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syphon filter DARK MIRROR

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PLUS

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> DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 3 > CRASH OF THE TITANS > MERCENARIES 2
> GTA IV > SPIDER-MAN: FRIEND OR FOE > THE BEST PS2 CHEATS EVER

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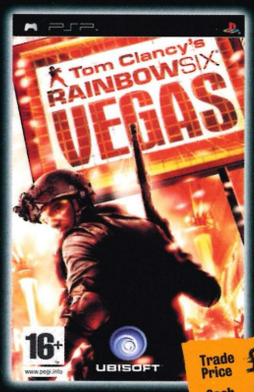

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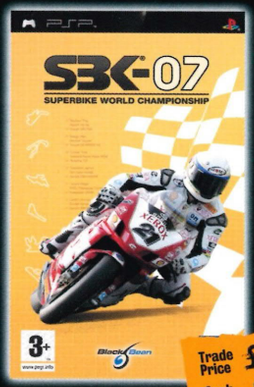

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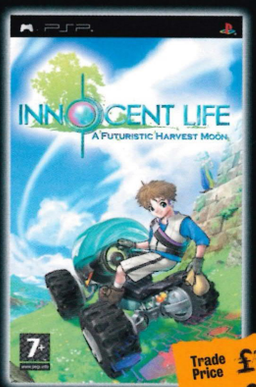

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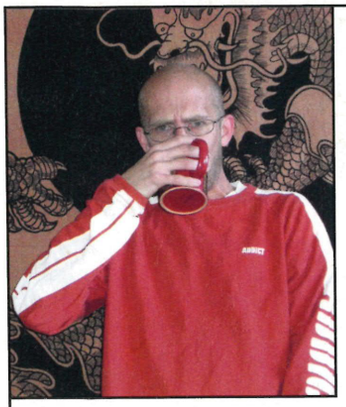


MISS MISS BANG BANG

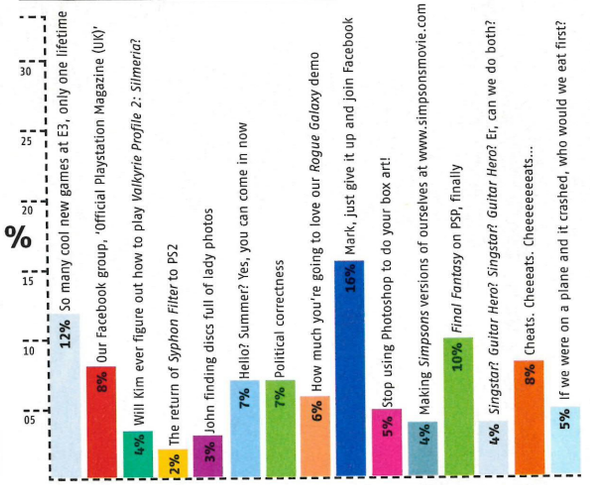
Would you believe that I've not managed to play a single game this month? That's why the expression on my face in this photo is rather grumpy. The first reason for my lack of PS2 action is that the remote control for my telly broke, and I can't flip to the AV channel that the PS2 runs through. D'oh! The second reason is that I've been super-busy helping to redesign OPS2. Next month (barring floods, hurricanes, earthquakes or similar unforeseen circumstances) you'll be holding a shiny new version of the mag in your hands. Although the look of OPS2 will be changing completely, there's one thing that we will most certainly be keeping the same: stuffing each and every issue with coverage of the very best games in the world. This month is no different, and although my own thumbs haven't touched a DualShock, the rest of the team have been busy playing their socks off. We've got details of all the brand new games announced at this year's E3 game show in Los Angeles, a world-first review of *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror*, huge features on the excellent *Simpsons* and *Star Wars* games and a first play of the new *Need For Speed* title. And of course lots more besides. I'm off to buy myself a new remote...

Nick

NICK ELLIS, Editor

COVER COMPO!
The first person to email or write in and tell us what make of gun Gabe Logan is holding on our cover wins a copy of *Dark Mirror*

WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT



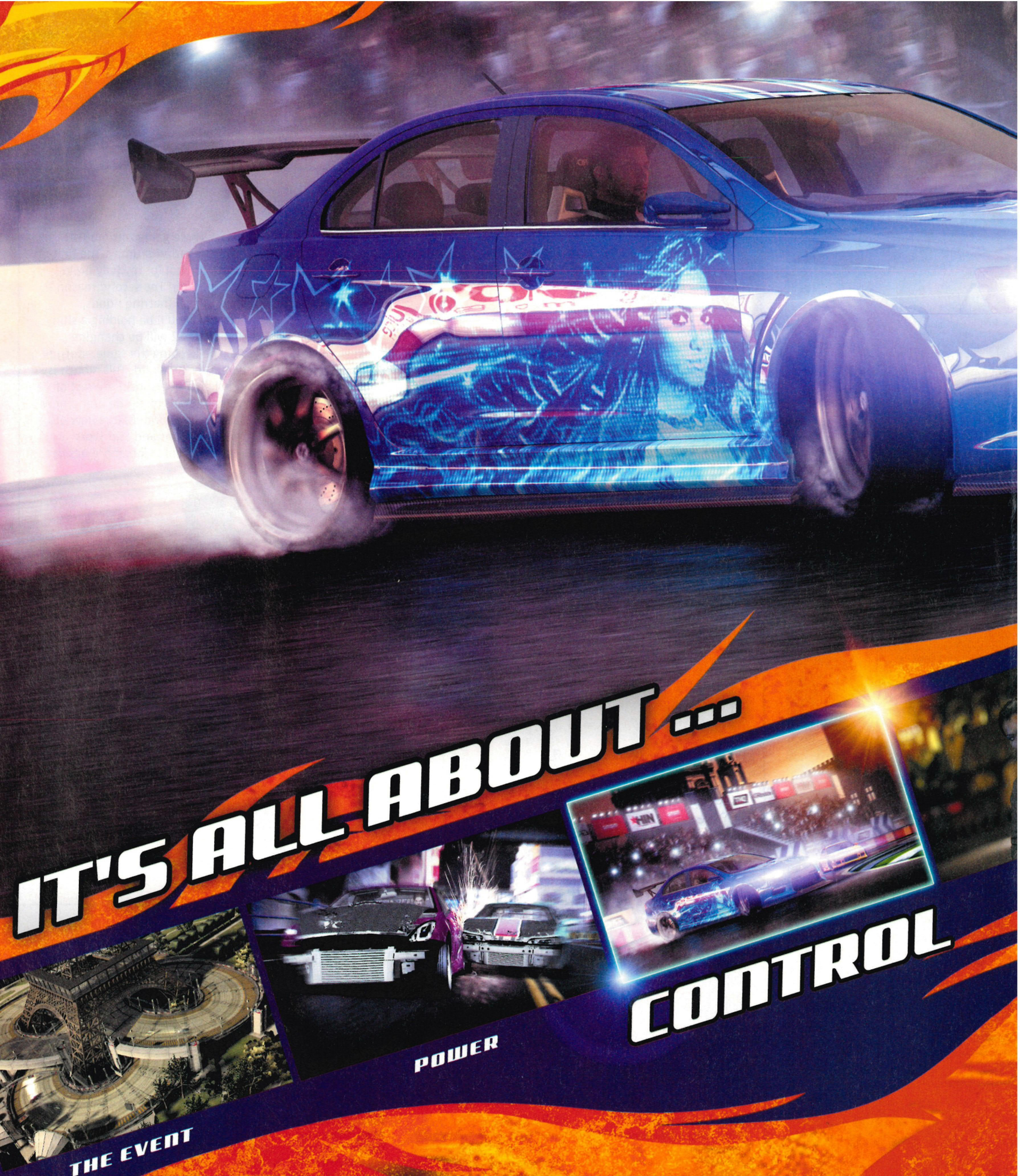
TEAM OPS2

Kim Richards
Writer, *Valkyrie Profile* review (p92)
Kim spent most of this month combing the streets of Bath for mithril ore and other items with magic potential, which she then combined at a spirit anvil to make armour and weapons of almighty power. As we went to press she was working on a way to rid the Park & Ride of its goblin infestation.

Mike Sterry
Writer, *Syphon Filter* review (p82)
Mike has long been single-handedly responsible for approximately 90% of the sales of Dr Pepper in the UK. In July his consumption of the caffeine-heavy soft drink rose to unprecedented heights as he struggled to stay awake at work. A cockerel has moved into the farm behind his home, you see.

Andy Hartup
Writer, *Singstar* feature (p74)
Last month we let Andy play with guns and tanks, but this month his social worker said we ought to give him something more calming to do, for our own safety. So we gave him a plastic microphone and a copy of every *Singstar* game on the market and he's once again a useful member of society.

Sophie Mason
Writer, '91 Craziest Cheats!' (p120)
Sophie says her favourite bit of July was seeing Sly Stone, Blondie, Soul II Soul and Scratch Perverts at the Lovebox Weekender. Why on earth she would rate that higher than putting together a list of the weirdest and wackiest cheats on PS2, we don't know. We'd ask her, but she's still in the toilet queue.



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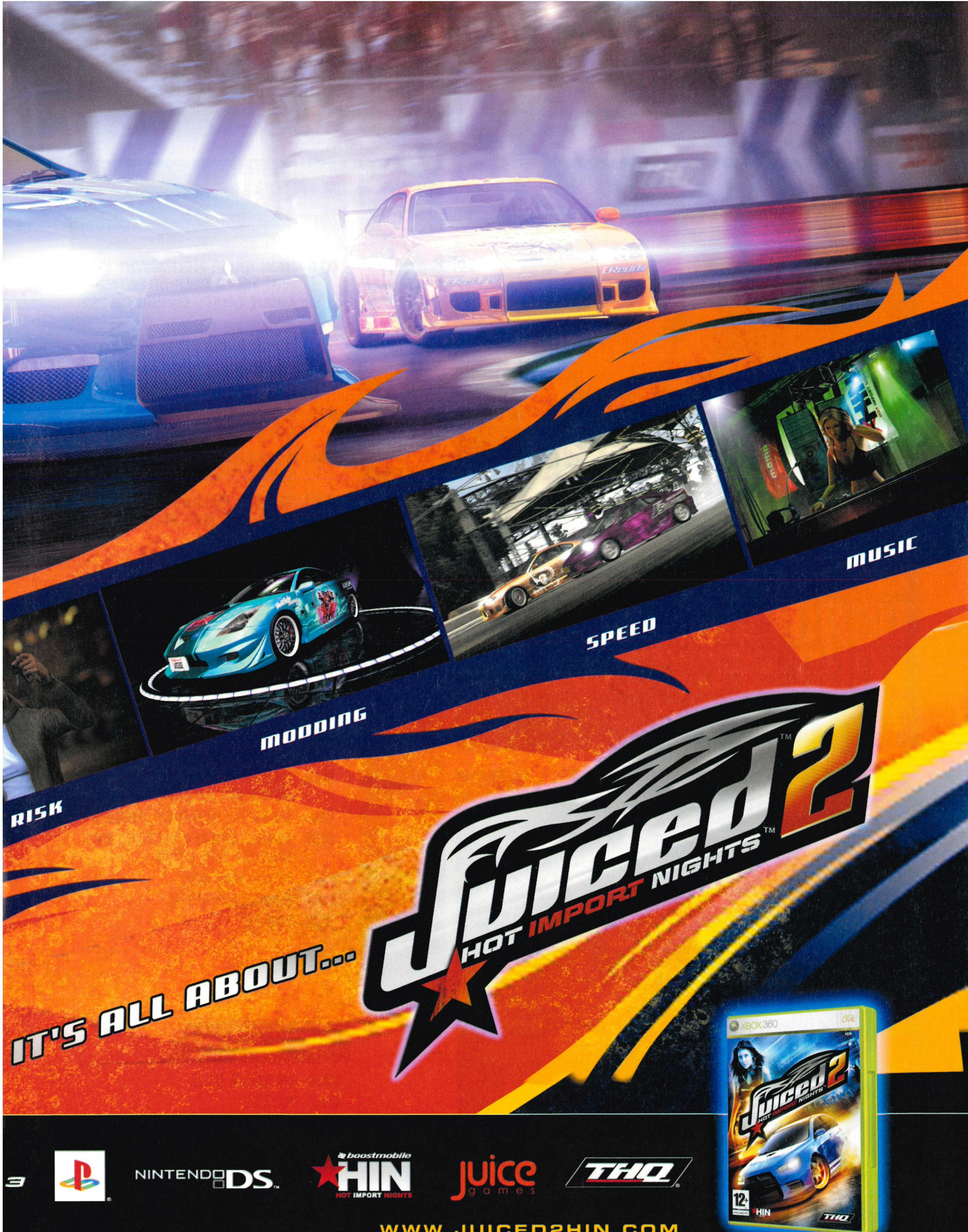
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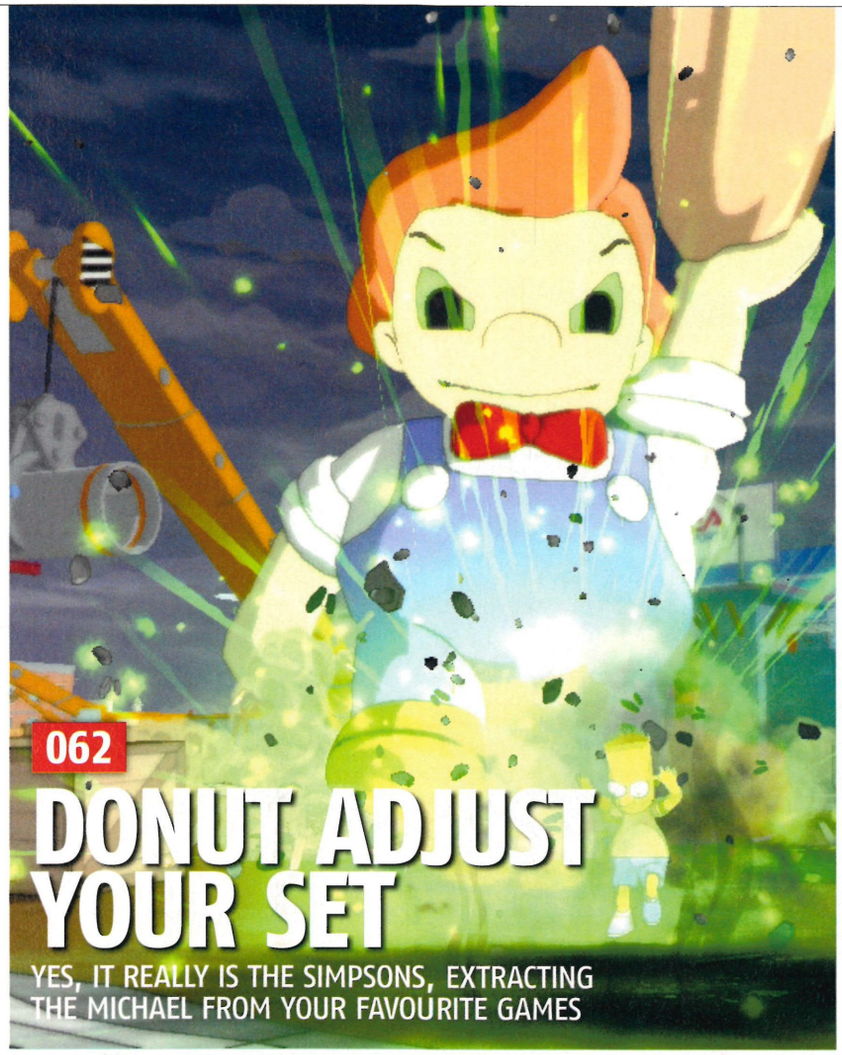

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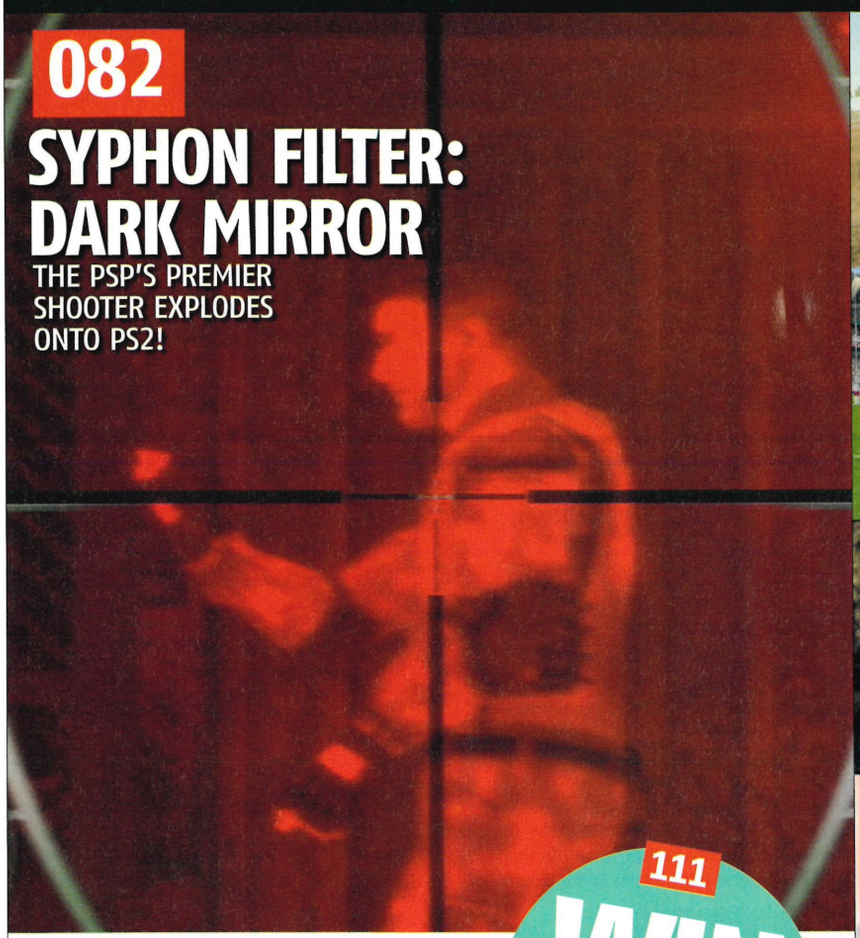

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SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

THE PSP'S PREMIER SHOOTER EXPLODES ONTO PS2!

088 ATV OFFROAD 4

090 RUGBY 08

092 VALKYRIE PROFILE 2

098 WARRIORS OROCHI

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106 WIPEOUT PULSE

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WIN

WE'VE GOT FIVE SINGSTAR 90S MIC + GAME PACKS UP FOR GRABS

PS2

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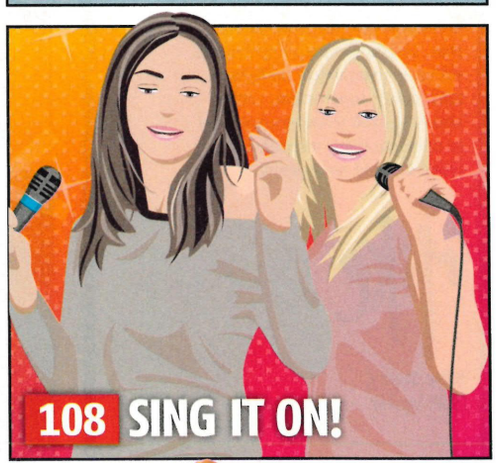

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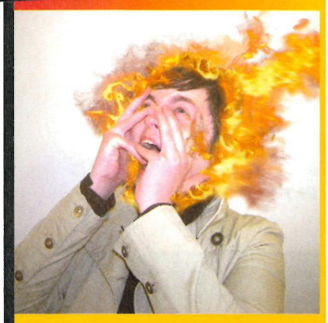
PLAY GAMES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST DEMOS!



We suppose an apology is in order. By including on this month's cover disc the three longest, most engrossing, most in-depth demos ever to have graced this hallowed magazine, we could well be accused of effectively stealing away your hard-earned spare time.

Rogue Galaxy, *Final Fantasy X*, and *Okami* make up this epic triumvirate of titles that everyone needs to play at least once in their lifetimes, roleplaying fan or not.

But not everyone can afford to sacrifice hours for the sake of entertainment, we understand that. Should you prefer lighter fare, we've an assembly of firefighters, talking fish, superheroes, ninjas and oversexed teenagers prepared to offer you many minutes of unadulterated amusement.

Mike

Mike Sterry,
Staff writer

WHY WON'T MY DISC WORK?

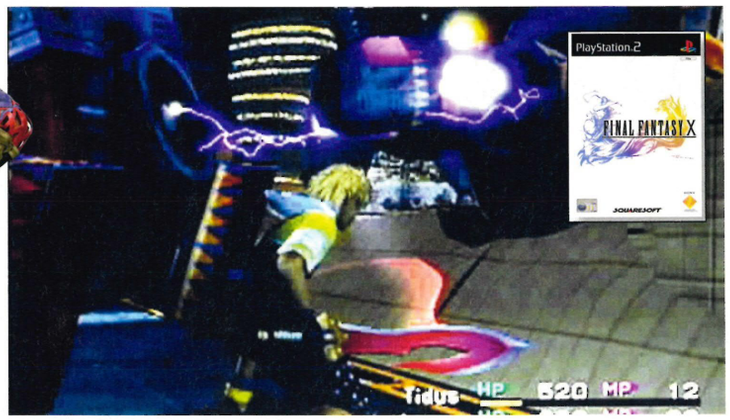
To be honest, we're not sure. But seriously, if your DVD appears not to be loading properly, first try resetting the PS2 and loading the disc again. If that fails, we'll gladly replace it for you. Simply mail the faulty disc (no need to send the box) with your address to OPS2 Magazine, Disc Returns, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. If you have any further queries, email us at ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk

01 ROGUE GALAXY

What you get: When we reviewed this space pirates roleplaying game in issue 86, we loved it so much we gave it 9/10. Well, it's finally hitting the shops and here's an exclusive chunk of demo to convince you that we were right and that you need this game. It's a taster of two levels: either explore the serene Burkaqua Village and hunt beasts in the woods, or take on forest boss Beast Leone. Or both!

NOW!

WIN!
Turn over to find out how you could win games and T-shirts by playing one of this month's demos...

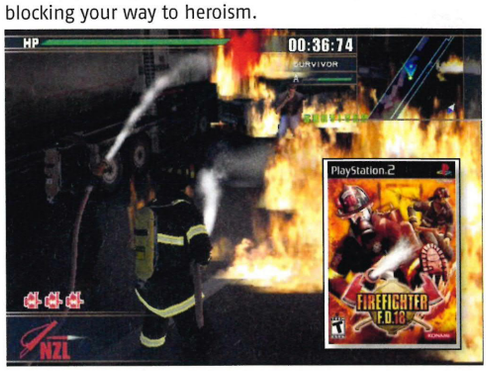


02 FINAL FANTASY X

What you get: Classic RPG heaven. Explore the first levels, Zanarkand and Besaid Island, complete with gorgeous cutscenes, and experience the joy of summoning an almighty Aeon into battle.

03 FIREFIGHTER FD18

What you get: Step into a firefighter's flameproof boots and rescue hostages from a fearsome tunnel blaze. Douse the inferno with your huge hose, avoid exploding fuel trucks and hack away at any debris blocking your way to heroism.

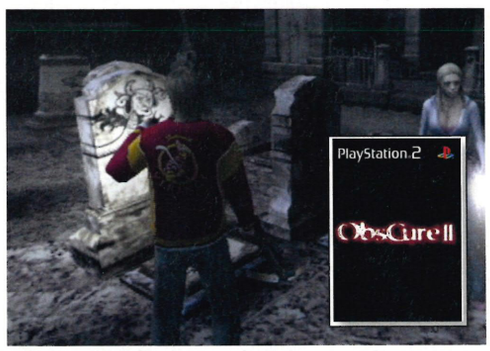


04 NIGHTSHADE

What you get: Ninjas? Pirates? Ninjas? Pirates? Put that aside for a while to play as a lady ninja in this beautifully fluid game. Fight through an underground station and if you master the art of killing a set of monsters within a time frame, you'll get super-sexy cutscenes.

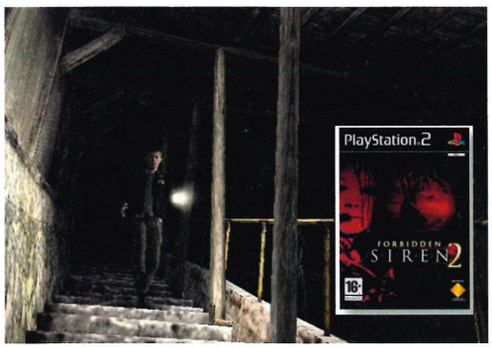
05 OBSCURE II

What you get: We gave it 7/10 last issue, now step into Amy and Corey's 'sneakers' as they look for their mates in a blood-soaked hospital. Chuckle at their corny one-liners! Scream at the gruesome aberrations thirsting for your blood! And perhaps, even, touch the flower...



06 OKAMI

What you get: A full 45 minutes of one of the most beautiful games to grace the PS2. Sniff your way through the tutorial, dig around Shinsu Fields or bark at the mighty Crimson Helm in this unique Japanese roleplayer where you play as a goddess disguised as a white wolf.

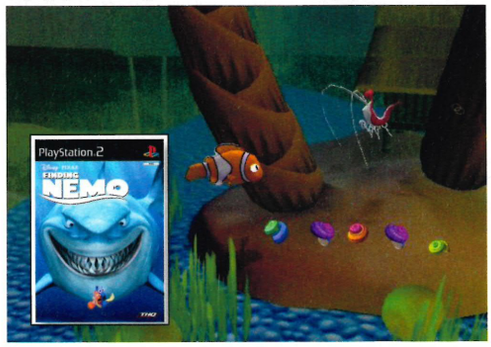


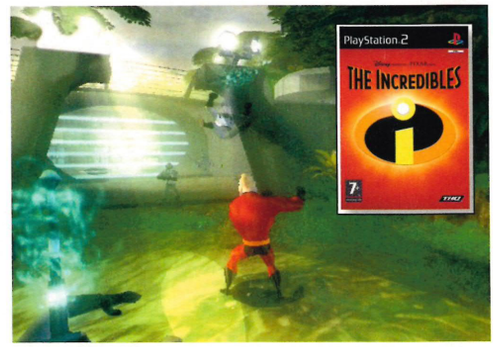
07 FORBIDDEN SIREN 2

What you get: Like Japanese horror films? *The Ring*? *The Grudge*? *Pulse*? Then you'll love this demo. Learn how to survive cursed islands full of ghosts and zombies – a useful skill, considering you're on one.

08 FINDING NEMO

What you get: Too much scary stuff on this disc? Hands shaking in fear? Suspicious damp feeling in your boots? Well, good old Nemo will make your world cute and fluffy again as you swim through the first level of his voyage, collecting the shells and shrimps.





09 THE INCREDIBLES

What you get: Play as Daddy Incredible as you punch, kick and body-drop your way through the Robot Arena. Squash all enemies that get in your way, and test drive a flying saucer. But remember: no capes!

DEMO DISC EXTRA

DISC CHALLENGE

03 FIREFIGHTER FD18

Fire. A trademark of Mother Nature's wrath. Giver of cooked food, taker of chopped wood. We all love a good fire – when it's under control.

But the second that sucker takes charge, no one's safe. So it's with these thoughts, and fresh from a family barbecue, that we decided *Firefighter FD18* should be the subject of this month's disc challenge. It'll teach you always to be prepared and not to play with matches and all that kind of very important stuff – and oh yeah, it might be fun too!

If you manage to beat the standards we've set, you could bag yourselves some prizes. One lucky winner will collect three top-notch PS2 games and an OPS2 magazine T-shirt. Three runners-up will each get a game and an OPS2 T-shirt.

CONTROLS

Ⓧ: Dodge
◎: Spray hose/Use axe
Ⓐ: Fire impulse hose

Left thumbstick: Move

R1: Change hose nozzle (spray/converge)
R2: Reset camera

L1: Move/direct water
L2: Crouch

SELECT: Open the Equipment menu

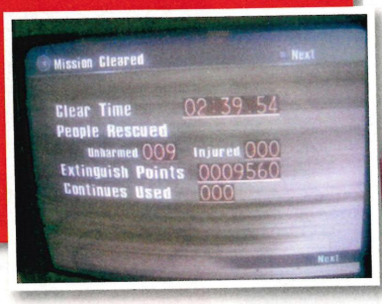
THE CHALLENGE

Load up the *Firefighter FD18* demo and you'll be thrown straight into the job. A raging inferno has broken out in a road tunnel (with an unusual amount of fuel tankers in it). You must fight against the flames and rescue all nine survivors in the first part of this level.

The challenge is to beat our time of two minutes, 39 seconds, 54 milliseconds. In the event of a tie, the person with the highest number of Extinguish Points wins.

Snap your score on your phone, attach it to an MMS and text CHALLENGEDISC (then a space) followed by your name and where you live to 07738 647177.

Texts are charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 16 August to 12 September 2007. We will not advise non-winners of the results.**



TOP TIPS

Fighting fires isn't easy, so here are some tips

In the game you are partially immune to the flames, so you can run through patches of fire to get to the survivors. However, red flames will severely damage your health, so avoid them! If you do catch on fire, shake the left stick to put it out.

Your hose has two nozzles; one creates a direct beam of water, the other sprays water everywhere. Stick to using the direct nozzle, because it's easier and quicker to control. Hit Ⓐ to use the Impulse hose (a quick burst of high-pressure H_2O) for some extreme firefighting action.

Sometimes the smoke and fire fills the screen so much it'll hypnotise you into thinking no one's there. Wrong! Pay attention to your radar! Survivors are green dots radiating with fear. Hurry!

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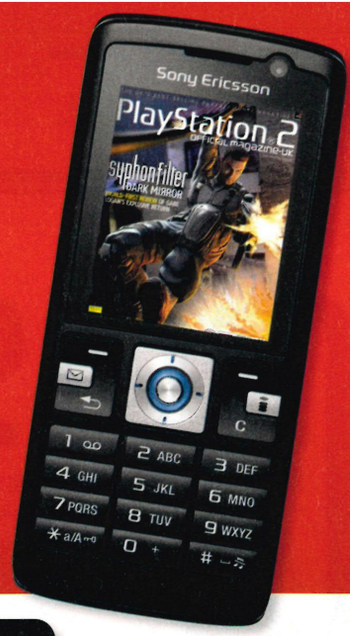

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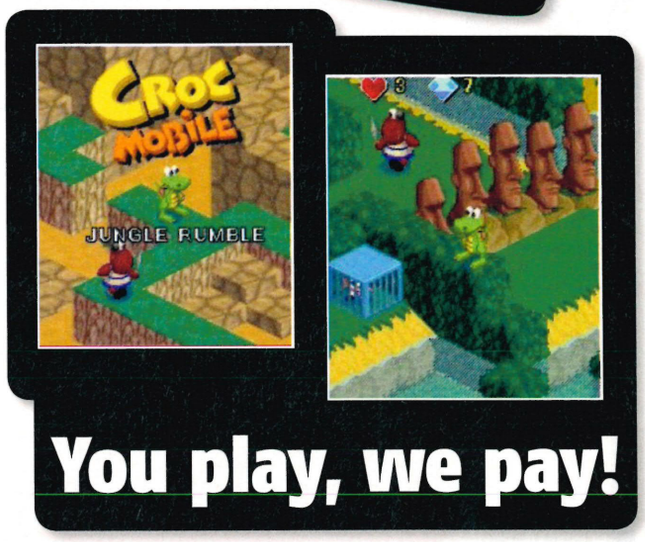

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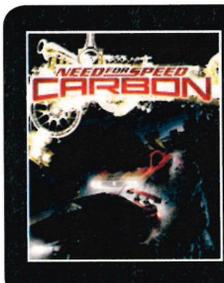
Luke, Leia and friends get the Lego treatment

RAINBOW SIX VEGAS
Tiny terrorists are still dangerous. Take 'em down!



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postal

THIS MONTH: WE HEAR FROM A DAD, A DEVIANT AND AN XBOX360 OWNER...

Write: Postal, Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, *Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Email: ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk*

WIN THIS!
This month, any letters published here will win an awesome PS2 game plus an OPS2 Magazine T-shirt. The writer of the Star Letter will receive four games and an OPS2 T-shirt. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.

star letter

FATHER KNOWS BEST

As a supposed crusty (44) and a dad to four boys aged 15 down to 7, I felt compelled to put an oar in as regards the *Manhunt 2* debate.

Right off the bat I have to say that I haven't played *Manhunt* nor do I have any interest in the new game because it's not my kind of game. So as to whether it should be banned, or not, I don't know.

However I do enjoy first-person shooters and a plethora of genres and have done my fair share of all-nighters finishing the *Hitman* games, *Black* and any amount of violent, visceral games.

As a responsible parent I do keep an eye on what my children play, though. And because I know my kids, I do allow them to play some games and watch some movies that other people may consider inappropriate for their age.

I rarely have to censor what my children play. They have been raised with morals and common sense and crucially I know that they are balanced, mature enough and psychologically able to understand the games they play or the movies they watch.

Then again, would it be too hard for games publishers to tone their games down a little, knowing that a very large number of people for whom the game was never intended might play it? Morally there may be the question of: just because we *can* produce something like that, *should* we?

I for one would be unhappy if I thought there was a direct link to a violent act upon my child by another who quoted a love of violence nurtured by games or movies, even though the rational side of me would know that there were other factors involved.
Gary Crittenden, Chatham

Agreed. Parents should be the decision makers when it comes to what their children should be exposed to. But sadly, not all parents are. Many a time have we seen grandparents walk into a store with 12-year-old grandchildren and walk out with an 18-rated game.

The risk of Manhunt 2 *falling into the hands of underage kids is too great. The thought of legions of 10-year-old boys around the country whipping their Wiimotes around in a simulation of garrotting someone sends shivers up our spines.*

RABID RACER

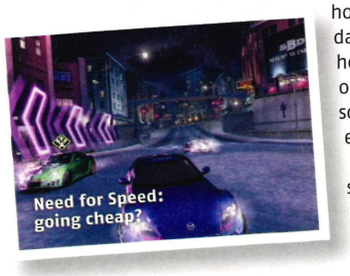
Well, that's it, the *Need for Speed* we all know and love is gone forever. Damn you, EA, don't you understand? We don't need another realistic, track-confined, change-the-pressure-in-your-tyres-to-make-you-go-faster, la-dee-da racing simulator. There are too many as there is.

Now that *NFS* has changed to a cheap version of *Gran Turismo*, what games are left to teach us kids how to drive dangerously and how to chav up our future cars so we can annoy everyone else?

The only street racing games left are the really crap ones like *Juiced*. If EA wanted to update the series why didn't it take inspiration from *Midnight Club*?

Like getting rid of those glowing pink walls blocking off roads, making the racing challenging or having a road layout that actually looks realistic instead of a '*Need for Speed* city' where they've designed it just to piss you off.

So if you're reading, EA, bring back the classic *NFS* or else. I am a gamer on the edge!!!
Sam Mason, Horton Heigh



Change is a scary thing, Sam, but as one of the developers for a popular racing sim commented to us recently: "If you don't like our new direction, why don't you just play the older games?" Anyway, we've played the new NFS *(see p42) and we think you'll learn to love it.*

Robert Plant, email
I had a dream the other night, or rather a nightmare, where I was in an abandoned hospital alone with Pyramid Head from *Silent Hill* for company. Since that night, I'm afraid to go to sleep. Please send me some advice on what to do?

We recommend Falling Stars *(reviewed on p95).*

Nick, email
Glad to see that that Mike Sterry's got a haircut. He looked like he needed a trim.

Robert Dickinson, email
Despite your apparent nominations for Balthier as the coolest *Final Fantasy* character he just makes me think of the Fonz from *Happy Days*.

DISTRESSING DELIVERY

WHAT WE WERE REALLY TROUBLED TO FIND IN OUR SACK THIS MONTH

How far would you be willing to go to get your hands on fantastic game? What would you be willing to do? I bet no one would go as far as I did a few months ago...

When *Final Fantasy XII* was released, I really wanted it. In fact, I had pre-ordered it, only to discover nearer the time that I didn't have the money for it.

I needed £50, and fast. So when a friend bet me £60 to soil myself in school assembly and provide evidence afterwards, I gladly did the deed, collected my £60 reward. I enjoyed *Final Fantasy XII* complete with strategy guide and I even had £10 to spare.

Again, just so you understand: I soiled myself for £60.
Graeme Stevenson, Belfast

We're unsure whether you're telling porkies or not, Graeme Stevenson from Belfast, but we've burned your original letter just to be safe. If you are telling the truth, there's no need to send us any 'evidence'.

GOD OF GUFFAW

I recently read your review on the promotion of *God Of War II* by using the Battle of the Gods website (OPS2#85). I was on a computer and couldn't resist having a look at it.

It was ace! Me and my mates couldn't stop laughing at the Barbarian King killing Chubby Kratos. Please, if there are any more game promotion websites, feature them in your next mag. Thanks!
Jason Vickers, Mexborough

No worries, Jason, if there's any PS2 silliness to report, you can be sure to find it here first. For anyone who missed it first time round, see Chubby Kratos and co at www.battleofthegods.tv

MICRO SOFT, SONY STRONG

I've got to admit to you that I am an Xbox 360 owner. That is, until a fateful day last week when I got the dreaded three red lights flashing on the front of the console meaning there was a hardware problem!

I immediately switched on my PS2 and went back to good old *Guitar Hero*. There's no red flashing lights on a PS2!

So I guess when it comes down to it, Sony beats Microsoft hands down, and I can admit that. Please print this to show people that Sony rules!
Kris McNair, Glasgow

WRITER FACE OFF

Last issue, we controversially came out in favour of the censors' decision to ban *Manhunt 2*. Many of you didn't agree with us. Now veteran games journalist Martin Kitts, one of only a few people who've played the game, offers his own opinion.

Are you capable of choosing your own forms of entertainment? Perhaps you believe you are experienced enough to distinguish between something you will find distasteful and something you will enjoy watching, reading or playing. Perhaps you believe you have the maturity and intelligence to cope with the poorer decisions you may take. Perhaps you believe you are a responsible adult.

But your self-confidence is irrelevant. The BBFC's banning of *Manhunt 2* is an unequivocal statement: on this issue, you are incapable of making your own decision. Whether or not you actually wanted to play the game, the ban sets an unwelcome precedent that affects us all, and can only further the demonisation of the art form.

The mainstream media does not yet understand videogames. And when an organisation as well-respected as the BBFC rules that a game is simply too dangerous to play, it only serves to reinforce a stereotype.

The fact that a censor has had to step in and tell us 'enough is enough' means they were right about *Grand Theft Auto*; they were right about *Doom*; there really is an industry that trains children to become killers.

In the early 1980s, a number of low-budget horror films were banned as 'video nasties'. The justification for locking them away was much the same as it is now for *Manhunt 2*.

Being a more mature art form, cinema suffered little long-term harm from that short-lived witch-hunt. Some of those films were re-released uncut and are regarded as classics of their now-legitimate genre.

Those who blanched at Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* would run screaming from today's 15-rated slasher flicks. But has society become so morally bankrupt that images once thought capable of corrupting anyone who saw them are now acceptable entertainment for teenagers? Or were the censors simply wrong?

The *Manhunt 2* ban is celebrated by people who do not appreciate that videogames are poised on the threshold of something spectacular, as film was at this stage of its evolution. To say that this fledgling medium can be a menace, rather than educate parents on the importance of age ratings, is sadly misguided.

And even if something unfortunate happened to your PS2 – say, you accidentally yanked it off the shelf after a frustrating time at God of War II *on Titan difficultly (ahem) – it's a hell of a lot cheaper to buy a replacement.*

THE MOON, A STICK

Why the hell is Rockstar so obsessed with setting the *Grand Theft Auto* series in Liberty City and Vice City? I wish they'd use somewhere more interesting such as London or create a futuristic place instead of sticking with the past or present.

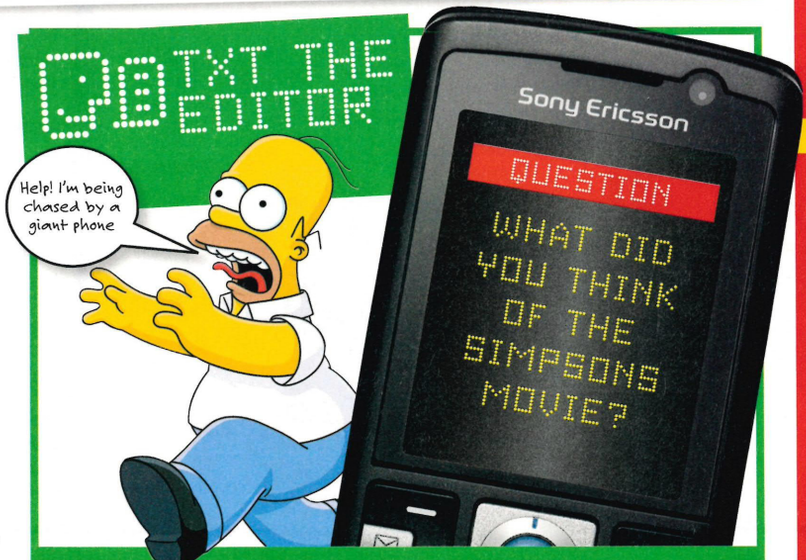
Also, don't you wish there was a *Super Smash Brothers*-like game with all the famous PlayStation characters?

Just imagine Ratchet beating the living daylights out of The Boss from *Metal Gear Solid 3* with his omni-wrench, and there being loads of *Final Fantasy* characters to choose from, such as Sephiroth or Kadaj.

Dougie Brown, Abu Dhabi

Sorry Dougie, have to disagree with you about GTA. *What's boring about Liberty City and Vice City? But a PS2 spin on Nintendo's* Super Smash Brothers, *incorporating the console's biggest stars – what a 'smashing' (ahem) idea that is!*

TXT THE EDITOR



TXT 87103 OR SEND YOUR PICS TO 87738 647177

Be sure to text 'TXTNICK', then a space, then your message or picture

Last Month's Question:

"SHOULD MANHUNT 2 HAVE BEEN BANNED?"

DUZ THAT MEAN I GOTTA GO TO BOLIVIA TO BUY MANHUNT 2?
MANHUNT BANNED? WHAT NEXT? GTA4!?!?!
HARRY POTTER SHUD B BAND - BOOKS R WELL BORIN
I AGREE WITH THE MANHUNT 2 BAN. THAT IS ALL.
I CANT WAIT FOR HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS GAME. WHENS IT OUT?

BAN MANHUNT 2? NO! NYET! NIEN! NA! NE! NON! NAE! NEJ! MAI! IIE! OCHI! MHAI!
THEY SHOULDNT HAVE BANNED MANHUNT 2. IT'S LIKE FREE SPEECH, INNIT
IF I CUD CAST ANY SPELL I WOULD CAST INCENDIO ON THE NEIGHBOUR'S CAT
I WUD CAST J-LO BUM ON MY GF SO SHE WUD HAV A BUM LIKE J-LO
THAT GIRL ON YOUR COVER LAST ISSUE IS STARING AT ME WHEREVER I GO

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YOUR GAME IN LIGHTS

Got an idea for a game? Design a cover, tell us what it's about and send it in!*

A GUN IN MY POCKET

DESIGNER: **Luke,** Pontprennau

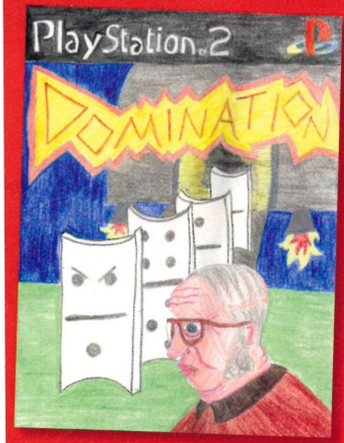
THE CONCEPT: Bob Chuckster is London's Most Wanted. He is a killer and robber. With only a neckerchief and a pair of sunglasses to hide his identity, you must: escape the police, break into Sharon Osbourne's house, kill one of the Osbournes and destroy the police station.

WE SAY: We're worried about you, Luke from Pontprennau. What did the Osbournes ever do to you?

DOMINATION

DESIGNER: **Joanne Curtis,** Pontypridd

THE CONCEPT: Domination is set in the not-so-distant future and involves the invasion of Earth by dominoes from space (evil ones), led by their queen: The Dominatrix. The game is a puzzle platformer with RPG elements, and has intense scooter-driving segments.



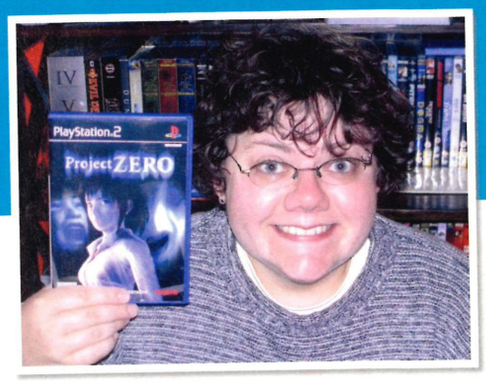
WE SAY: Intense scooter-driving segments in which you knock over giant sentient dominoes? Sign us up!

**We had a ton of entries this month, so if you're game wasn't featured here, check next issue. Also, don't miss our game box design competition on p72!*

letters

READERS RECOVER RARE GAMES!

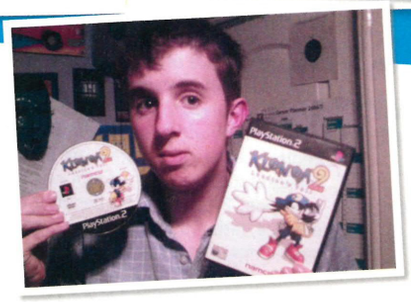
In Issue 87, we asked if you happened to own some of the rarest PS2 games in existence. We were so surprised by the size of the response we had, we're beginning to doubt if the games in question should have ever been considered rare in the first place!



This is me with my prized copy of *Project Zero*, the only one of your rare games I own. My pride at seeing my good taste vindicated almost knows no bounds! I can confirm to all and sundry that it is the most terrifying game yet in existence, and thus my fragile nerves can only cope with playing it in short bursts.
Grace Hughes, Vale of Glamorgan

I have three of the 11 rare PS2 games you listed: *Project Zero*, *Gregory Horror Show*, and *Zone of the Enders 2*. I also have *Final Fantasy VII*, but I couldn't find it. Here's a photo of me with the games.
Toby Corke, Brighton

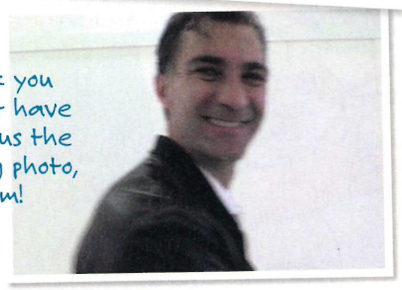
Here's a photo of me holding three of the rare games mentioned in your feature. I did have *Baldur's Gate II* and *Project Zero* but I traded them in recently for next to a pittance. Shame! Thanks to your feature I will be looking to make some money on *Castlevania* because it is holding a good price at the moment.
Neil Horton, Branston



You asked for pics, well I've got one. Here's me with my copy of Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil. First played a demo on the disc that came with my PS2. My parents really liked it so they bought it, but have hardly played on it since.

Re: 'Can You Spot The Hidden Treasures?' in Issue 87. Here's my own PlayStation collection.
Ben Leslie, Bedlington

I know that they're not exactly as you wanted but my boyfriend and I do have 10 of the games in your feature. See if you can find the impostor! My personal favourites are *Space Cannel 5.2*, *Gregory Horror Show*, *Rez* and *Amplitude*.
Olivia, London



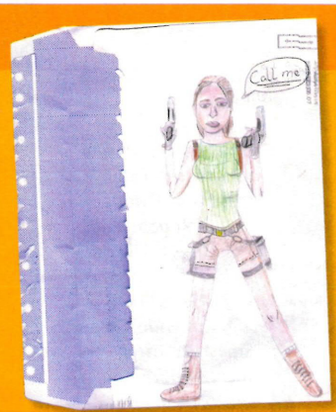
I have got *Rez* and here's a picture.
Callum McCutcheon, West Molesey

I loved your article on hard-to-find, quality games. I've been trying to find *Rez* since I got my PlayStation with no joy, but I was sure some of the names on your list rang a bell. So off I went to my local secondhand shop, and what did I find? *Project Zero* and *Zone of the Enders* for £2.99 each! Thanks for the insight.
Lee, Rugby

SEND US STUFF LIKE THIS!

Thomas Fretwell's stern-looking RPG fella!

Dale Bulloch's expressive interpretation of the next *Pro Evolution Soccer* cover!



This creepily seductive Lara Croft, who taunts us, since she never gave us her number in the first place!

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2007th HEAVEN

Oodles of new PS2, PSP and PS3 titles were unveiled at the E3 games show in San Diego. From Pro Evo to Pursuit Force, Mercenaries to Metal Gear, there was something for everyone at the industry's annual knees-up. To help you make sense of it all, here's our pick of what you'll be playing in the next year...

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! BIG WILLY UNLEASHED

ETA SPRING 2008

WEB WWW.DESTROYALLHUMANSGAME.COM

More *Carry On Close Encounters* coming soon

If you're going to release a game called *Big Willy Unleashed*, then you're going to need the balls to back it up. Otherwise you'll be left dangling in the breeze. Okay, enough jokes about the risqué name for the third *Destroy All Humans!*; will it live up to the high standards set by previous outings?

This time around it's in the hands of Locomotive Games, a newbie in the development world with only the PSP version of *Cars* under its PlayStation belt. Good news for our favourite human-fragging franchise? Well, let's just say we're reserving judgement until we're in Crypto's space-boots once again.

Big Willy Unleashed takes place in a typically funked-out 1970s setting. The summer of love has been and gone, and the Reagan era is looming like a fat man over an 'all you can eat' buffet, but the world is still docile enough for Crypto to run riot once again.

The big new feature this time around is Big Willy, a giant robot/mech. He seems to be kind of like the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man from the film *Ghostbusters*, which means you'll probably end up roaming the city using him to smash, stamp and punch anything that moves.

You'll be able to take to the air in Crypto's flying saucer and break out the usual array of alien weapons, including the anal probe gun. Expect plenty of hapless animals to throw around and prom queens to atomise, too.

MERCENARIES 2: WORLD IN FLAMES

ETA Q4 2007

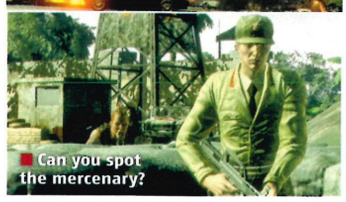
WEBSITE WWW.MERCS2.COM

We're all fired up about it

We saw a great deal of raw *Mercenaries 2* gameplay at E3, especially the return of the original three characters from the first game, now fleshed out with a back story and their own reasons for being caught up in the coup d'état in Venezuela.

In line with the mum-wouldn't-approve theme, we watched as the player tosses a grenade into some foliage and initiates a raging forest fire. You can also deploy Daisy Cutter-style ordnance to clear forests to make an impromptu clearing for landing in. Just don't tell Greenpeace.

The original *Mercenaries* was subtitled 'Playground of Destruction', but nonetheless there were some glaring oversights in the destructible environments department.



This time around, the developers' motto is evidently: "If you can see it, you can destroy it." And as we watch the player's helicopter lay waste to a gigantic oil rig, we couldn't be happier about it.

WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2008

ETA AUTUMN 2007

WEBSITE WWW.THQ-GAMES.COM/UK/GAME/SHOW/1069

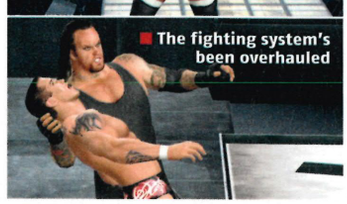
Bigger, better and sweatier

Yes, yes, you know all about the upcoming *WWE SmackDown vs Raw* instalment, but in case you've been living under a rock for the past few months, here's a summary.

Each wrestler has a primary and secondary fighting style, which both have advantages and disadvantages. Styles include Dirty, Powerhouse, Brawler, Technical, High-Flyer, Submission, Hardcore and Showman. Special moves are based on the primary style.

There's a new struggle submission system whereby you can apply certain amounts of pressure into a submission move by moving the analogue stick.

So far, confirmed wrestlers on the roster include Triple H, Umaga, The Undertaker, Jeff Hardy, Kane, John Cena and Rey Mysterio. So, with a lot more thought going into the fighting ethics, *Smackdown vs Raw 2008* is set to be one of the most engaging and intelligent wrestling games to date.



spy

PS2 News & More

GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

EDITOR'S CHOICE PlayStation.2 Official Magazine-UK

ETA NOVEMBER

WEB WWW.GUITARHERO.COM

Third time plucky

Okay, it's *Guitar Hero*'s fourth outing in a mere two years, but anticipation for the plastic axe-wielding series has never been higher. You're hungry for more rock, we're hungry for more rock: the whole freakin' world is desperate for more rock.

And that's exactly what we're going to get with this game. As the title suggests it's all about the Legends Of Rock, present and past.

Fresh tunes by the likes of Muse ('Knights Of Cydonia') and Smashing Pumpkins ('Cherub Rock') will mingle with hair-metal anthems by Kiss ('Rock And Roll All Nite') and Alice Cooper ('School's Out').

Weezer's 'My Name Is Jonas' will mingle with rap-metal such as the Beastie Boys' 'Sabotage', and classic rock such as Heart's 'Barracuda'. Mmm... widdly.

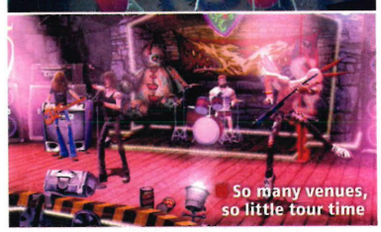
There'll be a finger-bleeding 45 tracks, although we don't yet know whether this number includes insanely difficult bonus tracks like the 'Freebird' and 'Trogdor' of previous iterations.

You can tackle Career mode solo or with a buddy in co-op. However, duets may lead to disagreements about who gets to use the sweet new Gibson Kramer guitar controller. Its sleek black body makes the old-style axes look like the kind of cheap, Taiwanese knock-offs you'd stumble across at a car boot, so be prepared to splash out for a whole new pack. Trust us – it will be yours. Oh yes. It will be yours.

On screen, there's been a whole lotta change too. Pandora, Lars and the other characters we know and love have been given makeovers, of course. But whoever you choose, you'll have to hold your stage against not only the audience, but also a raft of rock bosses, who you'll have to defeat to progress through the game.

The first confirmed boss? Poodle-haired fret-maestro Slash, of Guns'N'Roses/Velvet Revolver fame. The rest are anyone's guess right now, but we're crossing fingers for Eric Clapton and – judging by the artwork we've seen – Lord Hendrix himself.

Why's the drummer in the foreground? Wrong!



So many venues, so little tour time

DANCING STAGE SUPERNOVA 2

ETA AUTUMN 2007

WEBSITE WWW.KONAMI.CO.UK

Enhanced online play is the major attraction in this dancemat sequel, now supporting up to four players who can all use EyeToys. There's also a new Hyper Master mode to keep obsessive players satisfied and a bunch of fresh (as yet unspecified) tunes. But overall this is more of the same from Konami's legendary series – and that's fine by us.

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL: SING IT!

OUT SEPTEMBER

WEBSITE WWW.DISNEY.CO.UK

Oh my god, like, don't you *so* totally *love* that film *High School Musical*?! Wouldn't it be, like, *so totally awesome* to sing along with the cast in the songs from both films, like *SingStar* but with, like, all those *totally awesome* Disney songs?!? Oh. My. *God*!! Like, you *so* will be able to in this game!! It's *so* like *the most super-awesome thing EVER*!!!!

There's more action than in the first game

20 playable characters include talking animals

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

ETA SEPTEMBER 2008

WEB WWW.ADISNEY.GO.COM/NARNIA

No witches. No wardrobes. May contain a lion

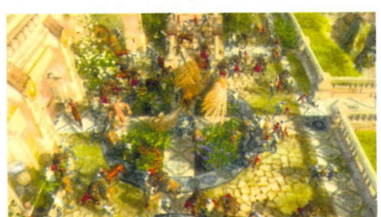
The first *Chronicles Of Narnia* game wasn't great. Soulless adventuring, shoddy set pieces and dull gameplay marred it like teenage acne, so it bombed at retail.

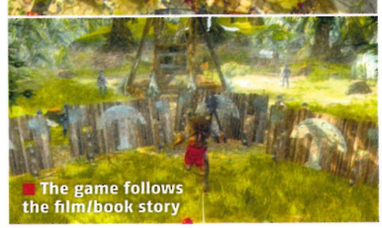
To be fair, though, the first Narnia film wasn't exactly action-packed so making the game must've been a thankless task.

But the next *Chronicles Of Narnia* film, *Prince Caspian*, is on the (distant) horizon. It's much more battle-heavy, with a young lad fighting to regain his rightful throne (a theme that may have been seen before in a videogame). So this game adopts a more action-centric stance, although it will retain the same structure as the first.

You'll have the chance to play as 20 characters including non-human Narnians, and drop in/drop out multiplayer will mean up to four players can tackle the story mode at once.

The levels have gone non-linear, too, so you'll be able to tackle them in whatever way you see fit. We're hoping this means the game offers more freedom than being able to take two samey-looking routes through each stage, but we won't know for sure until Prince Caspian sails onto our PS2 next year.





The game follows the film/book story

BEE MOVIE

OUT CHRISTMAS

WEBSITE WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

Jerry Seinfeld, Renée Zellweger and a story about a bee suing the human race: it all adds up to a box office smash for *Bee Movie* when it hits cinemas this Christmas. But will it make a great game? The early signs are hopeful, with a trailer showing plenty of fast-moving chase'n'race action and a brightly coloured world for kids to explore.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008

ETA OCTOBER

WEB UK.GAMES.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

The beautiful game takes a dive... literally

Just as certain as night follows day and as Frank Lampard gets selected for England no matter how anonymous his last appearance, every October brings about a new edition of *PES*. This year is no different, although the series' new name may catch you off-guard – you won't be inviting your mates round to play *PES 7* because its proper title is *Pro Evolution Soccer 2008*.

The cover might not have you spraying champagne around the dressing room, either. In an announcement that had Team OPS2 kicking chairs as if the World Cup happened yesterday, Konami has signed up soccer villain Cristiano Ronaldo to front the game in Europe (perhaps aware that this would have British fans flocking to rival *FIFA*, they've got Michael Owen for the UK box, though).

So it seems appropriate that one of the main features unveiled for the PS3 version of *PES 2008* is the ability to dive. We're not entirely sure how it'll be implemented yet – it could be contextual, it could be that you hit a specific button to 'accidentally' slip over.

Konami is working to get as many of the next-gen innovations like this into the PS2 version as well. That means a load of new skills and moves should be available, as well as a host of improved tactical options.

You want examples? We got 'em. How's about being able to choose which of your team stand in the defensive wall on free kicks? All 10 outfield players can be lined up (remind them to cover their 'special areas') if you're feeling especially paranoid about an impending Bobby Carlos humdinger.

And in a move we've been pleading for seemingly since the days when Teddy Sheringham was a Millwall youngster, you can now specify which players go up for corners. Yep, even your keeper can be thrown into the opposition box in times of desperation (so, every set piece if you're playing as Charlton...)

The signs are that the best footy sim on the planet just got even better – other than the glaring omissions of Plymouth Argyle and Crystal Palace, of course, but you can't have everything.

For some reason, Konami has made Ronaldo the star of the show

Here he is not scoring any goals against England

Oh look, there's Ronaldo again. Great

THE SIMS 2 CASTAWAY

ETA TBC 2007

WEBSITE WWW.THESIMS.EA.COM

Life really is a beach

The Sims has come a long way since it first moved into the PS2's neighbourhood. Once a rather dry life-simulation, it has spawned a *Pets* edition, an urban spin-off (*The Urbz*), and now it's going all Robinson Crusoe on us.

The Sims 2 Castaway is, as it sounds, a *Sims* game set on an uncharted desert island. Washed up on the shore after what we can only guess is some kind of plane/boating/reality TV accident, your sims will have to adapt fast if they expect to survive long enough to be rescued.

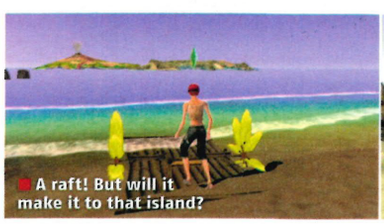
This means scouring the island for food to fill their bellies and materials to fashion living quarters from. You'll even have to fashion tools for your sims to work with. And look, is that a second island in the screenshot below?

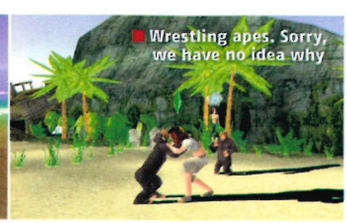
However, surviving is only half the game. The island itself will be filled with mystery items and valuable treasures for you to track down, so once you've 'gone native' you'll be encouraged to scour your surroundings for secrets. While you search, you'll discover new plants, fruits, and even tropical wildlife – all of which you'll be able to use in some way to supplement your castaway lifestyle.

'Intrigued' doesn't quite do justice to our feelings towards this game. If EA delivers on even half its promises for *Castaway*, this will easily be the finest *Sims* game to ever wash up on the PS2's shore.

Yarr! All aboard for some shipwreckin' fun

It's all smiles until the food runs out...


A raft! But will it make it to that island?


Wrestling apes. Sorry, we have no idea why

FIFA 08

ETA SEPTEMBER

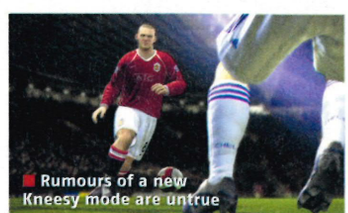
WEBSITE WWW.EASPORTS.COM

It's a people game

This year *FIFA* is all about individualism. Each virtual player will think and react as their real-life counterpart would.

So Arjen Robben is more likely to fanny about with the ball instead of passing it, whereas Stevie Gerrard is more likely to have a crack from distance. In theory, anyhow.

Whether or not EA takes the time to implement these kinds of idiosyncrasies in the lower-league players remains to be seen. But speaking of that, there are now 30 leagues in the game from around the world. So whatever your team – even if it's Swindon Town – it should be in *FIFA 08*.


Rumours of a new Kneesy mode are untrue

MX VS ATV UNTAMED

ETA JANUARY 2008

WEBSITE WWW.THQ.COM

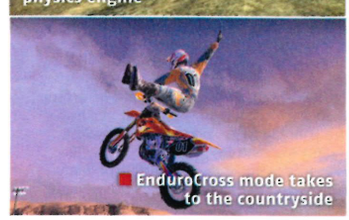
Like *Unleashed* but more untamed

MX vs ATV Untamed will appear on all PlayStation formats early next year. It will include a new EnduroCross mode that challenges you to tackle rough rural circuits littered with logs, mud pits and plenty of suspension-ruining rocks.

Developer Rainbow Studios is keen to show off its new physics engine, so expect to be thrown and shaken vigorously by the fiendish new courses.

We expect all the modes and options that were available in *MX vs ATV Unleashed* will be included too, but there's been no official word on this yet.

There's a new physics engine


EnduroCross mode takes to the countryside

PURSUIT FORCE: EXTREME JUSTICE

ETA AUTUMN 2007

WEB UK.PLAYSTATION.COM

A PS2 sequel to a PSP favourite

If you like a bit of over-the-top Hollywood action in your gaming, then 2005's *Pursuit Force* was the title to turn to. It didn't offer the most sophisticated gameplay, but the speed and sheer no-brainer thrills provided us with instant and spectacular fun of the sort that eludes many titles.

It was just a shame that it happened to be an exclusive for the PSP. But chin up, loyal PS2 owners: not only has a sequel been announced, *Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice*, but it will be gracing the PS2 as well as the handheld.

It's hard to believe, considering the ludicrous stunts that were in the original game, but developer BigBig Studios claims that *Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice* is going to be even more extravagant than its predecessor and with increasingly more elaborate, movie-style set pieces.

The core of the game remains the same: driving vehicles at high speed and then leaping heroically onto other vehicles.

But in the sequel you'll be swinging from train carriages and hurling yourself from jet planes in bigger, faster and more outrageous ways – situations so outlandish that you'll make *Die Hard*'s John McClane look like an old man hobbling around moaning about his joints.

So, while there has been no massive overhaul to the mechanics of the game, *Extreme Justice* has fine-tuned the on-foot sections and added a very welcome extra in the form of multiplayer modes.

On handheld, this means four-player WiFi; on PS2 we can all look forward to some split-screen entertainment in a couple of months when it hits shops.

Seeing *Pursuit Force* upgrade to the big screen of the PS2 is great news. A game with such explosive qualities deserves to be seen on the biggest TV possible. In fact, you might say it will do *Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice*, er, justice.

We'll get our hands on it next issue and let you know how successful the transition has been.

ALSO ON SHOW...

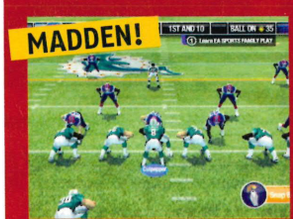
The best of the rest of E3 on PS2

All the major publishers had their prize PS2 games on display at E3, and there's a hell of a lot to look forward to in the next couple of years. American sports fans will be pleased to hear that EA's Madden NFL 08 and NBA Live 08 were both on display. For those who prefer their sport a little more urban, there was a chance to see the PS3 version of Tony Hawk's Proving Ground,

from which we can guess a little of what the PS2 game will be like.

The full-featured skate video editor won't make the jump to PS2, but you will see cuts, bruises and, after a time, some meaty scars on your virtual skater. We're also promised new Nail-the-Trick modes and a new RPG-influenced Career mode.

Take 2 WAS showing NHL 2K8 and the ice hockey franchise is looking cooler than ever. And, while we're still on the subject



of sports, Oxygen announced that PDC World Championship Darts 2008 will be lumbering onto PS2 by the end of the year.

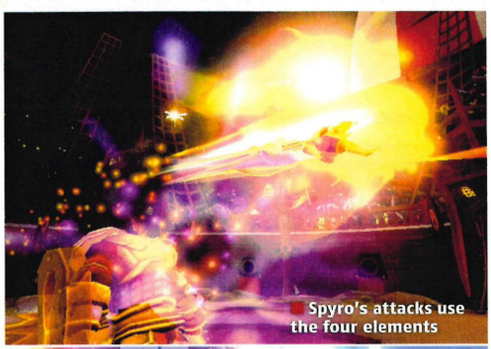
If you prefer your chunky blokes to be a little more proactive, you'll be tingling with excitement to know that Midway is bringing wrasslin' title TNA iMPACT to PS2 in an attempt to rival the insanely popular WWE SmackDown series.

Namco Bandai surprised no one by announcing Naruto Uzumaki Chronicles 2 is

on the way to PS2, and will probably arrive by Christmas. We're still playing the first one, dagnabbit!

Also hitting our shops around the festive season will be The Golden Compass, Sega's game of the film of the book that we showcased back in issue 86. Meanwhile Crash Of The Titans, the new Crash Bandicoot game is shaping up nicely.

There was a healthy dose of weirdness from Midway in the form of Aqua Teen Hunger Force: Zombie Ninja Pro Am, a slice of hardcore two-wheel action in Capcom's MotoGP 2007 and a fistful of kiddy games, among them Konami Kids' Playground and Disney Princess: Enchanted Journey. So, 2008: shaping up to be another great year for your PS2.


Spyro's attacks use the four elements

He's not so cute when he's angry

The action's bright and cheery as ever

THE LEGEND OF SPYRO: THE ETERNAL NIGHT

ETA OCTOBER 2007

WEB WWW.SPYROTHEDRAGON.COM

Back on a wing and a player

It's the second part of the little purple tyke's comeback trilogy, and after the previous game, *New Beginnings*, restored Spyro to much of the glory he'd been starting to lose, we have high hopes for his new outing, too.

This time around, Spyro's being haunted by freaky visions of doom and gloom. You must help him figure out what these visions mean and stop Gaul the Ape King from resurrecting the Dark Master because that's the kind of thing that creates serious bad karma.

In between *New Beginnings* and *Eternal Night*, Spyro's been working out. He now has four breath attacks (using the elements fire, ice, electricity and earth) and four melee and aerial attacks, and he even goes a bit *Prince of Persia*, using 'Dragon Time'; to bend time to his will.

Besides all of these new attacks and abilities there'll be more head-scratching puzzles to overcome; something that fans felt was lacking a bit in the first chapter. It looks set to keep you warm all winter.

PSP AT E3

GOD OF WAR: THE CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

ETA CHRISTMAS

WEB WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/GODOFWAR_CHAINSOFOLYMPUS/

Tiny, but still mighty

Everyone loves a good yarn. And the best stories are those of damned souls and tragic heroes. Well, in this respect, the *God of War* melodrama certainly delivers.

And yet there's more to add to the intoxicating legend that is Kratos, the Ghost of Sparta and the mortal who killed a god, and the latest chapter is heading PSP-wards.

Set before *God of War I*, Kratos has declared himself the Champion of the Gods in an effort to absolve his bad ass of his sins through gruelling servitude. Not an easy task, seeing as the world has just been plunged into darkness (for reasons unknown) and the gods have been rendered powerless.

So the gods send Kratos to the Underworld to face the most gruesome and horrific monsters in all of Greek mythology. Yes, including chapters 14 and 15 of *The Odyssey*.

It's an ambitious undertaking to bring the epic nature of *GOW* to the handheld console, but the team at developer Ready at Dawn are certain they'll be able to squeeze everything into this fun-sized port. It includes new brutal attacks, new locations such as the Gates of Hades and the Depths of Tartarus and, most importantly, guts and gore.

There'll be the same mix of fast-paced blood baths and mind-boggling puzzles that we know and love from PS2, as well as mighty boss battles with screen-filling monsters.

Kratos, as we know, could do with a spot of anger management training, but judging by the blood-spattered monster-mangling in this game's trailers, he hasn't signed up yet.

One clip shows Kratos plowing through waves of enemy (or, at least, stupid) soldiers and a Cyclops. Cyclops is then eaten by a fearsome and really rather large Basilisk, which then tries to have Kratos for dessert.

Evidently, Ready at Dawn is delivering its promise of 'a never-before seen experience on the PSP'. It's statements like that that make our knees go weak and thumbs get itchy.

The only bad thing about having *GOW* on your PSP, of course, is that you're likely to embarrass yourself by inadvertently yelling 'I AM THE GOD OF WAR!' outside the privacy of your own home.

Boss battles will be as exhilarating as ever

The graphics use all the PSP's power

The scale remains epic even on handheld

JEANNE D'ARC

ETA AUGUST 2007

WEBSITE WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/JEANNEDARC

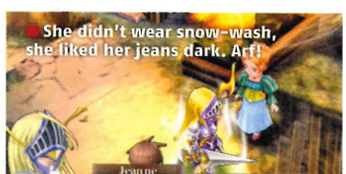
Zut, elle est vachement badass!

Remember the Hundred Years' War? In the 15th Century? Where France was trying to drive out the English after English Kings claimed the French throne? Of course you do.

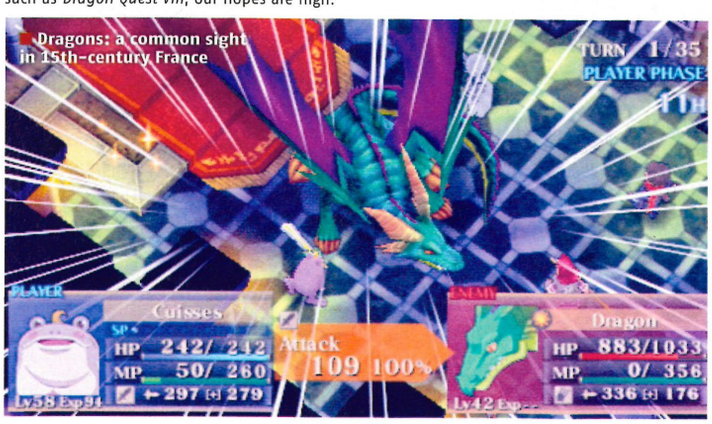
Surely, then, you also remember how a 16-year-old girl called Jeanne won the war by defeating the Demon King using a magical armlet created by five ancient mystical heroes?

Okay, so developer Level 5 has taken a few liberties with history and revived that age-old touchy subject of England vs France as a real-time tactical roleplayer. But it might just work.

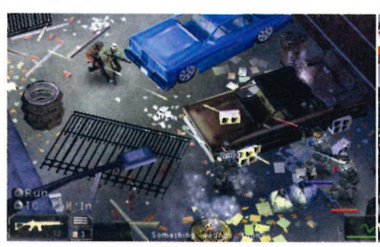
Cel-shaded *Jeanne D'Arc* promises over 40 hours of play, deep skill customisation and multiple characters to battle with. And given that Level 5 is responsible for crowd-pleasers such as *Dragon Quest VIII*, our hopes are high.



She didn't wear snow-wash, she liked her jeans dark. Arf!



Dragons: a common sight in 15th-century France



Multiplayer maps can be randomly generated

SWAT TARGET LIBERTY

ETA OCTOBER 2007

WEBSITE WWW.SIERRA.COM

Near to the mark

If, like us, you love gritty TV cop drama *The Shield*, you're probably still fuming about the cack-handed effort that was recently passed off as a tie-in PS2 game.

Well, we can't give Vic Mackey his dignity back, but we can look forward to playing *SWAT: Target Liberty* on PSP.

Why? Because the game is penned by Scott Rosenbaum, who also writes the TV version of *The Shield*, so the two projects have a very similar feel.

There's action, but the focus is on non-violent solutions

How many times do we have to tell you? Black hat!'

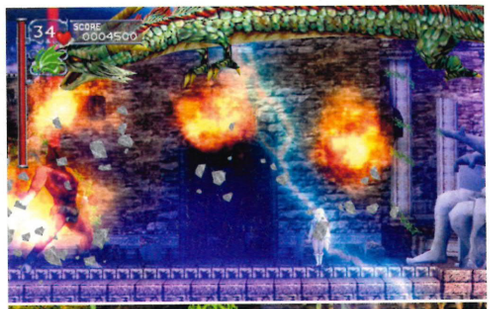
The game is a tactical shooter played from the top-down perspective, so no need to worry about overcoming that awkward lack of second thumbstick.

You play as genero-hero Kurt Wolfe, leader of New York's finest SWAT team. The aim is to rescue hostages and take down bad guys with as little loss of life as you can manage. You're actually rewarded for completing missions with as little violence as possible.

Because the single player mode randomly generates enemy positions every time you play, *Target Liberty* should be slightly different every time you load it up.

Similarly, the multiplayer mode gives you the option to create maps randomly, so each versus game takes place on a level playing field. Interesting stuff.

The remade *Rondo of Blood* looks stunning



CASTLEVANIA: THE DRACULA X CHRONICLES

ETA AUGUST 2007
WEB UK.GAMES.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

Three-on-one vampire action

In case you didn't know, there are two types of *Castlevania* game: the traditional, side-scrolling, hard-as-nails platformers that hail from the NES era and elegant, roleplay-infused games such as the PS1's *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* and its subsequent Nintendo DS spin-offs.

Well, okay, there are three types if you count any of the forays into 3D, but we don't. They're rubbish. *Castlevania* is best served as a 2D experience.

And that's what makes this remake of 1993's *Akumaj Dracula X Chi no Rondo* (*Castlevania: Rondo of Blood* to the layman) so confusing: it's a seemingly 2D side-scroller gorgeously rendered entirely with 3D models.

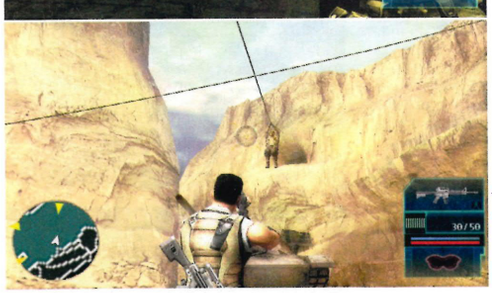
That aside, this is as purebred and perfect as 2D platformers get. You play as Richter Belmont, the latest in a family renowned for keeping Dracula at bay over the centuries.

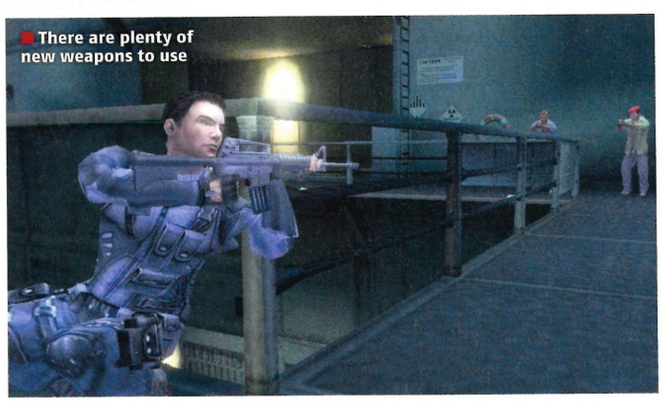
Armed with the famed Vampire Killer whip, Richter wades (with big, manly strides, like he's breaking in a new pair of pants – we're a bit unsure about his new walking animation, actually) through stage after stage of progressively more gruesome enemies. The game's purity of vision is only matched by the gritty splendour of its updated visuals.

The most exciting news about *Dracula X* though is that the UMD includes, entirely free of charge, a copy of the oustanding PS1 title *Symphony of the Night*. Heck, they could release *SotN* as a standalone PSP port and we'd buy it. Twice.

Konami isn't making a big deal about it, oddly. Or about the way it's charitably included the original version of *Rondo of Blood*, too, which only ever appeared on the obscure Japan-only PC Engine console. Three *Castlevania* games on one UMD? Sign us up.

Gabe can now blind fire from behind cover




There are plenty of new weapons to use

SYPHON FILTER: LOGAN'S SHADOW

ETA SEPTEMBER
WEB WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/LOGANSSHADOW

I spy with my little PSP...

Syphon Filter is one of the PSP's biggest success stories. After gathering a massive following on PS1, the series went dark, resurfacing once to regurgitate the decidedly average *Omega Strain* on PS2.

But then *Dark Mirror* came to PSP, and our love affair with Gabe Logan and pals was quickly rekindled.

Logan's Shadow takes place after *Dark Mirror* and sees Gabe having doubts about his former partner Lian Xing. Is she really a double agent, or is Gabe just paranoid?

Either way, you'll have to travel all round the world and shoot through plenty of terrorists to get to the truth. For this new outing Logan has brought some fresh weapons, including sticky mines, flashbang grenades and rocket launchers.

He's got new skills too, having learned how to blind fire from cover and take hostages to use as human shields.

The game also promises full underwater exploration and the ability to perforate fellow divers with a harpoon gun, so we're assuming there will be some shipwreck searching involved at some point. Nice!

Could this be the best terrorist-tickler ever to grace a handheld? Find out next month when we put mini-Gabe through his paces in our review.

And if you can't wait that long for some *Filter* action, check out our exclusive PS2 *Dark Mirror* review on page 82.

ALSO ON SHOW...

The best of the rest of E3 on PSP

Despite the fact that Sony showcased the all-new PSP at E3 (see p26 for more details), the accompanying line-up of software was weaker than granny's tea with extra milk.

Konami bravely rolled out its portable pants-ruiner Silent Hill Origins, which is looking foggier and more frightening than any game in the series yet. Origins reminds us of the earlier Hills, before the series

HILL!

went rotten with The Room, and that can only be a good thing. Konami also handed out the first screens and info on its comic tie-in Hellboy: The Science Of Evil. Should be a solid game, and we've got fingers crossed it won't end up on the handheld slag-heap like other superhero titles.

Sony had a competent PSP showing, too, as you'd expect from the makers of the

HELL!

console WipEout Pulse and SOCOM Tactical Strike proudly took centre-stage. The sequel to Pursuit Force, Extreme Justice, was knocking around too, and looking damn near finished. Check out our preview of the PS2 version on p19.

Meanwhile, during the Sony press conference, a man in a Chewbacca outfit was dragged on stage to plug Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron, Activision's show-stopping PSP exclusive

STAR WARS!

Finally, PacMan Rally was also shown for PSP, delivering another swift kick to the little yellow fella's already bruised and bleeding dignity. For shame.

KILLZONE 2

ETA 2008

WEB WWW.GUERRILLA-GAMES.COM

Sights set for success

E3 was awash with first-person shooters, almost too many to keep track of. However, there was one particular FPS that means a great deal to a lot of folks: *Killzone 2*.

In 2005, when the PS3 was all speculation and endless potential, the trailer for *Killzone 2* was unveiled as a demonstration of just what the new box of tricks would be capable of.

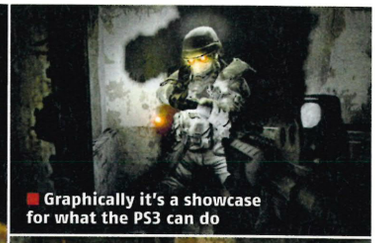
Two years later and the gaming world has evolved massively, but *Killzone 2* is still held up as the FPS poster boy for PS3.

It's rare for an E3 game trailer to be placed under really intense scrutiny but the 2007 *Killzone* footage (which was in-game) was subject to analysis bordering on the forensic: does the lighting look as good as the CG demo? Are the characters as detailed? Can it manage the same graphical effects that we were promised way back when?

Such investigation seems harsh, but shows how much people want *Killzone 2* to be good.

And is it? Well, from what we've seen, it looks fantastic. The ominous setting (if rather typically dark) comes courtesy of your new battleground: the Helghast homeworld, Helghan. This hostile planet will be as much of an adversary for you and your ISA Special Forces squad as are the Helghast themselves. Which says a lot, considering the sophisticated AI of your enemies.

Killzone 2's enemy AI is remarkably sophisticated



Graphically it's a showcase for what the PS3 can do

The action's set on the Helghasts' home planet

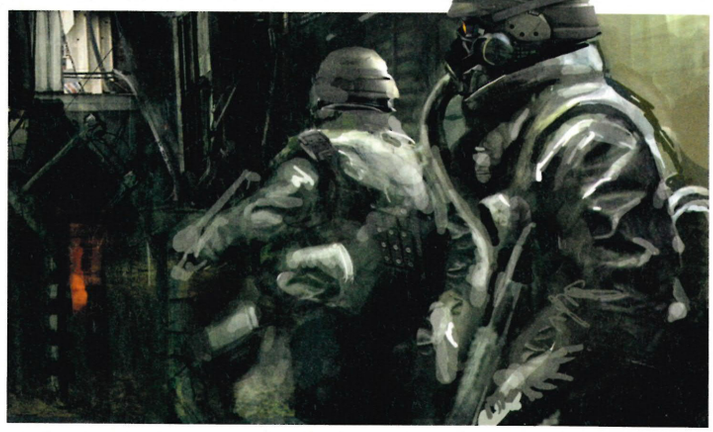
Killzone 2 promises environments that are not only destructible but respond dynamically to the planet's conditions – something to which your Helghast enemies have adapted so that it now works in their favour.

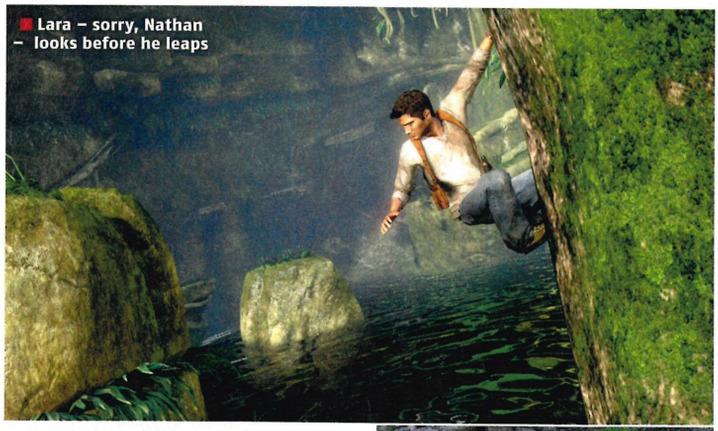
This huge disadvantage to you makes it all the more satisfying when you fill the red-eyed creeps with lead and watch their bodies dance as the bullets hit.

It's not all uphill, though. A sophisticated cover system lets you hide behind bullet-pocked walls and pillars before popping out to shoot at the oncoming hordes.

But don't cower for too long, because from what we've seen the scenery is deformable, so you'll soon find yourself horribly exposed.

There's still plenty of time for other FPS titles potentially to take off some of the shine. But right now, *Killzone 2* is rightly anticipated as the hottest shooter for PS3.





Lara – sorry, Nathan – looks before he leaps

UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

ETA WINTER

WEBSITE WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/UNCHARTED

Drake your own way home

Who's Drake and why should you care about his fortune? Well, he's Nathan Drake, star of this game, fictional descendant of real-life famed explorer, famous player of bowls and slave trader (boo) Sir Francis Drake.

But there's no prancing around in pantaloons here. *Uncharted* is about furious gunplay, brutal fisticuffs and shimmying across lost cities. Yup, packing heat and a full set of ledge-gripping fingers in his search for the fabled treasure of El Dorado, wise-cracking Nathan is all man.

And as we watch him gun his way through a pack of modern pirates (some of whom sport eye-patches) in a gorgeously realised jungle, bounding across ancient ruins and swinging on vines, a thought pops into our heads. Dude Raider, anyone?

BURNOUT PARADISE

ETA NOVEMBER 2007

WEBSITE WWW.CRITERIONGAMES.COM

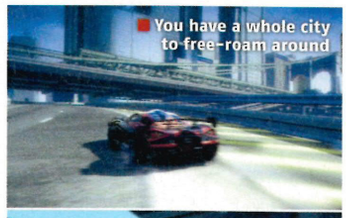
Taking you down to Paradise City

Think you've seen everything the crash-tastic *Burnout* series has to offer? Think again.

Criterion has completely redesigned its super-fast racing series for PS3. Now, instead of forcing you to zip around preset tracks, an entire city has been opened up to tear around.

You scour Paradise City looking for other cars to race against or traffic-chocked streets to turn into Crash Junction opportunities.

Every event you complete helps you unlock new content. There are signature takedowns to hunt and fresh cars to capture for your virtual garage. No news yet on multiplayer, but we're sure Criterion has something nice up its sleeve.



You have a whole city to free-roam around

SILENT HILL V

ETA 2008

WEBSITE UK.GAMES.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

The hills are alive – well, undead

Silent Hill V is creeping up on PS3. Number five in the great survival horror series (not counting *Origins*, which is mere weeks away from release on PSP) has you filling the shoes of war veteran Alex Shepherd, who returns home from battle after hearing reports that his younger brother has gone missing.

Naturally, Shepherd's trail soon takes him to the town of Silent Hill, and... you know what happens next, don't you?

Combat is undergoing a revamp, with more focus being placed on defensive moves, and puzzles are set to be trickier too. Lashings of fog are a given.

War vet Alex Shepherd is your main man this time

Oh dear, someone's going to have a bad chair day

HEAVENLY SWORD

ETA SEPTEMBER 2007

WEB WWW.HEAVENLYSWORD.COM

Goddess of War, anyone?

This is a game we've been salivating over since we first clapped eyes on it. And after sampling the demo Sony showed us, we wished we'd come wearing a bib.

For one thing, it's achingly beautiful to look at. Ginger goddess Nariko moves with alien grace as she dispatches the hordes of enemies on hand – hell, we'd let her decapitate us anytime.

Her Heavenly Sword can be detached and assembled into three different forms, corresponding to three different combat stances, each of which is suited to a particular class of enemy.

Join the sword together into a clunking two-hander to cleave larger foes in twain or divide it into a swirling, chained blade to sweep through lesser enemies... you get the idea.

Then there's Nariko's spacey sister Kai, who can be deadly with a crossbow – if you manage to pull her away from her imaginary friends, that is.

Ranged combat, via Kai's crossbow or Nariko's penchant for hefting and chucking corpses about, causes the camera to swing behind the projectile and follow it to its destination – during which time slows down and you're able to direct the projectile by tilting the Sixaxis.

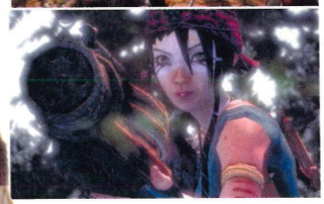
It's a neat effect and often essential, such as in one scene we saw where Kai was surrounded by dozens of enemy archers as she hung upside-down from a broken tramcar.

Then there's *Heavenly Sword*'s take on the so-fashionable 'match button presses to on-screen symbols' event. Whether it's guiding Nariko as she pelts it down giant, plinth-supporting ropes towards a pack of swearing swordsmen or ending an enemy's life with a gory finisher, these bits are the most spectacular of their type that we've seen this side of *God of War*.

Question is: can *Heavenly Sword* hold a candle to Kratos' fantastic, gore-flecked legacy on PS2? Only time will tell.

Nariko's sword can be altered to suit different types of enemy

Heaven is a sword in high resolution



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

ETA Q1 2008

WEBSITE UK.GAMES.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

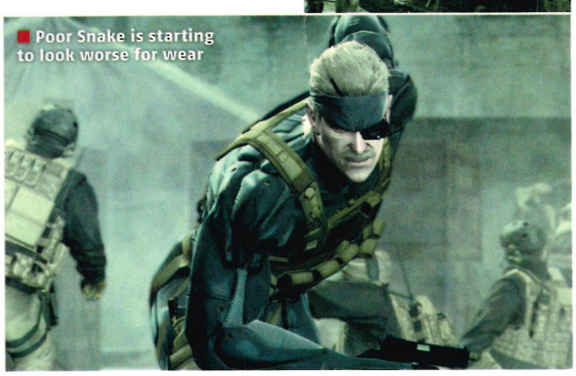
Gearing up to be special

In typical fashion, the new *Metal Gear Solid 4* trailer at E3 included no scenes of actual gameplay; rather, it was series of mouth-watering cutscenes edited together.

But neither did it skimp on the surprises. Notably, we spotted two blasts from *MGS* history, Meryl Silverburgh (Snake's squeeze from *MGS1*) and Vamp (knife-throwing, possibly undead nutter from *MGS2*).

Then there was Snake himself. Although *MGS4* only takes place five years after *MGS2*, Snake has already wasted away to an old man thanks to cellular degeneration caused by the faulty cloning process that gave him life.

But hang on, you cry, didn't we see a young-looking Snake briefly in the previous trailer? Yes. So we can't wait to find out what that's about...



Poor Snake is starting to look worse for wear

The series' trademark humour remains...

...but this time it all looks flippin' amazing

RATCHET & CLANK FUTURE: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

ETA AUTUMN

WEBSITE WWW.INSOMNIACGAMES.COM/GAMES/RCFTOD.PHP

Back to the future

After its more than reasonable PS3 launch title *Resistance: Fall Of Man*, Insomniac Games has turned its attention back to one of the most enduring and loved PlayStation franchises, *Ratchet & Clank*.

Tools Of Destruction is set to offer the same quirky humour, outlandish weapons, mad-ass gadgets, richly detailed worlds and characterful enemies that characterise the rest of the series – only in next-gen.

The game looked spectacular at E3. Think *more* weapons, bigger and *shinier* levels, *badder* baddies and *worse* jokes. The core gameplay looks to have changed little, but that's no bad thing and this is still one of our most-wanted PS3 titles.

EDITORS CHOICE PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

ALSO ON SHOW...

The best of the rest of E3 on PS3

The world and its wife had a PS3 game to show off at E3. The level of quality varied wildly, but for every identikit shooter there was a potential classic. Here's our pick.

Capcom proudly revealed a trailer for Resident Evil 5, which is looking very much like Dawn Of The Dead. It was sat next to Devil May Cry 4 – a similarly impressive next-gen prospect.

CONDEMNED!

Staying with the theme of monsters and horror, Sega proudly displayed the brutal CSI-style game Condemned 2: Bloodshot, and Codemasters unveiled more on its terror-shooter Clive Barker's Jericho.

Midway was building up hype for alien frag-fest Area 51: Blacksite, which was sat next to the always-impressive Stranglehold, a game that lets you tear through New York's Chinatown as Inspector Tequila from the *Hard Boiled* films. It's looking great.

FALLOUT!

Also promising was Bethesda's Fallout 3, a game that's being hailed as Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion in a post-apocalyptic world. We can't wait for more on that one.

Another one to add to your 'could be a classic' list is Quake Wars: Enemy Territory, one of the most handsome and frantic online shooters we've ever seen. Even the mighty Unreal Tournament 3 (which will be PS3 exclusive for a limited time) didn't quite manage to match its beauty.

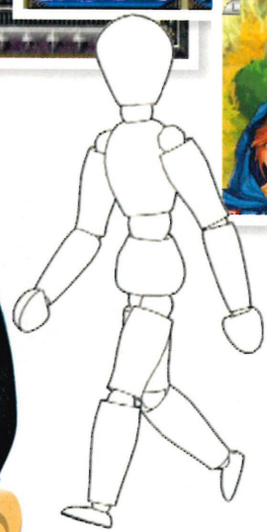
CALIBUR!

Elsewhere, RockBand rocked our world with its four-way guitar, drum and voice joy, Soul Calibur IV showed its calibre, and Assassin's Creed snuck quietly into our 'must buy' list. Stealthy.

Then there was the awesome Call Of Duty 4, the amazing Haze and the decidedly ropey-looking Bourne Conspiracy and many, many more.

spy

The rather excellent **Puzzle Quest: Battle Of The Warlords** is coming to PS2. Here it is dealing +10 cerebral damage on the PSP



echochrome

Ever wondered what it would be like to play an Escher sketch? Well, it looks like we'll find out when Sony releases bizarre puzzle game **Echochrome** on PS3 Network later this year

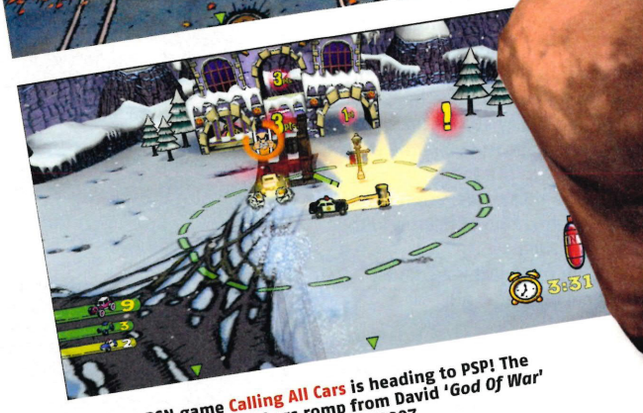
Remember **Final Fantasy Potion**, the soft drink released by Square Enix in Japan? Version two has hit Eastern shelves in this rather natty bottle

SNAPPED!

The future of PlayStation presented in pictures

Roger Avery, writer of the first *Silent Hill* film, has said that without Christophe Gans in the director's chair, he won't work on the **Silent Hill 2** movie. And since Gans has stepped down... oh dear

The sequel to handheld Hun-hoser **Medal Of Honor: Heroes** will be storming UK PSPs this winter



Popular PSN game **Calling All Cars** is heading to PSP! The multiplayer cops'n'robbers romp from David '*God Of War*' Jaffe will be available by the end of 2007

Love **Guitar Hero**, but hate the wire flapping when you're rocking out? Now you can strum at up to 25ft with Nyko's FrontMan wireless controller. Check it out at www.nyko.com

THIN AND GORGEOUS

PSP 2.0 IS HERE!

UK will score the new, slimmer PSP before the rest of the world

A new PSP in a Tokyo photo studio 9am this morning

Do not readjust your eyes: yes, you read correctly. Sony is poised to unleash the new, slim PSP on the UK in early September, and – here comes the mind-blowing bit – we'll be bagging the machine before the Japanese and Americans! Unheard of!

The new machine is a thinner, lighter version of the PSP with a few technical nips and tucks thrown in.

The screen and buttons all stay the same, but the actual casing for the handheld is thinner, its width shrinking from 23mm to 18.6mm. This means the battery pack has gotten slightly smaller too, but don't worry, its charge capacity of 10 hours or so remains the same. Phew.

The internal memory has been upped from 16MB to 32MB, which means it can store more information streamed from the UMD. In theory this should make for shorter loading times and better battery life (when the PSP accesses the UMD it drains power).

BACK IN BLACK

The new PSP will come in three colours: Piano Black, Ceramic White and Ice Silver. So you'll be able to pick a colour that coordinates with the rest of your portable media accessories.

There's no word from Sony yet on how much it will cost or exactly when it will be on shop shelves, though. Rumour has it that the price won't change, although some have suggested it may even increase to the amount it cost before the price cut we saw in the spring.

But as always, we recommend you treat this kind of hearsay with a pinch of salt.

Check back next issue for all the final details. ■ **AH**

The battery is smaller but the charge is the same

The PSP has lost 4.4mm from its waistline

WE WERE RIGHT! (KIND OF)

What we predicted last month...

spy

THE FUTURE OF PSP?

Big rumours about a new look for the little console

official magazine-uk PlayStation.2 025

Most of the rumours surrounding the PSP's redesign were well off the mark. The new portable still only has one thumbstick, annoyingly, and there's certainly no touch screen, built-in camera or slot-loading UMD drive.

However, the new model is much slimmer than the last one – something we predicted with Confucius-grade accuracy – and there has been a big hike in internal memory so the handheld can stream more data from the UMD at once.

So, we were right about some stuff, and the rest? Some day, friends, some day. We triple-guarantee it.

LIGHT AS A FEATHER

HE AIN'T HEAVY

...he's the new 30% lighter PS2

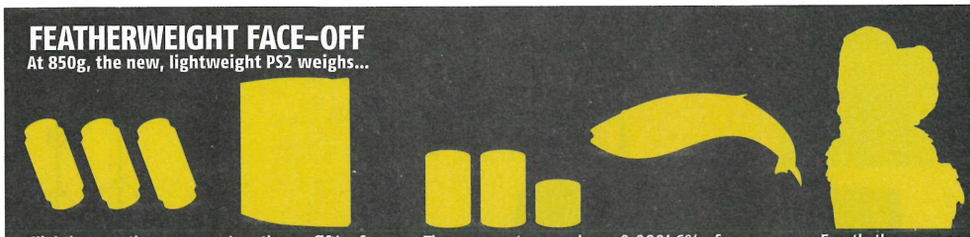
Great news for weaklings and game shop staff! Sony has reduced the weight of the slimline PS2 by roughly a third, replacing several key components with smaller, lighter versions.

The machine used to clock in at a respectable 900g, with the power supply adding a further 350g. That made around 1250g for the lot – enough to make Victoria Beckham green with skinny envy.

Now, that total has fallen to just 850g (600g for the console, 250g for the power supply). That means it's way easier to carry round a mate's house than a PS3. ■ **AH**

FEATHERWEIGHT FACE-OFF

At 850g, the new, lightweight PS2 weighs...



Slightly more than three PSPs (280g each)

Less than a fifth of a PS3 (5kg)

The same as two-and-a-half tins of beans

0.00046% of an average blue whale

Exactly the same as a Moluccan cockatoo

BOY, OH BOY

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

Results of July's Really Puzzling Genders quiz

Issue 87's gender-bending quiz got hundreds of entries, but the people who could tell the gender of every bender can be counted on a Moogle's paw. Well done Roxanne Deyer of Sudbury, Peter Haworth of Bristol and Carl Vose of Maidstone who truly know their Ys from their Xs (and are, evidently really, really, big roleplaying game fans). For the rest of you, here are the shocking results...

1 ♂ **Boy:** Say hello to *Disgaea 2*'s Adell, who doesn't really like girls very much.

2 ♂ **Boy:** Hard to believe, but Keldy from *Dawn of Mana* is a fella. Marginally.

3 ♂ **Boy:** A manly warrior with luscious locks: it's Ferrik from *Children of Mana*.

4 ♂ **Boy:** This is what happens if you choose the fighter class in *Makai Kingdom*.

5 ♀ **Girl:** All scurvy sea-dogs better be a-fearin Laura from *Unlimited Saga*! Yarr!

6 ♀ **Girl:** Surely you recognise Farris, *Final Fantasy V*'s lady pirate captain?

7 ♀ **Girl:** Lucca is a scientist from 1995's *Chrono Trigger*. And she's a chick.

8 ♀ **Girl:** Sassy kitty Mao is part of the *Shadowhearts: From the New World* gang.

9 ♀ **Girl:** This is *Disgaea 2*'s Yukimaru. And she *really* doesn't like boys.

10 ♂ **Boy:** Larsa, the future king of Arcadia in *Final Fantasy XII*. Also: a bit fey.

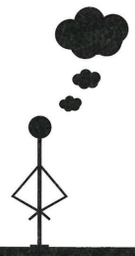
WHICH GAME CHARACTER ARE YOU?

Find out in our quick personality quiz

It doesn't matter how hardcore or casual a gamer you are, there really is something for everyone on PS2. And there's a character for everyone, too – someone to whom you can relate above all others.

So, who is your perfect on-screen partner? Who do you associate with the most? Are you an all-action hero or a shy, retiring type who prefers to use brain over brawn?

To find out, just answer the following 20 questions, tot up your score (explained at the bottom of the opposite page), then flick over the page to see the results. They may surprise you, but then again, they may not...



1 First, let's talk about you. Your **fondest childhood memory** is...

a) **Your first crush**
b) **Your first holiday**
c) **Your first pair of shoes**
d) **Your first kill**

2 Tell us about your **first pet**...

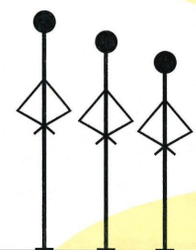
a) **I once had a hamster, but then I had an accident and we had to flush him down the toilet**
b) **Animals are my best friends, not my pets**
c) **Not that keen on animals**
d) **I still have him. He is a corpse called Richard**

3 Would you rather **rebel** against...

a) **The Man**
b) **The self-destructive nature of man**
c) **Fashion**
d) **Everyone**

4 In **10 years' time**, will you be...

a) **I dunno. Still mooching off my parents, I guess**
b) **Free as a bird**
c) **On the cover of *GQ* magazine**
d) **In charge**



5 How would you best **describe your friends**?

a) **Frat boys and ditzy girls**
b) **A solid bunch of comrades**
c) **Backup**
d) **Dead**

6 When you walk into a bar, what are you **most likely to order**?

a) **A beer for me, and a Sex-On-The-Beach for the cute blonde at the table in the corner**
b) **A coffee. I don't drink alcohol**
c) **Vodka on the rocks**
d) **A barrel of mind-melting wine and a pair of sexy slave girls on the side**

8 Speaking of dating, how would you describe your **ideal companion**?

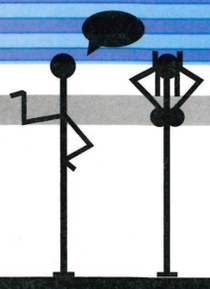
a) **Anything with a pulse**
b) **A quiet, sensitive soul with whom I can grow old**
c) **Fast mover, with nice, tight buns**
d) **Anything without a pulse**

7 You're lonely and decide to fill in an **online dating form**. What do you write?

a) **Perky young go-getter seeks member of opposite sex for fun and more**
b) **Shy type seeks like-minded soulmate for meaningful relationship**
c) **Can you compare to me? If so, get in touch, baby**
d) **Slave required for bustling harem**

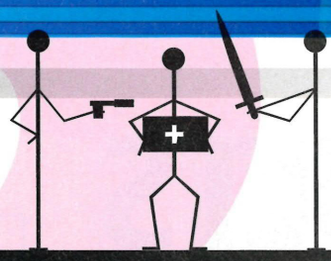
9 And **how do you act** around members of the opposite sex?

a) ***Snigger* You said 'sex'!**
b) **A little shy. I have confidence issues**
c) **In my element. Yeah, I know you're checking me out**
d) **'I'll just fetch my whips and chains...'**



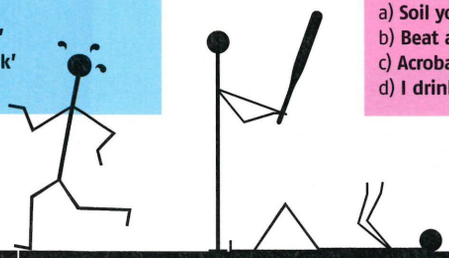
10 What's your favourite **chat-up line**?

a) **'I have money'**
b) **'May I buy you a drink?'**
c) **'You may buy me a drink'**
d) **'Kneel'**



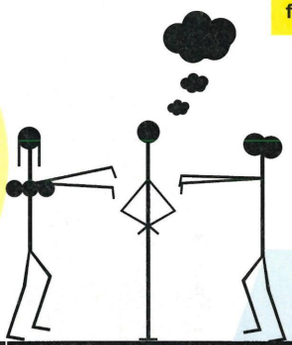
11 You're **surrounded by enemies** and down to your last medikit. Do you...

a) **Soil yourself**
b) **Beat a hasty retreat**
c) **Acrobatically leap to safety and shoot them all from above**
d) **I drink the blood of my enemies. That is all the medicine I need**



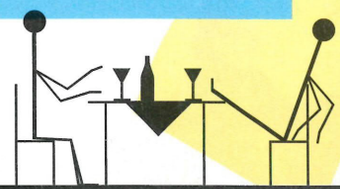
12 You see someone getting mugged on the street. **How do you react?**

a) **Run away: you're scared of getting mugged too**
b) **Take a photo for the police to use as evidence**
c) **Chase down the mugger and beat him**
d) **Pull out your knife and gut the mugger. Then gut the victim for being weak.**



13 Okay, instead of being mugged, what would you do if you saw **someone drop their wallet** on the street?

a) **Check no one is watching, pick up the wallet and spend the cash on clothes and booze**
b) **Chase them down and hand it back**
c) **They were careless enough to drop it, so it's fair game**
d) **Pick it up, chase them down and beat them to death with it. They are too weak to deserve money**



14 You're in a room with **monsters and undead abominations**. Your first thought is:

a) **Cool! Fancy dress party!**
b) **Run away!**
c) **Lime green scales and fangs are so last season**
d) **Must. Kill. Everyone.**

16 If you could have any **celebrity for dinner**, who would it be?

a) **Brad and Angelina – they're so hot**
b) **Captain Jack Sparrow – what a rogue**
c) **Colin Farrell – the only person alive who's as cool as me**
d) **Jade Goody – she would make a fine feast**

15 Your house is on fire and you only have time to **save one personal possession**. What would it be?

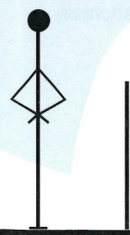
a) **Your address book, to stay in touch with your ex (just in case)**
b) **Personal photos, to remember your nearest and dearest**
c) **A treasured possession such as a guitar, rare artifact or idol**
d) **'Personal effects are for the weak. Besides, it was me who started the fire'**

19 **Love** is...

a) **Brief and awkward**
b) **All you need**
c) **Something I'm used to**
d) **Hard on the knees**

20 Finally, **you are**...

a) **A lover**
b) **A victim**
c) **Badass**
d) **Not okay**



17 A **wall** is...

a) **Something to urinate against after a heavy drinking session**
b) **A barrier that needs to be broken down**
c) **A challenge**
d) **A puny human attempt to keep me out of their homes**

18 Your **weapon of choice** is...

a) **My wit and charm**
b) **My brain**
c) **My trusty dual pistols**
d) **Whatever comes to hand**

HOW TO COUNT YOUR POINTS...
You get **1 point** for every time you answered **A**, **2 points** for every **B**, **3 points** for every **C**, and 4 for a **D**. Tot up your total, then turn over the page to see which game character you are... ▶

RESULTS

1-30

YOU ARE...
Leisure Suit Larry / Ashley from Resident Evil 4

You're not really the type to put your life on the line and save the Earth. You'd rather mess about, go shopping and hang around with your friends. You big softy. You're ideally suited to comedy games and equestrian sims. Alternatively, you'd be happy as a sidekick, letting someone else save your skin.

31-45

YOU ARE...
Jade from Beyond Good & Evil / Sora from Kingdom Hearts II

Despite being a world-saving hero, you're not afraid to show your sensitive side. Given the choice between fighting terror and having a chat about 'feelings', you'll plump for the peaceful option every time. You're best suited to quirky roleplaying titles and under-appreciated story-games.

46-65

YOU ARE...
Dante from Devil May Cry / Lara Croft from Tomb Raider

The archetypal action hero or heroine, you know how to kick ass and how to look great doing it. Your enemies quake in your presence, your friends want to buy you presents and your one-liners are as sharp as your shooting. You're ideal for blockbuster adventures and platformers.

66-79

YOU ARE...
Kratos from God Of War / Ivy from Soul Calibur

Aggression, pain and misery are your closest friends and if you could kill them, you probably would. However, despite being bitter, angry and borderline psychotic, you do have a shred of morality. You're most at home in dirty beat-'em-ups or hack 'n' slash games.

80+

YOU ARE...
Daniel Lamb from Manhunt 2

Stay away from us, you psycho.

you'd better

IMPORTABLE OPS

SOLID SNAKE SNUB

Japan gets **Metal Gear Solid 20th Anniversary** pack. UK to miss out

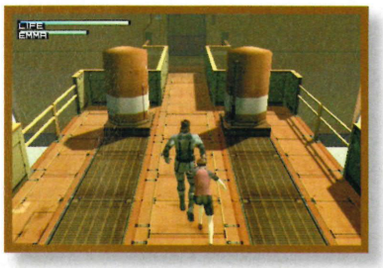
Solid Snake turns 20 this year and to celebrate, Konami is releasing a 20th Anniversary pack of Snake's stealth-stuffed *Metal Gear Solid* series in Japan.

It includes the original Famicom titles (*MGS1* and *MGS2*), *Metal Gear Solid* on PS1, *MGS2* and *MGS3* for PS2, *MGS Portable Ops* on PSP, and *Metal Gear Saga* on DVD.

No news on how much it'll cost, but judging by recent multi-game bundles such as the *Hitman* and *Silent Hill* collections, we're sure it won't strain Eastern bank balances.

Sadly, though, this cornucopia of Kojima is not planned for release in the UK. We reckon this is something that needs changing, and soon.

So help us petition Konami to release the game on these shores by filling in the form below and sending it to the address on p12. As a sweetener, we'll send a free game (not necessarily *MGS*) to the senders of the first three forms we get. ■ **AH**



Oi! Konami!

I'm partial to a bit of Solid Snake, and the news that the *Metal Gear Solid Anniversary Collection* is Japan-only fills me with deep sadness. I demand that you release this box set in the UK at once. If you refuse, I'll buy *FIFA* this year instead of *Pro Evolution Soccer*. You have been warned!

Yours angrily,

Name and address .....

.....

.....

incoming

Our guide to what's coming your way

AUGUST		
Buzz! The Hollywood Quiz	Party	Sony
Earache: Axe Attack	Racing	JoWood
Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks The 80s	Music	Activision
King Of Clubs	Mini golf	Oxygen
Premier Manager 2007/8	Sport	Zoo Digital
Stuntman: Ignition	Driving	THQ
Surf's Up	Sports	Ubisoft
Top Trumps: Dogs / Top Trumps: Horror	Party	Ubisoft

SEPTEMBER		
ATV Offroad Fury 4	Racing	Sony
Cars Mater-National	Racing	THQ
Crash Of The Titans	Platformer	VU Games
CSI: Dimensions Of Murder	Adventure	Ubisoft
FIFA 08	Sport	EA
Jackass The Game	Party	Empire
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	Racing	THQ
Madden NFL 08	Sport	EA
Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles 2	Fighting	Atari
ObsCure II	Horror	Playlogic
Painkiller: Hell Wars	Shooter	TBC
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	Action	Sony
Rogue Galaxy	RPG	Sony
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3	RPG	Atlus
Spyro: The Eternal Night	Adventure	VU Games
Valkyrie Profile Silmeria	RPG	Square Enix

OCTOBER		
High School Musical: Sing It!	Party	Disney
Naruto Ultimate Ninja 2	Fighting	Atari
Need For Speed ProStreet	Racing	EA
Phantasy Star Universe 2	RPG	Sega
Ratatouille	Action	THQ
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	Action	Sony

2007		
Alone In The Dark	Horror	Atari
Aqua Teen Hunger Force	Adventure	Midway
Bee Movie	Adventure	Activision
Ben 10	Adventure	D3 Publisher
Buzz! Junior: Dinos / Buzz! Junior: Monsters	Party	Sony
Dance Dance Revolution: SuperNova 2	Dance	Konami
Dawn Of Mana	RPG	Square Enix
Destroy All Humans! Big Willy Unleashed	Adventure	THQ
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 3	Fighting	Atari
Guitar Hero III	Music	Activision
Harvey Birdman Attorney At Law	Adventure	Capcom
Indiana Jones 2007	Adventure	Activision
Iron Man	Action	Sega
Lego Batman	Adventure	TBC
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	Action	EA
MotoGP 07	Racing	Capcom
MX vs ATV Untamed	Racing	THQ
Odin Sphere	RPG	Atlus
Orochi Warriors	Action	KOEI
PDC World Championship Darts 2008	Sport	Oxygen
Spider-Man: Friend Or Foe	Action	Activision
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Action	Activision
The Golden Compass	Adventure	Sega
The Simpsons	Adventure	EA
The Sims: Castaway	God sim	EA
TNA Impact	Wrestling	Midway
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Sport	Activision
Thrillville: Off The Rails	Sim	Atari
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2007	Fighting	THQ

THE LIGHT SIDE

BALLS UP

A new footy season is upon us and that means lashings of fresh games based on the beautiful, er, game. And of course the age-old debate about whether *FIFA* or *Pro Evolution Soccer* is superior.

SHOOTING STAR WARS

This month's epic *Star Wars* celebrations allowed Nellis and John to unleash their inner geeks. Check out our Ewok-rocking feature on p74 to see what they got up to.

GLEE 3

Although more downbeat than in previous years, the games industry's annual love-in, the E3 event, coughed up a wealth of new PlayStation games for us to get excited about in the rest of this year and next.

IN THE SABER

SUNNY DISPOSITION

No tans for us, we've been indoors redesigning the mag: you'll get your shiny new OPS2 next month.

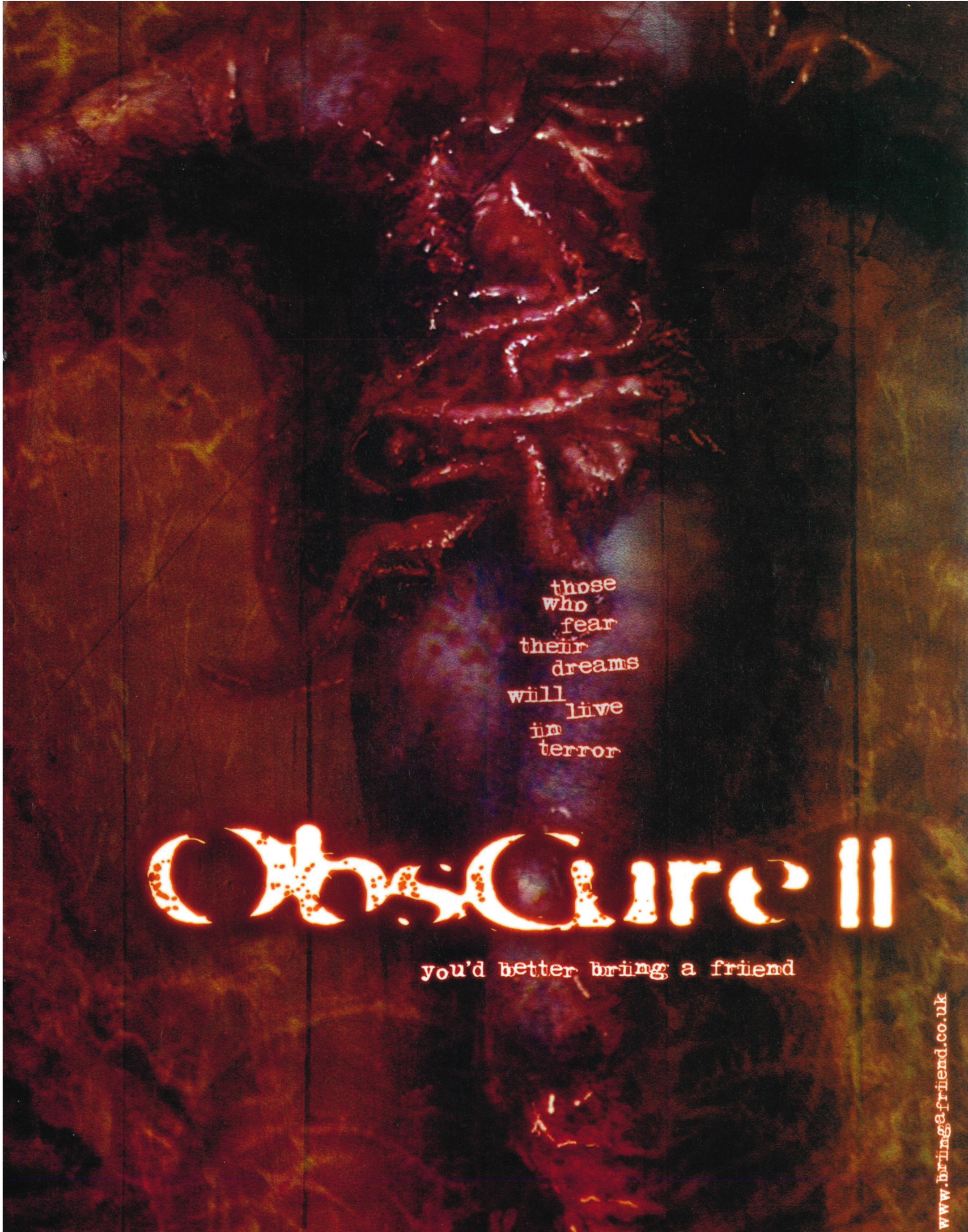
FIRMWARE FRENZY

Because of the inordinate number of PSP firmware updates released in July, we've spent more time trying to make our PSPs run all the latest games than actually playing them.

DRY SPELL

After realising that almost every team picture in the last issue featured some kind of alcoholic beverage, we've all been busy finding pictures of ourselves without booze for this mag. It was a tough challenge.

THE DARK SIDE


those
who
fear
their
dreams
will
live
in
terror
The Cure II
you'd better bring a friend
www.bringafriend.co.uk

DISABILITY AND PS2

START ACCESS ALL GAMERS

For people with disabilities, playing PS2 can be difficult or even impossible. But from adapted controllers to sight and sound mods, the technology is out there to make gaming more accessible

Daniel is crazy about PlayStation. But because he's paralysed from the neck down, he can't use the DualShock controller. His mum, Gillian, says that after the traffic accident that left Daniel disabled, the only way he could enjoy his favourite games was watching his friends play them.

He's just one of many people with disabilities who find that videogames and consoles simply aren't accessible to them.

That could be because they have coordination or dexterity issues that make it difficult to use a joystick or small buttons; or it may be that they are partially sighted, blind or deaf and so can't see or hear what's going on in a game.

There are nine million people in the UK aged 16 and over who have disabilities of some kind, and for those who love gaming it's devastating to be unable to join in the fun that everyone else takes for granted.

demand and dollars

Developers tend to focus on the far bigger market of able-bodied people for financial reasons. "It's not malicious," says Reid Kimball, a game designer who is deaf. "Some may say, 'we can't justify development dollars spent on making our games more accessible' but it's not because they are mean-spirited.

"They're trying to balance greater demand from players for next-generation gameplay, graphics, AI and physics and so on. When push comes to shove, accessibility features, which aren't as sexy as graphics, often get pushed off the schedule."

However, a disability doesn't necessarily mean you have to give up gaming. Hardware and software solutions are available and over the next five pages we'll look at some of them and what they do.

dexterity

If you have little or no control over your limbs because you're paralysed, for example, or have muscular dystrophy, tasks such as holding a PS2 controller can be impossible, let alone moving the joystick or rapidly pressing the buttons.

However, there is hardware available that adapts the controller to make it possible to use. The Dream-Gamer is one such device. It's a cap fitted with motion sensors that detect the movements of the wearer's head.

This motion-sensitive controller is worn on the head

The system was invented by Mark Heath and Dr Michael Taylor for six-year-old Daniel, who is paralysed from the neck down, after they were approached by his mum Gillian last year via the Round Table charity.

hat's entertainment

It was originally designed for Daniel to use with his radio-controlled car, but after Gillian told the makers how much he loved PlayStation, they adapted it to be used with the PS1 and PS2 in conjunction with their controller pads.

Michael explains: "We take the standard controller and connect four motion sensors to the left joystick. We also make a connection to the ⊗ button.

"So far we have mounted the motion sensors into a baseball cap because we originally designed the concept for Daniel, and Daniel could only move his head.

"But other people may have different requirements and, if we are asked to, we will build the control gear into a glove, or shoe, or anything else the user finds comfortable to use.

"Although Dream-Gamer is an adapted controller, the changes we make do not prevent [the DualShock] from being used as a normal controller by anyone else.

Daniel (right) wearing his Dream-Gamer cap

switchcraft

Inventor Barrie Ellis has worked with severely disabled people for 10 years. He says it is easy to make videogames more accessible by simply adapting existing hardware to work with 'one-switch interfaces'.

OPS2: How do one-switch interfaces work?

Barrie: If you're unable to hold a standard controller, but can perhaps use your head and feet to play, being able to split controls and put them where you need them makes a big difference. Switch interfaces do this in a versatile way.

It's possible to connect very specialised controls, such as large external switches and movement sensors, to computers and other electrical devices for ease of use.

My switch-adapted Namco Arcade Stick can be used in this way when connected to a PlayStation. It's especially useful to gamers who find a DualShock controller difficult or impossible to play with because it allows them to play in many different ways with different parts of the body.

OPS2: How successfully do they work with PS2 games?

Barrie: Switch interfaces can work brilliantly with videogames for many gamers, especially those that can deal with quite a few buttons or are happy to game as a team effort.

A number of games work very well, such as Everybody's Golf, Destruction Derby *and* Um Jammer Lammy. *There could be many more with a few extra menu options considered from the initial design.*

OPS2: Is it actually feasible to develop games with one-switch interfaces in mind?

Barrie: Definitely! Developers have already been making one-button games for mobile phones for years now, such as EA's Air Hockey *and GamEvil's* Stepping Stone. *The time is right for developers to consider including simplified control options for their games.*

On top of this, I strongly believe that there isn't a game out there that couldn't be modified to play with a single button. In fact, I'm aware of a university working right now on a one-button version of Half-Life 2, *using a variety of assistive modes.*

On my website, I'm campaigning for accessibility features in all games, trying to encourage game designers to think about making their games easier to understand and playable to more people.

For a mainstream designer to add a speed control to their game would constitute an accessibility feature. Hardcore gamers can ignore it, but those with slower reactions (which of course could apply to us all, eventually!) will still be able to play.

I'd love to see game designers add reconfigurable controls that take into account that some gamers might like to use an old-fashioned arcade stick, an old favourite gamepad, one-handed controller or switch interface to play.

I'd love to see designers adding a choice of difficulty level that really did offer a wide choice. There's no such thing as too easy for some gamers, but a game being too hard is a very common problem. I hope that one day we will see accessibility ratings on game packaging as we do already with age ratings.

For more information or to buy any of this hardware, visit Barrie's website, www.oneswitch.com. It's a treasure trove of ideas and products for people with all sorts of disabilities.

"Our adapted controller does have limitations. We are not able to duplicate in head movements the complex, multi-button operations demanded by many games. But two individuals can play with the same controller. One, say the person with the disability, could control the up-down/left-right movement and perhaps the fire button.

"At the same time, the able-bodied person could be controlling the more complex button pressing on the same controller to change equipment or whatever. The beauty of this is that two people could play together – both being involved in the experience."

Dream-Gamer has just been awarded CE compliance and is available to buy at www.dream-racer.com.

the lip fantastic

The Quad Controller is a mouth-operated device designed by aerospace engineer Ken Yankelevitz after he was approached by Atari in 1981, and it lets physically disabled gamers to 'be on an equal playing field with their friends', as Ken puts it.

It incorporates sip/puff switches that control all 12 buttons on a PS2 DualShock pad. Mounted on a wheelchair or table, it has one mouthpiece that operates a joystick, which in turn can be toggled to control the directional pad, the left joystick or the right joystick. Lip switches also allow the use of the 'push down on the thumbsticks' functions.

Ken has built more than 400 of these controllers, each designed to meet a person's individual requirements. Feedback for this invention has been incredibly positive, with gamers such as Robert Florio, who's been paralysed since a diving accident aged 14, heralding the Quad Controller as something that allows gamers to "control almost every aspect of the game".

"Games are extremely important to disabled people," Robert says in an interview on the Washington Post's website, www.washingtonpost.com. "Gaming becomes something you can do by yourself again.

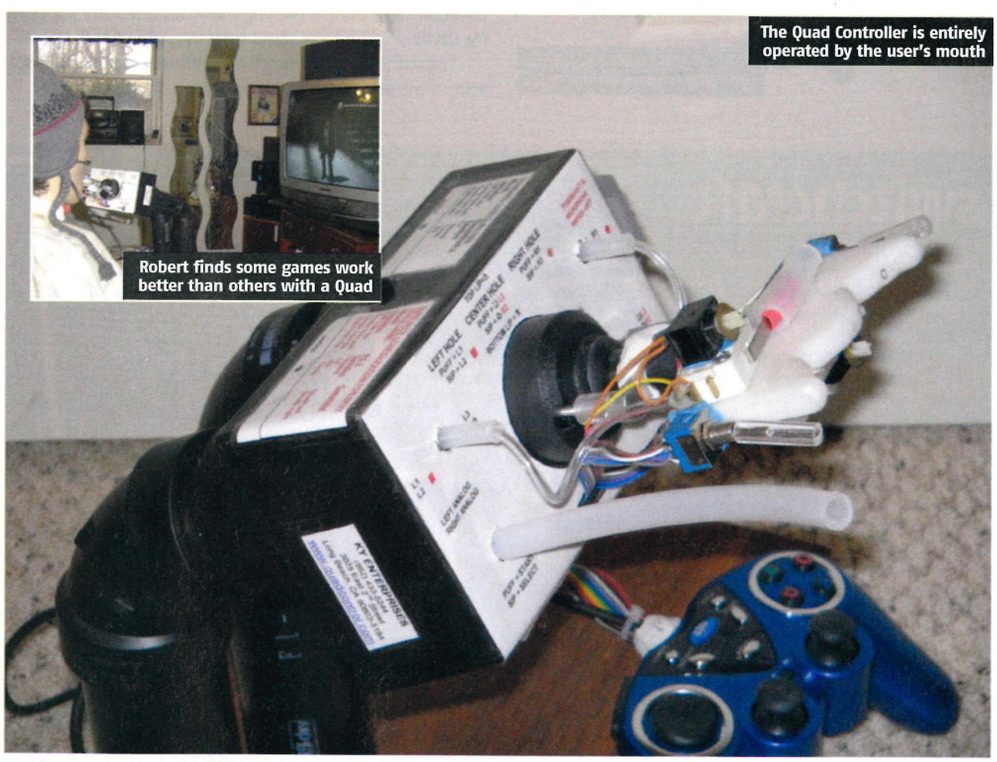
"You feel like you're interacting in a world in a way that you lost interaction in the real world."

For more information on the Quad Controller go to www.quadcontrol.com and find out more about Robert at www.robertflorio.com, where he also reviews how compatible various games are with the Quad Controller.

"Accessibility shouldn't be a foreign word," Robert says on his own website, "something to be screeched in the ears of developers who are not physically challenged or impaired in any way, keeping people from playing their favorite games. It certainly isn't stopping me and my friends."

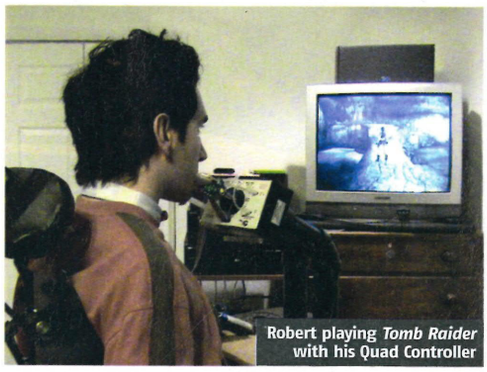
customise it yourself

The PS2 Phoenix controller is a completely customisable controller pad that could be useful for some people with physical limitations. Find out more about it at www.radicagames.com/phoenix-revolution.php



The Quad Controller is entirely operated by the user's mouth

Robert finds some games work better than others with a Quad



Robert playing *Tomb Raider* with his Quad Controller

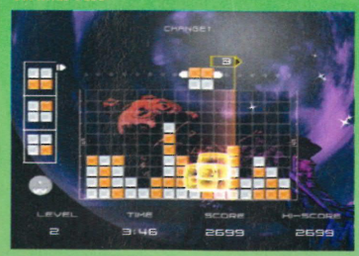
we recommend...

Four games that adapt well for people with impaired movement

TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

According to Robert Florio, Lara Croft is easy to manoeuvre using the mouth-operated controller, and according to us, "*Legend* is a largely tremendous update of the classic *Tomb Raider* template". Our score: **8/10 in OPS2#71**

LUMINES PLUS

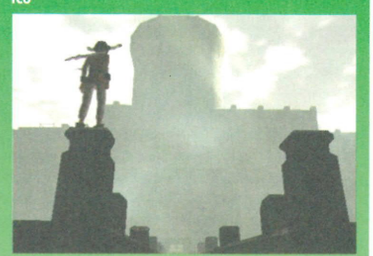


You only need to use the analogue stick and the ⊗ button to enjoy the fiendish puzzles in this classic game, while the mind blowing colours and stylish design make it a brain-tickling treat.

ANY RPGS

The menu-driven nature and turn-based fighting of most roleplaying games mean that you're almost exclusively using the directional pad and ⊗ button, while mammoth storylines and gorgeous characters will make you happily give up a good 80 hours of your life. Per game.

ICO

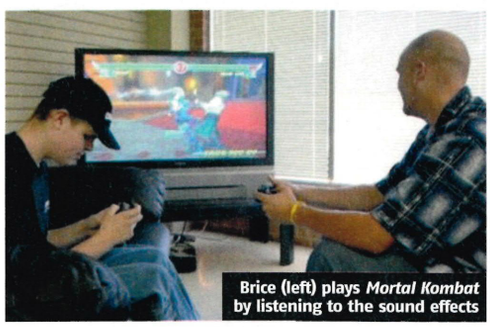


The straightforward controls and relaxed pace won't get in the way of you immersing yourself in this magical experience that, in the words of our review, "reminds you how emotionally powerful games can be". Our score: **9/10 in OPS2#69**

vision

In 2005, a man named Brice Mellen stepped into the limelight of the gaming world. His achievement? He beat Ed Boon, developer of *Mortal Kombat*, at his own game. And oh yeah, by the way, Brice is blind. He plays by listening to the sound effects of the fight.

Being unable to see the screen is obviously going to be a problem for most people when it comes to playing videogames. But you don't have to completely lose your sight to find it challenging. Conditions such as glaucoma or being colour blind can affect gamers, too, making it difficult to solve colour-based puzzles, for example.


Brice (left) plays *Mortal Kombat* by listening to the sound effects

sound stuff

Unfortunately, there aren't many console-based solutions for visually impaired gamers, beyond webgames that have been tailored to focus more on audio features than on visual ones.

Some games do have extensive auditory feedback that makes them more playable; mostly beat-'em-ups and RPGs. But even then, menus are often lacking in auditory information, which would leave partially sighted gamers struggling to set up a level.

Obviously, the extent of your impairment will determine what games you can play. But hopefully our suggestions, gleaned from information and comments on websites and forums covering this issue, will help.

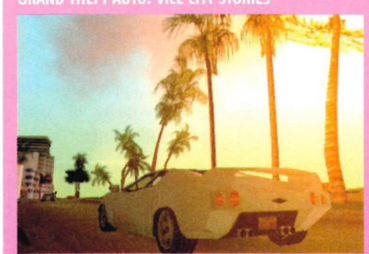
sight sites

- **www.bscgames.com** BSC games is a company that specialises in making games for the blind or visually impaired. Run by Justin Daubenmire, who is blind himself, it currently produces arcade games, educational games and free games
- **allinplay.com/home.html** Card-based games designed for people with visual impairments and without
- **www.audiogames.net** a useful community blog site with news and reviews

we recommend...

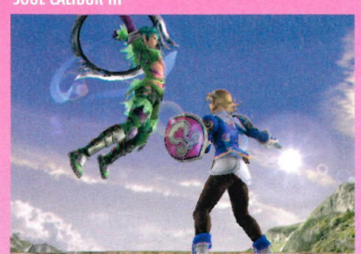
The best games for visually impaired players

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES



The bright colours, open structure and detailed sound effects of this free-roaming crime spree make it easy to get involved. Our score: **8/10 in OPS2#84**

SOUL CALIBUR III



Make like Brice Mellen and get fighting. Here, in one of the best fighting games ever, the crunches of a successfully landed blow will help guide your actions. Our score: **9/10 in OPS2#66**

TEKKEN 5

Another great beat-'em-up with a good sound engine, more than 30 meaty fighters and tons of headcracking moves. Our score: **8/10 in OPS2#61**

SINGSTAR

We like *Singstar Rocks!* the best, but any of the series that features your favourite musical genre will work well. You just have to plug in the microphone and warble to your heart's content.

hearing

People who don't have hearing difficulties often underestimate just how much we respond to audio cues when we're playing videogames, and how important they are.

In racing games we listen to the changing pitch of the engine to judge our speed. In shooters the sound of bullets zinging over our heads helps us pinpoint where the enemy is. In rhythm-action games it takes a combination of watching onscreen cues and 'feeling' the music to pull off a successful track.

Even when games are captioned, it can be confusing to know who's saying what if the dialogue isn't clearly associated with each speaker.

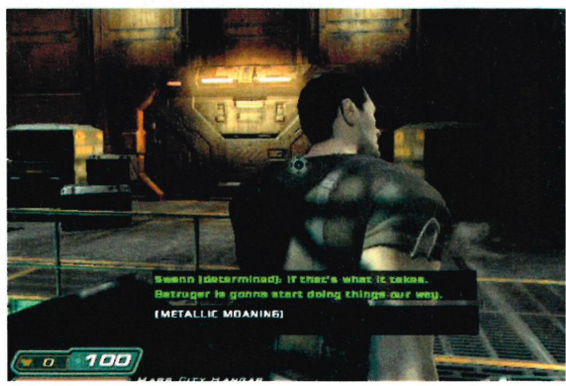
One solution is the incorporation of closed captions, like the ones you've probably seen on TV. They not only write out the dialogue, but describe sound effects and music as well.

Half-Life 2 is one iconic game that uses closed captions. After the first instalment was released, Marc Laidlaw of developer Valve Software received complaints from deaf gamers that this much-anticipated game was completely incomprehensible for them.

So Marc used closed captions in the sequel, and found that "the expense was very small and there was no negative aspect".

if the caption fits

In America, games designer and captioner Reid Kimball creates mods for current games. Reid, who developed severe hearing loss after having spinal meningitis when

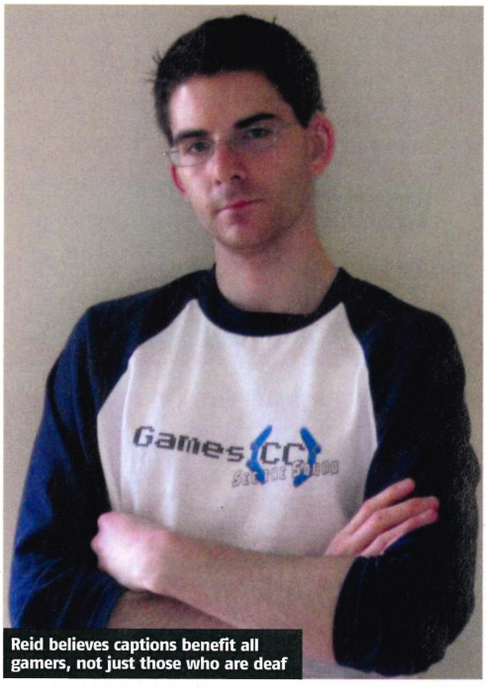


he was a baby, has had most success with a mod for the classic PC game *Doom 3* (download the mod for free at gamescc.rbkdesign.com).

It not only provides closed captions for the entire game, but uses a Visual Sound Radar that represents where sounds are coming from in relation to the character you're playing.

Reid is now working with programmers to create middleware software that can be licensed to developers so they can put closed captioning into their games.

All that, *and* he works full-time for LucasArts, currently designing levels and gameplay systems and scripting for *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*.



Reid believes captions benefit all gamers, not just those who are deaf

OPS2: Are closed captions enough by themselves to help a person with hearing disabilities play a game?

Reid: Yes, closed captioning is the primary accessibility feature that hard of hearing or deaf players need so they can enjoy the games better.

Someone who can't hear misses out on the important sounds – an enemy walking up behind them, for example, a telltale sound that signals the launch of a powerful enemy attack or an NPC giving the player an objective.

So long as that information is presented in a visual way, then those who can't hear have access to the information they need.

Other ways to show visually different sounds are icons, comic book-like words or a Visual Sound Radar.

OPS2: Is it difficult to put closed captions in a game?

Reid: It isn't difficult at all when you think about the usual engineering challenges that programmers tackle in game development.

Problems such as artificial intelligence, graphics rendering or physics simulation often require teams of well-paid programmers working on these problems for at least a year.

With closed captioning, a small investment from a developer – usually one programmer, full-time for a few months – can create a complete closed captioning system that can be used for all future games with little rewrite involved per project, if any at all.

The real trick is the data entry of all the captions for dialogue, sound effects and music.

OPS2: Are there any other methods to help gamers with hearing disabilities?

Reid: Using the rumble functionality of game controllers is better than nothing and I do recommend using both to reinforce and strengthen the presence of sound.

However, rumbling does lose some fidelity. How do you make a vibration feel like a normal footstep approaching from behind, compared with a thunderous footstep from a giant boss monster that's around the corner? It's also open to interpretation and misunderstanding from the players.

OPS2: Does the gaming industry cater sufficiently for its customers with disabilities?

Reid: Sadly, no. I also firmly believe that making games more accessible isn't only for the disabled.

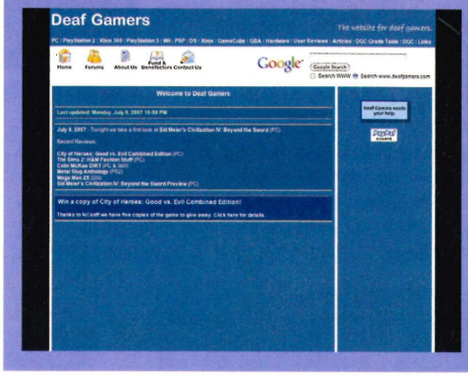
People tell me all the time that although they have normal hearing, they still like to use captions in games because sometimes the voice acting is poor and hard to understand, or their children go to bed early and they need to turn the sound off. Accessibility features make games better for everyone.

As developers, we're entertainers and our job is to make an entertaining experience, first and foremost. Not adding accessibility features to our games is completely ignoring our responsibilities as entertainers.

After we ensure that our games are accessible to everyone, then let's go back to trying to push more and more polygons on the screen. After all, why do all that work if someone can't enjoy it? ■ **Kim Richards**

sounds interesting

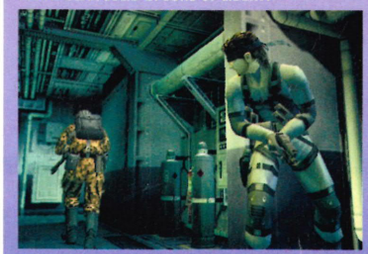
■ **www.deafgamers.com** Reviews every videogame imaginable, both as a game and in terms of accessibility for the deaf



we recommend...

Four games that don't rely on sound

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY



The entire *MGS* series captions not only cutscenes but in-game dialogue, too. And the use of gadgets such as heat sensors, radar and motion detectors makes spotting enemies a visual skill more than an aural one. Our score: 10/10 in OPS2#17

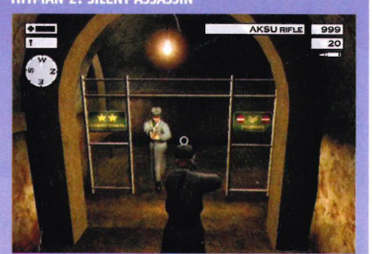
OKAMI

Everyone in this game speaks a gibberish language so it's all captioned. Character pictures appear next to speech, so you can tell who said what. Add eye-popping artwork and a delightful story and it's a winner. Our score: 10/10 in OPS2#81

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

All dialogue in this game is in Japanese, so captions are already there and the use of sound is minimal in the rest of the game. With gorgeous graphics and really, really, really big monsters, it's a must-have game. Our score: 9/10 in OPS2#68

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN



The clue's in the name: as well as the gameplay not relying on sound, everything is subtitled, from dialogue to cutscenes – you even get visual notification when guards have spotted your murderous presence. Our score: 9/10 in OPS2#26

find out more: some general websites on accessible gaming

■ **www.igda.org/accessibility** A blog site with all the latest news on games for disabled gamers

■ **www.game-accessibility.com** A great source of information for and about disabled gamers, with forums for discussions, articles on developments and gaming events

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monitor

ASKING ALL THE HOT GAMES OUT ON A DATE

Usually, the summer is a time of drought for PS2 games, but they've been flooding in this month. Remind you of anything?

Anyhow, because of this digital cornucopia, Monitor is bursting at the seams with quality games.

First off, there's *Need For Speed ProStreet*, which takes the insanely popular street-racing series and plonks it onto the race circuits.

We're slightly puzzled by the name seeing as this *Need For Speed ProStreet* doesn't actually take place on the streets, but hey, it sounds cool enough.

Then there's *Spider-Man: Friend Or Foe*, a new spin (arf!) on the superhero series that's set to banish the unhappy memories of *Spider-Man 3* from our minds.

And finally, the section ends with a preview of *Grand Theft Auto IV*, the don of next-gen gaming.

We're excited, you're excited, and it's going to take more than a few months of wet weather to dampen our summer spirits. Mind you, Bath hasn't flooded... yet...

Andy

Andy Hartup,
Deputy editor

NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET

OUT OF THE CITY AND ONTO THE RACE TRACK: WE GO HANDS-ON WITH EA'S LATEST TYRE-MELTER

046 **SPIDERMAN: FRIEND OR FOE**
The web-slinging superhero teams up with some unlikely allies in this easily accessible actioner

048 **CRASH OF THE TITANS**
The Bandicoot is back! Will this one Crash and burn, or is it titan-ingly good?

050 **THRILLVILLE: OFF THE RAILS**
The coaster-boy of theme-park sims is back for more madness. But is this sequel worth visiting?

051 **GRIMGRIMOIRE**
No, we don't like the name either, but this slice of Jap-o-madness is shaping up to be a great RTS

052 **HARVEY BIRDMAN**
Bring cartoon criminals to justice in this wacky take on Adult Swim's cult cartoon

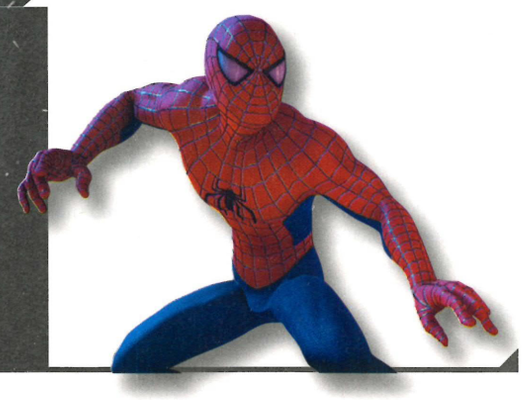
054 **NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA 2**
A sequel to *Ultimate Ninja*? Guess they were a bit over-ambitious when they called it 'ultimate'...

056 **FINAL FANTASY TACTICS**
Like chess, only with super-deformed ladyboys and dragons instead of rooks and bishops

057 **FINAL FANTASY**
Is the original the best? Or has the *Final Fantasy* series aged like a fine whisky?

057 **FINAL FANTASY II**
Completing the trio of *Final Fantasy* previews this month is the series' second outing. Twice as nice?

058 **GRAND THEFT AUTO IV**
The biggest crim-sim ever creeps closer to release. We get a lengthy demo of the new look Liberty City



PUBLISHER EA | DEVELOPER EA BLACK BOX | WEBSITE WWW.EA.COM/NFS/PROSTREET

NEED FOR SPEED PROSTREET

THIS YEAR, *NEED FOR SPEED* IS GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK hands on

The top racing game designers seem to have more spies in each other's paddocks than the average Formula 1 team (allegedly speaking, of course). Let's consider the evidence.

Burnout Paradise has an open-world map like the ones in *Need For Speed*. *Colin McRae DiRT* has suddenly turned ol' Colin into a multi-disciplined master. And even that immovable stalwart *Gran Turismo* is considering making the leap into the 21st Century by implementing crash damage as a downloadable extra.

Take your eye off the grid for a second and you'll need a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation just to remind you which racer is which. So, thank goodness for *Need For Speed*, eh? Good old reliable *Need For Speed*. You know where you are with *Need For Speed*. So much so, in fact, that we decided to write the preview for this game back in October 2006.

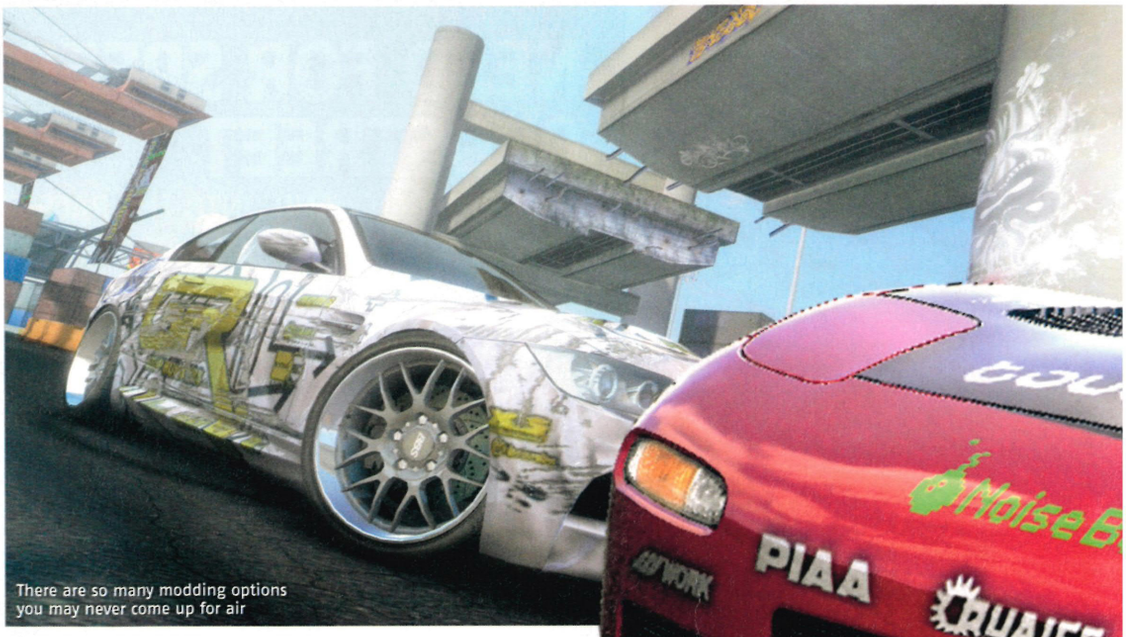
"The follow-up to 2006's *Need For Speed Carbon*," we began, "is an evolution rather than a revolution for the series. A few new gameplay modes and gimmicks can't hide that this is the same solid, if unspectacular, dose of moodylicious street-racing that it's always been. If you thought the previous *Need For Speed*s were alright, you'll think this is alright!"

But then we played it and we had to start writing all over again. For *ProStreet* couldn't be more different from the last few *Need For Speed* games if its star was a smiling sunflower named Boris (don't worry, it's not).

First, the open-world map has done one. Out in the real world, North American cops have started to take street racing very seriously; in fact, in Canada, it's a felony. The response has been attempts to legitimise the 'sport' in the way skate parks legitimised skateboarding.

Professional racetracks now do open days where the racers meet up, organise their own events and drive like loonies around the closed circuits. *ProStreet*, then, breaks with *NFS* tradition by offering up a worldwide tour of real-world circuits. Mind you, a few 'liberties' have been taken with their layout for gameplay reasons.

Paint scars are part of the crash damage that's new to the series



There are so many modding options you may never come up for air

POETRY IN PRO'S

Your goal at these circuits is fairly straightforward and familiar. You compete in multiple events, all of which should be recognisable to *NFS* veterans. Drag races, speed traps, standardised racing: they're all back, but this time the structure's a little different.

You tackle a string of disciplines in any given event, with points accumulating until you overtake a certain points threshold and win the event. Dominate the proceedings and you'll unlock new parts for your car.

Naturally, the police aren't going to follow you out onto the track, but in spite of this, driving is tenser than ever. The reason for our ghostly-white complexions and shaky hands? None other than the addition of something that, apparently, has been *NFS* fans' most-requested feature for years: crash damage.

We don't mean a few arbitrary dents when you smack into a roadside cactus. No sirree Bob. We're talking serious carnage.

Smash into a wall at high speed, and that's the end of your race. Indeed, that's it for that particular car, at least for the duration of the racing weekend, so careless drivers had best dig deep to get themselves an entire fleet to take to events.

It completely changes the dynamic of the way *NFS* plays and, for a while, we weren't sure we were going to like it. But now we're positive it's going to go down well with the core *NFS* audience, and it's a logical move considering the fetish the series has had with modding and customisation for the past half a decade.

ProStreet is a pivotal moment in the *NFS* timeline. From this point on, the series is slowly shedding its

World-famous real-life circuits are the setting for this new-style *NFS*

STATE OF THE NATION

Open Road Racing: the fastest Need For Speed event ever

At some point each year, a number of roads in America – such as Nevada's State Route 318 – shut a stretch of their tarmac off to the public and invite boy racers from around the country to turn up in their vehicles and just floor the pedal.

With an average speed of 150mph, these speed-trap events are so face-meltingly fast that sometimes it's all you can do just to keep your car on the road. Smacking into a roadside cactus and watching it disintegrate under the wheels of our car was a definite highlight in our test-drive of this event in *NFS ProStreet*.

BRIDGING THE GAP

This is a PS3 shot, but the PS2 version isn't so far behind – aesthetically or otherwise. The smoke effects aren't so impressive and the damage models aren't quite as dynamic, but everything else that appears in the offline PS3 version will be present and correct on PS2. The final online options for PS2 *ProStreet* have yet to be determined, though.

CULTURE CLUB

ProStreet does a good job of recreating the weekend atmosphere of the organised race events. Booze, pumping tunes and girls tucked into tops so tight that they could set off a fire alarm – these things are all present and correct. Certain rivals will crop up to antagonise you throughout the story mode, too. You've got to hand it to *Need For Speed* – it does a good line in odious villains. And hot chicks.

GEOFF SCRAPES

Clearly, this car's been brushing itself up alongside a brick wall like a big, long aluminum cat. In the world of street racing, paint scrapes are worn like badges of honour; they show your rivals that you've driven your car to the absolute limit. We know this because we watched a documentary on MTV once.

In each event you must tackle a variety of race types

arcade roots and turning into a complex, comprehensive car modding sim. This is apparent once you begin rooting around the customisation screen.

More than 10,000 parts from 250 manufacturers make it an intimidating proposition for anyone who can't check their car's oil level without incurring major injuries. But for those a bit more mechanically inclined, the possibilities are almost endless.

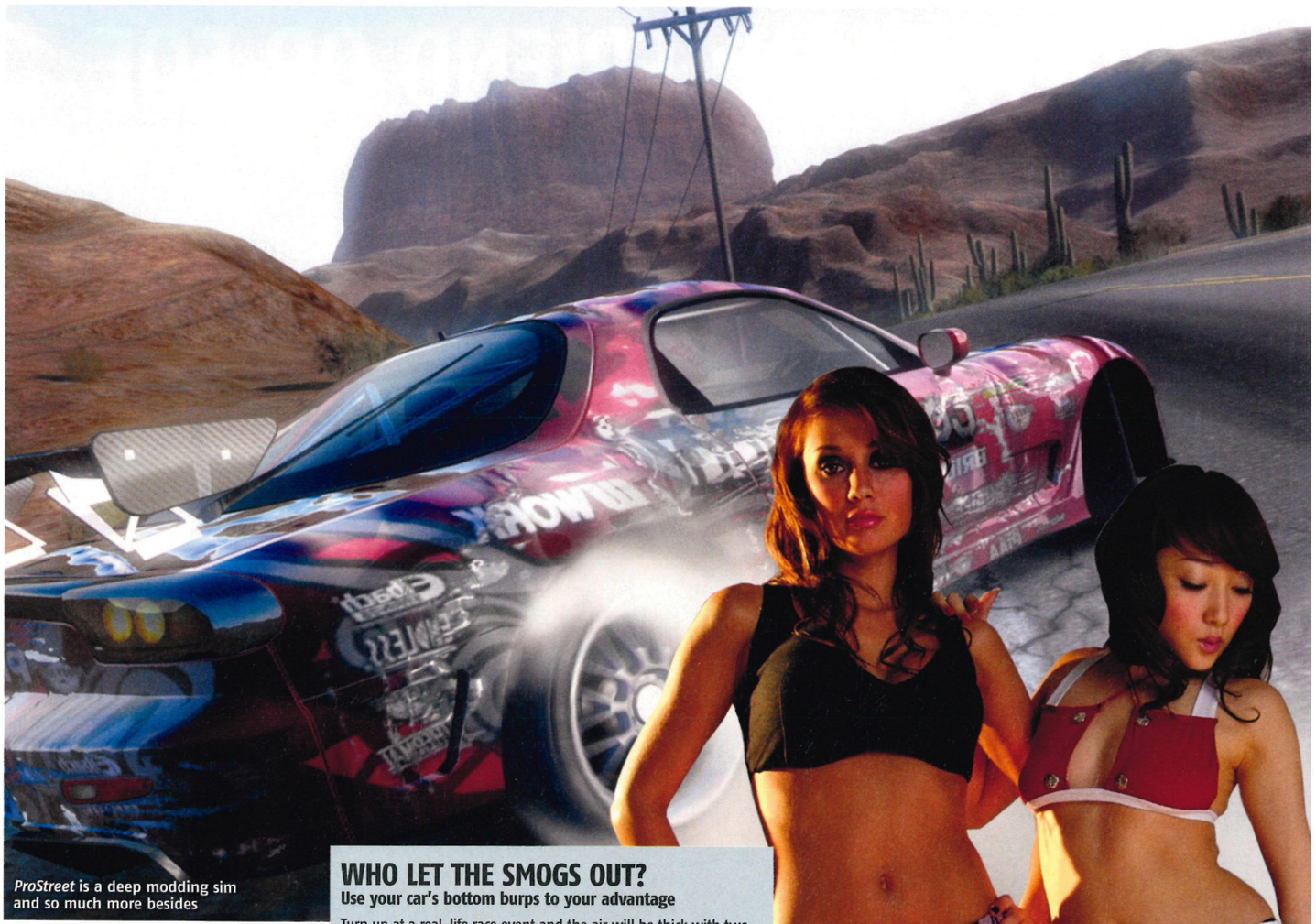
MODS AND CLOCKERS

On PS3, there's even a Blueprint leaderboard, where top designers can set their creation out into the wild and watch as their pride and joy accumulates online wins and climbs the charts.

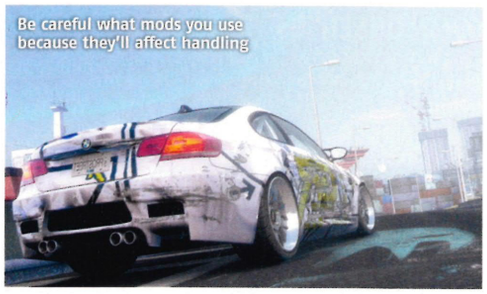
But if you can't tell your ballast from your elbow, then don't panic; there are enough preset options to ensure that you'll be adequately competitive without ever having to tinker with your motor's insides.

Of course, if you do tinker, you'd better do it right, because one of the main areas in which developer EA Black Box has invested its research (and development on *ProStreet* began long before *Carbon* was finished) is ensuring that every little tweak has a tangible effect on the physics of your car.

Carbon's autosculpting is back, but you might want to resist the temptation to bolt a gigantic spoiler onto the back of your Peugeot 106 this time around because the



ProStreet is a deep modding sim and so much more besides



Be careful what mods you use because they'll affect handling

tweaks you make in this mode will be affected by wind resistance. And that means often subtle but sometimes dramatic changes in your car's handling.

The physics have been rewritten from scratch to allow for more variables, you see; it still retains the same loose, eel-on-a-skateboard, slippy-slidey feel, but each modification has very real consequences.

Mention the word 'simulation' to EA Black Box and their faces shrivel up in the way that normally only watermelon-flavoured Jolly Ranchers are able to induce.

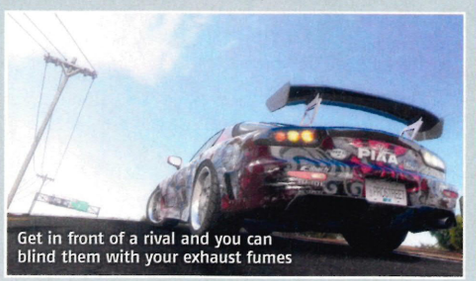
They say that it's a dirty word that carries baggage; the likes of *Gran Turismo* are often more toil than play. But it's a comparison you can't help but make when playing *NFS ProStreet*. The difference is that 'playing' is the key word there; at the end of the day, *NFS*'s arcade roots still sparkle brightly enough to prevent *ProStreet* from feeling like hard work. ■ **Alex Dale**

WHO LET THE SMOGS OUT?

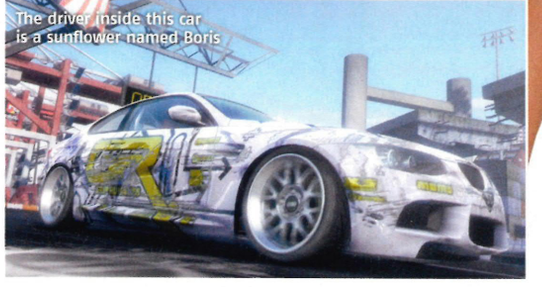
Use your car's bottom burps to your advantage

Turn up at a real-life race event and the air will be thick with two smells. One will be the putrid smell from the numerous botulism merchants using hairy hot dogs as their Trojan horse; the other will be exhaust fumes. *ProStreet*'s developer spent a lot of time working on the exhaust smoke, and the effects are dramatic.

Trail in the slipstream of another car and you might find yourself blind-driving, your screen consumed with smoke. But, brilliantly, you can use this to your advantage: plonk yourself in front of the trailing pack in the middle of a race and you can confuse the AI by shrouding their line of vision with your carbon emissions.



Get in front of a rival and you can blind them with your exhaust fumes



The driver inside this car is a sunflower named Boris

monitor

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK

It's a bold move for EA to tamper with its top-selling series, but it's a move *NFS* fans will love. More casual players may find the emphasis on safe driving a turn-off, though

HOT OR NOT

TEPID | WARM | **HOT** | BOILING | MELTDOWN

PUBLISHER **ACTIVISION** | DEVELOPER **NEXT LEVEL GAMES** | WEBSITE **WWW.SPIDERMAN-FRIEND-OR-FOE.COM**

SPIDER-MAN: FRIEND OR FOE

ANOTHER THICK SPREAD OF OUR MATE MARVEL

Be green: don't leave your phone charger plugged in

Iron Fist was Marvel's version of Bruce Lee

Spider-Man: you've had the ropey, teen-aimed game based on the last teen-aimed movie. Now here's something far more basic, yet social, and with a refreshingly tight structure.

It's going to be a bit like running around a school playground with your T-shirt pulled up over your head, chucking unravelling balls of wool at a scattering swarm of shrieking infants: what we mean is, it'll be something best not tried as an adult.

No, *Friend or Foe* is all about letting the younger Spider-fans, who'd find the fast combos and sprawling city of the movie-licensed games too tricky, have an entry-level interaction with the franchise.

It's an action-packed arcade brawler with minimal complications. The wee ones aren't going to get beaten down by overly intricate controls or slammed by tenuous and confusing links to an already cumbersome and muddled film. Lucky them.

Instead, publisher Activision scanned society with its demographic-detecting telescope and found that what it needs to provide is a simple, two-player beat-'em-up in which a kiddie-style Spidey fights kiddie-style villains.

COMMONSENSES TINGLING

Players can swap between characters mid-battle and any super-villain defeated joins the available roster of swappable sidekicks. It's kind of like *Lego Star Wars* but with more fighting and less Jedi block shuffling.

You bound from area to area beating enemies to submission with simple combos and co-op slaps, earning points to upgrade moves. Rinse and repeat.

The drop-in, drop-out gameplay is so non-punishing that it can often make progression a given once you start bashing buttons.

That and the cartoony look of the graphics make it obvious that this is a title aimed directly at the young and especially the young who don't want to feel they're bad at videogames. Or, indeed, feel like they have to get better or enjoy the 'Easy' option hidden in a menu.

Activision claims that anyone of any skill level can complete areas of *Friend or Foe* the moment they pick up the pad. Its target market will probably see that as a positive thing, but it'll make things pretty boring for anyone with any more gaming skill.

Thankfully the quality of the cutscenes and inclusion of 13 playable sidekicks should not be ignored by those with a kitsch eye for Marvel's golden boy and a gaming skill higher than zero.

And the story that makes all this friendship and ass-kickery reasonable? Well, it's guaranteed to involve something

The new Green Goblin is among the strong cast confirmed for *Friend or Foe*

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK
first look

SUPPORTING CAST

Meet The Definites.

There are different classes of sidekicks available, from those adept at using gadgets to ranged attackers to those who like to get up close and personal. Confirmed characters so far include: Sandman, New Goblin, Blade, Prowler, Nick Fury, Doc Ock, Iron Fist and Venom but this roster will fatten as time marches towards release. As you progress through the game you'll unlock special combat arenas, so you can pit whomever you want against whomever you need without even having to stroll through the levels. Think *Marvel Ultimate Alliance*, but calmed down for younger minds.

Oh, the villain is a decent bloke who's misunderstood. As usual

insurmountable that Spidey just can't handle on his own, forcing him to team up with vanquished villans and equally skilled superheroes (see 'Supporting Cast', right).

JUVENILE JUSTICE

The exact nature of the game's all-explaining narrative is currently sealed by tight lips and tighter non-disclosure agreements, but it has been confirmed that members of SHIELD are involved.

Whatever questions the exact details of the tale may throw up you know that the answer is going to be two small children trying to be first to hit a short sequence of buttons while laughing at a TV screen. This is a beautiful image, and one we have some faith in because *Friend or Foe* is being developed by Canada's Next Level Games.

The studio has already made ice hockey acceptably accessible for a wider, and therefore younger, audience with *NHL Hitz Pro*. It also, more recently, developed *Mario Strikers: Charged Football* for the Wii (which, we understand, some people might enjoy).

If anyone can make a simple, decent and enjoyable Spider-Man fighting game then Next Level is certainly more suited to the job than most. It's also arguably more worthy of your trust than Treyarch, the team behind the squashed arachnid of a game that was *Spider-Man 3*.

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

Next Level won't, however, be adding online multiplayer. Ironically, according to Activision, this is to make the game more accessible. That's accessible in a 'fewer options' kind of way rather than a 'far greater number of potential second players and more opportunities to play the game with people who don't live in your house' kind of way, then.

But seeing as PS2 online is a foul mess of passwords and DNAS screens, we're not sad to hear the game won't be going global. In fact, *Friend or Foe* sounds like a great game all round – if, that is, you can fit into a Spider-Man outfit bought from Woolworths. ■ WJ

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

THERE'S SOMETHING warming about the prospect of tagging moves with Green Goblin, but will that glow keep us cosy throughout the whole game?

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

Crash has gone back to his classic platforming roots

PUBLISHER VIVENDI | DEVELOPER RADICAL | WEBSITE HTTP://WWW.CRASHOFTHETITANS.COM/UK/

CRASH OF THE TITANS

CRASH RETURNS WITH A BANG AND A WALLOP

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

Make no mistake about it, he's back and looking better than he has in years. Developer Radical has taken on board a heap of advice from the Crash fanbase and is determined to breathe new life into the bandicoot. So far, it looks like the team are succeeding.

The most obvious change is Crash's physical appearance. He looks good – younger, heftier, hairier. His fists are raised up when he's waiting for action. He flexes and stretches when jumping and kicking about, making him appear more cartoony. And he certainly seems to be living up to Radical's mantra of 'street smart and action ready'.

Crash of the Titans is a return to Crash's original platforming style, but there's still plenty of variety to keep a wide range of gamers happy. Button-mashers will be satisfied by the instant attacks, skilled players will find depth in the slew of combos Crash can perform.

Although the levels are linear, there are loads of nooks and crannies to rabbit around in, which will keep both young gamers and hardened explorers interested.

WUMPA JUMPER

The game is set on Wumpa Island and all the familiar faces from *Crash* history crop up, including his siblings, Coco and Crush, and freaky voodoo mask Aku Aku. Dr Neo Cortex and his cyborg niece Nina are also returning in a quest for world domination on behalf of mysterious entity Uka Uka.

The entire cast (including minions) is brought to life by celebrities of the voice acting world, including Jess Harnell, Debi Derryberry and John DiMaggio.

Not heard of them? Well, between them they've voiced characters in *Kingdom Hearts*, *Spyro*, *Final Fantasy XII*, *TMNT* and *Futurama*, so there's plenty of talent behind the soundtrack.

And it shows. Everyone has a distinct personality and the script has a wicked sense of fun that's reminiscent of the *Shrek* brand of humour.

MOJO A-GO-GO

This time around, Dr Cortex has discovered a substance called mojo (used as currency in the game to unlock stuff), which he exploits to mutate the residents of Wumpa Island and create an evil army.

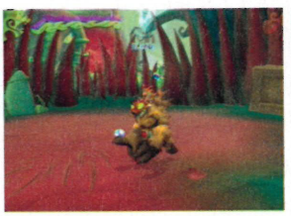
After saving Aku Aku, Crash learns how to use mojo for his own ends – giving him the ability to 'jack' monsters and control them.

JACK IN A BOX The ins and outs of monster mind control

This is Spike. He's the first creature you can jack. Isn't he surly looking?

Attack Spikey-boy until the green stars are filled. And then...

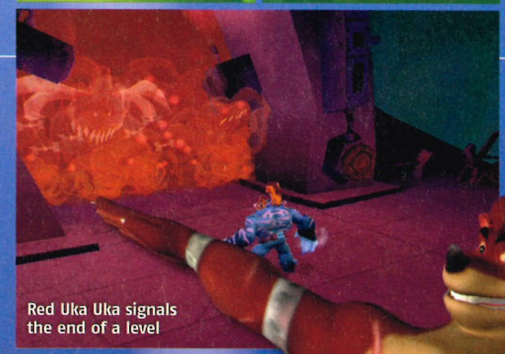
...hit ◎ and Crash will jump aboard. Slap Aku Aku on Spike's face and he's yours.



Bingo! You've jacked your first monster. Now, let's get out of here.

Use Spike's special ability to break down that blockade. Mmm. Pointy.

The bandicoot can now wall run... with a little help


Red Uka Uka signals the end of a level

This is where the real fun begins. Jacking is absolutely crucial to getting through the game. In many cases you'll be swamped by baddies, so gaining control of a Titan and using its special attacks will even things up. Also, a lot of objectives can only be achieved by jacking enemies. For example, you need to jack a beastie with the Rhino Roll ability to bust though some locked gates.

JACK YOUR BODY

There are 15 enemies to jack, each with three unique attacks, and you can even control bosses! To jack a monster you've got to beat up on it until the row of green stars above its heads fills and a ◎ icon appears. Hit it to take possession of the critter and you'll have some snazzy new attacks to play with.

Developer Radical has clearly put a good deal of emphasis on this top new ability. It's even included a feature where, once you jack a monster enough times, you'll unlock it in the menu. You can then return to earlier parts of the level with said beastie and break into new areas.

It's not all about the jack, though. Crash is imbued with a whole host of other lethal moves, some new and some familiar, including the spin hover, spin attack and wall run. You can also use Aku Aku as a skateboard.

JUST THE TWO OF US

One of the pure joys in the game is the co-op action, which is well thought out and works a treat. Engage co-op and your buddy Carbon-Crash will appear. From then on, there are two modes for you to play around with.

The first, Leapfrog, really enhances the platforming parts of the game, because Carbon-Crash and Crash work in unison to jump higher and further than would otherwise be possible.

The second mode sees you and Carbon separating from each other to do as you please. This really comes into play during frenzied battles where enemies spawn from everywhere, hellbent on your destruction. In those situations, two spin attacks are always better than one.

As well as the usual jumping, scaling, hovering and smashing involved in traversing levels, there are various mini-games hidden throughout the game world. They include time challenges, endurance tests, and general 'beat the crap out of everyone' objectives, with big mojo rewards.

When we first put *Crash of the Titans* in the PS2 disc tray we were nervous. Would Crash meet our hopes and regain his dignity? Ten minutes later, our worries had vanished. He's back. And, thankfully, there isn't a go-kart in sight. ■ **KR**

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

CRASH HAS been an underdog in recent years, but our hands-on with *Crash of the Titans* makes us sure he's ready to fight back to the top of the platforming ladder

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

Crash's spin attack is still his primary offensive move

Smash the blue orb to exchange your monster for mojo

No! Coco! I will avenge thee!

ETA 2 months
October 2007

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

PUBLISHER TBC | DEVELOPER FRONTEIR | WEBSITE WWW.THRILLVILLEGAME.COM

THRILLVILLE: OFF THE RAILS

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK first look

ANOTHER SLICE OF PARK LIFE

Whether it's a family day out, a company outing to soften the forthcoming news of insolvency or a place to hide when you're bunking off school, everyone loves a theme park.

The rollercoasters, the log flume, the junk food – it's the universal recipe for a good time. So it came as a surprise to us that last year's *Thrillville*, a solid PS2 game that let you build, manage and explore your own theme park, didn't sell too well.

We certainly enjoyed it, so we welcome the news of a sequel with open arms. *Off The Rails* takes the existing *Thrillville* concept and bulks it out, adding fresh park games and a whole new set of rollercoasters.

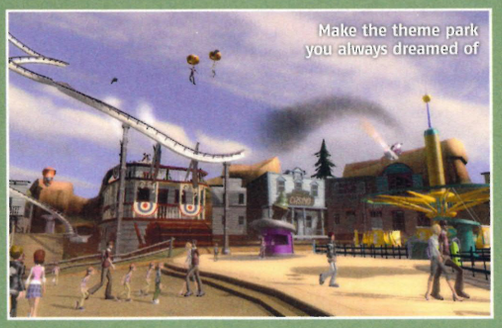
BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

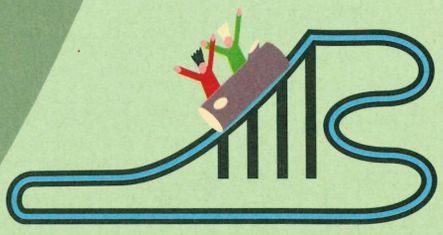
These new rides that you can design and build are known as 'WHOA Coasters' because of the reaction they elicit from visitors to the park.

They're also the reason this game is called *Off The Rails*: there are 20 unique WHOA Coaster options that let you lift the actual car off the tracks and plonk it down elsewhere. This means jumps, lifts and drops galore (and surely a 'dodge the lawsuit' mini-game?) as you search for even more extreme ways to thrill your punters.

When you're not desperately encouraging customers to empty their bowels on the newest rides, you can wander round the park chatting to them. This means answering questions, forming friendships, sussing out dodgy characters and possibly finding love. You can even challenge them to a game of 'hook the duck'.

Off The Rails is ideal fodder for theme park addicts frustrated by this summer's unseasonably wet weather. Get your fix in October. ■ **AH**


Make the theme park you always dreamed of



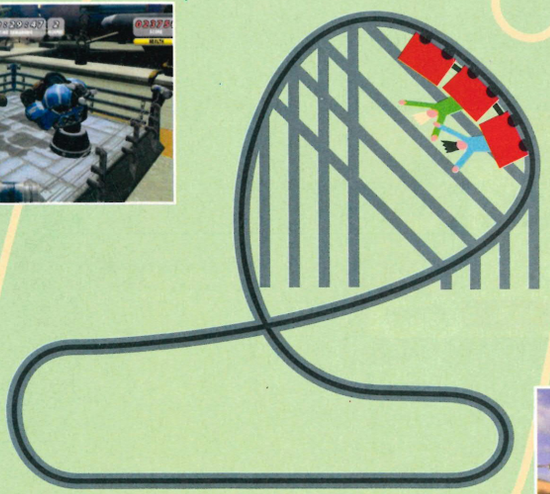
Chatting to customers is all part of the fun

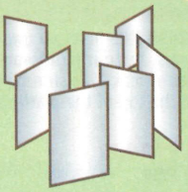
monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

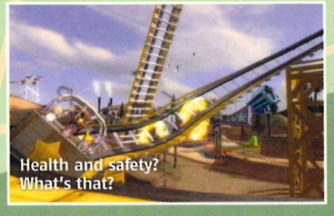
MORE OF THE SAME from *Thrillville* is fine by us, especially when the rides are more extreme than anything in the real world. Owning and managing a mega-theme park simply cannot be dull. Ever.

HOT OR NOT

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN






Health and safety? What's that?

Ideally, you want more customers than this

ETA 2 months
October 2007

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

PUBLISHER **KOEI** | DEVELOPER **VANILLAWARE** | WEBSITE **WWW.KOEI.CO.UK**

GRIMGRIMOIRE

MOVE OVER POTTER, LILLET BLAN'S IN TOWN

It's been a long while since a real-time strategy game has graced the PS2. It's an often-misunderstood genre. But the gorgeous design and quirky Japanese nature of *GrimGrimoire* could redefine the RTS as we know it.

It's set in a prestigious school for witches and wizards, where star pupil Lillet Blan keeps time-travelling back to the first day of term. She must take control of magical creatures ('familiars') to find out why.

Levels are covered in the Fog of War, and you must quickly build up your defences and troops, as well as amassing Resource Creatures to collect Mana from captured crystals.

If you're a fan of *Age of Empires* or the *Dungeon Keeper* series, you'll feel right at home here.

A KIND OF MAGIC

There are four categories of magic, each of which has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and each category has three grimoires to unlock.

Grimoires create summoning Runes, which are used to create structures and summon familiars. Level up the Runes, and you'll unlock more powerful creatures or upgrade the ones you have.

The types of magic are Alchemy (mechanical monsters), Glamour (elves and fairies), Sorcery (demons and dragons) and Necromancy (ghosties). From the word go, you have to suss out what grimoire your opponent is using and counter it with opposing magic.

For example, if the enemy is using Necromancy, that involves ghosts, which are immune to physical attacks.

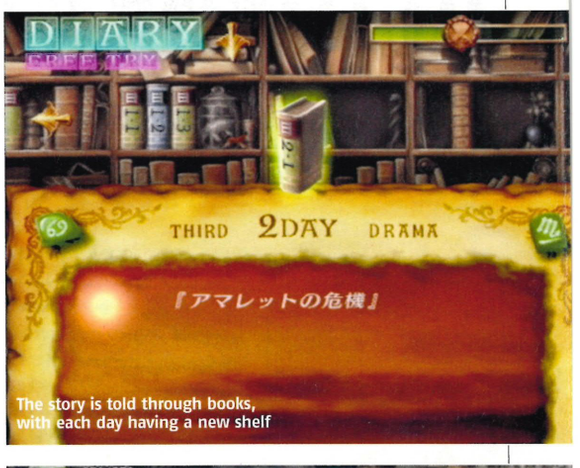
So sending in a bunch of fairies armed with bows and arrows would be pointless. Create a dragon using Sorcery, however, and the ghosts are toast. You can place Runes wherever you want, but it's best to keep them well defended with troops or Guardian structures that fire projectiles at anyone in the vicinity.

THINKING TACTICAL

Enemy AI is refreshingly intelligent and will take advantage of any weaknesses you have. And the whole thing drips with colour and gorgeous artwork.

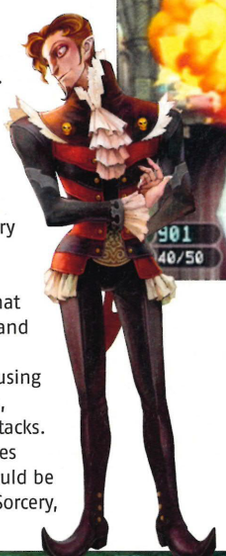
The creatures are cute and menacing at the same time, and the battles are incredibly stimulating and engaging.

If minor changes could be made, such as implementing an easier grouping system or a 'jump to' shortcut, it could be a champion of the RTS genre. ■ **Kim Richards**



The story is told through books, with each day having a new shelf

Resource familiars collect Mana and build things



monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-U

ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY, worthy opponents, an intriguing storyline and plenty of eye candy. We want this game and we want it right now

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

It's a dragon-on-dragon showdown spectacular!

Each type of magic has three runes

Put big beasts to sleep and they'll be useless

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK hands on

PUBLISHER **CAPCOM** | DEVELOPER **HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE** | WEBSITE **WWW.ADULTSWIM.COM/SHOWS/BIRDMAN/**

HARVEY BIRDMAN: ATTORNEY AT LAW

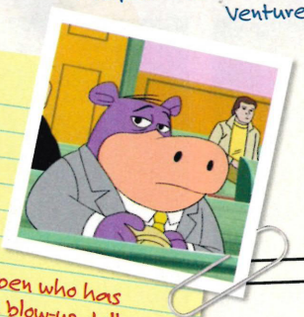
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK **new screens**

SHAKING UP THE LEGAL SYSTEM, ONE BIRD-BRAINED BRIEF AT A TIME

OPENING STATEMENT

Ladies and gentleman of the jury: tucked away on Bravo's late-night schedule* is something called the Adult Swim block. It's the 'grown-up' wing of Cartoon Network, and is home to some of the most entertainingly warped cartoons of the past decade – shows such as The Venture Bros, Aqua Teen Hunger Force and Robot Chicken. But the greatest Adult Swim 'toon? That would have to be Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law.

Witness #1



State your name for the court
'Peter Potamus'

Occupation
'Lawyer at Sebben & Sebben who has never been caught with a blow-up doll in the broom closet. Never.'

How do you plead?
'Did you get that thing I sentcha?'

Witness #2

State your name for the court
'Antonio de Ribera Garcia Azul Falcón'

Occupation
'Argentinean lawyer, since demoted to toilet attendant.'

How do you plead?
'Expensive and beautiful silk panty garments for everyone!'

Witness #3

State your name for the court
'Myron Reducto'

Occupation
'Trial lawyer. Master of this shrink-ray. Back off, I'll make you fun-size!'

How do you plead?
'Big bosoms make me nauseous.'

EXHIBIT A: THE TV SHOW

The Harvey Birdman cartoon raids Hanna-Barbera's back catalogue of cartoon characters from the 60s and 70s and thrusts them into an absurdist world where a superhero-turned-lawyer defends the likes of Scooby-Doo and Shaggy against drug possession charges. It really has to be seen to be believed. And now Capcom has picked up the rights to make a game about it. These screens show some of the lunatic characters who will be involved.

Witness #4

State your name for the court
'Phil Ken Sebben'

Occupation
'President and founder of law firm Sebben & Sebben. Ha, ha, ha!'

How do you plead?
'My office! Burgled! Plundered! Purloined! Ha, ha, ha ... loins.'

EXHIBIT B: THE GAME

But how can such a surreal show be hammered into something playable? Well, Capcom has broad experience of the lawyer sim genre care of their mega-popular Nintendo DS franchise, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney. The game is being marketed as an 'interactive story', which would normally have us running to the hills – but fear not, the whole thing is being penned and planned by the show's creators. And that means that even if the gameplay is shallower than an ant's paddling pool, it'll still be very, very funny.

Like Phoenix Wright, the game is broken up into individual cases, which will take Harvey from the scene of the original crime to the eventual verdict. Past cases featured on the show have involved Fred Flintstone being charged with mafia-related racketeering, the Jetsons suing the past for global warming and Secret Squirrel's partner Morocco Mole accused of plotting a terrorist attack. It's pretty much guaranteed the game's scenarios will be entertaining, to say the least.

*YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP TO ADULTSWIM.CO.UK FOR AN ANNUAL FEE OF £9.99 AND DOWNLOAD ANY EPISODE OF ANY SHOW, WHEREVER, WHENEVER

Witness #6

State your name for the court
'Harvey Birdman'

Occupation
'Superhero turned incompetent lawyer. Also: a virgin.'

How do you plead?
'Debbie, we're going to need some law books. With pictures this time.'

Witness #5

State your name for the court
'Peanut'

Occupation
'Harvey's legal clerk, also a part-time pimp and sun-cream dealer.'

How do you plead?
'You. Me. Closet. Magic.'

Witness #7

State your name for the court
'Caw! Caw!' [Avenger]

Occupation
'Ca! Caw! Caaaw!' [Harvey Birdman's legal secretary, who often devours Harvey's smaller clients, such as Inch-High Private Eye and Scrappy-Doo.]

How do you plead?
'Caw!'

CLOSING ARGUMENT

You might think a Harvey Birdman game would only appeal to those lucky few who've managed to catch the TV show. Not true! If it's anything like the cartoon, it'll be the funniest PSP/PS2 game ever. Now all Capcom has to do is reveal the European release date.

Witness #8

State your name for the court
'Mentok the Mindtaker'

Occupation
'Trial judge. Mindtaker. Yes, I know what you're thinking; question is, do you?'

How do you plead?
'Zombie guards, seize him! Now tell me that's not fun to say.'

monitor

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

NOT SEEN THE SHOW? Doesn't matter. What with DVDs of the show only available in America (only playable on a region-free DVD player over here), this is looking like the best way we Brits can get our *Birdman* fix

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

PUBLISHER NAMCO BANDAI | DEVELOPER NAMCO BANDAI | WEBSITE NARUTOUN2.NAMCOBANDAIGAMES.COM

NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA 2

GUESS THEY SHOULD HAVE CALLED THE FIRST GAME 'PENULTIMATE NINJA'

Take a mega-popular anime. Make a game based on it. Make millions. Repeat. It's a formula that rarely lends itself to a final product of sterling quality, due mostly to the easily met expectations of fans.

They want to play as their favourite character, levelling him up a bit along the way but mostly punching people.

Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles, released in July, took the multi-million-pound franchise along this fairly dull route, with a few roleplaying elements added on to temper the monotony.

Those of us who'd played the previous *Naruto* game, *Ultimate Ninja*, felt sorely let down, since it had been an exception to the norm of standardised beat-'em-ups.

Where in *Chronicles* was the highly explosive, over-the-top jutsu? Where were all the characters? Why did the game feel like a patronising attempt to win new fans for the series? Why couldn't we just have *Ultimate Ninja 2* instead?

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK **new info**

NINJA STARS

Well, here it is, released in the UK after being available in Japan since 2004. It doesn't feature the nigh-on 60 characters that fans will know from the latest TV series, but at 32 characters *Ultimate Ninja 2* offers a fair bit of choice.

The game also has RPG elements, allowing you to upgrade characters' abilities as you go.

However, the best new feature of *UN2* has to be Ultimate Road mode. It takes you through a sweeping story comprising pivotal moments from the animated series, then branches off into an original plot unique to the game. In short, if you know nada about Naruto, you could do worse than start here. But it's not just a game for newcomers.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

In Japan, they're up to number four in the game series – *Naruto Shippuden: Narutimate Accel*, a title in the same mould as *UN2* but dealing with the events of the sequel to the original anime series.

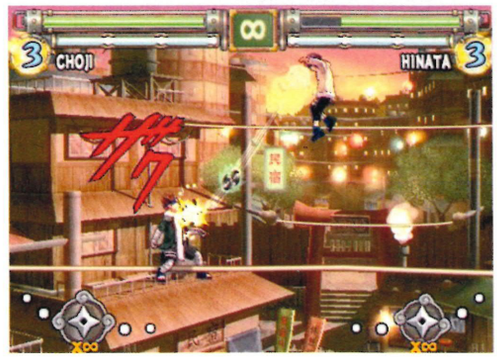
But that sequel only debuted on British TV earlier this year, so it'll be some time before we can play as the Naruto of the *Shippuden* series. *UN2* looks set to keep you very happy until then. ■ **MS**

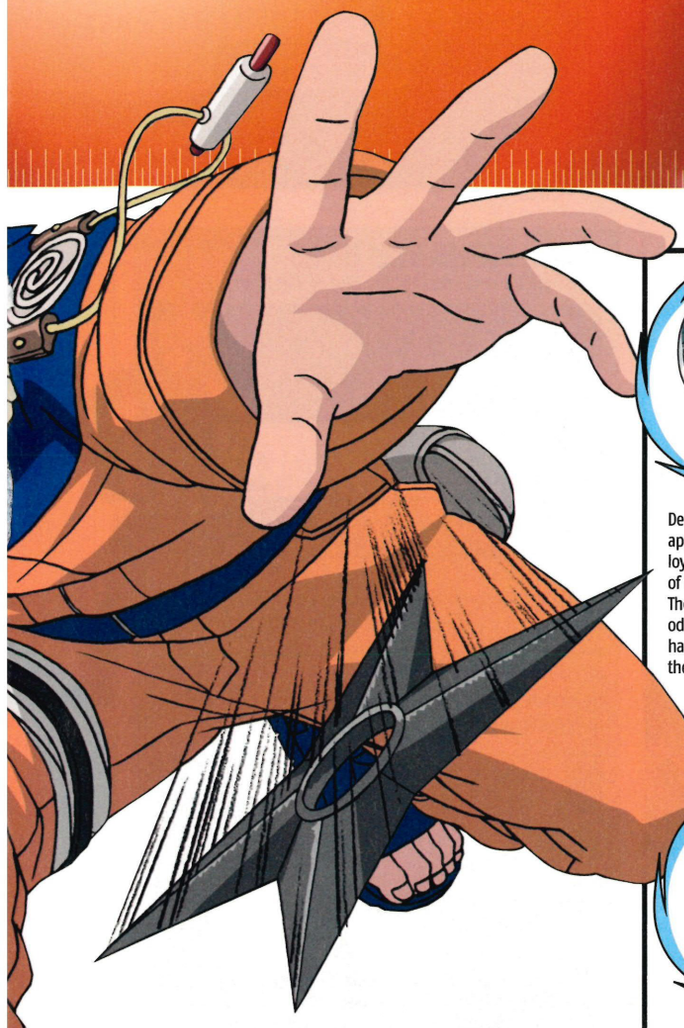
monitor PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK

HOW YOU SEE *Ultimate Ninja 2* depends on whether you understand the appeal of the anime. If not, think of it as a colourful beat-'em-up with a zany plot; if you're a fan, think of it as the best Naruto game yet

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN



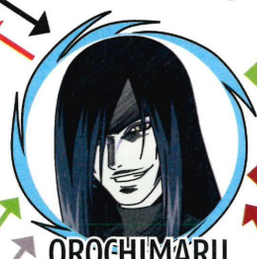


NARUTO 101

Don't know your Sasuke from your Sakura? Fear not, for this handy introduction to the world of Naruto will make you an expert in no time

KABUTO

Despite his somewhat nerdy appearance, Kabuto is the loyal attendant and medic of the dark ninja Orochimaru. Though he's frequently at odds with Naruto, Kabuto has a grudging respect for the upstart ninja.



OROCHIMARU

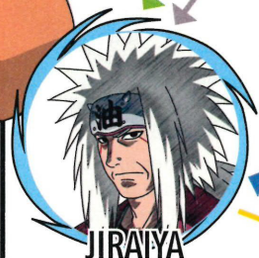
One of the series' primary villains, Orochimaru is not above performing twisted genetic experiments on infants. In his quest for immortality, he's found a quick solution: possess the bodies of powerful ninjas as his old body fails him. His current target: Naruto's friend and rival Sasuke.

ITACHI

Brother of Sasuke, Itachi possesses the Mangekyo Sharingan (an evil eye, basically), which allows him to trap his enemies in an illusionary world and torture them for what seems to them to be days but is actually only a matter of seconds. Also was once involved in a plot to kidnap Naruto.

KISAME

Kisame is a master of water ninjutsu and wields a sentient sword that's covered in large scales to shave and rend flesh as opposed to cutting it. It's no surprise, then, that his name means 'Demon Shark' in Japanese. Enjoys mutilating his enemies.



JIRAIYA

A self-proclaimed 'super-pervert', Jiraiya developed Transparent Escape Technique jutsu, which he uses to render himself invisible so that he can spy on naked chicks. Despite this, he takes offence when Naruto refers to him as the 'Perverted Hermit', 'Erotic Hermit' or 'Pervy Sage'.

NARUTO

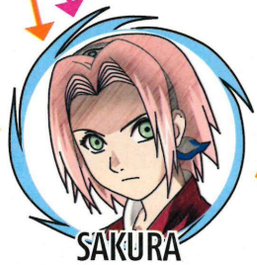
Described by his teacher Kakashi as the 'Number One Loudest, Unpredictable, Hyperactive Knuckleheaded Ninja' in his village, Naruto shares his body with a nine-tailed demon fox, sealed in him at birth. Also likes ghost-writing erotic fiction for Jiraiya in his spare time.

SASUKE

After discovering his brother Itachi standing over the corpses of their parents, Sasuke vowed vengeance on his brother and spends every waking moment training for it. One of the most talented ninjas in the Naruto universe, Sasuke has abandoned his friends in his quest for power.

KAKASHI

Fan-favourite Kakashi is Naruto's mentor and, like Itachi, sports a Sharingan – a transplant he received after losing his eye in battle. One of Kakashi's favoured justu attacks is the Thousand Years of Death, which involves inserting two fingers into an opponent's rectum and propelling the person across some distance.



SAKURA

The object of Naruto's affections, Sakura is herself more interested in their team-mate Sasuke, who – the cold-hearted playa – rebuffs her every advance. Even after Sasuke turns traitor and becomes a rogue ninja, Sakura refuses to let anyone badmouth her first, unrequited love.

COLOUR KEY

- Lackey
- Master
- Team-mates
- Ex-team-mates
- Enemy
- Student
- Sensei
- Friends
- Love interest
- Brothers

Bright, cel-shaded graphics recreate the look of the anime

A brief moment of peace before the face-punching kicks off once more

NARUTOPEDIA

Memorise the following definitions and it'll all start to make a bit more sense – well, as much sense as it ever will, which isn't a lot

CHAKRA: Bodily energy that ninjas use to power their jutsu techniques

GENIN: A junior ninja. Three of them are banded into a team under a sensei's supervision

HOKAGE: The leader of a ninja village. This is the rank to which Naruto aspires

JUTSU: Any technique requiring chakra manipulation, most of which appear magical

PUBLISHER **SQUARE ENIX** | DEVELOPER **SQUARE ENIX** | WEBSITE **WWW.SQUARE-ENIX.COM**

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS: THE WAR OF THE LIONS

THE BEST PS1 RPG YOU NEVER PLAYED GETS A PINT-SIZED PORT

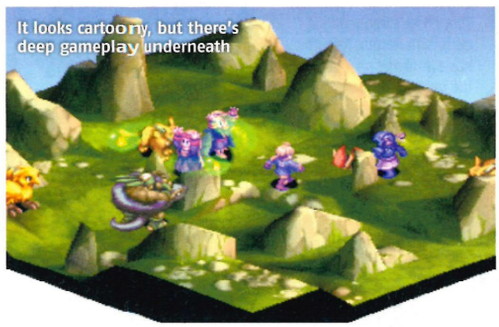
If you never played *Final Fantasy Tactics* when it came out on PS1 in 1998 (and given that it was never released in Europe, you're unlikely to have done) you missed out on one of the defining roleplaying games of the past decade. In fact, unless you're an obsessive importer or dabble in a bit of super-illegal PC emulation, you may never have even heard of it.

Well, although it lacks a comforting Roman numeral nailed to its name, *Tactics* is one of the best *Final Fantasy* games ever made.

But dry those tears. Uncle Square Enix is here, and in an act of supreme benevolence (or a cunning cash-grab, depending on your view), has brought *FF Tactics* to PSP as part of the Ivalice Alliance project.

Ivalice? If that name sounds familiar, that's because it was the setting for the most recent PS2 instalment in the series *Final Fantasy XII*. Both games were brought to life care of legendary Square artist Akihiko Yoshida.

Tactics was the first *FF* to feature Ivalice, although the events take place thousands of years after *FFXII*'s story concludes, with society having regressed from *FFXII*'s techno-savvy culture to a more feudal society.



TRAIN STORM

The plot behind *Tactics* is rather Shakespearean, and is viewed by some fans as utterly engrossing, by others as horrendously convoluted. Sadly, we don't have an extra 10 pages here to go into full detail, so suffice to say that *Tactics* places you in the shoes of a disgraced knight called Ramza Beoulve, who is attempting to uncover the dark truths behind the Lion War that has ravaged Ivalice.

To do this you must amass and train an army of allies and mercenaries, which is *Tactics*' chief joy. Using *FF*'s classic Job System, you train troops as Black Mages, Dragoons and Summoners, and unlock more classes as they master existing ones.

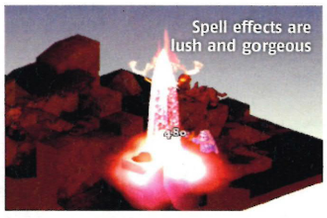
Battles are turn-based affairs that take place on a rotatable isometric battlefield and, as the title implies, require no small degree of strategy.

THE LION'S SHARE

Of course, it wouldn't be a Square Enix re-release without a slew of new content, and *Final Fantasy Tactics: The War of the Lions* certainly doesn't disappoint in that respect.

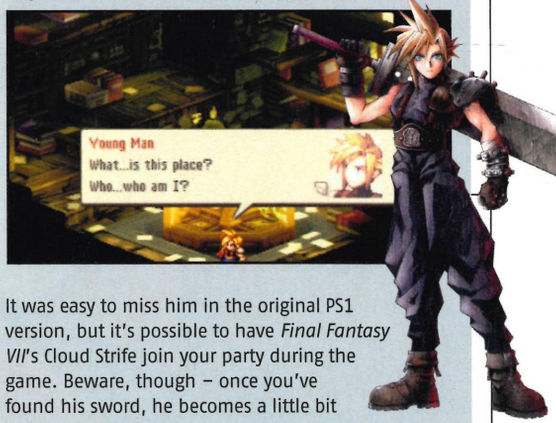
There are now two extra classes on top of the original 20: the Onion Knight and Dark Knight, both of which will be extremely powerful in the right hands. There's a new wireless multiplayer mode (co-op and versus), too, which is a dream come true for *FF* fans.

Add to that some beautiful, cel-shaded anime cutscenes plus a batch of new side quests, items and characters, and it looks like this port of *Final Fantasy Tactics* could very well be the game that every RPG-lovin' PSP owner has been waiting for. ■ **MS**



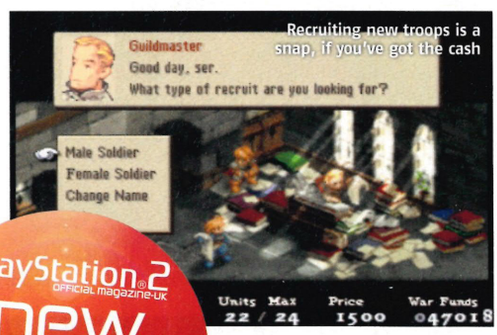
FANCY SEEING YOU HERE!

Why, look who we met in *The War of the Lions*!



It was easy to miss him in the original PS1 version, but it's possible to have *Final Fantasy VII*'s Cloud Strife join your party during the game. Beware, though – once you've found his sword, he becomes a little bit over-powered.

Surprise! Ivalice's infamous sky pirate, Balthier, has his own side quest and can join your party. But just how he came to be in the middle of the Lion War, which takes place thousands of years after the events of *Final Fantasy XII*, we don't know.



monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

IT'S ABOUT DAMN TIME the PSP started getting some classic PS1 games ported its way. Why should the PS3 have all the fun? Well, rejoice! *FF Tactics* is coming

HOT OR NOT

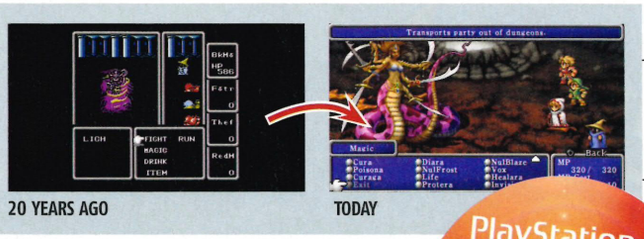
TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK new info

PUBLISHER **SQUARE ENIX** | DEVELOPER **SQUARE ENIX** | WEBSITE **WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/PSP/GAMES/FINAL_FANTASY**

FINAL FANTASY

THE PSP FINAL FANTASY PORT EXPLOSION CONTINUES...



This is it. This is where it all started. This is... not like we remember it at all! High-res, 24-bit colour? 16:9 widescreen? Redrawn, detailed sprites? Heck, when we played *Final Fantasy* back on the NES in 1990, we had 48 colours and five types of grey and we were damn happy about it. And that plinkitty-ponk NES music? Such sweet harmonies you have never heard!

Now here we have a 20th-anniversary remake of the first game in the legendary roleplayer series, a title that never had a UK release. The game includes the bonus dungeons from the GBA remake that appeared a few years back, not to mention a spanking new dungeon, The Labyrinth of Time. And when we say spanking, we mean it: the dungeon's quest has a time limit and your hit points decrease with every passing second.

FANTASTIC FOUR

This being the first Final Fantasy game, the plot is pretty basic. Four young Light Warriors are charged with restoring order to the world and ultimately find themselves fighting an ancient, unspeakable evil.

At the start, you create a party of four from six basic classes: Warrior, Thief, Monk, Red Mage, Black Mage and White Mage. Later, these classes can be upgraded.

It's not a strict port of the original NES game; numerous gameplay tweaks have brought it to the same standard of play as other *Final Fantasy* games.

So, if you're looking for a history lesson, you're better off sourcing a copy of the original game. If you can find one... ■ **MS**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK new screens

monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

THE NEW GENERATION of Final Fantasists might find the original hard going, but Square Enix has pulled out all the stops to make this an essential purchase

HOT OR NOT

TEPID | WARM | **HOT** | BOILING | MELTDOWN

PUBLISHER **SQUARE ENIX** | DEVELOPER **SQUARE ENIX** | WEBSITE **WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/PSP/GAMES/FINAL_FANTASY_II**

FINAL FANTASY II

...AND CONTINUES SOME MORE

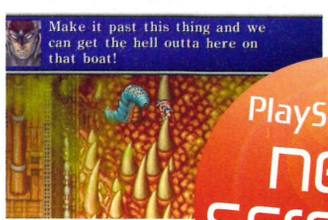
What's the difference between *Final Fantasy* and *Final Fantasy II*, you ask? Very little. So little, in fact, that *FFII* wasn't even originally released outside Japan. It wasn't until the SNES release of *Final Fantasy IV* (confusingly rechristened *Final Fantasy II*) that the West would see another game from the series.

So until the advent of cheeky NES emulation software and, later, Square Enix's decision to milk its back catalogue like the cash cow that it is, *FFII* remained a relatively unobtainable curio.

Of course, the true *FF* fanatic knows that *FFII* was the first instalment in the series to introduce the chocobo, not to mention a character named Cid (both have appeared in practically every title in the series since).

But otherwise, apart from one of the main characters being able to communicate with beavers, the plot is very similar, involving four youths on an epic quest.

This time, though, rather than locking your characters into a set class from the off, they develop through their actions. Let Leon swing his sword for long enough, for example, and he'll get stronger.



SOUL SURVIVOR

In addition to the high-res overhaul of the game, the remake also contains a neat little feature called the Soul of Rebirth: a bonus storyline that culminates in a second encounter with the final boss.

But whether Square Enix is spoiling us with this PSP version, or simply spoiling the memory of the original games, remains to be seen. ■ **MS**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK new screens

monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

IN TERMS OF gaming history, this isn't as important as its predecessor but if you can't get enough *Final Fantasy*, you'll still be glad you gave this a look

HOT OR NOT

TEPID | WARM | **HOT** | BOILING | MELTDOWN

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK
new screens

As is *GTA* tradition, you'll find yourself in a heap of trouble with the law

PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR | DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR NORTH | WEBSITE WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/IV/

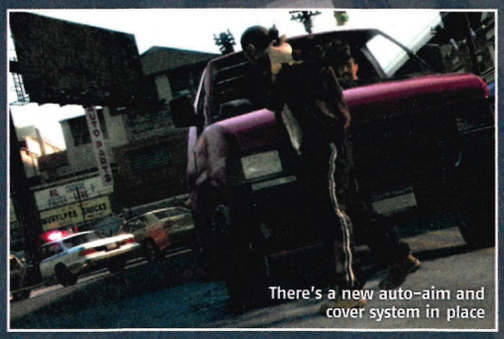
GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

WE SPEND AN ACTION-PACKED HOUR WITH NIKO BELLIC

The last demo of *Grand Theft Auto IV* lasted for a matter of minutes. But this time, developer Rockstar has invited us to its London office to see the hotly anticipated game in action for a full hour. So sit back, relax and we'll tell you what we saw.

The demo starts in Liberty City's version of Times Square and you only have to stand on the spot and look around to see the astonishing level of detail in the game. The myriad signs and adverts, many touched with trademark *GTA* humour, drench the bustling streets in a neon glow.

Pedestrians mill about, coughing, sneezing, smoking, muttering. A vendor pimps his hot dogs nearby. It's not as crowded as the real Times Square, but we fail to spot the same model twice for these non-player characters, and the same goes for the cars that trundle past on roads that are themselves heavily detailed with wear and tear. Liberty City feels alive. Really alive.



There's a new auto-aim and cover system in place

PISTOL FASHION

So let's walk through the main mission that we're shown. It's unclear at what point during the game it takes place; the mission timeline has yet to be finalised, but anyway, your man Niko Bellic has somehow managed to get entangled with a dodgy detective called Francis McGeary. McGeary calls Niko on his mobile (see 'The Sim-ple Life', right) and gives him orders to sort out a few sticky situations.

A troublesome lawyer at the firm Goldberg, Ligner & Shyster has some dirt on McGreary, and there's also a guy holding him to ransom over some incriminating photos. Niko's job? Take 'em both out, of course.

And for that you'll need a piece. But no longer can you nip to the nearest Ammu-Nation; instead you'll have to make underground contacts who'll sell you their wares from the boots of cars or dank basements.

This time, Niko pays a visit to a Jamaican called Little Jacob in an empty back alley, and acquires a pistol. Only a pistol? Well, walking around Liberty City with a rocket launcher slung over your shoulder is going to attract some attention. Throughout the game, bigger weapons will have to be stashed out of sight.

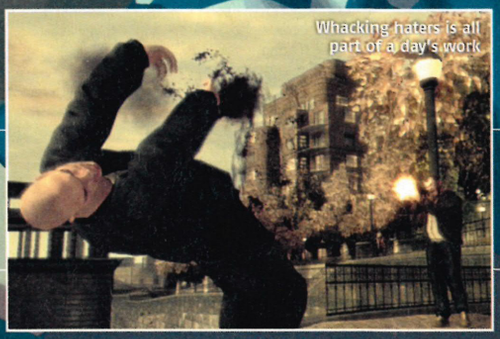
THIS CHARMING MAN

Fun-loving gent, new to Liberty City, GSOH, wltm other gangsters for fun, friendship and violence...

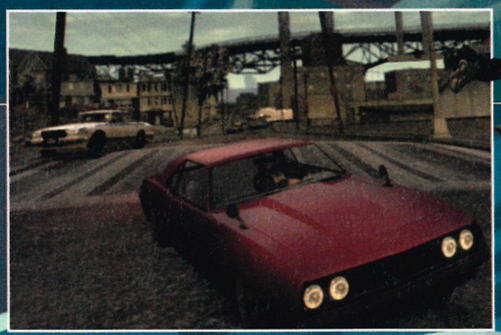
We're warming to Niko Belic, the main protaganist in Rockstar's latest urban crime caper. The heroes of *GTA* have always had a certain charm, largely down to superior scripting and voice acting, but technology now allows Rockstar North to give their man an even more convincing and arresting personality through a wide variety of facial animations and realistic body language and movement.

Take a look at the screenshots on these pages and you'll see him looking calm, angry, a little concerned and even, occasionally, reflective.

We liked him best during a cutscene (which uses the in-game engine) when his eyes were twinkling and a cheeky grin crossed his face. But hey, we're suckers for a nice smile.



Whacking haters is all part of a day's work



Hijacking vehicles won't be as easy as it once was

There's a plan to infiltrate the lawyer's office, and that involves Niko going for a job interview at the firm. So Niko's drawn up a fake CV and is going to make his application online.

He hails a cab to take him to the nearest internet café because, as with the carrying of heavy weaponry, breaking into cars every two minutes is likely to attract unwanted attention.

Just like New York City, on which Liberty City is based, there are cabs aplenty. But unlike NYC, you can either sit back and enjoy the ride or skip right to your destination.

LIBERTY.COM

Arriving at the internet café, we discover our first real surprise: *IV* has its own internet, to which you can get access from any in-game PC.

So we actually use the PC to upload Niko's CV to the company's website. We noted various amusing banner ads on the homepage and Rockstar says there will be "loads to do online", although no one would elaborate.

Anyway, as he waits for the lawyers to call him back, Niko nips off to whack the guy with the incriminating

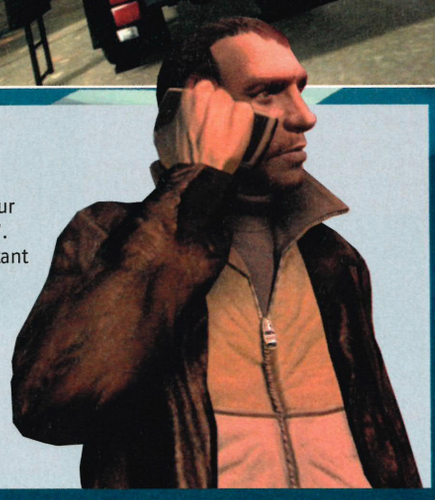
THE SIM-PLE LIFE

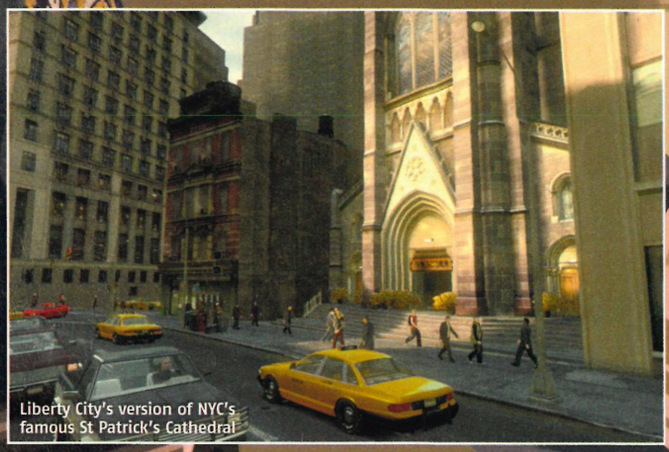
Your mobile phone lets you slay as you go

What's the single most important gadget you own, aside from your console? We'd bet most people would answer 'my mobile phone'.

It's no surprise, then, that in *GTA IV* Niko's mobile is as important a tool as his shooters, allowing him to keep in contact with the people he meets and receives missions from.

The in-game mobile has all the functions of a real one: text messaging, address book, personal organiser, camera, alarm, calendar and so on. When in use, the phone icon pops up in the bottom right corner of the screen and you scroll through menus with the D-pad. No news yet on whether you'll be able to buy Crazy Frog ringtones for it, though.




Liberty City's version of NYC's famous St Patrick's Cathedral

It's pollution that makes the sunsets so spectacular. Fact

Each district of Liberty City has its own unique look and feel

photos. It's a relatively simple job, a case of going to a rendezvous point, calling the guy to identify him and then giving him a lead shower.

Naturally this attracts the heat, so it's time to leg it. The familiar system of 'wanted stars' is in place, but getting away from the fuzz actually seems a little easier than in previous *GTA* games.

When they're after you, a flashing blue and red circle indicating their search area appears on the map. Their locations are also indicated and to escape their attention you must get yourself outside of the search zone.

The search area widens the more stars you clock up, and choppers and SWAT teams are called in eventually, too. But all the same, escape seemed none too tricky, even after a protracted and bloody shootout with cops.

With the first hit completed, Niko has time on his hands to do as he pleases until the lawyers call, and there'll be plenty to occupy him. For the purposes of the demo, though, the call comes straight away and Niko is invited for an interview.

INSIDE STORY

You don't turn up to an interview in jeans and a leather jacket so Niko stops by a clothes shop for suitable togs (see 'Sachs Appeal') before hailing another cab. The wuss. Then, at Goldberg, Ligner & Shyster we get our first real taste of how *GTA IV*'s interiors are shaping up. It's the only interior environment that we see, but on this evidence they're going to be really good. The offices are large with multiple rooms and the jumpy glitchiness that characterises interiors on PS2 titles is largely absent.

Having whacked the lawyer (who just has time to splutter 'Hey, guns don't kill people, videogames kill people') before the trigger is pulled, there's an almighty gun battle with security staff before the police arrive and surround the building.

And this is where we'll leave things, because for all the talk of a new, improved auto-aim mechanic and environment-based cover system, there's no way we can tell how proficient these things are just from viewing the game. We'll wait for our chance to play it.

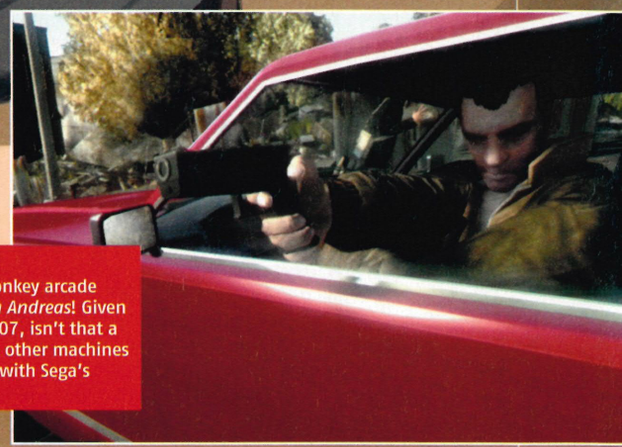
It may seem like a strange thing to say, but from the evidence so far, *IV* is very much a *GTA* game. What we mean is that all the trademark features that made the series such a storming success are present and correct, but even more so than before. The devil, as they say, is in the detail. ■ **NE**

BEER MISS?
So, there are hot dog vendors on the streets – does that mean that you'll need to feed your character? Yes, says Rockstar, although refusing to elaborate further, such as whether the presence of bars means you'll be able to get sloshed.

SACHS APPEAL
Familiar clothes shops make a return, as this chap's Didier Sachs grundies illustrate. In the mission we were shown, Niko stops of at a boutique called Perseus to purchase a rather natty brown suit and brogues.

BAIZE-ING SQUAD
Pool was little more than a passing distraction in *GTA: San Andreas*. Hopefully they've made it better for *IV*. And don't bet against Niko stepping up to a table tennis table at some point.

CABINET RESHUFFLE?
Look, it's a Go Go Space Monkey arcade cabinet as seen in *GTA: San Andreas*! Given that this is meant to be 2007, isn't that a bit retro? Perhaps we'll see other machines in classier joints equipped with Sega's Linbergh arcade board...



monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

THUS FAR *IV* BEARS ALL THE HALLMARKS of a classic *GTA* game and the level of detail is astonishing. As long as the shooting mechanic works effectively, we think everyone will be more than pleased.

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID | WARM | HOT | **BOILING** | MELTDOWN

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PlayStation 2

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100% SPOOF

In new game **The Simpsons**, America's most famous family are seriously taking the mick...

Do the phrases 'Shadow of the Colossal Donut', 'Medal of Homer' or 'Return to Castle Duffenstein' ring any bells? Yep, they're all parodies of videogames. And they're all in the new Simpsons game, a mick-taking extravaganza with levels, characters and skills based on famous games.

And it doesn't stop there. The Simpsons become aware that they've been licensed to yet another game, and they're not happy about it.

Take typical housewife Marge, for example. She's so disgusted with violence in videogames that she takes to the streets of Springfield to recruit citizens to her cause.

Marge can influence and command people with a megaphone, as in the Nintendo game *Pikmin*; we saw her and her acolytes destroying posters advertising a scandalous bit of software called *Grand Theft Scratchy: Blood Island*.

Homer enters an eating competition called Bite Night which transforms him into a big rolling ball like something out of *We ♥ Katamari*.

The more food Homer eats the longer he keeps going, and power-ups (the Insanity Pepper among them) turn him into other forms such as a fiery ball or gooey blob.

In a spoof of god sims, Lisa can summon the Hand of Buddha and move things around from an overhead viewpoint. Bart, meanwhile, gets superhero skills by transforming into Bartman.

The game's been designed for two characters and the second player can drop in and out at any time, making it perfect for co-op play.

From what we've seen, the writing is sharp and the references genuinely funny, and there's been plenty of input from the TV team (the cartoon is now showing on Sky 1, by the way).

More than 8000 lines of dialogue have been penned by the TV show's writers and creator Matt Groening even makes an appearance as a boss. He actually went into the studio so that game developer EA could record his groans and exclamations as he's taken apart by his babies.

FAMILY OUTING

Visually the whole thing matches the cartoon series beautifully with a warm, animated feel that's a class above previous Simpsons outings.

There are more than 200 characters in the game, around 100 of these recognisable from the show, including Krusty, Disco Stu, Millhouse and Groundskeeper Willie.

But it's the way *The Simpsons* pokes fun at itself and other franchises that we love best.

HOMER TRANSFORMS INTO A BIG ROLLING BALL LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF WE ♥ KATAMARI

Already we've spotted 40 or so references, from classics such as *Frogger* (at one point Bart must jump across lily pads) to *Medal of Honor*. Even game clichés such as exploding barrels and hazardous buzzsaws get thoroughly spoofed.

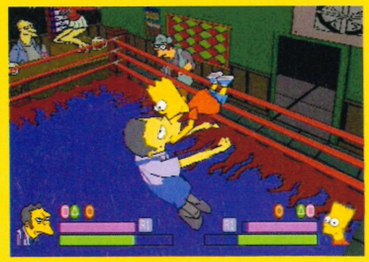
Over the next five pages we'll run through some of the send-ups we spotted and suggest a few more we'd like to see... ■ **Mark Walbank**

RIPS OFF: GOD OF WAR

The billboard in the background says it all. Homer turns into a Kratos look-a-like after eating a spoonful of Hot Chowder, and in the God of Wharf level Bart and Lisa take on waves of enemies, albeit without weapons so devastating or bloody as the Blades of Athena.

COMEDIC LICENCE

No wonder the Simpsons are a bit fed up at being licensed out yet again – take a look at some of the games in which they've previously starred



SIMPSONS WRESTLING (2001)

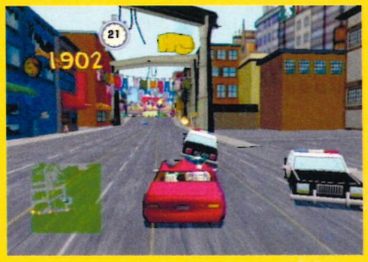
Two words that should never, ever be placed together are 'Simpsons' and 'wrestling'. This abomination embodied all that's bad about cynical licensing and has tarnished the brand ever since.

THE SIMPSONS SKATEBOARDING (2002)

Not content with putting Bart and co in lycra, the marketing people thought it would be a good idea to see them emulating Tony Hawk. Sluggish controls and vapid level design made this a crock, though.

THE SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE (2002)

A much better effort, this one. Although it was an obvious 'tribute' to *Crazy Taxi* there was enough fun crammed into *Road Rage* to please forgiving *Simpsons* fans. The mayhem was executed well but it did pall after a couple of hours.



THE SIMPSONS HIT & RUN (2003)

By far the best *Simpsons* game, *Hit & Run* had 56 missions and dialogue by the writers of the show. It also gave us a taste of the parodies that were to come with countless references to *Grand Theft Auto*.

LEVEL: SHADOW OF THE COLOSSAL DONUT

RIPS OFF: SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

This pastiche of the gigantic bosses from *Shadow of the Colossus* is obvious and the look of the Colossus is also a nod towards the Marshmallow Man in classic 1980s movie *Ghostbusters*. This could be Bart Simpson's biggest challenge to date (next to taking on daredevil Captain Lance Murdoch, of course) and he'll need all the special abilities he can draw on by transforming into Bartman.

LEVEL: MEDAL OF HOMER

Secret Level:
Castle Duffenstein

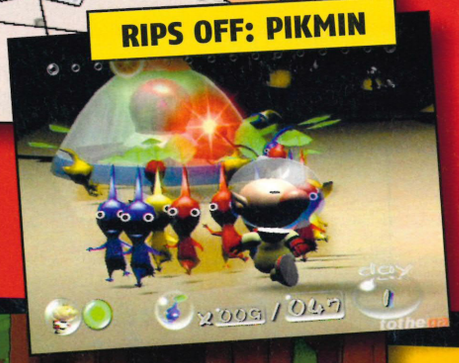
RIPS OFF: MEDAL OF HONOR

It doesn't take a genius to work out the reference here: the Normandy beach landing opening from *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. One of the strongest features of *The Simpsons* is that the game engine accommodates several play styles, from third-person action to overhead God sim. By the way, Homer's helmet says 'Killing Machine' and his rifle is called 'Margie'. Tee hee!

LEVEL: PIKMIN PERSUASION

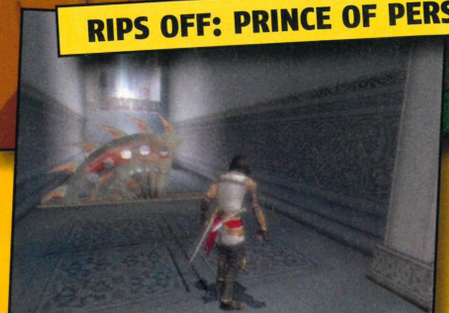
Marge is a persuasive lady, and her ability here to influence people with her megaphone (a direct parody of GameCube real-time strategy title *Pikmin*) makes for one of *The Simpsons*' strongest levels. She can command citizens to go around ripping up 'sordid' posters and wrecking game shops, part of her drive to rid the world of violent videogame nasties.

RIPS OFF: PIKMIN



LEVEL: SAWDUST OF TIME

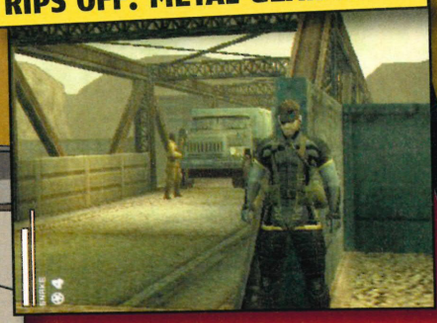
RIPS OFF: PRINCE OF PERSIA



There are several references to seminal platformer *Prince of Persia* throughout the game – some giant buzzsaws that Lisa and Bart have to navigate are among the more obvious. The third level of the game is called Tree Hugger and sees the family trying to bring down Mr Burns' logging company, which is planning to turn Springfield's trees into toothpicks.

LEVEL: METAL BEER SOLID

RIPS OFF: METAL GEAR SOLID



We all know Homer is partial to a beer or two and in several levels his health is boosted by consumables including alcohol, pizzas and chillies. If the name of this level isn't clue enough, the army trucks also bear a remarkable resemblance to those found in *Metal Gear Solid*, so stealth sections ripping off Snake's covert skills can't be ruled out. Homer's belching may well give the game away, though...

RIPS OFF: THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WINDWAKER

Posters for *The Simpsons* already show Homer dressed as Link complete with stick-on pointy ears, so it's not much of an imaginative jump to expect many references to Nintendo's much-loved *Zelda* series. The most obvious is Homer's ability to float breezily across rooftops with his cape – clearly an homage to Link's leaf-gliding antics from The *Legend of Zelda: The Windwaker*.

LEVEL: THE WINDWAFTER

LEVEL: SUPER HILARIO SUNSHINE

RIPS OFF: SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

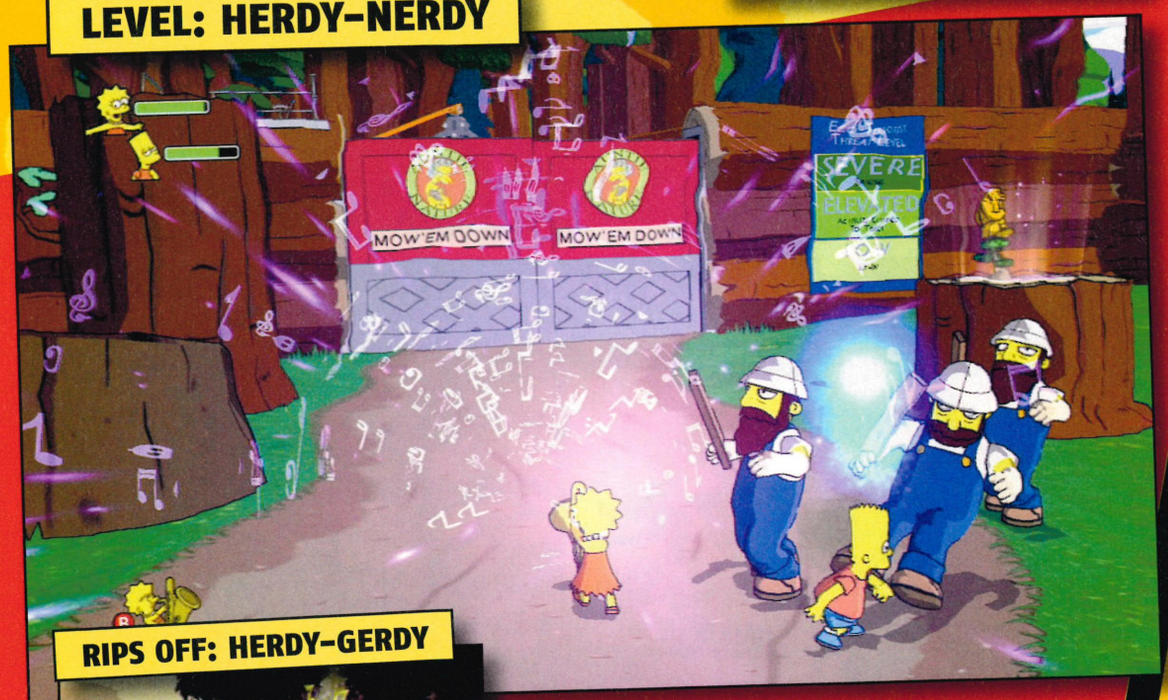
This platforming section takes place across Springfield's harbour – the spit of Delfino Bay from Nintendo's *Super Mario Sunshine*. Note the octopus in the background: it looks so similar to Glooper Blooper that we half expect to see Mario entering stage right. It's good to see that references aren't just sight gags but shape the structure of the levels as well.

LEVEL: GRAND THEFT SCRATCHY: BLOOD ISLAND

RIPS OFF: GRAND THEFT AUTO

There are loads of nods to the *Grand Theft Auto* games throughout *The Simpsons*. Even the streets of Springfield – with construction yards and cranes – look just like Portland from *GTA III*. And there are plenty of references to a game called Grand Theft Scratchy, including posters and advertising displays in the game.

LEVEL: HERDY-NERDY



RIPS OFF: HERDY-GERDY

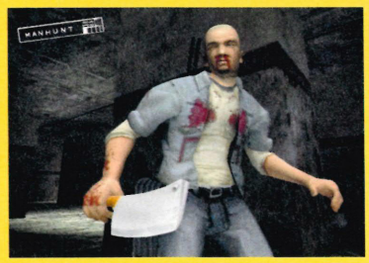
Okay, so this one's a little more tenuous but if you look closely Lisa is playing a magical saxophone. We're not exactly sure what kind of properties it has but, judging by the musical notes floating around and the name of the level, it could have a Pied Piper-type effect, just like those in Eidos' shepherd-'em-up *Herdy-Gerdy*.

PARODY OVERDRIVE

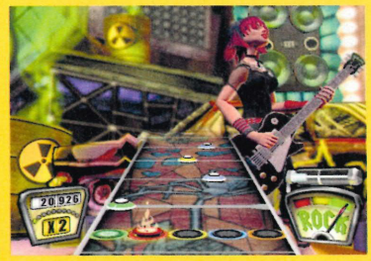
All these game parodies have inspired us to come up with some send-ups of our own. So here are four titles we'd love to see in the game

CANIS CANEM EEJIT
STARRING: MILLHOUSE VON HOUTEN
SPECIAL ATTACK: WATER-FIRING SPECTACLES
It's time for Millhouse to turn the tables and get his own back for years of schoolyard abuse. Mini-games such as Shame the Sports Jock with History Knowledge and a level called Dork's Revenge wouldn't go amiss.

GITMAN: BLOOD MONEY
STARRING: DR NICK RIVIERA
SPECIAL ATTACK: ANADIN EXTRA
Springfield's Dr Nick is no stranger to loose morals and the odd 'accident' in the operating room, so we think he'd make a brilliant assassin. With a shaved head and barcode on the neck he'd be the spit of Agent 47.



KLANHUNT
STARRING: GROUNDSKEEPER WILLIE
SPECIAL ATTACK: BOOZY BREATH
When this fiery Scot gets a bee in his bonnet the whole world knows about it. How about a level where he's kidnapped by the Ku Klux Klan, put in a reality TV show and has to kill the lot of them? No? Well, just a thought.



SITAR HERO
STARRING: APU NAHASAPEEMAPETILON JR
SPECIAL ATTACK: BOLLYWOOD DANCING
One of the posters EA has created for the game shows Apu in a *Guitar Hero* send-up. With his exotic charm and eccentric ways he'd definitely be a hit with the ladies. Levels with some rhythm-action strumming are surely possible, so let's hope Sitar Hero makes it in.

BOX INTERNATIONAL ART

When OPS2 reader Matt Le Page wrote to tell us about his recent trip to Canada and the packaging he'd seen on games in the shops there, we expected a patriotic rant about how North American game box art was inferior to that of the UK. But no. Quite the opposite.

"I noticed a copy of *Killzone* that had a completely different cover to the UK one," Matt wrote, "and it looked so much cooler.

"Along the shelves, I saw that almost all the other games looked better than ours. I don't think they should get a better deal. It's really unfair!"

That's a surprise. North American publishers have a nasty habit of releasing much-loved titles (ancient versions of *Mega Man* and *Bomber Man* are two classic examples) with new artwork that 'reimagines' characters as muscled, airbrushed goons, and insultingly so.

But lately, publishers the world over have started to become more clued-up as to what gamers want from packaging and many are even willing to try and meet us at least halfway, as you can see from the examples of Japanese, American and UK box art on the following pages.

Of course, the odds are that you, as a game magazine reader, already know those you want from those you don't before they even hit the shelves, so you'll just want the packaging to look as beautiful as possible.

Publishers use the covers to sell their products to the general public – to snag the eye of your average browsing punter and give them information about what's in the box.

Sometimes, both those things get nailed, and everyone's chuffed. Often, though, we're left with a garbled mess that serves no one and looks like it was cobbled together by a work experience kid rather than being the expensive outcome of many focus groups.

So, can good design coax you into an impulse buy? Should publishers even bother trying to please serious gamers? Does the box really change people's minds about which games to splash out on and which to ignore? Let us know your thoughts at the usual address.

ICO

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

A classic clanger this, as far as the USA is concerned. A game as delicately pretty and unique as *Ico* deserves better than generic fantasy-element scrapbooking, focused on what looks to be the Middle Earth equivalent of a chavvy thug. Luckily for us, though, the UK market was blessed with Japan's artwork: a striking and atmospheric cover that better conveys the enigmatic, exploratory nature of the game.

BEST: UK/JAPAN
America's 'son-of-Arnie-in-fancy-dress' look is quite the tragedy for such a beautiful game.

SHADOW HEARTS: FROM THE NEW WORLD

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

The *Shadow Hearts* character renders rarely do justice to the in-game visual charm of the series and its hand-drawn artwork. But the crisp, punchy art of the Japanese box does the job. The USA cover is naff but bearable and well framed. The UK edition, though, is the lamest of the bunch, for some reason choosing to showcase the worst side you'll ever see of lead character Johnny Garland.

BEST: JAPAN
Cool manga styling has universal gaming appeal. *Shadow Hearts: FtNW* should have run with it globally.

RATCHET & CLANK 2

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

Typical Japan, here: a cute image drawn specifically to appeal to Far Eastern players, even if it's not entirely like what you actually get from the game. The USA and UK versions are both bold, with big-ass sci-fi gun power and eye contact from the lead duo. The thing is, Ratchet looks like he's having way much more fun on the Japanese box.

BEST: JAPAN
Only because Ratchet's grinning instead of snarling. He's actually a lovely chap, don't you know.

WE ♥ KATAMARI

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

Each region gets its own wildly different tack, but all three manage to get across *Katamari*'s endlessly quirky soul in a manner that pings your curiosity and demands at least to be picked up off the shelf. The USA art loses out, however, because the quality of the image is in danger of suggesting the wrong kind of tacky, edging it into the dodgy territory of budget gaming.

BEST: UK
It's rendered in a crayon scrawl, sure, but warms your heart just to look at it. Aww.

GOD OF WAR

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

Here, Japan directly nabs the American box art, and that's no bad thing. It's definitely the more effective of the two images, depicting Kratos as the wearied, blood-caked, brawny anti-hero that he is; plus, his weapons look suitably brilliant and the background expresses the game's epic mood and colour well. On the other hand, the UK cover paints Kratos as a generic, throng-surfing combat dude, wielding only one blade and in the other hand, holding the Medusa head like a particularly aggressive loud hailer.

BEST: USA/JAPAN
Crouched, ready to spring and lusting for vengeance – you don't need lots of motion for an image to feel dynamic.

YAKUZA

The game's called *Like a Dragon* in Japan, but that art is just a little too vague, albeit flashy and eye-catching. The Western name reveals plenty more and could've gotten away with that minimalist high-kicking image, but the chosen tattoo-splashed design is nonetheless effective. Also, eye contact, despite being a golden rule of selling characters, is overrated.

BEST: USA/UK
Massive dragon tats are cool. The Japan box is styled to the point of obscurity.

FLIPNIC

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

That Japanese cover literally says it all, eh? If only more games could be so direct and honest. *Flipnic* is a pinball game, sure, but it's unlike any other you'll play, packed with groovy oddness and abundant imagination – something the people responsible for the USA box art don't seem to have noticed. The UK design at least tries to give a flavour of the game's leftfield lushness, though.

BEST: JAPAN
When you're trying to sell something so off-the-wall, you may as well be upfront about it.

RAW DANGER

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

The American design is the most explicit and informative but, boy, is it naff. Totally straight-to-video. In Japan the game is known as *Disaster Report* or *Desperation City*, making the cover image feel somewhat more alluring than the randomness it first appears to be. But, aside from the awful 1980s action vehicle name, it's the UK box that stands out best.

BEST: UK
Just the right kind of moodiness, even if the daft name and logo do their best to spoil it.

SILENT HILL 4

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

All three boxes focus on the same central image – the heavily sealed door to Henry Townshend's hellish apartment – but it's Japan that has the most unsettling success, with that murky phantom's sunken eyes and gob-bothering fingers. The USA version is over-egged to the point of looking like a cheesy horror flick, while the UK art is just a little too blurry-slurred for its photo-negative power to take hold.

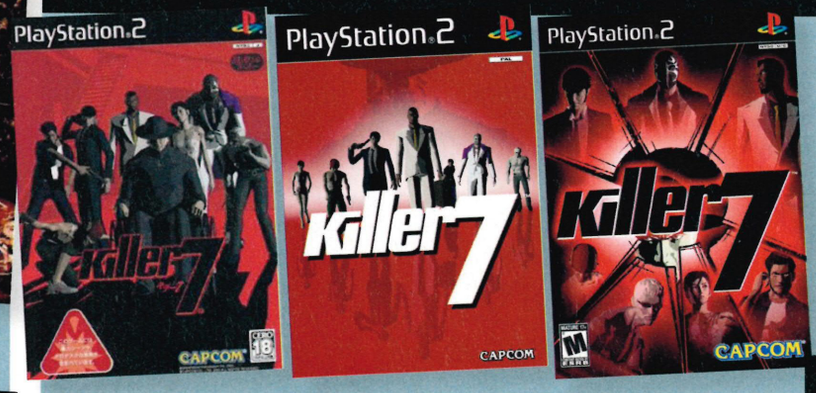
BEST: JAPAN
Properly scary faces – not just screaming, tortured ones – get across the series' sophisticated terror.

KUON

Luckily, this came out before Western remakes of Eastern horror flicks became such a cliché, otherwise the USA and UK boxes would have been just close-ups of eyeballs. It's still the Japanese art that best nails the ancient, ghoulish nastiness contained within, however, even if it does look kind of like a sexy Mahjong game. The UK one is too murderous, although the USA cover is decently chilling.

BEST: JAPAN
Luminous skin, a dead-eyed stare and twisted posture: a great encapsulation of *Kuon*'s horror.

KILLER 7



JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

With *Killer 7*'s cast of demented psychos, there's little choice other than to fill each cover with family album portraits of the Smith clan. Aside from the loud logo, though, the UK edition looks really quite soft, given the stark cel-shading of the in-game graphics. The Japanese image is a better effort, but it's the USA cover that hits hardest, its fractured glass being an accurate reflection of Harman Smith's seriously muddled mind. Or something.

BEST: USA
Black and red is stereotypical video nasty territory, but this psychotic dartboard of a cover works well.

DESIGNERS: DO IT LIKE THIS!

Four box designs that show the rest how it's done

BLACK

Not just another shooter; not just another piece of gun-game box art

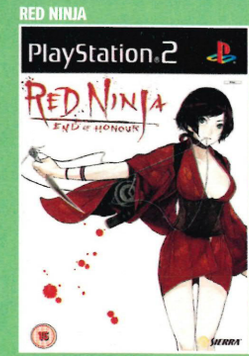
TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

Eight games in and Activision stills find a way to exploit Tony's mug

GOD HAND

Little to do with the game, but still 100% unmistakably fisty impact

RED NINJA



Murderous bird on a wire, with some deadly tricks up her sleeve.

BOX ART INTERNATIONAL

BUJINGAI: SWORDMASTER

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

Lead character Gackt is perhaps the most androgynous fella in the world of videogames, but there's no ignoring that hair, or a massive ornate sword with a cheeky nose-hole cut into the blade. It's saying, loud and clear: "Fancy some fey, soft-rock violence? Step right up!" The American attempt to use the game art differently is very nearly brilliant, but splitting the cover in half with the logo like that just kills it.

BEST: UK/JAPAN
Why wouldn't you highlight the fact that your game contains eyeliner and pink eyebrows?

MASHED: FULLY LOADED

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

All three feature a backdrop of exaggerated destruction, sure, but that American/Japanese name change is a little silly, making it look like any other *Burnout*-wannabe, as opposed to the somewhat dinky and playful race-combat extravaganza it really is. The proper *Mashed* logo is lovely, brash and just the teeniest bit cute, just how *Micro-Machines*-does-fighting should be.

BEST: UK
Logos speak volumes. 'Drive to Survive' has as much character as a plastic cup.

FINAL FANTASY XII

JAPAN | UNITED KINGDOM | UNITED STATES

Same old *Final Fantasy* story, really. In the UK we get the familiar *Final Fantasy* treatment that's also released in Japan: a pared-down logo, topped and backed by some gloriously colourful but mysterious brush stroke artwork. Meanwhile, the USA gets a bespoke character ensemble. It's not totally awful or anything, but it is strange the way Square Enix chooses to abandon its long-running and iconic cover art approach when selling in one of its biggest markets. Too foreign for them? We think the Yanks could handle it.

BEST: UK/JAPAN
This style keeps coming back in the *Final Fantasy* series for a good reason: because it's proper gorgeous.

KILLZONE

The Hellghast troop enemies in *Killzone* are much more iconic than the gun-running rebels you get to play as, so it makes total sense to give them pride of place. The Japanese cover's a mess, though, and the UK box has only half the cool of the American one: the weird toy soldiers at the bottom make it look like the Hellghast guy is peering in on a box of space-age microphones.

BEST: USA
Smoky-cool and packed with detail without feeling cramped. A rare gun-game victory for the USA.

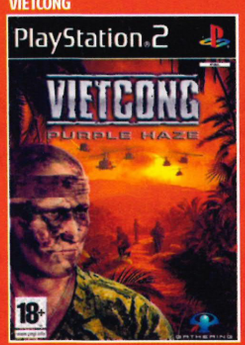
...NOT LIKE THIS!

Four covers that suck like a binge-drinking mosquito

BROTHERS IN ARMS: HILL 30

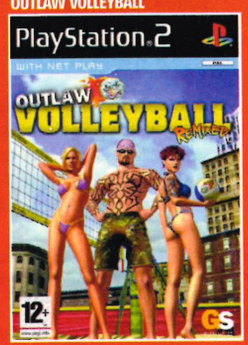
'Poot poot poot' goes the rubbish gun fired by the bored man

VIETCONG



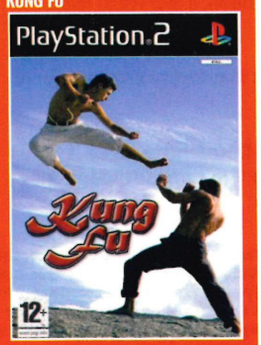
A disinterested mannequin who looks like he just trod in dog poo

OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL



Minus one million points for such a strained lunchbox – blech

KUNG FU



A photo with a logo slapped on it. Looks like a poor man's Gillette ad

competition

Design Your Own Box Art!

Amazing art book and graphic novels to be won...

You've seen how the professionals do box art – and how often they make a hash of it – over the past four pages. Now it's your turn. Send us your box art concept and you could win a veritable library of art-related prizes!

You could do a painting, a collage of pictures cut out from magazines, a Photoshop document, a 3D mock-up lovingly crafted from cornflake packets or even just a drawing of your idea with notes explaining how it would work in real life.

There's only one rule: it must be a real game that's currently on the UK market or in development. No spoofs, please (although they're always welcome in Postal's 'Your Game In Lights' section!).

Team OPS2 has its very own graphic designers in-house, of course, and our art bods Mark and John will be casting their professional eyes over all the entries to judge the best in terms of imagination, marketability and overall design.

They will choose one winner and one runner-up who will both have their designs published on these hallowed pages for thousands of readers to admire. Plus, of course, awesome prizes...

PRIZES

The winner will receive a copy of *Digital Fantasy Painting* by Michael Burns (a great step-by-step guide to making art on your computer), a beautiful *Castlevania* art print, a *Matrix* graphic novel, a stack of four *Star Wars: Clone Wars* graphic novels, a top PS2 game and an OPS Magazine T-shirt.

- The runner-up will receive a *Matrix* graphic novel, a *Star Wars: Tales* graphic novel, a PS2 game and a T-shirt.
- There'll also be T-shirts for any other entries that we like enough to print in the magazine.

So get designing! To inspire you we've had a little go at it ourselves: the results are over there on the opposite page for you to, er, 'admire'...

HOW TO ENTER

Write your name and full address on the back of your work and post it to:
Box Art Compo, OPS2
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW

If you are sending a computer document, for instance a PDF or JPG, please either email it to us at *ps2postal@futurenet.co.uk* with 'box art' in the subject line or put it onto a CD or flash drive (NOT a floppy disk) marked with your name and full address.
All entries must reach us by or on: 12 September

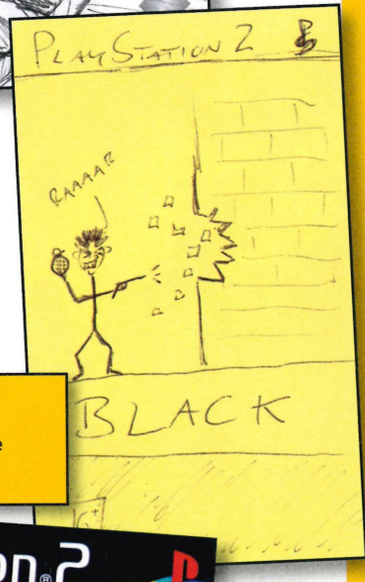
Only the two entries that OPS2 judges to be the best will win the specified prizes. Any other entries that are printed in the magazine will receive OPS2 T-shirts. All entries must have a name and full address attached and must be supplied in hard copy format. We will endeavour to return all entries as soon as possible after judging. Closing date 12 September 2007.
BOX ART COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS. By entering you are agreeing to receive detail of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. Winners will be notified within 28 days. We will not advise non-winners of the result. No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses, designs and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary.

BOX ART INTERNATIONAL

SOPHIE
Fur Fighters
Fur fabric, paper, ketchup
2007

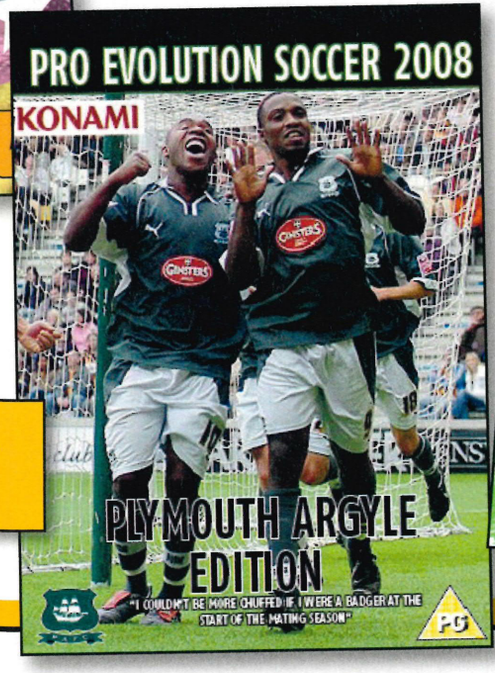
MARK
God of War
Pen, ink, paper
2007

KIM
Final Fantasy XII
Pen, crayon, paper
2007



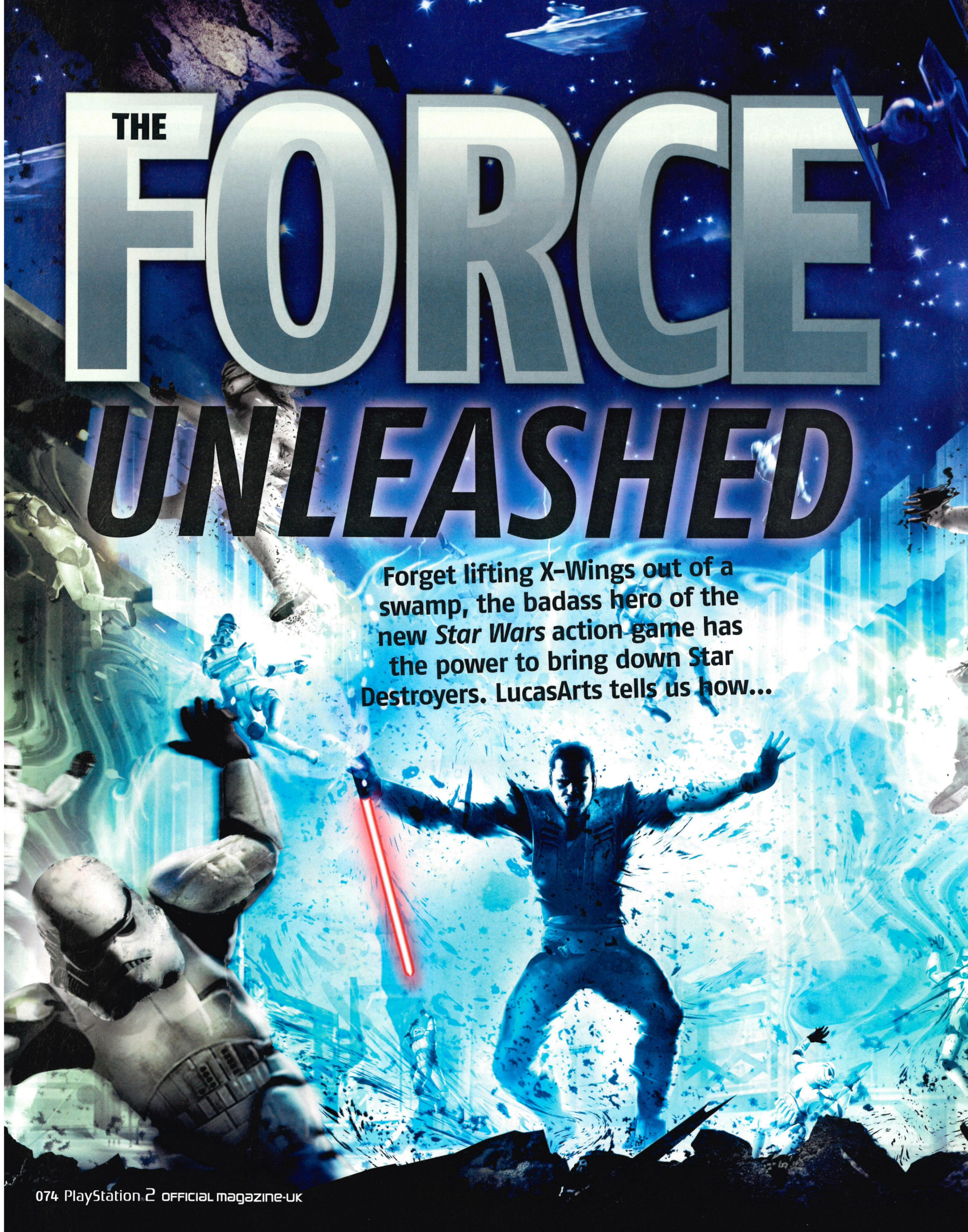
ANDY
Black
Pen, ink, Post-It note
2007

JOHN
Manhunt 2
Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop
2007



NICK
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008
Microsoft Word
2007

MIKE
We ♥ Katamari
Photoshop
2007



THE FORCE UNLEASHED

Forget lifting X-Wings out of a swamp, the badass hero of the new *Star Wars* action game has the power to bring down Star Destroyers. LucasArts tells us how...

Everyone's had a go at playing as a stormtrooper-slaying, look-at-me-I'm-the-saviour-of-the-galaxy Jedi hero by now. But we reckon every *Star Wars* fan would actually prefer to be on the dark side of the Force.

You want to be dancing through the rebel scum with your red lightsaber aloft, lopping off limbs by the dozen while the smell of scorched wookiee hair fills your nostrils, right? Right. And in *The Force Unleashed* you get to do just that.

You also get to play as the biggest badass the *Star Wars* universe has ever known, a Dark Jedi known only as The Apprentice. Whose apprentice? Not Alan Sugar's, that's for sure.

No, The Apprentice serves Lord Vader, having been recruited by him at some point between the end of *Revenge Of The Sith* and the start of *A New Hope*. So how much of a badass is he?

Well, the first trailer for the game shows The Apprentice using the Force to bring down a Star Destroyer... yes, a whole damn Star Destroyer! That kind of power makes Darth Maul look like Little Bo Peep.

DOUBLE AGENT

Why is Darth Vader's apprentice plucking an Imperial Star Destroyer from the sky? Indeed, why does the gorgeous piece of artwork on these pages show our chap tearing apart a squad of stormtroopers?

Well, turns out The Apprentice's very existence is a secret, and the key to the missions he embarks upon for his master is leaving no witnesses behind. Curious.

With the game not hitting the shops until early next year, the folks at LucasArts are unwilling to divulge further details about this

Force Lightning is just one of the Jedi powers at your disposal

Bow down before the one you serve, let's hope we get what we deserve...

aspect. But project lead Haden Blackman and producer Julio Torres are more than happy to chat about other aspects of the game, and as we talk to them their enthusiasm for the title becomes infectious.

They're positive that this will be the best *Star Wars* game yet, and despite the lack of any playable code, we're inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt. For the moment.

YOU CAN LEAP ONTO A RANCOR'S BACK AND SET ABOUT POKING HIM IN THE EYE WITH YOUR WEAPON

TO JEDI FOR?

The Force Unleashed is primarily a third-person action experience and, naturally enough for a game that puts you in the shoes of a titanium-tough bad guy, the focus is on scrapping.

The Apprentice has, of course, got his lightsaber for melee attacks and will be able to string combos together, but the Force attacks sound more intriguing. Force Lightning and Force Push will be familiar attacks for seasoned living-room Jedi. But for this game those powers have been greatly amplified (the clue's in the game's title – the Force has been, quite literally, unleashed).

he environments will be a mix of familiar and new

Although the epic moments such as the Star Destroyer crash are 'contextualised' (we take this to mean 'in cut-scenes'), you can see from these screenshots that in-game battles are going to be epic in themselves.

Take, for example, the concept sketch that shows a pack of Rancors being ridden by Jedis. You're not going to be able to dispatch that lot with a blaster.

An array of acrobatic moves are promised to complement your attacks: for example you can leap onto a Rancor's back and set about poking him in the eye with your weapon.

NEW HOPES

There'll be plenty of familiar faces, but a lot of new ones too

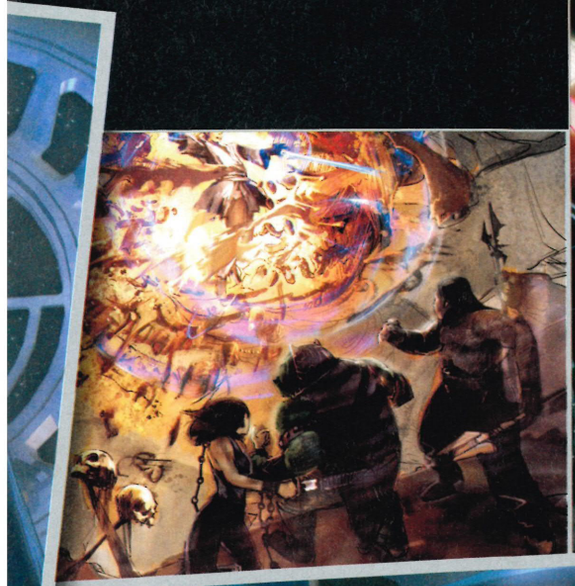
KOTA
Master Rahm Kota, one of the few Jedi who survived the infamous Order 66 in *Episode III*, plays a key part in the story of *The Force Unleashed*.

RANCOR
Every second image of the game released so far has featured a Rancor, and one concept piece included four of them. *Being ridden by Jedi*!

MARIS
We dig the twin lightsaber tonfas. We don't dig the fact that this lady is called Maris Brood, whom we thought was in *Coronation Street*.

DROID
No *Star Wars* adventure would be complete without a camp-as-Christmas droid to annoy you. This guy currently has no name. UR-M8, perhaps?

JUNO
This lass is an Imperial pilot and, more importantly, the Apprentice's love interest. Her uniform makes us feel a bit funny.



We can't tell if this is a screenshot or a render but it sure is pretty

Not only are there several million fans likely to get very upset if you cock up any details, there's also the man in charge to consider, George Lucas himself.

Lucas has been closely involved with this project, especially concerning the way in which Vader is portrayed. Lucas also encouraged the team to feature the Emperor more heavily in

TWO BIG PLOT TWISTS WILL CHANGE ALL WE KNEW OR SUSPECTED ABOUT THE GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY

the story and had a hand in 'two big plot twists' that will, apparently, change all we knew or suspected about the galaxy far, far away.

So the development team has a big budget, a ready-made story and set of characters, and one of the best special effects studios in the world in George Lucas' Industrial Light And Magic. But does this add up to a great game?

At the moment there's no way of knowing because they're not letting anyone near it. We'll let you know when the game is unleashed in the next few months. ■ **Nick Ellis**

As is increasingly becoming commonplace, there are some roleplaying game elements that will help your character grow as you progress.

Haden and Julio say they want the game to appeal to all types of player, so the RPG stuff won't be complex, and you'll be able to avoid it entirely should you choose to. But if it is your bag (and it's certainly ours) then you can ramp up your core powers in different ways.

Similarly, you can complete the game using only a couple of attacks or your melee weapon, but with each power growing stronger the more you use it, you're actively encouraged to use all of them at your disposal. Experience points earned in combat can be spent on new combos, and in turn those combos become more powerful the more you use them.

SPACEBOOK

Star Wars has a rich heritage and a galaxy crammed with all manner of colourful characters, worlds, ships and vehicles.

Like comics, videogames lend themselves perfectly to expanding the *Star Wars* universe, but Haden and Julio say that doing so is actually a pretty terrifying prospect.

It appears that Rancors are one of your main enemies

ROGUE SHADOW

The Apprentice's fancy starfighter unveiled

Fact: If you want to conquer the galaxy you're going to need a fancy ship to get around in. The Apprentice's Rogue Shadow has been designed specially for the game, and looks like a cross between Darth Vader's tie-fighter and Boba Fett's Slave II, with a giant R2 unit bolted to the front, which is fine by us, even if its name does make it sound like the latest Tom Clancy game.

Sadly you won't get to pilot the ship yourself, so there'll be no *Star Wars Starfighter*-style gameplay. But the ship will feature in cutscenes as the Apprentice zips from planet to planet at Vader's behest.

Indeed, there won't be any pilotable vehicles in the game at all, be they ground-based or space-based. Why not? LucasArts says it's because the Jedi you're playing as is so badass that he doesn't need them.

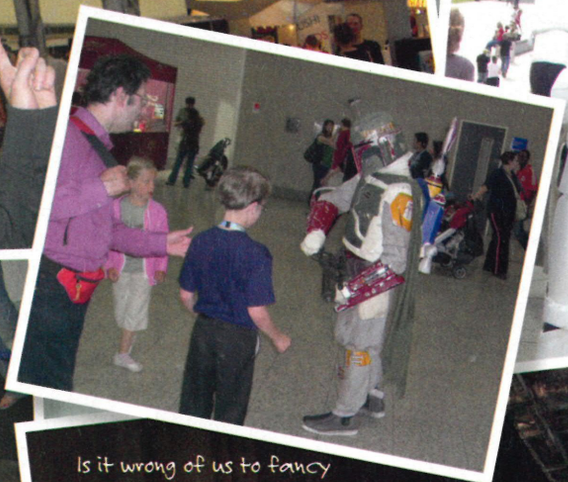
THE STAR WARS CELEBRATION

Not long ago in an exhibition hall not very far away, Nellis and John spent the day at Star Wars Celebration Europe

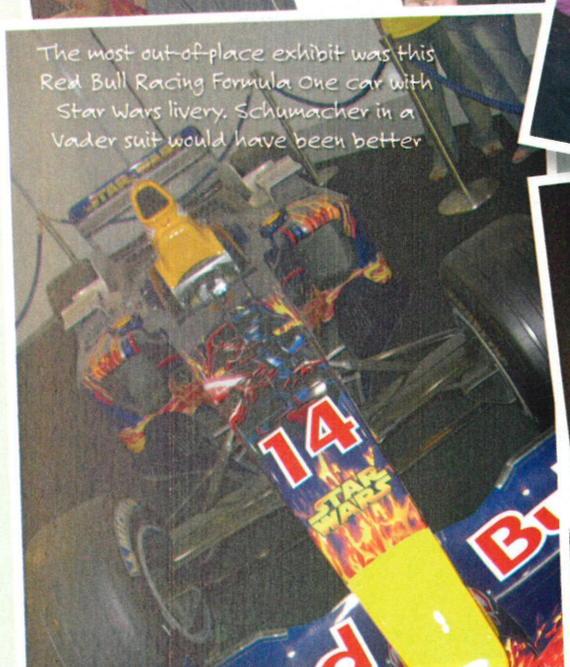
For one wet weekend in July, tens of thousands of *Star Wars* fans descended on London's Excel Centre for a shindig called *Star Wars* Celebration Europe. Luke Skywalker and C3-PO were in attendance and there were displays, talks, costume pageants, art galleries, even an army and navy recruitment centre to visit (misunderstood the 'wars' part of the name, maybe?).

Most of all, though, there were dozens of stalls offering 1001 ways to spend your cash on memorabilia. So after we'd finished chatting to the LucasArts guys about *The Force Unleashed*, we sallied forth into the incredibly crowded show to get our geek on...

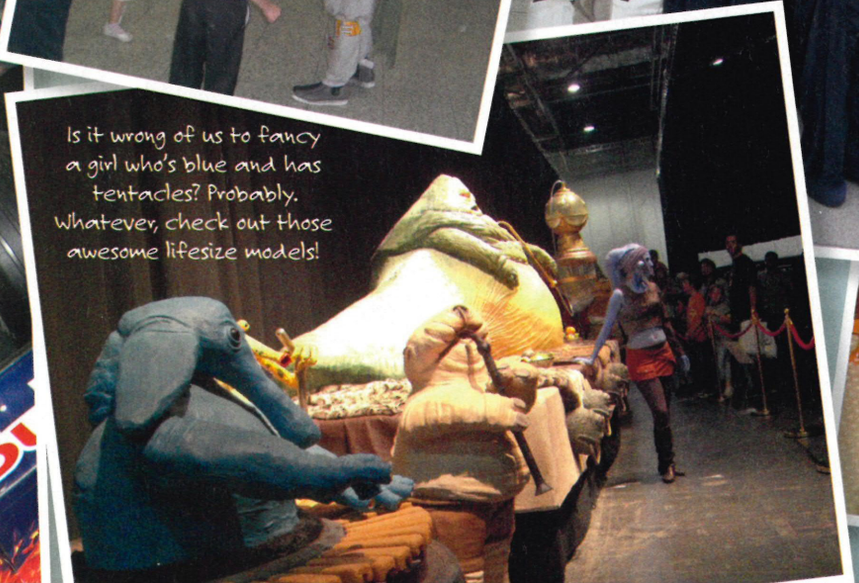
There were loads of cool replica models. This AT-AT, which appeared to be guarding the catering section, was the best



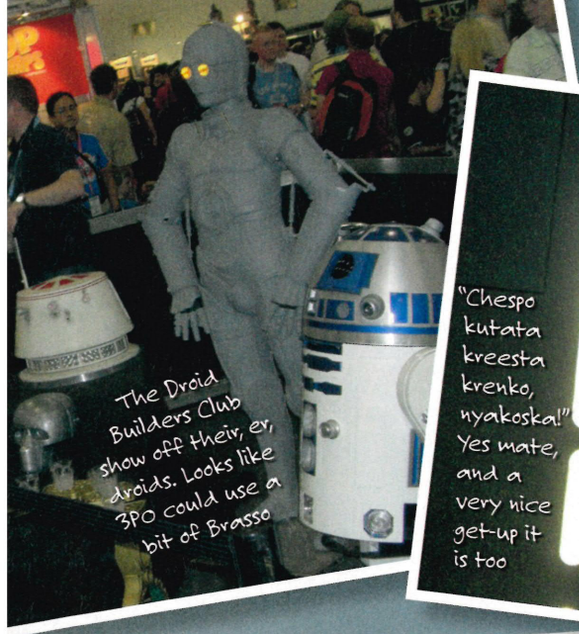
So cute! The folks who came in costume spent most of the day posing for photos



The most out-of-place exhibit was this Red Bull Racing Formula One car with Star Wars livery. Schumacher in a Vader suit would have been better

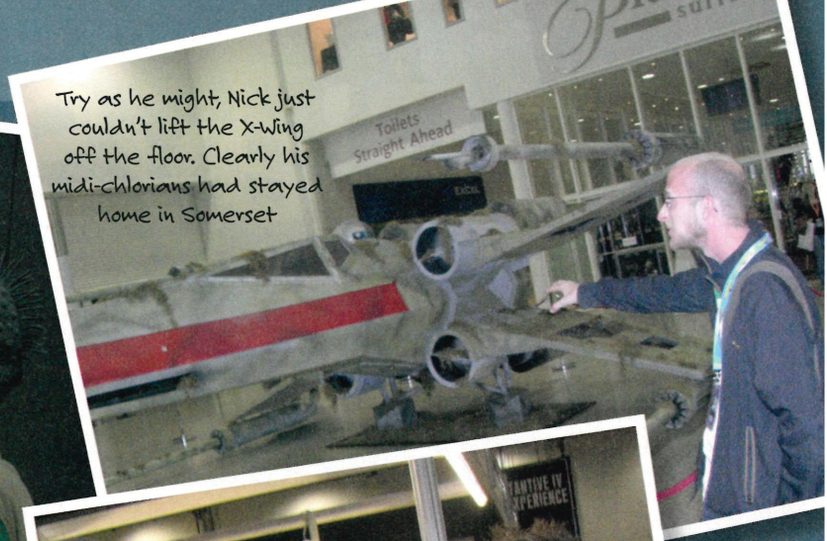


Is it wrong of us to fancy a girl who's blue and has tentacles? Probably. Whatever, check out those awesome lifesize models!



The Droid Builders Club show off their, er, droids. Looks like 3PO could use a bit of Brasso

"Chespo kutata kreesta krenko, nyakoska!" Yes mate, and a very nice get-up it is too



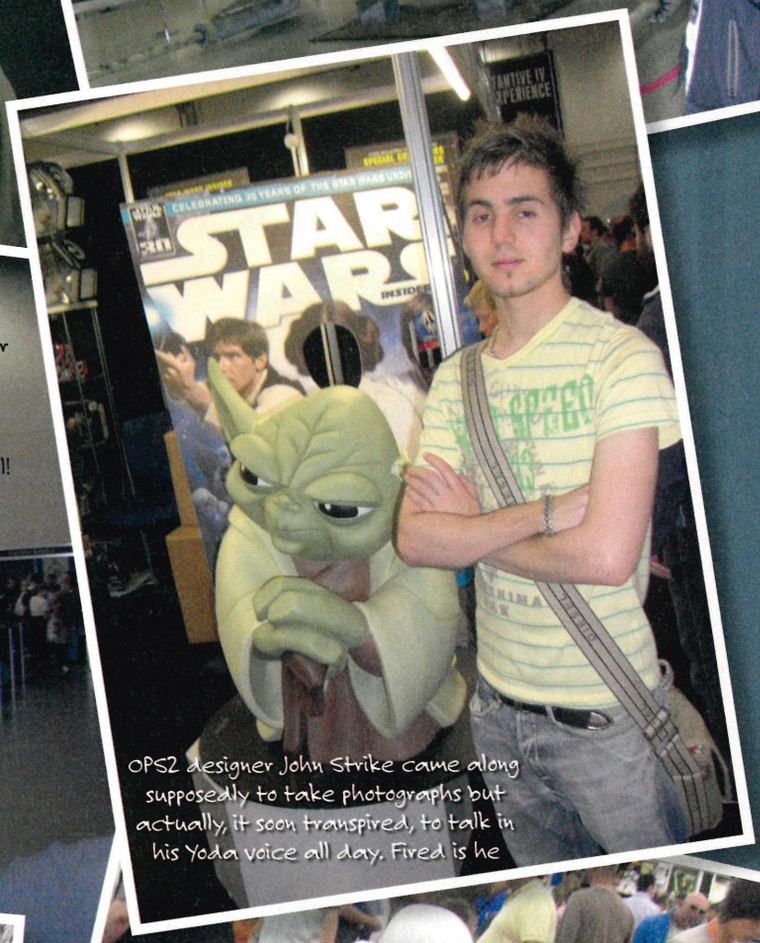
Try as he might, Nick just couldn't lift the X-Wing off the floor. Clearly his midi-chlorians had stayed home in Somerset

The guys who played Luke Skywalker and C3-PO were on autograph duty all weekend. We couldn't face the queue to meet them, though

Us!

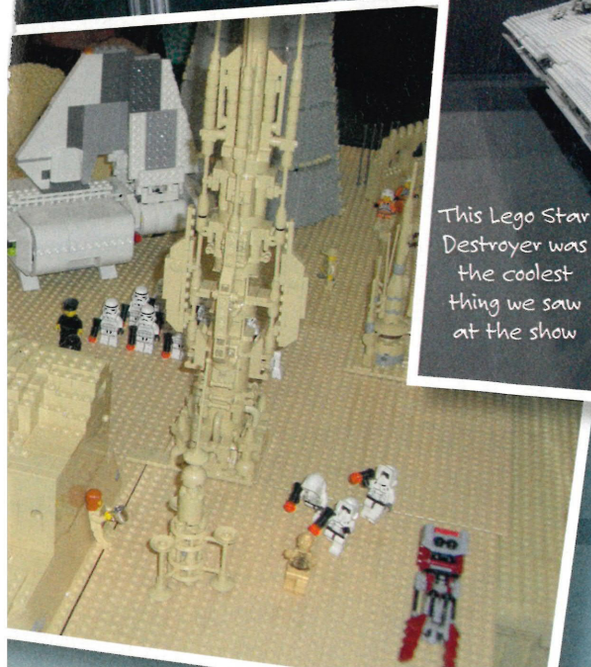
Anthony Daniels!

Mark Hamill!

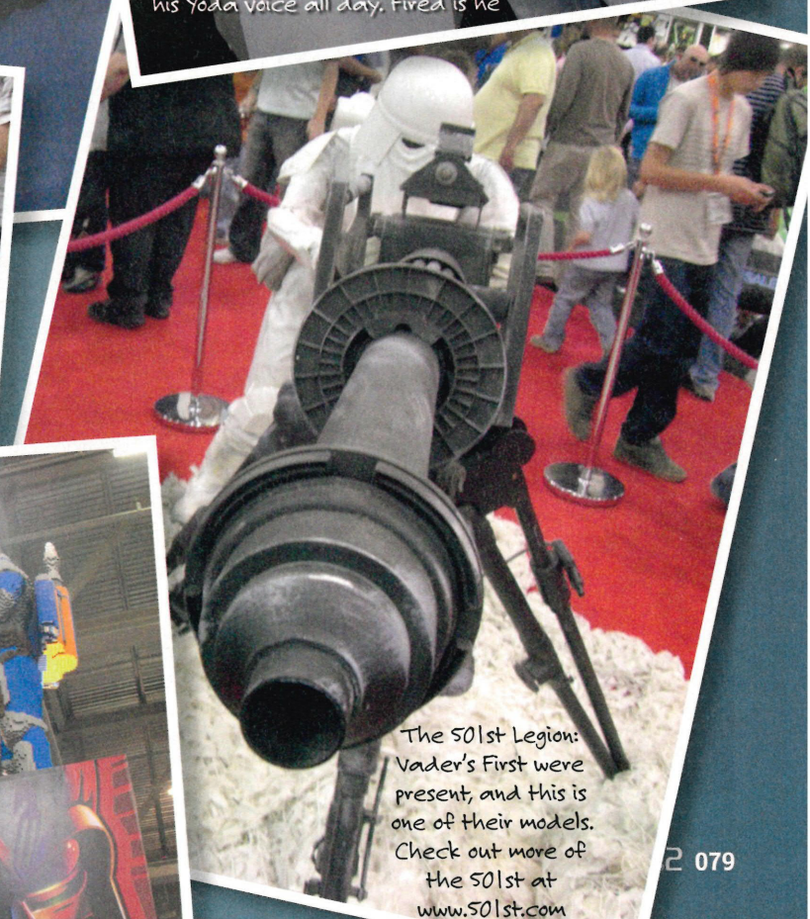


OPS2 designer John Strike came along supposedly to take photographs but actually, it soon transpired, to talk in his Yoda voice all day. Fired is he

This Lego Star Destroyer was the coolest thing we saw at the show



A giant Boba Fett, made out of Lego!



The 501st Legion: Vader's First were present, and this is one of their models. Check out more of the 501st at www.501st.com

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

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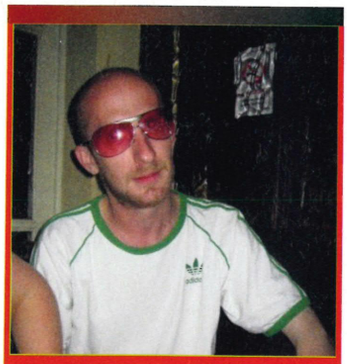
PLAYSTATION 3 PLAYSTATION PORTABLE **PLAYSTATION 2**

review

THE ONLY REVIEWS SECTION YOU CAN TRUST - AND THAT'S OFFICIAL!



Are you a fan of Westerns? I don't mean those wishy-washy John Wayne pose-a-thons; I'm talking the full-on Sergio Leone spaghetti Westerns. Brutal, bloody and so manly you want to buy them a beer and give them a hearty slap on the back, the *Dollars* trilogy is especially worth a watch.

Why am I blathering about cowboy flicks? Because this month's review section is very much a case of the good, the bad and the ugly.

Let's start with the good. *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror*, *ATV OffRoad Fury 4* and *Valkyrie Profile* are all stunning summer games.

Then there's the plain bad. *NASCAR 2008* is as boring and repetitive as gaming gets, and *Falling Stars* is a patronising RPG for kids. Not so great.

And finally, there's the ugly. *Final Armada* is one of the most hideous games to grace the PS2 this year. In addition to being zero fun, it looks like *Twisted Metal Black*'s unsightly, stunted cousin.

So if you've got a 'fistful of dollars' that you're aching to spend, you *need* to check out these reviews before buy.

Nick

Nick Ellis,
Editor

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

A REFLECTION OF THE LEGENDARY SERIES, OR A SHADOW OF ITS FORMER SELF?

082

PS2

088 **ATV OFFROAD FURY 4**
Another muddy brilliant racer slips and slides onto the PS2. A challenge to *MotorStorm*? Find out here

090 **RUGBY 08**
As the World Cup draws near, EA lobs another solid egg-chaser our way

091 **NASCAR 2008: CHASE FOR THE CUP**
The dullest motor sport in existence spawns a fresh PS2 game. Don't fall asleep at the wheel

092 **VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA**
A spot of norse-play in this old-school roleplayer from the makers of *Final Fantasy*

095 **FALLING STARS**
An RPG for kids - we were certain it wouldn't work. And guess what? It doesn't...

096 **FINAL ARMADA**
Thank god this is the final one, because this low-rent sci-fi shooter is a real stinker

098 **WARRIORS OROCHI**
The ultimate *Warriors* game brings together all the guys from *Dynasty* and *Samurai*

101 **PREMIER MANAGER 08**
Throw on your mac and stock up on chewing gum. It's time to start bossing the footballers again

PSP

102 **MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 2**
Gotta catch 'em all? No, not that kind of monster gathering game, but a damn fine one anyway

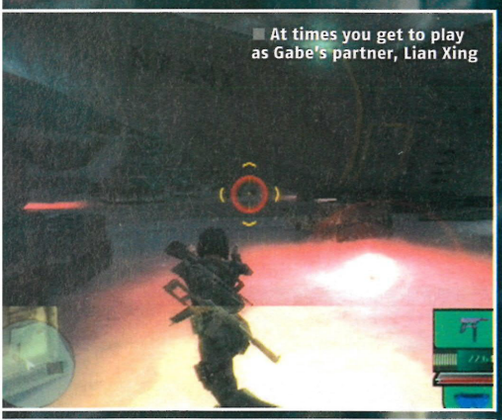
103 **TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2**
Unlike its hero, this game can be very hit and miss

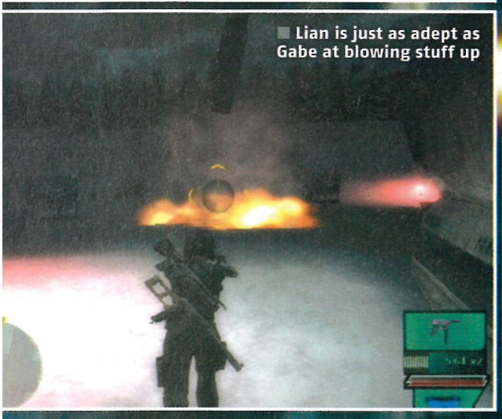
105 **CRAZY TAXI: FARE WARS**
The classic cabbie sim comes on PSP – would we get into the passenger seat with it?

106 **WIPEOUT PULSE**
Funky futuristic racing is back for a few more laps on PSP, and we're loving it

107 **PRACTICAL IQ**
How smart are you? Here's your first test: do you want to spend £30 on this?

107 **VALHALLA KNIGHTS**
What is *Valhalla Knights*? It's a bit like *Monster Hunter*, only infinitely more wretched and dull


At times you get to play as Gabe's partner, Lian Xing


Lian is just as adept as Gabe at blowing stuff up

The plot takes you to many places, some of them in Asia

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

Current darling of the PSP, can Gabe Logan win our hearts on PS2?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER SONY
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT OCTOBER
WEBSITE WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/SYPHONFILTERDARKMIRROR
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The fifth game in the much respected Syphon Filter series of stealth-'em-ups comes to PS2

Terrorists. What a bunch of dicks, eh? It seems not a day goes by now without some hater trying to crash the great party that is Western Civilisation with their shoe-bombs and their box-cutters and their unqualified ill feeling.

That's why it's a bit of a shame that there's no real-life Gabe Logan walking around to protect us. Like, here's a man who can run at a ne'er-do-well, take 20 slugs in the chest and still live to carve up the baddie with his combat knife. A thick-necked badass, in short.

He's been around for a while, this Logan chap, being now five games into the *Syphon Filter* series and with a sixth imminent.

Dark Mirror made its tub-thumping debut on PSP, where it won plaudits for being the first PSP title that genuinely brought the true fruits of console action to handheld gamers.

So here's a question. Why is it that when *Metal Gear Solid* (arguably PlayStation's finest, best-wrought and best-written stealth series) makes the transition to PSP it turns out a bit half-cocked, but when *Syphon Filter* – a game that could only really be described as above average on PS2 – hits the PSP, it's declared one of the handheld's must-buy titles? In short, why did *Syphon Filter* work on PSP when *MGS* didn't?

It's that little word that's haunted the PSP since its debut two years ago: control. *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops* controlled like a dog, and was far too complicated for its own good. But with *Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror*, Sony Bend managed to tame the PSP's infamous analogue nubbin, not to mention packing in a slew of features and play mechanics that had hitherto been the sole preserve of console titles.

HERE'S A MAN WHO CAN RUN AT A NE'ER-DO-WELL, TAKE 20 SLUGS AND STILL CARVE UP THE BADDIE

MAYBE GABEY

Juist about everything that made *Dark Mirror* such a triumph on PSP is present and correct in the console version. This is a game where you make your own fun. The window dressing – plot, enemies, level design – are nothing special, but it's the play mechanics that make things interesting.

The cover system is particularly well done. It's only after a few missions that you realise tackling enemies and objectives in a sneaky way yields a very different play experience. You can choose to kick open doors and decorate every room in seven shades of brain, but if you approach things softly-softly you'll often be rewarded with fewer enemies and alternative paths through levels.

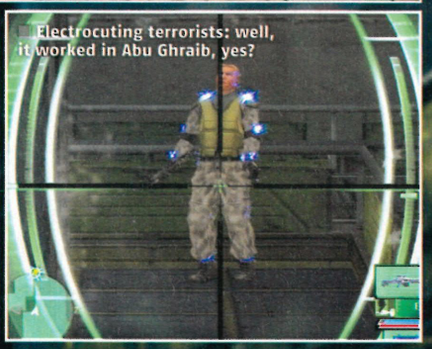
Sometimes, though, completing your objective requires you to achieve a sizeable bodycount along the way. And that, if you have a kernel of a conscience, can be somewhat sad.

We know these guys are terrorists, but now

The inventory menu is a breeze

Now's a good time to fire that gun, Gabe

If you played the previous *Syphon Filter*, you'll know what happens next


Electrocuting terrorists: well, it worked in Abu Ghraib, yes?

Shimmying along ledges will often reveal hidden areas

It's not just terrorists, Gabe shoots Russian mafia goons too

and again, when we spot a hapless foot-soldier wandering about alone, we just want to knock him out. You know, let the clean-up team arrest him and bus him to Gitmo. But no, even the items in your inventory that you might think were non-lethal – the Taser gun, the gas darts – are all vicious murder toys that leave families without fathers.

Use your EDSU goggles to navigate trip-mines

LOGAN'S RUN

Dark Mirror's plot is equal parts bewildering and boring; a knotty yarn involving a terrorist organisation called Red Section and their takeover of a government-contracted refinery in Alaska in an attempt to get their hands on something referred to only as Dark Mirror.

To get to the bottom of the conspiracy, Gabe must hunt down a mysterious woman from his past and – yaaaawn – some other stuff happens along the way. Betrayal. Explosions. You know the kind of thing.

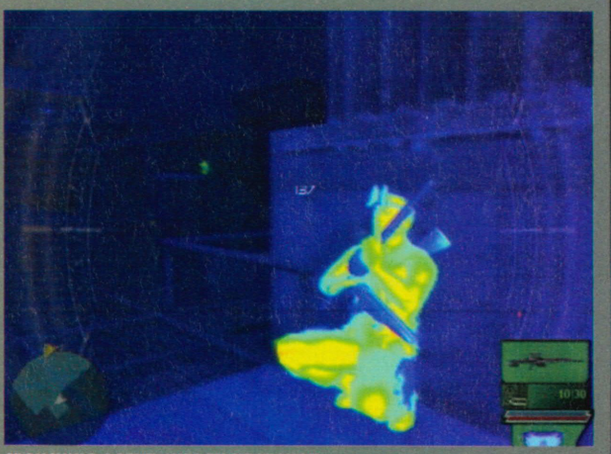
The dialogue is as creaky as the plot and sounds like it was written by a seven year old

FILTER TIPS

Guiding Gabe through his latest conspiracy can be tough at times, so here are some sneaky hints to help you along

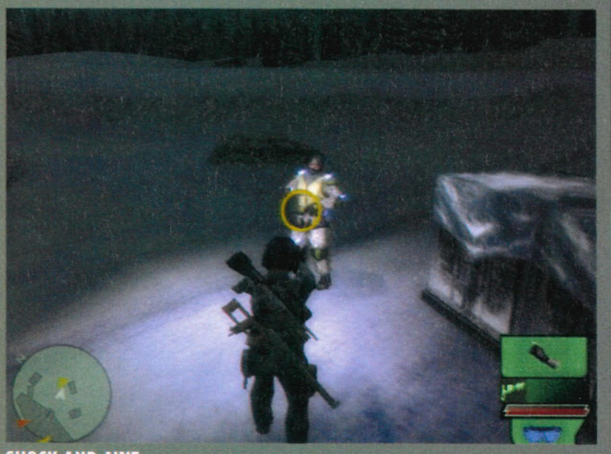
KNEESY DOES IT

Pesky sniper perched on a precarious ledge? Snap one off below his crotch and watch him tumble to his death! Worth doing if only to hear the hilarious howl he'll make on the way down.



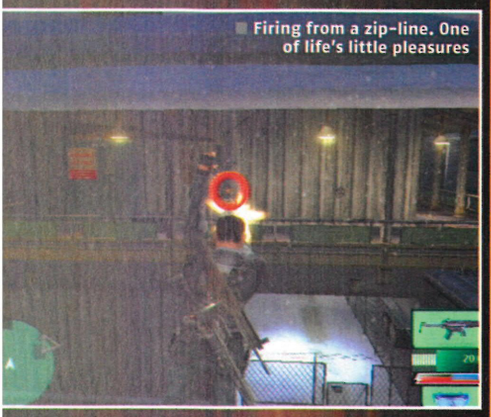
CROUCHING AGENT, HIDDEN HEADSHOT

If you plan on remaining unseen, learn to love your walls – any flat surface, in fact. Switch on your thermal goggles and you'll be able to get the silenced headshots in with minimal fuss.



SHOCK AND AWE

Running low on ammo? Time to whip out your standard-issue taser, which will stealthily shock your enemies into submission. Actually, they die. In quite an amusing fashion. But we like to pretend it's non-lethal.


Firing from a zip-line. One of life's little pleasures

raised on a diet of Steven Seagal films. It does contain some gems though: "I'll see you in Hell, Logan!"; "Not if I see you first!" was one of the most pleasing moments for us.

SPY HARD

You play as Gabe for the greater part of the game, although you also have the chance to take on a few missions as his partner, tactical support agent Lian Xing. They control identically, but it's good to play as the woman on the other side of the radio for the first time.

Some missions require you to help Lian, usually by sniping away the enemies threatening her while she completes some menial task such as hacking into a security system. It breaks up the action nicely. Other missions have you protecting an unarmed soldier; for example, one objective requires you to guide him through a collapsing building using your torch.

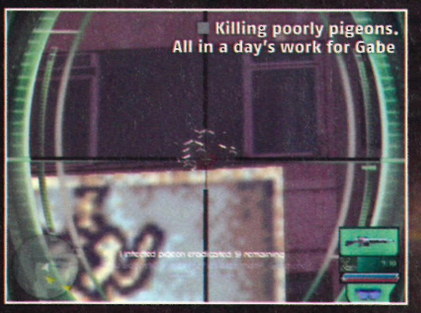
As ever, it's Gabe's equipment that's the star of the show. From Tasers to zip-lines to his ever-faithful sniper rifle, the guy has a gadget for every conceivable situation. The one you'll be using the most is his set of *Splinter Cell*-esque goggles. As you cycle again and again through the vision modes available (see right for a rundown), you will doubtless wonder, as we did, why you have to drop into the full menu in order to do so. *Splinter Cell*'s Sam Fisher only uses one button to cycle through his vision modes, so why can't Gabe Logan?

We'd prefer it if you could just stun people sometimes, but you have to kill

FROM TASERS TO ZIP-LINES TO HIS FAITHFUL SNIPER RIFLE, THIS GUY HAS A GADGET FOR EVERY SITUATION

If, for example, you're sneaking around with your EDSU goggles on when an enemy spots you and opens fire, you surely want to switch to the headshot-friendly thermal vision immediately, rather than fiddle about with menus?

Gabe's tactics can be quite 'shocking'

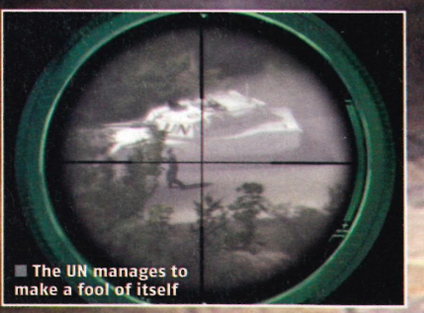

Killing poorly pigeons. All in a day's work for Gabe

The rest of Gabe's arsenal packs in an interesting variety of arms, though you'll be relying on his fictional high-tech sniper rifle quite a lot. There's some inconsistency, however.

GRENADE TO MEASURE

Grenades only appear late in the game, after you've asked yourself for the umpteenth time why you don't have any room-clearing grenades to hand (mind you, once they're unlocked you can replay any mission with them equipped). Plus, you're never told that you can disarm and use enemy trip-mines, only that you should shoot them. Presumably, this stuff is held back to prevent you just exploderising your way through the game, but it's still annoying.

Interestingly, every one of Gabe's weapons shows up on his character model. But this isn't one of those games that limits you to holding


The UN manages to make a fool of itself

THE STORY OF AN INVENTORY

There's a tale behind every weapon in Gabe's arsenal. Here are some of our favourites

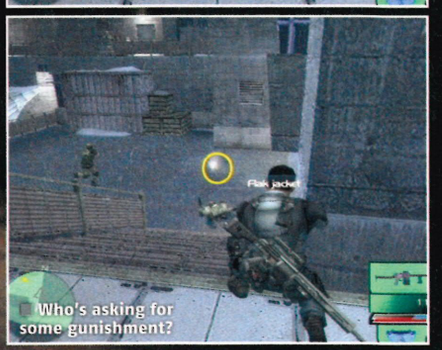
KA-BAR COMBAT KNIFE
Strange but true: the Ka-bar brand of hunting knives originally got its moniker from a semi-illiterate fur trapper. He wrote a letter of thanks to the company, saying that the knife had helped him 'K a bar' (kill a bear).

M4 CARBINE
Why would any normal, rational person want to get their hands on an assault rifle? Beats us. But in America, it's perfectly legal for a civilian to own an M4 providing it was made before 19 May, 1986 (prototypes were available then).

Gabe has a habit of looking down on people

Uh-oh, looks like we've been spotted

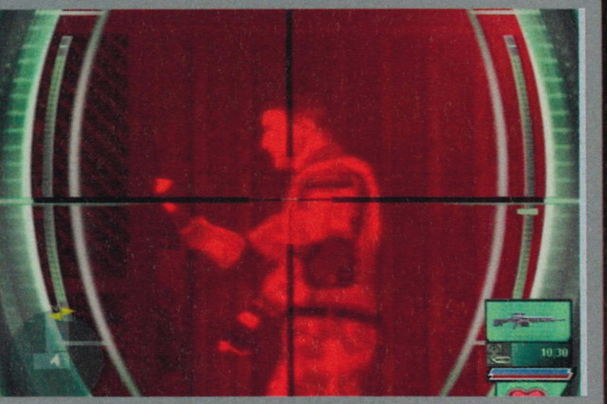
Yes, closer, my pretty, just a *little* bit closer...



Who's asking for some gunishment?

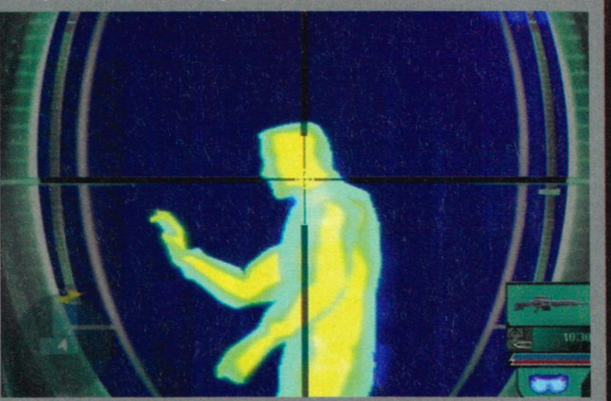
SIGHTS AND SORE EYES

Gabe Logan's goggles in detail. Get used to them. You'll be using them a lot



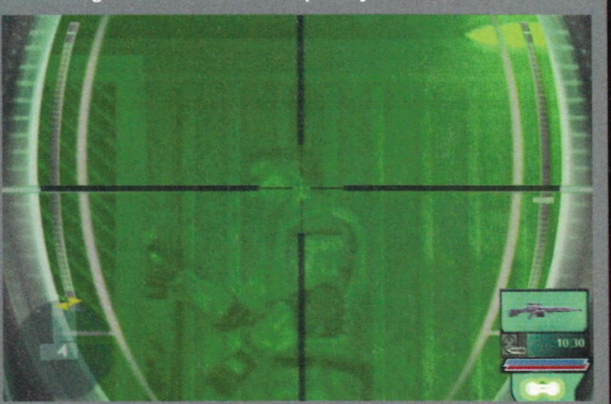
EDSU

We're guessing it stands for Electronic Device Sensing Utility. Or something. Anyway, this vision mode lets Gabe scope out hidden switches and trip-mines, but makes it extremely difficult to see enemies.



THERMAL

Were it not for those annoying trip-mines, you could practically rock through the whole of *Dark Mirror* wearing these because they allow you to see enemies long before the enemies have spotted you.



NIGHT VISION

Handy for reading hidden messages in the dark, we only found these useful on the few occasions in the game when it gets really, really dark. Not the most eye-friendly shade of green either.

TASER

The name Taser is an acronym for 'Thomas A Swift's Electric Rifle'. American inventor Jack Cover designed it in 1969 and named it after the sci-fi teenage inventor and adventurer character Tom Swift.

DRAGUNOV SVD SNIPER RIFLE

Early versions of the SVD featured an aesthetically pleasing wooden stock, grip and handguard; however, this was discontinued after it became apparent that when viewed through night vision, these components would glow bright yellow.

The cutscenes are a tad ropey, but they do the job

Sadly, the explosion effects aren't affected by thermal vision

two weapons at a time in a nod to realism. Hell no, Gabe can carry quite a few, resembling a futuristic merchant of death as he skulks about.

Once you've completed a mission, you can return to it, but this time you can use any weapons you've unlocked by completing the game's numerous challenges.

They aren't very tricky, and mostly boil down to dispatching a certain number of enemies in each level. There's also a headshots challenge that you can only complete on Hard mode.

But the challenges are enough to make you want to play through a mission several times.

The difference in the two difficulty levels is negligible, and once you've started playing through the game a second time to unlock more weapons and levels, you'll probably prefer the minimally increased challenge of Hard mode.

The challenges also unlock new missions, which are great – so great, in fact, that they show up the lack of variety in Gabe's mission objectives in the main storyline.

HONG KONG HOOEY

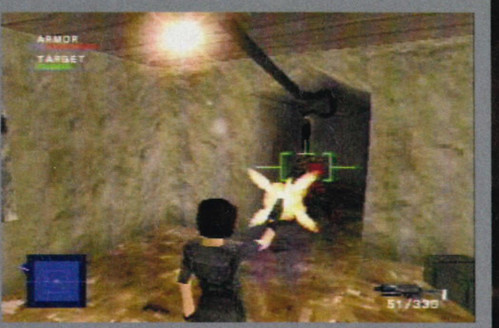
Our favourite is his trip to Hong Kong, which has you assassinating pigeons carrying a deadly

THE LEGEND OF LOGAN

Six games. Three consoles. One man

SYPHON FILTER
Released: **1999**
Format: **PS1**
Plot: **Terrorists. Betrayal. Syphon Filter: a virus that can target specific ethnic groups.**

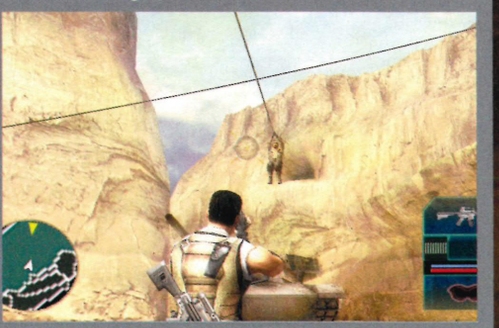
SYPHON FILTER 2
Released: **2000**
Format: **PS1**
Plot: **Turns out Gabe's employers The Agency are conspiring to get their hands on the Syphon Filter virus. Uh-oh.**



SYPHON FILTER 3
Released: **2001**
Format: **PS1**
Plot: **A ship containing the Syphon Filter virus is bound for Ireland. Uh-oh again.**

SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN
Released: **2004**
Format: **PS2**
Plot: **You play as a new recruit of Gabe's in a world that's safe after a vaccine for Syphon Filter is discovered. Or is it?**

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR
Released: **2006**
Format: **PSP, PS2**
Plot: **Doesn't involve the Syphon Filter virus, but does involve a mysterious terrorist group trying to take over the world.**



SYPHON FILTER: LOGAN'S SHADOW
Released: **2007**
Format: **PSP**
Plot: **Gabe's spy agency is in danger of being closed, and his partner has disappeared, suspected of being a double agent.**

If an enemy gets to close, give them the elbow

Shooting a sniper's softies while it snows. Poetry

strain of avian flu (of course, Gabe isn't infected by shooting them at point-blank range and being covered in a fine mist of their innards).

Fans of the series will also like the mission that picks up immediately after the events of *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*, though it is a little on the short side.

On PS2 *Dark Mirror* packs in a few more challenges than its PSP predecessor, but there's one glaring omission: multiplayer. The PS2 version is an entirely singleplayer experience. It's hard not to feel a bit cheated by this, but at least the main campaign offers a lengthy challenge.

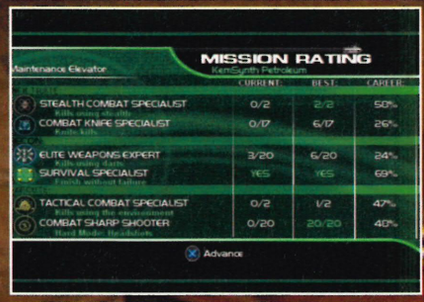
This latest *Syphon Filter* romp isn't a covert action spectacular on a par with the adventures of Sam Fisher or Solid Snake. But if you love sneaking up behind people and murdering them with high-tech gadgetry, you should take a look at this *Dark Mirror*. ■ **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	Pretty on PSP, pretty basic on PS2
Sound	07	Love-it-or-hate-it hammy voice acting
Gameplay	07	Stealth done well, even if hardly original
Lifespan	08	Lots of unlockables encourage replay

On PSP it set new standards but this port, enjoyable spy romp that it is, simply seems a bit dated when brought to the PS2

7/10



Damn you, woman! I look nothing like Billy Corgan!

Sometimes guns blazing is the only way to go

The ATV is still king despite three new vehicles

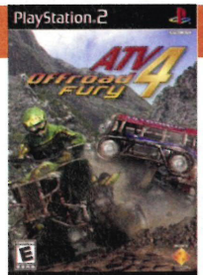
Landing stunts with a light vehicle can be risky

There are plenty of vehicles of each class to choose from

Most mortals would die after a fall like this. Thankfully, you don't

ATV OFFROAD FURY 4

bronze
PlayStation.2 official magazine-uk



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER CLIMAX
PRICE £24.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/ATVOFFROADFURY4/
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE YES

AT A GLANCE
Fourth game in the popular offroad racing series that's nearly as old as the PS2 itself

Good, clean fun? Well, two out three ain't bad

Remember mud? Remember when, in years past, you'd play in it, make pies out of it, toss clumps of it at your brother's head? Well, you can't really get away with that kind of behaviour now you're older, for risk of being sectioned. So what can you do to enjoy the brown stuff?

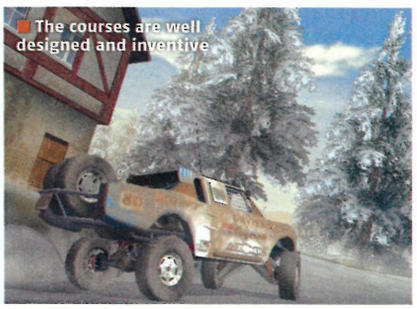
Well, you could buy an all-terrain vehicle, join a group of like-minded mud-heads, and churn some earth around your local dirt farm.

Or you can just play the latest version of PS2's premiere mud-racing game, saving yourself tears, cash and a constantly shattered tibia.

It's not a dramatic overhauling of the series, but *ATV Offroad Fury 4* certainly offers a robust amount of new content which marks this out as the best instalment so far.

What's immediately apparent is the inclusion of three vehicle types in addition to the titular ATV. There's the lean motocross motorcycle, the road-chewing Trophy Truck and the bouncy, slip-sliding dune buggy.

Though nominally divided into two classes – heavy and light – each vehicle's handling feels unique, care of a well-implemented, if somewhat flamboyant, physics system.


The courses are well designed and inventive

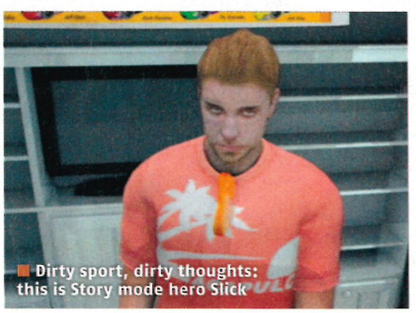
FIGHT DIRTY

When you first start playing, the scoring system for each of the vehicle classes appears unfair. Although on an ATV or motorbike (the 'light' vehicles) you can only rack up points by a succession of highly dangerous stunts, playing with one of the 'heavy' vehicles will net you points just for being there.

OFFERS A ROBUST AMOUNT OF NEW CONTENT WHICH MARKS THIS OUT AS THE BEST INSTALMENT SO FAR

Turn a corner: 5000 points. Take a jump: 1500 points. Turn a corner after a jump? Why, that'll be a score multiplier for you, my friend.

But with cash bonuses tied to your final score for each event, you need to spend quite some time with the heavy vehicles simply to earn the capital to upgrade your ATV and bike to a professional standard. So the whole system actually balances out quite nicely.


Dirty sport, dirty thoughts: this is Story mode hero Slick

The AI can be a bit unforgiving in places, and seems to be rather skewed to make the game artificially difficult in its later stages.

For example, although you very rarely see any of the AI riders perform any stunts, they always seem to end each race with a monumental trick score. The muddy sods.

So despite its arcade trappings, *ATV 4* does demand immaculate runs if you plan on placing first. We found ourselves restarting races three laps in, simply because we took a tumble from which we knew we'd never recover.

TRUE GRIT

Interestingly, the game will randomly select one or two competitors in each race to act as your

Point-to-point races are the madcap highlight of the game

THICKER THAN WATER
Mud: it's not just for racing

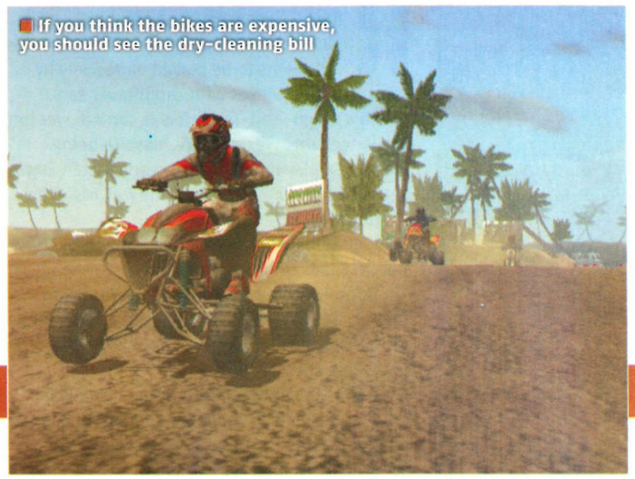
Not to be confused with muck, which contains more humus (chemically-stable organic matter) and of course brass, mud is good for other things too, such as:

RUINING HIPPIES' FUN

KEEPING ELEPHANTS MOIST

ECO-FRIENDLY HOUSING

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT


If you think the bikes are expensive, you should see the dry-cleaning bill

'rivals'. In theory, shunting into or overtaking them will send their Rival Meter red and they'll start racing for your blood. But in practice, the difference in behaviour is negligible.

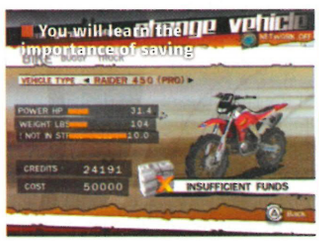
Story mode is also a new feature and acts as the main thrust of the game. Told through a series of unintentionally hilarious cutscenes, you start the game as disgraced rider Slick, who goes on to rebuild his (or her) career – and, along the way, uncovers some dark truths about what goes on behind the scenes in offroad racing with the help of a mysterious cabal of former riders. We kid you not.

MUDDY HELL

You have six events to choose from for each leg of your tour, though you only need complete three to unlock each region's point-to-point race and advance the story.

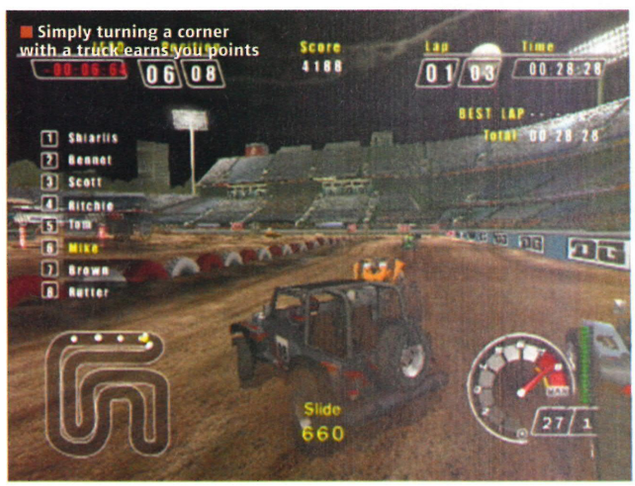
Considering the difficulty of the trick attack event – which typically requires you to keep a trick-chain going for around two minutes – this setup is ideal, particularly because the point-to-point races are easily the most exciting thing about the game, broken up into three legs and pitting you against dozens of competitors in a range of vehicles.

Not everyone's a fan of the offroad racing genre, of course, but *ATV 4* kicks up enough thrills and spills to delight even the cleanest of gamers. **Mike Sterry**



You will learn the importance of saving

Well, that's one way to see who's behind you



Simply turning a corner with a trick earns you points

OFFROAD AMUSEMENTS
Muddy multiplayer modes

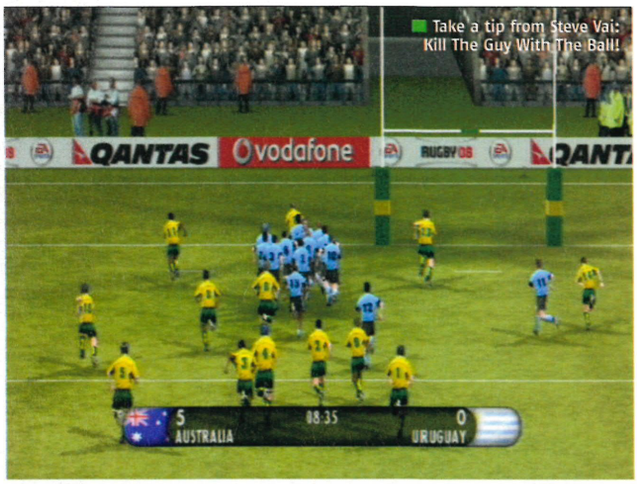
Hidden within the bowels of *ATV 4* is a bizarre clutch of multiplayer mini-games, including but not limited to: football, hockey, scavenger hunt and, uh, ATV bowling. If all that seems a bit too daft for you, you can always hop online for a massive multiplayer point-to-point race.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

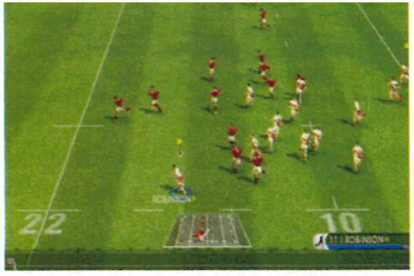
Graphics	07	It's no *MotorStorm*, but it's not half bad
Sound	07	The usual mix of screamo and hip-hop
Gameplay	08	Big jumps off huge humps
Lifespan	09	Absolutely tons to do and great multiplayer

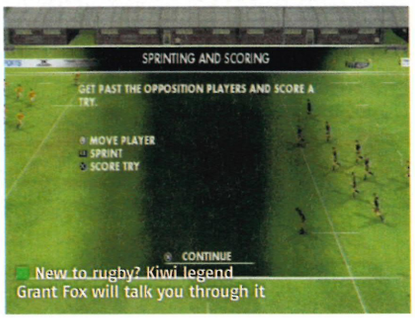
A confident end to the PS2 ATV series, Fury 4 goes out in style by tossing in lots of options while keeping the game's signature gameplay intact

8/10



Take a tip from Steve Vai: Kill The Guy With The Ball!





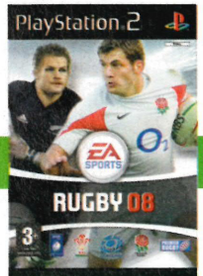
New to rugby? Kiwi legend Grant Fox will talk you through it

Line-outs like this will become a familiar sight

WHAT? NO FIGHTING?!

Aw, EA, you're such spoilsports

For many people, one of the attractions of rugby is the way that the players can often batter each other senseless with seeming impunity between plays. This is one aspect that EA has chosen to ignore to a large extent. There are a handful of WWE-esque cutscenes when a particularly vicious tackle is meted out, but we've yet to work out how to do this at will. More's the damn pity, we say.



RUGBY 08

Why play with 22 men when you can have 30?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER EA CANADA
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.ELECTRONICARTS.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

No-nonsense, bone-crunching rugby sim featuring all the top international teams and players

Rugby union turned professional more than 10 years ago, but essentially remains the rough diamond of sport. It still seems to be played exclusively by mean-looking blokes with cauliflower ears.

This rough-and-ready feel is carried over into the videogame world where, despite being eminently playable in recent years, the *EA Rugby* series has never really scaled the heights of its round-balled brethren.

Will the latest instalment change that? No, but it's loads of fun all the same.

Rugby 08 is based around the World Cup format, which is particularly pertinent this time round because the Web Ellis trophy is up for grabs this autumn.

There are the usual Tournament and Play Now modes, plus a Challenge mode that consists of re-enacting encounters of yesteryear with some specific objectives added in.

There are also tutorial and practice modes to teach newbies the basic ideas and controls.

YUMMY SCRUMMY

The nature of the sport means that designing a simple and intuitive control system is the biggest challenge of any rugby title.

The ball can be thrown, kicked and carried in a variety of ways; couple this with various rucks, malls and scrums, plus the offside rule, and you could easily end up with a baffling mess. But EA has come up with the goods in this respect, and that's the game's biggest strength.

The controls are easy to pick up because each offensive and defensive scenario is clearly delineated. You're never locked in to specific playing strategies and can decide how to move the ball on a play-by-play basis, whether that's recycling the ball through rucks and driving malls, employing the old up-and-under or just running straight through the middle.

Our main criticism is the AI. Sure, it's good not to have the team react in specific preset ways (à la *Madden NFL*), but a bit more reaction than you do get would be nice.

It's particularly noticeable when defending. Despite being able to select defensive options when, say, the ball's in the ruck, you can't really muster the team to provide any semblance of cohesion in their approach. As such, breakaway tries are remarkably prevalent. And despite scouring the control menu, we can find no mention of the much-used hand-off.

RUCK'N'ROLL

But these are minor quibbles. *Rugby 08* is immensely enjoyable right from the kick-off.

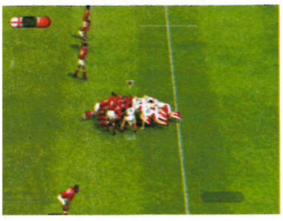
You get all the big-name players with their characteristics accurately reproduced, from the lumbering forwards to the speed blur that is Jason Robinson.

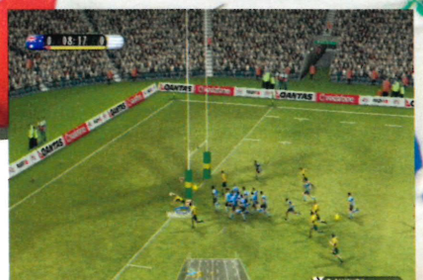
This is an accessible and surprisingly immersive game that doesn't disappoint, despite its rough edges. ■ **Joe Barnes**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK		VERDICT
Graphics	06	Somewhat shonky but well animated
Sound	07	Great sound effects, inane commentary
Gameplay	08	Pure fun right from the off
Lifespan	06	It's a bit on the easy side
Doesn't challenge the likes of Pro Evolution Soccer *or* Tiger Woods *in the sports sim stakes, but* Rugby 08 *will delight even casual rugger fans*		7/10

The stats screen shows you who's letting the side down

Mike Catt's kicking is consistent and accurate, just like real life...



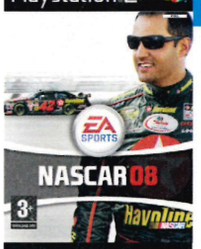


The courses go round... and round... and round... and round...

NASCAR 08: CHASE FOR THE CUP

PlayStation 2

Chase the cup around the world's dullest tracks



DETAILS

PUBLISHER EA SPORTS
DEVELOPER EA SPORTS
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.EASPORTS.COM/NASCAR08/HOME.JSP
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The real *Days of Thunder* – now featuring a driver with the name AJ Allmendinger

You don't have to be a fan of the oddly showbiz-drenched world of US sport to see why millions of people love gridiron and hoops. Few games are so deliciously violent as ice hockey, so nail-chewing as baseball, so tactically deep as American Football.

We might not understand them, but most of us can appreciate why the Yanks are so crazy about them and why massively comprehensive games such as *Madden NFL* are, to their tastes, what *Pro Evolution Soccer* is to ours.

But then there's *Nascar*. We've seen the film *Days of Thunder* and even, on occasion, watched Nascar on TV, so we know it involves: a) being a hugely accomplished driver and b) the knowledge that you're facing extreme danger every time you take to the track.

But the tracks are just ovals. It's not like negotiating your way around Monaco's hairpins in a metal missile, it's like driving down a very long motorway with the steering wheel permenantly locked 20° to the left.

ROUND EFFECT

And that, sadly, is why no Nascar game will ever work on console unless it's set 100 years into the future, on one of Jupiter's moons, and involves flying alien spaceships the size of skyscrapers around tracks as twisty-turny as a *Lost* flashback.

This latest game is undoubtedly extensive, with five different modes (including 'cars of the future', which, er, look just like normal cars), a boatload of tracks, staggering amounts of car tuning, and a Career mode so massive you need an Ordnance Survey map to navigate it.

But it's still cursed with the affliction that 95% of its courses are ovals. You push left on the analog stick... and that's it.

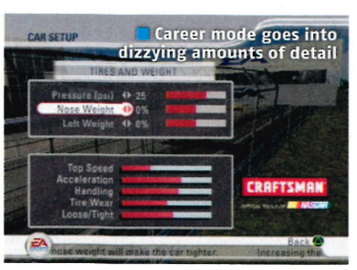
NASCAR BLIMEY

The long and the short of it is that Nascar, as a game, simply doesn't work. At no point do you ever have any fun. At no point do you feel challenged. At no point are you remotely excited.

Even short races – at an eye-bleering 22 laps – are just a war of attrition. If, like us, you find 22 further laps of qualifying are too much to cope with (coming, of course, with the bonus of no other cars), you'll start at the back of the pack and have to work your way to the front by, er, pressing left on the analog stick.

You can't argue with the way it replicates the sport but, sadly, you also can't argue with the fact that Nascar is boring. ■ **Tim Weaver**

You can drive custom cars or 'trucks' (normal cars)



Career mode goes into dizzying amounts of detail

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK		VERDICT
Graphics	07	Pretty good, as far as the oval tracks allow
Sound	06	A co-driver you can't hear over the engine
Gameplay	05	Mostly just really tedious
Lifespan	05	Huge in theory, in reality too dull to bother

Adeptly coded and enormously comprehensive for fans of Nascar. An energy-sappingly boring racing game for everyone else

6/10

OVAL TEAM

The highs and the all-too-many lows of driving Nascar-style...

CUSTOM!
Probably the best vehicles on offer in Nascar are these weird custom cars, which are: a) fast, b) stuck to the track and c) great around the game's small selection of non-oval courses.

CRASHES!
You can decide to 'intimidate' an opponent and – using deadly driving – take off their bumper! That should liven things up, right? Er, no. Races are stopped whenever someone crashes.

FUTURE!
The cars of the future (their words, not ours) promise much. Laser-guided rocket cars? Nah. The same cars you spend the rest of the game driving, except with an extra spoiler on.

VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

Wild Norses couldn't drag us away

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SQUARE ENIX
DEVELOPER TRI-ACE
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 9 SEPTEMBER
WEBSITE NA.SQUARE-ENIX.COM/VALKYRIE/SITE2/
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
Side-scrolling RPG where you play as an outcast valkyrie trying to prevent a war between Earth and the gods

Princess Alicia is a strange and rather unfortunate girl. She shares her body with the spirit of a valkyrie, Silmeria, which was put in there by Odin, the king of the gods. Unsurprisingly, that gives Alicia a somewhat schizophrenic nature.

Her dad, King Barbarrossa, freaks out about how weird she is, banishes her and announces her dead. Meanwhile, Odin has sent Silmeria's sister Hrist to kill the valkyrie spirit.

So, in traditional roleplaying game fashion, everyone's out for everyone, mortals are declaring war on the gods, and the whole universe is probably going to go down the pan if plucky outcast Alicia doesn't find a band of vagabond fighters and save the world sharpish.

Welcome to *Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria*, a proper, old-fashioned RPG.

The action happens in gorgeously rendered 3D environments, but characters move through them in 2D. Your path is strictly left or right, so dungeons are like platform games; full of things to jump up and fall down onto.

Sounds dull? It's not. It's actually incredibly head-scratching to figure out the puzzling paths that lead to whatever you're looking for.

To add to the puzzles, Alicia can shoot out photons that freeze monsters into blocks that can be used to solve geographical riddles.

Dungeons also contain Sealstones: orbs of energy that affect either your party's status or the enemy's status depending on where you've put it (on a dais, in a shell, in your pocket).

It's a crucial tactic to manipulate, because if you enter a boss battle when a status field of 'Party Defences -50%' and 'Enemy Ice Attack +60' is in place, you'll be crucified. Use it to your advantage, though, and you're laughing.

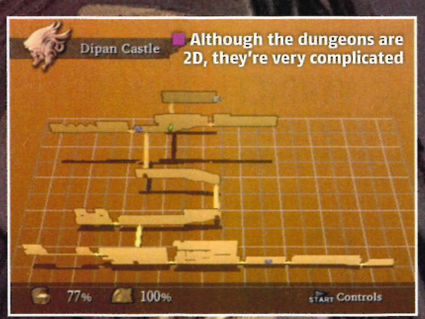
MENU AND YOU

We said this was an old-fashioned RPG, and of course that means spending a lot of time trawling through menus, working out character statistics and setting things for development.

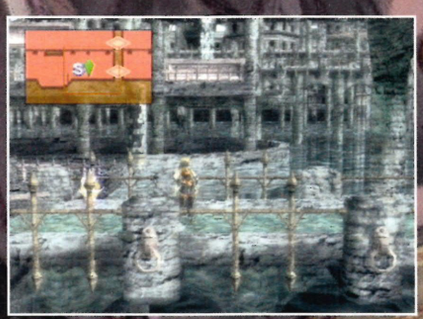
Unfortunately, in this game the menus aren't user-friendly. The in-game help seems to require a PhD to understand, so you'll discover things by trial and error.

Combined with the Master's degree you'll need to figure out the complex fighting system, there's so much information to work out that the first battles you win leave you wondering how the hell you managed it.

A combination of real-time and turn-based fighting, you get the usual RPG mechanisms: an Action Points bar, Health Point gauges and a Limit Break meter. Throw in a radar system, a dash technique and incredibly advanced enemy AI and things start to reach the level of complexity that you'll either find deeply



Although the dungeons are 2D, they're very complicated



The cutscenes are absolutely gorgeous

Use your team's abilities together for better attacks

Running into a purple monster triggers a battle

Create new items by combining things scavenged from corpses

TEEN SPIRIT

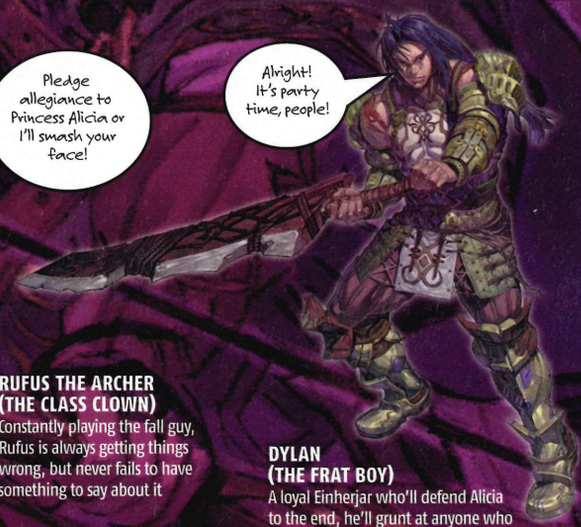
Your vagabond army is an amiable bunch, full of mysteries and quirks. Their pithy one-liners make them incredibly lifelike and details such as pre-battle bickering make them come alive – and, oddly, act like the cast of a US high school drama...

PRINCESS ALICIA (THE SISSY NEW KID)

When Silmeria isn't in charge, Alicia lacks confidence and is so apologetic it's kind of annoying

RUFUS THE ARCHER (THE CLASS CLOWN)

Constantly playing the fall guy, Rufus is always getting things wrong, but never fails to have something to say about it



DYLAN (THE FRAT BOY)

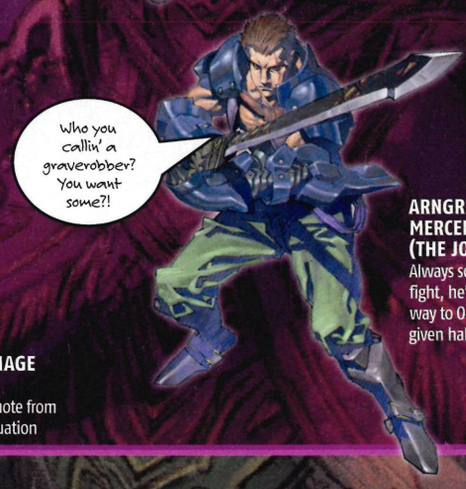
A loyal Einherjar who'll defend Alicia to the end, he'll grunt at anyone who threatens her and flex his muscles

LEONE (THE PROM QUEEN)

Beautiful on the outside, but scheming and plotting in her icy heart

LEZARD THE APPRENTICE MAGE (THE GEEK)

A techy know-it-all who has a quote from some dusty textbook for every situation



ARNGRIM THE MERCENARY (THE JOCK)

Always scrapping for a fight, he'd punch his way to Odin's doorstep given half a chance

VALKYRIE SILMERIA (THE GOTH CHICK)

Freakily possesses Alicia, constantly harbours doom and is determined to fight the system

TACTICAL WARFARE

Listen up squad! You can't just waltz into a battlefield without any structure and expect to win! Especially when the enemies are just as intelligent as you, as they are in *Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria*. You must react quickly to every situation and apply the best tactic for success, or you'll fail. So here are the basics...

Whether you land in the red area next to an enemy defines who gets first shot. When their Action Points run out, it's your turn. Attack as much as possible until your AP bar empties

The battle ends when you take down the leader of the horde. If there are a lot of enemies, it can be best to head straight for the boss; but if you need points and items, hack down the lot

Enemies are intelligent and will use their weapons to block, so you'll have to smash through their defences. While you're doing this, more baddies will probably sneak up on you

Bash R1 to dash across the field. Dashing is incredibly useful; master it and you can dash around a foe's attack path and attack from behind to inflict more damage

If you hit a monster in a certain place and that bit of it breaks off, you'll be rewarded with an item that can be later combined by blacksmiths into new armour or weapons

The red area in front of the beast is his attack range. Ranges will change depending on which attack they use (for example, a physical blow has a different range to a magic spell)

Fill the Limit Break bar and you'll engage ass-whupping Soul Crush, which can be chained for extra hardcore kicking

Hold down L2 to enter Target mode; you'll be able to freeze the battlefield and see all of the enemies' attack ranges (marked in red) and your attack range (shown as a yellow circle)

Hit the directional pad and you'll be able to split your party up into two smaller groups and control each for a pincer attack

engrossing or massively confusing (which is why we've had a go at explaining it here).

You can just button-bash, but if you time everyone's moves it will become more effective. For example, Alicia can knock a beast into the air, enabling Rufus to get a stronger shot with his arrows.

The dash system is interesting, but highly unreliable. Should a member of the party get stuck on a bit of scenery they'll be left behind at the mercy of the enemy horde while you chew your own leg off in frustration.

THINGS REACH A COMPLEXITY THAT YOU'LL EITHER FIND ENGROSSING OR CONFUSING

EIN HEAR YA!

If you've played a game in this series before you'll already have met Einherjars (souls of the heroic dead). They return in *Silmeria*, although they aren't as important as before.

When Silmeria finds weapons in various dungeons, she will call its fallen warrior into your service. You can do with them what you will; train them up to the point where you can free them, keep them in your ranks or forget about them. If you choose to free an Einherjar, you'll be rewarded with a stat-boosting crystal.

Although this provides a great abundance of class types to play with, you'll end up with an alarming amount of characters to sort through.

You see, new Einherjar will be low-levelled, so you'll have to go through hours of tedious grinding to make them more substantial.

In the meantime, you'll have collected more amateur fallen warriors and before you know it, there are 20 people in your party ranging from level 55 to a paltry level 4.

The thing is, though, that despite this convoluted character development system and the unwelcoming battle mechanics, once you master them, battles become a pure joy and provide an overwhelming sense of achievement.

And with entrancing environments and an engaging storyline (there's a cutscene around every corner), *VP2:S* is a challenging, intelligent and magical game. ■ **Kim Richards**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	08 Gorgeous cutscenes, interesting dungeons
Sound	07 Great music, good acting, if a little US teen
Gameplay	06 Complex battle system and lengthy menus
Lifespan	08 So much to see, so much to kill!

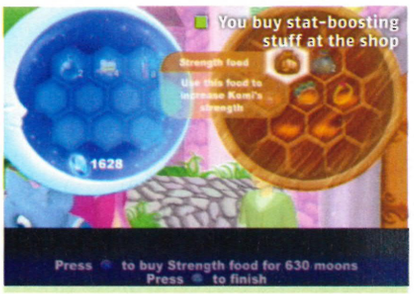
The detailed fighting and character development systems will mess with your brain at first. But master them and this is an absolute joy to play

8/10

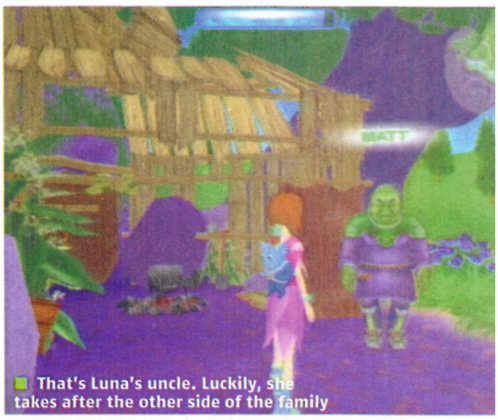
■ Valkyrie Hrist is on a mission to kill Silmeria

■ Warriors, wizards, chickens – it's your party, you choose

When not fighting, Komi pretends to be a backpack



You buy stat-boosting stuff at the shop


That's Luna's uncle. Luckily, she takes after the other side of the family

FALLING STARS

Why'd they have to go and put stars in our eyes?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER PINNACLE
DEVELOPER IVOLGAMUS
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 24 AUGUST
WEBSITE WWW.IVOLGAMUS.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
A feel-good RPG designed for kids, with training pets and dressing up thrown in

Global warming. Terrorism. The Spice Girls reuniting. The world is a terrible place. But never fear, *Falling Stars* is here: a 'feel-good' roleplaying game for children. An ancient spirit has sensed evil forming in a pretty-coloured land called Dazzleon and sent an apprentice spirit to check it out by inhabiting the body of a girl called Luna.

This 'evil presence' is currently inhabiting Luna's Uncle Matt, an inexplicably green, ugly dude who experiments on hapless animals. It could've been the basis for a decent story. But it spins out like a lazy, contradictory piece of work.

For example, when Luna discovers her uncle is a bit nasty, she hides his pet but is still happy to run errands for him such as picking up potions and pickaxes (presumably to be used in his devious experiments). It's patronising.

GIRL'S WORLD

The game is split into quests and mini-games. The latter tend to be simple archery games or find-the-bunnies-type challenges but the controls are a bit unwieldy and baffling.

One game involves directing someone to drop pillows onto a moving toy train so his kitten can jump to safety. Okay.

But to do so, you must rotate the right analogue stick to change the tracks, while rotating the left stick to charge the train *and* hit ⊗ twice to signal pillow droppage. Huh?

FUR FIGHTING

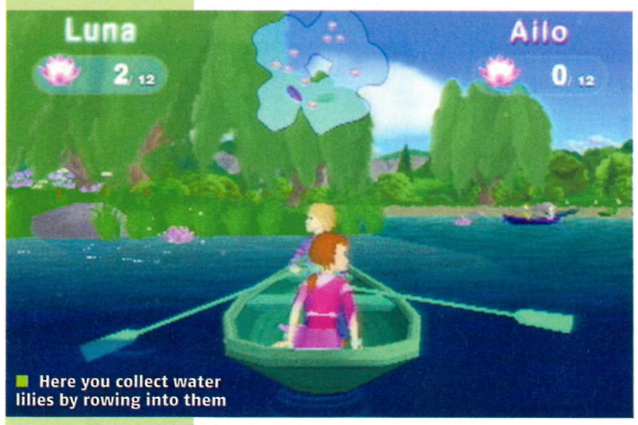
A furry blue fella called Komi fights for you in battles while Luna acts as a healer. To fight, you choose one of three attacks: fast, strong or mega. When the enemy attacks, you must choose which attack to defend against. Guess correctly and you won't receive damage. Get it wrong, and you will.

So battles are more about chance than strategy. And the absence of magic spells, different attacks or weapons makes it very dull.

The in-battle and map menus are all quite unfriendly, making it difficult to explore your pet's statistics and decide which to improve, or to keep an eye on him during battle.

There is a place for child-targeted RPGs. But the restricted battles and limited geography to explore mixed with inexcusable loading times makes *Falling Stars* feel underdeveloped.

Kids are young but they're not stupid, as better games such as *Ratchet & Clank* or *Buzz! Junior* recognise. **Kim Richards**



Here you collect water lilies by rowing into them

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	05 Colourful but otherwise bland and soulless
Sound	03 Nauseating music, minimal sound effects
Gameplay	03 Unnecessarily unhelpful battle system
Lifespan	04 Repetitive enough to drive you nuts

We applaud the attempt to create a substantial RPG for kids, but sadly the flat characters and limited battle options make this rather patronising

4/10

Lions and tigers and bears? Oh my!

AT HOME WITH LUNA

Luna welcomes you into her pink and purple boudoir

In the wardrobe, you can change your clothes and accessorise. The combination of items and colours that you choose will affect people's opinions of you. An important lesson for little girls, of course.

This is where you can allocate the experience points earned by your little blue friend, Komi, to various statistics and train him up to be more useful to you in a variety of ways.

This is also where the sprit hijacking Luna's body can communicate with the grand high spirit, who's in outer space. So, just like any other little girl's bedroom, then.

FINAL ARMADA

In space, no one can hear you scream. In your living room, however...

DETAILS

PUBLISHER VIRGIN PLAY
DEVELOPER I-IMAGINE
PRICE £14.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 28 AUGUST
WEBSITE WWW.FINALARMADA.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

A vehicular sci-fi action game that's been in development so long it was meant to come out for the original Xbox

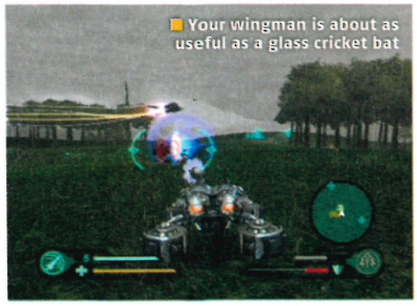
In 1588, with the blessing of the Pope, Spain assembled a massive fleet of warships with the intention of landing in south-east England and overthrowing Queen Elizabeth I.

But upon entering the English Channel, the Spanish Armada found itself beset by unmanned English fireships (abandoned, kamikaze ships laden with gunpower and set alight) and forced to flee northwards.

There it lost a quarter of its number to a nasty combination of severe weather and a jagged coastline. The defeat was so great that some even accused Elizabeth of being a witch.

What does this tale have to do with *Final Armada*? Nothing. But the story of the Spanish Armada's fateful voyage is infinitely more exciting than this horrible little PS2 game.

Not only can you count the number of ideas in *Final Armada* on one hand, you can count on the other the number of minutes you spend playing it before regretting your purchase.



STEAMING PILOT

You play as Lieutenant Zake Anderson, a man who – if the cutscenes are anything to go by – suffers from a terrible case of upper-lip paralysis.

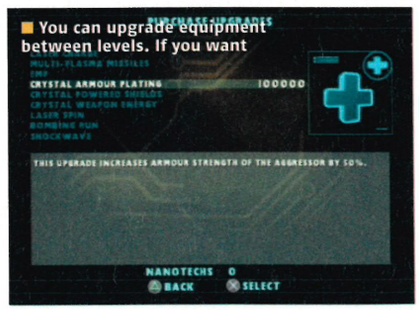
You pilot the Aggressor, a puckish little vehicle that can switch between four-wheel drive and a hovercraft mode.

But don't get too excited by this promise of a multi-terrain vehicle: trying to drive over even a hamster-sized rock stops the Aggressor dead.

Inexplicably, switching between the two vehicle modes will also change your primary chain-gun to a pulse laser. And since both weapons overheat very quickly, you must switch often between buggy and hovercraft.

However, this is where the one iota of strategy that *Final Armada* does stump up comes into play. Your hovercraft can't regenerate its shields and the Aggressor will melt away faster than a snowman in a sauna should you expose it to several seconds of sustained fire.

So most of the game involves sitting outside your enemies' proximity sensors, locking onto them and firing until they turn into an orange cloud (care of some braindead AI, they don't seem to mind much).



It's only a vague estimate, but it seems 75% of time spent with *Final Armada* involves pressing L1. The other 25% involves ⊗, for those awkward moments when you need to scoot away to recharge your shields.

Always at your side is your faithful wingman, piloting a starfighter that seems drastically more capable at killing things than your Aggressor.

TRYING TO DRIVE OVER EVEN A HAMSTER-SIZED ROCK STOPS YOUR MULTI-TERRAIN VEHICLE DEAD

You can give her various commands via the D-pad, but there's little hope she'll listen. She often seems more interested in wedging herself between trees than tackling intergalactic evil.

■ The dull story is told in a series of unskippable, static cutscenes

SEVEN THINGS WITH 'FINAL' IN THEIR NAMES THAT ARE BETTER THAN *FINAL ARMADA*

Final Fantasy (iconic roleplaying game series)
Final Fight (a beat-'em-up series from Capcom)
Final Destination (B movie released in 2000)
The **Final** Countdown (song by Europe)
World Cup **Final** (waste of TV airtime) *[You're fired – Ed]*
Final Cut Pro (film editing software)
The **final** frontier (space)

■ Occasionally you'll have a forgettable boss battle

When she can be bothered to train her lasers on an enemy, it disintegrates sharpish – leaving you to stare impotently at your pitiful chaingun.

And that's it, other than the occasional chance to sit in a turret shooting waves of alien drones for what feels like a fortnight.

ARMADAGEDDON

Games with the kind of hair-trigger action that *Final Armada* fails to achieve need little in the way of supporting plot. But *Final Armada* makes such a great deal of its rich sci-fi background that it's impossible not to comment on it.

Told via a long, unskippable series of silent, near-static cutscenes, the plot is so insipid, so devoid of, well, anything that we reckon even notorious movie director Uwe Böll (who made the awful *BloodRayne* and *Alone in the Dark* films) would refuse to adapt it. Should you ever get the chance to play *Final Armada*, we recommend you refuse, too. ■ **Mike Sterry**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	05 It doesn't hurt to look at, but it is dull
Sound	06 The main battle theme is bangin'
Gameplay	02 Unforgivable
Lifespan	03 It does go on a bit, sadly

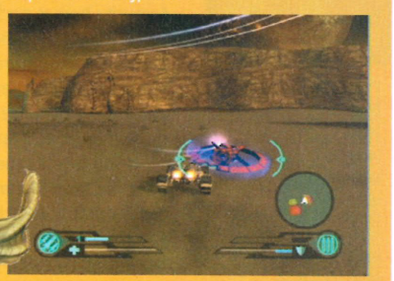
Don't be lured by its low price tag. Final Armada is dire, dull, dolorous, distressing, doleful, dismal, drab and downright depressing

3/10

MISSION IN ACTION

***Final Armada* is dull. Don't believe us? Fine, But jus to prove we're right, here's a sample mission from the game:**

Step 1: Drive to waypoint.



Step 2: Kill enemies at waypoint.

Step 3: Er, that's it.

WARRIORS OROCHI

Samurai scrapping gets the tag-team treatment

DETAILS

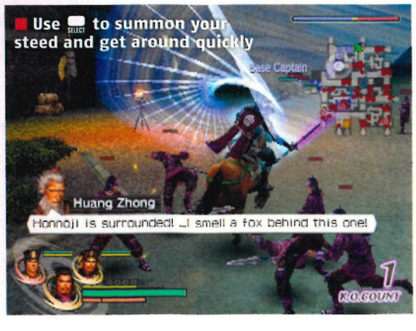
PUBLISHER KOEI
DEVELOPER OMEGA FORCE
PRICE £24.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT SEPTEMBER
WEBSITE WWW.GAMECITY.NE.JP/OROCHI/INDEX.HTM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
KOEI merge the *Dynasty Warriors* and *Samurai Warriors* series in a tactical action game that brings together 77 playable characters

There's something tantalising, something that captures the imagination about the coming together of much-loved universes. *Marvel vs Capcom*, *Justice League*, *Secret Wars*, *Alien vs Predator* – all-star games for die-hard fans: each one offering up alliances and confrontations between their favourite heroes and horrors.

So how's this: the heroes of the *Dynasty Warriors* and *Samurai Warriors* games joining forces to defeat an evil demon! Mouth-watering and history making? Or a non-event that's as monumental as a fart in a tornado?

If you feel it's the latter you're probably suffering from '*Dynasty Warriors* Fatigue', a condition that switches off your brain every time you see a game set in feudal China/Japan that has a brightly coloured swordsman/woman scything through thickets of identical soldiers.



It's a common complaint and the result of pubisher KOEI mining this particular gaming seam to exhaustion. Unfortunately, it's going to deny *Warriors Orochi* some attention; a shame, because it's a reasonably sparky hack'n'slasher.

SERPENT AT LEISURE

The premise is that Serpent King Orochi has got bored of kicking in peasants, so he's warped time and space to merge the Sengoku and Sangokushi periods. In doing so he's assembled the combined might of China's and Japan's most legendary warriors.

SERPENT KING OROCHI HAS WARPED TIME AND SPACE TO ASSEMBLE CHINA AND JAPAN'S LEGENDARY WARRIORS

The upshot of this for you is a total of 77 playable characters who can be unlocked and taken into battle, not just on their own but in teams of three.

When playing in the teams, you can swap between control of each warrior in mid-battle. And it's this tag-team element that might shake us all out of our '*Dynasty Warriors* Fatigue'.

It gives the standard hacking gameplay an extra dimension because you have to constantly micro-manage your threesome. On a basic level it's all about health preservation, because when one hero's fighting the other two are resting and regenerating energy. At a more advanced stage, you'll be called on to use your team's different fighting styles to win battles.

They come in three classes: speed, power and technique, and the combination you use depends on your playing style.

For instance, if you're comfortable with a character capable of speedy attacks or a technical one (nimble but has combos that require sharp timing) you could use them for most of the donkey work, while having two 'power' characters resting and charging up special powers. Then you can bring those guys in to devastating effect.

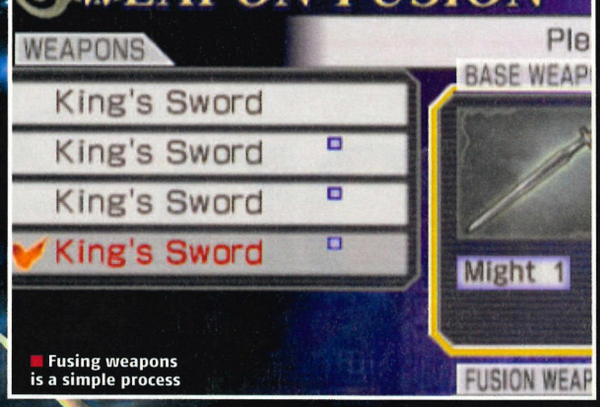
But if you struggle with the basic scrapping you might need less magic and more might.

Adding further substance is a Weapon Fusion system in which you gather power from different blades to create an all-conquering hybrid. Throw in character development and levelling up and you get a feisty action game with well-rounded strategic and roleplayer elements.

It's enjoyable, it's interesting and it's enough to disguise the fact that all you're really doing is all you've ever done in *Warriors* games: mash the action button.

But it can only disguise it for so long. The *Warriors* titles have always been limited and

Lose one of your warriors in battle and it's game over



Fusing weapons is a simple process

always will be because they rely on the spectacle of amassing huge groups of men and the satisfaction on laying in to them with a big stick. The trouble is, things that were technically impressive in the PS2's early days are now tired and predictable.

REPETITIVE STRAIN

You can have fun with *Warriors Orochi* in the same way you can enjoy stripped-down music with repetitive beats. The constant repetition lulls you into a trance-like state.

Once that's achieved, the levels blend into a blur of brutality. Mind you, soon you're in control of a levelled-up super-being, which is always a laugh.

But if you're looking for a game of subtle variety, constant surprise and real craft which doesn't play like a particularly busy harvest time, look beyond any game that has *Warriors* in the title; even this one. ■ **Dave Harrison**

It's all done with bright, flashy style

Swatting masses of enemy troops is extremely satisfying

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL-magazine UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	06	Good characters, bland backgrounds
Sound	05	Cheesy music and very camp samples
Gameplay	06	The tag team elements add some spark
Lifespan	06	Seemingly endless bad guys to smack

Still the same old, unsubtle scything we expect from a Warriors game, but given extra substance by some neat strategic twists

6/10

MAGIC NUMBERS

Swapping between characters couldn't be easier. It just takes one press of R2 and the next warrior is zapped into action. The speed with which this is done can be used to your advantage if you quickly use the special attacks of all three warriors one after another to create a devastating super attack.

Avoid being hit, then toggle through your team and activate each chap's special attack one after another.

It gets extra drama with some anime-style character close ups as the combined fury of your heroes is unleashed.

It's a great tactic and best kept as an effective reaction to those moments when you're surrounded by a mass of enemy officers.

gamesradar presents

top 7 sexiest cheats

the most dangerous people in the games industry

and one of them is your girlfriend

The 10 worst game characters ever!

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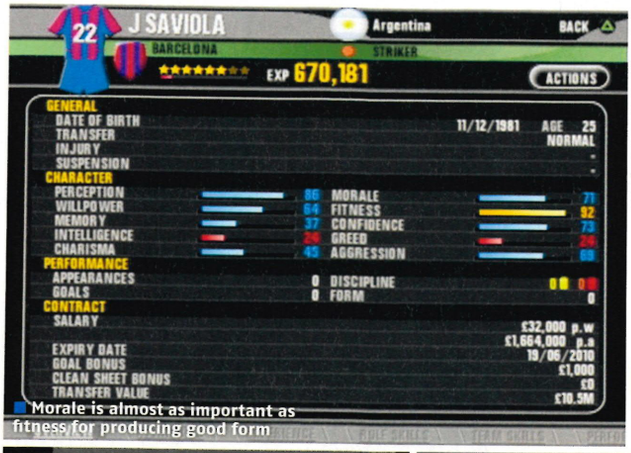
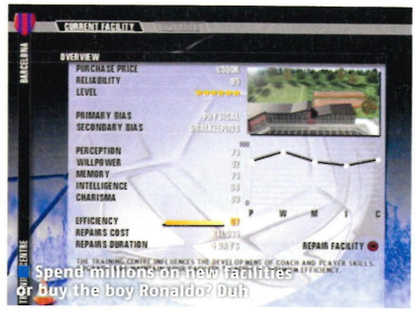
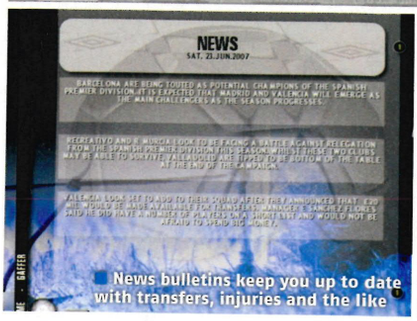


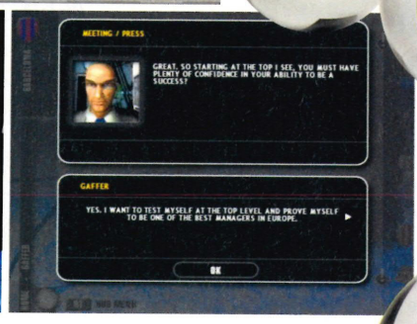
Morale is almost as important as fitness for producing good form



Spend millions on new facilities or buy the boy Ronaldo? Duh

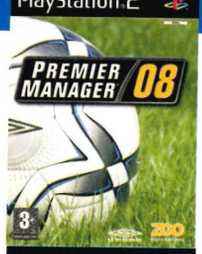


News bulletins keep you up to date with transfers, injuries and the like



PREMIER MANAGER 08

Makes Glenn Roeder seem a managerial genius



DETAILS

PUBLISHER ZOO DIGITAL
DEVELOPER ZOO DIGITAL
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 17 AUGUST
WEBSITE: WWW.ZOODIGITAL PUBLISHING.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
It's a new season but there's no real improvement in the career of this football management pretender

Everyone knows the gaffer situation. *LMA Manager* is the long-standing champ of manager sims on console, having seen off all potential challengers since the PS1 days. It'll take a very special game to break that status quo and *Premier Manager 08* is not it.

Similar to the quick-dip spirit of *LMA*, starting your managerial career couldn't be simpler. With the easily navigated menus you'll be organising the training facilities and playing the transfer market within minutes of loading the game.

The job can be as hands-on or hands-off as you prefer. Coaching, scouting and physio tasks can all be dished out. If you'd rather just concentrate on the glamorous stuff, such as transfers and first-team selection, simply delegate and let your assistants get on with it.

To be honest, the game isn't clever enough to discern any difference between hours spent on the training pitch and turning up on match day with a cigar and a scribbled team sheet.

FIELD OF SCREAMS

There are some nice touches: interaction with the press, for example, including a small choice of different responses, and meetings with the chairman. But it doesn't take long to see how shallow and unrealistic the game is.

Transfers are an obvious case in point. All negotiations seem to follow exactly the same routine with little variation in your dialogue with players and clubs.

Authenticity went completely out the window when we managed to snap up Michael Essien and Petr Cech from Chelsea for £5m each. And in this day and age how can you take a management game seriously when it doesn't involve agents?

The match engine is also heavily flawed. Represented by a 2D pitch with blobs scurrying around, it's impossible to get a clear idea of how the game is panning out – especially since there's no commentary or pertinent stats to help you decipher what the hell's going on and how you should change things around.

Even more annoying is the fact that you can't skip matches or at least jump through big time increments. All you can do is ramp it up to top speed and watch the blobs go crazy.

But the very worst thing about the game? You can choose between a limited range of formations but there's no option to refine individual player positions – moving Ronaldinho into the hole for example, or getting Essien to patrol just in front of the back four. That's basic management and *Premier Manager 08* doesn't even bother with it. ■ **Lee Hart**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	04 Menus, stats, graphs, blobs
Sound	01 Ah, the tinny hiss of a passionate crowd
Gameplay	04 Below average gaffer gaming
Lifespan	05 Depends on your boredom threshold

Undemanding bosses might get a bit of enjoyment out of this but there's far too little depth or realism to satisfy LMA veterans

4/10

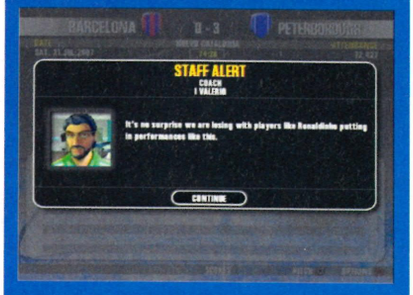
BARCELONA 0 PETERBOROUGH 3

Are freak results unrealistic or do they reflect authentically football's unpredictable nature?

We invited Peterborough for a pre-season friendly at the Nou Camp to investigate further.

Against a full-strength Barcelona side, the Posh go one up in the first 10 minutes. By half-time it's 0-3!

As the second half progresses, the big comeback fails to happen and we begin to feel the cold sweat of shame.



No matter how lazily an all-star Barcelona performed, surely they'd still win? Realistic or utter tosh? You decide.

Don't be shellfish, share the fun on WiFi

Hook up with some friends and hunt together

Bewilder your enemy with a sexy dance

MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 2

Now, where did we leave that monster...?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER CAPCOM
DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PRICE £29.99
OUT 31 AUGUST
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
WEBSITE WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

AT A GLANCE

Find monsters. Kill monsters. Turn monsters into snazzy outfits and weapons. It's what they would have wanted

One part roleplaying game and two parts action-adventure, the original *Monster Hunter* was an instant hit when it was released in 2004. But the sequel, *MH2*, never saw the light of day in Western climes.

And that's why *Monster Hunter Freedom 2* is so mouth-watering: it's a mix of *MH2* with 50% brand new, original content.

There's no plot as such, because the aim of the game is straightforward: to achieve the rank of Monster Hunter and become a legend.

Gameplay is split into quests that can be done solo, but the main attraction of *MHF2* is the ability to team up with other beastie slayers via the multiplayer option.

Most quests involve hunting down different species, luring them out of hiding and bopping them on the head until they meet their maker.

Weapons, armour and kit can be bought in towns, but you can also harvest monster bits to create even stronger bespoke goods. And one of the great things about *MHF2* is that whatever armour or weapon you equip will change your avatar's appearance – an impressive little touch.

You also have to consider real-life elements when equipping yourself. For example, your character starts out in Snowy Mountains, so he or she needs to equip armour with the 'Cold Elimination' ability to avoid freezing. Clever, eh.

KITS OUT

There's a generous 11 varieties of pointy death to wield, including bowguns, samurai blades, hammers and lances. Each has a special attack that you must master. Many happy hours can be spent experimenting and deciding which murder method suits you best.

Once you embark on a quest you'll be sent to the battlefield, which consists of several gorgeous landscapes.

Sprawling environments are perfect for exploration

You start off at your base camp, which contains chests to store monster bits and a bed to rest and recuperate. Then, once you've equipped your hunter and learned your trade in the helpful training section, it's time to head off and slaughter some critters.

Most monsters will be roaming about and won't attack unless you threaten them, or if you're in their close vicinity. So you can choose to run around, exploring the area, climbing up walls and wandering into caves.

TARGET PRACTICE

On the down side, *MHF2* suffers from a troublesome camera that constantly has to be adjusted via the D-pad.

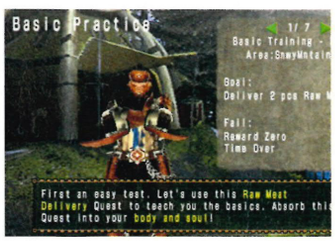
This means you'll often be attacked by an unseen foe, or be unable to fight properly because you can't lock on to your target. By the time you've swung the camera around, it might well have bounded off elsewhere.

Thankfully, this is just one problem overshadowed by the brilliance of everything else. The smug satisfaction behind bringing down a scaly beast that's almost too big to fit on the screen is an absolute joy – especially if your WiFi pals are around to share in your sweet victory. ■ **Kim Richards**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF WARRIOR KIM

It's all go for the scimitar-wielding huntress about town

CHARACTER STUDY
Selecting an avatar is just the first step on the road to monster hunting glory.

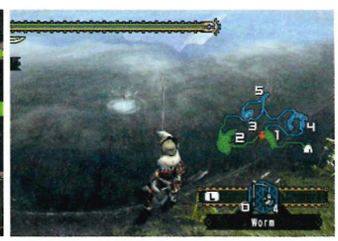


SCHOOL TIME
There's a lot to learn, but a detailed walkthrough will set you on your way.

MONSTER MASH
Hunt down beasts and carve them up for cash or to make better equipment.

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP
You advance through the game by creating stronger armour and weapons.

HAIR TODAY
You know it's a great game when you can play with your hairstyles within the story.



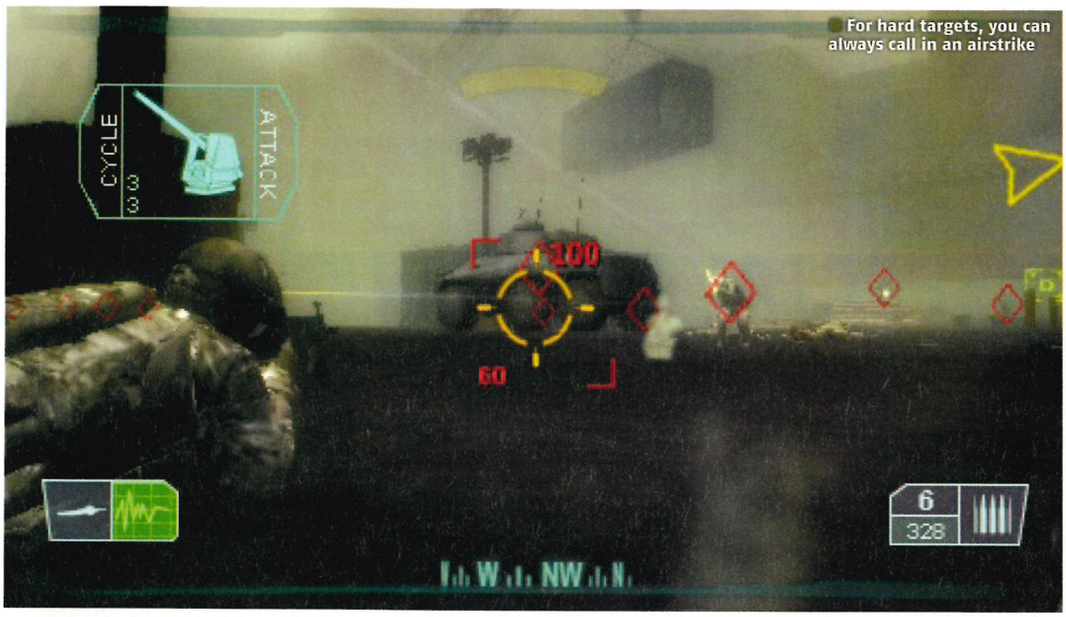
GONE FISHING
Take a break from the hard life of slaying monsters and do battle with fish instead!

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	08	Beautiful landscapes, gigantic bosses
Sound	04	It exists. That is all
Gameplay	07	Ace tutorial, simple controls, crazy camera
Lifespan	09	Loads of varied quests, huge multiplayer

MHF2 is a joy to play. There's tons to do, and immaculate attention to detail really brings this charming and gritty game to life

8/10



For hard targets, you can always call in an airstrike

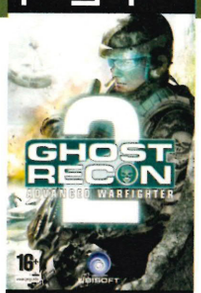
"Please, I never touched your sister!"

The versatile M29 OICW will serve you well

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2

PSP

Guns, crumbling governments and lots of green? It must be *GRAW 2*



DETAILS

PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER UBISOFT
PRICE £24.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING NO

AT A GLANCE
Another well-loved Tom Clancy series gets thrown to the PSP wolves

Tactical, squad-based combat. That's what you think of when you hear the words *Ghost Recon*, is it not? Well, let us hold you there and state that you'll find no such thing in *GRAW 2* on PSP.

No, you're a lone soldier, separated from his team in the wilds of South America, and you're going to complete this mission solo.

With no squad to bark suicidal orders at, *GRAW 2* plays something like a conventional first-person shooter. The only real tactic you're able to employ is the option of choosing your stance: running, crouching or crawling.

Sure, you can break out your flying UAV drone, but dropping bomblets on static, unsuspecting enemies from a great height is neither sporting nor particularly fun.

THE MIGHTY JUNGLE

Despite the game's lush jungle setting, it plays like your standard corridor shooter: running into pack after pack of enemies, gunning them down, and moving on to the next.

You occasionally have to contend with hidden snipers, a helicopter or a tank, but these appearances only serve to underpin how unlike the next-gen *GRAW 2* its PSP cousin is.

The control scheme is well implemented, with the PSP's face buttons admirably filling the role of a second analogue stick, as in so many first-person shooters before it.

Sunstroke: it's a soldier's greatest foe

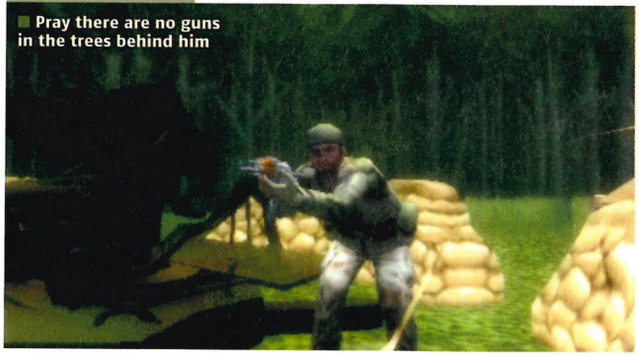
There's also a helpful auto-aim that only comes into play when you're zoomed in on an enemy and are aiming your reticule relatively close to him. So it doesn't feel like you're getting your kills for free.

MAN AT ARMS

You're equipped with a multi-component advanced combat rifle featuring three modes of fire and a barrel-mounted grenade launcher with fragmentation and anti-vehicle rounds.

But what happens when, say, a tank comes rolling down the street? You die, that's what, because switching fire modes is a chore, requiring a ludicrous three buttons. Your best option is just to lug around an RPG, which can be accessed with a quick tap of →.

So there's a solution at least. It just leaves you yearning for more buttons. Say, those found on a next-gen controller – the way *GRAW 2* was meant to be played. ■ **Mike Sterry**


Pray there are no guns in the trees behind him

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Serviceable, if rather foggy
Sound	08	Explosive via headphones
Gameplay	06	A runt compared to its next-gen brother
Lifespan	06	A short campaign, mediated by multiplayer

No teammates, no cover system: GRAW 2 PSP couldn't feel further from its console brothers if it tried. Stick to SOCOM

6/10

FULL METAL PACKAGE

How close is the military to having its own real-life Advanced Warfighters?

The short answer: very. *GRAW* might offer a speculative vision of the future soldier, but it's a pretty solid guess based on the US Army's Future Force Warrior initiative – which plans to have integrated exoskeleton and nanotech research into army kit by 2032.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE SCOOP!

ALIEN VS PREDATOR
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

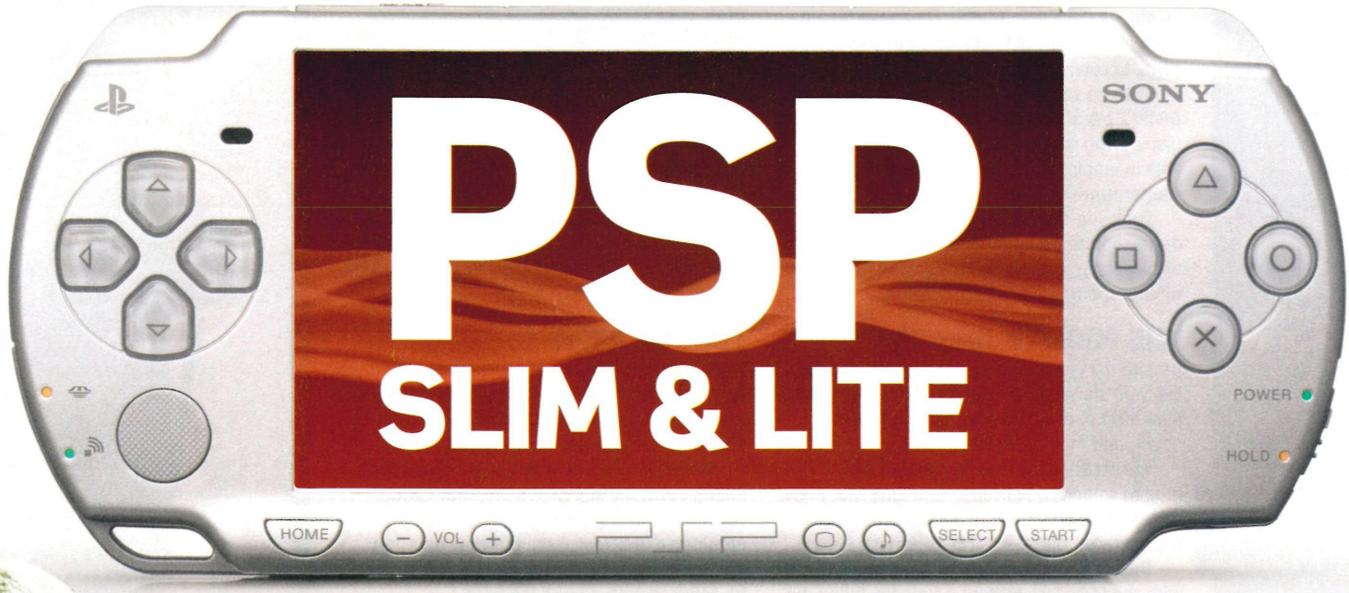
PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK **SPECIAL EDITION**

PSP™

PlayStation®Portable

THE OFFICIAL GUIDEBOOK

Sony's handheld console re-invented. Proof that less is more!

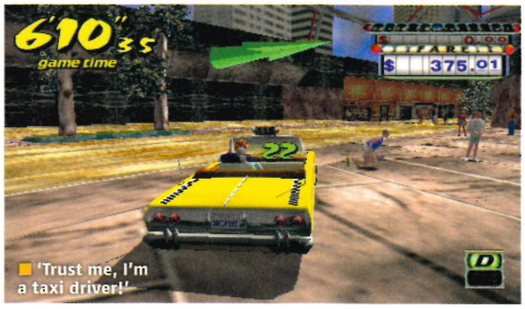


Faster • Smaller • Lighter

PLUS: The scoop on the hottest new games!

We're the ONLY mag for Alien Vs Predator WWE Smackdowngoes extreme **Echochrome: the maddest game ever** How The GoldenCompass is killing The Lord of the Rings **Faceplanting for fame in Jackass** Manhunt made nice **and more...**

Issue 32 On Sale Now!



'Trust me, I'm a taxi driver!'

If it's in the way just drive through it...

MULTI-CABBIE MAYHEM

Why can't we all just get along?

Team up with a mate and you can indulge in the war of fares that's promised in the title: chase your opponent down, rear-end the vehicle and then steal the rather shaken and alarmed passenger.

The most surprising aspect of the multiplayer mode, though, is the option to play cooperatively. Yes, in the most unlikely piece of teamwork ever postulated, taxi drivers can buddy up and divvy out the wonga.

Now, we're all for a bit of suspension of disbelief in our gaming, but come on – cabbies? Cooperating? That's just plain daft...

CRAZY TAXI: FARE WARS

All's fare in love and war...

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SNIPER STUDIOS
PRICE £29.99
OUT 7 SEPTEMBER
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS YES
GAMESHARING REPLAYS ONLY

AT A GLANCE
As the title suggests, drive a taxi in as crazy a manner as possible and make lots of lovely dosh in the process

You may well be thinking that the 'crazy' bit of this game's title is redundant, because plenty of taxi drivers clearly are. You might also wonder why on Earth anyone would base a game on being a cabbie.

But the aim here is not to bore your fares senseless with a stream of mindless drivel and tales of how you've 'done this job for 30 years, man and boy'; no, the aim is merely to drive like a complete hooligan. Maybe it's not so different from real life after all...

Instead of being an entirely new addition to the *Crazy Taxi* series, *Fare Wars* is a port of the original *Crazy Taxi* and its imaginatively named sequel, *Crazy Taxi 2*, with a new multiplayer mode tacked on.

There are a fair few variations and a handful of mini-games, but the main crux of the action is to get as many passengers as possible from Point A to Point B within an allotted time, while raking in as much cash as you can.

STEER AND LOATHING

The whole reckless driving concept is very familiar, no matter what platform you favour. As far back as the early days of the PS1, responsive handling was the norm, whether it was dedicated racing games or ones that were just partly driving-based, such as *Die Hard Trilogy*.

There really is no excuse for below-par car physics; Lord knows there's enough material and experience out there to draw upon.

So the *Crazy Taxi* developers owe us an explanation or two.

HIGHLY SPRUNG

The taxis handle incredibly erratically and are seemingly indestructible. The control system feels ill thought out, especially for drifting, which is essential to completing some missions.

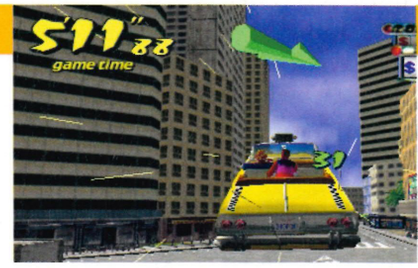
And whoever came up with the idea that taxis should be able to spontaneously jump deserves kudos for such a quirky concept, but also a swift a kick in the swingers for its shoddy execution. There's not even so much as an animation showing the extension of the highly sprung super-suspension.

The arcade racing genre is pretty saturated, so any game that wants to make a (skid) mark has to go a long way to stand out from the crowd.

Sure, *Crazy Taxi* has an anarchic premise, some amusing mini-games and falls into the arcade thrills rather than the hyperrealism category, but the finished product just feels lazy.

As *Driver 76* showed, it is possible to produce a game of this style that holds its own against *Grand Theft Auto* and its ilk.

But *Crazy Taxi: Fare Wars* runs out of petrol very soon after you've started. **Joe Barnes**



The Highway Code doesn't apply here

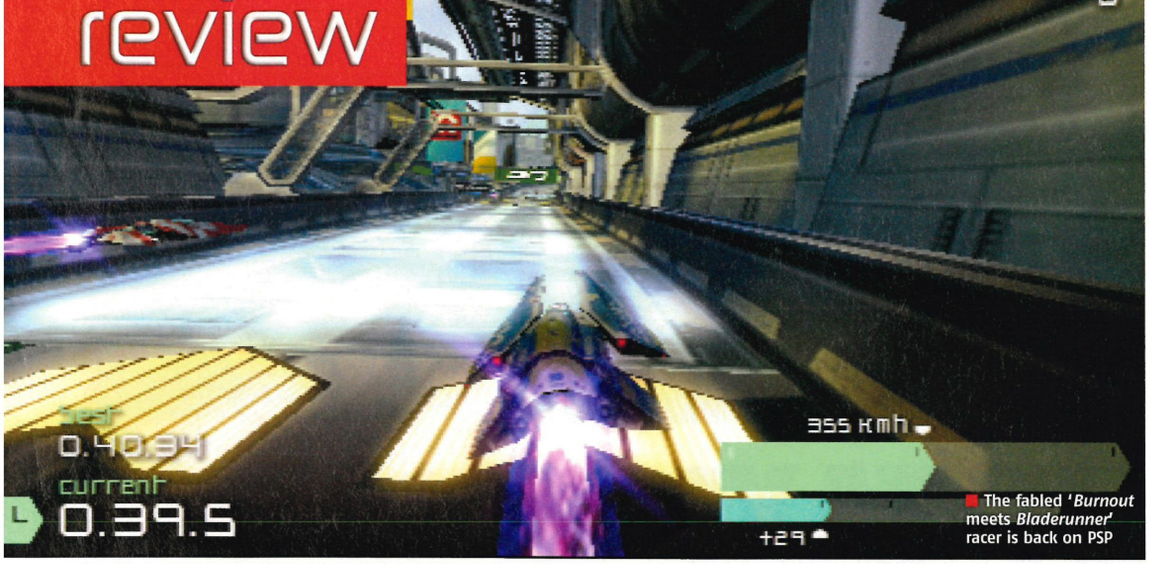
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK VERDICT

Graphics	05	Prone to regular bouts of slowdown
Sound	04	Average tunes and effects, awful dialogue
Gameplay	05	Too repetitive and one-dimensional
Lifespan	03	Very little to keep you coming back

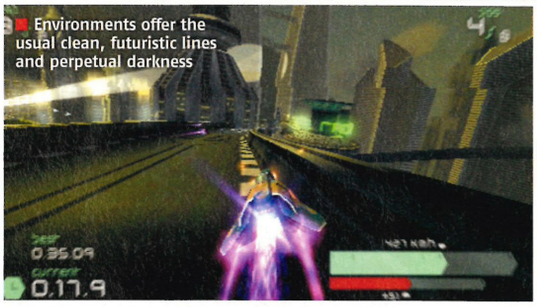
The crazy racer is now showing its age up against some strong competition, and its eccentric handling is all over the shop on PSP

4/10

You'll thank the heavens for that big green arrow pointing you in the right direction



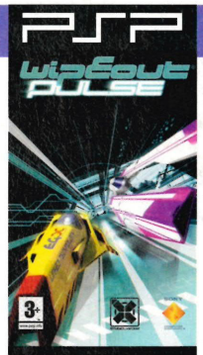
The fabled '*Burnout* meets *Bladerunner*' racer is back on PSP


Environments offer the usual clean, futuristic lines and perpetual darkness

In time trials you can race your ghost

WIPEOUT PULSE

Will it set yours racing?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER SONY
PRICE £34.99
OUT 28 SEPTEMBER
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS YES
GAMESHARING YES

AT A GLANCE

Veteran futuristic racer returns to PSP for more anti-grav speed racing

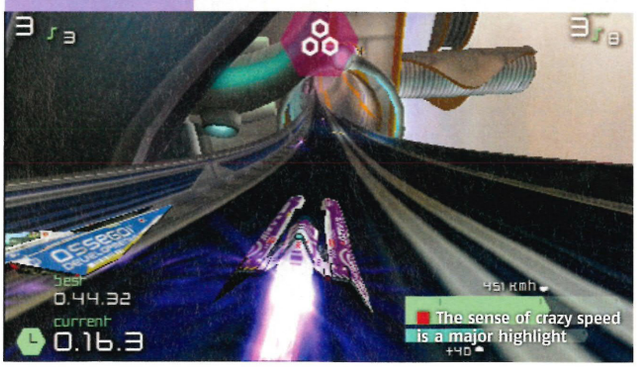
When the original *WipEout* stole the show at the PS1 launch, its mega-speed anti-grav racing seemed so futuristic, adrenaline pumping, breathless, and *fresh*. But now, twelve years and seven incarnations later, the series is starting to feel a bit, well, dated. Can this second PSP outing reverse the trend?

There's the usual slew of new stuff: 24 original tracks, eight teams with two vehicles each, and seven race modes. The game is split into several series of races with set goals that must be achieved to advance to the next level. Race types include time trials, single races, tournaments and speed laps. Incredible!

FINGER ON THE PULSE

The tracks will feel overly familiar to *WipEout* veterans and, frankly, they're all a bit short; a race is often over before you've really got the measure of your surroundings. But *WipEout Pulse* certainly doesn't disappoint where racing combat is concerned.

Weapons include mines, bombs, homing missiles, machine guns and rockets. There's also a fancy new Mag-Strip device that will lock opponent ships to the track and prevent you from bumping into the sides.



The sense of crazy speed is a major highlight

The menu is ugly and undecipherable

The AI is pretty vicious and you can get embroiled in some real battles; positions changing every few seconds as ships get blasted into oblivion.

FINGER ON THE PULSE

Music has always been a major part of the *WipEout* culture, with earlier releases in the series including top tracks from the likes of the Prodigy and the Chemical Brothers.

But surprisingly, the tunes in *Pulse* are a bit hit and miss, with fewer big names than we've come to expect and many tracks failing to raise the heartbeat.

Fortunately, you can always add to the soundtrack as *Pulse* is one of the few PSP games that takes full advantage of the portable's online technology. Go online to wipeout.com and you can download tons of new music, ships and tracks. You can also design your own skins for the ships and send them to your PSP.

The standout feature here is undoubtedly the multiplayer action. Get some mates round and you can play with up to eight of them at once via all of the race modes available in singleplayer. It's one of the finest examples of multiplayer gaming yet seen on PSP.

KABOOM TOWN

***WipEout* just wouldn't be the same without a bunch of cool boosts and weapons to chuck at your opponents. Here are some of our faves.**

Engage Autopilot mode and sit back as your onboard computer steers you straight into the lead.

The machine gun is capable of either single shots or full bursts, it's a neat way to pick off opponents.

Shields are incredibly useful as the enemy racers are more aggressive than they've ever been.

Homing rockets are a sure fire way of satisfactorily taking out anyone who's annoying you.

Triple rockets rely on a good aim, but their damage potential is phenomenal.

The multiplayer and online content are what give *WipEout Pulse* the edge over rival handheld racers. But with the likes of *Juiced 2* on the PSP horizon, this revamped veteran could soon be fading into the dust. ■ **Kim Richards**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	06	Bright colours, fancy explosions
Sound	06	Not as many big name acts as usual
Gameplay	07	Classic future-flavoured combat racing
Lifespan	08	Singleplayer short, multiplayer long

The core gaming is still very much the same, but the extensive multiplayer options raise* WipEout Pulse *above the average

7/10

Visit Chapels to revive unconscious characters

Maps are tiny and unreadable

The game's only unique aspect: a behaviour chart

PSP

VALHALLA KNIGHTS

This is no knight to remember

DETAILS

PUBLISHER XSEED GAMES
DEVELOPER K2
PRICE £19.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING YES

Having a name that sounds like some poodle-haired Scandinavian metal band from the 1980s only makes it even more disappointing when this game starts up and you're faced with another derivative slice of Dungeons & Dragons-esque battling with some half-assed roleplaying elements.

Valhalla Knights is set in 'a place that was forgotten by history'. And, to be honest, it's no wonder: some things should simply be erased from the history of the universe.

KNIGHTMARES

The game is unbelievably confusing. It opens with a group of warriors fighting a dragon, a snippet of conversation and then... you wake up in an inn as a new character who has amnesia.

From here on, there's barely a hint as to what you must do or where to go next.

The RPG features could have been the saving graces. You get to create several characters. Choose male or female, a race (human, elf, dwarf, halfling and machine).

Then pick whichever character class you fancy from a selection that includes fighter (melee weapons), mage (spells), priest (healing) and thief (ranged weapons). There are plenty of stats to keep hardened RPG fans occupied for a while.

But the battles will soon destroy this illusion of entertainment. They are stupidly difficult. We bit the dust practically every time, and we sure as heck ain't no kind of RPG noobs.

The only solution is to pay to create more party members. But you have no money. To earn money, you need to kill monsters.

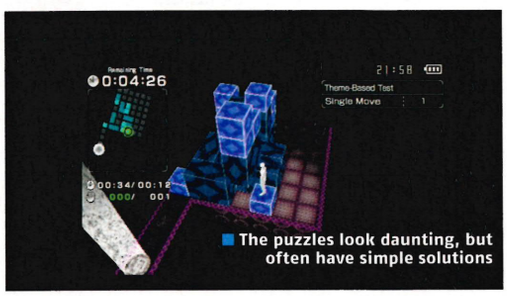
But the monsters are so tough you just die and end up at the inn, where the innkeeper takes your pennies. It's one of those Catch 22 thingies, and we all know how much fun they are. That's right, none at all.

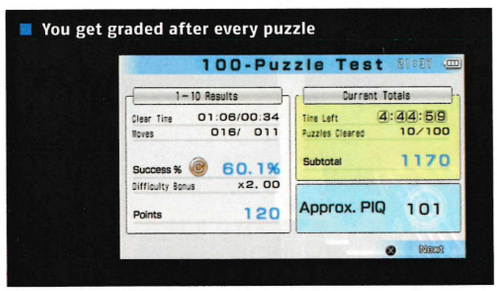
QUEST AND WORST

You can sign up for quests, but there are no details on where to go or what to look for. But by this time you'll have thrown the PSP out of the window, and rightly so. ■ **Kim Richards**

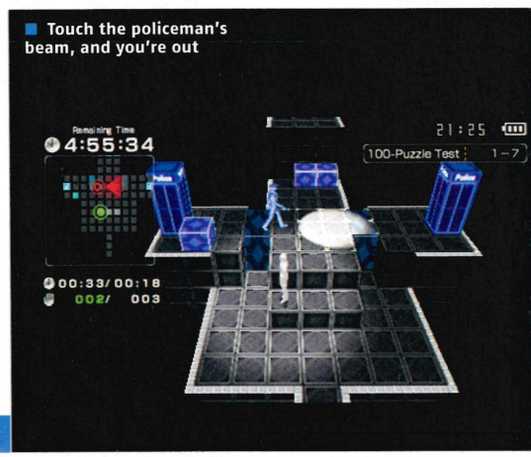
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	05 Good environments
Sound	04 It exists
Gameplay	04 Terrible quest system
Lifespan	03 Poor story and structure will drive you mad

Very average RPG mechanisms, diabolical missions, non-existent storyline, monstrously difficult battles... it's a bleak outcome **3/10**


The puzzles look daunting, but often have simple solutions

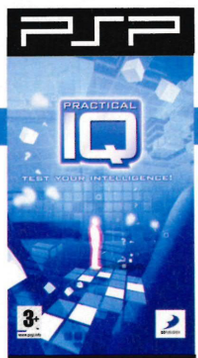


You get graded after every puzzle



Touch the policeman's beam, and you're out

PSP



PRACTICAL IQ

You need your brain testing if you buy this...

DETAILS

PUBLISHER D3
DEVELOPER NOW PRODUCTION
PRICE £19.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO
GAMESHARING YES

When Dr Ryuta Kawashima published a book called *Train your Brain: 60 Days to a Better Brain* in 2003, little did he know that he was giving birth to a whole new gaming genre. Although when his face appeared in *Brain Age* on the Nintendo DS, he might have had an inkling.

Now 'intelligence' games are popping up everywhere, each boasting their own Japanese boffin to add substance to the brain-expanding claims of these titles. For the PSP's *Practical IQ*, Professor Masua Koyasu is the resident egghead, introducing a "modular problem-solving game made up of different puzzles".

MIND POWER

Somehow, measuring your IQ is involved. It's not really clear how; instead of explaining that IQ is a mix of X + Y + Z, all *PIQ* offers is statistics. Well, just one statistic really, and that's your supposed IQ, seemingly plucked at random.

To complete each puzzle you have to make your way across a board to a pillar of light. The boards consist of various levels and obstacles. You can only climb up or down one level at a time, and blocks can be moved and stacked to help you out. Obstacles include lasers, doors and, bizarrely, police officers.

PRACTICAL OR NOTHING

The main part of the game is the 100 Puzzle mode, where you have five hours to make it through, yes, 100 puzzles.

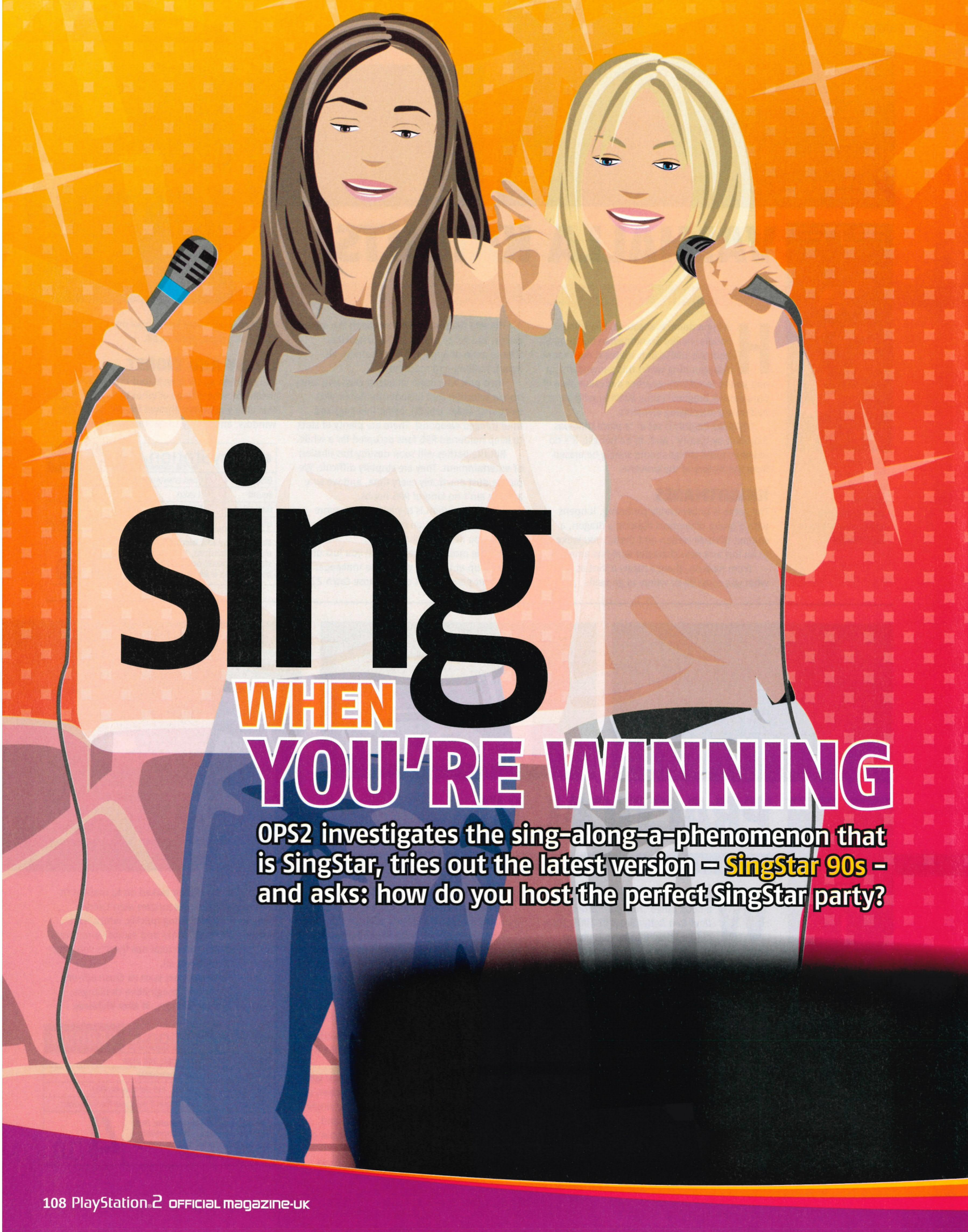
There's also Quick mode, in which you get a random selection of five of the 100 puzzles, or you can choose from 150 themed tests: single move, traps, reasoning, fewest moves, and advanced. Besides an option to create your own puzzles, that's your lot.

The whole thing feels like a basic puzzle game with the 'IQ' bit tacked on to make it fit the current craze. The puzzles aren't very dynamic and get boring quickly, which isn't helped by the dull looks and sound. Sure, there are 250 challenges in total but there's very little incentive to try them all.

With better puzzlers such as *Crush* offering quirky humour and imaginative challenges, *Practical IQ* is second rate. ■ **Kim Richards**

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK	VERDICT
Graphics	05 Very simple and plain
Sound	04 Hardly noticeable
Gameplay	05 Puzzling, but not very exciting
Lifespan	05 250 puzzles if you have the willpower

The levels are colourless and lack life, the puzzles aren't anything special and the whole thing is as sterile as a laboratory **4/10**



sing WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

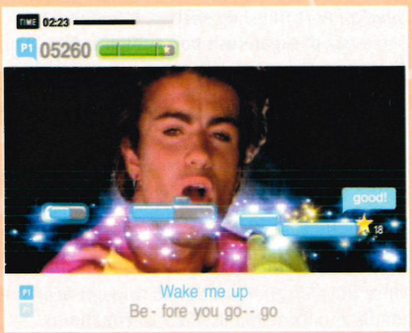
OPS2 investigates the sing-along-a-phenomenon that is SingStar, tries out the latest version – SingStar 90s – and asks: how do you host the perfect SingStar party?

Not so long ago, parties would finish quietly. After the food and drink was gone, the music would stop, and people would start to shuffle out of the door with their eyelids drooping and their dignity, mostly, intact.

But in 2004, Sony introduced us all to a game called *SingStar*, and since then social gatherings and family parties have never been the same. The sing-it-yourself series has sparked a good-time revolution!

But it wasn't an instant success. Back in 2004, the world gave the original *SingStar* only a cautious welcome. Most members of the 'serious gaming' community dismissed it as a girly fad, something to buy their little sister for Christmas. Meanwhile, they themselves hankered after *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, even though many critics had started raving about the karaoke game's massive potential.

SingStar sold well and scored positively in reviews, but it wasn't the essential party accessory it is today.



GOING SOLO

In fact, the first *SingStar* was geared towards solo play. Star Maker was the name of its career mode and this occupied the bulk of the game, with bare-bones Pass Da Mic options included for party play.

What made *SingStar* stand out, though, was the fact that it offered real tracks and videos, sung by their original artists. Other games had offered cover versions to wail along to, but they were no substitute for the real thing.

WHAT MADE *SINGSTAR* STAND OUT WAS THAT IT OFFERED REAL TRACKS SUNG BY THE ARTISTS

The original game wasn't without its problems, however. Many users found that there was a noticeable pause between the player singing and this being recognised on screen. Annoying, although it hardly ever rendered a song unplayable.

The niggles didn't stop BAFTA dishing its prestigious award for originality during the 2005 BAFTA gaming ceremony, mind you.

The words appear on screen with a pitch guide (here, the blue bars)

In the 1980s, this video made a lot of chaps quite confused

10 OF THE BEST

Our pick of the pops from the *SingStar* series

10 STEPPENWOLF 'BORN TO BE WILD' (SINGSTAR POPWORLD)
You can almost feel the wind tousling your hair as you cry out the "Booooooorn to be wiiiiiild!" part of the chorus. Great stuff.

9 THE OFFSPRING 'SELF ESTEEM' (SINGSTAR ROCKS!)
Looking to let off some steam at a party? This is the track for you! Filled with angsty lyrics and some sweet guitar riffs, it's 1990s punk par excellence.

8 THE DARKNESS 'I BELIEVE IN A THING CALLED LOVE' (SINGSTAR)
Listening to your mates trying to screech along to the high-pitched chorus in this song is priceless and deeply worrying all at once.

7 MC HAMMER 'U CAN'T TOUCH THIS' (SINGSTAR 90S)
If ever a song defined a decade, surely there's nothing more 90s than 'U Can't Touch This'. And doing that crazy trouser-wafting dance while you sing along is essential.

6 CARL DOUGLAS 'KUNG FU FIGHTING' (SINGSTAR)
So what if you only know the first few lines? This song is silly, infectious and great to fall back on if you're not great at more complex tracks.

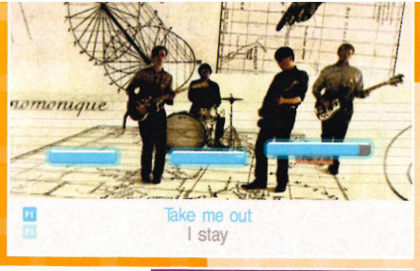
5 THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS 'UNCHAINED MELODY' (SINGSTAR LEGENDS)
What better way to impress the ladies than a Maverick-and-Goose-from-*Top Gun*-style duet with your best buddy? Well, actually...

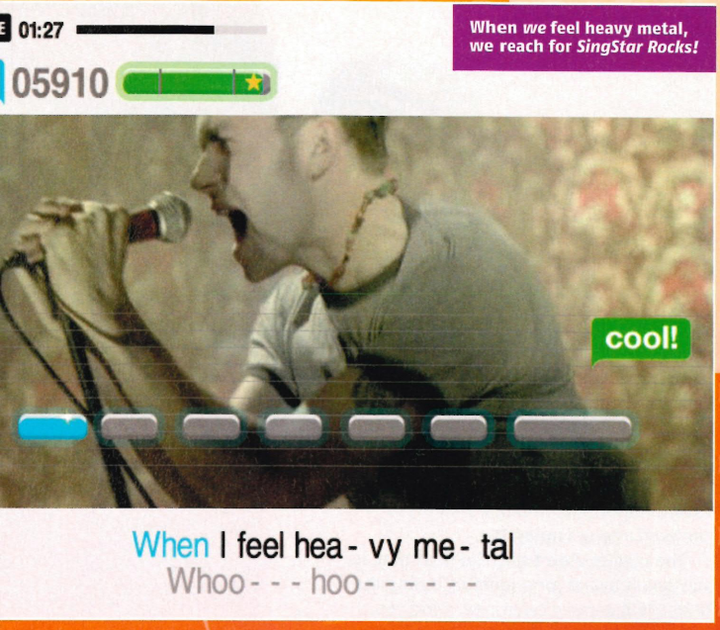
4 BILLY JOEL 'UPTOWN GIRL' (SINGSTAR 80S)
A simple and incredibly singable track from the decade of shoulder pads and colossal mobile phones.

3 DUSTY SPRINGFIELD 'SON OF A PREACHER MAN' (SINGSTAR LEGENDS)
Ever since *Pulp Fiction* this track has come back into fashion with a vengeance. Simple to sing, and great to listen to, it's a real solo-play favourite.

2 MADONNA 'MATERIAL GIRL' (SINGSTAR 80S)
Guys, it's okay to sing this one and like it. Unless your mates are watching, and you're stone cold sober, of course. Girls... carry on.

1 THE FOUNDATIONS 'BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP' (SINGSTAR PARTY)
There's no better track in the *SingStar* franchise to belt out with your mates as a duet.





Six months after the original's success, *SingStar Party* hit shop shelves. It featured the same mix of sugar-rush pop anthems, but there was one major difference between it and the original.

Star Maker mode had been ditched, and duet and battle modes had been introduced. Sony had realised the game's party potential.

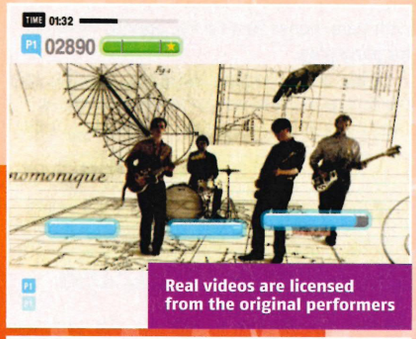
SINGSTAR HAS SPREAD THROUGH HEARTS, MINDS AND LIVING ROOMS LIKE A CATCHY CHORUS

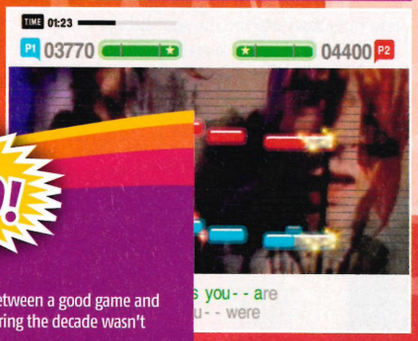
RISING 'STAR

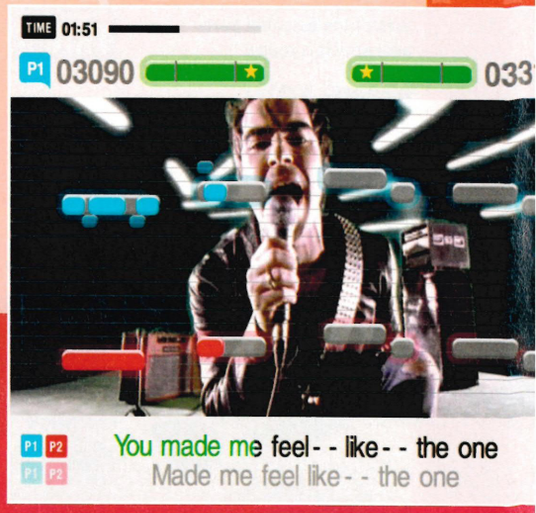
Since then *SingStar* has spread through hearts, minds and living rooms like a catchy chorus, diversifying as it goes. Sony has released more specialised versions of the game, covering niche genres: *SingStar 80s* was the first of these and it's been followed by *Anthems*, *Rocks!*, *Legends*, *90s* (which we've tested this month), *Popworld* and the recently announced *Soul*.

Internationally, *SingStar* has always adapted to suit target audiences, making it a worldwide success story. In the French, Spanish, German and Italian editions of each game, local acts and songs that are more famous there than here replace a large quantity of the tunes we get on the UK tracklist.

For example, Spanish warblers got 'Surfin' USA' by the Beach Boys in *Singstar Legends* instead of Barry White's 'You're The First, The







TESTED!

SINGSTAR 90S

U can't touch this. Yet. But when it's released, you should

Now that the *SingStar* formula has been well and truly nailed, the only real way to differentiate between a good game and a poor one is by looking at the tracks. Well, *90s* has a pleasantly large portion of anthems, considering the decade wasn't exactly a golden era for pop music.

Barenaked Ladies' 'One Week' and MC Hammer's 'U Can't Touch This' are obvious party highlights. REM's 'Everybody Hurts' and Wet Wet Wet's 'Love Is All Around' are perfect tracks for more low-key *SingStar* sessions. In fact, *90s* has a surprisingly diverse range of songs to suit every mood, making it an ideal buy for first-time *SingStar* players.

Sure, there's the odd turkey in there ('Pump Up The Jam'? Great record, but for karaoke?). Generally speaking, though, the 30-strong tracklist is one of the best collections of karaoke songs money can buy.

THE PERFECT SINGSTAR PARTY

Our five-step guide to a great evening in

STEP 1 First off, invite your mates round. Might sound like an obvious thing to do, but you need to know who's going to show up on your doorstep if you're going to plan the party well. Also, we recommend warning the neighbours. Heck, why not invite them, too?

STEP 2 Obviously, you'll need a PS2 and a big enough telly (26in or more is ideal). Don't worry if you haven't got either item; it's a dead cert that one of your mates will.

STEP 3 Now, to choose your *SingStar* pack. This is the tricky part. Think hard about who's coming to the party. If it's a younger crowd, *Party* or *Popworld* are ideal. Student parties should plump for *80s* and *90s*, and anyone older than that would be better served by *Legends* or the original *SingStar*. If you've got a rocky crowd then, obviously, *Rocks!* is your best bet.

STEP 4 When everyone arrives, drink! Alcohol if you're old enough; sugary pop if you're not. Either way, it's best to get a little merry and/or artificial-colouring hyper before cracking open a *SingStar*. Now, choose one of the Pass The Mic modes and get involved. Don't make it too formal, just let people take the floor and sing.

STEP 5 Get snapping with your camera or mobile phone. The morning-after pics of your mates faces as they howl into the mic are priceless. Why not send us your best moments? There could be a prize in it for you! See right for more details...

Last, My Everything'. And, bizarrely, the German version of the original *SingStar* had Baddiel, Skinner and The Lightning Seeds' 'Three Lions '98' instead of Lemar's '50/50'.

And it's not just European tastes that have been catered for. *SingStar Bollywood* is in development to accommodate the tastes of Sony's Eastern gamers (and a huge market in the UK, of course, so we're expecting it to be released here as well as in Asia).

What next? *SingStar Death Metal* for Finland? *SingStar Country & Western* for the USA? *SingStar Hasslehoff* for the Germans?

SHINE ON

Whatever genres Sony decides to plunder for the next round, there's no doubt the karaoke series has a bright future.

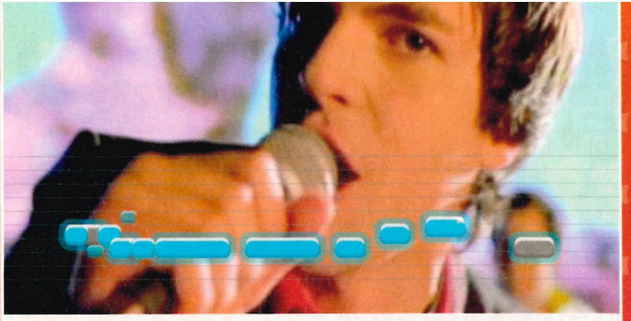
Taking advantage of the PlayStation Store and the 60GB hard drive, the PS3's first version of *SingStar* is making the next inevitable step up. As well as a 30-strong tracklist that features some of the hottest tunes from the past few years, you'll be able to download fresh ones from the PS3's online shop.

How much will they be? How many will be available? These questions will be answered next month when the game goes on sale. But it's undoubtedly something to look forward to.

Talking of PS3, there's a potential bump in *SingStar*'s otherwise smooth ride: EA's forthcoming *RockBand*.

This next-gen game combines guitars, vocals and drums for the complete interactive musical experience, with online co-op and versus multiplayer as well. Will it replace *SingStar* as the party game of choice? Unlikely, because the cost of setting it up – buying the next-gen machine, the game and its various peripherals – is likely to be high. Plus it'll require a bit more effort than simply grumbling into a mic after too many bitter-shandies.

Nope, *SingStar* is very much here to stay. So whether you're a veteran or a newbie, grab a mic, read our indispensable guide to hosting the perfect pop party (below left) and get into the groove. ■ **Andy Hartup**



THE SCIENCE OF SINGSTAR

How does crooning into the blue mic compare to real-life vocalising? *SingStar* producer Tamsin Lucas told us how the magic happens...

OPS2: How do the *SingStar* mics work?

TAMSIN: The movement of air when you sing causes a magnet to vibrate inside the microphone, and that sends a small amount of electricity down the cable into the USB converter. This measures the strength of the signal and that's sent digitally to the PS2 system. And all that happens 50,000 times every second.

OPS2: Do the mics have limitations in terms of how much information they can pick up and translate?

TAMSIN: The microphones have no real limits. We were careful when we were designing them to make sure they captured the singer's voice as accurately as possible. They can pick up sounds that you or I couldn't even hear! The real work is done in the game software, though. One of the challenges is trying to distinguish between singing and background noise, for example. We think it's pretty good, but we're always working to improve it.

OPS2: How closely can *SingStar* measure how a song is being sung and compare that to the real vocals used on each track?

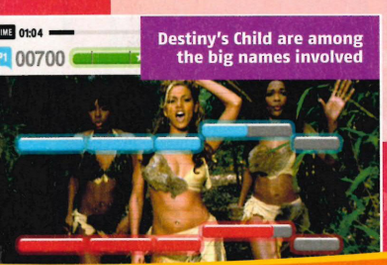
TAMSIN: The pitch detection system we use is extremely accurate. We've actually deliberately made the Easy setting quite forgiving but you can play on Medium or Hard difficulty if you like, which can judge your pitch to a very precise degree.

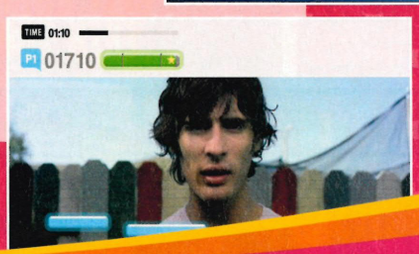
OPS2: Do you make any changes to the voice recognition in each *SingStar* game, or do you just work on the tracks?

TAMSIN: Our pitch recognition is really well established so we only need to work on our chosen tracks within these already defined parameters.

OPS2: Is there any difference between the mics that'll come with *SingStar* on PS3 and the ones bundled with, say, *SingStar 90s*?

TAMSIN: You will be able to use your PS2 mics with SingStar *PS3. We are working on wireless mics, too, which we hope to launch soon. There are some challenges in creating a wireless mic that doesn't leave a long delay between you singing and the game registering your voice, but we're nearly there so stay tuned!*



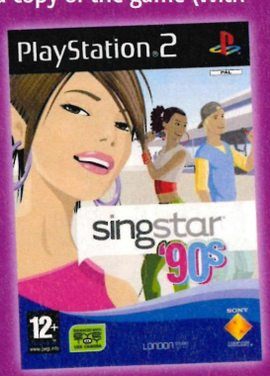


PRIZES!

WIN SINGSTAR 90S!

We've got five copies of *SingStar 90s* to give away.

All you have to do is send in pics from your *SingStar* party; we'll dish out a copy of the game (with microphones) to the first five entries we get!



BY POST
Send your pics to 'SINGSTAR PARTY ANIMALS', OPS2, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

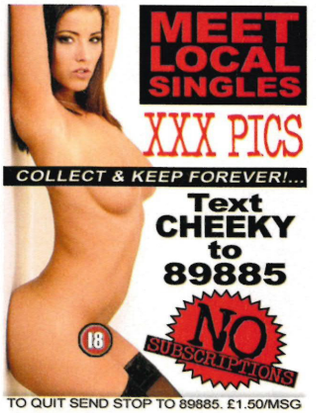
BY EMAIL
Email your pics to ps2compos@futurenet.co.uk and put 'SINGSTAR PARTY ANIMALS' in the subject line

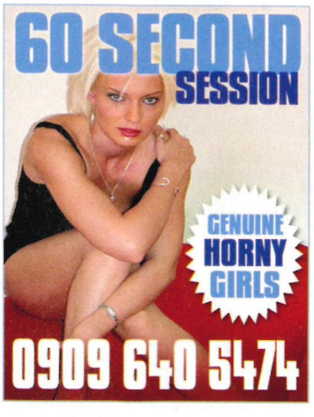
BY MMS
Attach your MMS picture then text SINGSTARANIMALS (then a space) followed by your name and full address to 07738 647177

Only the first five entries that OPS2 randomly draws will win a copy of *Singstar* and two peripheral microphones. Texts will be charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permission. Lines are open from 16 August to 12 September inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.*

*SINGSTAR PARTY ANIMALS COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd and third parties. Only UK residents over the age of 15 may enter. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please include the word NO at the end of your text message or email or in the top left-hand corner of the envelope in which you send your photos. Winners will be notified within 28 days.

No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary.





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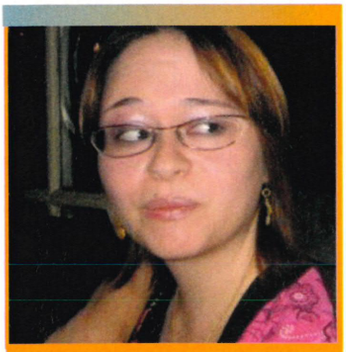
replay

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE MAD TO CHEAT HERE



This month, I've got some good news, and some really good news. The good news is we've got a great big list of the 91 craziest cheats ever to grace the PS2, with full instructions on how to use them.

You want a telephone as a sword? We show you how. Want a racing UFO? No problemo. Like to ride a bike dressed as Elvis? You can. Killer rabbits? We got 'em.

There are snowboarding snowmen, skating zombies and exploding cars. We've got guest stars including Cod of War, Indiana Jones and Billy Joe from Green Day.

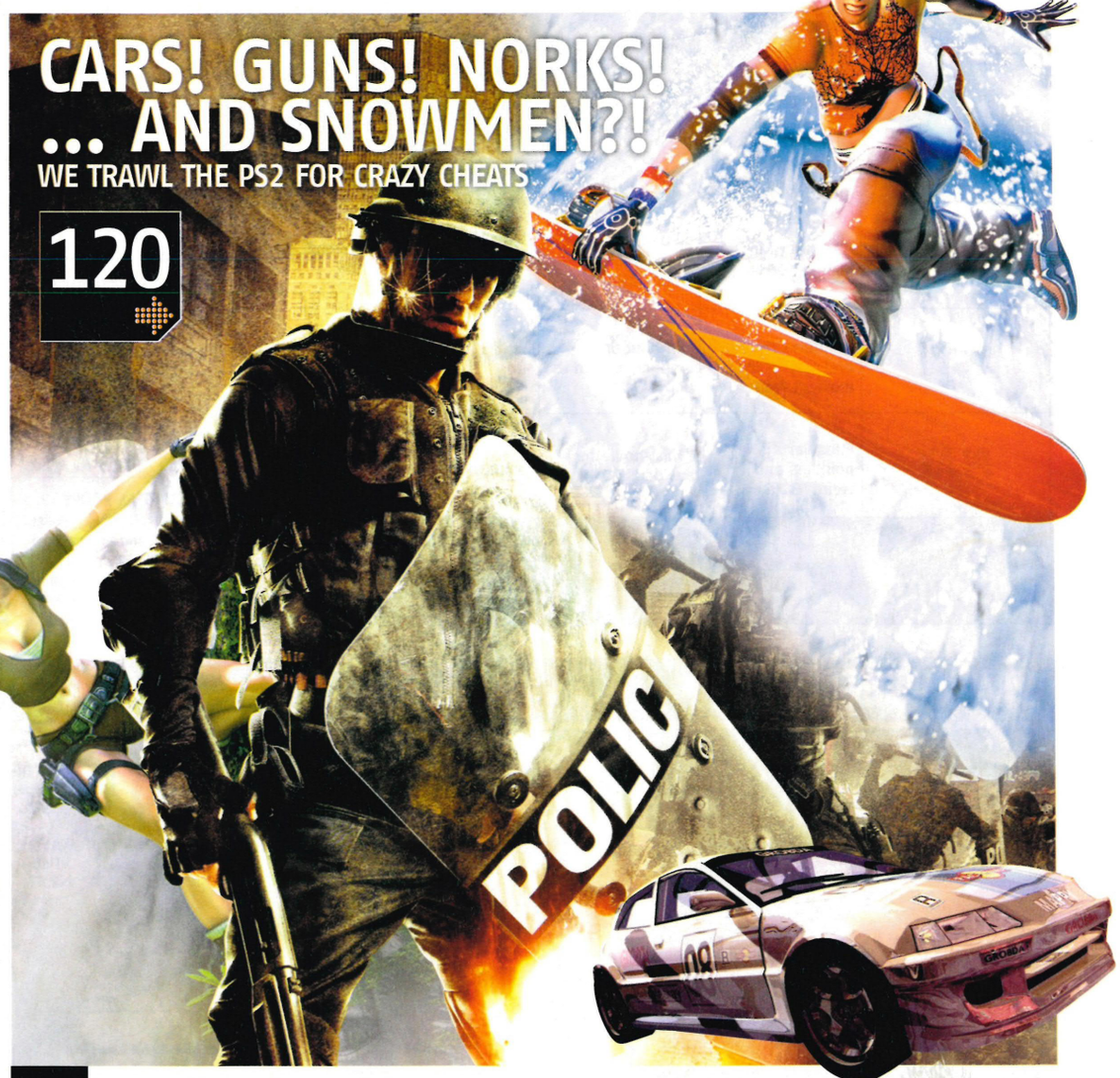
Unlockable cars, unlockable characters, unlockable guns... if it's wacky and it can be unlocked, it's on our list.

We've even got a hidden legend of the gaming world: that's right... the Naked Cheat. Okay, so it's not Naked Lara (that one was PC only, you pervs), but seeing everyone get their kit off in *Leisure Suit Larry* is worth a giggle, surely?

And the really good news? Well, all this cheat meat is served up with a special sauce: namely, instructions on how you can become part of the OPS2 online community in our Facebook group. Join it immediately! Then, my pretties, the world will be ours!

Kim

Kim Richards
Editorial assistant



CARS! GUNS! NORKS! ... AND SNOWMEN?!

WE TRAWL THE PS2 FOR CRAZY CHEATS

120

114 **CHARTS**
What goes up, must come down, they say. But is it true of PS2 game sales? Find out here!

115 **CHALLENGES**
Those who write a games magazine, must be the best gamers, they say. But is it true? Find out here!

115 **WIFI TESTS**
Adding WiFi modes to a PSP game makes it better, they say. But is it true? *[that's enough – Ed]*

116 **THE HOT 100**
The 100 games on this list must be the best on the market, they say. *[you're fired – Ed]*

118 **CHEATS**
We're fired, they say. But is it true? Who cares, with all these ace cheats to try? *[I resign – Ed]*

charts

FACTS, FIGURES AND FUNNIES

WHAT THE OTHER MAGS SAID

WE READ 'EM SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

PSM3	"One for younger gamers" 55%	"A dull, uninspired car crash of a game" 39%	"One of the laziest film tie-ins we've come across" 58%	"A simple remake" 75%
PSW	"Captures the feel and tone of the movies" 7/10	"Without an original bone in its body" 5/10	"An ungodly mess" 3/10	*NO REVIEW
PLAY	"Hogwarts is pointless and weird" 32%	"This should be avoided" 39%	*NO REVIEW	"Retains all the charm it had 10 years ago" 88%
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT	"The best Potter adventure ever" 8/10	"The How-To Guide on how to murder a solid licence" 3/10	"Technically impressive but ultimately soulless" 5/10	"A charming peice of gaming history in its own right" 7/10

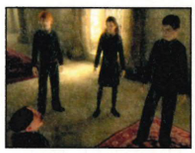
*Review not available at time of going to press

THE TOP 20 ChartTrack ELSPA

Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers Association

	Game Name	Publisher	Score
1.	Harry Potter & The Order Of The Phoenix	EA Games	8/10
2.	Shrek The Third	Activision	6/10
3.	Tomb Raider Anniversary	Eidos	8/10
4.	Spider-Man 3	Activision	5/10
5.	Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End	Disney	5/10
6.	God Of War II	Sony	9/10
7.	Medal Of Honor: Vanguard	EA Games	5/10
8.	Buzz! Junior: Robojam	Sony	5/10
9.	Final Fantasy XII	Square-Enix	10/10
10.	Brian Lara International Cricket 2007	Codemasters	7/10
11.	Guitar Hero II	Activision	8/10
12.	SBK-07: Superbike World Championship	Black Bean	7/10
13.	Burnout Dominator	EA Games	8/10
14.	Test Drive Unlimited	Atari	7/10
15.	Hitman Triple Pack	Eidos	8/10
16.	Spongebob & Friends: Volcano Island	THQ	6/10
17.	UEFA Champions' League 2006-7	EA Sports	7/10
18.	TMNT	Ubisoft	7/10
19.	Buzz! The Big Quiz	Sony	8/10
20.	Free Running	Ubisoft	5/10

HAPPY AS HARRY
What with it being Potter season and all (new book, new film) we're not surprised to see the game in the number one slot. Plus, it's a great game.



THREE FOR ONE
Looks like the appeal of ol' baldy is slipping. The Triple Pack is such great value for money we expected this one to be much nearer the top of the charts than it is.

SAVE POINT TAKING THE LESS-TRAVELLED ROUTE TO GAMING WISDOM

WORDS: KIERON GILLEN ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE

challenges

PROVE YOUR WORTH IN THE LATEST GAMES AND WE'LL RICHLY REWARD YOU

METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY

CHALLENGE 1 PS2

Fire up *Metal Slug 6* and blast your way through Mission 1. Your aim is to beat our rib-busting score of 785,870. Save every prisoner and pick up all you can. Oh, and don't die!

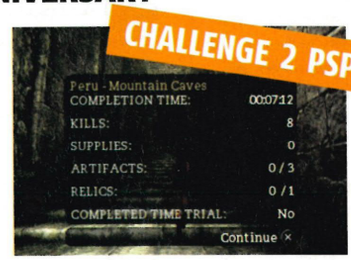
Best proved score gets...
Three awesome PS2 games and an OPS2 Magazine T-shirt

TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY

CHALLENGE 2 PSP

Load the opening level, Peru. Flip, climb and fire your way around the tomb and get through the infamous locked doors within 7 minutes 12 seconds.

Best proved time gets...
Two great PSP games and an OPS2 Magazine T-shirt.



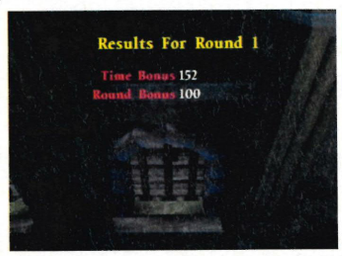
HOW TO ENTER

Attach your MMS picture then text either **CHALLENGE1**, **CHALLENGE2**, or **CHALLENGE3** (then a space) followed by your name and full address to **07738 647177**

Only the entries that OPS2 judges as the best score/time will win the respective prize. Texts will be charged at 50p plus your standard network tariff rate. Please source all necessary permissions. Lines are open from 16 August 2007 to 12 September 2007 inclusive. We will not advise non-winners of the result.

SHREK THE THIRD

CHALLENGE 3 PS2



Boot up the Catacombs Leap mini-game and leap your way across these treacherous dungeons. Clear Round 1, beating our time bonus of 152 and round bonus of 100 for a chance to win.

Best proved score gets...
Two great PS2 games and an OPS2 Magazine T-shirt.

PSP WIFI TEST 1

RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

What you get: *Rainbow Six* on WiFi offers nothing more than a couple of multiplayer modes and six maps to run around in.

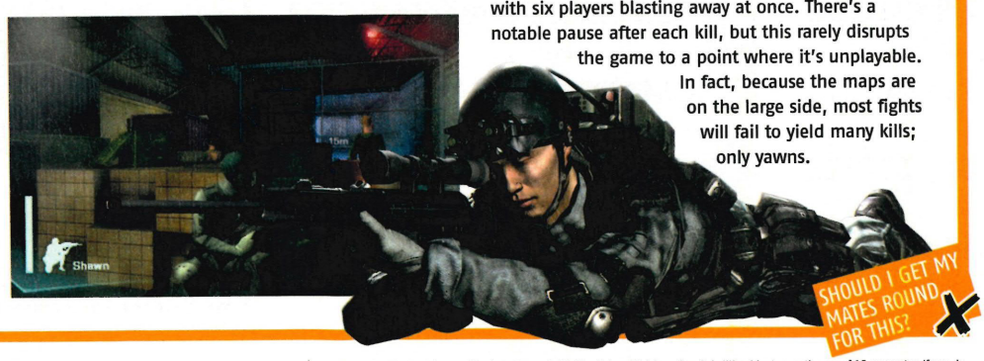
The only saving grace is that Survival and Team Survival can both be played over a local or online connection, so you don't have to rely your mates buying the game to have human opponents.

We were rather hoping for a co-op mode, even if it was for the Terrorist Hunts you unlock in singleplayer, but sadly this mode is limited to the next-gen versions.

What it's like: On a real-life scale of fun things to do, playing *Vegas* over WiFi sits somewhere between washing dishes and counting sheep from the window of a broken-down train. Dull, repetitive and unnecessarily laborious, *Vegas*' PSP multiplayer is a far cry from the spectacular frag-fests of the home console editions.

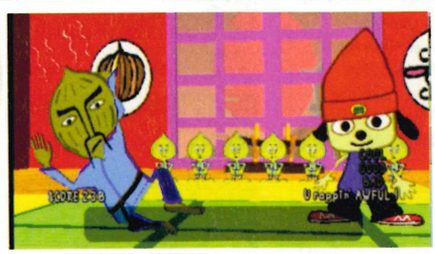
The dreadful game mechanics inherited from the singleplayer game are further crippled by the fact that you no longer use the left shoulder button to lock onto opponents. It's obvious why this has been done (after all, what would be the point of playing online with an auto-lock? Not much of a test of skill is it?), but that doesn't mean we have to like it. And we don't.

To be fair, the connection is solid enough, even with six players blasting away at once. There's a notable pause after each kill, but this rarely disrupts the game to a point where it's unplayable. In fact, because the maps are on the large side, most fights will fail to yield many kills; only yawns.



SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✗

PSP WIFI TEST 2



PARAPPA THE RAPPER

What you get: *PaRappa* is stuffed with rap-tastic WiFi content. Most of it is a four-player battle mode in which you rap-off head to head against your friends. There's also the chance to gameshare the first level of the game and download eight fresh remixes to tackle in singleplayer.

What it's like: The four-player head-to-head mode is entertaining enough, and the gameshare for the first level is a nice touch.

However, the real star of the show is the download options. The remixes are a little hit and miss, but they're a neat piece of bonus content and we're keeping our fingers crossed that Sony will release more remixes later down the line.

SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✓

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No employees of Future Publishing, any associated company or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Publicity may be given to any entrants and their names, addresses and/or photographs printed in OPS2. Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. No purchase necessary. These competitions are open from 16 August 2007 to 12 September 2007 inclusive.

the hot 100

NEED A NEW GAME? WE RECOMMEND ONE OF THESE

THIS MONTH

This month we had a dilemma. *Metal Slug Anthology* scored a very respectable 8/10 in our review last issue, but is that enough to bag it a spot in the Hot 100?

And if we were to slot *Anthology* into the list, what would we take out?

At the end of the day, we decided *Metal Slug Anthology* wasn't stellar enough to join our elite. We couldn't justify the removal of a great game to make room for a budget-price retro collection (even a collection as epic as *Anthology*).

Was that the right decision? Should *Metal Slug*, or any other games for that matter, be in the OPS2 Hot 100?

Let us know by sending in *your* top five all-time favourite PS2 games to: 'My All-Time Top 5', OPS2 Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

YOUR KEY TO THE TOP 100

GOLD
Reserved exclusively for games that scored the elusive 10/10

SILVER
Only awarded to games that rated a mighty 9/10

BRONZE
Lovingly given to games that scored an impressive 8/10

DVD#78
Want to try before you buy? Find the demo on this cover disc

ON THE DVD
Demos of these games are on this month's cover disc!

24: THE GAME — BRONZE
A quality re-creation of the show that's fun to play.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#69/#72/#86**

ACE COMBAT: SQUADRON LEADER — BRONZE
Great flight sim that's well worth a fly-by.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#56/#57**

AMPLITUDE — SILVER
Fun music/rhythm game with tunes adults or teens will recognise.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

AREA 51 — SILVER
Guns, aliens and conspiracies make for a top-notch shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#58/#62**

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT — SILVER
Body-swapping war shooter full of challenges and action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68**

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL — BRONZE
A gripping, engaging platformer from the makers of *Rayman*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#39/#85**

BLACK — GOLD
Hollywood-style gun porn – by far the best shooter on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#72/#76**

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30 — BRONZE
An addictive take both on WW2 and squad-based shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60/#62**

BURNOUT DOMINATOR — BRONZE
Another cracking *Burnout*. When it shines, oh boy, it dazzles.
REVIEWED *OPS2#83* / **OVERALL** 08

BURNOUT REVENGE — GOLD
The best arcade racer in existence.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#64**

BUZZ! THE MEGA QUIZ — BRONZE
Latest and greatest instalment of this mega-fun family quiz.
REVIEWED *OPS2#84* / **OVERALL** 08

CALL OF DUTY 3 — BRONZE
The most atmospheric and intense WW2 shooter we've played.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

CANIS CANEM EDIT — SILVER
Funny, silly, yet always enjoyable school-based adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 — SILVER
The career mode means this driving title is still loads of fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51**

CRICKET 07 — BRONZE
EA's solid, good-looking cricket sim will bowl you over.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2 — BRONZE
Globe-hopping comedy alien mayhem set in the 1960s.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08 **DVD#78/#87**

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING — SILVER
Combat-heavy demonic adventure with shooters and swords.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING — SILVER
Vintage Japanese roleplayer: long, strong and looks amazing.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#73/#75**

EVERYBODY'S GOLF — BRONZE
Cartoon visuals with some seriously dazzling golfing action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#64/#86**

EVERYBODY'S TENNIS — BRONZE
A deceptively brilliant sports sim that surprises and challenges.
REVIEWED *OPS2#86* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#86**

EYETOY: PLAY 2 — BRONZE
Games collection that uses the EyeToy to full effect.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#54**

FAHRENHEIT — SILVER
Stylish, cinematic reinvention of the point-and-click adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#64/#69/#86**

FIFA 07 — SILVER
Finally tackling *PES*'s unchallenged champion status.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#82**

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3 — SILVER
Knockout boxing sim takes face-punching to the next level.
REVIEWED *OPS2#71* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#74/#82**

FINAL FANTASY XII — GOLD
The best roleplaying game PS2, or any console, has ever seen.
REVIEWED *OPS2#81* / **OVERALL** 10

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — SILVER
Tactical battling in an urban setting. Insanely addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#37* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE — BRONZE
This is the finest Bond game on PS2. Simple and enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#67/#86**

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS — BRONZE
Tactical army sim that's accessible and truly gripping.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08

GOD OF WAR — SILVER
Heart-in-mouth joy from this frantic and bloody hack-fest.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#62/#63**

GOD OF WAR II — SILVER
Accessible, exhilarating and macho as hell.
REVIEWED *OPS2#83* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#85/#87**

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK — GOLD
Two superb games in the same box for just £40? Grand!
REVIEWED *OPS2#41* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES — BRONZE
Another killer *GTA* title ported from PSP.
REVIEWED *OPS2#84* / **OVERALL** 08

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS — GOLD
Enormous, even more so than *Vice City*, and cracking good fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#54* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAN TURISMO 4 — SILVER
Unsurpassed automotive beauty. The best driving sim on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

GUITAR HERO II — BRONZE
Slightly more challenging than the first one but just as much fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#80* / **OVERALL** 08

GUN — SILVER
This *GTA*-inspired Wild West shooter is mighty fine, if a little short.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

HARRY POTTER THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX — BRONZE
Explore a free-roaming Hogwarts in the only great *Potter* game.
REVIEWED *OPS2#87* / **OVERALL** 08

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY — SILVER
Agent 47's biggest, bloodiest and best adventure yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#73/#75**

READER TOP 5

THIS MONTH'S TOP 5 COMES FROM MICHAEL SAINTY, DERBY

1 BLACK
10/10 IN OPS2#69
Michael loves this game because "the pure destruction is brilliant".

2 SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS
9/10 IN OPS2#68
According to Michael this game is "exhilarating but hard". Yes, it is.

3 GOD OF WAR
9/10 IN OPS2#60
Sainty loves *God Of War* not for the violence, but for the puzzles, which he describes as "tricky".

4 FLATOUT 2
7/10 IN OPS2#74
Michael loves *Flatout 2* because it's "a great way to release anger". So is pilates, Michael.

5 BURNOUT REVENGE
10/10 IN OPS2#64
"I love it," was all Michael had to say about *Revenge*. Quite right too.

DISAGREE? LET US KNOW ABOUT IT

NEED A BACK ISSUE OF *OPS2* TO CHECK OUT THE FULL REVIEW? THEN CALL:
UK: 0870 837 4773
OVERSEAS: +44 1858 438 795

replay

ICO — SILVER
Beautiful, inventive, magical: *Ico* is an adventure like no other.
REVIEWED *OPS2#18 & #69* / **OVERALL** 09

JAK 3 — BRONZE
Ambitious platform adventure with oodles of varied gameplay.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#58/#75**

JUST CAUSE — BRONZE
Massive parachuting fun in a '*GTA* does jungle' adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 08

KILLER 7 — BRONZE
Insane shooter with exploding zombies and multiple personalities.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08

KINGDOM HEARTS II — BRONZE
Disney roleplayer from the makers of *Final Fantasy*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08

LEGO STAR WARS II — SILVER
Hugely enjoyable and comical retelling of the original trilogy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09 **DVD#76/#77**

MADDEN NFL 07 — SILVER
One of the most accurate sports sims ever made.
REVIEWED *OPS2#77* / **OVERALL** 09

MANHUNT — SILVER
A dirty, grisly, filthy but downright brilliant game experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#42* / **OVERALL** 09

MASHED — SILVER
Got friends? Get the fantastic party racer *Mashed*.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#49/#55**

MERCENARIES — SILVER
Enjoy all the fun of free-roaming warfare, and get paid for it!
REVIEWED *OPS2#55* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#55/#85**

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY — GOLD
A must-own, tactical espionage stealth-a-thon.
REVIEWED *OPS2#17* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#17/#37**

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE — SILVER
The superb *Snake Eater* gets a new camera and an online mode.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 09

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION REMIX — BRONZE
Super-bling street racer, now with extra tunes and vehicles.
REVIEWED *OPS2#73* / **OVERALL** 08

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS — BRONZE
The classic beat-'em-up gets a spectacular adventure makeover.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

MOTO GP4 — BRONZE
Fast, pretty and very challenging motorbike racing.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 08

MUSIC 3000 — SILVER
A virtual recording studio for £30? Can anyone say no to that?
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09

NBA 2K7 — SILVER
Great looking, responsive basketball game that's not just for fans.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON — BRONZE
The latest and greatest instalment of the super-fast street racer.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

OKAMI — GOLD
A beautiful, original, magical, picture-book adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#81* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#81/#82** ON THE DVD

ONIMUSHA 3 — SILVER
If you're looking for the best '*Musha* this is your boy.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 09

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST — BRONZE
Sun-kissed retro-racer makes a blistering comeback.
REVIEWED *OPS2#70* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#73/#75**

PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG — SILVER
The best movie tie-in on PS2. An awesome adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES — SILVER
The best *Prince of Persia* adventure so far.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6 — GOLD
The most realistic footie on PS2, good licences, great online stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#80/#82**

PROJECT ZERO — BRONZE
Genuinely disturbing survival horror, dripping with menace.
REVIEWED *OPS2#24* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#23**

RAINBOW SIX 3 — BRONZE
Squad-based shooter with a realistic edge and online missions.
REVIEWED *OPS2#45* / **OVERALL** 08

RATCHET & CLANK 3 — SILVER
Weapons and flashgun-centric play make this the series' best.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51/#58**

RED DEAD REVOLVER — SILVER
Wild West shooter that's like a cool breeze in Death Valley. Yeehaw!
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 09

RESIDENT EVIL 4 — GOLD
One of the greatest games ever made. Buy it now.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 10

REZ — SILVER
Psychedelic, music-based rhythmic shoot-'em-up. Hypnotic stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#16* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#17**

ROGUE GALAXY — SILVER
An addictive, old-school RPG awash with colourful characters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#86* / **OVERALL** 09

SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS — BRONZE
Excellent drug-dealing film tie-in.
REVIEWED *OPS2#78* / **OVERALL** 08

SECOND SIGHT — BRONZE
Slick, absorbing thriller touched with psychic powers.
REVIEWED *OPS2#50* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#50/#86**

SHADOW OF ROME — BRONZE
A historic blend of bloody action and stealth set in Roman times.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS — SILVER
Original, beautiful and haunting – nothing else feels like this.
REVIEWED *OPS2#68* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#69**

SILENT HILL 3 — SILVER
Wet-the-bed scary survival horror. We dare you to play it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#33* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#34/#80**

SINGSTAR ROCKS! — BRONZE
Party fun of the highest order, whether you can sing or not.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#76/#82**

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES — SILVER
Clever, funny and essential for all platformer fans.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS — BRONZE
Move in for the commander-in-chief of online tactical shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 08

There's a new *Need for Speed* on the way (see p42), and what better excuse to break out this pic of Emmanuelle Vaugier from *Need For Speed Carbon*, the most recent racer to make it into the hallowed Hot 100. Nice headlights!

SOUL CALIBUR III — SILVER
Better than ever, this is the greatest fighting game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65/#84**

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR — SILVER
Mythological hack'n'slash epic.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT — BRONZE
Challenges your ethics as well as your stealthiness.
REVIEWED *OPS2#79* / **OVERALL** 08

SSX 3 — SILVER
Ace snowboarding action with huge slopes and immense speeds.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#43**

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II — BRONZE
Fantastic set-pieces and brilliant space battles. Buy it.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE — BRONZE
Steer monkeys in Perspex balls around courses in this arcade oddity.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60**

TEKKEN 5 — BRONZE
The original PlayStation fighter beats its way back to top form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#61/#63**

THE SIMS 2 — BRONZE
The soap opera you can play. Entertaining and addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND — BRONZE
Hardcore, ultra-bloody, action-survival horror.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 08

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006 — BRONZE
Like the man himself, this year's edition is on fine form.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

TIMESPLITTERS 2 — GOLD
As vital to PS2 as your central nervous system is to your brain.
REVIEWED *OPS2#25* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#25/#31**

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT — SILVER
Shooter with enough guns to satisfy the most trigger-happy soul.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#56**

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 — SILVER
Tones down the Story mode and ups the red-hot driving experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#68/#72**

TOMB RAIDER ANNIVERSARY — BRONZE
A spellbinding adventure that stays true to the original.
REVIEWED *OPS2#86* / **OVERALL** 08

TOTAL OVERDOSE — BRONZE
Comedy Tex-Mex shoot-a-thon with entertaining special attacks.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

URBAN CHAOS: RIOT RESPONSE — BRONZE
Loud, brash, highly enjoyable law-and-order shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#72* / **OVERALL** 08

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 — BRONZE
Cartoon-style action adventure with great fighting controls.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 08 ON THE DVD

WALLACE & GROMIT: WERE-RABBIT — BRONZE
For once, a kid's game that doesn't treat you like a child.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#65**

WE ❤ KATAMARI — BRONZE
Very odd, very Japanese puzzler. Relaxing and enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#70/#72**

WRC RALLY EVOLVED — SILVER
Fantastic tracks with random events to test your skill.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65**

WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006 — SILVER
With better online play and new match types, this is essential.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09

XIII — BRONZE
Gorgeous PS2 shooter based on the comic-book adventure.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#42**

ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER — BRONZE
Strikingly impressive robo-scrapper.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#38/#83**

cheats

TIPS, TRICKS AND UNLOCKABLES FOR NEW AND CLASSIC GAMES

TRANSFORMERS: THE GAME

Enter the following codes at the menu that shows campaigns and bonus features

Robovision Optimus Prime skin ..... ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, →, →, →
Starscream G1 skin ..... →, ↓, ←, ←, ↓, ↑, ↑
Jazz G1 skin ..... ←, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, →
Megatron G1 skin ..... ↓, ←, ←, ↓, →, →, ↑
Optimus Prime G1 skin ..... ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, →, →, →
No vehicles on the street and no tanks or police attack ..... →, ←, →, ←, →, ←, →
Unlock all missions ..... ↓, ↑, ←, →, →, →, ↑, ↓
Unlock bonus Cybertron Autobot and Cybertron Decepticon missions... →, ↑, ↑, ↓, →, ←, ←

ATELIER IRIS 3: GRAND PHANTASM

Complete every quest in the game and a new one will appear on the Guild board called 'Truth in Darkness'. Finish this quest then head to Ruby Prism and use the item synthesis device to create a Shadow Gem.

For this you'll need Aroma Material, Brilliant Stone, Dunkelhite and Dragon Tongue and the Broken Gem that you have received for completing the 'Truth in Darkness' quest.

Now head over to face Uroboros, the final boss, and once you beat him you will see the story's true ending.

AVATAR: THE LEGEND OF AANG

Go to Extras, then Code Entry and enter these codes to unlock bonus features and abilities:

97831.....character concept art
34743.....double damage
53467..... neverending stealth
54641.....one-hit dishonour
23637..... unlimited copper
24463.....Unlimited chi
94677..... unlimited health
37437..... unlock all treasure maps

GOD OF WAR II

Where and how to find the urns:

Urn of Gaia
Rhodes Palace. Destroy the statue on the pedestal you've been pushing around and use it to double-jump to three chests.

Urn of the Gorgons
Near Euryale's Temple. Use the Golden Fleece on the petrifying beams on the conveyor belt

Urn of Olympus
After defeating Perseus, but before you find the Spear of Destiny. Push the Statue of the Fates close to the pressure-triggered gate so you'll be able to get through once you've slowed down time.

Urn of Prometheus
After the Titan Minotaur, inside Atlas, hidden in a stalactite.

KING OF FIGHTERS XI

Unlockable secret characters become available after certain amounts of time

Adelheid ..... 720 hours
Gai ..... 960 hours
Jyazu and Silber ..... 1200 hours
Sho ..... 1440 hours

Urn of the Fates and Urn of Poseidon
Found in Challenge of the Titans

To unlock extra costumes for Kratos, do the following:
Cod of War ..... Complete the game on any difficulty level
Hydra armour ..... Complete the game on any difficulty level
General Kratos ..... Collect 20 Cyclops Eyes
God armor ..... Achieve God ranking in Challenge mode
Dark Odyssey ..... Complete the game on God mode
Athena ..... Complete the game on Titan mode
Hercules ..... Complete the game on Titan mode

GUITAR HERO II

Enter these codes (coloured buttons) at the main menu:

Unlock hyper-speed mode
Y, O, B, O, Y, O, B, O
Unlock performance mode
Y, Y, O, Y, Y, B, Y, Y
Crowd have eyeball heads
Y, O, B, O, B, O, Y
Crowd have monkey heads
Y, Y, B, O, Y, Y, B, O
Crowd have flaming heads
Y, Y, O, Y, O, O, Y, O
Crowd have horses' heads
B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O, O, B, O

TRANSFORMERS (2004)

Enter the following codes at the Difficulty Select screen:

Amazon boss fight
←, ←, →, L1, R2, ←, ←, →

Complete Amazon level
L1, L1, L2, □, □, ○, R1, R2
Anarctica boss fight
L1, ←, L2, →, □, □, ○, ○
Complete Anarctica level
R1, R1, R2, L2, L1, L1, R1, R1
Mid-Atlantic boss fight
L2, ←, →, →, ←, L2, L2, L2
Complete Mid-Atlantic level
○, □, ○, □, →, ←, ←, →
Starship boss fight
→, →, □, R1, R2, ○, ←, ←
Complete Alaska level
R1, ○, R1, □, ←, ←, →, ←
Complete Deep Amazon level
←, →, ←, ←, →, R1, R2, ○
Complete Earth level
R2, R1, L1, L2, □, ○, □, ○
Complete Mid-Atlantic level
○, □, ○, □, →, ←, ←, →
Complete Starship level
←, ←, →, ○, ○, →, →, ←

Enter the following codes at Autobot HQ:

Big heads
○, ○, ○, □, L1, L1, L1, L2
Turbo mode
L1, R2, R2, □, □, □, □, L1
Glide camera tilt
○, ○, ↑, ↓, R1, R2, ↓, ↓,
Infinite dash
↑, ↑, □, ○, □, □, L1, L2
Infinite powerlink
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ○, □, □, ○
Infinite stealth (must have convert minicon equipped)
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, L1, L2, L1, L2
Super Tracker Beam
L2, L2, □, ○, □, R1, R1, R2
Unlock all minicons
L1, L2, ○, ○, □, ○, L2, L1

Enter these codes at the Pause screen any time during play:

One-shot any enemy
□, ○, □, ○, L1, L1, L2, L1
Stealth enemies
←, →, ←, R1, R2, R1, →, →
Unlimited health
R1, ○, ○, R1, R2, L1, L1, L2

To unlock all extras
At the main menu, select Extras, then enter □, □, ○, □, □, ○, L1, L2

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

One Weapon mode
Score 10 big stars in Hard mode
All Weapons mode
Beat One Weapon mode with a 10-star ranking
Full Weapon mode
Get a rank of 100 in One Weapon mode
Brand New Fear mode
Complete the game on any difficulty
Eileen's sub-machine gun
Get nine stars in a Brand New Fear file in Hard mode
Chainsaw
After beating the game once, save and load the data. Then go to Forest World and there will be a chainsaw by the cut trunk near the car
Eileen's nurse costume
Complete the game on any difficulty setting, then restart using the same save file. The costume can be found in room 303 and can be selected on your third run-through of the game
Cynthia's special costume
Finish the game with all four endings on one slot. Start a new game and select Eileen's nurse uniform

TMNT

In Codes, enter **DRDSS** and all recovery items for Michelangelo will be pizzas.

Beat Special Stage: Ordeal with each turtle to unlock **Gembu Turtle Power.**

To unlock alternative costumes for your turtles enter the following passwords in Codes:
Donatello ..... **DDSMS**
Leonardo ..... **LDMSR**
Michelangelo ..... **RRLMD**
Raphael ..... **DMDML**

PS2 CHEATS

GURUMIN: A MONSTROUS ADVENTURE

How to unlock costumes:
Armour ..... Give Hyperbolic 30 gold medals in Beginner mode
Witch outfit ... Give Hyperbolic 30 gold medals in Happy mode
Princess dress .. Give Hyperbolic 30 gold medals in Normal mode
Vampire outfit ..... Give Hyperbolic 30 gold medals in Hard mode
Samurai outfit ..... Give Hyperbolic 30 gold medals in Crazy mode
Monkey suit ..... Get the good ending on Beginner mode
School uniform ..... Get the good ending on Happy mode
Pyjamas ..... Get the good ending on Normal mode
Chinese dress .... Get the good ending on Hard mode
Leopard suit ..... Get the good ending on Crazy mode
Nurse outfit ..... Complete the Boss Rush mode on Happy
Workout gear ... Complete the Boss Rush mode on Normal
Work uniform ... Complete the Boss Rush mode on Hard
Swimsuit .. Complete the Boss Rush mode on Crazy difficulty
Kimono ..... Set your PSP's internal date to January 1-7
Santa outfit ..... Set your PSP's internal date to December 25

SPIDER-MAN 3

To unlock the Black Suit: beat the main game, then collect 50 Emblems

91 craziest cheats!

FROM SILLY WEAPONS TO CELEB CAMEOS, IT'S OUR PICK OF PS2'S MOST BIZARRE CHEATS AND UNLOCKABLES

9 BEST WEAPON CHEATS

1. Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones – swordfish
Press START to pause the game then enter ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ◎, □, ◎, □

2. Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones – telephone
Beat the game on Normal, press START to pause the game then enter →, ←, →, ←, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ◎, □, ◎, ◎

3. Ratchet & Clank – lightsaber
Pause the game, then press ◎, □, ◎, □, ↑, ↓, ←, ←

4. Guitar Hero – air guitar
At the mode selection screen press orange, orange, blue, yellow, orange to make your character play air guitar (well, it's a weapon when *we* play!)

5. Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones – toy hammer
Beat the game on Easy, press START to pause the game then enter ←, ←, →, →, ◎, □, □, ◎, ↑, ↓

6. Lego Star Wars – silly blasters
At Dexter's Diner enter NR37W1 in the Codes category to unlock silly blasters in the Extra Options menu

7. GoldenEye Rogue Agent – paintball mode
At the Extras menu, enter →, ←, →, ←, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑

8. Tomb Raider Legend – Excalibur
Complete Nepal in Time Trial mode in under 13:40. Then hold L2 and press , ⊗, ◎, R1, △, L1

9. Black – BFG
Enter 5SQQ-5THA-ZFFV-7XEV (including dashes) as your profile name, then enter your real name and start the game

RANDOM CHEAT!

Reign of Fire – Goat mode
At the main menu enter △, →, ←, ←, ◎, △, □, →

11 BEST VEHICLE CHEATS

1. WRC II Extreme – UFO
Enter UFOPTER in the Secrets option

2. Sly 3: Honour Among Thieves – Toonami plane
While flying a plane, pause the game and enter R1, R1, →, ↓, ↓, →

3. Jak II: Renegade – hoverboard
At the main menu press ↓, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ↑, →, ←, →, ←, →, ←, □, ◎, △, ⊗, ◎, □, ⊗, △

4. WRC II Extreme – bouncy suspension
Enter KANGAROO in the Secrets option

5. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories – spawn a Rhino tank
During play enter ↑, L1, ↓, R1, ←, L1, →, R1

6. Midnight Club 2 – drive floating in the air
Highlight Options mode and press ↓. When 'Option: Cheat Codes' appears, press ⊗ and enter carcrobatics

7. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas – Bikes will bunny-hop 100ft into the air
While playing the game, enter △, □, ◎, ◎, □, ◎, ◎, L1, L2, L2, R1, R2

8. Ridge Racer V – Pac-Man mode
When your total distance raced exceeds 3000km, you unlock a race where you play as Pac-Man in a little red Namco convertible against four ghosts on mopeds. Win it to unlock Pac-Man and the ghosts as playable characters.

9. GTA: San Andreas – cars can drive on water
While playing, enter →, R2, ◎, R1, L2, □, R1, R2

10. V-Rally 3 – hover cars
Create a driver with the name 21071974 MARTY

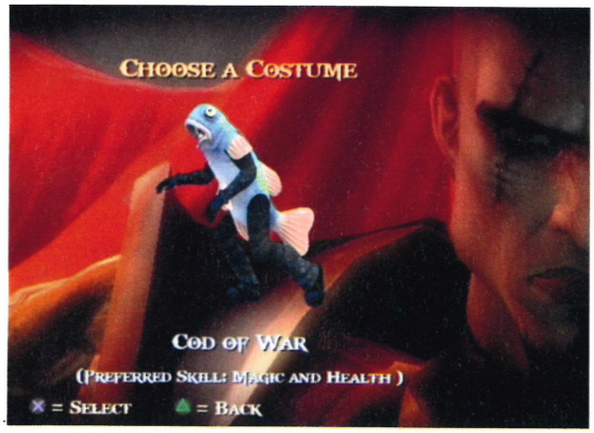
11. WipEout Fusion – ships shaped like animals
At the main menu select Extras, then Cheats, then enter △, ◎, ◎, △, ⊗ for a choice of pig, sheep or dog

RANDOM CHEAT!

The Suffering: Ties That Bind – Psychedelic mode
While playing the game, hold down R1, L1 and ⊗ and enter ←, ←, L2, →, →, L2, ↑, ↑, L2, ↓, ↓, L2

11 BEST COSTUMES

1. God of War II – Cod of War
To unlock this outfit for Kratos, complete the game on any difficulty level



2. Gauntlet: Dark Legacy – S&M costume for dwarf
Enter NUD069 as your name to get a very, very, disturbing dwarf

3. Silent Hill 3 – Killer Rabbit
Complete the game to unlock the Extra Costume option at the main menu. Choose this option then enter BlueRobbieWin to get a lovely bunny costume

4. God of War – cow with milk jugs as weapons
Beat the Challenge of the Gods to unlock this outfit for Kratos

5. Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 – Elvis costume
At the Press Start screen enter ◎, L1, L1, ↑, ↑

6. Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence – monkey mask
Finish Snake v Monkey mode

7. SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie – caveman outfit for SpongeBob
Pause the game, hold down all four shoulder buttons and enter □, □, □, □, ◎, □, □, □

8. Lego Star Wars – moustaches
Enter RP924W at the diner to unlock the option in the Extra Options menu

9. Sonic Heroes – metal characters
Choose a two-player game, select a level and hold down ⊗ and △ until the game has loaded

10. GTA: San Andreas – chubby CJ
While playing enter △, ↑, ↑, ←, →, □, ◎, ↓

11. Medal of Honor: Frontline – hat mode
Enter HABRDASHR at the Passwords screen in the Options menu

16 BEST PLAYABLE CHARACTERS

1. Mercenaries – Han Solo
Collect 20 National Treasures, then go to the Factions page of your PDA and enter ←, ←, →, →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↑

2. True Crime: Streets of LA – Snoop Dogg
At the Map screen press R1, L1, ↑, →, ←, ↓, press down on left thumbstick, press down on right thumbstick, ⊗, □, ◎, △. Save the game immediately without exiting to the main menu, then go to the Mission Select screen and you'll see a mission with Snoop's head at the top

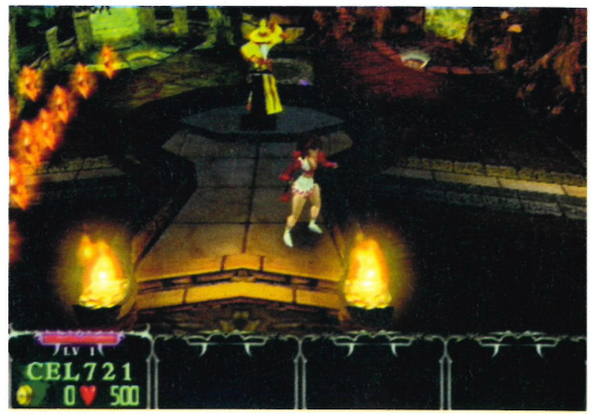
3. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005 – Justin Timberlake
At the Passwords screen enter THETENNESSEEKID

4. Simpsons Skateboarding – Demon Marge
At the character screen, hold down all four shoulder buttons and enter ⊗, □, △, ◎

5. Tony Hawk's American Wasteland – Billy Joe from Green Day
Beat Classic mode on Normal difficulty to unlock Billy Joe

6. SSX3 – snowmen
Choose Conquer the Mountain mode and press □ to open the Options menu. Select Enter Cheat and enter betyouveneverseen. Then start the game, ride to a lodge and pick Rider Details, then Cheat Characters where you should be able to select Snowballs to make your riders into jolly snowfolk

7. Gauntlet: Dark Legacy – cheerleader
Enter CEL721 as your name



8. Gauntlet: Dark Legacy – alien
Enter SKY100 as your name

9. Fight Night Round 2 – Ghetto Fabulous
In Create a Champ mode, select New Boxer and enter the name GETFAB. Press START. Ghetto Fabulous will now be available for you to choose in the Heavyweight division

10. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 – Eddie the zombie
Go to the Cheat Codes screen in Options and enter homielist

11. Mercenaries – Indiana Jones
Collect 20 National Treasures, then go to the Factions page of your PDA and enter ←, ←, →, →, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓

12. The Simpsons Road Rage – Smithers
At the Options menu hold down R1 and L1 and enter △, △, □, □

13. Rise to Honour – roast duck
Complete the game, then at the mainmenu hold down R1 and L1 and press ○, □, ↓, ←

14. Half-Life – skeleton
While the game is loading, hold down ✕, △, ○ and □ then release when the title screen appears

15. NBA Ballers – baby ballers
Select Quickplay and when the screen showing the players appears, enter □, □, □, □, △, △, ○, ○, ○, →

16. NBA Live 2004 – Busta Rhymes
Enter FLIPMODE as the surname for a player in Create Player mode and Busta will appear in the Free Agent pool

RANDOM CHEAT!

Star Wars Battlefront – Ewok mode
Start a new profile called Jub Jub to make everyone the size of Ewoks

8 BEST DESTRUCTO-CHEATS

1. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas – super punch (destroys everything)
Enter L1, L2, L2, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↑, R1, R2, R2 during gameplay

2. BloodRayne – gratuitous dismemberment
If the bloodsucking vampiress isn't gory enough for you already, enter INSANEGIBSMODEGOOD at the Cheat menu, then activate the cheat in the Pause menu. Note that you should not press ✕ after putting the final word in place, simply position it then press START to accept the code

3. The Simpsons Hit & Run – exploding cars
In the Options menu, hold R1 and L1 and enter △, △, □, □

4. Urban Chaos – bullets set fire to enemies
At the main menu press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ○, ↓, ↑, ○ to open the Cheats menu, then enter BURNINGBULLET

5. Grand Theft Auto III – increased gore
□, L1, ○, ↓, L1, R1, △, →, L1, ✕

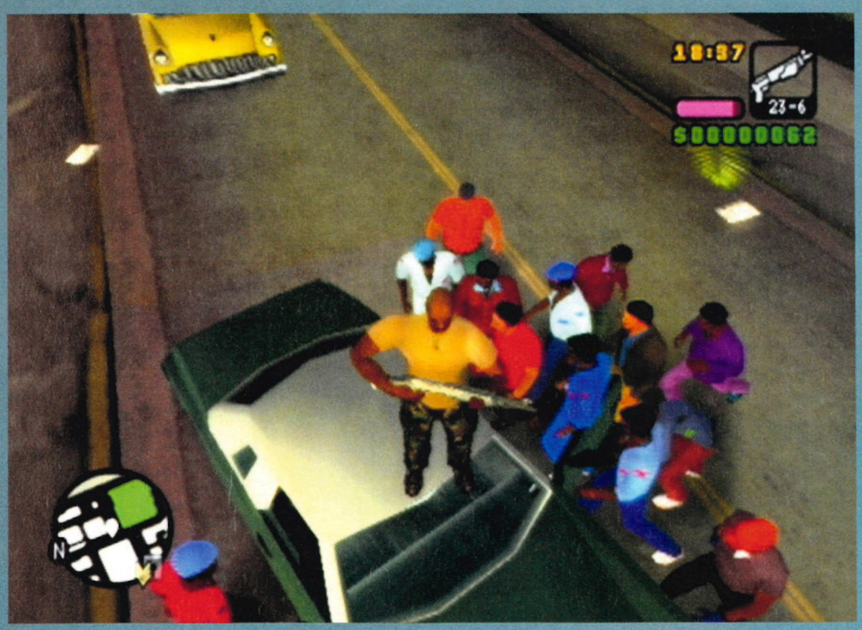
7. NBA Live – shatter the backboard
After you've dunked the ball, hang onto the rim and press L1, ✕, R2, L2, ✕, L2

8. GTA: Vice City – Blow up cars
R2, L2, R1, L1, L2, R2, □, △, ○, △, L2, L1

RANDOM CHEAT!

SSX On Tour – snowball fight
Select Cheats at the Extras menu and enter LETSPARTY

RANDOM CHEAT!



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories – guy magnet
→, L1, ↓, L1, ○, ↑, L1, □

8 BEST AUDIO CHEATS

1. Silent Scope – Love mode
On the Mode Selection screen, press ↓, △, ↑, □, △, ↓, →, □, △ and the game will be played to sexy sax music and will be coloured in romantic shades of pink

2. LMA Manager 2004 – cartoon sound effects
When starting a new game enter LMA2004MB on the Name Entry screen

3. MDK2 Armageddon – farty noises
Start the game as Dr Hawkins, then press L2, R2, ←, ✕

4. WRC II Extreme – squeaky co-driver
Enter HELIUM in the Secrets option

5. Tekken 5 – make Mokujin sound like a block of wood when hit
Hold ↓ when selecting Mokujin

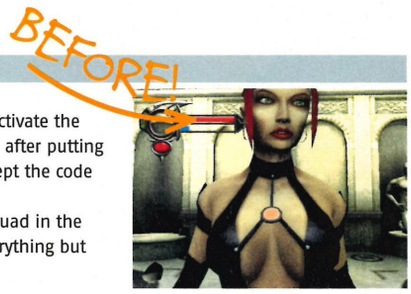
6. LMA Manager 2005 – low-pitched sounds
Enter LMA2005MC as your manager name

6. LMA Manager 2005 – high-pitched sounds
Enter LMA2005MB as your manager name

7. Urban Chaos – squeaky voices
At the main menu press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ○, ↓, ↑, ○ to open the Cheats menu, then enter WHATWASTHAT

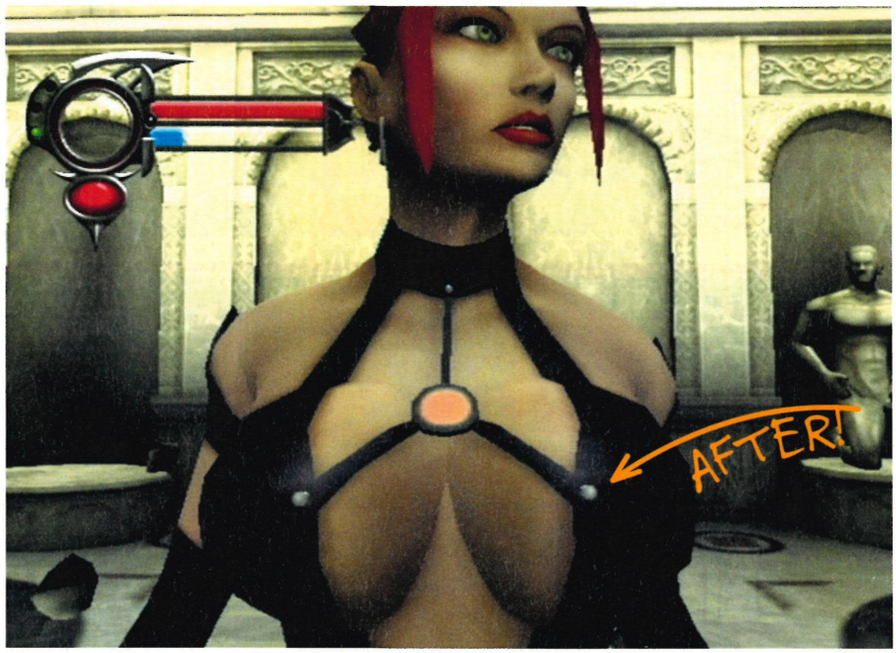
8. Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat – silly voices
Hold R1 and R2 then press down on right thumbstick, then press ○, SELECT, ✕, press right thumbstick, △, L1, □, L2, press left thumbstick

7 SAUCIEST CHEATS



1. BloodRayne 2 – juggy mode
Enter FakeBustCunninglyDistorted at the Cheat menu, then activate the cheat in the Pause menu. Note that you should not press ⊗ after putting the final word in place, just position it then press START to accept the code

There's a similar cheat in the first game (enter JuggyDanceSquad in the Cheat area) but since you only see Rayne from behind in everything but the cutscenes, it's kind of pointless



2. Rumble Roses – secret beach area
Enter ↓, →, ↓, →, ↓, →, ↓, R2, SELECT at the main menu to unlock the beach area in Exhibition

3. Rumble Roses – swimsuit
Enter ↓, ←, ↓, ←, ↓, ←, ↓, R2, SELECT at the main menu to unlock this in Exhibition

4. Leisure Suit Larry – naked mode
After you finish the game, you can buy the Everybody Naked! secret at the bar for 269 Secret Tokens

5. Tomb Raider Anniversay – Lara in a skintight catsuit
Find the hidden relic in the Santuary of the Scion to get this outfit in the wardrobe in Lara's bedroom in Croft Manor

6. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 – unlock Daisy
At the Cheats screen enter (o)(o)

7. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City – ladies' man
Enter ◎, ⊗, L1, L1, R2, ⊗, ⊗, ◎, △ during play

RANDOM CHEAT!

Silent Scope – Professional Night Vision Challenge mode
If you're a real masochist, hold down the fire button on the Mode Selection screen and highlight 'training' or 'arcade'. With the fire button still held down, press START six times. You will now play at night with the night vision scope and no aiming ring or enemy markers

15 BEST HEAD CHEATS

1. Guitar Hero II – band have horses' heads
At the main menu press (quickly!) blue, orange, orange, blue, orange, orange, blue, orange, orange, blue, orange, orange, blue, orange, orange, blue, orange

2. Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition – pumpkin head
Enter getheadk at the Cheats menu

3. Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition – yellow smiley head
Enter getheadj at the Cheats menu

4. Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition – bunny head
Enter getheadl at the Cheats menu

5. Medal of Honor: Rising Sun – Achilles heads
Enter MANDARIN at the Passwords screen in the Options menu

6. Killzone – big heads
Pause the game and enter the Options menu. Hold down L1 and enter ◎, R2, ⊗, ◎, ◎

7. Full Spectrum Warrior – big heads
In the Extras section of the main menu, enter NICKWEST then create a new profile

8. Guitar Hero II – crowd have monkeys' heads
At the main menu press yellow, yellow, blue, orange twice

9. Guitar Hero – crowd have skulls for heads
At the main menu press orange, yellow, blue, blue twice

10. Chicken Little – big hair
Select Extras at the main menu, then Cheat Codes and line up baseball, bat, bat, baseball

11. Van Helsing – big head
Find the Cheat Glyph behind the wrecked wagon at the start of Mission One, then toggle the cheat on and off in the Inventory menu

12. Fight Night 2004 – tiny boxers with big heads
At the main menu press ←, →, ←, →, ←, →, ←

13. ESPN NBA 2Night 2002 – basketball heads
At the Cheats screen enter BALLHEAD

14. Urban Chaos – no heads
At the main menu press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ◎, ↓, ↑, ◎ to open the Cheats menu, then enter KEEPYOURHEAD

15. Die Hard: Vendetta – pin heads
At the main menu enter L1, L1, R1, L1

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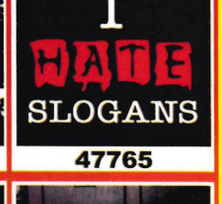

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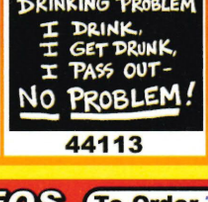

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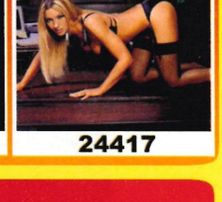
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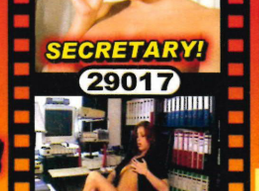

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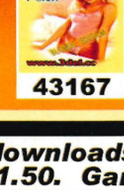
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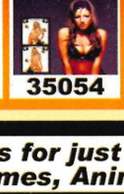

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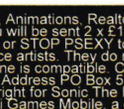

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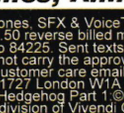

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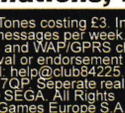

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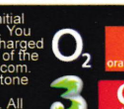

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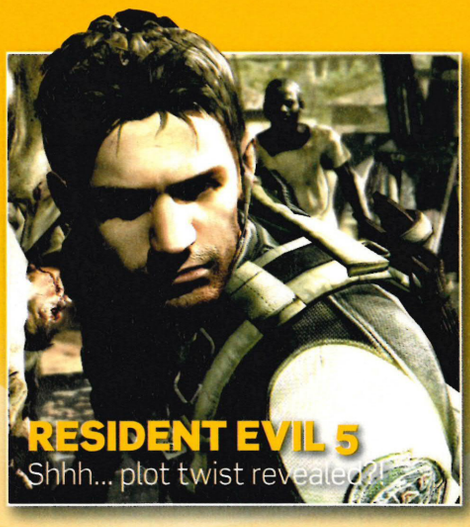

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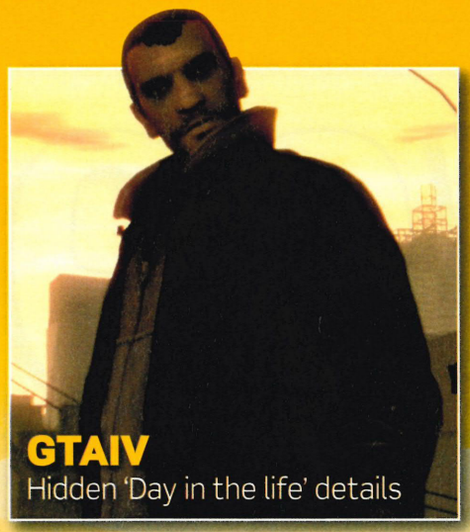
Shhh... plot twist revealed?!



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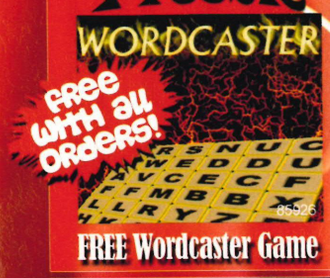

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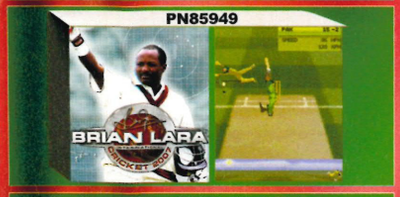

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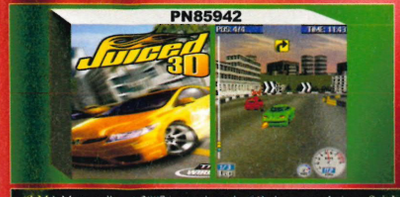

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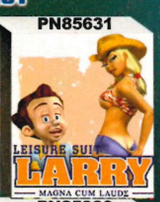

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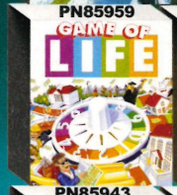

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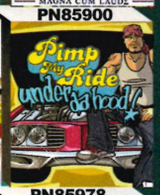

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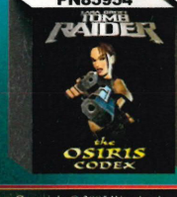

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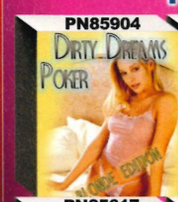

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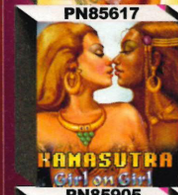

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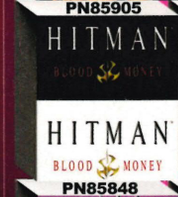

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PlayStation Education Part 8

BARMY BARNETS

Hair: it's everywhere. On our heads, under our arms, in the plughole. And some of the most inspiring 'dos can be found on PS2...

ARCHER

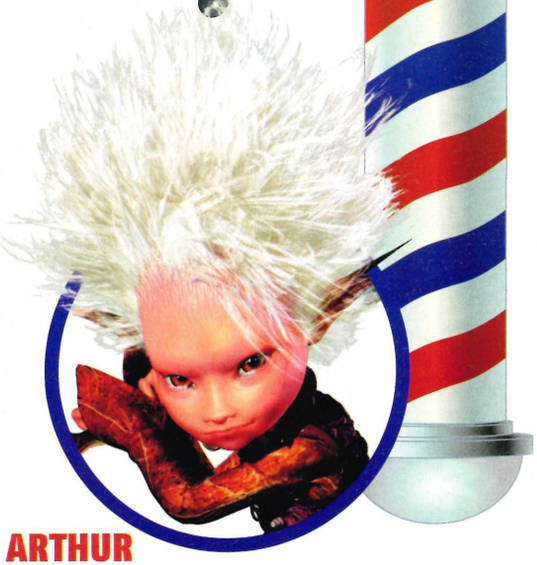
STYLE: The Torsade
STYLING TIPS: Using your favourite pastry as a model, it only takes a couple of elastic bands and a bit of wax to achieve this look
SEEN IN: *Disgaea 2: Cursed Memories*

THE SILENT PROTAGONIST

STYLE: The Emo
STYLING TIPS: Take advantage of the scalp's natural grease and your wounded heart to achieve this season's most maudlin look
SEEN IN: *Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3*

LEON

STYLE: The Dandy
STYLING TIPS: Asymmetry is really hot right now; just be sure to leave enough fringe so that you can push it back for dramatic effect!
SEEN IN: *Resident Evil 4*



ARTHUR

STYLE: The Ludwig
STYLING TIPS: Use a barber's razor to skim through your hair, followed by a healthy dollop of industrial lye. Voila!
SEEN IN: *Arthur and the Invisibles*

VENOM

STYLE: The Lampshade
STYLING TIPS: Our advice? Keep it growing! For a super-funky effect, why not stencil-spray your own design on top?
SEEN IN: *Guilty Gear X*

GOKU

STYLE: The Super Saiyan
STYLING TIPS: Focused anger and mastery of your ki energy is key. Mousse also helps
SEEN IN: Every *Dragonball Z* game ever

TIRA

STYLE: The Poinsettia
STYLING TIPS: Actually the product of swinging a giant, bladed hula-hoop about her person, Tira's tresses are one-in-a-million
SEEN IN: *Soul Calibur III*

SEYMOUR

STYLE: Twin Ailerons
STYLING TIPS: For maximum aerodynamics, bolt a steel framework to your skull and weave the hair around it
SEEN IN: *Final Fantasy X*

VIOLENT ZEN

STYLE: The Dandelion
STYLING TIPS: Four words: Van de Graaff generator
SEEN IN: *SVC Chaos: SNK v Capcom*

ZERO

STYLE: Xtreme Ponytail
STYLING TIPS: Heat-activated straightening serum is all you need to achieve Zero's glistening mane
SEEN IN: *Mega Man X Collection*

GHOST RIDER

STYLE: The Flaming Skull
STYLING TIPS: Napalm
SEEN IN: *Ghost Rider*

BENIMARU

STYLE: The Bride
STYLING TIPS: Seven cans of hairspray a day can be costly, but when you're as stunning as Benimaru, the results are worth it!
SEEN IN: *The King of Fighters* series

SORA

STYLE: The Sea Urchin
STYLING TIPS: Botox: just for your face? No! Injecting it directly into your roots can create attention-getting hair in seconds!
SEEN IN: The *Kingdom Hearts* series

FRAN

STYLE: The Furry
STYLING TIPS: Lost the spark in your relationship? Cosmetically grafting a pair of fantabolus bunny ears to your scalp can but it back pronto!
SEEN IN: *Final Fantasy XII*

PAUL PHOENIX

STYLE: Hi-Top Fade
STYLING TIPS: To best achieve this look, place long hair in a cylinder and slowly fill it with gel
SEEN IN: The *Tekken* series

MARGE SIMPSON

STYLE: The Beehive
STYLING TIPS: All backcombing and curling, this one's difficult to maintain. But with a pinch of patience, you can 'do it! Arf!
SEEN IN: *The Simpsons: Hit and Run*

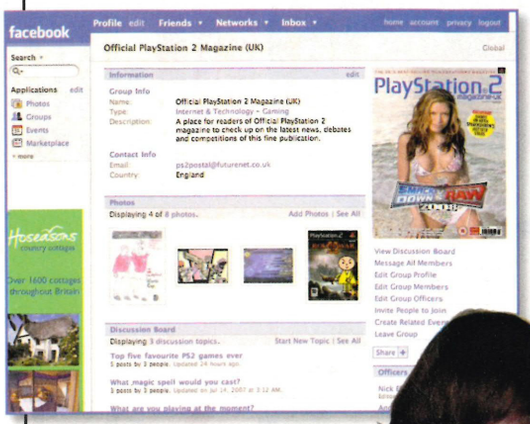
THE MONSTER WE CREATED IN SMACKDOWN '07

STYLE: Unkempt
STYLING TIPS: Don't let those body fascists tell you what is and is not acceptable body hair. You're beautiful the way you are.
SEEN IN: *WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2007*

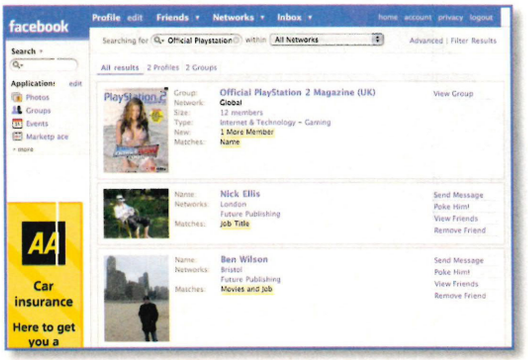
Join Us!

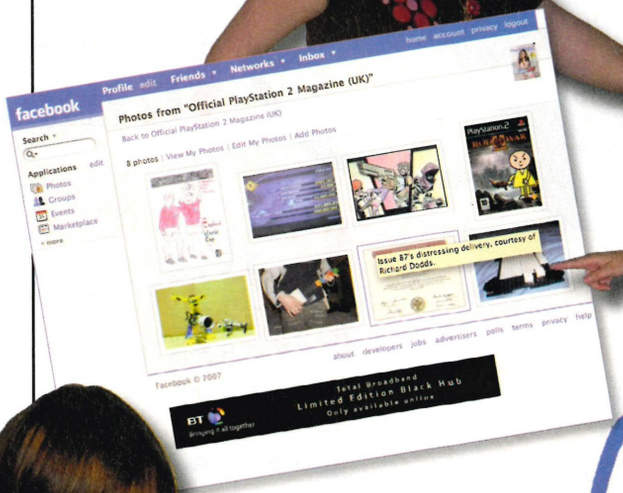
YOU'RE ON FACEBOOK, RIGHT? THEN JOIN OUR GROUP AND BE PART OF THE OPS2 ONLINE COMMUNITY! HERE'S HOW...

Hi, I'm Kim Richards. You may remember me from such reviews as *Valkyrie Profile 2: Silmeria* and *WipEout Pulse*. Among my many other talents, I'm admin of OPS2's Facebook group. So I'm going to talk you through joining our great big happy family and sharing all the joy of our online community. On the left there, you can see what the group's main page looks like. Nice, eh!



Okay, to join, you need a Facebook account. If you haven't already, go to www.facebook.com and follow the simple instructions to make your profile. Once you're up and running, you'll see a little link on the left of your profile page that says 'Groups'. Go on: click on it. Search for 'Official PlayStation 2 Magazine (UK)' and you'll see it, just like the pic there on the right.

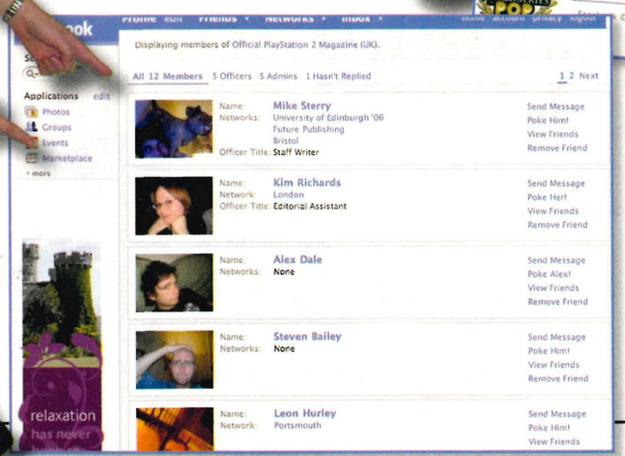




Welcome aboard! Now you're a member of the group you can chat with Team OPS2, leave messages for fellow PS2 enthusiasts and post pictures of stuff. Yep, you can post anything you like (as long as it's not being rude about me). You can also look at readers' photos from our Postal pages, bigger and easier to see than when we print them in the mag, and other stuff we haven't had room for. Basically, it's all about you!

Click on 'Discussion Board' and you'll be able to join in with what we're talking about. Want to tell us what you think are the best or worst PS2 games of all time? Want to tell us what you loved or hated about the last issue? Think our Mike needs a haircut? Want to start a petition to get Mark 'Caveman' Mitchell, OPS2's trusty art editor, onto Facebook? Here's the place to do it!

You can even use the group to make new friends! If you bond with someone in the discussion threads, simply check out the list of group members by clicking 'See All' and ping over a 'friend request' to get to know them better. You can even 'poke' them or leave a message for them on the group's wall. What are you waiting for? Stop reading and start joining!



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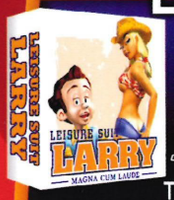

Larry is on the campus, and tries to conquer 3 attractive girls. For that he has his own very special technique.

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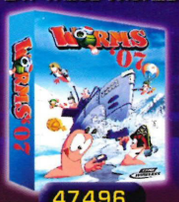
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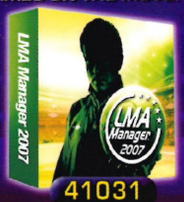
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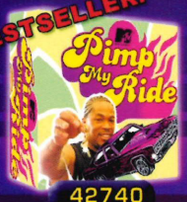
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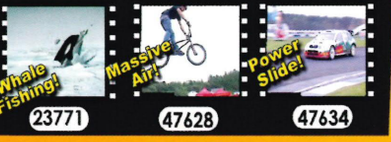
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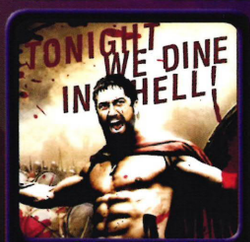
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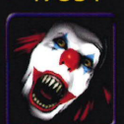
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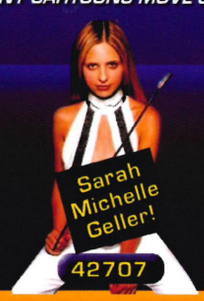
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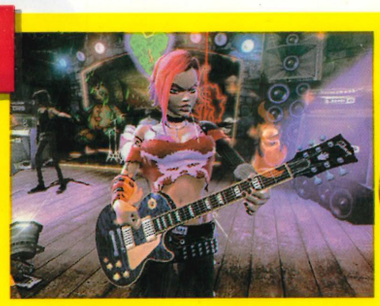

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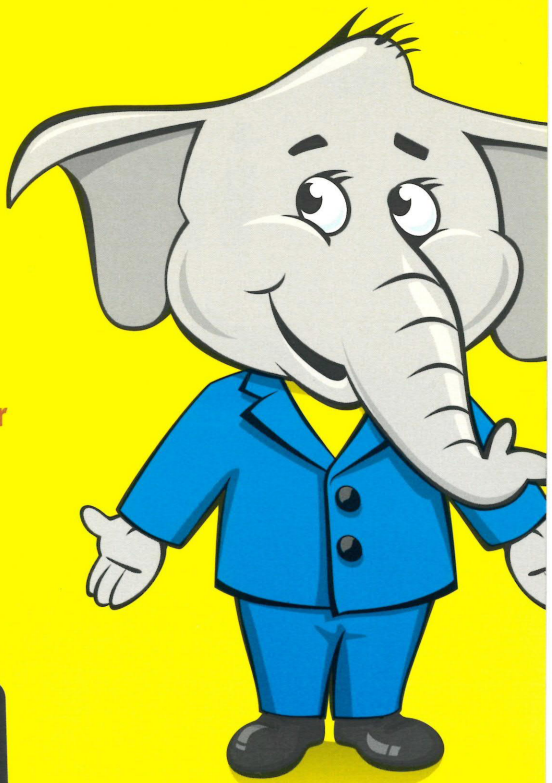

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