

CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK • CLASSICS: KING OF FIGHTERS

ISSUE 130 AUGUST 2004

HYPER

METROID PRIME 2

SONY PSP

NEXT-GEN POWER HITS THE HANDHELD

OUTRUN 2 JAK III F.E.A.R. KILLZONE

73 GAMES PREVIEWED



THE FUTURE OF VIDEOGAMES

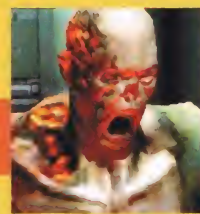
OUR E3 ANALYSIS OF 2005'S GAMES AND SYSTEMS

METAL GEAR SOLID 3

HALO 2

GAME OF THE YEAR?

FABLE
DOOM III
SPLINTER CELL 3



GOLDENEYE

NINTENDO DS

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14 FEAR AND LOATHING IN LOS ANGELES

We make the annual pilgrimage to E3 to check out all the latest games

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EDITORIAL

»» One of the more amusing aspects of being involved in the games industry is watching the latest trends emerge, whether they be graphical techniques such as the overuse of the lens flare and cel shading, or the popularisation of a genre, such as stealth gaming. There's one such trend that we haven't touched on in Hyper just yet, and that's the steady increase in games on an afrocentric tip. Sure, this isn't a new thing, as we've had games like the Wu Tang fighting game and Def Jam Vendetta in the past, but we suspect there's a bit of a groundswell this year.

Among the games on the horizon that we'd class as "afrocentric" are The Urbz (a console-only urban Sims sequel where you must become a "player" by building your "rep"), Get On Da Mic (a game based around hip hop culture and rapping) and even Grand Theft Auto San Andreas (which, although only partly set in the ghettos, definitely has a Boys in the Hood vibe going on).

It makes sense that games are going this way. After all, other areas of popular culture are saturated by black culture – just turn on any music video show and you'll see what I mean. Hell, I can just look in the mirror at the clothes I wear or turn on my sound system and know just how much I'm influenced by black culture. Not to mention feeling compelled to pour a 40 on the curb for my dead homies each and every time I go to L.A. Thankfully that's tongue in cheek.

There's no doubt, however, that black culture is both fashionable and lucrative, and so it shouldn't be surprising that game developers are going to exploit it. The interesting question, (and the reason I use the word "exploited") is this: are games with a basis in black culture actually respecting that culture, or just latching onto the more sensationalist aspects? We'll see.

Cam Shea »» Editor



[above] Cam's too sexy for his shirt...

HYPER CREW MONTHLY TOP 5 GAMES

Cam Shea - Editorbot

1. Mario Vs Donkey Kong – GBA
"A very clever puzzle game. Pity it's a little too easy."
2. Mario Golf: Advance Tour – GBA
3. Thief: Deadly Shadows – PC
4. Burnout 3 – PS2
5. Ninja Gaiden – Xbox

Daniel Wilks - Deputybot

1. Thief: Deadly Shadows – PC
"Well P my C! One of the games of the year."
2. City of Heroes - PC
3. Beyond Divinity - PC
4. Burnout 3 – PS2
5. P the C – Flash (coming soon)

Malcolm Campbell - Artbot

1. Red Dead Revolver – PS2
"The Annie Stoakes bull-ridin' boss fight – a Great Moment in Videogaming™™"
2. Watching Euro 2004 – TV
3. Transformers – PS2
4. Glob Football – www.globulos.com
5. Harry Potter & the Prisoner of Azkaban – PS2

Steve Farrelly - Nintendobot

1. Mario Golf: Advance Tour – GBA
"I am the Links master!"
2. Metroid Prime - GameCube
3. Max Payne 2 - PC
4. Harvest Moon: It's a Wonderful Life - GameCube
5. Quake III Arena - PC

HYPER»

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WRITE TO HYPER!

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OUT NOW

IN THE NEWS: Half-Life source code theft - arrests made ■ Phantom comes to life ■ Nintendo research the Revolution ■ Metal Gear Acid



[above] You can actually see all the letters of complaint floating about in this Enter the Matrix shot [left] Terminator: War of the Machines - one of the suckiest games of all time. Keep away!

ANIME

MANIFEST 2004

Super Happy Japanimation Family Festival!

» If you live in Melbourne (or even if you don't) then check out the Melbourne Anime Festival (Manifest) running on August 14th and 15th at Melbourne University, in the Economics and Commerce Building. It's Melbourne's only dedicated Anime Convention and aims to promote the enjoyment of Japanese culture through Screenings, Panels, Traders, an Anime Auction, Anime Idol, Video Games, Anime Art Display, Karaoke and other Cultural Events and competitions including Trivia, Cosplay, Fanfiction and Anime Music Videos.

Manifest is celebrating its fifth year and this promises to be one of the best yet so come along and join in the celebrations! If you're interested, then register early! For more information, visit <http://www.manifest.org.au/>



SOURCE

HALF-LIFE = PRISON-TIME

Valve hackers get big smacks

» Conspiracy theorists who put forward the idea that Valve faked the Half-Life 2 code theft so they could have a legitimate excuse to push the release of the game back a year may have to rethink their position. Mid June Valve announced that a wave of arrests have been made dealing specifically with code theft suspects. Before anyone thinks that this may simply be a deeper level to the obfuscation, the FBI and police have verified these arrests and although they have yet to name names assure us that the

theft is definitely being dealt with. In a show of gamer solidarity, Valve heavyweight (pun intended) Gabe Newell openly thanked the gaming community stating it was through their intervention and 1337 skillz and desire to track down the culprit/s (not his exact words) that this first wave of arrests have been made. With any luck there won't be any more obstacles for Valve to hurdle before the game's worldwide release later this year. Fingers, toes and all other prehensile appendages crossed.

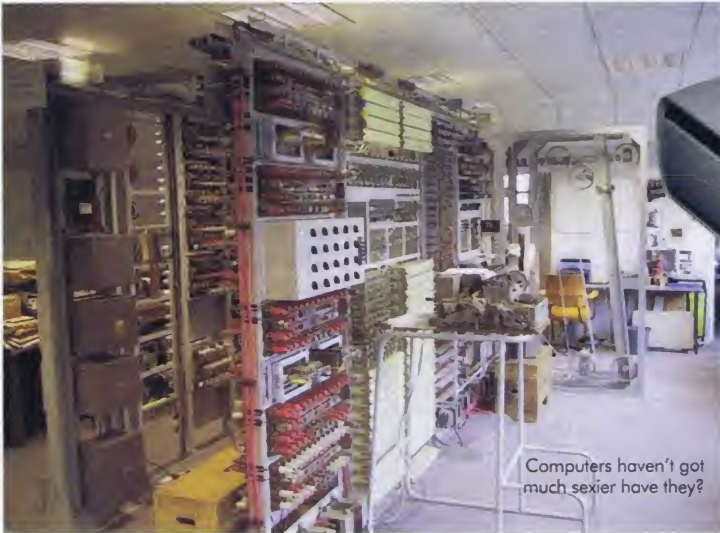
ROYALTY

PENALTIES FOR BAD LICENSED GAMES!

Warner Bros get serious

» Game reviewers always rant and rave about publishers rushing poor quality licensed titles through because they know the name alone will sell the product, but under a scheme being pushed by Warner Bros Interactive Entertainment head honcho Jason Hall, efforts are being made to enforce some kind of quality control. The basic idea is that royalty rates would operate on a sliding scale. The worse a game scores on average (more specifically, the further away the score gets from 70%), the higher the royalty that publishers pay them. Fair enough too. Poor licensed titles

may sell well, but it can be argued that they present the license in a bad light and devalue the license holder's intellectual property. Mind you, it will be interesting to see just which elements of the games press contribute to the average for a game, as there are a lot of rubbishy websites out there, and when it comes down to it, a review is what one person thought of a game, not a decree of quality from the gods. Still, it's good to know when we slag a bad licensed game in the future, it may contribute to the publisher thinking twice before doing it again.



Computers haven't got much sexier have they?

CODE

THE COLOSSUS COMPLEX

Computer from 1944 takes issue with Moore's Law!

Chances are that if you're something of a geek you would have heard of the Colossus Mk2, a massive supercomputer used during WWII to break Nazi code. What you may not have heard is that the beast has been rebuilt. That's right, using only photographs and some of the original schematics, a team of technicians and computer historians have managed to rebuild what was once far and away the most powerful computer in the world. Comprising some 1500 valves,

Colossus Mk2 went into operation in 1944, and was most probably the first fully electronic programmable computer. So successful was Mk2 that by the end of the war it is estimated that the computer decyphered around 63 million German characters. Capable of performing 100 boolean calculations at any given time, researchers believe that the Mk2 is still comparable to modern day computers when it comes to the art of code breaking.

SCARY

REALITY TV

Indistinguishable from reality

Just when you thought TV couldn't get any better comes the next wave in reality TV. Not those crappy shows that show people in situations that are anything but a reflection of reality, we mean TV looking so real it is hard to distinguish from reality. Japanese researchers have just started testing a new TV format called UHDV or Ultra High Definition Video for those of you who don't go in for that whole brevity thing, that is capable of displaying images with 16 times the resolution of today's most advanced high definition sets. The new format will use 4000 lines of horizontal scanning for optimal picture quality but at this stage needs a few tweaks to be viable as a consumer format. As it stands, to hold 18 minutes of UHDV footage the researchers had to use 16 HDTV recorders with a combined storage capacity of 3.5 terabytes, not the most convenient amount for an end user. The test footage shown to the world's first UHDV audience was taken by placing the camera on the



[above] On our primitive low definition TVs you can't even make out this obscene image

bonnet of a car and driving around – not the most impressive footage but considering that a good number of participants in the test complained of motion sickness due to the highly realistic sense of speed without the sense of motion it demonstrated the capabilities of the format fairly well. The developers believe that when the format is perfected the human eye will not be able to differentiate between real life and TV image due to the extremely high quality of the footage.

[left] The Phantom materialises



[right] The Stable Table for PC gamers

INFINIUM

VAPOURWARE NO LONGER

The Phantom gets a step closer to reality

Infinium Labs' Phantom is finally starting to sound (and look) like an actual product. In an interesting move, the Phantom Gaming Service Hardware will be free of charge to consumers who subscribe to its service for two years at US \$29.95 per month. Or you can buy the system for US \$199, which is very reasonable for the relatively modern PC under the hood. The idea is that the system is a closed PC – there's no optical drive, only one controller input and it plugs into your TV. It runs PC games that you stream over broadband, and Infinium are obviously hoping to make their

money through subscriptions and premium game charges. Despite offering little for the hardcore gamer (although we expect it will do well in places like hotels and possibly internet cafes), it's quite an attractive piece of hardware, and also has quite an innovative controller. Although still a keyboard and mouse, they're combined in an ergonomic relationship that will make it easy to place on your lap and use while sitting on the couch. Whether the service ever comes to Australia is another thing entirely, but we just thought you might like to see it.

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 57 in the subject line.

PART 57



DM-whistles-browtouch

Bad Cop No Doughnut

DANIEL WILKS - THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS DEPUTY EDITOR



Where's the innovation? That's the question I asked myself the most whilst I was over at E3, where are the new ideas? Where are the concepts that are

going to stretch gaming to the limits? Where are the titles that are going to make you stand up and applaud with the audacity of it all? I'm not saying that there was no innovation present at E3 - there was, but for the most part it was sequels. I like a good sequel (with the caveat that it has to be subtitled "Electric Boogaloo") but honestly, do we need another Mortal Kombat, another Ratchet & Clank, another Doom? I don't think so but then again I seem to be in the vast minority. The problem as I see it that gamers as a whole don't want this innovation. They want security. They want something that has come before that they know they are going to like. They don't want to have to take a chance on a wildcard. This doesn't just go for innovation, it goes for gaming in general, take a look at Beyond Good & Evil and Prince of Persia from last year. Both games were widely critically acclaimed, but did this equal sales? Hell no. People weren't willing to take the risk, no matter what the press said or did. Solution? Who knows.

WINNERS

Hyper 128

FIGHT NIGHT

Tim Godfrey, Glen Waverley, VIC
S. Hawkins, Toowong, QLD
Jamie Gosson, Macksville, NSW
Daniel White, Kensington, NSW
Houshyar Fallah Jnr, Glenlee, QLD
Michael Johnson, Maylands, SA

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY

Nic Huntington, Brisbane, QLD
Maria Coumariansos, Norman Park, QLD
J. Chaplin, Zillmere, QLD
Vincent Wan, Brisbane, QLD
Peter Henderson, O'Connor, ACT
Jason Harwood, Sandy Beach, NSW

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Linda Quinn, Sheidow Park, SA
Mr J. Tremayne, Minto, NSW
B. Olsen, Melbourne, VIC
Geoff Clingan, Woronora, NSW
Steven MacDonald, Salisbury North, SA
S. Sandford, Lawson, NSW
Jason Demajo, Colac, 3250
Marco Brunato, Coraki, NSW
Lisa Mitropoulos, Oakleigh, VIC
Stephen Eiszele, Wodonga, VIC



DOWNLOAD

XBOX LIVE CONTENT

More stuff for you to fill your Xbox HDDs with!

Two new Pandora Tomorrow maps are available for premium download on Xbox Live this month. The maps are called River Mall and Federal Reserve Bank, and initial feedback suggests they're worth downloading. So how much will they set you back? Around \$8 for both, which is pretty good value in our books. Links 2004 fans will also find that there's

another course for premium download, with more on the way.

In free Xbox Live content, Crimson Skies owners will no doubt be stoked to know that Microsoft recently released two new maps (Badlands and Lost Plateau), two new game types (Chicken Pox and Gunheist) and three new planes (Hellhound, Firebrand and Vampire). Gotta love freebies.

SHIGGY

NINTENDO REVEAL NOTHING

Dolphin swimming with the fishes

Nintendo have revealed that their new console in development is codenamed "Revolution", which follows nicely on from their N64 codename (Project Reality), but not so nicely on from GameCube (Dolphin). Nintendo president Satoru Iwata cited the usual Nintendo mantra of innovation in gameplay and design, and once again stressed that in the next generation raw power won't be the defining element - it will be new and

[right] Satoru Iwata, on the mic



compelling play experiences. This won't be confined to the next generation either. Nintendo have already announced that the next Mario Party on GameCube will have an innovative control method. Something like the EyeToy perhaps? We'll find out soon enough.

GOLDENEYE
ROGUE AGENT

OVERFLOW

Curious about the version of Full Spectrum Warrior created for the US Army? Be curious no more - it's hidden in the retail version of the game. Simply beat the game on normal, then authentic difficulty levels, or just enter hazzpipy9turstle at the code input screen.

Top Spin... on PC... published by Atari? Yep, you read right, it's happening.

The Getaway was the game that wanted to be a film so much it forgot to be a game. Now, finally, it can realise its ambition - there's a Getaway film in development. Sigh.

A version of Grand Theft Auto has apparently been confirmed for GBA - and no, it's not the one that was cancelled late last year. Sweet! A return to the top down antics of GTA2 would suit us just fine on the road.

Namco fans can look out for a new Ridge Racer and Tekken 5 before April 2005. In Japan at least.

Microsoft's highly anticipated MMORPG True Fantasy Live Online for Xbox has been cancelled. The game was in development at Japanese studio Level 5 (of Dark Cloud fame), and makes the Xbox's outlook in that territory even more precarious. Still, their master plan for Japan is on a ten year timeline... so don't count them out just yet.

We unfortunately ran out of room in our E3 feature to bring you all of Daniel's adventures, so we've thrown what we didn't print on www.doesmannerism.com. Oh, and our apologies to many of you who wrote in this month - our email servers have been sketching out so we didn't get all our mail. Dang technology...

STOP PRESS! FIRST SCREENS! Metal Gear Acid

PSP Developer: Konami Japan



"The best looking Xbox game we've ever seen.
And we've seen them all."



THE CHRONICLES OF
RIDDICK

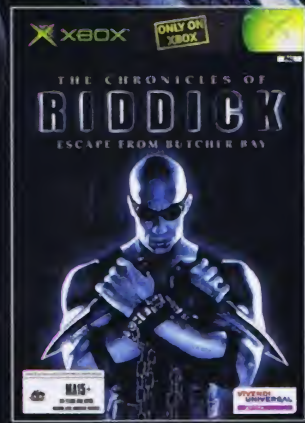
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www.vugames.com.au



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PHEST and LOATHING

in
LOS ANGELES

We were a few miles away from the EA Downtown Convention Center when the sea-breezes from the night before took hold. As we waited for our cab to arrive the streets seemed to fill with what appeared to be giant geeks, making their way to the convention in a manner not dissimilar to the rolling, lumbering gait of a beached whale or male elephant seal after a good feed (which is incidentally nearly impossible to find in the area of Hollywood where myself and my attorney/travelling companion, Dr Goose were staying). The cab finally arrived, driven by the same tall black man who had driven us the day before. "Deja-Vous", thought I, and then, "thank god - we can't wait around here any longer - this is Geek country". Dr Goose and young master Benton piled into the back seat of the cab, leaving yours truly in the front to pick up the tab. Must remember to be quicker next time. Both Dr. Goose and Benton seemed oblivious to the undulating mass of sweating humanity outside the windows. We were going to the first day of E3. Poor bastards, they would be seeing the Geeks soon enough.

It all started the night before - we were standing by the grotto at the Playboy Mansion, sipping on sea-breezes and ogling the lovelies (in a polite and unoffensive way) when I got the call. I was to cover E3, the biggest computer game exposition in the world. We'd been booked into a hotel in Hollywood. Not the swanky, upscale, shiny Hollywood that the very name of the place conjures up. The other Hollywood, the one where you can just make out the iconic sign when the smog thins. The Hollywood that is little more than Redfern on a larger scale. The Hollywood where the only food to be found seemed to be breakfast burritos and Subway. The Hollywood that is the epitome of the American Nightmare rather than the American Dream.

To tell the full truth the real story started a few days before on the flight to the U.S of A. There are two gods in the bible, the new testament god who will feed you, clothe you, pat your dog, make your barren wife fertile and kiss your children, and the old school god from the beginning who is far more likely to give you boils, kick your dog, turn your wife into a common table spice/flavour enhancer and kill your children just to see how you will react. Guess which one of them keeps an eye on me. After my last diatribe against Satan's own airline, United, I should have known that my hatred and condemnation would turn around and bite me in the arse. It did. Another fourteen interminable hours on luddite air took me to the supposed land of the free. Fourteen hours of being crammed in cattle between the small and agreeable Dr Goose and a wide load from Adelaide who insisted on talking to me about her son or her job every time I managed to get my headphones firmly planted in my ears. Fourteen hours of terrible food, little to drink and the great white whale leaning into me every time she fell asleep. When a divine being hates you with so much rancour that he insists that you can only fly on the world's worst airline then there is only one thing you can do. Hate him back an equal amount and take advantage of the good nature of one of the more camp and stereotypical flight attendants and try to drink the pain away. It didn't work in the end but at least it went some way to passing the hours.

X Day 1

Hangover

10AM is not a civilised time to be anywhere if you spent the night before drinking courtesy of Hugh Hefner, undoubtedly one of the greatest people alive. The Playboy Mansion is just like you imagine it would be, only with a couple more peacocks and monkeys than expected. Open closely followed by Bar are two of the most attractive words in the English language. "As your attorney I advise you to drink nothing but sea-breezes for the rest of the night" said Dr. Goose after hearing the magical incantation. Not having any legal training aside from the occasional brush with the law in my younger, more unruly days I capitulated with his advice and set about quaffing my first deliciously tangy (not to mention alcoholic) beverage of many.

It's either a disturbing expose into my proclivities or a scathing diatribe on the state of the plastic surgery industry when one can say with absolutely no dishonesty that they spent an evening at the Playboy Mansion surrounded by a reported 100 playmates and only found maybe half a dozen of them genuinely attractive, rather than superficially sexy but enormously fake. Be that as it may there were definitely some fine looking women on hand, some wearing nothing but body paint and others in various states of (un)dress. Whilst it's impossible to describe what the evening was truly like in such a limited space, a few anecdotes should make the experience more vivid in your fertile imaginations.

The evening began with a cab ride to the meeting point where we were to meet the busses that would take us to the Mansion. This

meeting point, one of the car-parks at UCLA was a mere 6 miles from our hotel. That's about 10km if you're using a real system of measurement, about 15 minutes at most, considering there was no



[above] "No really, in Australia we greet each other by shaking our..."

traffic. 45 minutes after getting in the accursed yellow monstrosity it became startlingly clear that there was something wrong with the trip. We'd travelled 17 miles and still hadn't arrived at our destination. Tempers were flaring, Dr. Goose had reached that state of unearthly calm that makes you think that he is about to snap and kill everyone in the area, Benton's bladder was filled to bursting and I was doing my best to simply fall unconscious in the hope that either the resulting brain damage would make me forget that we were late for our pickup and may miss what could be the defining moment in our young adult lives or that when I crawled my way back into the light we would be at the party. 50 minutes and \$40 odd bucks after we started our trip we finally made it to the pick up point, greeted by a vast throng of other guests who may or may not have started the night in a way similar to our own.

We arrive, we drank, we toured the grounds and looked at the monkeys. Then things started to get interesting. First one of the genuinely attractive playmates at the party, a tall, lean and slightly racially ambiguous Asian woman in a green dress cut down to there and up to here if you get my drift smiled sexily at Dr. Goose and said something along the lines of, "hey, I have something for you", with all of the innuendo the sentence conjures up whilst handing him what appeared to be a packet of cigarettes. When she walked off laughing was scornfully we knew something was

[below] No, that's not "Westside", but "2 in the P, 1 in the S"





[above] Cam's "proof" that he was there too...

wrong. The packet was empty. Dr. Gooses' resulting mannerism was so powerful that she was obviously cursed for the rest of the evening. In each of the photographs she posed for, this she devil failed to look sexy (which was obviously the desired intent), but instead looked as though she had eaten some bad Mexican (food that is, not a bad Mexican a-la Danny Trejo) and was paying the inevitable price.

Later in the evening, nearing the time when we tearfully had to wave goodbye to the modern day temple to Dionysus I was approached by the singularly most attractive woman at the event who asked me in a sexy mid-western drawl if I had a spare cigarette. I offered her the last in my pack, causing her to unleash a grin so cheeky that it has been outlawed in a number of countries. Her response to being given my last smoke was pleasantly surprising — an innocent yet remarkably sensuous kiss, complete with a cheeky little flick of the tongue. It's very hard to stifle a shit eating grin when the jaws of the geeks around who have been pining for these women all evening hit the floor — so I didn't even try, instead choosing to revel in my simultaneously hated and envied position for the remainder of the evening. I followed up the kiss by suavely asking what I would get if I gave her a whole pack but the lovely creature had been swallowed by the throng, only to appear a short while later in some unspeakably sexy poses with a small Asian woman with gloriously technicoloured hair and a penchant for seemingly innocent but contextually obscene finger gestures. Unfortunately my camera batteries had died by this stage so I'll have to leave the resulting images up to your dirty little imaginations. Needless to say the first day of E3 was a mixture of sore feet, throbbing head and churning stomach.

Wall of Heroes

MY first day of E3, and I start with a bang at the aptly named Xbox Hero Wall, a showcase for the latest and greatest titles — the four games slated to be their big titles for the year, other than Halo 2 of course, which, it goes without saying will without a doubt be the biggest selling Xbox game of the year when it is released on November 9. How do I know this with such arrogant certainty? I've played it. That's why. Back to the wall for the time being though. Four large and bright plasma screens arranged up one end of the Xbox booth, each with a comfy sofa and developers/producers of the respective game waiting, eager to show you why their game is going to be the best thing you have ever played. When I approached my first booth — Jade Empire, I was greeted with a warm smile and a handshake. I was the first journalist of the event to cross the threshold and be shown the game. I already pitied the person who would be doing the tour last on Friday — even then I didn't think the smiles could last that long and the cheerful enthusiasm would doubtlessly give way to frustration, apathy or (hopefully) homicidal rage. Not being that guy I'll never know.



Forza Motorsport

DEVELOPER: Microsoft Studios

PUBLISHER: Microsoft

DUE: Late 2004

■ 2004/5 looks as though they are going to be tweaker heaven. Anyone with an interest in ricing up cars and racing them either through streets or on tracks is going to be having the time of their life with GT4, Midnight Club 3, NFS: Underground 2 and Juiced. After two years of secretive development, Microsoft has thrown their hat into the ring with Forza

Motorsport. Eschewing the arcade racing of many of the other tweaker titles, Forza takes a deadly serious approach to racing, with a killer physics engine, graphics on par if not superior to Project Gotham Racing 2 and a serious feeling of speed. Even someone not particularly interested in racing games such as myself will find it hard not to be impressed by. The code on the show floor was riddled with texture tears and other small bugs but in the months before release these should easily be ironed out.



Fable

DEVELOPER: Big Blue Box Studios / **PUBLISHER:** Microsoft / **DUE:** September 2004

■ It seems to have been coming soon forever but Fable is finally just around the corner. After getting my hands on the code it's quite obvious that Microsoft are going to have another hit on their hands.

Although the combat is a little too simple with basic one button combos and nigh invulnerable blocking, the depth of the world and character interaction is incredible. Every act your character makes leaves a lasting impression on the world, as well as on the character themselves — name another action RPG that will let you dress your male character in women's clothing and court another man and I'll give you five bucks.





Although journalists are outnumbered 10 to 1 at the actual convention, the majority of attendees being trade people, there is a definite advantage to having a journalist ID badge - it's a license to cut in line. No matter how many people are queuing up for a game or a demonstration all you have to do is flash your badge to one of the PR people who will invariably be standing around and you're in. No waiting. This came in handy in my last stop at the Xbox booth. One quick flash of the all too easy to misplace ID and I was in to the behind closed doors hands on with Halo 2. It was only half way through day one and I'd already reached the highlight of my trip.

Outrun 2

DEVELOPER: Sumo / **PUBLISHER:** Sega / **DUE:** TBA
 ■ If there's a game synonymous with the powerslide it's OutRun. No other game has managed to recapture the thrill of taking a corner at 200MPH and skidding around at 90 degrees like the classic Sega race against the clock. Good news. OutRun 2 is on the way and it's a blast. The sense of speed and the sheer fun of the title is amazing. Unfortunately the graphics engine does look a little on the dated side and the novelty of powersliding to keep your girl happy may not have the staying power that Sega expects. Whatever the case you can be sure that Cam is waiting with baited breath to get his hands on some more complete playable code.



MechAssault 2

DEVELOPER: Day 1 / **PUBLISHER:** Microsoft / **DUE:** Late 2004
 ■ The original MechAssault has a legion of fans and quite rightly so - the sheer giant robot fun of it all is hard to beat. Until MechAssault 2 comes along that is. Take giant robot combat, add GTA-esque vehicle jacking, tons of usable vehicles and weapon emplacements, terrain deformation on a grand scale and robust single and multiplayer modes and you definitely have a recipe for success.



Unreal Championship 2: The Liandri Conflict

DEVELOPER: Epic / **PUBLISHER:** Microsoft / **DUE:** Late 2004
 ■ Epic have obviously listened to gamers since the lukewarm release of the original Unreal Championship, as the sequel speeds up gameplay and adds a great deal more player control to make for a furious shooting experience. Instead of simply being a rehash of UT like the original Unreal Championship, The Liandri Conflict is more about scampering about new maps with the weapons you've come to know and love in either first or third person and blowing the holy hell out of anything that moves. In the newest iteration of the franchise, Epic have added melee combat, wall jumping, boost jumping and a host of other elements to make the combat more fast and furious than ever.

Burnout 3

DEVELOPER: Criterion Games / **PUBLISHER:** EA / **DUE:** October 2004
 ■ You probably know about Burnout 3 by now, a game set to become the undisputed king of arcade racing, so saying too much will be a waste of space. Instead all we have to say to make the title more exciting is that Burnout 3 is now on Xbox Live, making the experience all the more frantic.



Halo 2 Hands On

DEVELOPER: Bungie / **PUBLISHER:** Microsoft / **DUE:** November 2004

■ I was a little worried going into the hands on multiplayer test for Halo 2 as the map we were playing on, Zanzibar was small and rather straightforward. I didn't think that such a mundane map would fully demonstrate the abilities of the game. Boy was I wrong. Bungie couldn't have chosen a better map to demo. The size and limitations of the map simply meant that the players were forced into more close-in confrontations and it wasn't too long into the test that all of the journalists present (all eight of us) were whooping and hollering like little kids on Christmas morning. Deformable vehicles, duel wield weapons and the chance to play the Covenant in multiplayer are just some of the goodies we can expect when the game ships on November 9. We haven't played any of the single player game as yet but if it's only half as good as the multiplayer component then we're going to be in for a real treat at the end of the year.

Mackin' With the DS

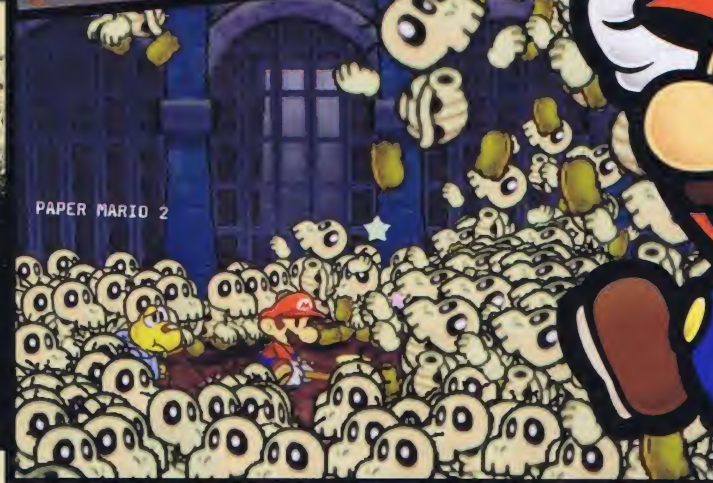
HEAD still ringing with the glory of Halo 2 I hurriedly made my way to the other side of the convention complex for my visit to the Nintendo booth to see what goodies they had on offer, stopping briefly to have a few what could loosely be called Tacos made by a tiny Mexican man with a penchant for using his bare hands to scoop meat into the thin shells. I managed to keep them down but the experience showed me that eating at E3 was something I shouldn't do. The Nintendo booth was everything I thought it would be - big, flashy and fun, surrounded by towering LED pylons that switched between animated images of Wario, Mario, Pikachu and other famous Nintendo characters jumping and generally carrying on. Two huge lines snaked through the area, one to a stage for a Pokemon demo, theatre thing and the other to the DS showroom. Once again the journalist pass allowed me to circumvent the line to the latter to get my hands on the latest Nintendo handheld.

DS Hands On

■ Appealing retro-kitsch in design, the DS is something of a revelation - the first handheld to truly expand the marketplace instead of just boost the graphical quality of games. Not only does the machine feature two screens, one of which acts as a touch screen, the DS will feature a built in microphone allowing for voice recognition to be used in games or simply for security purposes. Although none of the software running on the machines was really anything more than a tech demo it did convey the overall potential of the machine. Out of all of the tech demos two truly stood out - Pac Draw, a version of Pacman where the player had to draw a Pacman on the touch screen which would then animate forcing the player to draw barriers to bounce the yellow pill gobbler around the screen to eat ghosts and a simple lathe demonstration where the player could use the stylus to carve various materials spinning on a lathe. Whilst the N64 level graphics may not contend with the processing power of the PSP the sheer potential of the platform is staggering. Start saving up now because the DS should reach our shores early next year.



Eyes reopened to a love of all things Nintendo I wandered around the show floor taking in what they had to offer. The longer I stood amongst the flashing installations the more I felt like a Japanese schoolgirl. Normally I'm always in the mood for a little Japanese schoolgirl action but I mean I literally felt like a Japanese schoolgirl. Everything (with the exception of Resident Evil 4) was bright and colourful, well as being, dare I say it, cute. Not in a bad way though.



Paper Mario 2

DEVELOPER: Intelligent Systems / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** October 2004

■ If there was an award for the best looking game at E3 then it would go to Paper Mario 2. No game in recent memory has had such a unique and beautiful visual style but Paper Mario 2 is not just a pretty face. The Mushroom Kingdom has been transformed into a 2 dimension hell and Mario, now flat as a piece of paper must make his way through the

land to combat a new and highly amusing menace. Gameplay closely resembles that of Mario & Luigi Superstar Saga with one small difference - all combat takes place on a stage. Depending on how well you perform during combat the audience can either help or hinder Mario and his current sidekick by throwing out powerups or attacking the enemy. Whilst the code on the demo floor was far from being hard, the joy of the game seems to lie in the discovery of new areas and powers.

Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures

DEVELOPER: Nintendo / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** Real soon now

■ Four player Zelda anyone? Four-player co-op Zelda stripping back the game to its bare essentials. We won't say too much or it will ruin next month's review (hint, hint Nintendo - send us a copy).

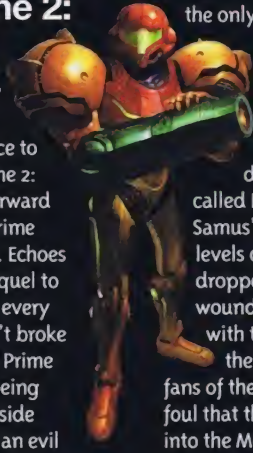




Metroid Prime 2: Echoes

DEVELOPER: Retro / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** November 2004

■ Whilst it would be nice to report that Metroid Prime 2: Echoes is a huge step forward from the first Metroid Prime doing so would be a lie. Echoes is essentially a direct sequel to the first game in nearly every way - that said, if it ain't broke don't fix it and Metroid Prime was about as far from being broke as you can get. Aside from having to combat an evil Samus (she's a bitch let me tell you),



the only real departure from Metroid Prime is the inclusion of four-player multiplayer. Two multiplayer game modes were demonstrated on the show floor - a simple deathmatch and a mode called Bounty Hunter where four Samus's (Sami?) run around the levels collecting coins that are dropped when another player is wounded. The winner is the person with the most coins at the end of the time limit. Although a lot of fans of the series will undoubtedly cry foul that the multiplayer doesn't fit into the Metroid mythology, the fact remains that it's still really good fun.



Star Fox

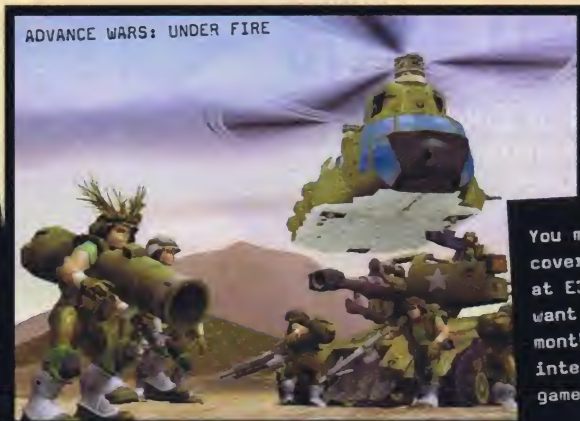
DEVELOPER: Namco / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** Late 2004

■ Rare's Star Fox Adventures may have been a fun little game but truth be told it wasn't really Star Fox. Where were the Airwing battles against superior numbers? Where were the things going boom? Fans of the original Star Fox and Star Fox 64 should fret no longer though as Namco's new game in the franchise neatly mixes up frantic space combat with ground combat and vehicle elements as well as on foot action. As icing on the cake, Star Fox features a four-player split screen multiplayer that includes both aerial and ground-based combat, both (obviously) with an emphasis placed on vehicles.

Advance Wars: Under Fire

DEVELOPER: Kuju Entertainment / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** Soon

■ If you're expecting a full 3D version of the critically acclaimed and much loved Advance Wars GBA series you may be a little disappointed (to put it mildly) with Under Fire. Instead of the simple yet remarkably deep strategy of the GBA series, Kuju Entertainment have opted for a more action-oriented title. The basic premise of the game is the same - two opposing armies fighting it out but instead of simply controlling the tactical layout and advance of you troops, Under Fire give the troops some autonomy and allows the player to jump into any of the troops on the field and fight the battles themselves, third-person shooter style.



Donkey Kong / Donkey Kong Jungle Beat

DEVELOPER: Nintendo / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** Soon

■ Donkey Konga, Nintendo's drum based rhythm game should be winging its way to us soon but what should prove even more fun will be the second Nintendo game to utilise the drum peripheral. Donkey Kong Jungle Beat is an adventure/platform game in which you control the inappropriately named gorilla by beating on the drums to send him in different direction and jump, and clapping will unleash a special attack. Although I didn't have a chance to play it at the Nintendo booth the sheer number of people lining up to play and the joyful laughter of those who were playing earmark it as a gimmicky but good time to be had by all title.

DK: King of Swing

DEVELOPER: Nintendo / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** TBA

■ Announced the day before E3, King of Swing is a radical departure from previous DK games. Rather than jumping on bad guys and the like, King of Swing, as the name suggests is all about swinging, using the shoulder buttons - the only controls in the game.

Mario Pinball

DEVELOPER: Nintendo / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** TBA

■ Strange rendered visuals aside, Mario Pinball is a remarkably fun, if somewhat gimmicky addition to the Mario franchise. The game, as Nintendo likes to call it is essentially a Pinball/Adventure - players must bounce a fetal positioned Mario around each of the screens/levels, collecting powerups and tripping switches with the eventual goal of rescuing Princess Peach who has been, wait for it, kidnapped. Again. Mario should dump her and find a more stable, less prone to kidnapping girlfriend.

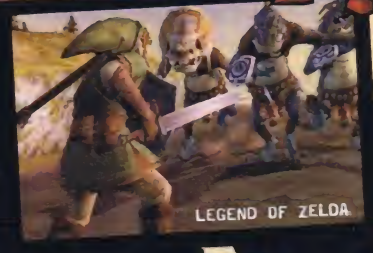
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap

DEVELOPER: Flagship / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **DUE:** TBA

■ A new year needs a new Zelda game for the GBA. The Minish Cap uses the conceit of Link being shrunk down to miniature size to kick off the adventure. Not too much is different from previous Zelda GBA titles but once again, if it ain't broke don't fix it. One of the new elements added to The Minish Cap (aside from the shrinking angle) are Kinstones - broken rocks scattered around the game world that will unlock special features like new dungeons if the two halves are brought together.



You may be wondering about the seeming lack of coverage of the new Legend of Zelda title announced at E3. The reason for that is simple - we don't want to blow our wad all at once. Stay tuned next month for a look at the new game as well as an interview with the man himself, the mind behind the game, Eiji Aonuma!



I Am Jack's Numb Feet

Finally I braved the sea of body odour again and made my way back to the other hall for my final stop on what had proved to be a very big day. By this time I couldn't feel my feet so the pain of standing was nothing, leaving me at a loss for something to complain about. After a brief but affable handshake with Hyper's ex ad manager, Chris (now the more than capable go to guy for Vivendi) it was off on another whirlwind tour of cathode ray genius. In hindsight I realise I may not have been in the best of sorts by the time I got to the booth as I started our tour on the wrong foot by laughing at Fight Club and pointing out my observation that the game may have something of an uncomfortable license considering that the book itself is quite damning of the American obsession with violent entertainment whereas the game itself is quite a decent and brutal fighter with a "realistic" system of bone breaking. Oh well, hindsight is a great thing.



EMPIRE EARTH 2

Half-Life 2

DEVELOPER: Valve
PUBLISHER: Vivendi
DUE: Real soon now
 ■ Still no playable code on the show floor but the two theatre shows of the game were incredibly impressive to say the least - good enough that had the code been playable it would have stolen my game of the con crown from Halo 2. The new videos showed more physics in action and hinted as the actual plot. They should become available for download by the time you're reading this so do yourself a favour and get downloading.



HALF-LIFE 2



HALF-LIFE 2

Empire Earth 2

DEVELOPER: Mad Doc Software /
PUBLISHER: Vivendi Universal /
DUE: Mid 2005
 ■ It came as no surprise when Vivendi announced that work had begun on Empire Earth 2, the sequel to their flagship RTS/Strategy title Empire Earth. Code on the show floor was very early but from what we could see the game looks to be shaping up very nicely with 14 different civilisations broken up into area groupings, each with their own unique troops as well as troops unique to the area grouping, making for 200 or so in all. Empire Earth 2 is also set to feature a dynamic weather system that will play a huge part into how the player plans their strategies.



Predator: Concrete Jungle

DEVELOPER: Vivendi /
PUBLISHER: Vivendi / **DUE:** Late 2004
 ■ Although the demo at the Vivendi booth could be taken as an example of what not to do with a strong movie license it's still too early to really judge Predator: Concrete Jungle as it does have many strong points going for it, not the least of them being that you play the Predator, one of the truly great sci-fi characters. Another strong element to the game is the fact that comic book genius Grant Morrison is writing the script. Fingers crossed that what was shown on the floor was simply a brief hiccup in the evolution of Predator: Concrete Jungle.

F.E.A.R.

DEVELOPER: Monolith /
PUBLISHER: Vivendi / **DUE:** TBA
 ■ Remember those games you've played that instantly made you stand up and say some iteration of "god damn that was cool". FEAR look as though it's going to be one of those games, combining squad based FPS action, sweet bullet-time effects, drivable vehicles and a horror theme more reminiscent of The Ring than those seen in basically every other horror game on the market. Unfortunately all we got to see was an all too brief trailer but Monolith's new engine is a thing of beauty and the action looks superb. Do yourselves a favour and download the trailer, drool over the screens and keep an ear to the ground for more FEAR news. Monolith may very well have another sleeper hit on their hands.



PREDATOR: CONCRETE JUNGLE



FEAR

Day 2

Footsore and fancy free

DAY 2 and I think I have it easy – only a few appointments for the entire day and a couple of hours to myself to explore and look around. Little do I know that this means that every PR person within the surrounding area would be making a grab for my attention and won't let me go until I sample every one of their wares. First stop THQ.

The Punisher

DEVELOPER: Volition / **PUBLISHER:** THQ / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox/PS2/Mobile

Frank Castle is here and he's going to have to kill a lot of people. Unrelated to the upcoming film of the same name (though they obviously both draw from the same source material); THQ's The Punisher drops players into the fractured life of the titular anti-hero on his quest for revenge on the people who killed his family. Along the way players will have to opportunity to shoot it out with a host of thugs, take advantage of a very messy locational damage model (reminiscent of the character deformation seen in Soldier of



Fortune 2) as well as location specific kills that take advantage of the terrain. The playable code on the show floor was remarkably fun, albeit very gory and anti-social but if the ratings board continues to work in the archaic style then it's kind of doubtful that we'll be seeing it on our shores in an uncut form any time soon.

Across the way the Capcom stand beckons with a sirens call comprised of gladiators, creepy towns, serial killers and cartoon superheroes – some of the best things in life.



Resident Evil 4

DEVELOPER: Capcom Production Studio 4 / **PUBLISHER:** Capcom / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** GCN

Last time we saw Resident Evil 4 in action we were blown away, and all E3 has done is to add further fuel to the raging zombie apocalypse fire. We can now confirm that in addition to a great deal more action in this title, the controls have been replaced by a new and intuitive setup which, though still not perfect, is a hell of an improvement

from the stand on the spot and rotate to the direction you want to go of the older games. No more of the story has been released save that the people of the town are possessed or mutated in some way. We can't wait to give ourselves the willies finding out in November.



S.T.A.L.K.E.R.



S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl

DEVELOPER: GSC Game World / **PUBLISHER:** THQ / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PC

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. probably ranks up there with Half-Life 2 and Halo 2 as one of the most anticipated games slated for release this year – and for good reason. The story, set years after the Chernobyl disaster, is compelling as hell, the graphics engine is beautiful and the photographs of the developers walking around the disaster site with no protection but flimsy cloth masks are insanely appealing. Once again the code was not playable on the show floor but the video footage introduced two new creatures, a scary giant head with legs that wants nothing more than to stomp you into fine stalker paste and a psychic dwarf. The new demo also showed the depth of the creature AI with the various inhabitants of the zone hunting, working in packs, seeking shelter from the elements and the like without the need for hard coding.

WWE: Day of Reckoning

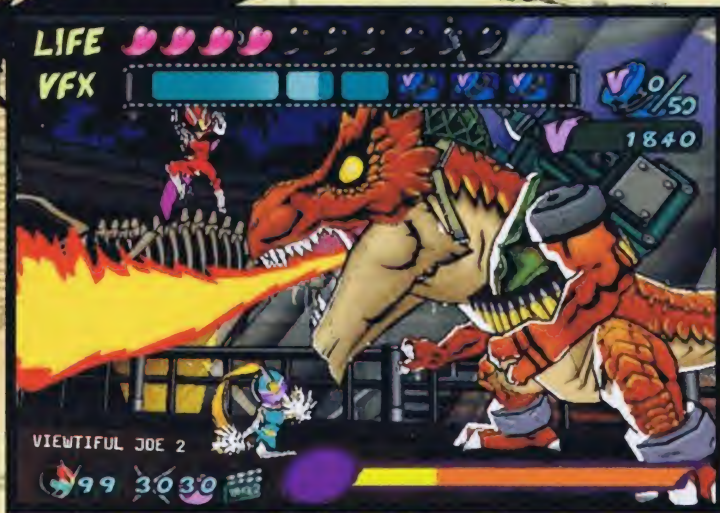
DEVELOPER: Yukes / **PUBLISHER:** THQ / **DUE:** August 2004 / **PLATFORM:** GCN

Finally a non WrestleMania branded wrestling game makes a welcome and exclusive appearance on the humble Cube. THQ's new wrestling game, Day of Reckoning will hopefully be the kick off point for another wrestling franchise. As it stands the game will feature 40 or more wrestling superstars, an intricate story mode in which the player works their way up from the



amateur ranks to becoming a main-eventer, a detailed stats system meaning that every wrestler is different as well as a huge selection of game styles and unlockable content.





Viewtiful Joe 2

DEVELOPER: Clover Studio / **PUBLISHER:** Capcom / **DUE:** October 2004 / **PLATFORM:** GCN/PS2

■ Sometimes more of the same is a good thing. Viewtiful Joe 2 is one of these cases. Not much has changed in the sequel aside from a few little additions that are bound to elevate it beyond the heights of the first game. How does a second playable character available right from the beginning of the game strike you? Instead of simply being a damsel in distress, Sylvia can now dish out the hurt with her guns and fu. Sylvia and Joe can also team up for some sweet co-op action with the special moves activated by either of the players affecting both of the characters. Finally, Joe and Sylvia will have access to some more new moves including the intriguing ability to records and replay a move from three different angles causing massive amounts of damage.

Next stop Namco, a booth very noticeable due to the massive statue of Nina from Tekken glaring over the crowd. Unfortunately try as I might I can't score a glance at the man himself, Joey Tekken.

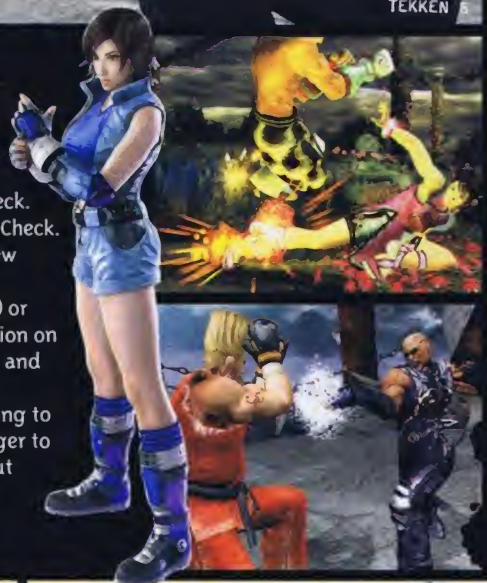


Tekken 5

DEVELOPER: Namco / **PUBLISHER:** Namco / **DUE:** 2005 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

■ Cool CGI movie? Check. Ambiguous subtitles? Check. No idea of what the new game will add to the franchise (if anything) or any concrete information on the engine, characters and the like? Check.

Looks like we're going to have to wait a bit longer to actually find out about Tekken 5.



Killer 7

DEVELOPER: Capcom Production Studio 4 / **PUBLISHER:** Capcom / **DUE:** September 2004 / **PLATFORM:** GCN/PS2

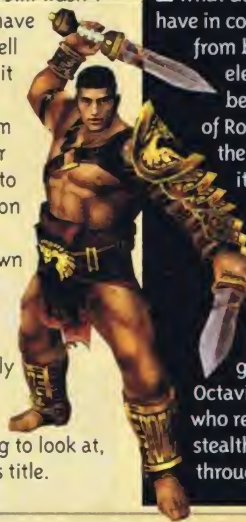
■ Unfortunately the code still wasn't playable at E3 so we still have no real idea of what the hell happens in the game but it still looks brilliant. From what we could gather from the code on the show floor players will choose paths to take the current incarnation of Smith (the serial killer/hero of the title) down and then may or may not have to fight in semi-traditional FPS style. Of course we could be entirely wrong — until we get our hands on the code Killer 7 will remain an appealing to look at, but gameplay ambiguous title.



Shadow of Rome

DEVELOPER: Capcom / **PUBLISHER:** Capcom / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

■ What do gladiators and stealth have in common? Nothing. Aside from both being major elements in Capcom's new beat/sneak 'em up Shadow of Rome. We don't know what the story involves as yet but it will revolve around the two playable characters, Agrippa, a hardened and battle scarred gladiator whose missions revolve around gladiatorial combat and general arse-kicking and Octavianus, a little wussy boy who relies on his brain and stealth to make his way through obstacles.



Death by Degrees

DEVELOPER: Namco / **PUBLISHER:** Namco /

DUE: TBA / **PLATFORM:** PS2

■ Nina from Tekken gets her own game but unlike the abortive attempts to make solo games for the characters from Mortal Kombat, Death by Degrees is shaping up to be a pretty damn good looking game. Aside from simply looking gorgeous, Death by Degrees utilises a combat system similar to Rise to Honor — the left thumbstick controlling movement and the right controlling attacks. At this stage the controls seem to be superior to Rise to Honor but to make it even cooler



the developers have added a nifty and incredibly cool looking critical hit system that presents the target as an x-ray skeleton and allows Nina to shatter the targeted bones or joints. No word yet as to when it will reach our shores but Christmas should be a good estimate.





Dead to Rights 2

DEVELOPER: Namco / **PUBLISHER:** Namco / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2/Xbox

More fighting, more guns, more doggy style — action that is. Jack Slade comes back to Grant City, breaking his own promise never to come back at the end of the first game, to rescue a young girl in trouble and naturally finds himself in a whole world of hurt.

The action for the sequel promises to be a lot darker than that seen in the first and brings with it a host of new combat techniques, guns and other military ordinance. Shadow, Slade's dog has also been beefed up for the sequel and will play a larger role in the game instead of seemingly being summoned from some magical doggy nether realm every time he was needed as in the original.



Baten Kaitos

DEVELOPER: Monolith Soft **PUBLISHER:** Namco **DUE:** November 2004 **PLATFORM:** GCN

Released late last year in Japan to rave reviews, Baten Kaitos is a novel and intriguing RPG set in a land comprised of floating islands in which the inhabitants all have the limited ability to fly. The code on the show floor was the Japanese retail so story wise we have no idea of what is going on. The most interesting aspect of Baten Kaitos (aside from the absolutely beautiful graphics) is the combat system which utilizes cards, but not in a way you've ever seen before. Instead of summoning creatures and the like as seen in a regular trading card game the cards are dealt at the beginning of combat and can be combined to make good hands for good attacks. The final result is a little like Magic the Gathering meets poker and is just about as addictive as both.

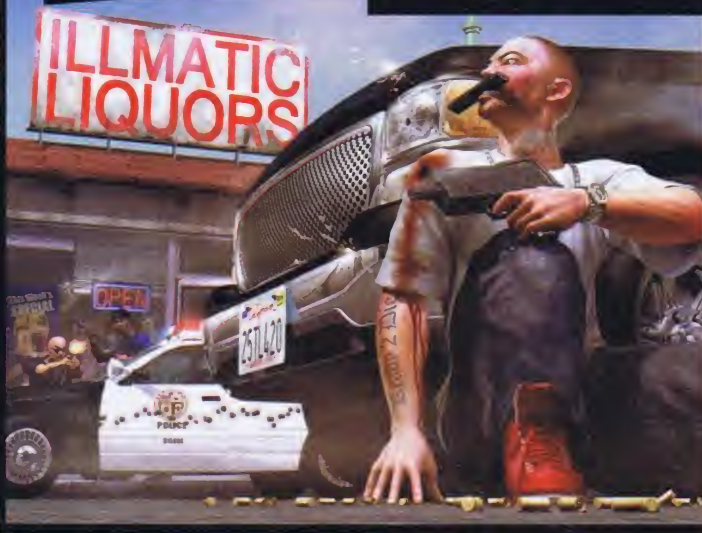
Unfortunately I miss Maria, the hard drinking, fun loving public face of Eidos at their stand, instead have to content myself with their lineup of titles.



Crash & Burn

DEVELOPER: Climax / **PUBLISHER:** Eidos / **DUE:** October 2004 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox/PS2

Crashing cars is one of the real pleasures in racing games. Smashing into a wall or another car at 200kph is a viscera thrill that's hard to beat but unfortunately it usually means that the game is over for you. Not so in Crash & Burn, a game that is as much about smashing into other cars as it is about crossing the finishing line first. Not only will you be able to crash into cars, the resulting crash will leave permanent debris on the track (or may even destroy a section of the deformable track) making the next lap even more of a challenge to negotiate at high speed. Add to this a healthy dose of car tweaking and you have to makings of a truly great arcade racer.



25 to Life

DEVELOPER: Avalanche / **PUBLISHER:** Eidos / **DUE:** TBA / **PLATFORM:** PS2/Xbox

From the makers of Tak and the Power of Juju comes 25 to Life, a game in which cops and gangstas do their level best to kill each other and control the streets. How's that for a change of company direction huh? 25 to Life will feature a single player mode in which the player must build their way up from a simple street thug to a hardened boss as well as 16 player online multiplayer complete with bloody cops and robbers action.

Snowblind

DEVELOPER: Crystal Dynamics / **PUBLISHER:** Eidos / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PC/Xbox/PS2

Imagine the gritty post apocalyptic ambience of Deus Ex along with Invisible War's biomod system, then take out the RPG elements and replace them with furious combat on a scale that nearly equals the sheer madness of Serious Sam and you have an accurate idea of Snowblind, the latest shooter from Crystal Dynamics. If nothing else the game looks incredibly tense and cool. As is fitting with the genre, Snowblind will feature a huge and unique arsenal including the requisite physics gun, an 11 mission single player mode as well as a robust online multiplayer.



The whirlwind tour continues, next stop Acclaim - all out all change. At around this time hunger pains begin to kick in, not that it matters, a couple hours more and I'll be so hungry I can't feel them anymore.

Juiced

DEVELOPER: Juice Games / **PUBLISHER:** Acclaim / **DUE:** September 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2/PC/Xbox

Like we said before, 2004 is the year of the tweaker. Juiced, Acclaim's entry into the tweaker market looks as though it may have the juice (bad pun intended) to be one of the best in the field. To start, Juiced will feature more than 50 licensed cars and hundreds of real after-market parts. Whilst the car licensing means that there will only be minimal damage modeling on any of the cars it's still a nice step in the right direction. Aside from the sheer number of cars, Juiced will feature a number of career modes including full street races, drags and pink slip races. A built in mobile phone will allow the player to be challenged by virtual racers at any point in the game making for an actual non-linear racing experience. Presumably this phone will also work in multiplayer.



Interview with a Made Man

DEVELOPER: Acclaim / **PUBLISHER:** Acclaim / **DUE:** Late 2005 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox/PS2

With Interview with a Made Man, Acclaim promises to deliver the most accurate mafia based game to date. Whether or not they can remains to be seen as the pre-alpha footage shown behind closed doors only showed a gun battle and little else, aside from the Soprano-esque level of coarse language contained within the game.



INTERVIEW WITH A MADE MAN



Ah Konami, the stand that makes you wonder, "what the hell is wrong with Japanese people?"

SILENT HILL 4

The Last Job

DEVELOPER: Acclaim / **PUBLISHER:** Acclaim / **DUE:** 2005 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox/PS2

Heist films have an enduring popularity rarely seen in any other genre. There's a real thrill to be had watching master criminals at work. The Last Job by Acclaim seeks to emulate this thrill. Whilst we have seen many crime based games in the past none of them have been quite like this. Players

take control of four master criminals, a brains man, the muscle, an elite hacker and an old school sneak thief over a number of jobs. Instead of being squad based, The Last Job uses what Acclaim calls "parallel play" a system in which the player takes control of each character sequentially over the same period of time. What the players do with one character will directly affect the next character you play.

Silent Hill 4: The Room

DEVELOPER: Konami / **PUBLISHER:** Konami / **DUE:** September 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PC/Xbox/PS2

It's hard to sum up in words how unnerving the latest installment of the Silent Hill franchise is with its horrifying soundtrack, freaky creatures (the baby headed thing still gives me

nightmares). Unnerving as the game may be there was something on the show floor even scarier - the cute little Japanese girl playing the game on the booth next to me who killed a person (in game of course) and then spent the next few minutes hacking into it with anything she could equip and swing, giggling like... well like a Japanese schoolgirl the entire time.

Rumble Roses

DEVELOPER: Konami / **PUBLISHER:** Konami / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

After fighting my way through a throng of huge sweaty men who resembled nothing so much as copulating slug creatures to discover what they were all leering at I caught my first glimpse of Rumble Roses, Konami's new, all girl wrestling game. Whilst the actual fighting engine feels fairly solid, the game gives the impression of being a two bit version of the DOA series where the developers have remembered the jiggle physics and forgotten the actual game.



Rumours flood around E3, it's the nature of the beast. One of the most popular this year is how much money EA spent on their booth. Whilst giving an accurate sum would be rude, lets just say that if the rumours are true you could win Big Brother (this year - complete with the "secret") a dozen or more times and still not be able to afford it. The massive screen in the middle of the booth constantly showing looped trailers for EA games may well have had something to do with this.



BLACK & WHITE 2

Black & White 2

DEVELOPER: Lionhead Studios
PUBLISHER: EA
DUE: Late 2004
PLATFORM: PC

Although similar in many respects to the original game, Black & White 2 is a whole new creature, pun intended. This time around players won't need to take such an active role in training the creature if they don't want, instead allowing it to learn by your example and the resulting beast will play a far more vital role in the game rather than being little more than an interesting AI experiment. The most interesting thing about the game is that this time around not only will the creature mutate to show your choice of good and evil, the actual gameplay will as well - play aggressively and the game will morph into more of a combat RTS, play peacefully and it will become more of a city builder.



Lord of the Rings: The Third Age

DEVELOPER: EA / **PUBLISHER:** EA /
DUE: November 2004 /
PLATFORM: All consoles

Finally, an RPG set in Middle Earth. It's been a long time coming but with the massive success of the movies you know it was bound to happen. Rather than style itself after more traditional western style RPGs, The Third Age has a distinctly Japanese feel to the mechanics, including a combat system highly reminiscent of the earlier Final Fantasy games. Players will take the role of six minor characters from the Lord of the Rings trilogy on a mission that will see them traveling much of the same ground as the Fellowship. Whilst some purists may gripe about the creative liberties that need to be taken for these adventures to be possible the game is looking very solid indeed, as well as remaining quite faithful to both the books and the films upon which it is based.



GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

GoldenEye: Rogue Agent

DEVELOPER: EA / **PUBLISHER:** EA /
DUE: Christmas /
PLATFORM: All consoles

Since the original GoldenEye, no other Bond game has been able to live up to expectations. Now comes Goldeneye: Rogue Agent and that looks likely to change. Don't be fooled by the name - this has nothing to do with the first game of the same name. It's not a sequel in any way. In the new game players take the role of a disgraced o06 agent dismissed from the secret service after too many incidences of wanton cruelty and property damage, and now in the employ of Goldfinger. The GoldenEye



BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EARTH

Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle Earth

DEVELOPER: EA / **PUBLISHER:** EA /
DUE: Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PC

A good LOTR based strategy game could be a great thing but it seems as though all of the developers that try simply can't quite get all the elements to gel together. Lord of the Rings: Battle for Middle Earth allows players to control great armies in conquest of Middle Earth using a mechanic that seems to be an uneasy combination of the army movement of the Total War series and the combat of a traditional RTS. Although the player controls overall troop movement on a large scale map much like Total War, when it actually comes to battle the player still needs to collect resources, build barracks and the like. The end result appeared unnecessarily clunky but we'll reserve final judgment until we get our hands on finished code.



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE



The Sims 2

DEVELOPER: Maxis / **PUBLISHER:** EA / **DUE:** September 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PC

■ Being a long time Sims hater it really pains me to say this – Sims 2 looks absolutely incredible. This time around instead of having to control mundane things like telling your Sim to eat, take a crap and then wash their hands, the Sims 2 is based around the idea of trying to fulfill your Sim's wants and desires without making them face any of their fears. Balancing these two ideals has the potential to lead to some incredible and frequently hilarious gaming moments if the demo on the show floor is anything to go off. The demo showed the way sim emotions can get the better of them with a married man flirting with and later kissing a woman other than his wife who later finds out and explodes. The animations and expressions perfectly captured the moment which was simultaneously touching and laugh out loud funny. We can't wait to get our hands on code.



Battlefield 2

DEVELOPER: DICE / **PUBLISHER:** EA / **DUE:** Late 2005 / **PLATFORM:** PC
 ■ Moving the action into a decidedly modern arena, Battlefield 2 has the potential to be just as big as 1942, not a small order considering that the first game has shifted over 3 million units and second only to Counter-Strike as the most popular game online. As well as updating the action to a modern setting, the developers of Battlefield 2 promise support for 100 players simultaneously. Massive 50 a side battles are within reach.

Damn it - get to the Tecmo booth just in time to miss the DOA Girls show - not that I'm interested in cute Japanese girls doing martial arts or anything.



Finally, last stop on the tour - Majesco. A bored looking woman makes a half-arsed effort to vamp it up as Bloodrayne as I enter. She poses for a photo - I decline the invitation. She looks relieved. If I had big fake tits I'd look how she feels, or maybe vice versa.

Bloodrayne 2

DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality / **PUBLISHER:** Majesco / **DUE:** October 2004 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox/PC/PS2

■ The original Bloodrayne was fun but so lightweight it almost blew away. The sequel, on the other hand seems to be a step further down the track, combining a dead sexy graphics engine, a whole slew of

great looking moves and attacks, the titular vampire vamp and enough gore to keep even the most hardened horror fan satisfied. The code is still far from complete, with a number of camera and framerate problems but if they can clear them up in the next couple of months Terminal Reality should have a winner on their hands.



Dead or Alive Ultimate

DEVELOPER: Team Ninja
PUBLISHER: Tecmo
DUE: September 2004
PLATFORM: Xbox

■ Take the already gorgeous Dead or Alive franchise, give it a facelift to make it even more ridiculously good looking, add new moves, levels, degrees of environmental interactivity, new characters, new movies and an online component and you have Dead or Alive Ultimate; not so much a new game but a compendium of all that is great about the franchise with a little more added on for good measure.



Day 3

The day after the nights before

WE may not be hung over for the third day of the show but this does not mean we are sprightly. Far from it. A combination of late nights, early mornings, bad food and worse drink have left us tired, grumps and just downright crappy. With the noise of the show threatening to make my head explode I wearily make my way to the impressive, Spiderman soaked Activision booth for my first appointments of the day.



Spiderman 2

DEVELOPER: Treyarch / **PUBLISHER:** Activision / **DUE:** Soon / **PLATFORM:** All consoles

■ Although I didn't get my grubby little hands on Spiderman 2 the demo behind closed doors absolutely blew me away. Imagine a living, breathing world populated by little AI people running around doing their daily chores. Imagine having nearly free reign of where you go in this city - on any axis. The demonstration showed everyone's favourite web-slinger swinging through the city, stopping random crimes as well as elements of the plot that will directly reflect the events of the upcoming movie. It's hard to describe how amazing the web-swinging action is aside from saying that it uses a real physics engine and requires actual grapple points unlike the earlier games in which the webs always seemed to attach to the clouds or maybe the landing gear of low flying planes. This is one to watch for.



Dead Rush

DEVELOPER: Treyarch / **PUBLISHER:** Activision / **DUE:** TBA / **PLATFORM:** All consoles

■ Survival horror games are all the rage at the moment but it's rare to see a game do something a bit different. The usual mechanic for a survival horror is creeping around a haunted/infested house, facility or town shooting things in the head and watching your steadily declining stock of ammunition. Not

so with Dead Rush, a zombie infested survival horror game that looks as though it will play as more of an undead GTA than the next Resident Evil. That's right - like the game trailer and tag line states, sometimes your best weapon is a car. Little else has been revealed about the title aside from the fact that the main character will often have to salvage parts of wrecked cars to make other vehicles work. Sounds very promising.

Vampire the Masquerade: Bloodlines

DEVELOPER: Troika / **PUBLISHER:** Activision / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PC

■ Vampires and RPGs are a match made in heaven as proven by the phenomenal success of White Wolf's Vampire the Masquerade line of pen and paper games and expansion books. It's not long now until Vampire finally makes it to our PC

screens and by the look of it it's going to be one hell of a ride. Starting as a young, newly sired vampire created in one of the clans taken directly from the tabletop game, players will initially have to work for the prince but will then be able to gather a little power of their own. Details of the plot are slim and none so it looks like we're going to have to wait a few more months to get to the bottom of the blood-sucking shenanigans.



X-Men Legends

DEVELOPER: Raven / **PUBLISHER:** Activision / **DUE:** October 2004 / **PLATFORM:** All consoles

■ Kicking butt with a team of four X-Men drawn from a pool of 15? Sounds like a comic book fan's wet dream. Find out the truth as to whether X-Men Legends will be a superhero in the world of action RPGs or its greatest villain next issue in our massive feature.



Tony Hawk Underground 2

DEVELOPER: Neversoft / **PUBLISHER:** Activision / **DUE:** October 2004 / **PLATFORM:** All formats

■ New story mode, new tricks, same silly missions.



Talk about impressive looking booties - Sony have a massive area filled to maximum capacity by hairy men with cameras who only know how to talk at the top of their lungs. Bliss.

Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal

DEVELOPER: Insomniac Games / **PUBLISHER:** Sony / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

Aside from having a catchy vulgar name, the third game in the Ratchet & Clank series may very well prove to be the best. Not only is Insomniac Games dishing up another helping of the single player action platformer we've come to know and love, Up Your Arsenal features online skirmish multiplayer



along the lines of Battlefield in which the teams have to capture and hold various strategic points across the map. Insomniac call Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal the best game they have ever made - let's hope they live up to that promise.



PSP Hands On

It would be nice to give a full report of how the PSP looks feels and plays but unfortunately there was no playable code or tech demo on display at E3. Instead we journalists had to content ourselves with simply touching the handheld. The unit itself is quite comfortable for the most part and the inclusion of a thumbstick is most welcome. As far as any downside to the design, the shoulder buttons are stiff and uncomfortable as they stand - of course, not actually having any code to play means that we have no idea of the responsiveness of the pad, thumbstick or buttons. Interestingly enough, even

though the handheld isn't even playable yet, Sony were hinting at all the extra add-on capabilities the unit may have, including a digital camera attachment, a mobile phone attachment and one that could turn it into a PDA style device. Whilst the movie playback of the device is impressive, it remains to be seen whether people will be willing to go out and pay full price for what is essentially a hobbled DVD (the UMD disc) to watch movies a couple of inches across. Ultimately the unit looks impressive but without anything to go by but footage that we were assured was gameplay, we'll have to wait to give a real impression of the machine.

Killzone

DEVELOPER: Guerilla / **PUBLISHER:** Sony / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

In the future mankind has spread out into space and the warlike Helghast, one of these offshoot human clans is hell bent on conquering the ISA. So goes the little story we know for Killzone. Plot aside what we do know is that Killzone could very well be the PS2's answer to Halo - one hell of a tense and atmospheric single player game with exceptional multiplayer on the side. You can bet we can't wait to get our hands on more complete code and give it a good thrashing.



Another hell another appointment. Ubisoft, a company quickly becoming one of the, if not THE most impressive in-house developer around.

Ghost Recon 2

DEVELOPER: Red Storm / **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** All consoles/PC

Whilst some may be disappointed that Ghost Recon 2 appears to be aiming at more of an action oriented market with larger scale battles, full on confrontations and a new over the shoulder perspective that's like a cross between first and third person you



can rest assured that the game is looking good. Really good in fact, just like a real sequel should. Aside from the change in pace and look, Ghost Recon 2 will also feature much smarter AI.

The Getaway 2

DEVELOPER: Sony / **PUBLISHER:** Sony / **DUE:** November 2004 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

It's no secret that we here at Hyper harbour no love for The Getaway. In fact, let's be honest, we hate it. Thankfully The

Getaway 2 looks one hell of a lot better. Much like the first game, players will take the role of both a cop and a criminal in a branching story that will eventually all tie in together when you get to the bitter end. Sony has also hinted that there will be a third playable character unlocked after completing the game. After listening to the myriad suggestions (read complaints) made by gamers, Sony have gone a long way to implement a much improved combat system and beef up the driving - when November rolls around you can rest assured that we'll be letting you know if they were successful or not.



Prince of Persia 2

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft / **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft / **DUE:** 2005 / **PLATFORM:** All formats

Holy crap on a stick (to put it lightly)! Last year's Prince of Persia was one of the best titles of the year and it looks as though Prince of Persia 2 will reap the same accolades in 2005. Take everything that made the first game great - amazing animations, an incredible array of moves, frenzied combat and environmental puzzles and make them bigger and better. More moves, including the ability to slide down curtains by stabbing them with your sword, much improved combat with a range of attacks and multiple weapons, far more enemies, more animations and even better movement puzzles. 2005 can't come fast enough.



FAR CRY: INSTINCTS

Far Cry: Instincts

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft / **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft / **DUE:** TBA / **PLATFORM:** Xbox

■ To put it bluntly, the Instincts code demoed at E3 looked horrible, but even the extreme pre-alpha nature of the code couldn't hide the sheer potential of the title. A separate game from the PC version of Far Cry, Instincts will see Jack infected with the trigen virus and begin to transform into a monster. Even more impressive than what we've heard of the missions is the level editor that will ship standard with the game. This tool, itself a lean version of the editor used to create the game will allow Xbox gamers to create multiplayer maps, place vehicles and objects and test them with the simple push of a button. Should be sweet.

FINAL FANTASY XII



Final Fantasy XII

DEVELOPER: Square Enix / **PUBLISHER:** Square Enix / **DUE:** Early 2005 / **PLATFORM:** PS2

■ It's still around a year off but Final Fantasy XII is looking as though it could well be the best Final Fantasy ever for one simple reason - immersion. In previous FF games players were often jarred out of the story by random battles, repetitive combat music and the like. Not so in the new game. Combat is all played out in real time with characters able to give orders on the fly or pause to give orders if they so wish. Random battles have been entirely omitted. We don't know anything of the plot at the moment but going by FF standards it will be epic, slightly wanky, tragic and uplifting - just the way we like it.



PLAYBOY MANSION



Playboy the Mansion

DEVELOPER: Groove Games / **PUBLISHER:** ARUSH / **DUE:** TBA / **PLATFORM:** PC/Xbox/PS2

■ Not simply a game about silicon (chip) boobies, Playboy the Mansion is a game about the playboy lifestyle as a whole - more specifically running the mag and throwing the parties. Whilst the former will make you money, the latter will allow you to generate better content for the magazine, thus gaining more revenue to throw a bigger party and so on. Believe it or not the game is more than a simple gimmick, instead being one of the most enjoyable sim/tycoon style games we've seen in a long while.

KOTOR II: The Sith Lords

DEVELOPER: Bioware / **PUBLISHER:** LucasArts / **DUE:** Early 2005 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox/PC

■ The demo of KOTOR 2 shown at the Xbox booth and LucasArts was, for want of a better word, terrible, filled as it was with dark and empty environments and umpteen glitches, obviously rushed out so Bioware could have something to show at the expo. Terrible demo aside, KOTOR 2 is looking like it is going to be an even greater game than the first. The engine and assets may be the same but expanded rules and a plot written by the man responsible for Planescape: Torment and you have an undisputed recipe for greatness.

KOTOR II



It's fine to showcase Star Wars games at LucasArts, but what happened to Sam & Max huh?



Sammy - home of Giant Doctor Bag Head

Iron Phoenix

DEVELOPER: InterServ / **PUBLISHER:** Sammy / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox

■ 16 Player online fighting with a focus on long combos, weapons and kung-fu movie cool with a long and elaborate single player game. Where do we sign up?

After all the conspiracy theories surrounding what Sega's big announcement for the show will be it turns out that they now have the publishing rights to Matrix Online. *whistles*

OTOGI 2



Otogi 2

DEVELOPER: Sega / **PUBLISHER:** Sega / **DUE:** Late 2004 / **PLATFORM:** Xbox

■ The original Otogi was an attractive but ultimately dull game due to the sheer repetition of the monster killing missions. Otogi 2 on the other hand looks as though it may be an absolute winner, combining frenzied and highly stylized third person combat, multiple characters to choose from and far more varied missions and monsters. It also looks pants (tres bien) wettingly gorgeous.

The final appointment for the show. The look of relief on my face is positively orgasmic. No more walking. No more noise. After seeing Take 2 that is.



Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition

DEVELOPER: Rockstar / **PUBLISHER:** Rockstar / **DUE:** TBA / **PLATFORM:** PS2/Xbox

■ The final tweaker game of the show takes a slightly different track from the others, focussing on the DUB culture - that is the tweaking and after market modding of luxury cars. As the game stands the engine looks very impressive with a great sense of speed and excellent car customising detail. We'll have more for you when it comes to light.

BEST IN SHOW



Splinter Cell 3

UBISOFT

■ Stunningly gorgeous graphics, undoubtedly the best demonstrated in the show are just one of the factors that make Splinter Cell 3 so great. New abilities for Sam Fisher and what could possibly be the greatest co-op mode we have ever seen also rank up there. What makes the co-op mode so impressive? How about the fact that this is one of the first games (if not the first) in which the players can only win if they work together as a team, not two people with the same objective. Find out more in next month's huge preview.

Jade Empire

BIOWARE

■ Take a quasi-steampunk feudal Asia, combine it with an impressive combat engine comprising dozens of martial art styles, an epic plot and enough action to keep you on your toes and you have what looks as though it is going to be the must have console RPG of the year. Bioware have finally taken the leap and created their own universe for a game, as well as their own rules. Is it a success? Find out next month in our hands on preview.

Halo 2

BUNGIE

■ We can't rave enough about how damn good the game is at the current stage. While we've only played the multiplayer to date, unless Bungie do something stupid like make every level in the single player campaign a series of jumping puzzles then it will be next to impossible to screw it up. We don't have much longer to wait to find out. The game will be with us in November. Yay!



Half-Life 2

VALVE

■ No playable code on the show floor does detract from the game but the two videos shown were so packed with character and atmosphere that you came out wanting more. Creepy, slightly surreal, scary and intense, Half-Life 2 looks as though it is going to be everything it's cracked up to be.

Paper Mario 2

NINTENDO

■ Incredible graphics, a cute plot and so much charm that you can't help but fall in love with the game - what more could you want from a Nintendo game? Even the demo on the show floor showed the humour and love that went into the game; instead of simply dishing out a few levels, Nintendo went all out and had E3 jokes, characters telling the player that they're not going to give away all their secrets (in terms of abilities) until they got review code and making Nintendo references.

Killzone

GUERRILLA

■ Space Nazis (or something much like it) and frenzied, tense combat could make Killzone the Halo of the PS2. From what we've played Killzone will offer players far more than the standard console FPS with four very different characters to choose from, each with their own unique abilities giving each mission potentially four different play throughs - each of them markedly different. We haven't tested the multiplayer yet but if it's half as impressive as the single player is it will be fantastic.



F.E.A.R.

MONOLITH

■ A real wild card, F.E.A.R. may be the game to take the horror FPS to the next level. Instead of simply shooting possessed Mars colonists or taking on hordes of demons and undead, F.E.A.R. takes a more prosaic approach to horror with a plot closer to Ring than Night of the Demons. Dead sexy engine too.

Final Fantasy XII

SQUARE ENIX

■ We have no idea of the plot as yet but the new battle mechanics and general aesthetic of the game are the best we've seen from the franchise - and that's one hell of a big order. You'd better believe that we will be covering Final Fantasy XII (that's 12, not 10-2 - great game, bad name) a good deal more in the future.

Burnout 3

CRITERION

■ Best. Arcade. Racing. Ever. Not only is the game incredibly fast, fun and hellishly competitive (there's nothing quite like bashing another racer into a wall and seeing the resulting crash in slow motion), the addition of online multiplayer on all formats (not just the PS2 as originally thought) means that Burnout will be able to go that one step further. Brilliant.

Prince of Persia 2

UBISOFT

■ The sequel to one of our favourite games of 2003 looks destined to be one of our favourites in 2005. Everything that was great about the first new PoP title has been made bigger and better. Bring it on.



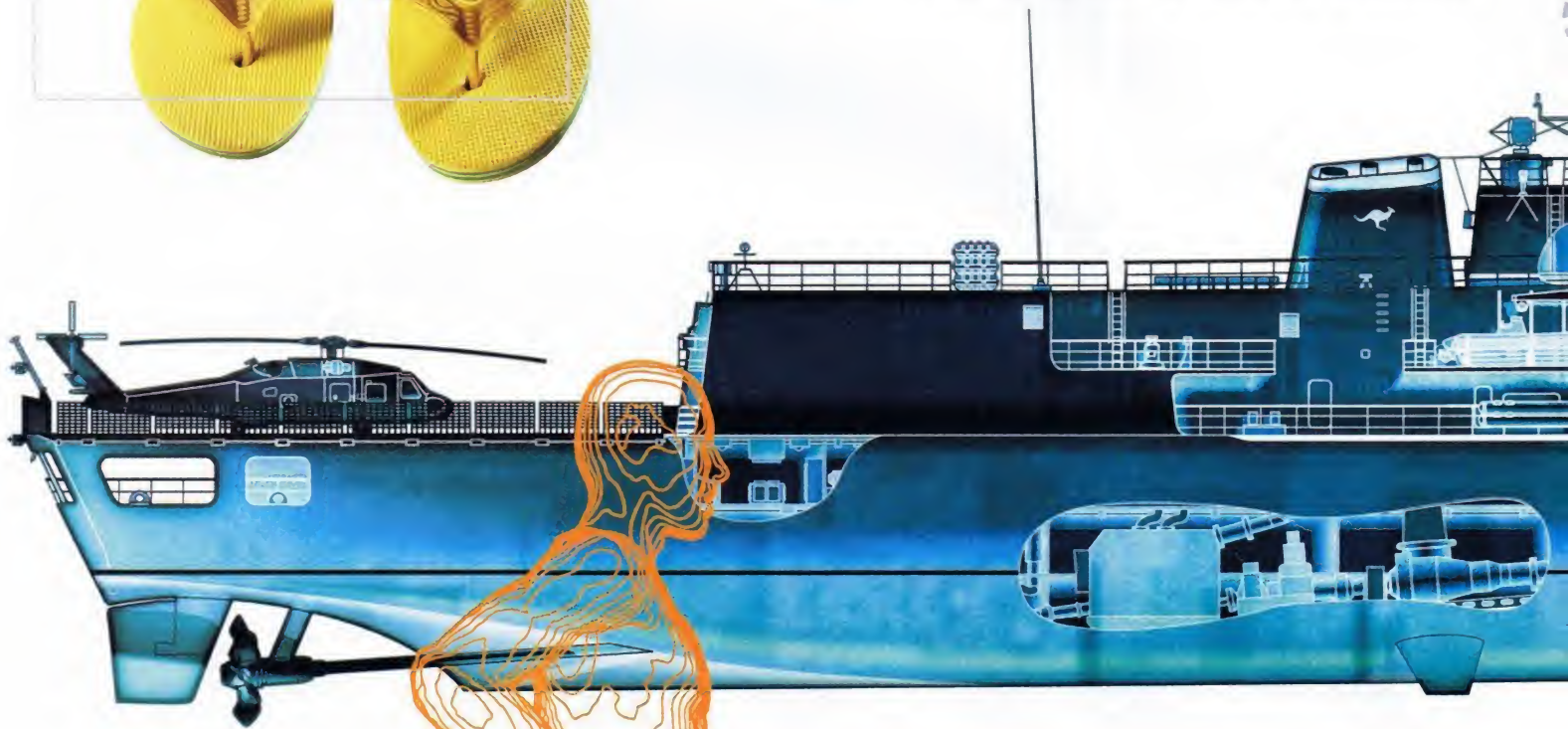
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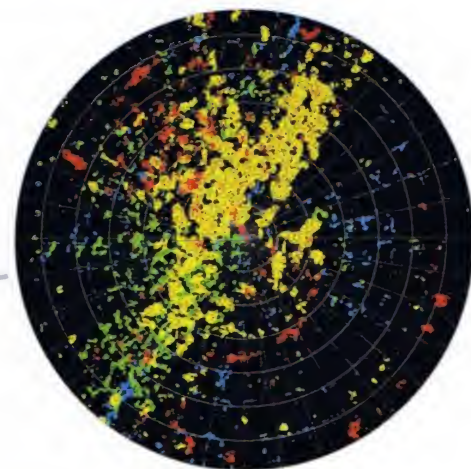
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METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Stealth Adventure /
PLAYERS: 1 / **DEVELOPER:** KCEJ /
AVAILABLE: TBA /

WOW-O-METER



Put Metal Gear Solid 3 near the top of your most wanted games list right now. It's that simple. We've finally had a chance to go hands-on with Kojima's latest opus, and can confirm that if you're a fan of the series, then this game is going to tickle you a healthy shade of pink.

NAKED SNAKE THE SNAKE EATER? WHAT IS THIS, PRON?

Set during the 60s, Snake Eater foreshadows many of the events that are to come in the series, not to

mention introducing some familiar characters (such as a much younger Revolver Ocelot). You play as "Naked Snake", and the plot seems to concern the very first Metal Gear project.

Despite a lengthy trailer and playable demo at E3, Kojima and Konami are still keeping their cards close to their chest surrounding the plot, as the series prides itself on the strength of its narrative, so why ruin it? That said, if you thought the codec conversations and long long cutscenes in the previous games got a little tiresome (we didn't - for the record), then Snake Eater won't be for you. In that respect it's certainly more of the same.

In gameplay terms, however, Snake Eater makes some much appreciated departures from what we might expect from an MGS game. Perhaps the game mechanic we should discuss first is the new Camouflage index. Now that the radar is gone, this baby will be your new best friend. It's

represented as a percentage in the corner of the screen. The higher the percentage, the harder it will be for guards to see you. This percentage is changed in a number of ways.

Obviously going prone will hide you more than standing up. Staying still will make you harder to see than moving. Snake can even choose from a variety of fatigues and face paint patterns to suit his surroundings, so the closer you can get your kit to the environment, the higher your camouflage percentage. As you can

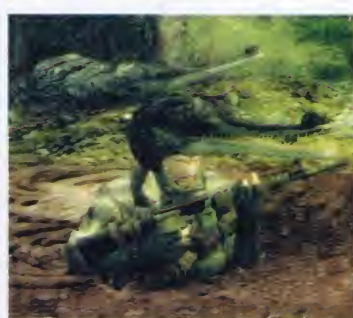
see, this isn't a simple binary system where you're either hidden or not; instead it feels far more organic and realistic. Very cool.

As the introduction of the camouflage index suggests, Snake will spend a lot more of his time in jungle style environments (although there will still be plenty of indoor sections and other locations), and along with this comes a change in gameplay emphasis and in Snake's abilities. One of these is the ability to climb trees. You don't actually climb them so





WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
 A reward for beating the game while wearing nothing but the alligator head!



much as press a button next to certain trees, but the ability to get up on high branches and scope out your surroundings is excellent. Snake can then hang from branches and shoot at enemy soldiers, not to mention drop on them for the ultimate stealth kill.

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

If climbing trees isn't your thing, however, then the new Stalking and Close Quarters Combat elements will come in handy. Simply put, you'll now be silently tracking guards and taking them out efficiently and ruthlessly. Indeed, the D-Pad is now used for the new stalking action, keeping you low to the ground and moving just faster than the guards. It may seem weird to put a stealthy move like this on a digital pad, but the advantage is that you won't press too hard by accident and end up alerting the guard — you'll always

move at the perfect stalking pace. Unlike other MGS games you'll also have much better awareness of your surroundings in a visual sense. You can use the right analogue stick to spin the camera around Snake, and in conjunction with the first person perspective, you'll always be able to keep track of what's going on around you. Naked Snake will also have a great range of moves at his disposal for taking on single and multiple foes. Our favourite (if you've seen the trailer you'll know what we're talking about) is stabbing an enemy soldier then using him as a shield while you pick off the rest with a gun. You'll also get the chance to tinker with some serious weaponry, such as gun turrets and rocket launchers to take out enemies and helicopters en masse. Perhaps the other change that we should mention is the inclusion of a stamina bar. Any time Snake does

something strenuous (such as hanging from a tree shooting people — bless him), you'll eat into his Stamina, so keeping it topped up is essential. And just how do you do that? By killing animals and collecting edible vegetation from the environment, and eating them. So yes, in a literal sense, you will have to be a "snake eater" in this game! Mind you, it's not quite as full on as you may imagine. Shooting animals (or fruit or whatever) turns them into the familiar rotating rations boxes for your consumption. It's an interesting concept, but we'll reserve judgement until we've played the final game. It's hard to capture just how slick Snake Eater is in a humble preview, but rest assured, the new gameplay elements gel together very cohesively, and along with some stunning new visual effects, this is a gameworld that truly lives and breathes. It can't get here soon enough. <<<



[above] As Wilks would say "it looks like he's rubbing one out"





JAK III

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GSN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Platformer / PLAYERS: 1 /
DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog /
AVAILABLE: TBA /

WOW-O-METER



Most gamers will probably now agree that Jak II, whilst a terrifically fun game, suffered a few flaws that really prevented it from being the classic it had the potential to become. Parts of the game really dragged (Haven "cough" City) and there were a few missions that felt more like completing household chores than goofing off with your favourite games console. Well, with Jak III the rule book has really been thrown out the window - and it very nearly hit Jason Rubin on the head as he was leaving the building.

FROM A TO B VIA T

For those of you who haven't yet

heard, the founding member and president of Naughty Dog software, Jason Rubin, has quit the company to pursue other projects. You could be led to thinking that this dramatic turn of events could tragically affect Jak III's last few months of development, but the reality is that the hard-working team that have been working on the game since day one are still very much in control. In fact, Jason Rubin probably didn't really even have a lot to do with the day-to-day design decisions on the game anyhow, so it's unlikely that his leaving will have any ill-effect on the eventual quality of the game. In fact, from what we saw at E3, Jak III is looking like it will be the best game in the series.

Traveling through the city in Jak II certainly got annoying, because if you weren't constantly bumping into things, you were completely lost amongst its samey alleyways. Jak III has addressed this issue by banishing Jak and Daxter to the desert area called the Wasteland. The Wasteland may be about four



The end comes at sundown...

times the size of Haven city from Jak II, but Jak now has access to vehicles that are much faster than any of those creaky old hover cars, and there's a lot more fun to have along the way when you're getting from A to B, because now you'll get to investigate T, blast apart P and explore D. But Haven city isn't completely forgotten - you will get a chance to return there in Jak III, but it's now a chaotic war zone, completely torn apart and overrun by Metalheads. Yikes.

In the meantime, getting about the desert in the new vehicles will make up a large chunk of the Jak III experience. The vehicles mix speed and firepower (the Warthog from Halo seems to have been an inspiration. In fact we also spotted some of those Halo-esque fixed

turrets in the game too) with a true variety of gaming objectives, from searching for characters lost in the desert to speeding through caverns and blasting at aliens.

But when not behind the wheel of a kick arse machine (or on the back of a loping lizard), Jak will still have a large collection of beefy weapon upgrades - including that very tasty shotgun, complete with laser marker. Jak still also has his Dark Jak power as well as access to his new form, Light Jak, with which he appears as a heavenly angel complete with blue glow and wings that allow him to briefly glide. Where Dark Jak is all about destruction, Light Jak is a more defensive solution allowing you to slow time, heal up and protect yourself (and others) from attack.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

Jason Rubin creating another new and amazing series!



WRAPPING IT UP

Now that Jak is very much the experienced loner, the action in Jak III will be even more relentless than it was in Jak II. There will be less slow adventuring, and more intense action platforming. The pacing of Jak III is a crucial element. Even though you start out the game with most of your abilities from Jak II, you will still acquire new weapon upgrades and abilities across the whole course of the game, and you'll definitely find yourself needing to re-explore areas once you get your hands on new powers to discover that you have access to previously out-of-reach locations. Jak really will become one of the most versatile platform characters around.

There will also be more Dexter gameplay in Jak III, for those of you who love the crazy little guy and don't want to see him continually neglected. In fact, Jak III will also get to the bottom of many of the loose story elements from the

previous games, and it's hinted that Dexter may even be redeemed from his creature form.

Don't go expecting any huge improvement to the game's graphics, because Jak III pretty much uses the same character models and designs from Jak II, however if you played Jak II you'll agree that the game looked pretty darn amazing and it would be tough for Naughty Dog to really get the game looking any slicker on the PS2 than it already does. Something new, though: Naughty Dog has managed to squeeze rag-doll physics into the engine, allowing for enemies to flop around in a more realistic fashion upon carking it. It's a pretty cool enhancement for a platformer.

Sadly, it now seems official that Jak III will be the last game in the Jak and Dexter series (at least on the PlayStation 2). We can't wait to get our hands on the finished game and we'll bring you our huge, luscious review as soon as we can. <<<

Ears looking at you Jak ol' buddy





DOOM 3

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GBA / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: FPS / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 /
DEVELOPER: id Software, Vicarious
 Visions / **AVAILABLE:** Late 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



When you see Doom 3 ooze into life on the PC you know that you are looking at something special; forget buzz words or technical phrases like global lighting and normal mapping, and think slinking shadows and horror-movie lighting.

When you see it run on the Xbox, you know that someone is cheating somewhere. We were lucky enough to score a seat at the first public show of the game on the green and black box and it really was Doom 3 unfolding in the demo levels. We'd all expected some stand-in with a really impressive suit and decent make-up, but this was the real deal.

IN DOOM ONLY DEMONS CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM...

Sure there were some slow-downs in the presentation level we saw, but Doom 3 on the Xbox loses nothing in atmosphere or trick lighting, which is amazing when you consider that the displays we've seen in the past have all been generated by PC graphics cards that cost more than an entire console.

The studio behind this magic is Vicarious Visions and its CEO Karthik Bala says that "cramping 10 pounds into a five pound bag," is what his studio does best. It got down to some funky stuff like bypassing DirectX here and there because it was taking up too much space, and writing a custom 5.1 sound system to free up computing power.

Bala says that all of this footwork is needed because Doom 3 just isn't the same game without the graphics. It needs a reliable global lighting system just to make it work. "When you have characters that cast volumes of shadows on other characters and you have the second guy hiding behind the first guy,



think of how that can be exploited from a gameplay dynamic."

You see the light subtly shift and sift through an industrial latticework of beams. You see shadows crawl across your gun, along pock-marked walls and slither over slimy things like it's the deep-dark central character of the piece. It touches everything and ties it together. id's Director of Business Development Marty Stratton says: "The graphics and the art and the technology — that you are looking at as the wow-factor — those are more of a gateway to creating the horror." He says that it's all about creating a real experience, and that experience needs people to feel like they are there.

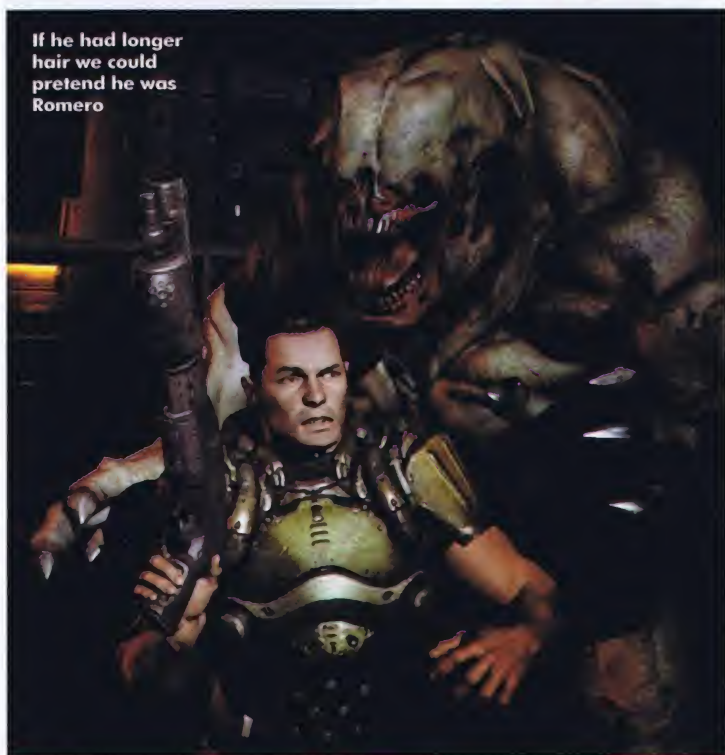
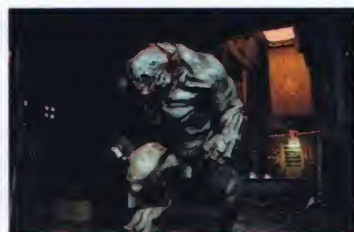
Where Doom and Doom II were action games, where players waded through hoards of horrors, this is

something a little different: this game is a hoard of horror waiting for some action. It is not a true sequel but a retelling of the original story. You play a marine who returns from a routine mission to find that his Mars base has turned into a house of horrors.

Guided by the voice of Sarg, who we hope is actually Sarg and who we hope has actually set up a HQ in the bowls of the base, players get ever deeper. Doors open and close by themselves, lights turn an angry red, voices whisper from the walls and armored demons scutter across the roof barely hidden by the darkness and fall on you with startling ferocity. Then there's the just plain disturbing stuff that messes with your head, like the marines that have been peeled open and become part

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

More than just nice graphics. Can it do psychological horror well enough to pull it off?



If he had longer hair we could pretend he was Romero

suit the Xbox controller.

The compound word "auto-aim" might send shudders through die-hard shooter fans, but *Vicarious Visions* is going to extreme lengths to make its system feel natural without taking any challenge from the game. It is context sensitive and changes on the fly making choosing things on a GUI panel very different to going for a head shot.

Bala says, "We do things like measure the surface area on screen that monsters take up, ranges of monsters to players and we make all kinds of adjustments to how it behaves. Players are unaware of it, but what ends up happening is that, as a player, the controller is doing what you think it should be doing." There are several difficulty settings, and you can turn off the auto-aim altogether if you don't want to be called a wuss by your PC-playing buddies.

The Xbox version will also feature co-op play, unlike the PC game, as well as 2-on-2, deathmatches and last man standing which is common between both systems. You won't be able to play these games on a split-screen so it's Xbox Live and System Link all the way. PC's will be visited by *Doom 3* a couple of months before the Xbox and while both are officially due "when they are done" we'll hopefully all be *Dooming* it up by the holiday season. <<

of the base, to creatures like the Cherub. It has the upper body of a little baby and the lower half of a bumble bee, plus translucent wings that flutter as they crawl towards you making distorted baby sounds.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Obviously, all of this is carefully constructed and paced to keep players on edge and this isn't something that you want thrown off by something as simple as not taking into account that Xbox controllers don't have a mouse wheel. "From day one we wanted the Xbox game to be a console experience, not a PC experience on Xbox. So we really had to think it through," Bala says.

While the plot, lighting and gameplay experience is straight out of the PC game there have been some changes. For example, while the basic story is the same, the way it is broken into levels is a little different to fit the Xbox's memory footprint — some are a little smaller and the flow has been adjusted to



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:
More levels (and more of the levels!)

CALL OF DUTY: UNITED OFFENSIVE

AVAILABLE ON:

PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: FPS / **PLAYERS:** 1-32 /
DEVELOPER: Gray Matter /
AVAILABLE: Late 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



War, what is it good for? Great videogames apparently! United Offensive is an expansion pack for the critically acclaimed Call of Duty, in development at Gray Matter. It can't be easy being the follow-up act to Infinity Ward's smash hit, but as the Gray Matter guys point out when we checked out the game with them, there are plenty of WWII stories to be told.

BLOODY HUGE

One such story is The Battle of Kursk. This little skirmish proved to be the largest tank battle of the war featuring 3,600 Russian tanks, 2,700 German tanks and more than two million soldiers. The mission we

witnessed was from this Russian campaign and from the opening moments in the back of a frosted troop transport the atmosphere is intense. Bombs fall all around, and we see an allied plane limp from the sky and crash in a spectacular sliding fireball aimed straight at us.

From here the action flowed into re-taking an over-run base and manning a mounted machine gun. Soon we're watching a juggling act as the developer swaps between the fixed arc of the mounted machine gun and his rifle to keep the tide at bay while he picks off the guys who manage to break his line and leap into the trenches behind him.

We watch as the soldier lowers his gun and sprints for cover and then cooks-off a grenade before throwing it. Soon we're fighting guys with ugly blunt weapons spewing streams of fire, before plunging over a ridge to plant satchel charges on Nazi tanks while our comrades keep the enemy soldiers occupied. Like Call of Duty, the action never lets up.

The other levels sound equally impressive: from the U.S. having to hold the city of Bastogne — surrounded and out numbered, in the Battle of the Bulge campaign; to the high-flying British campaign involving massive aerial battles and the classic B17 bomber action of scurrying between crew stations as the player watches his buddies fall to unforgiving anti-aircraft fire. The team at Gray Matter promise at least ten big missions spread across the three campaigns, with each campaign forming a story with a beginning, middle and end.

All three should showcase the new particle system, with the Battle of the Bulge and Kursk giving the new rain and snow effects room to shine, while the new particle effects comes out for every explosion, smoking crater and use of the flamethrower. Our fiery friend, by the way, is just one of the 14 new weapons which include plenty of anti-vehicle ordinance like satchel charges, bazookas and 88mm flack cannons to deal with the new vehicles in the



game like the B17s and tanks. And with the new toys come three new multiplayer modes including Tank Battle and Domination where players use heavy metal to control the maps.

With new maps, multiplayer modes, a graphics update, tight but explosive missions, plus gameplay additions such as being able to sprint, United Offensive looks like it's making all the right moves. <<<



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ROME: TOTAL WAR

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GBA / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action strategy /
PLAYERS: 1-2 / **DEVELOPER:** Creative
 Assembly / **AVAILABLE:** Late 2004 /

WOW-O-METER



Both Shogun and Medieval were impressive, but trust us - Rome Total War is on a scale all of its own. It's a Swords and Sandals epic like Ben-Hur or Spartacus ... and so it should be. Creative Assembly started it at the same time they started their second game, Medieval, and have been working on it the whole time.

If you're familiar with the Total War series then you'll know that they are huge two-headed beasts combining a turn-based campaign map with an RTS mode. The campaign map covers whole nations and the RTS battles feature crashing waves of thousands of units.

We actually managed to check in on

Rome's crashing battles — and their cast of thousands — when we played an early version of the latest Total War game. It wasn't long before we were launching elaborate attacks and diversions, while only occasionally losing track of units on the hefty battlefields. The controls are very similar to the other games in the series with the addition of being able to group units... it was all too easy.

INTO THE REAR

While we were only playing an alpha version of the game, it already looked and felt good, with the combat values switched back to being more like Shogun than Medieval... in other words: absolutely brutal. A good flanking charge or sneak attack into the rear will send units into the clutches of defeat, making even large battles, on the huge maps, feel fast-moving and tactical.

With a single click of the mouse you can zoom into a general's eye view in the middle of the 3D action. You see the swords falling, you watch infantrymen go flying under the momentum of a cavalry charge (or,

heaven forbid, elephants) and you almost want to duck as flaming catapult shots send chunks of earth into the air. It's a scene that's going to get called on a lot to describe this game, but if you imagine the battle at the beginning of Gladiator — and the developers admit to adding the flames to catapult shots because of it

— then you have some idea for how this game feels in action. Michael De Plater says that "these emergent cinematic moments" are one of the things that excites him most about the game.

Beyond that, he's really proud of the way the campaign unfolds. He says that in other RTS games or even



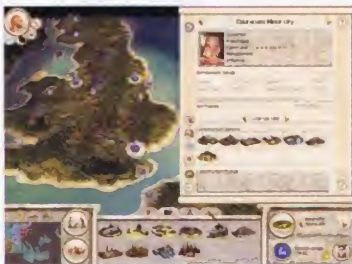
Someone's about to get served...

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

The might of the Roman empire... in a manageable form!



Siege tower or lighting rig at Woodstock 2004?



in something like Civilization, once you get to a certain point you know you have won, but you have to grind out the rest of the game consolidating the map.

That's not quite the case in Rome. Once you have conquered your foes, everything tends to fall apart as Rome itself turns on you and you have to fight all the way back to the seat of power and take final victory. Players start as the head of a powerful Roman house, and as such they are expected to go on missions for the senate, but as their power grows so does the senate's paranoia.

After one too many suicide missions it's time to take them out.

This adds an additional layer to the game where players not only have to keep tabs on their foes, but their allied houses as well. You'll have between 270B.C. and about 0 to become emperor so there's plenty of tech advances without too much time to dilly-dally.

THE POWER OF NAGGING

Some of the techs and the corresponding units, like Screaming Women and Burning Pigs, just have to be mentioned. The German

Screaming Women go out and nag their men into battle, while the flaming swine are the Elephant counter unit. Creative Assembly say that they only added one totally fictitious unit to the game, and it wasn't either of those.

Units now also have a range of special abilities from the Roman "Turtling" to the ability of certain skirmishers to hide. Things have also been made more interesting on the siege side of things. Now you can crack walls with ladders, rams or catapults and once you're in a city you don't gain control until you reach the town square which leads to deadly games of cat and mouse. What's even cooler is that you can attack specific buildings like barracks and if you destroy it in the RTS battle, then it's gone from the city and will have to be re-built in the campaign map mode, which adds a whole new economic side to strategy.

Overall, Rome is looking very impressive. If there are any concerns

about the game it might be that it's too big, but Creative Assembly are working hard to counter this by including reactive advisors.

One example of this comes in the form of the troop-rallying speech your general gives at the beginning of a battle. The game looks at a whole bunch of stats and then creates the voice-over from hundreds of phrases which can combine in countless ways. It'll describe how badly you are out-numbered, it will break down advantages like having the high-ground, it will tell you how good your general is, deliver some quick tips and then rate your chances all in a quick speech.

Even off the battlefield there are advisors which you can even get to automate building, expansion or battles, so you can concentrate on the parts of the game you like most.

When it comes to grand-scale strategy few games do it as well as Total War and gamers will soon know why Rome wasn't built in a day. <<



WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE:

Another medieval launch party in The Rocks with many an ale and wench...



DUNGEON SIEGE 2

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action RPG / PLAYERS: 1-Multi / DEVELOPER: Gas Powered Games / AVAILABLE: Christmas /

WOW-O-METER



Despite having a number of hardcore fans, the fact remains that the original Dungeon Siege was little more than an interesting tech demo on how to create a streaming world with no loading times made into a game, with only a little more playability than a screen saver. It may sound a little harsh saying this but the game was at times painfully linear and combat was by and large



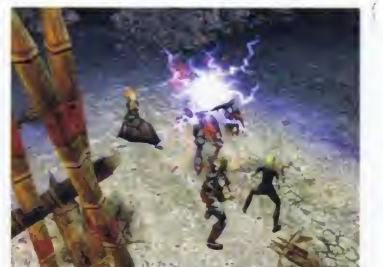
taken out of the hands of the player and left up to the companion AI. Hell in many sections of the game you could leave the fighting entirely up to your companions while you went off and had a sandwich.

MMM... SANDWICH

Thankfully this has changed for the sequel. Although it utilises the same engine as the original game and mimics the overall control scheme for the most part, Dungeon Siege 2 takes everything you knew and loved (or loathed as the case may be) from the original game and makes it bigger and better. As in the original game, characters you meet along the adventure can and will join the party but instead of being the silent combat engines of the original, characters will have just that – character. Party members will offer suggestions, arguments and comments continuously throughout the game making them into actual NPC characters you can get to know and care about rather than simple cannon fodder. Also, a new style of companion has been added to the mix. Pets can be summoned or otherwise brought into the party but unlike the other NPC party members,

pets are a permanent addition and can be built up as characters in their own right by feeding them. Don't worry – this is not some weird Pokemon experiment – pets will act as a kind of living garbage compactor. Instead of dumping all of the useless items you pick up along your adventures or lugging them around to the next shop, pets can be fed these items, their strengths, attacks, skills and magic growing depending on their diet.

Thankfully the combat system has also been seriously revamped with the player actually having to think and act rather than occasionally click somewhere on the screen. As well as the increased levels of interactivity, Dungeon Siege 2 will allow players to create characters from one of four races – human, elf, dryad and half-giant as well as tailor the look and skills of your character to a much greater degree such as allowing fighters to specialise in certain weapon styles to gain bonuses and access to certain class based powers. From the code shown behind closed doors at E3, Dungeon Siege 2 is shaping up quite nicely indeed and is in good shape for release around Christmas this year. <<



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»» The Big Rubber Stamp Of Approval isn't given lightly. In fact, when you see the stamp, you know that you can be assured of quality. Last issue, we gave the new Rise of Nations expansion pack Thrones and Patriots a rip roaring review and that most sacred of stamps. If you've been itching to play it ever since, but couldn't find the scratch for a copy, then stop fretting and just enter our comp! Thanks to our homebizzles at Microsoft, we have five copies of the original Rise of Nations and five copies of the expansion pack to give away to five lucky winners.

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

 **Name two of the new nations you can play as in Thrones.**

Put your answer on the back of an envelope along with your name and address, and post it to:

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5
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Win Dual Masters Evo-Crushinators of Doom deck and boosters!

»» Here at Hyper we're firmly of the belief that when the suffix "ator" comes in to play, you know you're in for a wild ride. Just look at what's happened in California since the Governor came into power! But we digress. The real reason for our rant is that Wizards of the Coast have a new 60 card expansion set out for Duel Masters, featuring some very cool artwork and spectacular creatures. Better still, it's called Evo-Crushinators of Doom. We like! We've been lucky enough to get 10 packs to give away, each one containing one theme deck and three booster packs.

To be in with a chance to win one of the ten packs, just answer the following question:

 **What is the Governor better known as?**

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10
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38 THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

Sneak a peek at one of this year's best games!





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Reviews

Game Theory

DANIEL STAINES



As far as accessibility is concerned, videogames are far more complex and esoteric than any other form of entertainment media you'd care to mention. Watching television or a movie is simply a matter of sitting still and staring at a screen. Reading

a book requires the use of a skill the vast majority of us are taught in primary school. Playing games, on the other hand, often requires a moderate level of manual dexterity, hand-eye co-ordination and a familiarity with interface devices specific to the machines and medium they're used for. The purpose of this month's column is to discuss the various ways developers and hardware manufacturers have attempted to overcome this problem of accessibility and the extent to which these attempts have been successful thus far.

The first and most obvious way to overcome the problem of accessibility is the one employed by the majority of developers: tutorials. Most games today come replete with an in-game tutorial that slowly guides new users through all the various ways in which they can interact with the gameworld. Tutorials are obviously useful devices and can be extraordinarily helpful if they're rigorously designed and implemented. Nintendo generally do excellent tutorials, with easy to understand instructions and ample opportunity for players to test out and come to grips with their newfound skills in a non-threatening environment. Go and play Wind Waker to see what I'm talking about.

However, it is arguable that Nintendo's tutorials are generally good because their games are so well designed and are based on simple mechanics that lend themselves to straightforward explanation. This highlights the problem with tutorials generally, which is that they don't actually make games any more accessible than the game design itself will permit. Taping an in-depth tutorial onto something like Vagrant Story doesn't actually make the game any easier to pick up and play – it simply educates those who have already decided to persevere.

Another approach that some developers have adopted is to effectively standardise commonly used game mechanics by mimicking successful interfaces from other products. For example, you'll notice that most strategy and role-playing games on the PC feature an icon based point-n-click system very

much like the one used by every version of Windows released since 1995. This isn't an accident.

Similarly, a majority of console games of the same genre sport interfaces markedly similar to the paradigmatic examples established by "genre fathers" like GoldenEye, Mario 64 and Final Fantasy. Accessible interfaces are intuitive interfaces – and what could be more intuitive than familiarity?

Nothing – but an appeal to familiarity presupposes familiarity. How does the similarity between the interfaces of Medal of Honour and Halo help somebody who has never played either game? How does Diablo's Windows style interface help somebody who's unfamiliar with Microsoft's operating systems? What we're talking about here is making interactive technology accessible to those unfamiliar with its conventions, so relying on these conventions as a means of fostering broader accessibility seems futile.

And this is where we come back to Nintendo. If the latest comments from Satoru Iwata are to be believed, Nintendo is purposely attempting to solve the problem of accessibility by redefining the conventions of interactive entertainment through hardware innovation. Look at the recently revealed DS. One of the main means of interacting with this new handheld is via the use of a touch-sensitive screen and stylus: a system that relies on the same basic mechanics familiar to anyone who has ever put pen to paper. Additionally, Iwata has also commented that the next Nintendo console (aply codenamed "Revolution") will take this principle further and "make everyone start off from the same point, like back when the Famicom made its launch and everyone touched the controller pad for the first time".

Games are ultimately about the mechanics of interactivity – so it seems reasonable to assume that games will become more accessible as the devices we use to interact with them also become more accessible. This argument finds real empirical evidence in the success of Sony's Singstar and EyeToy products. Whether or not Nintendo will make good on their promises and deliver a similarly successful solution to the problem of accessibility remains to be seen, but there's no denying that the odds are looking pretty good...

Until next month,
daniels@next.com.au

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

0-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
As the British would say "bleedin' bollocks guvna"	As an Aussie would put it "yeah, it's a bit crap mate"	As Joey Tekken would say "it ain't no ha ha step"	As a Russian might say "In Russia, game plays you!"	As a Frenchman would (possibly) say "pants tres bien!"	As a Japanese schoolgirl might say "sugoi! kawaii!"



Lord British surveys his domain from the rooftops



Pick the chastity belt and you'll get a sweet reward



Arrow arrow, what's all this then?

THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

ELIOT FISH goes poking around in the darkness...

Ion Storm Austin copped a ridiculous amount of flak over their release of *Deus Ex: Invisible War*. Sure, the engine was a bit buggy, performance wasn't great and some gamers had interface issues, but if you dug a little deeper past the surface there was a really fun and engaging game to enjoy. Now, many months later, Ion Storm Austin brings us another installment in a classic game series, *Thief: Deadly Shadows* (essentially, this is *Thief 3*). The good news is that out of the box, *Thief: Deadly Shadows* suffers from none of the bugs or apparent flaws that *Invisible War* did, which makes it a lot easier to appreciate just what a flippin' fantastic game it is.

NONE MORE BLACK

If you've never played a *Thief* game before, then you must know this: *Thief* is the ultimate stealth game. Unlike *Splinter Cell*, the level design in *Thief*

is completely non-linear, so you can sneak about and complete your objectives in any order you want and in any way you see fit. Garrett, the master thief and the game's main protagonist, is not a fighter, so stealth is always the answer. Just about every other stealth game simply incorporates sneaking into gun-toting action, but in *Thief*, if you get caught then there's a good chance you're going to wind up dead unless your feet can carry you to safety.

The stealth play in *Deadly Shadows* is better than it ever has been in the *Thief* series, and this is largely down to some amazing AI. Guards don't just get alerted to your presence and try to hunt you down - there are varying stages of suspicion, and because you're hiding out of view, the AI is always very vocal about what they're thinking and/or doing. Say you sneak into a dining room and steal the silverware off the table and then hide behind a

table - the maid will come into the room and immediately notice the precious items missing. You hear her admonish herself for being forgetful and mislaying the items. In another scenario, you might snuff out a candle on a desk in order to make the room a better (darker) place for sneaking. However, a patrolling guard immediately yells "who put the lights out?!" and then proceeds to have a look around. You might even hear him declare "I'm going to look behind that barrel" as you desperately try to change hiding places. The talkative AI is what brings the game fully to life. Even if you don't raise their suspicions, sneaking up close to a pair of guards on duty can reveal amusing conversations about how bored they are waiting for some action, or even some repartee about diseases going around the town. And yes, in *Deadly Shadows*, you do finally get to explore various locations in the City in-between missions.





He holds his medieval gat side on... nice one



Garrett burns the Midnight Oil. Sorry



Garrett listens in on a couple of Liberal MPs



THE TALKATIVE AI IS WHAT FULLY BRINGS THE GAME TO LIFE

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

You can explore the town and rob people's houses or even pluck the bags of loot off their belts as they go for a nightly stroll. Loot can then be taken to a variety of fences and sold off for money to spend on arrows, health potions, gas bombs and other thieving tools. However, the City is merely a stop-over. It's the story missions that provide the real highs in *Deadly Shadows*.

The brilliant storyline that has tagged us along through the previous two *Thief* games is continued, and it culminates in this third installment with an expose on the secretive Keepers. From the eerie cutscenes to the superb in-game voice acting, the story in *Deadly Shadows* is expertly delivered to the gamer, and once you get four or five missions in you will literally be gripped with intrigue. We won't spoil any of it in this review,

because you really must experience it for yourself, but fans of the *Thief* series will be delighted with how the game turns out in the end.

Visually, the game looks great, but it's worth reading the Read Me file carefully, because there are a few compatibility issues - the latest ATI drivers cause horrid performance problems, so you need to roll back to the 4.4 drivers for smooth gaming. However, most of these small glitches will be fixed in an upcoming patch. Generally, most people won't have a problem running *Thief*, and it performed beautifully for us at 1280x1024 with all details on high. And boy does the game look beautiful at times. The blue glow of moonlight comes streaming in through milky glass windows, patrolling guards cast

There is one rather bad bug in the game. If you save, and then load that save on the highest difficulty, the game resets to normal.

flickering torch light on the cold stone walls, and if you're playing in third person (first person is the default view on the PC) you'll be

able to appreciate how cool Garrett looks as he crawls around and readies his dagger. Changes to the game that fans were worried about, such as loot glint and arrow trails, are all non-issues. Loot glint is essential in determining just what items are valuable in the eerie darkness, and arrow trails are so subtle that most people won't even notice they exist.

Overall, *Thief: Deadly Shadows* has impressed this old-school *Thief* fan no end. It's an amazingly engrossing and absorbing piece of atmospheric and creepy gaming and it's unlike any other game out there. Go get it, tuffers! ❄️

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Stealth / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Ion Storm Austin / PUBLISHER: Eidos / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Classic stealth gameplay, incredible story, amazing audio.

MINUS: High PC requirements, a few AI pathfinding glitches.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

91 95 93

OVERALL

93

A seriously thrilling third installment in the series.





I thought Exodus was all about plagues...

and Abraham's people crossing the desert

Aah, who am I kidding!

GROUND CONTROL II: OPERATION EXODUS

MARCH STEPNIK geeks out at the mere notion of innovation in an RTS...

SN The RTS in its most common form is a bit like a slice of quiche: it goes down easy enough, fills you up, but is just a bit soft when you think about it. Furthermore, most designers seem to have given up on implementing interesting new designs to the RTS and instead re-hash the tried and tested — innovation in this genre generally moves at a snail's pace (Blizzard teased us with the promise of a whole new way to play the RTS with *WarCraft III*, only to fall back onto more familiar territory and releasing a near carbon-copy of



its predecessor *WarCraft II*). So it's absolutely refreshing to come across a title that without much fanfare boasts more innovation than most other RTS games put together — and then proceeds to pull off this innovation with plenty of style.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Ground Control II builds on Swedish company Massive Entertainment's very respectable and somewhat experimental first entry into the RTS genre released back in 2000. Offering sumptuous 3D graphics and control of groups instead of individual units, the key to *Ground Control*'s design was to take the focus away from resource gathering and base building/management and instead have you intimately control your forces through the many well-designed maps. The idea was that your units were anti-fodder and absolutely precious: use them

well, or make things a helluva lot harder for yourself.

The sequel takes this basic premise and softens it just a tad by allowing you to acquire new units (or reinforcements, as it were) mid-mission, by way of a drop-ship that'll run the errand as soon as you earn enough "credits". However, in introducing this new dynamic Massive has subsequently unleashed a decidedly new flavour to the game that should prove quite addictive to returning fans and newcomers alike. In a word, this game is just ace.

The best way to sum up *Ground Control II* is to say that it plays a lot like an RTS take of a first-person game of capture the flag (like you'd see in *Counter Strike*, *Unreal Tournament* or *Quake*). Each map features a selection of control points and landing zones, which at the beginning of each level are obviously in the control of your nemesis. Capturing these points

requires annihilation of opposing forces stationed there, plus a short period of occupation by your units before you can claim the area. And the benefit of such a zone? If a control point, a higher rate of credit accumulation; if a landing zone, then the same benefit of a higher rate of credit counting as well as a new location (closer to your mission's goal) from which to drop any new forces you order. The strategic benefit this offers is obvious, as is the benefit to your coffers (credits accumulate at a much slower rate the less control points you have; the more you have the more you earn), so these become hot targets for reclamation by opposing forces. Indeed, fail to leave defensive companies near such points and you'll find that the enemy will sneak their way to these points behind your back and put you at a distinct disadvantage.

The result is a game design which



Bible studies? Not my forte



Blauing people on the other hand?



Bring it on! I love a good rain of fire!



UNITS THEMSELVES GAIN **VETERAN STATUS AND BONUSES** AS THE ACTION PROGRESSES...

has you frantically trying to keep control of territory on multiple fronts as you progress through to the main mission objective — a welcome twist to the more common formula of “map progression” by numbers as seen in so many other titles.

The other major change to the game comes as a result of the dropship itself. While primarily a means by which you gain replacement units and never directly under your control, the dropship can be upgraded on many fronts (storage capacity, weapons, shields, fuel, etc) which in turn transforms it into a powerful unit in its own right. The ability for the drop ship to spot enemy movements and to fire upon — and often rapidly decimate — enemy units in remote areas of the map as it makes its way to your landing zone is an advantage not to be taken lightly. It can often mean the difference between sweet victory and sour defeat.

CO-OPNESS

While Ground Control II is polished in so many ways, there are still a few areas where the ball has been proverbially dropped. These are mostly minor, and amount to things like the inappropriate use of unit dialogue at times. “They’re everywhere!” from one of your men as he and about twelve others decimate a lone opponent just doesn’t seem right now, does it?

But then, GCII shines in so many other ways you’ll barely notice such small issues. The graphics are top notch (some of the best. water. effects. ever). The overall story paves the way for some varied and well scripted mission objectives. Two playable factions (including a bizarre, alien race) offer a nice variety to play, while the overall design of game maps ooze quality.

!!! GCII is set 300 years after the first game, offering a universe quite different to the one portrayed in Ground Control.

The base components of real-time strategy combat are also present, including use of line of sight, environmental cover and weapon emplacements, and shroud of war to good effect. Units themselves gain veteran status and bonuses as the action progresses, and are controlled relatively effortlessly.

And last, but definitely not least, Massive offers good further support with a level editor and an online game server system — much like Blizzard’s Battle.net — to better facilitate multiplayer shenanigans. But it’s the inclusion of a co-op mode of up to three players for the entire single player campaign that really does it for us here at Hyper. This is essential RTS gaming. <<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: RTS / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 / **DEVELOPER:** Massive Entertainment / **PUBLISHER:** Vivendi Universal / **PRICE:** \$89.95 / **RATING:** G8+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Innovative RTS with gorgeous graphics.

MINUS: Sticky camera at times, weak dialogue.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

92 83 93

OVERALL

90

A bit of a surprise actually — go on and find out why.





!!! They can't seriously expect us to believe that the guy in this screenshot is interested in women!?



She's in for a night of efficient German sex



"I'd say you're probably a C cup honey"



AC/DC's "Sink the Pink" always sets the mood well

SINGLES: FLIRT UP YOUR LIFE

DANIEL WILKS didn't like The Sims the first time round

It's amazing considering the phenomenal success that EA has had with The Sims that no one up until now has made a similar type of game. Maybe developers thought that they couldn't beat the games giant at its own game so didn't even try (not too bloody likely) or maybe they were just afraid of getting sued (a far more probable answer). Whatever the case may be, up until now the world has been blissfully free of second rate imitators. To be fair, calling Singles: Flirt Up Your Life a second rate imitator is giving it the short end of the stick — Singles does add a few new concepts to the people sim genre but ultimately they don't amount to much at all. Adding sex to the formula made famous in The Sims may sound like a great idea, and conceptually it is. A game with a mature approach to sex is something that many gamers would welcome with open arms. Mature as Singles may be it is also something else. Really, really boring.

AS VAMP WILLOW SAID "BORED NOW"

Essentially a strange experiment in eugenics, Singles puts the player in control of two people living in a flat. Basic gameplay boils down to manipulating the inhabitants of said flat into bumping uglies, a task which is achieved by keeping the basic needs of the singles maintained and constantly working on their social interactions with each other. That's it. Rarely is the player really challenged to do anything difficult and even though there are a number of characters, the interactions you can choose from between the characters are basically all the same, meaning that the only reason you'd want to play through more than once is to see what each of them looks like in their birthday suit. Anyone who has played The Sims will also be familiar with the control scheme as it is almost identical to that of the best selling title.

Gameplay aside, Singles does feature a more than adequate



graphics engine capable of rendering some nice, if somewhat Poser looking models with a nice level of detail. Strictly adult in nature, Singles does go all the way in terms of nudity showing full frontal shots of both sexes. Strangely, the actual payoff sex scenes are remarkably coy with magical Hollywood style sheets managing to adhere to all the naughty bits. The engine does show some clipping problems at the most inopportune times though — seeing someone's hand go through their lover's chest or their head melt into a pillow can really kill the mood.

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Sim / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: RoToBee / PUBLISHER: www.gamesuniverse.com.au / PRICE: \$89.95 / RATING: Adults Only / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Decent graphics engine, good idea, mature approach to sex.
MINUS: Sims ripoff, boring, repetitive.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
84 76 55

OVERALL
60

Seen one naked game character, seen 'em all.

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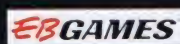


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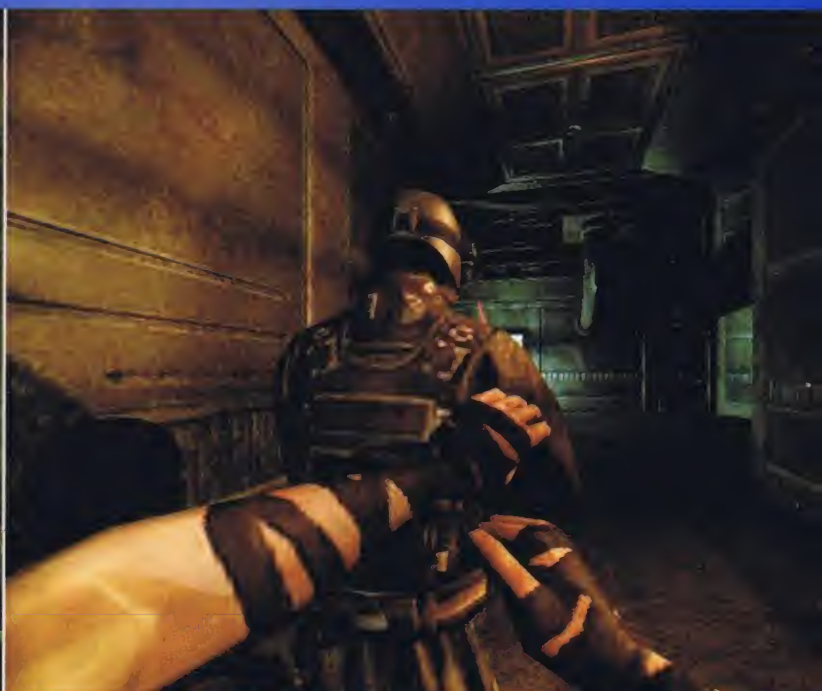


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That's a little Vin-dictive isn't it?



Where's CB4 and that crazy mutha named Gusto?



One of the "cratest" games ever?

CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

DANIEL WILKS doesn't drop the soap.

>> Vin Diesel has made a lot of money on the Pitch Black franchise. Whilst his paycheque may not have been staggering for the first film, it was undoubtedly the springboard for his quite rapid rise to leading man stardom and big figure salaries. With the sequel movie out (and the third already greenlit for production) he's guaranteed more money but it's the game, *Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* that could potentially make him the most, as not only does Vin provide his formidable likeness and voice to the game, his video games company, Taigon is also one of the producers.

NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE

While saying that *Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay* is equal to the sum of its parts may sound like quite a harsh indictment of the game, it is anything but — all of the elements of the game are so

well executed that saying that it was greater than the sum of its parts would be next to impossible.

Chronicling the events that lead up to the capture of Riddick by bounty hunter Johns in the beginning of *Pitch Black*, Riddick tells the tale of the titular loner and quintessential anti-hero escaping from Butcher Bay, the most notorious slam (privatised prison) in the galaxy. Much like *The Great Escape* (the movie, not the game of the same name), the action in *Riddick* takes the form of a number of unsuccessful escape attempts, each teaching the character and player a little more about their situation and environment, combining equal parts stealth, adventure/RPG, action and FPS. Although the controls are very similar to a standard FPS, *Escape from Butcher Bay* is anything but. Aside from a section in the training mission you won't even be holding a

gun for the first quarter of the game. You can't even pick one up without receiving a nasty electric shock due to the DNA encoding on the rifles which only allows the registered prison guards to hold them. Luckily (as you find out early in the piece) shotguns and pistols do not suffer from this problem. When not armed with a gun Richard B. Riddick (not the most bad-ass of names, that's for sure) is still a very dangerous individual. Unarmed, Riddick can deliver a flurry of blows and combos with the right trigger and a direction on the left thumbstick. Aside from his fists, he can also find shivs, clubs and knuckle dusters to make his job a little easier.

Clicking in the left thumbstick causes Riddick to crouch and enter stealth mode. Instead of relying on a light meter or the like to show if he's hidden from view, *Chronicles* fades the screen into shades of blue

to designate being hidden — for the most part players will not see any HUD cluttering up the screen. When stealthed, Riddick can carry out a number of one hit kills on prisoners and guards ranging from breaking their necks to stabbings and brutal clubbings, depending on the weapon he has in his hands at the time. With careful timing Riddick can also use disarms and counter moves against armed opponents — there is little more satisfying than running up to a guard who is swearing up a blue streak and making him shoot himself in the head with his own gun.

DICK B. RIDDICK: BAD-ASS

Whilst for the most part Riddick looks absolutely amazing with fully normal mapped environments and the best likeness we've ever seen in a game, some of the levels look... strange. There is an unnatural shine to some



This is Vin-tage gaming it is



Jack starts work on the Spares Farm



Now that's a Deadly Shadow



WITH CAREFUL TIMING RIDDICK CAN ALSO USE DISARMS AND COUNTER MOVES AGAINST ARMED OPPONENTS

SHINE GET!

The most distinguishing mark of Riddick in Pitch Black was his ability to see in perfect darkness due to his "shined" eyes. Whilst the plot of Escape from Butcher Bay is based around Riddick's escape from the titular prison, more importantly it tells how Riddick's eyes became the way they are as well as hinting to the deeper mythology of the character that is explored in the second movie. The eye shine effect in Butcher Bay is perfect in its emulation of the film effect, saturating the screen with bright pastels and rendering everything with an eerie lack of detail. Mastering the use of the "shine" is vital to finally escaping from Butcher Bay.

of the textures that makes everything look just a little bit otherworldly. Of course this could be a deliberate ploy on the part of Starbreeze studios but nonetheless it makes the experience a little less immersive at times. Strange textures aside, Riddick is a fantastic looking game, taking the engine first used for the underwhelming Enclave and pushing it to the nth degree. The animations are universally superb and unlike many other first person games you actually get to see how your character moves thanks to automatic switching to third person whenever you interact with the environment such as climbing, using keypads or using health stations.

The voice acting is equally good with Vin Diesel reprising his role as Riddick with a baritone gravitas that makes you hang on his every

word, no matter how cheesy. Cole Hauser reprises his role as the determined but far from heroic bounty hunter Johns with equal aplomb. The cast is ably rounded out with great character actors such as the mighty Ron Perlman and Michael Rooker as well as the badly named

rapper Xzibit. The score for the game strongly echoes that of Pitch Black to great effect, wonderfully heightening the sense of tension prevalent in the game. Finally, the general soundscape is nothing short of superb with very meaty sounding guns and even meatier sounding fistfights. If you own an Xbox you owe it to yourself to get a copy of Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay — it ranks up there with the best the system has to offer. <<

!!! Hey Vin - get cracking on a sequel or we'll... umm, bitch and moan some more!

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Starbreeze / PUBLISHER: Vivendi Universal / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Compelling, varied gameplay and missions.

MINUS: 12 hours on first play, needs a sequel urgently.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

91 93 94

OVERALL

92



Without a doubt the best game based on a license since GoldenEye.



Don't you wish you were a bloody Volvo driver

Doing stuff like this is as fun as Driv3r gets

As Will Smith once said "tick tick tick tick boom"

DRIV3R

CAM SHEA thinks Reflections should take a good hard look at themselves

After all the hype, after all the money, after all the development time, and after all the big names brought in to voice the characters, it's pretty obscene that we could end up with a game this average. Yep, sorry guys - no sugar coating for you. Driv3r is a huge disappointment plain and simple, especially so in light of its potential.

SHOPPING MAUL

But then, this isn't the most straightforward of genres to tackle. In creating this game, Reflections have had to juggle an awful lot of elements - crafting an in-depth driving engine that feels right across 70 odd cars, motorbikes and boats; giving the player the freedom to run and shoot their way inside and out through three massive environments; trying to come up with a compelling narrative to tie it all together... and making it fun to boot. Creating a

game with the pace, excitement and gritty narrative of a Hollywood blockbuster may sound simple, but trust us, despite their history of decent titles, Reflections had an ambitious task on their hands.

And it's not all bad. The driving component is actually pretty solid. The driving mechanics for one are actually quite satisfying: sensitive, but at the same time possessing the weight that the driving models in this series are known for. You'll be fangling along swinging your back end around corners in no time. Reflections have also included decent variety in the driving missions. Sure, there's plenty of "get to this location" or "lose the cops", but there are also Stuntman style missions where you need to hit a whole sequence of jumps and objects successfully, a nod to the Blues Brothers where you tear through a shopping mall, and some

interesting missions on water.

The cars sport pretty reasonable damage modeling too, and allow you to do things like shoot a driver through the windshield then drag his dead body out of the car and drive away. You can also shoot out tires, which is a nice touch.

Almost everything outside the driving model, however, is a mess. Driving through Miami, for instance, you'll see textures and cars popping into the world, you'll see the game engine struggling to keep up with what's going on, and you won't believe your radar when a car that's chasing you winks out of existence. You'll come across indestructible poles and picket fences. You'll die simply trying to get out of a boat, despite having full health. You'll see dead enemies bouncing up and down on the hood of a car. In short, the developers may say the game is set in Miami, Nice (the birthplace of

"it's good to play together") and Istanbul, but we know better - it's set in Glitch Town.

The glitches and design weaknesses are particularly noticeable any time you're on foot. The controls are really touchy, making aiming (and even moving) an exercise in frustration. Fortunately, there's the option to play from a first person perspective, which settles things down and makes the controls feel far more sturdy. But then, that's not difficult. Even basic actions become a trial in this game. You'll try to press a switch directly in front of you, which will result in Tanner turning around and getting in a car ten meters behind you. Yet despite this, if you're standing right next to a car chances are you'll have to press the button several times to make him get in.

When you're not worrying about Tanner, mind you, you're worrying



He may be a Driv3r but doesn't look too 1337 to me



I'm getting too old for this shit



Get in that boat and start glitching boy-o!



KEEP TRYING AND TRYING UNTIL YOU GET MISSIONS RIGHT... OR UNTIL THE **GOD OF GLITCHES** LOOKS FAVOURABLY ON YOU

about the pathetic state of the enemies you're up against. They follow very low level patterns - standing around, waiting to get shot mostly. If they see you, they might try some ancient evasive moves, like crouching, sidestepping or rolling. Wow! And of course, with AI this simple, you can exploit it. If you have some space to move, let the enemies spawn, then retreat and pick them off from a distance where you're oblivious to them. At close quarters, you can pretty much rest assured that the enemy around that corner will step out from cover, loose off a couple of shots then duck down. Every time. Mind you, that ducking tactic is pretty smart. You see, in third person you can't aim very low so if the guy is right in front of you, you can't actually shoot him!

Oh, and running guys over? What's the point? In this game you can run someone over, then when

they get up, back them into a wall, then get out of your car and they'll be standing IN the boot of your car shooting you! Arrgh!

WORD OF THE MONTH - GLITCH

Just like Stuntman and the previous Driver games, this is a title where you'll just have to keep trying and trying until you get missions right... or until the god of glitches looks favourably on you. Indeed, death or failure often seems completely out of your hands. But surely the storyline is good right? I mean, why else would they hire the likes of Michael Madsen, Ving Rhames, Michelle Rodriguez, Iggy Pop and Mickey Rourke?

Sorry to disappoint, but not only is Tanner one of the least appealing leading men in recent videogame history, but chances are you'll be

skipping the cutscenes before long too. The story really failed to draw us in, and far too often cutscenes consisted of mundane stuff happening (that's obviously meant to look cool) set to music, as opposed to actual plot development. Worse still, there's very little to do outside the missions, which is a shame given how often you'll find yourself at a frustrated standstill.

Where are the mini-games or secrets to discover?

Still, we did have some fun with this game. Unfortunately for

Reflections, that was when discovering new and interesting ways to break it or be an asshole. One of the most amusing of these experiments was glitching three boats on top of one another. Good times.

You might want to avoid this one. <<



We reviewed the game on Xbox. We can only pray that Driv3r is less glitchy on other platforms.

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 XBOX / GCM / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Shoot and drive / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Reflections / PUBLISHER: Atari / PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: TBC / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Good asshole physics, hilarious swimming animation.

MINUS: Character spin physics, seams on PS2, no Amos.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

75 78 62

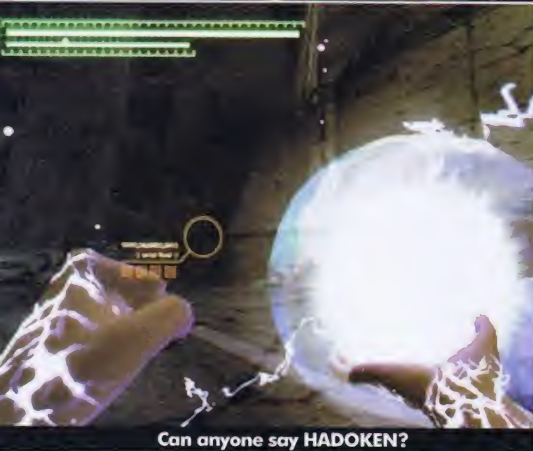
OVERALL

63

Almost as bad as The Getaway. Ouch.



!!! If you're prone to game-induced motion sickness, you should probably give Breakdown a test run before committing to a purchase.



Can anyone say HADOKEN?



Paaaaanch tha caaaaaaant



You look like a D. Cole dude

BREAKDOWN

BRETT ROBINSON is a pan dimensional being

Technological advances give developers the capacity to create ever more absorbing games, yet many of the least welcome conventions of game design - 'mysterious' floating platforms, omnipresent crates, and the failure of most first person games to depict the main character's physical form within the game world - remain. Fortunately, Breakdown is one of the games that challenges these conventions.

OMNIPRESENT CRATES

You literally observe the world of Breakdown through the eyes of Derrick Cole, a man who wakes up in a secret research facility with no idea who he is. Derrick's every move, from the mundane (reaching out and turning a door handle) to the complex (unleashing a flurry of punches and kicks) is represented on-screen. Better still, you can look downward and actually see Derrick's torso and limbs and the shadow he casts. In isolation they're simple effects, but combined

they convey the sensation of being completely immersed.

Initially, things look pretty grim for Derrick, who finds himself caught in the middle of a furious battle between special ops soldiers and a seemingly invincible, vaguely humanoid species known as the T'lan. In this regard the game is a bit Half Life-esque, but Breakdown quickly reasserts its individuality, beginning with the moment when Derrick discovers the powerful supernatural abilities he possesses.

There's a stronger focus on hand-to-hand combat in Breakdown than in other games, and because melee fighting is conducted from the normal first-person perspective, it feels that much more visceral. Never is this more apparent than when T'lan warriors land particularly powerful attacks, which cause the camera to sway wildly as you crash to the ground. Fortunately, you can dish it out just as well as you can take it, stringing together vicious combos

that send T'lan fighters reeling. In the latter stages of the game, though, enemies tend to attack en masse, and they've got a nasty (albeit successful) habit of king-hitting you to the ground, then decking you again as you struggle to regain your footing. Obviously this sort of thing gets real old real fast, and the dull, starkly geometric level design does little to improve matters.

Thankfully, there's enough good stuff in Breakdown to carry it over the finish line, so to speak. Its sci-fi storyline is full of twists and little mysteries, the character design is quite impressive, and the utterly surreal scripted events make for some truly memorable gaming. Clearly, Namco deserves some serious credit for coming up with such an intriguing concept, even if its execution is far from perfect. At worst it's most assuredly worth a rental, and our hope is that it'll inspire other developers to create similarly immersive games. <<

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: First Person Action /
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Namco /
PUBLISHER: EA /
PRICE: \$79.95 / RATING: MA15+ /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Terrific first-person mechanics, captivating sci-fi plot.
MINUS: Sometimes frustrating hand-to-hand combat.

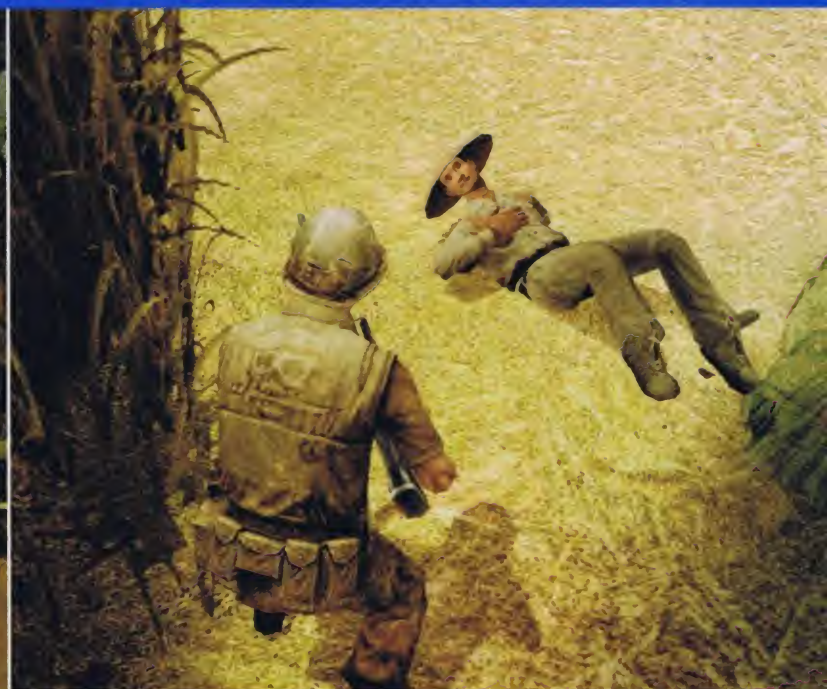
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
81 80 76

OVERALL
77

Unmatched for raw, in-your-face action, but it could've been better.



Shellshock is quite graphic in its depiction of the Vietnam war, and confirming its mature status is a smorgasbord of swears during the cutscenes. Ooh, naughty.



Not pictured, Major League... damn we've done that one



Look out for charlie, up in the erm, ground!



Armin Tazarian, shortly before getting shot in the back

SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67

CAM SHEA just can't get the spices right...

WIn the absence of a generic history of a game, developer or genre, the first paragraph in a videogame review is more often than not used by the author to hop on his or her soap box and have a bit of a rant. Indeed, coming into this review you were probably expecting me to talk about how morally ambiguous the Vietnam war was, and how I'm not sure whether I really want to play as an American G.I. during that conflict. Well, sorry to disappoint, but in this case it's objective game analysis all the way. Maybe.

FORCED TO SUBSIST ON A THIN STEW...

One of the advantages of setting a game during the Vietnam war is the style of combat you can encourage. We're talking about disabling booby traps as you crawl through thick jungle environments, wading waist deep through rice paddies, and creeping through eerily silent villages, all of which could have

enemy VC waiting to ambush you.

Shellshock has all this and more, and thrusts you into the conflict as part of a squad, which certainly helps give the game a more authentic feel. Strategic use of cover is encouraged, nay imperative, which is also a plus. It's a shame though, that there are such serious limitations on where you can go and how you can use the environment. Sure, you can use those boulders in the middle of the path as cover, but you can't flank around the boulders on the right because there's an invisible wall there. Similarly, you can't climb onto that slight rise and up that incline on the left to try and get a better vantage point because there's an invisible wall there too. While you do get used to this, it just underlines that you're in an artificial environment, and most of the time, being ushered along quite a linear path.

Indeed, Shellshock just can't shake mediocre and somewhat

contradictory elements from its design. Some aspects are more realistic, for instance, such as only being able to carry one heavy weapon at a time, whereas others are out and out arcadey, such as your indestructible squad mates and the endless waves of enemies that come at you until you complete an objective. Other aspects of the game are just poorly thought out. The third person perspective, for instance, means that when you're aiming with a grenade, your soldier is actually obscuring the end of the estimated trajectory, making aiming accurately difficult. And although we like the fact that there's a base camp for you to wander around in between missions, the absence of animations for soldiers when you're talking to them does make the game feel a little half-baked.

Ultimately, Shellshock has enough redeeming features to warrant a look, but it will frustrate almost as much as it will entertain. <<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 XBOX GOW PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Third Person Shooter /
PLAYERS: 1-4 / DEVELOPER: Guerilla
Games / PUBLISHER: Atari /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ /
AVAILABLE: September /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: The action can get quite tense, good control scheme.

MINUS: Gung ho American attitude gets tiresome quickly.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

78 80 70

OVERALL

72

Another day, another game set during the Vietnam war.



Samanosuke and Reno. It's like the original odd couple!

We would make a French joke, but Reno is too damn cool

Forget jiggle physics, this game has baggy eye physics

ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON SIEGE

When **DANIEL WILKS** grows up he wants to be Jean Reno

It's a pity that Onimusha 3: Demon Siege is the last in the Onimusha series as Capcom have finally got the formula just about right. Gone are the days of the clumsy and archaic Resident Evil style controls. Gone are the admittedly lush but entirely static pre-rendered 2D backgrounds. Gone is any pretense of being anything but a game totally obsessed with beating up monsters. Instead, Onimusha 3 is a gleefully over the top, wonderfully paced action game that plays very much like a Hong Kong action film. For the final outing it appears as though Capcom has decided that only having one bonafide star in the game, Japanese/Chinese actor Takeshi Kaneshiro was not enough and has created a new and equally heroic and just plain cool character. Jean Reno lends his likeness, complete with eye bags of epic proportions to Jacques, a French

commando dragged through time to feudal Japan by the main conceit of the game.

BEST. INTRO. EVER.

As it transpires, due to a magical mishap at the end of the spectacular intro movie, Samanosuke is transported through time to modern day France, whilst his counterpart, the stoic Jacques is transported back to feudal Japan and the height of Nobunaga's power. Of course Samanosuke is not alone when he comes to the future — swarms of monsters (Genma as they are called in the series) are sent to France along with him and proceed to kill everyone and everything they can get their slimy little hands on. Whilst in the future, Samanosuke also has to take care of Jacques' son (the Kenny) as well as his nubile, gun toting commando fiancée. Take care of in a strictly platonic sense that is, so get

your mind out of the gutter. In the past Jacques teams up with the past version of Samanosuke who has no idea of the time rift and gets his own soul sucking Oni glove and magical whip weapon. If this isn't confusing enough to the mix is added an annoying little fairy that can travel between the two time periods to deliver items or generally help out.

Although Samanosuke may be the hero of the series, the real star of Demon Siege is Jacques — he's such an interesting character and his weapons are so cool that the samurai kind of pales in comparison. The perpetually tired looking Frenchman is armed with a number of whip-like weapons, ranging from an Oni Whip through to a massive ball and chain. Aside from looking cool, these weapons allow Jacques to grapple enemies and hurl them into each other, ensnare them so he can pump them

full of lead (Jacques seems to have unlimited bullets for finishing moves but never uses his gun otherwise) or grapple objects to swing or activate. This last ability is the most interesting gameplay wise as evidenced in one of the later levels where Jacques and Samanosuke are standing on a sheet of flowing ice and Jacques must use his grappling ability to steer the sheet of ice to avoid crashing into obstacles, causing it to break and drop the pair into the freezing water.





Whip it, whip it good



Est-ce que voulez-vous que je vous fouette?



Vous aimez cette chienne? Oh ouais!



THE NEW CONTROLS ADD FLUIDITY AND SPEED TO THE PROCEEDINGS, RAMPING THE ACTION UP

THE KENNY

Although Onimusha 3 is clearly being targeted at a more Western audience with the inclusion of modern France levels and Jean Reno, Capcom have still left in a few things that are most definitely ingrained in the Japanese culture – most notably the Kenny. For those of you wondering, the Kenny is any young boy in disturbingly short shorts whose only role is to whine, get in trouble and maybe give the moral of the story at the end. For easy to identify examples of the phenomenon see any Japanese film that may contain a giant monster.



Why are you fighting Godzilla even though you're a woman?

RESIDENT ONIMUSHA?

The biggest step forward taken in this third game is the move to a logical and highly responsive control system. Instead of having to spin on the spot to move in a specified direction, players can now simply guide either Samanosuke or Jacques using the left thumbstick. To put it plainly, this change is the best thing that has happened to the series since its inception. Of course, if you're a glutton for punishment you can still use the old control scheme with the d-pad. The new controls add fluidity and speed to the proceedings, ramping the action up and cutting much of the frustration that marred the first two games. Other than the change in movement, controls remain the same as they have been in the previous games with simple one button combos, blocks, timing criticals, magic attacks and the like.

!!! Samanosuke can't be much of a hero if he has to fight Nobunago to the death three times.

Whilst the vast majority of Onimusha 3 is great there is one major crime committed in the name of a Western audience. For the first 20 odd minutes of the action Jacques is voiced (in French) by veteran tough guy Jean Reno adding a layer of class to the otherwise quite hollow proceedings. Unfortunately due to a little magic performed by the infernal fairy companion his voice changes to badly inflected American after that point. Why pay Jean Reno for his voice when you only use it for maybe 5% of the entire game? It wouldn't be so bad if the voice actor who takes over is any good but that is not the case. Many of the lines are delivered with all the conviction of a kid being forced into the school play by overzealous parents who think it would be good for his underdeveloped social skills. <<<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action / PLAYERS: 1 /
DEVELOPER: Capcom /
PUBLISHER: Capcom /
PRICE: \$99.95 / RATING: M15+ /
AVAILABLE: July 11 /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Lush visuals, Jean Reno, Best. Opening. Ever.

MINUS: Too short, terrible voice acting, not enough Reno.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 78 87

OVERALL

86

The best Onimusha title to date. Whip it good!



Car captions drive me crazy...



Almost as much as Benton's awful music here in the office



I mean, what mid-20s gamer listens to Abba?

GRAN TURISMO 4 PROLOGUE

MARCH STEPNIK test drives this test drive.

What have here is a game that is running decidedly behind schedule, enough so that the powers that be at Sony have decided that the world would be a better place if fans could get a piece of the action before the game's release (of which bets are leaning towards the end of the year). Released in Japan in December of last year, Prologue is a sample of what's to come, an entrée, if you will, of the type you'd get from a fancy restaurant: tasty but small, and not exactly value for money.

WITH A BIT MORE STUFF

It's sort of a game demo, but with a little bit more stuff in, and you're paying for it (at the budget price of \$59.95, with a 'making of' DVD thrown in too!). The real question, then, is this: is there enough substance here to warrant a purchase before the main course?

But first, let's make clear exactly

what does and doesn't ship with GT4 Prologue. There are two modes on offer from the main menu screen. Arcade mode consists of being able to 'race' on five relatively different tracks (more on this later) with a choice from — initially at least, 12 different cars. Lesson mode is but the license tests from Gran Turismo 3 A-Spec, but improved and re-jigged. There are around 46 of these tests to make your way through, and upon successful completion of most of them a new car is unlocked for use in Arcade mode. By the time the lessons are completed, you'll have 50 cars to play with in Arcade mode.

What isn't in GT4 Prologue is terribly much more than that. There's no garage or shop to play with; no way to tune up your beautiful machines. Oh, and championships, the real substance of the Gran Turismo series? Pah! Not even a single, token one — lest you call the

school mode its own little semi-exciting tournament (and you'd be a sad git if you did). And that leaves us with the most glaring omission made by Polyphony Digital next to Prologue's lack of a racing championship to master: multiplayer. Nope, not in. Bugger, even without turning competitor cars on in the options, the default setting in Arcade mode leaves you racing nothing but an underwhelming time trial.

But them's just the facts. What GT4 Prologue does do is highlight the many improvements made to the Gran Turismo game system. And since Prologue is but a limited sampler of the final version of the game, most of the improvements shown here are of the subtle variety.

The Lesson mode has been nicely polished, even though it doesn't offer much in the way of new driving concepts. This is our biggest gripe outside of the lack of multiplayer; the

notion that experienced GT players must work their way through the basic learning how to brake and take the "best racing line" all over again.

The difficulty curve though, is just right; to earn a pass (bronze medal) usually requires a few practice runs if instructions are adhered to, while earning a gold medal will test your driving abilities to the limit. For beginners, the most welcome new feature is that these lessons are now narrated by a British female whose voice straddles the line comfortably between authority and sexiness. That you can have basic racing concepts explained as you watch a demo of the track works quite well, especially for new players. Apart from a new, unobtrusive brake/gas meter which can be displayed, there's also a car-park, donut-inducing "coffee break" lesson to break up the seriousness of the lessons — a nice touch indeed.



Or the bloody Pet Shop Boys?

Thank god the Hyper sound system shits on PCPP's

Benton puts on Abba = Cam's music is suddenly very loud



MOST OF THE IMPROVEMENTS SHOWN HERE ARE OF THE SUBTLE VARIETY

SPECTRAL RACING

The courses themselves are a nice cross section of the racing spectrum too. Of the five, one's a streetscape from New York, two are speedways from Japan, while another's a pure dirt-track rally course set in the Grand Canyon and they all look great. Our favourite is the rally course set in an Italian village "Citta di Aria". Featuring plenty of hills to climb and race down, this course features sections of road just wide enough to let the car through. As a result, the sense of speed felt here is the most breathtaking, and the challenge most thrilling of all the courses on offer – an absolute high point of the Prologue experience.

This course also highlights a gameplay mechanism introduced into GT4. While visual damage modelling is out, penalties for trying to bounce off cars and barriers are in. In Prologue's case, hit a car or wall too

fast and you'll be penalised with a 10 second period of low-speed driving. Whilst not realistic, it's a creative enough way to eliminate these racing cheats found in previous GT games.

As for the handling itself, this one remains a bit more elusive to dissect. The driving engine simply feels more robust; there's more weight behind the cars, and they'll purr if you treat them nicely and crack if handled like a novice. A pure racing game this is not – Prologue hints that GT4's driving engine will be the most advanced yet.

With the subtle improvements to the driving/physics engine and the small touches present in driving lessons, we can't help but remain optimistic of what's to come. If the same level of polish found in some areas of Prologue makes it into the final version of the game, then we'll

be mighty chuffed indeed. As for Prologue itself? Better suited to newcomers to the series with its limited functions, it's a game that'll soothingly placate those impatient fans out there – us included.

The GT series has always been about the art of driving and tinkering with some sexy pieces of four-wheeled machinery. As such the enthusiastic Kazunori Yamauchi has been known to use language about the beauty of cars and driving that'd make yer own mum blush a few shades of crimson. GT4 Prologue then, while a very limited release in so many ways, is Yamauchi-san's way of saying "Okay guys, we have been working damn hard and the results will be worth the wait. Please enjoy this little bit of foreplay for when the time comes, you'll be making sweet, sweet love all night long." ❄️

!!! The best estimate we have for a release date for GT4 is November. Not long now!

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCM / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Driving/Racing Sim Demo / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital / PUBLISHER: Sony / PRICE: \$59.95 / RATING: G / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: Sweet visuals, nice handling. Turismo's back!

MINUS: Limited, no multiplayer, no championship races.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

90 81 71

OVERALL

75

Prologue fuels our optimism for GT4, even if it's a bit of a tease.



!!! There are three mini-games in all versions, while on PS2 there are six bonus EyeToy mini-games.



Stain glass windows piss me off too dude



"Come over here Harry. I have some candy for you"



Sorry, I'm still recovering from the screenshot on the left

HARRY POTTER: AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

CAM SHEA solemnly swears that he is up to no good.

The Harry Potter games have never been brilliant, nor have they been bad. Instead, they've been solid licensed titles that help give fans a somewhat limited interactive window into J.K. Rowling's world. Azkaban continues in this tradition, and is probably the best game to date. The most important change that has been made is that you now travel around Hogwarts and many of the levels with Ron and/or Hermione. Better still, you can change who you're controlling at will, with each main character possessing his or her own unique ability.

MIDNIGHT MARAUDERS MAP

This "teamwork" makes the game much more believable, and hence, appealing for Potter fans. It's especially cool in a firefight, with all three kids frantically casting spells and fighting alongside each other. The developers have also taken advantage of the party system to help out less experienced players,

with the other characters offering you tips about what to do or try.

The game itself is still very much a mish mash of styles, and is probably best summed up as an action platformer. It's also very linear, with the intended path through Hogwarts simply being a case of "follow the doors without big locks on them". Once you've entered a quest, the same is true, but at least the often impressive looking dungeons, simple puzzle solving and need to swap characters every so often makes things moderately compelling.

Puzzles range from pushing, pulling and shooting crates (or huge ice cubes as the case may be), through to using all three characters to pick up and move heavy objects, or to stand on switches. There are still some cool ideas, like being able to control Hedwig in order to retrieve things (such as the Marauders Map) from hard to reach places. There are also some Zelda rip-offs like bouncing a beam of light off a

bunch of mirrors to trigger a switch. Speaking of Zelda, you'll learn new spells as you progress, and it's up to you to assign them to the face button of choice. It's a nice RPG-lite influence that helps the game feel a little more grown up.

The Prisoner of Azkaban also looks very good, with the grandeur of Hogwarts and its labyrinthine secret passages and dungeons coming to life better than in any Potter game to date. The voice acting also helps to draw you into the world, although we couldn't help but pretend that Ron's deepening voice was actually being done by a Ringo Starr impersonator. Well, we thought it was funny.

Unfortunately, however, for the older Potter fans out there (such as the entire staff of this very magazine), this game has only limited appeal. Although it's moderately enjoyable, this is just a little too easy and run of the mill for us, although we'd still highly recommend it for younger gamers. <<

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Action platform /
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: EA UK /
PUBLISHER: EA /
PRICE: \$69.95 / RATING: G /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT

PLUS: It's Hazza Pazza! Ron is as funny as ever.

MINUS: Load times, puzzles too easy, retail code crashed.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

80 81 70

OVERALL

74

A great kids game that will have some appeal for older Potter fans too.

TDK

tremor

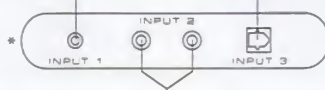


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Goro's gonna pay



Krang gets a new body

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER

STEPHEN FARRELLY takes Space Invaders very seriously...

Most games these days purport to have higher levels of world interactivity as well as complex mission objectives delivered through multifaceted puzzles and scripted play mechanics. It's the "rich tapestry" that seems to be important to many developers and publishers, but it's debatable whether that leads to a richer gameplay experience in the majority of cases (oh wow, I can kick boxes around!). Serious Sam, it seems, has been sent to Earth to argue that sometimes, it's the simple, visceral concepts that work the best.

In the world of Serious Sam, things couldn't get any easier to comprehend. Just shoot everything that moves. While originally developed for PC, the same style of play has been translated — very successfully — to home console in Serious Sam: Next Encounter, a game where not thinking is not only encouraged, it's damn well imperative.

MENTAL AS ANYTHING

The premise for Serious Sam, for the uninformed, is very, very simple; you play Sam, a strong-headed, dim-witted smart-mouthed intergalactic hero — your job is to stop an evil alien lord known as Mental from sending his mutant hordes against the human race. See, simple. Of course there's a cool Austin Powers inspired twist to also enjoy that we're not going to tell you about.

On the way to the final showdown of epic "proportions" (ho ho), Sam is given naught but an arsenal of progressively more powerful weapons and enough ammo to mow down the hundreds and thousands of enemies that descend upon him at any given moment. There are grades of enemies and they come in predictable patterns, from the Slimier-esque flying green blobs to the headless kamikaze screaming bomb handlers,

the endless supply of cannon-fodder is all you need to worry about and all the entire game is indeed about. There are ridiculously hard bosses and within each area at least one lever that needs to be interacted with. That's it.

Killing is the sport of kings in Serious Sam and a point system accompanies your hunting. Kill 20 enemies in a row and Sam will go

into a rage where everything is doubled, this includes your damage, ammo, enemies and points. Acquiring a huge score at the end of every level is the driving force, no explanation necessary.

As a console adaptation, this cult classic has been handled extremely well with excellent controls, a solid frame-rate and some cool new additions. As well as splitscreen, you can also take the PS2 version online and battle it out with up to 16 players. <<

!!! There's something like 30 new enemies for Next Encounter... not to mention vehicles.

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: FPS / PLAYERS: 1-16 /
DEVELOPER: Climax Studios /
PUBLISHER: Take 2 Interactive /
PRICE: \$49.95 / RATING: MA15+ /
AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Huge worlds, countless enemies, a great control scheme.
MINUS: Lack of any real interactivity beyond shooting.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
76 70 79
OVERALL
75

A no brains affair of mutant slaughter!



Queer as Folk: The Game



Yes, Tap Out is a better UFC game. Thanks for telling us



A lot of action happens with no time left in round one hey

UFC SUDDEN IMPACT

DANIEL WILKS takes Amos to the top... again

If you look at the demographics, UFC is a sport watched predominantly by young men and strange women – basically your lovers of adrenaline and violence. There is something to be said about the visceral thrill of watching two overly muscled men beating the holy hell out of each other with skill and then, bruised and bloody patting each other on the back for a job well done. UFC: Sudden Impact is the latest in a long line of UFC titles dating back to the Dreamcast in 1999 but if you're a fan of the series or the sport of Ultimate Fighting you'll quickly discover that the only real impact the game has, sudden or otherwise is that which it has on you wallet and due to the budget price even that is negligible.

SODDEN IMPACT?

The basic controls and action for Sudden Impact remain virtually identical to the games that have come before with each button

controlling an arm or a leg and a combination of two buttons performing a takedown, grapple or submission move. This time around though the developers have increased the pace of the fights which sounds good in theory but ultimately means that the tactical fighting seen in the previous games is by and large made redundant – simply mashing the keypad is a viable tactic. The other major addition in this iteration of the series is a seemingly in-depth but ultimately very shallow career mode in which the player works their way through three years of training learning up to three different martial art styles and numerous moves by completing a number of challenges. Whilst this sounds great in theory there are only a handful of challenges and they rarely if ever have anything to do with the move being learnt – why would punching

a person 8 times teach you how to do a reverse spin kick? To add insult to injury the story mode comes complete with annoying little talking heads that appear on the bottom of the screen and add totally inappropriate non-sequiturs about the life of a fighter.

The graphics engine, if anything, is worse than those seen in previous UFC games with staggering amounts of clipping issues

and a general plastic action figure look to all the fighters. The soundtrack is equally bad with a boring score, flat commentary and unbelievably laggy sound effects, much like you would find in a badly dubbed and pirated HK action film. Even at the bargain price UFC Sudden Impact is the worst in the series – do yourself a favour and get Tapout instead. <<

!!! We'll keep you posted on the Next Media showdown. We've almost created everyone from the office in the game. Let the violence begin!

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Fighting / PLAYERS: 1-2 / DEVELOPER: Global Star Software / PUBLISHER: Take 2 / PRICE: \$49.95 / RATING: MA15+ / AVAILABLE: Now /

HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: Some good fighting mechanics, cheap.
MINUS: Terrible graphics, dull story mode, been there, done that.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
56 52 68

OVERALL
55

No impact, sudden or otherwise.

Resist or Serve is set during Season 7, and the storyline concerns the mysterious black oil.



Scully and "the Duke" as we call him



Let me axe you a question punk. Do you feel lucky?



All the skills you'll need for a home autopsy

THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

CAM SHEA gets served...

Welcome, gentle readers, to the latest X-Files videogame. Unlike the last game based on this series, the 2004 vintage shies away from the point and click experience, instead diving into fruitier survival horror territory. If the taste is somewhat familiar, that's because you've no doubt experienced it before, in several much older varieties, namely the first *Silent Hill* and early *Resident Evil* titles, of which it is highly reminiscent. Fortunately, however, the X-Files flavour comes shining through to help balance the taste on the gaming palette.

YOU GET THE IDEA...

Yes, *The X-Files* has gone survival horror, and although it's a few years behind on the survival horror evolutionary timeline, it does what it does well. Indeed, all the fans who were dismayed that the last X-Files title had you playing as an unknown FBI agent in search of the missing Mulder and Scully, will be very

pleased to hear that this time you finally get the chance to play as everyone's favourite supernatural sleuths. Better still, you choose between Mulder and Scully at the beginning, with their paths converging at various points throughout the game.

In addition to their likenesses, David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson have lent their vocal talents to the game too, and the difference it makes is immeasurable. Mind you, it doesn't hurt that the dialogue is written very much in keeping with the show, with the pair constantly making cracks or witty retorts. Indeed, the story as a whole is quite good, and fans will appreciate some uniquely X-Files-esque touches, such as getting a bile sample from a dead body, which requires you to cut the chest open then syringe the bile duct. Gross, but definitely fitting.

The rest of the game, however, is standard survival horror fare. You'll be combing every room thoroughly (ie

slowly walking around the walls) in search of items to pick up or objects to interact with, which gets pretty annoying... but not as annoying as missing a vital item which will help you move on to the next area. Most puzzles are quite arbitrary, and two out of every three doors you try will be locked. But hey, it's survival horror!

There are also a few camera/control issues. For one it's annoying how often you find yourself running into the screen, thus having no idea if there are nasty monsters right in front of you. The game also employs "point where you want to go" controls, which is all well and good, except when the camera moves to a new perspective, leaving you pushing in the wrong direction. It's particularly comical in enclosed spaces where you'll often end up doing tight circles on the spot.

X-Files: Resist or Serve may be generic in terms of mechanics, but its use of the license is admirable, and for a touch under \$50 this game is well worth a look for fans of the show.

AVAILABLE ON:
PS2 / XBOX / GCN / PC

DETAILS
CATEGORY: Survival Horror / PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: Black Ops / PUBLISHER: Vivendi / PRICE: \$49.95 / RATING: M15+ / AVAILABLE: Mid July /

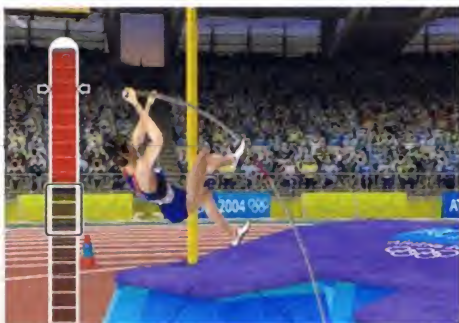
HYPER VERDICT
PLUS: A solid game all round really.

MINUS: But it does almost nothing new!

VISUALS 78 SOUND 84 GAMEPLAY 70

OVERALL
75

Survival horror virgins could do a lot worse than picking this one up.



ATHENS 2004

⌘ Athens 2004 is a very decent stab at trying to bring a little more variety into the Summer/Winter/Olympic games genre. Traditionally the realm of the button masher branch of gameplay (if you can call it that), this time around there are a few more elements brought into play. Many sports require you to alternate pressing X and O as fast as possible before using L1 for a final action (weightlifting, high jump, hurdles etc), but while this may be the basic template, it's certainly not the rule. Gymnastics events for instance, vary from Dance Dance Revolution style inputs (dance mats are supported by the way) through to angling the analogue sticks for holds on the rings, and even inputting face button combos in the correct order to land complex tricks off the vaulting horse. And then you've got sports like archery and skeet shooting which don't require button combinations or frantic pressing at all, just good timing.

Sounds good right? Well... to be honest it gets boring very very quickly. When competing with friends, many sports ("cough" pole vault "cough") chronically outstay their welcome, taking up to half an hour to get through with four people. Too long! Your best bet is to try out all the sports and then put together a custom championship of your favourites. It still won't be thrill a minute gaming, but throw in enough trash talking and chances are you'll have some fun. Pity it's not at a budget price though.

Cam Shea

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GOTO / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Buttons masher / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 / **DEVELOPER:** Eurocom / **PUBLISHER:** Sony / **PRICE:** \$99.95 / **RATING:** G / **AVAILABLE:** July 30th /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
70	72	60	65



Let the power of Amos guide your arrow true



BEYOND DIVINITY

⌘ Those of you lucky enough to play the surprise hit Divine Divinity will know by and large what to expect from this sequel — huge maps to explore, tons of side quests, a fiddly but otherwise rewarding rules set and attractive old school RPG graphics. Whereas the first game in the series was strictly about a single character, Beyond Divinity takes the novel approach of having the player take the role of two mortal enemies bound together by a vengeful demon. After a disastrous battle, a Paladin (the last surviving good guy) and a Death Knight are soul bonded, forever linking the fate of one to the other. The two must work together to escape the massive dungeon they have been imprisoned in with the hope of eventually killing the demon responsible. They're the original odd couple.

Although Beyond Divinity is basically an action RPG in the vein of Diablo, Larian's game shows a great deal more depth due to the sheer number of characters, quests, easter eggs and areas in the game. Each of the maps is truly huge so you can reasonably expect 40+ hours of gaming — not bad for an initial layout of \$70. Aside from the main levels, each act contains what is known as the battlefield, a randomly generated world that the player can jump into at any time, full of quests, shops and the like for even more side adventures. Whilst the graphics are a bit outdated, the soundtrack of Beyond Divinity is a thing of beauty — deliberately sneezy voice acting, decent weapon sounds and a sweeping orchestral/choral score.

Daniel Wilks

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GOTO / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: RPG / **PLAYERS:** 1 / **DEVELOPER:** Larian Studios / **PUBLISHER:** Hip Games / **PRICE:** \$69.95 / **RATING:** MA 15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	91	79	79



Fighting for Amos' affection. Weirdos



PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

⌘ Okay, so it's a bit of a stretch. You're going to have to accept that there are no conventional weapons in this game and that the only way to combat the many supernatural entities wanting to get a piece of you is by shooting them with a film-based camera. But once you do, you'll be treated to a beautifully crafted horror adventure game that absolutely oozes with atmosphere. Tecmo has managed to put together one of the prettiest games on the PS2, even if most of the visuals take on a shadowy, darkened hue.

Crimson Butterfly is set in a lost village that lures in unsuspecting victims into its folds by the titular butterfly. Apart from offering a much larger space to explore than the first PZ, this sequel also introduces a second player — the main character's twin sister — into gameplay. Mio and Mayu wander through the lost village together adding to the narrative and setting up some truly terrifying moments. Naturally, the two are constantly separated and reunited throughout the game, and any frustration gained by having Mayu wander into frame as you're trying to combat is negated by the overall depth brought to the typically solitary experience this genre provides.

The only thing we would have liked to have seen is less of a reliance on scripted events. Combined with poor game direction, you'll find yourself stuck at times, wandering around until you step in the right 'zone' to trigger the next major event — a flaw that also plagued the original game.

March Stepnik

AVAILABLE ON:

PS2 / XBOX / GOTO / PC

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Survival Horror / **PLAYERS:** 1 / **DEVELOPER:** Tecmo / **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft / **PRICE:** \$99.95 / **RATING:** M15+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
90	92	81	85



Super Happy Freaky Japanese Webcam Desu

MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG

Before Mario was known as Mario, he was "Jumpman" - an energetic romantic who spent more of his day rescuing his girlfriend from Donkey Kong, his pissed off pet Ape, than actually working his regular job as a builder. To this end, Mar... er, Jumpman, would scale the skeleton construction of his 'unfinished' buildings jumping rolling barrels and drums aflame all in an attempt to rescue his girlfriend. It never came up much, but apparently the reason for kidnapping Jumpman's girlfriend was because Donkey Kong felt mistreated by his master, Jumpman (I know every time I mistreat Cam he kidnaps Kosta and ties him to a pole, though I think there's another motive involved).

At any rate, DK has since been freed and Jumpman fired for not finishing his buildings. In an attempt to get more work, he changed his name to Mario and moved to the Mushroom Kingdom where he - rather slowly - pursues a [boring] relationship with one of the Mushroom Kingdom's royals in Princess Peach. However, wooing a monarch isn't cheap, which is why Mario has gone into business manufacturing Mini Marios.

Inspired by the success of pokémon, Mario took out a loan and started a Toy Factory to produce his Mini Mario line, and in the process paid for an expensive but effective advertising campaign that seems to have sparked something within a bored (and Rare-less) Donkey Kong who has been spending more time on his couch in front of the TV than adventuring.

So with the best of intentions Donkey Kong, a slave to the corporate evil that is advertising and the media, rushes off to a toy store to buy all of the Mini Marios. When he gets there he learns they're all sold out and decides to extract the little toys from their malevolent source, Mario's Toy Factory (which is conveniently situated across the road). In a relapse to his old antics, DK robs the factory of Mini Marios (as well as some other goodies) and takes off with an angry Mario in toe (he's not insured for simian theft). What ensues is a new-age battle with old-school rules where Mario must overcome a number of obstacles within self-contained levels in an attempt to recapture his stolen merchandise while teaching that crazy monkey a lesson.

I'M BLIND OUT THERE!

As suggested, this game follows a very similar idea to the original Donkey Kong game in its approach to



It's like Snakes and Ladders, except Mario keeps his snake well hidden

design. The levels very rarely exceed the size of the GBA screen, but the puzzles contained within each one extend the playability ten-fold, all the while never becoming too tedious or boring. It's very rare indeed you'll find repetition of a superfluous nature and any there is, is simply there for design consistency.

The set-up is simple; there are six worlds, within each world there are eight levels with two stages (except the last two levels of each world, they're one stage each), the levels get progressively harder as you go, a small video plays at the beginning of most new worlds or if a new feature or Mario ability is revealed to give you a heads up on how to perform the action or overcome the impediment. Beyond that, the rest is up to you and your gaming wits. It's a matter of thinking on your toes and enjoying the level design as it's presented to you, which, we might add, is stunning. While the game itself is fairly straight-forward in design, the visuals are top-notch, with Mario in particular looking very slick while his animations are fluid and downright spectacular to watch.

Mario Vs. Donkey Kong succeeds in its simple approach and stylistic execution, it doesn't hurt the game's appeal that it's as addictive as crack and the overall vibe is just so... cool. Mario Vs. Donkey Kong is another fine product for the GBA from Nintendo and fans of the Japanese gaming really ought to check it out.

Screw Flanders



Show off



So this is 128 Marios?



DK jealously guards his sack, and has Mario "on the ropes"

DETAILS			
CATEGORY: Platform/Puzzle /			
PLAYERS: 1 / DEVELOPER: NST /			
PUBLISHER: Nintendo / PRICE: \$69.95 /			
RATING: G / AVAILABLE: Now /			
VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
85	84	90	87



Zzzz... spaghetti... cannelloni

MARIO GOLF: ADVANCE TOUR

Camelot have to be one of the most consistent developers in gaming today. Although mostly known for their sporting titles (such as Mario Tennis 64 and Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour), they're also responsible for both the Golden Sun RPGs on GBA, proving that they have the know how to take on other genres. Well actually, the truth is that Camelot are old hands at RPGs. You see, they've been combining RPGs and sports titles since the days of the GBC. In fact, both Mario Golf and Mario Tennis got the GBC RPG treatment and ended up being just as good, if not better, than their N64 counterparts.

AS IT IS, SO IT WILL BE

And so it is with Mario Golf: Advance Tour. Camelot have developed both this and Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour for GameCube, but despite the GameCube's decidedly more flashy graphics, the GBA game is probably superior.

The reason for this is that Advance Tour immerses you in its world. Instead of being presented with a series of menus before you drop straight into a Tournament or other mode, this game is entirely built around its Story mode and the world therein. You don't play as some pre-defined Nintendo icon, but as a relative unknown trying to make it big on the pro tour.

The game is set in and around the Marion Golf Club, and you'll be able to wander around, get advice from people, challenge pros to tournaments, compete in a range of mini-games, learn all the tricks in your golfing arsenal, practice on driving ranges and putting areas, and play on several 18 hole courses. The more you play, the more gets unlocked. And the more things you beat, the more experience points you earn, to help level up your character and your partner.

Your partner? Yep, doubles play is an integral part of this title, and in it, you and your AI controlled partner take shots in turn. It's actually quite a fun way to play, but be warned - letting your partner's abilities slide while your character improves will make the later doubles tournaments very difficult.

LOOKEE HERE MAH!

The presentation in the wider world is very appealing, with nicely rendered surroundings and characters. Getting onto the courses sees the visual style change a bit with two perspectives for you to use to help plan your shots. You can move over the course in a top down perspective and zoom in to have a



closer look at the terrain, and there's also an over the shoulder view.

The courses have no real changes in elevation - just high areas and low areas and slopes on the green. But hey, given the system limitations, Camelot have done a great job, and the flat course design has allowed them to really focus on getting the mechanics right.

The gameplay is much the same as in Toadstool Tour, with the depth coming from the interaction of all the different elements of the game. Sure, you get an estimate of where your shot is going to go, but that doesn't take into account the wind, whether you nail the power level, whether you get the impact timing right, and whether you put topspin or backspin (not to mention super topspin or super backspin) on the ball. It's enough variables that as high as your stats might be, and as good as your timing might be, there'll always be a little guesswork.

Although it's sometimes difficult to read the green as well as you would like or to see some of the steeper rises on the courses, you actually get a better view of what's going on in this game than in Toadstool Tour. Fairway drives you can follow all the way (rather than that terrible perspective where the ball comes towards you in the GCN game) and even when you putt you have a much better view of the action. It's also much easier to sink really short putts.

In all, Mario Golf offers a richer experience than its console counterpart, but it's not perfect. Some of the later courses rely a little too heavily on gimmicks, and despite its RPG pretensions, this is not a game that's going to last you forever. Even so, this is the best handheld golf game out there by a long way.

Cam Shea

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Golf / **PLAYERS:** 1-4 / **DEVELOPER:** Camelot Software Planning / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **PRICE:** \$69.95 / **RATING:** G8+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

GRAPHICS
81

SOUND
76

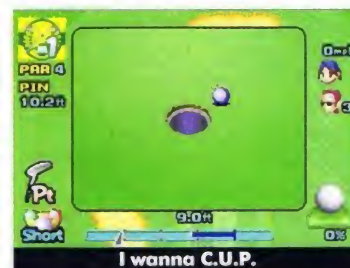
GAMEPLAY
86

OVERALL
85



CONNECTIVITY

Link up Advance Tour and Toadstool Tour via the GCN-GBA cable and you'll be able to transfer between the games. You can send your character (along with his/her kick-ass stats) from Advance Tour to Toadstool, as well as any new clubs you've got and any Taunt/Support messages.



DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2

Today the GBA is the platform of choice if you're into 2D side scrolling action games, with the abundance of said genre titles being somewhat overwhelming. However when Donkey Kong Country 2 first appeared on SNES it was the be all and end all of 2D gaming. We have either become more jaded or DKC2 has aged quicker than most of us would have expected... simply put, the union is not as palatable as many would have liked.

NESS LOVES THE KONG...

The great DK has always been a favourite amongst gamers, especially those now experiencing their late twenties, so even though there might be a few hiccups, we forgive quickly and seem to get excited ever quicker. But times change and most that start DKC2 will never see it to the end. Why? With 8 worlds, each featuring 5 levels of a different theme (for those mathematically challenged that's 40 levels in total) it's a gruelling struggle against frustration. The simple act of jumping was drawing deeply from our will to live, obviously we were not created with enough fingers to perform the act. Not that DKC2 is unplayable or even extremely challenging; its all about timing your moves and collecting everything shiny or yellow, but nowadays we expect more from games than we did when the SNES version was released. Like story and variety!

The most annoying flaw is that both Diddy and Dixie Kong were created with the same moves; they attack, swim, climb, throw objects and jump, neither moving faster nor jumping higher than the other. Which makes switching characters somewhat redundant especially when it only takes one hit to knock them out of the game forcing you back to the beginning of the level.

Thankfully, unlike other side scrolling games where you have a second character trailing you (think Sonic), they don't get in the way of gameplay but they can be annoying when trying to make a quick grab for bananas or other necessary objects. Often you are best to go on with one character, collecting the second once you have completed a necessary series of jumps or grabs.

DKC2 is a faithful port from the original though they have thrown in an addition or two for good measure. Firstly, there's a selection of bonus games but we aren't talking Wario Ware here! Instead, you're forced into something called Funky's Flights, in which you must



A lava level in a platform game? Dude, no way!

complete an objective in Funky Kong's gyrocopter, and Bag a Bug, where you collect as many fireflies as possible while avoiding Klubba, the big, dumb Kremling. There is also a beat the clock mode, Diddy's Dash, where you can replay any completed level.

We still love the Kong but what we want is to see him in a new form. Maybe if Kong's Playboy Mansion was in the works, or Silent Kong: The Banana Filled Room was hitting the stores we would have something to shout about. But you can't blame that odd feeling in the pit of your stomach on déjà vu when you know that what you're experiencing is a direct port of a previous released game. And a pretty simplistic game at that.

Ultimately if what you look for in a gaming experience is collecting a big "bunch" of stuff then DKC2 is worthy of your time and money. If you want varied and inventive gameplay that shies away from the platform norm, then look elsewhere.

Vanessa Morgan

DETAILS

CATEGORY: Platformer Port / **PLAYERS:** 1-2 / **DEVELOPER:** Rare / **PUBLISHER:** Nintendo / **PRICE:** \$69.95 / **RATING:** G8+ / **AVAILABLE:** Now /

VISUALS
72

SOUND
69

GAMEPLAY
75

OVERALL
73



Check out Diddy's chopper!



Is that an underwater crate I spy? They've thought of everything!



Getting a little misty down there



Spring loaded snake

VIDEOGAME LOGIC?

Like most games of its genre one shouldn't look too deeply for logic in DKC 2. Because why giant alligators, even if they were of the evil persuasion, would steal a banana stash is beyond us, or why Diddy Kong's primary attack is a piss weak cartwheel that is able to defeat gators three times his size is atrocious but oddly forgivable, it's Kong!

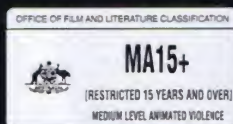
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PlayStation 2



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GIZMONDO

RRP \$179

www.gizmondo.com

Available: Late 2004

Nintendo's GBA is firmly entrenched as the portable system of choice right now, but with the Sony PSP and Nintendo DS on the horizon, not only is portable gaming going to get more sophisticated, but gamers will have true choice in the marketplace. You'd imagine then, that this would be about the worst time any company could launch a new portable gaming device, but this hasn't stopped the appearance of a slick looking new unit with the unfortunate name of Gizmondo, from giving it a shot — and perhaps even getting in just before the new systems from Nintendo and Sony hit the stores. Although you may dismiss its chances, it's worth a look nonetheless.

As you can see, the "Gizmondo" (cue internal laugh track) looks somewhat like the grown up older sibling of the original GBA. Four buttons on the face give it decent

versatility, and the raised shoulder buttons should hopefully prevent the cramped position we often find our fingers in with both models of GBA. The TFT screen is smaller than we would ideally like for a next gen handheld system, weighing in at roughly the same size as a GBA, with a max resolution of 320x240. Inside, the system has a 400MHz processor and 64 bit graphics engine, and the game screenshots that have been released to date show off some reasonable 3D graphics. Mind you, we haven't seen them running yet.

Games will come on MMC/SD cards and will also be available for download through the mobile phone network. Yep, it's another system with extensive online functionality. This includes built in SMS and MMS abilities, and Bluetooth for local wireless multiplayer. Perhaps the coolest inclusion, however, is built in GPS, allowing you to locate friends

with Gizmondos or the nearest ATM or Mickey Ds. It will even allow you to lock your Gizmondo down. You can set a range (or "geofence") for where the device is allowed to be, and if it goes outside that range (ie if it's stolen) it will SMS you to let you know, and you'll be able to track it. All this plus a digital camera, mp3 playback and movie playback.

But what about the games you say? Well that's the tricky part. At this stage we're only aware of three games in development, so it looks like they'll be trying to sell the system based on its other strengths. At least initially. The three games in development are Colors (gang warfare), Stuntcar Extreme (arcade racing) and Speedgun Stadium (an FPS heavily inspired by Unreal Tournament). We'll have more on these later in the year.

Cam Shea



[above] Stunt Race FX eat your heart out... kinda



PHILIPS 170T4FS 17" WIDE-SCREEN MULTIFUNCTIONAL LCD MONITOR

RRP \$1499

DISTRIBUTED BY: www.philips.com.au

 Flatscreen monitors are getting more and more affordable by the minute, and they're also getting more versatile. Take this WXGA LCD widescreen model from Philips, not only is it perfect for using as a PC monitor, but it also has inputs (composite and S-Video) for connecting other devices such as DVD players and games machines. Better still, you can also plug an aerial into it to watch TV.

Is this the perfect all round display then? Well, yes and no. Yes because

of its versatility, sleek lines and small footprint, which means you'll be able to set it up just about anywhere, from the study to the bedroom. No because, well, although it's sweet watching films and playing games in 16:9, the monitor itself is only 17" which is pretty small for a TV screen. The response time is also only 25ms, which isn't great for fast-paced games, but perfect for normal PC applications and games like RTSs.

Sound quality from the two flat speakers is acceptable, but don't

expect to get much in the way of bass out of them. If you're using it as a monitor you can also run the audio from your PC into the PC audio in.

The system also comes with a remote which has all the functionality you would expect, but (as often seems to be the way) isn't quite as slick in design as the rest of the unit. Overall though, this is an impressive monitor, and if you've got a surplus of money and a deficit of space, you should definitely check it out.

Cam Shea





[above] A battlecry that can be heard across pubs Australia wide



[above] Lord Seafood swims with the fishes




[above] The superhero wax museum, starring Blau Boy and his improbably large pants



City of Heroes

Developer: NCSoft / Distributor: www.gamesuniverse.com.au

The further adventures of **LORD SEAFOOD** and his faithful sidekick, **BLAU!**

 Lord Seafood surveyed the pile of unconscious bodies and knew he had done well. Heeding a call from a citizen in need, the hero and his ever faithful, ever present and ever juvenile sidekick BLAU had sprung into action, putting fist to face, foot to foot and in the case of BLAU, very large gun to somewhere else unmentionable in polite company. The fight, one of their first as a registered team was fairly easy but they knew it wouldn't always be that way. The further they went into the mire of villainy the more difficult their battles would become but that was to be expected. Whilst the life of a hero is not always an easy one, it is a rewarding one. It takes a lot to stand out in a big city like Paragon City and it takes more to be thought of as a hero in a City of Heroes.

RIPPING FRIENDS

From character creation to confrontation, City of Heroes is just about the most accessible MMO on the market at the moment. Players

set about creating their hero from a number of backgrounds commonly seen in comic books (mutants, magical, technological and the like), choose their class (Scrapper for hand to hand combat, Tanks to give and take damage, Blasters for ranged combat, etc), powers from a grouping related to your background, create an avatar for in game using hundreds of different variables and classes, and finally a name, background (optional) and battle cry. The whole process takes about 20 minutes, which may seem like a fairly long time for character creation but when you've got so much choice it really flies by. Then it's into the game.

All starting characters are dropped into a training scenario to teach you all the basics of controls. Whilst it can be frustrating to have to do this training with every character you create, experienced players can rush through it in about 15 minutes and still come out with the free level up at the end. Once the players enter their first city it's straight into the action. City of

Heroes adheres to the tried and true mission based formula – throughout the course of their adventures players will meet more and more contacts who will offer them jobs with increasing levels of difficulty. Controls are incredibly intuitive, using the standard WASD and Space for movement and jump. Attacks and powers can be hotkeyed or used by clicking on the corresponding icon on the bottom of the screen. Combat is a simple matter of clicking on an enemy to highlight them (or hitting TAB to go to the nearest enemy) and using whatever powers you have at your command. Every second or third level players can choose another power to add to the repertoire and every other level players get a number of expansion slots that can be allocated to powers so the player can further tailor their character by adding extra damage, range or effects.

A THIRST FOR JUSTICE

Although running around as a solo hero is fun, the true joy of City of Heroes comes when you're teamed

up with one or more other heroes. In keeping with comic book lore, CoH offers multiple different types of group – Sidekicks, Super Groups and Super Teams. A player can adopt another player as their sidekick providing that the sidekick character is a few levels lower. When working together, the mentor and sidekick receive bonuses to their powers and share experience. If the players stray too far away from each other they no longer get the benefits. Super Groups can be made on the fly by inviting other players to group with you. Like the sidekick grouping, super groups add combat bonuses and share XP. Finally Super Teams are named teams in which all the members are permanent (like clans in EverCrack). Aside from the standard grouping bonuses, super teams can name their team and have it displayed in their active character information for all other players to see and can modify the group costumes to a common theme.

If there is a downside to City of Heroes it is that the missions do get



repetitive – there’s only so many times you can go to X warehouse and defeat everyone there before you get a little tired of the experience. That said the combat is so fast paced and rewards for leveling are interesting enough that you’ll find yourself putting in the hard yards just to see what comes next. By the time you’re reading this NCSOFT will have released their first major patch to the game which will add more enemies, missions and areas so many of these instances of sameness should probably be cleared up – fingers crossed anyway. The developers have also announced that they are hard at work on the first expansion pack for the game, the aptly titled City of Villains that will introduce PvP gaming as well as allowing players to take the role of villains. It’s even been hinted that the expansion will allow players to build their own secret (evil) lairs and hire henchmen to carry out their nefarious plans. How this will actually work in game terms remains to be seen.



[above] Look at him, he look like a schmuffa



Links

»» Kosta Andreadis



Choose Your Own Adventure

<http://www.spazoutny.com/CYOA-1.htm>

»» The books one reads as a kid could be divided into two categories – regular boring books and exciting 'choose your own' adventures! The latter, which after each page left you with a 'Turn to page...' choice, may have been more of a gimmick than viable reading material – but boy were they cool. Now, thankfully the 'Choose Your Own Adventure' brand of storytelling continues into the digital age with Choose Your Own New York! The Internet's very own interactive New York adventure – so if you're interested visit this link otherwise bugger off. The choice is yours to make.

Not proud. 06/14/2004 at 20:01:16

Confess
Confessed. I went over my friend's house tonight, and I took all of her cookies. When her Dad came in and asked where they had all gone I hid them and then gobbled them down.

Pride
Envy
Sloth
Gluttony.
Greed
Lust
Anger
Misc

next >> random >>

Online Confessions – The Sequel

<http://www.notproud.com/>

»» The anonymity of the Internet has always been one of its main selling points – and if there's anything that needs selling it's the Internet. Where else could a text book nerd like Hyper's own Daniel Wilks chat, with confidence mind you, to the opposite sex under the guise of StudMuffin34? Of late the anonymity of the web has seen a rise in online confessionals where people spurt out their problems for the world to read. Not Proud is one of said sites where users post their confessions split up into categories named after these so-called "seven deadly sins". For example, under Sloth one could find, "Ah, 5 pm and I am just out of bed".



DVD Profiler

<http://www.intervocative.com/dvdpro/>

»» DVD Profiler is an extremely cool and detailed software package that lets users upload the specifics of their entire DVD collection online, for everyone to see. Let's face it, before DVDs were around, how many people out there were buying mass quantities of VHS Videos – hardly anyone. Back in the glory days of VHS a collector meant somebody who had a collection of films he taped from TV, whereas a serious collector meant pretty much the same thing, except more videos and with the commercial breaks paused out. These days people are buying DVDs like they're going out of fashion and hence the need for a program to cater to the hardcore collectors.

*Minimum monthly cost for this broadband and telephone package is \$73.45 per month (\$39.95 for starter 300MB plan and \$33.50 Optus phone line rental with 15¢ local calls). Quoted broadband price is only available when you take an Optus local and long distance home phone service. For technical or commercial reasons, broadband is not available to all areas. Not all homes can be connected to all Optus services and will depend on customer's location. OptusNet Broadband: *Exceeding monthly Data Allowance will see your speed limited between 20Kbps and 28.8Kbps until the first day of the next billing month. Unused Data Allowance cannot be rolled into subsequent months. Use of the service is subject to the Customer Terms and Acceptable Use Policy. See www.optus.com.au/optusnet_sfoa for details. \$300 pro-rata early disconnection fee applies. OptusNet Cable: Optus reserves the right to quote for non-standard installations. A \$2.20 monthly fee applies if account is not paid by direct debit. Minimum total cost is \$628.40 for 12 months (includes \$179 installation and a \$30 direct debit rebate) plus current monthly line rental. OptusNet DSL: Minimum total cost is \$628.40 for 12 months (includes \$149 installation) plus current

OPTUSnet
BROADBAND



Transformers Merchandise

<http://www.shoppertron.com/>

>> Internet Shopping can be a daunting task if you just want to browse and don't really know what it is you're looking for. If you fall into that category then this link probably isn't for you. Unless of course you're an insanely huge Transformers fan, then this site may tickle your fancy as Shoppertron only deals with Transformers merchandise. Which is great if you're a Transformers fan looking for some cool Transformers stuff to buy but what about the rest of us who may not be in the mood for Transformers Merchandise? I guess we weren't on the list when Shoppertron were creating their website.

The End of the Internet

Congratulations! This is the last page.

Thank you for visiting the End of the Internet. There are no more links.

You must now turn off your computer and go do something productive.

Go read a book, for pete's sake.



Multiplayer Flash

<http://globulos.com>

>> If you were after a really cool online multiplayer game you've really only got two options – the frenetic fast shooting action of UT2004 and the turn based blob soccer action of Globulos. Who am I kidding – the only real option is Globulos! Because when it comes down to relieving stress at the end of a hard day's work nobody wants to blow other people up into little tiny gibs – they'd much rather maneuver tiny globs across an arena in an attempt to push their opponent over the edge! Of fun! As endorsed by Amos!

The End of the Internet

<http://www.shibumi.org/eoti/index.htm>

>> All these years of surfing the World Wide Web and its vast sprawling interconnecting series of ever-growing servers, optical fibers and terminals meant that in the world of cyberspace there's no defining beginning or end. Well, I guess that theory just got thrown out the window as visiting this link will take you the very end of the Internet – which makes the whole experience kind of disappointing really. No more Internet means no more pages to visit, blogs to read, illegal music to download, cartoon Saddam Husseins to murder, or naked celebrities to gawk at. Oh well, back to books.

monthly line rental. Optus Local Telephony: Call charges are extra. Free standard installation of your telephone line(s) applies to applicable call plans. A New Number fee applies if you do not transfer your existing phone number. *On the 15¢ call plan you receive your first 100 standard local calls free per month. General: A \$99 pro-rata disconnection fee may apply to some Optus Local Telephony plans &/or preselected Long Distance if disconnected within 12 months. Full terms & conditions apply. All information correct as at 1 March 2004. Prices subject to change without notice. 'yes' rewards March 2004 Terms and Conditions apply and the offer expires 30th June 2004 unless withdrawn earlier. SingTel Optus Pty Limited trading as Optus Communications 101 Miller Street North Sydney 2060. Optus, the Optus logo, 'yes' and Optus FreeTime are trademarks of SingTel Optus Pty Limited. Optus Communications services are provided by Optus Networks Pty Ltd ABN 92 008 570 330. OPT3125/FLY

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THE KING O

>> MAURICE BRANSCOMBE IS THE KING OF FREELANCERS. TAKE IT MOE...

 In that small darkened corner you'll find in almost any local arcade, hidden beneath the monstrous shadow of the Dance Dance Revolution machines, down past the almost innumerable drum-beating, guitar-strumming novelties, and just to the left of that Erotic Mahjong Golf cabinet, you'll find the final bastion of what was once the lord and saviour of all gaming kind, the 2D fighter. And when it comes to 2D fighters there is quite literally none more regal than SNK's King of Fighters series.

HAIL TO THE KING BABY

It all started in 1990, the year Capcom released the immortal Street Fighter 2. Although in the West much was made of the competition between Capcom's Street Fighter series and Midway's then-popular Mortal Kombat games, on the company's home turf SNK was always Capcom's most formidable rival. So much so that reading the two company's release schedules for the years 1990 through to 1994 is like reading the account of a real life corporate brawl in which each successive barrage was returned with a doubly ferocious counterattack. Capcom's Street Fighter 2 may have landed the first blow, but SNK quickly answered in 1991 with Fatal Fury, and continued to do so with each consecutive Street Fighter edition being echoed with unforgettable games like Samurai Showdown, Art of Fighting and their many sequels. By 1994 however, the market for one-



on-one 2D fighters was well and truly saturated. While SNK's previous games had carved out a respectable niche of hardcore fans, Capcom had always managed to stay two steps ahead. In 1994 though, SNK turned the tables. In a move that was destined to be imitated by many, SNK assembled a roster of more than twenty combatants taken straight from their most popular franchises and pitted

them head to head in a three versus three competition, a revolutionary concept at the time. Loosely continuing the storyline established by the Fatal Fury series, and adopting the name of the fighting competition from those games as its title, the first King of Fighters game was a revelation. The inclusion of classic characters like Terry and Andy Bogard, Joe Higashi and Kim Kapwan from Fatal Fury and Ryo Sakazaki and Robert Garcia from Art of Fighting, finally gave longtime fans of both series a chance to find out who would really win if



F FIGHTERS

SON OF KING OF FIGHTERS

Along with SNK's yearly Neo Geo MVS and home system King of Fighters games there have been numerous other console versions of King of Fighters, and not all of them have been mere ports either. SNK released several original KOF games for their Neo Geo Pocket Color handheld system, complete with cutesy super-deformed versions of your favourite fighters, and you can currently get King of Fighters EX 2 for your GBA. Two other standout titles are the Sega Dreamcast versions of KOF '98 and '99, both of which feature some mighty fine looking 3D polygonal backgrounds behind the traditional 2D sprites. Getting your hands on any one of the home console KOF games could prove to be challenging though, as the last KOF game to get a PAL home console release in Australia was on the PSone...

the two sides clashed. SNK didn't just stop at characters from their other 2D fighters however, with Ralf and Clark from the classic top-down shooter Ikari Warriors making an appearance, and even the obscure Athena and Kensou from the 1987 cutesy platformer Psycho Soldier were included. In fact, throughout the successive years characters from almost all of SNK's most popular (and even not-so-popular) franchises have made guest appearances, or even had starring roles in a King of Fighters game. In contrast, the series has also made many of its original

characters just as popular as those imported from established games; Kyo Kusanagi and Iori Yagami being prime examples. The Ken and Ryu-like rivalry between the two has dominated

much of the plot developments throughout the series and even spilled over into other games such as Capcom Vs. SNK 1 & 2 and the recent SNK Vs. Capcom: Chaos, three recent games that show that even now the rivalry between the two companies still burns.

DREAMMATCH NEVER ENDS

While Hyper has been known to mannerism in the face of developers who release marginally tweaked versions of the same game year after year... after year, SNK may be just about the only ones who have managed to pull it off without losing credibility.

Each new installment of the series hasn't just settled for

changing a few pixels around, or introducing a raft of new characters, although they definitely did have that too, but instead, each year SNK would regularly change the core of the fighting system, sometimes radically so. From year to year it was impossible to predict whether or not your favorite characters would play the same way, or how super combos would be activated, or even how many fighters you could



have per team, and while fans didn't welcome every change, the constant evolution of the series has always assured that each new release has far more to offer than just a different year written at the end of its title.

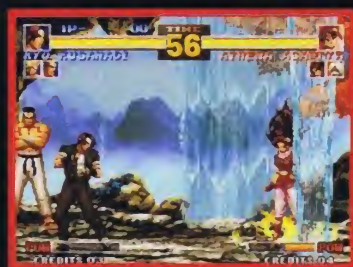
As impressive as it is to think that for every year of the past decade there's been a new King of Fighters game, that fact is even more impressive when you take into account the financial battles that the game producer SNK has been fighting just to keep the series going. Soon after the release of King of Fighters 2000 though, SNK hit rock bottom, filed for bankruptcy, and in October 2001 the company closed its doors. The company had been struggling for several years; while their arcade products had been successful, the company had continually lost money by supporting their line of home consoles, the Neo Geo AES and CD systems, and the handheld Neo Geo Pocket Color.

After a brief period of uncertainty, and more than a few worries that not only would the King of Fighters tournament have to skip a year, but that perhaps it would never return, a small start up company named Playmore entered the scene. Taking control of SNK's intellectual properties, Playmore would rejuvenate the KOF franchise with KOF '01 and assure loyal followers that it was back for the long haul, and better than ever in 2002 and 2003. While it's a relief to know the series is in good hands, the future for the King of Fighters series is for some bittersweet. On the one hand KOF 2003 is the last King of Fighters game ever to be made using SNK's fifteen-year-old MVS (Multi Video System) hardware, and also the final cartridge that will be produced for the equally aged but still supported Neo Geo AES console. On the other hand, the projects that SNK are currently working on promise to bring the series into the next generation. At present two new King of Fighters games are officially in production. KOF: Neowave, the latest arcade-bound 2D fighter made with Sammy's Atomiswave hardware, the same system that powered the beautiful Guilty Gear X, and the Playstation 2 exclusive KOF: Maximum Impact, a game that will mark the first time that the King of Fighters series has ever been played in three dimensions. If both games prove to have the same royal blood as their predecessors, the King of Fighters reign may never end. Long live the King.



KING OF FIGHTERS '94

After all the previous founders of the KOF tournament are killed by Terry Bogard during the events of the Fatal Fury series, a bright spark named Rugal Bernstein steps in as the event's sponsor and turns the tournament into a three-on-three competition, inviting the finest fighters in SNK-land to do battle. Violence ensues.



KING OF FIGHTERS '95

After a fine first effort SNK really settled into the series with '95. Teams could now be edited to include any character, not just those from the same nation, and fan favourite (and Kyo's Kusanagi's arch-nemesis) Iori Yagami made his KOF debut.



KING OF FIGHTERS '96

1996's big boss came in the form of Goenitz, who attempts to use the essence of an ancient demon named "Orochi" to destroy the world. Kyo and Iori defeat Goenitz as a team, but in the process Iori is possessed by the demon sending him into an uncontrollable rage in which he kills both his female teammates.



KING OF FIGHTERS '97

The Orochi saga concludes, with Kyo and Iori eventually banishing the demon in the final match. '97 is particularly notable because it sees a change in many characters' move lists. Projectile attacks are downplayed in favour of close-quarters combat, further setting KOF apart from Capcom's games.





KING OF FIGHTERS '98

Taking a break from the KOF continuity, 1998 saw the first of SNK's "Dream Match" titles, where all plotline considerations are thrown out the window. Virtually every notable character to ever take part in a King of Fighters game showed up, whether they were alive or not.



KING OF FIGHTERS 2001

After SNK's resuscitation by software publisher Playmore, the KOF reigns were passed into the capable hands of Korean developer Eolith, and although the reactions were mixed amongst some fans, others were just glad to see it continue, and all without missing a year.



KING OF FIGHTERS '99

Possibly the most revolutionary KOF since '94, this was the year that teams were changed to four-on-four, with the fourth fighter acting as a "striker" who could be used as a desperation attack.



KING OF FIGHTERS 2002

New developers Eolith wisely used 2002 to prove to KOF fanatics that they could indeed do the series justice, and what better way to do that than to hold another Dream Match! Fighters were once again recruited from every era of the franchise, and strikers were also given the boot, returning the series to its pure three-on-three roots. With KOF '02, The King of Fighters had reclaimed its throne.



KING OF FIGHTERS 2000

SNK's last stand as it were, as KOF 2000 would be the final game that the original company would release before collapsing. Doubling the amount of strikers, and including a few SNK in-jokes for the fans made it an admirable farewell to the company.



KING OF FIGHTERS 2003

KOF '03 may be the last King of Fighters game on the MVS hardware, but it certainly won't be the last in the series. Regardless, '03 is a more than fitting sendoff to SNK's fifteen-year-old hardware. Not only is '03 the best looking KOF yet, but just like '99, KOF '03 offers far more surprises than usual, most noticeably the almost total overhaul of the fighting system, which now allows players to switch between their team members mid-bout.



Buffy the Vampire Slayer SEASON 7

FOX HOME ENTERTAINMENT, M15+

» The final season of *Buffy* (or "Buffy, Slayer of the Vampyres", as it should henceforth be known) has some great episodes, and some excellent ideas for story arcs, but ultimately isn't as strong as previous seasons. The concept of the Bringers hunting down all the potential slayers to wipe out the entire line, for instance, is very cool, but when the show became inundated with annoying teenage girls, it wasn't quite so much fun. Similarly, Buffy's many military-style rah rah speeches started to really grate later in the season.

Thank Joss, then, for the return of Tom Lenk. Bringing back Andrew as a major character helped keep things light, providing the comic relief that Xander (to some extent) no longer could, and ensuring that the pop

culture references flowed thick and fast. Indeed, one of the best episodes of the season was presented from Andrew's point of view, as he documented the lead up to the showdown with the big bad. The rest of the core cast have their moments too (Anya back as a vengeance demon, the Principal's showdown with a re-ensouled Spike, Willow's battle with dark magic etc), and the introduction of Nathan Fillion as Caleb was a nice treat for fans of Whedon's masterful *Firefly*.

It may have teetered along the way, but as far as wrapping up events in Sunnydale, Season 7 of *Buffy* served its purpose admirably. Any self respecting *Buffy* fan should own this box set.

Cam Shea

MOVIE: 7 / EXTRAS: 6



Bright Young Things

WARNER BROS, M15+

» Set during the mid 1930s, *Bright Young Things* is Stephen Fry's adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*. It is a darkly humorous study of the excesses of the young and wealthy within a richly theatrical London party scene. Always with an eye for human fallibility, Fry wryly observes the tensions created as a host of glitterati find themselves the target of an emerging tabloid press. The story centres around young couple Adam and Nina, and the outrageous antics of their collection of larger than life friends.

Thwarted novelist Adam is coerced into writing a gossip column in a daily newspaper when the incumbent 'Mr Chatterbox' commits suicide, and Adam finds himself

completely broke and unable to marry his aristocratic bride to be. What follows is a merciless parody of social pretension, hilarious and biting at the same time.

But it is not until things begin to unravel, against a background of looming war, that the true pathos of this film begins to shine through. Prompted by the mental breakdown of one of the key players, the film's light hearted parody gives way to a completely different tone. No longer a caricature of shallow hedonism, the film becomes a savage indictment of "civilised" society.

Surprising and extremely entertaining, this is the Theatre of the Absurd at its finest.

Elizabeth Shea

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 5

Avalon

M15+, EASTERN EYE

» Ash is a legend in Avalon, one of the survivors of the infamous Wizard clan and probably the most powerful warrior in the game. In the future, society may be crumbling but entertainment still reigns supreme, even if it does border on the fringes of legality. Avalon is one such form of entertainment, a virtual reality MMORPG in which some people who jack in never manage to jack out again — death in the game sometimes turns out to be all too real.

Obsessed with finding a secret level in the game supposedly hidden behind the "ghost" of a sad young girl by the Nine Sisters, the original programmers of Avalon, Ash ventures deeper and deeper into uncharted virtual territory finding the true difference between the

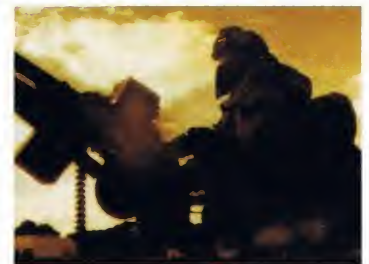
virtual and the real. Written and directed by the team behind *Ghost in the Shell* (Kazounori Itoh and Mamoru Oshii respectively), *Avalon* is one of the most interesting philosophical science fiction films to come out in recent years but be warned, it moves very slowly, carefully charting its course across a number of small and personal moments played in front of a beautiful CGI backdrop. A Japanese/Polish co production, *Avalon* stars mainly Polish actors and uses heavily CG enhanced Polish locales as the setting. The overall effect is beautiful and unearthly yet very effecting, much like the movie as a whole.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 9 / EXTRAS: 6



So many Polish jokes, so little space...



She's no Samos (Samus + Amos)... but then, who is?

Swimming Pool

UNIVERSAL, MA 15+

» Few people know how to make a good sexual thriller — too often the end result comes out like the softcore offerings of the Playboy channel whilst some even worse films turn out like *Showgirls* or the truly abominable *Sliver*. Francois Ozon is one of the few and with his latest film, *Swimming Pool* he proves without a doubt that just because a film is sexy it doesn't have to be bad. Charlotte Rampling stars as a burnt out British mystery novelist who takes up an offer from her publisher to spend some time in his French holiday house to relax and hopefully get back into the writing groove. Thriving in the peace of her new surroundings, Sarah (Rampling) finds herself flush with new ideas but her solitude is soon

interrupted by the unannounced arrival of the publisher's wantonly sexual daughter who spends the first half of the film picking up any man that takes her fancy. Sarah is at once fascinated, repulsed and furious at the interloper and as their tenuous relationship progresses the two feed off each other's distrust and dislike, slowly raising the stakes in their battle for... something. Ludivine Sagnier, something of a small and better proportioned Bardot is riveting as the wayward daughter, Julie and Rampling is equally as impressive as the up tight Sarah, giving much needed balance to the wanton sexuality of Sagnier whilst still remaining quietly sexual herself.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 4



He's the Mokujin of the film world. Or is that already held by Keanu?

Bichunmoo

SPECIAL EDITION

EASTERN EYE, MA15+

» Although the name may conjure up images of a stoner and his prize cow (dude, that's one bitchin' moo), *Bichunmoo* is in fact a sweeping epic set in China's ancient past when the Koryo people (Koreans) were persecuted as second class by the conquering Mongols. Into this oppressive and violent backdrop are plunged Jinha and Sullie, two lifelong friends split apart when the beautiful Sullie is promised to a dignitary for marriage. What follows is a labyrinthine series of battles, double crosses, star crossed lovers and remarkably poignant tear soaked moments. The cinematography, choreography and general art direction of *Bichunmoo* is nothing short of superb — but

considering that it is the most expensive movie ever to be produced in South Korea high production values can be expected. The only thing that holds *Bichunmoo* back from being a classic along the lines of *Crouching Tiger* is the lack of charisma evident in the lead actor Shin Hyeon-jun (Jinha). The man for the most part is the black hole of emotion — he's so flat and wooden that all surrounding emotions are drawn into him never to be seen again. Strangely towards the end of the film he loosens up and actually delivers a credible performance but it's too little too late. Even so, this is just the thing to take your mind off the latest *Matrix* clone.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 7 / EXTRAS: 1



Plenty of our readers like "Mullen up"



Tony Hawk's Secret Skatepark Tour

STOMP, E

» *Tony Hawk's Secret Skatepark Tour* sees Tony get a top lineup of professional skaters together to drive around the States, stopping off and ripping it up at skateparks along the way. It's a great idea — many of the world's best turning up unannounced at some great parks and skating them outside the pressure of competition or demos, free to do their own thing.

So who's (as Ken Kesey would say) "on the bus"? Everyone from up and comers like Ryan Sheckler through to current stars like Bam, Alex Chalmers and snowboard extraordinaire Shaun White, through to the old guard like the always cool Mike V and Rodney Mullen. Who steals the show? Well, Sheckler is

pretty amazing, as is Mullen, and Hawk shows he's as fearless as ever, taking a couple of really gnarly slams, but there's such a good balance of skaters that no matter what style of skating you prefer, you'll find something that you like.

The DVD also has a great selection of Special Features. There's footage of some of the extra parks and some burly tricks that didn't make it into the main event, not to mention the "Rodney Mullen Show" which just proves once again how inhuman and untouchable the guy is. Oh, and don't forget to check out the extra footage of Kerry "Hockey Temper" Getz going nuts every time he misses a trick.

Cam Shea

MOVIE: 7 / EXTRAS: 6



Did we mention it's ultraviolent too?

UltraViolet

SHOCK, MA 15+

» Trust the British to take a tried and true formula, turn it on its head and make it into something special. Running over six one hour episodes, *UltraViolet* tells the story of a group of special operatives tasked with hunting down the Code Vs or leeches, otherwise known to laymen as vampires. If you go into the series expecting something along the lines of *Buffy* or *Angel* you'll be sorely disappointed. Played very dark and straight, *UltraViolet* charts a very morally, politically and religiously ambiguous course, portraying the vampires not as blood sucking fiends but more as a persecuted minority who have done more to protect humanity from itself (and

thus keeping the blood clean and pure) than they have to enslave it. Vampires in the mythology rarely kill their victims but use them as a renewable source of food. The hunters on the other hand are a bitter group of damaged people leaving the viewer often wondering who the real villain of the piece is. Plots intertwine throughout the six episodes making the DVD more of a six-hour film than a typical series.

Unfortunately like all good things in the last couple of years, an American production company has bought the rights to remake *UltraViolet* as a TV action series. Watch the original and you'll know how bad an idea that is.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 4



Robin Williams is nowhere in sight. Phew!

Peter Pan

UNIVERSAL, PG

» It's hard to be faithful to an original story yet at the same time manage to re-interpret the text but somehow P.J. Hogan's new screen version of *Peter Pan* manages to walk that fine line and come out all the better for it. The story of this version remains very faithful to the text — Peter Pan, the eternal child who refuses to grow up whisks the hugely imaginative Wendy and her two younger brothers into Neverland for a life of adventure and excitement where they come into conflict with the diabolical Captain Hook, a pirate and Pan's nemesis. Nemesis is a very appropriate term for Hook as he represents in the film all that Pan is not. He is old, has responsibility

and regrets, essentially making him the punishment for Pan's hubris. There is a constant underlying thread of melancholy and sexual tension running through the film — Hook envies Pan for his freedom but he is too mired in his own regrets to live a similar life, Wendy sees the sadness in Pan's inability to feel anything and Pan's refusal to grow up is an escape rather than a joyful thing. Even Tinkerbell, played with wonderful physicality by Ludivine Sagnier (last seen in *Swimming Pool* sans clothing) is wracked by jealousy. *Peter Pan* may be a children's film at heart but it does have a lot to offer an adult audience if you give it a chance.

Daniel Wilks

MOVIE: 8 / EXTRAS: 6

Ghost in the Shell: STAND ALONE COMPLEX (IMPORT)

PRODUCTION COMPANY: PRODUCTION I.G.
GENRE: SCIENCE FICTION

It must have been tough on Production I.G. making *Stand Alone Complex*. *Ghost in the Shell* is such a highly thought of film, undoubtedly one of the most popular and critically acclaimed animated films around, that making a series based on it would have been massively weighed down by expectation. Even more difficult must have been boiling down the thought provoking nature of the film and cramming it into 25-minute episodes. We're more than happy to announce that I.G. have succeeded in spades. *Stand Alone Complex* ranks up there as one of the most impressive anime series we've ever seen.

Working loosely around the man/machine division of the film, *Stand Alone* revolves peripherally around the exploits of Kusanagi, a cyborg cop (the main character of *Ghost in the Shell*) and the cases in which she becomes involved over the 26 episodes. Whilst the themes of *Ghost in the Shell* and *Stand*

Alone Complex remain the same, the approach of the series is markedly different with a much lighter tone and underlying thread of warm humour. Whilst this change in tone may put off some fans of the film, the lighter heart of the series allows the characters to become far more approachable, creating more of a bond with the viewer.

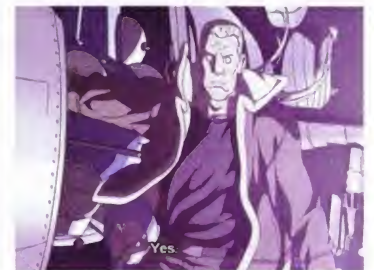
As with most series based on a film the design of *Stand Alone* is a good deal simpler than that of *Ghost* but it does not detract from the beauty of the piece one bit, as the animation is absolutely top notch. Likewise the soundtrack is for the most part brilliant, aside from a weird repeating track that sounds more at home in the mid 80s than it does in a film set in the near future. For a Japanese import the subtitles are absolutely top notch showing only the occasional spelling mistake and no confusing Japlish whatsoever.

Daniel Wilks

ANIMATION: 9 / PLOT: 8
OVERALL: 9



[above] Kusanagi. Hottest. Robot. Ever.



Psycho Diver

PRODUCTION COMPANY: MADHOUSE
GENRE: HORROR (KIND OF)

Whilst not doing enough with your allotted time in a film can leave the end result boring, trying to cram too much into a limited timeframe can have much the same effect as one event overwhelms the next and leaves the viewer exhausted and perplexed rather than entertained. *Psycho Diver* tells the story of Bosujima, a freelance Psycho Diver, an individual who uses a combination of psychic power and high technology to enter the subconscious of another and lay the smack down on their inner demons. Bosujima is hired to dive into Yuki Kano, an up and coming pop idol who suffers from a mysterious inability to sing and strange trances. What follows is the usual mix of personal and professional manipulation, psychosexual tension, a few interesting ideas and a lot of noir cliches.

The major problem with *Psycho Diver* is that it really doesn't seem to know what it wants to be. The cover and blurb promise the viewer psychological horror and weird

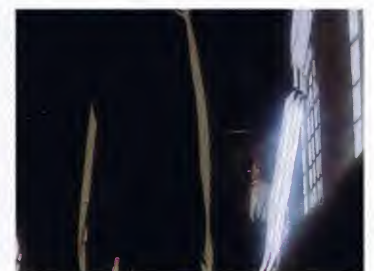
imagery — bandage wrapped cadaver like people, blood, and strange goings on in the deepest recesses of the psyche, but in reality that only covers a minor part of the overall film, the lion's share taken up with a sequence of hard-boiled detective cliches ranging from the hard-bitten PI (Bosujima), the femme fatale in the form of Yuki's manager who may or may not be using her sex appeal to manipulate the hero and Yuki herself who vacillates from being a coquettish vamp to a vegetable. When in the realm of the unconscious, *Psycho Diver* really shines with some great ideas and art but at other times it feels rushed and incoherent.

Daniel Wilks

ANIMATION: 7 / PLOT: 7
OVERALL: 6



[above] Reading PCPP can damage your brain



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AUGUST PRIZE

Just check out the list of games and goodies on the page opposite!

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HYPER 127 - HALO ELITE FORCE XBOX BUNDLE AND GAMES

Jarrad Camm, Bendigo, VIC
Russel Lopez, Arana Hills, QLD



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HYPER»

»HY0130

Q. Who is the world's worst videogame sidekick, and why?



If you've read our Net Trawlin' for this month then you'd already know the benefits that having a sidekick in a videogame can bring. Especially if it's as raging a coil of tight superhero muscle as BLAU boy. But let's face it, aside from a few instances (Kazooie and Dexter I'm looking at you here) sidekicks tend to be more annoying than anything else. So who did you guys think the world's worst videogame sidekick is... let's find out!

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's the best non-gaming website and why?"

Responses will be printed in Hyper #132



MAIL THE HYPER FORUM:

78 Renwick St. Redfern, NSW 2016 Australia
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.

NOT HOT ENOUGH

Microsoft would not like this forum topic, as it suggests that it's not good to play together, even if one is computer controlled. I was split between two, the first being Elvis from Perfect Dark. In certain levels Elvis liked to slowly jog along right across your line of fire blissfully unaware of anything. Plus his alien cries of pain were funny to hear and were an incentive to let him get shot. Elvis was edged out by Natalya from Goldeneye, a nightmare in the control level. Defending her was difficult even on agent. She complained about the racket even when you used a silenced gun and she wouldn't let you kill Boris. Her worst trick was the time she took to escape the level after hacking the Goldeneye. I had many an attempt at the infinite ammo cheat foiled, having to wait a few short inches from the exit. Being hot in the movie was not enough of a saving grace.

Mullet King

WALK THE AIRLOCK

The worst sidekick ever, the one I wanted to pummel the most, would have to be one of the wingmen in the original Wing Commander space flight sim. This was a great game for its time, a real classic, with a rich plot, excellent gameplay and rich characters. Except for one guy, who whenever he got in a scrap would yodel out 'Ramming Speed' before flying into some badguy. The worst thing was he always seemed to survive to the next mission, where the yodelling would begin anew. Man, I'd pay cash-dollars to make that guy walk the airlock.

David

OFF THE CLIFF

OK, so this dude's not technically a sidekick - he's more of an entirely characterless companion but my vote for the worst sidekick of all time would have to be that stupid spotter from CTU Marine Sharpshooter. I bought the stupid game on a whim for 30 bucks and want my money back because of that guy. He's meant to work like a military spotter picking out targets for the sniper and protecting him from attack but all the stupid bastard did was stand in the way, get shot making me lose the mission, give away my position or even in one case push me off the edge of a cliff. That stupid mother is without a doubt the worst sidekick ever to disgrace a game.

USS Crunchy Frog

PISSED OFF

Yorda. It's gotta be Yorda, that weird chick from ICO who only ever speaks in gibberish and is entirely useless aside from being a bad thing magnet. Don't get me wrong ICO is a great game but that chick just pissed me off at every turn. I really didn't want to save her a lot of the time just because she couldn't fend for herself. As far as I'm concerned if you're not going to do anything but mumble in gibberish and glow then you deserve everything you get.

Gareth

FUNNY BONELESS

Why is it that everyone loves that annoying scaly idiot from Neverwinter Nights? You know the one I'm talking about, Deekin the supposedly funny Kobold Bard.

Never in my life have I seen a less funny character. What is so amusing about someone who can't speak properly and is too stupid to work out what will and won't kill him. Even worse the little bastard is entirely useless in the game. All he ever seems to do is sing some stupid little song that boosts your resistances but very little else and then use whatever scrolls he is holding for no readily apparent reason. What kind of stupid sidekick uses all of the summoning scrolls one after another and wastes them all in a fight with a single skeleton? I hate Deekin.

Flange

PEACH PIE ACTION

Mario seriously needs to get a new girlfriend. Peach just doesn't cut it in the good love interest/sidekick stakes for so many reasons.

1) She's always getting bloody kidnapped. Getting kidnapped once is fine but any more than that and you know there's something wrong with the relationship. As far as I'm concerned Peach is always getting kidnapped on purpose just to see how pussy-whipped Mario actually is. You know what I'm getting at. She goes off with her lover Bowser just to see if Mario will come and rescue her...again. She'll stay happy for a while then get bored with the relationship (or maybe she just likes to torture the poor fat plumber) and runs off and gets kidnapped again. With any luck one day Mario will tell the bitch to go rescue herself.

2) She's a tease. To add insult to injury the little tease never gives Mario anything more than cake. If she offered him "pie" it would be a



[above] This game should do us all a favour and sharpshoot itself in the head

different story. Offering pie is like inviting someone up to your place for "coffee" and we all know what that means. But no, all Mario gets is a slice of bloody cake and the dread that next week he's going to have to go and stomp a few more heads and rescue the cock-tease again.

3) Not hot. Seriously, as far as 16

bit hotties go, Peach does not even rate a mention. She looks like she belongs in a Merchant Ivory film starring alongside Anthony Hopkins in that dress and parasol ensemble. Look at Mario on the other hand. He's Italian, overweight and has the best mustache ever. He should be banging some chick from The Sopranos or failing that Mira Sorvino.

Chunky Lover

SHIGGY LOVE

Worst sidekick? I would say it's got to be Luigi... cos he's always left behind (every Mario game ever except for Superstar Saga) or reluctantly dragged along (SS). But the thing is that Nintendo love to have fun with what a loser Luigi is! In Paper Mario he's left behind to tend to the housework, and in Superstar Saga wherever Mario goes he's instantly recognised, while they tend to point at Luigi and go "who's that?" I guess I'm saying kudos to Nintendo for creating the worst sidekick ever, but intentionally so!

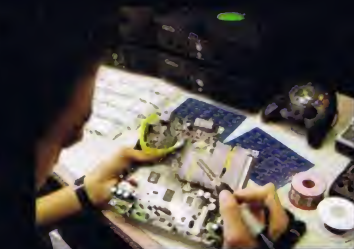
Andre 4000



[right] Luigi's botched attempt at a mannerism

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A PRICE INCREASE?!

Dear Hyper Gang,

Can you please make the cover price of your magazine around \$7 so I don't have to keep touching my newsagent's hand to collect the five cent piece change. I am a very, very serious gamer, I don't need people touching my hands, the tools of my leisure, the keys to my infinite gaming world. No one has ever touched my Nintendo controller besides me, it is marked only with my fingerprints, and it upsets me that I might be carrying the germs of my newsagent back to my domain of video game euphoria. I beg you, before I catch leprosy from this freak, change the cover price.

Thank you for listening.

Send by:

Dan Spicer

OK dude, put the knife down, we're going to back away slowly and everything is going to be fine.

ANXIOUS ABOUT ARCADE

Dear Hyper-izzles,

While perusing this issue, I was disturbed to find a complete absence of Levy-Love. Where the hell has Tim gone? Forget Arcade... Hyper isn't Hyper without an oh so whimsical photo of the (dare I say it) living embodiment of the Mannerism that is Mr Levy. I'm so damn irate that I traveled back in time far enough that I could write a letter to submit for this very issue,

to ensure the oversight is brought to people's attention quickly.

Herbet Tekken

Dear Herbert, this is why mucking around with the flow of time can only ever end in tears (albeit tears of joy in this case). Sure, you traveled back in time so your letter could be published in the Levy-Less issue, but by doing so, we were able to address the Levy-inbalance by pairing your "letter from the future" with the pic of the always humble Tim that you see on this very page. Enjoy! Oh, and I don't suppose you could travel back from Mid November with a copy of Halo 2 for us? Pu-lease!

On a more serious note, Arcade will be back next month. Phew.

DYNASTY WARRIORS FAN

hey hyper,

This is about my 12th unreplied e-mail but I'll keep trying to get my questions answered...

Anyway, first question...it's about subscription. When would I subscribe if I wanted to get all next years magazines? also, with release dates what does TBA stand for?

Second question...do you have any idea when Gran Turismo 4 is coming out here? I heard it was being delayed again.

Third, which are you looking forward to the most so far, Playstation 3, Xbox 2 or Gamecube 2 (if that's what they are going to be called?) Which out of Nintendo DS and PSP?



[above] We got your Levy Love right here!



4th, can you put in some more info on final fantasy 12? I am looking forward to it so bad and want to know more!

Last question, what would I write to if I wanted information on Dynasty Warriors? I know I should write to KOEI but I don't know where. Are they making dynasty warriors 5?

Don't you all think they should make "Dynasty Warriors: The Movie"? I had an idea for casting...Orlando Bloom as Zhang He, you seen Troy? Press r3 on dynasty warriors 4 and you'll see why he's perfect for the part. Anyway, I gotta go and watch the last samurai.

ma chao (and no, it's not my real name)

- 1) With subs if you wanted Jan through Dec it would probably be best to subscribe in November or so. Of course considering that you can simply renew a subscription it doesn't really matter when you get it.
- 2) TBA stands for To Be Announced which is, incidentally the date for GT4 being released. Although if it's a month you're after, let's say November.
- 3) Even though it sounds like a copout answer we're looking forward to all the new platforms but secretly we probably want the DS a little bit more than the PSP.
- 4) See our E3 coverage this month and keep your eyes peeled for a more comprehensive preview in the future.
- 5) Koei is your best bet. The interweb is your friend in these regards.

VOLVO CONSPIRACY

Is it just me or is everyone in the "Everyone wants to be a Volvo driver" ad the dead spit of Gordon Freeman?

Thanks.

Tim Chmielewski

It's not just you champ. It's kind of creepy.

MEMORIES, LIKE THE SOMETHING AND THE SOMETHING

Games are so much more enjoyable when you have real nice childhood/family memory to go with it. I'll never forget being at my grandma's one night for dinner, when my uncle and his wife to be, walked through towards the lounge room where the rest of the family were. Under his right arm my uncle was holding a square cardboard box with writing on it. I couldn't make it out as I was only 5 or 6 years old at the time.

What was to come was something I had never seen before at that stage of my life. It was a Nintendo Entertainment System with two games, one was Terminator (man I liked the movie but the game was wack, but I didn't care coz I was a tyke then) and the other was something so simple, but man it was the best game. SUPER MARIO BROS.

We all had a go, first I ran straight

CAPTION THIS!

PART 55 WINNER

Mr M. tickled our funny bones this month with this entry:



"Michael Jackson hopes that Bubbles doesn't recognise the new disguise."

in to a Goomba (them brown gay walking mushroom things), then I had to wait for my turn again. Then finally my second try I finished the level and the thing that made this so captivating, was the fact of how this game brought the whole family together on that single occasion. Also the fact that every time I jumped with Mario, my arms would move up as if I was trying to jump too! (I'm sure some people would have done this, being there first game ever! :)

1. What do you guys at hyper think of Red Vs Blue? Because I think it so damn funny! Church is my favourite, because everyone online or during system-link play in Halo mistakes me for it. (My game tag, being Chuchi85!)

2. Do you guys have any past/gaming moments? If so, you guys should put that in your forum! (Please don't beat me master!)

3. This is the first time I have ever written to a magazine, but I am sure glad it's Hyper (butt kissing gets you know where!).

So in closing this would have to be my all time favourite games, Legend of Zelda, Mario All-stars, Mario 64, Conkers BFD and HALO: Combat Evolved (can't wait till HALO 2). Although I obviously have other all time favourites, I also have some more favourite gaming/family moments too! (Yeah right!)

That's my whole two cents.

George Gerazounis not an alias.

George

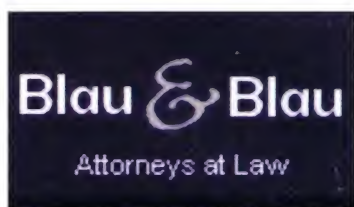
1) RvB is brilliant and kind of obsessively scary if you take into account the amount of time the guys must have to take to do an episode.

2) Will do.

3) It's always nice to have a freshly kissed butt.

WANTS MORE STEVE LOVE

Hi, my name is Paul. I was looking at your feature on 'The State of Play' in issue #129. I saw in the GameCube section that the average GameCube owner has six games. Six? How about 36, baby! Well, 37 if you include the Game Boy player. I'd just like to say



[above] John Smith discovers the world's most powerful law firm since Wolfram & Hart

that I'm a little annoyed with Hyper. In issue #129 there was only one GCN preview which wasn't exclusive to the GCN, and one each of exclusive and not exclusive reviews. What is with the GCN getting hardly any exposure in the magazine? Nintendo Gamer used to have at least 4 reviews or more. Maybe that's why it only has 5% of the market... This problem (which seems to be getting worse each issue) is making me consider whether my subscription to Hyper is worth it, considering I only subscribed to Hyper because Nintendo Gamer shut down. Why can't you review GCN games.

Another little annoyance: why is it that so many games are released on PS2 and Xbox or PS2, Xbox and PC but not the GCN? Is it due to the proprietary disc? Why is the GCN often passed up?

Apart from these issues, you make a great magazine, and keep BLAuing it up!

Paul Howlett.

Hey Paul,

Whilst we would like to be able to review and preview more GCN games (we do have a deep and abiding love of the little lunchbox that could) we can only review and preview what we have access to. Some issues we have multiple Cube titles reviewed and previewed, others we have next to none. Ultimately it's down to what we get every month as to what ends up in the magazine.

TRANSFORM THIS!

Dear Hyper persons (well, whoever is in charge of reviews),

After reading the review on "Transformers" for PS2 in issue 129 I was left a tad disappointed and felt it needed more information for the reader. After all, most of us buy/rent these games based on the reviews we read in Hyper.

I'd have to say that the most important thing missing was any mentions of game control. Most reviews in Hyper mention quite a lot of (if not all) aspects of each game and not seeing this mentioned made me feel like the review for this game was written in a hurry or possibly just overlooked.

Transformers, by Melbourne House, has quite a large learning curve when it comes to the controls. One thing that is missing (I felt) is customisable controls, or at least a choice of different control schemes.

Just my thoughts, and comments, on an otherwise great review.

Jeremy

Jerem-wah (if I may call you that)

LETTER OF THE MONTH

COMEDY GOLD GET!

Hey gang.

What did you stop doing "Shine Get" jokes? Think of all the comedy gold you're missing out on!

Unreal Tournament 2004-

PANCAKE GET!

Harvest Moon- GIRLFRIEND GET!

Zelda- MASTER SWORD GET!

Tony Hawk- KICK FLIP GET!

Resident Evil 4- LOSS OF APPETITE GET!

Tomb Raider- REFUND GET!

"It's Good to Play Together"-

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Jickle

Hey Jickle

Jickle letter Issue 130 Hyper - PRIZE GET!



You've won a Microsoft® IntelliMouse® Explorer for PC! Best. Mouse. Ever.

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Thanks for your comments. We agree that Transformers is a hard game to sum up in a two page review, partly because beneath the straight up shooter action is a surprisingly deep game that gets better the more you play it, and partly because, as you say, it does have a relatively steep learning curve control-wise.

Unfortunately, the reality is we can't talk about everything that we'd like to with only two pages to work with. After all, we've already got to pack as many in-jokes (Amos, Blau and "DM" references) as we can before we even get to the review.

Rest assured we'll be tekken our reviews a little more seriously from here on in.



[below] Braidy Newman gets sassy, FFX-2 style

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PlayStation 2 Games Over \$50

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1	▲	SingStar	All Other
2	▼	Gran Turismo 4 Prologue	Racing
3	⊕	Harry Potter: Azkaban	Adventure
4	⊕	Eyeto: Play	Compilation
5	▼	Transformers	Adventure
6	▼	Need 4 Speed:Undrgrnd	Racing
7	⊕	Shrek 2	Adventure
8	▼	Fight Night	Sports
9	▼	Simpson's Hit & Run	Adventure
10	▼	AFL Live Premiership Ed	Sports

TOP 10

PlayStation Games Over \$30

W/E 6 June 2004
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	Simpson's Wrestling	Sports
2	◆	H Potter Chamber Secrts	Adventure
3	◆	Yu-Gi-Oh Forbidden Mem	Strategy
4	▲	Grand Theft Auto Coll Ed	Adventure
5	▲	Disney Triple Pack	Adventure
6	▼	FIFA 2004	Sports
7	◆	Beyblade Let It Rip	Adventure
8	▲	Medal Of Honor 2 Pack	Action
9	⊕	FIFA 2003	Sports
10	◆	Bubble Bobble	Action

TOP 10

Game Cube Games Over \$50

W/E 6 June 2004
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	Mario Kart Double Dash	Racing
2	⊕	The Hobbit	Adventure
3	⊕	Harry Potter Philosopher	Adventure
4	▼	Final Fan Crystal Chron	RPG
5	▲	Lgnd Zelda: Wind Waker	RPG
6	⊕	Shrek 2	Adventure
7	▼	Mario Golf Toadstool Tour	Sports
8	⊕	Soul Calibur 2	Action
9	▼	Mario Party 5	Family
10	▼	Simpson's Hit & Run	Adventure

TOP 10

Xbox Games Over \$50

W/E 6 June 2004
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	V8 Supercars 2	Racing
2	▲	Splinter Cell Pandora Tom	Adventure
3	▼	Ninja Gaiden	Adventure
4	▼	GTA Twin Pack	Adventure
5	⊕	Harry Potter: Azkaban	Adventure
6	⊕	Shrek 2	Adventure
7	▲	RalliSport Challenge 2	Racing
8	▼	Simpson's Hit & Run	Adventure
9	▼	Need 4 Speed: Undrgrnd	Racing
10	⊕	Alias	Adventure

TOP 10

PC Games Over \$20

W/E 6 June 2004
RETAIL SALES

1	◆	The Sims Deluxe	Strategy
2	⊕	Harry Potter: Azkaban	Adventure
3	▼	The Sims Unleashed	Strategy
4	▼	The Sims Superstar	Strategy
5	▼	V8 Supercars 2 DVD	Racing
6	▲	Rise Of Nations	Strategy
7	▼	Far Cry	Action
8	⊕	Halo - Combat Evolved	Action
9	▼	The Sims Makin' Magic	Strategy
10	◆	Battlefield Vietnam	Action

TOP 10

Game Boy Advance Games Over \$30

W/E 6 June 2004
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	Pokémon Ruby	RPG
2	▼	Pokémon Sapphire	RPG
3	⊕	Harry Potter: Azkaban	Adventure
4	⊕	Mario Kart Super Circuit	Racing
5	⊕	Shrek 2	Adventure
6	⊕	Mario Vs Donkey Kong	Action
7	▼	Yu-Gi-Oh World Champ	Strategy
8	▼	Simpson's Road Rage	Racing
9	▼	Dragonball Z: Goku 2	Action
10	▼	Super Mario Adv 4: SMB3	Adventure

TOP 10

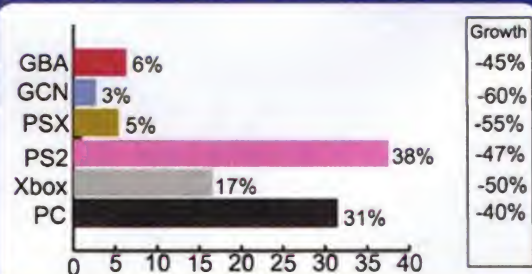
All Full Priced Games

W/E 6 June 2004
RETAIL SALES

1	▲	SingStar	PlayStation 2
2	▼	Gran Turismo 4 Prologue	PlayStation 2
3	⊕	Harry Potter: Azkaban	PlayStation 2
4	⊕	Eyeto: Play	PlayStation 2
5	▼	The Sims Deluxe	PC/MAC
6	◆	V8 Supercars 2	Xbox
7	◆	Transformers	PlayStation 2
8	▼	Need 4 Speed: Undrgrnd	PlayStation 2
9	⊕	Shrek 2	PlayStation 2
10	⊕	Harry Potter: Azkaban	PC/MAC

MARKET WATCH All Games by Platform

MAY vs JUN
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



GfK tracks the weekly sales of business and leisure technology products, and provides detailed reports to subscribers and Reseller & Retail panel members. For subscription or panel membership details phone 02 9900 2888. Copyright © 2004 by GfK. All rights reserved.

A full-page illustration of Cyclops from the X-Men Legends: The Motion Picture video game. He is shown from the waist up, wearing his iconic black and gold uniform. He has a determined, slightly angry expression, with his eyes glowing red and emitting a powerful, bright red energy beam that extends across the left side of the frame. The background is a dark, stormy blue with some lighter, hazy clouds. The overall tone is dramatic and action-oriented.

Next Issue:

X-MEN LEGENDS: Gaming up a Storm!

Plus: We talk to Eiji Aonuma about the Zelda franchise, go hands on with Grand Theft Auto San Andreas, and review another batch of steaming videogame goodness.

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Mobile Games

for Nokia, Siemens, Samsung, LG, Sony Ericsson, Motorola, Sharp

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

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1 Call gets 3 Games

EDGE

219901

Shark Attack
Red Hot Roads
Forge A Fortune

SLACK

219902

New Skool Skater
Escape master
Black Widow

MOOBIG TAXI

219903

Fruit Machine
Moon Taxi
Big Tree

GOAT

219904

Golf Teaz
Kekelade Penguin
Chairs

Garfield

210290

SOCCER manager

210227

COLLISION COURSE 2004

210303

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POOL CHALLENGE

210246

POKER

210204

PATIENCE

210210

BOWLING

210251

FIREBOMB

210306

CRICKET 1day Series 2004

210160

Golfatol Tour

210275

Golfatol Lakes

210275

PUB DARTS

210299

Monophonic, Polyphonic & True Tones

Monophonic Ringtones: Nokia, Samsung, Motorola, Siemens, Sagem, Sendo
Polyphonics: Nokia, Samsung, Sharp, Sagem, Panasonic, Sony Ericsson, Motorola, Siemens, Sendo, LG
True Tones: Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Sagem, Panasonic

BLACK BETTY - Spiderbait	113761	FOUR TO THE FLOOR - Starsailor	113588
ROSES - Outkast	113806	BOUNCE - Sarah Connor	114025
I DONT WANT TO KNOW - Mario Winans	113805	WHEN YOU SAY YOU - Human Nature	113926
LEFT OUTSIDE ALONE - Anastacia	113616	SWAY - Michael Bubke	114142
TRICK ME - Kelis	113804	SUGA SUGA - Baby Bash feat Frankie J	113106
THE REASON - Hoobastank	113947	LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE - Jet	113618
ONE CALL AWAY - Chingy	113563	DONT TELL ME - Avril Lavigne	113682
MY BAND - D12	113795	EVERYBODY'S FOOL - Evanescence	113833
WITH YOU - Jessica Simpson	113927	GET LOW - Lil Jon	112920
DRIVE - Shannon Noll	113934	SO BEAUTIFUL - Pete Murray	113623
THANK YOU - Jamelia	113455	SUMMER SUNSHINE - The Corrs	114023
PERFECT - Simple Plan	113847	IN THE SHADOWS - Rasmus	113081
NAUGHTY GIRL - Beyonce Ft Lil Kim	113292	HEY MAMA - The Black Eyed Peas	113460
LUV YA - JYess	114091	I HATE EVERYTHING - Three Days Grace	113808

NEW! All tones listed are available as regular Monophonic OR Polyphonic. Truetones sound just like the real thing! Yes real music with real singing! (not original artists). Available Truetones are denoted by the # symbol.

Hottest	NU-Metal	R&B
y Little Sister - Lost Brothers	113321	I MISS YOU - blink 182
All downhill from here - New Found Glory	114144	MY IMMORTAL - evanescence
Beautiful - Alex Lloyd	114127	LYING FROM YOU - linkin park
Breaking The Habit - Linkin Park	113955	BRING ME TO LIFE - evanescence#
Bum - Usher	113800	BEHIND BLUE EYES - limp bizkit
Chocolate - Kylie Minogue	113977	I HATE EVERYTHING - three days grace
Don't Leave Home - Dido	113582	
Down - Blink 182	113944	
Downfall - Matchbox 20	114141	
Everybody's Fool - Evanescence	113833	
You're Fit But Don't... - The Streets	113880	
Get Low - Lil Jon	113920	
Hear My Name - Armand Van Helden	113827	
My Happy Ending - Avril Lavigne	114136	
Nosebleed Section - Hilltop Hoods	114090	
On My Knees - The 411	113925	
Plug It In - Basement Jaxx ft JC Chasez	113698	
Super Dupier Love - Jessie Stone	113938	
You're The Only One - Maria Mena	114140	
I LOVE THEM HOES - eamon	114088	
LUV IS COOL - system of life	113985	
FURJB - frankie	113917	
MASS DESTRUCTION - faithless	113959	
CAUGHT IN A MOMENT - sugababes	113979	
3 AM - busted	113975	

Dance	Reggae
COME WITH ME - special d	113678
SUNNY - boogie pimps	113830
NO MATTER WHAT - benmy benassi	113575
HEAR MY NAME - armand van helden	113827
PLUG IT IN - basement jaxx	113698
CHA GHA SLIDE - dj casper	113506
DING DONG SONG - gunther	113962
BUILD ME UP BUTT - foundations#	113009
IM YOUR MAN - shane richie	113289
SUMMER OF 69 - bryan adams#	112531

Essential Tones	Party Time
IN DA CLUB - 50 cent#	112440
I HEAVEN - dj sammy#	112929
THE LOGICAL SONG - scooter#	111965
SATISFACTION - benmy benassi#	112751
DILEMMA - nelly ft. kelly rowland#	112921
LOSE YOURSELF - eminem#	112289
CASTLES IN THE... - ian van dahl#	111970
BECAUSE I GOT HIGH - afroman#	111454
YOU'RE A SUPERSTAR - love inc	112329
A LITTLE LESS CONVE - elvis vs jxl#	111957
SMOOTH CRIMINAL - alien ant farm#	111377
CANT GET YOU OUT - kylie#	111388
YEAR 3000 - busted	112344
IGNITION - REMIX - r kelly	112642
HOW YOU REMIND ME - nickelback	111671
TEENAGE DIRTBAG - wheatus#	111186
21 SECONDS - so solid crew	111341
RESURRECTION - ppk	111550

Hip Hop	Rock
CH-CHECK IT OUT - beastie boys	113936
99 PROBLEMS - Jay z	113989
WHERE IS THE - black eyed peas#	112890
SHE WANTS TO MOVE - n.e.r.d	113539
HEY YA - outkast#	113176
P.L.U.M.P. - 50 cent#	112599
HEY MAMA - the black eyed peas#	113460
MILKSHAKE - kelis#	112885
MY BABY - bow wow ft jagged edge	113997
THROUGH DA WIRE - kanye west	113622
SLOW JAMZ - twista ft kanye west	113427
SHUT UP - the black eyed peas	113123
IF I CANT - 50 cent	112601
TURN ME ON - kevin lyttle #	113100
NOWOMANNOGRY - bob marley #	111331

Reggae	Themes
TURN ME ON - kevin lyttle #	113100
NOWOMANNOGRY - bob marley #	111331
HOME & AWAY	111343
MCLEODS DAUGHTERS - title music	112653
BLUEHEELERS - main title music	112648
STINGERS - main title music	112654
WHITE COLLAR BLUE - title music	112655
EVERYBODY LOVES - title music	113221
NEIGHBOURS - theme	112178
THE SECRET LIFE - motor ace	112639
ALWAYS GREENER - title music	112986
THE SIMPSONS - the simpsons	111132
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	111121
EXORCIST - exorcist	111871
ROCKY - jogging theme	112481
FOOTLOOSE - title music	113937
THE OC - phantom planet	113967
GOOD BAD AND THE UGLY	111181

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141544	141162	141315	141935	
141717	141988	141286	141462	
141844	141834	141650	141245	
141795	141668	142301	141822	

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HITS 2003 119962 Innocent Eyes - Delta Goodrem Right Turn - Chingy Liesjes Of The Good Gracie	JUSTIN TLAKE 119961 Cry Me A River Like I Love You Work It	EMINEM 119955 Cleaning Out My... Superman Stan

Wallpapers

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