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PlayStation 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

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097 APRIL 2008

ISSUE 097 APRIL 2008
£5.99 WITH PLAYABLE DISC
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RED HOT PREVIEW!



"IT'S WHAT YOU DO WITH IT THAT COUNTS"

**EXCLUSIVE
PS2 REVIEW!**

SIZE MATTERS

RATCHET & CLANK

+ SBK-08 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ODIN SPHERE
GHOSTBUSTERS BUZZ! THE POP QUIZ ALONE IN THE DARK
OPS2 GOES OFF-ROAD PS2'S GREATEST BALDIES + MORE!



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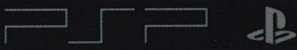
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THE POWER OF THE GODS IN THE PALM OF YOUR HANDS

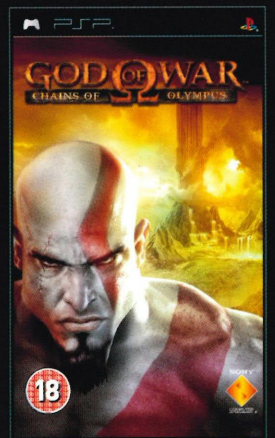


GOD OF WAR CHAINS OF OLYMPUS



PlayStation Portable

godofwargame.com



WELCOME

ⓐ REVIEWS ⓐ PREVIEWS ✕ FEATURES ⓐ ALWAYS FIRST FOR PS2



THE ONLY UK MAG THAT'S DEVOTED TO PS2

There's a lot to be said for giving things a second chance. Take our cover game, *Size Matters*, for example.

A couple of months back, we slammed developers for making lazy ports from PSP to PS2, but right now we're more than happy to welcome *Ratchet and Clank* back onto PS2.

One size fits all

Why? Because a great game is a great game, regardless of what format it's on, and providing it's handled with care, why shouldn't the game be ported to other systems?

Same goes for *Silent Hill Origins*. Why should non-PSP owners be denied the opportunity to see where Konami's now legendary series began? That's right, they shouldn't.

Alone In The Dark? Started life as a PS3 game, but now it's shambling onto PS2 - check out how the game is shaping up on p28.

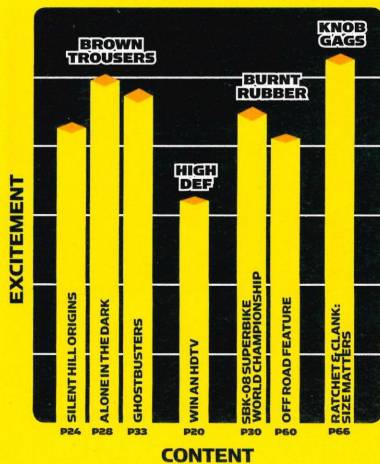
Now, if Sony would indulge us and port *God Of War: Chains Of Olympus* and *Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow* over from PSP, I'd be very grateful.

ANDY HARTUP
ACTING EDITOR
ahartup@futurenet.co.uk



"WONDERFULLY UNIQUE"
RATCHET & CLANK PAGE 66

THIS MAG CONTAINS



OPS2 #97 COVER STORIES



- P20 WIN A HIGH-DEF TV** Check out or compo to find out how you can bag a brand new telly
- P24 SILENT HILL ORIGINS** Exclusive hands on with Konami's trouser-ruining horror game
- P26 ALONE IN THE DARK** We've bagged the first pictures of AITD's camera-shy monsters
- P66 RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS** Don't judge our exclusive review by its size. It's epic
- P70 ODIN SPHERE** Square Enix strikes gaming gold again with this beautiful action RPG

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MEET THE TEAM

ANDY HARTUP ACTING EDITOR

Despite having problems with his computer, his car, his household plumbing, his iPod and his PSP, Andy remained surprisingly chipper this month.

PLAYING NOW Sega Superstars Tennis
CAN'T WAIT FOR Silent Hill Origins



SOPHIE MASON PRODUCTION EDITOR

This month Sophie reviewed one of the hardest kids games ever made: El Tigre. We laughed at her efforts to get past level 1, until we actually tried it ourselves...

PLAYING NOW El Tigre
CAN'T WAIT FOR Tomb Raider Underworld



MIKE STERRY STAFF WRITER

We say goodbye to Mike this issue: he's moved to Scotland and thinks it's too far to commute to Bath. Sadly, our request for a daily heli-taxi to get Mike to work was swiftly denied.

PLAYING NOW Odin Sphere
CAN'T WAIT FOR Star Trek Conquest



KIM RICHARDS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Kim also moved house in March but hasn't left the mag, which is a good thing, because who else could we force to review awful Japanese roleplaying games?

PLAYING NOW Ar Tonelico: Melody of Elemia
CAN'T WAIT FOR The day she can stop playing Ar Tonelico: Melody of Elemia



MARK MITCHELL ART EDITOR

The Grey Falcon celebrated yet another birthday this month with a rowdy knees-up. It degenerated, as all Team OPS2 parties do, into a SingStar extravaganza. We let him win, of course. Just this time.

PLAYING NOW Buzz! The Pop Quiz
CAN'T WAIT FOR The Dog Island



COVER FEATURE



66 RATCHET & CLANK

Size Matters. Or does it? Find out in our exclusive review of the latest R&C

FEATURES



24 SILENT HILL ORIGINS

Time to stock up on fresh pants and flashlights, because we're going back to Silent Hill



60 PLAYING DIRTY

OPS2 investigates new racer, Off Road, and finds out how close it gets to real-life mud-plugging

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PLAYSTATION MAGS
SEE P48





28 ALONE IN THE DARK

First shots of the game's monsters, which until now, have been kept tightly under wraps



20 WIN A HI-DEF TELLY WORTH £600

We've got a massive Samsung TV to give away to one lucky reader. It could be you



72 SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS

We put Sonic and his buddies through their paces in our massive SST review

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One of the most quirky and beautiful games you'll ever slot into your PS2. Check out our epic review

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ON THE DISC

This month's exclusive demos in detail plus how you can win PS2 goodies by playing them!

OKAMI

PUB Capcom OPS2 SCORE 10/10 WEB capcom.com/okami

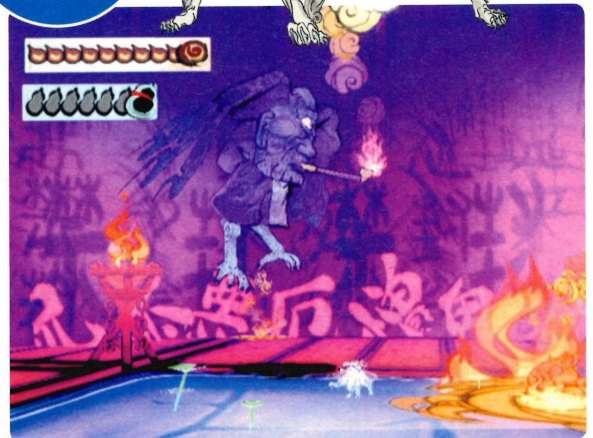


WHAT IS IT? Explore ancient Japanese folklore as a wolf-shaped sun god in a generous taster of this sumptuous adventure. Explore Kamiki Village and Shinsu Fields, using your magic brush to restore life and defeat demons. Then tackle one of the game's bosses, the mighty Crimson Helm!

PERFORMANCE TIPS

Crimson Helm looks daunting but his armour has flaws. Attack him from behind until he becomes vulnerable, then lay into him. Press **START** at any time and choose 'Tools' to find Holy Bones that restore health. And remember: flames are blown out by wind...

CAN YOU DO THIS?
Defeat Crimson Helm with all Satomi Power Orbs intact



CONTROLS

- Ⓧ Tackle/attack/draw
- Ⓧ Jump
- Right thumbstick: Camera
- Left thumbstick: Move
- Ⓛ Use Celestial Brush
- Ⓛ Change camera view

WE ♥ KATAMARI

PUB Namco OPS2 SCORE 8/10 WEB katamari.namco.com



CAN YOU DO THIS?
Roll a sheep into your flowery katamari



WHAT IS IT? A unique, crazy ball-rolling puzzler. Play alone or in two-player co-op, rolling up crazy objects as you try to make the biggest ball you can!

PERFORMANCE TIPS

To get a really big katamari, aim for long items such as baseball bats and human beings.



CONTROLS

Thumbsticks: move (in co-op, two players must move together)
L1 and **R1** Change view
L2 and **R2** Zoom in/out
 Click both thumbsticks for a quick 180° turn
 Waggle both thumbsticks quickly for a speed boost

CRASH OF THE TITANS

PUB Vivendi OPS2 SCORE 7/10 WEB crashofthetitans.com



WHAT IS IT? Your favourite Bandicoot in a combat-heavy platformer. Our hero as the ability to ride, or 'jack', giant creatures and use their powers to solve puzzles and problems.

PERFORMANCE TIPS

Tap **Ⓧ** to jump, and tap it repeatedly in the air to do a



spinning move that keeps Crash hanging in the air for longer.

CONTROLS

- Ⓧ 'Jack' monster
- Ⓧ Charged attack
- Ⓧ Attack
- Right thumbstick: Camera
- Left thumbstick: Move
- Ⓛ Block

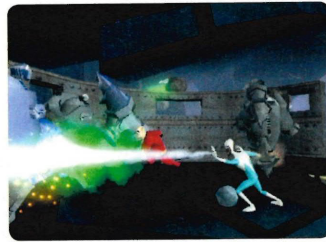
CAN YOU DO THIS?
Complete the hidden minigame without getting hit once

HARRY POTTER & TOOTP



WHAT IS IT? Roam Hogwarts with Harry and his friends, meet the characters from the film and join in a game of Gobstones.

THE INCREDIBLES: UNDERMINER



WHAT IS IT? The superheroes much tackle a man-mole called The Underminer. Swap between Mr Incredible and Frozone!

KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL



WHAT IS IT? Two levels from the floppy-eared hero's game including a speedy descent down a rampaging river.

WALLACE & GROMIT



WHAT IS IT? A taster of Curse Of The Were-Rabbit: explore the graveyard and keep marauding bunnies off the allotment.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN



WHAT IS IT? One of the best Simpsons games. In this demo you get to burn around Springfield in Homer's car.

TAK & THE POWER OF JUJU



WHAT IS IT? Help young Tak learn how to fend for himself, then explore his home village looking for secrets

ALSO ON THE DISC

ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES

WHAT IS IT? The opening of this magical, animated adventure.

BIONICLE HEROES

WHAT IS IT? Blast your way through the Jungle level of this Lego shooter.

DARK CLOUD

WHAT IS IT? Investigate the mystery of a disappearing village in this beguiling roleplayer.

FAQ

How do I use the disc? Switch on the PS2, put the disc in the tray and the demo menus should automatically appear.
Help! It doesn't work! Try pressing Restart. If that doesn't help, send it to us at the address on p3 with your name and address and we'll send you a replacement.

DISC CHALLENGE

Boot up the demo disc, beat the standard we set, and you could win!

THE CHALLENGE

WE ♥ KATAMARI: LARGEST KATAMARI

Building up a katamari of sufficient size to satisfy the King of All Cosmos is a task that requires precision, planning and patience. But we're asking you to go one further and roll a katamari in the school level that satisfies us. Yes, your challenge is to beat our noble effort of 2m, 11cm and 5mm. The person who bests our katamari by the biggest margin will win the prizes. In the event of a tie, we'll draw one of the tied entries at random.

HOW TO ENTER

1. BY TEXT

Snap a pic on your phone, attach it to an MMS and text CHALLENGEDISC (then a space) followed by your name and where you live to 07738647177.

2. BY EMAIL

Email a pic of your score to psnation@futurenet.co.uk with 'Disc Challenge' and your score in the subject line. Don't forget to give us your name and address too!

3. BY POST

Take a pic, stick it in an envelope with your name and full address, and send it in to us at Disc Challenge, OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

Closing date: 23 April 2008

For competition rules and full terms and conditions, see p111.



WIN THESE 2 GREAT PS2 GAMES!

ISSUE 95'S WINNERS

THE CHALLENGE: SEGA SUPERSTARS HIGH SCORE

NAME	SCORE
1 Robert Holder, Wigan	29290
2 Dearbail Jordan, Lancashire	29140
3 Mackenzie Harrison, Stowmarket	24440
4 Simon Begley, Leamington Spa	18860
5 Jamie Turuka, London	16460

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rac

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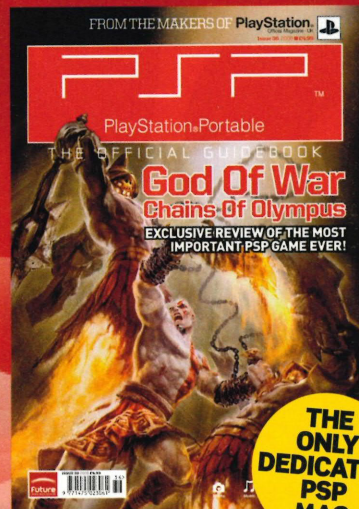
gamesradar.com

**sexy funny weird highbrow
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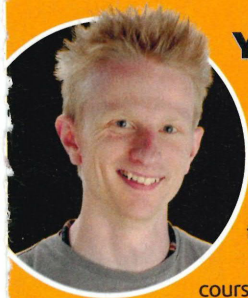


Now THIS is Living



UPFRONT

ⓐ LATEST NEWS ⓐ CULTURE ⓧ OPINION ⓐ EVENTS



YOU WIN SOME, YOU LOSE SOME

Don't be fooled by my crazy grin. I'm a sad man this month.

The main reason is, of course, that Sony has lost one of its key players in the PlayStation market. This man was inspirational, likeable, and above all he loved the PS2 to bits. We could all learn a lot from his brilliant mind and gentle nature.

Yep, we're all going to miss former OPS2 staff writer Mike, who has scuttled off to Edinburgh to work on his 'top secret project'.

Oh, and that tall, bald bloke, Phil Harrison, has left Sony too.

Feeling blue

Just joking, Phil: you're a huge loss to Sony. You're a legend. Without you, we wouldn't have SingStar, Buzz! or EyeToy.

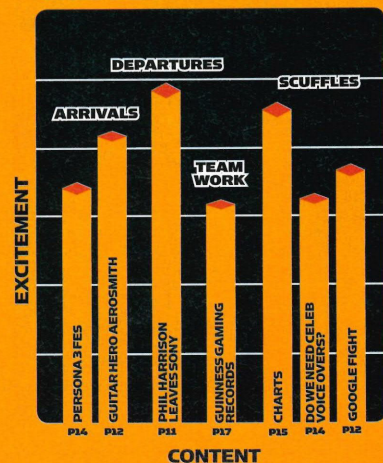
So, it's kind of fitting that in the same month the champion of social gaming toddles off, we should receive word of a new Guitar Hero (p12).

The announcement of GH Aerosmith certainly warmed my heart, and I hope - in these sad times - it'll bring a little comfort to all of you, too. If not, there's always the prospect of winning a massive high-def telly (p20)...

ANDY HARTUP
ACTING EDITOR

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THIS SECTION CONTAINS



Goodbye Mr PlayStation

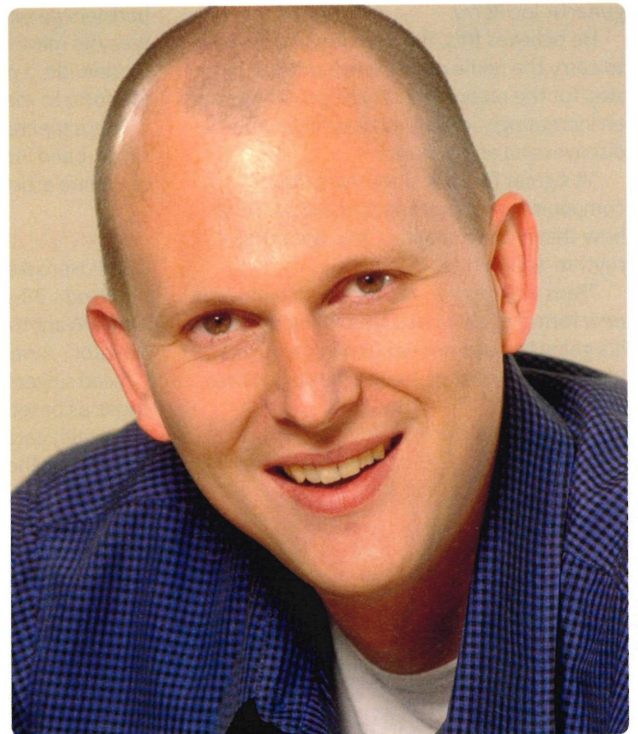
Phil Harrison quits Sony after 15 years

It's official: the charismatic face of PlayStation, Phil Harrison, has resigned his position as President of Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios.

During the early days of PS2 Harrison was responsible for 3rd party relations and research and development, meaning we have him to thank for securing such a glorious stable of triple-A titles.

Grand Theft Auto III? Metal Gear Solid? You're looking at the man that made sure they didn't go scampering off to Sega, Microsoft, or Nintendo.

But perhaps his biggest achievement was being one of the chief architects behind shifting the games industry's focus from hardcore titles to more casual, family-friendly fare, having overseen the ascendance such of PlayStation phenomena as SingStar and EyeToy.



but I wish to express my gratitude for his many invaluable contributions and also wish Phil the very best of luck in his future endeavours".

Harrison recently expressed dissatisfaction at how the Japanese arm of the company was handling the casual games market. This goes some way to explaining why he has taken up a post at Infogrames, home to troubled publisher Atari.

Atari has recently announced plans to move into the casual and mobile games sector and, for this task,

Harrison is the perfect man to have at the helm.

Harrison of a gun

As a parting statement Harrison said: "It has been a privilege to serve as part of the team [at Sony] and be inspired by them on a daily basis. I am so proud of everything PlayStation has achieved and will continue to support its future in every way I can."

OPS2 would like to take this opportunity to wish Phil goodbye and good luck. Shine on you crazy diamond.

Phil your boots

In a statement, Sony said that Harrison had "made a tremendous contribution" since joining company in 1992.

Fellow Sony exec, Kaz Hirai, went on to add: "As one of the founding members of Sony Computer Entertainment, Phil played a key role in the development and growth of the PlayStation business and our industry."

He went on to say: "It is sad to see him departing from SCE,



UPFRONT

GH: Aerosmith | Google Fight

Guitar Hero Aerosmith rocks the music biz

Band say game will 'help to rebuild the music industry'



Guitar Hero Aerosmith is the first step in a rock revolution, according to the band's guitarist Joe Perry.

He believes this, the first title in the series to carry the name of just one band, is a big step for the record industry as games become an increasingly important way for people to discover and enjoy music.

"It's great for rock since the record companies are struggling to make sense of how things are changing," Joe said of the rhythm-action title.

"Fans want to get and experience music in new formats. It's what's happening now, and it's going to build momentum in the future. It's a massive change for the music business."



↑ This is a shot of 'Same Old Song And Dance' from Guitar Hero III. Expect more songs like this

Dusty Welch, head of Guitar Hero publisher Activision, agreed: "This partnership will give Aerosmith, a band that has sold more than 150 million albums worldwide, a powerful and innovative platform to reach fans and new audiences."

It is expected to pave the way for more single-band instalments focusing on other big-name artists.

Steven and Perry

Guitar Hero Aerosmith features songs from the band's 38-year discography, including 'Don't Want to Miss a Thing', 'Love in an Elevator', 'Sweet Emotion' and 'Dream On'. Lead singer Steven Tyler said: "Activision chose us based on the diversity of the Aerosmith catalogue. Not only is songwriting a bitch, but then it goes and has puppies."

But the game will also include tracks from other musicians that Aerosmith cite as their influences. So expect to see the likes of Led Zeppelin, The Who, The Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix on the playlist.

"We've put a lot of ideas into the game so that fans can have fun interacting with our music, getting inside our body of work and learning about the band's history," said Joe.

You'll be able to step up to the axe as either Joe himself, fellow guitarist Brad Whitford or bassist Tom Hamilton when the game's released in the summer.

NEXT HEROES?

THE BANDS WE'D LIKE TO SEE IN GH FORM



DRAGONFORCE

GH III's 'Through the Fire and Flames' was just the beginning, surely?



YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

We don't really care which band, we just want to pretend to be this Swedish legend of shred with his finger-melting arpeggios. Perhaps a free wig could be part of the package?



METALLICA

The riffs! The solos! The big, meaty guitar sounds! We want them now!



MUSE

It's a crime against music that Muse's epic albums aren't already celebrated in GH form.

WHO ELSE SHOULD GET THEIR OWN GH GAME? TELL US! EMAIL PSNATION@FUTURENET.CO.UK

GOOGLE FIGHT

This Month: Futurama vs The Simpsons

It's the battle of laughs this month, with two titans of 2D taking each other on for the title of King Comedy: comic genius Matt Groening's creations Futurama and the Simpsons are pitted against one another in internet searches at Googlefight.com! And it's the Simpsons who win, with a massive 69,900,000 hits to a paltry 12,300,000 for Futurama.

The Google Fight interface shows a comparison between Futurama and The Simpsons. Futurama is labeled as the 'LOSER' with 12,300,000 results, while The Simpsons is the 'WINNER' with 69,900,000 results. The interface includes search boxes, a 'Make a fight' button, and character icons for both franchises.



Street Fighter IV coming to PS2?

Capcom suggests scrapper could go beyond next-gen machines

The rumour mills of OPS2 have been churning non-stop at the buzz that Street Fighter IV might, just might, make its way to PS2.

Why do we think this? Well, it has to do with something that publisher Capcom recently let slip.

Speaking to tech bible *Wired*, SF IV producer Yoshinori Ono said: "Street Fighter IV, as it stands now, would be well suited for the higher-level platforms. But the game doesn't have to have these visuals in order to be fun.



↑ The next instalment of the legendary fighter could be on PS2

"We could go, potentially, to the Wii. We could make it on Game Boy, for all we know right now." If there's a Wii version of the game, Capcom will have to essentially produce a heavily modified (read: less graphically advanced) version.

And it would make sound financial sense for a PS2 version to come along at the same time.

Ken you dig it?

Capcom has a history of porting successful titles to generate a bit more cash-money. Just look at the history of Resident Evil 4 (Gamecube to PS2 to Wii) and Okami (PS2 to Wii) as evidence.

One way in which we can make our Street Fighter IV dreams come true is to start petitioning Capcom.

So sign our petition below, send it in, and we'll pass it on to Capcom for you!

HADOUKEN! SONIC BOOM!

Want to see Street Fighter IV on PS2? Just sign on the dotted line and send this in to us, we'll do the rest!

Name

Address.....

Send to:

Hadouken! Sonic boom!, Official PS2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

THE MAGNIFICENT, FANTABULOUS HARRY POTTER!

"STAGE MAGIC LIKE YOU'VE SEEN BEFORE!" **THE DAILY BOASTER**



TOUR DATES

- 06-JUN-08 BATH - THE CRYSTAL PALACE
- 07-JUN-08 CHELTENHAM - THE RAT & MISTRESS
- 08-JUN-08 WOKING - WOKING SCHOOL FOR THE YOUNG MAGICIAN
- 09-JUN-08 READING - MRS MUGGLE'S TEA HOUSE
- 11-JUN-08 STOCKPORT - DOG PARK ARENA
- 12-JUN-08 ABERYSTWYTH - CENTRE FOR PIGEON FANCIERS
- 13-JUN-08 LLANDUDNO - YMCA
- 14-JUN-08 BLACKBURN - ST RONALD'S HIGH SCHOOL
- 17-JUN-08 OXFORD - NEW BOAT HOUSE THEATRE
- 18-JUN-08 GRIMSBY - THE OLD FISHERMAN'S CLUB
- 25-JUN-08 MAIDSTONE - CITY INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND
- 26-JUN-08 STEVENAGE - THE OLD BADGER
- 27-JUN-08 BIRMINGHAM - NEC [CANCELLED]

MOUTh PIECE

'Do games need celebrity voices?' asks OPS2's Kim



With the furious rise of game tie-ins to match every movie to flit across the silver screen, more and more actors are lending their voices to their virtual counterparts. And not only for tie-ins: recognisable tones turn up in all sorts of titles. But is all this really good for games?

Okay, celeb voice acting is acceptable with a film tie-in, because it helps the game recreate the source material. And as Golden Compass starlet Dakota Blue demonstrated recently, convincing performances are possible.



X factors

But in other games, a mix of several contributing factors can work for and against celebrity voices.

With kids' games, the simplistic use of gaming elements make major factors (such as star vocal chords) stand out. And this isn't really a good thing.

When I was playing the most recent Spyro instalment, with Elijah Wood in the title role, I didn't feel like I was

playing as a feisty little dragon, but as Frodo the hobbit.

The problem is that celebrities bring with them too much of their own personality

and the roles for which they are best known, which overpowers the character they are voicing.

But when it comes to a more adult game, the sheer scale of content pulls your attention away from what is a major selling point for younger games.

A case in point is Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, which boasts an impressive haul of celebs such as Samuel L Jackson, Axl Rose and Chris 'Reservoir Dogs' Penn.

But, thanks to the immersive world that GTA creates, their performances add to the characters, rather than mug them. In short, it's all about context.

EMAIL US

Send your comments to psnation@futurenet.co.uk

USA to get Persona 3 expansion pack

The Dark Hour is reset – but will we see it here?

Atlus USA has announced the forthcoming American release of an expansion pack for award winning roleplaying game Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3.

It will be called Persona 3 FES, the 'FES' being short for 'festival'. And it'll be stuffed full of new features that add an extra 30-plus hours to this already epic game.

Essentially a director's cut, Persona 3 FES is going to pack both the original version and the new version onto one disc.

And for those who've spent a good chunk of their lives working through the original: don't fret. You'll be able to transfer some of the saved data – the Persona compendium, for example – to use in the enhanced story.

Personal extras

New content includes 23 extra Personas to fight with, brand new cutscenes, a weapon synthesis system, a Hard mode and the ability to change your characters' clothing.

There are also going to be new quests available from the Blue Room, as well as additional events.

But the most enticing feature is the inclusion of Episode Aegis. It's a separate game mode that follows the path of Aegis, the lady android created by the game characters to aid them in their quest against the Shadows.

With an original story, extra cutscenes and 17 new music tracks, it's practically a new game in its own right.

FES will hit American shelves on 22 April, but there have been no announcements regarding a UK release so far. Fingers crossed!



⬆️ You'll have 23 brand new Personas to help you in your fights



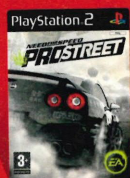
⬆️ The expansion pack will give you the ability to change the characters' outfits



⬆️ Fighting in a bikini adds +10 distraction to the status field. Suffragettes died for this, you know

PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

PS2 UK CHARTS



1 NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET
Just when you thought it'd spin out of the race, ProStreet roars back up to pole position.

EA 6/10 ▲ Last month: 5



6 SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008
Sweaty men in tight lycra working it out in the ring still appeals to the UK, apparently, making this one of the longest chart runners.

THQ 8/10 ▼ Last month: 3



2 FIFA 08
Once again, FIFA 08 has bounced back to take its place at the top of the PS2 football game league.

EA 9/10 ▲ Last month: 6



7 SIMS 2 CASTAWAY
Seems these Sims ain't going anywhere fast: life on the island of the charts is becoming permanent.

EA 8/10 ▲ Last month: 9



3 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008
Last month PES 08 was the champion of the footie game champions, but alas, FIFA's pipped it once again.

EA 9/10 ▼ Last month: 2



8 BUZZ! THE HOLLYWOOD QUIZ
Perhaps the recent showing of the Oscars inspired you all to indulge in this movie-based quiz game.

Sony 8/10 ▲ Last month: 10



4 THE SIMPSONS GAME
Like a barnacle on a whale, The Simpsons aren't letting go of their well-deserved mid chart position.

EA 8/10 ▼ Last month: 3



9 PDC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DARTS 08
Oxygen's offering continues to please fans of the pointy pub game.

Oxygen 6/10 ▼ Last month: 7



5 GUITAR HERO III
Much to our disappointment, our favourite axe-tapping game has dropped down into the depths.

Activ. 9/10 ▼ Last month: 1



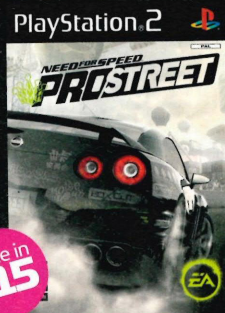
10 BUZZ! JUNIOR: MONSTER RUMBLE
A new entry in the charts, with this pleasantly entertaining monster based kids game.

Sony 7/10 New Entry

PS2 UK SALES TO DATE 9.9 MILLION

TRADE IN

Stuff you could buy if you sold your old games



Trade in
£15

NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET
Six months old



Trade in
£10

WORMS 4 MAYHEM
Three years old



Trade in
£10

TEKKEN 5
Three years old



RRP
£35



IMPERIA ITALIAN DOUBLE CUTTER PASTA MACHINE

GAME All trade-in prices with kind permission from GAME and correct at time of going to press
game.co.uk

PS2 AMERICA CHARTS



POSITION	GAME	POSITION	GAME
1	▶ Guitar Hero III	6	▼ WWE SmackDown vs Raw 08
2	▶ WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2008	7	▶ The Simpsons Game
3	▲ Rockband	8	▲ College Hoops 2K8
4	NE Metal Gear Solid Essentials Collection	9	NE Guitar Hero II
5	NE MLB 08	10	▼ Need For Speed ProStreet

PS2 JAPAN CHARTS

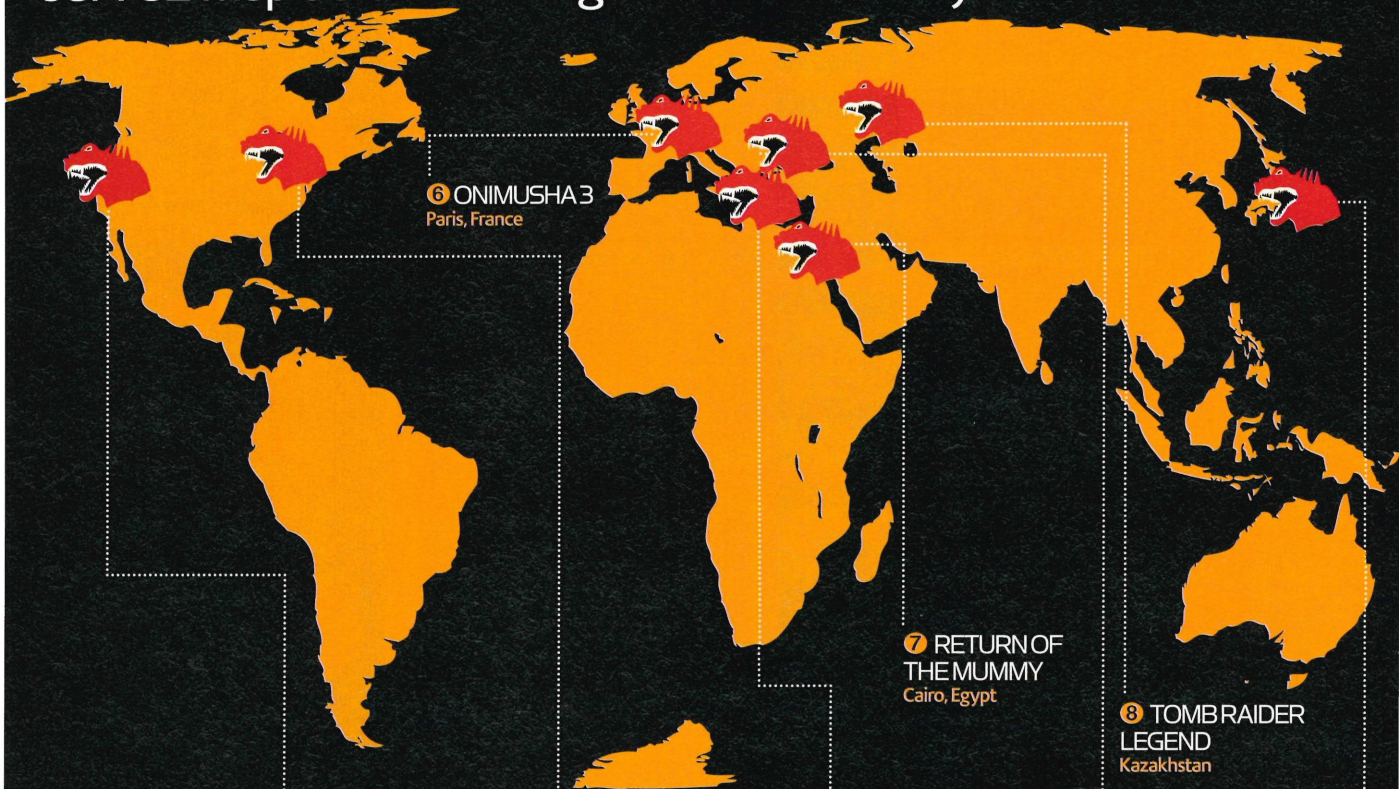


POSITION	GAME	POSITION	GAME
1	NE Pachinko Kamen Rider: Shocker Zenmetsu Daisakusen	6	NE Tales of Destiny: Director's Cut
2	NE Poison Pink	7	NE Dance Dance Revolution: Supernova 2
3	NE Last Escort 2: Shinya no Amai Toge	8	▼ Ryu ga Gotoku 2
4	NE Ebi Kore and Kimi Kiss	9	▼ World Soccer Winning Eleven 2008
5	NE NiGHTS Into Dreams	10	▼ School Days LxH



THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PLAYSTATION

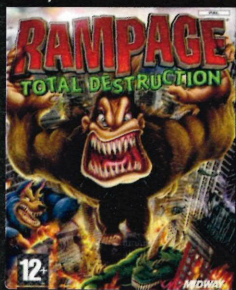
Monster attacks abound across the globe, so check on our PS2 map before booking that weekend city-break.



1 RAMPAGE: TOTAL DESTRUCTION Los Angeles, USA

In Rampage: Total Destruction several abominations of nature are having a heated competition to see which one can cause the most destruction in the City of Angels. Leading the way are Ralph (a giant wolf), George the Gorilla and a dinosaur called Lizzie. They're racing to decimate 10 blocks, eating pedestrians and crushing law enforcement along the way, before moving on to the next unfortunate city.

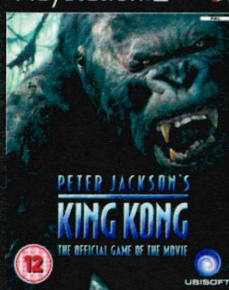
PlayStation 2



2 PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG New York, USA

There have been many disastrous shows on Broadway, but none with such horrific consequences as King Kong: The Eighth Wonder of the World, produced by Carl Denham. The star of the show was a 25,000 ton gorilla, who got stage fright and smashed his way out of the auditorium. He was last seen plummeting from the top floor of the Empire State Building before the camera feed cut out...

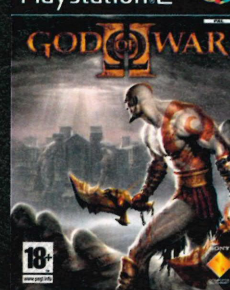
PlayStation 2



3 GOD OF WAR II Rhodes, Greece

After defeating Ares and becoming the God of War, Kratos' thirst for the destruction of Sparta's enemies leads him to the port of Rhodes. As he begins tearing the city apart, Athena intervenes, stripping Kratos of his godly powers and imbuing the Colossus, a giant statue that straddles the harbour, with celestial life. What follows is a battle between Kratos and Colossus that causes more damage than it was intended to prevent.

PlayStation 2



4 VAN HELSING Transylvania, Romania

Being the home of the Cheeky Girls, you'd expect Romania to be a place of fun, if not much food. The reality, though, is far more sinister: the rural population are terrorised by supernatural beings including the wolfman, Frankenstein's monster and Big Chief Bloodsucker himself, Dracula. Visitors are advised to stay clear of pale-faced women in period costume and men who sniff lamp posts and can lick their own balls.

PlayStation 2

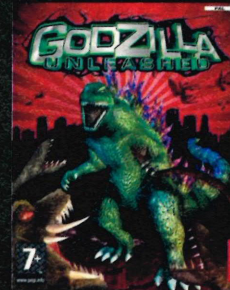


8 TOMBRAIDER LEGEND Kazakhstan

5 GODZILLA UNLEASHED Tokyo, Japan

A mysterious meteor shower has resulted in an unusual number of earthquakes and changes in climate. That in turn has led to the 'kaiju' (strange beasts) attacking major cities. First point of call for many is Tokyo, and it's seen major disruption thanks to the likes of Godzilla, Mothra and Gigan playing silly beggars. Surely if they wanted to play rough they could go to Monster Island where there's more room?

PlayStation 2



7 RETURN OF THE MUMMY Cairo, Egypt

6 ONIMUSHA 3 Paris, France

Guitar Heroes set world records

Rock history made at launch of Guinness gamers' book



It was a night that rock'n'roll will never forget. Earlier this month, rockers and gamers collided for some serious note-noodling that officially set new world records.

The venue: the Zavvi store on Oxford Street, London. The instrument: Guitar Hero III. The reason: to celebrate the launch of the first Gamer's Edition of the Guinness Book of World Records.

Axe entertainment

The first performance came from seasoned guitar hero Luke Albiges of Bournemouth.

Luke already holds the record for Highest Percentage Score on 'Knights of Cydonia' (First Play) and First Videogame Busker (having busked for two hours at Leicester Square Tube station

using Guitar Hero). His challenge this time was to beat his own high score for 'Number of the Beast': a target he narrowly missed, although he did get an impressive 362,110 points.

Next, the UK's participation in a round-the-world Guitar Hero relay marathon that also involved players in Paris, New York, LA, Toronto and Australia.

A team in each country played Guitar Hero III for two hours before handing the axe over to the next stage.

The Rev and Snell, former members of Towers of London, kicked off the UK leg with a blistering 'Anarchy In the UK'.

They then passed the axes to the members of Cub Scout Pack 184 from London's ACS International School. The young tykes stole the show with widdle-perfect performances of tracks including 'Barracuda' and 'When We Were Young'.

Later, cast members from hit Queen musical *We Will Rock You* showed off their mad skills.

Band together

Then members of the public took over in a rather unusual record attempt: Most People Using One Controller. Six guitarists took a button each and battled their way into the record books.

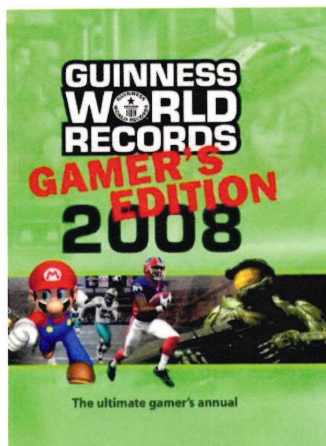
The Guinness World Records Gamer's Edition was created due to demand from gamers



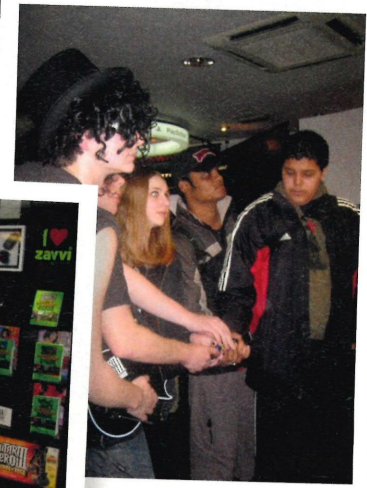
↑ Rockers included the cast of *We Will Rock You* and a cub scout pack

worldwide. Editor Keith Pullin pushed for a gaming offshoot because he believes that, as gaming gets more mainstream, gamers deserve to get the credit for their hard work.

The Guinness World Records Gamer's Edition is now on sale in book stores. And if you want to be a record breaker, check out www.guinnessworldrecords.com/gamers.



↑ The new book was created in response to popular demand



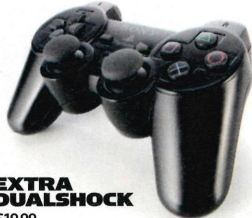
PS2 SYSTEMS CHECK

Just got a PS2? Here's the essential kit you need

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES



MEMORY CARD £14.99
Buy a memory card to stop all your progress being lost when you switch off the machine.



EXTRA DUALSHOCK £19.99
You get one with your PS2 but you should definitely buy one more for playing with mates.

PS2 DVD REMOTE
From £2.50

To use a PS2's built-in DVD player, you could just use the DualShock, but this is better because it's got no wires and the buttons are clearly labelled.



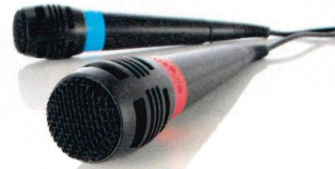
PARTY ACCESSORIES



GUITAR HERO
With game £49.99
Thrash your guitar like a rock god. Hotel trashing optional.



DANCEMAT
With game £29.99/Mat only £14.99
Pull shapes with your PS2 and the brilliant DanceDance range.



SINGSTAR
With game £34.99
Turn your PS2 into a karaoke machine with these mics.



EYETOY
With game £9.99 to £34.99
The Eyetoys games and camera make you the star of the game.



BUZZ!
With game £24.99 to £34.99
Buzz if you know the answer! The Buzz quiz games are a top laugh.



MULTITAP £29.99
Lets you plug in up to four PS2 controllers: essential if you want your whole gang to be involved.

HARDCORE ACCESSORIES



SONY SPEEDSTER 2 STEERING WHEEL £39.99
Compatible with all the latest, greatest driving games.

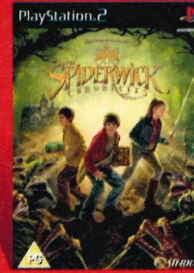


HEADSET £24.99
Use SOCOM 3's headset online to chat, offline to give squaddies orders. Works with Rainbow Six.



JOYTECH 8INCH LCD PORTABLE SCREEN £109.99
A battery-powered screen for playing games or watching DVDs.

OPS2'S LATEST RECOMMENDED GAMES



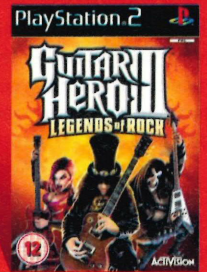
SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES
Adventure
A well-rounded, magical adventure.
OPS2 Score: 7/10



PHANTASY STAR UNIVERSE: AOTI
RPG
A worthy follow-up to the original PSU.
OPS2 Score: 7/10



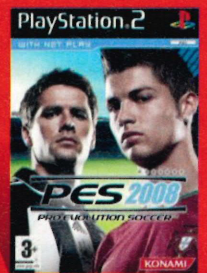
SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: PERSONA 3
RPG
Roleplaying at its finest.
OPS2 Score: 10/10



GUITAR HERO III
Rhythm
Test your rhythm-action skills to the limit and be a rock god, all at once.
OPS2 Score: 9/10



SONIC RIDERS: ZERO GRAVITY
Racing
Sonic's back with speedy hoverboard action.
OPS2 Score: 7/10



PES 08
Sport
The best instalment so far in this fine footie franchise.
OPS2 Score: 9/10

PLUG INS

Get the right PS2 cable for your TV



1 RFU ADAPTOR
This offers the lowest quality visuals but will connect a PS2 to any TV via the aerial socket.



2 AV CABLE
Plugs into the coloured sockets on your TV, it's better than RFU but not as good as the next three.



3 S-VIDEO
A gold-plated S-video cable will improve the sound and picture quality you get from the PS2.



4 RGB SCART
The best! Ask for a true RGB SCART cable which is better than the SCART adaptor in the PS2's box.



5 COMPONENT CABLE
The HD option. Links to compatible HDTVs, plasmas and monitors.

HIGH SCORE HEROES Month 4

FOUR MONTHS INTO OUR GUITAR HERO COMPETITION AND THE AMOUNT OF TALENT WE'VE SEEN LEAVES US DEJECTED, EMBARRASSED AND DECIDEDLY PROUD OF OUR READERS

This Month's Challenge

It's a Guns 'N' Roses special! Send in your score on Medium, Hard or Expert for 'Sweet Child O' Mine' from GH II or for 'Welcome to the Jungle' from GH III

THE COMPETITION

HOW IT WORKS Each month we give you a choice of two songs to play for the highest score you can get, on Medium, Hard or Expert. We name a winner each month for each difficulty.

You can only enter a score for one difficulty, and prizes are tailored to each, so if you are a GH god, don't lower yourself to an easier difficulty just to increase your chance of winning.

We know some songs are harder than others, so we use a complex series of equations based on how close each person came to the song's maximum score to determine the winners.

THE PRIZE A specialised, framed OPS2 cover proclaiming your Guitar Hero prowess to the world (just like in the game)!

HOW TO ENTER

BY POST

Send in photo evidence of your score, followed by your full name, address and email address if possible to the usual address (p37).

BY EMAIL

Email your score with your full name and address to psnation@futurenet.co.uk, subject line 'High Score Heroes'.

BY MMS

Snap a photo of your high score (make sure your capture your score, song title and difficulty) on your phone, attach it to an MMS and text OPS2HEROES (then a space) followed by your name and address to 07738 647177. Cost: 50p plus your standard network tariff rate.

Closing date: 23 April 2008

For full competition rules and text terms and conditions, see p111.

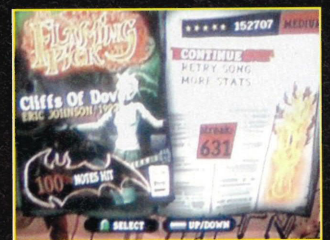
ISSUE 95 WINNERS!



MARCUS BEARPARK 270,919 FOR 'CLIFFS OF DOVER' ON EXPERT



DREW THORMAN 253,145 FOR 'THE BEAST AND THE HARLOT' ON HARD



CHRIS SANDERSON 152,707 FOR 'CLIFFS OF DOVER' ON MEDIUM

NEVER IN
THE BOLLON



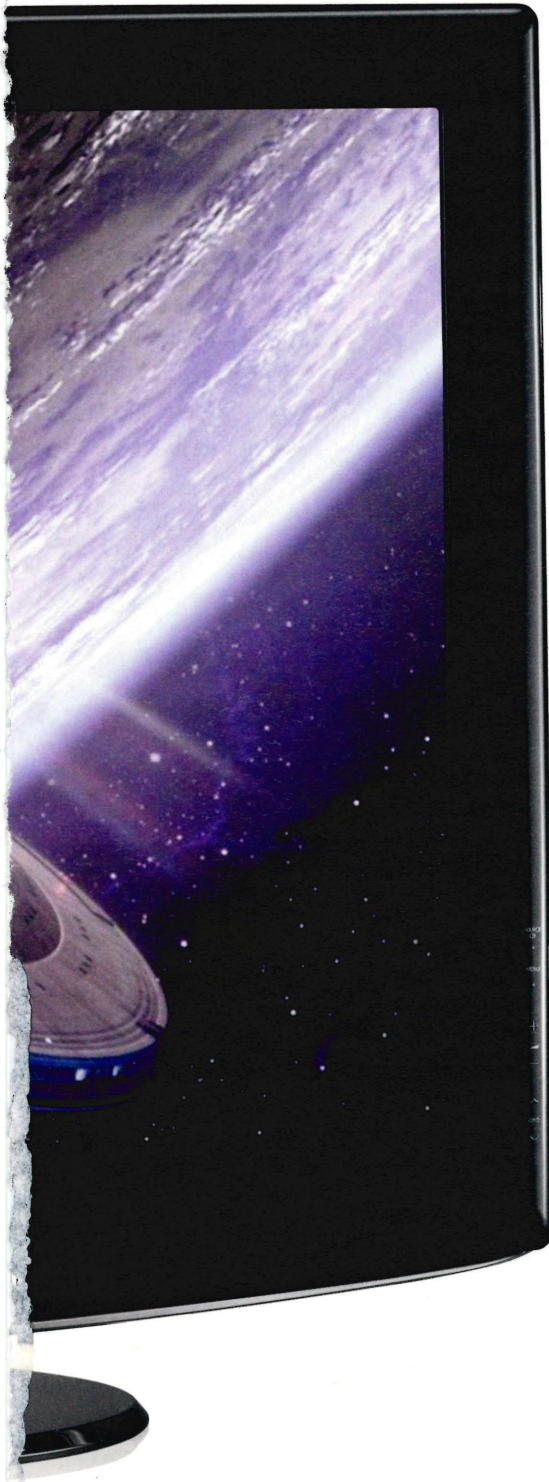
UPFRONT

Win a HDTV!

Win a 32in High



Definition TV!



Get your paws on a goggle box to die for by entering our compo

High definition is the future. Unfortunately, 'the future' is an expensive business, with a decent sized HDTV setting you back half a grand or more.

That's quite a lot of money. So we've teamed up with game publisher Koch Media to give you the chance to upgrade your gaming and film-viewing setup with a state of the art, 32in Samsung telly. Mmm, shiny...

You see, Koch is keen to let you know that Star Trek Conquest will be available in April, and – unlike the last couple of rather ripe Trek games – it's actually going to be well worth playing.

And the team at Koch hate to think of you shooting up the galaxy in anything less than gorgeous hi-def-o-vision. It just wouldn't do their work justice, see? We'll be bringing you a full review of the game next month, but what we've seen so far is very promising.

Flat's entertainment

But back to the TV. It's a Samsung 32" LE32R87BDX HD Ready Freeview Widescreen LCD TV. In English, that means that as HDTVs go, it's a swanky one.

There are a grand total of three HDMI sockets included, so you can plug in all kinds of high-def devices, and it's capable of rendering a picture in 1080p – the sharpest you can get.

It's got built-in Freeview so you can watch endless repeats of One Tree Hill on E4 at no extra cost, and it's got Nicam Stereo output,

so you can hook it up to your stereo or speaker system. In short: it's awesome.

For a chance to win this incredible prize, just answer the following question...

QUESTION

What classic character will Brit actor Simon Pegg play in the new Star Trek movie?

ANSWERS

- A) Captain Kirk
- B) Spock
- C) Scotty
- D) Bones

HOW TO ENTER

BY POST

Write your answer, followed by your full name and address, on a postcard and send it to the usual address (p3). Mark it clearly 'Star Trek TV Comp'

BY EMAIL

Email your answer with your full name and address to psnation@futurenet.co.uk, with 'Star Trek TV Comp' in the subject line.

BY TEXT

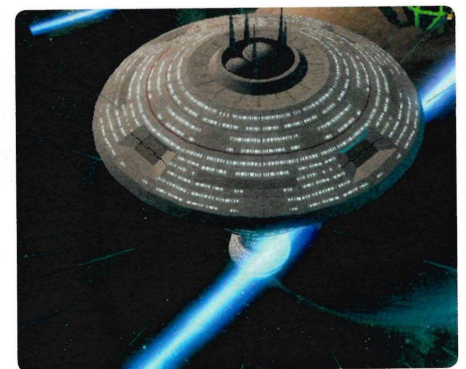
Text OPS2TREK followed by a space, then your answer (A, B, C or D) to 87474. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

Closing date: 23 April 2008.

For full terms and conditions see p111.



⬆ Conquest will be a strategy title. A bit like Risk, only with more Klingons and Vulcans



⬆ Trekkies will be chuffed to bits with the level of detail and canonical accuracy in Conquest

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK



The only magazine with a playable PS3 Blu-ray disc
On sale now

PS3 Blu-ray disc 12 games to play including Everybody's Golf: World Tour, NBA 2K8, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Burnout Paradise, FIFA Street 3 and The Simpsons Game.



First for PS3, PSP and PS2

This month: exclusive reveal of the new Aliens game, massive hands-on with GTA IV, plus reviews of God Of War PSP, Lost, and Army Of Two.

WIN A FREE SUBSCRIPTION NOW!

To enter the draw for a free subscription to PlayStation® magazine simply text 87103 within the time specified below with OPMFREE3 followed by your date of birth. Alternatively send your name, address, mobile number, date of birth and the magazine name with issue number to Subs Draw, Future Publishing, Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Entries must be received between 28th February 2008 and 9th April 2008. The winner will be selected at random from all entries received between the relevant dates. The ten winners will be notified within 28 days of the closing date and will need to supply their full address including a UK postcode. Texts will be charged at 25p plus your normal network tariff. Lines are open 24 hours a day, and you can enter as many times as you like. By entering this competition, you consent to us using your personal details to send you information about products and services of Future Publishing Limited which may be of interest to you. If you do not want to receive this information, please include the word "NO" at the end of your text message or in your postal entry.

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PREVIEWS

Ⓜ EXCLUSIVES Ⓞ FIRST LOOKS ✕ HANDS-ON PLAY Ⓞ LATEST INFO

THE EVIL IS ALMOST HERE AMONG US

[Editor's note: Sophie was unable to write this month's Previews column because she was so

frightened by *Silent Hill* and *Alone In The Dark* that she has been hiding behind the sofa for three weeks.

Seriously, we haven't seen her this scared since the Cybermen. However, she did pass out this note...]

Scare bear

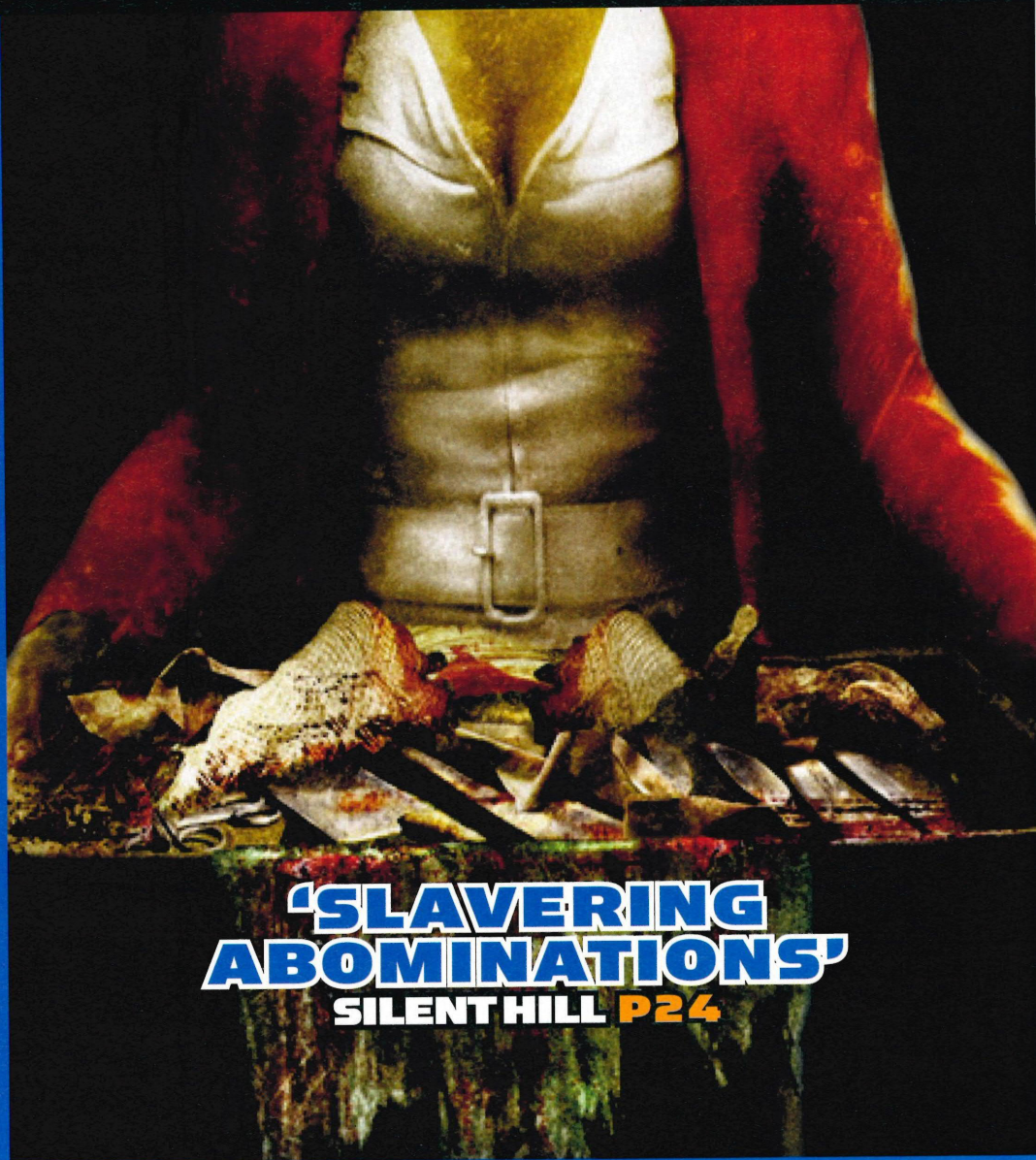
'To whom it may concern: I am scratching this with my fingernails into a piece of wood pulled from the sofa leg (thank God I got my furniture from Ikea). I fear it may be the last thing I write.

But I must warn you. They are coming. I don't know exactly when, but soon. Please, save yourselves.

They are evil, they are terrifying and they are very, very good at what they do. They will mess with your mind like they did with mine and they will show no remorse.

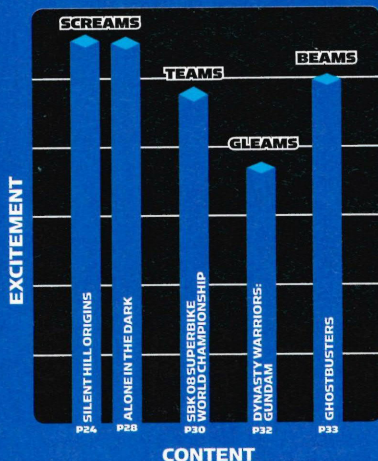
I am going to try to burrow out through the damp course but I heard a weird noise and I'm worried I may not be abl...' [note ends]

SOPHIE MASON
PRODUCTION EDITOR
smason@futurenet.co.uk



'SLAVERING
ABOMINATIONS'
SILENT HILL P24

THIS SECTION CONTAINS



IS IT NEARLY READY YET?

THE KEY STAGES OF GAME DEVELOPMENT

CONCEPT
The idea has just been unveiled, it's little more than a name at this stage

PRE-ALPHA
Early test levels provide proof of concept

BETA
A second playable version ready for final testing



ALPHA
The first playable version of the game, many features unfinished

RELEASE
The current release date but liable to change

COMING SOON!

SAMURAI WARRIORS 2 EXTREME	APRIL
UEFA EURO 2008	APRIL
SILENT HILL ORIGINS	MAY
ALONE IN THE DARK	MAY
IRON MAN	MAY
LEGO INDY	JUNE
HULK 2	JUNE
TOMB RAIDER UNDERWORLD	2008
STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED	2008

ORIGINAL SIN

Terror grips OPS2 as we have our first hands-on with **Silent Hill Origins** on PS2

PUB Konami **DEV** Climax **ETA** May **WEB** tinyurl.com/36dpgg



If you read our preview last issue, you'll know that we were feeling pretty triumphant about the PSP's *Silent Hill Origins* coming to PS2. After all, we predicted it would.

Now we've had some hands-on time with the game, it's fair to say our excitement is justified and that *Silent Hill* fans won't be disappointed by this newest addition to the series.

Konami handed *Silent Hill*'s secret formula to western developer Climax for the PSP version, and the chaps at Climax are also handling the PS2 port.

Last issue we predicted that the PS2 version would offer little in the way of new content, and from what we've seen so far, it seems SHO on PS2 will feature updated visuals and little else.

Most noticeable are the character models, which have been given a makeover to bring them in line with PS2 standards, though some of the cut scenes appear to still use the flaky old PSP models.

Origins takes place seven years before the events of the first *Silent Hill*

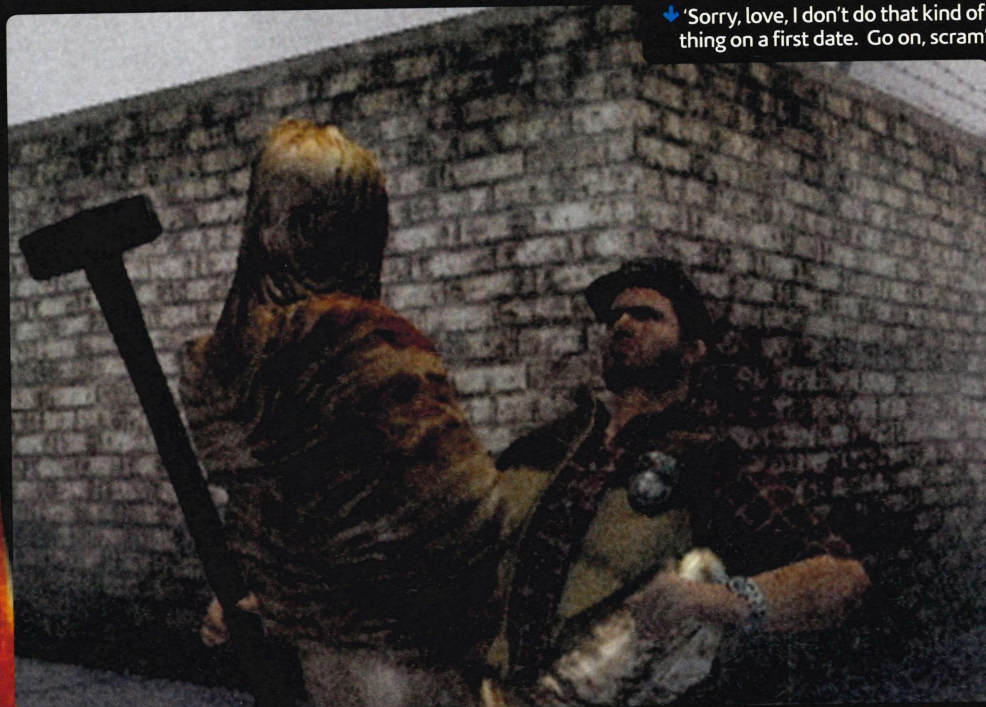


↑ You'd think having no face would make fighting hard. But no

↓ In *Silent Hill*, mirrors are for more than checking your stubble still looks manly



↑ Step away from the doll! For God's sake, man, leave it alone!



↓ 'Sorry, love, I don't do that kind of thing on a first date. Go on, scram'

Hill, right at the point in which the town transforms from a sleepy New England burg to a fog-swaddled embassy of hell.

Mothered trucker

The game thrusts you into the role of Travis Grady, a grizzled truck driver with a troubled childhood, who's forced to stop in Silent Hill after almost ploughing into a girl while on the road. One thing that really marks Travis out from previous Silent Hill protagonists is that – during our playthrough, at least – we've yet to discover a reason why Travis decides to remain in the town. Don't know about you, but if we were presented with a hideous flesh-demon birthed from our own



↑ Flesh-suits were totally hot on the Milan catwalk for spring/summer

memories of the road-kill we spotted on the road during our day job as a truck driver, we'd leave the town screaming and never, ever return.

But what does Travis do? He follows a trail of entrails and sputum to the local butcher's shop. Guess he's just pretty confident.

Mind you, seeing as the combat system has been overhauled since

HE FOLLOWS A TRAIL OF ENTRAILS TO THE BUTCHER'S

Silent Hill 4, he has every reason to be a little cocky.

Befitting of his rough n' ready profession, trucker Travis is the first Silent Hill protagonist who's willing and able to engage the Hill's gibbering nightmares with his bare fists.

Perhaps as a consequence of getting into too many bar fights over spilt porky scratchings, Travis is adept at turning any bit of environmental trash into a weapon (including, yes, pool cues).



THE SOUND

Akira Yamaoka's soundtrack mixes found sounds and industrial clatter to scare you witless.



IMPROVED COMBAT

Now you have more ways to tackle the demons in your mind.



SHARPENED GRAPHICS

It looked great on PSP, it looks even better on PS2.

LOVING

HATING

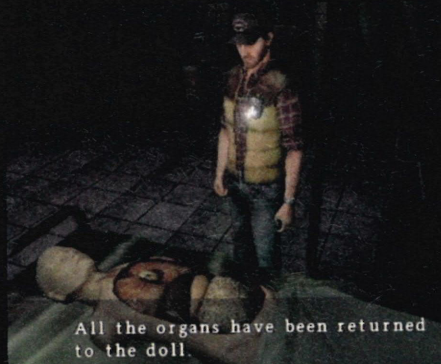
THE CAMERA

The camera hates you, your mother, your girlfriend, and your dog



THE LOCKED DOORS

Even a shotgun and meat-cleaver combo can't open them



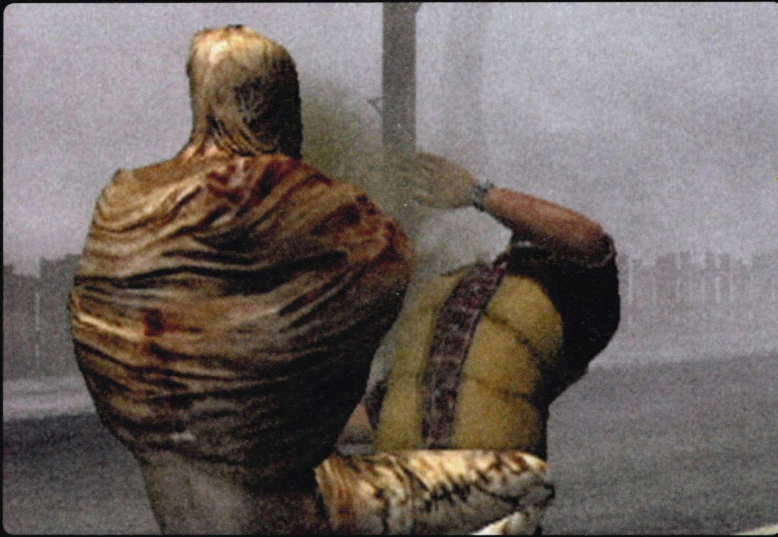
All the organs have been returned to the doll.

There are six classes of weapon that Travis can discover during his travels. They include four classes of melee weapon, one-shot breakable items such as televisions and toasters, and most importantly, firearms.

Gunplay in Silent Hill has always been severely limited by the amount of ammunition you could find, so that bullets were generally best saved for boss encounters.

But Origins is different. Bullets are plentiful, to the extent that you can almost fight off monsters exclusively by firing at them in the face.

This does have drawbacks; given the claustrophobic nature of Silent Hill, you might not always find you have the breathing space to aim at the abomination bearing down on you.



← He's got no arms, but he sure ain't 'armless'. [Groan - Ed]

FAQ

Q. IS THERE A REAL SILENT HILL?

A. Not as such, but the *Silent Hill* movie was filmed in Centralia, Pennsylvania, which has been almost wholly abandoned thanks to mine fire 46 years ago.



Name's Travis. Nice to meet you, Lisa.

↑ It wouldn't be *Silent Hill* without nurses. Some are pretty. Some aren't

Melée weapons have their own downside too: they break. Frequently. But, given the sheer abundance of meat cleavers, lead pipes and rusty scalpels dotted around the place, this isn't a problem.

It's always wise, though, to save a couple of the rare lance-class weapons (drip stands, pikes) and heavy weapons (wrenches, shovels) for more dangerous foes.

Just don't ask us how Travis can fit five TVs in his pockets to pull out at will. Must be some special trucker trousers.

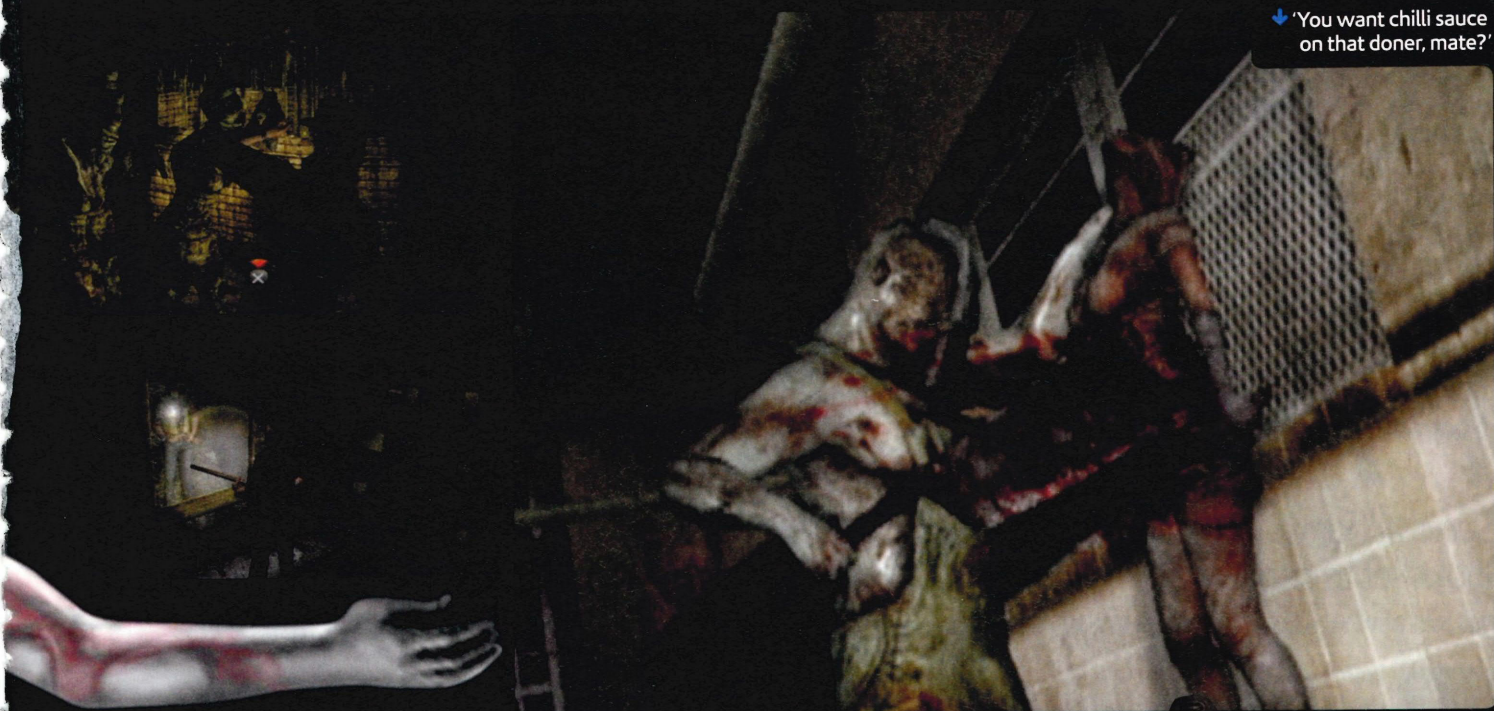
Travis can pull off weapon-specific combos and unleash a charge-attack by briefly holding down ⊗.

With one-shot weapons such as radios and typewriters, our hero will



DON'T ASK US HOW TRAVIS CAN FIT FIVE TVs IN HIS POCKET

↓ 'You want chilli sauce on that doner, mate?'



launch them at the nearest enemy, usually resulting in a crucial knockdown that lets him employ a boot-shaped finishing move.

Lighty night

As in previous Silent Hill games, your torch is both a boon and a curse. It might help Travis navigate through the pitch-black corridors of, say, Silent Hill's asylum, but it will also draw the attention of light-sensitive monsters.

Thankfully, your proximity to beasties is indicated by your pocket radio, which emits an unnerving crackle as you draw closer. Meanwhile your screen starts to warp with static.

This dynamic gives rise to some of Silent Hill Origins' most terrifying moments, as when you're forced to switch off your torch to avoid a roaming pack of monsters in a narrow corridor and run pell-mell past these half-seen miscreations.

It's moments like these where Akira Yamaoka's incredible work on the game's sound design becomes apparent. Were it not for his masterful command over industrial clatter and found-sounds, the Silent Hill series wouldn't be half as terrifying as it is.

Origins PSP is well-known for having a particularly atmospheric soundtrack and this has transferred well onto PS2.

THINGS THAT ARE TRUE IN SILENT HILL ORIGINS

GAME LAW

- 1 There are no charity muggers.
- 2 You can fit a TV, a toaster and a vase in your pocket at the same time.
- 3 Truck drivers are fit and muscular.
- 4 Touching mirrors is bad.
- 5 Freud was right about everything.



Sadly, one of the biggest flaws in Origins PSP has also found its way to PS2: the camera.

The game mixes fixed camera angles with an over-the-shoulder approach, but you only have limited control over the latter, being able to snap back behind Travis by tapping **LB**.

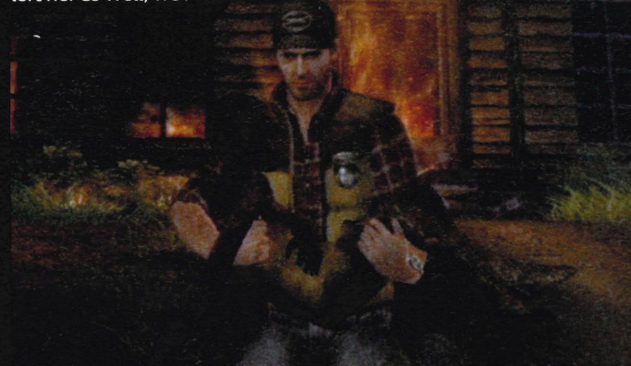
Both types of camera angle are often used in the same room, so you'll often find yourself doing a merry dance with **LB** just to ensure some half-formed monstrosity doesn't chew your face off.

Worse still, sometimes the camera angle will defeat your attempts to spy a nearby monster, so that your only recourse is to draw your sidearm and fire off-camera. It's a cheap way to raise tension.

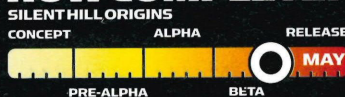
That said, Silent Hill Origins is shaping up to be a solid addition to the series, with the oppressive atmosphere and slavering abominations of nature we know and love. Mike Sterry

You all left that girl to burn.

↓ ...and you should've left her as well, Trav



HOW COMPLETE?





PREVIEW

Alone in the Dark

A STALK IN THE PARK

Survival horror in the open air, **Alone in the Dark** looks set to scare

PUB Atari DEV Hydravision Entertainment ETA May WEB centraldark.com



Here's what we know about *Alone in the Dark* so far.

We know it's set in Central Park. We know that it takes its cue from the cream of long-form US television shows such as *Lost* and *24*, and is divvied up into episodes, each with a gripping cliffhanger that practically begs you to jump to the next segment.

We know that the game sports an innovative inventory system that,

PS2 WON'T BE ABLE TO OFFER THE FULL RANGE OF GAMEPLAY

rather than breaking your suspension of disbelief by dumping you into a submenu, sees protagonist Edward Carnby peering into his jacket pockets to select items.

We also know that one of the biggest mysteries surrounding *Alone in the Dark* is how Carnby manages to

↓ *Alone in the Dark*? More like 'with company in the light'

travel from the 1920s in the original *Alone in the Dark* (released 16 years ago on the PC) to the decidedly modern setting of the new game.

Well, we can reveal one piece of the puzzle: he's been asleep since then. Just how he came to slumber for 80 years and not age a bit will play a big part of the story and tie together with the greater mystery of the creepy goings-on in Central Park.

Confusingly, this take on the series' chronology completely does away with 2001's *Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare*, which featured another character named Edward Carnby in a modern setting, but with no relation to past games.

And yes, thankfully it has nothing to do with the terrible film adaptation wrought by infamous hack director Uwe Boll.

Central dark

But it's what we don't know at the moment that's troubling us. The PS2 version is being developed by



↑ As you'd expect from the series that invented survival horror, *AitD* is creepy



↑ Disaster has come to New York City. The question is, what caused it?

Hydravision Entertainment, best known for the *ObsCure* series.

And we fear that *Alone in the Dark* could prove to be yet another example of the two-tier system that's arisen since next-gen went live, which sees entirely different games developed for both generations of console in parallel. We saw it with *Spider-Man 3*. We saw it with *Need for Speed: Carbon*. We're worried we might see it again here.

While we're promised that both versions of the game will feature

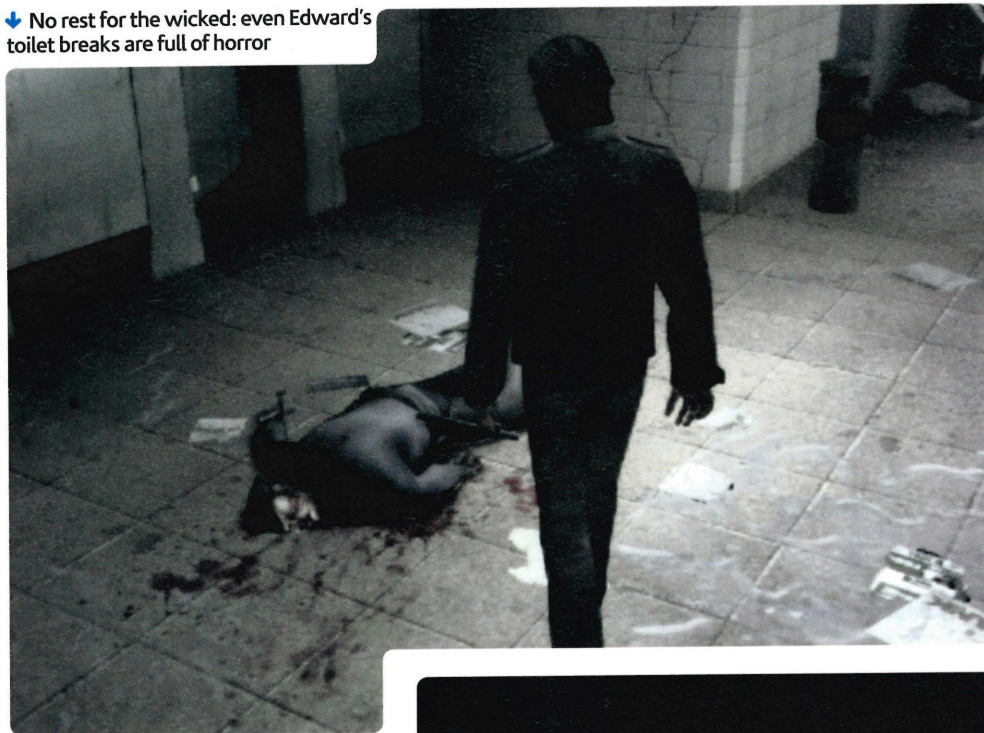


↑ Edward might be in Central Park, but there's still plenty of vehicles about

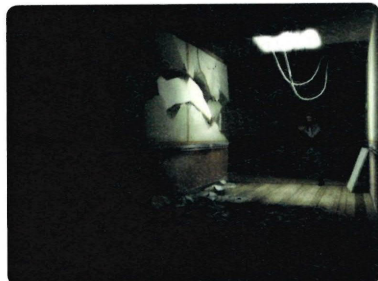


↑ Edward Carnby was never a man to give money to the homeless

↓ No rest for the wicked: even Edward's toilet breaks are full of horror



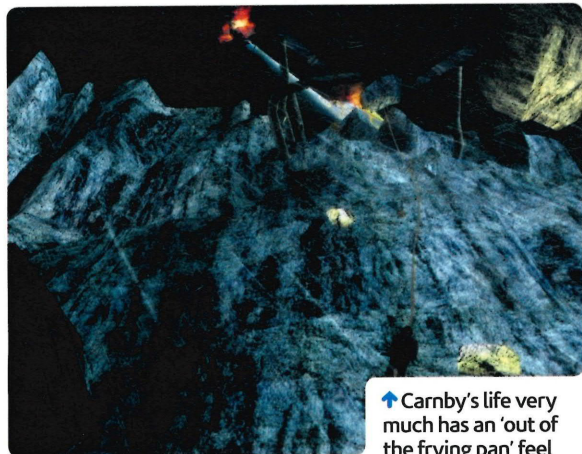
↓ You never know what's hiding in the dark, but it's probably not a cute puppy



similar mechanics and plot, just from looking at some of the footage on hand for the next-gen version, we know that the PS2 won't be able to offer the full range of gameplay.

Physic in the head

For one, we know that our darling PS2 simply isn't up to the job of replicating the same level of physics seen on next-gen. Iron doors realistically



↑ Carnby's life very much has an 'out of the frying pan' feel



↑ Enemies are attracted to the smell of blood

buckling when fired upon? Realistic rope and cloth physics? These are perks we know we're unlikely to see.

But we do know that Hydravision is doing its best to retain the concept of Edward Carnby as a MacGyver for the Resident Evil generation.

Take that stalwart of survival horror, the can of first-aid spray, for example. Here, it can be used to heal Carnby's wounds, as a flamethrower or as an impromptu grenade when tossed in the air and shot.

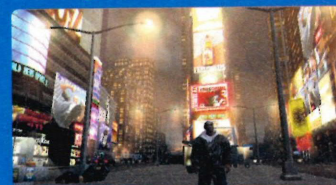
And, because seeing in the dark is rather important, Carnby can set light



↑ While we don't advocate it, learning how to play with fire is important

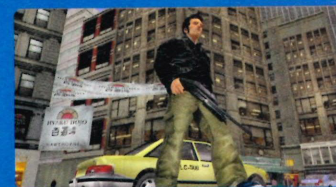
ROTTEN BOROUGHS

Other games that do NYC



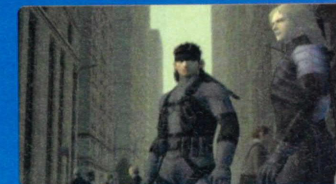
TRUE CRIME: NYC 2005

Noo Yoik, but with no people, crass advertising and framerate issues.



GRANDTHEFT AUTO III 2001

Liberty City isn't *actually* New York, of course. It's just very, very like it.



MGS2: SONS OF LIBERTY 2002

NYC proper doesn't cameo until the end, when Federal Hall gets trashed.



↑ AITD is divided into episodes, some of which literally end on a cliff-hanger

to many of the environmental objects at hand to use as makeshift torches.

We have high expectations for Alone in the Dark. Its promises of an immersive, free-form update on the survival horror genre are truly ambitious. Let's just hope it can deliver on those rather weighty promises on PS2 as well as on next-gen consoles. Mike Sterry

HOW COMPLETE?

ALONE IN THE DARK





PREVIEW

SBK-08 Superbike World Championship

BIKE TO THE FUTURE

Back in the saddle for SBK-08 Superbike World Championship

PUB Black Bean DEV Milestone ETA May 2008 WWW blackbeangames.com



Having spent an extensive amount of time gripping onto the handlebars of a preview version of SBK-08 there's one thing we can tell you for certain: this superbike racer is bi-polar. We can also assure you that this is a good thing.

You see, there's an eternal problem with bike games, a problem that developers have struggled with for years. And that problem is balancing the handling of the motorcycles to appeal to the right audience.

Time and time again bike fans have been forced to choose between

patronisingly simple games or downright sadistic simulations.

But with SBK-08, Milestone seems to have created a racer that strikes the right balance to keep every possible fan of the genre happy. And it's done so by making a game with two faces.

All bike to mine

Jump straight into a quick race and you meet the first personality of SBK-08: the fluffy, playful, arcade kitten. This default setting encourages you to go full pelt – to Hell with realism!

Driver aids take away just enough of the responsibility to allow you to simply enjoy the race, concentrate on nailing the apexes and go as fast as you can.

But flip the handling setting to its harshest simulation mode and SBK-08 turns from good-natured kitty to full on, snarling man-eater.

Suddenly you realize that these machines aren't just bicycles with engines. They are 200bhp-plus, 200mph, flame-spitting monsters that deserve serious respect.

Wind up to higher speed on straights without leaning behind your

Looks like someone is about to taste asphalt



OP52 BOARD OF CLASSIFICATION



SBK-08 has been passed suitable for...

- People who like leather
- Pretty ladies with umbrellas
- Angry commuters
- People with titanium kneecaps



Cover star and two-times world champ Troy Bayliss is your main driver



Don't worry about starting at the back of the grid. Overtaking is easy enough

windscreen and the front of the bike will lift almost unexpectedly from the sheer power coming from the back.

Jam on both sets of brakes when slowing down and you'll be heading the opposite direction.

You don't just have to take into account your speed and position on the circuit, but the weight of your rider on the bike itself. Lean at the



It's best to study tracks before you race them. Well, if you want to win...



All the bikes in this game are licensed, so if you're an SBK fan, 08 is a treat

↓ Keep your distance. One nudge on his back wheel and you're both crashing



↓ Fiddle with the driver assists to find the right difficulty for you



wrong time or apply too much pressure and the poor lad will be flung over the bars.

Other games have included all these features, but somehow SBK-08 makes you feel attached enough to your bike for it to feel intuitive. At least, it does after you've taken countless tumbles...

If neither of these extremes appeals to you, the assistance options can all

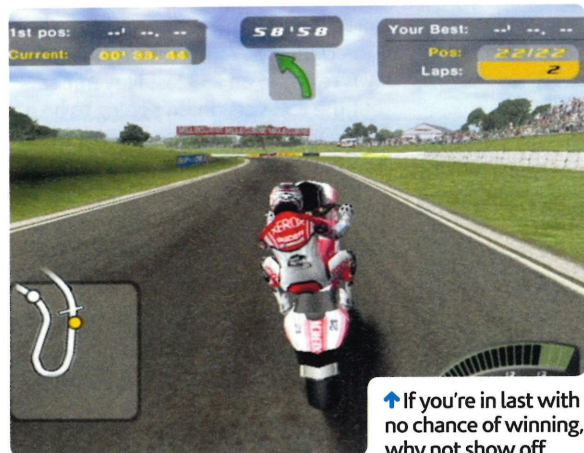
↑ 87mph in second gear: the bikes in SBK-08 are super quick

be customised progressively enough to give the ratio you want between enjoyment and hardcore realism.

And whatever your choice, the satisfying crackle of the engines – rather than a false and anodyne drone – gives a real emphasis to your sense of speed.

Motorcycle diaries

SBK-08 includes all the rider, bike and circuit updates for the latest season – even umbrella-wielding, Lycra-clad lasses who can be unlocked as pictorial rewards. Yay!



↑ If you're in last with no chance of winning, why not show off



↑ The in-bike view is so fast and furious you may well soil your leathers

BRIEF HISTORY

Milestone's biking heritage

1999 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (PC)

Milestone's first foray into superbikes, published by EA to great critical response.

2001 SUPERBIKE2001 (PC)

A thorough, hardcore sim, first to have differing weather conditions.

2005 SCAR (PS2)

Squadra Corse Alfa Romeo was notable for aggressive AI and its driver development system.

2006 SUPER-BIKES: RIDING CHALLENGE (PS2)

An epic game covering nearly every style of sports motorcycling.

2007 SBK-07 (PS2)

Struck a great balance between sim and arcade levels of difficulty, and set the template for SBK-08.

2007 MOTOGP 07 (PS2)

Milestone also made the first (and probably last) Capcom-published MotoGP for PS2.



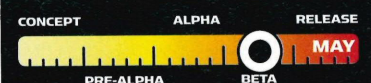
↑ Bomb down the straights to gain position, but keep an eye out for corners

So SBK-08, like SBK-07 before it, looks to be an extensive, authentic representation of a superbike race weekend, fleshed out for longevity with typically devilish challenges.

Our only niggle is that there doesn't seem to be much new here – rather like the event itself, which changes little year on year. Will it still be a winner? We'll see in May. Sean Curnow

HOW COMPLETE?

SBK 08



PREVIEW

Dynasty Warriors: Gundam

HEAVY METAL

Dynasty Warriors: Gundam is what it looks like when developers collide

PUB Koei DEV Koei ETA Summer 2008

Remember Transformers? Great concept, rubbish showing on PS2. What we really wanted from that game was legions of giant robots scrapping it out in an epic battle for the future of the entire universe.

Funny, because that's precisely what Dynasty Warriors: Gundam, a game that fuses the futuristic battling mechas of Namco-Bandai's Gundam franchise with the trademark tactical war formula of Koei's Dynasty Warriors, is all about. Awesome.

Gundam is one of Japan's longest running anime franchises. Based on the concept of warring mecha, it launched



← It's you – and your Mobile Suit – versus the world



↓ There will be a bunch of mechas exclusive to the PS2 version

all the way back in 1979 with the TV series Mobile Suit Gundam.

Strict machine

Since then it's spawned an impressive catalogue of TV shows, movies, manga novels, videogames and merchandise, becoming known for epic battles, tactical action and in-depth scenarios.

Meanwhile, the Dynasty Warriors series spans a massive 18 games and specialises in epic battles, tactical action and in-depth scenarios.

So Dynasty Warriors: Gundam is a match made in mecha heaven. The game will feature two main

campaigns: Official mode and Original mode. Official mode is based on the Universal Century timeline, featuring mecha from Mobile Suit Gundam, MS Zeta Gundam and MS Gundam ZZ.

Original mode uses mecha from Mobile Fighter G Gundam, Mobile Suit Gundam Wing and Turn A Gundam.

If you followed that, clearly you are a Gundam nut and this is the game for you. If not, all you need to know is that Mobile Suits are giant mechs, similar to the Zords in Power Rangers.

Mecha your mind up

After choosing whether to fight for good or evil, you suit up in your chosen mecha (which has fully upgradable slots for new weapons, armours and special abilities) and scrap it out with your enemies.

A Dynasty Warriors: Gundam game was released on PS3 last November, but the PS2 version isn't going to be a straight port. Koei tells us it'll be a new instalment with fresh features.

Packed with new scenarios and plenty of shiny Mobile Suits to equip, DW:G is all set to be the giant robot game we've been craving. Kim Richards



↓ Each mecha has its own specialities and weapons



HOW COMPLETE?
 DYNASTY WARRIORS: GUNDAM
 CONCEPT ALPHA RELEASE
 PRE-ALPHA BETA JUNE

IN THE SLIME LIGHT

Fresh **Ghostbusters** screens ooze out

PUB Vivendi DEV Red Fly Studios ETA October WWW ghostbustersgame.com



It's been more than two decades since the first Ghostbusters movie floated into the box office but we recall the magic of the fearless foursome as if were yesterday.

So it's with great optimism that we look towards Ghostbusters: The Video Game because all the ingredients are here for a classic PS2 title.

The story is being specially written by the movie's screenwriters and stars, Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd, who play Egon and Ray.

They've also convinced the rest of the cast from the films to lend their voices and likenesses too. Yes, even Bill Murray.

You'll play as a rookie ghostbuster who's just joined the team to fight a rampant ghostly peril in New York City in this third-person adventure.

It makes us all excited to see environments being carved up by the streams from the gang's Proton Packs as tables splinter, chairs are flipped through the air, and even the contents

of an enormous buffet table are splattered on the floor.

You'll have to reel the ghosts in like a fisherman; knowing when to pull harder to drag it down or slam it against the wall to soften it up first. Being careful not to cross the streams, though, of course.

YOU'LL PLAY A ROOKIE BUSTER WHO'S JUST JOINED THE TEAM

Details are slim as to who exactly you'll be taking on, but two of the movies' favourite paranormal fiends will definitely make an appearance: Slimer the green ghost and the massive Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man.

Slime to die

The initial confrontation with Slimer takes place as he's tucking into some free grub. He flies through walls –



↑ Feeling frisky? Why not take that chandelier down with a Proton blast?

leaving ectoplasm as he goes – and floats straight at you; knocking you off your feet and covering you in the green stuff. Ick.

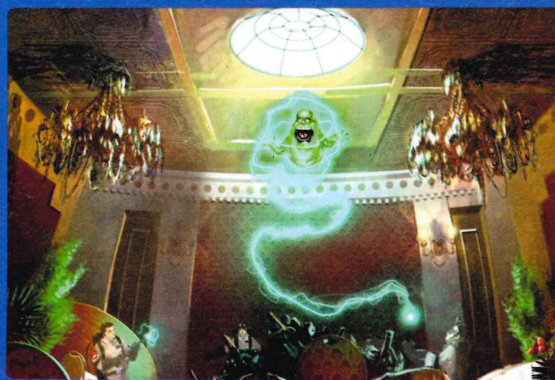
Then there's the colossal Stay Puft Man climbing up a skyscraper toward you. The intense battle takes place as you abseil – face first – down the structure to blast his fat face.

Ghostbusters already looks brilliant and with multiplayer modes aplenty, both co-op and versus, we can't wait to play it. Nathan Irvine

SMASH AND GRAB

Bringing down the house

While hunting spooks with your Proton gun, the interiors of building come apart before your eyes. There's a great bit where you stumble across a Slimer in this fancy-looking dining hall and the décor looks really detailed, but as soon as you fire up your gun, all hell breaks loose. Chandeliers smash into pieces, cakes explode into a sugary mess and the tables get chopped in half by the powerful Proton streams. While capturing ghosts you can literally wreck the place like a house party organised on MySpace.



HOW COMPLETE?

GHOSTBUSTERS





www.granturismoworld.com



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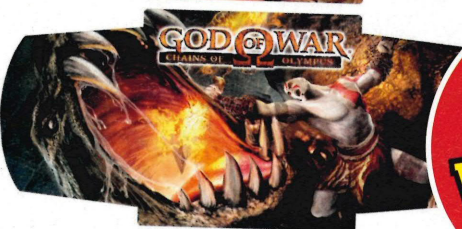
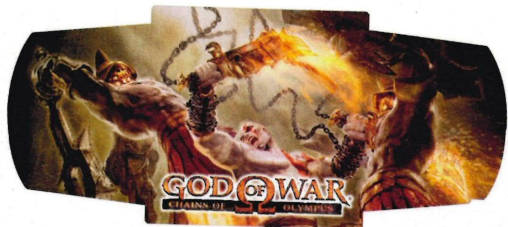


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Ⓐ YOUR LETTERS Ⓞ YOUR REVIEWS ✕ TIPS & SECRETS Ⓞ STUFF

I GOT MY BAGS PACKED BABY

So I've moved flats, and let me tell you, it was not pleasant. I spent a full day loading my worldly goods into the back of my tiny car and doing endless trips back and forth.

It doesn't help that my new pad is up about three flights of stairs... by the day's end, I was tired, broken and covered in bruises. Next time, I'm renting a bungalow.

Moogle muggers

This month, a reader has touched upon an issue close to my heart, and that's Square Enix's endless pimping of the Final Fantasy series and subsequent lack of focus on its other brilliant roleplaying games.

Yes, I love Final Fantasy. But I just wish Squeenix would put a bit more attention into Valkyrie Profile, Chrono Trigger and Vagrant Story.

Other than that, you've been musing on the nature of art and ranting about our demo discs.

We've also heard from one of our oldest readers yet. Turn the page to find out more...

KIM RICHARDS
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
psnation@futurenet.co.uk

WHAT'S GOT YOU TALKING THIS MONTH

CEREBRAL MELTDOWN

GAMING ART

BLOOD BOILING

PASSIONATE RAVING

SERIOUS INTEREST

RAISED EYEBROWS

TOTAL APATHY



SQUARE-ENIX



CANIS CANEMEDIT

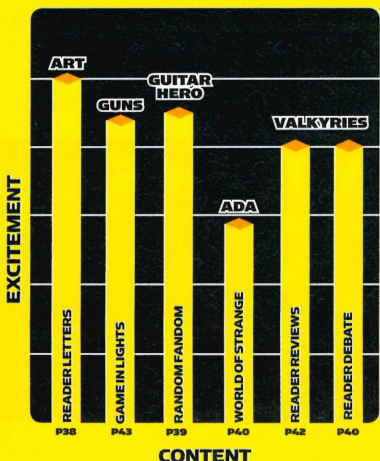


DEMO DISCS



'WAS THIS FLURRY HIDING SOMETHING SINISTER?'
CHRIS OSBORNE P38

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THE PERFECT GAME



So many games are given perfect scores nowadays that it is easy to conclude we are in some kind of 'golden age' of videogames. But was this flurry of (admittedly superb in many cases) games hiding something more sinister?

Looking at the bigger picture – the onslaught of racing games and first-person shooters – I can't help but think that creativity in this industry has become stagnant. Looking at the forthcoming release schedules I see little that will change this trend.

Going back a few years, to the 1980s and 1990s, we saw a succession of revolutionary games; games that defined genres and excited the imagination. It's difficult to articulate just how mindblowing this stuff was back then.

Elite opened up games and gave us a whole galaxy to explore. This was open-ended stuff. Gone was linearity. Tetris was the perfect puzzle game.



Go back a few more years and we have Pitfall, bland-looking today, cinematic back then. Populous made you a god. It all embodied the spirit of an industry in full bloom.

More recently games like Doom and Command & Conquer, Grand Theft Auto and Tomb Raider were innovative and introduced exciting new gaming elements previously unseen. Now they seem done to death.

The hardware we have today offers unlimited scope to developers. The PS3 and PS2 are technical powerhouses compared to what we had before and this should fill me with unbridled excitement.

After all, if the Spectrum could give us games to fuel the imagination then surely today's breed of PlayStations could do the same?

Or are developers running out of ideas? Or is it, more likely, publishers eager to turn a profit who are starving innovation in the belief that another World War 2 shooter will turn an easier buck?

CHRIS OSBORNE, WALES

There certainly were a lot of 10/10 games last year. Tastes differ, of course – we dont all agree with our Mike's worship of all things Metal Gear Solid, for example – but when we're scoring games we look at all sorts of factors such as whether it's innovative, value for money, technically sound.

Last year's flurry of high scores is a reflection of the fact that 2007 was a great year for games. Against the established standard, there were just so many great titles.

We agree that some games do seem to be churned out with no imagination whatsoever, but it's harder for game makers to innovate today than it was in the 1990s because so much has already been done. Is that an excuse? Tell us what you think, everybody!

↑ Metal Gear: a matter of taste

PlayStation 2



↑ Okami was one of 2007's top games but Chris Osborne thinks the industry has run out of steam

ART ATTACK

Regarding the 'Are games art?' debate in issue 95: a central point is that art and the defining of art is so subjective and contextual. **If it looks like art and it sounds like art, if it feels like art... then it is art.**

If just one person truly believes that a pile of bricks is imbued with that special, indefinable quality that raises it above being 'merely' a pile of bricks,

WIN THIS!



This month, all letters published in the main body of this section will receive a PS2 game. The writer of the Star Letter gets three games! So what are you waiting for? Get scribbling!





into the realm of 'art', then who are we to say that they are wrong?

It has been said or suggested that the driving force behind art is emotion – specifically the conscious and purposeful eliciting of such by the creator in the experienter of a piece of art. Games can do this. What more is needed for a game to be called art?

Personally I am inclined to believe that if just one person truly believes a particular game is art... then it is art.

DAN GAY,

KIDDERMINSTER

Thought-provoking stuff, Dan. Thanks.

ART IS LIFE

If a painting or a movie can be 'art' then so can games. I personally don't believe in 'art' the same way other people do. I believe that either everything is 'art' or nothing is. **I can**

↓ **Could Rufus and the Valkyrie clan take on Fran and her Final Fantasy chums? Tom Berkin thinks so!**



↑ **Are games art? Lots of you had an opinion on last month's debate!**

just sit on the floor watching the wall for hours without getting bored

(which means I'm pure zen and a good winner/loser).

Imagine if a blind man is the type who shouts 'hurrah' when he wakes up in the morning because he loves life so much. Everything is art to him. That's what I'm talking about.

JÁKUP FU,

FACEBOOK

Deep, Jákup! And very interesting. We can stare happily at a wall for hours, too – provided that wall is covered by a flat-screen HDTV...

FINAL FRUSTRATION

Oh, Square-Enix. Will your confusing nature never cease? You make Final Fantasy after Final Fantasy. They got stale games ago. So why do you not release a sequel for your deserving spin-offs, such as Valkyrie Profile?

I have never felt more involved in a game then when I was traversing dungeons as Alicia and friends, yet still you think we want to play as blonde-haired orphans from unfortunate planets.

It seems all Final Fantasy ever had to offer was world-saving plots and turn-based combat.

So why make more of them? They were good back in the day but now we want more exotic, more exciting games.

So where is Valkyrie Profile 3 – Hrist? I'm sure the large fanbase for ▶

RANDOM FANDOM

The good, the bad and the just plain weird in the wonderful world of PS2



GUITAR HEROINE

Francesca dressed as Guitar Hero goddess Judy Nails for last Halloween. We think she should wear this all the time. **FRANCESCA ESQUENZAI,** FLORIDA



BANGIN'!

Chris is overcome by Guitar Hero madness and the spirit of the Clash. Punk! **CHRIS JONES,** OXFORD



KING OF CAKE

Cake is beautiful. And it's even more beautiful when it's a Katamari cake. We almost don't want to eat it. Almost. **SPOTTED ON KOTAKU.COM**



TERROR TATT

Gaming tattoos: you either love them or hate them. Hopefully the former, if you've got this Silent Hill 2 design etched on your flesh. **SPOTTED ON KOTAKU.COM**



LARA LOVE

Keen artist Dave sent us this great picture of Tomb Raider's Lara Croft and friend. **DAVE WILKINSON,** STROUD

SHOW US YOURS!

Send your art and photos to Fandom at the address opposite or email your JPEGs to psnation@futurenet.co.uk

Sorry, we can't return any of the stuff you send



DEBATEBOX

Last month we asked you...

SHOULD WE REPLAY PS1 GAMES?

Are you in favour of the old school or the new?

80% YES

Anyone who dares call themselves a gamer needs to learn where it all began.

HELEN MORRIS, MILTON KEYNES

To be honest, everyone should buy a PS1 just so they can play FF VII. It's a legendary game that should be taught in the National Curriculum.

CSTRIFE, GAIA

I have so many PS1-related memories. The T-Rex scene in Tomb Raider, the Zombie Dogs in Resident Evil, winning the Champions league with Swansea in SWOS, the twist in Metal Gear Solid, battling Sephiroth in FF VII... A photo album for the memory, heh?

CHRIS OSBORNE, WALES

20% NO

What's the point? All PS1 games just look so blocky and unbelievably ugly now, it's just far too frustrating to bother.

SAMBREEM, SWINDON

The world is about looking to the future, not dwelling on the past. If you need to look up something about a game

series, just go to Wikipedia or YouTube and watch some footage.

LIAM MAHONEY, MANCHESTER

NEXT MONTH'S DEBATE

GUITAR HERO: DUALSHOCK OR GUITAR PERIPHERAL?

EMAIL PSNATION@FUTURENET.CO.UK OR JOIN IN ON OUR FACEBOOK GROUP (SEE P3 FOR DETAILS)

WORLD OF STRANGE

Bride of Plagus

Ada Wong is a tough gal and demonstrated in Resident Evil 4 that she can hold her own against flesh-eating hordes. But perhaps the Plagus-infested lads aren't after her meat – perhaps they crave companionship and commitment? Well, Drew Gardner at Deviantart.com decided to explore the option of a Zombie Wedding.



Luckily, I bought Primal and really loved it. The storyline and characters are great.

I really cared about Jen and Scree was adorable. So here's to Primal 2, 3 and 4!

JANET GREEN, DARTMOUTH

You, ma'am, have our utmost respect! Thanks for writing in. We're getting all our grannies copies of God of War II for their birthdays, just in case they finally see the light...

roleplaying games can live without Final Fantasy.

TOM BERKIN, DERBYSHIRE

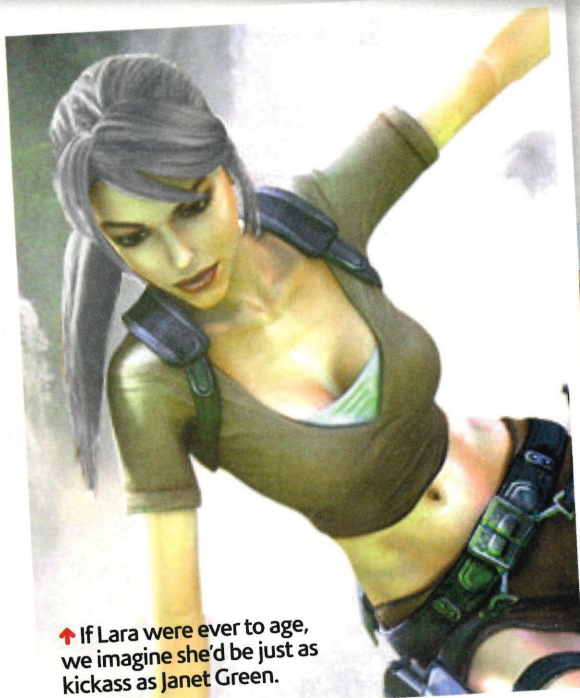
Yes, Final Fantasy is a legendary series, and we're glad it continues apace, but we'd love to see Squeenix pay more attention to their other games, because they're just as strong. Check out our review of Odin Sphere on p78 – it was published by Square-Enix.

STILL PLAYING

Being one of your older readers and a videogames player (I'm 65!) I thought I'd write with some of my views.

My biggest disappointment last year was Tomb Raider Anniversary, which I was looking forward to.

I was getting on fine, but halfway through, I came across the dreaded Centaurs! I tried for two weeks on and off, until it just wasn't fun anymore. I just couldn't get through them. But I love Resident Evil 4 (best game ever).



↑ If Lara were ever to age, we imagine she'd be just as kickass as Janet Green.

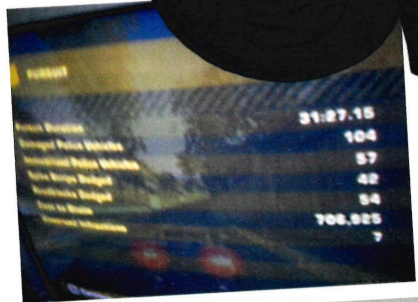
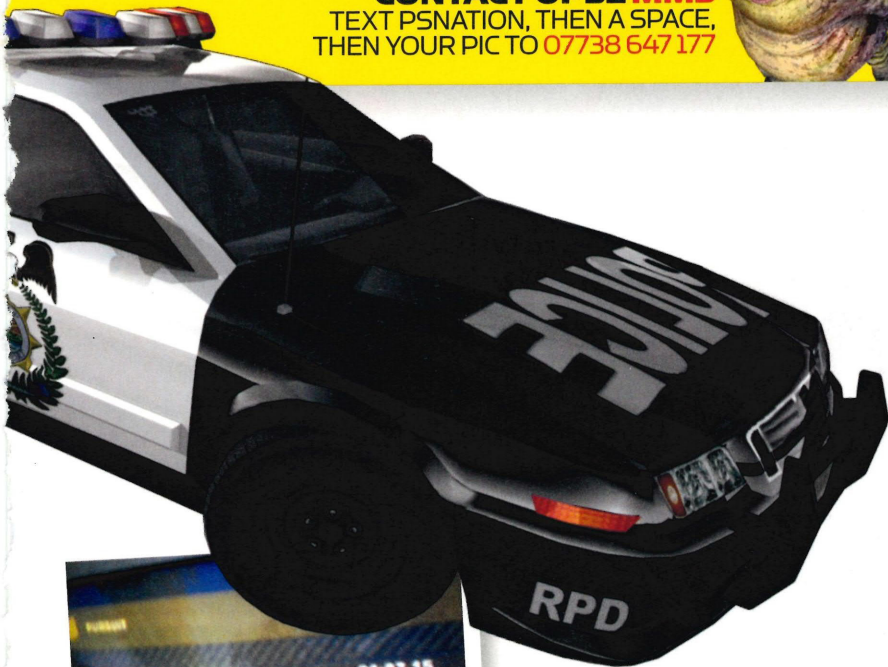
SPEED CHALLENGE

I want see if anyone can beat my score in a cop chase on Need for Speed:



↑ School's out for Jimmy? Chris Miller's got a good idea for a sequel.

CONTACT OPS2 MMS
TEXT PSNATION, THEN A SPACE,
THEN YOUR PIC TO 07738 647 177



← Can you beat Adam Fraser's impressive NFS score?

Most Wanted (picture above). My stats are: Pursuit Duration: 31:27.15 minutes; Damaged Police Vehicles: 104; Immobilised Police Vehicles: 57; Spike Strips Dodged: 42; Roadblocks Dodged: 54; Cost To State: \$706,925; Unserved Infractions: 7.

ADAM FRASER, SURREY

Challenge accepted, Adam. If anyone thinks you can make Adam eat your dust, send in the evidence!

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

I've got a few ideas for a sequel for Canis Canem Edit. Jimmy Hopkins is on his holiday from Bullworth. You get to go around his house and do some tasks for his mum and his stepdad.

When he goes back to Bullworth Academy, there could be a new kid who is trying to get Pete into trouble. Then Gary returns and tries to kill Jimmy. Maybe Jimmy and others could drive cars?

CHRIS MILLER, ADDRESS SUPPLIED

Great ideas, Chris, but the idea of Gary trying to kill Jimmy is a bit extreme! How about expressing distaste for his jumper collection instead?

DEMO DISAPPOINTS

When are we going to get some decent games on the demo disc, instead of the crap you put on it?

I always thought that game demos were supposed to be for the new games that are in production, not

games that are three years old. Take issue 95. You say you have played Ferrari Challenge so why do we get the demo for the game maybe a month later or when the game is already in the shops?

KR HAYES, SCOTLAND

The simple fact is that publishers are making fewer PS2 demos because it isn't their lead development platform anymore. As a result, there aren't many new ones for us to put on the disc, much as we'd love to.

And although we chase them about it, unfortunately we do rely on the publishers to provide the demos.

But the PS2 has an amazing heritage of fantastic games, and we know many readers won't have played every single one of them. So we try to include a choice from everything on the market, new and classic, to help you choose what game to buy next.

As for Ferrari Challenge, the version we played for our preview was very early and the publisher simply wasn't ready to put a demo on the disc for that issue.

↓ Our demo discs reflect the full range of PS2 games that you could buy



PLAYSTATION PROFILE



MATHEW JONES IS...



ANGRY AT JOHN CENA FOR COSTING HIM £20!

BIRTH DATE 26/12/86
HOMETOWN CAERPHILLY, WALES
FIRST GAME SUPER MARIO BROS

MY FRIENDS



LU



CLASH

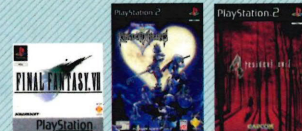


PAUL



STEPHEN

FAVE GAMES



FINAL FANTASY VII **KINGDOM HEARTS** **RESIDENT EVIL 4**

FAVE CHARACTERS



GUYBRUSH THREEPWOOD (ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND) **ULTROS** (FINAL FANTASY VI) **MILLENNIA** (GRANDIA 2)

WHAT I'M PLAYING NOW



RATCHET & CLANK: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

Amazing graphics and gameplay, plenty of vibrant worlds, variety of cool characters and extras to unlock. Plus it's rare to find great comedy in a game like this one!

MY RATING



MY LOCAL GAME SHOP

GAMESTATION, CAERPHILLY



GAME PET

Bobby Corwen, the Chocobo from Final Fantasy IX.



MI TUNES

WHAT I LISTEN TO WHEN I'M GAMING



SONIC FIRESTORM (DRAGONFORCE)

MY BEST MOMENT IN A GAME...

DEFEATING ULTIMECIA IN FF VIII



I struggled for weeks against her. I can't explain the feeling of joy, I was dancing around the room for the next 30 minutes!

MY LIFE

INTERESTS WRITING, RETRO CARTOONS, ANIME

MUSIC MEATLOAF, DRAGONFORCE, NARUTO AND BLEACH SOUNDTRACKS!

FILMS HEART & SOULS, STAND BY ME, THREE NINJAS, AMERICAN HISTORY X, NINJA SCROLL, MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND.

BOOKS/COMICS ALEX RIDER, STEPHEN KING, NARUTO MANGA.

GAME CHARACTER MOST LIKE ME...

ROCK LEE FROM NARUTO

I used to have the same hairdo as him. We're both determined, hyper and random at times and we can both do the Forbidden Lotus move. Honest.



SEE YOURSELF HERE!

Want to be our featured reader in a future issue? Just email psnation@futurenet.co.uk with your name and age and we'll get in touch if you're picked for a profile!



READER REVIEWS



The writer of the star review gets a top PS2 game! Email psnation@futurenet.co.uk

Has a game got you in a happy haze, or a ranting rage? Review it, send it in!

VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

REVIEWED BY **TOM BERKIN, DERBYSHIRE**
 WE GAVE IT 8/10 IN OPS2 #89

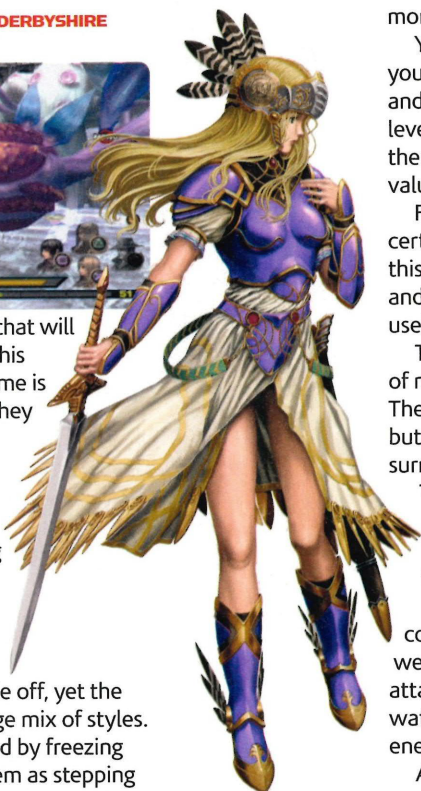


The first thing that will hit you about this spectacular game is the graphics. They stun and distract you.

Monsters look like monsters. Heroes look like heroes. Dogs look like dogs. The shocking detail put into the graphics simply takes your breath away.

The game is 2D, which puts most people off, yet the battles are 3D. A strange mix of styles.

You traverse the land by freezing monsters and using them as stepping stones to get to higher ledges, which is not often required but rewards you.



The inclusion of the Einherjar from the previous game is good; you have more choice on what to do with them.

You can just let them sit there in your team, doing nothing with them and leaving them at their starting level. Or you can use them and train them, effectively keeping them as a valued member.

Finally you can train them to a certain level and free them. If you do this you are rewarded with exclusive and rare items, which are certainly useful against the game's bosses.

The battles themselves are a hybrid of real-time and turn-based combat. The enemies only move when you do, but they are clever little boys and will surround you and destroy you.

This means that you will need to use the dynamic fighting system, assigning a character to each of the four DualShock buttons.

If you time your attacks correctly you can unleash certain weapons' Soul Break attacks. These attacks are massively satisfying to watch and pull off and send your enemy reeling.

Add this amazing gameplay and graphics to a solid plot which deals with mortal emotions and instincts,

as well as immortal ones, to get one great game. This is one game that never bores.

You will happily play around with Alicia and chums until your social life has been destroyed and space travel is discovered.

10/10

DEVIL MAY CRY

REVIEWED BY **CRAIG MARLER, VIA EMAIL**
 WE GAVE IT 9/10 IN OPS2 #14

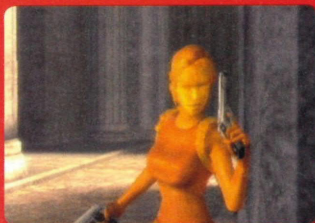


Devil May Cry is about a man called Dante. He gets a visit from a mysterious woman, and then she takes him to the underworld to find about the truth behind his powers.

This is an amazing game because it takes you from the real world to this strange underworld place full of

READER SECRETS

Check out these Easter Eggs and secrets sent in by fellow readers



UNLOCK LARA'S GOLDEN OUTFIT IN TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY

Fancy giving your Tomb Raiding the Midas touch? Collect all the relics from the Greece Level.

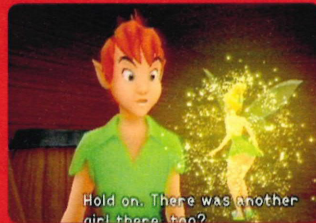
KATHY WALMSLEY, BIDDENHAM



UNLOCK TIRAWA IN SHADHEARTS: FROM THE NEW WORLD

Max out all of Shania's spirit gauges and visit The Gate. Then head to Moana Village to unlock Garvoy Valley, when Tirawa is hiding at the Sun Shrine.

TOM MULLAND, CHELTENHAM



UNLOCK PETER PAN SUMMON IN KINGDOM HEARTS II

To add the boy who never grew up to your summons list, go to the Ship Graveyard at Port Royal during the second visit. To find Stich, go to the hallway leading to the computer room in Hollow Bastion, after you've achieved your master form.

SARAH BENNETT, SCOTLAND



SEND US YOURS

We want your PS2 Easter Eggs. Email psnation@futurenet.co.uk with your secret, how you found it, and a pic if you can!

CONTACT OPS2 SMS
TEXT PSNATION, THEN A SPACE,
THEN YOUR MESSAGE TO 87474



creatures that are out to kill you. It is full of puzzling puzzles and plenty of chances for you to use your arsenal of weapons. The weapons include: Dante's trusty Pistols, a powerful shotgun, some more guns and a very powerful sword.

They become very useful when the time is right. It is one of those games that you just can't stop playing because you want to see what is behind then next door.

Sure, it is quite an old game but that is the start of the brilliant Devil May Cry series.

Devil May Cry has a dose of Tomb Raider, some Resident Evil and some very cool effects. That makes the game pretty successful.

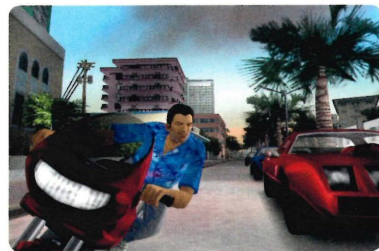
The graphics of the environment around you are brilliant, the detail of the guns and everything looks like they are real. The story is very well done, and it isn't that complicated.

That is why Devil May Cry is one of the best games on PS2 today. I recommend that you find your old copy of the game from under your bed, or you go and buy yourself a copy of the game. Then you can find out how great this game is.

10/10

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

REVIEWED BY **RICHARD DODDS**,
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
WE GAVE IT 8/10 IN OPS2 #84



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories is a great PSP to PS2 conversion because it is basically a Vice City update with better graphics.

Rockstar has done it again with the great music and the vibe of the 1980s is captured perfectly.

When I'm driving round Vice City set in 1984, I go past the old haunts of the last GTA: Vice City game and it's so cool.

I love the new sunsets, sunrises and the little helicopter. It is a vast improvement in GTA: Vice City Stories, but they should have kept in the car parks, especially the one that

goes up in a spiral: that was a hoot to go up in a golf cart.

9/10

SEGA MEGADRIVE COLLECTION

REVIEWED BY **CHRIS OSBOURNE**, VIA EMAIL
WE GAVE IT 8/10 IN OPS2 #80



I must confess to disliking retro collections. Overpriced and undernourished, they generally serve to remind us how badly games from yesteryear have aged.

This compilation goes against the grain. On booting up the disc there is a sense that Sega have taken their time in presenting this snapshot of the 16-bit Megadrive/Genesis console with care.

The menus are wonderful; there is plenty of DVD-style bonus material and even a generous helping of hidden games to unlock to go with the 27 initially on offer.

And as far as the games are concerned it's surprising how well they hold up. Obvious selections such as Sonic, Golden Axe and Ecco the Dolphin prove that Sega were undeniably at a creative high during this period.

Little known gems such as Ristar and Kid Chameleon serve to reinforce this view.

There are clinkers of course. Virtua Fighter 2 could never be recreated on the Megadrive and its inclusion here is a painful reminder. Some will also feel aggrieved that key games from this period (Streets of Rage and Toejam & Earl amongst others) have been omitted.

Overall, at £10-£15 this represents superb value for money.

8/10

WRITE FOR OPS2!

Say why you love or hate a PS2 game in no more than 250 words. Give it a score out of 10 and email the review to psnation@futurenet.co.uk (note, reviews will be edited before printing).

YOUR GAME IN LIGHTS!

Got a great idea for a game? Share it with the world here!

RATCHET & CLANK AND JAK & DAXTER

DESIGNER

NIALL FINAN, IRELAND

THE PITCH

Ratchet has just returned to the Phoenix to find Qwark has taken it over. Qwark flees, leading Ratchet and Clank to a moving planet. While chasing their nemesis, the dynamic duo bump into Jak and Daxter, who are fleeing from Jak's evil father. These enigmatic heroes team up for their biggest battle yet!



OPS2 VERDICT

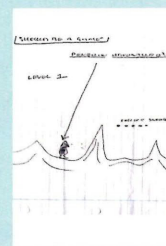
We are very excited at the idea of four of the most kick-ass platforming heroes getting together for some solid action. Will they be able to swap partners? Either way, it's a win!

CHANCE OF **R&C&J&D** BEING THE NUMBER-ONE GAME AT CHRISTMAS...

SLIM **REAL**

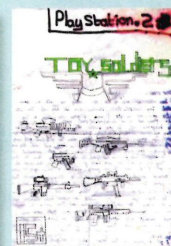
DEAL OR NO DEAL? DEAL!*

BEST OF THE REST



PENGUIN ADVENTURES
PEN, CHORLEY

Collect snowballs, avoid seals!



TOY SOLDIERS
CASEY RAMSDEN, CREWE

Fight in a war of devastating proportions!



FUR FIGHTERS 2: FRIEND OR FOE
CURTIS FOWKES, DEVON

Much needed sequel to the frag-tastic Fur Fighters.

SEE YOURSELF HERE

Post your pictures and game ideas to Your Game In Lights, OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW or email psnation@futurenet.co.uk

*R&C&J&D doesn't really get a publishing deal, but Niall does get a framed copy of our design for his game's box art



THE BRAINDRAIN

It's draining on your brain; get to the end, win some prizes!

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



X There's only one difference, but it's subtle! Text **OPS2SPOT** then a single space followed by your name and answers to **87474**



ANDY'S CRAP DRAWING OF THE MONTH

★ The technical mastery! The brilliant penmanship! But who is it that our Andy has drawn? Figure out who this PS2 character is, and tell us! You need to answer this question and six others to enter the Star prize draw. See below for complete details.



NAME THOSE GAMES

★ They're games with no names! Do you know what the real names are? This is one of the seven star prize questions. See below for details on how to enter.



PS2 MATCH MAKER

★ Match the character to the game. This is one of the seven star prize questions. See below for details on how to enter.



MULTIPLE CHOICE

□ Answer the three questions and text **OPS2CHOICE** then a single space followed by your name and answers to **87474**

- Which game features pro golfer Tiger Woods?
A Everybody's Golf B Tiger Woods 07 C King of Clubs
- Which game is called Hot Shots Golf in Japan?
A Everybody's Golf B Tiger Woods 07 C King of Clubs
- Which game is based around crazy golf?
A Everybody's Golf B Tiger Woods 07 C King of Clubs

OTHER PRIZES

To win one of the four single-question prize bundles, match the prize on the right-hand page to the PlayStation symbol on the question and follow the instructions given to enter by text or email.

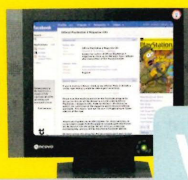
All texts charged at 25p plus your standard network tariff rate
Closing date: 23 April 2008
For full competition rules and text terms and conditions, see p111

HOW TO ENTER

STAR PRIZE

For your chance to win the star prize, you must answer ALL SEVEN questions that are marked with a **★**. To enter by SMS, text **OPS2STAR**, then a space, then your name and answers to 87474. Or email your answers to psnation@futurenet.co.uk with **OPS2STAR** as the subject.





VIDEOGAME MATHS



Figure out the numbers, do the maths and send us the answer to the sum. This is one of the seven Star Prize questions! See below left for full entry details.

The number of games in the OPS2 Hall of Fame	The number of prize bundles here (including the Star Prize)	Silent Hill: The Room	The number of demos on this month's OPS2 demo disc	TOTAL
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
+	×	÷	=	<input type="text"/>

WORD FINDER



Answer the questions, decipher the game-related anagram highlighted in red and that's the answer. A star prize question: see below for entry details.

- Japanese mecha shooter: ... of the Enders
- Lara Croft enjoys raiding these
- Trippy rhythm-action shooter
- Crash Bandicoot's friend, a floating voodoo mask

WHO'S YA BADDIE?



They all look nasty, but only one of them is an actual agent of evilitude. Tell us which one. Text **OPS2BADDIE** then a space, then your name and A, B or C to **87474**

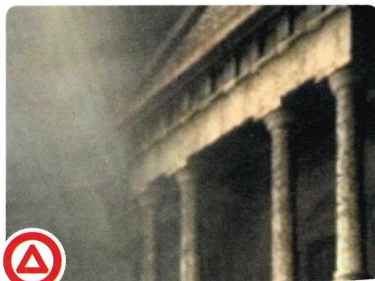


IMAGE ZOOM

Here's a little bit of scenery from a very popular game. Recognise it? Then text **OPS2ZOOM** then a single space followed by your name and answer to **87474**

VIDEOGAME PICTO-PUZZLE



These pictures are clues to the name of a game. But what is it? This is one of the seven star prize questions! See opposite for details of how to enter.



PRIVATE PROPERTY



This has turned up in Lost and Found. Do you know who it belongs to? This is a Star Prize question. See left for entry details.



Please return to...?

WIN ALL THIS! THE PRIZES

Match the question symbols to the prizes, and you could win all this!



AWESOME GTA: SAN ANDREAS PRIZES!

You must enter all seven Star Prize question to be in with a chance to win the Star Prize which comprises a Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas Official Soundtrack eight-CD box set; giant GTA: San Andreas stickers; GTA phone strap

PRIZE BUNDLE #01

Transformers Season 2 DVD boxset; Ghost Rider game; OPS2 Magazine T-shirt



Email your answer to psnation@futurenet.co.uk Subject line OPS2SPOT

PRIZE BUNDLE #02

Scarface and Incredible Hulk pen set; Eragon fountain pen; King Kong game; Let's Make a Soccer Team game



Email your answer to psnation@futurenet.co.uk Subject line OPS2CHOICE

PRIZE BUNDLE #03

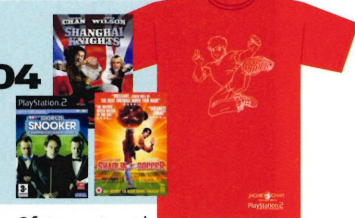
Rogue Galaxy art book; Rogue Galaxy game; Shadowhearts poster; Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga 2 poster



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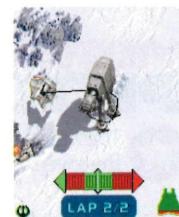
To join, text **OPSM2 to 62344**. This month our choice is Star Wars – The Empire Strikes Back, a recreation of

the classic film in minigame compendium form.

Our friends at Mad4Games told us: "You can sense a genuine love for the source material here, with some superb isometric graphics and the action replicated in exacting detail."

"The core of the game involves on-foot combat but you also dodge asteroids in the Millennium Falcon and take down AT-ATs with your Snowspeeder's tow cables."

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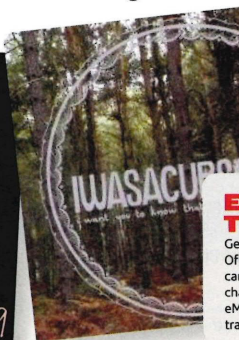
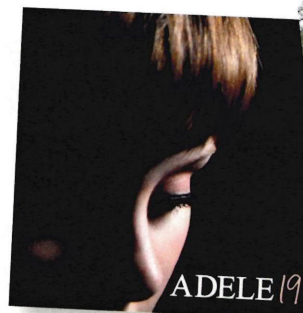
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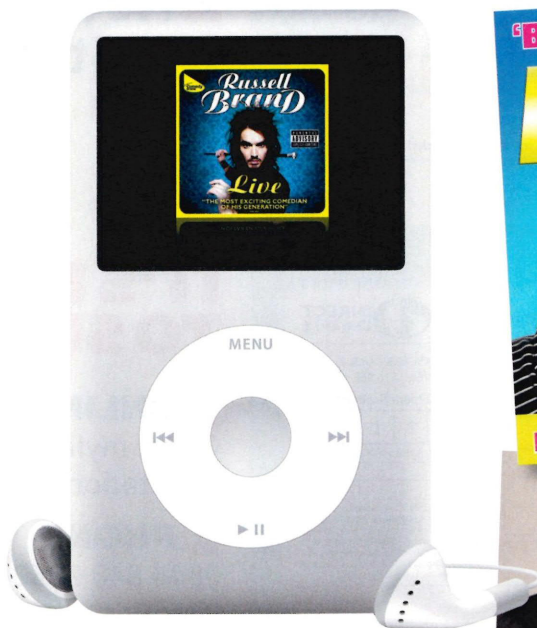
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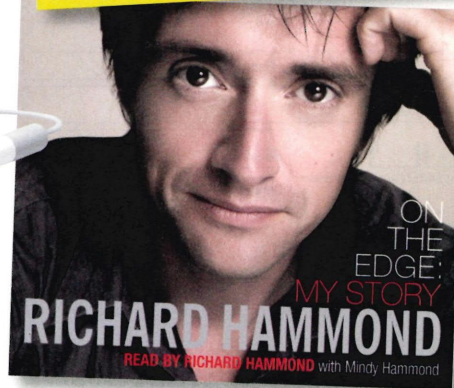
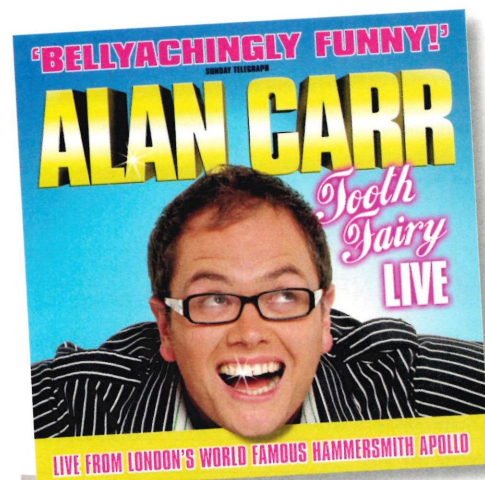
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THE LEVEL

We celebrate a classic sequence in **Viewtiful Joe**

THE STORY SO FAR...

During a date at the movies, Joe's gal Silvia is snatched into the screen by the film's bad guy! To rescue her Joe enters Movieland, becoming the superhuman Viewtiful Joe. We join him as he searches offshore for his lost love...



↑ The level, called '2,000,000 Leagues Under the Sea' starts with Viewtiful Joe taking to the skies in his Sixmachine. It is soon attacked by bats.



↑ Mixing up the slow and normal attacks with clever use of bullets and bombs Joe proves he's a hero in the air as well as on the ground.



↑ Suddenly the skies empty, but only for mere seconds: soon, the shape of a harrier jump jet appears from the clouds!



↑ Once on solid ground Joe unleashes his unstoppable punching power on the Movieland bad guys, first dodging then countering with slow attacks.



↑ Particularly tricky are the Cowboy Robots that fire six-shooters, but by slowing down the film Joe can smack the bullets right back at them.



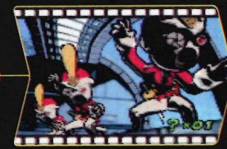
↑ Using the Zoom power, Joe can execute a hugely powerful spinning kick on a couple of power points to access a power-up.



↑ As well as combat robots, Joe must find a way around floating sentry points that shoot out damaging electricity bolts.



↑ Joker despatched, Joe uses his slow attack on a giant fruit machine. He gets three Viewtiful symbols! The jackpot: a key card for the security system.



↑ Next he faces blade-wielding guards, capable of lightning-quick strikes that are very hard to dodge and counter.



↑ The number of assailants and threats can be overwhelming if Joe doesn't use his speed and agility to get out of trouble.



↑ When things get too tricky, especially when the land mines come into play, Joe uses his Mach speed to zip through the level.



↑ Of course, Joe can't let this fishy plan be completed, so he flies into action, pounding Gran Bruce with Red Hot One Hundred punches.



↑ Joe has the upper hand on dry land but as the hangar fills with water, Bruce becomes quicker and strikes back at Joe.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE LEVEL AND WE'LL FEATURE THE WINNER! **TEXT 'LEVEL' THEN A SPACE, THEN THE KEYWORD TO 87474**



TEXT HOMIN

Siberia from Alien Hominid



TEXT WARLORD

The Keep from Onimusha: Warlords



TEXT TOMB

Midas' Palace from Tomb Raider

See p111 for text charges and full terms and conditions. Lines close 23 April 2008. You can also vote for your favourite level by email to psnation@futurenet.co.uk (put LEVEL in the subject line).



↑ The next threat comes from heat-seeking missiles: Joe sends them back where they came from with a short blast from the Sixmachine's guns.



↑ Jet-board riders with rocket launchers try to blast Joe from the sky, but by slowing down time he dodges their fire and offers a retort.



↑ Using the superior speed of the Sixmachine, Joe is able to out-manoeuvre the harrier and inflict enough damage to clear it from the skies.



↑ Joe's time in the sky comes to an abrupt end as he's sent tumbling towards the sea! But what's this? He falls into an open hatch of an underwater base!



↑ Joe discovers a remote control that operates a floating platform. He lowers the platform onto a door switch, allowing him to move onto the next stage.



↑ Using the slow counter-attack, Joe can build up a huge combo and dispense with groups of robots in a slow-mo orgy of battering.



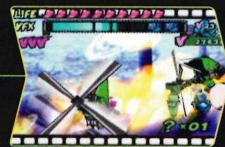
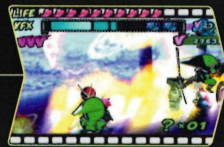
↑ Each area has valuable V tokens that Joe can collect using his superhuman speed and agility – it's like he's dancing in mid air.



↑ The action steps up a gear as a Joker comes into play, crackling with menace and electricity bolts!



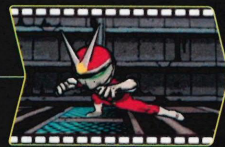
↑ Joe mixes up the attacks, using all his powers – Zoom attacks are particularly useful against the floating threats.



↑ Slugging bombs back at their owners is a particularly satisfying and effective way of countering attacks.



↑ Finally past the security, Joe makes his way to a hung submarine hangar only to be confronted by the Aquatic Terror, Gran Bruce!



↑ Bruce divulges that Joe's girlfriend is needed for his dastardly plot to escape Movieland and enter reality with the purpose of ruling the universe.



↑ By avoiding Bruce's Jaw and upping the intensity of his attacks, Joe is eventually victorious, sending the shark to a watery grave.



↑ But Joe's work is still not over. The damsel still needs rescuing, so our brave hero hops on board a sub that'll take him to the heart of enemy operations...



THE PS2 GAMES YOU SHOULD OWN #08

If you like your vampires twisted, brooding and intelligent, **Legacy of Kain: Defiance** is a bloody marvel

KNOW THIS



Publisher
Eidos
Developer
Crystal Dynamics
Genre
Adventure
Score
8/10 OPS2#41

WE SAID...
'Elegantly honed action and a dramatic, majestic story.'

NOW WE SAY...
An intricate adventure that's as gory as it is full of story

There might be something wrong with us, but we love vampires. Not in a wrong way, mind. We don't hang around street corners waiting for Nosferatu to crawl by in his coffin-shaped low-rider, we just love the concept.

From the Baroque blood-suckers of Castlevania to the nubile, Nazi-bashing night-walkers of BloodRayne – if it drinks blood, we're all over it.

But it's the Legacy of Kain series that is the undisputed king of vampiric gaming. Mind you, its vampires aren't the ruffled, undead dandies of an Anne Rice novel.

No, these are creatures twisted by their immortality, so far removed from their humanity that they cannot remember the sound of children's laughter or the cost of a loaf of bread.

Mortals are their cattle, fate is their playground, and they're more likely to be found spouting forth about the ethics of free will than they are terrorising slack-jawed country folk.

The Legacy of Kain series revolves around two such vampires: Kain, the vampire responsible for destroying the world of Nosgoth and rebuilding it in

his image; and Raziel, his renegade lieutenant. To further complicate things, Raziel isn't strictly a vampire.

Abandoned by his master Kain to languish in the abyss of the Elder God for millennia, he was transformed by the ancient deity into a tool of vengeance, a demonic eater of souls.

Love and fate

What marks out Defiance as a must-buy is the fact that, for the first time, mutual enemies Raziel and Kain are both playable. The story switches between their twin quests to discover which one of them is the genuine vampire messiah.

A key improvement in Defiance is its combat. In the previous Legacy of Kain games, combat was a badly implemented distraction that cropped up between the puzzle solving.

Enemies would come at Raziel one by one and his options for dispatching them were quite limited.

Here, the balance between puzzles and combat is reversed, making for a faster, more accessible game.

Although the combat isn't as nuanced as Devil May Cry, say, it still has its own quirks and peculiar thrills, such as the way Raziel's spectral sword, the Soul Reaver, literally tears the souls out of his foes, or how Kain



↑ If you're looking for traditional Gothic vampires, Defiance will come as a shock



↑ Once a vampire like Kain, Raziel has become a vengeful, soul-eating wraith

↓ The game's two leads each wield a version of the Soul Reaver sword



can telekinetically throw his enemies off precipices or onto waiting spikes.

Both Kain and Raziel's versions of the Soul Reaver can be imbued with elemental (fire, air) and abstract (time, dimension) properties, which have a number of clever uses within and outside combat.

Once equipped with the Water Reaver, for example, Raziel can not only freeze enemies solid but also transmute waterfalls into climbable ice statues to aid him in solving the game's many environmental puzzles.

As for the story – well, we love the Legacy of Kain series to bits, but even we had to read up on its intricate plot before we started to write this.

Revolving around fate, the price of immortality, time travel and the paradoxes it can create – the complex, intelligent story is the highlight of the series. Really, how many other games feature a vampire protagonist who travels back in time to kill his former human self? It's mind-boggling stuff.

Mighty bitey

It's also rather unfair of us to simply recommend Defiance as a PS2 Game You Should Own, because in order to understand what the heck is going on and thus be



↑ Crystal Dynamics managed to make vampires the *least* scary beasts

TOP FACT

The voice of vampire Janos Audron is provided by René Auberjonois, better known to trekkies as Chief of Security Odo in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.

3 REASONS TO OWN IT

Stick your neck out



01

YOU'RE A VAMPIRE

Any game in which you can telekinetically leech blood out of hapless humans gets our vote.



02

IT'S GOTTA LOTTA PLOT

Although Defiance is light on reading compared to past games, there's a lot of plot-revealing dialogue.



03

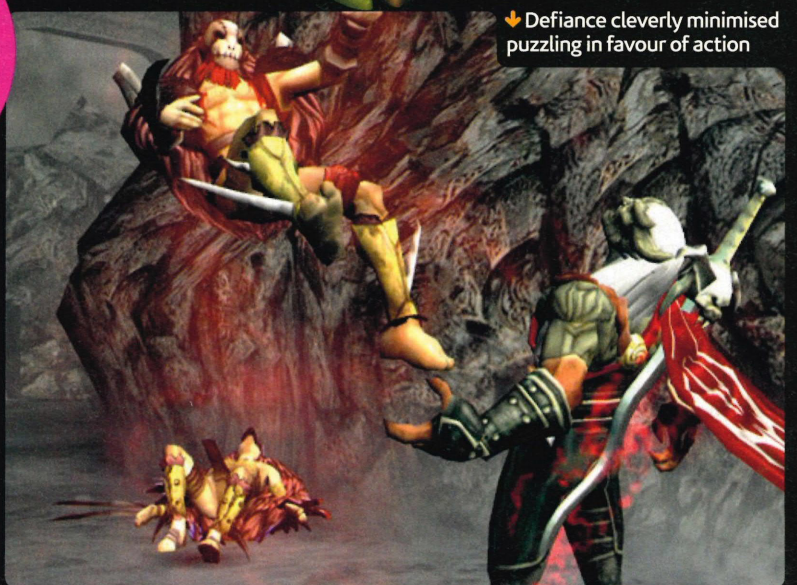
TELEKINETIC COMBAT

Levitating enemies with your mind before pulling them onto your spectral sword? Yes please!

as fully invested in the protagonists as you should be, you need to begin the tale with Soul Reaver or Blood Omen on PS1. You wouldn't start The Lord of the Rings trilogy by reading Return of the King, would you?

But if you're seeking an underrated, classic series to get your teeth into, you've just found it. Mike Sterry

↓ Defiance cleverly minimised puzzling in favour of action



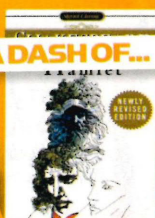
IN THE MIX

The ingredients of horror for LoK: Defiance



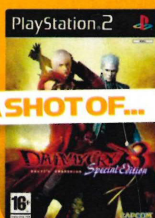
AS PLATTER OF...

...the high production values of God of War



ADASH OF...

...the fatalist musings of Shakespeare's Hamlet



ASHOT OF...

...the multi-tiered combat of Devil May Cry 3



Kratos

God of War, 2005

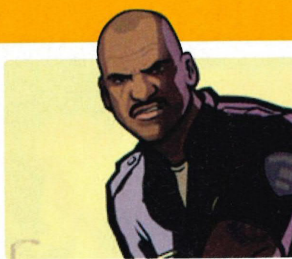
Scientists say stress can lead to premature baldness. Well, it's clear Kratos' childhood wasn't full of puppies, sleigh-rides and playing in the leaves on crisp autumn days.



Hakha

Killzone, 2004

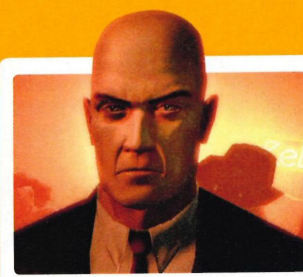
Hakha, like all Helghast, was born covered in hair, but was ritually shaved during puberty.



Officer Tenpenny

GTA: San Andreas, 2004

The original character design gave this cop a giant-sized rainbow afro and Elton John sunglasses, but it didn't sit well with QA testers.



Agent 47

Hitman: Blood Money, 2006

When we lose our locks, we want to be just like 47: a cucumber-cool customer who uses his assassinating monies to get all the scalp massages he wants.



Jinpachi

Tekken 5, 2005

If you're in danger of losing your hair but your facial hair is still functioning, why not grow a badass 'tache to distract people? That's what Jinpachi did.



Baraka

Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks, 2005

Baraka lost his hair when he forgot to take his wrist-blades off before joining in the YMCA dance.

GREAT PS2 BA

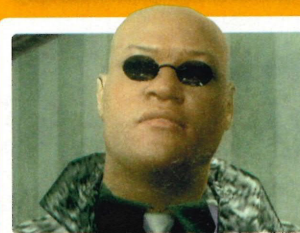
Our shocking exposé of the games depict the follicularly



Kermit the Frog

Muppets Party Cruise, 2004

As a puppet, Kermit is actually covered in a fine, downy fuzz. But technically, Kermit is bald. Just don't think about the human fist writhing around in his skull.



Morpheus

The Matrix: Path of Neo, 2005

Warning: side effects of the red pill may include: nausea, hair loss, speaking cod-philosophy that stoners think is 'deep'.

We were delighted to discover how many bald protagonists there are in PS2 games. Skull-naked, depilated, shaven, glabrous, unhirsute: the bald brethren of the PS2 are numerous indeed.

But as we compiled our list of PS2's most notable shiny-heads we uncovered something shocking. It seems that for the most part our hairless heroes are, well, a little bloodthirsty, deprived or just outright nutjobs.

Now, videogames have never been known for offering the most tactful representations of gender, race or religious belief, but this a tragic new low.

The bald and the beautiful

When Sam Fisher disguises himself as a terrorist in Splinter Cell: Double Agent, what does he do? He shaves his hair off. When a criminal cabal develops a genetically perfect assassin, what do they get? The bald Agent 47. It's clear that for PS2 developers, 'bald' is a byword for 'psycho'.



Jimmy Hopkins

Canis Canem Edit, 2006

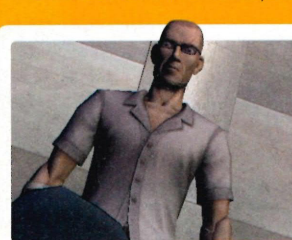
With no hair, you don't need shampoo: to get clean, Jimmy stands naked in the rain.



Homer Simpson

The Simpsons Game, 2007

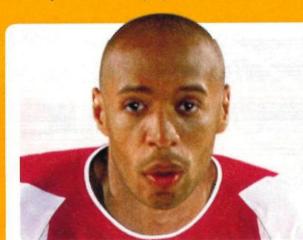
Homer isn't entirely bald, what with those two spindly hairs. But animators wish he was: they lose three of their team to exhaustion every episode because of them.



John Vattic

Second Sight, 2004

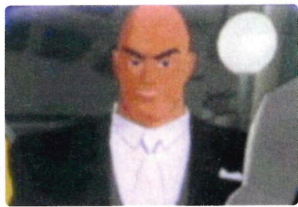
John was forcibly shaved when he was indoctrinated into a secret government telekinesis project. If you saw what the feds did to his nethers, you'd be sick for a week.



Thierry Henry

PES 2008, 2007

One of our favourite hairless icons. If only he'd return the severed ear that we posted to him, we could stop bleeding.



Lex Luthor

Superman: Shadow of Apokolips, 2002

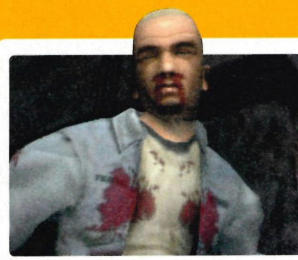
The only thing we remember about this game is the glorious debut of the baddie's beautiful bald head.



Bitores Mendez

Resident Evil 4, 2005

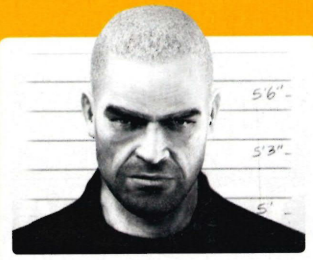
Bitores is growing his beard to a length where he can wrap it around his skull like a turban.



James Earl Cash

Manhunt, 2003

Used to have a full head of hair, but it divorced him in 1997, citing musical differences. James is pretty bitter about it, and that's why he's a bit grumpy.



Sam Fisher

Splinter Cell: Double Agent, 2006

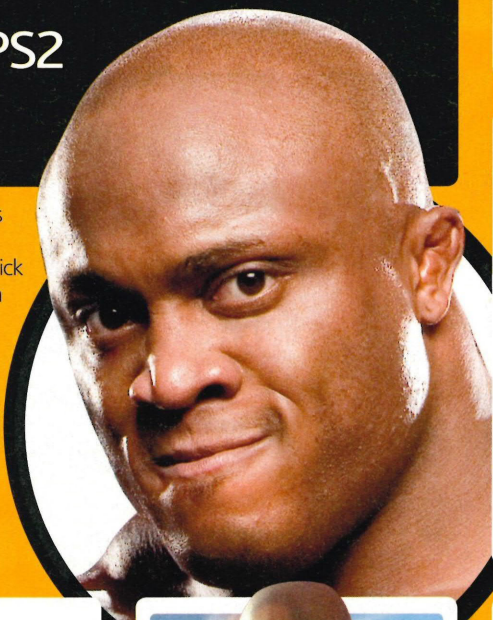
Sam thinks of his shaved head as a solar panel for a sex machine. Sadly, he spends most of his time creeping around in the dark.

EST LDIES

unfair way PS2 challenged

So taken are we by this new cause, we're writing our local MP. He's got a thick head of hair, so we reckon he must be a good guy...

Did we forget to include your favourite PS2 baldie? Well, drop us an email at psnation@futurenet.co.uk and tell us all about him! Or her!



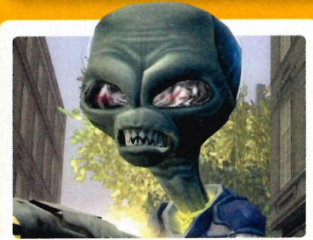
ONE LUMP OR TWO?



Bib Fortuna

Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy, 2006

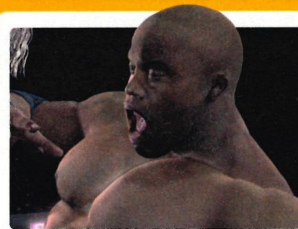
Imagine if you went bald not only on the top of your head, but on the entire length of your tentacle too? Poor Bib.



Crypto

Destroy All Humans!, 2005

Lending credence to the myth of bald men being unstopably virile is Crypto here, whose sexual appetite is only matched by the sunbeams bouncing of his bonce.



Bobby Lashley

WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2008, 2007

Don't get him angry, children, or the last thing you'll see in Bobby's reflective skull is your own screaming face.



Generic scientist

Half-Life, 2001

Baldness and a career in science go well together. If you need to write down a formula in a hurry, you can use a pen and a mirror.



Voldo

Soul Calibur III, 2005

When you're slathered in baby oil to help get your gimp suit on, the oil can play havoc with your hair. So Voldo cut it off. Possibly with those shears he's wearing.



Sergeant Cortez

Timesplitters: Future Perfect, 2005

The Terminator films got it wrong: after a bout of time travel, not only do you wake up without clothes, but without hair as well.



HOT HEADED!

Johnny Blaze

Ghost Rider, 2007

Pouring petrol on your head and lighting it may seem like a quick, easy method of hair removal. But it also removes flesh and eyes.



A worm

Worms Forts Under Siege, 2004

Look, we have to assign Worms' worms human attributes such as baldness, otherwise our mind wanders and we start imagining them as something unprintable.



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 THUG-O-METER

There are plenty of rough types on PS2. And here, from slob to yob, is our run-down of who'd beat whom in a fight. . .

START
HERE

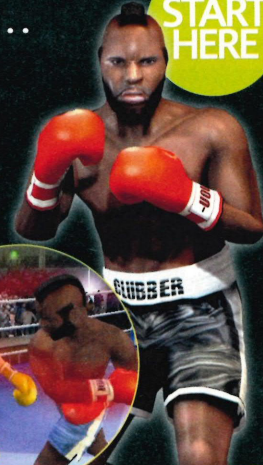
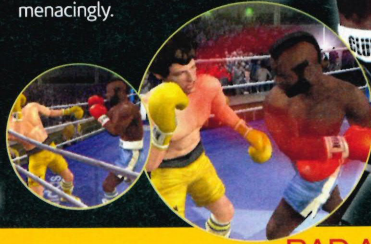
ASTAROTH

The typical beat-'em-up big guy, Astaroth stars in the Soul Calibur series. His axe is the size of a Volvo and he's hugely powerful, but - yep, you guessed it - quite slow.



CLUBBER LANG

We pity the fool who gets into the ring with Rocky's rival, Clubber Lang. He'll left-hook them into the foetal position and frown menacingly.



EDDIE

Now this is your proper British thug: the Sun-reading, white-van-driving, 10-sugars-in-his-tea star of The Getaway: Black Monday.

MUSCULAR

THE THING

A man with all the subtlety of a brick in the face, this Fantastic Four fighter's way of dealing with confrontation is to yell "it's clobberin' time!". And you know what? It usually is.



BAD ATTITUDE



CONAN

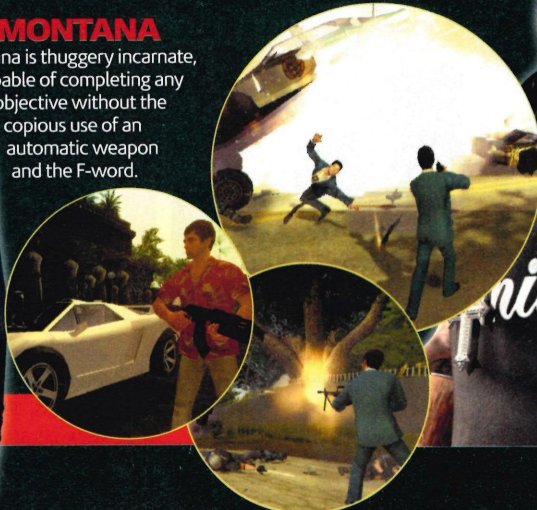
What can be said about a man who cuts his hair with a two-handed sword and has the same underwear as Captain Caveman? Anyone?



OUT-HOUSE

TONY MONTANA

Tony Montana is thuggery incarnate, incapable of completing any objective without the copious use of an automatic weapon and the F-word.



BARBARIAN

FIDDY

If it's mindless violence you want, we've got the game for you - 50 Cent: Bulletproof is as mindless as it gets.



GANGSTA



KNUCKLES

The brawn of Team Sonic, this echidna (a sort of spiny anteater, species fans!) possesses super-strength in his fists. His Hammer Punch can stun opponents. Ooh!



UMBERTO ROBINA

This balls-obsessed Cuban warlord from Grand Theft Auto: Vice City talks the talk, but always bails out when the bullets start to fly.



PRICKLY



COWARDLY



SHREK

An ogre who brushes his teeth with slugs and farts as often as he breathes. Appears cuddly, but when riled, is capable of opening up knights like tins of beans.

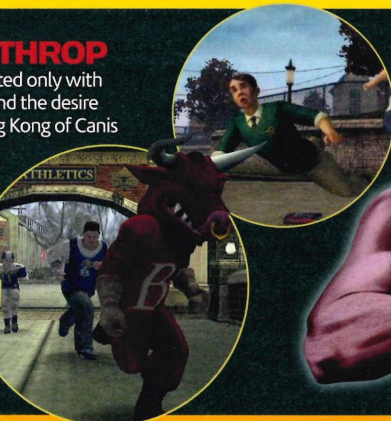


LOCAL

GREEN

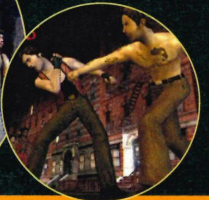
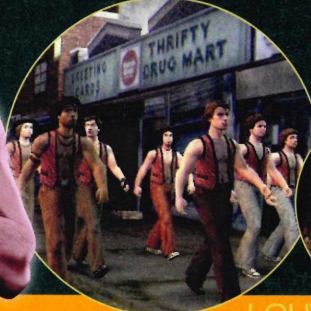
RUSSELL NORTHROP

A knuckle-dragging ape, gifted only with super-schoolboy strength and the desire to crack heads. He's the King Kong of Canem Edit.



AJAX

It takes a lot to be the sleaziest, most hot-headed, most lecherous member of a New York Street gang, but Ajax of The Warriors pulls it off.

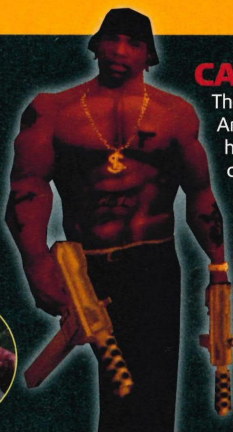


BULLY

LOUT

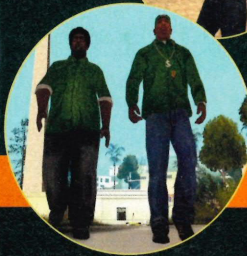
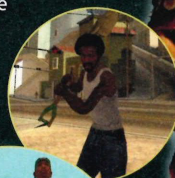
JUGGERNAUT

Seen in X-Men Dimension, this enemy of the X-Men is such a hulking brute that they got Vinnie Jones to play him in the film.



CARL 'CJ' JOHNSON

The star of Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas is a family man, but give him a gun and the chance to make a quick buck and it'll always end in argy-bargy.



AGRIPPA

The lead character in Shadow of Rome believes the best way get ahead in life is to brawl, poke animals with sharp sticks and show off to his mates.



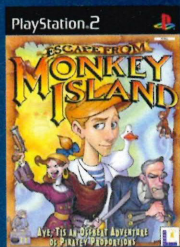
FAT-HEAD

HOODLUM

BRUTE

UNSUNG HERO

#08 In *Escape From Monkey Island* we meet a young man capable of making his dreams come true despite being a bumbling fool. His name is **Guybrush Threepwood**



This month's unsung hero of PlayStation comes from an unsung game. It's the fourth in the LucasArts point-and-click adventure series, much loved for its ingenious puzzles and genuine belly-laughs.

Escape From Monkey Island is the only one in the series to appear on PS2. And it's also the last in the series, despite it being greeted with a warm critical reception and offering something unique in world of identikit shooting and driving titles.

At its centre, as with all the *Monkey Island* adventures, is a coltish fop named Guybrush Threepwood.

Highly pi-rated

A teenager living in the 17th-century Caribbean, Guybrush dreams of one day becoming a pirate.

What's remarkable about our hero is that unlike many other games character he's largely defined by what he can't do rather than what he can. He's clumsy, he's a bit thick and often awkward in his speech.

During the series he's been shot out of a cannon, cursed by voodoo hexes, forced to use a rubber chicken for transportation and deserted by his

crew on numerous occasions. Despite all these trials he's remained positive, polite and seemingly unaffected by the pirate company he keeps.

He is also capable of holding his breath for 10 minutes, which comes in very handy for gamers who need time to think during underwater sections.

On top of that Guybrush has to be a hero and get the girl without the aid of a spinning attack or a double jump.

Does he achieve it? Hell, yeah – through a combination of wit, daring

and the determination to bounce back from any disappointment. By the time we see him in *Escape From Monkey Island* he's lived the life of a pirate, finally married his sweetheart and developed into a rather dashing young man.

Able seaman

But that haplessness that first endeared him to gamers remains. And the way he faces dangerous, surreal situations with a calm matter-of-factness is remarkable.

Guybrush represents qualities many of us would love to possess: the single-mindedness to know what he wants out of life, the grit and staying power to achieve it and the positive mindset to take everything life throws at him with a sense of humour.

It's a shame he's not seen more often these days, because he's a man, a role model and a hero that we could all learn from. Here's to you, Guybrush, you're the best in all of us.

Dave Harrison



YOUR HEROES!

Do you have a favourite PS2 character who doesn't get the respect he, she or it deserves? Nominate them to be an OPS2 Unsung Hero! Each month we celebrate one of the console's lesser-known stars; vote for your choice by emailing psnation@futurenet.co.uk

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PLAYING DIRTY

Many driving games brag about realism but just how authentic are they? We sent a diehard mud-plugger to find out how new 4x4 racer Off Road compares to the real thing

The man at the security gate of Land Rover's manufacturing HQ looks puzzled. "Are you sure you're here to play computer games?" he asks, casting a wary eye over my tattered Barbour coat and dirty wellies. "You don't look like the PlayStation type."

To be fair, Land Rover's security guards have to be especially cautious nowadays. Last year, a group of Greenpeace activists stormed the production line, chaining themselves to the machinery and a dozen or so half-built Range Rovers. That incident cost the company many millions of pounds, and garnered a lot of publicity for the anti-4x4 cause.

So you can't really blame this guy for questioning my credentials. But the reason I don't look like the 'PlayStation type' is that, ordinarily, I'm not. Apart for the occasional kick-around on FIFA 08, or the odd punch-up on Fight Night, I don't devote a great deal of time to the PS2 that's parked in the corner of my lounge.

I'm hardly a card-carrying

environmental activist, though, either. Indeed, many of my favourite pastimes would cause the average Greenpeace member to choke on their tofu. Chief among these is off-road driving, which I've been doing for almost as long as I've stood up to pee.

That's why I've been drafted in to have a look at Empire's new game for the PS2, I explain to the security chap. It's called Off Road, and I'm here to see how the game compares with the real thing.

Fantasy 4x4

It's dispiriting, then, that one of the first things I hear from the development team is that they've deliberately tried to incorporate an element of fantasy into Off Road.

The rationale behind this decision is persuasive, however: most people buy a racing game because they want a taste of what they think the fast-paced, thrill-a-second, environment ▶

LET'S OFF-ROAD!

4x4 101

There are a several off-road disciplines, each with a distinctive character. Off Road is most like Baja racing, which is one of the few truly high-speed forms



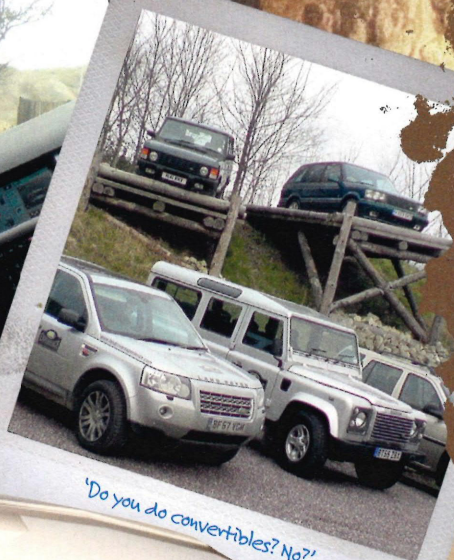
of 4x4 motorsport. The most famous Baja event is the Dakar, which journeys through North Africa at the start of each year and has featured famous drivers including the late Colin McRae, former World Rally Champ, and Charley Boorman, from Long Way Round.

Last year saw the first International Baja to be staged in the UK. The Baja GB took place last summer, and a field of contestants from all over the world competed for the inaugural title. The honour went to Czech driver Miroslav Zapletal – but only after a hard-fought contest for the top spot.

Off Road is like Baja insofar as it features high-risk, high-speed all-terrain racing. The gameplay seeks to recreate Baja's reaction-testing, adrenalin-pumping action. Visit bajawales.com for more details about the 2008 Baja GB.



Next stop - the A&E ward!



'Do you do convertibles? No?'





↑ Sadly, the farmers' Labradors had fallen out several miles back



↑ Concept cars like these Range Stormers add a welcome shot of glamour to all the heavy, utilitarian metal on display

► of a racetrack would be like. The fantasy, however, is often far removed from the reality – so game makers have to incorporate a degree of unreality into their products.

For a mud-bashing enthusiast like me, that's bound to present a few difficulties. A couple of minutes into the game and I feel compelled to tell anyone who will listen that the Land Rover Defender I'm driving would never be able to corner in the manner it does on-screen. The combination of live-sprung axles and separate chassis construction would definitely militate against this degree of control, I state.

Noticing that I'm now stood by myself – the other journalists having taken a sudden interest in a poster display on the other side of the room – I snap out of my reverie and decide to go with the flow. Once you do this, Off Road is an awful lot of fun.

The game offers a choice of 18 officially licensed Ford and Land Rover 4x4s to drive around 24 different tracks. There are three different off-road environments (ice, water and desert) in which to test your mettle, and the added spice of secret routes and hidden treasures. A giant waterfall appears in the midst of a

OFF ROAD HAS 18 OFFICIALLY LICENSED FORD AND LAND ROVER 4x4s TO DRIVE

copse of trees, for example, replicating just that sense of adventure that comes from driving a real off-road vehicle in real terrain.

On course

The exploratory element of the game is given further impetus by the Expedition mode. This enables players

to hunt for artefacts as part of the race – creating a novel twist on the more standard dash to the finish line that you associate with racing games. This sort of hell-for-leather carry-on can be chosen if you want it, however, in the form of the Point-To-Point mode.

A key element of the development process for Off Road was to allow for the distinctive character of all-terrain racing, compared with tarmac-based environments. The biggest challenge was to ensure the game's AI was sufficiently developed to give players a competitive experience.

This entailed compensating for the bumps and bruises associated with racing in the rough stuff. After all, it wouldn't be much fun to see your competitors shoot off towards the horizon, while you struggle to

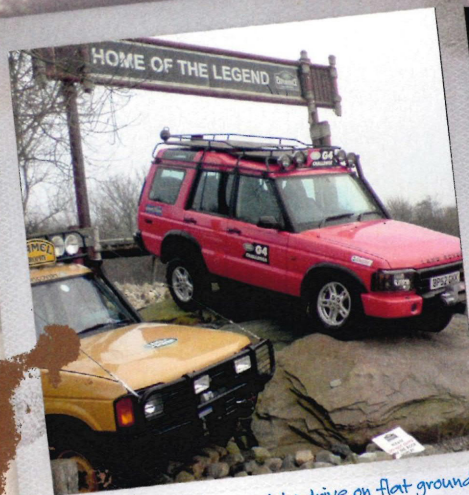
WHERE THERE'S MUCK...

Fancy a career racing 4x4s? Off Road is waiting

Off Road invites players to develop a career in off-road racing by sampling a wealth of race tracks and vehicles. As you'd expect, the 4x4s all have unique levels of performance, modelled closely on their real-world counterparts' specifications, and the courses vary in difficulty. As your career progresses, you move up the

hierarchy until you're racing the very best off-roaders in the world around the toughest tracks, in the most challenging conditions.

Off Road features 24 detailed tracks, which can be tackled by following a number of routes, 12 race types, three off-road surfaces, and 18 different vehicles. That should keep you busy for ages.

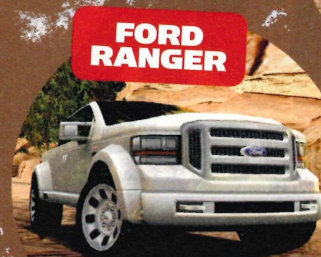


Land Rovers aren't meant to drive on flat ground...

THE VEHICLES

One of the most realistic elements of Off Road is the rendering of the roster of 18 Ford and Land Rover 4x4s. That's hardly surprising, given that the developers were given full access to them while making the game. The team even recorded the engine notes of the trucks, in order to ensure they reproduced them accurately.

So, just how do the graphics compare to the real thing? Here a few of the more iconic 4x4s that feature in Off Road.



↓ The Ford 4x4s are grunty beasts of machines

maintain traction in a sandpit.

Along with the official licence, Ford and Land Rover provided a mixture of production and concept vehicles for use within Off Road. In a rare move, the manufacturers also gave permission for their vehicles to sustain damage in the races.

Most car makers who license games don't like the thought of their products being seen in anything less than showroom condition – so Empire

has achieved a bit of a coup here.

But here's the rub, because the sort of damage sustained by the 4x4s has obviously been carefully controlled. I remember some of the knocks I've taken in the course of competitive off-roading, and I have to say the results were usually far more dramatic than this game would have you believe.

The bloke at the neighbouring console tells me I'm a party pooper, before disappearing to the coffee

machine for a cappuccino and a Chorley cake. And I suppose he's got a point: a game like Off Road isn't about exactly replicating the experience of sitting in a real 4x4 and haring around a track. It's about striking a balance between staying true to the spirit of the activity the game is designed to emulate, and suspending reality enough to make actually playing it an enjoyable experience.

Striking a balance

In this respect, I reckon Off Road has got things more or less right. Those elements of the game that, for someone like me, detract from the enjoyment will most likely enhance the gameplay for most gamers. If you're prepared to indulge the fantasy of the developer's vision of off-road racing, you'll be in for a genuinely thrilling time.

As for me, I'll probably stick to the real thing for now. That's not to say I won't while away the occasional hour with the PS2 and Off Road. But when I do, I'll make sure no-one is around to listen to my moaning. Tim Gibson



Not all 4x4s are underused Chelsea tractors

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REVIEWS

ⓐ LATEST GAMES ⓐ TESTED ⓧ BUYING ADVICE ⓐ KICKINGS

SO LONG AND FAREWELL

What a month for games it's been. Not satisfied with gracing the PSP with an addictively entertaining platforming adventure,

Ratchet and Clank: Size Matters has burst on the PS2.

Meanwhile, I managed to wrestle our copy of the hotly anticipated Odin Sphere from Kim's moogle mitts: and let me tell you, it was worth the hours of evil stares that ensued. Odin Sphere is absolutely gorgeous and heralds some of the most original gameplay elements I've experienced in ages.

We've also got the Sega crew picking up their racquets and heading to the tennis courts for an enticing slice of tennis action.

Thanks for all the fish

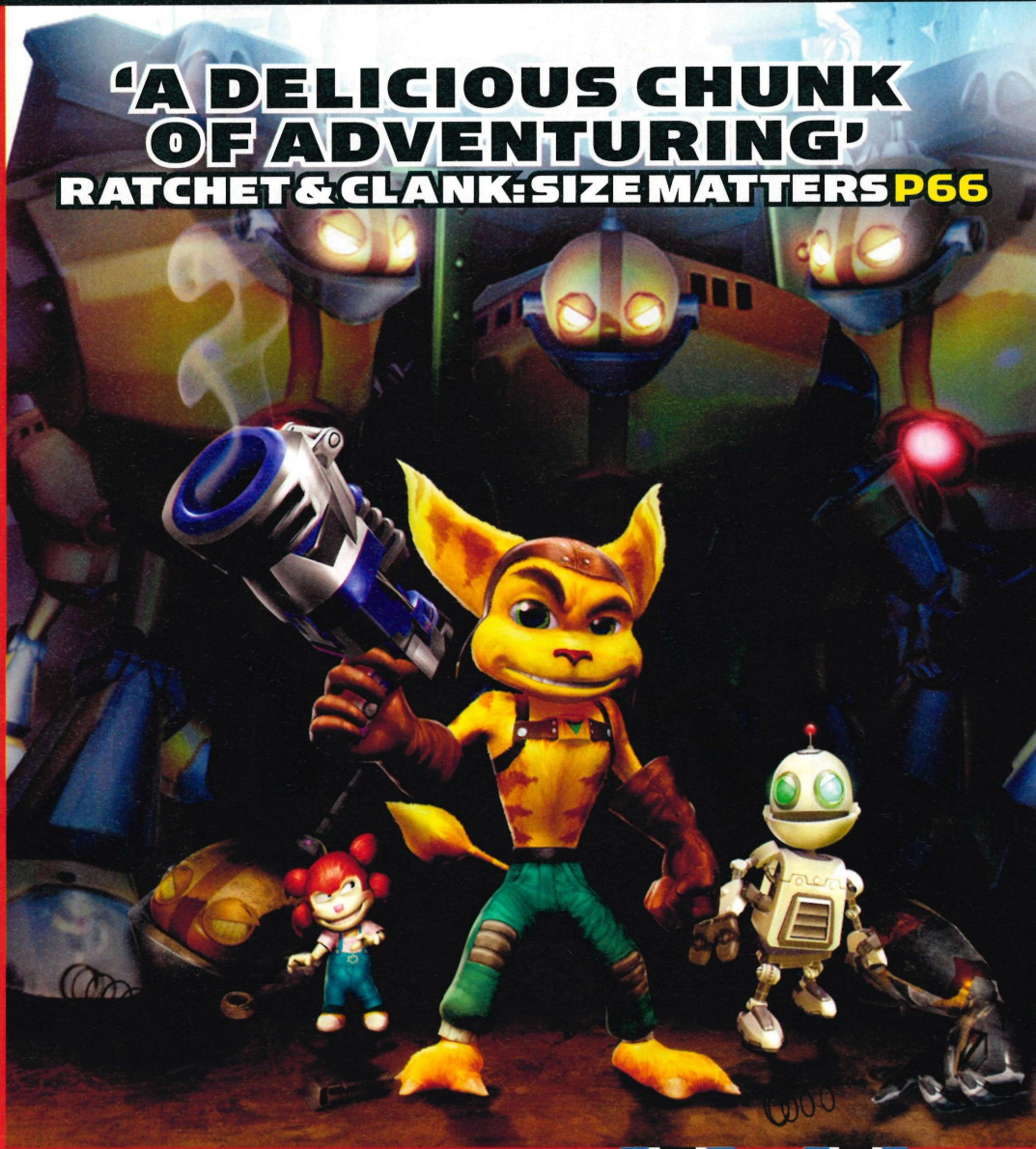
Alas, this is also going to be my final entry into the OPS2 annals, as I am moving onto pastures new.

It's been an absolute pleasure writing for you all and just remember the wise words of Admiral Ackbar: 'It's a trap'. Believe me: it's always a trap...

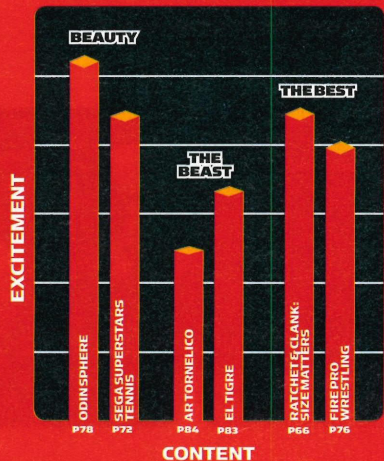
MIKE STERRY
STAFF WRITER

msterry@futurenet.co.uk

'A DELICIOUS CHUNK OF ADVENTURING' RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS P66



THIS SECTION CONTAINS



UNDERSTAND OUR SCORES!

10 ESSENTIAL

If you have a PS2, you owe it to yourself to own this game

9 OUTSTANDING

Truly innovative with lasting appeal: well made in all respects

8 AWESOME

A sterling effort, very playable and highly recommended

7 VERY GOOD

Falls short of brilliant, but still a great idea, well executed

6 GOOD

Has flaws, but fans of the genre or series will still enjoy it

5 AVERAGE

Not much cop, but maybe worth a go if you find it in a bargain bin

4 BELOW AVERAGE

Disappointing and boring, with few redeeming qualities

3 POOR

Oh dear. We recommend you steer well clear of this one

2 AWFUL

Broken, very badly made or actually unplayable

1 HORRIFIC

Not so much a game as an insult to console owners



AWARDS

The Star Game medal is for great games that just have to be played, regardless of your usual genre preferences. The Hall Of Fame medal is for titles that rock our world so hard they'll be inducted into our OPS2 Hall Of Fame next issue (find this month's complete listing on p88).

REVIEW

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters

Size Matters is a gadget-packed, gun-toting, galactic adventure that's fun from start to end



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RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS

Can this PSP port be as big a hit on a larger console?



If, looking at this page, you get a sense of déjà vu, fret not. It isn't the Matrix resetting. It's just that

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters has already been out on PSP for a while.

It got such a sterling reception that Sony decided the PSP couldn't contain greatness of this magnitude and therefore promptly ported it to the mother console.

So, PS2 owners, rejoice: you are about to receive one of the most entertainingly addictive games ever.



Water mimic sprouts and they will grow into handy weapons

The story begins with five-time hero Ratchet and his robo-buddy Clank taking a well-deserved holiday.

Awfully big adventure

But danger never sleeps, and suddenly their new-found friend, a lass called Luna, is kidnapped by nasty robots.

The heroic duo give chase and are thus thrown into an adventure of galactic proportions, packed full of brilliantly designed levels, many of

and poking about in Ratchet's mind.

That's right, in a genius, Psychonauts-inspired level, you get to experience the inner psyche of our favourite Lombax. And believe us, it's not a happy place.

The levels are colourful and each is a good length: not too long and not too short. In fact, R&C:SM seems to master the art of balance, as demonstrated by the delicate counterpoint struck between

IT'S PACKED FULL OF BRILLIANTLY DESIGNED LEVELS

them wonderfully unique. You'll be dashing across beach resorts, escaping from medical facilities, even rooting around inside Clank's body (you have to mend his broken heart)



Minigames include demolition derbies

REVIEW

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters



↑ The levels and action are really varied so you don't get bored

them to a patch of Electrosoil and they'll grow into either a ladder, bomb or throwing plant. Cute *and* ingenious!

breathlessly fluid gameplay and the demand for perfect technique.

You're constantly leaping from crumbling platforms, swinging across pits of lava, racing from exploding bombs; the full platforming works.

And of course, you experience moments of pad-flinging frustration when you've missed a jump for the umpteenth time – probably thanks in part to the sadistic camera system – and Ratchet's dissolving in a vat of acid. But this is what platforming's about.

Miniature treats

Veteran fans will recognise various gameplay elements such as lockpicking minigames and rail grinding, which have been combined into the Grind Lock minigame.

It's a pleasing break from the usual action. When confronted by a locked door, you shrink down and rail grind

through the lock's electric circuit, dodging mines and hitting switches until it opens.

But that's not the only imaginative idea. Take mimic plants, for example.

These are little walking seedlings that follow you around if you water them with the Sprout-O-Matic. Lead

Huge arsenal

One fly in the ointment of enjoyment, though, is Sky Boarding. In these lame and sadly mandatory sections, you basically race around bland racetracks, struggling with horribly over-sensitive controls, in order to win gadgets.

Ratchet & Clank are famous for their hefty arsenal of gadgetry, guns ▶

GALAXY BAR

If you were ever to find yourself in the area, pop in on these planets



POKITARU

With sandy beaches and azure seas, it's the perfect place for a break if you avoid the crabs.



DAYNIMOON

Primarily a farm region, but it's no rural idyll: when night falls, the sheep turn into wolves.



CHALLAX

Home to the Technomites, this city is tiny, so you'll need your Shrink Ray to find it.

REVIEW

Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters

LUST LIST

The guns that got our hearts palpitating



DUAL LACERATORS

Mod them up with double barrels and these babies will serve you well in the tightest of corners.



LASER TRACER

Modded from an engine so big that you have to stand still to deal with its awesome kickback.

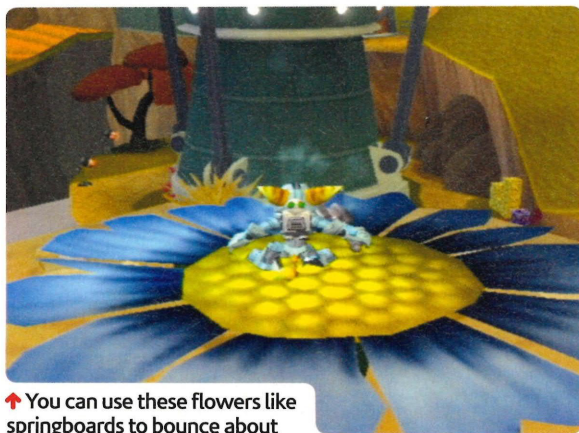


RYNO

Standing for Rip You a New One, this mighty motherfluffer does exactly what it says on the tin.

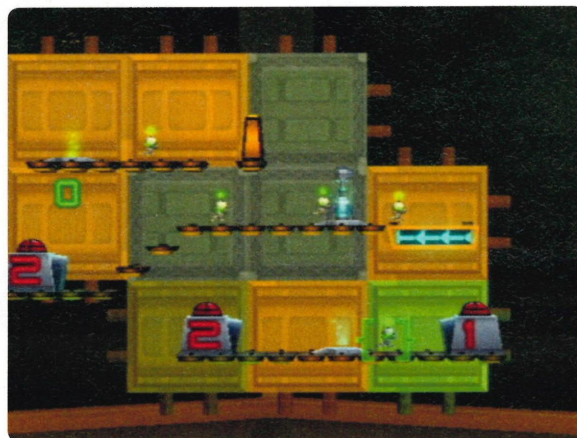
and inventions, and Size Matters doesn't disappoint. There are plenty of silly weapons to play with, including the Shrink Ray, Hypershot and Polarizer.

The most awesome gadgets, though, are the ones that upgrade your platforming abilities, such as the Box Breaker (smashes everything in the room when you hit the floor) and



↑ You can use these flowers like springboards to bounce about

↓ This level takes place inside Ratchet's mind. Who knew he was a Norwich City supporter?



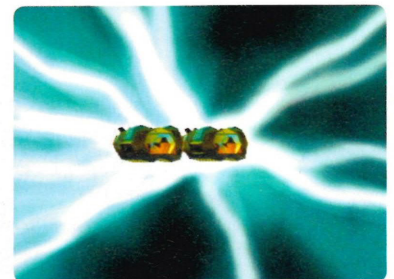
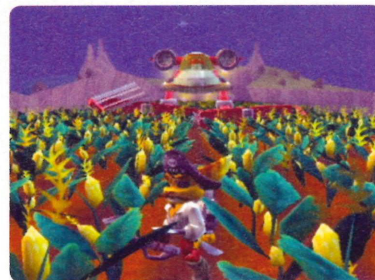
↑ This survival challenge is one of Clank's minigames

Bolt Grabber (draws in bolts, the game currency, from a wide area).

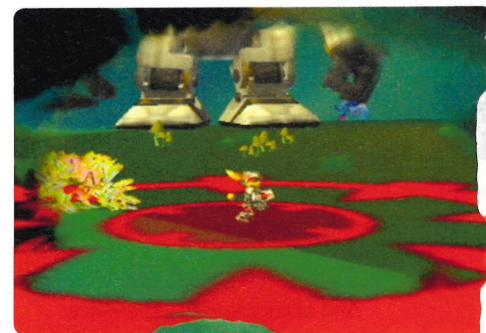
Size batters

But where R&C really comes to life is the combat. Words have not been invented to describe the immense feeling of joy that washes over you when you find yourself confronted by a room full of baddies. Why? Because of the multitude of ways you can kick their asses.

Okay, the controls for destruction are a bit haphazard, thanks to the



↑ Use weapons enough to fill the Upgrade Gauge and this will happen!



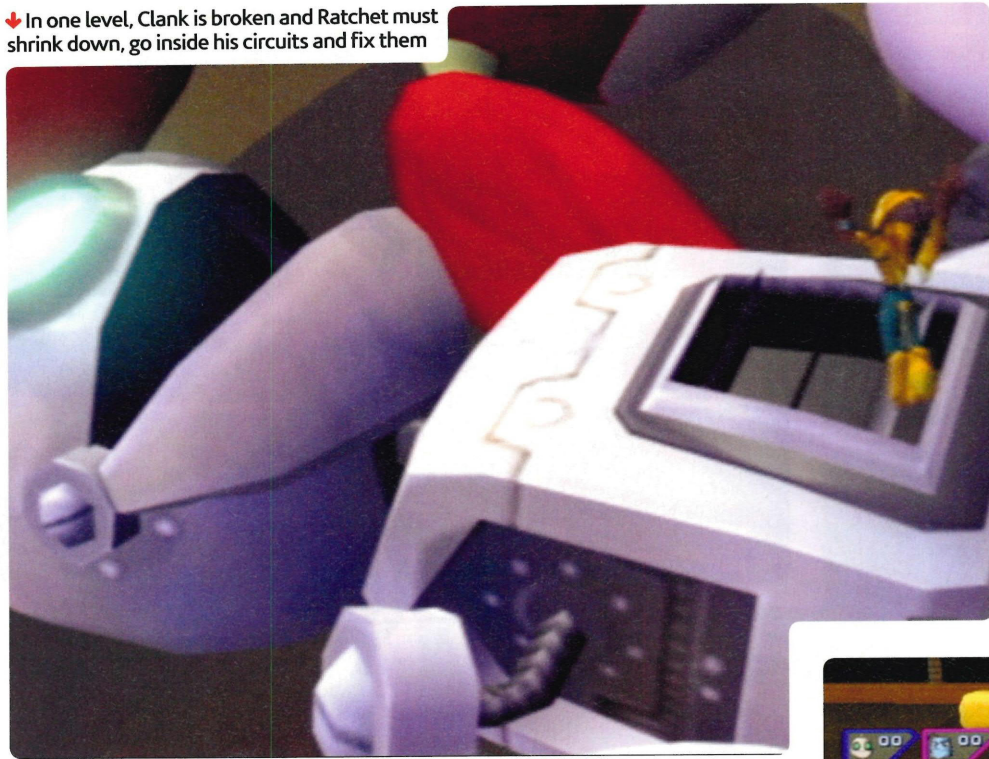
weird decision to map 'fire' to **○**, 'jump' to **⊗** and 'strafe' to **L2** and **R2**.

This means that when confronted with baddies, you hold 'strafe' to avoid their shots, but every time you need to jump out of their way (which happens a lot), you have to take your finger off the trigger.

Throw in the weapon's quick select menu on **△**, which has to be held down to navigate the menu, and you'll often find yourself drawing the wrong weapon, missing shots, or breaking your fingers in the ensuing confusion.

But whatever. None of this really spoils the game, because you're just

↓ In one level, Clank is broken and Ratchet must shrink down, go inside his circuits and fix them



↑ You can equip a shield barrier for temporary damage reduction



having too much fun with your weapons to really notice.

From the word go, Ratchet has his trusty Omni-wrench, which fans will remember from previous instalments.

It can be swung, thrown, or slammed on the ground for a powerful attack.

But don't be mistaken, you can't just wade in hacking the attack button. Constant enemy swarms will force you to reach for your holster and pull out some firepower.

Will you use the standard Lacerator pistol, the shotgun-style Concussion Gun, acid bombs or laser rifles?

Will you plump for the Mootator, which turns enemies into cows? Or would you prefer

an old favourite such as the Agents of Doom (a swarm of attack bots) or the Suck Cannon (the clue's in the name with this one).

Our favourites are the almighty Shock Rocket (an electric rocket launcher) and the god-almighty RYNO which destroys everything on the



↑ Gadgebot Toss is like basketball with gadgebots

screen... and then some. Don't be surprised if your cutlery drawer is rattling in real life when you use them.

Every weapon is fully upgradable, either by simply using them enough to fill their Upgrade Gauges, or by purchasing mods from vendor stations in return for bolts.

It really is rather satisfying to wield a set of Dual Titan Lacerators equipped with double barrels, or a rocket launcher that's bigger than Ratchet himself.

GAMEMYTH

Ratchet is a South African Tree Lemur

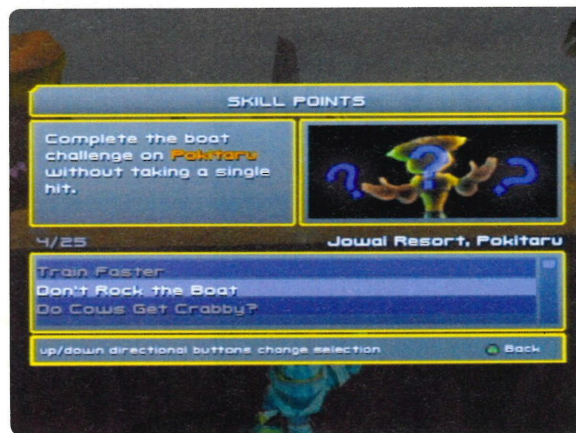
TRUE FALSE

Ratchet is actually a Lombax: an alien race that look similar to bobcats and has an affinity for mechanical stuff.



↑ Hyperborean armour freezes things when hit

→ Achieve certain objectives to win Skill Points that unlock cheats



REVIEW

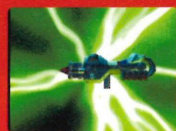
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters



↑ Acid bombs do loads of damage and are a fetching shade of purple



→ A handy flying machine is one of Clank's many useful functions



THE GUNS

Nothing feels better than big, meaty, comedy guns exploderating everything in sight.



COLLECTING BOLTS

The 'clink' sound, the sight of the bolt meter shooting up... it's addictive.



CLANK CHALLENGES

A nice break from the action, Clank's minigames are positively pleasing.

LOVING

HATING

SKY BOARDING

So user-unfriendly that you'll constantly be flying off the track or into a wall.



UNHELPFUL CAMERA

It hates you so much, it's going to obscure everything lethal from view.



↑ Grow ladders like this using mimic plants

Mind you, the game's not all about offensive machinery. Um, it's mostly about offensive machinery, sure, but Ratchet can also collect armour pieces to protect his vulnerable bits.

If you get a matching helmet, gloves, boots and body protector, you boost Ratchet's defence stats and add an extra power to his wrench. For example, it might become able to shoot out fire or freeze enemies.

If you experiment with armour combinations, it's also possible to create a hybrid set that imbues your

wrench with super powers. For example, mix the complete Megabomb set with the Wildfire gloves, and every third swing of the wrench will launch a fireball. Smokin'!

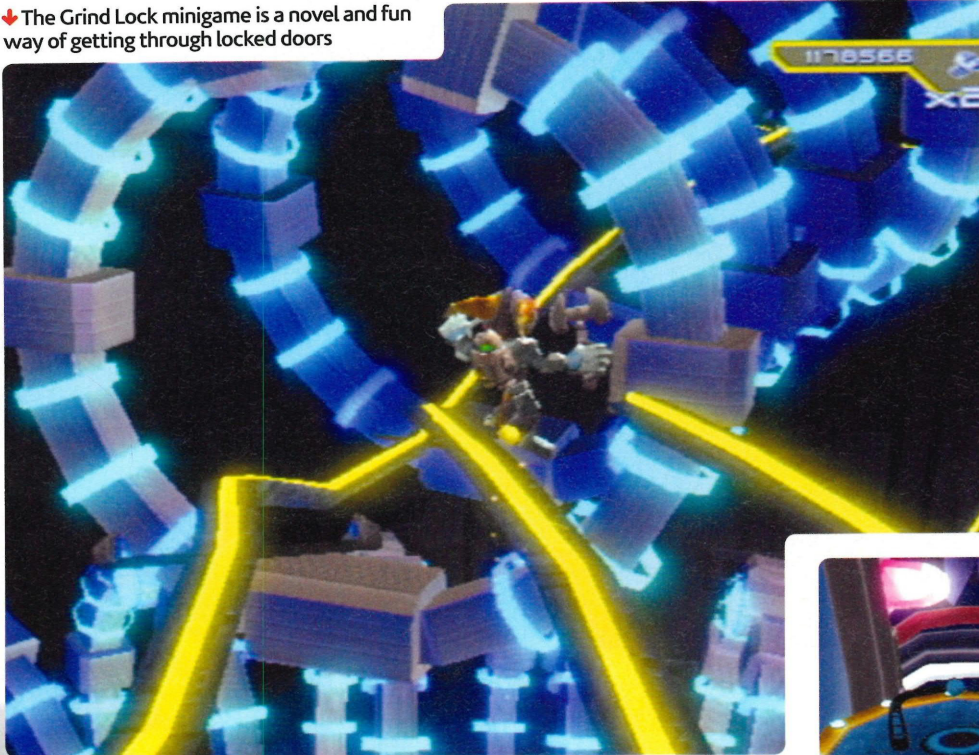
Small's well

Clank, meanwhile, gets to come out of Ratchet's backpack and star in his own level, bossing around gadgetbots.

He also gets his own set of minigames. These include destruction derbies, gadgetbot tournaments where



↓ The Grind Lock minigame is a novel and fun way of getting through locked doors



you play basketball with robots and a Lemmings-esque survival game.

Best of all, though, is when Clank is transformed into Giant Clank and blasts off into space for some fast and furious Ace Combat-style action.

All through the game, there's so much to do. You've got Titanium Bolts to collect, skill points to unlock, Clank Challenges to win.

And when you defeat the final boss, you unlock Challenge mode, where you can restart the game with all your weapons and equipment and take on harder enemies.

As an incentive, it's only through Challenge mode that you can pick up the Chameleon and Hyperborean armour sets and the RYNO gun.



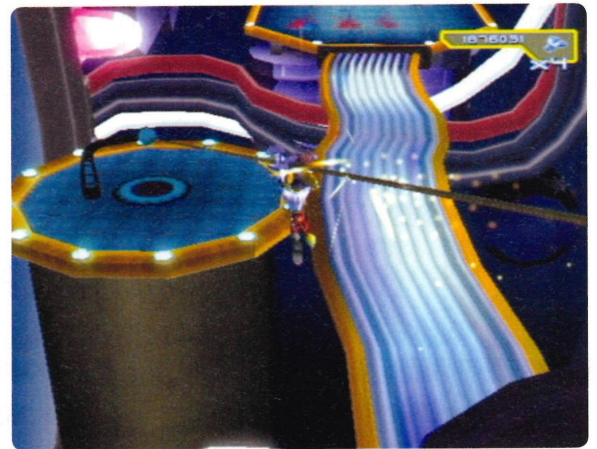
And then there's the multiplayer versus mode, which has 'eat into your life' written all over it.

Big challenge

The path to multiplayer victory involves completing objectives that depend on the level. You can, of course, murderise your friends while attempting to achieve your target.

Missions include collecting homing beacons to blow up enemy bases, or gathering power cells to fuel your team's cannon.

Our favourite arena by far is Mad Moon Disease, where you must use the Suck Cannon to blow cows into a meat machine, then get the crates to a delivery truck.



↑ So this is what Clank looks like from inside...

IT DOES WHAT?



THE TROPICAL VACATION OUTFIT

Well, it doesn't really do much apart from show off Ratchet's rippling six pack and allow him to tan in style.

ORIGINALITY RATING **86%**

Having said all this, if you own the PSP version, there's not much in this game that you haven't seen before.

But for the rest of the nation, R&C: SM is a delicious chunk of addictive adventuring. It's enjoyment, pure and simple, thanks to swift platforming action and meaty gunplay. There's rarely a moment when you think 'Oh God, not this again'.

A port it may be, but this game is strong enough to stand on its own two feet as an essential PS2 title. You owe it to your trusty PS2 to check this game out. **Kim Richards**

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- 😊 Slick platforming action
- 😊 Silly weapons and big guns
- 😊 Addictive upgrade system
- 😊 Stupid Sky Boarding sections

An engaging and highly enjoyable romp. Size Matters is a welcome return to form for Ratchet & Clank

9

← The Polarizer weapon messes up magnets. Win it by Sky Boarding

REVIEW

Sega Superstars Tennis

↓ Characters have different play styles
 – Beat's skates make him quite slidey



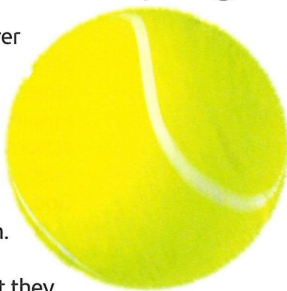
Release Out now Publisher Sega Developer Sumo Digital Price £29.99
 Players 1-4 Web tinyurl.com/ywyz5 Also try Everybody's Tennis

SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS

It's not every day Sonic and pals get their balls out

A Poor tennis. It's never taken seriously in videogames. From Everybody's Tennis to certain Nintendo offerings we could mention, it seems tennis is a genre where cheesy fun has won out against realism.

It seems the only way to convince the buying public that they want to play virtual tennis is by painting it saccharine colours and pumping it full of bobble-headed cartoons. Even the sim-esque Virtua Tennis series (which kindly supplies



the engine behind Superstars Tennis) has to fill itself with minigames in order to make friends.

Why doesn't cricket get the same treatment? Or rugby? We'd happily play a rugby game that featured Miles 'Tails' Prower staring down Dr Eggman's anus in a scrum.

And so now Sega has decided to grab some of that casual sporting dollar with Sega Superstars Tennis, cramming kooky characters into a peewee racket-and-ball title.

Surprisingly, though, considering the heritage that Sega has at its



↑ The Level Select stage spans 23 years of Sega: a total treat for retro fans

disposal, one of the biggest criticisms that can be aimed at SST is its character roster.

Many familiar faces appear, a few of them real blasts from Sega's past, but there are also a number of duplicated character models representing some

PLAYER PROFILE

Amigo

PRO Even though he's no taller than a waste bin, Amigo's backhand hits like a truckload of rhinos.

CON Unable to speak, he can only communicate through the medium of maraca.

SATISFACTION RATING

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



↑ Choose from 16 characters in all – some immediately familiar, others less so



↑ With Superstar special moves flying around, doubles matches can get crazy

↓ The Space Harrier minigame's a trip down memory lane for older Sega fans



↓ Hang on, those aren't tennis balls – they're monkey balls!



↓ The Jet Set Radio stages require precision targeting

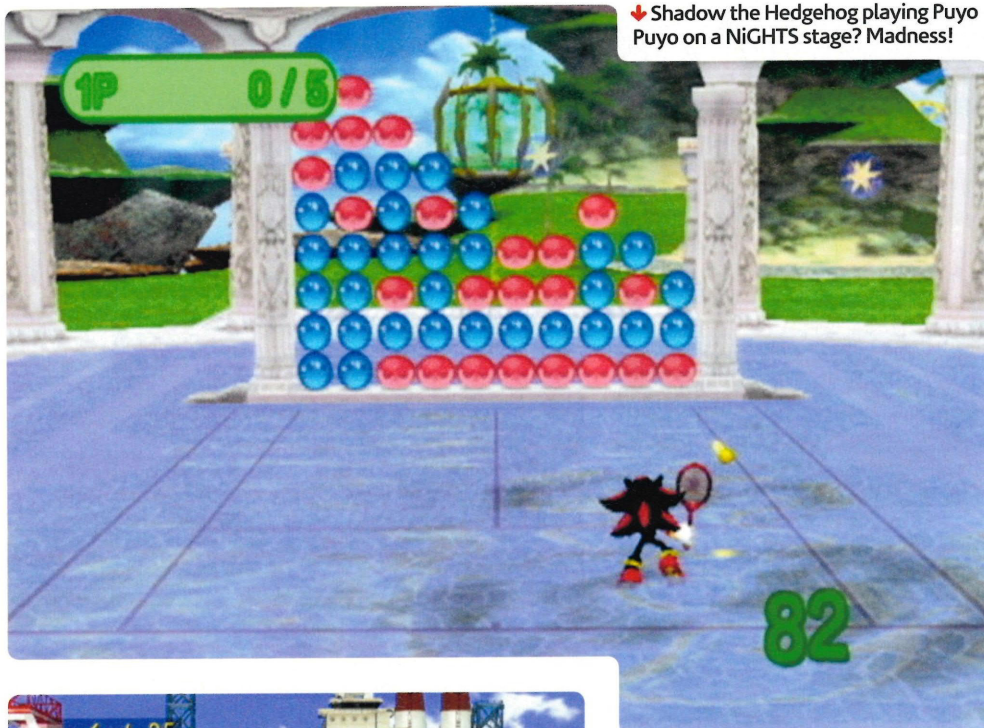


very minor characters from some of Sega's least-popular franchises.

Do we really need two monkeys from Super Monkey Ball, or Ulala's rival from Space Channel 5? Couldn't we have had ToeJam & Earl, Shinobi, or even Kid Chameleon?

Plus, to give the game a coherent look, most of the characters have been shorn of the unique visual style they're known for.

So Jet Set Radio's Beat is no longer cel-shaded and, disappointingly, Golden Axe's dwarf Gillus isn't imagined as the 2D sprite we had



↓ Shadow the Hedgehog playing Puyo Puyo on a NiGHTS stage? Madness!



↑ The Virtua Cop missions are by far the most tedious on offer

hoped for, but looks more like Santa Claus in a green tabard.

We might be nitpicking, but such an approach makes the whole Sega experience feel slightly homogenised, instead of being the truly diverse, multi-franchise madcap experience it could have been.

Net benefits

Each of the 16 characters falls into one of five play-style categories: Spin, Speed, Control, Power or All-Rounder.

But in practice, because SST is all about controlling space and the ball, only the Speed and Control characters offer any kind of noticeable advantage during play.

Certainly, they're the only characters you'll need in the minigames, which often require fancy footwork and precision shooting.

DESPITE THE TIES TO VIRTUA TENNIS, THIS ISN'T INCREDIBLY DEEP

EBAY GOLD

Shadow the Hedgehog hat

Okay, so his game might have been a bit pants, but how awesome is this tither? Cosy! Stylish! Yours for a fiver!



RARITY VALUE

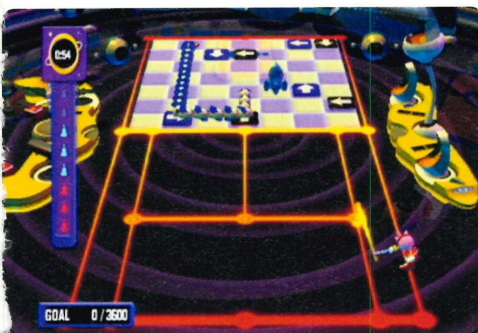
GOLDEN RINGS

CHAOS EMERALDS

The tennis itself, despite its ties to Virtua Tennis, isn't incredibly deep. You've got your forehand and your backhand, and you can drop-shot or lob the ball with a quick button combo. But you won't always get the assumed result from your button inputs, because the strength of your opponent's shot can cause you to awkwardly lob the ball back at them, setting up an easy smash.

Certainly, this makes for nail-biting tennis, but on harder difficulties it can seem a little unfair. And, ultimately, this approach to casual tennis doesn't work as well as the rock-paper-scissors method of Everybody's Tennis.

After successfully rallying the ball about for a bit, your character will fill up their Superstar meter, and can then invoke Superstar mode. What this ▶



↑ You wouldn't think Chu-Chu Rocket and tennis would mix, but it does

REVIEW

Sega Superstars Tennis



Sure, Gillus is a tad out of shape, but why do plus-size characters always have to play slower than molasses running down a glacier?

ASSEENIN Soul Calibur III, Marvel vs Capcom, Everybody's Tennis



↑ Sadly, the After Burner court isn't atop a nose-diving jet, just an aircraft carrier



↑ Our favourite SST moment? Beating Tails in straight sets until he cries

↓ Amigo gets superstars in his eyes when he's happy with his shot



IT'S FUN TO SQUASH YOUR OPPONENT WITH A GIANT MONKEY BALL

translates into is a brief cutscene (which can be disabled), and your character being able to initiate a crazy special move designed to confuse and confound the other player.

Sonic the Hedgehog, for example, hits a super-hard volley that takes a dramatic right turn at the last minute; should the other player manage to return it, it will actually push them back a few feet.

Superstar mode disappears after a set, so it hardly has an impact on the larger match, but it's still a laugh to squash your opponent under a giant

Monkey Ball (this being the special move of Super Monkey Ball's AiAi).

Court short

We love the fan-pleasing attention paid to the detailing of the various courts, which are themed around Sega games of the past. But a handful of them aren't exactly easy on the eye.

In fact, the Samba de Amigo stage (our favourite) requires the players to use blue balls, just so they show up on the retina-scorching orange court.

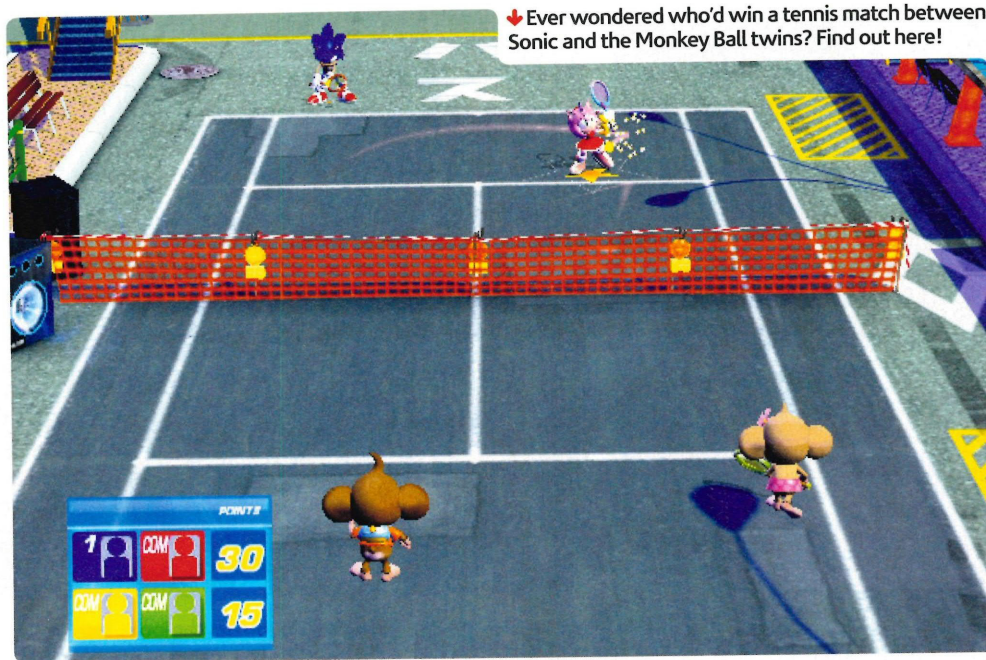
Sadly, the faithful design of the courts also means that when playing on some of the more elaborate stages, there's conspicuous slow-down, especially when playing doubles.

The star of SST's singleplayer campaign are the large number of themed mini-games tied to each stage.

↓ Meet Beat. He's got skates on his feet. Neat!



↑ You can play against real opponents or AI, which is easy to beat in early stages



↑ Ever wondered who'd win a tennis match between Sonic and the Monkey Ball twins? Find out here!

SOMETHING'S MISSING

This game would be better if...



THEY REVISED THE CAST LIST

Sega has oodles of franchises to choose from, so why does SST feature many minor characters? Gum from Jet Set Radio – sorry, who?



IT HAD A TUTORIAL

Despite completing the main campaign and unlocking everything, we're still none the wiser about the actual mechanics or control scheme.



THE CHARACTERS SHUT UP

We love Sonic, but not when he mouths off after every set. If not for the retro music, we'd have hit Mute.



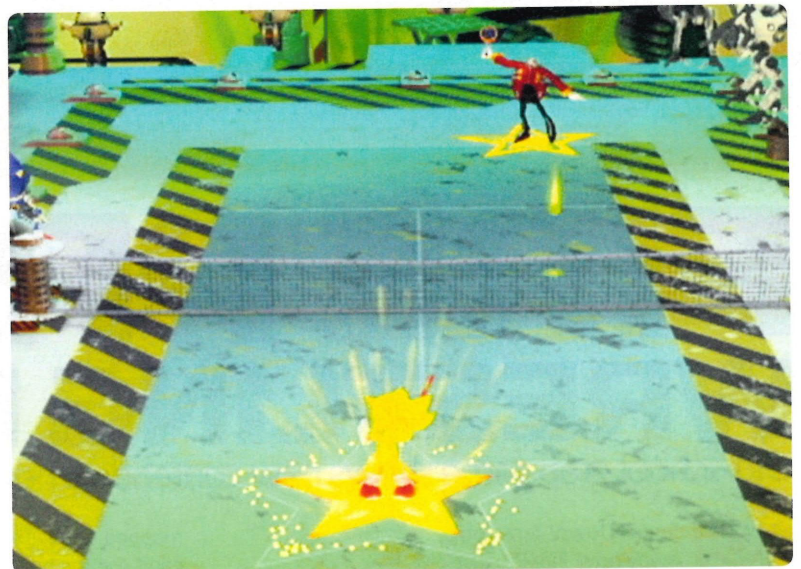
They hail from such Sega classics as Virtua Cop, House of the Dead, Space Harrier, Sonic the Hedgehog and cult puzzler ChuChu Rocket.

When they work, such as House of the Dead's "take out hordes of shambling undead with tennis balls" concept, they're fantastic.

When they don't, as with Virtua Cop's simplistic shooting action, they're more than a little dull. Thankfully, there are enough that you can move on quite quickly.

↑ Naturally, Sonic is one of the best characters to play

↓ A cutscene like this means a player's about to go Superstar on your ass



However, entertaining as they are, they don't help develop your tennis skills for SST's tournaments because the physics and amount of ball control you have in each one varies widely.

So, while during a singles match you'd happily give your right eye for perfect ball control, when playing ChuChu Rocket's or Space Harrier's minigames, you can direct the ball with laser accuracy.

Balls up

SST is aimed at casual gamers and that's no bad thing. But it means there's little meat for the more wizened, experienced player to sink their teeth into.

It's possible to complete the game, see all there is to see and unlock everything in only a few hours.

After that, how much longevity you can eke out of SST is proportional to

your love of all things Sega. You'd have to be quite the Sega fanatic to believe SST is an essential purchase.

But to the rest of us, it's still quite a good casual tennis game, even if it's not much more than that. **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- 😊 Breezy, fun-filled play
- 😊 A real treat for Sega fanatics
- 😊 Quality of minigames varies
- ☹️ Character voices are irritating

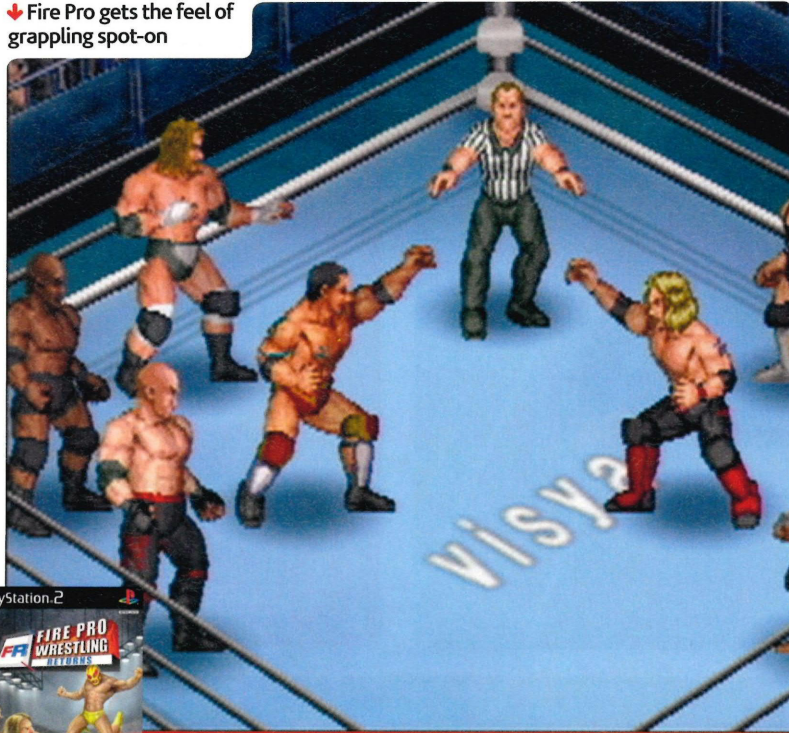
A solid serving of tennis-lite, but in the face of Everybody's Tennis, can only really be recommended to the Sega hardcore



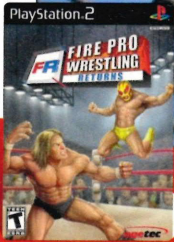
REVIEW

Fire Pro Wrestling Returns

↓ Fire Pro gets the feel of grappling spot-on



↓ SmackDown! has the looks, but Fire Pro offers truly gripping wrestling action



Release Out now Publisher 505 Games Developer Agetec Price £19.99
Players 1-8 Web snipurl.com/20101 Also try WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008



FIRE PRO WRESTLING RETURNS

Old-school grap game shows new contenders how it's done

SmackDown! fans, look away now. Fire Pro just changed the landscape of grap games forever. It's got the psychology of wrestling nailed. It's stacked with stars from the 1980s, 1990s and noughties.

And everything that happens in wrestling, is contained within, plus a fair bit of stuff you weren't aware of (Landmine Deathmatch, anyone?).

The secret to Fire Pro's success is that it focuses on the basics, then builds from there. Everything is contextual. Grapple moves are

mapped to ⊗, ⊕, and ⊙, but you can't use the heavier ⊙ moves until you've worn your opponent down sufficiently. Try to and they'll be reversed automatically.

At first this all seems impenetrable because after years of smashing the buttons until you've got ⊗ and ⊕ imprinted on your fingertips, learning

FIRE PRO HAS GOT THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WRESTLING NAILED

a wrestling game that's down to timing and skill takes effort. But start on the easiest difficulty, notch a few wins, and you'll never look back.

You're in charge

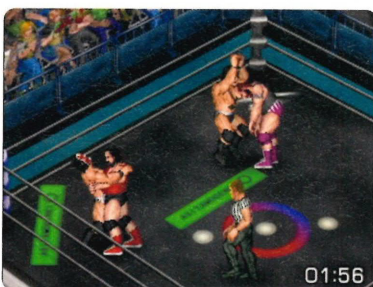
Special praise must be lavished on the customisation options: 327 wrestlers come with the game and you can add



500 more. Check out fireproclub.com for roster files which enable you to cherry pick the stars you want.

Our federations contain a stack of past WWF and WCW stars, the entire WWE roster and the cast of Street Fighter! Add created belts, refs and rings and you have a fully customisable, immeasurably deep wrestling game, both inside and outside the ring.

Triple H has spent the last couple of years prancing round calling himself the 'King of Kings'. Well, sorry, H: Fire Pro just stole your crown. Ben Wilson



← Every match type you could wish for is here

HERE'S SOME WE MADE EARLIER

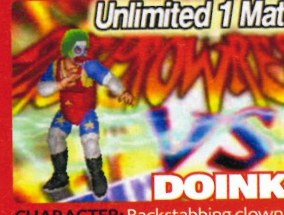
The customisation options in Fire Pro are endless. How many wrestlers do you know?



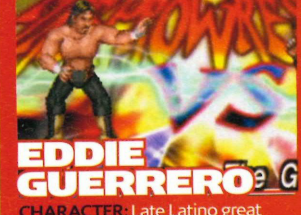
BRET HART
 CHARACTER: Technical master
 FINISHER: Sharpshooter
 GOLDEN ERA: WWF, early 1990s
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Five-time WWE champion
 SWORN ENEMY: Shawn Michaels



REY MYSTERIO
 CHARACTER: Acrobatic Mexican
 FINISHER: Springboard Seated Senton
 GOLDEN ERA: WCW, 1996-1999
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Winning the world title at WrestleMania XXII
 SWORN ENEMY: Chavo Guerrero



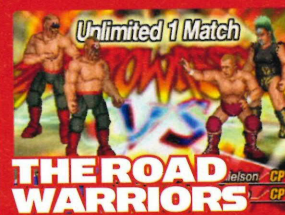
DOINK
 CHARACTER: Backstabbing clown
 FINISHER: Stump Puller
 GOLDEN ERA: WWF, 1993
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Clobbering Crush with a plaster cast
 SWORN ENEMY: Jerry Lawler



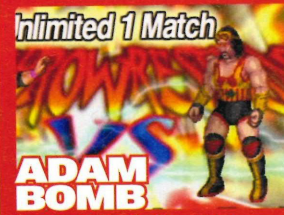
EDDIE GUERRERO
 CHARACTER: Late Latino great
 FINISHER: Frog splash
 GOLDEN ERA: WWE, 2003-2005
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Defeating Brock Lesnar for the WWE title
 SWORN ENEMY: Kurt Angle



THE GREAT MUTA
 CHARACTER: Japanese legend
 FINISHER: Moonsault
 GOLDEN ERA: NJPW, early 1990s
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: 20 years of racking up belts
 SWORN ENEMY: Masahiro Chono



THE ROAD WARRIORS
 CHARACTERS: Tag powerhouse
 FINISHER: The Doomsday Device
 GOLDEN ERA: NWA, late 1980s
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Winning pretty much every title going
 SWORN ENEMY: Demolition



ADAM BOMB
 CHARACTER: Radioactive man
 FINISHER: Neutron bomb
 GOLDEN ERA: WWF, 1993
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: A career reboot as one half of Kronik
 SWORN ENEMY: Kwang



BIG BOSSMAN
 CHARACTER: Baton-wielding cop
 FINISHER: Boss Man Slam
 GOLDEN ERA: WWF, early 1990s
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Sending The Mountie to the slammer
 SWORN ENEMY: Nailz



TERRY FUNK
 CHARACTER: Patriarch of hardcore
 FINISHER: Piledriver
 GOLDEN ERA: ECW, mid 1990s
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Wrestling well into his sixties
 SWORN ENEMY: Mick Foley



ULTIMATE WARRIOR
 CHARACTER: Face-painted nutjob
 FINISHER: Warrior splash
 GOLDEN ERA: WWF, 1990
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: The epic WrestleMania VI main event
 SWORN ENEMY: Everyone



JOHN CENA
 CHARACTER: Crew-cut baby-face
 FINISHER: The FU
 GOLDEN ERA: WWE, 2005-2007
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Winning over the fans last year
 SWORN ENEMY: Edge



BOB SAPP
 CHARACTER: Kickboxing beast
 FINISHER: Ground and pound
 GOLDEN ERA: K-1, 2005-2006
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: His 8-2-1 MMA record
 SWORN ENEMY: Mirko Filipovic



MILLION DOLLAR MAN
 CHARACTER: Cash-rich bad guy
 FINISHER: Million Dollar Dream
 GOLDEN ERA: WWF, 1990-1991
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Buying the WWF title from Andre The Giant
 SWORN ENEMY: Virgil



HULK HOGAN
 CHARACTER: Grap megastar
 FINISHER: Legdrop of Doom
 GOLDEN ERA: 1994-1996
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Slamming Andre The Giant at WrestleMania III
 SWORN ENEMY: Vince McMahon



GUILE
 CHARACTER: Slick-haired ex-soldier
 FINISHER: Somersault Kick
 GOLDEN ERA: Street Fighter II, 1991
 BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT: Helping to change the face of beat-'em ups.
 SWORN ENEMY: M Bison



PlayStation 2
 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- 😊 Fully customisable
- 😊 Feels like proper wrestling
- 😊 Stacks of match types
- 😊 Takes time to master

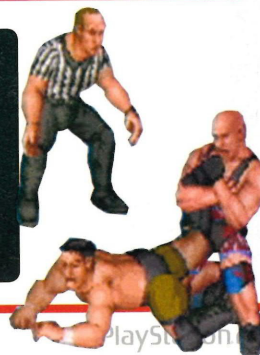
There's no finer grap game out there. At £20, this deserves to be bought and adored by every PS2-owning wrestling fan

9

THINGS THAT ARE TRUE IN FPW RETURNS

GAME LAW

- 1 You need to start at the bottom and grasp the basics
- 2 Its understanding of grap psychology is perfect
- 3 Eight-way elimination matches are a highlight
- 4 You'll spend countless hours in the edit mode
- 5 This is the finest budget game we've played in years





REVIEW

Odin Sphere



Release Out now Publisher Square-Enix Developer Vanillaware Price £29.99
Players 1 Web atlus.com/odinsphere Also try GrimGrimoire

ODIN SPHERE

Artistic, bold and utterly enthralling

It almost makes a kind of cosmic sense. Only as the PS2 enters its twilight years does a game as ambitious and elegant as *Odin Sphere* arrive. Just look at these screenshots. Hand-painted visuals? What else on the PS2 can even come close to it?



← *Odin Sphere* is hand-drawn, so it's exceptionally nice to look at

And while the art style is the game's sumptuous centrepiece, there's something even more wonderful that can't be properly imparted by the pictures on this page: the animation.

Normally, 2D animation in games uses three to four frames to describe an action. *Odin Sphere* uses three times that number.

So when a character, say, kneels down to cradle her dying sister, you see the whole thing rendered with smooth craftsmanship.

It's little touches like this that allow *Odin Sphere* to communicate a kind of pathos rarely found in games of this ilk. And it's *Odin Sphere's* visual style and animation that allow it to pull off its blockbuster plot with such gusto.



That jeweled bow that you hold is extremely powerful.

Just how does that plot pan out? We don't want to give too much away, but let's just say *Odin Sphere* wouldn't exist if it wasn't for The Brothers Grimm, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the epic opera by Richard Wagner (there's even a character named after him).

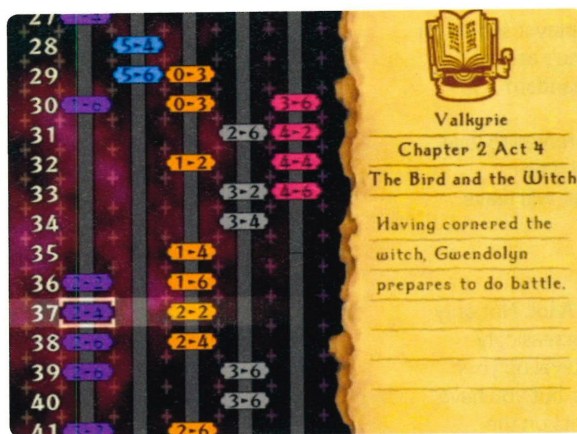


↓ The animations are unusually smooth and detailed for a 2D game



↑ Don't be put off by the pixies and pretty colours: this is a magnificently dark, complicated tale that you should own

→ This screen shows how the five characters' stories overlap



There are five playable characters, each representing one of the warring nations in the land of Erion.

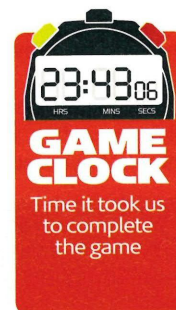
On first impression, all five seem to play quite similarly, but they each have some subtle differences to distinguish them (see 'Cast List' overleaf).

You follow each character's story in sequence, by picking up their book

from a little girl's library that serves as the game's front end. And you can open the whole timeline (by petting a cat) to see how each character's plot overlaps with the others.

Sphere to eternity

A consequence of the game's layered timeline is that you'll be revisiting the



same areas and squaring off against the same bosses. Although the Odin Sphere's robust plot deals neatly with this problem, it still feels repetitive.

Each of the five characters must be levelled up individually, although your found alchemical and dinner recipes carry through to each new story.

But most of Odin Sphere's foibles are rendered moot in the face of its excellent storyline and one of the game's chief joys is coming across the points at which characters' plots intersect, until you confront the epic finale with all five united.

Some of the dialogue and voice work is a little overwrought and will test the boundaries of your suspension of disbelief.

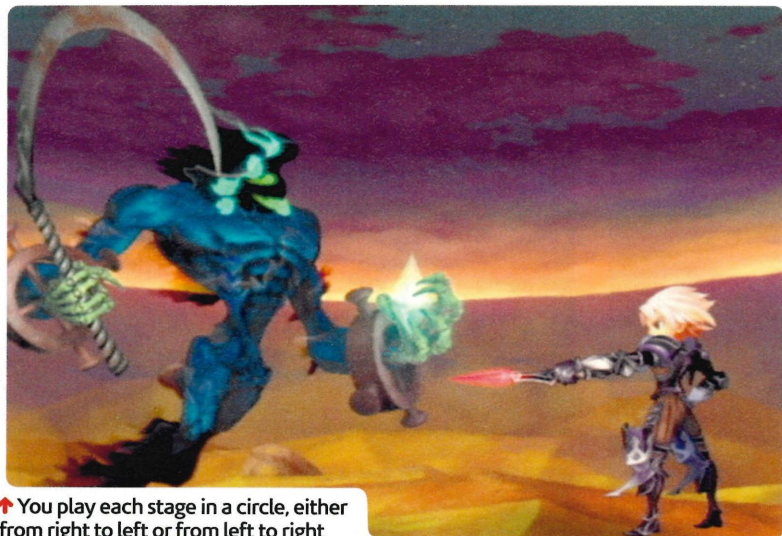
A particular sore point is King Valentine, supposedly the most malevolent tyrant in Odin Sphere's history, who sounds like a hysterical American used-car salesman.

But elsewhere the voice acting is generally fantastic. Most notable are the Demon Lord Odin, a complicated character who commands sympathy and condemnation in equal measure, and brooding shadow knight Oswald.

It has to be said, though, that despite all the glowing praise we're chucking at Odin Sphere, it's not a



↑ Few PS2 games achieve the sense of scale and drama that Odin Sphere has



↑ You play each stage in a circle, either from right to left or from left to right



↑ The cooking minigame will make you feel hungry for real

be ignored. In an interesting twist, certain play areas demand that you mix and use certain potions.

So, while in the Netherworld, you'll need to brew Shine potions to illuminate the darkness, and when traversing the snowy peaks of Horn Mountain, you'll need to concoct a warming potion to ward of the health-sapping cold.

This game is also ridiculously tough. On Medium, you're forced into doing much more of the levelling-up-by-eating thing by sheer necessity.

But even on Easy, which promises to be gentle so that you can enjoy the story, you'll often find yourself facing off against bosses who can kill you in one hit. Thankfully, the game starts you back only minutes before your death with no penalty, but it can still be frustrating to keep restarting.

Each combat area is a circle, so that if you continuously run to the right, you'll come back to the beginning.

SCENE STEALER

THE FIRST TIME YOU MEET BIG KING ODIN HIMSELF



game for everyone. Its veneer of a fast-paced action roleplayer should, in theory, widen the game's appeal beyond that of your standard Japanese RPG.

But the way you're forced to level up your characters is a time-consuming process that will leave some gamers cold.

Sphere factor

Why? Well, you cook. A lot. Not only do you have to cook increasingly complicated meals to level up your characters' health bars, but you have to source the ingredients on the battlefield, and even grow crops and hatch chickens.

Related to this is the game's alchemy system, which is absolutely integral to your survival and cannot

↓ This Victoria Beckham-alike is actually the queen of the dead



↑ Wagner's name reflects the influence of the 19th-century opera composer

↓ Mastering magic becomes integral to later parts of the game



CAST LIST

The five colourful playable characters

GWENDOLYN

BOOK 1: VALKYRIE

The daughter of Demon Lord Odin, Gwendolyn is a noble Valkyrie warrior who finds her allegiance to her country tested after the death of her sister.

OSWALD

BOOK 4: THE BLACKSWORD

A human raised in the Fairy Realm, Oswald wields the belderiver (an extremely powerful magic sword) but is it more of a curse than a gift?

VELVET

BOOK 5: FATE

Princess of the lost nation of Valentine, Velvet seeks to prevent the fulfilment of a prophecy that predicts her death and the destruction of the entire world.

MERCEDES

BOOK 3: FAIRYLAND

Flighty princess of the Fairy Realm, Mercedes has to find the confidence to lead when her nation erupts into brutal civil war.

CORNELIUS

BOOK 2: THE POOKA PRINCE

Originally the prince of Titania, Cornelius awakens to find himself in the Netherworld, cursed to inhabit the body of a Pooka – a mysterious, rabbit-like being.

These areas all connect as a web-like network to form a single chapter (each character has around half a dozen chapters in their individual story, not to mention the epic epilogue that can conclude in another half a dozen possible endings).

These combat areas are where you'll spend the bulk of the game, fending off waves of enemies and the occasional screen-filling boss.

As you dispatch each enemy, they release 'phozons', which can either be hoovered up by your character's



weapon to upgrade your combat and magic skills, or used to help grow any seeds you choose to plant on the battleground. Yes, essentially you feed the seedlings the souls of your murdered enemies. It's something we approve of.

In fact, we approve of Odin Sphere as a whole, in a big way. It's just a shame it's come so late in the lifetime of the PS2 that many people won't get around to playing it. We highly recommend that you make yourself one of the people who do. Mike Sterry

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- ☺ Epic story, excellently acted
- ☺ Stunning animation and visuals
- ☺ Unique play mechanics
- ☹ Can feel repetitive at times

Exceptional in looks, sound and story, Odin Sphere has all the makings of an instant cult classic. Everyone who owns a PS2 should at least give it a try

9



REVIEW

Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles 2



↓ You can switch players on the fly by hitting **L2**



↑ Bring in some clones with **L1** and they'll fight for you



↑ You can unlock loads of characters for the timed challenge mode



Release Out now Publisher Namco Bandai Developer Cavia Price £29.99
Players 1-2 Web narutouc2.namcobandai.com Also try Dragon Ball Z: Tenkaichi 3

NARUTO: UZUMAKI CHRONICLES 2

Proves that actions do speak louder than words

X For a game that's predominantly about hitting, there is far too much procrastinating in between fights in *Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles 2*.

Sure, it does follow in the same, cartoon-style footsteps as its predecessor, but for some reason the story mode has been given a needless injection of waffle.

The tale follows teen ninja Naruto as he and his slap-happy schoolchums race to find the Spirit Orb before the evil Shirogane clan, who plan to use it to unleash hell in the form of the Puppet Master. You can switch to playing as any of these buddies on the fly by tapping **L2**.

There are plenty of foes for you to kick the wind out of, but it's disappointing how long the fights last – or don't last, we should say.

As you travel around different locations on the story mode's World Map, you stumble across random battles with various enemies, only to doff them up within literally seconds and end up seriously underwhelmed.

BONUS INFO

Naruto is voiced by 42-year-old Hawaiian actress Maile Flanagan. A 2006 Emmy Award winner, her other recent work includes playing a lab technician in *Grey's Anatomy*.

These encounters are a waste of time, especially considering the amount of nattering you're already having to sit through courtesy of the aforementioned wordy storyline.

Talkin' loud

But it's not all talk, talk, talk. Although *Naruto: UC2* doesn't grip with its plot, there are still a fair amount of other modes to play with.



↑ Most missions have objectives, but all are primarily about repeatedly smashing rogue ninjas and bandits in the face

Mission mode drops you into set challenges that mostly revolve around punching people a lot.

Survival is pretty much the same except you're bashing people up before the timer reaches zero.

There's also a healthy dose of unlockables (mostly characters and weapons) and the fight mechanics are solid, on the whole, fully satiating your thirst for cartoon violence.

It's just a shame there's so much guff breaking up the action and thus your enjoyment of what comes so close to being a true festival of fighting fun. Nathan Irvine

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

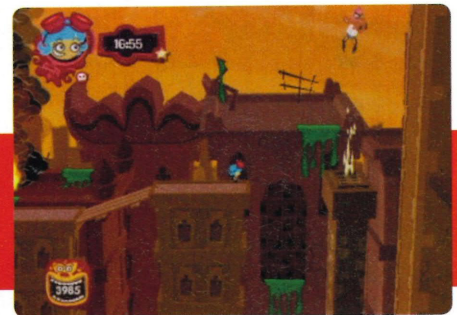
- ☺ Plenty of characters to choose from
- ☺ Bright, bolshy visuals
- ☹ Too much talking
- ☹ Wonky camera angle

The weakest title yet from the *Naruto* series. It feels unsurprisingly familiar, and lacks any real punch

6

↓ El Tigre looks and plays like a duller, lazier version of the cartoon it's based on

↓ The extras include a full episode of the TV show



Release 28 March Publisher THQ Developer Blue Tongue Price £19.99 Players 1
 Web tinyurl.com/yo89qn Also try *SpongeBob & Friends: Battle for Volcano Island*

EL TIGRE THE ADVENTURES OF MANNY RIVIERA

Hola, amigos! What's the Spanish for 'frustrating'?



Patience. Precision. The determination to try, try, and try again, even if the process is painful. These are not personality traits we normally associate with children.

But these are exactly the qualities someone will need to succeed at El Tigre – which is, apparently, for kids.

Having played the game, though, we can't imagine why anyone would want to buy this for their child. Perhaps if they really hated them?

Like most cartoon spin-offs, this side-scrolling, coin-collecting platformer is generic and boring, but that's not the main problem. The problem is that it's too bloody hard.

We don't mean 'hard' in the sense of 'challenging', 'demanding', 'hooray, I finally nailed that tricky jump after 15 tries'. We mean 'hard' in a 'what have I done to this developer to make them hate me so much?' sort of way.

The road to El

Some sections of the very first level were so tricky that three different members of Team OPS2 had to be called upon until we found someone with 'mad' enough platforming skills. And that means it's way, way too hard for its target audience.

You end up doing each section over and over until every last drop of fun is drained out, then finally finish the level with no feeling of joy, only relief that you'll never have to see it again.

Except that you will, because the next level is virtually identical, and so is the one after that.

There are no new attacks or combos to learn, barely anything to

unlock and you don't get stronger, however many coins – sorry, 'macho' – you collect. You do, though, get a growing feeling that life is too short to bother with El Tigre. *Sophie Mason*



PlayStation 2
 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- ☹️ The music's groovy. For a while
- ☹️ Too difficult to be fun
- ☹️ Repetitive. And also repetitive
- ☹️ Nothing interesting to unlock

Pointless, boring and annoying: a one-idea game that's so difficult it'll make your kids hate themselves

4

HOW MANY TIMES DID I DIE?

Trying to get through the third stage of the first level

332

← Flaming skulls instead of vultures is what counts for variety in this game



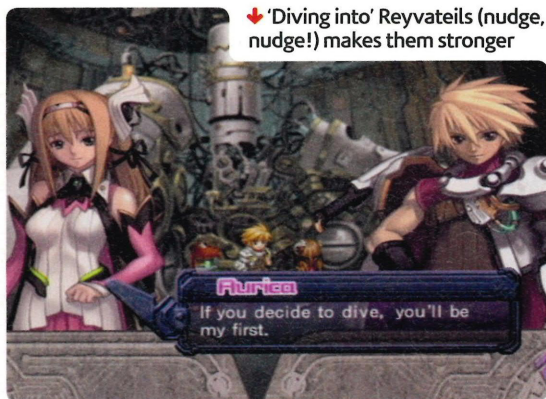
REVIEW

Ar Tonelico

⬇ You only need use one tactic to win pretty much every battle



Release Out now Publisher 505 Games Developer Gust Price £29.99 Players 1
Web nisamerica.com/games/artonelico Also try *Atelier Iris 3: Grand Phantasm*



⬇ 'Diving into' Reyvateils (nudge, nudge!) makes them stronger



ARTONELICO MELODY OF ELEMIA

No amount of auto-tune could fix this performance



The world is nothing but two shards of earth connected by a living tower called the Ar Tonelico. Deadly viruses have broken free and it's up to you, a young knight, to save humanity.

So far, Ar Tonelico: Melody of Elemia is standard Japanese roleplaying game fodder, from the repetitive dungeon exploration to the item synthesis system.

The main potential for interest comes from the Reyvateils – female

artificial lifeforms who use Song Magic in battle to help you.

While adding a new dimension to turn-based fighting, Reyvateils also bring a dating-sim element.

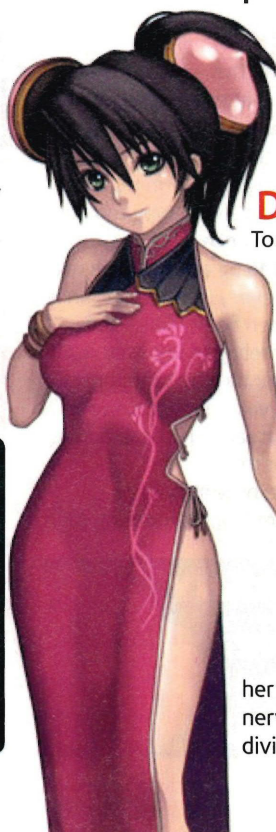
Dive to survive

To unlock a Reyvateil's abilities, you must 'dive' into her Cosmosphere (psyche) and solve her emotional problems. This could have been a unique challenge, but the paths you follow are strictly linear.

Meanwhile, you're plunging through sub-Carry On levels of innuendo and sexism that make diving akin to being trapped in a circle of hell.

Every time you're told how girls are a bit silly, or a Reyvateil comes into your bedroom at night, looks at you with her massive manga eyes and says she's nervous because it's her 'first time diving', you'll die a little inside.

AT:MoE also lacks any challenge. Infuriatingly, the battle system involves a good two hours of tutorials, but once you realise the best tactic is to set your Reyvateil to charge her generic 'Boom' spell, swipe the enemy a bit and then unleash it, the game's pretty much won. But then, we were glad it was over quickly. Kim Richards



PLAYER 2

MIKESTERRY

SECOND OPINION

The one thing you just don't do to a cutesy JRPG is cram it with innuendo. But AT:MoE is full of it – perhaps to obscure the ancient combat system?

LEAVE



PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

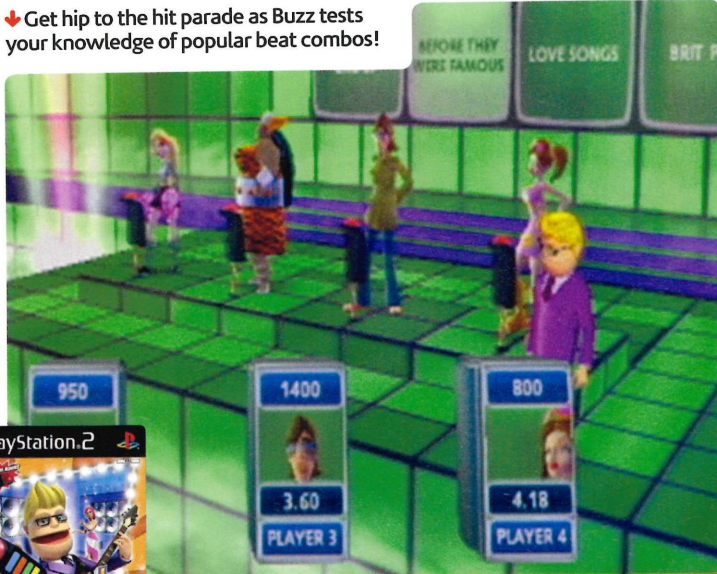
VERDICT

- ☺ Reyvateils are an interesting idea
- ☹ The battle tactics are underused
- ☹ Absolutely no challenge
- ☹ Cringe-making sexual innuendo

An average RPG that could've been so much more if Gust hadn't ignored their solid ideas and focused on the 'sexy' innuendo

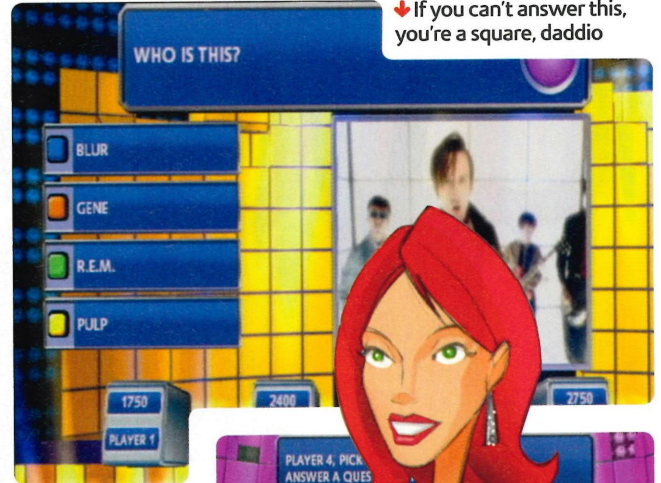
5

Get hip to the hit parade as Buzz tests your knowledge of popular beat combos!



Release Out now Publisher Sony Developer Relentless Price £29.99 (game only), £39.99 (with buzzers) Players 1-4 Web relentless.co.uk/games Also try Buzz! The Music Quiz

If you can't answer this, you're a square, daddio



BUZZ!

THE POP QUIZ

Not top of the pops



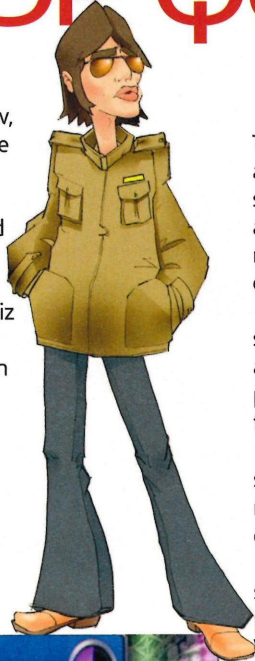
You know the drill by now, right? Buzz! is a quiz game that uses Sony's unique handheld buzzers, designed to bring competitive fun and entertainment unto us all.

But whereas Buzz! once broke gaming boundaries, with The Pop Quiz it's starting to look a little tired.

After choosing your avatar from an all-too-familiar choice of faces and sounds, you go straight into the multiple-choice questions.

Spin me right round

All the familiar Buzz! round formats are here: Pie Fight, Point Stealer, Pass The Bomb and a quick-fire finale.



There are also modes specific to The Pop Quiz, but these are uninspired and mostly rather similar, such as the self-explanatory 'Name that Band' and 'What's that Song?' or two rounds where you choose a category of questions to answer.

The questions themselves are suitably challenging, pleasingly varied and cover a reasonably long timeline, provided your specialist decades are the 1990s and 2000s.

They also take in a wide range of styles, although how exactly rock, metal, R'n'B and techno can be defined as pop is slightly baffling.

And despite the inclusion of some stupidly tenuous questions ('This performer shot to fame in *Pop Idol*. Who won that series of *Idol*?'), there's rarely a repeated query.

Unfortunately, some questions are unintentionally difficult to answer. During timed questions, for example, a song intro is played and you must guess either the band or song name.

But it takes so much time to even begin to identify slow-starting songs that the timer runs out. And most of the start of each clip is drowned out by canned applause.

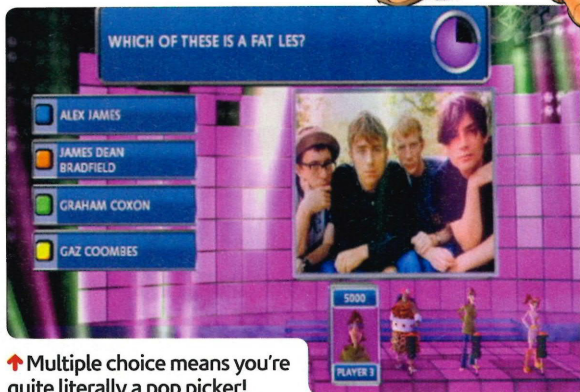
Plus, the majority of songs are poor cover versions, meaning you'll

struggle to recognise them even once the answer has been revealed. That's a fatal design flaw, given that music is crucial to the success of this game.

All by myself

A singleplayer option has been added this time, but it's criminally short and uninspiring. In any case, Buzz! is a party game, so why would you want to play it alone?

Buzz! Pop Quiz is entertaining enough, but it grows old very quickly. If you're a veteran of Buzz! Games, there's nothing new here. Even Buzz's purple suit looks passé. Kim Richards



Multiple choice means you're quite literally a pop picker!

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- ☺ Challenging pop teasers
- ☺ Entertaining for Buzz! newbies
- ☹ Nothing new for Buzz! veterans
- ☹ Song intro nightmares

Entertaining, but anyone familiar with the series will find nothing new here. Disappointing

6



**COMPUTER AND
VIDEO GAMES...**

Established 1981



HALL OF FAME

Ⓐ PS2'S 100 GREATEST Ⓞ BEST GAMES EVER ⊗ CLASSICS Ⓚ HISTORY



WELCOME TO THE OPS2 HALL OF FAME

Kingdom Hearts II is a story of friendship and courage. A tale of darkness and light, of good and evil, of loyalty and loss. And it'll break your heart.

In the second magical collision of Disney and Final Fantasy, young hero Sora is reunited with Donald Duck and Goofy to take on the Heartless once again. But along the way, he's determined to find his childhood friends Riku and Kairi.

Disney do well

If the idea of playing with the likes of Mulan, The Beast, Jack Sparrow and Simba isn't enough for you, familiar FF faces turn up, too: Vivi, Aeris, Seifer, even Cloud and Sephiroth.

KH II is fought in real time, with some of the most dynamic and beautifully fluid combat in any game. You feel the power behind every stunning spell and epic combo.

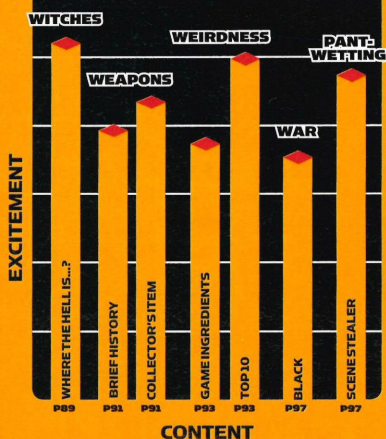
Throw in an achingly emotive soundtrack and a narrative to test your heartstrings and you have a truly powerful game.

KIM RICHARDS
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
krichards@futurenet.co.uk



'A SUPER-CUTE ADVENTURE'
#30 KINGDOM HEARTS II

THIS SECTION CONTAINS



HALL OF FAME ESSENTIAL INFO

HOW A GAME GETS IN THE TOP 100

We don't award membership to the Hall Of Fame lightly. To prove itself worthy of induction, a game must demonstrate many of these qualities: outstanding gameplay, glorious graphics, pioneering innovation, superior use of sound and great replay value.

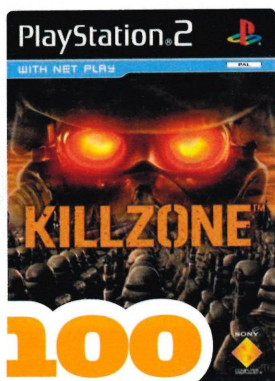
WE USE OLD REVIEW SCORES

Scores for games listed in the Hall Of Fame are those that were awarded when the game was first reviewed in OPS2. Times change and technology evolves, so some of the games released early in the PS2's life, while still great, may not have the same polish as more recent titles.

AWARDS

If you see this medal on the verdict box in a game review, it means the title is worthy of a place in the Hall Of Fame and will be inducted in the following issue.





100

KILLZONE

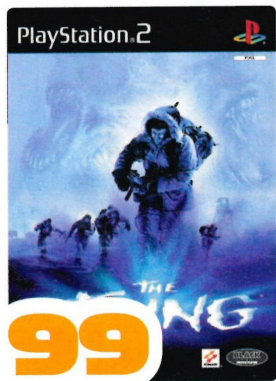
Sony, 2004 **Shooter**

Didn't turn out to be the Halo-killer that it was billed as, but worth a blast anyway, if only to see what all the fuss was about.

Buy it if... you need a lesson in vaulting ambition and you like blasting aliens.

OPS2 #51 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



99

THE THING

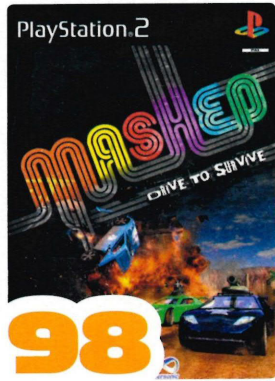
Konami, 2002 **Horror**

Takes up where the 1982 sci-fi/horror movie left off: you and your troops must survive a nightmarish Arctic in a tense, atmospheric thriller. Chilling stuff (arf!).

Buy it if... you don't feel the cold.

OPS2 #25 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



98

MASHED

Empire, 2004 **Racing**

Birds-eye-view driving with weapons that just screams to be played with three mates via multitaip. The definitive party racer.

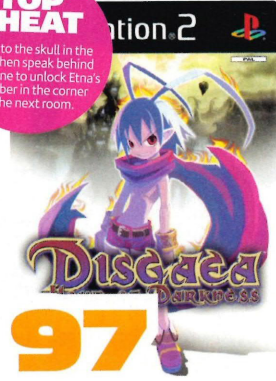
Buy it if... the local garage won't fit homing missiles to your motor.

OPS2 #48 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP CHEAT

Speak to the skull in the shop, then speak behind the throne to unlock Etna's Chamber in the corner of the next room.



97

DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS

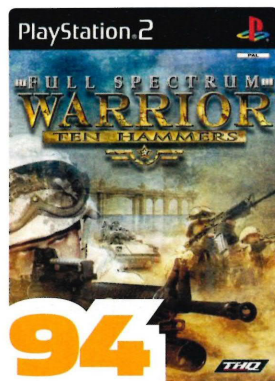
KOEI, 2004 **RPG**

Strategic RPG with more depth than the Marianas Trench and it's full of giggles.

Buy it if... the idea of deploying exploding penguins in a tactical RPG appeals.

OPS2 #47 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



94

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS

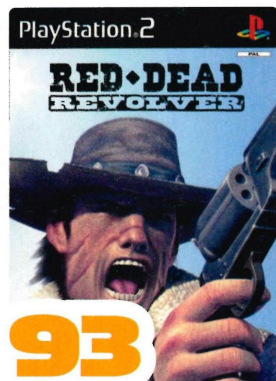
THQ, 2006 **Tactical shooter**

Hardcore, squad-based tactical sim used by the US Army to help train new recruits.

Buy it if... you failed your Territorial Army recruitment physical.

OPS2 #72 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



93

RED DEAD REVOLVER

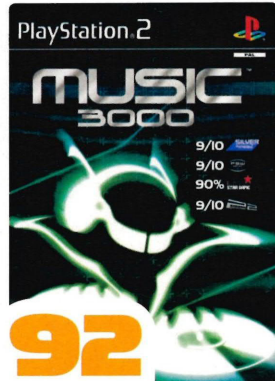
Rockstar, 2004 **Adventure**

Not quite as good as Gun (see #76), but if you love John Wayne and shooting greasy robber-barons in the face, this is for you.

Buy it if... in your house, 'spaghetti' goes with Westerns, not bolognese.

OPS2 #47 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



92

MUSIC 3000

Jester Interactive, 2003 **Music**

A powerful music editor. There's little else like this on PS2; it lets you sample MP3s, CDs or even your old GameBoy.

Buy it if... you tout yourself around as the new Fatboy Slim.

OPS2 #33 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



91

WORMS FORTS

Sega, 2004 **Real-time strategy**

Multiplayer laughs with an extra input of strategy via the fort-construction element – vastly under-scored in its original review.

Buy it if... throwing sheep, rhinos and grannies at your friends sounds like fun.

OPS2 #53 **7/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



88

SECOND SIGHT

Codemasters, 2004 **Adventure**

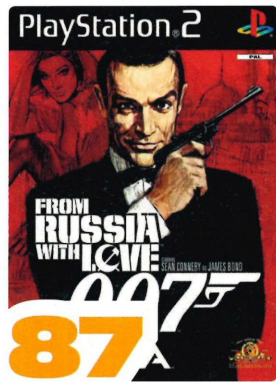
There aren't enough games that let you telekinetically throw people off buildings.

Buy it if... you ever wondered what Professor X from *The X-Men* would be like with no wheelchair and an SMG.

OPS2 #50 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP CHEAT
Kill the guard playing an arcade machine. Use the machine to make the Earth Impact minigame available through the Pause menu.



87

JAMES BOND 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

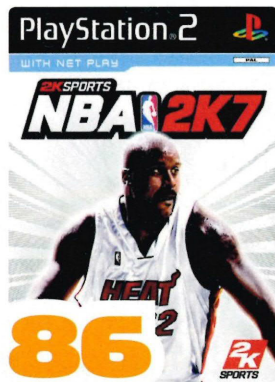
EA, 2005 **Action**

Superb adaptation: as close as you'll get to being 007 without actually killing a man.

Buy it if... you've been ex-schpecting it, Mr Bond.

OPS2 #66 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



86

NBA 2K7

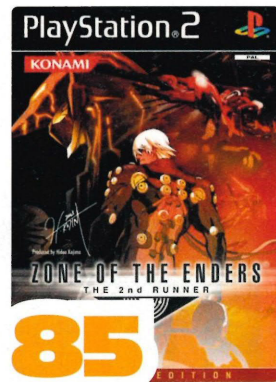
2K Sports, 2006 **Sport**

You don't have to be a b-ball fan to enjoy the subtleties of this top-tier basketball game. If you are, well, 2K7 will have you believing in true love.

Buy it if... the local court is rained out.

OPS2 #79 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



85

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: 2ND RUNNER

Konami, 2003 **Action**

Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima's other series, it couples scraps in flying mechs with a bonkers plot to great effect.

Buy it if... you're a Transformers fan.

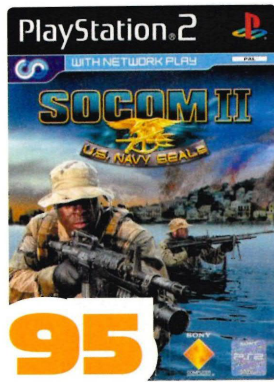
OPS2 #38 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



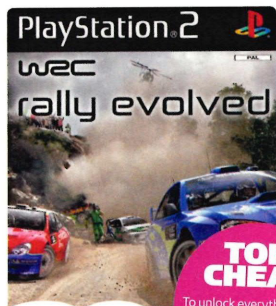
96

WALLACE AND GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT
Konami, 2005 **Platformer**
Well-crafted, with pleasing graphics that do justice to the original characters.
Buy it if... you wear the wrong trousers.
OP2S #65 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



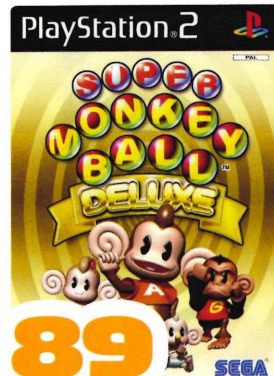
95

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS
Sony, 2004 **Shooter**
The daddy of squad-based tactical war simulations, SOCOM still boasts a thriving online community.
Buy it if... you've yet to experience the joys of squad-based online play.
OP2S #43 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



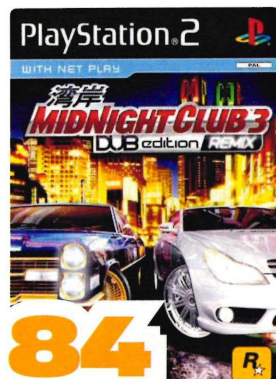
90

WRC RALLY EVOLVED
Sony, 2005 **Racing**
Sits neatly between punishing sim and fluffy arcade racing and remains accessible while gradually ramping up the challenge.
Buy it if... you've already nailed Colin McRae Rally 2005.
OP2S #65 **9/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



89

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE
Sega, 2005 **Puzzle**
Crazy action-puzzler-racer with chimps locked in giant plastic balls. A bit like that dream we have after eating cheese.
Buy it if... hamster balls fascinate you.
OP2S #59 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



84

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX
Rockstar, 2006 **Racing**
Nitro-tastic, open-world street racer with a generous selection of authentic vehicles, modding options, race types and tunes.
Buy it if... you're a fast-driving insomniac.
OP2S #72 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



83

HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX
EA, 2007 **Adventure**
Roam freely around Hogwarts in a surprisingly fantastic game that Potter obsessives and lay folk alike will enjoy.
Buy it if... you're not a Muggle.
OP2S #87 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

SECRETS ARCHIVE

Cheats, Easter eggs and hidden goodies from some of the PS2's greatest titles

LEVEL SKIPPING!



SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

To skip to Level 2, enter **□, ←, →, □, ←, ↓**. Skip on the Pause menu. To skip to Episode 4, enter **↑, →, →, ↑, ←, ←**. And to skip to the final episode, it's **↓, ↑, ←, ←, □, →**.

SECRET MESSAGE!



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

To see a hidden message from the game's developers, play through the Liberty Island level. At the end of the level, go into the Statue of Liberty's head and look for the message printed in lights.

UNDISCOVERED SPECIES!



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

Take a photo of every animal in the game, submit them to the Science Center and you'll unlock the Animal minigame Mdisk.



SHOW US YOUR EASTER EGGS!

Email your game tips to psnation@futurenet.co.uk

WHERE THE HELL IS...?

GrimGrimoire

Koei, 2007



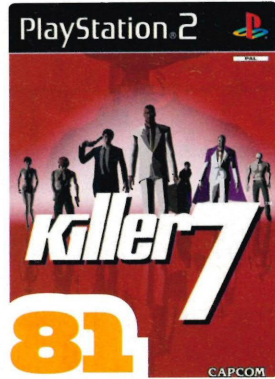
This month's great game that didn't quite make it into the Top 100 is real-time strategy Grim Grimoire. Our Kim can't believe it's not got a spot because, she says, "it's got such delicate artwork, such attention to detail, a deeply compelling story and fiercely tactical battles".

Did we miss out your fave game? Tell us why it should go in! Contact details on p3.



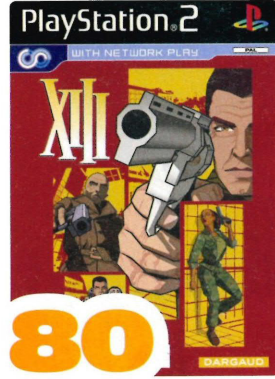
82

RATCHET & CLANK
 Sony, 2002 **Platformer**
 One of the finest games of the PS2's early years, the original R&C is still one of the most entertaining, inventive romps you can buy, even after three sequels.
Buy it if... you haven't played it already!
OPS2 #26 9/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



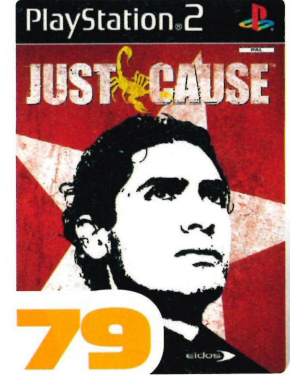
81

KILLER 7
 Capcom, 2005 **Action**
 Unorthodox, on-rails shooter where you play as a wheelchair-bound assassin who can call on seven personalities with special powers to work for him.
Buy it if... the voices tell you to.
OPS2 #61 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



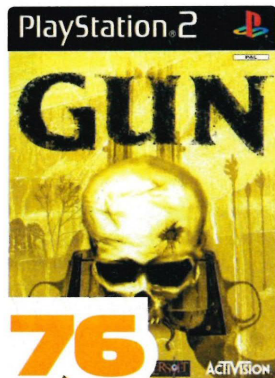
80

XIII
 Ubisoft, 2004 **Shooter**
 Highly original shooter starring a special-forces agent with amnesia who must crack a global conspiracy. Presented just like the cult comic book it's based on.
Buy it if... you love graphic novels.
OPS2 #40 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



79

JUST CAUSE
 Eidos, 2006 **Action**
 Parachute into the shoes of a CIA agent and bring down a corrupt government. Huge, beautiful and free-roaming.
Buy it if... the idea of Grand Theft Auto with politics gets you excited.
OPS2 #77 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



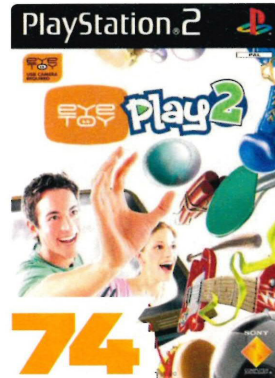
76

GUN
 Activision, 2005 **Shooter**
 Gun-totin', horse-ridin', baccy-chewin', poker-playin', free-roamin' Wild West action with a classic cowboys'n'indjuns storyline and great voice acting.
Buy it if... you're an outlaw.
OPS2 #67 9/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



75

ACE COMBAT: SQUADRON LEADER
 Sony, 2005 **Shooter**
 An unashamedly arcadey flight sim with tons to do and all kinds of aerial combat.
Buy it if... you failed your eye test for the RAF.
OPS2 #56 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



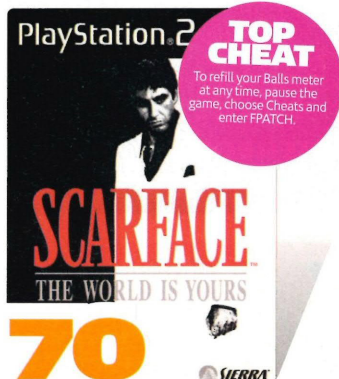
74

EYETOY PLAY 2
 Sony, 2004 **Party**
 Twelve entertaining, movement-based mini-games, plus the ability to turn your EyeToy camera into an inexpensive home security system, will make you smile.
Buy it if... you dream of being on the telly.
OPS2 #53 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



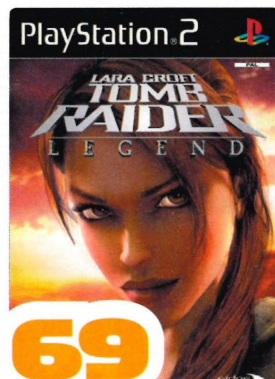
73

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES
 Sony, 2005 **Platformer**
 Cartoon japes starring a light-fingered raccoon and his gang. Sly is slick, stylish and bursting with ideas.
Buy it if... diamonds are your best friend.
OPS2 #52 9/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



70

SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS
 Vivendi, 2006 **Action**
 A GTA-inspired swear-a-thon that has you guiding Tony Montana from death's door to top of the Miami underworld.
Buy it if... you wanna play rough.
OPS2 #78 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



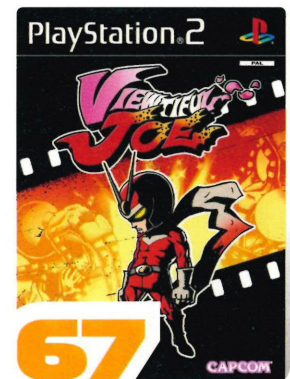
69

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND
 Eidos, 2006 **Adventure**
 Helping us forget the horror that was Angel Of Darkness, Lara's real PS2 debut is a trifle easy and a little short but a return to past form nonetheless.
Buy it if... you had a happy Anniversary.
OPS2 #71 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



68

ROGUE GALAXY
 Sony, 2007 **RPG**
 An excellent intergalactic roleplayer that borrows heavily from Star Wars, but in the most affectionate way. And with pirates.
Buy it if... you want great characters, settings and story. With pirates.
OPS2 #86 9/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



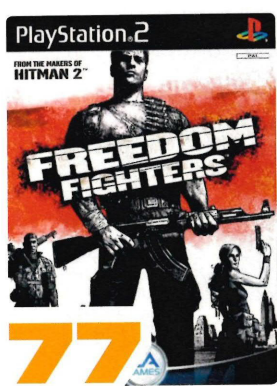
67

VIEWTIFUL JOE
 Capcom, 2004 **Fighting**
 A sexy marriage of snazzy, comic-book visuals and a retrotastic difficulty level, this loves to be hard but is hard not to love.
Buy it if... the words 'challenging' and 'retro' quicken your pulse.
OPS2 #52 8/10
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



TOP FACT
Cover star Andrew Flintoff won the Beard Liberation Front's Beard of the Year award in 2004 and 2005.

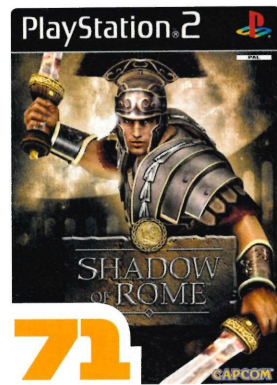
78
CRICKET 07
EA, 2006 **Sport**
The definitive sim of the ultimate real-time strategy game, it's more demanding than the Brian Lara games but also far superior. **Buy it if...** you know your square cut from your Square-Enix.
OP2 #80 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



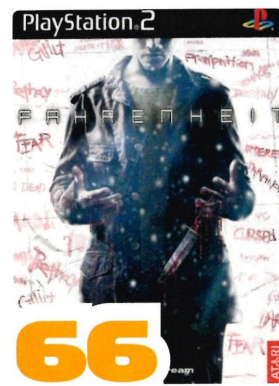
77
FREEDOM FIGHTERS
EA, 2003 **Shooter**
Insanely addictive strategic and tactical shoot-'em-up set in a bleak New York overrun by Communist Russians. **Buy it if...** you wonder what it would've been like if Russia had invaded the USA.
OP2 #37 **9/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



72
AMPLITUDE
Sony, 2003 **Music**
Vastly under-rated rhythm-action title: perform, mix and remix your way through classic tunes from the likes of David Bowie, Slipknot, BT, Pink and Run DMC. **Buy it if...** you're a bedroom DJ.
OP2 #38 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



71
SHADOW OF ROME
Capcom, 2005 **Action**
Gruesome toga'n'slash action mixed with stealthy detective work and a story that has more twists than Homer's *Odyssey*. **Buy it if...** *Gladiator* and *The 300* are your favourite films.
OP2 #56 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



66
FAHRENHEIT
Atari, 2005 **Adventure**
Ambitious and engrossing, this plays like an interactive movie. You must find out how you were made to commit a murder before the police catch up with you. **Buy it if...** you like messing up your mind.
OP2 #64 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



TOP CHEAT
For unlimited Crew Charge, enter ↓↑↑↑→←→ at the main menu.

65
NEED FOR SPEED CARBON
EA, 2006 **Racing**
A blur of spoilers, nitros and elaborate paint jobs that speeds past you in the outside lane doing 175mph, this is the best in the Need For Speed series so far. **Buy it if...** you feel the need.
OP2 #79 **8/10**
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF... RATCHET & CLANK

The furry fella and his robot pal have quite a history together...



2002
RATCHET & CLANK
The pair's first game quickly became the definitive name in platforming, combining lush planet environments, loads of comedy weapons and a heavy emphasis on shooting action.



2003
RATCHET & CLANK: GOING COMMANDO
Arf, arf, do you see what they did there? Ahem. Anyway this second outing had weaponry that could be customised and upgraded, as could Ratchet's spaceship, plus hover bike races and spaceship battles.



2004
RATCHET & CLANK 3
Also known as 'Up Your Arsenal' (ho ho!), this had yet more silly weapons, upgradable through four levels, and Clank got to show off his miniscule prowess. The first of the series to feature online multiplayer.



2005
RATCHET: GLADIATOR
The least strong in this sterling series, in which Ratchet sets off solo - forced to fight in gladiator arenas. Much of the humour was exchanged for a more cinematic style, and platforming gave way to a focus on combat.



2007
RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS
Clank's back, the rude-joke game name is back and the fun's back, too, in this return to form. As well as a new swathe of crazy guns, Ratchet can equip armour, and Clank is used in several minigames.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

Yuna's Tiny Bee Gun controller

The ultimate in Final Fantasy X-2 collectables, this controller is in the shape of the guns used by the game's star, Yuna. The left gun is effectively the left-hand side of the pad, the right gun the right side. Pull the triggers in battle and our diva will bust a cap in some monster ass. £100 well spent..

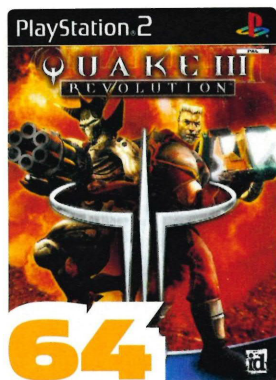


DODGY JPEG ALERT!

RARITY VALUE

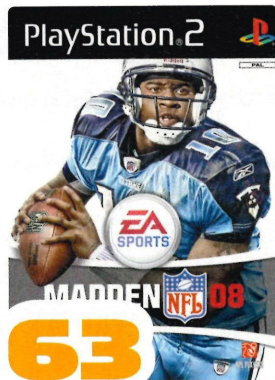
BEES' KNEES

BRITISH BUMBLEBEES



64
QUAKE III REVOLUTION
 EA, 2001 **Shooter**
 Old as the hills it may be, but Quake's only appearance on PS2 remains a solidly enjoyable, stress-relieving blastathon. **Buy it if...** you need a breather from TimeSplitters 2 (see number 4).
OPS2 #6 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



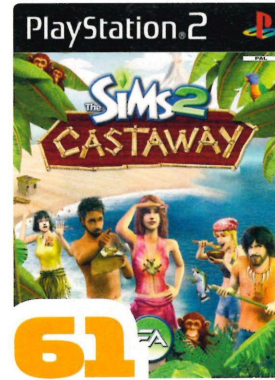
63
MADDEN NFL 08
 EA, 2007 **Sport**
 Another improvement on EA's superlative gridiron sim. With an in-depth Franchise mode and accessible on-pitch gameplay this really is American Football for all. **Buy it if...** rugby looks too dangerous.
OPS2 #90 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



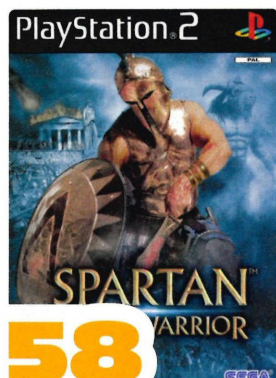
62
REZ
 Sega, 2002 **Shooter**
 A brain-frying, psychedelic, on-rails shooter-cum-music game where you hear colours and see sound. No, really. **Buy it if...** taking your brain to another dimension sounds like a good idea.
OPS2 #16 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



61
SIMS 2 CASTAWAY
 EA, 2007 **God sim**
 You wake up marooned on a desert island. What do you do next? Anything you want in this addictive, funny adventure that is open-ended but never feels aimless. **Buy it if...** you want a holiday.
OPS2 #92 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



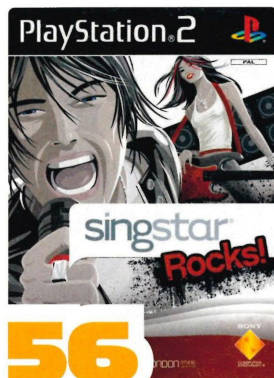
58
SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR
 Sega, 2005 **Action**
 A battle-heavy romp through the ancient world that blends the historical and mythological with swords and sorcery to great effect. **Buy it if...** you want to be one of the 300.
OPS2 #64 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



57
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07
 EA, 2007 **Sport**
 With excellent analogue stick controls for your swing and a dazzling array of official licences and customisation options, this is the definitive pro tour title. **Buy it if...** you're a serious golf fan.
OPS2 #78 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



56
SINGSTAR ROCKS!
 Sony, 2006 **Karaoke**
 Our favourite of the SingStar series, with Bloc Party, The Killers, Coldplay, The Rolling Stones and Keane on the tracklist. **Buy it if...** you wanna rock! Also try SingStars Pop Hits, '90s and Legends.
OPS2 #72 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



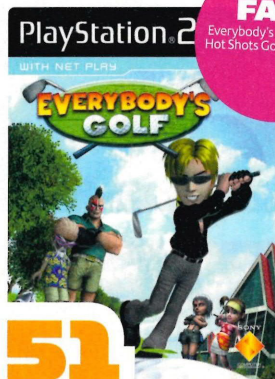
55
PROJECT ZERO 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY
 Ubisoft, 2004 **Horror**
 A gore-free yet terrifying ghost story; your only weapon is a camera that can exorcise the spirits trying to steal your soul. **Buy it if...** you dare.
OPS2 #46 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



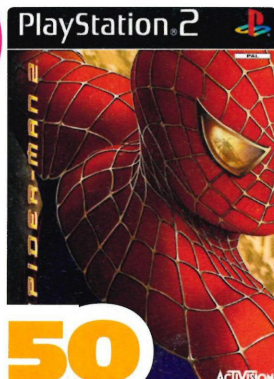
52
DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2
 THQ, 2006 **Action**
 B-movie-inspired shooter that puts you in an alien's spacesuit, hands you an anal probe and lets you take revenge on mankind for all the ET-blasting games. **Buy it if...** you hate the human race.
OPS2 #78 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



51
EVERYBODY'S GOLF
 Sony, 2005 **Sport**
 If you're not bothered about official PGA licences and don't mind the cute, cartoony looks, you'll find this to be the finest and friendliest golf game of all time. **Buy it if...** you can live without Tiger.
OPS2 #65 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



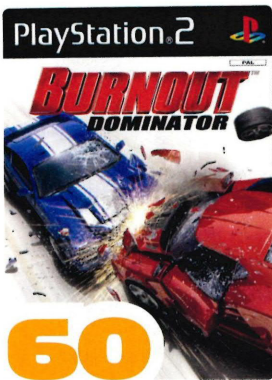
50
SPIDER-MAN 2
 Activision, 2004 **Action**
 Free-roaming and beautifully animated web-slinging adventure based on, but also expanding on, the movie of the same name. The best Spidey game, bar none. **Buy it if...** your spider senses are tingling.
OPS2 #49 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



49
STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II
 Activision, 2005 **Shooter**
 Offers both tactical and arcade gameplay options plus all your favourite characters, vehicles and locales. **Buy it if...** you can feel a disturbance in the Force.
OPS2 #66 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



60

BURNOUT DOMINATOR

EA, 2007 **Racing**
 Reckless driving? We don't recommend it. Burnout Dominator? Yup, totally recommend it. Great soundtrack, too.
Buy it if... you don't want to lose your no claims bonus.

OP2S #83 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



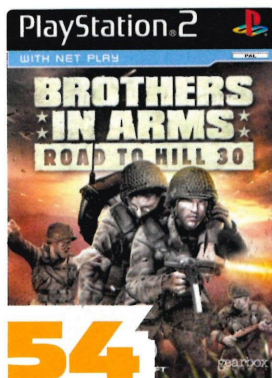
59

BUZZ! THE MEGA QUIZ

Sony, 2007 **Party**
 Quiz show-style fun for all the family that comes with special buzzer controllers. Kids should try the Buzz! Junior series.
Buy it if... you like quizzes but can't stand that Noel Edmonds.

OP2S #84 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



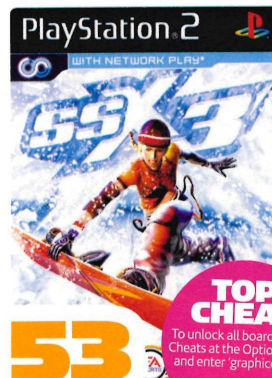
54

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30

Ubisoft, 2005 **Shooter**
 The story of a squad from the 101st Airborne in Normandy after D-Day. Realistic, atmospheric and respectful.
Buy it if... all's quiet on the Western front.

OP2S #58 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



53

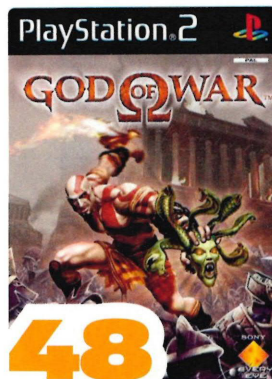
SSX 3

EA, 2003 **Sport**
 Sublime snowboard sim with one giant mountain to play on, dozens of disciplines to learn and hundreds of tricks to pull off.
Buy it if... bailing on concrete is too painful a prospect.

OP2S #40 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP CHEAT
 To unlock all boards, select Cheats at the Options menu and enter 'graphicsdelight'.



48

GOD OF WAR

Sony, 2005 **Action**
 Blessed with divine inspiration, this gore-spattered hack-fest begins the tale of Kratos, the angriest man in ancient Greece. Bettered only by its sequel.
Buy it if... you want to stick the knife in.

OP2S #60 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



47

PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN

Ubisoft, 2007 **Adventure**
 Combat-heavy platforming with a spellbinding story adds up to an electrifying experience.
Buy it if... you can run up walls.

OP2S #54 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

GREAT GAME INGREDIENTS DISGAEA

What gives this series its lasting appeal?

UNDERWORLD ROYALTY



Demon Prince Laharl has just been woken from a 10-year slumber to discover his father (the Ruler of the Underworld) has died and all the demons of hell are trying to steal the throne. Time to wreak vengeance.

TACTICS



Your army of darkness must sweep across the battlefield like a chess board, using every method at your disposal to destroy the enemy.

EXPLODING PENGUINS



You know it's something special when one of methods of mass destruction involves throwing penguin minions at the enemy.

BIGHTHS



Each warrior can wield some almighty spells that require the whole screen to pull off. And then some.

BIG WITS



Dark sarcasm, cutting one-liners, crazy characters, silly names for weapons – you'll be rolling in laughter.

CRAZY FOLK



Warriors, fairies, zombies and demons of all kinds are yours in the detailed character creation system.



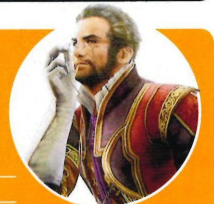
DO YOU LOVE DISGAEA?

Send us your memories: psnation@futurenet.co.uk

TOP 10

Ridiculous names

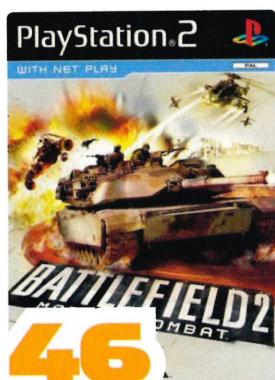
- 10 Pieter Von Eckhardt (Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness)
- 9 Amber Brazil (Raw Danger)
- 8 Roger Bacon (Shadowhearts)
- 7 Guybrush Threepwood (Escape From Monkey Island)
- 6 Crispin Whythead (Psychonauts)
- 5 Master Seymour Guado (Final Fantasy X)
- 4 Mad Monkey McKnight (Ratchet & Clank)
- 3 Willie Wumpa Cheeks (Crash Tag Team Racing)
- 2 Arkvoodle, Lord of the Sacred Crotch (DAH! 2)



#01

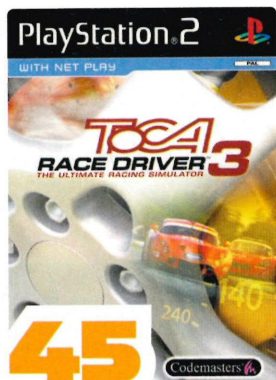
Doctor Cidolfus Demen Bunansa
 Final Fantasy XII

OPS2 HALL OF FAME



46
BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT
 EA, 2005 **Shooter**
 A superb modern warfare shooter that lets you switch between soldiers at the touch of a button. Great in multiplayer, too. **Buy it if...** you're an armchair general.
OPS2 #65 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



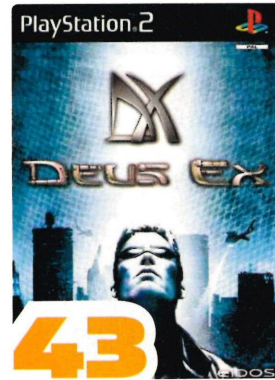
45
TOCA RACE DRIVER 3
 Codemasters, 2006 **Racing**
 Variety is the spice of life and with all sorts of wheels on offer this multi-disciplined racer is a potent feast for petrol-heads. **Buy it if...** you love motorsports but can't choose a favourite.
OPS2 #69 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



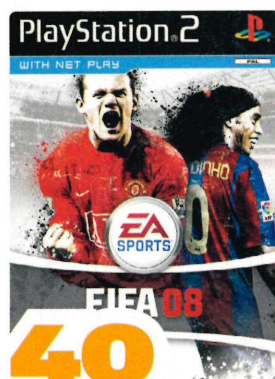
44
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE
 Konami, 2003 **Stealth shooter**
 The plot may be complex but MGS2 is still one of the most thrilling, cerebral games on PS2. Substance includes extras galore. **Buy it if...** you can follow the storyline.
OPS2 #32 10/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



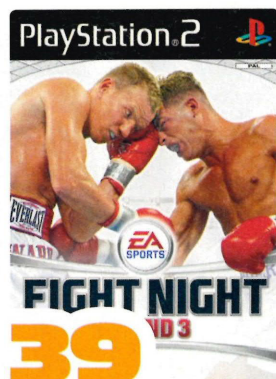
43
DEUS EX
 Eidos, 2002 **RPG**
 PC gamers: they think they're all that. Well, they ain't. PS2 owners have one of their greatest games in the shape of Deus Ex. **Buy it if...** you suspect you may actually be a nanotech-enhanced superhuman.
OPS2 #20 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



40
FIFA 08
 EA, 2007 **Sport**
 The best season yet for the veteran football sim, a plethora of licences combined with striking gameplay. The awesome Be A Pro mode is worth the price in itself. **Buy it if...** you want to keep it official.
OPS2 #91 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



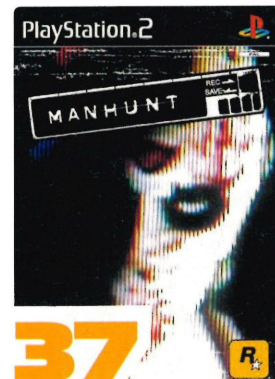
39
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3
 EA, 2006 **Sport**
 There's nothing quite like punching a man in the chin and watching as sweat and blood flies off in slow-mo. **Buy it if...** you need a legal outlet for your anger-management issues.
OPS2 #71 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



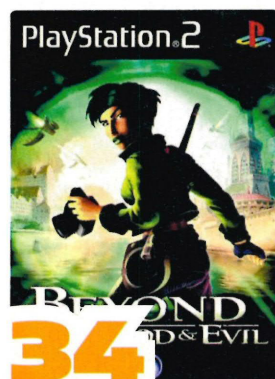
38
CALL OF DUTY 3
 Activision, 2006 **Shooter**
 There are roughly one million WWII games out there, but this is by far the best of them thanks to some intense action and great multiplayer. **Buy it if...** you hate Nazis.
OPS2 #80 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



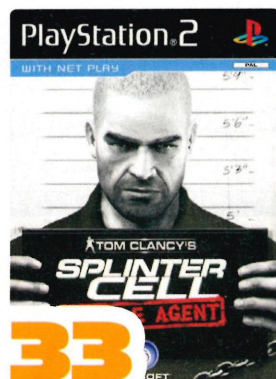
37
MANHUNT
 Rockstar, 2004 **Stealth**
 The grisliest game ever to find its way onto PS2, this sinister stealthier drips with atmosphere and twisted tension. **Buy it if...** you have a lust for gore and are looking for a sicko storyline.
OPS2 #42 9/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



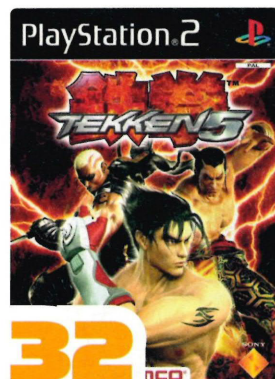
34
BEYOND GOOD & EVIL
 Ubisoft, 2003 **Adventure**
 Under-appreciated weirdness starring a female photo journalist and her piggy uncle fighting off an alien menace. **Buy it if...** you've got an eye for a photo and a penchant for green eyeshadow.
OPS2 #40 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



33
SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT
 Ubisoft, 2006 **Stealth**
 Pinnacle of the futuristic stealth series on PS2, this has moral dilemmas to get to grips with as well as nailbiting action. **Buy it if...** you can think as well as sneak.
OPS2 #79 8/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



32
TEKKEN 5
 Sony, 2005 **Fighting**
 The King Of Iron Fist Tournament returns with more fighters and fancier settings than ever. The quintessential 'easy to play, hard to master' scrapper. **Buy it if...** you heed the call.
OPS2 #61 8/10

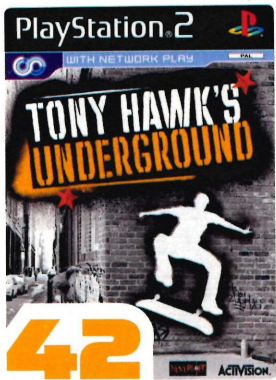
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



31
CANIS CANEM EDIT
 Rockstar, 2006 **Action**
 Grand Theft Auto meets Grange Hill for free-roaming adventure fun set in an American private school. **Buy it if...** you like melting Jelly Babies in test tubes.
OPS2 #79 9/10

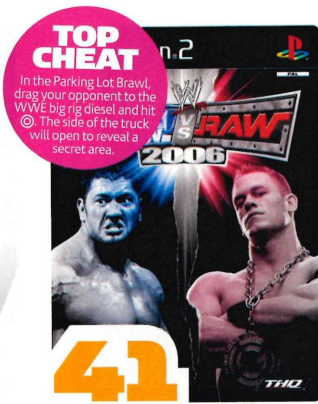
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP CHEAT
 To refill your ammo to maximum capacity, hold **R2** and press **↑** twice.



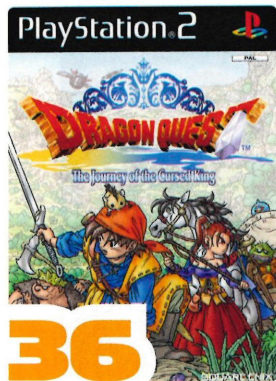
42
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND
 Activision, 2003 **Sport**
 With its story-driven trickplay, this is the best of the many titles in the skate series. **Buy it if...** you ever dreamed of pulling a backside 360° heelflip to fakie.
 OPS2 #40 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



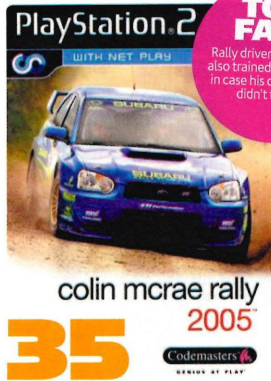
TOP CHEAT
 In the Parking Lot Brawl, drag your opponent to the WWE's big rig diesel and hit ⊙. The side of the truck will open to reveal a secret area.
41
WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006
 THQ, 2005 **Fighting**
 It's not the most recent in the franchise but pound for pound, SmackDown! Vs Raw 2006 is the best wrestler out there. **Buy it if...** you're a wrestling fan.
 OPS2 #66 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



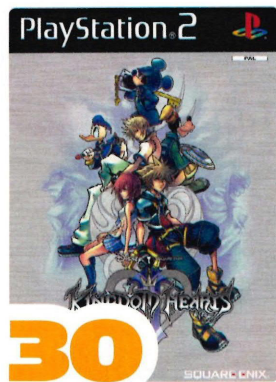
36
DRAGON QUEST VIII: JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING
 Square Enix, 2006 **RPG**
 A truly epic, old-school roleplayer with alluring visuals and a strong narrative. **Buy it if...** you've 100 or so hours to spare.
 OPS2 #71 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



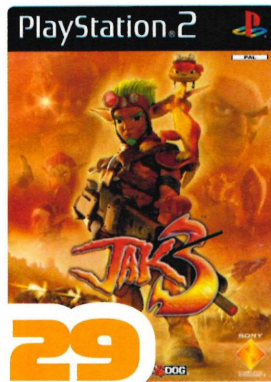
TOP FACT
 Rally driver Colin McRae also trained as a plumber, in case his driving career didn't take off.
35
COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005
 Codemasters, 2004 **Racing**
 Rally legend McRae will be remembered not only for his racing, but also for the ace games to which he lent his name. This is the best mud-sluder on the market. **Buy it if...** you live life close to the hedge.
 OPS2 #51 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



30
KINGDOM HEARTS II
 Square Enix, 2006 **RPG**
 The stars of Final Fantasy make friends with the Disney crew for a super-cute adventure that's as deep as it is handsome. **Buy it if...** Donald Duck and Cloud Strife in the same game is your idea of heaven.
 OPS2 #78 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



29
JAK 3
 Sony, 2004 **Platformer**
 Second only to Ratchet & Clank in the PS2's platformer-cum-shooter stakes, Jak and Daxter's third outing has variety and charm in brightly coloured spades. **Buy it if...** you're a Jak of all trades.
 OPS2 #53 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

PLAYSTATION WORKOUT



Sophie Mason keeps the kids entertained with four games that are ideal for under-sixes

WEEK 01



EASY

EYETOY PLAY: ASTRO ZOO

Help animals by jumping around, waving your arms. Doesn't involve using a controller and will hopefully tire out the nippers enough that they'll go to sleep on time. Hopefully.

- **PLAY IT AT A PARTY**
- **MUST DO** IGNORE THE TWO-PLAYER MODE, JUST TAKE TURNS

WEEK 02



MEDIUM

WINNIE THE POOH'S RUMBLY TUMBLY ADVENTURE

Exploration and collecting with Pooh and friends. It's hand-holdy to the point of being zero challenge, but it's relaxing and a great way to learn to use the controller in preparation for bigger, better things.

- **PLAY IT IN BED WHEN POORLY**
- **MUST DO** FIND ALL THE HONEY POTS IN THE 100-ACRE WOOD

WEEK 03



HARD

BUZZ! JUNIOR: MONSTER RUMBLE

When your little monster's got the hang of using the DualShock, challenge them with this excellent collection of minigames that are good fun for grown-ups, too.

- **PLAY IT WITH GRAN AND GRANDAD**
- **MUST DO** KEEP THE BIG, NASTY MONSTER OUT OF THE MANSION!

WEEK 04



KILLER

APE ESCAPE 3

By now your cheeky monkey's ready for more complex controls, so try them on this bright, bouncy bucket of fun. With lots of different stuff to do, it'll keep them busy, if not exactly quiet, for hours.

- **PLAY IT ON A RAINY DAY**
- **MUST DO** UNLOCK THE METAL GEAR SOLID MINIGAME (YES, REALLY!)

TOP CHUMPS

Ashley

Daddy's little princess

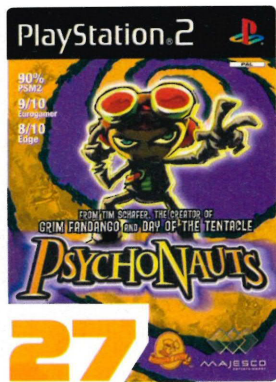
This little madam is an embarrassment to womankind. Kidnapped by a cult, she sits around waiting for a big, burly guy to save her, and when Leon does turn up, she relies solely on him to protect her from the ravenous hordes. Could she stretch to picking up a plank and swinging it at some heads? Oh no... she might break a nail...
See her in Resident Evil 4





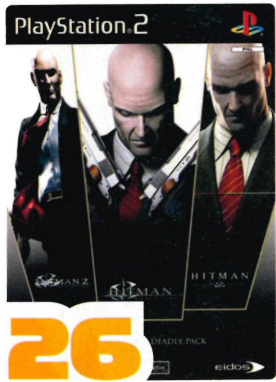
28
ONIMUSHA 3
 Capcom, 2004 **Action**
 Jean Reno stars in this demon-slaying Samurai spectacular that flips between modern day Paris and feudal Japan.
Buy it if... you think the film *Leon* would have been better with a spear whip.
 OPS2 #48 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



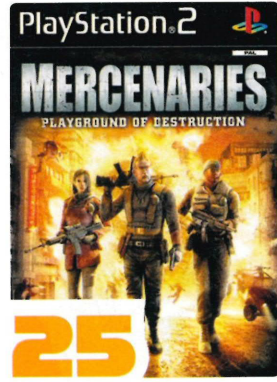
27
PSYCHONAUTS
 THQ, 2006 **Platformer**
 Quirky, funny and genuinely entertaining, this is one of the greatest yet sadly most overlooked platformers on PS2.
Buy it if... you like a side order of laughs with your gaming.
 OPS2 #65 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



26
HITMAN TRIPLE PACK
 Eidos, 2007 **Stealth**
 All three PS2 games – worth getting for Blood Money alone. Sneak around using disguises and cunning to carry out hits.
Buy it if... you fancy yourself as a genetically engineered assassin.
 OPS2 #88 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



25
MERCENARIES
 Activision, 2005 **Action**
 Hijack tanks, demolish buildings and topple a dictatorial regime in North Korea – all while making a pretty penny.
Buy it if... you think the explosions in Grand Theft Auto are kind of puny.
 OPS2 #55 **9/10**

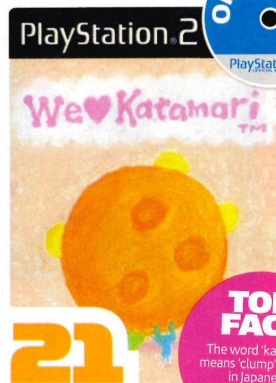
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



TOP CHEAT
 To play as an ewok, go to the codes section of the Mos Eisley Cantina and enter TTT289.

22
LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY
 Activision, 2006 **Adventure**
 The best *Star Wars* game money can buy. It's fresh, funny and cute without being sickly sweet or disrespectful to the films.
Buy it if... you liked the Ewoks best.
 OPS2 #77 **9/10**

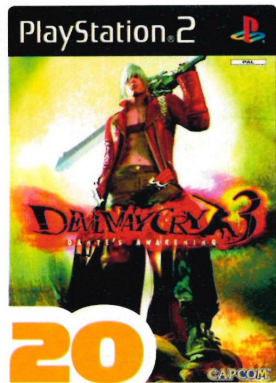
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



TOP FACT
 The word 'katamari' means 'clump' or 'clod' in Japanese.

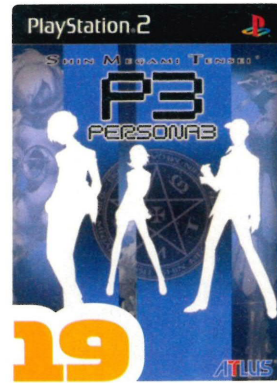
21
WE ♥ KATAMARI
 EA, 2006 **Puzzle**
 Completely mental, utterly unique and dangerously addictive, Katamari's genius is in its simplicity. Just roll a sticky ball around a city and collect stuff!
Buy it if... your life isn't weird enough yet.
 OPS2 #69 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



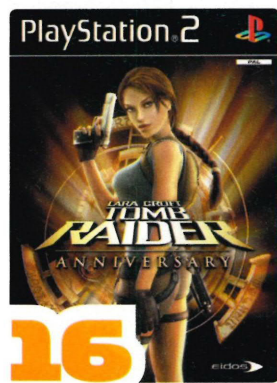
20
DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING
 Capcom, 2006 **Action**
 Super-hard prequel to the first-rate demon-slaying action series. Buy the Special Edition if you're inexperienced.
Buy it if... modern games are too easy.
 OPS2 #77 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



19
SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: PERSONA 3
 Atlus, 2008 **RPG**
 A brilliantly detailed roleplayer that blends thrilling demon-slaying with a unique 'school lessons and socialising' mechanic.
Buy it if... you have an 'interesting' fringe.
 OPS2 #95 **10/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



16
TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY
 Eidos, 2007 **Adventure**
 This stunning revamp of a classic title expands upon the original by extending fiendish tombs and adding extra puzzles.
Buy it if... you want globe-trotting action.
 OPS2 #85 **8/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



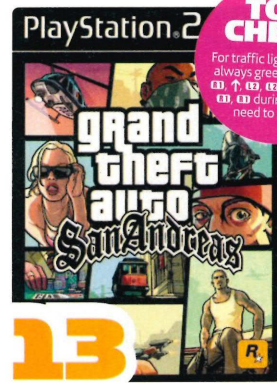
15
GRAN TURISMO 4
 Sony, 2005 **Racing**
 PS2's most comprehensive and authentic racer offers some 700 of the world's finest cars and 50 tracks to drive them around.
Buy it if... you never miss an episode of *Top Gear*.
 OPS2 #57 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



14
RATCHET & CLANK 3
 Sony, 2004 **Platformer**
 This third helping of pan-galactic, combat-centric platforming is a riot of barmy weapons, barmier enemies and glorious environments.
Buy it if... you want *Star Wars* with smiles.
 OPS2 #53 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



TOP CHEAT
 For traffic lights that are always green, enter → ↑ ↓ ← during play (no need to pause).

13
GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS
 Rockstar, 2003 **Action**
 A massively ambitious, crime-filled romp with planes, trains and automobiles by the score and 1001 things to see and do.
Buy it if... you're the original gangster.
 OPS2 #54 **10/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



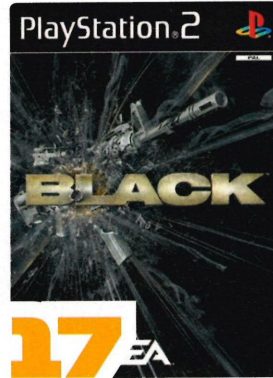
24
DARK CHRONICLE
 Sony, 2002 **RPG**
 An engrossing, attractive Japanese RPG with a great storyline, real-time combat, time travel and town planning among its many delights. Nick's favourite game!
Buy it if... you enjoyed Rogue Galaxy.
 OPS2 #35 **9/10**
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



23
ICO
 Sony, 2002 **Adventure**
 Visually stunning, intensely atmospheric puzzler with simple combat. Reminds you how emotionally powerful games can be.
Buy it if... the puzzles in Tomb Raider were a bit easy for you.
 OPS2 #69 **9/10**
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



18
THE SILENT HILL COLLECTION
 Konami, 2006 **Horror**
 A bumper pack of Silent Hill scares: each chapter has you guiding doomed visitors through a twisted, terrifying ghost town.
Buy it if... you want to own a meaty chunk of horror history.
 Not reviewed
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



17
BLACK
 EA, 2006 **Shooter**
 The makers of Burnout set their sights on the shooter genre with delightfully destructive results. As fine a guns'n'ammo game as you could wish for
Buy it if... you love to blow shit up!
 OPS2 #69 **10/10**
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



12
SOUL CALIBUR III
 Sony, 2005 **Fighting**
 Some purists cry foul at a fighting game involving weapons, but Soul Calibur III is as deep and engaging as they come.
Buy it if... you've a hankering for some stunning-looking swordplay.
 OPS2 #66 **9/10**
 PLAYED IT OWN IT



11
OKAMI
 Capcom, 2007 **Adventure**
 Restore life to a cursed world with a magic 'paintbrush'. An epic, emotionally charged journey with stunning, picture-book art.
Buy it if... you'd like to make the world a nicer place.
 OPS2 #81 **10/10**
 PLAYED IT OWN IT

THE YEAR IN PLAYSTATION 2002

The Queen Mother dies, East Timor gets independence and meanwhile on PS2...

THE BEST



TIMESPLITTERS 2
 Eidos, Shooter
 Blistering gun action, unforgettable characters, big levels, bigger guns and staggering multiplayer options makes for the best shooter on PS2.

THE WORST



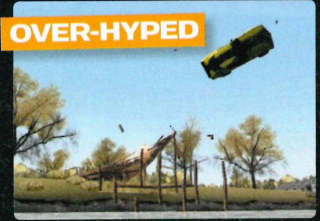
REIGN OF FIRE
 BAM Entertainment, Adventure
 Based on a tedious film, the naff controls, bland graphics and equally bland dragons make Reign Of Fire pure tedium.

UNDER-RATED



SPACE CHANNEL 5
 Sega, Rhythm action
 Ulala and her funky brand of dancing were sadly lost in the wake of hit rhythm games such as Rez and Parappa the Rapper 2.

OVER-HYPED



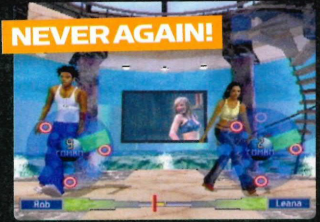
STUNTMAN
 Atari, Driving
 The idea of merging a racer with action themes was a good one, but mediocre tracks and endless menus took away the edge.

FORGOTTEN



SLY COOPER & THE THIEVIUS RACCOONUS
 Sony, Platformer
 Sly's witty charm and fluid action made this game a pleasure from start to finish.

NEVER AGAIN!



BRITNEY'S DANCE BEAT
 THQ, Rhythm action
 A prime example of a cash-in, this pitiful game featured just five of Brit's songs, making it one of the most pointless games in history.

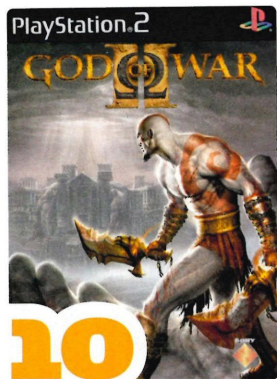
SCENE STEALER



Meeting the Bound Man

Project Zero MC2, 2002
 You're exploring a deserted mansion, hearing nothing but the creaking of floorboards and your blood pumping in your ears. Suddenly, something flashes in the corner of your eye. But... you're alone, aren't you? The hair goes up on the back of your neck... Slowly, you turn...

OPS2 HALL OF FAME



10

GOD OF WAR II

Sony, 2007 **Action**

Accessible, exhilarating and macho as all hell, the second thunderous outing for PS2's angriest anti-hero is an essential buy. **Buy it if...** you're feeling a little tense – and have a strong stomach.

OPS2 #83 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



09

FINAL FANTASY XII

Square Enix, 2007 **RPG**

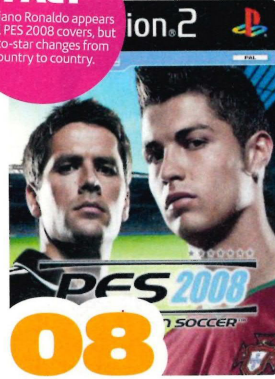
The latest in the fabled roleplaying series is as engaging of plot, epic of scale and achingly beautiful as any of its ilk.

Buy it if... you're on a quest to find the apex of sword and sorcery adventuring.

OPS2 #81 **10/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP FACT
Cristiano Ronaldo appears on all PES 2008 covers, but his co-star changes from country to country.



08

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008

Konami, 2006 **Sport**

The ultimate PS2 kickabout, even more so than last year's fantastic PES 6. Also: plays better on PS2 than it does on PS3. Ha!

Buy it if... the world is at your feet.

OPS2 #92 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



07

GUITAR HERO III

Activision, 2007 **Rhythm action**

The best in this rock-tastic series, with real songs, loads of co-op multiplayer options and fiendishly fierce two-player battles.

Buy it if... you're a legend in your own living room. Or anyone else's.

OPS2 #93 **9/10**

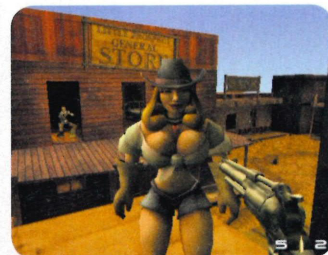
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP CHEAT
To make Expert mode a bit easier, go to Options, Cheats, Enter New Cheat and press these two-note chords: GR, CY, YB, RB, BO, YO, RY, RB

RUNNER-UP!



04



TIMESPLITTERS 2

Eidos, 2002 **Shooter**

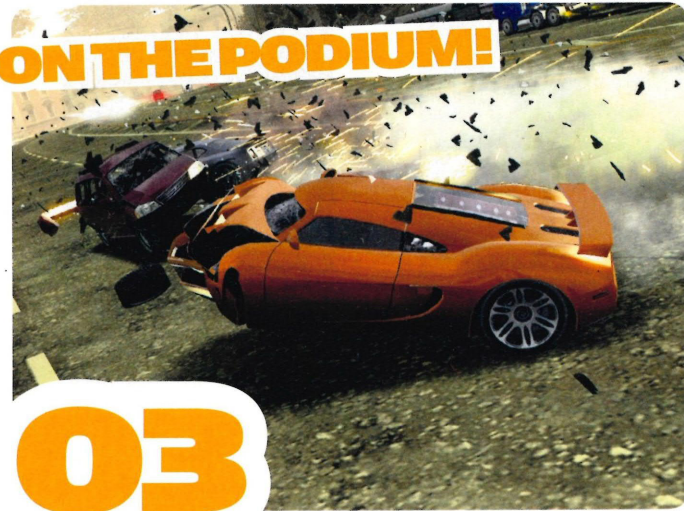
Killzone, Medal Of Honor, Call Of Duty – they all pale in comparison to this, simply the best first-person shooter on PS2. The singleplayer affair stands up by itself but it's in the expansive multiplayer modes that the game really shines. A copy of 'Splitters 2 plus a multitap equals countless hours of fun.

Buy it if... you have friends.

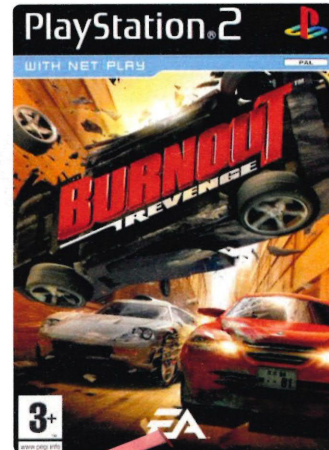
OPS2 #25 **10/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

ON THE PODIUM!



03



BURNOUT: REVENGE

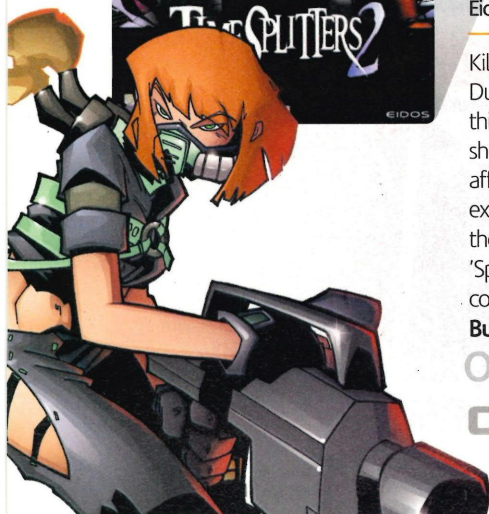
EA, 2005 **Racing**

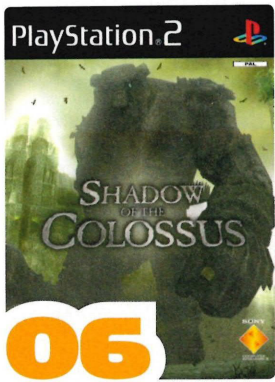
Insanely chaotic race'n'crash action – speed through rush-hour traffic, shoving ultra-aggressive opponents off the road, then watch slow-mo replays of the massive explosions that result. Great online multiplayer, too. All the Burnouts are classics, but Revenge is the definitive version.

Buy it if... VROOM! SMASH! and BOOM! are your favourite words.

OPS2 #64 **10/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT





06

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS
Sony, 2006 **Adventure**

Battle a series of gigantic monsters in a world touched by artistic genius and have your heart warmed by PS2's most original and unique game.

Buy it if... you've got the wanderlust.

OPS2 #68 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



05

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE
Konami, 2005 **Stealth shooter**

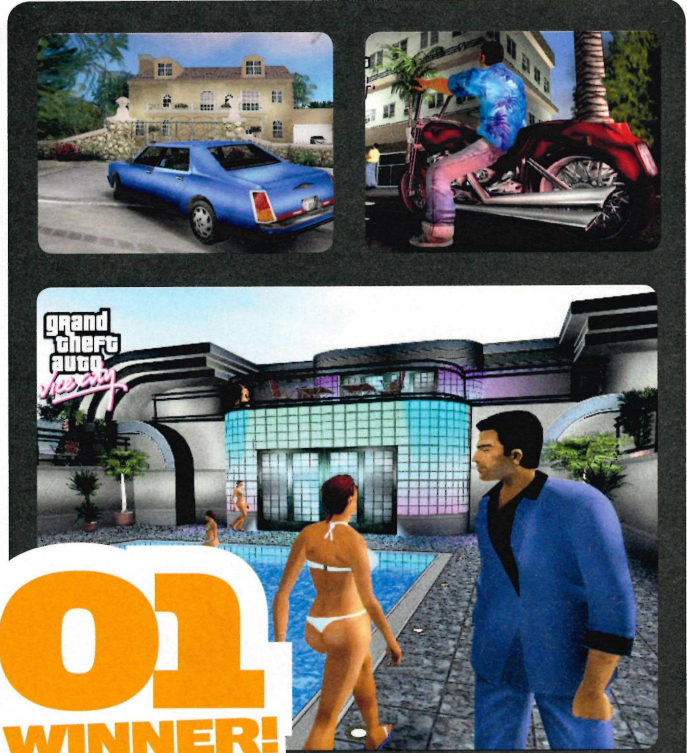
The finest blend of sneaky and shooting that money can buy includes two extra discs containing a mass of extras.

Buy it if... you like to stay hidden.

OPS2 #78 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP FACT
The inclusion of Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake with MGS3: Subsistence was the first time the earlier game had been available in the West.



01
WINNER!

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

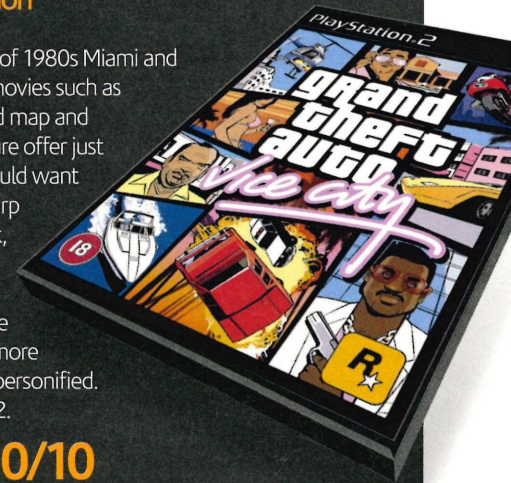
Rockstar, 2004 **Action**

Set in Rockstar's version of 1980s Miami and taking inspiration from movies such as *Scarface*, the open-world map and freeform mission-structure offer just about everything you could want from a game: a razor-sharp script, superb voice work, awesome music, fast driving, helicopter gunships, shooting up the 'hood and oh, so much more besides. Gaming genius personified.

Buy it if... you own a PS2.

OPS2 #27 **10/10**

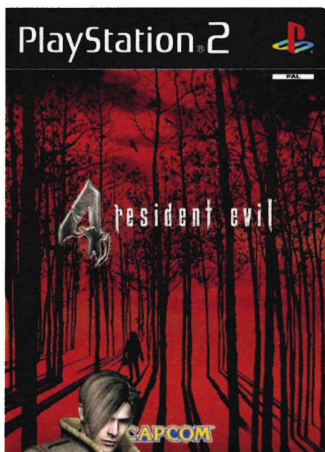
■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



SO CLOSE...



02



RESIDENT EVIL 4

Capcom, 2005 **Survival horror**

An immaculate adventure that outshines every other horror title and most other games full stop. A blend of beguiling plot, puzzles, boss battles and barmy villagers out for your blood, you can play the main game through numerous times without getting bored and there are bonus missions galore too. Essential.

Buy it if... your veins contain blood.

OPS2 #65 **10/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

HALL OF FAME FEEDBACK FORM

O! YOU'RE WRONG!

Dear OPS2, I disagree with your Top 100 in the following respects:

GAME NAME	OPS2 NO.	MY NO.

I am right, you are wrong, so change the list immediately. Thankyou.

Name

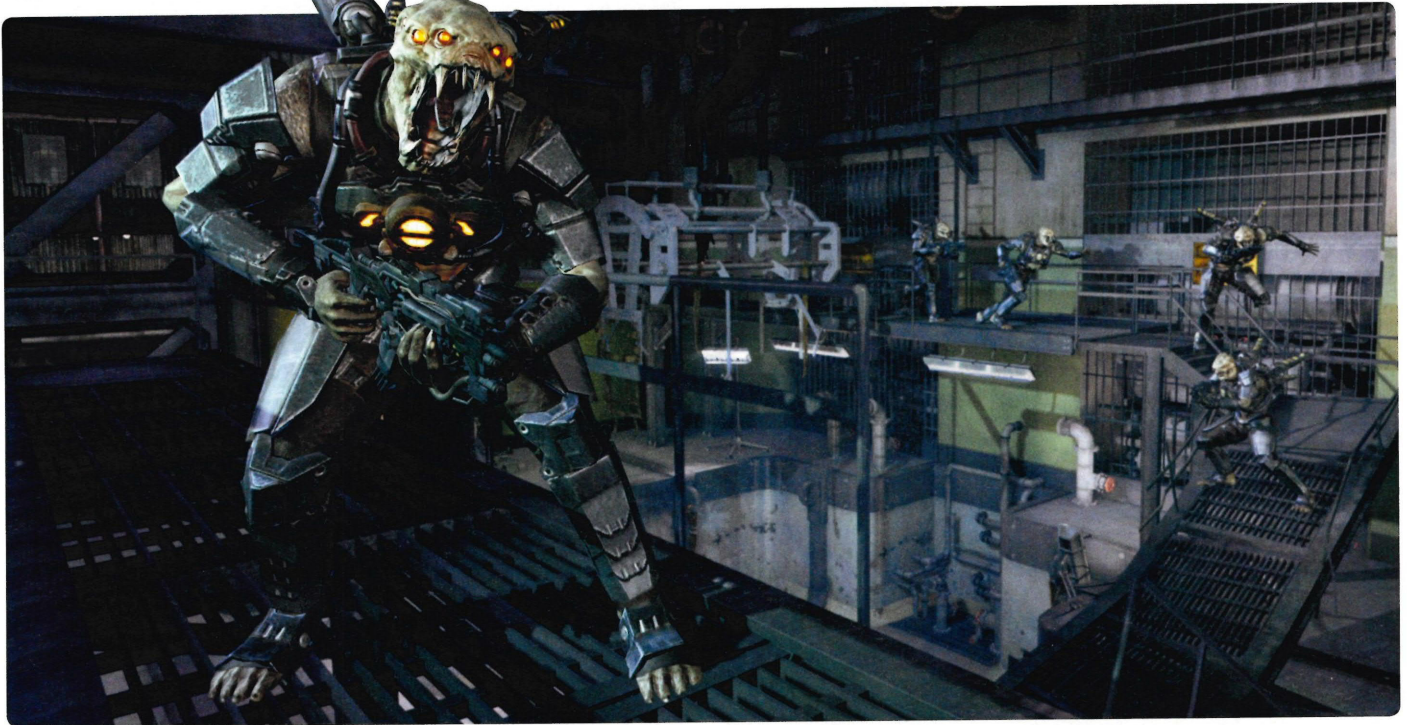
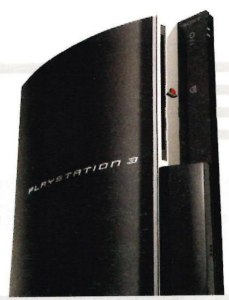
Email

Alternatively email feedback to psnation@futurenet.co.uk



PS3 IN OPS2

All you need to know about what's happening in next-gen



ILLEGAL ALIENS

The USA is about to get overrun in **Resistance 2**

PUB Sony DEV Insomniac Games ETA October WEB insomniacgames.com

After two years' absence the Chimera's retribution for their defeat in the UK in the original *Resistance* is swift and brutal. Their massive airborne attack swamps America in hours, opening the sequel with the alien equivalent of 'shock and awe'.

The invaders are more savage, more bestial than ever, but they're also better equipped, bringing with them new threats, such as robotic drones, and new mutant strains. One of these, the invisible Chameleon, terrifyingly de-cloaks inches from someone's face to tear them apart.

There are bigger enemies too. *Much* bigger. One boss in particular is several hundred feet tall.

But mankind isn't going down without a fight. We've been busy too. The end of *Resistance* saw Nathan Hale a US Marine virally infected with mutant DNA airlifted out of Britain by a strange group of soldiers.

Nathan's destination is Iceland, where he learns his ever-developing mutant healing abilities and telepathic

link with the Chimera leaders, are not unique. The result is a task force of humans called the Sentinels, each with their own abilities and weapons.

A friend in need...

If the single-player story sounds impressive, the co-op campaign is a revelation. It's a complete story in its own right for up to eight players online and promises to be lighter on story, but heavier on action.

There are three classes in co-op: soldier, medic and special-ops trooper



→ There are many new enemies, like this battle drone

↓ These Goliaths are no longer your biggest foes... Erk!

armed with a sniper rifle. Each one has his own upgrade path, advanced by collecting XP from kills and other achievements. Cleverly, special abilities are 'charged up' by killing aliens, so there's no sitting back while the others do the heavy lifting.

The multiplayer game is just as ambitious as the co-op with massive 60-player sessions. But before you panic about overcrowded lobbies the game will split the two 30-man teams into smaller groups. Bagsy the LAARK rocket launcher...



REACH FOR THE SKY

With its space cowboys premise and focus on acrobatic, wall-scaling shootouts **Damnation** is unlike any shooter we've seen

PUB Codemasters DEV Blue Omega Entertainment ETA Winter WEB damnationthegame.com

C Damnation's steampunky, cowboy-flavoured action unfolds in levels that are essentially massive climbing frames built from high, crumbling buildings. Imagine the climbing of Assassin's Creed and the shooting from Uncharted blended together and you're there.



↑ Enemies come from *all* angles

One glaring omission, is the current lack of a cover system. We're also dubious about Rourke's Spirit Vision skill, that enables him to enter a trance-like state that highlights foes as orange outlines, visible through walls.

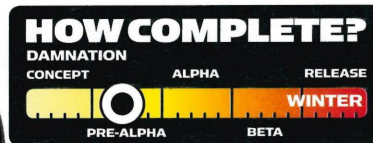
We think some kind of gadget would fit the steampunk vibe better.

Looking up

It's an interesting twist to the usual run-and-gun action, forcing hero, Rourke, to use high ground for a tactical advantage, either by raining death on enemies below or using the rooftops to avoid fights altogether.



↑ This tackles the lack of freerunning space cowboy shooters on PS3 head-on



PS3 TOP 5 CHARTS

The UK's best-selling titles – and that's official!

- 01 UNREAL TOURNAMENT III**
 Publisher Midway
 OPS2 Score 8/10
- 02 COD4: MODERN WARFARE**
 Publisher Activision
 OPS2 Score 10/10
- 03 TUROK**
 Publisher Ubisoft
 OPS2 Score Not reviewed
- 04 DEVIL MAY CRY 4**
 Publisher Capcom
 OPS2 Score 9/10
- 05 BURNOUT PARADISE**
 Publisher EA
 OPS2 Score 9/10

THE MAIN EVENT

Should WWE fear **TNA Impact's** entry into the PS3 ring?

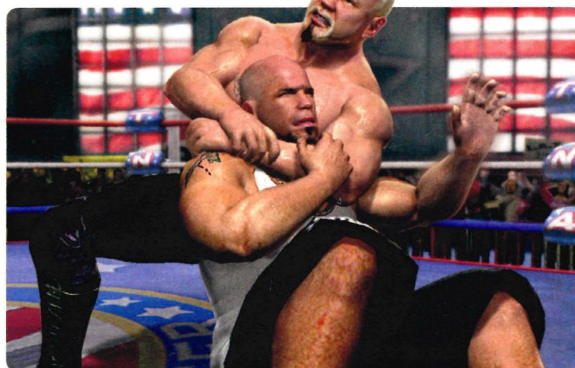
PUB Midway DEV Midway LA ETA June WEB midway.com

X We were hoping that TNA Impact might inject some fresh ideas into the grap genre after a decade of SmackDown! dominance, but those expectations are now being down-sized. It's a visual treat but good looks can only get you so far in the wrestling world. Just ask Torrie Wilson.

Our chief worry is that matches in Impact just don't ebb and flow like well-choreographed wrestling bouts should. Instead of trying to place your opponent in a hold or perform a move, it's often better to sprint around the ring then launch yourself at them every time they get to their feet.

Reversals are fiddly and too many characters perform the same moves – even big man Abyss can pull off the acrobatic Hurricanrana, which is silly.

The roster, which currently stands



↑ TNA Impact looks the part, but it's yet to nail the spirit of grappling

at just 25 grapplers is also a concern. Without strength in numbers, TNA's appeal could be severely limited.

A cute Angle

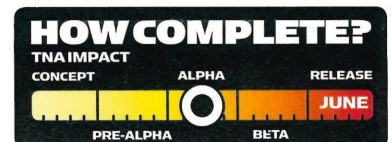
Still, there is some potential here. The motion-captured visuals really do look the part, with the likes of Kurt Angle



↑ Actually, it's not WWE's Kane, but TNA's rip-off version, Abyss

and Samoa Joe reacting with admirable realism to attacks and holds. For instance, if a wrestler is powerbombed on his back he'll arch upwards in pain instantly afterwards, grimacing realistically.

Those reactions – 'selling', in wrestlespeak – show that Midway LA has a keen eye for detail. But the fundamentals of wrestling really need to be nailed first if this is to seduce gamers away from SmackDown!.



PS3 REVIEW

Army Of Two



Release Out now Publisher EA Developer EA Montreal Price £49.99
Players 1 Web ea.com/armyoftwo Also try Conflict: Denied Ops

ARMY OF TWO

Is this PS3's first second-person shooter?



While its heroes may be muscled gun fetishists Army Of Two is a nice, tidy, air brushed conflict.

The game casts you as Salem and Rios, a pair of mercenaries battling evil nutters in Iraq, Somalia, China and 'Generistan' but while their Private Military Company-based tale of corruption and betrayal is solidly told, AOT never feels edgy with the potential for sudden violence.

Of course, AOT's big hook is that the entire game is set up to be played with co-operating heroes. In practice this mostly means that doors have two switches instead of one and some stairs are missing, requiring a 'leg-up'.

His name is Rios...

In battle, you can either both crouch behind cover, firing at the hands and wrists of bad guys hidden 200 yards away, or one of you can create a diversion. This means one player attracts 'Aggro,' while the other flanks, almost invisible to the distracted soldiers. EA Montreal has polished its no-brainer system brilliantly: the player drawing the Aggro actually

glows red, while the other becomes *semi-transparent*. Get injured and the screen practically bleeds red, while approaching death sees your view turn monochrome and begin to 'white-out'. It's far superior to gauges and bars.

The camera and character movement is buff too. Solo players ordering the AI grunt around, in particular, will be impressed with the genius simplicity of the controls.

Things take a turn for the worse with the ability to modify the guns. Buying new weaponry is fun, but the downside is the deliberate inaccuracy of the standard weapons. Even the

↓ Get your buddy to take all the enemy fire...



modified guns are never as accurate as you are. This is a serious flaw in a game about guns.

But what really grates is that your enemies' guns are amazingly accurate. Worse still, you can't even pick up their dropped über-weapons

Whether playing co-op or in one of the deathmatches (strewn cleverly with cash-earning objectives), in the end, AOT just never feels dangerous. The game's fundamentally hobbled weapons are simply the final straw.

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- 😊 Solid story, well told
- 😊 Slick, no-nonsense gameplay
- 😞 Weapon balance is all wrong
- 😞 Enemies are just too accurate

Likable as its twin leads are, AOT's gameplay is hobbled by unbalanced guns and AI that's far too sharp to be fun

6

↓ 'Right, so that's 280 pounds at 15 minutes per pound...'



Release Out now **Publisher** Ubisoft **Developer** Ubisoft
 Montreal **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1 **Web** lost.us.ubi.com
Also try A maths degree

LOST

The real mystery: what's with all the maths puzzles?

C New to Lost? Here's a quick introduction: A plane crashes on a tropical island, spilling a bunch of impossibly beautiful travellers onto the beach. Bad people called The Others show up. Flashbacks are really important. Then there are cursed numbers, polar bears, and a statue with four toes. Bottom line? If you're not familiar with the show, the game may as well be in Polynesian.

You play as photographer and amnesia-stricken new character Elliott, and while the style of the show is reproduced well, nothing else really works.

Isle of plight

You chat to other survivors using a simple menu system but the tasks you get all entail talking to someone who's wandered off, following markers like you're orienteering, or fetching items.

You're never involved in the series' main storyline, so the feeling rapidly grows that the

cast are simply trying to keep Elliott busy so he won't muscle in on the exciting bits.

The only action you do get is in the jungle, where you spend a good deal of time playing hide and seek with the series' mysterious, murderous black smoke along [sigh] *defined* paths.

Eventually you find some dynamite, which should mean excitement, but all it actually means is you have to gingerly inch your way through the jungle. Similarly, the gun you find *hints* at action, but delivers little.

Still, the puzzles are ace, right? Well, no. You repeatedly have to complete maths puzzles using fuses and voltage. It rapidly feels like homework dressed up as fun.

The photography mini-games are better. Here you shoot snaps of pivotal events to help you recall Elliott's murky past. Nailing shots is genuinely satisfying.

That said, if you're really looking for answers to Lost's myriad mysteries you're better off reading Wikipedia.



↑ Your character isn't part of the show's cast. More's the pity

BLACKSITE

Alien shooter is officially FUBAR



Release Out now **Publisher** Midway **Developer** Midway
Price £49.99 **Players** 1-10 **Web** blacksite.com
Also try Resistance: Fall Of Man

A Let's not mince words: this is a so-so alien blaster crippled by technical flaws and a shocking lack of polish.

The problems start as early as the prologue, set in Iraq. The desert is ugly, and some objects are put together so badly that you can literally see the joins.

Even when the action shifts to top secret US alien base, Area 51, and a nicely subversive plot kicks in, things don't improve.

The monstrous mutations you face sorely lack variety, while the frame-rate is so low that it's

often difficult to track enemies even from a few feet away.

So while the shooting at the core of the game is pretty solid, that doesn't count for much when every complex set-piece cripples the game engine.

PlayStation 2
 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT

What could have been a decent shooter is crippled by big technical problems

5

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK



PREVIEWS

Lego Indiana Jones
 Metal Gear Online
 This Is Vegas
 Turning Point:
 Fall Of Liberty

REVIEWS

God Of War:
 Chains Of Olympus
 NFL Tour
 MX Vs ATV: Untamed
 Rainbow Six Vegas 2

FEATURES

GTA IV
 Aliens: Colonial Marines

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune
 Skate
 NBA 2K8

ON SALE NOW!

PlayStation 2
 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT

In its attempt not to spoil the TV show, Lost on PS3 simply skirts all the good stuff

5

PSP IN OPS2



Your quick guide to the best new games for your handheld friend



↑ After Star Wars, now Indy gets Lego'd



→ The game sends up the first three Indiana Jones movies



BLOCKBUSTER!

LEGO Indiana Jones will bring a big-screen adventure to your small-screen machine

PUB Activision DEV Traveller's Tales ETA July WEB legoindianajones.com

One glimpse and the years melt away. It's not quite how we remember it but it's unmistakably the first scene from *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*.

Rugged relic-hunter Indiana Jones and his posse are making their way through a jungle infested with unfriendly, blowpipe-wielding tribesmen. And all made from Lego.

A couple of poison darts fly, and suddenly it's an all-action platformer! Indy is swinging on vines and jumping into the back of a biplane, running from giant boulders and flicking his whip like a crazy man, making plants explode into a rain of familiar gold and silver studs. Awesome.

Clearly all the elements that made



↑ As the huge boulder rolled towards them, Indy and Satipo were bricking it

LEGO Star Wars – developed by the same company, Traveller's Tales – so addictive are in this game, too.

It's classic platforming: big on action and puzzles, with plenty of collectables to sniff out.

Jungle and whippy

All Indy's friends and relations are present and correct: Indy's father, played by Sean Connery; feisty Marion Ravenwood; even Toht, the bespectacled Nazi interrogator.

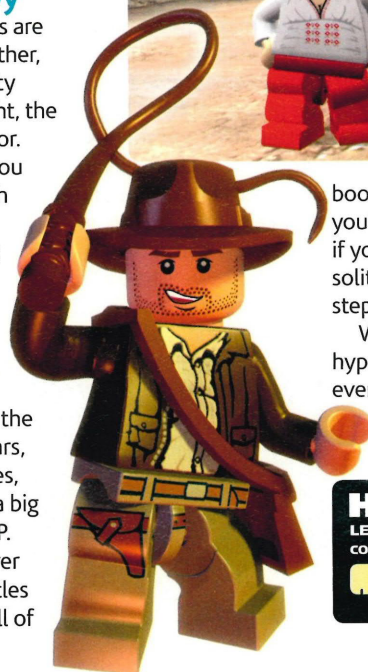
And if that's not enough you can play Dr Frankenstein with more than 60 different Lego figures, mixing and matching body parts to create your own twisted hybrid of, say, sexy Willie Scott from *Temple of Doom*, and *Raider's* Jock the pilot.

LEGO Indiana Jones is using the same engine as LEGO Star Wars, and as in those brilliant games, cooperative wireless play is a big part of the experience on PSP.

The settings suit two-player mayhem well, with Nazi castles and underground temples full of

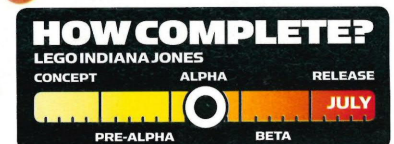


↓ Is it wrong to fancy toys? Actually, don't answer that



booby traps. Just the sort of places you'll need a helping hand. Of course, if you don't want to share or you're in solitary confinement, an AI buddy will step in to help you out.

Whether you're a new enthusiast hyped by Indy 4, or a diehard fan of everyone's favourite Nazi-whopping archaeologist, LEGO Indiana Jones will be an epic slice of fun.



PENGUIN THE MOOD

Holy plastic bricks, it's **Lego Batman!**

PUB Warner Bros **DEV** Traveller's Tales **ETA** 2008 **WEB** legobatman.com

A Surely, no one can look at these screens from Lego Batman and not feel a surge of joy. Traveller's Tales is no stranger to developing inspired Lego-based platformers (see opposite), and next up is a dimple-blocked take on the Dark Knight.

The game joins Batman and Robin as the loony criminals of Arkham Asylum have managed to bust out and are wreaking havoc on the streets of Gotham City.

The Penguin, Joker, Catwoman and Scarecrow (to name just a few) are all out, about and up to no good: robbing banks and breaking into jewellery stores. They're set to be joined by



↑ And just when we thought Robin couldn't look any more camp...

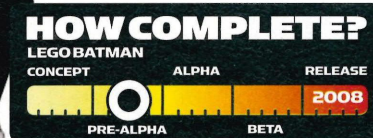


↓ Even in cute Lego, the Joker looks absolutely insane



lesser-known members of the DC Comic universe, including Man-Bat, Killer Croc and Nighthawk.

Smartly the action here will be a departure from the Lego Star Wars games. LB aims to inject new life into the series, with the caped crusader and boy wonder learning and developing skills as they battle to regain control of Gotham's streets.



PSP TOP 5 CHARTS

Big sales on a little console! The biggest right now are...

- 01**
FIFA 08
 Publisher EA
 OPS2 score 8/10
- 02**
THE SIMPSONS GAME
 Publisher EA
 OPS2 score 8/10
- 03**
NEED FOR SPEED: PRO STREET
 Publisher EA
 Score Not reviewed
- 04**
SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008
 Publisher THQ
 OPS2 score 8/10
- 05**
PATAPON
 Publisher Sony
 OPS2 Score 8/10

WING IT ON

Now we've played **Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law** we're even more desperate for it to get a UK release

PUB Capcom **DEV** High Voltage **ETA** TBC **WEB** capcom.com/harveybirdman

X Even if you haven't watched Harvey Birdman the TV show, this game is very, very funny.

In it you climb into the cheap suit of Harvey Birdman – formerly a third-rate superhero, now a third-rate lawyer – to

↓ HB is an inspired blend of classic toons and modern pop culture



defend characters plucked from both the Capcom and Hanna-Barbera universes.

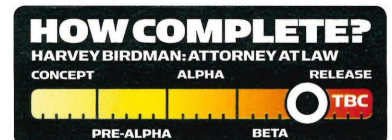
These include Secret Squirrel, Yakky Doodle Duck, Inch-High Private Eye and Street Fighter's Guile and Chun Li. The circumstances they appear in are hilarious: Secret Squirrel, for example, is accused of [cough] exposing himself to women.



Capcom has been selling Attorney At Law as an interactive version of the TV show, which will please fans, although it does mean you don't get a whole lot of game for your money.

Harvey investigates crime scenes for clues, presents evidence and argues his point in court, but there's no serious detective work to be done.

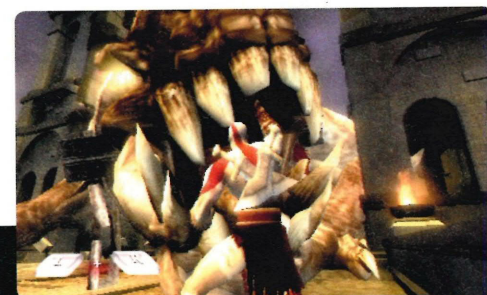
Still, the game is selling for a budget price in the USA, so if and when it appears in the UK, you'll pay no more than 20 quid for it. Come on Capcom – it's time to release the Birdman one!



PSP REVIEW

God of War: Chains of Olympus

↓ Chains of Olympus constantly ups the ante with bigger and better foes



Release Out now Publisher Sony Developer Ready At Dawn Price £29.99
Wi-fi No Web readyatdawn.com/chainsofolympus Also try 300: March To Glory

GOD OF WAR

Chains of Olympus is a thrill-packed, emotion-stuffed, unmissable joyride

The God of War series has been epic on PS2. So it was with caution that we approached its PSP debut, Chains of Olympus.

Surely, the ultra-vibrant surroundings, colossal boss battles and genius puzzles would be a bridge too far for Sony's handheld?

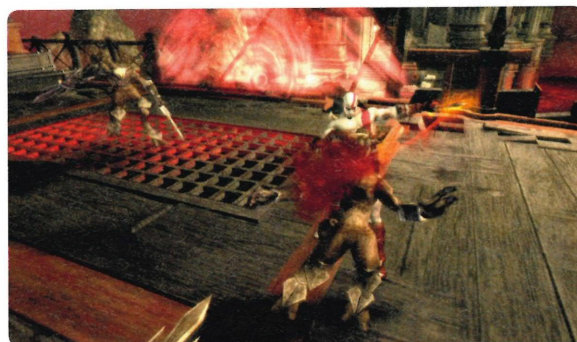
Within five minutes of play, though, Chains of Olympus had smashed us in the face with its heavenly wonders, banishing our early doubts to Hades.

This game doesn't struggle in the slightest on PSP, thanks to a Herculean effort by developer Ready At Dawn. In fact, this God Of War is so close to portable perfection that it's essential.

Rages for ages

There's no slow-down, no jaggy visuals and the way anti-hero Kratos' brutal repertoire of skills has been translated to the small screen is nothing short of digital voodoo.

The story has you stepping into the sandals of history's angriest warrior



and searching for the God of the Sun, Helios, who's been kidnapped plunging the ancient worlds into a darkness created by the God of Dreams, Morpheus.

Narratively Chains of Olympus is a prequel to the original God of War, and although this makes newcomers feel at home, fans will recognise nods and winks from the wider series.

From start to finish Kratos is in a reliably uncompromising mood as he tears enemies apart like wet toilet paper. And to its credit, the game never tries to moralise or shield you from his savage emotions.

Case in point: one minute you're taking part in the (unfortunately) obligatory sex minigame where you follow button prompts to perform the dirty deed with a bevy of buxom beauties; the next you're plunging into the afterlife, desperately searching for

↑ Kratos doesn't have anger issues – he's comfortable with his rage



Kratos' daughter, Calliope.

Anyone who doesn't well up during the touching reunion between father and daughter in the beautiful Fields of Elysium is a heartless husk. Chains Of Olympus is packed full of emotional surprises and this is one of the best.

True to the series, there are puzzles to solve in the breaks between bouts of blade-swinging murderising. They're tricky enough to give your brain a bit of a workout but rarely frustrate.

And once you're finished with the brilliant story mode you can test your mettle against the awesomely hard, but genius, Challenges of the Gods. This isn't just a decent stab at taking GoW to PSP, it stands shoulder to shoulder with its classic predecessors.

PlayStation 2
Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- 😊 Looks and sounds amazing
- 😊 Original, affecting story
- 😊 The violence pulls no punches
- 😊 Plenty of replay value

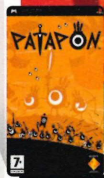
An unmissable, epic adventure that's as dramatic as any of Kratos' full-sized games

10

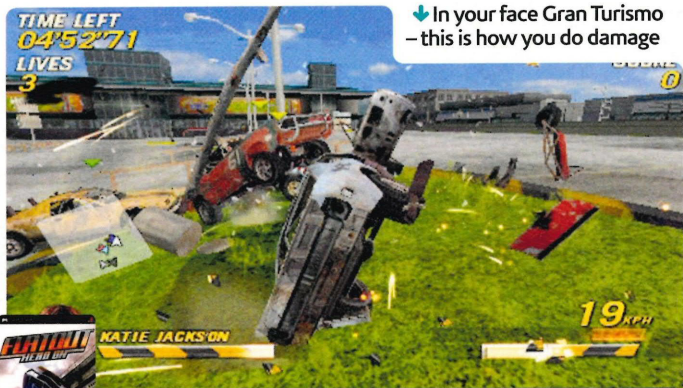


PATAPON

The drums of war



Release Out now Publisher Sony Developer Sony
Price £29.99 Wi-fi Yes Web tinyurl.com/2exqkt
Also try LocoRoco



↳ In your face Gran Turismo – this is how you do damage

Release 14 March Publisher Empire Developer Bugbear
Price £29.99 Wi-fi Yes Web bugbear.fi
Also try Burnout Dominator

FLATOUT HEAD ON



You'll love it to bits. Lots of smashed-up bits

X We've always known the PSP was powerful, but not every game really makes the most of it. Not every game shocks with its visual splendour and frantic, physics-bullying chaos. FlatOut does.

The cars bounce and slither brilliantly on their worn-out suspension, leaping and twirling above the tracks like brain-damaged salmon heading upstream, drunk, on stolen jetskis, and just about everything around them breaks realistically.

If you can hit it, it'll snap, roll, collapse or even explode in impressively realistic ways, and what's more the detritus will still be there on the next lap.

That includes the burned-out shells of rivals' ruined cars. And yes, even the twisted bodies of the rival racers themselves...

Rock and ragdoll

Hit something solid enough and your ragdoll driver will rocket limply through the windscreen with a frustrated moan. In reality, though, it's more *Jackass* than *Death Race 2000*.



But FlatOut doesn't waste its inspired ragdoll lunacy on the occasional impact. Instead, it makes a virtue of it with a huge arena stuffed with furiously painful-looking minigames, all centred on lobbing your unlucky driver through the windscreen.

So you can fire him through hoops to play basketball; over pools to skip him like a stone; at huge packs of cards to score a royal flush; into the sky for the high jump; through posts to score a field goal; down bowling alleys to get a strike; through flaming hoops to... well, just to hear him sizzle in the pool at the end.

Without wanting to denigrate the fast, tough racing in any way, (and in case you haven't sussed this already) these minigames are very much FlatOut's highlight. They're little shots of brilliance, particularly in multiplayer.



We expected the latest title from the makers of LocoRoco to be wonderfully bizarre. But nothing really prepared us for the layers of rampant originality in Patapon.

The premise is simple. You beat buttons in time with the music to guide your army of Patapons – a race that look like eyeballs with arms and legs that are waiting for the return of their Lord (that's you) – to victory.

The deeper you delve into their world the more surprises it throws up, such as the giggling

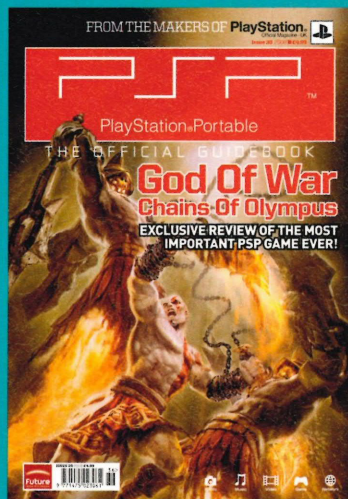
mountain that loves having its toes tapped with spoons.

But underneath its simple exterior lies a complex beast that follows the beat of its own drum, mixing RPG elements and taxing puzzles with visual flair.

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK VERDICT

Gets repetitive after a while, but overall a charming, crazy treat

8



PREVIEWS

Lego Indiana Jones
Crisis Core
Boulder Dash Rocks!
Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law
Lego Batman
SBK 08 Superbikes

REVIEWS

God of War:
Chains of Olympus
Flatout Head On
Final Fantasy II
Castlevania:
Dracula X Chronicles
Sonic Rivals 2
MX Vs ATV: Untamed
Patapon
Fading Shadows

ON SALE NOW!

#16 BOOBS

Not every PS2 game needs a pair of baps shoehorned in, but that doesn't stop the developers. Here are some of the breast (and worst) offenders.

IVY

Seen in *Soul Calibur III* (2008)

Tit type Christmas turkeys. From a distance, Ivy is hot. Close up, you see that her skin is puckered like an uncooked turkey.



CLOTHO

As seen in *God of War II* (2007)

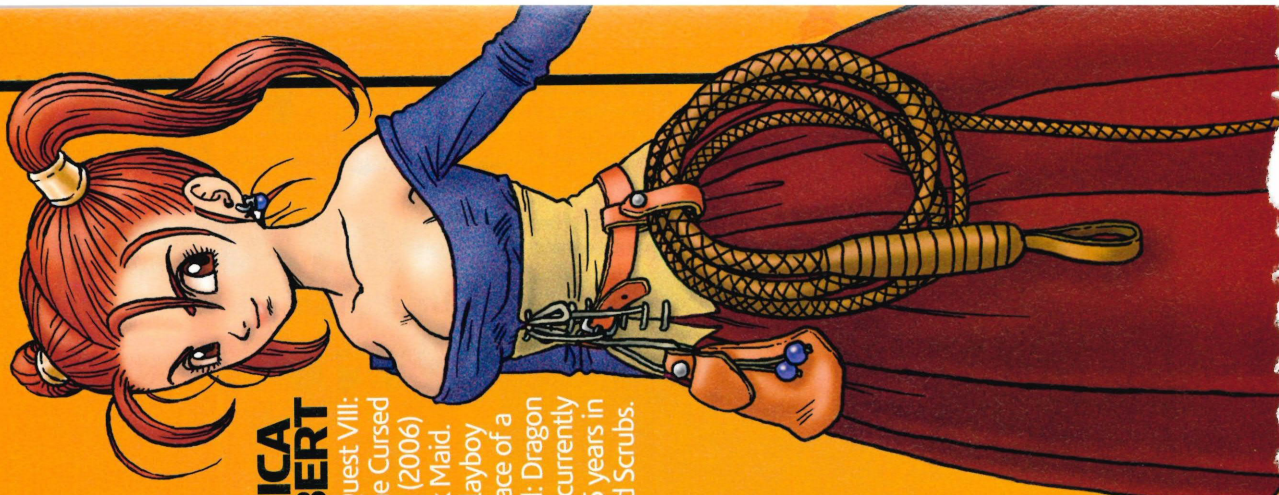
Tit type The Cones of Concussion. Warning: these babies clang together like Big Ben. Watch your skull!



JESSICA ALBERT

Seen in *Dragon Quest VIII: Journey of the Cursed King* (2006)

Tit type The Milk Maid. Rack of a Playboy centrefold, face of a 10-year old. Dragon Quest VIII is currently doing 35 years in Wormwood Scrubs.



LARA CROFT

Seen in *Tomb Raider* (1996)

Tit type The Twin Pyramids. Trying to cram sex appeal into gaming before the technology is ready will only yield unsexy, pyramidal lady lumps.



MIKA

As seen in *BMX XXX* (2002)
Tit type The No-Bra. BMX XXX was obviously made by men, because real women know that BMXing without a sturdy sports bra will only lead to injury.



RAYNE

As seen in *BloodRayne 2* (2004)
Tit type The Ballooning Bust. Use the 'jiggy' cheat to inflate Rayne's chest to this ludicrous level – and remember, people, suffragettes died so you could enjoy this.



SHAHDEE

Seen in *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* (2004)
Tit type Child-proof Lids. What do you get when the lead artist on a videogame hasn't been with a woman for four years? This Freudian nightmare.

NEXT MONTH HANDS



GRANDMA POULET

As seen in *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* (2002)
Tit type The Norks of Nostalgia. "Hell, I just remembered, I've got to go to the shops to pick up some milk."

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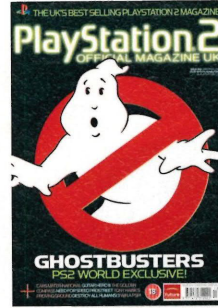
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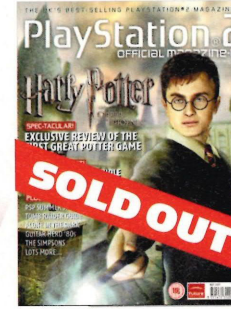
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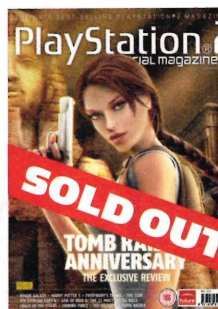
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SPLIT SCREEN

One classic level, two ways to complete it. This month: Resident Evil 4

METHOD 1 VALIANT STYLE

MISSION START

The US president's daughter has been kidnapped! Despatched to save her, Leon S Kennedy finds himself battling against folk who've been turned into crazed monsters by a mysterious parasite. Even worse, he soon runs into El Gigante who's determined to grind his bones to dust...



⚡ Discovering a wolf caught in a trap, Leon risks losing a finger and prizes the serrated trap jaws apart to free the whimpering canine.



⚡ After barely surviving attacks from giant fish, Leon meets El Gigante who demonstrates his strength by breaking the bones of its captors.



⚡ Leon lets rip with his shotgun, but the lumbering beast hardly flinches and strides across the ground, swiping at our hero's head.



⚡ Spending too long reloading, Leon lets the giant get right on top of him and pays for it, crushed by a foot the size of a canoe!



⚡ Suddenly a haunting howl fills the air and Leon looks up to see the wolf he freed from the trap, seemingly intent on joining the fight.



⚡ Good karma clearly pays off, as the wolf starts to reward Leon's kindness by distracting El Gigante, giving Leon room to attack.



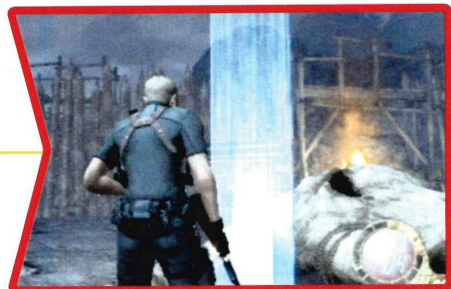
⚡ Pounded by shotgun shells, the monster writhes in pain, falling to one knee. But – what's that? A hideous parasite bursts from its back!



⚡ Leon takes his chance, climbs up onto the hulk and slashes at the parasite with his hunting knife, trying to sever its razor-sharp head.



⚡ After Leon repeats the process several times, El Gigante releases a bloodcurdling cry as he realises his tormented life is finally over.



MISSION COMPLETE

Leon, although battered and near death, stands triumphantly over the warm corpse of his house-sized assailant. But he knows his work is still not over and he cannot rest until the President's daughter is safe...

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SPLIT SCREEN

One classic level, two ways to complete it. This month: Resident Evil 4

METHOD 2 FEARLESS STYLE

MISSION START

Leon ventures into the heart of rural Spain, which is overrun with bloodthirsty locals and monsters, on a mission to rescue the US President's daughter, who's been kidnapped. He goes in his Resi 2 costume and shows no fear – mainly because he's picked up the Infinite Rocket Launcher.



♣ Seeing a wolf caught in a trap, Leon weighs up his options. After much thought he chooses to use the grenade he found on a dead crow.



♣ The grenade detonates in the hound's face. It doesn't die, but yelps off with a foul look on its face. Won't be seeing that mutt any time soon!



♣ Leon continues flirting with his support staff, posing in his Raccoon City police uniform and chucking grenades at any wildlife he finds.



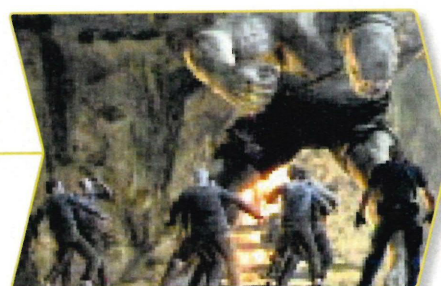
♣ Similar subtlety is used for the various puzzles and obstacles that stand in Leon's way – it seems a rocket launcher is a solve-all tool.



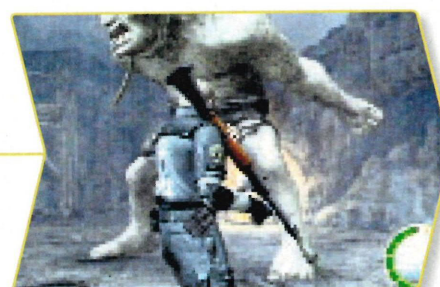
♣ The rampaging villagers aren't as scary when you can use the telescopic sights to prevent them invading your personal space.



♣ Then with pull of the trigger the Spanish attackers are blown into tiny portions – turning them into extra-crispy, apocalyptic tapas.



♣ Perhaps realising they present little problem to Leon, the pitchfork-wielding peasants wheel out the seemingly invincible El Gigante.



♣ The beast towers over Leon, roaring and grizzling with destructive intent, flexing with immense power...



♣ Then Leon shoots him in the face with a rocket launcher and the ugly slaphead goes down like a sack of mierda.



MISSION COMPLETE

So, without breaking stride, Leon continues his journey, destroying everything in his path: stabbing cows, shooting fish, tormenting merchants and even looking up the skirt of the lass he's been sent to rescue. What a lad, eh!

MISSION SELECT

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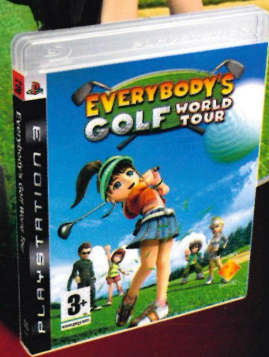
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