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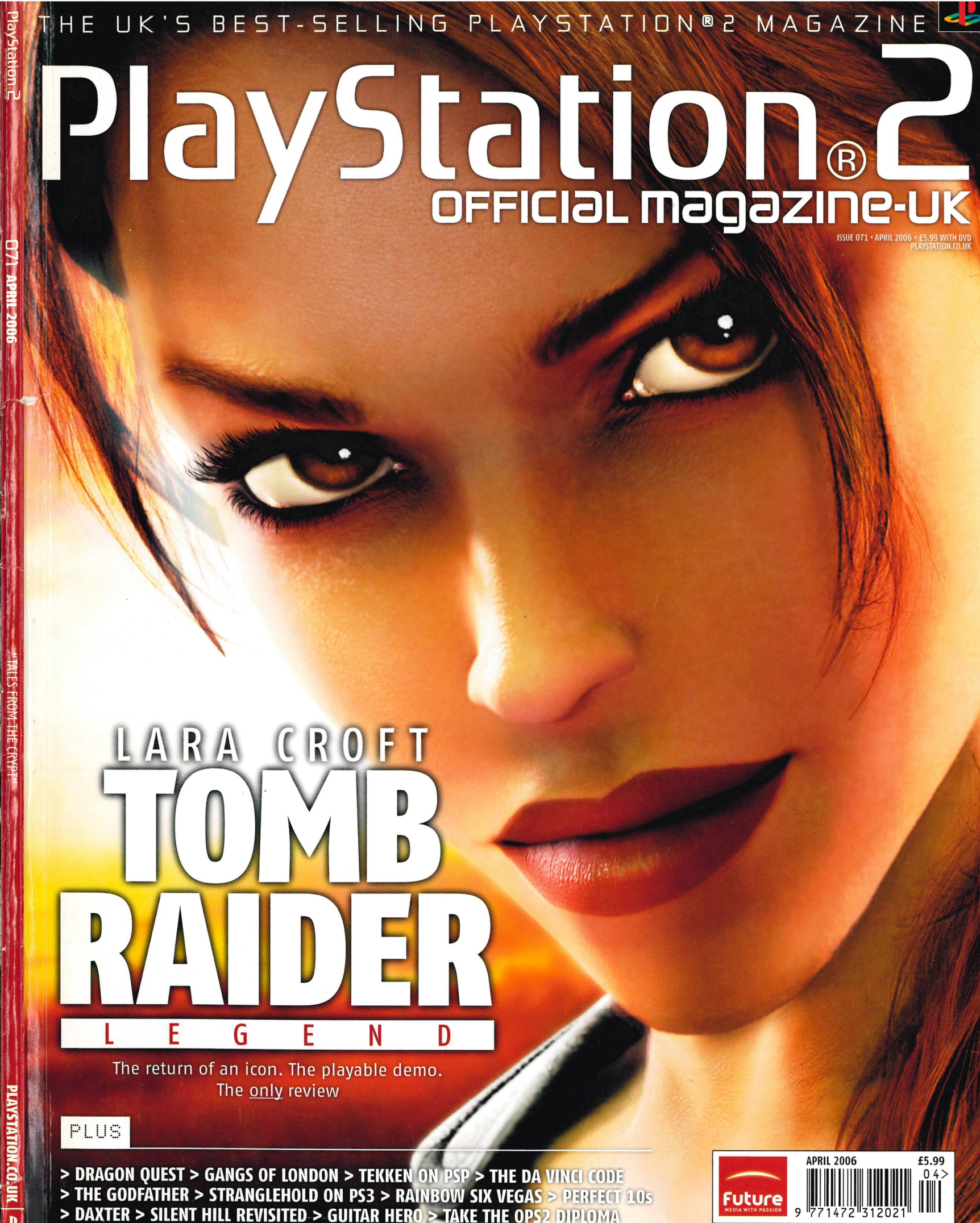

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

The return of an icon. The playable demo.
The only review

PLUS

> DRAGON QUEST > GANGS OF LONDON > TEKKEN ON PSP > THE DA VINCI CODE
> THE GODFATHER > STRANGLEHOLD ON PS3 > RAINBOW SIX VEGAS > PERFECT 10s
> DAXTER > SILENT HILL REVISITED > GUITAR HERO > TAKE THE OPS2 DIPLOMA

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PlayStation 2

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THE GAME

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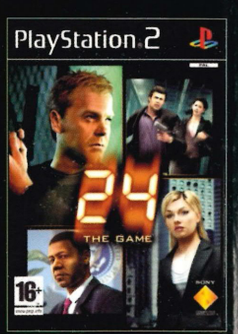

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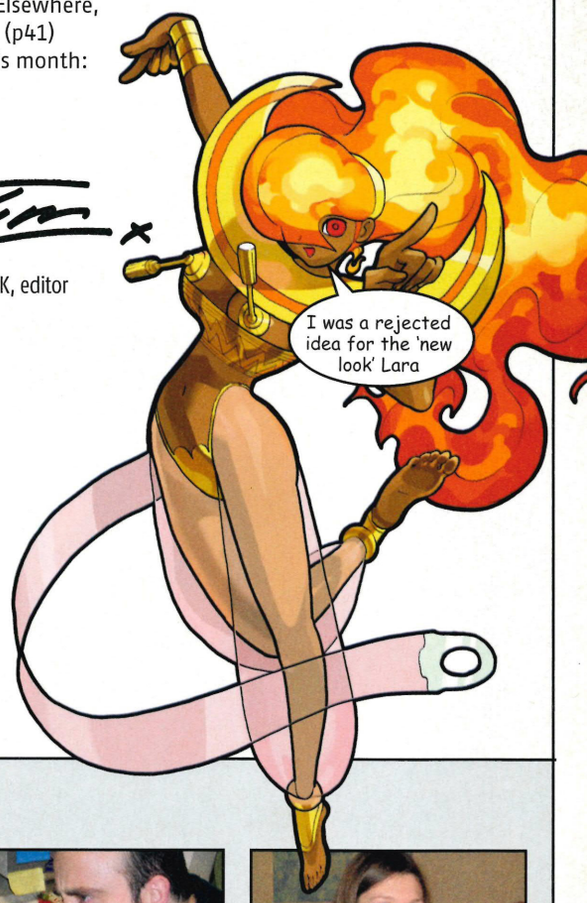
*In honour of *Tomb Raider: Legend*'s archaeological thievery, we asked the team what they would most like to steal...

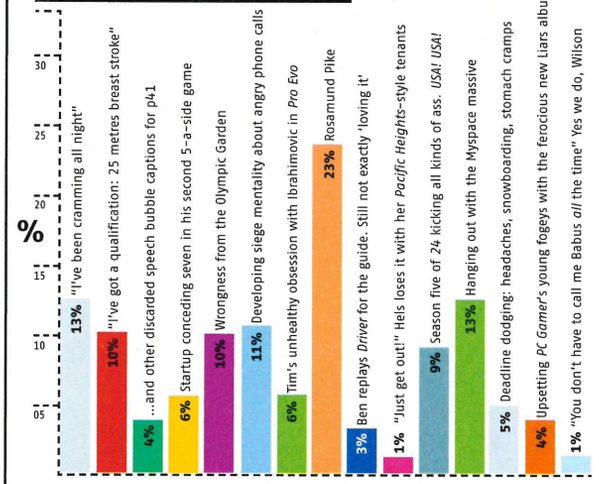
FALLING IN LOVE ALL OVER AGAIN

We make no apologies for our continued love affair with Lara, and not just because there are few girls willing to let you look at their arses for nine hours straight. However, after the last game even we thought it might be time to call it all off. ("It's not you darling... well, actually, it *is*.") *Angel Of Darkness* stunk the joint up so bad that its developer had Lara yanked out of its calloused hands. But now she's back, having spent the last few years recuperating in the States. Is she better? You'd better believe it. As ever, the proof is in the playing, and on this month's DVD you can sample a sizeable chunk of Lara's latest. *Tomb Raider: Legend* is a glorious return to form. Short, but oh so sweet. It's not going to reinvent adventure gaming in the way that her PSone debut did, but what it definitely will do is restore Lara to her rightful place at gaming's top table. More than anything, it's just good to have her back. She's an icon – and the world of PlayStation wouldn't be the same without her. Soppy letters to LC aside, elsewhere we examine the latest shockers heading your way (p67), a thorough investigation into the potentially massive *Da Vinci Code* game (p62) and the first shots of *Rainbow Six: Vegas* on PS3 (p16). Elsewhere, you can prove your gaming supremacy by passing the *OPS2* Diploma (p41) and meet the smallest Cockneys ever (p74). Biggest achievement this month: writing all this without mentioning Lara's arse once. What?

TIM CLARK, editor



WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT



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Andy 'Startup' Hartup
Writer, *Rainbow Six: Vegas* (p16)
While the skipper was off disgracing himself in Vegas, our new boy was left to write about *Rainbow Six* on PS3, also set in sin city. "If it's anything like Tim describes," says Andy, "the girls will all be called Mercedes or Lexus."

Nathan Ditum
Writer, DVD reviews (p134)
We like: the fact he'll review anything we send him. Seriously, *anything*. We hate: that he's not so good at remembering to shut the fridge door when he comes to visit.

Paul Fitzpatrick
Writer, *The Da Vinci Code* feature (p62)
When not penning insightful PlayStation reportage for us, Fitz is hard at work on his debut book. Judging by his recent, more 'experimental' work, it won't be suitable for reading next to easily shocked ladies.

'Naughty' Niki Earp
Designer, Horror special (p67)
Ostensibly the calmest member of Team *OPS2*, Niki keeps everyone else on their toes with her occasional use of sudden, military strength swearing.

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IF YOU ONLY READ ONE THING, READ THIS!

067 Horror Special

UNSPEAKABLE TERROR IS COMING TO PS2. JOIN US ON A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW HORROR

the stash.tv

Exclusive, free access to the very latest game videos as we get them. Head to our readers-only website **www.thestash.tv** and enter the password to see the white hot footage.

This month: we've got the original *Resident Evil 4* concept trailer, *Rogue Trooper*, *Powerstone Collection*, *Monster Hunter Freedom* and more

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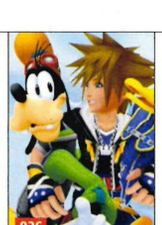

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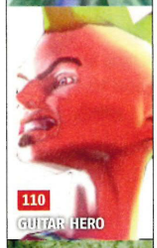

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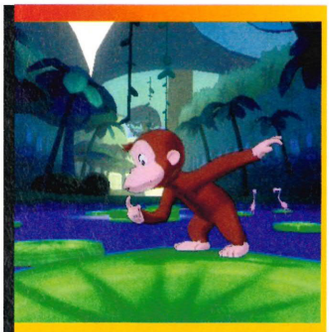
PLAY GAMES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST DEMOS!



This month's disc might just be our greatest ever. With 70 previous efforts that's strong praise, but consider the following: we've spent the last six months delivering exclusive news on the new *Tomb Raider* game, and now you have the chance to see (and feel) Lara in action. She's beautiful, and so is our massive demo. But that's just the beginning. We've also got two whole hours of Square-Enix's superb *Dragon Quest* role-player for you. If you're the athletic type, there's three top notch sports games to try. And urban painters with a love of hooded tops will go tag mental for our *Marc Ecko's Getting Up* taster. Like we said, it's a bit special.

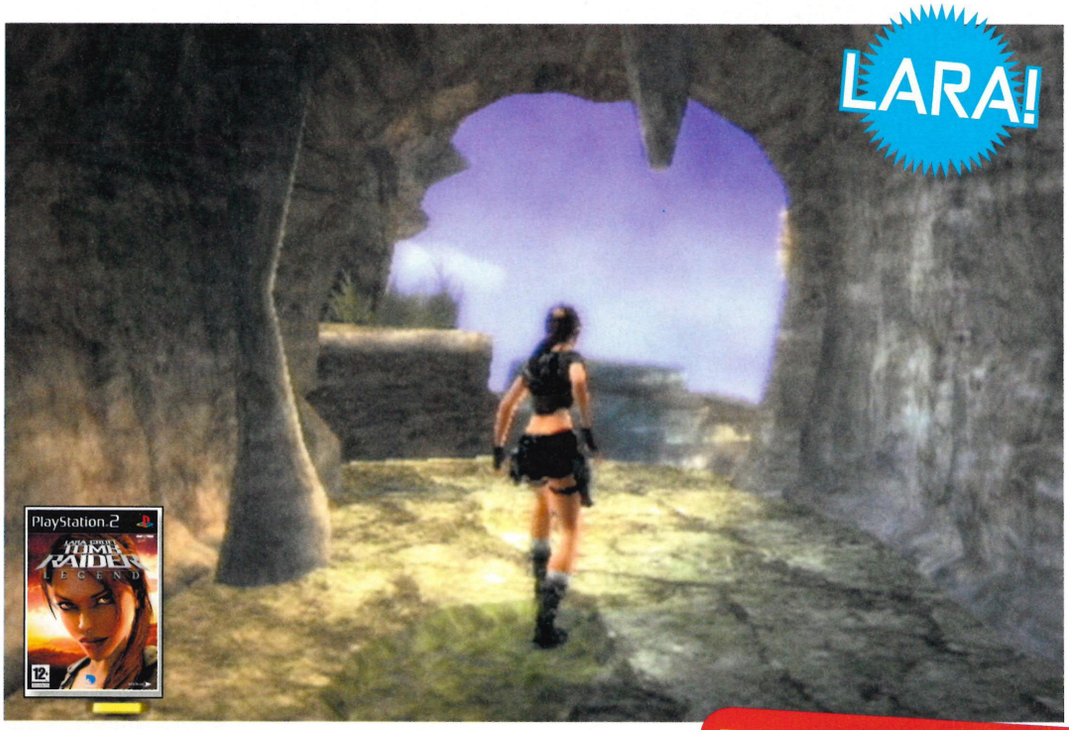
George

George Walter,
Disc editor

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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 console 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) to *Official PS2 Magazine*, DVD Returns, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9EF. If you have any further queries, email us at ps2disc@futurenet.co.uk



01 TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

What you get: A thrilling escapade set high on a Bolivian mountainside. Try out Lara's ever-expanding move set, then protect a tomb from some goons intent on looting it for its ancient artefacts. Once you've drilled them, rob the place yourself. Ah, it's good to have the old girl back.

02 RUGBY 06

What you get: A full friendly match between England and Australia. Control the home side and put Jonny Wilkinson's boot to the test, or take charge of the Aussies and go for broke while swigging from a can of Foster's.

DISC CHALLENGE

Win a kit bag full of EA Sports gold

CHALLENGE DETAILS

The Six Nations may be over, but it's not too late to jump on the oval ball bandwagon. Master this month's rugby demo and you could have a compendium of sports titles landing on your doorstep in the near future. All you need to do is score as many points as possible in one match, playing as England against Australia. Then send us a photo of your score and, if you've amassed more points than anyone else, you get the games. As well as *Rugby 06*, *Fight Night Round 3*, and *FIFA Street 2* – all featured as demos on this month's disc – you'll also receive *Madden NFL 06* and *NBA Live 06*. Not a bad collection at all, that.

Attach your MMS picture then text **CHALLENGEDISC (then a space) followed by** your name and where you live to **07921 889 345**

Only the entry that *OPS2* judges to have scored the most points playing as England on the *Rugby 06* demo will win the selected five games. Text messages will cost you 50p including VAT per text message received, plus your usual text message cost. Please source all necessary permissions. This service is available to UK customers of T-Mobile, Orange, 3, Virgin, 02 and Vodafone. Lines are open from 23 Mar to 19 Apr inclusive. We'll not advise non-winners of the result.*

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NOW!

And there's more...

THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE EXTRA DVD CONTENT

03 DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING

What you get: An hour of play in either Story mode or Battle mode. Wander around the town of Farebury or lead your brigade into action against a variety of enemies.

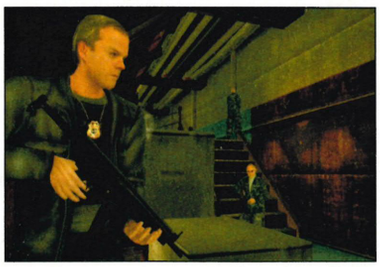
04 FIFA STREET 2

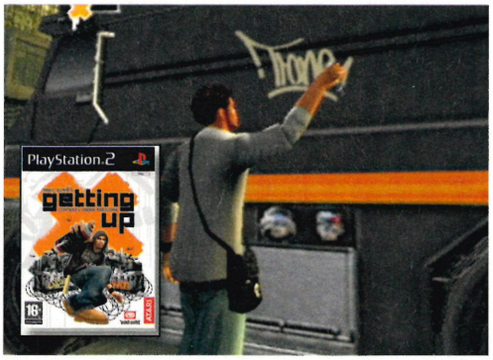
What you get: A thrilling three-minute match between England and Brazil, set in London. Gerrard, Rooney and Becks are on hand to carry you to victory. Just try not to get their knees grazed or you'll have Rafa and Sir Alex on your case.

Videos

24: The Game

If you (foolishly) missed our exclusive review in *OPS2#69* – where we awarded Jack Bauer's console debut a highly respectable 8/10 – then check out this extended clip to see why it's such an essential purchase. And think about subscribing so you never make the same error again. Page 125 will explain how you can make it up to yourself.





05 MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE

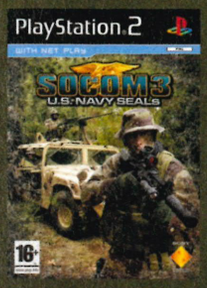
What you get: Three levels from this cracking graf game. Explore Trane's Hood, run amok at Grandma Celia's, and smash White Mike in The Poolyard.

06 FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

What you get: One bout between Bernard Hopkins and Roy Jones Jr, showcasing *Round 3*'s latest set of graphical improvements and stiffer-than-ever punches.

07 SUIKODEN TACTICS

What you get: Two different modes to try out. In 'Prologue', take a wander through the first level and learn how to fight and cast spells. Then try 'Battle' and wage war with pirates, bats and skeletons.



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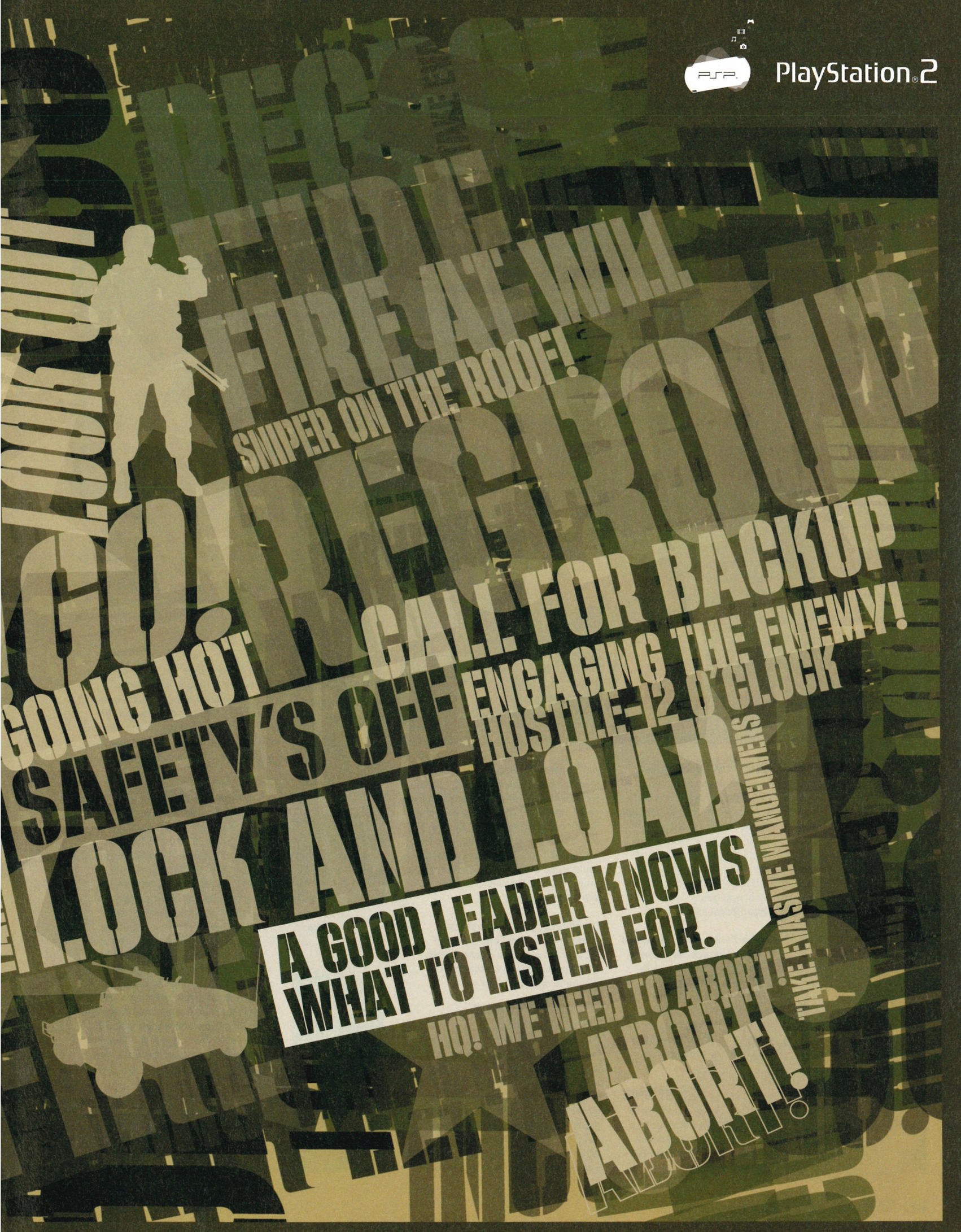
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FIRE AT WILL
GO! REGROUP
CALL FOR BACKUP
GOING HOT
ENGAGING THE ENEMY!
SAFETY'S OFF
HOSTILE-12 O'CLOCK
LOCK AND LOAD
A GOOD LEADER KNOWS WHAT TO LISTEN FOR.
TAKE EVASIVE MANOEUVERS
HQ! WE NEED TO ABORT!
ABORT!
ABORT!

postal

THIS MONTH: DRESSING UP, NAKED OLD PEOPLE, AND PORN (AGAIN)

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 receive a lovely copy of *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* courtesy of Gamestation.co.uk. The Star Letter also wins *We ♥ Katamari*, *Project Zero 3: The Tormented* and *Driver Parallel Lines*. Only main Postal letters receive games. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.

gamestation

star letter

MORE THAN LUCKY

Is it me or are games characters extremely lucky? Take the Prince Of Persia for example, there always seems to be a ledge in exactly the right place to jump from. Or what about Ratchet and Clank? There always happens to be a switch on the outside of a forcefield to switch it off. If I was an evil overlord then all my forcefields would be activated from the inside.
Simon Bailey, Hampshire

You're completely right, and you can add secret bases with air-conditioning seemingly designed just to allow spies to sneak around to that list. Oh, and self-destruct systems of any kind. "I wonder what that big red button does? Oh...

HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

I'm sending you a model of the PSP's rival. It's big, it's bulky and it's got two screens. You guessed it, it's the Nintendo DS. I've got a PSP and to me it scores 10/10 in all areas. I've played a DS and I think the whole touch-screen thing is a gimmick. The PlayStation Portable has nothing to worry about.
Leyton Payne, Reading

We can't help but think you've over-exaggerated the size slightly. But good skills with the sticky-back plastic and nice attention to detail with the Biro-sized stylus jammed in the back.

LOST SOUL

I find myself on the verge of a financial breakdown. What with PSP, PS2 and the raft of brilliant games available I can't earn enough money to keep my gaming passion alive. However, I think I've found a solution. After thinking long and hard I've decided I have only one option left: I am selling my soul. And as a loyal reader I have decided to give you first refusal. Think of the possibilities – I could make the tea or do the lunchtime burger dashes. The choice is yours.
Terry Smith, Suffolk

Funnily enough, our George met Lucifer in Mississippi and swapped his soul for some Resi 5 *screenshots. That's commitment. He says he's willing to offer £3.15 for yours*

IT'S BETTER TO HAVE LOVED AND LOST...

A couple of weeks back my dad bought me a copy of *GUN*. All I wanted to do was complete it and get 100%. My girlfriend kept calling and texting me, asking why I wasn't coming out. I made excuses because I didn't want to her to know I preferred my PS2 to her. Then, one day, I told her I was going out with a friend when I was really staying in to play *GUN*. But she got suspicious and rang him to ask if I was with him. He obviously said no and she got upset thinking I was going out with another girl. I tried to explain to her that I had only wanted to play a game but she just shook her head and broke up with me. So that's it; a two-and-a-half-year relationship gone. Still, at least now I can concentrate on completing *GUN*.
Ahmed Muen

Much as we feel for you, we're also keen to hear more tales of romantic woe. Dumped while playing Master League but kept going 'just to get to the transfer window'? Let us know about it. (Oh, and Ahmed – stop crying and send us your address, or it's no prize for you.)

THE PRICE IS WRONG

I'm in town. I have 80 quid in my pocket and I'm hoping to get a couple of games. I walk into a store and there's *Resi 4 Special Edition*, for 20 pounds. I'm shocked but I buy it. Then I look around and I see *Soul Calibur 3* for another 20 pounds. What is wrong with people? Why are these amazing gaming masterpieces not valued as they should be? It infuriates me to see brilliant stuff as sale items because people would rather buy shite like *Crazy Frog*. It's a travesty. And to top it off, I nipped into Argos and found *Burnout Revenge* for a tenner. A TENNER! What is the world coming to? Why don't the public know about these games? Before you know it, *Black* will be a fiver. Under-selling masterpieces must stop.
Izzy Kirby, Beckenham

Can you hear that knocking on the door, Izzy? That's all the other readers. You will note they're carrying pitchforks and burning torches. See, most folk are keen to pay 'less' rather than 'more'. Crazy, eh? Although, with our sensible hats on

CUT 'N' PASTE

THE EDITED HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME VERY STRANGE THOUGHTS

Rebecca Saker, Norwich
I've just finished *GUN* and I was like "What, no T-shirt saying 'I finished *GUN*' on the front?" It's so unfair.

Debera Davies, email
I've got an original idea for a game. The main character gets drunk in Essex and bangs some old tart. Boom! A son or daughter.

Ross MacKenzie, Cumbria
In *Shadow Of The Colossus* I decided to see how many arrows you can stick in a colossus. The answer is 27, after that they start disappearing.

Matthew Claydon, Yorkshire
After fishing my floating but wee-logged PSP out of the toilet, it still worked!

Joe Hadden, email
I sent a letter in but I didn't like it. I like this one.

Craig Watson, Aberdeenshire

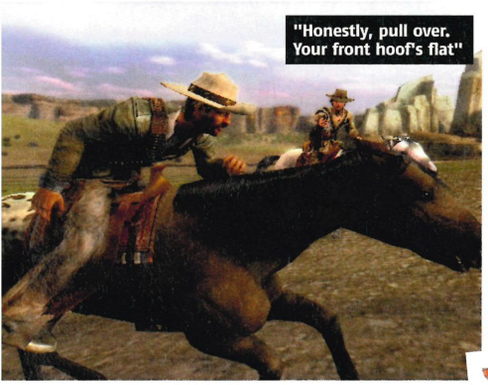
Name and address supplied
Being as I'm in prison, I seem to have a lot more time than your non-incarcerated person...

DISTRESSING DELIVERY

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

1. A picture of a very old, half-naked man. Words cannot describe how this made us feel.

2. Two anonymously posted stroke DVDs. English as well, so not even good ones.



– constant price-slashing will end with shrinking development budgets and even more reliance on no-risk sequels.

I'M NOT INDECISIVE MOST OF THE TIME

Could you point out which game is better? In past issues you gave both *Prince Of Persia: The Two Thrones* and *GUN* 9/10 scores. Because of this I'm really confused as to which one to get. You should put a section in the magazine which shows which games are superior to others. Could you tell me which was the best out of *Prince Of Persia* and *GUN*, or if you're in a good mood could you just give them to me?
Kevin Martain, Belfast

***Actually we do have a section that tells you what games are better than others. It's called the Reviews section. We've only been doing since – oooh – the dawn of time. Seems to have worked out okay so far. To answer your dilemma; get* Persia *if you like Princes. But if shooting horses is more your thing, go for* GUN.**

+20 LOVE

Nice work with the RPG feature last issue. As a confirmed, die-hard orc-lover it was nice to see a magazine finally paying some respect to the world of role-playing games. It amazes me that people get so excited about epic story-telling and strong characters in games like *Metal*

THE SHORT ANSWER

Q If you were a colossus would you shake the little boy or crush him?
Peter Ioannou, Canterbury
A Crush.

Q Any news on a *Lost* game yet?
James, email
A No.

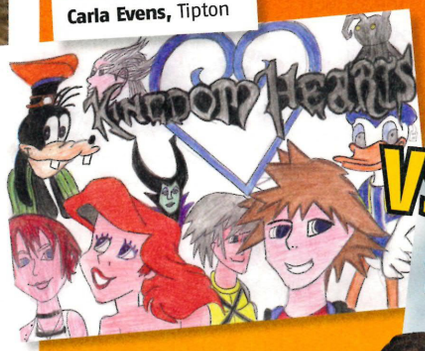
Q When does *Guitar Hero* come out?
Marc, text
A 7 April.

Q Do you fancy the new Lara, Keeley Hawes, then?
Martin, email
A Yes.

READER FACE OFF

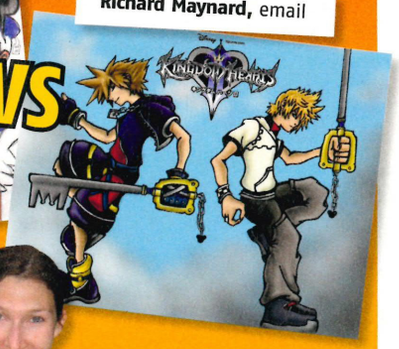
THINK OF IT LIKE A FIGHT BUT WITH INK SPILT INSTEAD OF BLOOD THIS MONTH: TWO PICTURES BASED ON THE UPCOMING *KINGDOM HEARTS II*. WE ASK OUR DEP ART ED NIKI TO DECIDE WHICH ONE IS BETTER...

Carla Evens, Tipton



VS

Richard Maynard, email



TECHNICALLY, THE COMPUTERISED PICTURE IS BETTER – BUT I PREFER THE LO-FI CHARM OF THE CRAYONS. SO CARLA WINS.

TXT THE EDITOR

Something to say or a picture we need to see right now? Fire away...

Who need stamps or paper when you can zap us your thoughts and pictures instantly over the airwaves from your phone? We could be reading what you wrote, or looking at your pictures, before you even regret sending them. So text Tim the ed with all your thoughts and pictures. We'll publish the best ones each month. This is not a tips line though, and we can't answer any messages directly.

TXT 87103

Be sure to text 'TXTTIM', then a space, then your message. Thanks

I'M P***ED OFF MY MUM WONT LET ME ON DA PS2 BECAUSE I SNEAKED MY PHONE TO SCHOOL. MICHAEL

PURSUIT FORCE 4 PSP SUCKS ASS CUS IT'S THE SAME THING EVERY TIME, ALL THAT U DO IS BLOW UP OTHER CARS. DEFO NOT WORTH 40 QUID MARK ROSS

I'VE JUST SMASHED MY JOYPAD ON MY HEAD BECAUSE I FELL OFF A LEDGE DURING THE BOSS BATTLE WITH THE MAIN BOSS IN *PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES* AND IT SENT ME BACK TO THE START. ANON

SORRY BUT THAT REVIEW OF *BULLETPROOF* IS A LOAD OF CRAP! THE CAMERA DESTROYS THE GAMEPLAY! PS I AM A BIG FAN OF 50 CENT. U SHOULD BE SACKED! STRONGLY.

DOESN'T THE *MGS4* SOLID SNAKE, COMPLETE WITH THAT 'TACHE, LOOK A LITTLE LIKE JOHN *'FAWLTY TOWERS'* CLEESE? ANON

By texting the editor you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd. If you do not want to receive this information please text the word stop to 87103. Texts will be charged at 25p plus standard network tariff rate. Please ask permission from whoever pays the bill.

score bores

Are you disrespecting us?

I think *Crazy Frog Racer* is a good game. It's funny because it sings the Crazy Frog ring tone at the start of a race. You gave it a bad review but I think it is a good game for children.
Reece (age 10), Manchester

I bought *S.L.A.I* (*Steel Lancer Arena International*) recently and was gutted by the rating it got in your mag. It looks great, and there's huge variety in the music and the mods. And there's a massive amount of customisation. Even the story is brilliant. I'd give this game at least 8/10.
Sam Morris, Gloucestershire

After your review of *Shadow Of The Colossus* I was very excited. After your demo I was crushingly disappointed. Terrible graphics, controls and the horse is awful to steer. I have lost faith in you.
Martin Fogg, Suffolk

I was saddened to see you give *Gaelic Games: Football* 2/10. It deserves at least 8/10. It might not be *Pro Evo* but it beats *FIFA 06* with its fast and furious gameplay.
Kevin Booth, email

Gear Solid and *Resident Evil 4*, because RPGs have been doing it for years. Top marks as well for remembering games like *Dark Chronicle*. I have to disagree with getting upset about the cursed Sage dying though. He had me running around like a right muppet looking for a cure but couldn't even hang on until I got back! Sod 'im.
Brian Farram, Brixton

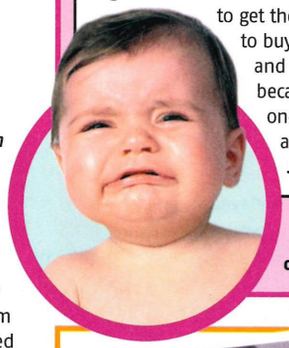
It was interesting to see how many of the team confessed to being closet goblin botherers. Even if most of them came forward with all the pride of an alcoholic at his first AA meeting.

HOT GAME FOR SALE

I am writing to reply to Ben Collard's letter in issue 69. I have a copy of *Fire Fighter FD18* in good condition that I'm willing to sell. I also have a game called *Fire Chief* on PC if he's interested. Also, *Urban Chaos: Riot Response* sounds like a kickass game – I can't wait for it to come out.
Richard Voaden, Edenbridge

Just one of many readers who wrote in offering to flog their copy of* Fire Fighter FD18. *Now then, can we interest any of you in a copy of* X-Men Legends II. *We keep leaving it out on the desk, but the cleaners won't touch it...

FAT CRYING BABY



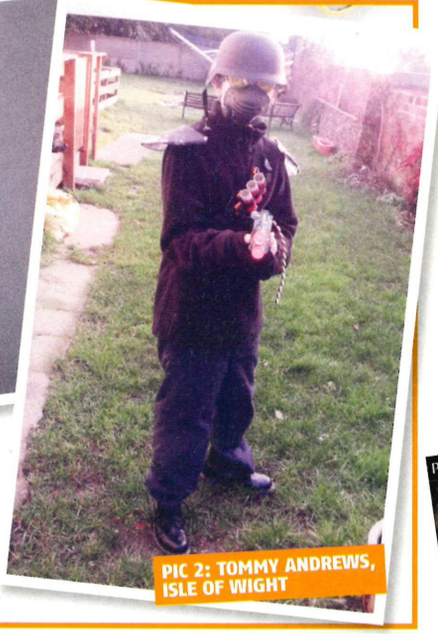
TWO FOR THE PRICE OF TWO

The amount of games being released together on PSP and PS2 is increasing. For example: the upcoming *Tomb Raider Legend* and *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast*. The problem is that to get the most out of the games you'll need to buy both formats. This is unnecessary and will put people off buying them because they won't be able to complete one game with out shelling out another £40 for the other.
Jonny Browning, email

Hey readers, are you worried about missing out on bonus costumes or unlockable concept art? Nope, us neither.

GOT A GRIEVANCE BUT SECRETLY KNOW THAT NOBODY'S TO BLAME BUT YOU? FEEL LIKE WHINING ABOUT IT ANYWAY? BE CAREFUL, YOU COULD END UP IN OUR PRAM OF SHAME.

PIC 1: LAURA, BUCKS.



PIC 2: TOMMY ANDREWS, ISLE OF WIGHT

COSTUME CORNER

Two readers sent us pictures of themselves dressed up as games characters this month. Can you guess which ones? (answers below)

GUITAR ANTI-HERO

I went into town the other day to buy my copy of *OPS2* and disaster: I only had £5.98. Luckily I had a solution. There was an Oasis-a-like busker singing songs and playing a guitar – so I stole a penny from him.

I bent down, as if putting money in his hat but as I threw one pence in I picked two up, securing the additional funds to purchase your magazine. You might think I'm the lowest of the low but I'd do anything to read your magazine and play all the great games in the DVD.
Kevin Queen, Scotland

Obviously we can't condone thievery of any sort, but nor can we ignore your total commitment to 'Team* OPS2*'. So, a few years from now, when the judge asks if you'd like to call any character witnesses – we'll be there for you, pal.

SECOND LEFT, FOLLOW THE ZOMBIE

Thank you for the excellent *Resident Evil 4* guide that came with issue 66. Not only did it help me complete the brilliant game but it also told me where all the items were. And you even had the kindness to include walkthroughs for all the mini-games. Please keep the guide books coming – your hard work is really appreciated.
Darren Hall, Essex

Cheers! Nice to know those late nights and tears were all worth it. And the blood too – let's not forget the blood. As we speak, several writers are hard at work on new guides for future issues in our special research lab. Or as they call it: 'The Dark Place'. ■

GAMES FOR TAT!

We want stuff, you want games. The first person to send us these oddities gets the related gamery. Simple as that

WE WANT...
A 'Don't Mess With Texas' T-shirt

YOU GET...
A copy of *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction*

WE WANT...
Any Corrosion Of Conformity memorabilia

YOU GET...
A copy of *Batman Begins* and *Def Jam Fight For New York*

Mark the package 'Games For Tat' and send to the usual address (include *your* address). The first one we receive gets the swag, any others will be returned.

NAME and SHAME

This Month's Postal Pest

Name: Alex Longman
Offence: Forgetting to buy January's issue of the mag and expecting us to send him one so there wasn't a hole in his collection. Three words Alex: 'No' and 'Back issues'.

COSTUME CORNER ANSWERS: Pic 1: Lady from *Devil May Cry 3*: *Dante's Awakening*; Pic 2: A Helghast soldier from *Killzone*

i play. i win. i gloat. i kick back. i catch a movie. i hear some tunes. all thanks to one little card.

Turn your PSP™ (PlayStation® Portable) handheld entertainment device into a fully loaded multimedia machine. How? With a SanDisk® gaming memory card. It gives you the power to play music, view pictures, watch movies and of course save countless game data, all with one little card. Also available for PC gamers — the new Cruzer Crossfire™ USB Flash Drive. It lets you take your game demos, trailers, game saves and casual games with you wherever you go. The Cruzer Crossfire carries music and photos for Xbox 360™ users.

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SPY CONTRIBUTORS | TIM CLARK, ANDY HARTUP, LEON HURLEY, GEORGE WALTER, BEN WILSON

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK EXCLUSIVE! SCREENS

SHOW ME THE MONEY

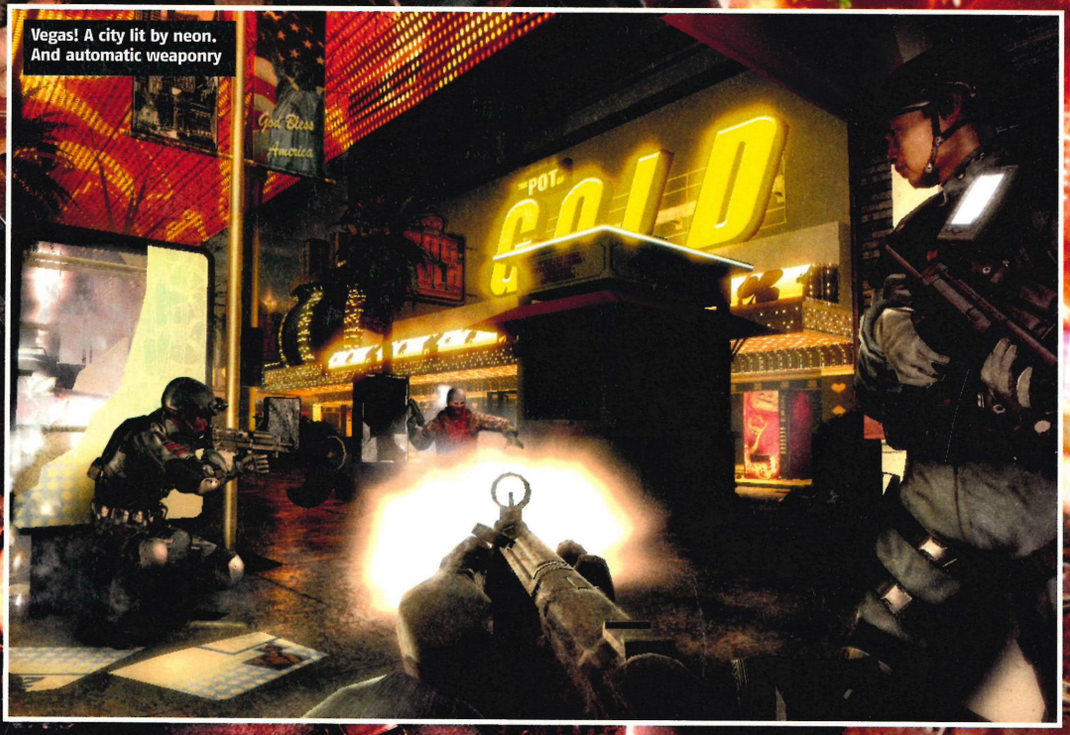
SIN CITY UNDER SIEGE

Rainbow Six gambles on massive PS3 debut

Vegas, baby! Home to showgirls called Mercedes, fat Texans blowing the mortgage on roulette and elite special forces teams. That's right, the *Rainbow Six* boys are heading for Nevada's Sin City to shoot terrorists and Craps. Not necessarily in that order.

Rainbow Six: Vegas is being developed for both PS2 and PS3, but the focus is very much on the next-gen version. The team behind the last game, the disappointing *Lockdown*, has been discharged and a team of new recruits brought in. Consequently, the interface and controls have been given a complete overhaul for *Vegas*.

The game takes place over a tense 12-hour period, with the Rainbow team ordered to stop a major terrorist threat from devastating the US of A. As you can see from these first shots, it looks astonishing – with every effect in the fancy graphics book on display. It's due out towards the end of the year, although of course that will also be dependent on when PS3 arrives. Our dream: leading the team on 'breach and clear' assault at Celine Dion's show. ■ AH



Vegas! A city lit by neon. And automatic weaponry

GO, GO, GO!

OPEN!

FRAG!

CLEAR!

spy

PS2 News & More

Special operatives don't need restaurant bookings

WHAT'S NEW

DOUBLE IMPACT

Rainbow Six Vegas will be blasting onto both PS2 and PS3 later this year

SIN CITY

It's set entirely in Las Vegas, and the Rainbow team will be kicking ass at famous locations like the Stratosphere Tower and Fremont Street

TOTAL CONTROL

The orders system has been totally revamped, and now you can choose specific targets for each of the team to 'neutralise'

SPANKING NEW TECH

New anti-terrorist gadgets, like the Snake Cam that lets you see into the next area before you storm it

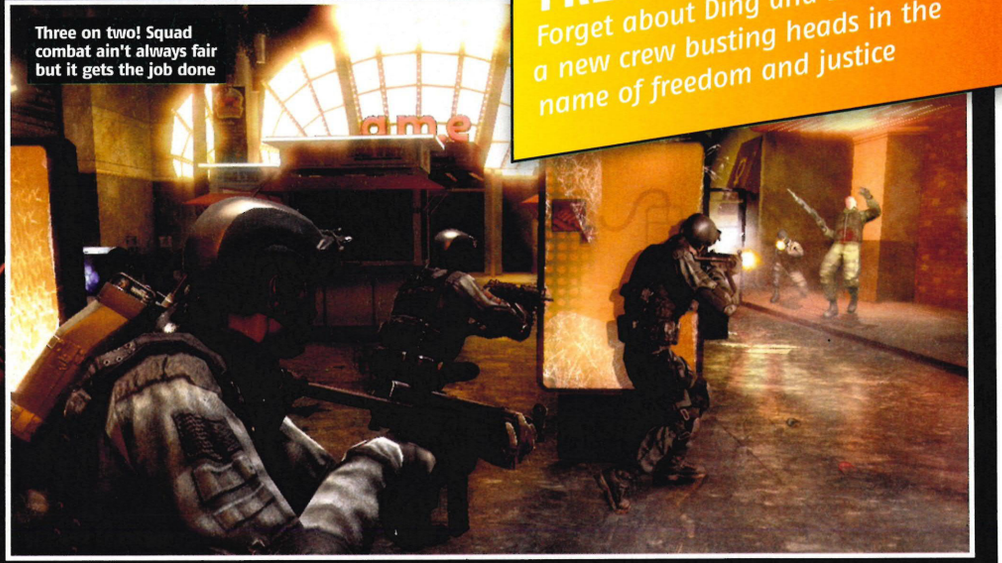
FRESH BLOOD

Forget about Ding and Dieter, there's a new crew busting heads in the name of freedom and justice

LISTEN UP, MEN

Ubisoft producer Alexandre Parizeau breaks radio silence to explain a typical scenario in *Rainbow Six Vegas*

"The mission starts in the chopper as you fly over Las Vegas. Before reaching your insertion point, your intelligence officer shows you surveillance footage through a Picture in Picture (PiP) display. You fast-rope onto a casino rooftop, and your Rainbow squad rappel down a couple of storeys, flipping upside-down to look inside the room without being seen. The observation phase is where you judge the threat and the stakes; you can't go in blind because you might get the hostage killed. Looking through the window, you see a hostage in the corner of the room and an alternate entry point for your teammates. You can now plan the assault and send your teammates to that door in order to attack from two sides. You can also indicate which terrorists you want your teammates to attack. Once they're at the door, you shoot the first terrorist, triggering the assault phase. This is where your good observation and planning pay off."



Three on two! Squad combat ain't always fair but it gets the job done

SNAPPED!

The future of PlayStation presented in pictures

Superman Returns is due out this summer, and will give you a free-roaming Metropolis to explore. Here, the Man of Steel is taking on Metallo

Shaun White the Olympic half-pipe snowboard champ is set to star in his own game. It's due out next year

2006 FIFA World Cup Germany is the inevitable EA tie-in to England's inglorious quarter finals exit. It'll be dominating shelves towards the end of April

spy

Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest will let you play as Jack Sparrow on PSP this July

Sensible Soccer the remake of the classic retro series is due to invade the PS2 pitch this summer

Over The Hedge the game will coincide with the release of the animated film later this year

Marc Ecko's Getting Up has been banned from sale in Australia because they reckon it promotes graffiti.

Medal Of Honor: Airborne is looking sexier than a lonely French peasant girl. Check out the latest shots to parachute in

INFO NUDGE

RETURN OF THE KONG?

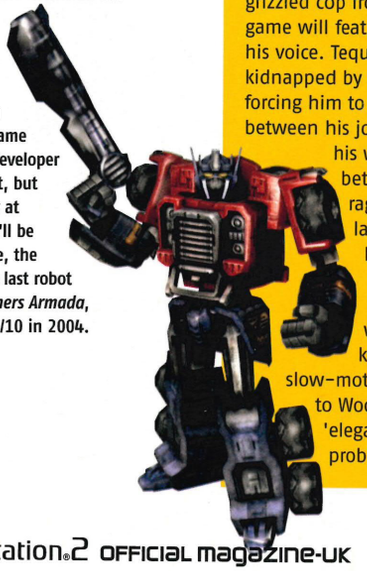
Speaking in an interview with Yahoo's Hollywood Byte, director Peter Jackson revealed he's been in talks with Michel Ancel (the creative mind behind the *King Kong* games) about new projects but concludes, "There is nothing to share at this point in time." However, Jackson has also been enthusiasticly bigging-up next-gen gaming, so the chances of a PS3 project further down the line seem strong.

KILLER INSECTS!

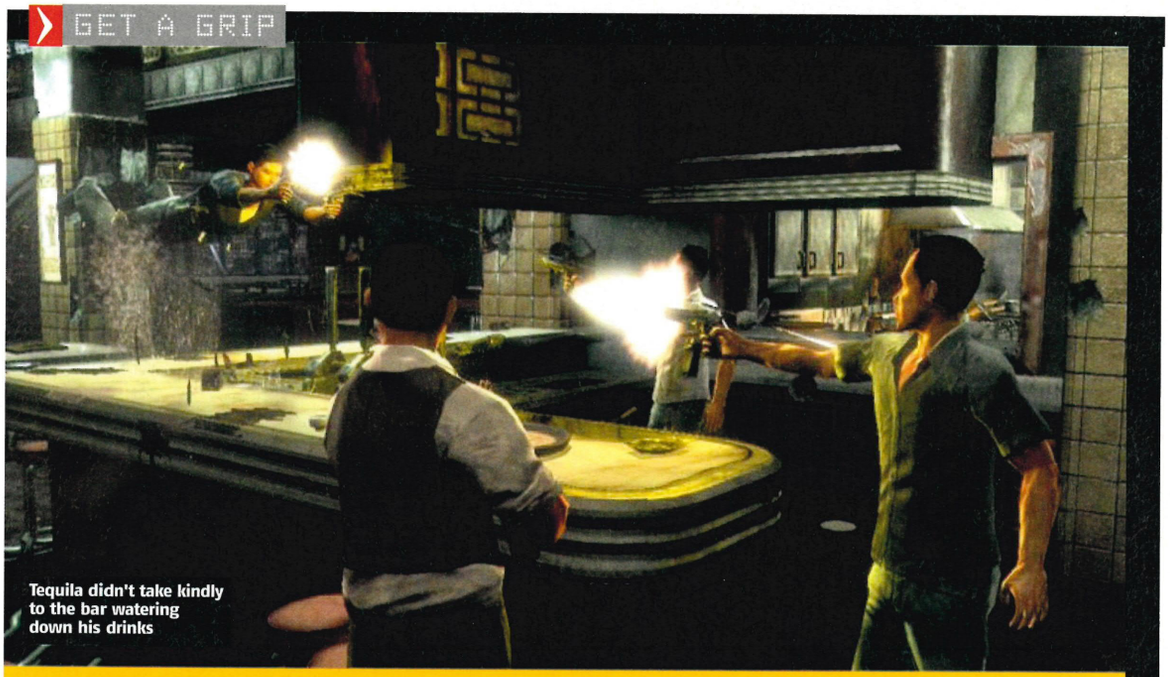
Like plastic toys, Happy Meals and innocent tears, videogames are now one of the expected spin-offs from all animated movies. *The Ant Bully* is Warner Bros' latest. Out this summer the movie tells the story of a small boy called Lucas Nickle who is shrunk down to insect size after bothering a colony of ants with his water pistol. The game will follow a similar path, only with platforms and lots of ant's-eye perspective. It's all a bit *Antz*, leading us to believe ants must be really easy to render in 3D.

TRANSFORMING GAMES

Next year will see the release of a live-action *Transformers* film from Steven Spielberg's Dreamwork's Pictures studio, and Activision has been granted the rights to produce a game based on it. Set to be released in July 2007, the game doesn't have a developer assigned to it yet, but it seems unlikely at this stage that it'll be Melbourne House, the team behind the last robot outing *Transformers Armada*, which received 8/10 in 2004.



GET A GRIP



Tequila didn't take kindly to the bar watering down his drinks

A SHOT OF TEQUILA

John Woo swaps camera for console in **Stranglehold**

So it's finally happened. After years of game developers ruthlessly pilfering from John Woo's films the primo Hong Kong director has decided to lend his expertise to a PS3 game with *Stranglehold*, planned for release at the launch of the console in late 2006/early 2007. According to Woo he'd always wanted to do a sequel to police shooter *Hard Boiled* and this gives him the perfect opportunity.

Stranglehold sees Chow Yun-Fat (*Crouching Tiger*, *Bulletproof Monk*) reprise his role as Inspector Tequila (the grizzled cop from *Hard Boiled*) and the game will feature both his likeness and his voice. Tequila's wife has been kidnapped by a Russian crime syndicate, forcing him to make tough choices between his job and his lady. Adding to his worries, a bloody battle between two rival gangs is raging on the increasingly lawless streets of Hong Kong and Chicago.

As well as Woo's dual-fisted pistol whipping, *Stranglehold*'s key hook is Tequila Time, a slow-motion dive which, according to Woo, gives the action a more 'elegant' feel. The obvious problem being that this effect has already been done to death in games – *Max Payne* in particular – having been nicked from Woo's films in the first place.

Hey Midway, why not just slap an 18 rating on the box right now

PS3 power is being showcased with fully destructible levels, including a natural history museum full of dinosaur skeletons. The game's maker has even trademarked the term 'Massive D' to describe the devastation on show. Think *Black* in third-person. And like *Black*, *Stranglehold* won't be a lengthy epic. Citing *Woo's* film background, the developer (whose previous credits include the excellent *Psi-Ops*) is aiming to deliver a clipped but brutal next-gen actioner. Hardboiled indeed. ■ **AH**

STRANGLEHOLD'S CLICHÉ CHECK-LIST

Midway's latest's more 'familiar' features

- ✓ Bullet time
- ✓ Holding two guns at once
- ✓ Fully (almost) destructible environments
- ✓ A psychotic (yet ultimately working on the side of justice) hero, with a troubled past
- ✓ Rival Gangs (cannon fodder) and Russian bad guys (the real criminals here)

COMMAND A WIDE RANGE OF SQUADS
US Light Infantry, US Special Forces,
Multi-National Coalition Forces

UTILISE REAL-WORLD COMBAT TACTICS
Outthink, Outmaneuvre, Outgun Enemies Through
Over 12 Levels of Intense Combat

8 UNIQUE MULTIPLAYER LEVELS/MODES
Co-op and Coalition Vs. Opposition Forces

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15 POWERED BY gamespy The way it's nVIDIA. meant to be played SOUNDS BEST ON Sound BLASTER X-Fi TECHNOLOGY ONLINE BROADBAND ONLY XBOX LIVE PANDEMIC THQ www.thq.com

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BOLL'S OUT

UWE TALKING BOLLS

Kojima hits out at **Metal Gear Solid movie** rumours

Don't do it. Step away from the ledge. Everything is going to be alright. It turns out rumours suggesting that Teutonic game-to-film butcher Uwe Boll is directing a movie of *Metal Gear Solid* are completely false. Boll's other confirmed future 'projects' are Ubisoft's *Far Cry* and Eidos's lesbo-horror *Fear Effect*. Last month Uwe Boll rolled up to the premiere of his latest filmic game re-interpretation *BloodRayne*, and told the press, "Now people are coming to me with *Metal Gear Solid*. They wrote a script, and Konami basically paid these people to write it. And I hope that *Metal Gear Solid* will be working." As well as wincing at Boll's terrible grasp of the English language, loyal fans feared that *MGS* would join *Far Cry* and *Fear Effect* on Boll's silver screen gaming hit list.

The rumours were quickly quashed when Hideo Kojima went on record (his gloomy blog) to say that the story wasn't true. Kojima fumed, "Absolutely not! I don't know why Uwe Boll is even talking about this thing. We've never talked to him. It's impossible that we'd ever do a movie with him." Hear that Uwe – *impossible*. Kojima previously told *OPS2* that he thinks *X-Men* star Hugh Jackman would make the perfect Snake. We'll have more on the *Metal Gear* movie soon. Fingers crossed for Evangeline Lilly as Meryl. ■ **AH**

MGS3, with its epic cut-scenes, was virtually a movie in its own right

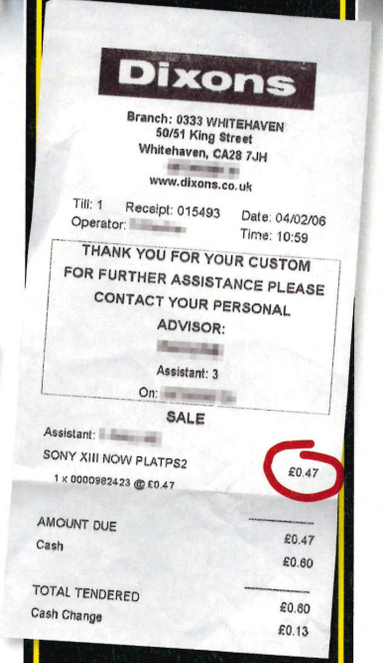
HAWK JNR?

Tony Hawk is back with new game *Downhill Jam*, which will be aimed at younger skate fans. More spin-off than sequel, it'll be different in style from other Hawk outings, meaning that another *American Wasteland* title is probably in the offing too. ■

2X REX FEATURES

KERR-CHING

Readers hit gaming gold...



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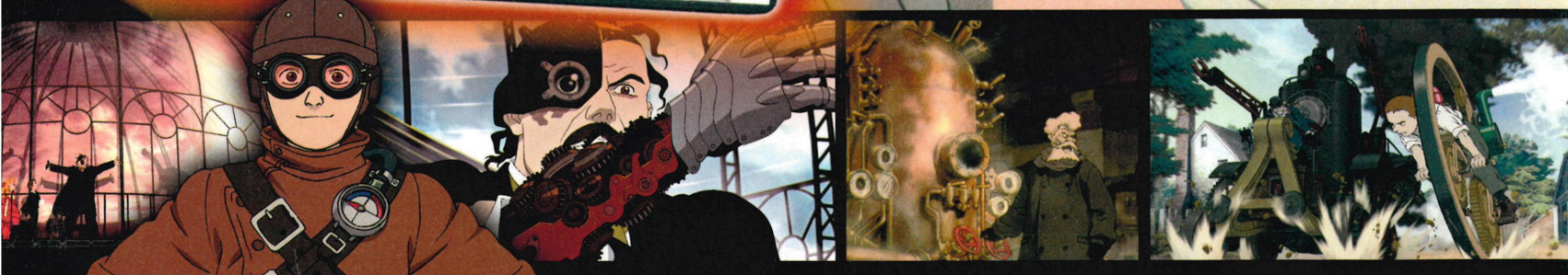
TOTAL TENDERED £0.60
Cash Change £0.13

THIS MONTH: Ryan McCarthy from Egremont buys a brand new copy of Ubisoft's first-person cel-shaded shooter *XIII* and gets change from 50p.

Found a really cheap game? Let us know. Send the receipt to **Kerr-ching, *OPS2*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF *AKIRA*

STEAMBOY



Steamboy features an inventor prodigy named Ray Steam who receives a mysterious metal ball containing a new form of energy capable of powering an entire nation. He must use it to fight evil, redeem his family, and save London from destruction. www.steamboy-dvd.co.uk

OUT 27TH MARCH

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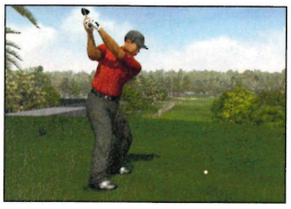
INFO NUDGE



FORE! NO, SIX ACTUALLY

Start polishing your balls gentlemen, there's more *Tiger* on the way. The king of the fairway has agreed to endorse *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*, EA's best-selling sports series, for another six years. The cash from which should keep him in smart trousers for the foreseeable future. Expect that tricky bunker on the 17th at Augusta to be rendered in grain-of-sand detail when the inevitable PS3 version eventually rolls around.

PSP GOES LA LA

Midway is stepping up its PSP support with *LA Rush*. The sun-kissed *Need For Speed* wannabe will arrive on Sony's portable console in time for Santa's most hated day of the year. The PSP version will come replete with 50 vehicles, an exclusive stunt mode, 30 new cruise missions, and WiFi compatibility up the wazoo.

IT'S A DOG WITH FLEAS

Soon the Japanese will develop a game that eradicates any need to have a real life. We've had shopping adventures, date sims, and even bus-driving titles – but the current craze is a renewed obsession with digital pets. *The Dog: Happy Life* is a PSP take on popular Nintendo DS title *Nintendogs*, which sees you looking after your own virtual hound, bathing it, and making sure the kids don't see you drive Scraps for that fateful last visit to the vets. More tragically, there's no word on a UK release date yet.

After the kicking, the victory dance

Combat looks athletic as ever

MARTIAL ARTS GOES MINI

The legendary Tekken smacks up PSP

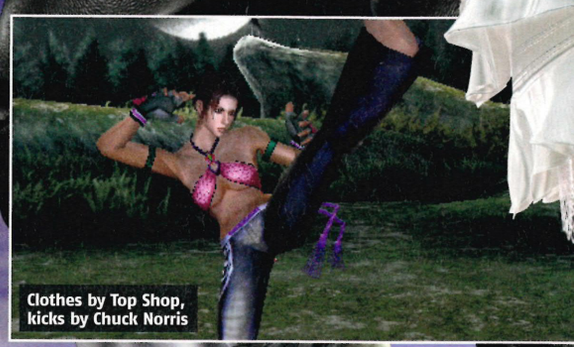
Q: I'm a recovering amnesiac, what's *Tekken*?
A: *Tekken* is the official bodyguard of PlayStation. It's been with Sony's machines for ten years now, and whenever gamers fancy a fight, it steps up cracking its digi-knuckles. The PSP needed some muscling up, so enter *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* looking all angry and stuff.

Q: What's so special about it?
A: Pulling off massive combos and pitting your cat-on-steroids reflexes against your opponent in a bid to be crowned King of the legendary Iron Fist tournament. It's not so much about getting into a fluid rhythm as it is chipping away at your opponent with a cheeky punch/kick combo, followed by a bone-crunching throw. Its unique approach to fighting has won the series millions of loyal, scrap-happy fans over the years.

Q: Is it another port?
A: Not really. Although the game is based on the most recent arcade version, there are plenty of PSP exclusive features planned. You'll get 30 fighters, including two new brawlers Dragunov and Lili, along with returning favourite Armor King. All of the characters are customisable and come loaded with punishing moves and ridiculously lengthy combo-throws, which should take a little longer to master than a quick journey into town on the bus. Namco is working on fresh cut-scenes and story elements for the handheld, so *Dark Resurrection* is going to be an essential purchase for *Tekken* lovers.

Q: Will I be able to fight my mates?
A: Wouldn't be *Tekken* otherwise. Quick-play WiFi matches are definitely included, and we wouldn't be surprised to also see some sort of tournament option in the finished game. However, there aren't any plans to take the combat global, so you'll have to find a PSP-owning friend to get your kicks.

Q: So when is the game out?
A: *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* will be eyeing up your lady and spilling your pint this summer. Also watch out for more info on *Tekken* for PS3 next month.



Clothes by Top Shop, kicks by Chuck Norris

This chick is Lili, one of the new characters

Tekken should be a perfect fit on PSP

Fights like a girl, has bedroom to match

STAR POWER-UP

Hollywood talent falls for **Kingdom Hearts II**

Lucky Stateside gamers are already getting to grips with Square-Enix's blockbuster *Kingdom Hearts II*, while we have to sit, arms folded, scowl on face, waiting for a UK release date. In the meantime, you may want to stare directly at the supernova of Hollywood stars who've lent their vocal talents to the Disney RPG.

"Guys, I'm pretty sure this *isn't* Keira"

WHO	YOU'VE SEEN THEM IN...	PLAYS...
Haley Joel Osment	*The Sixth Sense* and *Artificial Intelligence: A.I.*	Spiky haired main character, Sora
Christopher Lee	*The Lord Of The Rings* and *Revenge Of The Sith*	The masked enigma, Diz
Zach Braff	*Garden State* and *Scrubs*	Disney's own Chicken Little
Mena Suvari	*American Beauty* and *American Pie*	*Final Fantasy VII*'s eye-candy, Aerith
James Woods	*Casino* and *GTA: San Andreas*	The main villain, Hades
Brittany Snow	*The Pacifier* and *Nip Tuck*	Young witch, Namine
Rachael Leigh Cook	*She's All That* and *Get Carter*	Kung fu-fighting chick, Tifa
Gwendoline Yeo	*Desperate Housewives* and *24*	Rough and ready *FFX-2* lass, Paine
Ming-Na	*ER* and *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*	Lovable Disney heroine, Mulan
Steve Burton	*Taken* and *The Last Castle*	Sword-wielding blondie, Cloud Strife

REX FEATURES X2

A NEW DAWN A NEW

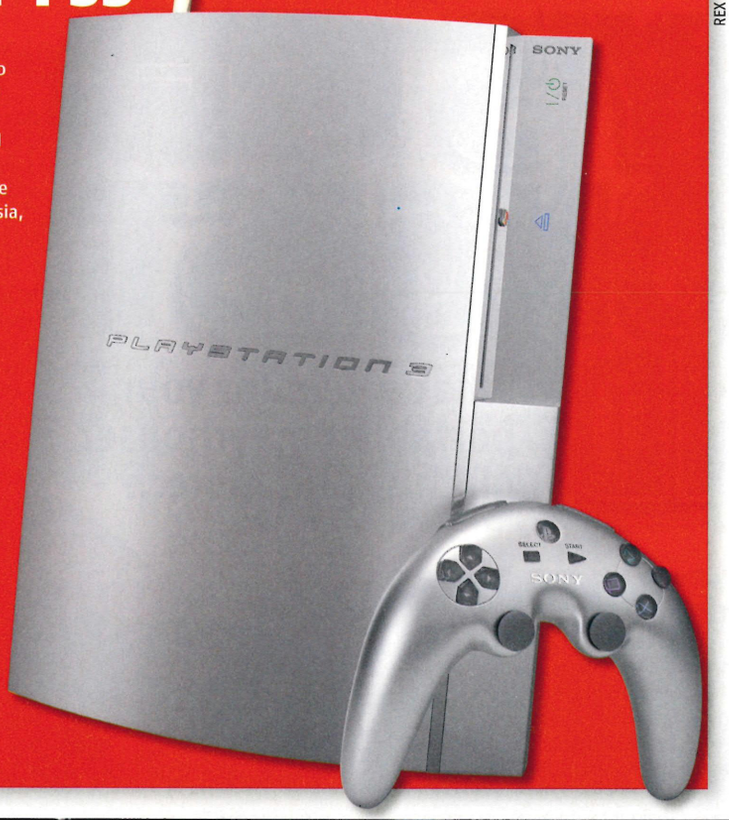
CAPCOM
capcom-europe.com
PlayStation.2
A Blood Red Dawn Arises

PIRATE-PROOF PS3

Sony locks out the HaXX0rs

Spring is here, but the PS3 is not, so when will the next-gen PlayStation finally be sitting under our tellies? That's the question everyone hoped Sony would clear up at this year's Taipei Game Show in Taiwan. Promising a vague 2006 release window, MD of Sony Computer Entertainment Asia, Tetsuhiko Yasuda, went on to explain why it's taking so long to tame the Cell-centred beast.

"Our number one competition is not other companies but counterfeiters. We want to work with governments to stop this," explained Yasuda. The PlayStation has always had issues with piracy, from both the Internet and the shady characters who hawk their copyright-infringing tat at car-boot sales and back-of-the-van market stalls. Now it looks like Sony is taking a 'better safe than sorry' attitude to the problem by ensuring their next baby is as tough as possible for hackers to crack. If rumours are to be believed, the complicated architecture of the console, combined with troubles arising from implementing the 'so new, its practically sci-fi' Blu-ray drive are the main reasons its taking Sony longer than anticipated to beat the pirates. All eyes now turn towards May's E3 show in LA for a definitive, official announcement on when you can expect to be firing up your shiny new PS3 for the first time. ■ **AH**



REX FEATURES

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HERO A NEW ENEMY

ONIMUSHA DAWN OF DREAMS™

POCKET PROSPECTS

SONY'S STRONGEST HAND

What's next for your portable powerhouse? All this, and more...

CHAT UP GIRLS!

In case you haven't heard, Talkman is on its way to the UK. This translation utility helps you ask pressing questions like "How long will your husband be at work?" in most major world languages. *Tres bien.*

Massive memory

Life's too short to wait for games to load, so it's no surprise that rumours of a PSP memory upgrade are spreading like bird-flu paranoia. The most likely idea is an upgraded version of the hardware, in the same way that Apple updates its iPod range. Think PSP 2.0, with 4-8GB of built-in flash memory, enabling quicker load times and enough space for tons of music, movies, downloadable game content and your tedious holiday snaps.

Where am I?

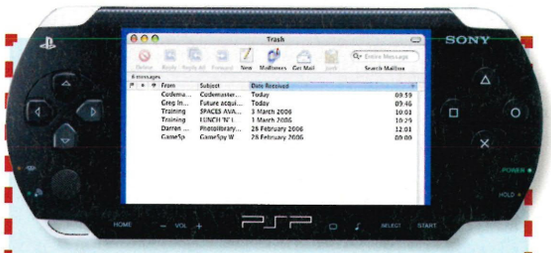
When you're lost and alone in a foreign city, the last thing you should do is whip out the old PSP and parade it around like prime mugger steak. Unless, that is, your PSP has the latest GPS device clinging on to its sleek little shell. News on the gizmo, which was unveiled last year, has been scarce, but given the growing popularity of sat nav we're willing to bet that this handy navigation tool hasn't been forgotten over at Sony HQ.

READ A BOOK!

One programmer in Japan has developed software that enables you to read books on PSP. The e-book reader is known as Jpegbook and is available (in Japanese only for now) to transfer text via Windows and Mac OS.

TV to go

The mobile TV revolution never really took off, mainly because squinting at Richard and Judy on the bus gave most people a headache. However, thanks to the PSP's wondrous widescreen and a gadget called Location Free TV, that's all going to change. Unveiled at January's Consumer Electronics Show, Location Free TV streams live shows from broadband to your PSP, and has been confirmed for UK release. Expect to moan about the licence fee on the move this summer.



Mail master

There have been rumblings about the PSP's web-browsing functionality and an email program for some time, but now word is there's a colossal update on the way that will deliver all this geek-pleasing goodness. If the whispers are to be believed, the Firmware update will also bring word processing and calculator functions with it too, making the handheld an ideal accessory for the nerd on the move.

ALLSTAR

EXTENDED PLAY

This year's hottest gaming takeaways...

Tekken: Dark Resurrection
Summer 2006

Gangs Of London
TBC 2006

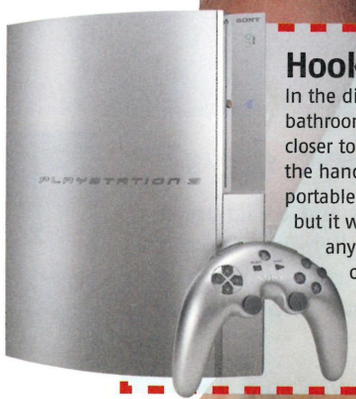
Killzone: Liberation
TBC 2006

Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror
Summer 2006

Tomb Raider: Legend
April 2006

Metal Gear Ac!d 2
April 2006

Gran Turismo 4 Mobile
TBC 2006



Hook me up

In the distant future the PSP may cook our dinners, clean the bathroom and walk the girlfriend around shoe shops. However, closer to the present, it seems Sony has some nifty plans for how the handheld will interact with the PS3. Not only will the portable device act as a remote control for the next-gen console, but it will also be able to wirelessly communicate with it from anywhere in the world. This means file sharing across continents, it means TV and movies streamed direct to your PSP, and it means music zapped from the PS3 Hard drive, across the ether and direct to your ears. Some kind of witchcraft, surely?

START A BUSINESS!

Bean-counters and Alan Sugar wannabes rejoice! Manage-a-faceless-corporation-for-fun sim, *Business Experience Series: The Path To Starting A Company* is all set for release in Japan. Shame it's not in English. [Sigh] Back to *Liberty City Stories* then...

PlayStation 2

SOME PETS WILL DO ANYTHING FOR ATTENTION

DRAGON QUEST™

The Journey of the Cursed King

Visit
www.dragonquest.eu.com

Why is it that you barely notice your dog these days?

It's the incredible world of DRAGON QUEST, with its lively towns, open spaces and treacherous dungeons. As monsters follow your every step, learn incredible spells and skills to help you in your mission to lift an evil curse from the Kingdom of Trodain. Marvel at the unique character design from the legendary Akira Toriyama (creator of Dragon Ball®) and immerse yourself into the story where a wealth of rewards and side quests await!

A huge new world is yours to explore - once you enter nothing else matters, not even your dog.

12+ www.pegi.info

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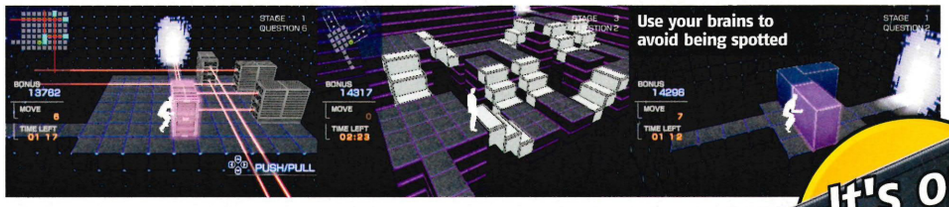
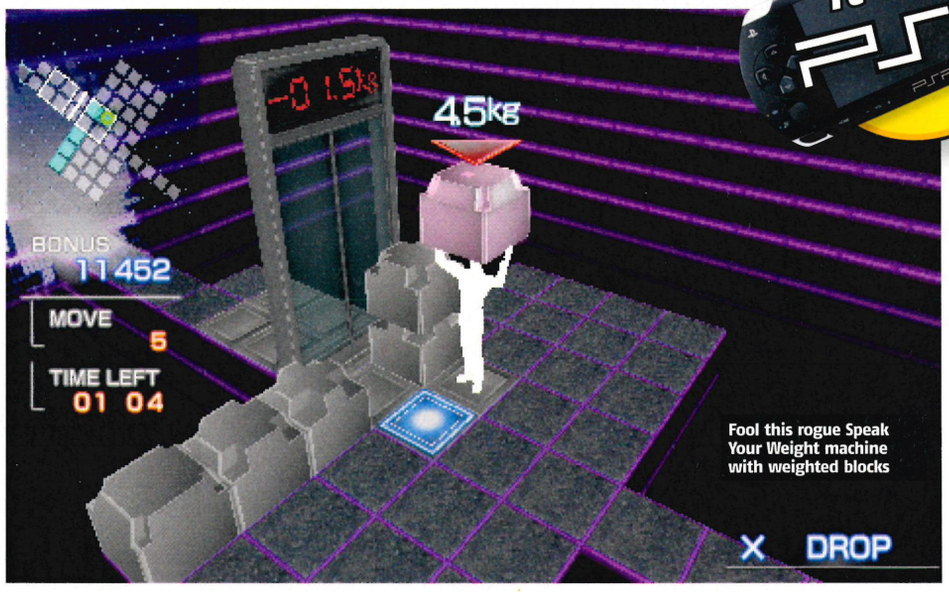
could be a classic



THE GAME THAT TELLS THE WORLD HOW STUPID YOU ARE

PQ: PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Publisher: D3 Publisher
Developer: Now Production
Release: Out now (Japan/US), May (UK)



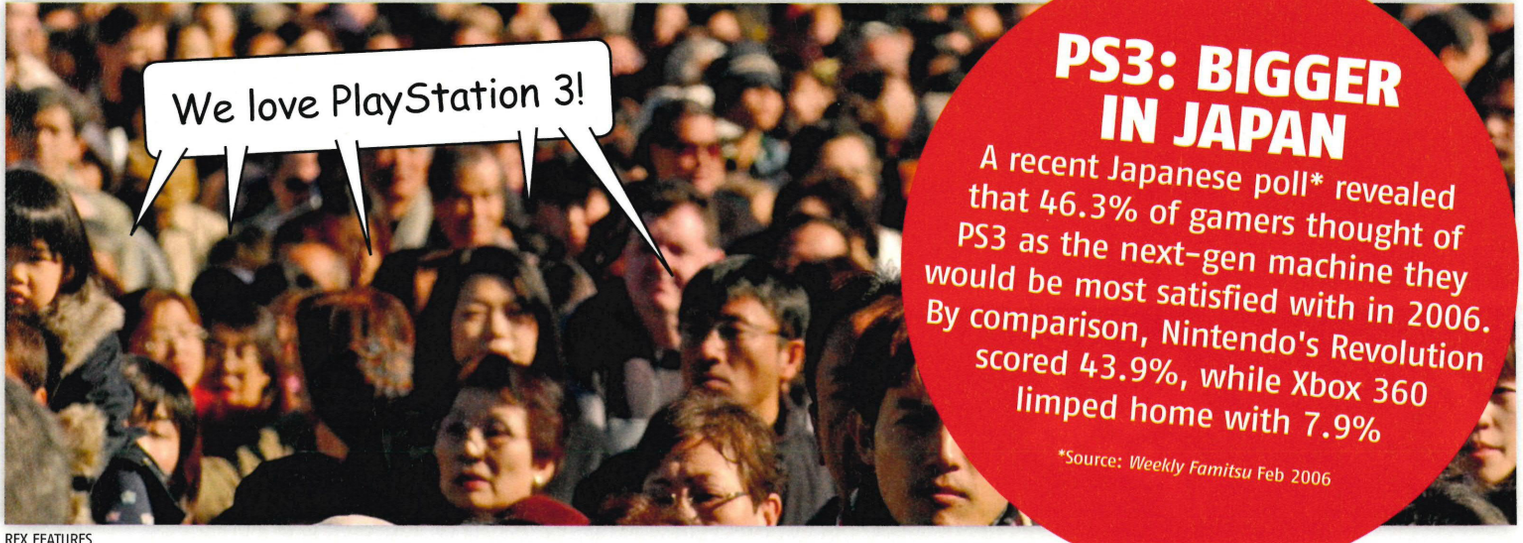
WHAT WE KNOW

"Hey, babe. Just clocked *Liberty City Stories* on the PSP, and you're invited to the celebration party in my pants." What's the chances of copping off with that kind of chat-up line? Exactly. Finishing games is never going to impress the fairer sex – unless, that is, you're playing *PQ*. Why? Because scoring big here equals massive brainbox bragging rights. This deceptively simple Japanese game – which asks you to complete basic puzzles against the clock using only the D-pad and ◎ – actually measures the size of your IQ. Set over 100 wire-frame stages, you control a crash-test dummy bloke whose only goal in life is to travel from the start of each level to the end without getting spotted by sentries. Push or carry blocks, flick switches, climb over obstacles and hide from view to reach the end. Sounds too simple? Well, the twist is that the clock is ticking, and your moves are limited, so you need to be both quick and efficient to convince the game that you're not a total div.

COULD BE A CLASSIC BECAUSE

PQ is a simple puzzle game at heart, making it the sort of annoyingly addictive PSP title that you'll find yourself playing during the small hours of the morning. More importantly though, finishing it will give you more than just a meaningless high score or best time that no one else cares about. The game will measure your IQ, store it on your PSP, and it'll even upload your score to a worldwide leader board that anyone can look at. This could be your path to clever-heaven, or a fool's-gold paved stairway to dunce hell. *PQ* will be straining your brain this May. ■ **AH**

CORBIS/CONDE NAST



REX FEATURES

PS3: BIGGER IN JAPAN

A recent Japanese poll* revealed that 46.3% of gamers thought of PS3 as the next-gen machine they would be most satisfied with in 2006. By comparison, Nintendo's Revolution scored 43.9%, while Xbox 360 limped home with 7.9%

*Source: *Weekly Famitsu* Feb 2006

ROCK HARD

PSP GETS STONED

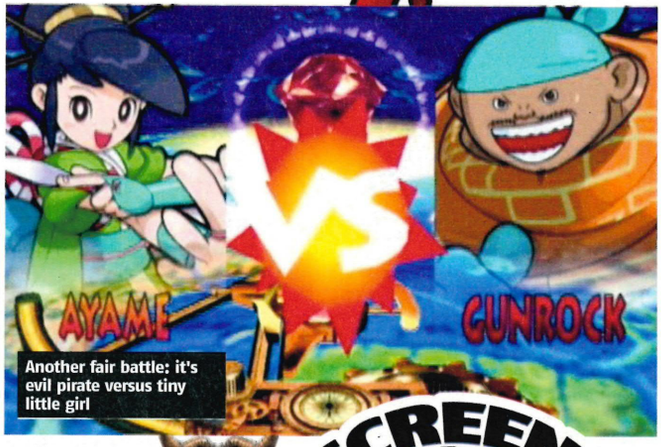
Party brawling goes handheld with Capcom's **Powerstone Collection**

"Fun for all the family. Assuming your idea of fun is smashing your family in the face with a comedy mallet." That's what we would've written about *Powerstone 2*. But didn't, because Capcom only released it on Sega's 'dead man walking' Dreamcast. Now we're ready to forgive and forget, because the series is returning on PSP. *Powerstone Collection* is due towards the end of the year and as the name suggests, compiles both Dreamcast games plus a host of buy-me extras.

With frantic action and fully interactive arenas, the *Powerstone* series is rightly considered to be a multiplayer classic, so playing it over WiFi should be a treat. Cheeringly, *Collection* features 'game sharing', meaning you only need one copy of the game for mates to join in (that's two in the original game and up to four in the sequel). You'll be able to pick from a full line-up of 15 characters, and other additions include a training mode and a bomb mode that replaces the weapons with, well... y'know.

Speaking of weaponry, producer Hironobu Takeshita told us new items were being added, but that "the original games were so well made, that we want to stay as faithful as possible." So don't expect too many changes. That also means one-player mode is likely to remain slightly anaemic. The controls (punch, kick, jump... you're done) should fit comfortably on PSP, but the camera has been tweaked. Now you can view from wide and close angles – and the PSP will select the best view for each of you during multiplayer. See footage of the game in action now, on our site www.thestash.tv ■ TC

The frantic multiplayer mode is where the real action is



Another fair battle: it's evil pirate versus tiny little girl

Kwik Fitz

He's rumoured up to the nines, but he's only got time to write a line

CONFIRMED: Sony is releasing PSP oddball title *Loco Roco* in the UK this summer

RUMOURED: Jeffrey Nachmanoff, of *The Day After Tomorrow* fame, has signed up to pen the new *Prince Of Persia* film

CONFIRMED: Bike-porn racer *Tourist Trophy* will be released in the UK this May

RUMOURED: PC megalomaniac delight *Spore* may well be heading to PSP

CONFIRMED: Blood-soaked scrapper *Mortal Kombat* is heading to PSP under the name *MK: Unchained*

CONFIRMED: Next-gen title *Infraworld* has been cancelled because developer Quantic Dream is working on an unannounced PS3 and PSP game

CONFIRMED: Atari will be releasing a remake of the classic game *Battlezone* for PSP

'HARDEST GAME EVER' RETURNS

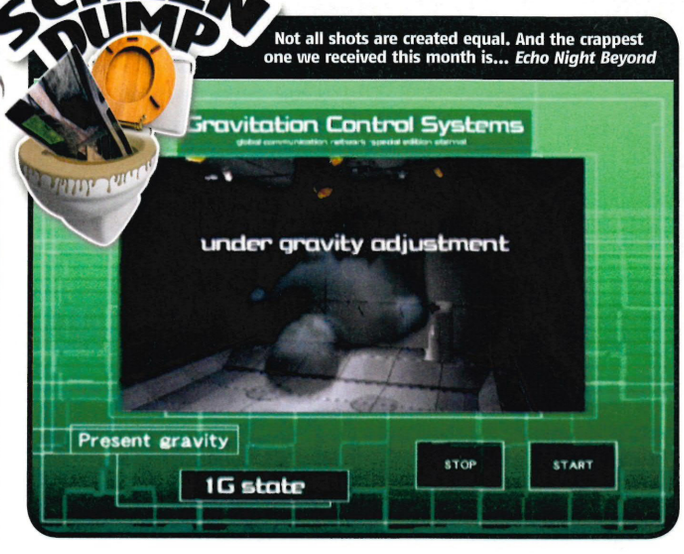
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins materialises on PSP

Not had your arse kicked enough lately? Try *Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins*, the debut PSP instalment in what's surely one of the most nails series ever. *Ghosts* has received a light 3D makeover but otherwise, it's exactly as you'd imagine: rock-solid platforming, starring brave knight Sir Arthur and all manner of supernatural monsters.

Fresh additions include extra armour and weapons, a comprehensive magic system, sub-missions, and new abilities (you can hang off ledges). Will it be as hard as previous instalments? Having played it, we'd say 'yes'. However, a save point system, coupled with respawning where you died should take the edge off slightly. Capcom says the difficulty is still being balanced. It's a tough job, pleasing diehard fans *and* bedwetting casuals. Find out if they've cracked it this autumn. ■ TC

SCREEN DUMP

Not all shots are created equal. And the crappest one we received this month is... *Echo Night Beyond*



MARVEL-OUS

X-APPEAL

Two fresh **Marvel games** swooping in to the save the day

ALLSTAR

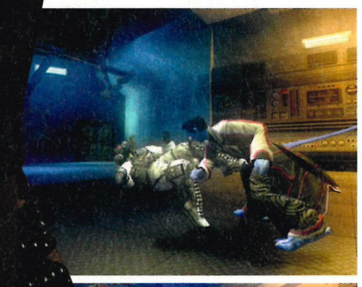
We can't wait to get hands-on time with Garner's Elektra

No longer the reserve of comic-collecting nerds and Lyrca fetishists, the X-Men are now some of the most popular superheroes around. As the third film *X-Men: The Last Stand* prepares itself for a May landing, Activision has announced not one, but two new games featuring everyone's favourite mutants.

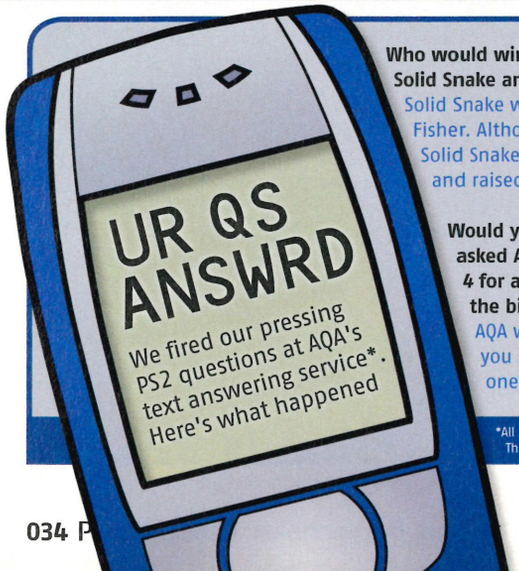
The first to appear will be *X-Men: The Official Movie Game* (working title, thank God), which will take you on a hack 'n' slash journey through the events leading up to, including, and then beyond the new film. Patrick Stewart has signed up to provide the voice for his own character, Charles Xavier, and the screenwriter of the new X-flick, Zack Penn, is on script duties. Surly brawler Wolverine, German odd-ball Nightcrawler, and pretty-boy Iceman will all be available as fully-upgradeable, playable characters in this promising looking adventure romp.

Later on in the year Activision will be unleashing the second title, *Marvel Legends*, which is an original RPG featuring more licensed comic-book creations than you can shake a hand-drawn fist at. Joining the X-Men in this game's ensemble cast will be the likes of Spider-Man, The Fantastic Four, The Avengers, Daredevil and Elektra to name but a few. We're adding four-player co-operative battling, and a massive stack of super-villains to the wish list of features we want to see in the game. More info on both games next month. ■ **AH**

Good to see the Balrog from *Lord Of The Rings* is still getting work



Expect to see plenty of this in the massively anticipated film, too



Who would win in a fist fight between Solid Snake and Sam Fisher?
Solid Snake would easily destroy Sam Fisher. Although Sam Fisher is good, Solid Snake was specifically cloned and raised as a prize agent.

Would you think less of us if we asked Ashley from *Resident Evil 4* for a quick fumble behind the bike sheds?
AQA would think no less of you if you fancied a quick one behind the bike sheds with Ashley. Just watch out for zombies!

How much will the PS3, a copy of *Bob Nudd Guide To Canal Fishing* on DVD, and a bag of Smarties cost me?
The est cost for a PS3 is £300. *Bob Nudd Guide To Canal Fishing* costs £7.45 from Amazon (delivered). A 160g bag of Smarties is £1.07. Total £308.52.

Which of the girls from *Soul Calibur 3* would make the best wife?
AQA thinks that Isabella 'Ivy' Valentine from *Soul Calibur 3* would make the best wife. She has the perfect figure and is a top-tier character.

How many licensed English Premiership clubs will be in the next *Pro Evolution Soccer* on PS2?
Details of licensed teams for *Pro Evolution Soccer 6* have not yet been announced by Konami. It is as yet unclear whether the game will be on PS3.

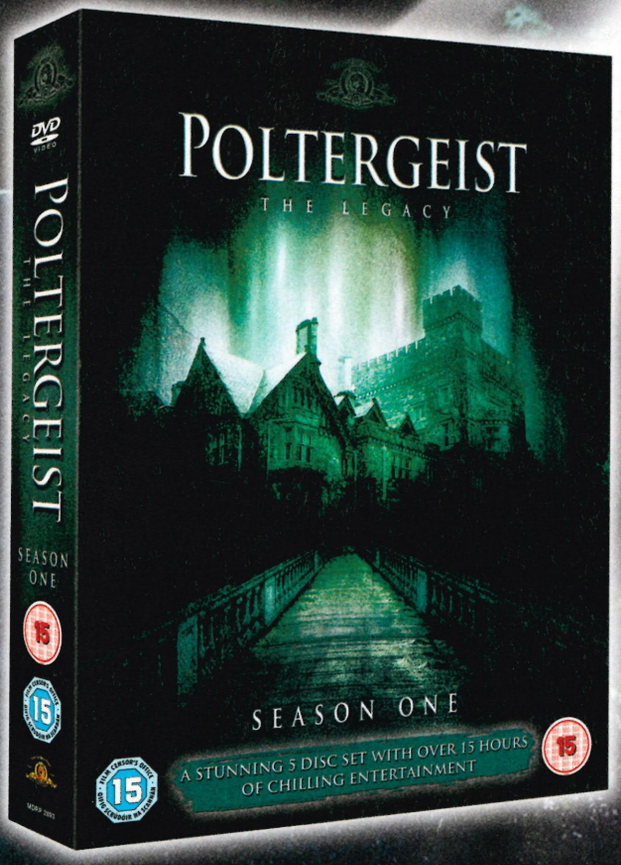
*All answers obtained are printed as they appeared from AQA. To have a go yourself, send your questions to 63336. The service costs £1 per message, with an additional £1 for every extra 160 words in your text.

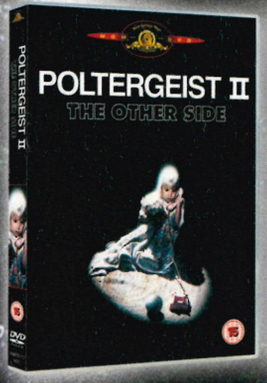
POLTERGEIST

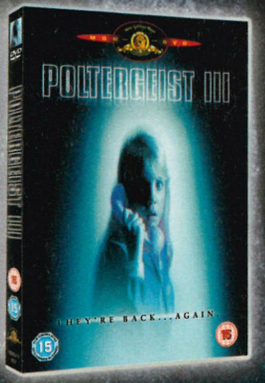
THE LEGACY

The supernatural holds many dark secrets.

One group holds the answers.







ALSO AVAILABLE

ON DVD MARCH 27 AT PLAY.COM

MOVIES MUSIC GAMES

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PLASTIC FANTASTIC

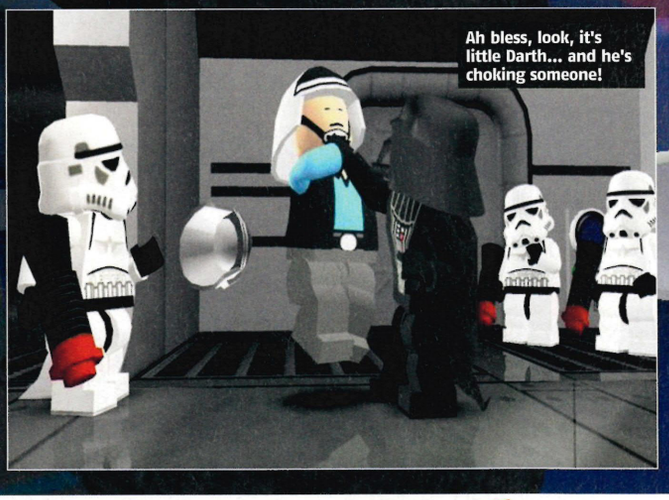
"YEAH, IT'S FOR MY SON"

Take gaming to pieces with LEGO Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away there was a game that combined down-the-back-of-the-sofa kid's toy franchise LEGO with the epic sci-fi space opera *Star Wars*. On paper it seemed like the game would fall apart like a badly built Bionicle, but in reality its charm and simple slick action cemented a place in our hearts. Now *LEGO Star Wars* is back, with a new developer and a whole toy chest filled with fresh features.

Importantly, the new game follows the original trilogy of *Wars* films – in other words: the good ones. This means you'll play as Han, Leia, Luke, Chewie and the rest of the crew as they struggle to save the universe from Darth Vader and the Empire, without committing incest along the way. We're looking at you, Skywalker. There are 50 completely new customisable characters, with another 56 additional ones available to anyone with a save file from the first game on their memory cards.

The main improvements include additional combat moves, and the chance to hop in vehicles and ride on space creatures, but Dads who blitzed through the last game will be pleased to hear that new developer, Traveller's Tales, is working on an advanced mode to make the whole experience tougher. *LEGO Star Wars II* will be appearing on PS2 and PSP this autumn, so expect more news very soon. ■ AH



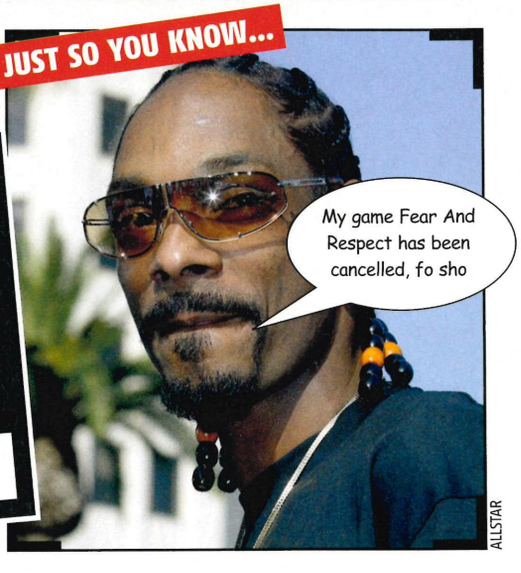
SHOT IN THE DARK

No screenshots? No problem! This month's secret game: Redwood Falls

Some developers will try and use the awesome power of PS3 to make prettier trees and fluffier kittens, but *Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior* developer, Kuju, is harnessing it for a more sinister purpose. Its new tabloid-baiting title, *Redwood Falls*, out for PS3 in 2007, will use the extra digital horsepower to make some of the most realistic wounding effects known to man.

So far, the developer has only shown a tech demo to a strong-stomached few, who witnessed an unfortunate digital grunt getting torn apart by bullets in a shockingly realistic way. Chunks of flesh were torn off, and blood sprayed out of his broken body before the corpse regenerated like some sort of freakish zombie. Witness the gore! *In your head.* ■ AH

JUST SO YOU KNOW...



ALLSTAR

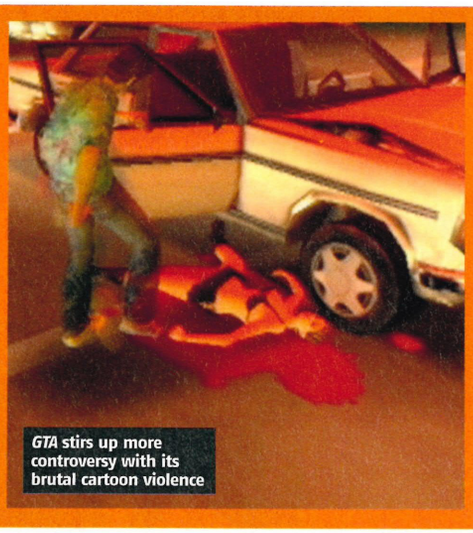
NO *GTA* PLEASE: WE'RE SEX WORKERS

Another month, another kick in **Rockstar's** crotch

Spare a moment to pity the hard-working legal team over at Take Two. They've been burned by Hot Coffee, hounded by legal firebrand Jack Thompson, and now the Sex Workers Outreach Project Of America is calling on potential punters to boycott the game.

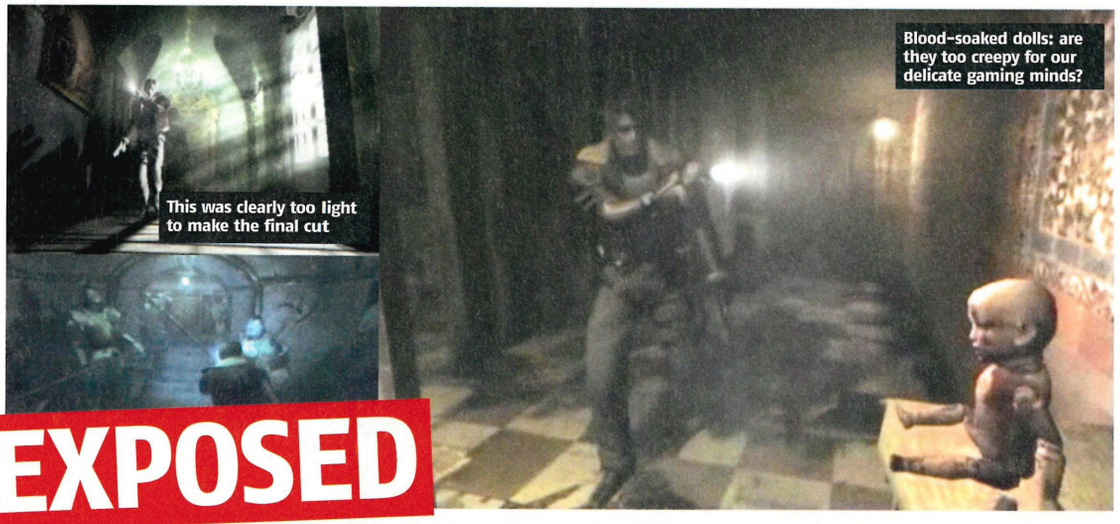
That's right, the prostitutes, pimps and porn-stars over in the States are none-too-pleased with the way the game lets you murder innocent hookers for a pocket-full of spare change, and they're asking parents and gamers to avoid the game. The group published a statement on its web site (www.swop-usa.org) stating: "We object to any media which represents sex workers as legitimate targets of violence, rape and murder" arguing that its members may face danger from *GTA*-playing customers eager to ape their on-screen heroes. Which, of course, we're led to believe, makes up a large proportion of their clients...

It's an odd situation, given that SWOP simultaneously calls for tolerance on other perceived evils of American society like prostitution and pornography.



GTA stirs up more controversy with its brutal cartoon violence

HIDDEN HORRORS



This was clearly too light to make the final cut

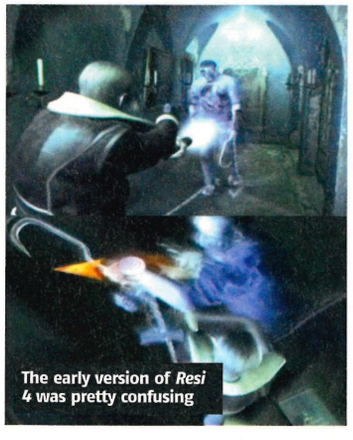
Blood-soaked dolls: are they too creepy for our delicate gaming minds?

EXPOSED THE *RESI 4* YOU NEVER PLAYED

Previously hidden trailer reveals totally different game

These pictures show Capcom's original ideas for what eventually became our 2005 game of the year, *Resident Evil 4*. Leon's trademark jacket and hair are in place but there's not a hatchet-wielding villager or chainsaw-swinging madman in sight. It clearly shows a transitional stage between 'old' and 'new' with some things that never made it into the finished game. You can see the whole thing for yourself on thestash.tv (check p6 for details) but for now here's what we've spotted...

- A haunted house was used as a setting before the Rural Spanish village.
- No villagers, no alien parasites, but possessed knife-wielding dolls and evil hook-waving spectres instead.
- Fixed camera angles mixed with the over-the-shoulder aiming from *Resi 4*.
- Original *Resi* controls – left or right to turn, and up to go forwards, regardless of viewpoint.
- Quick Time Event sections (where you followed prompts as they appeared on screen) were an early idea that made it into the final version.
- The axe-dropping suits of armour from Salazar's castle debuted long before the midget mutant appeared.
- Blue on-screen 'static' effects indicated nearby enemies. **LH**



The early version of *Resi 4* was pretty confusing

INFO NUDGE

GET IN THE GAME

Average schmoes, *Big Brother* contestants and other Z-listers pay attention. This is your chance to be immortalised forever in the medium of videogames, thanks to EA and *FIFA Street 2*. Eager to promote its latest tricks and flicks title, the publishing giant has created a website www.fifastreet2.com/showyourskillz, inviting you to send in mobile phone video clips of your own, real-life soccer skills to be rated by other street footy fans. The prize for being numero uno? A chance to appear in the next *FIFA Street* as an unlockable character. Check out the site and start practising those Ronaldinho flik flaks.

SMELL A RAT?

The 'can-I-have-one-of-those,-mummy?' market is alive and well with the announcement that D3 has snapped up the rights to publish a game based on the forthcoming Pixar flick, *Flushed Away*. Based on the story of an uptown rat flushed deep into the sewers of Cockney London, the film has some impressive voice talents signed up, including Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen and Hugh Jackman, although none of these A-listers have so far agreed to contribute to the game.

RECALL OF DUTY

Activision's distinguished war game *Call Of Duty 2: Big Red One* has been disciplined after the Advertising Standards Agency received complaints that the footage shown in the TV commercial wasn't from the actual game. Activision claimed this was "common practice", but the ASA was having none of it, and banned the misleading ad from being shown.

LOOKING SHARP

WIN A DREAM TELLY!

Capcom is celebrating the release of **Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams** by giving away a state of the art High Def-ready LCD TV

The life of a hero is so unfair. Slash through an army of demonic warriors, save the land from an unspeakable evil and all you get is a pat on the back, and if you're lucky, a quick fumble with the Princess you risked life and limb for. We're all about hard, tangible rewards. Preferably with plugs attached. And to prove it, we've teamed up with Capcom to give one lucky *Onimusha* fan a High Definition-ready LCD TV, a PS2 and a copy of the game.

Correctly answer the question below and you could be in with a chance of playing *Onimusha* in glorious widescreen, LCD-o-vision. The screen is a game-flattering 32" wide, and features katana-sharp visuals that will make Capcom's latest hack 'n' slash look so damn beautiful, you may want to stock up on kitchen roll to mop the salty tears of satisfaction.

And that's not all. Even if you don't snag yourself the top prize you could still be one of four lucky runners-up who bag a copy of *Onimusha: Dawn Of Dreams*. This, the fourth in the legendary demon-hacking series, takes the best of previous outings and adds a fully controllable camera, tons of new weapons and two-hander gameplay that enables you to change playable characters on the fly. It's reviewed elsewhere in the mag. Now then, what would be the best spot for that TV...? ■

THE PRIZES

One lucky winner gets:
- A 32" Samsung LE32R41BDX/XEU High Definition-ready TV
- A PS2 console
- A copy of *Onimusha: Dawn Of Dreams*

Four lucky runners up will get:
- A copy of *Onimusha: Dawn Of Dreams*

THE QUESTION

Which famous French actor leant his likeness to the last game, *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*?

a) Gary Barlow
b) Jean Reno
c) Ivor Novello

You have three ways to enter:

■ By Post:
Send your answer to 'Dream TV', *OPS2*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

■ By email:
Email your answer to ps2compos@futurenet.co.uk and put 'Dream TV' in the subject line.

■ By text:
Text DREAMTV followed by a space and then **A**, **B** or **C** to **80889**.

Closing Date 19 April 2006

TERMS AND CONDITIONS
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NEED FOR SPEED

DIESEL TAKES A SPIN ON PS3

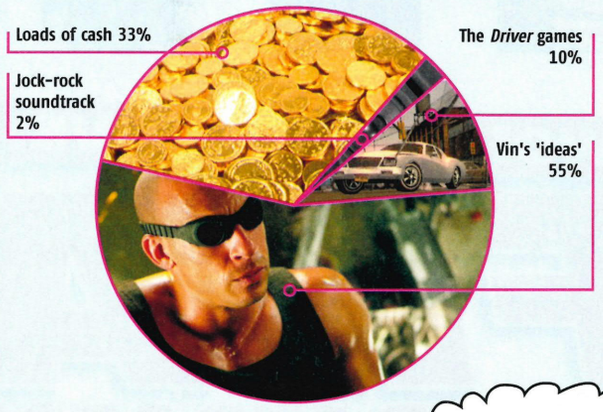
Midway announces **The Wheelman**

During a recent interview, boom-voiced *xXx* star Vin Diesel revealed he was planning to produce and star in a big budget movie of Midway's top-secret (until now) PS3 title, *The Wheelman*. A huge videogame fan himself, Diesel is looking to develop both projects alongside each other, meaning that the film will draw heavily from the game and vice versa.

So is this going to be the typical balls to the wall, bullets-flying fiesta we've grown to expect from a Diesel tie-in? Aside from the inevitable scrapping, shooting and blowing stuff up, expect similar gameplay mechanics to the *Driver* series, only done to an even higher standard thanks to the wads of cash being chucked at the project from all angles. Plot details remain secret for now, but what we do know for certain is that you'll assume the role of an expert getaway driver who cuts his retirement short when a woman from his past comes under threat. We also know that the soundtrack will be stuffed full of popular music, with MTV signed up to help sort out the tracklist. ("Yes! James Blunt is in!") The first screenshots should appear at E3, the games industry's annual bunfight which takes place in Los Angeles this May. Release date? The magic eight-ball says 2007. ■ **AH**

REX FEATURES

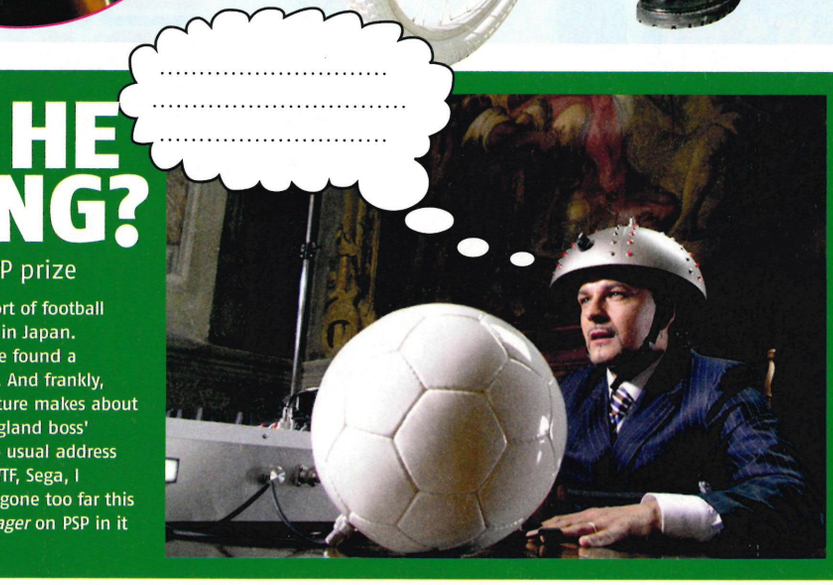
WHAT MAKES *THE WHEELMAN* ROLL?



WTF IS HE THINKING?

Best caption wins a top PSP prize

Sega is releasing some sort of football management game over in Japan. We know this because we found a promotional photo for it. And frankly, that's all we know – because the picture makes about as much sense as the 'Fat Sam for England boss' campaign. Can you help? Write to the usual address with your own caption, marking it 'WTF, Sega, I thought Shadow was bad but you've gone too far this time'. There's a copy of *Football Manager* on PSP in it for the funniest entry. ■ **AH**



THE LIGHT SIDE

■ **MORE RPG LOVE**
Dragon Quest brings peace, love and happiness to Team *OPS2*. Can we have *FFXII* now, please?

■ **SHINJI MIKAMI'S SECRET PS3 GAME**
Resi creator working on 'hard hitting' original game. We can't wait

■ ***BUZZ! THE BIG QUIZ***
Editor takes one day off. Rest of the team swap *Pro Evo* for general knowledge as skive of choice

■ **PSP GAMES: IMPROVING**
Street Fighter, *OutRun*, *Football Manager* and *Lemmings* provide some strength and depth

IN THE SABER

■ **YOO HOO... PS3... HELLOOOOO?**
Like the wait for *Lost Season 2* on UK telly, it's starting to get painful

■ **RETRO OVERKILL**
No more '30 games for the price of one' compendiums thanks, we're all stocked up on old

■ ***PES* MANAGEMENT**
Like cheating on your missus with someone similar but undeniably less sexy

■ **THE PHONE**
Unless it's good news, don't call

THE DARK SIDE

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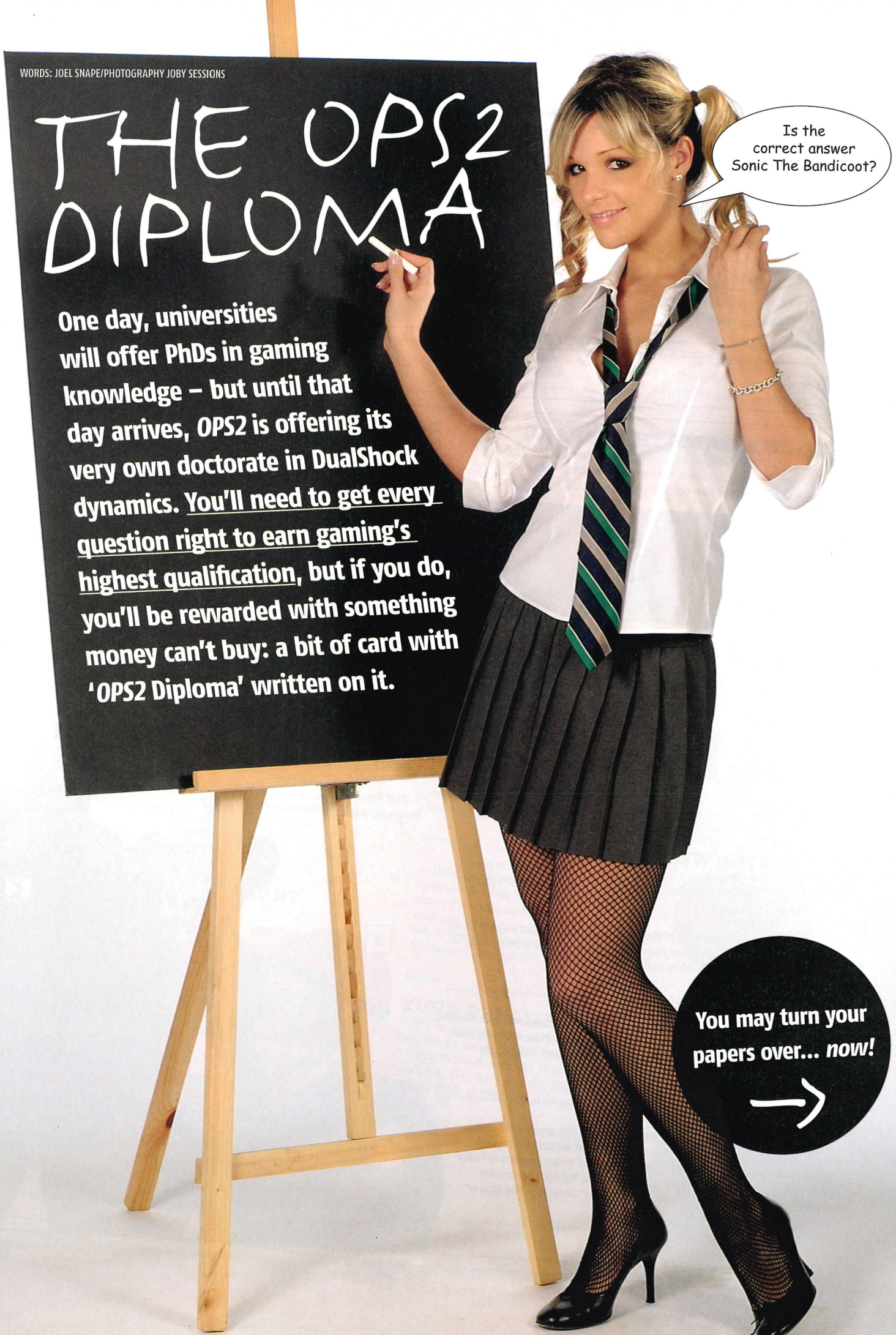
WORDS: JOEL SNAPE/PHOTOGRAPHY JOBY SESSIONS

THE OPS2 DIPLOMA

One day, universities will offer PhDs in gaming knowledge – but until that day arrives, *OPS2* is offering its very own doctorate in DualShock dynamics. You'll need to get every question right to earn gaming's highest qualification, but if you do, you'll be rewarded with something money can't buy: a bit of card with '*OPS2* Diploma' written on it.



PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

DIPLOMA

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

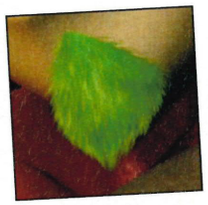
NAME .....

ROUND ONE: NAME THAT BEARD

Whether it's a goatee, a chinstrap or a full-on Bellamy, many of PS2's most beloved characters sport soup strainers of one sort or another. But which of our heroes do the following bits of jaw-based topiary belong to?

1 .....

2 .....



3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

ROUND TWO: WHO'S WHO?

Manuals, back stories, prologues – you'll only ever read them if you're bored, and you'll forget them instantly. But can you identify these characters just from their in-game descriptions?

1. The only son of the great king of the cosmos, he has a heart as pure as an untouched field of snow and lives alone on Prince Star. He's a little afraid of his father's strictness, but admires him greatly.

Answer .....

2. Brisbane, Australia... a city crowded with buildings, new and old. Nestled among the towering buildings of this city was a small dojo. A young man trained there, his face covered by the hood of his jacket. This young man trained there quietly.

Answer .....

3. When he was five he went into the Civil War in the small child unit. The child soldiers were being raised on Hollywood action movies and had gunpowder put in their food, as it contained hallucinogens to keep them drugged and controllable. He was a brutal fighter and quickly earned several nicknames including 'White Devil' and 'Jack The Ripper'.

Answer .....

ROUND THREE: TIP OF THE TONGUE

From mildly threatening to crazy like a cat in the bath, games characters are known for coming out with some absolute gems in conversation. But in which games would you hear the following?

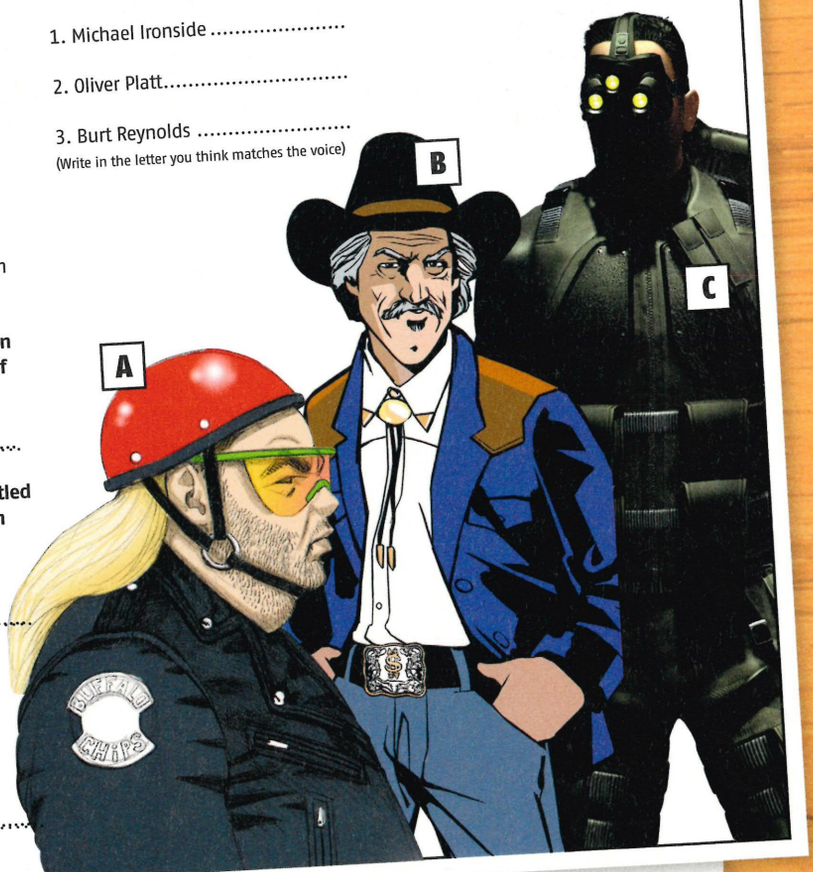
1. 'Welcome... to the stage of history!' .....
2. 'Henshin a-go-go, baby!' .....
3. 'Fisher, what the hell are you doing?' .....
4. 'You must defeat Sheng Long to stand a chance...' .....
5. 'Time to go to work, guys!' .....

ROUND FOUR: LOOK WHO'S TALKING

With games getting more like films, there's plenty of B-list talent on show in the latest releases. Can you match the in-game face to the voiceover man?

1. Michael Ironside .....
2. Oliver Platt .....
3. Burt Reynolds .....

(Write in the letter you think matches the voice)



ROUND FIVE: HELLO, LADIES

Attention developers: why bother making a deep, compelling game when you can simply crowbar a cherry-lipped ladyface into it and watch it sell by the bucketload? So: which games relied on these CG eye-sweeteners to add a bit of wallop to their sales?

1. Natasha Bedingfield .....
2. Josie Maran .....
3. Jada Pinkett Smith .....

ROUND SIX: LOSING THE PLOT

Five profoundly insane plots condensed into one confusing sentence each.

Tell us which game each refers to for a point apiece.

1. A teenage boy tries to bring his girlfriend back to life... by killing 16 enormous monsters.

Answer.....

2. A special agent's assigned to look after the US President's daughter... and ends up shooting a load of Spanish villagers.

Answer.....

3. A man gets mysteriously locked in his own flat, and gradually learns the importance of keeping his bathroom clean...

Answer.....

4. Bald man covered in ash murders his own family – then decides to kill a god to make up for it.

Answer.....

5. Convicted murderer 'recovers' from his own execution – then chases a rabbit and fights a man with a pig's head.

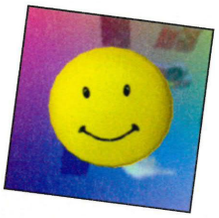
Answer.....

ROUND SEVEN: WHOSE SAVE?

Guess the games from their memory card icons

1.....

2.....



3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

ROUND EIGHT: WEIRD WEAPONS

Not all games rely on an SPAS-12 and an Uzi. Some get downright creative when it comes to death-dealing kit. Where would you find the following unpleasant ways to go?

1. Morph-O-Ray .....
2. Meathook .....
3. Brick .....
4. Wood chipper .....
5. Sharpened Hat .....

ROUND NINE: GAME OVER

Endings – they're never as exciting as the start, because the developers aren't sure you're ever going to see them. But which games broke the mould by including the following magical denouements?

1. Giant monkey goes ape in the big city – but, contrary to everyone's expectations, avoids a load of biplanes and makes it back home safely.

Answer.....

2. Horny little boy gets fed up of dragging his pale girlfriend around everywhere, washes up on a beach and earns a lightsaber for his trouble.

Answer.....

3. An American finds a secret stealth bomber, takes out half of Nazi Germany and wins WW2 for all of us useless Limeys. *Of course.*

Answer.....

4. Little girl proves she's the best, buys a time machine and tries to stop some parental abuse, but messes it all up and makes matters even worse for the most iron-fisted family in games.

Answer.....

5. Little pixelly movie directors arrive, sort of apologise for their last film being rubbish, then try to make up for it with a fight against a gigantic, sunglasses-wearing uber-bot, followed by a rousing verse of *We Are The Champions*. They fail.

Answer.....

YOUR DETAILS

Time's up. Put down your pens. Now send your completed paper to *OPS2*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and mark it 'Diploma'. (NB: don't copy this bit off your neighbour too or they'll get your diploma...)

Address .....

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FROM THE CREATORS OF
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monitor

GIVING THE FUTURE A BIG WARM HUG

So what do you think? Does orange fur suit me? Don't worry, I might be sporting a different look this month but Monitor hasn't changed. It's still packed with the latest gaming info. Like Daxter's up-coming PSP debut on page 50 for example. The little hair ball's first solo adventure is shaping up to be one of the strongest PSP games of the year. (Whisper it: but we're not missing Jak and his MTV goatee much.)

We've also got a blow by blow account of *Hitman: Blood Money*'s Agent 47 at work. Want to see how a professional assassin earns top dollar? Flip the page now.

However, the big news this month is *Final Fantasy XII*. There are changes afoot in the beloved RPG series but they might not be for the better. See what you think on page 58. Right, got to go. This glossy coat doesn't groom itself.

Leon

Leon Hurley,
Staff writer

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

LIVING IN AMERICA? NOT FOR LONG

048 FLATOUT 2
Now with added screaming driver flying through the windshield

050 DAXTER
Jak's fuzzy little sidekick jumps ship for PSP. Find out if the little guy can hack it on his own

052 SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE
Monkeys trapped in balls *not* cruel enough? How about wooden balls, set on fire? Happy now?

054 SPY HUNTER: NOWHERE TO RUN
Guess what happens when The Rock catches a spy he's been hunting. Hint: pain

056 METAL GEAR AC!D 2
Snake's portable card-based strategy adventure returns with a day-glo, 3D makeover

058 FINAL FANTASY XII
You should probably sit down before reading this. Square's uber-RPG seems to have gone wrong

060 SEGA RALLY 2006
Mud, fast cars and handbrake turns... what's not to like? Quite a bit, actually

PLUS

049 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006

053 VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

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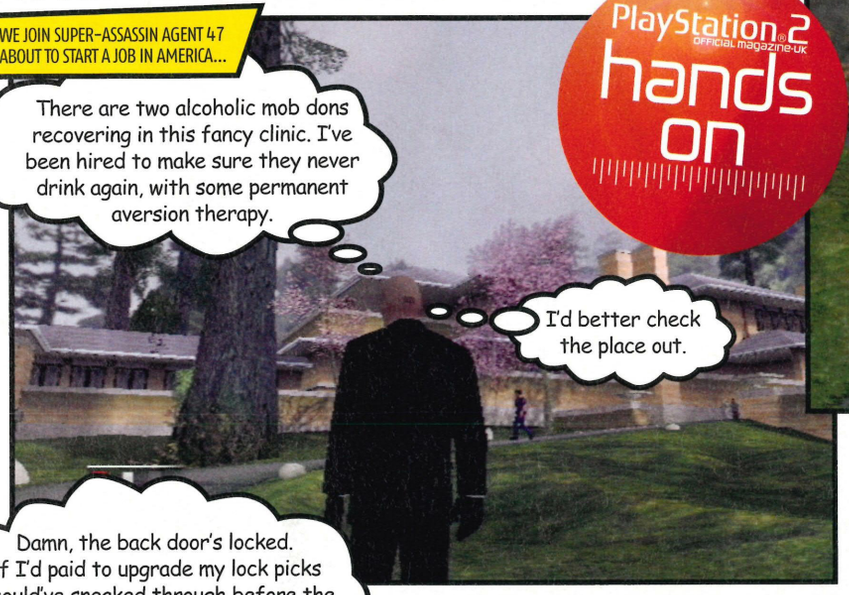
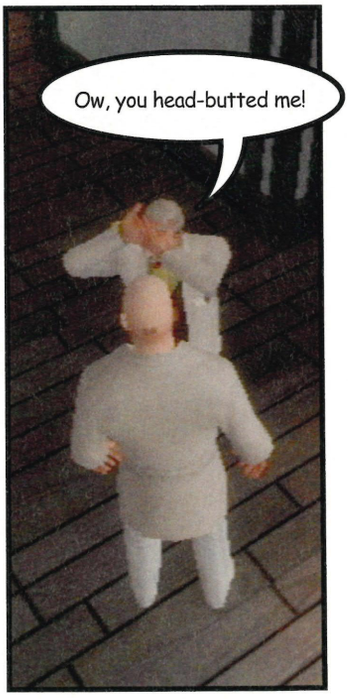
HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

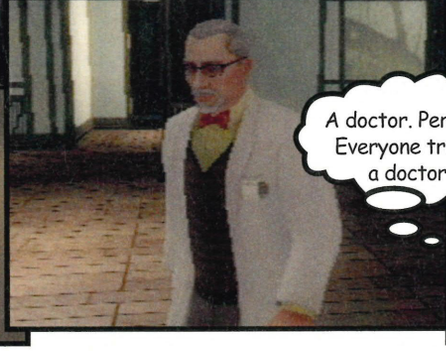
WATCH THE MASTER AT WORK

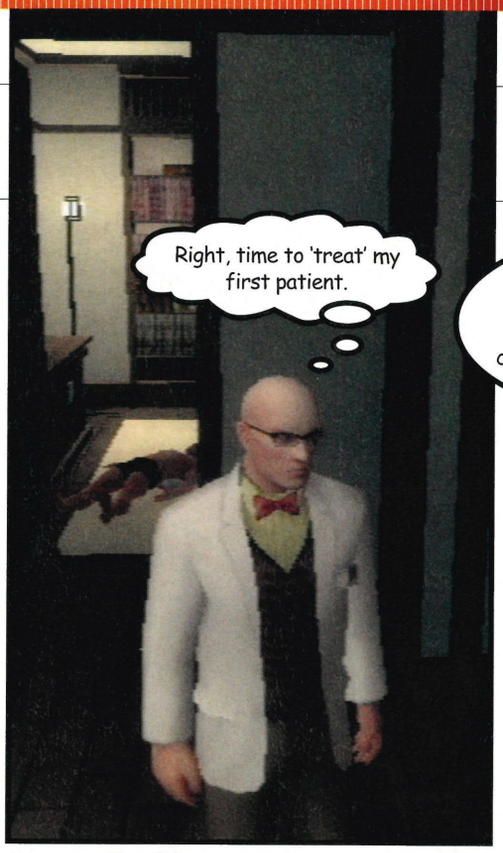
PlayStation 2 Official magazine-UK hands on

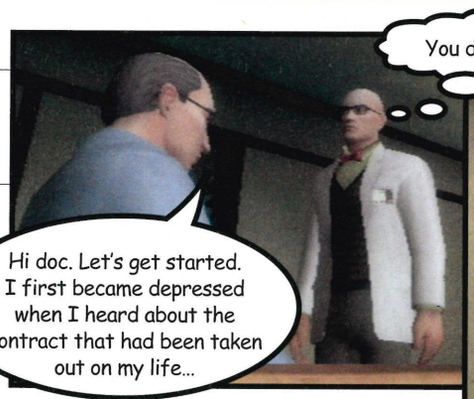
WE JOIN SUPER-ASSASSIN AGENT 47 ABOUT TO START A JOB IN AMERICA...

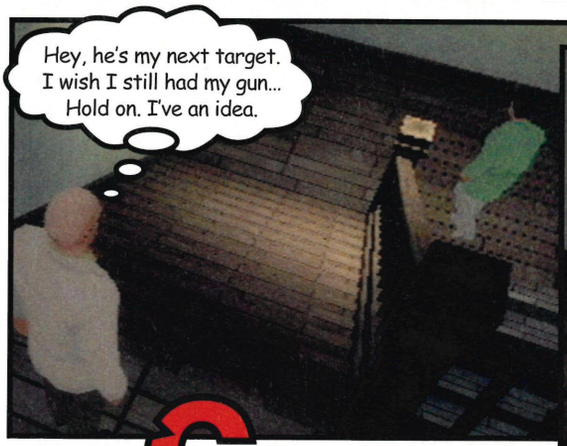


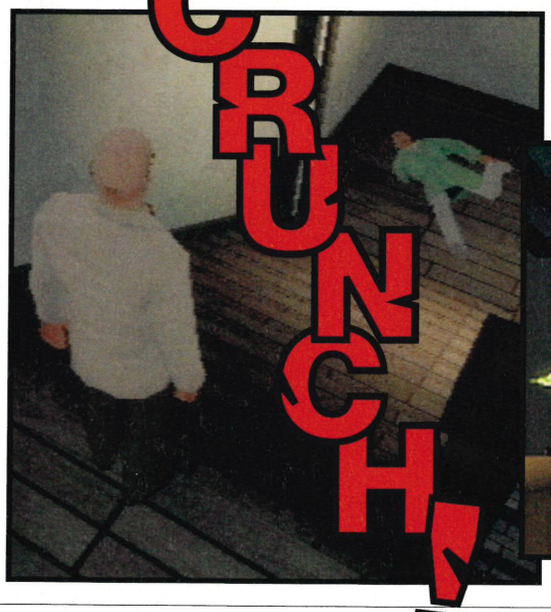












monitor

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine UK

THE PERFECT HIT IS HARD WORK. But slipping through a mission, bagging the target and getting out without anyone realising is one hell of a rush. There's also tons of different ways to do each level

HOT OR NOT?

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

PUBLISHER **EMPIRE** | DEVELOPER **BUGBEAR** | WEBSITE **WWW.BUGBEAR.FI/FLATOUT2**

FLATOUT 2

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK hands on

WATCH OUT FOR THE CAR! YOU NEARLY MISSED IT

You might remember *FlatOut* as the racer where drivers flew screaming through the windscreen every time you crashed. And not just in races. Whole mini-games were built around flinging your hapless wheelman through the air; hitting targets, knocking down skittles and so on. The sequel promises more of the same, but the amount of destruction you can create during races has been ramped up. Fences, girders, generators, even small buildings can be damaged or destroyed. After a couple of circuits most tracks become a minefield of clutter and wreckage, meaning victory is as much about missing the log pile you knocked over in the last lap, as it is beating the other drivers.

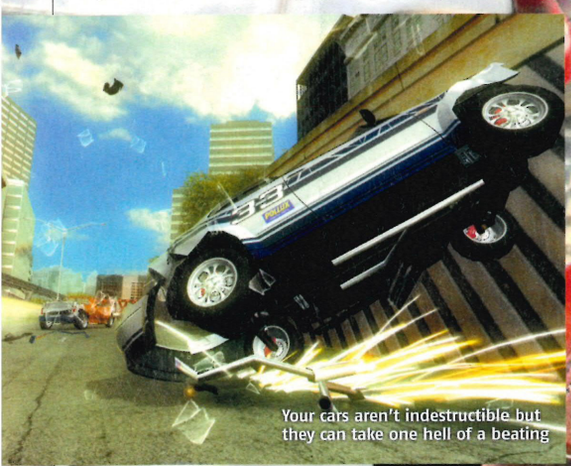
Also new to the series is a complete Championship mode. You'll be able to compete in a variety of tournaments over multiple vehicle classes including muscle and sports cars, pick-up trucks and compacts – our favourite ride being a suicidal mix of pick-up truck and rear-mounted jet engines. Nitrous is earned through any kind of reckless driving – from jumping ramps to smashing obstacles or opponents – and hitting the boost button triggers the sort of speed effects that force you back into your chair. Trust us, it's fast. Refreshingly the races are aggressive petrol-driven brawls rather than polite time trials. When you're crashing through cars, scenery and the shattered remains of whatever else you've hit, the whole thing feels like a perverse, warp-speed cross between Formula One and *Scrapheap Challenge*. Much like driving with the missus after a 'disagreement'. ■ **LH**

monitor PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

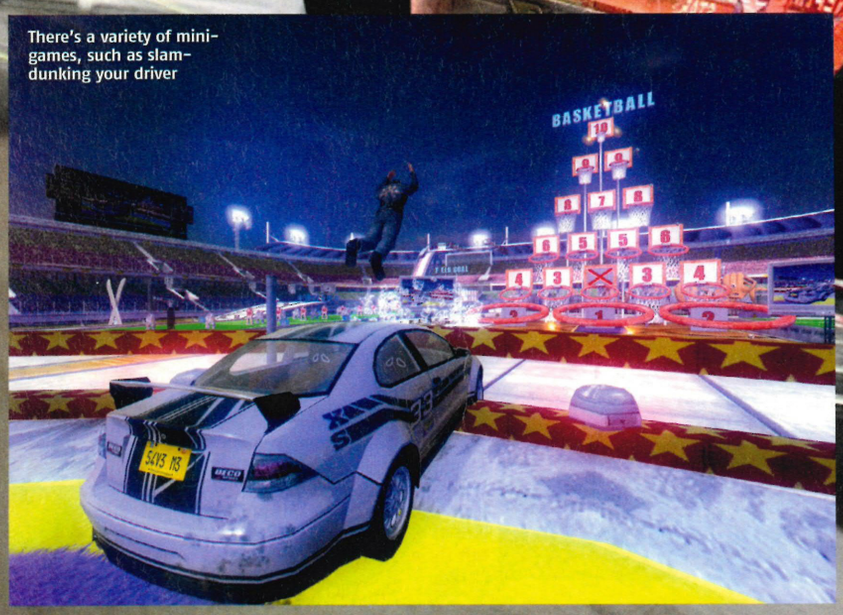
ASIDE FROM THE NOVELTY of watching your driver fly through the air, this is shaping up to be a seriously speedy and satisfying racer. Sharp looks plus a wealth of modes mean there's plenty of chassis-dinging fun

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN



Your cars aren't indestructible but they can take one hell of a beating



There's a variety of mini-games, such as slam-dunking your driver

There are several vehicle classes to race, from compacts to muscle cars

Brilliantly, the driver screams as he flies

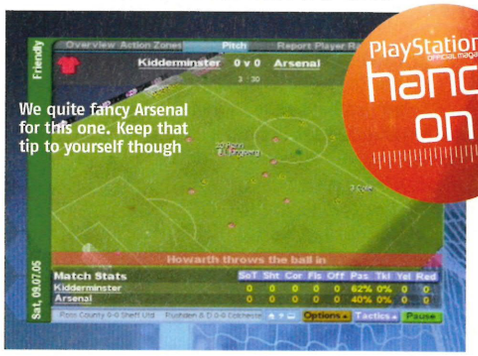
The opposition are incredibly aggressive

ALSO 1 MONTH AWAY

PUBLISHER **EIDOS** | DEVELOPER **GUSTO GAMES**
WEBSITE **WWW.CHAMPIONSHIPMANAGER.COM**

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2006

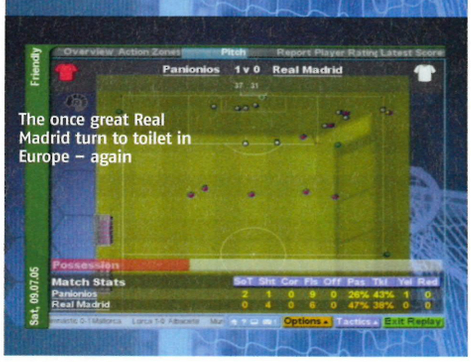
GUARANTEED TO MAKE THE PLAY-OFFS



Last season was a disaster for *Championship Manager*. The interface in *CM2006* was frustratingly complex, the finance system made the game unbalanced in the later stages, and don't even get us started on the ludicrous transfer system.

Champ Man was in disgrace and fearing for survival until it produced a competent version of the game on PSP. Now, having learnt from past mistakes and studied its many opponents, the once-great game is, at last, ready for top-flight again.

The interface has been lifted from the handheld version, the latest players are all present and correct, and the AI is showing balance fine enough to turn on a sixpence and leave its marker for dead. New features include an Assistant Manager who gives his advice on team selection, and the ability to shout at your players from the dug-out. Developer Gusto Games has, however, stopped short of a Hot Coffee-style mini-game that lets wannabe Svens make the sex with the club's loose-knickered secretary. ■ **AH**



HOT OR NOT?

Looks like the classic franchise is back on form

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

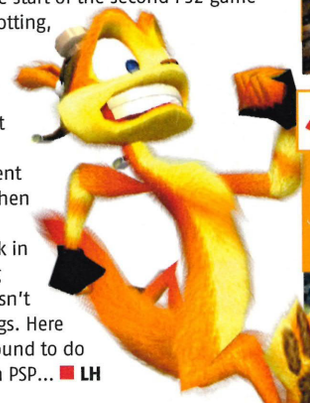
It's on PSP

PUBLISHER **SONY** | DEVELOPER **READY AT DAWN** | WEBSITE **WWW.US.PLAYSTATION.COM/CONTENT/OGS/UCUS-98618/SITE**

DAXTER

TEN THINGS TO DO IN HAVEN WHEN YOU'RE AN OTTSEL

What's the first thing you need when you find yourself alone in the big city? A job, obviously. Set just before the start of the second PS2 game *Jak 2: Renegade*, Jak is rotting, unloved in Baron Praxis' prison, leaving his sidekick Daxter to look out for his own furry butt until he can engineer a rescue. Clearly employment opportunities are slim when you're one foot tall, so when the chance to work in pest control comes along Daxter takes it. But this isn't just about squashing bugs. Here are the best things we found to do in Daxter's solo debut on PSP... ■ **LH**



1 CHECK IN WITH THE BOSS

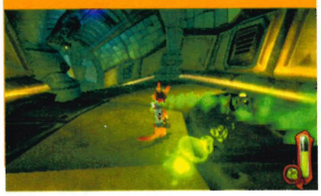
This is Osmo, owner of the pest control business. You can drop by and see him for jobs, hints and equipment. Unfortunately, like him, most of the gear he has is old and knackered.

2 SMOOSH BUGS

Daxter's default weapon is this electro-swat. It's basic but a bit of applied thwackery deals with all but the biggest insects. It's also useful for smashing boxes and containers when looking for power-ups.

3 SPRAY BUGS

Another handy piece of kit at Daxter's disposal is this adaptable spray gun. It only stuns most creatures but it also has some other interesting uses. (See entries seven and eight.)



4 PLAY MINI-GAMES

There's no shortage of problems to deal with along the way. In this case, to stop a machine blowing a gasket you have to tap the direction or face buttons corresponding to each dial as it turns red.

5 DREAM

After a hard day's work Daxter loves some shut-eye. Doing so triggers dream sequences and more mini-games. This one's a Matrix spoof where you need to defeat the attacking agents.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK hands on

6 FIND PRECURSOR ORBS

These mysterious eggs are in-game currency. They're everywhere. Some can be found by smashing things, others are hidden in plain sight, the question is, how to reach them?

7 FLY

Daxter's insect-killing spray gun also doubles up as an improvised jetpack. It's useful to reach new areas but chews through fuel fast. Some sections see you desperately racing over bottomless drops, trying to catch fuel pick-ups to stay aloft.

8 MAKE A FLAMETHROWER

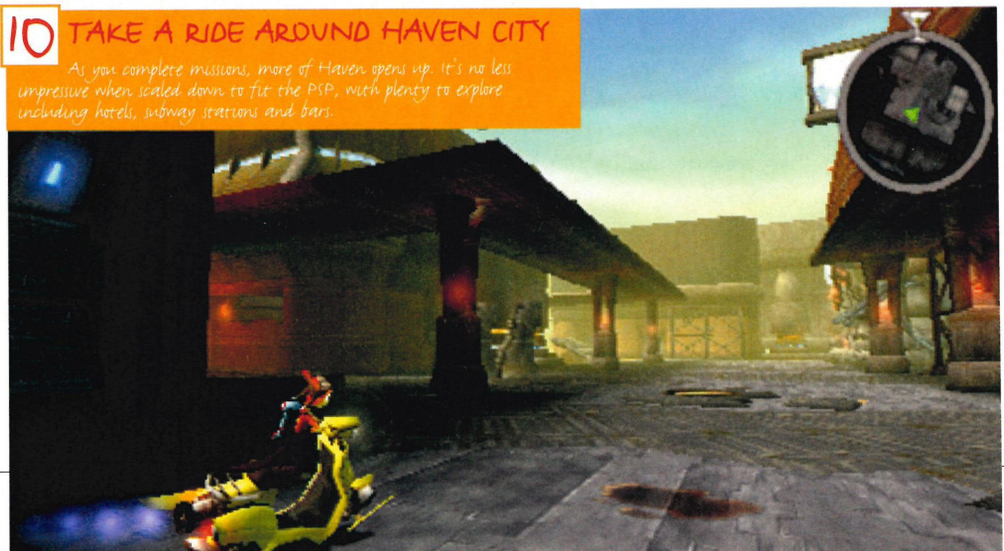
Aim Daxter's bug-spraying gun at a lantern and it'll catch light. You can then use it to barbecue bugs or burn away cobwebs blocking your path.

9 RIDE AN AIR BIKE

This propeller-driven scrap heap is called Betsy. It's used in a timed, crop-dusting mission. Flying at speed we had to spray infested plants, before ramming the queen-bug responsible out of the sky.

10 TAKE A RIDE AROUND HAVEN CITY

As you complete missions, more of Haven opens up. It's no less impressive when scaled down to fit the PSP, with plenty to explore including hotels, subway stations and bars.



monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

EVERYTHING YOU'D EXPECT from a *Jak* adventure, except Jak. The linear mission setup lets you explore between jobs and there's loads of variety. And it looks great too. Seems Daxter didn't waste his gap year

HOT OR NOT?

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

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Open road.
Open the throttle.

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PlayStation.2

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PUBLISHER SEGA | DEVELOPER TRAVELLER'S TALES | WEBSITE HTTP://WWW.SEGA-EUROPE.COM

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

...YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIRE ITS BALLS

Of all the sounds we never want to hear, a burning monkey is right near the top of the list. (Just behind Jessica Alba saying, "I just don't see this working out.") Unfortunately, from the looks of these latest *Super Monkey Ball Adventure* shots, we aren't going to have much choice. For the uninitiated, *SMBA* swaps the series' normally reflex-punishing puzzles for platform-based play. You still play monkeys inexplicably encased in Perspex balls, obviously, but there's now a proper story. If by 'proper' you mean *Romeo And Juliet* acted out by the PG Tips chimps. To explain, there are two warring monkey kingdoms whose feud is preventing the prince of one getting it on with the princess of the other. The two would-be lovers elope to Jungle Island, one of five vast areas in the game, hook up with the original *Monkey Ball* gang (Aiai, Meemee, Baby and Gongon) and set about trying to unite the kingdoms.

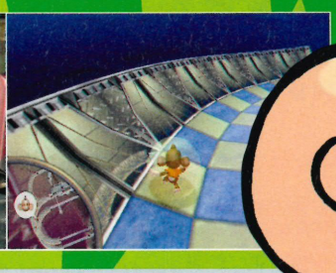
NEW BALLS PLEASE

There's also some guff about defeating a group called the Naysayers, who're bumming the monkeys out in some way. Whatever. We're *much* more interested in how comprehensive a package this is going to be. The key to completing quests and solving puzzles is going to be magically transforming your monkey's ball. Confirmed types include invisible, hoovering, boxing, sticky and wood. Wood is the one that's got us worried – in one of the screens it seems to have caught afire. (Probably one of the monkeys sneaking a crafty smoke.) Meanwhile, the sticky ball has suckers all over its surface and, as you can see, the monkeys can also roll around underwater and slide down beams of light. Top stuff.

What isn't clear, until we get our hands on the game, is whether you'll be swapping between monkeys or sticking to the same one. We do know, however, that there are more than 60 characters to interact with, suggesting this really will be a full-fat experience. For anyone still dubious about the change in direction, panic not. In addition to the main game, you also get 50 of the traditional puzzle levels to play. And of course, there's the dizzyingly good mini-games. Joining the classics – Race, Fight, Golf (yes!) and Bowling (double yes!) – are two newcomers, Pinball and Castles. Final word, though, must go to the PSP version, which will also include bonus levels, downloadable content, new ball types and DVD-style extras. Miniature monkeys, you say? Deal us in, Sega. ■ TC

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK new screens

Flip the ball open and your monkey can glide



monitor | PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

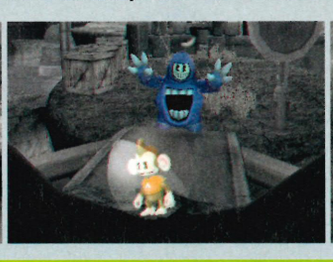
WE'RE EMBARRASSINGLY EXCITED ABOUT THIS. The visuals are strong, there's a vast amount of modes, and even the platforming stuff sounds solid. Only a total gameplay disaster can spoil it... [kisses lucky monkey's paw]

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN

MONKEYS FOR DINNER? AGAIN?

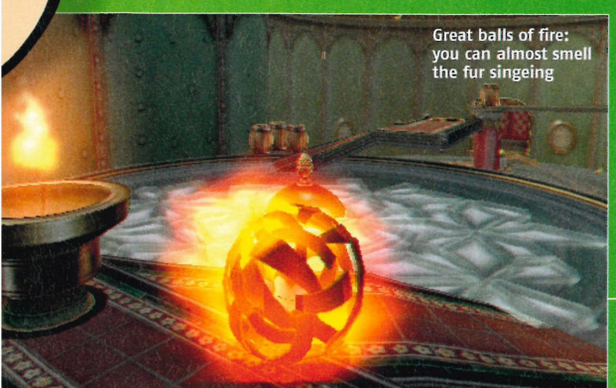
Expect the monkeys to face numerous enemies – like this spook who seems to have swallowed poor old Aiai whole!



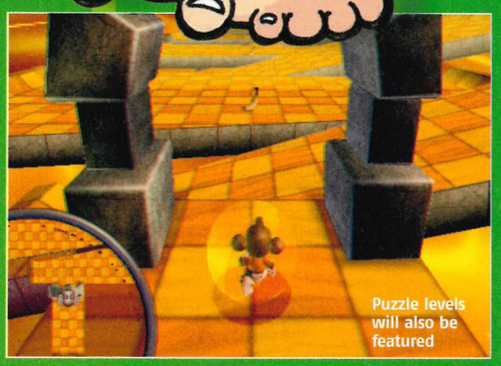
Monkeys do much of the hard work backstage at Pink Floyd concerts

This ball sucks. Literally

With ten seconds of air left, Alai started to panic



Great balls of fire: you can almost smell the fur singeing



Puzzle levels will also be featured

ALSO 3 MONTHS AWAY

PUBLISHER **CAPCOM** | DEVELOPER **CAPCOM**
WEBSITE **WWW.CAPCOM-EUROPE.COM**

VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

DANTE SAYS: 'FANCY A FOUR-WAY?'

Just a typical Friday night for Team *OPS2*

PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK hands on

This sort of thing is always called a 'party game', presumably because most parties end in savage, confusing brawls. *Red Hot Rumble* certainly manages the confusing part. Basically, it takes all the characters from the *VJ* universe (including the kids' cartoon), throws in Dante from *Devil May Cry* and has them slug it out in interactive arenas. For those of you who dabble with Nintendo, think *Super Smash Bros.* For those of you that don't, think total chaos.

On paper, using the frantic gameplay the series is best known for in a purely 'versus' setting sounds like a good idea. In practice, it's mayhem. The objectives are constantly shifting (rack up the most knockouts one second, defeat a flying helicopter the next) and there are also quick-fire button-pressing mini-games. But because the characters are tiny, it's hard to keep up with the action. We might get used to it with extended play, particularly with four friends competing over WiFi, but right now this is a headache waiting to happen. ■ TC

Given the look on Dante's face they should probably get a room

HOT OR NOT?

Total madness, and not necessarily in a good way

TEPID | WARM | HOT | BOILING | MELTDOWN

ETA 3 months
Jun 2006

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

PUBLISHER **MIDWAY** | DEVELOPER **TERMINAL REALITY** | WEBSITE **WWW.THESPYHUNTER.COM**

SPY HUNTER: NOWHERE TO RUN

BUT WILL IT, AHEM, ROCK?

Fast cars, massive guns, melon-balled ex-wrestlers and a John 'show me the doves' Woo-helmed Hollywood movie tie-in. *Spy Hunter: Nowhere To Run* ticks almost every box on the marketing suit's 'how to part kids from cash' checklist. Now all we're waiting for is the announcement that some LA it-girl has signed up to hold the game betwixt her boobs as part of the laser-guided 'promotional activity'. So the real question is – given that the last *Spy Hunter* was more *Johnny English* than James Bond – will this one actually be any good? Y'know, cos we're old fashioned like that...

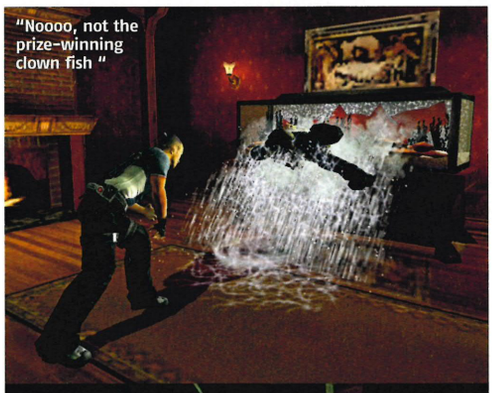
Judging from this box-fresh set of screenshots, everything points towards winner-city. The Rock's granite-faced looks have been excellently translated for *Nowhere To Run*, having spent many arduous hours posing, brooding and kicking his own shadow's ass in the developer's motion capture studios. Expect to see him smashing jaws and pulling off a whole host of scenery-sensitive moves, like slamming enemies into fish tanks, in the on-foot sections of the game.

ROCK HARD

Midway's version is only loosely based around the forthcoming big-budget flick, so the publisher hasn't felt obliged to limit the game's plot or scope for mindless violence – something that's dragged many film tie-ins straight to bargain bin hell. In fact, The Rock has even pitched several of his own ideas, some of which might make it into the final game. *Might.*

Inside the car, it's city-wrecking business as usual. The super-star car featured in the game, the G-6155 Interceptor, has a massive amount of functions crammed into its sleek shell, including the ability to shoot rockets, drop mines and deploy smoke-screens. Does it float? Sure. Will it fly? No. Is this all set to be the most explosive *Spy Hunter* game yet? Definitely. ■ **AH**

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


"Noooo, not the prize-winning clown fish "

Is it just us, or does this generic corridor look a little wonky

There are many ways to get out of a parking space. This is one

The Rock: checking into a hotel 'with extreme prejudice'

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

BANISH ALL MEMORIES of previous *Spy Hunters* to the back of your mind. Woo and The Rock are kicking, smashing and exploding new life into this once-great arcade series

HOT OR NOT?

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

The gadget-laden car also works on water

DOOM

THIS TIME, IT'S MORE THAN A GAME

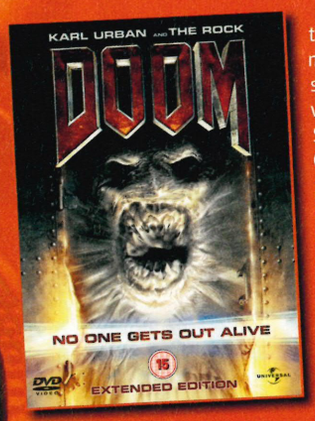
For what seems like an eternity, we've had to watch games publishers queuing up to nab the licences of Hollywood movies only to spend five minutes knocking together a cheap, virtually unplayable cash-in. So it's a genuine pleasure to see film-makers do the opposite: namely, take a legendary game and turn it into a movie. Only, *Doom* isn't just some cheap spin-off. Instead, it's a thrilling and at times terrifying ride through locations and landscapes that look remarkably similar to those originally popularised by the *Doom* PC games.

It stars The Rock as the leader of an elite Space Marine corps sent to investigate troubles at a remote scientific research station on Mars. The centre has been quarantined but – wouldn't you just know it? – there's still something inside. And it's not a lost puppy who wants to play roll over.

Rather than present itself as an action chiller from the outset, there's a slow, thoughtful build-up to *Doom*'s first half. Every time you expect guts and gore you're instead presented with a tense tease: another empty corridor or monster-free laboratory. But just when the film has you wondering whether that unseen force only exists in the characters' minds, it strikes with great vengeance – and once the bloodshed comes it's both gruesome and glorious. For all its groundbreaking capabilities, the computer game never did special effects in quite such explosive fashion.

ROCK'S SOLID

With his granite-carved muscles The Rock is often labelled a modern-day Arnie, but in *Doom* he demonstrates that he's much more than a catchphrase-churning hard man. His performance is full of humour and humanity – until the mysterious quarantined force begins playing havoc with *his* brain too. The question over whether he can hold it together long enough to save his comrades – and the human race – is one of the most intriguing sub-plots running through the film.

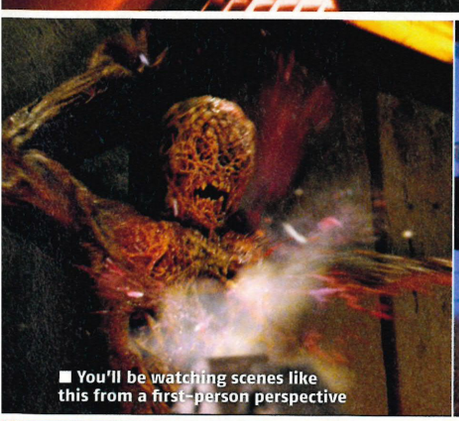


It's not the ultimate highlight, though. That comes towards the movie's climax, as the film switches to a first-person viewpoint for a sequence starring Space Marine John Grimm (played with gusto by Karl Urban, previously seen as Eomer in *The Lord Of The Rings*). It's a deliberate homage to the computer game, containing colourful kills and plenty of tongue-in-cheek humour.

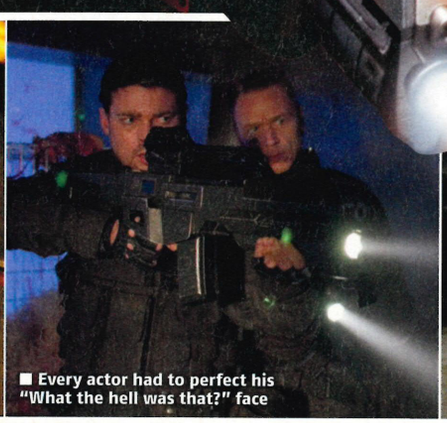
If you ever played *Doom* the game, you *need* to see *Doom* the film just to enjoy this experience. And even for those who have never played the game, this remains a superb slice of seat-edge action horror. ■

HELL BREAKS LOOSE ON 03/04/06

DOOM – AVAILABLE ON DVD AND UMD



■ You'll be watching scenes like this from a first-person perspective



■ Every actor had to perfect his "What the hell was that?" face

■ Of all the monsters in the film, this is one of the better looking

■ Meet sexy scientist Samantha (Rosamund Pike)

Doom © 2005 Distant Planet Productions Limited. All Rights Reserved. Design © 2005 Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.

ETA 3 months
Jun 2006

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

It's on PSP

PUBLISHER **KONAMI** | DEVELOPER **KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS** | WEBSITE **WWW.KONAMI.JP/GS/KOJIMA_PRO/ENGLISH**

METAL GEAR AC!D 2

ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE MINI-*METAL GEAR* SEQUEL

It's no surprise that *MGA2* looks sharp like a Saville Row suit made out of lasers. What is a shock to the system is the game's new hyper-stylised colour palette. It's a bit like being jabbed in the eye with a crayon – but the overall effect is miles better than the original's dull old military paint box.

This latest *Acid* adventure still plays like an electronic board game, with an odd mix of grid-based strategy and playing cards, but the sequel has also managed to pick up some new tricks. For starters, Solid Snake's movement has been overhauled. You now shift him around manually with the analogue stick rather than picking a destination, selecting 'move' and sitting back to watch. The other controls have also been streamlined with all available options now displayed clearly on screen.

Before each mission you're dealt a 'hand' from a potential 500+ cards. You receive various weapons, skill, and attribute cards which can then be used, or traded in for movement. To help plan your world-saving tactics, you can hit Ⓐ to get a top-down view of the level and use the shoulder buttons to swing the camera around. You can also use the cursor to collect Intel on soldiers, CCTV cameras, equipment and objectives. For example, highlight an enemy grunt and pink squares light up to show his field of vision.

Despite the curious style of play, the cards cover all Snake's usual skills. You could set a claymore mine and tap the wall to attract a guard into a trap or creep up behind a soldier and use a 'choke' or 'silenced MK22' card to knock him out. So your options are dependent on what you get dealt. There are new card types like the trap/attack card to enhance your abilities – boosting defensive or offensive skills – and you can also spend experience points earned from completed missions on packs of special *Metal Gear Solid 3* cards which boost Snake's powers further or access special attacks. A 'Fury' card, for example, lets you unleash a flamethrower blast. It's this strategic potential and flexibility – forming a plan of attack from the cards you receive – that makes for a refreshing spin on tactical espionage.

Okay, so it's still not Snake as we know and love on PS2 (watch this space for news of the *MGS* remake) but this is nonetheless another fascinating adventure in the *Metal Gear* universe. ■ **PF**

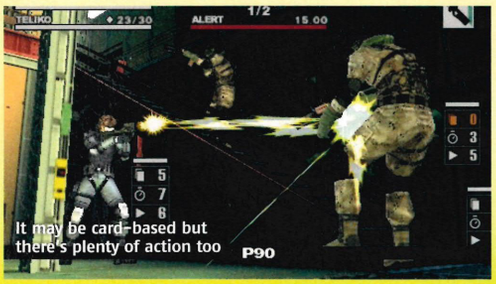
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK hands on

monitor PlayStation OFFICIAL MAGAZ

STILL STRUGGLING TO GET your head round the whole turn-based card-flipping *Metal Gear* thing? Get over it. This is shaping up to be quality stealth action. Get involved

HOT OR NOT?

TEPID	WARM	HOT	BOILING	MELTDOWN



"ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?"

Yes. And in glorious 3D

As you play you unlock cut-scenes and (cough) public information films in visual stereo. When viewed through the cardboard 'Solid Eye' goggles provided with the game, they come alive in super-sharp 3D. This nice lady is teaching us all about gun maintenance. Apparently the best way to keep a .45 caliber semi automatic clean is to lounge seductively on the sofa for at least five minutes a day.

Ubisoft presents Sam Fisher's Spy Thriller

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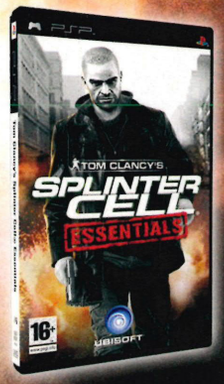

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UBISOFT

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK hands on

PUBLISHER **SQUARE-ENIX** | DEVELOPER **SQUARE-ENIX** | WEBSITE **WWW.FF12.COM**

FINAL FANTASY XII

HAS SQUARE KNACKED THE MOST FAMOUS RPG OF ALL TIME?

Usually fighting in *Final Fantasy* has all the urgency of playing *Monopoly* on your own. Battles have always taken place in fixed arenas with opponents politely lining up to take turns stabbing each other in the eye. The essence of it hasn't changed for 12 games. So the fact that this is supposed to be the first instalment to use real-time combat in a seamless 3D environment is a big difference.

We've played it and, to be honest, we're not convinced. It's actually neither turn-based nor real-time. Instead it's an uncomfortable compromise between the two. You move around in the same way you would in a third-person adventure, but attack by issuing orders from a menu. Each command then takes a specific amount of time to execute, indicated by a small timer bar building up. When the bar fills, the attack or spell takes place and a new instruction can be issued. It works but it feels messy, lacking any clear structure. There's no sense of order to the proceedings as characters mill around, dishing out attacks apparently at random. When you do flip though the menus and select options it doesn't always feel like it has any effect. Your party continue to wander around, occasionally attacking or sometimes looking a bit lost and left out.

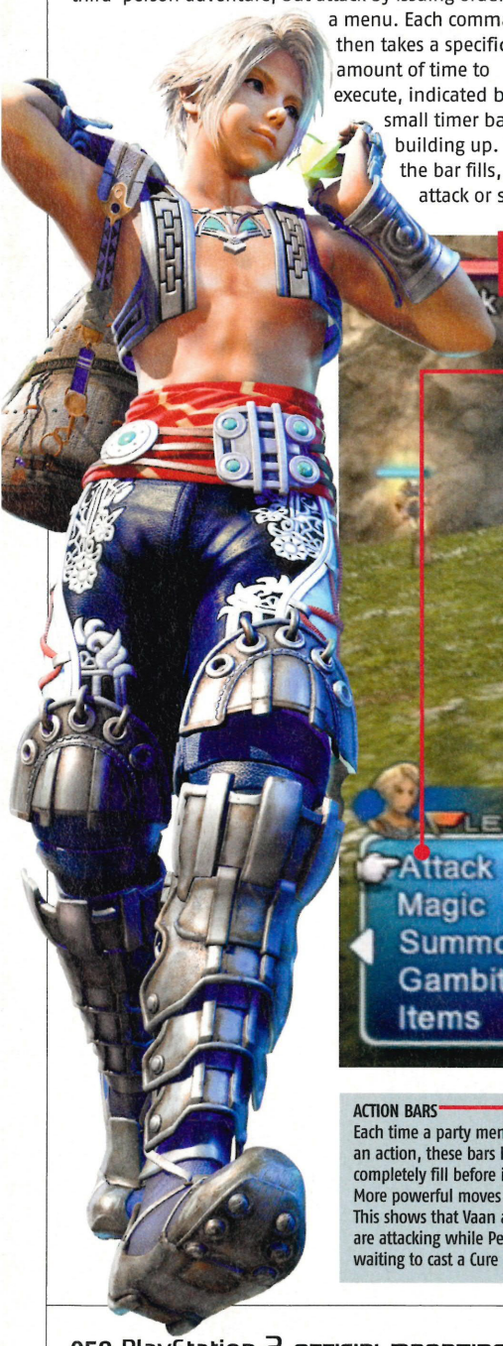
See below for more detail on how it works, and kiss your lucky Chocobo's claw in hope that the finished game is a more coherent experience. ■ **LH**

monitor — PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK

THE FINISHED GAME WILL need a fighting system with more depth and strategy. Right now it's like a playground bundle as you shout orders from the sidelines with no guarantee that anyone's listening

HOT OR NOT?

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



THE NEW COMBAT SYSTEM EXPLAINED

ACTION BARS
Each time a party member begins an action, these bars have to completely fill before it happens. More powerful moves take longer. This shows that Vaan and Basch are attacking while Penelo is waiting to cast a Cure spell.

GAMBITS
The 'G' means that Gambits are activated. These are special AI behaviours that control actions automatically. For example, you can tell them to be more offensive or defensive when not following an order you've issued. And if you want complete control, you can switch them all off and issue commands manually.

LINES
Actions, spells and attacks are represented by these glowing traces. This blue line indicates an attack on a monster while a red line shows a monster attacking. Green lines show healing spells. Once these lines appear you're locked in battle until the monster is dead or you hold down L2 to flee.

THE MENU
From here you issue orders, cast spells and control other functions while your team run around 3D environments in real time. The options are:

ATTACK
Select a monster to attack with your equipped weapon.

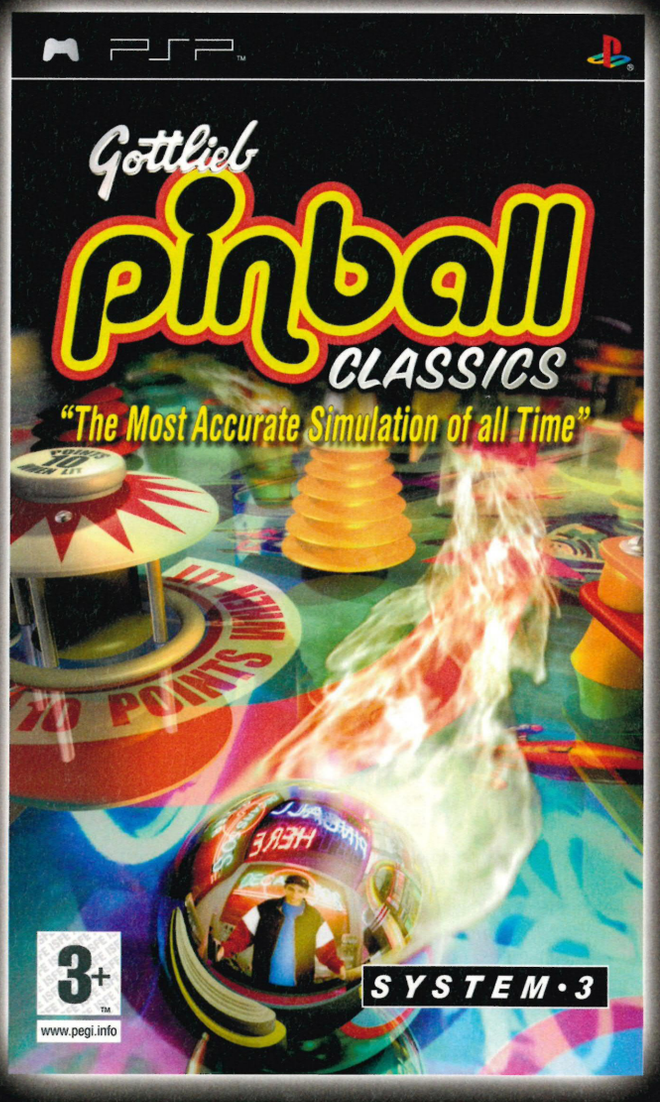
MAGIC
Cast spells from various classes. White magic for healing, Black for attack and Green for protection. There's also Time magic to slow down or immobilise opponents.

SUMMON
This lets you call on guardian creatures. Instead of triggering a huge animated special attack, the created monster replaces the other party members and can be issued orders.

GAMBIT
This controls AI settings or switches them off altogether.

ITEMS
Accesses your inventory to use potions and items.

PlayStation®Portable



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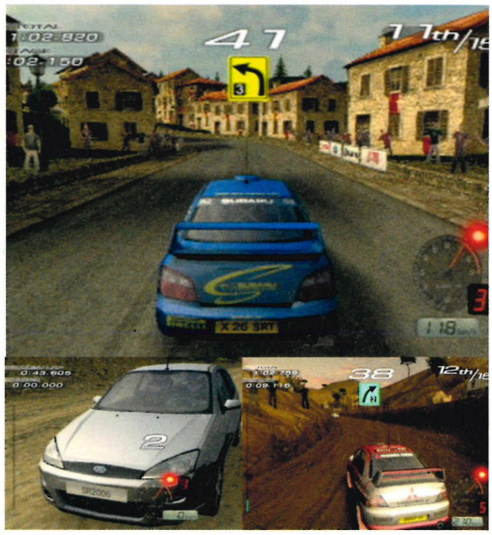
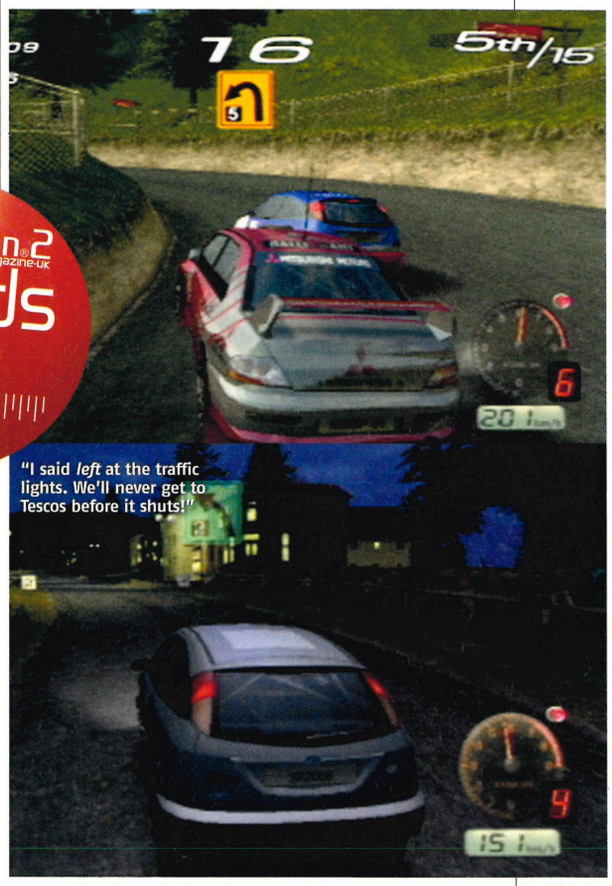




PUBLISHER **SEGA** | DEVELOPER **SEGA** | WEBSITE **WWW.SEGARALLY.COM**

SEGA RALLY 2006

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK hands on

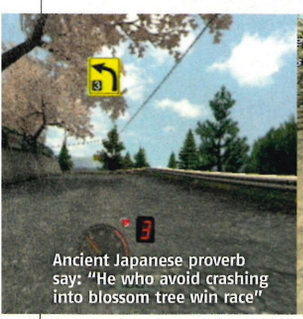
CLASSIC RACER. FULL SERVICE HISTORY. ONE CAREFUL OWNER. NEEDS NEW ENGINE

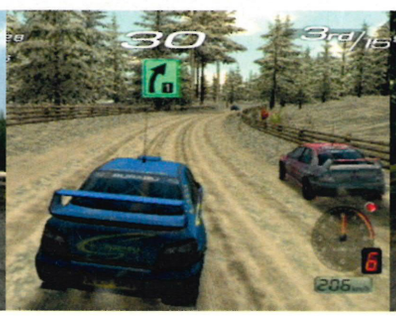
You know that new car smell? Well, in the case of this *Sega Rally* remake, we were expecting the sweet aroma of nostalgia, mixed with the slightly musky hint of modern adrenaline. Instead, once strapped in we were greeted with the noxious stench of an outdated game's blown gasket struggling to compete with today's sleek, feature-packed race leaders.

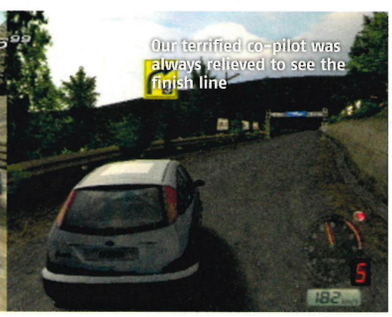
More like your Dad's car, this is hardly the dream machine we aspire to

Expectations aside, based on this showing (we've been playing the finished Japanese game) things aren't looking too great for the former arcade champion. Sure, the game retains the look and feel of the '95 version, and anyone who spent hours of their youth pumping coinage into a greedy arcade slot will instantly feel at home in 2006's bucket-seats. Essentially, this is just a spruced up, valet cleaned version of the original, with a coat of wax and some shiny new chrome accessories. Ironically, while that might be the game's main strength on the shop shelf, it's its greatest weakness once you take it home and realise the simplistic, no-frills racing isn't anywhere near as great as your rose-tinted memories suggested.

The stages are looking basic at best, with cardboard cut-out crowds, and details loading up a few feet in front of you ("Where the hell did that tree come from?"), standing out as just some of the major issues that will need to be addressed. Outside of the car, the racing options are limited with the bog-standard career and arcade modes providing the bulk of the action. The individual cars can be tuned and tweaked to optimise their performance on different surfaces, but at the moment this doesn't appear to make much of a difference to the game's trademark light, slidey handling. There's still plenty of time for Sega to call in the mechanics though, and they need to, because in its current state this isn't roadworthy. ■ **AH**


Ancient Japanese proverb say: "He who avoid crashing into blossom tree win race"




Our terrified co-pilot was always relieved to see the finish line

monitor — PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

WE'LL BE SEARCHING FOR FOUR-LEAVED clovers, collecting rabbit's feet, and praying to the great oil-smeared god of racing that *Sega Rally 2006* gets fixed before anyone even starts to consider releasing it here

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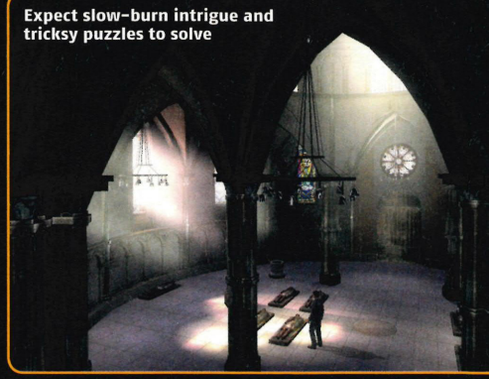
Can you Crack The Da Vinci Code's Brain-bending, Blockbusting Conspiracy?

(because from the looks of it, Tom hasn't got a clue)

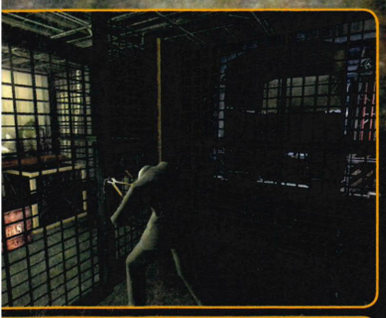
HOLY GRAIL THRILLER *THE DA VINCI CODE* HAS SOLD SO MANY COPIES, GOD PROBABLY HAS ONE ON HIS SHELF. WITH A MOVIE AND GAME NOW ON THE WAY, WE DELVE INTO THE MYSTERY...

You can run but you can't hide. If you've managed to avoid the global phenomenon that is *The Da Vinci Code* so far, your days are numbered. Having sold in its squillions, Dan Brown's Holy Grail-hunting thriller is now being turned into a Ron Howard-helmed blockbuster, and an intrigue-steeped, puzzle-filled action game, developed by the suspiciously cultish-sounding The Collective. But what if you've never even read the jacket blurb, let alone finished the actual book? Why should you care? Allow us to give you a crash course in the greatest mystery in history...

The breathless story sprinting through *The Da Vinci Code* is both a godsend and a potential headache for the game's makers. It centres on academic and symbologist Robert Langdon who, alongside French code breaker Sophie Neveu, is forced to go on the run when he's implicated in the bizarre murder of her grandfather, the curator of the world famous Parisian art gallery, the Louvre. In a breathtaking set-piece that opens the story (it's also featured in the movie's trailer www.sonypictures.com/movies/thedavincicode), Jacques Saunière, the curator, uses his dying moments to leave a series of cryptic clues for Langdon and Sophie around the Louvre. And nothing as subtle as a goodbye note either – he strips off, paints symbols on his body with his own blood and arranges himself



Expect slow-burn intrigue and tricksy puzzles to solve

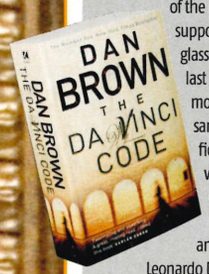


Da Vinci For Dummies

Haven't read the book yet? Didn't even know it was a book? Right, let's start at the beginning

The Da Vinci Code is...

...A staggeringly successful novel by author Dan Brown that pops a ton of rumours, half-baked theories and supposition about the whereabouts of the Holy Grail – supposedly the wine glass Jesus used at the last supper before he moved onto flaming sambucas – into a fiction blender along with a ruthless Catholic sect, mysterious clues and codes left in Leonardo Da Vinci's artworks, and a psychotic albino monk who likes spanking himself.



The Da Vinci Code has...

...Made Dan Brown richer by approximately $140,000,000, has sold upwards of 36 million copies and has been translated into 44 different languages. Its popularity has spawned an entire industry of similar Grail mysteries, spoofs, not to mention some 70-plus guides to the clues and locations found in Brown's novel. No doubt a porn spin-off is already on the cards in some Prague basement. Our money is on '*The Da Vinci Co-eds*'.

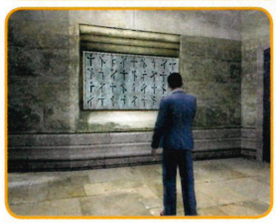
The Da Vinci Code is...

...Being made into a third-person, puzzle-rammed action adventure for PS2 by developer The Collective (*Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure*). Smartly, The Collective has enlisted the help of Charles Cecil, the man behind the similarly Grail-obsessed *Broken Sword* games, to help with the anvil-hard puzzles and headache-inducing conspiracy. It'll be bothering brains from 12 May.

The Da Vinci Code is...

...Also being made into a movie starring Audrey '*Amelie*' Tautou, Jean '*Leon*' Reno, Sir Ian '*X-Men*' McKellan, Paul '*Wimbledon*' Bettany, and last, but not least, Tom 'fingers down the throat' Hanks. The film is directed by Ron '*Apollo 13*' Howard. The movie is set for a 19 May release and will be as much of an influence on the game as the book.

The developer is going for broke with its intricate environments



to look like a famous drawing by Renaissance artist, inventor and scientist Leonardo Da Vinci. While one of the clues seemingly points to Langdon's involvement in the murder, it's actually a last-gasp challenge to the action-academic (think Indiana Jones with a mullet and leather patches on his elbows) and Saunière's granddaughter. Relying on their curiosity, he tasks them to follow a convoluted trail of symbols, half-truths and conspiracy theories in an attempt to both reveal his murderer and to uncover the mystery of the Holy Grail, the mythical cup that Jesus was said to have quaffed house red from during the last supper.

The Good Book

Where *The Da Vinci Code* soars as potential videogame fodder is in its relentless chase/pursuit dynamic – something the developer is keen to exploit. Not only do our heroes spend virtually every second ricocheting from one hidden clue to the next around the globe, but they do so while being chased by the police, who think Langdon's a killer. Worse still, they're also being hunted by a self-harming psychotic albino monk who's working for an obscure sect of the Catholic church called Opus Dei. In the book, these whackjobs are convinced that Saunière was actually protecting the whereabouts and the shocking true nature of the Holy Grail (see All This Over A Wine Glass, spoiler fans).

Our heroes ricochet from one hidden clue to the next

So far it all sounds great, but although *The Da Vinci Code* has action in spades, its narrative is held together with thick wedges of wordy description that detail complex codes, historical theories and ▶

Through The Looking Glass

Dan Brown's not pulling the wool over *OPS2*'s eyes. We have a conspiracy theory of our own...

Flip 'Dan Brown' around and you get 'Brown Dan', which is one way of describing a brown belt in martial arts. This is one of the highest ranks attainable. Martial arts are the primary fighting tool of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. The Turtles are named after famous renaissance artists including Leonardo Da Vinci whose work forms a pivotal role (duh) in *The Da Vinci Code*. Among his pictures featured in the novel is a drawing called the Vitruvian Man that depicts a nekkid guy with four arms and four legs. In this, you can see that Da Vinci has spared no detail and has drawn the guy's nob. And shockingly, 'Drawn Nob' is an anagram of, yes, you guessed it, Dan Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code*. Coincidence? We think not.

▶ obscure puzzles. Fascinating to read, maybe, but a potential poison chalice for a games developer wanting to thrill the average player.

The Collective's solution is neat; it aims to give players free choice on how they go about solving the mystery. First off, action junkies will get their fix. The developer has ramped up the cast of enemy characters – there's now more than just a handful of cops and a mad monk on the good guys' tails – and gameplay is built around a tense, cat-and-mouse stealth dynamic, punctuated by what The Collective are calling 'gritty combat'. What's more, key locations in the book and film have been fleshed out – some, like the St Sulpice church in Paris, appear briefly in the book but have a much bigger role here, while others like Saunière's mansion only get a mention in the novel but become major areas to explore in the game. There'll be lots of physical *Tomb Raider*-style puzzling in the game too, giving The Collective's proprietary graphics engine – last seen to great effect in *Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* – a proper workout. With both Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu taking on playable roles at different stages of the game, you can also expect their differing physical size, strength and brainiac abilities to take on particular significance. In this way, even if your interest in Grail lore barely extends to having seen *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* once, *The Da Vinci Code* will enable you to favour brawn over brain.

There'll be lots of *Tomb Raider*-style puzzling in the game

Brain Ache

If, however, like the millions of people who bought Dan Brown's pot boiler, you love immersing yourself in the whole 'is it or isn't it true?' mystery of the Holy Grail,' then *The Da Vinci Code* will bury you in an avalanche of historical whodunnit nuggets that'll take you until the Second Coming to fully enjoy. Central to this is the game's encyclopaedic Visual Database, which puts a wealth of knowledge about the architecture, cults, clues and hidden meanings in famous Da Vinci paintings at your fingertips. The idea is that, as you play, you can dip into the database to help solve the game's many fiendish puzzles and uncover bonus revelations suggested by objects in the richly detailed environments. You can also just use it to browse through 2,000 years of history behind the mythical 'Cup

Breaking The Code

Not surprisingly, mystery surrounds much of the detail of *The Da Vinci Code* game. But the clues are there if you look for them

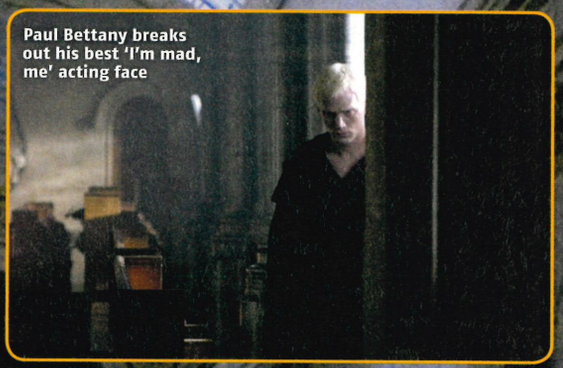
This is the Cryptex. It's a crucial artefact in the story and just one of the game's many mind-straining puzzles. Put the kettle on, love, this could take a while...

Stumped by a cryptic clue? Then check out the game's enormous Visual Database. It's here that you'll become a Grail expert and unravel *The Da Vinci Code*'s mystery.

The locations, most of which are taken from the book, are rich with detail. Remember to keep your eyes open at all times – clues are hidden everywhere. No, not *there*.

Here's hero Sophie fighting what looks to be the game's ultimate bad guy, the psychotic, albino monk, Silas. This isn't just a puzzle game – there will be plenty of combat and action to keep you busy.

Hanks failed to spot the alien scout ship hovering behind him



Paul Bettany breaks out his best 'I'm mad, me' acting face

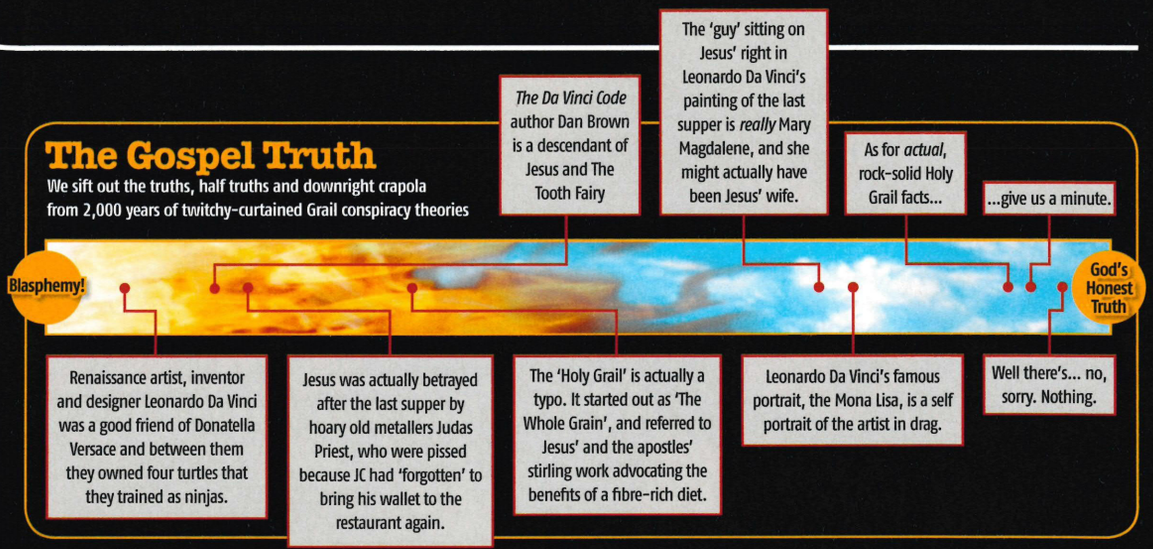
Run, Forrest, run: Tom and Audrey playing kiss chase in The Louvre

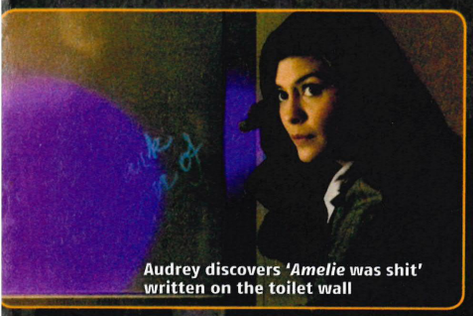
Of Christ', with every entry drawing you in deeper. Smartly, The Collective has also enlisted Charles Cecil, Grail-lore fan and the man behind the superb *Broken Sword* adventures, to help conceive the many puzzles, and also to ensure that the novel's gripping atmosphere is nurtured for gamers, not destroyed in the process.

So how far you allow yourself to be drawn into the labyrinthine mystery is up to you. Be careful though. The quest for the Grail has a way of getting under people's skin, making them see clues and connections everywhere. What starts as a game could become an obsession. Word of advice: don't take a Stanley knife to mum's paintings "looking for clues". ■

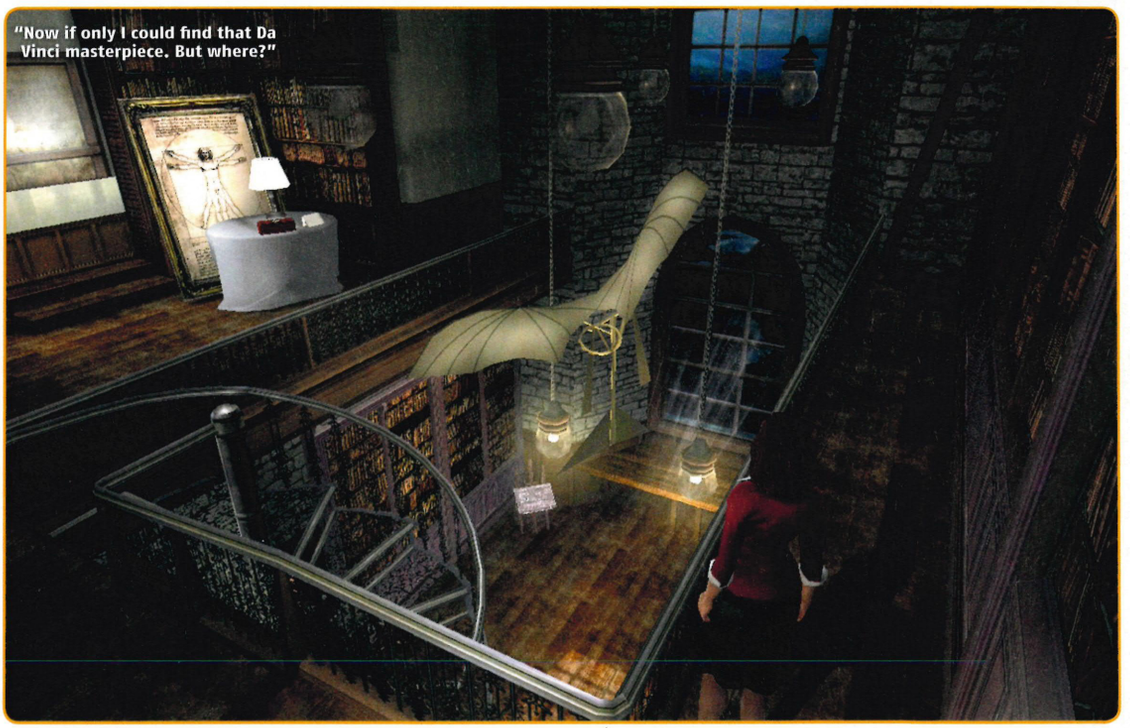
The Gospel Truth

We sift out the truths, half truths and downright crapola from 2,000 years of twitchy-curtained Grail conspiracy theories

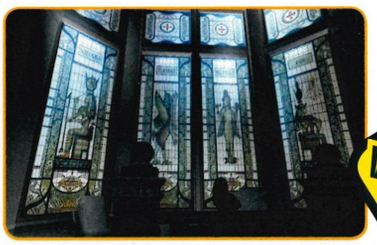




Audrey discovers '*Amelie* was shit' written on the toilet wall



"Now if only I could find that Da Vinci masterpiece. But where?"



It's not all about moving blocks and cracking codes. Now run!

SPOILER WARNING! DECODE WITH A MIRROR

All this, over a wine glass?

But really, why is the Holy Grail such a big deal in The Da Vinci Code? Allow us to put it in nutshell for you...

In The Da Vinci Code everyone is desperate to get his or her hands on a supposedly real relic called the Holy Grail. Most people believe that the Grail is the cup that Jesus drank from during the last supper. However, in The Da Vinci Code, it's suggested that the Grail is something a lot more significant than just a piece of Aramaic crockery. If you believe Dan Brown and certain academics, the Grail is actually a piece of knowledge – proof, in fact, that Jesus and ex-hooker Mary Magdalene were married and that after his crucifixion, she was whisked away to France to give birth. Which, if it were true would a) mean that the descendants of JC himself are currently eating baguettes and complaining about Euro Disney and b) kind of undermine the whole second coming thing and pretty much balls up Christianity.

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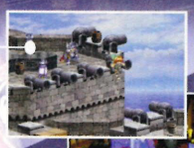

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WANT TO SEE SOMETHING *REALLY* SCARY?

With the imminent release of the *Silent Hill* movie and a crypt's worth of horror games in production, all things gruesome are back in fashion. Here, we check out the latest PlayStation shockers. (Warning: more scary little girls inside)

Format: FILM | Out: 21 APRIL

SILENT HILL THE MOVIE

"Most of the time a movie based on a game exploits just the title and does a massacre," says Christophe Gans, director and writer of the forthcoming *Silent Hill* movie. And you know what Christophe? Even though your Franglais makes for a slightly odd quote, we agree. What with the laughably inept Uwe Bolls-ups, (*House Of The Dead*, *Alone In The Dark* and *BloodRayne*) and the decidedly B-grade stylings of Andrzej Bartkowiak's take on first-person shooter *Doom*, it's pretty clear that in the past, using games as the foundation for a film has been a poisoned chalice.

Can Gans buck this seemingly unalterable trend? Possibly. Konami's *Silent Hill* team were involved in talks with the French director for five years before agreeing to let him make the film – presumably concerned that their series was in danger of getting ruined in the process. With the film now completed, the result looks like being a technically adept experimental horror flick, less focused on glossy gore and more on the scabrous, filthy aura the games themselves evoke. For gamers, that has to be a good thing.

The movie takes elements from the first three games, but the story's core is based on the first. It stars Radha Mitchell (*Phone Booth*, *Pitch Black*) as Rose, a desperate mother who visits Silent Hill in the hope of finding a faith healer to cure her daughter Sharon's terminal illness. After 'misplacing' Sharon (oops!), Rose joins forces with a cop called Cybil to search for her in the unearthly Silent Hill. Elsewhere, Sean Bean turns up as Rose's husband and Deborah Kara Unger appears as Dahlia, a witch who inhabits the town.

Silent Hill: Come for the foggy lakeside views, stay for the zombie nurses and gibbering meatbags

Just as *Silent Hill* shifts between light and dark, Gans has built different versions of the film set to represent the frequent lapses between fog (to represent purgatory) and dark (yep, you guessed right: hell). Further artistic flair is shown in the decision to shoot the dark sequences in High Definition, so that detail can still be made out in low light. Cue lots of traipsing around dark corridors lit only with a lighter or a torch – as you do for most of the game. Furthermore, certain sections have been filmed with a crane camera from behind the character to give the familiar third-person perspective seen in the games – a visual trick that openly winks at fans of the series.

THE FILM IS LESS FOCUSED ON GORE AND MORE ON THE SCABROUS, FILTHY AURA THE GAMES THEMSELVES EVOKE

While Gans plays down the film's gore in favour of 'disturbing imagery' (think David Lynch rather than Sam Raimi) at least three of the game's repugnant monstrosities have been confirmed lurking in the bowels of the town. The aggressively masked 'Pyramid Head' (so notorious he's even got his own Wikipedia entry), the faceless slithering nurses and the man in the veiny sac from *Silent Hill 2* will all make unsettling appearances.

Although the *Silent Hill* series will ultimately have to update its now-dated survival horror mechanics for PS3, it's still recognised as the most intelligent and genuinely frightening PlayStation chiller. (Check our feature on p115 for more.) Gans seems to have nailed the unpleasantness of the series and, above all, his film will offer a fitting cinematic tribute to six years of groundbreaking PlayStation horror.

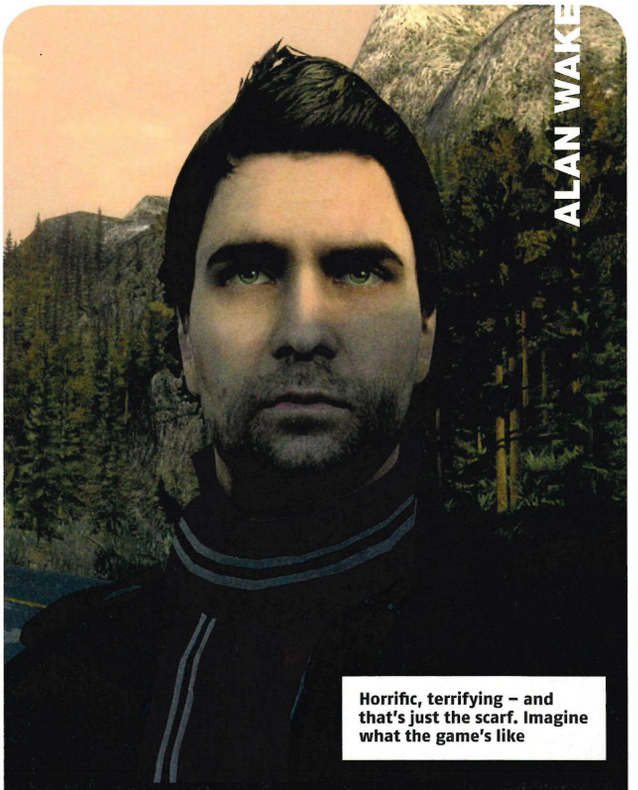
Rose is trying to find her daughter. And cough up a fish bone

IT'S ART!

"F*** him." That's the response of *Silent Hill* director Christophe Gans to American film critic Roger Ebert. Ebert claimed that games were "inherently inferior to film and literature". Gans replied with "Most people who despise a new medium are afraid to die" and "It was impossible for me to do *Silent Hill* and not be serious about it". It bodes well for the film, especially as Gans confirmed his gaming credentials by describing Nintendo classic "*Legend Of Zelda* as "beautiful" and *Doom* as "poetic".

Pyramid Head's in the film. Good news for us, not so much the cast

Sean Bean's character was only added after studio bosses protested about the all female cast



ALAN WAKE

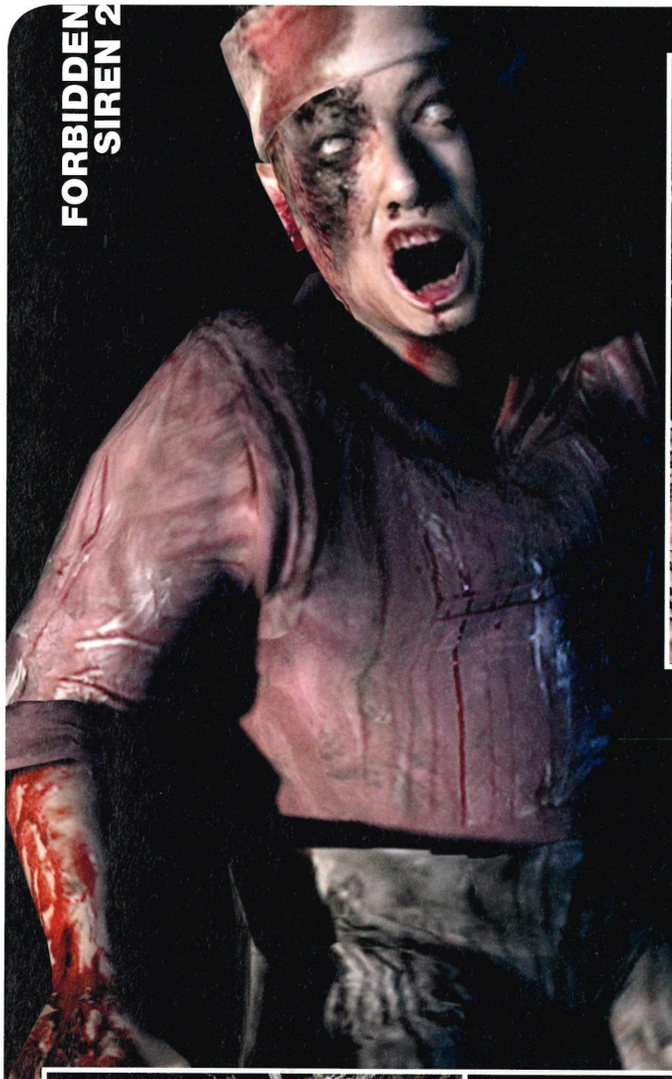
Horrific, terrifying – and that's just the scarf. Imagine what the game's like

Format: PS3 | Out: 2007

ALAN WAKE

The makers of *Max Payne* return with a game seemingly named after a door-to-door salesman. The premise however, is far from mundane: a horror novelist takes retreat in a remote town in the Washington woods after his wife and muse disappears in mysterious circumstances. Initially unable to sleep (clumsily hinted at in the title – *A Wake*?) he finds it impossible to pen his literary nasties until he meets a new woman who reawakens his knack for writing. Only this time it's unclear whether his novel is fiction or reality, as his world melts into nightmarish visions every time the sun sets. As a result, Alan will spend much of his time seeking out light as a means of safety. *Alan Wake* represents a welcome change from zombie head-splitting, taking a more subtle approach to terror in the vein of *Twin Peaks* with its small town setting and dreamlike visuals. All it needs now is a character that speaks backwards. And some dwarves.

Alan was always first out of Church on Sunday morning



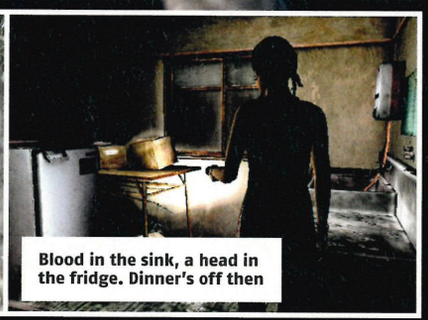
The Shibito attack anyone not transformed into shuffling ghouls

Format: PS2 | Out: JUNE

FORBIDDEN SIREN 2

At its rapidly beating heart, *Forbidden Siren 2* is an old-fashioned survival horror, moulded around the tried and tested *Silent Hill* model. Experienced in either the first or third person, you play as an assortment of Japanese characters, each one in various states of broken-minded terror after they are unexpectedly cast onto a strange island populated by vicious, flesh scoffing demons known as the Shibito. Confusing to the core, the plot constantly leaps from one horrified character to the other, splitting *Forbidden Siren 2* up into quick hits of 'Christ, what the hell was *that*?' gameplay. Eventually the threads tie together, presenting you with a grim revelation about why everything in *Forbidden Siren 2* is so royally messed up.

As if that wasn't psychologically draining enough, the tension is cranked up even higher by *Forbidden Siren 2*'s creepy Sight Jacking system. This unique dynamic (introduced in the original *Forbidden Siren*) allows you to see through the eyes of your deranged enemies as they track you down through the darkness and fog. The sinking feeling you get from seeing yourself slowly appear in your demonic foe's vision is unrivalled by any other horror game.



Blood in the sink, a head in the fridge. Dinner's off then

Format: PS3 | Out: 2007

ALONE IN THE DARK: NEAR DEATH INVESTIGATION

The original survival horror game (it first came out in 1992) that heavily influenced *Silent Hill* and *Resident Evil*, is back on PS3. Using the new hardware's graphical capabilities to render a macabre vision of gothic horror, the contorted landscapes and angular apparitions still owe much to HP Lovecraft. While PS2's sole *Alone In The Dark* game *The New Nightmare* was very much rooted in old-skool scares based on fixed camera angles and minimal environmental interaction, the PS3 version will have free-roaming levels. It's a complete reimagining of the series, so it remains to be seen whether lead character and paranormal investigator Edward Carnby returns or not.

We get the feeling he's not going to stay dead...

The demon elephant: underestimate at your peril

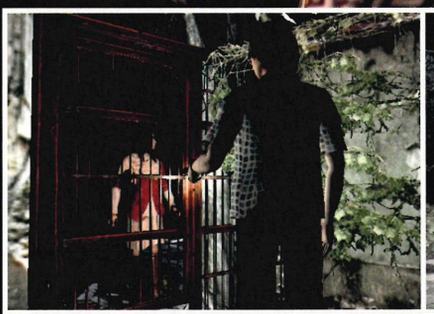
FORBIDDEN FILM

Following in the ghostly footsteps of *The Ring* and *The Grudge*, *Forbidden Siren 2*'s own style of crazy Japan-o-dread is heading to Hollywood. *Spider-Man* director Sam Raimi has scooped up the rights to make a big-screen adaptation, although this was a recent deal, so don't expect to be spilling your popcorn over it any time soon. Chances are it'll be worth waiting for though, as Raimi was responsible for the infamous *Evil Dead* movies, so he's no stranger to shocks and screams.

Enhanced for *Forbidden Siren 2*, Sight Jacking now lets you see through the eyes of animals, so you'll be able to send faithful beasts ahead to scout out any upcoming threats. Oh, and there will be plenty of these, hiding away in the murky darkness of *Forbidden Siren 2*'s visually impressive horror-scapes, ready to be dispatched by a swift shot to the chest or a savage beating with a rusty pipe. The developer has been economical but extremely effective with its use of light, turning the sought after substance into a real tool of terror. Shadows, bright flashes and eerie red glows all combine within the game to create a sense of unshakable menace.

FORBIDDEN SIREN 2'S CREEPY SIGHT JACKING SYSTEM ALLOWS YOU TO SEE THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUR DERANGED ENEMIES

The off-kilter nature of Japanese supernatural horror shines through in *Forbidden Siren 2*, with the Sight Jacking element adding a chilling cinematic twist – you can actually watch yourself get brutalised through the eyes of a killer. One of the most terrifying prospects for 2006? Too right.



"You crack on Dave, I'm taking a dump"

LA's overrun by vamps, and you've gotta stake 'em all

Format: PS3 | Out: TBC

VAMPIRE'S RAIN

Vampire's Rain is the new game from one of the creative luminaries behind *Sonic The Hedgehog* and is far removed from the candy-coloured cartoon world of Sega's most famous creation. In it, vampires have taken over part of LA and, playing as a special operative called John Lloyd, you have to seek them out and issue the garlic and silver bullets. While the fright factor associated with bloodsuckers has been somewhat weakened by the lame *BloodRayne* and *Buffy* games, the makers of *Vampire's Rain* claim to have returned to Vampirism's roots – difficult to kill and able to blend in with normal humans beings undetected. Indeed, an online mode will riff off this with hunters and vampires facing off in a rain-soaked Los Angeles.

Peter Kay's twin sister get's ready for a big night on the town

Format: PS2 | Out: OCTOBER

RULE OF ROSE

Strong horror isn't about gallons of blood and piles of body parts. Proper scares come from confusion, uncertainty and fear, especially when supposedly harmless things are involved. Like children. Creepy, wrong-headed kids are at the heart of this spooky mystery and the lack of obviously monstrous monsters only makes it more unsettling.

It all starts with the heroine Jennifer following one of the freak-sprogs into a gloomy house (obvious mistake #1). From there she's kidnapped and buried alive by kids wearing crude paper bag masks, before waking up on a giant airship – destination unknown. As she explores, the kids haunt her at every turn – slamming doors in her face, making sing-song threats and leading her deeper into the bowels of the ship. Later, as she explores, she picks up a canine companion who can follow simple commands and sniff out useful objects.

Despite an unusual plot, this is a classic survival horror setup. What makes it compelling is its lack of obvious shocks and constantly menacing atmosphere. If it's not going to try and scare you with hideous screaming fiends and buckets of gore, then what *is* it going to do? And what are those demonic rugrats really capable of?

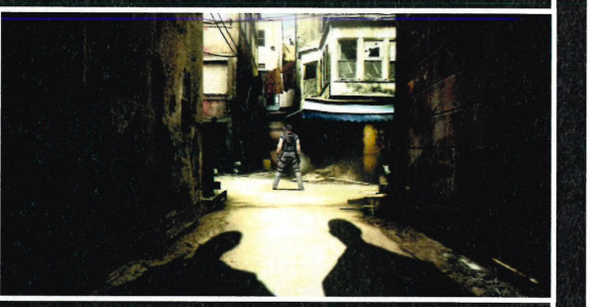
Just a hunch but it's probably not friendly

This is what happens if you don't enforce ASBOs

THREE MORE FRIGHTENERS HEADING TO PS3

DEAD RISING

With the shopping mall setting and hundreds of coffin dodgers on-screen at once, *Dead Rising* is *Dawn Of The Dead* in all but name. Plus, it's genuinely funny to play – with weapons ranging from the expected (shotguns, chainsaws, sledgehammers) to the truly deranged (park benches, handbags and plasma TVs). Chuck in non-linear missions, multiple endings and enough blood to float an ocean liner and you can see why we're hungry for this. Currently Xbox 360 only, but that's likely to change... Make it happen Capcom, or else.



RESIDENT EVIL 5

To recap, sun-bleached desert setting, *28 Days Later*-quick zombies and according to the director Jun Takeuchi, graphics way better than those seen in the teaser trailer. Although unconfirmed, only a fool would bet against the star being Chris Redfield – who returns from the original *Resident Evil*, as do a number of the development team. There's still an awful long way to go, but the new game will look to build on the success and revised control/camera systems developed for *Resi 4*. However, Takeuchi suggests that *Resi 5* will mark a "major turning point in the series." Bad news: it's ages away.

F.E.A.R.

The crowbarred acronym actually stands for First Encounter Assault Recon, but all you really need to know is that this is one of the flashiest PC shooters of last year. And word on the whisper vine is that a sequel is heading to PS3. There's been no nod whatsoever from Vivendi, but the developer's own website now lists vacancies for staff on a forthcoming 'cutting edge, first-person action game'. You do the math. *F.E.A.R.* was well received by the personal computer crowd, thanks to its intelligent enemies and slick shooting model. Expect *much* more when the game's inevitably confirmed.

JUST KEEP TELLING YOURSELF "IT'S ONLY A GAME"

SPUN OFF ON A TIGHT LEFT HANDER THROUGH THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

SWAPPED PAINT IN BARCELONA WITH THE ZONDA AROUND THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE

OVERTOOK ALFA ROMEO GT TO TAKE FIRST PLACE

HIT RAILINGS ALONG RAINEY CURVE

GOT SIDESWIPED BY THE MERCEDES IN EUROPE

OUTBREAKED THE CORVETTE INTO ANDRETTI HAIRPIN

OIL LEAKING FROM BOTTOMING OUT OVER THE CORKSCREW

REAR ENDED TUSCAN WHILST ADMIRING THE LONDON EYE

Evolution GT

THIS IS NO SIMULATION

3+ www.pegi.info

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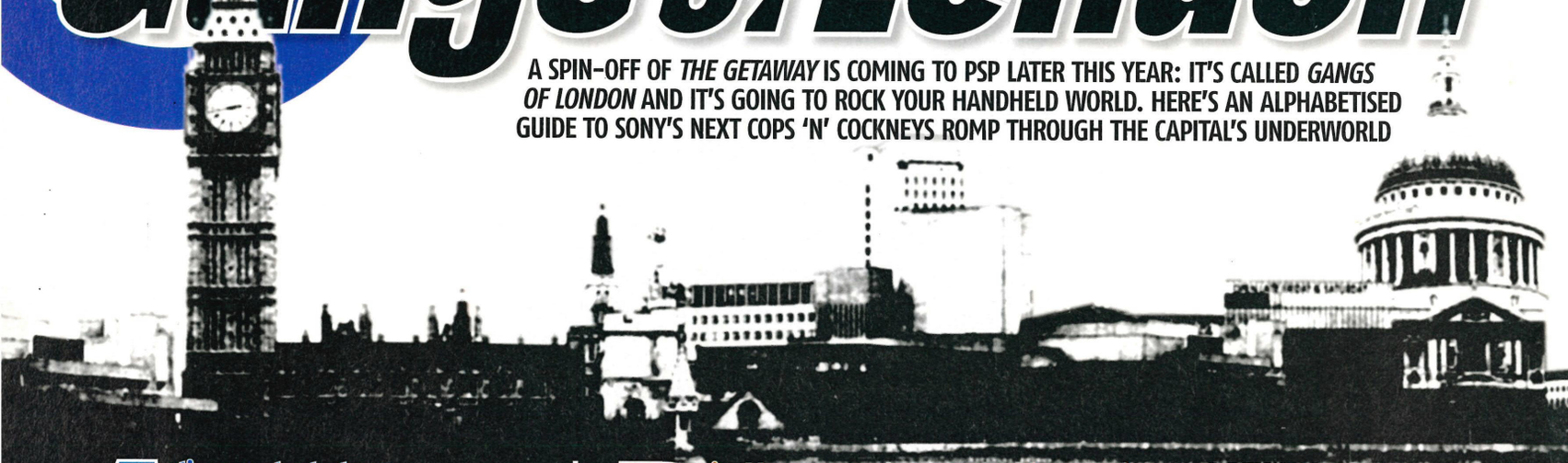
A-Z of Gangs of London™

WORDS: BEN WILSON

A SPIN-OFF OF *THE GETAWAY* IS COMING TO PSP LATER THIS YEAR: IT'S CALLED *GANGS OF LONDON* AND IT'S GOING TO ROCK YOUR HANDHELD WORLD. HERE'S AN ALPHABETISED GUIDE TO SONY'S NEXT COPS 'N' COCKNEYS ROMP THROUGH THE CAPITAL'S UNDERWORLD



Action meets strategy

Gangs Of London isn't like conventional story-based crime games such as *GTA*, *Driver* or the previous *Getaways*. Here you're in control of an entire gang, of which there are five to choose from: Cockneys, Triads, Pakistanis, Russians and Yardies. Each have their own unique backgrounds and motivations, which you need to understand if your wideboys want to dominate organised crime in London.

Big, Mr

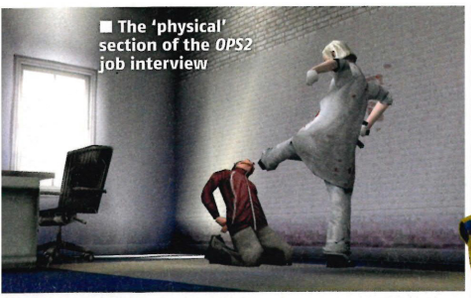
The top honour among London's criminals, awarded to the capital's most notorious gangster. Getting that honour bestowed upon one of your men is your main aim in *Gangs Of London*. Among the characters who stand in your way are a brother and sister killing combo called the Angel Assassins, and The Snowman, a torturer who specialises in amputation. He's not so dangerous during the summer months, though.

Crafty enemies

Your enemies aren't just idiots in knockoff sportswear – well, okay, they *are*, but they're capable of thinking tactically and using several different methods to ambush your lads. A typical example of the game's intelligence comes when you pick a fight with a rival hoodlum. Depending on the circumstances, he might whip out a weapon, jump in the nearest vehicle and try to run you over, or just high tail it out of there as quickly as possible. Bottler.

Driving

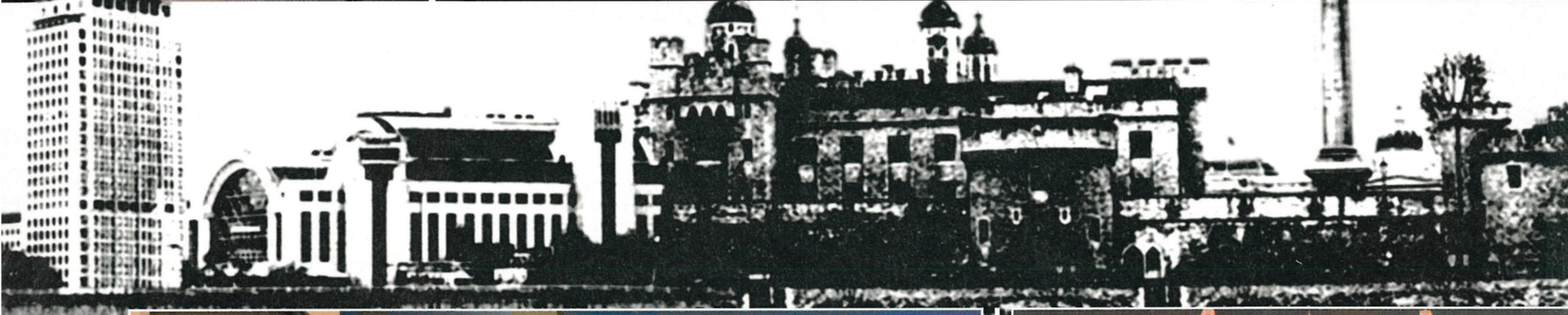
There's plenty of it, and the type of gang you choose will affect the vehicles available to you. For instance, the Triads use top-of-the-range Asian cars which are seriously fast, but not as robust as some of the rides owned by rival gangs. So while they're great for race and escape missions, they're not so handy if you need to ram rivals into oblivion.

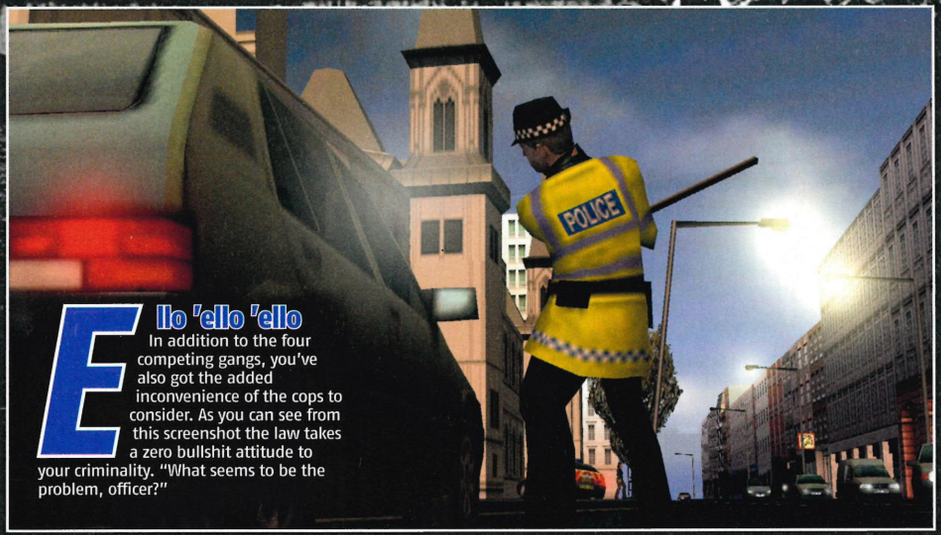


■ The 'physical' section of the *OPS2* job interview

■ The Beastie Boys' latest video shoot ended in tragedy

■ This won't be around long if you park it in King's Cross





Ello 'ello 'ello

In addition to the four competing gangs, you've also got the added inconvenience of the cops to consider. As you can see from this screenshot the law takes a zero bullshit attitude to your criminality. "What seems to be the problem, officer?"

Free roaming

You aren't forced to follow the storyline at all times – instead, you can choose to explore the city on your own terms. Choose your own mission objectives, vehicle, weather conditions, and police levels. However, the gangs are still out there somewhere, so wander into dodgy areas at your own risk. (That reminds us of a fateful school trip diversion into Soho.)

Game sharing

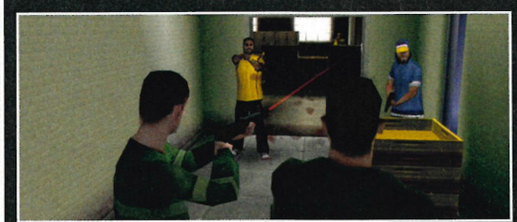
How's this for pushing the PSP's technology? If two friends with *Gangs Of London* link their machines it will generate a unique level set on the Tube, based on the serial numbers of the machines. So you might have to escape a swarm of cops at Oxford Circus armed only with a baseball bat, or take out some crooks on the northbound platform at Waterloo using a machine gun. Varying objectives, characters and weaponry means that no two PSPs will ever create an identical game.

Hot-swapping

Not a new form of speed dating, but rather the way you manage your various gang members in real time. You'll issue commands to your troops on the move and switch between differently armed characters in an instant using this slick new system.

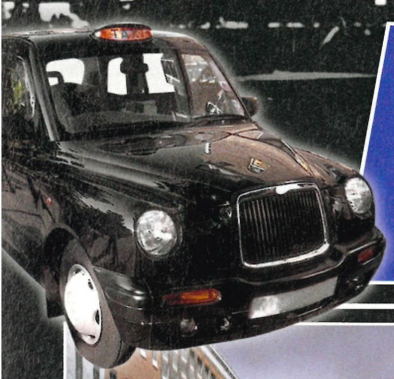
Immediacy

Sony's London Studio has done its best to create a game that can be dipped into for anything from five minutes to five hours. Missions cut straight to the point once triggered with almost no needless driving from A to B and back again, and every game mode we've mentioned is accessible at the touch of a button.



Judge, jury and executioner

Your decisions have a direct impact on your gang's actions, and getting to grips with squad play is likely to be vital. Think *Rainbow Six*-style strategy, as you position one man at the back lobbing grenades while a bloke at the front sprays machine gun fire and another sneaks around the side. Get it wrong and you're likely to start wiping out your own men – and inevitably that's not the best way to inspire unswerving loyalty.



Knowledge, The

Did you know that black-cab drivers have to spend two years learning their way around London town before they can earn their taxi licence? You do now. This exam is known as The Knowledge and *Gangs Of London* has its very own version, which will help you get to know every side-street and landmark in the city. Sadly, there's no option to pick up passengers and charge 25 quid for a short drive along Charing Cross Road. "South of the river? At this time of night? You must be mad!"

Loading times

Sony reckons there shouldn't be any at all. The game's assets have been completely tailored to PSP so *Gangs Of London* doesn't stream from the UMD at all once it's been loaded up. The framerate is solid and the draw distance huge. Basically, it's all gravy.

Music

Rather than accompanying your crime spree with the expected selection of officially licensed popular music, the soundtrack to *Gangs Of London* has been written in-house by a pair named Jackie Tetley and Alastair Lindsay. It's a risk, but Sony insists that the score suits the action perfectly, changing subtly as you encounter different gangs.

Navarro, Daniel

Gangs Of London's game director tells us that his favourite moment developing the game was "the first time I saw a character who I was trying to kill get in a random traffic car and escape when he saw he was low on health". Remember what we said about the AI characters' craftiness? That's a perfect example.

Oxford Street

Ever caned along it in a high-performance sports car with a rival gang member's daughter tied up in the back? Didn't think so. But you will in *Gangs Of London*.

Pub games

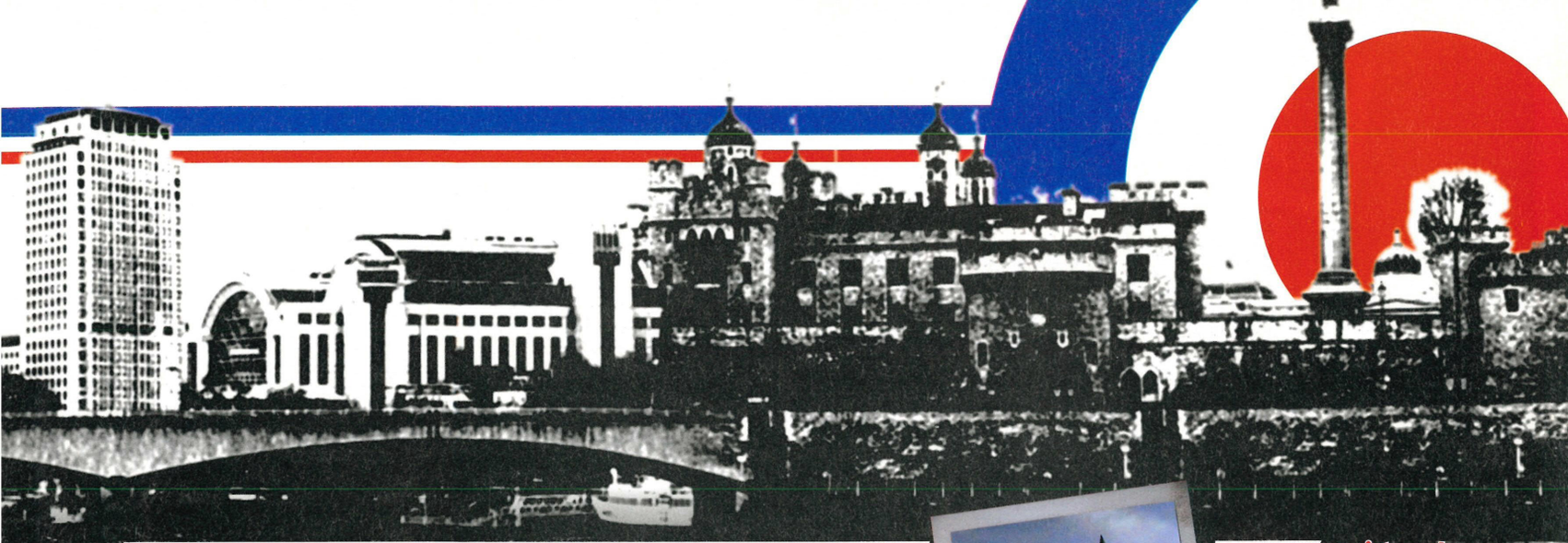
Brilliantly, you can choose to hang out in the boozer rather than risk a brutal execution on the mean streets of Clapham. Here your every need is catered for (bag of nuts excepted) with mini-games including darts, pool and skittles – all of which are also available in multiplayer flavours.

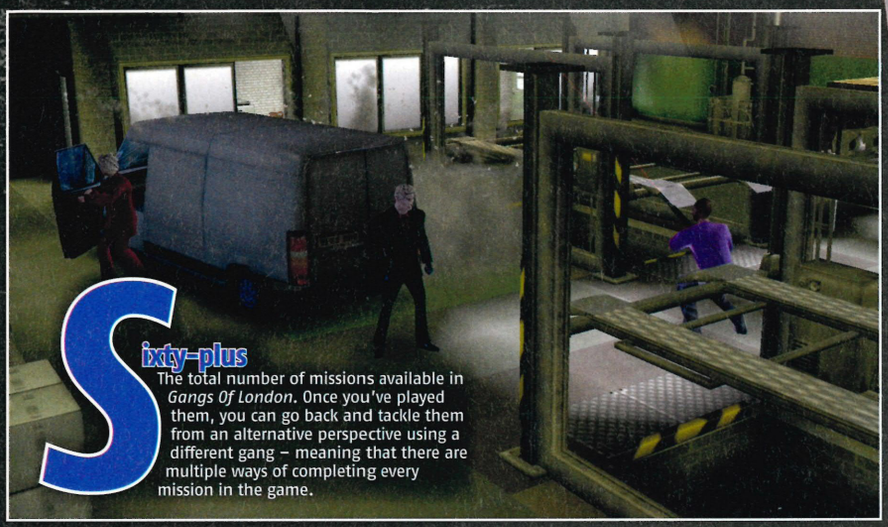
Quit talking about *The Getaway*

This isn't a port or a sequel, but a completely unique game set in the same world. While *The Getaway* was mainly driven by its sense of cinema, the onus in *Gangs Of London* is entirely on gameplay. Instead of filmic cut-scenes, the new game tells its stories through graphic novel-style panels.

RPG

Gangs Of London is one... sort of. Turn-based battles enable you to play against up to four human players on a single PSP by attacking and defending patches of London turf viewed on an interactive map. Once each player has decided on their move, the (previously secret) actions are all carried out simultaneously, meaning there's huge scope for bluffing and gamesmanship. For example, you might send ten of your men to take Covent Garden, but you won't know whether the enemy reinforces or escapes until you've committed to the attack. It's like the board game *Risk*, but played with your mates on the streets of the capital, and using chavs rather than Napoleonic infantrymen.





Sixty-plus

The total number of missions available in *Gangs Of London*. Once you've played them, you can go back and tackle them from an alternative perspective using a different gang – meaning that there are multiple ways of completing every mission in the game.

Tourist mode

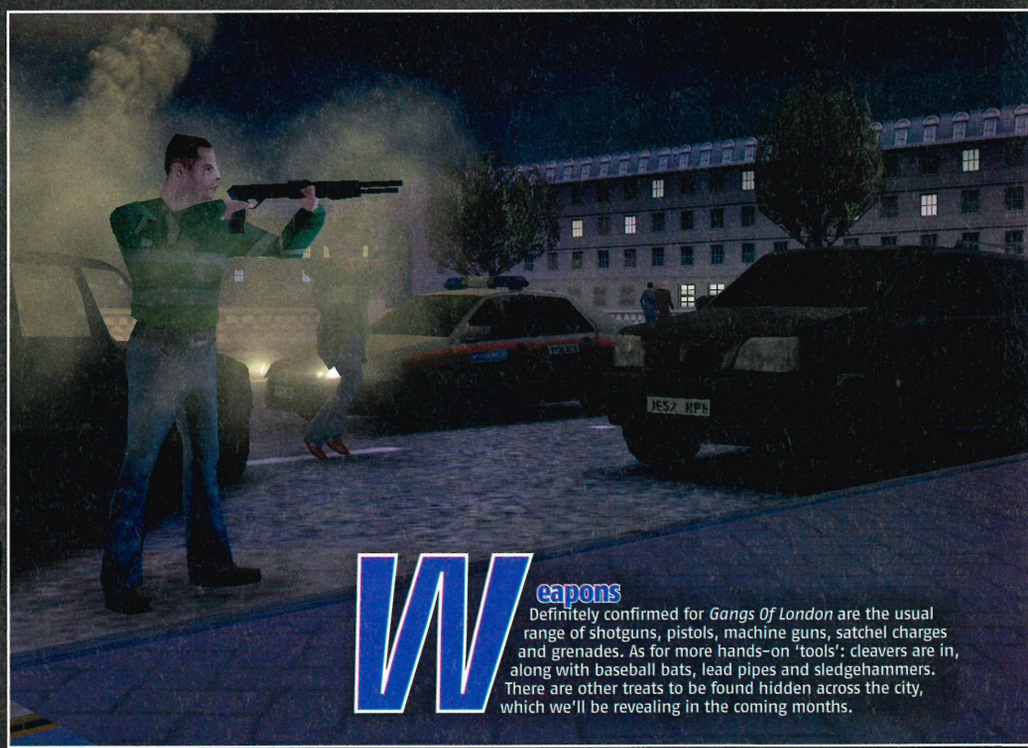
Ever wanted to know what it's like to be an American tourist, eating at a dodgy steak house every night while humming *The Star-Spangled Banner* and trying not to let that Bud-belly burst the top button on your shorts? *Gangs Of London* lets you to do exactly that (well, near enough). At the push of a button you can activate Tourist mode, where you unlock extras by exploring the city and photographing its most famous landmarks.

Undercover

You need to infiltrate London's criminal underbelly if your gang is going to rule the streets. But will the 'faces' you befriend trust you or stab you in the back (literally) at the first available opportunity?

Vehicles

Over the course of previous *Getaway*, *Driver* and *GTA* games we've driven just about every modern vehicle imaginable, but the *Gangs Of London* line-up is still mightily impressive. There are 34 different types found in the game, ranging from military vehicles and sports cars to black cabs, big red buses and ice cream vans.

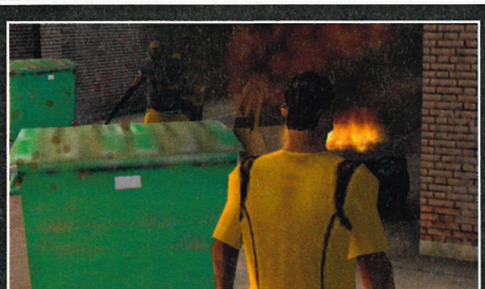


Weapons

Definitely confirmed for *Gangs Of London* are the usual range of shotguns, pistols, machine guns, satchel charges and grenades. As for more hands-on 'tools': cleavers are in, along with baseball bats, lead pipes and sledgehammers. There are other treats to be found hidden across the city, which we'll be revealing in the coming months.

Xmas 2006

The game's out in the autumn, which means plenty of time for friends or family to pick it up for you in time for Chrimbo. Get it on your list for old whitebeard now.



Your turf

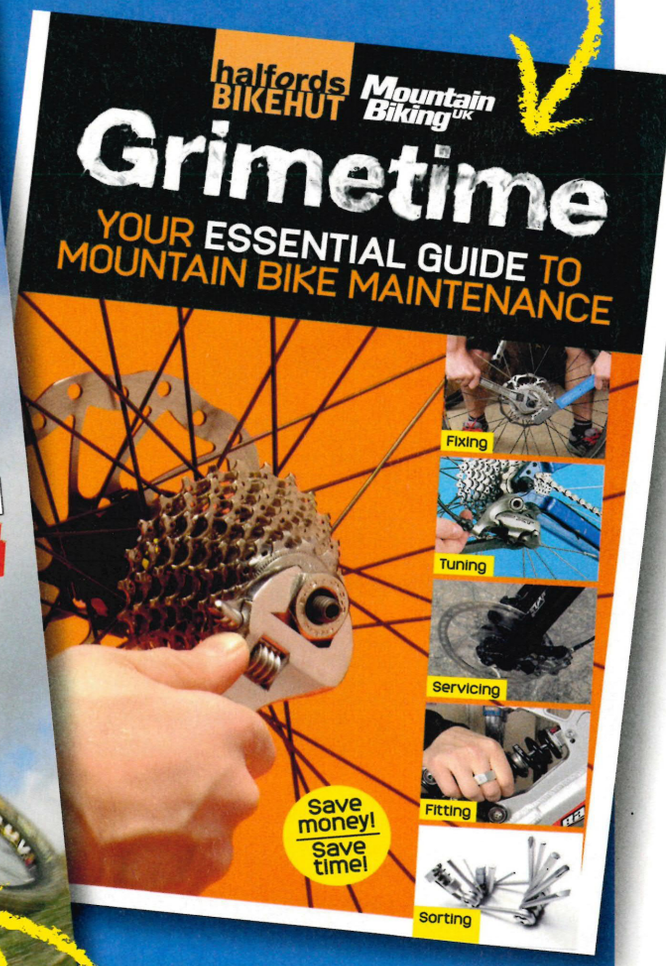
Ensure that it's well protected before you even think about invading anywhere else. Even a criminal mastermind needs a home to go back to.

Zebra crossings

Don't forget to stop at them to let pedestrians cross. Or alternatively, use the poor defenceless people going about their daily business for a spot of target practice. We won't judge you, but your conscience might. *Conscience*? Just kidding.

FREE halfords BIKEHUT WORKSHOP MANUAL

With the April issue of Mountain Biking UK



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- Grass roots trials
- Top dirt jumpers switch to freeride
- Why XC is still cool

WIN! AN MTB HOLIDAY TO CANADA WORTH £3,000

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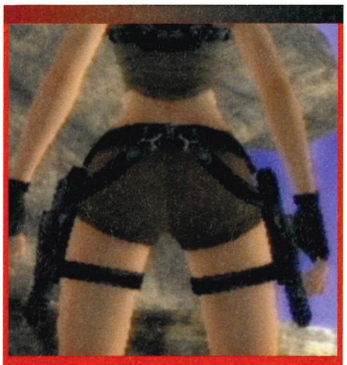
review

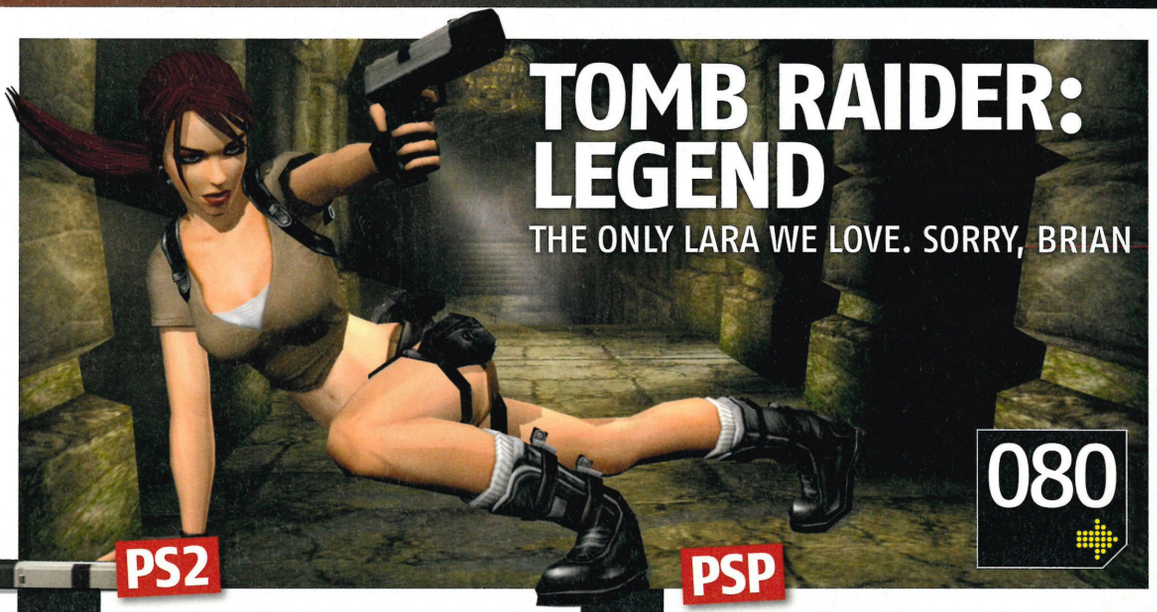
THE ONLY REVIEWS SECTION YOU CAN TRUST – AND THAT'S OFFICIAL



Thanks, they *are* nice buns. So, we're one quarter of the way through 2006 and, for our money, *Black* is still the early front-runner in the Game Of The Year stakes. Given the heavyweight competition, that's some feat. Having seen off rivals *Driver Parallel Lines* and *OutRun 2006* last month, this issue presents an altogether sexier challenger. Can Lara knock Criterion's incredible shooter from the Team *OPS2* top spot? Find out in our exclusive review, starting overleaf.

As for PSP, last year *Liberty City Stories* and *Lumines* were the standout games, but this year, things seem to be improving on a monthly basis. Portable *OutRun*, *Football Manager* and *Splinter Cell* are all put through the *OPS2* mixer, and one of 'em earns the precious silver badge. Find out which in a few short pages' time.

Ben Wilson,
Games editor



TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

THE ONLY LARA WE LOVE. SORRY, BRIAN

080

PS2

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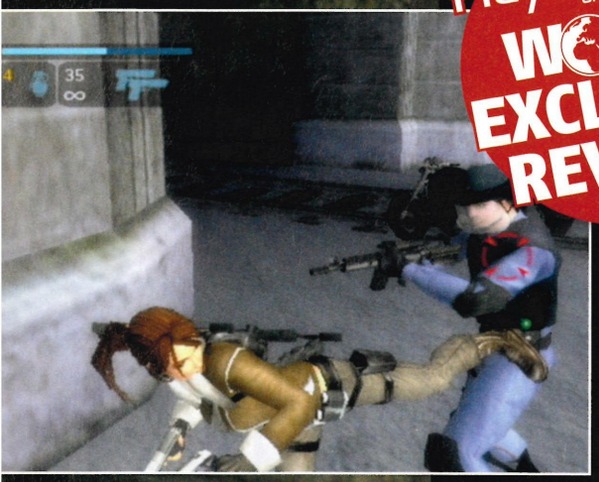
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!



ON THE DVD

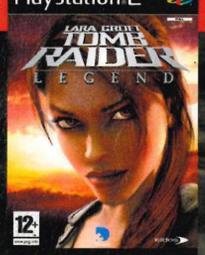
bronze

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

Lara's back but is she still a national treasure?

PlayStation 2



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DETAILS

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DEVELOPER CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
PRICE £39.99
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OUT 7 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.TOMBRAIDER.COM
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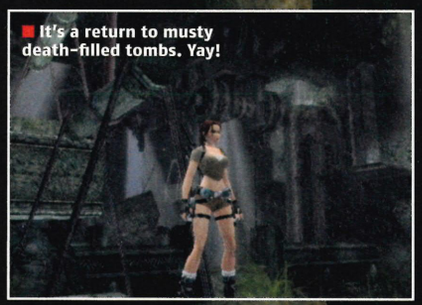
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

One of the most iconic videogame stars returns for her second PS2 adventure. Lara's trying to solve an archaeological mystery from her family's past.

Finally. The moment we've been waiting for has arrived. At this point we've already climbed Bolivian mountains, jumped motorcycles between Japanese skyscrapers and escaped a burning rope bridge as a helicopter gunship blew it out from under our feet. We've fought heavily armed mercenaries, the Yakuza, and the occasional leopard – all in the first few levels. But none of that matters now. We've reached a point that will define *Tomb Raider: Legend*. Something we've been anticipating since first picking up the controller. We've just found our first big tomb.

Having leapt spike pits and spear traps to infiltrate the depths of an ancient African temple, Lara steps through a doorway. As she does so the camera lifts into the sky, soaring through an immense underground space. It's a room of overwhelming proportions. The camera rises up through the damp air; past crumbling ledges, collapsed walkways and shafts of sunlight picking out flitting insects. It comes to rest in the roof, revealing our intended destination. A thought forms: 'how the hell are we supposed to get up *there*?' But then we already know the answer. It's why we came here in the first place, and it's what *Tomb Raider* is all about: the challenge of conquering massive, deadly environments, testing wits and



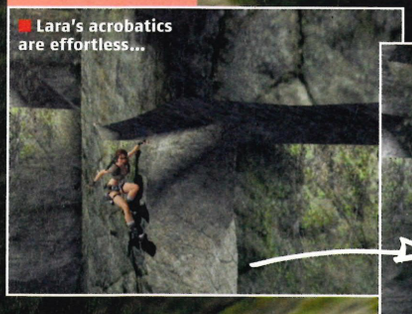
It's a return to musty death-filled tombs. Yay!

HOW THE HELL ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GET UP *THERE?*

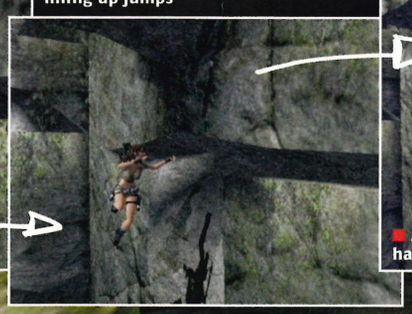
grip in order to scale impossible heights. Jumping up to the first handhold, we start to climb. Lara's back and all is well with the world.

WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU

But things have altered considerably since 2003's lacklustre *Angel Of Darkness*. For one thing, Crystal Dynamics – the people behind the *Legacy Of Kain* series – have taken over development duties from creators Core Design. And the changes are obvious. This is a complete reinvention, a reworking from the ground up. The Dynamics team have taken ideas and inspiration from numerous games such as *Resident Evil 4*, *God Of War* and *Prince Of Persia* and combined them all to create a totally new type of experience for Lara. Perhaps most tellingly of all, one of its biggest influences has come from EA's James Bond games. This is an action adventure designed to reward the casual gamer. Where there used to be sprawling, monumental levels that could take dedicated players hours to master, there are now tightly designed, carefully paced sections. A balanced mixed of action, exploration and driving. All the familiar elements you expect are present and correct – the gunplay, the archaeology and the awe-inspiring environments – but they've all been repackaged in a big budget, explosion-heavy, Hollywood-style remake. It's an Americanised, high-energy reinterpretation. The purists on the forums with names like 'I_Love_L@r@2468' might have trouble adjusting to such sweeping changes, but that's their loss. It is a huge departure from the old *Raider* games but it's a thrill-crammed, globe-hopping tale regardless, and one that grabs you from the second it starts and doesn't let go until it

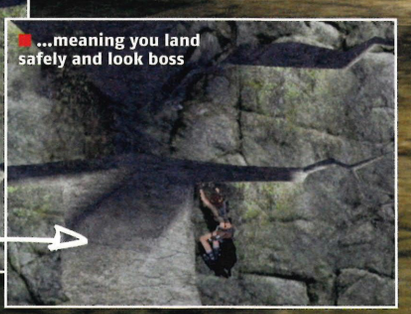


Lara's acrobatics are effortless...

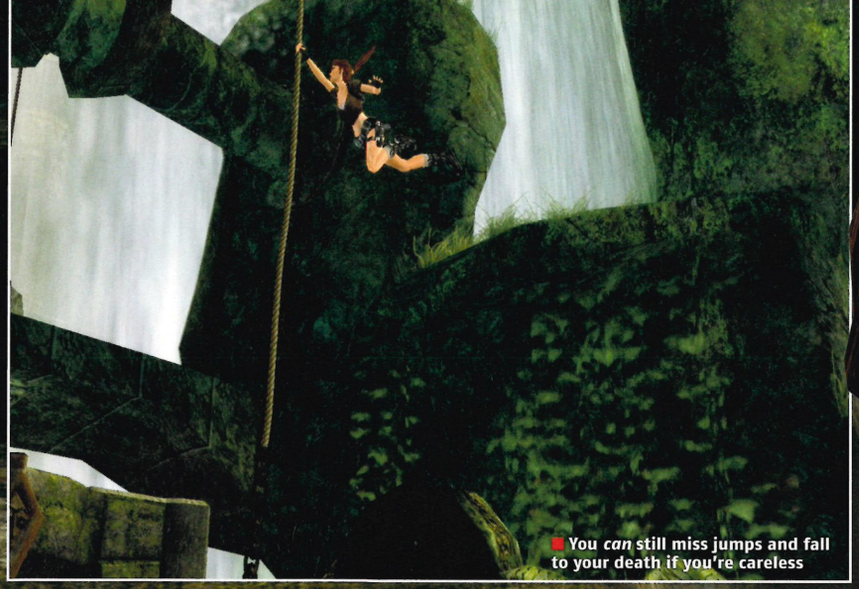


...you don't have to spend ages lining up jumps

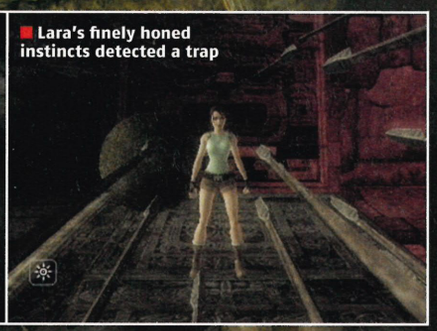
...her outstretched hands grab any edge...



...meaning you land safely and look boss



You *can* still miss jumps and fall to your death if you're careless



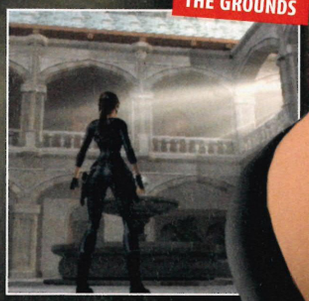
Lara's finely honed instincts detected a trap

THIS IS MY MANOR

Beautiful English country home. All mod cons

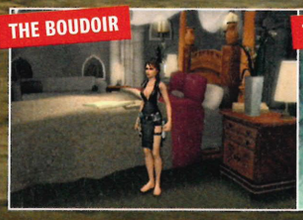
We imagine Lara lounges around at home in a baggy sweat shirt, watching *Desperate Housewives*. But Croft Manor isn't just a place to relax. It's a self-contained level which you can visit at any time to explore. The best bit is the excellent gym used to test out your acrobatic skills, but it's also littered with secret passages and hidden compartments to discover. Explore a little and you'll discover 'Croft Crests' that help unlock extra content like new outfits to wear when replaying levels. Or try on in Lara's bedroom. Oh God.

THE GROUNDS



THE GYM

THE BOUDOIR



THE POOL

LARA LADIES

Lara isn't real. That hurts, but over the years these girls have been there to soften the blow

For every game there's been a pretty young thing to make promotional appearances. This time it's the job of the lovely Karima Adebibe, below. She's a 20-year-old former Top Shop assistant who we're not entirely convincingly told is taking archaeology and elocution lessons plus weapons training to become a real life tomb raider. On the basis that Angelina is a 10, we'd give Karima 8.

reaches its spectacular conclusion. Which actually comes a little too soon, but more of that in a moment.

"I LIKE THE WAY YOU MOVE"

One of the most obvious changes is that the action now occurs in a far more organic, realistic environment. The rigid grid-based structures that built the old *Tomb Raider* levels have been replaced by a world unrestrained by blocky inflexibility. Similarly, the old turn-on-the-spot style of control has been usurped by a far more elegant third-person setup. Because of this, there's now an unprecedented freedom of movement. Lara can run, jump, swing and leap with a speed and grace that, should they ever meet, would leave the Prince of Persia gobsmacked (and slightly aroused). Her lack of inhibition is exhilarating. On the larger climbs, as Lara scales temples, mountains or buildings, it's possible to fling her from ledge to rope with what *looks* like utterly reckless abandon, stringing long sequences of moves together with unbroken agility. She's also sporting a new magnetic grapple: a portable rope that attaches to gleaming metal objects in the environment. With it Lara can swing over otherwise uncrossable chasms and also pull distant platforms to within easy jumping range.

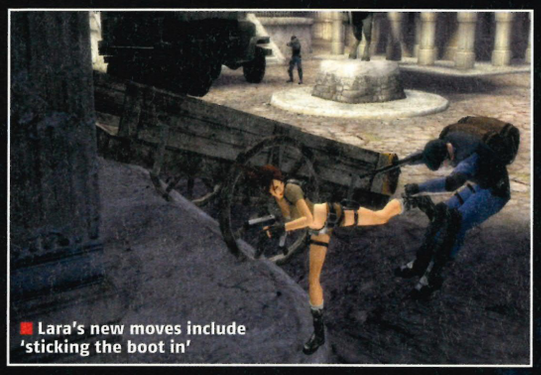
The impressive mobility is made possible thanks to several subtle gameplay tweaks. For example, Lara now leaps with a single outstretched hand, so she can grab any surface regardless of the angle she strikes it. You no longer have to worry about hitting an edge perfectly; you just have to hit it, period. Land at too steep an angle and you're rewarded with a theatrical swing as Lara steadies her grip. Even if you do totally balls-up a jump, it's still not instant death. Badly timed jumps leave Lara hanging precariously by her fingertips as △ flashes overhead. Tap the button in time and she strengthens her grip, saving that slender neck from a bone-liquidising plummet. There's also an almost imperceptible auto-aiming effect as you jump. As long as you're more or less on target you'll hit the mark. You'll never notice it

TEAM LARA

Meet the people behind the legend

Lara's not alone this time; back at Croft Manor she's got her own personal support team and a few friends scattered around the world. They relay vital information and instructions over Lara's headset as the game progresses. It's mostly useful stuff and it's funny listening to them panic every time Lara hurls herself into an abyss, but we could do without Zip's overly macho 'Ye-haws' every single time something goes boom.

The motor bike sections are simple but action-packed



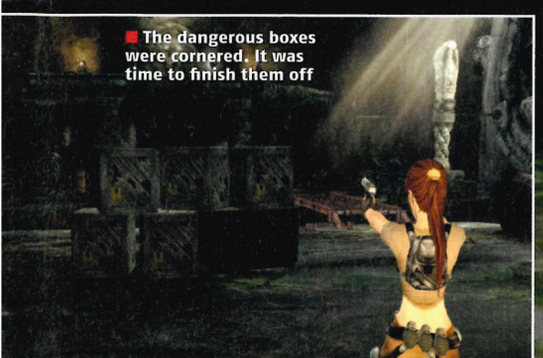
Lara's new moves include 'sticking the boot in'

(unless you're really looking for it) and careless leaping is still rewarded with a brief scream and a crunchy thud. But it does mean you don't have to stop and meticulously line up each move. It makes exploring a smooth, exhilarating experience with little in the way of frustrating or repetitive cock-ups.

YOU CAN LOOK DOWN

This new streamlined style of movement is both a blessing and a curse. It allows you to shift like never before, producing rapid, breathtaking acrobatics, but in doing so it has removed a great deal of threat from the environment. You can throw Lara around with very little fear of falling. There are moments when unexpected rocks fall or platforms collapse but they're rare and overall the risk of a sudden messy end on a forgotten rocky floor is minimal. There's also a surprisingly linear level design meaning there's always a logical progression from one platform to the next, and as such, you never really get lost. It's still an amazing experience to be back-flipping from a pole to a rope hundreds of feet in the air, but unlike previous *Tomb Raiders* you no longer have to spend hours practising the same small section until you get it right. You'll need two attempts; three at most.

Things are made even less complicated by abundant hints. There's an endless supply of on-screen tips while Zip and Alister, Lara's new back-up team back at Croft Manor, continuously chip in with chatter and advice via headset. It keeps things moving and there's funny dialogue in places but it can be frustrating to have everything constantly explained. For example, when we were faced with having to clear an electrified obstacle we were immediately told to use the magnetic grapple because the cable was insulated – we weren't even given the chance to work it out for ourselves. Thanks guys, how do we breathe again?



The dangerous boxes were cornered. It was time to finish them off

TAKE AIM

Compensating for Legend's overprotective handholding are frequent doses of combat to keep you on your toes. This is a much more action heavy adventure than previous instalments. Climbing and exploring is broken up with violent fighting sections, and most levels involve regular switches between travel and conflict. Lara often faces off against hordes of attacking opponents, spraying bullets and lobbing grenades wildly as chunks of scenery

Obsessed with anything shiny, Lara robs the world's biggest marble

TOMB RAIDER IN NUMBERS

260
creatures killed in the first *Tomb Raider* game

194
of which were animals on the endangered species list

6
were people

5m
Google hits for *Tomb Raider*

16,947
members discussing all the old games at www.tombraiderforums.com

$450m
Combined gross of both *Tomb Raider* movies

7
real women have appeared as Lara Croft excluding Angelina Jolie

2
of whom were Dutch

1
of whom was really called Lara

PSP

MINI *RAIDER*, NEW TRICKS

The PSP version of *Tomb Raider: Legend* is almost identical to the PS2 version. There's only a few minor changes to the controls. What is different, however, are a host of mini-games (called Tomb Trials) and multiplayer options. The WiFi multiplayer includes all sorts of deathmatch and adversarial challenges, the best of which is hide and seek. Two players each hide a treasure in a level and then race against each other to be the first to find their opponent's artefact.

Lara's grappling hook has multiple uses

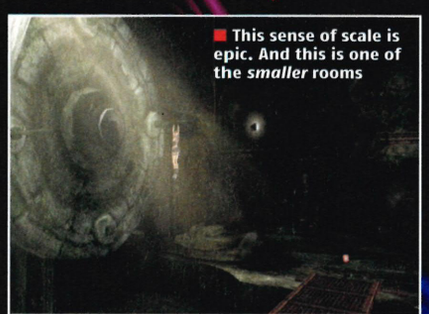
crash down on the bad guys' heads. She certainly has no issue with slaughtering a small platoon's worth of men in every stage.

One thing that remains unchanged is Lara's distinctive fighting style and her twin Desert Eagle pistols. As ever, combat is a frenetic mix of Olympian gymnastics and deadly gunplay as Lara leaps, dives, somersaults and backflips while drilling hired goons. Considering how much she moves around, the targeting is excellent. There's a solid, dependable lock which you can switch smoothly with simple flicks of the analogue stick. Tap Ⓐ as well and you can shoot barrels or trigger environmental kills. And, when you're not pinging around the screen like a homicidal Chinese acrobat, R3 activates a precise over-the-shoulder aim for that 'personal' touch. It is a shame, though, that the weapon selection is pretty poor. There's a meaty, but far too short-ranged, shotgun and a novelty-value-only grenade launcher. The only practical armaments are the two indistinguishable machine guns. Their range provides a valuable tactical advantage and makes them the only real choice.

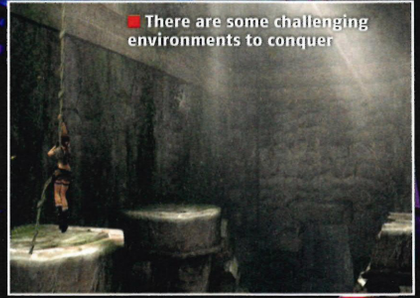
CHASE ME

Enhancing the action are motorcycle racing sections and button-pressing cut-scenes similar to the Quick Time Events in *Resi* 4. They're not substantial additions, especially the bike sections which only happen twice (not including a set-piece jump across roof tops in Japan). But it's exhilarating as you race against pursuing militia, trading gun fire, jumping ramps and opening up the throttle on Lara's Ducati to steer it under a Jeep that's crashed and flipped into the air. As enjoyable as they are, the high-speed thrills are very much bolted-on events. They start and finish with Lara welded to the saddle and confined to a single, narrow road.

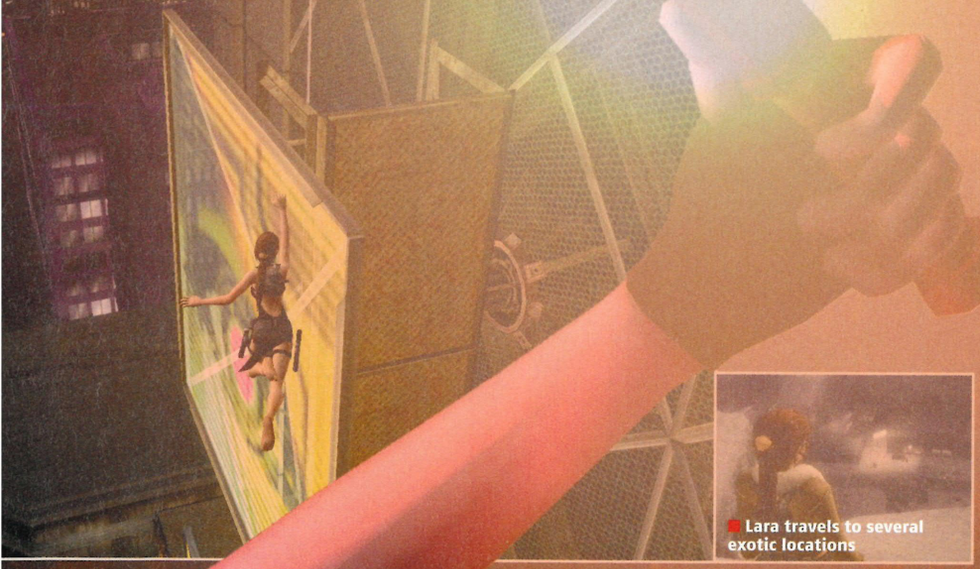
The reflex-action cut-scenes are a slightly more frequent occurrence. With these, the camera pulls out to a cinematic view as Lara dodges traps or other hazards. If you don't match the on-screen symbols on the joypad quickly it's a messy end for Lara and a trip back to the last checkpoint. They certainly make a change of pace and break up the action, but they're fairly limited with no more than three leisurely button presses to a sequence. In comparison to *Resi* 4's hectic tests of reflexes these are relaxing breaks from the action.



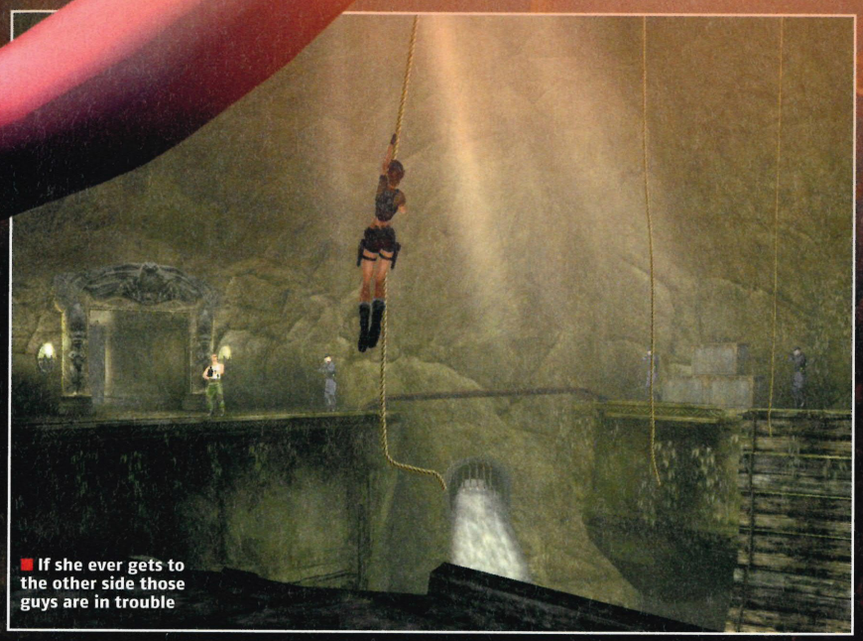
This sense of scale is epic. And this is one of the *smaller* rooms



There are some challenging environments to conquer



Lara travels to several exotic locations



If she ever gets to the other side those guys are in trouble

ONCE UPON A TOMB

Obviously Lara's not just catching random flights to distant corners of the Earth to climb and shoot things for fun. No, there's a reason behind it all. Lara's hunting for a mysterious artefact, related to the childhood disappearance of her mother. Her search for the relic brings her into conflict with one James W Rutland Jr, the obnoxious son of an American congressman. His motives for wanting the object aren't quite so clear but it locks him and his mercenary forces in direct competition with Lara as they race from one archaeological site to the next. We won't spoil it by telling you any more because as the story progresses there are some big surprises and we want you to enjoy them. There's also an immense twist at the end...

FORGET THE BLOCKY TROUT POUT OF THE OLD INCARNATIONS; THE NEW-LOOK LARA IS GORGEOUS

One thing we *can* tell you about is how incredible it all looks. This doesn't just raise the bar for other games visually; it breaks the bar clean off and burns it. It's as if PS2 has sold its electronic soul for obscene amounts of graphical power. Each level looks sumptuous and you can practically smell the musty air inside the beautifully musty tombs. Sunlight pierces though cracks in the rock, picking out drifting dust motes, while every moss covered rock and swaying leaf bristles with vibrant detail. The Japan level, in particular, is impressive, showing that there's more to *Raider* than tombs as Lara navigates neon-drenched city roof tops. It's also staggeringly smooth, with no stuttering or drops in the framerate and no limit to your view. Visually, it's as good as PS2 gaming gets.

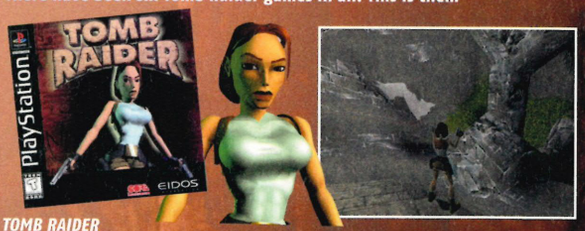
KISS ME YOU MAD FOOL

The lavish looks also extend to Lara. Forget the blocky trout pout and abundant polygonal bosom of the old incarnations; the new-look Lara is gorgeous. And it's not just the slinky animation or graceful curves. *Spooks* actress Keeley Hawes, who provides voice duties, *is* Lara Croft. Her posh-but-provocative tone brings the character to life; switching effortlessly between aristocratic English rose and sexy, gun-wielding psychopath as the situation demands.

It's not just Lara fans that will get a kick out of this though; this would be a consistently enjoyable and exciting experience whoever the star was. As the plot unfolds it reveals ever more stunning and varied locations. Complementing the tomb raiding, there are battles with the Yakuza in Japan, an abandoned Russian military base to infiltrate (full of dead scientists frozen solid since the '50s) and Nepalese mountains to scale. But for us the highlight of the game has to be a fantastic level set in the exotic climes of

A LIFE OF LARA

There have been six *Tomb Raider* games in all. This is them



TOMB RAIDER

Lara is hired to find an artefact known as the Scion. However, her employer, Jacqueline Natla, turns out to be a power hungry, would-be tyrant. Lara chases her to the lost city Atlantis and shoots her to death before she can take over the world.

TOMB RAIDER II: THE DAGGER OF XIAN

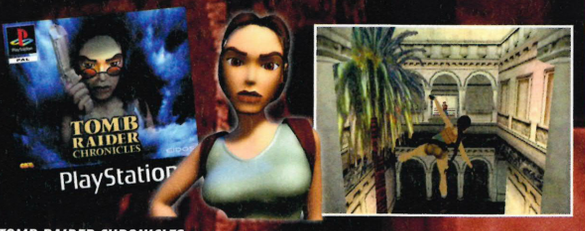
Lara goes up against Marco Bartoli, the leader of a cult chasing an artefact protected by Tibetan monks called the Dagger Of Xian. The dagger can turn whoever possesses it into a dragon. This was the first game to include vehicles and a range of worldwide locations.

TOMB RAIDER III: ADVENTURES OF LARA CROFT

A meteorite that crashed to Earth millions of years ago turns out to have weird powers. While Lara is searching for a fragment she goes head to head with loopy Scots scientist Dr Willard. This game included levels set in London and Area 51, and debuted stealth.

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

This moved back to classic tomb raiding with an entirely Egyptian setting. Lara had to prevent the evil god Set destroying the world after accidentally releasing him. It had ropes and swings for the first time as well as teenage Lara in a flashback training level.



TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

Having apparently died at the end of *The Last Revelation* this was made up entirely of flashbacks recounted by Lara's acquaintances, Werner Von Croy, Dr Willard and Father Patrick Dunstan, a friend from Lara's Childhood. The first game to debut a grappling hook.

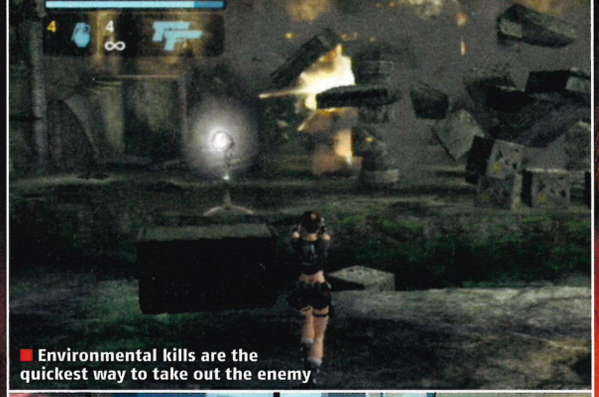
LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS

Poor controls, ageing gameplay and a conspicuous absence of tombs made this the worst game in the series. Stealth, RPG character development and a second playable character in the shape of the utterly hateful Kurtis Trent didn't help.

PLANET LARA

It's Crofty's world; we just live in it

Skip back to the late '90s and *Tomb Raider* was globe-tippingly big. Before Angelina starred in any movie Lara had a thriving media career. Advertising, merchandising, novels and at one point an appearance on U2's Zoo tour. Here what else she's been up to...


Environmental kills are the quickest way to take out the enemy

Apart from the new targeting system the combat is familiar

Those 4x4s are a pain. Shoot them. Lots

– get this – Cornwall. We won't spoil the 'why' for you but the England level is brilliant. Throughout *Legend* the mix of exploration and fighting is well paced, providing a steady progression through a generally well told story. We say 'generally' because there are points in the plot, however, that seem to be missing, requiring mental replay to fill in the gaps.

LOST TREASURE

This is unquestionably an outstanding comeback for Lara. It's an impressive adventure that races from start to finish with all the unstoppable force of an avalanche. It's filled with incredible beauty, thumping action and a strong story full of excellent characters. But it's also a completely new start for the series. The old-style *Tomb Raider* has been politely buried, never to be dug up again and in its place is a beautifully polished jewel in a modern setting. It's no longer about progress through impossibly cavernous environments, requiring dedicated practice and detailed exploration. This is a carefully crafted *Tomb Raider* experience. Each level follows a template, mixing and alternating between travelling, climbing and fighting segments. The design has been calculated to ensure you're always, *always* enjoying yourself. So instead of dauntingly sized levels requiring you to traipse miles locating keys, there are linear, impossible-to-get-lost-in corridor sections linking 'puzzle chambers'. In these chambers, the level opens out into expansive but manageable spaces, where the door and the switch are neatly self-contained. It means that you never get frustratingly lost or faced with a barrier you can't fathom; still, forgive us for feeling a little nostalgic for the old 'what the hell do I do next?' *Raider* gameplay.

Despite the changes to the series this is still consistently high-quality entertainment. It's engaging and rewarding throughout, containing moments that will stick with you long after it's over. But it's a bitterly short journey, barely more than nine hours and with a final level that lasts less than ten minutes. We honestly felt cheated when it was over, but mainly because were left wanting so much more. While it is brief, you can't fault the quality. Once we'd completed it we went straight back and started again. Replay value is high partly because it's so enjoyable but also because finding every secret bonus item will take some doing. This is a beautifully presented, compelling game which, while it lasts, never sags or lets you down. And for now that's more than enough. Welcome back, treacle. **Leon Hurley**

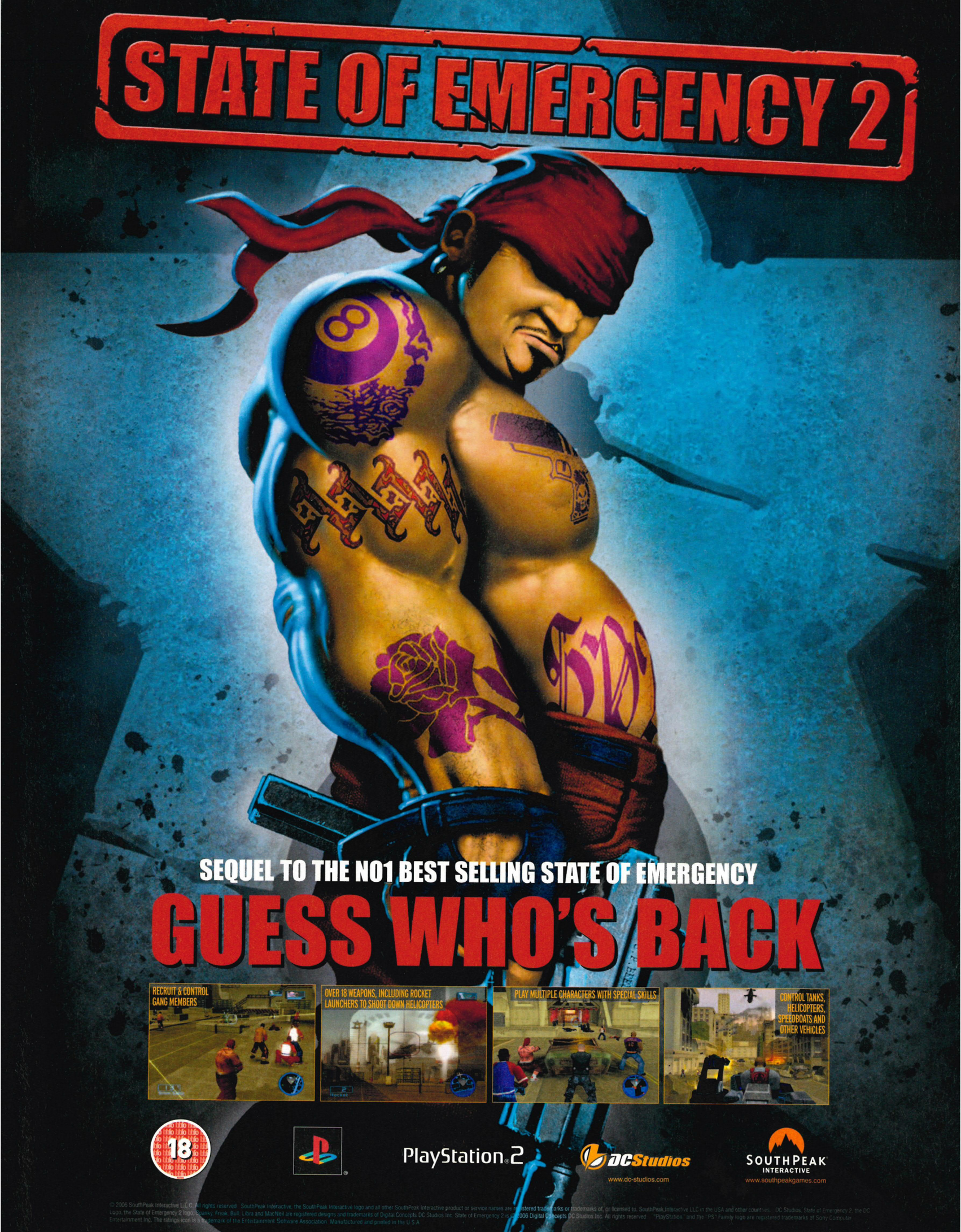
Ready to climb some neon signs in Tokyo?

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	10	Beautiful. A rich diversity of environments
Sound	09	Stirring themes and haunting melodies
Gameplay	08	Exciting, arresting and varied throughout
Lifespan	06	Too brief. It ends just as it hits its stride

***Legend** is a largely tremendous update of the classic* Raider *template, only let down by the short lifespan and lack of challenge*

8/10

STATE OF EMERGENCY 2



SEQUEL TO THE NO1 BEST SELLING STATE OF EMERGENCY

GUESS WHO'S BACK

18

PlayStation 2

DCStudios
www.dc-studios.com

SOUTHPEAK INTERACTIVE
www.southpeakgames.com

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PlayStation 2

THE GODFATHER

What have we ever done to make you treat us so disrespectfully?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 24 MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.EA.COM/OFFICIAL/GODFATHER/GODFATHER/US/HOME.JSP
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
Join the Cosa Nostra, extort businesses and rub out rival families to rise through the ranks. Can you dole out the concrete slippers and still find time to avenge your old man's death?

The Godfather is the ultimate Mafia movie, filled as it is with murder, betrayal and cookery lessons; but it's a strange candidate for videogame adaptation. Over its three-hour running time, it charts the demise of aging Don, Vito Corleone, and the rise to power of his son, Michael. It's glossy and brutal, but hinges on only three or four violent set-pieces. Instead of retelling its story, the game focuses on the trials of a Mafia foot soldier; a narrative which weaves through the movie's events like linguine through Puttanesca sauce. What this should mean is that you get a greater insight into the world of *The Godfather*. What you actually get is a shallow tale wrapped around the fringes of an extremely good one.

In the game, New York is your playground. You have the run of the city, and as well as film-themed story missions, there are rivals to whack, banks to rob, trucks to hijack and businesses to extort. The ultimate aim is to become the Don of NYC's five boroughs, and you'll have to 'lean' on every last shopkeeper to get the promotion. Extorting businesses is all about 'negotiation', which in Mafia talk means smashing people's skulls into table tops until they agree to pay you. Some businesses also have seedy back rooms with gambling rackets, and gaining control over these will give you even more cash and power. Later, you'll move on to larger depot buildings, and ultimately the compounds of rival families. Weirdly, there's only one interior layout for each business type. It's fine for the smaller venues,

THE ULTIMATE AIM IS TO BECOME THE DON OF NYC'S FIVE BOROUGHS

but when you invade three different warehouses in a row, and the floor plans are identical, it all starts to get a bit *Groundhog Day*.

A VIOLENT OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Combat plays a large part in the game, and all your kicks and punches are controlled with the right analogue stick, *Fight Night*-style. If you're feeling particularly angry, you can even throttle enemies with your bare hands, and the DualShock controller vibrates to their fading heartbeat. Once guns come into play, you'll quickly dump the fisticuffs, as a head shot's easier than an uppercut. Sadly the lock-on feature is a bit wonky, and you'll occasionally find yourself targeting pedestrians, rather than the nasty men firing hot bullets into your face.

The meat of the game is in the story missions. The developers obviously

Be warned: every 'hit' you make could start a bloody vendetta

The cars are antiques but they don't half shift

Characters with this icon have info for you. Uh oh, we've whacked him

Forties NYC is recreated with style

EA hasn't gone half-measures on the tomato sauce

watched the film looking for tiny plot holes they could fill in, but the bits of the narrative they've chosen to expand on are crashingly obvious. Instead of using missions to expand hazy plot details from the film, they've illustrated parts of the story that didn't need explaining. Showing how the horse's head got into the movie producer's bed is all very well, but by ignoring some of the larger questions (the details of Tessio's betrayal for example), they've failed to breathe any new life into the epic. On top of that, the story they've come up with for your character (avenge your father's death) is so rotten that its legs probably fell off when they dragged its decaying corpse out of Lake Cliché.

OPENING A CURRENT ACCOUNT, *GODFATHER*-STYLE

So you want some fast cash and a free MP3 player? Time to head to the bank!

STEP 1

ASSESS YOUR WEALTH

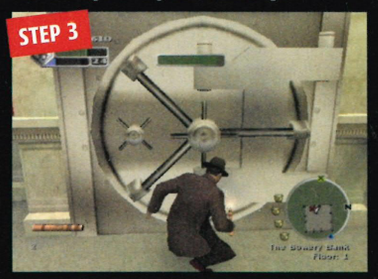
Have a look around the bank, note the locations of the security guards, and where that big shiny vault is. Hint: It's behind the big shiny door.

STEP 2

FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FORM

The Cosa Nostra have always used blood to sign contracts, so if you didn't bring your pen, try blowing holes in the guards to get the ink flowing.

STEP 3



MAKING YOUR FIRST WITHDRAWAL

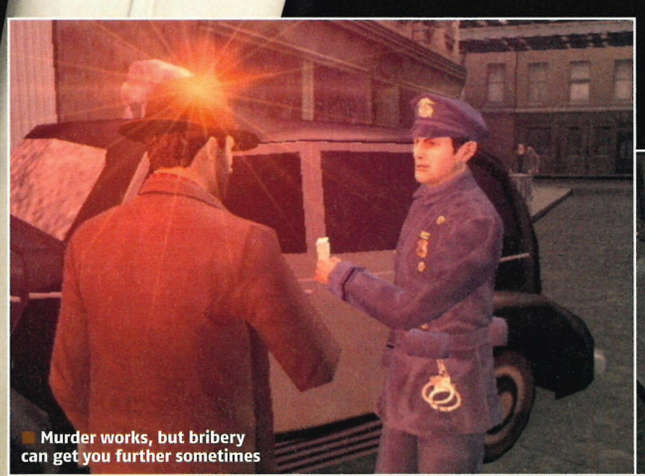
Attach some dynamite to the vault and stand well back. Once the door cracks open, grab as much cash as you can, and leg it. *Don't* wait for a receipt.

STEP 4

DEPOSITING YOUR MONEY

Jump into your getaway car and burn rubber with the cops in hot pursuit. Make it to your safe house, and the money is yours. See, told you saving could be fun!

It's about to kick off in the Mafia staff canteen



Murder works, but bribery can get you further sometimes

The fight dynamics are fun for a while

AN ENGLISHMAN IN NEW YORK

Is being a hoodlum in 1940s NYC something to write home about? We'll let you be the judge of that...

POST

GREETINGS & BEST WISHES

Hello Mother! Guess what? I've joined the Mafia! I know! It's been absolutely ripping so far. Yesterday we went into Sal's Bakery and threatened him by pushing him towards the oven until he gave us some money! Then we went into the back room. Imagine my surprise when I saw it was full of roulette tables! They gave us some money too, but we couldn't actually gamble with it for some reason. To celebrate we went to a nearby brothel, but despite it being full of lovely fillies, all they wanted to do was wave their arms in the air repeatedly! It was a bit weird actually. In the end we fire-bombed a flower shop and got chased by the pigs – badabing! Hope you're all well, wish you were here!

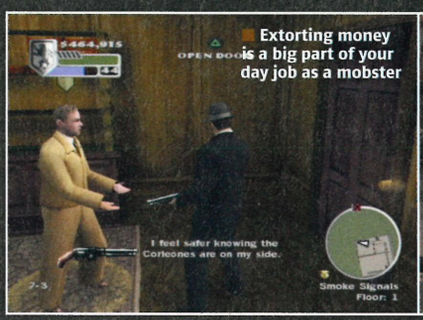
Love Algy x

Grollis-on-Sea
Wilts
WZ45 3ZZ
England

CORLEONE THE LONELY

Despite the game's constant talk about 'La Familia', you're mostly on your own – a Mafioso Rambo taking over New York single-handed. It's fine early on in the game, when you're still an outsider to the Corleones, but even as you rise to the level of Don, you never get the sense that you have any extra juice or power to wield over your growing empire. You want the game to evolve, to become more about people coming to you for favours, but instead you end the game as you begin, knocking over bakeries and barber shops.

Frustratingly, the first few hours are quite entertaining, but the lack of variety soon begins to grate. *The Godfather* has the feel of a hugely ambitious title that's been drastically cut down to size to make a much-delayed release date. You can finish the main story missions in ten hours (a far cry from the promised 50+), and all that's left after that is collecting icons and the unappetising prospect of taking over the remaining identikit businesses. The only time the game approaches *The Godfather*'s classic feel is during the excellent cut-scenes, but that's no surprise; they're mostly slavishly copied from the film. Even then, they're damaged by the gaping hole where Al Pacino's face should be. It's hard to see who it'll appeal to; people who love the film will be irritated by the poor characterisation (Michael Corleone leaning out of a car, machine-gunning the cops?), and people unfamiliar with the film will be left with a limp plate of *GTA*-flavoured spaghetti that already feels past(a) it. **Jon Hamblin**



Extorting money is a big part of your day job as a mobster

YOU'RE MOSTLY ON YOUR OWN – A MAFIOSO RAMBO TAKING OVER NEW YORK

The Big Apple is *very* big; expect to drive a lot

PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	08 New York is repetitive but well realised
Sound	06 Evocative music quickly begins to grate
Gameplay	06 Fun in places, but nothing new
Lifespan	05 Story mode is short, mopping up after is dull

An extremely average crime sim bolted onto a much-loved licence, this just proves that you can't buy class. Not horrific, just freakin' dull

6/10

KONAMI

GET UNDER THE SKIN OF PRO EVO

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER MANAGEMENT

IF YOU FANCY BREAKING INTO MANAGEMENT BUT WANT MORE THAN DRY STATS MAKE THIS YOUR STAR SIGNING. FROM THE TEAM THAT BROUGHT YOU THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED PRO EVO, PES MANAGEMENT FEATURES THE SAME AWESOME MATCH ENGINE BUT ADDS THE ABILITY TO GET INVOLVED IN EVERY ASPECT OF TACTICS AND WHEELER-DEALING TO TAKE A TEAM TO THE TOP. CALL MEETINGS WITH PLAYERS AND GET INVOLVED IN TRANSFER DEALS, GIVE TV INTERVIEWS, ACCUMULATE GLORY POINTS TO SPEND IN A SPECIAL SHOP, EMPLOY AND CONTROL BACKROOM STAFF, MOTIVATE AND TRAIN YOUR TEAM, HANDLE CLUB FINANCES... PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER MANAGEMENT FEATURES LICENSED LEAGUES, REAL PLAYERS AND BEST OF ALL THE ABILITY TO USE YOUR TEAM DATA YOU'VE SAVED FROM PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5. DIG DEEPER INTO THE WORLD OF PES AND USE A DIFFERENT SET OF SKILLS TO WIN THE BEAUTIFUL GAME.

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3+ www.pegi.info

PlayStation.2

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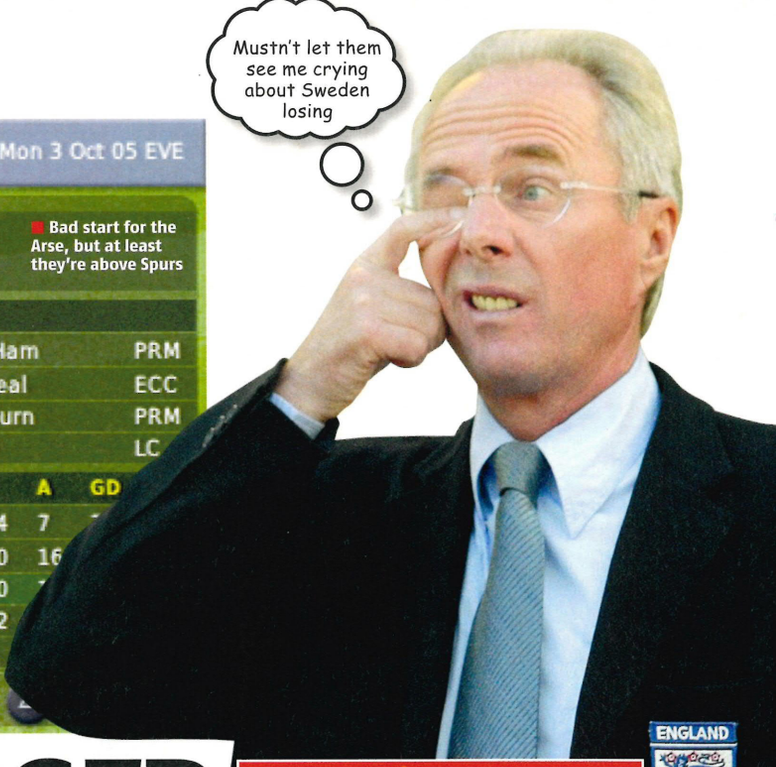
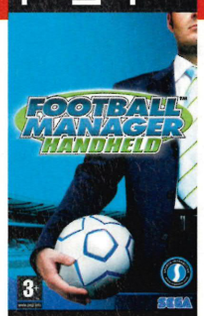


FOOTBALL MANAGER HANDHELD

PS2

Another quality signing for Team PSP



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SPORTS INTERACTIVE
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 13 APRIL
WIFI MULTIPLAYER NO
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE
Select your favourite side from one of seven nations and use your tactical skill and nous in the transfer market to turn them into the world's greatest. Mourinho overcoat from TK Maxx optional.

The true magic of *Football Manager* (or *Championship Manager*, as developer Sports Interactive's footy titles were originally known) has always been its uncanny knack of mirroring real life. Its first ever handheld outing is no different. Our debut season saw Chelsea coasting the Premiership, Arsenal destroying all-comers in Europe yet unable to pick up an away win in the league, West Ham and Wigan being the top flight's surprise packages and our old mate Crouchy unable to score in the first three months of the season. These things can be put down to scripting, coincidence or perfectly honed AI – and given Sports Interactive's impressive track record, we're plumping for the latter.

SWIFT LIKE CISSE

This is so much more than just a port of the more-popular-than-Shearer-on-Tyneside PC game. The 2D match view so prominent in recent years is out, with text commentary your main way of following the action. This means there's a bigger onus on your brain to fill in the passages of play you don't see, making games more exciting as you never know where a shot is heading until the 'goal' message flashes up on screen – or you're told that it's been shanked. Set the speed of the text commentary to 'very fast' and you can get through a match in under two minutes. It's perfect for getting a relegation six-pointer out of the way while you're taking your morning constitutional.

Speedy play is enhanced by *FM Handheld*'s revolutionary interface. Rather than using a cursor to move around the screen, your options are mapped to the four face buttons. In a match, for instance, you hit ▢ to view the home side's tactics, ◯ for the away team, or ✕ to select an option from the left-hand navigation bar. On your squad screen, pressing ▢ while a player is highlighted adds him to your first 11, while tapping △ switches between views like Stats, Attributes or Selection Info. It's a slick system that feels natural within seconds, and only adds to the gap in class between this and PS2 rivals *Championship Manager* and *LMA*.

A TACTICAL ERROR

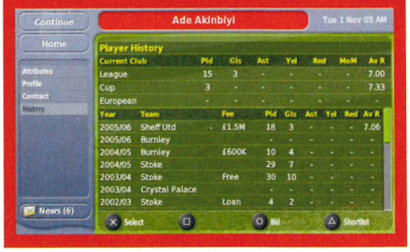
Some concessions have been necessary to squeeze *Football Manager* onto PSP. Tactics are basic and you're forced to shoehorn your players into predetermined formations rather than being allowed to create your own, which feels restrictive – and you can't save several formation/team combinations and flick between them. Squads are also limited to 36 players with no reserve or youth sides. Manchester United, for example, are missing lesser-known youngsters like Luke Steele and Mads Timm. Such omissions will go unnoticed by most, but hardcore fans might find them off-putting. Ditto the decision to omit squad numbers entirely.

Still, these are minor quibbles. A key part of *Championship Manager*'s appeal at its late-'90s peak (before Eidos and Sports Interactive went their separate ways) was being able to breeze through an entire season in a few hours, and *FMH* makes that possible all over again. For that reason alone, every footy-loving PSP owner should snaffle a copy now. ■ **Ben Wilson**

TRANSFER TICKBOX

Worried that your side's latest signing is missing?

FM Handheld's late-season release date has ensured that the game is completely up to date to the end of January's transfer window. Danny Murphy is at Spurs, Robbie Fowler at Liverpool, and mega-money teen Theo Walcott is in the Arsenal squad. Harry Redknapp's rag tag bunch of Pompey signings are included, and even new Sheffield United strike duo Ade Akinbiyi and Bruce Dyer are with their latest club. Sadly for Blades fans, they're still not Prem class.



REX FEATURES

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	06 Clean, stat-heavy screens
Sound	02 Other than the click of the D-pad, none
Gameplay	08 Bite-sized *FM* works brilliantly
Lifespan	08 An endless array of trophies to win

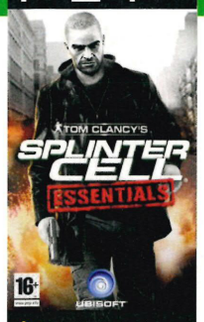
Slick like Ronaldinho tip-toeing his way across Camp Nou's immaculate turf, this addictive sim gives its rivals an emphatic thrashing

8/10

SPLINTER CELL ESSENTIALS

PSP

Fisher's mobile mission delivers mixed results



DETAILS

PUBLISHER UBISOFT
DEVELOPER UBISOFT
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 31 MARCH
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE

It's classic *Splinter Cell* shadow-crouching on a tiny screen. Guide Sam Fisher through some of the most intense missions from his past, using all the moves and gadgets available in his recent PS2 outing, *Chaos Theory*.

bronze
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

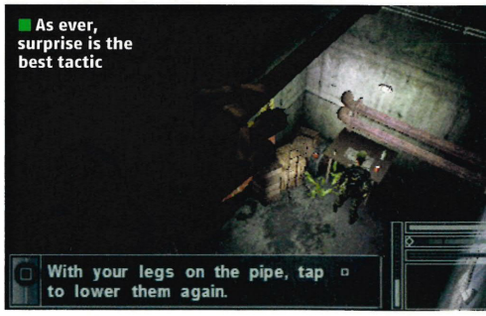
Overcoming impossible odds may be *Splinter Cell*'s speciality, but with *Essentials* it seems like Sam Fisher has been sent onto Sony's handheld for a suicide mission. On paper, it's a right old muddle, mainly thanks to Ubisoft's own crazy release schedule. The plot sees Sam Fisher being interrogated by the pen-pushing bureaucrats at Third Echelon HQ because of the unethical things he did in *Splinter Cell Double Agent*. Yes that's right: *Double Agent*, the PS2 game that isn't due out until September.

Wrap your head around the temporal cock-up, however, and everything else in *Essentials* starts to slot into place. The snack-sized stealth missions in the game are flashbacks from Fisher's covert career, all played out with the different weapons and moves he's learnt over the years. Fans will recognise many of the scenarios which have been taken from the previous games before being sliced and separated into smaller segments to suit the stop-start world of handheld gaming.

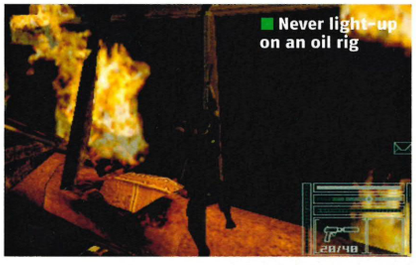
"MY EYES!"

Splinter Cell's retraining for its PSP assignment has gone well, and the controls feel refreshingly intuitive, combining buttons and D-pad to give access to the impressive quantity of military tech and manoeuvres we've grown to expect from Clancy's darkest hero. Everything is available at the touch of a button and, importantly, you can rotate the camera around Fisher to see what's lurking in the next area by holding down ◎ and moving the thumbstick in the right direction. Even the light and sound gauges from *Chaos Theory* have been lovingly recreated in *Essentials* to give the impression that this is a serious stealth adventure in its own right, and not just an attempt to squeeze the game onto the PSP to milk some extra cash. Less positive are the signature lighting effects, which don't work so well on the small screen. You'll find yourself hunched over your PSP, desperately squinting at the screen, trying to block out any sunlight just to work out who the hell is shooting at you. Even with Night Vision switched on, it's tough to get your bearings in the murkier levels, which compounded by the slow pace can lead to moments of frustration. If it wasn't for the tiny details crammed into the environments helping us to find our way around, we'd have left Fisher to fend for himself long before the end.

Despite the darkness, *Essentials* is a strong addition to the PSP line-up – there's still room for improvement – but it's a sure pointer that creating new content rather than recycling existing games is the way to go. **Andy Hartup**



As ever, surprise is the best tactic



Never light-up on an oil rig

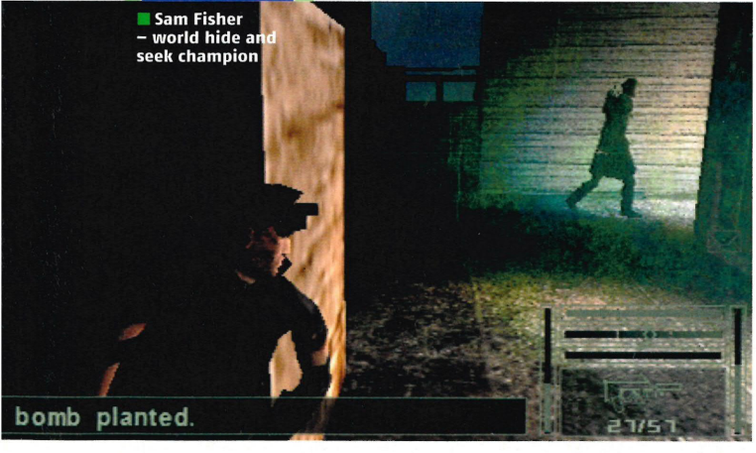
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	Some decent lighting, but mostly very dark
Sound	07	Good voice work; not so good effects
Gameplay	08	Translates well to handheld
Lifespan	08	Substantial single-player and WiFi

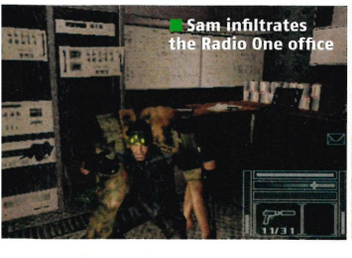
This classic series has been lovingly translated for PSP. It's a great stealth fix, although you do want to switch the lights on sometimes

8/10

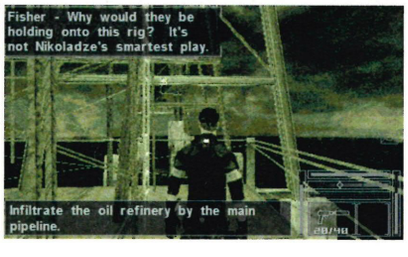
After every kill you need to stash the body



Sam Fisher – world hide and seek champion

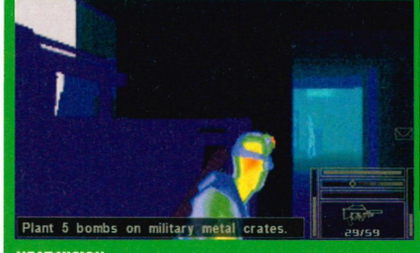


Sam infiltrates the Radio One office



SWISS ARMY STRIFE

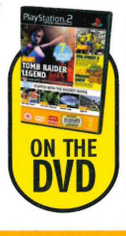
Fisher may have been shrunk, but he's still got gizmos busting out of every crevice. These are our favourites



HEAT VISION
Next to the indispensable Night Vision mode, Heat Vision is a massive advantage in some of the darker levels. Use it to locate and eliminate enemies prowling around behind random objects and jagged bits of scenery.

SC-20K RIFLE
The weapon of choice for Fisher throughout his career, this baby has been perfectly translated for this PSP outing, coming complete with multi-level zoom, differing rates of fire and tactical add-ons like Sticky Shockers and Smoke Grenades.

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3



Hard-hitting blood sport from the team that does it best

DETAILS

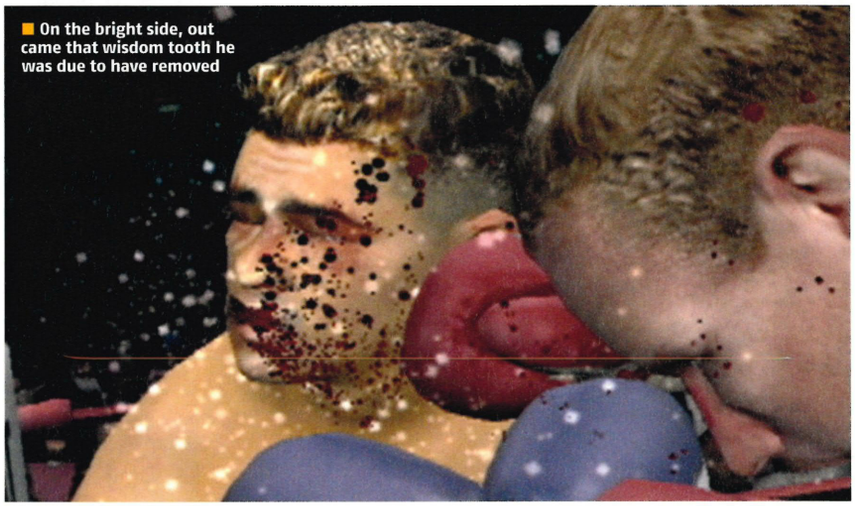
PUBLISHER EA SPORTS
DEVELOPER EA SPORTS
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 2
OUT 10 MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.EASPORTS.COM/FIGHTNIGHTROUND3
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE YES

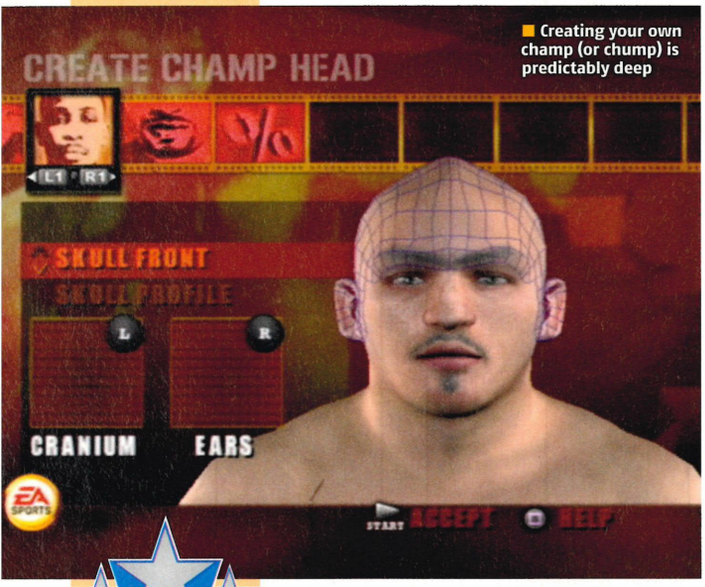
AT A GLANCE

The third in EA's market-leading boxing series. Now featuring classic match-ups, a newly beefed-up career mode and – at last! – online play.

There's always been something perversely compelling about the real-life sight of two men in shiny shorts beating each other's ears into cauliflowers. But does gaming – a field not lacking in violence in all its myriad, imaginative forms – really need something as bread-and-butter brutal as a boxing sim? Well, yes, it does. And here's why.

Fight Night has so far proven itself to be the Muhammad Ali of the boxing genre, a game of brute force, but also of astounding dexterity and ingenious complexity. Earlier instalments have been all about raising the bar: *Round 1* introduced a revolutionary control system, *'2* debuted the 'cut man' feature. So the news that *Round 3* would also make its debut on Xbox 360, with a PS3 version in the pipeline, sparked off some very real fears. Would this instalment see the PS2 punching a few divisions above its processing weight? In short: no. *Round 3* is more about fine-tuning than innovation. But far from being any sort of disappointment, the result is a superbly balanced boxing sim that impresses on every level.


On the bright side, out came that wisdom tooth he was due to have removed



Creating your own champ (or chump) is predictably deep

HAYMAKE WHILE THE SUN SHINES

But first, let's recap on what makes the *Fight Night* series a contender. Chiefly, it's down to a button configuration known as the Total Punch Control System, which looks at the button-bashing beat-'em-ups of decades past, winces, and pulls a face that says 'Is that really the best you can do?' Indeed, Total Punch forsakes the use of buttons at all. Powered entirely by the right analogue stick, you throw punches using a combination of stabs and stick rolls. A left jab? Tap up and left for a snappy, quick-fire fist to the face. Right uppercut? Pull down and circle up to the right, mimicking the swing's long trajectory, and if you've caught your opponent on the wrong foot, he'll be picking his teeth off the mat. Right at the top end are the Haymakers, TNT-powered piledrivers like the stun-punch and perspective-flipping Flash KO that'll leave your opponent wandering around the ring like a *Resident Evil* zombie.

Of course, boxing isn't about swinging your arms around like the school playground sissy and hoping when the tears clear your enemies will have either fled, or laughed themselves to death. *Fight Night Round 2* suffered because the onus was put too heavily on powerful haymakers, meaning it paid to come out flailing. Finely tuned punching means you'll now do well to play the long game, wearing your opponent down with jabs and body combos before unleashing the big guns.

BOXING CLEVER

There are many ways to play *Fight Night Round 3*. As well as a simple pick-up-and-play mode, there's the excellent ESPN Classics mode (see "I Hate Your Guts") and a new, improved career mode. First up, create your boxer. In doing so, you can tweak not just size, shape, and skill levels, but select strange idiosyncrasies to make your slugger stand out from the pack: Wild or Mummy punching style, cross-block parries, a cranium shaped like an organic vegetable – your choice. That, or you can take on the role of a boxing legend and

"I MUST BREAK YOU"

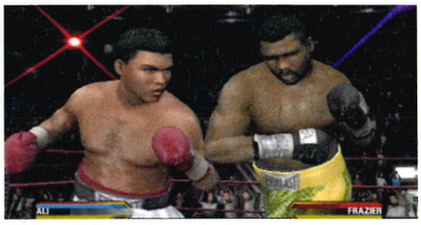
Sportsmanship is for suckers. The new flavour of *Fight Night 3* is rivalry, so fire up the ESPN Classics mode and relive these classic bouts

MICKY WARD VS ARTURO GATTI

'Irish' Micky Ward and Arturo 'Thunder' Gatti's 2002 welterweight match-up tapped such reserves of constitution that one over-excited commentator described Round 9 as the "round of the century!" In somewhat comic circumstances, their next clash saw Gatti break his fist against his opponent's ear. "The hardest punch I ever landed," said Gatti. "Pardon?" said Ward.

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON VS JAKE LAMOTTA

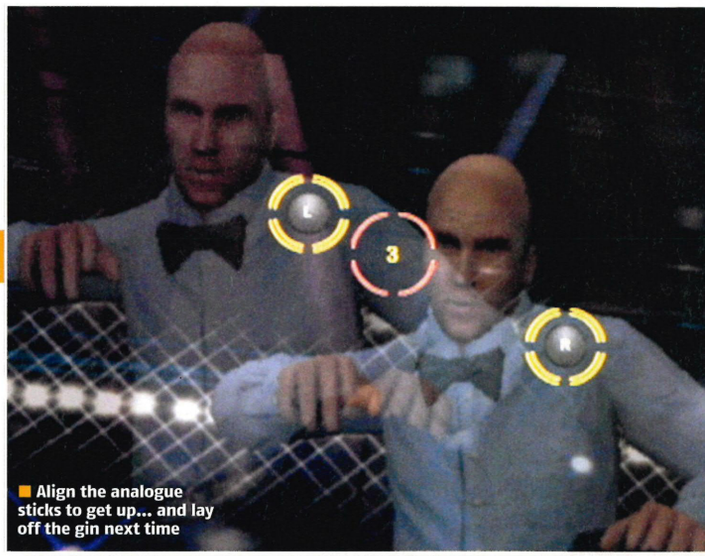
Robinson swept through his first 40 fights with a perfect record. The man to dirty this clean sheet was Bronx brawler LaMotta, who floored the champ in the first round. Robinson would later pummel his rival in a match so bloody it was dubbed 'The St Valentine's Day Massacre', but his place in history was assured: LaMotta was immortalised by Bobby DeNiro in top boxing flick *Raging Bull*.

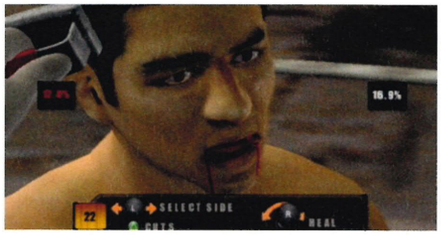


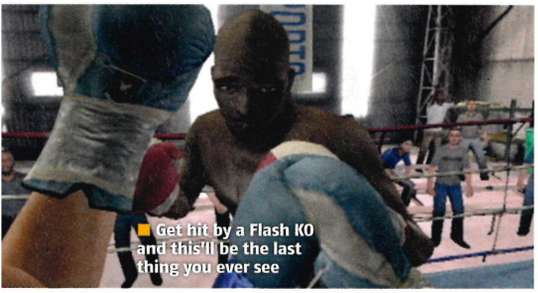
MUHAMMAD ALI VS JOE FRAZIER

A man of principle, Ali's stern opposition to the Vietnam war saw him stripped of his title and banned from the ring for a year. He came back to find Joe Frazier wandering around wearing his Heavyweight Champion belt. To his credit, Frazier promptly knocked Ali on his arse, but Ali would come back to beat his nemesis twice. They call him 'The Greatest' for a reason, you know.

"My fist. Your face. Good match."


Align the analogue sticks to get up... and lay off the gin next time




Get hit by a Flash KO and this'll be the last thing you ever see

take him from punch-bag to prize fight to podium under your own steam.

Career mode starts out easy, but you'll want to use the first five or so mooks as a chance to get to grips with the training room. You can lift weights to increase body strength, or practice your punch combos on a dummy. The heavy bag is easy once you've mastered your high/low punching, but who cares? You'll need those stat increases once your rivals step into the frame. Rivals? Ah yes. Occasionally, while you're leafing through a stack of Polaroids deciding which pretty face you'll pulverise next, you'll see some trash-talk from a young upstart. Whup him but good, and you'll have an enemy for life, opening up a side-game where you can kick off mid-press conference.

For a game we feared might rank second-class against its next-gen competitors, we can't get over the astonishing visual realism and bone-splintering audio. It's all there in the startling knock-down sequence. Picture it. Crack! You land a neat punch to your opponent's mush, and as he staggers back, metaphorical birds looping around his battered cranium, the gameplay shifts to mimic his sense of dazed semi-consciousness. Everything slows, as if you're punching through treacle. The yammer of the commentators suddenly fades to silence. It's like the ring's suddenly been sucked into *The Matrix*. And then watch as that final, punishing haymaker swings in, triggering a slow-motion shower of blood and a crunch that sounds like a cow being crushed to the size of a milk carton. It's brutally, not mention brilliantly visceral.

WATCH AS THAT FINAL HAYMAKER SWINGS IN, TRIGGERING A SLO-MO SHOWER OF BLOOD

Flaws? Well, the commentary quickly gets repetitive, and occasionally contradicts itself (not unlike real life). That aside, though, it's as solid as a steroid-pumped bicep. We can all get cynical about EA's ability to churn out the sports sequels, but when they're as genre-defining as this, what sucka would complain? *Fight Night Round 3* rules the ring with hands of stone. **Louis Pattison**

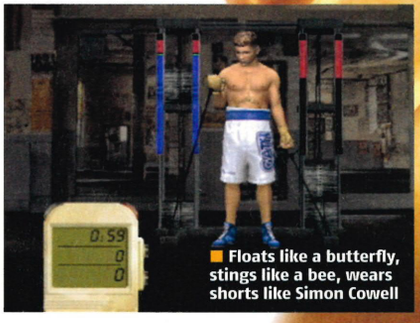
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT
Graphics	09 Blood, sweat but no tears – it looks great
Sound	09 Destroyed noses never sounded better
Gameplay	08 Analogue stick control still oh so sweet
Lifespan	08 New innovations should keep you swinging

No massive innovations, but a neat fine-tuning job confirms* Fight Night *as the uncontested heavyweight champion of boxing games

9/10

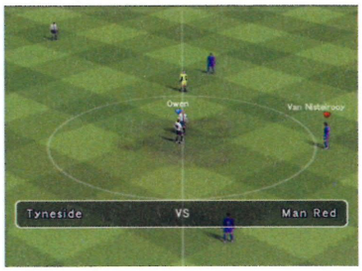
We tried to see what round it was but for some reason we got distracted

"Now listen carefully. DON'T. GET. PUNCHED. IN. THE. FACE. Got it?"


Floats like a butterfly, stings like a bee, wears shorts like Simon Cowell

UNLICENSED AND UNLOVED

Lack of official bits proves problematic – again



PES Management suffers from the same difficulties as original *Pro Evo* in the licence department. With Chelsea and Arsenal the only English sides to have proper kits, you're best sticking to the Italian, Spanish and Dutch leagues. The database is equally disappointing, with Roy Keane still at Man Utd and no attempt to update after the January transfer window. For example, Jenas is still at Newcastle. It's sloppy, and a huge turn-off. You *can* import data from your *Pro Evo 5* option file, but should you really have to?

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER MANAGEMENT

Like being handcuffed to the bench at the World Cup final

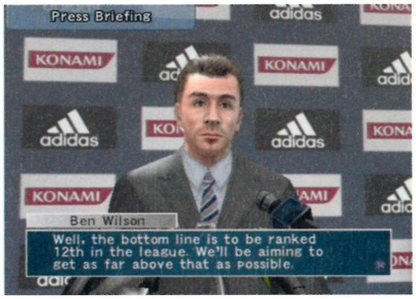
DETAILS

PUBLISHER KONAMI
DEVELOPER KONAMI
PRICE £24.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE UK.GS.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM/GAME.DO?IDGAME=108
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
The greatest footy game around gets a management sim spin-off that utilises the match engine from *Pro Evo 5* – and, sadly, the same random set of licences

Do you mind if we ask you a personal question? No? Good. Have you ever watched *Joey*? You know, the *Friends* spin-off where Matt Le Blanc isn't as funny as he used to be, and every episode feels like it's missing a certain something (specifically, Jennifer Aniston in a tight-fitting top, and jokes). If you have, you'll already be familiar with the feelings induced by *PES Management*. It is to *Pro Evolution Soccer* exactly what *Joey* is to *Friends*: a decent way to pass 20 minutes now and then, and one that may even make you smile occasionally, but on the whole an experience that just feels a bit wrong.

It's not that the game doesn't have good intentions. As well as including familiar options from the regular series, such as being able to play one-off matches or use international teams rather than force you into the season mode, it incorporates some quirky new features ignored by other management titles: face-to-face chats with your players and in-depth information on your opponents before every match are two of the high points.

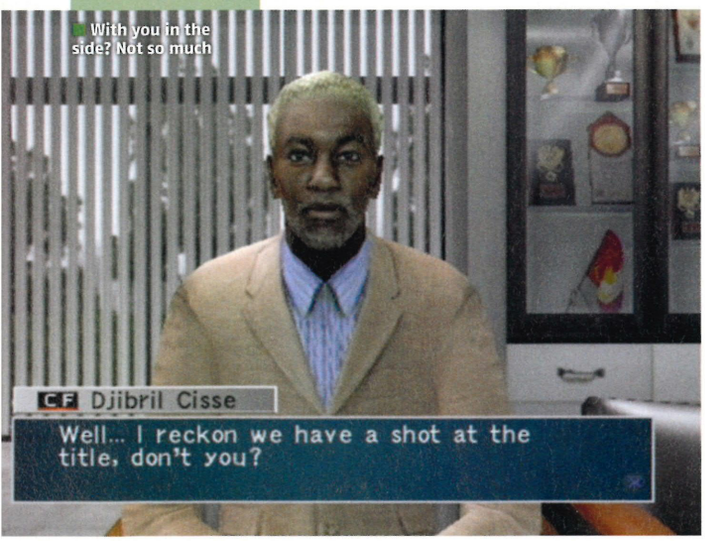


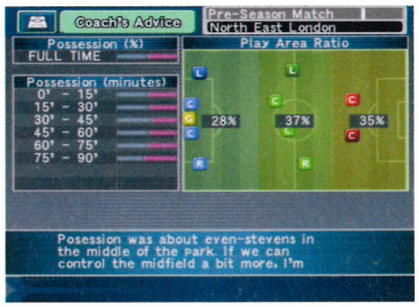
SPOT OF BOTHER

The insurmountable problem, though, is match days. The window dressing is pleasant enough: lots of easily navigable tactics screens and a smart in-match display that shows your players' current mental state and fitness while the action takes place – you can even watch in a compact 2D view. But because the game utilises the same engine as *Pro Evo 5*, it's impossible to avoid becoming frustrated when your AI-controlled players behave differently to how you would when controlling a game of *PES*.

A typical example: In our season at Spurs, Jermain Defoe continually got into a position to shoot and then passed backwards to central midfielders Carrick or Davids. You'd have thought that changing his 'Mid Shot' setting to aggressive would solve this, yet it remained an annoyingly prominent occurrence, and further tactical tweaks failed to have any effect. Probably just a quirk of the game, then. But the fact that we couldn't find a way around it severely affected our enjoyment.

It seems that, like Jean Alain-Boumsong, the developers have spent the last few months caught in two minds. The management options, while novel, aren't as deep as more dedicated contemporaries like *Football Manager*, and the matches themselves frustrate because you feel like you're watching a demo of *Pro Evo 5* on repeat. You can do your best to tweak individual instructions, but you'll never get your team playing exactly as you would in the regular game. Which is why one match on Master League in regular *Pro Evo* remains infinitely more satisfying than an entire season of *PES Management*. ■ **Ben Wilson**



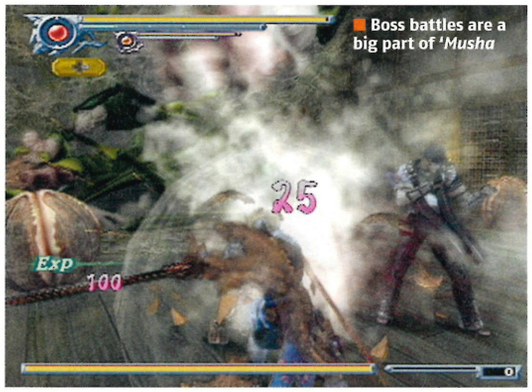


PlayStation 2 official magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	Acceptable, but beginning to look dated
Sound	07	The usual Brackley/Brooking waffle
Gameplay	06	A halfway-house that never quite feels right
Lifespan	05	You'll quickly yearn for some real *PES* action

A reasonable management sim that's hindered by its parent game's success and a glaring lack of licences. Stick with the real thing

6/10

At least the demon-slicing is familiar



Boss battles are a big part of 'Musha

ONIMUSHA: DAWN OF DREAMS

Newcomers welcome, previous fans need not apply

DETAILS

PUBLISHER CAPCOM
DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW3.CAPCOM.CO.JP/SHIN_ONIMUSHA
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

Dawn Of Dreams signals a new direction for Capcom's samurai-flavoured, demon-slicing horror action series. But will this hack-'em-up win new fans or just alienate the old?

For those of you who are new to Capcom's stylish, demon-slicing, hack 'n' slash series, here's what made the original trilogy a bit special. Thanks, largely, to its stubborn use of fixed camera angles, it was stunning to look at. Not just pretty, but 'omigod, how did they *do* that?' beautiful. It possessed a simple but rewarding combat system that hinged on absorbing the souls released by defeated foes. Some gave you health, others enhanced weaponry and items, while others charged powerful attacks. Combine these two elements with thoughtful puzzles, great characterisation and superbly atmospheric, orchestral scores, and you're looking at the gaming equivalent of a samurai's katana; pure, focused and possessing a deadly beauty; and all without a single extraneous detail.

And now we have a new *Onimusha*. Here, it must be said, because the fans wanted more. But what Capcom wants is to attract a new generation of gamers, and in doing so it seems to have lost its nerve and given its katana a pink furry grip, wing mirrors and a musical scabbard that plays Velvet Revolver every time you take it out to fight. Uh oh.

OUT WITH THE OLD

Dawn Of Dreams isn't all bad news. The soul of the series lives on in much of the combat, sound effects and themes (demons attempt to overrun feudal Japan, part human/part demon warrior fights back) and if you stick with the game, that soul gradually reasserts itself. The problem is, there's so much unnecessary clutter in the way that it can be hard to stick with it. The move to a fully adaptable 3D camera should feel like progress but it's resulted in substantially less attractive graphics than in previous '*Mushas*, *and* a fundamental control problem (see One Step Forward). Worse still, the decision to do a *Dynasty Warriors* and fill the screen with Attention Deficit Disorder-satisfying strike tallies, inset character art during cut-scenes, and mood-shattering J-rock during every fight, has robbed *Onimusha* of much of its unique identity.

Equally, the new AI companion system that sees most missions unfolding with a selectable playable buddy in tow, should add reams of depth to the gameplay, but flitting between warriors is often just an annoyance. Even if you choose to just order your companion around ('stab that', 'wait here and get stabbed' etc) you end up feeling more like a baby sitter than an invincible samurai.

Ancient Japan, but you still get guns

The light shows are spectacular

The good news is that *Dawn Of Dreams* is a grower. Ramping up the number of unlockable items and weapons, plus the inclusion of a new RPG-style skill points system, does add depth. And as hack 'n' slash action goes, this is still better than many competitors out there. But would we take *DOD* over any one of *Onimushas* *1-3*? Would we hell. ■ **Paul Fitzpatrick**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	A pale imitation of earlier games
Sound	06	Crashing Jap-rock grates
Gameplay	07	Purity of *Onimusha* gameplay muddied
Lifespan	08	It's deep, and there's decent replay value

Will appeal to first timers, but the changes made will alienate many of* Onimusha*'s staunchest fans. A grower, but vintage '*Musha *it ain't

7/10

ONE STEP FORWARD...

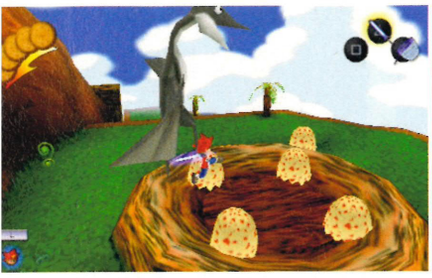
How the new '*Musha* throws the baby out with the bath water

3D? 3*DON'T* MORE LIKE
The move to a fully controllable 3D camera *sounds* like a great idea, but a) the series' trademark gorgeous visuals take a hit, and b) you can't fight *and* control the camera at the same time. Result? You often see even less than before, and what you see isn't always that pretty.

"DUDE, I'M, LIKE A SAMURAI AND STUFF"
Previous *Onimusha* heroes Samanosuke Akechi, Jubei Yagyu (and Jean Reno) were profoundly noble warriors. *DOD* gets a bottle-blond surfer dude-type with metal horns. We've got more in common with the demons.

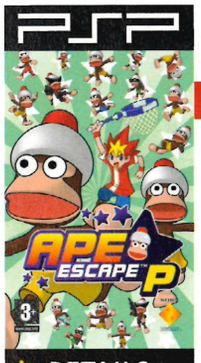
VEXING TEXT
Taking a leaf out of *Dynasty Warrior*'s book, *DOD* has jettisoned relatively clean screens in favour of a relentless stream of on-screen info-burps that tell you about combos awarded, gold collected, experience points accrued etc. You won't know whether to play *DOD* or just read it.

A FRIEND IN NEED...
...Is a pain in the arse. At least, that's how the game's AI companions will usually make you feel. When they're not busy getting themselves killed by your demonic enemies you'll want to take them out yourself. Even the two-hander puzzles like this one feel like pointless busywork.



That'll be another ape caught, then

Fans of the original will recognise this level



APE ESCAPE P

Is that a monkey in your pocket or...? Oh, right

With *Metal Gear Solid 3*'s Snake Vs Monkey mode introducing a whole new generation of gamers to the joys of monkey-bagging, doing a PSP sequel seems like a complete no-brainer. Design some new levels, make some more plinky-plunk music, add a small ginger child for good measure and watch the cash roll in.

And yes, superficially, *Ape Escape* seems perfectly suited to PSP – its soothing blend of primary colours, inventive gadgets and super-gentle puzzling are perfect on-the-go stuff. Actually netting the siren-headed simians is only half the battle – first you have to find a way to get to them, whether they're perched up a tree or riding shotgun on the back of a Tyrannosaurus Rex. It's lovely, nonsensical fun, and there's even a raft of WiFi games to keep multiple monkey-lovers happy – although Ping Pong and Boxing can't hold a candle to Monkey Soccer from *Ape Escape 2*.

But, even putting the lengthy mid-level loading pauses aside, there's trouble in monkey-land. Part of the reason the original *Escape* was so successful was the way it showcased the updated PSone controller's analogue sticks, using one for movement and the other for precision net control. Using the PSP's nub feels clumsy at times, and bagging the nimbler chimps becomes a bit of a chore. Whirling the camera around isn't much of a picnic either, and getting scuppered by the scenery is an all-too-common occurence.

Ape Escape PSP isn't bad – but if we're going to hunt monkeys again, we'd rather pack our tranquilliser gun and a bag full of stun grenades, *Metal Gear Solid*-style. ■ **Joel Snape**

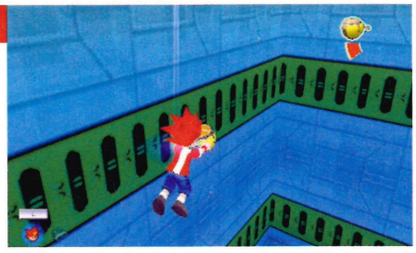
DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER SONY
PRICE £29.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

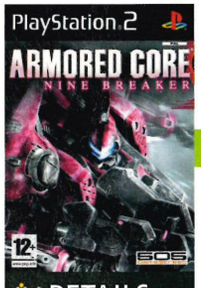
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT
Graphics	07 Brash colours work well
Sound	06 The same sweet music as ever
Gameplay	06 Marred by a lack of decent control options
Lifespan	06 You'll have it nailed before nap time

Hideo Kojima might love it, but first-time monkey-wranglers will wonder what all the fuss is about. The original games are better

6/10



■ Another PSone classic gets re-imagined on PSP



ARMORED CORE: NINE BREAKER

Well, it certainly broke us

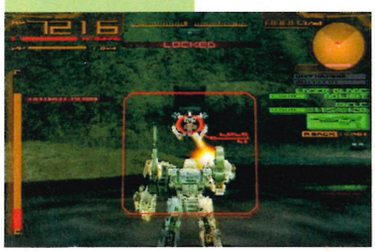
In what we reckon is the tenth game in the *AC* series, developer From Software has stripped out all the fun stuff and replaced it with loads of what hardcore fans love – training, shooting and mech parts. Be warned though, the training mode is super tough.

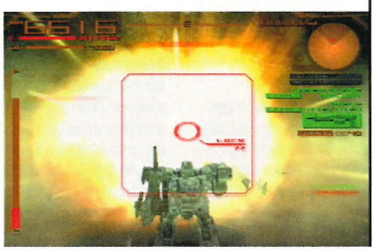
After earning your kit, it's time to build a mech and head for the arena. The path up the Arena battle rankings is a torturous one too, with a difficulty curve that spikes like Kilimanjaro. Those in search of some hot 'bot action would be better off with *Transformers*. ■ **JS**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER FROM SOFTWARE
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 24 MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.505GAMESTREET.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
As accessible as a David Lynch film dubbed into Russian and probably about half as much fun,* Nine Breaker *might keep mech lovers happy, but it'll leave everyone else cold	**4/10**





THE SWORD OF ETHERIA

AKA *Castlevania And Friends*

There are so many similaties between this splendidly presented slashfest and *Castlevania: Curse Of Darkness* that you almost admire Konami's cheek in releasing them as two separate entities.

What *Sword* does differently is give the main character two warrior companions. They add nothing to the thinner than Lindsay Lohan plot, but serve their purpose during combat as you juggle enemies while unleashing spectacular three-way combos. There's plenty of chance to experiment – but it's a shame the accompanying characters can't be human controlled to stop the relentless action becoming so repetitive. ■ **BW**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER KONAMI
DEVELOPER KONAMI
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE HTTP://UK.GS.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM
60HZ MODE YES
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

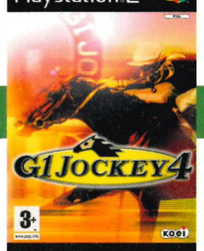
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
A playable hack-'em-up that delivers big on colourful enemy kills, but loses out because you're so reliant on dumbass AI teammates to aid you along the way	**6/10**

All the horses have mildly witty names like Stinging Frost

"You, sir, are acting like a horse's ass"

The experimental horse vending machine was jammed again...

PlayStation 2



G1 JOCKEY 4

The ride of your life, or a pile of steaming horse apples?

DETAILS

PUBLISHER KOEI
DEVELOPER KOEI
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 31 MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.KOEI.CO.UK
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO
PERIPHERALS CLIP-ON 'REINS' CONTROLLER

AT A GLANCE

Released to tie in with a certain famous horse race which takes place at Aintree in April, this is the latest incarnation of KOEI's nag racing series. And this time out, it's got a novel accessory packaged with it.

You'd think that after six years of delivering beautiful games, PS2 developers would have run out of ideas for bizarro new peripherals. After all, we've had *Guitar Hero*'s Playskool axe, *SingStar*'s mics, plus dancemats, golfing gloves, EyeToy, multiple choice quiz pads, fishing rods, and enough dodgy steering wheels for us to start our own unlicensed cab company.

Not that developer KOEI has taken a blind bit of notice. Bundled with *G1 Jockey 4* is a gadget that looks like a cross between a tiny pair of binoculars and a miniature version of Marty McFly's hoverboard from *Back To The Future*. In actual fact, it clips over the analogue sticks on your joypad to act as reins. Yes, *reins*. And it works (see right).

It's a novel gimmick, but be warned: you won't pick up *G1 Jockey 4* and have it mastered within the hour. Inevitably you'll head straight into a trial race, sprint for the first corner with a massive lead and then watch your already knackered nelly stagger through the remaining 750m of the course like a 40-a-day smoker trying to run the London marathon. The rest of the field will overtake and eventually thunder out of sight as your sorry nag wheezes towards the finish line/vet's needle. Disheartened, you'll admit to yourself that you'll never be the next Frankie Dettori, and then you'll go back playing to *Pro Evo*.

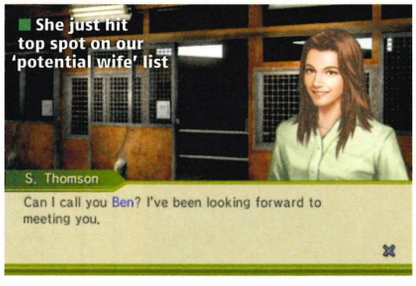
STATS AMAZING

Which is a shame, because if you're willing to put in the work, *G1 4* is an intriguing curiosity. Its huge variety of options and horses are on a par with football management titles like *LMA Manager*, making it a statto's dream. While the beasts might initially appear identical, they're all rated in seven different categories, such as starting ability and speed. On top of that, each horse has up to 20 individual characteristics: you might find one who is especially obedient but fades towards the end of a race, or another that prefers running at the rear of the pack but has a great sprint over the last 400 metres.

Thankfully, a deep tutorial mode explains exactly how to put this knowledge to good use. This is very handy in the story mode, where winning races and earning moolah leads to you being offered better rides. If you're really committed there's plenty of negotiating with owners and breeding options (for the horses, not you) but these features aren't essential to your progress, so you can pick and choose.

If you're into your gee-gees then *G1 4* is a must. Even if you've never heard of Claire Balding and think Goodwood is a pornstar pseudonym, there's more than enough here to make it worth a rental. We defy you not to jump around the room like a loon when, after a few hours' hard graft learning the tricks of the trade, all that hard work pays off with your first win. Sadly, Champagne's off the menu – but you can perform a victory salute by tapping ⊗ after galloping across the line. It's a satisfying yet undeniably camp feature in a camp yet undeniably satisfying game. **Ben Wilson**

There's an incredible amount of depth to pre-race preparations



She just hit top spot on our 'potential wife' list

TAKING THE REINS

Now where's our whip peripheral?

The clip-on reins accessory takes some time to master – particularly as the other buttons on the joypad (including the shoulders) are all utilised. Flicking the stick up and down in rhythm with your horse's footsteps makes it gain speed. Pulling it down tells the horse to decelerate. Moving it left and right – you guessed it – moves the horse left and right. And when the finishing post is in sight, rocking it back and forth as swiftly as possible tells your horse to run like the wind. Well, like a cool coastal breeze. Can you think of another game it might cunningly work with?

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	It's no *Black*, but this *is* horse racing
Sound	06	No voices, just hilariously cheesy music
Gameplay	07	Perfect for short bursts of horseplay
Lifespan	07	The just-one-more-race factor is strong

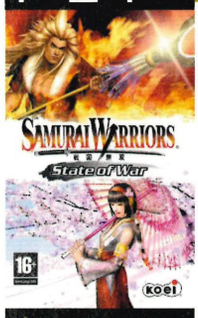
An unorthodox, immersive sports game that requires some hard graft, but will provide you with plenty of enjoyment in exchange

7/10

SAMURAI WARRIORS: STATE OF WAR

PSP

Japanese slasher finally comes good on PSP



DETAILS

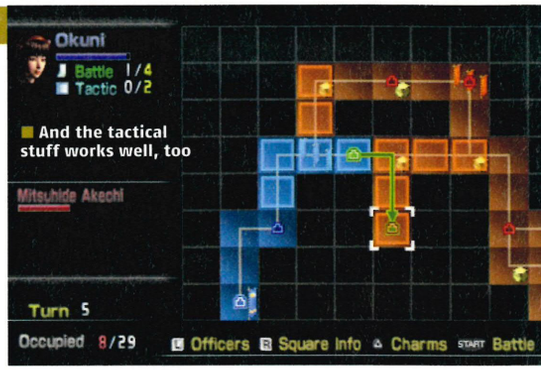
PUBLISHER KOEI
DEVELOPER OMEGA FORCE
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1 (1-4 WIFI)
OUT 24 MARCH
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

Yes, it's another thumb-molesting swords 'n' sushi epic, right? Whereas every other game in the now 14-strong *Warriors* (we're bundling *Dynasty* and *Samurai* together) series claims to have one new feature that makes it 'different' from all the others, *State Of War* actually goes one better and has two. The first of these is that it has real characters from Japanese history, including the infamous Hittori Hanzo, the legendary swordsmith name-checked in *Kill Bill Vol 1*. And the second surprise is that it's actually surprisingly playable.

Yes, you read that correctly. This *Samurai Warriors* game is different from the other repetitive slashers in the *Warriors* family because it takes the enjoyable elements from the PS2 versions, throws in some genuinely engaging tactical elements, and then tops it all off with WiFi multiplayer support.

The Story mode takes place on a campaign-by-campaign basis, with each one broken down into small parts that can be tackled whenever you snatch a couple of minutes alone with your PSP. First comes the tactical stage, where you move your army on a map, play special cards, and try to gain territory, like you would in the board game *Risk*. Then you have to fight for the land you've claimed, which is where the all-too-familiar button bashing comes into play. The tactics are an enjoyable, brain-teasing addition to the series – and because the action is sliced into easily digestible minute-or-so-length scraps for a small section of map, it never feels tedious.

The conversion has brought a few bad habits with it though, the most shameful being that identikit enemies will often suddenly pop up to take a dishonourable swipe at you from a location that's hidden by the drab, fog-filled environments. This doesn't cost *State Of War* victory, but it slightly takes the edge off what is an otherwise razor-sharp PSP game. ■ **Andy Hartup**



PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	06	Decent characters, dreadful environments
Sound	06	Eastern lift music and tinny sound effects
Gameplay	07	Swordplay works well in small chunks
Lifespan	08	Plenty to unlock and collect

Tasty combat and a fresh tactics system make this a rare beast indeed: a Samurai Warriors *game that surprises and excites*

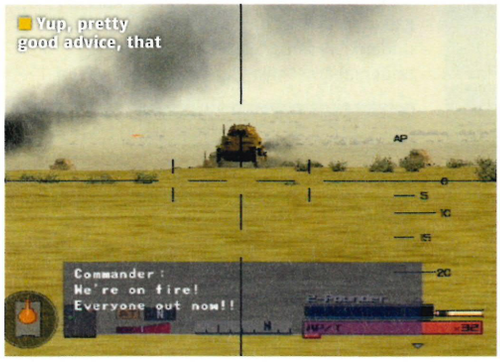
7/10

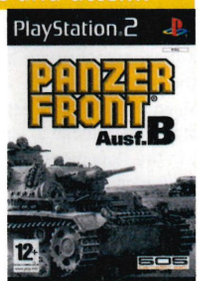
PANZER FRONT AUSF.B

Quick review: rhymes with 'tank', 'complete and utter...'

Now this really is staggeringly poor. We know that real tanks are slow and that as a simulation this was never likely to be *Burnout* with turrets – but did it really have to be soooooooo catatonically sluggish? And dull. Oh Christ it's dull. The framerate is so slow that we sort of felt sorry for it, and at one point we had to watch the screen carefully to check we were even moving. Levels consist of trundling along at glacial speeds then shooting blocky orange squares at a distant enemy. The only fun there is comes from laughing at the infantry, who are apparently made of Lego. ■ **LH**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
Substandard for a PSone game – there's almost zero presentation, excitement, action, graphical flourish or indeed point. We could go on, but it's too depressing	**2/10**





DETAILS

PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER ENTERBRAIN
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.505GAMESTREET.COM/PRODUCTS.HTM?CON=PS2
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

MEGA MAN POWERED UP

Mega how, exactly?

PSP

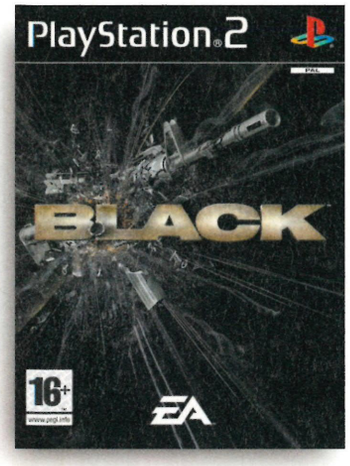
We have to admire Mega Man's perseverance. New games seem to arrive on an almost monthly basis, and by 'new' we mean 'slightly prettier'. The trouble is, the actual game hasn't changed, or been much fun, since the late '80s. It says a lot that this remake of the first 1987 *Mega Man* is tricky to tell apart from the umpteen sequels. Jumping through block-filled landscapes while trying to avoid lethargic, meandering enemies has all the enjoyment and reward of picking at a hangnail. Even the rudimentary level editor doesn't add much interest. To be honest, given the choice we'd pick the hangnail every time. ■ **LH**

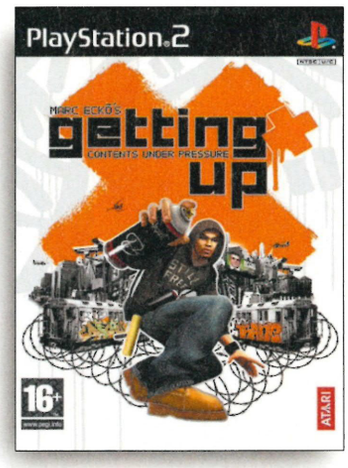
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT
There's little speed, skill or urgency to any of the platform/shooting action – making this another ignominious entry in Mega Man's *CV*	**4/10**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER CAPCOM
DEVELOPER CAPCOM
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 24 MARCH
WIFI MULTIPLAYER NO
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT YES
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

Available from
24th February





Available from
17th February

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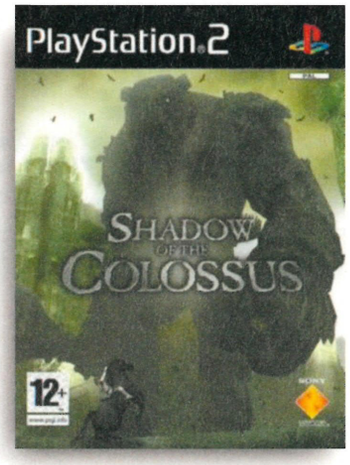

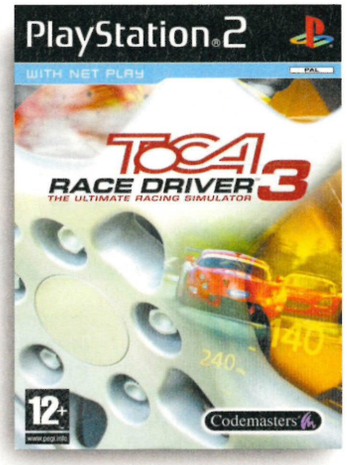

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24th February

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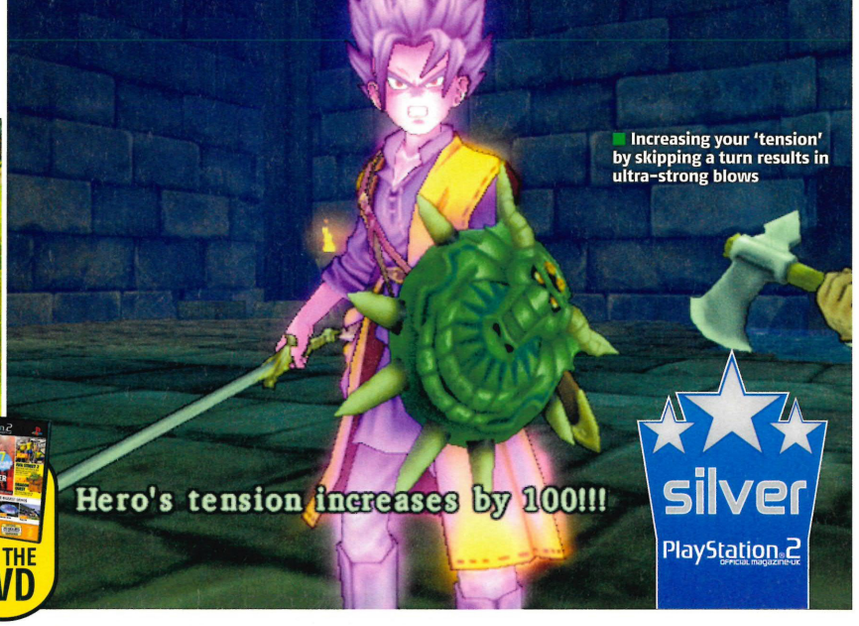


PlayStation 2

DRAGON QUEST: THE JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING

Clear your diaries, goblin-fanciers, it's a whopper

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SQUARE-ENIX
DEVELOPER LEVEL-5
PRICE £39.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT 1 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.DRAGONQUEST8.COM
60HZ MODE NO (OPTIMISED FOR PAL 50HZ)
WIDESCREEN YES
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

The *Dragon Quest* RPG series has sold over 40 million copies – and that's without ever getting a European release. Luckily this, the eighth game, doesn't require any knowledge of the back story.

Eighty hours is an *outrageous* amount of time for any piece of entertainment to demand of its audience. Think about it. That's two weeks of full-time work. Even at minimum wage it adds up to more than £400 in man-hours, and obviously *you're* the one paying for the pleasure. So what gives *Dragon Quest* the right to cheekily toss its hair, look you in the eye and whisper '...because I'm worth it'? The easy answer would be that it's the best stats 'n' sorcery game on PS2. Which is true, but it's also not quite that simple. See, *Dragon Quest* represents the very essence of Japanese role-playing. Which means it also suffers from some of the genre's more annoying habits. But what makes the game special (and worthy of the space we're devoting to it here) is the way it transcends those limitations, so once you're hooked you find yourself wishing it was even *longer*.

The story goes like this: King Trode has been transformed into a troll (a bit like Yoda, only gayer) and his kingdom Trodain has been overrun with magical vines. Adding insult to considerable injury, his daughter, the beautiful Princess Medea, has been turned into a horse. The culprit is an evil jester named Dhoulmagus, who's stolen a forbidden sceptre and now hovers several feet off the ground and finishes every sentence with a MWA HA HA! Enter you, stage left, as the plucky young hero tasked with restoring normality. You're eventually joined by three other adventurers, each with an axe to grind against Dhoulmagus. Literally, in the case of the oafish Yangus.

On paper, yes, it's typical fantasy nonsense – but you're swept along regardless because the tale is told with such warmth and style. Using a predominately British cast to provide the voices – Cockney geezers, West Country bumpkins, plummy aristocrats – is a masterstroke, and the script is sharp, funny and at times even touching. Okay, we're not talking laugh-out-loud or cry-yourself-to-sleep, but it's like stumbling across a particularly good cartoon on CBBC and finding yourself compelled to know what happens next. Admittedly, there are also times when the exposition gets a bit heavy, and you'd rather frantically thumb ⊗ than listen to the characters prattle on. But for the most part the story unfurls satisfyingly as the gang pursues Dhoulmagus from town to town.

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

Before getting to the number-crunching, a word on *Dragon Quest*'s lavish production values. It really is one of the most astonishingly pretty, vibrant games we've ever seen. Outdoor areas couldn't be more colourful without Skittles raining from the sky, and under the guidance of *Dragon Ball Z* artist Akira Toriyama, the

MONSTERS INC

The enemies are superbly designed – here's a few of our faves

BODKIN FLETCHER
They attack with poisoned arrows and carry herbs to heal themselves.

DRACKYMA
Grinning bats that can use magic to put you to sleep.

KISSER
Looks like Leslie Ash and about as handy in a fight.

BUNICORN
Fat carnivorous rabbits with enormous spikes. Excellent in a shortcrust pie.

MAD MOLE
Surprisingly violent fleatraps armed with shovels.

CANNIBOX
Disguises itself as a treasure chest then attacks when you attempt to jimmy it open.

SLIME
Dragon Quest's signature baddies come in varying sizes... this is a babus one.

characters burst with detail and originality. (Forget the grinning slimes, the coolest enemies in the game are the ass-shaking 'dancing devils'.) The game's rightly proud of its graphics, and encourages you to ogle them at every opportunity. The right stick can be used to rotate and tilt the camera, which also has practical benefits when you're exploring vast areas of countryside, looking for that elusive treasure chest. The visuals are backed with an orchestral score, just in case you needed reminding of *Dragon Quest*'s all-round epic-osity. The gameplay, meanwhile, is built around the three rock solid foundations of Japanese RPGs...

#1 FANNYING ABOUT IN TOWNS
#2 TRAIPSING AROUND THE WORLD MAP
#3 EXPLORING DUNGEONS

Let's take them each in turn. Towns are where you'll pick up the next plot thread; something that's inevitably done by talking to *all* of the residents. While you're there you can also hunt around for items (typically, no one seems to mind you rifling through their cupboards or smashing their vases), buy new equipment, heal the party by crashing out at an inn and save the game at the local church. Handily, you can also ask your travelling companions for advice at any time, which helps minimise confusion. You're then generally dispatched on a mission to acquire an item or defeat a monster. Once outside the town's walls you're into the 'world map'. In *Dragon Quest* this is represented with three-dimensional countryside, which you're free to explore to find rare treasure and side-missions.

THE GAME'S RIGHTLY PROUD OF ITS VISUALS AND ENCOURAGES YOU TO OGLE THEM AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY

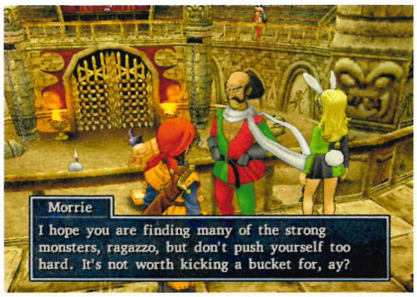
FEELING A BIT RANDOM

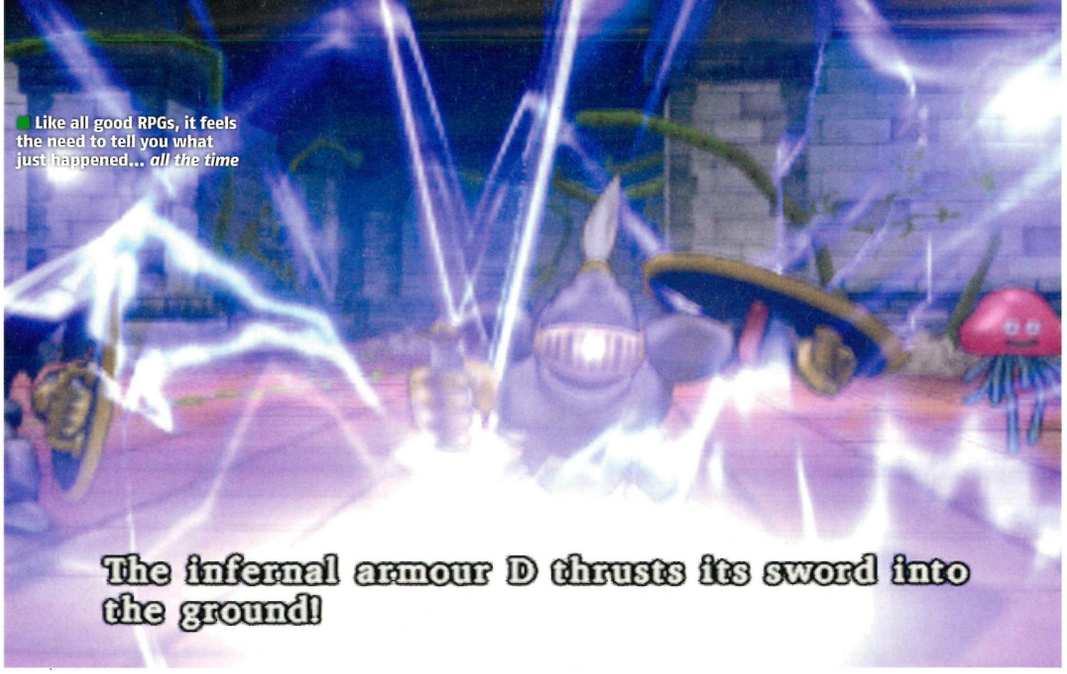
A word of warning, though. The landscape might look picturesque, but it's absolutely crawling

SQUARE ❤s SONY

Ignore what you might have heard, the Japanese love-in is set to continue come PS3

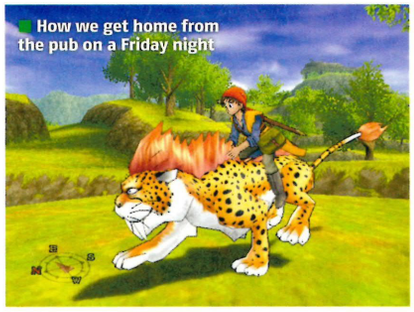
As purveyors of the world's finest RPGs, all the big console manufactures want a piece of Square-Enix. So there was some consternation last year when Microsoft announced it had secured the publisher's services for Xbox 360. However, to date this has amounted to nothing more than *FFXI*, the online RPG already available on PC and PS2 (outside Europe). Meanwhile, Square continues to support PS2 with all its enormo-franchises, including *Dragon Quest* and the next *Final Fantasy*. Tantalisingly, at last year's E3 we saw what Square expects from the PS3's visuals in the form of a lush re-working of *FFVII* (above). Hearteningly, *Dragon Quest* also represents a renewed commitment to Europe, with Square self-publishing over here for the first time.





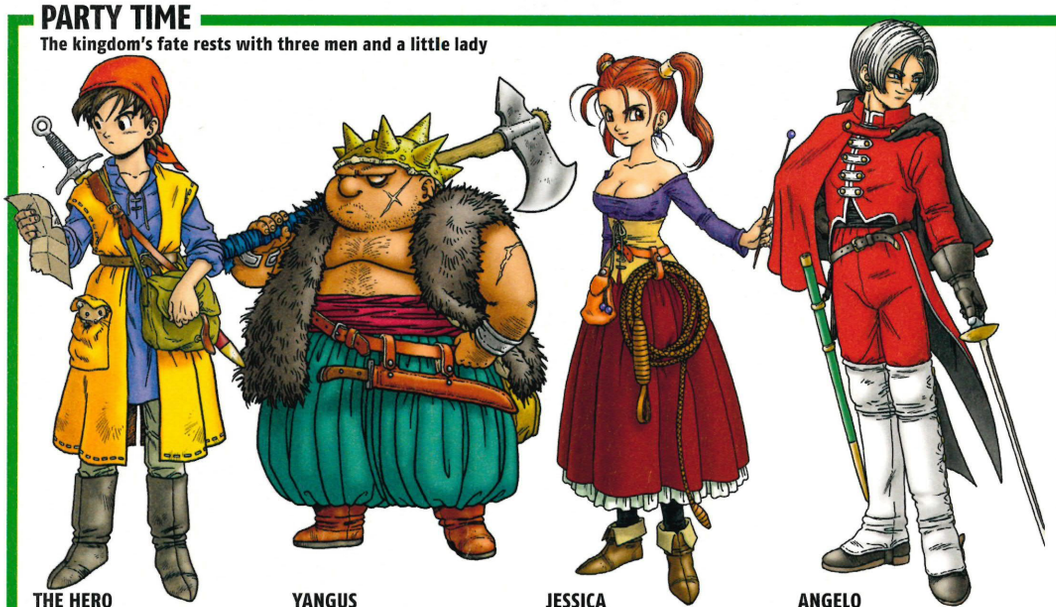
with danger. Much like wandering through Croydon on a Friday night, chances are you'll be attacked every few seconds. The core to *Dragon Quest*'s gameplay, and to levelling-up your characters, is an endless stream of random, turn-based battles. Don't make that face. Yes, in the past we've criticised RPGs for relying on busywork, but in this case it's a bit like complaining that the Ketchup is too tomatoey. For hardcore fans, the oh-so-gradual process of acquiring new techniques and spells is very much the juice. Anyway, *Dragon Quest*'s battles are quick-fire and genuinely enjoyable. Partly because the difficulty is pitched beautifully, so that there's a real risk involved if you start making bum decisions, but also because the animation is so crisp and snappy – with none of the overblown graphical cock-waving you get from *Final Fantasy*.

The turn-based structure, combined with the vast range of spells, weapons and techniques, means there's tactical depth here too. Scratch the surface and you're essentially looking at glorified resource management – your job being to maximise the characters' effectiveness by combining their unique skills. You also need to use brinkmanship to heal the members of your party at the right time, exploit weak spots and neutralise the most dangerous enemies first. The fact that failure is a serious possibility – particularly early on, when the characters are weak like kittens in a blizzard – only serves to feed your desire for more power. Again, this is classic RPG stuff, but *Dragon Quest* proves so addictive – and for once that really is the right word – because you're only ever slightly ahead of the curve (in terms of the party's abilities versus the monsters), which creates an irresistible drive to keep on improving, acquiring new weapons and learning new skills. The result is a deeply rewarding experience that gets exponentially more enjoyable as you travel further and your options expand.



PARTY TIME

The kingdom's fate rests with three men and a little lady



THE HERO
You, essentially. He was a guard at King Trode's castle when it was attacked by Dhoulmagus, but escaped, and is now trying to restore Trodain and its King to their former glory. Doesn't speak, making it easier for you to identify with him. We named him 'Babus'.
Weapons: Swords, boomerangs

YANGUS
Dimwitted barrow boy who, if they ever do a movie, *has* to be played by Ray Winstone. Yangus is an ex-bandit who swears loyalty to the hero after he saves his life following a botched robbery on a rope bridge. The classic brawn over brains character.
Weapons: Axes, clubs, scythes

JESSICA
Hottie in residence, and along with the Little Mermaid proof that cartoons can be sexy. Jess joins to avenge the death of her brother. Spell-casting specialist who speaks proper posh, despite wearing a top that would be considered 'a bit much' in Yates pub.
Weapons: Staffs, whips, knives

ANGELO
Self-styled ladies' man Angelo was raised by the Knights Templar after the death of his blue-blooded parents. He seeks revenge on Dhoulmagus for killing the man who raised him. Square thinks he's the cool one, but the ladies' hairdo and outfit suggest otherwise.
Weapons: Rapiers, bows

Earn extra coins by battling in the monster arenas. "Are you not amused?"

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Dungeons, meanwhile, are pretty much exactly as expected. Treasure chests, dead ends, more random battles and one very angry boss waiting at the end. However, unlike previous role-players developed by Level-5 (*Dark Cloud* and *Chronicle*) the dungeon designs aren't randomly generated, and look every bit as detailed as the locations found elsewhere in the game. The boss battles are also tense, because by the time you reach them the party's often running low on health-restoring magic. Occasionally it's possible to find yourself underpowered because you haven't spent enough time levelling-up on the world map. Which is an arse, but it happens less and less frequently further into the game because you develop a better understanding of how the various systems work. But the early stages may prove stern for virgin RPG-ers.

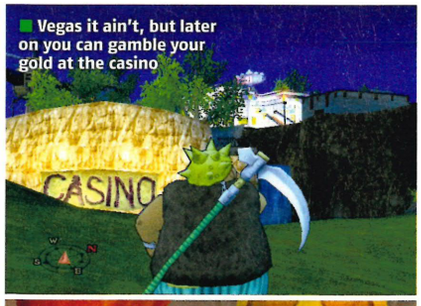
Make it past the first few hours, though, and you'll be along for the whole ride. There's a huge amount to see and do here. Early on, King Trode breaks out his alchemy pot, which allows you to cook up rare weapons and armour by combining items in your inventory. Later, the party gets the chance to gamble its gold at casinos and fight in monster arenas. There are also hundreds of other delightful touches which combine to make the game feel special. For example, at one point you play Munchie, the ferret-like creature the hero keeps in his pocket, and have to sneak into Jessica's room.

Dragon Quest is essentially a paint-by-numbers RPG, but when the finished picture looks so pretty, who's complaining? Every aspect of the game feels like it's been crafted with care, attention... love, even. If you hate RPGs on a fundamental level, there won't be anything here to make you reconsider your stance. But for anyone who enjoys leading a wide-eyed gang of misfits to victory against impossible odds, this is as good as it gets. Savour every hour. ■ **Tim Clark**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	09	Technicolor cel-shaded majesty
Sound	09	Superb voicing and symphonic tunes
Gameplay	09	No surprises, but rock solid RPGing
Lifespan	09	Add in the side quests and it's vast

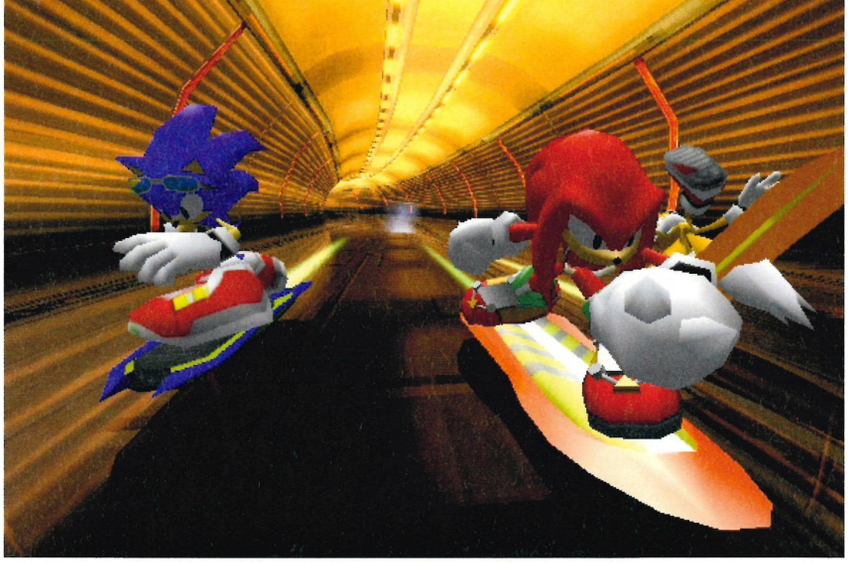
Dragon Quest ***looks sensational, plays tightly and lasts like a marathon-running robot. Not for casuals but a hardcore delight***

9/10



Vegas it ain't, but later on you can gamble your gold at the casino

Jessica found a quiet spot away from the boys before taking a leak



SONIC RIDERS

The hog leaves us feeling blue again

PlayStation 2

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SONIC TEAM
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-4
OUT 17 MARCH
WEBSITE WWW.SEGA.COM/SONIC
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE

After many years spent trying his little gloved hands at platforming, puzzles and pinball, the spiky blue one gets his own hoverboarding game. Naturally, Knuckles and Tails also star.

The PS2 isn't a machine of many flaws, but if we're brutally honest – and it is our job to be so after all – the one thing it has always lacked is a cartoon racer of the calibre of *Mario Kart*. Attempts to emulate the ever popular Nintendo series have ranged from the fair (*Crash Tag Team Racing*, *Space Race*) to the arse-awful (here's looking at you, *Crazy Frog*), and now, in an attempt to finally leave long-time nemesis Mario crying into his toolbox, Sonic has entered the fray complete with high-speed jet board and inevitably futuristic environments.

It's a decent looking game, but don't expect to take in much of the view because everything flies by stupidly fast. The game is so quick that you never feel fully in control of your character. Most courses are designed with dizzying corkscrews, and trying to negotiate them while travelling at top-speed proves tough. Crash into walls and you'll damage your board and have to check in at the pit stop booths dotted around the tracks. Alternatively, slow down as you approach corners and watch your opponents overtake you. Balancing the speed and control correctly is difficult like finding the setting on your shower dial exactly halfway between 'liquid nitrogen' and 'magma'.

OLD GOLD

The main incentive to racing is collecting rings and unlocking cool new items in the shop. When we say "cool new items", we actually mean "pieces of kit which are disappointingly similar to the stuff you start with". The board upgrades available claim to offer extra speed and better boost – but the fancy Hovercraft model feels almost identical to the default Blue Star which you get from the outset. This quickly nullifies any incentive to earn rings or unlock extra equipment.

Which leaves what, exactly? The cast of characters is equally unappealing. Each of the initial seven is split into one of three classes: Speed, Flight and Power. The first set are the fastest (obviously), the second better at negotiating airborne sections, and the third able to smash obstacles out of the way. It sounds good in theory, but again makes little difference when you actually get racing, with little to distinguish the character classes. This in turn means that another of the game's incentives – unlocking the nine hidden characters – is also rendered redundant.

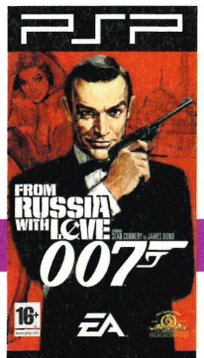
If you're after a brainless and speedy arcade racer that requires no thought whatsoever then by all means go out and pick up *Sonic Racers* – with Time Attack, World Grand Prix, Story, Tag and Survival modes in addition to a standard race, there's plenty of mindless jet board riding on offer. Otherwise, join us in blubbing into our custom-made Sonic trainers. We really want to love Sega's poster boy, but coming just months after *Shadow* stank up the office, this is another big disappointment. ■ **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK VERDICT

Graphics	07	Mostly good, but you'll hardly notice
Sound	05	The usual thumping dance tracks
Gameplay	04	Slick and quick but seriously flawed
Lifespan	06	Plenty to do but little incentive

An undercooked cartoon racer that again blemishes the once-great Sonic name. Only the sense of speed prevents total unplayability

5/10



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

This little diamond is forever

DETAILS

PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER EA REDWOOD SHORES
PRICE £34.99
PLAYERS 1-6
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

AT A GLANCE

Bond makes his debut on PSP in a close port from last November's PS2 game, with 007 battling Russian terrorists over London and across Europe. Additional features include six-player WiFi and extra mini-games.

Collateral damage: one enormous clock

What's this, Q?" "It's *From Russia With Love* on PSP, Bond." "Let me guess, Q: it's just like the bulkier console version, but miniaturised for ease of concealment, perhaps in the secret compartment of a briefcase, or a gentleman's toiletry bag?" "Well, yes and no, Bond. On the surface, it's just a straight port from last November's PS2 title. However, there are some interesting new features here. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised." "Very good, Q. And they all work perfectly?" "Er, for once, Bond, yes. Not still moaning about that exploding cigar, are you?"

SHAKEN, NOT SPOILED

From Russia With Love on PS2 was a solid Bond outing that captured the style, stealth and gentlemanly savagery of England's smoothest special agent, and its passage onto PSP feels almost flawless. The plot again loosely adheres to that of the original film, while the gun-juggling and explosive set-pieces that packed so much punch on the console version are just as good in miniature. What's more, the cut-scenes starring the likeness and suave Scottish burr of Mr Sean Connery are beautiful like a Russian femme fatale thawing by a log fire.

Importantly, the controls have been altered sensibly. Shooting is now triggered by shoulder buttons, with the left locking on to targets and the right letting forth a big orgasm of lead. Which brings us to Focus mode. Along the lines of *GUN*'s Quick Draw mode, it allows you to manually target your enemies within lock-on, aiming at vulnerable spots, meaning you can nail them with anything from a head shot (instant take-down) to a grenade on their belt (plume of smoke, pile of dead bodies plus licence to get absurdly excited while on public transport – see 'Bond Moments'). Sadly, the lack of two analogue sticks means operating a sniper rifle is tremendously tricky; but what price is repetitive strain injury when you've just created a gaping hole in a distant SPECTRE goon's skull?

The fresh features on offer are the biggest hook. First up, there's an all-conquering WiFi multiplayer mode which could do for WiFi what classic *GoldenEye* did for four-player action on the N64. Boasting six-man play and a variety of modes from classic deathmatch to jetpack dogfights, it's expansive and impressively free of slowdown. There's also a megalomaniac's volcano lair's worth of unlockables, including a wealth of new villain skins, and a number of puzzles. Among these you'll find a mini-helicopter bonus-game and Hedgerow Challenge – not a gardening programme, but a battle set in a Hampton Court-style maze.

Yes, essentially it's a close port of its PS2 daddy. But just like the debonair spy himself, *From Russia With Love* does excellent so damn effortlessly. ■ **Louis Pattison**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	09	Cinematic visuals and convincing cut-scenes
Sound	07	Sean Connery does the speech! Job done
Gameplay	07	Involved, if occasionally fiddly, combat
Lifespan	08	Engaging on your own or over WiFi

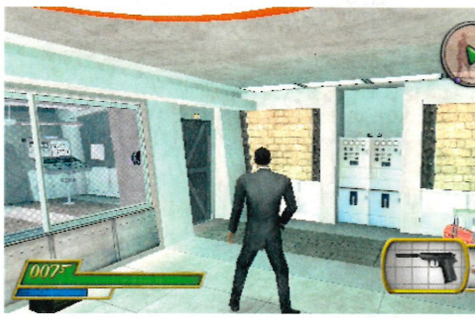
It looks good, it plays good, and it does handheld multiplayer as well as anything out there. Bond and PSP make perfect bedfellows

8/10

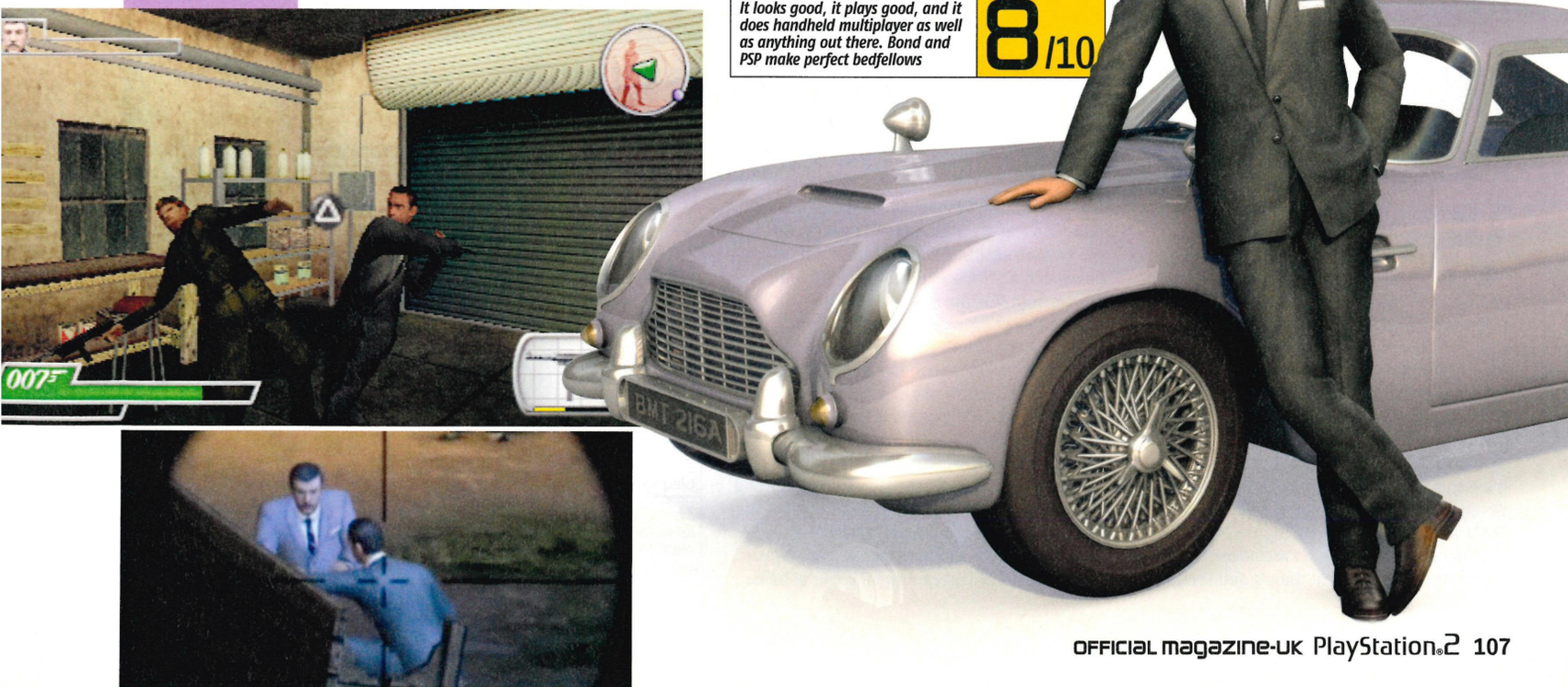
BOND MOMENTS

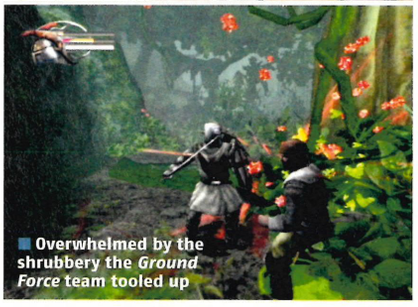
Be as cool as James. For a couple of seconds

One special PSP addition is the so-called 'Bond moment' – a hidden, once-per-level event that looks awesome but, just as importantly, frees new unlockables. It goes like this: Target an exploding barrel. Watch epic, man-mangling explosion. Curl eyebrow. Deliver withering quip.



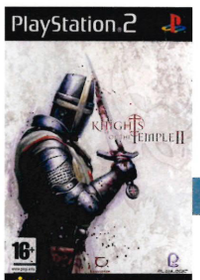
Drop in on Q's MI6 laboratory to pick up new weapons and kit





Overwhelmed by the shrubbery the *Ground Force* team tooled up

This is set in the Dark Ages. Just after 10pm in this case



DETAILS

PUBLISHER PLAYLOGIC ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER CAULDRON
PRICE £13.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.PLAYLOGICINTERNATIONAL.COM/GAMES/KOTTII.PHP
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND YES
ONLINE NO

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE II

Saving ye olde world one job at a time

For a budget game this is surprisingly high quality. The atmospheric medieval settings don't feel cheap – in fact, there's nothing shoddy about any of it. We've played much ropier full-price games. The gloomy plague-ridden cities and bustling Arabian towns are interesting places to explore and the 'Knights Templar fighting demons in 13th Century Europe' plot certainly makes for a refreshing change from the usual espionage/gangster idiocy.

The main mission – discovering artefacts to fight the forces of hell – is bulked out by a range of side quests. Finding lost children, locating magical herbs, reclaiming bad debts, you're basically everybody's bitch, running left, right and centre with a constantly expanding list of fetch-and-find jobs to complete. And at first it's a pain. Persevere, however, and successfully completed missions reveal new locations to explore and – *Jesus!* – more things to do. At times it feels like the game's trying to engulf you with objectives after goals, followed by tasks. The first few hours of play don't feel like they're achieving anything except building up a chivalric 'to do' list of epic proportions.

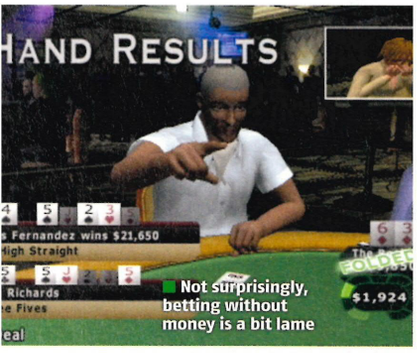
Get through the overwhelming initial hours though and things improve. With more locations available you start to actually complete quests. There's also plenty of solid if unspectacular combat, improved by a wealth of weaponry and upgrades to experiment with. While there's an awful lot of back and forth travelling (which is infuriating when you've forgotten who it was that wanted what and where) there's more than enough fun to justify spending 14 of your hard-earned pound coins. ■ **Leon Hurley**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine UK VERDICT

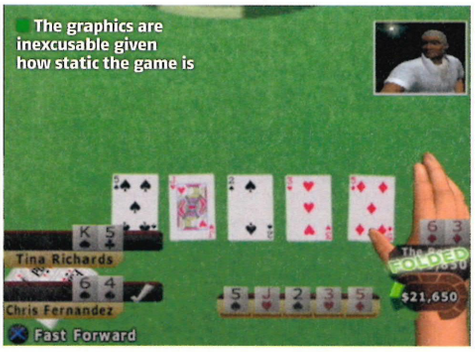
Graphics	07	Dodgy main character, classy environments
Sound	06	Spooky and cheesy but in a good way
Gameplay	07	Capable and enjoyable but poorly structured
Lifespan	07	The side missions and extras will fill days

With more loose ends than a fistful of hair, the missions could be tighter. But the action and exploration make this a quality budget title

7/10



Not surprisingly, betting without money is a bit lame



The graphics are inexcusable given how static the game is

WORLD SERIES OF POKER

Once again we're dealt a dead man's hand

When you consider that poker is played with numbered pieces of card invented in the 13th Century it's amazing that every time the game is attempted on PS2 it's messed up so royally. While you can't argue that *World Series Of Poker* is broken, it does so many laughably inane things that the passable opponent AI is rendered irrelevant. The character animation is woeful; unforgivable given the limited range of movement a human has when sat in a chair at a table. Meanwhile, the voice acting gives the impression that none of your opponents developed their speech past the age of four. You'll want to slap them daft.

Shame, because with online poker's huge popularity at the moment there's definitely a place for a really flash looking poker simulation set in the world's most opulent casinos, that has you playing against colourful card shark personalities. While *WSOP* has real-life card players from the titular annual tournament, the game's visuals are so limited that none of their trademark characteristics shine through. They all have the same animation for 'win', 'lose' and 'all-in', which irritatingly involves pushing their chips into the middle of the table and standing up, ready to walk. Every time. More pertinently *WSOP* utterly fails to accurately convey the psychological elements of poker, such as bluffing – which makes up such an important part of the real game – when you're not dealing with sweating, fidgeting human beings who've just bet the twins' college money on a pair of fours.

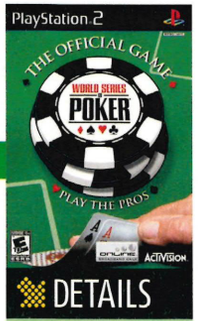
Of course we're obliged to point out that the buy-in is the budget price of £19.99. But frankly we can only advise you take that £20 note and (provided you're of legal age) invest it in a game of real competitive online poker. It might be the obvious retort, but it's true. ■ **George Walter**

PlayStation.2 OFFICIAL magazine UK VERDICT

Graphics	04	Weak, given the relatively static game
Sound	03	Terrible, terrible voice acting
Gameplay	06	It's money-free poker, so not great
Lifespan	06	Online could prove a diversion

Another attempt to cash in on poker's current online renaissance. But with no cash and terrible graphics it's a bum-deal

5/10



DETAILS

PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER LEFTFIELD
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.ACTIVISIONVALUE.COM/TITLES/WSOP/PR168140.HTML
60HZ: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: YES

■ It looks just like every other *Bust-A-Move* game. Because it is

BUST-A-MOVE GHOST

Bust? Not quite, but feeling the strain

Classic Puzzle, Ghost Puzzle, Blind Puzzle, Seesaw Puzzle, Shot Puzzle, Running Launcher Puzzle – the modes may sound *vaguely* different, but this is the same 'classic' gaming as it was ten years ago.

Playing *Bust-A-Move* is easy: it's all about emptying 2D screens filled with bubbles. Use your none-more-cutesy character to shoot coloured spheres out of a cross-bow-style machine to form groups of three or more bubbles, which will then pop. Repeat until the stage is cleared. But despite the subtle differences between the various modes, the gameplay is painfully overfamiliar. Solid enough puzzling, certainly, but nothing to trouble the shiny majesty of *Lumines*, the genre's current king. ■ **AH**

DETAILS

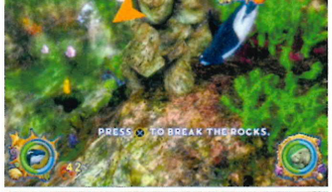
PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER TAITO
PRICE £34.99
OUT NOW
WIFI MULTIPLAYER NO
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

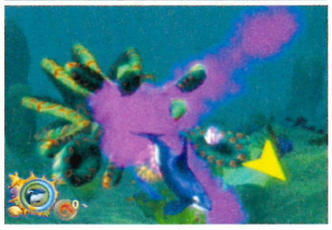
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

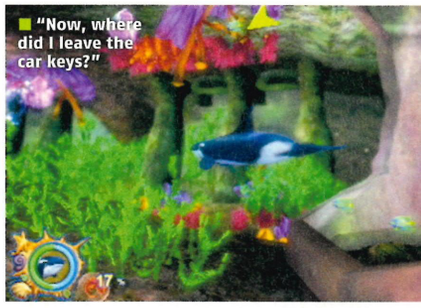
VERDICT

Behind the new name and smattering of fresh features rests a creaky old game that can't compete against its obviously-better-in-every-department rival

5/10







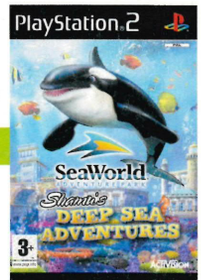
■ "Now, where did I leave the car keys?"

SHAMU'S DEEP SEA ADVENTURES

'Escape From Thames' level not included

Meet Shamu, 'The powerful and majestic killer whale'. The park where he's been merrily dreaming of world peace has been hijacked by the evil undersea god Poseidon, and it's up to you to help him restore tranquillity by hunting out golden relics and taking out an army of nasty sea creatures.

You may snigger, but don't: the colourful levels are enjoyable to mooch around and there's a stack of thoughtfully constructed mini-games along the way. Best of all, once you've raced through it you can pass it on to your little brother, who'll never put it down. ■ **BW**



DETAILS

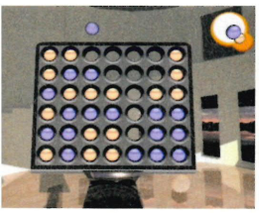
PUBLISHER ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER SAND GRAIN STUDIOS
PRICE £19.99
PLAYERS 1
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.ACTIVISIONVALUE.COM/TITLES/SHAMU
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

VERDICT

An enjoyable underwater escapade with plenty of nice touches. It's aimed at youngsters, but even the over-nines will get some enjoyment out of it

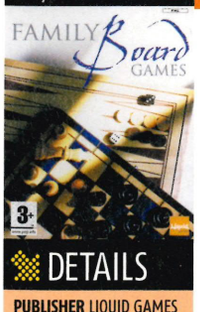
7/10



■ Only Enigma comes close to being fun

FAMILY BOARD GAMES

Even for a tenner, all sorts of wrong



DETAILS

PUBLISHER LIQUID GAMES
DEVELOPER LIQUID GAMES
PRICE £9.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.OXYGENINT.COM/GAMES/GAME5.PHP
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

Despite living in the age of always-on digitainment, we still play the odd board game every now and then. Well, with Nan. At Christmas. Once. Would she like this? Nuh-uh. *Family Board Games* brings together six 'classics' – Chess, Checkers, Backgammon, Quatro (Connect 4 to us lot), Reverse and Enigma – and somehow conspires to makes them *less* exciting. Quite an achievement, really.

If you live in a cave in Swaziland's Lubombo Mountains and have never been introduced to another human being, then you may find Enigma mildly enjoyable for perhaps half an hour. Otherwise, if you really want to play a board game, get down to Woolies and buy the real version. (At least there's a risk of the cat knocking all the pieces over to add interest.) This month's life lesson: there is nothing more soul destroying than losing a game of checkers to a machine. ■ **BW**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

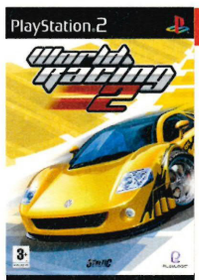
VERDICT

They're called 'board' games for a reason – they should be played on a piece of wood, against real people – not solo on your PS2. End of

3/10

WORLD RACING 2

"Let's off-road!"



DETAILS

PUBLISHER PLAYLOGIC
DEVELOPER SYNETIC
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.PLAYLOGICGAMES.COM/WORLDRACING2
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

You've got to show some love for a racing game that encourages you to wander off course and shortcut your way to victory, particularly when the scenery is far more interesting than anything on the road. Head off track in *WR2* and it's possible to meander around Hawaiian summer houses, Italian backstreets, and other environments specific to the place you're competing in. You can even pass through Egyptian pyramids.

Over 90 authentic cars are on offer from the likes of Lotus, Mercedes, and Skoda (yes, really) but while the career mode serves up plenty of variation, the actual driving isn't right. You never feel that you're going as fast as the speedo claims, and there are some framerate problems when too many vehicles appear on screen at once. And that's an absolute no-no for any racer. ■ **BW**

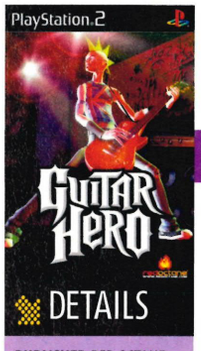
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

VERDICT

World Racing 2 offers loads of cars to try out, shortcuts to find, and career options to play, but you won't bother because the racing itself just isn't up to scratch

5/10

■ Authentic cars: 90+. Thrilling races: None



GUITAR HERO

silver
PlayStation.2 official magazine-UK

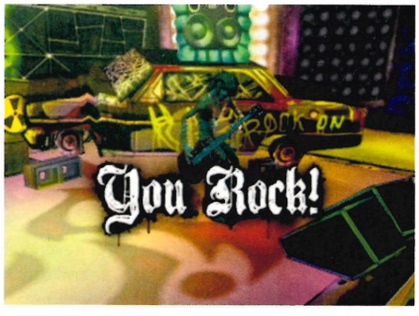
We who are about to rock... strap on a big plastic axe

DETAILS

PUBLISHER RED OCTANE
DEVELOPER HARMONIX
PRICE £49.99 (INCLUDING GUITAR)
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT 7 APRIL
WEBSITE WWW.GUITARHEROGAME.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
PERIPHERALS GUITAR
ONLINE NO

AT A GLANCE
Button-tapping music game. The genius of it is that the joypad is replaced with a little plastic guitar so you actually feel and look like your playing a real, if mildly Fisher Price-like axe.

We haven't answered the phone for ages. We haven't eaten and our cramped, spasming bladder has swollen to the size of a beach ball with no sign of any immediate relief. That's how passionately we're pursuing our virtual rock stardom. Once we've slung the plastic guitar over our shoulder and assumed a metal pose (feet spread, guitar hanging at just below crotch level) we aren't going anywhere. And don't doubt for a second that you won't be just as obsessed. It doesn't matter what you think about the music (a range of rock tunes from the '60s to present day, all perfectly recreated by sound-a-likes) or even if you possess the melodic potential of a handful of gravel chucked at a drum kit. Make no mistake – you will rock.



AXE MURDERER

It's the guitar peripheral that does it. It might look like a kid's toy but once it's hanging around your neck and you start playing, then you instantly become [insert favourite six-string god here]. As coloured circles move down a fretboard-like ramp, you strum away at a little trigger, tapping the fret buttons or holding them down when there's a trailing line behind the note. Hit the mark correctly and sweetly distorted, harmonious tones emerge from the speakers. Cock it up and it sounds like a drunk attacking the strings with pliers. Blunt ones.

THE KEY OF METAL

As you play, you score points for each correct note. The longer you go without messing up, the higher your multiplier bonus gets. There are also 'star notes' which fill a special Star Power gauge. When the bar reaches a certain level you can unleash this stored up energy by tilting the guitar neck up, scoring yet more bonus points, and making yourself look like a legend. More importantly there's a meter that measures just how much you rock. Miss too many notes and the needle dips from green to yellow and then finally, red. Hit this and it's all over. The song ends, the crowd boos you off stage and it's time to get the gear back in the van.

So that you're not just watching a series of dots move down the screen, you get a choice of characters to rock out on stage with. Anything from biker dudes, Britpop rockers or grunge chicks and eventually Death playing a strung-up scythe. The band starts out playing cramped flea pits. But as you progress they move up the venue ladder to bars, festivals and arena concerts as well as unlocking new song sets (there are 30 famous tracks and an extra 17 as bonuses). Each successfully completed 'gig' also earns you cash depending on your performance

THE *OPS2* SET LIST

Our faves from *Guitar Hero*'s 30 licensed tracks, as picked by our spell-checker-in-chief Helen – the only person to clock the game on the mind-numbingly hard Expert level!

10: SYMPHONY OF DESTRUCTION
Proper hard rock, and an absolutely nails solo.

9: STELLAR
Great guitar melodies and interesting timing.

8: UNSUNG
A track for men who know how to rock.

7: ZIGGY STARDUST
Great solo, cool harmonics, and diverse sections.

6: SMOKE ON THE WATER
Classic. You'll really feel like you're playing it.

5: TEXAS FLOOD
One for people who understand the language of guitars.

4: KILLER QUEEN
The most 'fun' track in the game. Genius placement of required notes.

3: COWBOYS FROM HELL
A proper song. Not at all for girls. (I am a lady!)

2: BARK AT THE MOON
Takes about a week to get the opening riff, but worth every second.

1: CROSSROADS
The crème de la crème. Most challenging to play, most rewarding to complete.

That burst of flame means you've hit the note perfectly

Double notes mean chords and should be accompanied by some serious moshing

ASSUME THE POSITION

There are plenty of poses to adopt when playing *Guitar Hero*. The *OPS2* team demonstrate their favourites

which you can then blow on unlockable extras including new guitars, characters and songs.

ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

The thing is, just telling you how it all works does no justice to how it feels. Okay you're not really performing any of the songs but there's such a tight relationship between what your hands are doing and what's playing on a track that it's easy to forget you're only pressing buttons. On some of the more complicated sequences, the on-screen patterns tie in unerringly with what's being played, including pressing two buttons at once for chords. The fact that you don't hear the notes you miss only reinforces the feeling that you are somehow 'making' the music. Nailing intricate flurries of notes during a solo creates an almost orgasmic shudder of pleasure.

NAILING INTRICATE FLURRIES OF NOTES CREATES AN ALMOST ORGASMIC SHUDDER OF PLEASURE

Even better are the moments where your brain switches off. You don't how you're doing it but your fingers move unprompted, as if possessed. Impossibly difficult sequences seem to pass straight from eye to fingertip with no conscious effort. Have a moment like that while playing with friends and wait for the groupies to form a queue. (Alright, so we're still waiting – but you take the point.) If you're worried that your clumpy little hands will never get the hang of it then don't. It's perfectly balanced. The different difficulty levels limit the number of buttons you need to worry about and the speed the symbols appear at. The clever bit is how gradually it increases the complexity as you move through the songs. The odd extra note creeps in here, a slightly trickier passage there and before you know it your fingers are blurring across the neck, rattling out a version of *No One Knows* by Queens Of The Stone Age, on the absolutely nails Expert setting.

The best thing is that it doesn't matter what you think about bands like Queen, Pantera or Incubus – like *SingStar*, the music isn't the point. You'll have fun regardless. Get a few mates round though and it's even better, especially if one of them has an extra guitar controller. The duet option is excellent. Even passing the one guitar around is brilliantly entertaining as people try to beat each other's scores, performances or just show off. It might cost a bit more because of the bundled guitar peripheral but you certainly won't regret it. It's the most enjoyment we've had with our PS2 this year. ■ **Leon Hurley**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Solid, but limited animation and locations
Sound	09	A great mix, from indie to rock and metal
Gameplay	09	A simple but enormously addictive idea
Lifespan	08	Not enormous but the replay value is huge

An absolute classic. Simple to play but hugely rewarding, challenging and entertaining like nothing else on PS2. You need this game **9/10**

Your on-screen characters rock out as you play

You start in dingy basement gigs but end up playing festivals

Busting ghosts in the 'heart attack' mode

silver
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

It's a PSP rocket in your pocket

Mmmm... aspirational

Picture the scene: you're in the games shop, ready to buy a copy of *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast*. Staring back at you are the PS2 and PSP versions, both begging to be taken home and shown a good time. You can feel the wind in your hair, hear the roar of the Ferrari's engine ... both versions look the same, so you reach for the PS2 box. Wrong. The screen

may be smaller on handheld, but the colourful slip-slide experience of *OutRun 2006* is much better suited to PSP play.

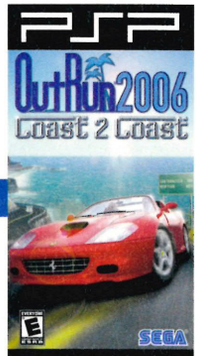
This is virtually the same game that, last month, reminded us that sometimes, life's simple pleasures are the finest. The reason the portable version edges into first place is that *OutRun 2006* is gaming best snatched in small chunks; something the PSP excels at. Quickly blast through a full race or take on the Coast 2 Coast mode, which offers up addictive mini-challenges such as avoiding meteors and dribbling beach-balls. It keeps *OutRun 2006*'s exaggerated drift-racing mechanics feeling fresher than a beach front drive in a new Enzo.

As far as the actual mechanics of the game are concerned, this PSP conversion is remarkably well-tuned. In some places it even seems quicker than the console version – the only real problem comes when the gameplay stutters like a Ford Escort during the twists and turns of the more demanding stages. You'll crash, you'll curse, but you'll still find yourself tapping ⊗ to keep playing, hungry for another taste of full-throttled blue-sky brilliance. **Andy Hartup**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	08	Bright colours and great details
Sound	09	Retro tunes and razor sharp effects
Gameplay	09	Extremely slick arcade-style action
Lifespan	08	Loads to unlock, with multiplayer to boot

Bright, highly polished, massively desirable and built to impress. OutRun 2006 shows the same class as the Ferraris it lets you race

9/10



DETAILS

PUBLISHER SEGA
DEVELOPER SUMO
PRICE £29.99
OUT 31 MARCH
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

At least *one* of his parents was a Muppet

Buzz's presentation is spot on

BUZZ: THE BIG QUIZ

Fingers on buzzers for the general knowledge round...

bronze
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

We haven't even got round to the quiz yet and already *Buzz* has done something very funny. Having chosen a character and entered our names we get to chose a customised 'buzz'. Infantile it may be but the noise of a comedy air horn, a Klaxon, a monkey and a sheep all going off at the same time is brilliant. It sets a perfect mood for this, the general knowledge-themed sequel to the original *Buzz The Music Quiz*.

It's the perfect WKD-fuelled party game

If you haven't seen the TV ads for *Buzz* yet it's a quiz game with the genius twist being that it comes with a set of plastic buzzer peripherals for 'fastest finger' action. It's set up as a TV show with a suave presenter and his lady assistant wise-cracking and calling people 'lamers' when they get things wrong or buzz in too early. The game is also clever enough to chart the failures and successes of players, commenting on close ties, runs of luck and useless contestants. Aside from the broader range of questions, the only major difference between this and *Buzz The Music Quiz* is a new round named Hitman that enables the winner to choose a player to 'shoot', losing them precious points. It's a great idea causing Olympic levels of swearing from disgruntled opponents. Our only real issue is that in the course of three consecutive games a number of questions were repeated and stock images appeared to be reused for multiple questions. If you already own the *Buzz* controllers, this is an essential purchase. If not, it's a perfect opportunity to get those fingers on the buzzers. **George Walter**

DETAILS

PUBLISHER SONY
DEVELOPER RELENTLESS
PRICE £24.99 (£39.99 WITH FOUR GAMESHOW CONTROLLERS)
PLAYERS 2-8
OUT NOW
WEBSITE UK.PLAYSTATION.COM
60HZ MODE NO
WIDESCREEN NO
SURROUND SOUND NO
ONLINE NO

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK	VERDICT	
Graphics	07	No frills, but fit the bill perfectly
Sound	09	Best air horn noise on PS2
Gameplay	08	Inventive quiz game modes
Lifespan	07	Questions do occasionally repeat

The PS2's premier quiz show party game gets a decent new set of questions? That's the right answer!

8/10

GENE TROOPERS

Even on a genetic level, this bites

PUBLISHER PLAYLOGIC **DEVELOPER** CAULDRON **PRICE** £13.99 **PLAYERS** 1-2
OUT NOW **60HZ MODE** NO **WIDESCREEN** NO **SURROUND SOUND** NO

This is a mess. With its biomechanics-related plot and dialogue-heavy 'action', *Gene Troopers* aims for an in-depth, *Deus Ex*-style shooter experience; in reality the only similarity between them is that they're both a bit blue. Clumsy to control and awful to look at, the game falls down on basic playability. An important element of the game is the ability to ask questions of your teammates at any time, but once you start a conversation you're frozen, and there's no way to back out. You have to wait for the dialogue to end naturally, even if you're being shot at. It's shoddy, game-ruining madness. ■ **ND**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Rubbish. Oh, and you can't play at all without a memory card; when you die your options are 'reload' or 'return to death screen'. What? WHAT?

3/10

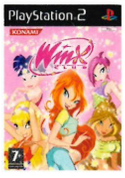
■ **"How do I turn the guns on myself?"**

■ **Fuzzball's about to be madeover...**

WINX CLUB

Something for the younger lady

PUBLISHER KONAMI **DEVELOPER** KONAMI **PRICE** £24.99 **PLAYERS** 1
OUT NOW **60HZ MODE** YES **WIDESCREEN** NO **SURROUND SOUND** NO



Based on the girly Nickelodeon show of the same name, *Winx Club* blends various genres together as only Konami can. Part platformer, part puzzler and part RPG, it's certainly unusual, yet the coherent storyline holds these different elements in place admirably. That doesn't necessarily mean you'll have fun playing it, though. With a difficulty level obviously geared towards younger gamers, there's nothing to entice you if you're over the age of 12. Which is a shame, because otherwise this is a perfectly acceptable blend of fashion and fantasy. ■ **BW**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Impressively colourful and absolutely faithful to the TV show, there's nothing particularly wrong about this; but the spoon-fed levels lack any serious challenge

6/10

CHICKEN LITTLE

PUBLISHER BUENA VISTA **DEVELOPER** BUENA VISTA **PRICE** £34.99
PLAYERS 1-2 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO **WIDESCREEN** YES

Predictably well-produced Disney tie-in for its latest cutsie hero, *Chicken Little*. As you'd expect, then, the animation and cut-scenes are top-notch, and the voice cast contains people you've actually heard of (Chicken Little himself is played by *Scrubs*' Zach Braff). The game is just as smooth, exhausting the standard platformer routine – double-jumps, collectables – in the opening few levels before branching out into some interesting variations – flying, dodgeball – to keep things interesting. ■ **ND**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Fine, if slightly soulless. The corporate sheen makes us feel queasy, but there's no denying it's a playable, if simple, tie-in

7/10

REBEL RAIDERS: OPERATION NIGHTHAWK

PUBLISHER NOBILIS **DEVELOPER** KANDO GAMES **PRICE** £19.99
PLAYERS 1 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO **WIDESCREEN** NO

Rebel Raiders is an old-fashioned, *Afterburner*-style arcade flight sim, with unsubtle *Star Wars* overtones in its thin-as-shaved-paper plot. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing – yes, it looks and handles like you'd expect a budget game to, with simple controls, repetitive missions and familiar visuals, but it brings it together into a satisfyingly playable whole, retaining a crucial sense of pace and pleasure in the swooping, scrambling dogfighting. Fun for at least 20 minutes. ■ **ND**

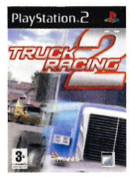
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

Brilliantly average; surprisingly enjoyable flying, wrapped in a no-expense-at-all package

5/10

TRUCK RACING 2

PUBLISHER MIDAS **DEVELOPER** MIDAS **PRICE** £14.99
PLAYERS 1-4 **OUT** NOW **60HZ MODE** NO **WIDESCREEN** YES



If presented with a garage containing every conceivable racing machine under the sun and offered the chance to race whichever one you liked, would you really choose a hulking great truck? No – that would be mental. You'd choose something sleek and fast with barely enough space in the chassis for you, a gigantic engine, and lovely women who don't sleep with truck drivers. See, it's no accident that *Burnout*, *Gran Turismo* and *Need For Speed* favour cars. *Truck Racing 2* really is slow and rubbish. Don't join the convoy. ■ **ND**

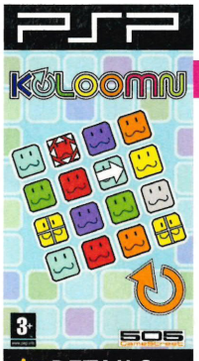
PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

A perfect recreation of the thrill-less experience that is road haulage: slow, cumbersome and ugly. Avoid this

2/10

KOLOOMN

This block party rocks a fat one



DETAILS

PUBLISHER 505 GAME STREET
DEVELOPER CYBER FRONT
PRICE £29.99
PLAYERS 1-2
OUT NOW
WEBSITE WWW.505GAMESTREET.COM
WIFI MULTIPLAYER YES
DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT NO
CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS NO

Puzzle games and handhelds go together like – well, like *Tetris* and Game Boy, or, more recently, like *Lumines* and PSP. Still, in a crowded market there are only so many ways to make falling, coloured blocks interesting – can *Koloomn* (released in the States as *Ultimate Block Party*) distinguish itself from the crowd?

Happily, yes. The cartoonish presentation and semi-liquid blocks may be reminiscent of *Puyo Pop Fever*, but the gameplay offers new twists on the well-worn 'group colours/eliminate blocks' formula. Rather than rotate blocks as they descend, *Koloomn* has you rotating already-stacked groups of four, or sometimes 16, from one main column. Group four or more of the same colour and they disappear, while 'chains' – groups created by the removal of other blocks – result in various 'magic blocks'. It's addictive, refreshingly different and a perfect way to gobble up hours or just a few free minutes waiting for the metaphorical bus. ■ **ND**

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-UK **VERDICT**

The new rotation mechanic takes some getting used to, but* Koloomn *proves complex, satisfying and horribly addictive. Good stuff

8/10

■ **Not quite as polished as *Lumines*, *Koloomn* still rocks**

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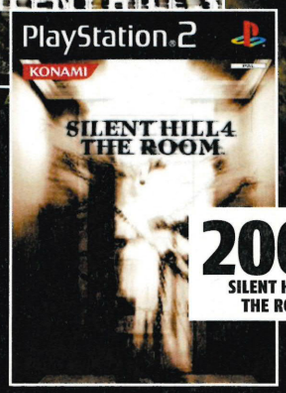
A BRIEF HISTORY OF SILENT HILL

WORDS: STEVE WILLIAMS



Taking strict precautions and donning rubber gloves, goggles and a surgeon's mask, we grope queasily into the murky, slightly nutty flow of the most notorious town in gaming

From the start, *Silent Hill* was unlike anything else, yet almost nobody realised. Released October 2000 into a PSone horror scene dominated by *Resident Evil*, few saw past the now familiar 'survival horror' framework to the pitch black psychology behind it. Where were the big scares? The dogs crashing through windows, the corpse-chewing zombie revealing blood-smeared jaws, the huge spiders scuttling in the background? And what the hell was with that fog? What those expecting cheap and nasty thrills missed were the beginnings of a story dripping with a rare maturity, darkness and horror.

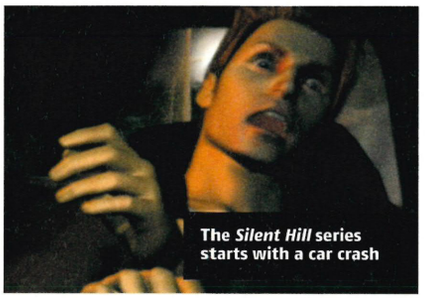
ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

Capcom's *Resident Evil* started the masses' fascination with 'survival horror' with its 1996 debut, which combined cinematic camera angles with spooky-pretty backgrounds, curious puzzles and a cavalcade of moaning zombies: "A subtle blend of lateral thinking and extreme violence," as Simon Pegg's character noted in *Spaced*. *Resident Evil 2* sealed the series' reputation as top dog, but in doing so did *Silent Hill* a disservice; they were inevitably compared, but in truth only the play mechanic was the same. And consider this: it took *Resident Evil* until 2005 to reach such heights again. *Silent Hill* has been kicking people's faces off the whole of the PS2's life – it's always the quiet ones...

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SILENT HILL

BUT IS IT STILL SCARY?

Despite being alone in the series as a PSone game, the first *Silent Hill* remains totally worth playing. The opening section in particular, where dark descends unnaturally to the chill of an air raid siren, is a classic. Obviously *Silent Hill* doesn't look great now, but we'd still bet it looks better than you're thinking. To be honest, we were surprised – it's more than playable. Better still, if you can find a second-hand copy somewhere you'll get brilliant gaming for just a few quid – you'll need a PSone memory card though.



The *Silent Hill* series starts with a car crash

SILENT HILL

RELEASE February 1999 **FORMAT** PSone

DODGY CHARACTERS

Harry Mason is utterly unlike any other game hero – because he's not actually a hero at all. After the car crash that separates Harry from his daughter and opens the game, he spends the whole thing searching Silent Hill for her. He battles monsters, attempts to help others, yet the final reveal is this: (SPOILER) he's a helpless pawn in a far bigger battle. He can never achieve a happy ending – he can never escape. Most likely he's probably unconscious in reality (as are Cybil the cop and Lisa the nurse) and possibly dying. He is used, abused and played from the very first seconds. Consequently you are too. Ouch.

THE PLOT

It's complicated. On the surface of it, Harry's simply searching for his daughter. In reality he keeps seeing her but the town keeps changing, switching from the 'misty' Hill to a 'dark' one, both of which are full of monsters. Why? Seven years before, a cult tried to bring its evil god, Samael, into the world. Their ritual created a child – Alessa – but it had only half the god's power. Spooky cult lady Dahlia soon tired of Alessa's refusal to use even this half and created another child – yep, Cheryl. Harry has been lured back simply to deliver Cheryl, who will combine with Alessa as the god Samael, allowing Dahlia to rule the universe.

But Alessa has used her powers to create the 'dark' Hill, in which she hides from Dahlia. In order to get the Fluoros (the only thing which can paralyse Alessa's power) and capture the child, Dahlia manoeuvres unsuspecting Harry into the 'dark' Hill. Meanwhile, Alessa throws increasingly horrific resistance at Harry. Dahlia, meanwhile, controls the 'misty' version of the town. Neither can be considered the real Silent Hill.

At least *this* nurse isn't trying to batter us to death with a lead pipe

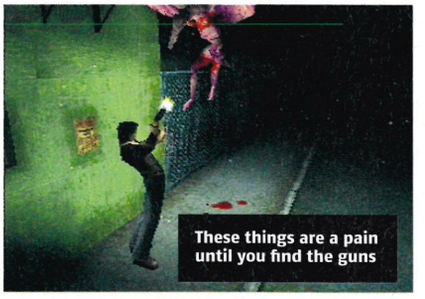
THE HORROR

Whereas *Resident Evil* arguably just had a clunky control scheme, *Silent Hill*'s limitations work symbolically. Harry's molasses-slow movement suits his vulnerability in the nightmarish world he inhabits. Combat is awkward and inaccurate because he's just a normal man with no weapons skills. In fact, try fighting everything and you die. Sometimes you just have to flee. When was the last time you had a nightmare where you had everything your own way?

ENDINGS

This has four normal endings plus a 'UFO' one (see It's A Funny Old World). The 'Good+' ending sees Harry kill the evil god and leave with sexy cop Cybil – and a new baby. The 'Good' ending is the same but Cybil dies (semi-sequel *SH3* makes this the *real* conclusion). In the 'Bad' ending Harry kills the god while it's still inside Mother Alessa, so doesn't rescue the reborn Cheryl. Cybil dies. We last see Harry dying in his crashed jeep, where he's been the whole time... and the 'Bad+' ending also means no reborn Cheryl, though Cybil survives. Unfortunately, she then slaps Harry for crying and tells him to leave.

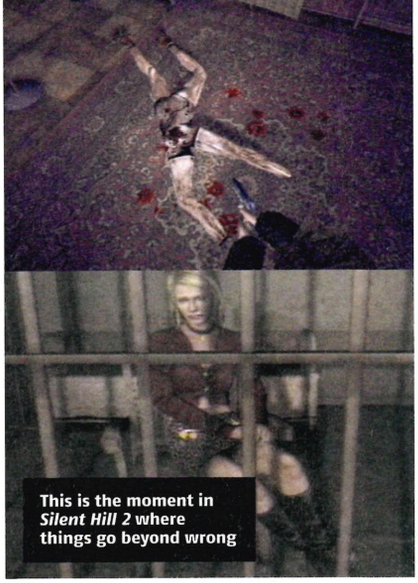
Ah, the bogs... staple of the *Silent Hill* universe



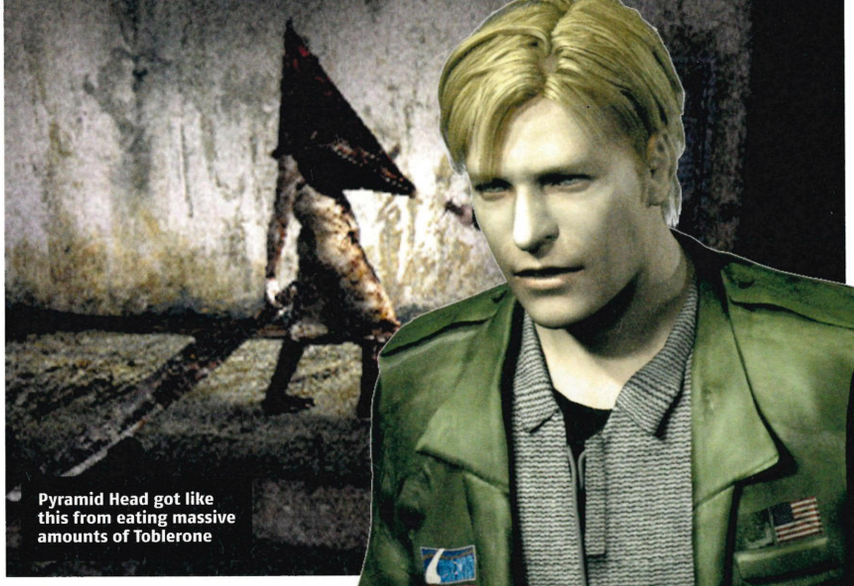
These things are a pain until you find the guns

This is Dahlia, a crazy old timer who sees into the future and sups tea

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SILENT HILL



This is the moment in *Silent Hill 2* where things go beyond wrong



Pyramid Head got like this from eating massive amounts of Toblerone

SILENT HILL 2

RELEASE September 2001 **FORMAT** PS2

DODGY CHARACTERS

New guy James Sunderland rolls into town after getting a letter from his wife saying she's waiting in their 'special place'. Heston Services? Sadly not – it's the Lakeview Hotel. Typically, the road's blocked and Jimbo has to head into the strange fog on foot. Silent Hill is seemingly deserted, apart from a few freaks. There's Eddie Dombrowski, who swears he's not murdered anyone; Laura, the eight-year-old who cheerfully tries to get James killed; the suicidal Angela; and Maria, a sexed-up doppelganger of James' wife Mary. As Mary's been dead for three years even a bit of lippy would be an improvement.

THE PLOT

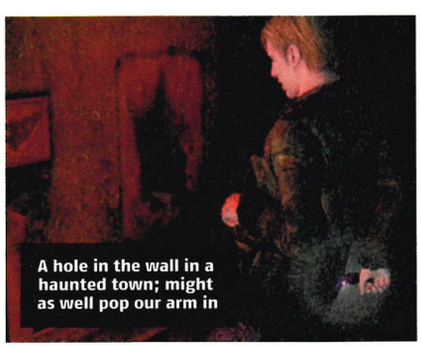
Like Harry, James faces bizarre monsters and a town that continually switches between 'misty' and 'dark' versions. But the cult activity of the first game is history – the story here is *within* James. His attempts to reunite with his wife constitute a voyage of personal discovery. What has James done? What happened as Mary wasted away from a fatal illness? Did he even really love her? The final reveal (SPOILER, OH GOD, SPOILER) is that James actually smothered his wife and has repressed it... or maybe he's already dead and is journeying into hell. Exactly why he killed her depends on the ending you get, but it ranges from a mercy killing to pure selfishness.

THE HORROR

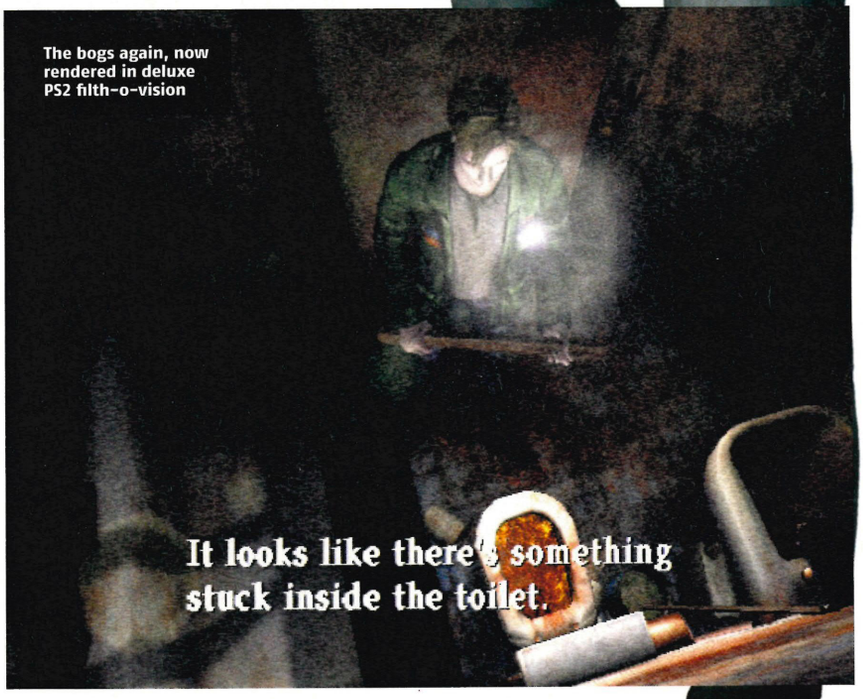
The whole thing's so harsh because it makes you doubt your own character; unlike with *SH1*'s Harry Mason, James has clearly been up to something. He doubts himself – the game even opens with him staring into a mirror, trying to somehow 'know' himself better. Laura constantly accuses him of terrible things. In fact, the doubt is so great it's questionable whether any of these events are even real. Is it the dream of a dying mind? Is he in Limbo, or even Hell? Many events, such as the frequent drops into dark holes, the endless descents and Maria's multiple death – she's a cipher for James and Mary's frustrated sexual desires – at the hands of a rusty-red helmeted monster with a colossal sword work on a symbolic level.

ENDINGS

'Leave' sees Maria transform into a monster, which James kills. Mary then forgives James' mercy killing and dies. James leaves with little Laura, presumably to bring her up somewhere nice. In the 'Maria' ending it's Mary who becomes a monster, who James kills (again). He then leaves with sexy Maria – who starts coughing, just like Mary used to. Ouch. 'In Water' sees James kill a Maria monster, drive into the lake and kill himself to be with Mary. And 'Rebirth' has James rowing to a small island, raving about old gods, refusing to accept Mary's death, and resurrecting her at an ancient shrine.



A hole in the wall in a haunted town; might as well pop our arm in



The bogs again, now rendered in deluxe PS2 filth-o-vision

IT'S A FUNNY OLD WORLD

Silent Hill isn't all gloom-faced misery, as the famously hard-to-get 'UFO' endings show. It started with Harry asking aliens at the top of the lighthouse if they've seen a little girl anywhere; they raygun him. *Silent Hill 2* didn't have UFOs until the *Restless Dreams* version, but did have James finding a machine that moves his and Maria's faces around a map... being worked by a dog. Oh yes. And *SH3*'s 'Revenge' ending sees Heather complaining to an alien who then says he's going to 'kick some ass', whereupon the town is demolished by UFOs. All to a song about Heather having two kids and Douglas selling fish. *The Room*? It doesn't have one. Hmm.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SILENT HILL

RECURRING THEMES IN A RECURRING NIGHTMARE

The *Silent Hill* series has, from the start, had recurring themes beyond its supernatural core. A key one is authority – many of the locations are institutions, such as schools, prisons, police stations, orphanages and hospitals. Of course, all are filthy, derelict and ruined. They signify the wider breakdown of order and abuse of power. Also common are children, symbols of innocence and of lives damaged from the very outset, while protecting your women and family is another major thread. The happiness (or otherwise) of the endings relies heavily on how well you treat various female characters. Which explains our typically shoddy performance.

Derren Brown lets it all hang out in the standout 'haunted house' scene

SILENT HILL 3

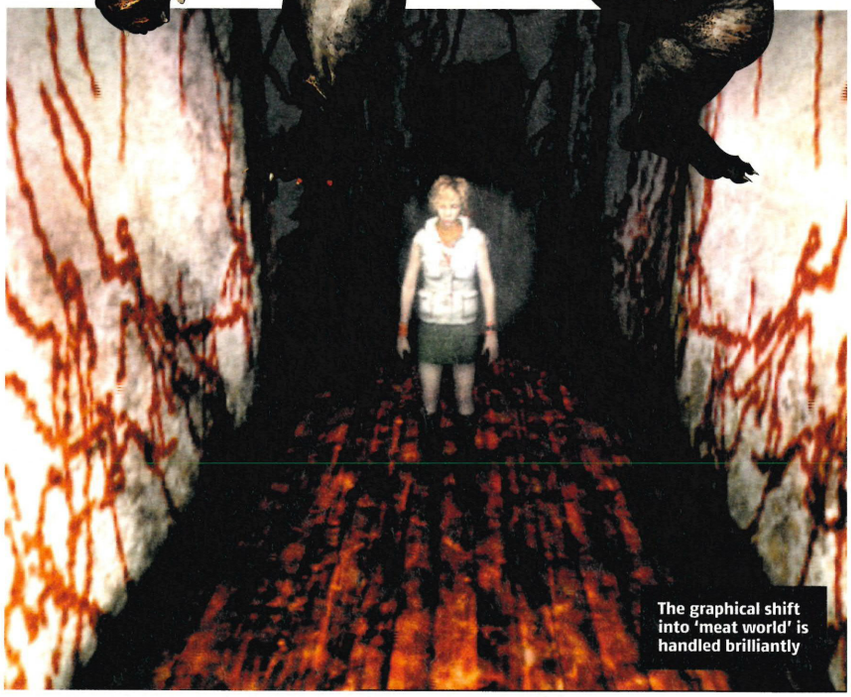
RELEASE May 2003 **FORMAT** PS2

DODGY CHARACTERS

The third game saw the first female lead character – something the upcoming film has adopted. This change aside, the action sticks quite closely to the themes (and certainly the opening) of the original game. You play Heather Morris, daughter, we soon find out, of *SH1*'s Harry – or at least the now-grown up child Harry was presented with in that game's 'Good' ending. Creeped out by private detective Douglas Cartland following her, she tries to escape, only to find the world shift into a dark alternate version. A mysterious woman called Claudia – the person who hired Cartland to find Heather – proceeds to have her dad killed. She admits as much before fleeing to *Silent Hill*. A foppish weirdo called Vincent then supplies a map and tells her to find someone called Leonard.

THE PLOT

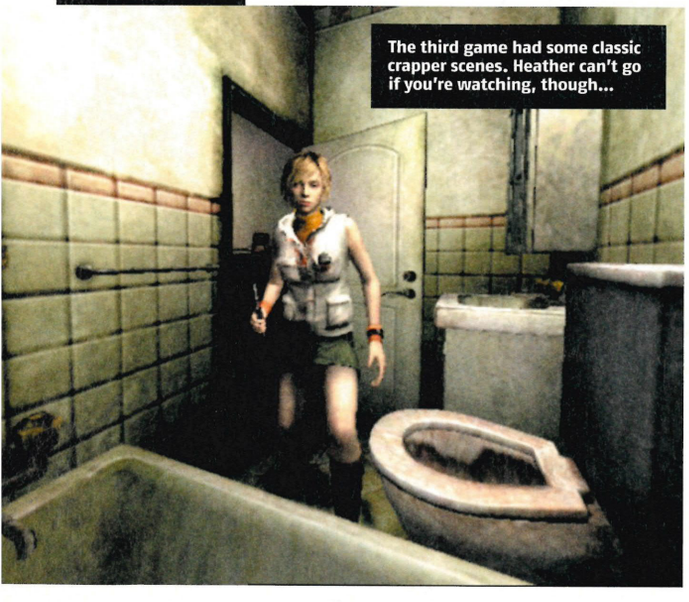
Leonard turns out to be a monster. This is the true sequel to the first game: Vincent is a member of the cult in *SH1*, and is simply sending Heather to her doom. Yet Heather's also been set up by Claudia. Harry's murder is nothing more than a particularly psychotic attempt to ensure Heather comes to Silent Hill.



The graphical shift into 'meat world' is handled brilliantly

Once there, Claudia aims to try and liberate the dormant god Samael inside Heather (who, if you're keeping up, you'll remember is one and the same with Cheryl and Alessa from *SH1*).

After she arrives in the town Heather finds herself retracing her father's doomed footsteps from 17 years before, but this time around takes far greater control. In the final showdown she drinks the mysterious red liquid in her necklace and vomits up the god Samael. Claudia proceeds to swallow it herself, but Heather succeeds in killing the resulting monster.



The third game had some classic crapper scenes. Heather can't go if you're watching, though...

THE HORROR

Though still darker than midnight, the series was becoming more playful – it starts by throwing you straight into the madness, then abruptly stops to reveal Heather waking up from a nightmare having fallen asleep at the mall. Later, once in Silent Hill proper, she even travels through a funfair's haunted house... which is, of course, less haunted than the reality outside – but still packed with some brilliantly executed jumps. It's also more action heavy, with weapons like the maul, katana and submachine gun (plus unlockables like the Sexy Beam death ray) demonstrate. *SH3*'s horror is more about grotesque visuals than implied mental anguish.

ENDINGS

Silent Hill 3 had only two regular endings, and which one you saw depended on whether you chose to forgive a major character or not. In the 'Normal' ending, Heather returns to Douglas, who's been badly injured by Claudia, armed with a knife. She goes to attack him but, at the last moment, reveals it's just a joke. Har de har. In the 'Possessed' ending, meanwhile, she isn't joking. Not at all.

SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

RELEASE September 2004 **FORMAT** PS2

DODGY CHARACTERS

Henry Townsend is perhaps the weakest character of the series. He's neither dragged to Silent Hill by his past like James and Heather, nor is he the unwitting part of some cosmic battle like Harry. Really he's just a random, ordinary guy who's manipulated from afar by a Hill-based psycho.

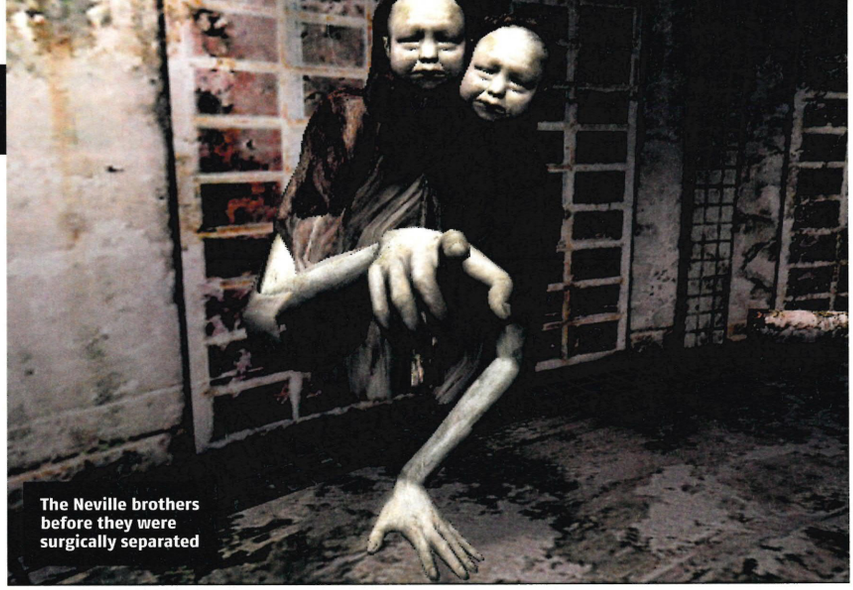
Also entangled is his neighbour Eileen Galvin, who, unfortunately, is being set up for a starring role in a murderous ritual. Behind it all is Walter Sullivan, referenced in *Silent Hill 2* as a man driven to kill by some supernatural force. Henry runs into manifestations of Walter both as a child and as an adult.

THE PLOT

The already somewhat solitary Townsend has lived in Room 302 for a couple of years, having felt drawn there. One day he awakes to find the door heavily chained, and after a while, strange holes appear in the walls. Escaping through one, he finds himself in the world of (the now dead) Sullivan. As an orphaned child, he was mentally abused by *SH1*'s cult and told that by murdering 21 victims (the 21 Sacraments Ritual) he could reawaken his dear old mum. Eileen, who showed Sullivan a rare moment of kindness as a child has been selected for a pivotal starring role in the ceremony.

THE HORROR

Heavily influenced by Asian horror movies, *The Room* cranked up the grim imagery, adding corpse-like figures that float silently towards you; huge, two-headed babies, and an umbilical-like worm that foreshadows the final boss battle (and represent Walter's fixation with finding his mother). Being tasked with protecting a woman is hardly new to *Silent Hill*, but failing – a character called Cynthia dies violently in the subway – is a real shock. The ordinary town of South Ashfield visible through Room 302's window is used brilliantly here, as emergency services respond to the incident by the subway entrance just below, grounding Henry's nightmarish experiences in reality.

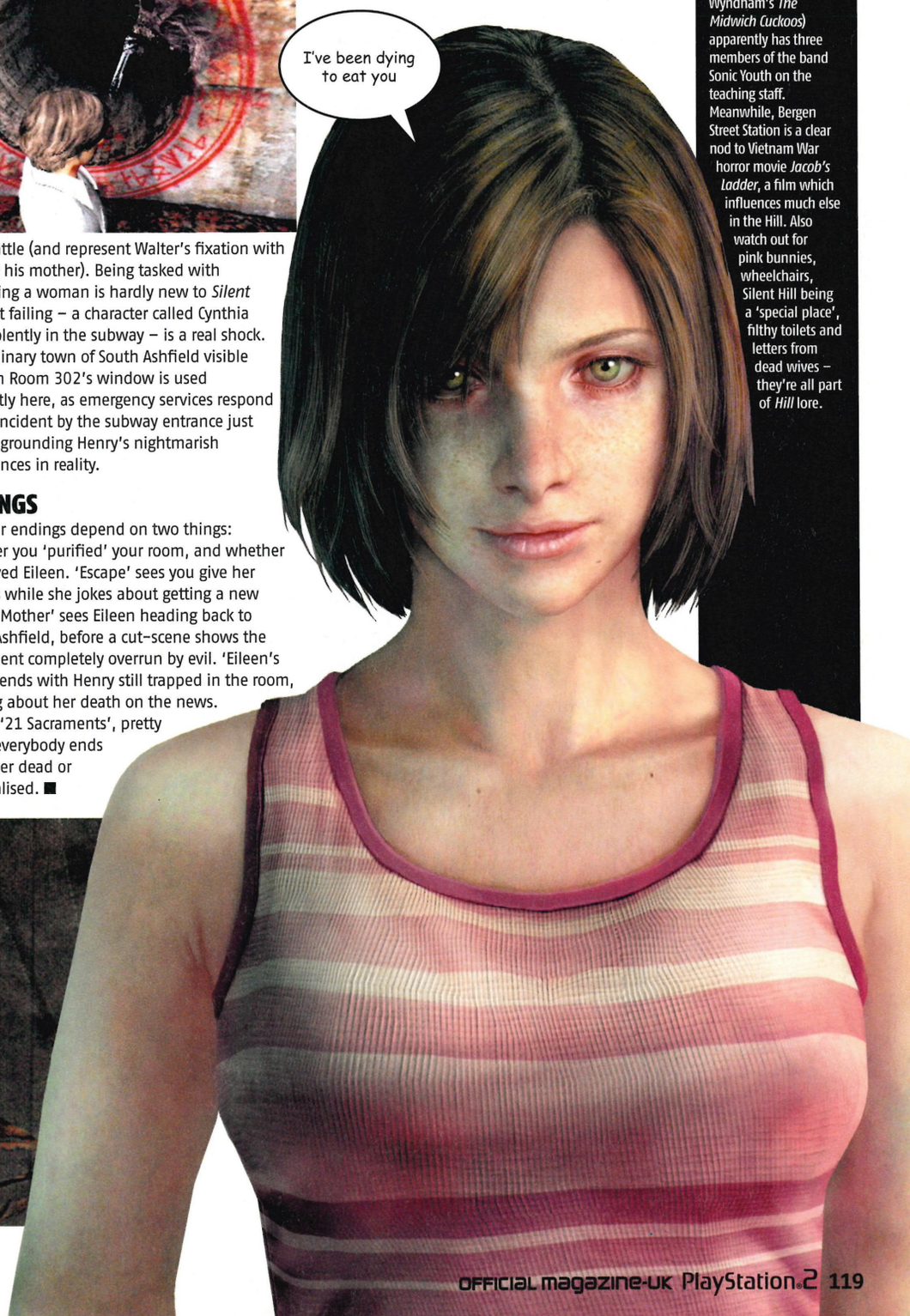


The Neville brothers before they were surgically separated

Townsend greets the locals in the time honoured manner

ENDINGS

The four endings depend on two things: whether you 'purified' your room, and whether you saved Eileen. 'Escape' sees you give her flowers while she jokes about getting a new place. 'Mother' sees Eileen heading back to South Ashfield, before a cut-scene shows the apartment completely overrun by evil. 'Eileen's Death' ends with Henry still trapped in the room, hearing about her death on the news. And in '21 Sacraments', pretty much everybody ends up either dead or hospitalised. ■



A BRIEF HISTORY OF SILENT HILL

"TAKE MY (DEAD) WIFE... PLEASE"

Silent Hill is stuffed with in-jokes. Richard Bachman (Stephen King's alter ego), Ira Levin (author of *Rosemary's Baby*), Dean R Koontz, Ray Bradbury, David Cronenberg and James Ellroy all have streets named after them, while Midwich Elementary school (a reference to John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*) apparently has three members of the band Sonic Youth on the teaching staff. Meanwhile, Bergen Street Station is a clear nod to Vietnam War horror movie *Jacob's Ladder*, a film which influences much else in the Hill. Also watch out for pink bunnies, wheelchairs, Silent Hill being a 'special place', filthy toilets and letters from dead wives – they're all part of *Hill* lore.

Only in PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

next month

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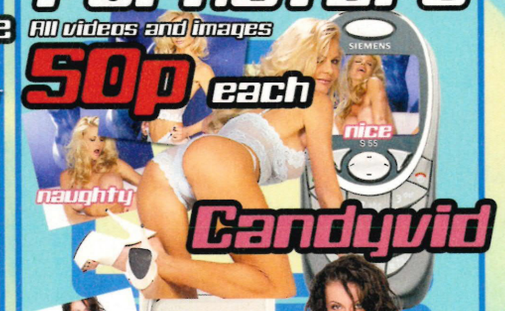

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CVG

FROM EUROPE'S NO.1 GAMING WEBSITE

replay

MORE GAMING MILES TO THE GALLON

This month we've been on a virtual world tour. Ben hooked up for a session on *Rugby League 2*, pitting his 'talents' against a squad of Aussie gamers who rambled on about stubbies and how we robbed the Ashes before humbling our man in almost every match.

Then there was *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland*. The game bridged the trans-Atlantic divide by letting us trick it out with a largely American crowd who kept talking ALL THE TIME. Obviously we wound them up with our best plum-voiced Hugh Grant impression and muttered about the glory days of 'the empire'.

We ended our virtual globe-trotting by dishing out some savage *TOCA Race Driver 3*-flavour beatings to some Germans. No hard feelings though: one of them even invited us over to 'see his country'. Chilling perhaps, but if he's free in June...

Andy

Andy Hartup,
News editor

HARD DRIVE

124

TOCA Race Driver 3 speeds onto the online gaming circuit, but it looks like the wheels are coming off

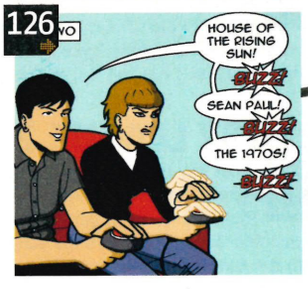
124 **CHALLENGES**
Impress the *OutRun 2006* honey and you could walk away with some top Sega goodies

124 **ONLINE**
We take *TOCA 3* for a spin, skate with Tony Hawk, and go egg-chasing with *Rugby League 2*

126 **CHARTS**
Our monthly round-up of gaming hot-cakes, what 'other' mags are saying, and a cartoon

128 **CHEATS**
Can't get up under pressure with *Marc Ecko*? Does anyone even know what that means?

130 **HOT 100**
Thinking of splashing out on a new game? WAIT! Read our definitive list of gaming goodness first



challenges

SLIP AND SLIDE TOWARDS THE PRIZE

PS2 CHALLENGE 1

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

Hop into a gorgeous Ferrari Superamerica and try to impress your lady in the Heart Attack mode. Select the OutRun 2 mode, and beat our score of 1,613 hearts.

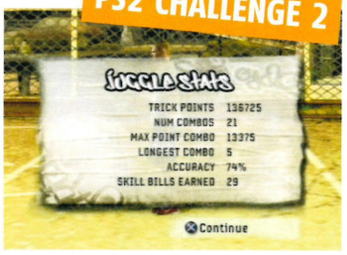
Best Proved Score Gets... *OutRun 2* goodies and a copy of *Shadow The Hedgehog*.

PS2 CHALLENGE 2

FIFA STREET 2

Kick *FIFA Street 2* into your PS2 and start up the Skills Challenge mode. Pick any character and see if you can score more than our measly tally of 136,725 points.

Best Proved Score Gets... A copy of *Shaolin Soccer* on DVD and an *OutRun 2006* T-shirt.



HOW TO ENTER

Beat our record and take a picture with your phone for proof. Then text **CHALLENGE1** or **CHALLENGE2** or **CHALLENGE3** (then a space) followed by your name and full address to **07921 889 345**

Only the winner *OPS2* judges to have the best score/time wins a prize. Only winners will be notified. Text messages will cost you 50p including VAT per text received, plus your usual text message cost. Please source all necessary permissions. This service is available to UK customers of T-mobile, Orange, 3, Virgin, and Vodafone. Lines are open from 23 March to 19 April inclusive.*

PSP CHALLENGE 3

LEMMINGS

Break out *Lemmings* and head over to the special stage called Pillar Talking. Get all eight Lemmings home with more than 3:47 left on the clock to grab the prize.

Best Proved Time Gets... A 512MB memory stick for your PSP and an *OutRun 2006* T-shirt.

online

IS IT WORTH GETTING BROADBAND FOR THESE GAMES?

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

What you get: Compete against up to seven others with an incredibly vast choice of races and cars – every single discipline, cup and track is available.

What it's like: There's no lag, but avoid races set up with collisions turned off because driving through other cars feels stupid. Sadly, issues with opponents randomly jumping around the track make this a real disappointment.

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✗

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

What you get: As well as the usual eight-player co-op and vs modes like King Of The Hill and Pot o' Gold, you can upload custom content via the Network.

What it's like: The choice of gameplay modes is staggering, and they all run remarkably quickly – you'll find loads of opponents too. Unsurprising, given that *Hawk*'s was the first PS2 title to offer network play.

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✓

RUGBY LEAGUE 2

What you get: No league or cup options – just an exhibition match against one other player using international, state or club sides.

What it's like: This game is massive in Australia, so you'll find lots of Pommie-bashers online in the early hours, most of whom will thrash you. It is fun, but not worth shelling out 40 quid for.

SHOULD I GET BROADBAND FOR THIS? ✗

PSP WIFI TEST

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

What you get: Basic one-on-one multiplayer plus a League Battle mode that lets you scrap it out with up to eight players in a round robin tournament.

What it's like: A cracking way to snatch five minutes showing your mates who's top-dog, although the handheld version will never compete with *Street Fighter* on the big-screen.

SHOULD I GET MY MATES ROUND FOR THIS? ✗

FANCY A GOOD FRAGGING?

We're setting up our own multiplayer games over the forthcoming weeks. Get online with the right game between 5pm and 6pm on the following Fridays and look for the 'OPS2Online' match.

31 March	TOCA Race Driver 3
7 April	Pro Evolution Soccer 5
14 April	Rugby League 2

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charts

WHO SAID WHAT, WHO SOLD WHAT, AND A CARTOON

WHAT THE OTHER MAGS SAID

WE READ 'EM, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

PSM2	"...unparalleled explosive thrills" 89%	NO REVIEW*	"An enticing twist on the horror genre" 79%	"*The Plan* is good but its execution lets it down" 49%
PSW	"...the best first-person shooter on PS2" 9/10	"...good fun from start to finish" 8/10	"...they don't come more frightening than this" 7/10	NO REVIEW*
PLAY	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*	NO REVIEW*
PlayStation 2 Official Magazine-UK VERDICT	"An all-out assault on the senses. You can't afford to miss out" 10/10	"...can't overcome the opposition from *Call Of Duty 2* or *Black*" 7/10	"...a brilliant, if old-fashioned ghost story" 7/10	"For all the good ideas here, this plan is fatally flawed" 4/10

*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	BLACK	EA	10/10
2	TOCA RACE DRVER 3	CODEMASTERS	9/10
3	SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS	SONY	9/10
4	TORINO 2006	TAKE TWO	5/10
5	RUGBY 06	EA	7/10
6	CHICKEN LITTLE	DISNEY INTERACTIVE	6/10
7	NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED	EA	8/10
8	MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE	ATARI	8/10
9	FIFA 06	EA	7/10
10	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5	KONAMI	10/10
11	STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II	LUCASARTS	8/10
12	RUGBY CHALLENGE 2006	UBISOFT	7/10
13	BUZZ! THE MUSIC QUIZ	SONY	7/10
14	WWE SMACKDOWN! VS RAW 2006	THQ	9/10
15	WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE WERE-RABBIT	KONAMI	8/10
16	NARNIA: THE LION THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE	BUENA VISTA	6/10
17	THE SIMS 2	EA	8/10
18	HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE	EA	6/10
19	FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE	EA	8/10
20	GUN	ACTIVISION	9/10

IT'S PROPERLY MASSIVE

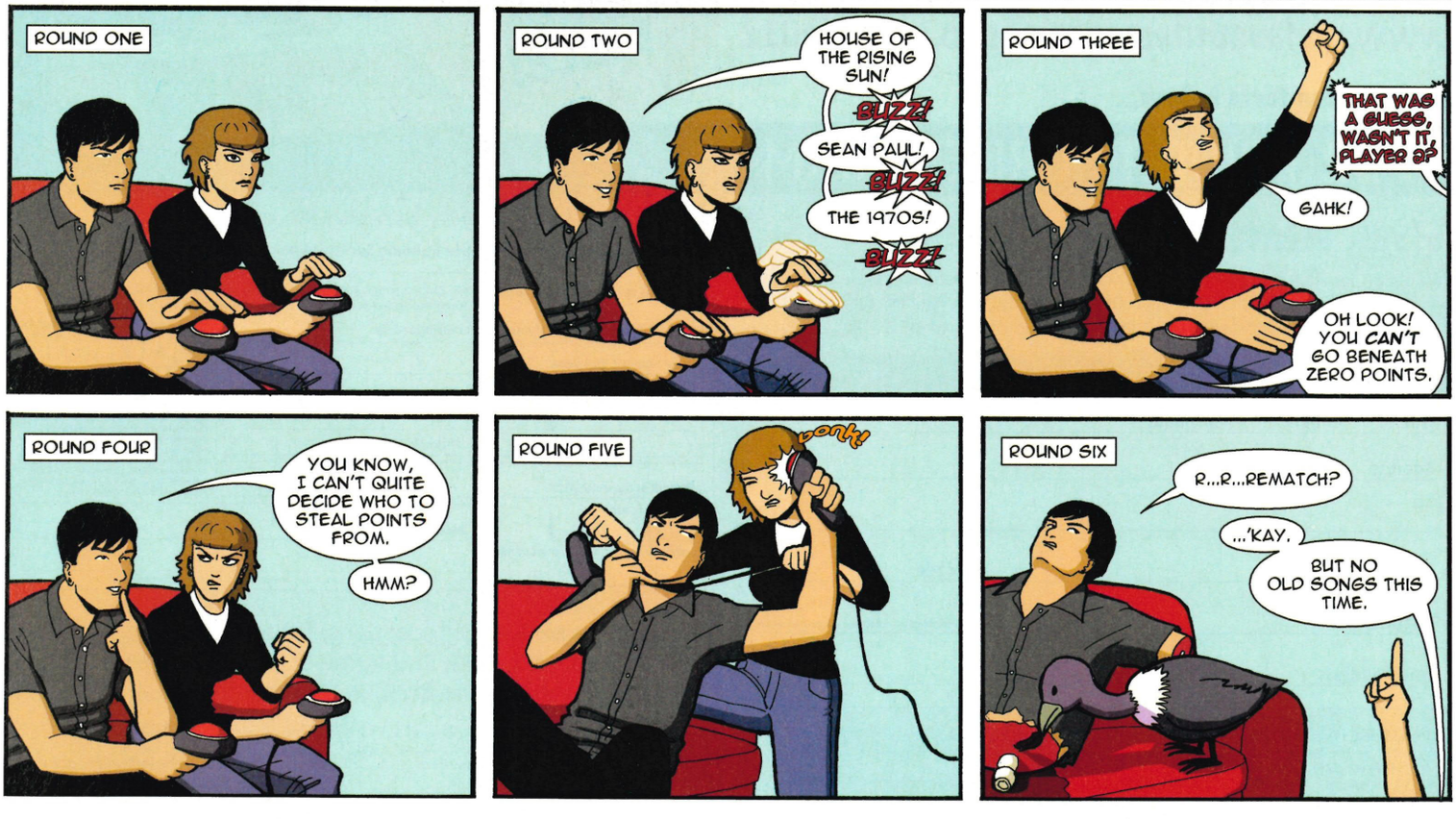
Shadow Of The Colossus debuted at number one – yay! – knocking *Need For Speed* off the top, before slipping to a still-strong number three.

DARK DAYS AHEAD

It's no surprise to see *Black* in at the top. It's an explosive experience that puts other shooters to shame. You haven't fired a (virtual) gun until you've played this.

SAVE POINT TAKING THE LESS TRAVELLED ROUTE TO GAMING WISDOM

WORDS: KIERON GILLEN ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE



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ATV Off-Road Fury Blazin' T.
Burnout Legends
Coded Arms
Darkstalker's Chronicle
Dead to Rights: Reckoning
Death Jr.
Dynasty Warriors
Everybody's Golf
Ghost in the Shell: S.A.C.
Grand Theft Auto: L.C.S.
Hot Shots Golf*
Lumines
Marvel Nemesis: R.O.T.I.*
Me and My Katamari*
Medievil Resurrection
Mega Man Legends
Mercury
Metal Gear Acid
Midnight Club 3: DUB Ed.
MLB*
Need 4 Speed: M.W.510
NFL Street 2: Unleashed
NFS Underground: Rivals
Rengoku: T. of Purgatory
Ridge Racers
Spider-Man: The Movie 2
Star Soldier
Star Wars: Battlefront 2
Tenchu: Shinobi Taizen*
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06*
Tony Hawk's Und. 2 Remix
Twisted Metal: Head On
Virtua Tennis: World Tour
Wipeout Pure
World Tour Soccer: Ch. Ed.
WWE Smackdown v Raw'06

A = 0 1

Ace Combat 5: Sq. Leader
Aeon Flux
Age of Empires 2
Alex Ferguson's P. Manager
Aliens vs Predator: Extinct.
America's 10 Most Wanted
Area 51
ATV Off-Road Fury 3

B = 0 2

Bard's Tale
Batman Begins
Battlefield 2: Mod. Combat
Black
BloodRayne 2
Brian Lara Int. Cricket '05
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Brothers in Arms
Brothers in Arms: E.I.Blood
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Bulletproof (50 Cent)
Burnout 2 Point of Impact
Burnout Revenge

C = 0 3

Call of Duty 2 Big Red One
Call of Duty: Finest Hour
Chaos Legion
Cold Winter
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Conflict: Global Storm
Conflict: Vietnam
Constantine
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex

D = 0 4

Darkwatch
Delta Force: B. Hawk Down
Destroy All Humans
Devil May Cry 3
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai T.
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas
Dragon Quest VIII: JOTCK
DRIV3R
Driver: Parallel Lines*
Dynasty Warriors 5
Dynasty Warriors 5 Xtr.Leg.

E = 0 5

Episode III: Rev. of the Sith
Escape from Monkey Island

F = 0 6

Fahrenheit
Fallout: Brotherhood of St.
Fantastic 4
FIFA 2004
FIFA 2006
FIFA Football 2005
FIFA Street 2*
FIFA Street Soccer
Fifty Cent: Bulletproof
Fight Club
Fight for New York
Fight Night 2004
Fight Night Round 2
Fight Night Round 3*
Fighting Fury
Final Fantasy X
Final Fantasy X-2
Final Fight: Streetwise*
Full Spectrum Warrior

G = 0 7

Genji: Dawn of Samurai
Getaway
Getaway 2: Black Monday
Ghost Hunter

PLAYSTATION 2

Ghost Recon 2
God of War
Gran Turismo 3
Gran Turismo 4
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: L.C.S.*
Grand Theft Auto: San A.
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Gun

H = 0 8

H.Potter & Chamber of Sec.
H.Potter & Pris. of Azkaban
Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire
Headhunter: Redemption
Heroes of the Pacific
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hitman 3: Contracts

I = 0 9

Indiana Jones: Emp. Tomb

J = 1 0

Judge Dredd: D. vs Death
Juiced

K = 1 1

Kessen 3
Killzone
King Kong (Peter Jackson's)
King of Route 66
Kingdom Hearts
Knight Rider

L = 1 2

L.A. Rush
Lara Croft T. Raider Leg.*
Lego Star Wars
Lion, Witch & the Wardrobe
LMA Manager 2004
LMA Manager 2005
Lord of the Rings: 3rd Age
Lord of the Rings: R.of King

M = 1 3

Man.United Manager 2005
Manhunt
Marc Ecko's Getting Up
Marvel vs Capcom 2
Matrix, Enter the
Matrix: Path of Neo
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: Euro. Ass.
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Mercenaries: P.of Destruct.
Metal Gear Solid 3 S.Eater
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subs.*
Midnight Club 3: DUB Ed.
Mortal Kombat: Deception
Mortal Kombat: Shaolin M.

N = 1 4

Naval Op:Warship Gunner
Need for Speed M. Want.
Need for Speed: Undergr.
Need for Speed: Undergr.2

O = 1 5

Onimusha: Warlords

P = 1 6

Paris-Dakar Rally 2
Peter Jackson's King Kong
Playboy: The Mansion
Predator: Concrete Jungle
Prince of Persia: 2 Thrones
Prince of Persia: W.Within
Pro Evolution Soccer 5
Pro Evolution Soccer Man.*
Project Zero 2
Punisher

R = 1 8

Ratchet & Clank 3
Raw vs Smackdown 2006
Rayman 2: Revolution
Red Dead Revolver
Reign Of Fire
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Res. Evil: Outbreak File #2
Resident Evil 4
Resident Evil: Outbreak
Robotech: Invasion
RTX Red Rock

S = 1 9

San Andreas, GTA
Shadow Hearts: Covenant
Shadow of Rome
Shadow of the Colossus
Shadowman 2
Silent Hill 2
Silent Hill 3
Silent Hill 4: The Room
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Sims
Sims 2
Sims in the City
Smackdown vs Raw
Smackdown vs Raw 2006
Smackdown! 4 : S.Y.Mouth
Sniper Elite
Sonic Mega Collection Plus
Sonic Riders*
Soul Calibur 3
Soul Reaver 2
Spartan: Total Warrior
Splinter Cell 3: C. Theory
Spongebob Squarepants
Spyro: A Hero's Tail
Star Wars Episode III
Star Wars: Battlefront
Star Wars: Battlefro...
Suffering: Ties Tha...

T = 2 0

Tekken 5
Terminator 3: Redemption
The Getaway 2 B. Monday
The Godfather*
The Great Escape
The Matrix: Path of Neo
The Punisher
The Sims 2
The Sims: Bustin Out
The Thing
Tiger Woods Golf 2005
Time Splitters 2
TOCA Race Driver 3
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Tom Clancy's: P. Tomorrow
Tomb Raider: Angel of Drk
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's: Amer.Waste
Total Club Manager 2004
Total Overdose
True Crime: NYC
True Crime: Streets of LA
TT Superbikes
Ty the Tasmananian Tiger 3

U = 2 1

Ultimate Spider-Man
Underworld: Eternal War

V = 2 2

Van Helsing
Vietcong: Purple Haze

W = 2 3

Warhammer: Fire Warrior
Warriors
World War2: POW

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cheats

THIS MONTH'S COOLEST, NASTIEST AND STUPIDEST CODES

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE

In the options menu, use these codes to unlock the following (re-enter the codes to switch them off):

IPULATOR	Unlock all the levels	**VANCEDALLISTER**	Maximum skills
DEXTERCROWLEY	Unlock all the movies	**MARCUSECKOS**	Infinite health
SIRULLY	Unlock the gallery	**FLIPTHESCRIPT**	Infinite skills
DOGTAGS	Unlock all the skills	**GRANDMACELIA**	Unlock the iPod
SHARDESOFGLASS	Unlock your Black Book	**NINESIX**	Unlock all the legends
STATEYOURNAME	Unlock all the characters	**WORKBITCH**	Unlock all the Beat Down arenas
BABYLONTRUST	Maximum health		

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF

With the game paused, select Menu Options, then Cheats, and enter the following:
#1stunna – Perfect shots.
workout – Empty n' clips counter kill.
yayoshome – Tony Yayo *So Seductive* video.
killa1 – *So Seductive* song.
sayhellotomylittlefriend – Unlocks the *My Buddy* video.
the hub is broken – More powerful guns.
ny'sfinestyo – Unlimited health.

BATTLEFIELD II: MODERN COMBAT

While playing the game, hold R2 and L2 and then press →, →, ↓, ↑, ←, ← to unlock all weapons.

CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

Enter this code in the Chapter Select menu to unlock all levels:
Hold R1 and L1 and then press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, ←, →, →, ◻, →, ◻, →, ◻.

CONFLICT: GLOBAL STORM

While on the main menu, press L1, R1, L1, R1, ◎, ◎, ◎, ◎ to unlock a new and highly desirable cheat menu.

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

Pause the game and hold down L2 while entering the following codes:
Reset alert meter:
L2, →, R2, R1, ◻, →.
Invulnerability:
◻, ◎, ←, ←, ◎, ◻.
Infinite ammo:
←, ◎, R2, →, R1, ◻.
Infinite mind power:
R1, R2, ◎, →, L1, ◎.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

Enter the following codes in the Extras section of the main menu. Note: For these cheats to work, you must create a new profile.
Big head mode: **NICKWEST**
Unlimited ammo: **MERCENARIES**
Authentic mode: **SWEDISH ARMY**

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

Enter these cheats while playing:
Get jetpack: ←, →, L1, L2, R1, R2, ↑, ↓, ←, →.
Super punch (destroys everything): L1, L2, L2, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↑, R1, R2, R2.
Full health, armour and $250,000: R1, R2, L1, ⊗, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑.

KING KONG

At the main menu, hold L1 and R1 and press ↓, ◎, ↑, ◻, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑ to activate the cheats menu, where you can then enter these codes:
Unlock all levels: **KKst0ry**
999 ammo: **KK 999 mun**
Unlock all bonuses: **KKmuseum**
God mode: **8wonder**
Start with a machine gun: **KKcapone**
Start with a revolver: **KKtigun**
Start with a shotgun: **KKsh0tgun**
Start with a sniper rifle: **KKsn1per**
Have infinite spears: **lance 1nf**
Get one-hit kills: **GrosBras**

MADDEN NFL 06

On the main menu, select My Madden, and then pick Madden Cards. Now select Madden Codes and enter these cheats:
Unlock all stadia: **555128**
Unlock Classic teams: **614897**

MARVEL NEMESIS: RISE OF THE IMPERFECTS

Select Cheats in the options menu and enter these codes:
Solora swimsuit model card: **REIKO**
Elektra swimsuit model card: **THEHAND**
Storm swimsuit model card: **MONROE**
Unlock *Fantastic Four* comics: **SAVAGELAND**
Unlock *Tomorrow People* comics: **NZONE**

MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

Pause the game, then hold L1+R1 and press ◎, ◎, ←, △, ◎, ⊗.
Now input one of the following:
Full adrenaline:
L1, R2, R1, ↑, △, ◎.
Infinite ammo:
L2, L1, ◻, L2, L1, R1.
Infinite health:
◻, L2, L1, △, △, L2.

MERCENARIES

After collecting 20 National Treasures, enter the following codes on the Factions page of your PDA:
Play as Indiana Jones:
←, ←, →, →, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓.
Play as Han Solo:
←, ←, →, →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↑.
Infinite health:
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →.

NBA LIVE 06

Enter the respective codes in My NBA Live to unlock these items:
Black TMan 5 trainers: **258SHQW95B**
White TMac 5 trainers: **HGS83KP234P**
A3 Garnett 3 trainers: **DRI239CZ49**
S Carter III LE trainers: **JZ3SCARTVY**
Boston Celtics 05-06 Alternate Jersey: **193KSHU88J**
Cleveland Cavaliers 05-06 Alternate Jersey: **9922NVDKVT**
Denver Nuggets 05-06 Alternate Jersey: **XWETJK72FC**
Detroit Pistons 05-06 Alternate Jersey: **JANTWIKBS6**

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

On the Press Start screen, input:
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →
to unlock the Burger King challenge race.
←, →, ←, →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓
to unlock the Ford GT Castrol SYNTEC car.
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ↑, ↓
to unlock an extra marker to use in the One Stop Shop backroom.

NHL 2K6

Enter the options menu and select Manage Profiles. Press R1, then select Create New Profile. Enter **Turco813** as your name. A message will confirm that you have unlocked everything in the game.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

Enter the following codes at the pause screen to unlock some useful new weapons:
Get a chainsaw:
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ○, □, ○, □.
Get a toy hammer:
←, ←, →, →, ○, □, ○, □, ↑, ↓.
Get a telephone:
→, ←, →, ←, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ○, □, ○, ○, □, □.
Get a swordfish:
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ○, □, ○, □.

SLY 3: HONOR AMONG THIEVES

While flying the plane pause the game and enter R1, R1, →, ↓, ↓, →. Unpause the game and you'll now be flying the Toonami Plane.

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

To get all the co-op missions, enter Solo or Co-op mode and hold R1 + R2 + L1 + L2 then press □, □, □, □, □, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○.

SSX ON TOUR

Select Cheats from the extras menu and enter the following:
FLYTHREADS to unlock all clothing.
ZOOMJUICE for infinite boost.
THEBIGPICTURE to unlock all movies.
FOURSOME to unlock the Ski Patrol Character.
MOREFUNTHANONE to unlock Mitch Koobski.
BIGPARTYTIME to unlock Conrad The Viking.
THREEISACROWD to unlock Nigel.
LETSPARTY for a snowball fight.
POWERPLAY to boost your stats.
ROADIEROUNDUP to unlock more characters.
JACKALOPESTLYE for monster tricks.

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II

During battle, hold L2 and R2 and input the following codes:
Alternate soldiers: ↓, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←.
Alternate sounds: ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →.
Infinite ammo: ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, →.
Invincibility: ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, →.
No HUD: ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ↑, ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, →.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

While on the wardrobe, hold L1 and enter the following to unlock all levels:
↑, ↑, →, →, ↑, →, ↓.
While on the bonus draw, hold L1 and enter the following code to unlock all extras:
↓, ↓, →, →, ↓, →, ↑.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

Pause the game at any point and hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2. Then input the following codes:
Give Aragorn all special abilities:
↓, ○, △, △.
Give Gandalf all special abilities:
↑, ↓, △, ○.
Give Legolas all special abilities:
△, ○, ⊗, ○.

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND

While playing the game, hold down R1 + L1 + ⊗ and enter the following codes:
Maximum evil: ←, ↓, ←, ↓, ←, ↓, R2.
Psychedelic mode: ←, ←, R2, →, →, R2, ↑, ↑, R2, ↓, ↓, R2.
All weapons: ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ←, R2, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, →, ↓, ←, R2, ↓, ↓, ↓, R2, R2.
Full health: ←, R2, R2, R2, →, ←, →, ←, ↑, R2, R2, R2, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, R2.
Invincibility: ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑.

THE WARRIORS

While playing, enter the following:
L1, SELECT, □, ↓, L2, → to instantly make 100% completion.
↑, △, L3, SELECT, ⊗, L2 for unlimited health.
□, ○, △, SELECT, ⊗, ← for unlimited rage.
↓, □, ←, ⊗, L1, SELECT for unlimited spirit.
R2, ○, SELECT, ↑, L1, → to get a pipe.
L1, ⊗, R1, R1, SELECT, R2 to get a machete.
↓, ↓, SELECT, ↑, ↑, L3 to get a knife.
↑, SELECT, ⊗, △, △, □ to get out of jail.
↓, □, ⊗, SELECT, L1, ← to instantly complete the level.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006

Go to Options, then Password, and type in the following codes:
CLUB11 to unlock all clubs.
WOOGLIN to unlock all golfers.
ITSINTHEHOLE to unlock all courses.
GOLDENAGE to get Tiger in a hat.
TECHNICOLOR for Tiger playing in striped trousers.
THROWBACK for Tiger playing in a retro outfit.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

Go to Options then Cheat Codes:
Mat Hoffman – **the_condor**
Jason Ellis – **Sirius-DJ**
Perfect grind balance – **grindXpert**
Perfect manual balance – **2wheels!**
Perfect skitch balance – **h!tchar!de**

TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

Bring up the map screen and input the following codes while holding R1 and L1:
Unlimited ammo: ○, □, ⊗, □, □, △.
Millionaire: □, □, △, □, △, □.
Redman Gone Wild mini-game: △, ⊗, ⊗, ○, △, □.
Super Cop: △, ⊗, △, ⊗, △, △.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Go to Controller Setup in the options menu and enter these codes:
Unlock all characters: →, ↓, →, ↓, ←, ↑, ←, →.
Unlock all comics: ←, ←, →, ←, ↑, ←, ←, ↓.
Unlock all artwork: ↓, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ←, ←.
Unlock all landmarks: ↑, →, ↓, ←, ↓, ↑, →, ←.

PS2 CHEATS

CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

Enter these codes at the main menu while holding L1 and R1:
Chicken-headed people:
⊗, ○, ○, □.
Remove heads-up display:
⊗, □, △, ○.
High-speed mode:
○, ○, △, △.
One hit KO:
⊗, ○, ○, ⊗.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

Enter these codes while playing:
Full health: L1, R1, ⊗, L1, R1, □, L1, R1.
Weapons (1): ↑, □, □, ↓, ←, □, □, →.
Weapons (2): ↑, ○, ○, ↓, ←, ○, ○, →.
Weapons (3): ↑, ⊗, ⊗, ↓, ←, ⊗, ⊗, →.
Clear Wanted Level: L1, L1, △, R1, R1, ⊗, □, ○.

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

Enter **!bacon** as your profile name for a cool $100,000.
Enter **!get-set** as your profile name to unlock all the cop cars in Tuner Takedown mode.

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT II

Pause, and press ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, ↑, ↑, ↑, ←, → for invulnerability.
Pause the game and input ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓, ↓, ←, → to make your ammo refill to the max every time you reload.

the hot 100

IF IT'S NOT ON THE LIST THEN IT'S NOT WORTH PLAYING

THIS MONTH

It's retro goodness this month as the gloriously sunny *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* cruises into the top 100. Following hot on its heels is *Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max*, fireballing the competition to take its rightful place in our PSP Top Five.

YOUR KEY TO THE TOP 100

GOLD
Reserved exclusively for games that scored the elusive 10/10

SILVER
Only awarded to games that scored a mighty 9/10

BRONZE
Lovingly given to games that scored an impressive 8/10

DVD#71
Want to try before you buy? Here's the issue where we ran a playable demo

24: THE GAME — BRONZE
The hit TV show arrives on PS2 in fine style.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#69**

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF — BRONZE
Violent vanity project enlivened by a huge suite of musical extras.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 08

ACE COMBAT: SQUADRON LEADER — BRONZE
Top flight sim that will take your breath away.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#56**

AMPLITUDE — SILVER
Music/rhythm game with loads of top artists and online options.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38/#62**

AREA 51 — SILVER
Guns, aliens and conspiracies make for a top-notch shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#58**

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT — SILVER
Genius body-swapping war shooter full of challenges and action.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 09

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL — BRONZE
Not quite *Jak II* but still an engaging platformer.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#39**

BLACK — GOLD
Hollywood-style gun porn – by far the best shooter on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#69**

BRIAN LARA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2005 — BRONZE
Quite simply the best cricket game yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#62* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#63**

BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30 — BRONZE
An addictive take on both WW2 and squad-based shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60/#62**

BURNOUT REVENGE — GOLD
Faster-than-light and the best racer in existence.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#64**

CALL OF DUTY: BIG RED ONE — SILVER
Stunning looking WW2 shooter with atmosphere to spare.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2005 — SILVER
Looks great, and the new career mode makes for massive fun.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#51**

CONFLICT: GLOBAL STORM — BRONZE
Easy to grasp, action-packed squad-based shootery.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#64**

DARKWATCH — BRONZE
Atmospheric, vein-ripping vampires vs cowboys shooter.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#65**

DEF JAM VENDETTA: FIGHT FOR NEW YORK — BRONZE
Gorgeous like Carmen Electra, must-have rap-scrap mayhem.
REVIEWED *OPS2#52* / **OVERALL** 08

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! — SILVER
Alien invasion B-movie style as you zap, crush and fry mankind.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#61/#62**

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING — SILVER
Combat-heavy adventure with shooters and swords.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 XTREME LEGENDS
Samurai strategy gaming, with the greatest depth and detail yet.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 07

ESPN NHL 2K5 — BRONZE
More fun and less broken bones than real ice hockey.
REVIEWED *OPS2#56* / **OVERALL** 08

EVERYBODY'S GOLF — BRONZE
Addictive cartoon golf that laughs in the face of realism.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#64**

EYETOY: ANTIGRAV
Unique use-your-body-as-the-controller jet-board racing game.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 07

EYETOY: PLAY 2 — BRONZE
This more creative follow-up shows off 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**

FIFA FOOTBALL 2005 — BRONZE
More licences, tighter play and the brilliant new First Touch system.
REVIEWED *OPS2#52* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#42**

FINAL FANTASY X-2 — SILVER
FF meets *Charlie's Angels* for a narcotic dose of the familiar RPG.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 09

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — SILVER
Tactical battling in Russkie New York. Insanely addictive.
REVIEWED *OPS2#37* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#38**

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE — BRONZE
This is the finest Bond game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#67**

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR
Tactical army shooter where you issue orders but don't fire a shot.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 07 / **DVD#59**

GOD OF WAR — SILVER
Heart-in-mouth joy from this frantic and bloody hack fest.
REVIEWED *OPS2#60* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#62/#63**

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK — GOLD
Two superb games in the same box for just £40!
REVIEWED *OPS2#41* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS — GOLD
Massively expansive, even over *Vice City*. The biggest game ever.
REVIEWED *OPS2#54* / **OVERALL** 10

GRAN TURISMO 4 — SILVER
Unsurpassed, automotive beauty. The best driving game on PS2.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

GUN — SILVER
This *GTA*-inspired Wild West shooter is mighty fine, if a little short.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

HITMAN: CONTRACTS — BRONZE
Deeper, darker and bigger than its predecessor.
REVIEWED *OPS2#46* / **OVERALL** 08

ICO — SILVER
Beautiful, inventive... *Ico* is an adventure unlike any other.
REVIEWED *OPS2#18 & #69* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#19/#35/#69**

JAK 3 — BRONZE
Sublime platform adventure and oodles of varied gameplay.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#53/#58**

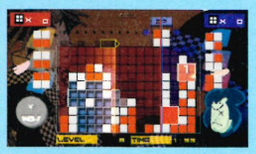
JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING — SILVER
Bond finally gets the game he deserves. SPECTRE-tacular stuff.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#40/#44**

THE PSP TOP FIVE

Got a PSP? Then you need these

1 GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES 9/10
Rockstar goes back to Liberty City where new missions and multiplayer make for an explosive package.

2 RIDGE RACER 9/10
Utterly addictive. Not only is the single-player game brilliant, but the silky-smooth multiplayer action is fantastic with a few mates.



3 LUMINES 9/10
A simplistic mix of block puzzler and music mixer that will suck up hours of your life and never give them back. An absolute classic.

4 VIRTUA TENNIS 8/10
Accessible *and* comprehensive. Career modes, multiplayer and loads of mini-games provide plenty of fun for everyone.

5 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX 8/10
The legendary brawler finally gets a quality remake with added WiFi multiplayer. Perfectly suited to PSP, this is the best fighter around.

NEED A BACK ISSUE OF *OPS2* TO CHECK OUT THE FULL REVIEW? THEN CALL:
UK: 0870 837 4773
OVERSEAS: +44 1858 438 795

replay

KILLER 7 — BRONZE
Insane shooter with exploding zombies and schizophrenic killers.
REVIEWED *OPS2#61* / **OVERALL** 08

KILLZONE — SILVER
Visually amazing FPS that'll rock your game world every time.
REVIEWED *OPS2#51* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#52/#55/#59**

KINGDOM HEARTS — BRONZE
Disney partners with Square for the ultra-cute RPG crossover.
REVIEWED *OPS2#27* / **OVERALL** 08

LEGO STAR WARS — BRONZE
One of the best *Star Wars* games yet, despite the cutesy looks.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#59/#62**

MADDEN NFL 06 — SILVER
Deep and technically flawless recreation of American football.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09

MANHUNT — SILVER
A dirty, grisly, filthy but *brilliant* game experience.
REVIEWED *OPS2#42* / **OVERALL** 09

MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP: CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE — BRONZE
Graffiti game created by a fashion designer. Original and good.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 — ON THE DVD

MASHED — SILVER
Got friends? Get the brilliant party racer *Mashed*. No excuses.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#48/#49/#55**

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN — BRONZE
A welcome second helping of sword-wielding platform antics.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#43**

MERCENARIES — SILVER
Enjoy all the fun of free-roaming warfare. And get paid for it!
REVIEWED *OPS2#55* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#55**

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY — GOLD
A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage stealth-a-thon.
REVIEWED *OPS2#17* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#17/#37**

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER — SILVER
Cinematic stealth adventure that devours the competition.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#57**

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION — BRONZE
Super-bling street racer. Earn cash to splash on your motor.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **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
The fastest, prettiest and bestest motorbike racing money can buy.
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 STREET V3 — SILVER
The definitive basketball game. Shoot hoops to build your rep.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 09

NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED — BRONZE
Throwing cops into the mix gives the *NFS* series a turbo boost.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 08

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2 — BRONZE
Vast racer with tons of mod-tastic freedom of expression.
REVIEWED *OPS2#53* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#53**

OBSCURE
Entry into this school of survival horror won't disappoint chillseekers.
REVIEWED *OPS2#52* / **OVERALL** 07 / **DVD#52**

ONIMUSHA 3 — SILVER
Saving the best till last, this is near faultless adventure gaming.
REVIEWED *OPS2#48* / **OVERALL** 09

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST — BRONZE
Sun-kissed, retro-racer makes blistering comeback.
REVIEWED *OPS2#70* / **OVERALL** 08 — NEW ENTRY

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
Only slight tweaks to the formula, but it's the best *POP* so far.
REVIEWED *OPS2#67* / **OVERALL** 09

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5 — GOLD
Like playing real football, but with your hands. Utterly beautiful.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 10 / **DVD#65**

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 flash gun-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
Simply 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**

SECOND SIGHT — BRONZE
Slick thriller touched with psychic powers from the *'Splitters* boys.
REVIEWED *OPS2#50* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#50**

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**

SINGSTAR POPWORLD — BRONZE
Party fun of the highest order, whether you can sing or not.
REVIEWED *OPS2#59* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#60**

SLY 3: HONOUR AMONG THIEVES — SILVER
Clever, inventive and funny, this is the best platformer around.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SMASH COURT PRO TENNIS TOURNAMENT 2 — BRONZE
A new career mode makes the top tennis seed even better.
REVIEWED *OPS2#47* / **OVERALL** 08

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS — BRONZE
Move in for the commander-in-chief of online tactical shooters.
REVIEWED *OPS2#43* / **OVERALL** 08

SOUL CALIBUR III — SILVER
Better than ever, this is the greatest fighting game ever made.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#65**

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR — SILVER
Mythological hack and slash epic.
REVIEWED *OPS2#64* / **OVERALL** 09 / **DVD#66**

SPIDER-MAN 2 — BRONZE
Free-roaming, superhero adventure fun with loads to see and do.
REVIEWED *OPS2#49* / **OVERALL** 08

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY — SILVER
Top stealth adventure, travelling the world to surprise terrorists.
REVIEWED *OPS2#58* / **OVERALL** 09

SSX 3 — SILVER
Super-long, fast races make this an essential PS2 purchase.
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**

TLOTR: THE RETURN OF THE KING — BRONZE
Well-crafted version of the film, with huge battles and great extras.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **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**

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND
Tony's looking tired, but this is still a great place to start.
REVIEWED *OPS2#66* / **OVERALL** 07

TOTAL OVERDOSE — BRONZE
Comedy Tex-Mex shoot-a-thon with entertaining special attacks.
REVIEWED *OPS2#65* / **OVERALL** 08

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 — BRONZE
Cartoon-style action adventure with great fighting controls.
REVIEWED *OPS2#57* / **OVERALL** 08

WALLACE & GROMIT: THE CURSE OF THE 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
Deeply odd and very Japanese but also hugely enjoyable.
REVIEWED *OPS2#69* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#70**

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 version of the comic-book hero. Play this now.
REVIEWED *OPS2#40* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#42**

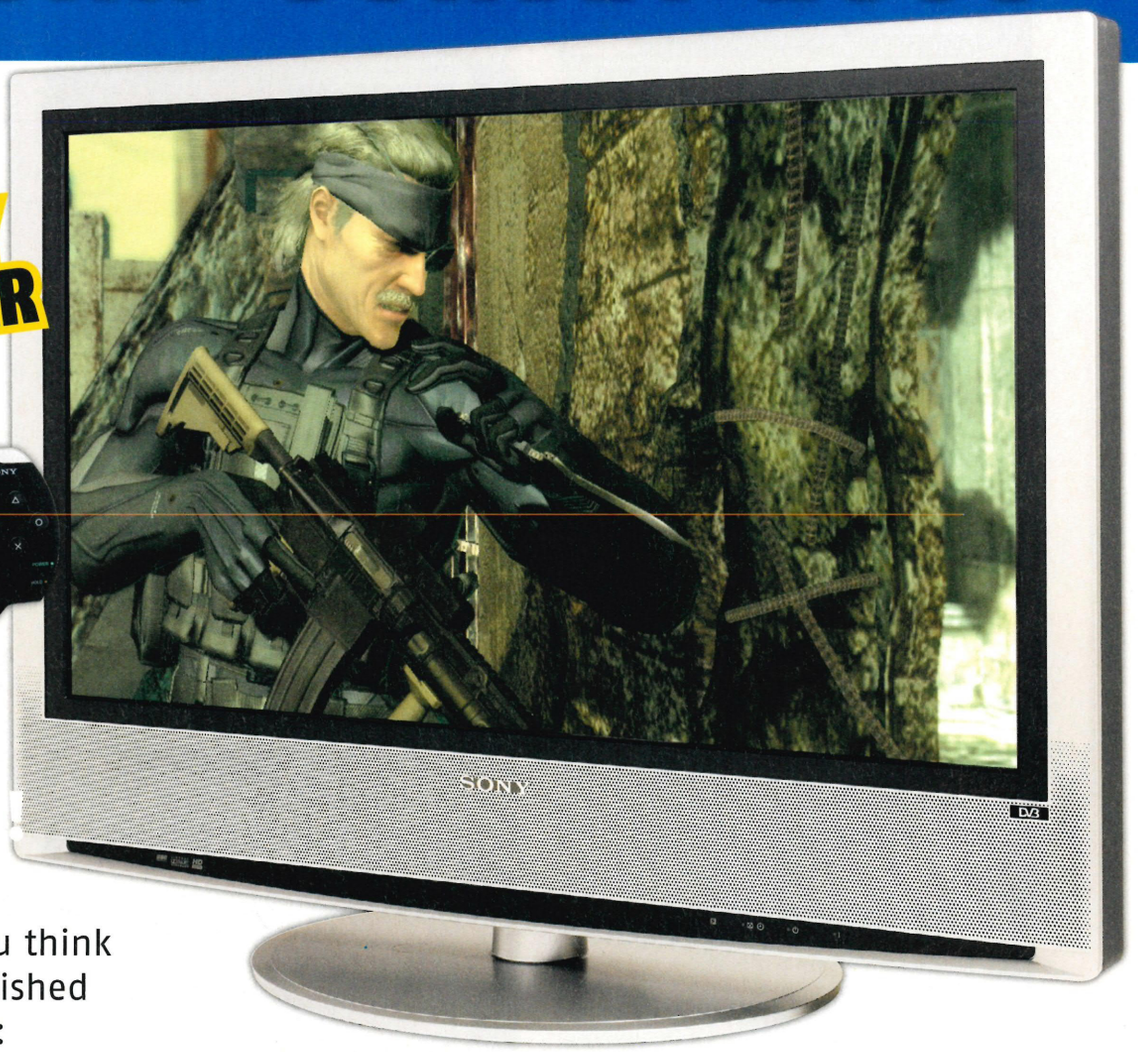
ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER — BRONZE
The strikingly impressive robo scrapper returns. Awesome.
REVIEWED *OPS2#38* / **OVERALL** 08 / **DVD#38**

PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

READERSHIP SURVEY 2006

WIN! A SONY 32" LCD HD-READY TV WORTH OVER £1,000!

OR A FANTASTIC RUNNER-UP PRIZE OF A SONY PSP



Here at *OPS2*, our days and nights are spent working out new ways to make you happy. To make the mag even better, we need to know more about you, your gaming habits and what you think about *OPS2*. Once you've finished reading this issue just go to:

www.gamesurvey.co.uk

and enter the password: **mb5** to fill in our online survey.

As a special thank you, all completed surveys submitted by **8 May 2006** will be entered into a prize draw* with a chance to win a fantastic **Sony KDL-S32A12U 32" LCD HD-ready TV** or a **Sony PSP**.

Please be honest - your answers don't affect your chances of winning! Good luck!

If you don't have access to the Internet you can obtain a paper copy of the survey by sending a self-addressed envelope (no stamp needed) to the following freepost address:

Charles Hutchings (Games survey)
Market Research
Future Publishing
FREEPOST
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2XF

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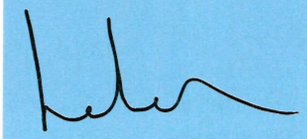
comedown

THE REST OF YOUR PS2 AND PSP LIFE IN ONE HANDY SECTION

Much like a nun living in the convent of games, my life is dedicated to the love of Comedown. As you can see, this month I've shaved my head and turned myself into an egg-loving caveman in honour of its greatness (turn to p135 for who this baldy character *really* is). But I must confess that this month, Father, I have been tempted to stray. I've been having 'thoughts' of what it might be like to touch the Reviews section. Or perhaps how exciting I might find it to be in the arms of Spy. I've even pondered on the gypsy life of features – less routine, less structure, and much, much bigger pictures. But then I remembered something a wise little bird once told me: travel too far up the tree and you'll miss the nest you're sat on. Well, I sat on mine all month. And now it's gone and bloody hatched itself all over the next 13 pages. Amen.



Helen Woodey,
Operations editor

film

music

incoming

feature

"Just leave it Harry, he ain't worth it. And to be fair, Ron *is* wearing blusher..."

134 **FILM REVIEWS**
Saber-sharp verdicts on the latest movies on DVD and UMD. This month: *Harry Potter*, *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *Revolver* and more

135 **HOW TO GET MOVIES ON YOUR PSP**
Our essential, plain-English guide to transferring your prized video files from PC to PSP.

135 **THIS MONTH'S WEIRDEST PSP THINGS**
A trio of unspeakably wrongheaded video nuggets dredged from the Internet's depths and rinsed off for your PSPleasure

136 **MUSIC REVIEWS**
Placebo, Aphex Twin, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and The Mystery Jets vie for your aural attention with their latest long players

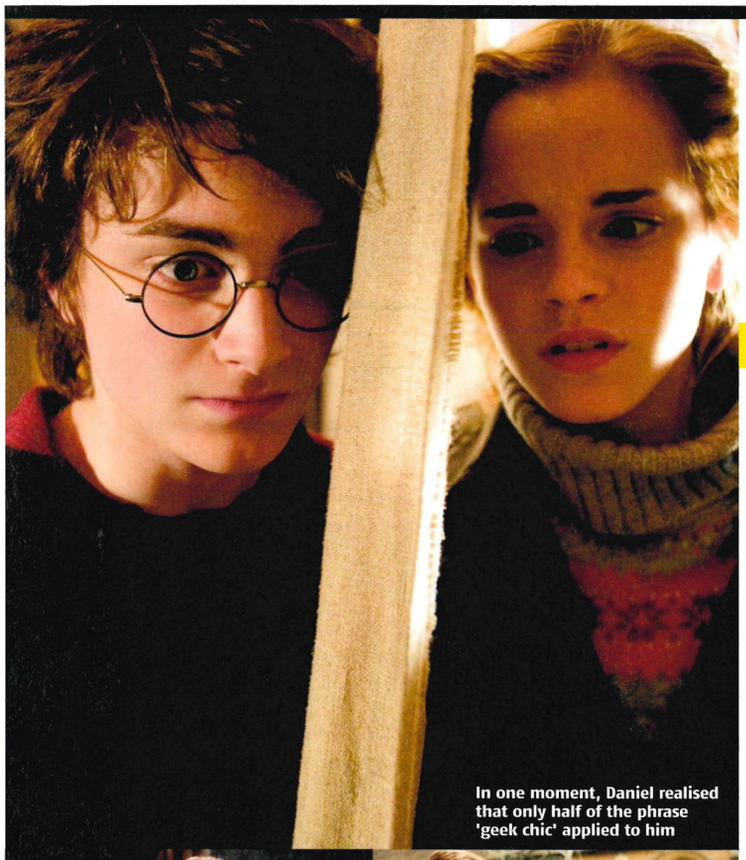
136 **PSP KIT REVIEW**
If your PSP's 2GB memory stick is already groaning from overuse, perhaps these gargantuan storage devices will lighten the load

137 **HOW TO GET GAME SAVES ON YOUR PSP**
Too lazy to input cheat codes by hand? Then you're probably too lazy to use our guide and download complete game saves. Pity

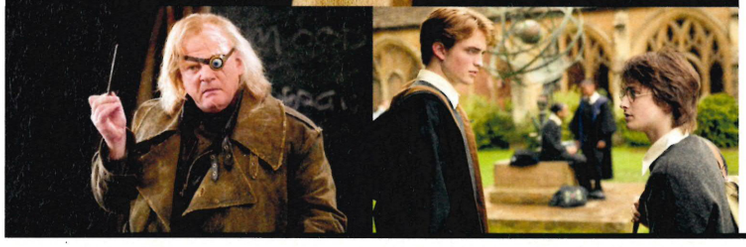
138 **INCOMING**
Don't let the towering wave of upcoming games releases on PS2 and PSP wash you away. Get prepared with our full schedule

140 ***OPS2* PERFECT TENS**
Few games have scooped the ultimate score in *OPS2*. We revisit the hall-of-famers with the original reviewers

After six long years, Placebo almost crack a smile



In one moment, Daniel realised that only half of the phrase 'geek chic' applied to him



HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

WIZARDS AND THAT

DIRECTOR
Mike Newell
STARRING
Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint
DISTRIBUTOR
Warner Home Video
OUT
Now
PRICE
£24.99 (DVD)
£24.99 (UMD)

FILM: Not quite as revolutionary as *Azkaban* – which led the cheery *Potter* franchise to somewhere darker and more interesting – *Goblet Of Fire* is more of a consolidation; still sharp and enjoyable, but retreading much of the same stylistic ground as its predecessor.

This time around, an increasingly gangly and adolescent Harry finds himself taking part in the Triwizard Tournament, despite not putting his name forward and being too young. Naturally, something mysterious is going on, so in-between battling dragons and outwitting mermen, Harry enlists Ron and Hermione to investigate. What do Harry's recurring dreams signalling the return of Voldemort mean? And are they linked to Harry's appearance in the tournament?

Lavishly produced, well-plotted and expertly put together, *Goblet* may lack the breathless pace and excitement of *Azkaban*, but the performances grow with every film and the climax is one of the darkest moments in kids' cinema, ever. **8/10**

EXTRAS: Interviews, making of, behind the scenes, game demo. **7/10**

VERDICT: A strong follow-up to the best outing yet – will leave you eager for *Potter 5*. ■ **ND**

Also out on UMD

The pick of this month's releases

FROM 20 MARCH:
- *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone*
- *Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban*
- *Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets*
- *The Exorcism Of Emily Rose*

FROM 27 MARCH:
- *Speed*
- *Aliens*
- *Behind Enemy Lines*
- *Flight Plan*
- *Independence Day*
- *Phone Booth*

FROM 3 APRIL:
- *Doom*

FROM 10 APRIL:
- *King Kong*
- *Ice Age*

REVOLVER

Director *Guy Ritchie* / Starring *Jason Statham, Ray Liotta*
Distributor *Redbus* / Out *Now* / Price *£17.99 (DVD), £17.99 (UMD)*

FILM: In this, perhaps the world's first metaphysical gangster movie, Statham's arch-gambler Jake Green is released from prison and seeks to settle a grudge against the man who put him there, Liotta's mob boss and racket-runner, Dorothy Macha. Things get trippy when Jake is offered the almost supernaturally insightful protection of mysterious loan sharks Zach and Avi. A messy and incoherent examination of identity, greed, chance and stuff follows. The frustrating thing about Ritchie's bag of flashy new tricks – anime cutaways, revelatory flashbacks – is that the story lost in the midst of it all seems good one. **6/10**

EXTRAS: Commentary, interviews, making of, deleted scenes, outtakes. **8/10**

VERDICT: Overcomplicated but still watchable. That said, there's nothing here that hasn't been done before, and better. ■ **ND**

THE CONSTANT GARDENER

Director *Fernando Meirelles* / Starring *Ralph Fiennes, Rachel Weisz*
Distributor *Universal Pictures* / Out *Now* / Price *£19.99 (DVD), £19.99 (UMD)*

FILM: A careful, precise thriller tracking the unlikely marriage of Fiennes' middling British diplomat Justin Quayle to Weisz's political campaigner, Tessa, and their time together in Africa. Her involvement in local aid projects – and especially an investigation into pharmaceutical company involvement in exploitative drugs trials – proves professionally embarrassing for Justin. As communication between them deteriorates, Tessa is found murdered, and against the advice of his employers, Justin starts an investigation of his own, not only into the truth of her death but also the truth of their relationship. Subtly crafted, with brilliantly measured performances. **8/10**

EXTRAS: Behind the scenes, documentary, extended and deleted scenes **7/10**

VERDICT: Too slow for some, but this is sharp and thoughtful stuff. ■ **ND**

KISS KISS BANG BANG

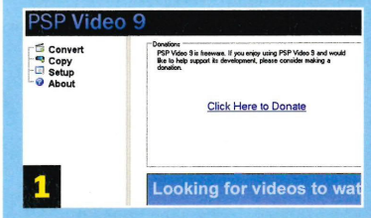
Director *Shane Black* / Starring *Robert Downey Jr, Val Kilmer* /
Distributor *Warner Home Video* / Out *Now* / Price *£17.99 (DVD)*

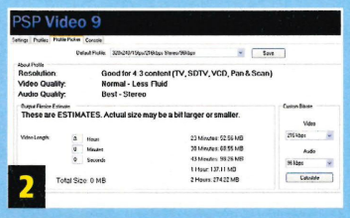
FILM: Quick-witted and knowing detective comedy from father of the modern buddy movie and *Lethal Weapon* scripter Shane Black. Downey Jr is Harry Lockhart, a small-time thug who stumbles into a screen audition while running from the cops. He wins the part and finds himself in Hollywood, paired with private dick Gay Perry – Kilmer in his best turn for ages – to get a handle on the LA criminal element as research for his character. Things get out of hand, of course, and, armed with an ever-ready supply of punchy dialogue and winks to the camera, Perry and Lockhart end up solving a very real, very dangerous mystery of their own. **8/10**

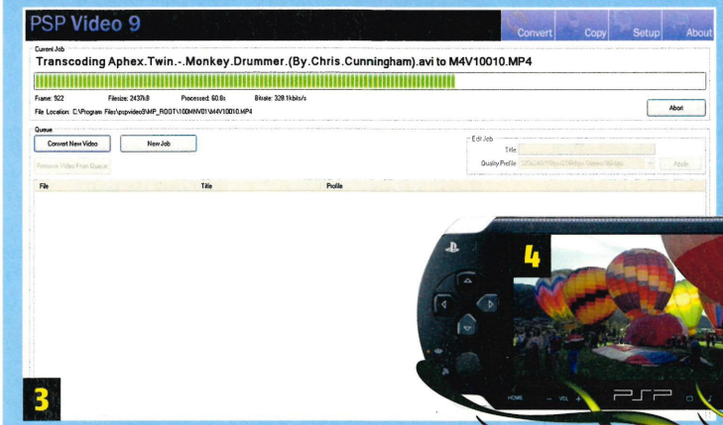
EXTRAS: None **0/10**

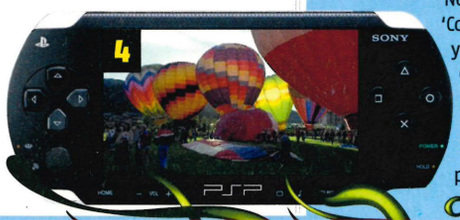
VERDICT: The sharpest action flick we've seen for a long time – funny, but packs a hefty punch, too. ■ **ND**

Step by step guide to... getting movies on your PSP









Got video files you want to watch on the go? Follow our guide...

PSP only plays certain types of video file – MP4, AVC – so you need to convert your movie file first. The easiest way to do this is by using a program like *PSP Video 9* **1** available at www.pspvideo9.com. It's free and easy to use, and transfers the finished files to PSP automatically.

Download the program and choose your video settings in the 'Setup' tab **2**. Tinker with the resolution, framerate and so on until you've found the balance between video quality and file size that suits you (you may want to use the 'Profile Picker' with automatic settings and descriptions of the quality level).

Now click the 'Convert' tab, select 'Convert New Video' and find the file you want to copy from the menu. Once converted, *PSP Video 9* automatically prepares the file so that your PSP can find it **3**. Plug your PSP into your PC's USB port, click the 'Copy' tab and you're away **4**.

THE WEIRDEST THINGS WE'VE SEEN ON PSP THIS MONTH

WE'VE TRAWLED THE WEB TO FIND THE THREE FREAKIEST VIDS ON PSP

#3 NOW DISPENSING SASS

Comedy short in which a square ginger type encounters problems with a loud-mouthed cash machine. You'll enjoy it if, like us, you've ever had an ATM-related grievance, like when it ejects your card really slowly, like an old man sticking his tongue out. No? Just us, then. Available from **www.goodiebag.tv/videos.htm**

#3 The ATM strikes back

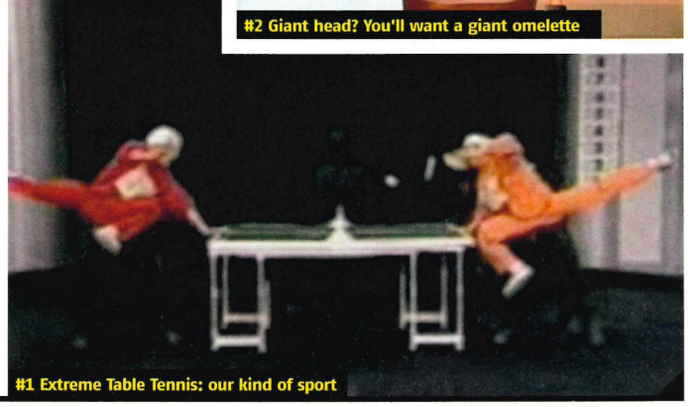
#2 EGGHUNT

Short animation about a caveman's Wile E Coyote-style attempts to poach eggs from a precariously positioned bird's nest. The weirdness is due to the lack of nudity, violence and self abasement as much as anything – rare qualities in the land of PSP downloads. In fact, *Egghunt* is refreshingly warm-spirited. Available from **www.planetmg.com/NewProd/psp** under 'short films'.

#2 Giant head? You'll want a giant omelette

#1 MATRIX PING PONG

Thoroughly demented but also closing in on genius. Japanese acrobats stage a game of table tennis in real-time, using human puppetry and black catsuits to recreate the *Matrix* films impossible athleticism. Available from **www.psp-vault.com** under 'vault/videos'.


#1 Extreme Table Tennis: our kind of sport

trailer park

Download trailers for hot new films to view on your PSP

X-MEN 3

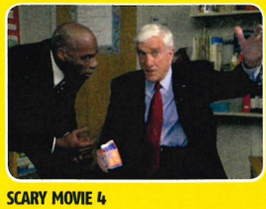
The next *X-Men*! It doesn't look rubbish! Actually, despite the departure of director Bryan Singer the whole thing's looking rather epic. Colour us excited. From www.movie-list.com/psp

PULSE

Horror-thriller in which net-savvy kids hack a portal to an evil dimension. Christina Milian ensures it'll be worth watching. From www.29hdnetwork.com/pspdirect/pulse2.html

INSIDE MAN

Spike Lee's next, with Clive Owen as a smart bank-robber involved in a battle of wits with cop, Denzel Washington. From www.29hdnetwork.com/psp_insideman.html



SCARY MOVIE 4

Enough already. The fourth instalment of the horror spoof 'comedy' series. Surely it'd be a lot easier to just make a real horror movie by now? From www.movie-list.com/psp

THE DA VINCI CODE

Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou jaunt across Europe solving religious riddles, pursued by the French police and a mysterious underground Catholic sect. From www.planetmg.com/newprod/psp

music THE TUNES CURRENTLY ROCKING OUR WORLD

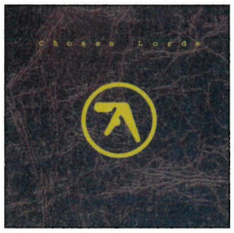
Placebo MEDS (VIRGIN)

WHO? Gender-bending European sleaze aficionados, famed for sex/drugs/sex'n'drugs anthems like *Nancy Boy* and *Pure Morning*.

HIGHLIGHTS: *Drag*, a synapse-twitching loser's anthem that pulls that quiet-loud thing with a finesse few have managed since the days of the Pixies.

LOWLIGHTS: *Space Monkey* combines both of Placebo's Achilles heels: namely stupid lyrics and an excess of whininess.

VERDICT: A straightforward rock record that forsakes studio experimentation for immediate hooks. The dude's still got a silly voice though. **7/10**



APHEX TWIN
CHOSEN LORDS
(Rephlex)

WHO? Insane techno Cornishman compiles the best of his super-limited Analord series onto one handy CD.

HIGHLIGHTS: *Fenix Funk 5* is both pretty and funny-mushrooms crazy.

LOWLIGHTS: *Klopjob* sounds like incidental music from a particularly bad '80s science program.

VERDICT: More fresh lunacy from the influential electronica maverick. **7/10**

YEAH YEAH YEAHS
SHOW YOUR BONES
(Polydor)

WHO? Painfully fashionable New York gutter-rockers with definite problems applying lipstick neatly.

HIGHLIGHTS: *Cheated Hearts* – part romance, part rocker, all glorious.

LOWLIGHTS: *Phenomena* proves YYYs can't really do 'funky'.

VERDICT: Style and substance from the Kings (and Queen) of NYC. **8/10**

MYSTERY JETS
MAKING DENS
(679 Recordings)

WHO? Eccentric prog-indie buccaneers from the mid-Thames hideaway of Eel Pie Island.

HIGHLIGHTS: The clattering, romp-along *Alas Agnes*.

LOWLIGHTS: *Soluble In Air* – dizzy hippy daydreaming.

VERDICT: A great debut from a band who don't need designer fringes to woo the indie collective. **8/10**

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH

Soledad Brothers The Hardest Walk (Loog)/**Secret Machines** Ten Silver Drops (Reprise)/**Mclusky** Mcluskyism (Too Pure)/**Ben Harper** Both Sides Of The Gun (Virgin)

ON THE *OPS2* STEREO

Rachel's Systems/Layers (Touch And Go/Quarterstick Records)/**Metallica** Metallica (Vertigo)/**Lavender Diamond** The Cavalry Of Light (Lavender Diamond Partners)

PSP tunes
Cool music downloads for your handheld

50 Foot Wave
HOT PINK, DISTORTED (4AD)
Grunge maiden Kristin Hersh returns with the literally titled *Free Music* EP
Download for free from www.50footwave.com/freemusic

Tiga
GOOD AS GOLD (Different)
Bouncy synth-disco from smooth Canadian techno auteur
Download from www.bleep.com

The Beautiful New Born Children
DO THE DO (Domino)
European scuzz-punk à la The Libertines or The Paddingtons
Download from www.bleep.com

MC Lars
DOWNLOAD THIS SONG
Geek MC giving away his tracks for free
Download from www.myspace.com/mclars

Jurassic 5
CONCRETE SCHOOLYARD (PIAS)
Nostalgic hip-hop classic from old-skool revivalists
Download from www.bleep.com

Battles
B+T (Warp)
Maximo Park's beret-wearing labelmates do funking experimentica
Download from www.bleep.com

Arctic Monkeys
THE VIEW FROM THE AFTERNOON (Domino)
Album opener from the biggest band in the world
Download from www.bleep.com

Celebration
WAR (4AD)
Raw, organ-drenched New York alt-rock
Download from www.playlouder.com

Cat Power
LIVED IN BARS (Matador)
Chan Marshall takes a country soul detour
Download from www.playlouder.com

Young People
HOT HORSE (Too Pure)
Punk-blues that makes White Stripes look hi-fi
Download from www.playlouder.com

PSP KIT REVIEW

THE BEST BITS 'N' BOBS FOR YOUR PSP

1 The Smartdisk PhotoBank
2 The Apacer CD311

As no doubt you're well aware, one of PSP's killer functions is a miniature movie player, able to play not only UMDs but films encoded by you in the comfort of your own home. But while one gig and even 512MB memory sticks are okay for short journeys – at roughly one cinematic treat per 500MB – any extensive travelling calls for something rather more substantial. And this month, we've found just the thing for you.

Firstly, we have the Smartdisk PhotoBank (£99 from www.smartdisk.com). As the name suggests, this USB mass-storage device is primarily designed for transferring your precious snaps to and from digital cameras, but it suits the PSP's purpose perfectly. See, the PhotoBank will connect direct to PSP and 'mount' your memory stick (not as fun to watch as it sounds; this just means it'll recognise it and display it as a hard drive). Using the controls on the PhotoBank you can then transfer movies, music, photos or whatever digital media you like to your PSP. As the PhotoBank has a default 40GB capacity (upgradable to a hefty 120GB), this means access to getting on for a massive 80 films on your travels – and a staggering 240 if you opt for the larger memory. It also comes with a rechargeable lithium-ion battery and measures just 78mm x 125mm x 26mm.

If you're looking for alternatives there's also the Apacer CD311 (more info at www.mydigitaldiscount.com). Basically, this does the same job as the PhotoBank – it has a rechargeable battery, USB connectivity and so on – but the cheaper price (around £92) comes at the expense of portability; the CD311 coming in at a chunkier 78mm x 128mm x 24mm. If you can spare the space in your luggage it could be money well saved. Either way, these two spacious bricks of memory mean your travels need never be boring again.

HOW TO...

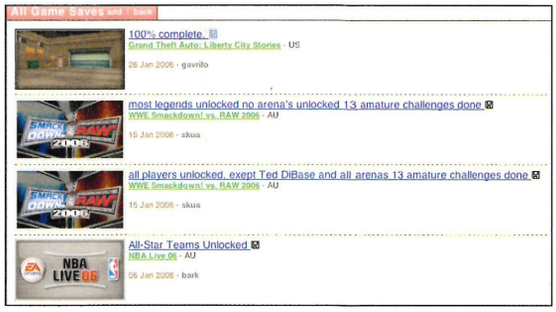
GET GAME SAVES ON YOUR PSP

NEED SOME 'ASSISTANCE' WITH THAT PSP GAME? ACCESS A WORLD OF GRATIS CHEATS

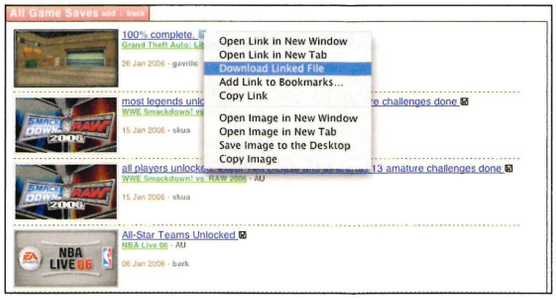
As well as standard key press entry 'codes' being available for may PSP titles (see page 129) the Internet has become a repository for game saves that can be downloaded and installed on your memory stick. This is entirely legal but it's worth bearing in mind two important points before you start interfering with your PSP.

First, installing a new PSP save for a game you already have a file for will *overwrite the existing one*. If you want to keep your own profile (game character, customised car etc) be wary of doing this.

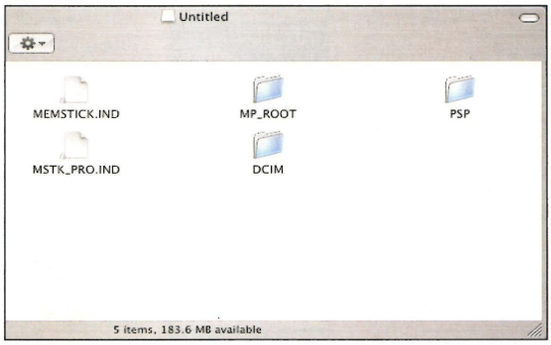
Second, there's always the possibility that a save could contain a malicious virus. While most people who post game saves do it because they like helping fellow PSP owners some haXX0rs just have to spoil the cheat fun. That said, we downloaded loads of saves and had no problems. If in doubt, don't do it*. For everyone else, here's a stupidly uncomplicated guide to getting saves onto your PSP.



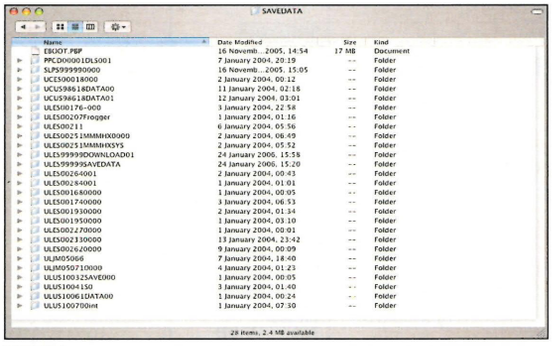
1 Locate the save files you want. Because there are three different types of PSP (US, European and Japanese) you need the save file that matches the version of the game you own. The best way to do this is to google the name of the game you want plus the phrase 'Euro psp save' (unless you have a US or Japanese PSP). Alternatively check our shortlist of PSP save archives on the right.



2 Follow the site's instructions to download the save file to your computer (normally just a right click). The file will be very small and consist of a folder that starts with the code ULES followed by a string of numbers. Inside you'll find a number of files including one called param.sfo (the save) and a small image that forms the thumbnail in the memory card save menu. Don't alter the folder name and leave all the files in the folder.



3 Connect your PSP to the computer using the USB cable. Switch your PSP to USB mode in the settings menu, then on your PC locate the PSP's icon and double click it. You'll see the above.

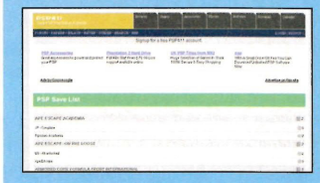


4 Inside, double click the 'PSP' folder which will take you to another set of folders. Double click the one marked 'SAVEDATA'. If you've made any other saves on your memory stick you'll see them listed inside. Locate the save folder you've downloaded on your PC and drag it into here and let it copy across. Eject the PSP from your PC and exit the USB mode by pressing the ◎ button.

5 To check the whole process has worked go to the game icon and select 'game save data'. Scroll through your saves and you should see the save you just downloaded. All you need to do now is put the game in and start it up, all cheats blazing!

CHEATS ON THE WEB

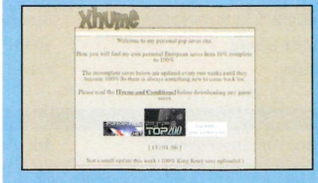
http://www.psp-saves.net
A large selection of US and Euro compatible saves but the site requires a (free) registration process.



http://www.psp411.com/list/save
A heavy US bias but a few Euro saves if you look carefully. Has an easy layout to get around.

http://www.psp-cheats.org
Organised into neat Euro and US save sections but seems to lack a lot of more recent game saves.

http://www.mypsp.com.au/gamesaves.aspx
Excellent Aussie game saves site with loads of 100% saves for top titles like *SmackDown!* and *GTA: Liberty City Stories*. All work on Euro PSPs too!



www.xhume.co.uk
Terrible design and a few pointless saves (2% *Liberty City Stories*? Come on...) but all the saves are Euro.

**OPS2* cannot be held responsible for any damage you might do to your PSP when installing save files on the memory stick. You've been warned!

incoming

Our guide to what's coming your way

MAY	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Ape Escape 3	Platformer	Sony
Black Buccaneer	Action/Adventure	10tacle Studios
Brothers In Arms: Road To Hill 30	Shooter	Ubisoft
Bubble Bobble Evolution	Retro	Rising Star
Field Commander	Strategy	Ubisoft
Football Generation	Sports	Midas
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Action	Rockstar
Guilty Gear Judgment	Fighter	Majesco
Hitman: Blood Money	Action	Eidos
Monster Hunter Freedom	Adventure	Capcom
Panzer Elite Action	Shooter	JoWood
Rogue Trooper	Action	Eidos
Spinout	Racing	Play It
State Of Emergency 2	Action	South Peak
Street Supremacy	Racing	Konami
Talkman	Translator	Sony
The Con	Fighter	Sony
The Da Vinci Code	Adventure	2K Games
Tourist Trophy	Racing	Sony
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	RPG	Ubisoft
Urban Chaos: Riot Response	FPS	Eidos
X-Men: The Official Movie Game	Action	Activision

JUNE	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
25 To Life	Action	Eidos
D.1.R.T.	Action	Deep Silver
Forbidden Siren 2	Horror	Sony
Fruit Machine Mania	Fruit Machines	Liquid
Impossible Mission	Adventure	Play It
Jaws Unleashed	Action	THQ
Metal Gear Ac!d 2	Action	Konami
Pocket Racers	Racing	Konami
Rogue Galaxy	RPG	Sony
Sensible Soccer	Football	Codemasters
Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga	RPG	Ghostlight
Summer Games	Sports	Play It
Superman Returns: The Videogame	Action	Electronic Arts
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	Action	Sony
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Beat-'em-up	Capcom
Winter Games	Sports	Play It
Yakuza	Action	Sega

SUMMER 2006	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Arthur And The Minimoys	Adventure	Atari
Arthur And The Minimoys	Adventure	Atari
Battlestations Midway	Strategy	Eidos
Bounty Hounds	Shooter	Namco
Bully	Adventure	Rockstar
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	Retro	Capcom
Capcom Puzzle World	Puzzles	Capcom
Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Shooter	Deep Silver
Dynasty Warriors 5 Empires	Strategy	KOEI
Final Fantasy VII: Dirge of Cerberus	Action	Square-Enix
Gangs Of London	Action	Sony
Hellboy	Action	Konami
Infected	Shooter	Majesco
Juiced: Eliminator	Racing	THQ
Just Cause	Action	Eidos
Kingdom Hearts II	RPG	Square-Enix
Loco Roco	Action	Sony
Me & My Katamari	Adventure	Electronic Arts
Mortal Kombat: Deception	Beat-'em-up	Midway

RADAR

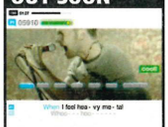
Only the big games bleep really loudly

OUT NOW

OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

Retro racing magic where the sun never stops shining

OUT SOON



SINGSTAR ROCKS!

Judged on the kickass song lineup alone: best *Singstar*... ever

MILES OFF

FINAL FANTASY XII

After *Dragon Quest* we want more top notch RPGing, but it looks like we might have to wait a while for this one

Andy (news ed) wants...

JAWS UNLEASHED

"I can't believe it's been delayed again. Chomping on human limbs will have to wait a little longer."

Pay Out Poker And Casino	Poker	Namco
Phantasy Star Universe	RPG	Sega
Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Action	Buena Vista
Poker Face	Poker	Play Technologies
Radiata Stories	RPG	Square-Enix
Reservoir Dogs	Action	Eidos
Rule Of Rose	Horror	Sony
Scarface: The World Is Yours	Action/Adventure	Vivendi Universal
Sega Rally	Racing	Sega
Spy Hunter: Nowhere To Run	Action/Racing	Midway
StarCraft: Ghost	Action	Blizzard Entertainment
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Platformer	Sega
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Platformer	Sega
Tales Of Legendia	RPG	Namco
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	Fighter	Sony
The Godfather	Action	Electronic Arts
Totally Spies	Adventure	Atari
World Poker Tour	Poker	2KSports
World Tour Golf	Sport	Oxygen
World Tour Golf	Sport	Oxygen
World War II: Air Supremacy	Shooter	Midas
Xyanide Resurrection	Shooter	Playlogic

LATE 2006	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War	Flight Sim	Sony
Beatmania	Music	Konami
Call Of Cthulhu: Destiny's End	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
Cars	Racing	THQ
Cartoon Network Grand Prix	Racing	The Game Factory
Chess Battle	Chess	Konami
Gangsters Ride	Action	GMX
James Pond Codename Robocod	Platformer	Play It
Killzone: Liberation	Shooter	Sony
Legend Of The Dragon	Action/Adventure	The Game Factory
Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	Platformer	Activision
Lego Star Wars II: The Original Trilogy	Platformer	Activision
Marvel Legends	RPG	Activision
Medal Of Honor: Airborne	Action	Electronic Arts
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	Beat-'em-up	Midway
Okami	Adventure	Capcom
Over The Hedge	Action/Adventure	Activision
Pilot Academy	Flight Sim	Rising Star
Power Stone Collection	Fighter	Capcom
SOS: The Final Escape 2	Action/Adventure	TBC
Splinter Cell Double Agent	Stealth	Ubisoft
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Strategy	Bethesda
Steel Horizons	Strategy	Konami
Street Fighter Alpha Anthology	Retro	Capcom
Suikoden V	RPG	Konami
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Skateboarding	Activision
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	Retro	Capcom

TBC	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER
Arc The Lad: End Of Darkness	RPG	Namco
Astonishia Story	RPG	Ubisoft
Barnyard	Adventure	THQ
Battlezone	Retro	Atari
Byte Hell 2000	Party	Sony
Casino Royale	Action	Electronic Arts
Code Age Commanders	RPG	Square-Enix
Curious George	Platformer	Namco
Final Fantasy XII	RPG	Square-Enix
Grandia III	RPG	Square-Enix
Interview With A Made Man	Action	TBC
Iron Man	Action	Activision
Justice League Of America	RPG	TBC
Open Season	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
Samurai Champloo: Sidetracked	Fighter	Namco
Shining Force Neo	RPG	Sega
Shining Tears	RPG	Sega
Surf's Up	Action/Adventure	Ubisoft
Wild Arms 4	RPG	XSEED

KEY

PS2 GAMES

PSP GAMES

George (disc ed) wants...

KILLZONE: LIBERATION

"This has every chance of becoming the defining PSP game. And not just because I like men in gas masks."

Ben (games ed) wants...

SAMURAI CHAMPLOO: SIDETRACKED

"A brilliant bundle of cult anime, Japanese swordplay, and hip-hop. Bring it to me now. Um, please?"

NO SUBSCRIPTIONS : NO CLUBS : BUY 1 GET 1

DBMob™

TUNES

CHART

	TRUE	POLY
50 CENT - HUSTLER'S AMBITION	158806	151539
MECK FT LEO SAYER - THUNDER IN MY HEART AGAIN	158928	151547
SOURCE FT CANDI STATON - YOU GOT THE LOVE	158929	151548
KUBB - GROW	158931	151550
THE ARTIC MONKEYS - WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN	158576	151526
THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G - NASTY GIRL	158577	151527
HI TRACK - SAY SAY SAY	158582	151528
CHRIS BROWN - RUN IT	158578	151529
ORDINARY BOYS - BOYS WILL BE BOYS	158749	151533
BEYONCE - CHECK ON IT	158574	151523

TALKING TONES

	TRUE
BASIL FAWLTY	158396
BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD	158397
BILL AND TED	158398
CHAVVY	158402
DAFFYD - LITTLE BRITAIN	158406
DASTARDLY AND MUTLEY	158407
MAD GERMAN	158431
MEL B - BO SELECTA	158434
OBI - WAN KENOBI	158446
OZZY	158448

REAL SOUNDS

	REAL
DR EVIL - THROW ME A BONE	158024
THE GREATEST FEMALE ORGASM EVER!!	158031
BO SELECTA MICHAEL JACKSON - SHAAMONE	158047
PULP FICTION - THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN	158051
DONALD DUCK GETTING A BJ (HILARIOUS)	158056
STAR WARS - JABBA'S LAUGH	158066
BUZZ LIGHTYEAR - TO INFINITY & BEYOND	158067
MONKEY GOING NUTS	158080
CAR WHEELSPINS	158096
DUKES OF HAZZARD - GENERAL LEE	158135
HOMER SIMPSON - DOH DOH DOH	158032
FULL METAL JACKET - DRILL SARGEANT "DO YOU SUCK...?"	158138
BOMB FLYING THEN EXPLODING	158091
ITALIAN JOB - BLOW THE BLOODY DOORS OFF	158040
AUSTIN POWERS - ALOTA FAGINA	158044

WALLPAPERS

154487

154301

159389

154324

154184

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159203

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159459

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TXT THE 6 DIGIT ITEM CODE TO

80155

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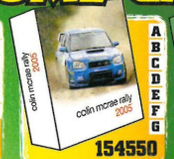

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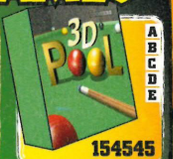

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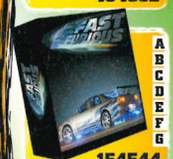

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OPS2 Perfect 10s

Only 12 games have ever received the maximum score – here's what they were and why they got the '10' treatment in the words of the original reviewers...

Resident Evil 4

PERFECT 10 IN OPS2#65

"*Resident Evil 4* is a masterfully designed, flawlessly paced slab of horror gaming"

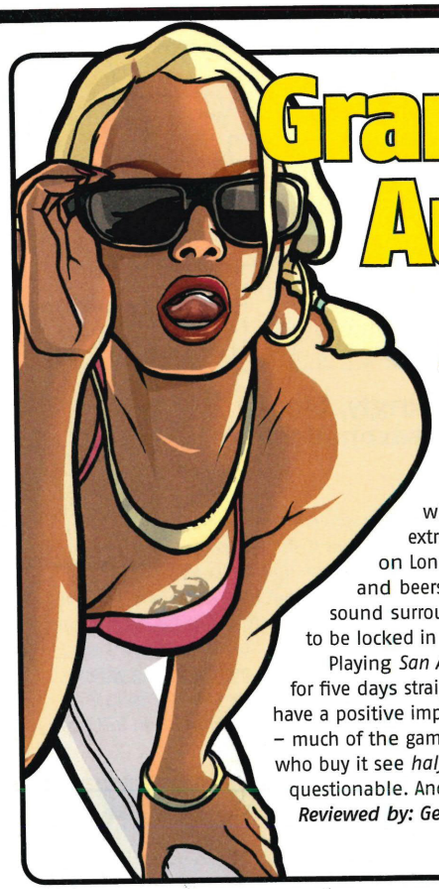
"*Resi 4* re-wrote Capcom's survival horror rule book and the genre can never be the same again. It's perfectly paced and is awash with clever cinematic references and in-jokes. The enemies are incredible, from lumbering yokels to creepy droning monks. There's such a heavy atmosphere of foreboding, such a rich sense of place – you become totally immersed in its rotting muddy world. At night I went to bed thinking about it and woke up dying to play it. I can't remember the last time I felt that about a game. 10/10? I was right then, and I still am." ***Reviewed by Keith Stuart***

Black

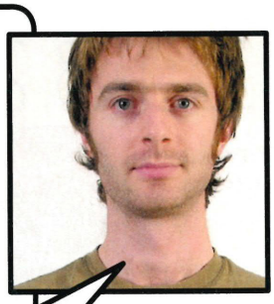
"How does *Black* fit into the scheme of first-person shooters? Top of the pile. By a mile"

"Without wanting to say, "I told you so!" – I told you so! From the first technical demo of *Black* we were shown over two years ago, it was always a title I wanted to get involved with, and we hyped it *relentlessly* in the mag. Given that I'd only ever seen visuals from three levels it was a genuinely new experience when it arrived – a rare situation when it comes to reviewing games. There hasn't been another PS2 shooter that's inspired the same level of joyous anarchy in me, particularly when the sound was pumped up and everything kicks off. That was the key to *Black*'s 10/10 – it gave me a tangible physical buzz every time I played it." ***Reviewed by George Walter***

PERFECT 10 IN OPS2#69



Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas



"Finally PS2 has its indisputable masterwork"

"It was difficult *not* to become intoxicated with *San Andreas*. The review scenario was extraordinary – a lad's pad dream of a room on London's Kings Road filled with sweets, crisps and beers, a huge widescreen TV, a topdollar sound surround system and a DVD so sensitive it had to be locked in a safe every night.

Playing *San Andreas* in such a closed environment, 24/7 for five days straight meant the full experience couldn't fail to have a positive impact. Yes, I still think I'm right about the 10/10 – much of the game blew me away – but whether most people who buy it see *half* of what makes this game so good, is questionable. And no, I'm not talking about Hot Coffee."

Reviewed by: George Walter

PERFECT **10** IN *OPS2#54*

Soul Calibur II

"Capable of converting non-believers like Jesus on a good hair day"

Of all the games we've given a '10'-shaped kiss, *Soul Calibur II* has to be the least commercial. But in a quiet month it made the cover, and as a massive fan of the Dreamcast original I pushed to do the review. Gorgeous visuals and character design aside, the hard thing was nailing why it feels so superb without banging on about 'fluid gameplay' like a ponce. *Calibur*'s genius is that it's deep without being alienating, instantly enjoyable and encourages lightning fast to-and-fro combat. It's the classic example of a 'best of breed' 10/10, because it shames everything else in its genre. So much so that even the office's non-fighting fans found themselves hooked. To this day it baffles me that *Tekken* sells better.

Reviewed by Tim Clark

PERFECT **10** IN *OPS2#37*

IMPERFECT 10

...and the not so special ones

Hologram Time Traveller (0/10)
"This game is pathetic... the end"
The only game in *OPS2*'s 71-issue history to earn the coveted 0/10 wasn't even a real PS2 game. It could also be played on a DVD player with the remote control!

Dragon's Lair 2: Time Warp (1/10)
"This will appeal to no one at all"
Again, not actually a PS2 game but a DVD-based, animated adventure that required little more than occasional button presses, which rather crucially, didn't appear on the PS2 D-pad.

Army Men: Green Rogue (1/10)
"Plumbing new depths of ineptitude"
Thankfully the Army Men have since disappeared from our lives, but in the early days of PlayStation 2 these toy soldiers were a byword for rubbish. *Green Rogue* was the series' ultimate lowpoint.

Jet Ion GP (1/10)
"Makes a mockery of the advances in PS2 gaming"
When this came in for review people just stood slackjawed and pointed in amazement. Then laughed hard and long in disbelief. An astonishingly crude *WipEout* rip-off that took the piss out of PS2.

Sven Goran Eriksson's World Challenge (1/10)
"Just the worst football game, ever"
This game was allegedly put together by a three-man team, in a Portakabin somewhere grim up North, on a BBC Micro. The result was *Kick Off*, a 14-year-old game given a coat of magnolia and Sven's head on the box.

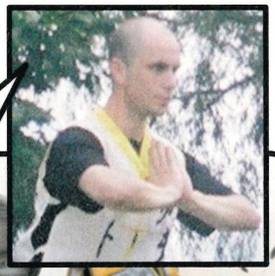
The rest of the 1/10s: *Space Ace, Charlie's Angels, Road Race 3, Fightbox, Ex Zeus, Formula Challenge, GT Racers, Master Chess, Challenge Volleyball, Golden Age Of Racing, Smarties Meltdown*

TimeSplitters 2

"An essential purchase for anyone in possession of a PlayStation 2 and a central nervous system"

This was my first lead review, so dropping the 'dix' (French for ten... don't ask) raised eyebrows. Not for long, though. *'Splitters 2* was one of those games which, as a team, we just fell in love with. Obviously, it's *all* about the quicksilver multiplayer – but the whole package is so comprehensive. It's typical of the 'chocolate box' 10/10, with so much to see and do – from the drum-tight story mode to the deranged challenges and formative map maker mode. Proof of its brilliance: Free Radical struggled to better it with *Future Perfect*, and we still play *'Splitters 2* daily, over two years after its release. ***Reviewed by Tim Clark***

PERFECT 10 IN OPS2#25



Burnout 3 Takedown, Burnout Revenge

"It's not perfect but genius never is; what it is, is exceptional"

"As a man who likes mellow après pub-gaming, I really shouldn't like *Burnout* – it's virtually impossible to play drunk. But you can't dislike it – it's wham-bam Hollywood gaming, stupider and louder than every Jerry Bruckheimer film put together, and even after six hours of play there are *still* moments where you can't believe that Criterion has managed to pull it off on the same machine that runs *Ford Racing*. *Burnout* makes all other driving games look rubbish – and if that doesn't deserve back-to-back tens, what does? ***Reviewed by Joel Snape***

PERFECT 10 IN OPS2#51/64

Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty

PERFECT 10 IN OPS2#17

"An uncompromisingly, bloody great game and reason alone to own a PS2"

"In preparation for writing this I popped *Metal Gear Solid 2* on again. It's been a while but it still blows me away. Here is a four-year-old sneak-'em-up that looks and plays better than 90% of the games that have come and gone in the intervening years. In any genre. From breathtaking graphical details like individual ice cubes melting on a bar top, to Hideo Kojima's bold execution of the theory that action is infinitely more gripping when it unfolds as part of an epic story, *MGS2* exhibits the characteristics of a true classic: technically and artistically it has scarcely aged. In fact, can we give it 11/10 now?" ***Reviewed by Paul Fitzpatrick***

1,219 REVIEWS AND COUNTING

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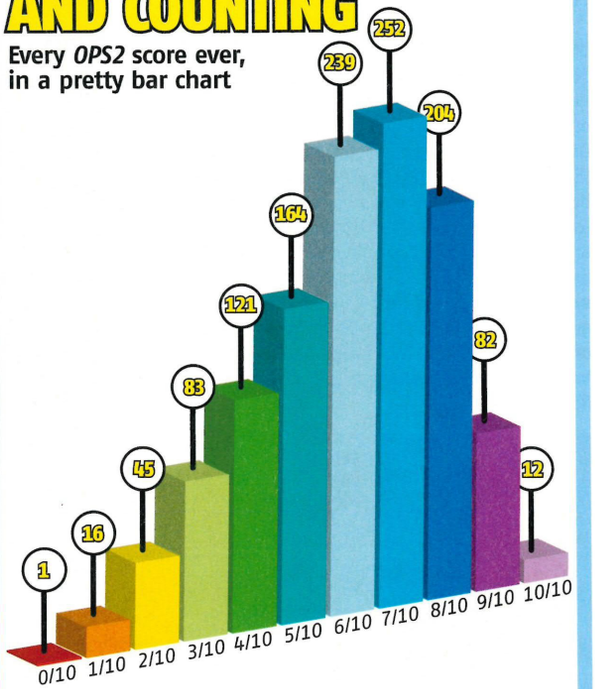
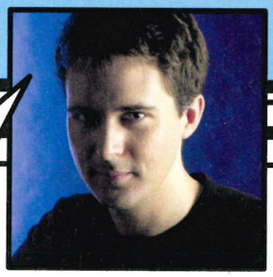




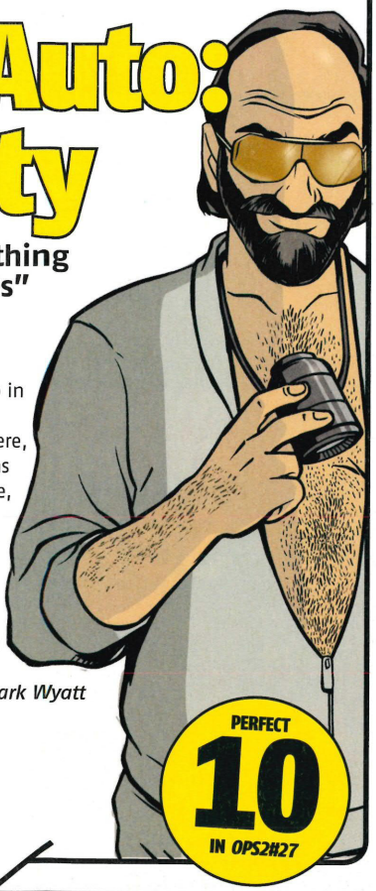
PES 3, PES 4, PES 5

PERFECT 10 IN OPS2 #39/52/64

"No other game has captured football so beautifully"

"Having been a hardcore supporter of Konami's football games since *ISS* on PSone it can be difficult to separate critical judgement from giddy excitement when reviewing a new *PES* title. But with *Pro Evo 3* there was no need to worry about balance – it was such a quantum leap in quality that it rendered all the opposition obsolete overnight. Totally compelling, incredibly realistic, *PES 3 felt* like football and was an obvious perfect 10/10 from the first five minutes of my first match. *Pro Evos 4* and *5* also brought significant improvements, and when you're talking about continually advancing the greatest football series ever then that 10/10 rating is pretty much a given." ***Reviewed by Lee Hart***

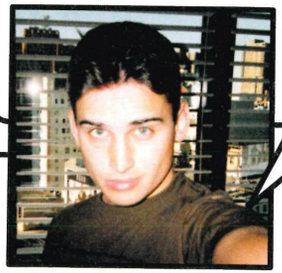
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City



PERFECT 10 IN OPS2#27

"Undeniably the best thing to come out of the '80s"

"*Vice City* set a new benchmark in imagination, vision and gameplay. Sure, things have moved on and up in the harshness and hugeness stakes since then, but for overall atmosphere, *Vice City* remains hard to beat. It was a beautiful and addictive experience, in a way that only Kate Moss and I can truly understand. I should have probably told the game's PR rep that she could stop rubbing my inside leg and whispering '10' into my ear, but I didn't. I still had a big game to get through and it made me feel quite nice." ***Reviewed by Mark Wyatt***



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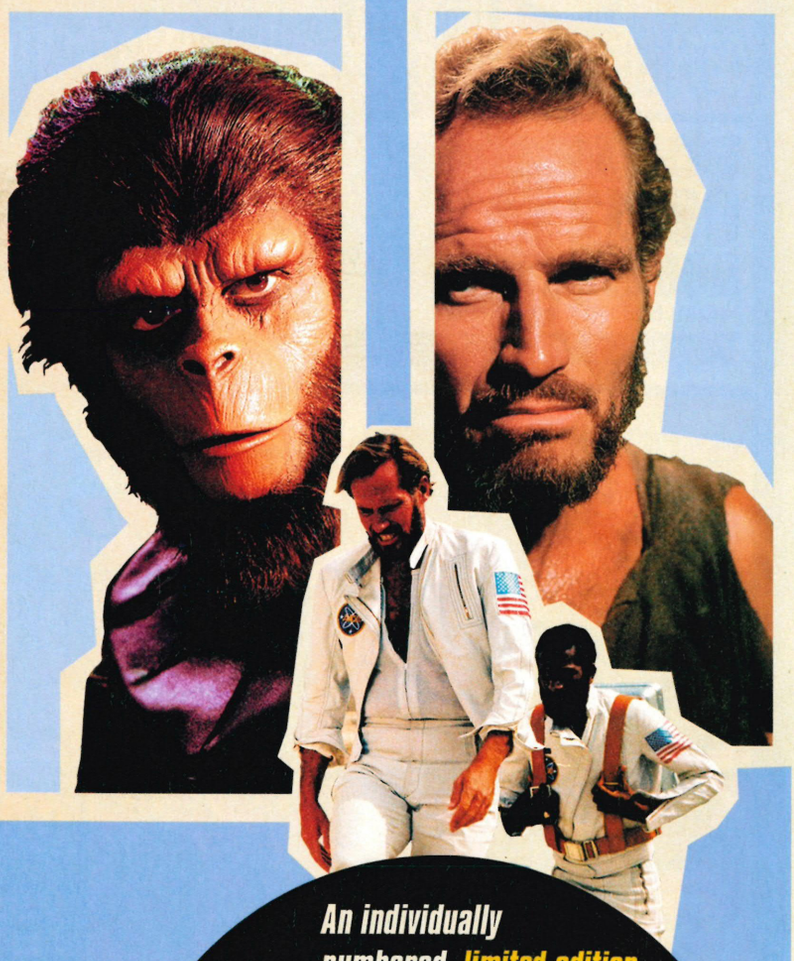

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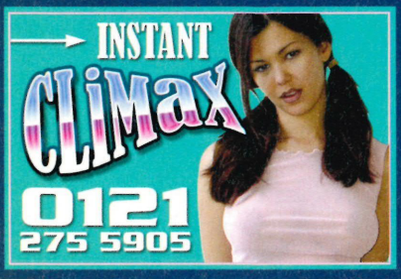

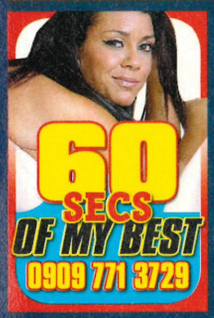

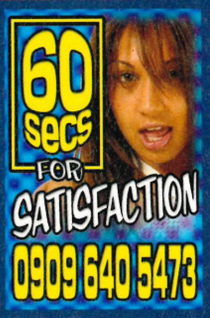

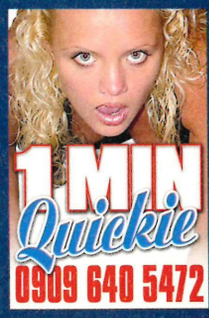

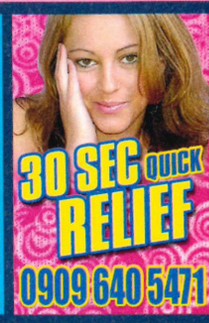

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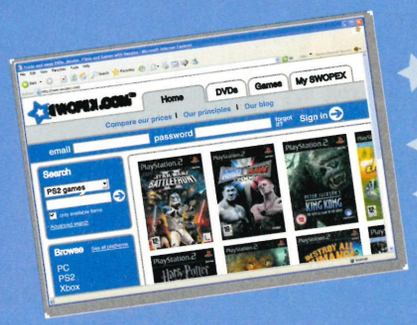

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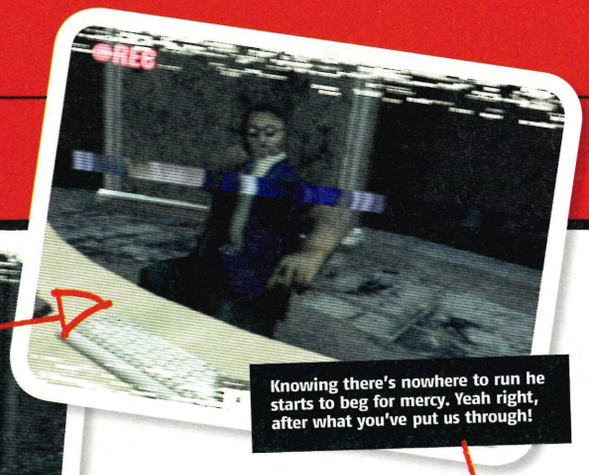
THIS MONTH: MANHUNT

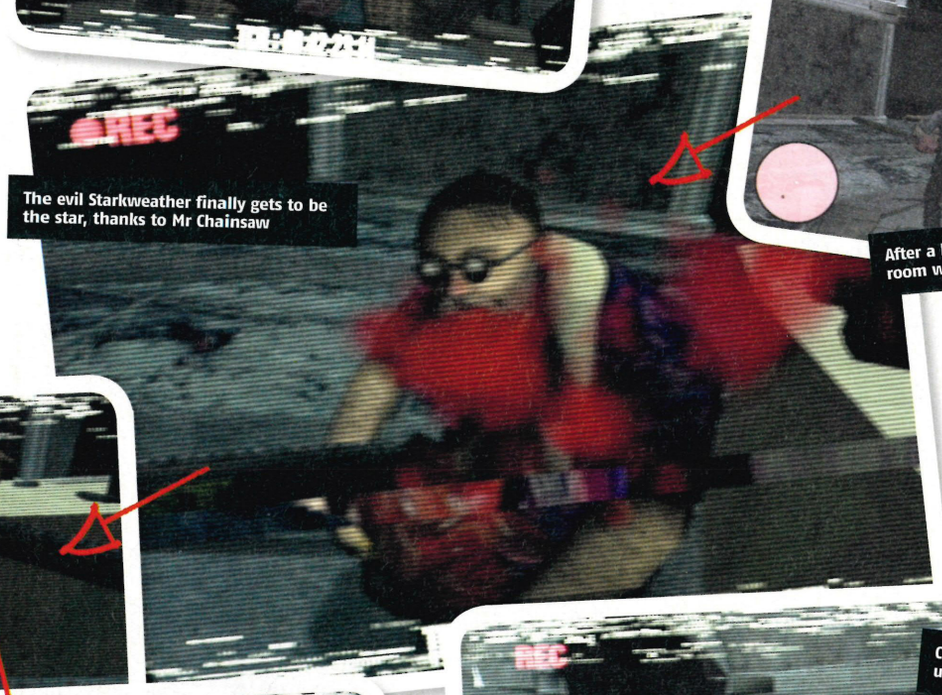
The perfectly paced build up to *Manhunt*'s brutal climax sees James Earl Cash breaking free of his imprisonment at the hands of deranged snuff film auteur Lionel Starkweather and turning the tables on him. The first two-thirds of Rockstar's controversial masterwork are spent hiding in the shadows, outwitting brutal gangs of costumed madmen, but in the final act the gameplay shifts radically as Cash closes in on his manipulative tormentor.

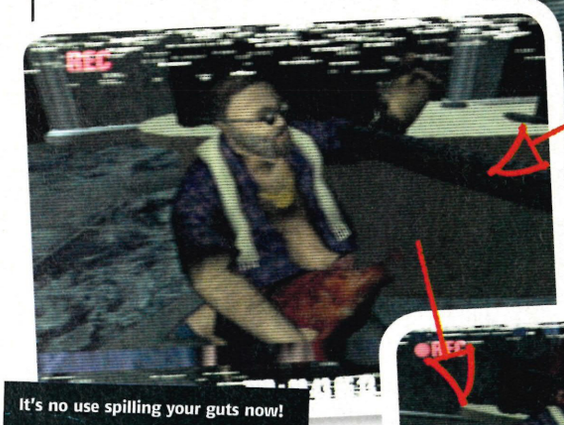
Having shot and butchered his way to the grounds of Starkweather's opulent mansion, Cash discovers its aristocratic facade hides a terrifying secret. Making his way to the attic he encounters Piggsy, the final boss character; a beast of a man with a severed pig's head mask and a chainsaw. It's a bleak, unforgettable experience as bit by bit you stab Piggsy to death with glass shards. After turning him into pork scratchings and dealing with a final onslaught of armed guards you face off with Starkweather. Dressed like the archetypal porn director. He's fat, incapable, pathetic, alone. You, on the other hand, are armed with a chainsaw...

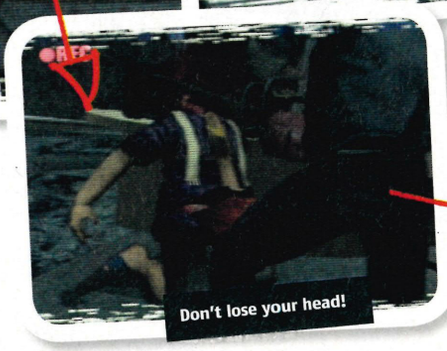
Cash enters Starkweather's hideout ready for a bloody showdown

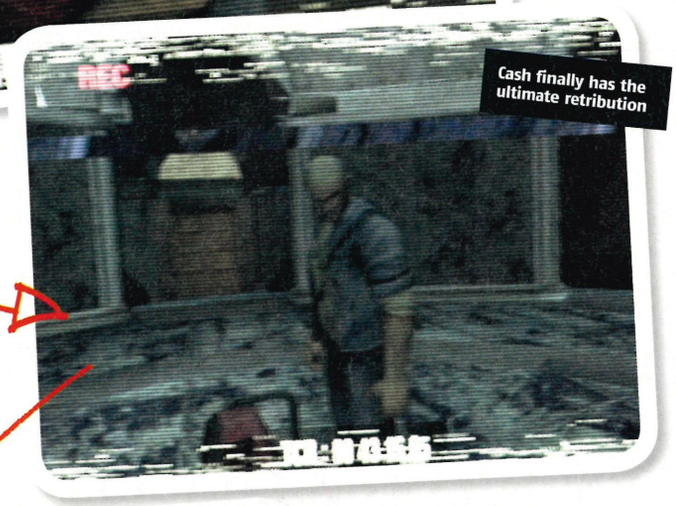

Knowing there's nowhere to run he starts to beg for mercy. Yeah right, after what you've put us through!

After a brief chase around the room we corner our victim and...


The evil Starkweather finally gets to be the star, thanks to Mr Chainsaw


It's no use spilling your guts now!


Don't lose your head!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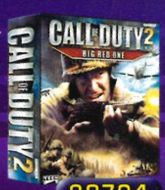

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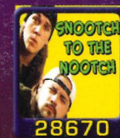

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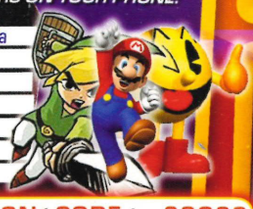

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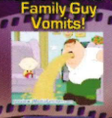

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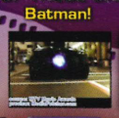

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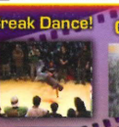

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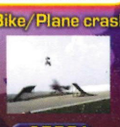

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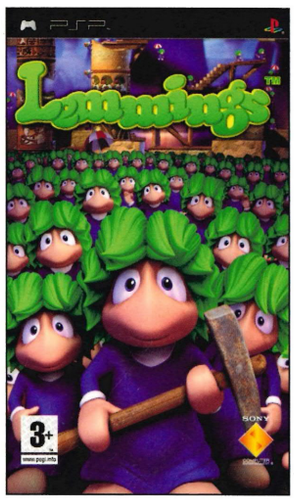

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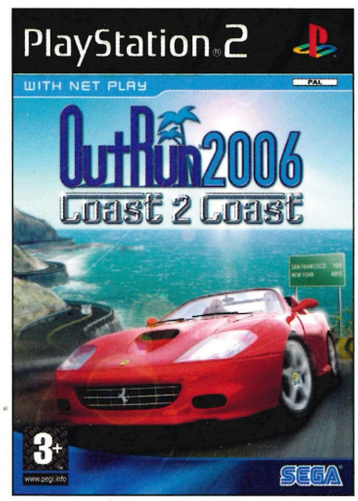

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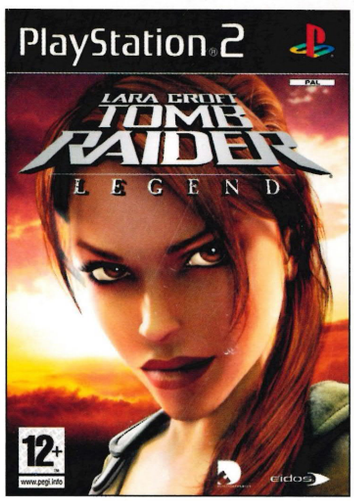

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