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O F F L I N E

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MARCH ISSUE 014

FREE

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Dreamcast IS DEAD

We conduct the post-mortem

Black & White

Latest screens in full colour

Phantasy Star Online

Multiplayer matures on DC

Put Up Your Dukes!

(of Hazzard poster, that is)

C-12

An alien experience on PSX

Hostile Waters

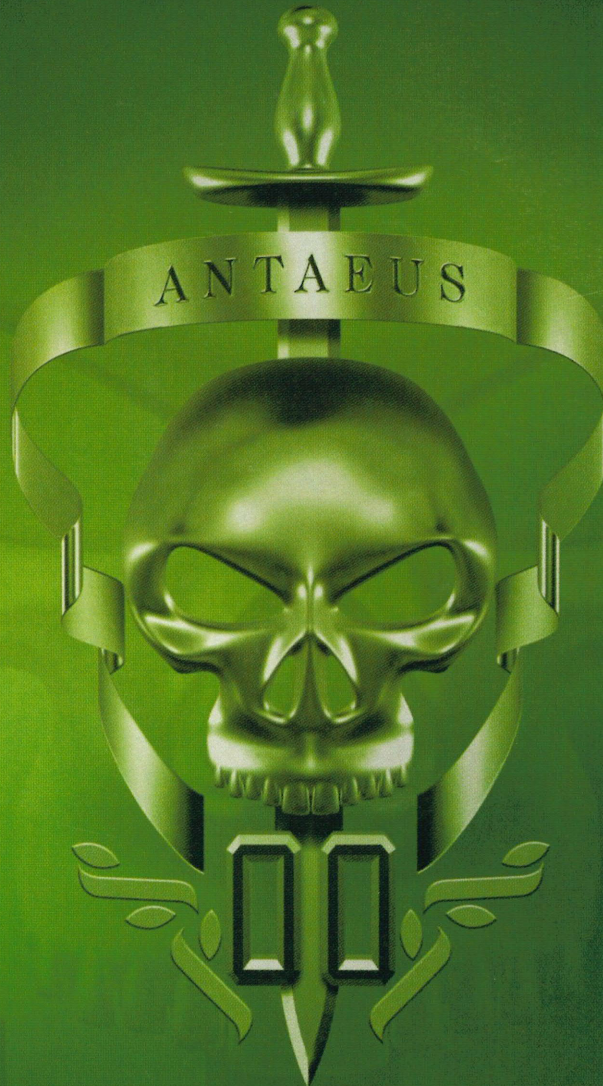
Sea water great review it's got

Severance

Enter the gore zone!

Plus 20 reviews, previews and pipelines including **Sonic Adventure 2**, **Vanishing Point**, **Formula One 2001**, **Operation Flashpoint**, **Moto GP** and **Clive Barker's Undying**

HOSTILE WATERS



"Without a doubt – it's the first great game of the new millennium. Buy it, or resign yourself to waking up in the middle of the night feeling as if there's something missing in your life"

"Rage's ambition has paid off big style"

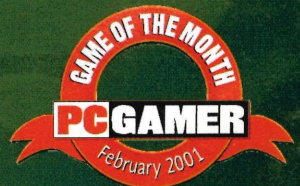
92% **PCGAMER**

These are Hostile Waters...

Rage

www.rage.com

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Dear retailer, please reserve me a copy of Hostile Waters

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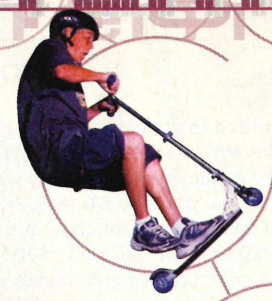
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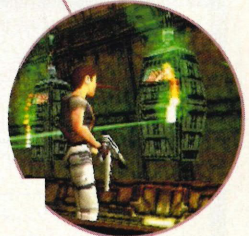
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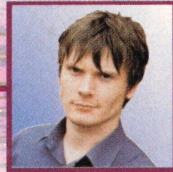


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GDO NOTE



At first I was perplexed but my mood turned to one of vexation in a manner so swift I shocked even myself. I hadn't seen a soul all day and when I discovered the cavernous food hall of GDO's subterranean complex deserted apart from the kitchen staff manning the serving counter, I knew there was a problem. I marched up to the counter and addressed one of the kitchen hands: a thin looking youth with a manic look in his eyes and what appeared to be breadcrumbs around his lips. "You boy," I said. "Where in damnation is everyone?" I was surprised to discover my own annoyance. "I dunno sir," the boy stammered; he appeared to be hiding a bread roll behind his back. "I heard there'd been a mistake with the magazine subscription." I was intrigued. "What sort of mistake?" I asked. The boy took a deep breath and continued. "I heard that someone put the offer in the magazine at the wrong price sir, and now we have hundreds of subscription requests that we're gonna lose money on. Everyone thinks you'll be real mad sir." The boy was visibly shaking. "Hey now, don't be afraid," I reassured him. "I'm not an ogre. Tell me - what price was printed?" The boy produced the February issue of the magazine and turned to the subscription page. The price was clear: £14.99 plus £1.99 for postage and packaging. "Surely that's wrong sir," the boy said earnestly. "You can't give away 12 copies of GDO and Soldier of Fortune Gold for that price...can you sir?" At first I smiled, then I laughed until my sides hurt. "It does seem too good to be true doesn't it?" I said as the tears streamed down my face. "But true it is." Within moments the room was full of cheering GDO workers; they had been listening from their hiding places and their relief was palpable. I beckoned them to join me and we sang all 103 verses of the GDO anthem until the roof beams shuddered. The celebrations continued long into the night.

James Kelly

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

GDO's prestige award system explained

GDO is committed to accurate and fair reviews. We're well aware that you might only buy one game a month, and hopefully you trust us to tell you which one is most worth your hard-earned cash. So, following remedial arithmetic classes for all the staff, GDO carries marks out of ten on each review - but we are stingy with our top marks.

That said, we are prepared to offer 10s to a certain select few games. Our criteria for this are as follows: it must meet the standards of its time in every area, excel in at least one, and not fall down in any; it must contain at least one element which can be described as "exceptional"; and it must also contain significant originality and assure long-term gameplay. Each game receiving a 10 is rewarded with the GDO Gold award.

Marks of 9 are given to games which fall short of the above criteria due to one or two minor flaws, and specifically for games which meet the Gold criteria but don't offer a significant quantity of originality and/or innovation. These games are rewarded with the Silver award.

So this means that you won't often see a game getting a 9 or 10 - but don't let this put you off. An 8 or a 7 is still a good mark, and if the game appeals to you it should be well worth buying.

We've thought long and hard about this marking system, and we're confident it makes our reviews clearer and your buying decisions easier to make. But if you have any suggestions or comments, send them to us at the usual address.



GDO GOLD AWARD

This award is only given to the top 'must have' game. It's GDO's highest award, and is given for a perfect score of ten out of ten.



GDO SILVER AWARD

This award is given to games achieving a score of nine out of ten. It is bestowed upon games that are highly recommended for purchasing.

PC SCORE STYLE

JUDGEMENT

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MIN: Minimum system requirements to play

GDO SUGGESTS:
Suggested system requirements for acceptable play

- PUBLISHER:** Game publisher
- DEVELOPER:** Game author
- RELEASE:** When the game is available to buy

GD ONLINE: The URL you should type in for the extra information found on our web site.

+ Positive points about the game

- Negative points about the game

THE REVIEW SCORE OUT OF TEN **6** OUT OF TEN

CONSOLE SCORE STYLE

JUDGEMENT

- FORMAT:** Console
- PUBLISHER:** Game publisher
- DEVELOPER:** Game author
- RELEASE:** When the game is available to buy

GD ONLINE: The URL you should type in for the extra information found on our web site.

+ Positive points about the game

- Negative points about the game

THE REVIEW SCORE OUT OF TEN **7** OUT OF TEN

uk charts

ChartTrack UK all format charts - week ending February 17, 2001



All information printed above is strict copyright of ChartTrack Weekly Report. Contact ELSPA at Station Road, Otterham, near Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1LW. Tel: 01396 830642

ChartTrack collects sales data from more than 4,000 UK outlets. Supporting retailers include Argos, ASDA, Blockbuster, Comet, Currys, Dixons, Electronics Boutique, Game Ltd, HMV, John Lewis, MFI, Currys PC World, Staples, Tesco, Virgin, WH Smith, Woolworth and a small selection of independents.

1	Final Fantasy IX Squaresoft	PSX
2	Who Wants To Be a Millionaire? Eidos Interactive	PSX/PC/DC
3	Moto GP Sony	PS2
4	FIFA 2001 Electronic Arts	PS2/PSX/PC
5	WWF Smackdown 2 THQ	PSX
6	Rayman (Platinum) Ubi Soft	PSX/GBC/PSX/PC
7	Buzz Lightyear of Star Command Activision	PSX/GBC/PC
8	Wu Tang: Taste The Pain Activision	PSX
9	Theme Park World Electronic Arts	PSX/PC/PS2
10	SSX: Snowboard Supercross Electronic Arts	PS2

WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?

The reviewers reveal all...

They review games for a living - but what do they actually choose to play when they're relaxing at home. Here, our fab four reveal what their top three games this month are.

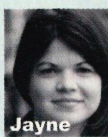


Currently playing: ISS Pro Evolution 2 (PSX), Oni (PS2), Quake III (DC)

"Now I've made the semis of the office tournament, practice is crucial. Office pride is at stake you know!"
[I just know it's all going to end in tears for someone - Ed.]



Oni



Currently playing: Alice (PC), Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 (PSX), Spider-Man (PSX)

"This month I have been mainly playing Alice on PC, to see how the other half lives. Also wetting my pants about the upcoming Red Faction on PS2 - looks great!"



Red Faction



Currently playing: Phantasy Star Online (DC), Hostile Waters (PC), Final Fantasy IX (PSX)

"Hostile Waters has been taking up a lot of my time and I'm still trying to finish Final Fantasy IX and discover why Zidane's sword's hilt looks suspiciously like a pork sword."



Hostile Waters



Currently playing: Championship Manager 00/01 (PC), Metal Gear Solid (PSX), ISS Pro Evolution (PSX)

"My efforts on Championship Manager 00/01 mean Nottingham Forest now let me down throughout the week, rather than just the weekend."



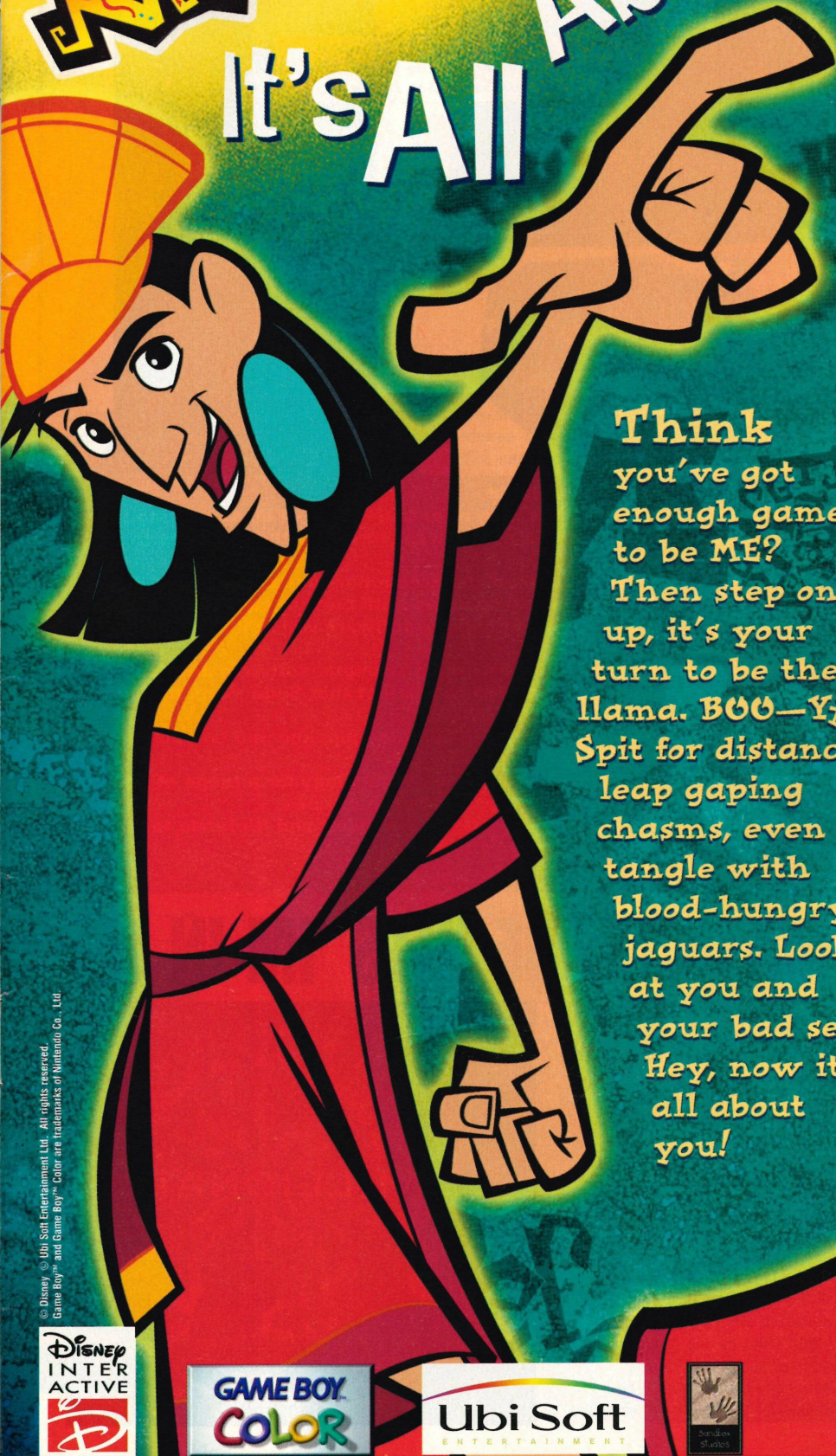
CM 00/01

Disney's

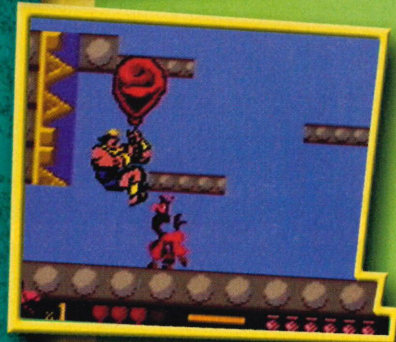
THE EMPEROR'S

NEWGROOVE

It's All About Me!



Think you've got enough game to be ME? Then step on up, it's your turn to be the llama. BOO-YA! Spit for distance, leap gaping chasms, even tangle with blood-hungry jaguars. Look at you and your bad self. Hey, now it's all about you!



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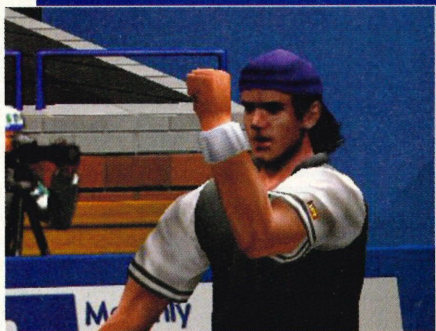
www.disney.co.uk/disneyinteractive/

www.ubisoft.co.uk

Tennis sisters to serve up a smash hit?

Tennis superstar sisters Venus and Serena Williams have been signed up to appear in the sequel to Virtua Tennis.

The girls will also assist with the development of the game which could prove to be another smash hit for Sega. Martha Hill, director of sports marketing at Sega of America, said the company was delighted to have the Williams sisters on board. "Sega Sports is thrilled to work with Venus and Serena Williams; two of the most dynamic athletes in sports today. We hope to translate their passion and excitement for the game of tennis into our new video game."



UK games sales up as USA market slumps

UK games sales rose 16 per cent last year as the US market experienced a five per cent slump.

NPD, a consumer report agency, has reported a dip in US video game, hardware and software sales in 2000, while ELSPA, who represent the interests of UK publishers, reported the healthy domestic figures.

US video game sales dipped from \$6.9bn in 1999 to \$6.5bn last year. In the UK, however, game sales actually rose to an all-time high of over £934m.

The US decline was attributed to the transitional period that the console market is going through: PlayStation and N64 are coming to the end of their lifespan while the PS2, Gamecube and Xbox are all on there way in.

The rise in sales in the UK is partly due to the drop in price of many console games. In 1998 a PlayStation game would have cost an average of £32 whereas now they are sold at the average price of £22.



Dreamcast is OUTCAST



The dream is over - but Sega will produce games for the PlayStation2 and the Game Boy Advance



Sega has ditched the Dreamcast.

The games giant pulled the plug after four years of disappointing sales of the next-generation console proved too much for the company to sustain.

The last Dreamcast will roll off the production line at the end of March. Marketing for the system will continue until current supplies of the console have run out. In the meantime, software will still be developed for the gaming system.

Sega will now concentrate on its main strength: software development. Dreamcast fans can be consoled by the fact that Sega plans to release 100 games for the DC by March 2002.

The company also has five PS2 titles in the pipeline and two planned for release on the Game Boy Advance.

Sega also plans to provide Dreamcast technology for a range of devices, including the PACE set-top box and palm top devices.

The Dreamcast's demise leaves Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo to battle it out for the top selling next-gen machine.

Sega Ditches Dreamcast: page 43.

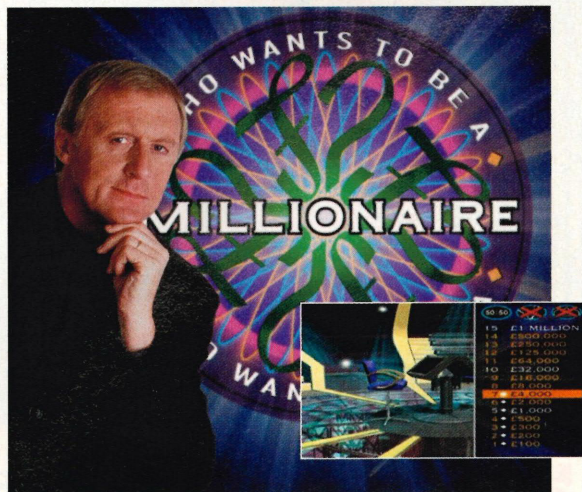
MILLIONAIRE HITS 1M IN UK

Eidos Interactive's 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' has become the first game to sell 1m copies in the UK.

It took just 121 days to propel the title, which is based on the hit TV series of the same name, to the 1m mark.

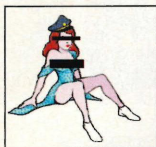
The game has been a big-seller on the PlayStation, selling over 600,000 copies so far. The PC version has sold nearly 350,000 - the Dreamcast release lags behind with only 39,000. The sales have reportedly generated £28.95m to date.

With Eidos having recently reported substantial losses, Millionaire could prove to be a lifeline for the beleaguered company.



Rank	Revenue
15	£1 MILLION
14	£950,000
13	£900,000
12	£850,000
11	£800,000
10	£750,000
9	£700,000
8	£650,000
7	£600,000
6	£550,000
5	£500,000
4	£450,000
3	£400,000
2	£350,000
1	£300,000

B17 PORN BOMBSHELL



FLYING FORTRESS THE MIGHTY 8TH

Copies of B-17: Flying Fortress - The Mighty Eighth have shipped with a file containing links to hardcore pornographic material.

The flight simulator game from Hasbro, which is rated for over 11s in the UK, was released containing a 200MB resource file which contained hundreds of links to Internet porn sites interspersed with game data.

After the problem was brought to the attention of publisher Rage Software, the company took swift action. Rage only recently bought B-17 developers, Wayward Design.

In a statement to GDO, Rage's Head of Communications, Glen O'Connell, said an internal

investigation had found the links could only be viewed if players dissected an individual data file, not through normal usage of the game.

"We have taken internal disciplinary action against an individual employee and are currently in the process of issuing a patch file to customers who have purchased the product to eradicate this problem. Rage is also working closely with Hasbro and Infogrames to recall any unsold copies of the game currently in the retail channel and re-mastering a new version of the game which will eradicate this rogue file." Find the B-17 patch at:

www.gamesdomain.co.uk/patches/b/3176.html

VIEWPOINT

Who would have thought that Sega would have ditched the Dreamcast?

Well, just about everyone, it seems.

No one in the industry was really surprised at Sega's announcement that it had decided to take a new direction, cease production of its next gen console and

focus on software development instead.

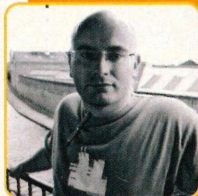
And though it is a shame that the DC had to go, it was obvious it was going down the pan even six months into its release - a lack of early quality releases didn't help.

It is ironic that just as some great games became available, such as Jet Set Radio, Shenmue and Metropolis Street Racer, Sega pulled the plug.

The Dreamcast will be sorely missed by GDO though. It is a wonderful console that was mishandled from day one - no wonder it didn't capture the public's imagination.

Hopefully, Sega will learn from its mistakes.

If you want to have your say, email: kevan@gamesdomain.com



Hungry for success Ubi Soft take a Blue Byte



French publisher and developer Ubi Soft has bought the German developer and publisher Blue Byte.

Blue Byte is best known for being behind the long-running Settlers and the Battle Isle strategy series. The company is also the creator of Great Courts - the first tennis game to provide online play.

Ubi Soft plans to bring the success of Settlers and Battle Isle games to new formats including the PlayStation2 and the Gamecube.

Founder and head of Blue Byte, Thomas Hertzler, said: "I have complete confidence in Ubi Soft's capacity to safeguard the unique features of our games.

"Ubi Soft's backing will help make our products better known because it will allow them to be adapted quickly to new generation consoles."

Sims go online

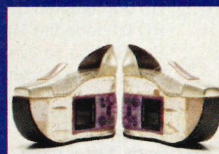


An online version of the The Sims is planned.

Maxis, the developer of the sim games, hopes to produce both Sims 2.0 and Sims Online.

Maxis is planning to create a multiplayer online experience with 50,000 houses creating a virtual community. Players will also be able to create entertainment venues such as nightclubs, arenas and amusement parks for their Sims to hang out in.

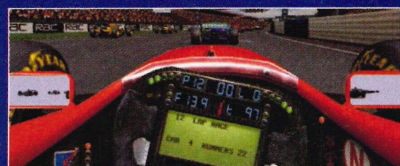
An official announcement from publisher Electronic Arts has yet to be made.



Footheld fun

A shoe designer is encouraging gamers to put their foot in it. Helen Richards has found a way of making the Game Boy Color even more portable than the handheld console already is.

The shoes, pictured below, are part of collaboration between Nintendo and Richards. Their design has been influenced by Japanese culture and Nintendo's GBC design and colours.



GP3 goes to DC

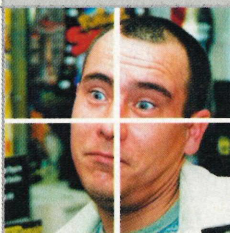
Infogrames has announced Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix 3 2000 will be released on the Dreamcast, bringing the realistic racer to a whole new market.

Also announced was an add-on pack for the PC version of Grand Prix 3.

The add-on will add the livery, tracks and drivers of the 2000 F1 racing season to the game which was based on the 1998 season.

What's the word?

When news broke that Sega had dumped the Dreamcast, some gamers openly wept - with relief, that is! Only joking, DC fans, we love the Dreamcast but it's time to let it go and move on. There are plenty more consoles in the sea of interactive entertainment (or something). To make sense of it all, we hit the streets of Lichfield in Staffordshire to get up close and personal with some real gaming geniuses - i.e. a sample of our loyal readership. After a long, arduous journey we ventured upon Lichfield Games Exchange and proceeded to quiz frequenters of the establishment as to what they thought about Sega's stunning decision and which of the remaining games consoles tickled their fancy.

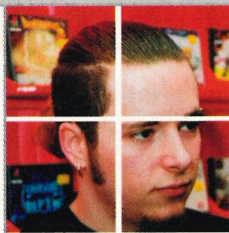
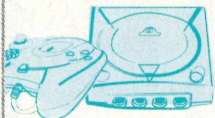


Andrew Hatton (36)
Tarmacker from Lichfield
What do you think about Sega ditching the Dreamcast?

I didn't know they had. I've never been tempted to buy one. We've got a PC - mainly for the kids. They play all sorts for games; whatever they get their hands on.

How do you rate the PS2 and other next generation consoles?

I'm not tempted by a PS2. Once I'd bought a PC I'd done the Mega Drive and the PlayStation so I've got out of playing console games - I'm clocking on a bit now.



David King (19)
Electronics salesman from Cannock
What do you think about Sega ditching the Dreamcast?

I didn't know that! I'm a bit disappointed because my mate's just bought one - we're on it most nights now. A PS2 is a lot of money compared to a DC; it's a bad idea to ditch it now.

How do you rate the PS2 and other next generation consoles?

I got hold of a PS2 and didn't think it was as good as they hyped it up to be. If Sega starts making games for the PS2 and the Game Boy Advance - now that'd be good.



Daniel Reynolds (19)
Salesman from Cannock
What do you think about Sega ditching the Dreamcast?

I've just bought a DC, so I think it's bad, but I can't do a lot about it, can I?

How do you rate the PS2 and other next generation consoles?

If Sega made games for the PS2 that'd be great. I've got all the consoles except the PS2. I'm waiting for the Xbox and then I'll make my mind up as whether to buy one or not.

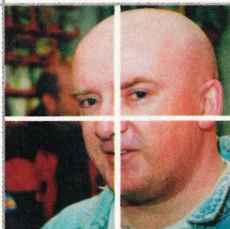


Vicky Knight (36)
Homemaker with three children from Lichfield
What do you think about Sega ditching the Dreamcast?

I didn't know the DC is being pulled. We've got a PSX and my lad's waiting impatiently for Final Fantasy IX and I love Who Wants To Be a Millionaire - it's a family game and I like that.

How do you rate the PS2 and other next generation consoles?

We've got the PlayStation and a PC, but I like the trivia games, Poker and Blackjack. It's all good practice for when I get into the casino!

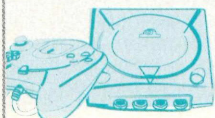


John Clarke (37)
Jazz musician from Lichfield
What do you think about Sega ditching the Dreamcast?

Well I'd consider some kind of legal action, but I think it's a myth anyway. [What?!? - Ed.] I've only had my DC for about a year and the gameplay is fantastic. Sega has said it's bringing out a set top box. What they're actually doing is altering for market needs. The logical thing is to do that.

How do you rate the PS2 and other next generation consoles?

When the Xbox comes out it's going to make all other consoles obsolete. It's Bill Gates, isn't it.



Karl Holton (32)
Lichfield Games Exchange staff member
What do you think about Sega ditching the Dreamcast?

I'd heard rumours that they were dropping the DC. I think it's a bad idea. We get a lot of people coming in for DC games that aren't even released yet.

How do you rate the PS2 and other next generation consoles?

I'm contemplating an Xbox myself, being a PC gamer. I'm sick of upgrading and the Xbox would be cheaper and hopefully just as good.



Paris will never be the same again!

Pre-order Offer

Pre-order a copy of RUGRATS in Paris' on PlayStation and receive an Exclusive "Rugrats in Paris" Movie Poster Free. Complete the slip at the foot of the page and hand it into a featured retailer to reserve your copy.*

* Only available whilst stocks last with listed retailers.

Town	Store Name	Telephone Number
Porstmouth	Ross Records	02392 862192
Swansea	Mentec Computers	01792 467980
Stoke On Trent	Another World	01782 279294
Uxbridge	Computer Paradise	01895 236 799
Tamworth	Gamesworld Games	01827 53957
Southport	Playhouse	01704 514 242
Loughborough	Woodco Consoles	01509 218386
Kent	Furnhouse	01822 559 672
Cornwall	Stark's Game Exchange	01326 21394
Sheffield	Trade Games	0114 246 7777
Stoke On Trent	Silverline Video	01782 744337
Kent	Computer Games & Sci Fi	01843 231211
Stafford	Disks & Disks	01785 214098
Cradley Heath W Midlands	Sega Supplies	01884 569040
Bristol	DJ Computers	01179 652244
Morcombe	Lee's Games	01524 646195
Romford	The Electric Shock	01708 724090
Sheffield	D & G Video	01246 229092
Lantow, Cardiff	Computer & Video Vision	02920 252122
Finchley	Eplay	0208 3710425
Chippenham	Pink Planet Games Exchange	01373 451 098
Walsall	Action Replay	01922 640 711
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THQ
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NICKELODEON MOVIES CSUPO

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See the movie only in cinemas

Dear retailer, please reserve me a copy of Rugrats in Paris: The Movie on PlayStation

Name _____
 address _____
 Telephone _____
 Date _____

I know why you're here, reader. I know what you've been doing. Why you hardly sleep, why you live alone and why night-after-night you sit by your computer. You're looking for it. I know because I was once looking for the same thing. And when it found me, it told me I wasn't really looking for it. I was looking for an answer. It's the question that drives us. It's the question that brought you here. You know the question, just as I did. What is the cheat?



Soldier of Fortune - PC

Create a shortcut to run the game in console mode by right-clicking on sof.exe in the game directory and choosing "Create shortcut". Then right-click on the shortcut you've created and choose "Properties". Change the command line by adding this: **+set console 1** It should look something like this when finished: "c:\...\SOF\sof.exe" **+set console 1**" Bring up the console by pressing "~" during the game:

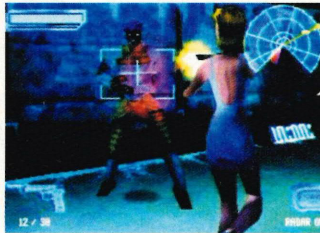
Code	Result
heretic	God mode
phantom	Walk through walls
ninj	Enemies don't see you
elbow	Give weapons 1-5
bigelbow	Give weapons 6-10

matrix # Timescale (replace # with 1-10)
gimme X Spawn object/item X
updateinvfinal Gives more ammo
killallmonsters Kills all enemies



Orphen: Scion of Sorcery - PS2

Unlimited life: When you are just about to die go to menu and choose equip and you will start the battle all over again with full life.



Danger Girl - PSX

Invincibility:
 At the pause menu, hold **R1** and press **X**, **Circle**, **X**.
Unlock all Levels:
 At the main menu press **L1**, **R2**, **L2**, **R1**, **Circle**, **Square**, **Triangle**, **Triangle** and then **L1** + **L2** + **R1** + **R2**.



Mechwarrior 4 - PC

Press and hold **[CONTROL]-[ALT]-[SHIFT]**, then type:

Code	Result
IY	Invulnerability
UO	Unlimited ammo
HF	Heat tracking off
IB	Destroy enemy mech
ML	Accomplish mission



Syphon Filter 2 - PS2

Hard mode:
 At the title screen, highlight the One Player option and press **Square** + **Circle** + **L1** + **R2** + **Select** + **Up** + **X**.

Croc - GBC

Level select:
 To select your level, enter **PQHBFHDHJB** at the password screen.

REPLAY

Xenon II Megablast was a classic title from renowned developers The Bitmap Brothers and is probably one of the most famous games of the 16-bit era. If you don't remember it then you will certainly remember the fact that Bomb The Bass recorded the soundtrack.

It was released to an unsuspecting world in August 1989 and was a simple scrolling shooter that saw you cruising across space, kicking alien ass. But, as ever, the Bitmap Brothers managed to squeeze a little life out of the old genre. Parallax graphics (I bet it's been a while since you've heard of those) allowed you to duck and dive in and out of the scenery and loads of power-ups - bought at a shop at the end of each level - meant that your ship became a super-charged death machine from hell.

Its graphics, unlike many games of the time, looked great. The level design was spot-on but the learning curve was a bit too steep. The tunes, as you would expect, were top notch.

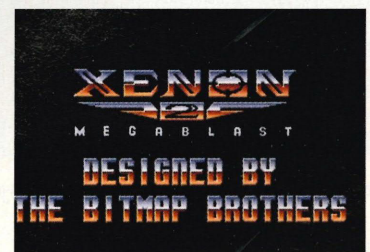


The ultimate top-down arcade shooter? Xenon II Megablast looked great but was darned difficult

Xenon II Megablast won a shed load of awards and once again proved that The Bitmap Brothers were at the top of their game.

It was released on Amiga, CDTV, Archimedes, ST, PC, Sega Master System, Sega MegaDrive and Game Boy.

The Bitmap Brothers are still producing quality games today and are currently finishing up RTS game Z: Steel Soldiers, due out in April.



Every month we will give the reader who sends in the best letter a game of their choice*- so get scribbling!

Write to us at Letters, Games Domain Offline, 435 Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 7SS. Or email gdo@gamesdomain.com (remember to enclose your address)

*prize games will be up to a value of £50 and subject to availability

COME AND HAVE A GO!

I read that Gareth Holden thinks he is the top man at ISS Pro Evolution in the latest issue of your magazine. I reckon I could take him on and all of you at GDO. How about it? How about a game, or are you too scared?

Ned Blanter
Basingstoke



Hi Ned,

Funny you should write. As we speak, an ISS tournament is underway here in the GDO bunker to find out once and for all who really is the GDO ISS King. Yours truly is currently heading the favourites while GDO editor James Kelly is looking at a quick exit from the competition [I was robbed! - Ed]. As it stands, Gareth looks like he may make the finals but there's still a few games to go. And despite ranking himself as an ISS expert, senior editor Richard Sutcliffe has the dishonour of not actually winning a game yet! We're using the original ISS Pro Evolution on the PlayStation for the tournament games rather than its PSX sequel ISS 2 which has been dubbed the 'pork ball' version by the office because, as Gaz explained, "When you kick the ball it feels as if it's made of solid pork." What a hideous thought. We'll let you know how we all fared in the tournament in the next ish.

Cheers, Kevan

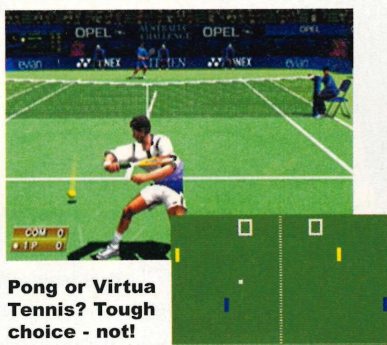
kevan@gamesdomain.com

RETRO RAGE

After reading issue 012's Star Letter by Angad, I felt that I had to write a reply. I have a Mega Drive and a Super Nintendo with games and I get great enjoyment from them. I buy second-hand games for them and I have had NO problems with either consoles - unlike these newer models that seem to have faults in them. Take the new Playstation2; what a load of rubbish! My brother has got the first ever Atari system and it is still working a treat! The market is fast moving and technology is booming with new gadgets all the time. Why spend a fortune on brand new systems with expensive games

only to see all your well earned money go to waste a couple of months later? What a lot of sad people there must be to want to keep up with the latest fashion trend of owning the latest console! Anyone out there who wants to throw away their Mega Drive and Super Nintendo games should send them to me where they will be appreciated. If I was to win the £50 star letter I would not spend it on anything other than Mega Drive and Super Nintendo games. Don't get me wrong, I have played on my friend's Dreamcast, Playstation and PS2 but I do not find these games efficient as you have to wait for them to load and it is very time consuming. I will take the older consoles any time.

Diane Rushworth
Lancashire



Hi Diane,

After reading your letter, the word Luddite springs to mind. You can't stand in the way of progress and I'm sure most gamers are delighted when a new and more powerful games machine becomes available. When the first Atari consoles came out there were no doubt some people saying, "What's the point of those new fangled machines? What's wrong with a good old-fashioned game of Snakes and Ladders round the fire." If we follow your logic we might as well all go back to the days of the whip and top and chasing greased pigs at country fayres (or something). Gaming and technology go hand in hand and it's kind of unusual to be a technophobic gamer. And as for finding games 'inefficient' because of their loading times, what's your problem - are you German or something? Given the choice between Virtua Tennis on the Dreamcast or Pong on the old Atari I know which I'd choose everytime. So c'mon Diane: get with the program!

Cheers, James

james@gamesdomain.com

Star Letter

It Sure Sucks

I've been waiting a long time for ISS2 but I think Konami has taken two steps backward from ISS Pro Evolution. I bought the game and I was just revolted. Instead of addressing the major issues - like the way the player you're controlling while defending switches at the worst possible moment - Konami has done some VERY stupid things. For instance, the far camera option has been dropped (who wants to see only a tenth of the pitch while playing?) and players are now able to make sharp turns while in sprint mode. It may look a bit better and have real player's names but that's it really; the game play is poor, poor, poor. Please do NOT recommend buying ISS2 instead of ISS Pro Evolution, the latter is worlds ahead: it feels like football whereas the sequel doesn't. ISS2's minor positive tweaks can't make up for the flaws it has been given by trying to suck up to EA's FIFA. Yuk!
Jean Paul Flecha
By email



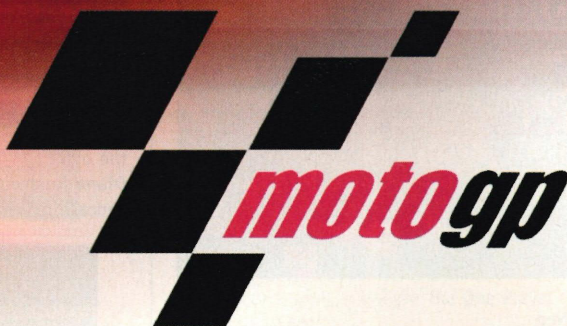
Disappointing - ISS 2 failed to live up to the pre-match hype

Hi Jean,

Yes, unfortunately you're right. Since ISS Pro Evolution, nothing has quite hit the mark in terms of footie sims - including ISS 2. The currently available ISS on PS2 is also a bit of a stinker when compared to its PlayStation predecessor. We can only hope the next PS2 ISS release - which has been developed by the original ISS team - will prove to live up to expectations. Down in the GDO bunker ISS Pro Evolution on the PSX has dominated lunch hours since it was released and so we were practically drooling when ISS 2 arrived. It was only after we discovered the only noticeable difference in gameplay was that it had slowed down that our anticipation turned to disappointment. This disappointment quickly descended into blind, ugly violence with Maltesers being thrown around the office and anti-Konami chants being sung for about three seconds before order was restored. I guess the moral of the story is that, try as you might, it's impossible to improve on perfection. Still, the original still knocks the spots off FIFA.
James.

james@gamesdomain.com

NOVEMBER ISSUE COMPETITION WINNERS: The lucky winner of the Dirtsurfer competition printed in our December issue is Thomas O'Donohoe of Norfolk. For a full list of competition winners, please write to the usual address.



Game Features

- Official licence** of the FIM World Motorcycle Championship.
- Real tracks** – including Donnington, Jerez and Paul Ricard.
- Real teams** – including Repsol, Honda and Yamaha.
- Real riders** – including Mick Doohan, Max Biaggi and Alex Crivillé.
- Challenge mode** – 54 challenges with rewards to unlock for successful completion.
- Season Mode** offering mid-season team transfers.
- Race against the clock**, race against your previous best time, race against the odds.
- Fantastic replay mode** that looks almost as good as watching on TV.
- Detailed bike** and circuit graphics with genuine trackside scenery.

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION

ONLY AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL INDEPENDENT RETAILER

Buy Moto GP at your local Independent Retailer and you could win two VIP tickets to the British Motorcycle Grand Prix at Donnington on 8th July 2001. See in-store for full details.

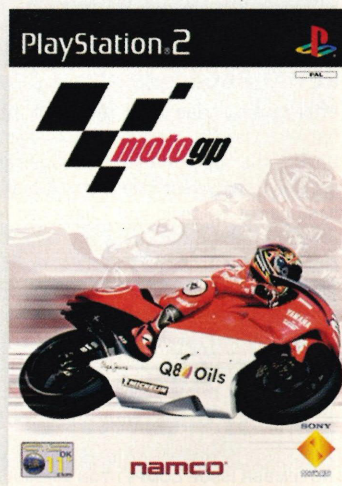
Line up on the starting grid and experience the thrill, the fear and the exhilaration of competing against world class racers on the most demanding circuits. Join real teams and race on real courses against real riders on genuine production machines.

**“As slick as the racing tyres it wears,
in both graphics and playability stakes” PSW**

Available NOW

Remember this exclusive offer is only available from your local Independent Retailer, so don your leathers, hammer down the throttle and get on track with

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PlayStation 2
DUALSHOCK 2

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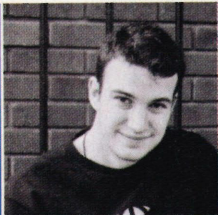
PC GAMES



S E C T I O N

PIPELINES PREVIEWS REVIEWS

2001's already shaping up to be a fascinating year's gaming



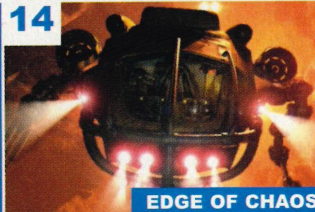
Mike Smith
Assistant Editor

What a way to start the year. Within days of each other, the GDO postman brought us confirmation of our status as Britain's most widely read multiformat magazine and *Hostile Waters*, one of the best games it's been our pleasure to play in recent months. 2001's already shaping up to be a fascinating year's gaming.

Peter Molyneux's baby *Black & White* is due through the letterbox any day now, and the coming months hold delights including *Tribes 2* and *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* for the FPS fans, *Anachronox* for the RPG players, and *Startopia* and *Commandos 2* for those who like their games with a little more thought involved. Quite a collection, and one sure to cause some late nights round our way.

It's also the time of year to think about upgrading - the inexorable advance of system requirements continues, so get counting your pennies. Have a glance through the reviews in this issue - RAM prices are stupidly low at the moment, and scheduled price cuts over the next few months will put 1GHz+ chips within everyone's reach.

mike@gamesdomain.com



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EDGE OF CHAOS



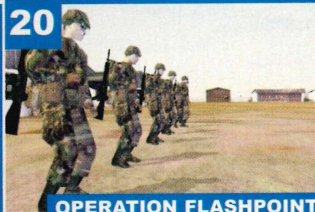
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BLACK AND WHITE



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ICEWIND DALE



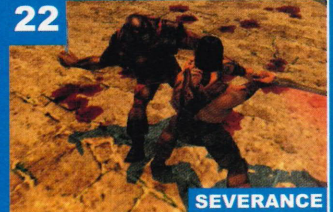
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OPERATION FLASHPOINT



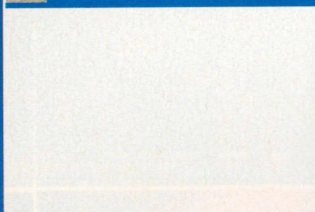
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CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING



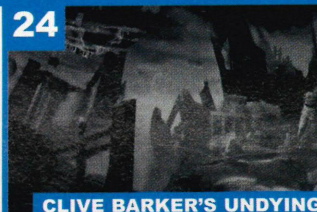
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SEVERANCE



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**DELTA FORCE:
LAND WARRIOR**



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BOOMSLANG 2000



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GLADIAC ULTRA



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HOSTILE WATERS

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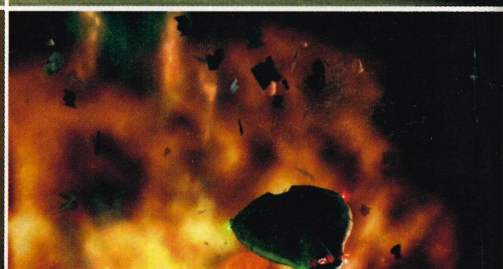
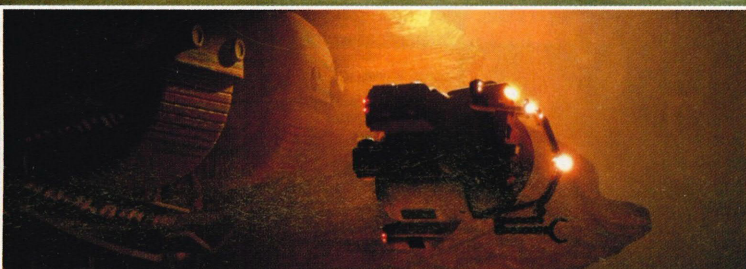
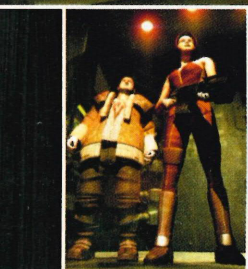
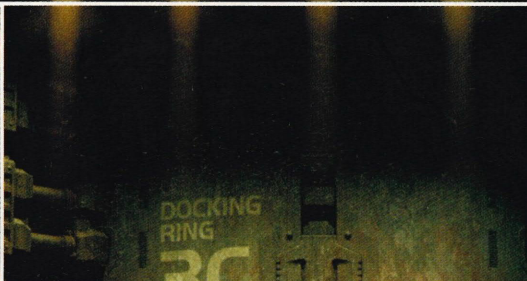
written by gamers like us...
for gamers like you



■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: PARTICLE SYSTEMS ■ RELEASE: JUNE 6

EDGE OF CHAOS: I-WAR II

Infogrames new space sim is about to blast off - and this time it's personal!



Independence War was celebrated on its release as being a true space simulator: the laws of inertia were adhered to while not compromising gameplay. The original was set amid the struggle between the Commonwealth and the freedom-fighting Indies.

This latest space adventure from Infogrames is set in the 23rd Century and takes a more

how you choose - be it as a space pirate or the people's champion - through the sixteen star systems in the game.

For the visuals, a new graphics engine, called Flux, has been created. This provides the player with some wonderful looking graphics. It also allows the developers to put in some stunning effects while still retaining the distinctive use of Newtonian physics to govern the rotation and thrust of ships. It also looks to feature some great CGI movies, for which Independence War was famous.

But some things have to be updated and the developers at Particle Systems are changing the

way the interface works to make it easier on budding pilots and more intuitive for the Independence War pro.

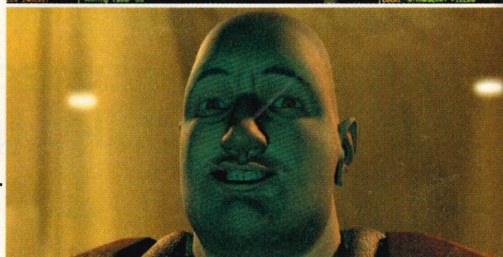
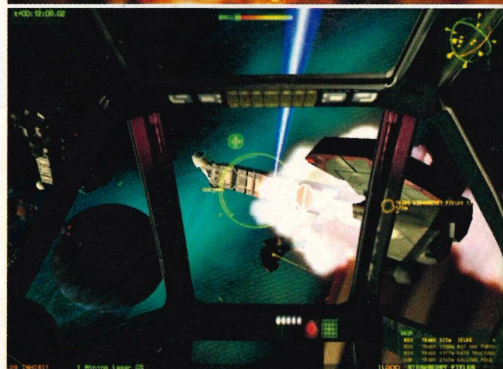
Even if the story doesn't appeal you can jump into the multiplayer feature which will provide a chance for 16 flyboys to battle it out across the Internet or on a LAN.

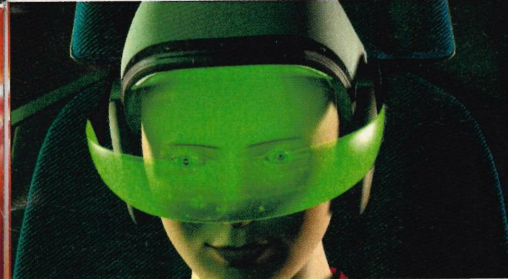
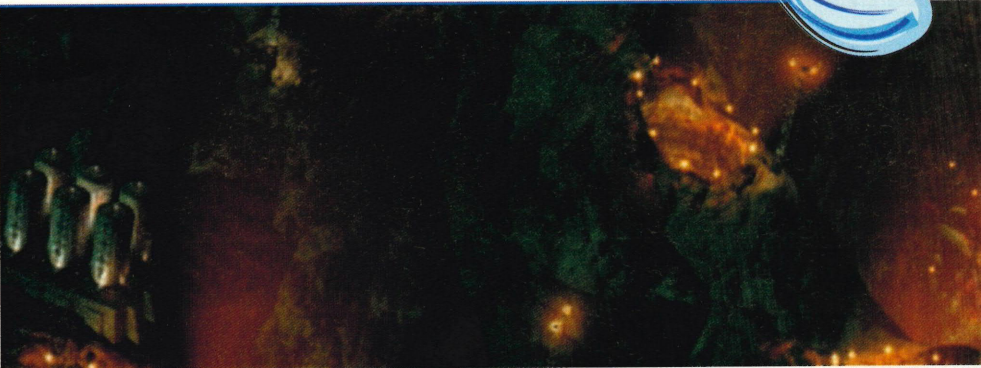
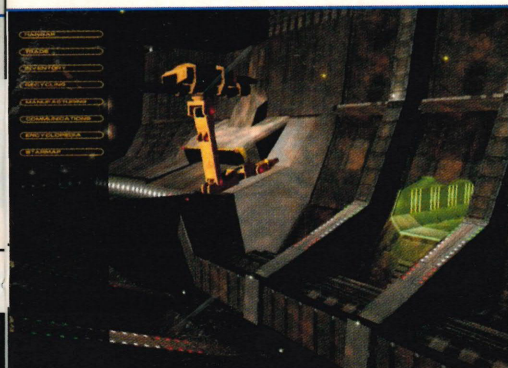
You'll get your chance at high adventure and personal vendettas once the game is released on June 6.

"The free-form structure allows you to dip into the story if you choose to"

personal approach as you take on the role of Cal Johnson - imprisoned after trying to avenge his father's death at the hands of loan sharks. After escaping incarceration, Cal and his close friends travel the spaceways as pirates. But soon events take hold of Cal and his companions as they are drawn into a conspiracy.

Edge of Chaos has a free-form structure that allows players to dip into the storyline, if they choose to do so. You can guide Cal and friends





Fan-ta-sy that!

Final Fantasy IX, a jewel in the crown of RPG gaming, is unquestionably a great game. It's also - according to reader feedback - one tough mother to crack. So if you're banging your head up against a brick wall, thanks to Games Domain Offline, there's no need to risk brain damage, as we have the solution - literally. In conjunction with Piggyback Interactive, Games Domain Offline is offering 15 of our readers the chance to get their clammy mitts on a copy the Final Fantasy IX Strategy Guide (RRP £12.95). Fancy your chances? Well, all you have to do to is answer the following question:

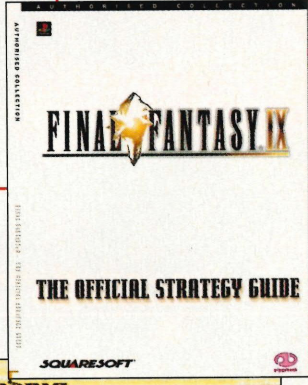
Final Fantasy IX's Zidane shares his name with:

- a) A French footballer
- b) A French letter
- c) Some French toast



COMPETITION HOTLINE:
0906 302 1007

Entry to this competition is by competition hotline only. Follow the instructions on the line and remember to speak clearly. Calls cost 55p per minute and should take just over a minute. Always ask the person who pays the phone for permission before making your call. Closing date April 15, 2001.



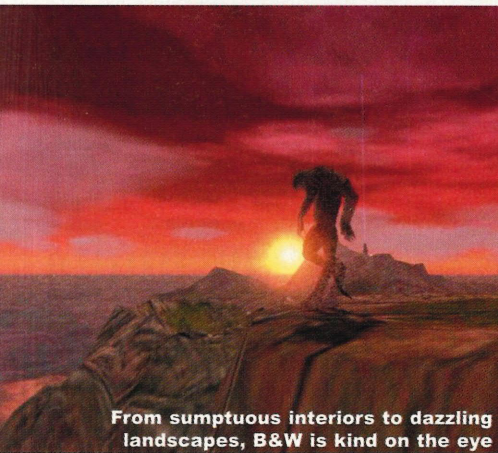
BLACK AND WHITE

Could Molyneux's odyssey finally be at an end?

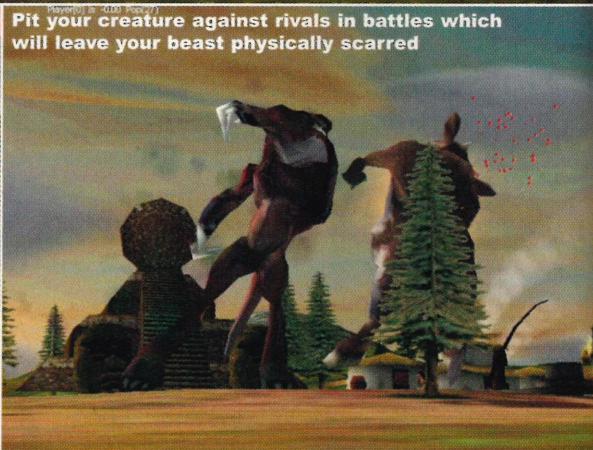
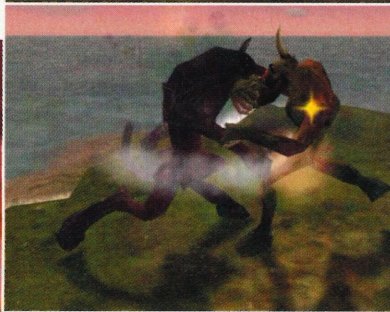
Black & White continues its long, slow march towards release - despite being scheduled for last November, there's still no clear idea when it will be finished. Right now publisher Electronic Arts is saying April 6 - but then, the other week they were saying March 30.

If you've escaped the hype surrounding this Peter Molyneux Populous-Pokémon hybrid creation, you must have been living in a cave for the last 18 months. If so, you won't know that it's a god-sim where players rule over village communities on islands, and raise huge creatures to do their bidding. The creatures grow and learn from the actions of players, giving Black & White aspects of a strange personality test. And, by the way, OJ turned out to be innocent all along.

We'll have a review for you as soon as Lionhead decide the game is finished - until then, though, here's a sumptuous collection of screenshots for you to enjoy.

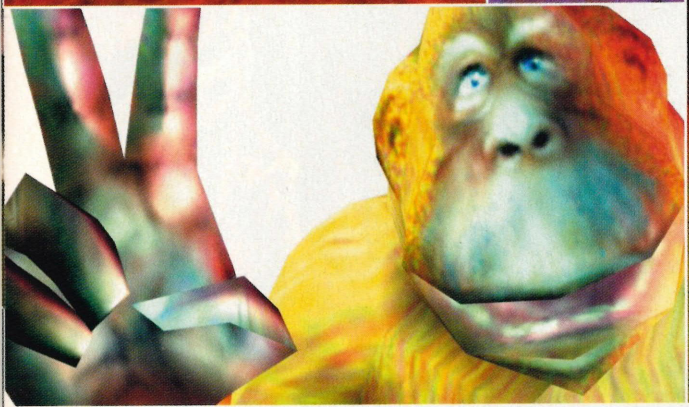
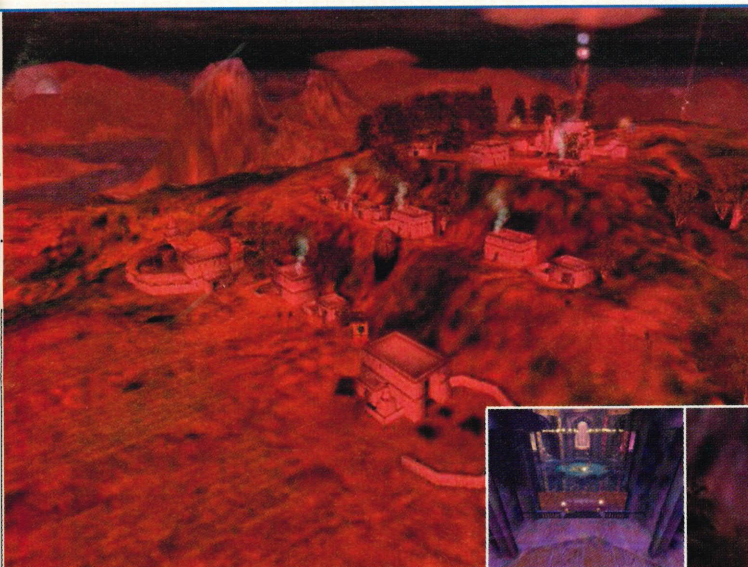


From sumptuous interiors to dazzling landscapes, B&W is kind on the eye



Pit your creature against rivals in battles which will leave your beast physically scarred





Your creature will develop into a gentle giant or a hideous ogre depending on whether the actions you have it take are good - or evil!

I WANT MY MUMMY COMPETITION

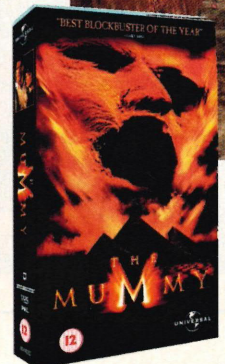
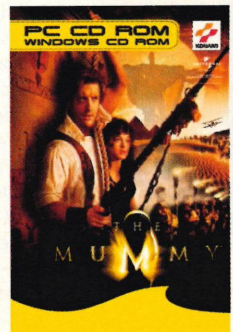
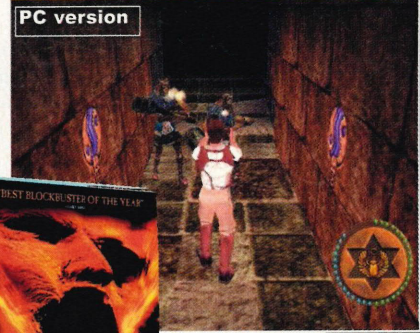
Here at GDO we love nothing more than jokes about mummies. Old classics like: "Your mummy is so fat that they had to build two pyramids," constantly crack us up. But, when we watched Brendan Fraser battling the evil Im-ho-tep in the rip-roaring action film *The Mummy*, we realised that it's best not to wind them up. To celebrate the release of the movie tie-in game, we have got together with Konami to offer you a prize even the pharaohs would be proud to receive. Ten lucky winners will get a copy of *The Mummy* on VHS and a copy of the fantastic sphinx 'em up on either PlayStation or PC.

And what incantation do you have to chant to win this great package?

All you have to do is phone the competition hotline below, follow the instructions and answer the following question. Remember to tell us what format you want the game on.

What is the name of the mummy they awaken in the film?

- a) Im-ho-tep
- b) Im-ha-fool
- c) Im-ha-nit

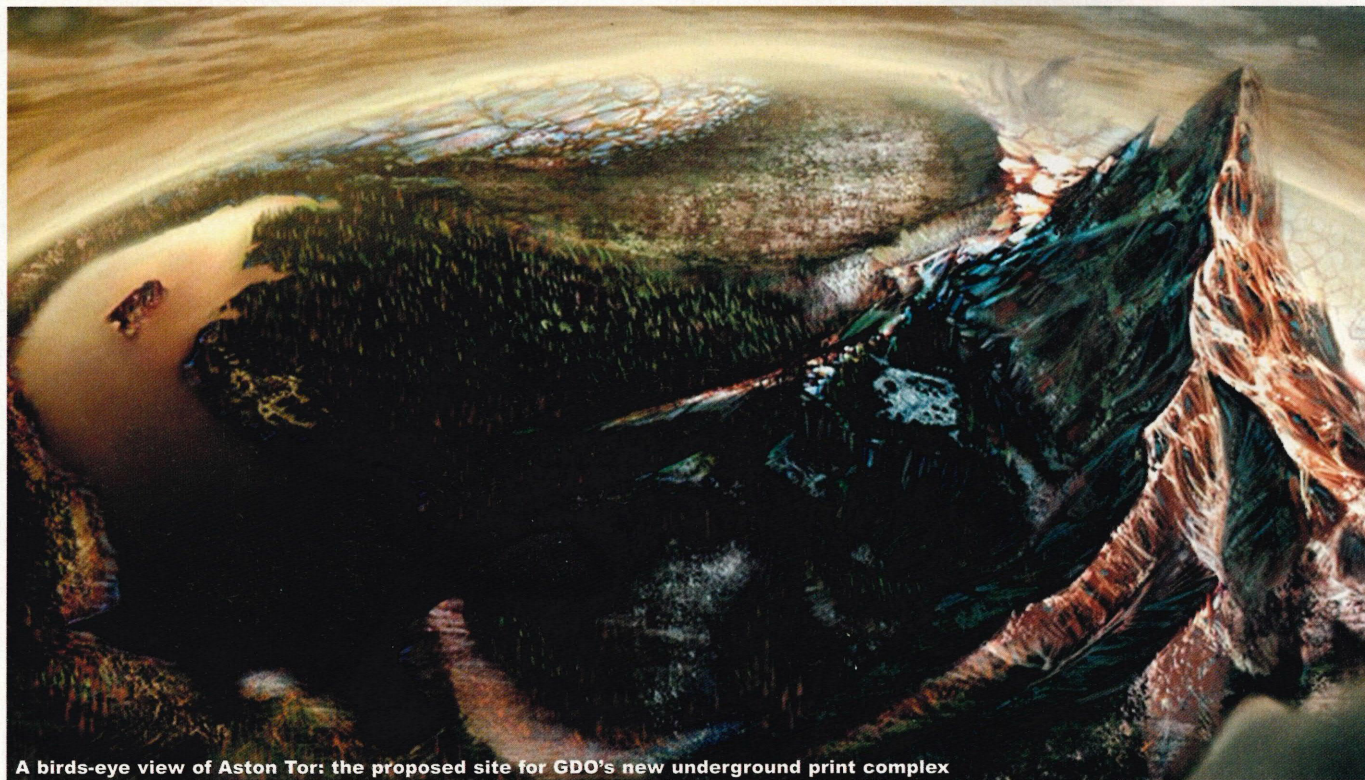


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ICEWIND DALE: HEART OF WINTER

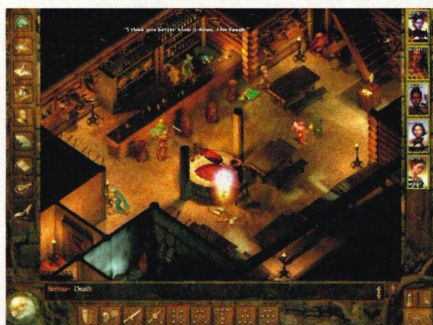
More quests, more adventures and more goblins to beat up. Lovely!



A birds-eye view of Aston Tor: the proposed site for GDO's new underground print complex



■ The screen resolution has been boosted to a respectable 800x600



■ Bards and Druids, useless in the original, have been given new spells

Icewind Dale was, it has to be said, one of the best RPGs of last year. Using Bioware's legendary Infinity engine, IWD should have stormed to the top of the charts. Should have, that is.

The only thing that stopped it was the virtually unknown Diablo 2, which no one was looking forward to and hadn't been anticipating for years upon years since the release of the original. [That's enough sarcasm thank you -Ed.] This meant IWD never did as well as it should

“Could be a must-buy for fans of the Infinity engine”

have done, and that's a crying shame because it was a darn fine game. To right this terrible wrong, Black Isle is to bring out an expansion pack featuring more quests, more adventures, and more goblins to beat up. Lovely.

The story behind it all is that the barbarians, never quite comfortable in their relationship with the settlements, have finally declared war on them. But, as you might have guessed, all is not as it seems. The leader of the barbarians is behaving a little oddly, which makes you wonder if maybe there's more going on than everyone thinks. It's hard to say any more without completely giving away the plot, but the early ramblings of new kings being old kings being new kings actually does make sense.

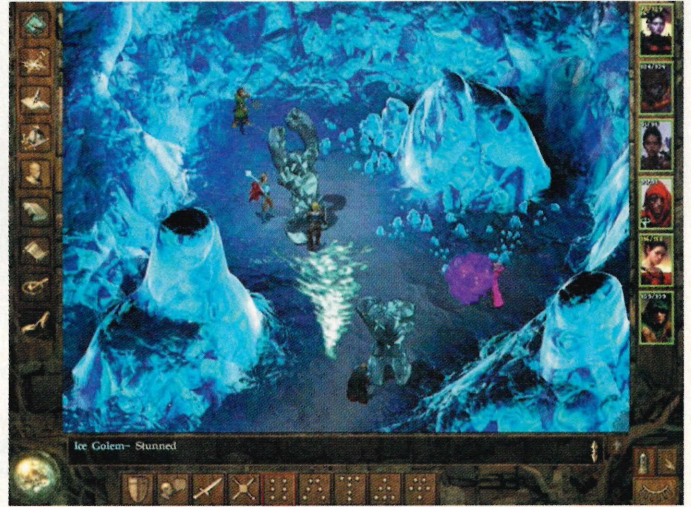
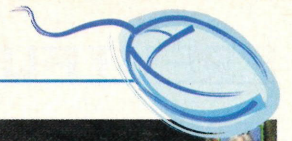
Heart of Winter starts in Lonelywood: the Northernmost of the ten towns featured in the original Icewind Dale. You can either play it by itself or you can choose it as part of a normal game. Remember that locked door in Khuldahar? No? Ok, there was a locked door in Khuldahar, but now it leads straight to Lonelywood. It might be an idea to check your characters before walking through, however, because Black Isle recommends you have no less than level nine characters. You can use a brand new party of

course, but that would be a little silly. With new enemies such as Barrow Wights, Wailing Virgins (oo-err) and a big nasty dragon on the other side of the door it

might be worth getting in some practise against a few harmless skellies first.

The good news, however, is that they've raised the experience cap substantially. The 1,800,000 experience point limit now goes up to 2,900,000, potentially allowing for level 30 characters. And for those not in the know, that's almost godlike. Almost.

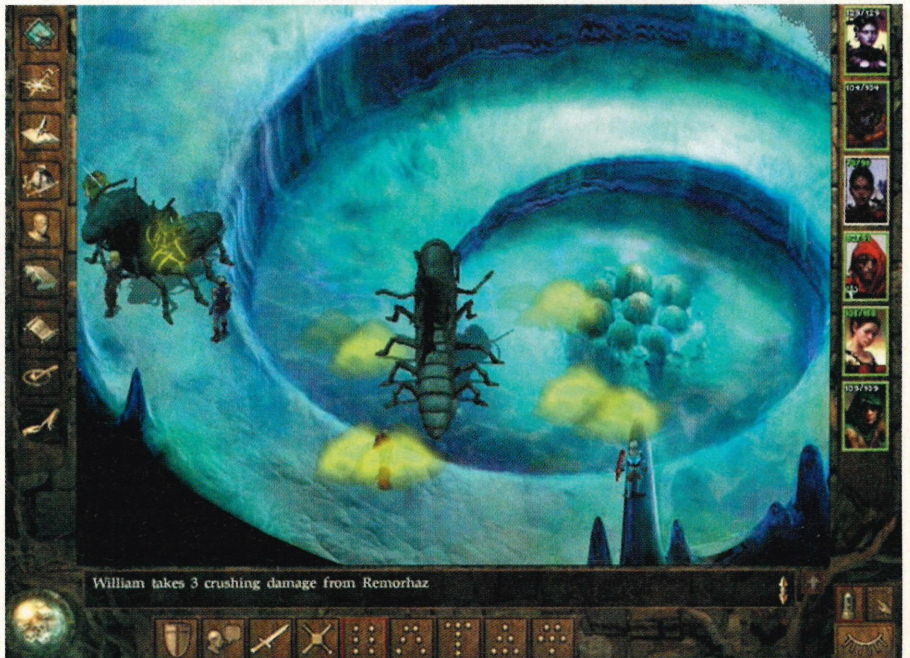
One of the main aims for Heart of Winter is to bring Icewind Dale up to par with Baldur's Gate 2, and it looks like it's going to do that very well indeed. The lowly screen resolution has been boosted from a miserable 640x480 to a much more respectable 800x600, with unofficially supported options going right up to 2048x1536. The higher resolutions make



characters look smaller but much more highly defined, rather than the pixelated romps of the original.

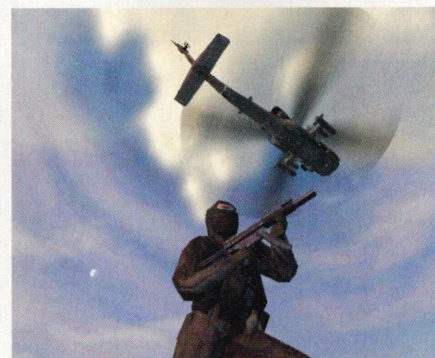
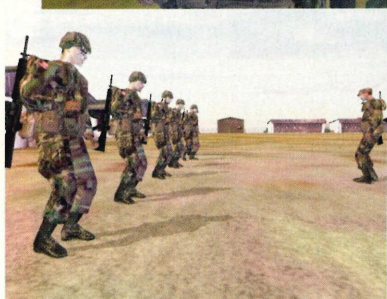
And it's not just eye candy, either. Bards and Druids, useless in the original, have been made much more effective and given some new spells. Paladins also gain their spells much earlier than before. Heart of Winter also features the natty little gem bags and scroll cases seen in Baldur's Gate 2 which means your level eight characters no longer have to walk around with an inventory full of level one scrolls or next to worthless gems. You'll also find the AI has improved somewhat. It's now much harder to get enemies to fall into a trap by 'picking them off' and enticing them to follow a character into a trap set by your party. You'll still get them to follow, but there's a fair old chance they're going to bring their friends with them. Lobbing a fireball at a goblin no longer means its friend just stands there picking his nose: he'll either attack or run to get his friends. Much better.

All in all, Heart of Winter adds around an extra thirty hours of gameplay to the original Icewind Dale and looks set to be an essential purchase for all fans of the Infinity engine.



OPERATION FLASHPOINT

Thought we were friends with the Ruskies these days? Think again, soldier!



■ These fellas don't look too healthy



■ And you're gonna get nowhere lying about on the job

Operation Flashpoint is a tactical action game that casts you as a soldier caught in the middle of a flashpoint (potential full-scale war) situation between Russian armed forces and the Americans.

The preview we received allowed us to jump into the single missions appearing in the game as an American soldier. These missions range from the simple - such as steal a car from behind enemy lines and get back to your base - to the difficult: a single-man covert mission to infiltrate a base and steal some classified

documents. How you achieve this is up to you. There are so many different tactics that you can utilise to complete missions, you really are spoilt for choice. You can trek back on foot, but that runs the risk of bumping into Ruskie patrols. Or you could steal a Skoda and return along a dirt track. You can even try to face down the enemy, which could result in a very short life-span. This amount of variation will certainly help the game's longevity and suit the style of many different gamers.

The action is slower-paced than your usual action game, with masses of land to traverse. Luckily, there is a time acceleration feature that proves very helpful when you are asked to travel on foot to a village several miles away.

The weapons are many and varied in Operation Flashpoint, ranging from rifles to artillery fire. Each has its own feel and you can adjust your rate-of-fire settings - allowing you crack off a single shot or go fully automatic. The weapon system is even more realistic than Counter-Strike's, so it will take a while to get used to. You can also steal any weapon that you find lying around and use it for your own purposes - handy for when you run out of ammo.

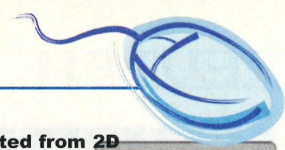
The graphics are looking good, rivalling similar games like this month's Delta Force. The characters are modelled well, but can be a little rough around the edges. But the most stunning

"The sunsets are so stunning they make you want to stop and stare"

documents. In each mission you play a single soldier, a cog in the great engine that is the American army.

The most exciting feature of Operation Flashpoint is the ability to jump into any working vehicle that you find. If you find a standard road car, you can steal it and race across the immense map where the missions take place. You can also jump into tanks, trucks and even helicopters and use them to aid the American cause.

In the first mission, you have the simple task of escaping the advancing Russian army by getting a weapon and then make your way back



feature is the sunsets that appear in the game - good enough to make you want to drop your gun and wonder what this war thing is all about anyway.

The scenery, such as trees, bushes and fences are all created from 2D bitmaps, which is normal for large area wargames, and as such, aren't totally convincing on closer inspection. Buildings and other structures are all fully 3D, however, and look very nice, but still aren't as intricately modelled as some games. The houses do have some wonderful textures to create the atmosphere of a war-torn land and the amount of buildings in the game more than makes up for this.

One of the other stunning effects is the way the shadows stretch and distort in relation to the sun as time passes. There is one other problem, though - the soldiers don't show up particularly well, proving that camouflage does work even when soldiers are strolling about in the midday sun.

Our preview code lacked proper voices in the cut-scenes, so it is hard to judge what the acting is like. We hope there is a bunch of sterling actors currently at work providing all the vocal drama you need.

The game could also do with a few tweaks when it comes to vehicle control: driving and flying both prove a little tricky at present, with neither realism nor fun truly mixed correctly into the formula. The developers need to choose between an arcade or a more sim-based approach for it to work really well.

But all in all, Operation Flashpoint looks like it's going to be a shining star for Codemasters - it's shaping up to be a great blend of action and strategy. We'll bring you a full review closer to the game's release date sometime in April.

The scenery, such as trees, bushes and fences are all created from 2D bitmaps and aren't totally convincing on closer inspection



The helicopter ride

One of the most enjoyable features of Flashpoint is the ability you have to jump into any vehicles you find. So what do you do when you find a chopper? Simple: get in, get the beast off the ground and go kick some serious Ruskie ass from your new vantage point.

SEVERANCE: BLADE OF DARKNESS

Rip the limb off your opponent in battle? Go on - there's no arm in it!



Once upon a time, there was a controversial game called Cannon Fodder, released on the 16-bit machines in the early 90s.

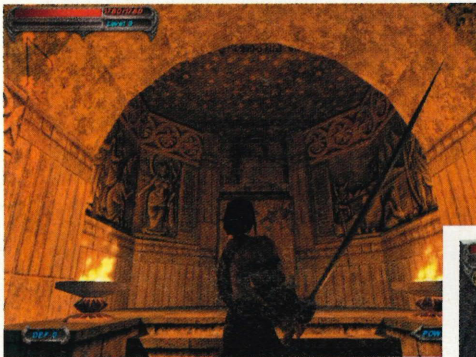
At the time, it attracted media attention for two reasons: firstly, the promotional art relied heavily on an image of a poppy, causing many grizzled old British Legion types to wail almost as loud as the last time they spent their entire pension on sherry. And secondly, because when you killed one of the ten-pixel high enemy soldiers, he lay on the ground kicking and screaming, and spurting blood all over the grass. Yes, blood. Now, no action game is considered complete without liberal splatterings of claret, and to shock, games have to plumb new depths of depravity.

So that's the hype out of the way, then. If the truth be known, once the initial amusement has worn off, being able to dismember your opponents is a bit of a gimmick, and compared to a good honest sword, the limb of some goblin (or similarly stereotypical fantasy bad guy) doesn't make much of a weapon.

Severance sees players taking the role of one of four characters, each with his or her own

fighting style and choice of weaponry. The knight uses one-handed swords and shields, the barbarian prefers two-handed, heavy broadswords, the more agile amazon uses staves and bows, and the sturdy dwarf employs, you guessed it, an axe. Nothing new there, then.

But the game's environmental modelling is rather more novel. Similar to this month's Hostile Waters, it has an understated physics system, so stacked crates, stools, tables and Severance's other props move and behave as you would expect. Flaming torches can be used





to burn other flammable objects, and cast real-time, realistic shadows on walls and other scenery.

Though the castles, cliffs and dungeons of Severance are well-textured, detailed and lifelike, they carry quite a processor overhead. Those real-time shadows don't help either; owners of low-end machines need not apply.

The plot is the usual nonsense about the forces of evil and a legendary sword, but makes a convenient excuse for the action. Each character starts in a different location, and goes about retrieving the sword in a different way, so once you've finished the game (or become irrevocably stuck) as one character there's still

“The ripped-off limb of a goblin doesn't make much of a weapon”

plenty of replay value. Simple puzzles are involved occasionally, but rarely venture outside the familiar "kill-the-orc-and-get-the-key" or "press-the-button-and-open-the-door" varieties. Commendably, though, thanks to some useful text labels and a carefully designed interface, it's always obvious which level elements can be interacted with, and which are just window dressing.

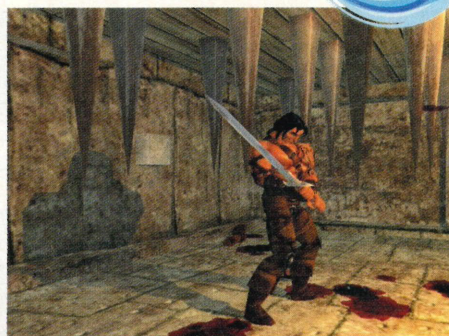
Combat is straightforward enough - the controls are mouse-and-keyboard, and feel much like Ritual's Heavy Metal: FAKK2. Pressing different directional keys while attacking gives different attacks, and various combos are

possible with button sequences. As your character kills enemies and gains levels, you'll get new combos and stat increases. There's a lock-on button to make sure you're always facing your foe, so it's possible to dodge and roll sideways while still being ready to attack - almost a 'circle-strafing' kind of manoeuvre. Characters with shields can block attacks, but too much of that behaviour will cause your shield to break.

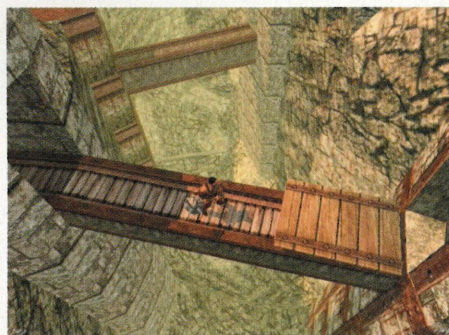
More interestingly, there's a stamina bar which decreases with each attack. Using a weapon which is too heavy for your character will cause it to deplete rapidly and leave you standing breathless and vulnerable. This forces players into a more thoughtful fighting style than, say, Oni - button-bashers will soon find themselves prostrate, probably with something less than a full complement of limbs.

Though the weapon-collecting and levelling-up of Severance invite comparison with Diablo, this is a much more action-oriented game. Higher levels just mean more health and the ability to use larger swords - both always welcome - but it doesn't go any deeper than that. Severance is much more akin to Rune, but with a much more intuitive and controllable combat system.

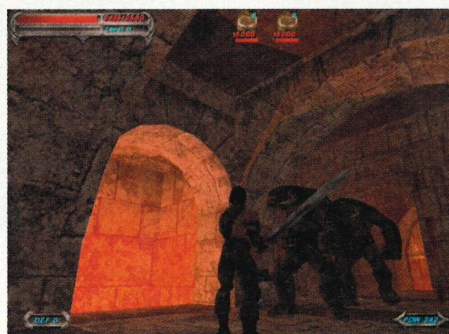
Whether or not Severance is the game for you boils down to how complex you like your entertainment. It's certainly one of the best-looking third-person games around - but it's not rocket science, and if you're looking for a Diablo-type experience you'll be disappointed. If, though, the prospect of some good old-fashioned hack'n'slash fun appeals to you, you could do a lot worse than Severance.



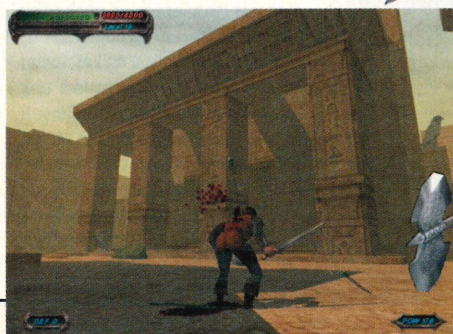
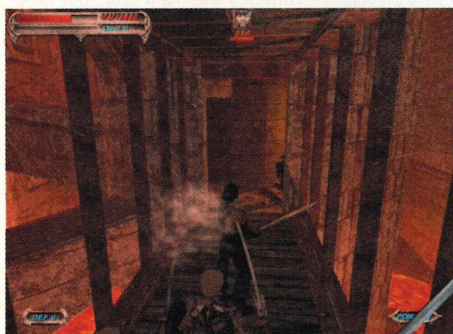
■ The sword is mightier than the limb



■ Well-textured and lifelike visuals....



■ ...carry quite a processor overhead



JUDGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MIN: PIII-400, 64MB RAM

GDO SUGGESTS:

PIII-500, 128MB RAM, 3D CARD

■ PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS

■ DEVELOPER: REBEL ACT

■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Demo at: www.gamesdomain.co.uk/demos/demo/1300.html

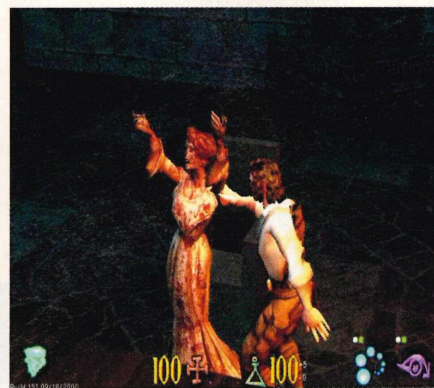
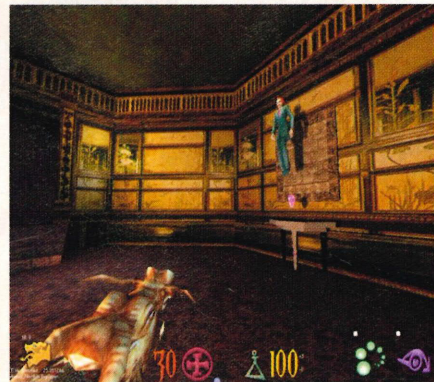
- + Intuitive and fun combat
- + Gorgeous graphics
- + Plenty of lasting appeal
- + Good physics modelling
- + Dismembering goblins is a laugh, for a while
- Demanding on hardware
- Some may find it too simple

7
OUT OF TEN

WORDS: MIKE SMITH

CLIVE BARKER'S UNDYING

Don your brown trousers because this game will scare you...witless



There are some scary games in this world: *Realms of the Haunting*, *Alien vs Predator*, *Silent Hill* on the PlayStation and that hideous *Big Brother* game. Clive Barker's *Undying* is from the mind of the great horror author himself, who is no stranger to trying out new mediums for his work. Games based on his films, such as *Nightbreed*, may not have been great hits, but he is certainly making up for it now with this first-person shooter.

Set in the 1920s, *Undying* has you playing the

"When played with the lights off, this game will scare the pants off you"

role of a Curtis Stigers look-a-like called Magnus who has been asked by an old war buddy, Jeremiah, to investigate strange happenings at his ancestral home.

Jeremiah, who is dying, is under threat from his family. This family strife is complicated due to Jeremiah's relations all being dead. Death, however, has not affected their spirit and they still roam the Irish manor house intent on disposing of their younger sibling.

Magnus offers to help his old friend and you take control of the adventure. As previously stated, the game is a first-person shooter but this one is based on the highly-regarded Unreal Tournament engine.

Undying's heritage instantly shows. The graphics are gorgeous and the detail in the levels is of a high standard. Curtains waft in the wind, doors creak closed and the rooms of the house and the outside areas are very spooky - especially the caves below the cemetery.

Overlaid with these graphics is a wonderful visceral soundtrack that creeps and crawls its way through the game. When you add the surround-sound audio effects such as wolves howling, thunderstorms and screams you have a deeply spooky game that, when played with the

lights off, may just scare the pants off you.

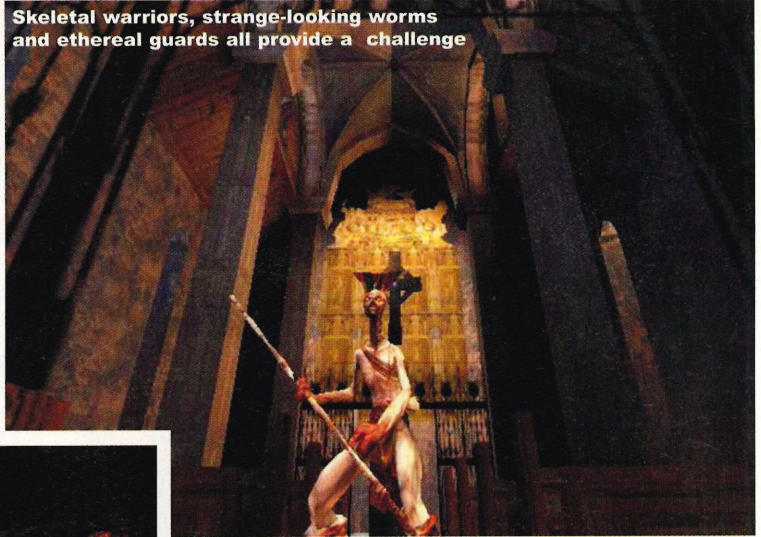
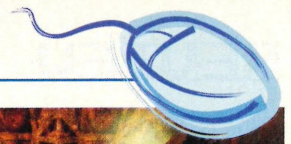
The weaponry is second-to-none, and twofold, in *Undying*. As well as the standard revolver, and some supernatural weapons, you have a litany of spells you can collect to do damage or discover information. Weapons are picked up along the way as well as spells. You can also increase the power of your spells by picking up amplifiers. Pretty soon you are a walking mass of hot steel and arcane knowledge ready to deal death to the already dead.

At the start, Jeremiah has the ability to scry: look back into the past to see events that have gone before. As you discover things about the household and the surrounding area it starts to get scary - especially in the nursery with the sound of children playing rapidly turning into screams.

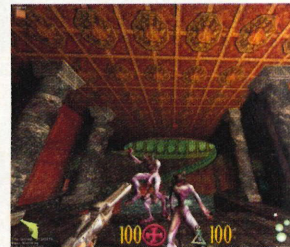
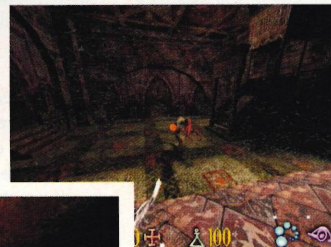
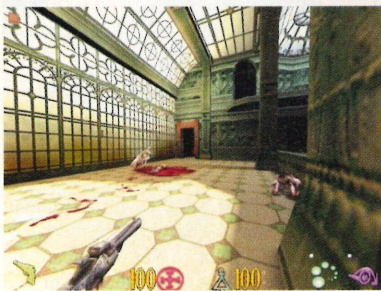
It would have been nice if the spell showed off the history of every room, with sub-stories working through the main plot, but only certain rooms are scry-able. As you progress, you discover more information and find keys to locked doors that allow you to move on and learn more about the house of horrors and its surrounding area. It's a linear movement through the game but involving nonetheless.

If you've played *Unreal Tournament* you will know how good the AI is and *Undying* hasn't changed this: enemies duck, dive and circle you. The added supernatural factor makes for more interesting creatures too. Skeletal warriors, strange-looking worms and ethereal guards all provide a real challenge to defeat.

Therein lies one of the problems



Skeletal warriors, strange-looking worms and ethereal guards all provide a challenge



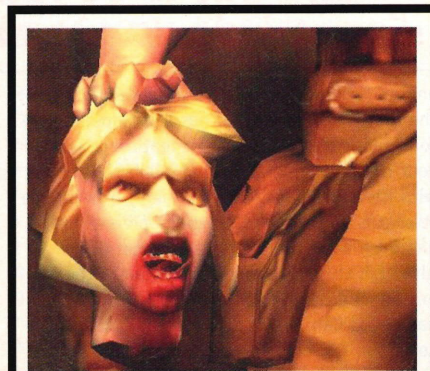
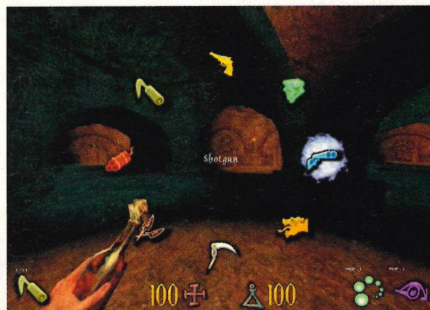
with Undying. If you get killed by the spooks, you restart the game at the point where you entered a new level, not at your last save point. This means the level loads up and then you have to boot up your save game after that, which can become tedious.

The problem is compounded by the fact that you can't skip cut-scenes and every enemy has it's own little death move. This adds to the annoyance: first you die, then you watch the death move, then you wait for the level to load and then you have to load your save game - aaaargh!

Another point to make is, despite the use of the multiplayer-based Unreal Tournament engine, there is no multiplayer available in the game. This is a big oversight; it could have created some great team-based games with monsters vs. humans. It could have been wonderful.

The influence of Clive Barker means there is a large amount of text to read if you want to get right into the middle of the story. If you want to read a Clive Barker book, go and buy one - but you can try and pick out the main bits if you feel up to it.

Beyond that there is nothing wrong with this game. It's spooky, fun and it draws you into its heart and keeps you there gasping for more. EA has hit the top mark here - it almost makes up for the flood of pants sports and theme games we have to suffer.



■ This GDO writer was two days late with his review. The punishment was severe but necessary to set an example to the other scribblers

JUDGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MIN: PIII-400, 64MB RAM, 3D CARD

GDO SUGGESTS:
PIII-500, 64MB RAM, 3D CARD

■ PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
■ DEVELOPER: DREAMWORKS
■ RELEASE: MARCH 9

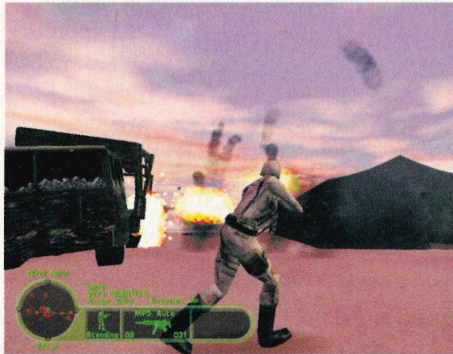
GD ONLINE: Movie at: www.gamesdomain.co.uk/movies/259.html

- + Looks great
- + Atmospheric sounds
- + Good variety of monsters and weapons
- Wordy
- No multiplayer
- Annoying save/load system
- No cut-scene skip option

COMPARISON POINT
8 OUT OF TEN
WORDS: KEVAN MANDER

DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

A special force to be reckoned with, or a bridge too far?



■ Land Warrior is fully 3D thanks to a new game engine



■ Even though the new graphics engine delivers highly detailed interiors, some of the levels suffer from lacklustre design with featureless, shoebox-like buildings.



Delta Force: Land Warrior is Novalogic's third release in its Delta Force series. Based on the real-life activities of US Special Forces, players get the opportunity to not only participate in an anti-terrorist campaign as a member of the elite Delta Force team, but also utilise weapons similar to those being tested in the US Army's Land Warrior program.

Several important enhancements have been incorporated into Land Warrior, making it far superior to the previous two Delta Force outings. The game is now fully 3D thanks to a new

groups in places such as Cairo, Egypt (complete with the pyramids and the Sphinx), in and around Mayan temple ruins in Mexico, aboard an offshore oil rig, amidst the "Big Kahunas" of Easter Island, and many more.

The assortment of weapons at your disposal includes the familiar sniper rifle, machine-gun and pistol as well as a variety of previously unseen ones, including the Land Warrior program's own OICW (Objective Individual Combat Weapon), which combines a 5.56mm rifle and a 20mm grenade launcher. You will also have the ability to drop your weapon if you run

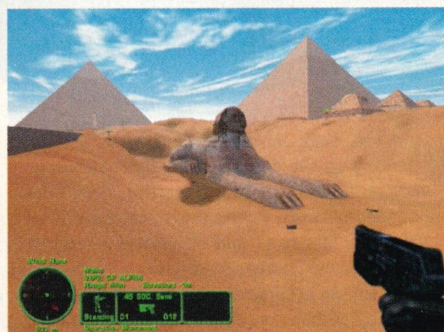
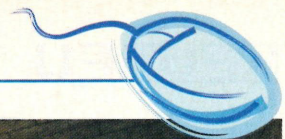
out of ammo and pick an enemy's weapon up off the ground.

In addition to the single-player campaign and quick missions, Delta Force: Land Warrior features a multiplayer option, which consists of a wide assortment of

“Many in-game features turn out to be rather superfluous and cosmetic”

playing modes, including cooperative, king of the hill, search and destroy, and attack and defend. Novalogic will be supporting multiplayer games on an all-new server, NovaWorld 2. The new service will include many desirable features such as persistent online character identities, experience bonuses, promotions in rank, statistical tracking of combat performance, and medals/awards earned in battle. Players will be able to register up to four unique character names per user, and multiplayer games will support up to 50 (count 'em - 50) players in a single game.

Delta Force: Land Warrior has many fine qualities in its corner. Unfortunately, it is also replete with a multitude of shortcomings, which



gnaw away at the merit of its overall presentation.

Even though the new graphics engine delivers highly detailed interiors, some of the levels suffer from lacklustre design with featureless, shoebox-like buildings. Another minor, but forgivable, annoyance is the limitation of saved game slots, as you only get three per mission.

Of slightly more concern is many of Delta Force: Land Warrior's features turn out to be rather superfluous and cosmetic. For example, the ability to switch from a first-person view to third-person perspective looks great but fails to enhance the gameplay or assist the player in any way. The concept of carefully selecting the correct equipment and personnel to accomplish a particular mission is also flawed; your choice of weapon and player character appears to have little impact on mission success or failure.

It also appears nothing has been done to rectify the poor enemy AI that so blighted previous games in the series. Opponents often stand right out in the open waiting for you to pick them off like tin cans on a fence post. There is no hearing algorithm to alert enemies to your presence. You can fire off an entire magazine while standing just around the corner from one of the terrorists, yet they don't react. What's worse, you can put a bullet between an opponent's eyes and the guy standing two feet

from him will ignore this event. Enemies also die instantly even if they have only been shot in the toe.

Ultimately, the lack of enemy AI results in a game totally devoid of any challenge (even at the hardest difficulty setting).

Even considering all these factors, Delta Force: Land Warrior is not a title to be dismissed out of hand. In spite of the ease with

“Ultimately, the lack of enemy AI leaves the game devoid of any challenge”

which you can pick off enemies (or maybe because of it), this game still manages to supply an acceptable level of fun, particularly if you enjoy taking out opponents with the long-range sniper rifle scope. Multiplayer is certainly one of the game's stronger points as well. In a FPS market filled to capacity with games based on science fiction and fantasy worlds, one so grounded in reality is a welcome addition. As many improvements as the game's developers have made over its predecessors, we only wish they had gone the extra mile and made this game into the top-notch title it could have been.

■ There's plenty of entertainment here if you fancy yourself as a sniper

JUDGEMENT

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MIN: PII, 64MB RAM

GD SUGGESTS:
PII-400, 128MB RAM

■ PUBLISHER: NOVALOGIC
■ DEVELOPER: IN-HOUSE
■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Demo at: www.gamesdomain.co.uk/demos/demo/1326.html

+ Improved game engine with 3D acceleration

+ Good multiplayer support

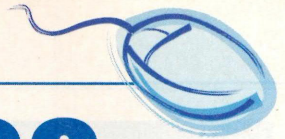
+ Expansive outdoor locations; some highly detailed interiors

- Brain dead enemy AI

- Too easy

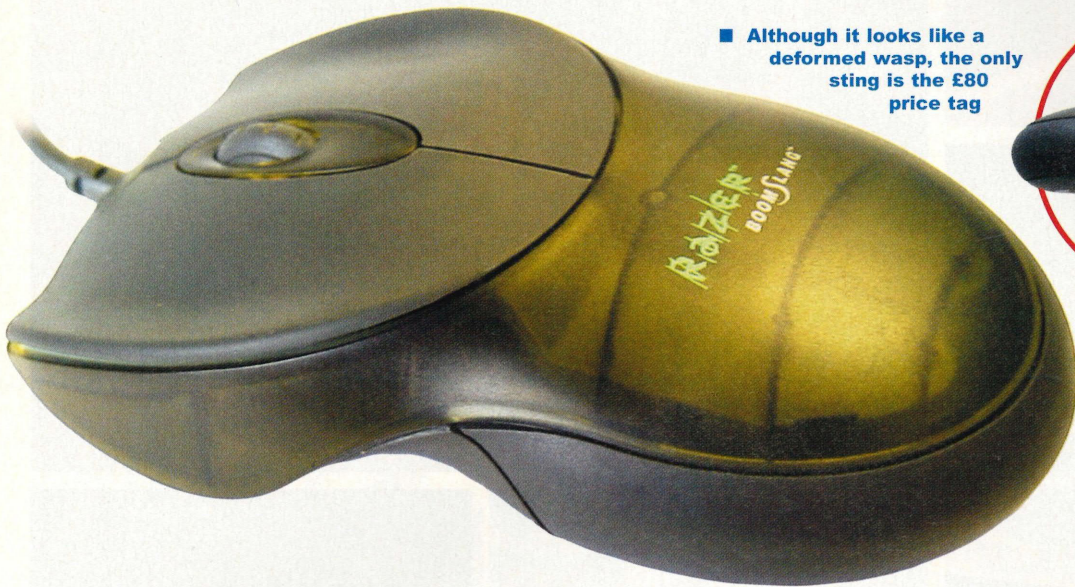
6

WORDS: BRUCE PULVER



BOOMSLANG 2000

It's the most expensive mouse since Mickey - but Disney go ignoring it!



■ Although it looks like a deformed wasp, the only sting is the £80 price tag



Razer Boomslang: not a traditional Antipodean hunting weapon, nor an Air Force vernacular, nor even a new shaving mechanism; rather, the latest and supposedly greatest piece of mousing technology. Can it justify its £80 asking price? We found out.

It's a funny looking thing, this Boomslang. It's longer and lower than other mice, with two extended main buttons, two side buttons tucked in under its "waist" and a conventionally placed wheel (which functions as a fifth button). Each button, and the rounded heel of the Boomslang, is coated with a non-slip rubberised material. The mouse is symmetrical, meaning left and right-handed users will feel equally at home. Finally, the ball is placed much further back than is traditional.

should naturally move backwards until your palm is resting on the desk and you are controlling the mouse with just your fingertips, hence those extended buttons. Once in this position, there is noticeably less strain put on your wrist and this reaps dividends during long gaming sessions.

This simple acclimatisation procedure is made easier by perhaps one of the Boomslang's best features - the "on-the-fly" sensitivity adjustment. This allows you to alter sensitivity settings at any point, even mid-game, with a simple button combination.

Razer sponsors the Cyberathlete Professional League, and has been positioning its mouse as the choice for serious FPS players for some time. However we found no evidence the Boomslang's brilliance translates into an increased frag

count. But there's no doubt the silky-smooth action and positive buttons make playing most games much more natural, and despite the odd looking shape it never proved intrusive. An audible creaking was evident though -

although this may have been down to the fact our test mouse was brand new. The mouse wheel is also a little too far forward to access easily if you use the Boomslang in the palm-on-the-desktop position you're supposed to adopt.

So the \$64,000 question is, are these mice worth the high asking price? Well, before buying one, you should certainly think about a new mouse pad to get the most from it; here at GDO we recommend the Everglide, while Razer recommends the 3M Precision Mousing Surface - either will be fine. As for the mouse, if the odd shape works for you, you'll never be comfortable with another mouse again. If you were a serious tennis player, you'd think nothing about spending this amount of money on a new racket; if you're a serious gamer, perhaps you can't afford not to.

"£80 is a lot, but if you're a serious gamer perhaps you can't afford not to"

Under the plastic casing, the Boomslang is a rather different animal from a traditional mouse. It uses tiny prisms to focus the light beams used to track the ball's movement, helping to deliver impressive resolutions. A typical mouse has a resolution of about 400dpi. We tested the 2,000dpi model; there's also a 1,000dpi model available for £20 less. Even the wheel has a higher resolving power - 42 dots per rotation, rather than the standard 18.

Installing the drivers was simplicity itself - the software is well-designed, clear and excellently presented. The accompanying handbook details the procedure for familiarising yourself with the Razer. The manufacturer recommends starting at a low sensitivity setting, and gradually ramping it up as you get more used to the responsiveness. Your hand, says the literature,

JUDGEMENT

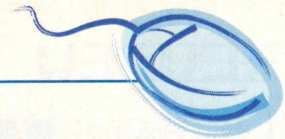
■ MANUFACTURER RAZER
■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

GDO ONLINE: Full review at: www.gamesdomain.co.uk/gdreview/zones/reviews/pc/jan01/razerrev.html

- + Fast, accurate and brutal - a real gamers' mouse
- + Strong and well-built
- + 'On-the-fly' adjustable sensitivity
- + Easy installation
- Expensive
- No noticeable frag-rate improvements
- Creaks slightly

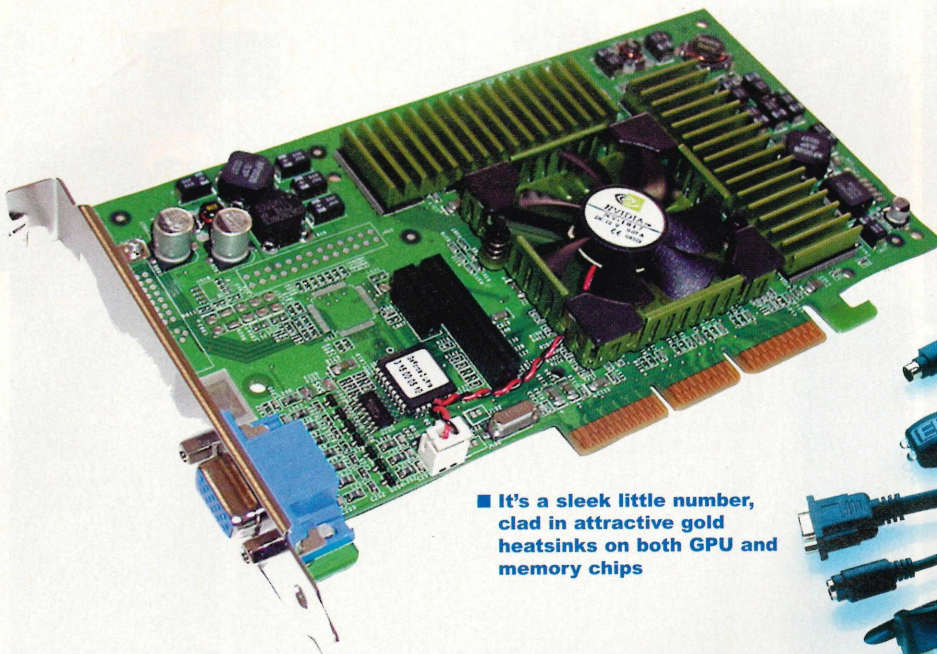
88
OUT OF TEN

WORDS: MIKE SMITH

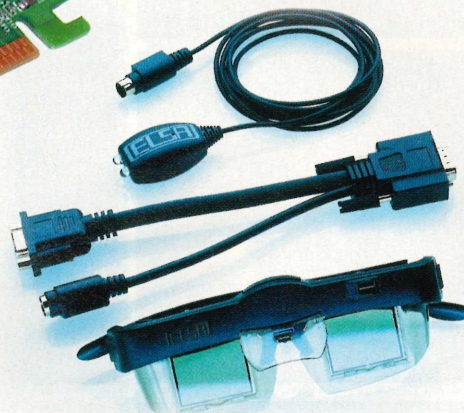
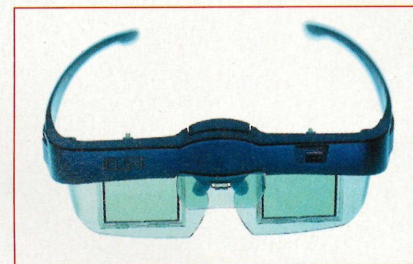


GLADIAC ULTRA

Is the Gladiac Ultra really worth more than 200 pints of Carling?



■ It's a sleek little number, clad in attractive gold heatsinks on both GPU and memory chips



Imagine the scene. The latest, fastest graphics card from Elsa is due through the door at any minute. On delivering the package the postman is buried under a mass of flailing geeky limbs, each desperate to get their hands on the goods. His condition was later described as "stable."

Well, OK, that's not strictly how it happened. But, that said, a great many people here were curious to know how Elsa justifies charging £400 for a graphics card. Could the Gladiac Ultra really be worth more than two hundred pints of Carling? For your money, you get the card - a sleek little number, clad in attractive gold

those who care about such things, are 31 million polygons/sec and a fill-rate of 7.4 Gb/sec, which corresponds to somewhere in excess of 1bn pixels every second.

Why is it so fast? The GPU doesn't hurt - it's Nvidia's latest generation of Geforce chip, and from this evidence, it's a lovely piece of kit. The memory, too, plays a huge part - it's some of the fastest DDR RAM available (with a 4ns access time) and no doubt contributes significantly to both the overall speed and the high price of the card - memory this fast doesn't come cheap.

If you're curious about the 3D glasses, they're intended to create a 3D, stereoscopic image by sending different pictures to each eye - they are good if the concept appeals, but effectively halve the refresh rate of your monitor, meaning you'll need speeds of 120Hz for a steady image. They can also be difficult to set up, so if tweaking PC hardware isn't your forte, you'll be in for a frustrating time. They are Direct3D only, and apparently don't work with certain games, although they were fine on the few we tested.

However, it's kind of hard to see Elsa's thinking in selling this card. Do they think today's gamer is prepared to spend £400 on a graphics card? If you don't have an up-to-the-minute processor and a high-quality monitor, there's really no point. Some people will, sure, but most will hold on, in the knowledge that in six months the card will probably be half that price, and by then, there will be some software to really make use of its power. As a flagship product, though, it's undoubtedly impressive.



"We threw everything we possibly could at this card - but it loved it!"

heatsinks on both GPU and memory chips - and a bonus set of Elsa's 3D Revelators, LCD-shutter-based independent vision glasses. With a glint in our collective eye, and a crowd gathering around the monitor, we set about throwing everything we could at the card.

But it loved it. Even Quake III, in 1600x1200 and 32-bit colour, proved playable (if not exactly lightning-quick). At just about every other resolution it was clear the limiting factor was the CPU - with one of the latest generations of processor, you should expect some obscure frame-rates. There's really very little point in posting benchmarks - choose your game, run it on your present card at 640x480, and the frame-rate you get will be about what the Gladiac Ultra will achieve - in any resolution, and in any colour depth. The raw performance figures, for

JUDGEMENT

- MANUFACTURER ELSA
- RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Full review at: www.gamesdomain.co.uk/gdreview/zones/reviews/pc/jan01/gladiac_ultra2.html

- + Ludicrously fast
- + Insanely fast
- + Did we mention it was fast?
- + 3D glasses are a bonus
- High price
- Will be outdated soon

7 OUT OF TEN

WORDS: MIKE SMITH



HOSTILE WATERS



Can the perfect action-strategy hybrid be found on the high seas?



Plenty of games are set in dark, post-apocalyptic futures - you know, atmosphere full of nuclear fallout, ground ravaged, water polluted - unpleasant places to live. *Hostile Waters* is different: rather than dark unpleasantness, the human race has solved all its problems and all's well with the world.

On its own, though, that wouldn't make for much of a game, so it's lucky a cabal of old-school violence and anarchy types have decided to create a group of Pacific islands from nowhere and try to send the world back to the bad old days of unpleasantness. There's one Adaptive Cruiser left over from the old wars, the *Antaeus*, and it's down to you to take the helm and save the world.

Although this concept interestingly harks back to an ancient 16-bit *Rainbird* game *Carrier Command*, in more modern terms *Hostile Waters* is probably most similar to *Battlezone*. You must harvest resources (scrap metal) and construct units to fulfil your mission objectives, which can be anything from simple seek-and-destroys to more complex tasks like helping scientists defect, or scouting islands while remaining undetected.

Each vehicle the *Antaeus* can build (helicopters, tanks, hovercraft, dune buggies and so on) can be equipped with a *Soulcatcher* chip, holding the skills and personality of a dead soldier. Each one has his or her own abilities and will complain bitterly if confronted with an unfamiliar machine to pilot. When in the field, they constantly keep up a flow of banter and information, often holding brief conversations between themselves, and occasionally resorting to torrents of abuse. Being grizzled old soldier

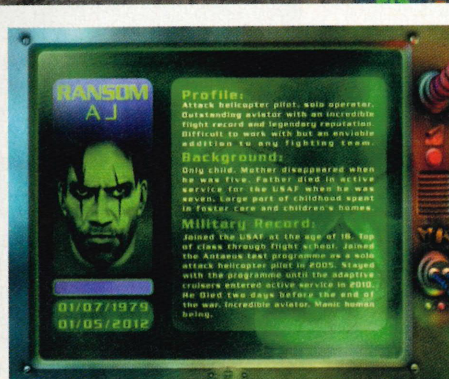
types, they often resort to words you wouldn't use in front of your granny - though it's entertaining, you can turn the swearing off if it offends.

Unit limits are intelligently applied - vehicles with no *Soulcatcher* chip must be player-controlled to do anything useful, so when you run out of chips you'll need to think about decommissioning some. As you progress through missions you'll be given more chips so more complicated combinations become possible. The friendly AI is mostly excellent, doing a good job of combat and navigating obstacles, although units will sometimes drift too far from other friendlies and become isolated.

“Hostile’s fun combat and strategic complexity has very broad appeal”

The vehicles are controlled with mouse and keyboard, with a feel rather like most first-person shooters and this works surprisingly well. Each vehicle can be fitted with one weapon and a selection of equipment (cloaking devices, armour, AI chips) when constructing - these are all easily accessible and allow for a variety of craft configurations. If short of cash, it's always possible to remove armour from a vehicle and make a cheaper, albeit less durable, alternative.

Hostile's engine really is an impressive piece of work. From the seagulls circling over the many beaches and cliffs to the 15-minute day-night cycles that make your timing of attacks crucial. Though the draw distance doesn't seem huge, it's actually a neat implementation of the fog-of-war - you can only see as far enough as your



radar scanner extends, and in practice it's enough to understand what's going on and fight efficiently.

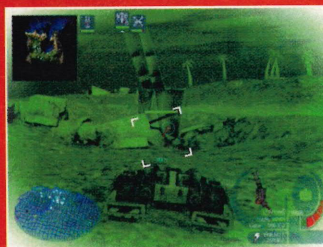
But the strength of Hostile lies in the atmosphere and immersive depth of each mission. All the graphical niceties, the convincing-yet-unintrusive physics engine and the well-characterised AI chips create an impression of a real, breathing world.

The missions are tied together with some excellent, in-engine cut-scenes, and thanks to classy acting from Dempsey and Makepeace stars Glynis Barber and Tom Brandon, not to mention Dr Who's Tom Baker, the atmospheric feel of the game proper is beautifully preserved. Rage employed "adult" comic-book maestro Warren Ellis for the script, and it shows, both in the overall quality and the dark themes.

The single-player campaign is long (about 40-50 hours), tough and compelling, but sadly once it's finished that's your lot: no skirmish mode and, for now, no multiplayer. Rage plans to investigate providing multiplayer levels after the game is released - here's wishing them luck, because multiplayer Hostile Waters could be tremendous fun.

It would be a shame if Hostile Waters suffered the same fate as Battlezone - critically acclaimed, but inexplicably ignored by shoppers. Maybe the action-strategy crossbreed is a hard concept to get hold of, and appeals to neither action nor strategy fans? Hopefully not, because Hostile's gorgeous graphics and fun combat will entertain action gamers, and strategically it's complex and flexible enough to engage RTS fans too. Don't let it pass you by.

Night Vision



The islands have day-night cycles lasting around 15 minutes, so light conditions are always varying, and as it's much easier to fight during the daylight, timing of attacks is crucial.

JUDGEMENT

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MIN: PII-350, 64 MB RAM

GDO SUGGESTS:
PIII-500, 128MB RAM

■ PUBLISHER: RAGE
■ DEVELOPER: RAGE
■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Demo at: www.gamesdomain.com/demos/demo/855.html

- + Excellently presented
- + Engaging, varied and fun
- + Strong plot and voice acting
- + Good and unintrusive physics
- + Excellent sense of progression
- Possibly limited lasting value



9 OUT OF TEN

WORDS: MIKE SMITH

GamesDomain

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Erm, right. Why is it hot we hear you cry? Well, for a piffling £14.99* you can get your favourite multiforum games magazine, Games Domain Offline, delivered directly to your door every month for a year. Based on our hugely popular website, www.gamesdomain.co.uk, Games Domain Offline is crammed full news, reviews, previews, cheats, features and exclusive competitions. And we'll also throw in a copy of SoF Gold!

THE GAME:

Soldier of Fortune Gold will blow you away - literally! The enhanced and improved version of the highly acclaimed 18-certificate first-person shooter sees you cast as a mercenary. Pitted against an evil terrorist group, you are called in to retrieve four stolen nuclear warheads.

Soldier of Fortune's blasting takes place across levels set in Kosovo, New York and Iraq to name but a few. Your armoury includes machine-guns, shotguns, flame-throwers, rocket-launchers and even microwave ray-guns.

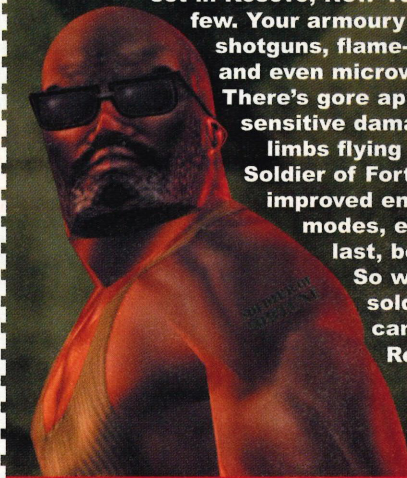
There's gore aplenty, thanks to SoFs hit-sensitive damage system which sees limbs flying and gibs galore.

Soldier of Fortune Gold also boasts improved enemy AI, new deathmatch modes, eighteen new levels and, at last, bot support.

So what are you waiting for soldier? Subscribe now: you can't afford not to!

Read full review of SoF at:

www.gamesdomain.co.uk/gdreview/zones/reviews/pc/apr00/sof.html



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HAZZARD
DAISY DUKES IT OUT





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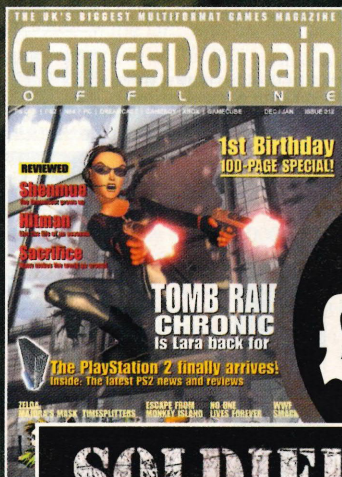
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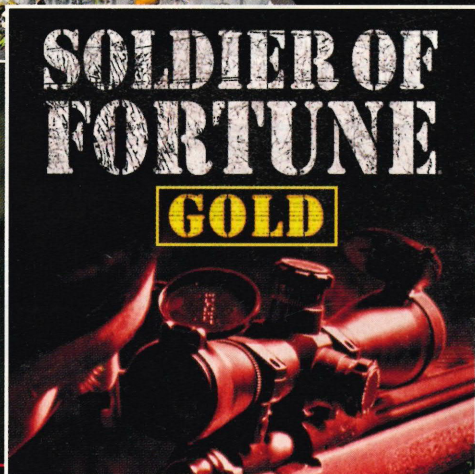
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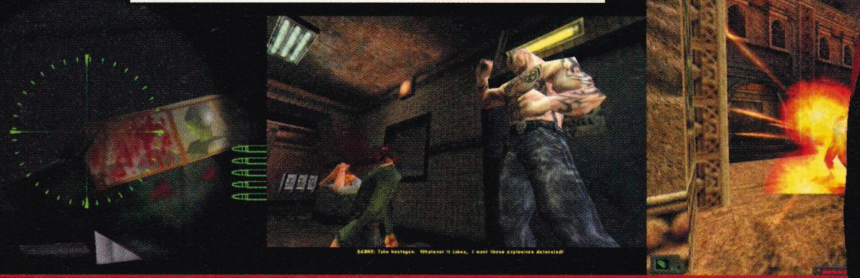


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download a taster of their

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It's not just demos that live in our downloads emporium of sin, either. We have a great selection of game footage in our movies section, the most comprehensive collection of game patches for those glitchy moments in your life, shareware titles, and also a truck-load of top-of-the-pop themes for those of you with desktop fetishes. Don't pretend: we know who you are!

Our lightning speed FTP servers also allow for 5,000 users to download at once. So pay a visit to Games Domain's downloads section - there really is something for everyone.



Demos

The crème-de-la-crème of commercial demos just waiting to be test driven. Everything from Quake to Metal Gear Solid is archived for your convenience. No petrol needed.

The screenshot shows the GamesDomain website with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area. The main area is divided into sections: 'HOTTEST 5 DEMOS', 'SHAREWARE', 'MOVIES', 'PATCHES', and 'THEMES'. Each section lists game titles with brief descriptions and 'MORE INFO' links. A search bar is located at the top right of the page.



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Patches

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Themes

Desktop environment need a lick of paint? GD's themes area will have it transformed with added eye-candy, quicker than you can say B&Q!



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ABC audited!

Games Domain Offline is No.1!

ABC

GDO proves success is as easy as ABC

It's official: Games Domain Offline is the UK's number one multiformat games magazine!!!

According to new figures released by Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), GDO is now the leading multiformat games magazine in the UK, with an official circulation figure of 78,950.

In just over a year our rocketing success has left the opposition trailing dismally in our wake and we are now beating the pants off them.

GDO's nearest ABC-audited multiformat competitor, Computer and Video Games, now trails GDO by over 33,000 with an official circulation figure of 45,606. Games Master is even further behind with an ABC calculated circulation of 44,848. And the high-concept Edge magazine has an ABC figure of only 28,376.

But the success of your favourite games mag should come as no surprise: Games Domain Offline is the sister publication of the US PC publication Computer Games Magazine, which is among the leading consumer print magazines *in the world* for computer game fans.

And of course, Games Domain Offline was also spawned from the loins of Games Domain, the world's first games web site which, together with Console Domain, is now the UK's leading destination for online gaming information.

GDO's first birthday was in December 2000 and we've only just recovered from partying to celebrate the seventh birthday of the Games Domain website next month - that makes us older than Yahoo! So remember to check the site regularly for some extra special features to celebrate our seven-year roller coaster ride on the wires.

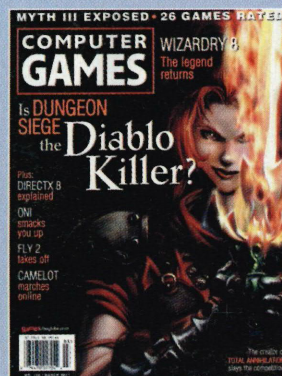
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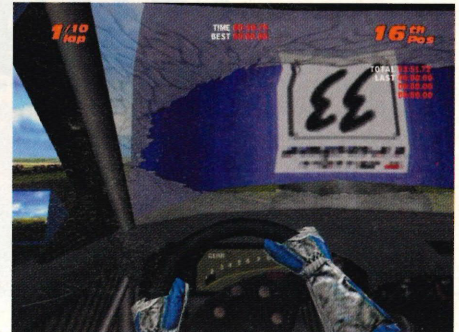


Games Domain Offline is the sister publication of the aptly named US games mag, Computer Games Magazine. Unlike GDO, Computer Games Magazine is PC only but the huge popularity of the mag in the US is testimony to the quality of its coverage of all game genres, including action, adventure, role-playing, strategy, war, simulations and sport.

For international subscriptions info visit www.cdmag.com and click subscriptions

TOCA

■ PUBLISHER: SOLD OUT ■ DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW ■ FORMAT: PC



The British Touring Car Championship was brought to life in this rubber-burning hit from Codemasters. TOCA brought all the speed and action of touring car racing and combined it with great handling and some stunning graphics. For anyone who doesn't know, a Touring Car is, on the surface, a standard road model such as a Ford Mondeo, Audi A4, Renault Laguna etc. Under the skin, as you might expect, things are a little different. TOCA proved beyond doubt that you don't have to be driving what looks like a razor blade to get four-wheel thrills. **RRP: £4.99**

GEKIDO

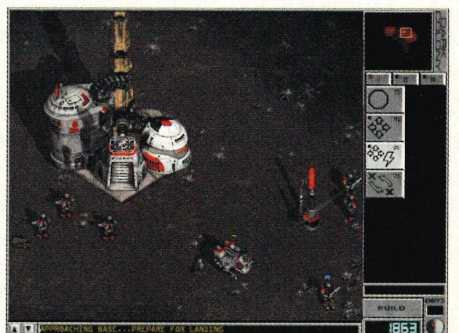
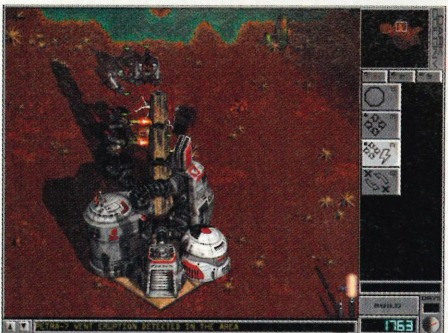
■ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES ■ DEVELOPER: NAPS TEAM ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW ■ FORMAT: PSX



Inspired by classic 2D scrolling beat 'em ups, Gekido brings street tough entertainment to the PlayStation. But 3D is the watchword for characters and environments in this game. In all, there are nine characters, each presenting a different style of fighting. While some rely on their huge build to bash challengers with brute strength, others are much more agile and use rapid, multi-hitting attacks. There is an in-depth system of combos and special moves to be learned and unlocked and plenty of challenges for both lone and multiplayer gaming. Gekido's graphics are adventurous and varied, but not over ambitious. With all of the combos and weapons to experiment with, beat 'em up fans should certainly add this to their collection. **RRP: £9.99**

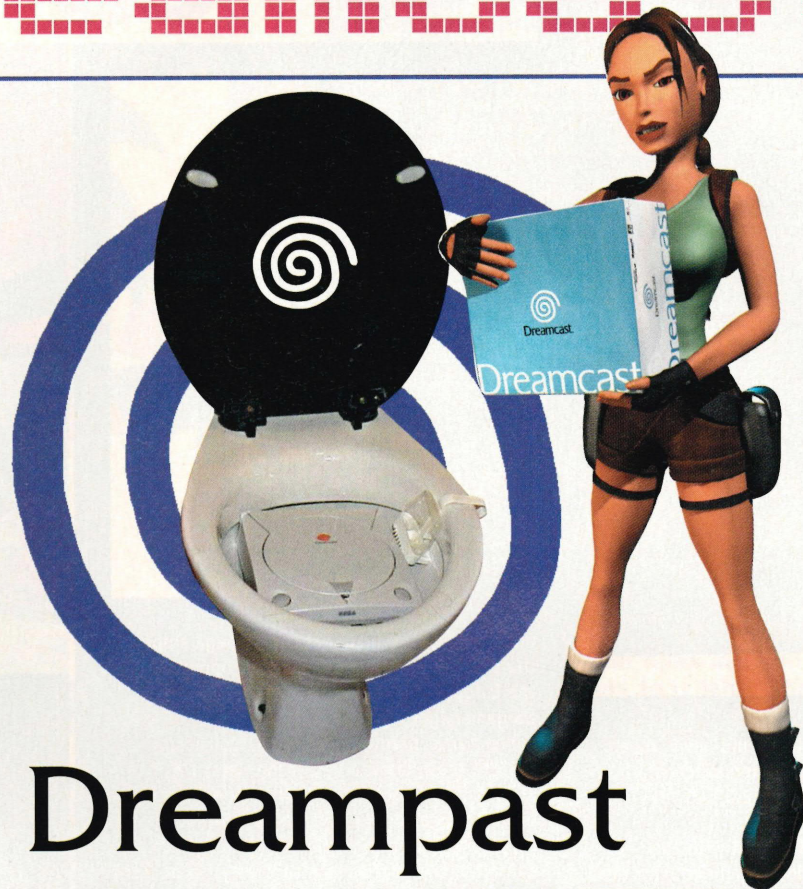
DARK COLONY

■ PUBLISHER: SOLD OUT DEVELOPER: SSI ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW ■ FORMAT: PC



Created by SSI, this budget release brings you stunning graphics and great strategy. The game's plot is based around the battle between humans and a race of aliens called the Greys for the control of Mars; you can play as either a human or Grey commander. Dark colony is a bit of a clone of strategy classic Command & Conquer. It has wide range of units available to utilise in your defence, or attack, as you wreak bloody war upon the surface of the red planet. Originally released in 1997, the game will run super smooth even on a P100. Now that can't be bad. **RRP: £4.99**

Sega ditches Dreamcast



Dreampast

This month the video games industry was rocked by news Sega had pulled the plug on the Dreamcast. The story leaked from Sega Japan and, as speculation grew, the US and European arms of the company floundered as the industry press demanded confirmation of the Dreamcast's demise. It came in the form of a typically stuffy industry announcement on January 31. The statement said Sega would now, "focus solely on videogame content -- an area that has been the company's biggest strength for more than 40 years." Sega was keen to stress Dreamcast games would still be arriving thick and fast (it plans to ship 100 worldwide by March 2002) but, although not explicit, the message was clear: the Dreamcast had failed. As an incentive to buy the last remaining DCs, the price of the machine has now been slashed to £99.99. So how did Sega - which was riding high after the success of the Mega Drive in the 16-bit era of console gaming - fail to live the next generation dream? GDO investigates.

In the early days of consoles, most gamers either sided with Nintendo or Sega. The SNES and the MegaDrive battled it out to be the top home console system: Nintendo had Mario and the MegaDrive had Sonic. The two machines lived happily alongside each other and it seemed like quite a friendly battle with both parties releasing some great games for their systems. Then Sega upped the stakes with the Saturn and Sony decided to join the market with the PlayStation.

Whereas Sega was renowned for making computer consoles and arcades, Sony was best known for electronics and dominated the home entertainment market. To successfully market its new console, Sony needed to capture a whole new target audience: the 20-somethings which had grown tired of Sonic and Mario and wanted something a bit more mature. Sony provided this. In 1995, flyers were handed out at the UK's Glastonbury Festival and leading dance

artists were signed to provide a soundtrack for *Wipeout 2097*. A market that loved gaming but wasn't being catered for was effectively tapped into by Sony and it blew the Saturn out of the water.

As PlayStation grew in popularity, Nintendo released the N64 into a new, more vicious market where great innovative games were dying and sequels were becoming the status quo. It would still be a long wait until Sega made its next move; some would say that it waited too long, letting Sony capture so much of the market. But Sega's problems with its new console contender, the Dreamcast, had plagued it since production began. The main problem was the graphics hardware. Sega announced that Videologic was making the graphics chipset. Then, 3Dfx floated on the stock market and had to announce all its current projects, one of which was the creation of a graphics system for the Dreamcast. Chaos and rumour

ensued: it was thought at one stage that two different consoles would be launched - a Videologic version in Japan and a 3Dfx version in USA. The official Dreamcast specifications cleared up the confusion when they were finally released in May 21, 1999, with Videologic now firmly installed in the system.

When it was released in the UK, the Dreamcast had a very promising launch line-up. Sonic was returning in full 3D with some stunningly fast and great-looking levels. *Sega Rally 2* brought the popular racing game that was such a hit at the arcades into the home and *Virtua Fighter* brought fully 3D fighting to the console, with the opportunity to play the game in first-person perspective.

Unfortunately, a lot of developers either didn't sign up for or dropped games for the console. Electronic Arts, the world's largest games publisher, never signed up to make games for the console, meaning that top titles like *FIFA*

The Dreamcast becomes a nightmare

The end is nigh for the Dreamcast but Sega looks to the future



and other EA Sports titles would never appear on the Dreamcast. Codemasters ditched a version of Colin McRae Rally 2.0 halfway through development.

The Dreamcast also had to deal with the Pokémon craze. Nintendo had an exclusive deal on the product and while the kids were clamouring for Pokémon games, students were curling up in bed with their PlayStation.

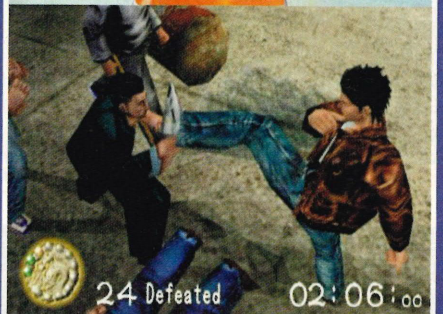
Dreamcast didn't fit into the kids or students' plans.

But, despite these problems, the Dreamcast still had some top titles. Namco produced its finest fighting game to date with Soul Calibur. Capcom made a visually superior version of Resident Evil: Code Veronica. Bizarre Creations made the superb driving game Metropolis Street Racer and Sega itself was pumping out some great games for the console, with Shenmue, Virtua Tennis and Jet Set Radio being hailed as great and inventive releases.

The Dreamcast also made the first steps by a console into the online market. With its Internet connection it allowed owners to surf the 'net and play games on it. It should have been wonderful, but it wasn't until nearly a year after the launch that the first online game, Chu Chu Rocket, was released. Unfortunately, it suffered from lag (Internet congestion that slows the time it takes information to reach a gaming server and back again) which meant that the fast-paced puzzle game was nearly impossible to play for UK owners. Bad publicity didn't help either. A report into the lack of Dreamcast servers in the country was highlighted on the BBC's prime-time consumer

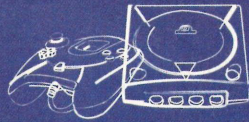
report show, Watchdog. In the US Sega shipped the Dreamcast with a 56k modem, opposed to the European 33.6k modem, which meant that US gamers got a better deal, and faster online connections, than their European cousins. Despite these drawbacks though, later UK releases like Quake III, a first-person shooter, provided great online experiences. Sega's commitment to bringing online gaming into the console arena continues with the yet to be released Speed Devils Online and Phantasy Star Online. But, again, the online experiment was let down by poor marketing.

"Play 6 billion people" stated a high-profile Sega UK television ad. Of course people would have loved to play, but what? Not once during any of the ads for the console were there shots of the fantastic titles that were available. This marketing angle didn't wash with consumers. One Sega employee was overheard to say at a press day: "If you sell the games, you sell the console." The company should have made him head of marketing. PlayStation was promoted by the number and quality of its titles rather than the hardware itself; who wants to buy a fantastic console if there isn't anything to play on it? Now PlayStation2 is promoting itself on being some kind of 'third place'. We'll have to wait and see whether it is successful in the long-run, but it is clear many would rather part with their cash for Sony's new beast rather than buy what became a gaming white elephant long before the announcement of its demise.



Going but not without a bang: there's a shed-load of titles coming out on the DC which is now available at £99.99

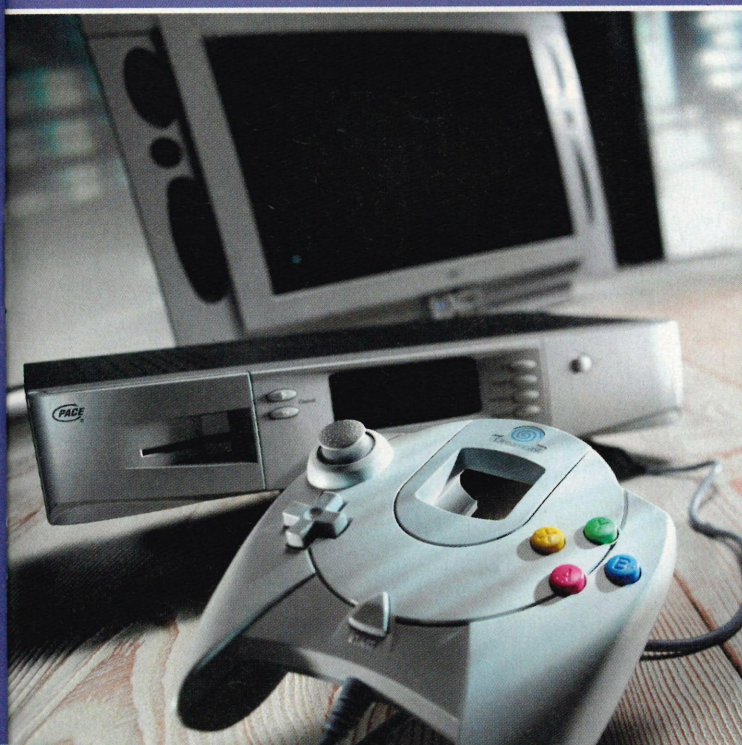
Games for Sega



Sonic is set to save Sega with games across a variety of platforms

The Dreamcast on TV

So where to now for the Dreamcast? Some elements of the little white box will live on, thanks to a deal Sega signed with UK-based manufacturer Pace. The device below, a set-top box, is Pace's newest digital TV accessory, a "personal video recorder" able both to receive digital television and download Sega games via a broadband net connection, probably via a "pay-to-play" system.



Sega's Statement

In Sega's Jan 31 statement, the company unveiled two main threads to its future plans: to become a platform-neutral third party videogame publisher for game consoles and to provide the powerful Dreamcast chip-set technology to a range of devices including the PACE Micro Technologies set-top box. The company said it would also deliver Sega games to Palm handheld computers and Motorola cellular phones to broaden its market of consumer purchasers, while dramatically expanding its revenue possibilities.

The first Sega games to be available on other game consoles this year will include Space Channel 5 for PlayStation2 and Sonic the Hedgehog Advance for Nintendo's Game Boy Advance.

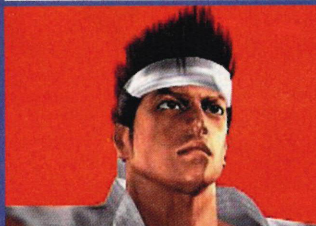
Sega plans to ship more than 100 games for Dreamcast worldwide (including best-selling brands such as Sonic Adventure 2 and Crazy Taxi 2), 30 for other videogame consoles and a number of games for other Internet devices by March 2002.

Kazutoshi Miyake, Sega's Europe Chief Operating Officer, said: "Our new strategy will allow us to put our software content across a variety of platforms keeping Sega at the forefront of gaming."

"We have a lot of quality titles due out over the next year including Phantasy Star Online, Headhunter, and Black & White. There is plenty of good gaming to look forward to on Dreamcast."

TOP TITLES STILL TO COME

Despite the gloomy news that the Dreamcast itself will cease production there are still plenty of games for DC owners to relish in the coming 12 months. Here are four of the best.



VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

Yet another instalment to the popular fighting series, designed more for the fighting connoisseur than the button mashing mainstream audience. Expect overhauled graphics, new stages and enhanced gameplay - a surefire hit.



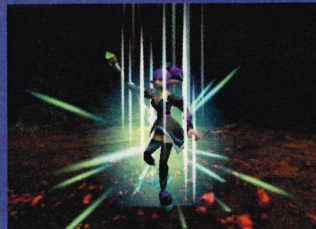
DAYTONA

A conversion of the popular coin-up, with many added bonuses, and already available on import. Where the Saturn failed, the Dreamcast finally does the game justice. The chance to compete online is one to be relished.



SHENMUE 2

The follow-up to Yu Suzuki's masterpiece, certain to go one better as you finally solve the murder of Ryo Hazuki's father. This looks like being compulsive gaming.



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

From Sega's Sonic Team, and the first online role-playing game available on a console. Certain to revolutionise the genre. Check out our review on page 50.

Win a scooter and a PSone™



Wheel-flips, candy-bars, can-cans and supermen - no, it's not a night out at the Follies Bergere with the GDO team: it's Freestyle Scooter, the first PSX game ever to let you loose on a high-flying kickboard.

Hit the skate parks and the streets as you trick and kick your way to success in this latest offering from Ubi Soft.

To mark Freestyle Scooter's release, Games Domain Offline has teamed up with Ubi Soft to offer five of our lucky readers the sort of prize package that would make your grandmother stair-jump with delight.

The fortunate five will each get their hands on a top of the range JD Bug Scooter, a PS One and a copy of Freestyle Scooter for PSX. That's right: three amazing prizes in one for five lucky readers!

All you have to do is enter is answer the following question, ring our competition hotline below and follow the instructions on the line, remembering to speak clearly. Okay, the question is: Which one of these is a scooter trick?

- a) Wheel-flip
- b) Heel-flop
- c) Flipping heck

Even if you don't win, initial stocks of Freestyle Scooter have a special offer: the chance to buy a JD Bug Scooter at £40 off the recommended retail price of £99.95 (i.e. only £59.95). So there really is no excuse not to hit the streets and try out the latest two-wheeled craze to sweep the nation.



competition hotline

0906 302 1007



Entry to this competition is by competition hotline only. Follow the instructions on the line and ring the number below. Always ask the person who pages the phone for permission before making your call. Closing date April 15, 2001.



CONSOLES GAMES



SECTION

PIPELINES PREVIEWS REVIEWS

It's not the end of the road for the DC, but the beginning of a new 'sonic' boom



Gareth Holden
Console Editor

So Sega has pulled the plug on the less than successful Dreamcast, signalling a major shift in its strategic focus.

The marketing of the DC was always questionable and the critics were queuing up after seeing the 32X, Mega CD and Saturn fail miserably in the face of stiff competition and speculative consumers. Questionable timing over its release, the absence of major publishers like Electronic Arts and Squaresoft, technology delays with the online gaming and, of course, competition from Sony, were all challenging factors.

The DC's death is a great shame for a company partly responsible for shaping the industry into what it is today. Who could ever forget the classic rivalry between Sonic and Mario or the first time we saw games like Virtua Racing and Sonic 2 running on the MegaDrive?

It's not quite the end of the road for Sega though; some may argue it's merely the beginning of a new adventure. After all, we'll still see a 100 strong line-up headed to the Dreamcast as well as other top titles for rival consoles.

If Sega continues to churn out more of the games we admire so much, its future will be rosy!

gareth@consoledomain.com



46

SONIC ADVENTURE 2



47

DUKES OF HAZARD 2



48

FORMULA ONE 2001



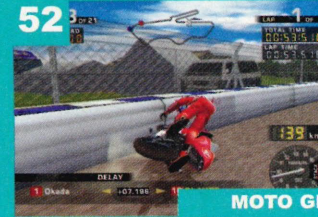
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PHANTASY STAR ONLINE



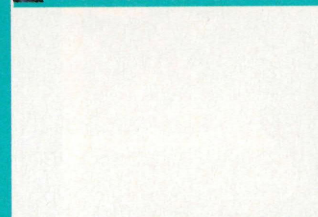
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HIT: POINT BLANK 3



52

MOTO GP



58

VANISHING POINT



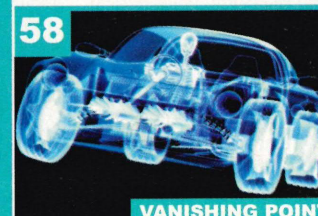
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ARMORED CORE 2



56

C-12



64

CROC 2



65

ACTION MAN

THE SPEED CARRIES YOU THROUGH THE BARRIERS, THROUGH THE FEAR.

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VANISHING POINT

PAST THE POINT OF NO RETURN



■ PUBLISHER: SEGA ■ DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM ■ FORMAT: DREAMCAST ■ RELEASE: TBC

SONIC ADVENTURE 2

Sonic is ten years old and preparing to celebrate in style



Sonic demonstrates the latest in extreme sports: aggressive street iron-boarding



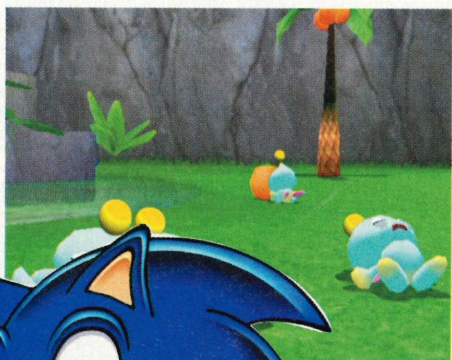
The year 2001 is the tenth birthday of the little blue hedgehog that made his fame as a figurehead for Sega. To mark the occasion, Sonic Team is releasing what promises to be the biggest and best Sonic game to date and has fuelled the hype with a series of sneaky glimpses of impressive screenshots and some fantastic preview movies.

If all this build-up is to be believed, Sonic Adventure 2, first unveiled at last year's E3 trade show in Los Angeles, looks set to be the best adventure platform game on the Dreamcast, ever.

Each will have its own specific attributes, as well as new special moves to allow for diversity of gameplay. Sonic and friends will have to complete six acts (Sonic terminology for stages within a level) and all of their separate antics will be interrelated. This means if you're playing as Sonic and you get punched by Knuckles, later on you will actually have to play as Knuckles as he punches Sonic.

If that's not enough, game developer Sonic Team has other surprises and features planned that won't be known until the title's release. Aside from advanced character interaction and Sonic actually having a voice, graphically the game looks like it's going to dish out stunning effects like Dr Robotnik's flying fortress morphing in front of your eyes as you fight him. Sonic is also going to jump on the extreme sports bandwagon, taking part in sky-surfing, snowboarding and a move that allows him to grind along suitable surfaces à la Tony Hawk.

Sonic Adventure 2 looks like it could be one game not to be missed, but, as they say, the proof of the pudding is in the playing and we've got a few weeks to wait before we get our hands on a playable version. With a Japanese release set for March 2001 and the UK date yet to be confirmed, let's hope when it eventually hits the streets, we won't be singing the blues for Sonic's birthday.

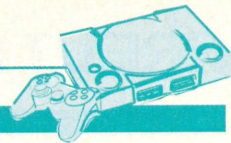


“Sonic Team has surprises planned that won't be known until the title's release”

So, Sonic is back in the saddle again and this time right here on Earth, but what exactly is the game going to contain aside from our hero and the same old ZZ Top-look-a-like enemy? Well, quite a lot from the looks of it, including a host of new and improved characters to play as, some pretty impressive looking graphics and an intriguing, interwoven storyline which includes a mysterious black hedgehog not dissimilar to Sonic himself.

There will be three playable characters in the game: old favourites Sonic, Tails and Knuckles.





■ **PU** Mechanics an ear-bashing should your car
anical difficulties.

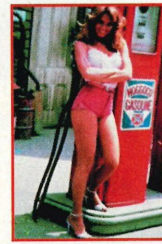
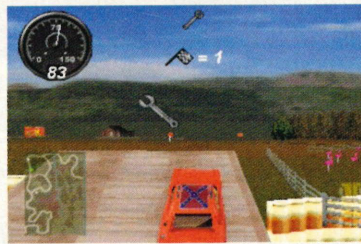
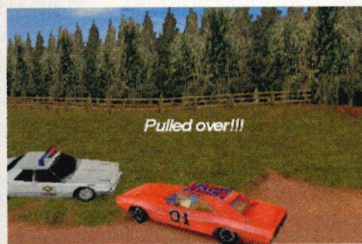
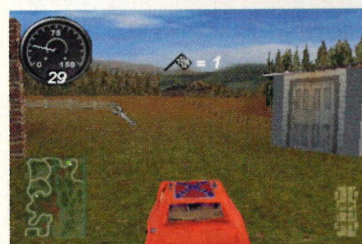
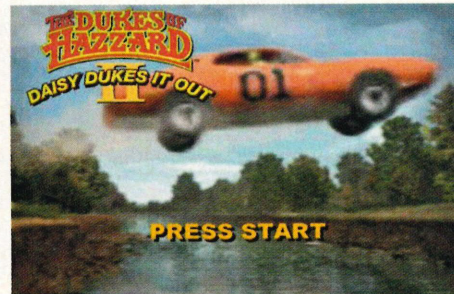
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Formula One 2001's graphics are nothing
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Th usly-detailed Monaco circuit, you won't
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the car handling in our version was

■ **PEAK INTERACTIVE** ■ **FORMAT: PLAYSTATION** ■ **RELEASE: MARCH**

OF HAZZARD 2

ke takes centre stage in the latest Hazzard romp



**FREE
POSTER
OF DAISY
ON PAGE
33**

Yieeeee Haaaaw! The crazy Duke
brothers are back in town and, as ever,
Rosco's hot on their tail. Undoubtedly
the coolest phenomenon to be resurrected
from the '80s, *The Dukes of Hazzard II: Daisy
Dukes It Out* picks up where last year's
redneck racer left off with Bo and Luke
striving to avoid the attentions of the law, so
mullets at the ready.

**"If you were a fan of the
original, this will bring a
huge smile to your face"**

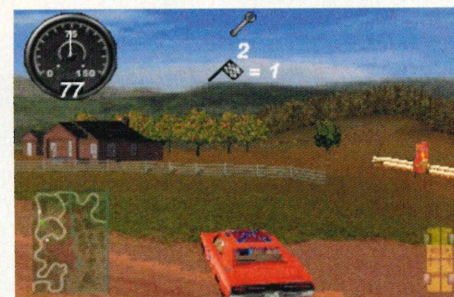
This time, the delectable Daisy Duke takes
centre stage as an old friend of hers, Missy Law,
comes to Hazzard County under the guise of a
geologist, surveying Uncle Jesse's land. Boasting
charming assets of her own, it's not long before
Missy Law is in the spotlight, but for all the
wrong reasons.

If you were a fan of the original (presumably
there had to be some) then this update will
bring a huge smile to your face, offering more of
the same mission-based driving fun across 18
all-new levels. The main aim is to tear around in
the General Lee avoiding a panel-beating from

Rosco P. Colettrain, hopefully making it in one
piece to the specified destination. Other
missions include collecting chequered flags and
transporting items around.

As well as the main single player missions will
be a joyride option for mastering all of those
back roads and a multiplayer mode, offering
games like *Capture the Jug*. You'll get the
chance to drive plenty of other vehicles as part
of the quest, including Daisy's jeep
and Uncle Jesse's truck, as the plot
thickens. Gorgeous cut-scenes convey
the characters in all their glory
(especially the lovely Daisy) and the
voice-acting is spot on to recreate
the true aura of the series.

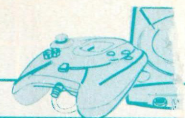
En route are plenty of spanners and nitro
boosts to repair immediate damage and then
blast away from the attentions of the law. A new
game layout means you can explore more of the
back roads of Hazzard, take shortcuts and access
hidden areas - handy for shaking the cops off
your tail and discovering new power-ups too.
Scenery has been made more complex, allowing
more underpasses, jumps and other interactive
obstacles to intensify the action. There's only
one downer though: the action stops halfway
through the level as the second half of it loads.
Let's hope this escapes the finished version.



■ Getting it sideways in the General Lee



■ Another of the vehicles available in Daisy
Dukes It Out



■ PUBLISHER: SONY ■ DEVELOPER: SCEE CAMBRIDGE ■ FORMAT: PLAYSTATION2 ■ RELEASE

FORMULA ONEURE 2

F1 2001 looks like a cert to take pole when it celebrate in style



Every console has its share of top racing simulations and the PlayStation2 looks set to follow this trend with three top Formula 1 games already revving up for pole position. EA's F1 Championship Season 2000 has already proven a solid hit, while Ubi Soft is currently gearing up for success with F1 Racing Championship. Sony could well steal the show from both these teams with its officially licensed Formula One 2001 game.

The race modes on offer include the standard fare: quick race (head straight into the action); single race (take part in a full race weekend); and time trials (race against a ghost car of your best lap). Naturally, two-player split-screen options will be available in these modes and - for the true F1 fan - there's even a spectator mode, offering the opportunity to sit in the director's chair, controlling a multitude of camera angles, from trackside to onboard views as AI-controlled cars battle it out. However, the best is saved until last with the full-blown championship mode, simulating the high-octane fuelled excitement of the real F1 season.

Competing in the full 2001 FIA Formula One

World Championship, you'll end with many of the world's most challenging raceways from San Marino to Sepang and from Montreal to wealth-laden Monte Carlo. All the championship's 17 circuits have been beautifully recreated, including every last detail from advertising boards to the correct track markings. For true authenticity, all of the correct drivers and teams from the upcoming season will be available, including Montoya, Raikkonen, Burti

"All the F1 circuits are beautifully recreated, without a hint of pop-up"

and the Minardi drivers.

Heading into the set-up screens you can practically tweak any car detail from wing angles to damper settings, ride height and even your pit strategy and stop schedule. Within the options screen, there's also the chance to randomise weather effects, enable race control flags, turn car damage on and even decide whether or not race failures should occur. This will at least give you an opportunity to give



AI drivers swerve into your path as a blocking manoeuvre, and don't be surprised if they clip your rear wheel to send you spinning off the track.



your mechanics an ear-bashing should your car hit technical difficulties.

Finally out on the track, you'll be amazed at how much this game screams next generation-not something all PlayStation2 games are able to do. Formula One 2001's graphics are nothing short of awesome, from the cars to the tracks and the surrounding scenery. Even on the notoriously-detailed Monaco circuit, you won't see a single hint of pop-up scenery.

While the car handling in our version was unfinished, it's already shaping up nicely. Using the in-car view, your driver's head gets thrown around when cornering, while the Dual Shock rumbles at every opportunity. The AI is equally pleasing. AI drivers swerve into your path as a blocking manoeuvre, and don't be surprised if they clip your rear wheel to send you spinning off the track too.

The special effects on offer also impress: the fully motion-blurred brake-lights of competitor cars during a heavy downpour have to be seen to be believed.

As ever, the proceedings are completed with the hyped-up gibberings of legendary commentator, Murray Walker. Whether he's right or wrong, you can't help but smile at his excited ranting. Having test-driven this 80 per cent finished version of the game, we're confident that Sony has the undisputed race leader under its bonnet.



How does F1 2001 on PlayStation compare?



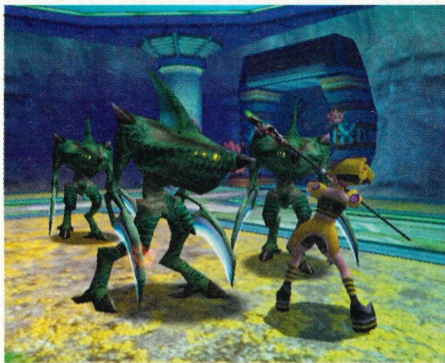
Comparing the PlayStation version of the game to its PlayStation2 bigger brother, the generation gap is crystal clear for all to see. The PlayStation's now ageing hardware churns out an impressive, although slightly grainy-looking representation, while the PlayStation2 version is simply streets ahead with silky smooth, higher-res action showing heaps more detail on both cars and the tracks.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

After nearly a year and a half, the second proper online game arrives on DC



■ The after-effects of the Selly Oak Balti Binge were visible from space



■ Sarah's demonstration of majorette skills failed to impress the aliens

So it's come to this: 16 months after the release of the Dreamcast, we've seen a magnificent total of one "proper" online game, *Quake III Arena*. *Phantasy Star Online* is the second - an addition to the groundbreaking *Megadrive* RPG series of the same name.

A classic, dungeon-crawling, item-collecting adventure, *PSO* is very similar to games like *Gauntlet* or *Diablo* for PC. After choosing a character from the list of nine types available - specialising in ranged combat, close melee fighting, psychic "techniques" or a combination of these - you can customise his or her appearance extensively.

The plot concerns a pair of spacecraft sent to colonise a new planet, Ragol. The first was sent ahead, landed successfully and began to settle. As the second ship arrives, a huge explosion shakes the planet and contact with the ground is lost. As one of the crew of the second ship, your mission is to teleport down to Ragol and, hopefully, find out what happened.

If that plot sounds interesting, bad luck, because that's about all there is to it. *PSO* couldn't be more different from games like the *Final Fantasy* series - rather than being driven by a strong plot and detailed set of characters, *PSO* is purely about killing the monsters to be found on Ragol, thus gaining experience, becoming stronger and finding better weapons.

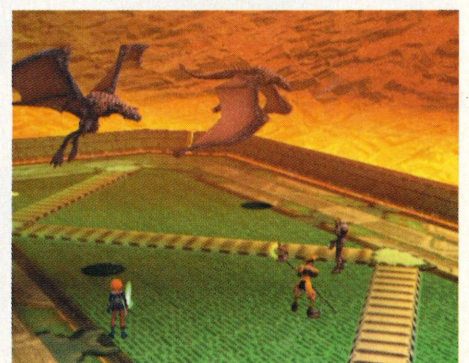
Combat is simple - weapons have two modes of attack, a weak, fast hit or a slower, less accurate but harder-hitting shot. These can be combined into quick three-hit combos. Force powers like fireballs or ice attacks can also be employed by certain character classes. Your character will auto-aim, though this process is hampered rather by a poor, loose-feeling camera which, at times, can make maintaining lock on a monster a real chore.

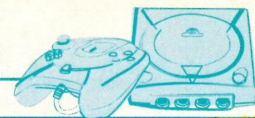
Your character also comes complete with a Mag - a floating, droid-like companion which accompanies you on your quests. Feeding it

"Don't underestimate the addictiveness of the online portions of *PSO*"

items periodically causes it to gain levels, giving you boosts to your abilities and allowing it to gain powerful attacks of its own.

The action on (and beneath) Ragol's surface is spread across four zones, each with a boss character at the end. Work your way through all four and you'll have finished the game. Die and you'll be transported back to the spaceship and have to fight your way back through to retrieve the weapon you were using and your stash of money. Returning to the spaceship allows you to take time out from the plot to complete simple quests, finding items or escorting people





around the dangerous areas of Ragol, yielding hefty cash rewards.

Think that sounds dull? Too right. Armies of samey, dumb monsters and monotonous, though initially impressive graphics make single-player PSO tedious and irritating. But then, you're not going to buy a game with the word "Online" in the title just to play it on your own, are you?

Connecting to the Sega online services results in a rather different experience. Though the locations, monsters and quests stay the same, you can join forces with up to three other players of any level to adventure as a team. The match-making system is efficient and easy, and it's possible to group with players from all over the world by joining servers in the US or Japan and a clever translation system aids communication between different nationalities. A keyboard is almost essential, as teamwork and communication are necessary to combat the increased monster count in these games. If you find yourself getting on well with someone, swapping "guild cards" will let you find them easily in future.

Commendably, even when playing with gamers many thousands of miles away on Sega's cheap-and-nasty modem, the dreaded "lag" - a characteristic delay caused by network congestion - never surfaces, indicating a good job has been made of the netcode.

Don't underestimate the addictiveness of the online portions of PSO, though. There's a crack-like quality to watching your character gain level upon level which can't be matched anywhere else in the console market. And there's always someone better than you to envy.

However, the biggest drawback to PSO is the amount it will cost you if you get hooked. Thanks to Sega UK's shortsighted and penny-pinching strategy of forcing gamers to use its own ISP service - rather than allowing the option to use a flat-rate net connection from a third-party company - you'll be paying well over

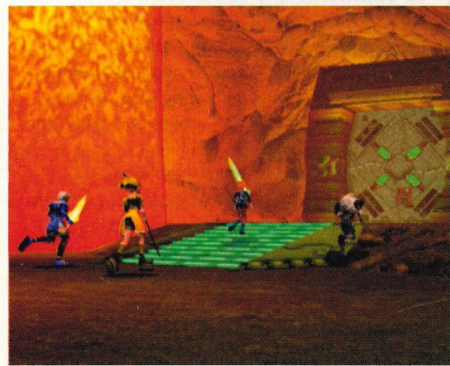


the odds for the privilege of online play. This could well be a crucial stumbling block for Sega - kids won't buy more Dreamcast games if Mum has confiscated it after having to pay the phone bill.

Though flawed, and potentially costly, PSO is a unique and rewarding experience. Don't buy it unless you intend to primarily play it online, and don't buy it expecting the depth of a Final Fantasy (or, indeed, one of the older Phantasy Star games). If you've always wondered what the fuss about online gaming is all about, though, PSO will show you what you've been missing.



■ **Armies of samey monsters and monotonous graphics make single-player PSO tedious**



JUDGEMENT

- FORMAT: DREAMCAST
- PUBLISHER: SEGA
- DEVELOPER: YUJI NAKA
- RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Movie at: www.consoleddomain.co.uk/dreamcast/movies/53.html

- + Hugely addictive online
- + Efficient match-making system
- Loose-feeling camera blights auto-aim
- Dull in single-player
- Weak plot
- Online play expense is prohibitive

7

WORDS: MIKE SMITH

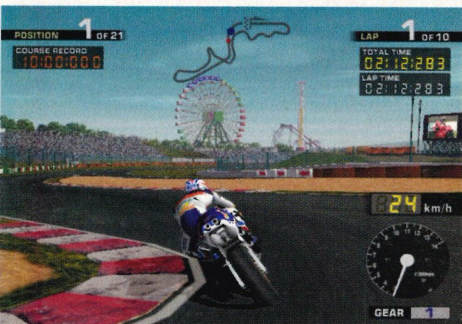
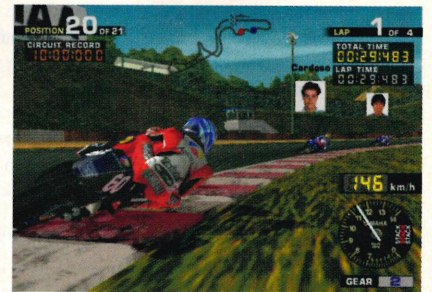
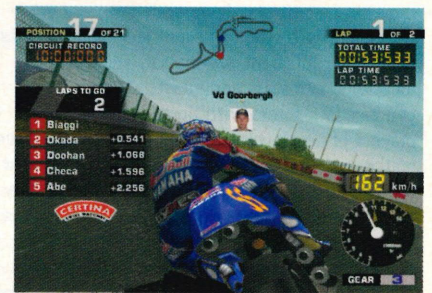
MOTO GP



Skid-lids and leather pants at the ready: Moto GP brings biking thrills to PS2



Performing a victory wheelie is probably a little premature on only the first lap



21 other riders in a points-based system. Players have five real-life tracks to race on, ranging from Britain's Donington to France's Paul Ricard circuit. A qualifying round allows you to push for a better starting grid position on each, although you can ignore this and start at the back.

Success results in new features being unlocked, including extra tracks, riders and even photos of the development team in action. A display in the challenge mode option shows just

“Moto GP is worthy of ranking alongside the best console racing games”

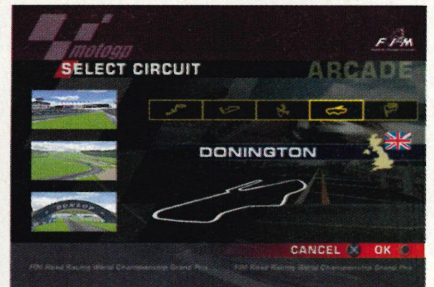
From its arcade origins as GP 500 in Japan, Namco's System 22 game Moto GP makes up the company's third launch title for PlayStation2. Standing in the shadow of both Tekken Tag Tournament and Ridge Racer V, Moto GP may lack the instant recognition factor, but it's by no means a filler title. While the majority of motorcycle racing games seem to disappear without trace, Moto GP is worthy of ranking alongside some of the best console racing games to date.

Immaculate presentation grabs your attention right from the moment you kickstart your console. Slick video footage blended with mouth-watering clips of in-game action, and a thumping rock soundtrack, urge you to head straight out onto the track.

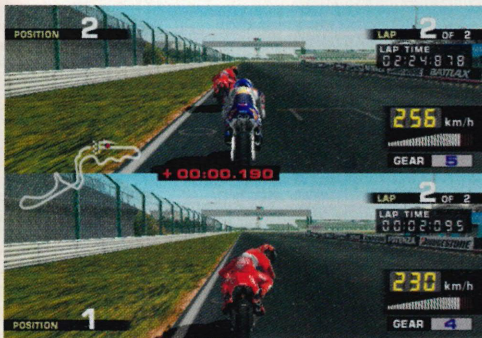
While there are no real groundbreaking modes on offer, there is still enough overall to set your pulse racing. Arcade mode offers a simple route to tarmac - select a track, race difficulty, and the number of laps, and away you go. Season mode offers more in-depth action, where you must select a team to join and then race against

how many of the game's secrets you have unlocked.

Besides these, Time Trials are purely for the dedicated fan, while the Versus mode offers two player split-screen rivalry. The frame-rate is maintained at a decent level, though at the cost of graphical detail. But the game still looks fantastic and the only real let down is that it's a strictly one-on-one affair with no computer riders to battle against - something you would have thought possible in this new generation of console gaming.



■ There are five real-life tracks to race on and more to unlock



■ Two-player split-screen action is fun but strictly a one-on-one affair, with no AI opponents

When you first don your leathers and step out onto the track, you'll realise just how close this is to matching the arcade version. Graphically, it's exactly what we've come to expect from Namco, whose golden touch should really draw people's attention. If you've been fortunate enough to experience Ferrari 355 Challenge on the Dreamcast, the tracks in Moto GP look every bit as good, with no apparent restriction on graphical draw distance.

Attention to detail is also high on the agenda, with riders' shadows moving to the opposite side of the bike as you round a corner and competing riders even take a peek over their shoulder as you close them down.

Once you've completed a race, the quality of the replay will quite simply blow you away. The game is transformed into TV quality viewing. From the hot fumes distorting the view, to the camera embedded in the heart of the tight corners, this is among the best replay features we've had the pleasure of experiencing.

Unlike most biking games, the playability is another area where Moto GP really excels. Once you get over the initial handling problems, you'll find out just how rewarding an experience this game can be. For each race you are also able to choose whether to play in arcade or simulation mode. Arcade mode is simple to grasp as you can bump into other bikes without falling off. However, in simulation mode, the bike will happily slide out from under you if you

accelerate while leaning hard into a corner - do this too often and the subsequent damage will force you into an early retirement.

While most people would normally choose a car racing game over a biking one every time, Moto GP will broaden your perspective. The immense satisfaction gained from judging a corner to perfection and then powering out down the straight makes Moto GP worthy of riding it out with the high-flyers of the racing genre.

But, of course, no game is perfect and Moto GP does have a couple of minor flaws. Hardcore bikers may be disappointed at the lack of facilities to upgrade and tweak your widow-maker's performance. Also, as you approach rivals, a huge picture of their head appears above them to tell you which rider they are. Not only is this annoying and distracting, some of the faces can really freak you out! Finally, the game's longevity could be questionable. Moto GP is great for a quick blast around the tracks, but only leather-clad fanatics would find enough to occupy them in the long term.

As it stands, Moto GP may well get overlooked by those who opt for the tried and tested Ridge Racer formula. And while it goes without saying that this is a must-have for biking fans, it's also a worthy addition to any racing fan's collection.

JUDGEMENT

- FORMAT: PLAYSTATION2
- PUBLISHER: SONY
- DEVELOPER: NAMCO
- RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Movie at: www.consoledomain.co.uk/playstation2/movies/158.html

- + Immaculate presentation
- + Rewarding handling
- + Satisfying gameplay
- Hardcore bikers may be disappointed with lack of upgrades
- No AI opponents in two-player mode
- Questionable longevity

8

WORDS: GARETH HOLDEN

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD™

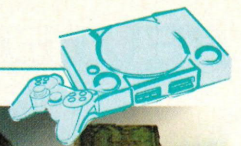
DAISY DUKES IT OUT™

Looks like them Dukes are stirrin' up
Hazzard County's backroads again!

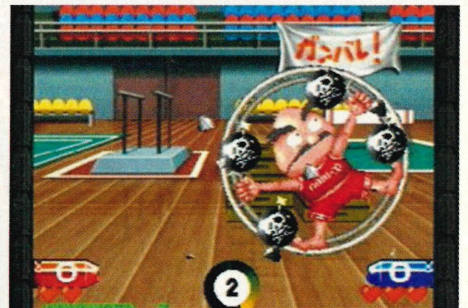


ubisoft.co.uk

POINT BLANK



It's zany, fast and furious but is Namco firing blanks with



More gore-free, zany, gun-related antics are on offer in Point Blank 3



When it comes to light-gun shooting games on the PlayStation, Namco is the force to be reckoned with. Not content with a near-perfect arcade port of its fantastic Time Crisis game, it then went on to translate each of the wacky Point Blank arcade hits to Sony's box of tricks. Cue the arrival of Point Blank 3 for yet more trigger-happy turmoil.

The aim is to take part in a multitude of mini-shooting games designed to test your reflexes to the maximum. Precision shooting, rapid

using two light-guns or taking turns using one.

There's still plenty of challenge for the lone gunman in the arcade, training and endurance modes. While the arcade mode operates exactly as in previous versions - having to beat different stages of levels before lighting up a fireworks display at the end - the training mode lets you loose on your choice of any level on any difficulty setting. In the new endurance mode, you have to guide Don and Dan up a tower by beating stage after stage of blasting action, before your three lives are used. Lives are lost

by either shooting bombs, civilians or the wrong targets of the incorrect colour or design. Bonus stages are thrown in after every ten stages in which you have to shoot one of four treasure chests to receive either a bonus

life, extra points or, if you're unlucky, nothing at all!

For the light-gun enthusiast, although there are plenty of new games, this version may prove slightly disappointing as it uses many of the same style of targets and graphics as in previous incarnations. This unfortunately means Point Blank 3 comes across as an obvious cash-in rather than an enticing follow-up. If you're after a value for money blastathon then it will probably be worth waiting until Namco's own Time Crisis: Project Titan is released.

"Precision shooting and a huge tolerance for zany on-screen antics are essential"

reactions and a huge tolerance of the zany on-screen antics are required to keep you focused right through to the very end of this fun-filled shooting gallery.

As ever, the disaster-prone duo, Dr Don and Dr Dan are back to guide you through five all-new game modes, hosting 80 brand new levels for up to eight players. Namco has thankfully decided to scrap the monotonous adventure mode from Point Blank 2 and put a greater emphasis instead on multiplayer and party play games in the versus and party modes. In these multiplayer modes, two players can blast it out at a time

JUDGEMENT

- FORMAT: PLAYSTATION
- PUBLISHER: SONY
- DEVELOPER: NAMCO
- RELEASE: MARCH 21

GO ONLINE: Full review at: www.console-domain.co.uk/playstation/reviews/Point_Blank_3.html

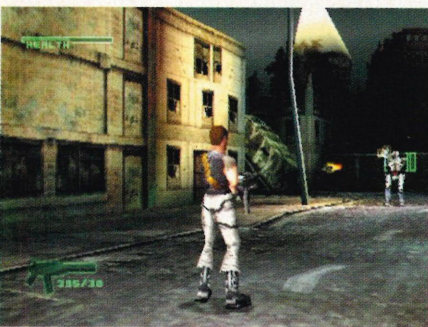
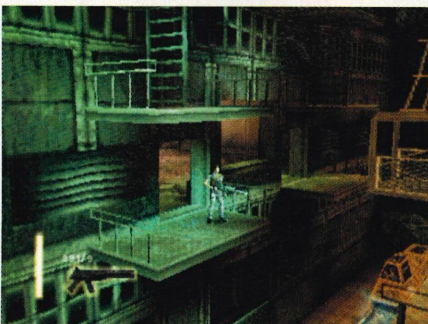
- + Great fun if you're a fan of the series
- + Lots of new games
- + Up to eight players can compete
- Not vastly different from previous games
- Maybe worth waiting for Time Crisis Project Titan instead

6 OUT OF TEN

WORDS: GARETH HOLDEN

FINAL RESISTANCE

ed and man faces extinction. Guess where you come in!



Yet again the end of the world is upon us and, as per usual, you're the only one left that can save Earth's inhabitants from their impending fate. Aliens are running amok, wreaking havoc and having a fine old time turning humans into cyborgs. With only an army-issue vest and the bare essentials to aid your mission, it's up to you to black your face up and bring them down one by one. **C-12 Final Resistance is incoming this March so dig out those stiff upper lips chaps; we're going in.**

C-12 is set during the aftermath of an alien invasion. Earth has been turned into a hostile playing ground and alien troops have flooded the city streets looking for human survivors. Word is that they want civilians for droning purposes - turning them into cyborgs for slavery - and to harvest our planet for carbon. Fear not though, Lieutenant Vaughan (that's you) is on hand to do pretty much anything to ensure that the aliens don't get their way.

Lieutenant Vaughan is a rare breed. Aside from huge amounts of physical strength and his cavalier attitude, he has been fitted with an eye implant that holds a very useful imaging unit. This means that you can use your implant throughout the game to either target enemies more accurately or use its information function to receive readouts about items like electronic boxes, vehicles and switches you cast your eye over.

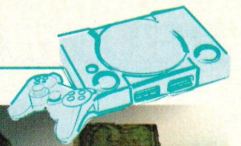
The game takes place over a series of levels with objectives that are sent to you via your communications device from your head office. The missions that you have to complete range from enabling your satellite system and saving a truck-full of allied soldiers, to building a bridge and, most bizarrely, retrieving a piece of technology you require by thawing out an army general who is kept in a cryogenic chamber. As you complete your objectives you will be issued with more goals - all this while beating off alien hordes and huge incoming alien aircraft.

Gameplay is set over barren ground, city streets, shopping malls and army bases. All have been ravaged by the aliens and are brilliant fun

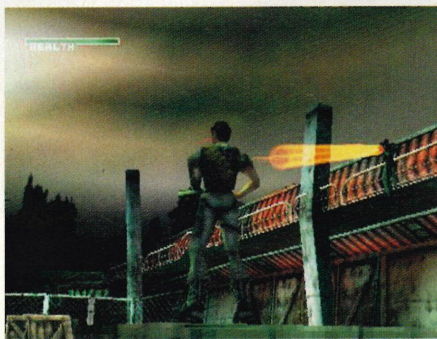
"As you work your way through C-12, you actually begin to feel like the hero you are playing"

to explore. Aside from the things that you definitely need to find - like fuel or people - there are other areas that, although not essential, hold secrets, ammo and health. These extra areas mean that the game as a whole has a non-linear feel and hidden depths, which you can choose to explore or ignore. Whether you do the latter or not, it still makes you feel that you are in real buildings and areas that have some real substance to them.

The great success of the game is that as you work your way through it you actually begin to feel like the hero you are playing. It's not that it's too easy and you can just blast round in an invincible state, deflecting bullets and enemies.

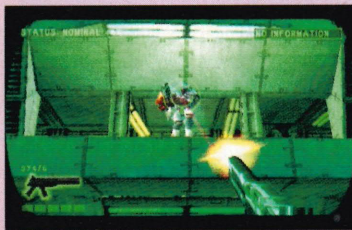


Sure it's a camera Mr Alien. Now hold still while I take your picture



Firing lightbulbs at the monster from outer space just served to make it angry

Keeping your eye in



■ When you're up against a bunch of aliens with bad intentions, it's always useful to have a bit of a trick up your sleeve - or in your eye socket. C-12's hero, Lieutenant Vaughan, has a very useful piece of kit: an imaging unit implanted in his eye. Handy for spotting nasty ETs who aren't content to joy-ride aimlessly in cigar-shaped objects

The 'of course I can do it - I'm Lt. Vaughan' feeling comes from great interaction between you and the lost individuals you encounter. The feeling is enhanced by the detail in your character's movements, as you dodge around bumping off the enemy, and the well balanced puzzles and secrets which are rewarding when solved.

Problems - well, yes, there are a few. Targeting can sometimes be confusing in heated battles, as it switches from alien to alien, and the lack of a spin-around action or the ability to jump in behind your character at the press of a button is sadly missed. Graphically, the game can get

blocky at times and occasionally even enables unrealistic actions to take place, like pushing a box that is far too big through a very small hole.

Aside from these flaws, C-12 is a great adventure game with lots of action, plot and gadgets for you to play with. If you can have a feel-good adventure game then that's what this is. Well paced with great, varied missions, enough action to last you to 'til tea time and a Steve Austin-style laser eye to boot - I ask you, who's going to knock that back?

JUDGEMENT

- FORMAT: PLAYSTATION
- PUBLISHER: SONY
- DEVELOPER: SCEE
- RELEASE: MARCH 2001

GD ONLINE: http://www.consoledomain.co.uk/playstation/reviews/C12_Final_Resistance.html

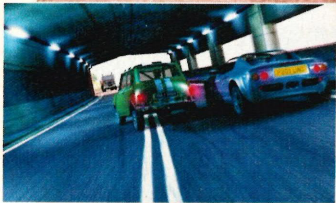
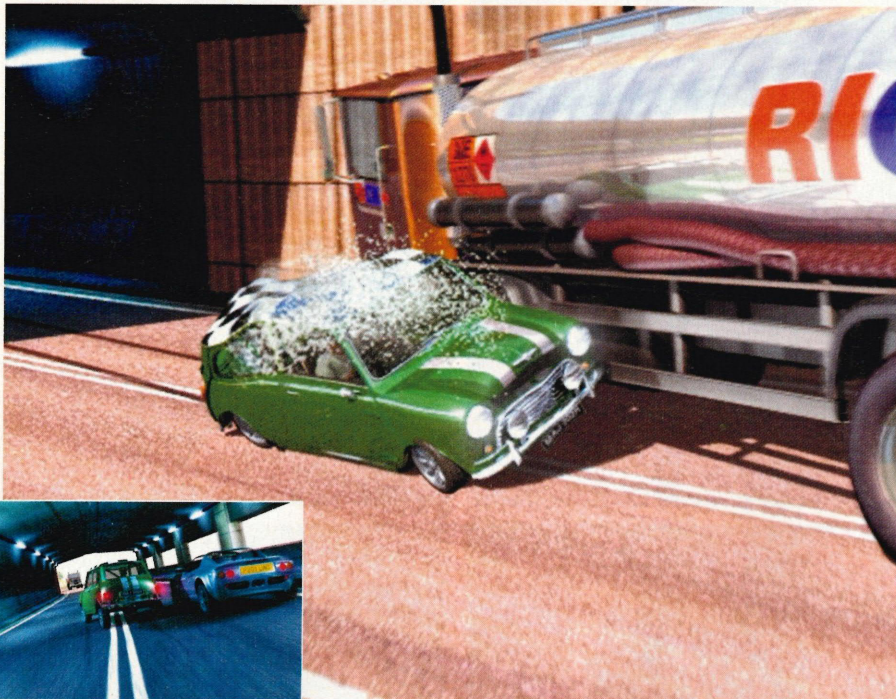
- + Impressive level design
- + Action-packed
- + Great gadgets and weapons
- + Well-paced and varied missions
- Occasional 'blockmaster' graphics
- Confusing targeting system

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
OUT OF TEN
8

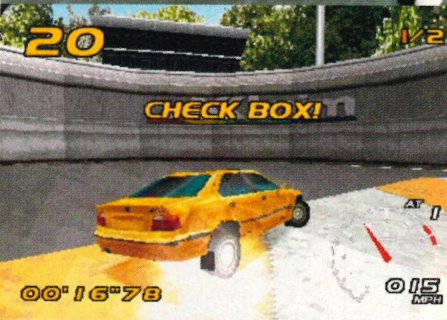
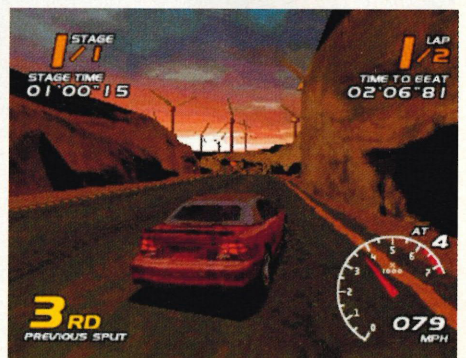
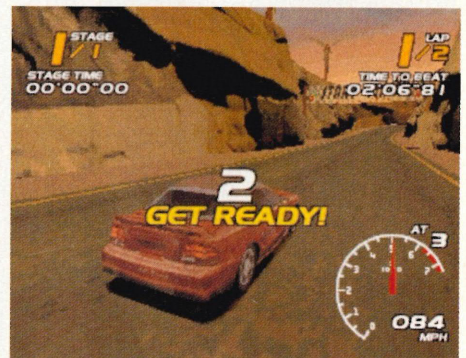
WORDS: JAYNE BOWEN

VANISHING POINT

Another PlayStation racer challenges Gran Turismo for pole position



'Watch out for that petrol tanker, Maureen!'



Vanishing Point takes its name from the developer's intentions to produce a driving simulation with no visible pop-up scenery, so you can literally watch the action disappear beyond the horizon.

Comprehensive collaboration with industry engineers to sharpen the game's vehicle dynamics and a garage full of licensed vehicles make Vanishing Point a really exciting prospect on paper. Will it be worthy of Gran Turismo 2's crown as the premier PlayStation racer, or will it simply drive you insane? Let's take it for a spin.

Starting out, players have the factory-standard option of single races, multiplayer races and time trials, alongside mini tournaments and stunt-driving challenges. While most of these are self-explanatory, the mini tournaments group several races together and have you competing against the clock to finish quicker than your rivals. Eight tracks are available, with reversed, mirrored and mirrored-reversed incarnations of each to unlock.

The stunt driving challenges are a refreshing change from the typical breed of PlayStation racing action, offering the chance to sharpen your driving skills while having plenty of fun. Each requires a task to be completed, like bursting balloons by jumping over hump-back bridges or performing barrel-roll jumps. A new challenge is unlocked if you manage to score sufficient points during the preceding challenge by completing it swiftly and in style. It's nice to see such a unique feature in a racing game -

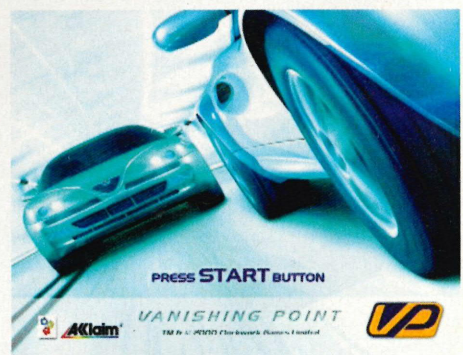
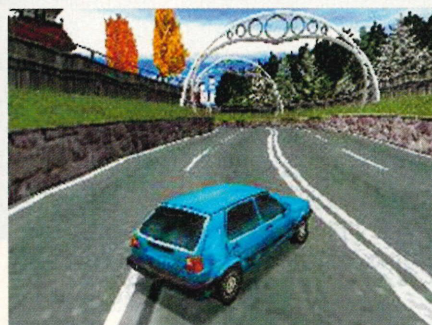
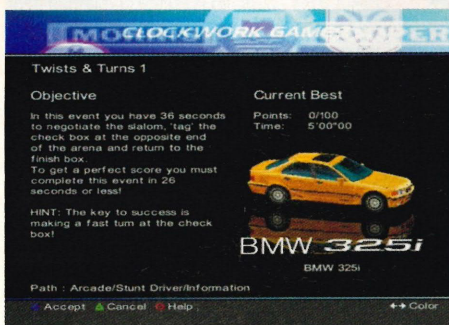
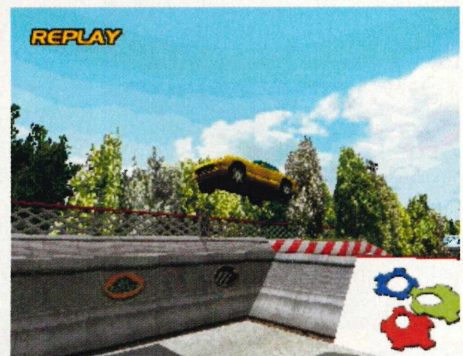
something that the developers could easily have omitted.

One of the first elements that will grab your attention in this game is the number of officially licensed cars. There are so many different vehicles, you'll immediately want to race right through the game and unlock every last one to see how each shapes up. Many of the world's finest roadworthy specimens can be added to your collection, from the Lotus Elise to the Shelby Cobra, TVR Griffith and Aston Martin DB7. For beginners, there are also less powerful, though still sporty cars, such as the Ford Focus,

"Until you get used to the handling, it feels like you're in a dragster on black ice!"

BMW 325 and Alfa Romeo GTV. You can even get behind the wheel of a wacky VW Camper van or a stretched Lincoln Town Car! Perfectionists will be pleased to know there's also the option to select the desired paintwork colour for each dream machine. Although cars can supposedly be tuned, this merely refers to tweaking the handling attributes, such as damper settings and camber angles, rather than upping the horsepower with modifications.

Most driving games have at least one aspect that differentiates them from the competition and Vanishing Point's has to be its car handling. Until you become used to this unique handling, it'll feel like you're at the wheel of a dragster on black ice. Corner after corner, you'll either be



slamming into walls or spinning around, like a shopping trolley. Hit a jump too fast and you'll begin floating as if the car's filled with helium. If you do try to correct a skid, you'll tend to fishtail the car, looking like a young joyrider on Police Camera Action. Once you do get to grips with the handling, it can prove relatively rewarding, especially when you get the hang of the handbrake turn in the stunt challenges. Collisions will inevitably have you spinning around agonisingly for ages before being able to drive on again. There is an abort key to avoid this, but it takes just as long to set you straight again.

With so many different cars on offer, you'd expect a massive variation in the handling of each, but unfortunately all feel equally twitchy, only significantly differing in their top speed. Races can be slightly short, consisting of just a few laps of a short circuit, which often doesn't allow you to gain back any lost time, should you come a cropper. Circuits also lack vigour; where are the challenging hairpins and tight turns to use the handbrake on?

Graphically, Vanishing Point sits near the top end of the PlayStation range of driving games, not quite offering the same showroom shine as the Gran Turismos, but not being as poorly constructed as some of the lesser titles we've seen. While pop-up scenery is kept to a minimum - something Clockwork deserves real praise for - whole surface textures can pop in awkwardly from time to time, depending on the course. Reflections and lighting effects are well

■ **Whoa there! Careful with the handbrake or the wall beckons**



■ **Select a car from the impressive selection on offer and hit the track**

conveyed, displaying different times of the day, but are undermined by grainy texturing and occasional polygon glitches. We did like the attention to detail on aspects like tyre smoke, wheel spins and tyre marks left on the track though.

At the end of the day, Vanishing Point is a solid racing experience, even if it's not quite the polished product we had been promised. While it may not trouble the likes of Gran Turismo 2 on the track, it's definitely worth a look for racing fans eager for yet another PlayStation joyride.

JUDGEMENT

- **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION
- **PUBLISHER:** ACCLAIM
- **DEVELOPER:** CLOCKWORK GAMES
- **RELEASE:** MARCH 2

GD ONLINE: VP on DC movie at: www.consoleonline.co.uk/dreamcast/movies/232.html

- + Quality visuals with no pop-up
- + Loads of cars to choose from
- + Cool stunt-driving mode
- Handling feels similar on all cars
- Circuits lack challenge
- Races are on the short side

7 OUT OF TEN

WORDS: GARETH HOLDEN

ARMORED CORE 2

A game with robot thingys that shoot each other? Mechs a change!



Armored Core first became available on the PlayStation in 1997.

After a couple of add-on type affairs, released over the last couple of years, the real sequel to the game is now striking out on the PlayStation2. Like the Mech Warrior series, Armored Core 2 sees players stomping around piloting overgrown chunks of iron.

The game is set in a time where soldiers are nothing more than cannon fodder. The only way to have some freedom and control over your military life is to make it to the top of the force by training to become a Raven.

You pilot a massive robot and take on missions to earn cash to upgrade your machine. The booty on offer is good, but the missions are hard going and any damage that you take on will cost big bucks, which is taken from your account.

It's tough, but it's the only way to live

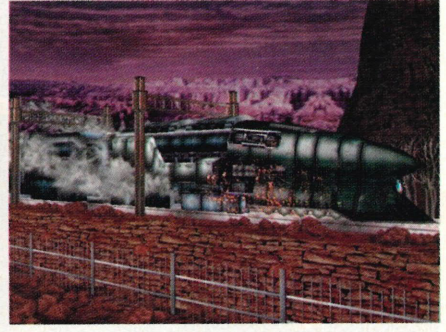
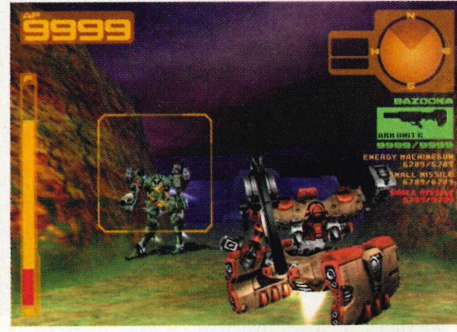
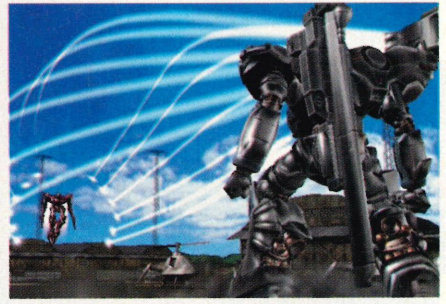
unless you fancy doing your time in the trenches with the other expendables.

Your mechanical vehicle is generally human shaped to begin with, complete with arms, legs and head. To get around quickly, you have a booster which allows you to propel yourself forward and upwards, but only for as long as your stored energy will last. This rejuvenates when not in use and is especially handy when employed to dodge incoming fire from your enemies, as your running speed isn't much to write home about. You have different upgradable firearms and a secondary laser hand weapon, used to strike your opponent when at close range.

The game is played from one main options screen which gives you access to your mission briefing, mission starting point and the arena, where you can challenge other pilots in order to rise through the ranks. You can visit the garage, to fine-tune your mechanics, and the shop, to buy new parts once you have some cash. You also have access to your email, where you receive communications about missions, enemies and new contacts - who fill you in on information regarding the history of the Ravens and the current political climate.

Missions are varied and quite difficult to complete successfully. They range from ridding one of your army's secure areas of enemy droids to racing after an enemy vehicle which is trying to get away with important items. Some are set indoors, along motorways and rail lines, while others are out in the open, amongst roaming hills and other landscapes, where you are very exposed to the elements.

Cash earned by successfully completing



missions allows you to buy better parts. Anything you have can be replaced as long as you have the money and your robot can be customised, even down to its colour and emblem.

The arena provides a good opportunity to hone your piloting skills and great if you want to just pick up and have a quick go rather than get involved with the mission side of things. In the arena you can only pick a fight with an

mid-battle. It's good in a way because huge robotic structures are bound to be a bit heavy on their feet, but it's still annoying when you get blasted because you're out of energy and you just happen to be piloting a metal elephant.

Armored Core 2 is a great sequel which benefits from the PlayStation2's technology, both in terms of its speed and polished graphics. It is, however, hard going and less proficient gamers may find it too difficult and a chore to get through, even on the normal setting. Nevertheless, Armored Core 2 is one well worth pursuing for its action-packed battles, varied missions and the

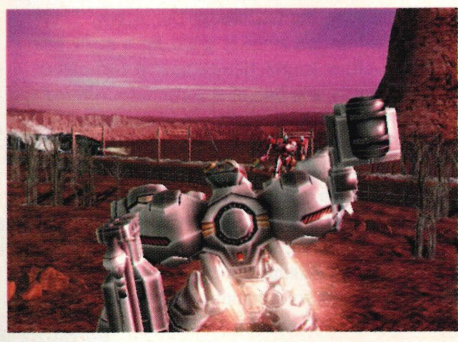
opportunity to build a flying, four-legged robot with the head of a metal teddy bear and some massive guns. Who in their right mind is going to pass on that?

“Mech add-ons include some freaky looking spider-like legs”

opposing pilot that is placed either directly above or below you in the ranks. This means that the slog to the top is hard work, but ultimately you benefit from it as you upgrade and improve in battle as you go.

Visually the game is fantastic, from the opening movie and introductory graphics to the arena and mission settings, which are huge and beautifully designed. The actual mechanics of the robots you pilot are really imaginative and when you've earned enough cash you can add weird and wonderful looking parts including some freaky looking spider-like legs.

The only jarring thing about the game is when you have to run anywhere or turn around quickly you are made aware of how heavy the Mech actually is. You can't spin around sharply or make a dash for it unless your booster is ready to use - so make allowances for that when you're



■ **Armored Core 2** benefits from the PS2's technology, both in terms of its speed and its polished graphics

JUDGEMENT

- **FORMAT:** PLAYSTATION2
- **PUBLISHER:** UBI SOFT
- **DEVELOPER:** CRAVE
- **RELEASE:** OUT NOW

GO ONLINE: Full review at: www.consoledomain.co.uk/playstation2/reviews/Armored_Core_2.html

- + Great range of missions and diversity in level design
- + Huge scope to customise your own robot
- + Action packed, good solid weapons and fantastic enemies to destroy
- Some less proficient gamers may struggle to succeed
- Mechs handling often feels awkward

7
OUT OF TEN

WORDS: JAYNE BOWEN

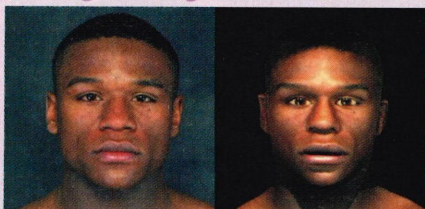
KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

A knockout title or a seven-stone weakling? Read on fight fans.



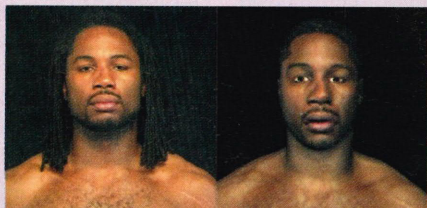
Face-off

Floyd Mayweather Jr.



■ Floyd Mayweather Jr. has an impressive career record of 25 wins, 0 losses and 19 knockouts. No wonder EA ensured the 'Pretty Boy' had a near-perfect in-game replica

Lennox Lewis



■ With 38 wins, 1 loss, 1 draw and 29 Knockouts, Lennox is the man of the moment in the world of boxing. This game presents the best opportunity to date to step into the big man's shoes

While some boxing games have never quite grasped the edge of the seat thrills and hard-hitting nature of the sport, EA's own Knockout Kings series has gone from strength to strength. Surely a PlayStation2 incarnation will knock fans out? Here's our blow-by-blow coverage.

Squaring up to the menu, following a glitzy intro sequence, several different modes of play are offered. As ever there's a no-nonsense quick match-up designed for instant action. Here the fighters and venue are randomly selected and a balance of attacking, defending and pacing your boxer, who tires if over exerted, are needed to succeed.

Next up is a slugfest, arcade-style mode. Unlike the above mode, you simply select the boxers and a destination and away you go. This time, the more blows you land, the harder they hit, meaning big trouble for the victim.

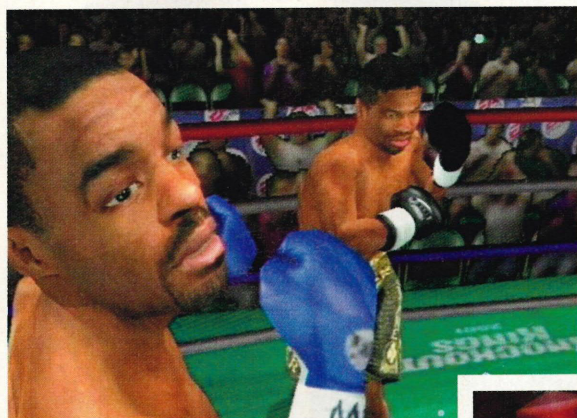
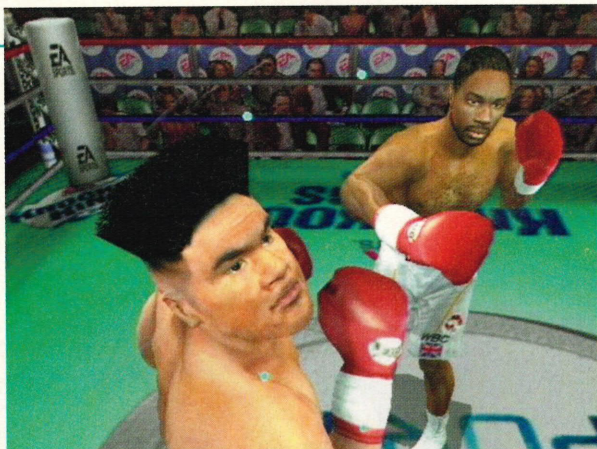
The exhibition mode is great for a quick few bouts, either to practice or have a two-player match-up in any one of the stadiums offered - which include Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas - and the Fantasy Fights mode acts much like a scenario mode. Here some of the greatest fights of all time can be recreated, such as Muhammad Ali against Rocky Marciano. You even get the full press-conference transcript before the fight, to see who's talking the talk. Female fighters are also available for a handbags-at-dawn style encounter.

But, without doubt, boxing fans will want to spend time in the career mode, building up a rookie boxer to become the champion of the world. After selecting from the light, medium or heavyweight divisions, you'll have to train up your wannabe to progress up the ladder of fame by defeating increasingly difficult opponents. With a set of attributes determining your boxer's power, stamina, chin and resilience to cuts, the aim is to train and increase your various strengths before you head out into the ring. Each time you train, you're given a number of

"The gameplay excels - this is the most rewarding boxing game to date"

points to distribute across your attributes, with the aim of eventually building them up to a maximum of 100. Training is directed by on-screen instructions, acting as a useful, interactive method of learning moves. Through a series of different sessions, you're taught everything from a simple jab to a rampant combo, evasive moves and even some illegalities, like head-butts and rabbit punches.

Especially good is the way different boxers fight with different styles and become increasingly challenging to defeat. In the heavyweight division, we had no problem cruising through the first few fights without

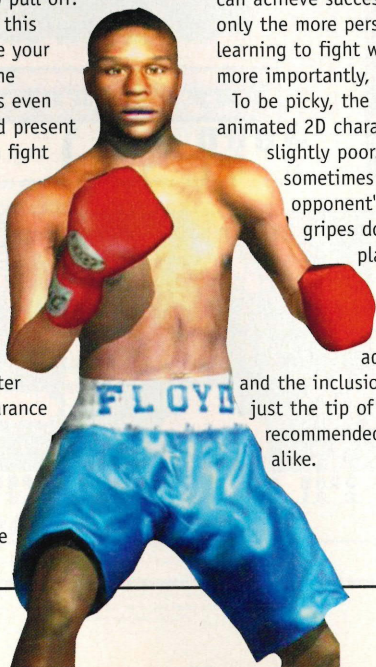


even having to defend but as soon as it came to the likes of Frank Bruno and the mighty Butterbean, our fighter's defensive strategies were rapidly exposed. When one of those guys belts you, it takes a huge chunk off your energy, so it's not a great idea to allow them unload a combo into your face! Nonetheless, a knockdown didn't necessarily mean a downhill slide to defeat; if anything the computer became slightly over-eager and dropped its defence, allowing a revenge attack and eventual victory.

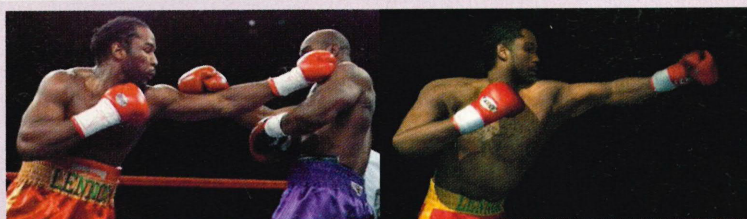
For true enthusiasts, all of the big names in the sport make an appearance. Barry McGuigan and Harry Carpenter commentate, while referees include Mills Lane and Richard Steel. Jimmy Lennon Junior also steps in to make ringside announcements.

Often in EA's past boxing games, the game's level of response to button-pressing has been poor, making combos hard to pull off. Thankfully, EA has addressed this issue and you can now create your own combos depending on the situation. New fighting styles even mimic those of both past and present professionals. Just as Ali can fight using his famous freestyle, Marciano goes for all out slugging with little care for defence.

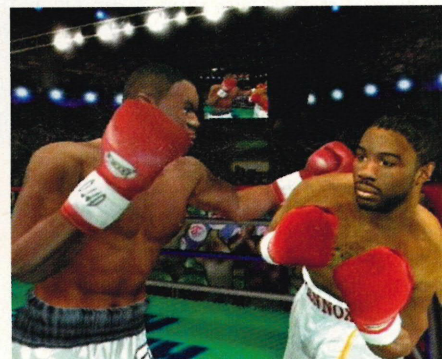
Graphically, Knockout Kings 2001 is simply an explosive blend of jaw-dropping visuals, showing true PS2 prowess; every fighter is uncannily lifelike in appearance and near perfect in detail. Motion-captured moves also help to ensure that fighters even move as you'd expect them to in real life, complete



I'm gonna knock you out!



■ Motion-captured moves also help to ensure that fighters move as you'd expect them to in real life, complete with signature moves



with signature moves. It's also worth mentioning the much-improved sound effects ranging from pounding thuds to the crisper jabs. It all adds to the satisfaction of what is a memorable experience.

The gameplay excels to make this the most-rewarding boxing experience to date. Rookies can achieve success with button-bashing, but only the more persistent will reach the top by learning to fight with calculated attacks and, more importantly, patience.

To be picky, the crowd is made up of poorly animated 2D characters and the lighting looks slightly poor. Similarly, punches can sometimes appear to go through your opponent's head. But these minor gripes don't spoil what is a very playable title.

All in all, this is by far the best simulation of boxing to date. Spectacular visuals, addictive, rewarding gameplay and the inclusion of many boxing greats are just the tip of a sparkling iceberg. Highly recommended for boxing and fighting fans alike.

JUDGEMENT

- FORMAT: PLAYSTATION2
- PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
- DEVELOPER: BLACK OPS ENTERTAINMENT
- RELEASE: OUT NOW

GD ONLINE: Movie at: www.consoledomain.co.uk/playstation2/movies/260.html

- + Awesome lifelike visuals
- + Realistic gameplay
- + Easy to get into, hard to master
- + Excellent AI
- + Best boxing game to date
- Background graphics could be better

COMING TO PS2

OUT OF TEN

8

WORDS: GARETH HOLDEN

CROC 2

■ PUBLISHER & DEVELOPER: THQ ■ FORMAT: GAME BOY COLOR ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

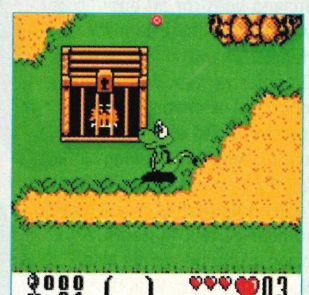
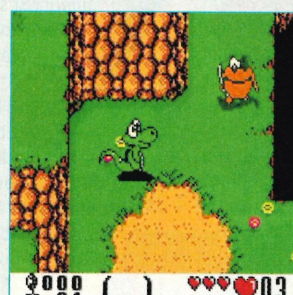
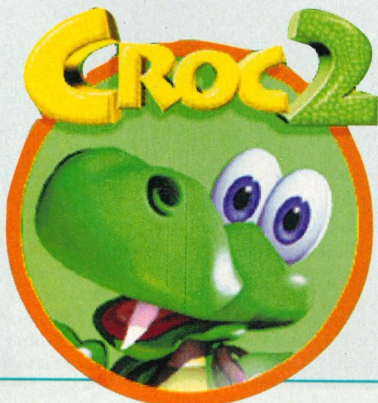
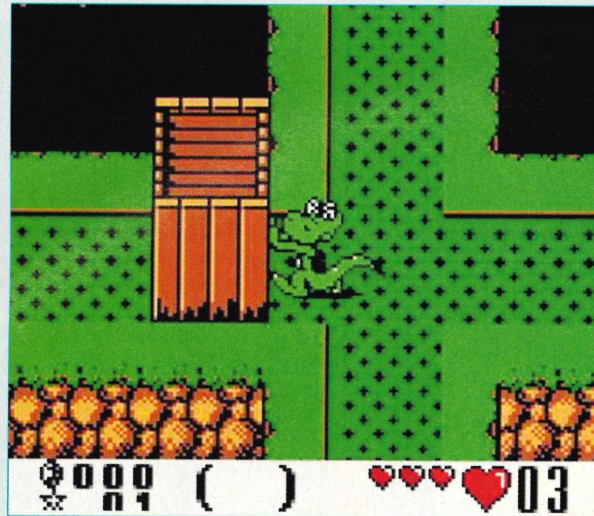
The kind-hearted swamp creature Croc is out to find his long-lost parents on Game Boy Color. Question is, will the snappy little fellow be able to locate his missing family or will the return of his devious enemy Baron Dante dash his hopes?

The story behind his latest adventures finds Croc on a beach playing with one of his Gobbo friends, taking a relaxing break from his Baron Dante fighting days. When, all of a sudden, the Gobbo spots a bottle floating towards the shore carrying a message. Being keen to find out what it's all about, they both go dashing in to rescue it. As a result Croc gets the shock of his life as he reads out a message sent from a couple of crocodiles looking for their lost son. He knows what he has to do and with the help of his Gobbo friends he sets off on his mission. And there's a twist to the tale - Baron Dante's back!

Gameplay is just perfect for kids, as it definitely isn't a game for the older player. Croc is set the task of not only finding his parents but also ultimately removing Baron Dante from his position of power once again. In order to do this, the gamer will need to take Croc through four worlds, collecting a variety of useful items, tackling puzzles and completing sub-missions. To progress you have to steer clear of evil Dantinis (servants of Baron Dante) and other nasty creatures which spring from everywhere.

Graphically the game is great, with a good sized main character. By this we mean Croc is not so small that his visual details cannot be made out and he's not too big that he takes up most the screen. There's plenty of colour and detail to keep all players happy visually and the music is nice and catchy without being too irritating on the eardrums.

We especially like the way the puzzles and various other missions have been sectioned off so that the player doesn't get lost, but there are still enough twists and turns per area to create a real maze effect, masking an obviously linear game. Overall, a great game for younger Game Boy players but steer clear if you are over 12 - otherwise it might be beyond you in its childlike cuteness.



ACTION MAN

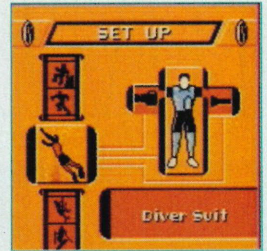
■ PUBLISHER & DEVELOPER: THQ ■ FORMAT: GAME BOY COLOR ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW

Action Man is out of the toy box and onto the Game Boy Color with the task of stopping Dr X (his arch-enemy) from using an evil weapon upon the world.

First, he must travel through many platform environments - located within steamy jungles, snowy mountains and various other terrains - while collecting useful items and fighting off a range of nasty enemies which include large insects, battle robots of varying descriptions, security drones and the man himself - Dr Evil.

Gameplay is hugely addictive, with a good-sized collection of sub-levels to be found within the main areas and variable difficulty settings. Graphics are basic but there is just enough use of colour to establish different backgrounds and creatures while giving an illusion of location. Sounds are fine in small doses but tend to become annoying over time.

Overall, Action Man really doesn't come across as a child's title, which is what you may expect from a game based around a toy. It does, however, offer something for everyone: for the younger audience it offers an opportunity to act as a super hero; for everyone else there is jumping from ledge to ledge with a supergun in your hand. Definitely worth a look.



WORDS: DAVE O'DONOHUE

WIN Wicked PS2 Peripherals!



Got your spanking new PlayStation2?

Check.

Got your games?

Check.

Got a spare controller, a steering wheel and a gold-connector SCART lead?

Nope?

Well, let Games Domain Offline and Radica UK help you out there. We've teamed up so that six lucky readers can each win a Gamester Dual Force 2 Steering Wheel with foot pedals, a Gamester Dual Force 2 Joypad and a Gamester SCART lead with gold connectors. The wheel and controller have been designed with the analogue technology of the PS2 in mind, but both are backwards-compatible with the original PlayStation.

All you have to do is enter is answer the following question, ring our competition hotline below and follow the instructions on the line, remembering to speak clearly. The question is: with which mode of road-going transport is a steering wheel most commonly associated?

- a. A car
- b. A bike
- c. A pair of in-line skates

COMPETITION HOTLINE:

0906 302 1007



Entry to this competition is by competition hotline only. Follow the instructions on the line and remember to speak clearly. Calls cost 50p per minute and should take just over a minute. Always ask the person who pays the phone for permission before making your call. Closing date April 15, 2001.

GARGANTUAN GAMEBOY GIVEAWAY!



We've always been a fan of the world's most popular handheld console here at Games Domain Offline. As if to prove the point, we're offering you the chance to win a bundle of Game Boy booty and a couple of the hottest Electronic Arts games which will be not be available to buy until April.

First up there's Antz Racing, a side-splitting experience in a race that defies all rules and regulations. Based on the 1998 Antz film, Antz Racing allows you to choose from six different characters to race across ten crazy tracks spanning five different worlds. There's some amazing racing contraptions on offer, including sardine tins and soda cans, and every trick in the book will have to be used to get to the finish line first - so may the best insect win!

Next up we've got Robin Hood. Here's your chance to don a pair of tights and join your merry men in a battle of good against nastiness. Control the mythical Robin and use weapons including a bow, sword and stick to battle across more than 15 action and adventure-based levels to protect the innocent countryfolk from the tyranny of evil men. The game features incredible character animations and several different scenarios such as the castle, the forest and the river area.

And you don't just win the games, oh no! Four (yes, four!) lucky first prize winners will take home a Game Boy Color, a copy of both Antz Racing and Robin Hood, a Joytech Action Pack and a GBC Goodie Bag each. Not only that, but ten runners-up will receive Game Boy Goodie bags which each include a trendy drawstring swim bag, T-shirt, cap, pencil case and lunchbox. Amazing eh?

All you have to do is enter is answer the following question, ring our competition hotline below and follow the instructions on the line, remembering to speak clearly. Okay, the question is:

Which company publishes both Antz Racing and Robin Hood?

- a) Electronic Arts
- b) Electronic Dreams
- c) Electronic Interference



1st Prize

Four First Prizes:-
 Game Boy Color
 Robin Hood game
 Antz Racing game
 Joytech Action Pack
 Game Boy Color Goodie Bag
 (comprising trendy drawstring swim bag, T-shirt, cap, pencil case, lunchbox)



COMPETITION HOTLINE:
0906 302 1007

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FINAL FANTASY IX

History is never repeated



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