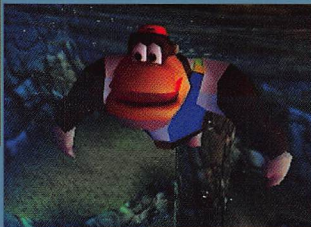SONY • NINTENDO • SEGA • PC • ARCADE

Gamers' Republic

COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

⤷ wipeout 3

DONKEY KONG 64

SOUL FIGHTER

HYPE: THE TIME QUEST

• BEHIND THE SCENES AT UBI SOFT • AN INTERVIEW WITH DJ SASHA
• IMPORTS, ANIME, NEWS, MUSIC AND MOVIES!

This is all the action you can handle.

* THIS PRODUCT IS NOT APPROVED, ENDORSED OR SPONSORED BY NINTENDO.

Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

Beginning this month with the obvious, a big congratulations to Sega from everyone here at *Gamers' Republic*. We knew it was going to be big, and we knew it was going to be fun, but not quite that big or quite that entertaining. To celebrate the biggest rollout in video game console history, Sega of America treated the press to parties across the U.S., with the grand daddy taking place the day after—hangovers in tow—at a posh S.F. club. When the dust settled, Sega had 97 million bucks to show for it, and probably let out a big simultaneous KA-CHING!

Dreamcast is the real thing. This time Sega's early and they have the goods to go the distance. Meanwhile, as expected, Sony chimed in just days after, proclaiming a Japanese release date of March 4, 2000, for their ultra-powerful uberconsole, the PS2. It's projected at just over ¥39,000 at launch, but figuring in the decrease in production costs over time it is conceivable the bona-fide multimedia machine, which uses proprietary Sony technology and plays DVD movies, could hit these shores at around $300.00—a deal, considering its prowess. The question is, will the PS2 be able to ring up Sega-sized numbers, initially entering the market priced above the magic $200.00 price point? One look at the games—which we're just beginning to see now as our editors arrive in Japan for TGS—and one thing is for sure: those with the means will make the purchase. Of course, by that time second-generation DC games will be at hand, and we'll be gleefully playing online games like Phantasy Star Online. Then again, the PS2 will undoubtedly kick the Japanese DC into a grave. But the PlayStation did that to the Japanese N64 years ago, and it has flourished here. Better still, the Dolphin, which could be every bit as powerful as the PS2, and is going to be cheaper as a pure game machine, is somewhere lurking close behind with the likes of Rare and Mr. Miyamoto attached. So it's anyone's guess at this point. I do feel, though, that with some 150 Dreamcast games announced and Internet support coming in 2000, Sega has definitely pulled off somewhat of a coup. Even with the software hiccup heard round the world, it would take a man of steel to stop this freight train. I know Mario's got a big pipe wrench, but he's not getting any younger, and Sony...well, they're Sony. They don't know the meaning of the words second place. So what's the bottom line? The bottom line is that early screen shots and streaming video are indeed exciting, but can't replace the fun that you can experience right now. This is all just one big vicious circle, and the truth is, if you're into playing games and you can afford the best system when it comes out, you're going to buy it. The really great part is, no matter which one that may be, currently or in any given year to come, you quite literally can't go wrong.

We are going to be inundated with a level of gaming bliss previously unseen or heard, as today's master game makers begin to learn how to mold games that utilize all of the advancements at our disposal.

BPA International Membership Applied for May 11, 1999

MADE IN THE U.S.A.
WESTLAKE VILLAGE, CALIFORNIA

Gamers' Republic
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY:
MILLENNIUM PUBLICATIONS INC.

HDG
HEARST DISTRIBUTION GROUP, INC.

GR

VOL. 2, ISSUE # 6
GAMERS' REPUBLIC
TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE
A MILLENNIUM PROJECT

DONKEY KONG 64 .52

Nintendo's biggest game rollout of 1999, DK 64 marks the monkey's first starring performance on the Nintendo 64. GR gets you ready with a first look and all the early Intel...

SPYRO 2 .44

One of the PlayStation's most charming characters embarks on his second adventure through a magical, beautifully realized fairy-tale world. Will this one play as good as it looks?

WIPEOUT 3 .20

For Psygnosis, the third time is definitely the charm. The next big thing in PlayStation racing is the ultimate in futuristic speed thrills. In addition to reviewing the game, we talk to the men behind the series' inspired music and design. It's all the Wipeout you'll ever need.

INDEX OF GAMES

Know the Difference.

This is Rayman, star of the massive 3D action-adventure, Rayman® 2 The Great Escape. Beware of cheap imitations! Only Rayman can save all. Only he can battle the invaders, ride the rocket, hurl fireballs, fly, surf, ski, climb, slide, and more. A world this troubled needs Rayman. So, beware of imposters!

NINTENDO.64

CD-ROM
WINDOWS 95

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

1.____

A.Rayman

B.a man called Ray

2.____

A.Rayman

B.a man called Ray

1.A; 2.B

frontlines **news**   page **10**   gamers' republic
monthly gaming news   NOV
11/99

frontlines

DC GOOD FOR $97 MILL

With estimations of 45 million in sales during a single day, Sega invited us to a party to celebrate their re-birth to the console market—and what a delivery. Not even Sega could have imagined the actual sales during the first 24-hour period, a staggering $97,904,618.09. Kezuka-san and Peter Moore were on hand to deliver the incredible news and everyone drank like sailors while listening to Bay Area locals, rap posse The Hieroglyphics and Salsa/Ska group Ozomatli, both of which gave awesome performances. We shared drinks around a huge bar that had the Dreamcast brain resting in the center, with industry favorites like our friends at Visual Concepts. Interestingly enough, some EA folks, people from Nintendo (oddly enough) and others attended as well, and all dropped their egos to bask in the return of Sega.

...AND THEN WE DANCED

On September 8, we hit the San Jose Software Etc., soaking in the energy surrounding the launch of the Sega Dreamcast. A very loud electrical storm was brewing outside, but the line still grew as midnight drew closer. Avid gamer and press junkie (as of late) Verne Troyer was on hand as well as Baywatch star Donna D'Errico, both happy to pose with *Gamers' Republic*. During a session with Ready 2 Rumble, Donna spanked Verne with Afro Thunder pretty good. The store was blanketed with Dreamcast systems, peripherals and, most importantly, lots and lots of games! Looks like Sega is well on their way to global dominance. Well, maybe not, but they do have a strong following. All the best to Sega through 2000.

NEVER SKATE DIE: Skateboarding with Neversoft

A few weeks ago I was invited to Joel Jewett's house for some evening skateboarding on his mini-half-pipe while we spoke about the recently finished Tony Hawk's Pro Skater game for the PlayStation. Joel is the President of Neversoft, Neversoft is the developer of the game, and his enthusiasm and lack of fear is admirable. It goes for the rest of the Neversoft guys as well, especially Mick West, who familiarized himself with the ramp in his sandals.

Working on the game has awakened the skater hidden inside them all. And the fancy of being able to skate with the guys caused me to break out my old Santa Monica Airlines Natas board, squeaky bearings and all. It is fair to say that those of us who were there that day suck when compared to Tony, Kareem or Elissa, but we all have a passion to skate, and that's all that matters. Watching Joel carve the ramp on his old banana board made of oak is a perfect example.

Within minutes I could see that Neversoft's dedication and determination stems outward in anything they set out to do. The whole crew was geared up and encouraging those who never stepped on a skateboard to cradle the ramp. Good energy was all around. Scott almost lost his head due to a runaway board, but GR was there on the lookout. Hey, we're expecting some incredible things from them on the 128-bit platforms. Can't let anything that might hinder that happen while we are on the scene.

PERFECT DELAY

At a multi-day Nintendo Gamers Summit in Seattle, to preview Donkey Kong 64 and other NOA winter titles, Peter Main, Nintendo's executive vice president of sales and marketing announced, among other things, that Perfect Dark would be delayed until April 2000. The follow-up to GoldenEye 007, PD was slated for release this December but, as Main stated, "We had a major set of meetings with NCL, Miyamoto's group, NOA and, more importantly, the Rare group. And Rare said if they had another 60 to 90 days, there were significant enhancements that they could include in the game."

From a marketing standpoint, it makes perfect sense for NOA to hold-off releasing the title: there are already two multi-million selling Rare/NOA games being released in the same time frame; secondly, GE007 is still a massive cash cow for the company. For nearly two years straight, GE007 has been and still is listed as one of the top 10 console games.

SEVEN UP2PS2

7 Studios is a brand-new developer, but they've got talent to spare, including many veterans of Westwood's Command & Conquer. As befits their experience, they're tackling a tough project: a strategy title, designed from its inception for the Playstation 2, entitled Legion. It takes place in the medieval-fantasy world of King Arthur, blending role-playing, real-time strategy, and action gameplay. Players take on the role of the legendary monarch to travel on quests, become a renowned knight of the Round Table, and defeat the armies of Morgan le Fay's...well, just call them the Good People. Legion has been in development for six months, and will be published by Midway.

PS2: HERE COMES THE 800 POUND GORILLA

The other shoe dropped on September 13. In a meeting for shareholders and selected press, SCEI announced the final details on the looks, capabilities, price, and release of the PlayStation 2. It's got a dark, sleek look, rather like a DVD player—fitting, since in addition to games, it will play DVD movies.

The console will hit the Japanese market on March 4, 2000, at a price of ¥39,800 (U.S. $368). The U.S. release will follow in the fall. Accompanying the console is a new all-analog Dual Shock, an 8 meg memory card, and a suprising list of in-development titles, ranging from Bio Hazard to a new Gradius. The PS2 comes at a stiff price, but Sony expects to sell an even million units at launch.

- Suggested Retail Price in Japan 39,800 Yen ($370)
- Available in Japan: March 4th, 2000
- Accessories included: Dual Shock 2 analog controller, high capacity 8MB memory card, demo disc, AV multi cable and an AC power cord.
- Dimensions: 301mm (W) X 178mm (D) X 78mm (D) 12" x 7" x 3"
- Weight: 2.1Kg(4lbs 10oz)
- Media: CD-ROM, DVD-ROM
- Formats supported: PlayStation 2 DVD-ROM, PSX CD-ROM, Audio CD, DVD-Video
- Interfaces: Controller port (2), Memory Card slot (2), AV Multicable output (1), Optical digital output (1), USB port (2), i.Link (IEEE1394) (1), Type III PCMCIA card slot (1).

Tekken Tag Tournament

Among the games unveiled with the PS2 prior to the Tokyo Game Show was this stunner, sporting a tune-up job even more impressive than Soul Calibur's. First-hand impressions liken the game to Namco's CG cinemas on the Playstation; note the smooth textures on Jin's skin, and the depth and detail of the background behind him. Tekken 3's spot-on gameplay, married to graphics of this quality, should ensure Namco's continued dominance of the 3D fighting genre in the next generation.

SF EX

Tekken Tag will have a little competition waiting for it. Arika is preparing a third game in their three-dimensional Street Fighter EX series for the Playstation 2, featuring super-clean renditions of the classic characters and the tag-team gameplay that seems to be all the rage these days. Dhalsim's limbs look very realistic, which is actually a bit on the creepy side...

Gran Turismo 2000

With GT2 ready to dominate racing on the PS this winter, goodness knows what the series will be like on the PS2. GT2000 is coming, though. Sony's even released shots of the box, which looks just like a DVD movie package. One wonders how many cars exist that Sony hasn't yet licensed, though.

monthly gaming news>>

GR'S APOCALYPTIC DINNER WITH AGENT S

After our coverage of Sega's Dreamcast launch at 12:01 a.m. in San Jose, we bumped into the girl starring in the "Apocalypse" commercial, Agent S. She was about to kick our butts, but when we went to hide behind our Gamers' Republic magazine, she snatched the thing away from us and asked if we were writers for it. We proudly said yes and she complimented us on a fine mag. That instance of fate led to this interview and late-night dining.

GR: Hello Agent.. sorry...Angela. It is a privilege to meet you, let alone share this time for an interview. Hope you are doing well.
Angela: I am, thank you. Thanks for your interests.
GR: Heck yeah. At this moment we are the envy of many people, trust us. So how did you get involved with the Sega campaign?
Angela: I heard of auditions going on in Vancouver. They were looking for someone with martial arts background, which I have.
GR: Really. You know there is something very attractive about a woman that can kick a guy's ass. So, is martial arts study a hobby of yours?
Angela: [Clinching fist] Yeah. I basically grew up on martial arts. Well, my whole family is in Judo.

GR: (Looking over shoulder.) Uh huh.
Angela: My dad taught me for a while when I was younger, and I am now currently studying a couple other styles of martial arts on my own.
GR: Um...I was kidding earlier about the ass-kicking thing.
Angela: [Cracks devilish smile.]
GR: Really I was.
Angela: Go on.
GR: So, have you done any previous modeling or acting?
Angela: Right now I am trying everything. I am eager to be a part of the stunt community in Canada.
GR: Are you a native of Canada?
Angela: Yep. I was born and raised in Canada in a small town north of Vancouver, and I moved to Vancouver about three years ago.
GR: How long ago did you become a part of the campaign?
Angela: Back in June they held auditions and I was contacted shortly after that. The following weekend we shot the commercials.

GR: You have really pretty eyes.
Angela: ...
GR: Ouch! Hey.
Angela:　What did you say?
GR: You have very powerful arms.
Angela: Thank you.
GR: (Couching) So had you known about Sega before joining the campaign?
Angela: Oh yeah, of course.
GR: Are you a gamer?
Angela: Yeah, when I was younger I had the Commodore 64, Atari, and, when Sega first came out with the it, the Master system.
GR: Very cool.
Angela: But since school I kinda' left all of the gaming stuff behind. Now with Dreamcast I am really excited to start playing again.
GR: School huh. Wow, the only thing more attractive than a girl that can kick your ass is a girl that is smarter than you are. Wait... did I just say that out loud?
Angela: [Familiar look. Like the one right before I was assaulted.] Try again.
GR: What are you studying?
Angela: I am studying Business right now and am applying for the Masters programs next year.
GR: That is awesome. For my own safety though, we better cut this interview before my quick brain-to-mouth processing lands me at the local General Hospital.
Angela: Are you sure?
GR: Well, after tonight I have learned to appreciate the ability to walk and breathe without leaning on something for support. Thank you for your time, but I need to sit down.
Angela: [Laughing] When can we meet again?

:: SONIC HAS A NEW
LIGHT SPEED DASH.. .: .: .:

SONIC ADVENTURE | Sega Dreamcast

IT'S THINKING

:: TOO BAD YOUR LAME-ASS
REFLEXES ARE THE SAME

Yuji Naka's warp speed 3D adventure through 40 expansive worlds of bonus rounds and minigames where
6 playable characters snowboard. play pinball. fly and even talk. moving 360° never felt so good. .: sega.com

SONIC
ADVENTURE

frontlines **news** page 14
gamers' republic
monthly gaming news
NOV
11/99

MONKEYING AROUND AT NINTENDO...

The recent Nintendo Gamers Summit (that's where we go to them so that they don't have to send us games) began with a six-hour gameplay session with a nearly finished version of DK64. Designed by the same team at Rare that brought us the three legendary SNES DKC games, this amazing new installment has depth to burn with the best of everything the DKC universes included. There's much to do in the game, including finding and playing a perfect rendition of the classic Nintendo arcade game Donkey Kong!

On the second day, Peter Main unveiled a new transparent green N64 unit and controller with a yellow-colored DK64 cartridge. The bundle package will be available on November 22 for $129...but it doesn't glow in the dark. Next, Main announced the new Game Boy Color game, Pokemon Card—the Wizards of the Coast card game in electronic form, slated for release next February—and touched upon plans for a massive Pokémon/Burger King promotion at the end of this year, as well as the marketing plans for DK64, which include a movie trailer this winter. Main says that DK64 will be bigger than Zelda 64 "because of its breadth of appeal it has an 85 percent awareness amongst the N64 community. We think that between Canada and the U.S. combined, we'll sell four million pieces of DK64 this holiday season."

In response to questions about the recently announced Game Boy Advance system, Main stated, "I don't want to spend a lot of time on Game Boy Advance, but it does a lot of interesting things. It's a dynamite product—a 32-bit machine with a much better screen. It's the next hardware platform NCL has announced. We'll be ready prior to the holiday season of next year. Stay tuned."

After Main's presentation, the Nintendo Software Technology group showed their Ridge Racer 64 game, and Henry Sterchi of the NOA TreeHouse group showed NBA Courtside 2 and Excitebike 64—both being developed by Left Field Productions. Of the three titles, Excitebike 64 was the most impressive, showcasing tight physics models and a track editor with limitless possibilities. Ridge Racer 64 combines elements of the original Ridge Racer, as well as Ridge Racer Revolution. It looks great, but still needs tweaking with the control. The NBAC2 game is a vast improvement over the original game released last year, and includes an exciting arcade mode.

NEED AN ADVANCE?

Nintendo and Konami have formed a joint venture called Mobile 21. The new company will concentrate on developing the next-generation Game Boy unit, Gameboy Advance, and likely work on connecting it to the next generation 256-bit Nintendo console. In addition, they plan to add cellular phone connectivity to not only allow for net-based gameplay, but perhaps to give the GBA more PDA-style applications. Like the GBC before it, the Advance will be backward-compatible with older GB software cartridges, but of course titles developed specifically for the new hardware will not run on older models. We just want to know about the games... Is it a 2D machine? Will there be a new Castlevania? We don't care if it washes dishes, give us 32-bit 2D games! Just check out these stats:

- CPU: Memory-embedded 32-bit RISC CPU (CPU core design by ARM)
- LCD: Reflective TFT Color LCD
- Display Size: 40.8mm x 61.2mm
- Resolution: 240 x 160 pixels
- Maximum colors to be displayed simultaneously: 65,000
- Size: Approximately Height 80mm / Width 135mm / Depth 25mm
- Weight: Approximately 140g
- Power Supply: 2 AA Alkaline batteries
- Battery life: 20 hours continuous play
- Launch date: August 2000 in Japan, Christmas 2000 in North America and Europe
- Suggested Retail Price: To be announced

LARA CROFT=TOP COW

That is, Lara Croft is back with Top Cow Studios, starring in a new comic series starting in November. Dan Jurgens, writer of *Superman*, will handle the scripting duties, with Andy Park and Jon Sibal penciling and inking, respectively. November's issue one will feature four different covers by four top comic artists, plus a limited-edition holo-foil cover. More info can be had on the Top Cow web site at www.topcow.com.

UM JAMMER LAMMY ROCKS THE BIG APPLE...

Gamers Republic was invited to join Sony in New York to celebrate the launch of their Um Jammer Lammy. The event was held at the world-famous Roxy and featured a live musical performance by MilkCan. Special guests on hand were Masaya Matsuura, creator of Parappa the Rapper and Um Jammer Lammy, and Rodney Alan Greenblat, artist for both titles. In the middle of the set, Matsuura and Greenblat joined MilkCan on stage to play a little one-on-one while being broadcast to the audience over a large video monitor. It was groovy man! But Paul and Dave were no shows.

database

YOUR NUMBER ONE SOURCE FOR TOP SELLING CONSOLE AND COMPUTER GAME STATISTICS

top ten selling *playstation* titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD AUGUST 1999

1. WWF ATTITUDE	ACCLAIM	6. LEGACY OF KAIN: SR	EIDOS
2. DRIVER	GT INTERACTIVE	7. FINAL FANTASY VII	SONY
3. MADDEN NFL 2000	EA	8. GRAN TURISMO	SONY
4. NCAA FOOTBALL 2000	EA	9. SPYRO THE DRAGON	SONY
5. NFL GAMEDAY 2000	989	10. NEED FOR SPEED III	EA

top ten selling *nintendo64* titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD AUGUST 1999

1. POKÉMON SNAP	NINTENDO	6. MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS	TAKE 2
2. MARIO GOLF	NINTENDO	7. SW EPISODE 1: RACER	LUCASARTS
3. SUPER SMASH BROTHERS	NINTENDO	8. MARIO PARTY	NINTENDO
4. RUGRATS: Scavenger Hunt	THQ	9. MARIO KART 64	NINTENDO
5. GOLDENEYE 007	NINTENDO	10. ZELDA: OoT	NINTENDO

PIKACHU

top ten selling *saturn* titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD AUGUST 1999

1. FIGHTING VIPERS	SEGA	6. NHL ALL-STAR HOCKEY '98	SEGA
2. NHL '97	EA	7. NBA LIVE '98	EA
3. SONIC R	SEGA	8. MADDEN '97	EA
4. STREET FIGHTER the movie	ACCLAIM	9. FIFA SOCCER '96	EA
5. NFL '97	EA	10. GRID RUNNER	VIRGIN

top ten selling *pc* titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD JULY 1999

1. ROLLER COASTER TYCOON	HASBRO INT.	6. SIM CITY 3000	MAXIS
2. RAINBOW 6 Gold Pack	RED STORM	7. TOTAL ANNIHILATION: Kingdoms	CAVEDOG
3. CABELA'S Big Game Hunter 2	HEADGAMES	8. TOMB RAIDER	EIDOS
4. LEGO ISLAND	MINDSCAPE	9. STAR WARS EP. 1 TPM	LUCASARTS
5. NEED FOR SPEED III	EA	10. HALF-LIFE	SIERRA

top ten *overall console*

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD AUGUST 1999

1. WWF ATTITUDE-PS	ACCLAIM	6. DRIVER-PS	GT INTERACTIVE
2. POKÉMON SNAP-N64	NINTENDO	7. MADDEN NFL 2000-PS	EA
3. POKÉMON PINBALL-GBC	NINTENDO	8. NCAA FOOTBALL 2000-PS	EA
4. POKÉMON BLUE-GBC	NINTENDO	9. MARIO GOLF-N64	NINTENDO
5. POKÉMON RED-GBC	NINTENDO	10. NFL GAMEDAY 2000-PS	989

world republic top ten games

japan

1. DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION
   2nd Remix   PS
2. MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM Side
   Story 0079   DC
3. EVERYBODY'S GOLF 2   PS
4. FIFA 99   PS
5. MOBILE BATTLESHIP Campion
   Nadeisco the Mission   DC

6. ACCOMPANIMENT ANYWHERE PS
7. SD GUNDAM G Generation Zero
                                 PS
8. YUGIOH II: DDS   GB
9. MARIO GOLF GB   GB
10. JIKKYOU Powerful Pro Base-
    BALL '99   PS
* FROM AUG 23 ~ AUG 29 1999

united kingdom

1. DRIVER   PS
2. SYPHON FILTER   PS
3. SILENT HILL   PS
4. GRAN TURISMO: Platinum   PS
5. COLIN McRAE RALLY: Platinum PS

6. SW EPISODE 1: Racer   N64/PC
7. ABE'S EXODDUS   PS/PC
8. CRASH BCOOT 2: Platinum PS/PC
9. V-RALLY 2   PS/PC
10. CRASH BCOOT 2: Platinum N64
   *WEEK OF 8/6/99

gamers' republic top ten games

* BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 14, 1999

d. halverson

1. RAYMAN 2   N64
2. SHADOWMAN   N64
3. SLAVE ZERO   DC
4. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
5. BANGAIO   import   N64
6. NFL 2K   DC
7. SOUL FIGHTER   DC
8. SILHOUETTE MIRAGE   PS
9. CASTLEVANIA SotN   SS
10. TRICK STYLE   DC

b. siechter

1. LEGACY OF KAIN: SR   PS
2. SILHOUETTE MIRAGE   PS
3. CRASH TEAM RACING   PS
4. SPYRO 2   PS
5. WIPEOUT 3   PS
6. MARIO KART 64   N64
7. SUIKODEN 2   PS
8. FF COLLECTION   PS
9. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
10. BANGAIO   import   N64

m. hobbs

1. WIPEOUT 3   PS
2. MAKAIMURA   WONDERSWAN
3. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
4. CRASH TEAM RACING   PS
5. FINAL FANTASY VIII   PS
6. SAMURAI SHODOWN 2   NGPC
7. BANGAIO   import   N64
8. SPYRO 2   PS
9. QUAKE 3 ARENA   MAC
10. PAC MAN   NGPC

t. stratton

1. NFL 2K   DC
2. GRAN TURISMO   PS
3. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER   PS
4. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
5. WORLD SERIES BASEBALL   SS
6. YU YU HAKUSHO   MD
7. RISKY WOODS   SG
8. LEGACY OF KAIN: SR   PS
9. SONIC ADVENTURE   DC
10. POWER DRIFT   ARCADE

pooch

1. DONKEY KONG 64   N64
2. JET FORCE GEMINI   N64
3. WHEEL OF TIME   PC
4. MARIO GOLF   N64
5. T HAWK'S PRO SKATER   PS
6. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
7. JUGGERNAUT   PS
8. GOLDENEYE 007   N64
9. HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2   DC
10. DONKEY KONG '94   GB

e. sear

1. CRASH TEAM RACING   PS
2. DONKEY KONG LAND 2   GB
3. WIPEOUT 3   PS
4. DONKEY KONG LAND 3   GB
5. SPYRO 2   PS
6. SUPER MARIO BROS DX   GBC
7. QUAKE 2   PC
8. GRAN TURISMO   PS
9. TOMB RAIDER 4   PS
10. BANJO/KAZOOIE   N64

r. elmquist

1. LEGACY OF KAIN: SR   PS
2. FINAL FANTASY VIII   PS
3. SHADOWMAN   N64
4. DRIVER   PS
5. HYDRO THUNDER   DC
6. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
7. TARZAN   PS
8. READY 2 RUMBLE   DC
9. ACE COMBAT 3   PS
10. NFL 2K   DC

d. smith

1. FINAL FANTASY VIII   PS
2. BANGAIO   import   N64
3. SOUL CALIBUR   DC
4. GUITAR FREAKS   PS
5. DANCE DANCE REV   ARCADE
6. JET FORCE GEMINI   N64
7. TOP SKATER   ARCADE
8. CRAZY TAXI   ARCADE
9. GRANDIA   PS
10. WWF Wrestlemania 2000   N64

EMULATORS:
What it Takes to Turn Your PC into a Console

Emulators are programs that allow one kind of system to run games and other software from some other (normally incompatible) system. They've been around for a long time in one form or another, and the most common kind allows a computer to play games from some console. Emulators are around for everything from the NES to the N64 and PlayStation, but their legality has often been called into question. While I won't dwell on this aspect of them, a few comments might not be amiss. The emulators companies are least fond of, and understandably so, are those which require pirated software to function. For instance, any pure software emulator for a cartridge-based system has to rely on illegal copies, since computers have no way of reading data off of cartridges. Instead, the data from the cartridges is copied onto the internet, to be downloaded to the computer. However, emulators often don't come out until many years after a console is dead, when the company in question no longer has a particularly strong interest in preventing piracy, so these emulators only tend to run into strong opposition in the rare case that they're made for current systems (as with UltraHLE for the N64). Not to say that other emulators don't have their legal problems; bleem!, a PC-based PlayStation emulator designed to run off of regular PlayStation CDs has encountered very strong (but thus far ineffective) legal opposition from Sony, despite the fact that there's no clear reason why Sony would not want the product to exist; after all, Sony makes its profit on the software, not the hardware.

The most common question asked about emulators, and the question most frustrating to emulator very much like the difference between trying to complete a long series of short tasks from a list, and trying to complete the same tasks from a list in a language you don't understand, having to go through a translator to find out what you're supposed to be doing. All of this should start to explain why a game system emulator running on a PC will require a pretty powerful processor.

Of course, all of this assumes a perfectly programmed emulator as a starting point. Actually programming the emulator is something of a Herculean task, particularly, as is often the case, when you don't have a detailed set of system designs to work off of. Here, you have to work backwards, looking at the data in the games, and what it causes the system to do, to try to figure out what all the different instructions are, and how they are supposed to work. Then, you have to figure out how to achieve the same effect on the PC. This part may well be fairly simple for something like an addition instruction, but when you have to handle specialized instructions like those found in a graphics processor, it's a harder project. Unfortunately, translating individual instructions is just the beginning. Then you have to have a system to keep track of all the data in memory, so that when the game wants to use data that would be in a certain place in the PlayStation's memory, your emulator will know where to find it in the PC's memory. There's also the issue of timing: when you

You can even run systems like NES, Game Boy, and even the older Atari systems with freeware and shareware emulators. Here, a Windows-based NES emulator working through Super Mario Bros DX and Castlevania.

gramming an emulator is a task fit only for the most dedicated and talented programmers.

Unsurprisingly, this tends to translate into some difficulties for the end user as well. The biggest one is that emulators tend to have a lot of compatibility problems, which tend to get worse and worse as the processors being emulated get more and more complicated. These are often due to problems that arise when a game uses an obscure piece of code somewhere; since emulators are designed backwards, if a game uses an instruction that was never used by the games that the emulator was built around, that instruction won't be supported, and will likely create bugs. Time synchronization can also create problems, since there are so many different ways of doing it, and it is such a challenge to keep it working when going from multiple dedicated processors to a single multitasking processor. This means that an emulator is almost always an ongoing project. Often, the emulator is built up over time by taking a close look at the most popular games that are having compatibility problems, figuring out exactly what is different about those games, and fixing the problem, which may well help a number of other games become compatible in the process. For instance, bleem! currently advertises
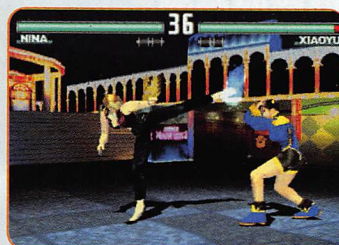
TECHFRONT
BY BRIAN OSSERMAN

tors, and the question most frustrating to emulator programmers is, "I have a Pentium with 133 MHz, and the PlayStation's CPU is only 33 MHz; why can't my computer run PlayStation games well?" There are several answers to this, probably the most important being that most consoles these days actually use several processors running in parallel, so that even if each of them is considerably slower, a single processor will have to do a lot of work to keep up with all of them at once. The next issue is that console processors are designed with games in mind, so they can often do tasks which are important to games (like drawing polygons or doing 3D calculations) considerably faster than a general-purpose processor like the Pentium (this point actually falls under the broader category of "it's misleading to try to compare MHz numbers for different processors," but in this case it almost always works against the PC CPU). Lastly, when a game is being run by the system it is supposed to run on, that system gets the instructions, and does them, one by one. With an emulator, it has to read the instructions, translate them to appropriate instructions for the PC, and then do those. It's have one processor of an unknown speed trying to run a game, it can't just try to copy all the different processors as fast as it can, it has to make sure that it's not going too quickly. Since console games are designed for a fixed-speed system, they can use all sorts of tricks to regulate timing, and your system has to be able to mimic several processors running at once accurately enough that these tricks will still work, and the game speed won't be thrown off. All in all, pro-

compatibility with hundreds of PlayStation titles, including big-name titles like Gran Turismo, Tekken 3, and Final Fantasy VII, but there are even more out there that aren't yet compatible. Problems include memory card saving and loading, as well as the sort of timing synchronization problems mentioned

On the left, a standard PS screen. But at the lower left, notice the difference running bleem! in software mode, and then look at the same thing running through a 3D-accelerated video card. Amazing! Keep in mind, however, that these are all static images; in real life, it's still all about the gameplay.

INTRODUCING THE NEWEST WAY TO PLAY BASKETBALL

Camera angles that put you in the action

Tons of different dunks

Addictive gameplay that's fast and fun

SPORTS GAMES FOR SPORTS FANS.™

foxsports.com
log on for more info, screenshots and downloads

nba.com

Also on Windows® 95/98 CD-ROM

FOX SPORTS INTERACTIVE™

wipEout 3

Wipeout enters the 21st century riding a crest of technical advancement...
Psygnosis' Leeds Studio delivers the fastest PlayStation racer of all time

When the first Wipeout launched in 1995, it was something of a mini-revelation, the first sign of a PlayStation-driven renaissance at Psygnosis. Always known for their pretty but frankly empty games, Psygnosis' premier PlayStation effort represented the first time they'd ever gotten the complete graphics and gameplay package working together in a single, glorious display. Playing Wipeout was like entering another world, a dark and somber meditation on futuristic combat racing the likes of which no one had ever experienced before. With its lavish attention to detail, perfect electronic soundtrack and supremely realized concept, Psygnosis created one of the most compelling racing environments ever conceived. But for all its pleasure, the original Wipeout doled out almost equal parts pain for many gamers, as its learning curve could be deeply intimidating. This wasn't totally out of character, for any revolutionary concept brings with it a whole new set of skills that needs to be learned, and for those that persevered, Wipeout became an immensely rewarding experience. The rest would have to wait for the sequel, Wipeout XL, as it was here that the series truly went main-
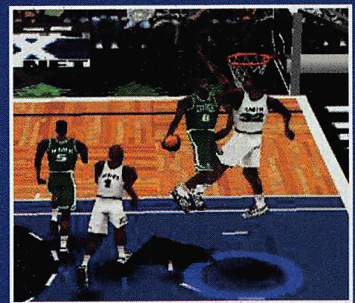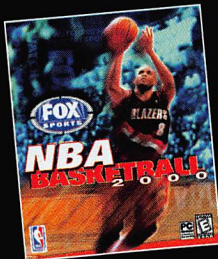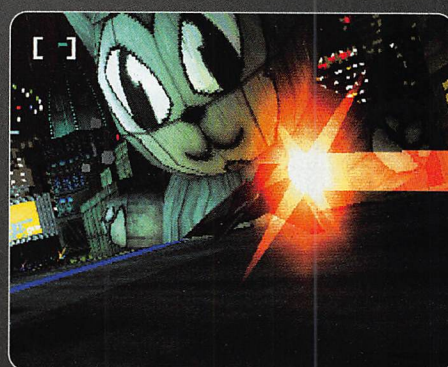
stream. This was a brighter, more accessible game with a less severe level of difficulty. For many, XL struck the perfect balance between challenge and playability.

The rather daunting task of following XL fell into the lap of Psygnosis' Leeds Studio team, charged with handling the series for the first time. Though lead artist Nicky Westcott worked on this game's predecessors, the rest of the development staff are all new to Wipeout—and what an eye-opening first effort this is, carrying on Psygnosis' flagship series with style, confidence, and restraint. They haven't rewritten the book on Wipeout, just nudged it impressively forward to the current state of the art, while at the same time crafting a game that is refreshingly closer in difficulty and overall tone to the groundbreaking original.

The first thing that strikes one about Wipeout 3 is just how far PlayStation graphics have come in the last couple of years, or more precisely, how far this new team has been able to push the system. Running in the PlayStation's high-resolution mode, WO3 has a solid and detailed look that is miles ahead of the now rather garish visuals in XL. The level of graphics achieved here is second only to Namco's system-defying R4, and in some instances, it surpasses even that. Clipping is virtually non-existent, and the speeds that can be reached in this game are positively mind-numbing. But beyond the brute force of this new engine are the loving design touches put in to thrill you each time you circle the courses. The awe-inspiring video screen that wraps around the outside of this right-hander in the Manortop circuit takes my breath away every time, and the snow-like fall of flowers gently drifting though the P-Mar Project course is a beautiful touch. New spotlighting routines create pockets of color and shadow that are simply thrilling to fly through and

F7200-racing league

0:49.30

0:49 30

167.60
70.60

there are the same stomach-dropping dips and blind corners that have become the series' trademark. And, of course, the work of Designers Republic is all over this game, and that perfect synergy between concept and imagery that so enthralled everyone in the first game carries on here stronger than ever.

But the ultimate success of any Wipeout game hinges on its ability to match its intense visuals with equally intense gameplay, and this third outing does it better than any other. It certainly didn't begin this way, however, as the beginner Vector class was an absolute cake walk, and I got the sinking feeling that the development team had lost its nerve and delivered an easy game. But as I worked my way up through the class-

es, the massive increase in speed suddenly revealed the true nature of Wipeout 3 and its new courses; these are highly technical circuits, and learning to drive cleanly and quickly enough to win is a daunting challenge not for the faint of heart. You never get a breather in these new tracks: it's tight turn after tight turn and the experience feels far more frantic and frenetic than that of Wipeout XL. But by the same token, there's huge satisfaction to be had in taking a seemingly impossible corner combination in one great gulp, and completing the Phantom class is a bigger thrill here than in any other Wipeout. This is a wonderfully demanding game to play well, one that requires extreme concentration and discipline, and being Wipeout, it shouldn't be any other way. If it were up to me, however, there would be just a few more high-speed corners in the game, ones where you really get to feel the analog working. Sometimes, the relentless nature of the courses can be a little too much, and I

167.60
70.60

ZS-1
●●● 1.09'99

Wipeout 3's highly technical circuits create an experience that is far more frantic than XL. The series makes a welcome return to the difficulty and intensity of the original

longed for the sensation of holding a steady turn at impossible speeds. Still, this is but a minor complaint. And for those fearing a game that is too difficult, the linear nature of the speed increases throughout the classes and the number of entertaining and diverting challenge modes ensures a fairly steady and manageable learning curve.

As expected in a sequel, a number of additions have been made to the Wipeout formula, most notably a two-player split screen mode and a selection of new weapons and defensive pick-ups. For instance, there's the force wall, an energy field that can be flung forward, erecting a narrow, impenetrable wall—great for use in tight corners and straights. This joins a new cloaking item that renders you invisible to opponents and a reflector that sends competitors' attacks back to their source. And the item pads have undergone a tweak as they are now differentiated between containing offensive and defensive pick-ups, allowing for a bit of strategy in item gathering. Also new is a hyperthrust that works a lot like the boost found in F-Zero X, wherein your ship's ener-

gy is drained as you use it to unleash an extra burst of speed. But to be honest, this is a feature which gets less and less use as you move up through the classes, because as the ultimate speed of your craft raises, the ability to use the hyperthrust in any meaningful way drops. And as for the two-player split screen, it's a good one, remaining very playable and holding a respectable frame rate and level of detail, suffering only in an increased amount of pop-up. Best of all, you can even race through the tournament mode in two-player.

Wipeout has always been one of my favorite series, and it's a testament to the strength of the original concept that each subsequent game has been but an evolution while at the same time feeling totally revolutionary compared with everything else. This latest Wipeout is as fresh and significant as the original was in 1995, and there's still nothing like it; no other combat racer demands so much from the player. This is even more refreshing when the general trend seems to run towards sequels that are easier and less intimidating than their precursors. Wipeout 3 is the most difficult and intense racing game I've played this year and a powerful effort from Psygnosis' Leeds Studio. ⁂

| ■ THE FASTEST, BEST-LOOKING WIPEOUT EVER | ■ ANOTHER PERFECT SYNERGY BETWEEN MUSIC AND IMAGERY |
| ■ NEW SPLIT-SCREEN BRINGS EASY TWO-PLAYER COMPETITION | ■ DENSE TURN COUNT MAY PROVE TOO MUCH FOR SOME |

REPUBLIC SAYS... PSYGNOSIS' LEEDS STUDIO HAVE OUTDONE THEMSELVES WITH THIS LATEST WIPEOUT. IT'S FAST, CLEAN, AND INCREDIBLY TOUGH IN THE HIGHER CLASSES.

A-

C7200-racing league

0:49.30

0:49 30   167.60
70.60

music to race by
an interview with
wipeout 3 music director sasha

Though the Wipeout 3 soundtrack features a diverse group of contributing artists including Orbital, Underworld, The Chemical Brothers, Propellerheads, Paul Van Dyk, and MKL, it was progressive DJ Sasha who oversaw the entire sonic landscape in addition to contributing five original tracks to the game. GR music editor Mike Griffin put Sasha in the hot seat. Their exchange follows...

Gamers' Republic: When did you first realize that you could make a career out of music?
Sasha: After DJing for two years. I went from owing money to suddenly having a career. It was probably when I started being asked to do remixes, around '93.

GR: Have you always been into sound production, even prior to becoming a DJ?
S: No, not really. After I was asked to do remixes, it led me into the studio.

GR: Where were your first few gigs and what kind of sound were you into at the time?
S: Manchester, '89—illegal parties in Blackpool and Blackburn around '88/'89. It was a bit of everything then— big records, big tunes, anthems—very influenced by Manchester's Hacienda club.

GR: Do you prefer your time in the studio, or do you prefer being on the road doing shows?
S: I like both. When I've finished a track, I can't wait to hear it out in a club.

GR: Have you considered creating your own full album release? Are you ready for it?
S: Yes. I've been working with a guy called Charlie May on the Wipeout project and the Expander EP. We're going to start work on an album after my U.S. dates this summer.

GR: What kind of sound do you find yourself pursuing lately? Has it changed much in recent years?
S: The Wipeout project is full on banging sounds, but when I do an album it will probably be lush, minimal sounds with singers, instrumentals, etc.

GR: Do you enjoy spinning in U.S. clubs like NY's Twilo, or do you prefer the traditional venues in the UK?
S: The U.S. is great. There's an amazing energy and freshness there. Sometimes people are segregated into different music styles and can be jaded in the U.K., but in the U.S. there seems to be a better cross section of people in clubs.

GR: Do you think the progressive house sound is still firmly rooted in the U.K., or has it spread to the U.S.?
S: The mainstream club sound in the U.K. is banging, trancey and cheesy house, whereas the U.S. is much deeper stuff.

GR: In terms of the studio equipment you use right now, what are some of your preferred tools, computers, programs, etc?
S: I created the Wipeout music on the MPC3000 sampler/drum machine. I Mixed the tracks down on to DAT, then dumped 11- or 12-minute pieces on to Protools and messed around with it until we had what we wanted.

GR: Are you a fan of games in general, and if so, what are some of your favorites?
S: I'm not a massive game player. I had an Atari console and a Commodore 64 as a kid and played games like Space Invaders and Pac Man. More recently I've played Virtua Fighter. I tend to play games for as long as they keep my attention and then I move on to something else. Most games are pretty poor, though. It was Wipeout's style and musical heritage that got me interested.

GR: Do you think the future of game music is destined to be redbook audio, or do you think there's some potential for interactive music using the advanced sound chips in the newer systems like Sega Dreamcast and PlayStation 2?
S: There were lots of ideas I had for the music and sounds in Wipeout 3 that I was told were not yet possible. Things like different mixes and sounds being triggered by events in the game.

GR: Have you played the original Wipeout games? What do you consider their defining characteristics to be when compared to other racing titles?
S: Yes. I really liked the look of both previous Wipeout games. The whole Designers Republic style and the series' great musical heritage make it stand out from other games.

GR: While preparing this soundtrack, how many original songs did you create? Were these tracks created exclusively with Wipeout 3 in mind?
S: I created five original tracks for the game. Each track is named after one of the teams in the game—Auricom, Goteki 45, Feisar, Icaras and Pirhana—and then one additional track is taken from the Expander EP that Deconstruction is releasing later this year.

GR: Did you have access to the game while creating and assembling these tracks, and if so, do you think it's necessary for game music producers to always see/play the game while creating soundtracks, much like film sound producers do for movies?
S: Yes, it was very important to be able to see footage of the game whilst I was putting the music together. I loved the challenge of working on a project that was more like scoring a film than writing an album.

wipeout newcomers
an interview with
psygnosis' leeds studio

For the third entry in their near-classic Wipeout series, Psygnosis handed the development over to the Leeds Studio internal development team in an effort to bring a fresh perspective to the game. Thankfully, it wasn't too fresh a take, as this new team has delivered a game that is unmistakably and brilliantly Wipeout. We talked with Alan Raistrick of the Leeds Studio Wipeout team to see how they went about accomplishing this none-too-easy goal, along with their other accomplishments in crafting this latest entry in Psygnosis' most successful internally developed series.

GAMERS' REPUBLIC: COULD YOU BEGIN BY GIVING US SOME BACK-GROUND ON THE WIPEOUT TEAM AT LEEDS STUDIO?
Alan Raistrick: The team has a broad cross section of experience, with members having worked on in excess of 20 different titles between them, including our own Retro Force and Global Domination and the hugely successful Worms, Theme Hospital and Alien Trilogy. Only one team member, Lead Artist Nicky Westcott, has worked on previous Wipeout titles. The combination of her experience and new blood for this version has proved to be ideal.

GR: SINCE THIS TEAM IS MOSTLY NEW TO THE SERIES, WHAT WERE THE INITIAL DESIGN STEPS TAKEN TOWARDS RETAINING THE ESSENCE OF WIPEOUT?
AR: It was essential to specify the direction and focus of this version very early on, both to preserve the Wipeout brand and also to push the boundaries of technology as far as possible in the amount of time we had available. We first looked at all of the features in the previous two versions and considered what they meant to the brand. We then discussed the new features that we thought essential, and then all of those options that we could choose to add. The resulting, fairly precise design was pretty much spot-on, evolving features and adding subtle strategic gameplay touches rather than making radical change.

GR: WHAT WERE YOUR MAIN GOALS IN CREATING WIPEOUT 3?
AR: To stay true to the Wipeout experience. To avoid unnecessary excess whilst still pushing all areas to their limit. To create a look that is unparalleled in its clarity, detail and graphical smoothness, even at break-neck speeds. To enhance the gameplay, making it more strategic and a better racing experience. To create the best sounding, best looking and best playing racer on the PlayStation. To reach the vastly increased PlayStation audience whilst retaining the die-hard Wipeout player.

GR: DO YOU FEEL YOU'VE MET THOSE GOALS?
AR: Yes, and more. In the final product we have achieved more than we hoped. The experience of the team enabled difficult areas to be addressed early and allowed us time to squeeze in almost everything on our initial wish list of items.

GR: WAS THERE EVER A DESIRE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO TAKE THE SERIES IN A RADICALLY NEW DIRECTION?
AR: No. Evolution, rather than revolution, has been the philosophy throughout.

GR: IS IT AN EASIER OR MORE DIFFICULT TASK CONTINUING A SERIES AS OPPOSED TO MAKING AN ORIGINAL GAME?
AR: We knew that the Wipeout formula worked, and this gives an edge over developing an original game in terms of focus and understanding of what is needed. However, it is all too easy to lose the essence of the brand and digress too much. There were many options that we could have added to the game "just because we can" or "because other games do it," but we were very conscious of avoiding features that were not Wipeout. Furthermore, we were constrained in some areas by technology that is so fundamental to Wipeout that it could not be changed. So the answer is that both original and sequel games have advantages and difficulties during development.

GR: FROM A VISUAL STANDPOINT, WHAT WAS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE IN DESIGNING THE OVERALL LOOK OF WIPEOUT 3?
AR: Progressing from the sometimes garish neons and the often cluttered trackside scenery of XL was a major goal. The artists wanted a cleaner, crisper look with more subtle coloration and detail. Hi-res was a key factor in achieving this. We have significantly reduced pop-up and added greatly to what is going on in the Wipeout world. Turn the checkpoints off and take a low-speed trip around the circuits to see what I mean.

GR: HOW MUCH INPUT DID DESIGNERS REPUBLIC HAVE ON THE LOOK OF THE GAME BEYOND THE OBVIOUS GRAPHIC DESIGN IMAGES? WAS THERE INPUT FROM THEM IN SHIP DESIGN, OVERALL COLOR PALETTE, ETC?
AR: We wanted to involve DR more thoroughly than in previous versions. They were involved in logo design, billboards and weapon icons, and, yes, in some aspects of color schemes. However, the ship design and the vast majority of track scenery is down to our artists in Leeds. We successfully combined the skills DR have with our own and the result is a tighter fusion of graphic design and artwork than in any other Wipeout game, and probably than in any other videogame on the market.

GR: THE HIGH-RESOLUTION ENGINE POWERING THE ACTION IS A MARVEL. IS IT ALL NEW?
AR: Our programmers had to work miracles to achieve what you see: the information that needs to be moved around on screen has increased by more than 60 percent. The smoothness with which the scenery moves past the edge of the screen is due to truly innovative techniques, a result of understanding the PlayStation hardware better than the people who designed it! We had to make significant savings in other areas to compensate, but there has been no resulting degradation in the quality of, say, the ship models.

"It is all too easy to lose the essence of the brand and digress too much. Evolution, rather than revolution, has been the philosophy throughout."

GR: WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MORE INTERESTING CHALLENGES IN GETTING THE ENGINE WORKING AT A SPEED AND DETAIL LEVEL ACCEPTABLE TO THE WIPEOUT STANDARD?

AR: Track design was very important, which includes both the length of straights, number of corners and size/detail of buildings around the circuits. We had to fine-tune each and every tile of track to make sure that the scenery, in terms of number of polygons, was kept under a strict limit. This task was done by the design department, and involved a lot of back & forth with the artists. Achieving this optimization without horrific pop-up requires very imaginative placing of buildings. There was also a design goal of having more fluid tracks than XL with fewer harsh corners; this made the process harder.

GR: HOW DIFFICULT WAS IT TO GET A TWO-PLAYER SPLIT SCREEN WORKING? WERE COMPROMISES MADE TO THE ONE-PLAYER ARCHITECTURE TO FACILITATE A WORKABLE LEVEL OF DETAIL IN TWO-PLAYER MODE?

AR: Pretty difficult. We have separate scenery for the single- and two-player modes. In the end, however, thanks to the sophistication of the engine and the skill of the artists, the scenery is remarkably similar in both one- and two-player modes.

GR: IT'S THE CONSENSUS OF THE STAFF HERE THAT THIS IS A MORE DIFFICULT GAME THAN XL. WAS THIS A SPECIFIC GOAL, OR MORE A NATURAL PROGRESSION OF THE DEVELOPMENT?

AR: We think Wipeout 3 is more accessible at beginning levels than XL, but harder at the top end. This has always been the goal—both reaching a larger market (to reflect current PlayStation ownership) and remaining the most challenging extreme racer around. One aspect that can make the game slightly harder is the improved AI. The opponents are not faster, they just race like real pilots, using the weapon and speed-up pads in the same way as a human player and also making use of different ship characteristics. This means that the sometimes fake AI of XL is now gone, and opponents will catch you after the slightest mistake, even if you have managed to hold first place for two laps.

GR: DO YOU FIND IT CURIOUS THAT NO ONE HAS ATTEMPTED TO MAKE A GAME LIKE WIPEOUT ON ANY SYSTEM SINCE THE ORIGINAL'S DEBUT?

AR: Wipeout is so unique in its look and feel that it would be difficult to come close without being an obvious copy. On top of this, each release in the series has pushed so far ahead in what is possible for extreme racing on PlayStation that it makes it harder for others to compete.

GR: WAS THERE ANYTHING THAT SOMEONE DESPERATELY WANTED TO PUT IN THE GAME, BUT WERE SIMPLY UNABLE TO BECAUSE OF HARDWARE LIMITATIONS?

AR: There are always hardware limitations. If we did not come across any, we would not be doing our job of trying to achieve the absolute best. Some of our initial wish-list items at first seemed unlikely, but we found a way. Our skill is in doing the best we can with what is available.

GR: THE LACK OF ANY PAYOFF FOR COMPLETING THE TOURNAMENT MODE WAS A LITTLE DISAPPOINTING. WAS THIS A TIME ISSUE?

AR: Wipeout has never been about glitzy rewards. It's about a pure racing experience where you die if you don't succeed. Finishing first is reward enough.

GR: NOT TO DEVALUE THE IMPRESSIVE WORK YOU'VE DONE HERE, BUT WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE NEXT WIPEOUT? WHERE DO YOU SEE THE SERIES GOING?

AR: Wipeout is a unique experience and it would be foolish to say that it won't appear again in the future. We have pushed the PlayStation as far as we know how with this version, so it will be some time yet before further AG (Anti Gravity) Racing Leagues are established.

GR: HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED THE NOTION THAT RACING GAMES TRIGGER A PRIMAL SENSATION, THAT OF THE HUNTER AND THE HUNTED, CHASING THOSE AHEAD OF YOU, RUNNING FROM THOSE BEHIND YOU?

AR: No, but I will now.

GR: WHAT GAMES HAVE IMPRESSED YOU LATELY?

AR: Any game that sells well impresses me. A few especially hot titles would be Driver, Tony Hawk's [Pro Skater], Syphon Filter.

GR: IF GIVEN FREE REIGN, WHAT TYPE OF GAME WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE NEXT?

AR: Something thrilling.

GR: IS THERE A LOT OF MULTIPLAYER COMPETITION WITHIN THE LEEDS STUDIO?

AR: More than is healthy.

● ● ● 1.09:99

designing the future
an interview with graphic design house designers republic

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL WIPEOUT TEAM'S MASTERSTROKES WAS THE COMMISSIONING OF DESIGNERS REPUBLIC TO HANDLE THE GRAPHIC DESIGN OF THEIR SOON-TO-BE-CLASSIC PLAYSTATION GAME. COMBINING A CLEAN AND COLORFUL CLUB-LIKE DESIGN WITH A FLAIR FOR THE FUTURISTIC, DESIGNERS REPUBLIC LENT THE FIRST WIPEOUT A VISUAL CREDIBILITY THAT IT OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD. THIS SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP CONTINUED IN XL AND IS NOW ENTERING ITS THIRD PHASE WITH THEIR LATEST COLLABORATION, WIPEOUT 3. WE WANTED TO LEARN A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT WHAT MAKES THIS MOST FAMOUS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN HOUSES TICK. HERE'S WHAT WE FOUND OUT...

GAMERS' REPUBLIC: WHEN WAS DESIGNERS REPUBLIC FORMED AND WHO STARTED IT?
Designers Republic: The Republic was declared in 1986. Ian Anderson was its first president.

GR: HOW DID THE DISTINCTIVE DESIGNERS REPUBLIC AESTHETIC FORM OVER THE YEARS?
DR: It's a collective personal vision, interpretation and projection of our environment tomorrow. Not what is but what could be. People who copy us merely fulfill this prophecy for us.

GR: HOW MANY PEOPLE CURRENTLY MAKE UP THE TEAM?
DR: Secret Seven. Five designers: Ian Anderson, Michael Place, Nick Bax, Matt "Punkwig" Pyke and Dave Bailey, plus two admin, Liz Close and Sian Thomas.

GR: HOW HAS THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC SCENE IN THE U.K. SHAPED YOUR DESIGN, IF AT ALL?
DR: It hasn't been influential directly. If anything it has evolved in parallel from the same mindset as some of our work, but manifests itself aurally not visually. Obviously there is synthesis between the two which serves to inform both, but our early work predates the current wave of electronica. As such, our formative history is more closely linked with the spirit of pioneers such as Kraftwerk, Neu!, Cabaret Voltaire, early Human League, Infra-Red Helicopters, Eno and even fusion-period (70-75) Miles, Lamont Young, John Cage and Stockhausen. We are primarily concerned with the idea of electronica, not the implementation. This is not to say we are not into current techno-logical music!

GR: HAVE YOU EVER DRAWN INFLUENCE FROM THE CLUB SCENE?
DR: It's more accurate to say that we have defined and continue to redefine the visual language of clubbing because we draw on influences previously considered mutually exclusive with club culture. Things must move on and new elements must fuse. Club visuals are a product of now, the commercialization of what we were doing yesterday, we're interested in what's next. There is no hierarchy in our influences. We are filters for everything.

GR: DOES DESIGNERS REPUBLIC WORK IN A MAC ENVIRONMENT?
DR: Yes, G3s racked up like Marshall amps at a metal gig! We run Freehand 8, Photoshop 5, Fontographer 4, Flash 4, Director 7, and brains.

GR: HOW DID DESIGNERS REPUBLIC END UP GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE WIPEOUT PROJECTS?
DR: The original contact from Psygnosis was simply the search for a solution to a problem: games packaging was in a Dungeons and Dragons rut, stuck between air-brushed thunder-breasted amazons, flight s(t)imulation and kiddie cartoons; basically, conceptually and visually not appealing to the industry's potential target mass-market of clubbed-up techno(logy) and cyber fans. They had identified the need for change, and saw that the launch of the PlayStation platform was the optimum time to make the change, but they were unsure of the actual direction they should take. Initially, I imagine they were thinking in terms of packaging, but our solution encompassed broader issues of the vision and approach, and attitudes of game developers and games marketing departments. For the change to be credible it had to be more than just a cosmetic makeover. Luckily, at the same time, the Wipeout development team, who were DR fans anyway and had been instrumental in our getting involved, were urging for similar changes from within the industry. It was a natural progression that our graphics be applied in-game to compliment the packaging and promotional identity, and a further natural progression that the creative relationship would develop.

GR: COULD YOU GIVE SOME IDEA OF THE DESIGN PROCESS AS IT RELATES TO WIPEOUT 3?
DR: The reason Wipeout 3 and its predecessors are well designed is because the Psygnosis people understand that their role is to commission the best design company for the job. Once that is done their mission is complete and they can leave the job of designing to designers while they get on with their part of the project. Wipeout 3 is slightly different to other jobs in that, as DR are the creators/curators of the visual language and identity of the game and its packaging, it is difficult for anyone to brief us other than to say, "Can we have some more, please?" Projects like this tend to grow organically rather than having specific start points: we really start thinking about the project as soon as it's in the discussion stage rather than waiting for actual confirmation.

Nicky Westcott is the person we've worked with most closely, her being the lead artist and therefore our main contact. She is also, with the exception of DR, the only person to be involved creatively with Wipeout from the start and is someone with whom we have a shared vision of Wipeout's philosophy and a mutual understanding of the importance of design and our role in the game.

GR: IS THERE A LARGE GAMING CONTINGENT AT DESIGNERS REPUBLIC?
DR: Yes. Mike likes racing games, especially Wipeout! Nick likes scrapping games like Tekken and Toshinden. Matt, Dave and Liz like Tomb Raider-style horror, role playing. Ian likes Galaxian, Phoenix, Gauntlet and Space Invaders. Sian would rather watch TV but has a tendency to over-obsess about Tetris!

GR: DO YOU HAVE ANY OUTSIDE, NON-DESIGN ACTIVITIES THAT YOU FEEL AFFECTS YOUR DESIGN STYLE?
DR: Breathing—which ultimately supplies oxygen to the brain.

GR: OUTSIDE OF THE WIPEOUT SERIES, WHERE MIGHT SOME OF OUR READERS HAVE SEEN YOUR WORK?
DR: International design magazine *Emigre* (based in San Francisco) devoted an entire issue to DR in 1994. The issue was their best seller and sold out long ago. A business colleague of mine paid $600.00 for one last month!

DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT: UBISOFT

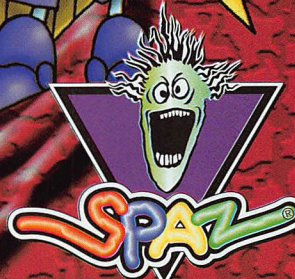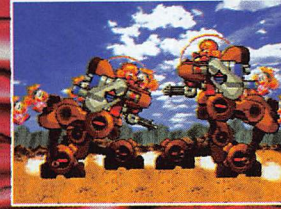<image name="screenshot_1" />

U bi Soft's Canadian studios have enabled them to establish a power-ful North American presence, standing toe-to-toe with the likes of Midway, Acclaim, Activision and many other major U.S. publishers. They mean business now. With over 400 people firmly entrenched in their new Montreal studio, Ubi Soft Entertainment is quickly becoming one of the most integral components in their vast worldwide development net-work, consisting of 16 main offices ranging from France to Japan.

Established in July of 1997, Ubi Soft Montreal already has several key titles under their collective belts, including Speed Busters, Speed Devils, Tonic Trouble and Monaco Grand Prix Racing for N64, and the soon-to-be-released Hype: The Time Quest. They've made intelligent acquisitions like Sucker Punch's Rocket and ESP's Evolution and Grandia, in response to the gaming public's plea for quality localization and marketing of extremely deserving titles. They're developing original games for virtually every major platform on the market, supporting each of these products with massive advertising campaigns and aggressive marketing, and yet they continue to subscribe to one funda-

mental rule: quality gameplay. Their goal is to become one of the top-ten game publishers worldwide going into the new millennium, and if our visit to their Montreal office was any indication, this lofty goal may be well in hand.

The first and most striking detail one notices upon entering the massive multi-level structure, located on St. Laurent, one of Montreal's busiest streets, is the sheer quantity of active personnel in the facility. Between their testers, artists, musicians, project managers, designers, marketing and PR staff, they're quickly approaching the 500 mark. That's huge. When lunch hour comes, it's an exodus of biblical proportions.

So how does Ubi Soft Montreal run such a tight ship? By carefully creating separate divisions within this mass, each of them a unique and fully self-sufficient staff, the entire Studio has become a cohesive network capable of achieving incredible productivity. And it seems they're all happy to be doing their jobs. Everyone has a respected role in a team, project heads each have their own dedicated staff, the budgets are high, and the games are good. As Hype's project manager puts it: "I assemble my team, we build the concept together, we tell all the other divisions of Ubi Soft how we're doing, and we make a great game day by day. I make certain that everyone is communicating, but mostly I leave the game design to the game designers, the artwork to the art director, etc. I make sure that we all have a clear perspective, together." This simple, logical formula still carries with it a clearly defined theme—an anthem of sorts for all of Ubi Soft: creativity will not be sacrificed because of size.

Their current focus involves two of 1999's biggest titles: Rayman 2, and Hype: The Time Quest. Dozens of additional testers have been brought in to rid Rayman 2 of the slightest anomaly, while a core team of testers and designers is currently finalizing Hype. In the midst of this mammoth company-wide deadline, we spoke with key members of the Hype development staff to discover their roles at Ubi Soft and what it takes to make a huge licensed title. These are the people behind the scenes, team members and team players helping to raise Ubi Soft's standards and identify the company as one the industry's strongest contenders.

An Interview with
Patrice Désilets
Game Designer-Hype

GR: As a game designer here at Ubi Soft, what does your work involve?
Patrice: My job is to define all of the rules of the game and the rhythm of the gameplay. On Hype I worked closely with the scriptwriter because the game is story-driven, because we were creating gameplay that tells a story and story that involves gameplay. I defined all the characters, all the enemies, all the locations, and all of the maps. Basically I had to capture the spirit of Playmobil and create a game universe.

GR: Since you had the Playmobil toy style to work with, was the design made easier?
Patrice: Personally, I really don't care about particular styles. For me, in game design we use blocks. Everything is blocks. We just put them in the right place at the right time. So if it's Playmobil, or a game for my grandmother, style isn't my top priority. True enough, though, I didn't start with zero, so in this aspect the license was a good foundation.

GR: How closely has Hype maintained its original design?
Patrice: Pretty close. As a designer, when you start a project like Hype, you have a big mess in your head. You try to get rid of a lot of these ideas and narrow it down to a solid, you know, game. At the beginning we had another story, another universe, and a different type of gameplay. We even wanted pirates in the game, because there's a pirate series in the Playmobil toy line. Two weeks after we started the project, we decided on the medieval theme and it stuck. The time-traveling concept came six months after we started the project, and it became a focus.

GR: Was there a lengthy concept period before the game development actually started?
Patrice: Hype was a special case, because Ubi Soft Montreal was just opening at the time. Before I had a team of game designers, it took eight months to come up with the design. I was learning my craft at the same time, since I was coming from the movie industry.

GR: Is the movie industry something you'd like to return to?
Patrice: No, I think I've found my way now. I love games. I've always been a gamer, since I was like six years old. I remember how much fun I had playing Choplifter and Load Runner on my Apple C2. I was designing levels in Lode Runner at the time, and I remember really enjoying myself—writing my name in the background [laughs], stuff like that.

GR: Are there any specialized tasks that you have worked on for Hype?
Patrice: I did work with an "info designer." I don't know if you're familiar with this term, but it's a special programmer who works on AI here, at our Montreal studios. I designed the game controls, how Hype moves, and I decided on the default control keys. I didn't do all the level design on my own; I have a team of level designers that responded to my designs creatively. I controlled how the level would begin, and everything it takes to complete that level, including the cohesion between puzzles and storyline.

GR: Roughly how many hours of gameplay is there in Hype?
Patrice: About 30 to 40 hours, depending on the player.

GR: You've completed work on Hype now. How is it decided when your work as a Game Designer is finally complete on a project?
Patrice: Depends on the project, I would say. If you're working on the AI, you could be on the project until very close to the end. If you're in charge of the rules and gameplay, you could be finished before the project is nearing completion. With some projects, you leave the team and return later on to check the progress. Personally, I left Hype for six months, then I came back with a new perspective on the game. It made it very easy to find flaws. Although everything was finished and all my design was implemented, I came back to polish the gameplay. Also, I added mini-games to find and complete, as an extra bonus for the really good players. It's another fun element.

GR: Do you foresee a Hype sequel, and are there any ideas that you would like to see implemented in the sequel?
Patrice: I'd love to do one. I learned a lot making this game, including which mistakes to avoid. I'd make the sequel faster paced, with a little more action. The control would have to be more like Mario 64 than Tomb Raider, which is sort of what we have now, but that's a personal opinion. We thought about adding multiplayer modes to Hype, vs. battles kind of like JetForce Gemini, or maybe even jousting on horses, but there wasn't time to do it. We always have pages and pages worth of other ideas that could not be implemented the first time around, but that's part of being a game designer.

An Interview with
Benoit Galarneau
Project Manager-Hype

GR: What does you work involve as a project manager of Hype, and how did it all start at Ubi Soft's Montreal studios?

Ben: As Project Manager on Hype: The Time Quest, I've been working for over two years now to create a great title. I received a mandate from the lead producer at Ubi Soft to make a game using the Playmobil license. I started with a small team, before assembling the whole development group: a scriptwriter, game designer, art director, and myself, as project manager. Basically we discovered our own roles while conceptualizing the title, because nobody had done a game before from top to bottom, but we moved on to extend the game design as soon as possible. The only solid experience we had in-house was the temporary staff from Ubi Soft's main office in France, who came over to Montreal to create and settle the different studios. They were a huge help with Hype, since they had all worked on previous games using the same type of engine.

GR: How did Hype go from licensed-toy concept to full-fledged game design?

Ben: We had such a strong vision for the game from the beginning. Since Playmobil has always released high-quality toys, we wanted our game to have the same impact. We wanted a huge storyline within the universe we were creating. At the time, Zelda 64 did not exist, but most of the designers were into those types of games – quest, adventure types. However, they liked the harder stuff, the classic stuff I guess, like Might & Magic, games like that. Of course, a Playmobil game had to be created with kids in mind as well. You have to think of a kid playing with his Playmobil toys, imagining the world that his or her toy is in and the adventure they create as they play. We decided the characters, worlds, and actions in Hype would have to follow this theme, while still retaining the Ubi Soft standard of universal entertainment.

GR: What type of player is the difficulty level aimed at?

Ben: Well, everybody can make their way through the game, it's just a matter of how long it will take. At first we made it too hard, for sure, as many focus groups were having trouble. Back then, enemies required too many attacks, and most importantly, players were losing track of their objectives too easily. They were able to make their way across the world, sure, but they weren't finding the characters we had in place that moved the quest along, so they just wandered on and on – taking in the pretty sights, but not really progressing. So we made the gameplay clearer, created an in-game map that would show you where to go, and that was just enough to finally make it very playable. You still have to know how to play games, though [laughs].

GR: In retrospect, as Hype approaches completion, has the game changed much from its initial concept?

Ben: No, the concept is the same. There was always this Hype character, who was sent back into the past, he's always had a little helper friend, and the time traveling has always been an idea shared by the whole team. We explored many different ideas when it came to the game universe, but the storyline has been fixed since about October of 1998.

GR: As a Playmobil-licensed title with graphics based on the powerful Tonic Trouble engine, how did Hype's graphic style and quality develop?

Ben: There's this medieval collection in Playmobil we used as inspiration, so we have stuff like orange and red roofs on the castles and houses. The buildings are exactly the same too, except we had to change the proportions a little so it would suit a video game world. The main goal was that we wanted something lively that could compare to the toys. Some of the texture mapping is actually a scan of the original toy and set that we stretched over the polygon.

GR: So in some ways, thanks to the Playmobil license, you weren't starting from scratch?

Ben: Yes, that was a good thing. Since nobody on the team had a previous game under their belt, we had so many different ideas: how the sky should look, how big a castle should be, and many other elements. We decided to focus on the Playmobil universe, and stick to the original plan. So instead of worrying over the color of a roof or the size of a castle, we emphasized having a real video game world. We want the player to go here and there, all over the game world, and be interested the whole way. It's funny, with the toy you can have four walls and one little character, and you can play for hours [laughs]. You can't do the same in a video game. You need to expand the universe—build a world for the toys. The Playmobil guys were wise about it, and our key contact there, in Germany, is a *big* gamer. Each time he came to Montreal, we went to all the Nintendo shops to pick up games that he can't get in Germany, like GoldenEye and stuff like that. He encouraged and supported our new, game-only Playmobil designs, like the Sumo boss, for example.

GR: Because you have created these new variations on the Playmobil design, do you expect a toy lineup based on the Hype game?

Ben: Actually, a lineup based on the game has yet to be planned. However, there is a line that includes Hype and all of the pre-existing Playmobil characters that we have in the game. In Germany they already have these toys. When we made our Playmobil characters, they were still all respecting the basic Playmobil trademark.

GR: Are we going to see Hype on Dreamcast?

Ben: Well, not officially, no. We'll see how the DC does first. The translation could be done in about eight months. The game itself doesn't work with Power VR right now, so that's an issue. We are checking to see how feasible a PS version might be right now.

An Interview with Jean Francois Malouin
Art Director-Hype

GR: What does your job involve as art director on Hype at Ubi Soft's Montreal studios?

JF: I have been on the project since its conceptual phase, so I had to study a lot with other artists and designers. It was our responsibility to bring Playmobil to life, in terms of animation and the backgrounds. Mainly, however, I deal with the animation, and with a title like Hype, based on plastic figures, it was very important. In Europe, a lot of adults have played with the toy, so they know it shouldn't look just like any other game. The image was very important, so I had to find a way to make these characters move in such a way that fans would be pleased, and the Playmobil company would be happy.

GR: Using the Playmobil toys as a guide, was it easy to achieve the graphic style of the characters and worlds in Hype?

JF: We always tried to maintain the pseudo-cartoon/pseudo-toy look. It's not cartoony like Disney, but it's not realistic either – not really a stiff representation of the toys. There's still the plastic feel, but we've added life and humor. A big issue with this graphic design was to keep it light and happy, and not too dark. Even though the story involves knights and sword fighting, we didn't go too dark. We wanted to evoke the sense of immersing yourself in a fully realized Playmobil world, so players who have enjoyed the toys can experience similar feelings with the game.

GR: Were there any limitations as a result of having this license?

JF: Well, we tried to make it look like plastic. We didn't use very much stretch and skin techniques, because the toy is rough plastic. Also, we always had to make the actions look painless – no blood, no death [laughs]. We could have had very interesting dismemberment animation for Hype falling off of a high place, or we could have had the characters changing parts with each other, but Playmobil didn't feel like seeing this and we really didn't want

to go in this direction anyway. So we made it lighthearted instead of violent. There is something that you won't see, and that's a darker intro movie that we made. It was really intense and we were really into it as we made it, and it fit the ending very nicely. But we decided it was a little too hard, so we scrapped it and made a lighter one. That's probably the only time we finished something that was later considered too dark for the general theme.

GR: What sort of animation techniques did you apply to the characters to make them appear realistic as they interacted with the environment, and yet not appear too robotic, like toys?

JF: As I mentioned, we retained the plastic feeling in the animations. Literally every animation was designed with this theme in mind. For example, when characters fall they bounce around when they hit the floor. However, we had a very big challenge in the beginning. We made characters without separate articulating legs, and only bending waists to mimic the toys, but they looked extremely strange when they were jumping or climbing stuff like ladders [laughs]. Yes, our first few trials consisted of very clumsy looking animation. After about a month of these early tests, we decided that there was no way we could go that way. So we combined a little bit of manga, a little Disney, and added life to the Playmobil world. We were making an action/adventure game, so we needed animation that reflected this fact.

GR: Do you determine what type of animation to apply to characters for specific actions, or does this choice belong to the game designers?

JF: No, as much as possible I like to leave it up to the imagination of my animators. If the game designers really want certain types of action, like for the character to jump a certain height for example, then of course we can do it. In general, though, once I show them the animation style we want, I leave the creative process up to the animators. I believe this is important.

GR: Tell us about the Hype engine and how it could be applied to future titles, possibly even sequels.

JF: At the beginning of the project anyway, it was the Tonic Trouble engine. We tweaked it and pushed it in different ways to meet our needs for Hype, like the addition of real-time shadows for example. We tried a lot of new stuff recently with our engines, and the new consoles will require even more completely new development. Theoretically, a sequel using a more advanced version of this engine would be very possible. We would have certain advantages, like being able to reuse a lot of elements like models, animation sequences, and AI, but we would push the envelope much, much further.

I have not seen this Playmobil set in particular. Don't let the name fool you: Hype's no full-on kiddie game. It's a fully realized, deep, action RPG.

An Interview with Eric Arsenault
Lead Tester-Hype

GR: What does your job involve as a Lead Tester for Ubi Soft?

EA: Well, right now we have around ten guys on the team. Ten guys who do nothing but play one game for eight hours a day, and that game is Hype. Now, you have to know that the game has four main levels, or time periods. So I have about three guys on each of these main levels, eight hours a day, five days a week. Now, of course, it's seven days a week [laughs]. I'll eventually put a lot of new guys on this project, because we'll have a big deadline rush just like we're having right now with Rayman 2 [he points to a massive room nearby with 40+ testers toiling away on the final Rayman 2 beta]. On that game we've been adding people for weeks; just last week 12 new guys were brought in. Part of my job is to integrate these new guys into the team. Some of our testers have been on a project for a year; others have been around for a couple of months.

GR: As a Lead Tester, how do you handle the addition of a new team member?

EA: The new tester who has just arrived must learn the game quickly. He has to become a tester who quickly adapts to the game, communicating to other members of the team right away. I have to show him what's important, so he can identify real problems that we haven't seen before and overlook problems that have already been documented.

GR: And what exactly do you prefer that your testers look for in a game's development?

EA: Obviously I have to make certain that every aspect of the game is covered. I'm not talking about one version, I'm talking about one game over the course of a year. Initially it's all very basic. We have our testers jump characters 40 to 50 times on a wall on the same spot, just to make sure the wall is solid. We check for characters that pass through each other as they interact. We have to be certain that as you're killing a guard he doesn't decide to fly up through the ceiling and disappear, or be sure that Hype is brightly lit when he's in a bright room. Big, major bugs like this. In the first phase of the test, we do all this stuff, then we progressively move into another phase of testing. I have to re-orient the guys to look for other types of gameplay-related bugs, like story bugs. For example, if I go talk to my dragon one time, twice, and then a third time, what is he supposed to say to me and does it make sense? If I have 100 gold coins and I add another 100 to it, will I have 200 gold coins? And if I save my game with those 200 gold coins, will I still have 200 gold coins when I return to my save game? In the final phase of testing you have to test out the entire in-game story as one cohesive sequence, using different methods to complete each part of the sequence. Essentially, my testers have to be sure that any type of player at home, even a player who doesn't use the most obvious course of action, can play the game without fear of bugs or crashing.

GR: Do all the testers on a team play their games using exactly the same PC setup?

EA: Actually, part of our work on the side involves these types of tests. Everyone has basic, well-known PC cards. You know, we don't use any strange no-name cards from Tokyo [laugh]. Our sound cards are Sound Blaster, our 3D cards are Voodoo 2, and we use Direct 3D to run the game. This provides us with a global perspective on our players; if people are using a normal current-day computer, the technical part of their gameplay experience will be solid. Of course, we have a department that tests numerous types of 3D cards, but generally our setup provides a reliable indication of the standard PC that gamers will use.

GR: How do you know when you'll finally be done testing a project like Hype?

EA: Good question [laughs]! I guess we'll know when we get there.

An Interview with Didier Lord
Vice President of Ubi Music/Ubi Music Publishing

GR: Have you always known that you were going to be involved with music production?
DL: Yes, but not necessarily associated with multimedia production. Six years ago, I felt it could be interesting to be involved in this business. At that point, I knew it was important to introduce audio in multimedia at a professional level. So I decided to build a solid audio department integrated within the production process.

GR: What attracted you to video game sound production?
DL: The challenges.

GR: Is there a different mentality or approach when it comes to creating game music, and how does this affect your work?
DL: Not really. It's like any other audio production, in terms of quality and process. Like movie sound tracks, it is important to work in synchro. The real difference is to work with interactivity.

GR: What sort of tools and programs do you create with, on a project like Hype for example?
DL: It is important for us to work closely with the programmers in creating new tools to add to the methods of classical audio production. We have created a new position in the audio process, that of the game sound designer. That requires you to create the sound concept of the game, with respect to technical constraints and gameplay. Of course, I can't tell you all of our secrets today!

GR: Are there any specific game genres that you would be interested in creating music for?
DL: Yes, Ubi Soft products.

GR: Do you think western video game musicians deserve more exposure, much like the super-star status of many Japanese game music personalities?
DL: It is normal that the Japanese game musicians are already famous; they began earlier in this production. Western video game musicians are beginning to get their exposure.

GR: Your most recent project, Hype, has been blessed with a fantastic score that includes celebrity talent. Tell us about the creation of the Hype soundtrack, the type of music, and where it all began.
DL: I had the opportunity to work closely with Canadian audio experts, especially Martin Klein. He introduced me to Robbi Finkel, a very talented composer with many years of experience. He understood and absorbed the atmosphere of the game very quickly. We decided to give a classical color to the music, and Robbi excelled doing it.

GR: Do you think a game like Hype would be less enjoyable with a soundtrack of average quality, and why?
DL: Of course. In Hype, the music and the sound effects are very close to the gameplay.

GR: Is all the music in Hype CD audio (redbook), or have you also used lower quality sound to create ambient or interactive music—music that is triggered, for example, at key dramatic moments?
DL: All the music in Hype is produced in the best quality possible, despite the support constraints.

GR: How closely do you work with other team members on your projects? For example, the animators and project managers, designers, etc.
DL: Everybody works in a precise production process. Our organization links the sounds with other studios like the programming, the animations and the game design.

GR: Did you play and watch Hype as you created the soundtrack? If so, is this a policy you always stick to when creating game soundtracks, and why is it so important?
DL: Yes, because it is designed for gamer's pleasure! The result has to be equal to audio in movies; we have to associate the music with the images. But the real challenge for us is to work with the complexity of interactivity.

GR: In terms of a soundtrack piece, do you consider a project like Hype to be a major production?
DL: Sure, it's a huge project and we had to have major production in terms of the audio quality.

GR: Would you like to see a separate, individually packed soundtrack released for Hype?
DL: It's a different business. We would have to build a different process to associate music products with multimedia. But it is something which we're working on and I would like to see it happen in the future.

GR: In your opinion, what is the future of video game music, in terms of variety, quality, and importance?
DL: We will have to work more and more with the gameplay and various aspects of interactivity, but without the support constraints we have had since the beginning. When you see that we produce music for video games in a Dolby Digital format, it's really incredible.

GR: Many publishers believe that a good game soundtrack must consist of a heavy list of licensed, commercially available music tracks. Do you think this is true for all games?
DL: I don't think so. I personally prefer to work closely with an amazing composer rather than a superstar. Of course, stars and show business certainly adds marketing value. But, to work with a composer that is really involved in the production will bring a game to a higher level.

GR: If there were no restrictions, how would you create the ultimate game soundtrack?
DL: I can't even predict the short-term future of the ultimate game, and I believe that's the reason why I love this job.

UBISOFT

goes multimedia with Rayman TV

Making the transition from games to TV and ultimately mass merchandising, Rayman is really enjoying his recent 3D exploits. Unlike many such instances where a character gains mass acceptance and as a result is marketed mainly for profit, leaving quality well down on the list of priorities, Ubi Soft is rolling out the red carpet for their funny little mascot. Groomed for network TV and built from scratch from the ground up, the lush, fully rendered *Rayman TV* show will span 23 episodes at 13 minutes each, featuring two unique stories per half-hour time slot. Ubi Soft is currently negotiating with some major networks for Rayman's debut. It's likely that Fox or the WB will become Rayman's new Saturday-morning home.

Rayman TV's cast is all new for the show (Rayman is the sole character coming from the game) and is aimed squarely at kids of all ages. Smooth CG on the outside, on the inside *RTV* is all about learning to get along with, appreciate, and share with others—about the true meaning of friendship. Sorely needed, I say; it's the perfect equalizer after an episode of Smackdown! A positive role model for kids that they can romp around with later on their Nintendo 64's — I don't see how it can miss. Ubi Soft is co-producing the series entirely in-house with the rendering and animation taking place in Montreal and the voice integration and story boards at Ubi's Paris HQ.

So who will put the chops to Rayman, you ask? None other than Dana Gould. No, no, I'm kidding! Rayman is voiced by none other than Billy West, the *Ren and Stimpy* guy! I do miss them.

DK 64
BY MIKE PUCCINI

I just returned from a visit to NOA and have to say that after two-and-a-half years in development, Donkey Kong 64 brings the king of the video game jungle to the N64 in majestic fashion. Everything you imagined this game would be is probably correct...and then some. It's being created by the same team responsible for the DKC SNES series, and they've included just about everything that you fell in love with back then.

The mine-cart ride in Donkey Kong 64 is quite a thrill, and the levels are so massive—the last three levels are said to be 10 times the size of the first level—that the RAM expansion pak is required to play this amazingly ambitious adventure; don't worry if you don't have one, because it's going to be included with the game.

Although the story is a rehash—Kongs are captured and bananas stolen, and you have to get them all back—the DK games have always been about gameplay, and DK64 is no exception: the game's loaded with things to do. Taking a page from Jet Force Gemini, DK64 requires players to return to previously explored areas with newly acquired characters, in order to complete all of the game's 200 objectives.

There are five playable characters—Donkey, Diddy, Tiny (she's just like Dixie), Lanky and Chunky—each equipped with a variety of special moves, a special weapon and the ability to play a musical instrument. The collection of a wide variety of items is such an integral part of the game that at times it becomes quite overwhelming.

Homage is paid to DK and Miyamoto with the inclusion of a completely playable, exact replica of the DK arcade game. A source of mine at NOA mentioned that there is also a classic Rare arcade game hidden. And, as it seems is the standard with a Rare title, there are multiplayer battles included.

The game seems to have it all, and will certainly prove to be yet another classic experience from the masters at RARE. 👣

任天堂

DIDDY KONG • DONK
NINTENDO JUNGLE SUMMIT NINETEEN

DONKEY KONG 64

HIGHLY RECOGNIZED VIDEO GAME ICON

CASTLEVANIA (2) 64
BY DAVE HALVERSON

Action view

Boss view

Castlevania, one of the last remaining old-school series to see an incarnation on every major gaming platform, has had a precarious ride on the N64. The series' most memorable installment of the last decade took place on the PlayStation in '97, and since then, the game has lived on exclusively in 3D. I think it's safe to say that the 2D Nintendo sendoff we were all hoping for isn't gonna happen. If you want to experience what could have been, grab a copy of Goemon's Great Adventure and imagine, say, Castlevania 2: Simon's Quest with those graphics.

Why do I do this to myself? What we get instead, with CV 2 64, is a fully realized version of last year's game, which, when you think about, it isn't all that bad. Admittedly, next to the likes of Jet Force and Rayman, this engine looks pretty dated, although the Kobe team is making the best of it with character designs derived from the classics, huge demonic beasts, dramatic camera angles, and new characters to have your way with—not to mention haunting melodies and real-time cut scenes.

Having received the playable game right before press time, I had just enough time to get a game going with Cornell, the man-beast planned for last year's game. No sooner than the Necrinomicon slammed shut, I found myself in an entirely new first level, which segued into a more focused version of last year's graveyard, and then moved on to the castle where I met another new character, Ortega.

Interesting. It would seem this game has much to offer beyond its predecessor. The intro, too, is juiced quite a bit, giving us a bird's-eye view of the human sacrifice offered to give the count life once again. I'll say one thing, the guy's resilient. The other new character in the game, Henry, wears a suit of armor and fires a gun (?). We'll take a look at him along with the new Reinhart and Carrie games in the next issue. In the meantime, I'm going to go out and by a whip, mount some candles on the office walls, jump like Simon, and try and recapture some of what brought me to Castlevania in the first place. ⚡

Action view

Boss view

Action view

Action view

BOOMBOTS

The Neverhood makes some bots that go boom!
A stranger band of metal maniacs (made of clay) you will never meet

BY DAVE HALVERSON

BoomBots is Doug TenNapel and company's second PlayStation offering since establishing the Neverhood, and they've crafted yet another memorable video game/clay media cinematic extravaganza. Combining their skills using both clay and polygons, BoomBots takes arena fighting to engaging new heights.

Hailing from the planet we're all spinning around on, the BoomBots have embarked on a mission to beat down the Feline Research Troops BoomBots and, in doing so, reclaim Earth's house-cat population so that they can rid it of the United Rat Infestation Nation. Vintage TenNapel. So, as you can imagine, the game sports an unusual (to say the least) cast of characters. Inspired by all walks of man, machine and everything in between, they range from robot dogs to wacky tanks and bugs, morphed into expressive mechanical gladiators. Playing the game for the first time, what I found instantly meritorious about BoomBots were the post- and pre-game antics. The Neverhood's uncanny sense of humor beams even brighter here than it did in Skull Monkeys, their underrated 100-per-

cent-clay platformer released in '97. The claymation cinemas are a sight to behold, as genuinely hilarious as they are eye-poppingly attractive. While less novel conceptually, the game itself makes the most of the genre and the stars of this show, the Boombots themselves. Each of the fifteen (five of which must be opened up) is different in various ways, from appearance to abilities. A decent but brutal array of weaponry is at your disposal, along with five hilarious special-attack sequences per Bot. They move about, shooting, dodging, and hiding, in elaborate interstellar arenas laden with platforms, ditches, and lots of stuff that blows up! Close-range attacks and supers are handled with the shoulder buttons, once enough power is collected, leaving the others free for launching scud and guided missiles, machine gun fire, and jumping.

"But is the game fun?" you ask. Oh hell yeah! We'll have lots more on BoomBots, including a little behind-the-scenes action in the December GR. This is definitely one to watch for!

SLAVE ZERO
BY DAVE HALVERSON

Aside from some drops in the frame rate amid larger environments and in the heat of heavy battle, which I'm sure will be addressed, Slave Zero is everything you could ever want in a mission-based action shooter.

The sorties, a sequence of sci-fi scenarios that unfold with you at center stage, range from seek-and-destroy to rescue and sentinel duty, and they all take you deep into a futuristic city bustling with life and laden with gorgeous arenas. Slave Zero itself, piloted by Chad (we'll have more on the story in the pending review), is one of the meanest and most highly animated mechs that I've ever had the pleasure to manipulate. His Freddy Kruger-like claw fingers animate nimbly as his heavily jointed arms almost float with animation, and the lurching vertebrae that connects his body makes everything he does look dramatic. His upgradable, standard-issue weapons—a machine gun affixed to his right arm and a shoulder-mounted cannon—are pleasing to fire from the outset, but once seekers and larger-mm guns are acquired, firing on the games many awesome foes from near and very far becomes all the more gratifying. Wicked voice commands and a mission-control center, which actually looks cool in a Terry Gilliam sort of vein, chime in to feed you Intel, and you just go, following the prompts and completing the progressively longer and more complex missions that link the story. The four bosses I fought in this latest version were all worthy adversaries as well.

The control mechanism, once assimilated, is both unique and extremely effective, and the level design and balance for all three modes-easy, medium, and hard-seem appropriate. Once the frame rate issues are addressed and the music's hemmed in I can't wait to have at the Slave Zero review. Hopefully that day's not too far off. I hear the planet's going to explode soon.

Target Locked

100

IT GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO FIGHT
BRAIN HUNGRY ZOMBIES...

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | Sega Dreamcast.

IT'S THINKING

APPARENTLY YOU'D RATHER SUCK HATCHET

new characters travel branching paths on 6 intense levels for ultimate replayability to confront over 20 kinds of mutants with hatchets, chainsaws and razor sharp teeth. check your shorts for cake. • sega.com

SPYRO
RIPTO'S RAGE
BY BRADY FIECHTER

Spyro, the charming purple dragon who soars through an enchanting world in Spyro: Ripto's Rage, is a special character, a true original that keeps pleasant company with such PlayStation indelibles as Crash and Tomba. In this sequel to the entertaining and colorful Spyro the Dragon, Spyro manages to evoke even greater appeal, aided by the increased technical achievements of the Insomniac design team: the fantastic designs of the first game have been fleshed out and expanded upon, and the game is visually extraordinary.

For the critics who found the first Spyro monotonous and far too one-dimensional, Insomniac has gone to surprising lengths to imbue Spyro: Riptor's Rage with a bounty of involving tasks to perform and moves to learn; the game is impressively deep. The primary focus of the game is collecting a talisman at the end of each level, which requires Spyro to engage in a lot of platforming and dispensing of the baddies, mainly with his charging attack or fiery breath. Collecting gems is still a large part of the game, but now Spyro finds more purpose in his pursuit of a huge stash: payments must be made to pass certain areas in the game, and moves like swimming and climbing are learned at a price.

What I've found so much fun about this game are the bevy of side ventures Spyro can go on, which reward success with a rune. Not every rune must be discovered, but a certain number must be collected to reach full completion of the game. Collecting the runes involves a number of entertaining situations: Spyro corrals animals into a pen, rides a mine cart to collect gears, spits rocks to knock flags off towers. And the last thing I expected to find was a mini-hockey game, with ice effects that are amazing. In a game like Spyro: Riptor's Rage, I guess little delights like this just come with the territory. ❊

Spyro's second adventure is full of little surprises that add layers of depth to the game and are always entertaining. Here, Spyro faces one of his foes in a game of hockey; a victory grants him an orb.

BADDIES

IT KNOWS YOU LIKE RUNNING >
·.·.. OFF-TACKLE ON THIRD AND SHORT

Sega Dreamcast. | SEGA SPORTS™ NFL 2K™

IT'S THINKING

OBSTINATE LITTLE TOOL AREN'T YOU? >

eye-popping 3D action with over 1500 player moves clashing at 60fps in VMU-selected secret plays at any of
31 highly detailed stadiums with realtime weather. ready for the big league, sweetheart? ·.: sega.com

EVERYONE

E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

PLAYERS INC

FURBALLS
BY DAVE HALVERSON

Enter a magical land where cute little animals
blow each other to smithereens!

 One of the main attractions at this year's ECTS was a game we started looking forward to after its initial buzz at E3. Now, much farther down the development path, Bizarre Creations' Furballs, which will be published in America by Acclaim, is closing in on its Dreamcast assault. To best understand its allure, just imagine the cutest little fuzzy-wuzzy critter whipping out a bazooka-sized firearm and blowing the head clean off another—with no remorse whatsoever—leaving its corpse jittering like a turkey on Thanksgiving. It almost makes you feel guilty.

There's a game in here to boot, as rich in exploration and puzzle elements as it is in nasty carnage. The goal in each level is to rescue a certain type of animal. But first, you have to become that type of critter. Only a kitty can save a kitty and so on. So first you must find a switch to, well, switch, and then go rescue your kind, while the rest try and make you into a throw rug. Call it an ultra-violent, puzzle/action shooter for the whole family. Well, maybe not the whole family. Imagine a cliché closing line here, like: we'll have more on this promising new Dreamcast title in the months ahead!

Playing Soul Fighter on the Dreamcast reminds me a lot of the first time I played Ninja Combat on the Neo Geo. While it brings nothing new to the category, it's just so damn beautiful that I thirst like a camel in Ishtar for each and every new level. Maybe I shouldn't say Soul Fighter doesn't bring anything new to the category; it does offer impressive enemy AI, stunning moves, powerful combos and, let's face it, a new level of visual stimuli. But, for the most part, this is still a straight beat 'em up, all dressed for the next, next generation.

SF is missing one key ingredient, though, considered standard issue for the genre, and that's a two-player mode. While I personally don't care for two-player beat-'em-up action, most people do. My experience with this phenomenon is that no matter how good you are, if P2 is poo at games, he'll steal all the chicken and fruits until one of you runs out of continues. Where's the fun in that? Still, the game should offer it, I suppose, so we'll have to wait and see if Toka installs one before the game ships.

The gameplay in Soul Fighter, while not complex in terms of play mechanics, is definitely well thought out, if not aimed squarely at the seasoned gamer. The usual Jackie Chan movie fighting rules, where a horde of surrounding enemies come at you one at a time, do not apply. If you run into a band of enemies in the game—nicely modeled and animated land, sea, and sky bearing demons and monsters—they will attack you, all at once, and never let up. The standard toe to toe beat 'em up strategy will only lead you to the game-over screen prematurely.

You get a bunch of continues, but, if caught in a murderous horde, you can easily lose two very quickly. It's best to approach each brood with caution and try to lure one or two in and polish them off with a quick combo before the others hear or see you. In the instance four or more do overwhelm you...run! Put some distance between you, turn, charge, and fire off a combo.

Par for the course, to polish off each sprawling level you need to kill everything in it, and then do your business with the level guardian. These guys are big, love to block, and will chase you; good luck. Who you choose also weighs in on the game's flow. Their are two male warriors (pronounced walliols in Toka-ese), Atlus, your straight beat-'em-and-smile type, and

SOUL FIGHTER
BY DAVE HALVERSON

LEGACY OF KAIN: SR
• **developer:** crystal dynamics • **publisher:** eidos • **available:** winter

With the PlayStation version of Soul Reaver, we were plunged into a realm of oppressive gloom and dread, where a terrifically dark and uncommonly well written story elevated the game to greatness. The PC version now takes this inspired game to the obvious next level – improved resolution and frame rate and a tighter engine. Will Raziel reach his ultimate form on the Dreamcast? ✿

SPIDERMAN
• **developer:** neversoft • **publisher:** activision • **available:** tba

Neversoft's 3D action game starring Marvel Comics' web-slinging, wall-crawling geek in long underwear will feature all his classic moves and New York locales. You'll need to master all of the former to traverse the latter and do battle with his many nemeses such as Venom, Doctor Octopus, the Lizard, and others; at press time, we were not able to confirm the inclusion of favorites like the Lava Men, Stilt-Man, and Paste Pot Pete. Even without the inimitably sticky stylings of the Trapster, expect this to be one of the better 3D adventures out there. Neversoft is on a good streak right now: their latest project was the excellent Tony Hawk Pro Skater. ✿

TM & © 1999 MARVEL

STAR GLADIATOR 2
• **developer/publisher:** capcom • **available:** winter

Word has it that Capcom's arcade port of their sci-fi 3D fighter went back into the shop after Namco's Soul Calibur raised the bar to such a fearsome height in the DC fighting arena. It's still due for release in Japan within the year, though, so it won't be long until we see whether Capcom can equal their competition's prowess at 3D art. They have a shot at it; current screenshots pack some substantial visual flair, with explosive special attacks that bring Marvel Vs. Capcom to mind. The arcade version's 24 characters all field a wide variety of moves, so completists should have fun trying to master them all, and the control, being similar to Street Fighter's, shouldn't be too hard to pick up. ✿

DUKES OF HAZZARD: RACING FOR HOME
• **developer:** sinister • **publisher:** southpeak • **available:** tba

Never mind that you can travel to the Rhuebottom's General Delivery & Dry Goods, save Uncle Jessy from masked assailants as he attempts to deliver the monthly mortgage to the bank, race the Double Zero—the only car to ever defeat the General Lee—and compete in a two-player game of "Run With the Jug." The true brilliance behind The Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home is the opening CG, which mirrors the sublimely goofy television show *Dukes of Hazard* and is immortalized by Waylon Jennings' theme song. For now, we'll just have to ignore the oversight of not including the "P" in Roscoe P. Coltrane. ✿

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD

AND SHERIFF ROSCO COLTRANE

DAISY DUKE

GET THE HOTTEST NEW GAMES
IN YOUR HOT LITTLE HANDS.

Get the latest titles delivered to your door the same day they hit our stores.

ROADSTERS '99

• developer/publisher: titus • available: september

Roadsters has come a long way since we last previewed it and is fast becoming one of the deeper and more well-rounded racers the 64 has to offer. The game is certainly a spectacle to look at, with textures that rival the system's best, beautiful lighting and reflections, and realistic weather effects. As we look under the hood of this latest version, there is much to discover. For starters, there is a vast array (upwards of 24) of extremely attractive exotic automobiles to choose from (all of which I want), 10 beautiful tracks that push the 64's poly engine to the max, and eight diverse trash-talkin' drivers. The control is as it should be, tight and precise, mimicking the automobiles represented with great accuracy. The engine sounds, too, really help drive the overall experience home. Modes include Trophy Race with three categories to race through for a total of 30 track variations, Time Trial, and Quick Race. A multiplayer option is also in the works. Roadsters could easily become one of the premier games in the genre for the 64. The stellar mix of sports cars, fantastical environments (don't be surprised if you see a dinosaur at trackside) and what looks to be great depth will be hard to beat. A Dreamcast version of the game is also on the horizon. Stay tuned for more on both as they enter the final stages of development. ⚡

ROADSTERS '99 DC

• developer/publisher: titus • available: tba

We haven't gotten a hands-on look at the DC version, but if the screenshots are any indication, it should stand up to the competition. The environments are more realistic, and the vehicle modeling is a good deal finer, with higher polygon counts and sharper textures; there also appears to be some smooth highlighting effects going on. 🐌

WARPATH

• developer: black ops • publisher: ea • available: fall

Thrill to the ferocious Mega Raptor and Gigantasaurus as these and 12 other dinosaurs battle in destructible arenas based on the Jurassic Park and Lost World films. If the names of these dinosaurs don't frighten you, the edible human power-ups will. Don't worry, children: there's plenty of violence. ✳

40 WINKS
• **developer:** *eurocom* • **publisher:** *gt interactive* • **available:** *november*

You're probably wondering, as did I, "Why would I want to play this obvious kid-fest?" Because, my jaded adventurer, within *40 Winks'* infantile-looking exterior lies a pure-bred action/adventure, brimming with otherworldly mystique and a Nyquil-sized dose of diverse gameplay including exploration, racing, shooting and lots of platforming.

Ruff and Tumble, the two kids at the center of this whimsical adventure, have dreamt their way into the very nightmare they fear the most. It seems the Winks—little creatures that live in your bed with the purpose of making your dreams all warm and fuzzy—have been captured by the Hood Winks, bad Winks who exist to induce nightmares. So, as Ruff or Tumble you must infiltrate the dream world and rescue the 40 Winks, hence the title.

Because the Winks are dream beings, they can change Ruff and Tumble into all sorts of beings to match the environments in which they frolic, from prehistoric temples to outer space races and just about everything in between. So you're not always playing as a pint-sized little kid in PJs, although even when you are, the character designs make doing so more pleasurable than you'd think.

40 Winks is rich in diversity and play mechanics and has a wide range of level and character designs. Imaginative and nicely executed, it's a fantasy game that, dare I say, has fun for all ages written all over it. The engine is among the best the PS has ever seen in a free roamer, and the graphics are fourth generation all the way. We'll have more on this promising new title in the months to come. ⚡

TOMB RAIDER: LAST REVELATION
• **developer:** *core* • **publisher:** *eidos* • **available:** *november*

You're looking at these screen shots, and you're telling yourself, "Tomb Raider 4 looks like Tomb Raider 3, which looked a lot like Tomb Raider 2, which in a lot of ways resembled Tomb Raider." And I'm playing the level that inspired those screen shots, and I'm telling myself, "Tomb Raider 4 seems to play a lot like Tomb Raider 3, which played a lot like Tomb Raider 2, which wasn't much different than Tomb Raider, which really isn't such a bad thing, because there's still no game around that evokes such a commanding sense of adventure and exploration." ✳

SILVER

• *developer:* **infogrames uk** • *publisher:* **infogrames** • *available:* **october**

Infogrames' long-awaited PC RPG, due to finally see release this October, promises to mix tight twitch-style battles with an RPG's depth of setting and story. The pre-rendered world is said to be exceptionally gorgeous, and some of the gameplay elements should be quite interesting. There's an option to control three characters at once, for example, bringing to mind Square's Secret of Mana. The many unfriendly denizens of the game's fantasy world sound like you'll have a great time doing them in.

I would be remiss, as a former devotee of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons (clean since 1993), if I did not note that the game will evidently feature the monstrous Tarrasque, in all its countryside-wasting glory. It's also worth noting that rumors of a Dreamcast port have been popping up frequently. 🐾

V8 SECOND OFFENSE

• *developer/publisher:* **activision** • *available:* **november**

Development of the many versions of Activision's vehicular combat sequel continues apace. In the most recent Dreamcast builds we've played, more and more levels are going in, new cars are becoming available, and the control is gradually tightening up. Things still feel too loose, even though it's much better than it was at E3. There's little sensation of firm, solid grip on the road; it's as if gravity has been turned down too low. When you take a hit from an opponent, or try for the bootlegger turns that were a key maneuver in the original V8, it's surprising how far you fly. Once that gets tuned up, though, this should be a worthy heir to the original. The environments look great in high resolution on the Dreamcast, and some of the new vehicle designs are very original. 🐾

DESTRUCTION DERBY 64

• *developer:* **looking glass studios** • *publisher:* **thq** • *available:* **september**

Yeah, I know. It's another car racing game for N64. But with this one, you're actually encouraged to run into other cars. As a matter of fact, you're granted extra seconds for solid hits and major time bonuses for completely demolishing opponents.

One of the most interesting features of Destruction Derby 64 is that there are more than a dozen hidden cars to unlock and drive. As a stress reliever, the game works; the constant smashing into cars kind of eases the blood. There's even four different battle arenas for DD mayhem. I like the aspect of being able to switch the camera to in front of the car, and driving in reverse to nab a hit. The graphics, control and physics seem to be standard fare these days, but again, that's not what this game is about. 🐾

SUPERCROSS CIRCUIT
• **developer:** idol minds • **publisher:** 989 studios • **available:** nov

Super-Cross Circuit is one of a number of motocross games being readied for release at the end of this year, and it may be in trouble stacked-up against the competitors. The game is extremely pixilated and the rider physics aren't as tight as they could be. The game does move at an extremely high frame rate (creating some control problems) and is filled with options—running the gamut of clothing changes to a create-a-track mode. It also includes quite a few riders and a healthy number of tracks—both indoor and outdoor—as well as a two-player mode.

As with nearly all of the motocross games, the ability to perform stunts when airborne is available and is quite fun, providing you pull it off. To be honest, I found the game to be somewhat comical in its overall presentation. I started with the swarming-bees sound effects and went from there. ※

DRACONUS
• **developer:** treyarch • **publisher:** crave • **available:** winter

Thanks to a recent visit with the guys at Treyarch, we were able to get a first-hand look at Draconus, an amalgamation of quest- and arcade-type gaming wrapped into one very spirited package. The action isn't as gradual as a more traditional RPG, but the elements such as magic, weapon upgrades and player performance all provide that particular aspect.

The male character, Cynric, is heavy on the hand-to-hand combat, with little ability in the hex department, while Aeowyn is just the opposite. The fight engine was running, though still early like the rest of the game conditions. A very simple combo system showed some nice character animations and the enemies appear to be just as intricate as the main characters, each moving slightly different as they circle, duck and use animalistic group tactics to stop you.

Environments are looking very nice too, though a serious amount of tweaking needs to be done in terms of level design. Again, the game is early but the lack of creativeness in certain areas leaves me weary of the full realization of this title. But if Treyarch can carry through with what they have started, we will all be in for a treat. ❧

JUGGERNAUT
• **developer:** tonkinhouse • **publisher:** jaleco • **available:** october

With the PlayStation-exclusive game Juggernaut, add another title to the horror genre of games. But unlike all the recent popular run & gun horror games, Juggernaut is a text-based puzzle game in the vein of D.

Weighing in on a whopping three disks, Juggernaut is long. The premise is that your girlfriend, Sarah, has been possessed by an evil force and you must enter her soul to save her. The game runs on a rail in a first-person perspective, with an icon showing you your travel path options. There is a map screen available to help navigate the mazes, but I found myself drawing my own in order to detail items in rooms, etc. This game will make you think. The puzzles are incredibly thought-provoking and some are layered within other puzzles. It's not for everyone, just those who love tons of atmosphere and puzzles in a game. 🐾

EVOLUTION
• **developer:** sting • **publisher:** ubi soft • **available:** fall

Sting's great little random dungeon RPG, Evolution, has been officially picked up for a U.S. release by Ubi Soft, of all companies. Having received a strong response in Japan thanks to its highly appealing character design and simple, satisfying gameplay, Evolution will hopefully pave the way for future RPGs in Sega's action-heavy Dreamcast software line-up. Currently undergoing a fairly straightforward localization, expect this title sometime in the fall, around the same time the Japanese sequel launches. ※

all format **previews** →

NINTENDO 64

PlayStation

Dreamcast

PC CD ROM

オールフォーマット
プリビュー

page 57

all-format previews

SUPERCROSS 2000
• developer/publisher: ea • available: fall

PlayStation

EA's entry into the recent and very welcome Motocross invasion, Supercross 2000, is, I'm very happy to say, looking extremely promising. Though still in need of some minor control tweaks and physics adjustments, the game does a lot right that the other guys still haven't figured out, like how the body reacts in conjunction with the suspension, and how throttle blips produce rooster tails – nice little sprays of chunk from the bike's knobby tires. Heck, in EA's game the dirt actually has physics! It's quite a sight. They've also dialed in what a first-turn assault really feels like and negotiating tight corners in a stadium setting. You have to wrestle with the controls just a hair too much currently, but judging by what's already here I think it's safe to assume that the game will be buttoned up with care. Aside from the actual racing, which covers every major stadium and features MX's biggest stars, EA has included a stellar replay mode packed with all manner of freeze frame, has some great music and ambient sound going, and have even found a tolerable announcer to man the mike! My interest is definitely piqued. ⚡

WHEEL OF TIME
• developer: legend entertainment • publisher: gt interactive • available: nov

PC CD ROM

The first thing needed to be said about The Wheel of Time is that this game is absolutely gorgeous – both in the opening and cut-scene cinemas, as well as in the actual gameplay. WOT uses an updated version of the Unreal engine, and it's quite striking.

The medieval fantasy story is based on the popular books of Robert Jordan—a modern-day J.R.R. Tolkien. In a refreshing change of pace, players will take the role of a female character—a sorceress of good, sworn to forever battle the Dark One—and guide her through the immense fantasy world.

There will be networked gameplay options and players will be able to design and build their own fortresses with a variety of harrowing obstacles.

Whether your PC system is state-of-the-art or just good enough, you will be absolutely captivated by WOT. And with 10 Robert Jordan books to cull from, this could quite possibly be the next great gaming legacy. 🐾

OMIKRON
• developer: quantic dream • publisher: eidos • available: winter

PC CD ROM

At the very beginning of Omikron:The Nomad Soul, the game's main character, an honest police officer named Kay'l, appeared and started talking directly to me through the monitor. He informed me that he'd been killed and needs my soul to inhabit his body and bring him back to life in order to try and figure out what's going on in the city of Omikron. It was at this point that I knew this was going to be a weird game. The weirdness all made sense though when I discovered that David Bowie composed and performed all original songs for the game and is a key character in it.

There are some really nice aspects to Omikron: the game is deep; the voice samples—over 200 minutes worth—match the character lip movements; hundreds of people and automobiles move about the city streets; and several game play styles are combined into one overall game. There is even a very cool training session in Kay'l's apartment where you practice hand-to-hand combat with a hologram. And since you are actually a free-roaming soul (hence the name Nomad Soul), when you die, you will be able to inhabit the body of the first person who comes in contact with you. 🐾

GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEWS

GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

DOMESTIC REVIEWS

DEMOLITION RACER	C-	C-	
FINAL FANTASY COLLECTION	B		
G-POLICE: WEAPONS OF JUSTICE	C+		
GRANDIA	A-		
HYDRO THUNDER	C	C-	
MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD	D-	F	
OUTCAST	A		
RAYMAN 2	A		
SHADOW MAN	B+		
SILHOUETTE MIRAGE	A-	A	B
TAIL CONCERTO	C+	B-	
TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD 3	C+		
TRICKSTYLE	B	C	C+
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB	B	B	
WINBACK	B+		
WIPEOUT 3	A-	A-	A-
XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS	C+		

IMPORT REVIEWS

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN 2	B
BANGAIO	B+
COOL BOARDERS BURRRN	B-
DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION 2ND RMX	B+
GUNDAM 0079	C
MARIONETTE HANDLER	B-
STAR IXIOM	C+
TOSHINDEN SUBARU	C+
TOUKON RETSUDEN 4	C-

SPORTS REVIEWS

FOX SPORTS NBA 2000	B-		
FOX SPORTS NHL 2000	B-		
MTV SPORTS SNOWBOARDING	B+		
NASCAR 2000	B		
TONY HAWK PRO SKATER	A	A	A-

GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEW SYSTEM

(A+)
(A)
(A-)
(B+)
(B)
(B-)
(C+)
(C)
(C-)
(D+)
(D)
(D-)
(F)

[A+ to A] Games in this bracket are the best of the best. They feature the highest quality visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. *Example: Silent Hill*

[A- to B] Excellent, solid, and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight frame rate problems, a marginally disappointing ending or any number of small quirks may take an otherwise exalted release down a notch. *Example: Ridge Racer T4*

[B- to C] Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems plus a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. *Example: Lode Runner 3D*

[C- to D] Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. *Example: Sengoku Turb*

[D- to F] Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Example: Turok 2 GBC*

1. Games marked in RED are highly recommended for your gaming collection.
2. Games marked in YELLOW should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your day. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX™

ONE SHOT WONDER.

Rainbow Six is as close as it gets to the intensity of real-life tactical operations. You'll control an elite multi-national strike force battling international terrorism.

Rainbow Six's explosive real-world action is coupled with spine-tingling tactics to create a gaming experience you won't soon forget. Rainbow Six is so real you'll find yourself yelling "Tango down!" in your sleep for weeks.

NINTENDO⁶⁴

PlayStation

GAME BOY COLOR

www.redstorm.com

Red Storm ENTERTAINMENT

RATING PENDING
RP
Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

GRANDIA
BY RYAN LOCKHART

Once, we feared it might never see these shores...
Now Game Arts' magnum opus prepares to delight the American RPG audience

Dey say' a "Everybody is-a born to play-a a part in-a life." Da same goes-a for you. Just in.

Brought to us by the talented staff at GameArts, the company behind the incredible Lunar series, Grandia is quite possibly their greatest offering yet. First introduced on the Sega Saturn in late 1997, this epic RPG has finally made its way to the PlayStation, and now, thanks to Sony, into American homes. Packed with beautiful graphics, a moving quest, and enchanting music, Grandia serves as both an incredible experience for fans of this genre, and as an

important reminder that RPGs don't necessarily need an hour of FMV to be extraordinary.

The tale of Grandia starts off innocently enough - a story about an energetic and naïve young boy who wants to follow in his father's footsteps and become a great adventurer. His carefree dreams suddenly become more complex as he learns that the leader of the local army is collecting antique artifacts for a corrupt purpose—a purpose that could destroy an ancient civilization that lies beyond the edge of the world. A race to discover and save this mysterious society is on, and so begins a story of friendship, adventure, and innocence lost.

That's right, Grandia doesn't have any world-destroying space demons, no surprise deaths of any major characters, no time traveling, no ancient prophecy that a boy in a silly blue hat will save his land from the ultimate evil. In fact, this game has none of the aspects we've come to expect from major RPGs. Perhaps that's what makes Grandia so wonderful: it harks back to a time when games didn't have to play out like Hollywood major

Even on the PlayStation, the graphics engine excels.
Grandia creates a huge, detailed new world

motion pictures to be memorable. And what a memorable game Grandia is.

The camera sweeps through towns vibrant with color, it bobs in between canyons to show you your objective in a dungeon, and scales a mighty statue in a lost ruin. While it's true that Grandia's 3D engine shows a bit of age in frame rate and such (it is nearly two years old), it still never fails to impress in terms of scope. It captures that classic 16-bit feel with hand-drawn sprites and fantastically textured polygons, and features a camera (similar to Xenogears) that can be manually rotated around outdoor areas to your heart's content.

Even putting the brilliant storyline and incredible graphics engine aside, Grandia is one of the best-playing RPGs ever, one that thankfully won't cause you to cringe every time the battle music starts. A departure from most modern RPGs, the combat system is actually fun, featuring solid and innovative (thanks to a very useful time-attack meter) gameplay. You can learn more-powerful spells by practicing old ones, stronger weapons can be bought or found, and new combo attacks can be researched by mixing up your spell and weapon uses.

Aside from the Saturday-morning-cartoon voice acting that often plagues touching moments in Grandia's storyline, the only major complaint I have about this game is that it almost came too late. Grandia was way ahead of its time when it first hit the Saturn all those years ago, and while it is still nice by today's standards, it would have delivered a much stronger visual impact if someone had brought it out for the system it was originally made for. Then again, we should be grateful we got it at all.

Will everyone enjoy Grandia as much as I did? Probably not. Grandia is one of those rare games that concentrates more on delivering a fun experience rather than a purely beautiful one, and folks weaned on the visually intense 32-bit Final Fantasy games might walk away a bit disappointed. On the other hand, those of us who have fond memories of classic 16-bit-style RPG adventures probably couldn't ask for a greater experience than Grandia. I surely couldn't.

What IS this? There's a Golem here too!

The Lost World

Dight Village
Valley of the Flying Dragon

- ■ SUPERIOR 3D GRAPHICS
- ■ INNOVATIVE, ENGAGING COMBAT SYSTEM
- ■ MOVING STORY AND ENGAGING CHARACTERS
- ■ WHEN WILL AMERICANS GET VOICE ACTING RIGHT?

REPUBLIC SAYS...   AMERICAN GAMERS ARE LUCKY TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THIS ONE. GRANDIA IS EVERY BIT THE EQUAL OF ANY RPG OUT THERE.

A-

GRANDIA

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGIES
BY BRADY FIECHTER

A much-appreciated Final Fantasy collection awakens the soaring Final Fantasy spirit of old

If Final Fantasy VI existed as nothing more than perfectly rendered nostalgia, it would be worth revisiting for the memories alone. But there is still an extraordinary richness to the game that refuses to be stifled by the shadow of modern game design, and playing this five-year-old classic is a rewarding experience in any era.

Unfortunately, Final Fantasy V, the second FF title contained on Final Fantasy Anthology and the one game in the series to never reach an American audience, is a struggle to get into. Playing it for the first time, I found this musty game's emphasis on battle over story and its overwhelming dated visuals hopeless. Only those drunk with nostalgia need apply.

Other than a touch of loading time, this much-appreciated collection faithfully presents these FF RPGs exactly as they appeared on the SNES; the only additions are striking CG sequences. These are not of the same caliber as those seen in FF8, but they are beautifully done and warrant any FF aficionado's undivided attention. With a music CD complimenting the package—choice Final Fantasy VI's tracks are timeless—Final Fantasy Anthology belongs in any collector or die-hard's library. ✼

Rhodox
GreaseMnk

EDGAR 128
LOCKE 118
TERRA 43

"Thousand Arms fuses hand-drawn sprites, beautiful polygonal landscapes, and interactive anime cut scenes together with stunning results."
-Gamers Republic

THOUSAND ARMS

Kyleen: Do you think you can survive in this world by following the rules?

• Double disk RPG epic packed with theatrical quality animation and 12 hours of spoken dialog!
• The first ever RPG/Dating Simulation on the Playstation®!
• Unique combination of hand-drawn artwork and wonderful 3-D environments!

ATLUS
www.atlus.com

RPG

RAYMAN 2
THE GREAT ESCAPE
BY DAVE HALVERSON

Magical. Enchanting. Engaging. Just some of the words that may come to mind as you guide Rayman through his latest adventure on the Nintendo 64. Beside the fact that, from a technological standpoint, the developers at Ubi Soft have the 64 jumping through a whole new set of hoops, Rayman 2 is sewn together with the utmost care and precision, creating an immersive, cinematic experience. Breakthrough gameplay stints segue into masterful cinemas with every passing level, and the cast of characters is nothing short of extraordinary.

The story centers around a pint-sized pirate king who's enslaving just about the entire population of Rayman's world with the intention of selling them off to an intergalactic circus. To disarm their opposition, the pirate hordes have disrupted the celestial harmony of the planet by scattering their power, the star energy, into 1001 fragments. As the game begins, Rayman himself is imprisoned, devoid of any powers, until his old friend Globox shows up with a gift from the intoxicating feline fairy, Ly. With one magical Lum, Rayman gathers enough power to break free, and the adventure begins.

Once Rayman frees Ly (his first quest), she reveals to him the secret of Polochus and the four mystical masks needed to awaken him. Only with his help will Rayman be able to fulfill his destiny and defeat Razorbeard and his evil pirate horde. Along the way, Rayman will heed the assistance of Globox on many occasions, including a rain-dance sequence you'll have to see to believe, as Rayman helps him overcome his fears in order to utilize his magical abilities. Rayman will also seek the wisdom of the Teensies, a tiny band of nutty wizard Kings who help Rayman cross over into the four worlds where the masks are concealed.

A complex mixture of diverse and ingenious gameplay elements, the long road to each mask will take you

page 65   nintendo 64 review

Every bit as good, if not better, in 3D, Rayman's N64 debut is one of the year's best!

Razorbeard's boosted his buddies and Rayman wants 'em back!

through some of the most fantastic landscapes you have ever seen. The payoff for each—a meeting with Polochus—is a jaw-dropping experience, as are the bosses and numerous situations within each world. Some of the visuals in Rayman 2 exceed any I have seen to this point on the Nintendo 64. I know that's saying a lot, but believe me, there are times when you will not believe what you are seeing come out of this cartridge. UbiSoft uses every trick in the book and throws in some new ones of their own design to astound you.

The gameplay in Rayman 2 is somewhat advanced, aimed squarely at the seasoned platformer, although beginners will make their way eventually, and probably love every second spent doing sections over. Light years beyond conventional run-and-jump, R2 takes you through just about every gameplay type imaginable. Rayman rides a crazy rocket, flies latched to exploding rocket barrels and other gizmos, water skis through treacherous waters, guides himself down firefalls and other wild rivers on floating berries, and must traverse a whole slew of

disappearing platforms and catwalks. You'll also encounter swimming scenarios, have to figure out complex puzzles, climb on numerous vertical surfaces, and use your shooting prowess in more than a few unique ways. The end result is a game that is not only impossible to put down, but that you'll wish you never had to.

On par with Rare's N64 offerings, Rayman 2 is an instant entry for game of the year. The music, direction, and overall presentation of the game are the stuff that legends are made of. Coming to a Dreamcast near you this Holiday season, the game will deliver the first platformer with real depth, although 64 users shouldn't feel like they're missing out. The DC game will be essentially exactly the same, save hi-res graphics and perhaps enhanced sound. What's here is about as good as it gets in the world of 3D critter games, and should not be missed by anyone, anywhere, who loves video games. ⚡

Gameplay is serious business at Ubi Soft. To the right are three examples of things Rayman must endure: gliding, rocket rides, and steering with shots. Sharpen those skills!

- PERHAPS THE BEST GRAPHICS ON THE SYSTEM YET
- UNFORGETTABLE REAL-TIME CINEMAS
- INCREDIBLE CHARACTER AND LEVEL DESIGNS
- XLNT SOUNDTRACK. CRAZY FX. IT'S ALL GOOD!

REPUBLIC SAYS... RAYMAN'S GOING TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH THIS TIME AROUND. THE GREAT ESCAPE IS A TRIUMPH IN EVERY RESPECT. YOU'LL PLAY IT AGAIN AND AGAIN. I GUARANTEE!

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

BY DAVE HALVERSON

I've probably written more about Silhouette Mirage than anyone else on the planet. From the game's first sighting on the Sega Saturn many moons ago to the fruition of WD's PS incarnation, I've been yacking away like the poster boy for small dual-colored witches with Christ-like implications – so I had every intention of letting someone else have at SM for the big PlayStation review. As fate would have it, though—and fate can be a mother—with the game arriving too close to deadline for anyone else to fully reap its many wonders, I again have been handed the torch. So here's the deal. If you (a) read GR regularly, or (b) have a thing for amazing 2D platformers, you either already know how I feel about Silhouette Mirage or are already planning to buy it the second it comes out, so I'm just going to seal the deal with this review.

Here we go. When the dust settled on the difficulty issue, WD wisely chose the middle ground and has tweaked weapon usage to a point where it's neither too powerful nor not powerful enough, making the game roughly 30 percent harder and perhaps, as a result, a bit better. Not being able to hold on to the beam for the whole game did disturb me at first, but it also forced me to figure out the game even more than I already have—and I didn't think that was possible. But then, of course, you have no idea what I'm talking about unless you played the import SS version, so that goes for the three of you! But then again this is GR, so the five of you! You really don't want to cut through a game of this magnitude without uncovering all of its clever nuances. Let's just leave it at that.

■ LEGENDARY 2D GAMEPLAY
■ LEVEL AND CHARACTER DESIGN FROM THE HEAVENS

■ MULTIPLE ENDINGS PLUS A HIDDEN BOSS
■ INCREDIBLE SOUNDTRACK

REPUBLIC SAYS... WELL, HERE IT IS: OUR SOLE JUSTICE 2D GAME FOR THE YEAR. I SURE HOPE THERE'S MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM.

A-

SHADOW MAN

BY DAVE HALVERSON

Fusing Metroid-like gameplay, expansive 3D environments and voodoo themes, Acclaim's macabre masterpiece has franchise written all over it...

The sheer scope of this game is awe inspiring. In fact, it may be the largest ever in terms of acreage. The closest thing to actually slipping into insanity, the game's numerous portals—which lead to wonderfully complex levels laden with multiple paths and intriguing puzzle elements—are linked by a complex network of infested tunnels. As you traverse them, Samus flashbacks abound as you jog past the numerous impassable barriers that can only be accessed once you attain the ability marked on each. Ultimately, Shadow Man will gain the ability to run, grapple, and swim through fire, use various voodoo weapons, and traverse the real world using his Shadow Powers to kill "The 5"—serial killers intertwined in a complex and intriguing story.

To obtain the game's items, Mike LeRoi must slip through a portal using his dead brother's teddy bear (complete with his echoing chant: "C'mon, slow poke") to a place called Darkside where, by gathering Dark Souls, his shadow powers grow and fester. Here, Mike is dead, so he can fall from any height, swim underwater (or under blood) indefinitely, and use the powerful Shadow Gun, which grows in strength along with Mike. Each time Mike's lifeforce goes up a notch, it allows him to break through new portals that lead to new items which continually expand the adventure, allowing you to return to previous stages and use their power. Once you visit a territory and mark it by using the Teddy Bear, you can return there instantly, at any time. This makes the game virtually impossible to put down: for many nights I found myself playing into the early morning hours, barely aware of the time. The quest for Dark Souls, Zad tattoos, and items becomes a feverish quest, much like the legendary Metroid.

The game's ambience is commendable. The enemies, a sickening bunch of rather intelligent (and bloodthirsty) maniacs and winged demons, are relentless, and seem to actually thirst for Mike's blood. The music, a disturbing blend of unholy chants, murmurs, and a twisted children's music-box

- ■ MASSIVE ENVIRONMENTS AND EXTENSIVE EXPLORATION
- ■ BONE-CHILLING MUSIC AND SOUND
- ■ REAL-TIME CINEMAS WITH SPOKEN DIALOGUE
- ■ METROID-STYLE GAMEPLAY: MANY HOURS OF DISCOVERY

REPUBLIC SAYS... AS GOOD AS SHADOW MAN IS ON THE 64, THE PC AND DREAMCAST VERSIONS BRING SMOOTH 60 FPS ACTION AND HI-REZ TO THE TABLE! A MUST-OWN GAME ON ANY PLATFORM.

B+

WINBACK 64
BY DAVE HALVERSON

Winback delivers, as promised, everything you'd expect from a game of covert ops from Koei, rulers of all that is strategic. Taking their first and perhaps sole Nintendo 64 project very seriously, they have tweaked and tuned Winback for your ultimate approval. In the vein of Metal Gear, it's a game of cat and mouse that is unlike anything else in the N64 arsenal and therefore garners instant appeal from a wide market demographic.

The game follows the exploits of Jean-Luc Cougar, a highly trained S.C.A.T. operative who gets separated from the rest of his squad en route to exterminate a terrorist group that has taken control of a U.S. satellite and base of operations. To infiltrate their HQ and ultimately take down their leader, he'll need to make his way through a series of complex missions that require the utmost proficiency in military assault tactics. Along the way, in high style, Jean-Luc meets up with other S.C.A.T. members still on the mission, as well as members of the terrorist assault unit. These scenarios tie the story together nicely, provide a strong team atmosphere, and excellent dramatic segues. In total you'll interact with upwards of 20 characters. Basically, short of joining up, this is about as close you'll ever come to a realistic infiltration mission without getting bloody. The game is produced in such a way that your connection with Jean-Luc and the missions is uncanny. This is due in no small part to an excellent control scheme, super-realistic animation, and first-rate game design. As I said, the game delivers on all counts exactly what it should. Short of hi-res textures (Winback began development before the Ram Pak hit the market), which aren't really missed so much due to the games military color schemes, and Jean-Luc's slightly robotic running animation, it's all good. The game is a joy to control, or even just to watch. Zooming in close to any character, you can easily distinguish facial features and full military garb. Koei's Active Motion System calculates character motion data on the fly in response to the players input, for the utmost realism: Jean-Luc alone has over 350 motions. And when the day is done, and you've put the Crying Lions in their place (about six-feet under) there's a surplus of versus play waiting for up to four players. Choose between the always popular Death Match (and remember kids, don't try this at home) Lethal Tag, Cube Hunt, Quick Draw, Team Battle, or Point Match. Winback's got it all and it's coming your way right about now to keep you firing until Jet Force hits. So have at it, people. Koei have done a fine job with Winback and I highly recommend it. ⚡

- EXCELLENT BLENDING OF ACTION AND REAL TIME CINEMA
- PRECISION CONTROL - XLNT CAMERA
- HUGE one-PLAYER GAME PLUS 6 MULTI-PLAYER MODES!
- UNIQUE TO THE SYSTEM

B+

REPUBLIC SAYS... KOEI FILL A VOID IN THE N64 ARSENAL AND AT THE SAME TIME GIVE US THE FIRST NINTENDO GAME TO CONJURE UP FEELINGS OF SOLID SNAKE.

TRICK STYLE
BY DAVE HALVERSON

Criterion's second Dreamcast offering is loaded with racing, stunts, sprawling futuristic arenas and vivid effects... Let's go!

Trick Style, Criterion Studios second Dreamcast offering following the sub-par Redline Racer (which has since been transformed into a much better game by Ubi Soft), has shades of the unpolished nature of RR, but, thankfully, is a much better game. After breezing through the game's training phase, in which you are prompted by a rather annoying chubby coach, it's onto the futuristic highways and byways of post-2K locales from around the globe. The racing takes place on long stretches of diverse terrain littered with obstacles, jumps, speed hoops and pads, and Magnorails. Contestants in this sport of the future come in three classes, or lobbies, as they like to call them: Stunters, full on show-offs; Racers, your basic speed freaks; and Bullies, those who relish in physical contact. The key to success lies in knowing your racer and the quickest lines through each awe-inspiring course, hitting key jumps, Magnorails, pads and hoops with precision, and possessing Wipeout-like racing skills to control your thrust; there's definitely some method to this madness. In order to upgrade your board, which is inevitable, you must first prove you're worthy by defeating your coach in various Challenge competitions. Each time you win, he'll teach you a new trick which you can then use in the Boss bowls to score enough trick points to earn faster, more stable boards. It's all in a good days glide. The control in TS is agreeably floaty, as it should be; you're floating, and so timing sharp corners and knowing when to decelerate is a bit tricky but the psychics are quite forgiving. Although you can't re-map the control scheme, the game handles very well overall. Mastering the game's deeper control mechanisms, like the luge, is also key. The luge maneuver puts the player in a tuck position to catch and ride the games thin green Magnorails, high-speeds shortcuts placed sporadically in each locale. Magnorails are usually placed in areas where utilizing them will give you a definite advantage, if not the win. They're hard to hit, but pretty much always worth the effort. And win you must, as only first place advances in Trick Style.

- ENVIRONMENTS TO DIE FOR, LOVE THY DREAMCAST
- OFFERS MORE THAN JUST STRAIGHT RACING

- KICKIN' SOUNDTRACK/LAME VOICE ACTING... EVEN TRADE!
- TONS OF MOVES TO MASTER AND VMU MINI GAMES!

REPUBLIC SAYS... WHILE TRICK STYLE ISN'T A PERFECT GAME IN TERMS OF BALANCE, FOR RACING THRILLS IT BURIES THE LIKES OF HYDRO THUNDER. A GOOD FIRST EFFORT AT A GREAT CONCEPT.

OUTCAST
BY DAN JEVONS

Outcast places you in the combat boots of Cutter Slade, an ex-Navy Seal turned government agent recruited by the military to lead an elite team of scientists into a parallel dimension (specifically, a planet named Adelpha) to look for a damaged experimental probe that's causing all kinds of trouble back on earth. Things get complicated when the natives on Adelpha, a peaceful race known as the Talon, proclaim Slade to be the Ulukai-a prodigal savior sent from the heavens to deliver them from the tyranny of their evil ruler. If Slade wants their help finding the lost probe, he's going to have to play along with their prophecy and all that it entails.

Running on Appeal's proprietary software-only 'Paradise' engine, the terrain in Outcast is composed entirely of voxels, which gives the game a very, shall we say, unique look. As a friend of mine put it, Outcast is the most beautiful ugly game he's ever seen. I agree. The many regions of Adelpha are lush, detailed and expansive while at the same time being both pixely and glitchy. The polygon characters and creatures are, however, unanimously excellent and the engine sports some glorious eye candy, including phenomenal pyrotechnics, lens flare, and the best water effect ever experienced in digital form, bar none. Unfortunately this all comes at a price: the maximum resolution the game allows is 512x384, and you'll need an absolute ninja PC to get an acceptable frame rate at any res. Thankfully, everyone will be able to enjoy the impressive sound effects and movie-quality soundtrack courtesy of Lennie Moore and the Moscow Symphony Orchestra.

Outcast is billed as an "action/adventure" and, remarkably, that's exactly what you get. You'll spend an equal amount of time exploring and chatting with the natives as you will blowing the crap out of enemy soldiers and indigenous beasties. This marriage of RPG elements with traditional third-person action gives Outcast a very unique dynamic, which I'm fairly certain won't be to everyone's taste. Initially, the non-linearity of your quest is quite imposing and there is an awful lot of talking in the game to get through (albeit with top-notch voice acting).

But stick with it, because once you get a few hours in I guarantee you'll be hooked. Not only are the battles a lot of fun (the weapons are very satisfying), but the

warning

- ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GAMES AVAILABLE
- ONE OF THE UGLIEST GAMES AVAILABLE
- A VAST AND FULLY REALIZED ALIEN WORLD
- ENJOYABLE MIX OF EXPLORATION AND COMBAT

REPUBLIC SAYS... | STEEP SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS ASIDE, OUTCAST IS A GREAT EVOLUTIONARY STEP FOR THE ACTION/ADVENTURE GENRE. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. | **A-**

all-format reviews →

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

• *developer:* universal studios digital arts • *publisher:* ea • *available:* now

I don't know many guys who wouldn't want to fool around with a scantily clad vixen in a leather skirt and halter-top, although I'm sure that sword could shrink a few egos. I wouldn't want to fall victim to a hit from her Chakram either. Regardless, helping Xena save villages from pirates and carrying out other missions based on actual episodes from the television series is also inviting.

Like the show, the game is based heavily on action, only with clever puzzles spread about to keep Xena from falling victim to the dreaded hack'n'slash stereotype. For the most part, the puzzles are what kept me involved, dispelling the sometimes-monotonous moments. One of the game's other strong points is the handy Chakram. The camera follows its path as you control its direction, which is a vital part of the play mechanic and a gas to dial in as the game progresses.

Where Xena falters is in the control department. Moving Xena about is a bit labored, and turning around can be frustrating, especially when being attacked from behind. The Environments are beautiful, with excellent textures for a PS game, and the color schemes for each level really add to the experience, creating the look of the TV show. Aimed at a broad demographic, Xena's flaws shouldn't keep her fans away. This is a solid action title that mimics the look of the series very effectively. But the next Tomb Raider it is not. Perhaps her next outing will be.

G-POLICE 2: WEAPONS OF JUSTICE

• *developer:* the wheelhaus • *publisher:* psygnosis • *available:* now

Have you ever had one of those 50-50 ice cream bars with the orange Popsicle on the outside and the vanilla ice cream on the inside? You love the vanilla but don't really care for the orange part. And you deal with and try to ignore the orange in order to enjoy the vanilla, but the orange is always taking away from the pleasure. Well, that was kind of the dilemma facing me with this game.

G-Police 2: Weapons of Justice is a multiple vehicle shooter (which I love) packed with sweet weapons, an interesting story and great-controlling vehicles. But the graphics constantly hinder the pleasure of playing. The background draw-in rate is so bad that it actually affects the gameplay. There was one point halfway through the game where I couldn't even see the airborne boss ship right in front of me, but yet I was getting pelted with bullets.

There's a lot going for this game, but I would be remiss in my job if I didn't mention this major drawback. I recommend that you rent GP2 before deciding to purchase it, because, who knows, maybe you'll like the orange part as well as the vanilla part.

TEST DRIVE OFF ROAD 3

• *developer:* accolade • *publisher:* infogrames • *available:* now

Test Drive Off Road 3 has huge, epic courses (thanks to the streaming engine) and nearly 30 licensed vehicles to choose from, but playing it is a bit too much of a struggle. The frame rate leaves a little to be desired, and keeping your vehicle pointed in the right direction takes a lot of care—a style of gameplay that is at odds with its seemingly rough and tumble nature. Some may appreciate this aspect of the game's challenge, and there's plenty to TDOR3. You can upgrade your vehicles in myriad ways, and the branching courses and split screen mode provide some replay incentive, but most will probably find the game a little tedious overall. Certainly a better effort than Test Drive Off Road 2, but not yet great.

COUNTER + POINT

Trick Style · Critereon Studios · Acclaim

B

- It's easy to pull ideas from the Extreme School of Design without worrying about creativity
- Poor balance between racing & scoring trick points. 1st place determined by last-minute performance

C → ← **C+**

- Vast, expansive 3D environments
- Weak frame rate, annoying progression, and gross load times

Brady Fiechter

Criterion Studios must have been so drunk on the power of the Dreamcast that they felt compelled to show off how sophisticated their game could be, forgetting to pay attention to an engaging sense of design. The game is bright and flashy, but it exists only as a garish graphics show, bereft of inspiration and flavor, with characters that are obnoxiously boring. The track design is also handled clumsily, with no sense of flow to the layout—needing a direction arrow to point the way is not good. The challenge of the game lies in mastering the acrobatics of the boards, which some gamers might enjoy, but when the game attempts to be a pure racer, its crippled by sloppy AI.

David F. Smith

Trick Style has the makings of a great game inside it, but like Redline Racer before it, it could have used some time in the shop before release. The frame rate is surprisingly weak for a Dreamcast game, dropping disturbingly low at times. It's the price you pay for the beautiful levels, I suppose, but a better balance between looks and speed should have been found. Also bothersome were the obnoxious practice-mode tests, and lots of annoying load times (with a 16x drive?). The soundtrack grates after a while as well.

Virtua Fighter 3tb · Genki · Sega

- Deep, realistic gameplay is constantly offering up new surprises
- In light of Soul Calibur, VF3 isn't quite as special as it seemed at the time of Japanese DC launch

B → ← **B**

- Durable Virtua Fighter play mechanics loved by many
- It's a year old, and it shows

Mike Hobbs

VF has really been shown up by Soul Calibur, both graphically and in the accessibility of its gameplay, and Yu Suziki's game now comes across as dry and a little bit dated. If Genki's conversion had been an exact match for the Model 3 original, VF might have held up a little better. It still looks incredible by current standards, of course, and the gameplay is virtually arcade perfect, meaning that it's very deep and realistic, something which has seemingly kept American gamers at a distance. But for those that give it the time, VF3 is a wonderfully satisfying game to master, though most players would probably prefer the flash of Soul Calibur to the staunch realism of VF3.

Brady Fiechter

When a masterpiece like Soul Calibur casts the glow of its striking images over other fighters, they wilt from its intense presence. Virtua Fighter 3tb is the latest victim, arriving to the American Dreamcast a year after its launch in Japan. I never found Virtua Fighter's design compelling in the first place, and now it seems flatter than ever. But playing Virtua Fighter 3tb is to engage in truly unique 3D fighting, and the depths of its technique arguably match, if not eclipse, Soul Calibur. They are completely different games, but for artistic expression and masterful visuals, Soul Calibur is the only fighting game worth playing.

Demolition Racer · PitBull Syndicate · Infogrames

- I like the idea of the game, but engaging control and physics are nonexistent
- Dull track design and lifeless graphics

C- → ← **C-**

- The premise wears thin quite quickly
- No convincing sense of the action

Brady Fiechter

Demolition Racer is obviously meant to be intuitive and easy to pick up and play, and this is exactly where the game takes its first wrong turn. The cars employ very rudimentary physics routines, handling with no sense of realism or weight. Contact with an opponent is always exaggerated and unrealistic, which turns the game into a haphazard search-and-destroy mission; this might have worked, had the cars imparted more dynamic force and evoked a true feeling of impact. A few minor adjustments to the gameplay would have helped immensely, but the dull, muted color scheme and the harsh contrast of the cars, which look like they were painted on the screen, ensure the game's mediocrity.

Mike Hobbs

The novelty of smashing up cars struck me as cool when the PSX was launched over four years ago. Now my tastes have changed and the concept seems a bit thin. The same reaction occurs when one is subject to the game for the first time: stimulation from the idea of being able to knock your car around, knowing that it is primary only to not completely crippling your own car. After about 10 or 15 minutes you're looking for a reason as to why you want to continue playing. The car models are not very exciting and some major texture twitches in the environments keep the action from becoming convincing. Some may forgive these imperfections for sake of freedom of total ruin.

COUNTER + POINT

PlayStation

Originally Reviewed By Mike Hobbs [page 20] · Counter · Point 87.13457 ·

wipeout 3 · *Leeds Studio · Psygnosis*

A-

■ PERHAPS THE BEST RACING GAME ON THE SYSTEM, FAR ECLIPSING PREVIOUS WIPEOUTS
■ TRACKSIDE DETAILS, LIKE THE GIANT CONCRETE CAT AND FLASHING VIDEO SCREEN, ARE CLASSIC WIPEOUT FIXTURES

A- → **A-**

■ OUTDOOR TRACKS INDUCE TRANCE-LIKE MOMENTS
■ PRECISE CONTROLS ESTABLISH PROLONGED ENJOYMENT

Brady Fiechter

WIPEOUT XL WAS A BIT OF A DISAPPOINTMENT, TRADING IN QUIET AMBIENCE FOR MORE RADICAL, KINETIC DESIGN, AND SENSATIONAL DIPS AND TURNS FOR MORE SPEED-INTENSIVE TRACKS. WITH THIS THIRD INSTALLMENT IN THE SERIES, I'M PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WITH THE GAME'S ABILITY TO RESONATE WITH THE SAME INTENSE FREQUENCY OF THE FIRST WIPEOUT. RIVALED ONLY BY THE RIDGE RACER 4 ENGINE, WIPEOUT 3 IS A TECHNICAL POWERHOUSE, COMPLIMENTED BY THE BOLD ARTISTIC STROKES OF DESIGNERS REPUBLIC. THE SPEED OF THE GAME IS INCOMPARABLE, AND THE TRACK DESIGN IS AT ONCE IMPRESSIVE AND DAUNTING: THE CORKSCREW TURNS AND OBSCURED CORNERS DEMAND A TERRIFIC FOCUS. THIS SERIES EXISTS SIMPLY IN A CLASS ALL ITS OWN.

Dave Halverson

HAVING BEEN SOMEWHAT DISILLUSIONED AFTER WIPEOUT XL AND 64, I'M EXTREMELY PLEASED TO SEE PSYGNOSIS RETURN THE SERIES TO ITS TECHNO-MEETS-ERGONOMIC ROOTS WITH W3. THE CHARACTER PROFILES ARE STILL ON THE SIDELINES (ONLY I LIKED THEM ANYWAY), BUT EVERYTHING ELSE FROM THE COURSE DESIGN TO THE TECHNOLOGY AND SOUNDTRACK ARE FOURTH GENERATION ALL THE WAY. COMPLIMENTING PERHAPS THE BEST DESIGN, BALANCE, CONTROL, AND DEPTH THE SERIES HAS ENJOYED THUS FAR, THERE IS LITERALLY NO CLIPPING (!) AS WELL. W3 IS BY FAR THE MOST DIFFICULT SO FAR, BUT IN A VERY INTELLIGENT WAY. THROUGH MEMORIZATION AND FOCUS, ONCE YOU MEET THE LEARNING CURVE AND BECOME DIALED INTO THE GAME'S SUBTLE NUANCES, IT'S LIKE ONE LONG FUTURISTIC JOYRIDE.

PlayStation

Originally Reviewed By Tom Stratton [page 78] · Counter · Point 87.13457 ·

Tony Hawk Pro Skater · *Neversoft · Activision*

A

■ INCREDIBLY WELL-ROUNDED SKATEBOARDING GAME
■ POSSIBLE YEAR-END AWARDS CANDIDATE

A- → **A-**

■ GREAT-LOOKING LEVELS AND HAND-MADE ANIMATIONS
■ TIGHTEST CONTROL OF ANY SKATING GAME I'VE EVER PLAYED

Pooch

THE INCLUSION OF A VIDEO CLIP OF HAWK'S HISTORIC 900 AT THE 1999 X-GAMES IN S.F. IS WORTH THE PRICE OF THIS GAME ALONE. BUT EVEN WITHOUT IT, THIS IS A STANDOUT TITLE WITH A FUTURE LEGACY. IT'S A TIGHT, FUN, POLISHED AND REALISTIC GAME—THE BEST OF THE RECENT BATCH OF SKATEBOARDING GAMES. I DIDN'T THINK A SKATEBOARDING GAME OF THIS MAGNITUDE WAS POSSIBLE, BUT HERE IT IS. AND WITH THE ADDITION OF INPUT FROM TONY HAWK HIMSELF—UNQUESTIONABLY THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOARDER—MUSIC YOU CAN BOARD TO (INCLUDING PRIMUS AND SUICIDAL TENDENCIES) AND A HUGE REPLAY FACTOR, IT SHOULD BE MENTIONED COME AWARDS TIME AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

David Smith

NEVERSOFT'S TONY HAWK SMITES GRAPHICAL BEAST TRICK STYLE RIGHT WHERE IT COUNTS. YEAH, IT'S ON THE PLAYSTATION, BUT THE ANIMATION, ENVIRONMENTS, AND FRAME RATE ARE SLICK CONSIDERING THE HARDWARE, EVEN IN SPLIT-SCREEN MODE. THE TRICK CONTROL IS GREAT, WITH A HUGE VARIETY OF STUNTS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PASS A TEST TO PULL OFF, AND I LOVE THE WINDOW-DRESSING. THERE'S A HUGE CACHE OF COOL FMV FEATURING THE GAME'S REAL-LIFE SKATERS, AND A STOMPING SOUNDTRACK OF PUNK AND SKA. ACTIVISION GETS A BIG "WHAT THE HELL?" FOR CENSORING THE DEAD KENNEDYS' "POLICE TRUCK," THOUGH; THEY SHOULD HAVE JUST LICENSED A CLEANER TRACK.

Counter · Point 16.54973 ·

Hydro Thunder · *Midway · Midway*

■ ANOTHER GORGEOUS DREAMCAST GAME
■ GRAB-THE-BOOSTER-FUEL-AND-FIND-A-SHORT-CUT GAMEPLAY FALLS FLAT

C → **C-**

■ A LACK OF CONVINCING WAVE GRAPHICS AND PHYSICS RENDERS HYDRO THUNDER POINTLESS
■ THERE ARE SOME IMPRESSIVE-LOOKING LOCATIONS, BUT WHO CARES? IT JUST ISN'T ANY FUN

Brady Fiechter

TO CAPTURE A FIRST-PLACE FINISH IN HYDRO THUNDER, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU (A) MAINTAIN A CONSTANT BOOSTER CHARGE AND (B) TAKE EVERY SHORTCUT. THIS THIN METHOD OF STRATEGY MAY HAVE WORKED IN THE PRIME ARCADE ENVIRONMENT, BUT 30 MINUTES OF PLAY ON THE DREAMCAST INVITES BOREDOM. WITHOUT THE IMPACT OF ENGAGING WAVE PHYSICS, THE EXTREME OPENNESS OF THE TRACKS FURTHER DEFLATES THE GAMEPLAY, UNDERMINING ANY SENSE OF SPEED AND MAKING SKILLFUL RACING CONFRONTATIONS WITH OTHER BOATS NONEXISTENT. IF NOT FOR ITS GREAT LOOKS, HYDRO THUNDER WOULDN'T EVEN MAKE A RIPPLE IN THE DREAMCAST LINE-UP.

Mike Hobbs

IT'S AMAZING JUST HOW MUCH BETTER TECHNICALLY WAVE RACE 64 IS THAN THIS ILL-CONCEIVED RACER. ON THE "LOWLY" N64, SHIGERU MIYAMOTO AND HIS TEAM CREATED THE MOST STUNNING SENSATION OF BEING ON THE WATER THAT THERE HAS EVER BEEN, AND ONE WOULD THINK THAT THE DREAMCAST WOULD BE ABLE TO HOST AT LEAST THE SAME LEVEL OF WATER PHYSICS. PERHAPS IT CAN, BUT IT DOESN'T DO IT HERE. AND IF HYDRO THUNDER WERE ANY GOOD, I COULD LIVE WITHOUT FEELING THE WAVES, BUT IT'S NOT. THE MOSTLY BIG, WIDE OPEN COURSES CONVEY NO SENSE OF SPEED, AND THE DESIGN OF THE GAME, WHICH REQUIRES YOU TO SNAG EVERY BOOST ALONG THE TRACK TO WIN, IS SIMPLY UNSATISFYING AND MORE ANNOYING THAN ANYTHING ELSE. YES, SOME OF THE LEVELS ARE GRAPHICALLY IMPRESSIVE, BUT IT'S SIMPLY NOT THAT MUCH FUN.

Mortal Kombat Gold · Midway · Midway

D- → **F**

- THE CHARACTER DESIGNS AND HYPERKINETIC ANIMATION ROUTINES ARE RIDICULOUS
- MORTAL KOMBAT'S HEART FLAT-LINED IN MK3

- MODERN 3D FIGHTING GAMES JUST DON'T GET ANY WORSE THAN THIS
- IF WE'RE LUCKY, THIS SPELLS THE END OF THIS EMPTY FIGHTING SERIES

Brady Fiechter

I TOO ENJOYED THE BLOOD AND GRIZZLY FATALITIES OF THE FIRST FEW MORTAL KOMBAT GAMES, AND IT WAS GOOD FUN JUMP KICKING AND MECHANICALLY GRINDING THROUGH THE COMBO COMMANDS. I PAID NO ATTENTION TO THE BLOCK BUTTON, ACTUALLY CONSIDERED THE CHARACTER DESIGNS AND BACKGROUNDS INTERESTING, AND WAS QUITE IMPRESSED WITH THE REPERTOIRE OF MOVES DISPLAYED BY THE LIKES OF RAIDEN AND LIU KANG. THIS SERIES HAS DONE NOTHING TO CHANGE SINCE THEN, AND NOW, IN A TIME WHEN VIDEO GAMES ARE BECOMING EXPRESSIONS OF GREAT IMAGINATION AND DESIGN, I VIEW THE REMARKABLY SPIRITLESS, SLIPSHOD, ASSEMBLY-LINE MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD WITH DISAPPOINTMENT AND INCREDULITY.

Mike Hobbs

THIS SERIES HAS BEEN IN A DOWNWARD SPIRAL EVER SINCE THE DECENT-PLAYING AND -LOOKING MKII, AND THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. WORST OF ALL, THIS LATEST VERSION SHARES SHELF SPACE WITH SOUL CALIBUR AND POWER STONE, AND AMONG ITS CURRENT, INNOVATIVE PEERS, MK GOLD IS JUST INSULTINGLY BAD. THE CHARACTER MODELS ARE A JOKE, DRIVEN BY STIFF AND WHOLLY UNCONVINCING ANIMATION OF THE CALIBER THAT I WOULD EXPECT TO SEE IN A FIRST-GENERATION 3D GAME. BUT MORE UPSETTING THAN ANY OF THAT IS THE FACT THAT THIS GAME JUST FEELS AND PLAYS SO POORLY. THERE'S SO LITTLE FINESSE IN THE CONTROL AND FIGHTING SYSTEM THAT IT'S EMBARRASSING. MK GOLD HAS ABSOLUTELY NO REDEEMING QUALITIES WHATSOEVER.

Silhouette Mirage · Treasure · Working Designs

A-

A → **B**

- A BRILLIANT 2D ACTION/PLATFORMER, WITH PLAY MECHANICS THAT MAKE YOU LAMENT THE DEATH OF THE CATEGORY
- 2D ARTWORK AND CHARACTER DESIGN FLOWING FROM THE IMAGINATIONS OF THE INDOMITABLE TREASURE

- A CLOSE-TO-PERFECT CONVERSION OF THE EXCELLENT SATURN ORIGINAL, MISSING JUST A FEW GRAPHICAL EFFECTS
- THE AMERICAN VERSION'S RE-RECORDING OF THE VOICE FALLS COMPLETELY FLAT. IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT ALONE

Brady Fiechter

HERE IS A GAME THAT IS CLOSE TO TWO YEARS OLD, HASN'T A SINGLE FRAME OF CG, HASN'T A SINGLE ELEMENT OF 3D DESIGN – AND I LOVE EVERY SINGLE THING ABOUT IT. IT HAS BEEN SO LONG SINCE A 2D GAME OF THIS CALIBER HAS COME ALONG – SPIRITED, QUIRKY, BIZARRE AND DELIGHTFULLY FULL OF INVENTION. FEW GAMES CAN MATCH SILHOUETTE MIRAGE'S UNIQUE AND CHALLENGING PLAY MECHANICS, WHICH ARE SO FRESH AND INVOLVING THAT THE GAME FORCES US INTO AN ENTIRELY NEW MODE OF THINKING. AS HIGHLY CHARGED AS THE GAMEPLAY IS, THE LOOK OF THE GAME IS A FORMIDABLE PRESENCE, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE IMPRESSIVE ASCENDANCY OF 3D. SILHOUETTE MIRAGE DESERVES TO BE REMEMBERED AS A TIMELESS CLASSIC.

Mike Hobbs

SILHOUETTE MIRAGE IS A TYPICALLY CREATIVE SIDE-SCROLLING ACTION/SHOOTER FROM THE MASTERS AT TREASURE, AND IT'S GREAT TO SEE THIS PS CONVERSION OF THE SATURN ORIGINAL COMING HERE. THE SUPREMELY WACKY BOSSES AND TWISTED ENEMY DESIGN ARE A BREATH OF FRESH AIR AMIDST THE PLAYSTATION'S 3D LIBRARY, AND ANY FAN OF 2D GAMES MUST PLAY SILHOUETTE MIRAGE. HOWEVER, I MUST TAKE UMBRAGE WITH WORKING DESIGN'S RE-RECORDING OF SHYNA'S VOICE FOR THE AMERICAN VERSION. THE WONDERFULLY EXPRESSIVE SOUND OF THE ORIGINAL VOICE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY LOST AND WORSE, THE NEW VOICE SOUNDS AS IF IT WAS RECORDED AT A LOW SAMPLING RATE. THIS IS MERELY ANNOYING RATHER THAN DAMNING, AND SILHOUETTE MIRAGE REMAINS AS ENJOYABLE ON PS AS ON SATURN, EVEN IF SOME OF THE MORE IMPRESSIVE BACKGROUND EFFECTS ARE MISSING.

Tail Concerto · Bandai · Atlus

C+ → **B-**

- PLEASANT MUSIC AND DECENT GRAPHICS
- RIDICULOUS STORY; SHORT, EASY, AND EXTREMELY BASIC

- GREAT-LOOKING ENGINE AND WELL-CONCEIVED GRAPHICS GIVES TAIL CONCERTO A WARM AND FUZZY APPEAL
- WAY TOO SHORT AND BASIC TO HOLD ANY LONG-TERM VALUE. SURE IS CUTE, THOUGH

Brady Fiechter

PREDICTION: THERE WILL BE NO GAME THIS YEAR WITH A MORE ASININE BACKSTORY THAN TAIL CONCERTO. NORMALLY I WOULDN'T FOCUS CRITICISM ON THE STORY IN AN ACTION/PLATFORMER, BUT SO MUCH TIME IS SPENT IN SPOKEN DIALOGUE IN TAIL CONCERTO THAT THE TALE OF THE CAT PEOPLE AND DOG PEOPLE LOCKED IN AN AGE-OLD ENMITY BECOMES NUMBING. TO ITS CREDIT, THE STORY INSPIRES SCENES WHERE KITTENS MUST BE COLLECTED BY A STEAM-POWERED MECH WITH FLOPPY ARMS AND A BUBBLE CANNON; IT'S FUN ZIPPING AROUND CHEERFUL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FORM A WORLD OF FLOATING ISLANDS IN THE SKY. THERE ARE OCCASIONAL BURSTS OF INVOLVING PLATFORMING IN TC, BUT, RELEASED MORE THAN A YEAR AGO IN JAPAN, IT JUST DOESN'T HAVE THE GOODS TO BE A STANDOUT.

Mike Hobbs

HAD THIS GAME BEEN RELEASED A YEAR AGO, AROUND THE TIME OF THE ORIGINAL IMPORT RELEASE, IT WOULD HAVE FARED A BIT BETTER. UNFORTUNATELY, IT HASN'T AGED THAT WELL, BUT IT STILL HAS A LOT OF CHARM AND APPEAL FOR THE VERY SHORT DURATION OF THE EXPERIENCE. THIS IS A REALLY CUTE GAME, AND I LOVE THE EXPRESSION OF THE LITTLE CATS THAT YOU SCOOP UP INTO YOUR MECHANIZED SUIT, THOUGH AS PER USUAL, THE EXTENSIVE ENGLISH DUB IS SOMEWHAT LACKING. TAIL CONCERTO IS UNIQUE AND INHABITS AN INTERESTING WORLD, AND FANS OF ROCKMAN LEGENDS SHOULD ENJOY THIS, EVEN THOUGH IT'S A MUCH SHORTER AND SIMPLER EXPERIENCE.

gex 3   dev/pub: eidos
avail: q4 This port of Gex will feature 15 levels plus mini sub-levels to conquer, as well as nine different costumes and over 4,500 frames of animation for our cold-blooded hero and his enemies. The mix of side-scrolling and isometric levels contains multiple paths that give it additional replay as Gex tries to rescue Agent Xtra. First PlayStation, then N64, and now GBC. Can the DC be far behind? Stay tuned. ☢

croc 3   dev/pub: fox
avail: q3 Another port on the way! Croc has to save four Gobbo tribes (plus a secret one) as he searches for his parents in 40 levels of platforming action. He'll sport a host of new moves, have new challenges and, of course, face new, tougher bosses. ☢

wcw mayhem
dev: adrenaline   pub: ea   avail: q4 EA's first venture into the GBC zone is with this good-looking little number, based on the N64 and PS versions of the same game. Players can choose from 12 famous rasslers like Goldberg, Hollywood Hogan, and Sting, and grapple not only in the ring, but in the locker room and back alleys as well. But will it include the babes? ☢

Welcome to the new and improved handheld section. Don't take this to mean that we'll be cutting back our GBC coverage; just look at all the great titles of justice! But the new format gives us a chance to highlight the cool stuff coming out on other portables. What do you mean, "What other portables?" Wake up, Francis, 'cause there's a ton of stuff on the horizon! So much so, in fact, that we'll hold the reviews until next month and give you a pre-Christmas preview fix.

pokémon yellow   dev/pub: nintendo avail: oct 18
In case you haven't been paying attention, Pokémon Red and Blue have been in the top ten sales charts for over six months. That's not the top ten Game Boy titles; that's across *all* formats (see page 16). Nintendo's next cash cow (or, more appropriately, cash Pikachu), Pokémon Yellow Version: Special Pikachu Edition, is basically the same as Red and Blue, but adds new features, such as a Pikachu which follows your character with funny animations and sounds. The levels that Pokémon evolve at are different in PY, and characters from the TV show will make guest appearances in the game. Additionally, you can now make stickers from PY with the Game Boy Printer.

In a related vein, *GR* has just gotten word from Japan that Pokémon Gold and Silver editions will be released there by year's end! They will feature a redesigned, easier-to-use Pokédex, as well as the appearance of Pokémon eggs (perhaps available once you collect the male and female...) and the Pokégear—a device to help the trainers keep track of time, locations, phone calls, and even "radio" broadcasts...all in the game! No verification that the Gold and Silver versions are headed stateside, but judging from the lines at the local malls every time a power pack is released, I'd guess it's only a matter of time. We'll let you know when we get more info. ☢

biomotor unitron   dev: yumekobo pub: snk   avail: now
In BU, your task is to build up your Unitron (SNK-speak for robot) by seeking out parts and money. You start by choosing a character team (a Unitron master and an engineer), and set out to fight other Unitrons in the arena, train your master and engineer, visit towns, explore dungeons, and build up your Unitron. The game hit my desk right as the issue closed, so it's far too early to give any subjective feedback, other than my first impression is favorable. Expect a full review next month, once I've burned through a couple sets of batteries. ☢

snk vs capcom card battle
dev/pub: snk (with capcom) avail: nov 11 SNK vs Capcom, the much-anticipated fighting game, is due out in November, but first comes this card-based video game (think Magic: The Gathering or the Pokémon card game) using the characters from both companies. There will be two versions: one for SNK fans and one for Capcom fans, assumedly balancing the version in favor of the favorite characters. The details of the gameplay are still hazy, but there will be 300 cards available in the game, and SNK is aiming for an RPG feel. ☢

neo turf masters   dev/pub: snk
avail: q4 Another NGPC that arrived too late to spend serious time with, Neo Turf Masters is SNK's answer to big-headed golf, á la Hot Shots and Mario Golf. These other games have set the bar pretty high for video golf, and at first glance the SNK offering seems to come up a little short. The swing and power meters tend to distract rather than provide information, but again, it could be that I need to adapt to the interface. The graphics, music, and characters are very SNK, which will no doubt help me in logging many hours with this game. Look for a full run-down next month. Until then...FORE! ☢

Other games on the PlayStation should be so lucky to look and play as good as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater. I really feel bad for action games that suffer from bad camera logic, and franchised games into their third incarnation that don't look or move as exceptionally as this game. I feel bad, but not that bad, because to be quite honest, when I think about Tony Hawk, the word "unbelievable" and a variety of expletives involuntarily come wailing out of my mouth. So it is only proper that a game fashioned for him evoke the same emotion.

I have followed the progress of this game since E3 and have been continuously delighted with the action, control, look and fluid frame rates, as each of these assets was tooled with perfection as the goal. When the finished game hit my desk, I knew I was in for a sensory banquet.

Much can be said about the intense visuals and character models. That I am dumbfounded the PlayStation can deliver the look and action without suffering during any point of the game is testament to the talent of the design team. Environments stretch out and upwards with no clipping, pop-up or refresh problems, while the camera catches the action from the best angle imaginable. To watch it all, or better yet, play it while it is happening, is a new feeling I haven't found with games as of late.

Level design lends natural progression in carving out a line—

some of these areas are exceptional in their concept. And the gameplay encourages you to ollie, lip slide and catch phat air throughout each area. You progress by collecting video-tapes, and by doing so are able to unlock new courses. There are a total of five tapes in each level with different objectives needed to obtain them—a great replayability aspect. Find and grab the letters S-K-A-T-E; break through obstacles, like no skating signs; track down a hidden tape; and rank up two sets of huge points by busting crazy combos in a limited amount of time.

The boarding bliss doesn't end with the one-player game, because there are three different two-player modes. Frame rate is still very nice, and chasing a friend around any particular level is out of control, especially during Graffiti mode. The premise is that anything you perform a trick on, will highlight in either blue or red, depending on who you are. Mark as much of the area as you can to win. The twist is, if your opponent does a better trick that rewards more points, the area will change colors. So, a constant exchange can occur, driving players to bust out the best tricks they can in order to win.

A 128-bit version of Tony Hawk is a must, but I will play this one religiously until the next arrives. Do yourself a favor and do the same. ✈

The best thing short of sharing a hot chocolate with the hot little snow bunny in the pink outfit lounging by the fire after a day on the snow is carving the hill on a snowboard. Both experiences are heart pounding; both will have new guys (and gals) finessing them the next day. But snowboarding, unlike the snow bunny, is fueled solely by one's own desire and often a more fun experience when alone. Besides, experiencing a lodge room alone can lead to cabin fever, if not blindness.

Sorry, this game has just sparked memories of a recent trip to the mountain, and there hasn't been a game to come out for the PlayStation that re-creates the same sense of emotion when snowboarding. At least not until now, and while the game doesn't even lean towards the steep difficulty of understanding how to surf the snow, it does represent the speed and drives the player to exploit the surrounding topography to maximum effect. Finding short-cuts through the snow, learning multiple tricks and executing as many of them as possible off a single jump are mandatory to earning respect in this game.

Strapping into the game is a breeze, and coming to grips with the play mechanics is easy and almost second nature, with familiar button commands. After hitting the X button to jump, press and hold the R2 button and tap any one of the face buttons to initiate a trick. The R1 or L1 buttons will help increase and decrease spins or flips, depending on what direction you are holding after the jump. The whole format is very arcade-like and will attract casual and more skilled gamers with the same excitement, but I fear the hardcore crowd will probably

be turned off by the lack of control when completing tricks and watching the computer automatically land tricks. But if you perform a trick too drawn out for the time allowed, you may still land, just a bit off balance—which is nice, because it's not a matter of do the trick right or you fall. You won't get points, but you won't start from a stand-still position. Your character will stretch out its arm to keep balance if possible.

Levels stretch far to the left and right, hiding awesome jumps, and the environments move without the clipping that plagues other games of this kind. I have much respect for Radical Entertainment, but the MTV tag really had me worrying. But it seems they haven't done anything other than license some cool music and lend a stylish look and interface, letting Radical do what they do best—make games worth playing.

There is a lot to say about MTV Sports Snowboarding. Challenges like racing two other snowboarders is intense, but the best feature is the Create-A-Park option. Extremely well represented, you can place rocks, trees, rails and, of course, a bevy of different jumps. The whole package is here.

gamers' republic sports '99
MTV SPORTS SNOWBOARDING
developer: radical entertainment   publisher: thq   available: october   B+

Yee Haw! Besides hunting timid woodland creatures, NASCAR racing has to be one of the hinterland clique's favorite sports. It seems this attraction to the who-can-drive-in-circles-the-fastest type of racing is frighteningly enough consuming many weekend afternoons of more urban outfits as it is in more rural areas. EA smelled this coming way back and has sprouted quite the evolving franchise in the video game market.

For simpletons the game can be played with no frills: just choose Quick Race and be the first past the checked flag. For those more handi-capable, a fairly deep set of simulation options are available to replicate events of an actual NASCAR race. Different flags will dictate race conditions. Adjustable opponent assertiveness and draft effects are found and a handful of season modes can keep folks busy tweaking for hours. Customizing your car is, of course, a given, and, more important, you have the option to tailor races from nearly 400 laps to a mere three.

The game pushes a great-looking engine. Even if the

Press highlighted button to decrease pit time

majority of tracks are remarkably small, it helps keep the frame rate locked at a nice smooth pace. Cars are modeled extremely well and display comparable physics as they take the bend and ricochet off track walls. Following the line of the car in front of you is the easiest way to judge on how to hit the corners, though there is another way to do so: If you hit a corner too quickly and your tires start to lay tracks, they will remain there throughout the race, so you can gauge your entrance and exit from a turn based on previous tire marks.

Lending to the races are some exciting and refined commentary and pit crew communications helping you flush out the perfect line. During all of this are some awesome tunes preformed by John Popper. I like all of the elements, but to me this isn't a racing game; it is a game of tolerance that without the fantasy tracks, which contain more variety in track design, would be tedious. To others who actually appreciate the sport, the game is everything they could dream of. Racing fans fond of the never-ending left turn will go dizzy with NASCAR 2000.

gamers' republic sports '99
NASCAR 2000
developer: stormfront   publisher: electronic arts   available: fall   B

GR 84681-4832
18-LDK 05-05

Fox has had a rough road with their attempts at video sports. Lots of money spent on marketing less-than-average product has influenced many of the sports gamers not to stray from their long running series, no matter how broken it might be. When I last saw this game I was still in the fervor of an exciting day at Fox Studios. Being a part of a lot of cool activities, I was hoping that all the excitement didn't hinder my normal judgement on initial impressions. I am pleased to say it didn't.

This latest copy of the game is a progressive improvement over the alpha version they sent me home with. What really surprised me was that it seems as if they have included all of the features they said they would when visiting that day. Much respect to Radical and those at Fox for knowing the importance of following through with what you commit to verbally—a trait other companies need to adopt.

Playing the game, I found the action to be a bit slow, but after only a few minutes of sitting down with it did it occur to me that the action moves quite naturally. Players use a number of different one- and two-handed passes with varying speed. No look passes and quick dishes to the go-to guy will become necessary in your play tactics. There isn't much new found in defensive strategy, which is a bummer. You can call four different formations offensively and defensively, but new patterns are not recognizable.

Fast breaks are somewhat broken, too: many times the guy passing the ball sends it hurling out of bounds. To the game's credit, there are player tendencies incorporated, like one, two or no dribbles before a free throw, and head tracking while the ball is sailing towards the basket, and many television-style cuts and replays. The game begs to be played multiplayer, and that is where the true excitement lies. Thumbing through a complete season is going to be monotonous due to a lack of strong defensive AI, but for Radical's first effort at a basketball game, the other houses better pick up their game before they are checked. ⅄

gamers' republic sports '99
NBA BASKETBALL 2000
developer: radical entertainment   publisher: FOX sports interactive   available: october

Radical must either have a crew of elves tinkering away at refining their games when everyone goes home for the night, or they have been welded inside their office with daily rations of food and sleep. Either way they are dialing in the games, all with equal quality and attention to detail. Their new bedfellow Fox should be very happy, for NHL Championship 2000 is fast arcade fun that anyone can get into and enjoy.

Having the resources of Fox Sports has definitely aided the look and presentation to the game, providing very familiar characteristics. In fact, the entire semblance is cut and directed like a television presentation you would see on the Fox network: great-sounding commentary streaming about and periodical updates and game tips pop up at the bottom of the screen. But, more important, the game moves at a chilling speed—something lost after the days of 16-bit cartridges.

Now, the game isn't perfect in terms of control, but Fox definitely has a strong understanding that gameplay is crucial, and supplied that without visual shortcomings. Multiple replays and checks are main stage thanks to a great frame rate and nice-looking animation routines. It is this delicate balance that keeps me playing the game, though I fear because of the mishandled products of yesteryear, many will not be brave enough to stray from their yearly updates from other companies.

My suggestion to anyone interested in buying a hockey game is to first rent your favorite hockey game, and then rent NHL Championship 2000 to make comparisons. Extra features like World Tournament make this title unique, not to mention rivalry match-ups, which provide even more aggressive player traits. Many will be surprised at what Radical and Fox have accomplished. The Fox name is earning much reverence, and thanks to Radical, future endeavors can only be better. ⅄

gamers' republic sports '99
NHL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000
developer: radical entertainment   publisher: FOX sports interactive   available: november

The fact that T*HQ has taken over the WWF license for the N64 will cause many to stop screaming for the ever-aging, feeble-bodied Hulk Hogan in exchange for the ruff-neck, rattlesnake Stone Cold Steve Austin. The WWF wrestlers never got the proper treatment in terms of a highly playable and really enjoyable video game. But thanks to the help of a solid Japanese game engine, they will. The very effective grappling system T*HQ is known for in their wrestling games has been brought to new heights in WWF Wrestlemania 2000, as have the graphics.

The player models are the most realistic yet and faces have been mapped onto the polygonal counterparts. The introduction to each of the actors, err, wrestlers, is pretty persuasive in making you fear their presence or laugh at their lack of class. It definitely sets the atmosphere to what is about to happen inside the ring.

Once the action starts, things really get involving. A cool combo system threaded with the grapple system makes for some truly stimulating play mechanics. And though the game is at its greatest when four people are playing against each other, a solo excursion in the square-circle is just as furious. ❦

gamers' republic sports '99

WWF WRESTLEMANIA 2000

developer: aki/asmik publisher: thq *available: fall*

EA is bent on earning the esteem they once had with their golf games, and determined to do so with their Tiger Woods license. They are going about it in a surprising way too: the realistic look has been placed in the circular file and lovable cartoony characters and similar backdrops have taken its place.

Don't stop reading just yet. There are greens modeled after actual courses, just with a slightly more adolescent look. Strangely enough, Tiger himself has many different incarnations too. From the awkward kid golfing for the first time without his dad (that must have been tough, on a field full of white folk) to the ebony version of Popeye, equipped with huge forearms, chiseled chin and with a golf club instead of pipe, of course.

The play mechanics aren't much different from any other golf game out, which is good. Why turn people off with mechanics they aren't comfortable with? Those who own an analog controller will be treated to a very cool feature: pulling back on the stick will generate the power of the stroke, and snapping it forward will hit the ball—a very cool aspect indeed. ❦

gamers' republic sports '99

CYBERTIGER

developer/publisher: electronic arts *available: november*

NINTENDO SPACE WORLD

After several years of avoiding the public eye in Japan, Nintendo finally held its long-awaited video game show, Space World, at the Makuhari Messe, from August 27 to 29. It was the last week of summer vacation, and admission was free, which only further enticed the massive crowd of 170,000 that rushed the place like a K-Mart on 24-hour blue-light special. There's nothing quite like being a part of what can only be described as a herd of excited Japanese gamers. Once inside Pikachu and Donkey Kong were on hand for pictures, and Mario and Link were inviting crowds in with open arms. The Nintendo machine was again in full effect, Japan-style. While Nintendo showed us much new, the main attraction was, of course, the long, long, long awaited appearance of the 64 DD, which is finally going to come out in Japan. They waited so long, we'll never see it, but I'm buying one just to map my face on to freaky bodies and build F-Zero tracks until I pass out.

◄LEGEND OF ZELDA — THE CONTINUING SAGA...

Once thought to be an expansion pack of sorts for use with The Ocarina of Time, The Legend of Zelda—The Continuing Saga will in reality be a standalone game. Set scant months after the events in OoT, this all-new adventure begins as Link follows a strange boy in a skull mask riding baby Epona into a parallel world that is strangely off-kilter. A slowly falling moon signals the end of this world, and Link must battle against time as an enormous clock tower counts away the final moments of this parallel universe. By donning different masks, Link will be able to transform into a Goron, Zora, and Deku Scrub, each granting him unique abilities vital to completing his quest. This highly anticipated sequel is due to ship in Japan next March.

スペースワールド

MARIO RPG 2 — a classic cast with a unique look

Though Shigeru Miyamoto is not heavily involved in the development of Super Mario RPG 2, its brilliant mix of 2D and 3D was borne out of his fertile imagination, creating the most delightful Nintendo game environment since Yoshi's Island on the SNES. All of the characters in the game are comprised of colorful flat images (like Parappa) moving around on real-time backgrounds, lending this RPG a magically simple, endearing aesthetic. Like its SNES-based predecessor, SMRPG2 will feature turn-based battles, but goes beyond that by including an ability to create a "Powerful Mario" by inventing equipment and gaining strength from your allies. We can't wait for this one, and it's set to arrive this January in Japan.

KIRBY 2

HAL's Kirby games for the SNES have always been utterly charming adventures, overflowing with color and gameplay, and it's a wonder that it's taken this long for a Kirby title to appear on N64. This Klonoa-esque 2.5D action game contains all of the famous Kirby cues, from sucking in enemies and adopting their traits, to the bright, candy-colored environments. HAL is a strong developer, and Kirby's Dreamland 64 is looking great.

EXCITEBIKE

Based on the classic Nintendo arcade and NES games and developed by Left Field Productions, Excitebike 64 has one of the tightest physics models seen in a motocross racing game. This becomes apparent through turns, when landing jumps, and when moving the stationary bike with the joystick. In addition to 20 different tracks, the game will feature a track editor with the ability to create sizeable hills and deep trenches. There will be six riders to choose from as well as a create-a-player mode

MARIO PARTY II

One of the best Nintendo party games of all time, Mario Party had the brilliant notion of combining a board game with tons of simple, highly addictive, competitive action games, and Mario Party 2 looks to be more of the same. Fantastic! A total of 64 mini-games will feature heavily into the action, including new challenges such as a cute little archery competition. Mario Party 2 will ship in Japan this December.

MOTHER 3

Though the original EarthBound received a mostly lukewarm reception in the States, the very odd Mother series that spawned it was huge in Japan, and Mother 3 for N64 looks to be another highly twisted RPG. The game is split up into several chapters, and you can play a different character in each in this quest to learn the secrets of an unidentified object that is causing strange things to happen. Mother 3 is coming in May in Japan, with a possible U.S. release at the end of next year.

CUSTOM ROBO

Two-player, arena-based mech combat is the focus of this fighting game/RPG from Marigul and Nintendo. As its name implies, this title is all about customization, as you pit your unique Robo against other players. An RPG mode is also included, where you get to interact with other characters in a quest to defeat the champion Mamoru. With its simple controls and open-ended design, Custom Robo will bring a smile to player's faces this November in Japan.

MINI RACERS

Rare's RC Pro Am on the 8-bit NES is an undeniable classic, and Nintendo is looking to bring some of those same thrills, albeit in a far more advanced form, to the N64 this October. With a four-player split screen, tons of "full sized" environments, and a built-in track editor, Mini Racers looks awesome.

ZELDA GBC 2   FRUIT OF THE MYSTERIOUS TREE

There's an all-new Zelda adventure coming for Game Boy Color. Fruit of the Mysterious Tree follows Link as he endeavors to retrieve the Rod of the Seasons and, of course, rescue Princess Zelda. New features include riding around in the pouch of a kangaroo called Rikki, which will be integral to solving some of the puzzles, and you'll also have to deal with varying seasons on your quest.

AROUND THE SHOW FLOOR

Spaceworld was suffused with an almost carnival atmosphere, with its youthful target audience and massive crowds. The signature characters that have always been Nintendo's bread and butter were out in force; stalwart Donkey Kong was obviously in attendance to promote his new adventure, but it's still evident that the game giant's new point man is small, yellow, and positively charged. In between the big names, a few brave third parties like Treasure were still supporting the N64, and the Game Boy is packing as much support as ever.

スペースワールド

FIRST 64DD GAMES REVEALED!

The long-delayed 64DD will finally launch this December in Japan. With its networking capability and rewriteable software, expect this Japan-only peripheral to host a broad range of innovative software. Some of the most intriguing are shown here.

F ZERO EXPANSION KIT

Nintendo's blisteringly fast racer gets a new lease on life with the F-Zero X Expansion Kit. Apart from adding two new cup races to the original game, this DD exclusive lets you effortlessly create your own courses with tools very similar to those available to the development team, and these tracks can then be traded over the DD's Landnet service. You can even design custom racing craft, selecting different colors, shapes, and handling characteristics and can save three ghost competitors for each circuit.

PAINT STUDIO & TALENT STUDIO

It's Mario Paint for the new generation. Paint Studio allows users to create original works of art, flip book animations, and simple 3D scenes. The software really comes to life, however, when used in conjunction with new peripherals: the capture cartridge, which allows you to import images from a VCR or video camera, and the Game Boy Camera, which you can use to input black and white images into Paint Studio. Up to four people can work on a piece of art at the same time, and images created in Paint Studio can even be exported to the other DD creation software, Talent Studio.

Ever wanted to make your own virtual star, or see yourself rendered as a real-time 3D character? Talent Studio lets you do just that. By using the software in conjunction with the Capture Cartridge, Game Boy Camera, and Paint Studio, you can create mini-movies complete with captions and special effects. This is truly original software from Nintendo, as they continue to explore the seemingly boundless possibilities of gaming.

DOSHIN GIANT

This has to be the strangest game for the DD. The goal in Kyojin no Doshin 1 is to become a giant, growing and growing until you can't even see your feet. You can become a yellow "Love Giant" by giving trees to the island's inhabitants or a destructive "Hate Giant" by causing destruction. Thanks to the nature of the DD, the game continues to evolve even after the power to the system has been turned off.

ULTIMATE WAR

In this real-time battle simulation game for the DD, you play as a commander in the U.S. Army, sent to Japan to thwart the Soviets, who are involved in conflicts taking place in the Korean Peninsula. Eschewing the traditional hex-based movement system, Ultimate War allows for great freedom of movement, facilitating a more realistic style of battlefield combat.

NINTENDO'S SHIGERU MIYAMOTO

Gamers' Republic caught up with the very busy Shigeru Miyamoto at this year's Spaceworld to speak with him about Dolphin and related Nintendo affairs.

Gamers' Republic: What is your opinion of the Dreamcast? Do you feel that Sega has again hurt their cause by being first with hardware that will be third best in just over a year? What is Nintendo's intention? Shigeru Miyamoto: I basically don't think about other hardware... I mean this hardware is good for this, the other hardware is good for that. Nintendo is trying to develop hardware that is specifically designed for gameplay, as well as one that satisfies the need to reach the market at a reasonable price. With regards to Dreamcast, Sega is aiming at creating a development environment that is symbiotic with the personal computer world. The intention or purpose of our hardware is very different.

GR: Dreamcast has built-in network functions, and now that we all know about the Dolphin and the fact that it does have network communication capability, will its online capability be similar to that of DC?
SM: Well, in terms of its use, the machine will at least be able to do what the Dreamcast does online. Fundamentally, Nintendo does not have any sort of rivalry against other hardware developers like, "Oh, Sony did this so we have to include this function on our console." The concept of developing Dolphin has no relation to PS2 or DC. The reason we want to release Dolphin is that after developing games for N64 over the years, we have found various levels of inefficiency. Thereby, we came to the conclusion that it is time to develop a machine that will raise the efficiency level regarding game development, as well as the cost and spec performance.

GR: The Dolphin will mark the first time that Nintendo has released a disk-based system since the Family Computer disk drive. Why?
SM: Since the N64 uses cartridges, it is good for children as they can safely handle the carts. However, all the big manufacturers have started using disk media. Due to the popularity of disk media, it tends to make cartridges look obsolete. As a matter of fact, in the development community, there are still strong requests that the cartridge format should not be abandoned. However, as far as third parties are concerned, there is a sort of handicap inherent with cartridges compared to disk media because of the manufacturing costs. So by adapting disk media for the Dolphin, we hope to avoid this hindrance for third parties.

GR: Like the PS2, can the Dolphin be the center or core of a home entertainment system?
SM: Yes, as a center of entertainment, although the PS2 is designed not only for entertainment but also for multimedia.

GR: You mean, then, that Nintendo is not developing Dolphin for the purpose of multimedia?
SM: No, not at all.

GR: Then Dolphin is designed purely for gameplay?
SM: Yes. But I don't know how the Dolphin will be used in the future. Although Dolphin can be called a multimedia machine, Nintendo will supply software only for entertainment purposes. As long as we keep our focus on creating games, it is fine with us if other parties develop peripherals of that sort for multimedia purposes. We are not developing the Dolphin in order to collaborate with other developers; our goal is to make Nintendo-like games to the last. If we make a mistake in the course of our business, we will be drawn into the world of competition. As President Yamauchi says, "Nintendo is not the company to compete with other developers." [Smiles.]

GR: As one of the premiere game makers in the world, the pressure to constantly push gaming to the next level must be overwhelming. When and where do you come up with new ideas?
SM: Well, the working environment is similar to that of film making, in which I am a director who is behind the camera and directing all the crews or programmers at the scene of the action. Most times, I direct the development of the games concurrently with programmers. I think this way of developing games suits me.

GR: You are busy man. What do you do outside of gaming to unwind? Any hobbies?
SM: I try to rest on weekends. Even though I work all day on weekdays, I try to spend time with my family. My hobby is...well, I recently moved into a new house. I am into gardening [smiles]. Look at me! I am sun tanned, right?

GR: Yes, that's what I thought! Is it a Japanese garden?
SM: It is about half Japanese and half western. I became acquainted with a student who is studying gardening, and I sort of became a sponsor for him. And at the same time, I am working with him to make my garden look good. Also, I am into swimming. I have been swimming twice a week for about 10 years. I also enjoy playing the guitar, which I started doing when I was student.

GR: Wow, then your music sense was incorporated into Ocarina of Time?
SM: Well [smiles]. I usually let the staff in charge of music handle that, but I think they might dislike me because I ask them too many questions [laughs].

GR: Will games take more or less time to produce on the next wave of consoles? Also, how will you utilize all this polygonal power?
SM: Well, yes and no depending on the games. It might be necessary to display all the polygons using whatever the technology available. Basically, I want to create games without worrying about how many polygons can be incorporated. This is one of the reasons Dolphin is being developed. Developers currently need to spend lots of time determining how they can display what is initially conceptualized. In the case of the Dolphin, designers can display as many objects and polygons as they want without worrying.

スペースワールド

GR: Have you seen Rayman 2 for the N64 yet? If so, are you impressed? How about Jet Force Gemini? Any comments?
SM: I think they are very fine. However, after working for years on developing games on N64, I don't think it is necessarily right that action games all be in 3D.

GR: That's the reason why you created Mario RPG 2 in a mixture of 2D and 3D?
SM: Right, and with regard to Mario-type action games specifically developed for N64, I think it would be great to have more individualistic aspects in the game.

GR: Is Mario RPG 2 to be your last title for the N64?
SM: Well, I am not deeply associated with the game development, although I conceptualized the way the game looks. Hmmm... [look of deep thought] another version of Mario is being developed for the N64, although we have not decided to release it or not. Perhaps, this version could be the last one.

GR: It's rumored that the work done on Super Mario 64 2 has evolved into the first Dolphin game from you and your team. Is this true?
SM: Oh...[smile]. It's a rumor, although I actually did say that. After the initial concept and design aspect are done, I tend to explore possibilities, which means I tend to think if I should use Mario or Link after the initial concept. For example, Wave Race: I conceptualized the game as I was splashing water. If I place Mario in that game, then it is going to be a Mario game. If I put Link in a raft, the game will be Zelda. So in that respect, I have not decided what kind of character I will be using for the first Dolphin title. Since there are lots of Mario fans, I might have said that the next game will be a Mario game.

GR: Are you satisfied with the body of work you're leaving behind on the N64?
SM: I feel I still have an unfinished job. There are things that should still be done for the N64. Also, we need to raise young producers, such as those who are currently working on games for the N64 without my direct supervision. If those producers show that they are able to do their job right, then the role of the N64 can be said to have been gracefully accomplished. And the games exhibited today at the show are not the last titles for N64. Several more titles are scheduled to be released in the future. Most of the games here are contracted games that are being co-developed by Nintendo and a partner. So far, the only pure Nintendo title on display is Zelda. You might see another pure Nintendo title for N64 in the future.

GR: Are you still planning a multiplayer online game with a constant and ever-evolving environment? Is this the future of gaming in your opinion?
SM: I think...I have to think about that...but what is important is that I have to think about what the gaming market is going to become five years from now and what we should do in order to widen the market. I don't regard games as a sort of fashion or fad.
GR: What do you see as the next step in player interaction? How much longer will people simply being moving little sticks around and pressing buttons?
SM: I think that's a good and important point. Games are intended for everybody to enjoy. However, looking at the current game market, games are becoming unfriendly for beginners. It is important to keep

creating something new for everybody, not just for hardcore gamers. The role of Nintendo is to provide new entertainment for everybody. Although it is in fact a part of Nintendo's responsibility to also provide new games to those hard core gamers, we should instead always think about new entertainment possibilities for everybody.

GR: How are the graphical capabilities of Dolphin going to change the nature of Mario? Is he going to be more realistic and exhibit the same playful, youthful feel of historical Mario or will he grow up in a sense?
SM: If I make him more realistic, it does not work well, I think. So I am trying to figure that out now (smile). I have always thought about what it is that is intrinsically Mario. Whether or not Mario is true to Mario is difficult to determine unless I actually see him moving around in a game environment. When I developed Mario for N64, I conceptualized Mario while watching hamsters that I have at home moving around. But I have not yet gotten the idea regarding Mario for Dolphin. My responsibility is to create a Mario that uses the Dolphin's power appropriately, so please look forward to it!

622.5km 415.6 280.1

world republic

> [*i*] We had hoped to bring you both Climax Landers and Star Gladiator for the Dreamcast this month, but unfortunately both have again been delayed. Instead, we've got Bangaio, and some other interesting bits and pieces. We'll be reviewing the U.S. Coolboarders soon, so we're not done there, and be sure and check out Evolution 2: Ubi will likely pick it up.

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **treasure** • available in japan **now**

bangaio

Treasure gives new meaning to the word firepower with their latest shooting phenomenan

With only 10,000 copies available for distribution in Japan, and in light of a supposed, but still unconfirmed, Dreamcast version set to hit in November, Bangaio for the N64 will undoubtedly be in short supply stateside. So the question for import game addicts everywhere is: is Treasure's manic shooter worth tracking down and perhaps paying a hefty sum for? An odd release from Treasure, Bangaio comes after two Dreamcast hardware launches without their support and after temporarily shelving their first Naomi/DC game (which coincidentally would have been their first 3D game), Gun Beat. But as an old-school-meets-new-school shooter, Bangaio is obscure not only in terms of genre, but it's for the Japanese N64-a floundering console if there ever was one. The plan must be to make bank on the DC game; otherwise, how would the relatively small developers recoup their costs? Regardless, the 64 game is here and as expected, it definitely warrants a look, if for no other reason than it being from Treasure.

At first glance Bangaio looks like a garden-variety 2D shooter, especially given that the first few levels are a bit sparse. Upon further examination, however, it quickly becomes a frantic game of strategy and skill. As you attempt to overcome each area's insane barrage of attackers and firepower, you must also figure out their routes, especially as they become progressively longer and more complex. The game's many diverse landscapes—complex arrays of channels, populated with little houses and buildings that reveal fruits when exploded (?!)—aren't always passable without some exploration, and there are barriers held in reservoirs that must be released with the utmost care or you can get trapped. So the level design itself weighs greatly in the scheme of the gameplay. Of course, there is also the usual quiver of indubitable Treasure bosses on hand, a freaky-looking array of oddballs ranging from spiky-haired long-nosed villains to bubble-headed humanoids. Each zone's six areas harnesses a final guardian as well, which is a larger ship that packs devastating firepower. Other enemies in the game—ground cannons and Gauntlet-like enemy-spewing portals that emit rival mechs—aren't too difficult to handle alone, but in groups they can throw an unsettling amount of projectiles your way, often hundreds at a time! Ducking in and out or banking shots in from a distance is the only way to chip away at these strongholds. To do so, you have two mechs at your disposal: Ricki's, which fires powerful streams of missiles, and Mami's, which lets fly an array of banking lasers. Manipulating them both conjures up memories of arcade classics gone by, like Smash TV. You can set movement onto the analog wand and delegate shooting to the directional buttons or movement to the d-pad and shooting to the wand. It's Treasure; they know you want it your way. As with all Treasure games, you can also look forward to an incredible soundtrack worthy of a separate purchase.

In the end, pure, raw firepower is what Bangaio is really all about, along with some exploration and strategic elements, and it is in these areas that the game breaks new ground. Never have we seen this much onscreen and lived to tell about it, and to drive it all home, the explosions crackle with the intensity of a live 4th of July display. Bottom line: if you're into shooters and/or classic gameplay, Bangaio is by all means worth tracking down. It may be hard to find, but I think you'll find it well worth the effort. We'll bring you any news about a DC version as soon as it's confirmed. Word has it Gunbeat is back on track as well. ⚡

> **World Republic says** "There's a lot more to Bangaio than meets the eye. I'm in the thick of it currently and it just keeps getting deeper. This could be a real classic".   **B+**

bangaio © treasure 1999.

dance dance revolution

The Smithsonian Institution steps up and gets his groove on

If you visited the Konami booth at E3 '99, you probably saw a small crowd surrounding some fetching young women and a huge arcade cabinet. That was Dance Dance Revolution, Konami's ace arcade dance simulator. The idea is to step on four buttons in time with instructions scrolling up the screen; you're graded on your performance according to how precisely you follow the instructions. It sounds goofy, but you'd be surprised by the moves shown off by Japanese devotees of the game (not to mention Konami's trained demo team – yeow!).

A new version of DDR has come home for the Playstation. DDR 2nd Remix includes the original's gameplay and tracks, plus two expansions worth of great new music. There is a huge array of tracks from all different genres, including a few licensed surprises, such as "Tubthumping" by blockbusting commercial anarchists Chumbawamba, and a sweet remix of the Village People's "In The Navy" (hey, why are you looking at me like that?). The result is pure dancing satisfaction, especially with Konami's special dancing mat controller (reminiscent of Nintendo's ancient Power Pad). The set costs a bundle, if you can even find an importer to sell it to you (there's no U.S. release in sight), but there's no finer party game, especially with two controllers.

World Republic says "Why won't Konami bring this game to the US market? Imagine Bust-A-Groove crossed with the Twenty Minute Workout. Excellent." **B+**

toukon retsuden 4

A disappointing outing for the King of Sports

After spending a fair amount of unhappy time with Giant Gram, the first Japanese wrestling game for the Dreamcast, I held out hope that Tomy's Toukon Retsuden 4 would provide the superior control and breadth of styles that the AJPW-licensed game lacked.

Unfortunately, to paraphrase Dean Rasmussen, the first NJPW effort on the DC isn't...very...good. The animation is slow and stiff. The motion-captured power moves and suplexes look nice, but the wrestlers maneuver around the ring like marionettes on strings, and strikes have no authority. Jushin Liger's "OHTANI-KILLER SHOTAY OF DEATH!" looks about as stiff as a Hulk Hogan "punch." Poor collision detection compounds the striking problem. Often, you seem to get a solid hit on your opponent, yet nothing happens. Other times you miss by a mile, but they still sell the move. In tag matches, when the camera pulls very far back to cover the entire ring area and your wrestler's facing is erratic, moves frequently miss due to tricky positioning.

Those are TR4's major problems, but there are more minor ones. The game scores atmosphere points with lengthy introductions and killer music (I love Masa Chono's theme), but the ugly arenas and crowd animation drag it back down, and I miss Giant Gram's hyperactive Joey-Styles-snorts-crank announcer. Despite the fact that NJPW's stars (especially the juniors) have some of the broadest movesets in wrestling, certain moves (like the swinging neckbreaker) get performed over and over, due to weak AI and the vagaries of the control system. TR4 just doesn't provide a leap beyond the Playstation's TR3, aside from better polygon models. Indeed, I'd rather play TR3, since TR4 is missing a few of my favorite wrestlers (Chris Benoit and Eddy Guerrero head the list). With only WWF Attitude now on the way, the DC wrestling situation looks bleak. Hopefully Asmik or Human will bring one of their proven series to the system.

D.D.T

World Republic says "Stiff animation, wonky collision, and no Latino Jesus or Canadian Crippler makes for an unhappy Reverend. Pray for a Fire Pro game." **C-**

622.5km | 415.6 | 280.1

bomberman 2

NINTENDO 64

He's back, and he still thinks he's the bomb! What's more, you may well agree

Hudson's exciting Bomberman series is back for N64. The latest Bomberman game is much improved from the previous N64 version, and comes with more functions as well. Although the game is still in development, it looks extremely promising, especially due to the easy-to-view battlefield, reminiscent of Smash Brothers, and many different types of bombs that you can use.

By using various bombs that have specific functions, you are able to do interesting things, like teleporting from place to place. Each bomb can be exploded in two different ways—either in a circular or cross fashion, depending on the attributes of the bomb. There are five different attributes to the bombs, and each performs differently. On top of that, all of the bombs have a simultaneous function, in which you place as many bombs as you have and detonate them all together, resulting in a massive blast.

The addition of a four-player split-screen for certain battle modes has added to Bomberman's excitement. There are four varieties of battle mode: Survival, King & Knights, Time Attack, and Score Attack. Survival is the powered-up version of Team Battle mode from the previous version, in which if King loses, the game is over. Split-screen gameplay is possible in two modes: Time Attack mode, in which you compete to find a key quicker than anybody else, and Score Attack mode, in which you have to blow away as many enemies as possible in a given amount of time.

robopon 64

NINTENDO 64

Calling them pokérobs was out of the question... Regardless, Hudson has a go at the genre

Robopon is a simulation RPG for the N64. Usually, in an RPG, you choose your character first, and then start off on your adventure. In Robopon, however, you have several characters to use throughout your quest, incorporating nurturing elements from games like Pokémon. The characters that you have to bring up are called Robopon.

The objective is to travel around seven seas to find seven Karamel, items necessary to revive the savior of the world. Success in the overall mission depends on the player's willingness to train his Robopon, in order to more easily defeat the enemy.

Robopon do battle to earn experience, but they also help out with daily tasks like cleaning and fishing. Some of those jobs are mere rote, but others allow you to acquire special food and other useful items. There are also mini-games that can be used to train them. Robopon have indicators for stress and hunger, and if you do not take care of their needs, they of course get weaker.

Among the activities, the mini-games are the most frequently used, since you can increase the fighting abilities of your Robopon with them. There are five mini-games, but to play them, you need to acquire special medals. Remember to praise your Robopon after they do well in the mini-games and other tasks. Doesn't it sound like you have to become a parent?

By using the 64GB peripheral, you can grow your character on the go with the Game Boy, and exchange information between systems. Although the Game Boy and Nintendo 64 versions play identically, battles on the N64 feature real-time characters and environments.

電気製品

super runabout

Terrorize the streets of San Francisco without that pesky Dirty Harry on your tail

Climax's new driving action game, tentatively called Super Runabout, is the third title in the Runabout series, in which players drive through expansive environments in a variety of vehicles. The DC version is not a port of the upcoming PS Runabout 2; it is a completely different, more ambitious project. In Super Runabout, players drive through the entire city of San Francisco, unlike its predecessors, which took place in many small environments.

All the famous locales will be there, such as Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Of course, the famous cable cars are running on the streets, adding to the realism of the city environment. And since you don't race on a track, you might get into the mood for sightseeing.

There are several scenarios included in the game, and the main character, his relationship to other characters, and your location all vary depending on the scenario. For example, you can choose to play as the bad guy, a stick-up artist eluding the authorities, or the good guy, a cop trying to catch him, and your starting point and objectives will reflect that character's situation.

Each mission features four different cars you can drive. The game progresses as you clear each mission, but it's all over if you run out of gas, completely wreck your car, or drive into the ocean. For the skilled, an additional mission, called challenge sub-mission, is included in each scenario. Everything you destroy and all damage to your car will be added to your debt total and displayed as your total cumulative damage amount. This amount will then be recorded along with your time score, and if you owe too much, you'll find your name on a blacklist. During the game, by driving over specific checkpoints, you can obtain emblem items. Once you do this, hidden routes can appear or special cars can be unlocked.

Since Super Runabout's development is still in its infancy, it's too early to delve into the game physics. However, Climax will surely bring spectacular gameplay to the market.

Los Angeles
ロサンゼルス

Tokyo
東京

Far left: a photo of San Francisco, taken by the developers. Left: an in-game shot of someone abusing the Mercedes in the same place.

super runabout © *climax 1999.*

622.5km   415.6   280.1

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **namco** • available in japan **now**
star ixiom

It's no Colony Wars – Namco's simple 3D shooter is fun for a while, but it's not up to their usual standards

This is an odd, fun little game from Namco. Star Ixiom plays like a defanged version of Psygnosis' Colony Wars, offering up simple space combat and very rudimentary strategy elements. Though it can't hold a candle to CW's impressive graphics and epic scope, it does offer up its fair share of Namco charm. In a mission called Space Bugs, you've got to protect this planetary system from invading hordes of real-time versions of Galaga enemies while a new version of the classic arcade music plays in the background.

Between such missions, you are taken back to a space station where you get to interact with real-time characters over a fairly cheap-looking pre-rendered background, learning about your next objectives and upgrading or changing your attack craft. It's all very simple and easy to understand, even in Japanese, and most gamers should have little trouble making heads and tails of it. ⋇

World Republic says "This certainly isn't a great game by any stretch of the imagination, and like Pac Man World, is a bit undercooked for a Namco title, yet it still has a certain charm about it."   **C+**

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **uep systems** • available in japan **now**
cool boarders

You'll have to fight to get to the meat of the game, but it might be worth the effort

Cool Boarders Burrrn is a definite graphical leap beyond its predecessors. It's all high-res, the framerate is an almost-constant sixty, and the backgrounds are beautiful, especially in the later levels. On the flip side, its controls and trick system aren't quite as versatile as that in Nintendo's 1080 Snowboarding, and the difficulty makes getting to the good bits of the game a chore sometimes. If you're willing to stick with the game, though, it'll reward you with some beautiful environments and hidden extras.

You start the game with six characters, which isn't bad. They're smartly designed; check out the dead ringer for Kenji Eno. You can ride nine boards, all with different strengths, which is quite nice indeed. Sadly, you get only one track, which is a little irritating. To unlock tracks, you have to register a quick time and a high trick score on available ones. It's tough at first, when you're struggling to just get down the hill without crashing. The advanced tracks, though, are amazing feats of level design. You'll find yourself sliding through villages, over roofs and down alleys, or inside a huge network of drainage pipes.

For those that have the patience to master it, Cool Boarders Burrn definitely has replay value to offer, with a cache of secrets to be discovered, like the famous snowman. Those who fear a really steep learning curve, on the other hand, should wait for later efforts like Infogrames' Supreme Snowboarding. 🌐

World Republic says "It's not the only Dreamcast snowboarding title in the pipe, so this isn't an unconditional recommendation, but snowboarding cognoscenti could do worse than Cool Boarders Burrrn."   **B-**

star ixiom © namco 1999. cool boarders © uep systems 1999.

marionette handler

Rough going for the Japanese-illiterate, but satisfying for those who can hack it

Marionette Handler is a mind-boggling game similar to mech sims like Carnage Heart. First of all, you have to select a robot from six different types, then you engage in battle with other robots. By winning battles, you earn money to buy parts that enhance your robot. The more you win, the stronger your mech becomes. The process of creating a perfect robot is the crucial part of the game, requiring a great deal of thought.

In most mech games, you have direct control over your robot. In MH, however, it's not in your hands; instead, the robot is managed by a program you design. Once a fight starts, you sit back and watch the results of your coding.

Programming your tactics is time-consuming. Luckily, you don't have to write program code (like C++). Instead, you string together icons representing instructions. For example, you can place the icons in an order like this: search, if no enemy, then turn 45 degrees left, or if enemy is found, attack. You can test your programs in simulation mode, so you don't have fight immediately after writing your program. Creating the most effective strategy is difficult, and takes lots of trial and error to master.

Marionette forces players to think, and gives a great feeling of achievement when winning a battle. The game does not feature fast action, yet it becomes very addictive.

World Republic says "Strictly for Japanese-parsing eggheads. That said, Marionette Handler is a deep, involving simulation experience; it's a fine specimen of its niche."

B.

evolution 2

Not all the dungeons are random anymore. Welcome to the next Evolution

With Evolution set to debut in the States this fall from Ubi Soft, we felt the time was right to take a look at Sting's follow-up, Evolution 2. For starters, this new game will feature a few fixed dungeons, as opposed to the exclusively random dungeons of the first game. This should provide a bit of purpose and direction to the action in this version, giving it the feel of a true RPG. Also, you will be able to switch perspectives in the dungeons, moving from the traditional overhead to a more dynamic, over-the-shoulder view. As expected, there will be more effects present during battle in Evolution 2, and it should be a bigger and better game all around. Current plans call for a release before the year is out.

Playstation Review

valken 2

GAME BY NCS/MASAYA

You may have played this game's predecessors without even knowing it. Assault Suits Valken 2 is the sequel to the SNES' Assault Suits Valken, called Cybernator in the States, which in turn was a follow-up to Assault Suits Leynos, available on the Genesis as Target Earth. Valken 2, like its forebears, offers up superior mech shooting action, and in a departure for Masaya, it's in real-time 3D. Shooter junkies ought not worry, however; the difficulty level is as maddening as ever. **B**

marionette handler © micronet 1999. evolution 2 © sting 1999. valken 2 © ncs/masaya 1999.

622.5km   415.6   280.1

電気製品

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **bandai** • available in japan **now**

gundam: side story 0079

If stiff, mission-based mech combat is your cup of tea, this Gundam title might be up your alley

The biggest problem with Gundam: Side Story 0079/Rise from the Ashes is that it plays more or less like it should. Piloting a mech from a first-person cockpit view through mission-based levels and engaging in combat with enemy mobile suits is as slow and stiff as one would expect dueling mechs would be. Though elements such as the zooming sniper rifle and commanding fellow mechs lend the game some fun and playability, the whole affair is mostly awkward and sluggish. Great-looking real-time cinemas show off some off the very well modeled mechs, but this isn't enough to recommend this DC Gundam. This is a decent game for die hard fans of the long running anime series, but for the rest, don't bother.

World Republic says "There are some nice graphics in this DC Gundam effort from Bandai, but the action is very stiff and awkward, ultimately proving to be worthwhile only for dyed-in-the-wool fans of the anime."

C

WORLD RXP .0009.762 798132 798.008

Wonderswan Review

GHOULS & GHOSTS
GAME BY CAPCOM

The fact that this game made it to the Wonder Swan and not any other handheld system ever is amazing. What is even more exciting about its arrival to the great little machine is that it incorporates the ability the play while holding the system long ways, bringing much more area into view while in vertical levels. Old enemies, new bosses and great platforming action make this worth buying a Wonder Swan. **B+**

World Republic Review • developer/publisher **tamsoft** • available in japan **now**

toshinden subaru

The very first 3D fighting game that dazzled us on the PlayStation lives on... named after a car

Toshinden Subaru—not the car, the character (Subaru Shinjo)—comes to us from Tamsoft, the game's original creators, but in an entirely different looking package. The likes of Ellis, Sophia, and Tracy, along with the rest of the cast, are no more. The new cast of characters, a wider variety of anime-tastic fighters, will take some getting used to, but after the inspired anime cinema at the game's outset, I'm adjusting fast. Besides the new character evolution and story line, the ever popular Team Battle scheme has also been added along with a very in-depth story mode, where teams of three actually converse for long stints as they ascend the ranks. We pay for it, though, with extended loading, as characters don't jump in after one is defeated. Rather, the match ends and a new one begins. It's probably a matter of 15 or so seconds, but in a fighting game time that can seem an eternity. The arenas themselves have changed as well, taking on a more Tekken-like look and feel, while the controls and Rengi supers have pretty much stayed the same. As usual, the 3D models look excellent, taking full advantage of the PS' spec, and the game's pyrotechnics, I'd have to say, look better than ever. Look, I know there's only a few Toshinden fans left in America, and they probably like the games for a lot of the same reasons I do: anime tie-ins and character designs. To you I say go forth and purchase Subaru. I'm sure this is but a new beginning, so you better brush up on the new players!

World Republic says "Toshinden Subaru may be too big a departure for fans. Some of the new characters are cool but they can't replace the original crew."

C+

---

gundam: side story 0079 © bandai 1999.
toshinden subaru © tamsoft 1999. ghouls & ghosts © capcom 1999.

yu yu hakusho

A late entry into the cart wars of '94, a small developer rolled out of Konami to form Treasure and soon broke out onto the Japanese gaming scene with a four-player game that still holds up to this day. It may not look like much now, but back in the day, four players on screen with huge explosions and the ability to jump in and out of the background was a near miracle. Relegated to hard-core import gamers, Yu Yu Hakusho reached a narrow audience.

Before fighting games hit the mainstream, Yu Yu Hakusho introduced the parry, air combos and Super Cancels. These modernizations were complimented by excellent character animations, parallax and warping in the backgrounds, and gameplay that rivaled anything the arcade had to offer. I get excited just thinking about how elated I was back when it came out. Yu Yu was celebrated on many levels.

First of all, the character design mimicked the anime eerily well for the technology of the day. Treasure also nailed it when they balanced the game. With such a wide variety of characters and special moves, tweaking the game to match the anime and play well had to have been quite a task. The levels themselves were up to the task as well—some levels even had a misty effect going on in the foreground, which we'd never seen before, hinting to the fighter's position. These refinements were fully exploited by the multi-layered arenas, with fighters jumping into and out of the background to best counter or avoid their opponent. Watching two sets of fighters go at it on separate planes is one thing.; all four meeting on one layer with barely a trace of slow down is another.

The ability to use the backgrounds as a tactic opened up a variety of possibilities. You could jump back to avoid a barrage of attacks or hold your ground and time a blast to meet a player jumping into your layer. It sounds funny now, as 3D has become prevalent, but back then we were happy with even the slightest technological innovation.

Yu Yu's play mechanics involve precise double jumps and charging attacks, where a spirit meter slowly drains as you use special moves. The results are the biggest brightest explosions the Mega Drive has ever seen. Most characters with projectile attacks are able to hold and extend them into more-powerful attacks as well, which can absorb and pass through normal projectiles and hit the fighter slow enough to stand there and watch it coming. You can cancel supers too, another aspect that blew me away at the time.

I shudder to think what a modern day Treasure fighter would be like, but I'd sure like to find out. Yu Yu Hakusho is easily one of the best 16-bit fighters there has ever been. If you have the opportunity, I highly recommend picking one up.

G-KIVES

<<retro video game assimilation>>

gr001

A GAMERS' REPUBLIC MONTHLY SECTION

SAKURA WARS VOL. 2
REVIEWED BY DAVID SMITH
•1999 ADV FILMS
60 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH
★★★ *ACTION/ADVENTURE*

Story: Ah, this is good. The second volume of *Sakura Wars* features fewer introductions and tearful farewells and much more in the way of giant robots beating the hell out of each other. The Floral Assault Unit goes into its first battles on the streets of Tokyo (including an apparent homage to Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*). Meanwhile, Ogami Ichirou makes his entrance as that classic anime archetype, the total nebbish who gets to second base with all the hot women.

Highlight: Sakura Shinguji takes out the demonic Steam Cannon with that old Himura Kenshin standby, the Devastating Kendo Attack With The Long Confusing Name. Runner-up goes to Iris' devastating teddy-bear assault.

Animation: Good OVA quality. The battles are nice and smooth, and don't rely too much on little flashy streaks superimposed over empty black backgrounds.

Character Design: Ogami looks like Tenchi Masaki in an army uniform that's too big for him. Send 'im to hell. The rest of the cast, however, is wonderfully done.

Dubbing: Buy the sub. Some of the foreign accents work (Maria), others absolutely do not (Ri Kouran), and in general the good performances are out- weighed by the grating ones. I quite liked Sumire and Maria, however.

Bottom Line: Aside from the dub, I was surprised by how much I dug this. Video-game adaptations tend to be a little iffy (Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer, anyone? To say nothing of this month's Variable Geo!), but *Sakura Wars* features great designs, engaging characters, and of course, giant robots beating hell out of each other. Subtitled, it's a nice offbeat mecha anime.

フリーダイヤル：1.818.995.3383（FAX専用番号・24時間受付）

■A欄：商品合計額＋送料（手数料）を記入してください。

⚡ **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH • SUNRISE**
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•1999 ANIMEWORKS
100 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH
★★★★ *ACTION/ADVENTURE*

Story: Having been whisked away abruptly to fulfill their destiny and rescue an alternate world from certain doom (which, let me go on the record as saying, would freak me out totally), Hikaru, Umi, and Fu prepare to embark on their journey through Cephiro. Continuing to mirror the Saturn game (actually the Saturn game mimicked these episodes) the trials at the pond of destiny and the girls' first meeting with Ascot are at hand. Of course, Ferio isn't far behind and the plot's first big twist ensues. Sunrise concludes when Hikaru saves a cute little critter and falls head over heels for it, only to discover later...well, let's just say she's got her hands full.

Animation: For a lengthy TV series, top drawer all the way.

Character Design: With original designs from Clamp, *Rayearth* helped set the standard. How cool is Clef, and the dragon he rode in on? The girls have timeless features and Ascot is devious on a wonderfully strange level. It doesn't get much better.

Fight Scenes: Quite a lovely spectacle. The super moves repeat, but they're laden with clever edits and wispy effects.

Dubbing: Okay, here's where it gets dicey. First of all, I like dubs. Or, let me rephrase that: I like good dubs. Sucky ones I despise as much or more than the next guy. This is a good dub. I'll leave it at that.

Highlight: The entire scene at the Spring of Eterna.

Soundtrack: Buy it.

Final Analysis: There's a lot to love here. Old-school fans will celebrate each and every new episode while they prepare for Manga's release of Clamp's *X*, and newcomers will be mesmerized by the amazing Clamp style.

🌹 **MONKEY MAGIC DVD**
REVIEWED BY DAVID SMITH
•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM
112 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH
★★★1/2 *ACTION/ADVENTURE*

Story: Kongo, the Stone Monkey, falls from the sky in a comet, and instead of fighting for truth, justice, et cetera, he sets about using his rock-hard physique to go to war with neighboring humans. He's egged on by the minions of the evil Dearth Voyd, who wants him to join the dark side or what-have-you. After receiving his comeuppance from part-time god Prince Nata, he sets out on a quest for divine power, or at least enough power to ensure total monkey hegemony. Then we enter standard *Dragon Ball Z* territory, which is not necessarily good—but with monkeys, is definitely good.

Highlight: Excluding the descent into the earwax caves, it would probably have to be the bit where hordes of cloned monkeys smite the legion of monstrously transformed martial-arts students. Like I say, *DBZ* with monkeys.

Animation: *Monkey Magic* is a kid's show, but the animation is sharp, with a smooth mixture of 2D characters and 3D CG backgrounds. The high DVD resolution is a marked assist.

Dubbing: It's only available dubbed, so if you religiously resist English dialogue, you're out of luck. But *Monkey Magic* has impressive voice acting considering its Saturday-morning audience. If you're a little young at heart, it's just fine.

Bottom Line: At five dollars an episode, *Monkey Magic* on DVD is a great deal. It's a nice way to dial your brain down after *Serial Experiments Lain*, or cheer yourself up after *Grave Of The Fireflies*. I might have thought I was too old for it when I was younger, but now I've grown up just enough to enjoy something simple.

CITY HUNTER: BAY CITY WARS
REVIEWED BY CHRISTINA ALEXANDER
•1999 ADV FILMS
60 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH
★★★1/2 *ACTION/ADVENTURE*

Story: An evil dictator, his daughter, and their small army from a foreign country have taken over a new hotel in City Hunter's territory. The dictator has personal vendetta against the United States, and he has managed to get control of a nuclear weapon. Using the captive Bay City Hotel as his base of operations, he threatens to nuke the U.S. The police are fairly powerless to stop the dictator. This leaves everything up to Joe and his friends. The new hotel has a powerful new computer system that the dictator is also using to control his nuke. While trying to save Kaori and Miki, Joe is sidetracked by a small army and the dictator's pretty young daughter. After some fairly intense fighting and quite a bit of luck, Joe manages to locate Kaori and Miki, and find his way down to the computer control room. Joe has to somehow convince the dictator's daughter not to type in the launch code for the nuke. The story isn't overly complicated, but it is definitely enjoyable.

Character Design: *City Hunter* is very plain. Clearly from an older generation of anime. It looks a lot like *Soryuden*.

Animation: Since there is plenty of action in this movie, there were plenty of chances for the animators to show off. The action sequences with Joe were very smooth and I was duly impressed all around.

Dubbing: Unfortunately the dubbing is marginal at best. Some voices are passable while others are painful to hear. Fortunately Joe's voice is passable, but the accents on the foreign dignitaries is still atrocious.

Fight Scenes: The fight scenes were extremely enjoyable. There were enough bullet rounds and explosions for everyone. Generally the whole movie was about going from one fight to the next. If they're gonna make you listen to bad dubbing, at least something blows up every two or three seconds!

Soundtrack: The soundtrack was strangely out of place. Normally *City Hunter* does a good job with soundtracks, but this one rubbed me the wrong way.

Final Analysis: This was a fun anime. It was by no means epic, but it was definitely fun. Joe once again spent most of his time chasing women, but he did find time to fight a small army. The story was very typical of this series. Once a again a terrorists threatens the civilized world, and Joe manages to take them down. While this story isn't terribly original, it is well done and entertaining. It made me laugh and the explosions weren't half bad either. And what else in life is there but a good laugh and big explosions?

★ 発売直前タイトル

EATMAN '98 VOL. 1 & 2
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM
48 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBTITLED
★★★ *ACTION/ADVENTURE*

Story: *Bye Bye Aimie* gets underway in the somber form we've become accustomed to from this series. A quiet break-in, a gun to a forehead, the gentle sound of the trigger, and *bap!* Five such murders have taken place recently and the single link between the victims is that they were all biotechnology researchers. The seductive detective Aimie who's assigned the case tracks down bolt (she finds him where we always do, in bar eating bolts and sipping Whiskey) that very night and, after a conversation that suggests that perhaps Bolt was slipping Aimie the crank, she escorts him to jail. Of course, we know Bolt's innocent—he always is. It takes about another two minutes to figure out who done it and why. So the stylish cliffhanger ending, while nicely produced, comes as no surprise.

Animation: Good Japanese TV quality.

Music: There's very little but what's here is quite good. Light classical with violins, some moody ambient, and finally a nice bluesy end theme.

Character designs: Aimie has a great look about her with sharp features, dark eyes and jet-black hair that hangs over her face just enough to make her mysterious. I like the Police Chief as well.

Highlight: The rooftop scene at the episode's end. Great police hover rigs.

Final Analysis: I was kind of hoping Eatman would evolve, but come to think of it, the fan base probably likes it for its somber bitter-sweet drama. It's not for me because it's hard for me to find drama in a story about a guy who eats metal. Call me crazy. Fans should be happy with *Eatman '98*, though.

ANIME•REPUBLIC

BLUE SUBMARINE NO. 6
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM
30 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBTITLED
★★★★★ ACTION/DRAMA

Story: The underwater motif continues to exude quality action, adventure, and drama. Zorndyke, self-proclaimed lord of the sea (which now covers the Earth), thirsts more vehemently than ever to extinguish what's left of the human race. What's disturbing is how convinced he is that he is somehow almost doing mankind a favor by wiping out his own species. The attack in this episode is massive and casualties plentiful. The enemies—barbaric humanoid sharks and massive alien sea vessels—are wondrous. Meanwhile, the underlying story between Tetsu and Mayumi continues to fester, as does his mysterious connection with the humanoid female he was bitten by in episode one. "Science turned its back on the flow of nature...mankind fell from its hand."—Zorndyke.

Animation: Beautiful on two counts: The CG and the traditional elements seem more in synch than ever. There's nothing quite like it.

Music: Makes some getting used to, but I suppose it fits. There are a lot of horns in the action sequences that I find odd, but the rest is nicely dramatic.

Character Designs: There's a little of a lot of my favorites in here. You can see shades of *Akira*, *Wings of Honniamease*, and *Evangelion* in *Blue Submarine,* along with some very fresh sea-creature designs that rival anything that's come out of Hollywood in the last decade.

Highlight: This whole tape is a highlight.

Fight Scenes: Lots of highly animated CG, huge explosions, and realistic underwater effects, mixed with anime overtones. So cool.

Final Analysis: Once again I am totally enthralled with *Blue Submarine No. 6*. The intoxicating character designs that drew me to it initially are only getting better, and the CG elements are broadening still. A drawn cigarette emits real smoke; animation and cg mingle seamlessly. The overall look of this series, the lighting, the blurs, and wipes, continues to amaze me. The writing and the acting are also thoroughly enjoyable.

I'm going after the Ghost Ship!

★ 刺激的な2-Dビジュアル

刺激的な2

VARIABLE GEO
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•1999 ADV FILMS
90 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBTITLED
★★★ 1/2 ACTION/ADVENTURE

Story: You played the game, now see the movie! Actually most of you have likely never played one of the many fighting games based on this peculiar T&A/fighting hybrid, but, after viewing *Variable Geo* for yourself, you may want to. The greatest thing about this titillating slice of life, besides the obvious, has got to be the hyper-bizarre theme. See if you can conjure up something more broken than this! *Variable Geo* is a martial arts tournament fought to determine the toughest waitress in the world (I'm quoting the narrator here, folks). The winner receives 10 million dollars (Dr. Evil...) and prime real estate in the city of her choice! And if you lose? Humility is your bedfellow! You must strip nekkid for the crowd! I'll tell you who the toughest waitress is. The swing shift lady at Denny's in Compton. She'll pop a cap in yer' ass! My question? Who on God's green Earth came up with this one, and better yet, who green-flagged it! Nevertheless, VG is here for us all to enjoy, so pull up a double-D brassiere and have at it!

Animation: "Gettin' jiggy wit' it" takes on a whole new meaning! The fight scenes in *VG* are big-time productions with excellent animation. The rest is par for the course, but, they fight all the time!

Dub: ADV voice actors I don't recognize abound, and it's really good. They must always be hiring!

Character Design: I'll give you a hint: they're the center of attention.

Fight Scenes: Nonstop high-dollar chick fights. Clothes shed, undies fly. Need I say more?

Soundtrack: It's pretty much just there.

Highlight: Satomi's first fight as a full-fledged mutation.

Final Analysis: What's not to love? There's some depth woven through the story, which revolves around a deep friendship split apart by the evil doings behind *VG*, and it's action packed to boot!

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG: THE MOVIE
REVIEWED BY DAVE HALVERSON
•1999 ADV FILMS
60 MINUTES•DUBBED IN ENGLISH
★★★★ ACTION/ADVENTURE

Before I begin, I feel it my duty to comment on a review of *Sonic The Hedgehog: The Movie* that ran in a recent issue of *Entertainment Weekly*, a magazine I subscribe to and highly respect, especially since Lisa Schwarzbaum gave *The 13th Warrior* an A-. I mean no offense, but this review, in which the reviewer somehow couldn't grasp the story(?), was written as if the movie was never watched. In fact, I'm pretty sure it wasn't. Anyone who has seen the poor state of cheap, farmed-out Saturday morning cartoon animation in this country would certainly at least know to comment positively on *Sonic*'s high production values. Rather, this reviewer saw fit to actually hammer it. And if you can't grasp the story here, (I mean, the ending, come on—could they paint a more vivid picture?) you certainly shouldn't be writing reviews in *EW*. I normally would never question a reviewers authoritah, as reviewing is, after all, highly subjective. But anime in

this country needs to come of age and inaccurate reporting such as this in such a respected mainstream magazine is just wrong. That said, the DVD is even sweeter than the excellent VHS we reviewed in the September *AR*. Special features include slick interactive menus, a web connection that leads to the pot of gold at the end of the anime rainbow, scene selection, English and Japanese dialogue/subtitles—a superb feature to rate the dub—and 15, count 'em, 15, ADV previews!

2-Dビジュアル
注意して読んで

OUTLAW STAR VOL.3
REVIEWED BY DAVID SMITH
•1999 ANIMEVILLAGE.COM
60 MINUTES•ENGLISH SUBTITLED
★★★★ ACTION/ADVENTURE

Story: We've reviewed *Outlaw Star*, Bandai's ace sci-fi adventure series, three times now. Some would say that the point's been driven home. I disagree. The world needs to know, whatever the cost, that OUTLAW STAR IS REALLY VIOLENTLY COOL AND WE DIG IT.

Ahem. Volume three settles down a little, after all the sturm und drang from the last time out, and there are some nice quiet bits between Melfina and Gene. That's not to say it's all dialogue, though. The tender moments keep being interrupted by Aisha (the vengeful catgirl from episode 3), who spends a fair while trying to wallop the secret to the Galactic Ley-line out of Gene. There's also the first appearance of "Twilight" Suzuka, assassin and honorary UNC Kendo Club member, who spends part six doing her level best to kill Gene, after he gets involved in an

old friend's slightly shady business deals (another influence from classic pulp fiction; old friends never, ever pop up unless they're being tailed by lethal opposition).
Highlight: It's a tie between Gene's badass Chinese broadsword posing (complete with the Bruce Lee war cry) and Aisha's display of Lina-Inverse-esque noodle-slurping insanity. Well, and then there's the debut of the *Outlaw Star* itself, Gene's brand-new Grappler Ship, which discards its drab appearance from episode four in favor of a gorgeous red paint job. Again, I must salute the mechanical design of this show.
Animation: As good as ever. Gene's throwdowns with Suzuka and Aisha look great; I continue to enjoy the less-polished character animation.
Character Design: I feel a need to note that if Aisha's are originals, I'll eat my favorite hat. Suzuka swings the meanest bokken in anime since Kanuka Clancy, though, and is thus hereby named Our Knee-Breaking Lady And Mistress.
Translation: It gets a little stiff in parts, and the sub fonts go off at one point in the beginning of the second episode. Still, this is perfectly acceptable subbing.
Bottom Line: *Outlaw Star* remains the definition of where it's at. Anybody who wants to help sing "Through The Night" at the AWA karaoke event, drop me a line.

GAMERS' REPUBLIC EDITORS' TOP 5

D. Halverson
1. Blue Submarine No. 6 **bandai**
2. Cowboy Bebop **bandai**
3. Outlaw Star **ADV**
4. Bubblegum Crisis 2040 **ADV**
5. Perfect Blue **manga**

C. Alex
1. Princess Monoke **miramax**
2. Rurouni Kenshinn **sony**
3. Escaflowne **bandai**
4. Combustible **guardress**
5. Bastard **pioneer**

D. Smith
1. Trigun **pioneer**
2. Serial Experiments **pioneer**
3. Bubblegum Crisis 2040 **ADV**
4. Girl Utena **soft. sculptors**
5. Outlaw Star **bandai**

Gamers' Republic
anime top 5
adv films and gamers' republic

READERS' TOP 5
1. Ninja Resurrection **ADV Films**
2. Ninja Scroll **ADV Films**
3. Perfect Blue **Manga**
4. Evangelion **ADV Films**
5. Ghost in the Shell **Manga**

TOP 5 ANIME CONTEST

1ST PRIZE
Kamille M. Bullock
Manson, NC

A SEGA DREAMCAST WITH SONIC ADVENTURE (!), ADV'S SONIC THE MOVIE, AND A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO GAMERS' REPUBLIC!

2ND PRIZE
Curt Clendenin
Glen Allyn, IL

SONIC THE MOVIE, A GR MOUSE PAD AND T-SHIRT, AND A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO GAMERS' REPUBLIC!

3RD PRIZE
Adam McNeal
Woodland, ME

SONIC THE MOVIE AND A ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO GAMERS' REPUBLIC!

Congratulations to this month's winners!

To enter the ADV/Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime Contest, simply send us a list of your favorite five anime, new or old. Make sure to include your name, address and age and send it to: **Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, suite 218, West-lake Village, CA 91361**, or e-mail our venerable leader at **dhalverson@gamersrepublic.com**. First prize will receive: A Sega Dreamcast & Sonic Adventure, The Sonic Movie from ADV, and a ONE-YEAR Subscription to Gamers Republic. Second place will receive The Sonic movie, a Gamers' Republic mouse pad and t-shirt, and a 1-year subscription to GR, and third place will receive the Sonic Movie and a 1-year subscription. Good Luck everyone! For your free ADV catalog (and this is one cool catalog) write to: AD Vision, 5750 Blintiff #217, Houston, TX 77036.

Gamers' Republic would like to thank ADV Films for their support.

No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited.

Cliffhanger Comics, in conjunction with Dynamic Forces and Palisades Marketing, will soon be bringing us these beautifully sculpted (by Sam Greewell) Crimson figures. Alex, Scarlet X, Joe and Lisseth will all be available this winter. Look for them in *Previews* and finer toy and comic book stores.

CRIMSON

Sleepy Hollow will likely rule the cinema this holiday season, and where there's a hot commodity there's a guy named Todd. These look amazing! But where's the Christina Ricci figure? Maybe it wouldn't stand up.

Sleepy Hollow

MACROSS

Standing nearly 8 inches tall and made from die-cast metal and plastic, here's a first look at the Vf 11 Thunderbolt from Toycom's upcoming Macross Plus line. We'll have more on these hot new toys soon.

From Tomy Japan's Character World Real Grade line, it's Parn, Deedlit, and Niece, from *Record of Lodoss War*! Available now through Inteleg, check out all of their hard-to-find import toys at inteleg.com.

ロードス島戦記

GR SYNTHETICS
MACROSS • SLEEPY HOLLOW • RECORD OF LODOSS WAR • CRIMSON

RED Interactive, formed last year to "create compelling soundtracks for high-tech games," gets their first chance to prove their stuff with *Duke Nukem: Music To Score By*. The album contains 45 minutes of music from and inspired by games like Duke Nukem: Time To Kill and the N64's Zero Hour, including unreleased tracks by metal veterans Megadeth (the "Duke Nukem Theme") and more contemporary act Corrosion of Conformity. Actually, a blend of the old and new in metal seems to be the motif on the album. Stabbing Westward and Type O Negative rub shoulders with "oh yeah, I wonder what happened to them" acts like Slayer.

But along with the loud speed guitar and angry people screaming, there's a good deal more on "Music To Score By." 175 megabytes of disk space are given over to all kinds of fannish what-not that you can access with a personal computer. There's an interactive strategy guide to Duke's various adventures, screen savers and other graphics, shareware (perhaps including the original Duke Nukem 3D, and maybe even his years-past 2D adventures), links to things Duke on the World Wide Web, and audio from Time To Kill, Zero Hour, and the eagerly-awaited Duke Nukem Forever, due out one of these days for the PC.

Connoisseurs of the King's adventures and generally raucous (vulgar? infantile? rambunctious? hooliganish?) style will probably eat this stuff up, although one wonders if there are in fact that many such people out there (are there any Megadeth fans left either? Were there any to begin with?). If *Music To Score By* turns out to be a success, however, expect to see RED give the same treatment to further games; they're calling it "the blueprint for videogame soundtracks to come."

It seems like an easy task: get some cool bands to do some cool songs based on a cool game, and start countin' the cash! Well, Red Interactive got some choice acts, but my two main beefs are: (1) No one but Megadeth uses any samples of the Dukester, and (2) most of the tracks seem to have nothing to do with the game series. I guess it makes marketing sense to have rock and metal acts like Megadeth, Slayer, Type O Negative, and Stabbing Westward share CD space with rap acts like Wu-Tang Clan and The Beatnuts, but it often seems like I'm the only person who can appreciate these genres side-by-side. When played back-to-back, though, I get the impression that Red put the song titles in a hat and drew them out at random to organize the song list. All the Marketing 101 aside, however, there are some great exclusive tracks here, such as Megadeth doing Duke's theme song (only found on this disk), Type O Negative's remake of Neil Young's "Cinnamon Girl" (first release in the U.S.), and The Beatnuts' absolutely bumpin' "Stone Crazy."

I really can't recommend this disk unless you have a favorite band represented here, or have an obsessive need to own all things Duke-related (and they include a handy product listing!) Hey Red: for the next disk, get Duke up the mic!

Edd Fear

Duke Nukem: Music to Score By
Red Interactive, Domestic

C-

After the release of several not-so-noticeable albums (*Transistor, Live, Omaha Sessions*), nearly five years after the success of their 1995 self-titled album *311*, the five-piece band from Omaha, Nebraska, finally seems to be heading back on track. With their new album *Soundsystem* due out on Capricorn Records October 12, 311 combines its its trademark hard rock, rap, funk, jazz and reggae chops with some catchy new tunes.

Among its standout cuts are the hard reggae, hip-hop lead single "Come Original," and "Flowing," a guitar-driven tune filled with the renowned blend of Nick Hexum and Count SA's vocal harmonies throughout the song. One of my personal favorite cuts on this album was "Life's Not a Race," a riff-heavy track with a crunch of heavy guitars and Santana-like jazzy guitar solos.

Although *Soundsystem* seems to be a step in the right direction for 311, the band seems to have lost its way from its footloose and fancy-free early days or maybe they're just trying too hard. For die-hard fans, *Soundsystem* has a few good new songs but seems to lack some overall ingenuity. This album will no doubt receive some spins on MTV, but will it have enough stamina to throw 311 back on top?

Maissa Dauriac

311-Sound System
Capricorn Records, Domestic

B-

"I have opened all my doors, so there's nothing left to hide," growls the 20-year-old Travis Meeks on this bold, ambitious, sometimes beautiful second album from Days of the New. Indeed, Meeks is not one to hide anything, especially not his darker, most-intense emotions: "Pain is my pill/I've lost my pill now I'm numb/numb/down on my knees wanting to die," he sings on the richly atmospheric "Flight Response."

Meeks may be accused of sinking into self-indulgence, but when he takes his dusky spirit and channels it into his music, the result is often intoxicating. Every song sinks into the other, creating a flowing, melodically cold landscape of exotic sounds: a female voice glides through the background of the songs, fusing chants and effluent colorings to the arrangements; lush orchestrations spill around the dominance of the acoustic guitar, electronic tones breathe in the distance. Many of the album's 13 tracks have moments that are stirring, often intense in their ability to feed a cloud of somber energy. Meeks shows the occasional lack of maturity that deflates his inventions and sometimes straps them with banality, but the album ultimately adds up to an intriguing experiment that yearns for more extensive study in the future.

Kent Kencade

Days of the New
UltraSonic Recordings, Domestic

B

MARIO GOLF

METALLIC MARIO FOR THOSE WITH THE SKILLS
Probably the hardest Codex Republica tip this month is the abili-
ty to unlock Metallic Mario in Mario Golf. To obtain Metallic
Mario, you will need to score a birdie on every hole on each course
in Tournament Mode. Good luck!

DONKEY KONG LOOKS GOOD IN PLAID
One of the hidden characters in the game is Donkey Kong. To
unlock DK, you will have to play the Ring Shot game and obtain 30
rings. Then DK will be a selectable character.

WHERE'S THE CODE SCREEN?
There is a codes screen hidden within the Main Menu of Mario
Golf. First, highlight the Clubhouse option. Then, simultaneous-
ly press Z + R + A. You will then get the normal Clubhouse screen
with the addition of a Code Entry option. Select Code Entry to
enter the code below.

DONKEY KONG AIN'T NO CADDY
If you are having problems unlocking Donkey Kong by way of the
Ring Shot game and would like to play as the Big Ape, you can
access a tournament game with DK as the golfer by inputting the
following code at the Code Entry screen (see above): oEQ561G2
(note: the first digit is a zero).

CHANGE CHARACTER COLOR
You can change the color of the outfit of each character (and the
color of Yoshi) by holding down either the Right C, Left C or Down
C button while selecting the character.

ADD A LITTLE OOMPH TO YOUR SHOTS
There is a way to "fudge" the ball an extra inch or two for those
games where every inch matters. When the ball is slowing down
and about to stop, repeatedly press the Z trigger and the ball will
spurt forwards a bit.

TRY TO WIN EACH HOLE EVERY TIME
This code comes in handy when trying to unlock all of the charac-
ters in Get Character mode. If you make a bad shot and feel that
you are going to lose the hole because of it, pause the game and
select Save and Quit. Then from the Main Menu choose Continue
and select the saved file. The game will continue on the hole you
saved at, giving you unlimited opportunities to win each hole.

PlayStation

This is a great game and is chock full of codes. These codes can be entered at
the first menu screen, where there is a guy in front of the word Driver and
behind a cop car and a Mustang. If entered correctly, you will hear a click and
the code will appear in the Codes option (toggle to the cop car on the first
menu screen). Make sure you press the buttons in succession quickly.

THE COPS ARE OUT EATING JELLY DONUTS
The following code will make all the cops disappear: L1, L2, R1(4), L2(2), R1(2),
L1(2), R2.

IT'S MY DAD'S CAR
The following code will give you invincibility: L2(2), R2(2), L2, R2, L2, L1, R2,
R1, L2, L1(2).

DA BOOTY'S IN DA BACK
The following code will switch the axle control from the front wheels to the
rear wheels: R1(3), R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1.

DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU SEE
The following code will make the cars really small: R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1,
R2, L1, R1, L2(3). But be forewarned that although the car looks small, it is
actually still large as you will find out when you start running into things and
seeing pieces fly when you haven't really run into them. It's rather amusing.

SHE'S GOT LEGS, SHE KNOWS HOW TO USE THEM
The following code will lift your ride so you can be cool like the big guys: R2,
L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2(2), L2(2), L1, R2, R1.

JUST DON'T GET SICK LOOKING AT IT
If you get queasy really easily, you may want to stay away from this code. The
following code allows you to turn the world upside down : R2(2), R1, L2, L1, R2,
L2, L1, R2(2), L2, R2, L1. In the cheat menu it is called "Antipodean."

SO WHO MADE THIS GAME ANYWAY?
To watch the credits of the game and see the mug shots of a bunch of Brits
input the following: L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1.

NINTENDO 64

DRIVER

TARZAN

FOUR PLAYER LINK
The following secret will allow you to link up two PlayStations together. You will need to have a PSX link cable in order to perform this secret. First hook up the cable to the two PlayStations (into the serial i/o port in the back) and load the game on both. The following will need to be performed on both systems. From the Main Menu screen, select Options. From the Options Menu, select Game Setup. From the Game Setup screen, select Default Names and Default Name Player One. You will then need to change the default name on both to LINK. The screen will flash to confirm that you have successfully entered the code. Next, on both units, choose the new "Establish Link" option on the Options screen. The first system to do this will be the main system. Next, select the number of players and choose a Single Race, then class and track, or from the main system choose Eliminator Mode. The final step is to select your vehicles. Enjoy.

ME TARZAN, LIKE LIVES
Tarzan is a great PlayStation game. If you are having trouble and are running out of lives too often, the following tip will help you. When you are low on lives, go back to the earlier levels that you've completed and play them over and over and over until you feel you have enough lives to progress at the level you were at. When playing the level to build up lives, make sure that you do not save the game or else you will lose your higher level progress.

ME TARZAN, LIKE ALL LEVELS
The following code will enable you to access all of the levels in the game. Start a game and while active, press R1, R2, L1, L2, R2, L1, L2(2).

WIPEOUT 3

SKATE RATS HAVE EGOS
The following code will enable Big Heads for the skaters. First, pause the game. Next, hold down the L1 button while pressing the following buttons: Left, Up, X, Down, Up, X. If you performed the code correctly, the pause screen should shake. You will then need to quit the current game and restart. All of your skate rats should now have big heads...yea, like they don't already.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
If you would like to open up all of the Free Skate levels, the following code is for you. First pause the game. Next, hold down the L1 button while pressing the following buttons: Square, Up, Left, Up, Circle, Triangle. If you performed the code correctly, the pause screen should shake. You will need to quit the current game and go back to the Level Select screen. All of the practice mode levels will now be available for you to skate to your hearts content.

OLLIE LIP SLIDE TO CHEESE MCTWIST WATERMELON
I've always wanted to say that. Actually the following code does help you perform trick moves in the half-pipe in the street course. Make sure that you grab enough airtime in order to pull the tricks. Play as Bob Burnquist and when you're airborne, press Up, Up, Down and Circle to make him do a Back Flip. Another Burnquist trick is a Finger Flip Air Walk. To do this, grab air and press Left, Left and Square. Play as Tony Hawk and perform the same code to make him do a 540 Board Variel.

TONY HAWK

The following codes are entered at the VS. screen and in a manner similar to that of NFL Blitz for N64. There are three buttons to use - Turbo, Hurdle and Pass - as well as a direction on the cross pad. You can go to the options menu and customize your button configuration. In the codes below, the first number represents how many times to press the Turbo button, the second how many times to press the Hurdle button, then which direction to press the Pass button, and the third the D-pad. For example to access a Night Stadium, the code is 5-o-2-down, meaning press Turbo five times, Hurdle no times, Pass twice and then down on the D-pad. If done correctly, the name of the code will appear and you'll hear a sound confirming it.

Late Hits	0-1-0-Up
Fog	0-3-0-Down
Massive Fog	0-4-1-Down
Super Turbo Running	0-3-2-Left
Big Head Mode	0-4-0-Up
Big Head For Whole Team	2-0-3-Right
Super Blitzing	0-4-5-Up
Giant Football	0-5-0-Right
Long Field Goals	1-2-3-Left
Headless Team	1-2-3-Right
Big Players	1-4-1-Right
No Punting Allowed	1-5-1-Up
No First Downs	2-1-0-Up
Always Play QB on Multi-player	2-2-2-Left
Always Play Receiver	2-2-2-Right
Fast Passes	2-5-0-Left
Grass Field	3-0-0-Up
Dirt Field	3-0-2-Up
Astroturf Field	3-0-3-Up
Snow Field	3-0-4-Up
Tiny Players	3-1-0-Right
No Head	3-2-1-Left
Invisible QB	3-4-2-Left
No Interceptions	3-4-4-Up
No Random Fumbles	4-2-3-Down
Invisible Player	4-3-3-Up
Turn Off Stadium	5-0-0-Left
Old Day Stadium	5-0-1-Up
Old Night Stadium	5-0-2-Up
Snow Stadium	5-0-3-Down
Roman Stadium	5-0-3-Left

NFL BLITZ

ENTER THE FAT DRAGON

CRASH CINEMA • VHS

Sammo Hung, star of CBS TV's "Martial Law," directs and stars in this 1978 parody of Bruce Lee's *Enter the Dragon*, playing Ah-lung, a pig farmer's son who idolizes Bruce Lee. When he moves to Hong Kong to help his uncle run a food stand, he finds many reasons to utilize his martial arts skills. However, real life isn't like the movies, and the more he tries to help using kung fu, the more trouble he gets into.

The opening action sequence and the final fight scene are pretty typical martial arts fare, but the middle action sequence, in which a drunken Ah-lung takes on the bad guys while catering a posh party, is very well done. And when he gets the chance to be an extra on the set of a Bruce Lee-wannabe action movie, he ends up schooling the entire cast in kung fu, and then gives them a lecture on the master's style! Needless to say, he gets fired from yet another job.

This film has been remastered in widescreen format, which is a plus. However, this means that the subtitles (in both Chinese and English) can get tough to read, especially when the white subtitles blend into light backgrounds. Some of the translations are straight from the Chinese, which at times makes almost no sense and other times unintentionally adds to the comedic value.

Enter the Fat Dragon may not be the most consistent in pace, storyline, or action, but Hung's onscreen charisma makes up for any minuses, making this action-packed parody a good time for anyone who enjoys Hong Kong-style kung fu flicks. There's very little foul language, no nudity, no blazing guns, and no gore—just a roundish guy with all the right king fu moves.

Unrated; suitable for all ages; available now

SHAOLIN MASTER KILLER

CRASH CINEMA • VHS

Anyone looking for unending fighting scenes will be disappointed in this film, but if you're interested in understanding the rigors and trials of mastering martial arts, this is a great movie. Gordon Liu stars as San Te, a student whose family and friends are killed by Manchu warriors. He escapes death and seeks to learn kung fu from the Shaolin monks in order to exact his revenge. The opening scenes, as well as the final battle against his enemies, are mere bookends holding up the two-hour tale of San Te's seven years in the Shaolin monastery and the training he undergoes. I know it sounds like a Discovery channel special, and I wish they had left the Chinese dialog in and subtitled, because the redubbed audio tracks ended up being the weakest part of the movie. But I was riveted and fascinated by his transformation, and was actually cheering for him as he went from student to master...to master killer.

Unrated; suitable for teens and older; available now

THE MUMMY

UNIVERSAL • DVD

Brendan Frazer's stock plummeted with me somewhere between *Encino Man* and *George of the Jungle*. I went to see *The Mummy* for the effects and what looked to be an old-fashioned monster movie in a CG guise. I love a good monster movie, plain and simple. *Predator, Species, Aliens* – no brainers. See ensemble cast, see flesh eater; the fun's in guessing who will live and how the soon-to-be-departed will depart. While *The Mummy* didn't deliver the goods in terms of horror, it certainly excelled as an action/adventure. Wonderful locations, amazing cinematography and high production values all around, I rather relished the Indy Jones-meets-CG bad guy theme. And Brendan Frazer, well, he was pretty good. Almost good enough to make me forget *Blast from the Past*. Almost. *The Mummy* DVD is one of the most impressive overall packages I have seen on the format. The interface is gorgeous and the bonus material goes deep into how this amazing film was made. The transfer quality is also first rate, making the sand look like you could reach in and grab a handful. If you passed on *The Mummy* because of lukewarm reviews, do not hesitate—rush out and purchase this DVD. When the dust cleared on the summer-movie scene, *The Mummy* was looking pretty great. Critics fear giving early season contenders high marks, or I'm sure *The Mummy* would have rated significantly better. It's wall-to-wall entertainment and CG from the gods. ⚡

Rated PG-13; available now

THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

• **I'M YOUR SHADOW MAN:** Word has it that Ice Cube has stepped up to produce and star in a motion picture adaptation of *Shadow Man*, and plans to aim the character away from the Acclaim Comics' versions. But, Cube, what we really wanna know is are you playing the game? • **MAX MAY BE MAD, BUT HE'S DOING ALRIGHT:** Mel Gibson has green-lighted a script for a fourth *Mad Max* movie, and should start work on it sometime in 2000. Guess we'll finally find out what's beyond Thunderdome... • **MORE RAPPER NEWS:** Busta Rhymes has reportedly joined the cast of the remake of *Shaft Returns*. So will he pull a Fresh Prince and bust out the soundtrack and singles from the movie?

cine**matrix**
THE GAMER'S GUIDE TO FILM

cinematrix

edited**by**edd**fear**

FALLOUT

Hello, I am Otaku Zod.

You probably get this a lot, but you have a great mag going. I've been around since issue 2, and it keeps getting better (especially with the import coverage). This also brings me to my point of the message. In your anime republic section, you should expand your coverage to Japanese Anime that hasn't reached our shores yet (ex. Neo Ranga, Berserk, and the ever popular Rurouni Kenshin and Flames of Recca). If word got around more on these titles, companies would think " Hey, people seem to be interested in this... let's try bringing it out here." Otherwise the masses lose out big time, and are forced to turn to fansubs. Also, thank you for not going ga-ga over Pokémon (THAT slogan should be "Gotta kill 'em all!") I've already got the first 6 eps of Cowboy Bebop, and you'll love those too! Let me know if you want a copy... finally, on the Cowboy Bebop Soundtrack, Vol 1 is instrumental, and Vol 2 is vocal. Both are put out by Ever Anime, and they will cost about 30-35 dollars. Well, that's all I've got to say... Keep up the GREAT work, and please don't sell out (like some OTHER unworthy of my $5 mags).

Name withheld

Reverend speaks:

Covering unreleased stuff is tricky, on account of we're all lazy monolingual bums and none of us have the energy to get the fansub hookup. Furthermore, encouraging Sony to release Kenshin here is a bad idea. They could very well start thinking "hey, maybe we can sell that Samurai X thing after all," and unspeakable horror would ensue. We'll think about giving it a shot, though.

Pokémon may be a sinister plot to gain a death-grip on the brainstem of every human between the ages of five and twelve, but damn, those things are cute. Among the prized possessions atop my computer monitor, my little beanie Poliwhirl, whose name is Ed. Regarding the soundtrack thing, a word of advice: if you paid thirty bucks for an Ever Anime release, you got cheated twice over. They're a bootleg manufacturer, and their discs usually go for fifteen at the outside. The real Cowboy Bebop OST albums (and things of unspeakable beauty they unquestionably are) were published by JVC. To fan-roaches everywhere: piracy lacks style, and anyway, you don't get those cool little spine cards with Son May ripoffs.

Dear Gamers' Republic,

Hello. I'm writing to you from my Dreamcast. I don't have a keyboard yet, so I'll keep this letter relatively short.

I have two things to ask you. GR is a great mag, but the letters section is so small. More people should write you guys (note to self: write GR a letter). It would also be nice to see some pictures with captions regarding other peoples' letters. For example, if someone writes about Final Fantasy VIII, put a naked picture of Rinoa next to it saying, "Here's your damn picture, you pervert!"

Also I wanted to know if GR would talk to certain people about making videogames that the fans would want. Yet another example; we, the readers and videogame buyers would write to Gamers' Republic and tell you what videogame we would spend our money on (i.e. Guardian Heroes for DC - wink, wink), then you guys print a highly requested game and us readers/buyers would write to you and tell you that we'd seriously spend our money on it. If there are enough of us (a LOT of us) you guys can go to whomever would produce it and hopefully, he will.

Ok, I said I was going to be brief and I didn't... whoops... uhm, thanks for your time.
SegaFan
(But I still like PSX and Nintendo)

Reverend speaks:

You have the honor of being the first reader to send us a letter via the Dreamcast Internet browser. Congratulations, and let's hope you're not the last.

Reader input is an important influence on our content, and it's becoming more and more significant as people like you get on the Internet and suddenly have the ability to communicate with us via a few simple keystrokes (or D-pad motions, in your case). As we get more input from you, Fallout will grow correspondingly bigger. So keep those letters coming! Requests for pornographic visual aids will be denied, however, unless we happen to be really, really tired when we put Fallout together...

As for your other suggestion, how about a Top Ten Most Wanted feature next to our regular editorial Top Tens? If enough readers out there send in their opinions, that could be pretty cool, and developers would definitely take notice (if they know what's good for them).

I was in my local supermarket today, browsing through the magazine section, *when I saw the magazine "Gamers' Republic." Being a long-time gaming and anime enthusiast (I'm 27, and I've been a fan since Starblazers and Pong), I started flipping through your publication and was extremely impressed. After the workers there got done mopping up my drool, I took the magazine (which, not surprisingly, was the last copy) along with my assorted mix of munchies, "cheked out" and headed home for further reading. It has been a VERY long time since I have found a mag worthy of a subscription, but you can sign me up. I'm hooked.*

One question, though. About a year ago, in another magazine (sorry - I didn't know about you then) I saw a Dreamcast preview of the game "Godzilla Generations," where you control the big G (or one of several other characters) and go on different missions. I will be buying a DC, and have adored and followed Godzilla ever since I was 3 and saw the first Godzilla movie at my grandparents' house, but since reading that preview, I haven't heard/read a single solitary thing about it since. Don't tell me Sega killed the project, because they NEED killer games like this to attract attention and keep gamers from defecting to other systems when they come out (if you publish it, they will come). If Sega starts getting too picky about releasing games - again - Sony and Nintendo will bury Sega; this time, I'm afraid, for good. Thanks, and keep up the great work.
Erik L. Bolog
Clearwater, FL

Reverend replies:

Thanks for the high praise, and cheers to another old devotee of bare-bones video tennis and Space Battleship Yamato (although it's best seen in Corn Pone Flicks' magnificent How-They-Lied-O-Vision). Your subscription is in the works as we speak.

I agree that Sega needs to support the Dreamcast with a wide range of quality titles. However, Godzilla Generations, which shipped with the Dreamcast launch in Japan, wasn't exactly what you would call "quality." General consensus among import players here and the general public over there is that GG was crippled by lousy gameplay and a fearsomely slow pace. Trust us, the American Dreamcast is much better off without it. Too bad it turned out the way it did, though; Godzilla is one of those licenses (Macross springs to mind as well) that deserves more than the lousy videogame treatments it's gotten so far.

▸ **SHADOW MAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 68**

melodies, digs into your psyche to play over and over in your head the next day, adding to the game's already ethereal allure. During a creepy hymn within the asylum, for example, you hear a squeaky toy attracting a puppy, accompanied by it being grabbed and letting out a sad cry followed by...the electric knife! Kids, don't try this at home!

The cameras, which can be zoomed in and out and all around Mike via the d-pad and controls, are a blessing (not only for gameplay but for setting up awesome perspectives), as is the lock-on feature, à la Zelda: OoT for targeting prey. Shadow Man's only slight miscues (somewhat relegated by opinion) are the technology at work and the look and feel of Mike Leroi. Some feel Mike looks a bit stiff, which I can understand, although I felt he looked the part and was spoken extremely well. Of course, I've been staring at him for some 40 hours. All the voice in the game is very good, and there's lots of it. The tiny accompanying font is hard to read, though. While the game doesn't exhibit the texture prowess of Rayman 2 or Jet Force, it more than makes up for this in vastness and the distance you can see with no fog. Frame rates fluctuate depending on the amount of polys in a given vicinity, but overall I deem the gameplay and control first rate.

With every type of gameplay exhibited and carried out beautifully—platforming, exploration, shooting, puzzle solving, and some light role playing—along with an intriguing adult story and an insane size, Shadow Man is quite an achievement. The recent announcement that it's making the jump over to Dreamcast makes it even sweeter. There's also a movie in the works and, I'm sure, action figures. And so, along with Raziel, the latest star in video game action and adventure, Mike LeRoi successfully picks up where Lara and Turok left off and will undoubtedly lead the pack in to the next evolution of this fantastic genre. ⚡

▸ **TRICK STYLE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 70**

Graphically, Trick Style is, as you can see, a gorgeous game. The frame rate hovers at around 30 fps most of the time, which seems low, but given the insane amount of architecture present you'll hardly notice or care. The music in the game—thick, heavy electronica—fits perfectly, and the voices, mostly taunts from your rivals, while not overly annoying, are pretty moronic in terms of content. My player of choice, Mia, a stunter from France, likes to ask, "Wanna date?" for some reason, as she scoots by, while others coin such unique phrases as "Surf's up!" Those wacky Brits are watching too much Baywatch!

In the end, Trick Style isn't everything I'd hoped for, but it's sure close. A very good first effort at a good concept at the very least, TS deserves further investigation. I feel a sequel would put this game right on track to becoming Acclaim's next racing franchise. ⚡

▸ **TECHFRONT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18**

above, which can lead to all sorts of esoteric bugs. Of course, the number of compatible titles goes up with each release, as more and more of the subtle idiosyncrasies of the PlayStation hardware are discovered and incorporated. Even so, emulator incompatibility is always likely to remain a significant issue for the end user.

Of course, emulators are generally not intended to replace consoles entirely, but rather to give you an alternate way of playing your console games. And despite whatever problems they offer in the compatibility department, they can often offer some big bonuses to give people a reason to play games on them. Of course, there is the indulgence (of questionable legality) of being able to download and play old NES games long after you thought you had forgotten them, but there also are some compelling reasons of a more solid ethical character. Particularly where 3D games are concerned, and when the user has a PC with a 3D accelerator card, emulators can often offer considerable enhancements. For instance, in this situation, bleem! is capable of taking advantage of the extra horsepower to offer high resolution graphics with texture filtering. This makes the games look a lot better, and is intended not only to let console fans play better-looking games, but also to give PC gamers a chance to experience PlayStation games running at a visual quality acceptable by PC standards. This goes well beyond the no-frills emulation offered by the PlayStation 2, for instance, and should really be a model for backwards compatibility in the future; unenhanced emulation is really letting the extra horsepower of the newer machine go to waste.

Emulators are incredibly complicated pieces of software; as simple as the initial idea is, there are tremendous hurdles to face in actually making the idea a reality. Hopefully, you now have a better appreciation of what emulators are actually doing, and the amount of effort required to get them to do anything in the first place.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for topics you'd like to see covered, please email techfront@gamersrepublic.com.

▸ **SOUL FIGHTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48**

Orion, a bearded elder with exceptional magical prowess; and Sayomi, a nimble female with a wicked scissor kick. The characters all look spectacular, although Sayomi's running animation does leave something to be desired. While we're on the subject, double-tapping to run works okay with the d-pad, but the analog wand just says no. This aspect of the control should definitely be tweaked.

What I'm hoping for with the final product, besides the running tweak, is, above all, for the difficulty to remain intact. If Toka caves and makes Soul Fighter a walkthrough, I think the game's ultimate value will be severely wounded. I've heard a lot of bad (or impatient) players complain about the game's difficulty, so maybe Toka should add an easy mode with a weak ending. It's always been my estimation that you should want to master a game this beautiful. But along those same lines, when I'm finished beating down my foe and I want to hang around to check out the gorgeous textures or whatever, the last thing I need is a narrator prodding me to "Go! Go!" I know I need to go. I just busted ass on four blood-thirsty reptiles; he should know that. Change that too. ⚡

▸ **SILHOUETTE MIRAGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66**

Regarding the control issues, WD has actually added a clever dual analog scheme that makes some of Shyna's more taxing moves a lot easier over the long haul. Of course, the regular scheme is intact as well. Again, middle ground. In translating the Japanese story, WD has taken a similar stance, leaving some unsaid implications still somewhat unsaid. You'll know what these are as the game unfolds, or perhaps not-hence the reason for the read-between-the-lines guise. And finally, either to your liking or chagrin (so few people have played the Saturn game, it probably matters not) the bosses now speak English, and Shyna's voice has been re-recorded. "Reflecta!" is now "Reflector!" WD does as good a job as one ever could in this department, knowing that we import game addicts will never be satisfied with voice tweaks either way. Probably a wise decision, considering the broad U.S. demographic. My, I am becoming more diplomatic with age. WD has induced analogous personalities to each combatant, and in this case even I chuckled at some of the English anecdotes. Aside from these changes, Silhouette for the PS is amazingly religious to the SS version, missing only a layer of parallax here and there, but includes a bonus boss the Saturn version never saw.

An event for the platform-starved world over, I'd take the game in a paper bag, but I'm sure the packaging will be sweet, too. We don't get much these days, comrades. In fact we rarely get anything, so revel in this one; it is most definitely one of the last of its kind we will ever see. ⚡

▸ **OUTCAST, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 71**

exploration is equally entertaining. Adelpha is quite simply the most complete alien world I've ever experienced in a game, with a believable culture, economy, history and ecosystem. Appeal has done a great job of making the world feel alive, and by the end of the game I was really getting a kick out of my role as savior - helping the Talon with their numerous problems and seeing their collective gratitude.

In case you can't tell, I'm impressed with Outcast. It's a huge game both in terms of length and scope. There are a few control and camera issues, especially where jumping is concerned (make sure you use the mouse/keyboard combo option) and the lengthy conversations are going to have the more action-orientated gamers itching for some Q3, but for those with the patience (and a powerful enough PC), Outcast should prove to be an engrossing, entertaining and at times amazing experience. ⚡

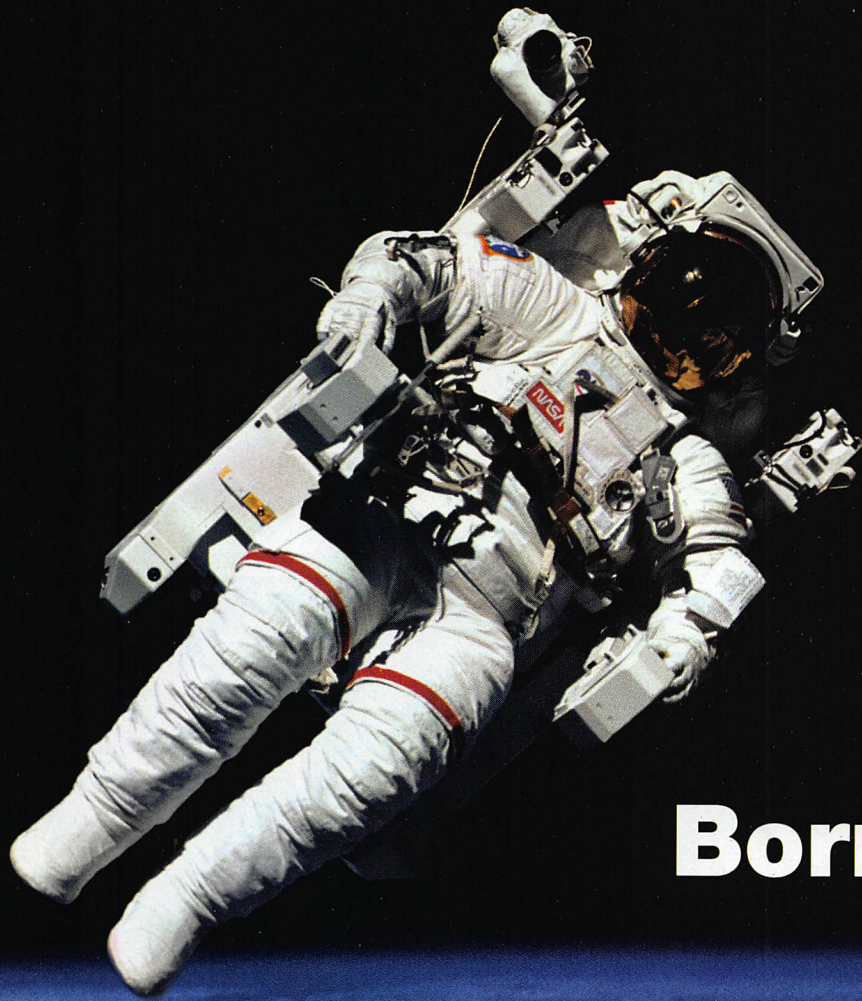|		
100		100
85		85
70		70
55		55
40		40
25		25
10		10

GR

FEATURING:
MESSIAH

DECEMBER 1999

Yes, it is true. In fact, we actually have the game in our possession! Next month we will sing the praises of Shiny's latest incarnation, the ultimate game for millennium-eve entertainment, Messiah. Of course, all we can talk about is how much we wish it was Dreamcast, but hey, we're willing to brave the rigors of PC gaming for this one. Along with Messiah, we're working on some great cover-story ideas, and we'll have an extensive report on the Tokyo Game Show, along with the usual dose of DC, N64, PS, and anything else we can dig up in 3½ weeks.

ISSUE
#19
STREET DATE 11.15.99

Borrring.

RAY

THE

GAME

COMING

SOON