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FINAL FANTASY IX MASTERCLASS!

OVER 50 GAMES PLAYED AND RATED!

PLAYTESTED:
- FEAR EFFECT 2
- ISS PRO EVOLUTION 2
- SIN AND PUNISHMENT
- DAYTONA USA 2001
- SHADOW OF MEMORIES
- PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
- FIGHTING VIPERS 2
- AND MORE...

REVIEWED:
- FINAL FANTASY IX
- STARLANCER
- BUZZ LIGHTYEAR
- GUNGRIFFON BLAZE
- GRANDIA 2
- STREETFIGHTER EX3
- TOY RACER
- AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE
- LEGEND OF DRAGOON
- SPEC OPS
- LODDOS WAR
- DELTA FORCE LAND WARRIOR
- AND MORE...

SHADOWMAN 2
WORLD EXCLUSIVE! PS2'S SCARIEST GAME REVEALED
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9/10 Official Dreamcast Magazine

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Kapu Kulalua
Karate
Kenpo
Kickboxing
Kuk Sool Wan
Kung Fu
Moo Yea Do
Muay Thai
Ninjitsu
Pakua-Chan
Pentak Silat
Pitfighting
Sambo Fighting
Savate Fighting
Shootfighting
Submission Fighting
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Tae Kwon Do
Trapfighting
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Our world exclusive blows the lid on PS2's most promising horror action-adventure for 2001

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Your problems, our solutions. More fun

BEST EVER... WEAPONS
The definitive list of gaming's most inventive, destructive and funnest weapons

2001 - A GAMING ODYSSEY
Your pull-out calendar of the hottest gaming releases, hardware, events and movies of 2001. Don't plan anything this year without consulting it

EASY MONEY
Our cash, your tips. A winning combination

MASTERCLASS: FINAL FANTASY IX
We help you nail all the bosses of PS2's new uber-RPG, sort the heroes from the villains and even throw in some hints and tips too. What more could you possibly want?

RECOMMENDED READING

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

COVER GIFT
196 pages of killer tips for Tomb Raider Chronicles, Shenmue, The World Is Not Enough, Medal of Honour Underground. You can't lose!

WIN £100
Is that your final answer?

WIN THIS LOT NOW!
Piles of tasty prizes, including loads of lovely WWF goodies, are up for grabs

STARLANCER
Three copies of this Dreamcast space blaster are up for grabs

DELTA FORCE LAND WARRIOR
Five copies to be won!

FREE POSTERS

www.computerandvideogames.com
COMMANDOS 2
OUT JUNE PLATFOR/PS2/DC

The follow-up to one of the best WW2 strategy-shooting games on the PC is going to declare war on the entire world when it appears on PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast. You control a team of crack troops with individual skills, carrying out missions and generally proving yourself to be a Nazi (geddit?) pain in the ass. Enemy AI is tweaked to the max - if they see or hear you, all hell is going to break loose. The PC version will be out in April, and while we’re still waiting to hear just what enhancements will go into the PS2 and DC instalments, controls will certainly be adapted for joystick use.

You can take down the enemy with silent weapons and hide the bodies, you can set traps for them or even try and fool them by dressing up in their clothes. Send one guy in to distract a guard while another sneaks up behind and sticks a knife in his throat. Poison injections - a fave from Commandos 1 - return as well. Cool
Edox is keeping much of the gameplay improvements under wraps for now, but we already know about new additions like your marine being able to swing out of windows and hang onto ledges, as well as swing across wires strung between houses - all of which increase the strategy options. The graphics have also been tweaked to allow you to see inside buildings and play new underwater sequences. It's a game where everyone will have their own way of completing the missions, and if it works, it's right.

As with the original, vehicles play a big part in the sequel. If you thought *Metal Gear Solid 2* provided the only prospect of tense atmospheres and smart AI in 2001, then you were wrong. Just wait until you experience the emotional rollercoaster that is *Commandos 2*. Don't expect it to play any easier on PS2 or Dreamcast either.
**ACCESS ALL GAMES**

A WHOLE MONTHS NEW GAMES IN ONE PLACE

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**LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER 2**

OUT MARCH - PLATFORMS: PS2/DC

Raziel travels back through time to continue his battle against Kain. You kick off with all the skills that you had learned throughout the last game and then have to battle to learn new talents and abilities that are essential for completing each stage.

---

The puzzles in this third game in the series are more in-depth than before and will require a more cerebral approach to the mindless soul-sucking that went before.

---

**EMPEROR: BATTLE FOR DUNE**

OUT MARCH - PLATFORMS: PC

Westwood finally get around to taking RTS games into the world of 3D with their latest offering in the epic Dune series. Just check out the numbers of full-on polygon 3D battle units you can have on screen here - and by the time it's released there's bound to be loads more.

---

In the world of Dune, you get a lot worse than sand or raw sewerage in your sandwiches if you wander across the deserts - you get a huge Sandworm blasting out of the sand to eat ya. See the tiny teeth? See the tiny units in its mouth? That's you, that is.

---

The graphics are several times more detailed than the old PlayStation version. Remember the way the old game loaded as it went along, so you were never waiting for a level to kick in? They're keeping that going on PS2 and DC too, along with a constant 60fps frame rate. We like the sound of that.
C12
OUTMARCH PLATFORM/PS1

Sigh, those pesky aliens are at it again. Invading Earth and douring prisoners, turning them into mutant cyborgs and sending them out to attack their fellow man. Guess who's the only person who can stop them? Need to ask the audience?

You get to play as one of three characters, solving puzzles and kicking cyborg ass throughout the four different graphical environments. Oh, and expect big guns - we love big guns.

Sony reckon that this has some of the best graphics yet on the original PlayStation, but then they would say that, wouldn't they? While the jury is still out on that, we can say that the switch between third-person Tomb Raider-style to first-person action is pretty damn smooth.

You get to ride fast bikes around your environments, before getting off and investigating in more detail on foot - which is where the stealth and all-out action sequences kick in. Sega are also talking about making this playable online.

HEADHUNTER
OUTBAC PLATFORM/DOS

Could this be the long awaited Metal Gear Solid-style epic Dreamcast needs? Taking a leaf out of Shenmue's book and making you emotionally involved with the game, Headhunter also throws in stealth and puzzles as well as plenty of action. And check out that detail.
UNREAL TOURNAMENT
OUTMARCH PLATFORM: DC
The DC version of Unreal Tournament has got a couple of advantages over its PS2 counterpart. For a start, it can go online right out of the box - no waiting for Sony to get their acts in gear and sort out online gaming for the PS2. You can also enjoy eight players in an online game, which should make scraps pretty frantic.

GRAN TURISMO 3
OUTTBC PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2
Formerly known as GT2000, it's so delayed they've had to rename it, but it is coming along nicely. You can even link two PlayStation 2s together (if you can find two people who actually managed to buy one) to have some really cool head-to-head racing. You need to lug two TVs together and buy two copies of the game, mind.

THE BOUNCER
OUTTBC PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2
Square's PS2 epic is coming together well, thank you. Plenty of rocking action as well as features like time events, where a fight may not happen unless you are in a certain place at a certain time. Additional game events may also happen if particular enemies are smacked down at particular times. Looks awesome.

COOLBOARDERS CODE ALIEN
OUTTBC PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2
After the success of EA's awesome SSX, Sony have dusted down their old Coolboarders franchise and given it a dose of PS2 magic. Plenty of play modes and stunt sequences promise a fresh breath of excitement and the multiplayer mode will lead to some frantic action - let's just hope they've learned from past mistakes.

TANTEI SHINSHI DASH
OUTTBC PLATFORM: DREAMCAST
Not many details on this one yet but it's a Dreamcast action detective game where you follow a trail of clues that lead to showdowns of frenzied shoot-outs and tense situations. If nothing else, it's promising to be original and - providing the sleuthing action is up to scratch - this could have some real depth to it.

LUNATIC DAWN TEMPEST
OUTTBC PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2
A free adventure RPG (free as in go anywhere, not get it for nothing), where you play a 17-year-old girl who wants to become a heroine to make her dead dad proud. Like Shenmue, you get to have a part-time job to earn money to help you in your quest. Weather forecaster maybe, or mental health nurse?

ARSENAL CLUB INFO
Stadium Name: Highbury
Ground Capacity: 38,500
Current Division: 2nd, Premier League
Club Transfer Record: £7.50M
Current Budget For Players: £30.10M
Weekly Players Wage Bill: £25.98K

GIANT KILLERS
OUTFEBRUARY PLATFORM: DREAMCAST
Footy management finally hits the Dreamcast. Just a shame it's a conversion of a fairly average PC game which only rated 3 Stars in CVG last year. Aimed at the under-16 market, it has a cleaner, easier interface than most others and is packed with stats and facts, but may not appeal to seasoned managers.

VIDEOCAPTOR: TOMOYO'S VIDEO TAISEN
OUTTBC PLATFORM: DREAMCAST
Looks like Sega got a bit jealous about the success of Nintendo's Pokemon Snap. You have to take still shots and videos of your friend in action (oo-er), get points according to how good your pics are and can view the video in a home theatre section. You can even exchange pics and video via your DC modem too.

EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE
OUTTBC PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2
Imagine the Rontados, Zidanes and Beckhams of Euro soccer under your control. This features all the teams and players from the 2000/01 Champions League season in arcade or simulation modes, so that anyone from a Sunday league novice to premiership star can handle it. Will it bear FFAP? We shall see.
TRAFFIC GIANT
OUTBACK PLATFORM/PLAYSTATION
Bored of killing endless hordes of enemy troops? Had enough with racing around F1 circuits at 200mph? Then this could be for you. Conversion of the strangely addictive PC game, you run a traffic system in a huge city, making sure the traffic flows smoothly. Two Jags Prescott could learn something here.

THE EAGLE SHOOTING HERO
OUTBACK PLATFORM/PLAYSTATION
A Kung Fu role-player no less. You learn the martial arts from scrolls you discover on your travels - then get to try them out on an endless stream of thugs and lowlifes. Sounds a teeney bit like Shenhua, but without the ten hours of boring stuff at the start - but it didn't cost $20 million either.

CONFIDENTIAL MISSION
OUTBACK PLATFORM/MARCADE/DC
The next game in the Virtua Cop series. Plenty of gung-ho cop action with you travelling through three long missions shooting all that goes before you. Hardly thought-provoking stuff, but with a satisfying number of weapons to use against the hordes of thugs, plus a few bosses to mess with, this should prove to be a hit.

SEGA GAGA
OUTBACK PLATFORM/DREAMCAST
Take control of Sega and try to dominate the videogame world. No, that really is what the game's all about. The ultimate answer to all those jaded players who reckon they could run a major games company better than the real managers. Do well and maybe Sega will even give you a job. But will it ever release in the UK?

WORLD RALLY CROSS 2001
OUTBACK PLATFORM/PSS2
If dirty roads rather than the pristine tracks of F1 are more your thing, then Sony have treat in store for you while we wait for Codemasters to do Colin McRae. WRC 2001 will bring you all the thrills and spills of the international rally scene, but you almost certainly still won't be able to run the crowd over. Bah, humbug.

F1
OUTBACK PLATFORM/PSS2
It's been heavily delayed and now won't go head-to-head with EA's disappointing F1 effort. Sony are taking the extra time to build up the realism and give this the speed and adrenaline buzz that it needs for the sort of F1 experience we want to see on the PlayStation 2. Budding Jensen Buttons, start your engines.

BLUE SUBMARINE NO.6: TIME & TIDE
OUTBACK PLATFORM/DREAMCAST
You may not get to discover the Titanic, but there's plenty of treasure at the bottom of the seabed just waiting for you to find it in your mini-sub. Battle sea monsters and environmental hazards as you explore the oceanic world beneath. Yet again, someone tried to do something different, but only on Dreamcast. Wonder why?

LIBERO GRANDE
OUTBACK PLATFORM/PLAYSTATION
A soccer sim which does things a little differently from the rest. It's played from a third-person view rather than a fixed camera, and gets you into the heart of the action, setting up tactics and playing a role in each move. It's more of a simulation than the usual arcade-style of footy outing.

CLIVE BARKER'S: UNDYING
OUTBACK PLATFORM/PC/PSS2
The UK's King of Horror brings his warped mind to the world of games. It uses the Unreal engine to bring you all the action thrills you can handle, with plenty of shocks thrown in to keep you on your toes. Expect loads of magic and gore to round off the classic, in-your-face first-person style of gameplay.

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FIRST SHOTS OF LARA

Above Left to right: Lara through the ages! Her many guises in Tomb Raider 1 through 4. We especially enjoyed the bikini look of TR2, but the kiddy look of 4 is disturbing.

Below: Lara’s final incarnation? Angelina looks great as gaming’s queen of action-adventure. Hopefully, she’ll look just as sexy in the next-gen 7th generation games. Ogle at your (p) leisure.
MOVIE REVEALED!

ANGELINA JOLIE IS LARA CROFT IN TOMB RAIDER Flick

IT'S OFFICIAL - the Tomb Raider movie looks awesome. Core Design and movie heavyweights UIP have finally released a three-minute teaser trailer and pictures of the lovely Angelina Jolie, delighting Lara-lovers everywhere. The film, known simply as Tomb Raider, will be released in the Summer and, judging from the trailer, promises to be the must-see action flick of the year.

Plot details are scarce but the trailer reveals it concerns a mysterious object called the Clock of Ages. Check out these stills...

Lara drops from the rafters, ready for any danger

This robotic menace is after our lovely lady

He's scary, but the big mech eventually falls

Lara goes mystical as the trailer continues...

Is this artefact the Clock of Ages in the plot?

The old-duffers aren't sure what to make of Lara

Check it out - proper tomb raiding and mysteries

Julie's got the sassy accent and look all sorted

Lara means business here and is on a mission

Girl on a motorcycle? In pyjamas? Mmm... saucy

Movie Lara is far prettier than the game Lara. Yes!

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DOWN IN THE DUMPS

ONLINE GAMING SHOULD HAVE EXPLODED ALL OVER OUR MOBILE PHONES
BY NOW - WAP IN THE WORLD IS GOING WRONG?

FANSITE OF THE MONTH
Lots of your fan site entries, but Paul Fitzpatrick’s multi-format games news site rocks. Very well written and accurate too.

www.homestead.com/gamestoreinfo/main.html

SEZ YOU! CAPTION COMPO
What’s Les saying here? Entries to our usual address, stating your preferred game prize.

Last month’s winner: Neil Thorpe from London, nabbed Tomb Raider Chronicles for this little gem:

The Hills are alive...

FIVE THINGS EVEN MORE DISAPPOINTING THAN WAP
1. WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?
Despite being the worst videogame we’ve seen in ages, it’s still flying off the shelves and none of us here at CVG can work out why.

2. FUN-SIZE CHOC BAR
Just as the yummy choc starts to get your taste-buds going, it’s all gone. Not fun.

3. LES’ PROMISES OF COFFEE
Every day we believe Les when he says he’ll make us all a coffee. Every day it’s a lie.

4. VIRTUAL BOY
It’s 32-bit! It’s affordable virtual reality! It gave you migraines and caused kids to fall down.

5. CLAIMS OF ADVANCED AI
Developers say: “Most advanced enemy AI ever.” We say: “1/100 games manage this”

THAT’S ENTERTAINMENT!

THE LATEST BIG DVD RELEASES TO KEEP YOUR PS2 WARM THIS WINTER

THE CRAFT
WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT
A bunch of junior witches wreak havoc at their high school, until one of them gets ideas about her spell-casting station. Far more fun than Sabrina The Teenage Witch, though the tele series at least spawned a game or two from Havas.

SPECIAL FEATURES
Entertaining director’s commentary, deleted scenes, neat little behind the scenes documentary, trailer and some seriously spooky menus. All in all not bad, especially if you can’t get enough of those naughty, nubile voxens.

COST: £15.99
CERR: 15

EDWARD SCISSORHANDS
WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT
Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder head the cast of this fantastical tale about a boy who has great big shears where his hands should be. From the mind of Tim Burton, who also brought us the first Batman movie. Girls and soft guys should keep some Hankies close by.

SPECIAL FEATURES
Two audio commentaries, short but sweet ‘making of featurettes, cast soundbites and a bunch of trailers, including a couple of thoroughly weird Spanish efforts.

COST: £15.99
CERR: PG

WELCOME TO THE WITCHING HOUR

EXTRAS: OK
OVERALL: OK

www.computerandvideogames.com
WAP mobile phones promised a revolution - online play, multi-user games, email, text messages and internet direct to the palm of your hand. Not to mention games so easy to use that we'd be playing them and each other every spare minute we get - in bed, on trains, in the street, on the bog. That was last Summer, when we first revealed the potential of WAP gaming and sang the praises of the potential greatness of the WAP format. It's 2001, and we're still waiting for the WAP revolution. If you unwrapped a shiny new Net-connected phone from Santa, you're probably wondering if the WAP Xmas tree has lost all its needles already. So are we.

**PICCO-FEW**

WAP sales seem modestly healthy at first glance. Two of the key players, BT Cellnet and One 2 One, claim a massive increase in WAP subscribers and mobile internet users and there are now an estimated 550,000 WAP subscribers in the UK - 250,000 more then in June. But only a fraction of subscribers are using the service to play games, not logging on regularly enough for telecoms firms to make enough money to cover their initial investments. WAP gamer Picofun can boast about 10,000 users a month playing Picofun's Rugby game in the UK and Scandinavia combined, admitting this is "not very many" and adding that "not many people have WAP phones".

**WHY, OH WHY?**

The high cost of WAP connection appears to be to blame. WAP games are accessed via your WAP handset by trying in the site's URL and currently there is no charge to sign up for WAP games. Instead, you're billed as normal by your mobile phone network, according to the tariffs you've opted for. This will change, however, in the near future, as WAP clubs are set up where you'll have to pay a membership to play, along with game-specific WAP portals you'll be forced to use - all of which could bring costs down.

**HOW MUCH?**

But in the meantime, players using BT Cellnet's Rugby game portal are charged an average 10 pence per minute, while One 2 One charges an average 5 pence. Many of the current WAP games require regular and sustained use to win. Picofun's Rugby game (featured in CVG last Summer), requires well over 10 hours of play every month to make the leagues, even on the cheapest tariff this would bump your monthly bills up by a scary £30+ plus. So three months' WAP-ing it up online could cost you as much as a Game Boy Advance this year. What's more, a new study by technology experts has found WAP isn't ready for mainstream use - nor will it be usable in the near future. Not a good sign for the next-gen of WAP phones which are just around the corner, promising animated games and full colour screens.

**MULTIMOBILE MARVEL**

Meanwhile, cheer yourselves up with a look at this beauty on the left here. Publisher THQ and Siemens have joined forces to provide WAP handsets and programmes, including what appears to be the next-gen of WAP phones. The MultiMobile, due mid 2001, features a full colour screen, dualband wireless technology, and uses the same operating system as Microsoft's Pocket PC. The first game will be an online golf title.

**WAP'S HOT RIGHT NOW?**

Take a sneaky peak at the hottest WAP games available now or coming to a handset near you before the Summer.

**PHOTOBOOTH**

[Image of a photo booth]

Navigate the world's most unhindered underground system. Beat off muggers, kick away the rats and escape the beaters en route to your destination.

**WAP HUNGER 3D**

[Image of a hunger game]

This mobile role-playing game is coming soon from Firesoft Technologies and lets you navigate a simple 3D dungeon environment battling monsters and helping buddies. There's even simple animation as you kill ews.

**LIFESTYLER**

[wap.pictofun.com]

Create a virtual personality and then chat with other users, solving puzzles as you try to attain status. There's even the possibility of romance with your team members too!

**WAP ROBBY**

[www.firesoft.eu.com]

Due later in the year and looking pretty cool. It's a management game set in the American gangland Twenties. Expand your gang's territory into rival Don's patches.

---

**CVG RECONS**

The current WAP situation is similar to the early days of mainstream internet use, where connection difficulties and expense caused many potential players to think twice. The cost itself isn't the problem - everyone will WAP eventually. We'll be here to keep you informed.

---

**VIRGIN SUICIDES**

**CERT: 15**

**WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT**

70s set teen flick about five sistera and their religiously borkers mum. Kristen Dunst is especially good as the middle sister with the alarming roof-top habits. Even CVG's own action man Dan managed to sit through the whole thing.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

Very little of note, unfortunately. Although the film is good enough for it not to matter, you can't help wishing there were a few extras here. Someone clearly needs a lesson in two in the power and potential of DVD.

**EXTRAS:**

**OVERALL:**

**OK**

---

**POILER ROOM**

**CERT: 15**

**WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT**

Wouldn't Wall Street whiz (Friends star Giovanni Ribisi) land a job in a sweaty brokerage firm, but soon discovers the dark side to his new-found money-spending career. Ben Affleck shows up in a small role.

**SPECIAL FEATURES**

Contributions from cast and crew, a short director's commentary, deleted scenes and the obligatory trailer. Not the most exciting combination in the world, but there's enough here to keep you busy for a while.

**EXTRAS:**

**OVERALL:**

**OK**

---

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LEE'S LAB TESTS

GAMING ADD-ONS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

It's 2001 and the Prof looks forward to a new era of world peace, scientific breakthroughs, and a constant stream of awesome gaming peripherals to review. With PS2s available now and new consoles coming, it's an exciting time for add-ons and the Prof's the only voice you need to listen to.

PP9K LIGHT BLOWER GUN

PS/PS2

£19.99

This is a high-quality light gun with a tasty trick up its barrel. The PP9K features a build-in recoil feature that needs no external power source. Smart. It doesn't have the chunky feel of Namco's official gun but it does have a pedal.

SAMRT JOYPAD 3

PC/MAC

£19.99

Playing PC action adventures can be a right faff with a keyboard but with this piece of kit you can play 'em with a PlayStation controller, wheel or dance mat. You'll even get force feedback and dual shock rumblings. Very cool.

DC-X FOR DREAMCAST

DREAMCAST

£14.99

Play import games on your DC for a budget price! Stick the DC-X into your machine's eagery mouth, then switch the disc with an import game. There are loads of options to help if your games don't load up first time.

CONTROLLER EXTENSION CABLE

PS/PS2

£7.99

You can't beat a good multiplayer TimeSplitters session on a massive TV but, to save your peepers, you could invest in these handy cables to help you sit further away from the TV. Hardy a revolution, but useful and sensible.

ANALOGUE JOLT CONTROLLER 2

PS/PS2

£19.99

A decent alternative to the official PS2 pad, this beauty has full analogue buttons. The dual shock vibrations are strong too and the chrome finish is stylish. The only drawback is the looser than normal analogue sticks.

IT'S EASY TO ENTER


WIN £100 TO SPEND ON WHATEVER YOU WANT

1 Which cartoon hero is going quackers on NES this month?
A Hong Kong Phooey
B Dangersnake
C Donald Duck

2 What DC game first used the cell shading system seen in Sonic Shuffle?
A Quake 3
B Jet Set Radio
C Shenmue

3 Which Feline superstar series debuts on the PlayStation as an arcade puzzle game this month?
A Hello Kitty
B What's New, Pussycat?
C Pussy Galore

4 Name the star of Final Fantasy IX
A Platini
B Zidane
C Beckham

5 Which skateboarding superstar appears on the Game Boy this month?
A Tony Hawk
B Marty McFly
C Dwayne Johnson

6 Name the Best Ever Weapon from MDK2.
A BFG
B Chainsaw
C World's Most Interesting Bomb

7 In what state do you begin Record of Lodoss War on Dreamcast?
A Drunk
B Naked
C Ugly

8 What's the URL for the new CSVG web site?
A computergames.com
B CSGO
C CSVG.net

9 Which wrestling organisation's goodies features in Win This Lot Now?
A ECW
B WWF
C IW

10 How many stars did Brenda 2 get in our review this issue?
A Less than Lodoss War
B The same as Lodoss War
C More than Lodoss War

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

1 B, Zone of the Ends
2 A, 3 or more
3 A, Hitman
4 B, The Wonderful '80s
5 B, Ludwig Von Drake
6 C, Green
7 C, Mats
8 B, In the Wild West
9 C, 4
10 C, Shenmue

The lucky winner of Issue 229's compo and a hundred quid is...
Robert Simpson, Eaton

NAME: ____________________________
AGE: ____________________________

ADDRESS: ____________________________

EMAIL ADDRESS: ____________________________

EMAP Active Ltd may contact you about other offers, or pass your name address to or e-mail to other reputable companies whose products and services may be of interest to you. Please tick box if you do not wish to receive such offers. ☑
She fancies the pants off me. Why won't she sleep with me?

My girlfriend’s happy to go to a movie, a club or even the football.

So why won’t she go all the way?

It’s a question asked by millions of horny guys every day.

The answer is probably that she’s simply not ready yet.

For sex to really go off with a bang, both partners need to be completely ready, especially if it’s their first time.

If one of you isn’t, you’re likely to ruin what should be a very special moment (or preferably several moments...)

Think about how she feels. If you think she loves you now, show her you’re cool enough to wait. Chances are she’ll be crazy about you then.

So if you’re getting a bit het up, keep your pants on.

As they say, good things come to those who wait...

**SEX**

Are you thinking about it enough?

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IN THE SHOPS SOON
WHAT TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES ARE LIKE TO PLAY

WELCOME TO HELL

The intro - seen over the next seven pages - uses atmospheric, film-style camera angles and is a real gut-churner. Detectives racing to recover a voodoo book from a warehouse are interrupted by a demonic presence: heads fly and legs are crushed. Then it segues to Shadowman on a train.

SOMETHING

WORDS/E.S. ELLIS SCRIPTS/DESIGN: ACCLAIM STUDIOS

www.computerandvideogames.com
WICKED THIS WAY COMES...

PLAYSTATION 2 GOES TO HELL FOR ITS SCARIEST GAME YET

SHADOWMAN 2 SECOND COMING
OUT OCTOBER FOR PLAYSTATION2

From the dark, twisted and tortured souls that brought us the original cult classic Shadowman on Dreamcast, PC, N64 and PlayStation, comes a second, even nastier, even scarier dose of disturbing psychological horror. After the ultra-creepy, blood-thirsty, serial killer-fueled escapades last time around, they've taken the sequel to new and extraordinary extremes with an End of the World-type nightmare. Be afraid. Be very afraid. It's Armageddon on a biblical scale, and EVO's the first mag in the world to see it, play it, fear it and get out alive from Acclaim Studios' nerve centre to tell you all about it...

NEW PANTS, PLEASE

Dedicated players regularly cite Resident Evil as the scariest videogame of all time, but we reckon that's just not true. Sure, it made you jump and had plenty of blood when you were blasting this horde of unending zombies, but deep down inside you could laugh it off because it was just gone. It never really got to the stage where you didn’t want to open a door because you could hear weird sounds or had sweat bumps coming up on your arms because you knew that something wasn’t quite right (you didn’t know what, you just knew something was wrong). Those are the fears that Shadowman played on. Now, the sequel plays with them some more and then really messes you up when you discover exactly why it is you should be so afraid. Acclaim are going for a 15+ audience, and this is one game where it probably is a good idea for anyone younger not to play it.

ARMAGEDDON

This time out, the story revolves around the appearance of a new star in the sky and the alarming effect it has on cults on Earth.
Throw in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the sort of Armageddon-type scenarios we all heard so much about during the run-up to New Year's Eve in 1999, and you can begin to imagine the chaos that occurs in the game. Only Shadowman can save the world, but he's literally going to have to go to Hell and back to do it. As for the twist at the end, oh man, no-one will see this one coming. Even if you were smart enough to figure out that Bruce Willis was dead in the Sixth Sense before the end, you won't turn it on this one. It's more than a twist in the tail, this is a twist in the midriff that'll leave you feeling like you've been torn in two and left to bleed, staring at your own entrails as you die. We'd love to tell you more but we don't want to give too much away.

**EVIL DEAD**
The sequel's much more tightly focussed than the original game, with no more constant backtracking through levels that you've already cleared a few times, and definitely no respawnin monsters. Once you kill something, it's dead for good – or at least until all hell breaks loose later on... Another gem of an improvement is the removal of all the post-perfect precision leaping when you need to jump from platform to platform. We're talking minimum frustrations, maximum heart-palpitations. The combat system has also been sorted out, so even in the heat of battle you'll still be able to concentrate more on fighting and having fun, rather than staring at the pad trying to figure out what to do next. Now you get to use both of Shadowman's hands in combat, and the system allows you to run into a room, lock one gun on the boss or a big target, while using your other hand to take out smaller minions that are desperately trying to rearm your limits. They tried it in Tomb Raider and it didn't work properly... here it does, and it needs to because there are some stages where there's literally no limit to the amount of creatures they can have on-screen running for you. Thanks to some sneaky tricks inside the PlayStation 2, you can have an almost infinite number of the same design of creature on screen without a drop in the 60fps frame rate – which all goes to prove developers really are beginning to explore and exploit the true powers of Sony's next-gen console. Now, is that good news or what?

**RETURN OF THE MIKE**
The hero of the original game returns, but much bigger and badder than ever. Mike's been down the gym to turn himself into a real Schwarzenegger-style musclebound freak, while his dark alter ego Shadowman has also seen changes – but he isn't quite as flattering. Now he's deadlier than ever, looking really rotten literally, complete with a hole in the side of his face. He's skinny and weak, but very fast, while Mike is the tough action man of the game. Mike can fight bare-handed and move blades around, while Shadowman swims underwater for an unlimited time and can fall any distance without damage because he's already dead. You're going to have to use their individual characteristics to make your way through the puzzles and physical challenges of the game. Shadowman also gets to pit his wits and athletic skills in the game's new stealth mode. Metal Gear Solid in hell anyone?
IN THE REAL WORLD

Some old friends you'll come across when you're playing in the realms of the living. But are they all that they seem?...

Mike - this is you. He's been down the gym, buffing up a bit since the last game.

Jaunty - the tiny Irish freak's back and always ready with a quick one-liner.

Nettie - strength, she's been busy at the plastic surgeon since SAM7.

Beacon - Has a nasty experience in the intro. He looks like a normal bloke, but is he?

STEALTHIN' HELL

Shadowman may not have the strength, but another new feature les him switch to stealth mode for sneaking into places unseen. This swaps play from the normal third-person view to a near-top-down angle that gives you a larger field of vision. You get to sneak around, creep up on creatures and use a particularly satisfying neck-breaking move to send them to their maker without everyone else hearing. Then you have to hide the body or another patrol will see it and raise the alarm. Disposing of corpses includes neat little tricks like throwing them into Alligator pools in Louisiana to let the 'patons do the hard work for you. It's during this sequence that the huge leaps the developers have made in enemy AI become increasingly clear. They may have come looking for you in Metal Gear Solid, but these guys communicate with each other! A sniper may see you as you cross his infra red sights, but instead of taking you on he'll call his mates, who'll hunt you down like a dog. If they're outgunned, they're smart enough to go and get some back-up before they attack. They're also smart enough to anticipate your next move, depending on your environment - scarily intelligent. So, in one move they've managed to introduce a strategy element to the normal horror action-adventure. Oh yes indeed, this is beginning to sound like our kind of nightmare!

TIME AND WEATHER

As you'd probably expect, being a master of Voodoo has its advantages. Not only is it great for pulling girls or pulling the arms off anyone who tries to stop you, but you also get to be an utter control freak. Some of the puzzles are only solvable during the day and others only at night. But later in the game you get to control the time, use a pocket watch, so you can switch as and when you need to. Pretty cool huh? But, even better is when you get to control the weather to aid your puzzle-solving further. Imagine the scene: you need to reach an item on a higher level, but nearby water is too low to be any use. Pretty tricky, and there's no obvious Zelda-style switches to flick to gain access. But wait a minute, how about if you made it rain and raised the level of the lake so you can swim across at the correct height? Testy, huh? And that's not the only weather effect you can control — others can be called on to help you out in different ways, including stealth.
IN DEADSIDE

In the Shadowman universe, every Yang has its Yang, as you'll soon discover when playing in the realms of the dead...

Let this go close and he'll put a real squeeze on you.

Meet Jautty in Deadside and he's not half the man he used to be.

Nettie has joined Chor on the quest for eternal youth.

Half horse, half lobster. Not what you want to meet in a dark alleyway.

PORTAL TO HELL

For what is a dedicated PlayStation 2 game, the developers have worked hard to come up with a new, dedicated engine that pulls off all sorts of amazing tricks aimed at making your playing experience just that—a real experience. The new Portal engine means that the PlayStation 2 is only ever drawing what you can see in a level meaning that less time is spent loading-in stuff that you have already seen, or won't see for ages. The result? No loading times whatsoever. You're never pulled out of the game to see a loading screen so the action is relentless. It's breathtaking stuff. Now, if you dare to imagine it, combine all this with levels of detail on the characters that have been improved to such a degree that, at times, it's like playing in CGI cut-scenes. Awesome. When a character speaks, the lip-synching is damn near perfect and (for added realism) it's not just the lips that move. You'll gasp at how the nose, cheeks and throat are carefully animated to breath added life into the characters on your screen. Then there's the real-time weather systems. Fog isn't there to cover up slow and clunky graphic updates—it's deliberate atmosphere-enhancing fog, the kind of fog that you can walk in and out of and have wending its way around your feet. Not to mention the simulated real-time night and day transitions as well as loads of visual effects that make the environments look simply stunning, like pools of water and blood rippling and reflecting in amazing detail. Trust us, when you're in a coffin-shaped room with light coming in through stained glass windows, you can't fail to be impressed.

AURAL TERROR

A steaming cauldron of horror and tension can be instantly created with sound alone. Not just loud, crashing music at a quiet juncture of the game to make you jump, but freakish sounds that set your flesh crawling and make you genuinely reluctant to go into somewhere... but you have to, of course. Remember the unnerving impact of certain scenes in the first game, such as where you heard the babies giggling, and then the giggles started to sound like crying, and then torture noises? Or the gruesome sound of someone hacking at flesh with a knife? You can expect a lot more of these sound-scares to keep you on the edge of your seat. To round it all off, there's over two hours of scene-setting music that resets to events in the game, plus an hour of in-game speech.
FREAKSHOW
Fans of the first game will be glad to know that a few of the outstanding characters return, although bear in mind that with so many layers of twists and turns in SM2 you'll never know who to trust or even exactly who or what everyone is. Mike and his alter ego are back (obviously) in their new forms, but do you remember the Hunter who left you a note and tried to help you out in the original? You didn't trust him did you? Well he's back, with a dramatic (and totally sick) debut in the intro sequence where his partner's head gets ripped off. What an entrance. Thomas Deacon, aka The Hunter, is an ex cop turned Private Eye who offers help and advice - but he also seems to know an awful lot about what's going on with the bad guys who are known as the Fallen Angels. And then there's Nettie - not the old, fully clothed Nette you remember from Shadowman 1, but a new, Lara-killing sea kitten who'll do more than raise your eyebrows. Guess the quest for eternal youth is going well then, eh Nette? The blasphemous little Irish fella Jaunty returns, too, but this time you see him in both incarnations, and he never fails to make you laugh. Especially when he's sat on your shoulders using a blunderbuss to blast zombies during an escape scene.

WEAPONS OF THE DEVIL
With the combat being revamped, there's plenty of heavy duty firepower for Mike to rely on, and Shadowman even gets a Deadside version of every weapon to use on the souls, er, souls he encounters. Top addition (and no doubt a potential new entry to CVG's Best Ever Gaming Weapon Chart) are Satan's Smart Bombs. These are actually the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (check a Bible if you want to know more about the full horror of the Horsemen - but in a bomb-like form. The Horsemen appear elsewhere in the game too, but in their weapon form they're used individually and just once each - to utterly devastating effect. Use War and you become incredibly strong when fighting; use Death and bolts of lightning strike down the enemy; use Famine to sap your opponent's energy and slow them down, while Pestilence summons a cloud of vicious flies to attack the enemy.

THIS IS THE END
Oh, and about Deadside, which was where you went in the original when you died. This time out, it's just one of a number of alternate realities you'll have to explore, while the equivalent real-world levels are far more varied, including one in the snowy wastes of Russia (where an Evil Dead/Blair Witch-inspired hunting scene occurs), another in the boglands of Ireland, a haunted house in England and finally the deserts of Iraq, where the big final twist is revealed. We've had a sneak peek at the final conflict in the end level and it looks like SM2's got something rather special up its sleeve for anyone who makes it that far. We're talking pure old-school gaming combat that uses a system more like R-Type than the usual tackily-predictable, Res-evil-style endings.

 NIGHTMARE MOMENTS
But for a game to deliver the full psychological horror experience, it has to be crammed full of scenes that seep down into your deepest levels of consciousness and linger there, festering away, never to be forgotten. In the same way that you can talk to your mates about your favourite scenes in movies, you'll want to discuss the most chilling moments in Shadowman 2. It could be the Evil Dead-inspired scene where a boss hunts you through a forest, or another boss encounter that's a horror homage to an immortal, histrionic scene in John Carpenter's The Thing. Even comedy moments are memorable, such as when you're pushing Deacon in a wheelchair while he attacks demons in your way, or some dialogue such as 'God, shite hurled at you in a Geordie accent by a bosse's disembodied head while his 20ft armoured body attacks you. The fact you don't know whether to laugh or cry out in horror is almost as disturbing as the episode itself. The game is literally filled with scenes or sequences that will stick in your mind - and probably come back to haunt you when you're asleep.
OH, THE HORROR, THE HORROR
From what we've seen so far, what you'll get when you delve into the twisted new world of the Shadowman is an unsettlingly psychological horror, plenty of gore splashing around and a storyline that'll haul you right through the full range of emotions - certainly not all pleasant - before you reach the end of the game. But, crucially, you'll just have to keep playing no matter how disturbing the experience becomes, you'll be desperate to find out how it all concludes. With a control system that has been designed to make play as intuitive as possible - so you only have to battle the game, not your joystick - and breathtaking graphics, Shadowman Reckoning promises to be a real ex-terror-ence in gaming horror.

ZELDA IN HELL
The first game was considered by many to be Zelda's evil twin and, with its combination of action and adventuring, became something of a cult classic on NES, SNES and PC. But, unlike Zelda, some players reckoned the core gameplay was flawed. In particular, the freedom to go anywhere whenever you wanted left many feeling lost in the game, unsure of what they had to do next. Furthermore, the PlayStation version suffered from annoying bugs and weak graphics, which ruined the overall atmosphere. Now the sequel, which is currently a PS2-only release, will right the wrongs of the original ten times over. This time around, Shadowman is taking Zelda to Hell, adding cool gameplay elements from other classic titles as varied as Mario, Metal Gear Solid, Thief and Tomb Raider and fixing all that was wrong with SM1. If Stephen King made a videogame that did justice to his reputation as a horror writer, it would surely be something like Shadowman Reckoning (and that not awful F-13 game on PC that he was intensively connected with). What's more, SM2 will be out in October in the UK, so now PS2 owners really will need to upgrade to PS2 before Metal Gear Solid 2 comes out next Christmas if they don't want to miss out on a genuinely creepy and disturbing, next-generation gaming experience.

BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID
Videogame horror usually relies on gore and loud noises to create its shocks, but Shadowman Reckoning is going to be much more disturbing, using haunting effects and clever plot twists to put you on the edge of your seat, before the true horror kicks in, leaving you hiding under your duvet hoping that if you pretend it isn't there it'll go away. This has to be one of the few games that will bring you out in goosebumps, mess with your head and emotions and haunt your thoughts. Taking inspiration from many classic horror movies as well as classic games, SM2's on course to take you and your PlayStation 2 to Hell and back. Call a priest, call an exorcist - the Shadowman is coming and this time he's leaving no soul unturned in his quest to save the world from the Fallen Angels and their brethren. This is one sick puppy of a game and, if what we've played is anything to go by, you're going to love it. Stock up on your crucifixes, cause October you'll need them.

CVG RECKONING
It's set to be the scariest PlayStation 2 horror action-adventure in 2001, if not longer. We know there's a Resident Evil game for PS2 in the pipeline, but it's going to have to be ultra-special to provide more thrills and chills than Shadowman 2 promises. Sick? Yes. Disturbing? Oh, yes. Compelling? Very. Something wicked this way comes... and we can't wait!

SCENE SETTER
Shadowman's Mike Lerti uses his section of the intro to explain some of the plot and outlines a number of his powers. In full, the intro lasts about five minutes and certainly whets your appetite - it will also help newcomers acclimatise to the Shadowman universe.
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IT'S A. IT'S A. IT'S A... SIN

WILL THE BIG 'N' BE PUNISHED AS IT GOES RETRO FOR ITS LATEST N64 EPIC?

**SIN AND PUNISHMENT**

**OUTBIC FORMAT/N64**

If you've been playing games for any length of time, then you'll see certain scenes in games that have obviously been influenced by classics. Then comes Sin and Punishment - not so much just slightly influenced by another title, more a direct rip-off of Sega's trusty but crusty blaster Space Harrier. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Is it a rip-off or an homage? Is it set to be an all-action hit or a samey miss that's dull and repetitive? Cue controversy...

**VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN**

The gameplay is pure retro. You sit on the screen Space Harrier-style, blasting the hell out of everything that comes towards you or flies around. Unlike Space Harrier though, you don't get to fly. Just move left or right with an occasional jump to avoid ground-based opponents. What it lacks in imagination, it makes up for with pure fast-paced, intense action - there's no let-up from the moment you press start to when you die in a hail of bullets or complete the game.

---

**RETRO THRUSTER**

Developers Treasure have taught this old retro dog a few new tricks. Shooting platforms out from under your opponents is good for a laugh, even if they do end up rolling down the road towards you, causing you more hard work as you have to jump over them while simultaneously shooting the hell out of everything else on screen. If there's one thing this isn't short on, it's non-stop action. When there's a screen full of nastiness all heading for you - and that's pretty much all the time in this game - it's time to make the most of being able to switch your sights between free-roaming and locked-on.

**BULLET IN THE HEAD**

A game like this couldn't take itself seriously if it wasn't packed full of super-hard bosses. The kind of things that take up a whole screen and pump out more bullets than the LA Police during a peaceful arrest. There you were, quietly running down a road, wasting loads of ickle baddies, picking up a power-up or two, when all of a sudden these things appear from nowhere, shooting nasty stuff all over the place, normally accompanied...
Feel like you've seen this before? No, you're not experiencing déjà-vu. *Sin and Punishment* is a blatant rip-off/homage (delete according to personal bias) of Sega's old shoot 'em up, *Space Harrier*. We are assured that the explosions are bigger, though by some lesser targets. Sounds tough, but as veteran gamers know, the joy is to figure out a boss's attack pattern and learn how to kill it without taking a hit.

**TREASURE-HUNT**

Treasure have a history of classic old school shoot 'em ups and action games that have always appealed to the very hardest of hardcore gamers. More casual players tend to find them a bit frantic for the first few goes then get put off by the seemingly repetitive style of action. The UK will get its share of retro action next year when Nintendo finally unleashes the GAMECUBE and Game Boy Advance, but you have to wonder how many new players will find appeal in this style of game.

**CYG RECKONS**

Totally old school, hardcore retro-action. Intense, but does this type of game have wide enough appeal?
The main game action looks the same as the cut-scenes, with characters rendered in manga glory.

Fear Effect 2 is full of suggestive moments like this. It's adult, for sure, but more stylish than sleazy.

TRAPS, TERROR, AND

Hana and Rain are true Millennium babes, happy to use their ample womanly assets to their full effect while trouncing drooling guards. The movie influences on the game even extend to a sexy shower scene. We’ll let you guess which characters are involved.

FEAR EFFECT 2: RETRO HELIX
OUT MARCH FORMAT PLAYSTATION

You're going to read a lot about Fear Effect 2's saucy sapphic sub-plot in the months leading up to its release. It's likely to be the one thing that'll always be mentioned in the games press too. While it's unusual in a game and mildly, er, 'stimulating', there's so much more to this excellent sequel that it's a shame these naughty goings-on are likely to become the main focus. Let's just say that the two gals in the game, Hana and Rain, are 'close personal friends.' Now, let's get on with the playtest and never speak of this publicity-seeking addition again.

MANGA MOTION
We loved the original Fear Effect for its adult story, striking John Woo-meets-Resident Evil action, and its original graphical style. It was undoubtedly a tough game and sometimes too unforgiving in its trickiness for its own good, but Fear Effect was still a benchmark title in proving originality on PlayStation isn't completely dead. The
TITILLATION

The green target icon will appear when your hero is locked on.

 Unlike the first game, you can now choose to fight with your fists.

There are superb camera views throughout - the long zooms rock.

Motion FX technology that made the first game's locations appear so alive with movement has been reworked and improved for the second instalment. Compare the static pre-rendered backdrops of Resi or Dino Crisis 2 to Fear Effect 2's moving, breathing backdrops and you'll see how much of an atmospheric difference this Motion FX wizardry makes.

BITE ME, HOLLYWOOD

The clever background trickery and Manga-influenced graphical style mix superbly together to create a consistent and believable world that plays like a happy union of your favourite action comic series, Japanese anime, and a particularly brutal Hollywood action flick. The game is chock full of cut-scenes and atmospheric little camera swoops to create a true cinematic experience - right down to a widescreen format for the main action. The joins are seamless and it appears everything about the presentation, the story and even the game controls has been designed to heighten the filmic experience. Transitions from one room to the next are instantaneous, unlike Resi games, and the controls can be tweaked for either a Resi-style configuration or a true 3D mode where Up moves you up, Left moves you left, and so on. Even those horrible loading times after dying in the original game are long gone.

NEW PAIR OF GENES

To go with its dark and edgy look, Fear Effect 2 tells a suitably gloomy story, based on fact. The game is subtitled Retro Helix, which relates to a real-life DNA study conducted by the US government. Glas, Deke and Hana from the original are joined by Rain for this prequel to the first adventure, and you'll spend most of your time with the girls rather than the guys. You'll love their saucy banter and inappropriate touching. Prank! But the very best bits of Fear Effect 2 are the puzzles. Every screen will present some kind of head-scratching challenge, whether it's timing your movement past iron-doors of death, or working out how to operate a secret panel to open a door. The puzzles, rather than the combat, will be what separates the wheezy players from the chaffy ones. This intellectual focus is another reason to get excited about Fear Effect 2, as it rewards brainwork as well as wanton violence. And what violence there is too! Bodies are shredded, blood pumps freely and nobody in the game, including your four heroes, takes any prisoners. Fear Effect 2 definitely looks like one for the mature gamer.

END
PHANTASTIC PHANTASY

THIS SONIC TEAM STUNNER WILL BRING ABOUT ONLINE WORLD PEACE

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

OUTEND FEB FORMATDC

Anyone who’s ever braved the Dreamarena Chu-Chu Rocket chat rooms will know that while online play is fun, the gagle of cussing youths and the tedious insulting that goes on creates the kind of spectacle that makes you ashamed to be a UK citizen. It’s not much better with the PC online community either. Though they may be slightly better behaved, all too often there’s that sneery jingoism, that undercurrent of nasty xenophobia between the pan-European players. Phantasy Star Online, however, is about to change the way we play online games for the better. No more tawdry playground antics; just you and up to three other real-life adventurers helping each other in quests, conversing with one another, trading items, united in a common goal. And not one spotty oik dissing ‘yer mum’. Here’s hoping, anyway.

OUR OFFLINE PHANTASY

Our version of PSO has all the wondrous multiplayer gubbins intact, but the bods at Sega are still tweaking the online adventures to perfection, so we’ve only played the offline missions. The co-rking single-player action is totally absorbing and the sheer depth of the game is apparent right from the start, with more options and sub-branches than you’ve ever seen in an RPG before. The most fascinating of these are the speech and chat menus. It seems that for online adventures, you’ll not only be able to chat via a keyboard, but also be able to pre-contract loads of sentences and questions, and even design your own. The best bit is you can then select via a joystick or keyboard shortcut key for ease of chat. It makes far more sense to just tap a key to ask a fellow RPG bod to join you, rather than sit there typing it all out, and it also looks set to allow for cross-continental translations. PSO is going to unite the world.

FOREST OF FEELING

From the main hub area of the Pioneer 2 space station you have complete freedom to go wherever you wish. You can check out the stores and the traders’ stands as well as talk to all the local nuts. The Hunter’s Guild should be top of your list of places to go. This is where you’ll receive your missions both in single and online multiplayer. Start with the training and rescue missions or you’ll get your arse kicked as soon as you bump down to the lush forest surface of Regol. Despite its complexity, you can’t help but feel emotionally gripped by the action, as the whole thing looks so damned good. Moreover, the range of tweakies and the chat options gives you more freedom than most RPG-stars will be able to handle. If we’re this blown away by the offline stuff, then we’ll surely explode when the adventure goes fully online. Check our first impressions over the page for a run-down of the first few jaw-dropping moments of Phantasy Star Online.
The first thing you do in *PSO* is choose your character and you can even tweak your physical attributes. Fatty or skinny? You decide.

This is the space station Pioneer 2 controller. He needs your help to suss out what's going on with the doomed Pioneer 1 craft on Ragol. Below

Talk to the various folk on the Station and they all seem very cagey about something. Beam your ass down to the hub area and get adventuring.

There are shops and people to chat with in the hub section, but you really should check out the Hunter's Guild. We chose Battle Training first.

Meeting and gathering folk for online battles looks like it'll be an intuitive affair, but initially a very confusing one. Options galore await you.

As with any half-decent RPG, conversing with the CPU characters is always rewarding. Some will give you clues and others will offer to help.

The first time you beam down to the surface of Ragol you'll be awestruck. The lush greens and gentle shading is a huge contrast from Pioneer.

The action comes thick and fast in *PSO* and your first few fights will really test you. These Booma things are like big angry bears. Hit him!

These ickle duckies look like they want to be your friends, then start chomping away at your shins. Not tough but numerous. Avoid 'em!

Die and you'll be whisked off to the Medical Centre back on the hub and have to fight your way back through the area you just cleared.

There's no pause function in *PSO* and pressing Start brings up the dazzling array of subscreens. The action carries on in the mini-screen though.

This purple warrior is called Kireek and will help you out in the early missions. As you play he'll stop you to tell you important information.

These pretty forcefields are dotted around all over Ragol. Using them opens up new sections of the map for you to explore and piller from.

Further into the action, Kireek tells you about how the cursor icons in the bottom right of the action screen relate to the buttons on your pad.

The battles heat up as you near the end of your first mission. After you and your android buddy smack the space cats, you'll complete your task.

You've done it! Ash has been rescued. He's not very appreciative though. Head on back to Pioneer 2 and go see the woman at the Guild.

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**CVG RECKONS**

*PSO* plays fantastically offline. The way you create your own personal hero and then train him in an epic journey is pure emotional wonder. Playing online with like-minded adventurers is the stuff of gaming dreams.
SHEN-WHO?

MEMORIES IS AN EXPERIENCE YOU WON'T FORGET

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

OutTBC FormatPS2

Cold-blooded murder: that's what it was. There you were, minding your own business as you strolled down a street in the town of Lebensbaum, when a knife is violently thrust into your back. After crying out in futile anguish, you slump lifelessly to the ground as the unknown murderer makes his escape. You are dead. Brutally murdered in broad daylight. Game Over? Quite the opposite - it's just the beginning of an awesome adventure...

FATEFUL BEGINNINGS

The year is 2001, your name is Eike Kusch, and you've been murdered. This is the somewhat alarming point from which you must begin your epic adventure. You slowly regain consciousness in a strange and unfamiliar room, awoken by a mysterious, detached voice emanating from an unknown location. The voice informs you that you are dead, but adds that it intends to use its powers to give you the chance to alter the course of your fate. Confused, you stutter half-formed questions as the weight of your predicament throws your mind into chaos. How can this be happening? Who would want to kill you? Who is telling you these strange things? Is this really happening? For the time being, you are left in the dark about such vital facts.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME

The disembodied voice then gives you a device called a Digipad, explaining that it gives you the ability, within certain parameters, to travel back through the annals of time - the Digipad is only drawn to periods that directly relate to the circumstances of your death. It is at this point that the essence of your quest is revealed: you must travel back in time to prevent your own death. It's kind of like a more macabre version of the Bill Murray movie, Groundhog Day, but instead of repeating the same day over and over, you jump between centuries, trying to solve the mystery of your death. In the course of your adventure, you will visit four separate time zones: the present day, the 1980's, the 1930's and the late 16th Century. In each
You can't be tired from something that simple.

Each chapter generally begins with your death. You must travel back in time, altering the shape of the future in order to prevent this tragedy.

of the periods, you are always present in the same town and as the story develops, you realise you are unravelling the secrets of generation after generation of your ancestry.

GET TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM
As the game begins in earnest, you are thrust back to Lebensbaum 30 minutes before your murder. The voice you heard hints that to avoid your death you should be surrounded with people, as you were alone when the attacker struck. This requires you to immediately search the town and talk to everyone you meet, desperately trying to find someone to accompany you - sheesh, even Wario's got more mates than this guy. Walk into the café and you'll see yourself slumped on a table, moments before your murder. Try and make contact with yourself, and in a blazing flash your very existence is erased - you must quickly learn the importance of causing minimum interference to the timeline. If you manage to prevent the stabbing, don't think you've saved your ass - the killer will just find another opportunity to strike. What the mysterious voice teaches you is that the only way to prevent your death is to extinguish the root of the cause. It's no good hanging around with a load of senile grannies: they ain't gonna be there to protect you 24/7 - especially once the bingo starts - and your killer will hunt you down, eventually. This therefore is the focus of your quest: the root will only be uncovered and eradicated by delving into centuries of history and mystery.

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LESS IS MORE
One of Shadow of Memories most outstanding attributes at present is the stunning cinematic experience it offers. Forget the cringe-inducing, hammy voice-acting of the UK version of Shenmue, with only a few exceptions, the quality of dialogue delivery here is high. If you were put off by this facet of Shenmue, you'll know what a difference this sort of thing can make. There are only a limited amount of characters you will be involved with, in all time zones, but this is definitely a case of less is more, as this allows for more complex and well-rounded characters, and a tighter script. Added to this is some truly stunning camera work that can liven up even the more mundane conversations. An excellent example of this is when you are poisoned in a bar. Eike is sat at the table, reciting a somewhat dull, though relevant, passage from a book. While this happens, the camera follows the barman, as he carries Eike's food from the kitchen, lacing it with poison when no-one is watching. This might not sound that amazing, but the overall effect is one of total immersion in a truly compelling and convincing storyline, that sucks you in and just won't let go.

BACK TO THE FUTURE
Time is an ever-present pressure throughout. The playable sections operate in real-time and, whichever period you are in, that time is displayed parallel to present-day time. You will often be aware of the time at which the killer will strike, and this really adds to the tension as you race to alter the past before it's too late. In fact, the key to saving your life involves altering certain events in the past. For example, at one point you eat poisoned food. To prevent this from happening, you must travel back to 1902 and ensure that the town's museum actually becomes a library instead. Then you can wander into the present day library and look up an antidote for the poison - is that awesome or what?

SIMON SAYS
At present, the main objection is the lack of involvement you actually have. To be fair, you don't have to do too much for the first few hours, most things being well signposted by either the voice or by the Shenmue-style notebook you keep. In this respect, Shadow of Memories is essentially linear, but we were so engrossed by the brilliant plot that it was never a major issue. One further annoyance is that your death often seems unavoidable, and when you've been playing for half an hour since the last save point, it can be something of a chore to trawl through all the same scenes and dialogue again. All in all though, from what we've seen so far, Shadow of Memories is shaping up to be a truly awesome PS2 title. Most attention is obviously being focused on Konami's other two PS2 titles in the pipeline, Metal Gear Solid 2 and Zone Of The Enders, but it would be foolish to ignore such a polished and exciting title as Memories. It might not be to everyone's taste, but if you want a gripping, involving story, you'll struggle to find a better example anywhere else. With more twists than a tornado and more turns than a game of black jack, Shadow of Memories looks set to rock PS2's world. And ours.

CAGE RECKONS
If the rest of the game lives up to such promise, this should be a stunning experience - without a Shadow of a doubt.

but I believe that you are the one who is fated to acquire it.
AWESOMELY POWERFUL.
DEADLY ACCURATE.

BUT WITHOUT HIGHLY TRAINED
WEAPONS SPECIALISTS
ABOUT AS LETHAL AS A
PORK SAUSAGE.

THE HARPOON
ONE OF THE FOXIEST, COSTLIEST,
GUIDED MISSILES IN THE WORLD.
AT A RANGE OF 70 MILES, IT CAN STOP
A 4000 TON ENEMY VESSEL DEAD
IN THE WATER. AT A CRUISING SPEED
OF MACH 0.9, IT CAN ATTACK FROM
LOW LEVEL OR HIGH LEVEL OR A DICK
DASTARDLY COMBINATION OF THE TWO.

THE MOST VITAL PART OF THE
HARPOON ISN'T THE 'COMPUTERISED
INERTIAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM;
IT'S THE PRACTICAL GENIUS WHO
UNDERSTANDS WHAT ONE
OF THOSE THINGS IS AND KNOWS
HOW TO MAINTAIN IT.

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ISS PRO EVOLUTION 2
OUTEASTER 2001 FORMAT PSOne

ISS Pro Evolution is certainly the finest football game ever made, and its many fans would also argue it's the finest game ever made. Period. That's why, when the man from Konami dropped by with an almost-finished copy of ISS Evolution 2 for PSOne, we got very excited. In the games room and played until we passed out. The real player names struck us right away, righting a wrong that's plagued ISS games for years. There's something much more satisfying about bursting the net with a thirty-yard scorer from the real Scholes, rather than some soundalike. FIFA fans will be amazed at the subtlety of the new ISS, and even hardened ISS players will marvel at the new features. We played Evolution 2 for ten hours straight. Over the page is a diary of the differences and how quickly we noticed them.

YOU SHOULD BE GETTING VERY EXCITED

ISS was the series that could not fail, until two flaky titles in November suggested there was trouble in paradise. But well-informed fans always had an eye on what the Evolution team was up to, and it's looking like they've delivered big time. It might look similar to the last one, but ISS Evolution 2 plays very differently. The animation touches go to a never-before-imagined level, and it's a stiff challenge for even hardened ISSers. Your existing crazy skills won't be enough to guarantee winning games. Get ready to go back to the training pitch. You'll immediately notice the loss of the 'feet' goals that gave good players a near-certain goal in a one-on-one with the keeper. For us, you earn every break in ISS Evolution, and you shouldn't be punished for having the ability to pull off the only move in the game that practically guarantees you a goal. You could argue it's a 'soft' goal, but it takes hours of practice to get the timing spot on. The jury is out on that bit.

AN INTENSE TEN-HOUR SESSION ON THE NEW ISS HAS US SWEATING. HERE'S THE LOW-DOWN ON THE BEST FOOTY GAME OF 2001

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS DEAN SCOTT

TEN HOURS IN, GVG RECKONS

Will be the best footy game ever made. Better than anything on PS2, DC and PC combined. Start saving now and brace yourself for a season of footy heaven.
FIVE SECONDS IN:
It looks identical to ISS Evolution. As far as we can make out, there is very little visual difference at all. Zinedine Zidane's bald patch looks a little more convincing, but that's about it. Ordinarily, alarm bells would be ringing pretty loud by now, but ISS Evo was a fine looking game anyway.

FIVE MINUTES IN:
Scoring is proving very difficult. The spaces aren't where you expect them to be. You've got to be much more precise when passing through the midfield, and the cutting through-ball needs to be timed with utter precision. A period of sustained pressure leads to a defender desperately diving to head the ball away from a crowded penalty area. We're impressed.

TWENTY SECONDS IN:
It doesn't play the same. You can feel the difference right away. Players seem more fleet-footed and agile than they were in the last game. It feels like a touch of the dribble-friendly player control of ISS '98 has been reintroduced, meaning many jinky moves are possible this time.

SEVEN MINUTES IN:
Finally managed to crack that German backline, and Claudio Lopez is through on goal. With his pace, he won't be caught, so it's just a case of rounding the keeper for One-nil. But no. We try the old feint trick, and the keeper stays on his feet. Clearly someone felt this 'certain goal' scenario had to be removed. We're gutted, because it takes special skill to pull the feint off.

ONE HOUR IN:
We're starting to pick up on little animation changes. When a player does a '180' turn with the ball, he spins with more speed and looks like Johann Cruyff. You can slide to hook a ball away that's rolling out of play. The standing tackle looks much more convincing as the player really sticks his foot in. You can practically see neck muscles straining for those power headers.

TWO MINUTES IN:
First match, first foul. A player goes flying over on his side. Every foul in the last game was of the 'onto the face' variety, and we're starting to appreciate that it's the small details that make up the bulk of the changes for this sequel. That's fair enough, since their was nothing much wrong with the last version.

FIVE HOURS IN:
No matter how hard you kicked the Scots in the last Evo, the same eleven men trudged off the pitch with a smile at the end of the ninety minutes. Not any more. Give someone a serious booting in ISS Evolution 2 and they'll be lucky to get back up. You might have to sub them. And even if you don't, the knock will have sapped their speed and stamina. Cool.

SIX HOURS IN:
 Didn't you just hate people that sent their keeper rushing out at you in Evo II? Half the time your striker got clattered, and you never got a penalty. Ever. This time out, they've got to be more careful. If they catch you this time, it's a foul. And if it's a cynical foul to stop you scoring, he'll probably be off. Justice at last, and unless they're quick with the sub keeper, a defender goes in goal.
IN THE SHOPS SOON
WHAT TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES ARE LIKE TO PLAY

STRAATEGY MADE SIMPLE
AFTER SEVEN YEARS Z RETURNS - AND THIS TIME IT'S IN 3D!

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS PAT (I'M NICE REALLY) GARRATT

Z: STEEL SOLDIER
OUT FEBRUARY FORMAT PC

Z: Steel Soldier has been in the works for a monstrous seven years, and although it's not immediately obvious why it should have taken so long to come up with the game, what we really have here is an action-strategy title like no other. The developer has likened the project to reinventing chess, and after ten minutes of play you realize the claim simply isn't that outlandish.

RODENT FRIENDLY
If you played the original all those years ago, the core concept will be familiar: the red forces are up against the blue army, and the aim is to capture all the territory on the map by controlling flag points. The format is similar to many RTS games - such as Warzone 2100 - in that you get 3D terrain adorned with troops and tanks; all controllable by a drag-selection system. The camera can be spun in any direction - up, down or in a 360° circle - by holding down both mouse buttons and moving it wherever you want it to go. In fact, literally everything you need to do can be performed with the mouse, so you never have to touch the keyboard.

UNRELENTING ACTION
In terms of units, expect robots, armour from WWII, futuristic tanks, factories, missile launchers and a whole lot more, all lit up with some spectacular explosive effects. Six worlds are available for play, including an ice planet, a desert, a jungle, post-apocalyptic wasteland, a river area based on the Rhone Valley in Germany and a volcanic scenario. You'll get 20 maps in total to duke it out on. In a nutshell, this is definitely the easiest RTS game to pick-up-and-play we've ever seen. In many ways, it's probably better not to think of Steel Soldier as real-time strategy game at all. It's fast, furious and the AI team never lets up for a second, but the balancing is spot-on and will keep you on tenterhooks for the entire time you're at the keyboard. Chuck in multiplayer for up to eight people and you could have a winner on your hands. Top, laser-biting fun.

CVG RECKONS
Could well be a breath of fresh air for PC strategy with its simple interface and depth of gameplay.

END
DEADLY, ONCE THEY’RE IN THE BOX.

Trouble is, McVitie’s Jaffa Cakes are so delicious you’ll want to do all the finishing yourself. One taste of that great centre and you’ve just got to go for a double, or a treble. No wonder they’re Man United’s favourite half-time snack, especially as they’re high in energy and low in fat. And here’s your chance to join Man United on a special training day. For details visit www.manutd.com/jaffacakes.
You're thundering around a massive banked curve, tyres squealing and smoke billowing out from under the wheel arches. Thirty-nine other cars are swarming all over the track right in front of you and the sensation of in-your-face speed is not entirely unlike being thrown out of an aeroplane attached to a boulder the size of Denmark. Gran Turismo 3 can only dream of racing intensity like this: Daytona USA has returned with a vengeance the size of a planet.

KNEE TREMBLER
For the uninitiated, the idea is simple. Thrash your power-slide-happy stock car around circuits built purely for speed and to get your adrenaline gushing like Niagra Falls. If you ever sat down in an arcade and played a racing game and came off shaking with energy, the chances are it was Daytona USA. And that undisputed classic is about to make a very large splash indeed on the DC.

REAL CONTENDER
Daytona USA 2001 is looking arcade perfect in every conceivable way. That fact alone makes it a contender for 'greatest racer ever' in the eyes of many. There's a handful of all-new tracks to race on too, making sure your Daytona-freak mate has little advantage the first time you take him on in an online race.

MULTIPLAYER BENDER
Oh sorry, did we forget to mention the eight-player online mode? How silly of us. Sega are promising no speed reductions, no leg and twice as much fun as the original sit-down arcade cabinets, which only let four players go at it together. We can't say yet how well this will work, but after the impressive Quake 3 online experience you've got to assume anything is possible. We're still waiting to get our trembling paws on online code, but sources suggest that as CVG went to press before Christmas it was already looking very handsome indeed.

KICK IN THE FENDERS
Playing Daytona USA 2001 in split-screen also breaks new ground for a console racer. Forget about just you and a friend duelling out there on the track. Daytona throws eight computer-controlled cars into the mix to keep things at maniac levels of intensity. Gun it alone, and there can be as many as forty other cars on the track with you. That's a few more than GT3's paltry six.
**FUEL-INJECTED THUNDER**

And you'll want to play *Daytona* alone as much as possible. The track detail is good, and even the most distant skyscrapers are ever-present on the skyline. The gameworld is gloriously solid, and thunders past your eyes like a speeding express train. *Daytona* veterans will get misty-eyed at the prospect of belting under the spinning fruit machine wheels on the bridge at Three Sevens Speedway, then catching a glimpse of the Sonic etched into the rock as you career round the bend.

**REMEMBER, REMEMBER**

They'll also remember the high banked curves of Dinosaur Canyon, the motorway suspension bridge section of Sea-Side Street Galaxy and the hot air balloon watching as cars thunder through the canyon at Desert City. New tracks include the foot-to-the-floor mayhem of the Circuit Pixie oval, where you're picking through forty-car traffic over four laps - never once touching the brake - and the head-hittingly massive, banked corner around the Mermaid Lake.

**TOP OF OUR AGENDA**

The handling feels twitchy as first with a joypad, with harsh tiller of the stick sending the car into mad oversteer. Playing with a gentle touch saw us climb the rankings, and breaking out the steering wheel ground the entire office a glorious hoot. The games room WAS the *Daytona USA* coin-op for a few hours. If only we'd thought to charge people a quid a go.

---

**EVG RECKONS**

Rejoice if you got a DC at Xmas. The most fantastic arcade racer ever is just around the corner. If the online play works out, nothing can stop *Daytona USA*.

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There's Soul Calibur and Street Fighter Alpha 3, but after that you have to struggle to find any awesome fighting games on Dreamcast. It's time someone did something about this unsatisfactory situation, and because no-one else seems to be, Sega has taken on the job themselves. Fighting Vipers 2 is a conversion of an arcade title that never came out in the UK, and the sequel to a Saturn game that not many people bought. Here's why you should care.

**FIGHTING VIPERS 2**

Controls are simple: there's just guard, punch and kick to worry about. FV2 plays like Virtue Fighter on fast-forward - all the attacks are carried out at a lightning pace and are accompanied by non-stop flashes and sparks from fists and weapons. Fights happen in small, enclosed rings, so you can smash faces into walls and some characters are able to climb those walls and jump back in again, Smackdown 2-style. Finish a fight with a powerful attack and you'll bash your opponent straight through the wall and into the surrounding scenery, which is sometimes demolished as a result. Perfect for humiliating friends!

**CRAZY AS F**...**FUDGE**

Each fighter is protected by body armour. This doesn't make them wusses though, because the beatings you deal out are cranked up to the max and the armour can only take so much damage before it disintegrates. To add to the effect, armour breaks are shown with flashy, multiple-angle replays like a kung-fu movie. Once your armour is broken off, you injure more easily. If you're feeling especially cagy, you can tap out a special combo to break off your own armour. This then opens up the Super KO finishing technique. Super KOs are where the crazy stuff happens - any remaining armour is toast, fighters get knocked out of the ring by asteroids or explosions, that kind of thing.

**FANCY DRESS PARTY**

The characters are among the craziest seen in a fighting game. Girls dress in neon pinks and greens, lads in trenchcoats or skate gear. The best part is their props, which can be used as weapons - Charlie's is a BMX strapped to his back. It gets even more degraded than that: some of the armour off costumes are verging on scandalous. FV2 is a classic Sega-style coin-op, and we'll have more details when a UK release is confirmed.

**CVG RECKONS**

A weird choice to convert, but as frantically funny as fighting games get.
IN THE SHOPS SOON
WHAT TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES ARE LIKE TO PLAY

MOVE OVER LARA, HERO WITH BALLS
HERE'S A

DUKE NUKEM LAND OF THE BABES
OUT FOR PLAYSTATION

Blood and gore splashed all over the walls, hi-tech sci-fi weapons, scantily clad women being saved and latched at by the hero and one-liners laced with double entendres that make you groan. Could be the latest Schwarzenegger flick, or just could be the long awaited return of gaming's most politically incorrect hero, Duke Nukem.

I'LL BE BACK
Land of the Babes is everything we wanted Tomb Raider 5 to be. It's fast, you're not constantly running into walls and the platform action is replaced by a mixture of blasting and switch-based puzzles, with pixel perfect jumping kept to a minimum. And what you know, as a result of this it's shaping up to be a lot of fun.

WAZZUUPP
Humour is definitely big on the developers list of priorities. Whether it's Duke picking up a phone and parodying the Budweiser adverts or coming up with a smart one-liner after blowing away an alien freak in particularly gruesome style, there's always something that will make you smile or groan. The puzzles, although lightweight compared to some games, do keep you on your toes and mean that you need to keep an eye on the environments for switches or things that look that little bit out of place.

ACTION MAN
But whether Duke is hanging from ladders, blasting pigs in the face with his array of high explosive weapons, chatting up the babes, leaping huge chasms or trying to figure out a way to get through a level, the emphasis is always on fun and action. It's managed to ditch some of the worst and maintain all of the best features of the original Nukem classics. The way this is shaping up, maybe Duke will be one of the few PC heroes to make it big on consoles as well.

CIVIC RECKONS

Duke's back, and he's not taking any crap. Gameplay and gags bring laughs in typical Nukem-style.
THE CODEFATHER, PART II

SEGAMarine Fishing

One of those obscure and weird facts that scares the life out of normal, right-minded folk, is that the most popular participation sport in the UK is fishing. You bunch of freaks, you should be ashamed of yourselves! Everybody knows it's much healthier to be locked away in a dingy room playing games all day. But now you can get the best of both worlds with Sega Marine Fishing, the follow-up to the Godfather of fishing games - DC's surprisingly addictive Sega Bass Fishing.

THE ROD IS GOD

Once again, you're not gonna get the most out of SMF unless you invest in a fishing rod controller, as with the standard pad it's all a bit too easy and uninvolved. Sega canned their official controller but, if you look around, you should be able to pick up a third-party one for around £20. Options wise, there's an Arcade mode, which is straight fishing against the clock, but it's more likely that you'll spend most of your time in Original mode. Packed away in here are various mini-games that act as a training mode, teaching you the subtleties of fishing, like how to improve your casting accuracy, or learn how to reel in the big fish, for example.

SECRETS OF THE DEEP

One particularly neat feature is the Aquarium mode. During Original mode, you're able to unlock and collect various different items, ranging from rocks, to Octopuses and other assorted fish. Once you've collected these items, you can stick them into your own aquarium, and view them from a variety of camera angles. Ultimately it's pointless but it's pretty cool nevertheless.

POWER DIGGERZ

OUTMARCH FORMAT PLAYSTATION

Become a well-whistling digger driver in one of the most offbeat titles in ages. Power Diggerz is part of the Ga/ series of Japanese games (Go by Train! being the most popular) and the first one to get a UK release. Mini-games and two-player challenges await players exhibiting the most arse-crack.

SMASH STUFF UP!

The single player game is a bit like a JCB sim where you have to complete construction - and destruction - challenges in a set time. These range from shovelling dirt to knocking down buildings. The control system is unwieldy at first as the game uses every joystick button, but with practice you'll find it works perfectly and gives you loads of control.

MINIGAME MADNESS

As well as the sim mode, you get a load of single and two-player mini-games like wrecking parked cars and transferring little turtle dudes from one pool to another. These games play like Bush Bash for construction freaks and are a real joy. The graphics are bright and bold and the sounds suitably weird. Should be released at a budget price too.

CAN YOU DIG IT?

PNEUMATIC PLEASURES ON PLAYSTATION

It's crazy but also very cool. Our pistons are pumping.
RINGING IN THE CHANGES

ETERNAL RING? WELL, IT CERTAINLY GOES ON A BIT

ETERNAL RING
OUT FEB FORMAT PS2

When it comes to driving games, the PS2 is more than adequately endowed - bouncing around showing off its wares in the showers. But look at the RPG side of things and it's hiding itself embarrassed at the package it has to offer. No sign of a Final Fantasy in the near future, so role players will have to look to the likes of this and Evergrace to satiate their desires.

ETERNAL STING?
The Japanese release was disappointing, although it does look like some of the worst problems have been ironed out - the most obvious one being that everything makes sense now and you can solve the puzzles that it throws at you between the endless bouts of combat. Speed as well, which was a major issue, has been tweaked somewhat so that moving between locations and backtracking (which you have to do a lot) doesn't take so long that you end up putting off, suddenly discovering that you can't be arsed anymore.

ROLE PLAYING LAME
The game is huge so there's a lot to explore, but the graphics aren't that different between stages, and most of the action happens in enclosed corridors. Switch to outside and fogging is used for; sham, atmospherics - or it may be that they can't handle drawing the full distance. Hey, maybe they're working on it. Combat is pure hack-and-slash, although using the gems to create magic introduces new elements as you go along.

INFERNAL RING
The PS2 needs RPGs, there's absolutely no doubt about that, but whether this will be enough to persuade people that they don't have to wait for Final Fantasy remains to be seen. With Eternal Ring, Summoner and Evergrace all to be released around the same time, it looks like this could turn into a real bitchfight to see which one reigns supreme. Stay tuned and we'll tell you more next month when we should have the review.

CVG RECKONS
Interesting combination of first-person hack 'n' slash with RPG elements, but it doesn't feel that strong right now.
VERMIN OF THE BOARD
SONIC AND HIS CRAZY CHUMS TRY TO CRASH MARIO'S PARTY

Words & Screenshots: Johnny Minkley

Musical statues was always the game of choice at Sonic's annual beach party. The little critters have never looked so good.

SONIC SHUFFLE

Board games on consoles and computers are certainly not a new thing. Anyone who whiled away hours on the awesome Scrabble on BBC Micro will know what we mean. It wasn't until the Big N's Mario Party, however, that someone actually realised these games could be, like, fun and stuff. Sega, in bandwagon-jumping style, have rolled their dice into the arena with Sonic Shuffle, providing a serious challenge to Nintendo's, ahem, monopoly.

MAKE KNUCKLES SHUFFLE

The first thing that'll strike you about Sonic Shuffle is its amazing graphics. Using the same cel-shading technique as the magical Jet Set Radio, Sonic and chums have never looked better. The game worlds look stunning, brimming with vivid colours and detail. Taking the form of a four-player board game, you initially choose from either Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, or Amy, with more to be unlocked later. Then you traverse the board, obtaining the most Precioustones to secure victory. There's almost 50 mini-games to play and tons of features to keep things exciting.

RING RAIDER

Each square on the board affects the game, from ring bonuses and battles, to mini-games and shops. You move around the board using numbered cards, which are also used in battles. Select a card higher than your rival's to win, stopping it on the right number; roulette-style. Despite being turn-based, you're never out of the action for long, as mini-games involve all four players and cater to players with less experience. With great multiplayer action, Sonic Shuffle is looking like a varied and entertaining game, but single players be warned: from the code we've played, we reckon your interest may begin to wane quickly unless you invest in some extra joypads.

CVG RECKONS

With the emphasis firmly on fun, Sonic Shuffle promises to be essential party fodder.
IN THE SHOPS SOON

WHAT TOMORROW'S BIG GAMES ARE LIKE TO PLAY

THREE KINGS AND FRIED RICE

AGE OF EMPIRES FACES ORIENTAL CHALLENGER

THREE KINGDOMS: FATE OF THE DRAGON

OUTMARCH FORMATPC

Based on the second most-read book on the planet after the bible (which would not really have made that good a war game), Fates of the Dragon on the PC lets you take the role of one of three ancient Chinese leaders attempting to unite this vast country under one banner - your own, of course. The basic resource management is pure Age of Empires, but dig deeper and Fates of the Dragon has plenty of new game features and plot twists that will give even the most hardened and cynical Red Alert fan interested.

CHINESE TAKEAWAY

Each leader has different technologies available to him - providing he can stretch the labour to develop it. Then there's the small matter of building different military units and exploring to find the enemy. Sounds simple but it takes ages to build up, with more emphasis on the structure of your town and resource management than fighting - although there's plenty of that later on. Oh, and forget 'tank rushing' (though obviously there are no tanks in feudal China), you can't do it anymore - you need to keep your troops supplied as they travel to war. With the sheer number of options and variety of ways you can go about playing, plus the easy interface and eye pleasing graphics, this is going to be one to really get your teeth into, even if you know nothing about this period of history. It's so compelling you'll find yourself learning without even knowing it - and the code we've played still feels at tweaking to be done. Who says games should be more educational, huh?

LEE'S POKEJOURNAL

AS THE UK RELEASE FOR GOLD AND SILVER APPROACHES, WE KEEP YOU UPDATED ON OUR PROGRESS THROUGH THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF THE BEST ADVENTURES OF ALL TIME

OCTOBER 18, 20:09

HOURS - After successfully whooping Falinks and his brain-brained Pokémon in the last journal, I've made a fair bit of progress and now I'm doing some night-time adventuring. First stop is Azalea Town, the Southernmost town in the game. But what's this about Slowpokes disappearing? And didn't that creepy guy in Violet City offer to sell me a Slowpoke Tail? I'll ask around to see what the crack is. Ah! It seems that all the Slowpokes have been captured by Team Rocket and their tails are being sold off as delicious treats! Time to go save the Slowpokes and battle some Rocket scum!

30-46 HOURS - With all the Slowpokes safe and sound, I'm off to help the Charcoal guy in the West of town find his assistant. He's lost in the flex forest somewhere and having trouble with a dialogic Farfetch'd. Lots of Pokémon seem to hang out in these dark woods, so I'll remember it for later when I'm on a pokéball-hunting mission to catch all of the rare critters. Pokémon also hide in the smaller trees and I can shake them to startle and catch 'em - ha ha! I finally catch up with the freaky fowl and return it safely to its owner. Back in Azalea, the Charcoal guy gives me Hidden Machine Out! Now I can hack dawn trees! Wicked.

OCTOBER 19, 13:03

HOURS - Right time for some top lunch-time Pokémon action. I just pop me soup in the microwave, giving me just enough time to have a battle or two with Bugsy's cronies in Azalea gym. These guys bug-eyed monsters are no match for my awesome fiery Cyndaquil and after a few minutes, they're just like my soup - done. Next it's on to the gym leader Bugsy and more deadly bug Pokémon. Think I'll try out my newly acquired Cut move... Hmmm... not bad, but Cyndaquil's Ember is still boss. After a minor struggle, Bugey bombs out of the battle and leaves me the Hive badge and TM49, Fury Cutter. Brill.

13:56 HOURS - After my success I feel a trek back to flex forest is in order. Apparently, there's a strange fellow there who will give me a TM if I find him. So it's back to the forest to Cut my way to a new path. Sure enough, the green haired guy gives me Headbutt! Now where... Hmmm... how about I head up to Goldenrod City - I bet there's loads of stuff to do there. Just outside the city there's a daycare center! This is too cool. Drop off your Pokémon and maybe they'll breed. Oh my God - my first taste of fatherhood! Cor...

...Continues next issue
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WINNERS UPDATE – ISSUE 229

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POKEMON MOVIE
Kevin Mason, London; J Helbie, Northants; Ian Smith, East Sussex; Paul Michael, N Ireland; Sean Willis, Aberdeen; Pat Reesley, Herts

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER
Paul Jennings, Dorset; J Snell, West Yorkshire; Andrew Wood, Gloucester; J Allen, Northampton; John Fitzpatrick, Durham

SIGNED TRISH T-SHIRTS
Dan Treanor, Surrey; B Collin, Glasgow; David Chan, Herts

RARE STATION
Andrew Strain, Essex; Simon Smith, West Yorks; Dean Brown, North Yorkshire; Allen Whistle, Lancs; S Henry, London

CHARLIE'S ANGELS
Karl Jameson, Staines

JORDAN RACE WHEEL
James McMahon, Kent; A Kanell, Glasgow

WWF CHAMPION RING
Chris Simons, Co Clare

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More WWF goodies, this bundle is a proper treat. Includes a PlayStation console, boxed CD set of WWF tunes, T-shirts, a cap, a bag, and we'll even throw in some cute WWF teddies. Aww...

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GAME BOY BUNDLE

WILD THINGS BUNDLE
Alun Hughes, Liverpool
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Desperate to get to the next level? Never fear, The Masters are here. To seek their guidance write to the address on the opposite page.

FINAL FANTASY VII & VIII

I've been searching for months for the answers to these questions about Squaresoft's Final Fantasy games. Firstly, Final Fantasy VII. How do you enter Chocobos in the Chocobo races at Gold Saucer? I can catch Chocobos, but I can't get anywhere near Gold Saucer. As for Final Fantasy VIII, how do you defeat Sorceress Adel at the beginning of Disc 4, and how do you catch Chocobos?

Gregory Smith, Matlock

You can only reach the Gold Saucer by catching the tram from Ropeway station in North Corail. To find North Corail, cross the rope-bridge after talking to the miner in the Coral Desert. If you've already caught a Chocobo, you'll be able to enter it in the races at Chocobo. To catch Chocobos in FFVIII, head for Shumi village in the frozen North and look for the Chocobo forest to the right of the village. Once inside the forest you'll meet Chocobo, who will teach you how to catch Chocobos. Once you've caught the Chocobo in the forest you'll be able to ride it outside on the world map as well.

As for that witch Adel, the task of beating her is made more difficult because she's holding Rinne as a hostage, therefore you must be careful not to use attacks which damage Rinne as well. Adel also uses Drain on Rinne, so it's vital that you cast Regen on Rinne as soon as you can. Don't use any magic or Guardian Force attacks because they'll harm Rinne. Concentrate physical attacks on Adel only. Make sure you use Mug to get Adel's Semenca Soul. Because attack options are so limited you'll have to top up your party's health regularly, especially after Adel's frequent Ultima attacks. Use all the protective magic that you can on your party as well as Curaga. When you get the message that all attacks will now concentrate on Adel, you can let rip with more powerful magic attacks as Rinne is momentarily protected. Keep weaving Adel down and protecting Rinne and you'll eventually turn the wicked bint to dust.

DRIVER 2

Can you help me find the secret cars hidden in the Chicago and Havana levels?

Jim Mumford, Ashfield

In Havana the secret car is hidden in an underground parking area on the far west of the city. Look for the switch to open the gate.

In Chicago go to the ticket booth at the front of Wrigley Stadium. Press (Triangle) to buy tickets to the game and the gate will open. Drive in, then walk up the stairs. Turn right and go down to the basement to find a truly fine Mustang just begging you to take it for a spin.

JET SET RADIO

I'm getting a bit marred with the Brooklyn level. I'm trying as hard as I can, but I just can't seem to tag four of the red arrows. The first one is just to the right of the start, above the gas station. The other three are all on the wall behind the basketball court. How do I reach them because from where I'm standing, it seems impossible?

Brian Torres, Sunderland

All the high arrows can be reached with a well-timed wall grinders. To tag the first arrow, get on the gas station roof, then head past the paint cans to the sign. Ride the wall and then jump. You can't land anywhere near the arrow, so you'll have to tag it in mid-air. To get the three arrows near the basketball court, grind the rail and then jump. Get enough height on the jump so that...
Jet Set Radio: Go with the grind to reach those tricky red arrows.
you can propel yourself towards the wall. Ride the wall and jump again. If you've timed your jump well, you should be able to tag the arrows in mid-air.

SPYRO 3: YEAR OF THE DRAGON

The Turbo Snowboard Super Bonus level is proving to be a monster pain. I never finish higher than fourth and I always seem miles behind the front three. Am I ever going to catch them up?

Sara King, Corsham

To excel at this level, make like the Tony Hawk and pull off lots of tricks to boost your Turbo meter. Use Turbo throughout the race, and do as many Twisted Lemon tricks as you can. Try and do a triple Twisted Lemon on the ramp just before the finish line to give yourself a huge boost at the end of the race. If you skate the race straight without any tricks, you'll never get anywhere.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2000/01

I'm managing Man Utd in Championship Manager, but despite having some of the best players in the world in my team, I'm languishing at the bottom of the table – the chairman has just given me the dreaded 'vote of confidence'. We all know that means I'm about to be sacked, so please help me improve my team before the axe falls.

Gary Calvin, Plumstead

Nobody ever said footy management was easy, but these general tips should help you cling onto your job. Firstly, make sure you study the stats of the team you're about to play and tweak your squad accordingly. For instance, if you notice that their forward has a low bravery rating, try putting your most aggressive defender in the squad to mark him. Use the assets of your team to maximise your advantage. If you have tall forwards that are good at heading, make sure you play with wide wingers who will get lots of crosses into the box for them. Also keep an eye on the condition of your players towards the end of the match. Players that are less than 70% will not be effective and should be substituted if possible. Finally, if you have pace forwards with good dribbling skills, try playing Counter Attack as often as possible to catch the opposition off guard. In short, you'll succeed by concentrating on the tiny details as much as possible.

GAUNTLET LEGENDS

Help me! I can't open the third portal on World 2. I've managed to destroy the Chimera with the Scimitar of Decapitation, but have no idea what to do next. I currently have four rune stones. Is that enough, or do I need something else?

Andy Van Hale, Muswell Hill, London

Forget about the Rune stones for now. It's Obelisks you should be after to open the portals. Speak to Sumner the Wizard in the Tower of Torment and he'll tell you where to find them all. When you've got all of them, you'll be able to progress through the portals.

TIMESPLITTERS

I'm having tons of trouble getting to grips with the time challenge on the Hard Mansion level.

Andrew Schreiber, Stonebridge

Don't worry, Andrew, a lot of people are having a tough time getting through this challenge. Guess that's why it's called 'Hard'. Concentrate on clearing a pathway through the zombies and mutants so you can keep running. If you try to take out every single monster, you'll never beat the time limit. Your tactics should consist of a mixture of quick headshots and fast strafing on the move – just keep on practising. With this in mind, when you reach the set of stairs in the cellar with three zombies coming straight at you, just take out the one at the top with a quick headshot to clear the way through and ignore the other two rotting freakoids. When you reach the Mansion, don't forget to check out the room behind the counter with some health and ammo. When you get into the room with the dead heads that shoot at you, don't shoot back or you'll waste too much time – just grit your teeth and run for your life.

WWF NO MERCY

Masters, I need your help! How do you perform the Dudley Death Drop (aka 3D)?

'Undertaker' Harris, Bath

Here's the answer Mr Undertaker, Sir. When playing as the Dudleys, Irish Whip your enemy toward the ropes. When he or she bounces back towards the Dudleys, both of them need to grapple the opponent together to pull off the 3D.

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

I keep coming to a sticky end on level 8 (Masquerade) because the blast doors at the end keep shutting in my face. What am I doing wrong?

Declan Murphy, Dublin

You need to leap up and hold onto the striped black and yellow bar at the tunnel's end. Watch the cut-scene and then breathe a sigh of relief as you land on the other side of the blast doors. If you've seen the film, it should all look very familiar.
**THE BEST EVER...**

**IN GAME WEAPONS**

**WEAPON:** 'EXPLODING SHEEP'
**GAME:** WORMS

**THE GAME**
More top multiplayer action. Take command of a team of worms with a vast selection of weapons with which to battle other teams. Victory is achieved by being the last worm standing.

**THE WEAPON**
The exploding sheep does exactly what it says on the tin: you fire your wooly friend at the enemy and watch it bounce around, before blowing up and causing mass destruction. Not original in itself, but sheer absurdity and comic genius makes this a winner.

**FEEL MY WRATH**
It's unlikely Bernard Matthews will be happy about such a shameless waste of meat, but it still rules.

**KICK ASS OR SICK AS?**
Entirely accurate in its representation of the food chain - everyone knows sheep are the natural predators of worms - this is a cool trick to have up your sleeve.

**WEAPON:** 'CHAINSAW'
**GAME:** DOOM

**THE GAME**
If you aren't familiar with the original Doom, then yours must be a very sad existence. As the son of Wolfenstein and the precursor to the Quake series, Doom was an awesome genre-defining frag em up that took place in an alternative sci-fi reality.

**THE WEAPON**
The chainsaw is a sickening, mutilating weapon of torture that no self-respecting frag-fan would go without. When equipped, you hold it up while racing around. Hit the fire-button and watch in joy as you pull the cord and go on a lacerating rampage.

**FEEL MY WRATH**
Attack a foe with the chainsaw and watch their blood and guts spray the walls - true, the blood effects now seem a tad pixelated, but back then it was a rockin' gore-fest. The sound it makes is also violently satisfying: you can close your eyes and almost hear the engine scream as you tear through flesh and bone. Even better, they don't die at once, so you have to really stick it in like you're carving the Sunday roast. Would you like stuffing with that, sir?

**KICK ASS OR SICK AS?**
Doom was a revelation in gaming, and at the time probably accounted for more last working hours than the bumper plague. The chainsaw was at the heart of this phenomenon, the murderous weapon of choice for many an obsessive fragger: Instead, to display their greatness to all, truly hardcore Doom-addicts would take on the notorious Chainsaw Challenge, which involved seeing how far you got by only using the chainsaw. Trying this out on the last level of the game is still challenging today.

**WEAPON:** '3-WAY FIRE'
**GAME:** SMASH TV

**THE GAME**
Set in the future, you play the contestant in an ultra-violent gameshow where, trapped in an arena, you must gun-down an almost never-ending stream of man-eating baddies hell-bent on seeing you off without so much as a blanket throw at your head. So it's nothing at all like that cool Amie film, The Running Man, is there, not at all.

**THE WEAPON**
There are loads of cool weapons of destruction, but the best by far is three-way fire, which gives you a spray of fire that wipes out stacks of enemies. This can then be backed up to six-way fire by collecting a double damage power-up ball that circles your character.

**FEEL MY WRATH**
In a game of such intensity, the 3-way gun provides slight relief from the onslaught, allowing you to race around the screen, gliding causing utter devastation in all directions. As the cheesy in-game host likes to say, "Total Carnage - I love it!"

**KICK ASS OR SICK AS?**
Still an awesome weapon even today, and the rush is just as satisfying Rampaging over screens of zombies, blasting their guts all around is dammed satisfying. The rocket and grenade launchers may have the cool explosions, but this causes unparalleled slaughter. If you've got an old copy, dig it out now.

**WEAPON:** 'FLAVOURED SNOW'
**GAME:** SOUTH PARK 64

**THE GAME**
Weak first-person shooter in the style of GoldenEye, in which you control the South Park kids as they curse their way around town. The one-player game sucks ass,

**THE WEAPON**
But multiplayer is sweet for a while, due to the many playable characters, a classy range of catchphrases and some amusing weaponry.

**FEEL MY WRATH**
Of all the attacking options available, the most depressed (and therefore by far the best) I've got to be the band on a snowball, then chucking the snowball at an enemy. Though you don't get to see your character take a leak, it's accompanied by a suitably gratuitous zip effect. It's so inspired, you've got to wonder if it would work in real life.

**KICK ASS OR SICK AS?**
It's a touch of pure class in an otherwise limited game, and provides much more multiplayer hilarity in the short-term, but the novelty will wear off.

**WEAPON:** 'SNIPER RIFLE'
**GAME:** GOLDEN EYE

**THE GAME**
You guys voted this your favourite game of all time, so we know you love it as much as we do. This is a game that set the bench mark for console first-person shooters, with an awesome, challenging single-player game, and a multiplayer mode that changes people's lives. Even post-Perfect Dark, many still regard this as the ultimate secret-agent experience.

**THE WEAPON**
The sniper rifle is the ultimate power trip for Bond-wannabes. Unsurpassed in picking off distant foes, it allows you to zoom in from afar and get them right between the eyes. Console owners had never experienced anything quite this good before, and it pretty much rewritten the rule book for non-PC FPS games. These days, no self-respecting FPS comes without one.

**FEEL MY WRATH**
Pick up the weapon, find a suitable vantage point, and lie in wait for your helpless opponents. Zooming in on an doorway that some evil Russian terrorist's trying to sneak out of, then hitting them right when it hurts is a truly sublime gaming moment that will fill your heart with murderous joy.

**KICK ASS?**
Even to day, GoldenEye's still played with passion and still rocks the world, and although PC-boys may rant and ad infinitum about Quake 3, Unreal Tournament etc. console owners know that their snapping secret-agent can give any FPS a damn good run for its money. It's the best weapon in your favourite game of all time. Need we say more?
Few things in life are more satisfying than smashing the smitheeens out of evil videogame baddies, but it's even more fun when you get to dispatch them with ingenious instruments of death. So we've delved through the dusty videogame archives to come up with the finest, most inventive, most awe-inspiring and most destructive weaponry in gaming.

### POWER POINTS

A truly great weapon will feel as satisfying as destroying the Death Star when you use it to mercilessly ravage your enemies.

- **Great Shot Kid, That Was One in a Million!** - The Ultimate
- **Now, Young Skywalker - You Will Die** - Devastating
- **The Force Is Strong in This One** - Powerful in the Right Hands
- **You've Failed Me for the Last Time, Commander** - Ultimately Unsatisfying
- **Meesa Called Jar-Jar Binks** - As Effective as Beckham on Mastermind

### WEAPON: 'Cheese Cutter'

**GAME:** Chan Chan

**THE GAME**

Obscure and utterly mad old-skool platfromer only ever released in Japan. Take control of two Japanese comedians investigating a kidnapping, and traverse various Mano-style levels. Pass up walls, bounce around in rubber bins, go into public toilets and try on your Gash-a girl and vampire outfits - it's all good.

**THE WEAPON**

By far the best (and most amusing) method of attack at your disposal is the ability to fart. Yes, it's not big, it's not clever, and your mum certainly won't approve, but hey, we all know toilet humour rules. The perpetual gurgle and stench - the mop-up and post-play laughter that makes this weapon an endearing joy.

**FEEL MY WRATH**

If your sides don't split the first time you see this game in action, then you are a truly cold and sad individual. Or mature, which is just as bad. Gloriously launching food puff into the faces of sea-serpents and pit bulls is pure, unadulterated genius, and the quintessential moment in videogame history.

### WEAPON: 'World's Most Interesting Bomb'

**GAME:** MDK2

**THE GAME**

Taking control of three different, unassuming characters, you must neutralise the threat of an alien invasion through wit, cunning and an assortment of cool weaponry. MDK2 is a tiring and engaging game, with sprightly, atmospheric levels and a tough learning curve.

**THE WEAPON**

In a moment of genius, the makers created the ultimate implement of iniquity, turning the concept of the timebomb on its head and coming up with the World's Most Interesting Bomb. The first time you use this you'll be astounded by its sheer brilliance.

**FEEL MY WRATH**

Once collected, simply place the bomb in a suitably tactical position, and run for cover. Then watch in awe as the alien rush to the bomb like Gazo to the pie shop, unable to control their curiosity. Koo-booom! - their dumb asses are promptly splattered on the walls.

### WEAPON: 'The Hookshot'

**GAME:** Ocarina of Time

**THE GAME**

Ocarina is a thing of beauty, abundant with flashes of genius - your life isn't complete until you've experienced this masterpiece. A game you must play.

**THE WEAPON**

By far the coolest is the Hookshot. Functioning both as a weapon and an important navigational device, it's essentially an extendable hook which you can shoot at walls and enemies.

**FEEL MY WRATH**

The large reach of the hookshot makes destroying enemies from afar an very satisfying experience. You can also fire at distant objects, pulling Link across huge ravines.

### WEAPON: 'Rocket Launcher'

**GAME:** Quake 1/2/3

**THE GAME**

Quake was the game that took up the bright torch of first-person brilliance from Doom, then took it to the next level, revolutionising the genre with its true 3D environments.

**THE WEAPON**

Used just as a weapon, the rocket launcher is one mean piece of kit, causing mega-satisfying damage to everything in its path. The real genius, rocket-jumping, came about by a happy accident, however, as a result of the splash damage from exploding rockets.

**FEEL MY WRATH**

The spread of explosion around a blast, and cunning gamers turning this into a kind of super-jump, adding a whole new tactical level to the game. Only the super-skilled will deliberately self-inflict damage to take shortcuts around enemies.

### WEAPON: 'The Redeemer'

**GAME:** Unreal Tournament

**THE GAME**

These days, the discerning, hardcore first-person fan is either a Quake 3 junkie, or a zealous Unreal Tournament nut. Like all the best games in the genre, UT comes into its own in multiplayer and possesses one of the ultimate weapons.

**THE WEAPON**

The first time someone uses this, other players will be rolling around with laughter at the sheer audacity of such a weapon. It's basically a kind of nuclear rocket launcher - until you use the secondary fire option. Then you become the missile, with the ability to fly around the level, watching your enemies blindly fleecing in terror - if they spot you.

**FEEL MY WRATH**

The flip-side of this out-of-body experience is that it leaves your character totally vulnerable to attack 'til the missile explodes, giving its use an extra edge. The Redeemer also possesses about 20-times the splash damage of ordinary rockets, causing ultimate devastation.

### KICK ASS OR SICK AS?

- **The Importance of this weapon to the Quake series cannot be underestimated and influenced other titles too. Hell, you could even use the same principle to fireball jump in Wheel of Time, while Unreal Tournament's impact on Quake can also be used to gain elevation.**

- **Extra edge. The Redeemer also possesses about 20-times the splash damage of ordinary rockets, causing ultimate devastation.**

- **A truly great weapon, more finely crafted than Lara's chest and utterly brilliant to inflict on your opponents.**
Cross our palms with silver, and see what we predict will be the hottest games, machines, movies and events for players everywhere in 2001.

The game-playing life can be a long and thankless road...
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH (PS2)

Two formats are obviously not enough for EA as the company's PS and NG4 Band Band shooter has PSP, with a PC counterpart, and Xbox and PC versions are due later in the year. The closest thing to GoldenEye on your new next-gen console is Final Fantasy X (PSX).

MOVE: DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

The first big movie of the New Year looks like one of the coolest too. Based on the hit DS2 world (and not on the other cheesy DS game), it stars Jeremy Irons more than Redfield.

CVG on sale February 15

and watch out for highly anticipated RTS square-based fun in Command & Conquer 2 (PC) and the much delayed (and hopefully internet-ready) Harry Potter on DC.

FOOTBALL IS SO PRETTY! (PC

...and watch for first Kung Fu Fighting game on PC.

FOOTBALL IS SO PRETTY! (PC)

...and watch for first Kung Fu Fighting game on PC.
**MAY**

**E3**
We're off to steamy LA once again for E3 2001, to cram ourselves into an overcrowded, but thankfully air-conditioned, hall full of sweaty games-mad journos from across the globe. We'll be bringing you all the freshest news on everything that's big in gaming. Last year's show brought LA to a standstill.

**THE BOUNCER (PS2)**
This hard-hitting action adventure from Square is still shrouded in mystery and we hope it's more of a *Final Fantasy* than a *Driving Emotion* Type-S. Incredible graphics will lick your eyeballs and an adult story should pack the required punch.

**SILENT HILL 2**
With both *Shadowman 2* and *Silent Hill 2* in development for PS2, players looking for console chills will be well pleased. *Silent Hill 2* will offer skin-crawlingly spooky moments and beautiful graphics with a hand-drawn look. Creepy stuff.

**CVG on sale May 17**
...and watch out for: arcade action in *Daytona USA 2001 (DC)* and digging delights in *Power Digger* (PS).

**JUNE**

**OUT TRIGGER (DC)**
A multiplayer action frenzy in the ever popular *Quake III* style, with four-player split-screen carnage and single player challenges. It'll be going head-to-head against *Unreal Tournament* on PS2, but looks as if it will deliver.

**MOVIE: TOMB RAIDER**
Everyone's favourite cyber-bebe gets real. Spend a summer evening with Lara Croft and Angelina Jolie with the Tomb Raider movie. You get two babes wrapped up in one glossy action movie package. This unofficial pic was taken on the set of the movie.

**18 WHEELER (DC)**
Dreamcast will continue to deliver original, offbeat titles and *18 Wheeler* looks like a trucker's dream. Kinda like Crazy Taxi with massive tankers and online play is promised too.

**CVG on sale June 14**
...and watch out for: Katana-based carnage in *Seven Blades (PS2)*, *Hidden & Dangerous 2 (PC)*, and genre-melding RPG/God sim *Dark Cloud (PS2)*.

**JULY**

**FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN**
If you've seen the trailers already, you'll know the *FF* movie WILL be special. Mind-blowing animation and an A-list Hollywood cast, along with a unique *FF* story. Bound to be the hottest ticket this summer.

**GAME BOY ADVANCE (US/EUROPE)**
If Nintendo's projected release schedule is to be believed, we'll get GBA at the same time as our buddies across the Atlantic. Buy it with *MKA* and you won't let your new handheld leave your palms ever again.

**GAMECUBE (JAPAN)**
We want to believe GAMECUBE will make its tentative July launch in Japan. Imagine Manic, Link and Pikachu drizzled with delicious 129-bit sauce and try to stop yourself drooling with excitement. Send a prayer to the gaming gods to make sure it actually happens.

**CVG on sale July 17**
...and watch out for: Sony's marvellous marsupial muppet Crash Bandicoot in his first next-gen adventure (PS2), and a fully 3D online world in *Ultima World Online* (PC).
OCTOBER

GAMECUBE (US)

Another deadly release date for US gamers... looking forward to the GameCube release on a UK date likely to be in early 2002. The European launch is expected to be January 2002.

THE SIX FOOTBALL (PS2)

Pokémon Stadium 2

The Nintendo-licensed PlayStation hockey series will make its PS2 debut on October 17. The game will feature all the familiar characters and new ones as well. Look out for our review of this eagerly awaited title.

SEPTEMBER

E3 2001

There's a new venue for the world's biggest games expo! E3 will be held in New Orleans this year, just in time for the US release of GameCube. We're hoping to bring you all the latest news and previews from the show.

MGS 2 (JAPAN)

Unquestionably the most anticipated videogame of all time, Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty is set to release in Japan this October. We're excited to see how it will compare to the original hit.

AUGUST

CONKERS BOLD BUNNY DAY (NGC)

In development for ages, this new adventure is finally ready. The quirky Conkers returns for another thrilling adventure.

SIN AND PUNISHMENT (NGC)

Released on August 16, Sin and Punishment is one of the most highly anticipated releases of the year. Experience intense action and thrilling gameplay.

CVG on sale September 14

SPACEXWORLD 2001

Nintendo's own spin-off to the popular hit game! SPACEXWORLD 2 offers even more excitement and adventure. Get ready for the ultimate gaming experience.

CVG on sale October 17

And watch out for UK releases! The UK release date for GameCube games is October 17.

CVG on sale August 16

And watch out for new games! New releases include Metroid Prime, a thrilling adventure in the world of Metroid.
FINAL FANTASY XI (P22)

January 2002

MGS 2 (EUROPE)

December

DINOSAUR PLANET (NGC/GAMECUBE)

November

XBOX (US)

THE GETAWAY (PS2)

HARRY POTTER and the Philosopher's Stone

No text content was extracted for this page.
150 cars
15 tracks
6 players

CAN YOU HANDLE IT?

UNDERNEATH THE BONNET OF GRAN TURISMO 3, ONLY IN THE PLAYER
YOUR TIPS

If you're a gaming guru with loads of top tips and crafty cheats rattling around your head, how's about sharing them with your fellow gamers and earning yourself ten quid at the same time? Send us what you've got to the usual address.

TIP OF THE MONTH

METROPOLIS STREET RACER
If your killer tip is the best we get for that month, we'll buy you a free game in return. This month Lenny Gambles of Clayton gets a copy of Grand Theft Auto 2 for sending us this super speedy cheat.
EASY KUDOS: When racing time trial hot laps, set yourself an easily achievable time target for your first lap, then gamble a Joker on the result. Race the first lap carefully within the time limit you set, then race the rest of the laps as carelessly as you want, throwing in lots of spins and handbrake turns. Then sit back and lap up loads of extra Kudos points.
SPEED START: Keep your nerves ticking over as just under 2000. The instant you hear "Go!", accelerate as quickly as possible. Do it right and you should get a head start over everyone else, avoiding any wheel spin and those unsightly skid marks.

DREAMCAST

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING:
ROUND 2
What could be better than a game that lets you punch Michael Jackson in the face? Thanks to Chris Mallinson from Redcar for sending in these funky codes that make this boxers boxing game even more tricky.
All of the codes should be entered at the Character Select Screen. You should hear a bell ringing to confirm the cheat.

PAT MODE: Right, Right, Up, Down, R Trigger, R Trigger, L Trigger
SKINNY MODE: Right, Right, Up, Down, R Trigger, L Trigger
CRAZY COSTUMES: To add a sense of occasion to the game, remove your copy from the Dreamcast and turn on the emu console. Then, go to the Settings menu and change the date to one of the special occasion dates listed below. Once this is done, place the game back in your Dreamcast and start playing. Now sit back and enjoy as the boxers get all festive!

PLAYSTATION 2

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT
Thanks to Simon Rees from Wolverhampton for this list of characters to unlock with your fighting skills as well as some other cracking extras. This'll require some real dedication.

SIX SNOWBOARDING
Cheers to Paul Seaton in Skeffington for sending us these top cheats for one of the best snowboarder's ever. All cheats are activated from the Options menu.
UNLOCK EVERYTHING: Press Down, Left, Up, Right, X, Circle, Triangle, Square to unlock all outfits, tracks, boards and boardsiders.
UNLOCK RUNNING MAN CHEAT: Press Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Square, Triangle, Circle, Cross.
VIEW ALL RACE HINTS: Hold down L1, L2, R1 and R2 at the same time. Then press Circle, X, Circle, X, Circle, X. To deactivate the cheat enter the code again in the options menu.

SILENT SCOPE
Sam Hewish from Basingstoke must be crazy! He's sent us a cheat to make Silent Scope more difficult!
EXPERT CHALLENGE: To play the game without the aid of arrows or aiming rings, press the trigger button when selecting either Training or Arcade modes. Whilst holding down the trigger, press Start four times. If you've entered the code correctly, you should hear another gunshot as confirmation.
NIGHT VISION CHALLENGE: Fancy a shot in the dark? To play at night using just your night vision rifle scope, follow the same instructions for the Expert challenge but press Start five times instead of four.
**PC CD-ROM**

**Tony Hawk rules and now he's made it to PC. Chad Sherwood from Tottenham sent us these handy codes:**

- **Cheat** Please: To enable Cheats, bring the console up again by pressing Tab and enter the codes below.

**CODE** | **WHAT YOU GET**
--- | ---
God God Mode
Ghost Walk Disables Ghost cheat

**SUMMON ITEMS:** Write Summon at the console screen and then enter a word from the following list for the item you want to summon. **ITEMS:** VikingShortSword, RomanSword, VikingBroadSword, DwarfWorkSword, DwarfBattleSword, HandAxe, GoblinAxe, VikingAxe, SigurdAxe, DwarfBattleAxe, RustyMace, GoblinBoneClub.

**ALL STATS AT 10:** Space, V. B. C, V, Up, Down. ALWAYS FULL SPECIAL: Space, V, B, Up, Left, V, C. 25% MORE SPEED: Down, C, V, Right, Up, B, Down, C, V, Right, Up, B. FAT RIPPER: Space, Space, Space, Space, Space, Space, Space, Space, Space, Space. Left. This makes the skater get faster and faster every time you enter the code. THINNER: Same code as above, just substitute Left for C.

**NO ONE LIVES FOREVER**

Stuart Grey digs the groovy music in this psychedelic FPS, but he's stopped swinging his pants long enough to pass on these fab cheats.

To enable the cheats, press T and then enter a code from the list below.

**CODE** | **WHAT YOU GET**
--- | ---
mfmyyourfather God Mode
mpmderitz Replenish Health
mpeureka Replenish Armour
mpcuckickkeycuneedemonkey Full Armour Options
mpwagdolcestar Infinite Ammo
mpmaphole Complete Mission
mpmascarn 3rd Person View
mpmposbud or mpracroboy Snowmobile
mpmilked Quit

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**NINTENDO 64**

**SUPER SMASH BROTHERS**

Jimmy May from Wales has sent us some great codes. **Nice one Jim!**

- **CHANGE OUTFITS:** At Character Select screen, press all four C buttons to change a character's costume.
- **UNLOCK ITEM SWITCH MENU:** Play Vs Mode more than 50 times.

**UNLOCK MUSHROOM KINGDOM:**

Finish with all eight characters.

PLAY AS CAPTAIN FALCON: Finish game in under 20 minutes. When the Captain challenges you, beat him and he'll join the list of playable characters.

PLAY AS LUIGI: Complete Bonus Practice with at least eight characters. Then beat Luigi when he fights you.

PLAY AS NESS: Finish with lives set to 3 on Normal without using continues.

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**GAME BOY COLOR**

**YODA STORIES**

We all know that Yoda is a wise and shrivelled old thing. Malcolm Church from Lifracomb is equally wise but hopefully less shrivelled. Thanks for these level codes, Malcolm.

**LEVEL** | **CODE**
--- | ---
2 | XKJ
3 | GPJ
4 | TVM
5 | WB
6 | ZVW
7 | QTC
8 | TGR
9 | VDP
10 | BFG
11 | STJ
12 | FJ
13 | BLP
14 | YSE
15 | CSE

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**METAL GEAR SOLID**

Clive Jones of Swansea has these stealthastic tips.

**Nice one Clive.**

- **STAGE SELECT:** Win in Easy Mode to unlock a Stage Select Mode with additional tasks.
- **SOUND MODE:** Finish the VR Missions in each mode to unlock this mode.
MASTERCCLASS

MAKE ME THE BOSS OF FINAL FANTASY IX

How to vanquish every boss and much, much more

Imagine a gameworld so vast in size, so epic in scope, that it really should be sold with its own house and garage. Well, Final Fantasy IX is that game. It’s so massive you’ll probably spend the rest of your life playing it, or at least the rest of 2001. It’s also pretty hard going at times, which is why we’re giving you the lowdown on the best way to survive this truly fantastical journey.

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: MAURA SUTTON

THIS MONTH: Live the fantasy

When you embark upon your quest beware: the road to success is littered with pitfalls of unutterable horror. Use our in-depth player’s guide to learn its hidden secrets, develop your knowledge of the best characters for your party, and prepare yourself for the toughest bosses in the game. We’re talking four discs worth of RPG genius here - let’s get started!
There are nine playable characters in *Final Fantasy IX*. You'll learn to love them all.

**ZIDANE TRIBAL:** The main hero of the story. A tail-wagging skirt chaser with a heart of pure gold.

Zidane is your strongest party member. His most powerful weapon is Ultima Weapon, which is obtained by using Dead Pepper at the Shimmering Island site. For everyday use, get the Ogre from the Syth shops at Lindblum and Black Mage Village and the Angel Bless from the Syth shops at Black Mage Village, Treno and Daguerreo.

Zidane is a thief by trade and his skills reflect this. Thievery is a powerful special attack, whilst Mug damages the enemy at the same time as nicking stuff. Use his Steal command on every enemy you come across to get rare weapons, potions and power-ups. Flea is essential for a fast exit when your party is suffering losses.

You'll want Zidane to Trance so that you can access his special Dyne Skills. Solution 9 is one of the best, taking 9999 hit points off the enemy. It uses a whopping 48 MP, but it's worth it. If you're short on MP, Shift Break causes damage to a group of enemies for 16 MP whilst Free Energy costs 10 MP and focuses power on one enemy.

**VIVI ORRIENN:** Looks like a Jesus doing the pantomime season. Small and shy with amazing sorcery skills.

Vivi may be low on physical power; but his Mage's staves are the source of amazingly strong spells. Make sure he aquires as many staves as possible, including the High Mage Staff from the Black Mage Village Shop and the Oak Staff, which can be purchased in the Condé Petie, Black Mage Village, Treno and Alexandire shops. Vivi's ultimate Staff is the Mace of Zeus, which can be found in Memoria.

Much of the black magic practised by little Vivi will be familiar to *Final Fantasy* fans from previous games. He gets to dabble in everything from Fire and Bio to Doomsday and Thundaga. Water and Auto-Float are particularly useful when dealing with the more powerful enemies at the end of the game, whilst Auto-Potion is absolutely essential for survival.

Train Vivi up as much as possible as he can frequently win battles on his own when all of his fellow party members have been KO'd. In his Trance state he gets to cast double magic, which is a perfect way to deal a lethal double whammy to a troublesome boss. As most of Vivi's power comes from magic, he's not a good character to take along on Kuja's mission to the magic resistant kingdom of Geofront.

**PRINCESS GARNET AKA 'DAGGER':** Rebels against her evil Mum and falls for Zidane in a big way.

Her weapon of choice is a rod or racket she uses to cast spells. The Mythril Racket, a good all-rounder, can be bought at shops in Bran Bal and Daguerreo. Best is the Tiger Racket, which can be obtained by using Dead Pepper on the porch at Quaer's house in Qua's Marsh.

Dagger can be trained to be a very powerful healer. Keep her in your party so she can use healing skills such as Curaga and Life. Scan is another important spell as it informs you of the enemy's total Hit Points as well as their weaknesses - that can then be targeted.

She can summon Eidolons (similar to *FFVIII's* GE's) by equipping a corresponding gemstone in the Add On slot. Gemstones can be found, stolen, won in battle or bought. Make sure you buy Dark Matter at the auction in Treno so that Dagger can summon Odin.
MASTERCLASS

ADELBERT STEINER: A ruddy old Knight who never stops frowning. Waits his sword with skill and pride.

The captain of Queen Brahne's Knights of Pluto, he's a skilled swordsman. The Mythril Sword is a decent mid-range weapon and can be bought at the shop in Treno. Steiner's dream weapon is Excalibur 2, which can only be seen by reaching Memoria Terrace within twelve hours of gameplay. Phew!

His Sword Arts skills enable him to cast the same powerful spells as Evit, making him a strong all-round party member. Equip him with different kinds of armor and headgear so that he can learn as many spells as possible. Steiner's Shock Attack may cost a hefty 46 MP, but it will help you win many tight boss battles.

In Trance state the potency of Steiner's physical attack is increased. Exploit this by using physical attacks during his Trance and using the most powerful sword available. Keep Steiner well levelled up throughout the game or you'll find it almost impossible to survive when he undertakes a tough adventure with Beatrix in Alexandria.

AMARANT CORAL: A mean, moody and magnificent bounty hunter. His hands are deadly weapons.

Amarant uses claws and knuckles to shred the enemy. His ultimate weapon is the Rune Claw, found on the way to the final boss battles in Memoria. If you haven't managed to reach Memoria yet, the Mythril Claws found in the Desert Palace will give Amarant plenty of punching power. Also make sure you get the one-hit kill Avenger Claws at shops in Bran Dol and Daguerro or steal them from the Earth Guardian.

Amarant is one of our favourite characters and we suggest you include him in the majority of your parties, simply because of his incredible attacking prowess. When Amarant reaches L40 plus, his claw attacks will frequently rip over 4000HPs off the enemy. Train that tiger up and watch him purr: Amarant works well with the equally combat-tastic Zidane and is an essential choice for Kuja's Oelivert quest where the use of magic is prohibited.

He's rude and sullen but no-one with such lovely red hair can be all bad, and luckily Amarant has a secret soft, white underbelly. As well as boasting immense physical power, he can also be used as a healer by virtue of his Monk's Fair skills. Chakra should be equipped as soon as possible as it restores one character's HP and MP. Aura is another favourite as it bestows Auto-Life and Regen on a member of the party.

FREYA CRESCE: A distinguished Dragon Knight. Freya eternally pines for lost love Lord Fenrir. Sad.

Freyas a lean, mean, fighting machine. Her weapons of choice are spears and lances. Best is the Dragon's Hair Spear which is obtained by using Bead Pepper on the cracked mountains near Oelivert.

Freyas Dragon Knight abilities are a mix of attacking and healing skills. Reis's Wind is a life-saving skill that casts Auto-Regen on every party member. White Draw will restore all MP in a party.

Freyas basic attack isn't very powerful, but her weapons are more effective from a height via her Jump command. In a Jump attack, Freya is protected from all enemy attacks and status changes.
Eiko Carol: Cute, blue-haired lonely orphan with an embarrassingly obvious crush on Zidane.

As with the similarly gifted Dagger, Eiko is a Summoner with white magic skills. Her physical strength is negligible and her collection of flutes and rattets are best used for summoning Eidolons and casting magic, rather than bashing the enemy. She can share rattets with Dagger, and her ultimate weapon is the Angel Flute, found in Memoria.

Due to her inexperience, Eiko's only able to Summon four Eidolons (much fewer than Dagger, but Dagger is unable to summon any of Eiko's Eidolons). Once Eiko's Summoning Powers are unlocked, she should be trained up on all four as they are all worth summoning during the latter stage boss battles.

Guina: Long-tongued and literally cross-eyed, this greedy gourmand eats its belly first.

Guina has the most deadly gut in the world and requires a huge fork to keep that big belly permanently stuffed. The Ylisse's a good basic weapon for Guina to use and can be found in the Desert Palace. Guina's ultimate weapon is the Dragon's Hair, which is also used by Freya. Nobody's quite sure exactly what sex Guina is under that masssive apron. So he/she's hard to insult -- is he/she a big fat momma or a bloated Mr. Blobby? The choice is yours.

This strange character may look and behave like a complete joke but never underestimate the power of the ridiculous. Guina can obtain some awesome Blue Magic powers by eating it's foe in battle. Think of it as being a little like trapping a Pokemon. During a battle, wait until the enemy is suitably weakened and then try using Guina's Eat command. If it's successful, the oddball Guina will absorb the enemy's magic power.

Beatrix: A beautiful yet ruthless General who plays with her hair and flirts with Steiner. What a babe!

Beatrix isn't featured in the main party and she starts off on the side of the enemy, but you get to control her several times in the game and she's a whole lot of fun to play with. Just ask Steiner.

When you get control of Beatrix, she's already at L20 with all abilities learned. Make sure you don't equip her with any rare pieces, as you won't get them back when you lose control of her.

You don't need to use any other attack than her awesome Clinhazard. It wipes out even the strongest of enemies and leaves you wishing that Beatrix was always in your party.

The most useful of all is the Phoenix Eidolon, which renews all party members from KO at the same time as causing fire damage on the enemy. Equip the Phoenix Pinion in the Add-On slot to learn it. The more Phoenix Pinions that are stocked in your inventory, the stronger the attack, so collect as many of them as you can.
MASTERCLASS

BOSS BATTLES

Use our awesome monster-mashing, wizard-bashing guide to be the boss of the bosses

1. **BLACK WALTZ NO 1/SEALION**
   - **LOCATION:** ICE FOREST
   - **HP:** 229/472
   - **AP:** 5
   - **WEAKNESS:** Fire, Ice
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Ignore Sealion and concentrate on the Mage. Basic physical attacks should take care of the Mage and his funky pet.

2. **BLACK WALTZ NO 2**
   - **LOCATION:** VILLAGE OF MALI
   - **HP:** 1,030
   - **AP:** 5
   - **WEAKNESS:** Wind
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Stick to physical attacks from Steiner and Zidane, as the Mage will fire your own magic back at you.

3. **BLACK WALTZ NO 3**
   - **LOCATION:** CARGO AIRSHIP
   - **HP:** 1,128
   - **AP:** None
   - **WEAKNESS:** Wind
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** A very easy fight as, unlike his mates, he has no special tricks, so you can use magic as much as you like.

4. **GIZAMALUKA**
   - **LOCATION:** GIZAMALUKA'S GROTTO
   - **HP:** 3,175
   - **AP:** 5
   - **WEAKNESS:** Thunder, Wind
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Use Zidane's Soul Blade to inflict blindness on Giza and stop his deadly Crash attack.

5. **BEATRIX**
   - **LOCATION:** BURMECIA
   - **HP:** 3,630
   - **AP:** Unknown
   - **WEAKNESS:** None
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Keep your HP levels high, as she'll end the battle with Stock Break, which reduces all party members to 1HP each.

6. **BLACK WALTZ No 3**
   - **LOCATION:** CABLE CAR
   - **HP:** 1,292
   - **AP:** 5
   - **WEAKNESS:** None
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Equip Dagger with Multina Racket to beat this already ailing Black Mage into absolute submission.

7. **RALURANA**
   - **LOCATION:** GARGAN ROAD
   - **HP:** 2,200
   - **AP:** None
   - **WEAKNESS:** None
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Not a terribly difficult boss, just let Steiner slash away with his sword and heal with Dagger's Cure magic.

8. **ANTLION**
   - **LOCATION:** CLEYRA
   - **HP:** 3,938
   - **AP:** 5
   - **WEAKNESS:** Ice
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Use Thundaga to finish quickly. Beware Sandstorm attack, it reduces all HP to 1 or 2. Equip Desert Boots to reduce damage.

9. **BEATRIX**
   - **LOCATION:** CLEYRA
   - **HP:** 4,736
   - **AP:** None
   - **WEAKNESS:** None
   - **BATTLE TACTICS:** Use Vivi's Slow magic and Freya's jump. Once again, she'll use Stock Break to reduce your party to 1 HP before fleeing.
**10. Zorn and Thorn**
HP: Zorn - 4,896, Thorn - 2,984
AP: None
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: They swap magic powers, so concentrate attacks on the twin that has just received the magic to stop it from casting.

**11. Beatriss**
HP: 5,709
AP: None
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: She's learned some new tricks, which cause major damage, so equip Steiner with the Ice Brand to take her out quickly.

**12. Raou Fimago**
HP: 3,352
AP: 7
WEAKNESS: Ice
BATTLE TACTICS: When the snake curls up, it feeds off physical attacks and repays them tenfold. When its guard's open, slash away.

**13. Lani**
HP: 5,708
AP: None
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: An easy boss with few tricks. Hit her with all you get and take care to heal Bugger, as Lani will continually target her.

**14. Soul Cage**
HP: 5,700
AP: 9
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: Trickly, as it likes to cast LS Death. Use Carbuncle to protect and keep pounding away with Bio until the tree wilts.

**15. Scarlet Hair**
HP: 6,900
AP: 5
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: If Zidane Trances, use Free Energy. Only attack the dancing guy when he's close. When he's far away, use healing spells.

**16. Arrown**
HP: 20,002
AP: 11
WEAKNESS: Wind
BATTLE TACTICS: It has powerful Boomerang and Whirlwind attacks. No magic so use Freya's Reis's Wind and Amaran's throwing power.

**17. Valia Pira**
HP: 12,119
AP: 11
WEAKNESS: Wind
BATTLE TACTICS: Pick up all the Bloodstones in the Palace or their power will be used on you. Water, Bio and Leviathan should finish it.

**18. Meltigemini**
HP: 24,348
AP: 11
WEAKNESS: Fire, Holy
BATTLE TACTICS: Zorn and Thorn combined! Use Vaccine to dispel their Virus curse, then cast Mimi and crush 'em with a critical blow.
Taharka
HP: 29,186
AP: 11
WEAKNESS: Fire, Wind
BATTLE TACTICS: You'll find Bahamut and Bio to be a killer here. If you're lucky, the BOSS will drop the rare Ramuh card when it dies.

Earth Guardian
HP: 20,756
AP: 11
WEAKNESS: Wind, Holy
BATTLE TACTICS: Have Quina cast Might Guard whilst Zidane keeps casting Thievery and Soul Blade. If Zidane trances, cast Grand Lethal.

Silver Dragon
HP: 24,095
AP: 13
WEAKNESS: Ice, Wind
BATTLE TACTICS: Madeen and Bahamut should be summoned by Eiko and Dagger, along with physical attacks from Zidane and Amarant.

Garland
HP: 40,728
AP: None
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: Eiko should cast Carbuncle to reflect magic back. Zidane and Amarant should be physically strong enough to finish him.

Kiija
HP: 42,382
AP: None
WEAKNESS: None
BATTLE TACTICS: Summoning is the key, with Madeen, Carbuncle and Bahamut causing Kiija to cast Ultima and bring about total meltdown.

Nova Dragon
HP: 54,940
AP: 13
WEAKNESS: Ice, Wind
BATTLE TACTICS: Physical attacks and Thunderdaga work. Be sure you have Vivi, as his HP is replenished by the boss's Tidal Wave attack.

Maluris
HP: 50,497
AP: 10
WEAKNESS: Ice
BATTLE TACTICS: Stay physical or it'll reflect magic. If hit with Mustard Bomb, move to the next member (press Triangle) to avoid instant death.

Tiamat
HP: 50,494
AP: 10
WEAKNESS: Ice
BATTLE TACTICS: Very tricky. Stand firm and counteract with Water, Meteor and Boosted Frenzy. Random Odin may work, if you're lucky.

Kraken
HP: 59,496
AP: 10
WEAKNESS: Thunder
BATTLE TACTICS: Go for the tentacles first and you shouldn't have a problem. If your party get frozen, use a small Fire attack on them.
HINTS AND SECRETS

There are zillions of hints and secrets about FFX. Here are a few of the coolest.

CHOCOBO FOREST 1

They're back! The first FFX Chocobo Forest can be found just North of Lindblum's Serpents Gate. Visit when you're on your way to Gizaouka's Crotto. When you're inside the forest, the Moogle will talk to you and you can get Chocobo tracks on the world map, use Spsalp Greens to call your Chocobo. You can leave him parked when you like and he won't run away. Riding a Chocobo is a good way of escaping unnecessary random battles on the world map.

CHOCOBO FOREST 2

When you leave you can catch your Chocobo outside the forest. He'll be yours for the rest of the game. Whenever you see Chocobo tracks on the world map, use Spsalp Greens to call your Chocobo. You can leave him parked when you like and he won't run away. Riding a Chocobo is a good way of escaping unnecessary random battles on the world map.

MOOGLES

Moogles aren't just cute and useful for saving your game. They also give you lots of hints and cryptic tips about secrets in the game. When one of the cute little guys asks you to take a message to one of the Moogles' friends, always make sure you agree to the quest because the letters they often contain vital information. The notes you pass on are often funny too. "Hey, dude!"

CARD GAME

As with Final Fantasy VIII, there are numerous opportunities for you to collect rare cards as you make your way through the game. For example, when you see Zidane shaking his head at the 'I' signs in Memoria, press Square and he'll be able to play a card game with a ghost. If he wins, he will get special rare cards that are only available this way.

COLLECTING

When you're tired of the main game you can always take part in one of the collecting quests. Visit the grand lady in Treno and collect Zodiac signs for her and she'll give you a reward. Or you can visit the old guy in Bali Village who collects rare coffee beans. Talk about the rare model on his wall and he'll give it to you. Take some rare beans to him and he'll reward you again.
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STAR LETTER

WIGGIN’ OUT

Holy guacamole! My heartthrobs, Daphne and Celeste! In CVG! Reading issue 229 as I usually do (backwards), I figured you guys had clearly used D&G cut-outs for your Space Channel 5 story. But when I got to page three, there they were again with Dan leering away between them! And here's me desperate to see them in the flesh. How unfair! Seeing how you're all wearing disco wigs in that picture, I figured that's how you lured them into your offices. Daphne and Celeste in wig fetish shocker! Working on that theory, I bought myself a disco wig and have been wearing it while playing Space Channel 5 for the past two days. And D&C still haven't come knocking at my door. Where did I go wrong?

John Durrell, Liverpool

You liar! You know for a fact that we cornered the entire world market in bad afro wigs for that photoshoot, so you can't possibly have bought and worn one for two whole days. Other than that, you went wrong in one other key area – you're totally barking, pal. A real loop-the-loop, rubber than a squirrel poop, plain insane. The only way we got the lovely Daphne and Celeste into our boudoir was 'cos they love games. Anyway John, we'll send you a copy of Shenmue for Most Outrageous Lie Of The Week. Enjoy.

DISH’N THE DIRT

I can't wait 'til I get a PlayStation 2, but I've noticed reviewers love to play it safe and tell everyone to buy games like Tekken Tag and Ridge Racer 5. I know these are promising games, but we have seen them all before, and I want something a bit more original! Like, Summoner, The Bouncer, Red Faction and Dropship. I'll not give Tomb Raider 5 and Resident Evil 4 a go. If they keep on disappointing sequels, is it worth dishing out £30?

Arron Wesley, via email

Feir point, and one we've made ourselves a few times. Which is why our PS2 launch games reviews didn't score TT and RAS highest. So nyer!

STICKING POINT

I'm a proud owner of O'Leary Manager 2000 on the Game Boy and one day my friend noticed that if you pull off the sticker on the cartridge it reveals another sticker saying Total Manager 2000. Weird, eh?

Callum, via email

IT'S EVOL

I'm a loving owner of the greatest footie game ever – ISL Evolution. But I don't feel it's perfect. When I'm playing multiplayer with my mates I find that sometimes my players start to run slower or, just as I'm about to tackle one of their players, it changes to another player. These things usually result in a goal being scored! Do you ever find this? My mates all take the piss and say I'm a bad loser but I'm not! Have Konami put in a handicap or something 'cos I swear there is. Does anyone else think this? Please say I'm not the only one.

Bazza, Leeds

Feir not. Yes, you do get slowdown in four-player, particularly if you've zoomed the camera angle right out. As for the tackling issue, it sounds like you're playing co-op with your mates. Yes, the computer can get a little confused when two of you are playing on the same side and it doesn't always select what seems the most sensible player. But this is only if you've got the semi-automatic player select option on. So, when you are in controller setup, switch that option to manual and it should sort you out. So no, you're not a bad loser and it proves that even quality games like Evolution aren't perfect.

PRETTY SOLID, SNAKE

The only really bad thing I have to say about Hideo Kojima is that thanks to him, I will soon have to kiss my girlfriend and social life goodbye. Please can you print my picture of Snake – there's a flyer in it for you if you do.

Lee Andrews, Mitcham

MAKING A POINT

I read your article about Stupid Invaders and I felt that I just had to say that I really love point-and-click adventures. Give me more... pleasease! I'm begging you, if there are more point-and-click adventure games coming up, tell me now!

Ott Kekishev, Estonia

It's OK, there's no need to beg. But as far as we know, there's nothing in the pipeline, so you'll have to savour Stupid Invaders to the full. In the meantime, the debate continues in CVG Towers over whether Monkey Island 4 was better or worse for not being point-and-click...

“My Heartthrobs, Daphne and Celeste! In CVG! In wig fetish shocker!”

John Durrell, Liverpool
"I feel cheated - I have 22 DC games, is it a waste of money?"  Andrew Dixon, London

TAKIN’ THE PSSS2
Will the Pocket Station work on the PS2? I know the Pocket Station was never available in Europe, but Ridge Racer Type 4 supports it. Also, would it work on PS2 games, or only on PS1 games? On another note about the PS2, I live in Ireland and we have none of those stupid pre-order slips! Ha ha! One up on Ireland! Being 13, the only money I get is £3 a week pocket money. I decided to get a Dreamcast with 3 games instead. Come on Sony, you've already lost me, don't go and lose anyone else. Finlay MacAree, Ireland, via email

DREAM HOSPITAL
I am a big fan of your mag and have brought every issue since November 98 but I have a problem. In issue 215 you said Dreamcast is the most powerful console ever, however, now PS2 is the most powerful. I love my DC and bought one the day it came out because you said buy one and you can't go wrong. Now "DC is in trouble" and "PS2 rocks" - you never hear anything good about DC anymore. I feel cheated - I have 22 DC games. Is it a waste of money? Is the DC on life-support? Please help me because I'm worried about it.
Andrew Dixon, London

LESSON LEARNT
I'm a subscriber to your brill mag, but I'm ashamed to say I was conned by another mag on the shelves. Once home, I was shocked to find they'd given me the worst demo and review ever, of the best game ever: Smackdown! 2. Now I know you're the only games mag to get. Your Smackdown! 2 review was the best. All hail the CVG team! Alun Matthews, via email

CREA-NESS NEVER ENDS
This score was made by my brother Paul. It's the highest score I've seen for the game and is higher by more than half that of the highest.

HELP, PLEASE
Subject: joke
What's the hottest part of the sun?... page 3!!
Guy Nicholson, Finsbury Park, London

COULD BE A CONTENDER
I'm sure I'm not the only one angered by the lack of confidence the public seems to have in Nintendo's next-gen console. Okay, the N64 wasn't exactly as successful as Sony's 32-bit machine, but that was no reason to ignore Nintendo completely. My point is, from what I've seen and heard about Nintendo's new box of tricks, it is quite capable of toppling Sony's tower. Give GAMECUBE a chance.
Jack O'Neill, via email

BANG ON
After reading your article "PS2 or DC: The verdict", I was very impressed. Not only did you give Sega's mighty box a higher score, but you told it like it is.
Jonathan Hunter, via email

Larkin' Around
Check out this mystery from the mystical world of gaming. First, here's a pic for you of a screenshot taken from Outcast. Pretty isn't it? Now take a good look at this screenshot from Skies of Arcadia which was in CVG in Issue 229. The similarity is uncanny, don't you think? Can this just be a coincidence?
Peter Larkin, via email

Sound Argument
I'm a deaf hardcore gamer, have been playing games since 1987, and have a vast collection of classic computer and videogames. There are about four-and-a-half million people who are deaf or hard of hearing in UK. I'm very concerned about new generation consoles, because there's a trend of using speech instead of text to follow game plot. I can understand and accept the growing popularity of using speech for a game's plot to allow more realism. I'm also aware of cheaper, powerful new audio technology. But what caused me most concern was an Xbox developer saying: "We are going to introduce a headphne with a microphone where you can speak and order instructions while playing games in the X-Box." I strongly feel that game developer's don't give a damn about the hard of hearing. This isn't a new trend, as they have already demonstrated their attitude. Look at Half-Life, Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain, and the Resident Evil series: these games include speech without a subtitles menu. To summarise my concerns, will games on the next generation of consoles include a subtitles menu? Personally, I very much doubt it because of a perceived lack of demand. Deaf gamers need to lobby hard or we're going to miss out.
John G, Gloucester

We hope some developers read what you've got to say, John, 'cos it's a very fair point. But some more forward thinking developers are still including subtitles options (Shenmue, for example) and hopefully - in time - the games industry will follow the TV broadcasters and include far more features for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Who wrote to Mailbag this Month
Toad, via email; Adrian Bassett, via email; Accident Man, via email; Jay Mc, London; Nicky Adams, via email; Robert Schonau, Skokie-on-Trent; Cheggy (you naughty chappie), via email; Dillon Finn, via email; Stuart Healy, Dublin; Brian O'Regan, Co.Limerick; Leren Mcdonald, via email; Halfeen Hemmings, via email; Marky, Leeds; Mark Woodland, Bishop's Stortford; Bobby Ahern, Dublin; Stephen Barlow, Chorley; Alex Law, James Morgan, London; Sam Davies, Wrexham; Behgas Awd, Egypt; Jan Lewis, Gosport; Mark Williams, Bridgend; Steven Cox, Ellen.

What's the hottest part of the sun?... Page 3!
Guy Nicholson, Finsbury Park, London
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284 - Boom boom boom - Venga Boys
299 - Don't call me baby - Madison Avenue
317 - Genie in a bottle - Christina Aguilera
340 - Livinlaoudaica - Ricky Martin
342 - Mambo No.5 - Lou Bega
346 - Millennium - Robbie Williams
382 - Sweet like chocolate - Shanks & Bigfoot
395 - Thong song - Siego
402 - What a girl want - Christina Aguilera
296 - Crazy - Britney Spears
312 - Flying without wings - Westlife
274 - Baby one more time - Britney Spears
355 - King of my castle - Wamdue Project
397 - Tragedy - Steps
259 - I only kiss when the sun don't shine - Vengaboys

VIP
65 (1355)
673 (1219)
750 (827)

OVERLOAD
282 (845)
289 (1034)
3mad (596)

3smile (587)
488 (455)
529 (731)

PARTY
78 (1222)
824 (1364)
84 (1367)

MyGirl
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WHAT'S IMPORTANT

The Computer and Video Games Five-Star Award is your guarantee of a great game. When you see the logo, it's like having an informed best mate recommend you a game.

78 FINAL FANTASY IX

This really is PSone's final fantasy. FFVIII was great but didn't quite live up to VII's benchmark standards. Will the legendary series now bow out in style from the little grey box?

78

Kuja

"I can't believe you beat Deathguyse..."
How can something be so different and yet so very much the same? You loved Final Fantasy VII and never wanted it to end. You loved Final Fantasy VIII and never wanted it to end. You wanted to live in the world of Squall and Cloud forever. But now you have a new world to live with and in, new people and things to care about, new baddies to hate. In Final Fantasy IX, the dream-weavers at Square have moved forward by taking a step back in time. The last Final Fantasy game on the PlayStation sets new standards by returning to the style of old school FF games, with weird mythological creatures and fairy tale settings. The realms of goodness are more glittering and shimmeringly beautiful than ever before, the dark and evil places are more gothic, sinister and downright creepy. Any gameplay kinks have been ironed out, you can still ride Chocobos and Junctioning has been dumped, thank God. The best Final Fantasy ever? Oh yes, Kupo.

Squall and Rinoa are gone, but you won't miss them because the world of FF IX is populated by some incredible characters. We can't get over the sight and sound of tiny Regent Cid, who got turned into a squalchy Oglopp by his angry wife, and there are plenty of other friendly freaks.
Of course it rocks! What did you expect?

FANTASY IX

DASTARDLY VILLAINS

There may be lots of cute 'n' fluffy characters in FF IX, but there are also some revolting examples of black-hearted evil. As ever, they usually turn up when you least expect it, so make sure you save your game at every opportunity. Be warned, things are never what they seem in Final Fantasy land.

Dastardly Villains:

- Queen Brahne is the evil crown, who becomes obsessed by the pursuit of power. Boo. Hiss.
- The villainous Kujo is a dainty looking bloke, but he's polite! He rides about on a Silver Dragon.
- Zidane is the dastard of all the bad guys. We know this because he's always dressed in black.
- General Brahn is a screech of the side of Queen Brahne, before wailing up and fainting the good guys.
Like all Final Fantasy games, FF IX has a gripping plot with lots of twists and turns. It has to be good to keep your interest going for over 40 hours, but it manages to hook you in by constantly shifting direction. Just when you think you know who the real villain is, someone new comes along and does something even more nasty.

The whole thing kicks off with a night at the theatre in Alexandria when Zidane and his gang pretend to be actors so that they can kidnap the Princess.

When Zidane and friends are attacked by the henchmen of Queen Brahno, they resolve to find out her evil plans. When they see the tranquil town of Cleyra destroyed, they vow to stop her.

Turns out that Brahno is just a small cog in a nasty wheel of treachery. The quest ends in the land of Memoria where our heroes are haunted by memories of tragedies from their past.

“It’s great to know in the new Millennium

Veteran Final Fantasy players will be pleased and not entirely surprised to learn that FF IX has lots of new tricks to flaunt, though some popular elements from the earlier games have also been retained. But even these have been given a make-over to bring them into line with the fresh look and feel of the new characters and locations.

There’s a new card game this time around called Tetra Master. Press Square to challenge people to a game and try to collect the rare cards that are hidden throughout.

Chocobo’s have returned! The first one that you see is cruelly being used as slave labour in Dalis Village. Later on, you find a much happier baby Chocobo being raised in Black Mage Village.

Guardian Forces are back, but now they’re called Eidolons and only Eiko and Daggar can Summon them. Their Summoning animations are shorter than before, but no less stunning.

INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE VITAL EQUIPMENT

Final Fantasy IX is all about knowing how, when and where to equip your party with armour, weapons and potions.

Junctioning is no more. This time around your party members learn skills and abilities by equipping different types of clothing and weapons.

Always use the Synthesis shops to make rare weapons. There’s a secret Synthesis shop to be found in Memoria just after Quina goes swimming.

The key potions you should always keep in stock are Potion, Hi-Potion (Restores HP), Elixir (Restores MP and HP) and Ether (Restores MP).

You should constantly check and update your Abilities screen. The more battles your party wins, the more Abilities will be available to them.
HELP IS AT HAND

Make no mistake, Final Fantasy IX can be quite a complicated game at times. The playing area is huge, the cities are sprawling and full of people and sometimes you get lost and truly stuck. You might feel overwhelmed at first, but every care has been taken to help you on your way without holding your hand too much.

The marshlands are very useful. Visit them to play Quina’s Frog Hunt game as well as asking the Moogle for directions whenever you get lost wandering the world map.

Make sure you talk to everyone you meet in the game. Even the lowest street archie might have something useful to say that will help you progress further or lead you to secrets.

There is no 'Help' screen this time around. Instead, when you're feeling puzzled about your menu screens, just press 'Select' and a Moogle will tell you all you need to know about any object.

you can still trust the name Final Fantasy"

SUB-GAMES A GO-GO

One of the many brilliant aspects of Final Fantasy IX is the strange but nevertheless entertaining sub-games. Some of them pop up when you'd least expect them to, including the very odd game where Regent Cid has to sneak up on a monster to get a key and perform a daring rescue. Barmy.

The Hunting game is fantastic. Race around the different areas of Lindblum trying to catch animals within a time limit. Freya usually beats you to first prize, but it's a great laugh anyway.

Hippo racing is a very underrated sport that has been strangely overlooked in the world of videogames. Until now that is. Take a break from all the drama and join Vivi in racing with a Hippo athlete.

It might look simple but the Alexandria skipping game is the most difficult of all. It's really hard to get the timing right and you risk making a complete prat of yourself, but it's worth a try anyway.

INSTANT PLAYER GUIDE

BATTLE TACTICS

If you want to reach the end in Final Fantasy IX, you'll have to get to grips with the new ATB battle system.

Don't run away from random battles. If you chicken out too many times, you'll never build up enough AP to beat the mega bosses at the end.

When your character's red gauge starts to flash, it means that they are in a Trance state and that new options have been added to their commands.

If Quina is in your party, use the Eat command when you battle an enemy. This way hur/ha will have access to lots of tasty and exotic magic.

If you find yourself embroiled in a tough battle and running low on healing Potion, you can always use some of the rare stones in your item list.
Simply The Best

It's quite a bold statement to say that Final Fantasy IX is the best game in such a popular series, but we've played it solidly from beginning to end and we just can't see how it could be any better. We want to keep playing and never stop. We think we might need a lie down now, or possibly a mild sedative. Dribble.

The new Active Time Event system lets you see what other characters are getting up to. It's like watching loads of mini-cartoons and you can't wait to see what happens next.

It's just so damn funny. We can't remember a Final Fantasy game ever being this hilarious. Characters such as evil Jesters Zorn and Thorn are a right hoot, as are the mad citizens of Conde Petit.

The longevity factor. There are so many sub-quests and secrets as well as special weapons to find, gems to collect and secret bosses to battle.

"The FF series just keeps getting better"

Finally, we're going to treat you to some of the gorgeous FMV footage that will make your tongue lol in anticipation of the forthcoming FF movie. If it looks like this on the PSone, what will it look like on the big screen?!

Get yourself a nice big bib so that you don't leave huge puddles of glistening drool on the living room carpet.

Art for Art's Sake

This sequence involves a battle between an airship that Zidane has taken command of after nicking it from arch villain Kuja. Kuja may be a swine but he keeps his airship nice and shiny. What a guy!

Zidane and friends are amazed when Regent Cid's heavily depleted forces take to the air to help the tail-wagging one in his perilous air-battle. Lose this skirmish and all hope is gone. Crikey

The enemy dragons may look amazing and beautiful when soaring through the skies, but they're on a mission to wipe Zidane and his crew off the face of the planet. Dragon fricassae, anyone?

What We Thought...

If You Like This Try These...

Final Fantasy VII (PS, PC), Final Fantasy VIII (PS, PC), Zelda: Ocarina of Time (N64), Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)

Stunning

We all know a classic game when we see one and FF IX is no exception. Living up to a reputation as a great gaming series is a tough task but SquareSoft rise to it and excel themselves every time. Whilst other gaming franchises continue flogging a long-dead horse into turgid money making mediocrity, Final Fantasy just keep getting better and better. Will it ever end? Hope not.

Emotions in Motion

PS2 may have its fancy Emotion engine, but FF IX manages to convey every emotion under the sun on the plain old PSone. There are plenty of moments here that you will still be talking about in years to come, the same way as you did about the death of Aeris in FF IX. We're not ashamed to admit that we dabbed away a tear once or twice, sucked in our breath and whispered 'Oh My God' on more than one occasion and laughed out loud far too often.

Art Attack

The pre-rendered backgrounds and stupendous FMV sequences are simply amazing. There are stunning cut-scenes sprinkled all the way through the four disc set that draw you further and further into the story and enhance the sense of wonderment. You really do feel like you're taking part in a classy interactive movie.

What Are You Waiting For?

There are some people that hate Role Playing Games and therefore will probably shun all things Final Fantasy, but, as with the Zelda series, the sheer quality of the gaming experience on offer should quell any such preconceptions. Even Quake 3 frog beasts who would rather eat their own puke than talk about wizards, magic and fluffy pink Moogleo's will be stopped dead by the splendours of the worlds of Terra and Gaia. Meanwhile, the rest of us will revel in every minute of the 45 and-then-some hours it takes to complete the game. Even when you've finished, you'd still want to go back and see how many cards or special treasures you can collect and how many new monsters you can discover and beat to a pulp. It's just great to know that in the dark days of the new Millennium you can still trust the name Final Fantasy.

Computer and Video Games
Out there & on the edge...

KERRANG!

LIFE IS LOUD

TO SOME PEOPLE MUSIC IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

Out there every Wednesday.
STARLANCER
Samey but a pretty smooth operator online

The year is 2160. After decades of conflict, the Coalition has finally agreed to sign a peace treaty, signifying an end to years of slaughter. But as the Alliance ships make their way to the signing, the shocking truth is revealed. It was all an elaborate hoax, and cloaked Coalition fighters unleash their firepower into the bewildered Alliance fleet. With this attack, all hope of peace has ended, and citizens of the Alliance must once again fight for their lives. Space blasting action ahoy!

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

Following the devastation of the enemy strike, the Alliance is in dire need of troops. A galaxy-wide appeal for volunteers is issued, and you answer the call, joining the 45th Volunteers Squad of fighter pilots. They didn’t even ask if you know how to fly. Well do you?

The destruction, appeal for manpower and subsequent updates are covered by TV news

The first shipload of new recruits leave their home planet to join the Alliance. Bye Mum!

You take your first steps as an officer. Shame you can’t complain about travelling in the cargo hold

Commander Enriquez briefs you before every mission, giving you a rundown of your objectives
You might as well start to familiarise yourself with the inside of your craft, because you'll be thrown straight into the deep end and as soon as you join. Complete space blaster novices may find it a little complicated at first, but all the functions are accessed via the joystick with relative ease.

Hold down X to view enemies, friends, and objects. Cycle through and lock on automatically.

Press left and right on the D-pad to cycle between the different types of missile available to you.

Up on the D-pad reveals a radar. Enemy craft are displayed in red, while friends are in green.

Choose in-cockpit or third-person view. Newbies will soon get used to the on-screen displays.

As you progress through the game, moving up the ranks, better ships and more powerful weapons will become available to you. There's twelve different types of craft to choose from, and a host of missiles (homing, proximity etc) with which to arm your craft to the teeth.

As a rookie, only the lesser-powered craft are available. This Predator is a good first choice.

This goes for weaponry too, with an early choice of four missiles, including this Screamie. Asaahl.

When you get real good, you can use this cool, cloaking cutie, The Phoenix, in the mission modes.

And you can equip your ship with this kick-ass missile, which even tracks cloaked craft.

Online play is a major feature, and when we tried it, it ran surprisingly smoothly, although it's tough to tell the degree of lag 'cos you're rarely sure how much damage your hits are doing. With a handful of modes including deathmatch and pass-the-bomb, it's fun in the short-term, if a little limited. Bodies well for the DC's online future.

It's dead easy to get going online. You can hop into someone else's game and get fragging...

...or create your own deathmatch, choosing the rules of play, like whether third-party turrets fire.

Frag and chat at the same time. There's no doubt that a DC keyboard is now an essential purchase.

This mode is a game of tag, with whoever's 'it' having a time-bomb attached. Get rid of it, quick!

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

SPACE ODYSSEY
Starlancer oozes the atmosphere of a Hollywood movie and presents a smooth, low-lag online experience. It's not the most tactical multiplayer game ever, but the action is fast and frenetic. The main problem is, due to the nature of the onboard display, you spend most of your time firing at targeting-circles rather than actual ships, and no amount of flashy presentation can mask the feeling of non-involvement this join-the-dots style gameplay brings.

LANCING THE STAR
This really does undermine the sense of involving realism achieved elsewhere, and at times the game can sink into mindless blasting. What's more, missions are extremely samey. The space environment looks impressive but doesn't facilitate varied backdrops. Screens full of different-looking enemy craft would make up for this, but due to the problem outlined above, you don't really get to see enough of them. You will tire of Starlancer's repetition fairly quickly in one-player, but there are still thrills to be had online - it's just a pity there isn't more variety.

Again, as with one-player, once the novelty wears off, so will the appeal.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST DC GAME IN THE UK TO INCLUDE ONLINE PLAY?
A/ Moo-Moo Sprocket
B/ Boo-Hoo Stop It
C/ Chu-Chu Rocket

COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

ISSUE 231
AMERICAN McGEE’S ALICE
It’s one hell of a sick and twisted fairy tale

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
The plot of this truly weird adventure game kicks off where the classic Lewis Carroll novel ends. Alice has managed to escape from Wonderland, but now she has to answer a call for help from the wilderness. Personally, we would have ignored said call and run as far away as possible, but bless her blood-spattered apron, Alice wants to be a good citizen and save the day. When she arrives she finds that the helpless denizens of Wonderland are enslaved by the fiendish Queen of Hearts and her well-shuffled pack of Card Guards. Can she manage to free the Wonderland loonies and get her apron dry-cleaned on the way? More importantly, will she manage to stay sane long enough to complete her mission of mercy?

OFF (WITH) IT’S HEAD
The main thing that strikes you about Alice is the incredibly imaginative level design. Once the setting for a mildly strange children’s book, Wonderland is now the province of all manner of hellishly weird creatures and locations. Rarely do you find actual buildings giving you the creeps, but the maniacally rocking Skool house positively oozes malevolence. You don’t want to go on, but you have to. Many of the characters are genuinely disturbing – even the Cheshire Cat (who is supposed to be Alice’s friend) seems to be on the verge of ripping her heart from her chest.

WORTH PLAYING?
Alice is basically just a very glossy and well produced platform game with some incredibly irritating precision leaps. Although it uses the incredible Quake 3 engine, you should expect none of that game’s frenetic combat craziness. Happily, the gore factor is well cranked up as Alice slices baddies in two and removes their heads with slightly disturbing glee. If you’ve got a taste for something weird and twisted, this could be the game for you, but be prepared for lots of frustration.

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: MAURA SUTTON

COST: £29.99
OUT: NOW
MULTIPLAYER: NO

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The weapons of today hold no fear for future soldiers. Machine-guns and missiles mean nothing. Rust, on the other hand, is going to be what wins and loses wars in the future if games like Gungniffon Blaze are anything to go by. Forget camouflage, body armour and bags full of supplies. We’re talking towering mechs, stomping on everything that gets in the way, unleashing hell on earth from gun pods if anything dares to have a pop.

GUNGRIFFON

BLAZE

Heavy metal thunder sounds a bit hollow

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: LES ELLIS

GOT A TIN OPENER?

Sticks and stones may break your bones but you’ll need a nuclear missile or a giant tin opener to harm these big boys if you’re unlucky enough to come across them somewhere on the battlefield. Mech games were few and far between on PSOne, so next-gen mech-heads should lap this up.

The desert levels: you find this Mech equivalent of an elephant coming at ya. Don’t laugh at the trunk, that’s a rocket launching gun.

These huge Sentry Mechs guard most bases and will sacrifice everything to stop you attacking the buildings. Down boy.

These Spider Mechs may not be the toughest in the pack, but they can outrun and out-maneuver you with ease. Arachnophobia alert!
There's no time to admire the immaculately mown fields (who cuts all the grass around here anyway?) when you're taking your pet mech for a quiet stomp though the countryside - there are things out there trying to spoil your day.

After clearing a path, you can march right up to a base and let rip

These guys are last - if they get away, the base will be warns

Some mechs get dropped into a warzone to make your life harder

Get tooled up, Mister. Drop that peashooter and get some rockets

Destroying these trucks can give you some vital extra supplies

All these lovely enemy buildings are just asking to be trashed

Missions have a special prize - like the chance to trash a shuttle

Don't leave these on the battlefield. Pick them up for weapons

A Mech comes out of his hangar for an early morning stretch

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

RUST IN PEACE
This is how we want to see the extra power of PS2 used. Forget all that moving-every-blade-of-grass stuff we want big explosions, earth-shattering weapons and earthquake-inducing mechs stomping on everything. And that's exactly what you get. There are vague attempts to introduce strategy when you tool up your mech and use the briefing to plan your battlefield attacks. But you'll find yourself reverting to the chaos theory of attack and just wonder around killing everything.

STOMP ON THE WILD SIDE
The ease of controls and all-out action mean if you don't want to take the shortcut and just fight, there's as much reward as there is for planning it out carefully. The developers haven't scrunched on the size of things to kill. Normal size tanks are nice and chunky but you know that over that hill there could be a massive military base to smash up. Well impressive. And the bigger the target, the bigger and more impressive the explosions. When it boils down to it, that's what this is all about - turning these nice graphics into piles of rusting metal.

WORTH PLAYING?
Gameplay-wise, it's quite limited with the only real variety being if you pick up new weapons in the field to use in later missions. Not a problem if you like your action loud and in-your-face, but probably not suited for those who like to think about what they're doing. They've put in loads of missions and plenty of challenge as a substitute for variety. You get more bang for your buck - that's for sure. The way Gungriffon paints pretty pictures of explosions and heavy metal warfare is enough to keep any carnage freak happy. But while that is fun, you're left feeling it's all a bit hollow and could have had more depth to it.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Mech Warrior
Front Mission 3
Armoured Core 2

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GRANDIA 2

Finally – a thoroughly involving, traditional RPG on DC

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

The battle between good and evil rages on into eternity, and millions of lives are lost as this immense struggle tears the universe apart. Grandia 2 puts you at the heart of one such struggle, as the balance tips from the Lord of Light, Granas, to a nightmarish world under the control of Valmar, Devil of Darkness. As Ryuud, a mercenary Geohound, you are placed in charge of the safety of Elena, a beautiful young girl, and as you take her under your wing a sprawling tale of epic forces and ordinary people opens out before you.

TOP OF THE PLOTS

Such an involving plot requires a core of strong characters around which everything else takes place. The main characters all have distinctive personalities and interact with one another in a convincing and compelling manner throughout. Even fringe figures you encounter are impressively characterised.

The hero of the saga, Ryuud, a Geohound, is a mercenary with a good deal of cynicism, an acerbic wit and some dark secrets.

Skye is Ryuud's winged companion. Older and wiser, Skye prefers to look in from the outside, proffering advice as an observer.

This beautiful and goodie two-shoes girl, Elena, is under the protection of Ryuud, and her endearing relationship with him is a highlight of the story.

When Millenia first appears, her destructive and passionate behaviour intimidates others. But what is her connection with Elena?
FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT!

One of the most outstanding features of the game is the battles. At first they seem a daunting mish-mash of random stats and power gauges, but with a little perseverance, they become a deeply rewarding aspect of the gameplay. Here are the basics...

The standard attack is the combo, which quickly strikes the enemy twice in succession.

If your foe's icon is in the final third of the meter when you critically strike, you'll cancel their attack.

You can learn special attacks, which inflict serious damage but take longer, leaving you vulnerable.

A well-timed use of defense can dramatically reduce your enemy's effectiveness against you.

IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

On top of basic attack and defence moves, once you gain a mana egg, your character is able to learn a wide variety of magic spells. Not only do they look completely awesome when used, but they decimate opponents' health when correctly utilised. Magic can also heal wounds and other ailments.

Millenia joins you and has strong magical powers, such as the ability to engulf the enemy in flames.

And for Millenia's next trick... energy forms around a foe and explodes, sapping their energy.

One of Ryudo's spells sends hundreds of spinning discs into air - as they fall, they batter the enemy.

Magic is not only destructive: you may need to use a healing spell to restore the life of one of your party.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

When travelling in the world of Grandia 2, you will visit some memoriable and outlandish locations, each with their own distinctive feel and design - from sprawling deserts, to vast throbbing cities. Here's a taster of what's in store for you...

Carbo town is where you begin. This peaceful town is thrown into chaos by dark forces.

When you arrive at Liligue, it has already been destroyed and taken over by monsters.

Your first 'boss' fight in Durham Cave. This ugly git's stolen a momento of this kid's mum.

Beneath its prosperous surface, Agor contains some disturbing mysteries for you to unravel.

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

Lodoss War (BG), Zelda, Majora's Mask (NG), Final Fantasy 9 (PS)

YOU'LL LAUGH, YOU'LL CRY

Grandia 2 is a fantastic, traditional role-player; with a story filled with humour, surprise and feeling. Any danger of the game becoming sentimental is dashed by the cynical and mecha Ryudo. A strong story is essential for a successful RPG, and there are enough well-scripted twists and turns to keep you glued to the screen.

YOU PUT A SPELL ON ME

Fans of real-time systems like Zelda may disagree, but the complex, turn-based battle system reaps huge rewards with persistence, and deep and involving tactics are required later in the game. Thankfully, a helpful tutorial mode is included, which eases you into the fighting system. There's a shedload of moves to earn and learn, new spells to cast, and different characters to control during combat. You may prefer to focus on your hero initially while you learn the ropes, and you can automate other members of your party with a range of AI options. But later on you'll need to take more direct control over the whole party.

THE VERDICT

Since its launch, the DC has been starved of a truly epic RPG, and now (along with Lodoss War,) there's two at the same time. Grandia 2 isn't perfect: it's too easy to lose your bearings and spend time backtracking, the confusing compass not being much help. It's also annoying when you're dragged into unwanted battles, which are time-consuming and waste energy and items. Nonetheless, with Grandia 2, the DC has an excellent role-player that will have you hooked until the end - if you have the patience to learn its depths.
A high-speed thrill ride where Buzz is not a toy, he's a real-life Space Ranger!

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS-LEE SKITRELL

Woody and pals had to convince our Buzz that he is not the all-singing, all-flying toy he said he was in Toy Story the movie, but in his latest game he gets the last laugh. Star Command is based on the Disney/Pixar cartoon show that's big in America and coming our way soon, and its comedy action, colourful graphics and wicked humour perfectly capture the brilliance of the show. Catch the space criminals, beat time trials and help your team members in high-speed platform and racing action.

BANG-ON BOSSES

Playing Star Command is strange at first as you can't damage the boss characters while you chase them down. You have to wait until they reach their getaway point at the end of the stage, before you can attack and make your arrest. If the boss reaches the end before you, a timer will appear, counting down until they escape.

This is Torque. He's a six-legged moose who is wanted for terrorism

Gravitina is the big-headed, sensual Mistress of Mass and Attraction

Nasty Nos-42, the vampiric robot, has set bombs you have to defuse
Star Command is an unusual game in that it's part action adventure and part cartoon racer, with loads of other styles of game thrown into the pot for good measure. Most of the time, Buzz is chasing the boss to the end of the level, but there are things to do along the way, like collecting tokens to buy power-ups such as these below...

These springboards are fairly common throughout the whole game and they are mostly cheap to use

These are the coloured tokens that let you buy your treats. They vary in value according to colour

The hover board is another cheap item that's very handy for catching up if you are lagging behind

The jet bike is actually free for Buzz to use and helps you get to the end of the level super fast

Like any good action game, Buzz offers loads of replay value but, unusually, it actually makes you replay stages in order to proceed. Each level requires a certain amount of medals to enter. You win one medal per stage for each of the three modes on offer: chasing the boss, time trial, and collecting all the body parts of Buzz’s pal XR.

The first way to play involves chasing the boss to the getaway spot

The easy-ish Time Trial mode is a good way to stock up on medals

When looking for XR’s body parts you should always follow the arrow

The Star Command cartoon show should be hitting the airwaves just as you read this. Rather than go for the Pixar 3D modelled look of the Toy Story movies, the animated show has a far more traditional look. Buzz looks brilliant as a 2D Space ranger and the assorted buddies in his team, including the Little Green Man, are wicked.

Gravitina doesn't think much to defeat. Ahh, boo hoo

Nasty Nos-4A2's a bragging, flashing freakazoid. Cool!

It won't be long before you know the whole gang

Here Booster updates you on your enemy’s status

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

Crash Bandicoot (PS)
Toy Story 2 (PS, NGPC, DC)

TO INFINITY...

Star Command is aimed at a younger audience but there’s plenty for every action and race fan to enjoy. The graphics are lovely, the action high-speed and the presentation outstanding. It may be a bit easy to see the end, but there are enough tricky moments to keep you busy until you get there. And this was never meant to be a Final Fantasy-style epic.

AND BEYOND!

The simple 'trek through to the end of each level' gameplay sounds dull on paper, but in practice it's brilliant fun. There are often minor tasks to fulfil as you stomp your way across the planets, such as defusing big bombs, and there are plenty of expertly-drawn enemy characters to blast away at. The way you spend your tokens on power-ups is also very different and very cool.

BEST BOSSES!

Buzz's bosses blow other games' monsters clean out of the water. Each has a selection of coloured forcefields and to defeat the boss, you have to collect the same coloured weapon as the forcefield. This adds just a tiny smidgen of strategy to the action, it's challenging and it's dead original. Star Command is a great game that kids will fall in love with and older players will enjoy too. The action is certainly brainless but that doesn't stop it from being brilliant fun. Also coming on Dreamcast!
STREETFIGHTER EX3

2D or not 2D? That's the question

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

Ken's chums were beginning to regret buying him the novelty glow-in-the-dark pants for Xmas. All of your favourite characters rendered in full 3D glory - SF EX3 should have been the best thing ever. As you can see, there are loads of characters to play as and more to unlock. Guile still rocks, too.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Despite being overshadowed by the flashy pump of next-gen fighters like Tekken Tag and DoA2, the 2D Street Fighter series, having been tweaked to perfection over many years, still retains a cult following. Many players still reckon it's the best beat 'em up ever. SF EX3 is Street Fighter in 3D, with all your fave characters recreated in full polygonal glory. Added to this are a host of less familiar characters, plus some neat modes, but can it possibly topple the likes of Tekken Tag? What's more, can SF2 fans find or want their beloved fighter in three dimensions?

OLD-SKOOL
SF EX3 does have some fab modes in it that aren't typical of the new breed of fighters. Dynamic Fights are cool, and can involve you versus up to three opponents at the same time, which is completely mad but also a real test of skill, even for veterans. Also excellent is the Character Edit mode, where you're given a fighter that is essentially a 'blank slate' and must earn new moves by performing certain tasks against the CPU. Develop your character well, and he can become a destructive force in the main game. The game plays very well, but old-skool SF2 fanatics will find responses a little on the sluggish side, and the game a little slow, (slower even than the Japanese version, annoyingly).

WORTH PLAYING?
The problem lies in it being 3D. SF EX3 is a rigidly 2D fighter, presented in 3D, but it doesn't look as good as other 3D fighters, and doesn't quite play as well as its 2D predecessors. You following? You can't directly compare it to T7 and DoA2 as they're very different games, but you can compare it to other SF's, and frankly, it's not as good. If you take away the classic unique look of 2D SF and the frenetic pace and speed of response, you're left with a lesser, albeit still excellent, game. So why did we score the PAL version one Star less than the original Japanese code? Quite simply because, unlike DoA2, in the year since first release they've done nothing to it. Except, with the absence of a 60Hz option, made it even more sluggish. Boo. If you've already played it in the arcades, you'll be a bit disappointed.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

Dead or Alive 2 (PS2), Streetfighter Alpha 3 (DC), Tekken 3 (PS)

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TOY RACER

So you thought the internet was here to make gaming better?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
A pseudo-sequel to the DC launch title, Toy Commander, Toy Racer smacks of more of an experiment than a fully rounded gaming experience. The price should alert you to this (and twenty percent of that's going to charity, mate) but it still doesn't excuse the game's distinctly unfinished feel. The basic premise is that you choose from a selection of toy cars and race around a depressingly small number of novelty circuits. The main purpose of this title, however, is the online play that it offers.

ARE YOU LONESOME TONIGHT?
If you never intend to utilise the DC's online functions, you should avoid this like the plague. (You probably should do anyway.) The simple reason for this is there aren't any CPU-controlled drivers to race against offline. True, there's a two-player mode, but with such a limited repertoire of circuits, each presenting so little challenge, you'll be so bored you'll blow the dough you saved on this complete against the local arcade. The main and fundamentally dull purpose of one-player mode is to become accustomed to each circuit, get used to the vehicles on offer, and achieve ever-faster times. Sounds fun, doesn't it?

Micro Machines in 3D. Minus the fun, excitement, playability, humour, thrills, spills, and action

FICKER-SHOCKER-GLORY
If a game is focused on online play, you'd expect it to be at least half-decent. Well think again. When you play any online game, information is only updated a few times a second. So AI is used to fill in the gaps and predict where people should be. Making games run more smoothly, Toy Racer spits on this convention and is a disaster for it. Without AI, online opponents flicker across the track as the network is unable to keep up with what they're doing. Hence, it's impossible to perform precise overtaking moves as the opposition skips all over the track.

WORTH PLAYING?
OK, it is dirt cheap and it's of interest just to experience online racing on your DC, but at best, Toy Racer is little more than a demo. Tracks are samey, graphics are bland, two-player is a non-event and the one-player is dull in the extreme - this is a game that struggles to recommend itself. Toy Commander fanatics could view this as a partial add-on to their beloved game, but everyone else should steer clear.
ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Ultimate Fighting Championship has caused quite a stir on the Dreamcast, thanks to its ultra-realistic depiction of violence and responsive gameplay. Now PS owners get to experience full-on, bare-knuckle action for themselves. Choose from a selection of the meanest, scariest fighters you’ve ever seen, each with their own style, and enter the octagon. The rules are simple: you win either by knockout or submission – how dirty you fight to achieve this is up to you.

THE MIRACLE OF CREATION
Graphically, UFC isn’t too shabby at all. Fighters are large, solid and well animated, and hits connect well. The trade-off here is the dire crowd graphics, but this is made up for by some crunching sound effects, which let you feel every blow. If you grow tired of the knuckle-heads on offer, you can create your own from scratch, choosing his name, appearance and fighting style, then tweaking his stats. Yay, it sounds great on paper, but in reality, the story is a very different one.

HAMMER HORROR
One of the great achievements of the DC version was the phenomenal realism achieved. The PS, despite its best efforts, just isn’t capable of recreating anything near that level of detail. Most disturbingly though, UFC plays incredibly sluggishly; rather than controlling super-strong athletes, your character often feels like a radio-controlled Jo Brand, crawling around the screen with the grace of a darts player. There may well be stacks of moves, but most of your time is spent rolling around on the canvas, hammering buttons in an uninvoking and simplistic manner – where’s the skill in that?

WORTH PLAYING?
Multiplayer isn’t any better, mostly being a case of who can tap the buttons fastest, and it quickly becomes dull. The default difficulty is extremely challenging, and at first you’ll be regularly losing in under ten seconds, so you may want to opt for easier opponents while you learn the ropes. That said, once you get your head around the controls, it’s straight into rolling around on the floor for ages. UFC is a nice idea, but a flawed game, completely lacking in character and personality. It has neither the brutal, gritty realism of the DC version, nor the off-the-wall quirky humour of Ready 2 Rumble 2, ending up as a dull, lifeless affair that begins to grate in a very short space of time.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
UFC (DC), Smackdown! 2 (PS), Ready 2 Rumble 2 (PS2)
Our village has been destroyed, and many old friends slaughtered. All that remains are the debris-strewn alleys you once strolled down, and the roofless buildings you used to call home. All has been crushed by the Imperial state of Sandora, at the behest of the maniacal Emperor Doel. Worst of all, the sole purpose of this devastation was to kidnap your closest childhood friend, who has been swept away to prison, as unaware as you are that the world’s future rests on her. And so your adventure begins...

WELCOME TO HELL

There you are, having an innocent stroll in the country, when suddenly a 1000ft dragon tries to eat you. When you begin your quest, scant details are available and many crucial questions remain unanswered. Who’s the bird who saved your ass, and which pop star will Patsy Kensit marry next? Ok, not the last question.

This opening cut-scene gets the adventure off to a dramatic start and quickly draws you in. These two guards are up for a scrap, but...

Feybrand has other ideas. He’s the Emperor Doel’s most destructive weapon - control of this beast is closely linked with the Dragons legend

Luckily, this mystery lady drags you to safety behind a rock and then informs you that your home town, Seles, has been razed

Rushing back, you find it’s all true and a priest tells you who’s to blame. You quickly get a chance to vent your spleen on his underlings
As you'd expect from an RPG, you'll meet a shedload of strange folk on your travels, each with their own secrets and mysteries, and the hero himself is no exception. It's therefore important that you assemble a core of people you can trust, who will watch your back in a fight and help you in your hour of need.

Dart is the hero. Stunned at the kidnap of his dear friend, Shana, Dart vows to free her. In doing so, a vast story begins to unfold.

Shana is held in Hellena prison. Dart heads there sneaking in on a merchant's car and massive rucks ensue as you search for her.

Which is when you meet up with Lavitz, a bold and fearless Knight, also trying to escape. He quickly becomes a close ally and friend.

Your adventure spans a vast world, full of exotic places. The background artwork is stunning, adding huge dollops of atmosphere to the proceedings. It's also delectable eye-candy in its own right. Here's a selection of locations you'll be visiting early on. Now where's that camera...

Rale is the beautiful home town of Lavitz, and is part of the Kingdom of King Albert.

Indela Castle is the royal home of Albert, which you visit with the King's trusty knight, Lavitz.

You visit this Dickensian town during a flashback, as Dart reveals secrets of his past.

The Limestone Cave is a beautiful, frigid network of caverns that reaches deep beneath the earth.

The fighting system in Dragoon is essentially standard RPG stuff, with turn-based battles, magic spells, and stats-heavy menus. A neat twist is the timing element that comes in during certain moves, where you must press a button at precisely the right moment for maximum effect. A bit like Summoner's chain attack.

When the boxes align, press X for a maximum-powered blow. Timing is the key to success.

Don't get cocky though, as there's always the chance your opponent will counter-strike.

For the first nine-odd hours, this is the best magic you'll be able to conjure up...

But then, a whole world of magical splendour is yours for the taking, like this burn attack.

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

Looking Good
Legend Of Dragoon is a bold attempt to challenge the tried and trusted might of the Final Fantasy series. It certainly looks the part: characters are well animated, but where Dragoon really excels is in its exquisitely drawn scenery. From stunningly detailed caves, to beautiful, fertile landscapes, it often feels like you're walking through a work of art.

In With The Old
Dragoon is very much a traditional RPG, with turn-based battles and spells to learn, but the timed button-pressing is a neat (if occasionally frustrating) twist on a well-worn idea. There are, alas, several flaws which really hamper the experience. Firstly, battles are S-L-O-W. Spending 20-odd minutes in turn-based combat against a boss, with a limited repertoire of moves is not fun - but that's exactly what you'll be doing early on, and painful loading times only exaggerate this. The script is also frequently clunky and unconvincing, which doesn't exactly help to make the story gripping.

Patience is a Virtue
Battles do become more interesting, but you'll need superhuman patience to reach the point where new magic and moves are available to you. There is a good game in here, but the sheer dedication required at first may put many people off. Shame.

If You Like This Try These...
Final Fantasy IX (PS), Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64), Grandia 2 (DC)
SPEC OPS:
RANGER ASSAULT

Some of the ideas are special but the graphics just aren't up to spec

WORDS & SCREENSHOTS: JOHNNY MINKLEY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
So you want to be the best? You want to test yourself to the limits, to prove yourself in the ultimate game - the game of war? Then go and join the army boy! If you'd prefer to munch on a bag of Pringles while blasting seven shades of @$% out of enemy cannon fodder, then Spec Ops could be for you. You and your buddy are dropped deep behind enemy lines, with clear objectives that must be fulfilled. Choose your soldier from five military specialists, select your weaponry, and work together to snuff out the enemy. Hmmm, sounds kind of familiar...

TAKE CONTROL
Spec Ops is bristling with good gameplay ideas, but is unfortunately let down by weak graphics and some needless flaws. One feature that does work really well is the ability to control both members of your team during the game. As the natural leader (of course!) you call the shots, but it's vital to give your partner the correct instructions at exactly the right moment. So, you can direct him to follow you, move ahead, or shoot to kill. Moreover, when you feel the control freak really taking you over, you can also switch direct control from one soldier to the other. This way, you have total control over both soldiers' actions. Whether they live or die is down to your skilful (or not so skilful) manipulation of their every movement - making for some fairly intense tactical play.

CLIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK
What lets the game down, however, and undermines the commendable efforts in other areas, are the disappointingly poor graphics. The scenery is very blocky and indistinct, making it extremely difficult to spot enemies in the distance, and pop-up rears its ugly head too, as our screenshots show. This problem is compounded by a practically useless radar, which generally seems to only pick up enemies after you've already been shot, somewhat defeating the point of sneaking around. Dodgy clipping means you can end up sniping at enemies that are actually inside buildings, and enemy soldiers also have a strange and very annoying tendency of suddenly appearing out of nowhere.

Two-player co-op rules! "Cover me!" you scream. "With what?" says Les. Weirdo

WORTH PLAYING?
If you can put up with the crappy graphics and the niggles, there's some genuinely exciting gameplay to get stuck into, and we very much applaud the low price point - if only more games came out for under a tenner. The two-player co-operative mode is loads of fun, and the range of weapons on offer is impressive, although explosions from grenades and bombs are hardly awe-inspiring. Sneaking around and sniping on dumb-assed enemies is also a good crack, but only on certain levels where the graphics don't make this a nightmare. All in all, a sound concept let down by poor implementation of ideas and a poor second to the PC's new Delta Force offering (see our review on p110).

Two-player co-operative mode brings out the best in Spec Ops; you can work together or each go gung-ho solo

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HELLO KITTY
CUBE FRENZY
Catch some mad-cat disease

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Alright, you can stop sniggering now, we know it's got a stupid name but we bet you thought the same about Pokémon and looked what happened there. Hello Kitty is massively popular in Japan and just like Pokémon has got its own arcade puzzle game to capitalise on that success. And while Hello Kitty hasn't reached the hysterical proportions here that it has in Japan, the game is still a worthwhile release, combining charm and appeal with full-on addictive gameplay.

KITTY LITTER
The game takes Tetris and adds another dimension to it. You control the blocks falling from the top of the screen and have to place them to make a route for Kitty, who you also control, to get to the items she needs to clear the screen. You think it's simple? Just try it! Learning the thing is enough to make your brain ache - then every level becomes a different puzzle for you to figure out. Your head will hurt.

WORTH PLAYING?
If you go for completely hatstand games, then this could be just the padded cell for you. Its charm is irresistible - cute graphics, cool sound and characters that are sweeter than a nudge picture of Britney Spears. You may not get to kill anything or drive at over 200MPH, but Hello Kitty Cube Frenzy has a unique appeal for all age groups. Good old-fashioned addictive gameplay is what you get here. And isn't that what this game's business is all about?

HBO BOXING
So bad, you really can win without even seeing the telly

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Choose from a selection of famous and not-so-famous male and female boxers, and take part in one-off bouts, or fight your own fighter up in career mode. Videogames should be a fun and enjoyable experience, so enough of a challenge to give players an incentive to keep playing. Either someone neglected to mention this to the developers of HBO Boxing or their definition of the word 'challenge' comes from the Dictionary of Lame Excuses.

SHAMBLING DISGRACE
One-player HBO suffers from one of the worst gameplay flaws we've seen in a while - you can win virtually however you play. On the hardest difficulty setting, we managed to win fights without even looking at the screen, using one hand and holding down one button and one direction. Er, hello? Have these people heard of playtesting? Controls, if you bother with them, are sluggish, and fighters crawl shambolically around the ring. Yeah, you can train your boxer and select from a range of combos, but why on earth would you bother?

WORTH PLAYING?
Hmmm. Tricky question... not. To be fair; it's an absolute riot in two-player, but only because you'll be splitting your sides with laughter at how bad it is. One-player can slug away for all his life's worth, but the other can come in with some feasible jobs and kick-ass. If someone gets a flurry of punches going, it's nigh-on impossible to escape, leading to some implausible victories. Frankly, we'd rather smear our ears with dog-food and jump into a pit of rabid rottweilers then ever play this again.
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

Diablo-style dungeon crawler - on DC!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Hardcore Anime heads will no doubt be patting themselves on the back right now. They know that when Lodoss War goes big on our shores, they'll have been there from the start, and will have no doubt watched the movie, the TV show and played the SNES and Game Boy games. This next-gen airing of the epic fantasy yarn tells the story of five tortured souls united in their quest to vanquish the evil of Cardice, a resurrected goddess of destruction. Bwah-ha-ha!

CHILLY WILLY

You start the game stark naked, with an icy dungeon chill breezing around your bits. You've been resurrected by the Great Wise Wart, and have no recollection of who you once were or why you're back from the beyond. Wart is your guide and he'll help you vanquish evil and regain your memory. The undead skeletons and nasty goblins you fight drop important items like armour, weapons and spells, so you can kit yourself out in no time.

GO SWIVEL

The action is viewed from a top-down viewpoint that can be swivelled around at will. And while this gives the game an old-school feel, the scraps you get into are on a par with mighty PC hits Diablo II and Baldur's Gate II. Moreover, the Lodoss world is massive, with rewarding sub-quests and different plot strands depending on your actions in the game.

WORTH PLAYING?

There's nothing much like Lodoss War on any console, which makes it stand out straight away. The game successfully merges Old World mystique with arcade adrenaline kicks, and offers a massive challenge into the bargain. The saga is gripping and the massive skirmishes and effects are the final lacy bow on a gorgeously-wrapped gaming present that'll last you ages.
DONALD DUCK
QUACK ATTACK

A different format and a higher score for our fowl-tempered buddy

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Why is it that Quack Attack is much more fun on N64 than on PlayStation, when it's essentially the same game? Is it that it's so much prettier than the slightly raggedy 32-bit version, or maybe it's because the gameplay's fairly unique for Nintendo's machine? Whatever, this version's got loads more sparkle for your dash.

SMILEY HAPPY GAMEPLAY
Like before, Donald has to rescue the delicious Daisy from Merloc's clutches, but first he has to help set up Gyro's machine that will warp him to where Daisy is imprisoned. Massive boss characters hold these items and the Don must clear his way through fast-moving platform stages one by one to unlock the boss's lair. Each stage can be played through over and again for extra bonuses and the wealth of collectibles and cunning layout of the levels will keep you smiling.

SIMPLE BUT FORGIVEN
The repetitiveness of play that disappointed us in the PS5 version is still present on the N64. But as there are few traditional platformers on N64, it's less of a big deal and easier to forgive. The boss fights are even better on N64 and the lush graphics really make a difference – this is a game that oozes charm and pure playability in spite of its simplicity.

WORTH PLAYING?
Quack Attack's main drawback is it's pretty easy to blast through, in spite of a few fiendishly tricky moments. Still, replaying all the stages to meet the time challenges or collecting all of the lost toys for the bonus levels and costumes for Donald will take you quite a while. And with this cheaper-than-usual N64 version you actually want to get right to the end. Great stuff!

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...
Crash Bandicoot Warped (PS), Rayman 2 (N64)
INSPECTOR GADGET

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Forget the half-hearted movie, this platform extravaganza is based on the wicked Eighties Inspector Gadget cartoon and features everything that makes the animated series so damned special. You want to control Penny, Brain and the begedgeted one himself? No problem! And, as they all have their different uses for getting through the multi-direction scrolling levels, you're going to have to work as a team to win.

GO GO GADGET GAMEPLAY
As you explore the nicely-drawn multi-scrolling levels, you'll pick up new gadgets for the gang to use, along with experimenting with their individual skills. Brain can run faster and jump higher than the others, while Penny can swim underwater. Most puzzles are solved by switching characters.

WORTH PLAYING?
The speed of the game and plentiful character-swapping action makes sure you're kept busy, and the sublime character graphics and cheesy plot scenes capture the Gadget atmosphere brilliantly. It's original, well thought-out, and even occasionally laugh-out-loud funny. And it's got those springy limbs in it.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Play pocket Tony! The 3D lushness of the PlayStation and Dreamcast skate-fests has been replaced with side-scrolling 2D parks and, by and large, it works pretty well. As in the other versions, you have to meet the challenges in every area to progress and earn new courses and skateboarders. The best new additions are the photos of boarders that you can print out and marvel at. Whoop!

TRICKSTER TROUBLE
Tony Hawk's 2 is difficult but it grabs your attention and makes you want to keep trying. Finally locating and collecting all the hidden objects in each area gives you a warm feeling, but learning all the tricks will cause you pain worse than scraping your knees along the pavement.

WORTH PLAYING?
Tony Hawk's 2 has loads of features and stacks of challenge but some may find it overly tough, especially with the strict time limits. It's also similar to the first GB Tony game, so if you've got that then you probably won't need this. Otherwise, check it out.

DONALD DUCK QUACK ATTACK

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
The high-speed shenanigans of Donald's console games make the leap to GBC. It may not have the 3D effects but the game still looks incredible - probably the finest graphics you'll ever see on your handheld. It's fast, smooth and superbly presented throughout.

GENERIC JAPES
Given its fantastic looks, it's even more upsetting to us that Quack Attack is so horribly generic to play. Jump on badgies' heads, collect the various treats, avoid the spikes, leap the gaps, fight the bosses... nigh! The action is varied but there's nothing here you've not seen a million times before. There's no excuses - as Gadget proved, there's still scope for originality in GB platforms.

WORTH PLAYING?
If you're new to GB action games, then Quack Attack is a perfect place to start. Even if you're an old pro you'll still enjoy it, despite knowing what to expect. The difficulty level is just right and there are thankfully few irritating moments, but this is gaming by numbers and GB owners expect and deserve more.
Alpha Team is a decent puzzle-action game that has a lot in common with that classic rodent-puzzle, Lemmings.

**TRIAL WITH ERROR**
At the start of each mission you're given a briefing followed by a rundown of the LEGO items dotted around each stage. You have to place those items correctly to save your friends. Dash and your rescued team members work on automatic pilot, so you have to make sure all your blocks are in place before you give them the go signal. Lots of trial and error but it's mostly all good fun.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
Alpha Team is great for a time but the thrills were as it gets harder. Like any puzzle game, the action is repetitive but the game doesn't quite have the required spark to make you want to persevere. The teamwork aspect is nice but you may get bored before you've rescued all of your buddies.

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**LEGO ALPHA TEAM**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
The LEGO Alpha Team has been captured by the evil Ogel and it's up to Dash, and you, to save them! Ignore the crummy visuals (this is LEGO, after all) and you'll see that across dirt tracks chock-full with ramps and pitfalls. Luckily, there are multiple training games to get you up to scratch.

**PEDAL PUSHER**
The best thing about Extreme Wheels is the stamina bar. This decreases as you pedal and, if it runs down to zero, you'll be left huffing and puffing as your rivals zoom past you. Racing yourself is the key to winning, with quick bursts then tactical rest periods. But it's tough combining your pacing with avoiding obstacles and watching how you land after tackling the jumps.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
If you like games with challenge, then Extreme Wheels will satisfy you. Handling your bike over the jumps takes ages to master and keeping an eye on the stamina gauge is actually far more frustrating than it should be. Could have been great but it's too fiddly and unforgiving.

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**EXTREME WHEELS**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
It's super-fast and super-tough racing for your handheld, but you need to put in the effort to get the best out of this one. The side-on action sees you pedalling furiously

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**KONAMI GB COLLECTION VOL.4**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
Another quality trudge through Konami's back catalogue of retro games reveals three more gems and the standard comedy stinker.
007 RACING

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
The name is Bond, James Bond. Licensed to have all manner of cash-ins produced thanks to the success of my movies. GoldenEye and TWINE proved successful, but this attempt to be different and not be in with a movie isn't. Doing a game without the restraints of a movie licence should've given the developers licence to thrill with wild action and imagination-fuelled plot devices. So why are we left with a mission-based driving sim? Even a Mario Kart-game with all the vehicles would've been better. **WORTH PLAYING?**
It feels like you're playing a Die Hard Trilogy sub-game - not spectacular; just a series of uninspiring missions that don't feel like a coherent Bond game.

£29.99 **OUT NOW**

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WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE THUNDER TANKS

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
For those with good memories, this is Twisted Metal with tanks - and we all know how good those games were. Big tanks with huge guns and special weapons chasing each other - last man standing is the winner. Forget subtlety, forget tactics - this is in-your-face action with no opportunity for explosive chaos unexplored. It's not just the poor saps fighting you who are targets, most of your environments will take hits to provide you with extra weapons or power-ups. **WORTH PLAYING?**
With the multiplayer options and different battle modes, this is a step on from Twisted. It lacks your fancy physics or complex gameplay, but WOLT doesn't pretend to be anything it isn't.

£29.99 **OUT NOW**

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ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
It's not often that a videogame based on bad children's toys turns out to be less fun than the toys themselves. And when the toy in question is an inch-high plastic soldier, then the game must be weak - and it is. Running around, picking up weapons and shooting fellow plastic soldiers is hardly inspiring. And it's even less likely to blow your socks off when the control system is so clumsy you find yourself missing vital hits purely because of the game rather than any lack of skill on your part (no, honest). **WORTH PLAYING?**
Not really. A few hours on this and we felt violated, and not in a good way. Let's just hope it's the swansong for the lacklustre Army Men series.

£29.99 **OUT NOW**

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AQUA GT

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
Another racing game that's left the starting line three years too late. Seemingly randomly-placed famous landmarks do not make this like racing through familiar cities, and quite honestly, we've heard more convincing engine sound effects coming from a beehive. Just steering left and right, with only the need to press brake once every five minutes doesn't herald any breakthroughs in racing gameplay either. **WORTH PLAYING?**
Four-year-old Wave Race on N64 still offers a more realistic and immersive racing experience. There's no excuse whatsoever for including this thrill-free title in your games collection.

£29.99 **OUT NOW**

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BLADE

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
A fairly low-key release for this film licence, coming out so long after the Wesley Snipes Vampires game. But don't let that fool you into thinking this is some kind of cop-out cash-in, designed to suck your cash but not give you the kind of game you desire. What you get is almost Tomb Raider in its design, with you exploring, taking down vamps and completing tasks. Throw in a puzzle element as well and you have a solid all-round performer that'd have really excelled if I'd come out when the movie did. **WORTH PLAYING?**
Tomb Raider is tired, so if you're looking for something in the same vein, then these vampish antics will more than match your expectations.

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CALL TO POWER 2

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
This has to be one of the biggest and potentially most life-controlling games for a long, long time. It's not everyone's cup of tea with little action, as most of your time is spent building up your civilisation and creating your own little Utopia. Sending troops off to fight other civilisations will hardly raise your heartbeat either. But it's the immersive experience that has always made the Call to Power and Civ games so awesome, and this one is no different. **WORTH PLAYING?**
Oh my god, yes. Bigger and better than before, with more depth and addictive online abilities. Lots of new developments and strategies to get to grips with. What are you waiting for? Go buy.

£29.99 **OUT NOW**

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106 COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES ISSUE 231
BANGAI-O

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Mad-as-a-hatter; old skool shoot 'em up action. It either looks awesome (in a nostalgic kinda way) or pants (in a DC way), but either way, it's a cool, if limited slice of quirky Japanese gaming. Take control of a dicky robot and fly around futuristic 2D levels, blasting other medals and collecting, erm... oranges.

WORTH PLAYING?
If you have fond memories of your 16-bit shooters, definitely. It handles like a dream. If using the D-pad and analog stick to simultaneously move and fire. The cut-scenes and text are completely bonkers and nonsensical, but that just adds to the charm. Great fun, but beyond the novelty value, Bangai-O is pretty samey and won't hold your attention for ever.

£19.99
OUT NOW

SILPHEED

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
More retro shooting action for you lucky next-geners, this time in an update of an old Mega-CD title. It's a fairly bog-standard vertically scrolling affair, with wave after wave of baddies, periodically interspersed with a big, fat momma of a boss to slap about. Power-ups are earned at the end of each level, and you are able to equip two weapons per section.

WORTH PLAYING?
It's extremely dull, surprisingly difficult to die, and there's some criminal slowdown. No in-game power-ups or smart bombs adds to the soporific effects of Silpheed, and you'll probably be bored by the time you've finished your first game.

£39.99
OUT NOW

CAPCOM VS.SNK: MILLENNIUM FIGHT 2000

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
The grandaddy of beat 'em ups, Street Fighter 2, is given yet another twist on the DC. Capcom heroes are joined by SNK's finest in a cataclysmic battle to see who's the don of fighters. The fighting's pretty standard (in an awesome way), plus there's the ability to gain points in the main game with which to purchase in-game goodies such as new costumes.

WORTH PLAYING?
Absolutely. There's plenty of 2D SF2 choices on the DC, but even if you own the others, this is still worth getting. Presentation is truly stunning, with fab menu screens and brilliant dance music, and the graphics are as sharp and stylish as ever. SF Alpha 3 still just edges ahead on gameplay, however.

£39.99
OUT NOW

PC CD-ROM

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Gunman started off life as a mod for Half-Life. Now it's evolved into a game in its own right. Gunman Chronicles is a Half-Life sci-fi adventure with a splash of Wild West styling, where you get plenty of alien shoot-outs, juicy weapons (even tanks!) and more tension than Dawn French's belt. If you're expecting Elite Force or Counterstrike-style excellence though, you'll be disappointed. As action-packed as this is, it's starting to show the age of the Half-Life engine now.

WORTH PLAYING?
It's very atmospheric and tense, with some great level design and clever scene-setting moments, although it does still feel a bit like one of those free downloadable mods rather than a brand new game.

£24.99
OUT NOW

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP: SEASON 2000

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Based on the 2000 season of F1, FCS2K lets you pick from the cream of drivers (and the crap ones) as you race for first place on all the circuits from the World Championships.There's your usual options plus customisable championships. Cars look nice, but scenery is little better than a PS game - is that what you shelled out 300 notes for?

WORTH PLAYING?
Handling is ok: with assists turned on, your car moves fine - until the dodgy frame-rate makes it jerk around corners. But take assists off, and you'll be cursing in rage, as your car flails around like a spinning top. A waste of a good licence, this game looks rushed and is frustrating to play.

£44.99
OUT NOW

K-1 GRAND PRIX

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Despite the create-a-fighter option and four different fighting modes, this is doing nothing that hasn't been done in dozens of other fight games, only they do it far better. It takes so long for button presses to be enacted on screen, the character animation is so slow and you're struggling so much with the controls to put together combos that you almost feel it's turn-based.

WORTH PLAYING?
If you like your fighting games lifeless, uneventful and dull, then you're in hog heaven. If you like to have the tiniest bit of action in what is a pretty violent and action-packed genre, then you're on a hiding to nothing. Tedium, an embarrassment to the genre.

£29.99
OUT NOW
**POOL MASTERS**

**SAMBAA DE AMIGO**

**POWER RANGERS LIGHTSPEED RESCUE**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
One for any budding Jimmy Whites who don’t want the ‘arguing over whose 50p is that on the pool table’ experience at your local pool hall/arcade. And if you don’t know how to play, it’ll show you that as well. To make sure you don’t get bored just with the one game, there are loads of versions of Pool in here for you to tackle. Mind you, they mastered games like this on the PlayStation, so you don’t exactly need all this extra power - it certainly doesn’t do anything that other, cheaper games don’t.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
Entertaining enough in two-player mode, although Pool has been done to death on the PS. Pick one of those games up from the bargain bin instead.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
Quite simply the finest rhythm-action game ever designed, and, after CVG’s campaign, now out in the UK! Shake your comedy maracas in time with on-screen instructions. Clever technology in the controller unit detects the height of your shakes and whether you’re swinging to the left or right.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
Make sure you play Samba at all costs. It’s a little pricey and not many people will be able to enjoy the two-player arcade fun or the co-operative Love Love mode at parties (you need two sets of shakers, you see?), but the extensive single-player game and unlockable treats will keep you playing way into the night. Awesome.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
Rescue the world from Diabolico and the forces of nature in this sad-so action adventure. Different playing styles make for varied play but all of the modes are uninspiring. You can rescue stranded city folk on foot, in fire engines and ambulances, and in an almost-cool hover craft.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
Power Rangers fans will love Lightspeed Rescue but non-fans will find it too limited and too cheesy to stick with it. It is strangely enjoyable in its own simple way and the budget price and authentic Rangers atmosphere makes it more appealing, but not even the two-player fisticuffs can save this from being anything but Mighty Morphin’ mediocrity.

**TIGGER’S HONEY HUNT**

**PC CD ROM**

**TYING OF THE DEAD**

**RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
It’s a cute Disney platformer, so don’t expect any complex, multi-level gameplay or indeed a game that will last longer than a couple of evenings to complete. All the Tigger gang are in here, along with loads of little sub-games to perk up the non-stop platform Tigger action. All the cute graphics in the world don’t make up for the lack of depth though, making this purely a kids’ game.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
The jury is split. If you’re young and don’t want to worry about anything too taxing, then this will appeal. If you love the graphics, you’ll know and love the characters. For the rest of us, this remains kids’ stuff that we wouldn’t touch with a barge pole.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
It’s Sega’s zombie blast fest House of the Dead, only you don’t shoot stuff, you type in words to kill the mutants. Yeah, that’s right - you type whatever letters appear in boxes by the mutants. Sound stupid? It is. While it may be a tad more action packed than Mavis Beacon Typing Tutor - it’s still trying to teach you to type. Yes, it’s a novelty, but like most novelties, it wears off after a few minutes to leave you with a linear, frustrating game.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
This tries to be educational and an arcade game, but the two don’t sit together very well. Hear that, Mr Blair? Just ignore this game and let’s never speak of learning in zombie blast-fest games again.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**
DC port of the most recent PS version of the popular survival-horror series. Take control of Jill Valentine and Carlos Oliveira, as you slaughter your way out of Racoon City. Throughout, you are pursued by the monstrous Nemesis, an 8-foot zombie desperate to get its filthy, hands on you.

**WORTH PLAYING?**
DC owners have already had months of joy with the wonderful Code Veronica, and this isn’t in the same league. Graphics are only barked up slightly from the PS version, and extra-costumes and a mini-game don’t really make up for this. That said, it’s still a cool game, and if you’re a Resident Evil fan, it’s worth it. Otherwise, go and buy Code Veronica now, you fools.
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SNIPE FOR THE PICKING

DFLW is a sniper's dream come true, and picking off distant enemies is one of the game's highlights. Zooming in on a foe from hundreds of meters away, and shooting him right between the eyes looks and feels better than ever; with detail perfectly rendered even from way off thanks to an impressive new graphics engine.

You'll want to get a good look around at the terrorists you're gonna slaughter, so climb up this here pyramid to gain a good vantage point.

Check this view out. Awesome, isn't it? See all those tiny ant-like people? If only they knew you were about to blow their heads off.

You can shoot people from up to 1,000 metres away, so this poor little blighter didn't really stand much of a chance. That'll learn him.
WELL 'ARD WEAPONS

You’ll need a powerful PC to get the most from DFLW, but on the plus side the licence brings some of the latest and greatest weaponry on Earth right into your very own living room. There's loads of cool gadgets like night-vision goggles, and GPS navigation, and some satisfying firearms too. Here's a selection to whet your appetite...

The obligatory rocket launcher. Take down a chopper and destroy the crew. Always a pleasure.

The MAK4 Burst rifle. For the man who demands a close shave. We suggest that you stick to Gillette.

Good ol’ Frog Grenades are a laugh. They rip your enemies to shreds. Ah ha ha ha ha ha... or, help!

Thanks to the improved graphics, the Doc could spring ears without having to leave his office.

WHERE IN THE WORLD

As part of U.S. Special Forces, you must crush the threat of terrorism around the globe. From stealth operations underwater, to sniping in the snow, there's certainly plenty of travel perks for the lads in Delta Force. It takes the idea of adventure tourism to unprecedented levels. Wonder what the travel guidebooks would say about these...

Don’t shoot, it’s made of stone you fool. This guy’s obviously seen too many ‘boss’ monsters in his time.

Take a look at these rules. How did they build ‘em? And how the hell does the flash work on this thing?

He was only gonna freeze his nads off anyway, so you may as well blow ‘em off for him. It’s only fair.

No matter how often you played it, someone always managed to take Laser Quest too seriously.

WHO ARE YOU?

For the first time in the Delta Force series, you are given the opportunity to choose from five highly-trained military specialists, each with their own individual skills. This adds an extra tactical layer to the game, giving more than one way to approach each mission. Choose your character carefully and use their skills wisely for best effect.

“Yeah, I know I look a bitch in this outfit. But I also like to work with children and animals”

Believe it or not, you’ll grow to love this guy in the game. If there’s sniping to be done, he’s your man.

“He may look a filthy, inbred buck, but you won’t find anyone who can blow things up with such panache”

WHAT WE THOUGHT...

SNEAK-A-BOO

If you’ve ever wanted to play the part of a deadly soldier with stealth on his side, DFLW is the game for you. It has been developed alongside the real Land Warrior program in the good old US of A, so you have access to coolest gadgets governments can buy. What’s more, each mission is based on a plausible incident in a politically sensitive part of the world. This realistic background is a strong element of the game, and is reflected in the way it plays: you really must learn to think and act like a soldier – in the field, it only takes one shot to kill or be killed.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

A new graphics engine has enhanced the experience, with both close-range and long distance combat equally tense and enjoyable. The addition of selectable characters has given the game personality, adding an element of teamwork. In one-player, there are plenty of missions and campaigns to get into, and gameplay is augmented by tricks such as loss of accuracy when shooting whilst running, and the aim of sniper scopes being affected by your soldier’s breathing.

THE VERDICT

Multiplayer is always a popular and important option in first-person shooters, and DFLW fully exploits this, with up to 50 players in the same online games, which include Deathmatch, King of the Hill and CTF. You can also replay one-player missions in co-op. First-person novices will find the game a joy to get to grips with, and seasoned experts will no doubt relish the prospect of such stealthy, sniping delights.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY THESE...

Hidden & Dangerous (SC), Rogue Spear (PC), Perfect Dark (N64),

COMPETITION

Fancy yourself as a crack trooper? Well, now you can prove yourself, as we've got five copies of the game to give away, plus a cool Delta Force body warmer, courtesy of Novologix. Send your answer to the following question on a postcard marked 'Delta Force Comp' to the usual address.

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- Half Life
- Quake 3 Arena
- Seaman + Microphone
- Sega Marine Fishing
- Shenmue
- Skies of Arcadia
- Soldier of Fortune
- Star Wars Classic
- "call for more titles"

Gameboy USA
- Dance Dance Revolution 2 (Japan)
- Dragon Warrior 1 & 2
- Mario Tennis
- Pokemon Crystal (Japan)
- Pokemon Gold
- Pokemon Pikachu 2
- Pokemon Powerpuff Girls
- "call for more titles"

Dreamcast Japan
- Animal Forest
- Bangang
- Custom Robe 2
- Exo Delta
- Mario Party 3
- Mysterious Dungeon Furei No Shiren
- Pocket Monster Stadium Gold & Silver
- Reima Airship
- "call for more titles"

Dreamcast USA
- Charge 'n Blast
- Doomsday USA 2001
- De Ja Set Radio
- Eldorado Quest
- Fighting Vipers 2
- Gaming 2
- Guilty Gear X
- Gunship
- Phantom
- "call for more titles"

Dreamcast Japan
- Charge 'n Blast
- Doomsday USA 2001
- De Ja Set Radio
- Eldorado Quest
- Fighting Vipers 2
- Gaming 2
- Guilty Gear X
- Gunship
- Phantom
- "call for more titles"

Playstation USA
- Breath of Fire 4
- Charms Cross
- Evil Dead Hail to the King
- Final Fantasy 9
- Final Fantasy Anthology
- Harvest Moon: Back to Nature
- Legend of Dragoon
- Lunar 2 Eternal Blue
- Parasite Eve 1 & 2
- Persona 2
- "call for more titles"

Playstation Japan
- Breath of Fire 4
- Charms Cross
- Evil Dead Hail to the King
- Final Fantasy 9
- Final Fantasy Anthology
- Harvest Moon: Back to Nature
- Legend of Dragoon
- Lunar 2 Eternal Blue
- Parasite Eve 1 & 2
- Persona 2
- "call for more titles"

NEO GEO Pocket Colour
- Big Bang Pro Wrestling
- Colosseum
- Cotton
- Evolution
- "call for more titles"

Playstation USA
- Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix
- Dance Dance Revolution 3rd Mix
- Darkstalkers
- Dragon Ball Z
- "call for more titles"

Playstation Japan
- Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix
- Dance Dance Revolution 3rd Mix
- Darkstalkers
- Dragon Ball Z
- "call for more titles"

PC Engine
- Alien Crush
- Castlevania: Japanese System
- "call for more titles"

Wonderwall Japan
- "call for more titles"

Wonderswan Colour Japan
- "call for more titles"
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