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18

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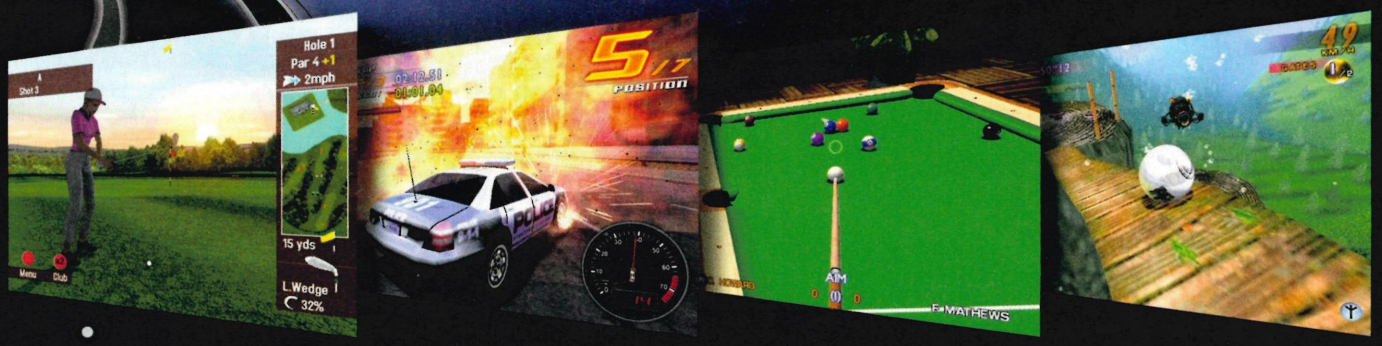

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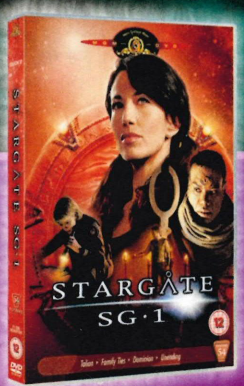

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WELCOME

REVIEWS PREVIEWS FEATURES ALWAYS FIRST FOR PS2

THE ONLY UK MAG THAT'S DEVOTED TO PS2

I managed to grab a few weeks holiday this month (which was very nice indeed, thank you). Upon my return I found that everyone in the office had, rather suspiciously, managed to become experts at Guitar Hero III.

Now they're all laughing at my feeble attempts to master Sunshine Of Your Love by Cream on the Easy setting. They won't be laughing as much when I hand them their P45s.

Winter warmer

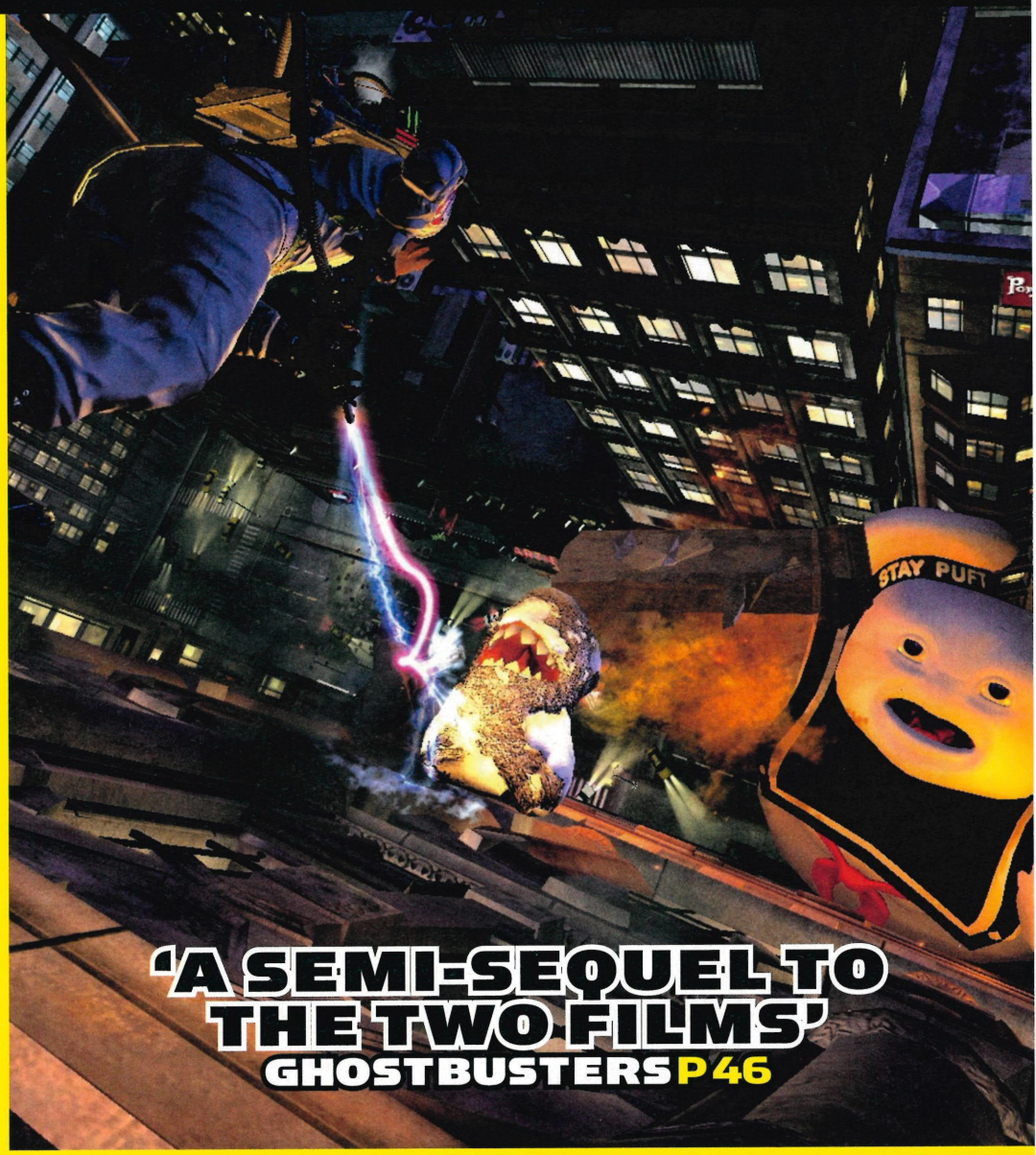
So my hols meant I missed out on the Guitar Hero sessions, and indeed playing any of the other games that are packed into our review section like so many presents under the tree.

However, I did manage to win the Master League double in PES on the Professional difficulty setting. Result!

I'm sure you'll all be playing plenty of games in December, too. Don't forget to write in to PlayStation Nation (p34) and tell us what you think of them, or how you've set an unbeatable high score.

Merry Christmas! See you in 2008.

NICK ELLIS
EDITOR
nick.ellis@futurenet.co.uk



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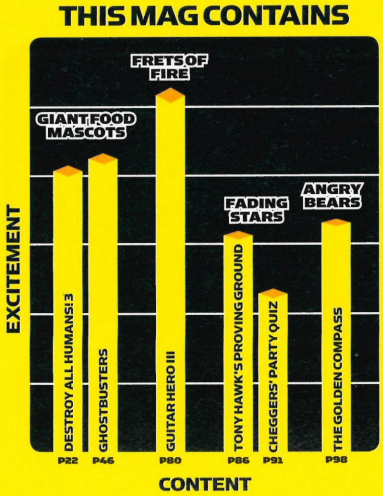
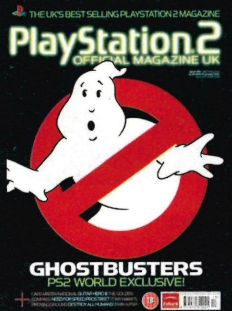


OPS2 #93 COVER STORIES



P46 GHOSTBUSTERS "Why worry? Each one of us is carrying an unlicensed nuclear accelerator!"

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P80 GUITAR HERO 3 The first PS2 review, plus finger-saving tips from our resident rock gods

P96 NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET The fabled street racer decides to play it straight. Oh dear

CONTACT OPS2

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MEET THE TEAM

NICK ELLIS
EDITOR
Nick has been largely absent this month after taking three weeks off. As such he has had time to take his beloved Plymouth Argyle to the Champions League finals in PES. Oh and he went abroad too.
PLAYING NOW Happy holiday maker
CAN'T WAIT FOR PDC Darts 2008

ANDY HARTUP
DEPUTY EDITOR
Andy has been in charge this month (see Nick's absence above), so it's been a month of Guitar Hero III at 'lunch'. And by 'lunch' we mean 9am to 5pm.
PLAYING NOW Guitar Hero III (Rythmn)
CAN'T WAIT FOR Phantasy Star Universe AOTI

SOPHIE MASON
PRODUCTION EDITOR
Undisputed Guitar Hero Queen, Sophie has been putting together a guide for you on how to be a rock god. See it on p83 and pay homage to her mad metal skills.
PLAYING NOW Guitar Hero III (Lead)
CAN'T WAIT FOR Sega Superstars Tennis

MIKE STERRY
STAFF WRITER
Poor Mike has been the office tat-magnet this month. Acme Arsenal and Avatar both found their way onto his desk, and have left him a broken man.
PLAYING NOW Psychonauts
CAN'T WAIT FOR Lego Batman

KIM RICHARDS
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
After reviewing Cheggers' Party Quiz, Kim had to visit the emergency dentist to have a tooth removed. Ironic, as she described the game as "Like pulling teeth..."
PLAYING NOW Cheggers' Party Quiz
CAN'T WAIT FOR Ar Tornelico

MARK MITCHELL
ART EDITOR
As the old gentleman of the team Mark can often be heard complaining about his back, the price of butter, and the local kids who mess with his bins.
PLAYING NOW Singstar Bollywood
CAN'T WAIT FOR Manhunt 2

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46 GHOSTBUSTERS

We cross the streams (and the Atlantic) to bring you a world exclusive first look at this spook-tacular game

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Check out our indispensible buyer's guide to the finest treats for your console this Xmas

72 AND THE WORST GAMES OF THE YEAR
Don't say we didn't warn you. We've put together a list of this year's virtual guff so you can avoid it

PlayStation.2
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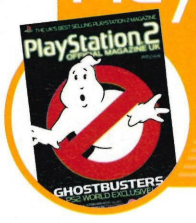

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Sims 2 Castaway survived in two different ways

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ON THE DISC

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

HARRY POTTER & TOOTP

PUB EA **OPS2 SCORE** 8/10 **Web** masterthemagic.com

CAN YOU DO THIS? Win the Gobstones minigame

WHAT IS IT? A chance for you to explore Hogwarts school and chat with schoolchums about life, love and spells. Try out your spells on the game's interactive environments, play a bit of Gobstones and see if you can uncover any of the secret areas. A great taster for one of our favourite games of 2007.

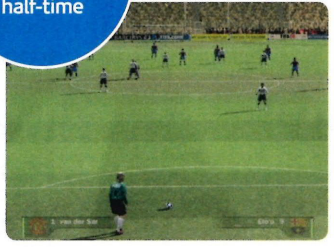
PERFORMANCE TIPS
To cast Winguardium Leviosa on an object, push the right thumbstick upwards and then, in the same movement, from right to left. Harry's arm will mirror your movements to cast the spell. Once you've lifted a target with Wingardium you can move it as you please.

CONTROLS
L1 Target
L2 Change Target
Left thumbstick: Move
Right thumbstick: Cast spells
Talk
Get out/Put away wand

FIFA 08

PUB EA **OPS2 SCORE** 9/10

CAN YOU DO THIS? Score five goals before half-time



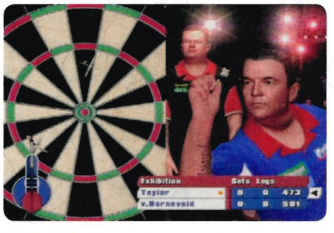
WHAT IS IT? Choose from eight countries and play a furious half of a match in this top-notch and totally official footie sim.

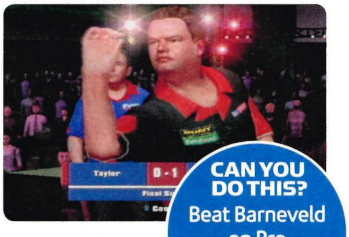
PERFORMANCE TIPS
Don't forget to make yourself heard! The best way to beat a defence is by doing a one-two, so once you've off loaded the ball, call for it back and you'll leave the opposition standing.

CONTROLS (FOR 'NEW ANALOGUE' SETUP)
L1 Change player
R1 Sprint
Lobbed Pass/Sliding Tackle
Short pass/Tackle
Shoot/Pressure
Through ball/Call keeper

PDC WORLD CHAMP DARTS 2008

PUB Oxygen Games **OPS2 SCORE** Not yet reviewed





CAN YOU DO THIS? Beat Barneveld on Pro

WHAT IS IT? Face Phil Taylor or Raymond Van Barneveld in a standard exhibition match. It's the best of one set and one leg, so give it your all.

PERFORMANCE TIPS
Be careful not to knock the right analogue stick when powering your shot; if you do, your aim will angle either left or right.

CONTROLS
L1 Zoom out
R1 Zoom in
Left thumbstick: Aim
Right thumbstick: Power (pull back and flick forward to throw)

ON THE DISC
Playable Demos

ROGUE GALAXY

WHAT IS IT? Wander around the tribal village of Burkaqua or fight the forest king, Beast Leone, in this fantastic roleplayer.

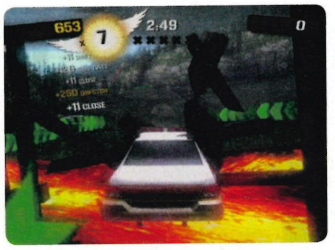
OKAMI

WHAT IS IT? Take the wolf goddess for a spin in her epic adventure. Explore Shinshu Fields or plunge into a boss battle.

TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY

WHAT IS IT? Discover the first level of Lara's updated adventure. Fight wolves, tackle waterfalls and try the iconic cog puzzle.

STUNTMAN IGNITION



WHAT IS IT? Burn rubber in the latest Stuntman game. Star in a volcano-themed movie, or play it cool in the 'No Ice' level.

GOD OF WAR II

WHAT IS IT? The epic opening to this intense action slasher. Smash through the Greek hordes and face the Colossus boss.

SPIDERMAN: FRIEND OR FOE

WHAT IS IT? Your chance to play the Tokyo Rooftops level from Spidey's latest with either Green Goblin or Venom to help.

ALSO ON THE DISC

EVERYBODY'S TENNIS

WHAT IS IT? A taste of PS2's most accessible tennis game.

HEATSEEKER

WHAT IS IT? Aerial action extraordinaire in the game they call 'Burnout in fighter planes'!

BRIAN LARA CRICKET 2007

WHAT IS IT? A generous chunk of this year's best PS2 cricket game for you to try.

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 p5 with your name and address and we'll send you a replacement.

DISC CHALLENGE

Boot up the demo, try the challenge and you could win!

THE CHALLENGE

PDC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DARTS 2008: LOWEST SCORE

The aim in darts is to go from 501 points to 0 before your opponent does, but what we want you to do is get as close as possible to the number 1 without losing or winning the game! So you must use the board tactically and make every shot count. Do it in as few or as many moves as necessary. The closest score to 1 will win – in the event of a tie, the first winning entry selected at random will win.

HOW TO ENTER

1. BY TEXT
Snap a pic of your score on your phone, attach it to an MMS and text CHALLENGEDISC (then a space) followed by your name and address to 07738 647177. Cost: 50p plus your standard network tariff rate.

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: 2 January 2008
For competition rules and full terms and conditions, see p127.

ISSUE 91'S WINNERS

THE CHALLENGE: STUNTMAN IGNITION HIGHEST SCORE

NAME	SCORE
1 Christopher Coote, Essex	1,203,350
2 Daniel Barkess, Huddersfield	1,061,106
3 Mike Mair, West Lothian	1,051,304
4 Andrew Smith, Cardiff	1,049,920
5 Amil Hill	1,027,874

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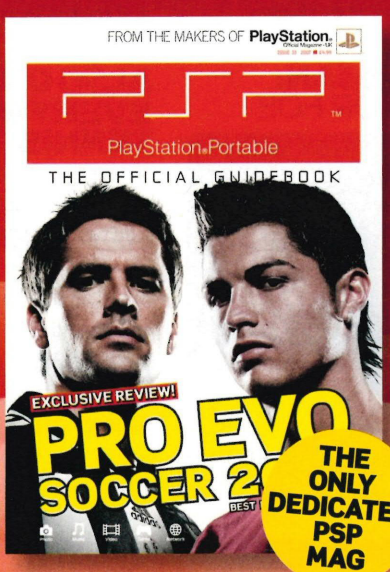

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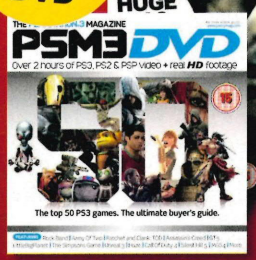

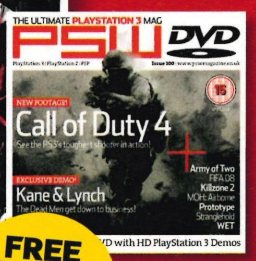

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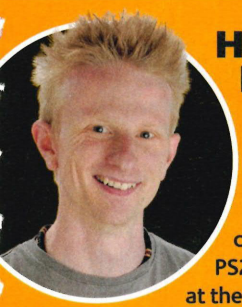
UPFRONT



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO PS-YOU!

Maybe you are expecting me to tell you that we had a crazy party to celebrate PS2's seventh birthday. Or at the very least, that we baked one of those console-shaped cakes that have been all the rage on the internet this year.

But we didn't. Sorry. Instead the whole team played a truckload of Guitar Hero III.

We gathered around the small, slightly-busted office TV (which may be causing several of us severe retina issues) and rocked out to Muse, Pat Benatar, The Killers, Fall Of Troy and countless others.

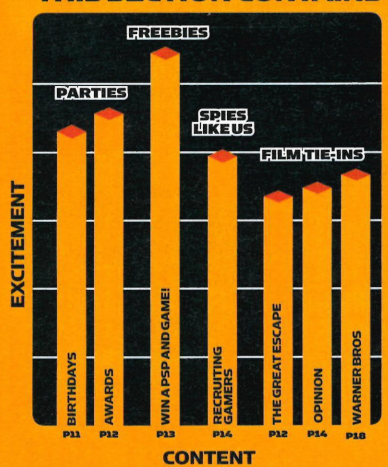
Seventh heaven

You see, we couldn't think of a better way to celebrate PS2's seventh year than by slotting the world's finest social game into its hungry disc tray and letting the machine do what it does best: entertain people.

So, happy birthday PS2. Sorry we didn't make you a cake or throw you a lavish party, but we have brought plenty of games for you to play until you turn eight.

ANDY HARTUP
DEPUTY EDITOR
ahartup@futurenet.co.uk

THIS SECTION CONTAINS



Seven years at the top for PS2

Cheaper, compact model announced to celebrate

It's sold 120 million units worldwide. It's home to 8571 titles, which have shipped a staggering combined total of 1.205 billion copies.

And on 24 November, the mighty PS2 celebrated its seventh birthday.

Sony marked the occasion by reconfirming its dedication to helping the venerable console see out its 10-year product lifecycle.

To demonstrate this, a new 'compact' PS2 has been announced, and will be released in the new year.

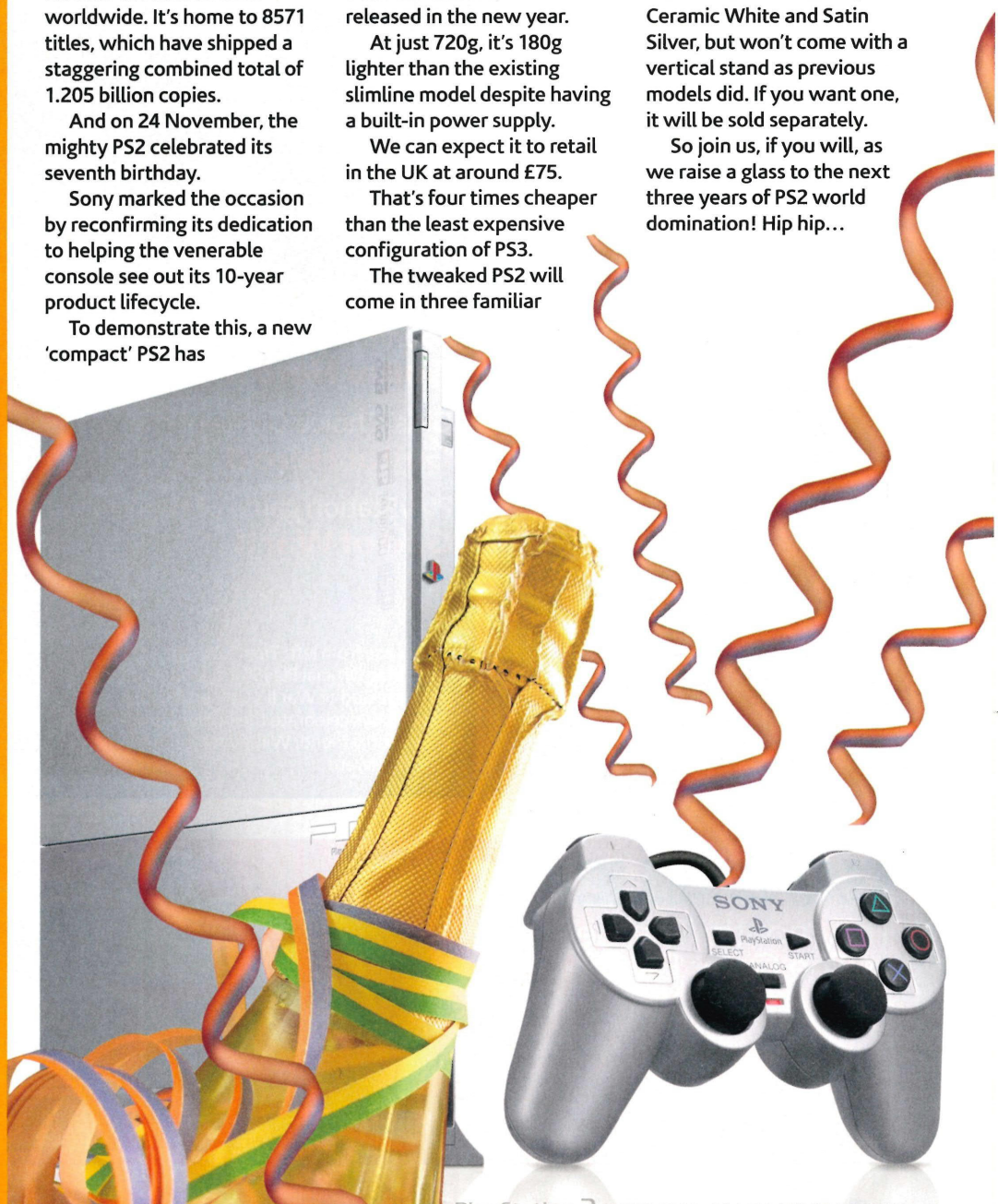
At just 720g, it's 180g lighter than the existing slimline model despite having a built-in power supply.

We can expect it to retail in the UK at around £75.

That's four times cheaper than the least expensive configuration of PS3.

The tweaked PS2 will come in three familiar colours: Charcoal Black, Ceramic White and Satin Silver, but won't come with a vertical stand as previous models did. If you want one, it will be sold separately.

So join us, if you will, as we raise a glass to the next three years of PS2 world domination! Hip hip...



PS2 scoops up the gaming gongs

Seven-year-old console dominates BAFTAs and Golden Joysticks

It would seem the PS2 still rides high in both public and critical esteem, despite the best efforts of those next-gen upstarts.

That was the message from this year's BAFTA and Golden Joysticks game awards, anyway. PS2 games God of War II, Okami, and Guitar Hero II swept the board at both events, picking up gongs voted for both by industry experts and the general public.

At the gaming BAFTAs, there were plenty of token half-celebrities in attendance who had nothing to go with the gaming industry, including faded popsters Gareth Gates and Charlie 'Busted' Simpson, plus one half of Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer.

The Wright decision

But the true star of the night was Will Wright, the legendary game designer behind Sim City and The Sims. He received a BAFTA Academy Fellowship, the first ever awarded to a member of the videogames industry.

This signals that, finally, games and their creators are being treated with the respect they deserve. Will, we salute you.

THE PS2'S AWARDS IN FULL

BAFTAs

Technical Achievement
God of War II

Story and Character
God of War II

Original Score
Okami

Artistic Achievement
Okami

GOLDEN JOYSTICKS

Soundtrack of the Year
Guitar Hero II

Girls' Choice Game of the Year
Guitar Hero II

PlayStation game of the Year
God of War II

Clockwise from left: Tim Clark, editor of our sister mag Official PlayStation Magazine, presents God of War II's Golden Joystick; the Okami boys celebrate their pair of BAFTAs with a furry friend; Will 'living legend' Wright with his award

GOOGLEFIGHT

This month: The Getaway vs The Great Escape

Two sadly forgotten games. But only one can win in our contest to see who gets the most hits in a web search at Googlefight.com. If you thought it'd be a one-sided fight, what with The Great Escape also being a rather famous film, you're right. The Getaway gets away with 8,540,000 hits, while The Great Escape runs off with a mighty 49,900,000.

Win a slim PSP!

...plus Final Fantasy Tactics: War of the Lions to play on it!

Once again, it's a Square-Enix bonanza! It just wasn't enough that, in the last issue, we gave away an insane amount of Valkyrie Profile goodies. Not nearly enough.

So this issue, we're giving away more Square-Enix-related gifts! This time, it's your chance to win a copy of the amazing Final Fantasy Tactics: War of the Lions, and a brand new, slim PSP to play it on.

Any roleplaying game nut needs this game in their life like chocobos need moogles. And all you have to do to be in with a chance of winning this perfect package is answer this question:

Question

Which Final Fantasy VII character makes a cameo in FFT: WOTL?

A Cloud
B Tifa
C Barrett
D Red XIII

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 (p33). Mark it clearly 'Final Fantasy Tactics Comp'.

By email
Email your answer with your full name and address to psnation@futurenet.co.uk, with 'Final Fantasy Tactics Comp' in the subject line.

By text
Text OPS2TACTICS followed by a space, then your answer (A, B, C or D) to 87103. Texts cost 25p plus your standard network rate.

Closing date: 2 January 2008
For full terms and conditions, see p127.

Manhunt Dating Agency

Your hearts in our hands!

WITH:

Private, safe, anonymous email! Hundreds of unique members! Free searching!

0800 MAN HUNT

MOUTH PIECE

'It's time to give movie tie-ins a chance' says OPS2's Andy Hartup

Transformers. Ratatouille. Spider-Man 3. These are some of the best films of 2007, but their spin-off games stank up the PS2.

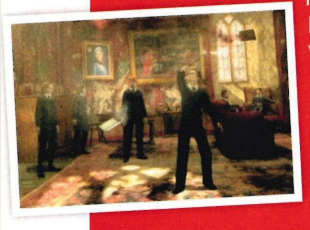
When it comes to film tie-ins we've grown accustomed to expecting the worst, and 90% of the time the developers don't disappoint.

But it needn't be that way. EA's Harry Potter & The Order of the Phoenix and The Simpsons showed that the games industry can work with the notoriously possessive world of Hollywood.

This is why we're optimistic about the new Ghostbusters PS2 game (see p46).

Still rolling

Red Fly has spent the past two years building a piece of software that it hopes will do justice to the legendary name, and you can be sure publisher Vivendi won't let the game hit shelves until it's pixel-perfect.



However, because there's no new film to dictate the game's release date, Ghostbusters has had the luxury of time.

Other titles, such as Sega's The Golden Compass, aren't so fortunate. In their cases, planning and finance are key, but as EA has proved, it is possible to pull great games out of Hollywood's snapping jaws – and that bodes well.

@ EMAIL US
Send your comments to
psnation@futurenet.co.uk

Government seeks gamers to be spies

Intelligence agency targets stealth fans with in-game ad campaign

Think you'd be a good spy? So does the Government Communications Headquarters – a British intelligence agency – which is targeting gamers with its latest job recruitment campaign.

The agency has put adverts in stealth game Splinter Cell: Double Agent in the form of billboards. And if this campaign is successful, we can expect to see more images cropping up elsewhere.

Oi oi savvy boy

Why? Videogame fans are "computer-savvy, technologically able and quick thinking" according to the GCHQ.

Well, we reckon our Kim would be dead good at Solid Snake stuff, so she penned this application letter...

Kim Richards
OPS2 Magazine
30 Monmouth St
Bath
BA1 2BW

8th November 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Application to join MI6

I would like to apply for a position within the GCHQ having seen your advert on a leading videogames magazine. Due to my long experience in gaming, I believe I have the mad skillz that you are looking for.

My practical experience of tactical espionage spans the length of the Splinter Cell series, and I am a good team player, having never left a squad member behind in Rainbow 6 or SOCOM US Navy Seals. Okay, sometimes I have to restart a mission a few times to get it perfect, but that's just the same in real life, I'm sure.

Other previous experience in the field includes rescuing the US president's daughter from plague-infected abominations, infiltrating mafia boss Don Guiseppe Gulliano's Sicily mansion and disabling nuclear-able tank 'the Shagohod' during the Cold War.

I believe I would be perfect in the division of signal intelligence, thanks to my time spent trolling around internet forums amassing data regarding Final Fantasy VII for the PS3. The fact that I have not revealed the results of this operation proves that I am a reliable agent.

Should the job ever call for more coercive information-gathering, I would be happy to share the methods of physical interrogation that I have devised for use on Square-Enix staff if they don't release Final Fantasy XII: International Zodiac Job System in the UK by the end of this year.

My passion for Japanese roleplaying games has exposed me to fearsome turn-based battling, where swift number-crunching and strong tactical decisions are key. This means I would be most adept in a real-life combat situation, providing the enemy attack one at a time and then stand around doing nothing while I look at menus for a bit.

With all these abilities and more, I am sure I would be a valuable asset to your organisation and can add at least +10 to the UK's defence stats.

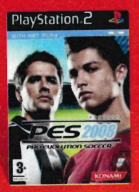
Regards

Kim

Kim Richards

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

PS2 UK CHARTS



1 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008
Shock horror! PES 2008 has managed to boot FIFA 08 from the top spot!

Konami 9/10 New entry

6 RATATOUILLE
Remy is following Crash's suit and clinging to the same spot as last month.

THQ 6/10 ▶ Last month: 6

2 FIFA 08
Despite being beaten back to second division by PES 2008, this battle of the footie titans is clearly far from over.

EA Sports 9/10 ▼ Last month: 1

7 JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS
Spicy racer Juiced 2 is crashing and burning, dropping sharply out of pole position.

THQ 8/10 ▼ Last month: 2

3 THE SIMPSONS GAME
Going straight in at number three is a good sign for The Simpsons. Christmas number one? We reckon it's got a good chance.

EA 8/10 New entry

8 BUZZ! THE HOLLYWOOD QUIZ
We think Buzz would want to thank his parents, his manager, his lawyer, his producer, his manicurist and his cat for helping him to get this far.

Sony 7/10 New entry

4 SIMS 2 CASTAWAY
Our favourite beachcombing game washes up in a respectable position. But can it survive in the hostile environment of the top 10?

EA 8/10 New entry

9 THE LEGEND OF SPYRO: THE ETERNAL NIGHT
Tiny tyke Spyro has managed a rather lukewarm entry, which sums up his game, really (see OPS2 #92).

Vivendi 6/10 New entry

5 CRASH OF THE TITANS
Crash is clinging firmly to the charts, regardless of being at half mark.

Vivendi 7/10 ▶ Last month: 5

10 TRANSFORMERS THE GAME
Finally, the public seem to have realised that this game has no place in the top 10. Hopefully it'll be gone by next issue.

Activision 5/10 ▼ Last month: 4

PS2 UK SALES TO DATE 9.7 MILLION

PS2 AMERICA CHARTS

POSITION		GAME	POSITION		GAME
1	NE	Guitar Hero III	6	NE	Fire Pro Wrestling Returns
2	▲	Guitar Hero II	7	▼	WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2008
3	NE	Rock Band Special Edition	8	▼	Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the '80s
4	▶	Madden NFL 08	9	NE	Thrillville: Off the Rails
5	NE	The Simpsons Game	10	NE	Manhunt 2

PS2 JAPAN CHARTS

POSITION		GAME	POSITION		GAME
1	NE	Bleach: Blade Battlers 2nd	6	▼	Dragon Ball Z: Sparking Meteor
2	▲	Pachislot Series Vol 11 CR Neon Genesis Evangelion	7	▲	J-League Winning 11 2007 Club Championship
3	▼	PSU: Ambition of the Illuminus	8	RE	FFXII International Zodiac Job System
4	▲	Another Century's 3: Final Banpresto	9	RE	Pawafuru Pro Yakyuu 14
5	NE	Seaman 2: Peking Genjin Ikusei Kit	10	▼	Jikkyou Powerful Major League 2

TRADE IN

Stuff you could buy if you sold your old games

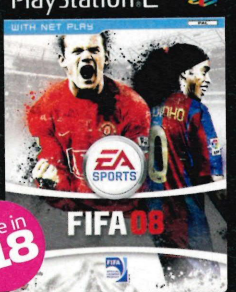
PlayStation 2

Trade in £18

GOD OF WAR II
Seven months old

+

PlayStation 2



Trade in £18

FIFA 08
One month old

+

PlayStation 2

Trade in £13

CRASH OF THE TITANS
One month old

=

RRP £49

1GB IPOD SHUFFLE (GREEN)

GAME game.co.uk

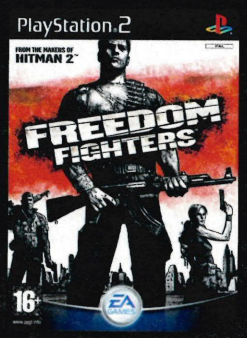
All trade-in prices with kind permission from GAME and correct at time of going to press

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PLAYSTATION

Assassinations are happening in all sorts of nations on your PlayStations...

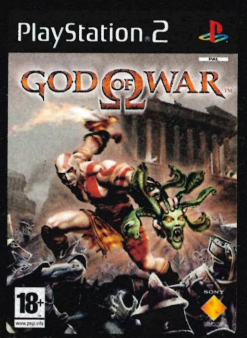
1 FREEDOM FIGHTERS
New York

In this 'alternative history' shooter, NYC is occupied by the Russian army under the command of one General Tatarin. Realising they'll never remove the entire Communist war machine by force, the Yank resistance movement sends your character – Chris Stone – to take out Tatarin. Invading his makeshift headquarters, Chris battles through hordes of Red troops before using his trusty sniper rifle to bring down the Rusky.



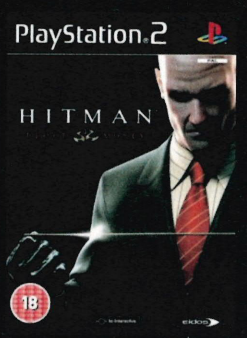
2 GOD OF WAR
Greece

How do you assassinate a god? Let's face it; there aren't many men up to the job. What you need is someone borderline psychotic, handy with a variety of weapons and able to cast lightning out of his own body. Enter Kratos, egotistic Spartan general with no family ties. He's sent to bump off Ares, god of war, and take his place on Mount Olympus. After travelling through Hell to get there, he finally puts his quarry to the sword. Got to admire that.



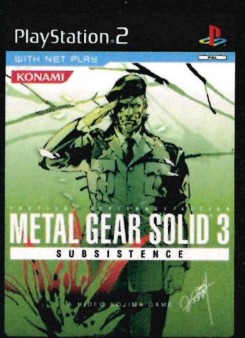
3 HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY
Paris

Think you're safe singing on stage in the Paris Opera House? Alvaro D'Alvade, opera star, does, while rehearsing in an auditorium packed full of security guards, workmen and tourists during the level Curtains Down, but he's wrong. Our preferred way of whacking the warbler is to dress up like his co-star, walk on stage with Alvaro, and shoot him with a real gun during his execution scene, then walk away.



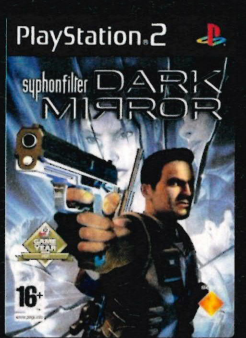
4 METAL GEAR SOLID 3
Russia

It's 1964 and the Cold War is in full effect. Miffed at the fact that one of their top operatives, The Boss, has defected, the USA sends grizzled hardcase Solid Snake to Russia to muderise the double-dealing swine. Well, it turns out the defection was a double bluff and The Boss is still working for Americkay. But Snake is still forced to do her in to maintain the illusion that she'd truly defected. Politics is a bitch, eh.



5 SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR
Bangkok

During one of the bonus levels in Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror, spy gabe Logan heads to Bangkok to off a baddie called Jimmy Zhou, who's taken Logan's mate Lian Xing hostage. After fighting a battalion of gun-toting henchmen, Gabe comes face-to-face with Zhou and pops a .50 between his eyes. And lucky Gabe gets a special 'thank you' from his saucy ladyfriend after coming so valiantly to her rescue.



Batman on call as Looney Tunes giant gobbles up Lego licensee

Warner buys Lego Star Wars developer Travellers Tales

Entertainment conglomerate Warner Bros has bought Travellers Tales, the mega-successful developer behind the Lego games.

The move is part of Warner's ongoing push into the games market, and the marriage between Travellers Tales' Lego licence and Warner Bros' catalogue of films bodes well for gamers.

Why, what other Lego games might we see now? Lego The Matrix? Lego Looney Tunes? Lego Harry Potter? Lego Beetlejuice? Lego Eyes Wide Shut?

Brickbatman

What is certain that the Lego Indiana Jones and Lego Batman games already announced are on track.

Soon after the purchase announcement, the first trailer for Lego Batman was unveiled. Mind you, it's shorter than a sneeze, and sees our blocky hero donning his Bat-gear and pummelling his way through a row of exploding thugs. Funny, but not very revealing.

Lego Batman is promised for some time in Autumn 2008.

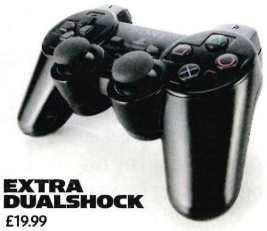
Also on the Warner Bros horizon is the tie-in PS2 game for the upcoming Speed Racer film, based on the 1960s anime and directed by The Matrix's Wachowski brothers. **Mike Sterry**

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.

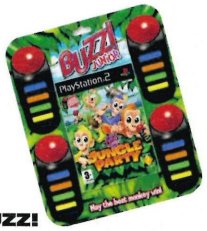
PARTY ACCESSORIES

GUITAR HERO
With game £49.99/Guitar only £29.99
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 Eyetoy games and camera make you the star of the game.

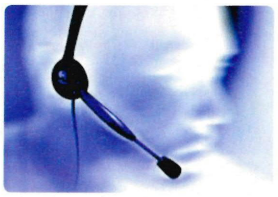


BUZZ!
With game £24.99 to £34.99
Buzz if you know the answer! The Buzz quiz games are a top laugh.

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

HARDCORE ACCESSORIES

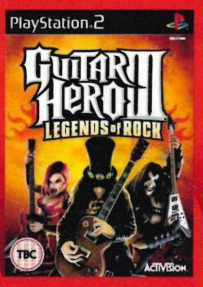
SONY SPEEDSTER 2 STEERING WHEEL £39.99
Compatible with all the latest, greatest driving games.



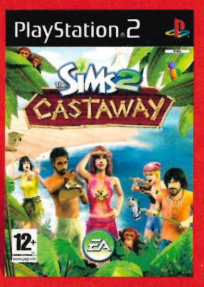
HEADSET £24.99
Use SOCOM 3's headset online to chat, offline to give squaddies orders. Works with Rainbow Six.

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

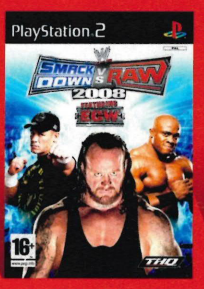
OPS2'S LATEST RECOMMENDED GAMES



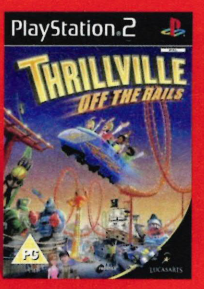
GUITAR HERO III
Rhythm
The biggest, loudest, finest music game you'll ever rock out to.
OPS2 Score: 9/10



SIMS 2 CASTAWAY
Strategy
An island sim to chase the winter chills away.
OPS2 Score: 8/10

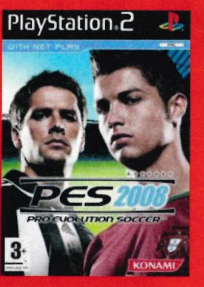


SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2008
Fighting
If guy-grappling is your bag, you need this.
OPS2 Score: 8/10



THRILLVILLE: OFF THE RAILS
Sim
Love rollercoasters? Then make your own!
OPS2 Score: 7/10

THE SIMPSONS GAME
Adventure
As funny as the show and not a bad game.
OPS2 Score: 8/10



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008
Sport
The best virtual footy your money can buy.
OPS2 Score: 9/10

PLUG INS

Get the right PS2 cable for your TV

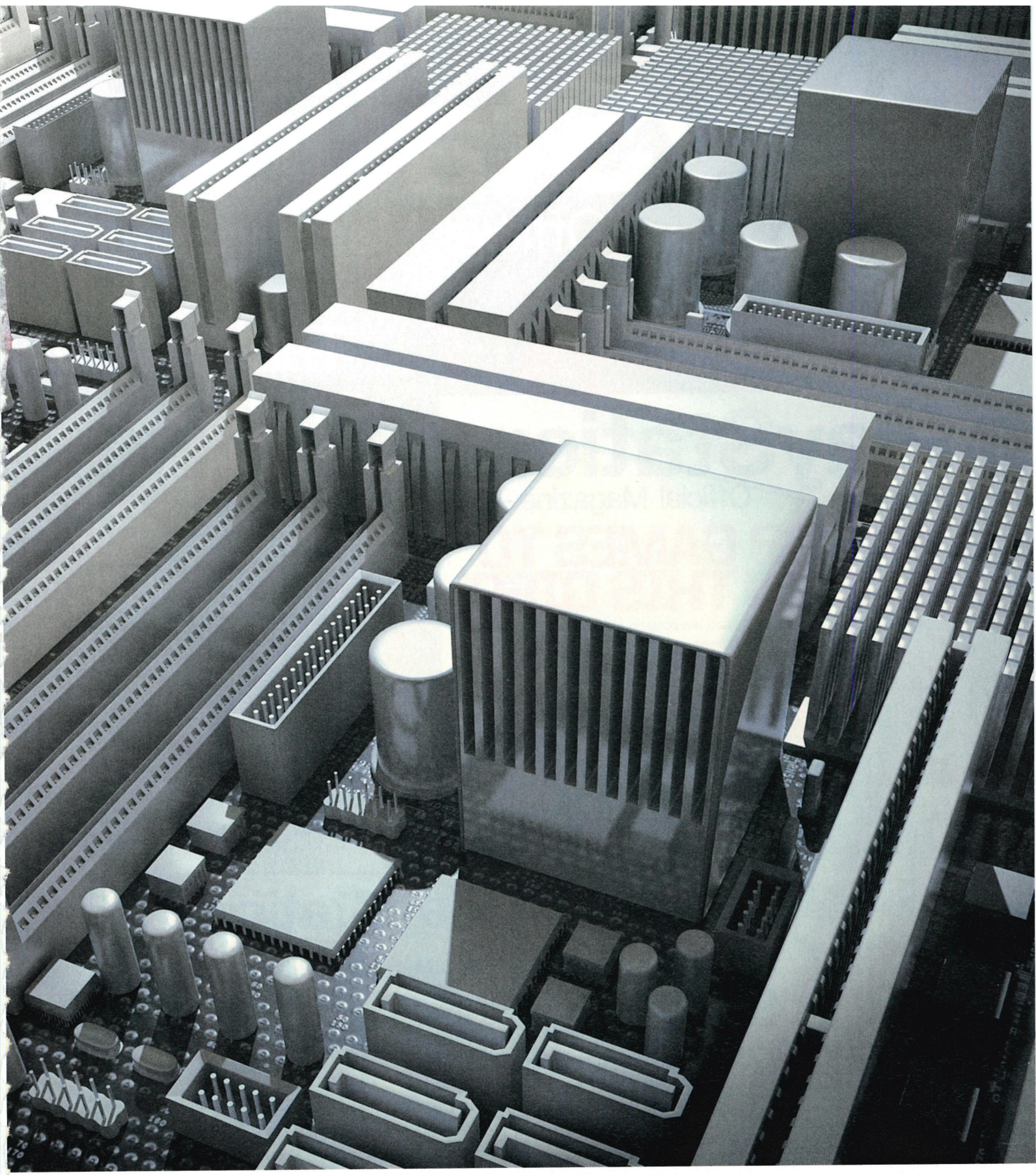
1 RFU ADAPTOR
This offers the lowest quality visuals but will connect a PS2 to any TV via the aerial socket.

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.



Without your computer expertise we wouldn't get off the ground.

The RAF uses some pretty impressive hardware. As a result, we rely on some even more impressive software. We need Communication and Information Systems Specialists to supervise and oversee one of the biggest, most technologically advanced networks in the world. This net needs to draw in all available battle information and link it to our aircrafts' weapons systems. It isn't only vital to the RAF. It's vital to the country. Simply put, without you, the RAF can't take off.

Text SYSTEM followed by your email address to 88RAF (88723)
rafcareers.com

ROYAL AIR FORCE

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PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

The only magazine with a playable PS3 Blu-ray disc

Playable Blu-ray disc
24 PS3 games to play including Stranglehold, Sega Rally, The Darkness, Jericho, Skate and Stuntman Ignition.

First for PlayStation 3
This month: exclusive Uncharted: Drake's Fortune and Assassin's Creed reviews, huge guide to the 40GB PS3 and expert Warhawk tips, plus our shock Kane & Lynch score.

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PLAYSTATION 3 PLAYSTATION PORTABLE **PLAYSTATION 2**

PREVIEWS

△ EXCLUSIVES ○ FIRST LOOKS ✕ HANDS-ON PLAY □ LATEST INFO

SO MUCH TO PLAY, SO LITTLE TIME...

We're not even a little bit into December but I'm already all over the Christmas shopping like a shiny-papered demon.

You won't catch me having a pulmonary in Woollies on Christmas Eve with all the other suckers; I did it all already on the interweb.

Everyone's getting books, DVDs and games: if they don't like it, they can give them back to me and I'll play/read/watch them.

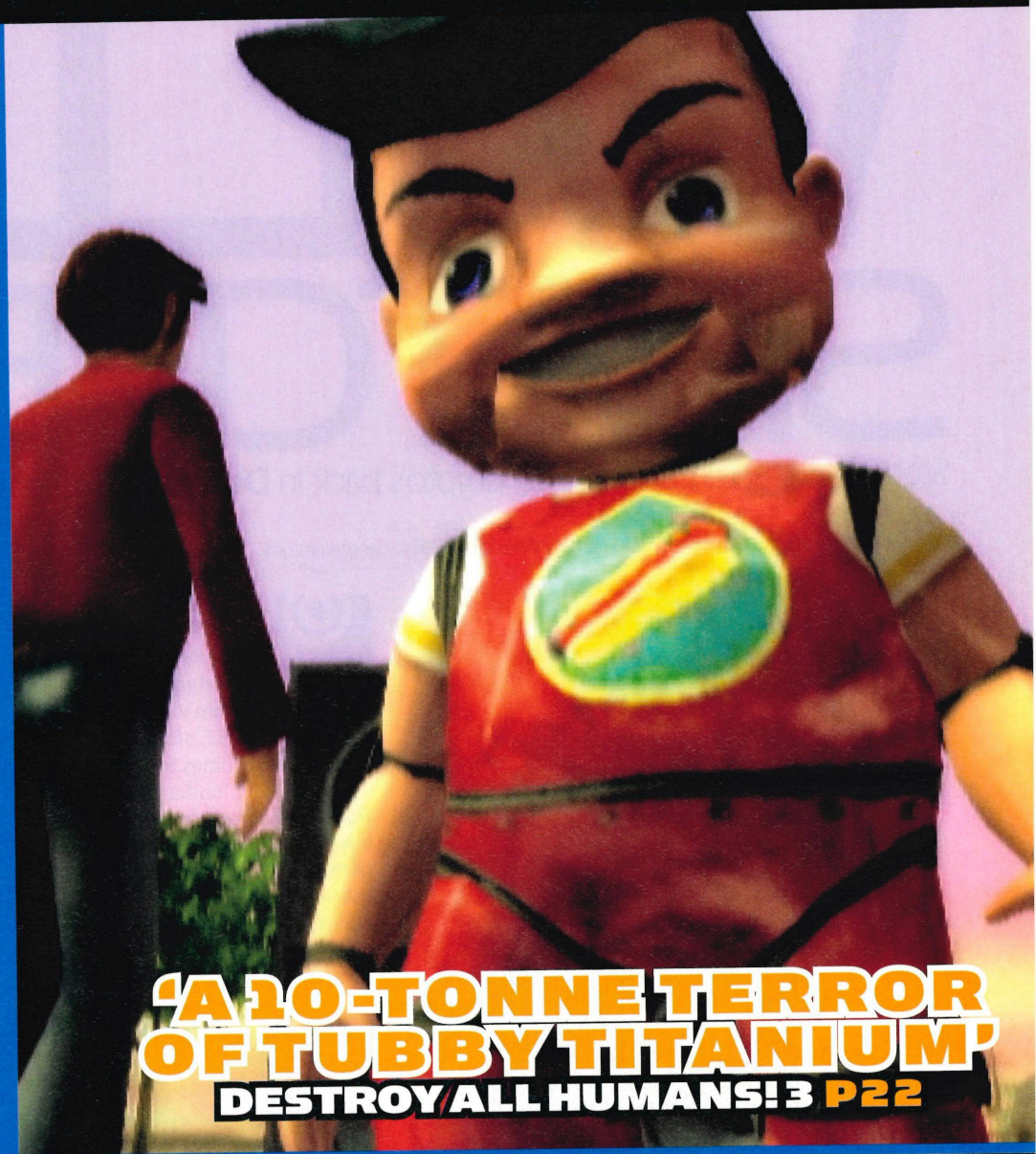
WE CAN BE HEROES

I've been too busy playing Guitar Hero III to go to the shops. The OPS2 house band has already completed co-op career mode on Medium and we're now over halfway into Hard.

Meanwhile I've got to keep a close eye on Sims 2 Castaway, because my Sims keep partying when they ought to be exploring the other islands. My poor brother is still lost out there somewhere, probably going feral!

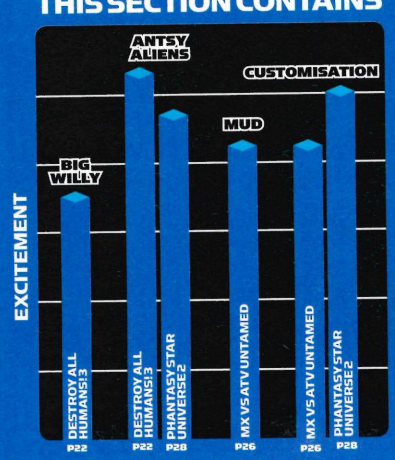
And it's all got to be done by the new year because that's when I'll be starting Destroy All Humans! 3 and the new Lego games. Sheesh, December is such a busy time, eh...

SOPHIE MASON
PRODUCTION EDITOR
smason@futurenet.co.uk



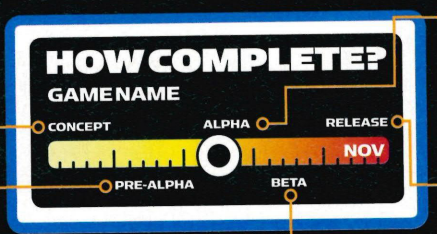
'A 10-TONNE TERROR OF TUBBY TITANIUM'
DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 3 P22

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!

GODZILLA UNLEASHED	JAN
ARTONELICO: MELODY OF ELEMIA	JAN
ROCK BAND	FEB
LEGO INDIANA JONES	FEB
STAR WARS: THE FORCE UNLEASHED	FEB
SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: PERSONA 3	SPRING
WILD ARMS 5	SPRING
MERCENARIES 2	SPRING
SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS	2008

INVASION OF THE WILLY SNATCHERS

Stop giggling, start celebrating: Crypto's back in **Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed**

PUB THQ **DEV** Locomotive Games **ETA** February **WEB** destroyallhumansgame.com

This is how it should be done. With PS2 and PS3 now existing side-by-side in intergenerational harmony, the more venerable of the two, our own PS2, often gets short shrift when it comes to new games.

Many of our fondest franchises, from Final Fantasy to Ratchet & Clank have already moved into the pastures of the PS3. Only a wise few remain on the verdant fields of the PS2, nibbling quietly on the huge financial benefit of releasing a game on a console owned by 120 million people.

Destroy All Humans!, and by extension its publisher THQ, is one of those wise few.

Rather than moving the franchise entirely to next-gen, or simply foisting a half-baked port of the next-gen title on PS2, THQ has taken a two-pronged approach. Two sequels. Two consoles. Two entirely different games.

Spaced invaders

PS3 gets DAH! Path of the Furon; PS2 gets DAH! Big Willy Unleashed.

Big Willy Unleashed is effectively the third game in the series, taking

↑ This time around, Crypto's packing. And we don't just mean the guns

↑ You never forget your first encounter with a Big Willy

IT DOES WHAT?

BIG WILLY
You can control him and use his weaponry, but The Simpsons Game beat DAH! to the concept of a possessed metal fast-food mascot.

ORGINALITY RATING **55%**

← Unleashing Big Willy, the robot, is all Pox's idea

place between the events of Destroy All Humans! 2 and the PS3's upcoming Path of the Furon. But if you're new to the series, here's a quick catch-up…

DAH! FOLLOWS THE MISADVENTURES OF A SNARLING ALIEN

Destroy All Humans! follows the misadventures of snarling, Jack Nicholson sound-alike alien called Cryptosporidium. He is a particularly human-hating member of a bulb-headed race known as the Furons.

The first game saw Crypto, as his friends call him, invade earth under orders from Furon leadership to harvest DNA from humans to bolster the race's genetic strain.

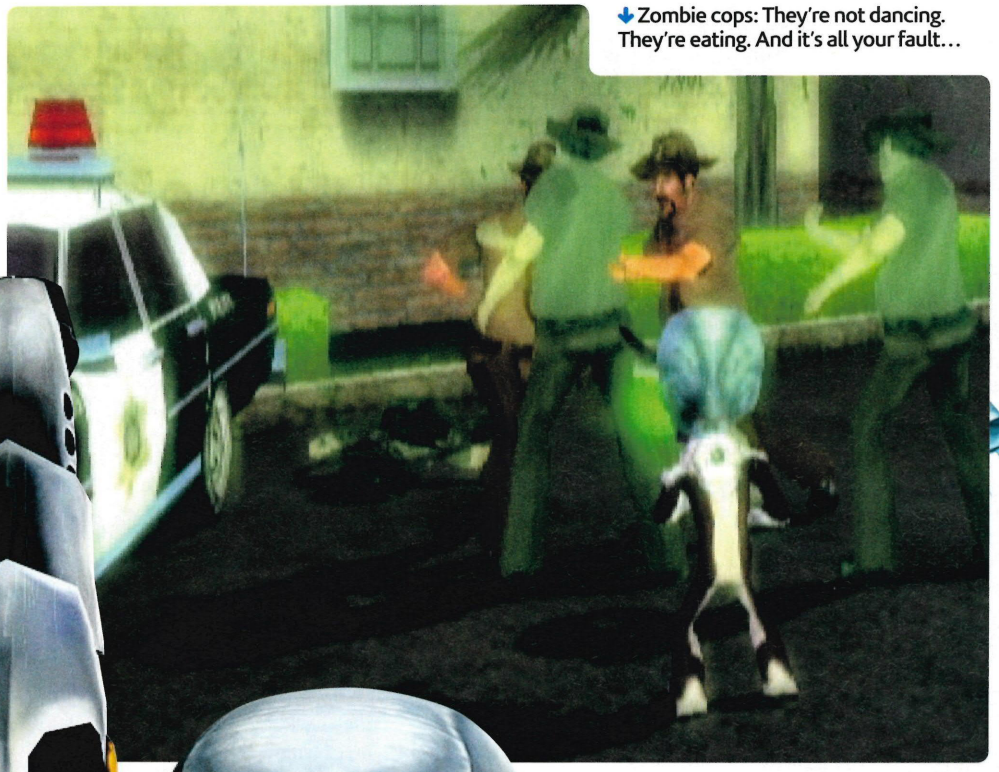
Their genes have been corrupted after years of radiation exposure that left them unable to reproduce by, ahem, conventional means. They've been using cloning instead: the Crypto of the first game was actually the 137th clone in the Cryptosporidium line.

Still following us? Good. The DNA harvesting was successful, so the clone of Crypto featured in DAH! 2 (number 138) was the first of his race in millennia to be blessed with something called 'The Package'. That is to say, a lunchbox. Crown jewels. Er, you know what we mean.

Unleash the hounds

Roll on, ahem, Big Willy Unleashed, and it seems Crypto has grown bored of his new toys, to the extent that he and his commander Pox decide to ▶

↓ The mystery of ball lightning explained: a green man with a gun



Zombie cops: They're not dancing. They're eating. And it's all your fault...

open up a hotdog joint, Big Willy's, to continue harvesting DNA from the unwitting human population.

But the secret ingredient in Crypto's hot-dogs isn't fine cuts of pork, it's fine cuts of people. Like, *human* people. Ah, equating the rise of capitalist fast-food chains with mass cannibalism: it's the kind of wryly satirical, tongue-in-jowl humour we've come to expect from the series, and which is back in spades for part three.

But their plan doesn't go exactly to plan: rival restaurateur Colonel Kluckin (d'ya see what they did there?!) uncovers their dastardly scheme, which leads Pox to fashion an avenging robot out of their restaurant's mascot, a giant statue of a boy... Big Willy.

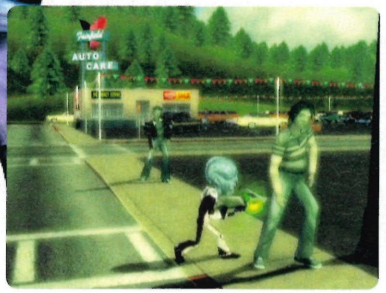
Willy or won't he

A 10-tonne terror of tubby titanium, Willy functions as a vehicle for your playable character, Crypto, rather as the flying saucer did in the previous two games.

He can flash-fry pedestrians with eye-lasers, drop an atomic, neighbourhood-levelling fart or release a torrent of gastro-intestinal muck that melts through tanks and little old ladies alike.

HE CAN FLASH-FRY PEDESTRIANS WITH EYE-LASERS

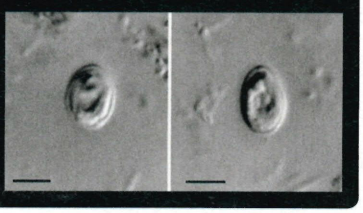
All this power comes at a cost, however. His fuel meter depletes as you rampage and must be recharged by picking up a human, popping off their head like a tube of Smarties and guzzling their grey matter.

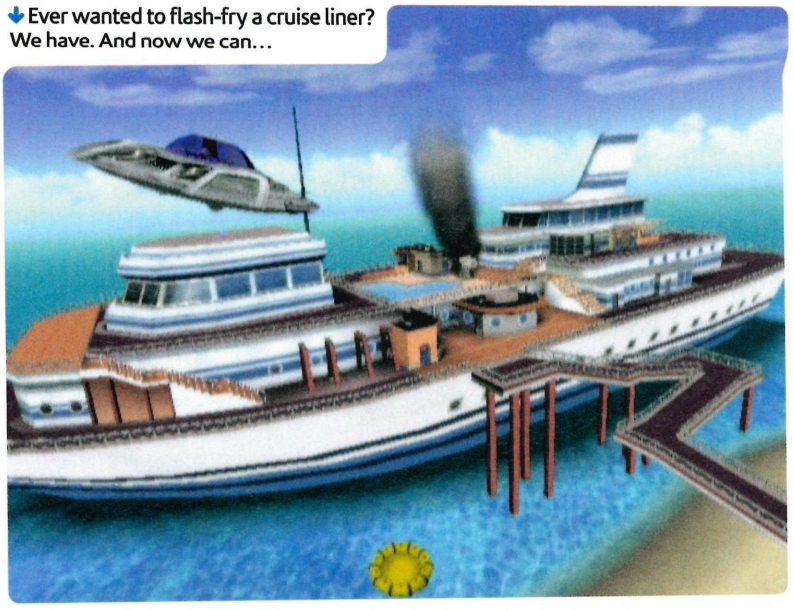


FAQ

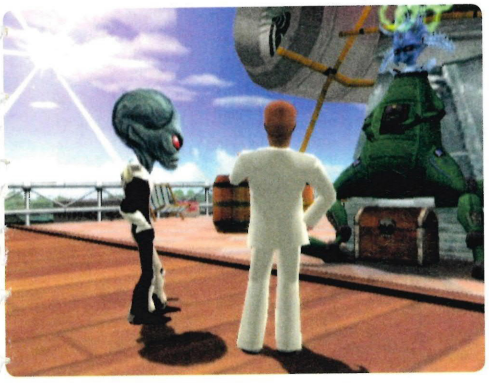
Q. JUST WHAT THE HECK IS A CRYPTOSPORIDIUM?

A. Crypto's namesake, the intestinal parasite Cryptosporidium, causes an uncomfortable case of the squits and is one of the most common waterborne diseases known to medicine.





Ever wanted to flash-fry a cruise liner? We have. And now we can...



Suits you, sir: Crypto dresses for the days of disco

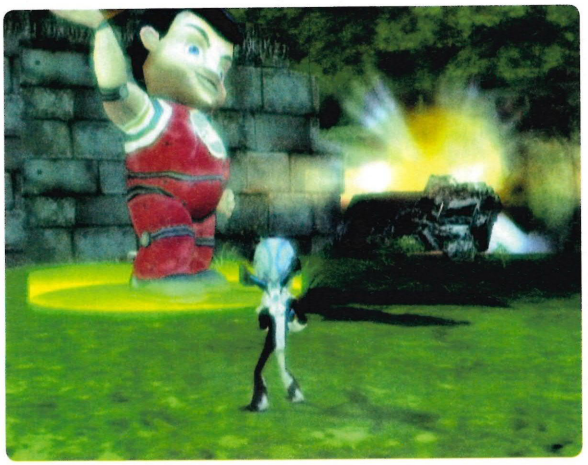
In a pinch, Crypto can hop out of the hatch in Willy's posterior and use his Zappomatic weapon to repower Big Willy's, erm, 'Mantenna'. Silent Hill this ain't, but it does promise laughs in a snickersome sort of a way.

It wouldn't be a DAH! game without a bevy of new weapons with which to terrorise humanity. Apart from the return of the ever-popular Anal Probe, our favourite has to be the Zombie Gun.

Alientertainment

Plugging a human with the Zombie Gun will initiate a delightful domino effect of brain-munching undead, as one slavering zombie infects another human and so on, until Crypto is supported by an army of shamblers.

Big Willy can't help but make Crypto feel a bit, well, inadequate



Then there's the not-so-subtle device that produces crackling ball lightning, which floats down the street, electrocuting unfortunate passers-by. But Crypto isn't all about the futuristic firearms: he's still armed with a range of psionic abilities.

Body-snatching isn't as easy as it was in previous games, mind. Taking over a hapless homo sapiens now requires a quick button-pressing mini-game while Crypto wrestles to control his new fleshy vessel.

BODY-SNATCHING ISN'T AS EASY AS IT WAS IN PREVIOUS GAMES

As you can tell from the screens, the game is set in the 1970s, and the developers have licensed a number of cheesy disco tunes to celebrate. Crypto even dons a natty lime disco suit for the occasion.

Given the series' habit of poking fun at recent American history, we expect a great deal of fun to be had at the expense of disco culture, the Vietnam War and all of your other favourite 1970s stereotypes.

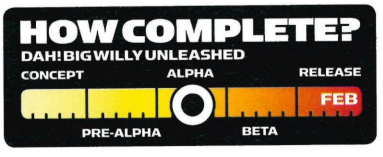
Disco studio

With new developer Locomotive Games taking the franchise off of Pandemic Studio's hands, you'd be right to be a little wary with where they'd take the series.

But take heart. It's nigh-on impossible to upset the apple cart with Destroy All Humans!'s gratifying formula of anal probes, Jack Nicholson impressions, witty one-liners and giddy, sandbox destruction.

And by the way, if you weren't sure that the Yanks' use of 'Big Willy' in the title was intentional, we can confirm (thanks to the plentiful, and very silly, Willy-based double entendres that crop up in the game's dialogue) that it is very much so. A bit childish? Sure. But is that so wrong?

So if the idea of leading zombie armies into battle from inside a giant metal boy appeals to you, start saving up your Christmas coppers: you'll be able to get your hands on Big Willy in February. **Mike Sterry**



There are plenty of race locations, including this airfield

THE FILTH AND THE FURY

MX vs ATV Untamed is ready to spray dirt in your face

PUB THQ **DEV** Rainbow Studios **ETA** March 2008 **WEB** mxvsatv.com

MX vs ATV Untamed is an angry game. Even the vehicles sound really hacked off, as their rasping throttle zips you round each track like a leather-clad bottle-rocket.

The soundtrack is nothing but the heaviest metal and your opponents are aggressive enough to give hardcore Hells Angels the willies.

However, despite the vein-popping ire, we rather enjoyed our hands-on time with this early preview version.

MX vs ATV Untamed is an incredibly playable game, even if you've never stepped within 5ft of a motocross bike for fear of getting your Levis mucky.

Bike for good

There's a wealth of riding events to choose from, and you can tackle courses on a variety of vehicles made up of the titular MX and ATV classes.

The indoor races give you opportunities to show off

Fanatical mud-junkies can spend hours tinkering with their specific machine set-ups, adjusting everything from the size of the engine down to the body colour.

If you're that way inclined, you can even give your vehicles pet names.

WORST CASE SCENARIO

A DODGY LANDING ON THE LAST LAP

The secret to success in an MX game is learning to land jumps. Coming off your ride means losing the race.

CHANCES OF WINNING **50/1**

↑ Races are always hotly contested

Of course, once you're out on track it's all down to how well you perform.

All the vehicles handle very similarly, and no matter how far behind you fall, even the lowliest bike or quad will be able to power you back into a podium place with some smart handling.

The AI is mercifully fallible, too, so don't be surprised to see other riders cocking up corners or spilling uselessly off their dirty metal steeds.

Mind you, the difficulty level is generally high. And, frustratingly, if you botch it up on the last lap, you're likely to find yourself staring down the barrel of sixth place and facing a frustrating restart. We're hoping this will be addressed between now and the game's March release.

Quad of war

Track-wise, Untamed starts off weak, but gets much better. The first hour is spent trawling around oh-so brown indoor areas and is thus more painful than back-to-back repeats of Fifth Gear. But once you break into the exciting outdoor circuits, zipping around farms and powering up 45° sand slopes, things get very interesting.

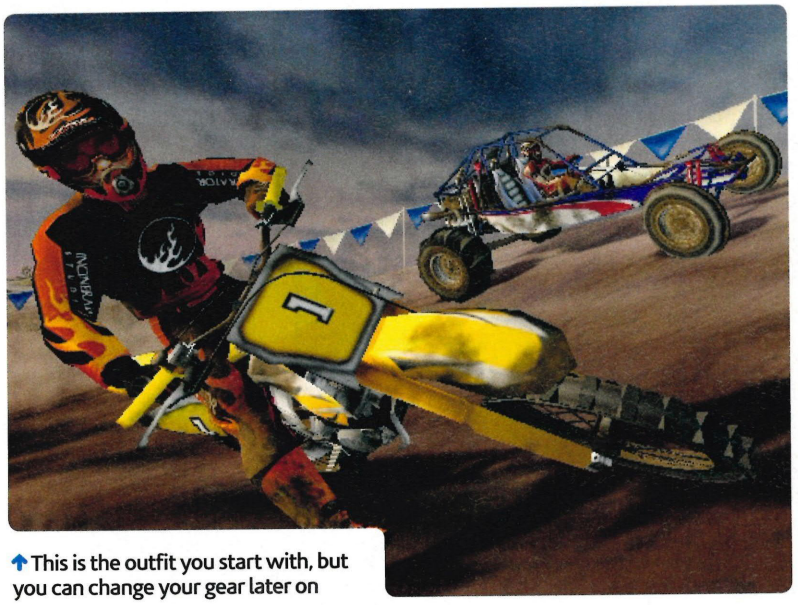
After a couple of hours we were only about 3% into the game, and we'd barely scratched the surface of some of the modes.

As well as straight racing you can take part in stunt challenges that range from performing specific manoeuvres to racking up bigger point-combos than your opponents.

Scoring is a tricky skill to master, and to start with your rider will probably spend more time face down in the mud than in the air striking a daft pose.

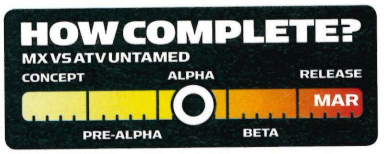
Again, though, persistence is the key and it looks like the patient will be rewarded with a game that'll last for months.

This is the latest in a long line of MX vs ATV games, but right now, we reckon it's shaping up to be one of the best. So if you haven't got your hands dirty yet with a previous instalment, March could be the time. **Andy Hartup**



↑ This is the outfit you start with, but you can change your gear later on

↓ The stunts you can pull of are impressive. Just not very realistic



PHANTASTIC MORE

The epic sci-fi adventure continues with **Phantasy Star Universe: Ambition Of The Illuminus**

PUB Sega **DEV** Sonic Team **ETA** Jan **WEB** phantasystaruniverse.com

Phantasy Star Universe occupies an awkward sort of roleplaying game middle ground. It's by no means a poor game, but it isn't as beautiful as Final Fantasy, as engaging as Rogue Galaxy or as cute as Kingdom Hearts.

Despite this, Sonic Team's series has built up a cult following and the reward for these loyal players is Ambition Of The Illuminus.

Sega is releasing this as a cut-price standalone game, so you won't need a copy of the original to enjoy it.

We can't imagine why you would pick this up without owning Phantasy Star Universe, but if you don't, you should be able to pick up the original for next to nothing secondhand.

Culty national

The game picks up where the first PSU left off, with the ill-fated Gurhal system finally at peace.

That is, until a fundamentalist cult known as the Illuminus arrives and starts kicking up a stink, throwing the government into chaos.

Enter the Guardians, keepers of the peace, to kick some ass and restore a little law and order.

Guardian angels

Mercifully, Ambition Of The Illuminus lets you create your own, custom Guardian instead of forcing you into the space-boots of the loathsome hero of PSU, Ethan Weber.

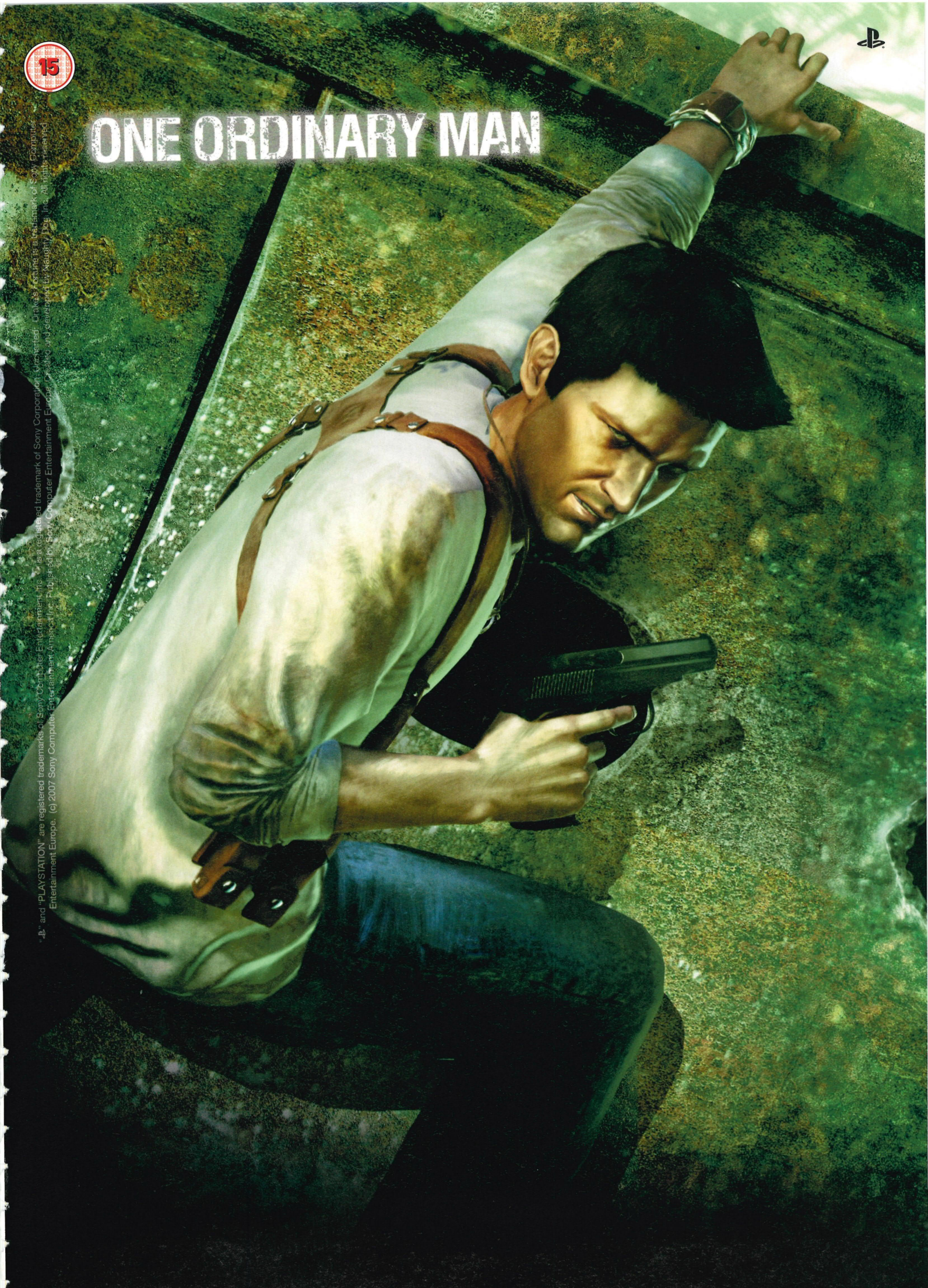
From there you'll have a raft of fresh options when it comes to decking out your home, enhancing your character's abilities, and creating your own online persona. Yup, there are more fancy pairs of trousers and Photon Arts than you can shake a massive glowing sword at.

Then it's off to Cylez City spaceport to jet off to the new worlds on offer. The ruins of Old Rezenom City and the Granigs Mines are just two of the locations you'll be able to explore, and each one is packed with newer and weirder enemies to put to the sword.

You'll meet some familiar faces along the way, including Ethan Weber himself. So do us a favour and shoot him in the head. Thanks. **Andy Hartup**

There are plenty of weird and wonderful weapons to wield

HOW COMPLETE?
PSU: AMBITION OF THE ILLUMINUS
CONCEPT ALPHA RELEASE
PRE-ALPHA BETA FEB



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PLAYSTATION NATION

△ YOUR LETTERS ○ YOUR REVIEWS ✕ TIPS & SECRETS □ STUFF

MY STOCKING IS READY AND WAITING

Merry Christmas and all that business, I hope you're going to be happy with your Christmas pressies, and that most of them will be game-related.

My letter to Santa includes Guitar Hero III, Persona 3 and World Peace 3. But what are you hoping for?

In the case of Star Letter writer Jermaine Green, a revival of the point-and-click game genre. As for Paul Snowdon, more official baseball games in the UK.

Voice of the Nation

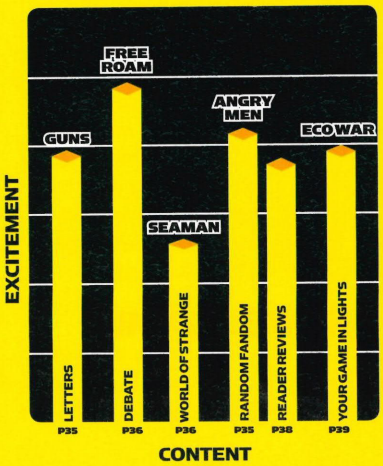
There have been some great reviews pouring in for our Reader Reviews section, so much so, I'm considering retiring in the new year.

But somebody's got to watch over our Facebook group, especially as you internet types come up with such quality contributions.

Special mention goes to a certain cluster of Facebookers who've started a campaign to bring Seaman 2: The Peking Man Rearing Kit to British Shores. Join our Facebook group and sign up for the cause!

KIM RICHARDS
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
psnation@futurenet.co.uk

THIS SECTION CONTAINS



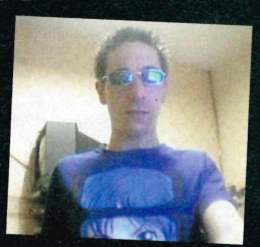
WHAT'S GOT YOU TALKING THIS MONTH

'SHAME ON YOU, KONAMI'

ALEX FLYNN P36

SEND US STUFF LIKE THIS

↑HANDICRAFT DELIGHTS
We love to see a bit of handcraftery, whether it be crosstitch, painting or cake. Show us yours!



↑STAR READER
Fancy seeing a section dedicated to yourself? Write in and tell us!

↑FUNNY CHEATS
There's nothing we like more than a laugh, so snap a pic of your favourite cheat and send it in!

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CLICKED OFF?

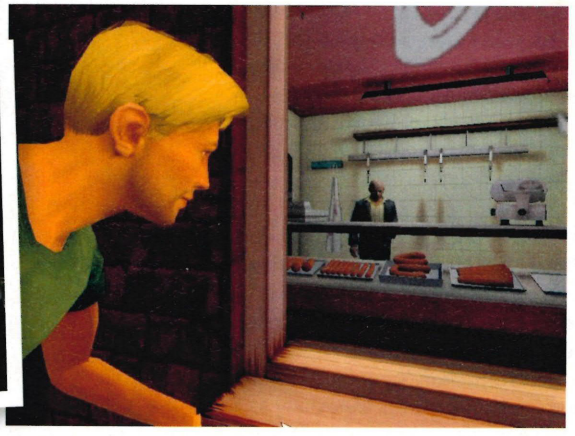
STAR LETTER

Where have all the point-and-click games gone? Games like Monkey Island, Broken Sword and Discworld seem a distant memory. Games that make you think while you enjoy their in-depth storylines and witty humour.

Is there a new unwritten rule that all games must be fast-paced and involve killing things for 10 hours? I beg for someone to sort this out. At the very least port some of the old ones onto PSP.

JERMAINE GREEN
BEDFORDSHIRE

It is a shame that this genre of gaming has slipped away and we agree, it should be brought back to life!



↑ Jermaine Green says: bring back these games!

WIN THIS!

This month, all letters published in the main body of this section will receive a top PS2 game. The writer of the Star Letter gets four games!

STAR LETTER

ONE SWITCH

Since your article on gaming accessibility in issue 89, I have managed to create a PS2 controller switch interface, making it easier for disabled gamers to play PS2 games.

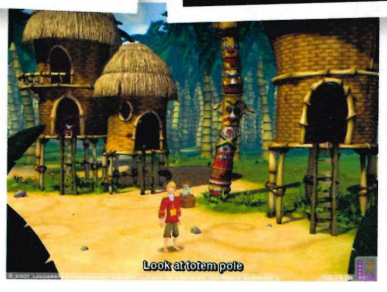
It uses an adapted Sega Dreamcast arcade stick with joystick that can act as the direction pad or analogue sticks, and accessibility sockets.

These allow for a huge range of controls to be attached, including large switches, sip/puff controls and even external USB keyboard set-ups.

I'm also working on a PS3 controller, so fingers crossed!

BARRIE ELLIS ONESWITCH.ORG

Check out Barrie's website at oneswitch.org.uk for more details.



← One Switch's new PS2 controller

BASEBALL BOYCOTT

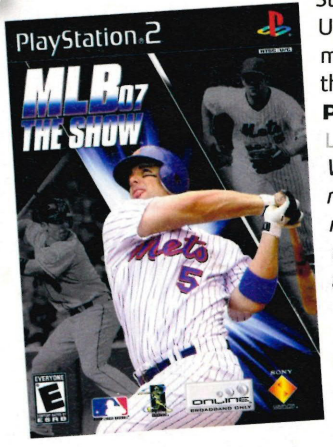
Thanks for showing the list of the hot 10 games over the pond. And still in there at number eight is the fantastic MLB07: The Show.

What? You can't get it over here? Yes, that's right, once again, the powers that be have decreed that baseball isn't a seller so the thousands of followers of the game in the UK have been denied the best baseball game on the market today.

It's been years since an officially licensed baseball game from the States was released in the UK. How about your magazine demanding that this changes in 2008?

PAUL SNOWDON
LIVERPOOL

With American Football really taking off in the UK now, it's likely baseball will, too. And the more fans there are, the more the videogames will come, so keep showing your support for the sport and this travesty will soon be a thing of the past.



ONLINE SHAME

I bought Metal Gear Solid 3 first time around and then wanted Subsistence on the strength of your review and

Paul Snowdon hopes MLB07 will one day hit our shores

was recently reminded of its brilliance by its number five spot in the OPS2 Hall of Fame.

So imagine my disappointment when I bought it in October, only to find that Konami discontinued the online play at the end of that month. This was one of the main reasons for buying Subsistence so I am very upset.

Shame on you, Konami – only one year's online support on a much-delayed title is a disgrace!

ALEX FLYNN
OXFORDSHIRE

THE SHORT ANSWER

What the hell is a moogle?

THOMAS ROCHE, LEEDS

A fluffy molebat native to the Final Fantasy games.

That is rather shocking Alex. Sadly it does seem that game-makers are deserting the PS2's online capability, but a year does seem a very short run for such a new title.

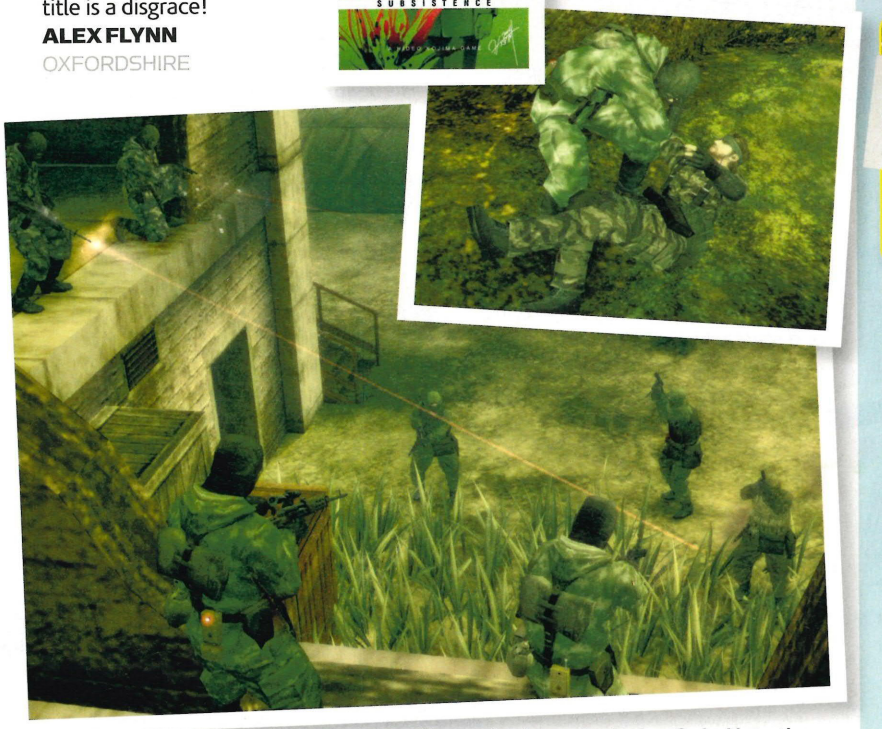
GUN HO

I've bought an XK light gun from a secondhand shop to use with my PS2. But I have no idea which games I can use it with!

I was hoping that you may be able to help me with a list of games?

BRIAN ROGERS KENT

Sure we can. Try Dino



Online multiplayer Snake has faded into the background, much to Alex Flynn's annoyance

RANDOM FANDOM

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

BABY LOVE

This here is three-and-a-half months old Karina, cuddling up to her brother Adam's PSP. Aww!

ADAM
VIA EMAIL

GOD OF DRAW

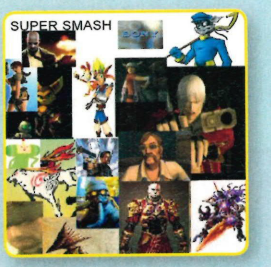
Jack is so excited about God of War: Chains of Olympus that he drew us this awesome picture!

JACK MANN
RUMNEY

BLACK IS BACK

Not satisfied with the Spiderman 3 artwork, Pearu has come up with his own.

PEARU UNGA
FACEBOOK



SUPER SMASH SONY

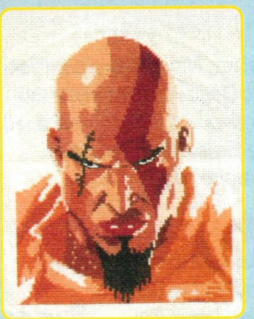
Inspired by the Nintendo series, Freddie has designed a Sony version.

FREDDIE EDWARDS
LONDON

THE HOLLOW

Budding game designer Simon sent us an impressive dossier detailing The Hollow. It's a third-person tactical shooter set in a war-torn universe in the year 2173. Meticulous attention has been paid to weapons, level designs and characters, making our mouths water! We're very impressed.

SIMON MBUGUA
VIA EMAIL



CROSSTITCH KRATOS

John's only the second person ever to send in a stitched-up version of our pattern from issue 85!

JOHN PAUL GRANTHAM
VIA EMAIL

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...

'FREE ROAM: FUN OR ANNOYING?'

We were flooded with opinions on this lava-hot topic. Here are the highlights...

21% FUN

Free-roam games are great because you don't have to survive, you can just quit the mission and go home and come back and have another go. Think about GTA with no free-roam, no random killing sprees. I got really annoyed when playing Superman Returns and I had to keep on doing the missions.
JAMES HARLEY FACEBOOK

Free roam only works if it's new and exciting. If you create miles upon miles of city then shove the same old textures over it, then it becomes miles upon miles of repetition.
JORDAN NORTON
MANCHESTER

Your personal tolerance of free-roaming depends on your opinion of the source. For me personally, my opinion is that it's annoying..... but only because I don't like Grand Theft Auto.
GLENN DAVID SCULLY
NEWCASTLE

79% ANNOYING

I love linearity! When games didn't do any of this free-roaming-arse-about-anywhere-you-like-and-do-anything-you-want palaver, they infused the games with a fantastic, immersive and atmospheric plot, where you actually cared about the character you controlled.
DAN GAY KIDDERMINSTER

There's just so much to get distracted with. It takes away the escapist nature of games, so I just switch off.
ADAM LAWRENCE WEST MIDLANDS

NEXT MONTH'S DEBATE
TEKKEN OR SOUL CALIBUR?
EMAIL PSNATION@FUTURENET.CO.UK

WORLD OF STRANGE

Seaman 2: The Peking Man Rearing Kit

Strange, but true, Chris Osborne of Wales posted this pic on our Facebook group, and now faithful readers have started a campaign to bring Seaman 2 to the UK. Swing over to Official PlayStation Magazine (UK) at Facebook.com to check it out. Meahwhile, we've prepared suitable puns for the review, should it ever happen.

Stalker; Ninja Assault; Resident Evil: Dead Aim; Resident Evil Survivor 2 Code: Veronica, all the Time Crisis ports and Vampire Night.

VOICE CHOICE

I was just looking through some old issues when I read the Onimusha 3 review in issue 48. I noticed that it said "Reno's voice is replaced by some no-mark American early on." Partly true...

Did you know the 'no-mark American' in question, Paul Mercier, also voices Resident Evil 4's Leon Kennedy?

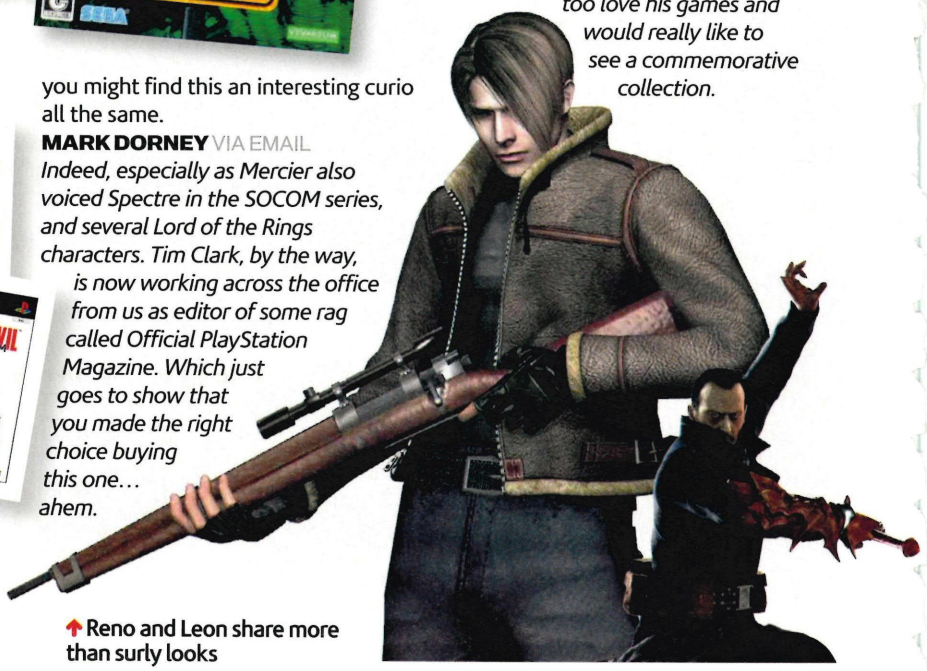
I know that the review's writer Tim Clark has since left, but thought you might find this an interesting curio all the same.
MARK DORNEY VIA EMAIL
Indeed, especially as Mercier also voiced Spectre in the SOCOM series, and several Lord of the Rings characters. Tim Clark, by the way, is now working across the office from us as editor of some rag called Official PlayStation Magazine. Which just goes to show that you made the right choice buying this one... ahem.

↑ Got a light gun? Try these!

COLIN TRIBUTE

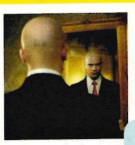
My deepest condolences to the McRae family, who have lost a great son and racing legend in Colin McRae.

He was special when it came to making the McRae games on PS1 and PS2. I think they should make a tribute game featuring all the stages from Colin McRae 1 to 5, because when they made these great games he had lots of input.
RICHARD DODDS CAMBRIDGE
His death was a real tragedy, and we too love his games and would really like to see a commemorative collection.



↑ Reno and Leon share more than surly looks

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



Colin McRae: great games, great guy

WRONGNESS

Is it me or has anyone else noticed there are no children in Grand Theft Auto? Think the cool missions you could have with kids.

You could steal candy from a baby, deal drugs to infants and push them so hard while on a swing that they fall off.

NICK SADLER NORFOLK

You are a sick person.

A NEW HERO

Joe and Konrad are pretty good at Guitar Hero (OPS2 #92), but even they don't come close to the mighty Cüs, for I have set a whopping score to eclipse the original by nearly 100,000 points with my total of 293,786.

I'm more than happy to assume the title of GH II Legend.

MARCUS BEARPARK DORSET

Mighty indeed, and we'll gladly give you the title of GHII Legend, for this month at least. But who knows,

Can you topple the mighty Marcus?

someone might rise to the challenge next month! Keep sending in your shots of GH pwnage, everyone – we're particularly keen to see how you get on with GH III…

THE SHORT ANSWER

Anyone agree there should be an Elvis game?

SUNNY KRISHAN SHAW, FACEBOOK

Yes

PLAYSTATION PROFILE

ANDREW SCOTT IS...

I'M FEELING

WISHING SOMEONE WOULD SHUT UP BUZZ

BIRTH DATE	05/01/78
HOMETOWN	BRISTOL
FIRST GAME	GRAND THEFT AUTO III

MY FRIENDS

ALEX

DIONNE

LUKE

PAUL

FAVE GAMES

TOTAL OVERDOSE

X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE

STAR WARS EPISODE III REVENGE OF THE SITH

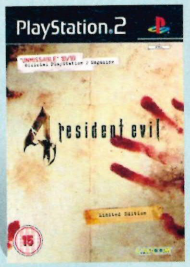
FAVE CHARACTERS

LEON KENNEDY (RESIDENT EVIL)

RAMIRO CRUZ (TOTAL OVERDOSE)

LARA CROFT (TOMB RAIDER)

WHAT I'M PLAYING NOW



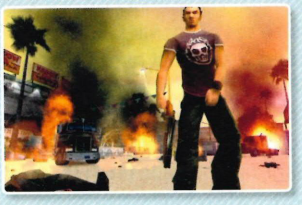
RESIDENT EVIL 4,

It's very scary with lots of blood. Look out for the guy with the chainsaw or lose your head! The only bad point is that annoying Ashley Graham.

MY RATING 0 10

MY BEST MOMENT IN A GAME...

BLOWING UP THE TANKER IN TOTAL OVERDOSE



You have to ram your car into a tanker to blow it up. To do this you need to pick up speed and jump out of the car before it hits.

MY LOCAL GAME SHOP

VIRGIN MEGASTORE, THE GALLERIES, BRISTOL

MY LIFE

INTERESTS
WICCA, KARATE, VAMPIRES, THE GYM, THE INTERNET

MUSIC
LINKIN PARK, SEETHER, PAPA ROACH, EVANESCENCE, FALL OUT BOY

FILMS
THE CRAFT, HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS, HACKERS, SCHOOL TIES

BOOKS/COMICS
BOOK OF SHADOWS (PHYLLIS CUROTT), BLOOD PRICE (TANYA HUFF)

GAME PET

Spyro: he's cute. And how cool would it be to have a pet dragon?

MiTUNES

WHAT I LISTEN TO WHEN I'M GAMING

HACKERS MOVIE SOUNDTRAK

GAME CHARACTER MOST LIKE ME...

JUNPEI IORI FROM SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI: PERSONA 3

He looks like me: the goatee, the brown eyes, the short dark hair. He's also upbeat and cheerful, and so am I.

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

REVIEW AND WIN!

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!

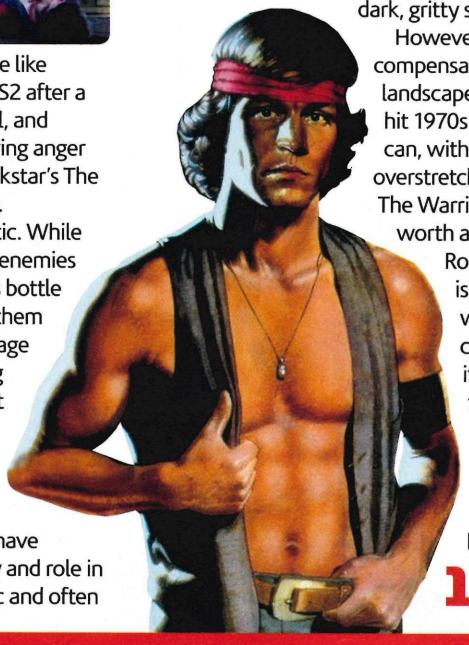
THE WARRIORS

REVIEWED BY **LOIS NORTHWAY, LEEDS**
WE GAVE IT 7/10 IN OPS2 #66

There's nothing quite like switching on your PS2 after a dismal day at school, and taking all your brewing anger out on a sea of enemies. Rockstar's The Warriors is a perfect remedy.

The fighting style is realistic. While you're punching and kicking enemies you can pick up a brick, glass bottle or plank of wood and finish them off. After a few fights your Rage Meter becomes full, enabling you to use more complex yet devastating manoeuvres.

You'll never find a dull moment. You are constantly changing between characters that all have their own unique personality and role in the group, such as the artistic and often cowardly Rembrandt whose job is to tag the streets with spray paint and take The Warriors 'all city'... or even Cleon, the ruthless leader of the Warriors clan.



You also have your own group which you lead by issuing commands. This is vital, especially when you've got the cops on your back!

The graphics are acceptable, although you do get bored with the dark, gritty slums after a while.

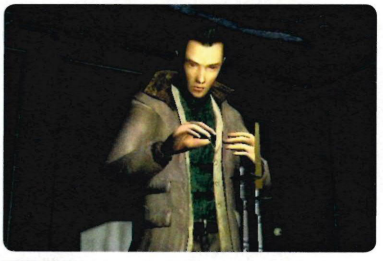
However, the epic storyline compensates for the dark, musty landscape. It comes as close to the hit 1970s film storyline as it possibly can, without becoming overstretched or repetitive.

The Warriors is a game certainly worth a try, especially for any Rockstar fans. Once the story is in full swing you won't want to put down the controller until you've seen it through until the end, but the fun doesn't stop there. With extra features to unlock and an 'armies of the night' minigame to finish, you'll be happy for longer than you think.

10/10

FAHRENHEIT

REVIEWED BY **IBRAHIM BARUT, LONDON**
WE GAVE IT 8/10 IN OPS2 #64



Fahrenheit is a paranormal thriller with an absorbing storyline. New York is stunned by a series of mysterious murders that follow the same pattern: ordinary people become possessed and kill absolute strangers in public.

Lucas Kane is one of these murderers and must uncover the supernatural forces behind his crime before the police find him.

There are two other main playable characters, detectives on the case of the murder committed by Lucas.

The overall presentation is visually stunning, the lighting looks and feels very atmospheric and nerve racking.

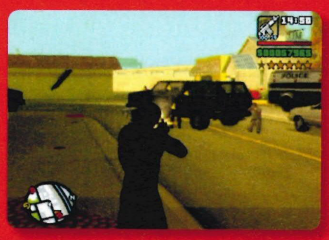
The gameplay is original with sequences of buttons in action sections

READER SECRETS

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

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!



INFINITE HEALTH IN GTA: SAN ANDREAS

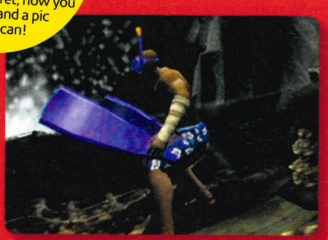
Input this code: ↓, ⊗, →, ←, →, ◻, →, ↓, ↑, △ to get infinite health but watch out: you'll still be hurt by explosions.

MIKE OLDFIELD
LONDON

CALL OFF ALERTS IN MGS 3: SNAKE EATER

If you've triggered alert mode, interrogate a nearby guard. There's a chance he'll give you a radio frequency to call off the alert.

BRANDON SMITH
MIDDLESEX



ADDITIONAL COSTUMES IN GOD OF WAR II

There are five hilarious costumes you can unlock by completing God of War challenges, including Chef of War and Bubbles.

GINA LEWIS
STOCKPORT

but it gets repetitive after a while. Overall the game has an original story and well-developed characters, original gameplay, great set pieces and replayablity: it's a must buy.

9/10

BLACK

REVIEWED BY **DAVID DILLON, INVERNESS**
WE GAVE IT 10/10 IN OPS2 #69

Black is really good as first-person shooters go. There are a lot of really intense firefights and a lot of carnage and destruction, buildings blowing up etc.

One problem with the game is that it only lets you carry two weapons. This is fine in games like Call Of Duty where the only other weapon is a rubbish little single-shot weapon, but in this game there are AK-47's, uzis, shotguns, sniper rifles and RPGs, all of which you want to carry, but can't.

Who cares about realism? Would I be playing games if I cared about realism? And who cares about strategic weapon selection? It's really not hard and it's already been done in Halo. Stop copying Halo.

FPSs that let you carry everything are easily the most fun, such as Project: Snowblind. Having said that, Black is still a very intense experience and is a must for all FPS fans.

8/10

BRIAN LARA'S INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2007

REVIEWED BY **JAMES MAY**
WE GAVE IT 7/10 IN OPS2 #83

I've been a keen fan of Brian Lara's games ever since I knew about them. I loved the 2005 version and couldn't wait for the next one. Unfortunately, it took a hefty two years for the next instalment.

The fielding has improved with the addition of throwing to both ends of the wicket and having overthrows and direct hits.

The only thing that I criticise about the fielding is the 'catching in the slips' because it's frustratingly difficult: you have one second in which to respond.

The batting, I feel, can be improved – maybe something like the batting in EA's Cricket?

The dancing down the wicket feature is good, although it takes ages to get back in your crease if you miss the ball.

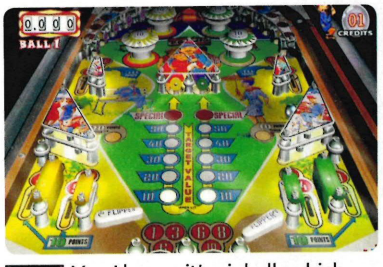
The highlight of BLIC 2007 is the bowling. Out-swingers, in-swingers, googlies, yorkers and bouncers are all easy to execute. Much better bowling than EA's. A three-year-old can take out Ricky Ponting in Cricket.

The graphics in BLIC 2007 aren't the best and the licensing issues are a flaw, but it's a good all-round cricketing experience.

7/10

GOTTLIEB PINBALL CLASSICS

REVIEWED BY **DANIEL GAY, KIDDERMINSTER**
WE GAVE IT 7/10 IN OPS2 #72



Yes, I know, it's pinball, which means that it basically consists of using your flippers to keep the little shiny silver ball in play for as long as possible, and is probably at least 50% chance… but it's fun and mildly addictive and I like it!

And the tables (11 of them) are pretty! And when you tire of flipping your balls about you can have your fortune read by Zoltan or have a go on the Love-O-Meter!

Okay, maybe forget that last bit… but for a pinball game, it's one of the best of its type… and did I mention that the tables are pretty and based on real-life 'classic' Gottlieb tables?

7/10

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!

CARBON FOOTPRINT

DESIGNER
HELEN SCULLY, IRELAND

THE PITCH
Set in modern-day Earth, you have been given 20 different goals to try and stop global warming. But then, the ice-caps melt and you are stranded on a building with 10 other people… can you survive and rebuild civilisation?

OPS2 VERDICT
This is certainly a topical issue to focus on, and we like the idea of presenting it as a puzzle game with the option of two player co-op. It could have been a dull, dry subject but Helen has made it exciting by adding an element of raw peril!

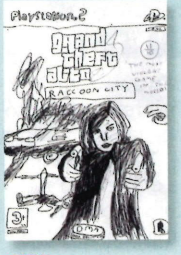
DEAL OR NO DEAL?
DEAL!*
WE WANT TO SEE IT (AND SO DO OUR AS YET UNBORN GRANDKIDS)

CHANCE OF **CARBON FOOTPRINT** BEING THE NUMBER-ONE GAME AT CHRISTMAS...

SLIM — REAL

BEST OF THE REST

DEMON BLOOD
STUART SCULLY, IRELAND
Aivoir is a half-demon who takes on five trials to stop the demon blood from killing him.



GTA: RACCOON CITY
LIAM SMITH
Police want to lock you up, zombies want to eat you. Find weapons and kill EVERYONE.

CITADEL
LLOYD JEPSON
A tower called the Citadel is erected in New York, and you, a mercenary, must destroy it.

SEE YOURSELF HERE

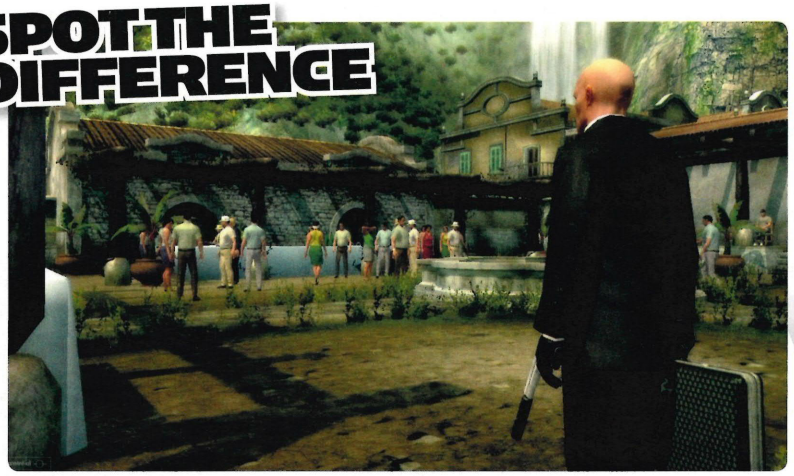
Post your pictures and game ideas to Your Game In Lights, OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW or email psnation@futurenet.co.uk

*Carbon Footprint doesnt really get a publishing deal, but Helen does get a framed copy of our design for her game's box art

THE BRAIN DRAIN

Exercise your brain, reap the rewards! We've set the difficulty to maximum...

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



There's only one difference to find, but it's a toughie! Text OPS2SPOT then a single space followed by your name and answers to 87103.

ANDY'S ~~NICK'S~~ CRAP DRAWING OF THE MONTH

As Nick has been away playing PES this month, it fell to Andy to put pen to paper and demonstrate his, er, artistic talents. Figure out which PS2 character he's drawn and see below for details of how to enter, because this is one of the seven star prize questions.

NAME THOSE GAMES

It's a game with no name! Do you know what the real names are? This is one of the seven star prize questions, so 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 87103.

1 Which of these games has the most characters?
A Soul Calibur III B Tekken 5 C Mortal Kombat: Armageddon

2 Which of these games features a character called Nightmare?
A Soul Calibur III B Tekken 5 C Mortal Kombat: Armageddon

3 In which of these games are you fighting in the King Of Iron Fist tournament?
A Soul Calibur III B Tekken 5 C Mortal Kombat: Armageddon

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 87103. Or email your answers to psnation@futurenet.co.uk with OPS2STAR as the subject.

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: 2 January 2008
For full competition rules and text terms and conditions, see p127

VIDEOGAME MATHS

Do the Playstation sum below and send us the number you come up with. This is one of the seven star prize questions so see below left for details of how to enter.

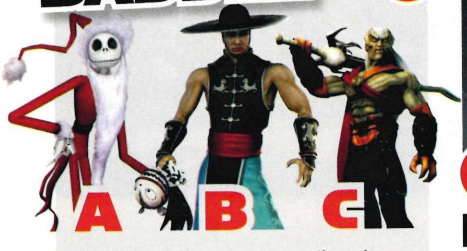
Tracks in Guitar Hero III (not including bonus tracks)	×	Number of Spyro games on PS2	+	The year PS2 was launched	−	The last Final Fantasy game on PS2 was number…	=	TOTAL

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.

- The sequel to this game has been banned in the UK
- The fastest hedgehog in gaming
- This John Carpenter alien can assume any human form
- Is Spider-Man your friend? Or…

WHO'S YA BADDIE?



This bunch look pretty evil and nasty but only one of them is an actual baddie. Tell us which one. Text **OPS2BADDIE** then a space, then your name and A, B or C to **87103**.

IMAGE ZOOM

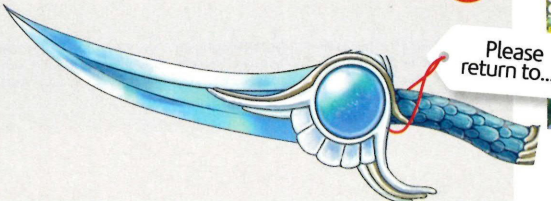
Here's a little bit of scenery from a much bigger game. Do you know which one? If so, text **OPS2ZOOM** then a single space followed by your name and answer to **87103**.

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 so see opposite for details of how to enter.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

Do you know who this belongs to? This is a star prize question, so see opposite for details of how to enter.



WIN ALL THIS!
THE PRIZES

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

A PAIR OF SUB INDUSTRY SKIS + MORE!

Answer all seven Star Prize questions correctly to be in with a chance to win this mundo prize! Star Prize bundle comprises: one pair of Sub Industry skis; Super Monkey Ball Deluxe game; Ghost Rider game; The Plan game; Lego Boba Fett keyring.

PRIZE BUNDLE #01

Fantasy Art Workshop book; Rogue Galaxy Artwork book; Samurai Warriors 2 Empires game.

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

PRIZE BUNDLE #02

King of Fighters 2: Maximum Impact 2 game; King of Fighters XI game; Metal Slug Anthology game.

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

PRIZE BUNDLE #03

Dynasty Warriors 5 Empires game; Samurai Warriors 2 Empires game; Samurai Warriors 2 Empires postcard set; Samurai Warriors 2 Empires notepad.

Email your answer to psnation@futurenet.co.uk
Subject line **OPS2BADDIE**

PRIZE BUNDLE #04

Devil Summoner game; Atelier Iris 3 game; Shin Megami Tensei game and poster; Shadowhearts poster.

Email your answer to psnation@futurenet.co.uk
Subject line **OPS2ZOOM**

ISSUE 91 WINNERS

Star prize: Alex Jenkins
Spot the Difference: Tristan Loftus, Devon
Multiple Choice: Matthew Breeze
Who's Your Baddie?: Angela Nuircroft
Image Zoom: Simon Hallman

Horror DVD package: Tilo Hall, Norfolk

Spot the moogle: Keith Appleton, Hemel Hempstead

READER OFFERS

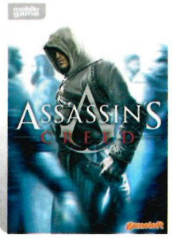
FREE STUFF! Just look at all the amazing cash-saving deals our partners are offering to the PlayStation Nation!

UBISOFT
gameloft

Save money on games, films, phones, music and photos with special deals for OPS2 readers

MOBILE GAME FOR JUST £3!

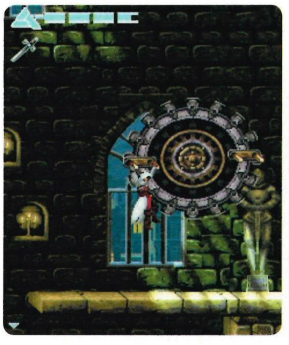
THIS MONTH'S GAME ASSASSIN'S CREED

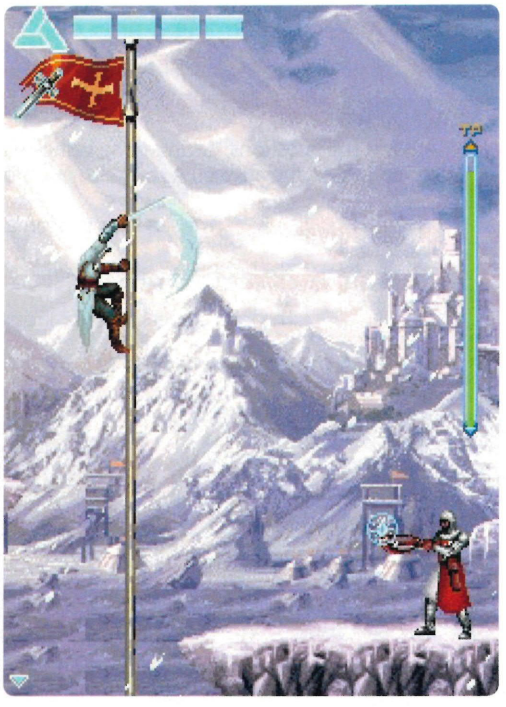


We've teamed up with Mad4Games to offer a great service for readers who play games on their mobile. Subscribe to OPS2 Magazine's 'Game of the Month' for £3 per month, and each month we'll send you the best game released that month, chosen by our team of reviewers. **To join, text OPSM2 to 62344.**

This month, our choice is Assassin's Creed. That's right, you don't need an expensive next-gen console to enjoy this awesome action adventure set in the 12th Century Holy Land!

You can use acrobatic free-running moves with close combat and devastating long-range attacks in four vivid environments. There are 13 missions to complete and you'll interact with people and objects around you as you progress, uncovering dark secrets and mysteries…





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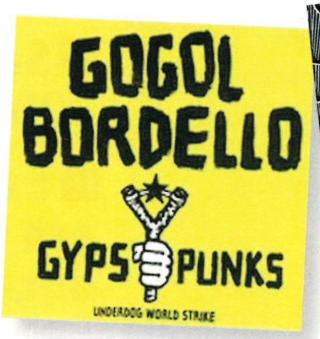

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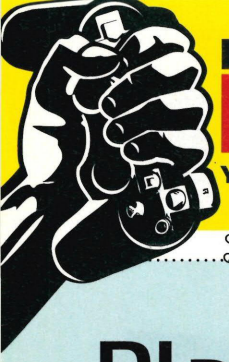

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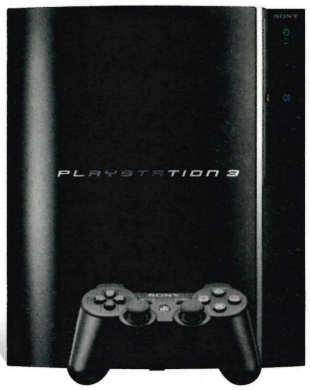

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WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

THE GHOSTBUSTERS ARE BACK IN BUSINESS. BUT CAN THEY STILL MAKE YOU BELIEVE?

Lunchboxes! Toys! Books! Water pistols! Pencil cases! Slime-in-a-can! Ask anyone who was alive in the 1980s about the Ghostbusters and they'll tell you what a phenomenon it all was.

When lesser film licences limp their way onto PS2, the obvious question is: 'Why?' With Ghostbusters, the question is: 'Why's it taken so long?'

Well, very probably because earlier 'busters titles on a variety of formats were, without exception, pants.

This version of Ghostbusters has been in development for more than two years.

And the really good news is that Dan Ackroyd and Harold Ramis, who wrote both Ghostbusters films as well as starring as, respectively, Dr Raymond Stantz and Dr Egon Spengler, have taken on writing duties for the game.

They've been tinkering for years with a script for a Ghostbusters 3 movie, but now this game will form a semi-sequel to the first two films.

With dialogue that's faithful to the characters at the same time as being funny – "These readings are off the charts! Now I have to make new charts!" – things are looking good.

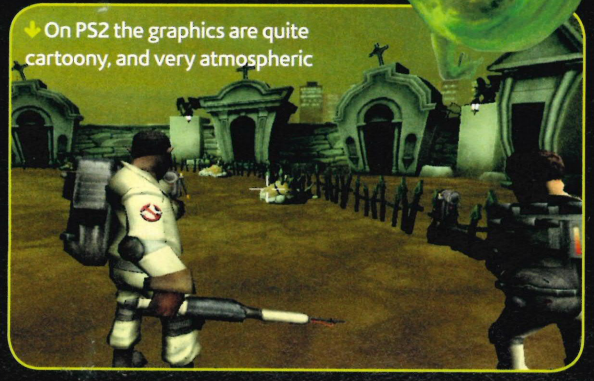
Their fusty government nemesis Walter Peck will be back, too, but whether Bill 'Venkman' Murray will be involved is… unresolved.

You play in third-person as one of the famous Ghostbusting team

DAN ACKROYD AND HAROLD RAMIS HAVE TAKEN ON WRITING DUTIES FOR THE GAME

The game's being overseen on every format by movie studio Universal, but on the PS2 it's being developed by the relatively young Red Fly studios.

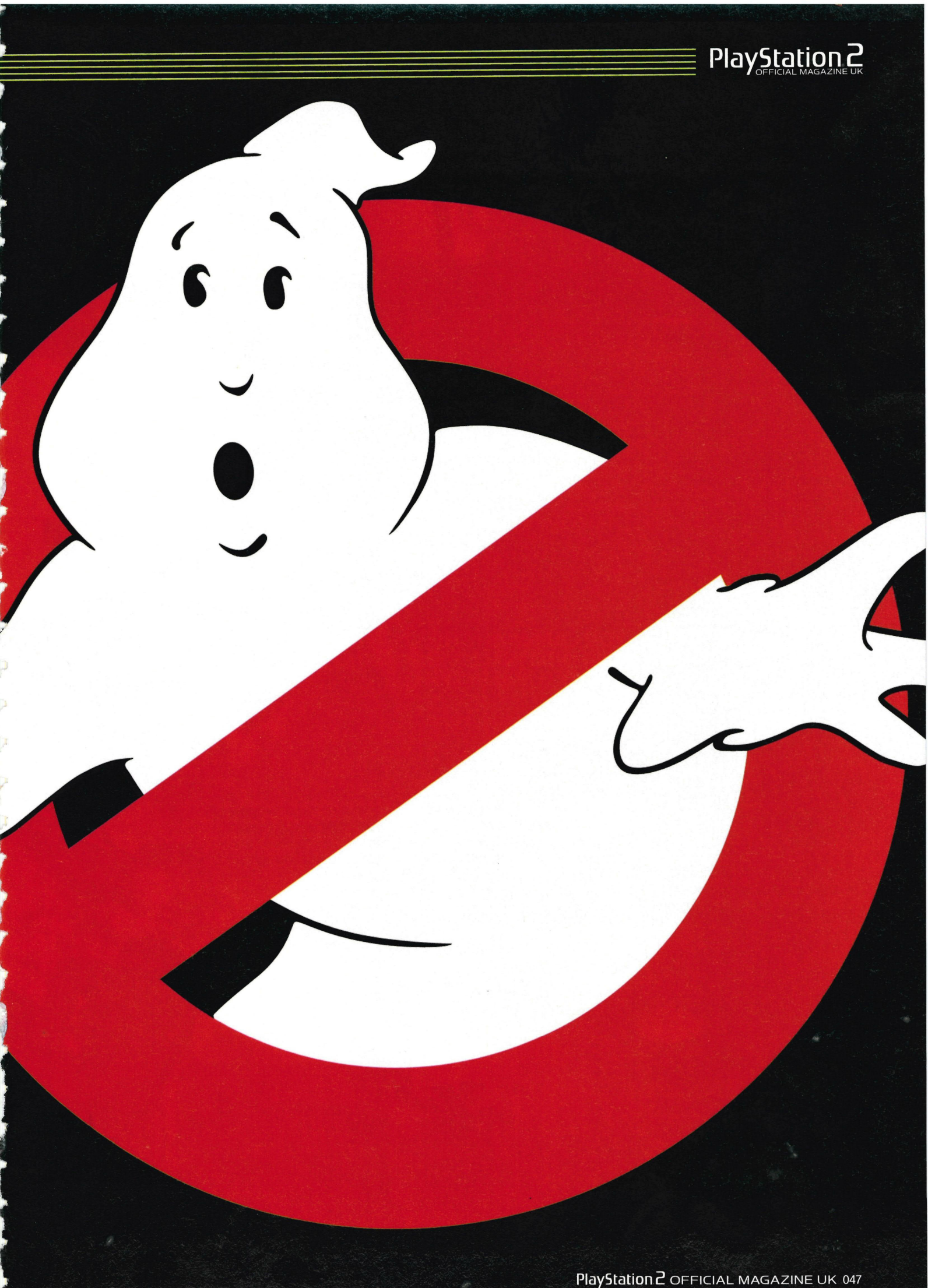
So, what's the story? Well, after saving New York at the end of Ghostbusters 2, the action jumps ahead to 1993 where the boys are still riding the wave of their popularity. Spectral activity's on the up, so they decide to make the business into a franchise – meaning more staff and more outlets. It's not going to be plain sailing, though…



On PS2 the graphics are quite cartoony, and very atmospheric

PROTON POWER

It all happens in classic third-person shooter style. Early levels have you investigating spectral disturbances in classic Ghostbusters venues such as the New York library and the Astoria Hotel ballroom – classic setpieces, recreated with just enough of a twist to feel fresh.



Some ghosts must be reeled in with careful Proton beam control

The PS2 version of Ghostbusters follows the same plot as the next-gen editions – albeit with a more cartoony, Real Ghostbusters look – so you won't miss out on any of the action.

You start out with the boys' famous Proton Packs, which are good enough to take down minor-league ghosts on their own.

Charged Shots and Proton Blasts – done by combining shoulder buttons – work on tougher ghosts, but these will also need catching.

To do that, you'll need to slide a trap along the floor, catch the ghost in your beam and then haul it in, kind of like a fisherman trying to land a huge, spooky trout.

Ghosts come in different flavours, classified according to the ever-handy Tobin's Spirit Guide, through which you can flick between levels. Animators, for instance, can possess things like books, chairs or tables to make them attack you.

YOU CAN WHIP GHOSTS AROUND AND INTO WALLS, SMASHING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT

Ghosts come in different sizes: these guys are comparatively tame

SLIME TO DIE

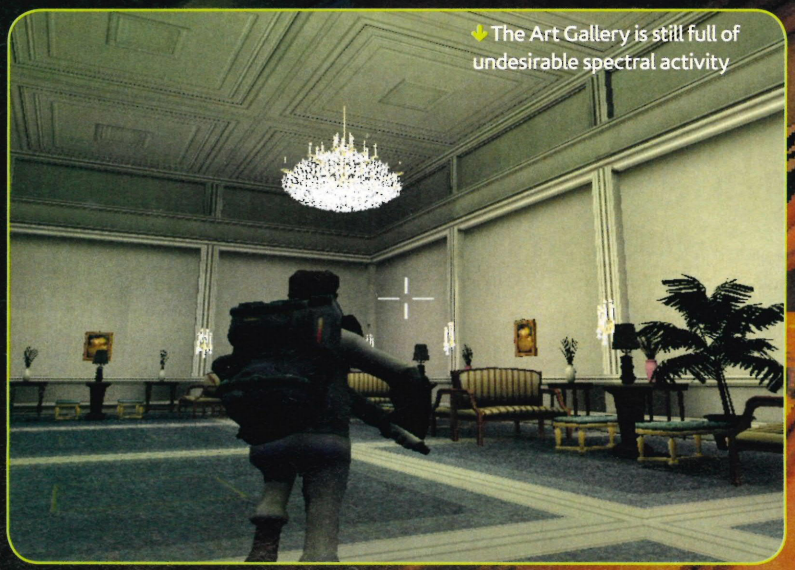
Slimer, as film fans will doubtless remember, is a Class Three Free-Form Floating Apparation. Really tough ghosts like this need to be weakened before they're destroyed, and this is where the fun really starts.

You can whip them around and into walls with the Proton Pack, smashing everything in sight and causing massive amounts of damage.

There are boss characters as well, at whom you must chip away, and they will usually shield themselves with objects from their surroundings.

Of course the Ghostbuster work as a team, and the other guys join in at key points, using fairly decent AI, so you can wreak even more havoc. They'll shout at you if you cross the streams, though.

Between missions, the boys hang out in Ghostbusters HQ, where you can upgrade your kit, buy new



The Art Gallery is still full of undesirable spectral activity

The game visits familiar places from the films and new locations, too

I AIN'T AFRAID OF NO GHOSTS

GHOSTBUSTERS FEATURES A MIX OF CLASSIC SPOOKS AND NEW ONES CREATED JUST FOR THE GAME...

LIBRARY WOMAN

IN THE FILM She scared the bejesus out of Dan Ackroyd and gave a generation of schoolchildren another reason to be afraid of libraries and old people.

IN THE GAME She's more powerful than the Ghostbusters had originally thought, and commands an army of sentient books in the catacombs under the city library.

MR STAY PUFT

IN THE FILM He's a harmless marshmallow mascot turned into the ultimate destroyer by baddie Gozer.

IN THE GAME He's got his own super-popular toy line but he still comes back to pull a King Kong-style rampage in New York.

THE SEA CAPTAIN

IN THE FILM Um, he isn't in the film.

IN THE GAME He's a salty dog who wears a rotting life-preserver and attacks our heroes with a cheery 'A-harrr!' Reminds us of the bloke from The Simpsons.

OPERA LADY

IN THE FILM She isn't in the film either. Also: it appears the developers aren't too good at thinking up names.

IN THE GAME She attacks our heroes with blasts of foghorn-volume singing and can bring her surroundings to life.

SLIMER

IN THE FILM He's the first ghost the boys bust – after he covers Bill Murray in goo.

IN THE GAME He's back, and appears as a playable character in co-op mode.

VIGO THE CARPATHIAN

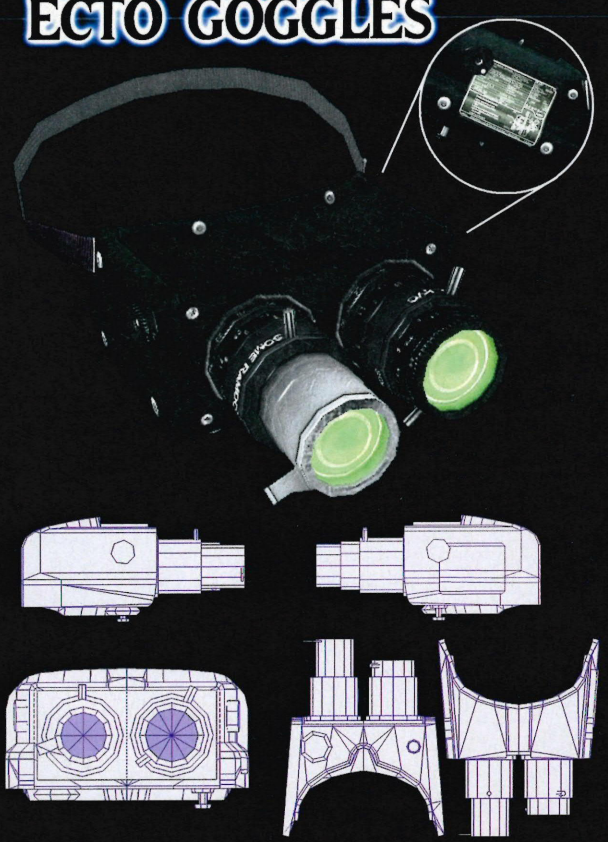
IN THE FILM He's the scourge of Carpathia, inhabits an evil painting and tries to possess Dana's baby.

IN THE GAME He's still sitting in his painting, but doesn't get out much these days. He can't resist the temptation to fling a few choice profanities at the Ghostbusters as they explore the art gallery, though.

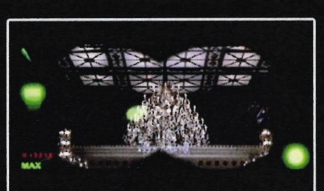
GADGETS

YOU CAN'T GO GHOSTBUSTING WITHOUT A PROPER SET OF KIT... AND HERE'S THE BEST OF THE EQUIPMENT THAT'LL BE AT YOUR DISPOSAL

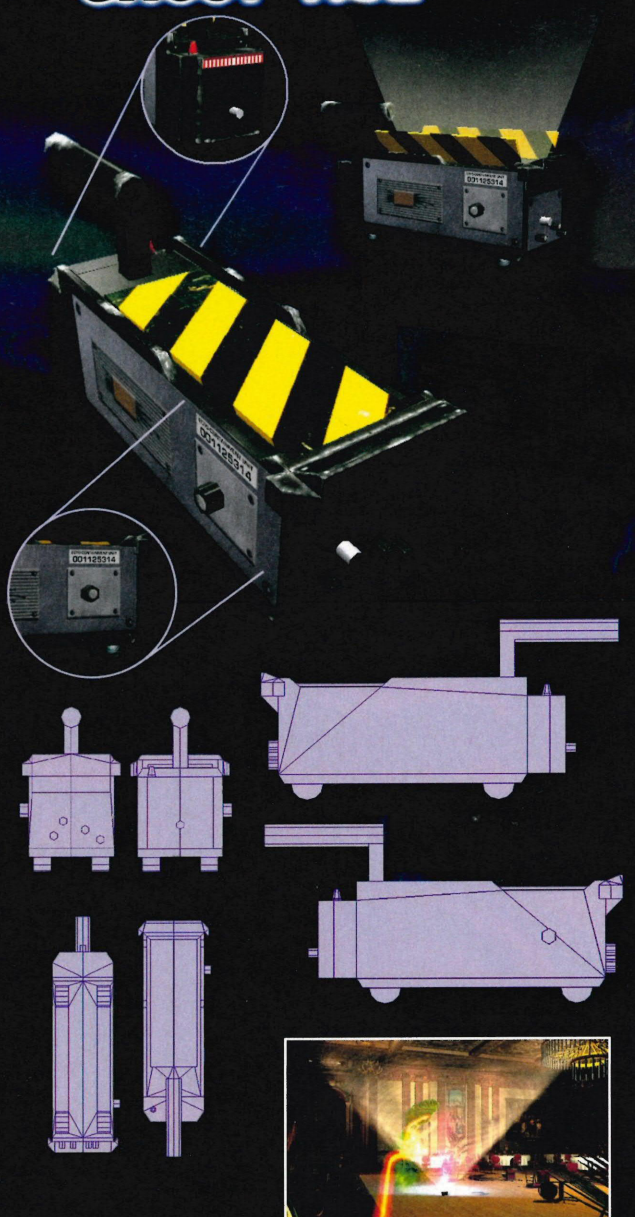
ECTO GOGGLES



As originally worn by Stantz, the Ecto Goggles are used to locate ghosts' hiding places or to find hidden areas, where there will be bonus objects to fill up Tobin's Spirit Guide.

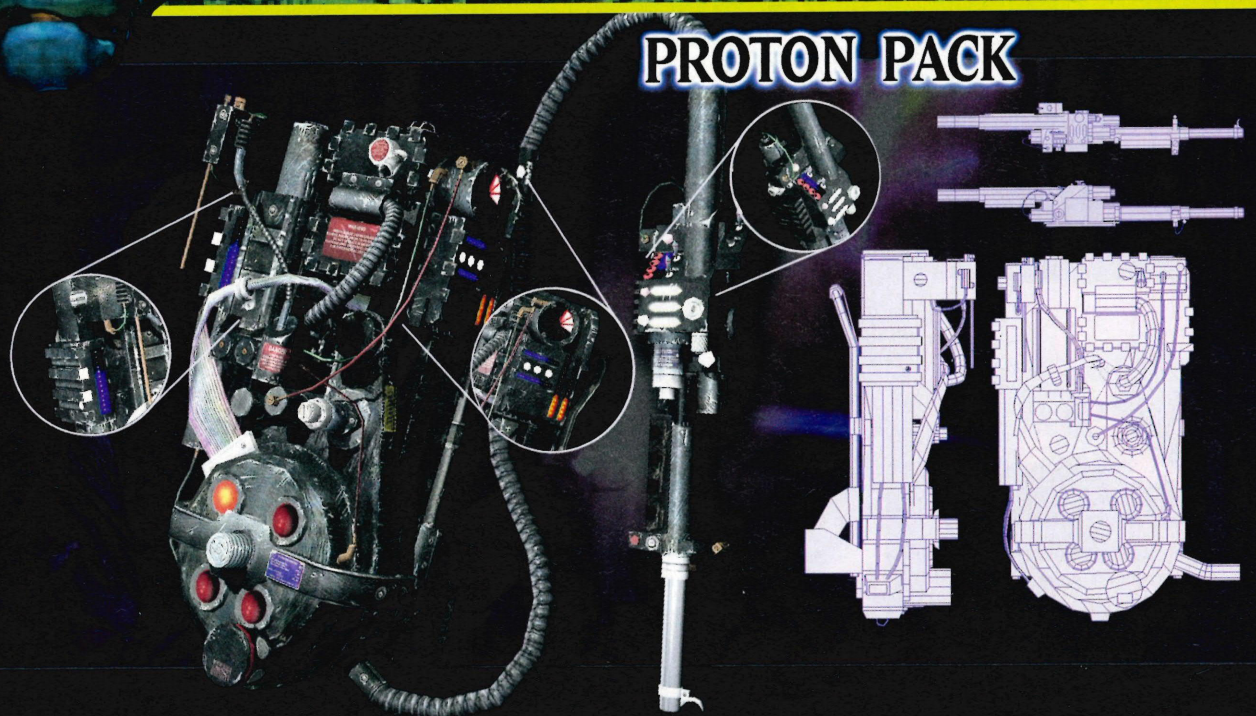


GHOST TRAP



You need to use these against bigger ghosts and bosses, although you can also trap smaller ghosts to raise your prestige and funds, instead of just blasting them. If your fellow Ghostbusters are fighting alongside you, they will throw the traps out; if you're alone you'll have to do it yourself. Either way, you don't need to worry about them getting stuck under tables: they give off a laser blast that clears out anything above them. Oh, and all the destruction you cause goes on the insurance report at the end of the mission.

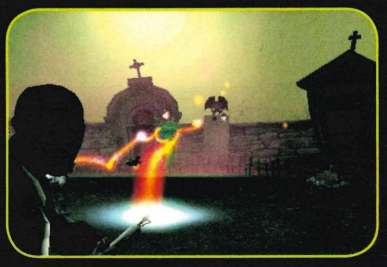
PROTON PACK



Ghostbusters doesn't have much in the way of energy bars. Instead, you're cleverly kept updated on how you're doing via the lights on the Proton Pack (the ghostbusting backpack). The ones at the top show how close the pack is to overloading – which will stop you using it for a few seconds – and the ones at the bottom show how knackered your Ghostbuster is. If one of your buddies is taken down, you'll need to rescue him before you get slimed yourself. Oh, and the other thing to remember about Proton Packs: don't cross the streams…

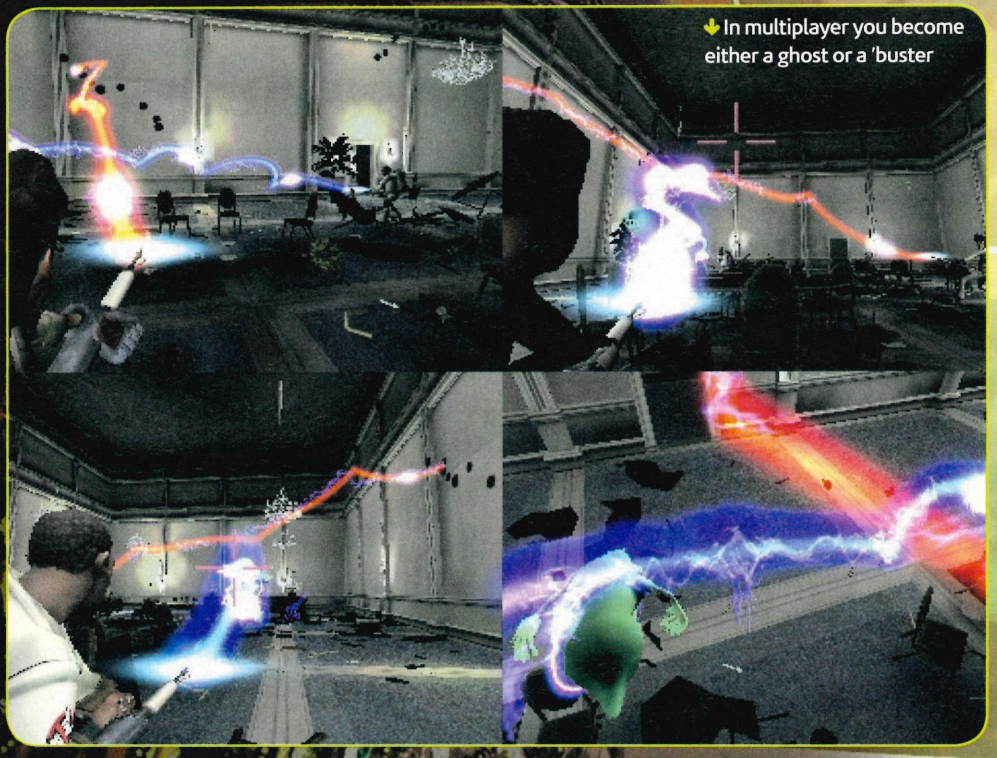
PKE METER

PKE stands for Psycho Kinetic Energy, but to all intents and purposes what the PKE meter does is detect globules of slime in the air. In solo play, Egon will regularly dash off and use the PKE meter to show where ghosts can be found. In multiplayer, 'busters can use it like a not-very-advanced radar to work out where enemies are.



↑ Your Proton Pack offers a variety of outputs for different situations…

↑ … which are controlled by using combinations of the shoulder buttons



↓ In multiplayer you become either a ghost or a 'buster

equipment and even slide down the famous fireman's pole.

Egon frequently invents new bits of kit, such as the Electro Shocker that freezes ghosts or our personal favourite: the Tethergun.

The latter fires out sticky globules of goo that will glue objects together, so you can hold doors open or even (in extreme circumstances) glue cars to ceilings.

There will also, we're told, be scenes where you protect the Ghostbusters' car ECTO-1 although, sadly, you don't get to drive it.

Then there's the multiplayer mode. This is one of the big draws in the PS2 version and promises to be interesting.

FOUR-WAY MULTIPLAYER IS A CRAZY BLEND OF DOUBLE-TEAM SLIMINGS AND DISTRACTIONS

Featuring mismatched sides, it's more Splinter Cell than TimeSplitters – you're either a ghost or a 'buster and the two have totally different powers.

It's based on a tug-of-war score meter in the middle of the screen; ghosts get points for sliming the environment and scaring 'busters, while 'busters get points for cleaning up and catching ghosts.

Ghosts can fly and float through areas that are solid to the 'busters, but 'busters can trash everything with their Proton pPacks.

In two-player it looks okay, but in four-way split-screen it's a crazy tactical blend of double-team slimings and distractions.

ZUUL AND THE GANG

The PS2 code is early at the moment but it definitely feels very much like Ghostbusters. It has a genuinely eerie, creepy haunted-house vibe, with shocks jumping out on every corner.

Yet at the same time, the banter between the lads lightens the mood and reminds you what you love about

BUSTING MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD
…BUT IT HASN'T ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY

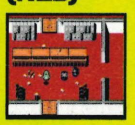
GHOSTBUSTERS (COMMODORE 64)

Mostly based on an old game called Car Wars, the first game of Ghostbusters took six weeks to make… and it showed.

GHOSTBUSTERS 2 (AMSTRAD)

Levels include dangling into the sewer with Ray Stanz and racing the Statue Of Liberty towards the New York Art Museum.

'NEW' GHOSTBUSTERS 2 (NES)



A side-scroller in which our boys dash towards the museum. Rather weirdly, that big-toothed bloke from Ally McBeal appears as the final boss.

GHOSTBUSTERS (GENESIS)

Side-scrolling run'n'gun action featuring super-deformed versions of Venkman, Spengler and Stanz. But not Zeddemore.

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS (GAME BOY)

A puzzle game starring Venkman, where you used your Proton Pack to bust blocks and bombs to bust ghosts. Yes, just as stupid as that sounds.

EXTREME GHOSTBUSTERS (GAME BOY COLOR)

A genero-buster starring new characters such as Kyle and Eduardo.

the films in the first place. It'll be amazing if Bill Murray is involved, but as the Real Ghostbusters cartoon proved, they can do it without him.

Now, if they can just include some of that slime-in-a-can in the package, they'll have a surefire hit… **Joel Snape**

10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT GHOSTBUSTERS

1 In Dan Ackroyd's original film script, the Ghostbusters travelled through time and fought on distant planets. Co-writer and co-star Harold Ramis was brought in to calm things down a bit.

2 The parts of Louis Tully and Winston Zeddemore were originally written for John Candy and Eddie Murphy. They had other commitments, so Rick Moranis and Ernie Hudson stepped in.

3 In deleted scenes, Bill Murray and Dan Ackroyd play several other characters, including a pair of Central Park bums.

4 The original trailer for the film included a phone number for the Ghostbusters. It got more than a million calls.

5 The Stay Puft explosion in the finale used thousands of pounds-worth of shaving foam. Walter Peck alone got hit with more than 50 gallons.

6 The joystick that the boys use to control Ray's descent into the New York sewers in Ghostbusters 2 is actually a NES controller.

7 The SFX team designed a version of the librarian puppet that was even more pant-soiling than the one in the film. They ended up using it in *Fright Night* instead.

8 The baby in Ghostbusters 2 was actually played by twin boys, William and Henry Duschendorf, nephews of singer John Denver.

9 The ECTO-1 was originally going to be black, like the A-Team van. It was painted white after someone pointed out that most scenes would take place at night and a black car would be difficult to see.

10 Dan Aykroyd's long-time chum John Belushi was meant to star in the first film as Venkman, but died of a drug overdose before filming began. It's rumoured that Slimer was jokingly referred to 'the ghost of John Belushi' on set.

THE LEVEL

We celebrate a classic sequence in Rogue Galaxy

THE STORY SO FAR...

The war that divides the galaxy has cast its dark shadow upon the distant desert planet Rosa. Highly valued for its natural resources, Rosa has been put under direct control of the evil Longardian Federation and its people enslaved...

We meet our would-be hero Jaster out in the desert, riding a skeletal steed. He draws a sip from his canteen. It's clear life ain't easy on Rosa.

Our hero rushes out of the church only to be jumped by the undead. But just as he appears to facing his doom, a mysterious figure shows up.

Major ass-kicking ensues. And don't fret, the stranger joins your party straight after to help Jaster uncover the source of the monster invasion.

Jaster, stunned, looks in amazement at his new sword. He gets to test it out right away: two rock giants attack, vulnerable only to aerial attacks.

Wait, the stranger ran away from these two? Thanks to Jaster's sword, they even mistake him for the previous owner, the legendary Desert Claw.

Woah! Looks like our boys just found the source of the monster invasion. It's a Mark VIII Salamander, apparently. No time for introductions - kill it!

It's here we learn that boss battles in Rogue Galaxy aren't simply a matter of whittling away hit points. They've all got a weakness...

Jaster's victory is enough to convince Steve and Simon that he's the famous Desert Claw. But if Jaster's to join their crew, he's going to have to tell Raul.

As they exchange farewells, Raul and Jaster reminisce on how Jaster was left on Raul's doorstep as a baby.

Erm... why, it's a galleon. Sitting in the middle of a desert. Surely this can't be the great space pirate Dorgengoa's starship?

No time to find out - a pack of ten tonne sand-worms attack! After munching on Jaster's steed, they bear down on our hero...

Just as Jaster is about to become worm-food once again, a girl zooms out of the ship on a flying moped.

Their hands clasp, and Jaster's saviour snatches him from the jaws of one of the sand-worms. Escapes don't come closer than this.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE LEVEL AND WE'LL FEATURE THE WINNER! **TEXT 'LEVEL' THEN A SPACE, THEN THE KEYWORD TO 87103**

TEXT BLACK Naszran Foundry from Black

TEXT WARLORD The Keep from Onimusha: Warlords

TEXT DEVIL Black Knight from Devil May Cry 3

See p127 for text charges and full terms and conditions. Lines close 2 January 2007. You can also vote for your favourite level by email to psnation@futurenet.co.uk (put LEVEL in the subject line).

↑ Although our introduction to the slave town Salgin is short, it's clear that the corrupt storm-troopers of the Longardian Federation are in control.

↑ Here we meet Jaster's adoptive father, the priest Raul. However, their intimate conversation is soon interrupted by a minor earthquake…

↑ Jaster and his companion scamper through Salgin, chatting to scared citizens, crossing broken bridges, and smashing baddies' faces in.

↑ Alarmed, the stranger fears he's been spotted. After revealing that he sees potential in young Jaster, he hands over his prized sword and legs it.

↑ Turns out they're Simon and Steve, envoys of the great pirate Dorgengoa, who wants to recruit Desert Claw. Eager to get off Rosa, Jaster plays along.

↑ But first, Jaster requests they help him duff up the monsters terrorising Salgin. Keen to fulfill their mission and recruit 'Desert Claw', they comply.

↑ Steve hands Jaster the Monography Shot, which creates platforms on the beast's body, leading to its weak spot: its black, beating heart.

↑ One last dramatic slash and down goes the boss. With the monster dead, Jaster is now officially a galactic bounty hunter!

↑ Raul admits that Jaster's destiny is in the stars, and permits him to travel. Well, it'd be a pretty dull game if he didn't, now wouldn't it?

↑ We rejoin Jaster at night in the desert. Alone and on horseback, things seem bleak, until he sees a glint of something over the next sand dune.

↑ Jaster whips out his new sword, and slices the monster's looming tentacle. On seeing the huge monster, Simon orders the ship to move. Schmuck!

↑ The ship speeds away from Jaster as more and more sand-worms begin to make chase. Run little Jaster, run!

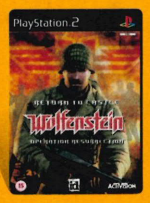
↑ Jaster swings himself onto the back of the girls 'ped. The mysterious stranger looks on as the ship flies away. Just what is his role in all this?

↑ The ship breaks out of the atmosphere, and shifts into hyper drive. Jaster's new life starts here. Cue title screen. How's that for an opening, eh?

THE PS2 GAMES YOU SHOULD OWN #04

Think Nazis and zombies would make a heady combination? Then Return to Castle Wolfenstein, if you dare

KNOW THIS



Publisher
Activision

Developer
iD Software

Genre
Shooter

Score
8/10 OPS2#35

WE SAID...
'A classy addition to the first-person shooter canon'

NOW WE SAY...
A dark romp through the myth of Nazi occultism

Nazis. Zombies. Cyborgs. If Return to Castle Wolfenstein had thrown in a few pirates and ninjas, it could conceivably lay claim to having the greatest rogue's gallery of foes in any videogame, ever.

As it stands, Return to Castle Wolfenstein's panoply of villains is but one of many reasons for adding it to our running list of underappreciated (and under-purchased) classics.

A console conversion of the successful PC sequel to the granddaddy of first-person shooters, Wolfenstein 3D, Return to Castle Wolfenstein's gaming heritage is impeccable.

Like its 256-colour father, the premise behind RTCW on PS2 is simple.

You play as allied agent BJ Blazkowicz (stop sniggering in the back) as he investigates Heinrich Himmler's fictional SS Paranormal Division from behind enemy lines.

But as the word 'Paranormal' suggests, this isn't the quasi-realistic WW2 you remember from Medal of Honor, Call of Duty and their ilk, with their waves of identikit, rank-and-file Nazi peons.

Schweine the times

No, this is classic FPS fare in the mould of iD Software's other legendary franchise, Doom.

You face a steady succession of harder and more horrifying foes that can only be dealt with by your growing arsenal of louder and more experimental weaponry.

The PS2 version is called 'Operation Resurrection' because it includes a whole new prequel episode. In fact, in all it has a remarkably long and diverse single player campaign for an FPS.

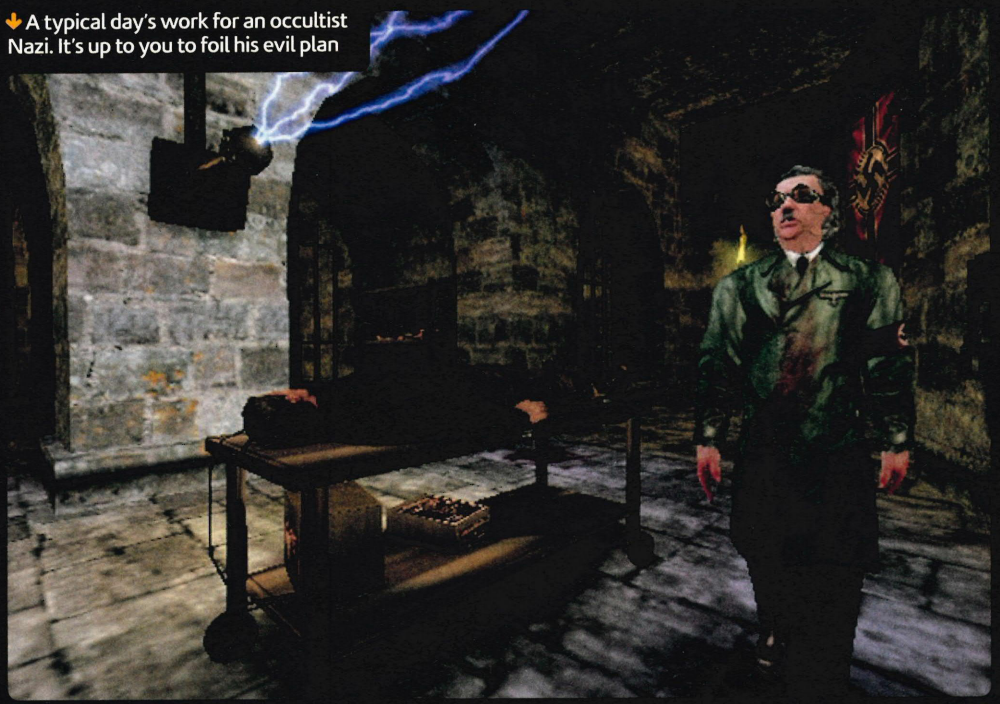
Even more remarkable is how it manages to hold your interest throughout its entire length. This is mostly because the game – just like its old-school PC predecessor – gets more bizarre the deeper you go.

Sure, you start by fighting fairly ordinary soldiers, but soon you'll be fending off acrobatic, PVC-clad Nazi harlots and hordes of ancient undead.

Later on you come up against bio-engineered cyborg Nazi Übersoldaten, something we certainly don't remember from A-level History.

After a few intense missions like that, the game will return to more conventional enemies and objectives. And that's part of RTCW's brilliance.

Weapons aren't historically accurate, but then neither are your enemies



A typical day's work for an occultist Nazi. It's up to you to foil his evil plan

It's half Medal of Honor, half Resident Evil, and blends the worlds of the WW2 shooter and the intense, ammo-conserving survival horror extremely well.

Mein camp

There's loads of variety. Some missions are a race against the clock to destroy a V2 rocket before it launches. Others require you to quietly infiltrate a Nazi mansion and assassinate a general.

Stealth isn't absolutely necessary, but caution is. You must think carefully about what part of your arsenal to employ in a given situation, because the availability of ammunition is less than consistent.

The guns themselves feel solid and pack a punch. There are plenty to choose from, although the lack of a decent physics engine means foes collapse in pre-animated heaps.

Yes, Return to Castle Wolfenstein has its faults. Its transition from PC was less than perfect, even if all the extra content crammed onto the PS2 disc is a welcome addition.

It is the very definition of a Brown Game. That is, you'll be seeing a lot of umber, russet and taupe tones as you skulk through dungeons, mines and Nazi fortresses.

The game palette feels bleak and washed-out most of the time, but it also serves to make the missions in verdant forests and snowy wastes stand out all the more.

So: nubile Nazis, moaning undead and big fuggin' guns. If you're looking for your next PS2 FPS, you've just found it.

Mike Sterry

3 REASONS TO OWN IT

It's Nazi but nice because...

01

HARDCORE GUNISHMENT

Some of the weapons are hardly historically accurate but there's plenty to please firearms fetishists.

02

FIENDISH FOES

From shambling death-knights to Waffen-SS flamethrower troopers, RTCW sure packs in the freaks.

03

HOT NAZIS

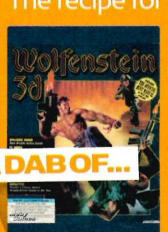
Maybe it's just us – okay, just Mike – but there's something terribly titillating about fascist babes in spray-on latex uniforms.

TOP FACT

A Castle Wolfenstein film has been in the works since 2002, and is currently helmed by Pulp Fiction writer Roger Avary

IN THE MIX

The recipe for Return to Castle Wolfenstein



A DAB OF...

...the classic inspiration from **Wolfenstein 3D**, the PC original

A SLICE OF...

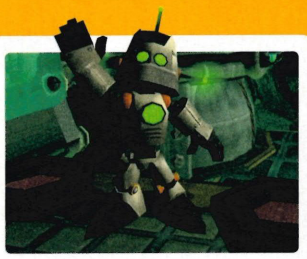
... gothy, occultist fun like in **BloodRayne**

A WHIFF OF...

... the giddy gun porn of **Black**

There was never any problem getting the castle barbecue started

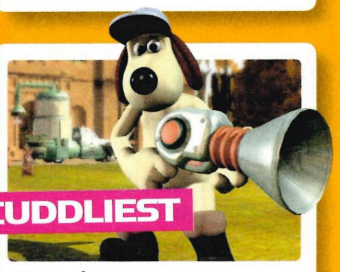
Agro
Shadow Of The Colossus, 2006
Agro the horse is crucial to Wander's adventure: in fact, our silent hero would be rendered utterly useless without him. He's strong, stolid and loyal; everything the ultimate sidekick should be.



Clank
Ratchet & Clank, 2002
Green-eyed mini-robot Clank fits on Ratchet's back like a backpack. He can store an infinite number of items in his tummy and upgrade himself with helicopter blades, electro-zappers and thruster packs.

Ashley
Resident Evil 4, 2005
Okay, she doesn't really do much, apart from get attacked by zombies, but having to protect her as well as yourself is, er, fun, right?

Otacon
Metal Gear Solid 2, 2002
Hal 'Otacon' Emmerich is a hacker and weapon designer who supports your mission via codec link with regular helpings of swanky knowledge and anti-smoking quips.



CUDDLIEST

Gromit
Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit, 2005
The brains behind the operation, Gromit always pulls Wallace out of the tough spots. Here he's armed with his rabbit-catcher.

Yangus
Dragon Quest: Journey of the Cursed King, 2006
Cockney ex-thief Yangus may be rough, burly, and stubborn but he owes Hero his life and will protect him from anything.

GREATE SIDE

From wise-cracking robots grappling hooks, every hero

Where would Batman be without Robin? Xena without Gabrielle? Sonic without Tails? Yet sidekicks are perhaps some of the most underrated people (or animals – or indeed fairies, aliens or robots) in our culture.

They walk forever in the shadow of the hero, yet without the humble sidekick, it's more than likely he or she would crumble in the limelight, flounder with the opposite sex or be eaten by the first wave of zombies.

Meanwhile, without the sidekick to dispense sage advice or crack jokes – or both – at regular intervals, the game would be a lot less entertaining for us gamers to play.

Two's company

Sidekicks are so much more than hired help. They are the comic relief, the helping hand, the decoy, the nifty little hand that can fit through jail bars, the muscle-power in a fight, the computer nerd who can hack

The Old Woman
Worms 3D, 2003
Looks like a harmless little granny, but her explosive heart makes her a warring worm's best friend. In later games, she's also known to actually pee herself. Terrifying.

Yorda
Ico, 2002
Pathetically ditzy Yorda seems like a liability at first, but comes in very handy when you're at a locked door or need clues on solving the game's endless puzzles. Would benefit from family counselling, though.

Scree
Primal, 2003
This cutesy little gargoyle helps heroine Jen rescue her boyfriend from demons. He can climb up walls and turn into stone too, which is handy in a sticky spot.

Pey'J
Beyond Good & Evil, 2003
He may be a pig, but Pey'J is a perfectly mannered companion. His strength and mechanical ingenuity are perfect counterparts to Jade's compassionate, artistic skills. And boy, can he drive a hovercraft…

Redmond
Whiplash, 2004
Poor Redmond. This lab bunny has been tested on so much that he's indestructible, so his partner Spanx has no qualms about throwing him at guards, jamming him in machines or using him as a grappling hook.

Fran
Final Fantasy XII, 2007
Sexy, cool and calculating, Fran is hard as nails and an equal in partner Balthier's sky pirating. She's also more than 100 years old.

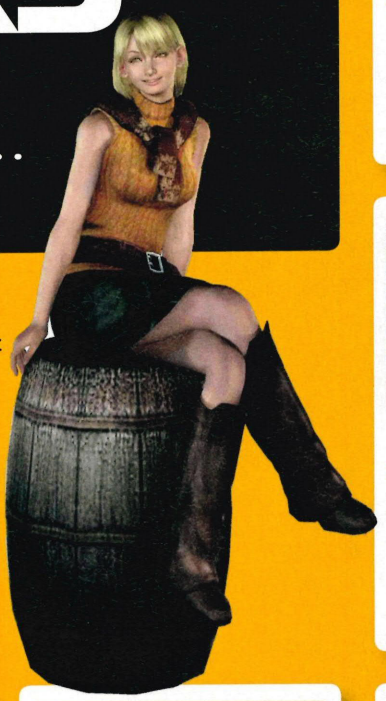
EST PS2 KICKS

to bunny-shaped needs a sidekick...

security systems, the scout who provides intelligence information and most importantly of all, the best friend who's still there when it all goes wrong.

So here we pay tribute to 24 of the greatest sidekicks ever seen on PS2. Salute them, for they are heroes one and all. **Kim Richards**

Did we miss out your favourite PS2 sidekick? Who would you want next to you in a fight? Tell us about it! Email psnation@futurenet.co.uk



FUNNIEST

Bender

Futurama, 2003

Sarcastic robot Bender is the muscle to Fry's, er, brain... well, he provides the muscle, anyway, with his super bending strength.

Daxter

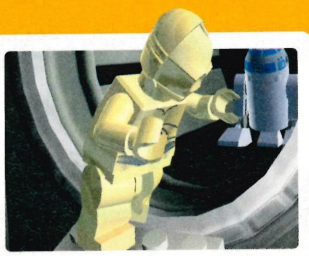
Jak & Daxter, 2001

Continuously claims that he's the hero in this series, but mostly just provides comic relief. However, he does choose to save the world over getting himself turned back into a human, so he's a hero after all.

Murray

Sly 2: Band of Thieves, 2004

Sly Cooper's best friend Murray is strong, big-hearted and loyal and provides the robber gang with muscle. "I'm going to bend this gate like the truth!" is just one of his memorable lines.



C3PO

Lego Star Wars II, 2006

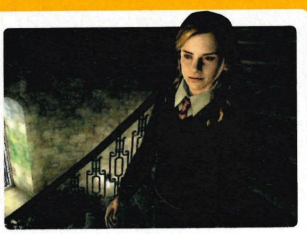
Although he is a playable character, it's more fun to watch everyone's favourite camp robot bumble around and open doors for you.

SEXIEST

Princess Farah

Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones, 2005

Nimble, brainy and slim enough to squeeze through tiny gaps, Farah's invaluable for opening otherwise inaccessible areas. Also: vicious.



Hermione Granger

Harry Potter & The Order of the Phoenix, 2007

Potter would be nothing without minxy brainbox Hermoine. She may be a Mudblood and a really annoying nag, but there's nothing she doesn't know about magic.

Octavianus

Shadow Of Rome, 2005

While Agrippa is off butchering Celts, Octavianus sneaks around Rome digging up dirt on politicians. The pair are chalk and cheese, but they keep each other alive.

ANGRIEST

Gimli

Lord Of The Rings: Return Of The King, 2003

Pure aggression, with an axe. Should you ever find yourself surrounded by drooling orcs, rest assured Gimli will be there, screaming defiance in his Finland-via-Pollokshields accent.

Rose

Buzz! Hollywood Quiz, 2007

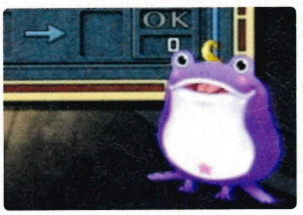
Brainy but under-appreciated Rose is your classic game-show popsy: the Carol Vorderman to Richard Whiteley, the Jenny Powell to John Leslie and the Wife Number Two to Bruce Forsythe.

SMALLEST

Issun

Okami, 2006

Often mistaken for a bug, Issun is actually an inch-tall wandering artist and fierce-hearted warrior. He acts as a guide and painting tutor for Amaterasu the god-wolf.



Toady

Rogue Galaxy, 2007

A purple amphibian he may be, but Toady creates shiny new weapons for your team as well as chipping in with the odd witticism.

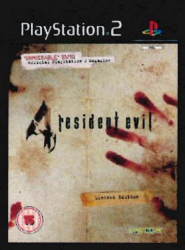
Pox

Destroy All Humans!, 2005

Orthopox 13 is technically Crypto's boss. He sends Crypto out on earth missions and provides the gizmos and gadgets to help his underling dominate the puny mortals.

UNSUNG HERO

#04 In Resident Evil 4, it helps to be well-equipped. Luckily for you, The Merchant is always open for business. The question is: waddya buyin'?



Forget Ada Wong. Forget Albert Wesker. Forget the Umbrella Corporation. The greatest unsolved mystery in Resident Evil 4 takes the form of a simple man, known only as The Merchant.

But is he one man? Or is this a team of benevolent tradesmen, trying to make ends meet on an island awash with the un-undead?

After all, shooting The Merchant in one place will lead to him disappearing from that area after a melodramatic death, but he'll still be open for business everywhere else. Suspicious.

And in the rare instances where The Merchant is encountered alongside enemies, they'll leave him be, even as they whale on you. That certainly raises questions.

Could he be playing both sides off each other? Is he arming Leon Kennedy but meanwhile selling information about his whereabouts to the insidious Osmund Saddler?

Welcome, stranger

He's not Spanish like the rest of the game's baddies, but speaks in a playful growl that could be cockney, could be Australian, delivering many of the game's best lines.

'Waddya buyin'?', 'Waddya sellin'?' and 'Ah, I'll buy it at a high price!' may appear somewhat mundane when printed on the page, sure.

But as anyone who's played the game knows, when uttered sonorously from behind The Merchant's rotting bandana, they take on a memorable melody that bores into your mind.

You needn't take our word for it. The Merchant has forged his own legend on the internet, with his catchphrases emblazoned on T-shirts and some fans inspired to attempt very faithful cosplay.

But our favourite tribute to The Merchant comes from gaming comedy troupe Mega64, who sent one of their number wandering the streets, asking oblivious passers-by 'Waddya buyin'?'.

Come back anytime

The Merchant is not just a bunch of catchphrases: he is a paragon among PS2 shopkeepers.

He's awfully trusting, for one thing. Hunted by infected Ganados and pursued by convulsing Regenerators, a desperate Leon Kennedy could quite easily pull out his glock and rob The Merchant of all his goods. It's that kind of confidence in his customers that makes The Merchant a model businessman.

And he continues to ply his wares long after contracting the Plagas parasite, his condition visibly worsening as the game goes on.

No sick-notes for The Merchant; his customer's needs come first.

So, ignore Resident Evil 5's jump to next-gen. Ignore the race-relations maelstrom its setting has stirred up. No, the real controversy will come if The Merchant fails to appear in the next instalment of Resident Evil. **Mike Sterry**

YOUR HEROES!

Do you have a favourite PS2 character who doesn't get the respect that 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, so vote for your choice by emailing **psnation@futurenet.co.uk**

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12 Minimum top-up £10 per month. UK texts only. Reward starts from 300 texts for £10 monthly top up. Unlimited texts subject to a fair usage policy and £30 monthly top-up. Offer ends 30.1.08. Terms apply, see www.orange.co.uk/playstation2freesim.

13 Calls from the UK to any UK, standard rate, mobile or landline telephone number are charged at 15p per minute. Service is subject to the terms and conditions for the supply of Orange pay as you go services, a copy of which can be found in your SIM connection pack.

14 Orange reserves the right to withdraw or vary the Offer at any time without notice to you.

DON'T LEAVE 2007 WITHOUT...

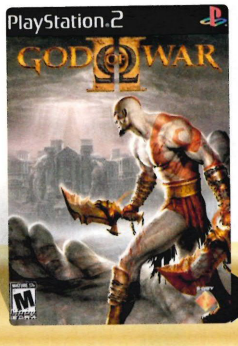
...the best games of the year and our tips on playing them

2007 was a vintage year for PS2 games. The old console may have been pushed aside to make room for Sony's next-gen plans, but it seems someone forgot to tell that to the developers, because they've turned out some cracking games.

In fact, in most cases the PS2 version has matched or bettered its PS3 equivalent. Has there been a better roleplaying game than Final Fantasy XII on any other format? Nope. Did Heavenly Sword better God Of War II's blade-flinging brutality? Hell, no.

We've got eight of the best here and for each, we've given you the best price we could find, a top-notch alternative and a handy set of hints and cheats to help you get ahead.

Best of all, most of 2007's games are now going cheap and Christmas is almost here. So rip out these pages, scrawl 'Dear Santa' at the top and send 'em off to the North Pole...



GOD OF WAR II

Released April **Best price** £24.98 at GameStation.co.uk
Review score 9/10 in OPS2 #83

BEST ACTION GAME

That was the Greek that was

Blood, boobs, blades: God Of War II has everything any action fan could possibly want from a console game. It doesn't radically build on the formula laid out by the original, but it cranks up the action to 11 and that's enough for us.

At the start you're thrust back in the sandals of baldy butcher Kratos who, after sticking it to Ares in the first game, is now the new god of war.

That is, until the other gods banish him back to earth and take away his godly powers.

However, just because he's mortal again doesn't mean Kratos forgets how to kick some ass.

The opening level – which you'll find on this month's demo DVD – is proof of that, as our hero goes toe-to-toe with the giant Colossus Of Rhodes, one of the biggest bosses ever seen on PS2.

The graphics in this huge game are some of the finest on PS2

Rhodes to success

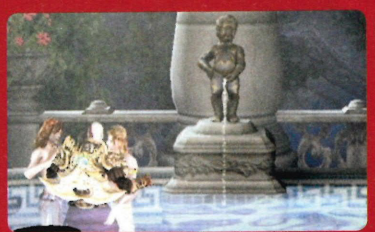
The reason GoW II works so well is that it sticks to what it does best: action. You don't catch Kratos trying to sneak his way around levels, or taking part in crazy on-rails sections.

It's pure head-bashing (18-rated, mind) fun, broken up by a fistful of genuinely puzzling puzzles and platforming bits to tax your brain and give your throbbing thumbs a rest.

What's more, once you've finished the main game there's the Arena Of Fates (a set of genuinely entertaining sub-missions) to fight through and new costumes to unlock which let you fight through as Classic Kratos, Dark Kratos, mythical minx Athena and even the Cod Of War.

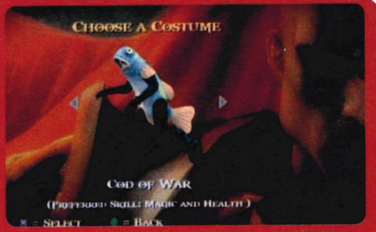
Quite frankly, if you're an adult PS2 gamer with 30 quid to spare, we can't imagine why you haven't already bought this one. Seriously, get it at the top of your list now and have a claret-coloured Christmas.

TOP TIPS



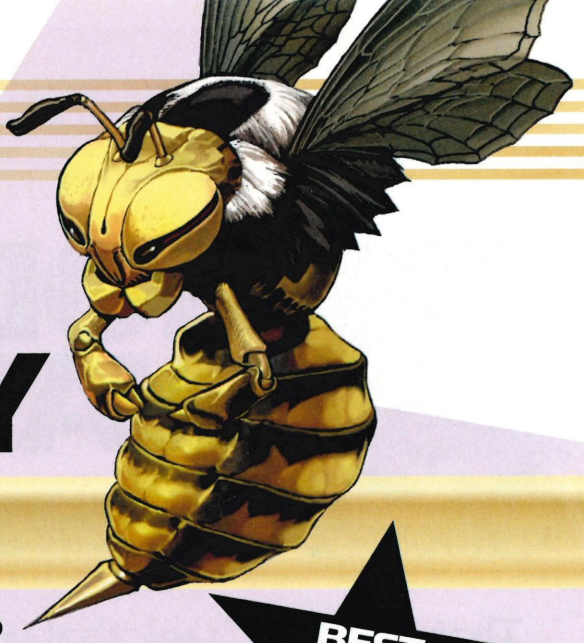
Crack open the screen in the hot-tub part of the opening level to reveal a saucy sex mini-game. Please the ladies and you'll be showered with red orbs.

Levelling up one specific weapon at a time will give you the edge earlier in the game. Level up your Athena's Blades for maximum impact.



Beat the game on any difficulty and you will receive the Cod of War outfit – a serious contender for Best Unlockable Costume In Any Game Ever.

ROGUE GALAXY



Released September **Best price** £24.98 at Amazon.co.uk
Review score 9/10 in OPS2 #86

A space RPG with pirates: what's not to like?

It's a sad fact, but the sales statistics speak for themselves. Rogue Galaxy looks destined to join the likes of Ico, Rez, Psychonauts and Shadow of the Colossus in the ranks of the PS2's most underappreciated, under-purchased gems.

But Rogue Galaxy is much, much too much fun to leave languishing in your local game emporium.

These days many roleplaying games try to be 'RPGs for people who don't like RPGs': a shaky claim indeed. But Rogue Galaxy is totally unashamed to be a proper, old-school RPG. And it's got pirates. In space! And those are two things everyone loves, surely?

Yarrs in their eyes

It's liberally garnished in the trappings of hardcore Eastern RPGs, but with a lightness of touch that renders it enjoyable whether it's your first RPG or your first RPG of the week.

There are no protracted grinds to level up your party, but if stat-crunching is your bag, you can certainly play that way

And rather than plodding, turn-based combat, you'll be having it out with the game's colourful enemies in real time, using your preferred combination of swordplay, gunplay and magic.

Then there's the game's personality and humour, which truly make it stand out from typically po-faced Japanese RPG offerings. Its characters are bright, memorable, and genuinely funny. If you passed on Rogue Galaxy the first time round, get it now.

The real-time combat calls for quick, tactical decision-making

The fast-paced adventure takes your party to different planets

TOP TIPS

Be sure to make use of Toady, your item-upgrading amphibian. He's the only way to get many of the game's best weapons.

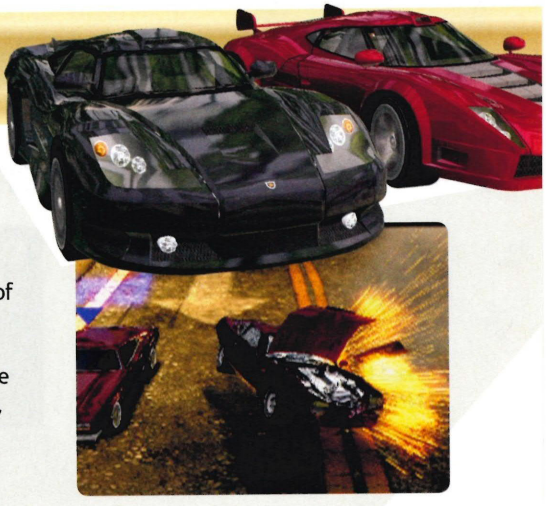
Use your Burning Strike special move when up against tougher foes. It's easy to replenish and will save your bacon more than once.

Using the Factory is fun and very profitable. It's a puzzle mini-game that rewards you with hard-to-find items and weapons.

IF YOU LIKE...

BURNOUT DOMINATOR

Released March **Best price** £17.97 at Amazon.co.uk
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #83



Crash! Bang! Wallop! What a racer!

It's been a less than sensational year for the PS2 racer. It seems to be the genre most affected by the next-gen pinch. But there was one game that stood out from the rest, that proved itself more than merely one car-modding mode with some patchy racetracks tacked on. That game? Burnout Dominator.

Some games are all about the feel. The kick of an SMG's recoil, the sensation of burnished, god-forged metal cleaving demon-skull, the solid thunk of fist on flesh. Black; God of War; Soul Calibur III... and now Burnout Dominator, a game that did in 2007 for racing what gunpowder did for siege warfare in the ninth century.

BEST RACING GAME

Wheel life

Though still an amazing franchise in its own right, Burnout as a series lost sight of its own spirit somewhere around Burnout Revenge, which concerned itself more with achieving catastrophic feats of car-wreck pornography than actual racing.

Dominator marks a return to the standard achieved with Burnout 3, providing a hardcore racing experience and lashings of car carnage in equal measure.

For one, it reintroduced Burnout chaining to the series, which was last seen in Burnout 2. That is to say, you can continuously chain boosts together so long as you keep your Burnout meter fed with a steady succession of near-misses and dips into oncoming traffic.

It's white-knuckle stuff, to say the least. One false twitch of the steering wheel and the paramedics will be removing it from your oesophagus. But at least you'll get to see a really cool explosion...

The spectacular crashes are just as much part of the joy as the racing

Vrooming marvellous

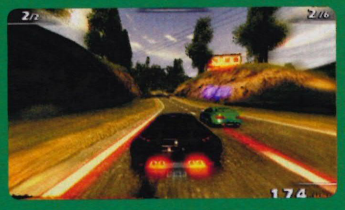
Burnout's trademark Signature Takedowns were also tweaked in Dominator. Now, achieving nigh-on impossible conditions such as shunting your opponents into a specific type of vehicle will reward you by opening up a shortcut in the track, rather than just a poxy postcard as in previous titles.

Dominator's over-assisted AI and devilish difficulty in the closing stages might rile some, but for most will be of little consequence in the face of such an otherwise well-crafted game.

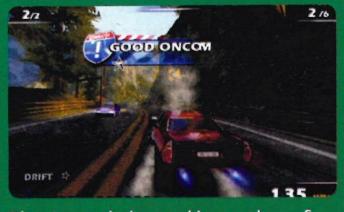
This is a masterclass in savage, high-octane entertainment and you owe it to yourself to play it.

Achieving stuff such as crazy shunts nets you real rewards

TOP TIPS



To unlock the Dominator series, you'll first need to unlock a sexy Dominator car and earn yourself 6000 Dominator points with it.

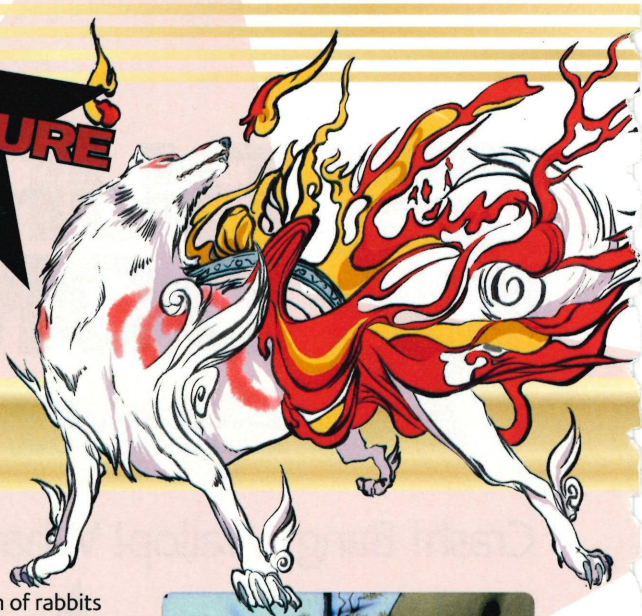


The Assassin hotrod is another of our favourite unlocks. To get it, earn yourself 150,000 Maniac Points in the 'Maniac on Ocean Drive' event.

FEATURE
Don't leave 2007 without...

BEST ADVENTURE GAME

OKAMI



Released February **Best price** £14.99 at HMV.com
Review score 10/10 in OPS2 #81

Welcome to a wonderful world of weird...

It's often said that the only games released now are new iterations of familiar series, or spin-offs with well-known characters. Okami bucked that trend and then some.

Not only is it based on Japanese legends and myths so unfamiliar to us Westerners that they had to be explained in the manual, but the whole thing is rendered in the style of traditional Asian watercolour painting.

Its weirdness is the key to its charm, though. In this cheese-dream world, gods take the form of rabbits as often as they do dragons, feeding the birds is as essential to success as slaying monsters and demons are shaped like wheels or soup tureens.

And the characters! From the tiny warrior who lives on your nose, to the nice old couple who wear oranges on their heads, to the psychotic, camp swordsman who uses his hair as wings – each is like no one you've ever met before. And all are beautifully drawn in both senses of the phrase.

BONUS INFO
Okami developer Clover Studios was dissolved by Capcom just a month after Okami's release.

Brush hour

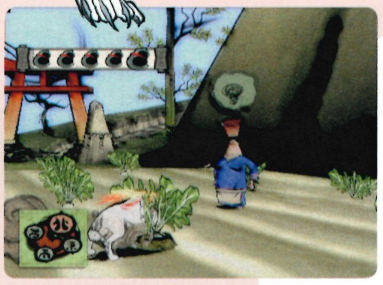
Drawing is, of course, at the heart of Okami. Its 'celestial brush' mechanism, where you freeze game-time and use a magic paintbrush to draw shapes on the screen, is a brush-stroke of genius. It allows you to open up new areas, solve puzzles, defeat enemies...

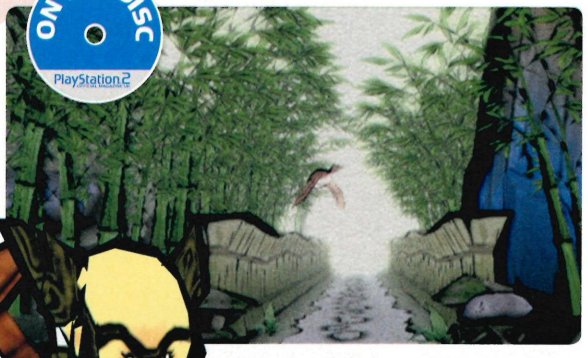
It's not often someone comes up with a radically new way to use the PS2 and even less often that they come up with a way that's so simple but so full of possibility.

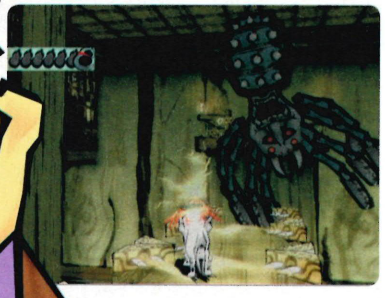
Last but not least, Okami manages to be heart-warming without being nauseating. Even if you don't usually like 'cute', even if you think the only thing moogles are good for is target practice, we defy you not to get a glow inside when you see flowers bloom over a hillside and streams begin to flow again because you've lifted a curse, or to punch the air when you've saved your wolfy avatar from being swept over a waterfall while clinging to a log.

Maybe you need to play this game with the curtains shut because you're worried your friends will think you've gone soft, but whatever; you just need to play this game.

It will show even the most jaded gamer that there's plenty you have neither seen nor done before.

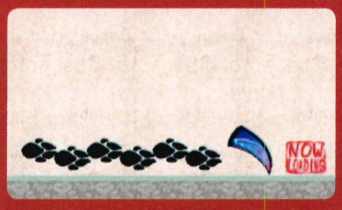






Beautiful scenes await you around every corner

TOP TIPS

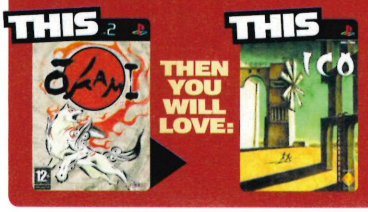


Hammer ⊗ on loading screens to stamp paw prints on the background. Create enough prints and you'll win a Demon Fang.

Once you find all 100 Stray Beads you'll be rewarded with invincibility. You get the last bead for finishing the game, though.

To unlock the Snowflake brush technique, use the Blizzard brush then draw an asterisk. You can now turn villagers into snowmen.

IF YOU LIKE...



THE SIMPSONS GAME

BEST TIE-IN GAME

Released November 2nd 2007 **Best price** £29.99 at Game
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #92

Yellow fever strikes the PS2

Finally, a Simpsons game that is utterly brilliant and truly captures the spirit of the show. Okay, there's nothing new to see here in terms of gameplay, but the the joyful parodying of just about everything gamers know and love make it really enjoyable and hilariously funny.

There's also the nostalgia factor of seeing old familiars from the show, such as the Gummi De Milo, that Sideshow Bob rake joke and Lard Lad from Treehouse of Horrors VI.

Family affair

All of your favourite characters make an appearance; Ralph Wiggum, Moe, Professor Frink... the list is endless.

There's great attention to detail, such as Comic Book Guy popping up to comment drily on game clichés.

And of course, there's the Simpsons themselves. Every member of the immediate family is playable, each with their own special abilities.

The use of 2D celshading makes this Simpsons game look how it's meant to be; previous 3D games looked a bit odd and slightly unsettling. Cutscenes look like the show, and altogether make up a mini-Simpsons movie.

Some of the levels even recall the joys of the very first Simpsons arcade game, as the family meet their previous, low-res screen incarnations and discover what happens to old videogames when they die.

They bump into a raft of great cameos, too, including Sonic and Mario (forced to toil in giant treadmills to power an evil gaming empire), in spooftastic levels such as God of Wharf, Shadow of the Colossal Donut and Medal of Homer.

The game can also be played as two-player co-op to make the most of the point-and-giggle visual jokes that pepper every single frame.

BONUS INFO
The character Tom Jackson is a reference to game-hating lawyer Jack Thompson.

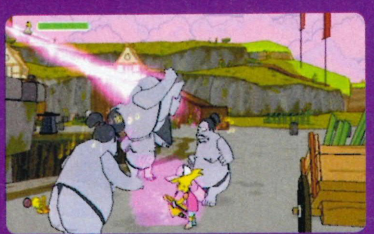
Fans for the memories

This is a must-buy whether you're a casual Simpson fan or whether you know every line of every episode of the show. You need this game like Milhouse needs Lisa because the bottom line is: it's a laugh.

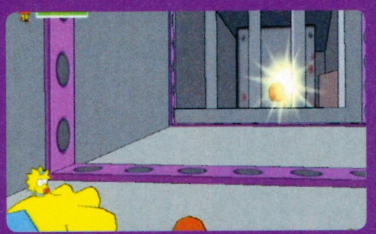
IF YOU LIKE...

There are so, so many gaming cameos, including Mario and Sonic

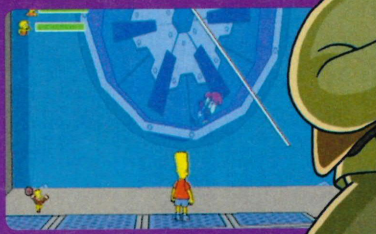
TOP TIPS



If you're overwhelmed by bad guys, use Lisa's magic saxophone to confuse them into attacking one another.



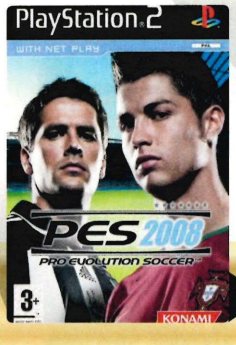
Notice any small spaces and ventilation shafts? If baby Maggie is about, you can use her to crawl through and find hidden items.



There are literally hundreds of game references hidden around the Simpsons world. Try to spot them all!

FEATURE
Don't leave 2007 without...

BEST SPORTS GAME



PRO EVO SOCCER 2008

Released November **Best price** £24.79 at PowerPlayDirect.com
Review score 9/10 in OPS2 #92

Thought it was all over with PES 6? It is now

Pro Evolution has nailed the footy formula. 2008 brought scant changes or tweaks to the tried-and-tested gameplay that we know and love, but still managed to edge out EA's stunning FIFA 2008 to become our top sports game of 2007.

This is still the quickest, smoothest game of football on the PS2. Even thought it's still criminally crippled by the lack of licensed teams, we'd rather spend an evening playing this than watching the real England team fumble around a football pitch. Call us old fashioned, but we enjoy winning once in a while.

BONUS INFO
There is a PES arcade machine called Winning Eleven 2006 Arcade Championship.

So, why should you buy 2008 if you already own PES6? Well, the main difference is the way your on-screen athletes move and react.

Animations have been polished so hard that you can almost see your grinning face in them, and the AI has inherited a few more virtual brain-cells. Well, ten out of your 11 have – admittedly, the keepers are still as brainless and prone to horrendous gaffs as they were last year.

Pitch perfect

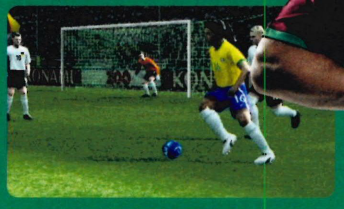
Although the players are smarter this year, they also seem to be harder on the eyes. But when you're missing their proper name and kit, a few extra whacks with the ugly stick is neither here nor there.

PES 2008 has some tactical improvements, too. Popularity ratings have been added to the Master League mode, so you have to keep an eye on who's hot and who's 'so last season' to keep the punters filing through the turnstiles. And if management isn't your bag, you can dip into the World Tour mode and play out challenging international scenarios.

If you know PES, then you know what to expect. If you don't know PES, you owe it to yourself to give this premiership title a shot this Christmas.

TOP TIPS

This year's keepers are flaky, so it's always worth having a pop at goal – even if you're further out than you'd usually shoot.

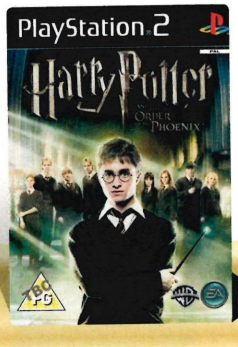


PES 2008 is a scrappier game than last year's thanks to a bouncier ball, so it pays to use more close control moves when you're attacking.

Watch your player's body shape when you're passing and shooting. If you're lined up, you're more likely to hit the target.

IF YOU LIKE...

The player animations have been improved over last year's efforts



HARRY POTTER & TOOTP

BEST FAMILY GAME

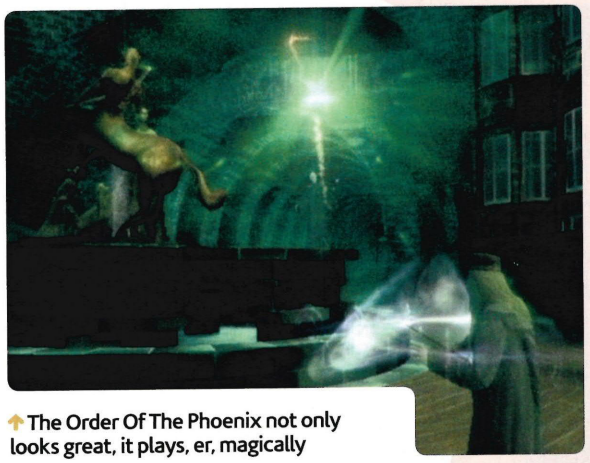
Released June **Best price** £27.96
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #87

The sweet spell of success

You're probably already writing an angry email or Facebook group post complaining that we had the audacity to put Harry Potter in our top games of 2007. After all, isn't that kind of kiddy nonsense a bit pointless and weird? Well, step away from that keyboard, because we stand by our decision. Here's why.

Order Of The Phoenix was the game Potter fans had been waiting for. It shoves a vast amount of authentic boy-wizardry into a framework that is not only playable, but actually enjoyable.

BONUS INFO
Order Of The Phoenix was translated into a whopping 22 languages.



The Order Of The Phoenix not only looks great, it plays, er, magically

ON THE DISC PlayStation 2

You can ride the moving staircases just like in the books and films

It was also a technical masterstroke for PS2. Despite not having Blu-Ray, a Cell processor or all that other guff, the current-gen version was easily on a par with its PS3 counterpart.

It played the same, it sounded the same and, aside from the fact that the characters didn't have that waxy next-gen finish, it looked the same.

The whole Hogwarts

The ability to roam freely around Hogwarts school as you work through the story at your own pace was the most liberating thing that developer EA could have done to the series. The fact that they did it without loading times is truly spectacular.

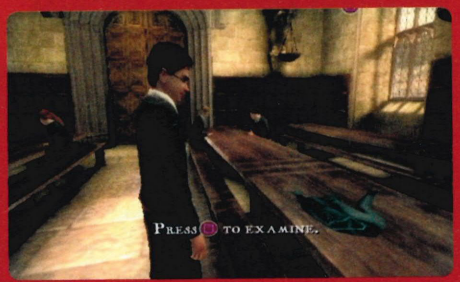
Few developers have managed to push the hardware quite as far, and for this reason alone, we'd be tempted to shove Potter onto our 2007 pedestal.

But that would be unfair to the rest of the game. The stirring movie score, the lifelike characters and the fact that you can throw rocks at Hermione whenever she makes a smartass comment: they all contribute to making this one of the finest adventure games of the year.

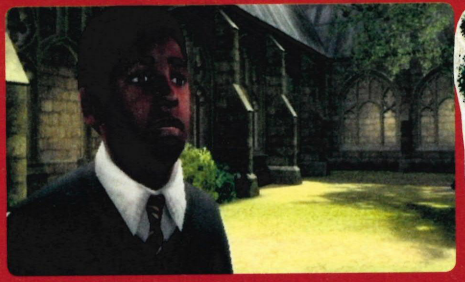
No other franchise has undergone the same transformation as Harry Potter and, clearly, a whole lot of love and attention has gone into making Order of the Phoenix.

IF YOU LIKE...

TOP TIPS



At the end of the game you have to find Luna Lovegood's lost luggage. You can find it in: 1) The Great Hall; 2) The Library; 3) The Clock Tower Courtyard; 4) The Viaduct Entrance; and 5) The Entrance Courtyard.



Dean Thomas wants you to find talking gargoyles. Here's where they are: 1) The Defence Against The Dark Arts Tower; 2) The Transfiguration Courtyard; 3) The Paved Courtyard; 4) The Viaduct; 5) Outside the Fouth Floor corridor.

FEATURE
Don't leave 2007 without...

FINAL FANTASY XII

Released February **Best price** £12.99 at Game
Review score 10/10 in OPS2 #81

BEST RPG

The final Fantasy for PS2 is also the best

It took six years to create and sold 1.5 million copies in its opening week in America alone. It won a cabinet full of awards and continues to sell extraordinary amounts of merchandise. It's Final Fantasy XII.

The story takes place in Ivalice; a world in turmoil, as warring nations Archadia and Rozarria collide.

Stuck in the middle is peaceful kingdom Dalmasca, which falls under Archadia's tyrannical rule. The freshly widowed Princess Ashe of Dalmasca disappears to form an underground resistance to free her country.

BONUS INFO
FFXII was going to have a co-op mode, but hardware limitations made it impossible

Hack'n'Basch

Into this chaos fall spunky orphan Va'an and his best friend Penelo. They team up with disgraced Dalmascan Captain Basch, super-slick sky-pirate Balthier and dominatrix bunny-girl Fran to save the world. As you do.

The story has everything: lovers spurned, an evil genius, power-hungry tyrants, tragic deaths, adrenaline-pumping action, political turmoil, heroes rising from the ashes... but FFXII also saw changes to the core RPG mechanics of the series, and for the better.

Battles are no longer random encounters triggered by unseen foes, but fought in real time on the actual game field. So you can see enemies in and choose to avoid or attack them.

You can play as any character in your party and set the actions of the others using the Gambit system of defined responses to particular situations.

But while there are fresh innovations, the Final Fantasy hallmarks are all still there: chocobos, moogles, magic, airships, scantily clad ladies and an androgynous hero.

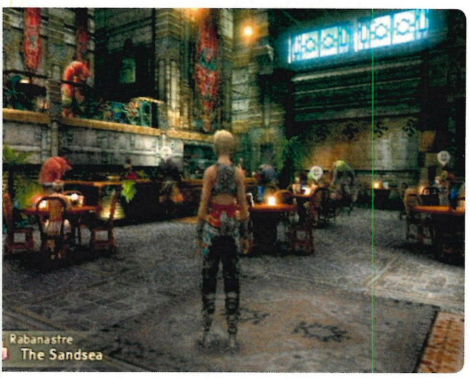
Moogle worth

The world is beautifully real, brought to life by cities bustling with citizens, convincing voice acting and hundreds of memorable characters.

The game itself is so epic in proportions, you'll find yourself still playing it six months later, if only to complete the many side quests.

FFXII is one of the most epic and engaging games of all time. Full stop.

Special attacks or 'Quickenings' are as kickass as they are pretty



Dalmasca is bustling with life and things to do, especially the pub

IF YOU LIKE...

TOP TIPS

Max out your Licence board as soon as possible, so you can equip the strongest weapons and kit.

The world is littered with hidden traps. Cast Libra, and they'll appear as red pillars of light.

There are 13 hardcore Espers that you can enlist to fight for you, so seek them all out.

The final boss takes three forms. Preserve your Magick Points in the first two; you'll need them later.

THE BEST OF THE REST

VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

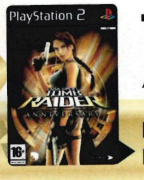
Released September **Best price** £17.98 at Amazon.co.uk
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #89

A Norse to be reckoned with

You'll find yourself engaged for months on end in this unique game, which sees a princess, possessed by a valkyrie, on a quest to stop a god from destroying the world.

With an innovating blend of platforming elements and RPG game mechanics, the fiercely intelligent battle system is hard to grasp, but wonderfully invigorating when mastered.

With more depth than a bottomless wishing well, this is one hardcore roleplaying game.



TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY

Released May **Best price** £12.99 PowerPlayDirect.com
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #85

The original and still the best

The first Tomb Raider, remade for PS2? Yes, please! Anniversary was a fitting farewell for Tomb Raider on the PS2, and a damn fine game to boot.

Every tomb, puzzle, enemy and scenario is lovingly coaxed into the 21st century as the game takes us through Lara's first adventure again.

If you've always fancied a piece of this brilliant series, but have never got round to playing it, Anniversary is the perfect place to begin.

GUITAR HERO III

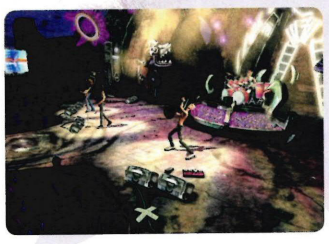
Released November **Best price** £39.98 (with controller) at Amazon.co.uk **Review score** 9/10 in OPS2 #93

Have a rock'n'roll Christmas, a Christmas rock'n'roll...

If you haven't already seen our review of this game, flick to p80 right now. Seriously: like *now*.

Of all the Guitar Hero games, number three has the best track listing and the most innovative features such as two-player battles, end-of-level bosses and a co-op career mode.

If you're after some rock-star action, but fancy avoiding the crippling embarrassment of climbing onto an actual stage and having beer bottles lobbed at you, this is the game you need.



SIMS 2 CASTAWAY

Released October **Best price** £29.99 in Game
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #92

We're beachy keen on this one!

If you think The Sims is just escapism for ugly boys and housewives, you're wrong. The Sims brand has been maturing like a fine Chianti, and Castaway is the definitive vintage.

Adapting to island life is a genuine pleasure, and because you're given plenty of goals to complete, Castaway shakes off the stagnant, aimless feeling that plagues the other games after a few hours of play. This is a perfect, sun-drenched tonic to keep the winter blues at bay.

MADDEN NFL 08

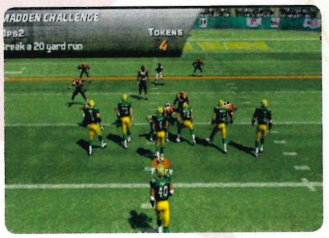
Released October **Best price** £29.99 at Argos.co.uk
Review score 9/10 in OPS2 #90

Because soccer is for softies

This is the finest game in EA's long-running American Football series and if you've never taken the plunge into the sport, now is the time.

The on-pitch gameplay is fantastic, and the management options in Franchise Mode are so detailed it's almost frightening.

Throw in all of the official licences, flashy presentation and a bunch of new modes, and you've got a real winner... particularly if the round-ball type of football isn't your cup of tea.



EVERYBODY'S TENNIS

Released June **Best price** £24.98 Amazon.co.uk
Review score 8/10 in OPS2 #85

Are you being served?

Realism is over-rated. Until the game arrives that can correctly simulate Federer's face without giving us the heebie-jeebies, why not enjoy a day-glo fantasy?

Why not play Everybody's Tennis, in fact? It doesn't have the manicured lawns and heaving bosoms of Virtua Tennis, but its cutesy finish belies an extremely deep tennis sim. Arguably, it even simulates the cut and thrust of a good game better than VT. Advantage: Everybody's Tennis.

FEATURE
Do leave 2007 without...

Over the past 10 pages, we've celebrated the very best PS2 games of 2007. Now it's time to warn you about the worst...

TORRENTE 3: EL PROTECTOR

REVIEW

Release Out now **Publisher** Virgin Play **Developer** Virtual Toys
Price £27.83 **Players** 1 **Also try** Anything else at all

CRAPPEST PS2 GAME

Oh, dear God. Why?

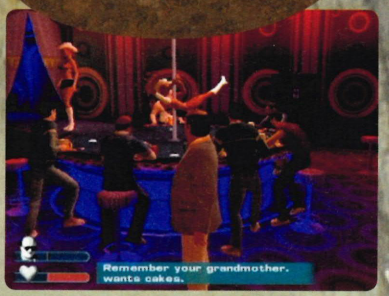
Sometimes, developers bite off more than they can chew. When it comes to Torrente 3: El Protector, though, we're reminded of a mouse trying to swallow a 12in sub.

Based on the 2005 movie of the same name, Torrente 3: El Protector is absolute, utter rubbish.

It stars Jose Luis Torrente, a Spanish movie 'icon' who makes Jim Davidson look like the Dalai Lama.

Fat, sweaty and massively sexist; fond of drugs, hookers and booze; a mouth fouler than a rugby team's communal toilet. What a guy!

The basic game concept is in Grand Theft Auto-ish territory, although set in Madrid. The game's rendition of Spain's fine capital city reminds us of the original Driver on PS1, and of the few pedestrians there are, those in the middle distance trot about with hilariously crippled animation.



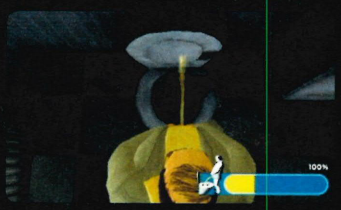
→ Cor, get a load of those, eh lads! Lads! Er, lads?

DIVERSIONS

Things you can do in Torrente 3: El Protector (if you really want to)...

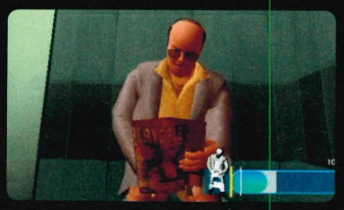
DEFECATION

Flick the right thumbstick up and down to help Torrente crimp off a length. Now *that's* entertainment.



MICTURATION

Use the analogue sticks to guide a stream of wee. Much harder than in real life, even when drunk.



ONANISM

Wiggle the right thumbstick to... oh dear, please don't make us talk about the horror.

Sh*t torrente

The vehicles – scooters, cars and vans – handle like house bricks with croissants for wheels.

Travelling anywhere seems to take forever and, throughout, Torrente is forever spouting offensive tripe.

The 'gameplay' is largely made up from offensive mini-games with offensively simple controls.

A farting contest, acted out with a golf-swing power bar? Weightlifting, by waggling the right stick? Please. There are more, but they're just not worth talking about. Some, in fact, do not even bear thinking about.

We challenge you to uncover the bizarre method by which you have to buy items from the game's shops; we'd come back half an hour later, and probably find most of you still scratching your heads or weeping a rage of frustrated tears.

Protect yourself

Oddly, this is not a shoe-in for Worst PS2 Game Of All Time. It actually made us laugh. Twice! And the soundtrack is a funky accompaniment.

But the worst PS2 game of 2007? Certainty, squared. **Steve Bailey**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

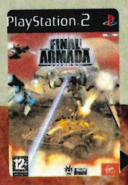
MEMBER OF THE TURD OFFAME

- Offensive, and not in a good way
- Stupid, and not in a good way
- Handles badly
- Hard on the eyes

If you liked the film, you'll probably like the game. But, frankly, that says more about you than it does about the game

1

OTHER GAMES TO AVOID



FINAL ARMADA

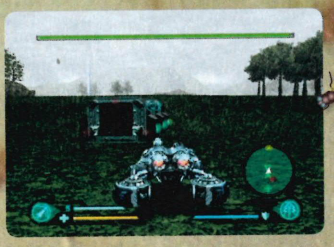
Released August **Best price** £20.00
Review score 3/10 in OPS2 #89

Armada-geddon out of here

Looking only slightly slicker than your average PS1 title, this is one action game that confidently draws a line between 'simple' and 'simplistic'.

It's dull, frustrating, ugly and not worth the money even at a budget price. Your supposedly 'multi-terrain' vehicle can't drive over even a hamster-sized rock.

Instead of wasting your time and money on this, sniff out the very underrated Battle Engine Aquila for futuristic, multi-vehicle battlefield combat thrills.



FALLING STARS

Released August **Best price** £15.00
Review score 4/10 in OPS2 #89

Falling stars, sinking heart

We've got nothing against roleplaying games aimed at children, but even children don't like sloppy mini-games and maddening loops of music.

In Falling Stars the characters are flat and the battle options are simplified to the point that they feel limited, not easy.

And don't be fooled by Falling Star's dreamy-looking game world: screenshots flatter a game that's grubby in motion. Harvest Moon is a much better offering of cute fun.

XYANIDE RESURRECTION

Released September **Best price** £20.00
Review score 4/10 in OPS2 #90

Some things should just be left to die

Any PS2 shooter is going to have do something pretty special to stand up to the blistering brilliance of Gradius V, or even the surprisingly deep R-Type Final. Xyanide Resurrection doesn't even try, really.

It's just a mindless blast that fails to snag either the imagination or your adrenalin gland. It looks a bit trippy, but it's just dull and a bit confusing.

Old-school can be fun, but not when the textbooks are smothered in dust.

KING OF CLUBS

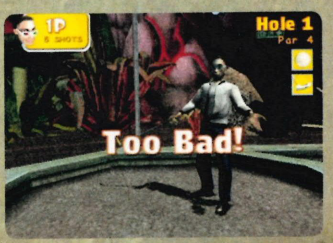
Released October **Best price** £25.00
Review score 2/10 in OPS2 #91

You'd be impressed if it was on your phone. Maybe

The PS2 is still starved of a truly great crazy golf game, one that manages to nail both the 'crazy' and the 'golf' aspects.

You won't be finding either with King of Clubs. Is it the irritating music? The paltry visuals? The slapdash course design? Luckily, we don't have to decide which is worse, since they're all bundled together onto one easy-to-avoid disc.

If you like golf and you like it a bit wacky, play Everybody's Golf, not this seriously below-par title.



THE SHIELD

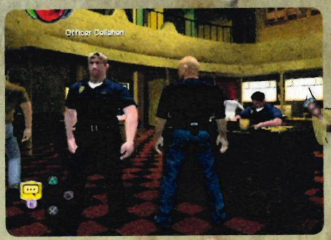
Released July **Best price** £30.00
Review score 3/10 in OPS2 #88

Shield your eyes

Talk about 'fan service' as much as you like, but a crushingly generic game is a crushingly generic game no matter how many award-winning actors turn up in the cutscenes.

The Shield is a raw cop drama on the telly, but us gamers like something a little less 'raw' than generation-old gunplay and stealth. Corruption has never felt so dull.

24: The Game is much better, with the added bonus of having Jack Bauer in it.



FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

Released July **Best price** £30.00
Review score 3/10 in OPS2 #88

Luckily, there is no Fantastic I, II or III

This year's annual award for the Most Disappointing Licensed PS2 game goes to this repetitive, lumpy, low-rent cash-in.

We don't want lazy tie-in games, and neither do you. So show your allegiance to the cause by dodging this cynical, tiresome 'product'.

Even if you are a massive fan of the movie, there's almost definitely better (and cheaper) merchandise around. If you just want comic-book hero action, get Marvel: Ultimate Alliance.

QUIT OR RETRY?

This month: Are cheats a good thing?

YES!

Sophie Mason
Production editor

NO!

Kim Richards
Editorial assistant

There are many, many cheats available for PS2 games. In fact, we frequently print them in this magazine! But is it a good idea to use them? Let the debate commence...

Cheating in a game is absolutely, positively pointless. At the end of the day, the whole point of playing is to overcome a challenge and get a reward , be it storyline progression, an ultimate weapon or an unlocked extra. If you take away that challenge, you suck the fun out of the game faster than Crypto the alien can collect brain stems when you're using the invulnerability cheat in Destroy All Humans!.

Don't be ridiculous. Cheats rock! Why spend hours ploughing through millions of random battles or an entire Career mode to unlock the best weapons or multiplayer maps when you can bash in a code and have everything at your disposal right away?

I use cheats all the time. I used the code to unlock everything in Guitar Hero II, for instance, because I want to play as the Grim Ripper but I'll never get the score you need to unlock him, even if I practise forever.

I used the 'unlock all clothing' cheat in Sims 2 because I like dressing up my Sims and wanted the full choice from the beginning. I played Lord of the Rings: Return of the King with all the fellowship's special abilities right from the start. Is that so wrong?

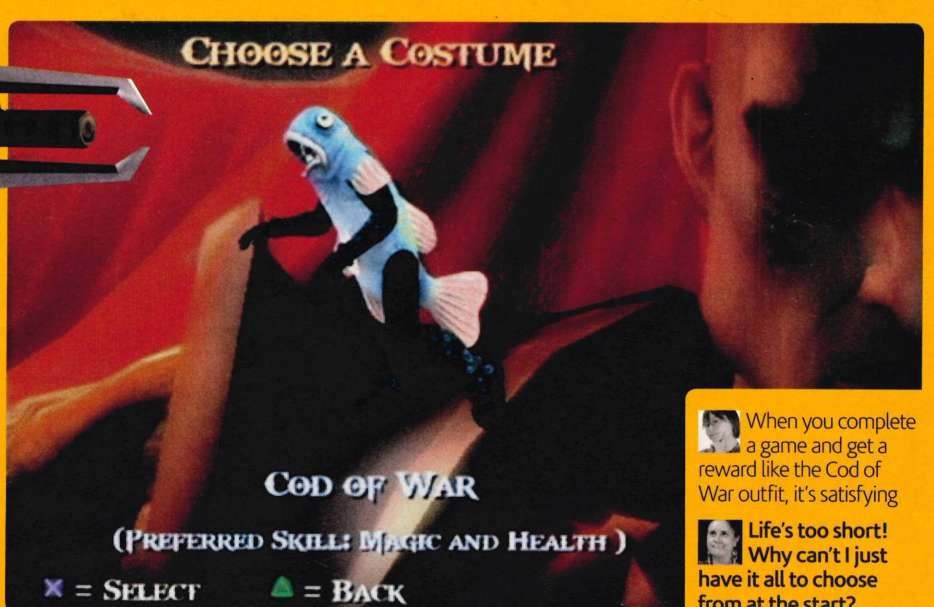
Cheats seem like a good idea at the time but you soon realise that there are no prizes for being lazy. Take Everybody's Golf, for example. Sure you can use a code to unlock all the courses, characters and so on right from the start. But then what's the point in playing? How do you progress? You're just some mighty golf god with nothing to look forward to.

Sure, you'll play a few of the courses, but then you'll just put the game down and forget about it because there's nothing to do anymore.

GOTTA LOTTA PLOT

Lazy? Maybe, but games are supposed to be fun, they're not homework. Anyway, I don't agree that the point of playing a game is always only to overcome challenges. What about the storyline?

If you get stuck on a level, why not play a little while with one-hit kills or invincibility to get past the tough bit? Otherwise, you won't know what happens next. You can't



When you complete a game and get a reward like the Cod of War outfit, it's satisfying

Life's too short! Why can't I just have it all to choose from at the start?

tell me that in all your roleplaying games, you've never even looked at a walkthrough to tell you how to solve a puzzle.

If I want to engage myself in something for the pure pleasure of the storyline, I'll read a book or watch a film, not play a videogame.

As for walkthroughs, okay, I've had a sneak peek on occasion. But I only resort to this as an absolute last measure, after trying to find every solution possible. I won't reach for one immediately, because what's the point of shooting through a level that a design team's taken years to create?

But the design team worked on the cheats, too, so surely it's no insult to them to use it? In fact, I'd say it's the opposite – someone's gone to the trouble to create all the racetracks, maps, levels and characters in a game, so why not appreciate them?

CHEAT 'EM UP

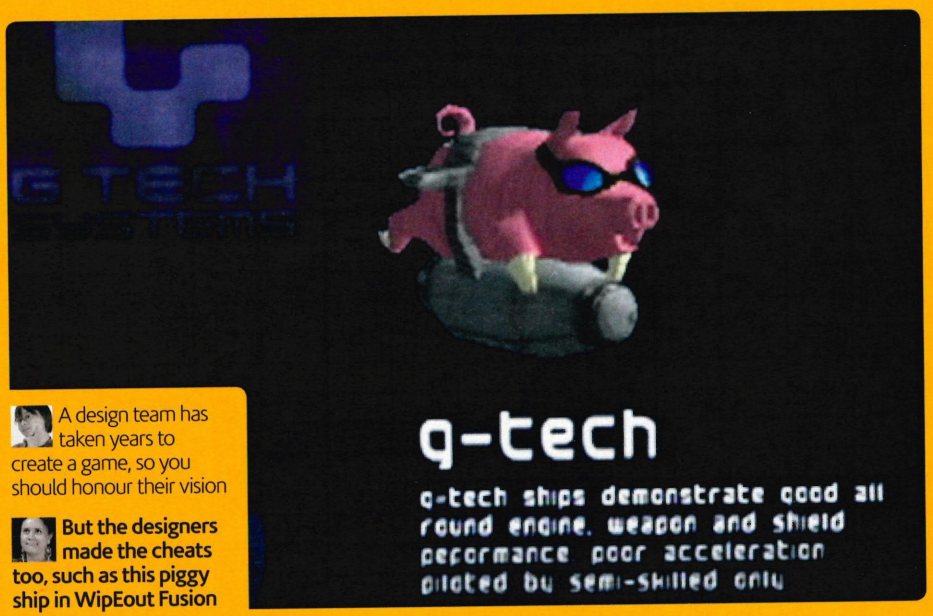
I'll concede that in puzzle-based stuff such as Ico or Tomb Raider, looking up the solution is like looking up the answers in a crossword: tempting, but ultimately unsatisfying.

But other times I don't see the difference between playing on Medium difficulty and playing on Hard with an uber weapon that does mega explosions and has infinite ammo: same level of challenge, but less hassle.

Because it's 10 times more rewarding to find everything off my own back or unlock it all the way it was supposed to be unlocked.

I do think, though, that it's okay to play a game with cheats once you've completed it without them.

Your point about games being fun is true in this respect, because it is fun to replay a level with a full arsenal of weapons or a crazy outfit (Cod of War will never get old!) – many games such as Tomb Raider: Anniversary reward you with funny cheats when you complete them. That's the point, it feels like you've earned it.



A design team has taken years to create a game, so you should honour their vision

But the designers made the cheats too, such as this piggy ship in WipEout Fusion

Cheats seem good but there are no prizes for being lazy

Everyone uses cheats, but some are cagey about it

Aha! So you *do* use cheats! You've just confirmed what I already suspected: that everyone cheats, it's just that some people are cagey about it. I'm just being honest: I like to cut to the chase and I'm not going to apologise for it.

SHOW ME THE FUNNY

Well, obviously there are different kinds of cheats. The silly ones like playing WipEout with a flying pig-shaped spaceship – those ones don't really take away the challenge, although they can spoil things in other ways. I wouldn't play Prince of Persia the first time through with a fish instead of a sword, for example, because it takes away some of the atmosphere.

Yes, I agree that comedy cheats are the best, although in games such as Grand Theft Auto there's a fine line between comic cheats and ones that make things easy.

I guess we'll just have to keep on playing in our own ways. And next time we have a TimeSplitters 2 session, I won't let you play as the hard-to-spot little monkey while I play a full-sized character, okay? You did say you prefer a challenge, after all...

Funny cheats are the best, like the comedy weapons in Prince of Persia

Silly cheats can distract you from the atmosphere and mood of a game

QUIT OR RETRY

YES!	NO!
Cheats add to the fun	No challenge, no fun
Why work for stuff?	Cheating is lazy
If you don't cheat, you miss loads	Play a game how it's meant to be played

THE VERDICT

Different strokes for different folks; but personally, I'm too impatient to faff about unlocking stuff if I can have it the easy way.

I'll admit that silly cheats are a laugh. But performance-enhancing cheats just take away the challenge, and that kills the fun.

@ WHAT DO YOU RECKON?

Who's right? Are they both talking cobblers? Mail in your thoughts to **psnation@futurenet.co.uk** and we'll feature the best comments in the mag.

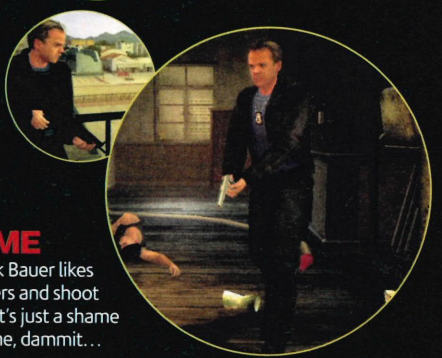
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2
STEALTH-O-METER

They're silent. They're deadly. They could be standing behind you right now! They're PS2's sneakiest games...

START HERE

ALIAS
Sydney Bristow, the mistress of disguise, is a sneaky lady. She isn't afraid to bust out the AK-47 though.

24: THE GAME
This is more like it. Jack Bauer likes to sneak around corners and shoot terrorists in the back. It's just a shame he never has much time, dammit...



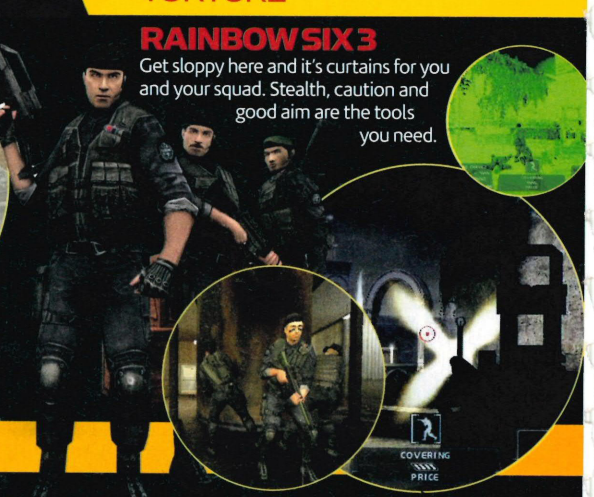
SEXY

TORTURE

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR
Gabe Logan is, technically, a spy and capable of doing things quietly. He does, however, have a bit of an itchy trigger finger.

SOCOM US NAVY SEALS 3
Unless you're a crack shot, you'll need to tippy-toe through the later levels.

RAINBOW SIX 3
Get sloppy here and it's curtains for you and your squad. Stealth, caution and good aim are the tools you need.



STERN

GREY AREAS

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT
Sam Fisher is the master of stealth. He's so damn shadowy, even his own organisation can't keep track of him.

SLY 3
Being a world-class thief, Sly's an expert at not being seen. Plus, he's had two previous games to practise.

SILENT

GODZILLA: SAVE THE EARTH

There's nothing subtle about a giant monster rampaging around Tokyo. You could hear Godzilla topple a building miles away.

BLACK

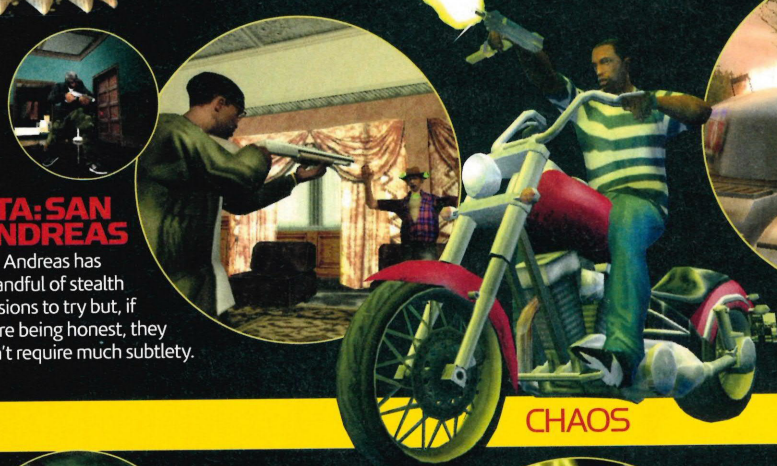
Wrecking up everything around you isn't the best way to stay unnoticed, but then again, you don't have to shoot it all...

NOT SNEAKY

UNSUBTLE

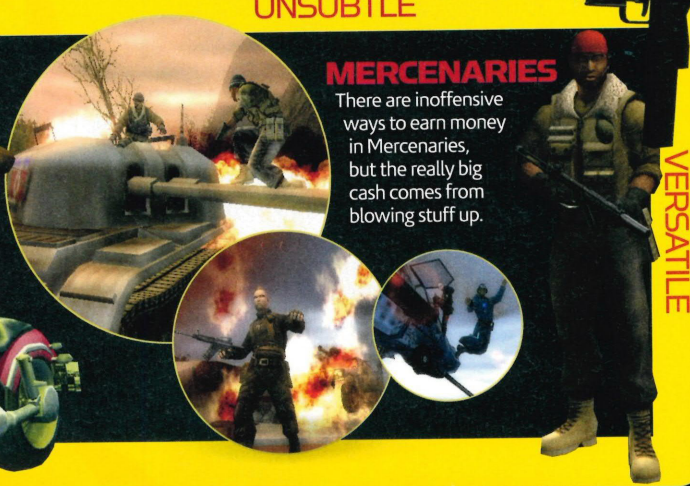
GTA: SAN ANDREAS

San Andreas has a handful of stealth missions to try but, if we're being honest, they don't require much subtlety.



MERCENARIES

There are inoffensive ways to earn money in Mercenaries, but the really big cash comes from blowing stuff up.



VERSATILE

CHAOS

GREGORY HORROR SHOW

In this nightmarish hotel you need to be extra sneaky when you're roaming the halls and spying on your fellow guests.

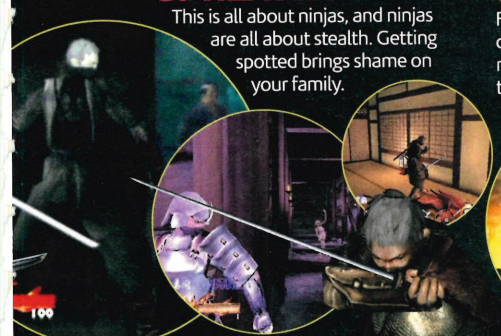
METAL GEAR SOLID 3

What's that lurking behind that tree? Why, it's Solid Snake with his camo/face paint combo. The most sneaky MGS to date.

PEEP SHOW

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN

This is all about ninjas, and ninjas are all about stealth. Getting spotted brings shame on your family.

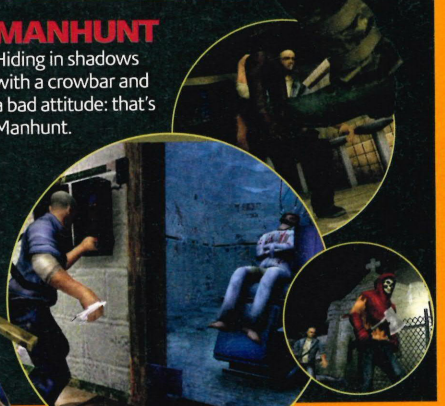


BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

For heroine Jade, getting caught is not an option. She needs to be sneaky to get the pictures she needs.

MANHUNT

Hiding in shadows with a crowbar and a bad attitude: that's Manhunt.



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PROFESSIONAL

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES...

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REVIEWS

LATEST GAMES TESTED BUYING ADVICE KICKINGS

HELP! I JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FINGERS...

To say that excitement rippled through the office this month at the arrival of Guitar Hero III and two controllers would be the understatement of the year.

My own thrills stemmed in no small part from the inclusion of the track FCPREMIX by The Fall of Troy, a band I suggested back in issue 89 for potential inclusion in GH III because their songs are a finger-twisting mess of vicious chords and time-changes. I thought it would be fun.

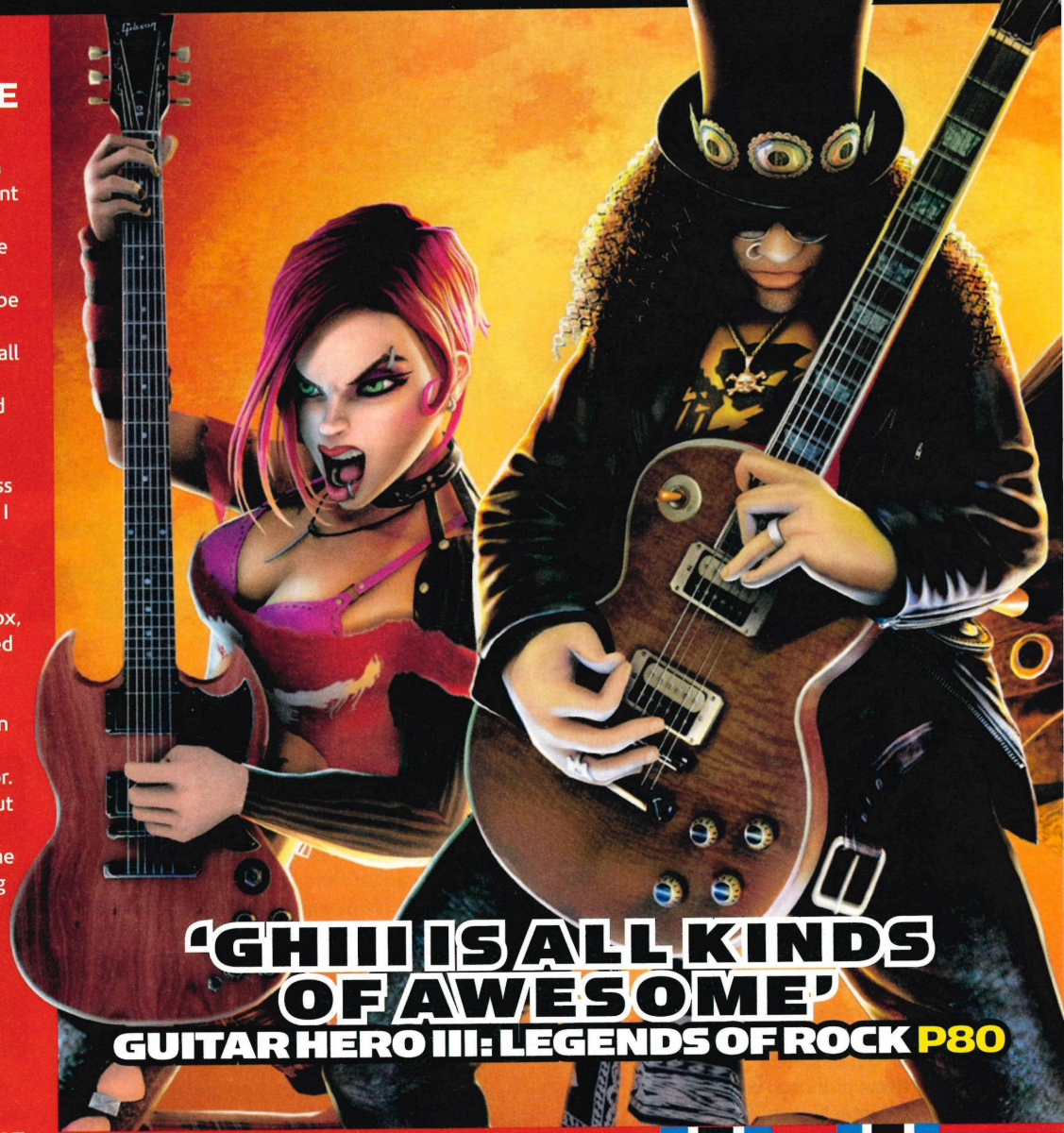
Dawn of the shred

Within 10 minutes of opening the box, FCPREMIX had single-handedly felled three staffers: myself, Andy and Sophie – Guitar Hero veterans all.

My fingers were a mess, my vision swimming. The moral of the story, friends: be careful what you wish for.

Since then, Andy's managed it, but only on Medium. And now we've unlocked DragonForce's 'Through the Fire and Flames', I may soon be suing for loss of use of my left hand...

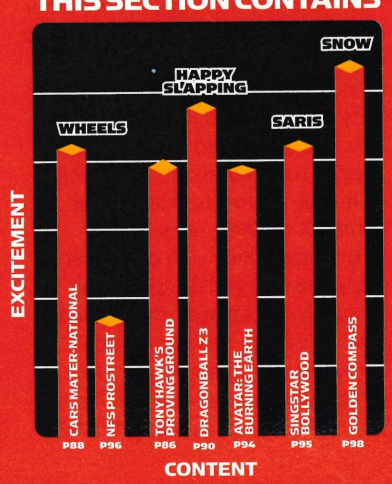
MIKE STERRY
STAFF WRITER
msterry@futurenet.co.uk



'GHIII IS ALL KINDS OF AWESOME'

GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK P80

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

PlayStation 2 STAR GAME

MEMBER OF THE PlayStation 2 HALL OF FAME

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 p103).

Boss battles with real-life rockers are just one of the great new ideas in GH III

Release Out now **Publisher** Activision **Developer** Neversoft **Price** £39.99 (game only) £49.99 (with controller) **Players** 1-2 **Web** guitarherogame.com/gh3 **Also try** SingStar Rocks!

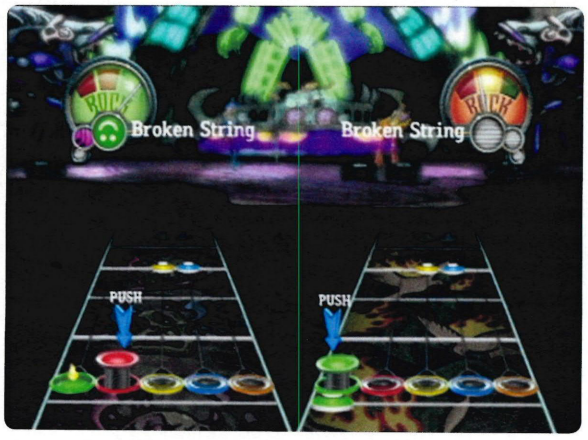
GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

Keep on rockin' in a game that turns everything up to 11

The third album by any band is always 'difficult'. Sometimes it's because success is making them too comfortable; sometimes it's because they've won enough clout with their record company to kick out the producer and go all 'experimental'. And sometimes it's simply because they've run out of ideas.

All of these problems could have applied to Guitar Hero's third outing (we're not counting 'Rock the 80s' which was really just an spin-off from Guitar Hero II).

In Battle mode you can nobble your rival with tricky 'attacks'



With a new developer at the helm and the brand becoming almost more famous than the Beatles, the stage was set for a lazy, comfort-zone performance. But happily, it hasn't happened: we can report that Guitar Hero III is all kinds of awesome.

The basic format remains the same: rock music; moving coloured circles designating notes; a 'guitar' controller and lots of tongue-in-cheek humour.

But loads of new stuff has been added, to the extent that it really pushes the envelope for what can be done with the rhythm action genre.

Battle of the bands

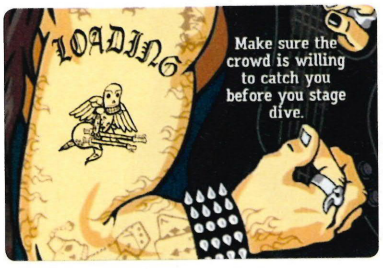
The most successful, new idea is the two-player Battle mode. It's basically like the Face-off multiplayer of previous games, in that two people play the same track side by side and attempt to outscore each other.

But this time you can pick up 'attacks' from particular sequences of notes and use them against the other person. They do stuff like upping your opponent's difficulty level for a limited time, doubling the number of notes they have to play or disabling one of the coloured buttons until they've hammered on it for a while.

Career mode cutscenes are chucklesome but and look great

It adds a ferocious element of competition. And, because you 'attack' by jerking your controller in the same way you'd engage Star Power in singleplayer mode, it really feels satisfying – as though you're throwing something at your rival.

Career mode remains much the same, albeit with a redesigned HUD



The loading screens are numerous as ever but so funny that you don't care

Your final boss battle takes place in Hell, against the mysterious 'Lou'...

OPS2 PERSONALITY QUIZ
IS GUITAR HERO III THE GAME FOR YOU?

YOU PICK UP 'ATTACKS' TO USE AGAINST THE OTHER PLAYER

and a new set of venues. You progress through a series of increasingly difficult tunes, earning money to spend on unlockable guitars, tunes, characters and outfits.

Two can play

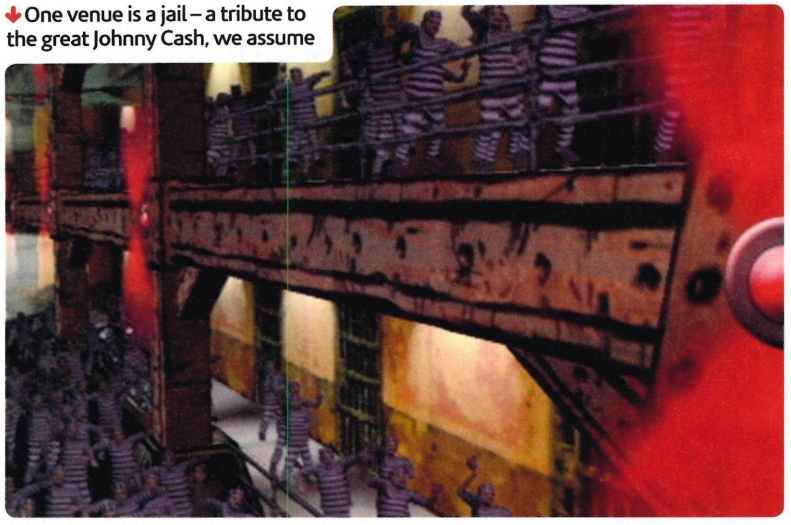
But this time around there's also a two-player, co-op career path, meaning less time sitting on the sofa waiting for your turn. Hooray!

New character Midori is really cute in a crazy, J-Pop kind of way

For each track one player chooses lead guitar and one bass or rhythm, and you don't have to be on the same difficulty setting (the rewards are based on the easiest setting, though, so there can be no passengers!).

We did find it slightly annoying that co-op career is completely separate from the singleplayer career so you

One venue is a jail – a tribute to the great Johnny Cash, we assume



can't carry on unlocking songs on your own after your mate goes home. But it's not a massive issue.

Hack'n'Slash

It's in the Career mode that you meet the next really new idea in GH III: the boss battle.

Much-hyped before the game's release, these involve 'battling' against real-life rock gods Tom Morello (out of Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave) and Slash of Guns'n'Roses fame, who've been squeezed into your PS2 by the miracle of motion-capture.

The format is the same as Battle mode, the idea being to force the boss to fail the song by attacking him. And once you've beaten him, he becomes available as an unlockable, playable character, although you still have to earn the money to unlock him.

It's fun and innovative, but the idea seems a bit under-used and rather as if it's been tacked on without really fitting into the game's flow.

Also, Slash and Tom are so easy to beat that we got them both first time.

In most videogames it takes a few tries to beat any boss, and it would have been nice to have the challenge level set to something more satisfying here, as well.

It's surprising, because overall the difficulty level has been noticeably tweaked up to 11 compared to the first two Guitar Heroes.

Medium setting feels like the old Hard but using only four buttons. Easy setting is no longer really dull and Expert is a huge challenge that'll entertain even the greatest virtuoso.

At the same time, though, the game seems to have become more forgiving of mistakes, so even if you score badly, you're less likely to fail a track completely. We really prefer

Singers' mouths are more in sync with the words this time

HOW

1. STAND UP

Standing up allows your arms to move freely, and makes it easier to strike those rock'n'roll poses.

5. SAVE YOUR STAR POWER

See the points bonus on the left of the screen? Engaging star power doubles this, so wait until it's at 4 or 6, if you can, for maximum effect.

8. GET YOUR FOOT UP

It's rock law that when you're bustin' out a solo, one foot must be placed on a speaker. A coffee table, pouffe or family pet will suffice for the living room legend.

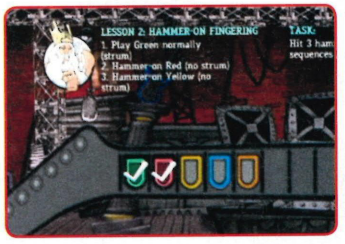
TO BE A ROCK GOD

2. GIVE IT THE FINGER

Use your thumb and forefinger to strum up as well as down: it takes practice, but once mastered allows much more accuracy in those tricky fast bits.

3. SWING LOW

Only bassists are permitted to wear their instruments above the belt line. Everyone else: keep that strap long.



4. HAMMER ON AND PULL OFF

They take practice, but hammer-ons and pull-offs let you play noodly bits that are impossible if you try to press every key. The advanced tutorial will show you how.

6. SORT YOUR THREADS

Slash didn't get where he is today by turning up on stage in corduroy slacks. Dark glasses, circulation-sapping trousers and 'interesting' hair are the rock god way.

7. ANTICIPATE THE QUIET BITS

Some songs have bits with no guitar at all. We can't imagine why they'd be done this way, but anyway, learn where they are and don't waste your star power just before a section where you don't hit any notes.

10. ATTACK!

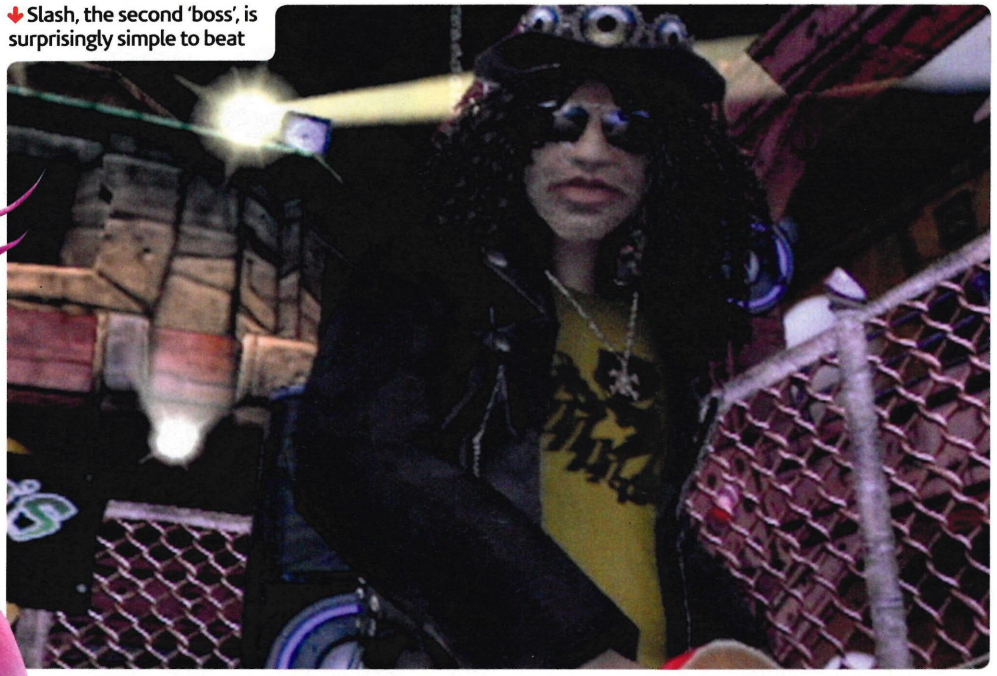
When battling, use your attacks as soon as possible. There's no point holding onto them when you could be nobbling your rival's noodling.

11. PRACTISE!

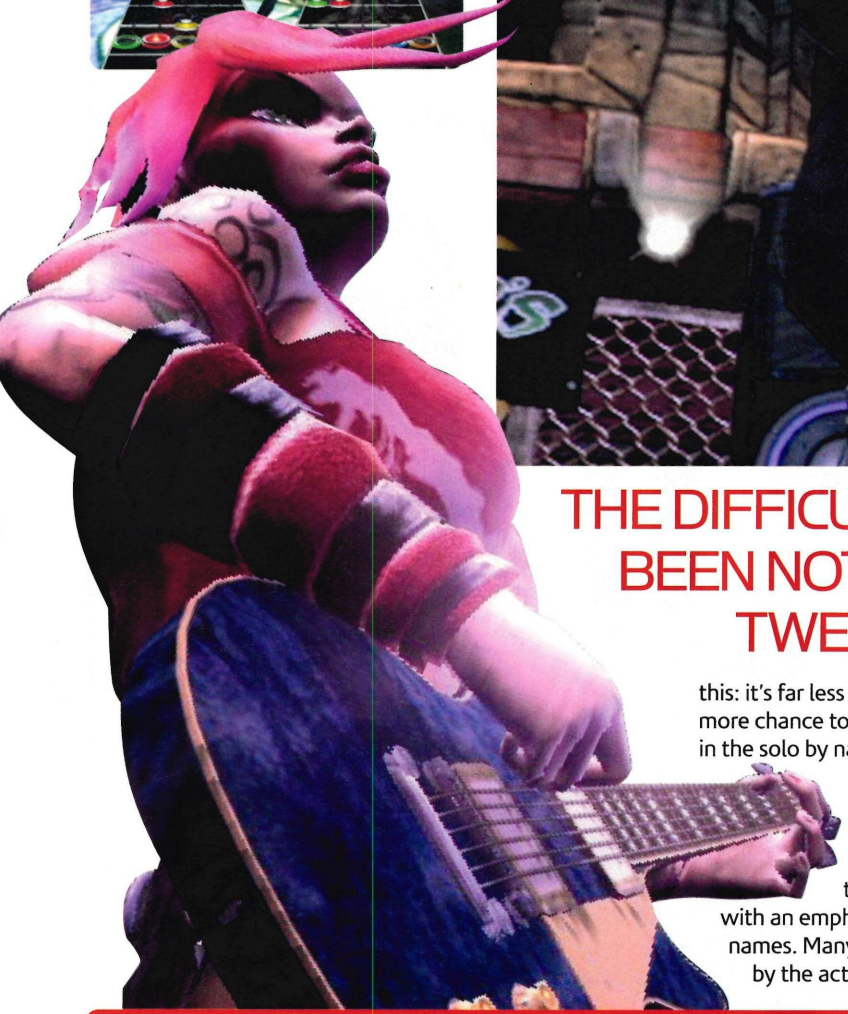
Do what the pros do: learn the notes slowly, then speed them up until you can manage a full-on shred. Oh, and if you learn one song really well, you can impress people with it and they need never know you can't play anything else on the setlist...

9. MASH THE TREMBALOS

For maximum pointage, make with the whammy arm. You don't have to keep the strum thingit pressed at the same time but do keep your left hand on the coloured button.



Slash, the second 'boss', is surprisingly simple to beat



THE DIFFICULTY HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY TWEAKED UP

this: it's far less frustrating and allows more chance to make up for mistakes in the solo by nailing the riffs.

The tracklist has something for everyone, from classic instrumentals to modern pop-rock, with an emphasis on famous names. Many songs are performed by the actual artists, from Slayer and Iron Maiden to The Strokes, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Metallica, The Smashing Pumpkins and The Beastie Boys – even the mighty Rolling Stones.

This makes a huge difference to some of the tracks (we shudder to think how a cover band would have performed Muse's 'Knights Of Cydonia', even one of the calibre used by Guitar Hero).

But in other, more solo-heavy songs, we don't suppose there would have been much of a difference.

Made famous buy...

Unlockable characters are bought with cash rather than, as previously, by getting near-impossible scores, which is a great improvement because it means everyone has a chance of getting their favourite.

The PS2 version offers slightly different unlockable characters to the next-gen games: there is no Grim Ripper for us this time, sadly.

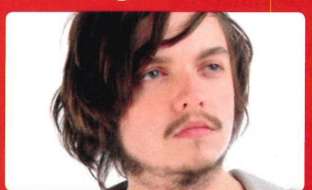
But aside from that and the online support, there's no real difference between this and the PS3 game.

Oh yes – apart from the wireless controller, that is. All other formats get an axe shaped like a Les Paul, whereas ours is a Kramer Pacer. The

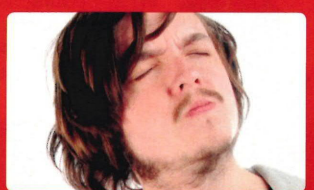
The redesigned HUD includes this new-style Star Power meter

FACE THE MUSIC

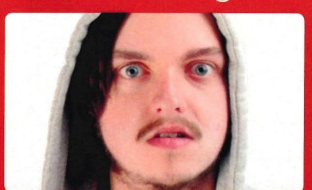
Real rock gods show their emotion. Here's how to work those faces of feeling...



THE WHIMSICALIS
What it says: Tough guys have feelings too.
As seen on: James Hetfield

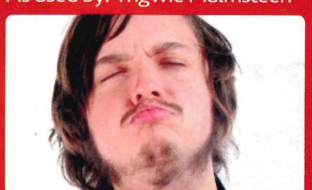


THE SQUEADLIE
What it says: Check out how many notes I can fit into a solo!
As used by: Yngwie Malmsteen



THE WIDOWMAKER
What it says: Am I scaring you? No? How about now?
As used by: 'Dimebag' Darrell

THE SNEERUS MAXIMUS
What it says: This solo is better than sex. For me, anyway.
As used by: Jimi Hendrix

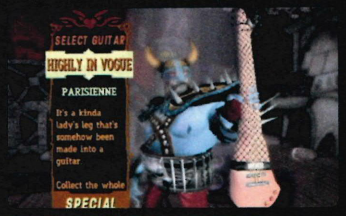


THE BAYOU POUT
What it says: I gots dem ole blues mama.
As used by: Jimmy Page

THE CRICKED NECK
What it says: I'm so good it hurts. Especially in the neck area.
As used by: Eric Clapton

LUST LIST

Lars Umlaut models our top unlockable guitars

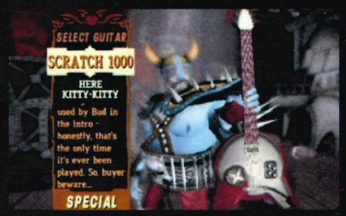


THE PARISIENNE

Shaped like a lady's befishnetted leg, with high heel. Ooh la la! Also: slightly disturbing...

THE PHUNGALZOFT

Constructed from a toilet bowl (used) and a rat (dead), this is ideal for those endless pub gigs.



THE SCRATCH1000

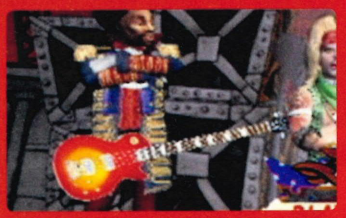
The 'Here Kitty-Kitty' model is so cute, it makes us miss our teddies. Comes in a choice of colours.

LUST LIST

Xavier Stone presents our favourite unlockable basses

THE GIRL FRIDAY

Women, we're told, respond to bass and the 'Lady Shapes' Special is just the instrument to get freaky with.



LES PAUL

A classic, shown here in the Cherry Sunburst finish. Ideal for left-handers such as Sir Paul McCartney.

THE ENFORCER

One for the surfers, this is a bass with real teeth. And fins. And eyes. It's also available as a six-string.

shape's great; the functionality, it seems, not so much. Oh dear.

Why oh wire?

We received two controllers to use with our review copy of the game; one works perfectly, but the other can only consistently 'talk' to its receiver if you stand in a particular area of the room relative to the console.

And that area is pretty much nose-pressed-up-against-the-telly. It's hardly the freedom that wireless should bring.

↑ 'Sponsorship' brings extra cash but is annoyingly blatant in-game advertising

Oh, and if you're prone, as we are, to epic-length GH sessions, make sure you've got plenty of batteries: these new axes will need the juice.

It's not as though the wires on the original controller were much maligned, so we don't really get why the decision was taken to make them wireless and run the risk of problems.

But the older controllers are compatible with this game, so if you want to be on the safe side, use those if you have them.

↓ When hit with this attack in a battle you have to whammy hard

Don't let the new controllers put you off, though. Guitar Hero III is still fantastic value for money, and with its challenging, rocking and above all *fun* soundtrack, it's an essential purchase. Looks like it's going to be a rock'n'roll Christmas this year. **Sophie Mason**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

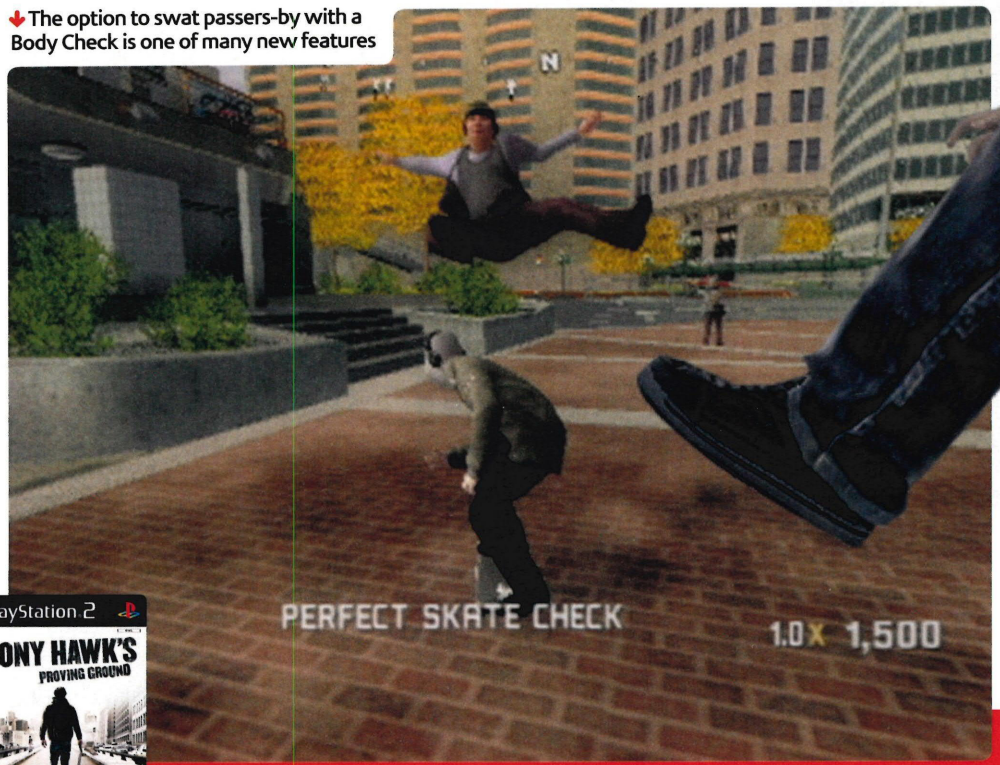
VERDICT

MEMBER OF THE PlayStation 2 HALL OF FAME

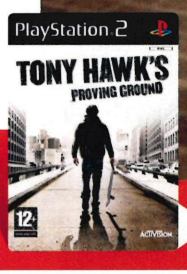
- Battle mode is brilliant
- Great choice of tracks
- Plenty of replay value
- Too much advertising

All the best stuff from the first two games has been kept in and everything that's been added just makes this GH the best yet

9



The option to swat passers-by with a Body Check is one of many new features



Release Now **Publisher** Activision **Developer** Page 44 **Price** £29.99
Players 1-2 **Web** thpgonline.com **Also try** Tony Hawk's Project 8

TONY HAWK'S PROVING GROUND

One thing it proves is that not everything Tony touches turns to gold

When legendary skater Tony Hawk finally croaks and ends up in hell, the first thing Beelzebub will probably do is sit Tone on his thorny throne and force him to play through a few centuries' worth of some of the more difficult objectives from the games bearing his name. The majority of them will be drawn from this, Proving Ground.

But there's a reason why Tony's managed to chalk up no less than 11 games in eight years.

The games not only founded a genre, but continued to innovate to the extent that any skating game without Tony's name appended to it was nearly always inferior.

Alas, though. Every giant must stumble eventually. And now is that moment for this series.

Proving Ground is not be the first Hawk's game to be simultaneously released on next-gen and best-gen (that honour goes to previous game Project 8), but it's the first to be victim of The Curse of The Two Developers.

That is to say, next-gen gets the proper treatment, while best-gen (that's PS2) gets the scraps (see 'Something's Missing', right).

PROVING GROUND IS VICTIM TO THE CURSE OF TWO DEVELOPERS

Class war

On PS2, Proving Ground's chief new feature is the introduction of three nominal classes (or 'lifestyles') of skateboarder, although your skater gains skills in all of them.

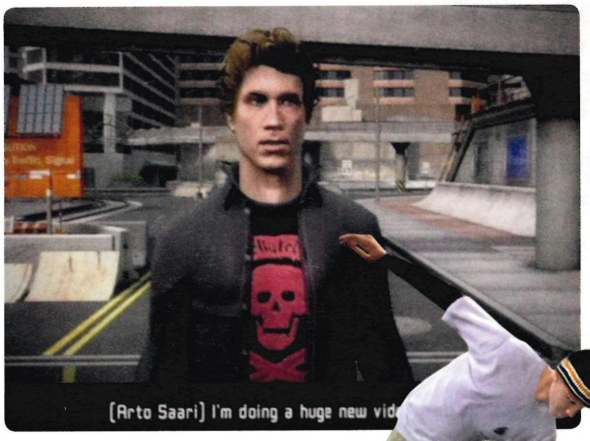
The Rigger is a shady type who fashions impromptu kit out of 'borrowed' material; his skills allow him to enter into a frustrating level editor at any time and drop kickers and rails where necessary. He can also get off his deck to climb around in search of that perfect gap.

The Hardcore class comprises all manner of lawless dudes, and is why the game comes with a "Contains anti-social behaviour" warning.

They have both the most useful and least useful skills in the game: the Aggro Kick and Body-Check respectively. The Aggro Kick gives your skater a speed boost, while the latter allows you to callously launch pedestrians about.

You have plenty of options for the way your skater looks and dresses

There are 'object combos' in each level where you must trick off every obstacle



Look, it's the Hoff! Eh? What do you mean it's supposed to be Arto Saari?

The Career skater is all about the fame and pizzazz of pro skating, with an emphasis on performing for skate videos; hence his skill set is primarily the ability to enter the Nail the Trick and Nail the Grab modes introduced in Project 8.

A quick tap down on the two thumbsticks puts him into slow-mo, allowing you to pull of all manner of would-be impossible flips and grabs.

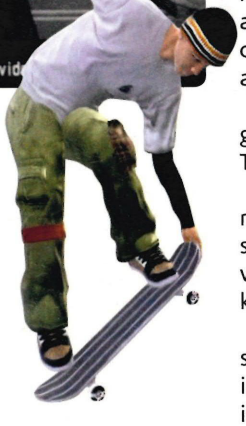
More importantly, both modes have the physics-defying side effect of allowing you more air-time, so are necessary for clearing some of the gigantic gaps the game throws at you.

Each class has its own storyline and missions, but you'll need to complete pretty much all of them to advance.

The daily grind

The trouble is, they're not all that interesting, and are rooted firmly in the class skills (Rigger missions play like puzzles, and so on), as opposed to the skateboarding trickery of Hawk games past.

But then there is a Classic mode, which can be accessed at a bleeping arcade machine in each level. It harks back to older TH games by giving you a mess of goals to complete in a time limit with a famous skater.



The Rigger class has challenges that involve collecting stuff

SOMETHING'S MISSING

...it's in the PS3 game, though

NAIL THE MANUAL
Not much of a loss, this. Nail the Manual mode wasn't very well done on PS3, and it was always preferable to manual the normal.

NO LOADING
The three cities in the PS3 version are entire levels you can traverse without a loading. On PS2 they're divvied up into zones that you access from a menu.

REAL-TIME INJURIES
On next-gen you can see your poor skater reduced to a blob of scar tissue. PS2 skaters' skin remains rash-free even after the nastiest fall.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

SKATEBOARD COMMANDOS
In the 1990s, the United States Marine Corps tested commercially available skateboards during urban combat exercises "for manoeuvring inside buildings in order to detect tripwires and sniper fire."

Buggy ride

Meanwhile, Proving Ground's levels are spectacularly buggy. Your skater can frequently get trapped in scenery and maybe even bail for no reason.

That said, they are the most grind-friendly levels to yet appear in a Tony Hawk game.

Mind you, even when you've maxed out your grinding skill, you're still prey to the tricky Grind meter, which must be controlled carefully to keep your balance.

At the core of Proving Ground lies a solid game, full of great additions and ideas. The problem is, that solid game is Project 8. The ill-thought-out class system and poor level design added since that makes this a whopping disappointment. **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- It's a Tony Hawk's game
- Classes are poorly implemented
- Dull, grey levels
- Irregular difficulty

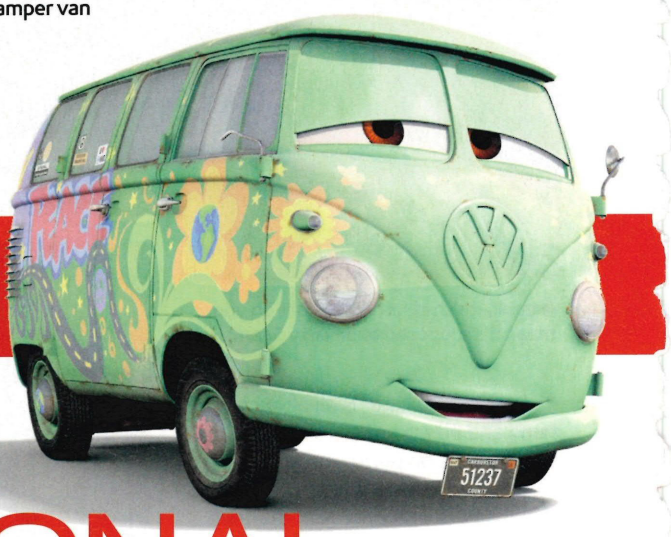
Grey, unfair, buggy: it's a lackluster entry to the series. Still, it's better than Downhill Jam

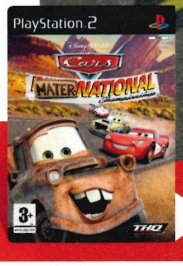
6

Much like these monster trucks, the new game is like the original, but pimped

You can adjust much more than the paint jobs in this super sequel

This is Fillmore the chilled-out camper van





Release Out now **Publisher** THQ **Developer** Rainbow Studios **Price** £29.99
Players 1-2 **Web** carsvideogame.com **Also try** Crash Nitro Kart

CARS MATER-NATIONAL

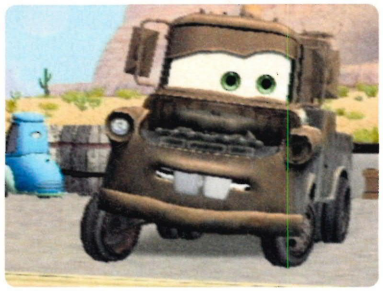
The Disney Pixar racer just hit top gear

If you'd told us six months ago that we'd be giving a higher review score to a kid's cartoon racer – and a film franchise, to boot – than a Need For Speed game, we'd have slapped your impudent chops and sent you on your merry way. The cheek of it.

But that's just what we're doing this month, because Cars Mater-National is genuinely the better game.

So how did this happen? Well, firstly it's all gone a bit wrong for NFS, as you'll see in our review on on p96. But that's not the only reason.

Cars is far from merely another wan kiddy racer. First off, it's got character. Anyone who's seen the Disney Pixar movie *Cars* will know and love most of the main players in Mater-National, but if you're one of the unfortunates who hasn't, we're confident you'll fall for their charm within a few minutes of slipping disc into console.

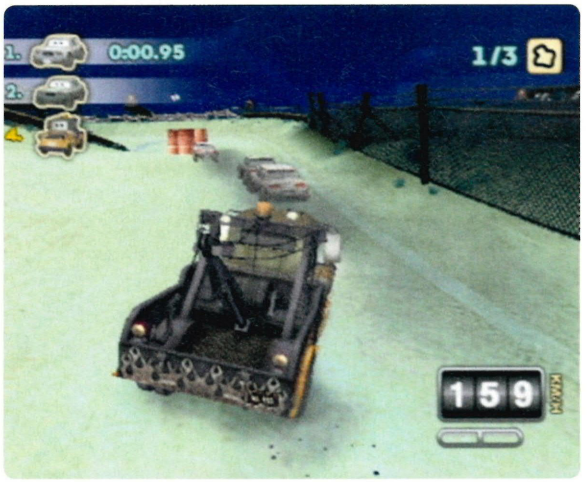


Racing aces

The set-up is simple. To celebrate the building of the Lightning McQueen practice arena and racing HQ, pick-up truck Mater has organised an international speed festival.

It's drawn in racers from all over the globe. This means you'll be racing against modded Audi-style car-acters from Germany, sleezy sport racers from Italy, some old-fashioned American muscle cars and lots more.

The Mater races are tough: your opponents are quicker than you



You'll be able to drive them, too, in the decent two-player mode, although in singleplayer you choose only from film characters.

Impressively, Mater-National boasts more than 130 different race events, so you're getting plenty of gaming fuel for your money.

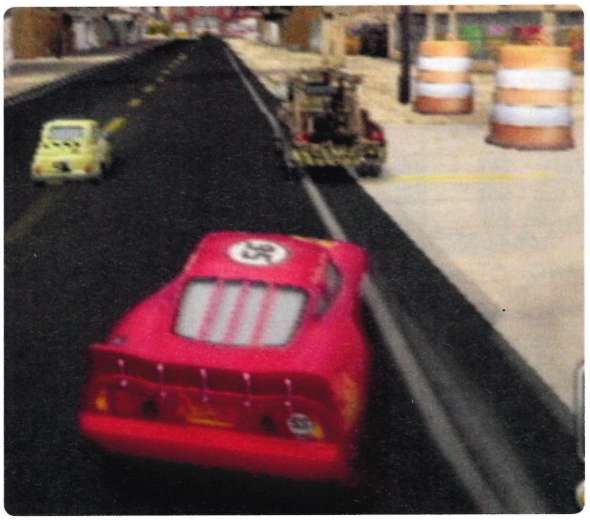
If you're after a quiet Christmas, you could do a lot worse than slipping a copy into your nipper's stocking.

But even if you are buying it for someone younger, we reckon you'll be tempted to pick up the pad and give it a bash as well.

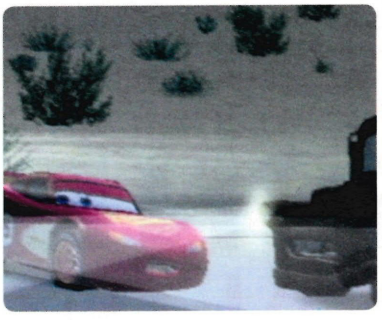
The racing is basic, but solid, and some of the later events are a genuine challenge. Sadly, some events err on the side of insanely frustrating, so you'll need a fair chunk of patience to see them through.

In between events you're free to roam around some of the massive environments that featured in the original film, including Radiator Springs and Ornament Valley. Each one is stuffed with collectibles that

Among the 130 race types are fuel races where you collect petrol as you go round



In between races you can explore your surroundings



GAME TOUR

This game has...

FREE ROAMING
Taking a leaf out of 'The Rule Book Of Racing', Cars lets you wander the world tackling events as you please.

DANCING
Thought suspension popping and crazy tilting in time to music was just for gangsters? Think again!

TAG-RACING
There are plenty of race types, and our favourite is this: try to catch your rival before they reach their 'home'.

MORE THAN 130 RACE EVENTS MEAN PLENTY OF GAMING FUEL

range from points to paint-jobs, and once you've bagged fresh items for your car, you can head over to an auto-shop and have it applied.

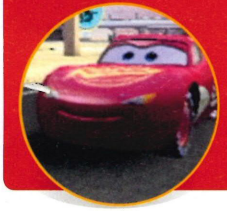
Paint misbehavin'

It certainly isn't customisation on the Need for Speed level, but having the option to change your car's appearance is a nice touch.

We especially liked the fact that when you do change your paint job, other cars on the road will make comments on your sweet new look.

All things considered, Cars Mater-National is much too simple to set your world alight if you are a serious racing fan. If you're a *Cars* movie fan, though, or someone looking for an easy entry into the four-wheeled world, we can't recommend this title highly enough. **Andy Hartup**

OPS2 BOARD OF CLASSIFICATION



Cars Mater-National has been passed suitable for...

- ✔ People with provisional licences
- ✔ *Cars* movie fans
- ✔ Christmas lists
- ✘ Gran Turismo obsessives

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK VERDICT

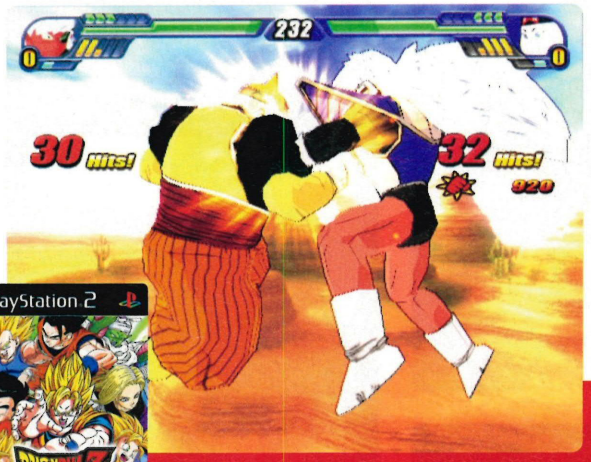
- Looks and plays great
- Masses of Cars content
- Too simple for hardcore gamers
- Can get extremely frustrating

As a racing game, Cars is good, straightforward, family fun. As a movie licence, it's a must for all fans

7

The backstory is explained in captioned sequences

The special moves are a riot of explosive visuals and sound effects



Cel-shaded graphics make this fighter as good to look at as it is to play

Release Out now **Publisher** Atari **Developer** Namco-Bandai **Price** £24.99
Players 1-2 **Web** dragonballz.com **Also try** Naruto Ultimate Ninja 2

DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI TENKAICHI 3

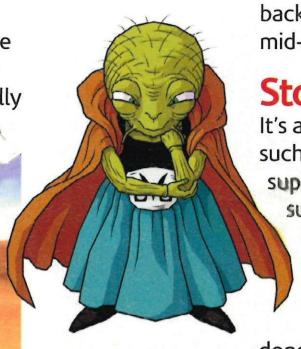
Now with added plot explanations!

Although this is the fifth outing on PS2 for the Dragon Ball series, we're still not entirely sure what the hell is going on. We know they love gratuitous violence, wacky hair and, er, that's about it… until now.

Finally, DBZ: Budokai Tenkaichi 3 is here to tell us what's what and deliver a sound ass-kicking to boot.

Deep down, it's the same hardcore beat-'em-up it has always been. You choose one of the 150-plus beautifully crafted fighters and then smash up your foe over air, sea and land in a massive 3D world.

But now there's a big bag of dialogue, too, so at various points during the story mode fighting you're prompted to press down on the right thumbstick and the game briefly cuts away from the action to give some background to your current plight via mid-battle narratives.



There are more than 150 characters to choose from

Story party

It's a nice touch, explaining things such as why you're going up against super androids or why Gohan is suddenly able to learn a Super Kamehameha attack during his fight with the evil Cell.

We'd have preferred these fairly dry narratives to have been done in animated cutscenes rather than subtitles and a bit of chatter, but at least we get what's going on now.

DBZ: BT3 packs loads of new features in, too, including Mission 100 mode that sets you challenges such as time limits, and Disc Fusion, which unlocks secret content when you insert either of the previous DBZ: BTs into your PS2.

It's the ultimate package for DBZ fans. For everyone else it's one of the most technical and rewarding fighters out there. **Nathan Irvine**

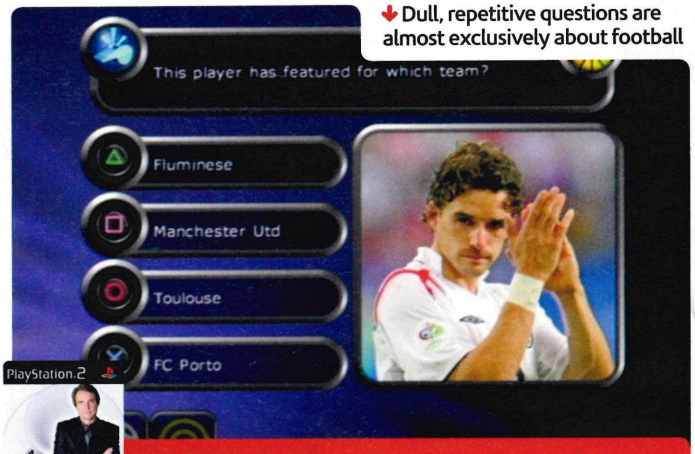
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- Actually has a story
- Plenty of bone-smashing fights
- Rather repetitive
- Still a bit niche

Looks great, good fun and packed full of modes but most fights play out the same way once you work out a winning formula

7



Dull, repetitive questions are almost exclusively about football

Release Out now **Publisher** Oxygen Games **Developer** Oxygen Studios/The Code Monkeys **Price** £24.99 **Players** 1-8
Web oxygengames.net **Also try** Buzz! The Sports Quiz

ALAN HANSEN'S SPORT CHALLENGE

The biggest challenge is why you'd want to buy it

Christmas isn't Christmas without some family bonding over a trivia-based game. And that may explain why Oxygen has brought out not one, but two quizzy videogames for the festive season.

This is a fine idea. But apart from different hosts and different topics, Alan Hansen's Sport Challenge and Cheggers' Party Quiz are identical, down to the loading icon and buzzer sounds.

I want to be Alan

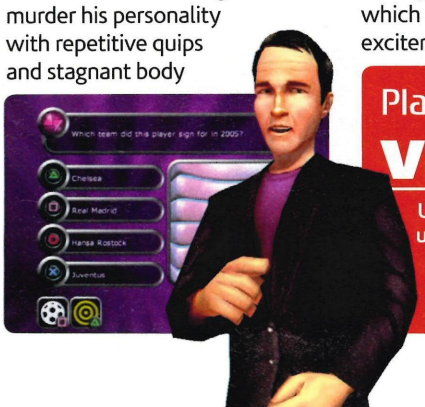
Alan Hansen is a successful commentator and columnist. So it's terrible to see this game murder his personality with repetitive quips and stagnant body language *[you've never watched Match Of The Day, have you? - Ed]*.

And it would be better named 'Alan Hansen's *Football* Challenge' because it's obsessed with soccer and only occasionally tosses in a bit of rugby or tennis.

Even then, questions are restricted to 'What team did this person play for?' or 'Which person played for this team?'.

All the round formats revolve around selecting multiple choice answers, and if you want to know more, read the Cheggers review.

The music is like a ringtone from 1999 and the questions belong in Christmas crackers, which contain far more excitement. **Kim Richards**



PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT
Unimaginative, uninspired and just plain unexciting
3

Questions are film, music and TV-based, and soon start to repeat

Release Out now **Publisher** Oxygen Games **Developer** Oxygen Studios/The Code Monkeys **Price** £24.99 **Players** 1-8
Web oxygengames.net **Also try** Buzz! The Mega Quiz

CHEGGERS' PARTY QUIZ

There's no Buzz of excitement here

The key to a good PS2 quiz is to make the game shine and excite in a way a boardgame can't. But Cheggers Party Quiz fails utterly to do so.

It was a bold move to use TV presenter Keith 'Cheggers' Chegwin. The glory days of *Cheggers Plays Pop* are long gone and anyone under 30 will barely recognise him from *GMTV* and his traumatising naturist antics in *Naked Jungle*.

He does bring some energy and humour, but his soundbites quickly get repetitive and stale.

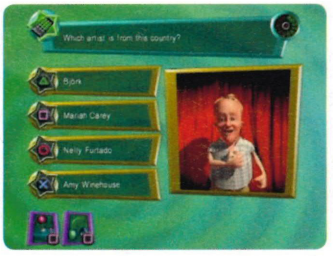
Cheggers says stop

Background music is restricted to two tunes, the layout is bland and singleplayer is pointless because there's no opponent AI.

Most baffling of all, though, is how short and unrewarding this game is. You choose three game lengths, an icon, a buzzer sound, and that's it. No characters, no unlockables… nothing.

Rounds such as Star Question (buzz in first), Channel Hopping (where you can change your answer) and Final Cut (the answer's slowly revealed) should add diversity. But really you simply select one of four answers in each.

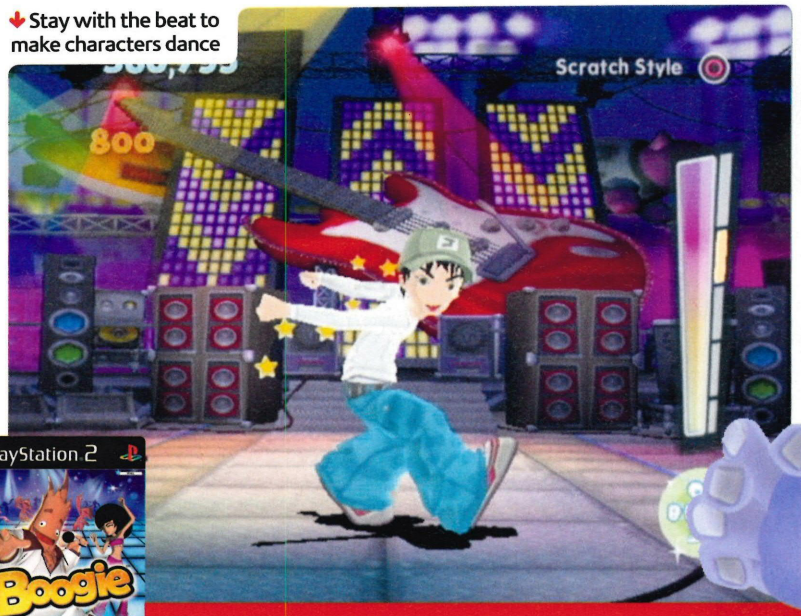
Topics cling to films, music and TV. And disappointingly, the questions soon start repeating themselves, so if you played for long enough, you would win every time. But why would you bother? **Kim Richards**



The graphics are so simple that they just look cheap

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT
Underdeveloped, underwhelming and just plain unbelievable
3

Stay with the beat to make characters dance



Release Out now **Publisher** EA **Developer** EA **Price** £39.99 (with mic)
Players 1-2 **Web** boogie.electronicarts.co.uk **Also try** B-Boy

BOOGIE

All-singing, all-dancing but nothing more than alright

Everyone has an inner boogier, from dad's Chicken Dance to granny's Skirt Flourish, right down to your little brother's Absolutely Embarrassed by Everyone Shuffle.

So surely the perfect way to celebrate Christmas is with the art of boogie in game form? Well, prepare for utter confusion when you boot up this game – because Boogie is a rhythm action game like no other.

There are no symbols to follow, no moving arrows; you're free to do whatever your heart desires, given that you follow the beat.

The only time a guide appears is when you hit L1 to start the combo mode, 'Strike a Pose', where you use both analogue sticks to hit targets.

Each of the five dancing avatars has three dance styles (controlled by ◎, ⊗ and □) which you put together with the directional pad. The more moves you string together, the more elaborate your dancing becomes.

Miss a load of beats, and your avatar will don his frowny face. Get it right, and the luminous visuals paired with energetic humour make it very difficult not to smile.

Boogie bogeys

It all sounds so, so good on paper. But there are problems. Most of the time, your character is unable to finish a dance move before you've hit the next beat, horribly ruining what would have been a slick visual groove.

Mind you, it doesn't matter all that much, because having the Boogie Bar (which you fill to perform combos) on the right side of the screen means that half the time you miss what's going on stage centre, anyway.

MISS A LOAD OF BEATS AND YOUR CHARACTER DONS A FROWNY FACE

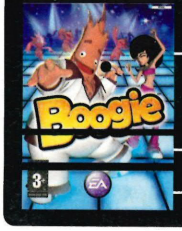
Our second gripe is that, unless you've got the rhythm skills of a deaf koala bear, everything is far too easy.

Simply bashing buttons will rack up uber points, regardless of whether or not you're pulling off a credible dance.

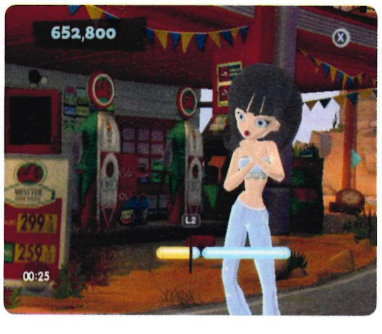
Thirdly, once you've completed the story mode (five dances for each character), the game abruptly stalls. Sure, there are unlockable tunes and dance arenas. But apart from that,

Bubba auditions to be the latest Pussycat Doll

WHAT'S IT MADE OF?

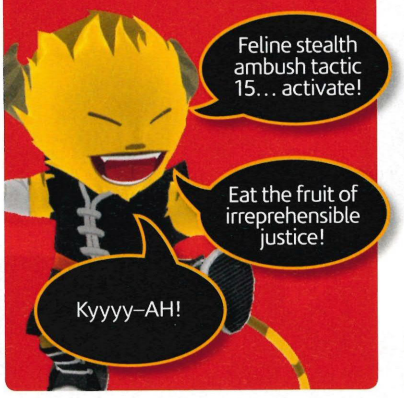


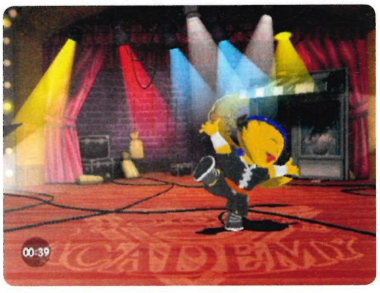
75% Dancing
10% Singing
15% Camp poses



"QUOTED"

Words of wisdom from the mouth of **Karate Kat Kato**





↑ Fill the Boogie Bar and you can pull off combos

Boogie will collect dust, except for now and again when you get your mates round.

Sing for your supper

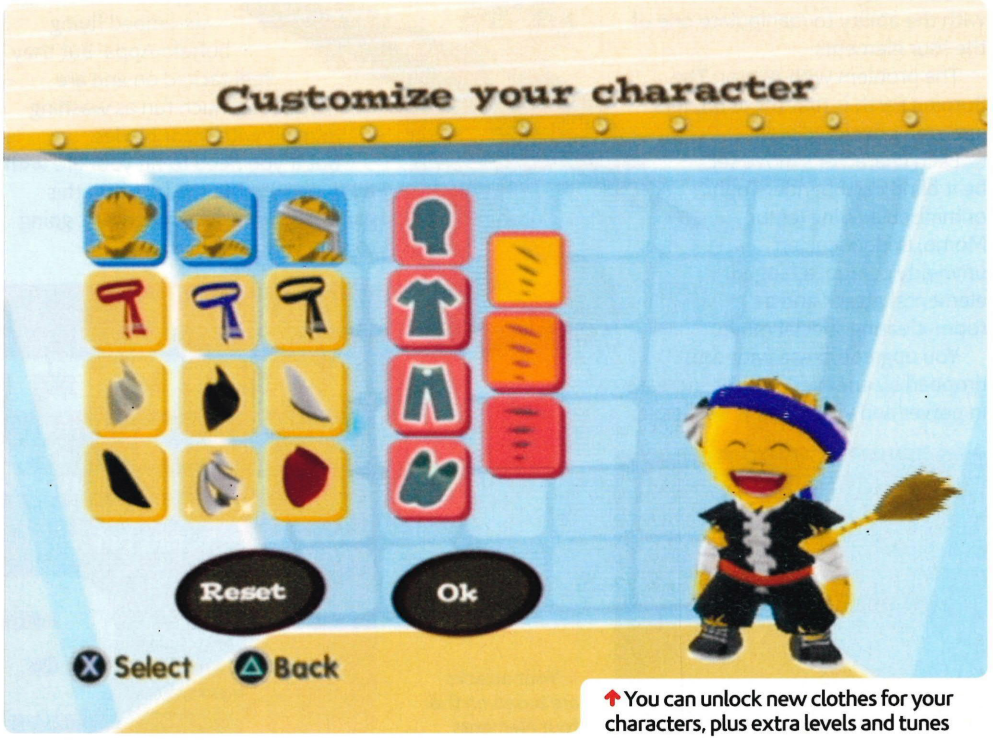
For the multi-tasking partygoer, there's a karaoke option for extra points. But bizzarely, during a story mode dance, you only have to hit the L2 button in time to the words.

Karaoke would have really added to the entertainment, but it rather fails to be functional. Hitting the right notes seems irrelevant, rhythm is random and singing the wrong words entirely doesn't seem to matter.

But when all's said and done, Boogie isn't terrible. Its choice of tunes – from the Jackson Five's 'ABC' to Fergie's 'Fergalicious' to Carl Douglas' 'Kung Fu Fighting' – is guaranteed to get your toes tapping, your head bopping, and eventually, all your misery guts cleansed.

Yes, the game mechanics are sloppy. Yes, there isn't a whole lot of Boogie to play. And yes, the karaoke is utterly pointless and a bit weird.

But Boogie achieves what many games seem to forget about: fun. Yes: fun. Maybe you might want to rent it or wait for the sales rather than paying full price, and po-faced shooter purists should look elsewhere for sure. But if you're up for a laugh, you should Boogie on down. **Kim Richards**



↑ You can unlock new clothes for your characters, plus extra levels and tunes

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

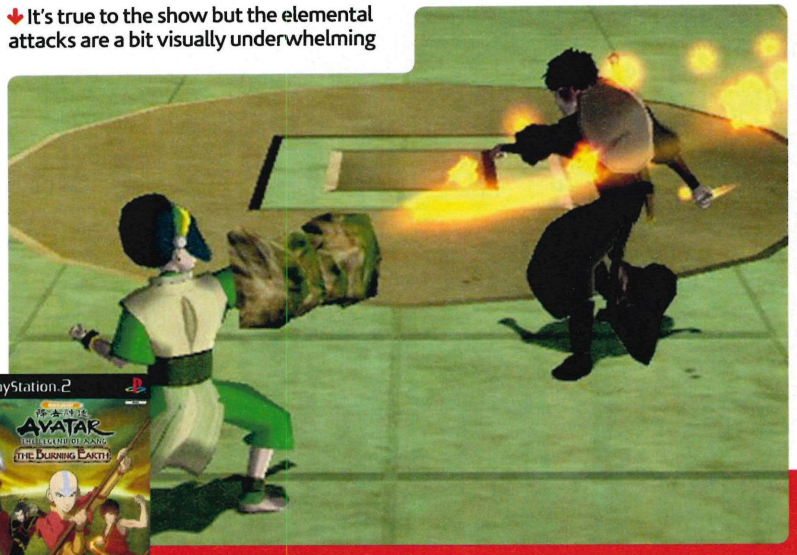
VERDICT

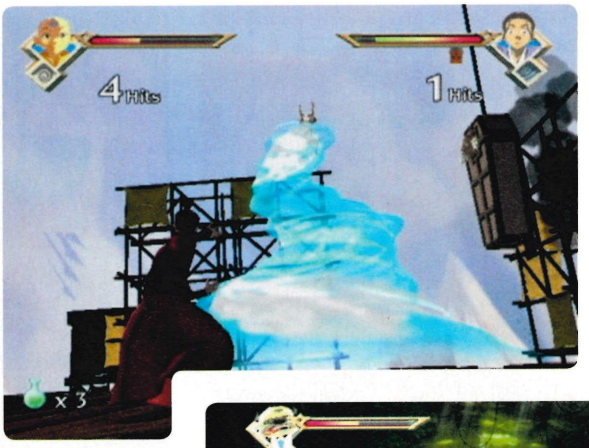
- Colourful, bright visuals
- Toe-tapping tunes
- Not much longevity
- Karaoke feature is under-used

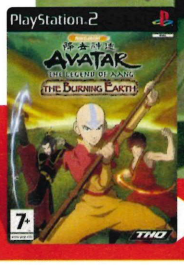
Like an X-Factor winner, this is nice to look at and entertaining for a little while, but is ultimately vacuous and short-lived

6

It's true to the show but the elemental attacks are a bit visually underwhelming







Release Now **Publisher** THQ **Developer** THQ **Price** £29.99
Players 1-2 **Web** avatartheburningearth.com **Also try** Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles

AVATAR: THE BURNING EARTH

Baldy's back with more friends and some new features. But is it enough?

Say what you will about the successful American anime-inspired animated series Avatar, but it's definitely not as convoluted and nonsensical as the likes of Naruto or Dragonball Z. It's actually watchable.

The show itself is divvied up into 'chapters' (episodes) and 'books' (series) and, being the second Avatar game, The Burning Earth follows the events of the second 'book'. That said, it feels like more of an episodic update to the previous game, as opposed to a fully-fledged sequel – scrimping on new features in favour of a timely pre-Christmas release.

Ele-mental

The whole Avatar series revolves around various folk called 'benders' with the ability to manipulate one of the four elements.

The problem with Avatar: The Burning Earth is that these powers just aren't depicted well.

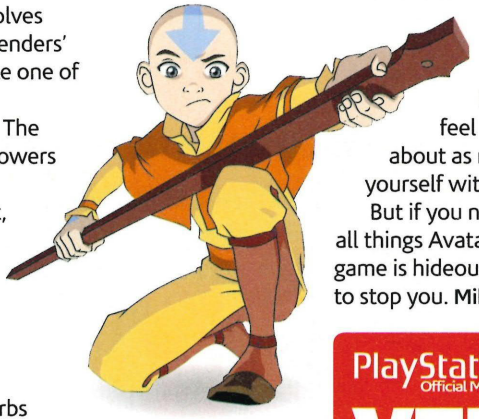
Each character's move set, be it blind earthbender Toph or miniscule flying lemur Momo, is identical: an unwieldy combo, a ranged elemental attack and a room-clearing special move.

You upgrade these with orbs dropped by enemies, but the increase in power and visual flair is negligible.

Fans of the series will be glad that the art of firebending is now available to play with, as is the show's most popular character, renegade firebender Price Zuko.

Also new is a series of on-rails aerial combat segments involving six-limbed flying buffalo Appa. But they feel tacked on and are about as much fun as washing yourself with razor blades.

But if you need to fill your life with all things Avatar, the fact that this game is hideously average isn't going to stop you. **Mike Sterry**



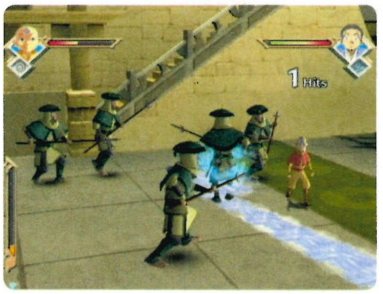
EBAY GOLD

Deluxe Aang costume

Available from the Nickelodeon online store, this stunning Aang costume can be purchased for the amazing price of $39.99 (about £18.99). It comes complete with capelette, boot covers, bald cap, vinyl headpiece and two temporary tattoos.

RARITY VALUE

BEST OF ALBUMS — SNOW AT CHRISTMAS



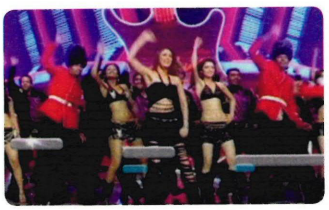
Your attacks are based on the four elements

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK VERDICT

- Faithful to the source material
- Gameplay is simplistic, repetitive
- Lip-synching is broken
- Excessive loading times

More than a little mindless, The Burning Earth is definitely one for fans only. Everyone else should leave it well alone

6



Big stars and big songs are the focus for this tracklist

Pret - ty wo - man
Tum bhi ka - ho na pret - ty wo - man

Release Out now **Publisher** Sony **Developer** Sony
Price £19.99 (game) £39.99 (with mics) **Players** 1-2
Web singstargame.com **Also try** Boogie

SINGSTAR BOLLYWOOD

A spicy bag of Bombay remix

Don't be intimidated by Singstar Bollywood. You don't have to know the language, or even the words to enjoy the songs.

It's aimed squarely at Bollywood-loving families and is very tuned-in, although Sony has stopped short of going the whole hog and releasing the whole game in the original languages.

Yes, all the lyrics are in phonetic English meaning you can actually hum (or hiss) your way through the entire game and still come out golden balti.

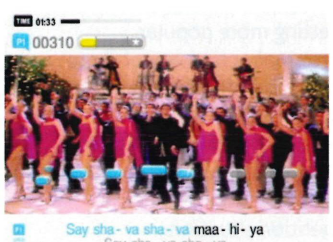
If you do speak Hindi or know the real lyrics to the tracks you'll actually find it's a tougher game to master, because you end up holding back, forced to keep within the constraints of the game language.

Although this means the whole family can play, it'll inevitably grate with hardcore Bollywood fans.

You and filmi

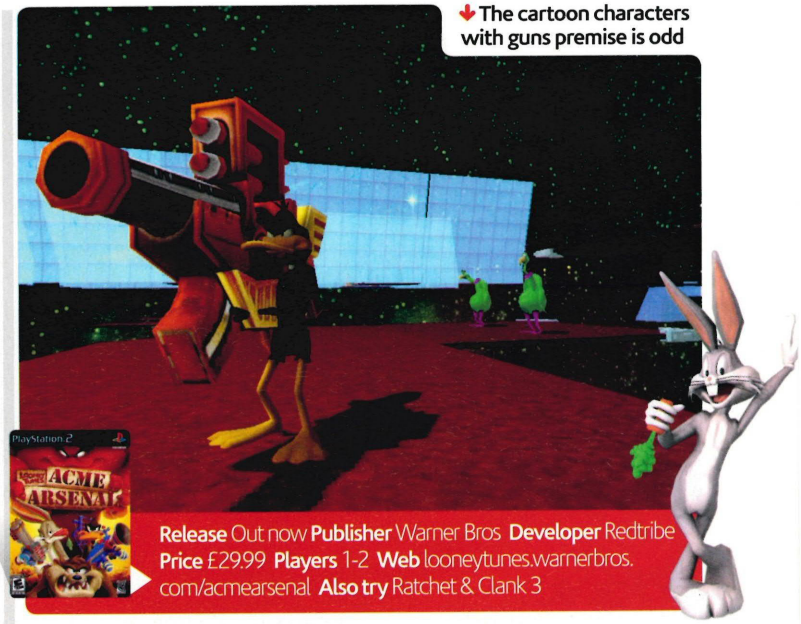
You can't fault the presentation, though. With its legendary Bollywood tracks and cool tantric fonts, this baby rocks the post-*Big Brother* circuit in a big way.

And with a song list that spans the last couple of decades, be prepared to arm-wrestle your niece and your nan for a go on the mic! **Priya Mitchell**



Thur li-riks ar spelt owt in sil-uh-bulls for non-Hin-dee spee-kurs

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT
All the classics are there, but they feel watered down because of the language
7



The cartoon characters with guns premise is odd

Release Out now **Publisher** Warner Bros **Developer** Redtribe
Price £29.99 **Players** 1-2 **Web** looneytunes.warnerbros.com/acmearsenal **Also try** Ratchet & Clank 3

LOONEY TUNES: ACME ARSENAL

What's up glock?

Our memories of the classic Looney Tunes cartoons of our youth don't actually include Bugs Bunny shooting his animated chums in the face with a shotgun. Even Elmer Fudd.

Yet this is exactly Acme Arsenal's formula: Daffy Duck + rocket launcher = game. Odd.

As well as the focus on firearms, each character has a melee weapon that they pull out of some hidden orifice when the attack button is tapped.

There are combos, but they're a headache because you have little control over your character once you've initiated one.

So you often fall off platforms, although thankfully checkpoints are frequent.

Fur-gettable

On the up side, all the Looney Tunes legends are playable characters. On the down side, they all play exactly the same. Level design is horrible, and will frustrate the youngsters at who the game is targeted, particularly since the camera frequently starts moving around by itself.

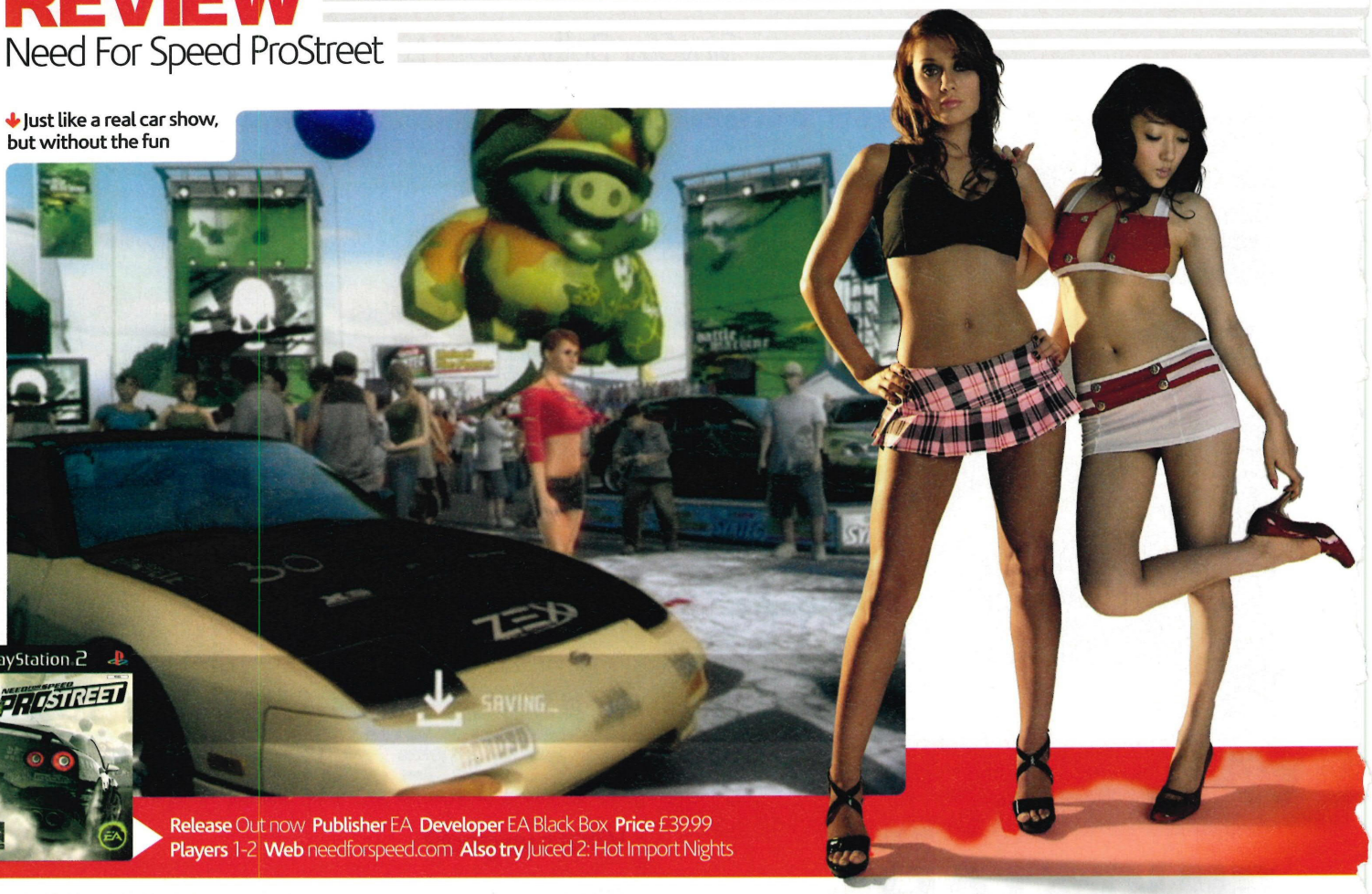
Two-player co-op alleviates this somewhat and two-player deathmatch has its thrills, slightly resembling the far superior game Fur Fighters. But half-baked multiplayer can't save a game that otherwise commits every sin a platformer can. **Mike Sterry**

All the classic Looney Tunes characters are playable

Whatever character you play the experience is exactly the same

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT
Frustrating, disheartening and broken in places: a perfect recipe for making kids cry
4

Just like a real car show, but without the fun



Release Out now **Publisher** EA **Developer** EA Black Box **Price** £39.99
Players 1-2 **Web** needforspeed.com **Also try** Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights

NEED FOR SPEED SPEED PROSTREET

Driving away from the stuff that made it great

Need For Speed ProStreet will be received in two very different ways by gamers. The first, and probably most common, reaction will be devastation at what has happened to the franchise.

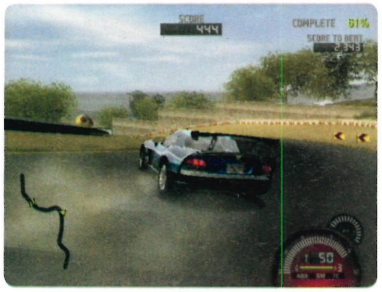
For ProStreet has a complete lack of police cars, civilian traffic, neon-lit city streets and glitzy, over-the-top cars – in fact, all the things that made Need For Speed games so popular in the first place.

Many will come to the conclusion that by turning away from illegal street racing to the world of legal meets, NFS has been neutered, like a randy tom-cat in his prime.

But there will also be those who see that NFS ProStreet is simply keeping up with the times.

Illegal street racing is a dying practice. The future, whether we like it or not, is organised events that reward skill in different disciplines rather than dodging the fuzz.

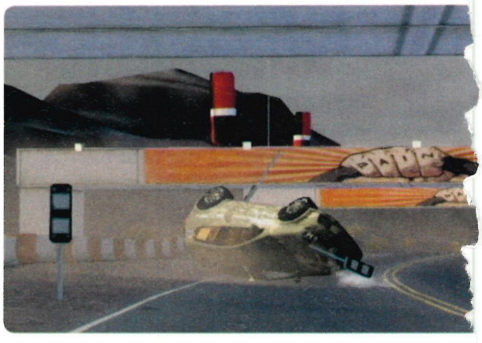
A COMPLETE LACK OF POLICE CARS, TRAFFIC AND NEON-LIT CITIES



Drifting has been ruined by difficult handling

Whip to be square

Recent movements in the motoring scene mean the previous emphasis on exaggerated style has been replaced with the desire to build cars where performance is key. As a result, events where owners can demonstrate how well their cars have been enhanced are getting more popular.



If you've been to any of these shows in real life, then you'll know that ProStreet recreates them very authentically, rewarding you for creating a neatly-performing 'whip' as well as driving it skilfully in a competition situation.

A real-life enthusiasm for motoring events will give you a tolerance for the game that others won't have.

Each car has an individual 'blueprint' that tailors it to a particular event

Drag races are entertaining, but all you need is horsepower!

Sadly, whatever your approach, ProStreet is fundamentally flawed. The thing is, a game inspired by shows held on old airfields or empty desert roads is unavoidably dull.

Effectively, instead of being given the run of a detailed, atmospheric metropolis, we have to stay in the car park and drive around cones.

NFS's new direction reflects what real-life tuners are doing, sure, but the implementation lacks the excitement an NFS game should have.

Why subtract the fantasy and danger when NFS did it better than any other game on the market?

The knife is further twisted by the heavy, unresponsive handling in Grip Races set to chronic understeer and drifting that's inexplicably been ruined by steering that bears little relation to where you want to go.

Drifting was such a fun part of NFS Underground 2 and NFS Carbon that this seems particularly ridiculous.

Off The Street

That said, ProStreet is by no means unplayable. Drag races are consistently enjoyable and the career mode is substantial, if repetitive.

Meanwhile, being able to tailor several different motors specific to particular events presents far greater opportunity to use the wealth of cars on offer and build them with a focus that previous NFSs lacked.

But the bottom line is that if you want another Carbon or Most Wanted, you'll be disappointed. Well done, EA, for trying to be authentic and bravely targeting a niche audience… but the rest of us are bored. **Shaun Curnow**

Pre-drag burnouts can be earned by hitting buttons at the correct time

SHOWDOWN

Illegal street racing vs legal, organised events – which is more fun?

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED
EA, 2005

NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET
EA, 2007

RACING

Sticking it to The Man, driving like a maniac on public roads and upsetting shaky-fist old ladies with your nitros. ✔

Buying a ticket to race, then leaving at 5pm because people have to pack up their giant balloons. ✘

MODDING

Making your car look 'bling' and shiny, spending hours applying custom kits and vinyls and hood scoops. ✘

Spending all your money under the bonnet, tailoring a vehicle to perfection for a specific event. ✔

COMPETING

Drag racing on highways for pink slips; racing through cities, chased by police, dodging civilian cars. ✔

Warming your tyres for grip, gunning for official times; racing around marked-out courses on flat airfields. ✘

OVERALL

This game allows us to try things we'd never do in real life, and that's what makes it great. ✔

It's all a bit serious and ultimately rather too dull to be fun – the thrill has, sadly, gone. ✘

PLAYER 2

ANDY HARTUP
SECOND OPINION

"With Carbon and Most Wanted, this series was going in the right direction, but ProStreet has set NFS back by years. Steer clear."

LEAVE

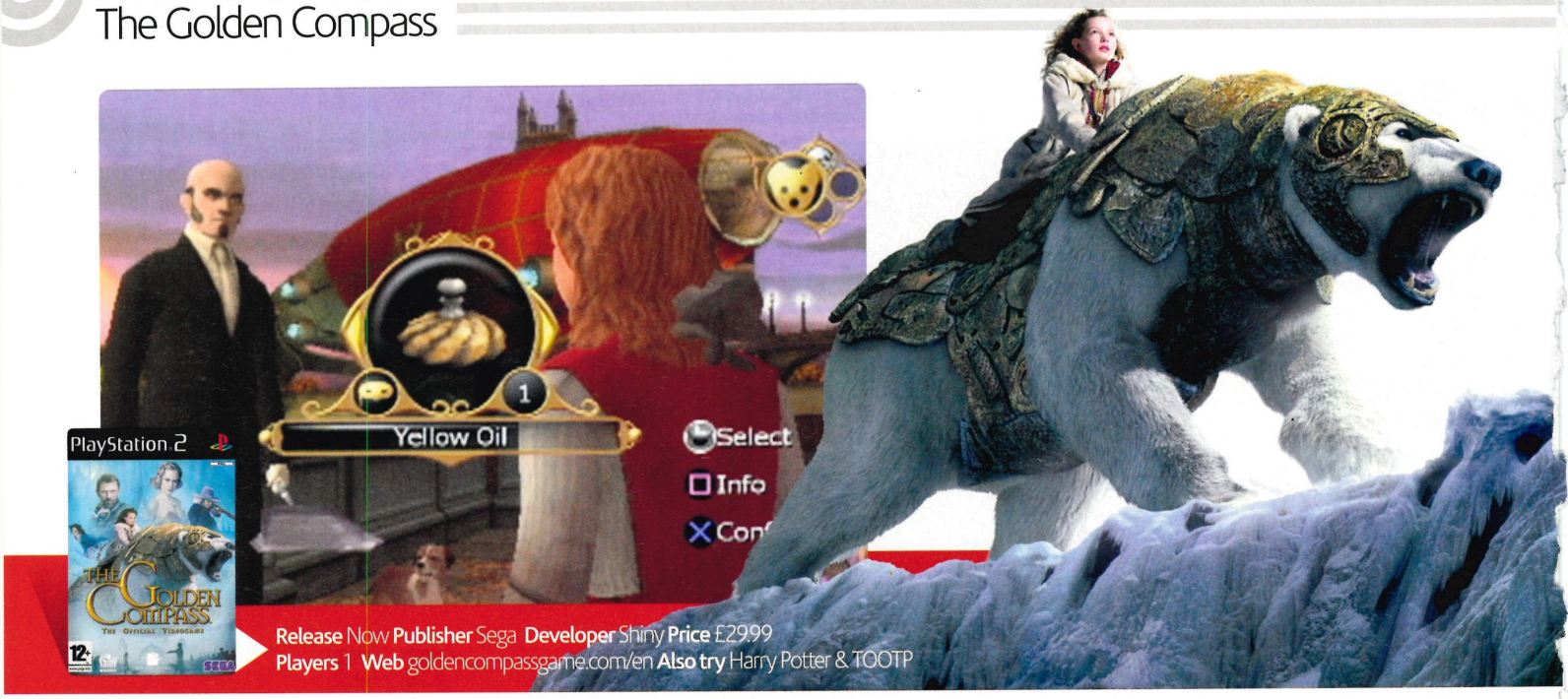
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- Appeals to car show fans
- Handling is heavy
- Drift racing sucks
- Tracks are boring

Illegal street racing makes for a fun game. Auto testing on a runway doesn't..

6



Release Now **Publisher** Sega **Developer** Shiny **Price** £29.99
Players 1 **Web** goldencompassgame.com/en **Also try** Harry Potter & TOOTP

THE GOLDEN COMPASS

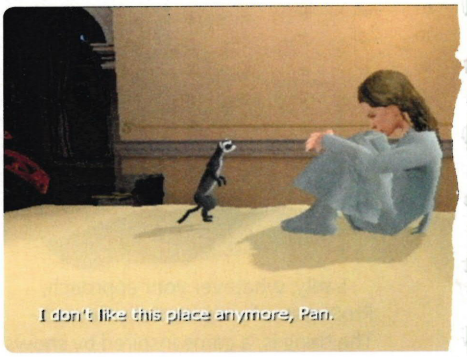
His Dark Materials have not been handled with care

Something is seriously wrong with The Golden Compass game. You see, with 'the game of the movie' you'd expect the plot of the game to follow that of the film, or at the very least, the book on which it was based. But in this case there isn't much cross-over.

Sure the characters are the same, and movie-goers will recognise some of the locations, but the majority of the game takes massive liberties with the franchise and comes up with something that's almost guaranteed to upset everyone.

Now, we're all for games going beyond the narrative of their silver-screen cousins (EA's Lord Of The Rings games did this particularly well), but it feels like The Golden Compass game hasn't treated its source material with a whole heap of respect.

Fans of the film will be a little bewildered by some of the scenes in the game, whereas true, die-hard Pullman-ites will be downright horrified at what Shiny has cooked up in some of the later levels. For example, we don't remember reading about Iorek fighting a tank, or seeing a scene in the film where Lyra wanders around the Gyptian's boat cleaning up seagull guano on deck.



THIS WILL LEAVE YOU COLD LIKE A POLAR BEAR'S GIBLETS

Bear bones plot

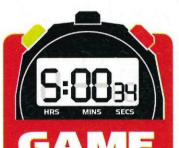
Mercifully, though, anyone who's experienced either film or book will be able to follow the story. Newcomers, on the other hand, will struggle. The game starts at the end, with Lyra roaming the North Pole on Iorek's back, searching for her pal Roger.

There are no introductions to the characters, no mention of the fact that this is an alternative Earth, and no explanation as to why you're charging around in the snow on the back of an armoured polar bear.

The game also forgets to mention anything about Lyra's demon, Pantalaimon, who remains unseen until half way through the level where he randomly chips in with a few comments. Oh dear.

Once you've randomly 'subdued' (this is a PG rated game, kids) a few packs of wolves you're thrust back to

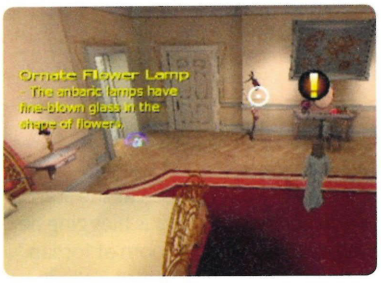
↑ Jordan College is Lyra's home until she gets whisked away on her adventure



GAME CLOCK
Time it took to figure out how the alethiometer actually works

↑ When you play as Iorek, you get the chance to smash up all kinds of animals

Lyra spends her time sneaking around and lying to adults



the start of the timeline, with Lyra creeping around Jordan College, blissfully unaware of the adventures ahead of her. Yeah, it jars a bit.

Then, just to make sure you're nice and confused, the next level takes place in Mrs Coulter's apartment in London with only a handful of short, baffling movie-clips to explain why you're there. Escape from her flat, and you're on the Gyptian's boat sailing for the arctic. That's half the film/book, hastily glossed over in under an hour of gameplay!

Once again, anyone who hasn't seen the movie or read the novel will be left floundering, wondering who the hell Mrs Coulter is, why everyone keeps talking about Gobblers, and why James Bond is hanging out with a

"And if I catch you stealing my sardines again, I'll make you replay the game"

leopard at Oxford University. The game simply doesn't take time to justify itself, and just assumes players will know what's going on.

Pan helps Lyra across the gap

The Subtle Strife

Sadly, The Golden Compass' problems don't stop there, because the gameplay is similarly random. Essentially this is a platform adventure with a handful of mini-games lobbed in to keep things interesting.

Because it's aimed at a younger audience, the gameplay is simplistic to the point of being insulting. That's all well and good if you're a child looking for

THE FORMULA ADVENTURE

As patented by The Golden Compass

01. INNOCENT HEROINE

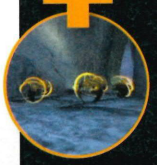
Lyra is thrust into a conflict between divine good and evil after she's caught spying on her uncle Asriel.

02. SHADOWY FORCES

Who the hell are the Magesterium and what is their game? Why do they want to capture Lyra so badly?

03. AWESOME WEAPONS

The alethiometer can answer any question put to it, but only a handful of people can read it. Lyra is one of them.



04. LOADS OF ORBS

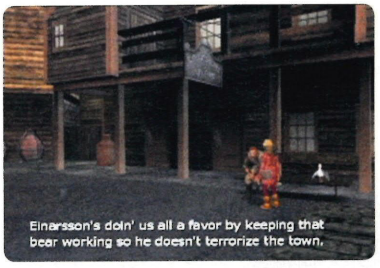
Where would the adventure genre be without lashings of random collectibles? Plenty in this game.

What dark secrets are waiting for our hero in Mrs Coulter's study?

that little something to supplement the film, but if like us you're an adult enchanted by Pullman's excellent trilogy of books, the game will leave you cold like a polar bear's giblets.

Most areas are taken directly from the movie, although there are a handful that never appear in either film or book, and each one has you either solving puzzles as Lyra or smashing skulls as Iorek the bear. Neither requires much skill. The Lyra sections are an uninspiring

↑ You can help out Father Coram by reading the alethiometer



↑ Chatting to random people can be rewarding, but it is a bit of a chore

mix of platforming and conversation mini-games, but they are preferable to Iorek's ham-fisted combat stages that play out like the Kong levels of Peter Jackson's King Kong.

You can swipe, block and throw, but as there's no lock-on feature, you'll find most of your blows carving through thin air instead of enemies.

Lyra's levels are more coherent, and her exploration mechanics work well. Her environments are very evocative of the film, and surprisingly her animations and facial features are some of the most realistic we've seen in any film tie-in.

She can jump, hide, balance on beams, and use Pan's shape shifting abilities to manoeuvre around trickier parts of each stage. However, you'll spend most of your time lying to people and playing odd conversation mini-games to progress, and although it seems like a great idea at the start of the game when Lyra is blagging her way into the reading room at Jordan College, it quickly becomes a chore.

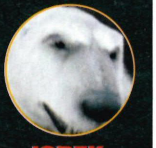
IN ALL THE GOLDEN COMPASS GAME IS A BIT OF A MESS

↓ Lyra can ride around some levels on Iorek's back

CAST LIST

LYRA BELACQUA
Our heroine, Lyra is a special twelve year-old girl.

PANTALAIMON
Pan is Lyra's daemon, a shape-shifting manifestation of her own soul.



IOREK BRYNISON
The rightful king of the armoured bears. He befriends Lyra.

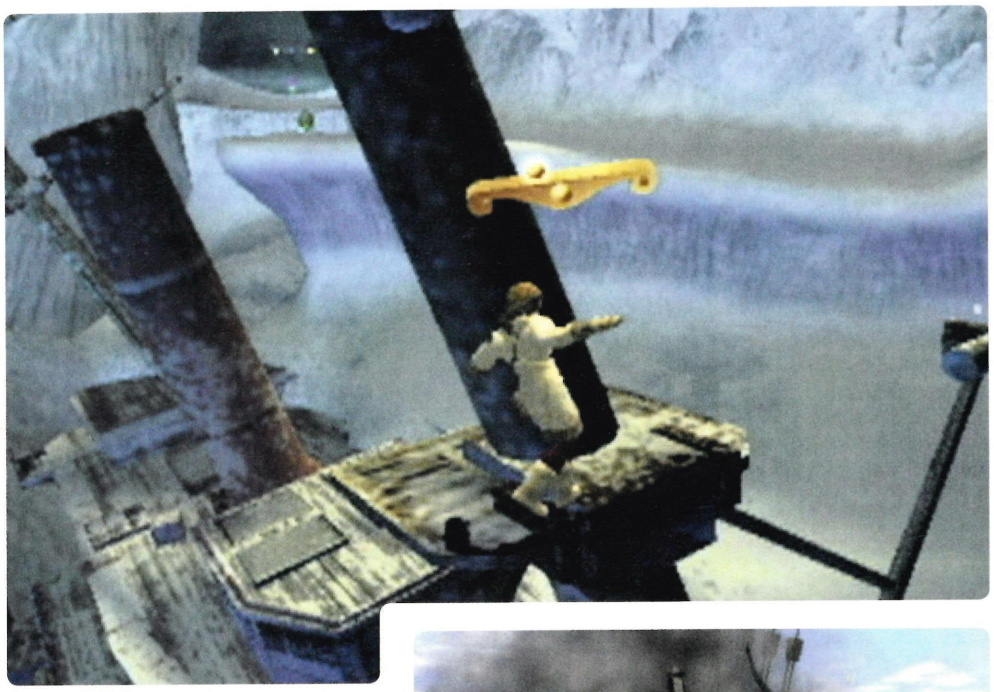
Lyra, liar

The only mini-game that seems to make much sense from a plot perspective takes place when Lyra reads the alethiometer, the film's titular golden compass, which is a device that answers any question.

Throughout the game she calls upon the alethiometer to answer questions that help advance the plot.

To start off, you have to set the hands of the mechanism to ask the right question; so learning what each symbol means is essential. You learn symbol meanings by observing the world around you, which is a great

↑ While on board the Gyptian's ship Lyra takes time to brush up on her geography



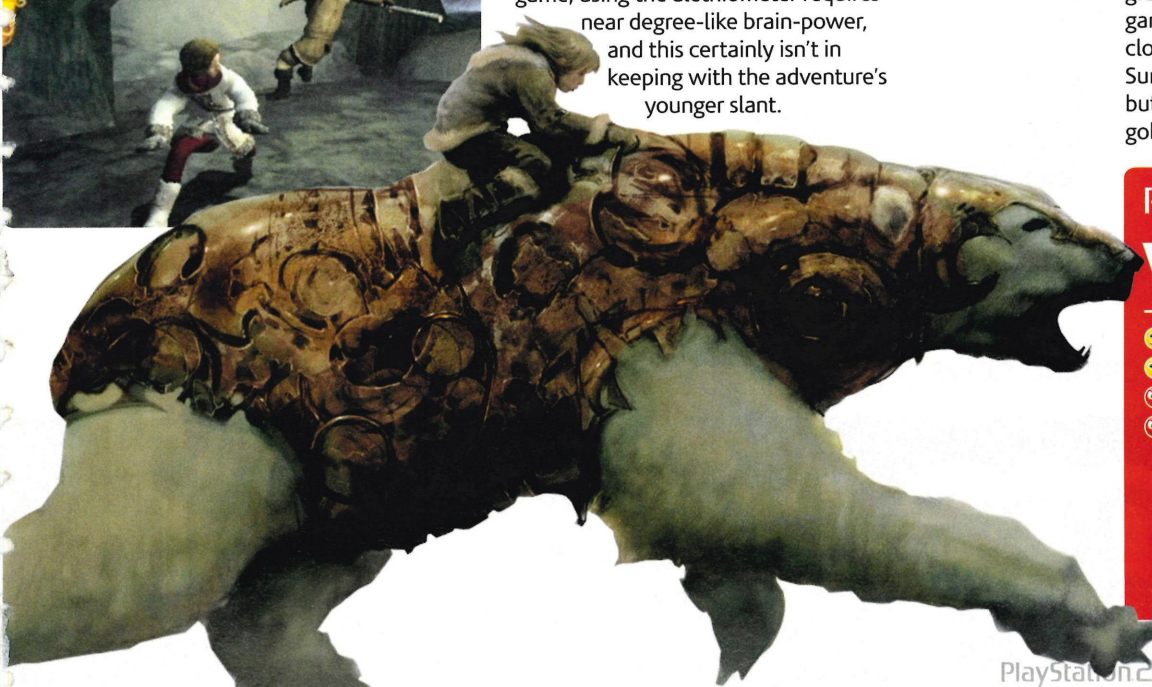
touch – something that is sadly absent from most of the game considering its rich source material.

So, if you see a tree in the game you can look at it, and the game will tell you one of the three meanings of the tree symbol on the alethiometer. Simple. Kind of.

When the hands are set on the device you can then play the mini-game proper, which involves pressing the right button when the fourth hand stops spinning. If this sounds a little complicated, well, that's because it is.

Unlike every other puzzle in the game, using the alethiometer requires near degree-like brain-power, and this certainly isn't in keeping with the adventure's younger slant.

Lyra takes time out to practise her karate skills. Sigh



GREAT ENVIRONS
The environments, despite being a little ropey looking in places, are very close to the film's.

SLICK ANIMATIONS
In terms of animation and facial structure these characters are spot on.

LOVING

HATING

MINI-GAMES
Mini-games are a great way to add variety, but in The Golden Compass they're over-used.

BADSCRAPS
Iorek's combat sections are unresponsive and naff, but sadly, you can't skip 'em.

SWABBING THE DECK
Mindless tasks are no way to extend the lifespan of a short game.

In all, The Golden Compass is a bit of a mess. Its plot jumps around like a grasshopper on happy pills, the gameplay is messy, and it doesn't stick closely enough to the source material. Sure, it looks and sounds like the film, but there's certainly little that's golden about this game. **Andy Hartup**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- Great voice acting and likenesses
- Some interesting gameplay ideas
- Massively confusing plot
- Stale, repetitive gameplay

Not a disaster, but sorely lacking in polish. It is riddled with problems and takes too many liberties with the franchise

6

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the most dangerous people in the games industry

and one of them is your girlfriend

The 10 worst game characters ever!

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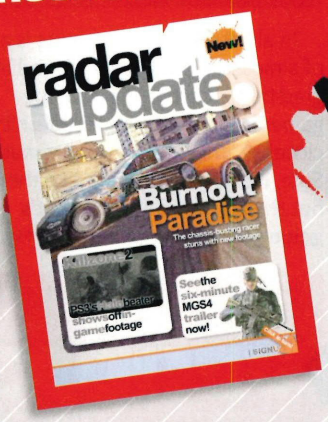

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HALL OF FAME

PS2'S 100 GREATEST ◎ BEST GAMES EVER ⊗ CLASSICS ▣ HISTORY

WELCOME TO THE OPS2 HALL OF FAME

The nature of art. Not a typical subject to find discussed in a games magazine, sure. But if you consider art to be any human-made media that elicits an emotional response, Shadow of the Colossus has to be one of the greatest artistic achievements in gaming. It also happens to be my favourite PS2 game.

Colossal achievement

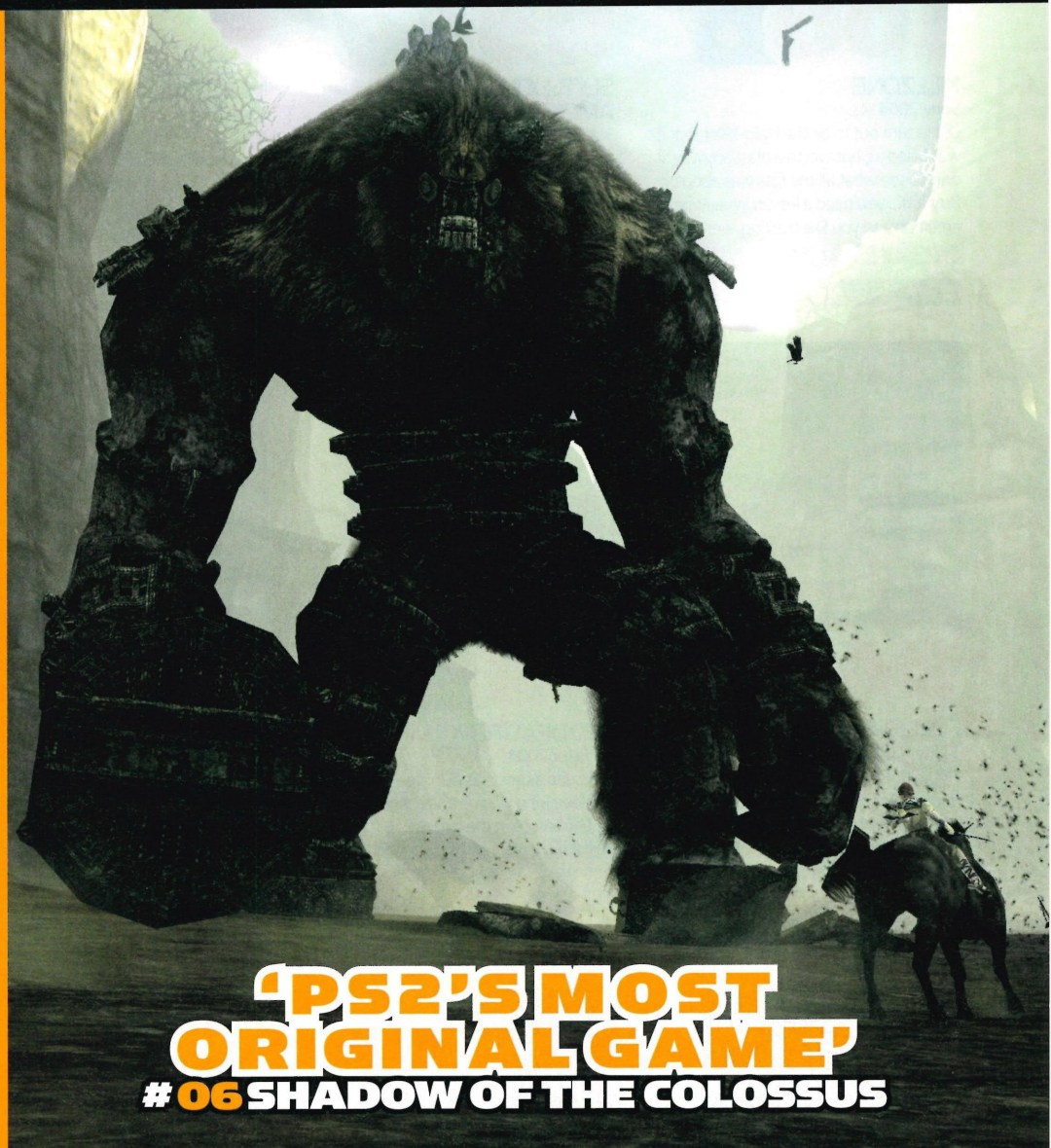
Boy meets girl. Girl croaks it. Boy is tasked by an elder god with killing 16 colossi in order to revive his love.

That's all the story you'll get for the first third of the game, but no matter: the true stars are the colossi.

They're huge. Like, Godzilla huge. Except you're not playing as Godzilla – you're the hopelessly outsized kid at their feet, and must awkwardly shimmy atop these brutes in the hope of uncovering and exploiting each one's weak point.

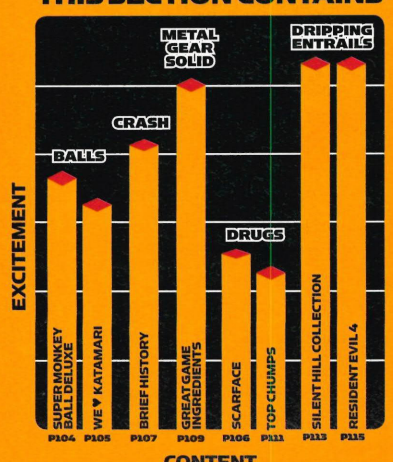
Shadow of the Colossus is undoubtedly a masterpiece. But unlike most masterpieces, this is one you can afford to buy.

MIKE STERRY
STAFF WRITER
msterryfuturenet.co.uk



'PS2'S MOST ORIGINAL GAME'
#06 SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

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.

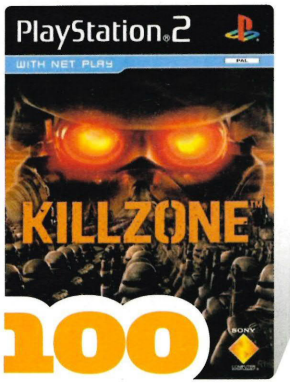
WE USE OLD REVIEW SCORES

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.

OPS2 HALL OF FAME



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

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES

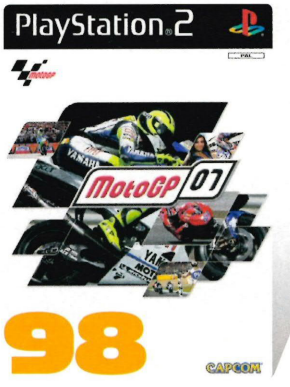
Sony, 2005 Platformer

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



98

MOTO GP 07

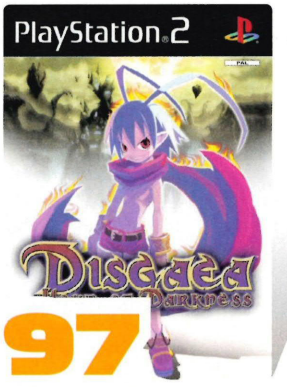
Sony, 2007 Racing

A superbike sim that's as accessible as it is technically impressive. Truly brings the sport to life for fans and newcomers.

Buy it if... you want unsurpassed racing realism with all the names and licences.

OPS2 #91 8/10

PLAYED IT OWN IT



97

DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS

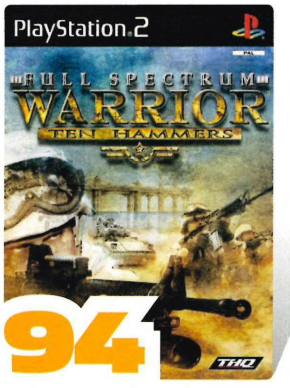
KOEI, 2004 RPG

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

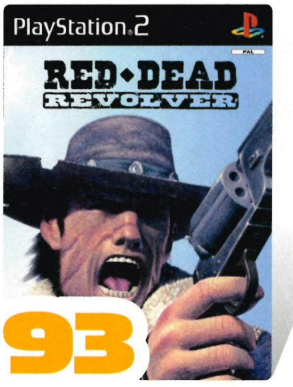
THQ, 2006 Tactical shooter

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

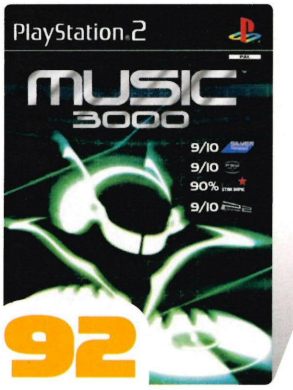
Rockstar, 2004 Adventure

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

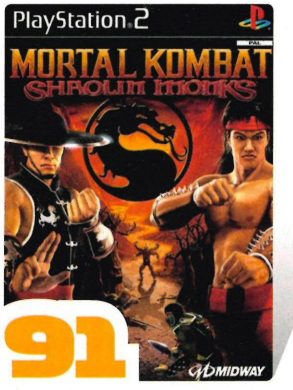
Jester Interactive, 2003 Music

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

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS

Midway, 2005 Fighting

A fast-paced beat-'em-up with loads of colour, class and claret.

Buy it if... your first words as an infant were: "Finish him!"

OPS2 #65 8/10

PLAYED IT OWN IT

88

SECOND SIGHT

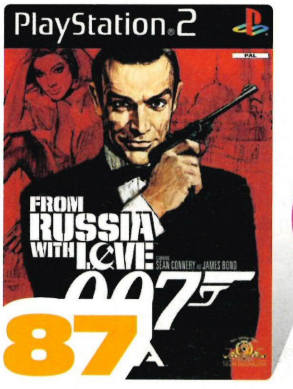
Codemasters, 2004 Adventure

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



87

JAMES BOND 007: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

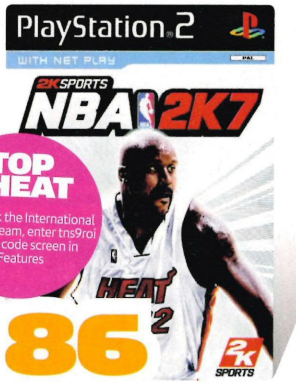
EA, 2005 Action

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

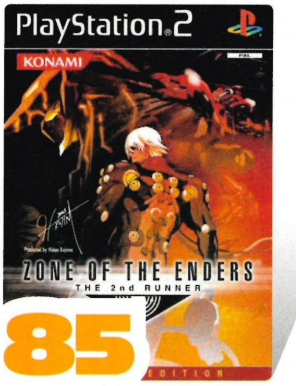
2K Sports, 2006 Sport

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

TOP FACT
Wallace is voiced by 86-year-old actor Peter 'Last of the Summer Wine' Sallis

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.

OPS2 #65 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

95

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS

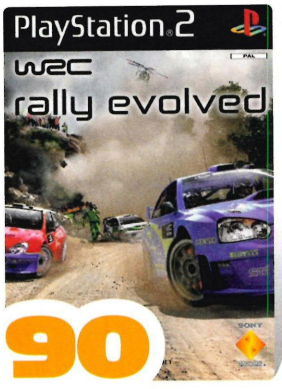
Sony, 2004 Shooter

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.

OPS2 #43 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT



90

WRC RALLY EVOLVED

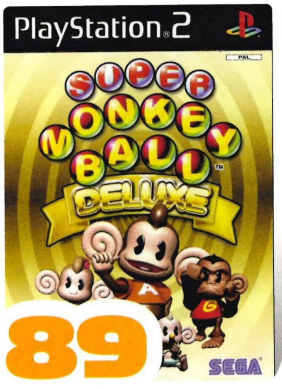
Sony, 2005 Racing

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.

OPS2 #65 **9/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT



89

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE

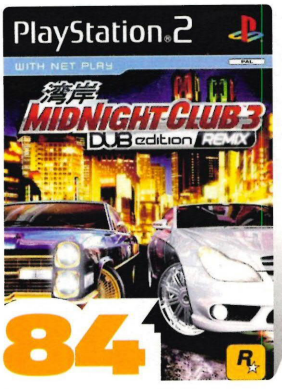
Sega, 2005 Puzzle

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.

OPS2 #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.

OPS2 #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.

OPS2 #87 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

SECRETS ARCHIVE

Digging up the hidden extras and bonus items from PS2's greatest games...

EARLY ZODIAC SPEAR

FINAL FANTASY XII

To get this super-weapon in the game early you need to avoid opening: the treasure chest in Lowtown, outside Old Dalan's place; the two chests in the southeast corner of the cellar in Rabanastre Palace; all chests in the dungeon's Confiscatory and the 16 chests on the island in the Phon Coast. You'll then find the spear in a chest at the Necrohol of Nabudis.

GET WOOD!

TEKKEN 5

Do Mokujin's sound effects leave you feeling a little... hollow? Well, just hold down on the analogue stick before a match in which you're playing as him, and he'll sound like a block of wood when he gets hits.

BIG HEADS!

KILLZONE

Everyone loves a big head cheat. And if any game could use the gentle levity produced by baddies with oversized bonces, it's Killzone. Hold L1 on any menu and press ◎, ▢, ✕, ◎, ◎ to get them.

SHOW US YOUR EASTER EGGS!
Email your game tips to psnation@futurenet.co.uk

SCENE STEALER

Brain-melting intro movie

We ♥ Katamari
EA, 2006

It's like diving into a pool of Technicolor jelly babies while they all sing Sinatra. Backed by Shigeru Matsuzaki's sublime swing tune, the intro for We ♥ Katamari is full of pirouetting red pandas, rainbows and giant men made of stars. Is this where Teletubbies go when they die?

OPS2 HALL OF FAME

82

RATCHET & CLANK

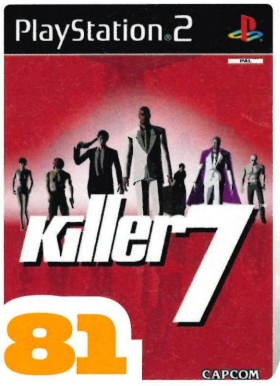
Sony, 2002 Platformer

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

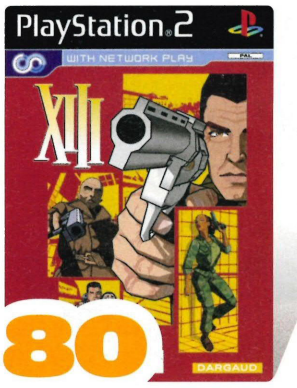
Capcom, 2005 Action

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

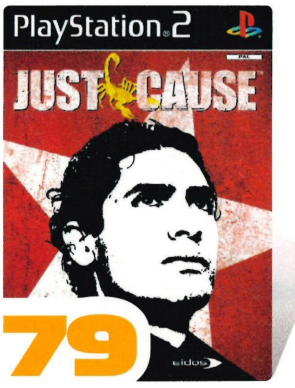
Ubisoft, 2004 Shooter

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

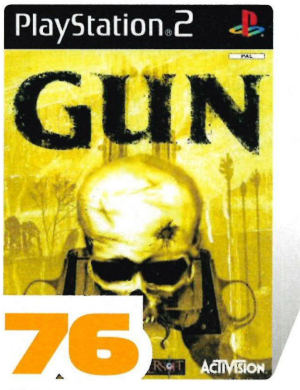
Eidos, 2006 Action

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

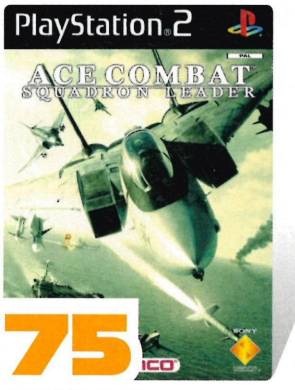
Activision, 2005 Shooter

Gun-totin', horse-ridin', baccy-chewin', poker-playin', free-roamin' Wild West action with a classic cowboys'n'injuns 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

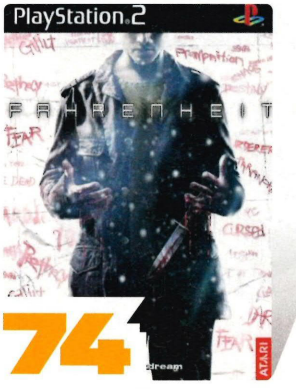
Sony, 2005 Shooter

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

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.

OPS2 #64 8/10

PLAYED IT OWN IT

73

THE THING

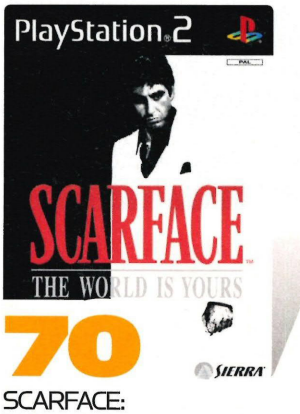
Konami, 2002 Horror

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



70

SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS

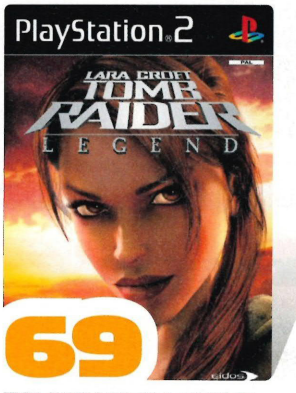
Vivendi, 2006 Action

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

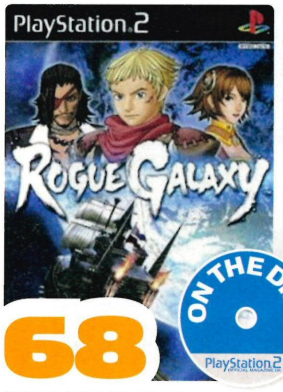
Eidos, 2006 Adventure

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

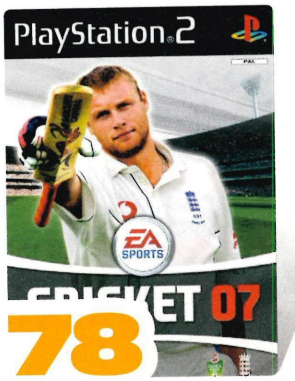
Capcom, 2004 Fighting

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



CRICKET 07

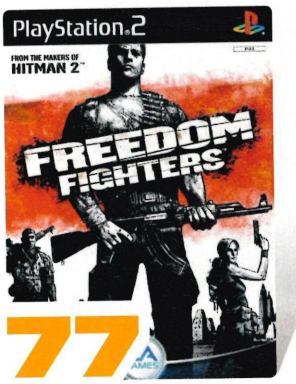
EA, 2006 Sport

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.

OPS2 #80 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT



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.

OPS2 #37 **9/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

AMPLITUDE

Sony, 2003 Music

Vastly under-rated rhythm action: peform, 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.

OPS2 #38 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

TOP FACT

Julius Caesar is voiced by Michael Ball, best known as Raziel from the Legacy of Kain series.

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.

OPS2 #56 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

BUZZ! THE MEGA QUIZ

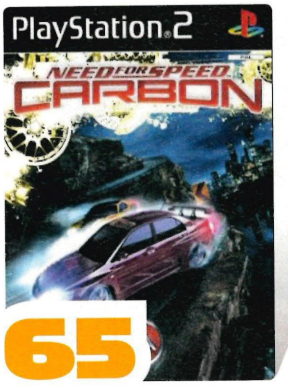
Sony, 2007 Party

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.

OPS2 #84 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT



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.

OPS2 #79 **8/10**

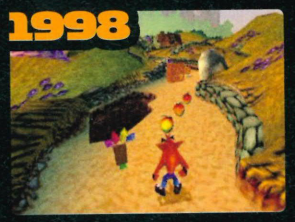
PLAYED IT OWN IT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF... CRASH BANDICOOT

He's as old as the PlayStation brand itself, don't you know

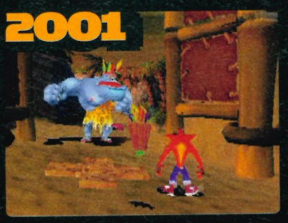
CRASH BANDICOOT

This is where it all began but it was hardly Crash's finest hour. It hasn't dated well, particularly its punishing 'die-too-many-times-and-it's-back-to-the-beginning-of-the-game' thing.



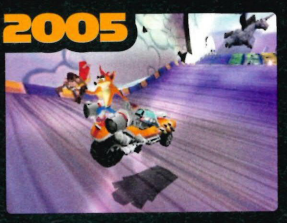
CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED

Easily the best of Crash's PS1 outings, Warped was the last platformer to be developed by series' handlers Naughty Dog. Bonus fact: The Japanese version was rechristened Crash Bandicoot 3: Flying! Globe-Trotting!



CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX

Crash's move over to PS2 introduced drivable vehicles and Crash's adopted sister, Coco, as a playable character.



CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

The third game in Crash's kart racing spin-off series, Tag Team Racing had platforming sections and Mario Kart Double Dash-style two-player control. But character changes and a thin plot angered hardcore fans.

CRASH OF THE TITANS

A return to the platforming genius of his late PS1 games, Titans relies heavily upon a beast-riding mechanic that is more than just a gimmick. It is also the first genuinely funny Crash Bandicoot game.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM

Manhunt Piggsy statuette

Come on, who doesn't want a vinyl statuette of a fat serial murderer in a homemade pork-mask? As mantlepiece talking-points go, it beats the hell out of a Charles and Di commemorative plate. Only 500 were made and if you want one for yourself you should expect to pay £50 or more.

RARITY VALUE

PORKY SCRATCHINGS — MANHUNT 2 UK RELEASES

OPS2 HALL OF FAME

64

QUAKE III REVOLUTION

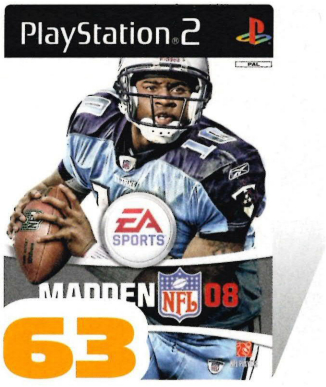
EA, 2001 Shooter

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

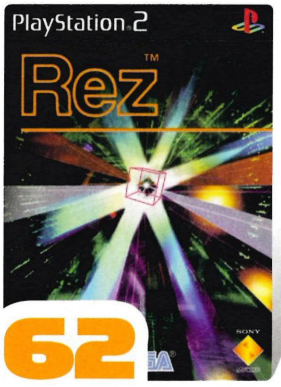
EA, 2007 Sport

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

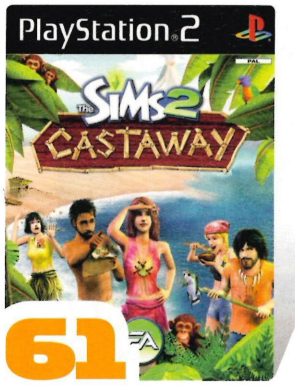
Sega, 2002 Shooter

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

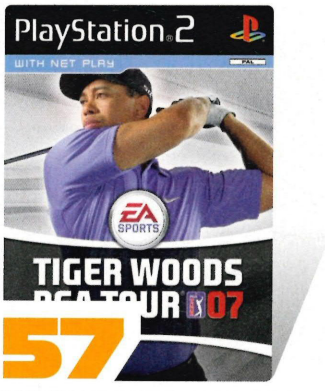
Sega, 2005 Action

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

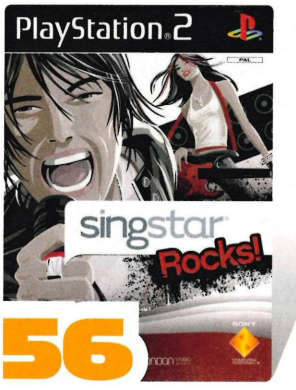
EA, 2007 Sport

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!

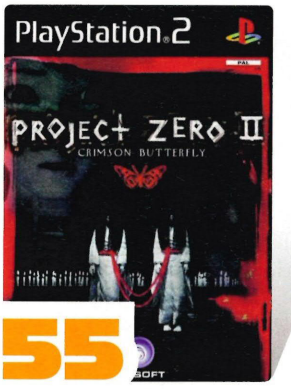
Sony, 2006 Karaoke

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

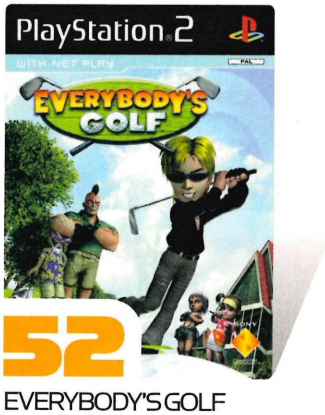
Ubisoft, 2004 Horror

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

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

51

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

50

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II

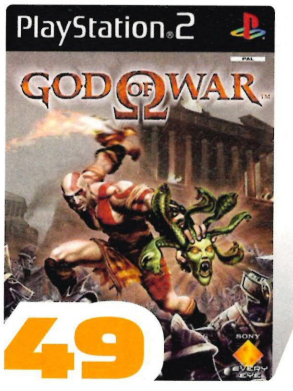
Activision, 2005 Shooter

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



49

GOD OF WAR

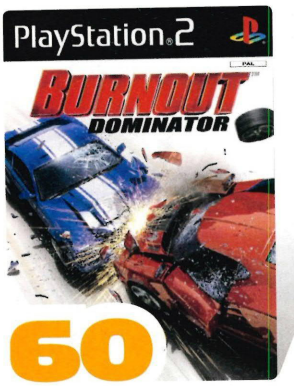
Sony, 2005 Action

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.

OPS2 #60 9/10

☐ 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.

OPS2 #83 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

59

EYETOY PLAY 2

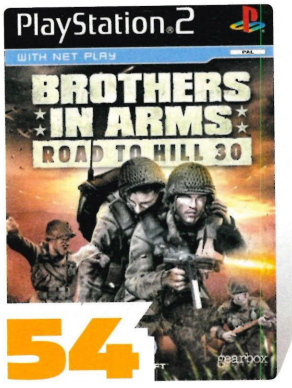
Sony, 2004 Party

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



54

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30

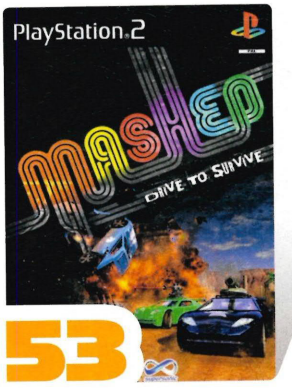
Ubisoft, 2005 Shooter

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.

OPS2 #58 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT



53

MASHED

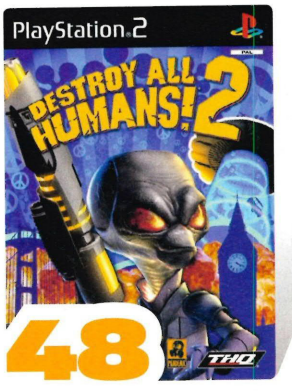
Empire, 2004 Racing

Birds-eye view driving with weapons that just screams to be played with three mates via multitap. 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



48

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2

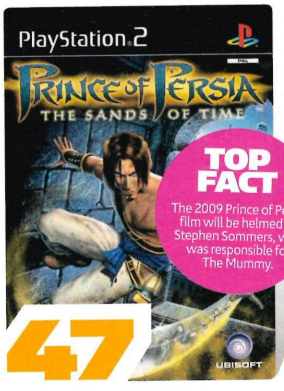
THQ, 2006 Action

B-movie-inspired shooter that puts you in an alien's spacesuit, hands you an anal probe and lets you take revenge on humankind for all the ET-blasting games.

Buy it if... you hate the human race.

OPS2 #78 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT



47

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME

Ubisoft, 2003 Adventure

This slick remake of the classic platformer introduced us to both the wall run and the ability to rewind time. And neat beards.

Buy it if... you've a good sense of balance.

OPS2 #40 **8/10**

PLAYED IT OWN IT

GREAT GAME INGREDIENTS

THE METAL GEAR SOLID

What gives this game its universal appeal?

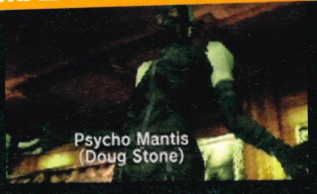
A MAN NAMED SNAKE

Liquid, Solid or Naked – it wouldn't be a Metal Gear Solid without a Snake sneaking around. Sure, he smokes like a refinery and snaps men's necks while they're at the urinal but admit it: secretly you wish he was your dad.

ABSURDITY

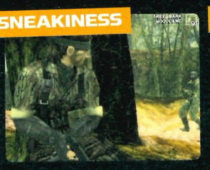
Naked somersaults; guards with irritable bowels; cola-huffing, diaper-wearing monkeys: this game is totally off its rocker.

MADCAP BOSS FIGHTS



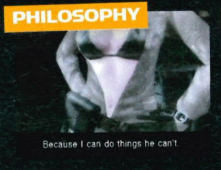
Psycho Mantis, The Shagohod, Vamp, The End, Revolver Ocelot: names that ring loud throughout the history of videogame bosses.

SNEAKINESS



With all the madness in MGS, it's easy to forget that they're actually all about corpse-hiding.

PHILOSOPHY



Discourses on the nature of identity mean MGS is often more Plato than John Woo.

MEGA MECHA

Ah, the titular Metal Gears. They could totally have Optimus Prime, we reckon.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT MGS?
Send us your memories: psnation@futurenet.co.uk

TOP 10

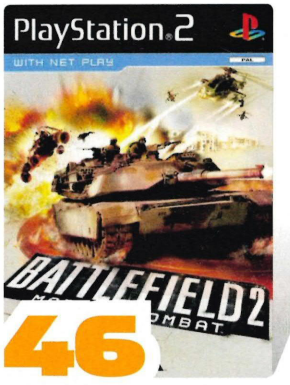
Hardest PS2 games

10	Shadow of Rome
9	Guitar Hero II
8	Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria
7	Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution
6	Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening
5	Gradius V
4	Shinobi
3	Viewtiful Joe
2	Stuntman

#01

MDK2 Armageddon

Hard as a titanium and concrete sarnie



BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

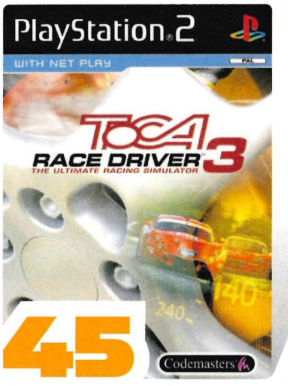
EA, 2005 Shooter

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



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

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

DEUS EX

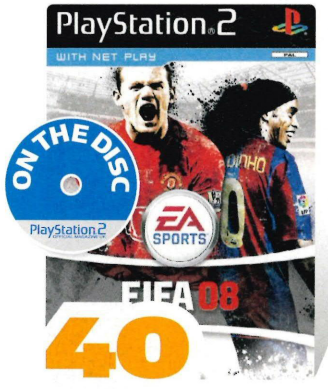
Eidos, 2002 RPG

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



FIFA 08

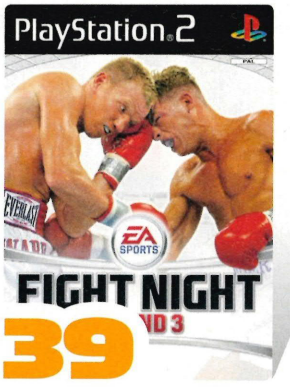
EA, 2007 Sport

The best season yet for the veteran footie 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



FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

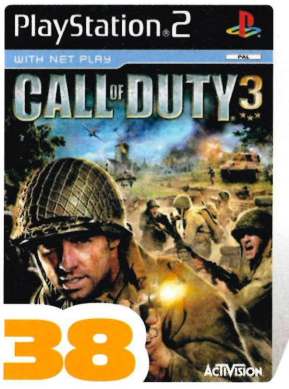
EA, 2006 Sport

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



CALL OF DUTY 3

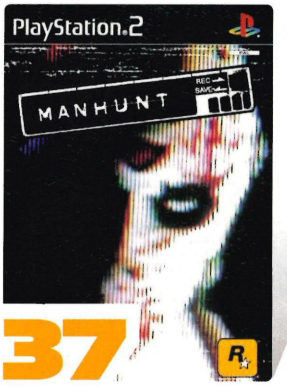
Activision, 2006 Shooter

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



MANHUNT

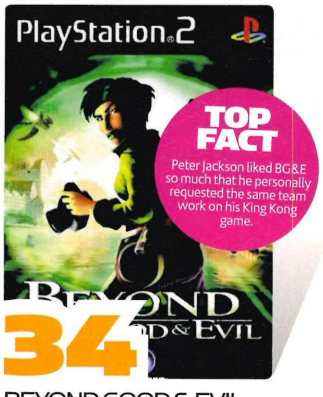
Rockstar, 2004 Stealth

The grisliest game ever to find its way onto PS2, this sinister stealther 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



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

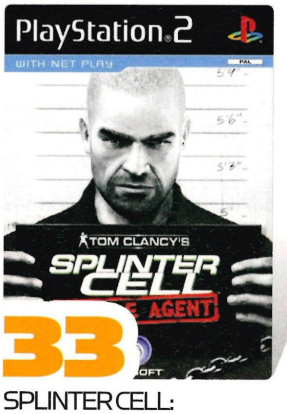
Ubisoft, 2003 Adventure

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



SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT

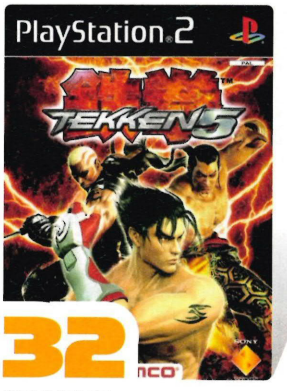
Ubisoft, 2006 Stealth

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



TEKKEN 5

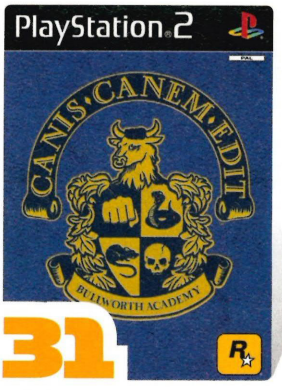
Sony, 2005 Fighting

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



CANIS CANEM EDIT

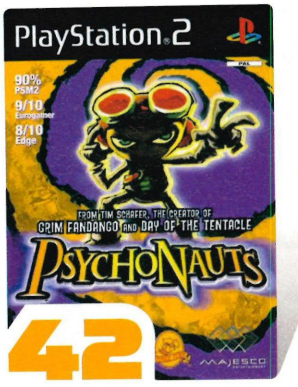
Rockstar, 2006 Action

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



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

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

DRAGON QUEST VIII: JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING

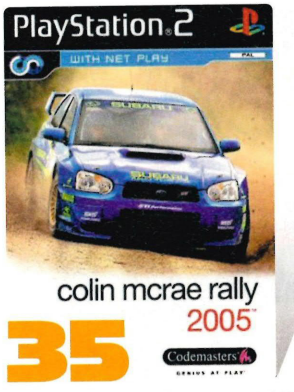
Square Enix, 2006 RPG

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



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005

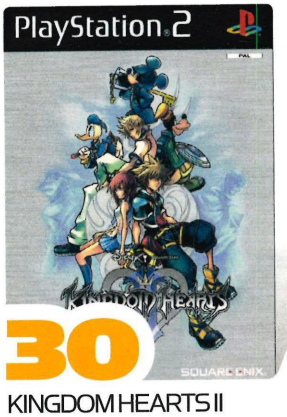
Codemasters, 2004 Racing

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-slider on the market.

Buy it if... you live life close to the hedge.

OPS2 #51 **9/10**

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT



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

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

Mike Sterry straps on his bandolier and plots a daring raid into the FPS genre

WEEK 01

EASY

CALL OF DUTY 3

Ten-hut recruits! Look at you lot: greener than a frog's backside. I bet you can't even fire and strafe. You're going to die so fast, I won't bother asking your names. Basic training with Call of Duty 3: Fall in!

■ COMPLETE IT ON MEDIUM
■ MUST SEE THE LAST STAND OF THE POLISH 1ST ARMOURED DIVISION

WEEK 02

MEDIUM

KILLZONE

Alright, scum, you've namby-pambied your way through a bit of singleplayer, but real grit comes from multiplayer, so we're putting you up against the 'bots of Killzone's excellent Battlefields mode.

■ WIN A 14-BOT BATTLEFIELDS DEATHMATCH
■ MUST SEE THE TRENCH WARFARE OF THE OPENING LEVEL

WEEK 03

HARD

BLACK

Think you've seen war? You've not seen war until you've chewed a bullet out of a buddy's arm and sew the wound up with mud. War is hell. War is Black. No multiplayer, but you'll still die like a dog.

■ COMPLETE IT ON HARD
■ MUST SEE THE ASYLUM LEVEL

WEEK 04

KILLER

TIMESPLITTERS 2

This is it, soldier, this is everything you've trained for. Think you can hack it out there in a four-player Timesplitters 2 match? You'd better learn to grunt, or we'll be mailing you home in a bin-liner.

■ GET 15 KILLS IN A ROW IN FOUR-PLAYER, SIX-BOT MULTIPLAYER
■ ALSO GET PLATINUM IN THE 'BRICKING IT' CHALLENGE

TOP CHUMPS

Ken Rosenberg

Cocaine's a hell of a drug

Based on Sean Penn's neurotic lawyer in the film *Carlito's Way*, Ken Rosenberg is a bumbling mob lawyer who's assigned to Tommy Vercetti. But Vercetti's success in the cocaine business leads Rosenburg to develop a nasty habit, and he's found years later in San Andreas, penniless, paranoid and burned-out. As he says: "I couldn't intimidate a child – and believe me, I've tried!"

See him in Grand Theft Auto: Vice City (2002)

OPS2 HALL OF FAME

28

ONIMUSHA 3

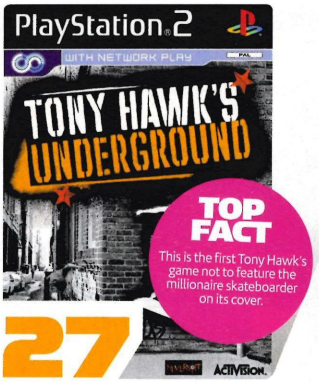
Capcom, 2004 Action

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

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

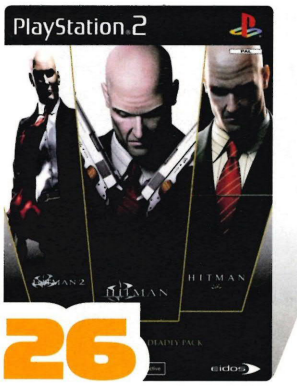
Activision, 2003 Sport

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



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

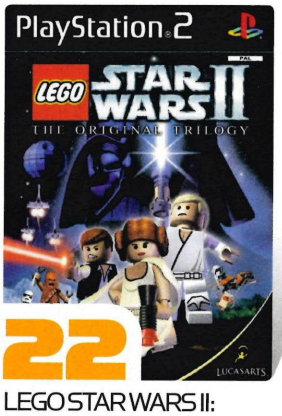
Activision, 2005 Action

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



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

21

WE ♥ KATAMARI

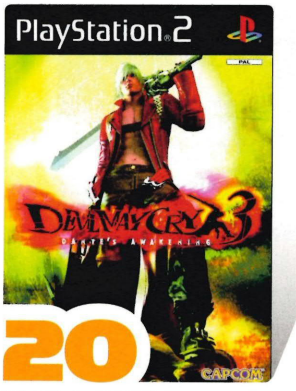
EA, 2006 Puzzle

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

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.

OPS2 #40 **9/10**

☐ PLAYED IT ☐ OWN IT

16

TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

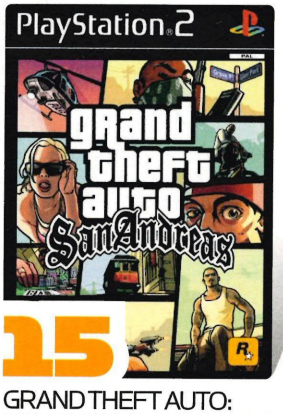
Eidos, 2007 Adventure

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

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

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

13

GRAN TURISMO 4

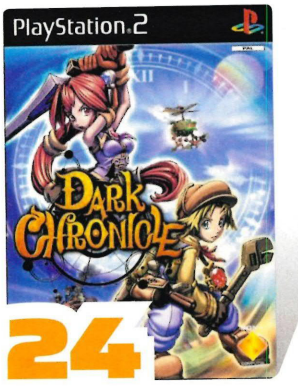
Sony, 2005 Racing

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



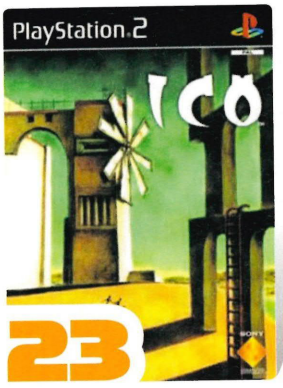
DARK CHRONICLE
Sony, 2002 RPG

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



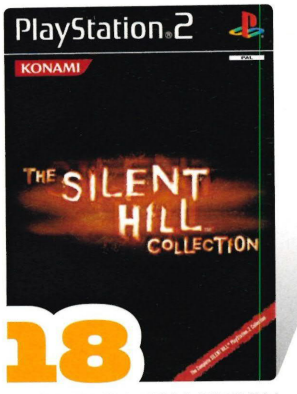
ICO
Sony, 2002 Adventure

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



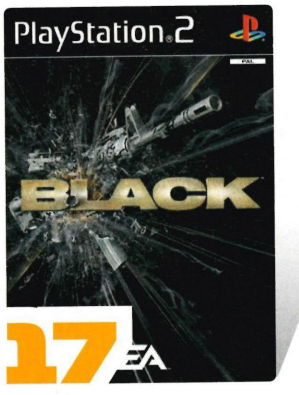
SILENT HILL COLLECTION
Konami, 2006 Horror

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



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

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

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

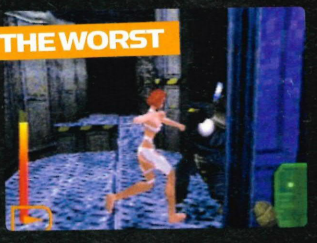
PLAYED IT OWN IT

THE YEAR IN PLAYSTATION 1998

The year Bill Clinton lost his cigar and the PS1 reached the height of its power

GRAN TURISMO
Sony, Racing

Effectively, the birth of console racing, GT introduced detailed tuning options, super-realistic handling and a huge garage of cars.

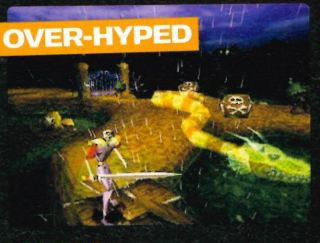


THE FIFTH ELEMENT
Activision, Action

A film tie-in so dire that most gamers have wiped their minds of it. Basically, take Tomb Raider and remove all the fun and coherence.

PARASITE EVE
Square, RPG

An RPG set in a modern, real-world setting, telling the story of what would happen if our own cells' mitochondria went mad.



MEDIEVIL
Sony, Adventure

The PS1 never had a Mario 64-killer. Some people thought it was this: an okay platformer with RPG bits and an undead knight with one eye.

THEME HOSPITAL
EA, God sim

Micromanage a hospital like no other, treating cases of Bloaty Head, Slack Tongue and The Squits. Funny and challenging in equal measure.

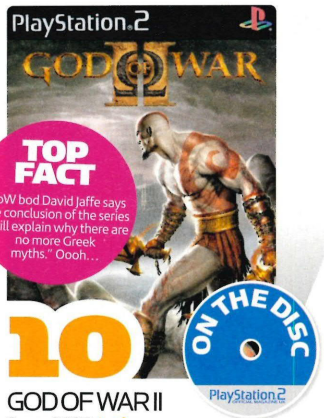
ASTEROIDS
Activision, Retro

Games that can be explained in one sentence don't need to be remade. Shinier graphics can't disguise bazillion-year-old gameplay.

TOP 100 STATS

Top 100 titles we own

Which OPS2 staffer has the best collection?



10 GOD OF WAR II

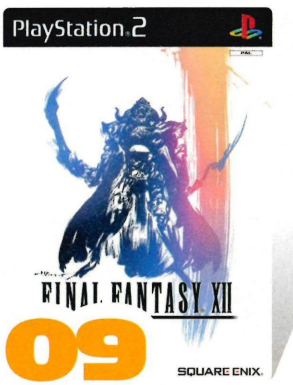
Sony, 2007 Action

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

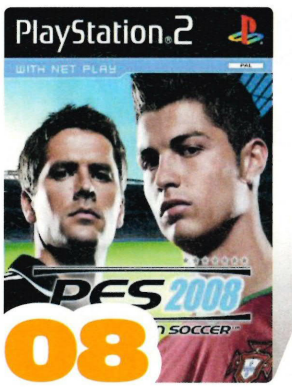
Square Enix, 2007 RPG

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



08 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008

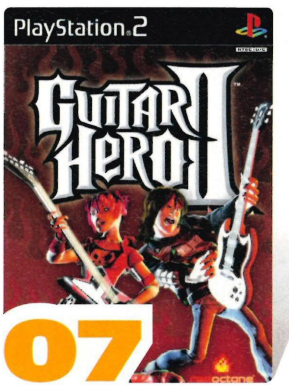
Konami, 2006 Sport

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 II

Activision, 2006 Music

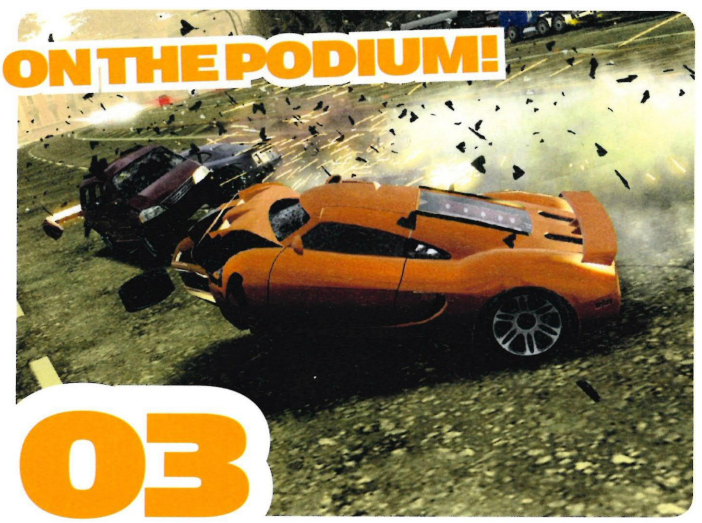
Simple to play but very rewarding, this axe-wielding rhythm-action title brings out the rock god in anyone and everyone.

Buy it if... you're a legend in your own living room.

OPS2 #80 8/10

☐ PLAYED IT ☐ OWN IT

04



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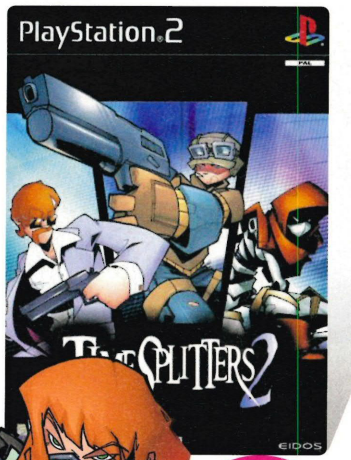
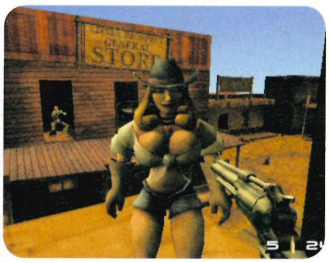




TIMESPLITTERS 2

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.

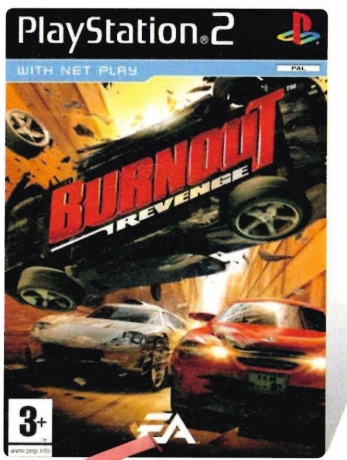
Buy it if... you have friends.

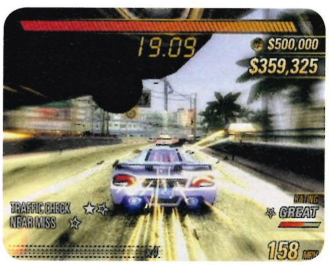
OPS2 #25 10/10

☐ PLAYED IT ☐ OWN IT

TOP CHEAT

To unlock Big Ears mode, complete Escape from Neo Tokyo with a Gold or Silver medal.





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

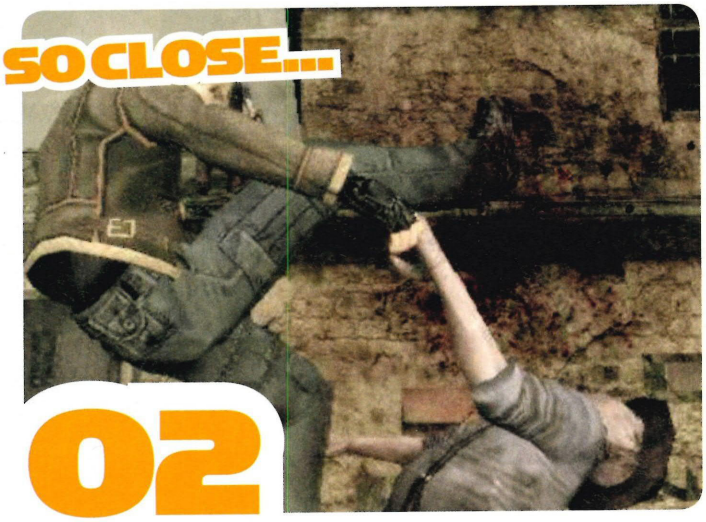
Konami, 2005 Stealth shooter

The finest blend of sneakery 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



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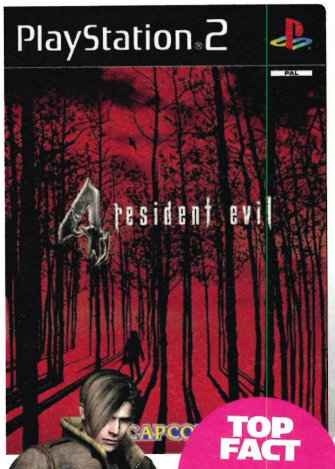


RESIDENT EVIL 4

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.

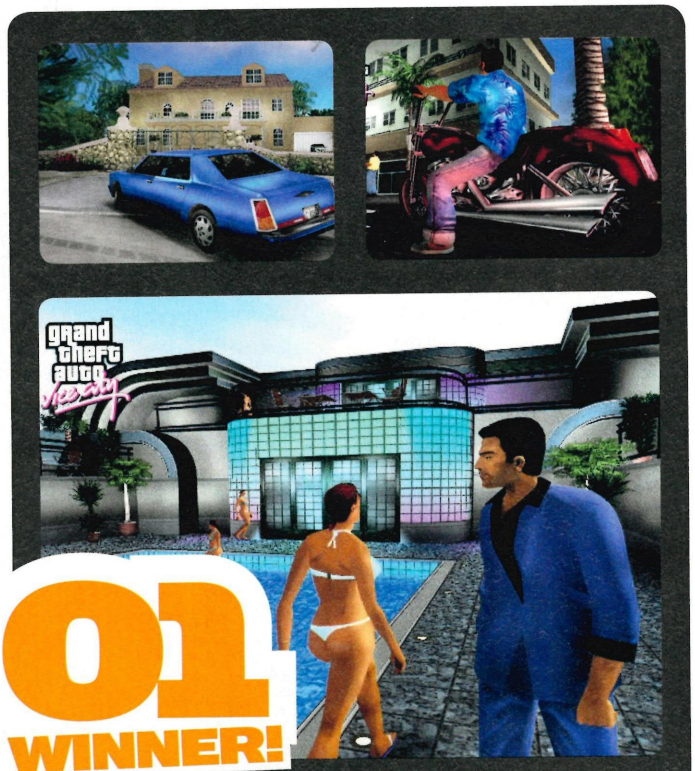
Buy it if... your veins contain blood.

OPS2 #65 10/10

■ PLAYED IT ■ OWN IT

TOP FACT

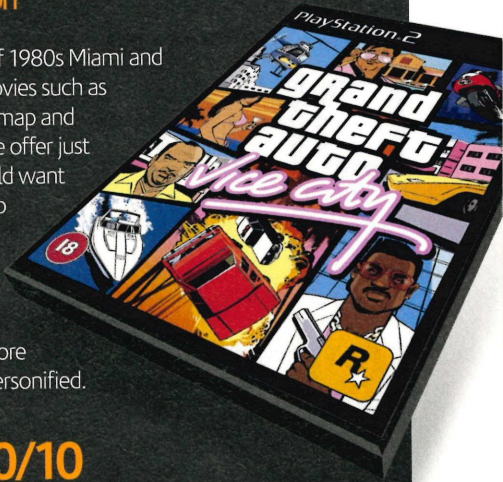
Development for Resi 4 started as early as 1998, and that game would eventually become the first Devil May Cry title.



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

HALL OF FAME FEEDBACK FORM

OI! 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

EVEN BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

One of PS2's best games is set to create the same joy on PS3 in **Devil May Cry 4**

PUB Capcom DEV Capcom ETA Feb WEB devilmaycry.com

"Watch this," says Hiroyuki Kobayashi, producer of Devil May Cry 3 and now 4, as he makes flamboyant demon-killer Dante pull out... a briefcase? Wait. There's more to it.

Disassembling like a Transformer, the case turns into a minigun. Then a razor-sharp boomerang. Then a laser cannon. Then a rocket-launcher and finally a smart bomb that destroys everything on screen. "It's called Pandora's box," says Kobayashi, as the device resumes its default shape and Dante kicks it back into his hand. Cool.

Director Hideaki Itsuno promises DMC4 will feature more weapons, manoeuvres, enemies, locations, music and cutscenes than all the previous games combined, and he's cherry-picked elements that fans love.

DMC3's Lady is back, along with her gigantic rocket launcher, although she's a bit older this time out.

Devil may die

The third game's impossible fight choreography also returns, highlighted by new girl Gloria's pole-dance moves.

DMC3 was infamously difficult, but Kobayashi promises that this time the learning curve "will be easier".

There's nothing really new here, despite young pretender Nero, who you play as for the first half.

But the enemies are huge, the characters sexy and the swordplay dizzying. And the weapons? Dante pulls out Pandora's Box once more.

This time it transforms into a mobile, flying missile battery that he can float around in, firing out 20 fist-sized rockets at a time. Stupid? Very. But cool. Very cool.

↑ New kid (and Dante lookalike) Nero is your main man for the game's first half

↑ The series, known for its sexy looks, really comes into its own on PS3

SOUL SURVIVOR

The standards stay high as **Soul Calibur IV** adds new characters without losing any of the things that make the series great

PUB Namco DEV Project Soul ETA 2008 WEB namcobandaigames.com

So there's these fighters, right, and they're all trying to find the evil Soul Edge sword. It's currently in the hands of Nightmare, a demonic knight who travels about hoovering up souls.

Meanwhile, the Soul Calibur – a sword created to counter the Soul Edge – is wielded by Siegfried, a strapping knight who, erm, used to be Nightmare, but now definitely isn't.

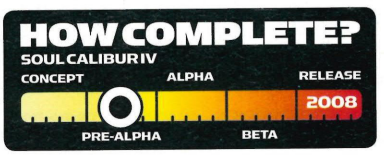
↑ Old friends and enemies are back with new looks

Sword have mercy

Erm… okay, forget the plot. Here's why you need to care about Soul Calibur IV. First, it's pretty like a Pacific sunset, thanks to fancy lighting and breakable scenery. More importantly, the movement system allows you to circle your opponent, ducking in with graceful combos, rather than being locked to the horizontal axis.

← Unlike other games, Soul Calibur allows circular fighting

With online confirmed, our only worry is that last time around Mitsurugi's balance was off. If that gets sorted, our love will be complete.



PS3 TOP 5 CHARTS

The UK's best-selling titles – and that's official!

01 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008
Publisher Konami
OPS2 Score 8/10

02 FIFA 08
Publisher EA
OPS2 Score Not reviewed

03 MOTORSTORM
Publisher Sony
OPS2 Score 8/10

04 HEAVENLY SWORD
Publisher Sony
OPS2 Score 7/10

05 RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN
Publisher Sony
OPS2 Score 7/10

HOUSE OF HORROR

Condemned 2: Bloodshot puts the 'ewww' in 'part two'

PUB Sega DEV Monolith Productions ETA 2008 WEB sega-europe.com

Survival horror sequel Condemned 2 is not only awesomely unpleasant, its first-person view forces you to confront the horror up real close and personal.

When it's not trying to make you cry with glistening mucus beasts and worse, it keeps the 'oh God, no' going with its gruesome forensic techniques, as damaged hero Ethan Thomas uses the tools of the trade to unravel a trail of gut-spilling carnage.

But this isn't just a private investigation. It's the former star detective's final chance to salvage sanity from the encroaching madness that's dogged him for years and turned him into a boozing loser.

↑ If only we all could look this good first thing in the morning

Way of the fist

While CSI science will be on tap to guide Ethan, the game itself is played out in terrifying visions and violent confrontations. Guns are a rare commodity, forcing Ethan to rely on his fists to defeat enemies in frenzied melee scuffles.

You can improve your chances of coming out of this desperate combat alive with improvised weapons – pipes or tire irons for example – or by equipping extras such as brass knuckles or steel-toed boots.

↑ There may be a little violence involved in this game. We're not certain, though

Then, when you've beaten down your opponent, you can see them off with one of around 40 vicious finishing moves.

Our favourite so far is the punishing yet satisfying 'clonk' sound created by bouncing a bad guy's head off a porcelain toilet bowl.

Release 7 December **Publisher** Sony **Developer** Naughty Dog **Price** £44.99
Players 1 **Web** tinyurl.com/2brf7b **Also try** Ninja Gaiden Sigma

UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

...is Tomb Raider for real men

Uncharted is a grower. It starts with a dense tutorial that feels rushed, firing off a clumsy burst of plot info before abruptly moving on to a pirate attack and hasty aeroplane escape.

Meanwhile, Nathan Drake himself seems like a punchably smug catalogue-model type.

But Uncharted and Nathan Drake make good on these clumsy first impressions and go on to provide an incredibly assured adventure – vibrant, action-packed, romantic, light-hearted and wholesome.

The story is meaty, boy's-own stuff, the sense of mystery and adventure is vivid and Drake turns out to have an endearingly self-effacing attitude.

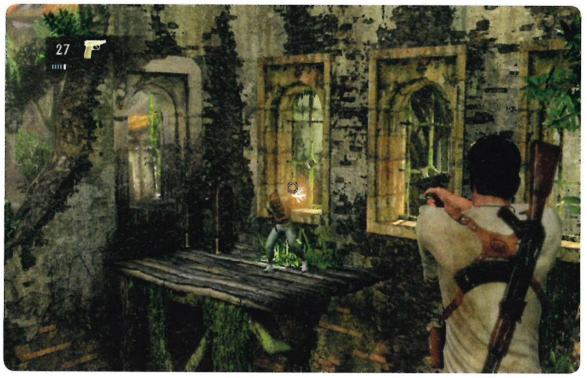
Maze in heaven

The big question before release was how similar Uncharted would be to Tomb Raider. Well, Drake's acrobatics are nearly identical to those of his curvier counterpart. He leaps gaps, shimmies along ledges, scrambles up ropes – and in ruins and dusty mazes.

What stops Uncharted from being just another Tomb Raider-raider is the balance of clambering versus gunplay.

Lara's shooting has always been weak, but Drake has a much deeper, more accomplished fighting mechanic at his disposal with an intuitive cover-and-fire system.

But he does much less puzzling than Lara. There are only a handful of genuine brain-benders, and they would rank among Lara's gentler tasks.



There's a real sense of mystery and adventure in a thrilling story

Drake that and party

This game's mechanics are accomplished rather than innovative, but it delivers big on narrative involvement, colourful characters and huge set-pieces. A winner.

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- Really feels like a big adventure
- Intuitive fight system
- Exciting, deep story
- A bit thin on truly new ideas

Like Tomb Raider but with more guns and fewer puzzles, Uncharted deserves to be 2007's sleeper hit

9

Combat is clever and beautifully choreographed

Release Out now **Publisher** Ubisoft **Developer** Ubisoft **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1 **Web** assassinscreed.uk.ubi.com **Also try** Heavenly Sword

ASSASSIN'S CREED

Do you have a need for Creed?

Power is a terrible thing. You might think you're one of the good ones. The kind of person who buys the Big Issue and puts English money in those Christian Aid envelopes.

But give yourself 10 minutes exploring the 12th century setting of Assassin's Creed and you'll be a stone-cold, Templar Knight-slaying killer.

The game's 'hero', Altair – a trained assassin in the era of the Crusades – isn't just handy with a sword, he's unstoppable. Combat is a beautifully choreographed ballet of flashing blades and gushing crimson as you deflect attacks and counter blows.

Instilling an even greater sense of power is Altair's spring-loaded, wrist-mounted knife. It can be deployed in an instant to deliver a rapid stealth kill. Using this, it's possible to off someone in full view of bystanders.

Altair's other skill is his superhuman agility. He's part Spider-Man, part free-runner, able to scale buildings using any ledge or sill. You can scrabble up walls to the rooftops in seconds, before leaping between buildings like a spring-loaded monkey.

It's simple to control, too, a couple of buttons enabling you to vault from window ledge to beam effortlessly. The skill comes from steering Altair so you don't run out of things to jump on.

Hits out

After all the entertaining combat, beautiful locations and clever social stealth it's a shame, then, that the actual assassinations are a bit of a let down.

Each one follows an identical pattern of find-prey-kill and as soon as your mark is dead, the alarm is raised and the 'escape' phase of the hit begins.

The final stages of Assassin's Creed demonstrate a game that's blatantly running out of ideas.

But despite its shortcomings, just tearing about using Altair's acrobatic skills is an experience few games can match.

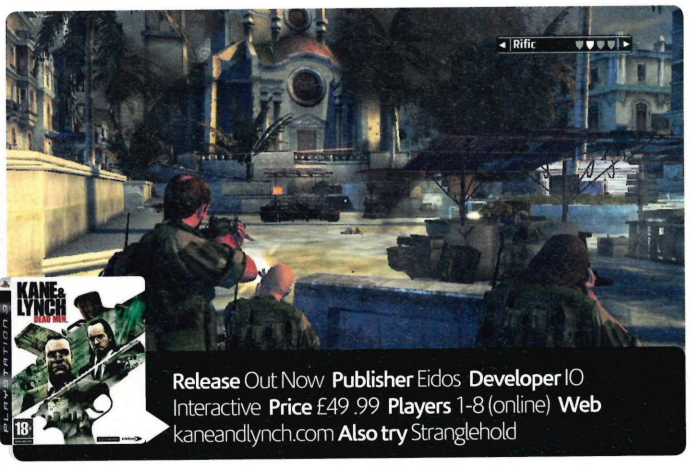
↑ The 12th-century setting has an awesome sense of scale

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

Not as good as expected but still a fun playground to be let loose in

8



Release Out Now **Publisher** Eidos **Developer** IO Interactive **Price** £49.99 **Players** 1-8 (online) **Web** kaneandlynch.com **Also try** Stranglehold

KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN

Dead men, but sadly not dead good

Measured by the gap between pre-release hopes and finished reality, Kane & Lynch has to be one of the biggest disappointments of recent years.

What we thought we were getting was a grown-up, Michael Mann-inspired crime story.

What we ended up with is an inconsistent, unnecessarily unpleasant, technically broken letdown. From invisible walls to dipping issues to an incoherent story to characters who made us feel we were hanging out with sweary tramps, we just wanted to get it over with quickly.

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

An unrelenting, ugly parade of death and loss and regret. With bad controls

5

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

PREVIEWS
Devil May Cry 4
Prototype
Soul Calibur IV
Brütal Legend
Condemned 2: Bloodshot

REVIEWS
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune
NFS: ProStreet
MOH Airborne
Guitar Hero III
Assassin's Creed

FEATURES
Warhawk guide

PLAYABLE DEMOS
Stranglehold
Skate
The Darkness

ON SALE NOW!

PSP IN OPS2

Your quick guide to the best new games for your handheld friend

↑ The gore factor is as high on PSP as PS2

↑ The story explains more about angry Kratos' history

PREVIOUSLY ON GOD OF WAR...

Chains of Olympus reveals Kratos' hitherto unknown history

PUB Sony **DEV** Ready at Dawn **ETA** 2008 **WEB** us.playstation.com/GodofWar_ChainsofOlympus/

Games don't come much bigger than God of War. But Chains of Olympus fits absolutely beautifully into the PSP's compact chassis.

And it is no retread of the two existing games. It's a prequel created especially for PSP, filling in Kratos's story and explaining all kinds of things.

But despite the amazing detail and many things to do in the immediate foreground, God of War hasn't lost any of its epic sense of scale.

While most games might send you tip-toeing across a narrow beam over a deadly drop and be content that's exciting enough, God of War adds a massive inferno beneath the beam, a huge vista across the city in the background and a giant, rampaging lizard just a few streets away. A lizard that thinks your leg bones might be perfect toothpicks.

↑ The epic sense of scale transfers perfectly onto the handheld screen

Blades of gory

As is God of War's way, the battles aren't mere attack button-bashing fights. Once the lizard sticks its head through the doors, you must punish it with your normal attacks, then time a series of button taps to on-screen prompts to set off a finishing move.

Then you're up above the flames using ← and → to keep balanced. Mess up a command and it's good night Athens. The variety's impressive.

The controls have transferred from the PS2's DualShock without fuss, too.

That's not to say Kratos' reason for being has been forgotten. There's no shortage of enemies desperate to slice bits off him, but taking them all on is just the right balance of visceral, colourful fun and challenge.

The prospect of GoW on PSP is exciting enough, and we're pretty confident the reality will deliver the experience we all lust for. Start saving.

↑ As well as filling in details of Kratos' past there are some clues on Godzilla's

HOW COMPLETE?
GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS
CONCEPT · PRE-ALPHA · ALPHA · BETA · RELEASE · 2008

FRIENDLY FIRE

Bomberman Land is much cuddlier than its name suggests

PUB Hudson Soft DEV Hudson Soft ETA January WEB hudsonentertainment.com

Despite sounding like it could be George Bush's nickname for Iraq, Bomberman Land is a cheerful, sunny land of relaxed pleasure and children's laughter.

Yet, the green-and-blue land of this long-popular puzzle game is not entirely happy. In the Story mode – one of three ways of playing – it's your task to restore peace through a series of quests that may or may not involve high explosives.

This is that special kind of bombing that's not violent

Bomb the basics

The other ways to play? The original, top-down, maze-based Bomberman Battle is included, bearing 47 retro stages – and it supports multiplayer too. Up to four players can fight ad hoc with just one copy of the game.

You can't help but feel warm inside when the graphics are this cutesome

The third and final option is a minigame mode. Hudson Soft is promising 50 of these to provide 'something for everyone,' so long as everyone doesn't expect Bomberman to do much safecracking, grave robbing or hot coffee drinking…

HOW COMPLETE?
BOMBERMAN LAND
CONCEPT | ALPHA | RELEASE (JAN)
PRE-ALPHA | BETA

PSP TOP 5 CHARTS

Big sales on a little console! The biggest right now are…

01 FIFA 08
Publisher EA
Score Not reviewed

02 TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY
Publisher Eidos
Score 6/10

03 RATATOUILLE
Publisher THQ
Score Not reviewed

04 SWB: RENEGADE SQUADRON
Publisher Activision
Score 6/10

05 SIMS 2 CASTAWAY
Publisher EA
Score Not reviewed

SPY ANOTHER DAY

Multiplayer-only **Syphon Filter: Combat Ops** adds a whole new chapter to Gabe Logan's adventures

PUB Sony DEV Bend Studios ETA December WEB us.playstation.com/LogansShadow

Like killing? Feel it's something better done with friends? Then have we got the thing for you.

Sony is releasing a special multiplayer-only version of Syphon Filter, a stand-alone ad hoc and infrastructure slice of online gaming for a sliver of the cost of the full thing.

You can design your own maps or use the ready-made ones in five modes

Shoot at your friends in ad hoc or infrastructure multiplayer

The 'full thing' we're referring to is, of course, the brand new PSP exclusive Logan's Shadow. And though it has its own multiplayer section, Combat Ops is considerably more tooled up. You won't need to own the full game to play it either. It's entirely separate.

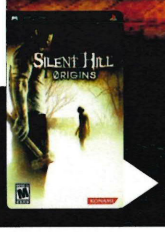
As well as five varied multiplayer modes, there's Mission Modifier, a utility that lets you design maps to your own fiendish specifications.

Uniquely, you actually run around your map, placing objects in wireframe areas, rather than working on a representation of it.

And despite it only just having been announced, Combat Ops may even be out as you read this. We're expecting a December release at the latest. A stealth shooter sneaking up on us? How's that for life imitating art?

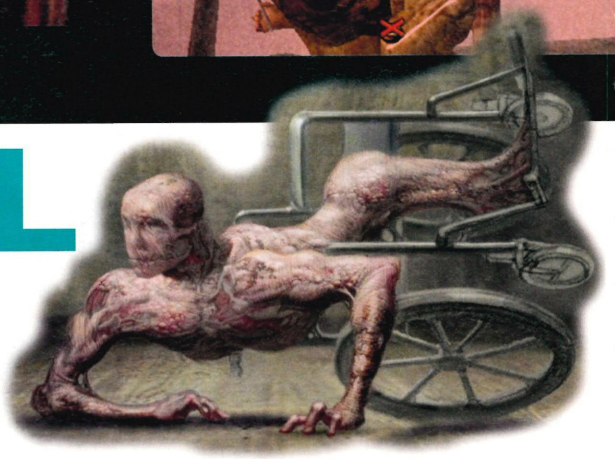
HOW COMPLETE?
SYPHON FILTER: COMBAT OPS
CONCEPT | ALPHA | RELEASE (DEC)
PRE-ALPHA | BETA

Sometimes there just isn't enough bog roll to blot all your shaving cuts



Release Out now **Publisher** Konami **Developer** Climax **Price** £29.99
Wi-fi No **Web** konami.com **Also try** Infected

SILENT HILL ORIGINS



How far back do you want to go?

Do you know what would save people in Silent Hill a lot of trouble? A good locksmith. Every flippin' door is broken, stuck or locked.

But you wouldn't have it any other way, really; when you finally get that latch to click, you just know there's going to be something awful on the other side. And that's why you're here.

Original sins

As the 'Origins' tag suggests, this is all about how gaming's most terrifying town became the monster-filled window on hell we know and, er, love.

It begins when Travis the trucker nearly hits a ghostly figure in the road. Soon after, he discovers a burning house and rescues a child from the blaze before collapsing in a heap.

And right from the start, as Travis stumbles through the inferno, it's clear that this is one of the sharpest looking games on PSP, spooky lighting and all.

The monsters are grotesque and unnerving even on a small screen

True to the series, Origins' monsters are grotesque abominations. Keeping all their horrifically queasy allure, even at one-fifth scale, they spasm and twitch, groaning and trying to stab you with dirty hypodermics.

Gameplay is equal parts exploring, solving puzzles and bashing monsters. To help keep track of objectives there's an excellent map, constantly updated with sealed doors or blocked passages.

The biggest weakness is combat. As before, fighting consists only of leathering the giblets out of whatever nastiness you meet by clumsily hammering ⊗. Camera angles occasionally leave you flailing but even with a clear view it's rarely an exhilarating experience.

Origin the mood

Origins manages a few genuine scares, mostly thanks to the first-rate sound: the score is haunting and the atonal sound effects are very unsettling.

There are also audio flashbacks that spring out of nowhere, delivering pulse-quickening jolts. Just be careful explaining your shriek to the old dear next to you on the bus. "Sorry, it was a faceless meat beast," will only make things worse...

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

VERDICT

- Genuinely scary
- Looks and sounds great
- Imaginative puzzles
- Fighting can get boring

Interesting details for fans but also works as a standalone game – plus it maintains the chilling atmosphere of the big-screen games

8

In multiplayer you can play as either Empire or Rebel

Release Out now **Publisher** Activison
Developer Rebellion **Price** £34.99 **Wi-fi** Yes
Web rebellion.co.uk/swbfrs **Also try** Alien Syndrome

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

Renegade Squadron packs in loads of new stuff

It shouldn't really come as much of a surprise to attentive fans, but with the original Star Wars Battlefront games having covered all the vehicles, planets and characters from the two trilogies, what was left to make a great third game?

Although the – rather predictable – answer is 'not much', Renegade Squadron does pack in more content and game options than any other Battlefront game by plundering from half-remembered Expanded Universe books and comics.

Hard on the Jedis

Visuals certainly aren't everything, but when they make Renegade Squadron look like a cheap, car-boot rip off of the Battlefront series, you have to start worrying.

The action itself is more familiar territory. The basic aim is to sprint around blasting as many opponents as possible, capturing their bases and wrecking up their vehicles in the process.

It may not require the same finger-crippling skill as other

shooters (movement is assigned to the nubbin, and auto-aiming to R1), but its simple control scheme works well when you're scrapping against a competent human opponent in multiplayer.

Alone time ago...

However, the chances are that most of your PSP time will be spent alone, so it's single player that'll see the most action.

Taking on the Campaign mode, which forms the bulk of the gameplay, is frustrating, complex, and mind-bogglingly easy all at once. And the Risk-like strategy of Galactic Conquest mode is actually rather fun.

But despite all the new toys that Battlefront throws at you, you can quite easily complete both modes in around five hours using just the blaster rifle and the rocket launcher.

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT

Disappointing effort; scrapes the barrel more than it feels the Force

6

MOH HEROES 2

Medal of Honor's latest is straightforward fun

Release Out now **Publisher** EA **Developer** EA
Price £34.99 **Wi-fi** Yes **Web** ea.com/mohheroes2
Also try Call of Duty: Roads to Victory

Can a game be both stupid and good fun? Well, yes. Heroes 2 is both stupid and pretty good fun. It's not brilliant, it's not amazing technically, it's not original.

But we enjoyed playing it all the same, and that's the point. It's straightforward Nazi-blasting fun in all the locations you'd expect: trashed towns, beaches, sewers and the like.

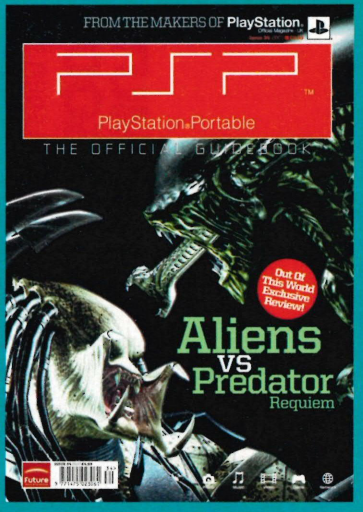
Though it boasts an impressively large 32-player multiplayer component, Heroes 2 hides its limitations much better when you're wasting idiotic AI troops. In singleplayer, it's an excellent game to switch on for cathartic, bullet-based heroism – and then switch off again 30 minutes later, safely gorged on stupid fun.

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
VERDICT

So simple that it's actually a bit limited, despite a substantial multiplayer offer

7

PlayStation Portable
THE OFFICIAL GUIDEBOOK



PREVIEWS
God of War: Chains of Olympus
Bomberman Land
Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed
Syphon Filter: Combat Ops
Football Manager Handheld 2008

REVIEWS
Alien vs Predator Requiem
Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow
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Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice
The Simpsons Game
Medal of Honor Heroes 2
Silent Hill Origins

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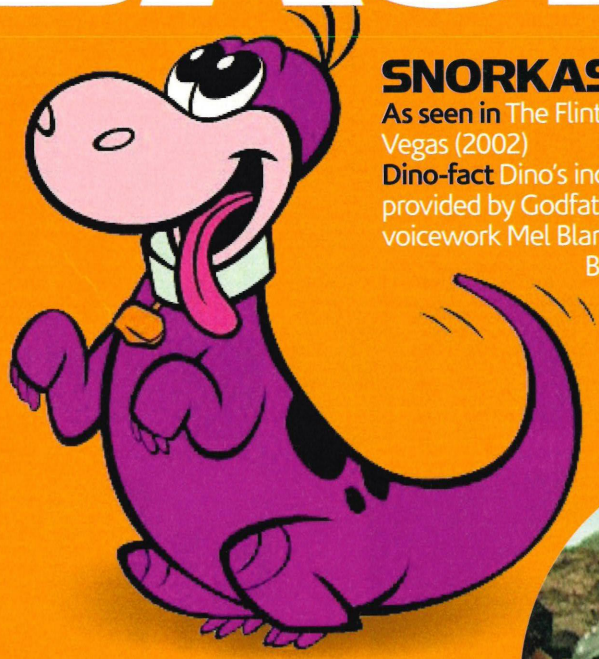
PLAYSTATION EDUCATION

#12 DINOSAURS

They may have been extinct for millions of years, but the mighty dinosaur is alive and well on PS2.

MUTATED GODZILLASAURUS

As seen in Godzilla: Unleashed (2008)
Dino-fact Although the Godzillasaurus is fictional, a species of recently discovered dinosaur was named after the Japanese monster: Gojirasaurus.



SNORKASAURUS

As seen in The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2002)
Dino-fact Dino's incessant yapping was provided by Godfather of cartoon voicework Mel Blanc, who also did Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Marvin the Martian.

ALLOSAURUS

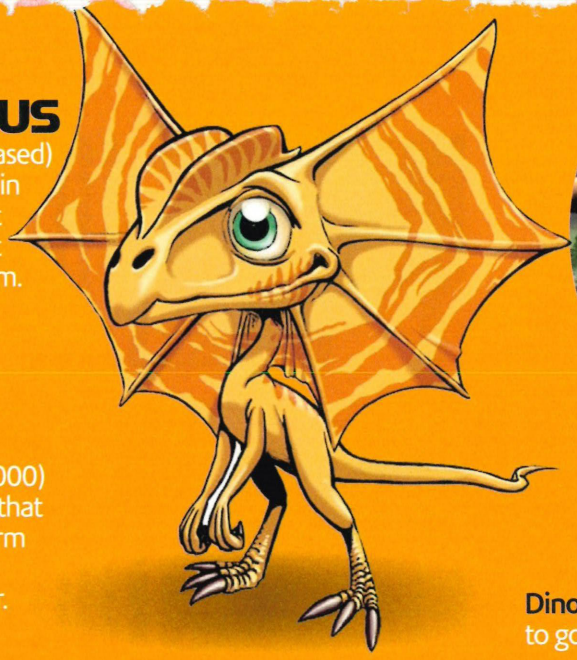
As seen in Final Fantasy XII (2007)
Dino-fact Allosaurus is the official state dinosaur of Utah, USA.

BRONTOSAURUS

As seen in King Kong (2005)
Dino-fact The name 'Brontosaurus' came about after a palaeontologist misinterpreted the skeleton of the already discovered Apatosaurus as a new species.

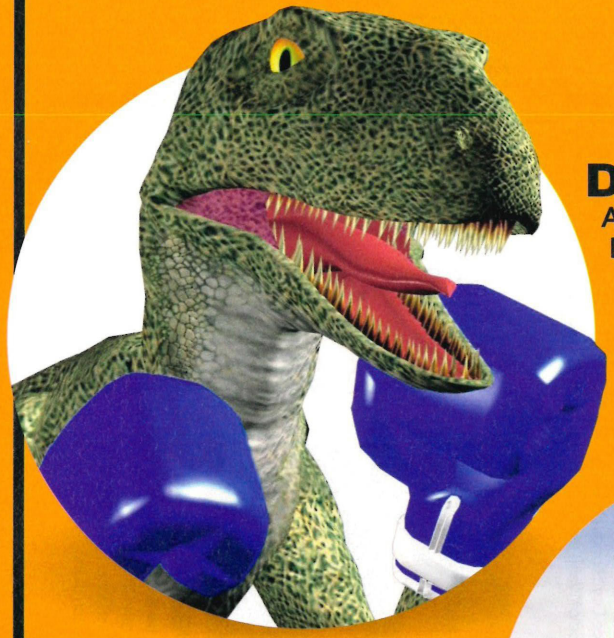
DILOPHOSAURUS

As seen in Dinoz (unreleased)
Dino-fact Despite what you saw in *Jurassic Park*, Dilophosaurus did not have neck-frills and did not spit gobs of venom.



TRICERATOPS

As seen in Turok Evolution (2002)
Dino-fact Triceratops did not use its horns to gore enemies, only for courtship rituals.



DROMAEOSAURID

As seen in Tekken Tag Tournament (2000)
Dino-fact Although Tekken lore says that Alex here is a Dromaeosaurid, the term actually refers to a family of bird-like dinosaurs including the Velociraptor.

PTERANODON

As seen in Dino Stalker (2002)
Dino-fact Pteranodon lived during the time of the dinosaurs, but is not one itself: it belongs to the group Ornithodira, or 'bird necks'.

VELOCIRAPTOR

As seen in Tomb Raider Anniversary (2007)
Dino-fact The Velociraptor as depicted here never existed. The real Velociraptor was half the size of a man, covered in feathers and less intelligent than a dog. Blame *Jurassic Park* (again).

NEXT MONTH **EVIL GENIUSES**

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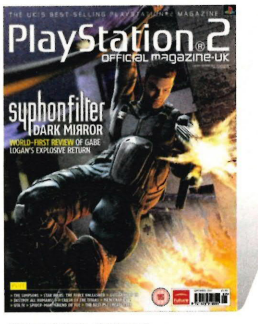

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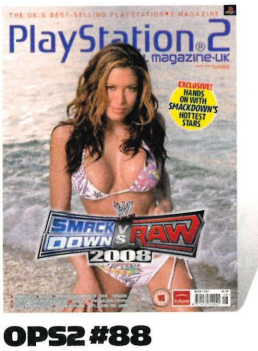

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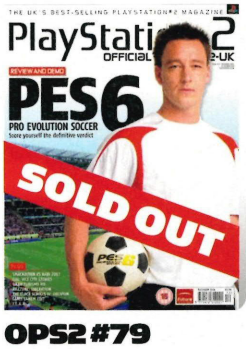

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- Smackdown vs Raw 2007
- Fighting special
- PES 6 and FIFA 07 demos

OPS2 #78
- Scarface
- Devil May Cry 4
- Racing special
- Destroy All Humans! demo

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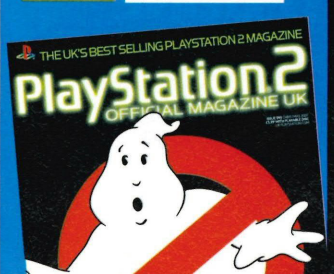

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ALONE IN THE DARK

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SPLIT SCREEN

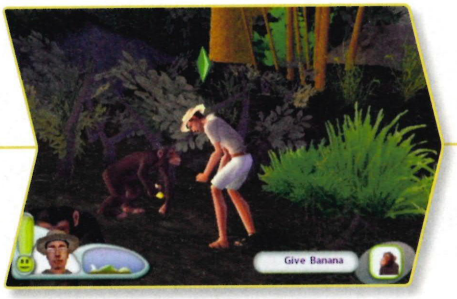
One classic level, two ways to complete it. This month: Sims 2 Castaway

METHOD 1 SOCIABLE STYLE

MISSION START

It started out as a strictly platonic boating holiday for our five Sims, but a freak storm hit the luxury cruise. Now our story starts with one lonely Sim washed up onto a desolate beach. He's hungry, exhausted and desperate to see if his friends survived. Here's how his story turns out...

You start to panic. You've got no food, no company and scant hope of being rescued. Frantically, you search your surroundings.

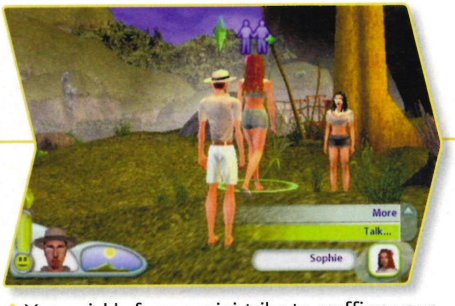


On the other side of a thick patch of brambles you find fruit and a bunch of chimps. But despite being friendly, they aren't great company.

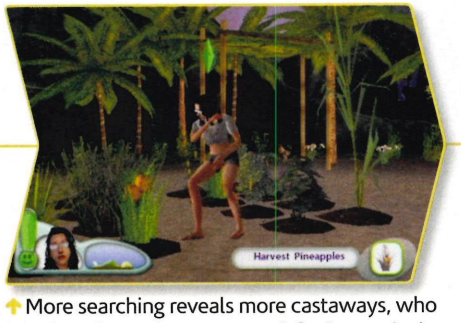
This island is creepy. Even the friendly apes have started eyeing you up as if you're a fleshy Mars bar. Time to get out of here.

If only you had a way to get to that other island. But wait a minute! You're surrounded by a veritable bounty of raft-building materials...

You soon make landfall on the next island, where immediately you spot a familiar face. You are ecstatic to discover that you both survived!



You quickly form a mini-tribe to reaffirm your bonds. Now it's time to find the others and get back to civilisation.



More searching reveals more castaways, who join the tribe and agree to work for its survival. There's lots of hunting and gathering to do.

Finally, after finding a third island, all five pals – beardy and unkempt – are reunited. It's so much fun to tell stories around the campfire!

Working as a team, you build a home out of wood and palm fronds. The men relax while the girls garden, cook and look hot in short shorts.

MISSION COMPLETE

With a safe base, a thriving community and an abundance of food, the idea of simple island life starts to grow on your tribe. As the months fly by, planes and boats pass within rescuing distance of their beach, but no one can quite bring themselves to send out the SOS signal.

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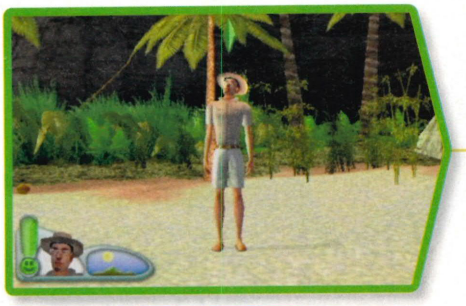
SPLIT SCREEN

One classic level, two ways to complete it. This month: Sims 2 Castaway

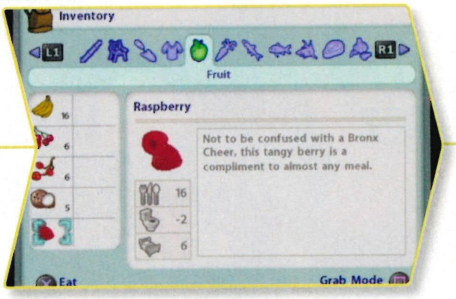
METHOD 2 HERMIT STYLE

MISSION START

So, you've seen how things turn out if your Sim meets up with all his old pals and goes a bit Swiss Family Robinson. But what if you never liked those losers anyway? What if you just fancy a bit of peace and solitude? Waking up alone on a beach would be a blessing, wouldn't it? Let's see...



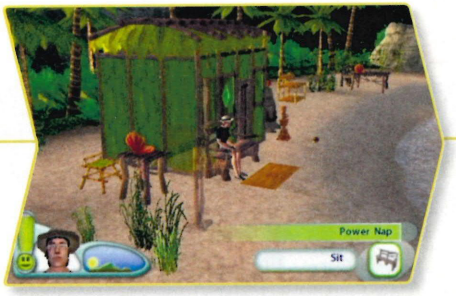
Ah, this is the life. Sun, sea, abundant food and plenty of room to do yoga, with no noisy friends to spoil the idyllic setting.



Who needs meat when nuts and fruit are so plentiful? A vegetarian diet with perhaps the odd fish is ideal for this pure, simple, new life.

Exploring the island, you find a sculpture. An outsider must have left it here. Yikes! Better nick it and scarper before they come back.

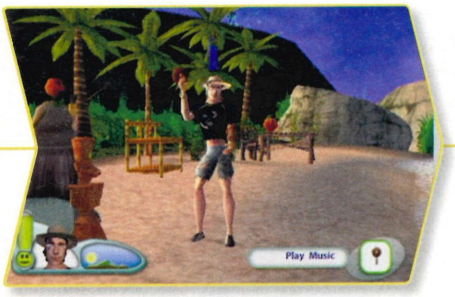
A man's never alone when he's got his tools, so keep yourself busy with a bit of DIY. You can make better tools to gather more materials.



Ahh. You'd pay 600 Baht a night for a set-up like this in Koh Samui, so sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour. And, literally, some fruit.

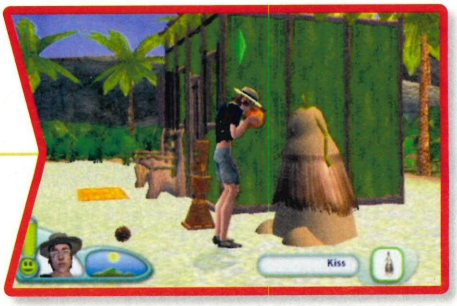
Joy! A whole double bed to yourself. Although there is a mysterious parrot that watches you while you sleep. Or are you imagining it?

More clues about your shipmates' fate: it seems they died and were eaten. But surely not by the chimps: they're your friends. Aren't they?



Whatever. You don't need friends to party! They'd only spoil the fun by laughing at your dancing and that facial twitch you've developed.

Still, the loneliness is starting to get to you a bit. Personal hygiene is becoming an issue, too: even the chimps are keeping their distance.



MISSION COMPLETE

Well, sod 'em. The Sand Buddy you fashioned from a coconut is much more understanding. In fact, it's amazing how much you have to talk about! And after a wonderful night spent chatting about coffee beans and aliens you find yourself unable to resist kissing her luscious lips...

MISSION SELECT

Have you got a favourite mission you'd like us to feature here? Tell us about it! Email **psnation@futurenet.co.uk** or write to **Split Screen, OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

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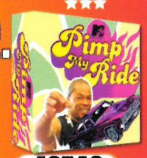
2. 

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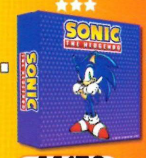
3. 

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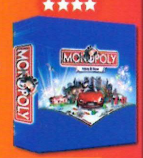
4. 

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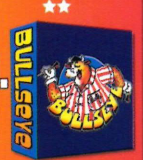
6. 

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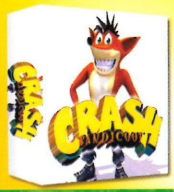

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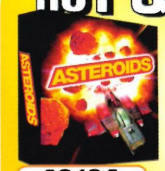

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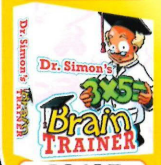

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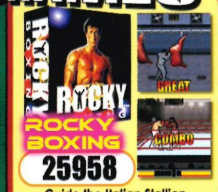

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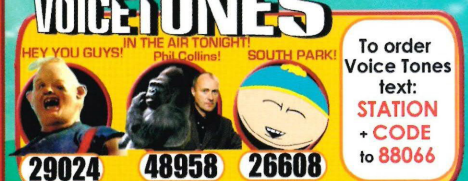

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