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IT WOULD HAVE been easy to overlook the PSP at this year's E3. Such was the enormity of the PlayStation3's presence (and the size of the Sony Bravia TVs it was displayed on) that its little cousin was in danger of being trod underfoot in the rush to play those first next-gen games.

But wait. Stop, take a step back from the abyss of 1080p gaming and you'll notice that the PSP had an E3 that was every bit as strong as Sony's 'other' console. You know some of the games already: *Killzone: Liberation*, *LocoRoco*, *Gangs Of London*... These all looked and played great and would, in terms of gameplay at least, grace any console. Including the PlayStation 3. Sony also announced a load of new peripherals – a new super-life battery, 4 and 8GB Memory Sticks and an EyeToy-like camera that will enable video chat over a Wi-Fi Internet connection. Hey, it was also announced that the PSP is Sony's fastest-selling console ever, shifting over 17 million units in 18 months. Now that's something we can't overlook.

PSP-PS3 connectivity was also revealed in a new and surprisingly innovative way with a system that directly links software of the two formats to make one complete game. This was demonstrated with a PSP hooked up to the PS3's new F1 game. It was used as a wing mirror.

And this was a nice metaphor for the PSP's future – not only as a brilliant games machine in its own right but also as an invaluable tool, helping the next generation reach its potential. So turn to our exhaustive feature now to find out just what games you'll be playing on your PSP in the next few months and start getting excited.

Nick Jones, Editor in Chief

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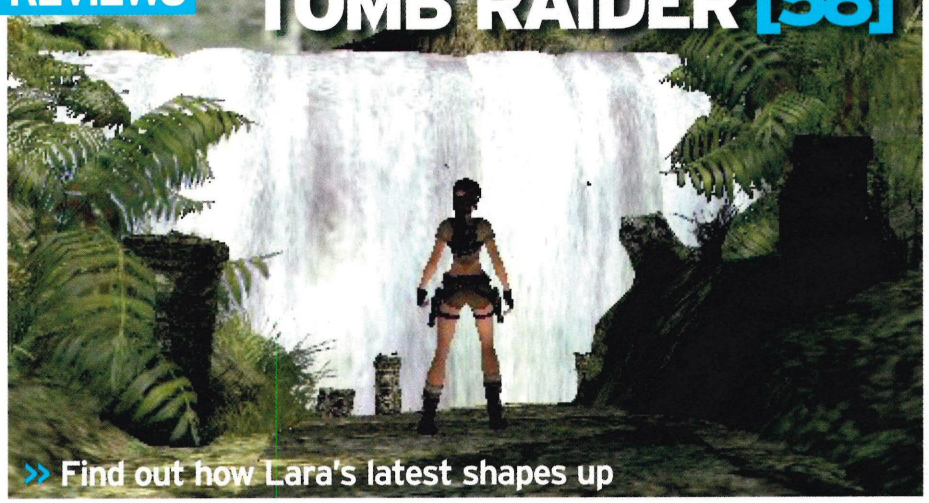

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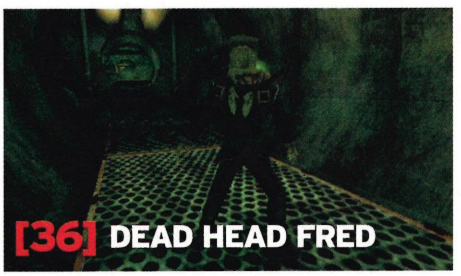

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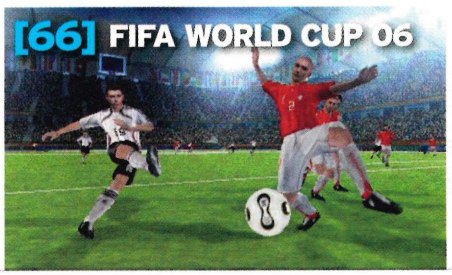

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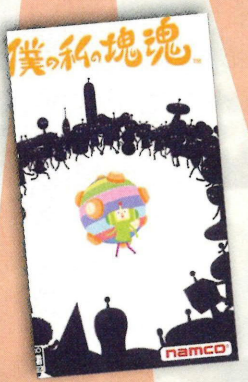
日本の賭博の風変りな世界
THE WACKY WORLD OF JAPANESE PSP GAMING

with Takeru Amazawa

日本の賭博の風変りな世界

The editors of this downright excessively fine magazine have charged me – expert in Japanese videogames as I am – with the task of locating and explicating hot and amazing Japanese videogames for the Sony PlayStation Portable entertainment system. The criteria was simple: find games that would by no means be released outside of Japan. Games that are too weird, too wacky, for Western tastes. And oh, did I find some good ones . . .

Boku No Watashi No Katamari Damashii



Publisher: Namco

In this game, you play the part of a one-centimetre-tall green space prince, son of the bulging-crotched King of All Cosmos, rolling around a tiny little ball. You collect enough garbage to get big and eventually grow large enough to capture people, cars, trees, buildings, bridges – and then the whole world – while listening to Seventies-styled brassy, nuts Japanese music that you'd never hear anyone who's not out of their mind listening to in, say, New York or London. All the while, you are engulfed in bizarre kinetic visuals and cutesy/weird/insane character designs so overtly Japanese that to play it with headphones would be to miss your bus stop.

It has a couple of control issues, though. The ball controls like a tank, and with the right side of the controls being confined to the PSP's face buttons, it gets hard to pull diagonals. Now... wait, what's that you say? *Katamari Damacy* is a huge hit in the West? You say it sold even more in America and Europe than it did in Japan... You say it sold three times more in America and Europe than it did Japan?

What the hell!!

I, um, guess that times have changed since a long, long time ago. I mean, obviously, if there's enough reader demand for a magazine to commission a feature on wacky Japanese games, then wacky Japanese things must be interesting to at least someone un-Japanese.

So anyway. I'm going to scrape the depths here. I'm going to make you sorry you asked. ■

Machi: Unmei No Kousaten

Translation: City: Crossroads Of Destiny
Publisher: Sega/Chun Soft

Sega and Chun Soft recently announced a partnership wherein Sega will publish ports of all of Chun Soft's famous 'sound novel' games from the Super Famicom and Sega Saturn era on PSP. This is kind of a good thing, if you like sound novels.

What, exactly, is a sound novel? Well, it's basically a novel you read on a television screen. Well, in the case of the PSP version of *Machi*, your PSP screen. It's entirely in Japanese! There are pretty much no voices. You hear sound effects, and you see images, and you read text. At the end of every couple of blocks of text, you choose where the story will go. It's like one of those 'Choose Your Own Adventure' books from the Eighties, only with sound and pictures. You can save your game, you can turn it off, and you can even turn it on. Eventually, it ends. You play it because the story is interesting.

Machi's story is, at least, weirdly interesting. The characters are nuts. It was noted, in its time, for using photographs for images, instead of hand-drawn art or abstracts. All of the actors are unknowns. The game is a weird little situation, involving (kind of) detectives and people in need of detecting.

The weirdest thing about Machi might be that, at the end of 2005, just minutes before its PSP port was announced, it was thrust back into the public eye by some conspiratorial readers of *Famitsu*, Japan's biggest games magazine. It had a poll, asking readers to name their favourite games ever; the list of the top 100 was published in a special pull-out section. It seems that 2ch, a sprawling, anonymous Internet community, had in the name of irony, managed to ballot-stuff *Machi* to high heaven, landing it in number five. The rest of the top-ten, voted by *Famitsu*'s core readers, were, of course, um, *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest* games. ■

Kamaitachi No Yoru 2

Translation: Night Of The Kamaitachi
Publisher: Sega/Chun Soft

This is another Chun Soft sound novel. It's either more or less liked than Machi, depending on the personality of the person you ask. It's more of a serious story, rooted in Japanese folklore – a tale of the 'Kamaitachi' – the 'sickle-weasel', a mythical creature able to move at the speed of wind. According to the story, if you're in a field and a sharp wind blows, and if grain is cut by the wind, that was the work of the Kamaitachi. The game kind of has something to do with this. This is the sequel, highly regarded as superior to the original. The original was simply Chun Soft finding their game-developing feet. This one is more refined.

It's perhaps most famous for the characters – drawn as mere silhouettes, years before some Nintendo DS game with a terrible title ripped the style off.

After all this sound-novel business was out of the way, Chun Soft went on to make a game called *Mysterious Dungeon*, and then they started making *Mysterious Dungeon* games starring the characters from other companies' games, at those companies' commission, and they came into buckets of money, giving up the art they had established. Now they're rich enough to make royalties off the name *Mysterious Dungeon* while other companies make *Mysterious Dungeon* games starring their own characters and/or intellectual properties, so they've got back into sound novels. *Kamaitachi No Yoru 3* will appear on PlayStation2 some time this year. I'll probably be playing some fighting game or something, instead. ■

日本の賭博の風変りな世界

Kigyoudo: Sekai Nanbaa Wan Wo Mezase!

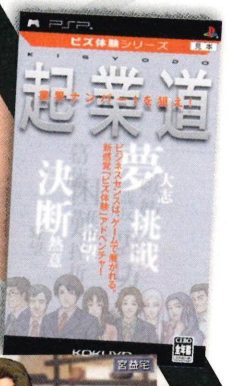
Translation: Starting A Business: Aim For Number One!
Publisher: Kokuyo

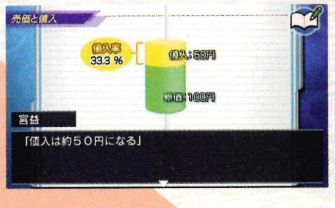
Yes!! Kokuyo is a company that makes such exciting products as legal notebooks and personal organisers! They even make pens! Man, I've had a Kokuyo notebook on my coffee table forever. It's graph paper, actually. I write song lyrics (once my band gets big I'm afraid I'll have to stop writing these articles) in there.

Anyway, now Kokuyo is making videogames! *Aim For Number One!* is the first in a series of games they call the *Biz Taiken* (hands-on business) series; how many the series will end up being, I don't know. Though it sure would be funny if part two was called *Aim For Number Two!* (Nintendo executives would probably eat that one up (console patriotism slightly faked)!). It's a Japanese-style 'adventure' game in the most traditional sense. Characters, drawn in anime-style, appear before the player's viewpoint, and speak. The game has full voices, so do wear headphones. The main character is an average 29-year-old salaryman at a boring company, who one day runs into an old friend from high school, who's currently dating a model (the most important part) and making a killing in big business. The main character gets interested, and the game that ensues will see him through the trials and tribulations of starting a business from nothing.

The game's PR says that you can learn valuable, real-life tips from this game. So, if any of you boyos out there in Britain are thinking of starting a Japanese company any time soon, you'd best start brushing up on your kanji.

I, on the other hand, am going to keep writing song lyrics in this Kokuyo notebook until someone drops a sack of money on my groin. ■





Minna No Chizu

Translation: Everybody's Maps
Publisher: Zenrin

Double yes! This 'game' features obsessively detailed maps of Tokyo! Also, you can click on addresses or department stores and see the menus of restaurants! You cannot, however, see what is playing at the movie theatres, or when such-and-such a cafe has closed down due to kitchen fire, as the software is not Internet-compatible. However, the maps are a perfect snapshot of how Tokyo was circa 1 March 2006.

You know – my cellular phone (a Sony Ericsson that runs on the Sony PSP operating system) has a GPS tracker and mapping software that, I think, does the same thing. However, downloading pictures of the nasty octopus tentacles some places call 'appetisers' costs something like 50 yen each, if I'm not mistaken.

I especially like how the title of this game is a lot like the title of *Everybody's Golf*. Except, instead of golf, it's maps! Which is almost the same thing, right?

If you buy this, you can stare at it on the train until people become dead convinced that you're a weirdo. Maybe have a tourist map of London unfolded in your lap at the same time, looking back and forth between the two with a confused look on your face.

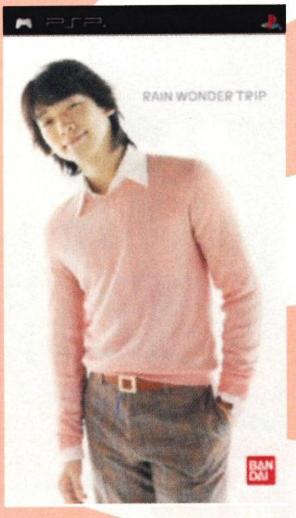
That reminds me of the guy I saw in the library a few weeks ago – old guy in a golf hat – carefully photographing every page of the telephone book. Might he have been researching Zenrin's next PSP game do you think? ■

Rain Wonder Trip

Publisher: Bandai-Namco

Rain is a Korean man with perfect hair. I hear he's also an R&B singer, though my lord, look at that hair. I wish I looked like that. He has a real Mama's boy look to him and I reckon the girls who like that sort of thing like it, um, enough to pay 9,800 yen for the special edition of a game version of this attractive fellow. You can view Rain's videos, participate in a quiz show of Rain trivia, and even unlock little interview clips.

The most intriguing part of the game is the extra-special snippets where you can see Rain in his apartment, drinking tea and talking. You can pick questions to ask him by pushing the right buttons. He'll answer them, though you can't, say, blush and say something to throw him off guard. You can't reach out and brush the hair out of his eyes, or whatever. He's just going to talk, and talk. There are some games on PSP where you go to virtual islands or whatever and relax on some beach. I say – I'd rather go to a real beach. If it's a videogame, let me do something like, say, listen to a pretty person (girl next time, please) talk while drinking tea. ■



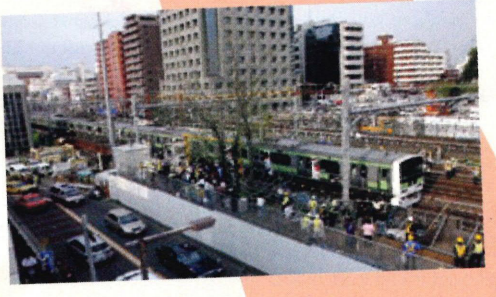
日本の賭博の風変りな世界

Densha De Go! Pocket Yamanote-sen

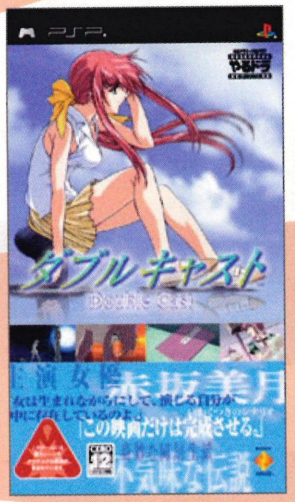
Translation: Let's Go By Train! Pocket Yamanote Line
Publisher: Taito

Let's Go By Train! is the first game to pop to the top of any freelance writer's 'evidence Japan is wacky' list. I, personally, don't find it too wacky. I mean, it's normal enough. It's about driving a train. I once talked to a guy who drove a train, and he said he used to play these games all the time before he decided to learn how to do it for real. I was impressed. I asked him if he was good at these games, and he said: "Hell yes." He then said: "It's either the most videogame-like job in the world, or the most job-like videogame in the world." I asked: "Was he talking about the games or the actual job?" He said: "Both, I suppose."

This game allows you to carry the Yamanote Line in your pocket. Represented on Tokyo maps as a perfect circle, the Yamanote Line is a roughly diamond-shaped loop of track that encloses the greater Tokyo Metropolitan Area. Trains run clockwise and counterclockwise. It is the most notoriously punctual train on Earth, stopping at 29 stops in exactly 58 minutes. A common hobby among young unemployed Japanese men is to ride the Yamanote, 'shooting hoops'. If you buy this game, it will at least help you learn the names of the stops, and make navigating Tokyo on vacation much easier. And then you can play this on the train, while shooting hoops. Try to keep pace!! ■



Double Cast



Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

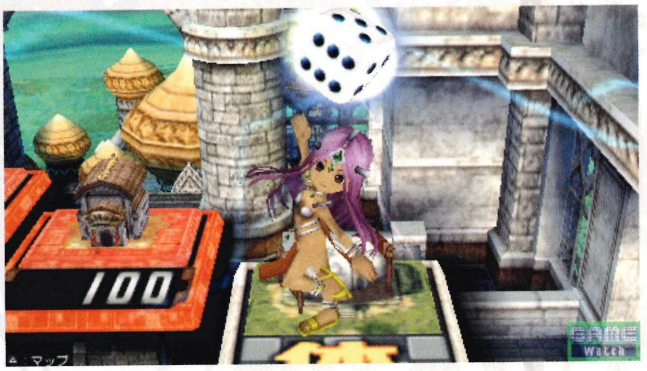
Double Cast seems to be the most popular of the *Yarudora Portable* series that Sony Computer Entertainment is making a killing from lately. A 'Yarudora' is, essentially, a Dora you Yaru. Duh!

'Dora' is short for 'Dorama', meaning 'drama', which is what the Japanese call a television series. 'Yaru' means 'to do', or 'to play'. So a Yarudora is a 'drama that you play'. This means you watch story segments and press buttons.

When I hear 'drama' in Japanese though, I always think of, you know - real actors. All of these for PSP are animated, I don't know why. Apparently, in Hong Kong and Taiwan and wherever, they're releasing ones with real (and popular) actors and actresses.

Double Cast, meanwhile, is about high school students and puppy love. (Note: does not actually involve puppies.) There might be some supernatural stuff in there. There usually is, these days.

Sony also has a Yarudora in the works based on Gonzo's *Blood: The Last Vampire* animated series, which has the most original title in the history of Japanese animation. (Sarcasm.) That anime is about a girl killing vampires in her high school with a sword. I guess that makes something interesting to watch while sometimes pressing buttons. This is, after all, the kind of game *Metal Gear Solid* producer Hideo Kojima prophesied would be the most popular on PSP - things you watch, and sometimes make choices. Then again, isn't that what games are, anyway? When you jump, it is because you make the decision to jump, et cetera, et cetera. I could go on all day. ■



Itadaki Street Special: starring Dragon Quest and Final Fantasy: Portable

Publisher: Square Enix

This is perhaps the first game Square Enix has published that deserves to be called a Square Enix game - this is because it involves characters from both *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest*, Square and Enix's (respectively) most respected and valuable franchises. Not even two months after *Final Fantasy XII*'s release, and already, all of the characters are in this game. Wonderful. What are these characters doing, though, that requires them to all be in the same UMD? I mean, surely, an all-star cast would mean eventual Western release, right?

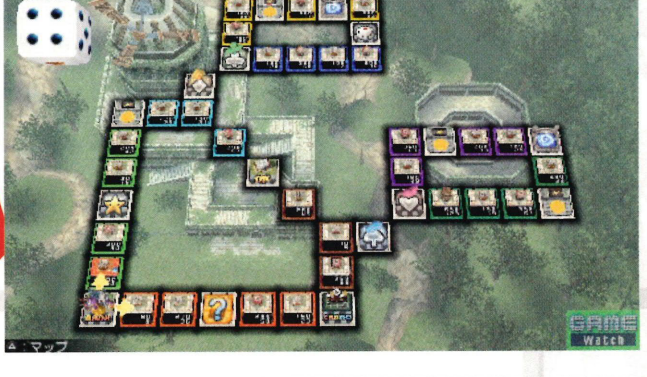
...uh, no? It's a board game.

No, not like *Mario Party*. It's a board game where you open stores and raise stocks. You buy and sell stocks. You watch market values. It's all extremely complicated, very strict, and very serious. The characters do seem to take much pleasure whenever they roll the die, though you have to wonder about that, to a point.

Itadaki Street - 'Itadaki' meaning 'I'll take it' - was originally born on the Super Famicom, with generic characters, more than ten years ago. It wasn't until 2005 that Enix, the publisher, got the idea to fancy it up with famous characters in order to sell more. I'll admit, they got me. I played it a bit, got scared and stopped. It made my head hurt.

The PSP version allows up to two players to play with one UMD, so you can share the confusion as the computer-controlled opponents whip your ass. You get to see famous characters looking happy and/or tough, though. Isn't that worth something? I mean, really? Isn't that what every *Final Fantasy* game is about these days, anyway?

In closing, this series is most specifically popular with girls in their early twenties. If you mention you like videogames to a Japanese girl and she says she loves *Itadaki Street*, chances are she's not lying. That, and you should probably run away from her. ■



Sweet Paradise

Publisher: Success

This is another UMD video 'game'. In it, you play paper-rock-scissors and other exciting games that can be navigated with ease in media-player menus. You play these games with girls, who proceed to smile.

The girls happen to be around 11 or 12 years old. Here I could talk about there being cultural differences, and how this is not, by any means, pornography. I could tell you that some men – and women – claim to like to watch videos of young girls because the girls' happy-go-lucky personalities brighten up their own moods on cloudy days.

Instead, I'll mention that Saaya Irie – one of the stars of this game, and a singer in an 'idol' group called Paradise Kiss – though she may only be 12 years old, has breasts about the size of coconuts. There was an incident on the Internet, wherein some Chinese nerds were getting angry about Japan (they do this once a year) never saying sorry for World War II, even though Japan has technically said sorry maybe a dozen times now. Anyway, some Japanese nerds popped in with a picture of Saaya Irie in the bathing suit, Photoshopped with a message, in Chinese, telling the Chinese nerds that their country's attitude was making her sad. The Chinese nerds changed the topic of their discussion to the girl's perfect breasts. Shortly afterwards, the Japanese guys popped in again and said: "She's only 11 years old, you sickos!" Internet war commenced. Real-life politics got involved. It was fun to watch. Saaya Irie has now promised to never wear a bathing suit. Ever again. ■

日本の賭博の風変りな世界

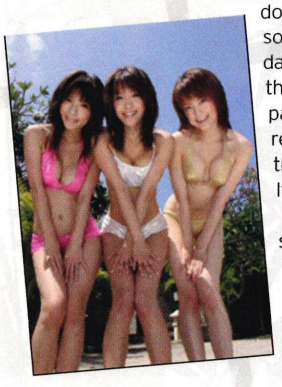
Yawahada Eigo Juku

Translation: Soft-skinned English School

Publisher: Success

Quiz games and brain-training games are all the rage, no matter what portable system you've got in your pocket these days. No less than three games in the 'train your brain' genre had appeared in Japan before this little satirical gem appeared. Though Nintendo's *Brain Age* or whatever they're calling it has already been released abroad, I doubt this one will make it.

See, it's about swimsuit models. Swimsuit models, teaching you English. And not just any swimsuit models, and not just any English. They are Japanese swimsuit models, and it is terrible English. Why they're teaching you English, I don't know. Though sometimes, these girls dance, sometimes together; and sometimes, during these dances, they find great reason to speak about things like hotel costs and rent-a-cars. They will pause, hands to their ears, giving you a chance to repeat the target sentence. Then they'll give you a thumbs-up – every time. See, this game isn't a game. It's a UMD video. So they can't even hear you.



And the English in the subtitles is just about always spelled wrongly.

The name, *Yawahada Eigo Juku* is a pun on *Yawaraka Atama Juku*, one of the brain-training games for Nintendo DS. I wonder if any young kids bought it and played it when their parents were telling them to study? ■

Boku No Natsuyasumi

Translation: My Summer Vacation

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

My Summer Vacation is a game about a carefree childhood. In it, you play an 11-year-old boy at home in the country during the Japanese Sixties. The game is quite popular with older Japanese guys, who play it and, apparently, weep. It was originally available on the PlayStation, though now it's on PSP, with a new beetle-battling mode tacked on for extra play value among children. Collect and trade beetles! Every damn game has a beetle-collecting mode, now.

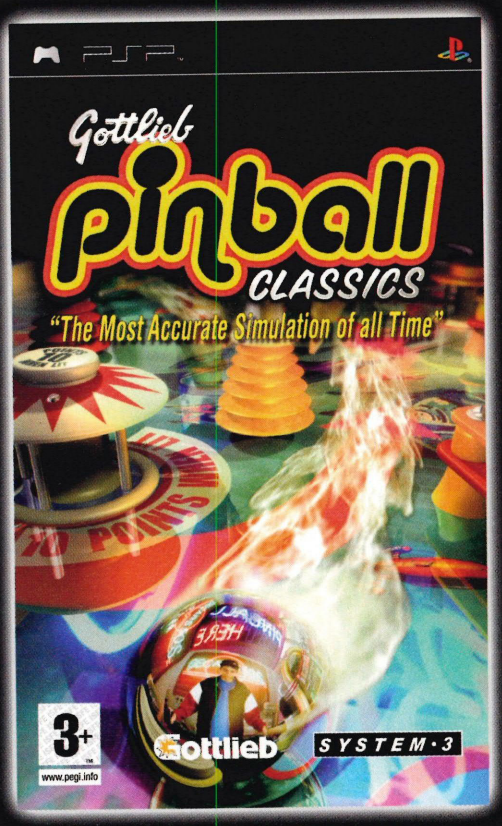
Anyway, kids apparently really did collect beetles in the Sixties in Japan. I'm not making that up. I couldn't imagine touching one of the things.

What is rather touching, however, is this story. There's a girl, who in one poignant, early scene, talks about her dead big brother. There are vague moments of sadness. There is longing. The narrator opens the story by saying this is what happened during his summer vacation. And something indeed does happen. What happens, exactly – well, it might be a good introduction to the Japanese language.

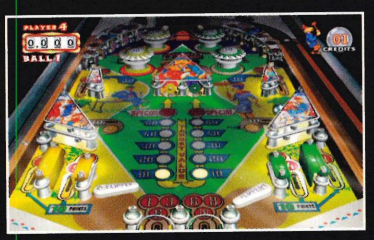
It really is a nice little game. It has a wonderful sense of self. In its PSP port, the screen framing is played with. Sometimes butterflies hover in and out of the black bars on the left and right of the screen. The sound of locusts is sampled from, well, real locusts. It's a treat of sound design. ■

"The Ultimate in Pinball Wizardry"

Official PlayStation®2 Magazine

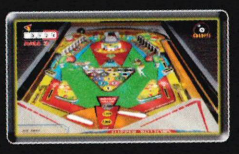


Available NOW



Switch while actually playing between Vertical and Horizontal screen modes for the complete Pinball experience.

Unique Game Sharing mode



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INSIDER

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PSP GAMING

BREAKING NEWS

E3 DISHES THE

PS3 confirmation at E3

Well, E3's finally here, although by the time you get to read this, the world's largest videogames Expo will have disappeared for another year. We're not in the slightest bit sad though, as this year's little gathering in LA has brought us some of the most exciting news we've ever heard. Yes, you guessed it, it's the PS3. But that's not all. Sony's conference delivered more than the usual corporate piffle and as well as the standard sales charts, self-ingratiating rhetoric and motivational music, we were treated to some genuinely stimulating news.

Probably most unexpected was Sony's voracious support of the PS2, insisting that backing for the aging system would continue for a good while to come, perhaps in response to suggestions that the upcoming generation of consoles are being released too early. Also rather surprisingly, snide comments levelled at Microsoft and Nintendo were kept to a minimum with the statement that the PS3 would not follow the same avenue of gimmickry and restriction that had previously been trodden by other manufacturers.

The big news, of course, was the release date and pricing for the PS3 however, and with a worldwide 17 November release date, we've all got something to look forward to. A less enjoyable prospect would be the sizable price tag though. Ending much speculation, the strategy of releasing two versions of the console at two price points has been adopted by Sony. Thankfully, both types of machine will come with a Hard Drive - 20GB and 60GB at 499 euros and 599 euros respectively - enabling all users to download content and - crucially - allowing developers to take advantage of a built-in Hard Drive in a way that creators of Xbox 360 titles can't, given that one of the two 360 models lacks a Hard Drive.

But we're not out of surprises yet, oh no. The most lamentable nugget of news was that PS3 controllers lack any vibration function. The reason being that it would interfere with the brand new "high-precision, highly sensitive six-axis sensing system", or in other words, the amazing new tilty technology, allowing gamers to control their on-screen personas with the movement of the joypad itself. Not entirely revolutionary we might add, but certainly unexpected.

But what about us PSP owners? Well, we're in luck, as along with the traditional gout of software

DIRT

announcements, we've been promised a new range of re-releases along the lines of the PS2's platinum range. Titles out for nine months and having shipped 250,000 copies will be eligible for the title 'greatest hits' on Sony's fastest selling console ever. The PSP's connectivity to the PS3 was referenced only once however, during a *Gran Turismo* demo, which hinted at the handheld being used as a kind of rear-view mirror for the upcoming *GT* HD. With Sony forecasting another 12 million PSPs to be sold on top of the 17 million already out there, we're sure there'll be plenty more in store over the coming months. Meanwhile, of course, head over to our gigantic 10-page E3 blowout special on page 44 and wallow in the excitement of what's making its way to your PSP this year. ■

FIRMWARE UPDATE

Firm And Fruity

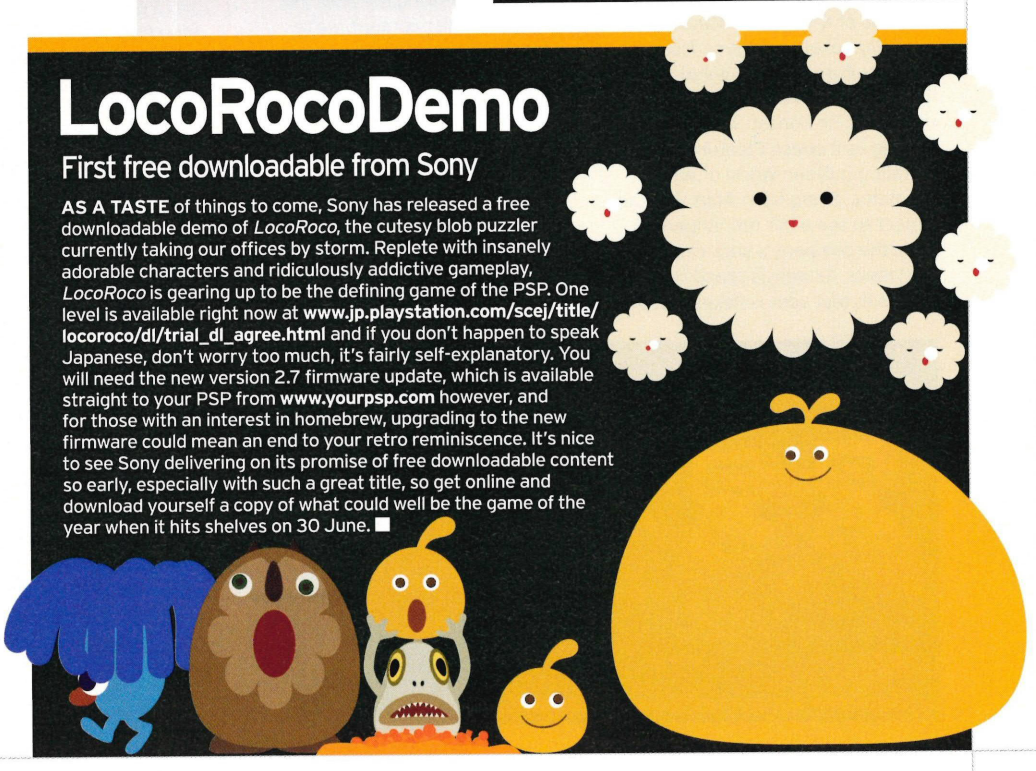
Version 2.7 enables Flash browsing

IT'S NOT BEEN too long since the last firmware update, but this latest one adds another pile of functions to the already overflowing barrel of goodies available to lovers of the PSP. Amongst the new capabilities, Flash websites have been made available for browsing, as well as the ability to play more formats of music files, including MP3, ATRAC, AAC and WMA, and stream podcasts. Version 2.7 also prepares the system for Location-free TV, the latest, and somewhat expensive, innovation to be released on the general public this month. Whilst we're excited about getting our hands on the watch-anywhere Location-free system – and have been waiting some time to play around with our favourite Flash sites– version 2.7 has received a cool reception from homebrew enthusiasts, as it patches all the exploits favoured by the community. Homebrew god Fanjita recently evaluated the system and given that the now famous *GTA* exploit has been closed off completely, it'll take a good few months to find another way to hack the PSP through a different route, possibly via a new function, such as the Flash player. ■

LocoRocoDemo

First free downloadable from Sony

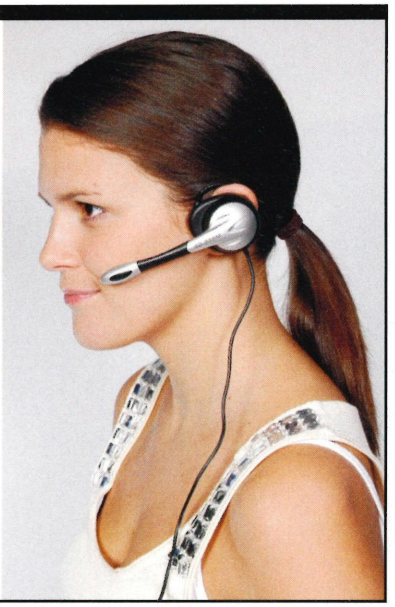
AS A TASTE of things to come, Sony has released a free downloadable demo of *LocoRoco*, the cutesy blob puzzler currently taking our offices by storm. Replete with insanely adorable characters and ridiculously addictive gameplay, *LocoRoco* is gearing up to be the defining game of the PSP. One level is available right now at **www.jp.playstation.com/scej/title/locoroco/dl/trial_dl_agree.html** and if you don't happen to speak Japanese, don't worry too much, it's fairly self-explanatory. You will need the new version 2.7 firmware update, which is available straight to your PSP from **www.yourpsp.com** however, and for those with an interest in homebrew, upgrading to the new firmware could mean an end to your retro reminiscence. It's nice to see Sony delivering on its promise of free downloadable content so early, especially with such a great title, so get online and download yourself a copy of what could well be the game of the year when it hits shelves on 30 June. ■



PERIPHERAL

Ready, headset, go!

Datel release PSP headgear



We don't like shouting – well, with the possible exception of Simon, who seems to love it. If everybody shouts all the time, nothing gets done and people get angry. When people get angry, they get into fights, and fights mean broken noses, cut lips and a whole bunch of bad feeling. We don't like bad feeling, or indeed broken noses, so we'll do anything to avoid raising our voices. Thankfully, Datel's latest gadget, the Communicator Headset for PSP, cuts out any and all need for shouting, ever. Well, at least for the time you're playing online with your PSP anyway.

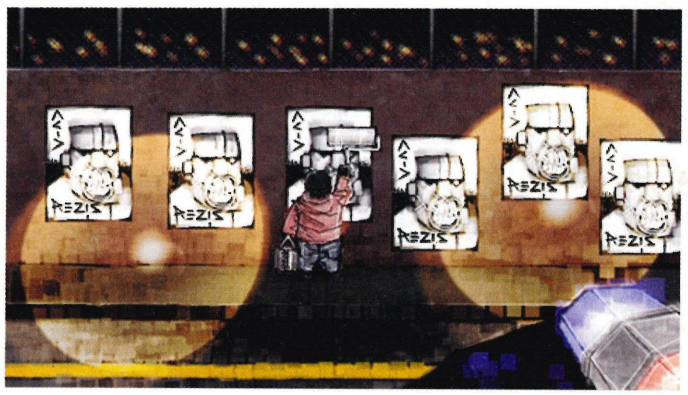
Yes folks, your online communication can now be as discreet as you like. This handy gimmick not only comes in a sleek, stylish over-the-ear design and provides crystal clear audio, but it also positions the mic so very close to your mouth you'll barely need to whisper to issue orders to your team-mates on *SOCOM*. Out later this month, and priced at £9.99, Datel's Communicator Headset is the perfect choice for those who want the quiet life. ■

SIZZLIN'

Hot to trot

Red hot mini-game action from Atari

Get ready for the most intense mini-game madness you'll ever encounter on the PSP, with Atari's recently announced *HOT PXL*. Comprising over 200 furiously paced micro-games, along the likes of Nintendo's *WarioWare*, *HOT PXL* takes inspiration from street culture and the digital lifestyle, whatever the hell that means. To be honest, we don't care, as long as it doesn't feature that irritating buffoon Wario or any of his mates. Being from Atari you can expect to see a fair few influences from the company's back catalogue of classics, as well as brand new games to test your reflexes. Details are fairly sketchy at the moment, but the kind of trials you can expect run from the everyday – trying to cross a busy road – to the not so everyday – stage diving at a digital concert. Geared towards multi-player, and featuring the ability to download regular content, we're anticipating a bit of a sizzler when this hits the shelves towards the end of the year. ■



SIZE MATTERS

Ratchet and Clank off on a mini adventure

That infamous duo, Ratchet and Clank have finally managed to make their way onto the PSP in a mini adventure entitled *Ratchet And Clank: Size Matters*. Apparently a real return to the roots of the series, the pair's new escapade starts shortly after the last PS2 affair, *Deadlocked*, and involves, surprise, surprise, a damsel in distress, loads of silly weapons and a good few Clank-based missions. With a number of the original Insomniac Games' boys on board with this project, we can expect the same kind of quality we've seen on the PS2, as well as PSP-only innovations like new vehicles and highly customisable armour. Far from being a simple port with a few extra levels, High Impact Games (new development blood for the series) has kept much of the style and humour of the past games, as well as the ridiculous arsenal Ratchet's so famed for. Much like the recent platform adventure, *Daxter*, the game engine has been built from the ground up to deal with the demands of transposing the lush environments and all-out gameplay to the handheld, delivering a clear step-up in the quality of portable gaming. ■

PSP
PlayStation Portable

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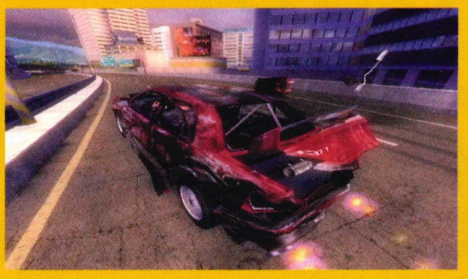
ATARI



Retraction

Tom eats humble pie

As some of you may have noticed we reviewed *FlatOut 2* in last month's PS2 Roundup. Unfortunately the code we reviewed from actually turned out to be unfinished and as such was not an accurate representation of the final game. We apologise unreservedly to Empire Interactive for any damage that may have been caused due to our inaccurate review and look forward to playing the finished game when it arrives.

FlatOut 2 is out soon and will be far better than our review suggested. ■

FIRST LOOK

UBISOFT GETS ANIMATED

Open Season on PSP cartoon tie-ins

For anyone wanting to get a sneak preview of Sony Pictures Animation's first full-length CG feature, *Open Season*, you'll have your chance on the PSP – a good week before the movie hits the silver screen. Bringing Boog the grizzly and Elliot the deer to life are the voice talents of Martin Lawrence and Ashton Kutcher, as well as a wealth of CG experience from films such as *Antz*, *Monsters Inc.* and *Stuart Little*.

In the game, playing as the tame bear Boog, it's your job to scare off the gaggle of itchy trigger-fingered hunters with all manner of puzzling fun. Utilise the power of acorn-propelling squirrels, foul smelling skunk bombs and all sorts of silly woodland tricks to thwart the bloodthirsty game hunters in what could well be a chuckle ridden laugh-a-thon of a title. Of course, there's a fair chance it'll be a cynical cash generating machine, but here's hoping Elliot and Boog can produce the goods. ■

RUMOUR MILL

PSP Mk2?

PSP2 RUMOURS SNOWBALL

Sony keep tight-lipped

Following numerous Internet forums' combined speculation about a PSP Mk 2 last month, Sony has refused to let anything about the project slip – if indeed there's any project at all – instead focusing on the fact that Sony never comments on rumour and speculation. The supposedly leaked report from an ex-employee of the project suggested that the PSP2 would not feature a UMD drive, but instead would have a much meatier Hard Drive to deal with the huge amount of downloadable media available by the time it hit shelves, which would supposedly be within three years. In a new twist – every bit as factually lightweight as before – stories about chip manufacturers nVidia seem to be lending credence, or some small semblance of at least, to the possibility that Sony is currently working on a PSP2. Given Toshiba and IBM's recent partnership expansion with Sony, yet more rumours are abound regarding the shrinking of the PS3's cell chip. We're still not convinced, but fear not, we'll bring you the latest on all this guesswork and hearsay as and when it gets interesting. ■

FIVE STAR

Each month, someone picks their five fave PSP games

Andy Mountain
Senior Designer

LEMMINGS
I don't usually like saving animals. I'm a bit of a meany you see.

WORMS MAYHEM
I like this game but I wish Tom would shut up with the itchy ring jokes.

SSX ON TOUR
I haven't played this a lot, but it's definitely my kind of thing.

FIGHT NIGHT 3
Not as good as the 360 version, but it's definitely getting there.

BUST-A-MOVE GHOST
Old-school puzzling at its very best.

OUR MAN ON THE CLAPHAM OMNIBUS

BRIGHT LIGHT... BRIGHT LIGHT...

A fleeting glimpse at the darker side of portable PlayStation-ing

So, after last month's horrendous ordeal at Heathrow terminal, I'm now a little more aware of my actions, and managed – for the most part – to keep my PSPotty mouth under control whilst on holiday. The results of this restraint aren't completely unexpected however, as I've been in something of a mood ever since arriving at Gando Airport (that's the Canaries if you don't remember). In all fairness, this is unsurprising as – despite my recent loathing of all things average – I don't really like this kind of thing at all. A holiday in Tenerife? What was I thinking? Excessive heat and unbearable light aren't a good combination for someone not used to any brighter light than that given off by a PSP (on it's lowest brightness setting at that). But then, it's not just my sensitive eyes and delicate skin that suffer, it's my gaming. I've always wondered why that European guy you meet on whatever online game you happen to be playing is unfailingly crap, and now the answer has become blindingly clear, blindingly being the operative word.

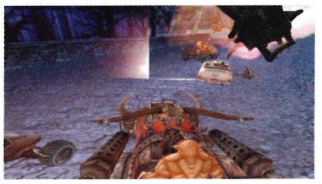
It's the horrible surfeit of sunlight. To any non-gamers out there, perhaps a girlfriend flicking through while you wait for your other half to finish a level, maybe someone perusing a friend's coffee table reads – whatever – you all need to know something. If society allowed it, we'd shun the light completely. I'll let you in on a secret – there's a direct correlation between our mastery of games and how much sunlight our skin absorbs. Yup, that's right, the *Daily Mail* has been getting it right all these years. An addiction to games does lead to grey pallor, sunken eyes, clawed hands and an aversion to sunlight. They say that admitting you have a problem is the first step, but refusing to acknowledge a personal crisis is not necessarily an indicator of deep-rooted issues is it? Anyway, clawed hands can come in very handy for lots of claw-related activities.

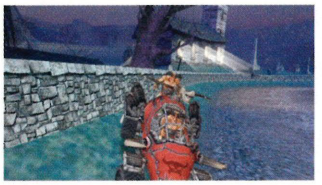
I jest of course, but the point is there, and whilst we can't always be proud of the state of the weather, we can revel in our collective gaming genius. We're a nation of gamers, and it surprises us when we go abroad and we're confronted by a deficit of outlets for our passion. So there I sat, surrounded by Spaniards lacking in even the most rudimentary knowledge of gaming history, thwarted by a sun bright and hot enough to produce enough glare and sweat as to make the whole effort pointless. Bloody sun.

I was, however, committed to enjoying myself, and so I did. I managed to sneak a few hours of gaming in once the sun went down and succeeded in filling the rest of my days with overly long siestas and inane arguments with my girlfriend about which of her ridiculous abundance of stringy tops she should wear. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for enjoying other cultures and expanding my horizons, just so long as it doesn't interfere with any other aspect of my life. At all. Ever. So as I sit here on my gigantic sofa, back at my tiny South London flat, I can appreciate the finer things in life a little better. A PSP not drenched in sweat, retinas not being burned to a crisp, and the soft patter of our fair capital's seemingly constant rainfall against the window. Yup, it sure is good to be home. ■

[There's a direct correlation between our mastery of games and the amount of sunlight our skin absorbs...]

COMING SOON





OWWW MOMMY, I'VE GOT EARACHE

Get ready to rawk with Earache Extreme Metal Racing

Ever heard of extreme metal? Nope? Well, it sits nicely between thrash metal and death metal, and is the kind of thing your mother wouldn't approve of, unless your mother happens to be some sort of a hardcore self-harming goth metaler. Either way it's not the kind of thing you'd expect to have a racing title based on, but with the aid of a teenage gothette on work experience, Data Design Interactive has done just that. Yes, in between making tea and doing lunch runs to the local sandwich joint, 17-year-old headbanger, Sky Nash conceptualised and designed the DDI's upcoming *Earache Extreme Metal Racing*. With a soundtrack quite literally from hell, this gory title – due for release on the PSP around Christmas – features masses of zombies, headless corpse brides and plenty of giant hammers, spiky bonnets and wheel blades with which to dispatch said undead creatures. Of course the racing is a fairly important part of the game as well, and with eight courses straight from Beelzebub's lair along with numerous arenas for the multi-player deathmatch outings, you're guaranteed nothing less than a great day out in the netherworld.

The track listing, coming straight from the Earache record label includes top talent from the extreme metal scene, such as Napalm Death, At The Gates, Cathedral, The Haunted, Hate Eternal, Cult Of Luna, Beecher, Urkraft, Anata, Mistress and Severe Torture amongst others. We have no idea who this lot are, but we've been assured that they're the best that the genre has to offer. Publisher Metro 3D is also considering the option of two separate releases, one for the kids, and an 18+ rated version including all the atrocities originally planned for the courses. Either way it'll be quite a while until it actually hits the shelves here in the UK, so you'll have plenty of time to grow your hair in preparation. ■

THE HOURS

WHAT'S BEEN EATING OUR LIVES, AND FOR HOW LONG

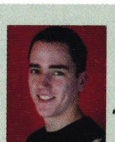
SIMON

SYPHON FILTER

"One of the best games around at the moment. It certainly brings back memories, and its control system is as smooth as it's ever been." 12 hrs

BLAGGIN' DAYS OFF WORK

"Ha ha you fools, I've managed to net myself an all-expenses-paid trip to see what's going on at E3 before it even starts. Read the feature to find out more." 02 days



ANDY

WORMS

"I dunno how I'm managing to play so much worms and get the magazine designed on time. It's so addictive, and a helluva lot less itchy than having real worms." 06 hrs

GYM SAUNA

"Whilst I've not been 'going to the gym' in the traditional sense, I've been making full use of its facilities and have managed to lose lots of weight in sweat." 12 hrs

TOM

BUJANGAI SWORDMASTER

"Mindless button mashing with *Bujangai Swordmaster* on the PS2, one of the most dazzling titles out there." 10 hrs

ATTEMPTING TO WOO BARMAID

"Our local pub sports an array of sexy barmaids, one of which is the epitome of hot sex. It's a simple equation: Booze + sexy barmaids = love." 11 hrs

HENRI

ROGUE TROOPER

"I'd rather be playing *Shadow Hearts 3* to be honest, but this is fun enough I suppose. It's a little too predictable though and it makes me feel sad." 15 hrs

GETTING HORRIBLY DRUNK

"I've been hitting the sauce an awful lot recently. It's no bad thing though, as it makes work much more fun." 04 wks

TAKERU AMAZAWA'S TOKYO TITTLE TATTLE

POPULARITY CONTEST

An insight into the world of Japanese PSP-ing by our man in Tokyo, Takeru Amazawa

You can't throw a rock on the Internet without hitting someone in the head who's arguing out his ass about which is more popular, the Sony PSP or the Nintendo DS. I personally think that each machine has its own uses; some days I carry my DS on the train to work, and other days, I carry the PSP. I'm not ashamed to admit that.

I will also say that it is, no mistake, very obviously the case that the Nintendo DS is more popular in Japan. It is selling like crazy. On **Yodobashi.co.jp**, the online store for Yodobashi Camera, Japan's largest electronics chain, "Nintendo DS" is the top search string, over "iPod," "electronic dictionary," "MP3 player," and even "television," for God's sake. "PSP" is number 15. 15! So that just goes to show you, well, whatever it goes to show you.

Why is the DS more popular? That's kind of a funny question. The easiest answer is that it has more games that are "games," while also being "things." The PSP has a collection of software (media might be the better word) that falls into two categories, the "games," and the "things." "Game-things" might just be the future. Who knows? For the meantime, the PSP is sorely lacking.

When I see a person on a crowded Tokyo subway playing a PSP, I can't help taking a look at what's on the screen. Many times, I am oddly confused to find the person watching some television programme or sports highlights that they might have been downloaded from the Internet somewhere, or else animation, or else girls in swimsuits standing with their hands against brick walls, sometimes making delighted facial expressions and other times looking completely serious. These are all legitimate forms of entertainment, if one considers "entertainment" to be "passing the time."

I personally can't bring myself to play PSP games on the train. I wonder why this is. According to recent market research, something like 80% of Japanese PSP owners admitted to only ever playing PSP games while at home. At all other times, they view "various media." Normally, the "various media" does not even include UMD videos.

> **We all know that wherever Korean girls go, Wi-Fi hot spots follow**

Currently, Sony Computer Entertainment Korea has been testing bold new ideas for the PSP's infrastructure mode. They have mammoth servers lined up to deliver content – television programmes, music videos, film trailers – to PSP-owners on the go. They want to make PSP more popular with girls, and we all know that everywhere Korean girls go, Wi-fi hot spots follow. (Well, everywhere Korean guys go, too; I mean, the whole city of Seoul is wired). With the recent announcements about PlayStation3 being a hub for media, with the revelations that it's going to interface wirelessly with the PSP, things are starting to grow clearer. Recently, Microsoft's Xbox Live service began hosting free episodes of animated television series for download in Japan, in hopes to lure people in as subscribers. Sony looks to be hopping onto the same boat, only their PSP will make carrying your media with you a possibility: transfer it wirelessly from your PS3 to your PSP, whether it's a full PSone game, some fan-made game, a movie trailer, an episode of your favourite television series, or what. Take it home, and delete it from your Memory Stick to make room for something else.

It makes me wish I had a bigger Memory Stick, or that they at least made bigger ones.

I'm looking at the top-selling UMD videos for PSP on **Amazon.co.jp** on my computer over here: "*The Goonies*," "*Pink Panther*," "*Aliens*"? "*Bad Boys II*"? The "Kiss Me Goodbye" (theme song from *Final Fantasy XII*) UMD video single? #1 is a single, seemingly random episode of a "*Gundam*" series!

Maybe they should forget the UMD and just make a new PSP with a Hard Drive. That's one of the reasons I don't carry my PSP on the train sometimes. The drive is noisy, and you could hear a pin drop on some mornings. It depends on the weather. ■

FIRST LOOK

DEAL ME IN

Oxygen announce World Championship Poker 2

Gambling's pretty big right now, what with ITV's new phone-in-and-fail-to-win money channel, as well as a plethora of poker, racing, and sports-betting websites and cable channels. And don't forget about the wealth of poker paraphernalia about, encouraging you to eschew the standard Friday night out in favour of losing all your money to your mates – we can't think of anything better. Fans of the game will know the top dogs at the table, but we're unashamedly ignorant. We'd rather let you decide if Howard Lederer, Annie Duke, Greg Rayner, Amir Vahedi, Paul Darden, Clonie Gowen and Robert Williamson III are big enough players to make their endorsement of *WCP2* a worthy one. We're guessing it is, as the first iteration received significant acclaim Stateside, the spiritual home of card-based gambling. So what's going to make you go for this particular title? It's not like there's a shortage of poker games around, is there? Apart from the inclusion of the aforementioned pros, the feel of being at a poker table has been transposed to the PSP with more realistic player reactions and a load more on-screen action to spice up what could easily become a dull game to watch. The range of modes announced is impressive as well, with 14 types of poker as well as six multi-player versions. With some strange, but innovative features like a bluffing mini-game and the unique ability to link up with your PS2-playing cousins, *WCP2* looks to be the king of poker games.

Sevens and fives, eh? We're gonna buy us this pot, cos we sure as hell can't win it

This is a depressing sight. Howard Lederer down to his last two grand in change. How the mighty have fallen

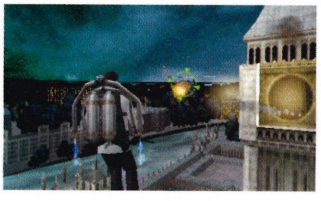
The name's vision... Activision

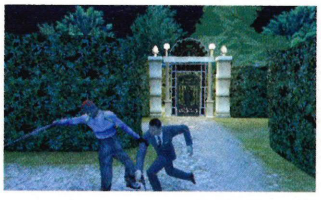
Activision get Bond in their sights

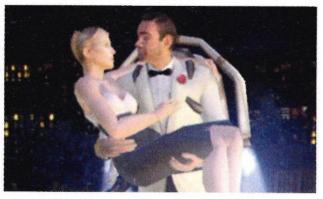
James Bond's a popular guy. Not only with the ladies, but with us regular movie-going folk too it seems. Whether the new blonde Bond in the form of Daniel Craig will be able to repeat the success of previous stars remains to be seen, but with total box-office takings topping $3.6 billion since Mr. Bond brought his particular brand of humour, action, glamour and style to the big screen in 1962, it's easy to see how this particular action franchise could be like candy to all those salivating publishers out there. Sadly for all the rest though, Activision has successfully snaffled the rights to publish every *Bond* game, including those not directly linked with a particular movie until 2014.

MGM seemed delighted with the affiliation, causing the vice president to spout the following: "Activision's proven expertise in developing cutting-edge games, their core competency in managing large movie franchises combined with the global appeal of the *James Bond* property, will create a new benchmark for the next-generation gaming experience. We are excited to be partnered with Activision and look forward to a long and mutually successful partnership."

Exactly how they managed to wrestle this particular franchise from the almighty EA, even after the abysmal *From Russia With Love*, is a mystery to us. Given the hit-and-miss nature of previous titles in the franchise, we're hoping for something a little more consistent from Activision over the next eight years.







NEWSFLASH

Double D

Publishers Atari has finally jumped on the fantasy bandwagon with its forthcoming release of *Dungeons And Dragons: Tactics*, a turn-based strategy due to hit shelves later this year. We're expecting a profoundly deep gaming experience, as this version features the *D&D* ruleset 3.5 and includes downloadable content to top up the gameplay. Replete with the regulation *D&D* character classes plus a number of prestige classes and Psionic characters, you can be sure we'll have our etched broadsword of might ready for a preview in a few months time.

Help! Fire!

Fire International, the media management folk responsible for the Xploder cheat system is set to launch a new range of products for the PSP. Focusing on media management and incorporating a new generation of 'iTunes style' software, this new batch of media management systems cover everything from movie and music conversion to digital image transfer and game save management. Check out **www.xploder.net** for more details.

Flashy git!

Newgrounds.com have gone PSP friendly with a brand new PSP flash portal. Taking advantage of the new version 2.7 firmware update, **Newgrounds.com** is offering all manner of interwebnet goodies including wallpapers, trailers and an immense range of flash content for portable perusal.

Wii, Wii, Wii, all the way home

The news that the Nintendo Revolution has changed its name to the Nintendo Wii (as in wee) has been greeted with skepticism throughout the games industry, with forums ablaze with some of the wittiest pun-work ever conceived. Check out **wii.nintendo.com** for proof, but if you ask us, we're finding Nintendo's Wii just a little hard to swallow.

RIVALRY

DS VERSUS PSP

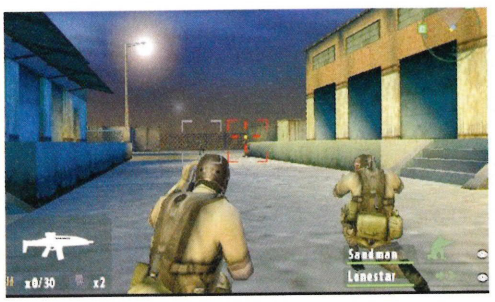
Race for the handheld lead still tight

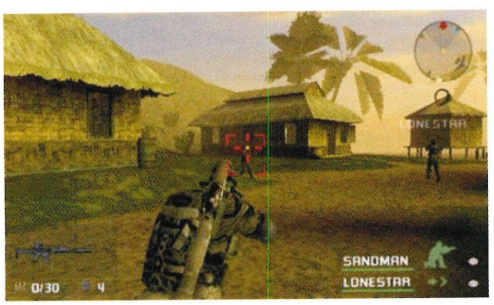
It seems the battle for handheld supremacy still rages between the Nintendo and Sony camps – despite the obvious difference in target markets – making this particular competition one of the closest in console history. March's console sales figures for the PSP and DS in the US were stupidly close, with the PSP just pipping the DS to the winning post. Sony managed to shift 186,000 units Stateside, whilst the DS managed a close second with 184,000. We're hailing this as a bonus for gamers everywhere, because where there's fierce competition, great games are sure to follow – just look at what happened when Nintendo squared off against Sega in the era of the Mega Drive and SNES consoles. Both handhelds enjoyed strong software releases during March with *Metroid Prime: Hunters* and *Tetris DS* going up against *Daxter* and *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror*. Of course, all this is small potatoes compared with the mighty PS2, which managed to shift over 270,000 units in the same period. Funnily enough, the last generation's handheld leader, the GBA, beat both of the newer consoles by some way, still selling over 200,000 per month, whilst the Gizmondo, by our reckoning, smashed all previous records and sold one unit – woo-hoo. Further dwarfing the handheld market, it's worth noting that the biggest game out across the pond in March was Square Enix's *Kingdom Hearts 2*, which managed to sell well in excess of 600,000 copies. ■

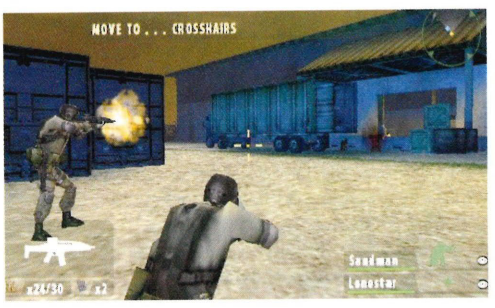
SOCOM SPRINGS A LEAK

Fireteam Bravo 2 announced in error

Ever with our ears to the ground, we've managed to pick up some dodgy rumours about the next in the line of *SOCOM* titles headed for your PSP. Whilst we'll happily admit that this slip-of-the-tongue announcement was something of a cock-up on the part of some lowdown Sony fetch, we're equally happy to report on it. Apparently following on from the recently released *Fireteam Bravo*, the imaginatively titled *Fireteam Bravo 2* has been touted in a mysteriously posted press release to have a plethora of enhanced functions and additions, such as non-linear missions, as well as a reward system including elements of local influence that give you bonuses for winning hearts and minds. Also publicised were ten new multi-player maps, three new game types – Capture The Flag, Tug Of War and Target – as well as a superior Crosstalk system. Quite exactly where this came from is something of a mystery, but we're pretty sure that whoever it was will be in for a stealthy SEAL hit before long. Find out more in our E3 feature. ■







NEWSFLASH

Oh what a knight

Tenchu creator K2, has announced a brand new RPG for the PSP – *Valhalla Knights*. Whilst it's not penned in for a European release, Japanese publisher Marvelous Interactive looks likely to send it our way, given its suitability to Western audiences. With group-based combat, plenty of leveling up and inordinate weapon and armour loadout choices, this could be a real winner in the RPG stakes.

Double-take remakes

Fans of *Sid Meier* rejoice! We've heard a few whisperings from within the ranks of publisher Take 2 that *Sid Meier's Pirates!* is swashbuckling its way to the PSP. If that doesn't excite you however, they're also rumoured to be releasing *The Da Vinci Code*, *Dungeon Siege* and numerous 2K Sports titles as well. More next month.

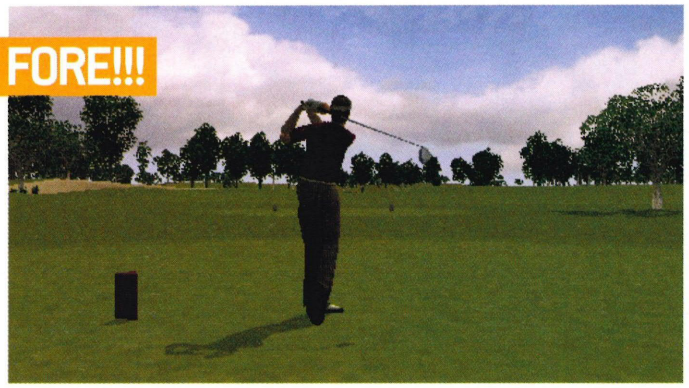
GTA port

All those PS2 owners out there will be glad to hear that the PS2 version of *Liberty City Stories* will be hitting our shores fairly soon. Scheduled for a European release on 9 June, and retailing at £19.99, the big screen iteration is likely to rouse a whole new level of interest in one of the biggest franchises of all time, especially considering Rockstar's application for the trademark of *Vice City Stories* earlier this year.

Snooker loopy

Snooker fans rejoice, as after Graeme Dott's recent victory over Peter Ebdon in the Masters, you've got something else to look forward to. Yup, you guessed it, *World Snooker Challenge 2007* is set for release later this year and features over a hundred of the world's best snooker players as well as 10 official tournaments and a new mode combining snooker, pool and billiards.

FORE!!!



WORLD TOUR GOLF COMING TO PSP

Oxygen strokes for PSPar

Let's face it, regardless of how much we've been told that *Tiger Wood's PGA Tour Golf* encapsulates the sport, it's a country mile from actually being out on the course. When you're out there on the links it's unlikely that you'll ever hit a ball hard enough to see sparks fly, and it's equally impossible to put spin on the ball after you've hit the thing. People don't do dances on the green, in fact it's positively frowned upon, and it's silly to think that buying yourself £750,000's worth of apparel will put an extra 10% on your putting ability. Indeed, before the mighty Tiger Woods entered the virtual scene, the humble golf title had a minimal following and an even smaller variation in gameplay. Three timed button presses could educe a perfect shot, leaving all but the most hardcore of golfing fans with little satisfaction.

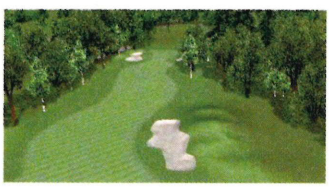
It's with this in mind then, that publisher Oxygen Elite has announced its upcoming golf title, *World Tour Golf,* across multiple formats, not least the PSP. Having sampled the delights of some very early code we were struck most by the game's sheer, all-out realism. There really is nothing present that isn't as realistic as it possibly can be. Take the Pro Stroke Control System, for example: rather than choosing a type of shot such as chip, punch or flop, the individual motions, adjustments and distributions determine the path of your ball. Rather than some arbitrary power bar, or other bizarre on-screen indicator, the swing method forces the player to consider timing with every shot. Distributing your weight properly, as well as the movement of the club, is the only way to achieve great shots and for those in the know, the huge array of options open to them can combine to create any kind of shot you like. Lean back, open the clubface and reduce the power, and you have the perfect shot for getting over obstacles, while leaning forward and closing the clubface will give you a shot with plenty of bounce and run.

Another exciting prospect is the full course editor and a massive career mode built around your worldwide renown. There are also a range of additions to the traditional golfing formula, such as the sometimes strange, but wholly realistic views leaving you feeling like you're actually there. One of the greatest joys of golf, as we're sure fans will be aware of, is that each shot is different and *World Tour Golf* aims to do away with identikit shots and the complacency that so easily slips into golfing titles.

So, along with some hot golfing voice talent, the extensive career mode and a range of tournaments, challenges and training modes, *World Tour Golf* looks to be something of a revolution in the genre. ■

Wow, look at those gorgeous rolling links. Breathtaking, isn't it?

Look mate, don't hit it there, that'd be stupid



WRAPSTAR SKIN UP

Gimme some skin man

We all get a little bored of even the greatest things. Complacency slips into every relationship at some point or another. You know, when you start snapping at each other, maybe you get into a heated argument over some ridiculous quibble in a public place, you start looking at each other with barely concealed contempt. You both know what it's about. It's not about whose turn it was to take out the rubbish or what colour you should paint the spare room, it's about a lack of pizzazz, pure and simple. The bond between you and your PSP is no different, y'know, and sooner or later you'll be eyeing up other, sexier machines and eventually, you'll find your self looking for an out.

Don't risk it. Spice up your portable life with Wrapster's new range of pre-cut skins for your PSP, and you'll never have to worry about losing interest in your handheld relationship. Formed of cast vinyl and originally coming in five designs – namely Leopard, Flux, Wood Camo, Blue Rain and Union Jack – these sassy little numbers not only look the part, but protect your precious portable from the daily stresses and strains of being a PSP. Wrapstar has promised an assortment of designs to further the range, including licensed brands, sports talent and even pop stars. We can't wait for a Chico Time skin. ■

UK CHARTS

We've been keeping an eye on...

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	Football Manager 2006	SEGA	Like numbers? Like football? Try this, it's got it all.
02	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Essentials	UBISOFT	Essential, massive, bangin', happnin'. Whoop whoop!
03	Socom: US Navy Seals Fireteam Bravo	SCEE	Only just out, and the second one's just been announced.
04	GTA: Liberty City Stories	Take 2	It's like that old geezer in the corner of the pub. It never goes away.
05	FIFA Street 2	EA	Silly footy fun, *FIFA Street* is so urban it hurts.
06	Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	With video footage of the next in the evolutionary tree, we're excited.
07	Daxter	SCEE	The furry orange ottsel climbs his way up the charts
08	Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	We could put an inane itchy ring joke here, but we won't.
09	WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2006	THQ	Big sweaty men in Lycra beating the crap out of each other. Tops.
10	From Russia With Love	EA	Great licence, terrible game. What a shame.
11	King Kong: Official Game Of The Movie	Ubisoft	Another licence with limited appeal, but you lot seem to like buying it.
12	Prince Of Persia: Revelations	Ubisoft	The prince is still hanging around the charts with his acrobatic skills.
13	Lemmings	SCEE	Oh no! They're slipping, but not quite over the edge yet.
14	Outrun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	SEGA	Ridiculous racing action with more drift than one of Simon's farts.
15	Championship Manager 2006	Eidos	*Championship Manager* loses out to the superior side down in the relegation zone.
16	Formula 1 Grand Prix	SCEE	Yawn, Formula 1 again. Not quite as good as it should have been.
17	MX VS ATV On The Edge	THQ	Not as extreme as the title makes out, but fun enough for a bit.
18	World Tour Soccer	SCEE	A sturdy title, but not the best of the footy bunch this month.
19	Midway Arcade Treasures: Extended Play	Midway	A full-on burst of retro lovin' from those lovely guys at Midway.
20	Fight Night Round 3	EA	Bippety bip bap bop, and down it goes for the twenty count.

Football Manager 06

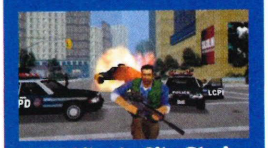
Football Manager's arrival in the office has seen everyone coming in with far more facial hair than normal, and giant bags under their eyes. C'mon guys, it's only football.

From Russia With Love

What on earth is this tripe still doing here? The only saving grace is Sean Connery's dulcet tones, although he sounds a bit like a nasty Glaswegian drunkard nowadays.

Midway Arcade Treasures

We love a bit of retro. Any young'uns out there won't appreciate titles like the original *Mortal Kombat*, *Defender* and *Joust*, but to us they're worth the asking price easily.

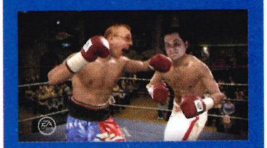


GTA: Liberty City Stories

When we're 80 and collecting our tiny pensions, *Liberty City Stories* will still probably be somewhere around the top of the charts. This may outlive our grandchildren.

King Kong

If you like linear games you're in luck, as this is the most linear you'll ever find on the PSP. It's not necessarily a terrible thing though, as the game's actually quite fun.



Fight Night Round 3

Simon and Tom have been battling it out on *Fight Night* ever since it came into the office. This month we'll see who gets crowned top dog in the **Go>Play** office. More next month.

WORLDWIDE CHARTS

Don't say we never do anything for you. Look, we've been to the States and Japan investigating what they're buying...

USA CHARTS

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	SCEA	Riiiiggghht. Top-draw third-person shooter action from Gabe and the Gang.
02	Daxter	SCEA	Another high-quality title, only this time you control an ottsel.
03	Metal Gear Acid 2	Konami	Solid Snake puts his poker face on for *Acid*.
04	SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	SCEA	Those seals are back in action on the PSP.
05	Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	Capcom	Probably the best retro collection in the world ever. Probably.
06	Ys: The Ark Of Napishtim	Konami	Kind of like a bad guy meet and greet. Still a funny name though.
07	Me & My Katamari	Namco	Da, da, da, da, da, da ,daa, daa, da, da, Katamari on the swing...
08	Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	SOE	Hit the dungeons looking for all that glorious booty. Mine, all mine!
09	Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	Lara takes her leave of crappy games and makes a decent outing on the PSP.
10	Megaman Maverick Hunter X	Capcom	Oh look, a fire boss battle. Do you think I should use water to kill it?

JAPANESE CHARTS

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	Naruto: Narutimate Portable ~ Mugenjo no Maki	Bandi	If you speak Japanese you might love this. We don't, so we can't tell.
02	Talkman	SCEI	Think of all those crazy foreigners speaking English thanks to *Talkman*.
03	DJ Max Portable	Pentavision	Create your own tunes or save yourself some money and just hum to yourself.
04	Initial D Street Stage	SEGA	Awesome arcade racer coinciding with the release of the movie.
05	Bleach Heat The Soul 2	SCEI	Cel-shaded fighter from the land of the rising sun. Think *DBZ* and you're there.
06	Gradius Portable	Konami	Five *Gradius* titles in one pack. Any colour you want, as long as it's *Gradius*.
07	Dragonball Z Shin Budokai	Atari	Funky flying and fighting from the bizarre world of *DragonBall Z*.
08	Street Fighter Zero 3 Double Upper	Capcom	Who doesn't like *Street Fighter 2*? We love it.
09	Boku No Watashi No Katamari Damacy	Namco	Rollin', rollin', rollin, rawhide. One of the must-own titles.
10	Valkyrie Profile Lenneth	Square Enix	Classic RPG remake. Works really well on the PSP we've been told.

RELEASE LIST

THE HANDHELD HAREM IS BURSTING AT THE SEAMS. DELIGHT AWAITS!

OUT THIS MONTH JUNE

The calm before the storm, this month's releases are a little thin on the ground. Don't fear though, check out the opposite page, it's bursting with E3 announcements

FRIDAY 2 JUNE

WORLD POKER TOUR
2K Games (£25)
We're still pretty rubbish at poker, but with all these poker games coming out we're bound to get a little better by the end of the year. Las Vegas, watch out, here we come!

POPOLOCROIS
Agetec (£30)
Silly name, even sillier game. *PoPoLoCrois* is as old school an RPG as you'll ever find. Could be considered a little boring by some, but heaps of longevity nonetheless.

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2
SCEE (£35)
Sony takes a slightly different approach to the beautiful game to avoid competing with *FIFA* and *Pro Evo*, will it pay off?

FRIDAY 9 JUNE

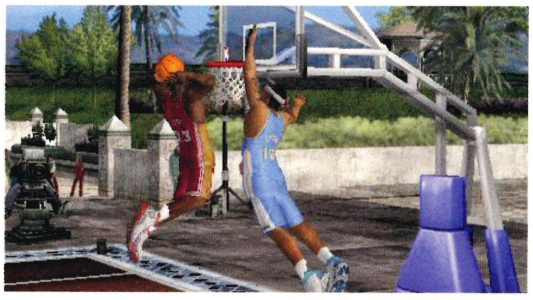
TALKMAN
SCEE (£35)
Just in time for your summer holiday is this handy phrase book on a UMD. It's not all boring learning though and there are plenty of mini-games to keep you occupied and slyly teach you stuff.

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND
Eidos (£35)
Lara is back with a bang in her first PSP outing. It's a cracking little game too and is sure to keep you occupied for a fair few hours, especially when you have a go at the multi-player modes.

FRIDAY 23 JUNE

PQ: PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT
D3Publisher (£25)
We've been assured that this block puzzler from D3Publisher will be available for you to buy this month, despite having been put back a good few times.

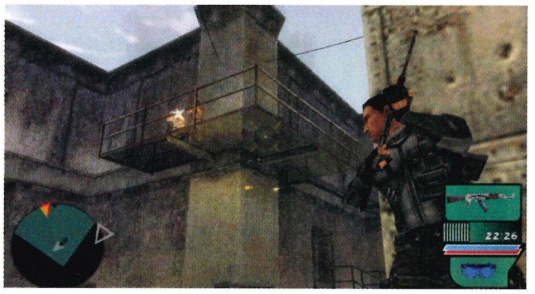
NBA BALLERS: REBOUND
Midway (£35)
Nothing particularly original but *Ballers* does provide some enjoyable solo and multi-player fun that's perfectly suited to a handheld console.



FRIDAY 30 JUNE

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST
(Buena Vista Games) £35
Oooohh arrrr, me hearties! Splice the mainbrace and shiver me timbers. This is sooo piratey we cut off our hands and attached hooks, bought a parrot and started wearing an eyepatch. Nice!

SYPHON FILTER
SCEE (£35)
We can't wait for this one. We've been bapping each other from one end of the office to the other for a good few weeks now, and it doesn't get boring, ever. Huzzah for Gabe Logan!



LOCOROCO
SCEE (£35)
Big wobbly blobs on your PSP. We haven't had a bash at the full game yet, but with all the demos floating around we know this is going to take the world by storm.

Aaah, look at all the cute little LocoRocos

OUT NEXT MONTH JULY

CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION
Capcom

CAROL VORDERMAN'S SUDOKU
Xplosiv (£20)

CARS
THQ

DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NY - THE TAKEOVER
EA

EARACHE EXTREME METAL RACING
Metro 3D

INFECTED
THQ

MIAMI VICE THE GAME
Vivendi

WORLD OF POOL
Ghostlight

Killzone is gonna be awesome, fact!

BLIMEY! THAT'S NOT ALL! 2006

AUGUST

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF - G-UNIT EDITION
Vivendi

MADDEN NFL 07
EA

SEPTEMBER

B-BOY
SCEE

GANGS OF LONDON
SCEE

L.A. RUSH
Midway

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY
LucasArts

PILOT ACADEMY
Rising Star

POWER STONE COLLECTION
Capcom

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION
SCEE

OCTOBER

ATV OFFROAD FURY PRO
SCEE

DAVE MIRRA BMX CHALLENGE
Crave

DUNGEON SIEGE: THRONE OF AGONY
2K Games

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES
Rockstar

NBA 07
SCEE

NOVEMBER

ERAGON AND SAPHIRA
Vivendi

KILLZONE: LIBERATION
SCEE

PAINKILLER: HELL WARS
DreamCatcher Int.

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8
Activision

TBA

300: MARCH TO GLORY
Eidos

ACE COMBAT X: SKIES OF DECEPTION
SCEE

APE ACADEMY 2
SCEE

ARTHUR AND THE MINIMOYS
Atari

AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER
THQ

BATTLEZONE
Atari

BLACK & WHITE CREATURES
THQ

BLISS ISLAND
Codemasters

BLITZ: THE LEAGUE
Midway

BOMBERMAN
Konami

CALL OF DUTY 3
Activision

CHESS BATTLE
Konami

CODED ARMS: CONTAGION
Konami

CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII
Square Enix

DEAD HEAD FRED
D3Publisher

DEATH, JR. 2
Konami

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: TACTICS
Atari

DUNGEON EXPLORER
Hudson Entertainment

EARTHWORM JIM
Atari

EVERY EXTENDED EXTRA
Buena Vista Games

FIELD COMMANDER
Ubisoft

GENERATION OF CHAOS
Nippon Ichi

GHOST RIDER
2K Games

GRAN TURISMO 4 MOBILE
SCEE

GUILTY GEAR JUDGEMENT
THQ

HELLBOY
Konami

HOT PXL
Atari

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES
Eidos

LUMINES II
Buena Vista Games

MARVEL TRADING CARD GAME
Konami

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE
Activision

MERCURY MELTDOWN
Ignition

METAL GEAR AC!D 2
Konami

METAL GEAR SOLID DIGITAL COMIC
Konami

METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS
Konami

METAL SLUG COLLECTION
SNK

MLB '06: THE SHOW
SCEE

MONSTER HOUSE
THQ

MORTAL KOMBAT UNCHAINED
Midway

MOTOGP
SCEE

NASCAR 07
EA

OPEN SEASON
Ubisoft

PLANET PSP
SCEE

POCKET RACERS
Konami

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6
Konami

RENGOKU 2
Konami

SILENT HILL ORIGINS
Konami

SOCOM US NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO 2
SCEE

SONIC RIVALS
SEGA

SPINOUT
Ghostlight

STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT
Bethesda Softworks

STEEL HORIZONS
Konami

STREET SUPREMACY
Konami

SUPERMAN RETURNS: THE VIDEOGAME
EA

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE
SEGA

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED
Atari

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
Namco Bandai

ULTIMATE GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS
Capcom

UNTOLD LEGENDS: THE WARRIOR'S CODE
Ubisoft

WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2007
SEGA

WORLD TOUR GOLF
Oxygen

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2007
THQ

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Family matters

I need help! I bought *Championship Manager* a couple of days ago, and just can't stop playing. I know that's the whole point of it, but it really is ruining my life. What's made it worse is that we've just found out that my wife is preggers, and of course, is being that much more demanding, what with all those extra hormones and whatnot. I've always been a fan of footy management sims, but in the past they've been confined to a bulky computer or console meaning that the temptation isn't there for me to attack it every spare second of my day. I honestly think that if it came down to it, I might conceivably choose *Champ Manager* over my family. Help!

Duncan Brooke, Eastbourne

Hmmm, that's a tricky one Duncan. Being amongst the most passionate PSP owners in the country, we can sympathise with your predicament, as we've been through it all ourselves at some point. You have two choices, give up everything and allow your PSP to become your new family, or just get sneaky. It's a bit like having an extra marital affair, just make as many excuses as you can to be out of sight of your lady. Perhaps get a potting shed, a train set in the attic or join a club. That way you can legitimately demand time on your own without arousing suspicion. Granted that doesn't deal with the root cause of your addiction, so it would be sensible at some point to get some professional advice – we are, after all, just fellow addicts. We wouldn't listen to us to be honest.

Whassup Go>Play,

Hope you don't mind, but I've got a couple of questions that have been getting on my nerves recently. The first is about your mag. Why, every month, is one of the team caught doing a stupid finger gun salute? First former Editor Miles Guttery, then new Dep Ed Simon Griffin, and then last month I thought it had passed me by, but I caught sight of Staffer Tom subtly pointing his six shooters at the camera in the reviews section. Dork. The other thing bugging me is why you hired a film reviewer who clearly just doesn't like films. Eight out of every ten films you feature get rubbish write-ups. Let's face it, if anyone's watching UMDs, as nice as they are, they're not going to be the most highbrow of film lovers are they? Why not tone down the bile and ease up on them?

Anyway, great work, keep it up.

Drew Shirtest, Cardiff

It's always nice to read that you lot care enough about the mag to send in your honest criticism. As far as the finger work you were talking about, it's an age-old tradition (well five issues worth of tradition at least) initiated by the great Miles Guttery in

F.A.Q.

Mail to: goplay@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Putting out the fires of those burning PSP questions

› Dear, oh dear, oh dear **Go>Play**, what have you done? I hate to point it out, but your top 50 PSone games you'd like to see on PSP was all wrong. How on earth could you put *Gran Turismo 2* at the hallowed number one spot, above the amazing *Resident Evil*? How you can put *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis* (a plainly rubbish game!) only one place behind *Tomb Raider* is beyond me. What on earth were you thinking? I would have put *Final Fantasy VII* at number one, closely followed by *Soul Blade*, a title you deemed worthy of a pathetic number seven. Don't get me wrong, it was an ace read, bringing back all those memories of the magic of the PSone, but I say it again! You are so wrong it's not true. I call for a recount.

Brian O'Hare, Belfast

As you say, this was OUR top 50. We didn't really expect an agreement amongst even a small percentage of readers, as we couldn't even decide on them between ourselves, but what we hope to have delivered is a syringe of retro nostalgia right to the heart in anticipation of the PSone downloads coming soon. We hopefully managed to shove in a few of your favourites, a few of our favourites and some of those titles that everyone loved.

› For a PSP-based magazine, you're pretty down on the main data

STAR LETTER

Electronic Irritation Expo

I don't get it, I really don't. What's all the fuss about this silly E3 rubbish? It's a self-promoted event that doesn't do the industry any favours at all. Granted it's held at the perfect time for any hardware releases, giving manufacturers ample time to hype their products before Christmas, but as far as software goes it makes no sense whatsoever. Think about it. Publishers spend the year gearing up for it, so that games often have to be needlessly rushed out to fulfil milestone criteria based solely on an exhibition. That's one indisputably bad thing right there, and here's another one that completely baffles me. Why, oh why does it have to be just before summer? I mean Christ, what's wrong with these people's heads? Games shown at E3, which are inevitably the publishers' strongest titles, wind up getting released right in the middle of summer. Just right exactly when we're less likely to play them. I call it stupid.

Paul Whitchel, Amsterdam

You may call it stupid, and indeed, we're not major fans of the event ourselves, as it stunts the activities of publishers pretty much right the way through from the end of the Christmas period until now. The trouble is however, that with such an event, you can make a real impact on all the drunken journalists, thus getting maximum coverage for your product. Also, whilst many titles shown at E3 do come out in the summer, with development schedules getting longer and longer, more and more games exhibited there are due for release later in the year. The fact is, however, that it will only increase in importance as the years go by, so it's something you'll just have to get used to we're afraid.

STAR LETTER
Joytech Media Amp for every star letter

Wow. Look how funky these E3 types are. If only we could be as cool as them. Sniff

storage medium for it, namely UMDs. All that reporting on the state of UMD sales and how they're going down the pan makes me feel like I've backed a losing horse with the PSP. So come on, buck up your ideas and get behind the format, as watching films on the PSP may not be amazing from an aesthetic point of view, but as a cool enjoyable activity to do while you're on a long journey, you can't beat it. Okay, they may be a little expensive, I'll give you that, but really guys, you should ease up on them.

Will Short, Theakston

Hey, we don't make the news, we just report on it, and there's no doubt that UMDs are doomed. How long it takes is a different matter. Sony could drop the price to something a little more reasonable, then they might do a little better, but it's difficult to imagine that the UMD film will be able to survive that much longer.

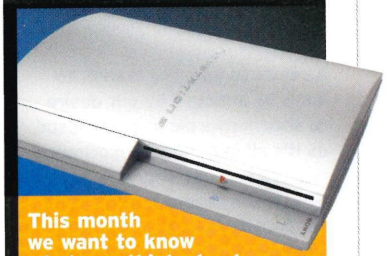
> Great mag guys, keep up the good work, but I have a question about your cheats pages. The PSP is a portable device so who is going to buy a magazine, sit at home and stroll through a walkthrough? Why not get rid of those pages, most gamers are grown-ups nowadays and we don't really need solutions.

Rodney Piper, via email

You'd be surprised at how many folk feel the need to cheat, even if they are all grown up and anyway, >>

HOT TOPIC

What's on everyone's brains this month?



This month we want to know what you think about the PS3's connectivity with the PSP. Will it be everything you dreamed it'd be, or will it just be another gimmick to give publishers something to write on the back of the box?

Well, the PSP can already hook itself to the PS2, and look how much use that particular function has got. The only game I can think that uses it is *Daxter* and *Jak X* racing, and even then it's a pretty minimal addition.

Luke, Somerset

It all depends on exactly how much effort Sony puts into the function. If the link-up isn't merely a silly way to transfer saved games, and involves expanding your games and making use of the PSP's mobility, we could be in for something of a treat. Otherwise, you'd be right, it's just a novelty that an innovative developer might possibly make use of. Possibly.

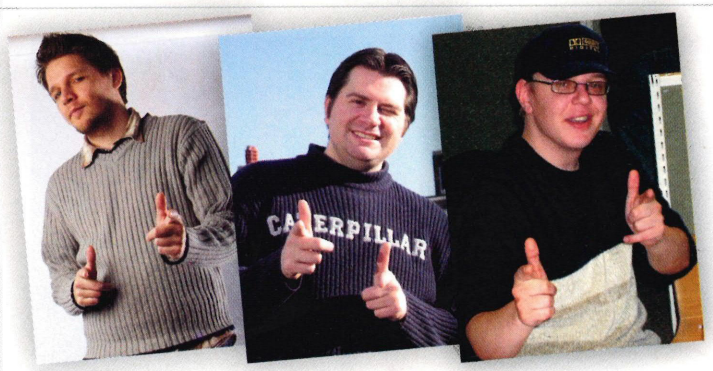
Dom, email

When it was first announced, Sony said it would be able to make your breakfast for you. This is clearly hogwash, but I imagine that Sony will have to make use of the PSP in order to get one up on Microsoft, given that they've already got a year's head start. I hope it does do something magical, as that'll really make me feel all warm and fuzzy inside.

Keighly O'Donnel, Whitstable

I doubt it'll make a difference to the gaming scene as a whole, I mean what can a PSP and a PS3 do together that is really all that amazing. I know there'll be easy downloads and stuff, but I suspect it won't be all that mind-blowing.

Tim Allan, Scotland



a salute to you, the reader, so don't be annoyed by our desire to shoehorn a pic in every issue, as it's all in honour of glorious readers such as yourself. Recently however, it seems to have been adopted by Tom as a kind of wordless (and utterly charmless) chat-up line. Needless to say, it hasn't been very effective. As far as Aaron's craving to slate every film he watches goes, well we're not sure about that either. Given the amount of time he spends watching them and doing Mark Kermode impressions, we'd have thought he might actually quite enjoy them. Not so it seems. We'll pass on your gripes though, don't worry.

Vorder police

What on earth is Carol Vorderman doing? Really! She's been on TV for years now, happily presenting letters with the dexterity of a surgeon and the chirpy demeanour of a holiday rep, but now she seems unhappy with life post Whiteley, and thinks she can just slap her name all over some sub par Sudoku game. This really is out of order! It's licensing gone crazy. I never thought Carol would stoop this low. It's shocking.

Roy Masdedge, Lowestoft

Give it a rest mate! Please, there's no need to be so uptight, just calm down a bit will you? We're not saying *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku* is going to be the most mind-blowing of puzzlers, but that's no reason to just tear into her, is it? Look, the lady clearly loves her maths, so why on earth shouldn't she be allowed to put her name on something she loves? You never know, we might be seeing *Carol Vorderman's Pro Sudoku Underground Remix* in a few years when the franchise has got off the ground, so just shut up about it, eh.

>> there's nothing wrong with accepting a helping hand every now and again, especially if it enhances enjoyment.

> Yawn. E3 again. Cripes I'm so bored of it! At least this year there might be something interesting like some hands-on experience with the PS3, but apart from that it's bound to be dull. I hope you don't use it as an excuse to just fill your pages with rubbish about the multitude of first looks you got there, 'cos if so it'd be a very dull magazine.

Henry Wilkes, Somerset

No one seems to like E3 today, maybe it's a hormonal thing. We've said it before, and we'll more than likely say it again, but it'll be a very different matter once all the juicy gossip gets about and the excitement about the upcoming releases reaches fever pitch.

GO>PLAY

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Printed by
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Go>Play is distributed by Seymour Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT
☎ 020 7396 8000

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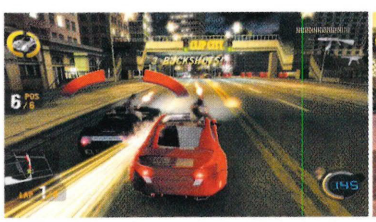
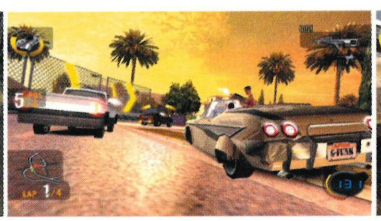
Urban street racing

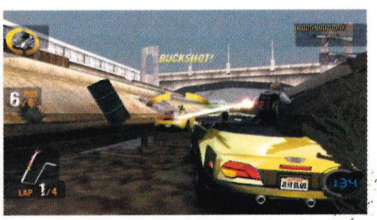
and furious firefights collide as you crush your rivals in fierce weapon-based combat.



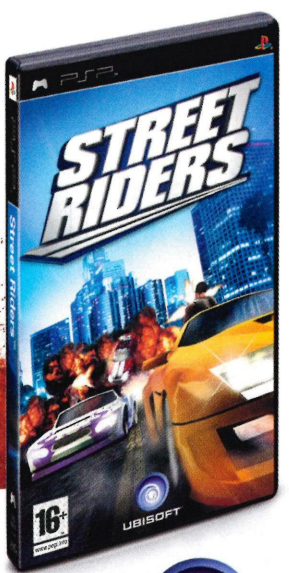
Boost, swerve and shoot through **14 modes** and **66 missions.**



Punch the gas and defend your block with **14 weapons** and **30 vehicles.**



Face up to rival racers in **45 multiplayer stages.**



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EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 22 cars on track
- 8 players online
- Unlockable classic cars
- Downloadable stats
- Schumacher's stupid face (why?)

The first ever videogame to feature aids

FORMULA ONE 06

OUT: JULY '06

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-8**

WHAT IS IT?
Formula One – expensive cars, hot women and Schumacher/ Alonso winning everything

Formula One is really exciting! That's probably what people used to say ten years ago, which is around the same time Michael Schumacher decided to jump into a Ferrari and win everything ever. As a result, everyone got bored. "There's no competition," they cried. The rules were changed, the qualifying sessions altered, everything tweaked to be as anti-Michael Schumacher as possible.

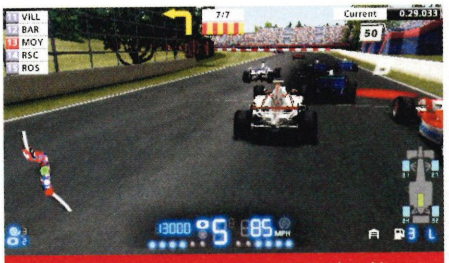
It worked! Instead of wide-grinned, granite-chinned Schumacher scaring small children with his awkward grin from the podium post-race, we have scraggy poodle-haired loser Fernando Alonso winning everything instead. Sigh.

Fortunately, this is why the Good Lord made videogames. Partly because he had lots of spare bits and wires lying around that he didn't know what to do with, mostly because he was as bored with Formula One as everyone else. Hence *Formula One 06*, a game dedicated to the art of humbling Schumacher and bapping Alonso, ensuring that the virtual crowds don't fall asleep after the first corner when only the small chance of Takuma Sato ramming into someone at 120mph is what keeps people watching.

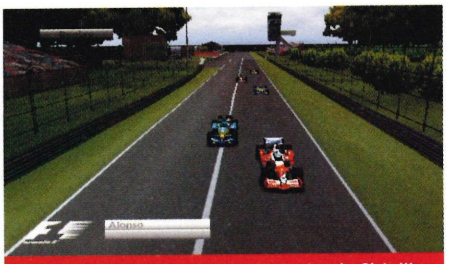
Formula One 06 will be exciting. It should be exciting anyway, as it won't have the pointed inaccessibility that these games traditionally have, so you snap your PSP in why-the-[censored]-am-I-playing-this-[censored]-[censored]-[censored]-thing frustration after three corners. For example, you now have racing aids. No, not the disease. That wouldn't really help much. Rather, racing aids are tips that appear to help you spray victory champagne in David Coulthard's face rather than spend the entire race driving into other cars (unless you're Takuma Sato, in which case you're entertaining the virtual crowd). In addition to that is a patronising sounding 'Learning Centre' where racing gimps can learn all about the rules and regulations, what flags mean what, blah blah blah. And in addition to that, you're also advised on how different settings affect your performance. Basically, even if you don't know which part of the car is the front, this game will teach you. And if it can't teach you, then it will give you aids. Ahem.

If all that hand-holding sounds a bit too weak for the Formula One beast lurking within, then there's the option to turn aids off, something

The infamous first corner where crashes are frequent and anger is inevitable. Don't crash, fool!



In case you've been wondering what racing aids looks like, here you go, captured in all its glory



Oh look, bloody Alonso is in the lead again. Sigh. We wouldn't mind him so much if he cut his hair

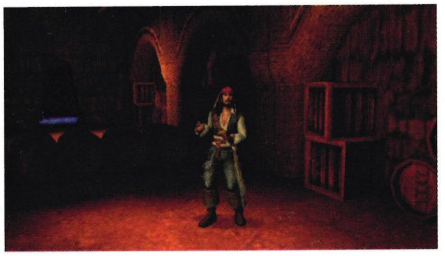
doctors have been trying to do for years. The hardcore petrolheads can go straight in with no help whatsoever and play this in the serious simulation style it was probably intended. It's those same, slightly scary hardcore enthusiasts who will get the most mileage from the career mode. You can play as a real F1 driver, because it would be a bit of a rubbish game if you couldn't, but you can also play as the chief engineer and test driver. Which isn't very exciting. You can play as the chief engineer and test driver! No, it's still not exciting us. Apparently, the idea is you can set up cars by doing test laps, tweaking settings and so on. Why? You can also "watch the actual race unfold from the pits." Double why? Maybe the hardcore petrolheads can write in and explain the appeal because we certainly don't get it.

So far, the network abilities have been the usual touted features and one especially weird one. The usual touted features are race online, compete in a season and... well, that's it. It's a serious simulation, they're not going to start playing around with capture the flag modes. Weird feature - you can apparently play online against PlayStation2 owners. What? Maybe we're reading the press release wrong. "Race online between PlayStation2 and PSP!" Not much room for misinterpretation there. Will PlayStation2 owners get to see slightly blockier cars suddenly appear on their track? Will PSP owners get to blame their losses on having to use the nub rather than analogue stick?

[You now have racing aids. Not the disease, that wouldn't help]

And that, folks, is *Formula One 06*. It's shaping up to be the ultimate Formula One game on handheld but that's no surprise to anyone. The ace up its sleeve is the PSP joining PlayStation2 aspect of the online mode, a clever trick that's sure to draw the attention of all PSP owners. Even the attention of those who hate Formula One games? Sure. After all, what else would racing aids be for? ■ **Ryan King**

WE SAY ***Formula One 06*** **won't be everyone's cup of tea but there's enough to cater for all skill levels, interesting online modes and, of course, racing aids.**



Why are pirates called pirates? Because they just aaaaarrrrr

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

OUT: JUNE '06

Publisher **Buena Vista** / Developer **Amaze Entertainment** / Players **1-4**

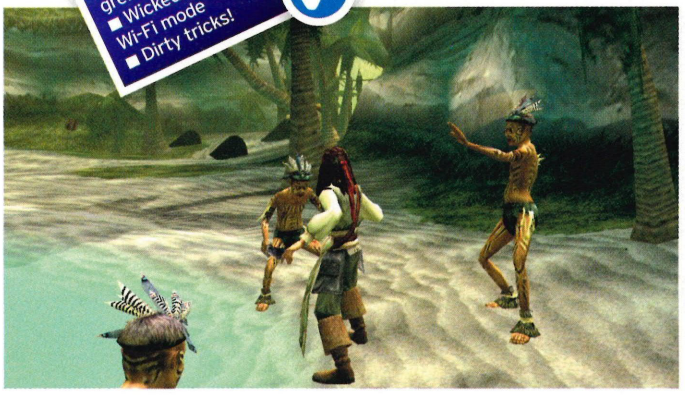
WHAT IS IT?
The only real videogame incarnation of this year's soon-to-be movie smash hit

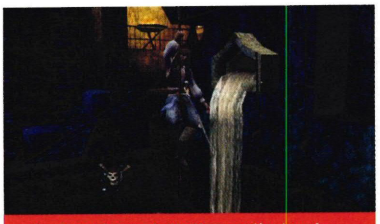
EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Ten levels
- Over 14 weapons including swords, grenades and bottles
- Wicked four-player Wi-Fi mode
- Dirty tricks!

We love pirates here at **Go>Play**, in fact, most of us have at least one pirate outfit for all those impromptu fancy dress parties we have. Some of us spend days on end 'oooooohhhhaaaarrrr-ing', splicing the main brace and shivering each others' timbers. We each have a parrot, of course, and although you may not think it, given our manly gait, we also sport a wooden leg. It makes typing and wiping our asses a bit of a pain, but our adoration of piracy has lead us to replace our hands with hooks as well, and we've all chipped in to buy a small piratey frigate and go sailing, smuggling and pillaging at the weekends. We even have our very own caves, where we hide our booty – that's real booty of course, not the substandard ghetto type you see so much of nowadays – and even a Jolly Roger billowing outside our window to put the fear into all the other mags. We hide treasure and mark it with an 'X', and very occasionally attack and board other magazines.

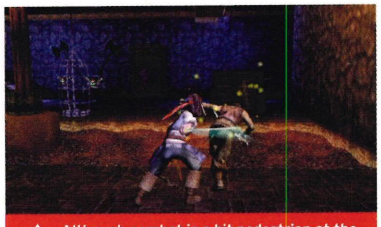
This is, of course, utter rubbish. We don't really love pirates that much – although the idea of plundering **games™**'s games cupboard is quite an appealing one – in fact we're amongst the least piratey magazines around. We do, on the other hand, quite enjoy films, and ones with Johnny Depp in particular. Not because of his dreamboat factor, you understand, but simply due to his quality acting. So the arrival of *Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* was greeted with mixed results and the revival of numerous pirate jokes, the best of which we'll share with you later on.

So, what's it all about then? Following the narrative of the upcoming film, you take control of captain Jack Sparrow as you seek to remove a curse placed upon you by the legendary Davy Jones, captain of The Flying Dutchman, a ghostly





Don't fall Jack, that's an entire town's sewerage down there



Although combat is a bit pedestrian at the moment , BVG have got time to sort it out

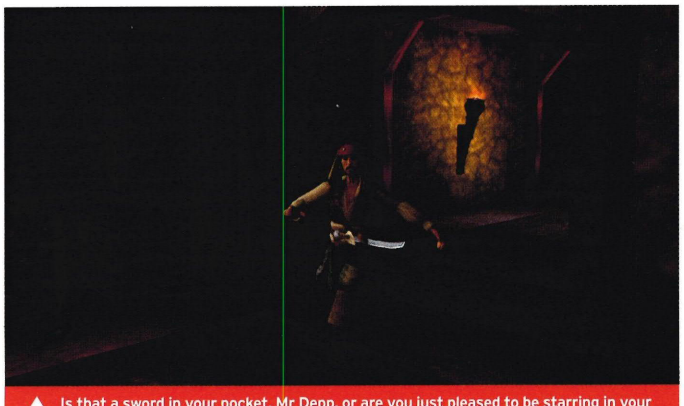
ship with a crew of bloodthirsty demonic warriors. On this chilling escapade, Jack manages to wreck the wedding plans of Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann, who join the crazy swashbuckling party to help their old pal Jack.

Of course, being a licensed game, much of the ambience of the film world comes through with the lavish environs, featuring sweaty caverns, grotty pirate ships and steamy jungles, as well as some top-notch voice acting (sadly not the real actors however) and great little comedy cut-scenes. Despite being relatively early code, much of the feel has been transposed into the gameplay, and during fights, which often involve a bottle to the head or kick to the groin, the quips come regularly enough to keep a smile on your face. Jack swaggers like his real-life counterpart, seemingly 100 per cent drunk 100 per cent of the time, and throughout the levels Jack encounters piratey situations that require him to perform some kind of super pirate move like kicking a barrel or blowing the doors off a prison cell. Now, that's piratastical.

Granted, it's got the *Dead Man's Chest* licence, but what's the hook? We've all seen a thousand movie tie-ins that use the setting of the film to great effect and fall flat on their faces when it comes to actually delivering quality gameplay. Well, as we said, our hands (or hooks)-on experience was with very early code, so there are a fair few niggles to be sorted out, not least of which being some slightly ropey animation and repetitive fighting. Granted it's not as bad as some, giving you four buttons with which to batter your opponents, but we're expecting a little more variation when the final code finds its way to our office.

We're guessing the movie doesn't feature as much combat as the game, but if it does, you're in for a horribly gory experience. Broken down into swift attacks and heavier attacks, the fighting engine demands the correct use of your swords in every fight. Using a quick attack against a dual-wielding enemy does nothing, as they can simply sit there blocking all day if need be. Hit them with a heavy attack on the other hand, and their defence breaks down, leaving them with only one sword, and no hope against a series of swift attacks. Similarly, when battling axe-wielding nutters, it's best to get a little dirty and deliver them an express shot of

[There's great potential for Dead Man's Chest]



Is that a sword in your pocket, Mr Depp, or are you just pleased to be starring in your very own PSP title?

Oooohh arrrrr...

When we heard *Pirates Of The Caribbean* was on its way, this was the best joke we could come up with. Enjoy...

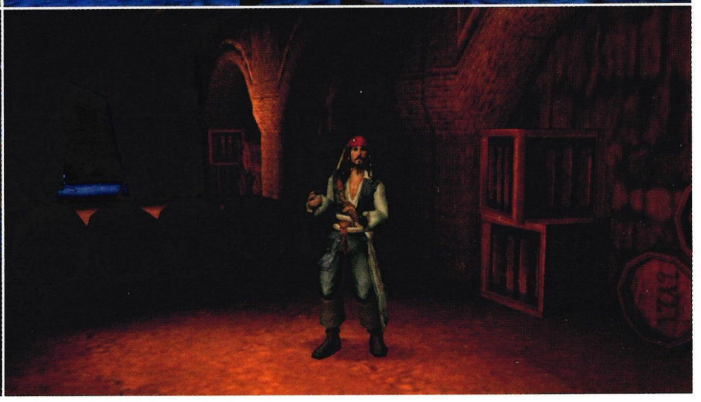
A man went into a pet shop, " I am playing Long John Silver in the local amateur dramatic society's version of *Treasure Island* and I need a parrot to sit on my shoulder," he said.

"I don't have any parrots at the moment, but you wouldn't want a real parrot for that. It would squawk in all the wrong places, poop on your shoulder and generally be a nuisance. What you need is a stuffed parrot. Just as realistic and easily controlled."

"Are you sure a stuffed parrot would be okay? " asked the customer. " I do want this to be as realistic as possible."

" I am sure a stuffed parrot would be absolutely fine, " said the pet shop owner, "I have one at home. I'll bring it in and if you come back on Thursday, you can have it."

" Sorry, " said the customer. " I can't make it on Thursday. That's the day I'm going to have my leg cut off."



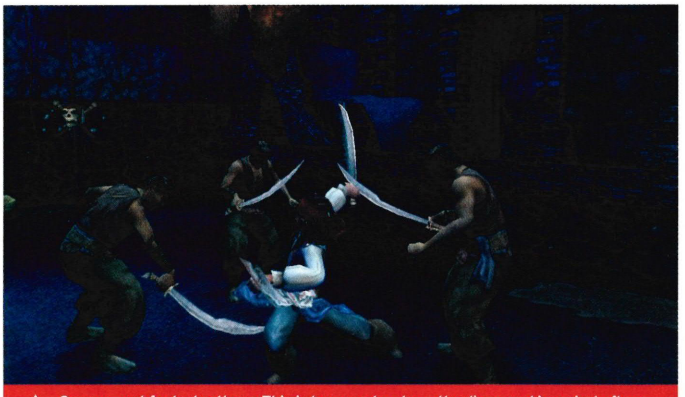
pain to the groin or head with your dirty tricks, allowing you to cut them to ribbons while they helplessly grab their crotch or sway like a baby after a can of Super Tennants. With a wealth of weapons including old school cutlasses, pistols, knives, grenades and bottles, as well as exploiting the environments to dispatch your enemies, there's great potential for *Dead Man's Chest* to be a strong enough title to survive the PSP charts without the protection of its celluloid parent.

So there's combat – and lots of it; there are puzzles, ten levels of them in fact; there's swashbuckling by the bucketload and the drunken swagger of Jack Sparrow; as well as the inclusion of a top multi-player piratey blast in the form of four-player Wi-Fi naval battles. This seemingly innocuous mini-game really caught our attention and boils down to choosing one of five upgradable sea-going vessels and battling it out on the high seas with three different types of cannon shot. Horribly addictive and painfully Moorish, this little morsel of mini-game madness deserves a UMD all to itself. Even if the main game turns out to be a load of old grog, the naval battles will rule the high seas.

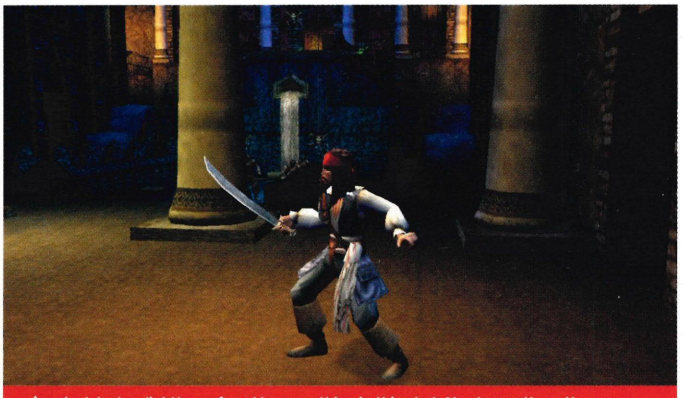
[There's swashbuckling by the bucketload]

With a release coinciding with the film, and with the full weight of Buena Vista Games' marketing behind it, expect to be seeing a lot about this particular adventure, but we'll be first to bring you a full review straight from the bottom of Davy Jones' locker. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

WE SAY **With plenty of time and money, Buena Vista should have its problems ironed out by release. The result should be a faithful translation to the PSP.**



Owwww, get funky brothers. This is how you lay down the disco soul in a pirate flava



Jack looks slightly confused by something in this shot. No change there then

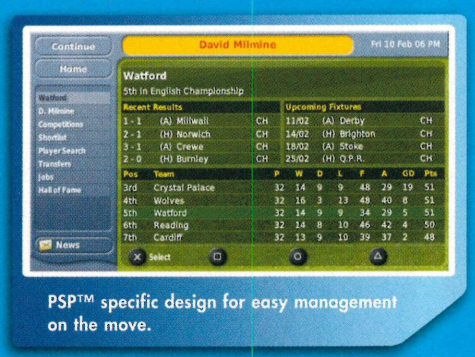
WHAT'S YOUR AWAY STRATEGY?

"The best footy management game ever goes portable"

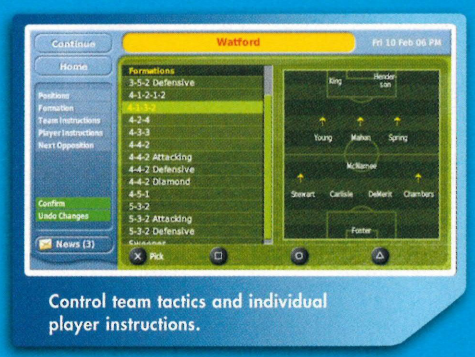
Go Play

OUT FROM 13TH APRIL

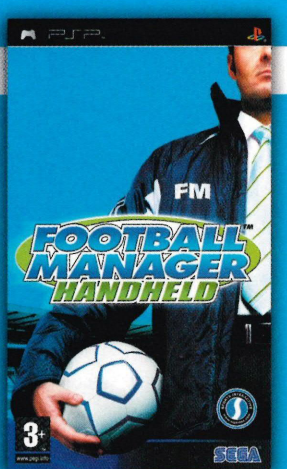
From Sports Interactive, the people who defined the football management genre, comes Football Manager™ Handheld. With 19 playable divisions from 7 countries, utilising SI's world renowned database, plus an easy-to-use interface and fast gameplay, it's been specially developed for the PSP, allowing you to play on the go.



PSP™ specific design for easy management on the move.



Control team tactics and individual player instructions.



HOW WILL YOU MANAGE?

www.footballmanager.net

3+ www.pegi.info

PSP™

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2006 IS AVAILABLE ON XBOX 360, PC AND MAC.

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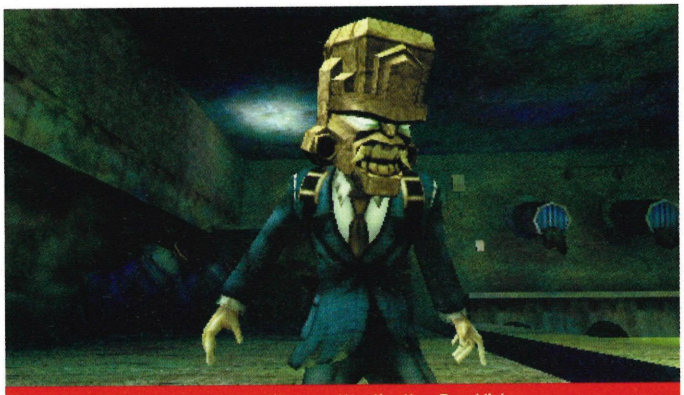
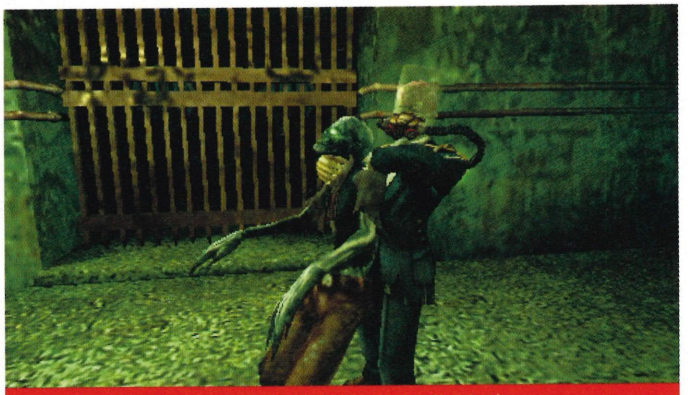


Even with a stone head he's still more attractive than Ronaldinho



This jarhead is more concerned with killing mobsters than Iraqis

A very different kind of Jarhead...

DEAD HEAD FRED

OUT: 16 JAN '07

Publisher **D3Publisher** / Developer **Vicious Cycle Software** / Players **1**

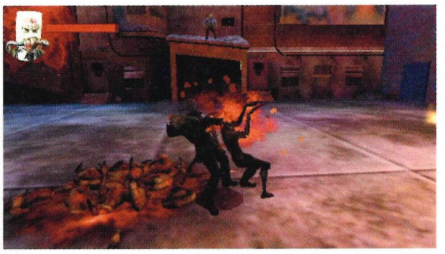
WHAT IS IT?
You play as Fred Neuman, a murdered detective resurrected in a bizarre science experiment

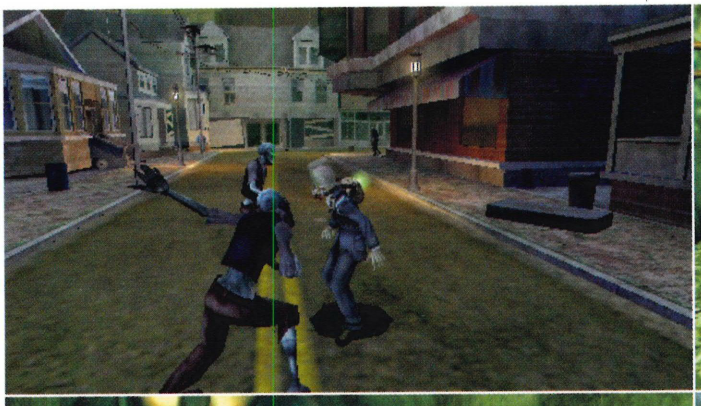
EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Nine different heads
- Unlockable side quests
- 12 bonus mini-games
- Multiple ways to complete missions
- Upgradable moves and weapons

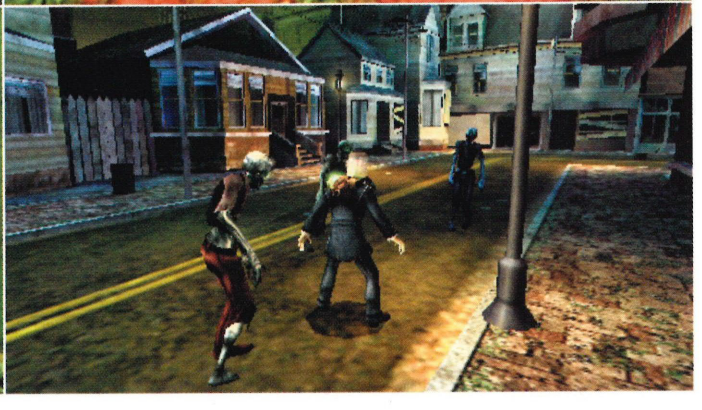
Private detectives are used to sticking their noses where they're not wanted, but in this case, P.I. Fred Neuman managed to stick his whole head where it wasn't welcome and ended up getting it lopped right off. Well done Fred. In a game that D3Publisher is touting as a 'twisted noir', we see the titular Fred living in a town that's far from conventional. In fact, Hope Falls is contaminated by a massive radiation leak stemming from the nuclear power plant. As well as turning the residents into mutated monsters, it also has the power to bring the dead back to life. With the town quickly becoming the biggest freak fest this side of the *Big Brother* house, something needs to be done and that's where Fred steps in.

Well, that's usually where the game's protagonist would step in, but developer Vicious Cycle isn't exactly playing by the rules, as Fred isn't a courageous hero out to save the town and the innocent survivors that dwell within. No, Fred's out for an extra large helping of revenge with a side order of redemption. The first time we see Fred, he's tied to a chair with a bag over his head and, while this might seem like a healthy weekend activity for any government ministers reading, to us that's a little strange. However, all is explained as we learn that by accepting a commission from a mysterious lady one day, Fred made a massive mistake. The job involved investigating the operations of a mob boss at the aforementioned power plant but when discovered snooping, Fred was given the long kiss goodnight. With another twist in the tale, Fred is soon brought back to life by one of the scientists from the plant but minus a head of course – his brain can be found floating in a jar on top of his neck. If you're having trouble picturing him, just think of Nixon's head in *Futurama* and you'll be close.

Understandably upset, Fred goes in search of his missing melon as well as some sweet revenge on the people who did this to him. In order to achieve this, Fred can utilise various melee attacks and







combos, but the most fun comes from using the different heads on offer. Each of the nine collectible heads has different attributes and can be changed on the fly. Some are depletible with powers or ammunition only temporary, while others are permanent and allow you to solve the various environmental puzzles and deal with the freakish opponents you encounter. Some heads, such as the stone head, are very powerful and can bust through buildings, but they can also weigh you down, making movement much slower. However, if you reach into your backpack and attach the shrunken head then you're much faster, although inevitably weaker. When you combine the functions of each head with moves such as the nut punch and a wide selection of weapons, there should be enough to keep even the most homicidal PSP gamer happy.

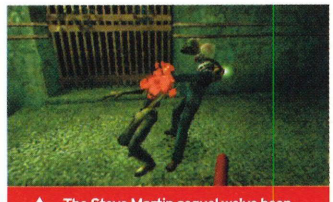
Away from collecting heads and busting up mobsters, you earn money and power-ups from fallen foes - worms, for example, give you a health boost whilst cash can be spent on one of the many mini-games. Games include radioactive cockfighting (sounds painful) and The Gran Ratismo - we're not quite sure what this involves but it's sure to be suitably bizarre. These mini-games are to be found in a different section away from the main story missions but they still take place in the town, which acts as a sort of hub and makes for a much more organic experience as you don't need to quit out to the main menu whenever you want a quick mini-game fix.

[A large helping of revenge with a side order of redemption]

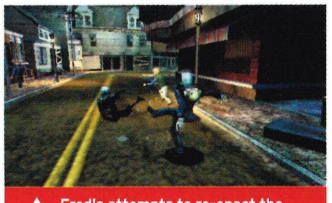
In fact, throughout the game things feel organic in general, as the camera helps rather than hinders play by adjusting to the blend of platform and action elements well. The AI is also slicker than your average. We're told that enemies will size you up before attacking and depending on what state you're in, they'll either wade in and give you a damn good thrashing or bottle it and show you a clean pair of heels. It's such innovations that make *Dead Head Fred* an intriguing prospect for the future, offering novel new concepts and solid gameplay mechanics, all whilst keeping its tongue buried deeply in its cheek. ■

Keith Hennessey

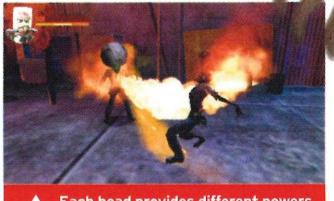
WE SAY **If the head-swapping concept is implemented properly this could make not only a highly amusing game, but an entertaining one too.**



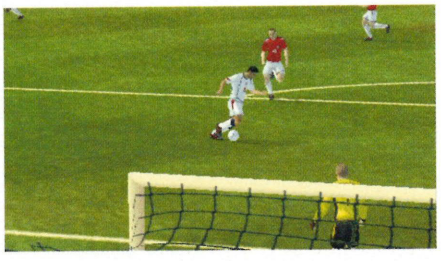
The Steve Martin sequel we've been hoping for - The Man With A Few Brains



Fred's attempts to re-enact the Thriller video went a bit pear-shaped



Each head provides different powers, can you guess what this one does?



World Cup fever starts here

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2

OUT: JUNE '06

Publisher **Sony** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
A new slant on the footy title – lots to do and unlock, without trying to outdo *FIFA* or *Pro Evo*

Right! We're now officially in World Cup fever mode. We've got our wall chart, we've got our gigantic England flag, we've got our foam hands, rattles, England strips and World Cup branded mugs, and we're ready to go. In truth, that's a bit of a lie, as we've been going for some time now. Mock-up World Cups have been the staple of our lunch times for months, and the tragic news about Wayne Rooney's metacarpal has caused much discussion about who should replace the crippled striker. Yup, it's all going on around here, and just when you think it can't get any more footbally, along comes preview code of Sony's *World Tour Soccer 2*. At this rate we might be well and truly footballed out come the Final. Or maybe not.

We were immediately struck by the obvious revamping this version has received. Everything seems that much more sparkly, from the menus to the game modes. If you're bored of playing the same game over and over again, *World Tour Soccer 2* introduces some genuine innovation to the mix, and offers the whole range to those gamers in search of multi-player action as well.

So what about those modes then? Far from feeling like random inclusions to a well-worn game, match types like All-Rounder – whilst perhaps not sounding like much of a novelty – do a great deal to spice up the beautiful game, forcing you to pass the ball to every player on the pitch before a goal can be scored. Outnumbered is another such option giving you a diminished team from the start of the match and Classic Plus introduces match-specific conditions, SUCH AS like only allowing goals scored from outside the penalty area.

Other favourites include Time Attack, which gives you a points goal to achieve in a certain time limit, and In The Zone, where you're rewarded for pulling off tricks in a certain section of the pitch.

It does seem, however, that the original mechanics of the on-field action remain untouched, something of a disappointment for fans looking for a more intricate control system. The range of modes and in-your-face skills are where *WTS2* shines though, and with this summer's World Cup you can be sure it'll be up there in the charts. ■

Tom Leclerc

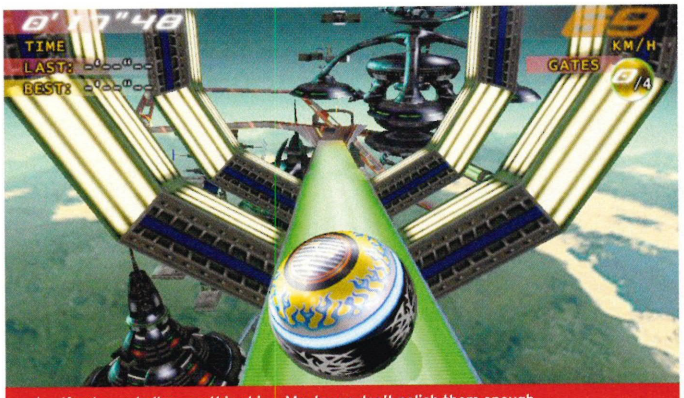
> **We might be well-and-truly footballed out come the Final**

WE SAY **Whilst the basics of the game haven't changed much, with the plethora of modes, options and teams, it's a different kind of footy title.**

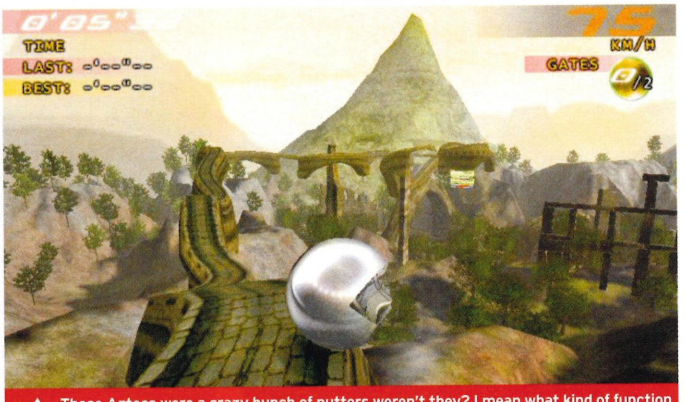
EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Features 11 game modes
- Full multi-player support for every mode
- Gamesharing included
- Range of All Star teams to unlock

England versus Portugal? Could be a semi final at least. Here's hoping

The on-pitch gameplay is pretty much exactly the same as the previous title. That isn't to say you can't score some corking goals though



If only our balls were this shiny. Maybe we don't polish them enough. Fnarr fnarr



Those Aztecs were a crazy bunch of nutters weren't they? I mean what kind of function does this serve?

Arrrrrgggggghhh! Balls! One more go!

SPINOUT

OUT: 25 AUG

Publisher **Ghostlight** / Developer **Icon Games** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?

A futuristic take on *Super Monkey Ball*, *Spinout* looks to take frustration to a new level

Spinout is a horribly appropriate title for this surprise announcement from the boys at Ghostlight. Having played a few levels of the early code, we've lost a good 16 quid between us to the office swear box and are now sitting amongst clods of our own hair. You could use many adjectives to describe us right now; mad, aggressive, livid, irate, tetchy, or perhaps even a little unstable, but none of this would do justice to the oppressive weight of malicious hatred that's currently hanging above the Go>Play office. Right at this particular moment in time, we hate you.

All because of a seemingly innocuous ball-rolling puzzler. Such hatred is not necessarily a bad thing however, as it's all garnered from our own ineptitude, rather than any major issues with the game. Granted, there are aspects that need work – and not insignificant ones – like a slightly jittery camera, and a near-impossible difficulty level, but it's at a relatively early stage of development, and the simplicity of the game means that perfecting the control and camera elements is, or at very least should be, of paramount importance for developers Icon.

Spinout is about a futuristic zorbing (now called Xorbing) tournament, and set in the year 4269, it's a heady combination of stunt driving, racing and puzzling at truly bowel-loosening heights. With over 50 courses set across nine themed environments – a majority of which require nothing but the keenest of concentration – there's plenty of play on offer here without even going into the four-player competition modes.

[A heady combination of stunt driving, racing and puzzling]

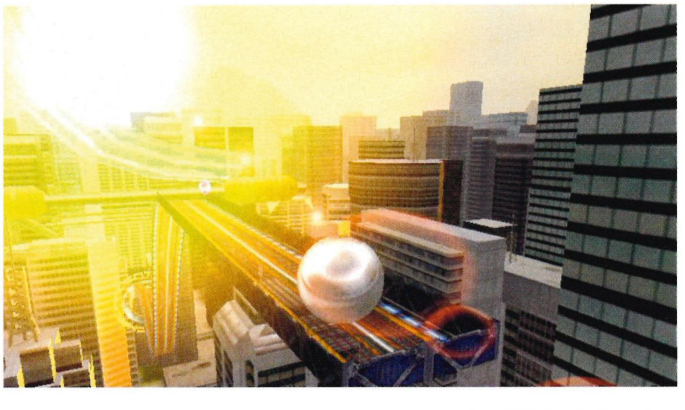
We were impressed by the style of *Spinout*. It's not the prettiest game by any means, but each of the worlds has its own individual feel and unique challenges. Plus, with the high level of Xorb (or ball as we like to call it) customisation, it's certainly something that should appeal to anyone with a particularly lengthy series of train journeys in front of them. *Spinout* is never going to be the top puzzler or racer on the PSP – those accolades are destined for titles with greater pedigree, but we'll definitely be making room for *Spinout* come August. ■

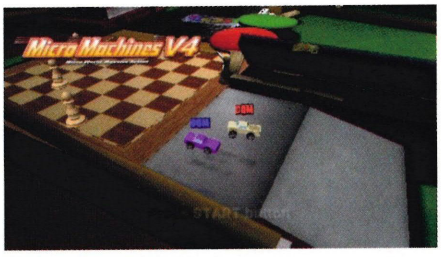
Tom Leclerc

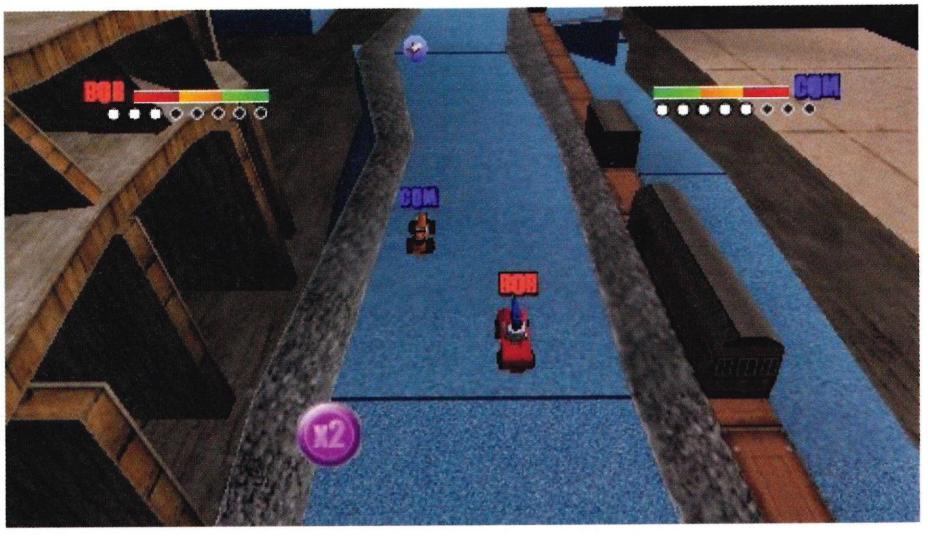
WE SAY **Not the best looking game in the world, but definitely one to keep an eye on for those who want *Super Monkey Ball* without the monkeys.**

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

- 54 tracks over 9 worlds
- Real-time damage system makes collisions look nasty
- Over two million combinations of Xorb customisation







Micro machines come in collections of... er four

MICRO MACHINES V4

OUT: JUNE 06

Publisher **Codemasters** / Developer **In-House** / Players **1-8**

WHAT IS IT?
Race tiny toys around tables, gardens and laboratories in the fourth game of the series

Imagine controlling a car the size of a stag beetle and having to avoid hungry, angry chicken beaks thrusting down from an invisible sky. No wait, don't bother thinking about it, in June you can actually drive around in that giant world. If this all sounds a little strange and you'd prefer to be "flipping those gangsta's wigs back", then maybe the miniscule world of *Micro Machines* isn't for you. But, if like the rest of us, you want to be part of a real-life *Honey I Shrunk The Kids*, *V4* could well be the portable answer.

In fact, it's the first *Micro Machines* game for nearly five years, presenting a welcome return for the pint-sized franchise. Veterans will be pleased to see old tracks parked up against new ones. There are classics such as the pool table, where you avoid an ongoing match, with striking cues, moving balls and of course, the inevitable bottomless pockets. The breakfast table track will involve steering clear of soggy Cheerios drenched with rancid spilt milk. Shunted alongside the older tracks are newer editions such as the fantastic farm, where you'll have to avoid pecking and scratching chickens. The beauty of *Micro Machines* is the sense of wonder and giddy charm it creates when you see the world this small, or rather big. We can't wait to relive lost science lessons by driving round toppled Bunsen burners and conical flasks filled with face-melting acid. Hairpins become roadblocks, tap water becomes Niagara Falls and with over twenty different areas to explore, this promises to be the largest mini adventure yet.

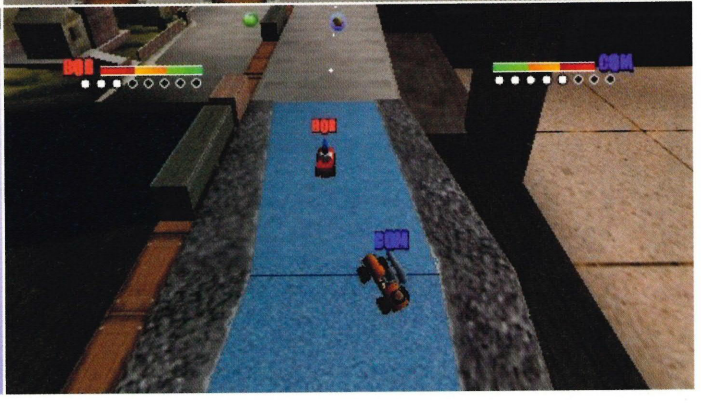
Micro Machines V4 is set around one neighbourhood, but could these titchy motors travel much further? You'll be driving up on rooftops, alleys, hairdressers, cafés, kitchens and the best thing is you can do this against your mates whilst sat in any of these real-life places.

Aside from the track settings, there's the largest set of cars to unlock than in any previous *Micro Machines* game – 750 to be precise. And here's where it gets a little complicated. Apparently you won't be able to unlock all the cars by yourself, you'll have to race real-life opponents on the net or via Ad Hoc in order to unlock more. The details are scarce at the moment and it's unclear if connecting to the

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 25 different weapons
- Track editor
- 25 vehicle styles
- 750 cars in total

No surface is left untouched when Micro Machines are in town. This train set is shown up for how boring and pedestrian it really is

There's a great selection of cars on offer so you should never be short of something to race around the kitchen sink



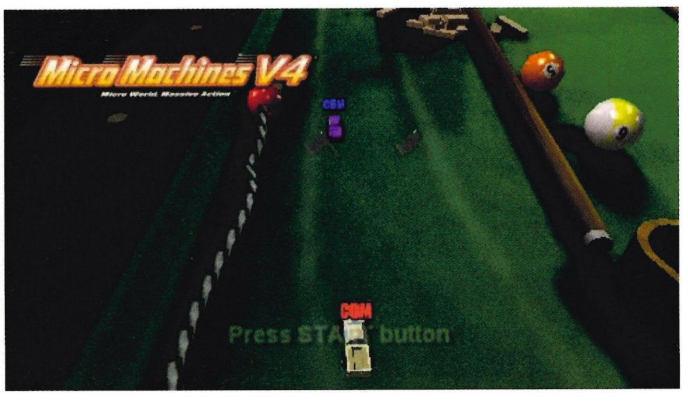
PS2 version will also unlock more vehicles. Everything from sports cars to 4x4s will be available, beach buggies are back, as are muscle cars, which sound a bit too big for this title. However, it's the prospect of driving a lowrider that'll fit in the palm of your hand that's getting our hydraulics loose with excitement.

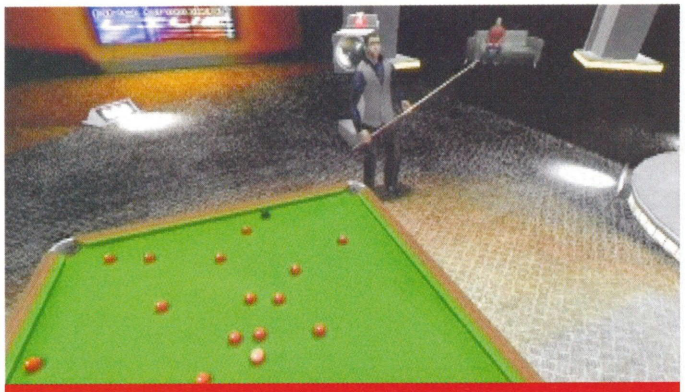
As usual, you'll be able to upgrade your tiny toy with an assortment of mental weapons. From what we can gather, the traditional pea-shooting tanks will be available, as will the newer roof-mounted hammer. With this you can squash your opponents while driving up a set of ping-pong bats. There are also missiles and machine guns, so you can blast your opponents into even more tiny pieces, then call the AA for their pencil side recovery. The emphasis will be on quick arcade-style play, which is perfect for dipping in and out of on a PSP. What makes *Micro Machines* so difficult and addictive is the strange floaty control system. Cars slip and slide and the top-down view makes it hard to know which way the little fella's going to go. We're assuming that the controls will be similar to previous versions, making for frustrating yet fluid gameplay. It's also been hinted that two people might be able to share a single PSP and race against one another. This harks back to previous versions where eight players could race on four Mega Drive pads.

[Hairpins become roadblocks, tap water becomes Niagara Falls]

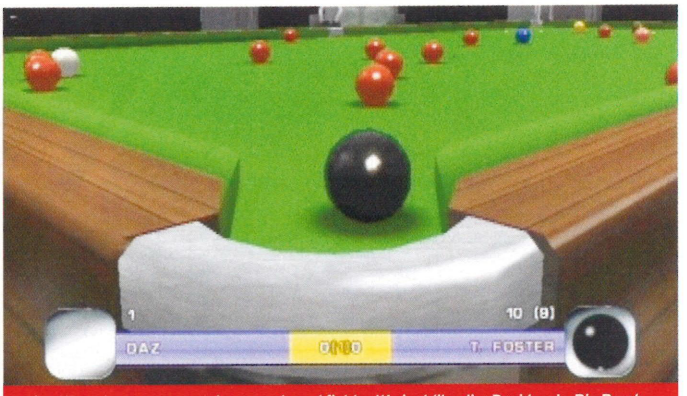
Multi-player is where it'll all kick off though. Aside from the unlockables, we can't wait until we hear Simon's agitated screams in the office as he's beaten by another girl. Online and offline, this will make the world smaller, but ten times more fun. ■ **Henrietta Rowlatt**

WE SAY **Details are scarce so we'll have to wait to see what it's really like. The amount of cars, tracks and weapons will keep any fan driving for hours, though.**





Oi, mate, this table's on a bit of a slant, can I have my 50p back?



It's only a game, so put up a real good fight... It's just like Jim Davidson's *Big Break*, only without Jim Davidson, and the horrible urge to kill yourself

Hey pal, nice shirt. Wanna play for it?

WORLD OF POOL

OUT: 28 JUL

Publisher **Ghostlight** / Developer **Icon Games** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
Hey, it's pool, only a little bit dodgier than your average baize sim. Hmmm... seedy

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Unique special moves for each character
- Create your crib in certain ways to unlock mystery bonuses
- Pool, snooker and billiards on offer
- Multi-player shows off mode to out-bling your mates

Pool's a pretty simple affair when you think about it. You try to hit balls into pockets, and if your spatial awareness is decent enough – or your luck is in – you'll get them in. Easy. What's not quite as straightforward is developing the style, finesse and flair required to look the part as you shimmy around the baize. In short then, just having the game isn't good enough – you need to bring it. Something developer Icon is determined to shoehorn into its pool offering, *World Of Pool*.

With similar titles already in development for the PSP, *World Of Pool* isn't just about the act of potting balls and beating your opponent to the black, preferring to focus on the seedier side of the game instead. Wagers, bets and special moves feature heavily in the rather unique mechanics of *World Of Pool*, with your crib being the hub of activities. Kitting your place out with the assorted trappings of contemporary materialistic life isn't as easy as just popping down to your local Ikea, oh no. It's all about betting your hard-earned fixtures and fittings. Like your opponent's snazzy cupboard handles? Well, all you have to do is set your favourite Pollack print against them, win a match and voilà, you've got yourself a spangly new set of kitchen accessories. So what if your entire flat is drenched in the bitter hatred of your fallen rivals? It looks good and when it comes down to it, that's the most important thing.

[Much of the game is geared towards pimping out your crib]

But while much of the game is geared towards pimping out your crib, it's not merely a visual thing, as playing against fellow pool sharks in your own home allows you to get a little dirty with your tactics and alter your table to give you a bit of a headstart. Like we said, seedy.

But then the core physics haven't been ignored either, and we've been promised a deep, involving experience when it comes down to the nitty gritty of working the tables, with mysterious character-specific 'special moves'. Normally that might include powers like laser eyes or some kind of fireball, but we don't imagine they'd be much use down your local snooker club. Well, let's hope not. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

WE SAY **As long as the physics are sound, the superfluities should inject a much-needed dose of fun to the pool-playing proceedings.**

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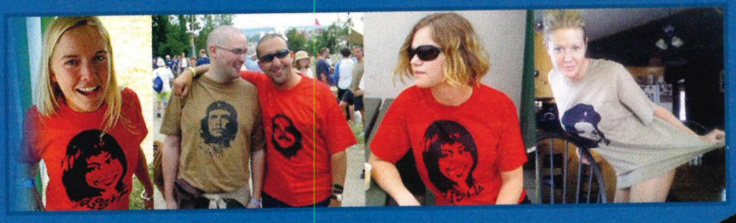

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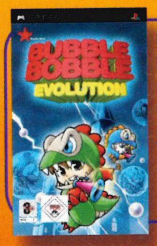

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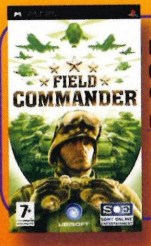

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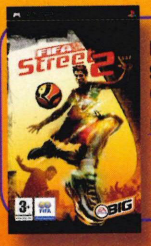

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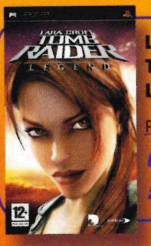

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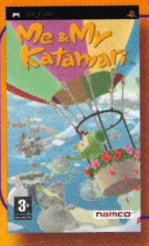

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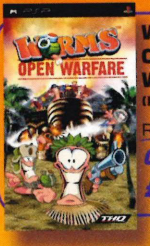

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BEST IN SHOW

While all the PlayStation3 announcements stole the show, there was still a heavy presence of PSP software in attendance. The strong support for the PSP by so many publishers really is encouraging and proves that our favourite handheld will do nothing but go from strength to strength. We braved the sweaty crowds to bring you the lowdown...

KILLZONE™ LIBERATION

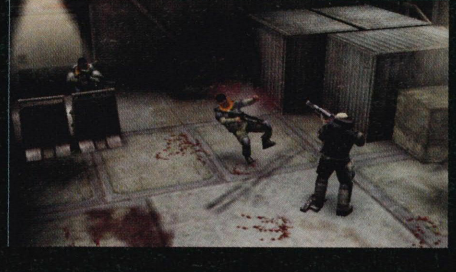
Publisher: **SCEE**
Developer: **Guerrilla**
Release: **November 2006**

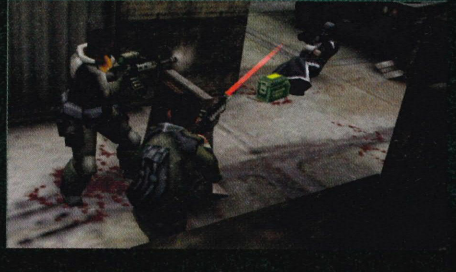
Having been announced for PSP some time ago, this *Killzone* sequel has had little information released apart from a few screenshots. What these did give away is the fact that the game takes a different approach to the gameplay. Rather than being a straightforward FPS like the PS2 game, *Liberation* adopts an isometric viewpoint that places the camera above the player, similar to that in *Metal Gear Solid*. Despite this, Guerilla has ensured that the game retains the same intensity and scope as the PS2 original.

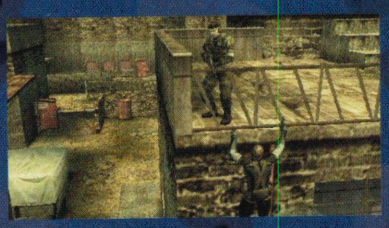
Now we've actually played *Liberation* we can confirm that this camera angle works incredibly well. Rather than having cumbersome camera controls, there is instead an intelligent camera system that will pan over points of interest and will zoom in and out depending upon the action that's taking place on-screen.

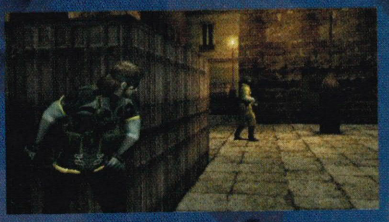
The gameplay this time around is much more focused to handheld gaming and *Killzone* exudes a pick-up-and-play quality with frequent checkpoints throughout the levels and the whole game has been tailored specifically to the PSP. With this new approach come heaps of other new surprises, including weapons like the crossbow and flamethrower. New enemies also make an appearance, such as the fearsome Attack Dogs. Vehicles like tanks and hovercraft can be commandeered to aid your cause, and of course, there are plenty of new environments to explore, featuring weather effects like wind and rain.

The biggest addition to the gameplay is the introduction of the 'Buddy control system', which allows you to give commands to any soldiers who happen to be joining you in battle. This gives some firefights a far more tactical edge as you can send off your buddy to flank the enemy while you keep them occupied. Even something as simple as planting explosives can be delegated if you don't feel like doing it. Cover plays an







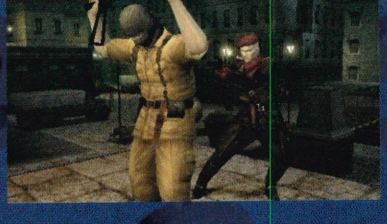


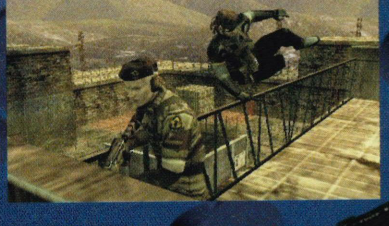
METAL GEAR SOLID PORTABLE OPS

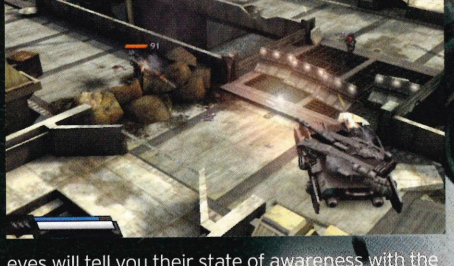
Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-house
Release: TBA

It's the news we've all been waiting for – regular *Metal Gear* on PSP. While *Ac!d* and its sequel are enjoyable adventures, *Metal Gear* fans have been gagging for some real-time Solid Snake action. Konami has answered our prayers with *Portable Ops*, a game that continues the story where *Metal Gear Solid 3* left off. Set in the Seventies a few years after the events in *MGS3*, *Portable Ops* will fill in the gaps in the story leading up to the first game on PSone, with Big Boss becoming the central character.

As you can see, the cartoon-like visuals of *Ac!d* are gone and have been replaced with visuals much more akin to the PS2 games, and very nice they look too. Plenty of details are still to be released, but along with the single-player experience, there will be an extensive online mode as well as team customisation.







important part when engaging the enemy and objects like barrels or crates can be used to hide behind if everything gets too much for you. Of course, barrels can be blown up in traditional style and *Liberation* even lets you specifically target them so you can use their destructive power to its full effect.

The enemy soldiers won't just stand around waiting to get shot though and will actively seek cover and throw grenades at you to draw you out. You can also take the stealthy approach through some sections and the colour of the enemy's eyes will tell you their state of awareness with the traditional yellow, orange and red.

The campaign that sees you facing endless battalions of these enemies consists of four chapters containing a total of 16 missions. Each level contains a challenge game, which, once completed, will unlock special abilities. What we're really looking forward to is the multi-player, which is shaping up to be absolutely awesome. There are six maps with up to six players able to participate at once. There are a variety of different game modes too, but there's no doubt that deathmatch will be a favourite. GameShare is also available and will give the recipient a taster of a single-player mission.

With a plot that follows directly on from the first game, *Liberation* is sure to draw in old fans as well as *Killzone* virgins and no wonder, as it's looking to be one of the best releases on the handheld yet.

grand theft auto Vice City Stories

Publisher: Rockstar
Developer: In-house
Release: 20 October 2006

As inevitable as it is welcome, Rockstar's next PSP visit to the world of *GTA* takes us to the sunny beaches of Vice City. No actual details have been released just yet except the release date, but you can rest assured that it will be more of the great action witnessed in *Liberty City Stories*. What decade it will be set in and who will be the lead character is still to be revealed, but if the last game is anything to go by we can expect to see a few familiar faces. No doubt a few new vehicles will be available and who knows, you might even be able to take to the skies this time around. Multi-player is also a dead cert and hopefully we'll see a few more modes joining the already cracking selection seen in *Liberty City*. We'll be keeping a close eye on this as the release draws closer, so make sure you stick with **Go>Play** for all the latest *Vice City Stories* news. In the meantime, here is the lovely new logo to whet your appetite. Hopefully we'll have some shiny screenshots to show you soon too.

Publisher: **SCEE**
Developer: **In-house**
Release: **September 2006**

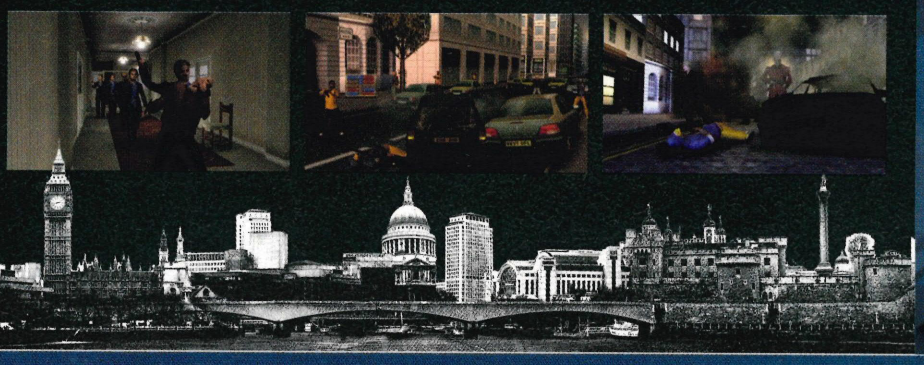
Those familiar with *The Getaway* and its sequel on the PS2 will feel right at home with *Gangs Of London*. While those two games followed specific plots, *Gangs Of London* is a slightly different kettle of fish, with a total of six gangs fighting for control of the big smoke. London is divided into 31 areas made up of 10 square miles of the city. Once you've picked a gang you must drive, shoot, fight and sneak your way around the streets and take over the city piece by piece. Missions will take place both inside and outside with a mix of on foot and vehicle-based action on offer as well as 36 vehicles available and 100 miles of road to explore. A squad dynamic is also in place that allows you to switch between different gang members and give orders. Gang members will also level up during play, meaning you will become more formidable opponents.

There's plenty to do besides the missions and, of course, a Free Drive mode is available so that you can explore the city on your own terms. If you really want to learn the streets then try The Knowledge, a taxi mini-game that sees you ferrying passengers all over town. Tourist Mode gives you a camera so you can explore the sights at your leisure. Take photos of famous landmarks and information about them will be unlocked. One of the more interesting games is 4 Weeks Later, which sees a large portion of the population turned into bloodthirsty zombies. A time limit will be enforced and you'll need to dispose of a given number of undead enemies before that time runs out. Going down a completely different route is the as yet unnamed Strategy Mode, which purports to be a cross between Risk and Poker as you take over the city with the turn of cards.

The fun doesn't end there and the much vaunted pub games ensure you can get a quick fix of fun on the bus. Skittles, darts, pool (both UK and US rules) and retro arcade games will all be available to play solo or with a friend. Game Share will also provide an interesting distraction for the recipient as the game will create a unique London Underground-set level based on their PSP's MAC address.

The production values look to be high with stylish graphic novel inspired cut-scenes that feature sound effects and voice-overs. Loading times have also been kept to a minimum as the entire city is loaded into the memory to allow for uninterrupted gameplay.

Gangs Of London looks set to provide hours of fun even when you've completed the main missions, look out for it later in the year.

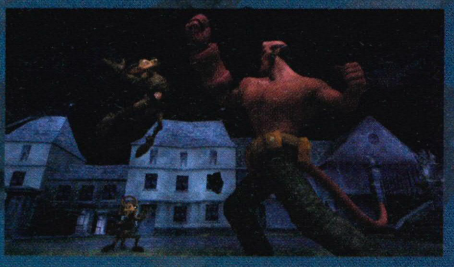


HELLBOY

Publisher: **Konami**
Developer: **Krome Studios**
Release: **2007**

Drawing on the acclaimed Dark Horse comic book series, *Hellboy* will provide a tactical brawling experience that allows players to unleash Hellboy's Right Hand Of Doom on waves of enemies in an attempt to thwart Hermann Von Klempt and his evil plot. Charged attacks will be possible, as well as rapid-fire combinations. Enemies can also be grabbed and used as weapons to keep others away, as can numerous other objects.

Six unique locations will provide fully destructible environments and will be a suitable supernatural setting for the crimson-skinned warrior. Co-op play is also available, with other characters from the *Hellboy* universe making an appearance, such as Liz Sherman and Abe Sapien. *Hellboy* sounds like it could be a fun, frantic and action-packed title; let's hope that is the case.



CRISIS CORE: FINAL FANTASY VII

Publisher: **Square Enix**
Developer: **In-house**
Release: **TBA**

This game acts as a prequel to *Final Fantasy VII* and centres on a young military recruit of the Shinra Corporation called Zack. The plot appears to revolve around Project Genesis and Sephiroth will play an important part in the game. Gameplay is mainly action-orientated with plenty of combos and fast attacks. Cloud doesn't seem to feature in the game but until more details are released we can't be sure that he won't appear at all.

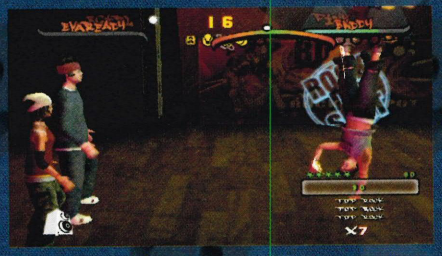
B-BOY

Publisher: **SCEE**
Developer: **FreeStyleGames**
Release: **September 2006**

From first impressions, *B-Boy* looks to be a rather simple dancing simulator, the likes of which we've seen many times before. However, look a little deeper and this is a game that requires a sense of rhythm, timing and skill to master. Like *Tony Hawk's* or *Tekken*, *B-Boy* is all about learning combos so you can out-dance your opponent and impress the crowd. As you progress through the game, you will learn new moves that can then be added to your repertoire. It's not just about pressing the button combos though and you'll need to learn how to make the transition between moves and which moves can follow which.

You will take part in three seasons of *B-Boy* championships across a total of 21 environments. B-Boying won't be restricted to PSP though and you can transfer your character to and from the PS2 version, enabling you to train from the sofa and on the bus.

Multi-player is a given and up to four players will be able to compete via Wi-Fi. Expect an in-depth preview soon.

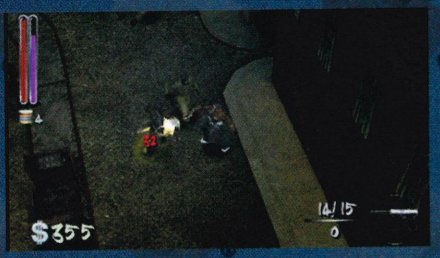


50 CENT: BULLETPROOF – G UNIT EDITION

Publisher: **Vivendi Universal**
Developer: **High Voltage**
Release: **August 2006**

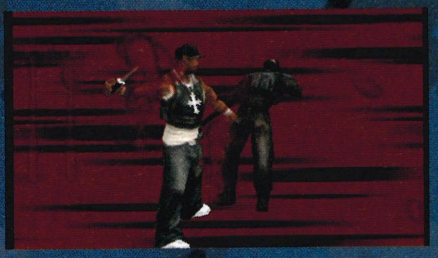
Let's be honest here, *50 Cent: Bulletproof* was a truly terrible game on PS2, so why would we want to play it on PSP? Well, for one thing, High Voltage has tailored the game specifically around the PSP with a new handheld-friendly top-down isometric viewpoint instead of the third-person view in the PS2 version. The gameplay remains pretty much the same with all the trademark violence that's associated with Fiddy's videogame.

The game will start concentrating on hand-to-hand combat with a variety of weapons to pick up, such as bats and pipes. Of course it's not long before you get your gangsta mitts on some firepower and pistols, rifles and machine guns will be available for you to spit fire at the enemy with.



The new viewpoint means a lock-on aiming system is in place that allows you to move in one direction while targeting an enemy in another. Counter-kills still play a big part and there are a total of 36 to pull off, all of which are suitably brutal. Along with the solo mode there are five multi-player modes for six players via Wi-Fi. These range from deathmatch to the new Breaking and Entering, which sees you tasked with destroying the other team's car before they destroy yours.

This PSP version also contains all the music videos and tracks contained in the PS2 one along with a lengthy behind-the-scenes documentary with members of G-Unit, which should keep fans happy.



ACE COMBAT X: SKIES OF DECEPTION

Publisher: **Namco Bandai**
Developer: **In-house**
Release: **Q4 2006**

While the previous console versions of Ace Combat have been mostly story driven, this PSP edition veers slightly away from that by offering a branching mission system that will unfold as you progress through the levels. How you perform in each mission will determine how subsequent missions will play out, so completing a certain bonus objective in one mission will open up a branch to another that would otherwise have remained closed.

The solo mode will offer up a selection of aircraft for you to tune and upgrade with parts that you can buy or unlock. The number >>

SILENT HILL ORIGINS

Publisher: **Konami**
Developer: **Climax**
Release: **Q4 2006**

The spooky horror franchise is finally coming to PSP with an all-new storyline. Origins reveals the events that turned *Silent Hill* from a sleepy town to a nightmarish hell-hole. In true Silent Hill tradition, you take the role of a lone truck driver stranded in the town. He is confronted by images of his troubled past and the truth behind them must be revealed as he tries to escape the town.

New gameplay mechanics are being employed for this new addition to the franchise. Foremost is the barricade system, which allows you to pick up objects and place them in the path of pursuing enemies. The camera has been enhanced with the PSP in mind and the control system has been re-jigged to accommodate the PSPs layout, which will also provide improved combat and more detailed exploration of the environment.

MOTOGP

Publisher: **SCEE**
Developer: **Namco**
Release: **TBA**

While we've seen a little bit of two-wheeled action PSP we're yet to see a fully-fledged motorbike experience. Until now, that is! This edition of the popular *MotoGP* series has been developed with the PSP in mind and is ideal for short bursts of gameplay. Both single player and eight-player Ad Hoc modes will be available. The game is fully licensed so you can race around the world's most famous tracks against the likes of Valentino Rossi and Sete Gibernau. Sounds awesome!

LUMINES II

Publisher: Buena Vista Games
Developer: Q Entertainment
Release: Q4 2006

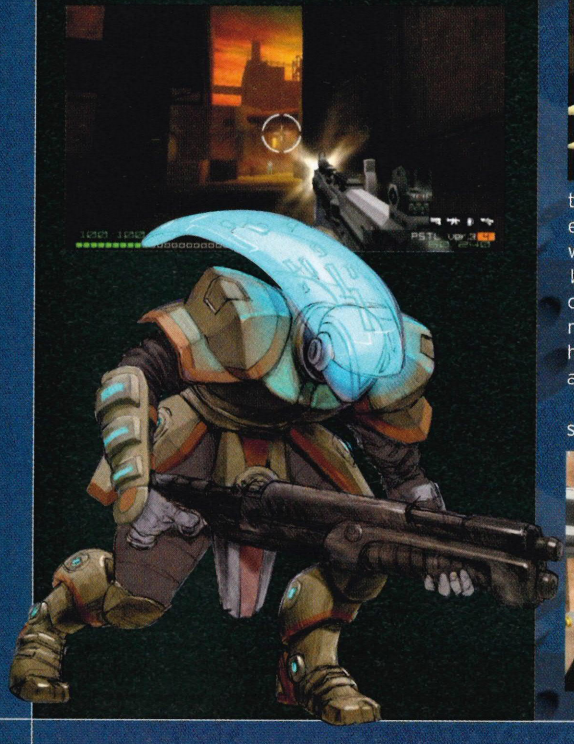
The awesomely addictive *Lumines* was one of the strongest launch titles for the PSP and this sequel looks set to take over our lives all over again. However, nothing looks to have changed much from the first game with only slightly different background effects and music being evident. Not all of the game modes have been announced yet so there's still room for some big changes. But hey, if ain't broke...

CODED ARMS: CONTAGION

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Creat Studio
Release: 2007

As the PSP's first FPS, *Coded Arms* was something of a letdown. Konami clearly has faith in the franchise and is bringing the franchise back to PSP and even taking to PS3 too. This sequel sees the premise being very much the same as the first game. You're a futuristic security agent inside a virtual world where you'll need to take down all manner of cyber terrorists as they attempt to steal data and classified information. From what we've seen so far, the gameplay has remained relatively unchanged too, with many of the same enemy types and puzzles making an appearance. The randomly generated levels seem to be gone, which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Multi-player makes a return and now has the capacity for eight players instead of four.

With such a poor reception for the first game, you'd think that Konami would have made some pretty drastic changes but it appears not. Whatever the outcome let's hope this improves over the original.



>> of missions currently stands at around 20, but this could change by the time the game hits the shelves. Unsurprisingly, multi-player also features heavily in the game with wireless deathmatch and team modes both available.

One thing that won't carry over from the recent console versions is the wingman function, but pretty much everything else is present and correct including the on-screen HUD. Controls look to be pleasingly simple although it remains to be seen how the lack of a second analog nub affects it.

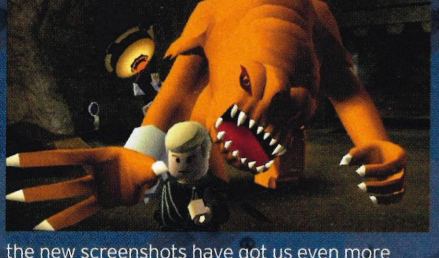
Graphically, while inferior to the PS2 version, *Ace Combat* on PSP is looking very nice indeed, with some impressive plane modelling and animation as well as some superb environments.

With a severe lack of flying games available on PSP, we're looking to forward to seeing if the final product can live up to what we've seen so far.

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Publisher: LucasArts
Developer: Traveller's Tales
Release: September 2006

No more details have really been released since we previewed this a couple of issues back, but



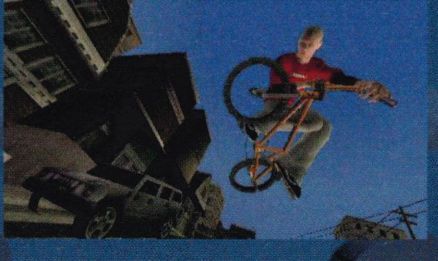
the new screenshots have got us even more excited, as has the news that the release of this will coincide with the release of the original *Star Wars* trilogy on DVD again, but this time the characters will be in their pre-CGI forms. That's right folks, Han will shoot first, the Sarlacc won't have a silly beak and Anakin's ghost will once again be an old man - hooray!

Anyway, as far as the game goes, it looks set to recreate all the key moments from the trilogy in brick form and should be tremendous amounts of fun, especially if the PSP version gets some Wi-Fi multi-player action going.

DAVE MIRRA BMX CHALLENGE

Publisher: Crave
Developer: In-house
Release: October 2006

Dave Mirra has been absent from the world of games after his series morphed into the disastrous *BMX XXX*. Thankfully Dave is back at the forefront and there are no topless ladies in sight with the emphasis being back on tricks rather than ti... well, you know what we mean. *BMX Challenge* offers 17 levels spread across nine different environments with nine bikes to choose from. Each level will contain a number of challenges in the traditional extreme sports style, but each will be short enough to be ideal for a quick fix of handheld gaming. Up to four players will be able to compete via Ad Hoc in various different modes. There's even the ability to create your own rider and customise them. All in all, Dave Mirra's return looks set to be a real success.



L.A. RUSH

Publisher: Midway
Developer: In-house
Release: September 2006

Those already familiar with Midway's *Rush* franchise will know it's all about driving as fast as possible down city streets while attempting death-defying jumps and crazy stunts along the way. This PSP incarnation promises more of the same arcade-style racing, plus Wi-Fi multi-player modes that let you challenge your friends through sections of Los Angeles. Also exclusive to the PSP is the new Stunt Arena where you can perform all manner of insane stunts while collecting gold tokens that unlock extra content. *Rush* features over 36 licensed vehicles ranging from muscle cars to exotic imports - all guaranteed to flip your wig back.

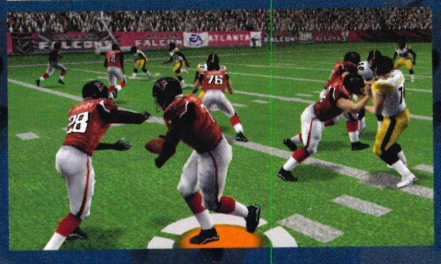
MADDEN NFL 07

Publisher: EA
Developer: In-house
Release: August 2006

Madden is unsurprisingly huge across the pond. It's no wonder then that *07* is getting released on pretty much every console going. This will be the second *Madden* game on the PSP and we're hoping that this will be an improvement over *06*, which was a bit of a letdown. This new edition

promises the ability to control the running game like never before. For the first time, you'll be able to create a hole with the lead blocker and then use the tailback to smash through, overpower, or slash away from potential tacklers – no, we're not sure what any of that means either.

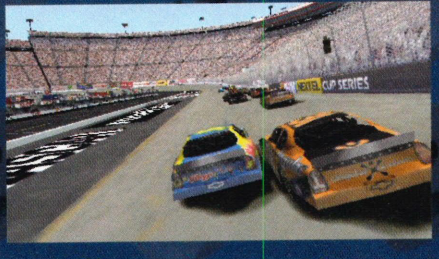
New rushing controls will give you a game-breaking ground attack featuring all-new jukes and cutbacks. Well, whatever it all means we're sure it'll be yet another comprehensive NFL simulation from EA.



NASCAR 07

Publisher: EA
Developer: In-house
Release: TBA

NASCAR games don't tend to be released over here, mainly because no one buys them. Still, you never know, this might see the light of day in the UK and if not, you can still import it. Anyway, this latest edition will feature all-new Adrenaline Moments that see you using your skill and instinct during the most intense situations to avoid disastrous accidents and flying bits of wreckage. You'll also be able to maintain your focus on dangerous conditions ahead by using the new RaceBreaker feature, which guides you through every treacherous moment of the race.



With all-new speed blurring, spark and smoke effects as well as camera shakes, *NASCAR 07* should be one of the most realistic translations of the sport yet.

BOMBERMAN

Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-house
Release: Q3 2006

An ominous black shadow is creeping towards *Bomberman*'s planet and attacks on neighbouring planets by mysterious robots have left the inhabitants brainwashed. This premise will see the titular hero embarking on an intergalactic adventure to stop this alien menace in his tracks.

With his first visit to PSP, *Bomberman* brings with him retro gameplay along with some handheld-style twists. The story offers up 100 levels spread over classic and new environments. A new item stock system lets you collect items and use them at strategic moments in the game. A 'Classic' mode is also available that provides another 50 levels of action. Multi-player is fully supported with up to four players able to compete at once across 20 different stages. Gamesharing will also allow players to battle in party modes with just one copy of the game.

MIAMI VICE THE GAME

Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Rebellion
Release: July 2006

Based on the upcoming movie starring Colin Farrell and Jamie Foxx, *Miami Vice The Game* puts the player in the shoes – as well as the sharp suits – of Crockett and Tubbs as they make it their mission to infiltrate the underbelly of the South Beach underworld.

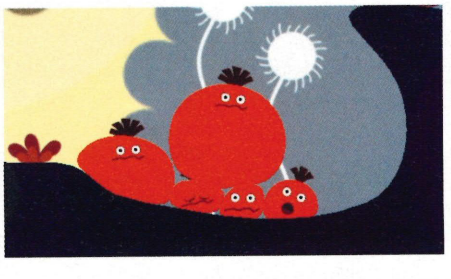
You won't find a game based on the blockbuster movie anywhere else, as this has been designed exclusively for the PSP and as such, it maximises the technology on offer rather than being another port of a home console game. The action takes the form of a third-person shooter with a variety of elements including Drug Trading, Hacking and Interactive Cutscene Encounters. The main idea is to boost your reputation within the underworld so you can go undercover and bust a South American drug lord. The action won't just take place on foot and action-packed boat chases are promised too. As long as this is better than the PS2 *Miami Vice* game that was based on the TV series, then we should be okay. >>

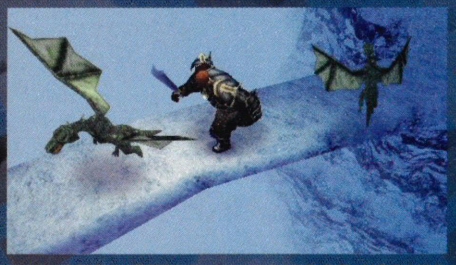
LocoRoco™

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: In-house
Release: June

Most PSP owners have heard of *LocoRoco* by now and whether you like or hate the look of it there's no denying it's going to be a big hit. The basic premise sees you in control of a strange blob that bears a close resemblance to a Space Hopper. You control the movement of the blob by tilting the in-game world via the shoulder buttons or pressing them both to make it jump. Gravity does the rest as you roll around the bizarre world collecting more LocoRocos to increase the size of your blob.

The game is best described as a puzzler and you must figure out how to reach certain areas in order to grab those precious collectibles. Our hands-on play revealed *LocoRoco* to be strangely likeable and bizarrely addictive. The music, while mildly irritating, will get into your brain and stay there for days. *LocoRoco* is out soon so expect our verdict next issue.





>> DUNGEON SIEGE: THRONE OF AGONY

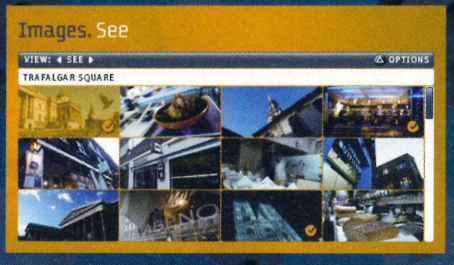
Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: Supervillain Studios
Release: October 2006

This first foray onto the PSP for the *Dungeon Siege* series will feature an all-new story built around a non-linear single-player campaign, which will take around 15 hours to complete, so you'll definitely get your money's worth. The gameplay will stick to the tried-and-tested formula of real-time combat, dungeon exploring as well as item collecting.

You will be given the choice of four different characters at the start with plenty of scope for customisation. While previous games have featured party-based combat, you will have to travel solo for much of Throne Of Agony. However, there is an array of pets and companions that will come along for the ride, each of which has unique strengths and abilities. Levelling your character up will play a big part, so you can ensure your character is powerful enough to take on all of the 100 different enemy types. To aid you in this there are also over 100 spells and abilities with which to defeat your foes.

Vehicles make an appearance for the first time in the series and instead of warping or waling across the map, you can now hitch a lift on an airship or a boat.

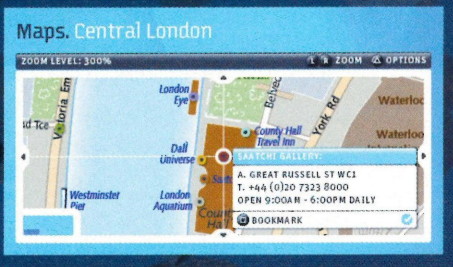
Ad Hoc multi-player for two players will be available, allowing you to play through the story cooperatively or pit your heroes against each other in an arena. All in all, this looks to be another accomplished RPG for the PSP.

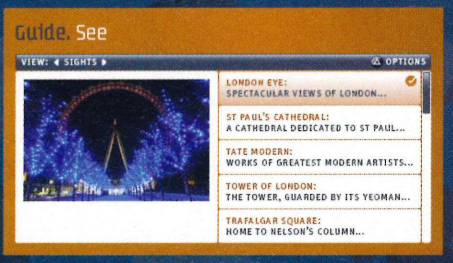


PLANET PSP

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: In-house
Release: Q4 2006

Throw away those guidebooks! *Planet PSP* is an interactive city guide featuring popular European destinations like London, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Prague, Paris and Rome. Never get lost or go hungry again, as detailed city maps will guide you through streets to the nearest eatery or whatever else you happen to be looking for. With *Talkman* and now this, Sony really is trying to make the world a smaller place.





RENGOKU 2

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Hudson Soft
Release: Q3 2006

This sequel to last year's android-based action-fest promises even more excitement. Once again you're in the role of the gladiatorial android known as A.D.A.M. This time he will have to fight his way through eight levels, seven of which are based on the seven deadly sins. Customisation will play a big part once again and there promises

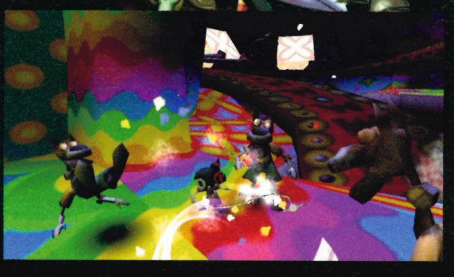
DEATH JR. 2

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Backbone Entertainment
Release: Q4 2006

This sequel allows you to take control of DJ once again and also his friend Pandora. Each character will have a number of different moves and weapons in their arsenal with which to fight off the weird and wonderful enemies that lie ahead.

A new Rage Mode will allow you to power up attacks and unleash Reaper Madness and Pandemonium for DJ and Pandora respectively.

The developer has taken on board the criticism that was levelled at certain areas of the first game and has improved the manual camera control and tightened up the controls in general. Here's hoping the improvements make this sequel better than the hit-and-miss first.



to be over 300 different items that you can recover from your slain enemies. *Rengoku 2* also looks to be far more colourful than its somewhat gloomy predecessor and looks graphically superior too.

Four-player multi-player will make a return with Gamesharing included, so you only need one copy of the game. Downloadable content will also be on the cards with new maps, weapons and items becoming available after the game's release.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS TACTICS

Publisher: Atari
Developer: Kuju Entertainment
Release: Q4 2006

This turn-based strategy game allows parties of up to six players simultaneously within the popular *D&D* universe. Using a grid-based system, movement of your character will be pleasingly simple and post-movement actions will be selectable from an easy-to-use menu system. This menu can be customised so it shows your most frequently used actions for easy access. Characters can be created and are fully customisable and you'll be able to create as many as you like, or that your Memory Stick will allow. Each of these characters can be added to your party until you reach the maximum of six, unless you want to play with friends via Wi-Fi, in which case you can each control your own character within the party.

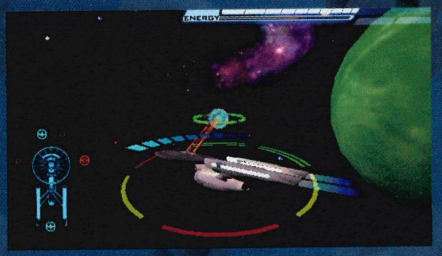
The story throws up the predictable main side-quests, as well as the main missions, some of which can only be attempted if you have the required good or evil alignment. The environments are what you'd expect for a *D&D* release, but there's no recycling here and the world has been specifically created for this PSP version. Both the environments and character models look suitably impressive and the whole package should please long-time fans and newcomers alike.

STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Developer: Quicksilver Software
Release: TBA

This "real-time spaceship combat" game is based on the Kirk era of *Star Trek* when Scotty was busy beaming and the Klingons were bad guys. Your task as ship's captain is to outmanoeuvre enemies and strike at the weak spots with photon torpedoes and the rest of your arsenal as you decide on the best course of action for your ship and crew as you progress through the branching campaign. Two separate campaign modes let you control either Federation or Klingon ships so you better dust off that Klingon phrase book.

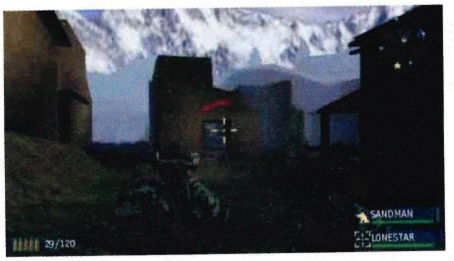
Multi-player hasn't been forgotten and you'll be able to face-off in epic space battles via Wi-Fi. The multi-player and Skirmish modes also allow you to take control of Romulan, Gorn and Orion fleets, as well as the Klingon and Federation. Each race has different strengths, weaknesses and tactics, giving you five completely different experiences. The screens may look pretty good already and if you're not averse to a bit of Trekkie action, then this could provide some space-based fun.



ATV OFFROAD FURY PRO

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Climax
Release: October 2006

Expect lots of high-speed hi-jinks and lashings of mud from this latest venture into the world of ATV racing. Choose from a total of 30 tunable vehicles including MX bikes, buggies and Trophy Trucks and race on 64 tracks, including ones from the original *ATV Offroad Fury* games that feature terrain such as snow ice, water, >>



SOCOM U.S. NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO 2

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Zipper Interactive
Release: Q4 2006

We've only just had the last one and there's already a sequel on the way! Not that we mind, as the first *Fireteam Bravo* was a cracking game. Things are much the same this time around, apart from a few new additions including the non-linear mission progression. This will allow you to choose which of the 14 missions to do next and will also allow you to go back to previous mission areas when enemy activity resurfaces there, which allows for almost endless replay. The Command Equity system is also a new addition and will be rewarded if you perform well in certain areas of the missions. This can then be used to purchase weapons, satellite intelligence, air strikes and more. Local Influence is the civilian version of this and deals with how well you interact with the local populations of the areas you visit. The higher your rating in this, the better chance there is that they'll give you intel and access to black market weaponry.

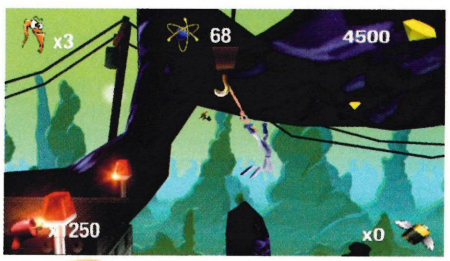
Gameplay has been enhanced with better enemy AI and access to more weapons. The visuals have been spruced up too with more realistic environments and character models.

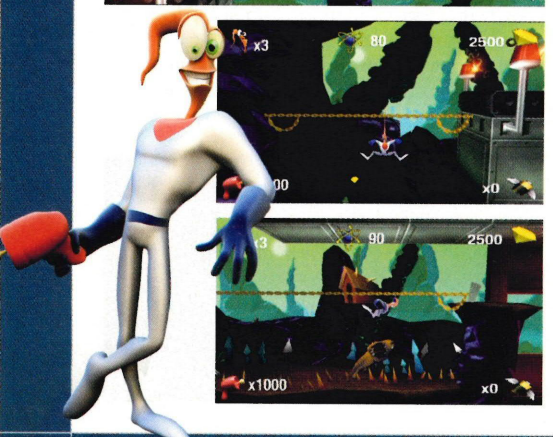
The comprehensive multi-player modes remain and are joined by three new ones – Tug-of-War Control Points, Capture the Flag and Target. Crosstalking between *Fireteam Bravo 2* and *Combined Assault* on PS2 will feature heavily too, with even more dramatic effects on story progression this time around.

This looks to improve on the first game in every way possible, which is no mean feat – we can't wait!

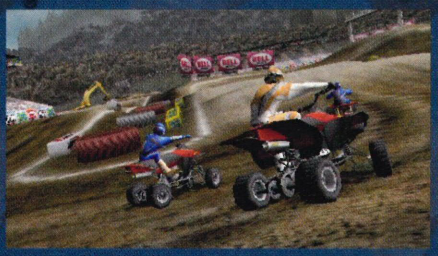
Publisher: Atari
Developer: In-House
Release: Q4 2006

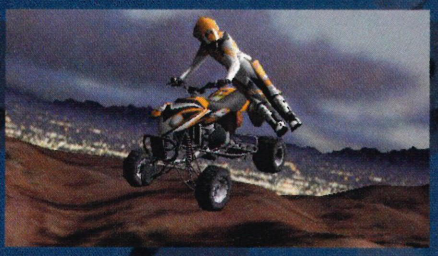
Atari has picked up the rights to everything *Earthworm Jim* and its first use of the licence is to put the wacky character on PSP. The side-scrolling platformer was a big hit in the Nineties with its cartoon-style visuals and crazy humour. The visuals have taken a step into the 21st Century with improved animation and characters, environments and effects that are crafted in 3D. An expanded array of moves will assist Jim in his quest to save the princess and he travels through open, playground-like levels that beg to be explored and are filled with puzzles to solve. Jim's return to gaming looks to be something special.





>> grass, mud and plain old dirt. Along with plenty of single-player championships, four players can compete via Wi-Fi or Infrastructure in a number of different game modes all designed to test your racing skills. Compatibility with *ATV Offroad Fury 4* on the PS2 is also possible, allowing you to share customised circuits, exchange vehicles and access chat rooms to discuss racing tactics.





NBA 07

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: In-House
Release: October 2006

In contrast to all the 'street' *NBA* games that populate the shelves, Sony is striving to bring us back to reality with a proper sim of the sport with the ability to play a full season featuring player trades, injuries and plenty more. Officially

licensed by the NBA, this edition boasts all-new gameplay modes and mini-games. The Conquest mode allows you to take one of the 41 teams and challenge NBA squads across the country, while Pick Up mode lets you choose from 10 different players for a playground-style match (there's the 'street' element). The mini-games include a rhythm-based dunk contest

along with skee-ball, pinball and pop-a-shot. The popular Dodgeball and HORSE also make a welcome return.

Both Ad Hoc and Infrastructure are supported for up to four players so you can show off your b-boy skills to anyone who's willing to compete.

BATTLEZONE

Publisher: Atari
Developer: Paradigm Entertainment
Release: November 2006

An update of the Eighties arcade game that sees you controlling futuristic hover tanks in close-combat battles. There will be eight customisable team vehicles, various weapons and Wi-Fi multi-player for up to four people with deathmatches, capture the flag and more game modes. An online level-builder tool will also be available that will allow you to download your designed level to a PSP with a USB cable. Looks like a definite winner on the multi-player front.

BROOKTOWN HIGH: SENIOR YEAR

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Backbone Entertainment
Release: 2007

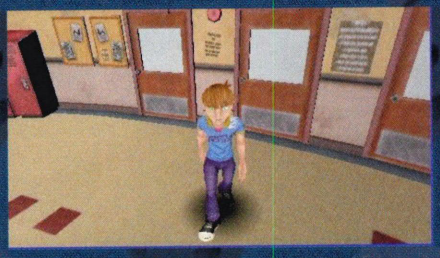
You asked for it and now you've got it - the first dating simulator for PSP. *Brooktown High* lets you relive those carefree days of senior year in high school (good job really, as we can't remember them). Create your own character and charm the pants off one of 12 fellow male or female students who each have their own personality and style. You don't have to go it alone and you can hang out with gangs

including the rebels, jocks or preppies as you look for the girl or guy of your dreams. You can take your love interest on dates to the movies or the beach and even partake in a variety of mini-games. This looks unlikely to be released outside of the US but we can always hope.

YU-GI-OH! GX

Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-House
Release: Q4 2006

In this debut *Yu-Gi-Oh!* game for PSP, you can compete in teams of two for the first time, allowing you to switch characters and decks in the middle of a duel. With more cards than any previous *Yu-Gi-Oh!* game you can perform all-new deck and duel strategies. The duel field has been updated with 3D animations for each card and now you can even create custom duel puzzles for endless strategic fun. Four players will be able to compete via wireless multi-player so the fun never stops!



EVERY EXTEND EXTRA

Publisher: Buena Vista Games
Developer: Q Entertainment
Release: Q4 2006

From the creator of *Lumines* comes this crazy music shooter that shares some similarities with both *Fantavision* and *Rez*, two top puzzle games in their own rights. Like *Lumines*, the further you progress, the more manic the gameplay becomes as you control a detonator that's travelling down a tunnel. Formations of spheres fly all about you, which you need to avoid and destroy with the detonator when large clusters

appear. If you're lucky you'll cause a chain reaction that will leave lots of lovely bonuses in its wake. It's a tough title to describe and only by playing it can you actually appreciate the fantastic technicolour puzzle wizardry on offer. It's definitely a game that takes a little time to get to grips with, unlike *Lumines*, which needs little explanation. Controls are nice and simple though, so at least it's just the stuff on screen that you need to worry about and not what button you need to be pressing.

APE ACADEMY 2

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: In-House
Release: TBA

This sequel to the popular party game will offer more of the same. Details are scant at the moment but there will be 100 new mini-games in a scissors/paper/stone-style card battle with 300 trading cards to collect. You'll also be able to play one-on-one games against a friend on one PSP, and Ad Hoc multi-player and Gamesharing will also feature. Sounds guaranteed to send you ape!

MARVEL TRADING CARD GAME

Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-House
Release: Q4 2006

Based on the Upper Deck collectible card game, this videogame version will allow you to assemble a deck of cards from the huge roster of Marvel heroes and villains, including the *X-Men*, *Avengers*, *Fantastic Four* and *Spider-Man*. The biggest feature of the game will be the >>

ULTIMATE GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: In-House
Release: Q3 2006

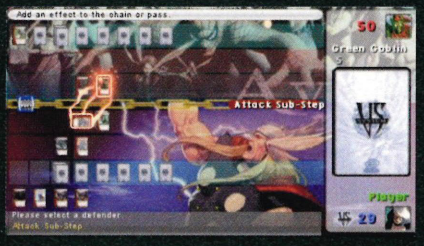
The valiant knight Sir Arthur returns to save the princess from the clutches of the evil dark lord of the underworld once again, who's intent on conquering the human world once and for all. Recreated from the ground up by members of the original *Ghost 'n Goblins* team – with the PSP well-and-truly in mind – this fourth instalment of the legendary series sees exciting upgrades and new gameplay features added while still retaining that classic charm.

Despite remaining a side-scrolling adventure, a new 3D graphics engine has been employed to give the game more depth and greater detail. Sir Arthur now has more moves at his disposal and can dash, double-jump, shoot up or down and even grab onto ledges. His skills can now be levelled up too, so you can gain more powerful magic abilities and attacks. The insane difficulty has been toned down too, with the addition of extra lives that allow you to continue where you left off rather than returning all the way back to the checkpoint. There are also three difficulty levels to cater for gamers of all skills.

The story will see you travel through five main stages that each include sub-missions, hidden paths and tricky bosses to defeat. *Ultimate Ghost 'n Goblins* looks set to offer a retro fix with a distinctly modern feel to it.

>> online multi-player support that will enable you to use your deck to challenge players from around world. Cross-platform multi-player will also be available between the PC and PSP versions of the game. There will also be access to an online store where you can purchase additional packs of virtual cards in order to boost your deck.

For the solo player, there's a story mode that will see your card battles interspersed with comic book-style sequences. The card game doesn't do particularly big business over here, at least not when compared to the likes of *Pokémon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, so this might not see a release in the UK, but you never know.



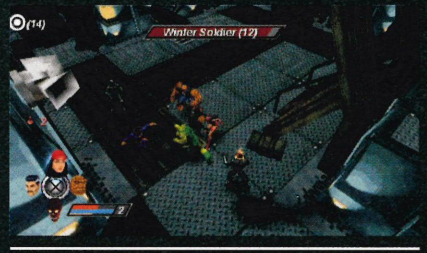
MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Raven Software
Release: Q4 2006

This is along the same lines as *X-Men Legends*, only now the entire Marvel universe gets to join it. Among the 140 characters in the game, 20 will be playable including the likes of Spider-Man, Wolverine, Blade and Captain America. The gameplay takes the form of an RPG with real-time combat and includes the ability to level up your characters. The combat system will allow for battles to take place on land, in the air and underwater, with each character having access to a set of standard moves plus some awesome superpowers. Player's actions determine how the story will play out depending upon what objectives they complete, what missions they accept and how they interact with other characters.

Multi-player is a given and you can join friends in co-operative story modes. A competitive mode will also be included where the game tracks various in-game stats so players can see how they stack up against one another. This will affect how many experience points they earn and how various pieces of equipment are distributed.

X-Men Legends was a competent title with a few flaws, which will hopefully be ironed out for this seemingly more ambitious title.



SONIC RIVALS

Publisher: SEGA
Developer: Backbone Entertainment
Release: Q3 2006

Developed exclusively for the PSP, *Sonic Rivals* takes the Sonic franchise back to its roots with 2D-style gameplay set in a 3D environment. *Rivals* is a head-to-head competition between Sonic and both his friends and foes, as players race to cross the finish line first utilising boost moves and power-ups to trip, shove and vault over each other. The tracks will twist and turn all over the place and are filled with Dr. Eggman's hazardous traps. You can pick one of four Sonic characters to play as and each has their own story to follow as you progress through the game. Trading cards are rewarded for doing well and these can be used to customise the characters.

AND THE REST...

Some games were merely hinted at and no juicy information was actually dished out, not to mention any screenshots. So here are some words about them without visual aids – enjoy!

PAINKILLER: HELL WARS

Publisher: DreamCatcher Int.
Developer: People Can Fly
Release: November 2006

This FPS sees you taking the role of Daniel, a human, who after his death, was enlisted into the army of Heaven and made to fight in the war against Hell. The PSP version seems to have some new content over the Xbox and PC editions, with new monsters among the 75 types you'll face and fearsome new weapons on offer. As well as a single-player story mode, there will also be multi-player modes available.

CALL OF DUTY 3

Publisher: Activision
Developer: TBA
Release: Q4 2006

Little more than a possible release date was mentioned in regards to this, but we do know it will be a first-person shooter and will be developed specifically for the PSP, rather than being a port of the console versions.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6

Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-House
Release: October 2006

Pro Evo is always awesome, unless it's on the PSP, of course, then it's a bit rubbish. Hopefully this year's edition will improve on last year's

disappointing debut, though that's difficult to tell at the moment, as Konami has done little more than announce it and shown us some next-gen screenshots. Fingers crossed, eh?

GHOST RIDER
Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: Climax
Release: Q1 2007
Being released to tie-in with the upcoming movie starring Nicholas Cage, the game seems to share more similarities with the comic book than the movie, much like *The Punisher* game that was out around the same time as the movie. *Ghost Rider* has both on-foot sections and, of course, plenty of motorcycle riding. Your main weapons are chains, which are used in a very similar way to God Of War, even down to the light and heavy attacks that you can dish out with them. The bike section once again sees the chains used to attack enemies on either side, and a projectile to hit those at the front. It's all a bit simplistic at the moment but the game is still in the early stages of development so time will tell whether it can deliver a solid comic book experience.

DUNGEON EXPLORER
Publisher: Hudson Entertainment
Developer: In-House
Release: TBA
Based on the classic action/adventure series that originally appeared on the TurboGrafx console. As well as solo missions, expect to see Wi-Fi multi-player support for up to four players.

ERAGON AND SAPHIRA
Publisher: Vivendi Universal
Developer: Amaze Entertainment
Release: November 2006
Based on the movie that's based on the book, Eragon will offer up lots of *Lord Of The Rings*-style fantasy action with plenty of dragons and magic thrown in. The single-player campaign will show the story from the perspective of the young hero's dragon and will feature a healthy dose of sky-based action. Multi-player will be supported for up to four players with 12 different game modes.

AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER
Publisher: THQ
Developer: In-House
Release: Q3 2006
Based on the popular Nickelodeon show, players can take control of Aang, Katara, Sokka and Harra as they grow into a force to be reckoned with using the Kung Fu-inspired bending arts through the Avatar universe. Explore the four Avatar nations in impressive detail and take on an army of new and deadly enemies.

300: MARCH TO GLORY
Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Collision Studios
Release: 2007
Based on the film that's based on the Frank Miller graphic novel. The novel tells the story of King Leonidas who held back the mighty Xerxes and the entire Persian army with just 300 Spartan soldiers. Expect plenty of sword-based combat and the chance to fight solo or with other soldiers.

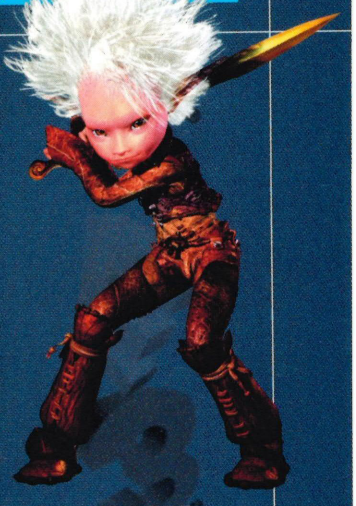
TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Release: 25 November 2006
The name is all we know about this but we're pretty sure Tony will have a few new tricks up his sleeve. One feature that might make it into the PSP version is the Focus Mode, which pulls the camera in to the character's feet and slows the gameplay down.

TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED
Publisher: Atari
Developer: Melbourne House
Release: TBA
As most people are focused on the Xbox 360 version of this game, it may have escaped your attention that it's coming to the PSP too. It promises to retain the majority of the core gameplay features, including the miles of Hawaiian roads on the island of Oahu, online multi-player, over 70 luxury supercars, solo challenges, player-created races, car upgrades and downloadable content. To accommodate the PSP, an Arcade Race mode has been added to provide a quick blast of racing when required.

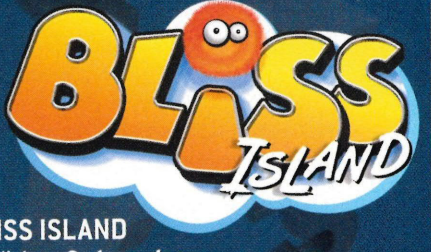
DISNEY-PIXAR CARS: THE VIDEO GAME
Publisher: THQ
Developer: Rainbow
Release: July 2006
Players can relive the excitement of the animated movie and take control of over 10 playable characters, including Lightning McQueen, in 50 story-based races and mini-games as you try to win the coveted Piston Cup Championship. All the environments in the movie have been faithfully recreated, such as Radiator Springs and Ornament Valley, all of which should provide different racing experiences. All the voice talent from the movie will be used, so expect to hear the likes of Owen Wilson, Paul Newman and Michael Keaton. From what we've seen so far the game appears to recreate the film well with both strong visuals and sound.

JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES
Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Snowblind Studios
Release: Q4 2006
This isometric RPG features DC's greatest heroes in the form of the seven JLA members – Superman, Batman, Green Lantern, The Flash, Martian Manhunter, Wonder Woman and Zantanna. Each character has the same standard attacks along with special attacks that relate to their powers. As you move through each area you battle an increasing number of foes, gaining experience and levelling up as you go. Enemies will drop items that will boost your stats, which can be allocated to specific skills. There will also be four unlockable characters, presumably playable, and possibly another two who may only appear on the PSP.

ARTHUR AND THE MINIMOYS
Publisher: Atari
Developer: Etranges Libellule
Release: Q4 2006
Based on the Luc Besson film of the Luc Besson books of the same name, the game will allow you to relive the adventures of Arthur and his two friends as they fight to save the Minimoys' world from destruction.



The gameplay will centre around the utilisation of all three characters with puzzles that require the skills of all of them, as each has unique but complementary powers that must be used together and separately in order to be successful.



BLISS ISLAND
Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Pompom Software
Release: May 2007
Bliss Island sees you take the role of Hoshi the Zwooph, a small, blue, fluffy creature with a long trunk, as he competes in a multitude of mini-games that centre around his ability to expel precision puffs of air from his trunk at high velocity. These puffs are used to bounce or control objects to complete challenges like diverting pieces of fruit into mouths or blowing creatures round obstacle courses. Sounds weird but could be fun.

WORLD SNOOKER CHALLENGE 2007
Publisher: SEGA
Developer: Blade Interactive
Release: Q3 2006
Not much in the way of info for this yet but you can expect loads more snooker loopy action with officially licensed tournaments and players as well as an expanded career mode. Sega's previous effort was a quality title so there's no reason to think this will be anything less.

BLITZ: THE LEAGUE
Publisher: Midway
Developer: In-House
Release: Q4 2006
The arcade-style American Football game is back with a new angle on the sport. *The League* will expose the harsh and troubling, behind-the-scenes stories of a fictional professional football league. The Blitz-style play remains but now features on-field injuries that range from broken bones to horrible, career-ending tackles.

REVIEWED

WE PLAY 'EM, WE RATE 'EM, YOU BUY 'E

HIGHLIGHTS

"It never seems as though it's up to you to **figure out the puzzles**, so half the fun is taken away."

Does too much **hand holding** ruin Lara's latest adventure? **Page 58**

"As **wonderful** as the PlayStation Portable is, it is yet to be blessed with a **truly wonderful football** game."

Can the new FIFA World Cup game change all that and bring **proper footy to the PSP** or will we be let down again? Find out on **page 66**

"Even if you are a fan you should **think hard** before buying Yellow Avenger."

Discover **what's gone wrong** with SpongeBob SquarePants' latest adventure on **page 65**

1 This suspicious look shows the sheer contempt that Keith has for all us PlayStation fans. Sitting over on his 360 magazine he thinks he rules the office – muppet.

2 So chiselled is Keith's jaw that he felt the need to partially conceal it, lest the ladies of the world tear apart every last copy of **Go>Play** just to get a glimpse of it. What a considerate chap.

3 Keith claims his large forehead conceals a massive brain, capable of out-thinking every last one of us. Shame it doesn't help him be any good at games.

4 The pursed lips say it all. We asked Keith to think of his favourite Status Quo tune and he didn't take kindly to it. We were then forced to examine his iTunes –it contained no Quo.

5 Clearly a fan of make up and high heels, Keith wears his Kiss t-shirt with pride. He wishes Gene Simmons had come to his school.

6 As small as Ryan is large, Keith has trouble finding clothes small enough for his delicate frame, hence the abundance of folds in his t-shirt.

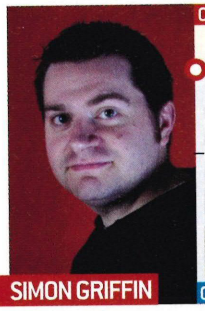
REVIEWER OF THE MONTH

(As picked by us, out of a small box)

REVIEWER: Keith Hennessey
SUBJECT: Mild-mannered reporter

CHAMP OR CHUMP?

So, what exactly have the hard-working, hot-to-trot **Go>Play** crew been up to this month? We ask them directly...



SIMON GRIFFIN

CHAMP

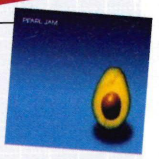
9 April
Did nothing - it was awesome!!

25 April
Went to London to see games on Sony's dime. Cheers Sony!

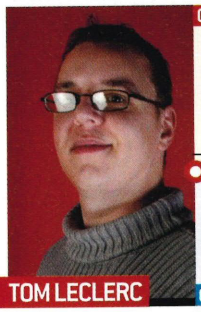
14 April
Went to Stonehenge, it was rockin'.

15 April
Bought a new jacket, I'm stylin'.

31 April
New Pearl Jam album out tomorrow - rockin'... again.



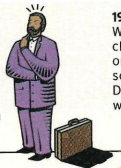
CHUMP



TOM LECLERC

CHAMP

13 April
Left my briefcase at the bus stop. Dunno why, guess I was a bit drunk.



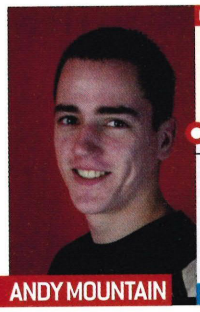
19 April
Went to arc-welding classes to brush up on my contemporary sculpture techniques. Dunno why, guess I was a bit drunk.

3 April
Stayed in the office for three days straight 'cause deadline was fast approaching. Dunno why, guess I was a bit drunk.

25 April
Cooked the world's largest batch of eggs. Dunno why, I was a bit drunk I guess.

27 April
Gorgeous weather, so I hit the beach with my laptop. Dunno why, I might have been a bit drunk.

CHUMP



ANDY MOUNTAIN

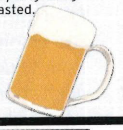
CHAMP

13 April
Go>Play hits its deadline with no problems so its off to the pub then onto a club to see a Live band.

28 April
Finally after many months waiting got to watch *Final Fantasy Advent Children.*

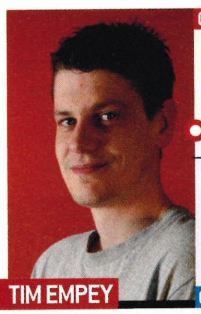
8-9 April
An active weekend, my sister's dance show, a friend's birthday, a night out in Bournemouth, lunch with friends and an afternoon of windsurfing.

22 April
Went out for a friend's birthday and celebrated in the traditional way of getting wasted.



30 April
BBQ & party night, ate lots, drunk more and burnt the patio.

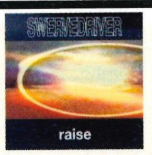
CHUMP



TIM EMPEY

CHAMP

2 April
Watched a load of old *Space Ghost Coast To Coast* episodes, damn they were funny. They made me smile. Chortled a bit as well, until realised chortle is a rubbish word.

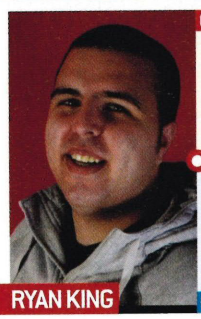


22 April
Found out that youtube.com has videos of practically every band I could think of. So I spent the day reminiscing and watching vids form the mid-Nineties. Felt old.

9 April
Played *Dragon Ball Z* for ages, turned it off and then when I turned it back on again I found out auto save hadn't been turned on. Got a bit grumpy.

15 April
Watched pretty much all of *Justice League Unlimited,* decided I really want to be Batman. Then realised I was getting fiction and reality all mixed up again.

CHUMP



RYAN KING

CHAMP

5 April
Discovered a new combo with Denjin Ryu in *Third Strike* and bapped Tim with it. He's rubbish!

28 April
Bought a DVD called *Crazy Guy With Super Kung Fu.* It's crazy! And super! Hooray!

2 April
Completed *Oblivion!* The ending's a bit rubbish. He turns into a statue? What?

10 April
I can't remember what I did today but it definitely didn't involve Mario.

19 April
When did the *Silent Hill* film come out again? I saw that when it was released, whenever it was.

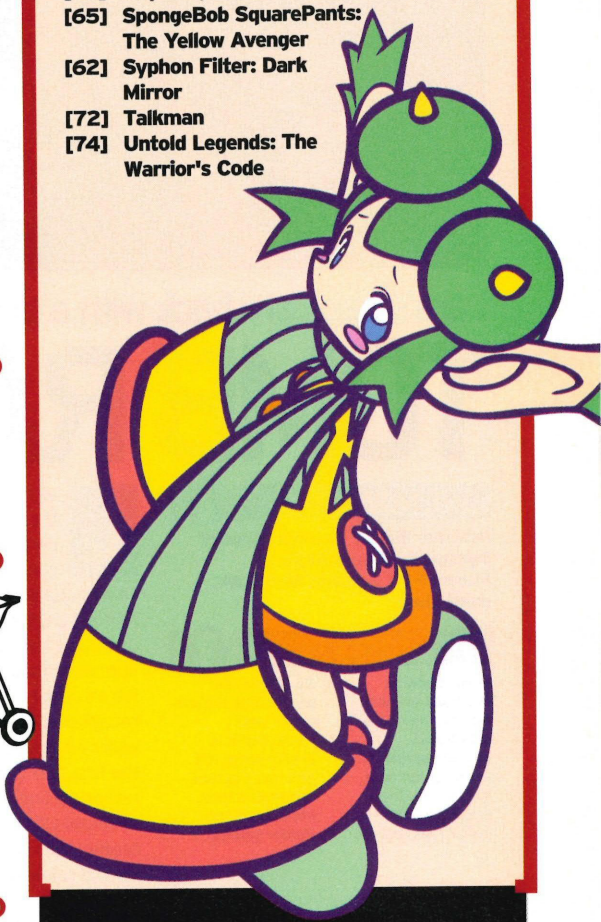
CHUMP

Reviewed this month

[58] TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND
Can Lara still turn heads and stop traffic? No doubt. But can she make a good game?

HIGHLIGHTS

[70] Capcom Classics Collection
[69] Carol Vorderman's Sudoku
[66] FIFA World Cup Germany 2006
[76] Puyo Pop Fever
[65] SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger
[62] Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror
[72] Talkman
[74] Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code



How we review

The Big Question

Even the fairest-minded reviewer makes assumptions. How good have the developer's other games been? How good are the games this is up against? We outline The Big Questions...

Percentage Score

It's a games mag tradition to score out of 100 per cent, and who are we to break with tradition? Chances are you know how these work, but in case you don't:

Under 30% = atrocious
Under 60% = pretty damn poor
Around 70% = now we're interested
Around 80% = well worth buying
Around 90% = fantastic. Sell your gran to get it

Summing-Up Line

The whole game boiled down to 15 or so words.

Lara's baps are back with a brand new adventure

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Eidos** / Developer **Crystal Dynamics** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Wow! Look at the baps on her! I mean, hey nice graphics...
Yup the graphics are nice, but how ever pretty they are, it's what's inside that counts.

So is this the best *Tomb Raider* game yet?
Nope. But it is pretty good. It's just more action orientated than previous *Tomb Raider* games.

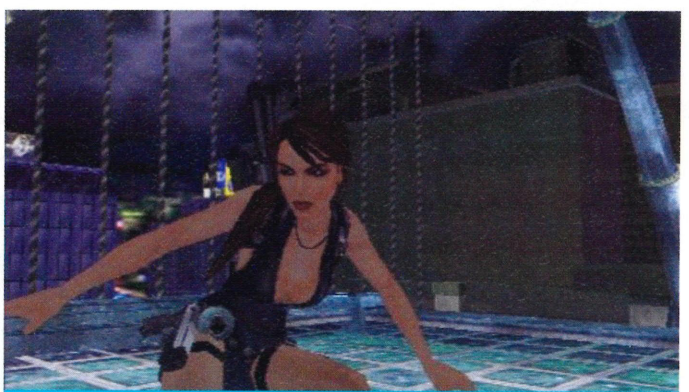
Lara's knocking on a bit these days; it's been a long time since she graced the cover of the now-defunct *Face* magazine, she's getting crow's feet around her eyes, and has obviously had some sort of surgical operation to keep her baps pert. Lara's never really managed to recapture the glory of her early years either, with every release after the first two *Tomb Raider*s being rather derivative and in the case of *Angel Of Darkness* - absolutely broken. And now with the multi-format release of *Legend*, will she be able to live up to her tag line?

Legend begins with an easy introduction to all of Lara's new tricks; apparently you can teach an old dog new ones. She's got her hands on a magnetic grappling hook with which to swing from and to drag items and platforms to her. It comes in handy pretty early on as well, when Lara has to cross a pit filled with spinning blades. Later on she's monkeying around swinging from structures and making last-ditch attempts to save herself from a fall that will spell certain, not death, but starting again from the restart point.

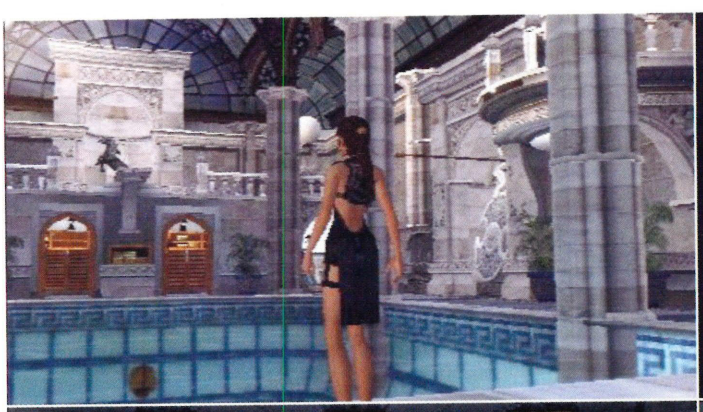
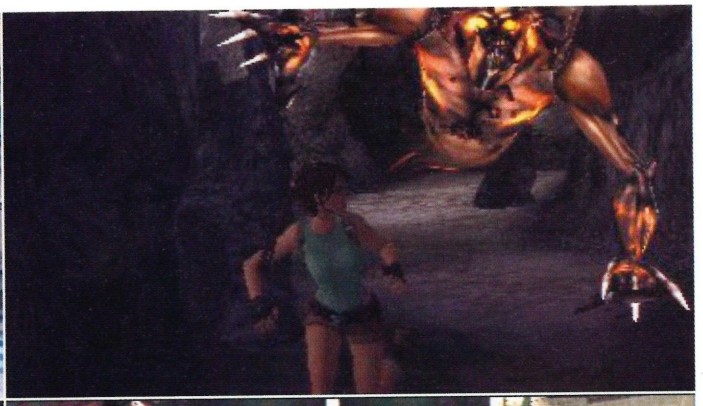
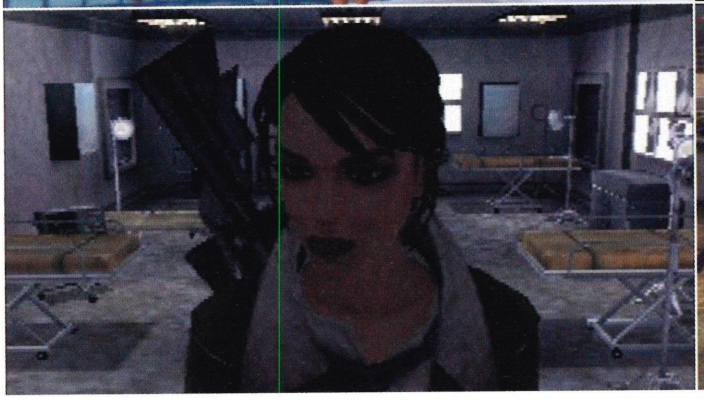
She's also been playing a lot of *Prince Of Persia* and has copied a few of the Prince's moves. Now you'll see Lara jumping from poles and shimmying around them, as well as making much more acrobatic jumps than she's ever been able to do before. For the first time you'll see Lara swinging round and round on a horizontal pole before launching herself off to grab a previously unreachable ledge. Nice.

It's not just the mid-air acrobatics that have been improved. The familiar grid system that saw Lara having to line up all her jumps just to get the distance right has gone. No more do you have to walk slowly to the edge of a block before jumping back and taking a mad running leap, you can now jump from just about anywhere, safe in the knowledge that Lara will grip and cling like a shapely monkey to the ledge you

There are shoot-outs round every corner, so it's lucky Lara never runs out of ammunition for her default pistols



At times *Legend* looks absolutely gorgeous and you're proud to be playing with such a well-animated character

aimed her at. It's not that safe though! If it is a bit of a risky jump then you might have a second to hit Triangle to make her grab the ledge with both hands. Fail to do it in time and down she goes. At first this seems like a really good way to keep you on your toes, but it doesn't take too long before you just start pressing triangle after every jump just in case it pops up.

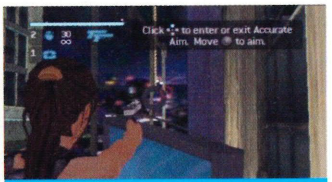
Even the block pushing has been changed due to the grid system being removed. Lara can now rotate the boxes rather than having to run around them to get to the correct side. Admittedly it takes a wee while to get used to, but it's not long before you're thankful of this development in block pushing. As well as cuboids, Lara has spheres to play with. Big round boulders that conform to physics whenever they are pushed or kicked.

From the sounds of it, *Legend* is a return to form with lots of puzzles, loads of tombs, the odd raider here and there and the occasional head-scratching bit. But it's not. *Tomb Raider: Legend* is much more action-orientated than before, there are gun battles round practically every corner and after the first few times of clearing the screen of enemies, it's pretty good fun. Lara also has some close combat moves where she can leap off an enemy and backflip while shooting them in the face. Time even slows down when you do this and you feel like a well-fit Max Payne. With breasts. Which is pretty exciting... the back flipping and so on, not having breasts, although... anyway!

[Lara will be jumping from poles and shimmying around them]

These constant gun battles quickly become tiresome and you start crying out for a way to stretch your brain, for some tricky puzzles that seem impossible at first but when you figure them out you feel like a genius. Unfortunately these never come, which is due to a few reasons. Reason one: Whenever there's something of interest, Lara will cock her head to look at whatever it is, kinda like a dog when you whistle at it. This let's you know there's something up there that you have to fiddle with. Reason two: The RAD goggles - they're special

Because jumping and shooting just isn't fun enough - here you just shoot!

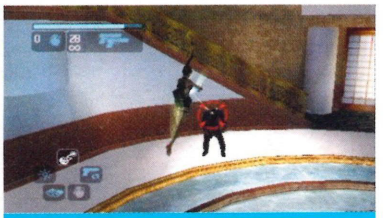


The help screens never stop, even if it's something you've done already

Bapmania

New QTEs flesh out the gameplay

Quick Time Events such as those that Shenmue was centered around make their appearance for the first time in a *Tomb Raider* game. They usually pop up whenever something dramatic happens and the action switches to a game engine cut-scene with massive icons appearing in the middle; of course, you then have to hit the corresponding button or Lara dies. This is good because then you can see around three different Lara deaths in one small sequence. If only there was a bit more rhythm to it all because then it would be a bit like *Parappa The Rapper.*



The bullet-time effect you get after leaping on enemies allows for some handy shots

You can use the grappling hook to bring stuff closer to you, or you closer to stuff

Kikstart

Lara on a bike – baps everywhere

The biking sections are by far the worst new element to Lara's adventuring. They're poorly implemented and, to be quite frank, really dull. Not even that ass-hat Zip can liven things up, even though he tries with all his "WOAH! You got air!" nonsense speak. It's really just a case of avoiding the rocks, holding down accelerate and shooting whatever baddies try to race alongside you. Sometimes there are jumps to make and sometimes you're avoiding barrels, but in Kazakhstan you get to race alongside a train for absolutely miles! It's really not fun whatsoever. Let's not have them in the next one, eh?

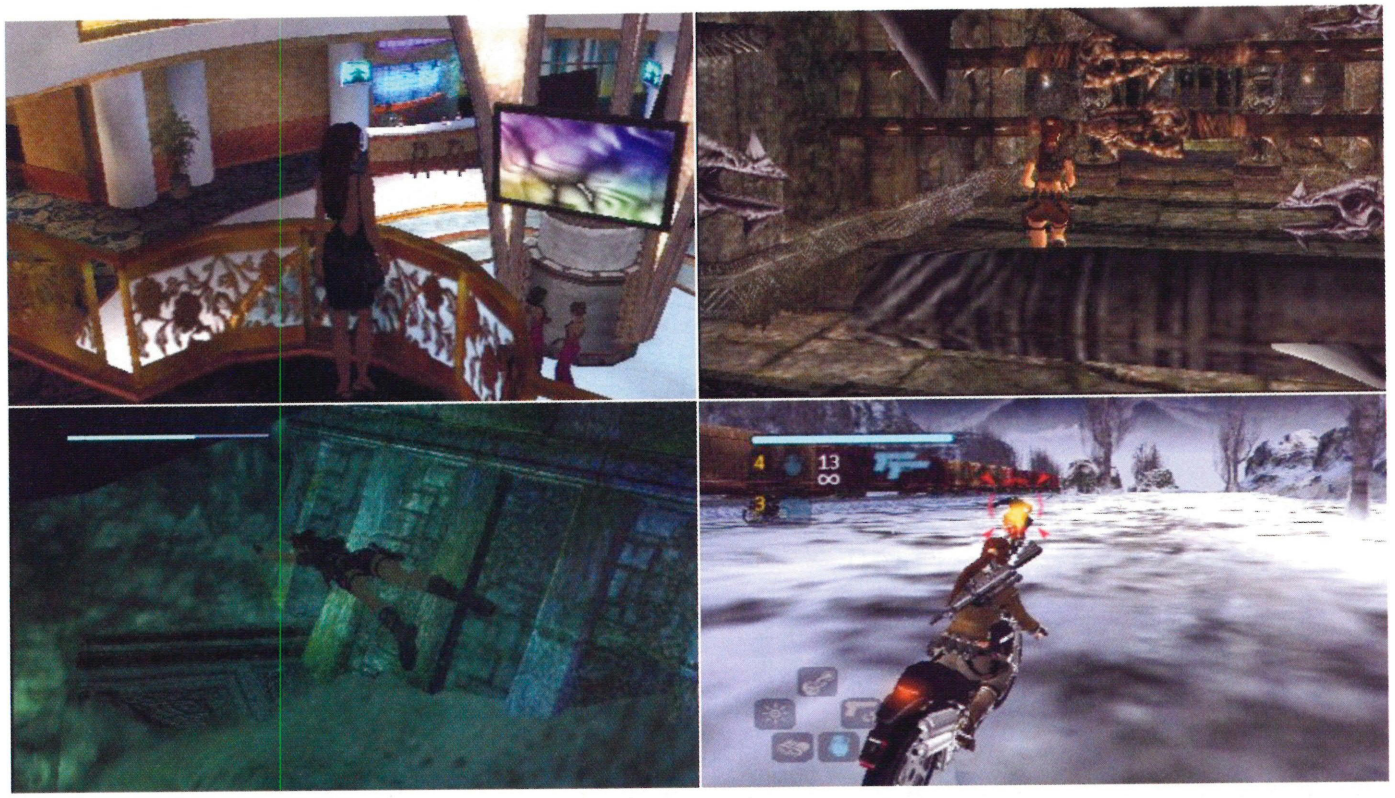
binoculars that can see puzzles. They're so good at seeing puzzles, they can work out what various bits of a structure can do, which pretty much tells you what you have to do to solve the 'puzzle'. Reason three: Whenever you come to a point that you can interact with, such as block pushing or when to use the grappling hook, the controls for it flash up at the top of the screen – even on the later levels when you've being doing it for a while. All of this leads you by the hand throughout the whole game and it never seems as though it's up to you to figure out the puzzles, taking half the fun away.

On the plus side, the pace of the game is kept rather fast as you bounce from one gun battle to the next and breeze over the puzzles. On the negative, you can complete the whole of *Legend* in about four or five hours. This doesn't sound like much value for money, but that's where the two-player mode comes in. In it you and a friend hide an item in one of the levels and then it's a race to find each other's item first. This is good fun the first few times you do it, but then because of the randomness of where you can hide the items it comes down to luck if you happen upon the item, rather than any deduction on your part.

Lara's pretty easy to control with the analogue nub and all the button presses come naturally to you; you hardly need the constant button tutorial that the game likes to give you. The only problem we found was that when looking around, something you'd do quite easily with the right analogue stick on

[The great thing about Legend is the graphics – they're super]

The RAD goggles help you seek out important items and clues to some of the slightly more difficult puzzles



the PS2 is hampered by the lack of an equivalent on the PSP. Instead, having to stop and hold down the left shoulder button and then look around can take some time and slow down your progress a bit. It just takes a while to get the camera into a decent position again after you've run Lara face first into a corner. It's a minor niggle compared to many of the other ones, but again it just adds to the list of why this is certainly not Lara's greatest adventure.

Story-wise it's pretty solid with some interesting takes on Lara's upbringing and what happened to leave her an orphan. This is expanded on when you flash back to when Lara was at school and on an archaeological trip that went wrong, setting the rest of the plot in motion.

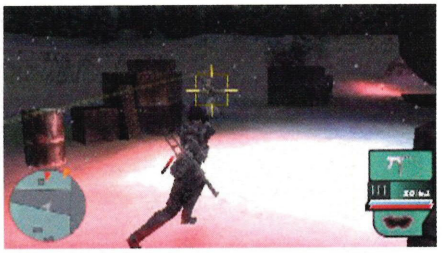
The great thing about *Legend* is the graphics – they are near identical to the PS2 version and that's super. But then you have to ask yourself if you'd rather play with Lara on the move, while constantly trying to find a position where the sun doesn't reflect off the screen, or if you'd like to stretch out on your sofa and spend a leisurely evening with the new bimbo Lara.

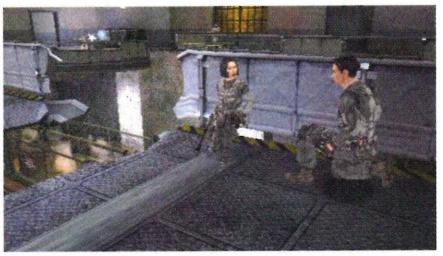
Lara's latest adventure is pretty awesome, but it turns out it's not so much *Tomb Raider: Legend*, more *Tomb Raider: Fable*. ■ **Tim Empey**

Play with Lara in the palm of your hands, jiggle them **78%**

Now Ms Croft is taking on James Bond with all her base-jumping tricks. Just remember to get her parachute out before she goes splat

It's an actual tomb in a *Tomb Raider* game! Thought we'd never see the like of it again





Gabe's back kicking terrorist butt!

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

OUT: 28 JUNE

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-8** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, Wi-Fi Internet multi-player, GameShare**

THE Big QUESTIONS

So does this pick up where *Omega Strain* left off?
Yes, but little is mentioned of the events that took place in that game. Listen carefully, though, and you'll hear references to previous games.

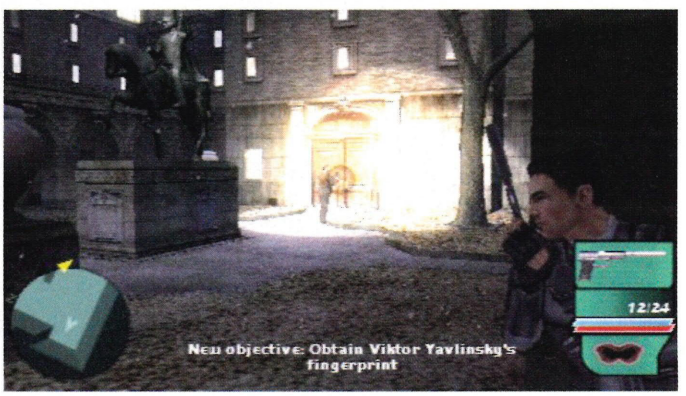
It looks pretty slick, are those really PSP shots?
They certainly are, the graphics look almost identical to *Omega Strain* on the PlayStation2. Pretty sweet for a PlayStation Portable game.

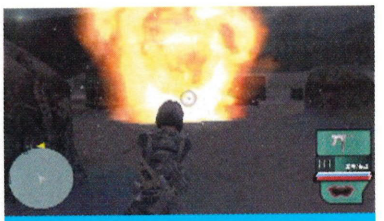
Gabe Logan has been gone far too long and so it's with open arms that we welcome him back into the fray. However, it is with some trepidation that we greet him, as his last visit on the PS2 was less than satisfying. Far from ushering Logan into a new age, it just made us long for the simpler times of his three excellent PSone adventures.

Worry not, *Syphon* fans, as Gabe has not let us down and *Dark Mirror* could possibly be the best *Syphon Filter* game yet – on any format. It's unusual for us to get quite so excited and positive about a game this early into a review, but in this case there's no point in beating around the bush – *Syphon Filter* is excellent in almost every way. Now let us tell you why...

The control system is probably your first concern and no wonder, considering the hit-and-miss success that games of this type have on the PSP with its lack of a second analogue nub. The developers have done the best they can with the options presented to them and opted to configure the face buttons to looking up and down and turning left and right. While it's safe to say that this will take a little while to get used to, by the second or third level it should become intuitive and you'll find that you probably won't even think about the controls any more. Of course, there are some who will whinge and moan about having to move and aim with the buttons, but seeing as that's the only option, it has been executed with some degree of proficiency.

Now we're past the bugbear that is the controls, we can concentrate on the meat of the game: the missions. The plot this time around centres, unsurprisingly, around a nefarious terrorist and one of Gabe's old flames. This plot, while not overly original does provide the excuse for some great settings for the various missions, not to mention some truly stunning cut-scenes that really get you into the whole experience, mainly because each one leads seamlessly into the next mission and





Fans of explosions are in for a treat as they happen with pleasing regularity

Hang from a rope and shoot at the same time! Who said men can't multi-task?

gives the impression of a constantly ongoing story. This, coupled with the excellent music score, gives the whole thing a distinctly Hollywood feel (we'll forgive it the soap opera-style ending). Load times are also reasonably short, besides every loading screen giving you some spiel to read, although Gabe's ramblings do get a little irritating once he starts going on about fate. This is hardly a major gripe, it's only a loading screen after all. On your travels through the 23 missions contained within seven chapters, you'll visit such locations as the snowy wastes of Alaska, the tropical climes of Peru and the war-torn Sarajevo as you take on bad guys with such bizarre codenames as Touchstone and Singularity.

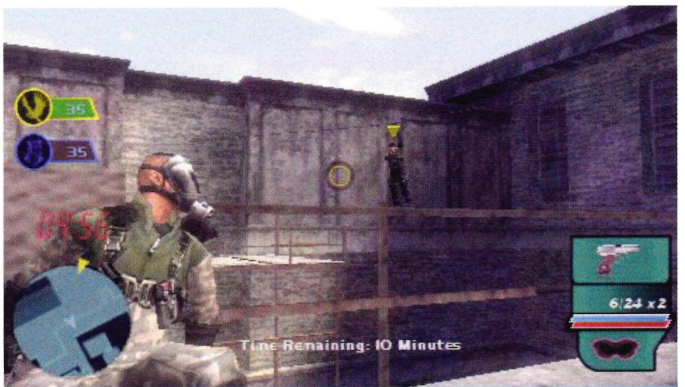
While the plot is all well and good, it's the gameplay that we're most concerned with here and as you've probably guessed, it's spot on with a perfect balance of action and sneaking that throws up enough surprises to keep you interested. You also won't go it alone in some sections and either Lian or various rescued hostages will be along for the ride. The hostages aren't just there to follow you like an obedient puppy dog however, and you will need their help in various tasks to continue through the level. The learning curve is also just right, meaning you won't breeze through the game in no time at all, but you also won't get stuck for ages on the same level. That said, it won't take forever to get through the game, but once you reach the end the fun has only just begun. Not only can you try the game again on a tougher difficulty level, but there are also a handful of bonus levels to unlock via various methods that will expand the challenge further. The AI, while not always perfect, is pretty convincing with some enemies running to find cover when under fire. Sadly, this isn't the case at all times and some bad guys will just stand there as you pump them full of lead. In most cases you will find yourself in surprisingly realistic gun battles as both you and the enemy hide waiting to see who's bold enough to stick their head out first. Bosses also make an appearance on some levels

No point in beating around the bush - Syphon Filter is excellent

More the merrier

Syphon Filter in multi-player should be played by everyone...

Besides the obvious Deathmatch and Team Deathmatch modes, which are great by themselves, there's also the Objective mode. This sees participants divided into teams with each side having a clear set of objectives. Rather than simply capturing a flag or being the team with the most kills, this actually makes you work together and take a more measured approach to the game. These objectives are even tailored to each map offering an even more varied experience.



The multi-player really is excellent, especially the team games, which will see you bonding quickly with your team-mates as you try to defeat the enemy

and for the most part they are just better-armoured enemies, but some do require a little more thought and effort put into their demise.

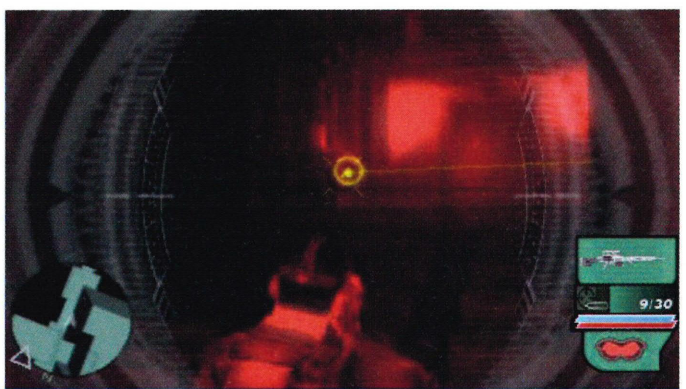
The impressive arsenal of weapons and gadgets keeps everything fresh, as does the excellent level design, which gives plenty of scope for different ways of completing some of the missions. One particularly handy item is the EDSU Goggles that reveal interactive elements within the environment, including laser trip mines so there's no more wandering aimlessly into deadly traps. Some of this stuff may seem pretty superfluous at first, but if you simply run in, guns blazing, you're likely to get nowhere fast, not least because you can carry an overabundance of ammunition and so will constantly need to be on the lookout for a fresh supply.

> **This shows how well a shoot-'em-up can work on PSP**

Syphon Filter doesn't just focus on the solo experience as an extensive Multi-Player mode is included. Up to eight players can fight it out both online or via Ad Hoc in a number of specifically designed arenas. Match types range from deathmatch to team-based objectives that play out like the single-player game, only with more participants. It all runs smoothly and is one of the best multi-player experiences we've had on PSP. Gamesharing is also included and while it doesn't allow multi-player, it will give your chosen friend a taste of the single-player, which will hopefully result in them rushing out to get a copy so you can get down to some serious deathmatch action.

The care that's been put into creating an enjoyable and fresh experience has clearly paid off and after the disappointing *Splinter Cell*, this shows how well a third-person shoot-'em-up can work on PSP if a little extra thought is put into it. Even if this genre doesn't appeal you should give it a whirl, and if you know someone who owns it tap them up for a bit of GameShare. If you've longed for another decent *Syphon Filter* game since the third on PSone, then this should definitely satisfy. More Gabe Logan if you please Sony. ■ **Simon Griffin**

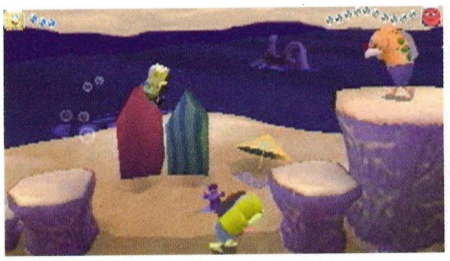
A fantastic experience both solo and with friends **93%**



The EDSU goggles in full effect. Handy for spotting laser trip mines and other such nasty traps

Maybe an elbow shot isn't ideal but it'll still hurt like hell

Stealthy kills are perfect if you want to remain undetected



It's time to save Bikini Bottom – hooray!

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE YELLOW AVENGER

OUT: NOW

Publisher **THQ** / Developer **Tantalus** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

So is this game based on the movie then?
Sadly not, the plot is nowhere near as action packed. We suggest you buy the movie on UMD instead if you want *SpongeBob* action on your PSP.

Is there any multi-player action?
There are a few two-player mini-games that will provide a short-lived distraction, but nothing that's going to set the world alight.

SpongeBob is one of those characters you either love or hate. If you can't stand the little square fella then you'll have absolutely no desire to pick up this game. However, even if you are a fan you should think hard before buying *Yellow Avenger*.

You see it's not that our pal Mr SquarePants is misrepresented here in any way; pretty much all of Bikini Bottom is here for you to explore and all the characters have been animated with care to ensure that the experience stays true to the show. Unfortunately, the gameplay seems to have been forgotten. Maybe in an attempt to make this slightly more than a generic platformer, the developers have added adventure elements that see SpongeBob completing little side-missions as he travels around the map. However, when you realise that the majority of these simply involve travelling back and forth across the same areas to pick up items and deliver them, things rapidly become boring.

It's not helped by the repetitive nature of the enemies. At the start of the story, SpongeBob accidentally turns the super-villain Dirty Bubble into hundreds of tiny evil red bubbles. These little bubbles then chase the residents of Bikini Bottom. To save them you need to jump on their heads (go figure) and burst the bubble. This would be fine if these bubbles stayed gone, but leave and then return to an area and they will have returned, which gets annoying with all the backtracking involved.

Things liven up later as Bob gains some special powers. These are activated by special pads on the ground, but they are too few and far between to really get things going.

Compounding these problems is the fact that there's no voice talent in the game. Without his distinctive voice SpongeBob seems incomplete, as do the lacklustre sound effects. The music is fitting, but even that's on an irritating, endless loop.

What could have been simple and fun has had the enjoyment sucked out of it, and is now full of endless repetition and, sadly, lacks the comedy that SpongeBob is so well known for. ■ **Simon Griffin**

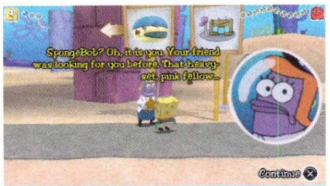
What should be fun turns out to be painfully dull **52%**

Super Sponge

Anyone can be a superhero these days

SpongeBob has an array of superpowers that are unlocked as the game progresses. They can only be activated when you stand on a special pad and only when you've collected a sufficient amount of Little Dirty Bubbles. It all sounds a little bit restrictive doesn't it? The powers consist of the Raging Whirlpool, which will propel you up to high places; Sea Creature Summon, which beckons little undersea critters to form steps for you; the Water Ball is a bouncing projectile that defeats most enemies; Super Strength allows Bob to carry heavy objects; and finally, Super Speed slows down the world so SpongeBob can jump across fragile platforms before they crumble. Sounds like a barrel of laughs, eh?

[Without his **distinctive voice** SpongeBob seems incomplete]



Without any voice-over work the conversations are pretty tedious

Which way to go? That is the question on all our minds

The French team's break dancing lessons weren't going according to plan

He wasn't that keen on booting the ball into the penalty area, he'd grown quite attached to it

EA Sports unleashes its 74th FIFA game of the new millennium

FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006

OUT: NOW

Publisher **EA** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-8** / Supports **Wi-Fi Lan Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

So, there's every team in the world in here, right?
Well, sort of. There's every INTERNATIONAL team in the world. Which is still a hell of a lot.

Is it better than *World Tour Soccer*?
Comprehensively, yes. Although the scream of "LAMPARD" is marginally better in Sony's effort.

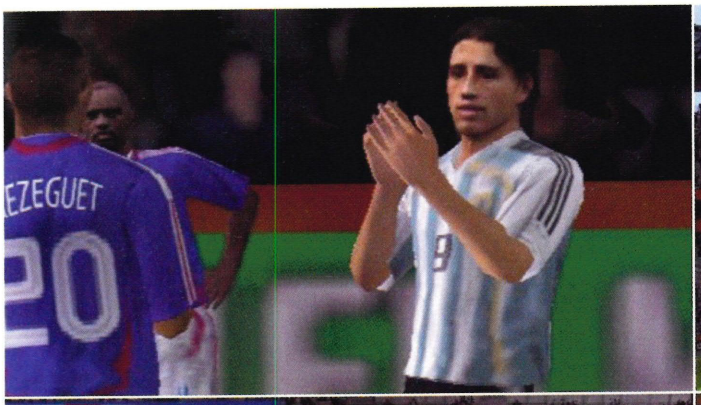
As wonderful as the PlayStation Portable is, it is yet to be blessed with a truly wonderful football game. *Pro Evolution Soccer* is a poor, ugly runt version of its, er... brother; *World Tour Soccer* is fun but decidedly average; and the previous *FIFA*s have been plagued with phenomenally long loading times and unfortunate pauses during gameplay.

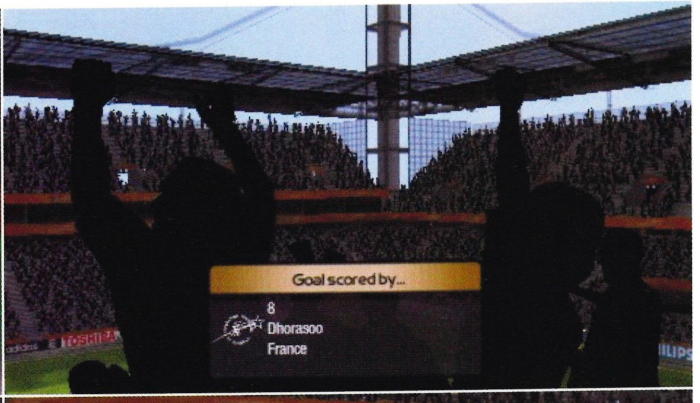
So it's with great pleasure that we can announce EA Sport's assault on this summer's FIFA World Cup as the game everyone has been dreaming of. Only joking. It's another *FIFA* game, bringing all the problems that have been inherent in the series for years. Yes, all the ropey ball physics, sweet shooting spots and overt scripting have made it across to the PSP completely intact. But for some reason, we just can't stop playing it.

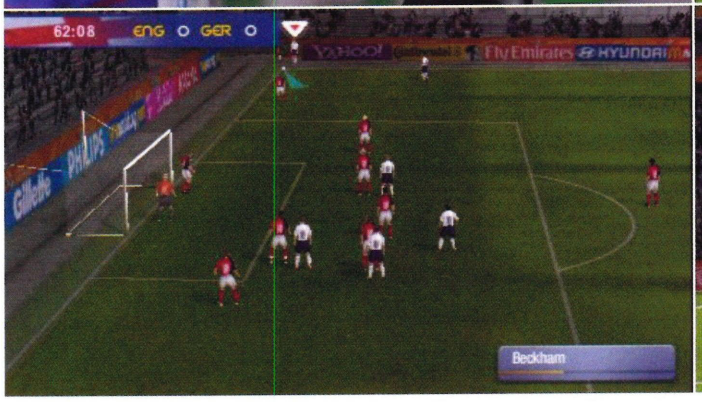
It's probably just the early onset of 'World Cup Fever™'. Or perhaps it's the excellent commentary from Clive Tyldesley and Andy Townsend. Maybe even the fact you can spank in Lampard 30-yard screamers on the bus with relative ease. As much as every ounce of common sense in our bodies tells us we're wrong, we can't help but enjoy *World Cup 06*.

As soon as the PSP's power switch is flicked to 'on', *World Cup* hurls the kind of EA razzle dazzle (yes, razzle dazzle) directly into the player's brain. A selection of World Music that Gilles Peterson would be proud of; a stylish, high budget intro sequence; a thousand menus to customise every aspect of your game - it's an Electronic Arts 'experience', and no mistake.

Some may complain that EA has removed all of the club teams for its take on the most prestigious event in football's calendar. In doing so, though, the giant of sports videogames has included every single footballing nation in the entire world. It's quite a feat - you can play as countries you didn't even know existed. It's all so the pre-World Cup qualification mode is as comprehensive as possible, and this







is the area of the game that most players will spend their time in.

While you can jump straight into the tournament proper, the drama and tension of the qualifiers is almost as exciting as the main event.

Picking someone small, like Chad (a **Go>Play** favourite nation, fact fans) and trying to take their rubbish players all the way to Germany is a refreshingly different take on videogame football. So much time is usually spent flik-flakking with Ronaldinho or shimmying with Rooney that spending time on tactics and formations is actually very interesting.

Also, for a PSP title, it is pretty smart visually, with solid player likenesses, superb stadiums and decent animation. That, coupled with the great commentary and crowd noise, sets *World Cup* apart as a truly second-gen PSP football game. In fact, it's actually a better game than the Xbox 360 version - and that's no fanboy rant, it's the truth from a reviewer who has played both.

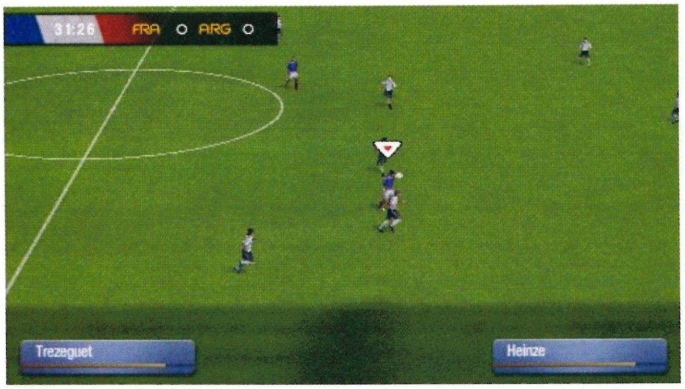
[Solid player likenesses, superb stadiums and decent animation]

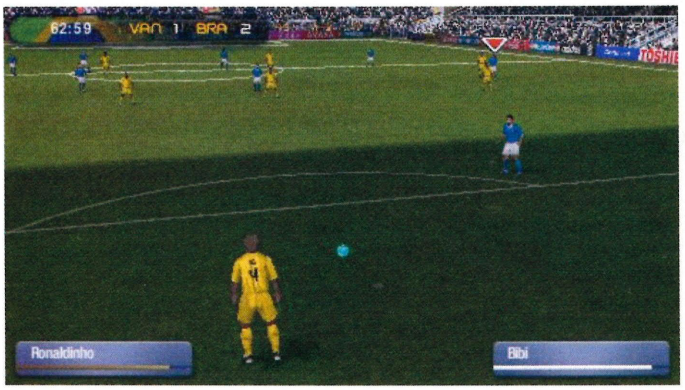
It's not all rosy in the garden of EA though. As we mentioned earlier, all of the issues that have plagued the *FIFA* series for years have returned. Hitting a long ball up the pitch, for example, sends the ball looping high into the air then crashing back down to earth like some sort of dense rock. Its distance from the pleasant parabola of a *Pro Evo* pass is noticeable and infects every aspect of a match. It makes it difficult to spray the ball around the pitch with any real conviction - passing moves are hampered by the fear that the ball is about to do something weird and wrong at any second. Without a right stick for 'first touch' it's also difficult to gather the ball up in your stride during a flowing passing move and produce a quality ball or run. In short, it suffers from *Pro Evo* syndrome - not enough buttons - but unlike *Pro Evo, FIFA* is a far less complicated game, and as such, actually suits the PSP better. You won't find yourself mindlessly losing control of the ball at every opportunity, or unable to face up on

EA-sy does it

Will it ever end?

They may be getting better, but do we really need THIS many *FIFA* games in our lives? It's ridiculous. Since **Go>Play**'s inception (not that long ago at all!), this is already the third FIFA-branded EA Sports football game we've reviewed. If people keep buying them and EA keeps making money, then we'll just keep reviewing them, but we can't escape the feeling that a little more time spent on each version would result in a vast improvement for the franchise. All we can do is hope.





defence, or bring a ball down from the sky, as EA has cleverly made all of these actions automatic. It may never be able to match up to *Pro Evo*'s fluidity and realism, but *FIFA* is actually a far less frustrating portable football experience.

This, however, does NOT mean that *FIFA World Cup* is a better videogame than *Pro Evolution Soccer*. We're sure that the next iteration of Konami's sublime football simulation will fare far better on the PSP, but as it stands, if you're hankering for some handheld Three Lions fun for this World Cup, then *FIFA* may just be your best bet.

There's a veritable gamut of modes to play from the start, including an enormous 'scenario' section, where you get the chance to change history by joining famous matches at key moments and playing them until completion. Fancy smacking that magic Geoff Hurst goal over the bar and ruining Kenneth Wolstenholme's legacy? Now you can, although it's probably more to do with the erratic shot bar than any particular malice. Throw in all the national anthems, the entire planet in football teams and a heady dose of EA sheen and you're left with a decent package.

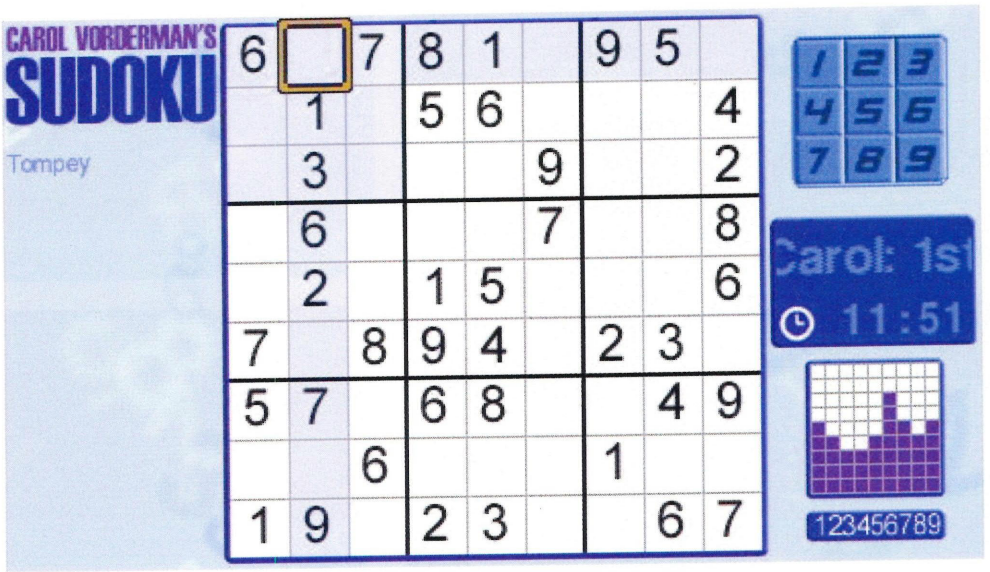
[Like football by numbers: pass, shoot, head, stepover and sprint]

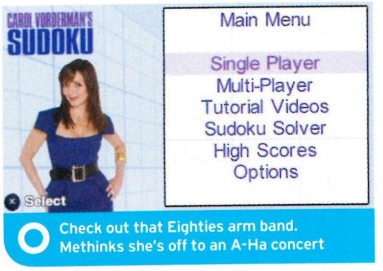
If only the actual matches were a little better. Yes, dribbling past an entire defence with Cristiano Ronaldo or splaying a defence-splitting through ball with Juan Roman Riquelme is tremendously satisfying, but when you've done it for the eighth time in one match, the novelty starts to wear a little thin. And therein lies *FIFA*'s greatest downfall. It captures the brilliance of football without balancing it with the crap. While mis-controls, dodgy refereeing decisions and shocking misses from three yards might be the bane of every *Pro Evo* player's life, without them, everything just becomes far too mechanical.

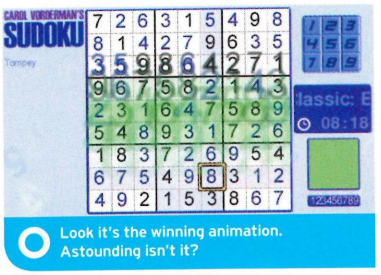
Playing *World Cup 06* is like football by numbers. You can pass, shoot, head, stepover and sprint. All the player names are there. All the licences are there. But sadly, none of the passion is there, and until EA figures this out, *FIFA* will never be the game it really should be. ■

Jon Denton

A decent *FIFA* effort, but sadly, far from great **72%**







Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!

CAROL VORDERMAN'S SUDOKU

OUT: 9 JUNE

Publisher **Xplosiv** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£19.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi Lan Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Christ on a bike! This has to be pretty boring visually, right?
It's about as interesting as you could imagine. There's some flashy lights and footage of the lovely Carol dotted around, though.

What's the difference between this and doing it in the newspaper?
Erm... one costs 20 quid, the other costs pennies. Even if you like Sudoku, you're not guaranteed to enjoy this.

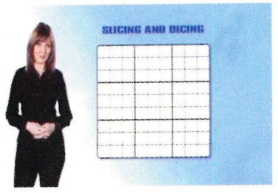
We reckon we could have Carol Vorderman. You name it, we'd beat her. Bare knuckle fist fighting, gladiatorial combat, arm wrestling or Inuit ear pull, she'd go down so quickly it'd be over before she could say "Not in the face". So it's a bit of a bummer that when she releases a PSP title, it's all about a game that we're a bit crap at. I mean, what's wrong with *Street Fighter II Carol Edition* or *Tekken 5: Dark Vorderman*? C'mon, give us a break!

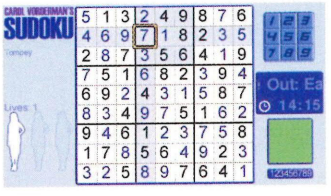
Never ones to back down from a fight, we bravely attempted each of the various modes and with aggravating frequency managed to fail spectacularly at every single one. Just when we thought we were getting close to filling one of Carol's grids, up pops a glaring error, screwing up your entire game. In the normal course of events this would be about the point you launch your newspaper/puzzle book through the nearest window and begin stabbing yourself in the thigh with your pencil to take away from the agony and frustration of what must be the silliest puzzle game ever devised. Sadly for your PSP, and thankfully for your thigh, *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku* requires neither newspaper or pencil, and if you're the sort of Sudoku extremist Carol seems to be aiming at, you could save yourself upwards of £11,000 over the course of your lifetime by our reckoning.

It's not that Carol isn't fair about it. The range of tips, hints and handy advice she gives right the way up to the extreme Sudoku master level are genuinely enlightening and make the grids significantly easier.

There's no doubt *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku* is the most complete Sudoku title on the shelves. Just exactly how much that makes you want to buy it is up to you, but with the range of play modes available, as well as the inclusion of everyone's favourite mathematician, fans will undoubtedly enjoy it. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

The best Sudoku game around. Shame Sudoku sucks really. **69%**

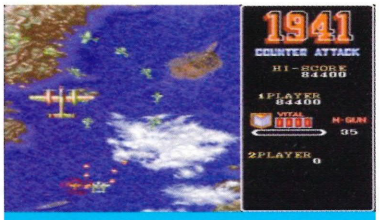




It's not just Sudoku

Carol and her many guises

Carol's clearly had a fun day out at the Eighties style mart as she's clad in a variety of *Top Of The Pops*-esque outfits throughout the menus. Thankfully she slips into a sexy all black number for her tutorials, leaving the player with minimal distraction. That's not the only source of variation throughout the game however, as the options, both single and multi-player, are numerous and, despite being a little samey, manage to keep your interest for longer than you might imagine. One of the more interesting modes, especially for beginners, is 'Three strikes and you're out', where you're given a paltry three errors before Carol takes your puzzle away. Horrible woman!



Apparently they had stealth bombers and giant flying tanks in 1941

Magic Sword, a very basic hack-'em-up, but enjoyable nonetheless

We're going commando

CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION: REMIXED

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Capcom** / Developer **In-House** / Price **$39.99 (Import)** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Do we really need another PSP retro compilation?
Hell yeah! A good retro collection is essential for any gamer, its just that they're often loaded with fillers and/or rubbish. This one isn't.

Does it have *Street Fighter II* then?
Nope, sadly not we're afraid. The inclusion of the original *World Warrior* would have increased the score by a good ten per cent.

We remember arcades when they were good. We remember when you could stroll into any seaside video hall and entertain yourself for hours upon end with just a pocket full of change. We remember when gamers weren't required to handle some complex novelty control system on the road to success. We remember when you crossed the threshold of these dens and found a shiny new Stand Up (or, heavens, a new Sit Down) every week. It was a golden age truly, but one not destined to last.

You've probably read a hundred retro compilation reviews along the same lines, but the fact is that when a decent retro collection comes along, we're reminded of all the great things about retro gaming, but when a bad one hits the shelves, our interest wanes somewhat. It's worthwhile noting at the minute then, that having sampled all the juicy treats that *Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed* has to offer, the retro appeal is at an all-time high.

Capcom really did make some titles worthy of the name classic, and with one gaping exception, they're all there. Think Capcom, think *Street Fighter II* right? Wrong. Whilst the original, and frankly rubbish, incarnation is here in all its shoddy glory, there's no sign of Capcom's greatest fighter, and the collection feels emptier for it. Other than that however, this assemblage of aged arcade games stands up particularly well against many other collections out there.

Some of the titles haven't aged well, it's fair to say, and titles like *Bionic Commando, Forgotten Worlds* and *Legendary Wings* are the kind of things you'd be hard pushed to get

more than a few minutes play out of. These are the runts of the litter, along with *Avengers* and *Section Z*, which despite – possibly as a result of – being one of the oldest in the collection, suffers from the terrible affliction of being crap.

There are other problems, but not necessarily with the games themselves. Take *Block Block* for example. *Block Block* is a break-out clone that has the potential to up the replay value of such a compilation considerably, but it simply doesn't work because of the lack of decent analogue controls. Similarly, the original *Street Fighter* isn't what you might call a quality videogame experience, as you're left chugging through fights without the aid of fireballs – again, more of a problem with the PSP than the game, but a little thought would have gone a long way.

Fortunately, a majority of Capcom's classics require a less than average standard of thumbmanship, necessitating little more than a healthy amount of credits to complete. *Strider*, for example, has been transposed marvellously, and whilst the game itself has a punishing level of difficulty, the joy of revisiting such a timeless title is unrelentingly fun. *Black Tiger*, *Side Arms* and *Magic Sword* are equally enjoyable, each displaying the kind of quality and innovation exhibited by games at the height of Capcom's success.

[In the collection are three of the best games of all time]

Well, okay, maybe they weren't rammed with the kind of imagination we expect of modern titles, but each took a well-used format and ladled on enough extras to reinvigorate the genre.

So, a couple of dross titles, a handful that don't work and a gaggle of above-average shooters and slash-'em-ups then. What's left? Well, this is unashamed personal preference here, but included in the collection are three of the best games of all time, namely *Captain Commando*, *The Speed Rumbler* and *Final Fight*, a title so poorly refreshed by Capcom in its recent *Streetwise* effort. Granted, there aren't going to be many folk out there that'll agree with us here, but in all our hours, days, months and weeks spent in arcades, we played few finer games than the magnificent *Captain Commando*, and this conversion is perfect, allowing up to four players to get in on the action with Baby, Mummy, Ninja and good ol' Cap. Similarly, *Final Fight* offers the same degree of mindless but enjoyable action that you'll remember, and as for *The Speed Rumbler*, well that's one you've got to play to appreciate.

It only takes a handful of top-notch titles to make a good retro compilation, and *Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed* manages to do justice to its name with a range of widely loved titles. We didn't like them all, but that's why a collection like this is great. As with any retro mishmash though, you need to be of the right age to fully appreciate them, but then you probably wouldn't be reading this if you weren't, would you? ■ **Tom Leclerc**

Top-drawer stuff from the golden age of video arcades **81%**

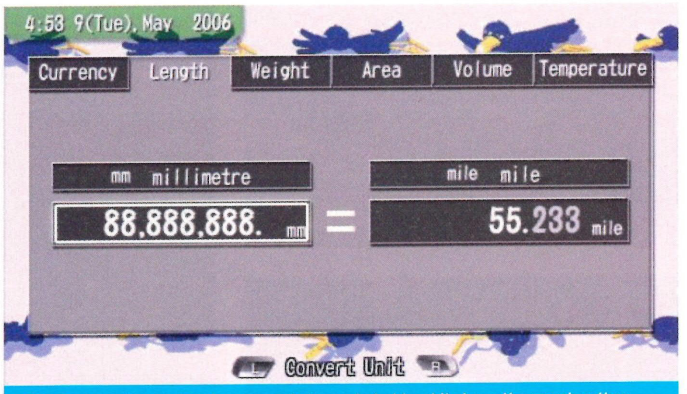
The also-rans

The ones we forgot to mention get a mention

We're missing a few here, but they're mostly on the stranger end of the spectrum with games such as *Mega Twins*, a fairly pedestrian attempt at a co-op hack-'em-up, *Quiz And Dragons*, a clearly American-orientated quiz title set in a mythical kingdom and *Last Duel*, a racy blasty type affair that escaped our notice the first time round – in all honesty we're glad it did. *Avengers* is undoubtedly the worst game of the bunch, being one of the least inspiring beat-'em-ups around. So steer clear of that one then.

Captain Commando kicks butt in what has to be one of our favourite arcade beat-'em-ups of all time

Only a C?! Right, that's it, time for a little Max casserole..



Perhaps the most boring screenshot ever, but at least it shows the game's rather useful unit convertor

When is a game not a game?

TALKMAN

OUT: 9 JUNE

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

THE Big QUESTIONS

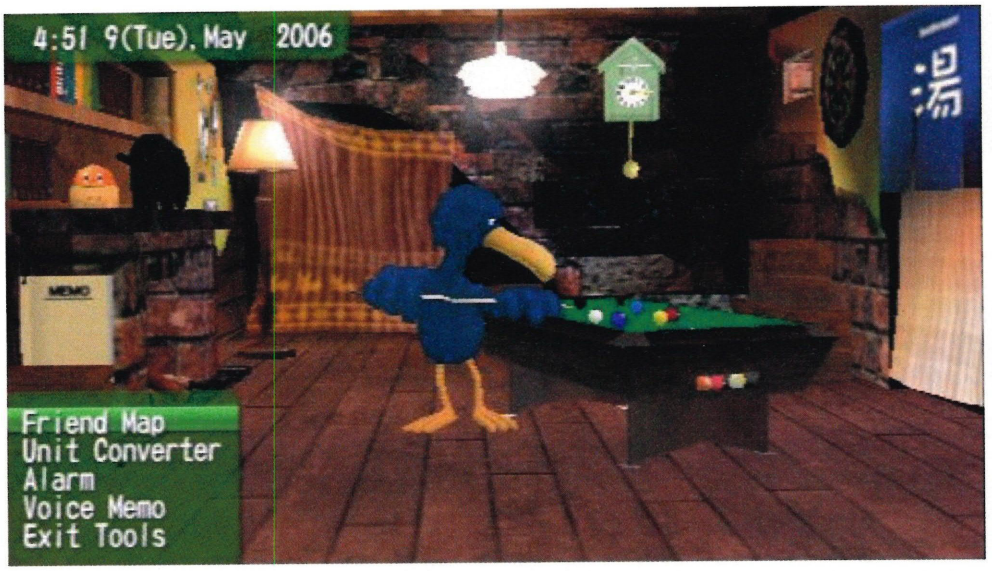
Isn't this the *Talkman* that first proved popular in Japan as well as South Korea?
The very same. If only this version was simply bilingual, it might have been of greater use. Sigh.

Why is that bird so very haunting?
Search us. The piercing eyes, the suspicious level of enthusiasm, the changing voice-over – pick any from the three. It's that Scotch advert all over again. Brr..

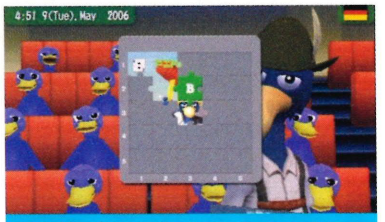
A game is not a game when it's *Talkman*. This release is very much a part of Sony's whole multimedia device push, veering dangerously towards 'education' throughout and barely qualifying as a game at all. Now, if you're over twenty and looking to take a nostalgic trip back to the classroom, harbouring fond memories of visiting assistants who'd question your foreign grammar and then proceed to make up English as they went along, that's fine. If, however, you're soon to break up for six sweet weeks of bliss, you're not really going to want to spend it with your PSP, talking to a (sadly not metaphorical) bird.

The basic function of *Talkman* is to act as a kind of slightly more practical foreign phrasebook. Using the USB slot-mounted microphone bundled with the disc, it's possible to speak whatever message you wish to convey and for your console to then come up with a translation into one of English, French, German, Spanish, Italian or Japanese. Obviously though, there is only a finite amount of space on a UMD to store voice recordings, so if your particular phrase isn't in the database then you'll be presented with a list of best possible alternatives. Voice recognition is generally spot-on, making picking out a known piece of speech the proverbial piece of cake, whilst the menus that step in when words fail are easy to work your way around.

Due to the nature of a piece of software such as *Talkman* (and the lack of technical faults therein), it's actually pretty difficult to make the same kind of critical judgment you would for a generic gangland third-person shooter. The only correct thing to do is to describe how much use this all might be if you were to find yourself stranded on the Champs-Elysées with only your PSP for comfort. Trying to take on five European languages plus its native Japanese was an impressive venture, but you can't help thinking more detailed concentration on two or three languages (or, better still, country-specific editions) might have been the wiser way to go. Whilst 3,000 phrases may sound enough to help you save the world with only a coat hanger and a length of masking tape, the 500 per language this actually represents means we're hovering



Ja, das ist gut! Success is met by the cheering crowd



Complete the jigsaw puzzles separating quiz rounds to receive further goodies...

around GCSE speaking test level most of the time. This is tempered somewhat by the fact that you can record short sections of audio to add, for example, specific names of places onto the end of more general questions or statements. The in-game menu also offers 13 conversation-streamlining scenarios, but the whole package becomes just the little bit less useable, as a result.

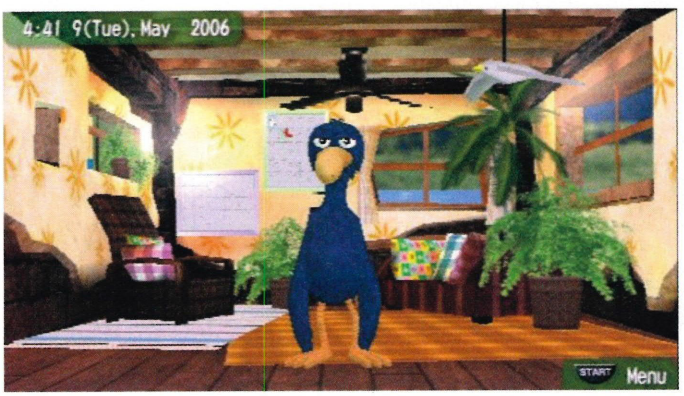
The most enjoyable area for *Talkman*'s older (and wiser) players will no doubt be the set of mini-games on offer, which promise to take public play to whole new levels of embarrassment. One of these is a simple listening test, in which an increasing number of foreign-language phrases will be read out (accompanied by what they mean) before one is repeated for you to identify in a written list. Completing each test creates a jigsaw piece on a five-by-five square, getting more and more difficult the further to the right and downwards you go. It's all nice and cute, and probably pretty useful to those preparing for exams, plus it's quite interesting to see how much knowledge remains from years trying not to pay attention. Another mini-game takes the form of a speaking test, giving a five-point grade based upon how closely you'd match a native speaker for each example-accompanied phrase taken from the overall database. Again, pretty fun stuff in a rose-tinted spectacles kind of way, regardless of how comprehensively it makes you look and feel like a total plank.

A few other functions are on hand to aid any intrepid traveller, including a currency converter activated by providing *Talkman* with an accurate exchange rate.

[Mini-games will take public play to new levels of embarrassment]

Ultimately though, it's hard to see what type of person might venture onto foreign soil so ill-prepared as to require one. A similar point might be made about the game as a whole: its fun and relatively entertaining, but anyone off on holiday with *Talkman* would also require a phrasebook, and that defeats the object a bit, doesn't it? ■ **Dave Shaw**

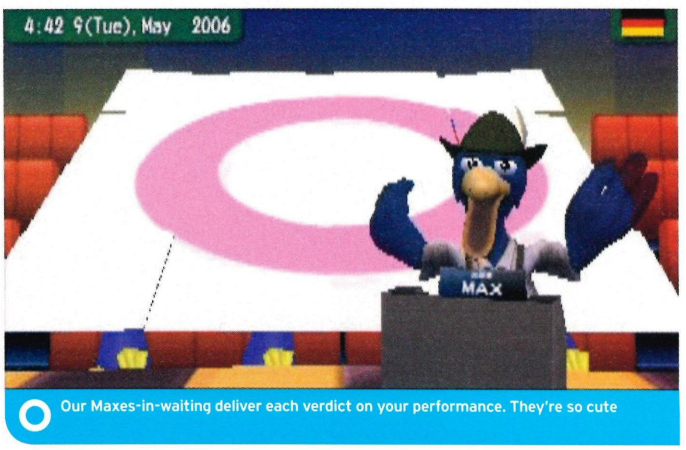
A great idea, but not in-depth enough to be useful **72%**



Emotional overload

For what are words, without feeling?

Max isn't a one-trick pony (well, bird), oh no. Adding to the voluminous amount of bog-standard phrases open to our feathered friend are a number of emotional or qualifying utterances. These not only produce some of the most haunting screenshots known to man, but allow you (among other things) to express sadness or qualify statements. Sadly though, these are only the equivalent of saying 'can we go to the beach, a bit' in English and lack any kind of grammatical respectability. Having said that though, you'd probably still be understood using this feature, most of the time anyway. This is largely a speaking tool, after all...



Our Maxes-in-waiting deliver each verdict on your performance. They're so cute

Transformers, robots in disguise

UNTOLD LEGENDS: THE WARRIOR'S CODE

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Ubisoft** / Developer **SOE** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

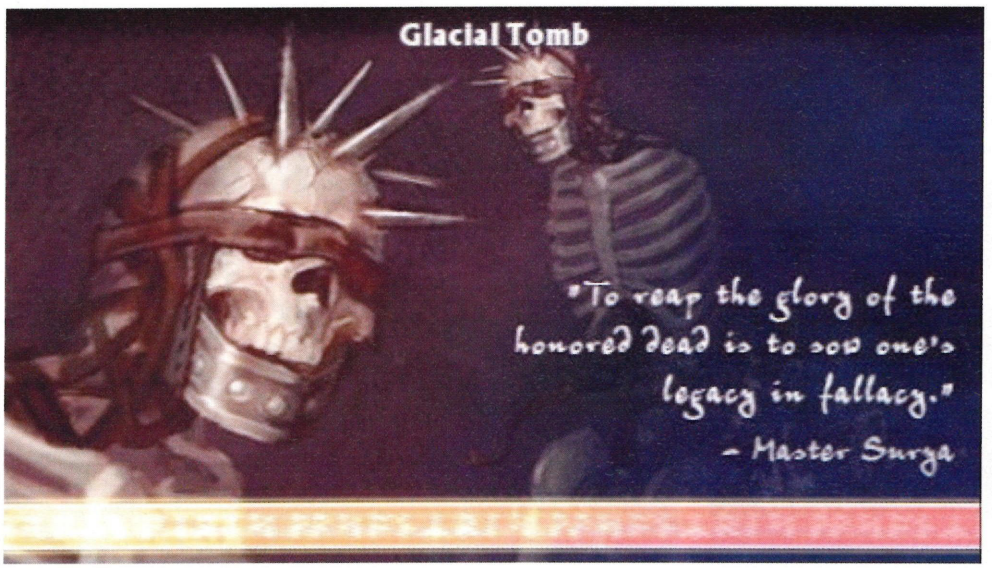
THE Big QUESTIONS

Is this as intricate as the PS2 titles? Hell yeah. This is every bit as involved and has a huge array of spells, weapons, gems, projectiles and armour to tinker with.

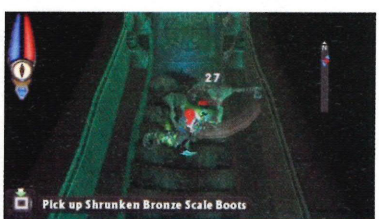
It's not really a proper RPG though is it? Honestly? No it's not. You should think of it as more of a scrolling hack-'em-up with oodles and oodles of power-ups.

Getting into an RPG is a bit like going on a Club 18-30s holiday. You go to experience new cultures and meet new people, you quite often get into fights with the locals and you pick up inordinate amounts of crap while you're there. *Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code* is the quintessence of the action RPG genre and, as such, feels an awful lot like two weeks in Ibiza, only without the nasty dose of clap. *Brotherhood Of The Blade*, SOE's previous instalment of the series, was the most popular PSP launch title by quite some way, vindicating Sony's decision to introduce a title so reliant on visuals so early on in the life of the PSP. In much the same way as *Baldur's Gate* developed on the PS2, this next iteration, *Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code* simply offers more. More story, more moves, more spells, more options, more killing and, crucially, more weapons, armour and trinkets.

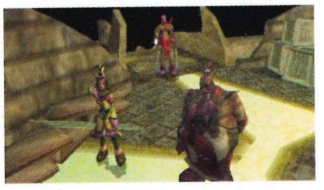
We're greedy buggers by nature and *The Warrior's Code* does nothing to help us distance ourselves from that particular sin. Indeed, playing through any of SOE's action RPGs instils the kind of furious, all consuming greed that makes us feel distinctly less human than we thought, not to mention a little dirty. Why though? What causes this addictive covetousness? Well, for those that have had the pleasure of a couple of weeks in Norrath or Aven, explanation is probably unnecessary, but for the rest of you it all boils down to the immense weight of randomly generated goodies available. Try resisting the urge to tinker with your character's weapon or armour load-out the second you manage

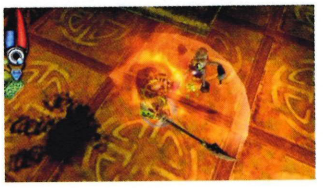


Cor blimey, I really shouldn't have had that vindaloo last night. Ouch



Oooooh, shrunken bronze scale boots, eh? They'll go with that little chiffon number





to acquire a shiny new piece of kit, even if it's in the middle of a fierce spat of fighting. It's not only the uniqueness of the items you collect however, as with the five separate characters, each having almost infinite branches on their upgrade trees, there's a different experience waiting for you each time you play.

However, the actual nuts-and-bolts gameplay is about as mindless as the genre gets. You chunter around the lavish landscapes and dismal dungeons bludgeoning the forces of evil back from whence they came, in the foamy-mouthed pursuit of ever greater treasures. This is *Untold Legend*'s greatest drawback: it's kill, kill, kill and kill again, then kill some more. There's no escape from the death dealing except for those times you're concentrating on kitting out your warrior. Granted, the inclusion of charged attacks and attacks of opportunity bring a thin veil of complexity to proceedings, and when playing with four mates, life in Koryn Thal is infinitely more enjoyable – necessitating a degree of tactical thinking when it comes to building your team – but the core of the game remains similar to the very first games in the genre. Similarly, the ability to transform into a beast – the warriors also happen to be changelings, you see – does little to spice up the adventure, and in a vast majority of cases you'll be watching a screen full of bad guys soaking up your vicious melee attacks, getting one hit in and then perishing, dropping a charm, weapon, armour or just a pile of shiny gold pieces. No, there's no change here, and despite a not insignificant weight of alterations, comparative to other advancements in the series, if you've never been particularly taken with SOE's particular brand of RPG, little enjoyment will be found here.

[A different experience awaits you each time you play...]

By the same token we're fans of the genre, and this is undoubtedly a step up from *Brotherhood Of The Blade*, leaving us happy to chug through the monotony of the combat in search of the perfect piece of armour. The storyline helps though, and things are distinctly more intriguing than have previously been the case, being centred around an evil warlord's takeover of the once prosperous land of Koryn Thal. Okay, it doesn't sound that interesting, but it's engaging enough to stop you skipping the cut-scenes.

Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code shuffles cautiously in the direction of progression, adding a mass of new gameplay mechanics and combat tweaks. Ultimately though, you're left with the same game, which for many will be what they're after, but for those looking for true evolution it'll be a bit of a disappointment. ■ **Simon Griffin**

Nothing new, but fans will love the extra tweaks **78%**

Warriors within

The who's who of Koryn Thal

Included in the line-up are a variety of dodgy characters, each bringing their own unique mix of skills into the fray. Our personal favourite – Prowler – is a speedy, menacing killer with giant claws, who leaps towards his foes with both power and agility. Guardian is a powerhouse of defence, and is indispensable in any group, while Scout and Disciple both serve a wholly different purpose in a multi-player game – that of support/projectile character. Somewhat like Prowler, 'tough-as-nails' Mercenary also concentrates on aggression, which makes her one of the easiest characters for single play.

Ignition pop SEGA's cherry

PUYO POP FEVER

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Ignition** / Developer **SEGA** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

This is just the old Game Gear title *Columns*, isn't it?
It's an evolution of the classic colour-matching puzzle, but with far more emphasis on working towards building some sizeable chains.

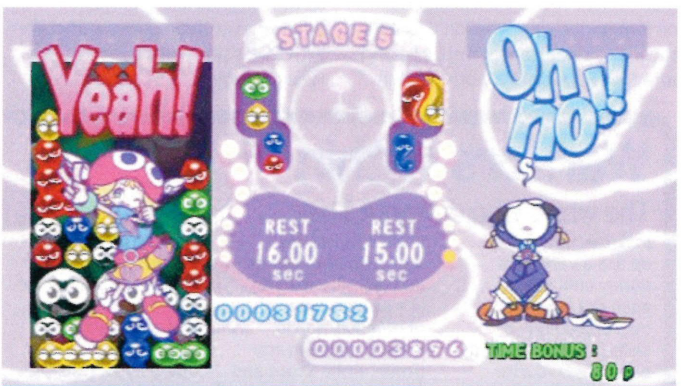
Is it more of a multi-player or single-player game then?
A bit of both really - the single-player is engrossing enough to warrant lengthy play, but it's the multi-player where *Puyo Pop* really shines.

We're all about the puzzlers here at **Go>Play**. We like to keep our brains in tip-top condition you see, and there's no better way to do that than to throw yourself perpetual challenges like *Lumines*, *Mercury*, *Smart Bomb*, *PQ* and now SEGA's *Puyo Pop Fever*. It may not immediately seem to fit in the same category, traditionally being focused more on the multi-player aspect than anything else, but we can assure you, with its multitude of modes and infuriating difficulty, it's every bit as much of a mind workout as any of the other puzzlers out there, regardless of who you're playing.

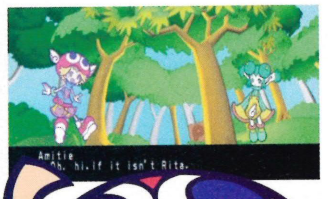
A SEGA staple since the Mega Drive, *Puyo Pop Fever* can be something of a brain melter at points, especially with Fever mode thrown into the mix. These over-the-top spasms of excessive colour and activity effectively allow you to deliver a sucker punch to your opponent by racking up horrendous amounts of Puyos in your opponent's half and dumping them all over your opponent's board. Once you've reached Fever mode, by maintaining consistently decent play, all hell breaks loose and your board is swamped by pre-created blocks of Puyos, purposely set up to allow massive chains of combos - if you're clever enough to spot where to place your Puyos for maximum effect. It may sound overly complex for a block puzzle/colour-matching title, but the Fever mechanic works well to heighten the tension and can often turn a doomed match on its head. There will, of course, be gamers out there with a natural aversion to anything new to the *Puyo Pop* formula, but the Fever mode is most definitely a worthy addition to the system.

For the uninitiated among you, *Puyo Pop* is of the cutesy brand of puzzler, with an abundance of colour, bizarre rivals and just plain silly storyline. It works differently to many other puzzlers, as it requires a good deal more forethought than most, meaning that the only method

Here we are getting owned by these idiot Frankenstein types - major jippage



Hoorah, we win. In your face strange bookworm thing



of winning those particularly difficult match-ups is to chain together combos by purposefully loading up your screen in such a way that one strategically placed blob has them all crashing down and onto your opponent's screen.

> An **abundance of colour**, bizarre rivals and just plain silly storyline

And that's where the real appeal lies. The joy of something like *Puyo Pop Fever* can be rated by the amount of swears you level at your opponent during the course of your face-off. We've had more than a couple of bouts since the code came into the office, and each one has lead to a sulky silence for a good few hours. Sharing a PSP – taking one end each – leads to further aggression issues due to the proximity of your opponents, as they're invariably within reach of a swift kick to the shins. What makes it all the more frustrating is the way in which you have to play to succeed. Just popping single clusters, regardless of size, will do very little to hinder your opponent, forcing you to amass as great a string of chains as possible, and there's nothing more infuriating than gearing up for a massive strike but being halted at the last minute by a shower of malignant blobs. It's enough to have you snatching back your PSP and grizzling for a while.

If you're wondering about the story, don't; as what little narrative there is has been swallowed up by the ridiculous colours and outrageous gameplay. From what we could be bothered to make out, you play as a young girl called Amitie, who loves school and *Puyo Pop*. Cue lots of bizarre conversations and a trail of preposterous characters to face-off against. Many of your opponents in the single-player mode play differently to each other, some preferring to go for smaller, more regular attacks, while others will keep stacking up Puyos until they can crush you entirely.

It's not revolutionary, and it's been done on numerous other formats, but *Puyo Pop Fever* remains a frustratingly addictive title with the kind of colourful draw of *Bust-A-Move* or *Columns*. With loads of modes and multi-player options however, this is well worth a pop for the puzzle enthusiast. With that in mind though, most of us are only going to have one puzzler on the PSP, and as to whether *Puyo Pop* has earned the right to be that one game, we're not entirely sure. It's fun, yes, it's immediate also, but it may not satiate your single-player lust for puzzling. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

Git! Look how he mocks our misfortune. We'll get him next time

Daft storyline, but *Puyo Pop Fever* has surprising depth **68%**

Multi-player options

Double the fun on half the screen

As well as the split-screen mode, with one player taking the face buttons and the other using the D-pad, the wealth of available modes gives a decent variety to the puzzling action. There's classic Endless mode, Fever mode – forcing you to play the whole thing in flashy Fever mode, and Mission mode, which charges you with performing certain tasks, such as chaining together combos or popping loads of colours at once. There's also a Wi-Fi link-up and a crazy single-player Career mode, which charts your adventures in and around Puyo Pop school.

WIDESCREEN

AARON ASADI CHECKS OUT THE MONTH'S HOTTEST UMD RELEASES...

CONTENTS

Your UMD guide at a glance...

★★★★★	Excellent
★★★★	Must Buy
★★★	Average
★★	Fair
★	Don't Bother

UMDs

[78] The Office: Series 2
[79] Black Adder
[80] True Romance
[81] Anger Management
[81] Dirty
[81] Drowning Mona
[82] Zathura: A Space Adventure
[82] Kickboxer 3: The Art Of War
[82] Bone Collector
[83] The Fog

THE OFFICE: SERIES 2

Like this review even needs to be written

OUT: 5 JUNE

Director: Stephen Merchant & Ricky Gervais / Starring: Ricky Gervais, Martin Freeman, Lucy Davis / Price: £19.99

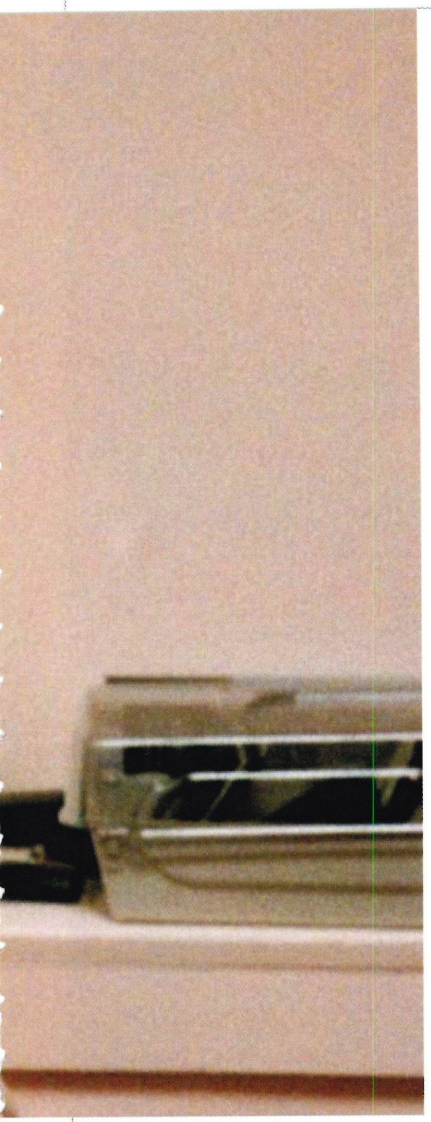
★★★★★

Have you seen that ridiculous advert the Beeb is running at the moment? It asks the question "Would you give someone who has never written before, never directed before, and never acted before, their own sitcom?" Then comes the big reveal of David Brent doing that dance, the slogan reading: "It's what we do". Bugger. Off. We're not stupid. We saw Gervais on the *11 O'Clock Show* way before he was writing and directing scenes that featured someone who was basically a 'chilled-out entertainer'. We've watched telly for years. It's what we do.

That's not the main issue we have with the advert though. The real problem we have with it is the clip they decide to use. As we say, it's the bit where Brent decides he can outdo his boss in the dancing stakes by acting like a gorilla possessed by an electronic witch. It's clear why the Beeb have used it – it is undeniably the most celebrated clip of the entire series – but we just disagree with the infamy of the clip. Despite being absolutely hilarious the first couple of times we saw it, its repetition became tedious and worse still felt more and more distanced from what made the show great to begin with. The dance scene is a well-edited piece of slapstick, but *The Office* is so much more than just that. It's an incredibly well made piece of television, using the mockumentary format better than anyone has done before (and yes that includes *Spinal Tap*), and even though it is a sitcom, there is some real drama here – the scene where David Brent begs his superiors to reconsider his redundancy is nothing if it is not tragic and moving. Equally, the office romance between Tim and Dawn is not there for cheap laughs, instead providing the most believable relationship between a man and a woman *ever* to have been broadcast. A bold statement you might think, but one we make without the slightest hesitation – *The Office* is an impeccable show, and one that deserves the highest praise. It's as simple as that.

It's almost slightly odd to think that *The Office* is funniest when it's being most lifelike. Brent wouldn't

SHOCK FACT!
The US version of *The Office* isn't bad at all – in fact, it's actually quite good. Shocker!



Brent pondered on how to make himself look even cooler

be funny if he was just this peculiar man working for a paper merchants – it's the embarrassing familiarity of his mannerisms, tone, insecurities and relationships that made a nation giggle and cringe at the same time. Everyone knows a 'Brent' or a 'Gareth', and it's from this recognition that the true genius of *The Office* lies. More than anything else, *The Office* is a wonderful piece of observational comedy and we should remember and cherish it for this reason – and not just for that bloody dance. ■

Before Mr Bean there was... something really quite good

BLACK ADDER

The king was unaware of the power of Brian's voice. Once angered the Blessed would destroy his eardrums with one magnificent bellow

OUT: 5 JUNE

Director: **Martin Shardlow & Geoff Posner** / Starring: **Rowan Atkinson, Tony Robinson, Brian Blessed** / Price: **£19.99**

★★★★★

If you look to the left of this review you'll see a review of *The Office*, a contemporary British sitcom that hails the writing talents of the two behind it, Stephen Merchant and Ricky Gervais. Wonder what they'll be doing in ten years. You'd like to think something of equal merit really wouldn't you? But the truth is they're more likely to end up writing Hollywood-friendly pap and starring in childish sitcoms that don't have half the wit and intelligence of their earlier work. Or at least they will if Richard Curtis' and Rowan Atkinson's careers are anything to go by.

You see, Curtis is now better known for his work on *The Vicar Of Dibley* and the terribly thin *Love Actually* than his early stuff on *Black Adder*. The same can certainly be said for Atkinson as well, who seems forever destined to shatter his status as one of the country's best-loved comedians by making crap like *Johnny English* and *Mr Bean* cartoons.

Now, though, is the chance to embrace what gave them both the opportunity to throw it all away: *Black Adder*, one of the funniest Brit-coms of all time.

Following the unsuccessful endeavours of Prince Edward (Atkinson) as he tries to dethrone his father, *Black Adder* is deliciously dark stuff and thoroughly deserves its status as one of the truly defining series of British comedy. There's just something refreshingly punk about a sitcom based around murdering a king, and when you consider the popular shows of today, such as *My Family* (which consistently trounces quality like *The Office* and *The Thick Of It* in the ratings), you can't help but feel that comedy has, broadly speaking, deteriorated over the years. Fair enough, there are some remarkable exceptions, but when you sit down and watch *Black Adder* (which is something you should bloody well do if you haven't already), you can't help but get depressed about the fact that prime time comedy back in Eighties was much more enjoyable to watch. Thankfully, things like this UMD release mean such ponderings are completely without cause – please take advantage of this fact. ■

SHOCK FACT!
***Bean* was the first ever movie to gross $100 million before being released in the US.**

Baldrick was constantly jealous of the Prince's hat, but not of his thoroughly dodgy and downright distasteful hair

Call girls, cocaine, blood, hitmen and shoot-outs... how romantic

TRUE ROMANCE

OUT: 12 JUNE

Director: **Tony Scott** / Starring: **Christian Slater, Patricia Arquette, Dennis Hopper** / Price: **£17.99**

★★★★

Tony Scott has gone nuts. After suspecting this for years, we were finally convinced when we saw *Man On Fire*, a fairly decent revenge flick, because his hectic, ADHD-style finally took a turn for the stupid. It was nothing major, just the fact that even the subtitles in the film had bags of needless, distracting flair. He then made *Domino*, so we're convinced that there's just no going back for him now, and as a result, we're utterly convinced that *True Romance* will forever be his best film.

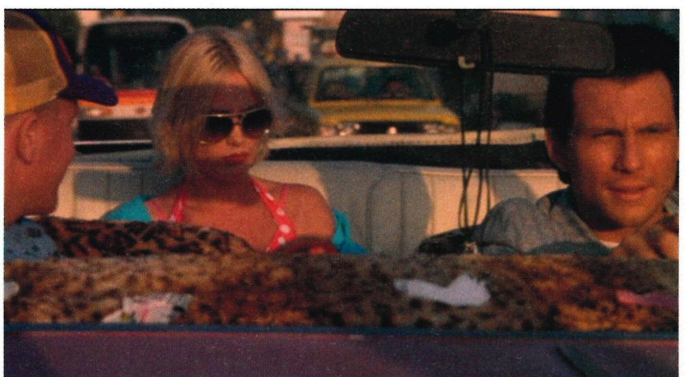
Scripted by a young hot-to-trot Quentin Tarantino, *True Romance* includes all the ridiculously enjoyable elements you could wish for in a film about a comic store clerk who falls for a call girl and then kills her pimp, stealing a briefcase full of drugs in the process. It's terrifically energetic stuff, whisking you off from one memorable scene to another, rarely pausing for breath and never shying away from the violent consequences of the couple's decision to try and sell their newly acquired goodies.

It's also rich with pre-post-Tarantino dialogue as well, and by that we mean it's written by a chap with a real verve for electric chat who has yet to become aware of what it is that makes him exciting (not the case anymore).

There's no denying the superficiality of the entertainment here – it's all about cool guys, a cool chick, and cool guns – but that shouldn't really count against it, particularly when the film is also littered with some tremendously well designed scenes, most notably Dennis Hopper's clash with ganglord Christopher Walken. Wonderfully played with an unrelenting air of danger and menace, the exchange is unquestionably a highlight in Scott's career and is nothing short of brilliant.

Constantly reinvigorated with a cast determined to chew every last bit of the scenery, *True Romance* is, if nothing else, tremendously easy to watch. It also has at its heart a romance you can root for, which is a very rare thing indeed for a movie that has twice as many bullets fired as it does kisses planted. ■

SHOCK FACT!
Tarantino sold his script for *True Romance* to fund *Reservoir Dogs*. Wowsers!



Patricia was upset that the leopard skin print didn't extend to the back seats too, she had to put up with boring old leather

5 of the best UMDs on the shelves

[1] FIGHT CLUB

Brilliant black comedy that's as cool as hell. Brad Pitt, as the iconic Tyler Durden, has never been better and Ed Norton has rightly conceded that he will never star in a better film. Trudat.

[2] ROBOCOP

Excellent sci-fi. Super violent and often misunderstood as nothing more than that, which is a shame. Still, so long as you know that this is Verhoeven's best film and one of the best of the decade as well.

[3] A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

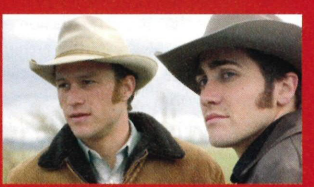
The best comic book movie of all time? Probably. Subdued, measured and powerful, Cronenberg's action thriller/family drama will grip you from start to finish and give us an excuse to use loads of clichés! Unmissable.

[4] KILL BILL: VOLUME 1

A terrific martial arts movie from start to end/middle. Doing what he does best, Tarantino somehow turns what is essentially terrible cinema into a thing of excellence. Wonderful choreography and a central performance from Uma Thurman that should have been good enough for three Oscars.

[5] BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

Well acted, simply told, stunning to look at and with a score that will send shivers through your ears and out your arse, with *Brokeback Mountain*, Ang Lee has created, first and foremost, a film that ticks all the boxes.



What happens when actors choose their bank account over their craft

ANGER MANAGEMENT

OUT: 17 JUNE

Director: **Peter Segal** / Starring: **Adam Sandler, Jack Nicholson, Marisa Tomei** / Price: **£17.99**

★★

There's a scene in *Anger Management* that sees Jack Nicholson's character swivel on his chair and flip the bird to one of Adam Sandler's character's more annoying workmates. It's absolutely hysterical, and for no other reason than the mischievous glint in Nicholson's eyes when he does it. It's also, more tragically, a glimpse into how funny this comedy might have otherwise been were it able to fulfil the promise of its concept.

Sandler plays a businessman who is somewhat unfairly sentenced to an anger-management course led by a rather eccentric tutor played by Nicholson. The methods of the instructor are naturally rather quirky (how else could they source comedy from therapy?), and involve crazy antics such as smashing up cars with baseball bats, holding up traffic to sing tunes, and eventually moving in with his patient. The latter method is where the film spends most of its time, with the therapist 'hilariously' affecting everything from our misjudged hero's breakfast to his relationship with his fiancée.

As we say, there is some real potential for genuine laughs here, especially when you consider the quality of the cast, but it's never reached, and instead you have to depend on the moments of class from Mr Nicholson (themselves few and far between) for any giggles.

Whilst never being dreadful, it just takes a bit too much effort on the viewers behalf to enjoy *Anger Management*, and given the type of comedy this is trying to be, a bit too much is simply far too much. ■

SHOCK FACT!
Sandler donated copies of the movie to US military bases in Iraq to thank them for their good work. Poor gits.

Jack was dismayed by the large Shock Fact! sign that Adam carried around on his head, especially as the fact wasn't that shocking

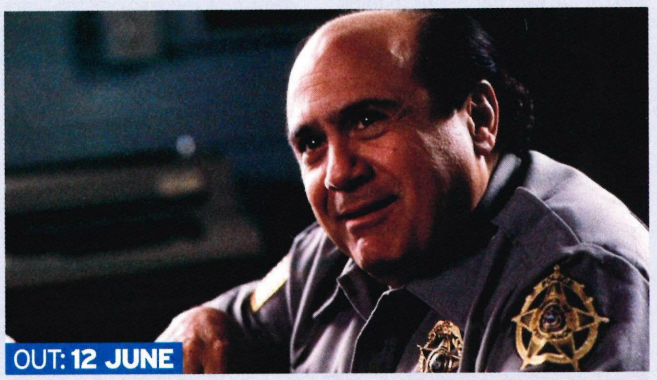
OUT: 26 JUNE

DIRTY

Director: **Chris Fisher** / Starring: **Cuba Gooding Jr, Clifton Collins Jr, Cole Hauser** / Price: **£19.99** ★★

WE'D LIKE TO think that the script for this had already been greenlit before *Training Day* came along and won Denzel an Oscar, but it's more likely that some Hollywood producer saw the success of *Training Day* and thought there might be something in this corrupt LA cops thing. He was wrong. The problem with this gang members-turned-cops movie is that it offers nothing new at all; even the performances feel like tired rehashes of previous ones. The message that cops might not be so different from gangsters after all is just about as tedious as it gets, the subject matter thoroughly dealt with in a film that this one may as well be a remake of: namely, *Colors*.

There is a certain amount of redemption in the fact that the film is well executed, but it's not enough to transform this into something that isn't totally redundant. ■



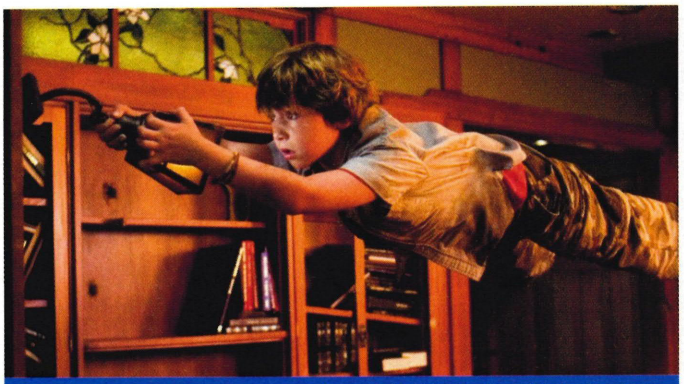
OUT: 12 JUNE

DROWNING MONA

Director: **Nick Gomez** / Starring: **Danny De Vito, Bette Midler, Casey Affleck** / Price: **£16.99** ★★

FINALLY A PREMISE we can believe in: Bette Midler plays a character who's so annoying, when her car flies off a cliff, everyone in town is considered a suspect. De Vito plays Chief Wyatt Rash, the officer given the responsibility of solving the case, and because of the deceased's soap-opera-esque dealings in the past, there isn't a person within a ten-mile radius without a viable motive.

The investigation leads to a zillion contrivances and lies, far too complicated to care about, and soon it begins to feel like one of those movies where the tag line came first ("one murder. 460 prime suspects. Not so much of a 'who done it' as a 'who didn't'"). It's fairly light stuff, though, and if it was on the telly on a bank holiday afternoon, you mightn't mind it. As far as recommending you actually buy it goes, well, we're not. It's not very good. ■



Why can't kids just play Monopoly or Kerplunk. Ohhh no, they've got to find the dusty old game that has some sort of curse attached to it - ruddy brats!

A sequel that isn't really a sequel

ZATHURA: A SPACE ADVENTURE

OUT: 19 JUNE

Director: **Jon Favreau** / Starring: **Tim Robbins, Jonah Bobo, Josh Hutcherson** / Price: **£19.99**

★★

Weird one this. It was marketed as being part of the *Jumanji* family, but has absolutely nothing to do with it. Different cast, different director, different story... if we weren't super-duper clever we'd be racking our brains to think why the distributors would try and hammer home this potentially misleading connection.

The thing is that, for a kids' film, *Zathura: A Space Adventure* has a fairly tough plot to describe. It's about two brothers who don't get on; they find a board game, decide to play it and in doing so drag their house into outer space, and the only way they can get back is to finish the game. Therefore, it ultimately just makes more sense to say that it's a bit like *Jumanji*, but without any of the animals, but with extra planets.

What is surprising about *Zathura* though, given the undeniably original story, is how uninvolving it can be. This is mostly due to the two brattish kids at its centre, the feuding brothers blowing any chance of you enjoying the film's goodies, such as its decent special effects. We honestly couldn't even imagine ourselves liking these two when we were younger, such is their ability to annoy.

This could have been a worthwhile fantasy movie, but without the cast to match the ideas, and, it has to be said, some rather pedestrian direction from Jon Favreau, we just couldn't ever bring ourselves to recommend this. Not a disaster by any means, but hardly the family film triumph it could have been. ■

SHOCK FACT!
Director Favreau is best buds with Vince Vaughn, fast-talking star of this summer's *Break Up*. Holy hell!

Without his helmet The Rocketeer felt somewhat exposed and was concerned about the number of bugs he might potentially swallow

OUT: 19 JUNE

KICKBOXER 3: THE ART OF WAR

Director: **Rick King** / Starring: **Sasha Mitchell, Dennis Chan, Richard Comar** / Price: **£13.99** ★

CONSIDER THIS: SEQUELS, bar the odd exception every decade, are never as good as the original.

In this case, however, we can't really say that as it would imply that *Kickboxer* was good. It wasn't - it was cack. There was this cool fight at the end where Van Damme takes off his glass-covered gloves to beat the ass of some ugly Sagat-wannabe, but it was a film destined to forever live in the shadow of the mighty, mighty *Bloodsport*. This continues along the same lines as the first - a western Thai-boxer who fights a lot - but is so lacking in the thrills department it makes you wonder just who the hell would ever think it was a good idea to release it. It doesn't even star Van Damme for God's sake, and we're saying that like it's a good thing. Our advice? Avoid as you would Black Death. ■

OUT: 19 JUNE

BONE COLLECTOR

Director: **Phillip Noyce** / Starring: **Denzel Washington, Angelina Jolie, Luis Guzman** / Price: **£19.99** ★★

HERE AT GO>PLAY we're firmly in the Aniston camp when it comes to the whole Pitt/Jolie affair thing - just so you know . The main reason for that being such an easy decision for us is the pap Ms Jolie continues to pump out. *Taking Lives* was one awful thriller we'd like to forget, and this was so nearly another, saved only by the presence of Denzel Washington, an actor so good he can shine even when he spends the whole film in bed, which, incidentally, is exactly what he does here. He plays an injured cop who's forced to help a determined Jolie solve the case of this weirdo bone-collecting serial killer whilst stuck on a mattress. It's run-of-the-mill thriller junk, but the star presence does elevate it to something more worthwhile. Would have been better if Aniston starred in it though. Maybe. ■

Yet another dire remake pollutes shop shelves

THE FOG

OUT: 12 JUNE

Director: **Rupert Wainwright** / Starring: **Tom Welling, Maggie Grace, Selma Blair** / Price: **£17.99**

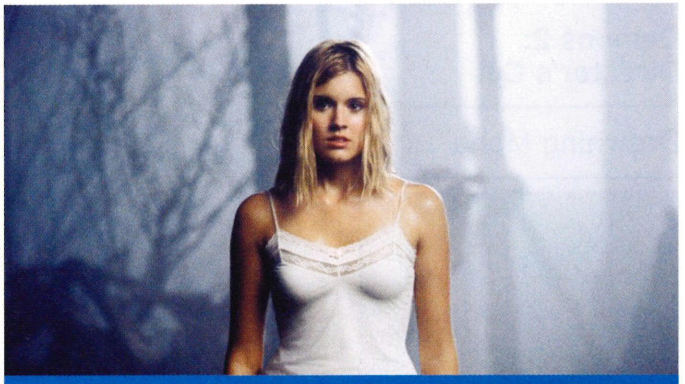
★

So if Lex Luthor and Clark Kent were buddies when they were younger, how come Lex Luthor can't figure out Superman's identity when they're older? Must be the glasses Clark doesn't wear. Arrggghhh! God, *Smallville* is poo, and worse still it seems that no one else knows it but us. Another problem we have with it is the star, Tom Welling. He's just so unbelievably bland. Now Superman was hardly the most interesting character, but at least Christopher Reeve injected some life into him. This Mr Welling chap should just go back to modelling or stick to being an extra in lame Steve Martin movies. But wait – what's this? He's starring in a remake of John Carpenter's *The Fog*? Dear Lord, it's as though he's trying to wind us up.

SHOCK FACT!
Despite being mega-popular the world over, *Smallville* is actually lame-as-hell!

Given our clear disgust of Tom Welling, it says something that he's by no means the worst thing in *The Fog* – that would be the fact that there are next to no shocks in this shoddy horror, and mostly because it's so utterly drenched in what have now become terrible horror clichés. It seems to be the case that, post-*Scream*, horror scenes play out quicker in your head than they do on-screen. You've seen it all before and why the hell should you sit through it again, right? Naturally this point is amplified by the fact that *The Fog* is a remake.

The plot does remain deliciously over-the-top, with it centring around some ghost lepers who have come to take their foggy revenge on a town 100 years after being left to die at sea, but here it's handled with an amazing lack of imagination and a reluctance to ever do anything interesting or new with either the characters or the story. Director Wainwright seems so content to just have his cast plod through the motions, and equally seems terribly keen to not thrill, shock, or even upset his audience in anyway. This is frankly awful and it really is no wonder why John Carpenter distanced himself from the franchise after seeing this piece of trash. ■



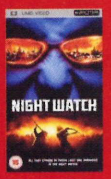
Maggie clearly 'lost' the plot when she accepted a role in this absolute duffer

TOP FIVE BEST-SELLERS

[1] BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
Everyone loves good romance.

[2] FINAL FANTASY VII: ADVENT CHILDREN
The non-interactive software proves to be a hit.

[3] THE PRODUCERS
A silly film sells a few. The shame.



[4] NIGHT WATCH
The Russian horror-flick does good business.

[5] KING KONG
The ape fails to climb to the top of the charts.

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH

Animal Farm
5 June
George Orwell on PSP. Go figure.

Seven Swords
12 June
Familiar Japanese adventure.

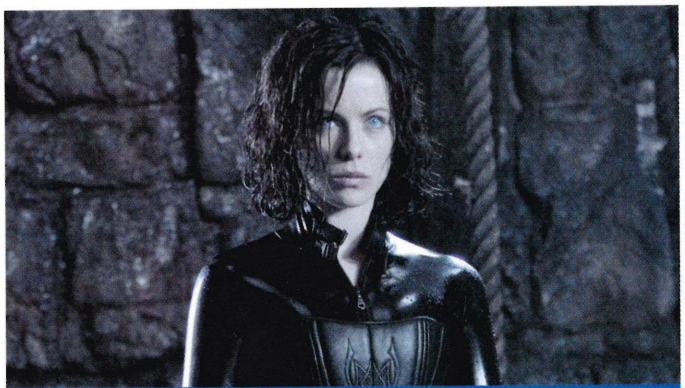
Top Gear: Winter Olympics
12 June
The great magazine show hits UMD.

Spider-Man: The Animated Series
19 June
New energetic Spidey adventures.

The Best Of Monkey
19 June
Crap TV makes for a crap UMD.

UMD RELEASE LIST

HMM, NOT MUCH NEW ON THE HORIZON FOR UMD, IS THIS REALLY THE END OF THE FORMAT AS FAR AS MOVIES ARE CONCERNED?



Those piercing eyes, that tousled hair, Kate knew just how to stop a werewolf in its tracks with one smokin' look

Ewan started to wish that Yoda was around to get his car out of the tree. Getting it up was the easy part, but getting it down again, that was a different story

Blackadder tried to look more gormless than Baldrick but failed

Some demons from *Demons 2*. They need some moisturiser

He was the best-looking phantom she had ever seen, what a hunk!

MONDAY 5 JUNE

- Anger Management
- Black Adder Series 1
- The Bone Collector
- Doctor Who: Series 2 Vol. 1
- Monkey: Episodes 6, 25 & 26
- The Office Series 2
- Top Gear
- The Water Margin: Episodes 1, 9 &16

MONDAY 12 JUNE

- Animal Farm
- Demons: Director's Cut
- Demons 2: Director's Cut
- Drowning Mona
- Kickboxer 3: The Art Of War
- The Phantom Of The Opera
- Spider-Man: The New Animated Series
- True Romance

MONDAY 19 JUNE

- Dirty
- Underworld Evolution

MONDAY 26 JUNE

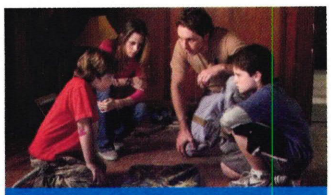
- The Fog
- Seven Swords
- Zathura: A Space Adventure
- Zathura/Jumanji Double-pack

"If I give you an autograph will you stop stalking me?"

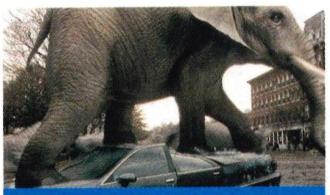
Gary's chopstick scars showed how much he had struggled with them

Angelina lets another man in her life down gently "Sorry Denzel, there's this guy in Pittsburg I haven't shacked up with yet, he needs some Jolie-time"

Blade wasn't too keen on sharing the limelight with these young upstarts so made sure he looked as miserable as possible at all times, that'll learn 'em



Kids plus mysterious board game equals big trouble



Try explaining that one on your insurance claim form

MONDAY 17 JULY

Big Fish

Heathers

Hellraiser II: Hellbound

Hellraiser III: Hell On Earth

Initial D: Drift Racer

Kalifornia

Ninja Dragon

Trial Of The Incredible Hulk

MONDAY 2 OCTOBER

Blade Trinity

MONDAY 30 OCTOBER

Tony Jaa Box Set: Ong-Bak/Warrior King

Warrior King

Surely even bareknuckle fights have rules, one of which probably prohibits the wrapping of heavy-duty rope around your fists

UMD Bargain Hunt

With UMD movie sales falling, many retailers are desperate to get rid of them and prices are dropping fast

Play.com has a large selection of cheap titles from £6.99 to £10.99. Top-notch gangster flick *Layer Cake* is down to £7.99, as is Rob Zombie's gore-fest *The Devil's Rejects* and the awesome *Alien*. For a little more outlay at £9.99 you can get your hands on the classic, action-packed *Bad Boys* or the fantastic *Robocop*. At the £10.99 price point you can get *Stealth*, which while it's a bit of a rubbish film, it does have the advantage of containing an exclusive track for *WipEout Pure*. If that doesn't float your boat then perhaps the original *Terminator* will satisfy. If none of this sounds particularly appealing and you want to get in touch with your feminine side, or in fact you are a girl, then you can pick up a copy of *13 Going On 30* for just £9.99.

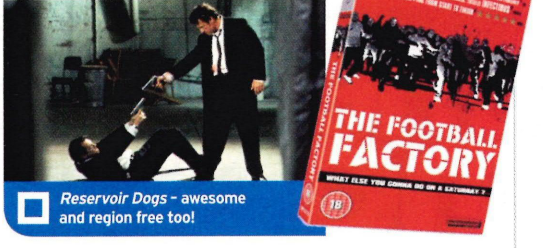
If you have a branch of the ill-fated Silverscreen nearby and they are still open for business, then our bargain hunters have some great news for you too. At the time of writing the shop was offering 50 per cent off a large selection of UMDs including recently released titles, so check it out before they're all gone.

High-street game store Gamestation have been knocking money off some of their UMD movies, as well as offering combined discounts if you buy more than one. While these offers still don't make the UMDs a particularly cheap prospect, you still stand to make a reasonable saving.

Region Free UMD

How to play different region UMDs on your PSP

We'd love to tell you we've found a program that allows you to play UMDs from any region on your PSP, but sadly that isn't the case. However, even if you have an import PSP (namely US region 1) then it is still possible to play some titles on it. What you need to look out for are movies from smaller distributors. Studios like Paramount and 20th Century Fox are far more stringent when it comes to region encoding and so none of their titles will play on a PSP that isn't the same region. Distributors like Momentum and Pocket Pictures take a more relaxed view towards regions and we found a number of titles that worked on our US region 1 PSP. *Akira*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Old Boy*, *Sky Blue* and *The Football Factory* all worked, despite some clearly stating Region 2 on the packaging. The only way you'll be able to tell if it works is if you put the UMD in the PSP, which will require you to buy the title, so don't lose the receipt.



Reservoir Dogs - awesome and region free too!

THE TIPS MAGAZINE FOR PLAYSTATION GAME ADDICTS

THIS ISSUE:

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

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SOLUTION

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

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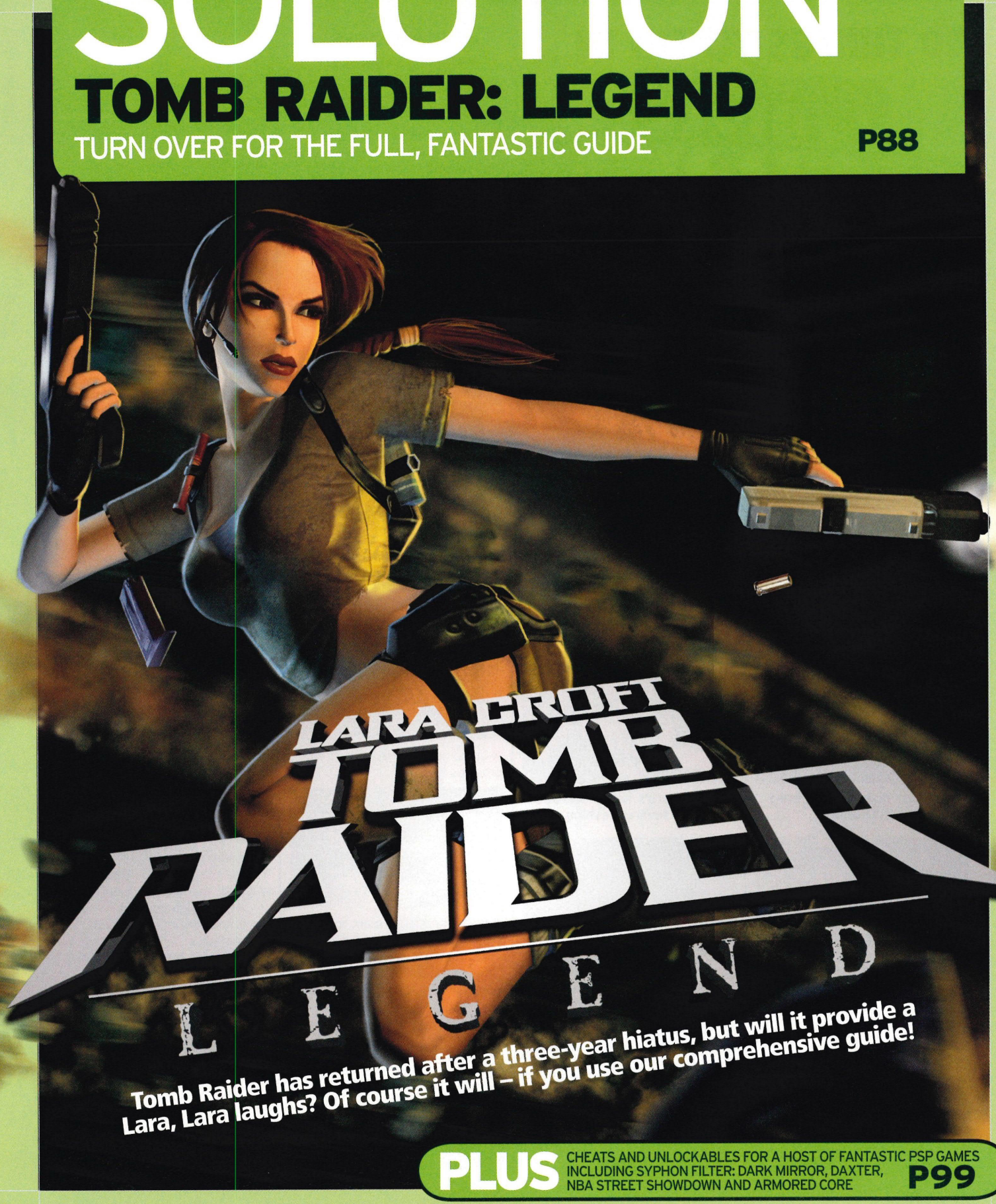
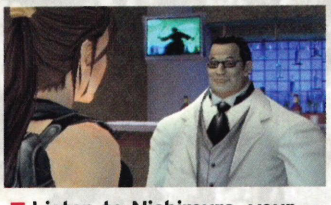


Tomb Raider has returned after a three-year hiatus, but will it provide a Lara, Lara laughs? Of course it will – if you use our comprehensive guide!

PLUS CHEATS AND UNLOCKABLES FOR A HOST OF FANTASTIC PSP GAMES INCLUDING SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR, DAXTER, NBA STREET SHOWDOWN AND ARMORED CORE P99

10 THINGS TO DO IN... LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER LEGEND



1 Listen to Nishimura, your Japanese friend, as he tells you he's 'relieving himself'.

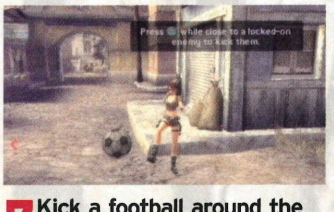
2 Marvel at how big the man's head is compared to the size of his body.

3 Take a long walk off a short plank in downtown Tokyo.

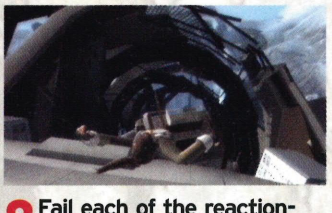
4 Try your best to blow up the Tesla gun. Have that!

5 Wonder how she can even walk in that dress.

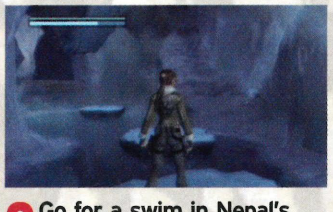
6 Give Lara's newly borrowed ride a severe trashing.



7 Kick a football around the opening section of Peru.



8 Fail each of the reaction-test events. Lara go splat!



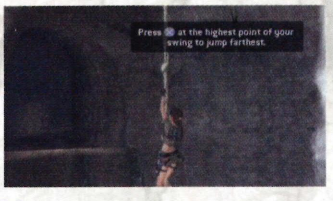
9 Go for a swim in Nepal's frozen waters. Refreshing.

10 Flame-grill our tomb-raiding heroine.

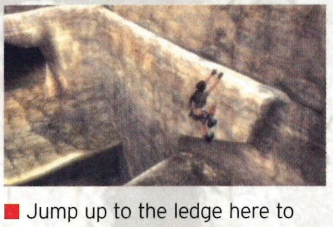
LEVEL ONE Bolivia

■ Head up the ramp and into a crevice to your left to pick up your first reward. Follow the prompts given to progress.

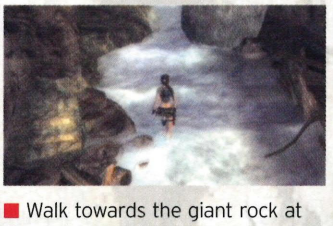
■ Pick up your second reward on the other side of the bridge. Continue upwards, following the prompts as you go.



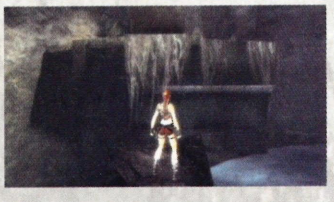
■ Use the rope in this location to swing into the left tunnel, rather than straight on through the waterfall. A reward lies at the end of this corridor.



■ Jump up to the ledge here to progress further.



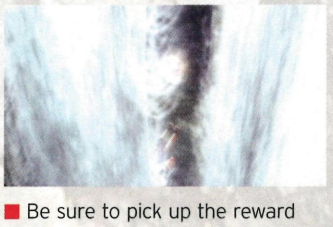
■ Walk towards the giant rock at the waterfall to make it dislodge itself. Run back down to take cover to the bottom left or right. Continue by following the prompts once again.



■ Use the ledge here to reach a higher level. Knock down the rock thereon. Remember to collect the reward on the floor below.

■ Jump from this jutting rock to the branch ahead that you've just raised. Swing from here to the waterfall ahead. Continue, using the prompts.

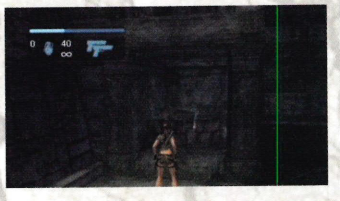
■ Here, leap across to the rope, towards the waterfalls, then work your way clockwise.



■ Be sure to pick up the reward in a crevice directly behind the waterfall, though. Watch out for the guard straight after dismounting from the second horizontal bar.

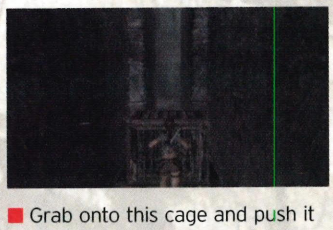
■ Pick up the reward high to your left after using your grappling rope to swing over the crevice to a stairway.

■ After pressing △ to send the boulders down the bank, take on the few alerted guards. Make sure to collect another reward in a small crevice to your right after you slide down the incline. Clamber over the large step and head into the far right corner of the chasm to find another reward. Head up to the rope to swing across and have another shoot-out with a gathered group of guards.

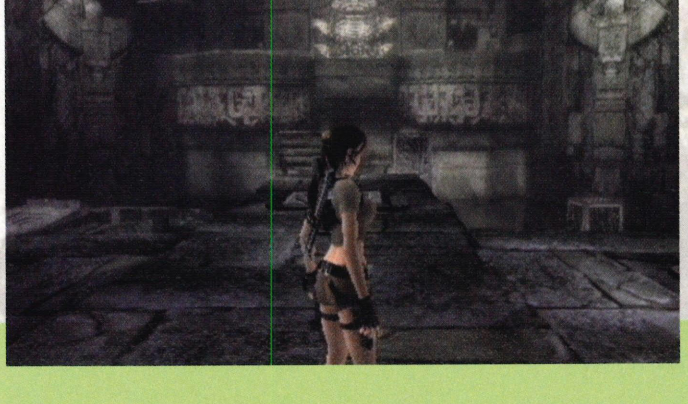


■ On the left side of the tomb's entrance you'll discover this walled-in cave. Simply shoot the wall away to reveal another reward. Head up the stairs and then head straight into the tomb.

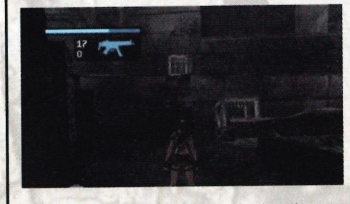
■ You should notice the ⊗ symbol above your head, telling you to use your grappling line to cross the trap. You may have to use the analogue stick to swing, first. On the other side, head left down a small gap in the wall to reach another reward. Be prepared to draw your guns against a big cat after your swim.



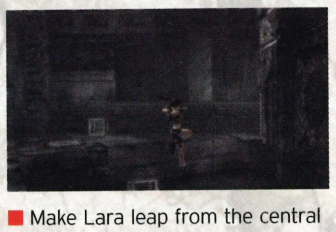
■ Grab onto this cage and push it through the slamming stones to get through unscathed.



■ Here, first collect the reward to the right-hand corner, on a small platform above the vertical chain. Take care of the moggy at the flooded ground level.

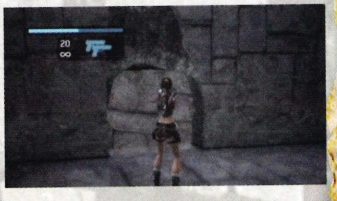


■ Drag the crate that's lodged under the bridge onto the lower floor to make yourself a see-saw. Then, place a crate at the lip of said see-saw.



■ Make Lara leap from the central platform onto the opposite end to hurl the crate onto the upper level. Repeat the process for the other crate before positioning all three atop a switch above. Use the only scaleable chain on the raised entry platform to access the series of ledges, swinging across the horizontal chain to reach the exit. Before you do leave, though, take a trip along the ledges on the opposite side of the room from those you used to reach the exit. You'll find a reward across the horizontal chain. Get ready to press ◎ then ⊗ in the next corridor to quickly and spectacularly avoid a few hidden traps. After descending the ledges ahead, be prepared for another big cat attack.

■ Grab and push this block to find a tunnel leading to another reward. Head back into the previous room. From the corner platform, run and jump to the horizontal bars protruding from the eerie-looking pole next to you. Work your way over to the opposite corner of the room using these before jumping across to the ledge in the wall there. From here, you can shuffle clockwise around the room, leap across to another corner pole, then across to another reward.



■ Return to the section of ledge across which you have just shuffled, in a clockwise direction. Through the darkness, you should see a ledge above you. Use it to find a path up and out of the area. After the cut-scene, head across the bridge, jumping the gaps before taking on the many guards. Be sure to move around as much as possible to make yourself the hardest possible target to hit. Also, use the right analogue stick to make sure you're always hitting the guard closest to you.

TIME TRIAL

As you complete the game, 'Time trial' mode will be opened up for each of the eight levels. Successfully conquering these challenges brings some very cool rewards.

LEVEL	TARGET TIME	REWARD(S)
Bolivia	12:30	Outfit: Sport green Cheat: Draw enemy health
Peru	21:30	Outfit: Winter pink, no coat Cheat: Infinite SMG ammo
Japan	12:15	Outfit: Goth, lace shirt Cheat: Infinite assault rifle ammo
Ghana	20:00	Outfit: Amanda Cheat: Infinite shotgun ammo
Kazakhstan	27:10	Outfit: Swimsuit Cheat: Infinite grenade launcher ammo
England	27:00	Outfit: Goth Cheat: Bulletproof Lara
Nepal	13:40	Outfit: Winter pink Cheat: Wield Excalibur
Bolivia Redux	4:15	Outfit: Amanda winter Cheat: One shot kill

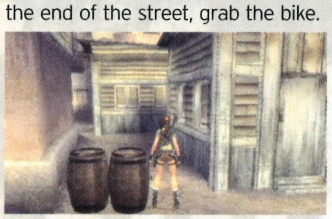
LEVEL TWO
PERU

■ Take down the guards that appear in similar fashion to your previous boss battle. Be aware that Lara can blow up particularly lethal containers when △ appears. Head into this alleyway to pick up the reward contained within. Run up the stairs of the Town Hall building then across the roof of the small stall to the roof above. Swing across the horizontal bar to reach a reward. Next, shimmy up the Peruvian flagpole and onto the above platform.

■ Kick open the door on the balcony using △ to find a reward. Swing across the gap with your grappling rope and prepare for an assault by a shotgun-wielding man, through the door.

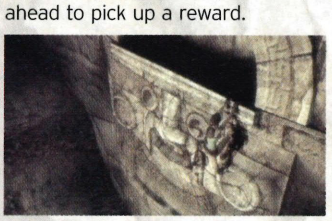
■ Work your way down the street, fighting the stationed guards. Use grenades first, then finish your foes off with a round of lead. Swing across to the building opposite your entry point. At its far upstairs exit lies a truck with automatic weapons capability. Quickly nip out and throw your grenade, then return.

■ Head down this alleyway then right to obtain another reward. At the end of the street, grab the bike.



■ Life on two wheels is a pretty simple business, really. You need to be careful not to over-steer; simply brake a little if you think you're about to lose control. Other than that, try to obtain any orange health packs you can by running into them. Press R1 to fire at the mobile enemies who attack you. There doesn't appear to be any great need to change targets, so just concentrate on pressing R1 whilst avoiding the protruding rock formations.

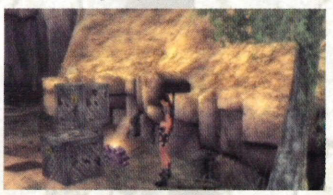
■ Once you assume control of old-school Lara, follow the on-screen instructions, jumping up onto the bar above once you reach the hole in the ground. Once events have transpired, head back to this junction and enter the right-hand passage. Set the trap off by walking towards the opposite side of the next room to the searchlights, then pull the crate onto the trap switch to use the spears above as horizontal bars. Now swing over to the platform ahead to pick up a reward.



■ Use this ledge to access the next room. Here, use the large platform on the side wall to access the rope dangling above the trap switch. Swing up to the platform above the trapped man, from here. When chased, jump straight over the two stone blocks and into the hole ahead (look for the rope). The set-piece will now end.

■ In the following room, roll the large ball off the raised platform at the room's corner onto the switch on the wall, like so. Then, clamber back up to the corner plateau before leaping across the horizontal bars you've just created. Use the rope to exit.

■ Make sure you collect the reward lying on the balcony before you do, though. Use the horizontal bar in the following corridor to avoid being impaled.

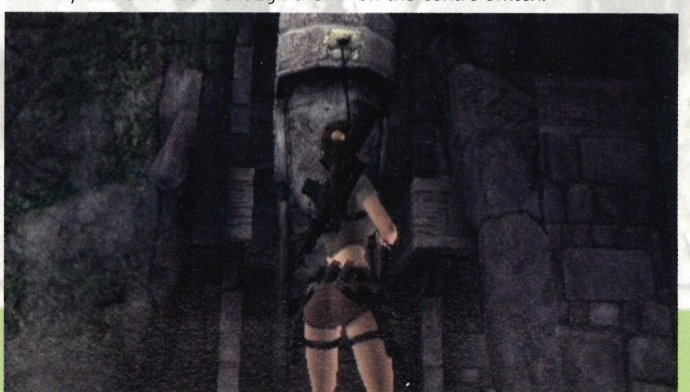


■ Once you assume control of Lara once more, you'll find a couple of rewards around the entrance to the tomb. One is pictured; the other is inside the large, fractured crate that's situated by the water's edge. Take the only available route though the water-filled passages, coming up for air every time you see a ray of sunlight.

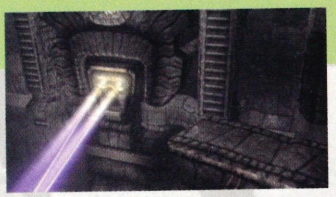
■ Once you reach an open, flooded hall, observe the glowing lights in the water. You must quickly dash between them so you can activate all four in one underwater trip. To do this, press △ repeatedly to swim faster, then △ again once you reach the lights themselves. This will drain the hall. Remember to collect the reward from in front of the iron bars at the hall's side before continuing through the large hole in the far wall. Continue on into the tomb. When you reach the slippery incline, use the ledges on the left wall to reach a higher right-hand platform. You can use your grappling rope to progress afterwards. Having scaled the waterfall, use the grappling rope again to swing out. Pass the following reactions test to continue.

■ Here, roll the ball on the floor into the right-hand floor switch. Traverse either ladder on the side of the now-revealed statue (using the ledges in the centre to switch to the top of the right-hand ladder to reach the summit). Push the ball here down onto ground level. Slot this ball into the left floor switch.

■ The third stone can be found here. Use your grappling rope on the shining section high above to pull the statue over, releasing the ball (□ then △). Place this ball on the centre switch.



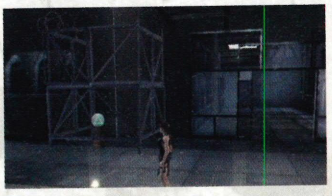
■ Escape via the arms of the centre statue shown, the ladder of the left-hand statue (the only one you've not yet climbed), and the platform and ledge running around the corner of the wall thereafter. Swing across any gaps in the ledge. After dropping down the three sets of ledges, leap to the rope. Once you encounter the guards, fight them as before all the way back to the large, drained hall. At the far end of this, you'll find a rope that you can use to ascend to the point at which you earlier swam into the room. After ascending the ledge into the next chamber, make use of the set of



ledges carved into the side wall to climb further. There'll be another guard at the top. Continue back to the tomb entrance, where another set-piece battle with guards will take place. Luckily, there's plenty of cover available to make a gung-ho approach the best one. Be aware that they will occasionally throw grenades at you. Press ◎ to avoid. When Lara advises her friend someone is coming, aim upwards towards the vehicle to kill the attacker.

LEVEL THREE
TOKYO

■ Follow the instructions to visit your man in Tokyo before another guard fight begins. Take care, as always, to move swiftly and you'll have no trouble at all. Once done, head down the opposite corridor to the lift.



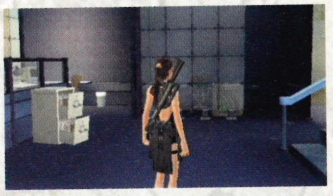
■ Outside on the roof, you'll find this barrel. Blow it up to create yourself a climbing pole. From a platform above, you can access the very top floor.

■ Use your grapple rope on this section of the glass. Jump up onto the higher ledge to the right, destroying the crate there for a reward. Head down the stairs within the hole you've just created in the roof to nab the bike. Another reward lies hidden within a wooden crate next to the motorbike itself. Head out onto the main roof again then right to take a flying run at the broken, blue neon-lined bridge ahead. Get ready for a reaction test to complete the job. A simple gymnastic text follows, but first make sure you

venture along the lower of the two wooden scaffolding levels – there's a wooden crate hiding a reward at its end. When the game prompts you with instructions on accurate aim, shoot the silver attachment hanging on the rope ahead, readying it for use. There's a zip wire at the end of the board section, to finish. Grab onto the platform ahead as instructed and pull it towards you. Let go when it's close to set it into a swing. Jump onto it when it's closest to you. Jump off the far end and shoot out your grappling rope.

■ You should now find yourself in this sorry situation. Turn right to continue along the side of the building. At the final corner, grapple onto an above shiny object once more and swing onto the new roof. A relatively facile guard fight ensues in which your enemies are flanked by a couple of attack dogs. Try to take out one or two of the men themselves, first. You can side-step the dogs for a while quite easily. Skilful dodging should see you through, however. Afterwards, find the blue door and press △. Travel down a floor to an apparent dead-end. A wooden crate containing a reward lies amongst several smaller cardboard boxes, here.

■ Continue heading upwards until you reach another dead-end. This is what you should see. Head out onto the pipes through the hole in the fence then jump across to the left wall. Lara will grab on. Work your way down the wall then jump backwards to another set of pipes, on which lies another reward-containing crate. Head down a floor and enter the door. Be prepared for another guard fight. Lock-on to your enemies and side-step to survive. Kick open the silver cupboards on the raised area to receive another reward.



■ This wooden crate hides a further stack of treasure.

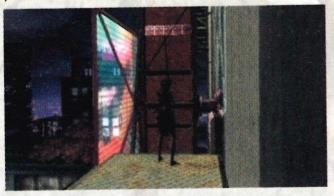
■ Use your grapple rope on the metallic central 'T' panel on the giant screen to pull it forward a little, before using precision fire on the shiny silver holders at each top corner to send it all crashing down. After a battle, proceed through the fire exit.

■ Outside, use the fire pole to the right to access the platform above. Grab onto the ledge shown to shimmy across to the outer edge

STEAL ENEMY HEALTH

To take all enemies' health with a simple press of the R1 button, enter the following code at any point during play: hold L1, then press ◎, ◎, ⊗, L2, R1, △.

of the ledge then up on top of the platform itself.



■ Use your grappling rope on the neon sign support. Pull it towards you, then use it as a platform. Head across the building to the ladder. Grab the next sign support with your grappling hook and repeat the process. Continue climbing up.

■ At this point, jump towards the sign support, grabbing onto the grey horizontal bar. This will tip it over, ready for you to return to the vertical pole and use the support

as a platform. Jump off the next vertical pole the instant you reach its summit (the same applies across the following horizontal bars) - they can't support your weight for long. Enter the door at the end to trigger a gunfight. Head out through the glass door afterwards. Proceed right immediately to find some guards and a reward crate.

■ There's a gun turret down the following corridor. Roll the spherical artwork, standing behind it, down the hall to avoid being hit.

■ After your next gunfight, use your grappling rope to swing the dragon above back and forth, smashing the window on the second floor. You'll now be able to give chase through this. A few guards will attack, though. Head into the lift.

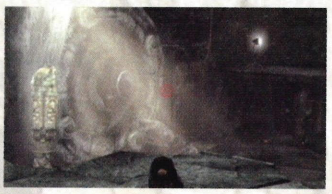
ENEMY INTEL TAKAMOTO

HIS STRENGTHS: An extremely powerful magic attack, plus a reliance upon you not finding out the secret behind his potency.
HIS WEAKNESSES: A rather silly flaw in the layout of his arena.
HOW TO BEAT HIM: This boss initially looks very hard indeed, but there's a way to take him on whilst avoiding all of those nasty turrets. Behind each statue stands a vertical pole. Shimmy up these to take on just the man himself. From here, all you need to do is constantly lock on to him and fire, pressing ⊗ to avoid his low attack and ◎ to avoid his high one. Eventually, he'll be history.

LEVEL FOUR GHANA

■ Dive straight down into the water far below, after the initial cinematic. You may wish to collect a reward to your left and you land, underwater. At the pictured point, climb up the series of right-hand block steps to jump across to the rope above the stone door. Climb down, then quickly use your grappling rope as shown to pull the door forward, before the latch slots back in.

■ Head into the tomb itself. At this point, use your grappling rope again to lasso yourself the raft at the far end of the pool. At the second bend, you'll be attacked by a lone gunman. Soon, you'll reach a large hall. Polish off the baddies in here, using the far right corner from your entrance point as a method to reach those guards slightly out of reach (collect the reward, while you're at it).



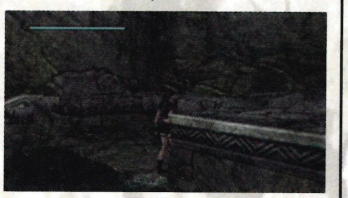
■ Shoot the column to the immediate left of the water wheel using the gun turret on top of the high platform. Now, you can use the water wheel to reach the high platform on the other side of the hall (using the spikes on the wheels as horizontal bars). Use the grappling hook to pull yourself across the room on the hanging platform, latching onto a small stump at your destination. Once Lara has inspected the new traps, it's time for you to get the other wheel turning.

■ Jump across to the rope, swing to the upper horizontal bar on the second wheel, then swing across to the ladder in the distance and

climb up. Inside this cave, use the set of ledges to the left of a second ladder to progress. At the end of the ledges, climb a ladder. In the next room, watch out for a big cat attack as you land.

■ Find this position, then head straight into the ahead corner. If you travel all the way up the ramp here, you can reach the tall platform to your right. This will allow you to hop quickly across the raising and falling blocks and up a far ladder. Collect the pictured reward whilst you're at it.

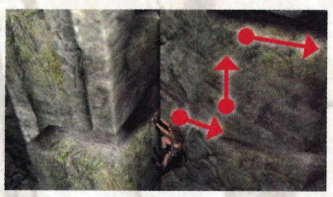
■ Jump straight down into the water from this point.



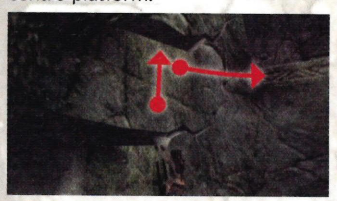
■ Here, climb out of the water to receive another reward.

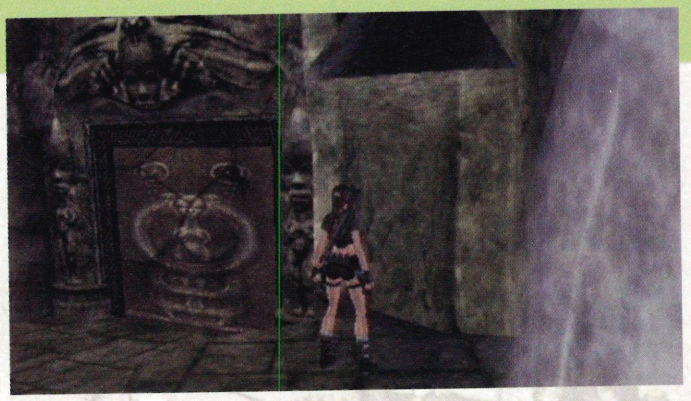
■ Find the corner of the flooded area using the raft floating in the water and a quick grapple rope move, then use the corner ladder, jumping off at the top onto the weighted blocks.

■ Pick up the pictured reward, here. Continue along this side wall using a grapple jump. You should now be at this point. Jump across into the ledge on the nearby moss-covered column.

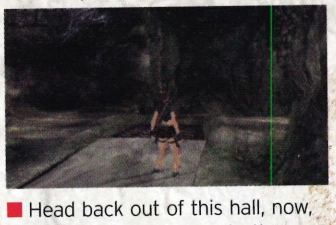


■ Follow the arrows, here. Pressing the switch at the next platform you reach releases a large wooden crate down below. Head over past the god figure to a second platform. Place the crate here on the switch, and you'll find one of the god's arms unclamped when you return to the centre. Head back to the first switch and press it down. Wait for the platform to turn the full two revolutions, then sprint as fast as you possibly can to the centre platform.

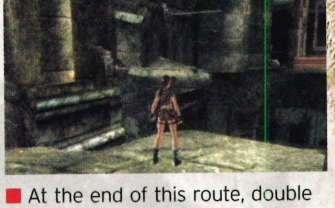




■ Swiftly attach your grapple rope to the god figure and pull. Its arms should break loose, flooding water into the previously dry chamber.



■ Head back out of this hall, now, back the way you came to the previously stopped wheel that you've just supplied water to. The traps will now be operational, so head over to them. Press O to dodge past them. Soon, you'll be chased by a great boulder, **Indiana Jones**-style. Quickly, jump over the right barrier, roll under the next left one and jump over the final gap to avoid it. Outside, proceed along the obvious route along the tomb's face.



■ At the end of this route, double back on yourself to reach the horizontal bar. Once you're back inside the tomb, use your grappling rope to swing across the chasms. You'll start to encounter more guards, now. When you emerge into the next waterfall-filled chamber, turn right and work your way upwards using the horizontal bars and the single column on the far wall.

■ Jump left from the bottom ledge of this column to reach the pictured platform. Throw a grenade at the cracked door in order to blow it open. There'll be a reward inside. Head to the top of the area to face more guards (use the right column). Head on through to a big cat confrontation in the following room. Head up the stairs, ducking in one of the crevices in order to avoid the large boulder. Swing across to the right stairs, running back onto the rope when another boulder emerges. After this, it should be safe for you to proceed up the right staircase. Press the switch to open the door, then roll under it before it has time to shut.

ENEMY INTEL
JAMES RUTLAND

HIS STRENGTHS: Agility, a plentiful supply of grenades.

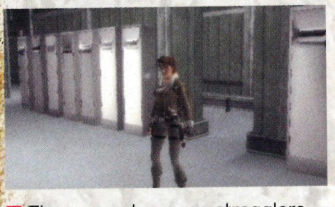
HIS WEAKNESSES: Quite easily constricted.

HOW TO BEAT HIM: Remain in lock-on (L), firing on your enemy to begin with. Whenever he lunges at you, remain locked onto him, pressing ◎ to dive either way when he's within striking range. Eventually, he'll tire of trying to lunge at you. Occasionally, he will leap up onto one of the platforms above. You may notice the △ symbol that appears on the platform whenever he does this. Hold △ whilst pressing R to shoot a cover from the bottom of each platform in turn as your foe jumps on them, exposing the shiny section underneath. You need to quickly use your grappling rope and pull to remove these, causing each platform to fall. Once they're all gone he'll revert to the old lunge attack. So long as you use ◎ skilfully to evade him you'll see the fight out, no problem.

LEVEL FIVE
KAZAKHSTAN

■ Jump off the side of the cliff to begin, then follow the on-screen instructions to land. Luckily, you'll have parachuted in right next to a gun turret! Press △ to use it and wipe out all before you.

■ Jump up to the raised right-hand section of the building you're on, then use this horizontal bar to reach another roof, where you'll find a crate with a reward in it. Jump down from the roof and head towards the building with an assault rifle painted near the door.



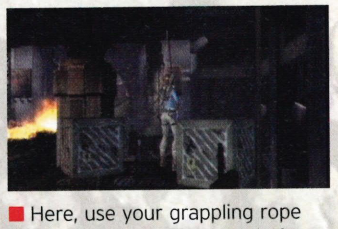
■ There may be some stragglers you've yet to finish off lurking around, so deal with them. Inside said building, enter the pictured doorway. To your left will be another reward.

Take the ladder near the doorway onto the roof. A guard will be stationed on top of the opposite building - take him out. Head over to that same building when he's down. Kick the crate off the far side of the roof to alert a few more guards below - it's easier to take them down when you're above them. Head down onto the lower roof using the ramp to take on the guards further away from you. Break into the hut with the cross sign on it for a short cut-scene.

■ You'll be told the gate you're after is up ahead before being attacked by guards, once again. There are still many of them, but keep locked on to one of them at all times, and strafing left and right quickly to avoid the grenades they throw should be adequate protection. Make sure to run over any medipacks dropped, though. Afterwards, head to the pictured gate and press △ next to the keypad to open it.

■ Guards are rolling explosive barrels down the hill. Avoid them by running to the left side of the uphill track and holding △ whilst firing. Enter the building and approach the console.

■ Head up the ladder, across the gantry and down the first zip wire after the cinematic. At the intermediate platform, drop down to the floor below to find another crate containing another reward. Blow up the explosive barrel to escape, and then return to the platform above, the long way! Take on the guards below, then hop on the bike and speed after your train! There's not a great deal of help possible for the ensuing chase. Staying close to the train is the best method not to get taken off your bike, but this elongates the sequence. Keep an eye out for △ symbols - blowing up the canisters will take out all enemies displayed. When you reach the train, a reaction test will occur.



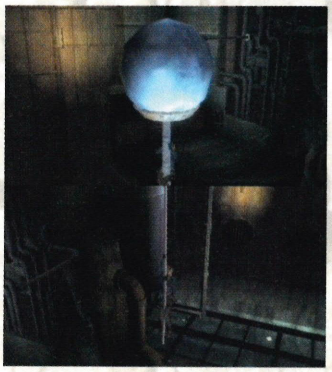
■ Here, use your grappling rope at the end of the starting platform to pull the rope closer to you, then use it to cross the void.

■ Jump over to use the sign to Lara's right as a ledge, then proceed to her left over the horizontal bars to an identical sign on the other side of the train. Drop down from here. Drop down again to the floor itself to find another crate containing a reward. Head back up to the higher platform then use your grappling rope to drag another climbing rope towards you. Use this to swing over to another raised platform, then shoot out the fan above you with △. Leap over to the ledges below to proceed through the fan opening. There now follows a little acrobatic action through the ducts that should be a doddle. When you're informed that turning the power on might have been a mistake, drop down the nearby gap to find another crate containing a reward. To escape, run to the end of the pit where the large crate stands, jump from it then press ⊗ to use your grapple rope.

■ Once you reach the room containing this generator, leap up onto the high platform to the left of it in this shot. This is done by kicking one of the crates from the other corner of the room under the end of the high platform next to the wire fence, then standing on it to leap up and grab. Once up, head clockwise around the room, leaping across the gap, then into the rope ahead. This will give fuel to the generator, allowing you to pull the switch on its front with your grappling rope. Head out of the door to the left of the map for another obstacle course. The route through is pretty obvious - remember to tap △ to speed yourself up over the electrified bars, though. At the end, you'll enter a room with a large Tesla gun buried into the floor. Ignore it for the time being, taking on the guard on the far platform instead. Next, head down the destroyed bridge to take on the guards below.

■ Collect the reward at the side of the machine before you carry on.

■ When you're done, climb the Tesla tower ahead. Be careful not to touch the electric sparks as you do. Jump backwards, proceed up the step ahead and then double back on yourself to swing across to the rope.

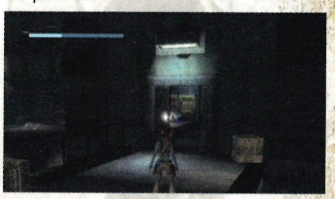


■ From here, rotate and jump from each of the vertical poles in turn to reach an elevated platform with a dead guy on it.

■ Take out the barrel inside the wire-frame cage behind you to gain access to the reward inside. Next, follow the tracks leading from the machinery you just traversed through the door. You'll have to avoid some more coolant gas by using a platform or two. Take down the guards when you reach your next hall.

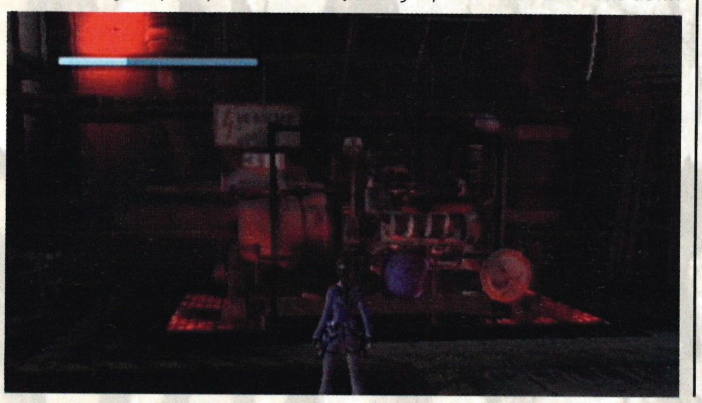
■ Move the core just a little down the track in order to reach the ladder, and platform above. Continue clockwise around the room, using the exotic blue equipment hanging from the roof as a ledge to reach the far wall.

■ Eventually, you'll reach this point. Blow up the barrel using △ then swing across into the control room. Pull the lever using △. Then, pull the core along the track using your grappling rope. Stand by the locked door and drag the core into it. This will 'unlock' the door. The core will automatically travel down the track, now. When you reach the switched-on cables, pull them with your grappling rope to give you the split-second required in order for you to get through. Back at the machinery you recently climbed around, pull the yellow cover to allow the core to assume its position.



■ Head through this malfunctioning door. After the cut-scene, continue through the second door in this room to take on a few more guards.

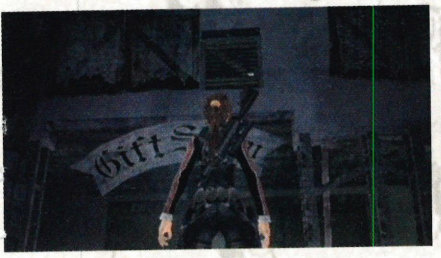
■ Use the Tesla gun to form yourself a path across the void by dragging the large section of platform over to the far right. Once through the next door, climb onto the shining platforms, then use your grappling rope to set the platform in motion. Precision fire will take out the bars - you'll need to jump over the electric obstacles.



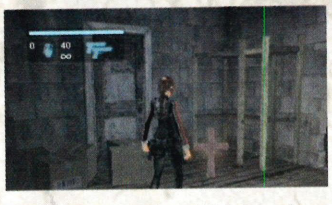
ENEMY INTEL
AMANDA

HER STRENGTHS: Her 'pet'.
HER WEAKNESSES: A bad understanding of science.
HOW TO BEAT HER: First, move clockwise around the edge of the arena, continuously pressing ◎ to activate each of the small switch boxes. When all of their red lights have turned to green, a short cut-scene will take place. Next, head towards the arena's centre, into the Tesla gun, then tap r to shoot the blue, bulbous objects away from you to make them conduct. When all of them are in place, quickly jump out of the turret and grab the sword fragment above it with your grappling rope.

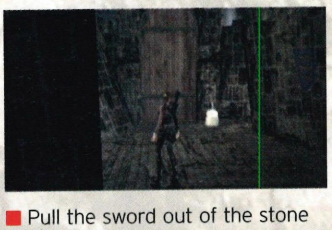
LEVEL SIX
ENGLAND



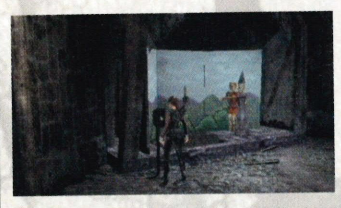
■ Use your grapple rope to pull off this vent above the gift shop, then push the crate in the shop itself into a position where you can use it to jump up and climb into that same vent. Another vent can be found on the floor in this next room.



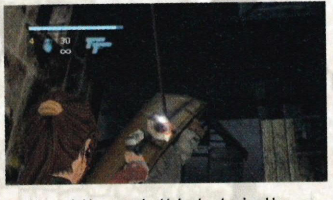
■ Be sure to collect this reward, hidden inside a destructible crate. Head through the next vent. The window ledges on the red-brick wall outside give you a way up to an upper ledge and over the iron gate. Turn on the power switch using △. Head back over the ledges, avoiding the floor, to your entry point. The door at the far end will now be open, so use it.



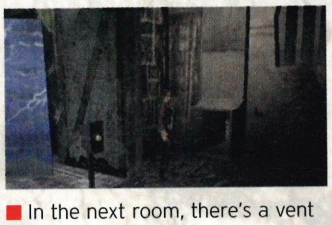
■ Pull the sword out of the stone here to enter. Proceed to press the small stands next to each exhibit in the museum to gain information. When done, head over to the plank hanging over the crevice below, so you can jump over to the first horizontal bar. Follow the bars around the room until you can swing across and hang from the drawbridge. The second you land on the drawbridge itself, you must quickly return to the horizontal bar you came from. This way, you'll be able to jump back to the drawbridge again once it's been fully lowered.



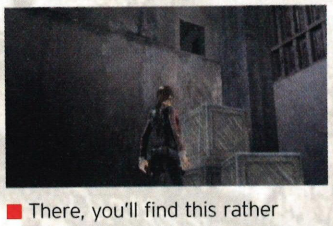
■ Continue to view the exhibits by pressing △.
■ Shoot the statue down to create yourself a path.



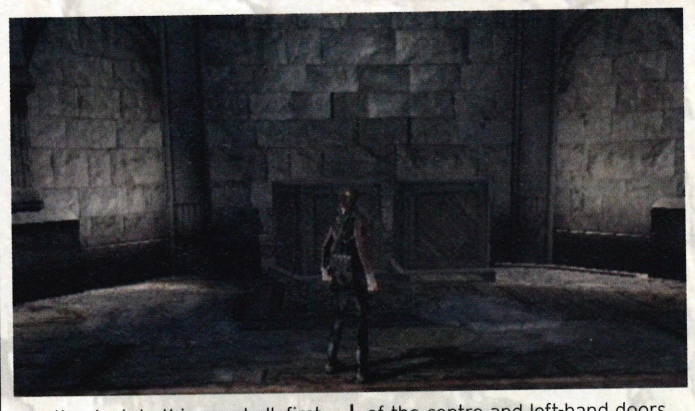
■ Head through this hole in the wall to find a crate containing a reward. Return to your previous room to pull the sword from the stone once more to continue. You'll need to pull the shining object uncovered with your grappling rope to open the door.



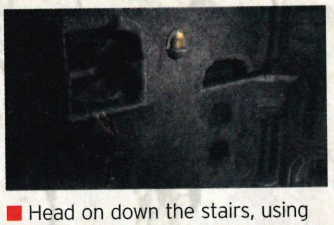
■ In the next room, there's a vent high above you. Pull the cover off with your grappling rope, then stack the crates with the forklift to form a makeshift set of stairs. There's a reward to be found up there. Next, re-stack the crates with the forklift to give yourself space to head down the stairs.



■ There, you'll find this rather suspicious wall. Move the crates in front of it then ram it with your vehicle to progress. Drive the forklift through the entirety of the following corridor – it'll protect you from the traps, and give you an easy way to open the gate. Straight after bashing through the next wall, you'll have another

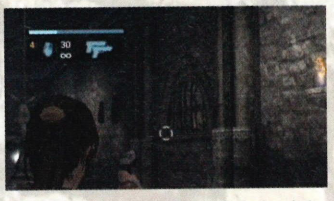


reaction test. In this new hall, first obtain the reward on your right by throwing your grappling rope at it. Do exactly the same with the reward dead ahead of you in a small depression in the wall.



■ Head on down the stairs, using the ledge on the side wall. The last section of this (and the following staircase) will fall soon after you land on them – remember to tap △ to hurry up. At the bottom, head out up the stairs.

■ Jump across the grille, carefully avoiding the flames. At the centre point, use your grappling rope to drag the crate at the centre of the inferno towards you. Grab and push it a few feet into the second set of flames. Jump over the obstacle yourself, climbing onto the top of the crate to allow yourself a longer initial jump. At the other side, grab the crate with your grappling rope once more, dragging it towards you to use it as a step-up onto a higher level above you at the apparent dead-end. Over the wall, operate the large brown lever standing at the room's corner before grabbing the crate you previously used through the now-open gate. Grab the crate in the right-hand room with your grappling rope to pull it through the blades. Next, lodge one of the two crates you now have in each of the centre and left-hand doors. Through the left-hand gate you'll find a reward (enter by pushing the crate through). In this small room, stand on top of your crate before leaping up onto a ledge above. You'll find a door with 'I' marked on it at the end of this platform. Press △ to grab and push it all the way in. Now, head into the right-hand side room, avoiding the blades. You will find a platform just like the one to the left, here, with a door identical to the previous one except it will be marked 'II'. Push this door inwards, too. Finally, head back to the hall in which you lost your forklift to find a third door marked 'III'. Pushing this one in will open a gateway nearby containing yet another reward. Re-trace your steps, taking the centre passage to continue (by pushing a crate in front of you). Reclaim your crate on the other side to stop another set of blades. At the following flames, use your crate once more to create a stepping-stone over the danger. A long jump should see you through, now.



■ Swing the nearby chandelier into this set of fragile bars. Now, you'll be able to grab the coffin inside by using your grappling rope. Incidentally, this is also the method you need to use to get your hands on the reward directly opposite the coffin. Drag the deceased out into the water, then hop on. Use your grappling rope as this will help you haul yourself back towards your entry point into the hall, using the flaming torches at either side of the stretch of water, and the one above the floor switch.

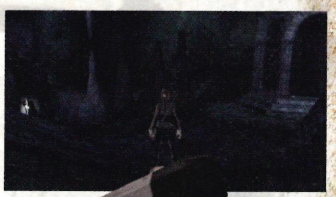
■ Eventually, you'll have hauled yourself and the coffin clean out of the water. Make use of the grappling rope to haul the coffin onto the switch then proceed through the doorway below.

■ Once in the water, use this switch to raise the gate ahead.

■ Stand on the coffin and use your grappling rope to reach the above ledge pictured. Once over, head left and left again to find another large lever, underwater.

Pull it. Head back right on the coffin, using your grappling rope to move - this will help you claim another reward. After heading back to the lever, use the coffin to jump up to the left over another underwater gateway.

■ This is the scene that should be before you here. Jump down and swim through to the far side of the hall, where you'll find the frontage to another tomb. You'll need to manipulate the golden posts with your grappling rope to give yourself a route across the wall once you eventually climb it. So, grab the left post and rotate it 90 degrees clockwise. Next, do exactly the same thing to the left post. Then, climb the wall on the left-hand side of the tomb (using the bright blue ledges). Swing across to the angled platform below for Lara to start sliding down. When you leap to the first golden post, it should rotate, allowing you to jump to the next (pressing ⊗ as you take off to use your grappling rope on the centre torch). Use the series of ledges and the chain to reach the roof of the tomb.



■ Close to the arched structure you'll find a reward (left). Continue down the rope inside said arched structure. Once you've seen the cut-scene, examine each of the caskets around the arena's edge to trigger another.

■ Move this broken sarcophagus, by pulling it, to this location. Use your grappling rope to set the chandelier above in motion, swinging towards the glowing statue of Arthur. Then quickly climb the column next to the half-sarcophagus, jump over to the weight attached to the length of chain (to the right) and, with any luck, you'll have caused the chandelier to hit the bell!

ENEMY INTEL

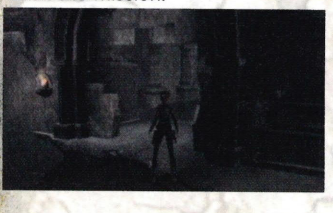
HYDRA

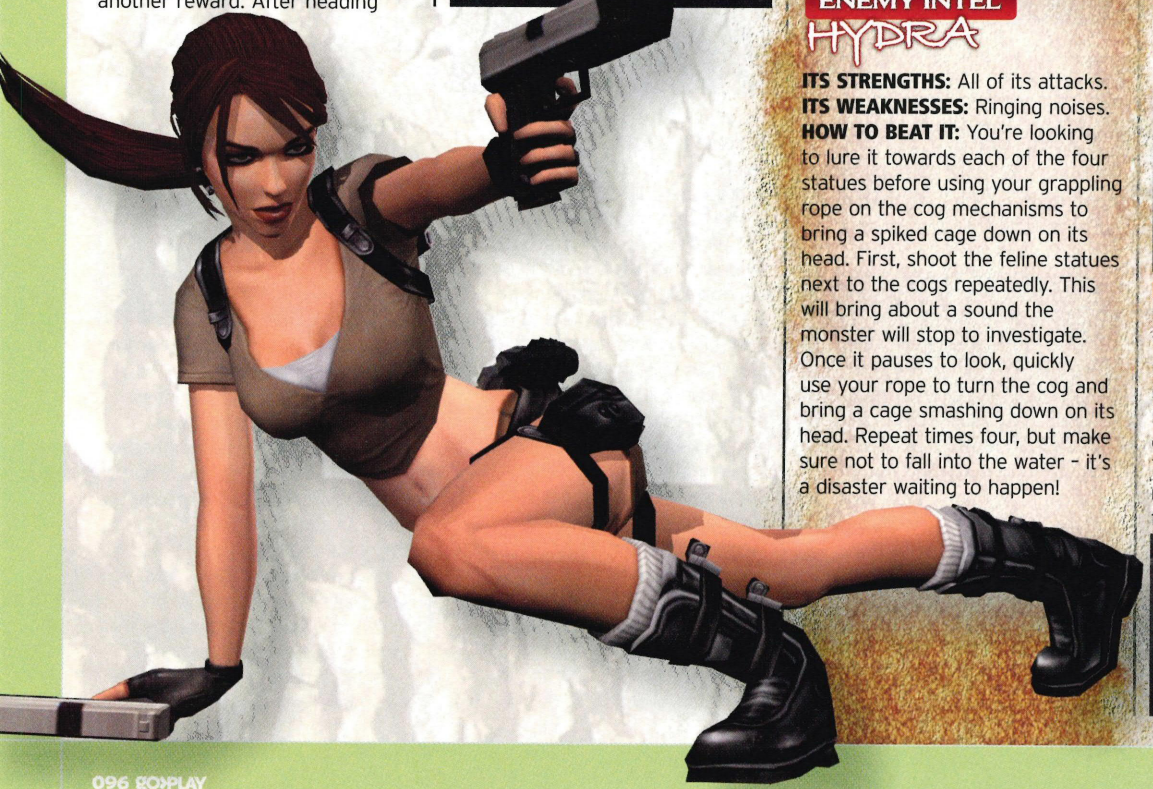
ITS STRENGTHS: All of its attacks.
ITS WEAKNESSES: Ringing noises.
HOW TO BEAT IT: You're looking to lure it towards each of the four statues before using your grappling rope on the cog mechanisms to bring a spiked cage down on its head. First, shoot the feline statues next to the cogs repeatedly. This will bring about a sound the monster will stop to investigate. Once it pauses to look, quickly use your rope to turn the cog and bring a cage smashing down on its head. Repeat times four, but make sure not to fall into the water - it's a disaster waiting to happen!

■ After the battle, use the body of the monster to escape. Jump then press ⊗ to use your grappling rope to swing over the following chasm. Ready yourself for a reactions test at the end.

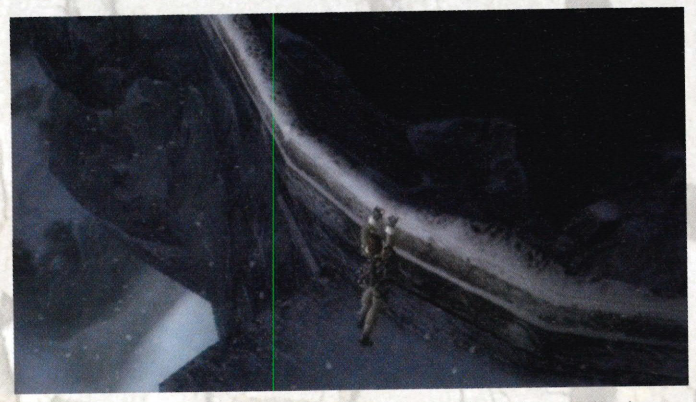
■ In the next cave, look up towards the top of the gate where you'll see an attachment you can shoot out. Do so. Use the newly detached chain to cross the gate by climbing the ledges at either side of it. Pick the reward up on the other side then return to the top of the gate, then to the chain, once more. Swing towards the next platform as pictured, before pulling the lever and escaping. You'll find yourself back in the rotating blades room before too long. From here, it's a simple matter of retracing your steps back towards the start of the level, under fire. As ever, the same general rules apply regarding making yourself as hard a target as possible to hit. Be aware that whilst traversing the flaming coals guards may attack through the holes in the central wall, so these must be finished off first. A lift will have mysteriously appeared in the hall edged by crumbling ledges, so jump up to it and press △ to use.

■ After attacking the enemy at the top, use the grappling rope to pull the lift towards the wall. Collect the reward in the alcove on the wall (using the grappling rope) before heading out. Continue to head out, fighting the guards as you go. Take out the ones hiding behind riot gear by throwing grenades to finish the mission.

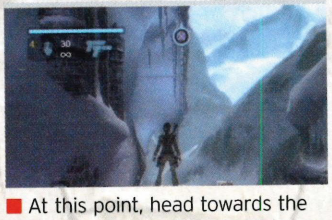




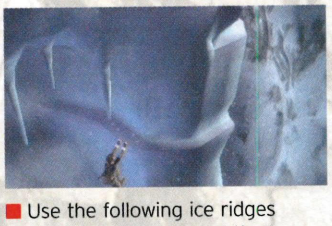
LEVEL SEVEN
NEPAL



■ Speed along the opening ledge using the △ button - it will collapse if you don't. Then continue along the short obstacle course that lies ahead.



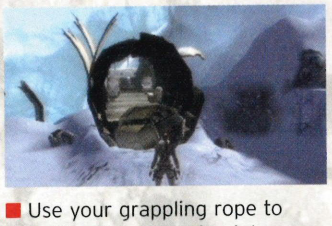
■ At this point, head towards the camera and drop down to claim a reward, then return to the top level and press ⊗ to use your grappling rope. You need to swing onto the icicles ahead and hop between them, taking care to do so quickly, before they break.



■ Use the following ice ridges to inch your way around the mountain and onto a higher platform. Shoot through the ice-covered doorway at the top.

■ Continue along the platform shards, jumping carefully between them. Press ⊗ during your jump, here, to make Lara swing across to the far platform. When you've seen the helicopter, look to your right to see a section of tower. Jump across to use the ledges protruding from it and the mountain side to find a way down. Amongst the debris below you'll find a snow leopard.

■ And a reward.



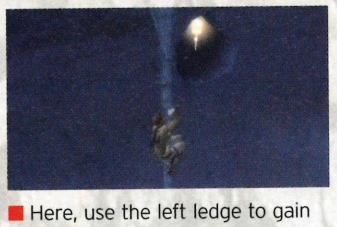
■ Use your grappling rope to drag the plane's engine into the broken end of the plane as pictured, so it won't topple off the edge when you clamber into it. Be prepared for a reactions test when you do.

■ Leap off this edge to slide down the angled mountain side. Make sure to swing from the horizontal bars first time, as it'll crash to the floor. You'll also have to press △ halfway down to smash through another ice wall.

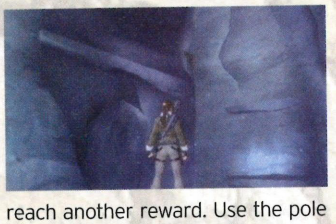
■ At the bottom, use your grappling rope to claim a reward.

■ The path through the next acrobatic section is obvious, but you need to be particularly wary of ledges and platforms that crack and move, through which you'll have to speed up.

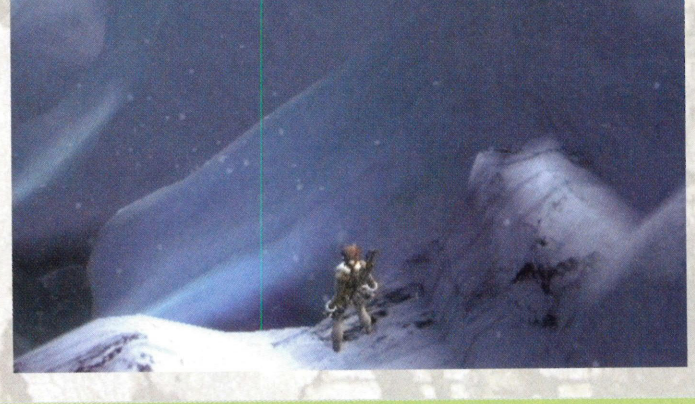
■ Be sure to pick up the reward here by jumping to the nearby platform and using your grappling rope effectively.

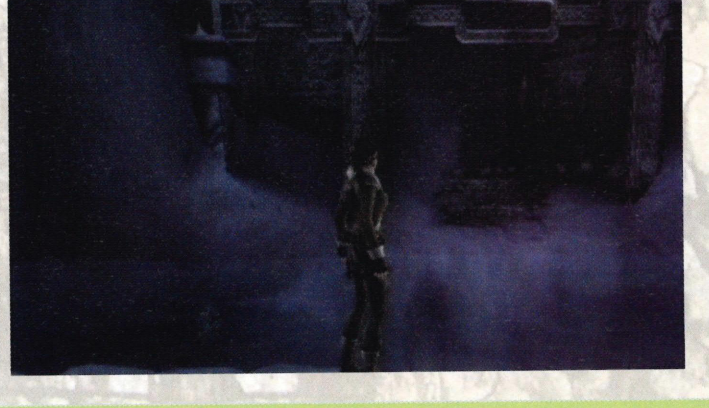


■ Here, use the left ledge to gain access to those further ahead. Drop down to the bottom ledge after your leap, then head right (using the opposite wall's ledges) to reach another reward. Use the pole and the series of ledges to reach a hall filled with guards. After they're all down, the central platform (via a second plateau at the arena's edge) gives access to another reward where a guard lately stood. Jump, then press ⊗ from this to reach the zip line at the far corner. Use it.



■ Slide down to find a series of water-bound platforms. Be aware that the freezing conditions will cause your health to fall if you take a swim. Upon exiting the hall you'll find a river populated by an array of drifting icebergs. Here you must jump from block to block, upstream, towards a platform at the far side. At the top, if you turn left, you'll find a lovely reward.



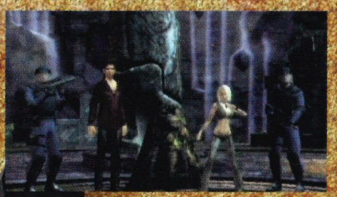


■ When you're done, carry on down the frozen corridor pictured.
■ In this hall, first be prepared for a snow leopard attack, then swing across by tapping ⊗ after you've jumped three times, attaching yourself to the torches above. Another snow leopard will be waiting for you below.

■ A rather crafty puzzle awaits. First, climb onto the left side of the scales, then use your grappling rope to pull the small box onto the platform with you. Then climb onto the right side of the scales and use your rope to pull the large box onto this platform with you. Finally, jump onto the top of the platform, above the door, and pull the large box onto the switch bearing its design. Ta-da! Door open. Head on through. After the cut-scene, hop over to the door you entered through. Press R to break it open with your new sword. Hop out from platform to platform as quickly as possible. Wait for the final platform to fall forward a little before jumping, so you'll be able to reach the ledge ahead, when you do.

LEVEL EIGHT

BOLIVIA REDUX

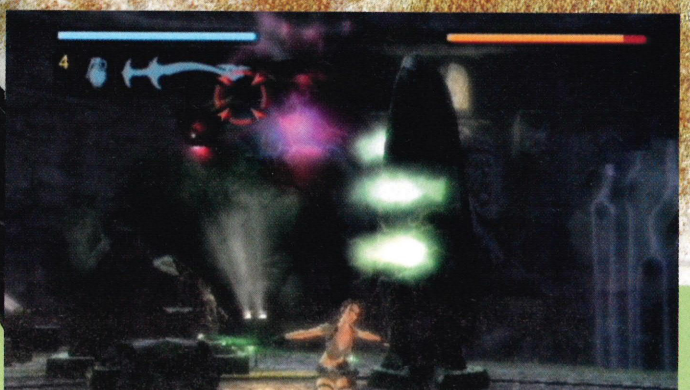


ENEMY INTEL
GUARD COLLECTION

THEIR STRENGTHS: Their large numbers and weaponry.
THEIR WEAKNESSES: Your sword.
HOW TO BEAT THEM: Use Excalibur in exactly the same way you would use your guns. Target your opponents, making yourself as small a target as physically possible. Continue running around and swinging your sword until they're all down, avoiding the grenades they throw. It's a standard guard fight, really - make sure to use the gun turrets dotted around the edge of the stage if it all becomes too much (press △).

ENEMY INTEL
AMANDA

HER STRENGTHS: Well, she turns into a mystical monster, and all.
HER WEAKNESSES: Your sword, once again.
HOW TO BEAT HER: This encounter is a little tougher than your previous one. Keep moving at all times, locking on to her in the same way you'd use a gun, once more. Be ready to tap ◎ whenever it looks like she's about to shoot her fireballs your way - try to keep as many of the stone towers between yourself and her as possible. Obviously, it's best to hit her when she stops moving. Eventually, you'll bring her down at which point you must run up to her and press △. This will reduce her maximum health level by a quarter or so. You'll then have to fight her as you did before. Repeat this process until a final blow with the △ button well and truly finishes her off for good.



Beat the world, but don't tell them how you did it...

CHEATS & TIPS

Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror

UNLOCKABLE WEAPONRY
These weapons are for use in Mission Mode:
M1 Super 90 - Destroy 5 DU containers in 4-1
M16A2 - Destroy 5 DU containers in 4-2
M4 Carbine - Destroy 5 DU containers in 4-3
SP-57 - Finish Training Mission 1 in under 1 minute and 25 seconds
Famas - Finish Training Mission 2 in under 3 minutes
UNP .45 - Finish Training Mission 3 without wasting a bullet
AK-47 - Complete the "headshots" goal in mission 6-1
Rocket Launcher (SMAW) - Shoot All The Small Warheads In 4-3
M249 SAW - Finish KemSynth Tower Bonus Mission in less than 2:42
Shot Defender - Finish Sana Yemen Bonus Mission in less than 3:39

ONLINE BADGES
Ammo Expertise
Expert: 250 Headshots
Elite: 500 Headshots

Armor Expertise
Expert: Find Flak Jacket
Elite: Find Flak Jacket

Explosive Expertise
Expert: 200 Exp. kills using MGL, SMAW or M67
Elite: 500 Exp. kills using MGL, SMAW or M67

Field Medic
Expert: Heal
Elite: Keep healing

Gadget Expertise
Expert: Get kills using Taser, Laser Mines, Claymores
Elite: Get kills using Taser, Laser Mines, Claymores

Hand-To-Hand
Expert: 30 Melee kills
Elite: 50 Melee Kills

One Handed Skill
Expert: 250 kills using pistols/small arms
Elite: 500 kills using pistols/small arms

Triage
Expert: 100 Revives
Elite: 200 Revives

BONUS MISSIONS
Birds of a Feather - Finish Story Mode on Normal or HardÐ
Goodnight, Sweetheart - Beat all the time limits in the Training Missions
Jimmy Zhou's Army - Finish "Birds of a Feather" Trapped
In The Hornets Nest - Obtain all the badges for "Combat Sharp Shooter"
Up a Column Without a Paddle - Obtain all badges for "Elite Weapons Expert"

Daxter

Unlockables	What to do
Matrix I Minigame	Collect 1 Orb
Braveheart Minigame	Collect 100 Orbs
Lord Of The Rings Minigame	Collect 200 Orbs
Indi s Minigame	Collect 300 Orbs
Matrix II Minigame	Collect 400 Orbs
Lord Of The Rings II Minigame	Collect 500 Orbs
E3 2005 Trailer	Collect Precursor Orbs
Concept Art	Collect Precursor Orbs
Intro Animatic	Collect Precursor Orbs
Game in Construction	Collect 900 Precursor Orbs
Behind the Scenes	Collect 1000 Precursor Orbs
Indiana Jones Hat	Get Gold in the Indiana Jones Mini-game
Pants	Get Gold in the Lord Of The Rings II Mini-game
Website Clue A	Get Gold in the Matrix I Mini-game
Website Clue B	Get a Gold in the Braveheart Mini-game
Website Clue C	Get a Gold in the Lord Of The Rings I Mini-game
Website Clue D	Get a Gold in the Matrix II Mini-game

NBA Street Showdown

TROPHIES
You must complete certain conditions to unlock each of the four trophies:
Trophy 1 - Win King of Courts Mode
Trophy 2 - Win 30 Quick Play Games
Trophy 3 - Beat Level 17 of Arcade Shootout and Level 13 of Shot Block
Trophy 4 - Get all three other trophies

Armored Core: Formula Front

Cheat	Hints
Drop Left Arm Weapon	During a manually controlled Battle, press up on the D-pad and circle at the same time
Drop Right Arm Weapon	During a manually controlled Battle, enter up on the D-pad and square at the same time
Drop Extensions	During a manually controlled Battle, enter D-Pad up and D-Pad right
Fire Energy Wave	During a manually controlled Battle, Boost Forward on the ground and press circle
50 Exhibition Matches	Defeat Formula Regular League

Cheat	Unlockables
Ending Credits	Win 50 Exhibition Matches

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EXPAND

MORE PERIPHERALS PUT TO THE TEST

Need PSP accessories but no time to decipher the good from the bad? Don't panic – we've done the hard work so you don't have to

Joytech Mega Memory Pack £29.99

IF YOU'RE YET to buy any accessories for your PSP then this box of goodies from Joytech is just what you need. With a massive 13 items inside, it covers pretty much everything. First off you get a 256MB Memory Stick, which – while not huge – is certainly a handy item. There's a nice, sturdy case that will hold your console and a couple of games and there's even a soft pouch if you don't want anything too bulky, which also doubles as a cleaning cloth too. You need never be without power again either, as you also get both a USB charger and a handy in-car cigarette lighter adaptor for it too. There's also a USB data cable for transferring files to and from your PC. The Power Dock gives you somewhere safe to place your PSP while it's charging and there's also a faceplate included that will protect the screen while it's not in use. Three UMD cases are in the box as well, so you can also be sure that your favourite games are protected. Last but not least, you get a pair of earphones and an earphone splitter, which means you'll be able to share your tunes with others.

For the price, this pack is pretty good value for money. Okay, so not all the stuff is essential – the faceplates never look good on a PSP and the case isn't the best looking around. The earphone quality isn't bad but you probably wouldn't use them over the supplied Sony ones. On the up side though, all the cables have a clever retracting function that keeps them all neat and tidy, although tangles are a possibility unless you're careful.

This is certainly a cheaper option than buying everything separately and there's no doubt that you should get some use out of the majority of items. Pick one up if your PSP is lacking in accessories and you'll be set for any eventuality.

SCORE: ★★★★

Neuros MPEG4 Video Recorder 2 £149.99

THIS LITTLE CONTRAPTION has the amazing ability to record video and music directly onto a Memory Stick. Not that special you might think, as many PCs can do exactly the same thing. Fair point, but you don't need a PC to use this and it's incredibly easy to use. All you do is plug this little box into your DVD player, TV, camcorder, satellite receiver or any other compatible device and it will record directly to a Memory Stick. Once recorded, the video will immediately play in your PSP without a hitch. There's no messing around with compression or changing of file type – it's that easy. Those with a little technology know-how will get to grips with it after just a few minutes, but even those technophiles among you should be transferring your favourite movies to PSP with a minimum of fuss.

The quality is not as good as a UMD, but it was never going to be was it? However, it is perfectly watchable with only particularly dark scenes suffering from any loss in clarity. We did notice the picture becoming momentarily blocky on a couple of occasions but this was rarely a real problem. If you want the best quality that the Neuros has to offer then you'll need a Memory Stick of no less than 1GB to fit an entire, average-length movie on, but the price of those is coming down all the time, making this a much cheaper proposition than an armful of UMDs.

It's not all about the movies though, as the Neuros can also play any MP3s that are on the cards and can even display photos from your camera's Memory Card on the TV if you don't have the necessary leads to do it already.

At this price, the Neuros is unlikely to ring the final death knell for movie on UMDs, but it is a step closer. If you have the cash, you travel frequently and you have a library of DVDs that you wish you could take with you, then this is a perfect companion to your PSP.

SCORE: ★★★★

WIN FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY 2006 AND A PSP!

Take your team to international victory courtesy of EA Sports and Go>Play

WITH THE WORLD Cup a mere few days away you're no doubt eager to get your hands on some portable footie action, so look no further than your friends at **Go>Play**. Not only do we have copies of EA's latest *FIFA* release, but we've also got an awesome PSP to play it on for those of you yet to get your hands on the greatest handheld in the world.

To have a chance to win these prizes it really couldn't be easier. All you need to do is call 0904 169 0100 with the correct answer to the following question:

Which team will England play first in the 2006 World Cup?

A: Brazil
B: Germany
C: Paraguay

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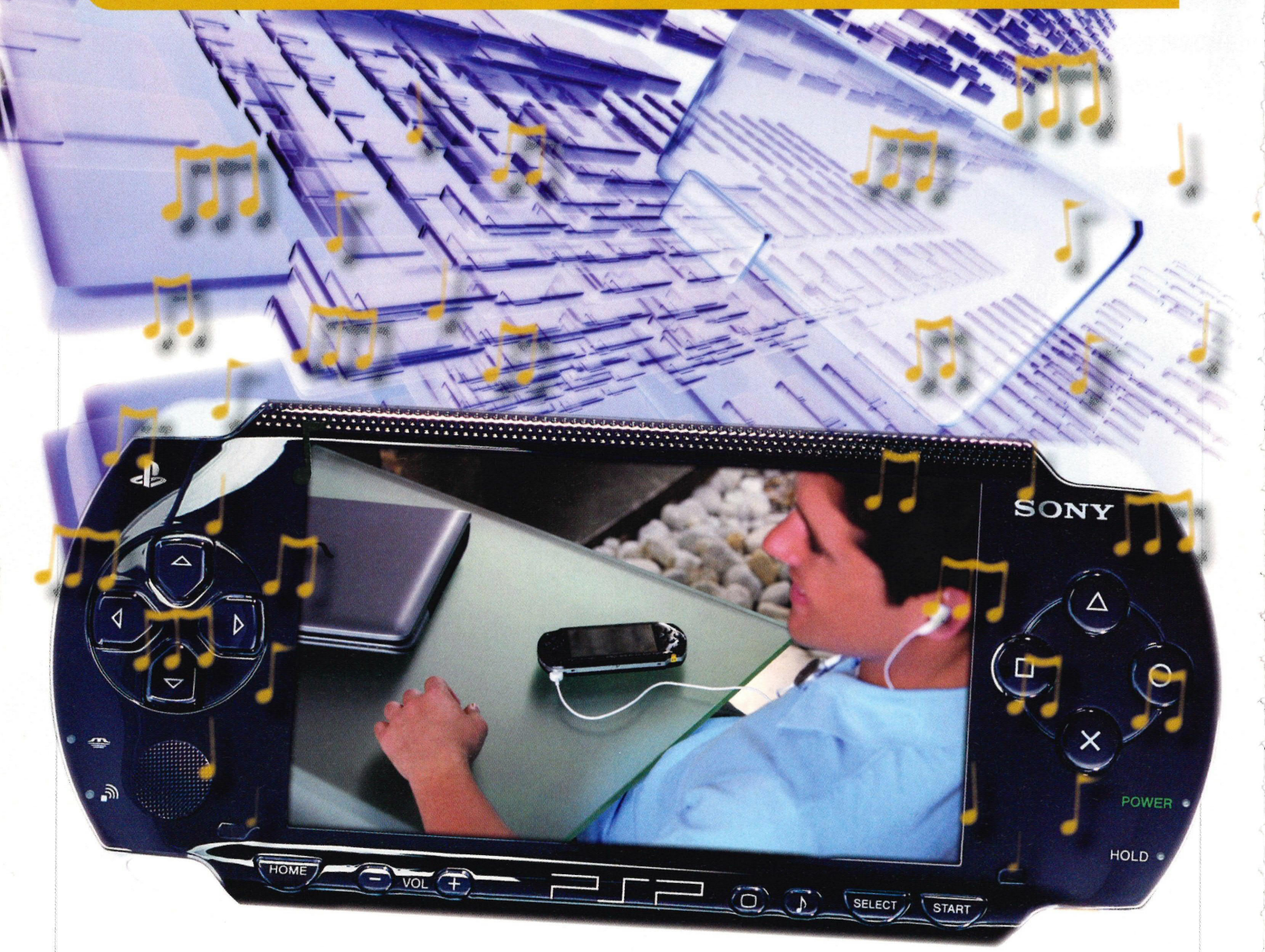


PUMPING UP YOUR PSP

We take you through the PSP's latest essential app

So then, Connect readers, over the last few months we've had quite a journey, and yet there's still more for us to discover. Even the most casual of PSP users will realise that they own a powerful (and very slick and sexy) piece of kit that's light years ahead of the competition, but we're here to tell you more. Much more. We've looked at the best way of watching movies on your PSP, which didn't include buying overly expensive UMDs. We've shown you the best way of listening to MP3s and even revealed how to play homebrew titles via a hack in *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*. Surely we should be running out of tricks? Surely there can't be more things that this amazing console can do? Guys... we haven't even started yet. This month we're looking at PSPRadio which is easily one of the most hi-tech homebrew applications that is currently available for download.

STEP 1

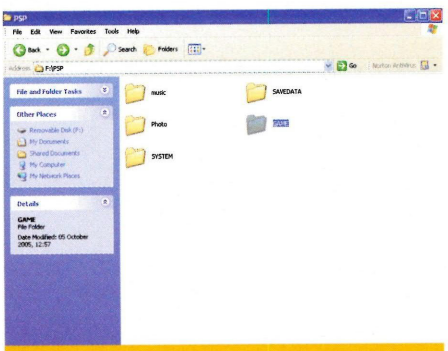
Getting Started

Okay then, so you're not going to get anywhere without the actual software itself so head on over to your favourite homebrew site (we're using PSPUpdates) and download PSPRadio **(STEP 1)**. Oh, and before we forget, you better turn your PSP's Wi-Fi on.

Now that you have downloaded the file you'll need to get it onto your PSP. Duh! For those whose PSP knowledge consists of nothing more than playing games (shame on all of you) simply connect your PSP up to a USB cable, head over to settings and click on USB connections. It's as easy as ABC.

Preparing the memory card

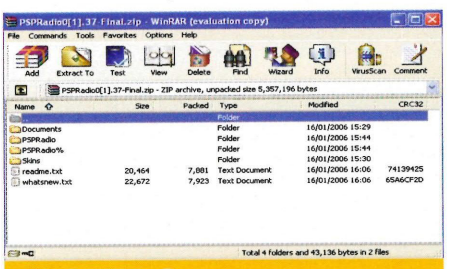
Once you are connected it's time to have a root around on your memory stick **(STEP 2)**. Open up your folder and look for a new folder called PSP. Open that and if there isn't one already, create a new folder called GAME. Once the game folder is created, quickly locate the PSPRadio zip folder which you should have saved on your PC's desktop. Unzip PSPRadio **(STEP 3)** and drag the PSPRadio and PSPRadio% into the recently created game folder on your PSP memory stick. Now it's time to look at the actual program...



STEP 2

Feeling your way around

So that's PSPRadio on your actual PSP, now let's boot it up and guide you through its available screens. There are four screens in total – three are for playback while the fourth is used for changing options. For the moment, we're going to look at the Main Playlist screen **(STEP 4)**. There's a lot going on here, but it's all pretty easy to understand so don't get too confused. The left-hand side of the screen shows all your available folders (set up as many as you wish but make sure they are placed in the Playlists folder (this can be found in the PSPRadio folder). Once you've chosen your playlist press circle or cross and you'll be taken to the Song Selection Station. When you've decided what you want to listen to, simply press circle or cross again. Once the buffer (top left of screen) approaches 100 per cent you should start hearing music. Hey presto, Chris Moyles or Radio Sega on your PSP.



STEP 3

Shout, shout, let it all out

Of course, some people are far too lazy to set up music to listen to, so you'll find the Shoutcast screen **(STEP 5)** essential for your needs. For those unaware, Shoutcast is essentially a multi-platform freeware audio streaming technology. Developed by Nullsoft it is used for MP3 encoding of audio content (as well as HTTP) as a transport protocol that enables you to effectively broadcast web radio. While it's available for a variety of

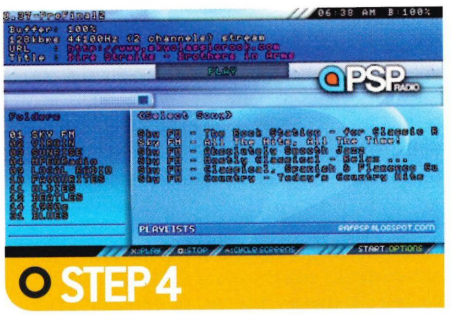
STEP 5

TUNE IN, FREAK OUT

Right then, so you have a spiffy new way of listening to music on your PSP, but what do you plan on listening to? Punk? Rap? Girls 'bloody crap' Aloud? The world (or rather the Internet) is literally your oyster, so scour the World Wide Web and allow yourself to go wild. Alternatively, you may want to check out the following:

Radio Sega

If you love the music of Sega, then do we have a treat for you. Genius Mark Kidley has uploaded some of 2,000 odd MP3s of classic Sega tunes for your enjoyment, and each and every one is bloody superb. *Sonic The Hedgehog*, *Burning Rangers*, *OutRun2*, the hits just keep on coming and it's fully shout cast compatible. Brilliant – **http://radio.mysega.co.uk**



STEP 6

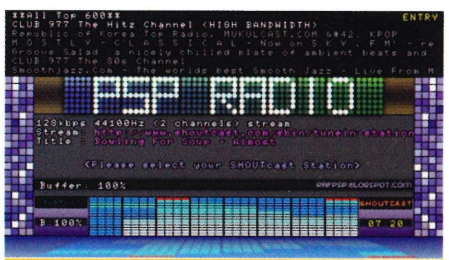
servers and clients, we're just interested in this PSP version.

Upon selecting the Shoutcast Playback screen you'll be given immediate access to the top 600 Shoutcast radio stations. You can select your station the same way as with the Song Selection Station screen, wait for the select channel to reach 100 per cent on the buffer and off you go.

Going local

One of the handy aspects of PSPRadio is that it automatically searches your PSP/Music folder for any sub-folders that contain either MP3s or OGGs. All of this then appears on the Local Files Playback screen (STEP 6). Whatever album names you have on record become the folders, while the actual song tracks show up in the select song section. So, it's possible to listen to all of your stored albums without leaving PSPRadio.

STEP 7



STEP 8

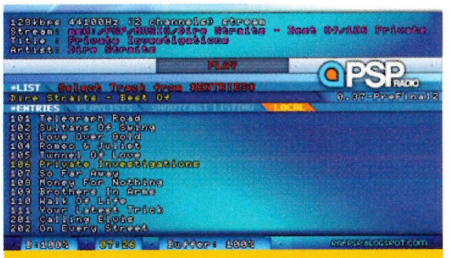
Perfect for those who are far too lazy for their own good (us in other words).

So many choices

The final screen is the Options Screen (STEP 7). This particular screen is rather essential as it allows you to change all sorts of nifty things. Although sadly a few of the options only currently work on issue 1.5 firmware. In total there are 13 different options to choose from; USB enables you to put your PSP into USB Connection mode at run-time, Log-Level is useful for checking errors, while Play Mode enables you to play MP3s either one at a time, sequentially, or one track repeatedly. The above are by far the most useful.

Skinning up

If you're not happy with how your PSPRadio looks then don't moan to us – do something about it and get it changed. Changing your skins couldn't be easier: simply get your new images, place them in the TextUI folder of the PSPRadio and



STEP 9

give them the following names. PlayListScreen.png, SHOUTcastScreen.png, LocalFilesScreen.png, OptionsScreen.png. PSPRadio already includes three skins for you (they can be found in the Skins folder (STEPS 8, 9 and 10). Simply unzip them and place them in the folder we've already mentioned.

Ultimate Eighties

As much as we'd like to think otherwise some of us at **Go>Play** are pushing on in age now. So when we're on a tough deadline we like nothing more than kicking off our shoes, playing with our perms and listening to Journey, A-ha, INXS and a host of other iconic bands. A word of warning though, if you think 50 Cent is the be all and end all when it comes to killer tunes you'll to be very disappointed.

Find it on www.shoutcast.com

Soundtrack for your stylish, mysterious, dangerous life

The title's a bit of a mouthful, but if you're a fan of classic spy yarns the funky Secret Agent is well worth tuning in to. Tracks range from the Narcoleptics to Burt Bacharach and the atmosphere they create is superb. Indeed fans of titles such as *Hitman*, *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear Solid* will be in seventh heaven. We've not heard the *James Bond* theme tune yet, but we'll keep listening just in case...

Find it on www.shoutcast.com

STEP 10

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

8-bit computers fight on via the PSP

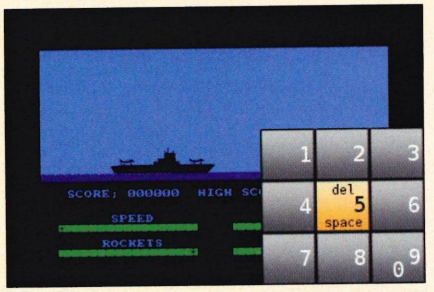
The Amstrad was normally considered as something of a bad joke back in the Eighties, but those in the know realise that it was quite a decent piece of kit. Sure it suffered from a lot of ropey Spectrum conversions, but that was mainly due to them sharing similar processors. Now that we've all grown up (and have our superior PlayStation Portable) we can go back via the power of emulation and find out for ourselves whether the machine was really as bad as everyone made out. So why are we telling you all this? Simple. The Amstrad, Commodore64 and ZX Spectrum are all available via emulation and two of them have even had a number of nifty updates.

Retro emulation in all its glory – it does get more exciting than this, promise

First up is the rather nifty PSPCAP32, a version of the Amstrad emulator Caprice32. The latest version V1.0.3 not only works on both 1.5 and 2.0 firmwares, it's also received some natty little tweaks. There's now a handy Option menu that allows you to alter parameters such as sound and clockspeed (handy for slow arse games like *Driller* and *The Sentinel*) while the Zip archive now supports both disk (.dsk) and snap (.sna) files. There's even the handy ability to map buttons for those few games that require specific keys or don't use a joystick (you didn't really have joypads in those days).

The developer of PSPVice (a rather good Commodore64 emulator) has also been busy and has released a staggering amount of updates that push this lovely emulator ever closer to perfection. Some of the many upgrades available include much better speed accuracy (although it's still far from perfect), the ability to save settings when you exit the emulator, better sound, an improved disk-tape browser as well as much, much more.

Sadly, PSPspectrum (the ZX Spectrum emulator) hasn't received any updates at all (the last one was back in September last year). Fortunately, the emulator itself is reasonably impressive, extremely straightforward to use and features all of the basics (sound etc) so all three machines can be experienced equally. Now how long will it be before everyone starts arguing over which emu plays the best version of *Head Over Heels*? ■



Who needs millions of colours when you have a massive selection of four?

THE DEATH OF HOMEBREW?

Will Sony's latest upgrade kill the homebrew scene?

If you were like us and bought *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*, you would have been gutted to find out that it spelt the end of homebrew on your then 2.0 PSP. Fortunately, Fanjita's excellent *GTA* eBoot loader enabled us to once again download homebrew apps to our hearts' content and stick the proverbial two fingers up at Sony. Everything was right with the world again. Sadly, lightning has struck twice and in our effort to get the amazing *LocoRoco* demo we've gone and buggered things up for ourselves again. As you're probably aware, the excellent demo requires a brand-new update to run, and it's frustratingly incompatible with the *GTA* hack.

Fanjita has obviously received a lot of questions about the compatibility and placed a brief Q&A on his forum. The long and the short of it is that it's entirely unlikely that an upgrade (certainly from Fanjita) will be appearing for the *GTA* exploit. So, at this moment in time things are looking pretty grim for owners of V2.7.

Of course, it's hopefully only going to be a matter of time before an exploit is found by someone, but in the meantime, if you love homebrew it's probably best to leave V2.7 and *LocoRoco* well alone. Even if it is brilliant. Of course, *LocoRoco* will only be the first in the next wave of games to need the upgrade, so it doesn't look good if you want to play new stuff. More info can be found at **www.fanjita.org**.

MICKEY MOUSE: CASTLE OF ILLUSION

Thanks to the joys of emulation, every month we'll be looking back at a classic game that we've been revisiting on our PSPs. This issue, we've been revisiting mysterious castles... of illusion

R-Type

Originally Released **1990** /
Developer **SEGA** / Emulator Used **DGen**

Call us lame, call us sad. Hell, call us thumb-sucking cissies who don't deserve our manly PSPs, we just don't care. We've been enjoying the guilty pleasure that is the wonderful *Mickey Mouse: Castle Of Illusion* and we don't care what any of you think. Except for you at the back with the wide-set shoulders – you look like trouble – but everyone else can go to hell. Mickey's first Mega Drive adventure is as fun to play now as it ever was and we just can't leave it alone.

Sure, you're probably laughing at us about this month's choice – the more sinister of you may even be considering paying us a visit in order to show us what games we really should be playing, but have you played *Castle Of Illusion* lately? It really is bloody good.

Take its visuals for example. When *Castle Of Illusion* first appeared back in 1990 it immediately stunned Mega Drive owners thanks to its glorious visuals and slick animation. Mickey himself was animated to perfection, and looked as if he'd jump out of the TV screen at any moment. While everyone's favourite mouse mimicked his cartoon counterpart as much as the Mega Drive's hardware would allow though, his opponents weren't given the same attention. They were all beautifully drawn and full of character, but it was just obvious who Sega had lavished all the real attention on. The bosses shared a similar fate. If you could get past the fact that they didn't share Mickey's fluid animation it was still easy to be in awe of the impressive mayors. A giant tree that attacks you by rolling its face at you, a psychotic jack-in-the-box and of course the evil witch you face on the last level are all memorable encounters that still manage to impress 16 years later. Then you have the added bonus that they now look pin-sharp thanks to the PSP's excellent screen. Revisiting that first walk through *Illusion*'s haunted forest, frantically running down the hills of toy land or precariously jumping across leaves while spiderwebs glisten in the background has never looked better, and just wait until you get to cake land!

Beautiful visuals are just one part of *Illusion*'s startling aesthetics, as its superb soundtrack is also to die for. Beautifully composed, it perfectly captures the on-screen action and ranges from jaunty little jingles to frightfully eerie tunes that are sure to give you the heebie-jeebies. Sadly the spot effects don't quite match the magnificence of the soundtrack, but hey, who cares when you can head to the option screen and listen to whatever you want?

Ultimately though, *Castle Of Illusion*'s real trump card is the fact that it's still an utterly playable little platformer. There are no annoying leaps of faith, no naff level design, no frustrating collision issues that ruined *Fantasia* – what you have here is good old-fashioned gaming that's unashamedly old-school and impossible to put down. Everything you'd expect is in abundance. Bottom bouncing... check. Moving platforms... check. Collecting objects... check; it's all present and correct, yet it never feels like a chore. But then, how could leaping across light switches (in a giant's house) catching a ride on a moving leaf or leaping across pools of jelly ever get boring?

Check it out for yourselves and you'll see what we mean.

Darran Jones

Swinging through the forest without a care in the world

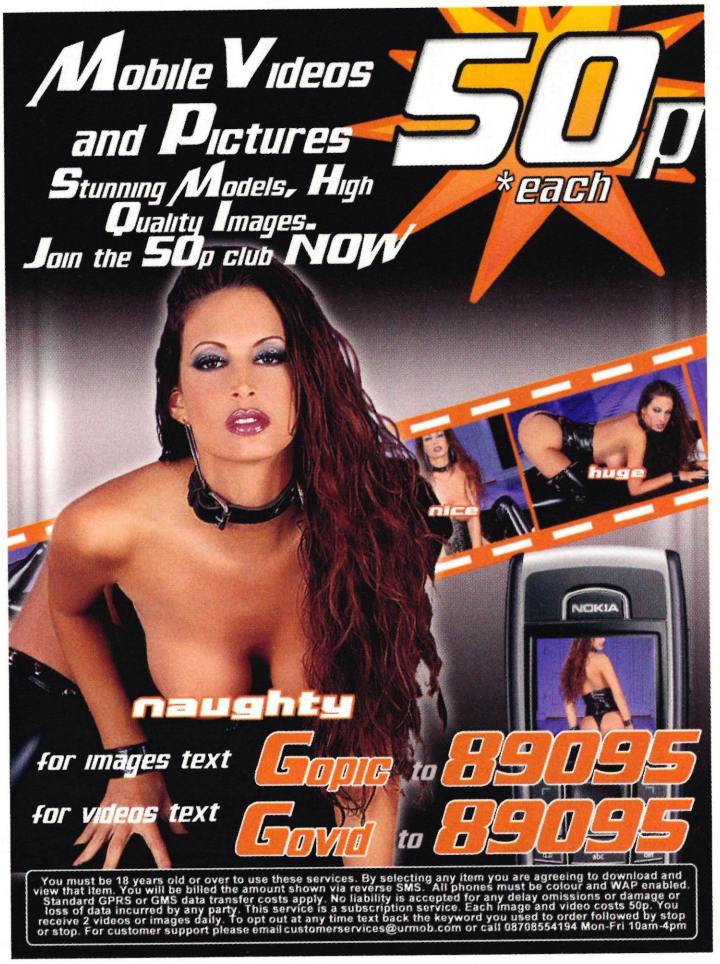
Other great Mega Drive games we've been playing this month

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
Alright so there's a fair bit of blur, but heck this is Sonic The Hedgehog and Sonic The Hedgehog is bloody aces. Racing through Green Hill Zone is one of the purest gaming experiences you can get, and until a proper compilation gets released we'll just play this instead.

THUNDERFORCE III
Many people will tell you that Thunderforce 4 is the superior blaster; ignore these fools as they are crazy individuals who probably sleep like bats and drink the blood of stray dogs when they think no one is looking. Trust us; Thunderforce III is one of the finest shooters the Mega Drive has to offer.

STRIDER
Believe it or not, but the Mega Drive version has a far better soundtrack than its arcade counterpart. It's also a very accurate arcade conversion and captures all the thrills and spills of the original coin-op hit. Play it, love it, then play it some more. What could be better?

The boss needs to be hit on the head – but first you have to reach it...



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DIRECTORY

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE NOT-SO-UGLY LIST OF PSP GAMING

Armored Core: Formula Front - Extreme Battle

The ludicrous length of this game's name means we don't have much room to say anything good about it -oh well.

Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus

Colin's PS2 venture gets cut down to PSP size but loses none of its playability. A cracking rally game that will only be bettered by the next in the series.

Exit

A hugely challenging yet rewarding puzzle game that is only hampered by some frustrating level design. Stick with it, though, and you won't regret it.

FIFA Street 2

Despite being a *FIFA Street* game, this is actually rather good fun. The arcade nature of the game is far more suited to the PSP than the PS2 and there's no commentary - result!

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Ape Academy	SCEE	1	85%		Simian silliness of the highest order and tremendously enjoyable to boot.
Ape Escape: On The Loose	SCEE	1	62%		Do we really need this old PSone game on our shiny new PSP?
Ape Escape P	SCEE	5	74%		A port of the old PSone version with virtually no improvements at all.
Archer MacLean's Mercury	Atari	1	82%		A tough challenge but there's no way you'll be able to tear yourself away.
Armored Core: Formula Front - Extreme Battle	505 Gamestreet	5	56%		Great for hardcore mech fans but impenetrable to everyone else.
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	SCEE	2	70%		Fun for a while, but only if you don't mind a rather limited experience.
Burnout Legends	EA	1	71%		A lack of draw distance ruins the fun, but it's still worth a play.
Breath Of Fire III	Capcom	4	76%		A decent effort but starting to show its age now.
Bust-A-Move Ghost	505 Gamestreet	5	85%		Hugely playable and addictive, though the 'spooky' treatment does nothing for the game.
Championship Manager	Eidos	2	80%		Addictive but there's plenty of room for improvement.
Championship Manager 2006	SEGA	5	81%		A little shy of Football Manager's greatness but not far off.
Coded Arms	Konami	1	64%		An okay attempt at an FPS, but not quite good enough.
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	Codemasters	1	83%		Just like the PS2 version, but a bit smaller in size.
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi	2	77%		*Bandicoot* fans should find this funny, innovative and perfect for the PSP.
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	1	79%		A good game and a good port, but the controls are far from perfect.
Daxter	SCEE	4	89%		Not overly original but manages to be an addictive platformer all the same.
Dead To Rights: Reckoning	EA	3	63%		Reasonable blasting action that quickly gets repetitive.
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai	Atari	5	69%		Too much button mashing mars what could have been a decent beat-'em-up
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	1	70%		Fun at first but even fans will be a little bit disappointed.
Everybody's Golf	SCEE	1	91%		Fun, addictive and perfect golfing in almost every way.
Exit	Ubisoft	3	83%		Enjoyable puzzle action that can get a bit frustrating.
F1 Grand Prix	SCEE	1	81%		Spot-on adaptation of the sport, worthy of a decent place on the grid.
FIFA 06	EA	1	76%		Possibly the best footy game on the PSP (after *Pro Evo 5*).
Fight Night Round 3	EA	3	93%		An absolutely fantastic boxing simulation. You need this in your collection!
Fired Up	SCEE	1	59%		Just about playable, but not worth anything more than a passing look.
Football Manager Handheld	SEGA	4	88%		A cut-down version of the game that is still just as compelling as ever.
FIFA Street 2	EA	4	76%		The PSP is clearly the best place for *FIFA Street* - it's actually quite good.
From Russia With Love	EA	4	62%		A poor PS2 game that's even worse on PSP. Goodbye, Mr. Bond.
Go! Sudoku	SCEE	2	40%		An expensive way to play a game that simply needs pen and paper.
Gottlieb Pinball Classics	System 3	4	86%		A well-crafted title that provides hours of enjoyment.
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Rockstar	1	97%		Quite simply, the best there is. If you only buy one game, make it this.

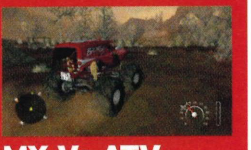
TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Gripshift	Ubisoft	1	69%		An interesting kart-based game, with not enough racing.
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	EA	1	70%		It's good for the fans, but not many others, sadly.
Infected (Import)	THQ	4	77%		A gory horror-fest that gets slightly repetitive. Great multi-player though.
Kao Challengers	Atari	2	55%		Surprisingly good multi-player, but everything else about this is bad.
Key Of Heaven	SCEE	4	80%		Looks lovely and plays well too, sadly it's just too damn repetitive though.
Koloomn	505 Gamestreet	5	70%		Best played with a friend, as the single-player isn't particularly engaging.
Lemmings	SCEE	2	82%		The suicidal critters are back and they're just as good as you remember.
Lord Of The Rings Tactics, The	EA	1	74%		A decent effort from EA, but it falls short of its potential, unfortunately.
Lumines	Ubisoft	1	88%		Delightful to watch and addictive to boot - this really is puzzle heaven.
Madden NFL 06	EA	2	76%		Too much is missing from the PS2 version for this to get top marks.
Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects	EA	1	73%		A reasonable beat-'em-up, but flawed and nowhere near as good as it sounds.
Me And My Katamari (Import)	EA	3	91%		Quirky, crazy and bizarre but you'll love it.
MediEvil: Resurrection	SCEE	1	67%		Big on personality, if not on gameplay. A disappointing return for Sir Dan.
MegaMan Maverick Hunter X	Capcom	4	82%		Rock hard but great fun once you get to grips with it.
MegaMan Powered Up	Capcom	3	79%		A decent effort but this isn't the best MegaMan game on PSP.
Metal Gear Ac!d	Konami	1	82%		Tough to learn, but an original slice of action for fans.
Metal Gear Ac!d 2 (Import)	Konami	5	91%		Fixes all the flaws of the first game, absolutely essential!
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	1	70%		If 'pimping rides' is your thing then look no further.
Midway Arcade Treasures Extended Play	Ubisoft	4	77%		A strong compilation with some real classics on board.
Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	5	79%		Some frustration and boredom at first but ultimately a great adventure.
MX Vs ATV Unleashed: On The Edge	THQ	5	65%		A so-so racer that is fun for a while but ultimately an unfulfilling game.
NBA Ballers: Rebound	Midway	5	88%		Nice to look at and fun to play, a great b-ball game.
NBA Street: Showdown	EA	1	87%		A great conversion of a solid game that's excellent in multi-player.
Need For Speed Most Wanted	EA	1	68%		Not particularly good, but it's still perfectly adequate all the same.
Need For Speed Underground Rivals	EA	1	61%		'Pimped' to the post by the superior *Midnight Club*.
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	EA	1	76%		Fun but still filled with the flaws of the PS2 version.
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	SEGA	3	93%		Looks amazing, plays even better. Yet another great racing title.
PoPoLoCrois	Agetec	3	69%		Far too simplistic to satisfy the majority of RPG fans.
PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient	D3Publisher	4	75%		An original piece of brain-bending puzzle action that can get frustrating.
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	2	79%		The best footy game on PSP but a few flaws hold it back from classic status.
Pursuit Force	SCEE	1	89%		High-speed hi-jinks that really show off the PSP.
Ridge Racer	SCEE	1	92%		*Ridge* is back on form with a truly fantastic PSP debut.
Samurai Warriors: State Of War	Koei	4	75%		Provides a decent slice of hack 'n' slash fun, but it's nothing particularly special.

Key Of Heaven

While this is accomplished in most aspects, with solid gameplay and nice visuals, there's just far too much repetition for it to give any long-term enjoyment. Good but not great.

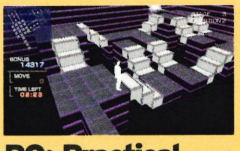
Madden NFL 06

Madden's first visit to the PSP is a strong debut but it fails to capture the spirit of the game like its console cousins. Too much content has been removed to make this the definitive release.



MX Vs ATV Unleashed: On The Edge

There's nothing fundamentally wrong with this but you can't escape the fact that it's actually quite dull.



PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient

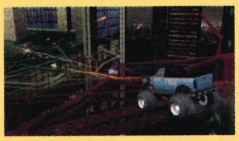
A game that is even more baffling that its name. Only those confident in their intelligence should even attempt these puzzles.

KEY

Racing
Platform
Beat-'em-up
Shoot-'em-up
Sport
Puzzle
Action/Adventure
RPG/Strategy

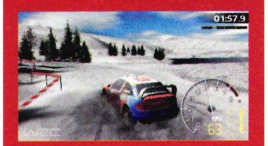
Splinter Cell Essentials

Fisher's first foray into the world of PSP gaming is a decent effort but is too short to satisfy anyone but the most die-hard fans. That camera's rubbish too.



Twisted Metal: Head On

Like all *Twisted Metal* releases, this is far more fun in multi-player than going solo. The control issues stop this from being instantly playable, though.



WRC

Not a complete disaster but *Colin McRae* offers a much more pure rally experience and it looks a hell of a lot better too. Solid, but sadly lacking that certain something.

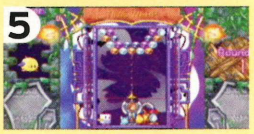
TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Sims 2, The	EA	2	86%		*The Sims* is always great and that doesn't change on the PSP.
SOCOM US Navy SEALs: Fireteam Bravo	SCEE	4	91%		A few control problems don't mar this excellent tactical shoot-'em-up.
Spider-Man 2	Activision	1	47%		Spidey's latest outing sadly pales in comparison to the PS2 version.
Splinter Cell: Essentials	Ubisoft	3	80%		Not a bad first outing for Sam Fisher, but we were expecting more.
Star Wars Battlefront II	LucasArts	2	80%		Controls take getting used to but still an absolute blast.
Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX	Capcom	3	80%		Arcade-perfect port let down by the awkward controls.
Street Riders	Ubisoft	5	56%		*187 Ride Or Die* with a different name but in reality, still just as crap.
SSX On Tour	EA	4	87%		Great single player, great multi-player, and looks to die for.
Tales Of Eternia	Ubisoft	3	84%		Despite offering little that's new, it still manages to be highly addictive.
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	1	81%		Carbon copy from the PS2, but it manages to impress.
Tokobot	Take 2	3	72%		A nice idea that doesn't really work as well as it should.
Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix	Activision	1	70%		More of the usual boarding antics, let down by some rather dodgy controls.
Twisted Metal: Head On	SCEE	2	70%		Fun in multi-player but this game is plagued by annoying control issues.
Untold Legends: Brotherhood Of The Blade	SCEE	1	73%		A button-bashing RPG that unfortunately doesn't quite make the grade.
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	5	85%		A little mad on the eyes but still a great deal of fun.
Virtua Tennis World Tour	SEGA	1	90%		One of the most addictive games on the PSP to date, an essential buy.
WipEout Pure	SCEE	1	88%		Fast, beautiful and intense futuristic racing game.
World Poker Tour	2K Sports	5	81%		A great game for both poker veterans and newcomers.
World Snooker Challenge 2005	SEGA	1	89%		Filled with content and plays surprisingly well.
World Tour Soccer: Challenge Edition	SCEE	1	71%		No trailblazer, but worthy of Premier League status.
Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	5	84%		Worms back to its 2D best with a solid single-player experience and fantastic multi-player.
WRC	SCEE	1	65%		Solid but lacklustre racing coming a firm second place behind Colin.
WWE Smackdown Vs RAW 2006	THQ	2	90%		A perfectly formed miniature version of the PlayStation2 grappler.
X-Men Legends II: Rise Of Apocalypse	Activision	2	69%		Fun for fans of the super-mutants but far from perfect.

KEY

Racing · Beat-'em-up · Sport · Action/Adventure

Platform · Shoot-'em-up · Puzzle · RPG/Strategy

GO>PLAY TOP FIVE PUZZLE



5 Bust-A-Move Ghost

While this offers little that is really new, the puzzle action remains tremendously playable and if you can get past the irritating tunes then you should have an absolute blast with it.

4 Lemmings

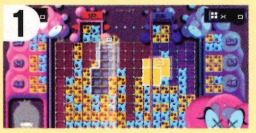
The suicidal green critters are back for more brain-taxing fun. Some of the puzzles aren't very original for *Lemmings* veterans, but everyone else should enjoy it from start to finish.

3 Archer MacLean's Mercury

A little easy to start with, *Mercury* rapidly becomes more and more fiendish. It's this learning curve that will draw you in and keep you playing until every last puzzle is completed.

2 Me And My Katamari

Monumentally irritating controls aside, this crazy game is sure to get you hooked immediately. Or you'll end up loathing the very sight if it. Either way it will make an impression.



1 Lumines

The launch game that used little of the power within the PSP but took full advantage of the handheld aspect, with fast and frantic gameplay that's guaranteed to liven up those dreary bus journeys.

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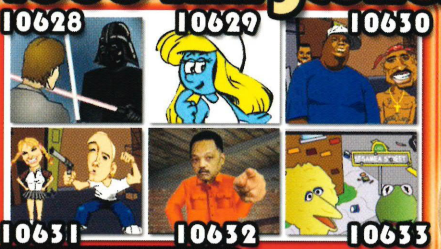

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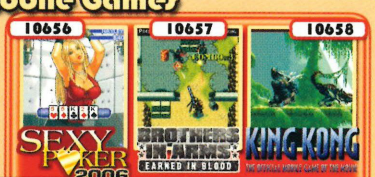

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