspit River, Norrath.

 **PlayStation 2**
Real opponents. Infinite possibilities.

A unique EverQuest online experience available exclusively on PlayStation®2.
www.eqoa-game.com



 **SOE** IMPORTANT: A Network Adaptor (Ethernet) for PlayStation 2, memory card and broadband connection is required to play EverQuest Online Adventures. 30 day subscription included. Additional subscription fees applicable thereafter. "D" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. EverQuest is a registered trademark and Online Adventures is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ©2003 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. SOE and the SOE logo are registered trademarks of Sony Online Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. WLTBWA KSP5603M



"Rafting, I hate this sport!"



The Adventures of Indiana Jones

THE COMPLETE DVD MOVIE COLLECTION



PARAMOUNT, M

» Daa da da-daaa, daa da-daaaa... yep, Indiana Jones is finally on DVD — and in an exceptionally fine box set no less. Those of you who bought the Star Wars DVDs will know well enough the polish of Lucasfilm's releases — great menus, amazing picture and sound quality and truly excellent bonus material. This Indiana Jones package is no different.

NAMED AFTER THE DOG

Considering that these films were made in the 1980s, the transfer to DVD is astounding — you'd almost think it was shot yesterday. The digitally-remastered

image is as sharp as a Hovito dart, and the new Dolby Digital 5.1 soundtrack is crunching.

Each of the three Indy films comes on its own disc, with the fourth DVD devoted entirely to the extras. The special features include an in-depth "making of" for all three films, as well as featurettes on the stunts, sound, music and special effects. Fans will enjoy seeing Tom Selleck's audition

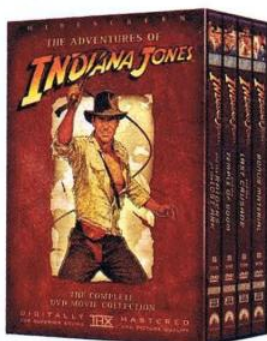
tapes for the role of Indiana Jones (thank the maker that Selleck had to turn the part down) as well as fresh interviews with Lucas, Spielberg and Ford (who looks decidedly comatose) on their Indiana Jones memories. It will be interesting seeing these three team up

again for Indiana Jones 4 which is set to be released alongside Star Wars Episode III in 2005.

Raiders of the Lost Ark (which has been annoyingly re-titled *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* — an unnecessary mouthful) is still the pick of the bunch and one of the coolest adventure films you're likely to ever see. *Temple of Doom* has its moments, but is probably the weakest of the three films (even though it's still an entertaining romp), whilst *The Last Crusade* rounds off the package nicely with its truly epic chase scenes and the Indy posse riding off into the sunset at the end. A must-have release.

Eliot Fish

MOVIE:
Raiders: 10
Temple of Doom: 8
Last Crusade: 8
EXTRAS: 9



The Simpsons SEASON 3



FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, PG

It's been over a year since the last Simpsons box set and fans have been clamoring for more. What's been taking so long? Well, quite simply, the staff place the production of new episodes — ensuring that they meet their high standards — over all else. This means that finding the time for writers, directors and so on to record commentary is almost impossible. Guess we can't argue with that, although it does make the road ahead for DVD compendiums look like a long one.

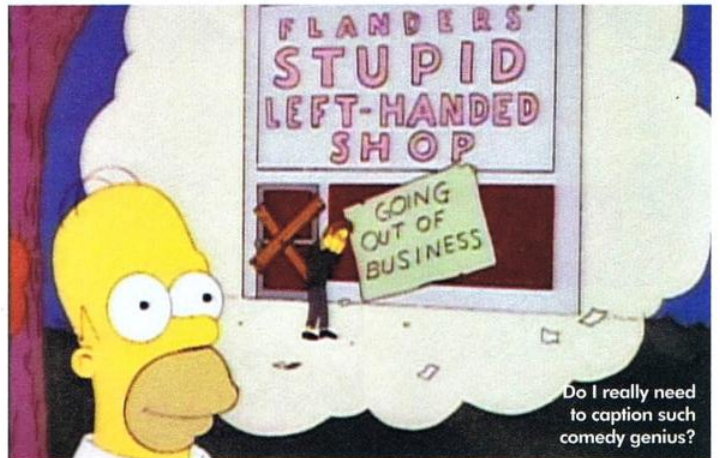
Fortunately, it was worth the wait, as Season 3 is a great collection of episodes, and saw the show get further into its stride. With increasing confidence on the part of the writers and directors come multiple narratives that weave together lots of cut away gags (years before the

Family Guy came along), regular film parodies (who can forget the classic Raiders sequence?) and the continuing evolution of Homer as the greatest cartoon character of all time.

The episodes are great, but for fans, it's the episode commentaries that are the highlight, and this time several of the voice talent have come to the party, with Dan Castellaneta and Nancy Cartwright in particular providing some interesting insights. Other extras include secondary audio commentaries, easter egg outtakes from the voice talent and storyboards. There's still no table read footage though, which is a big disappointment. The presentation is also somewhat lacking, but at least there are some cool new couch gags to enjoy. Get it.

Cam Shea

MOVIE: 9.5 / EXTRAS: 6



Do I really need to caption such comedy genius?

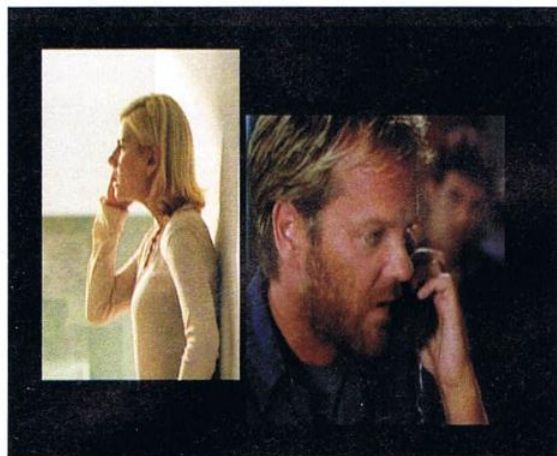


f mind. lligent. Simpson



oun\ [L.] HOMER SIMPSON in which the

a mover century Stutter to speak pauses, Sty \nou swelling on the r



God, she was the stupidest daughter ever.

24 SEASON 2

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, M 15+

Jack Bauer is without a doubt the hardest man to grace the cathode ray tube and a believable hard man at that. Initially taking a hiatus from the CTU after the tragic unfolding of the first season (read basically becoming a bum) and being cut off from his daughter who blames him for the disaster, Jack is coaxed back into CTU by the now President Palmer to search for a nuclear device believed to be primed for detonation some time in the next 24 hours. After seeing Jack cold bloodedly shoot a self-confessed child molester in the head and saw off his head with a hacksaw (off screen) to establish his credentials with a local militia cell it becomes fairly obvious that instead of simply being

a man with a mission, Jack Bauer is now a man possessed either with thoughts of revenge or a self destructive streak a few light years wide. Keifer Sutherland is magnetic as Bauer and seems to have finally grown into his body, eschewing the slightly gawky movements featured in many of his earlier films for a more world-weary naturalism. The seven-disc set is rounded out with some very nice special features including audio commentaries, a two part making of, a featurette about one of the key scenes in the season and a whopping 45 deleted scenes. Will Jack prevail? Naturally. All eager viewers need do now is wonder how they're going to up the ante in season 3.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 9 / EXTRAS: 7



CELENA
Class: Magician
Race: Erudite

Easygoing Erudite wants athletic type to duff up big headed Elf. Gnomes need not apply :-)

You can find CELENA@Temple of Quellious, Norrath.



A unique EverQuest online experience available exclusively on PlayStation 2. www.eqoa-game.com



IMPORTANT: A Network Adaptor (Ethernet) for PlayStation 2, memory card and broadband connection is required to play EverQuest Online Adventures. 30 day subscription included. Additional subscription fees applicable thereafter. "E" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. EverQuest is a registered trademark and Online Adventures is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ©2003 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. SOE and the SOE logo are registered trademarks of Sony Online Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. WLTBWA KSP5592C



They call me Magneto the White, now



X-Men 2

2 DISC BOX SET

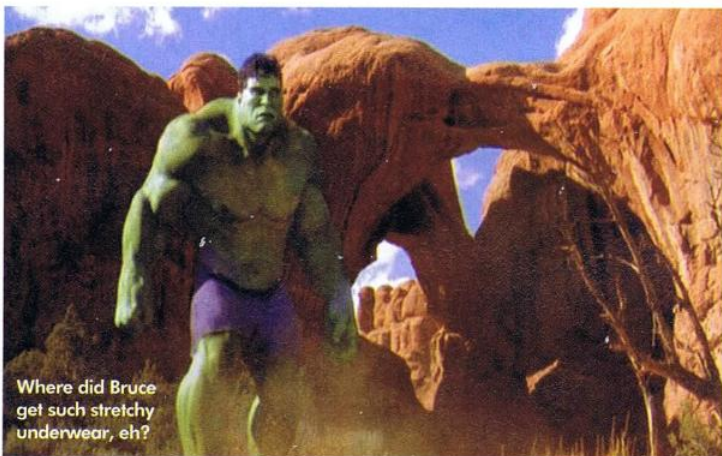
FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, M 15+

You can't help but think that director Bryan Singer fell in love with the X-Men whilst making the first film and set about making the movie that the first should have been. Whereas the original *X-Men* was little more than a showcase for Wolverine (far and away the most popular of the X-Men), *X2* follows a more comic book formula and deals with the exploits of the team as a whole and fares far better for it. Loosely based on a famous story arc called "God Loves, Man Kills", *X2* pits everyone's favourite band of mutants against an insane military genius with an agenda to wipe every mutant off the face of the planet and has a special bone to pick with the mentor of the X-Men, Professor Xavier. In a rather candid making of feature it is revealed that Singer and

the writers introduced the character of Nightcrawler to ugly up the team as they felt that the first movie seemed a little too much like a bunch of beautiful people bashing those less aesthetically pleasing. Whatever the reason, Nightcrawler is a wonderful addition to the film both in character and the power/special effect he brings into the fold - the opening attack on the Whitehouse is absolute poetry in motion. Aside from the standard deleted scenes, most of which are fairly forgettable, it features a number of excellent featurettes with topics ranging from costume design to the comic book origins as well as two audio commentaries.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 9



Where did Bruce get such stretchy underwear, eh?

Hulk

2 DISC BOX SET

UNIVERSAL, M 15+

Uber reviewer probably summed *Hulk* up best when he referred to it in his column as a "comic book movie for people who wouldn't be seen dead in a comic book movie". Although the modern day Hulk comic is undoubtedly super heroic with the not so jolly green giant fighting all sorts of larger than life foes, director Ang Lee has wisely chosen to take the comic back to its roots for his movie, delivering a picture about man's basest nature and the metaphorically disfiguring power of childhood trauma.

Although partially faithful to the comic, *Hulk* adds a number of new plot devices to the mythology that are bound to infuriate comic book purists, namely the fact that Banner's rage and

transformative abilities are more due to his father than the gamma experiment and the whole somewhat muddled end section. Be that as it may, *Hulk* is still an enjoyable and remarkably human superhero movie backed up by a wealth of great features including an excellent commentary, a number of featurettes including a very informative look at the unique comic book paneling style utilised in the editing process and some deleted scenes. Although it's not really the film that purists were wanting or pundits were expecting, *Hulk* still deserves a place on any good movie collector's shelf.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 7 / EXTRAS: 7



Australia's Worst Drivers Caught On Tape!

The Matrix Reloaded

2 DISC BOX SET

ROADSHOW, M 15+

The second movie in the *Matrix* trilogy copped a lot of unwarranted flak upon its release due to the fact that it wasn't as revolutionary or story packed as the first film. The simple fact is that *Reloaded* is the middle part of a trilogy and if you look at it in a traditional storytelling perspective, the first act introduces the characters and sets up the rules of the world in which the story is set, the middle act carries the bulk of the action and serves to flesh out the characters whilst not progressing the plot too far and the third act brings all of the plot threads to denouement. *Reloaded* faithfully follows this tried and true formula by working on the love story between Neo and Trinity, the blind

faith that Morpheus has in the prophecy and dishing up a number of dizzying action sequences specifically developed to one up the sequences in the first film, paving the way for the reportedly truly spectacular and superheroic action in the third. The overall result is a bit sketchy but still a solidly entertaining 2+ hours. The only real disappointment with the DVD is the special features, all of which seem a little lightweight. Although seeing the development of the freeway chase sequence is quite interesting, you can't help but think that there is a super duper features packed extra special edition on the way and the current printing is simply out to assuage the masses.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 6

Animation Runner Kuromi

PRODUCTION COMPANY: YUMETA
GENRE: COMEDY, DOCUMENTARY

Feeling over-worked, under-paid, under-resourced and under-staffed? Disillusioned from working in the private sector? Well, don't run off to that cushy government job just yet, as *Animation Runner Kuromi* will teach you how to embrace the horror of being just another cog in the corporate machine, proving in its own fashion that the truth is often funnier than fiction.

THROWING IN THE TOWEL

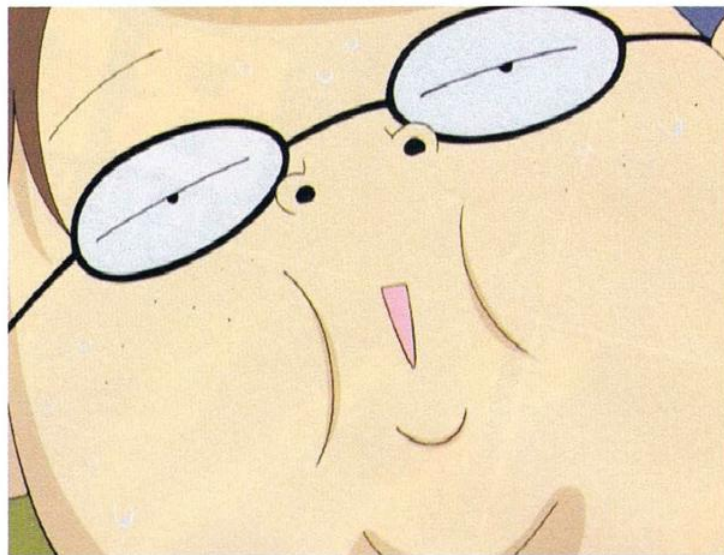
Animation Runner Kuromi is a 40-minute short film about Mikiko 'Kuromi' Oguro, the young and fresh-faced new production manager at anime production house, Studio Petit. Faced with impossible deadlines and surrounded by morons, Kuromi undergoes a trial by fire as she somehow makes the wheels turn and motivates her staff to complete the next episode of an OVA — all in the name of pleasing a short, fat, balding man sitting upstairs.

Based on his own experiences in

the anime industry, Jubei-Chan and Fruits Basket director Akitaroh Daichi delivers the very simple message that good management is about knowing how to manage the people as people, and not as mere resources. The simplicity of this message is a great source of humour, as Kuromi pushes her team and herself harder and harder. However, the film's greatest message comes from Kuromi's subconscious realisation that despite all the stress and rushing around, it's just a job — it's not her life.

Animation Runner Kuromi is light on production values and loaded with in-jokes, and isn't likely to interest younger viewers. Those of you who've mused about throwing in the towel and telling the boss to go **** himself, however, will appreciate the thought that's gone into it.

ANIMATION: 6 / PLOT: 8
OVERALL: 7



[above] Argh run! He's eating the magazine!



Cat Soup

PRODUCTION COMPANY: YAMATO DO CO
GENRE: ARTHOUSE

Winner of the 'Best Short Film' award at the Fantasia Film Festival, *Cat Soup* is a luscious, multi-layered work of traditional and computerised animation that transcends most mainstream tastes. There is no dialogue in this 30-minute feature; and despite their cute appearance, the feline characters are emotionally despondent. In fact, it seems as though *Cat Soup* relies on its evocative imagery to stir an emotional response from its viewers, thus giving it meaning on many levels.

MUNCHING ON A PIG

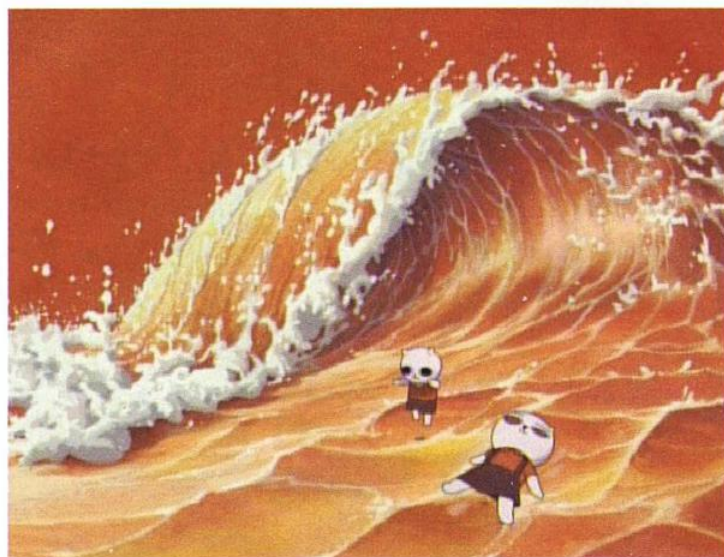
Cat Soup tells the tale of Nyaako and Nyatta, who take a journey through

a surreal dreamscape in order to recover Nyaako's soul. Their adventures are riddled in metaphor. Whether they're riding in giant water elephants or randomly munching on a pig that could've come from Douglas Adams' *Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, there constant references to birth, death, and that thing we struggle daily to find meaning in, life.

Cat Soup comes across as nihilistic at the best of times, turning traditional values and perceptions on their head in each scenario. It's like Hello Kitty meets MTV's *The Maxx*, directed by Darren Aronofsky — it's not immediately entertaining, nor does it have any wry humour to liven the scenes — it's just downright depressing. But if left running in the background, the innocuous charm of its bizarre, dream-like imagery will intrigue and even fascinate any onlooker.

With Dolby Digital 5.1 sound and a director's commentary track is a neat little package that'll add a real touch of class to your anime collection.

ANIMATION: 9 / PLOT: 6
OVERALL: 7



[above] Just like Bondi after the Campbell's Soup tanker disaster



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Just Subscribe!

It's a huge Christmas for Xbox. Project Gotham Racing 2, Amped 2, Grabbed By The Ghoulies, Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge, Top Spin... the great games just keep on coming. That's not to mention the launch of the impressive LIVE online gaming service. If you're dreaming of playing with an Xbox this summer, then we have an awesome opportunity for you to win your very own **Beast Pack** which includes an **Xbox, two games, an Xbox Live trial, an extra controller** and a **DVD remote**. Sweet! We have three Beast packs to giveaway to some lucky subscribers and re-subscribers this month!



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Q. What game are you most looking forward to, and why?

Seeing as it's the end of the year and 2004 is looming ahead of us, we thought we'd ask you that old chestnut "what game are you most looking forward to?" It's fun to look into the near future and see what goodies are coming our way, and it's even easier to get anxious and excited about finally getting to play them. So, here's a snippet of what Hyper readers are looking forward to...



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 was the best game of 2003?"

Responses will be printed in Hyper #125

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.

STEAMY BOWL OF BLISS

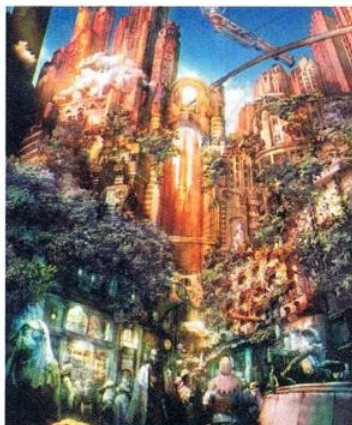
Which game am I looking forward to most and why?

Hell, where should I begin? There are heaps of great games coming so I'll do my top 3.

1. The Next GTA. Why? Why not?! Chances are RockStar will improve dramatically on Vice City and serve up a steamy bowl of gaming bliss. Any one who thinks different or says Vice City wasn't all that good (I have personally met several people who say this, bloody Xbox fans) is as Tommy Vercetti would put it, a prick!
2. Would have to be the next StarCraft game. I am a dedicated fan of the franchise and personally want to know why some Terrans have bred Zerg-Protoss hybrids (see the last level of Brood War).
3. And finally the next TimeSplitters game. TimeSplitters 3... it just rolls off your tongue doesn't it?

Oh and Halo 2, how did I forget? Maybe cause I own a PS2 and not an Xbox, oh well.

Harold



[above] Final Fantasy XII - more next issue

BEST EVER!

The game I'm looking most forward to would be the next Smackdown title for PS2, as I used to own SD!2 and SD!JBI and now own SD!SYM, which is the best ever!

Also, I'm looking forward to Final Fantasy X-2, how great will this game be!? Slick graphics, the first ever sequel to a FF game, and on top of all that... it's Final Fantasy! YES!!

And last but definitely not least... Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater!! Need I say more about the MGS gaming genius incorporated in the great series? It will be fantastic, you can bet on that!

Thanks,
Kraefer

HEART-ATTACK MATERIAL

Indulge me while I talk about myself for a while. I've always gravitated towards racing car games, and being a PC idiot I have mainly made do with various console versions. Wipeout 2097, Need For Speed, TOCA, then the fabulous Gran Turismo series. GT1, GT2, GT3, and GTC have all taken up huge portions of my game time. Joining various on-line forums dedicated to Gran Turismo has kept me happy for years, but with GT4 on the horizon its all getting my heart rate up, and for a guy who is almost 30 and lives on KFC it's heart attack material!

Imagine being able to finally race on-line with real people with the great GT car physics and graphics? I've been lucky enough to race some i-link GT3 with some mates, but GT4 will certainly take simulated racing to new levels for me and many other

race game lovers. I think people will really be surprised at how many guys there are who devote large amounts of time in trying to perfect driving skills for on-line competition. You can keep your on-line FPS and sports sims... give me a polyphony racer and some real opponents any day.

Bring on Gran Turismo 4!
Rypien

ONE DAY IN THE FUTURE...

I must admit, I'm an RPG fanatic. In particular, anything Square makes me giggle like a schoolgirl with glee. Because of this, I'm most looking forward to the next 'official' Final Fantasy game, Final Fantasy XII.

Although Squeenix (who'd have ever thought those two would merge? No one from the late '80s/early '90s, that's for sure. Not even MC Hammer, or Alf) haven't released much information about this particular episode in the grand saga (or should I say SaGa, ha ha), what has been revealed is that fellows from FFXVIII and Vagrant Story are working on it, not to mention the brilliant Nobuo Uematsu. This leads me to believe that XII will be a darker journey than, say, IX or X were.

Even though we probably won't see it until late '04/early '05, Squeenix will provide hours of entertainment, what with X-2 coming soon, news of Advent Children (FFVII's movie sequel), and maybe a few more Enix games released for us. For now, though, I'll replay FFTA and await that fateful day in the future, when I can hold in

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my paws the glory that will be Final Fantasy XII.

Love,
Oreo Xander

DREAMING OF SEQUELS

In normal circumstances, I would also be hoping for a true sequel to Castlevania: SotN, but I've finished that and CotM so many times that I've gotten sick of the gameplay.

That said, I'm personally crossing my fingers for a sequel to either Vagrant Story or The Longest Journey, although some sites claim that there actually IS a sequel in development for the latter. Hopefully you guys can clear this rumour up in a future issue.

From,
Sie Jun

PLASMA GRENADES

The next game that I am most looking forward to would most definitely be Halo 2. The reason would be because I love games with

co-operative play, bots in multiplayer, being able to kill your own team mates and having the honour of sticking plasma grenades to the covenant lifeforms.

Thank you for your time Hyper.
Addicted to Xbox

BLOWN AWAY

That would be a very close call between Half-Life 2, Deus Ex 2, and Halo 2, warranting a toss up from some ridiculous 3 faced coin. I used to be an avid PC gamer, and the memories of playing Half-Life and Deus Ex through for the first time hold a special place in my heart. And, like 1-in-3 Xbox owners, I own Halo, and was blown away by the Halo 2 trailer. The things I loved about Deus Ex were all the augmentations, your skills, the interactivity of the world, and the storyline. In Half-Life there was the downright creepiness of it, the action, and the length. In Halo, the vehicle action was the best, and the graphics. Honourable mentions go to Starcraft: Ghost, Full Spectrum

Warrior, Perfect Dark Zero, Metal Gear Solid 3, and Splinter Cell 2.

Keep up the good work.
Chalkfacedgoon

BELIEVE ME

The game I am most looking forward to is Resident Evil 4 coming to GameCube. Why, you might ask? Resident Evil is the best series of games I have ever experienced and believe me, I've played a lot of games in a series.

I already own the good old GameCube Resident Evil Zero, 1, 2. I will soon own number three but in meantime I'm enjoying my three already.

Another reason why I look forward to this game most is because I'm a huge fan of all survival horror games and I try to own as many as a can. The game will also be appearing for the first time ever, so for me and all the other Resident Evil fans we will have a whole new nightmare to journey into.

Anon

GONNA BE THE BEST

Halo 2 would be the game I'm most looking forward to. Why? Because it's gonna be the best besides StarCraft: Ghost & Half-Life 2 etc on Xbox. Being the sequel to the best Xbox game yet, and highly rated. I like FPSs & the graphics, gameplay & sounds really are amazing on Halo 2. I love the battles, creatures, abilities... basically everything. It's good that Bungie is spending a lot of time, effort & money on making hopefully the best game ever, I've also pre-ordered it. I'm also wishing it can be just as good as Half-Life 2, maybe even better?

P.S. I'm a 1st time subscriber to Hyper, so if it's different to the normal mail, that's why. Thanks HYPER.

Jim Bob

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A FUTURE WARREN SPECTOR?

Hello,
the name's Evans... Daniel Evans. Hyper can you please help me with a possible life changing matter?

I'm currently attending 8th grade and I know that you guys don't give a crap, but the golden oldies call us the next generation, the next Rupert Murdoch, the next Kerry Packer or the next John Howard... (The eyebrows! The humanity! ARGGGHH!) I need to ask how to become a game tester or catalyst like yourselves! I know you're probably thinking "R U on drugs?" or "oh, you're embarrassing me!", but truly I mean it, I've got the brains, the looks, the words, the games and the bat to bash up hippies on the streets of Redfern! But please, give me a chance? Don't just say it's a matter of luck coz I know it isn't. I've still got another 4 years to work on it, and I know it's hard work but I can pull through!

So can you please give me a path to my future or some crap like that! Ciao,

Daniel Evans

Dear Daniel,

These days there are plenty of games industry related courses - from 3D programming to game design. All you need to do is a little research into what courses are near where you live. In Brisbane, for instance, there's QANTM (www.qantm.com.au)

LITTLE FELLOW

Hyper,
I'm sure you are all familiar with the Lord of the Rings trilogy by now (what rock have you been hiding under?), and we all know about the incredible CGI featured throughout the films. The incredibly DETAILED CGI. The little TOO detailed CGI. If you're wondering what the hell it is that I'm getting at - brace yourself.

You know that little albino-monkey that follows Frodo and friends around in *The Two Towers*? Gollum? Well, if you pay close enough attention to his groin area, particularly in the scene where he has a schizophrenic conversation with himself, you'll notice the tattered little rag around his waist doesn't cover up as nearly as much as it should. You may unfortunately notice something I did; a little fellow flopping around the place. Sure, it's pretty subtle, and sure, he isn't blessed with the most giant of giants (he isn't going to earn the nickname 'Horse' anytime soon - put it that way), and it's shrouded in darkness for most of the time, but you can't help but think that the CGI crew responsible for the creation of Gollum had a little too much time on their hands.

Regards,
Asshole_face

Dear Asshole_face,
Boy, you need a new nickname...

GET A REAL JOB

First off, I'd like to say that I am, to say the least, an avid fan of your work. I've bought every magazine since issue #98, and I continually flip through my "Hyper Stack" to check up on specific facts.

With that out of the way, I've noticed in issue #117 that you used emulators to get screenshots for the Final Fantasy Classics feature. Also, in issue #118 you even encourage the use of emulators in your reminiscence of the game Last Ninja.

Since you're all games reviewers, shouldn't you respect the companies that send you the games that in return pay your bills by discouraging emulator use?

That said, I noticed right now that you called the job system in FF5 "the most convoluted character development system ever conceived" yet in the latest issue, #121, you praise the job system of FFT-Advance, even though it is extremely similar to the one in FF5.

These were just a few things I wanted to share with the world. If you found this letter offensive, please don't send goons to my house. Please?

Sie Jun

Dear Sie Jun,

The opinions on the Final Fantasy job system were from two different writers - we don't all agree on everything here.

FONT OFF

Dear Hyper,

I'm a long time reader, first time writer. Your magazine is truly the gaming bible. It always has and always will be the greatest mag in the world. Enough chit-chat, on to my pitiful question.

What is the name of the font that you use in Hyper and where could I get it on the net?

"Is that all?" I hear you ask. Yes, yes it is.

Margo
P.S Hello Baillie! I'm in Hyper!

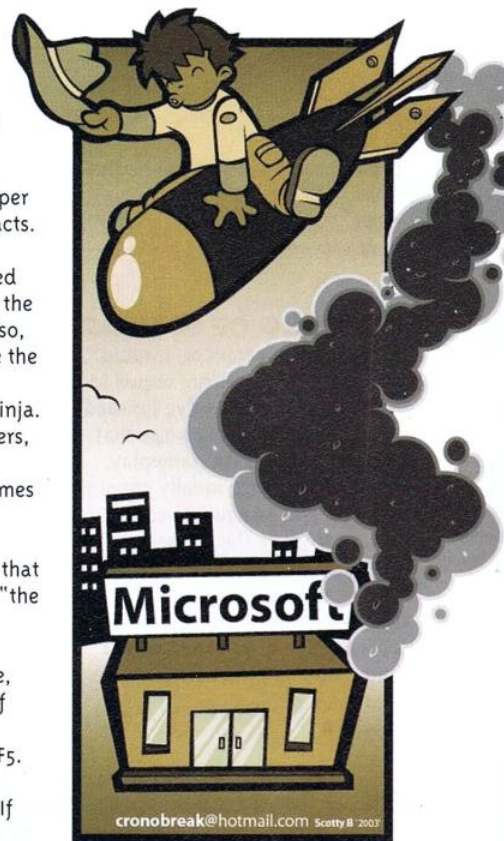
Dear Margo,

We use many, many fonts in Hyper. Which one do you mean? The font we use for headings is called "Futura" and can be purchased from Bitstream (www.bitstream.com). The main body font is Triplex, from Emigre (www.emigre.com).

FORBIDDING CONSOLE?

Dear Hyper (and please forward to Nintendo),

I was reading the forum section of issue 121 ("Nintendo's Next Console Needs To Have These Features...") and



[above] Scott Bartlett did this fantastic illustration for us!

I realised that there was one VERY necessary aspect left out. It's not a feature of the actual console, and chances are that it won't happen.

What Nintendo's 5th console needs is a DARK, VIOLENT, FORBIDDING atmosphere, and don't forget EPIC Zelda! It wouldn't have to be a release title (they wouldn't want to rush it), but it would have to be anticipated prior to release (downloadable screenshots and movies etc.)

I believe that this would definitely give Nintendo fans no other choice of what console to buy. And it could even turn some Xbox and PS fans if it were to be advertised well. Do you not agree?

Thanks,
Fyfe L.

Dear Fyfe,

Was Metroid Prime not dark, violent and forbidding enough for you? What makes you think this will make a console successful?

UFO LOVER

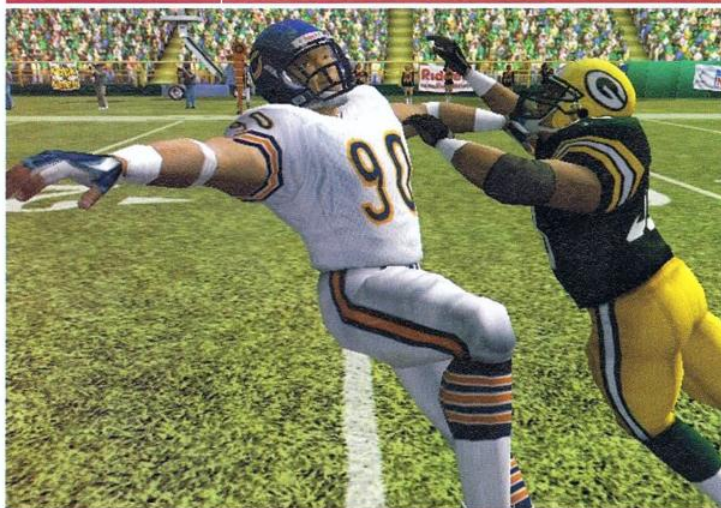
Dearest Hyper,

I am writing this email today with a plea. Not just any plea, this is the biggest, most puppy-dog eyes plea in the history of pleas. This story starts about 7 years ago when I had just got my PlayStation off lay-by after 6 months of paying it off slowly with my pocket-money. I heard about this great game called UFO:Enemy

CAPTION THIS!

PART 48 WINNER

This month, the month of Christmassy goodness, comes a winning caption from **Mark Howell**. It made me laugh, mihihihhi. Sigh.



"Pass me the midget repellent."

Unknown from one of my friends, and as I didn't have access to a PC I decided to buy it on PS. "What the?!? I need to shell out more money for a memory card!" was probably my first expression. So actually the game had cost me about \$140 (which is heaps for a 15 year-old with no job).

Anyways, I booted up the PS when I got home and started playing this game with its weird turn-based style. I liked chess so I thought this game would be pretty good. Boy, was that the biggest understatement of my life (and I've made a few). XCOM is the BEST and I mean BEST game ever, EVER! Hours and hours of my life wasted away in front of that tv, homework sitting lonely and unattended in my backpack longing to be completed, but alas, it never was.

So after reading all this you are probably wondering what I am pleading for? You see, I sold it! I can't believe it. About 4 years ago I really needed the money so I sold my PS and everything with it. My plea, please help me to relive my adolescence with this absolutely amazing game. If anyone out there has a copy (in good nick please with manual and box) I want it, badly. So Hyper, I am begging you, I feel like I

continued over >>

LETTER OF THE MONTH

CRATES

Hey Hyper crew,

The other day I sat in my room (?) looking down upon my consoles in disgust. I couldn't get my head around the absurdities of next generation gaming. WHERE HAVE ALL THE CRATES GONE? I'm not talking of those cheap imitations where you may have to push a crate, smash a crate or even mate with a crate. No I'm talking of games whose foundation is solely based on crates.

One of these is Apprentice on my dusty Amiga Commodore 500. As an apprentice of the magic arts, instead of using cool magic you are left with the HUNDREDS of crates littered about the levels to rain down ash and brimstone on menacing enemies such as echidnas, mice and even jumping mushrooms. These boxes are not just for destructive purposes however, they can be stacked to reach higher places and kicked to break wooden beams.

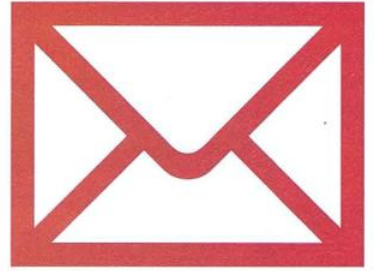
Raise your glasses to Apprentice! The game that

defined a genre! Crate games would never be the same!

One of the Jones boys

Dear One of the Jones boys,

If you're still using an Amiga Commodore 500 then I think the only solution is to award you with this IntelliMouse in the vain hope that you'll go out and buy a new PC to go with it. Please.

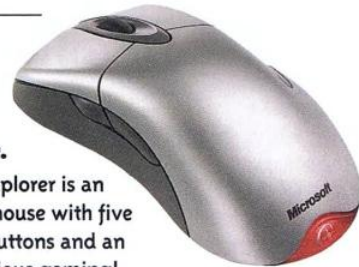


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have lost a part of myself (much like when a dog dies or something equally as sad), please help me get it back.

Regards,
Matthew Mills
mgwmills@hotmail.com

Dear Matthew,

Good luck in finding a copy. It was a sweet game. You might also want to take a look at a brand new PC game, *UFO: Aftermath*, which is an unofficial re-make of sorts, though it's nowhere near as good as the original.

XBOX THEFT

Dear Hyper,

Do you know if the Grand Theft Auto double pack on Xbox will be released in Australia and if so, when?

Cheerio
Ben

Dear Ben,

Take 2 won't tell us, but we suspect it will be early in the new year January would be a safe bet.

RARE NOWHERE?

I know this isn't what Bill Gates wants to hear, but I'm starting to think buying Rare was a waste of money. The two greatest games that it's done are GoldenEye and Donkey Kong 64. Now Rare has lost the licences for both Bond and DK. Perfect Dark Zero sounds good, but better than Halo 2 and Doom 3? I don't think so. Also, Kameo doesn't look like a Sudeki-beater. Grabbed by the Ghoulies is another contender for the bargain bin.

I know I'm a little cynical here, but Rare is famous for huge development times, something which won't do the Xbox much good. But as people say, only time will tell.

Steven Milios

Dear Steven,

You're right, only time will tell! Of course, both Kameo and Ghoulies were leftover GameCube games that were ported over and finished for Xbox, so we haven't really seen Rare's first exclusively Xbox developed game... we may be surprised.

WARP PIPE

Dear (whoever answers these letters),
Here is an interesting website I managed to stumble across the other day -
www.warppipe.com. This

basically allows LAN based GameCube games to go ONLINE! Going from the website, the games are Mario Kart, 1080 and some Kirby game. Just wondering if u guys could check it out and tell me what you think? Also, living in the south eastern suburbs of Melbourne, I was dismayed to find out that I can't get any form of cable or ADSL from anybody!! Now I don't live out in the bush or any crap like that so Telstra, Optus, anyone, please get your act together so I can get on live, cheers.

John Stamo

Dear John,

That's an interesting site, and we'll watch their progress with great interest (as Chancellor Palpatine would say).

MECH LOVE

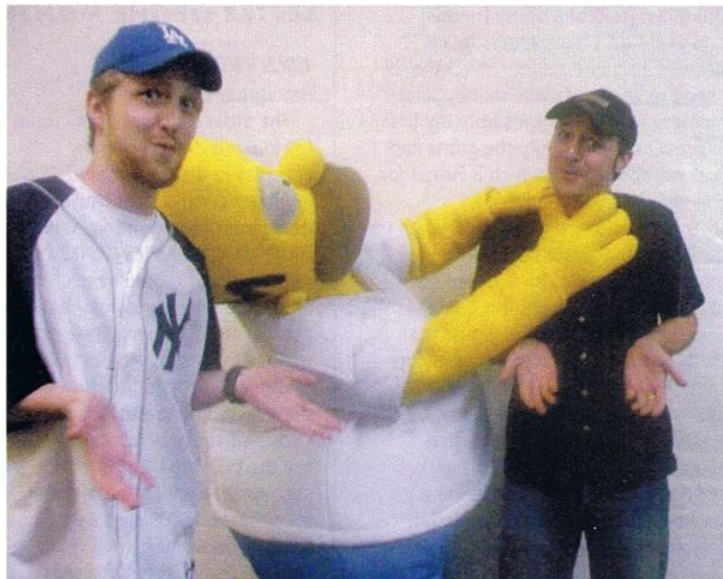
Hey Hyper,

Awesome birthday issue, keep up the good work! I recently saw *The Matrix Revolutions*, and was amazed to that IT HAD MECHS! But that was about it. It was bloody hard to follow and it didn't have any bullet time. Hmmf. Well my advice to the developers of the next Matrix game is that it should definitely have mechs in it.

P.S. Will Call of Duty be released on Xbox?

Seya,

Timesplitter_X



[above] Cam and Eliot have only one defence: the mannerism.

Dear Timesplitter_X,

Call of Duty is a shoe-in for Xbox, although not officially announced as yet. If it doesn't happen, I'll eat this issue of Hyper live on the internet.

IT'S GREAT TO PLAY...

Hey guys!!! Yes I'm one of those long-time readers, first-time writers and after reading your X03 article (btw your trip sounded like a blast... did you guys have fun "playing together"? :P) I just HAD to write in to tell you how much of a masterpiece that article was!! I laughed so much it was hard to breathe especially the constant

referal to "It's good to play together" and how you slapped it all over your pictures!! Brilliant!! Keep up the awesome screenshot captions and the overall FANTASTIC MAG!!

Later guys :)

James D

Dear James,

All we can say is... Thanks!

WHO IS THE SNAKEST?

Dear Hyper,

Hey there. I would just like to say how good the new Metal Gear Solids look. I saw the E3 previews and i was gobstruck, gobstruck I say. Just seeing Snake eating a snake sorta seemed just a bit ironic (and a bit gory). Any way I just got a few questions:

1. When is Metal Gear Solid 3 coming out in Australia?

[left] Slim Jim painted his PS2 for some crazy reason.

2. When is Metal Gear Solid Twin Snakes coming out?

3. What is Hyper's favourite MGS game?

4. Did you guys get the ending of MGS2: Sons of Liberty?

5. And finally, how cool will a MGS movie be?

Well that's my Metal Gear Solid rant see ya.

Simon O'Connor

Dear Simon,

1. Metal Gear Solid 3 is not on the local release schedule yet, which means even the distributor (Atari) have no idea when it will ship here.

2. February, for GameCube only.

3. I think we would all agree the PSX Metal Gear Solid was the best.

4. Does it really matter? :)

5. In theory, very cool. Casting will be pretty crucial to nailing it...

MARIO KART HOPES

I desperately hope that Mario Kart DD reminds me more of Super Mario Kart than Mario Kart 64.. Catchup needs to be able to be switched off. Though it made races close, it rendered powerups like mushrooms practically useless and made the game far too easy. No longer did picking a Kart on speed, handling and acceleration have any effect. The Battle arenas, even for four player, were too big and there weren't enough of them. Keeping it simple worked well in SMK. 5 races per cup would greatly improve the lastability of the game. I really hope coins are brought back as well to add a bit more to the races.

Al Christie

Dear Al,

I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

The Official Australian Games Chart

Compiled by Inform in association with IEAA

TOP 10

PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	★	WWE Smckdwn Hre Cmes Pain	Sports
2	▲	GTA Twin Pack	Adventure
3	▼	Eyeto: Play	Compilation
4	▼	FIFA 2004	Sports
5	★	NBA Live 2004	Sports
6	▼	Time Crisis 3 G Con Bundle	Action
7	▼	Jak 2: Renegade	Adventure
8	▼	Rugby 2004	Sports
9	★	Dog's Life	Strategy
10	▼	GTA: Vice City	Adventure

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$30

W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	YuGiOh Forbidden Memories	Strategy
2	▼	Beyblade Let It Rip	Adventure
3	◆	FIFA 2004	Sports
4	◆	Grnd Thft Auto Collectors Ed	Adventure
5	▲	Simpson's Wrestling	Sports
6	★	Dragonball Z: Ult Battle 22	Action
7	▼	H Potter Chamber Of Secrets	Adventure
8	▼	Disney Triple Pack	Adventure
9	◆	Final Fantasy IX	RPG
10	◆	Driver 2 Ptm	Racing

TOP 10

Game Cube Games Over \$50

W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	★	Star Wars Rebel Strike	Action
2	▼	F-Zero GX	Racing
3	▼	Animl Crssng w/Mem Crd 59	Strategy
4	▼	Soul Calibur 2	Action
5	▲	Legend Of Zelda: Wind Waker	RPG
6	▼	Viewtiful Joe	Action
7	▼	Metroid Prime	Adventure
8	▼	Finding Nemo	Adventure
9	★	Worms 3D	Strategy
10	▼	WWE WrestleMania X9	Sports

TOP 10

Xbox Games Over \$50

W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Top Spin	Sports
2	▲	Halo - Combat Evolved	Action
3	▲	FIFA 2004	Sports
4	★	Str Wrs Knights Old Republic	RPG
5	▼	Crimson Skies 2	Simulator
6	▼	Buff: Chaos Bleeds	Adventure
7	▲	Cnflct Dsert Strm 2 Baghdad	Action
8	▼	Finding Nemo	Adventure
9	▼	NBA Live 2004	Sports
10	◆	Tom Clancy's Splintr Cell Clsc	Adventure

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$20

W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	★	Call Of Duty	Action
2	▼	The Sims Makin' Magic	Strategy
3	▲	Max Payne 2	Action
4	▲	The Sims Deluxe	Strategy
5	▼	Age Mythology: Titans Exp	Strategy
6	★	FIFA 2004	Sports
7	▲	The Sims Superstar	Strategy
8	▼	Halo - Combat Evolved	Action
9	▼	C & C Generals Zero Hour Exp	Strategy
10	★	Age Of Mythology	Strategy

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$30

W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Super Mario Adv 4: SMB3	Adventure
2	◆	Finding Nemo	Adventure
3	◆	Pokemon Ruby	RPG
4	◆	Pokemon Sapphire	RPG
5	★	Banjo Kazooie	Adventure
6	◆	YuGiOh World Wide	Strategy
7	▲	Pokemon Pinball Ruby/Saph	Action
8	▼	Simpson's Road Rage	Racing
9	▼	Final Fantasy Tactics	RPG
10	▼	Donkey Kong Country	Adventure

TOP 10

All Full Priced Games

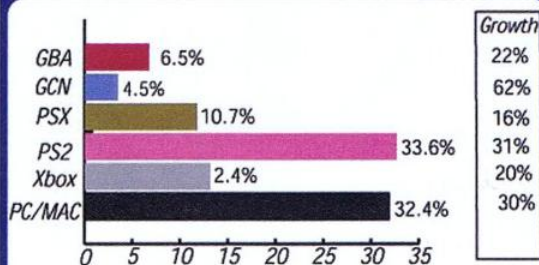
W/E 9 NOV 2003
RETAIL SALES

1	★	WWE SD Here Comes Pain	PlayStation 2
2	★	GTA Twin Pack	PlayStation 2
3	★	Call Of Duty	PC/MAC
4	▼	The Sims Makin' Magic	PC/MAC
5	▼	Eyeto: Play	PlayStation 2
6	▼	FIFA 2004	PlayStation 2
7	★	NBA Live 2004	PlayStation 2
8	▼	Time Crisis 3 G Con Bundle	PlayStation 2
9	▼	Jak 2: Renegade	PlayStation 2
10	▼	Rugby 2004	PlayStation 2

MARKET WATCH

All Games by Platform

OCT 03 vs SEPT 03
RETAIL SALES



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



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

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Next Issue:



GRAN TURISMO 4

PLUS! Our review of Deus Ex: Invisible War on PC & Xbox >>> Castlevania: Lament of Innocence: Is it another symphony of gameplay? >>> Manhunt – our hellish review >>> Rockstar tell us all about Grand Theft Auto for Xbox...

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Nokia 5100:	1030
Nokia 6100:	1040
Nokia 6610:	1050
Nokia 7210:	1060
Nokia 7250:	1070
Nokia 7650:	1080

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 Splinter Cell 22265	 Siberian Strike 22262	 DeSally Soccer 22257
 Prince of Persia 22259	 Rayman Golf 22261	 Rayman 3 22260



 DEALER 22004	 22003	 22001	 DIAMOND MINE 2 22006	 ASTRO GOLF 22008	 GOLF GP 22118
 Fruit Machine 22004	 Rack 'em Up! 22002	 MOON TAXI 22009	 MAD SKILLZ 22007	 CRICKER 1 Day 22138	 KARAOKE 22148

 ADVENTURER 22155	 22095	 FLOWBOARDING 22153	 22128
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- Bonnie and Clyde - Jay-Z & Beyonce 15024
- Lose Yourself - Eminem 15012
- Ice Ice Baby - Vanilla Ice 15102
- Dilemma - Nelly ft. Kelly Rowland 15094
- Murder Was the Case - Snoop Dogg 15405
- Get Busy - Sean Paul 15401
- Remix to Ignition - R. Kelly 15397
- Mundian to bach - Punjabi MC 15396
- Right Thurr - Chingy 15508
- Where is the Love? - Black Eyed Peas 15444
- Ignition [Remix] - R. Kelly 15397
- Business - Eminem 15159

Vic Bitter - theme 15570

ROCK/ALTERNATIVE

- No One Knows - QOTSA 15138
- She Hates Me - Puddle of Mudd 15137
- Scar Tissue - RedHotChiliPeppers 15153
- Praise You - Fat Boy Slim 15152
- In The End - Linkin Park 15033
- Beautiful People - Marilyn Manson 15081
- Enter Sandman - Metallica 15022
- Bittersweet Symphony - The Verve 15027
- Unwell - Matchbox 20 15381
- Sanitarium - Metallica 15384
- Sunday Bloody Sunday - U2 15416

BO'S/RETRO

- Sweet Home Alabama - Lynyrd Skynyrd 15041
- Billie Jean - Michael Jackson 15082
- Brown Eyed Girl - Van Morrison 15096
- Tainted Love - Soft Cell 15096
- Sweet Child o Mine - Guns n' Roses 15038
- 'm Too Sexy - Right Said Fred 15091
- I Will Survive - Gloria Gaynor 15072
- Tubular Bells - Mike Oldfield 15135
- Superstition - Stevie Wonder 15013
- Golden Brown - Strangers 15407
- Call Me Al - Paul Simon 15390
- Bad - Michael Jackson 15385
- Like A Virgin - Madonna 15379
- We Are Family - Sister Sledge 15403

POP/DANCE

- Jenny from the Block - Jennifer Lopez 15125
- Just a Little - Liberty X 15128
- One More Time - Daft Punk 15116
- Sweetest Thing - U2 15036
- 1000 Miles - Vanessa Carlton 15101
- Big Yellow Taxi - Counting Crows 15017
- The Ketchup Song - Las Ketchup 15080
- Can't Get U Out of My Head - Kylie 15034
- All the Things She Said - A.T.U 15013
- Cry Me a River - Justin Timberlake 15014
- The Logical Song - Scooter 15093
- Sandstorm - Darude 15062
- Shiny Disco Balls - Who Da Funk 15030
- Children - Robert Miles 15138
- Boom Boom - Vengaboys 15188
- Sing It Back - Moloko 15387
- Stuck in the UK - Planet Funk 15393
- Something Beautiful - Robbie Williams 15511
- You Don't Treat Me Right - Sonia Dada 15544
- Stuck - Stacie Orrico 15493
- Miss Independent - Kelly Clarkson 15281
- Get Busy - Sean Paul 15401
- Breathe - Blu Cantrell 15507

TV/FILM THEMES

- Mission Impossible - Theme 15021
- Simpsons - Theme 15028
- Beverly Hills Cop - Theme 15028
- Rocky - Theme [Survivor] 15037
- Sex & the City - Theme 15010
- The Muppets - Theme 15035
- X-Files - Theme 15109
- Hawaii 5-0 - Theme 15026
- James Bond 007 - Theme 15018
- Topgun - Theme 15042
- You're The 1 That I Want - Grease 15074
- Deep Space 9 - Star Trek 15406
- Terminator 3 - Theme 15411
- Superman - Theme 15409

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- Miss Independent | Kelly Clarkson 5842
- Where is the Love | Black 'd Peas 5843
- Gotta Be More 2 Life | Stacie O. 5911
- Rubberneckin' | Elvis Presley 5908
- Unchained Melody | Gareth Gates 5841
- White flag | Dido 5904
- Shack Ya | The Weather | Nelly 5845
- Right Thurr | Chingy 5879
- Sanitarium | Justin Timberlake 5910
- Angel | Amanda Peet 5840
- Ignition (Remix) | R. Kelly 5836
- Breathe | Blu Cantrell 5909
- Get busy | Sean Paul 5837
- When I Get You Alone | Thicke 5911
- Tomorrow | Silverchord 5920
- Satisfaction | Benny Benassi 5839
- I Was Made for Lovin' You | Kiss 5802
- Buster in the Sun | V. Firmes 5867
- Sex & the City | Theme 5807
- Dancing in the Street | Etta James 5869
- Don't Say A Word | Emmanuel Carreira 5880

ROCK/ALTERNATIVE

- Get Free | The Vines 5721
- No Reason | Grinspoon 5725
- Chop Suey! | System of a Down 5315
- Under the Bridge | RHCP 5266
- Sk8er Boi | Avril Lavigne 5650
- Enter Sandman | Metallica 5260
- Smooth Criminal | A.A.F. 5302
- Pussy Town | MGF 5728
- Here She Comes | The Androids 5738
- Cochise | Audioslave 5738
- Tribute | Tenacious D 5561
- Rollercoaster | MGF 5727
- Alive | POD 5433
- How You Remind Me | Nickelback 5287
- Lithium | Nirvana 5270
- London Still | The Waifs 5722
- No One Knows | QOTSA 5720
- The Wreckening | Boomkat 5780
- Somewhere I Belong | Linkin Park 5773

TV/FILM THEMES

- Mananara | The Muppets 5583
- James Bond 007 | Theme 5017
- Snowflur | Theme 5270
- Muppets | Theme 5180
- The Simpsons | Theme 5184
- Pink Panther | Theme 5029
- Inspector Gadget | Theme 5078
- Mission Impossible | Theme 5018
- Flintstones | Theme 5178
- Neighbours | Theme 5082
- Good, Bad & Ugly | Theme 5007
- Hawaii Five-O | Theme 5074
- Friends | Theme 5070
- Seinfeld | Theme 5083

POP

- Big Yellow Taxi | Counting Crows 5716
- Cry me a River | Justin Timberlake 5739
- Beautiful | Christina Aguilera 5741
- Angel | Shaggy 5036
- Hey Sexy Lady | Shaggy 5851
- Naughty Girl | Holly Valance 5714
- 1000 Miles | Vanessa Carlton 5544
- Whenever You Hear My Shakin' | Kiss 5349
- Can I Go Now | Jennifer Love Hewitt 5717
- Complicated | Avril Lavigne 5564
- Born to Try | Delta Goodrem 5876
- Kiss Kiss | Holly Valance 5548
- Tide Is High | Atomic Kitten 5834
- Boys | Brinley Spears 5746
- Die Another Day | Madonna 5866
- Can't Get U Out of My Head | Kylie 5747
- Family Portrait | Pink 5879
- We've Got Tonight | Ronan Keating 5704
- All the Things She Said | TATU 5747
- I Begin to Wonder | Danni Minogue 5781
- Landslide | Dixie Chicks 5782
- Get the Music On | Sophie Monk 5787
- Not Gonna Get Us | TATU 5801
- Prunk | DJ Ferry Corsten 5706
- Take Me Away | 4 Strings 5707
- Scandalous | Miss-Ted 5791

RAP/HIP-HOP/RNB

- Symphony in X-Major | Xzibit 5783
- Bump Bump Bump | B2K 5772
- Nu Flow | Big Brovaz 5742
- Stole | Kelly Rowland 5702
- Work It | Missy Elliott 5332
- Thug Lovin' | Ja Rule ft Bobby 5703
- What's Your Flava? | Craig David 5659
- Clean out my Closet | Eminem 5333
- Foolish | Ashanti 5540
- Always on Time | Ja Rule 5451
- Hot In Herre | Nelly 5659
- Because I Got High | Afroman 5289
- So Fresh, So Clean | Outkast 5241
- Work It | Nelly ft Justin Timberlake 5757
- Rich Girl | Selwyn 5620
- Hidden Agenda | Craig David 5754
- Karma | 1200 Techniques 5723
- Without Me | Eminem 5638
- My Neck, My Back | Khia 5831
- Real Slim Shady | Eminem 5233
- Get Ur Freak On | Missy Elliott 5288
- Dilemma | Nelly ft Kelly Rowland 5567
- In Da Club | 50 Cent 5771
- Beautiful | Snoop Dogg 5785
- Can't Nobody | Kelly Rowland 5800
- Gossip Folks | Missy Elliott 5792

DANCE/TECHNO

- Cocaine | Yakoza 5500
- Boys of Summer | DJ Sammy 5655
- Heaven | DJ Sammy 5563
- The Logical Song | Scooter 5602
- Breathin' | The Prodigy 5291
- 1 of My Kind | Rogue Traders/INXS 5756
- Little Less Conversation | JXL/Elvis 5555
- Children | Robert Miles 5167
- Resurrection | PPK 5496
- Punk | DJ Ferry Corsten 5706
- Take Me Away | 4 Strings 5707
- Where's Your Head At | Basement Jaxx 5400

JAZZ/CLASSICAL

- Big Spender | Coleman/Fields 5516
- Don't Know Why | Norah Jones 5755
- Human Nature | Miles Davis 5289
- Peter & the Wolf | Prokofiev 5359
- Advance Australia Fair | Anthem 5353
- Waltzing Matilda | Traditional 5352
- Funeral March | Chopin 5181
- Hallelujah | Handel 5187
- Wedding March | Mendelssohn 5184
- Pomp & Circumstance | Elgar 5377

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