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Sir Maximilian

Sir Ferdinand I

Sir Pedro II

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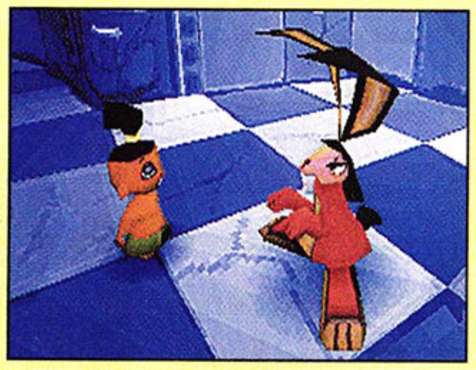
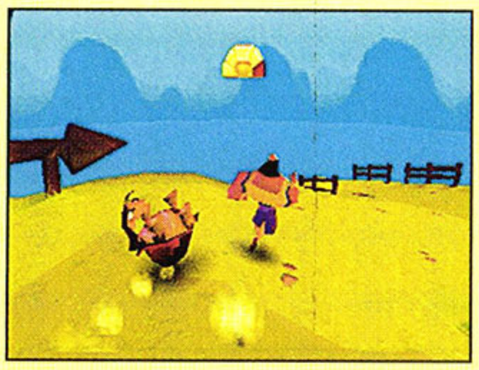
Sir Maximilian I

Sir Kuzco (duh...it's me.)

Sir Rudolf II





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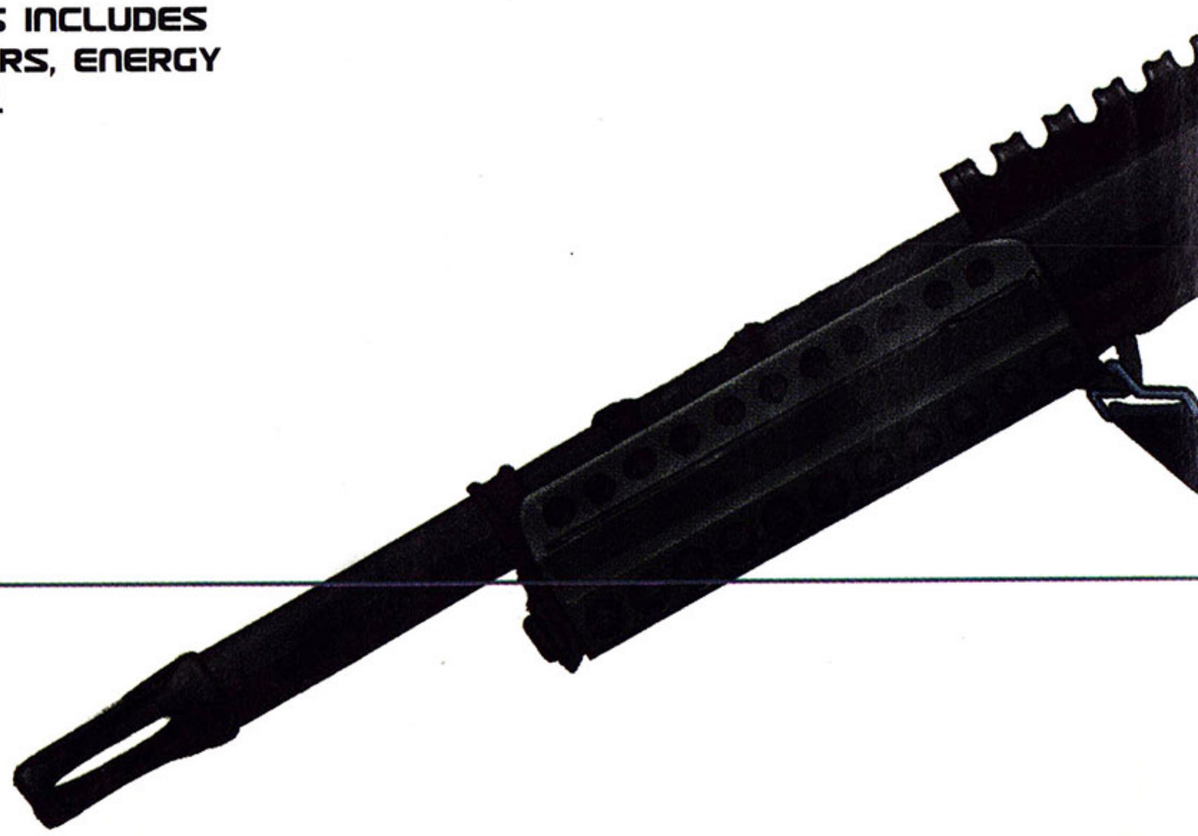

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Animated Violence

Mac

PC CD ROM

DARK HORSE COMICS

BUNGIE

GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS

R

GAME INFORMER®

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TimeSplitters and Unreal Tournament have already given PS2 fraggers two top notch first-person shooters to chew on. Now, upstart development house Volition shows off what might be the new standard in shooters with the amazing Red Faction. Behold the future.

FEATURE

36 PLASTIC FANTASTIC: VIDEO GAMES TAKE OVER THE TOY MARKET

Over the last five years, video game toys have grown from a small niche market to one of the largest and most lucrative sectors of the toy business. This month, Game Informer goes on location to Palisades, who will be bringing us new Final Fantasy and Resident Evil toys, to learn how they turn digital visions into plastic gold.

FEATURE

46 GET THE GOODS: GI'S GUIDE TO GETTING WHAT YOU WANT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Santa Claus better run and hide, because Holiday Sam has returned to snatch back his crown as the king of December. Along the way, he reveals the time-honored secrets you'll need to con your parents into spending dollars this year. Learn from the master; just don't smell like him.

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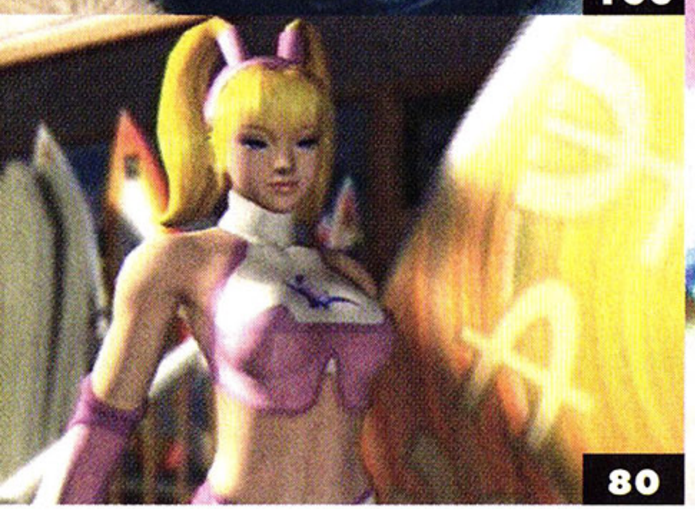

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20 NEWS
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50 PREVIEWS
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On a typical day the US Customs service seizes:

- arms and ammunition worth over $24,000
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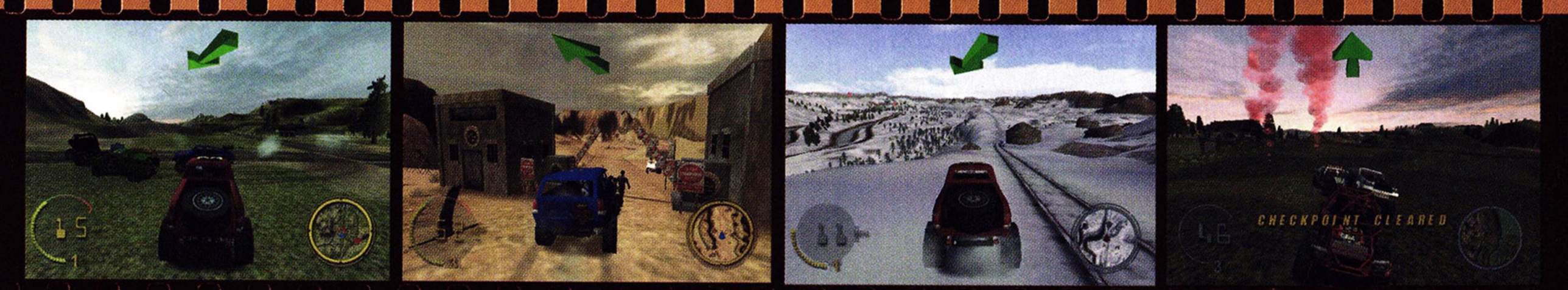

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Volume X • Number 12 • Issue 92

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SUNRISE PUBLICATIONS, INC

President John Woodson

Publisher Cathy Preston

Manufactured and printed in the United States of America

The Editor welcomes company product information for all video games. Such materials should be addressed to: Editor, Game Informer® Magazine, 10120 W. 76th Street, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned or acknowledged.

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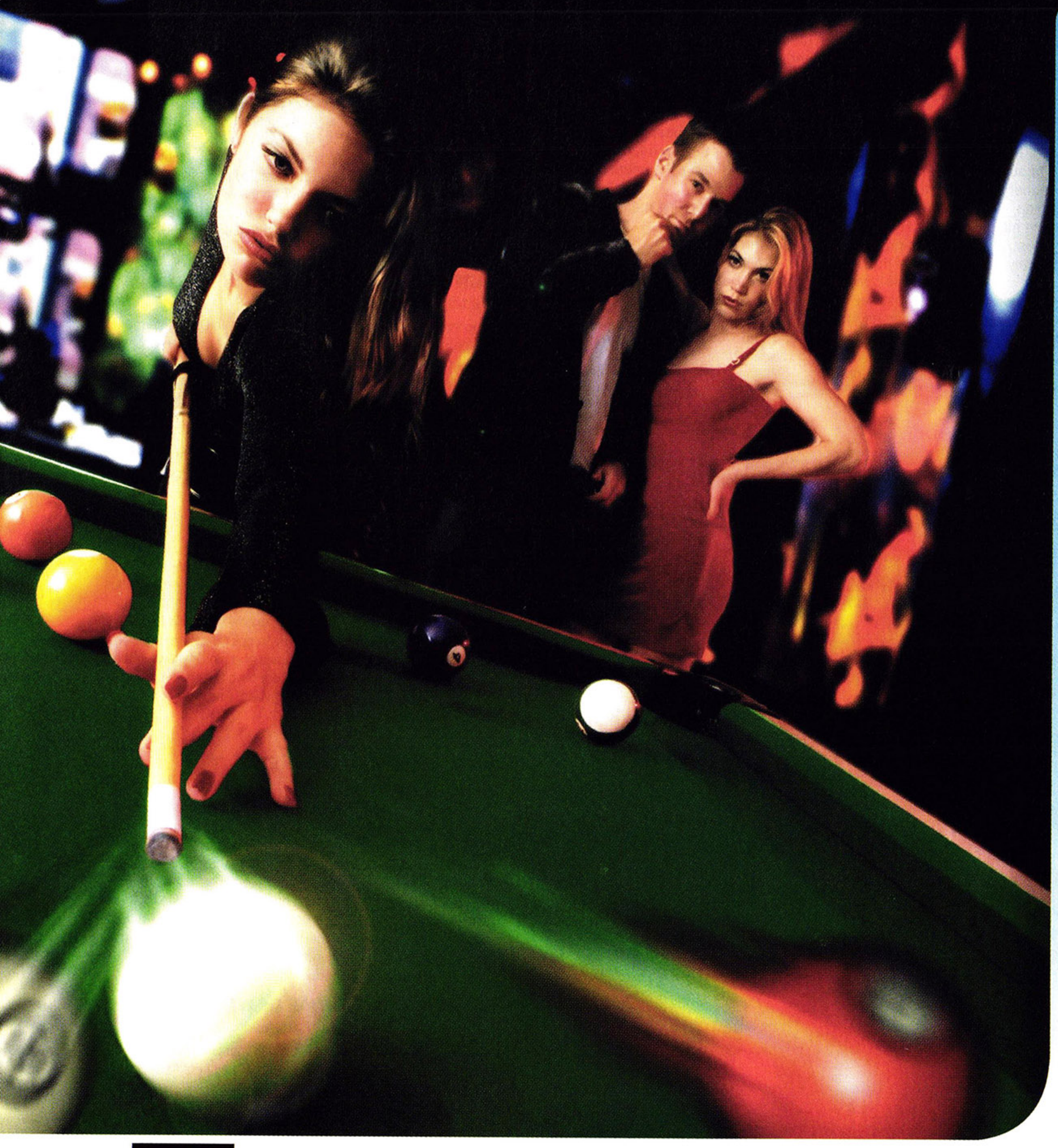
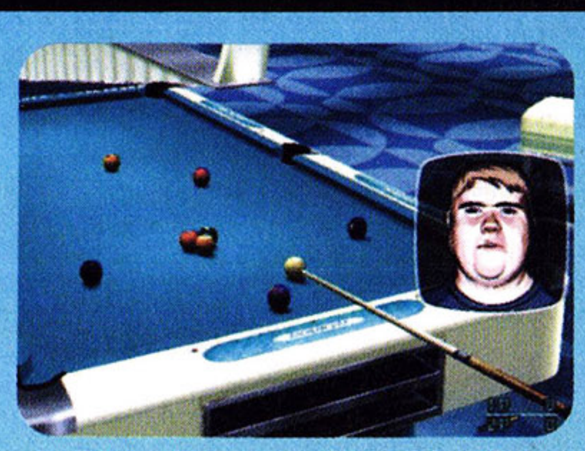
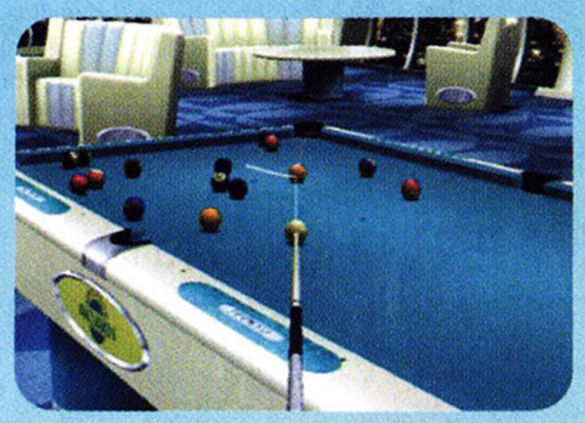
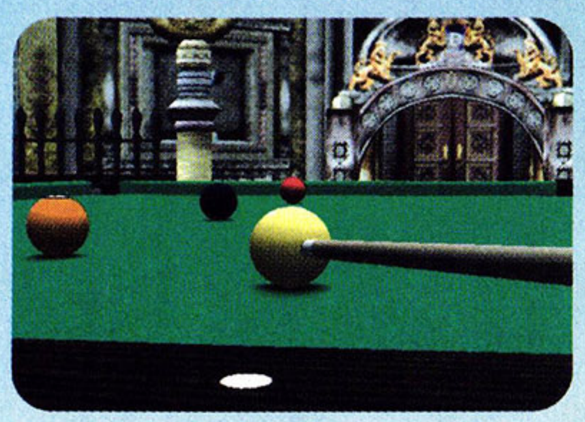




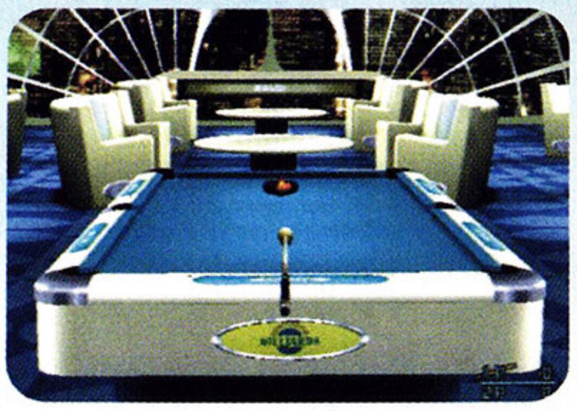
Play alone or with a friend



Master the techniques used by the pros!



The most beautiful pool halls in the world!



9 modes of play, plus 3 hidden pool games!

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EDITORS' FORUM

RETURN OF THE MADMAN

Well, the readers have spoken and overall I think the redesign was a success. Some people are pretty pissed about the loss of the three reviewers, but I am hoping they can get over it (well, they are gonna have to, because we aren't changing it back). About the only other big concern I had, was that people were somewhat mixed on the cover, thinking it looked too much like a PC mag, or that it was too white, but I can assure you the look will change depending on what art we have available to us at the time.

On other fronts, it seems Sony really screwed the pooch on the launch of PS2. Sure, every man and his dog wants one and will do anything and everything to get one, but I think this would have happened either way (even if Sony had been able to get all 1 million units out on launch day). But hey, I'm sure you'll be able to get your hands on one sometime in January. Sony is turning into the new Nintendo, willing to screw you over and over with delays and the like, leaving you sitting high and dry just having to take it if you want to play its games. Nintendo never learned, but maybe Sony will...unfortunately, I don't think it will be anytime soon.

I certainly would love to be a fly on the wall in the offices of Microsoft and Nintendo right about now, as you would have to imagine they are doing some serious brainstorming trying to figure out how to take down the Sony behemoth, or least assure a strong hold on second place.

Speaking of second place, what is up with our good old friend Dreamcast? I know you don't want to hear this, but the sad part about the ushering in of PS2 is that the Dreamcast may be its first causality. Which is really unfortunate, as I am really starting to love the DC – Sega is just so feisty, and it may be one of the best and innovative game developers out there.

Now I know you are saying to yourself that old Andy here is just down on the Dreamcast, but I challenge you to fight the facts. Dreamcast sales in Japan are horrible, and even here in the States you will be hard-pressed to find a third-party developer with a game planned for the DC in the fall of 2001. While no one will fess up to this dirty little industry secret (as they know Sega will be quick to retaliate), I can't get anyone to challenge it. So Sega boys and girls out there, if you want Sega to make it through the tough year ahead, you better get out there and buy, buy, buy as much Sega product as you can. Sega is gonna need some support from consumers to make it past the Xbox and Gamecube launch.

Either way, I should get lots of interesting material for Letters From the Editor over the next year from this whole battle, and I will even make a prediction that if Sega can't make it through the upcoming hardware wars, we may just see our friends at Sega making games for another system. Hmmm, I wonder which one that would be? Guess we'll have to talk about that another month.

Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Balloons l to r: Andy, Matt, Reiner, Kristian, Erik. Broadcasters: Jay & Paul.

PAUL, THE GAME PROFESSOR
paul@gameinformer.com

"I got an interesting email from Griffith, Indinana regarding my reviews of Madden and NFL 2K1. The author was quite disgusted at how I scored Madden higher than 2K1 and, because he was a former Indiana state champion, he knew his football. However, he forgot one thing: He didn't play Madden. He rambled on and on, but I really only read the first couple sentences. Hey, I like nothing better than to debate the pro and cons of games, but I think that you should have the intelligence to play both of them before calling my reviews a 'pile of crap.'"

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER
reiner@gameinformer.com

Rather than tap into my raging persona to make fun of my coworkers (Paul is a mental poophead!), I want to add closure to the rumor that the GI staff is getting canned. We were on the chopping block, but thankfully, the powers that be never made it to the GI office to hand out the pink slips. It turns out that their flight to Minneapolis was actually rerouted to Iraq in a plane with 'Saddam can suck it!' spray painted on the wings. So, if our new bosses ever return, which I highly doubt, we may face extinction. Until then, the same staff, and our first female writer, Kristian, will continue to churn out the goods."

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER
matt@gameinformer.com

"The stress of this so-called 'New and Improved Game Informer' has crushed my feeble mind. I can barely string together a coherent sentence anymore. The best I can do is spew inane non-sequiters and profanity. Hey, maybe this might qualify me for being the lead singer of Limp Bizkit! Here's my audition- 'Yo, getcha groove on! I hate my parents, I hate @#$ carrots - getcha groove on- MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY, don't ever @#$ with me, Your elbow's writing checks that ya pancreas can't cash! Who gets the blame? I'm @#$ lame! DON'T @#$ing @#$ wit' me skidmark! Yo, it's kinda dark – getcha GROOVE on! Don't pee-pee on my windowpane!"

ERIK, THE PC JEDI
erik@gameinformer.com

"Argh! All I can think about is Red Alert 2. I don't have time for this silly blurb! For the first time since Doom, I've developed a serious urge to get out there and kick total strangers' butts. Nothing is quite so entertaining as flattening an enemy base with Kirovs and then dropping a nuke on their fleeing troops for a humiliating coup de grace. There's nothin' like the smell of exploding cows in the morning. A lot of you ingrates out there have been sending me challenges to take you on in online games. Fine. Just don't cry when the PC Jediski crushes you."

JAY, THE GONZO GAMER
jay@gameinformer.com

"I've been spending a lot of time out in Las Vegas lately working on a top secret project for Game Informer. The fruits of my labor will be appear in next month's issue, but I'd like to tell you all about a weird thing that keeps happening to me out there. When I go out on the town in Vegas, the ladies are all over me. That's not the strange thing, though. That's just another day in the life for yours truly. What I can't figure out is why all the girls I meet live in big houses on the outskirts of town. And why do I wake up missing around $150, with the girl nowhere to be found? It's very perplexing. Has this ever happened to any of you?"

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG
kristian@gameinformer.com

"Good issue to you, my droogs and only friends. I, Kristian, your humble narrator, have been busy with all manner of crazy and scandalous things these past weeks. I'm slightly ill at ease as it seems Reiner has finally arrived at a mental break. He has been chasing me around the office in his favorite pink tutu, ranting and raving that I must be a girl because my name begins with a K. At first, I was able to fend him off with a bit of the old ultra-violence, but now it seems his tactics have shifted, for I woke up last night to him grinning at me ghoulishly through my bedroom window. Pray for my safety, brothers and sisters, that I may live to write again!"

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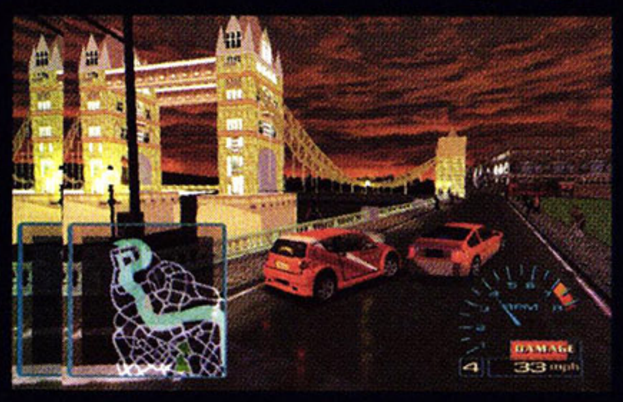

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DEAR GI

THE NEW GAME INFORMER

So there I am going through my mail as usual, right? And I come across a magazine that had familiar letters at the top of it, but it didn't look right. Then I realized what it was. And THEN I realized I needed to put some new pants on. I must say – I had already thought of Game Informer as the #1 video game mag out there, but now there is no question in my mind. You usually can't improve on perfection, but miracles do happen. I am pleased that nothing was dropped from the previous version of the mag and many things were added. Everything has been improved upon. And I actually found myself laughing...numerous times, really. I guarantee that all your hard work will pay off...in dividends. You guys rule. Everyone else just sucks.

Nate "Fathead" Lechner
Park Ridge, IL

Thanks, Nate. We've received a tremendous amount of positive feedback on our new look from our readers. We will continue to work to make Game Informer the biggest, baddest video game magazine on the block, and hope that all our readers will be along for the ride. As for your pants, we recommend soaking them in club soda and then washing them in cold water to remove any poopy stains. Erik swears by this technique, and he should know.

A STINKY SITUATION

Recently, I've been hearing rumors about Sega's Seaman, more specifically the microphone that comes with the game. I've heard reports from numerous people and different websites that people have been renting Seaman with the microphone and before returning the game have been wiping their private parts with the tip of the microphone, and in some cases sticking it into places it definitely wasn't intended for. Now whether or not this is true still remains to be seen, but it might be a good idea to warn your readers about renting Seaman. Just trying to keep America from talking into fecal matter.

Steve "I warned ya" Kotecki
Anytown, NY

Thank you, Steve, for alerting us to this potentially dangerous situation. We urge our readers, at least those of you who are concerned with personal hygiene, to exercise caution when playing a rented copy of Seaman. We suggest dousing the microphone with an anti-bacterial spray, and wearing a dental dam and latex gloves while playing. Remember, when it comes to video games, your safety...hey...[sniff, sniff]...this letter smells kind of funny...[sniff, sniff]...wait a second...[sniff]....OH MY GOD....you !@#$!@#$!@! ....real funny, Steve!....WE'LL GET YOU FOR THIS!...yuck!! If you'll excuse us, we have to go wash our hands.

JET GRIND RADIO STATIC

When I first heard about Jet Grind Radio, I thought: "Finally, they're starting to make aggro inline games!" However, only a few hours later, my mom pointed out to me an interesting article in a local newspaper. The article stated that the aldermen of my city are moving to try to ban this game here in Milwaukee!

They said the game "glorifies graffiti" and "teaches kids to hate the cops," making "taggers look like the good guys." My first reaction was, "What a bunch of bull$#!Ü!!" We finally get a decent inline game, and now some damn politicians want to ban it! I mean, they've released way worse games in the past without much of a fuss. I mean, c'mon! The game even contains a disclaimer about vandalism! Luckily, Milwaukee is the only city so far to try to ban this game. Nevertheless, I will not let this take place, and I know there are probably lots more gamers who will stand behind me. Gamers of Milwaukee and the world unite! We can make just as much noise about this as some skater-hater politicians can! Video game graffiti is not a crime!! We have a right to play good games!!!

A furious Milwaukee gamer,
David Nelson
Milwaukee, WI

We sympathize, David. It seems like 2000 is the year that politicians everywhere are attempting to use video games and the entertainment industry as the scapegoat for any number of societal problems. However, the main problem you have is that you live in Wisconsin. Trust us – get out of Milwaukee as soon as you can, and never look back. Have you seen *American Movie*? Don't you see all those unemployed alcoholic mongoloids you live amongst? Move to Rhode Island, move to Iran – just move! You'll thank us later in life.

FEAR OR LAZINESS?

What's up with recent shooter games like Resident Evil: Survivor and Silent Scope not being compatible with the light gun? Are game companies backing away from the realistic touch that makes those kinds of games so fun because of government pressure, or are they just being lazy?

John Dettinger
York, PA

Fear, mostly. We can't speak for all companies, but in the cases of RE: Survivor and Silent Scope, we know that Capcom and Konami, respectively, were motivated by concerns about video game violence. In Capcom's case, it even went so far as to take the word "gun" out of the title (the game was Biohazard Gun Survivor in Japan). That said, we think the game sucks with or without a gun controller. As for Silent Scope, the developers actually managed to do a good job of overcoming the loss of a gun controller, so you might want to check it out anyway.

WEASEL FAN CRIES FOUL

Excuuuuuuuuuse me, but how DARE you make fun of Pauly Shore in your newest issue? [see Good, Bad, Ugly October '00] You say he's got a [expletive deleted] voice but I think it is DEAD SEXY. Why must you be cruel [expletive deleted]? Reiner, I thought you were hot.

Some Babe
Via excite.com

Whoa...let's watch the language, young lady. We didn't mean to slight your beloved Weasel. We haven't forgotten his brilliant pop hit Lisa, Lisa (The One I Adore), or his cinematic masterpiece *Son in Law*. We were making fun of Andy, not Pauly. Just because you don't agree with our viewpoints, there's no reason to write in such gutter talk to a respectable family publication. If you think Reiner is hot, that's because he is. We're lucky enough to see him prance around the office every day in a zebra-striped Zubaz bikini and high heels. Work that sweet patootie, you Raging hottie!

ROCK THE VOTE!

Dear future President Paul Anderson,

I read the GI feature article and think your ideas and plans totally kick ass! I cut out the free campaign button and will use it when the time is right. As it said in the article, I am sending a donation to the campaign. I was too cheap to put in a real dollar, so I spent a half hour making this one on the ol' PC. You can hang it in your campaign headquarters or any place you wish as a reminder that you have at least one supporter. In addition to my dollar, you have received a free quarter. Yes, you read right, 25 cents, if this highly valuable coin is not stolen in the mail.

Michael Guerra
Stewart Manor, NY

Thanks, Michael. The overwhelming response to Paul's campaign has resulted in a massive groundswell of support for his candidacy. Thanks to our readers, Paul is now running at almost .0000789% in recent polls

(which actually puts him slightly ahead of Pat Buchanan). Since you were nice enough to send two copies of this letter, along with two quarters, Matt (Director of Operations, Anderson 2000) was able to buy himself an ice-cold Dr. Pepper. It was very refreshing.

SOME TOUGH QUESTIONS

I have sent you several emails in the past, but you haven't responded to any of them. Maybe it's because I don't suck up to you like Jeff Jarrett did to Vince Russo. Anyway, I have some questions. Answer them, or you will be cursed for EEEEVVVVEEEERRRR!!!

1. I once heard of a portable system called the Sega Nomad. In one of your older issues, you said that it was a six-button system and it could play Genesis games. How many bits did it have, and how many games? Could it play Game Gear games or Sega Master System games? And how can Sega's games be so bad that a six-button color system is driven out of the market by a black-and-white, two-button 8-bit system (Game Boy)?!

2. Where do you come up with your nicknames? Except for the PC Jedi, everyone is "(Name), the (some adjective) Gamer", or "(Name), the Game (some really stupid noun)." COME ON!!!!

Jacob Rudolph
West Chester, PA

All right, Jake, we'll ignore your petty threats and answer your questions. Apparently, we've already been cursed to a life of answering ridiculous letters, so we seriously doubt that your silly little hex could make matters much worse.

1. The Sega Nomad, released in October 1995 in the US, was basically a handheld version of the Genesis. It featured a 3.25 full-color backlit LCD screen, a d-pad, and six buttons. It was compatible with the entire library of Genesis games, but not Game Gear, Sega Master System, 32X, or Sega CD titles. The system ran on a 16-bit processor, a derivation of the Genesis hardware, and used 6 AA batteries. The system failed for a number of reasons, most notably short battery life (only 2 hours), and lack of consumer confidence in Sega after the failure of the 32X and Sega CD. Also, Sega released the Saturn that very same year, which meant the Nomad was never marketed properly.

2. In light of your criticisms, we took it upon ourselves to come up with some more creative nicknames. From now on the GI staff will be known as: Matt the Mellifluous Madrigal, Erik the Esoteric Eggplant, Paul the Persian Pollywog, Jay the Gelatinous Jockstrap, Andy the Angry Areola, Kristian the Comatose Ketchup-Head, and Reiner the Rotten Rotary Phone.

Send your comments to Game Informer.

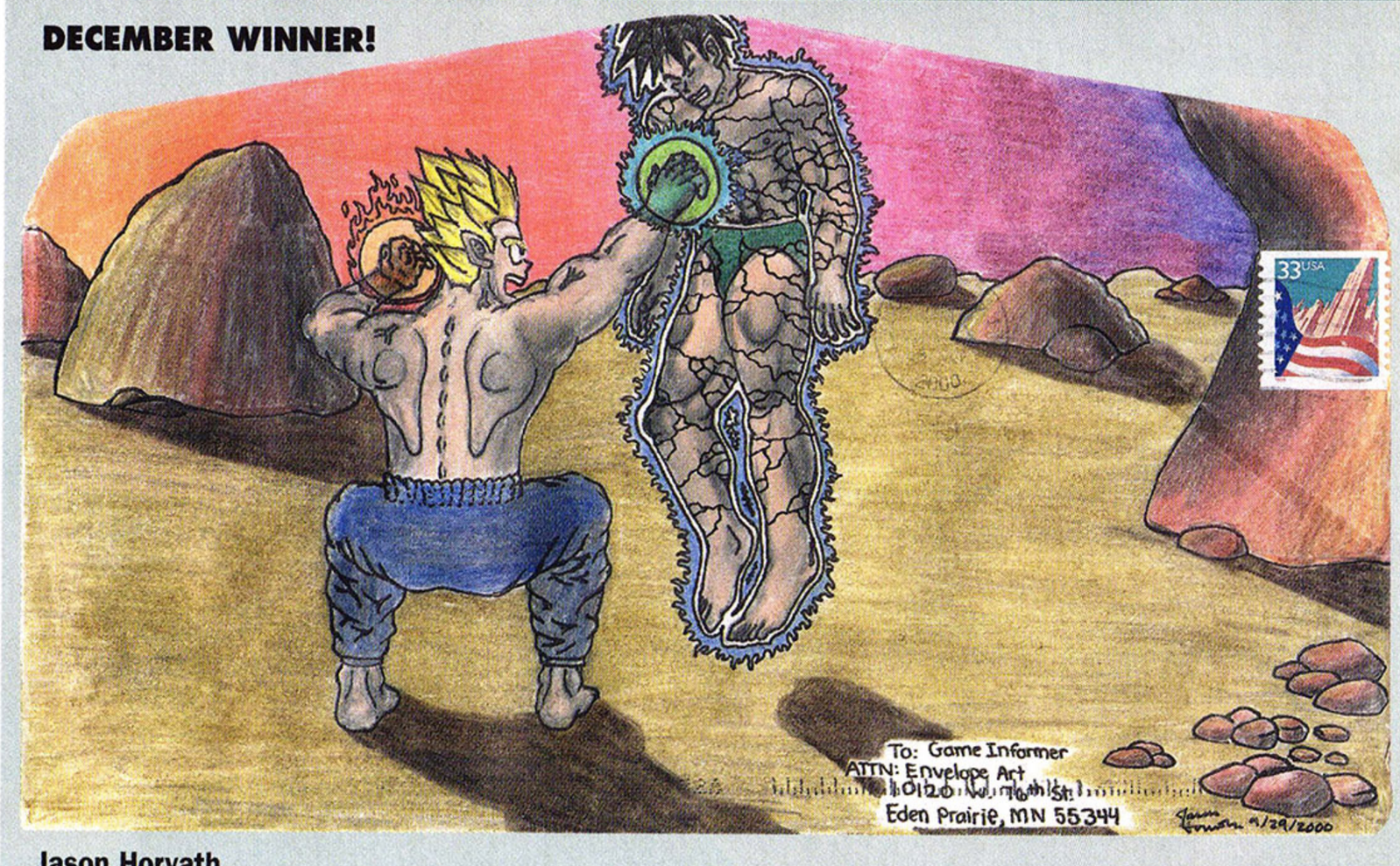
Snail Mail:
Game Informer Magazine
Attn: Dear GI
10120 W. 76th Street
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Email:
deargi@gameinformer.com

WWW
www.gameinformer.com

ENVELOPE ART

DECEMBER WINNER!



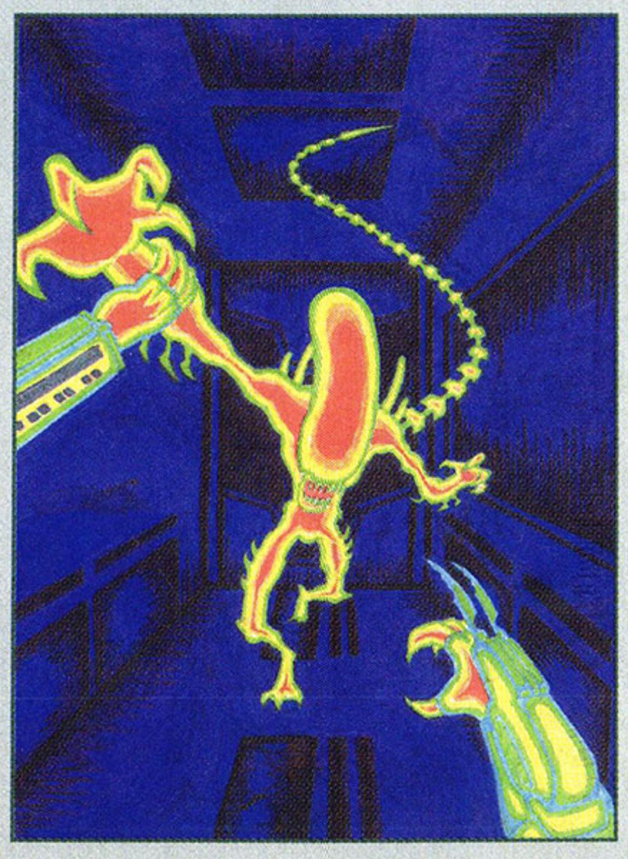
Jason Horvath
"What did I tell you about using the last roll of toilet paper without a tree in sight? You stupid fool!"

Mark Neil
Unlike many black mages out there, Vivi has the unique ability to conjure fake vomit at will from his hand. A great trick at parties.

Ario Elami
This is Mario's poster for his promotional campaign for S.S.B. – Stop Supporting Bowser – an anti-large turtle group.

Nikki Edwards
Roses are red.
Voilets are blue.
Come near me, and
I kill you.

Josh Gilbert
We are trying to stop Josh from getting in the magazine every month, but the guy keeps sending us cool stuff.



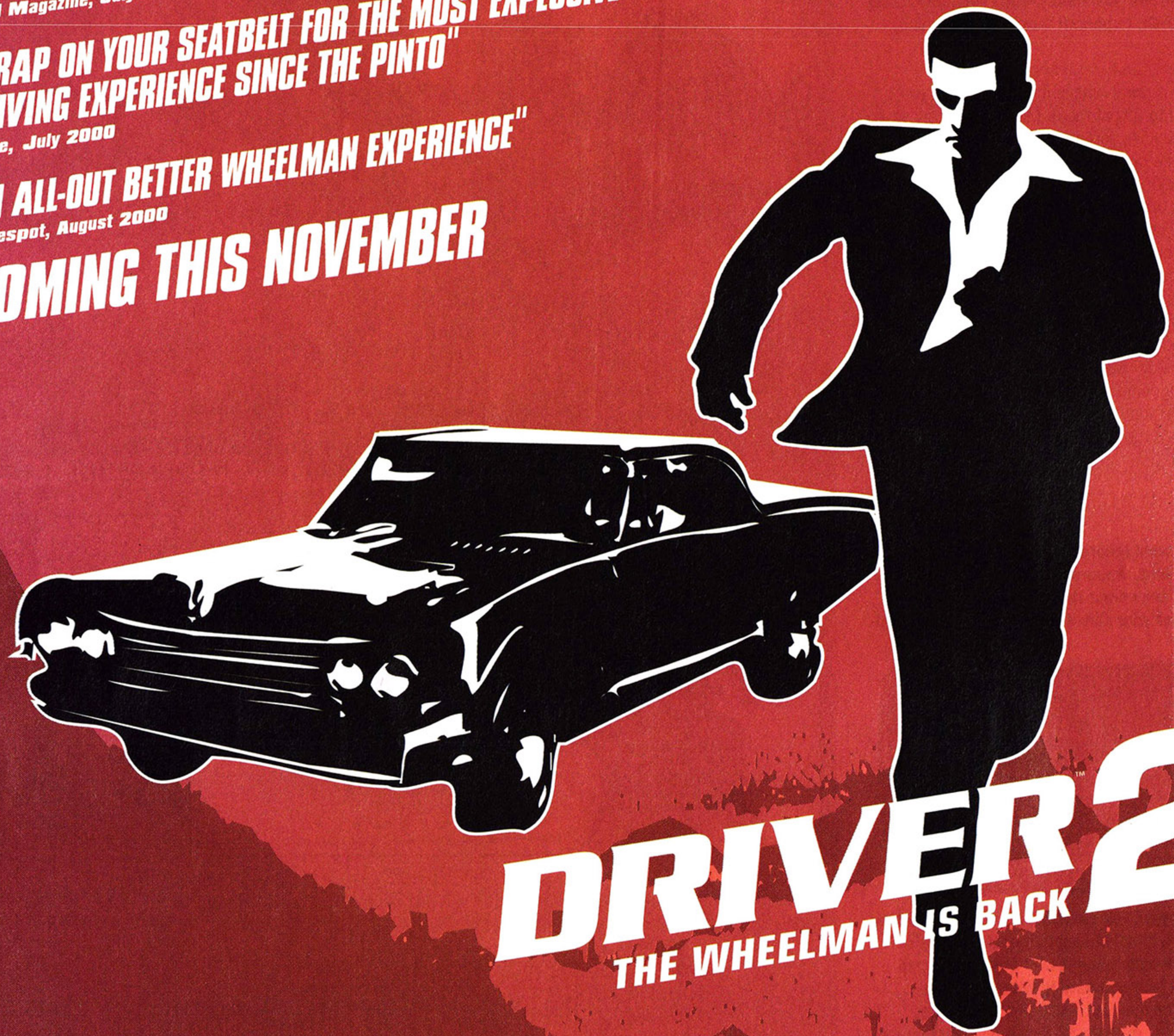
Enter the Game Informer Envelope Art Contest. All you need to do is draw, paint, scratch, spit, or carve the best darn envelope art you can think of and send it to us. Please include your name, phone number, and return address on the back of the envelope. If you're the monthly winner, we'll feature your work in GI and you'll receive a video game prize from the Game Informer vault.

"THE ULTIMATE GETAWAY GAME GETS EVEN BETTER"
PSM Magazine, July 2000

"STRAP ON YOUR SEATBELT FOR THE MOST EXPLOSIVE DRIVING EXPERIENCE SINCE THE PINTO"
Incite, July 2000

"...AN ALL-OUT BETTER WHEELMAN EXPERIENCE"
Gamespot, August 2000

COMING THIS NOVEMBER

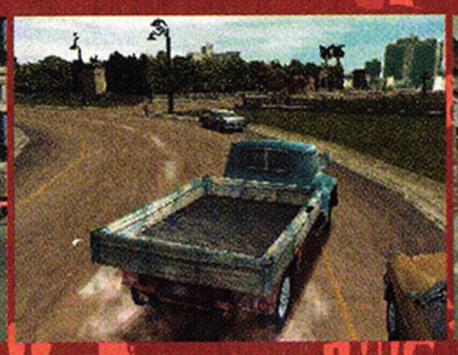


DRIVER™ 2

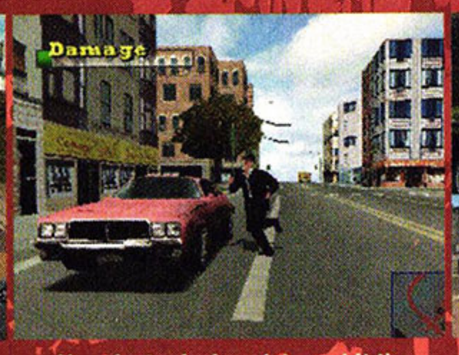
THE WHEELMAN IS BACK

WWW.DRIVER2.COM

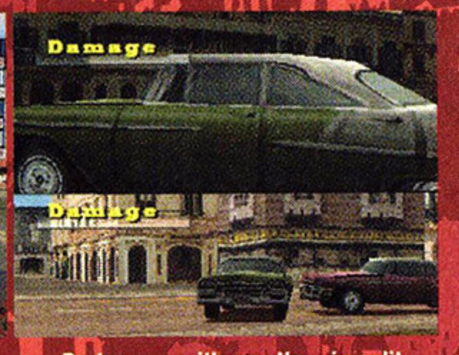
4 new cities: Vegas, Havana, Rio, Chicago, epic storytelling, and high-quality cinematics!



All-new curved road systems bring the action to life with ultra-realism!



New foot missions let you hit the streets and commandeer any vehicle!



Partner up with any thug in split-screen multi-player modes!

THERE'S SOMETHING GOING DOWN ON THE STREETS. AN INTERNATIONAL MOB WAR HAS ERUPTED, SPILLING BLOOD ACROSS TWO CONTINENTS IN A HAIL OF BULLETS. BUT IT'S JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE FOR ONE COP. ONE COP WITH ONE NAME. DRIVER™ 2 STARRING TANNER.

PlayStation®

REFLECTIONS INTERACTIVE™

DIESEL FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

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TEEN
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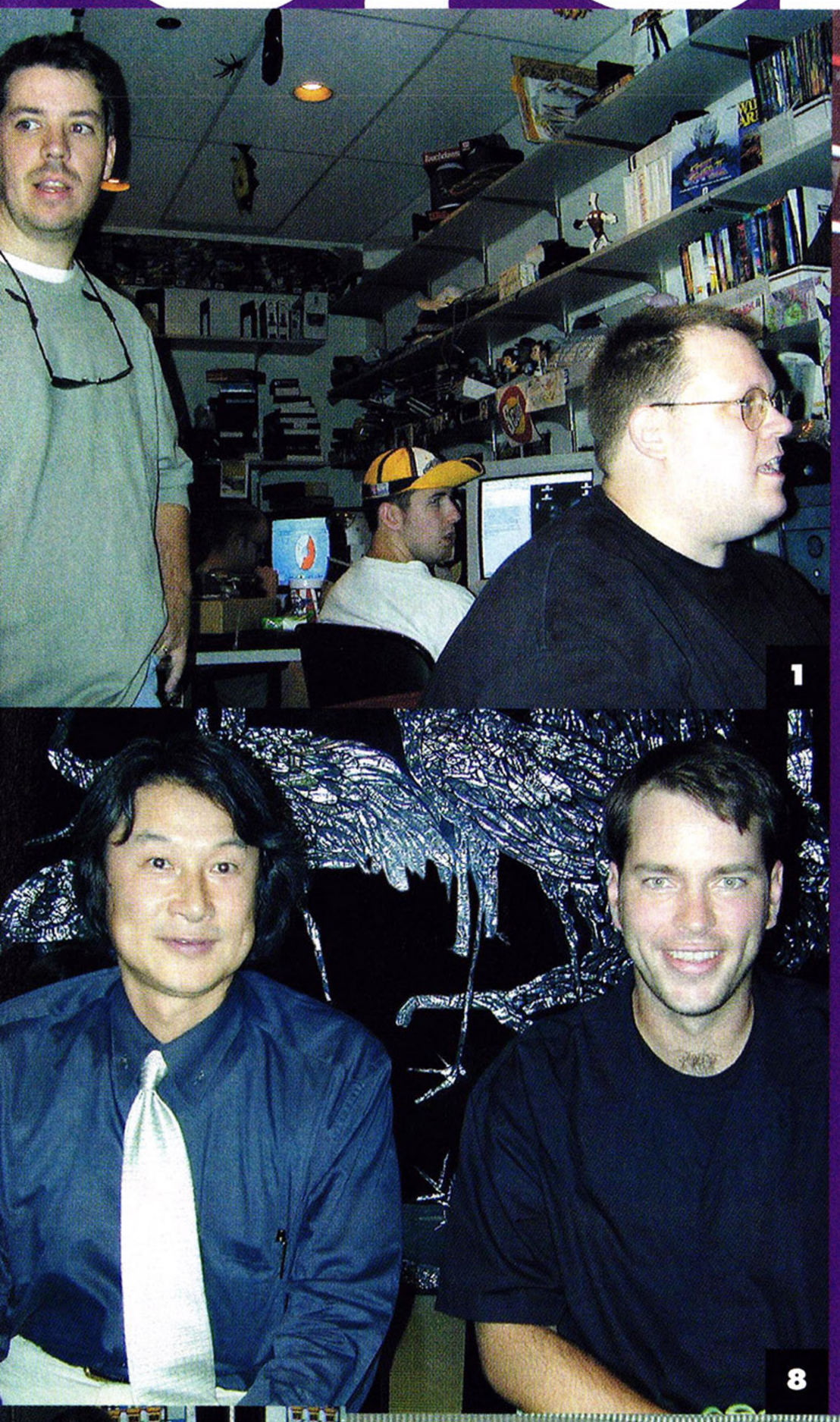
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

INFOGRAMES™

GI SPY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2

CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

(1) Kristian looks on as comic artists Dan Veesenmeyer (Video Game Deathmatch, Wizards of the Coast's Star Wars RPG), and Adam Hughes (Wonder Woman, Ghost) spend an afternoon downloading naked pictures of Danni Ashe at the Game Informer offices **(2)** After smacking the taste out of Matt's mouth at the Codemasters' Mike Tyson event, video game historian Steven Kent asks, "Who's your daddy?" **(3)** Andy begins to regret his decision to meet his EverQuest girlfriend in real life **(4)** Jen Stover shows off the costume that won the Aya lookalike contest at Square's Parasite Eve 2 launch party **(5)** Jeff "Club MTV" Casteñeda of Rockstar Games and Rob "Pickle King" Fleischer of Linn PR demonstrate the bizarre initiation ritual required to join their motorized scooter gang **(6)** Game Informer: The Next Generation? Elsa Anderson (daughter of the Game Professor) pledges her allegiance to Nintendo, and spends some time hanging out with Kirby. **(7)** At the Tokyo Game Show, style maven Paul declares, "Orange vinyl is a fashion must this winter!" **(8)** Yochi Erikawa (aka Kou Shibusawa), founder of Koei and producer of Kessen, poses for a photo with his prom date, Paul Anderson. It takes a real man to get away with wearing a silver tie and electric blue shirt!

3

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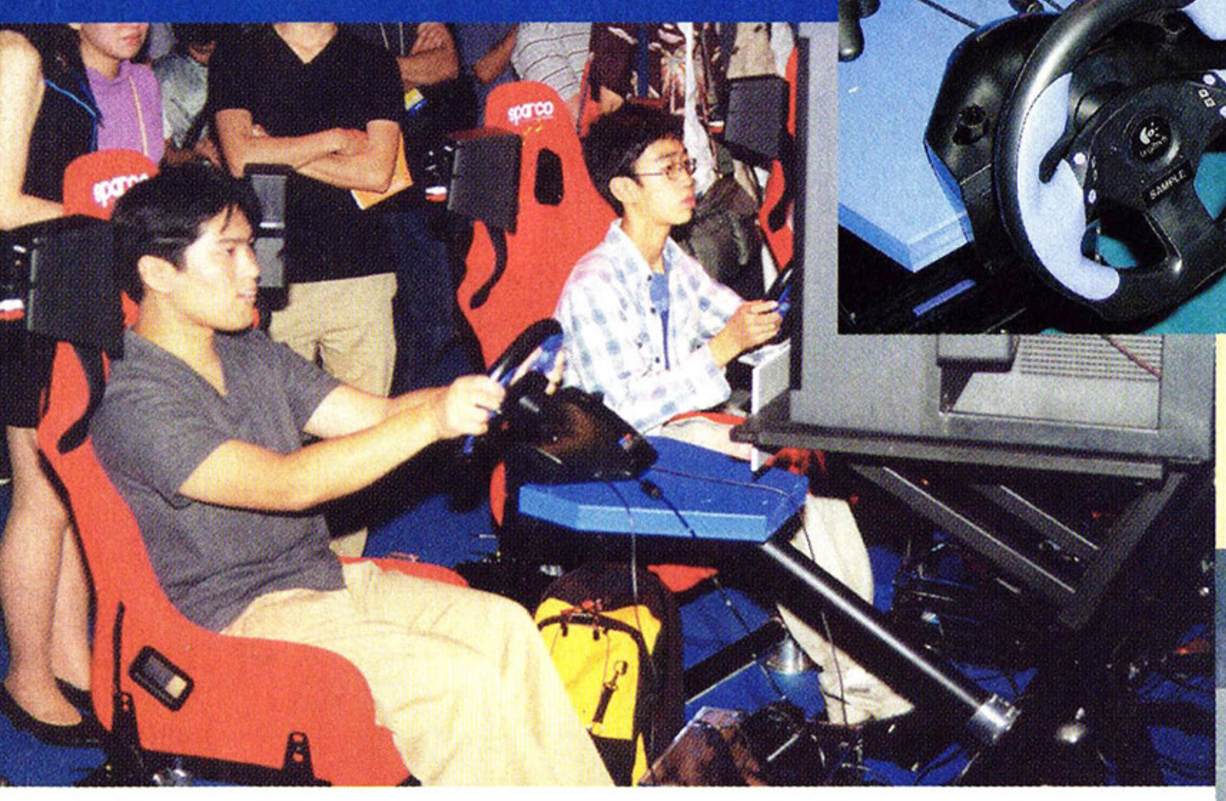
GI NEWS

THE SIGHTS OF TOKYO GAME SHOW

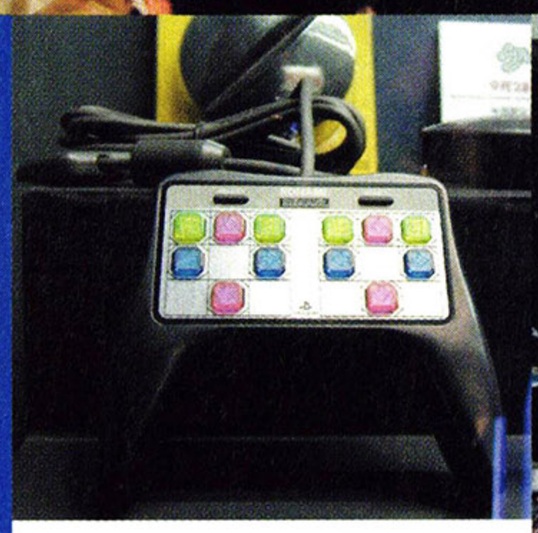
The semi-annual **Tokyo Game Show** drew over 160,000 gamers over its three days in late September. Making the trek to Chiba City on the outskirts of Tokyo, *Game Informer* soaked it all in of the sights.

Although the crowds were big and there was strong showing of product from the likes of **Konami**, **Capcom**, **Koei**, and **Sony**, this session of the TGS was largely void of excitement due to the absence of two large game companies – **Sega** and **Square**. Likewise, **Nintendo's** only participation in the event is through its sponsorship and the company, historically, does not have a booth set up to show its wares.

Most of the noteworthy games we had a chance to see at the Tokyo Game Show are featured in this month's preview section.



Talk about playing in style! Sony had a number of stations playing Gran Turismo 3, including these deluxe set-ups complete with a racing seat, side-mounted speakers, and a force-feedback steering wheel made by Logitech.



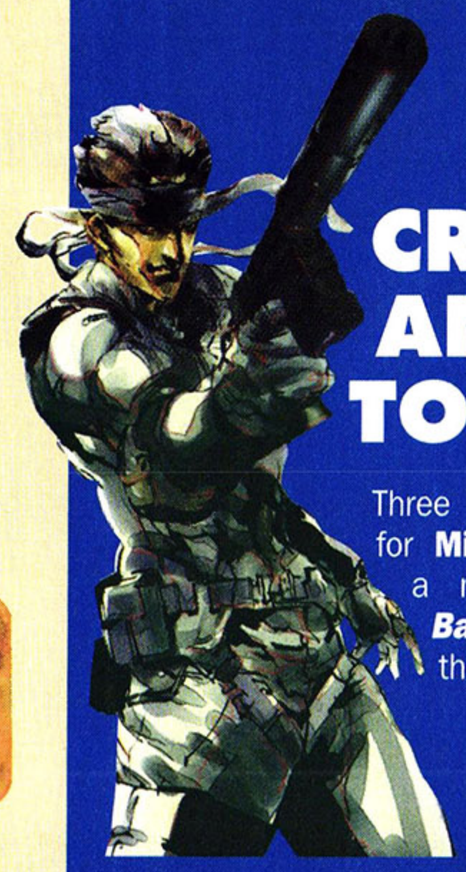
This PS2 controller from Konami is made specifically for use with Dance Dance Revolution, Konami's popular dancing simulator. Instead of jumping around on a footpad, this confusingly lets you use your fingers. What's the point?

The USB connection on the PS2 will be put to use with new digital cameras that have been introduced. The devices will work in conjunction with compatible games to allow players to import their likenesses into the action. There is also the possibility that the controller camera could be used in future network games to show each player the opponent on the other end.

Bandai displayed it upcoming handheld, the WonderSwan Color. Due to hit Japan in December, this machine will also hook into the PS2 via a USB cable. It was also revealed that WonderSwan games could be downloaded to a Sony MagicGate Memory Stick.

Dressing up as your favorite video game character, known as "cos-play," is really an event within itself at the TGS. Prizes are awarded for the best dressed. Outside the event hall, eager photographers form lines to snap pictures of their favorite cos-play participants. Some of these amateur shutterbugs carry equipment that would put a professional photographer to shame.

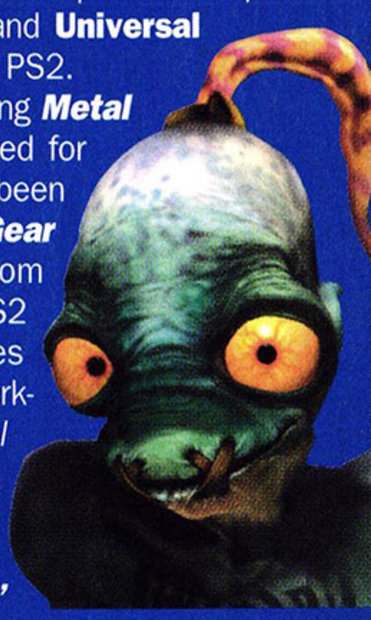
CRASH, SNAKE, AND ABE HEAD TO XBOX



Three popular **PlayStation** game franchises are headed for **Microsoft's Xbox**. In what can only be viewed as a major development coup for Microsoft, ***Crash Bandicoot***, ***Metal Gear Solid***, and ***Munch's Oddysey*** – the sequel to ***Abe's Exoddus*** – will all be seen on the Xbox next fall.

Even though the news of all three of these games going to Xbox are big acquisition for Microsoft; the most noteworthy has to be **Crash Bandicoot**. Since the launch of the PlayStation in 1995, Crash has been the informal mascot for the system and used in countless PlayStation advertisements. In a twist of events, **Universal Interactive** – the holder of the rights to Crash – has struck a development and publishing deal with **Konami**. However, Konami and **Universal** still plan to bring a new Crash game to the PS2.

Konami will also be responsible for bringing ***Metal Gear Solid 2*** to the Xbox. First announced for the PlayStation 2, *MGS2* has now also been slated as an Xbox launch title, ***Metal Gear Solid X***. Despite persistent denials from Microsoft public relations representatives, MGS2 is indeed planned for next fall. A Microsoft sales executive confirmed that the company was working closely with Konami to make sure *Metal Gear* and *Solid Snake* would appear with the Xbox's debut.



The delivery of the Xbox will also be accompanied by ***Oddworld Inhabitants' Munch's Oddysee***. This title, the follow-up to the successful *Oddworld* series on PlayStation, was originally planned for a May release on the PS2. However, these plans have been scrapped altogether as Microsoft has acquired the rights to *Munch's Oddysee*. Microsoft plans to publish the game under its own label and keep it an Xbox exclusive.

XBOX TO INCLUDE BUILT-IN PARENTAL CONTROLS

Microsoft will attempt to assist owners of the **Xbox** in keeping young gamers from playing mature rated games. Xbox's Senior Director of Sales **Alex Kotowitz** says the company will be installing built-in parental controls in the Xbox console, which can be programmed to restricted specific content.

Similar to some current televisions that allow users to block certain channels, the parental controls on the Xbox will recognize games of mature or violent content and block the system from playing them if the user makes the appropriate settings.

While we are sure that this feature will appease concerned parents and some of the fat cats in Washington, we remind those who welcome this addition to the Xbox to not underestimate the power of juvenile ingenuity.

Race with what's
under the hood.

Win with what's
strapped on top.

Hybrid Extreme RACING™

Customize your wheels
for maximum firepower.

Transform through portals
to battle by land,
sea and air.

Blast your way through
with all the hard-core
weapons you find.

PlayStation

EVERYONE
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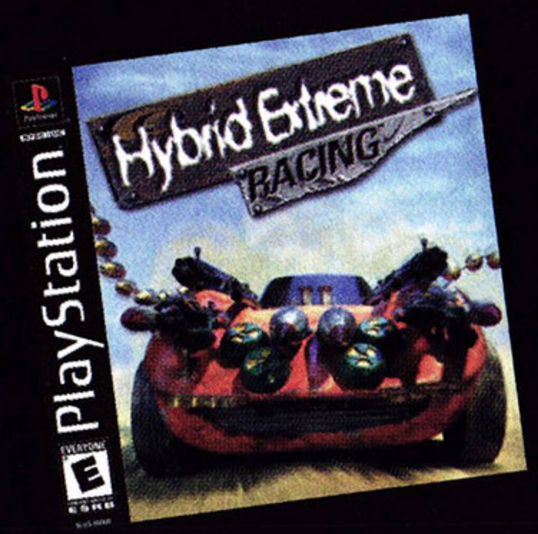
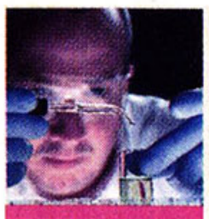


Take it to the Extreme! Modify then race one of eight customizable cars through some of the toughest tracks! Transform your vehicle to handle the terrain. But to win, you need fire power. Pick up machine guns and missile launchers to knock your opponents out! Because in this game, the best way to win is to make sure the other guys don't finish at all!



R&D

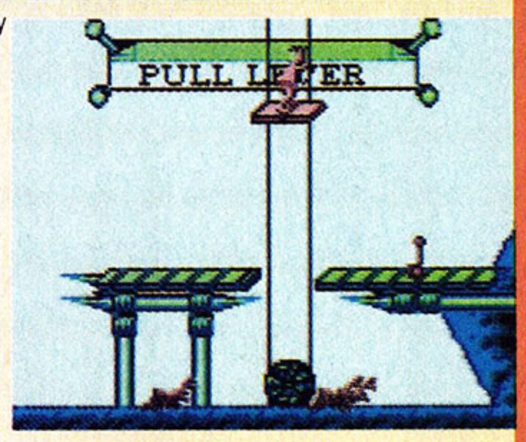
Game Informer's research and development operatives search the globe, seeking out the untapped licenses that will become tomorrow's killer games. If you have any great ideas for games of the future, be sure to drop us a line. Maybe we'll use our godlike power over the video game industry to turn you into a millionaire – or just steal your idea.

THE ORIGINAL TRANSFORMERS

Every 20-something fanboy would love to see a game featuring the classic Transformers that blends the action of Twisted Metal and Armored Core with a heavy dose of arena gaming options and a single-player action/adventure game mimicking the style of the old episodes. Imagine the following scenario. The Decepticons have captured one of the wussier Autobots (Bumblebee) and wired him to a bomb while the majority of the Decepticons run off to seize a mysterious item in the desert. You select the fastest Autobot at your disposal and he volunteers for the dangerous task of rescuing the little guy. As you progress through the timeline of the cartoon series, you eventually get the opportunity to acquire new Autobot allies. Many of these could be the goal of a new mission like coming to Sky Fire's aid, while others could be unlocked by completing secret mission objectives, like finding a cave full of fossilized dinosaurs, leading to Wheeljack's idea for creating the Dinobots. Grimlock like!

NAME THAT GAME

Based on a legendary PS-X series (soon to make a highly publicized Xbox debut), this game starred a legendary Mudokon in his first handheld quest. The highly unique title favored brains over brawn, and was a remarkable deep Game Boy experience.



(Answer on page 24.)

TOP 10 WORST PRESENTS WE'VE EVER RECEIVED

10 A subscription to Redbook

9 One walkie-talkie

8 A hubcap from a '79 Chevette

7 Kenny G's Greatest Hits

6 One strand of Burt Reynolds' chest hair

5 Police Academy action figures

4 A bottle of deer scent

3 The Bedazzler®

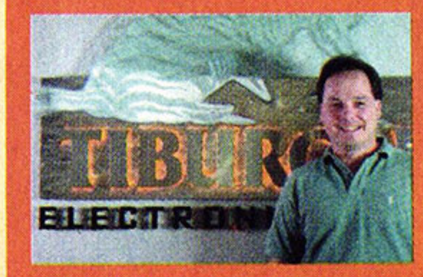
2 Limp Bizkit's Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water

1 Clam chowder

Game Informer is looking for your Top Five favorite games. Please send your Top Fives to:

Game Informer Magazine
Attn: Top Five
10120 West 76th Street
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Everyone that enters every month will be entered in a drawing to win a GI T-Shirt! So get writing!



DEVELOPER **TOP 5**

JOHN SCHAPPERT
Maitland, FL

1 Madden NFL 2001 – PS2, PSX, N64, PC

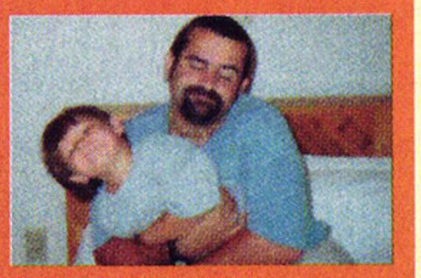
2 Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time – N64

3 Bomberman – SNES

4 Diablo/Diablo II – PC

5 Metal Gear Solid – PS-X

John is the general manager of Tiburon Electronic Arts and is currently developing Madden NFL 2002.



READER **TOP 5**

STEVE & CALEB BARNES
Richmond, VA

1 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 – PS-X

2 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater – PS-X

3 Medal of Honor – PS-X

4 MTV Music Generator – PS-X

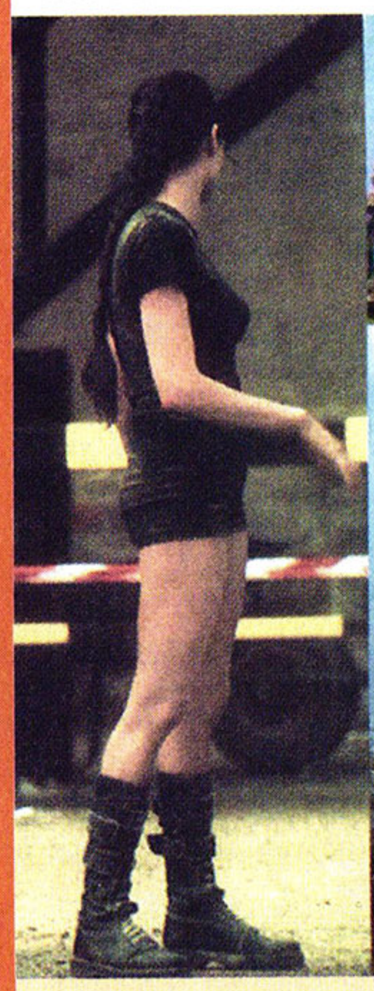
5 Soul Blade – PS-X

TOMB RAIDER FILM ON TRACK

The live action **Tomb Raider** film starring **Angelina Jolie** is currently still shooting in a number of locations across the world. Scheduled to hit theaters next summer, we have learned a few more details concerning the cast and were sent a few spy photos from the set.

The most interesting piece of casting news from the Tomb Raider production is the signing of **Jon Voight** to play the role of Lara Croft's father, Lord Croft. In actuality, Voight is Jolie's real-life papa, as well as one damn good actor.

Currently, the crew is said to have wrapped most of its shooting at London's Pinewood studios and is going on location to Angkor Wat in Cambodia.



RESIDENT EVIL FILM RESURFACES

In is no secret that the film based on **Capcom's** popular ***Resident Evil*** franchise has taken a long time to get off the ground. However, we have now learned that the film has received new financing, a new writer, a new director, and will begin production as early as January.

Taking on the dual role of writer/director is none other than Paul Anderson. No, not *Game Informer's* own Game Professor, but the Paul Anderson who directed the blockbuster video game film, ***Mortal Kombat***. Anderson has apparently devised a new cast of characters for this film and will reportedly introduce a new duo named Alice and Matt. Disappointingly, the casting information that we gathered made no mention of Barry or that pesky Wesker.

The film is being produced by Constantin Film and distributed worldwide by Intermedia. If all goes as planned we should see *Resident Evil* on the big screen next Halloween.

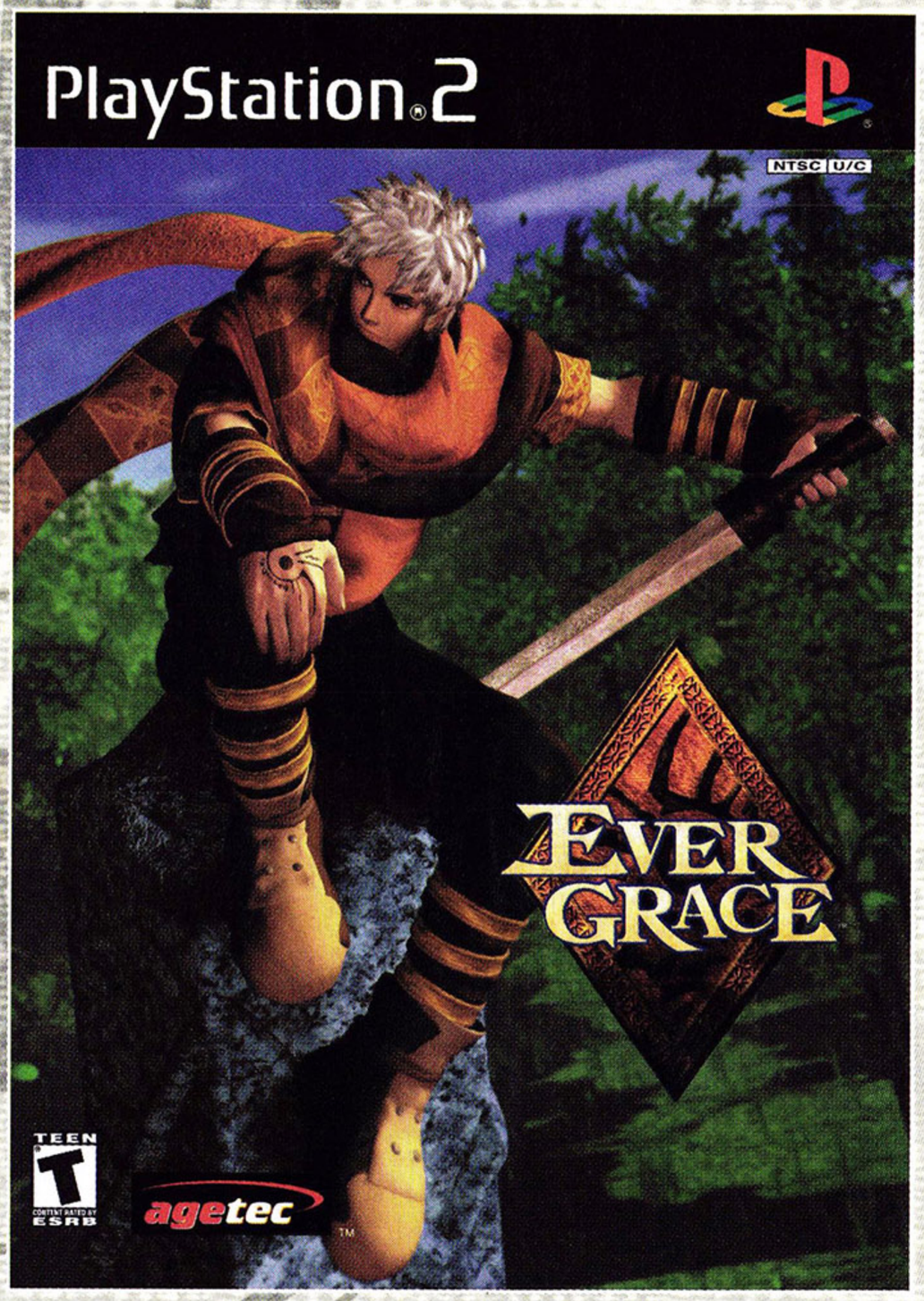
Defeat Your Fears To Achieve Grace

Players enter a world of intense magic and thunderous battles – where your survival is determined by collecting powerful artifacts and fashioning them to unique armor and weaponry. Two complete adventures await Darius and Sharline – heroes who must face an evil reborn. Journey as either hero and discover unique characters and monsters for each adventurer. They will need to master the art of arming themselves with items of incredible might and untold magical abilities to thwart the powers of darkness.

Attack with unique Palmira armaments

Utilize many bizarre weapons to wipe out enemies

Face evil in its lair



"Expect gorgeous special effects and plenty of action."
– PS Extreme

Destroy foes everywhere you journey

- Customizable elements include weaponry, armor, and clothing.
- Certain combinations of armor and clothing unlock hidden magical abilities and powers.
- Two independent characters to play – each with their own storylines, goals, and discoveries.
- Epic RPG storyline with all the action needed for a legendary quest.

Magnificent graphic and lighting effects

Challenge ultra-strange creatures to the bitter end

FROMSOFTWARE™

TEEN CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

agetec™

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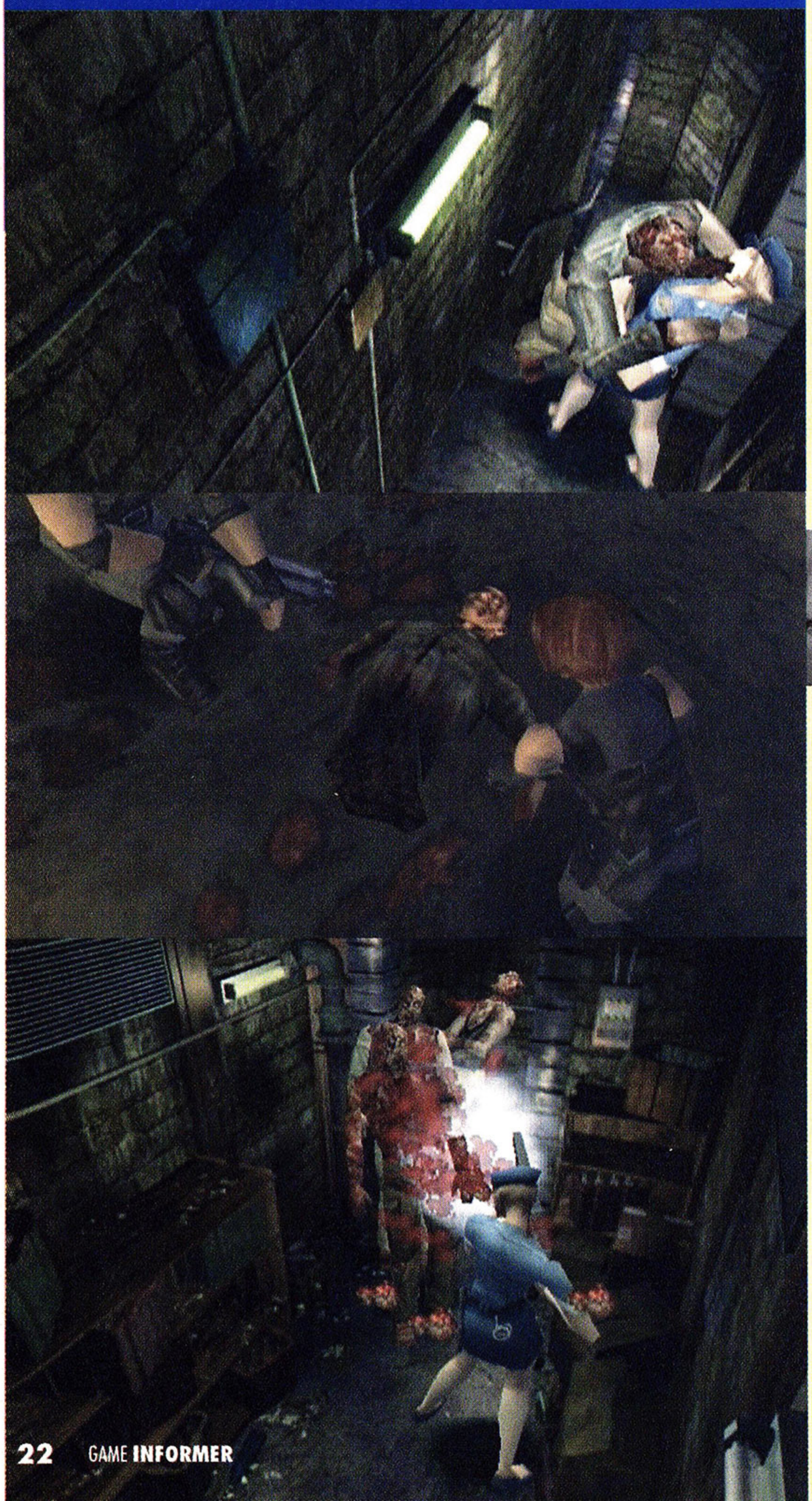
MORE SURVIVAL HORROR ON DREAMCAST

Capcom is bring three of its most successful – and terrifying – games to the **Sega Dreamcast**. ***Dino Crisis***, ***Resident Evil 2***, and ***Resident Evil 3*** are all on their way and Capcom promises new enhancements for each.

While most of the new features will largely be in the games' appearance, the best addition to the list of enhancements will probably be the price tag. All three games are scheduled to carry a suggested retail price of around $20.

The three titles are supposed to hit the Dreamcast before the end of the year. The only question that remains is: "Barry, where's Barry?"



THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

GOOD – With the recent price drop to $150 and new game releases such as ***NFL 2K1***, **Sega of America** reports that **Dreamcast** hardware sales have increased 92% in recent months.

BAD – **Sega of America's** recently announced **Dreamcast** sales increases occured prior to the launch of the **PlayStation 2.** Will the PS2 drown the sales of Sega's system?

UGLY – **Nintendo** is sending the owners of 55 **Pokémon**-related domains to court for trademark infringement. Nintendo claims these domains are trying to profit from the Pokémon franchise, and wants cash and seizure of the domain names as compensation.

GOOD – For our exemplary work habits in the production of the new issue of *Game Informer*, the staff was promised one day off for every three weeks worked.

BAD, UGLY – Sony cut its initial shipments of PlayStation 2 in half to 500,000 units, causing gamers everywhere to question the availability of the console. We hope this event didn't prevent anyone from locating a PS2, but we bet there are a few unhappy campers around.

GOOD – **Square Pictures** has invited *Game Informer* to its Hawaii headquarters to take a look at the upcoming Final Fantasy movie, The Spirits Within.

UGLY – Just a few weeks after featuring associate editor **Erik Reppen's** Volvo station wagon in the October's *ETC.* section, the car threw a rod and was completely totaled. Erik hopes he can get a few bucks for the tires

LOOSE TALK

Wherever there's a juicy rumor in the industry, Game Informer experts are on it like a fly on stink. If loose lips are spraying hot gossip, we're sucking up the secret saliva and drooling it all over this section. Loose Talk exposes inside rumors for all to see. These leads may turn out to be 100% untrue, but then again, they could also be dead honest, and you've just learned about them months before anyone else!

One of our sources claims to have seen a gorgeous fighting game running on the **Xbox** development kit, one that TKO's everything else on the market in the graphics department. He also said that **Konami's** name may be attached.

Word has it **Crave Entertainment** is trying to land the **Razor** license to bring a level of authenticity to its upcoming scooters game. If we ask nicely enough, maybe they'll insert Jay as a character with a "nil" balance rating.

EA Games is working on ***Sled Storm 2*** for the **PlayStation 2**. Our sources have told us that the snowmobile racing game is slated for release in March.

With **Vince McMahon's** hard-hitting ***XFL*** just a few months from primetime, the WWF phones have been ringing off the hook with developers interested in creating games based on this league. **Midway**...***Arena Football***...***NFL Blitz***...sounds like a match.

The new ***Medal of Honor*** **PlayStation 2** game will tie into the first PS-X release by bringing back the main character, **Jim Patterson**. Apparently, he's not alone, as team tactics replace the solo assassin aspect. The rumored date for release is fall 2001.

With many of the **SingleTrac** guys back at **Sony** under a new company name, **Incognito**, one must wonder if a new ***Jet Moto*** is in development. A new ***Twisted Metal*** is on the way (see page 67), so why not another *Moto*?

Disney's upcoming film, ***Atlantis: The Lost Empire***, has become the most desirable game property on the market. Who will land the license prior to the film's June 2001 release? Will it be **THQ**? **Activision**? **Sony**? Or does **Microsoft** have some kind of bid on the table?

SURFING H30

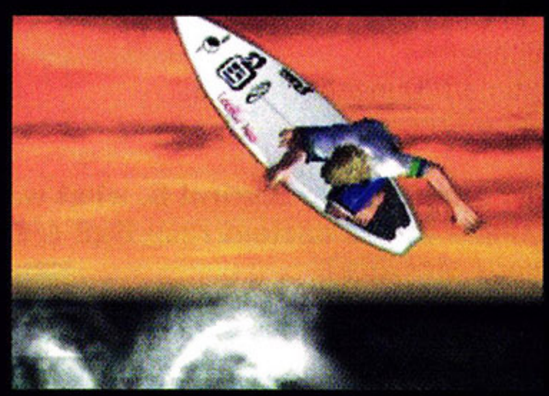
PlayStation®2

SOUND TRACK COURTESY OF HOPELESS RECORDS

Next generation wave modeling physics

6 epic waves to master

11 playable characters each with unique abilities



Over a dozen aerial tricks can be linked for unlimited combo's!

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/SURFINGH30

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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

OPUS CORP.

RenderWare 3

ASCII

PHOTO BY TOM SERVAIS

VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

This month's tutti-frutti test-a-rooti is as prickly as a pineapple and as sticky as a tangerine. So what kind of edible pulpy mass are you? Haven't a clue? Then take our wonderful 10-question quiz to see how seedy you really are!

Question 1: In 1976, a company named Fairchild Camera and Instrument electrified the video game scene with the first cartridge-based system – the Fairchild VES (later named the Channel F). This historic unit came equipped with two games installed on the hardware. What were they?

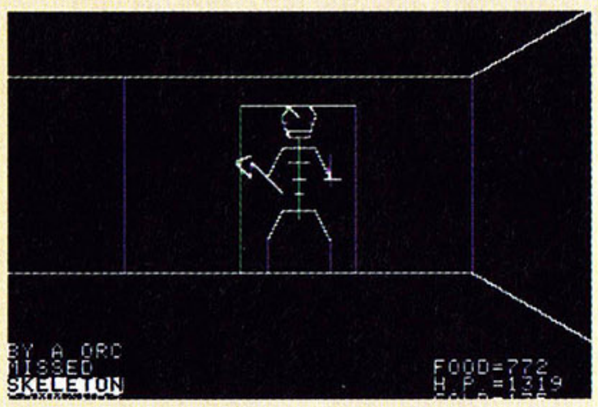
A. Pong and Football
B. Quadra-Doodle and Shooting Gallery
C. Tic-Tac-Toe and Doodle
D. Hockey and Tennis

Question 2: Who was the famous animator who created the Dragon's Lair character, Dirk the Daring?

A. Mel Blanc
B. Don Bluth
C. Charles Zembillas
D. Peter Pawlings

Question 3: How many blocks of memory does the standard Dreamcast VMU hold?

A. 200
B. 15
C. 50
D. 100



Question 4: Ultima Online designer, Richard Garriott, created an Apple II game in 1979. What was it?

A. The Castle of Lord British
B. Aklabeth
C. Ultimate Dungeon
D. Orion Chronicles

Question 5: In Star Control II, what was the name of the ancient race that created your starship?

A. Zoikoids
B. Thradash
C. Precursors
D. Klingons

Question 6: What special power did Erdrick's armor give your character in the classic NES game, Dragon Warrior?

A. Increased dexterity
B. Regenerated hit points
C. Granted invincibility
D. Granted invisibility

Question 7: What six countries were available for play in the NES game, Ice Hockey?

A. US, Sweden, Poland, Canada, USSR, Czechoslovakia
B. US, Canada, USSR, China, Australia, Romania
C. US, USSR, Canada, England, Switzerland, Australia
D. Mars, Mercury, Venus, Pluto, Saturn, Earth

Question 8: In the Genesis game, Altered Beast, what did the digitized voice say when you started playing?

A. "Good luck, my friend"
B. "Find the golden cow"
C. "Rise from your graves"
D. "Reap what you have sown"

Question 9: In the Intellivision game Buzz Bombers, players were armed with a can of bug spray. The goal was simple: kill the bees and destroy their honeycombs and hives. This war was not fought alone though. You had an ally that helped remove honeycombs. What was it?

A. A flyswatter
B. A Venus flytrap
C. A hummingbird
D. An armadillo

Question 10: Considered the first head-to-head fighting game, Karate Champ's kung fu was absorbed by the arcade and NES crowd. Who developed it?

A. Data East
B. Gametek
C. LJN
D. Gamestar

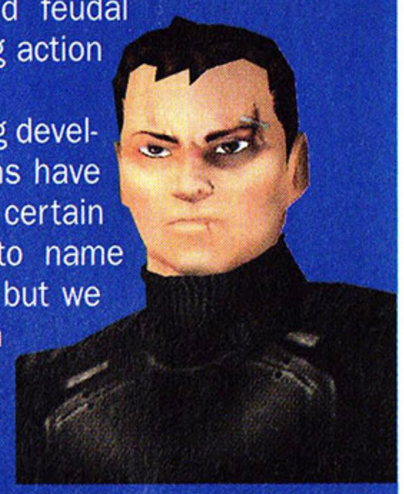
SCORE	RANK	
0	Kumquat	
1-3	Crab Apple	
4-6	Pear	
7-9	Watermelon	
10	Honeydew	

Video Game Trivia Answers:

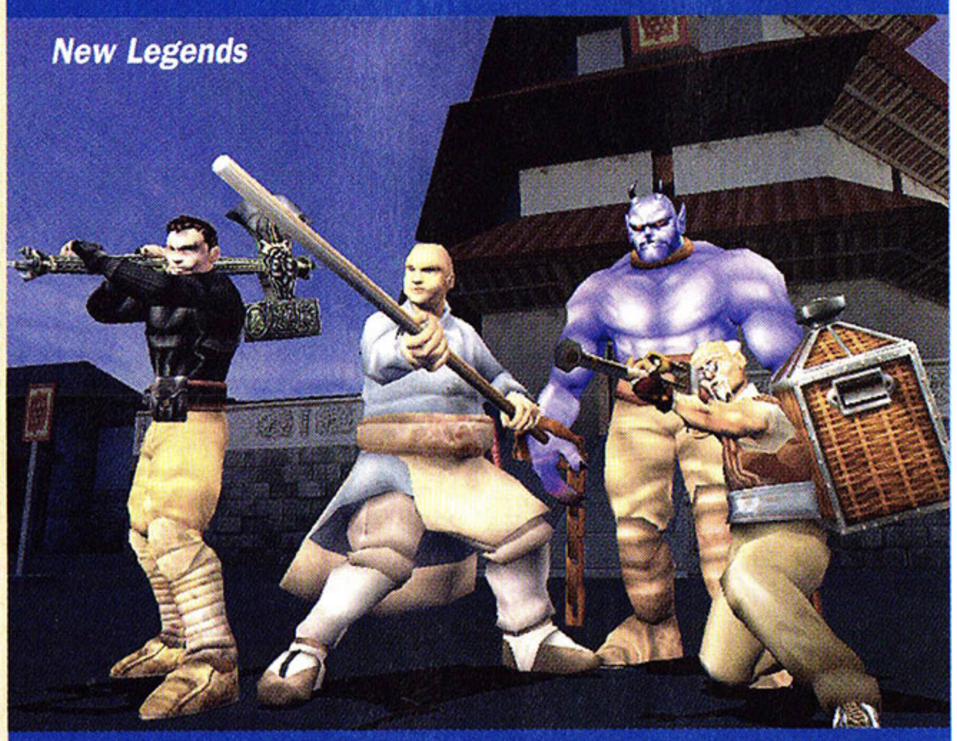
1. D 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. C 6. B 7. A 8. C 9. C 10. A

THQ REVEALS NEW LEGENDS TITLE FOR NEXT-GEN SYSTEM

During a recent visit to Las Vegas, *GI* learned details concerning a project coming out of **THQ** dubbed ***New Legends***. The game will reportedly use third-person action to tell the tale of a mixture of modern and feudal China, set in the vein of Hong Kong action films.



New Legends was originally being developed for PC, but recent negotiations have changed the direction towards a certain next-gen console. THQ declined to name what system is will be for exactly, but we have a feeling it will be a neXt-gen system that comes in a BOX when you buy it at its launch sometime next year.



EVERQUEST CONFIRMED FOR PS2, ANOTHER EXPANSION ON THE WAY

EverQuest is indeed coming to **PlayStation 2**, according to **Verant** producer **Brad McQuaid**. When asked about this possibility, McQuaid responded, "We're working on a massively multiplayer PlayStation 2 game..."

In related news, *Game Informer* has learned that another expansion to the wildly popular *EverQuest* **PC** universe will be released sometime next summer. Dubbed ***Shadows of Luckland***, this installment will be set on the moon of Norrath. Also in development is ***EverQuest 2***, promising to drain even more valuable hours of your life. Its release is slated for November 2001.

DATA FILE

➤ **Sony** announced that the sales of the ***Crash Bandicoot*** series of games for the **PlayStation** have reached 20 million units worldwide.

➤ Although an official announcement has not been made, **Enix of America** is currently working to bring the **PlayStation** RPG, ***Dragon Warrior VII***, to the US next spring. The game has sold in excess of 3 million copies in Japan.

➤ **LucasArts** has officially delayed the release of the **PC** Padawan game ***Obi-Wan***. LucasArts is currently recalibrating *Obi-Wan's* development timeline and will provide another update in early 2001.

➤ Even though **Koei's *Kessen 2*** is still in development, we have learned that Koei is already planning ***Kessen 3*** for **PlayStation 2**. Plans for the game call for full multi-player capabilities via the PS2's upcoming broadband network.

➤ The arcade/restaurant/bar chain **Game Works** is implementing a new access policy for mature-rated games. GameWorks will utilize a **V-Card** that will be coded to either allow restricted or unrestricted access to games depending on the patron's age.

➤ **Sega of America** has reportedly shipped close to 500,000 copies of **Visual Concepts'** football game, ***NFL 2K1***.

➤ **Nintendo's** upcoming successor to the **Nintendo 64**, the **Gamecube**, will be unveiled in a playable form at the **Electronic Entertainment Expo** (E3) in May

➤ In its first week of release, the combined sales of ***Pokémon Gold & Silver*** topped 1.4 million copies. **Nintendo** expects to sell 10 million copies of the two titles.

➤ **Take 2's PlayStation 2** action/adventure game, ***Oni***, won't make it to the system until next year. The game, developed by **Bungie**, is now due to hit stores in January.

➤ **Activision** announced that the **PlayStation** version of ***Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*** has shipped over one million copies.

➤ *Game Informer* is interested in seeing readers and their rides. More specifically, we are investigating a possible feature about drivers who hit the streets in racing modified cars. If you might want to show off your car, email paul@gameinformer.com.

Name That Game Answer:

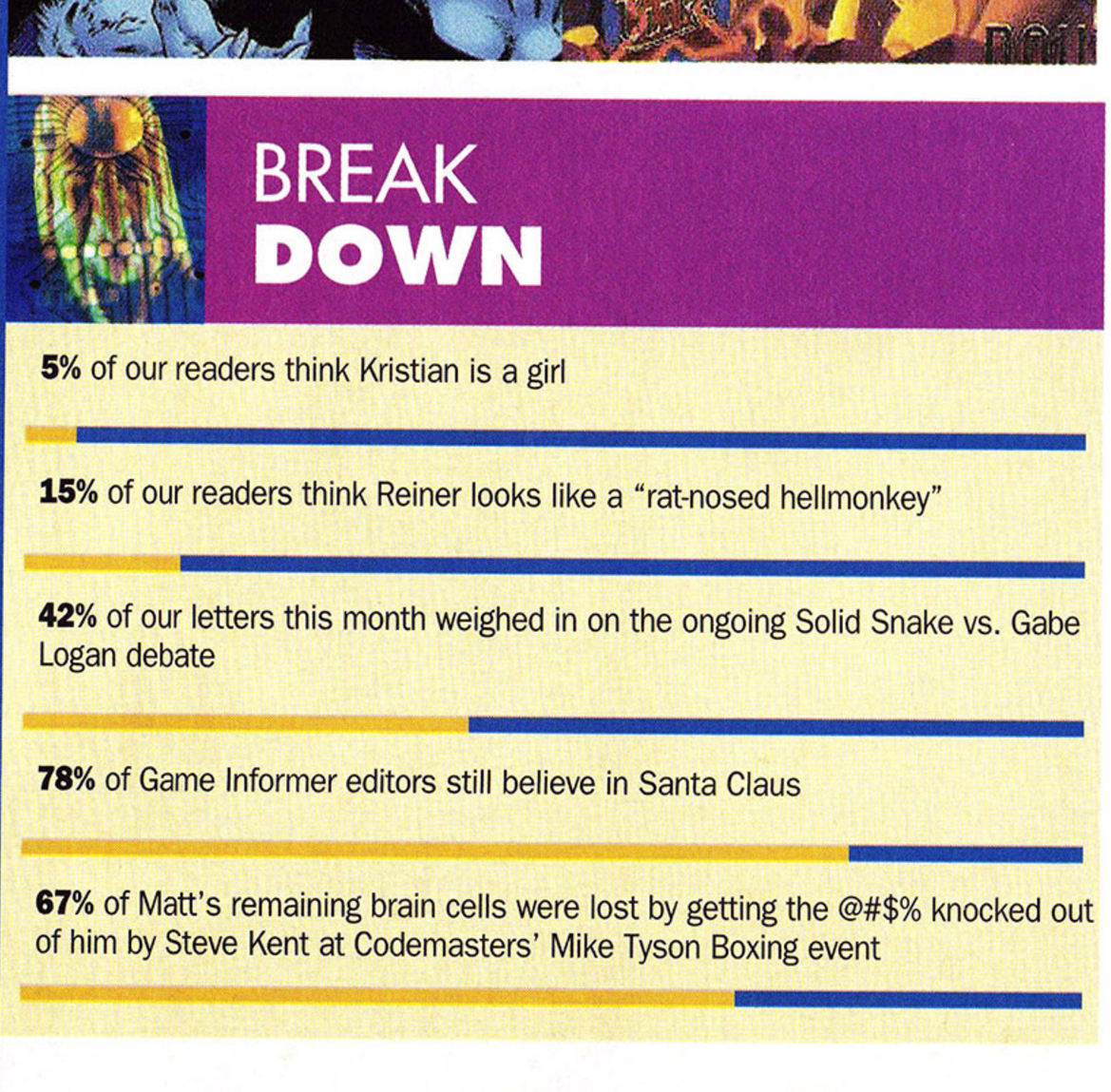
Oddworld Adventures

PS2 BRINGS X-MEN ABOARD

The ***X-Men*** have become a video game mainstay, and plan to stay that way, thanks to **Activision**. The company announced that two new X-men titles are headed to the **PlayStation 2**.

Due to release first is a fighter, supposedly similar to this summer's top-selling **X-Men Mutant Academy**. Activision will test the bounds of the *X-Men* appeal with its second title listed as an action/RPG. These are just two of the 14 titles Activision is planning for the PS2.

Fighting games will have ample representation on the PlayStation2 with monster titles like ***DOA2 Hardcore***, ***Tekken Tag***, and ***Street Fighter EX3*** all slated for the console's launch time. Time will tell whether the upcoming *X-Men* titles will carry on the tradition of excellence Activision has shown in the past, or if they'll slip into mediocrity.



BREAK DOWN

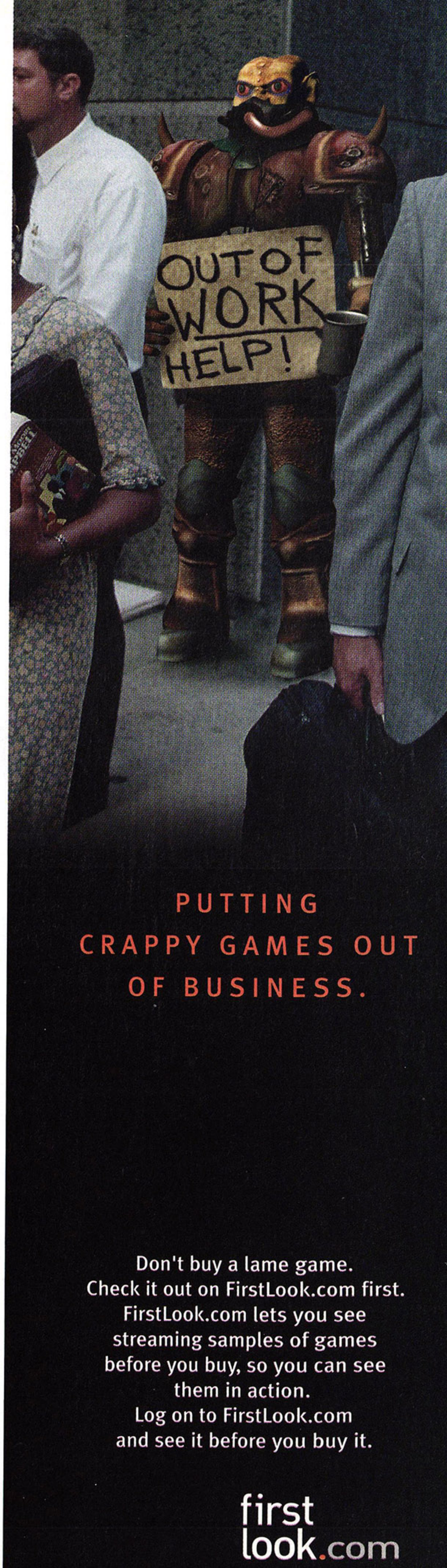
5% of our readers think Kristian is a girl

15% of our readers think Reiner looks like a "rat-nosed hellmonkey"

42% of our letters this month weighed in on the ongoing Solid Snake vs. Gabe Logan debate

78% of Game Informer editors still believe in Santa Claus

67% of Matt's remaining brain cells were lost by getting the @#$% knocked out of him by Steve Kent at Codemasters' Mike Tyson Boxing event



RED FACTION

Burrowed into the east central part of Illinois is the minor metropolis of Champaign. Perhaps you've heard of it. After all, it is well known as the home to a University of Illinois branch that boasts a student population of 36,000. If you've ever driven through it, surely you noticed why it was voted one of the easiest cities of its size to motor about in. Or maybe you've visited the newly constructed Hooters restaurant on the outskirts of town.

Regardless of your Champaign, Illinois familiarity level, however, there may be one detail that has slipped your attention. Huddled in amongst a street filled with low-lying, brick business offices is a simple looking metal-framed glass door, behind which works a group of insurgents intent on changing your perception of reality.

According to them, you've accepted the irrational in video games for far too long. A bomb will obliterate any person who is unfortunate enough to set it off, but will leave the wall it was set against completely unscathed. A rocket launcher can be used to blow a sniper out of a wooden tower, but never to destroy the weak structure he sits in. These illogical elements have stood since Wolfenstein 3D showed the world the way of the first-person shooter eight years ago. Due to technology constraints, such limiting factors were understandable back then, but they are unacceptable now.

In the view of these agitators, it should be just as possible to shoot a pane of glass though an enemy as it is to shoot an enemy through a pane of glass. If you're shooting missiles from a flying vehicle, the people in your sights should be just as worried about being killed by shrapnel and falling rubble as they are about being caught in a blast radius. If you want to use your demolitions to blow a tunnel through a wall, go right ahead.

The letters on the office door tell you the masterminds behind this revolution call themselves Volition. Their first PS2 game was a mostly-straightforward RPG. Their next PS2 title will change the first-person shooter forever. Come on in and take a look at Red Faction.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
■ **DEVELOPER** VOLITION ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 2001

DESTROYING EXPECTATIONS

A perfect example of the Geo-Mod engine at work. In this picture, the main character is shooting a person through a pane of glass

The Big Change

On the surface, Red Faction appears to be a first-person shooter of the standard variety, albeit a very attractive one. After just minutes of play, however, one quickly realizes that this game isn't of the garden variety. Red Faction's claim to fame – the feature that will everafter raise people's expectations from the genre – is its Geo-Mod engine.

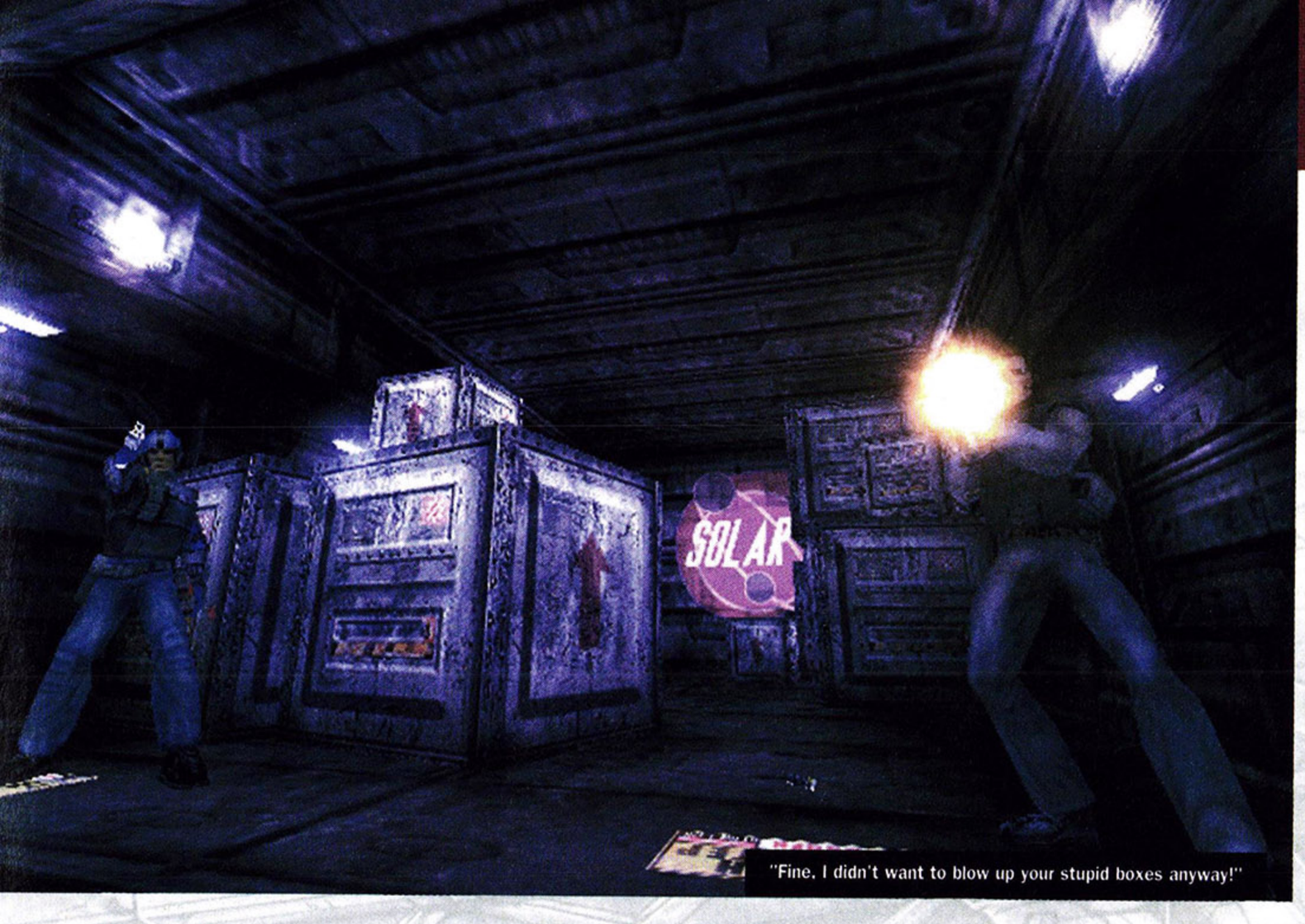
Short for geometry modification, what Geo-Mod basically does is allow a player's weapons to damage the environments in more ways than simply putting bullet holes in things. With a heavy enough armament, players can blast through walls and collapse buildings. Of course, not everything can be decimated (otherwise, what would be the point of level design?), but for the most part players can attempt to use their arsenal to circumvent obstacles in their path.

When the Geo-Mod engine is combined with Red Faction's realistic physics engine, and AI that reacts to hit locations and environmental changes, the gameplay diversity is enhanced to a never-before-seen degree. If a firefight breaks out in an office, stray bullets will ricochet off the floors and walls. Those caught in the conflagration risk not only being shot, but also being hurt by weakened pieces of the ceiling falling from above, or nearby windows shattering onto them.

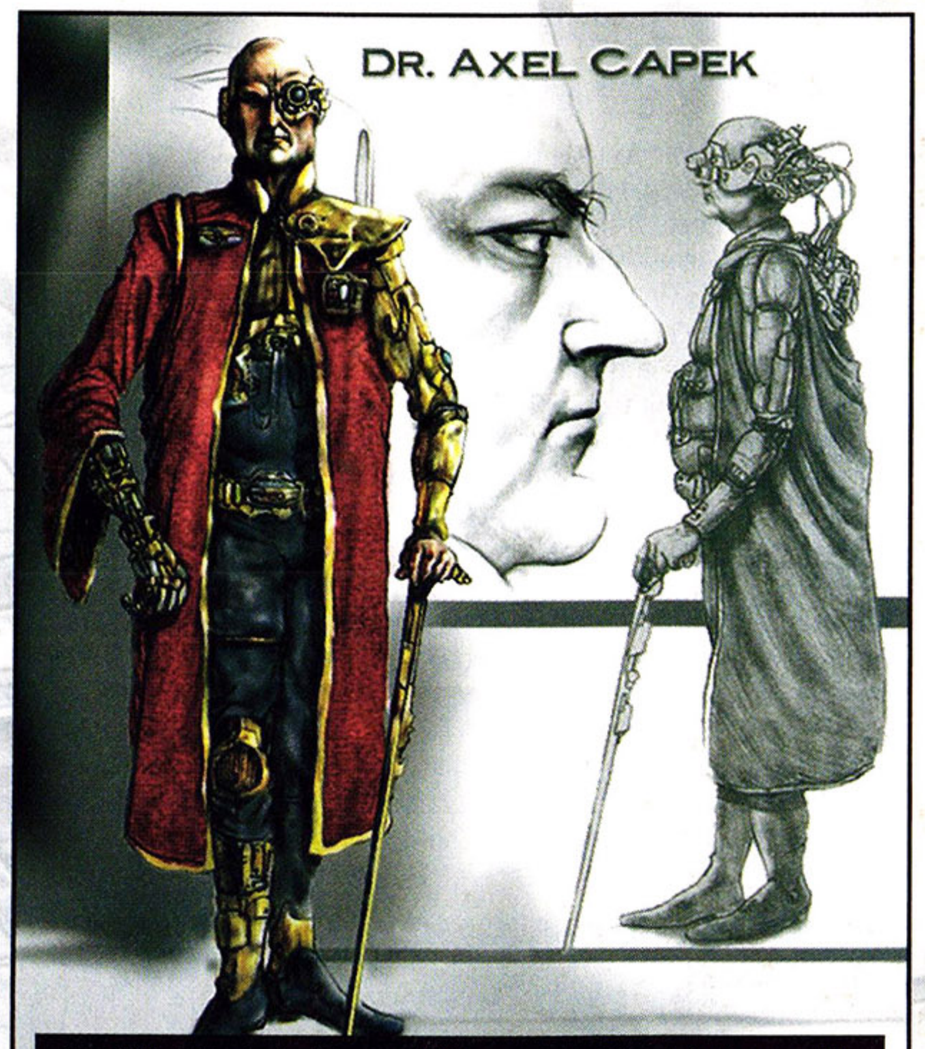
The opportunities such details give might go unnoticed initially, but once players realize the power they now have in their hands, the game is seen through entirely different eyes. One wonders what would be easier: trying to tag all the troops crossing a bridge, or blowing out both ends of the crossing to send them to the abyss below. A fast-moving creature might be too hard to peg between the eyes, but perhaps a nearby skylight could be collapsed on it. If a group starts firing on you out in the open, you may be able to blow something down to use as cover. Even heavy winds can be used to slightly curve the trajectory of fired munitions, flushing out hidden enemies.

Here, a pane of glass is being shot through a person. In both cases, the glass breaks at the point of impact, and the enemy reacts according to where he is shot

Here, the enemy isn't killed by a direct hit from the rocket launcher, but by the concussive force of the blast behind him. Also note that the rocket launcher has an infrared scope, capable of spotting –and possibly harming – people behind doors and walls



"Fine. I didn't want to blow up your stupid boxes anyway!"



One of Ultor's head scientists, even if it turns out that Capek isn't responsible for The Plague, he deserves to be killed based on wardrobe alone

Showing Off

Having used Summoner as its training ground, Volition shows with Red Faction that it's quickly picking up the tricks of the PlayStation 2 graphical trade. Without giving up any speed to its main FPS competitors – TimeSplitters and Unreal Tournament – the developers have attained an unparalleled level of detail.

The way enemies flinch and fall varies according to what you're using and where you strike them. Glass shatters from the point of impact, and the shards remain on the ground, possibly to be skittered about by more gunfire. Steam from a vent will briefly waft in a different direction due to an explosion. These are but a few examples of the many amazing things that happen during play.

When one takes into account the mind-boggling amount of calculations already being performed due to the Geo-Mod engine, the fact that such nuances can be displayed along with real-time shadows, rich textures, and dynamic lighting – all without slowdown – only further proves that both the PlayStation 2 and the Volition team are workhorses. Anyone who fails to be impressed with what they see happening onscreen in Red Faction is most likely blind.

"The way it's set up, players can absorb as much or as little of the story as they want. For example, if there's two people talking up ahead, you can go rushing ahead and shoot them, or hang back, listen to what they have to say, and then go shoot them."
Mike Breault, Writer

The Picture That Tells A Thousand Words
It's gory, but this shot of Red Faction is very telling of the level of detail. Once you're done gawking at the blood which was spattered according to where the security guard got hit and how close he was to the wall, take some time to admire the bullet holes in the walls, the ricochet marks on the floor, the scattered casings, and the display on the side of the gun that tells you how much ammo you have left. It's a scene fit for a forensics case study.

Miner Differences

Although Red Faction will have a multiplayer option, the main meat of the game will be its intensive single-player storyline. If one had to briefly summarize the Red Faction experience, it could most concisely be described as the dramatic storytelling of Half-Life crossed with the setting of Total Recall.

Players control Parker, a miner working for the Ultor Corporation on the planet Mars. The conditions the miners are forced to endure have always been horrible, but once The Plague – a disease that mysteriously only affects the workers – begins rapidly spreading, discontentment turns into a revolution. With the help of an Ultor insider, Parker becomes the leader of this insurrection, and it's the players goal to not only take up arms against their oppressors, but figure out the corporation's ulterior motives and the origins of The Plague.

Much of the adventure takes place in the underground mines of Mars, but as players make their way through the web of intrigue they will find themselves on the planet's surface, and even in an orbiting space station. The Geo-Mod aspect of Red Faction certainly makes one anxious to cause mass destruction, and although players will definitely have an opportunity to do just that, there is more to the game than just blazing your way through level after level. Many of the tasks put before Parker require subtlety, stealth, and sometimes disguise.

To further flesh out the ever-evolving story, plenty of real-time cutscenes will be dispersed throughout the game. These, combined with the realistic gameplay engine that aids in suspension of disbelief, create an overwhelmingly immersive journey.

A Martian stand-off

All's fair in an underground Martian rebellion

"All right, who put the flares in my rifle?"

With a twitch of the thumb, the Remote Charge can blow up almost any obstacle and scare away nearly all smartly dressed businesspersons

If you can't club 'em, you can always zap 'em

The Bigger They Are...

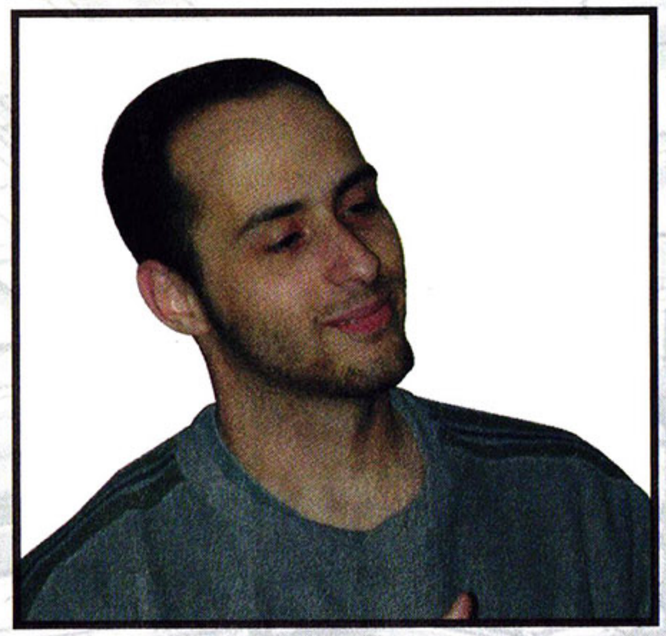
No matter how long the list of features for a first-person shooter is, the foremost question on any potential player's mind is, "What kind of weapons does it have?" Red Faction boasts 15 different arms in its arsenal, each with secondary functions. In addition to hand-held implements of destruction, there are also turrets at various places in the game that allow players to unload on anyone or anything nearby. Although the exact variety of weapons hasn't been finalized, here's a listing of definite inclusions and their alternate uses.

Weapon	Secondary Function
Pistol	Fire silenced rounds. Helpful in stealth missions.
Riot Stick	Changes to a taser to zap your enemies.
Remote Charge	A proximity mine that detonates when someone gets too close.
Shotgun	Autofire rather than pump action, but with reduced accuracy.
Sniper Rifle	Zoom lens to hit distant, and often unaware, enemies.
Rocket Launcher	A lock-on homing missile.
Assault Rifle	Rather than three-round bursts, it goes fully automatic.
Machine Pistol	Armor-piercing rounds that shoot through multiple objects and people.
Grenade	Emits volumes of smoke.
Flamethrower	Torch turns off and player can spread fuel to ignite later.

"I think everyone has wanted to see something like this for a long time, but until now it just wasn't possible. Our lead programmer spent easily a year just getting it to work and making it fast enough."
Alan Lawrance, Lead Designer

As this concept art shows, you won't just be facing soldiers and robots

A look at the submarine from the outside

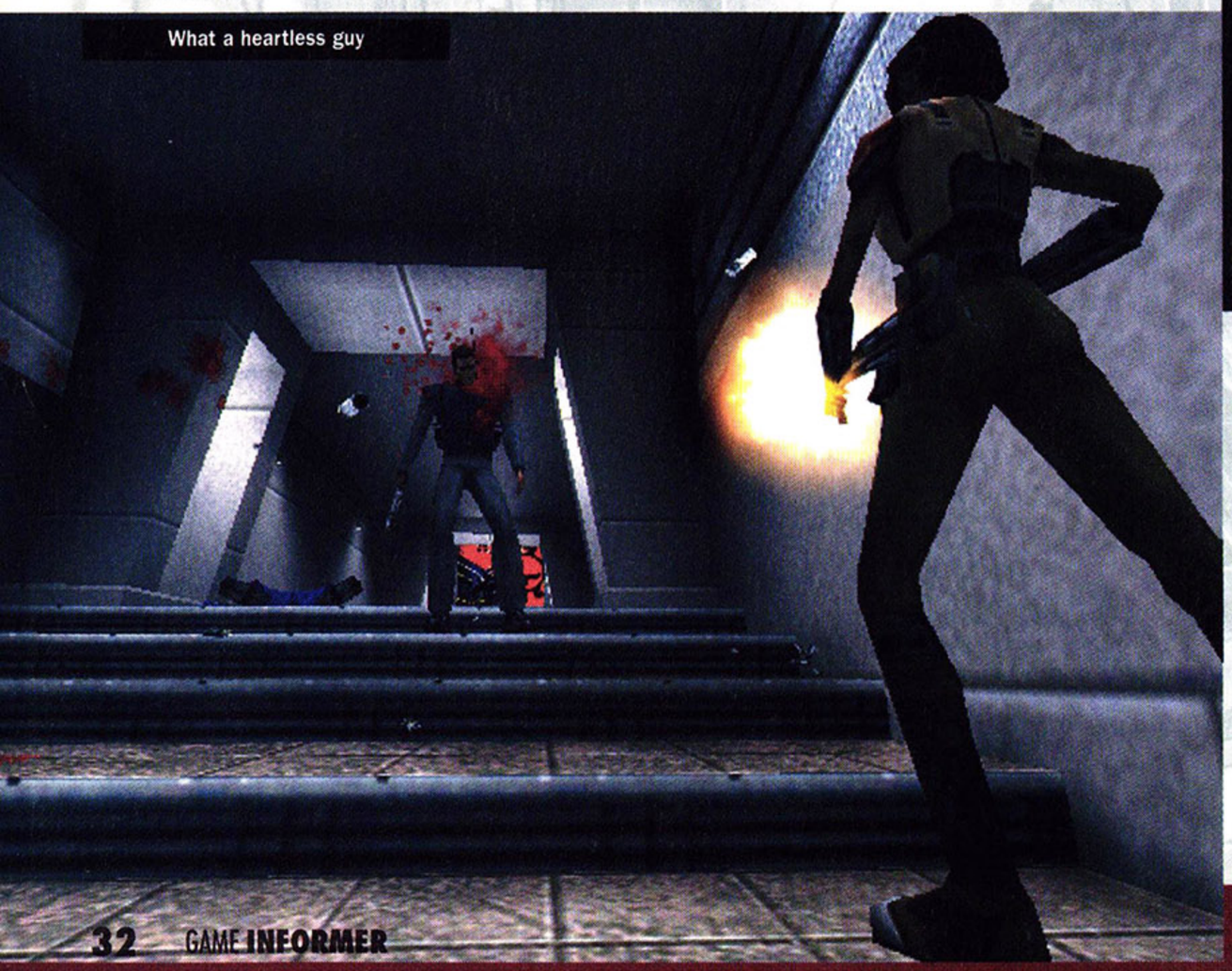


"We wanted the weapons to be very set in the real world. We didn't want there to be purple shrink rays and freeze guns. I think there's a certain satisfaction that comes with just shooting someone."
Frank Capezzuto III, Artist

Vehicular Manslaughter

Moreso than any other FPS before it, Red Faction encourages, and sometimes demands, that players get behind the wheel of the game's six vehicles (four of which Volition was willing to tell us about). When a player finds an alternate mode of transportation, entering changes the display to a cockpit view. Some vehicles, such as the APC and flying fighter, are built for destruction, armed with machine guns to mow down troops, and either missiles or mortars to destroy undesirable constructions. Other vehicles, however, serve to carry Parker to otherwise difficult to reach places. There's a submarine for making treks underwater, and a completely unarmed, but heavily armored, drilling machine made to bore quickly through mountains of stone.

What a heartless guy



It may look like fogging in the back of this picture, but it's actually steam being blown through the vent fan

Listen Closely

Although audio almost always plays second fiddle to visuals, it's hard not to appreciate the decibel detail of Red Faction. In the heat of combat, it's easy to single out the many sound facets transpiring at once. Amongst the report of multiple firearms, one hears a commander yelling orders from the rear, the sound of your character's feet crunching across broken glass, bullets bouncing off walls, and bodies hitting the floor, all as the musical score plays on.

Knowing that people like to do harm to different harmonies, Volition is considering putting the soundtrack in the hands of the player. From a menu screen, as many or as few of the 45 available tracks are selected, then programmed to play in whatever order strikes your fancy.

Complete Control

Like almost everything else in Red Faction, the controls can be completely programmed by the player. Of course, the developers have attempted to make a natural-feeling default control scheme, but if you think their setup sucks, feel free to change it however you see fit. Functions can be assigned to everything on the Dual Shock 2 (including the rarely used analog stick buttons). If even this isn't enough, you're welcome to plug a keyboard and mouse into the PS2's USB ports and go hot key crazy.

"This game is a major shift in thought. We're going with the philosophy that everything is destructable, unless we decide it can't be as opposed to the other way around."
Matt Boynton, Level Designer

"Yo, baby! Want to see what's under my helmet?!"

"Look man, it's standard company procedure. Now turn around so I can get my sample."

This weapon makes the BFG look like a plastic water gun

"Feeble!" **An anonymous comment from a Red Faction team member upon seeing TimeSplitters for the first time**

MATURE

Animated Violence
Animated Blood and Gore
Suggestive Themes

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

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MURDER AND MAYHEM INTERRUPTED BY FREQUENT DRESSING AND UNDRESSING.

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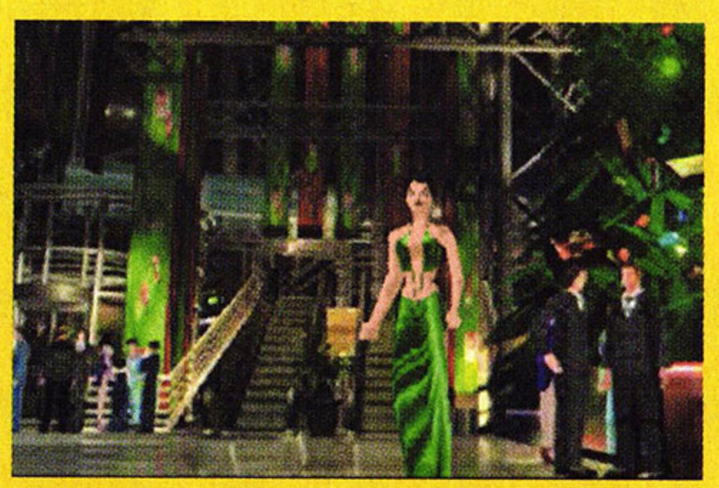
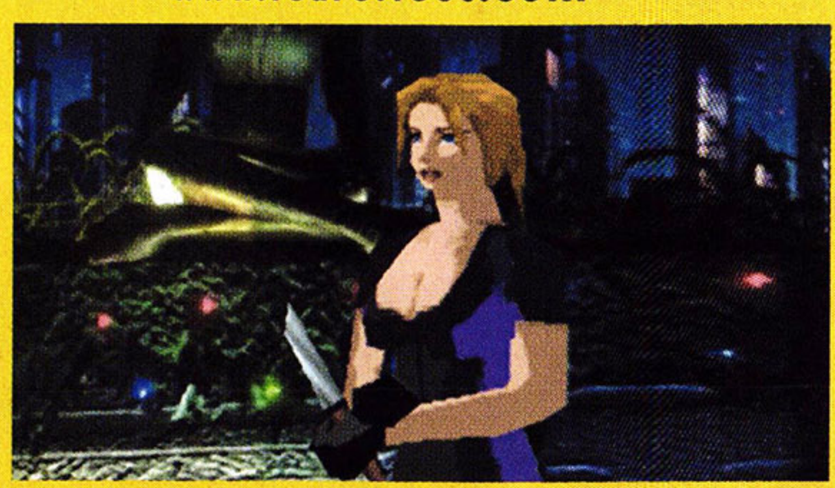




PLASTIC FANTASTIC

Video Games Take Over The Toy Market

It's been conventional wisdom for the last 20 years or so that for a new action figure line to be successful, it has to be based on characters from popular movies, television shows, comic books, cartoon series, or, best case scenario, all of the above. It's easy to see why this trend has held true. A personality and back story come inherent within such hunks of painted plastic. Just seeing these toys creates instant immediacy and excitement, reminding the purveyor not only of the adventures that character has already had, but also conjuring up images of the escapades that could be if only the figure were freed from its packaging.

There may be a new plastic-badged sheriff on its way to toy town, however. More interactive than movies or television, with a bigger audience than comic books, and as animated as any cartoon, video games are the next big thing just beginning to be tapped by toy manufacturers. Game Informer couldn't be happier with this trend.

Finally fans have a way of showing what their favorite video game is other than sketching its logo onto the cover of their algebra notebook. Not only are there action figures available and in the pipeline based on a multitude of titles, there's also plenty of statues, lunchboxes, and playsets on the way. Have a look through the following pages and you'll definitely find something you want. There's still time to make some additions to your holiday wish list, right?

Resident Evil 3 Vinyl Statues

Palisades Marketing
Available: December

At 16 inches tall, the Nemesis vinyl statue towers over the petite 11-inch Jill. Both come fully painted and ready for display in a "I'm going to crush your pretty, little head like an overripe melon" pose.

Army Men

Playing Mantis
Available: November

Here's a peg-warming series that should sit on retail shelves right next to the Godzilla: The Movie line for years to come. Rather than buying a bag of 500 little army dudes, Playing Mantis is offering one green figure, with articulation we might add, for six to seven bucks. Sarge, Plastro, Hoover, Vikki, Col. Grimm, and Riff round out the first – and hopefully last – series of Army Men figures. If you buy one of these toys, please send us an email, because we really want to get into your head and see why your brain doesn't function properly.

MAKING IT

A lot more goes into making a figure than you might think. Palisades Marketing was kind enough to take GI on a guided tour through its creation process, laying out the steps it takes to put together a video game action figure.

Concept

With your team assembled, play some vids and/or look through video game magazines and websites to see what's cool and has good-looking characters begging to make the screen-to-shelf transition. Obviously, marketability has to be kept in mind during this step. NFL 2K1 is a great game, but figures based on it might be less than exhilarating – plus Sega doesn't own the rights to the players' likenesses. Also, if a game has great characters but only sold 3,000 copies, the market for merchandise based on that title is going to be limited.

Contact

Once you've found your winning idea, it's time to call up the company to see if it's interested in such a thing. If the answer is affirmative, it's time to work out the business end of things, and discuss what artwork and information the company needs to provide to move onto the next step.

Sketching

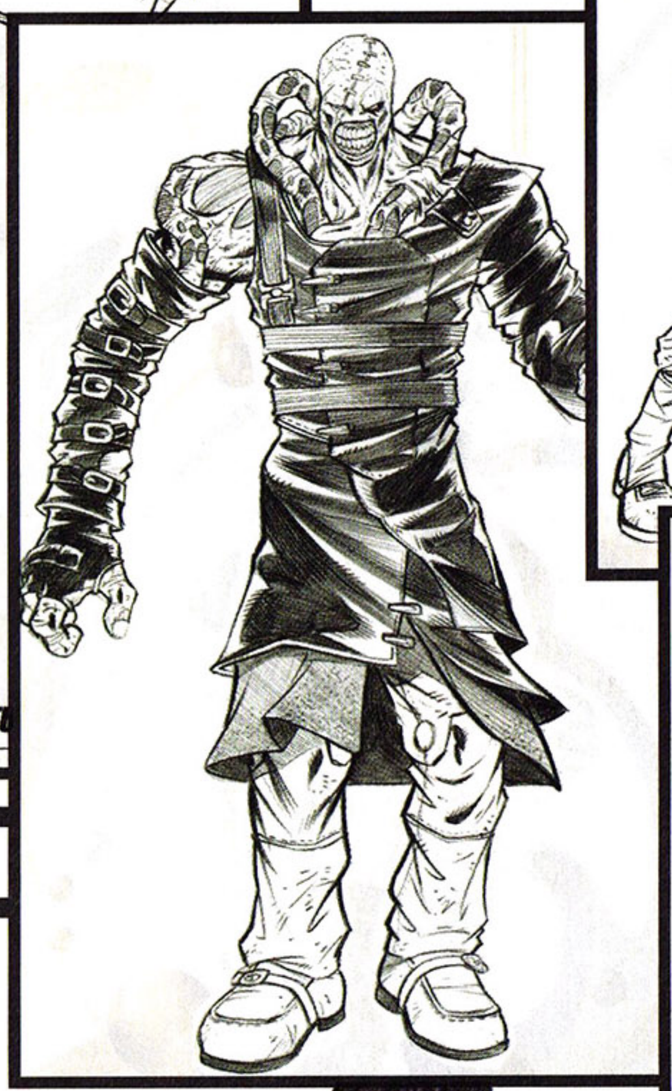
With the materials assembled, an artist with a working knowledge of action figures sits down with a big sheet of paper and a pencil. It's the artist's job to render the character, from all angles, as he thinks it should be as a figure. It's at this stage that such details as points of articulation, types of joints to use, color scheme, and accessories to include are decided.

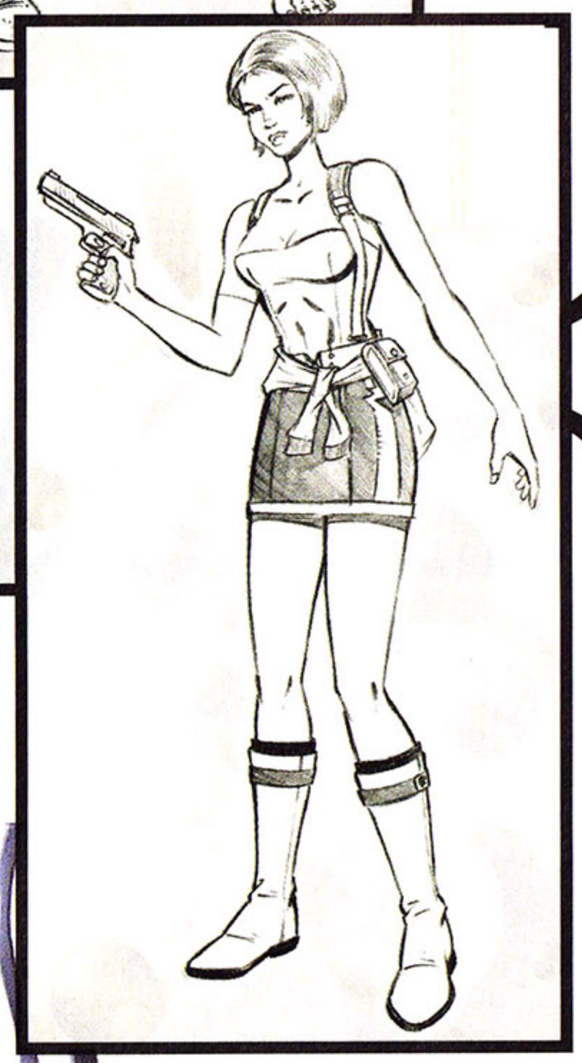
Continued on pg. 39

Resident Evil Action Figures

Palisades Marketing
Available: First Quarter 2001

The Resident Evil statues are just the tip of the survival horror iceberg for Palisades. The company has the rights to produce action figures based on all the Resident Evil games, which it eventually plans to do. Its first series of four figures will all have at least 14 points of articulation, and will include a nine-inch Nemesis figure, and a six-inch Jill, Soldier Zombie, and Nosferatu. If only the characters in the series had access to such good looking models. They might be able to recreate the mystery using a Raccoon City diorama rather than risk getting killed by investigating firsthand.





Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

Blue Box Toys
Available: First Quarter 2001

Following Palisades' streak of success, many of Blue Box's upcoming toy lines revolve around the world of video games. If you didn't like the ending to the game, the first two figures in the Soul Reaver line allow you to reenact the scene. The Kain figure looks fantastic, but Raziel's sculpt leaves much to be desired. What's with his Backstreet Boys' hairdo, anyway?

Armored Core 2

Kotobukiya
Available: December

In celebration of the PlayStation 2 release, Japanese toy developer Kotobukiya has assembled two finely-crafted mecha from the game. Both Emroard ECM XR00 and Geo Matrics ZCL-XA/2 feature shiny chrome paint jobs and amazing articulation. If you're looking to snatch up these figures, good luck. The only way you can get them is through importing. However, most worhtwhile comic shops should carry them.

Approval

The early sketches are sent to the licensor for approval. Usually, a back and forth communication regarding small changes begins. Not until both sides are happy with all the proposed figures can the process move along.

Sculpting

Freelance sculptors are contacted to take on the job of transforming the drawn image to something you can wrap your hands around. The person whose artistic style most coincides with the project gets the job. Every few days, the sculptor takes digital pictures of their progress and emails them to the sketch artist to confirm that things are moving in the right direction. Depending on the size and detail of the figure, it takes two to four weeks to finish a sculpt for a single figure.

Approval Part II

Photos of the sculpts are sent to the licensor to go through the approval process once more. If any changes are requested at this point, it's back to the grindstone for the sculptor.

Casting

Time to destroy all the sculptor's hard work. Each component is placed in a silicone mold, then melted out so a resin casting can be made. The result is a white figure made of a lightweight cement-like material.

Painting

The casting is given its colors by a freelance painter according to the specifications decided upon in the sketching phase.

Continued on pg. 41

INTERVIEW WITH

MIKE HORN

President of Palisades Marketing

Game Informer: What's easier to make the decision on if it would be a good license – comic books or video games?

Mike Horn: Video games! The 100th ranked selling video game is still going to have a larger audience than a top ten selling comic book. Plus, games are more complex, so the characters are more detailed, therefore the players are more involved, and the merchandise is more appealing.

GI: With the time it takes for you to manufacture your merchandise, is it hard for you to get product on the shelves in time to coincide with a video game's release?

MH: That's why we usually try to pick a line that we think will have some staying power. We try to pick games with good characters, and we've been lucky that a lot of our licenses have had sequels to keep interest in the lines going. It's our intention to get more timely with our releases, and that's going to happen as we get to know the game publishers better.

GI: Case in point with this timeliness issue is your Final Fantasy IX license. The game comes out November 15. When will we see products based on it?

MH: We didn't get our license signed until September, so that line won't be on shelves until March 2001. For the Final Fantasy movie, however, the deal has already been finalized, and the merchandise we have planned will be available by the launch of the movie.

GI: A lot of your product used to be made by a Japanese company, didn't it?

MH: Yeah, we had relationships with two Japanese companies and an American company. We did some really good business together, but we wanted to be completely in charge of the products – what characters got done, how they got sculpted, when they got released – a lot of the things we only had partial input on. We made sure to set them up with distribution in the US before going our own way because we don't view them as competitors, we just couldn't continue to dedicate the time and energy to sell someone else's product.

GI: You guys have made lunchboxes for comics. Do you have any plans to make video game lunchboxes?

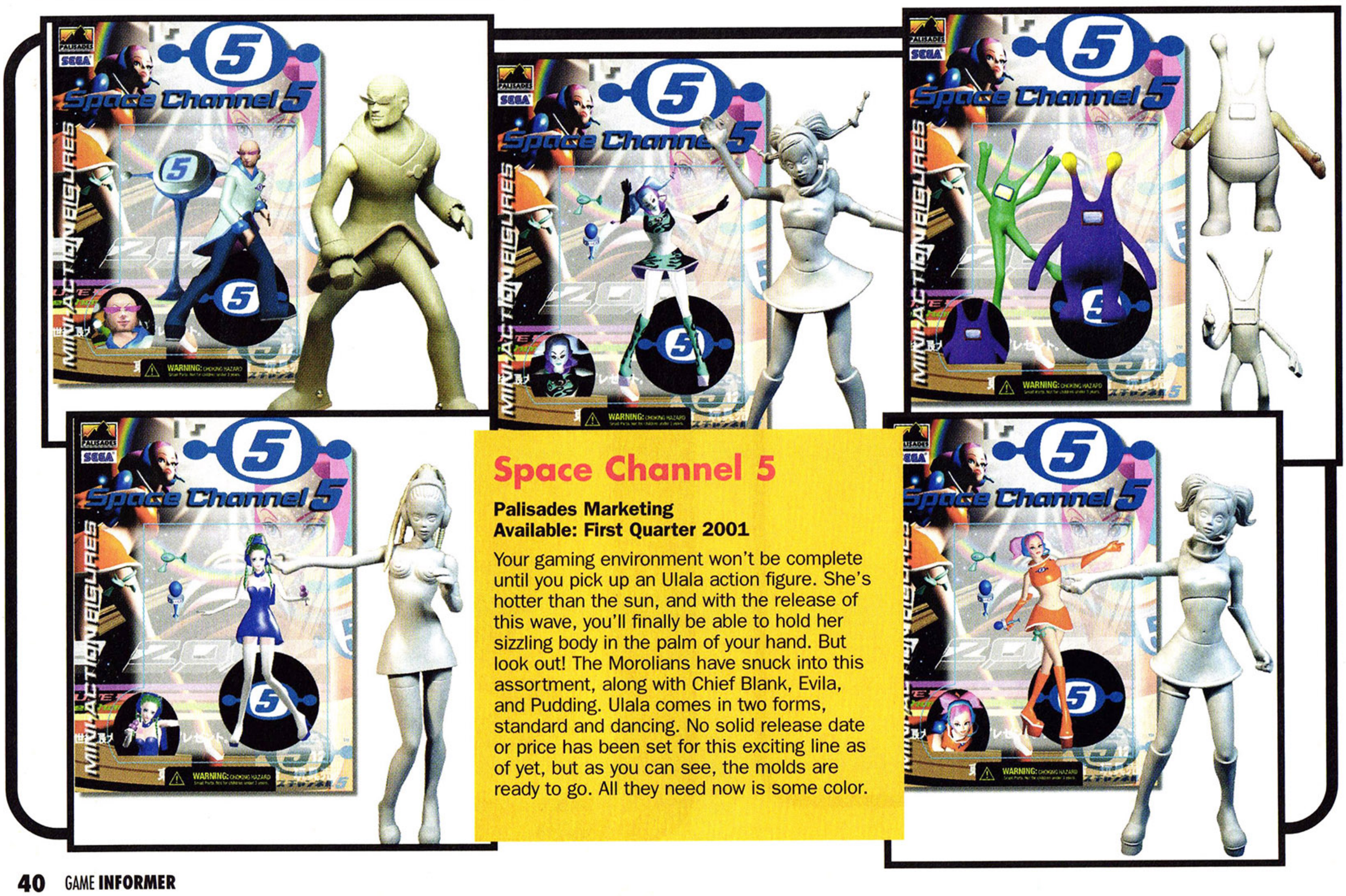
MH: We sure do. We actually made some promotional Parasite Eve 2 lunchboxes for Square Soft to give away at a party they had. The Sonic lunchboxes have just become available, and we've got ones for Space Channel 5, Final Fantasy IX, and the Final Fantasy movie planned.

GI: How many of your lunchboxes do you think are actually used to carry lunches?

MH: My brother is a school teacher, and I know he uses his Buffy lunchbox for its intended purpose. So that's one I know of for sure. Beyond that, I'd guess…I don't know…very few.

GI: What about your action figures? How many do you think get taken out of the package?

MH: I'm sure barely any of our figures end up in a sand pile in the backyard, but people still want to put them in a fighting pose with other figures on their desk or whatever. I mean, what fun is a cool looking figure stuck in its package?



Space Channel 5

Palisades Marketing
Available: First Quarter 2001

Your gaming environment won't be complete until you pick up an Ulala action figure. She's hotter than the sun, and with the release of this wave, you'll finally be able to hold her sizzling body in the palm of your hand. But look out! The Morolians have snuck into this assortment, along with Chief Blank, Evila, and Pudding. Ulala comes in two forms, standard and dancing. No solid release date or price has been set for this exciting line as of yet, but as you can see, the molds are ready to go. All they need now is some color.

Approval Part III

This is the last chance for the licensor to object to anything they don't like about the figure.

Molding

Two resin castings are sent to Hong Kong: a tooling master and the painted copy of the figure. The tooling master is meticulously sanded and smoothed to create as clean a copy of the figure as possible for the making of the mold. Each individual piece of the figure is molded into a block of solid metal the size of a shoebox, into which hot plastic will be injected. While the molds are being made, the backing card design is being decided upon back in the States. When the look of the cards is finalized, these too are sent to Hong Kong to be manufactured.

Assembly

Imagine a team of a couple hundred people assembling and painting a model, and you have a good idea of what this looks like. Each figure is molded, cleaned up, painted, and put together by an assembly line in Hong Kong.

Packaging

At the end of the assembly line, the figures are placed into their plastic trays, then heat-sealed to the backing cards, and packed up into cases. From here, everything is shipped off to whatever stores have toy orders pending.

On The Shelf

You see it in the store. You like it. You buy it. From conception to market, it took around seven months for this figure to make it into your hands.

House of the Dead 2

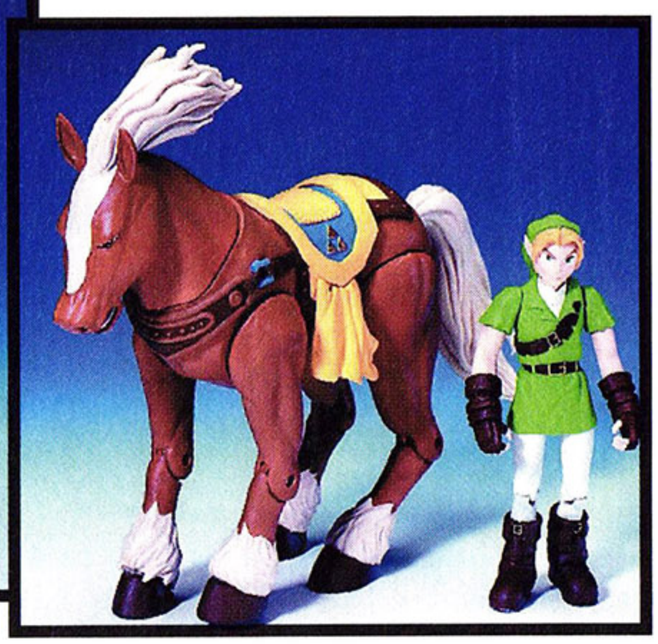
Palisades Marketing
Available: December

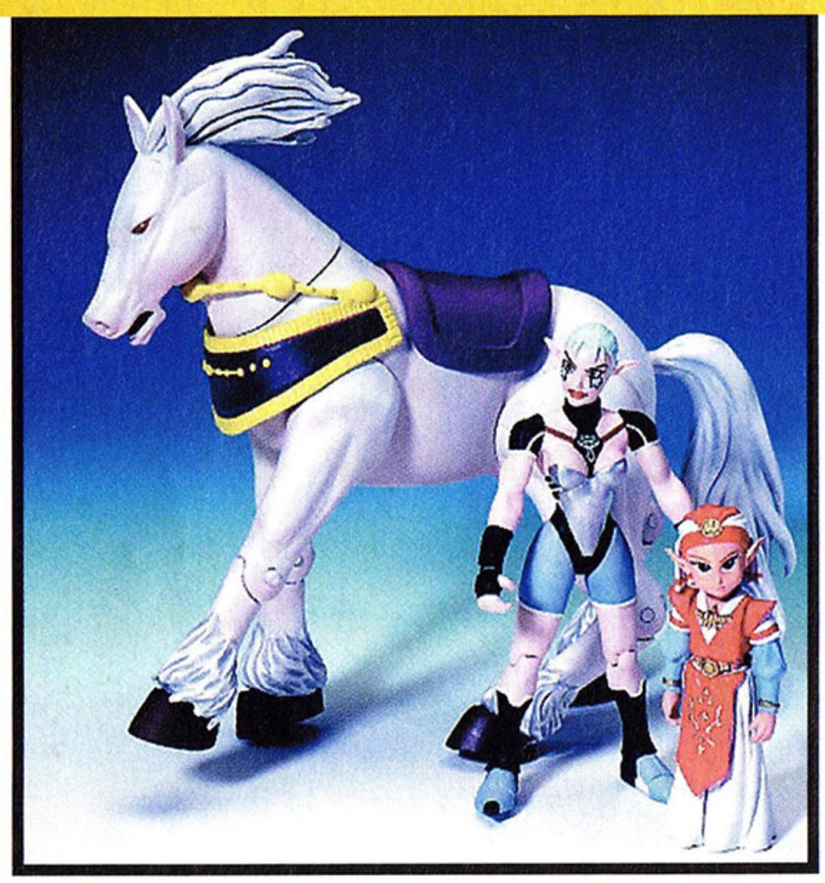
You know what the best thing about these figures is? They're sweet even if you've never heard of House of the Dead. You've got a maniacal, axe-wielding zombie, a chainsaw-swinging brute, a clawed freak with a metal mask, and a...uh, fish guy. Well, the other three gotta have something to cut up. Fish sticks for everyone!

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Toy Biz
Available: January 2001

This is the second line of Zelda toys based on the Ocarina of Time. Along with Toy Site's upcoming line, Toy Biz has a series of its own that should make gamers drool. These highly detailed figures will ship in sets. Gannondorf comes with his trusty warhorse, Zelda is accompanied by Impa and a cute little pony, and Link will share his box with Epona. While the pictures make these figures look gigantic, they only stand at 3 3/4 inches. Gannondorf is a tad taller at five inches.





The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Toy Site
Available: November

Countering Toy Biz's attack, the original Ocarina of Time toy manufacturer has a new series of deluxe figures up its sleeve. Along with new sculpts of Link and Gannondorf, this series includes Sheik, Stalfos, Darunia, and Princess Zelda.

The Legend of Dragoon

Blue Box Toys
Available: November

Despite what ex-Game Informer editor Jon Storm thinks, The Legend of Dragoon is an amazing game that is worthy of its own toy line. For those of you who sucked up this brilliant RPG, how could you not want a Lavitz toy? Blue Box did a commendable job capturing the look of each character, but it would have been nice if each figure came equipped with Dragoon equipment.

EverQuest

Toy Vault
Available: December

These figures should hit retail shelves around the same time as The Scars of Velious (November 27), and knowing how EverQuest fanatics play their games, they'll probably camp outside their local retailers with their guilds, waiting for days for these rare figures to re-spawn. Needless to say, this line is very impressive. Many of the figures come with mini-creatures like snakes, spiders, and rats. The first wave consists of a Troll Shaman, a Dark Elf Wizard, a Split Paw Gnoll, and an Iksar Warrior. Immediately after this, a Dark Elf Magician, a Grenix Mucktail Gnoll, an Iksar Necromancer, and a Troll Warrior will hit shelves.

TOY WEBSITES

In many cases, finding a store that carries the toys we've shown can be a real pain. To help you out, here's some websites that will with your shopping needs and keep you in tune with what's going on in the action figure world.

Manufacturers

www.bandai.com – Digimon

www.blizzard.com – Diablo II, WarCraft III

www.blueboxtoys.com – Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, The Legend of Dragoon, Fighting Force, Omega Boost

www.bluebyte.com – Settlers

www.palisadesmarketing.com – Resident Evil, Space Channel 5, House of the Dead, Final Fantasy

www.playmatestoys.com – Tomb Raider, Monster Rancher

www.resaurus.com – Street Fighter, Gex, Quake, Crash Bandicoot

www.toy-site.com – Zelda, Super Smash Brothers, Pokémon, Donkey Kong

www.toyvault.com – EverQuest, Farscape

News

www.action-figure.com

www.figures.com

www.tomart.com

www.toymania.com

Stores

www.entertainmentearth.com

www.etoys.com

www.gamestop.com

www.toymaniacs.com

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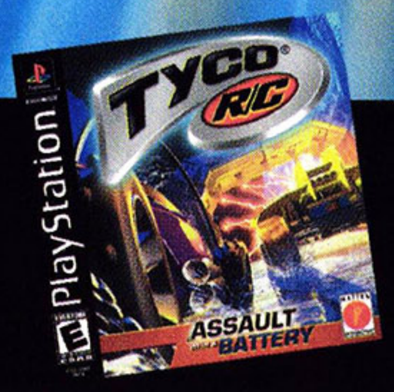
Flip off your Friends



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GET THE GOODS!

Game Informer's Guide To Getting What You Want This Holiday Season

In late December, the world comes together as one in brotherhood and good cheer. Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanza give us occasion to celebrate our cultural and spiritual beliefs and remember how much we love our fellow man. That warm, fuzzy holiday feeling makes our world a happier place, if only for a few weeks.

Right! We all know what's really on the mind of every little one of you stinky hooligans. Presents. That's right – the good stuff that magically appears under your tree every year. You crave the highly prized games and toys that can make you the envy of all your friends.

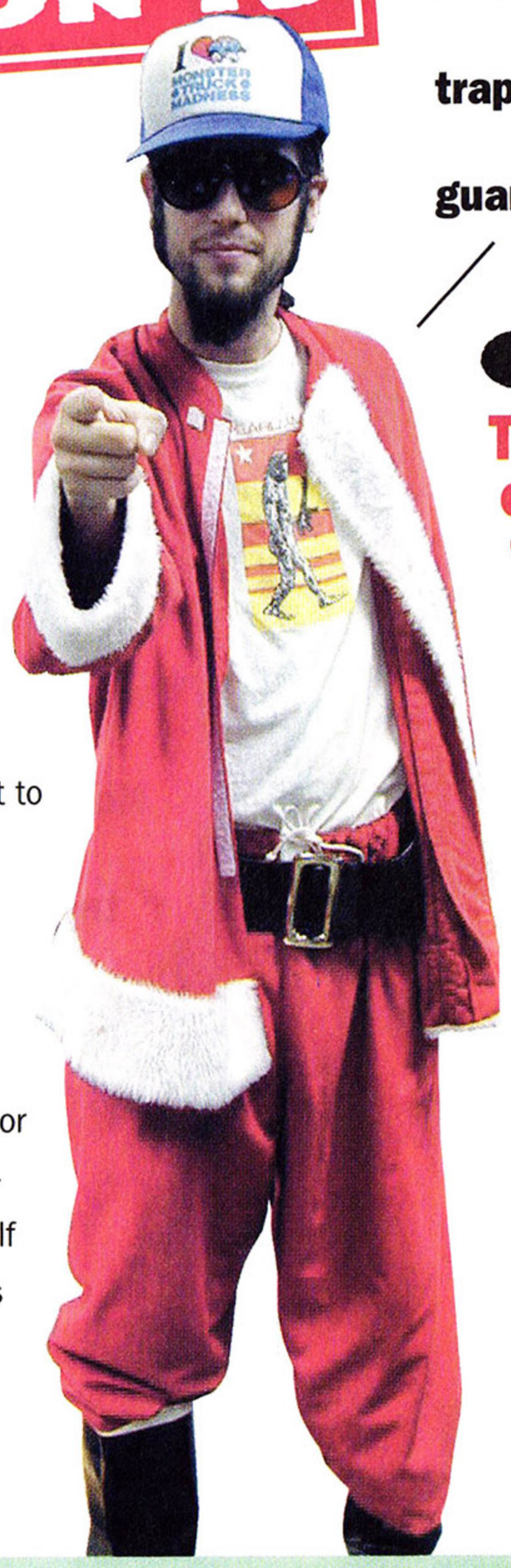
Of course, there is only one thing that can ruin your holidays more than passing gas at Christmas Mass – and that's bad presents. We've all gotten them. Whether it's socks, a green turtleneck, a cheese log, or (heaven forbid) an Army Men game. Yes, we all know what it's like to feel totally ripped off by a lame present. So, how can you be sure to get the booty you so richly deserve? Sure, you could be a little angel all year, but what fun would that be? To this end, we've devised a surefire system that will help you stay in the good graces of Santa and your parents this year. To help us out, we've enlisted the help of the legendary Holiday Sam.

"Hey you little snail-snarfing snot gobblers! This is...no...I'M NOT SANTA CLAUS! My name is Holiday Sam. Santa Claus is a no-good hustler who stole this whole holiday gig right out from under my nose. Won the sleigh and reindeer from me in a poker game in Kansas City back in '65. Got a suit just like mine and started claiming he was the one giving every-one presents. What a load of horse pucky! Started moving in on my territory. Pretty soon him and them damn midgets drove me right out of business. He's an idiot. Imagine him wedging his fat rear end down a chimney and getting all dirty. Heck, I just picked the lock and broke in like a sensible person.

Anyway, you greedy little turds wanna know about presents? I done wrote the book on presents when you were just a gleam in your pappy's eye! Now listen close, and Holiday Sam'll tell you the secrets of getting the good stuff."

HOLIDAY SAM'S DO'S & DON'TS

"Here's just a few pointers on sucking up to your parents. If you wanna make out like a bandit, then mind your Ps and Qs, shut your trap, and open your ears. Now, my sweet little guano chompers, here we go..."



GOOD:

Rat out the competition

They say that no one likes a snitch, but I'm here to tell you that it's every man (or woman) for themselves in this crazy world. Every dollar not spent on your sibling is a potential dollar added to your present budget. See your sister taking an extra five-spot from your mother's purse? Run right to mommy and sing like a jaybird!

BAD:

Graffiti

I don't care if you've been playing Jet Grind Radio or hangin' with them hippity flippity breakdancing rapper types – graffiti is one great way to land yourself in a whole heap o' trouble. Throw them spray cans in the trash, kids!

GOOD:

Throw out all that noise you call music and listen to something decent for a change

Back in your parent's day, they didn't have all this Sick Biscuits, or M&M, or Roach Motel or whatever those femmy little chuckleheads calls themselves! They had songs you could sing along to – like Anne Murray, Christopher Cross, and Uriah Heep! Now that was MUSIC. Throw away that trash, and start crankin' up some Neil Diamond. That'll get you on Mom's good side in no time!

BAD:

Giving your sibling a haircut

This may sound like a good idea on paper, and it might even save your parents some bucks - but trust me, it's dangerous. One false move and your little sister Katie could look like that Coolio fella!

QUIZ: NAUGHTY OR NICE???

Can you expect a PlayStation 2 in your stocking this Christmas, or just the proverbial lump of fossilized rhino poo? Take our quiz and find out where you stand in the eyes of Old Saint Nick.

1) What is the your nickname?
a) Sweet Pea
b) Chip
c) Shorty
d) Lil' Devil
e) Inmate #1256

2) You see an old lady crossing the street, walking toward her car. Do you:
a) run to help her across
b) pretend you don't see her
c) offer to help carry her packages
d) hope she didn't see you make off with her car stereo

3) You see some kids toilet papering your principal's house. Do you:
a) Join in on the fun
b) Call the police
c) Run home crying to your mommy
d) Set his house on fire

4) What did you give your mother for her birthday this past year?
a) A dozen roses
b) A candle and a lovely card
c) A bag of Doritos
d) An ulcer

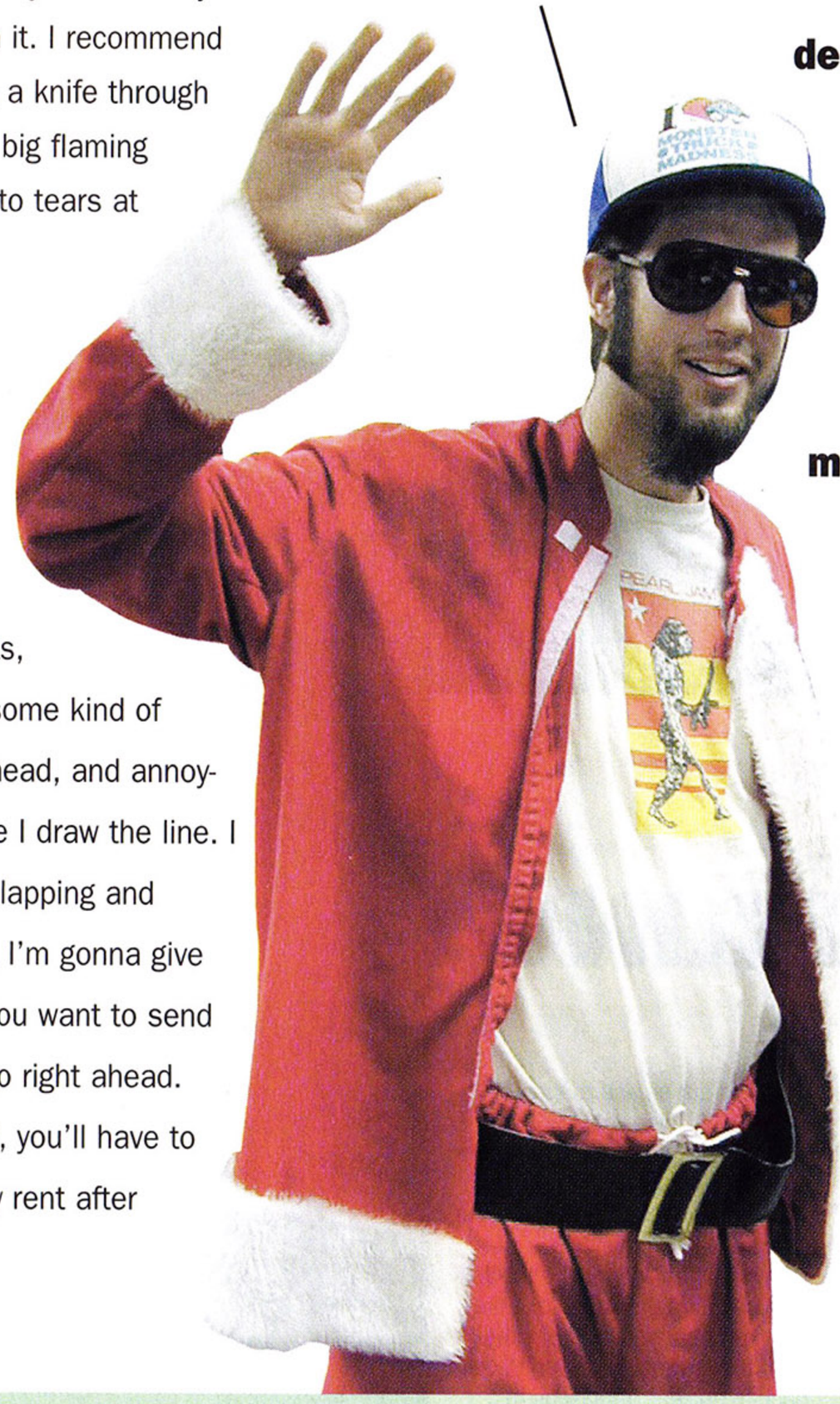
5) What's your favorite color?

SCORING:
1) a-0, b-0, c-2, d-3, e-4
2) a-1, b-2, c-0, d-5
3) a-3, b-2, c-1, d-6
4) a-0 b-1, c-3, d-4

GOOD:

Getting a tattoo

I know some of them sissy-pants Harvard types might frown on them, but nothing shows somebody how much you care like a tattoo with their name in it. I recommend getting "Mother" in a big heart with a knife through it. Either that or "Dad" written on a big flaming skull. Believe me, they'll be moved to tears at this touching gesture.



BAD:

Becoming a Hare Krishna

Now I think that anyone has the right to believe what he or she wants, but when that means dressin' like some kind of hippy mental patient, shaving your head, and annoying people at airports – that's where I draw the line. I swear, if those beatniks start that clapping and chanting around me one more time, I'm gonna give 'em a colon exam with my boot! If you want to send your dear mother to the therapist, go right ahead. Forget about getting a PlayStation 2, you'll have to pawn your regular PlayStation to pay rent after you get kicked out of the house.

"So there you have it. Thanks to your old buddy Holiday Sam, you little puke-bellied pit stains will probably get more presents than you could ever deserve! I ain't happy about it, mind you. I'd rather eat a pickled raccoon gizzard than spend a dime on you grubby grease monkeys. I already lost all the money they gave me to do this asinine article at the track anyway! Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to be going. I'm making an appearance at the opening of a White Castle in Flint, Michigan."

5) If you answered green, you fail this test automatically!! Green is the color of eeeeviil! Be gone with ye, Satan-spawn!!

If you scored:

0 – You're stinkin' lyin' rat! No one is that good! You'll get nothing and like it!!!

1-5 – You're a real goody two-shoes. If I were your daddy, I'd smack ya around fer bein' such a weenie, but you'll probably make out pretty good this year

5-10 – You're kind of a little brat, but your parents are probably nice enough to get you some of the stuff you want

10+ – You're ridin' shotgun in the demon Camaro on the Highway to Hell! Forget about presents - you'll be lucky if your parents don't press charges against you!

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS...

"Now I know some of you rapscallions are so rotten that you won't get a present no matter how many secrets I give you! I say, GOOD! You deserve a quick kick in the butt, if you ask me! And quit playing on my lawn!! Ahem...now what do you do if you get totally stiffed this holiday season?

Lucky for you, banks are giving out credit cards to any broke loser on the street! They're easier to get than rabies at a pit bull convention. Now just get yourself an application, say that you're 18, and you'll have your very own free-money card in no time!! If the guy at the store gives you funny looks, tell him you have a kidney disorder that stunted your growth like that dwarf who hangs out with Kid Rock. Also, a pair of those mustache nose glasses might help you look older. Happy shopping, and tell 'em Holiday Sam sent ya!"

PREVIEWS

DREAMCAST/PLAYSTATION/PC

EVIL DEAD: HAIL TO THE KING

WHERE'S MY BOOMSTICK?

For everyone who's ever wanted to jump into the middle of an Evil Dead scene, here's your chance. The popular film series is being converted into a third-person adventure game. Hail to the King takes you inside the mind of Ash as he shoots and chainsaws his way through what could be called a Resident Evil spoof.

The game opens seven years after the end of Army of Darkness, and is set in the rustic cabin where the original two Evil Dead films were made. Taking on a new plot line, Ash and his new squeeze, Jenny, decide to go back to the cabin because of recurring nightmares about the Necronomicon – a book written in human blood and bound in flesh, the contents of which concern all manner of nasty and bad things. You must find its pages to put an end to the menace plaguing you.

In the game's opening, Evil Ash comes back and kidnaps Jenny. This, of course, starts you on your journey to kill your evil doppelganger, and rescue the Jenster from certain peril. Along the way, you visit a number of sites from the movies, and even travel back to ancient Damascus to engage the undead hoards.

When you begin the game, you start with two weapons – an arm-mounted chainsaw and a large axe. It isn't long before you get your filthy little hands (technically, it would be "hand" since the other one is now evil) on a pistol, a sawed-off shotgun, a rifle, and another weapon yet to be disclosed. The chainsaw uses gas and can be turned on and off for greater killing ability. Fuel can be found throughout the woods in varying quantities, and you'll want to make sure you keep an ample stock of it. You're rewarded for your bloodthirsty nature by health kits, bullets, and other bonuses that appear from enemies you dispatch.

Bruce Campbell provides plenty of original voice work in HttK, as evidenced by the different taunts you can hurl at whomever (or whatever) seems to need it at the time. Interestingly enough, some enemies will become more aggressive when taunted, while others may be intimidated and run away when faced with a vintage Evil Dead one-liner.

THQ is well aware that the game is still in development stages, and needs to have its bugs worked out. We look for this game to have the same appeal as the movies – a heavy dose of camp. Evil Dead fans will rush out to buy this one, but for those of us who are casual fans, the choice may not be automatic. Presumably, Hail to the King will debut with refined graphical and audio features that were lacking in the preview version. If it's polished and pretty, this title will probably enjoy moderate success.

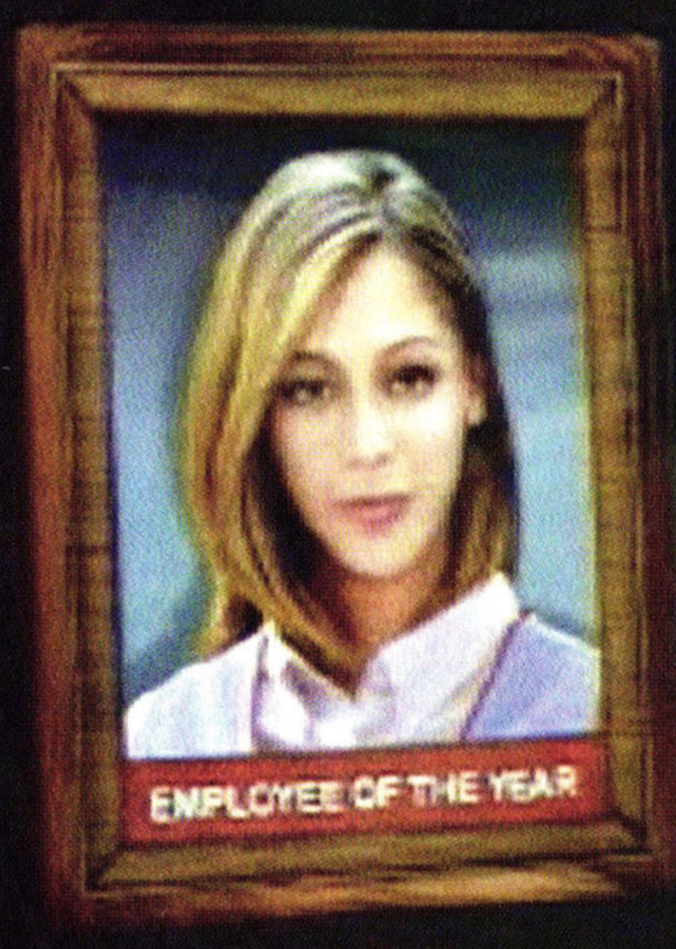
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** HEAVY IRON STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 1

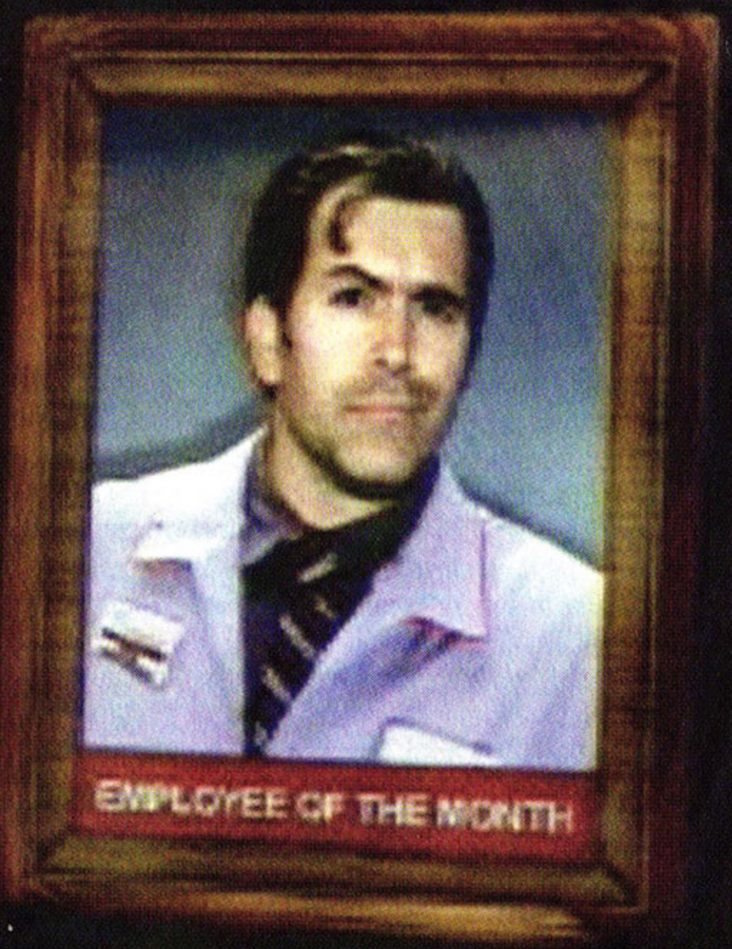
The back of the cabin

PC graphics are sharper

Dreamcast's graphics are decent

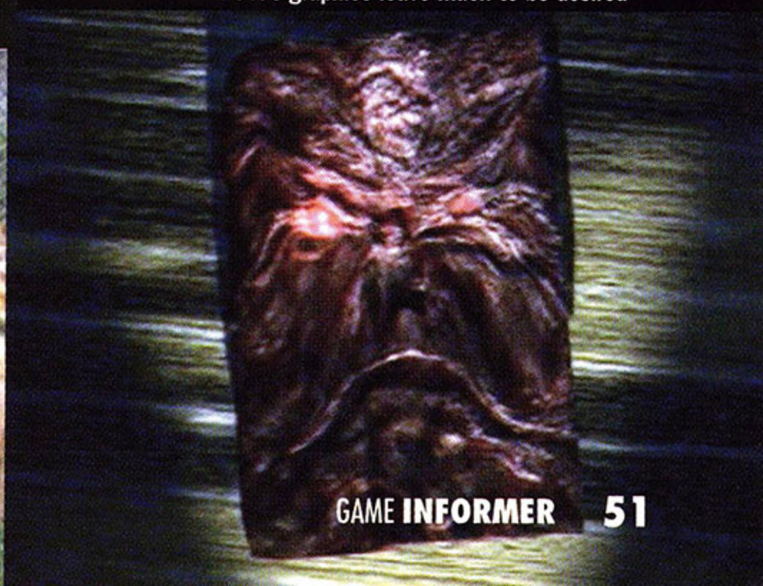
PS-X's graphics leave much to be desired





Ancient Damascus

Death by axe



PLAYSTATION 2

GRAN TURISMO 3

ENHANCED WITH A NEW COAT OF PAINT

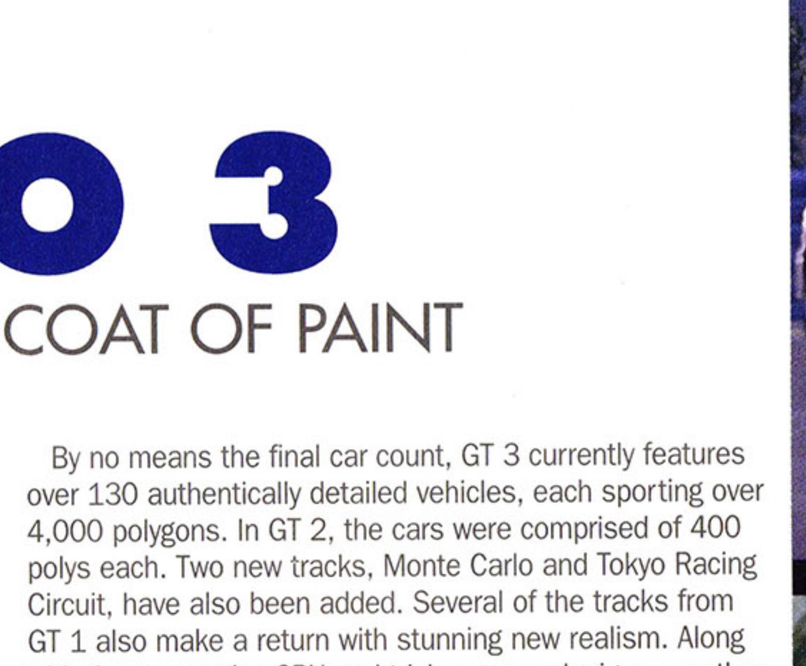
With more than 15 million units sold worldwide, the Gran Turismo series has transformed the face of racing games, and become one of the most talked about and highly craved titles on the market. Originally scheduled to kick start the Japanese PlayStation 2 launch, the newest chapter in the series, Gran Turismo 2000, slid into a series of delays and is still parked in Polyphony's development garage, being fine tuned with each passing day. At Sony's first US Gamers' Day, the hungry press were fortunate enough to catch a special sneak peek at the evolution of the GT series. Announcing that Gran Turismo 2000 wouldn't be ready for the US PlayStation 2 launch either, but rather an early 2001 release, Sony made the smart decision to change the name of the game to Gran Turismo 3.

The reason for this gigantic delay is quite simple really. Polyphony continues to add new material to the game, and won't let it hit retail shelves until it is perfect. Everything you've previously read about this title has more or less changed in the last few months. In the previous GT titles, Polyphony captured the utmost realism in car designs, but the physics and opponent AI didn't fall into the same level of realism. In GT 3, the game physics have been drastically enhanced, and now feature real-life physics for each particular vehicle. Every little aspect has been taken into account, right down to the speed, gear ratio, friction, weight, and wind.

Much to Polyphony's disapproval, the CPU cars always drove in packs, never once showing a competitive side. Tying into the PlayStation 2 hardware, Polyphony has created emotional AI, which is by far the most significant enhancement to the series. The CPU will do just about anything to win a race. If you cut them off, or bump and grind, opponents become enraged and will tailgate you, speed up and cut you off, or shove your poison back in your face and knock you off the track.

By no means the final car count, GT 3 currently features over 130 authentically detailed vehicles, each sporting over 4,000 polygons. In GT 2, the cars were comprised of 400 polys each. Two new tracks, Monte Carlo and Tokyo Racing Circuit, have also been added. Several of the tracks from GT 1 also make a return with stunning new realism. Along with the aggressive CPU and tricky course designs, weather conditions will affect your racing. From blinding sunlight to thick fog, your visibility will often be poor, making the game all the more difficult. For the multiplayer crowd, GT 3 offers several new split-screen games; but most exciting of all, it supports the i-link cable. How many PS2s can you link together for this racer? We don't know, but Unreal Tournament supports four. Maybe GT 3 will too!

Due to Polyphony's erratic development schedule, GT 3 still doesn't have a solid release date; for the time being, spring 2001 is the word. The wait may be painful, but from what we've seen thus far, it'll be worth it.



The new game physics push the player to customize the way the car handles

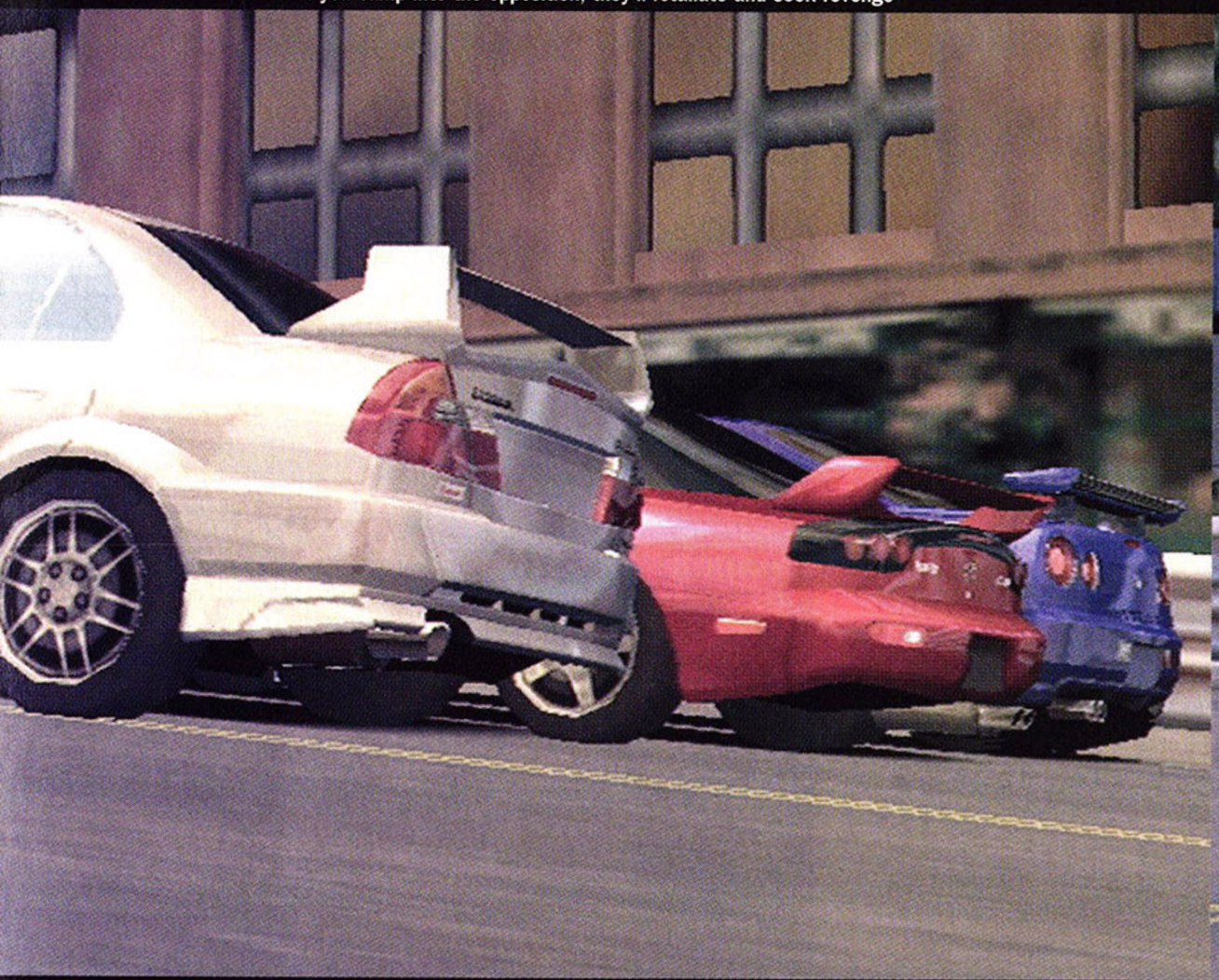
New effects include heat rising off of tarmac

All the replays feature broadcast-quality graphics and camera angles

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** POLYPHONY DIGITAL ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2001

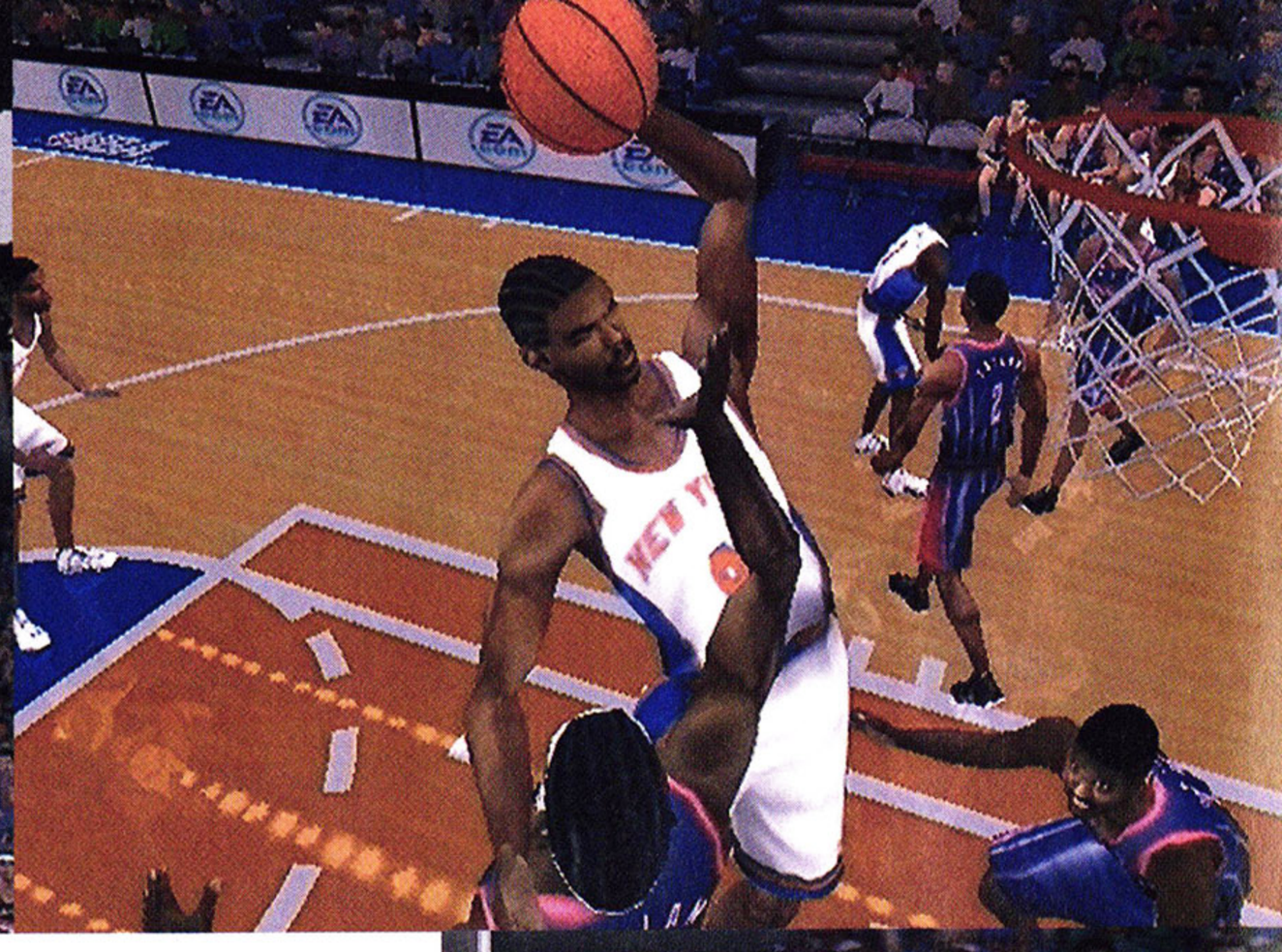
If you bump into the opposition, they'll retaliate and seek revenge

In multiplayer, the i-link may allow up to 8-player support



For all you pervs out there, here's a voyeuristic view of car butts

The soundtrack will consist of music ranging from decades ago to current hits



PLAYSTATION 2

NBA LIVE 2001

THE KID & THE NBA ON PS2

The NBA means big business to EA Sports. Although its long-running basketball franchise, NBA Live, has played second fiddle to the world of Madden football in terms of sales, the game has consistently been the leader in the hoops genre. So obviously, EA's second-most important sports franchise is still going to get the push toward the company's new PlayStation 2 efforts. NBA Live 2001 is being touted by EA as the "most realistic-looking basketball game ever," but will it live up to this hype? Well, so far the game has been nothing but hype as we have yet to see it in action.

When Live 2001 was first announced earlier this year, the game was scheduled to be on the PS2 by mid-November. However, the date was continually pushed back due to unknown circumstances. In turn, these delays – which we speculate are due to the painstaking process of modeling players – has dropped NBA Live 2001 from this year's radar. Luckily, players won't have to wait for this title too long as the new release has been slated for the second week of January.

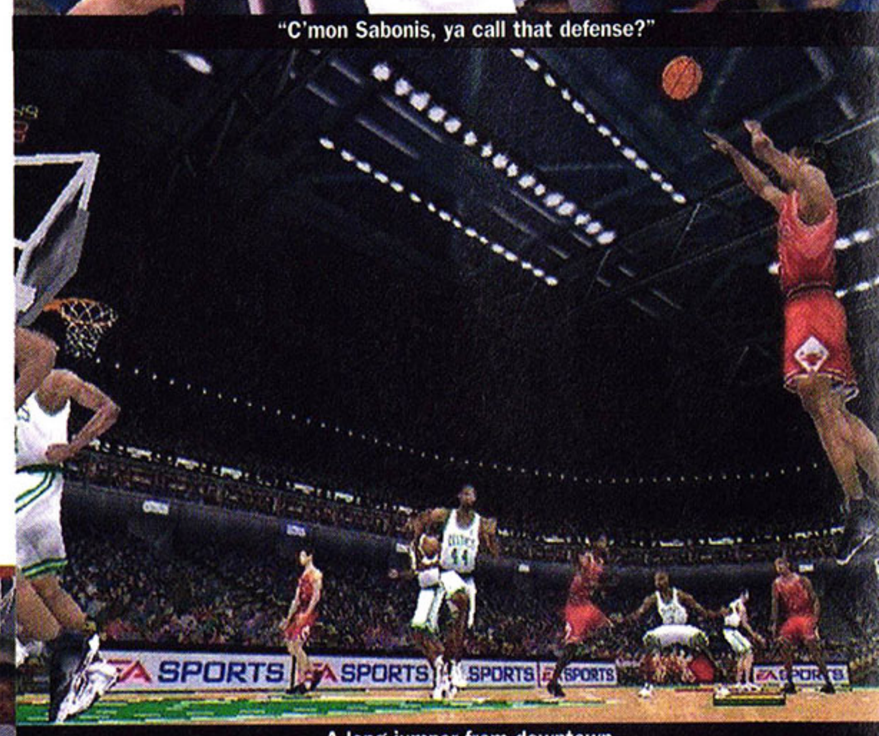
As this issue goes off to the printer – in late-October – a version is said to be coming our way very shortly.

However, considering the PS2 translations of EA's NHL and NFL games, we think control will be almost identical to the PS-X predecessor. Yet, with the PS2's increased processing muscle, things like advanced computer AI will greatly enhance the gameplay experience. The same can be said for the graphics.

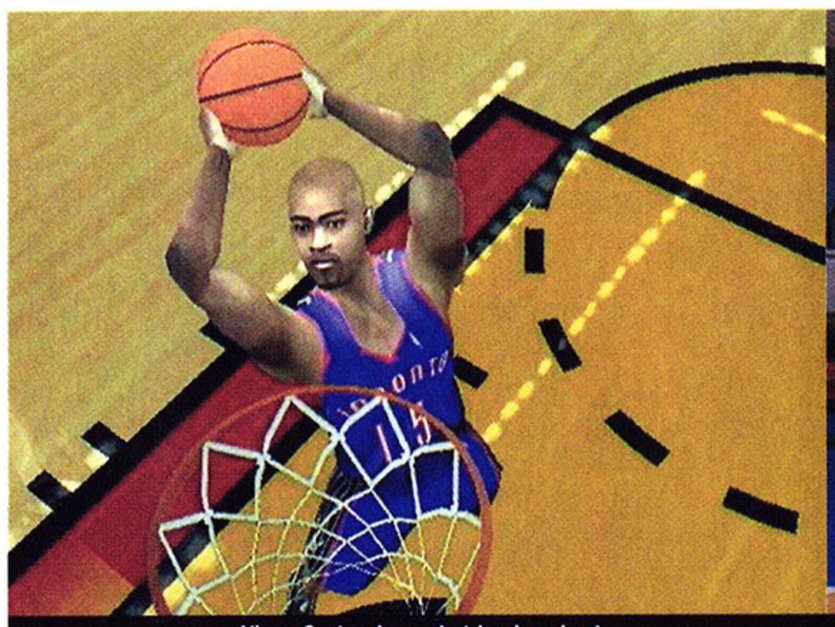
Undoubtedly, Live 2001 will benefit from its snazzed-up look on the PS2. The TV-style presentation on the PS-X version was arguably a little rough. This section of Live on the PS2 should show off a polished spectacle filled with fantastic looking scenes. One thing is for sure: Live coverboy and NBA superstar Kevin Garnett will now look like himself, instead of the mutant player found in the PS-X game.

NBA Live 2001 will be loaded with plenty of features and options to round out the entire basketball package. However, we can tell you that the NBA Challenge mode found in the PS-X version will not make an appearance on PS2. Well, you can't have everything, but we are still pumped up to finally get a chance to try this game. The T'Wolves are gonna rule!

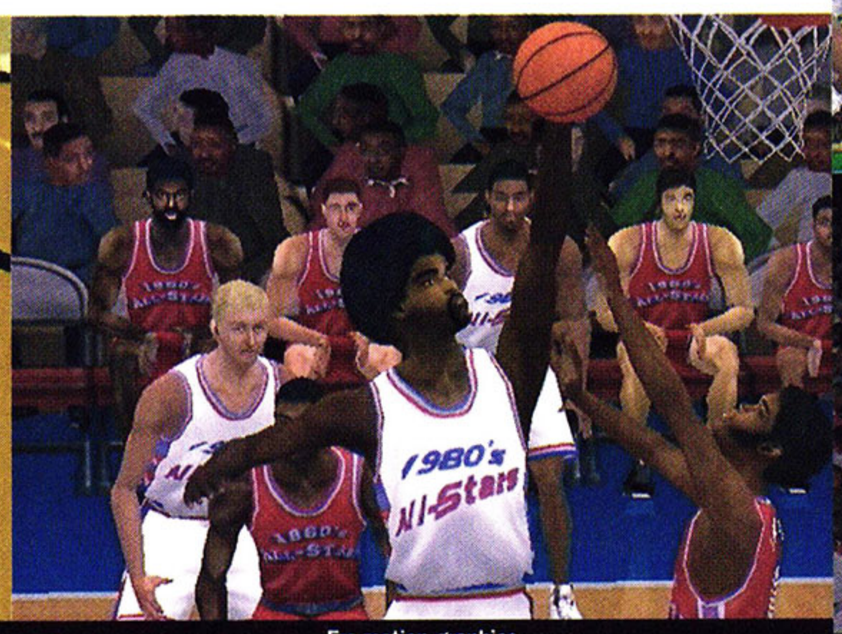
"C'mon Sabonis, ya call that defense?"



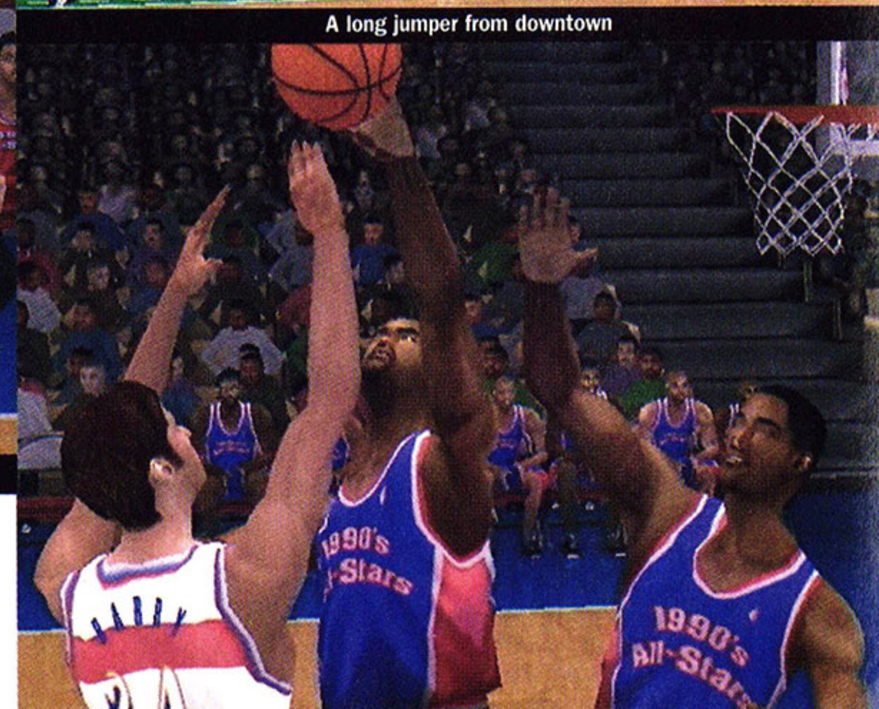
A long jumper from downtown



Vince Carter does what he does best

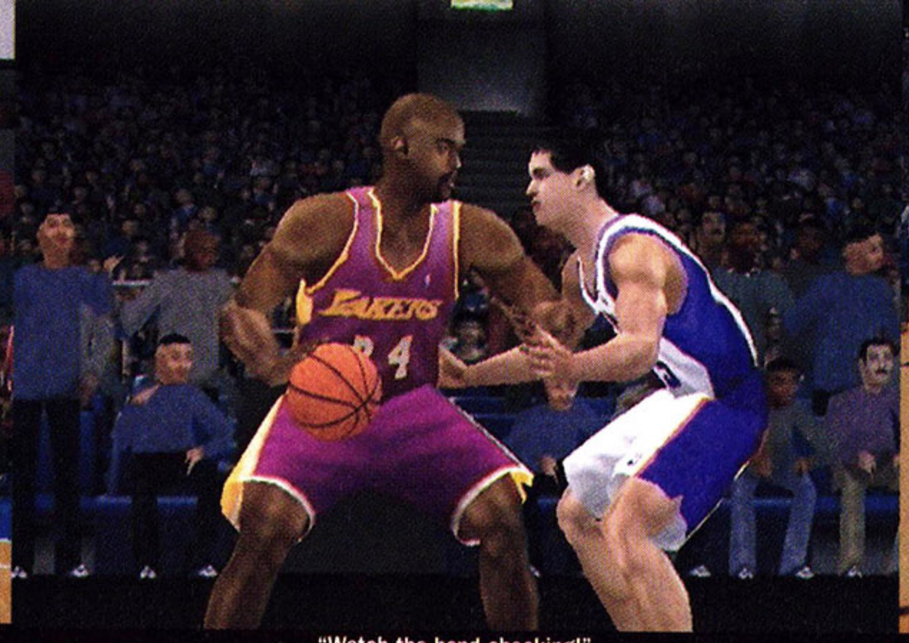


Fro-motion graphics

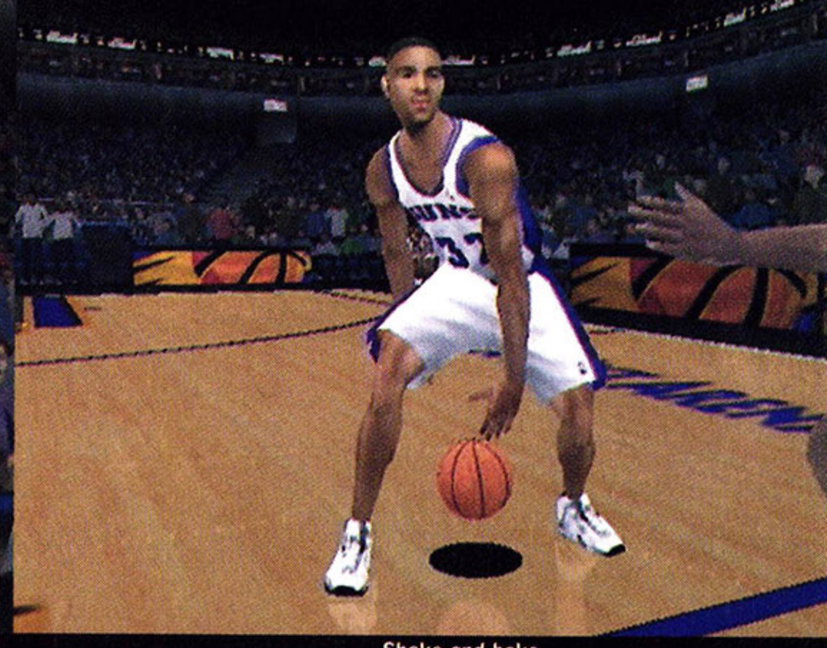


■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA CANADA ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 9

Wilt Chamberlain is just one of the many all-time greats included in Live



"Watch the hand checking!"



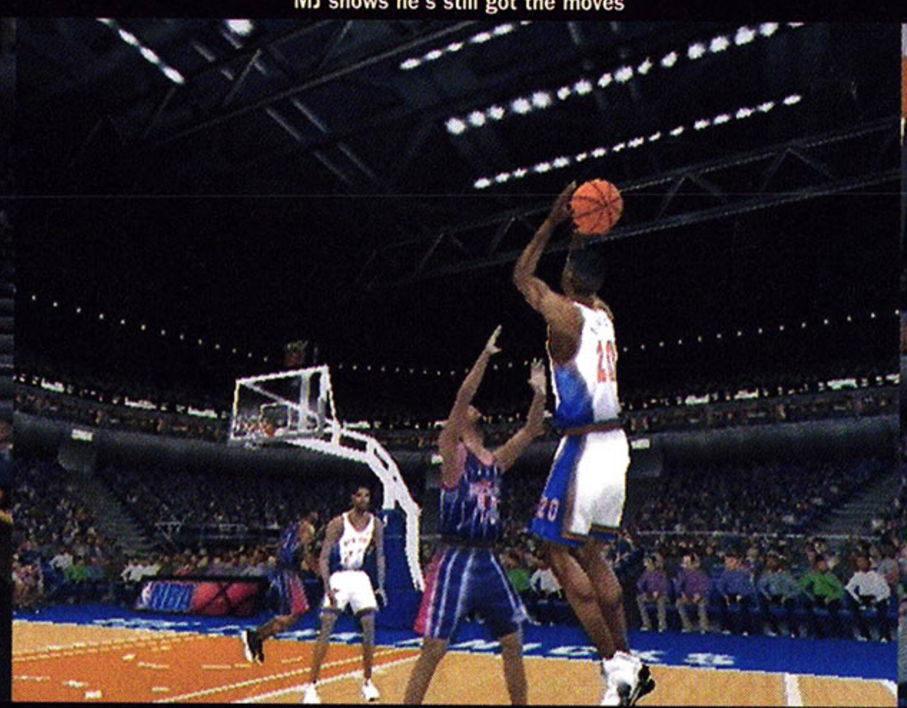
Shake and bake

It looks like this is another poorly contested shot

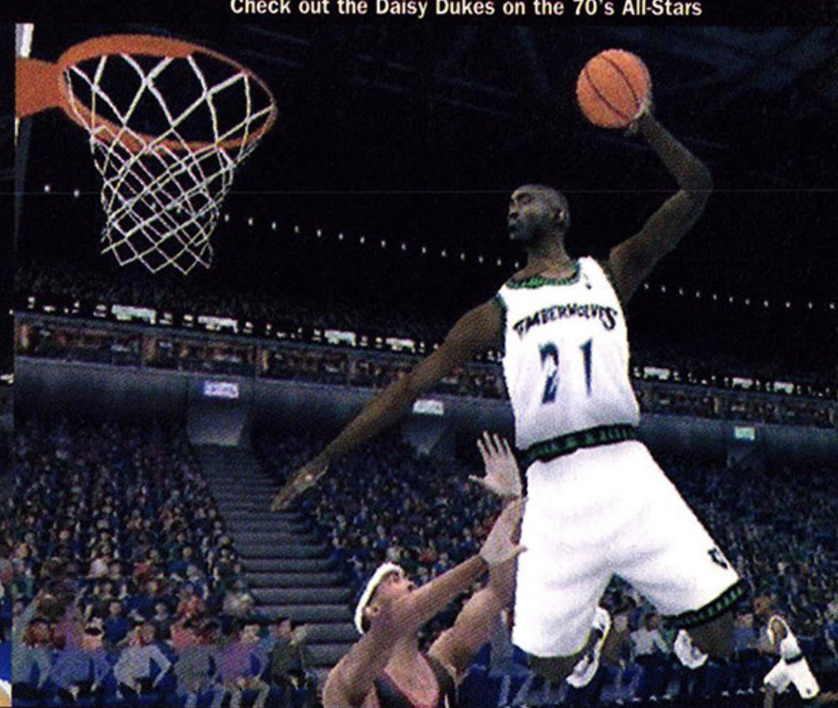
MJ shows he's still got the moves

Check out the Daisy Dukes on the 70's All-Stars

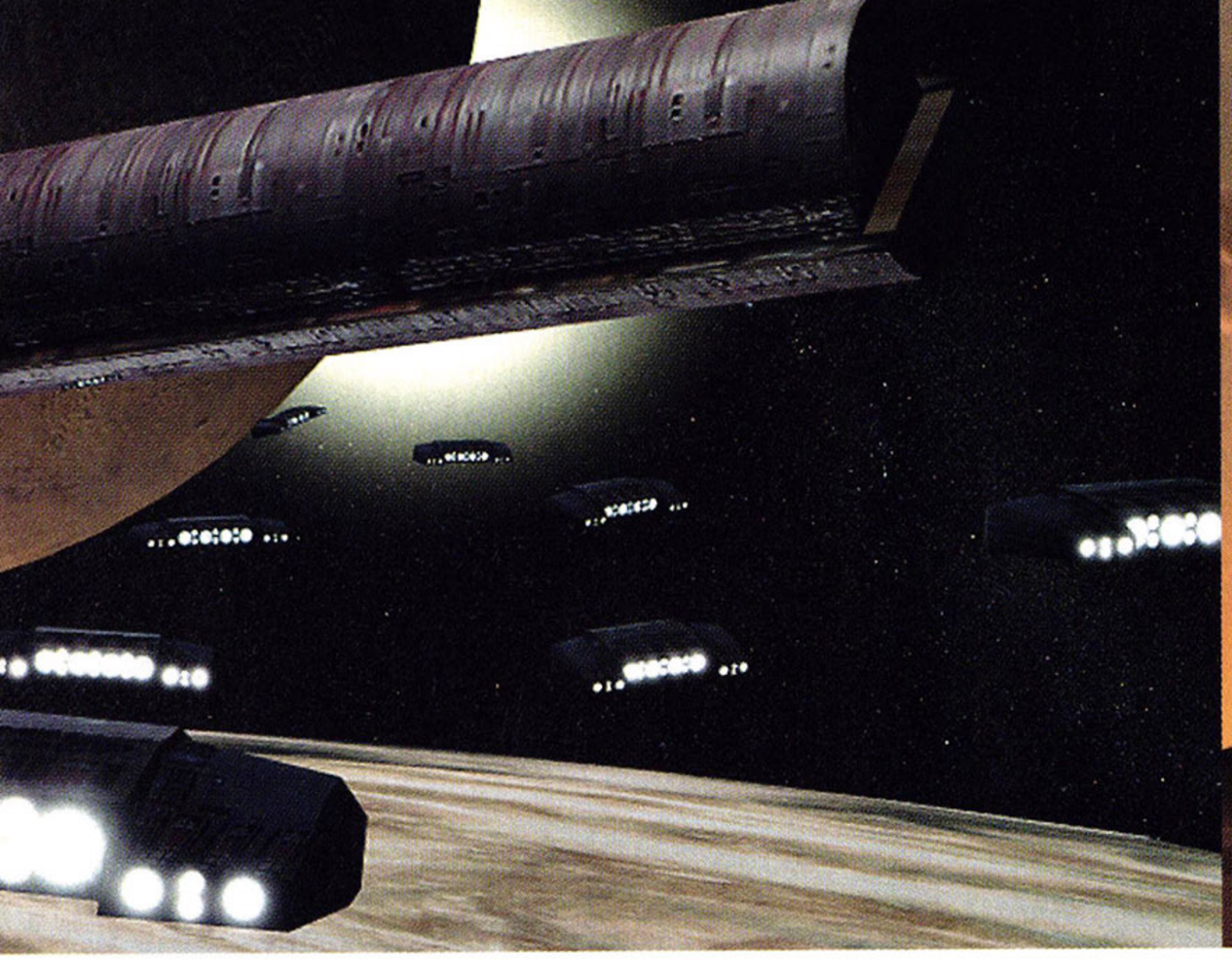
Preparing for a definite rim rockin' dunk

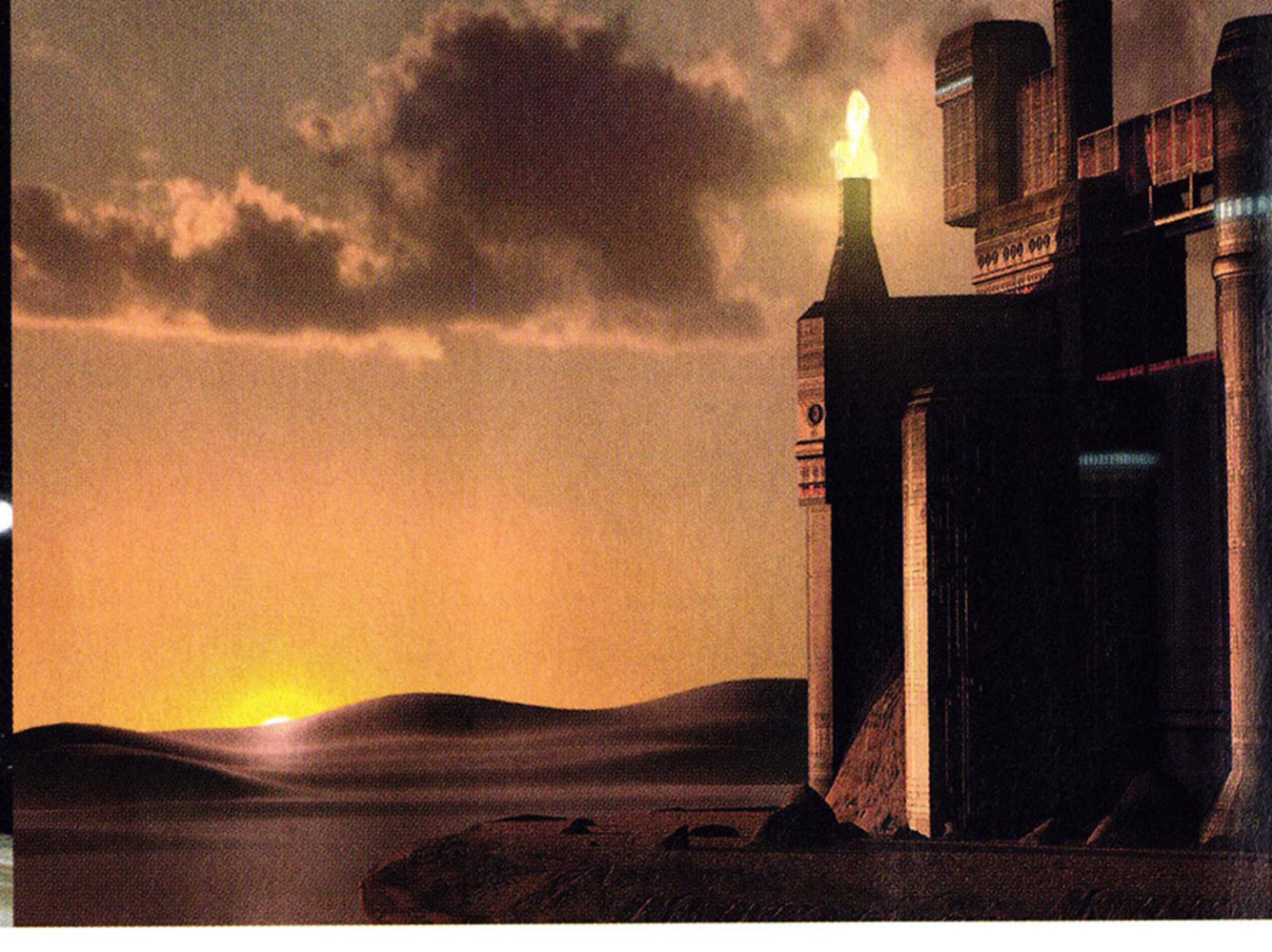


"3 – 2 – 1..."



KG elevates over Wallace for some T'Wolves thunder





PC

EMPEROR: BATTLE FOR DUNE

WESTWOOD RAISES THE BAR

Dune II is considered the first RTS by many. While this isn't necessarily true, it was certainly the first to utilize a very specific formula that has been the mainstay of nearly every RTS to come out since the amazing success of Command & Conquer. If C&C is the RTS equivalent of Doom, then Dune II is its Wolfenstein 3D. Now Westwood returns to its roots with a full-fledged sequel to Dune II.

While criticisms of Westwood's failure to innovate in more recent games had some merit, the true problem was more a failure to create an exciting combination of units rather than sticking with a formula that has worked well for nearly ten years. In any case, Emperor will put these tired, "must-advance-the-genre" arguments to rest. Westwood has finally moved to a gorgeous three-dimensional game and dropped their standard mission-to-mission style of play.

The initial campaign takes place on Arrakis where there are 33 areas to control. Your goal is to take out your enemies' jump gates, which allow them direct access to their home worlds. Before each mission, the player must choose which zone to attack. The decision is not as simple as blazing a path directly to your opponents' gates, because if you spread your forces to thin, with only one area to reinforce from, you put yourself at a serious disadvantage. Once an area to attack is selected, one of a hundred mission types is randomly chosen. While the primary goal of each is to wipe out the opposing forces, there will be other goals like collecting a certain amount of spice or making an ally. If things go poorly or your only interest was to complete a secondary objective, you have the option of retreating, which returns you to the strategic map screen. Failure does not end the game unless your gate goes down.

Westwood estimates that most players will win the game in 10-15 missions, but obsessive players can always choose to conquer the entire map for at least 33 missions. After the campaign on Arrakis, the game moves to new environments like guild ships and the Atreides home world, Caladan. It appears as though these missions won't feature the same strategic map campaign and, without spice to mine, most will simply give you a set number of units or a cash allotment to work with.

As in Dune II, there are three sides to the conflict, the well-balanced and noble Atreides, the brutal and merciless Harkonnen, and the sneaky tech-savvy Ordos. To make things interesting, Westwood has thrown in five sub-groups, any two of which can be allied with as the game progresses to grant new unit types and abilities. These range from the Fremen worm riders to the deadly Sardaukar troops.

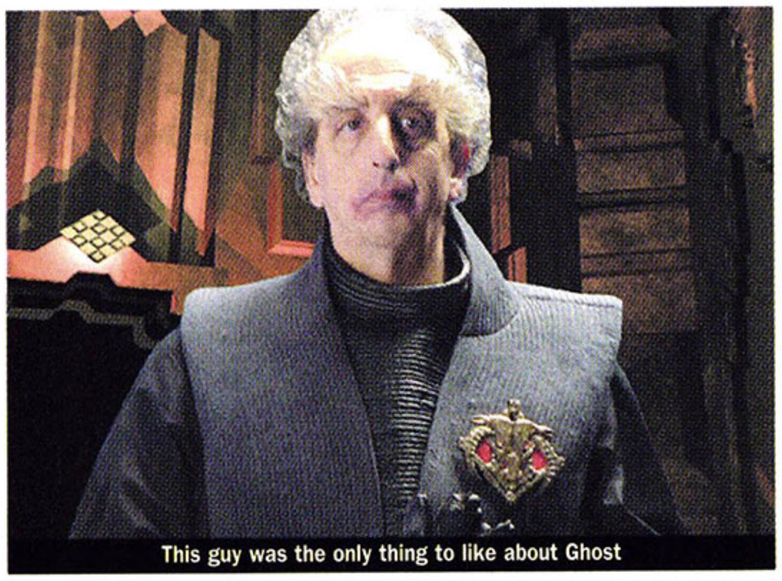
From the speedy wing-flapping ornithopters and massive walkers to more standard tanks and artillery, Emperor features a wide variety of units for each of the major houses. Not counting units that can be acquired from allies, each of the three houses will have 15-20 unique vehicles and infantry. The infantry in particular appear to be much more diverse than they have been in previous Westwood games. Snipers, scouts, mortar troop, rocket launchers, and the kamikaze saboteur bombers are only a handful of infantry types.

As with all Westwood RTS games, a heavy dose of cutscenes adds some additional spice to the game. Some of the bigger names Westwood has acquired for the scenes are Michael Dorn of Star Trek fame (Worf), Vincent Schiavelli (the freaky subway guy in Ghost), and Musetta Vander from The Cell. Presumably, these scenes will depict your progress and the diplomacy that leads to your new allies. It seems unlikely that they actually filmed 300 cutscenes for every mission type and faction.

While Westwood is taking a sensible "It's done when it's done" approach to the game, the game looks complete enough for it to hit the stores as early as spring 2001. From what we've seen so far, the game looks excellent. Between the new campaign system, the three houses and the allies, and the huge variety in units, Emperor exhibits some heavy replay value. It's a pretty sure bet that this will be one of the best RTS games of 2001.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** WESTWOOD STUDIOS ■ **DEVELOPER** WESTWOOD STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** 2001

The shadows are impressive

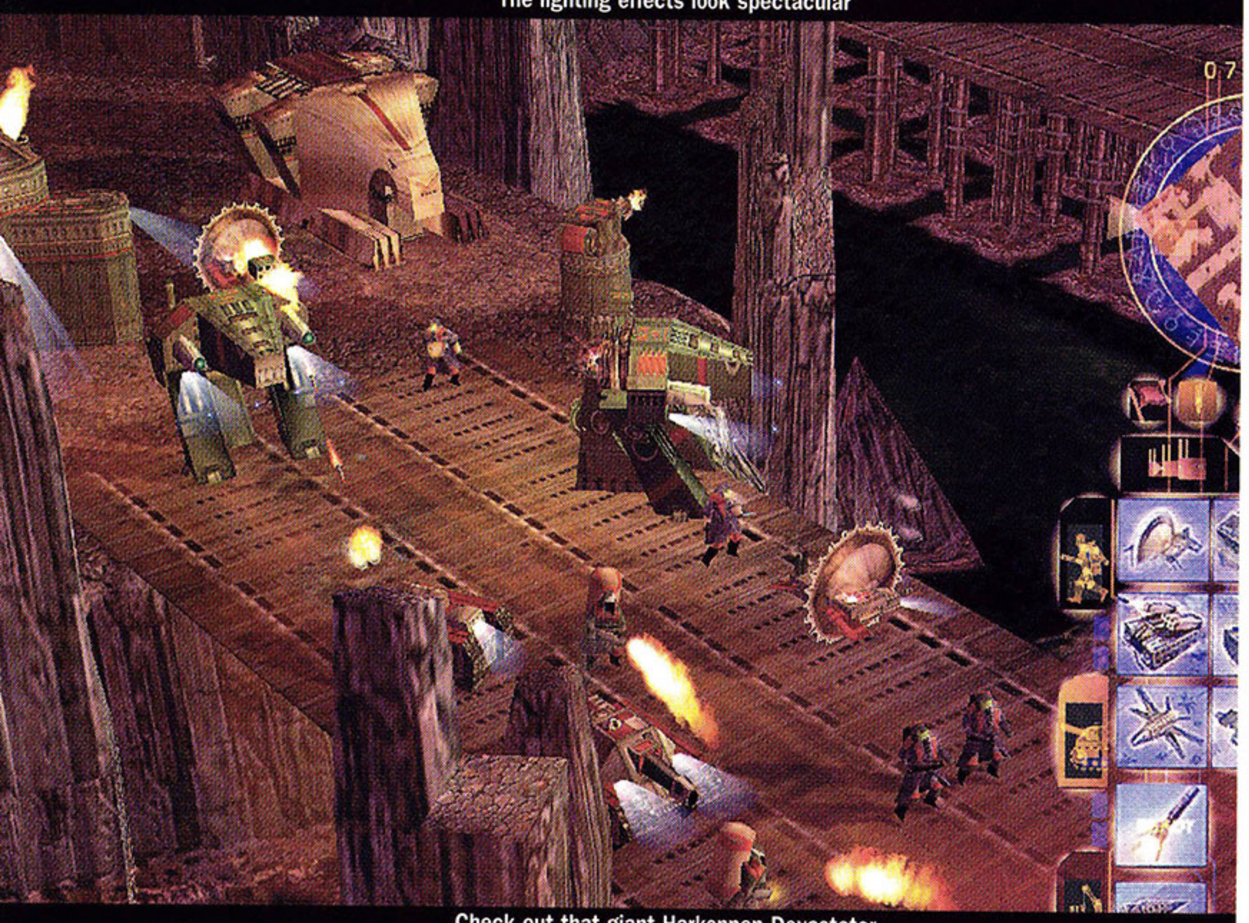


This guy was the only thing to like about Ghost

The Harkonnen are about to lose a refinery

Harkonnen on Caladan? It's madness!

The lighting effects look spectacular



Check out that giant Harkonnen Devastator

Garrr! The sea is a fickle mistress

PC

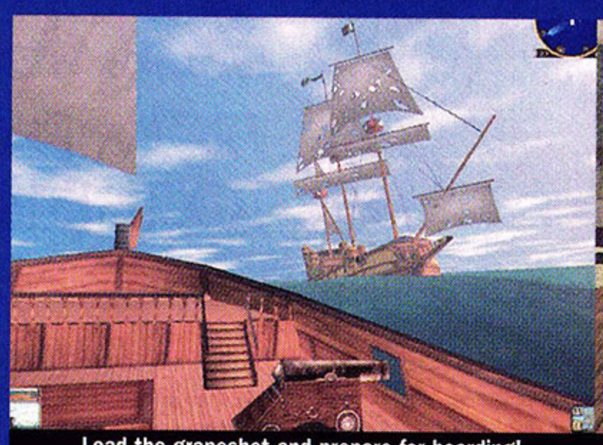
SEA DOGS

ARRRRRRRR!!!!!!!

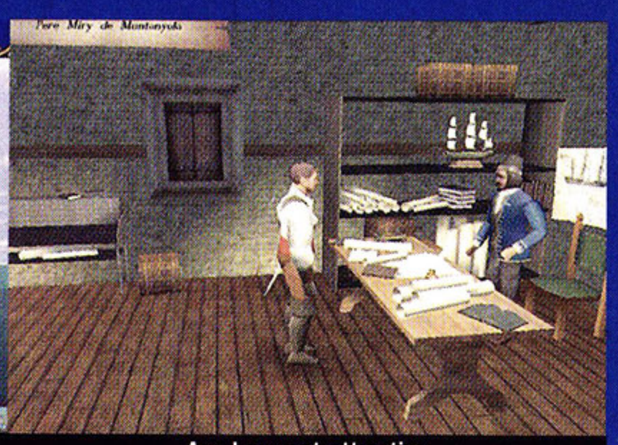
Avast ye! Thar be a new game comin' o'er the horizon and it looks ta be the closest a landlubber has e'er got to the fo'c'sle since Pirates! on the Commodore's 64. All facets of the pyrate's world can be explored. Ye can choose ta go on account and take to the high seas as a buccaneer, takin' what ye will from the colonies or ye can render your services to the petty wishes of the colonies for modest rewards and a pat on the back from the dogs.

At first, the colonies seemed ta be a bit generic. We swear we walked inta the same tavern in every port of call. Not only that, but yer main character's sea legs make him look like he's got a mizzen mast jammed in his poop deck. As soon as we stopped swinging the lead however, we realized that the landlubbers are just a prelude to the sea. They are good for information, tasks, takin' on new mateys, finding a place ta spend your loot and gettin' inta the occasional sword duel with a foe. Ye can also choose to conquer them once ye have yerself a decent fleet.

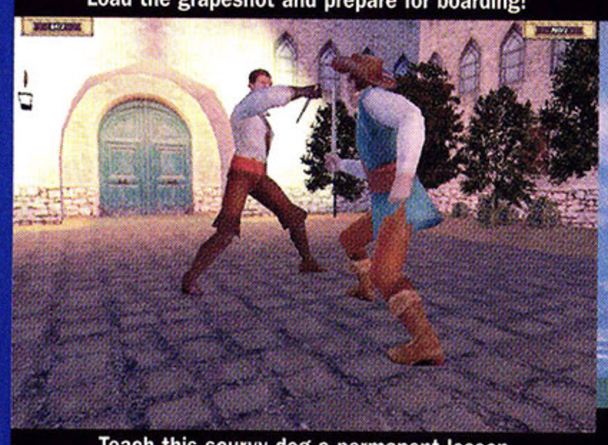
The sea is where you get yer sea legs on. Ye can man the helm of o'er 20 different ships, from the quick but modest sloops ta the massive man o' wars. All vessels have hit locations, allowing a captain with his wits about to target the masts and sail to slow his enemy down 'fore goin' in for a raid or sending his foe ta Davy Jones's locker. The scurvy dogs at Bethesda Soft couldn't get us a review copy in time, but Sea Dogs looks to be a solid game for those with the pirate calling.



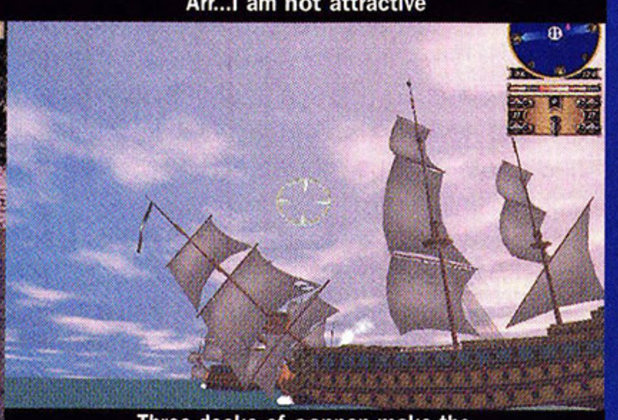
Load the grapeshot and prepare for boarding!



Arr...I am not attractive



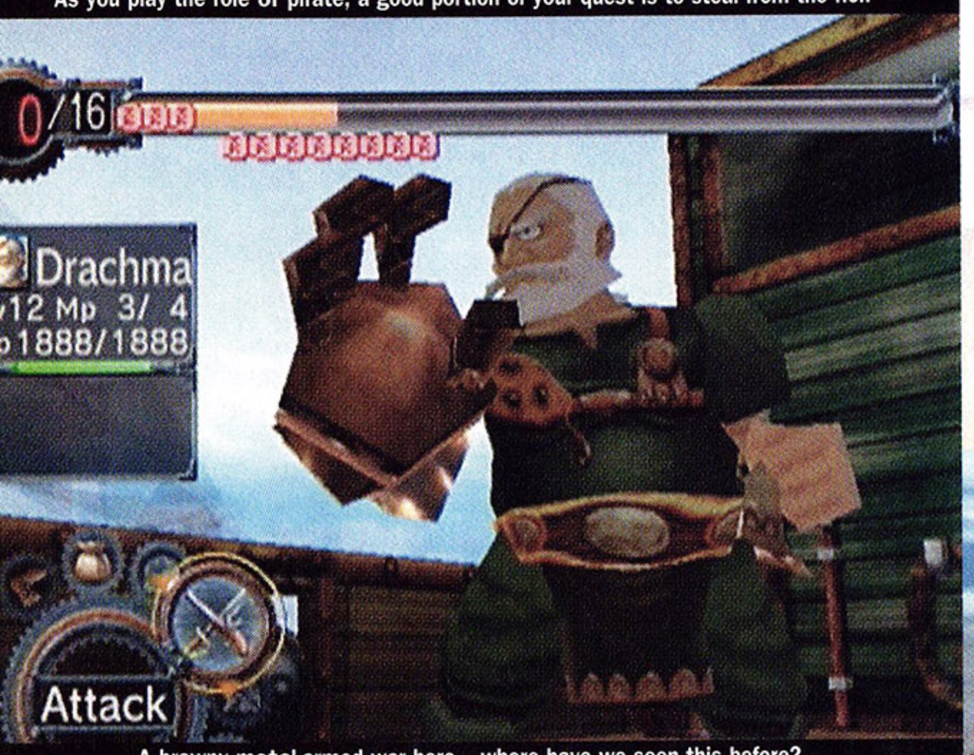
Teach this scurvy dog a permanent lesson



Three decks of cannon make the man o' war a deadly opponent

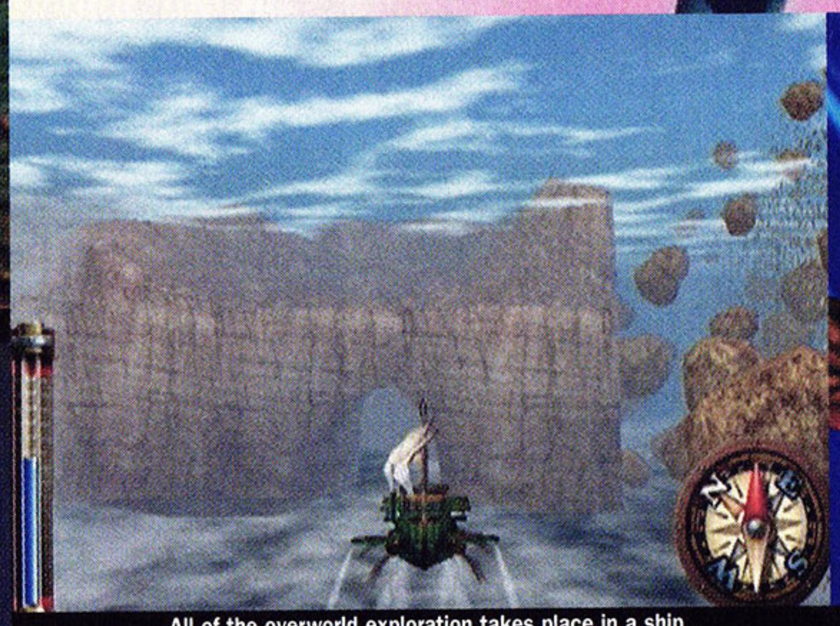
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** BETHESDA SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** AKELLA ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 1

As you play the role of pirate, a good portion of your quest is to steal from the rich



A brawny metal-armed war hero – where have we seen this before?

Arcadia's story borrows heavily from Star Wars and Moby Dick


All of the overworld exploration takes place in a ship

Vyse's energy cutlass unleashes devastating attacks

DREAMCAST

SKIES OF ARCADIA

FROM PHANTASY STAR TO THE HEAVENS

You can customize, own, and pilot over 80 sky-ships

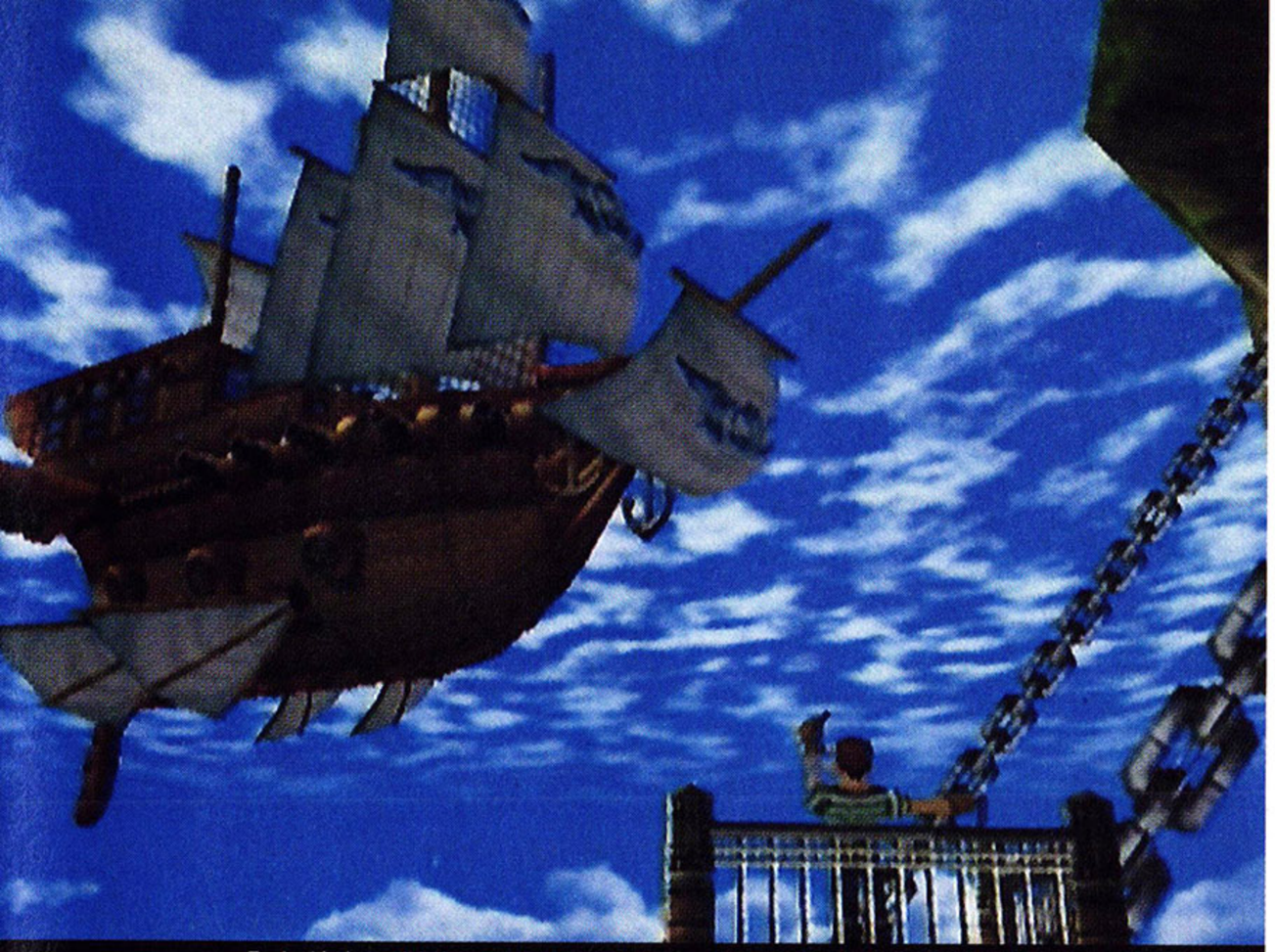
Set in a world where powerful magic looms large and all forms of life are stranded on floating isles, the creators of the wildly popular Phantasy Star series have an exciting new tale to tell. As you take on the role of a young adventurer and ruthless Blue Rogues pirate named Vyse, the skies of Arcadia are yours to explore. As captain of your very own sky-ship, a flying vessel modeled after a ship in a 16th century Great Voyage-era fleet, it's up to you to set sail and discover new worlds. Along your way, you'll encounter powerful new allies, hideous monsters, and an evil empire seeking global domination.

The Phantasy Star team has done little else than develop innovative creations, and Skies of Arcadia is no exception. Instead of focusing heavily on the traditional role-playing standards we've digested for years on end, Skies of Arcadia unfolds quite differently than other RPGs out there. First and foremost, world exploration could easily be a separate game in itself. Instead of walking from place to place, all transportation takes place from the sails of a sky-ship. As you venture forth, random enemy encounters range from hostile creatures boarding your vessel to all-out ship-versus-ship battles. Each of these combat situations unfolds in a different light. Standard enemy encounters are tackled in turn-based hand-to-hand melee. In these scenarios, you and your party can either strike with weapons or tap into magic. As simplistic as it may sound, the combat is actually quite complex. Before each strike, you can change the elemental property on your weapon to be more effective against different beasts. If a fire demon stands in your path, you'll want to use a water attack. Through the simple click of a button, your weapon changes color to show the desired property. By using different properties, you will in turn be rewarded with colored crystals that match the property you used. These crystals are required for magic casting. Along with a point-based system, you'll need a certain number of colored crystals to cast a spell. The point system is also a tad out of the norm. To regain these valuable points, your player may need to sit out and meditate for a round or two. Further into the game, you'll learn that you can actually lace spells onto your weapons and transfer points into special attacks.

While sharing the same turn-based design, the airborne ship-versus-ship battles require a little different strategy. Since you can't fly and fight by yourself, your crew will also have a hand in combat. They can fire cannons, repair the ship, or demand evasive maneuvers for better position. Along with characters gaining experience, the ships can also be upgraded with new weapons and items. In total, you'll have the chance to customize over 80 different ships.

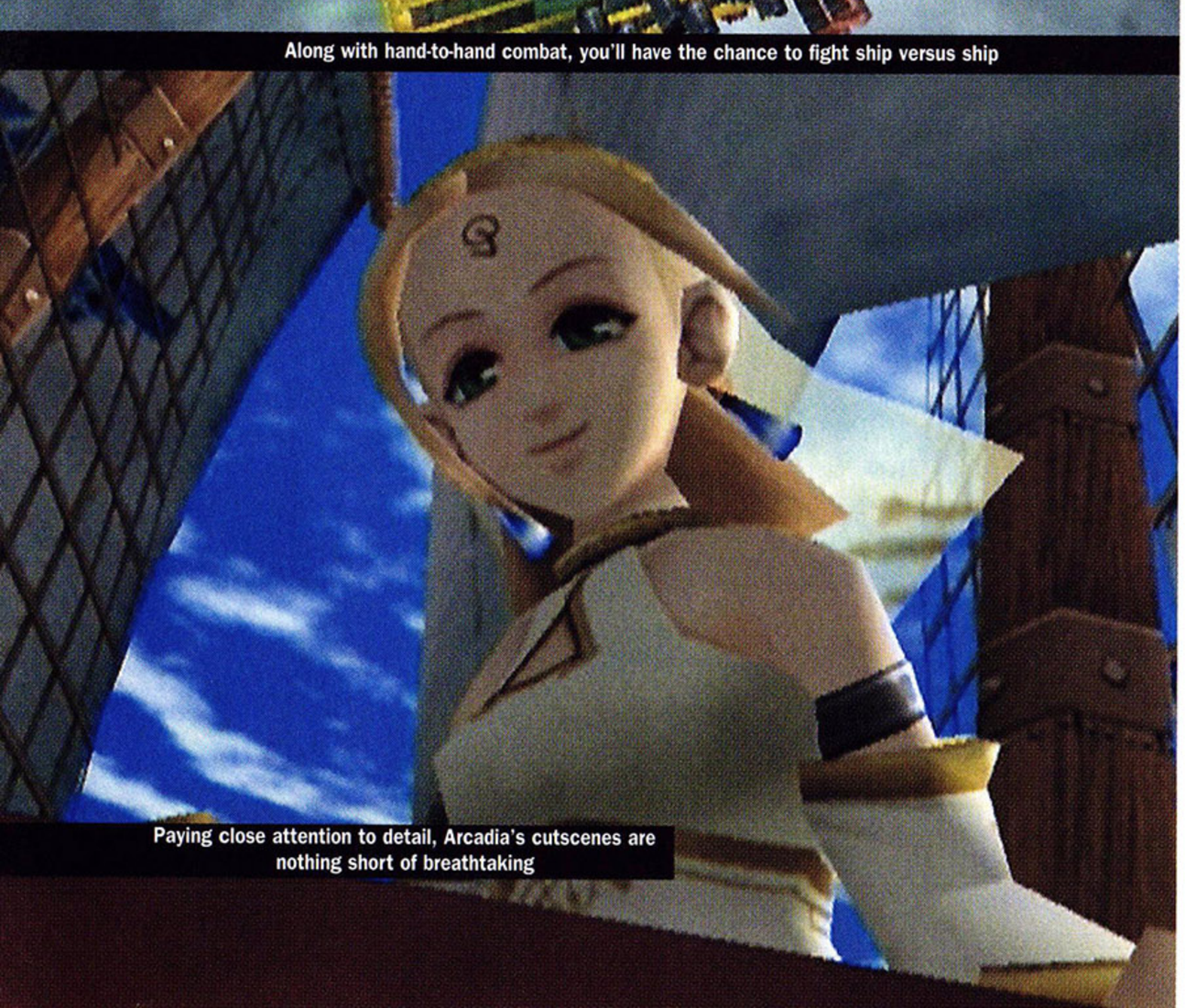
Along with the amazing gameplay, Sega has created a wonderful story and beautiful cinematics to go along with it. All the characters in the game feature numerous facial expressions, blinking and moving eyes, and a few voice-overs as well. Skies of Arcadia's innovative gameplay, unique story arc, and magnificent graphics should translate into one of the year's most recognized RPGs, a game that everyone will want a piece of.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA/OVERWORKS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 21



Each ship is modeled to capture the cultural aesthetics of the 16th Century Great Voyage era

Along with hand-to-hand combat, you'll have the chance to fight ship versus ship



Paying close attention to detail, Arcadia's cutscenes are nothing short of breathtaking

PLAYSTATION 2

RAYMAN 2: REVOLUTION

DEPORTED YET AGAIN

Suffering from the same syndrome as the Street Fighter license, the progression of the Rayman series has come to a screaming halt at number 2. Will there ever be a Rayman 3? From the warm response Rayman 2 received in its N64 and DC endeavors, Ubi Soft would be crazy to end the series. Of course, before Rayman can reach the trilogy milestone, the second adventure must be fully digested on every platform. Heck, we wouldn't be surprised if new Rayman 2 updates found a home on the Xbox and Gamecube as well.

The PlayStation 2 version of Rayman's never-ending saga looks even sharper than the impressive Dreamcast version, and will be equipped with a load of exclusive features, levels, and bonuses. A work of art to begin with, it's hard to fathom the game with an even higher graphical quality, but Ubi Soft assures us it'll be twice as nice.

Thanks in part to the numerous versions, and a swanky CG movie, Rayman's popularity has soared over the last year, and with a barren PS2 platforming genre just itching for a game, Ubi Soft should clean house with this enticing port. Some day though, Ubi Soft has to give this talented brother some limbs. Not being able to wrap his arm around a lady must kill Rayman's romantic life.

"Oh dear! I'm surrounded!"

"Quit staring at me, you freaks!"

The graphical quality is even sharper than in the Dreamcast version

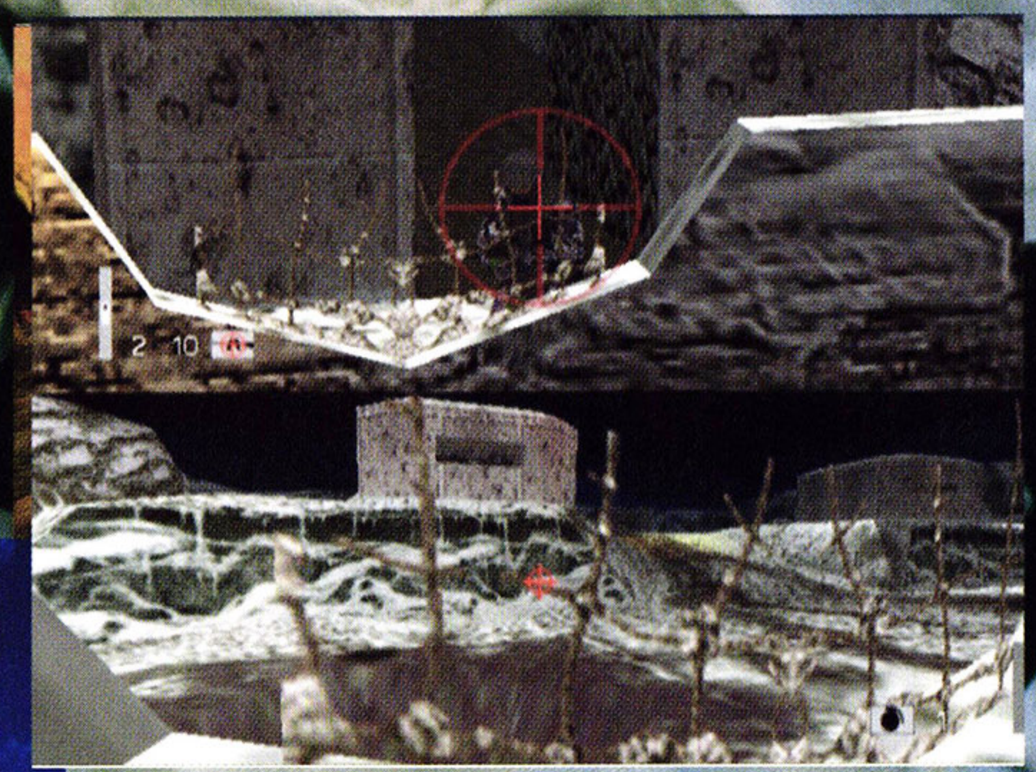
As you can clearly see, the lighting effects are drastically improved

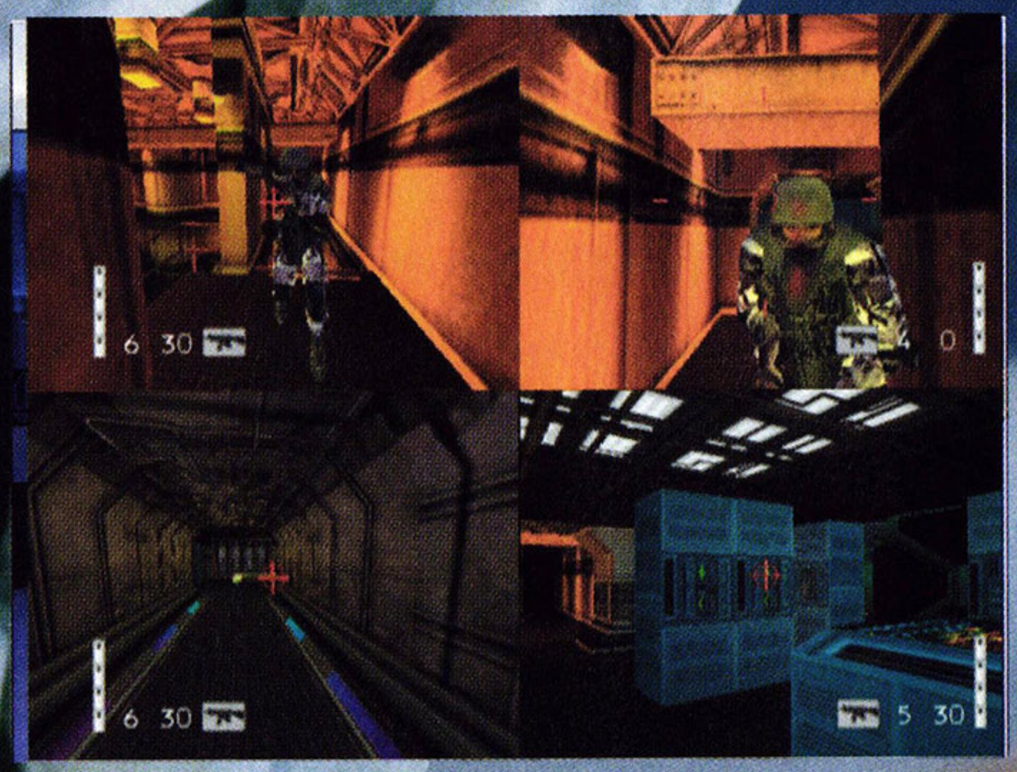
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT
■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

CATEGORY
TEEN 13
Animated Blood And Gore Animated Violence

ONE SHOT





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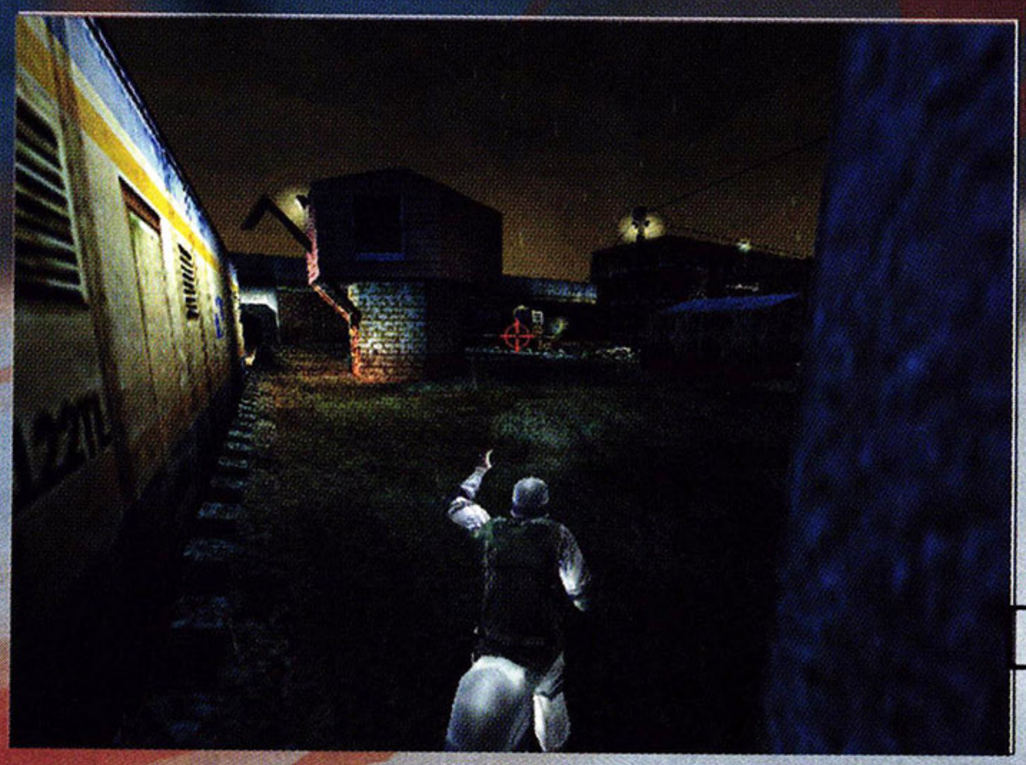

Dreamcast.

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Like all good things, the game begins with a zeppelin crash

This is where you get some, ahem, fatigue training

PC

ARCANUM: OF STEAMWORKS AND MAGIC OBSCURA

FALLOUT MEETS FANTASY & THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Well, that's not entirely true. We were definitely expecting this game to be a lot more similar to Fallout with Troika (a team consisting of some of Fallout's key creators) at the helm. That said, the influence is definitely there. The graphics look very similar to the original Fallout (and just a smidgen out-of-date), the turn-based combat is essentially the same, and players still get the option of tackling problems through a variety of different routes depending on their character designs and the choices they make.

One of the biggest differences is the setting itself. Arcanum is a world of high fantasy that has recently been plunged into a bizarre industrial revolution with steam power and early firearms accompanied by Orwellian oddities like clockwork automatons and wonder drugs. The result is an unusual setting where mages uneasily rub elbows with industrialists and half-ogres dressed in Victorian-era suits roam city streets unmolested.

Lukan, the witless, meet Burk the Bonehead

Another thing Troika has taken a very different approach to is character advancement. While characters can advance up through 50 levels, only one point is given for improving skills and attributes per level gain. Consequently, careful planning is a must. You simply can't become fairly good at everything like in the Fallout series. There are eight attributes to raise from eight to a maximum score of 20, 16 regular skills (thieving, fighting, etc.) with five levels of competency, five spells to be learned within each of 16 schools of magic, and eight technological disciplines with seven applications to be learned in each. It becomes pretty clear that there is no way in hell anyone will be playing the jack of all trades game with only 50 points to spend.

To further promote specialization, the world of Arcanum has its own rules. Technology and magic don't mix. Where one seeks to promote the laws of the universe, the other bends them to its will. As a character puts more points into their technical or magical skills, they are less likely to be affected by the other and vice versa. Bullets frequently miss archmages while spells have a nasty habit of fizzling out before doing damage to technological masters. Fledgling characters, on the other hand are quite vulnerable to both.

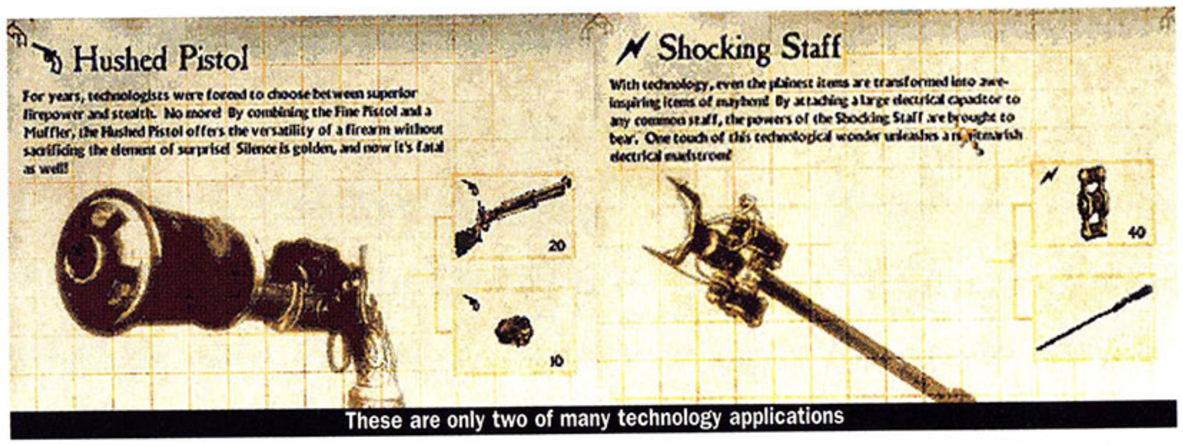
Essentially players are presented with two sets of character choices. The first is the Fallout option of becoming a warrior, thief, diplomat, or some combination of the three. The second is magic or technology. You can try to mix the two if you like, but you're just asking for trouble. A technologist who chooses to take one basic healing spell for simple convenience will find that the spell becomes less and less effective as they advance in the technological disciplines. They would be better off knowing how to make Heal Lite, a wonder drug from the Herbology Discipline.

The depth and scope of character tweaking in Arcanum is comparable to very few games out there. If Troika follows through in allowing countless alternate solutions to problems, no matter how wacky or impractical, Arcanum could be another RPG hit. Currently, our only concern is just how deep they plan on going with the unusual world that they've created. Otherwise, we're looking forward to seeing this game in its complete form.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING ■ **PUBLISHER** SIERRA STUDIOS ■ **DEVELOPER** TROIKA GAMES ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 1

Sure, stealing is cool...

...until you get caught



These are only two of many technology applications

PLAYSTATION 2

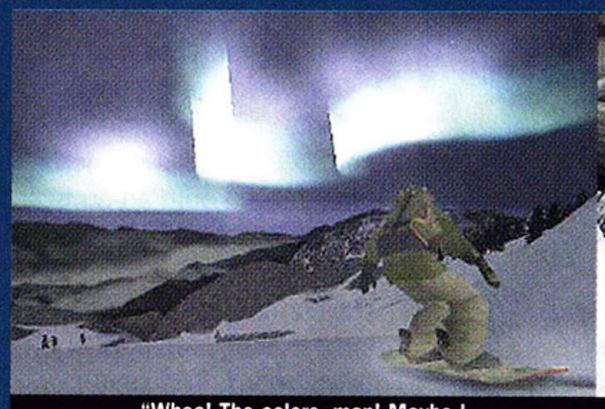
COOL BOARDERS: CODE ALIEN

EXTRA TERRESTRIAL SNOW ABDUCTIONS

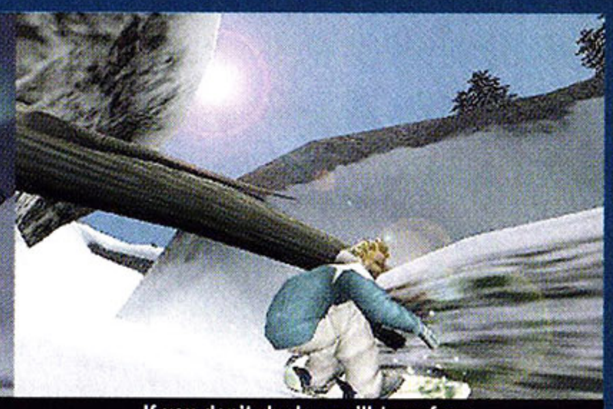
Despite Sony's efforts to continue the Cool Boarders legacy through internal development, the founder of the series, a Japanese company named UEP Systems, is still producing Cool Boarders games in Japan. UEP's last version, Cool Boarders Burrrn, weaseled its way into Sega's first-party lineup, only disguised as Rippin' Riders. Returning to its PlayStation roots, it will be interesting to see if UEP's next title, Cool Boarders: Code Alien, finds a U.S. publisher. Will Sony extend an open hand to UEP? Or will the U.S. Cool Boarders series continue in-house at Sony? If you're a fan of UEP's work, keep a close eye on this title, because if another publisher does secure it for a stateside release, the name will be changed.

Code Alien made its debut at this year's Tokyo Game Show, but only in video form. From what we could tell, the traditional CB formula is intact, but of course, the graphics have improved drastically. The courses appear to be expansive, allowing the player to freely carve and search for hidden shortcuts just like in EA's SSX.

If you live in Japan, look for Code Alien this December. As for stateside gamers, cross your fingers and wait.

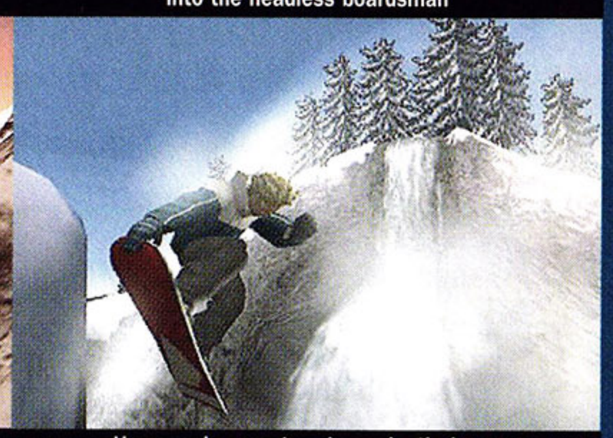


"Whoa! The colors, man! Maybe I shouldn't have eaten that taco?"



If you don't duck, you'll transform into the headless boardsman

How pretty...now's let's see him crash and burn!



Huge environments = huge death drops

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** TBA ■ **DEVELOPER** UEP SYSTEMS ■ **RELEASE** TBA

The cyclone spell tosses around unsuspecting soldiers

Kessen 2 will be able to display 500 soldiers on the battlefield

Hmmm...that's not Mary Poppins, but if we gave her an umbrella...

Kessen 2 promises rich and lengthy CG cutscenes

PLAYSTATION 2

KESSEN 2

KOEI RETURNS TO THE BATTLEFIELD

Even before the launch of Kessen in the US, we were presented with details and images regarding the second installment, aptly titled Kessen 2. At September's Tokyo Game Show, Koei held an event to introduce the title to the US gaming press. The development of Kessen 2 is still in its early stages, but it appears that the game will diverge from the original game's feudal war theme, and present a number of new story and gameplay elements.

For those of you who weren't too thrilled with the prospect of the historically accurate plot of an ancient Japanese war found in the original Kessen, the plotline of the this so-called sequel will involve an almost entirely fictitious story. Although still set in ancient China, the story of Kessen 2 incorporates a lot of fantasy elements intertwined into a theme of love and war. Obviously, Koei doesn't want to reveal too many details about the game's story, but from what we've seen, it is clear that Koei is looking for a broader audience of gamers for this new title.

One way Koei hopes to tap into this bigger gaming audience is by introducing magic to the battles. Like we said, Kessen 2 will introduce fantasy elements and there is no better way than with a little sorcery. We witnessed impressive video footage of some devastating elemental attacks unleashed on a massive army. One sequence showed a cyclone attack that dropped a funnel cloud onto an army and tossed the soldiers around like rag dolls, and another displayed a lightning storm that pulverized virtually everyone beneath.

The game also promises to give the player more control of the armed forces that he commands. Koei commented that players can control the armies at a squad level – meaning that in a group of hundreds of soldiers, the player can control individual squads of about a dozen or so troops. This feature will surely change the dynamics of the strategy, as the original game does not have this squad-control feature.

Though Kessen 2 is in an early form, graphically it already shows signs of greatness. With the graphics a lock, we hope Koei devotes some serious time to modifying and improving the game system and playcontrol.

決戦II

KESSEN

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** KOEI ■ **DEVELOPER** KOEI ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 2001 IN JAPAN, TBA IN US

PLAYSTATION 2

SILENT HILL 2

HUSHED HORROR FROM KONAMI

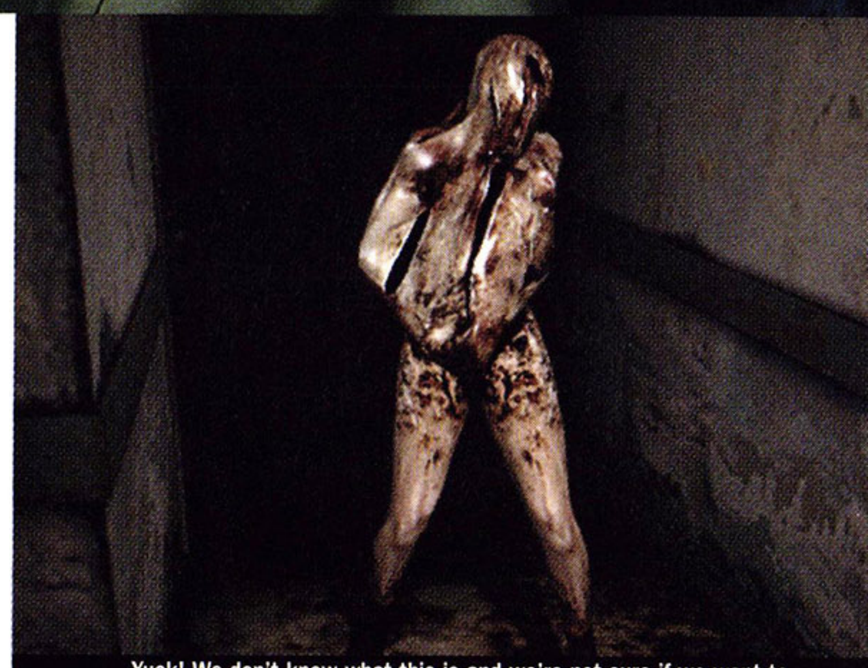
A sequel to Konami's action-thriller was a relative no-brainer as the first Silent Hill game ranks as one of the PlayStation's Greatest Hits. In last month's GI News, we brought you just a glimpse of Silent Hill 2 for PlayStation 2, and now we return with new details and a bunch of cool new shots.

Silent Hill 2 was recently on display at the Tokyo Game Show in the form of a looping video presentation. To say the least, some of the segments shown were quite disturbing and completely gruesome. Granted, it was hard to distinguish if any of this footage was of actual gameplay, but the horrific tone of the game was established. Silent Hill director Tetsuhiro Imamura stated, "The monsters will not just have grotesque appearances, but grotesque movements as well. We are working by hand to create unusual movements which are humanly impossible."

This is evident by a video clip that can best described as a cross between the film Jacob's Ladder and a Nine Inch Nails' video. One scene shows a character that appears to be a doctor. You could only see this figure from the waist down, but his bloodied scrubs showed that he'd been up to some serious malpractice. As the brief scenes flashed in and out, we witnessed this character approach a dead nurse and then hoist the corpse by the ankles. Continuing down the hall, the carcass suddenly comes to life and begins to morph and slither like some nasty cow-birthing scene from the Animal Planet channel. Unfortunately, we don't have any screens of this particular event, but we can fill you in on some of the images you see on this page.

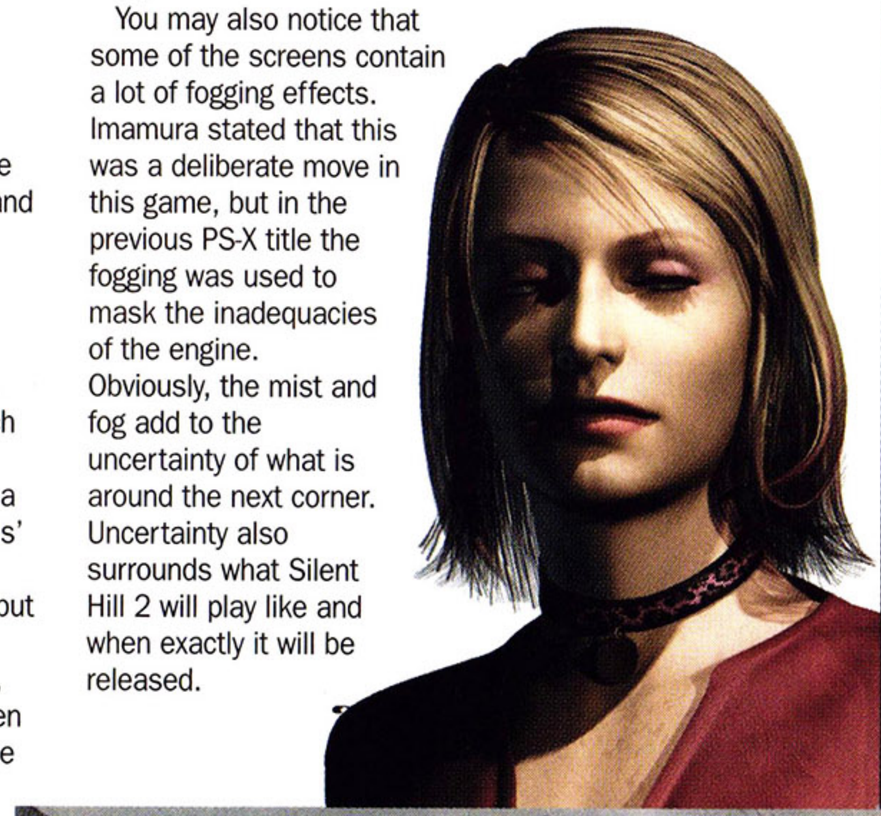
Although Konami has announced that Silent Hill 2's story is completely separate from the first game's, the setting is the same resort town known as Silent Hill. The main character – who bears a striking resemblance to the first game's main dude – is named James Sanderland. It seems that although his wife had passed away three years ago, he receives a mysterious letter from said wife telling him to meet her in Silent Hill. Confused, and definitely a little scared, James travels to Silent Hill and meets a woman named Maria. This Maria bears an uncanny resemblance to James's former wife...and so the story unfolds.

You may also notice that some of the screens contain a lot of fogging effects. Imamura stated that this was a deliberate move in this game, but in the previous PS-X title the fogging was used to mask the inadequacies of the engine. Obviously, the mist and fog add to the uncertainty of what is around the next corner. Uncertainty also surrounds what Silent Hill 2 will play like and when exactly it will be released.

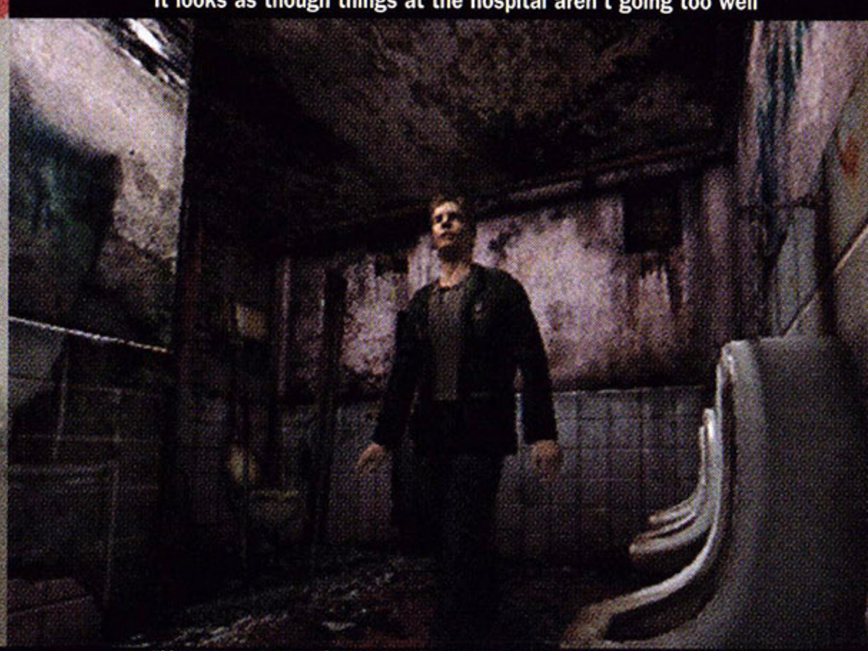


Yuck! We don't know what this is and we're not sure if we want to

It looks as though things at the hospital aren't going too well



Explore the mysteries of Silent Hill



"Hmmm...seems like the toilets need some fresh urinal cakes."

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KCE TOKYO ■ **RELEASE** FALL 2001

PLAYSTATION 2

GEKIKUUKAN PRO BASEBALL

GREEN GRASS, WHITE BALLS, & HARD WOOD

Although baseball is thought of as "America's Pastime," the game has a long and proud history in Japan. Baseball was first played in Japan in 1873, and existed as an amateur sport until the 1920s, when the first pro club was formed in Japan. By 1936, the professional league (which featured six teams) held its first season. This league evolved into Nippon Professional Baseball, which now features 12 teams divided into the Pacific and Central leagues.

Baseball, both professional and amateur, continues to enjoy massive popularity in Japan. This led Square, a company not known for its sports titles, to release Gekikuukan Pro Baseball for the PlayStation 2. Square has acquired the NPB license, and this game features all current stadiums, teams, and players. At press time, there had been no announcement regarding the American title or release date for the game. Although, given Square's close relationship with Electronic Arts, we wouldn't be surprised if we saw this engine converted into the next iteration of the Triple Play series here in the US.

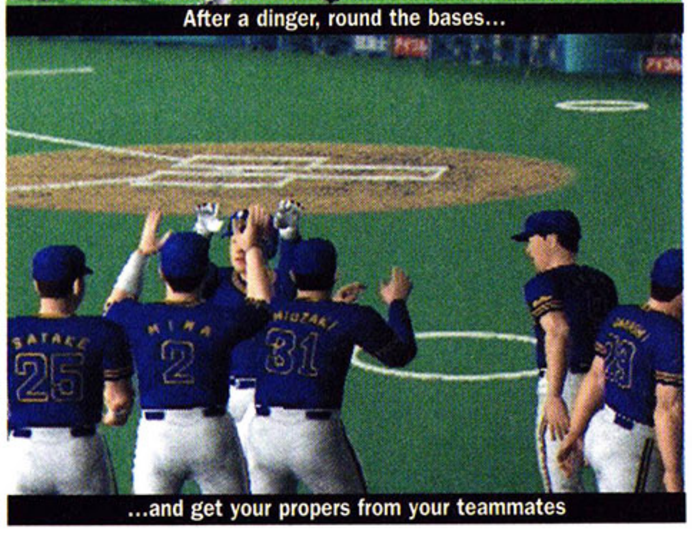
From the first, it quickly becomes obvious that GPB is far superior to World Series Baseball 2K1 for the Dreamcast. Its visuals are crisp, featuring complex player models and intricate animations. Players react to the ball with exceptional realism, running out grounders and snagging one-handed grabs. Most impressive are the home runs, which show the rejoicing crowd, the player rounding the bases and giving his team a hearty round of high-fives in the dugout.

Unlike WSB 2K1, the gameplay is the equal of the graphics. Although it's not an exceptionally deep simulation, the pitching and batting interfaces lend a unique twist to the action. On defense, your pitches are selected using the d-pad, and you can position your ball anywhere in the strike zone using the left analog stick. Before the pitch, players are able to rotate the fielders left or right, and forward and back by using the shoulder buttons. Batting is similar, displaying a shadow that shows your bat position in the strike zone.

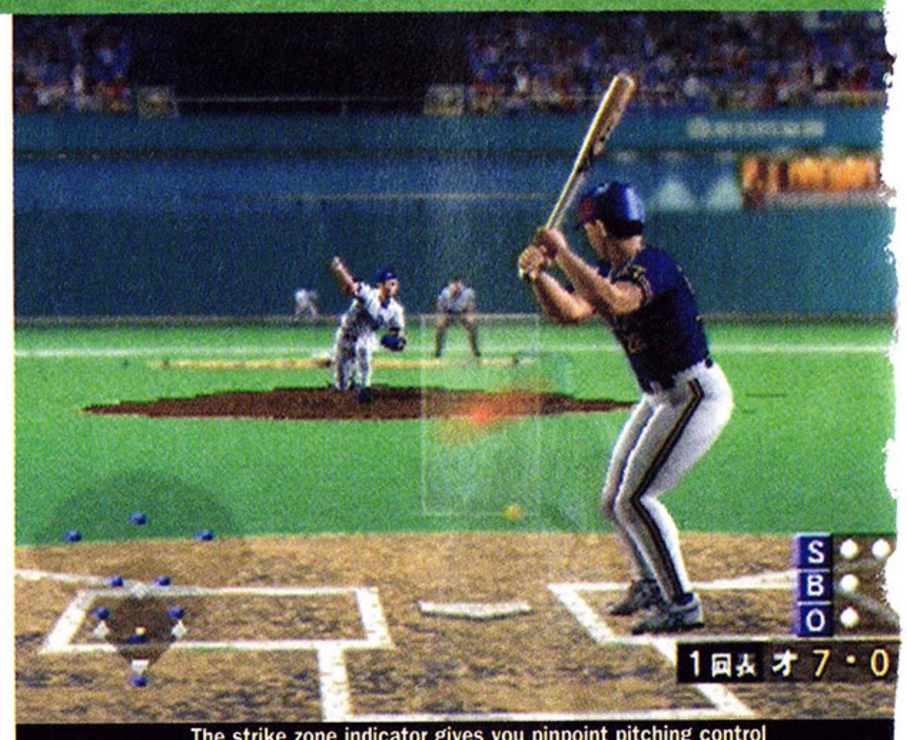
Fielding is intuitive, as the computer reacts to the hit off the bat, then switches control to the player as the view zooms in. Generally, the AI seems to do a reasonable job of putting you in position to make the play.

Hopefully, this promising title will make its way Stateside in some form or another. It seems to be a solid baseball game wrapped in some awesome next-gen window dressing. In fact, it's so impressive that Jay is actually excited about a baseball game for the first time in his life.

After a dinger, round the bases...



...and get your propers from your teammates



The strike zone indicator gives you pinpoint pitching control

Whiff!

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** SQUARE SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** SQUARE SOFT ■ **RELEASE** TBA

The multiplayer includes four-player split-screen and i-link compatibility

Robot in disguise, Sweet Tooth can transform between vehicle and mecha form

PLAYSTATION 2

TWISTED METAL: BLACK

BACK IN BLACK

In the beautiful city of San Francisco, Sony held its first US Gamers' Day, inviting the industry's leading journalists to get a better look at the PlayStation 2 launch activities. A conference hall filled with hundreds of hardcore gamers sat in eager anticipation for Sony to unveil something new, but after a few hours of boring statistics showing where Sony has been over the last five years, and where Sony wishes to be in the coming months, it appeared as though Sony had nothing new to offer. Gamer after gamer dozed off, etched stick-figure drawings in their notepads, and prayed to the gaming gods that Andrew House would end his Power Point presentation before they died of old age. At the very end of the conference, the lights dimmed, and a series of unexpected videos were shown. To all who were still awake, Square Soft tantalized the eye with a gorgeous video of The Bouncer, Konami unveiled a new Metal Gear Solid 2 trailer, and Sony dropped the mother of all bombs by debuting the unexpected continuation of the Twisted Metal franchise.

The two-minute Twisted Metal video riled up the crowd, and was followed by deafening applause. Sony then announced that this high-end sequel is being developed by the original Twisted Metal team responsible for the first two installments in the series. After leaving Singletrac, the talented individuals who more or less created the vehicular combat genre, formed a new company named Incognito, then sided with Sony again to bring the series back to its roots. While the gameplay looks a tad like Twisted Metal 2, a good majority of the game has changed, but for the better. All 14 characters are either familiar to the series or inspired by such films as Seven and Silence of the Lambs. These characters can actually lean out of the car and use handheld weapons. There's a chance that they may run on foot as well. As for the vehicles, think more along the lines of Transformers. In beautiful animated sequences, and upon pick-up, all the weapons emerge from hidden compartments in the car, then quickly tuck back in after their ammo is depleted. Most impressive of all, the vehicles can transform into gigantic robots. That's right, giant robots! Just wait until you see Sweet Tooth wreaking havoc on a small town as a robotic clown! It'll blow your mind.

Along with realistic weather effects that create poor visibility and force your drivers to use fog lights, every inch of the deathmatch arena can be destroyed. On one such stage, the base of a Ferris wheel can be knocked out of place, which in turn sends the wheel rolling down the road and eventually into a small town, laying waste to everything it touches.

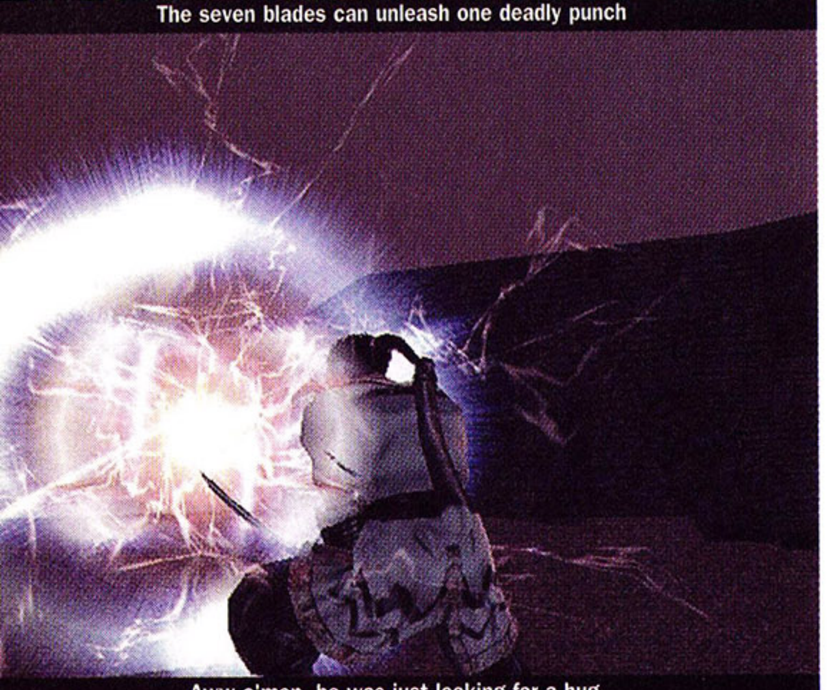
The most important news of all is that Twisted Metal: Black is only a few months away, releasing next spring. Even with the stiffest of competition from The Bouncer and Metal Gear Solid 2, Twisted Metal: Black received the biggest pop from the gamers in attendance and has now become GI's most anticipated game. If Singletrac keeps the physics similar to Twisted 2, then look out world! We may have to delay an issue or two to beat the game with all of the characters!

In the first three games, Sweet Tooth's design didn't change too terribly much

However, with the fourth installment, his ride mutated drastically...but the biggest change of all is yet to come

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** INCOGNITO/SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2001

The seven blades can unleash one deadly punch



Aww c'mon, he was just looking for a hug

Make 'em dance with your musket

PLAYSTATION 2

SEVEN BLADES

DUELING DYNAMIC DUO

Information on Seven Blades is scarce, but by calling on our network of well-placed Far-Eastern correspondents, we've managed to glean a few cubits of information concerning both the story and accompanying action. It all starts with religion as our two heroes, Gokurakumaru (male) and Yuri (female), answer the call of religious duty with sword in hand. However, the task will not be easy. Turns out, quelling a religious uprising on the island of Dejima is harder than soliciting gay-pride donations from skinheads during National Hate Week, and the game pumps out an onslaught of enemies similar to the scale seen in Dynasty Warriors 2.

From what we've gathered, gameplay surrounds your ability to use both characters, which then splits the story between different paths, enemies, and endings. While there will be times when you fight side-by-side, the title stresses replay value by letting you create your own unique carnage with either player.

Gokurakumaru seems to be the main focus of the game, as he is the wielder of the namesake seven mystical blades, each of which (in keeping with the spirit of the title) posseses its own brand of quick death. His exclusive use of swords makes him a master in close quarters. Yuri, however, is different in that her use of various firearms make her deadly from a distance. Adding flavor to the mix is a special meter for both characters that burns with a fiery aura, and a ferocious attack to match.

Seven Blades' holy war should send out one helluva "hallelujah" when it comes out in Japan on December 21, and over here in spring 2001. The religious war is coming.

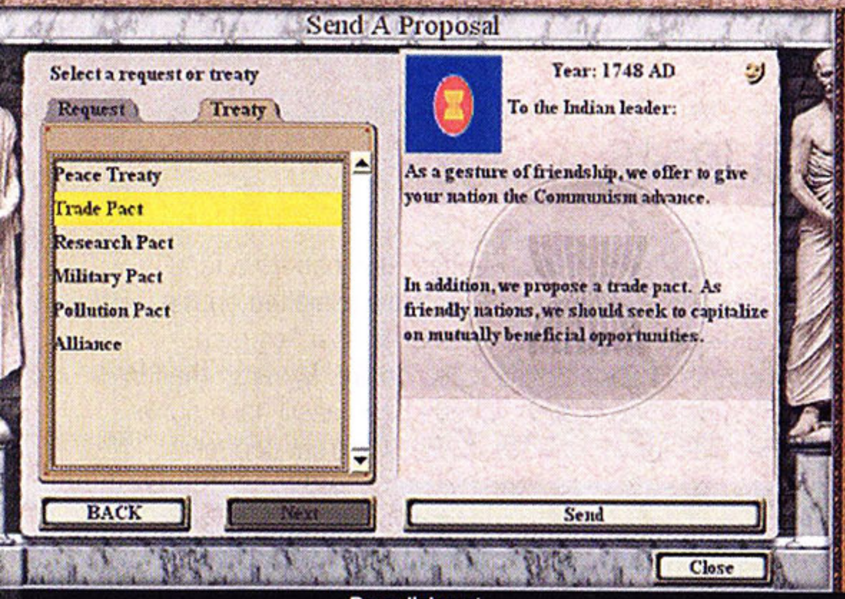
Apparently, you've made them mad

Beware of those devices called "lasers"

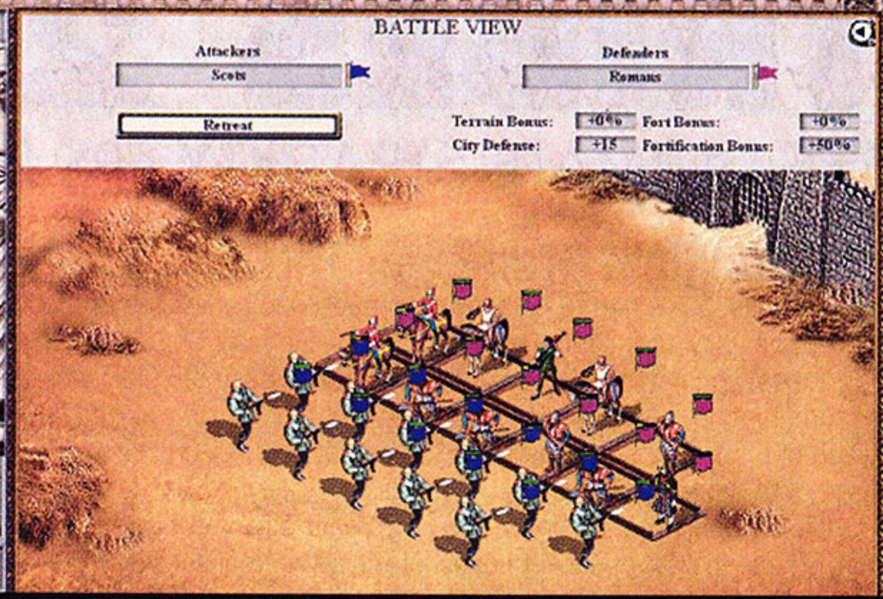
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KCE JAPAN ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 21 IN JAPAN, TBA IN US

Build your empire

Get to know your neighbors



Be a diplomat



It's smashin' time!

Construct new wonders

PC

CALL TO POWER II

ET 2, BRUTE?

Sid Meyer's Civilization is undergoing yet another upgrade. Building on the original CtP engine, this installment will feature new wonders and units, as well as updated trade and diplomacy options.

Call to Power II will attempt to immerse the player in several new tools for governing their piece of the pie. Improved trade and combat features help move the game along; however, the diplomatic landscape is much more robust than its predecessors. It will assist players in choosing their political stance, and enemy states will take stock of their diplomatic surroundings before attacking or forming alliances.

Other improvements include a virtual mayor that allocates resources to what the AI feels you need most. You may notice your mayor switching from an emphasis on production in peacetime, to defense in wartime. Unconventional units can now be seen by each other, regardless of type, easing the pressure of researching numerous branches of the tech tree to enable the detection of a certain threat.

The resource gathering system is another updated feature, where your city will expand its borders as it grows, building tile improvements along the way. Your territories expand while working around each other, which allows each different city to grow in a unique way. The game also does away with space cities and units, shifting play focus to the conquest of land and sea.

Other features and gameplay elements have been wisely left alone. The unit-building structure still behaves in much the same way as it did in CtP, unit movement is basically untouched, and graphically, there are only minor changes to units and battle environments. These are all things that work in CtP2's favor, as these were cornerstones of CtP.

Activision has a large hurdle ahead of it, as bugs have been a serious problem with previous Civilization titles. CtP2 doesn't have an especially new look for this unique genre, nor is it particularly innovative. But it is building on a system that works, and implementing some much-needed changes. That being said, we look for this game to come out bug and hassle free.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** ACTIVISION ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

Curse these uphill battles!

Ouchie!

"Put on a happy face!"

"Uh...I'll be leaving now."

PC

TRIBES 2

THE ULTIMATE STRATEGY FPS RETURNS

The original Starsiege: Tribes may not have sold as well as it deserved, but the response from fans was so huge, there had to be another sequel. Few games foster the kind of devotion that Tribes players have exhibited on the Web and in play. Like Team Fortress, it puts emphasis on teamwork over Quake-style brawling with the occasional flag grab.

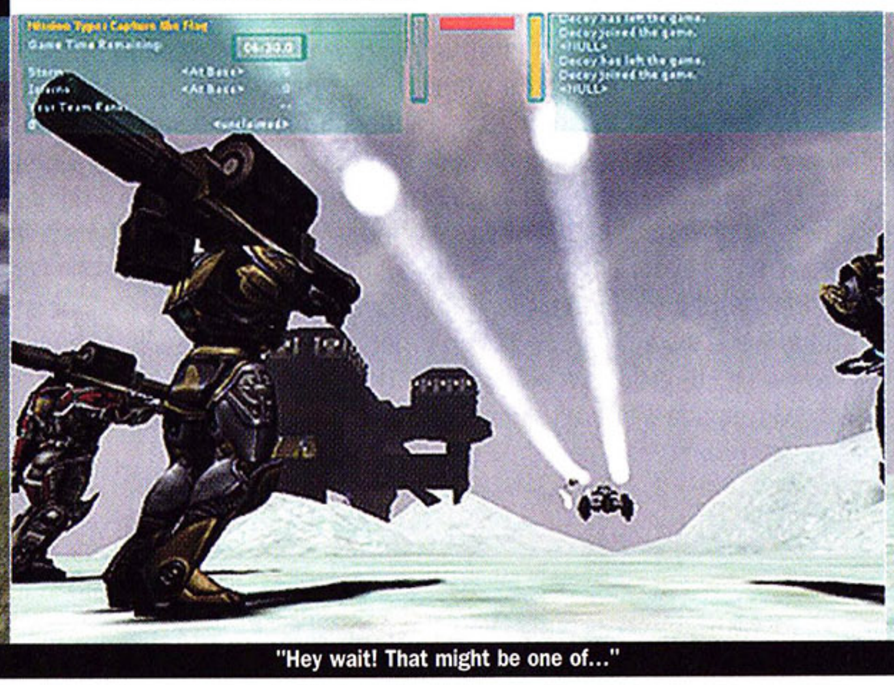
In Tribes, you get vehicles and can run back to base to select whatever weapon and armor loadout you desire. More so than in any other game, during deathmatch, a team of moderately skilled FPSers that knows how to work together can easily take out a legion of top fragmasters. Between the use of vehicles and choosing effective roles for your troops, there is a great deal of strategy to be considered.

Oddly enough, Tribes 2 only appears to feature two new weapons (but the recent delay to a first-quarter release may change that). These include a Rocket Launcher that fires heat-seeking missiles and a much-needed melee weapon – the lethal Shock Lance. The Rocket Launcher will lock and track its target. If an opponent manages to evade, the missile will automatically track the next target it finds, whether friend or foe, which makes it a risky weapon to use. Individual soldiers can avoid the missiles by shutting off their booster packs and dropping flares, but it's much more difficult to evade with vehicles.The Shock Lance works great with a new cloaking field that players can equip. The field makes you nearly transparent, allowing you to sneak up on opponents and cut them down before they even know what's happening. A new type of sticky mine has been rumored, but not confirmed.

Aside from the gorgeous new graphics and enhanced chat and waypoint command options, the vehicles are one of the most noticeable changes. Flyers include a speedy single-seat light-attack craft called the Shrike, a bomber with tail and bell-gunner positions, and a heavy carrier capable of transporting up to four troops (in addition to the pilot and tail gunner). There are also three new ground vehicles. The unarmed grav cycle is an ideal single-seat transport for snipers and flag grabbers, while the assault vehicle packs a serious punch with what is essentially a mobile base turret equipped to fire mortars or plasma shots. Last but not least is the heavily armored, but weaponless, mobile command vehicle capable of jamming sensors and restocking supplies in the field. It's just a hunch, but we imagine Tribes fans will be pleased.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 64-PLAYER ACTION/SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** SIERRA STUDIOS ■ **DEVELOPER** DYNAMIX
■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2001

Sure hope these guys are on the viewer's side



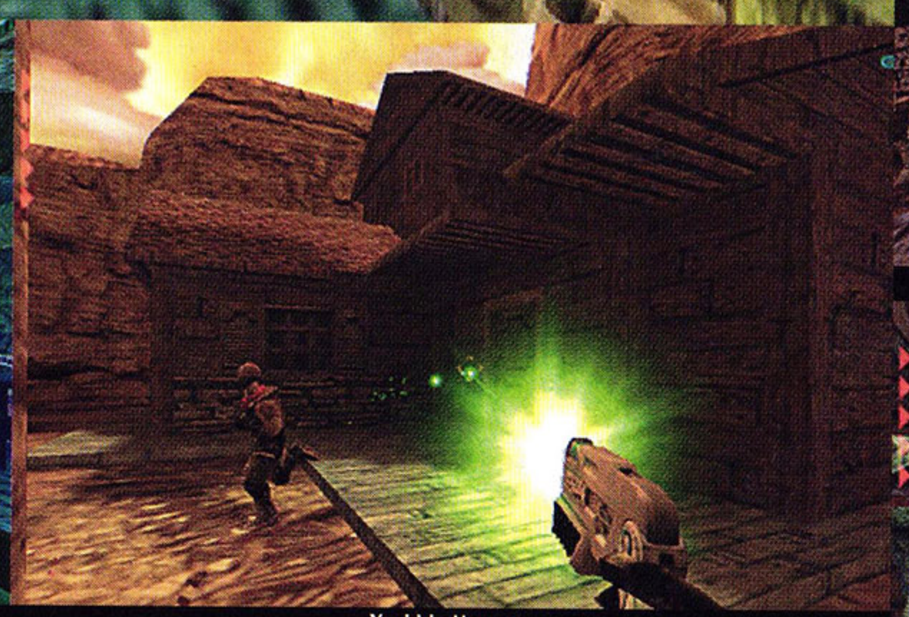
"Hey wait! That might be one of..."

"...ours..."

"Have a seat, cowboy!"

Airborn targets of the third kind

"Blue, my favorite color for destruction"



You'd better run

Could this room be any more detailed?

"Bite this, dinosaur scum!"

PC

GUNMAN CHRONICLES

A GOOD ENGINE GETTING BETTER

Called upon to assume the leadership of the Gunmen, to avenge your General's death, and to fight an alien foe known as the Xenomes, you strap on your piece and go to work. Gunman Chronicles promises to send first-person shooter fanatics into fits of blissful seizures as they start in on over 40 hours of expected gameplay.

Powered by the wildly successful Half-Life engine, Gunman Chronicles will combine a high-tech arsenal with good old shoot-out action as your character blasts his way through four different worlds and 30 genetically modified mutants. Original sounds and music will accompany you on your travels, but the weapons will make sure you don't take an early exit. GC will offer eight different weapons to help you blast the opposition, be it a friend next door, or something even more hideously grotesque on-screen. Among the weapons are the following:

STANDARD ISSUE LASER PISTOL

You will carry a laser pistol into all missions. This is your jump-off weapon – you will never start with less than this. The Laser Pistol still packs a punch with it's different modes: Pulse, a high-powered burst of three energy units that is the most accurate of the three standard modes; Charge, a slow-moving packet of 10 energy units; Rapid, a stream of pulse bursts, machine gun-style. The is also a sniper rifle stock add-on long range accuracy is no problem with this upgrade.

SHOTGUN

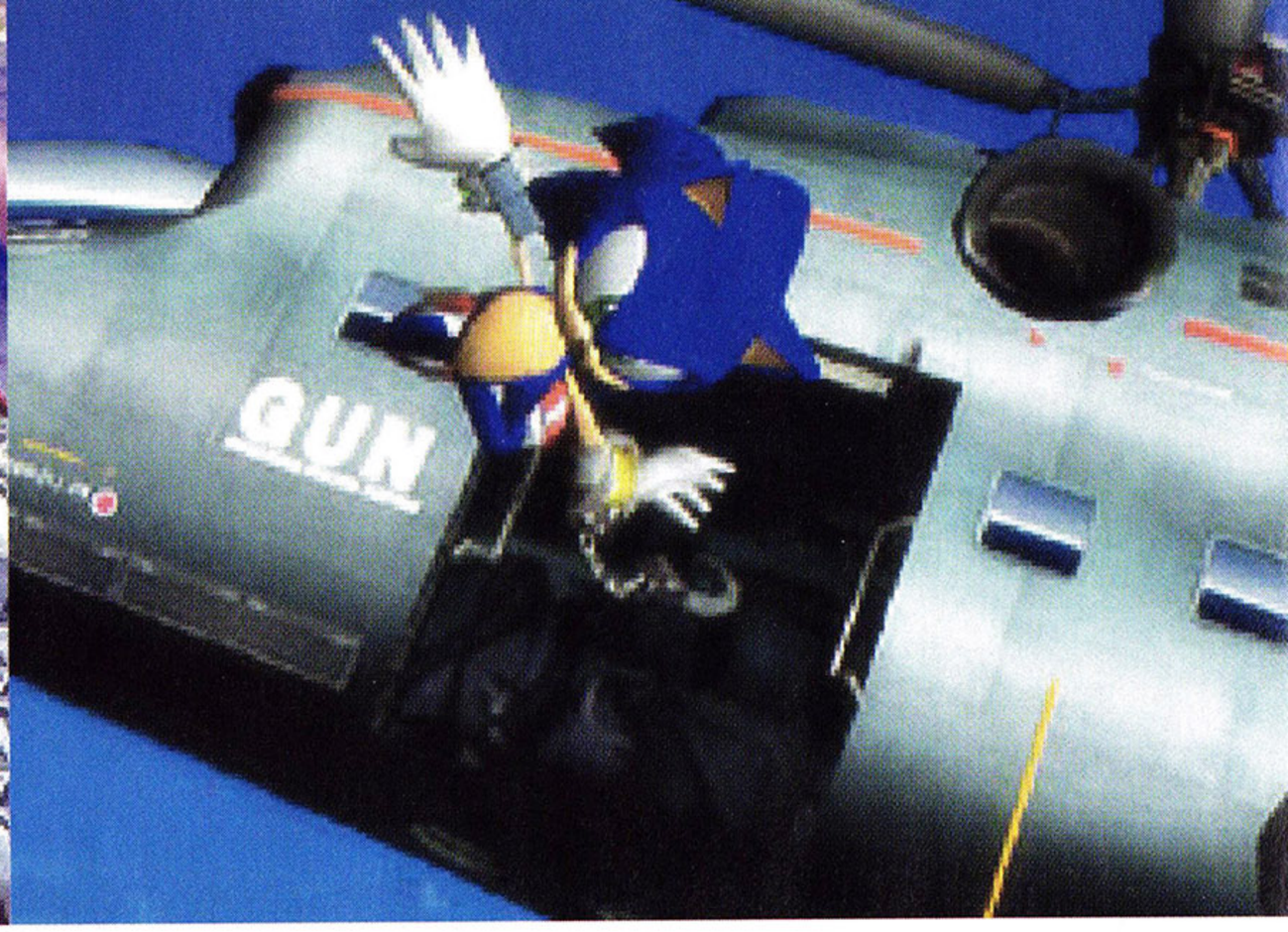
This will be one of the first weapons you find. The shotgun offers two customizable features. You can tweak the spread, which refers to the scatter range of the buckshot. Selecting lower numbers will concentrate the buckshot in a smaller area. Larger numbers – up to 20 degrees – spread the buckshot in a wider area, but with less effectiveness. You can also set the shotgun to fire from one to four shells simultaneously with each shot.

MECHA GUN

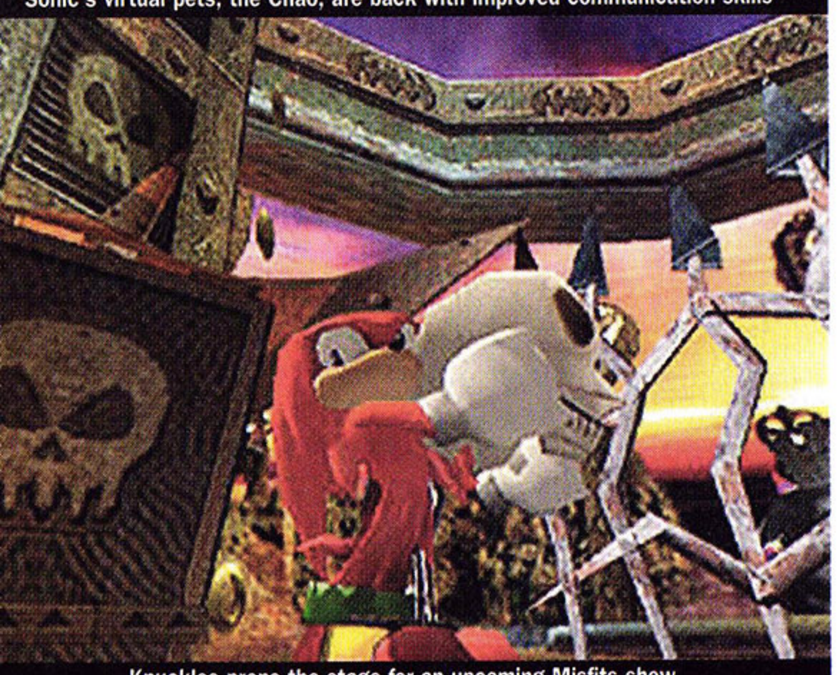
The standard sub-machine gun has been improved to provide substantial firepower – up to 20 rounds per second. You'll want to keep on eye on the temp, as the gun will malfunction when overheated, firing uncontrollably until it cools. The Mecha Gun's default setting fires approximately 10 single rounds per second. Adding the Barrel Spin doubles your firepower by equipping the extra barrel via a unique spinning action. Barrel coolers are clip-on components that cool your barrels, allowing the gun to fire rounds for longer periods of time without overheating.

Customization features in GC will be simply mind-boggling for first-time players. Find yourself with rockets, but no launcher? No problem, you are now able to disassemble the rocket and use the warhead in a number of viciously delicious ways. The list goes on and on, and you'll want to find every one of them.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 32-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** SIERRA STUDIOS ■ **DEVELOPER** REWOLF SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** WINTER 2000



Sonic's virtual pets, the Chao, are back with improved communication skills



Knuckles preps the stage for an upcoming Misfits show

The background detailing is now comparable to Shenmue

DREAMCAST

SONIC ADVENTURE 2

SEGA'S NEED FOR SPEED

Faster than a speeding bullet. More powerful than a VW Beetle. Able to leap small shrubbery in a single bound. Look! Up in the sky. It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Super…er Sonic the Hedgehog! Sega's mascot and multi-million-unit-selling cash cow is finally making his way back to the powerful Dreamcast scene with an action-packed sequel. For those of you who took a chance with the first game, only to be disappointed by the sheer amount of gameplay difficulties, Sega has ironed out the wrinkles, hoping all the unbelievers out there will transform into speed addicts.

Right from the get-go, Sonic Adventure 2 starts out with a killer action sequence featuring Sonic handcuffed to a helicopter. Using his many skills to break free, Sonic leaps into the air and plummets rapidly. Just when it appears big blue will make an even larger blue smear on the ground, he yanks a sky board out of his back pocket and shreds the clouds, which is an incredible sequence that you actually control, then lands safely on the ground. In the first game, Sega tried to implement a number of minigames to lend the game diversity. Sega succeeded in this mission, but most of the material was subpar. The sequel uses the same techniques, but this time the payoff should be significant. The gameplay segments in Sonic Adventure 2 are rarely repeated, and if you ever do want to take a break from the strenuous action, Chao breeding has received a complete makeover. Sega not only improved the communication and response between the heroes and the Chao, but several interesting VMU minigames have been added so you can play the game on the go.

Sharing the spotlight with some of his co-stars for the second time running, Sonic will be just one of many playable characters. Knuckles, the guardian of the Master Emerald, is lending a helping hand, and if you thought he was da bomb before, he has an explosive arsenal of new moves to work with. The notorious gangsta, Dr. Robotnik, a foul human who has always had it in for Sonic and his buddies, is no longer the adversary. You heard us right! Eggman is actually one of Sonic's allies this time around, and he may even be a playable character! This is an interesting spin to say the least.

Could it be?! Is Dr. Robotik a new playable character!!!

Along with improved camera angles and more intuitive control, several of Sonic's new abilities allow him to reach a new level of interaction with the environments. Jumping on the skateboarding bandwagon, Sonic (without a board we might add) can grind objects like railings and ledges. We'll have to wait and see if Sega went to the extreme, allowing big blue to actually perform a Madonna.

We've heard your complaints about the first release a thousand times over, and we agree with you. The second chapter should sit a little better with everyone, but then again, many of the problems with the original were caused by Sega rushing the game out of development and onto retail shelves. Before it hits the streets, hopefully this sequel receives the touch-up it deserves.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM/SEGA ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER 2001

TWO WORDS

Shenmue

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Violence
Mild Language
Use of Tobacco and Alcohol

www.sega.com/shenmue

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Dreamcast™

With the ability to lock on to enemies, the combat is very Zelda-like

PLAYSTATION 2

DARK CLOUD

THE WORLD IS YOURS TO BUILD

Sony's most ambitious PlayStation 2 property is finally taking shape. Despite early reports that the game only looked to be average, the latest offering from Sony's Japanese development studio blew us away. All the action is very fluid, borrowing key traits from Zelda's 64-bit adventures. The world-building aspect is also impressive, coming together with a menu and item-placement system similar to Sim City. Dark Cloud will release in Japan this December, with the US release just a few months later in early spring. Take a tip from us and reserve your copy now!

You can build your own cities, then zoom down to interact with them

Sephiroth!!! Ah!! Ah!!! Sephiroth!!!

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2001

PLAYSTATION 2

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO

NOT THE MASTER YET

Even with a December 15 release date, Kengo still appears to be in the early stages of development, and because of this, our first impressions didn't leave us with the highest of expectations. Former Square Soft heavy hitter, Lightweight Entertainment, has big plans for the continuation of its Bushido Blade series.

The biggest change is the alteration of the instant kill. If you look at the pictures scattered around this article, you can see both life and special meters. As the game progresses in development, one-hit deaths may be implemented, but right now, the only way to win a match is through depleting the opponent's lifebar. The easiest way to do this, of course, is through powering up the special meter and using it to unleash a devastating attack. This new system lessens the tension the one-hit system delivered – you don't need to hunt for an opening any more, just slash away.

The two things Kengo has going for it at the moment are character models and environments. Each warrior is dressed in flowing garments with a remarkable amount of detailing. The little things, like unsheathing a sword, are delivered with precision as well. The arenas are equally impressive; however, they are quite small, which leads us to believe the exploration aspect has been removed.

Hopefully, Lightweight is holding out on us, and the material we've seen is only the tip of the iceberg.

Kengo has more than enough hidden characters

Filling the special meter enables mighty special attacks

The FMV sequences are highly detailed

Hopefully, a strike like this will bring instant death

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT ■ **DEVELOPER** LIGHTWEIGHT ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 15

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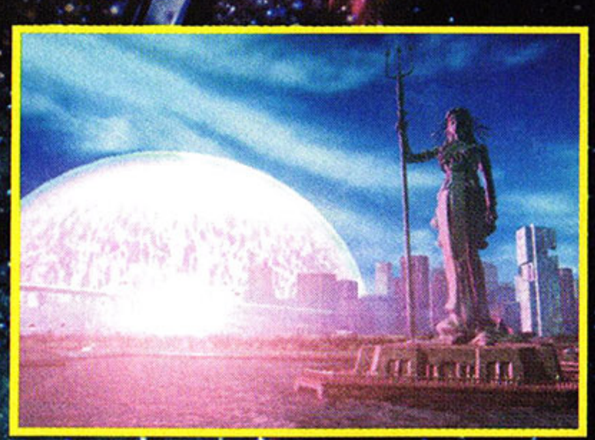

PlayStation®2

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Mild Language

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Build up your kingdom

DREAMCAST

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III

THE LITTLE GAME THAT MIGHT

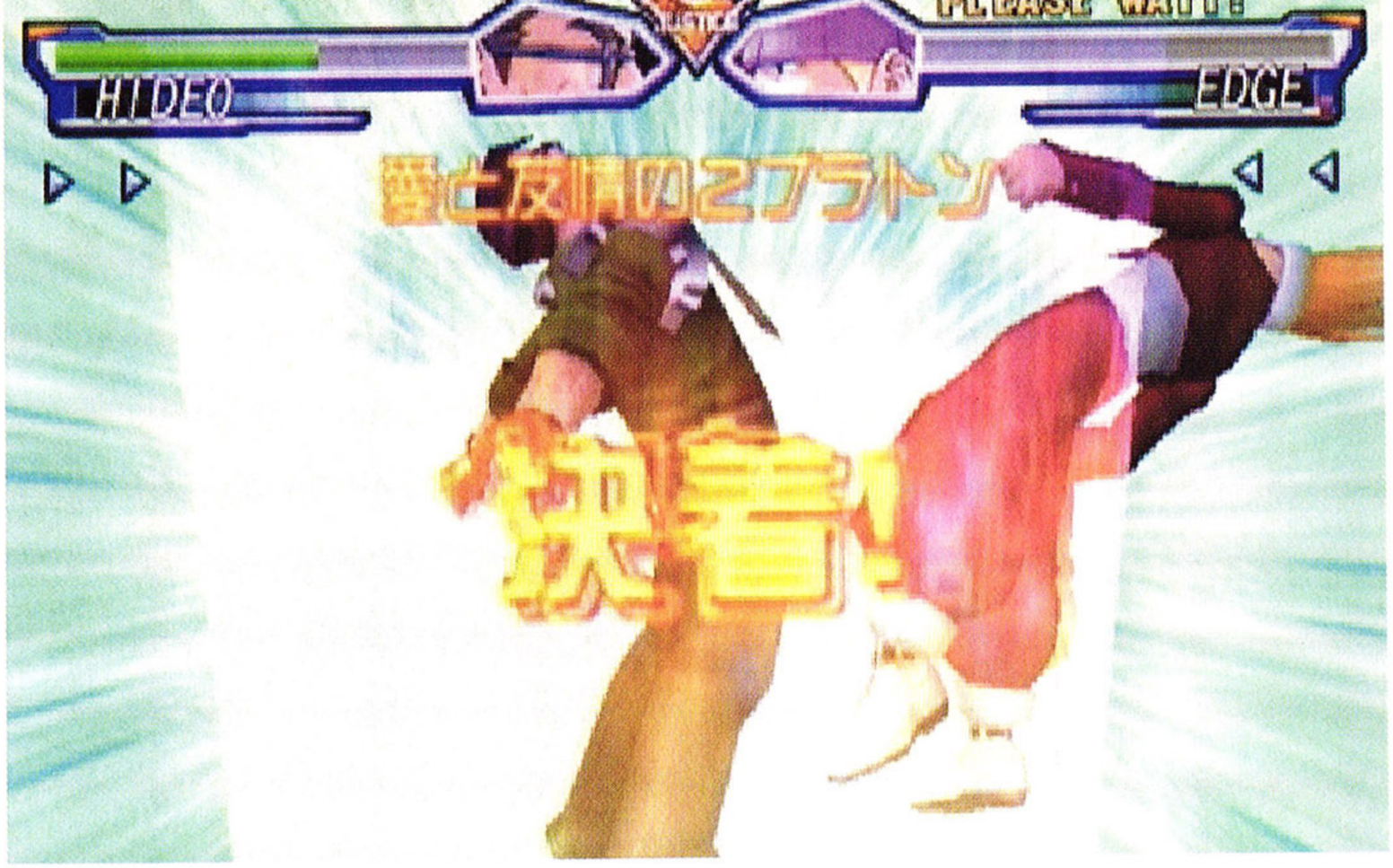
Heroes of Might and Magic III has all the elements of a good adventure game – interesting plot lines, a variety of foes, multiplayer functionality, player stats, etc. We have a feeling that with some well-placed patches and tweaks, Heroes of Might and Magic III has the potential to be a great buy for the Christmas season. The game brings a lot to the table. There is an overwhelming amount of content to swim through – something any self-respecting adventure gamer demands. The battle detail and experience gathering are nothing to hoot and holler about, but get the job done.

A player is able to choose between several different game mode options. Multiplayer capability will keep all you HM&M maniacs coming back for more after you've finished off the single-player scenarios, as well as the myriad quests and adventures.

HM&M III may struggle on the Dreamcast due to the sheer volume of information shooting around the screen. Load time will be a big factor as to whether or not this title sees a lot of daylight. Fans of the series will not be disappointed, as it's obvious a voluminous amount of work went into this one. Time will tell.

Amble around with your army

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ENTERTAINMENT ■ **DEVELOPER** WESTKA ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 5



DREAMCAST

PROJECT JUSTICE

PREPS AND JOCKS GET IT ON

Striking gold with its untouched high school license, where hostile students excel in beating the tar out of their classmates, Capcom has forged a sequel to the sleeper title Rival Schools. On a grading scale, Rival Schools was a C-. Capcom is hoping to raise this mark and possibly make the honor roll with this second attempt. Many of the students from the first game are back as either juniors or seniors, and six new faces have transferred to the school, bringing the whopping character total to 22.

The overall feel of the game is very much the same, but some extensive changes have been made to the tag tactics. When the power gauge reaches level five, players can perform the Party Up technique which lights up the screen with a simultaneous three-man assault. Each Party Up maneuver is different for the different groups of characters, and instead of being knocked senseless or blocking this move, the opposing force can retaliate and counter the attack. Many of the two character co-op moves are still in place with hilarious and mind-numbing animation.

Capcom has also answered the "Where's the beef?" cry by giving the game a hefty frontend filled with interesting options, including an enhanced Edit Character mode and a new League system.

It's tough to say whether this game will make an impact, but we have a feeling it will be the last hurrah for the Rival Schools gang.

Tag team tactics still play a large role

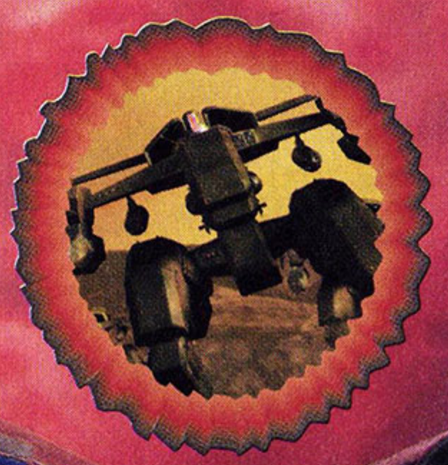
If only we had the power to discharge lightning blasts when bullies gave us swirlies

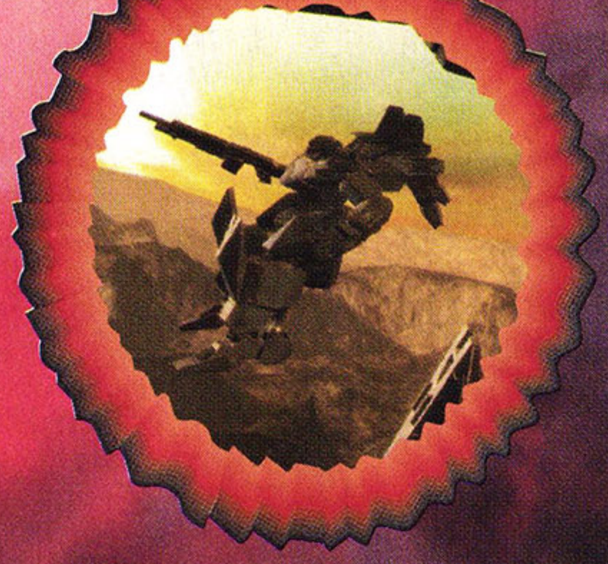
Every walk of high school life is included. Jocks, nerds, teachers...

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 15, 2001

GUNGRIFFON BLAZE™

IN A POST-APOCALYPTIC FUTURE LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS A BOLD NEW LOOK





"*Easily* one of the best PS2 launch titles."
– Gamers' Republic

PlayStation®2

TEEN T — Animated Violence, Mild Language

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Hit these objects for big points

PLAYSTATION 2

SURFING H30

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT WAVE

"Surfing is a way of life, man – a way of looking at a wave and saying 'Hey, let's party!'" So sayeth Jeff Spicoli, and so sayeth we. These words of infinite wisdom must have inspired Ascii to create Surfing H30 (titled Surfroid in Japan), a surfing game quite unlike any other. We recently got our hands on the Japanese version of the game, which features a number of sci-fi oriented characters. Rockstar has informed us that many of these will probably be taken out of the US version, though they might appear as hidden characters.

The most striking feature of the game is the unique surfboard controller, which attaches to the Dual Shock's analog sticks. This is used to guide your surfer through the waves, while performing tricks with the analog buttons and shoulders. This odd little innovation (which will come packaged with the game), sets Surfing H30 apart from other games of its ilk. There are a handful of gameplay modes, most of which require that you attain certain point levels through tricks and collecting land mine-like bonus objects. The graphics are a little spotty at this point, but Rockstar has promised to pull out the Sex Wax and buff the polys to a brilliant sheen before its American release.

The innovative surfboard controller uses your Dual Shock to simulate real surfing

This comely beach bum is one of the game's outrageous characters

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ROCKSTAR GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** ASCII ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

PC

SACRIFICE

SHINE ON, YOU CRAZY SACRIFICE

In the classic struggle to add role-playing to an RTS, Shiny has unveiled Sacrifice. Being the current master of the PC RPG (sorry, Origin), Sacrifice seems like the next logical step for Interplay, which is pushing the RPG envelope in multiple genres and platforms.

Sacrifice hits the RPGer right where it counts – in the detail. The character generation in Sacrifice is nothing special, but what a person can do with that character...that's impressive. Reminiscent of the old "choose your own adventure" books, the game has you guiding your newly formed wizard through the realms of five gods. Showing bravery and allegiance to one or the other will entice your god of choice to show you favor, whereas the others will attempt to block you.

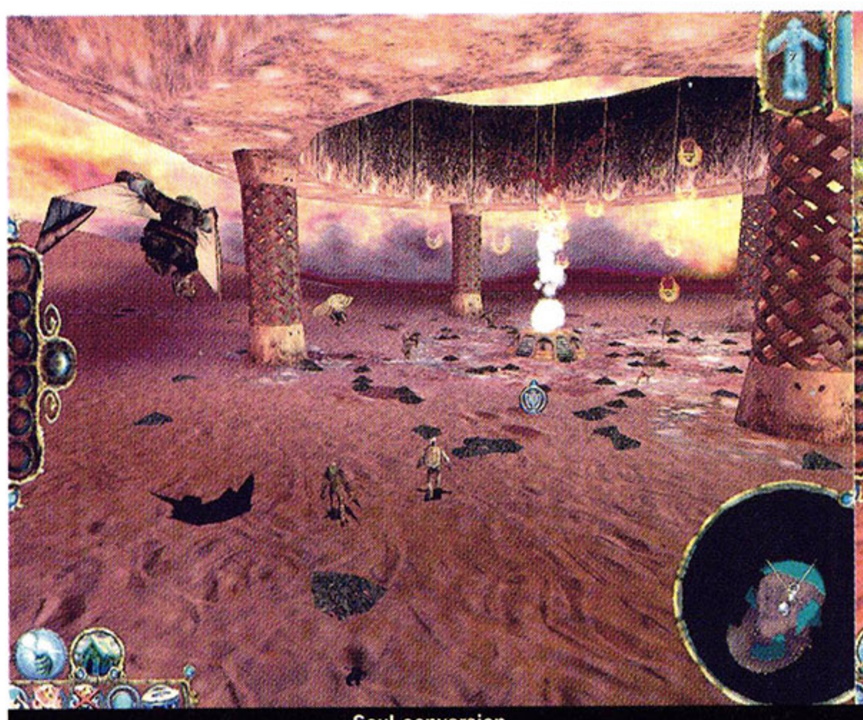
Sacrifice offers more bang for the buck. As it features a level editor dubbed Scapex, the possible amount of level customization is simply staggering. An advanced level editor even has the option to add cutscenes, mission objectives, and character audio to the created scenario. Also included is map creation and texture editing, giving the creator more latitude to make a uniquely recognizable realm.

Sacrifice will break the mold for an RTS/RPG hybrid. Highly controllable situations and missions are already leaps and bounds ahead of other RTS/RPG contenders such as Warcraft III. Unit control and magic manipulation are elements any gamer will appreciate given the innovative formation techniques and spell options.

Online play will also be available, only adding to the already gigantic replay value. We have a feeling this will be the mark other production houses shoot for as more and more RTS/RPG's hit the market. Any gaming fan should put aside a little scratch for the release of Sacrifice. It will be well worth your while.

Aim...

Fire!



Soul conversion.

Battle!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 12-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** SHINY ENTERTAINMENT
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 1

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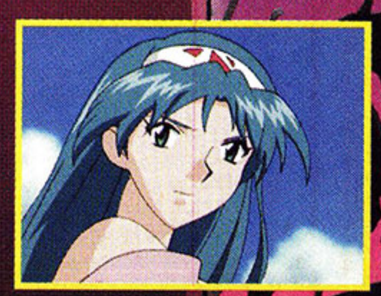

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Giant cats look so friendly...until they try to kill you.

PLAYSTATION 2

GOEMON

MYSTICAL BLUE HAIRED BOY

Goemon – sounds like a bad disease or some really stinky cheese. However, if you've followed the Nintendo world dating back to the days of the Super NES, you know Goemon is the blue-haired boy who originally starred in The Legend of the Mystical Ninja. Certainly, this little fella has seen his share of adventures on the SNES, Game Boy, and Nintendo 64, but this upcoming PlayStation 2 release is surprisingly Goemon's first frolic on a non-Nintendo platform. Yes, Goemon is moving to new pastures and at the recent Tokyo Game Show we had a chance to take a quick look at his new PS2 game.

Konami tried a few new tricks with Goemon on its N64 offering, bringing the game into a 3D arena. The PS2 version mimics it, but on a larger scale. The adventure breaks up the game into typical role-playing tasks of exploring towns and speaking with residents, while providing action through combat. Most of what we saw were RPG elements, but from what we know of the other games, expect combat to see a variety of weapons and a little magic mixed into the battles.

Given the current stage of the game, it's hard to tell in what direction it's moving. On the one hand, the graphics are fairly devoid of detailed textures. Likewise, the game engine is not too spectacular. However, one thing is for sure – if Goemon is anything like the past games, the story and events will be as crazy as a bad disease caused by eating smelly cheese.

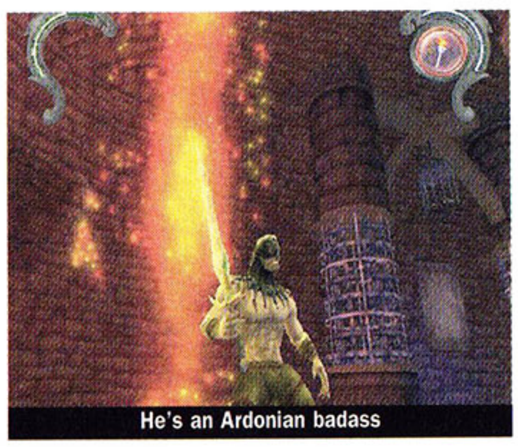
Yikes! It looks like the watermelon patch has come alive.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **DEVELOPER** KCE KOBE ■ **RELEASE** TBA

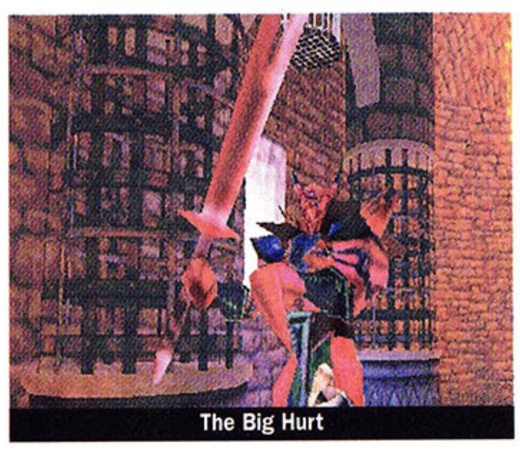
PLAYSTATION 2

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

DON'T HATE ME BECAUSE I'M DAMNED



He's an Ardonian badass



The Big Hurt

"Okay, we've got a great idea for a new PS2 title. We'll take this guy, right? And we'll put him in a bad situation, like maybe he's in a war-ravaged land full of disease and famine, and people are blaming each other for all the bad stuff that's happened. We'll call the place, oh I don't know, Ardon or something like that. So anyway, here's our boy, and he's one of the people being accused of doing naughty things! Can you believe it?! So, to prove his innocence he has to go on a quest to find out what's going on in Ardon. If he fails, he's thrown into a pit of demonic creatures or something. Who knows, we'll work that out later. But anyway, as our dude is trying like the dickens to figure out what's going on, he finds out that an evil god is behind all this! So he has to kick the bad god out of Ardon to save humanity. What do you think? Oh, and our hero kills lots of baddies along the way with assorted blades and magic."

Warriors of Might and Magic is not a game that makes use of incredibly original plot lines. However, it looks like WoM&M will offer gameplay that makes full use of the PS2's processor through FMV, dialogue, and other assorted features that only a system like the PS2 can offer. 3DO is very confident in WoM&M's graphical prowess and promises that, at times throughout the game, it will use 20 times more polygons than the PS-X's Crusader.

Aside from the technical improvements, this installment of M&M is delivering updated combat techniques, as well as defensive options, to improve and expand gameplay. We have high hopes for Warriors of Might and Magic, as does much of the gaming community. With spectacular graphic effects and 3D immersion as promised by 3DO, we would be surprised if this title did poorly.

Stink attack!

He fell into a burning ring of fire...

■ **STYLE** ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** 3DO ■ **DEVELOPER** 3DO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 2000

PLAYSTATION 2/PC

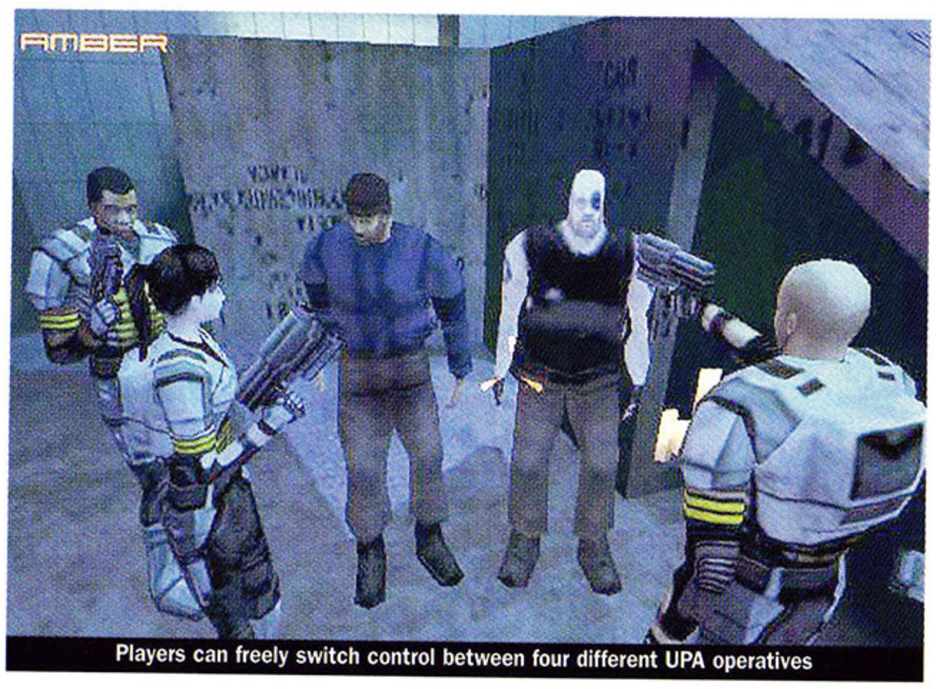
PROJECT EDEN

LIFE AFTER LARA

The developer that gave birth to Lara Croft and the Tomb Raider series has a new story to tell. This time around, however, it won't be seen through the eyes of a tightly-clad heroine. In Project Eden, players can freely switch control between four different characters from the Urban Protection Agency elite force. This team was formed to deal with serious disturbances within the mega-cities. Cleaning up the streets is one thing, but the UPA has never handled a situation this severe. A group of technicians was sent to the Real Meat factory to repair machinery that simultaneously malfunctioned. The group hasn't been seen since. It's up to you to solve the riddle.

This epic story not only unfolds through the eyes of four highly-trained operatives, Project Eden features interchangeable first and third-person views. While in the first-person perspective, if you look down, you can actually see your torso and feet. The team-based gameplay spans across 11 mission-heavy stages. The PlayStation 2 version is limited to a single-player game, whereas the PC version allows for two to four-player networking. Both versions are expected to shoot up the gaming scene in February.

Project Eden can be played from either the first or third-person viewpoint



Players can freely switch control between four different UPA operatives

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** CORE DESIGN ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 2001

The main character, Eike Kusch, tries to find what's behind his death.

PLAYSTATION 2

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

IS THIS AMNESIA?

If Shadow of Memories was a feature film that was set in Los Angeles and starred Warren Beatty, the game might be called *Heaven Can Wait*. Well, not exactly, but the plot of Konami's PlayStation 2 adventure made us immediately think of this late '70s flick.

In the game, you take the role of a young man named Eike Kusch who, at the outset of the adventure, has been murdered. Eike's subsequent resurrection – or so we think – sets off a chain of events where he retraces the steps leading up to the murder. We're not talking just a few days or weeks, as Eike will travel hundreds of years into the past to discover his origins and reveal key events that could have lead to his dismal destiny.

Shadow of Memories is a third-person perspective adventure featuring characters and settings that are rendered in real-time. With your character traveling through many different eras, you will interact with a huge variety of personalities – all present with voice acting depicting the change in time. Items, puzzles, and clue gathering will all be a part of this adventure.

At this stage, Konami hasn't nailed down a definitive US release date for this game. However, the presentation and story have piqued our interest.

Needless to say, these 16th Century maidens are surprised to see someone from 400 years in the future

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **DEVELOPER** KCE TOKYO ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER IN JAPAN, TBA IN US

Throughout the game, Donald's facial expressions will change

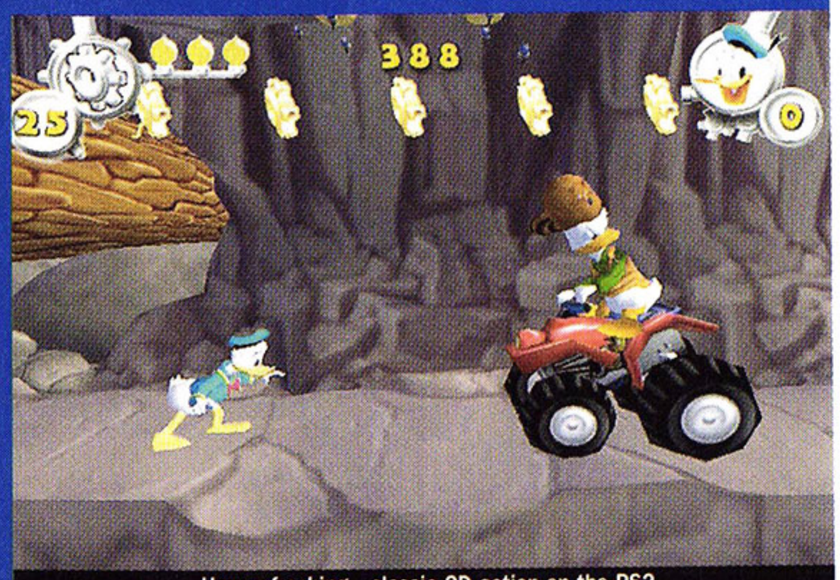
PLAYSTATION 2

DISNEY'S DONALD DUCK: GOIN' QUACKERS

MOOD SWING FEVER HITS PS2

Donald Duck has always had a red-hot temper that leads him into a world of trouble. We've seen him explode on a number of occasions. Remember when Chip and Dale messed with his Christmas tree? Oh boy, was he steaming! Yet, from what Ubi Soft has told us, his cartoon exploits will seem quite tame in comparison to his PlayStation 2 game, Goin' Quakers. But then again, this polygonal outburst may play second fiddle to Donald's wrath toward Ubi Soft if his PS2 title is a big fat stinker.

All of Donald's raw emotions will play a big role in the game, and thanks to high poly counts, you'll actually see his facial expressions change on the fly. Stylized as a platformer, this release will take full advantage of 2D side-scrolling, and all-out 3D exploration à la Crash Bandicoot. Donald's lovely lady, Daisy Duck, has been kidnapped by the notorious villain, Merlock. Donald must travel across 24 massive levels, leaping vast pitfalls and using his feathered fists to knock out Merlock's minions.



How refreshing...classic 2D action on the PS2

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** UBI SOFT ■ **RELEASE** UBI SOFT HASN'T SET A FINAL RELEASE DATE AS OF YET, BUT DONALD IS EXPECTED TO HATCH FROM HIS PS2 EGG IN EARLY 2001

PLAYSTATION 2

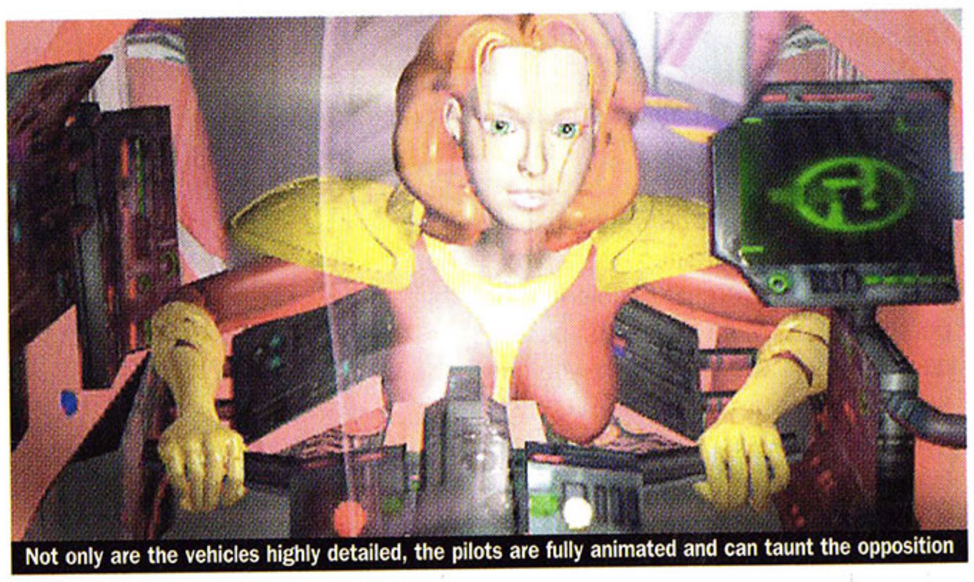
MOTOR MAYHEM

FROM WDL TO VCL

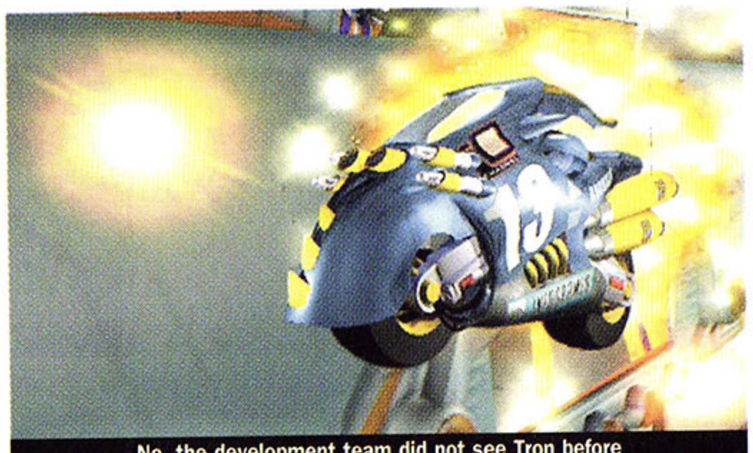
In what seems to be a WCW versus WWF feud, 3DO and Infogrames are butting heads in the vehicular combat genre. 3DO has shown its development prowess with World Destruction League, and Infogrames hopes to steal the love-stricken audience away with its first title in the Vehicle Combat League, Motor Mayhem. While vehicular destruction is the main focus, Motor Mayhem adds a new element to the mix. All of the characters are visible within, or on top of, their monstrous rigs. As the player hunts his or her prey, the characters react to objects in the environments and taunt the opposition. Infogrames may be delighted by this groundbreaking innovation, but little do they know that Twisted Metal Black has already demolished this aspect with characters that not only show emotion, but actually pop out of the car with handheld weapons. You snooze, you lose!

Back to the battle at hand. Motor Mayhem's premise is set within the year 2025, and the gameplay unfolds through gigantic arenas filled with fans hungry for carnage. On the other hand, WDL's premise is set in...well...who cares! We surely don't. Now then, time for the ever so important propaganda-filled quotes from Infogrames director of marketing, David Riley. Woo hoo!

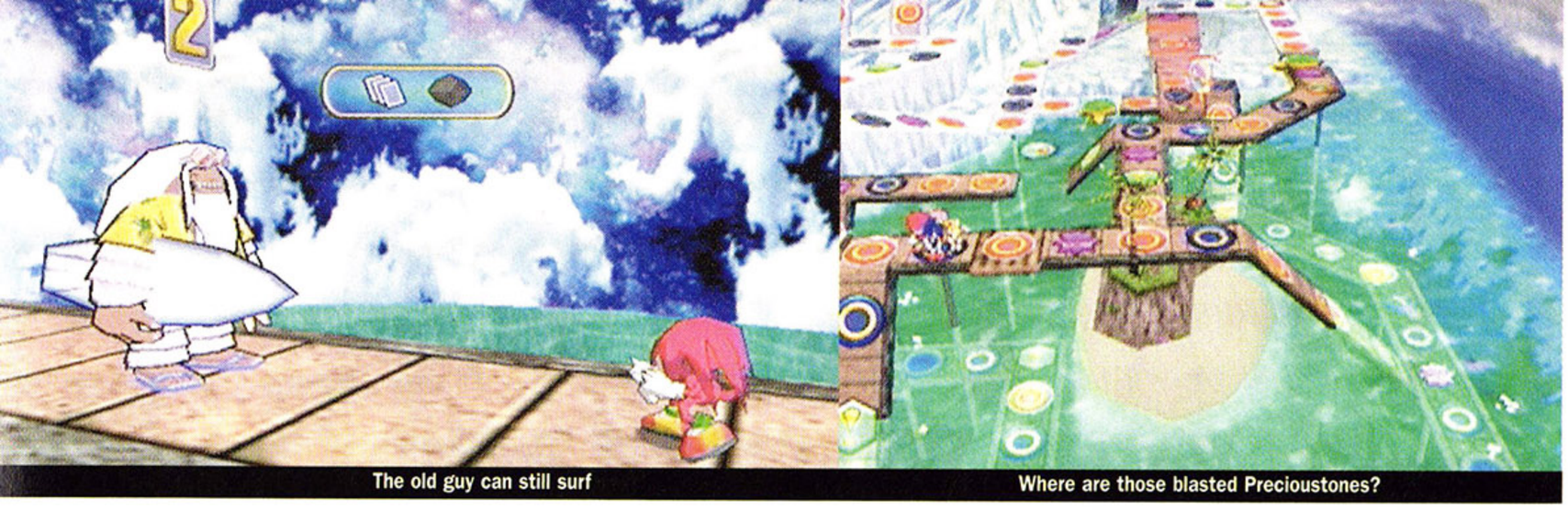
Take it away, David! "Motor Mayhem brings an edgy element to our PlayStation 2 lineup that will appeal to the masses as well as the hardcore gamers that will purchase the new game console." Hmmm...Very intriguing, David. "With up to four-player split-screen pandemonium and spectacular special effects, this game really takes advantage of the technology that the PlayStation 2 has to offer." We're sure it does, David. We're sure it does.


Not only are the vehicles highly detailed, the pilots are fully animated and can taunt the opposition

All the battles take place within gigantic arenas filled with traps and weapon power-ups


No, the development team did not see Tron before creating this vehicle

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** BEYOND GAMES ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2001



The old guy can still surf

Where are those blasted Precioustones?

DREAMCAST

SONIC SHUFFLE

DOSIE DOE, MOFO

So, there you are, wondering aloud to yourself, "Gosh, I'm going to have three of my geeky video game friends over tonight and, by jove, we need something to do. I wish we could play a Dreamcast game which incorporates Sonic and all his friends into a party game set in a whole new magical world." Well, Sega has heard your cries for party-time entertainment, and will release Sonic Shuffle in early November. Sonic Shuffle features a 3D gameboard for Sonic, Knuckles, Amy Rose, and Tails to play out their search for Precioustones. These stones in question were ruthlessly thrown about by a force known only as The Void. What does this mean? It means you have to collect these Precioustones (isn't that clever?) before your friends do, to save the land of Maginary Whirl. Sega has thrown in minigames and trivia questions to make things interesting. This game could be a lot of fun, but right now it's missing that *je ne sais quoi* that makes a party game cool for all ages.

Sonic has to share the spotlight this time

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SONIC TEAM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 13

The animated series is ready to go, yet it may never air

NINTENDO 64/DREAMCAST

ROSWELL CONSPIRACIES

MIB WITHOUT THE RAPPER

As though all information was blanketed by a huge cover-up, the developer really hasn't divulged any information surrounding the Roswell Conspiracies. Already though, this upcoming Dreamcast and Nintendo 64 game has stirred up quite an interesting story. Both versions of Roswell Conspiracies are based on the animated series bearing the same name. Are you a big fan of the Roswell Conspiracies cartoon? If you answered yes, then you're a big fat liar. The show hasn't been picked up for syndication yet, and while the game was originally scheduled for a fall 2000 release, Red Storm is holding onto the project in hopes that some network will pick it up. Red Storm has set a deadline. If the show doesn't air by early 2001, the game will release in spring regardless.

The story is more or less a replica of the Men In Black concept. Aliens are on earth and it's up to an underground agency called The Global Alliance to combat the extraterrestrials without letting mankind know there's life on other planets. Through 40 stages, players switch control between Nick Logan and Sh'Lainn Blaze, each bearing unique abilities.

Even without the cartoon foundation, this game has an impressive look and the basis of gameplay seems solid. We can't wait to see it!

Nintendo 64

Dreamcast

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** RED STORM ■ **DEVELOPER** RED STORM ■ **RELEASE** TBA

GAME BOY ADVANCE

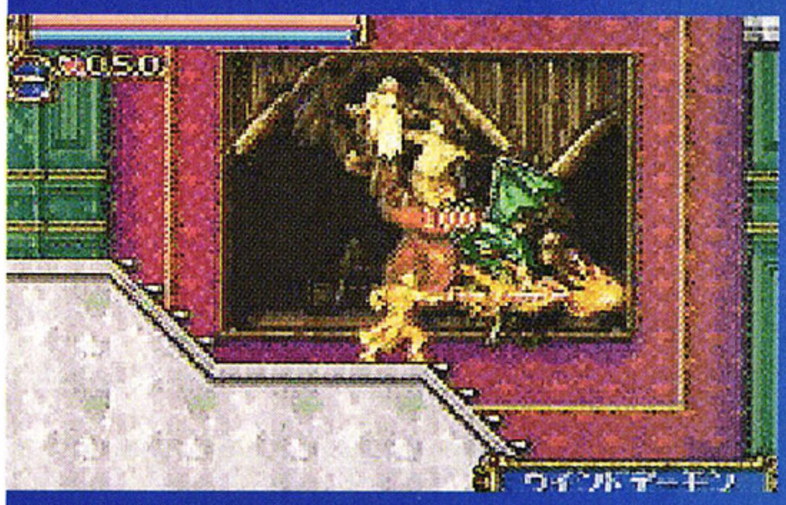
CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON

BLOOD SUCKING IN THE CLASSIC SENSE

Well, it's about time already! After 1997's memorable release of Castlevania: Symphony of the Night, the gaming nation sat in eager anticipation for the release of a sequel. Unfortunately, the continuation of the classic 2D Castlevania lineage never came to fruition, and instead of giving gamers what they truly wanted, Konami tried to convert this dark tale into a three-dimensional adventure. Thankfully, two significant events happened. Gamers turned their backs on the 3D releases, and Nintendo announced a new handheld unit that thrives off the second dimension.

Naturally, Game Boy Advance is the perfect opportunity for Konami to correct itself and return the series to its roots. Before you get too excited, the main character is not Alucard, but rather a whip-wielding adventurer – possibly a Belmont! The look of the game is a grade below Symphony of the Night, but still looks stunning. It also appears the game will hold many of the RPG qualities found in the PS-X release. Experience can be gained – for what exactly, we don't know – and different attacks and techniques are unlocked by wielding specific items. The whip can also be customized through the gathering of cards.

Many of the classic Castlevania components are in place, including Dracula as the last boss, and a remix of the original score. This exciting title should accompany the July launch of Game Boy Advance.



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER 2001

REVIEWS

Our crack (or crackhead, we can never decide which) review team rates games in a number of categories to help you sort out the great from the stuff you hate. Each game is reviewed by at least two staff members, and you will find both their opinions on each review. To make things a little easier we have put together some definitions of what the numbers mean, what the reviewers are like (so you can find the reviewer most like youself), what we look for in a game, and also a cheat sheet so the newbies can understand our advanced video game jargon. Read on and soon you will be talking FPS and FMV with the best of them.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

Game Informer's rating system ranges from 0 to 10, and is similar to school grading. 7 is average, 9 and above is exemplary work, 5 and below is a failure. Aside from concept, entertainment, graphics, playability, sound, and replay value (all explained to the right), other factors that influence a game's final score are how much game you get for your money and how all the game's elements come together.

10 - Perfection. One of the best games of all time, if not THE best game of all time. This game has no flaws, and thus this rating is rarely given out.

9 - Worth owning. Fans of the genre should definitely enjoy this game, but even those who don't normally like this type of game may find themselves getting hooked.

8 - Worth playing. Still a great game, but arguably so. It may not be the best ever, but there's enough to keep your fingers wrapped around the controller for some time.

7 - Worth renting. Unless you're a fledgling gamer, you've probably seen everything this game has to offer before. Still, just checking it out won't ruin your weekend.

6 - Limited appeal. There are always a few people that will fall in love with a game of this caliber, but for the most part, those playing it will be yearning for something more.

5 & BELOW - Garbage. From this point down, it's just a matter of how much of a failure the game is. The lower the score, the more you're hating life for playing it.

CONCEPT
What new ideas the game brings to the table and how well old ideas are presented.

GRAPHICS
How good a game looks, taking into account any flaws such as bad collision or pop-up.

SOUND
Does the game's music and sound effects get you involved or do they make you resolve to always play with the volume down?

PLAYABILITY
Basically, the controller to human interface. The less you think about the hunk of plastic in your hands, the better the playability.

ENTERTAINMENT
Flat out, just how fun the game is to play. The most important factor in rating a game.

REPLAY VALUE
The longevity of the title.
- **High** - You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** - Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** - Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** - After finishing it, there's not much reason to give it a second go.
- **Low** - You'll quit playing before you complete the game.

THE CONSOLE TEAM

ANDY
■ **Handle:** The Game Hombre ■ **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, Strategy ■ **Interests:** R.A. Salvatore Fantasy Books, Clint Eastwood Westerns, Dr. Pepper, Vikings Football, Timberwolves Basketball ■ **Dislikes:** Your Mama, Uncooperative PR People, Kentucky Fried Chicken ■ **Current Favorite Games:** EverQuest, Zelda: Majora's Mask, MoH: Underground

When Andy's not yelling at a game for "rippin' him off", he plays drums in Minneapolis indie rock band, Unbelievable Jolly Machine. A longtime fan of Metroid, Andy has been reviewing video games professionally since the days of the 8-bit NES. While a big sports fan in real life, Andy isn't the first to line up for sports titles, but is always willing to put in the extra hours to play a good RPG or strategy game.

PAUL
■ **Handle:** The Game Professor ■ **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Racing ■ **Interests:** NFL, NBA, Arizona, Alan Greenspan, IRC ■ **Dislikes:** Pennies, Mike Tyson Boxing, US Tax Policy ■ **Current Favorite Games:** Madden 2001 (PS2), MSR, Tony Hawk 2

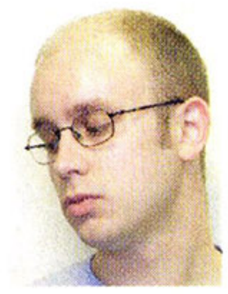
Since the days of the Mattel Intellivison, Paul has consumed every type of sports video game imaginable. Not only is he the staff's resident sports gaming expert, he also has authored detailed strategy guides on all of Capcom's survival horror games. A GI Staff member since 1992, Paul has reviewed well over 500 games during his tenure.

REINER
■ **Handle:** The Raging Gamer ■ **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Sports ■ **Interests:** Comic Books, Star Wars, Transformers, Anime ■ **Dislikes:** Country Music, People With Guns, The PC Jedi ■ **Current Favorite Games:** Final Fantasy IX, Tony Hawk 2, TimeSplitters

Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 489 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his six years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, Perfect Dark.

MATT
■ **Handle:** The Original Gamer ■ **Expertise:** Racing, Puzzle, Action/Adventure ■ **Interests:** Rolling Rock, Bands Nobody Likes, Soup ■ **Dislikes:** Chewing Gum, Robin Williams, The Former Czech Republics ■ **Current Favorite Games:** Tony Hawk 2, TimeSplitters, Emperor's New Groove, Metal Walker

While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on how close your desk is to his. Less esoteric than his colleagues, Matt prefers traditional action and platform games.



JAY
■ **Handle:** The Gonzo Gamer ■ **Expertise:** Strategy, Puzzle, RPGs ■ **Interests:** Dungeons & Dragons, Comic Books, Wrestling, Paintball ■ **Dislikes:** The Minnesota Vikings, Teams Unable To Beat The Vikings ■ **Current Favorite Games:** Final Fantasy IX, Tony Hawk 2, Tile Pai Gow Poker

Jay lives in his mom's basement just like you. Adding further fuel to his archetypal nerd fire is his love for comic books, metal miniature painting, and twice weekly pencil-and-paper RPG sessions. In fact, he's such a D&D fanatic, he hates professional football simply because it interrupts his Sunday gaming schedule. Par for course, his favorite games are often obscure ones. He is also one damn handsome man.

THE PC TEAM

ERIK
■ **Handle:** The PC Jedi ■ **Expertise:** Strategy, RPGs, Anything That Allows Upgrades ■ **Interests:** White Vermont Cheddar, Science Fiction, Tom Clancy ■ **Dislikes:** Wisconsin Cheese, Soccer Moms, V6s With Automatic Transmissions ■ **Current Favorite Games:** Red Alert 2, Suikoden II

Erik is a self-professed closet nerd, otherwise known as a NUCI (Nerd Upon Closer Inspection). Although he couldn't care less for people who love everything and anything about anime, he has developed a fixation on mecha. Erik is completely clueless about sports, and will attempt to change a conversation on the topic to one about X-Com or 3rd Edition Dungeons & Dragons so he doesn't look foolish in front of the ladies.

KRISTIAN
■ **Handle:** The Game Dawg ■ **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports ■ **Interests:** The Cincinnati Bengals, Stanley Kubrick, Boyle's Law ■ **Dislikes:** His Roommate's Wicker Furniture, Helen Hunt, Beets ■ **Current Favorite Games:** Rune, Red Alert 2, Chutes and Ladders

Kristian enjoys opening a can of whoop–ass on his buddies at the ping pong table, then running off to the golf course for a lesson in humility and anger management. The original text-driven Zork started Kristian on the gaming road; Ultima 6, NES Baseball, and Zelda made sure he stayed. Still an avid RPG fan, he can always find time to pound out a good sports game.

NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

For our newer readers, here is a glossary of terms and acronyms that commonly appear in the magazine. Video game veterans should move along (these aren't the droids you are looking for).

Action – A term we use for games like Rising Zan

Adventure – A term we use for games like Myst

AI – Artificial Intelligence. Usually used to refer to how well the computer reacts to a human opponent

Board – A term we use for games like Jeopardy

CG – Computer Graphics

cutscene – A portion of the game where players simply watch as the story unfolds

DC – Sega Dreamcast

E3 – A place where pathetic people jump for hours on end to get free shirts

Fighting – A term we use for games like Street Fighter

FMV – Full Motion Video. Usually refers to an animated CG cutscene

FPS – Frames Per Second. How many animation frames happen in one second. Also used to denote First Person Shooters like Doom, GoldenEye, & Unreal Tournament

framerate – The frames of animation used to create the illusion of movement

frontend – A game's menus and options

GB – Game Boy

GBC – Game Boy Color

ISP – Internet Service Provider. The company that provides you with access to the Internet

LAN – Local Area Network. Connecting computers or consoles together within a small space to allow communication between them. Provides fast, simultaneous gameplay

minigame – A small, simple game within a larger one

motion-capture – Using human models and infrared cameras to record movement for game animation. Also mo-cap

N64 – Nintendo 64

NES – Nintendo Entertainment System

part time sucka – Anyone who's not a full time playa

Platform – A term we use for games like Super Mario, and Crash Bandicoot

pop-up – When onscreen objects, usually distant, suddenly appear

PS2 – Sony PlayStation 2

PS-X – Sony PlayStation

Puzzle – A term we use for games like Tetris

Racing – A term we use for games like Ridge Racer

RPG – Role-Playing Game. A game that involves character improvement through collecting and spending points. A term we use for games like Final Fantasy

SG – Sega Genesis

Shooter – A term we use for games like R-Type

SNES – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

Sports – A term we use for games like, well duh, Madden Football

SS – Sega Saturn

Strategy – A term we use for games like Command & Conquer

third-party – Something made for a console by a company other than the console manufacturer

GAME OF THE MONTH

FINAL FANTASY IX

When Final Fantasy first hit the PlayStation, its flowing mixture of FMV, cutscenes, and gameplay bedazzled all eyes that fell upon it. In the years since that time, such spectacles have become the rule rather than the exception. Does this mean that Final Fantasy has lost its relevance? Absolutely not. Resisting the urge to follow FFVIII's trend towards more intricate gameplay options and world design, the designers of Final Fantasy IX have taken the series back to simpler times, and in the process created a gem that is sure to be considered one of the best in the series. Pg. 100.

The time-traveling aliens are ugly enough to warrant a shot to the groin

The arsenal is massive and includes almost every handheld weapon set within three time eras

"...FPS that is as mindless as Doom and as explosive as Unreal"

PLAYSTATION 2

TIMESPLITTERS

PERFECTLY GOLDEN

The brilliant team responsible for Perfect Dark and GoldenEye are no longer soldiers for Nintendo's development army. Shortly after putting Joanna Dark on the map, several key members from Rareware fled the 64-bit trenches and formed the independent development company, Free Radical Design. Instead of branching out to new horizons, Free Radical is sticking with what the developers do best – first-person shooters. Tossing out all the high-tech gizmos, complex mission objectives, and covert story material, Free Radical has pieced together a simplistic FPS that is as mindless as Doom and as explosive as Unreal.

Part of me craves a much more compelling package, ripe with an engrossing plot and varying missions. Yet the explosive play TimeSplitters offers is hard to deny. Actually, it grows on you like a foot fungus and is nearly impossible to shake. While the single-player game is limited, multiplayer is fully loaded. However, if you don't have three buddies around for a split-screen frag fest, the single-player game is very difficult and the Challenge minigames, which require ridiculous things like blowing the head off 50 zombies in two minutes, prove to be a time-consuming pain in the arse.

Showing it's the best at what it does, Free Radical worked wonders with the PlayStation 2 technology. Screaming across the screen at a constant 60 frames per second, the movement is silky smooth and the control couldn't be more responsive. The visual content is also a work of art, introducing several new effects to the console medium. Along with glass that actually shatters at the point of impact and realistic specular highlighting, the CPU animation and weapon detailing are some of the best around. To much surprise, the enemies are very crafty. They can duck behind objects, raise their gun arm, and spray bullets into the nearby area hoping to have tagged you. Just like in GoldenEye, players can target different hit zones on the enemy. As always, headshots end their life in one blast, often knocking the head clean off.

The pride and joy of Free Radical's work is the Map Editor. For multiplayer use, players can create new stages up to eight tiers high – setting starting points, lighting, texturing, and weapon placement. This feature is easy to grasp and a blast to use.

While a story would have been nice, TimeSplitters is a technological wonder that offers infinite play with its multiplayer options and gameplay sculpted by the gods themselves. A must for FPS junkies. – **REINER**

GOODIES

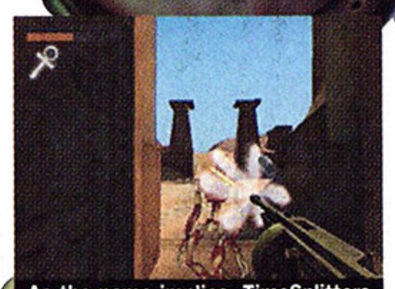
After completing a stage, many interesting awards await. You may unlock a character or two, a multiplayer stage, weapons, or a Challenge level. All of the characters feature amusing introductory animations, which make them all the more desirable, and the new weapons range from a Rocket Launcher to a Brick. That's right. A Brick.

EFFECTS

Not only does TimeSplitters feature a smooth framerate of 60, it also introduces a handful of impressive new effects not yet seen in the console realm. When you shoot a window, the glass doesn't explode like we've seen in the past. It actually breaks at the exact point where the bullet made contact. Also, if you shoot an object that a bullet cannot penetrate, the shot will ricochet off into a different direction, creating a spectacular visual.

STATISTICS

Following in the footsteps of Joanna Dark and James Bond, Free Radical has incorporated a heavy statistical front that tracks everything from glass panes broke, miles traveled, heads shot off, heads punched off, and bullets fired, to average speed, total kills, longest killing spree, favorite level and weapon, accuracy, and time invested.



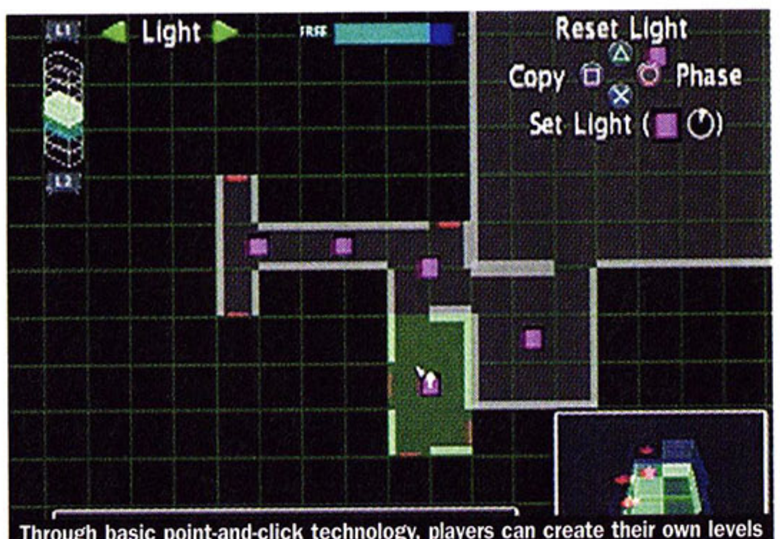
As the name implies, TimeSplitters unfolds in the past...

...present...

...and future. Each of these zones features a different weapon set

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** FREE RADICAL DESIGN
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

After conquering Story mode, try your hand at the insanely difficult Challenges



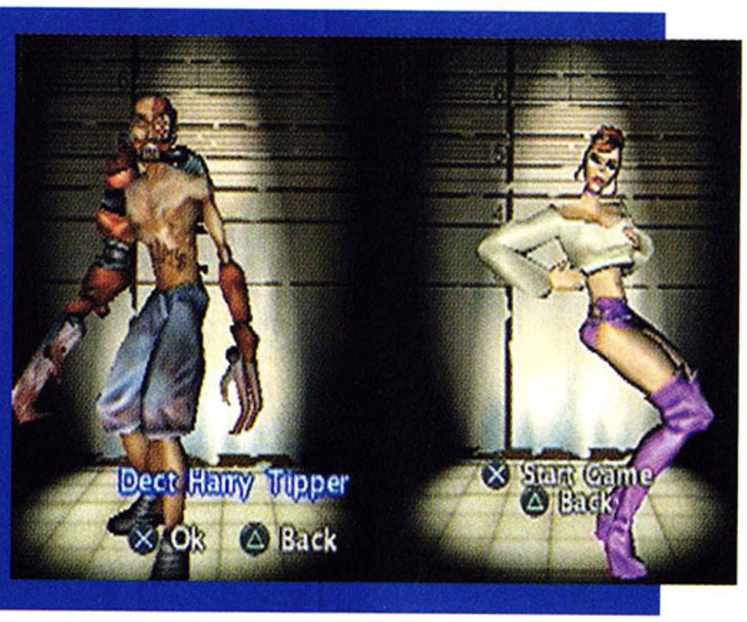
Through basic point-and-click technology, players can create their own levels and use them as new multiplayer battle grounds

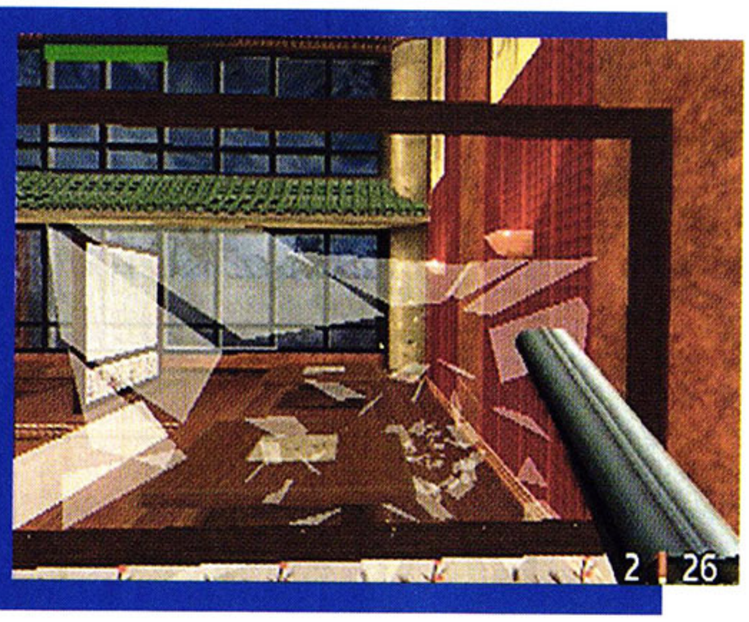
THE BOTTOM LINE

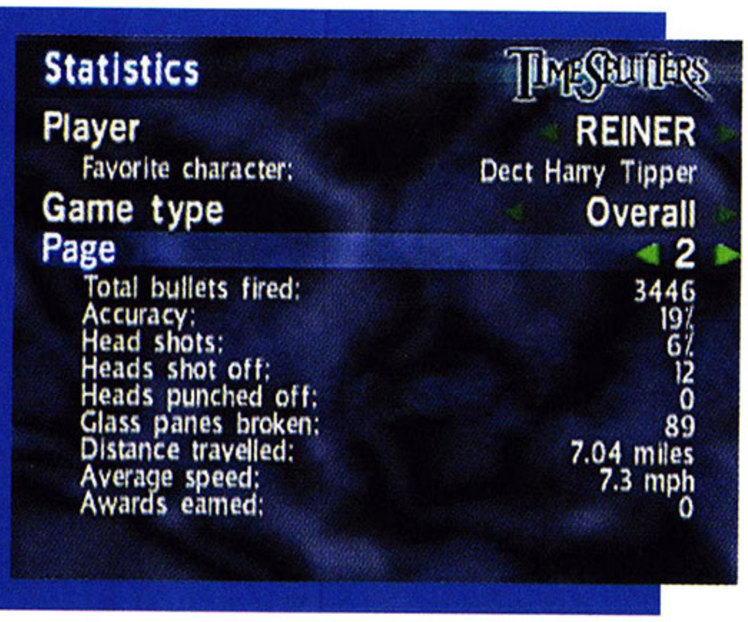
MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9.5

- **Concept:** Lacking in story and mission objectives, deathmatch is the main focus
- **Graphics:** At 60 frames per second, this is the smoothest shooter on the market. The animation is also something to marvel at
- **Sound:** A diverse soundtrack with memorable spy beats similar to GoldenEye
- **Playability:** The dual analog sticks haven't been used better. Targeting is a breeze and the CPU AI is ferocious
- **Entertainment:** With a level editor, this FPS can be played forever
- **Replay Value:** High







SECOND OPINION

Information on TimeSplitters has been circulating through the office for quite a while and I never really paid much attention to it. I was thinking it would be some boring first-person shooter. How wrong I am. This game is incredibly fun. The Story mode is excellent, with enormous environments and ultra-intelligent enemies. Speaking of the environments, I think it's great that there are multiple paths to the same objective. There seems to be so much to explore. I must say, the weakness of the Story mode is the rather simplistic objectives, but the game more than makes up for that with its speedy engine, beautiful graphics, and incredible challenge. The designers at Free Radical know their stuff. The design of TimeSplitters is exceptional and there is just a ton of modes. Definitely check this game out.

PAUL – 9.25

PLAYSTATION 2

MIDNIGHT CLUB

RACING 'TIL THE DAWN

Midnight Club is a straight-up racing game that never veers away from the pedal-to-the-metal formula, even though it could have done so much more with the authentically modeled cityscapes. Finding immediate success with the PlayStation 2 and its blockbuster release, Smuggler's Run, Angel Studios' second venture is not quite as exhilarating, but it does add a much-needed spark to the over-polluted racing market, making Ridge Racer V seem a generation behind. Midnight Club's checkpoint racing system through the streets of New York and London is very difficult, often pushing the player to find shortcuts and learn patterns to beat the competition.

With only two cities, the racing does become a tad repetitive, and the selection of vehicles, while plentiful, misses the boat on variety. Many of the vehicles are similar in design, and the handling ratio doesn't vary all too much. The means needed to unlock these rides is grand, forcing you to search the entire city for hidden markers, and race head-to-head to win the ride of your opponent. Midnight Club has the racing aspect down pat, and the graphical front is breathtaking, especially the vehicular deformation, but the game just doesn't have the drive to keep you playing. Variety is crucial nowadays, and unfortunately, Midnight Club doesn't have it. – **REINER**

In the most minute of detail, Angel Studios has created accurate models of the streets and locales of New York and London

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

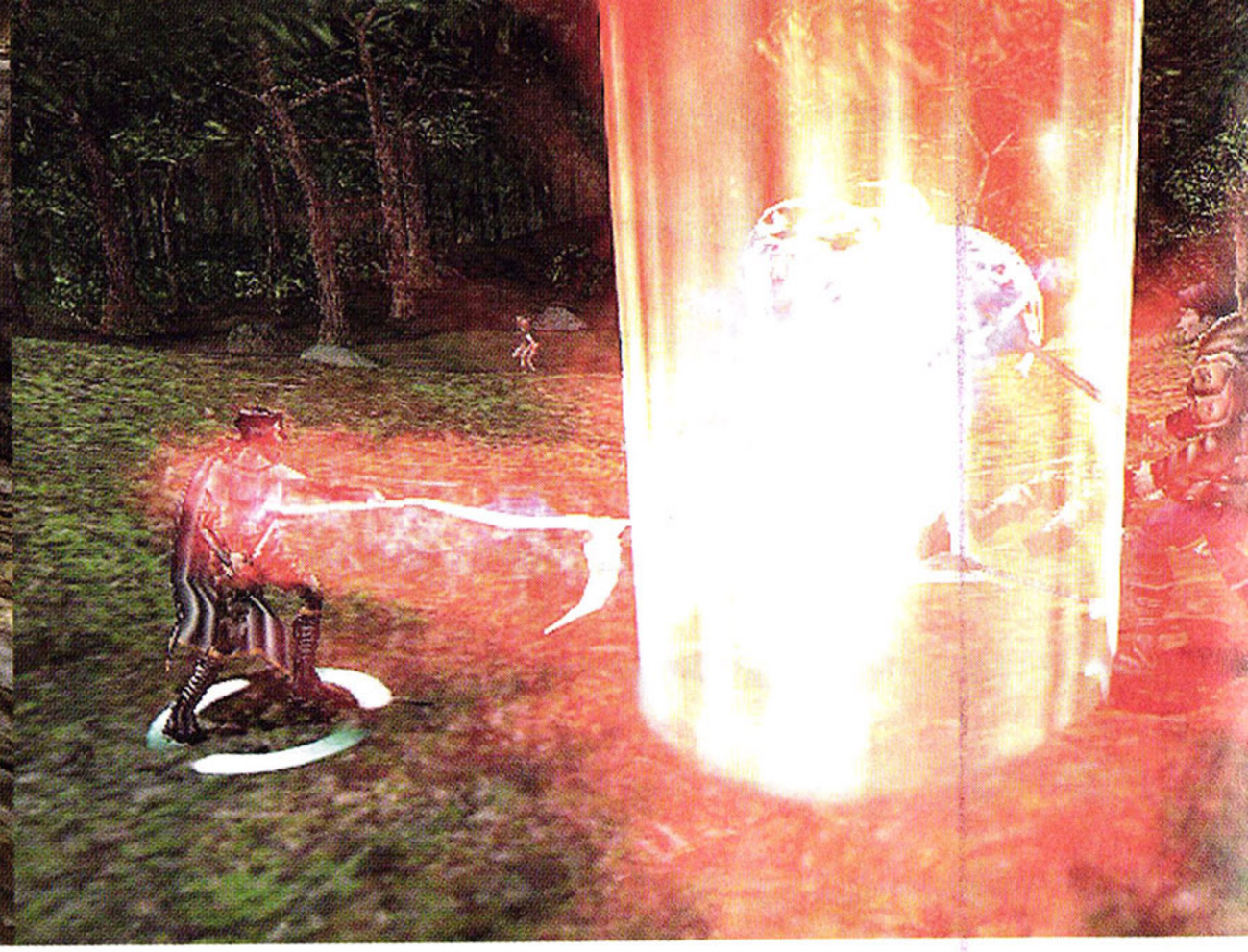
- **Concept:** Illegal racing set in New York and London
- **Graphics:** The cityscapes look very realistic, and the ambient life and traffic are implemented realistically
- **Sound:** Nothing special, yet some of the opponents' taunts are amusing
- **Playability:** Other than speed, the cars really don't differ in handling all too much
- **Entertainment:** With only two cities, the racing suffers from monotony, but the challenge is definitely there
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Expansive driving environments based on actual cities. Sounds pretty good, eh? In some ways Midnight Club is impressive, but in many ways it's just plain dull. Cruising the streets and learning the huge road system is an incredible challenge. There are just a ton of back alleys and unmapped areas. The control is also fairly tight and the racing is loaded with plenty of traffic and pedestrians. The real downfall of the game is the repetition. You just keep following the other cars over and over and over. Sure the routes change, but the entire thing gets a little boring with only two cities. I think I would have preferred more, smaller cities. There are going to be plenty of racing games for the PS2, and I think this one just isn't worth the 50 clams.

PAUL – 6

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ROCKSTAR GAMES
■ **DEVELOPER** ANGEL STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26



PLAYSTATION 2

SUMMONER

AN RPG CREATED BY HARD WORKING NERDS

"In many regards, Summoner is a PC game hiding within a console skin."

If your wrists hurt from shaking 12-sided dice, or if your voice is hoarse from screaming at your DM for not granting you the ability to cast Magic Missile at the darkness, you may want to quit your day job and try securing a line of work within the upstart console developer, Volition. Everyone within this company is a nerd, or at least that's the impression I gathered through playing Volition's first console RPG, Summoner. If a game could exude a scent, Summoner would reek of geeks. It touches ground on nearly every fantasy property on the market, and clings ever so tightly to the principals that keep society's intelligent rejects off the streets and strapped to their PCs.

If you thought Square Soft created engrossing stories with more than enough substance, wait until you see what Volition has in store for you. Similar to the Lord of the Rings animated films, all the backstory and history of the Summoner world are told through spoken narrative accompanied by hand-drawn images and real-time sequences. Many random conversations lead to pages and pages of interesting information, almost too much for your brain to handle. Having all this material isn't necessarily a bad thing, yet at times, the quest becomes clouded with details and badly obscures the next objective. If you like games with novels worth of reading material, you'll love Summoner. It's a good game, and a pretty decent book as well.

As with the story material, Volition also paid close attention to developing the gameplay. The loose camera really needed another month or two in development, and the real-time combat, while sufficient as is, could have used some tweaking. Other than this, Summoner's mechanics are quite good. I really like the attention to detail that went into the character development. Not only do different armors and weapons showcase cosmetic changes in the highest of detail, the player actually has the ability to tweak the class of their character through distributing Ability Points to different categories. The most vital piece in the mix is the ability to summon. Even with a hefty five-man party, players can summon help, and the beasts actually become new characters with unique talents. The great thing is, there are a ton of summon creatures to find.

Volition claims that Summoner is a 40-hour RPG. I can see players cruising through it in this time, but if you want to conquer every little sidequest, I'd say you're looking at a 70 to 80-hour quest. In many regards, Summoner is a PC game hiding within a console skin. Unlike Final Fantasy, kids won't be able to jump into this game. It's designed for an older audience and the dark plot reflects it. For all the RPG fans out there, I think you'll be surprised by how engrossing this game truly is. – **REINER**

COMBAT

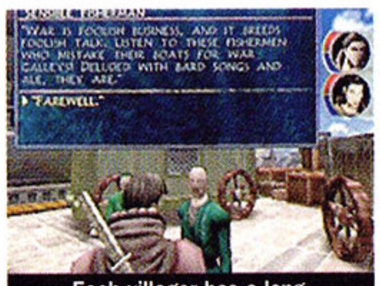
For those of you who have invested most of your years in traditional console RPGs, Summoner's PC-styled gameplay may be a little difficult to grasp. For example, the combat chemistry is something entirely new. All of the actions are real-time, meaning every member in the party is doing something simultaneously. Along with a human-controlled character, the CPU handles the rest, yet players can freely switch between different characters and tweak how the CPU will handle the melee.

EXPLORATION

Following the traditional console RPG formula, the overworld map is way out of proportion, allowing quick access to new towns. The interesting thing is, when combat occurs in this area, it's not instantly loaded up, but rather you enter a large diorama filled with dozens of battles. This eases the burden of gaining experience and gives each encounter some substance, opposed to the quick in-and-out action we're accustom to.

SUMMONS

By far the most impressive aspect of this release is the ability to fabricate creatures out of thin air. The monster you conceive actually gains experience, learns new attacks, and follows group tactics. The ring you use to cast the summons also gains levels. When the ring reaches a specific level, new monsters can be projected. Basically, the summons become new characters.



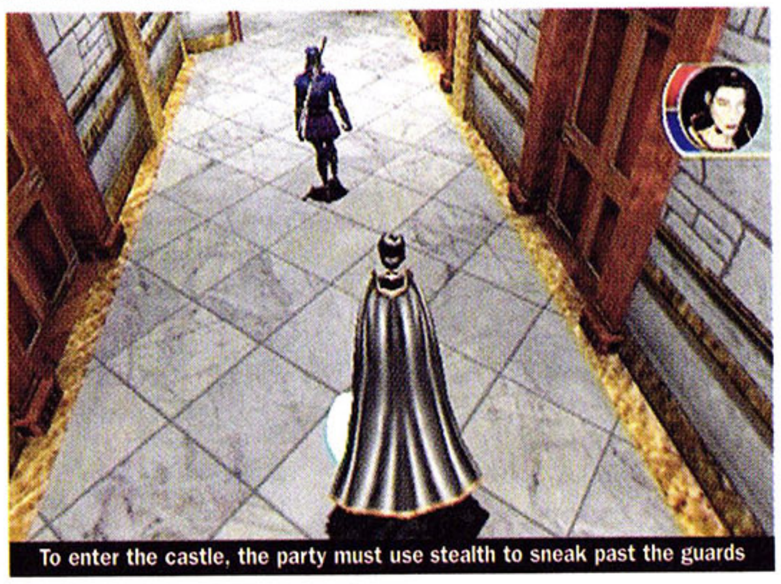
Each villager has a long, drawn-out story to tell

Many of the boss battles unfold with real-time sequences

Along with customizing the look, players must assign skills to each character

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** VOLITION ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

All of the characters are class-specific, offering different hand-to-hand and casting talents



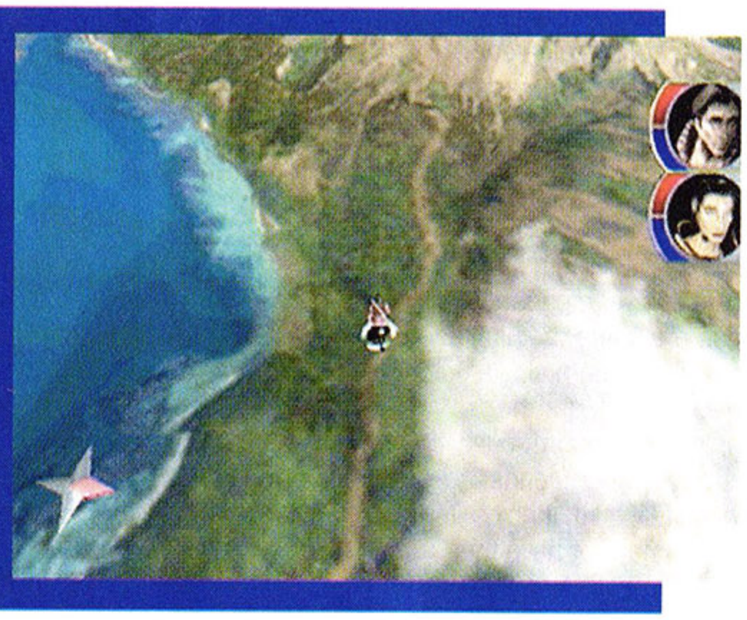
To enter the castle, the party must use stealth to sneak past the guards

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

- **Concept:** A dark RPG that targets an older audience
- **Graphics:** The world is highly detailed, and character appearances change when new items are equipped
- **Sound:** Both the voice acting and soundtrack are music to your ears
- **Playability:** The combat is quite sloppy, and the camera is troublesome. Tuning characters' abilities and summoning beasts are this title's strong suits
- **Entertainment:** Slow and heavy on text, but a great journey nonetheless
- **Replay Value:** Low



SECOND OPINION

When an American developer puts together a console RPG, there's usually not much to get excited about. Summoner beats the odds by not only being playable, but interesting and involving as well. There's so much detail in the game that it's all quite daunting at first. Hours will be spent pondering such things as where should I put my skill points, is this chain attack better than another one, and what the hell is this guy talking about? Once the smoke surrounding the play mechanics begins to clear, Summoner really starts to shine. It's obvious that this game was a PC title first, and a PS2 game second, but in my opinion the adaptation was pulled off. Summoner isn't the greatest game the PS2 has to offer, but it's certainly the best RPG currently available and, assuming some improvements were implemented, I wouldn't mind seeing a sequel at all.

JAY – 8

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

4.25

PLAYSTATION 2

ORPHEN

SCION OF SORCERY

The best way to describe Orphen is by comparing it to a Monet. From a distance, it looks gorgeous. Elaborate scenery, lush backgrounds, fluid graphics – everything you've come to expect from a PS2 title. It's when you get right into the nitty-gritty of the game that its faults come to the front. It seems the developers put the emphasis on graphics and corny dialogue rather than gameplay. It would be nice to be able to heal one's self during the course of a battle, but lo, it was not to be. Instead you are left hoping a blitzkrieg-type attack will work in every situation. As far as PS2 titles go, this is by far the weakest I've played. It's a shame because it looks so damned good.

I'm guessing the Orphen staff wanted to be different, so they've done away with things like hit points, for instance. I'm all for a new way to display and manipulate health, but come on, people! Can't we do any better than little crystals that pop up above characters' heads every so often? And for the love of everything good and pure, give us a combat system that won't prompt a controller-bashing tirade as we try frantically to target monsters that are flying around the screen. If you're an RPG fan with a penchant for self-destruction, Orphen is right up your alley. – **KRISTIAN**

The combat system needs a little work

- **Concept:** Find a guy's kid, try not to ruin your controller
- **Graphics:** Lush and deep
- **Sound:** Lots of lame dialogue, but it's dialogue nonetheless
- **Playability:** THBBBT!
- **Entertainment:** I've had more fun waiting for water to boil
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

This title was contaminated before it even entered development. I made the fatal mistake of purchasing the anime series, and let me tell you, they don't get much worse than Sorceress Stabber Orphen. I reckon a game based on Little Orphan Annie would have more entertainment value than what ESP has constructed. To be fair, the graphics are spectacular, tapping into the PS2 power to unleash a hurricane of amazing effects and highly detailed character models. Nevertheless, the eye candy is the only noteworthy aspect. Orphen has the most confusing and poorly designed combat system on the planet. Menu management, of all things, is also a nightmare. All of the environments are cookie-cutter pieces with little ingenuity. Just follow the crumbs and you'll eventually reach a boss. Lame! Lame!! Lame!!!

REINER – 5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER** ESP\SHADE ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

PLAYSTATION 2

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

DEATH IS CERTAIN

"...holds its own as one of the best FPSs out there."

In the PC world, many would argue that Unreal Tournament is the new standard for online first-person shooters, and that it has even usurped Quake as king in this arena. Of course, a big part of its popularity comes from the online component that is available on PC (and even the upcoming Dreamcast version), mixed with its various games that you can play besides the standard Deathmatch. However, even as a stand-alone game, Unreal Tournament can hold its own with the best of them.

There is no story to Unreal Tournament; however, you still need to choose a character and work your way through its various games unlocking more characters, new modes, and new arenas. You start off in Deathmatch where you must get a required number of Frags (or kills) to move on. Soon you unlock Domination mode, where the goal is to hold certain positions on the playfield for the longest time, which sends your team running from point to point blasting the enemy. Then comes Capture the Flag, which follows the simple rules of get the enemy flag and bring it back to your base (not easy with the entire enemy team running after your butt). The final mode is Assault where you and your team must infiltrate an enemy position in a given time, then after (or if) you have taken the enemy stronghold, you must then defend it for the same amount of time, or fail the mission.

These modes, even in single-player, are quite entertaining, with Capture the Flag and Assault being my two personal faves. Across these four modes there are 51 maps, so there's a lot of game here, and the computer AI is actually pretty good, even for your teammates.

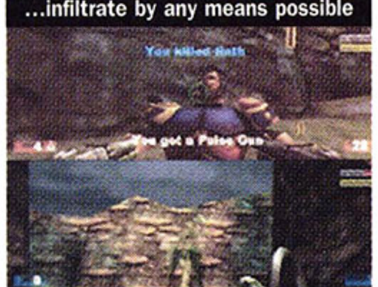
The biggest hurdle in this game is probably just getting started as the control configurations are limited, and the turning radius on the default is horrifically slow. But once you find a good control config and turn up the horizontal speed, this game cooks. Epic even went as far as to add in some auto-targeting, since the joysticks aren't as precise as a keyboard/mouse combination (by the way, any USB standard mouse and keyboard can be picked up and used with this game).

Like any first-person shooter (FPS), Unreal Tournament's long-term enjoyment comes from its multiplayer modes. Without online capabilities your choices are somewhat limited, but with up to four-player split-screen available on a single unit and the ability to have a LAN (local area network, for the Internet illiterate) party with four machines together through iLink, there are still plenty of chances to frag your friends.

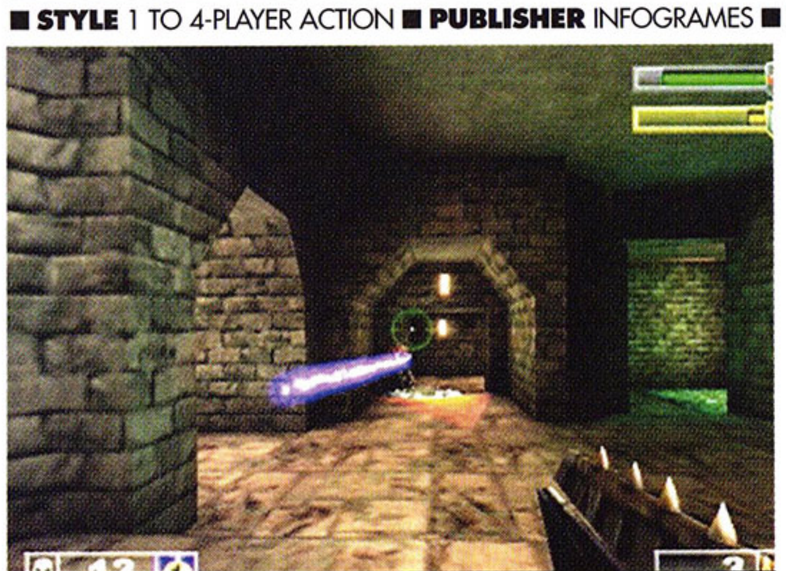
Overall, I got hooked on UT, and I definitely think it holds its own as one of the best FPSs out there. It may not have the flair of TimeSplitters, but it certainly has the best AI in this category, which means the most frantic action you can find anywhere. – **ANDY**

Locate the enemy base and...

...infiltrate by any means possible


Take no prisoners

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** EPIC ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26


Each weapon has a primary and a secondary function

Unlock new Avatars as your work though the levels

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** Screw story and plot, this is all about the Frags baby
- **Graphics:** New art, new levels, and the detail in this port of the PC hit are more than satisfactory
- **Sound:** Soundtrack's nothing to write home about, but the voice-overs are great coming from your enemies and allies – "Medic!"
- **Playability:** Limited control configuration is a hassle, but the added Target Lock feature helps make this game more user-friendly
- **Entertainment:** This game is quite addicting once you get started, especially the Assault mode
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

If your gaming rig is portable, toss your PlayStation 2, TV, and a change of clothes into your car, and camp out at your friend's house for a week. With Sony's new iLink cable, Unreal Tournament's multiplayer experience is just as impressive as its PC counterpart. For all of you who whine about the control with a Dual Shock 2, you can plug your PC keyboard and mouse into the USB ports on the front of the PS2 to replicate the control schematic you love. All the lag and slowdown that comes with Internet gaming is no longer an issue with the PS2 version. The play is incredibly smooth. Just like the Doom games on the PS-X, Unreal's console debut is loaded with 14 exclusive levels. A new Target Lock feature has also been implemented to ease the burden of targeting with an analog stick. Let the frag-fest begin. This is Unreal Tournament at its finest!

REINER – 9

"NASCAR 2001 is the first title to bring realistic scale and speed to give NASCAR the props it deserves, and at the same time make a nice driving game."

PLAYSTATION 2

NASCAR 2001

ALL I WANNA DO IS ZOOMA ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM IN A VROOOOMMMM VROOOOMMMM!

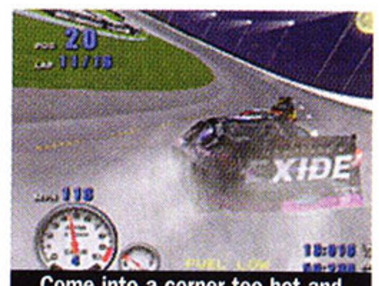
It's sad to say, but I am one of the converted. Like many others out there I used to think NASCAR was the most asinine sport on the planet – hold pedal to floor, turn left, repeat – until I went to a race. NASCAR is one part party (if you go to events, you know what I speak of); three parts crazy-ass freaks who drive way too fast really, really close together; and one part bloodlust as the crowd waits in anticipation for the next huge wreck.

Previous NASCAR games, even this year's PS-X one offering, lacked the feeling of speed and car proximity that makes the sport truly amazing. NASCAR 2001 is the first title to bring realistic scale and speed to give NASCAR the props it deserves, and at the same time make a nice driving game.

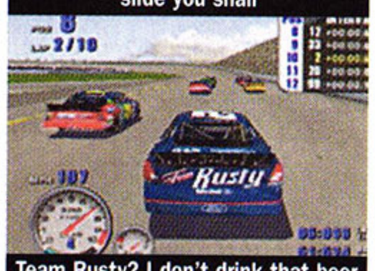
Each race features a field of 24 sponsor-decorated speed machines that can tear across the ground like a rocket. But it isn't the cars or their physics that make this game so realistic, it's the tracks. Each track really has its own temperament. Daytona is fast, but if you come into turn three too hot, you will quickly find yourself scraping the wall; Talledega is all about keeping your speed up by holding a solid line; and Bristol's short track is all about staying alive in its non-stop traffic jam from start to finish.

However, the game is not without its faults. For one, the crashes stink. Sure it shows nice damage on the cars, and the smoke from burning rubber as you zoom around the track is great, but I want carnage. Cars going sideways in front of me, wheels flying off, tons of cars flipping end-over-end, massive pileups, I can go on and on. Instead, NASCAR 2001 basically brings your car to a quick stop with the occasional flip or two. Yippee!

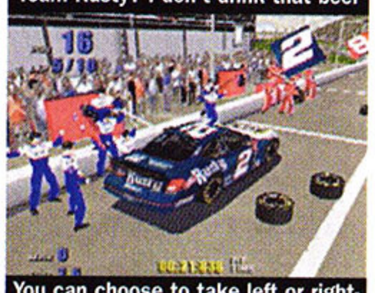
In the end though, NASCAR 2001 is a solid racer, with 14 official tracks (with Bristol, Charlotte, and Daytona featuring both night and day driving), 30 drivers with improved racing AI, adjustable season and lap length (including pit stops on lower-lapped races to add some strategy), and some pretty impressive graphics. If you are enlightened enough to understand the beauty and power of NASCAR, this game will find a home in your PlayStation 2. If you think NASCAR is still a sport for hillbillies looking for a place to get together and get drunk, then maybe it's time you tried to take a 2,000 pound car around an oval at speeds in excess of 190 mph, 'cause let me tell ya brother, it ain't easy. Now, where's my beer? – **ANDY**



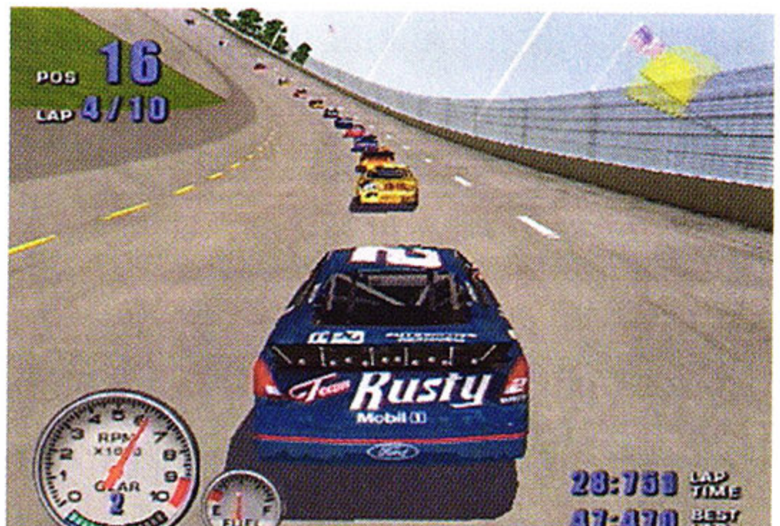
Come into a corner too hot and slide you shall



Team Rusty? I don't drink that beer


You can choose to take left or right-side tires when pitting

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 5



The yellow flag, time to go get a drink

This is about as spectacular as the crashes get

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

8.5

- **Concept:** Speed, speed, and more speed
- **Graphics:** The cars are detailed and the tracks are a marvel to behold
- **Sound:** Racing commentary, spotter headset transmissions, and screaming engines complete this racing package
- **Playability:** Super-tight controls make holding a line easy, and avoiding traffic the key to victory
- **Entertainment:** Put a 12-pack by your Lazy Boy, take off your shirt, show some buttcrack, and race all afternoon
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I spent my other NASCAR review in this issue denigrating the sport, and stopped just short of calling anyone who liked it a moron. Now, after playing NASCAR 2001 for PS2, I'm forced to eat my words and admit that this game is pretty fantastic. I guess that's what I get for talking out of my ass all the time. First off, it remains essentially the same game, but the new level of graphical detail elevates it well above its predecessors. The crashes and car damage are beautifully done; you actually see individual parts fly off cars. The controls are tight, allowing you to pick a smooth line or just grind it out with your competitors. There are a few flaws that keep it from attaining stock car perfection, namely some pretty serious anti-aliasing and framerate dropout that occur when you have the rearview mirror on. A fast, furious, and fun racer.

MATT – 8

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** Flying through hoops may not sound entertaining, but when you throw in some weird goals it works
- **Graphics:** Nice particle effects, but otherwise nothing spectacular
- **Sound:** Some crazy tunes and buzzing props
- **Playability:** Some planes are easy, others are more difficult, but all can pull some amazing moves
- **Entertainment:** Oddly satisfying in a "I always wanted to fly" sort of way
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

PLAYSTATION 2

SKY ODYSSEY

TAKE TO THE SKIES

"...yet another winner we gamers can thank Activision for bringing over."

Activision seems to have a knack for picking up good Japanese titles and bringing them Stateside, and Sky Odyssey is yet another winner we gamers can thank Activision for bringing over.

Activision touts this game's great next-generation PlayStation 2 graphics, but I would have say that I am a little underwhelmed. Yeah there are some nice particle effects like geysers blasting water into the air, or the torrential wind currents that swirl around you, but otherwise the levels are pretty bare.

Graphics aside, Sky Odyssey is a pretty massive game. Sure you don't shoot anything, but in the Adventure mode you will search for lost cities hidden in long, stalagmite-filled caves, ride high-speed jetstreams that blast you across vast oceans, and even search for lost campers hidden in a treacherous mountain pass. I found myself quite addicted to this mode, and eventually had to seriously restrain myself so I could get my work done.

The other modes aren't nearly as fun, but are a decent way to pass the time. There is Target mode where you fly through – huh...what do you know – targets that are strategically placed in an environment, within a limited amount of time. Sky Canvas lets you take a crack at skywriting with a smoke trail as you complete various shapes for scores (a lot harder than you would think, let me tell you). Then the standard Training and Free Flight modes finish out the list.

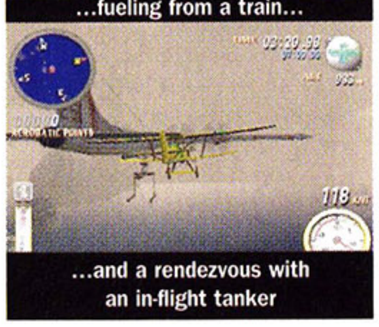
There are 11 planes in the game (eight of them hidden) that you can upgrade by scoring well in the Adventure mode. The planes vary from a bi-plane all the way up to stealth jets, Autogyro jet helicopters, and even UFOs.

As I write this and try to come up with a score for Sky Odyssey, a lot of questions cross my mind. Mainly, is this game really good, or is it just one of those weird titles that just syncs with certain players? To give you an idea, I am not the biggest flight sim or air combat fan, but even with those credentials, I found myself intrigued by this game. For one, it takes some serious flying skills to make it through some of the missions, and a big part of that challenge comes from reacting to the currents that swirl around your craft.

So in the end, I'm gonna have to say Sky Odyssey is a good game, but I think its charm comes from the fact that it uses some of the nice environment effects the PS2 has to offer. In a year I will look back on this game and think it's crap, but for now it's fun to fly the friendly skies. – **ANDY**

Some of the tougher challenges include landing on an aircraft carrier...

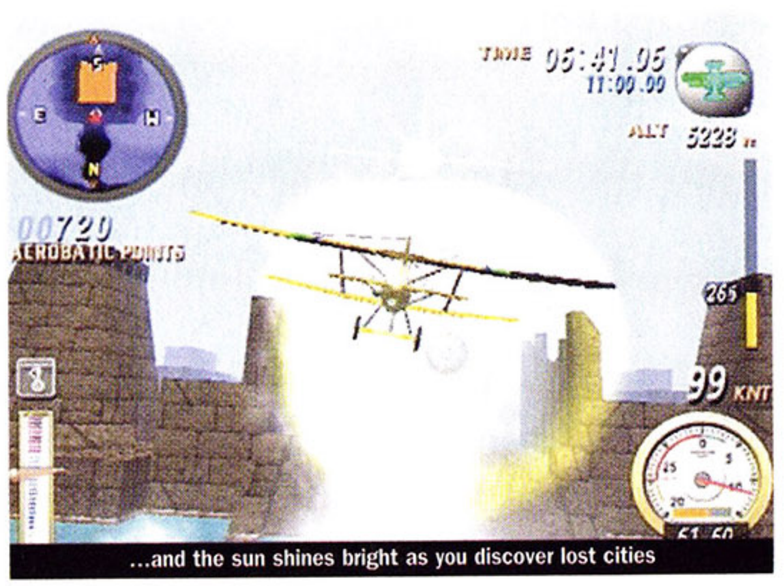
...fueling from a train...



...and a rendezvous with an in-flight tanker

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** CROSS/XEX ENTERTAINMENT/FUTURE CREATES
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

Lightning fills in the sky during storms...



...and the sun shines bright as you discover lost cities

SECOND OPINION

Since the foundation of this title is primarily a flight simulator, Sky Odyssey won't garner the respect it truly deserves. Without mass destruction or intense dog fighting, I have a feeling most gamers will find the simple nature of flying through rings quite boring. Most of the missions are rather lengthy, but the developers did a phenomenal job keeping the action lively. Changing wind patterns send your aircraft barreling out of control, and the diverse missions often force you to navigate narrow passages filled with rockslides and unstable weather conditions. Many of the missions are too long, but again, close attention was paid to making the surroundings and objects different. Altogether, Sky Odyssey is a nice diversion from the mainstream of gaming. It won't blow your mind, but it will entertain all who give it a chance.

REINER – 7.75

Carrier: The Next Mutation

(Game name may change)

COMING FEBRUARY 2001

Jaleco USA
225 Larkin Drive
Unit 4
Wheeling, IL 60090

Re: Carrier: The Next Mutation ad copy

The following is the advertisement copy for our new game, Carrier: The Next Mutation. The game will be published on the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system.

Carrier: The Next Mutation is the [redacted] awesome game on the planet. [redacted], it's got it all!

Chicks with [redacted]. Guys with [redacted]. Action! [redacted]! Bombs! [redacted]! Blood! Guts! Gore! [redacted]! Destruction! [redacted]! [redacted]! Rock-n-Roll! All that really [redacted] stuff that makes kids [redacted] their [redacted] and parents pinch [redacted] tighter than [redacted]. Getting through the [redacted] explosions and [redacted] monsters on this ship [redacted] during Desert Storm.

Carrier: The Next Mutation has the [redacted] awesome, god[redacted] scariest, [redacted], [redacted], [redacted] monsters and, of course, the [redacted] king of bad [redacted] – MORPH! This huge [redacted] plant named MORPH is just waiting to get you [redacted] and infect you! MORPH! is the baddest [redacted], [redacted]. Were not talking [redacted] off philodendron here. This plant is so [redacted] think a weed could [redacted]. Best to play this game on an empty stomach. Your momma's cookin [redacted] anyway.

In Carrier: The Next Mutation you go through this [redacted], [redacted], [redacted] aircraft carrier trying to reach the engine room without getting [redacted], infected by MORPH or [redacted] your head [redacted] off and [redacted]. MORPH! and his band of [redacted] started to [redacted] the crew. They're already [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] gonna help [redacted] [redacted] now. You can't [redacted] your friends or crew mates any farther than you can [redacted] a rock.

Sure you got a [redacted], [redacted] gun to blow this [redacted] MORPH! away. Your gonna need help, [redacted]. But who [redacted]? Who is still alive and who is [redacted] bait.

Thank you for taking the time to review my copy. We know that Carrier: The Next Mutation will be a [redacted] must have for all gamers.

Sincerely,

Ken Gratz

Ken Gratz

WARNING!

We wanted to tell you all about our cool new game: Carrier: The Next Mutation

Well. . .
Our ad agency said you can't say those kinds of things, so this is it.

Buy our game. Filling in the blanks will never be this much fun again.

PlayStation®2

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

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"Although the AI of the opponents is definitely tougher, there is a difference between making a game harder and making a game better."

PLAYSTATION 2

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2

NOT QUITE THE G.O.A.T.

The original Ready 2 Rumble for Dreamcast pretty much defined for me the problem I have with so many next generation games. The developers seem to think that a game can succeed on graphics and gimmicks alone. Don't get me wrong– visuals are a tremendously important part of the gaming experience. It's just frustrating to see so much effort being put into character designs and models at the expense of creating a compelling gameplay engine.

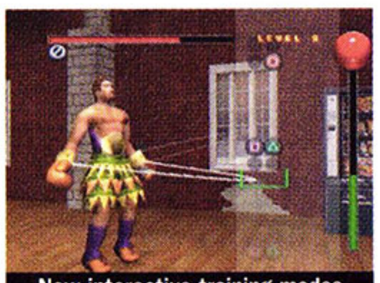
Midway promised that the large part of Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2's development process would focus on improving the gameplay. I was skeptical, and for good reason. After sitting down and picking apart this highly anticipated sequel, I find that that not enough was done to address the complaints that so many had with the first game.

Although the AI of the opponents is definitely tougher, there is a difference between making a game harder and making a game better. Even though you won't bulldoze through your matches with the same ease as before, the simplistic strategy for winning still holds true. Here's a quick strategy guide – Jab, jab, back away, jab, combo, back away. Repeat until you've won every match. They've compensated for making the game relatively easy by making the last boss ultra-difficult. By this time, you'll probably be so bored that you won't even care about winning the belt.

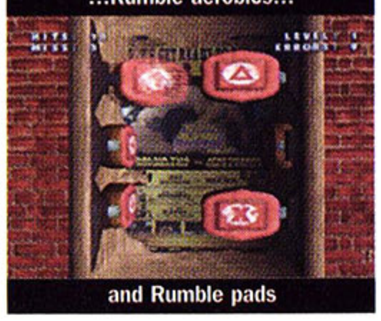
The last boss illustrates another problem I have with this game, which is the lack of balance between characters. As in the first, there's absolutely no reason to play as a larger, slower character like Mama Tua. Big boxers don't to have any more punching power than smaller ones, and their lack of agility makes them essentially worthless.

There are some key changes to the game, most importantly in training. It now revolves around a training schedule and fight calendar. There are several cool new events, which require timed button pressing, my favorites being Rumble Pads and Jump Rope. It is essential to keep up in you training or your stats will slip. This results in much time wasted going through menu screens just to get to your next fight.

In the end, Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2 fails to grab the torch from the game it tries so hard to emulate, Mike Tyson's Punch Out. That game used the same combination of crazy characters and amazing (for its day) graphics. However, that classic utilized a simple, yet timeless gameplay model that had endured to this day. If you want boxing perfection, skip ahead to Classic GI and check out our Punch Out strategy guide. – **MATT**


New interactive training modes includes jump rope...

...Rumble aerobics...


and Rumble pads

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY ■ **DEVELOPER** MIDWAY ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

The character designs are even more outrageous

Call Guinness – We've found the world's largest camel toe!

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.25

- **Concept:** Silly arcade boxing with outrageous characters
- **Graphics:** Not a huge improvement over the DC version; characters are slightly more detailed and buffed. Also, the ropes bounce!
- **Sound:** All characters have an array of allegedly funny taunts. Also, that ring announcer says some phrase a lot, too...hmm...can't quite remember it offhand
- **Playability:** Improved AI, but combos are pretty limited
- **Entertainment:** Impressive multiplayer; single-player is average at best
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

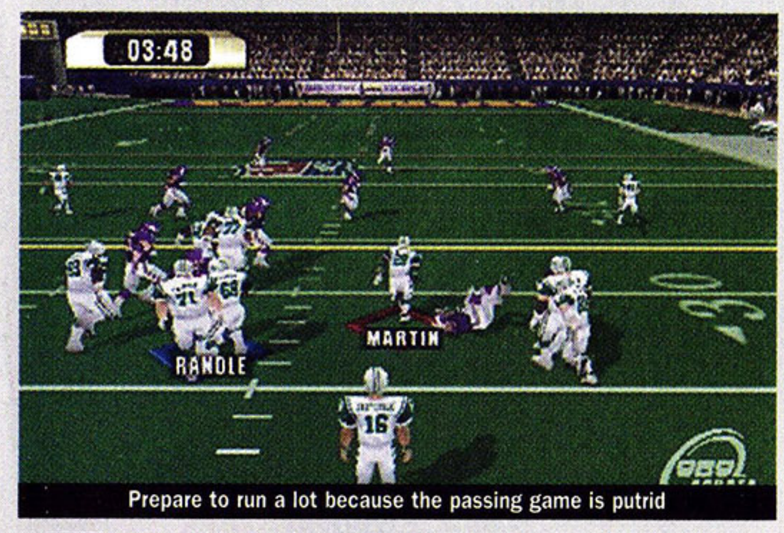
Sharing the same fate as its predecessor, Round 2 focuses heavily on graphical fluff but not enough on gameplay. As intended, the visual content will stupefy the eye, and the amusing character personalities will tickle the funny bone, but the play will do little more than bore and aggravate consumers. I truly believe Midway made a valiant attempt to improve the AI, and to some degree the CPU opponents are smarter, yet even so, the same strategy from the first release can be tapped to topple most of the competition. Just punch and retreat. They never catch on. As a multiplayer game, Round 2 shines. Using superhero-esque moves to snap your friends jaw proves to be enjoyable every time. For the second time, the single-player experience is dreadful. Training grows old within minutes, and only the last boss is challenging.

REINER – 7.5

PLAYSTATION 2

GAMEDAY 2001

989 TAKES A KNEE



Prepare to run a lot because the passing game is putrid

Faced with a third-and-long situation and fearing its chances slipping away in PlayStation 2 sports development, 989 Sports called a running play and then punted GameDay 2001 to the new Sony console. This obviously incomplete game had me scratching my head and leaves me in disgust. The evidence of the poor quality was clear to me after the first pass. The playcontrol is unresponsive and clearly not tuned. The rosters and depth charts are way out of whack. No matter how big a fan you are of GameDay, don't get this game. – **PAUL**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

3

- **Concept:** Thing are attempted, but are never fulfilled. GameDay has definitely been rushed to market
- **Graphics:** The player model are nicely designed, but horribly animated – a very jerky presentation
- **Sound:** The players yell out trash talk after plays, but all the other sounds seem the same as its predecessor
- **Playability:** This game plays far worse than the current version on the PS-X. What the heck happened to the passing?
- **Entertainment:** Madden just pancakes GameDay in every category
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

This is a joke, right? I can't believe 989 is trying to pass off this PS-X port as the next generation of video football. This is a new low, even by 989 standards.

REINER – 4.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** 989 SPORTS
■ **DEVELOPER** RED ZONE INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

PLAYSTATION 2

REAL POOL

HOT POCKET ACTION

I was not aware that there was a huge market out there for pool simulator games, but there must be. Why else would Infogrames spend time on Real Pool? I like playing pool, I even like watching pool on ESPN every once in a while, but I really think it loses something when it hits the simulation circuit. There's nothing really new or exciting with Real Pool. There's a puzzle mode that's moderately interesting, a few different games, but it's not knocking my my socks off. It looks like this is a game for pool junkies only– just like every other pool sim.– **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

5.25

- **Concept:** Put your balls in the hole
- **Graphics:** There isn't much you can do with a pool table, but what's there looks good
- **Sound:** Crappy music, run-of-the-mill sound effects
- **Playability:** It's easy to jump right in and start missing every shot
- **Entertainment:** This game would be a lot cooler if you could fight your competitor
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Video pool seems a little pointless. The game loses its charm when taken out of smoky bars. Real Pool is decent, and I really liked the creative table layouts in Puzzle mode.

MATT – 7

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** TAKARA
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

PLAYSTATION 2

MOTO GP

TICKET TO RIDE

The racing league re-created in Moto GP is a mouthful: FIM Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix. Clearly, this racing league is far more popular in places like Europe and Asia, but I do appreciate a racer with authentic tracks, teams, and drivers – even if I don't have the slightest idea who the heck they are.

Undoubtedly, the look of this game is quite a jump from cycle racing games of the past. The riders are nicely animated and you'll see such things as a racer looking over his shoulder, sitting up in his seat, and sometimes flying over the handlebars. Also, the replays show off some nice camera work after the race is through.

Certainly, the gameplay is solid and has options for difficulty, as well as settings for adjusting the bike's handling. However, I found it essential to use analog controls on both steering and acceleration to get the most out of this title. I also found it necessary to play in the Sim mode, as the game is far too easy if you don't. Still, it's odd how your bike is faster than anyone else's on the track.

There is plenty to like about Moto GP, but I think the only people who may appreciate it are those who actually know the name Kenny Roberts, Jr. Others may just want to take it for a short spin. – **PAUL**

Luckily, big crashes don't result in a trip to the hospital

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

7.5

- **Concept:** Cycle racing with real World Grand Prix riders and tracks presented in a no-frills package
- **Graphics:** Extremely detailed and well produced replays; however, the in-game look isn't quite as good
- **Sound:** This game needs commentary to spice things up a bit
- **Playability:** Solid control, but the challenge was still limited even on the hardest settings
- **Entertainment:** There is really nothing too exciting about this racer – unless you follow the World Grand Prix
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I've never been a big fan of motorcycle race games, and Moto GP didn't change my mind. I don't know why I've scorned the two-wheeled brothers of my beloved Tempo. Maybe it's those annoying crotch-rocket frat boys who zoom around downtown Minneapolis. Maybe it's the fact that turning mechanics in motorcycle games fail to capture the dynamics of powersliding and braking that define the best car games. Moto GP does many things well. The control is tight, and the speeds are quick without sacrificing texturing or framerate. The replays are wonderful, offering tons of dramatic camera angles and even some shots from a helicopter. Sometimes I felt as though I was having more fun watching the replays than actually playing the game.

MATT – 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO
■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

PLAYSTATION 2

TOP GEAR DARE DEVIL

GET ROAD RAGE WITHOUT LEAVING THE HOUSE

Since I'm a long-winded dork that works in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, I know a thing or two about frustrating driving experiences. Being trapped in an endless sea of minivans and SUVs, blankly staring into space as I listen to the local metal station play some Papa Roach song – it's truly maddening. However, given the choice, I would gladly take it over playing Top Gear Dare Devil.

Come to think of it, this game bears a strong resemblance to rush hour: 1) You're in a crappy car, 2) You're going really slow, and 3) You're not having fun. The graphics are horrible, and the control is absolutely ridiculous. You spend most of your time watching the map in the corner to see where the next coin is, so it soon feels like you're playing a really bad version of Pac-Man. In my opinion, the worst PlayStation 2 game so far. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

2

- **Concept:** An incompetent clone of Super Runabout
- **Graphics:** Oftentimes, your tires appear to sink into the pavement
- **Sound:** I can't even remember if there was sound, so it must have been pretty dull
- **Playability:** The weenie little European cars have problems taking turns at 20 mph
- **Entertainment:** We used the disc for skeet shooting after work
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

In this game, you race slow, crappy cars through tiny city environments where everyone drives like a grandma. It's like...driving with me.

ERIK – 3.25

This special minigame is packed with ramps

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** KEMCO/SVG
■ **DEVELOPER** PAPAYA STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 2000

PLAYSTATION 2

FIFA 2001

KICK THAT ****, HOMIE!

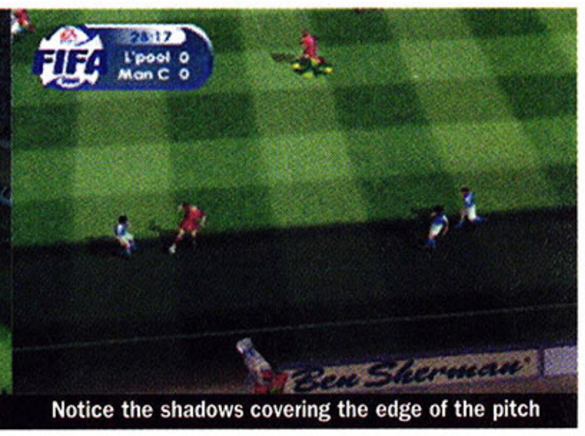
EA Sports is attempting to corner the PlayStation 2 sports game market from the get-go. Having already done my thing with both football and hockey, it's time to move onto the world of soccer.

FIFA 2001 was already released in Japan in a slightly different form, so playing this version was really nothing new to me. In fact, if you have played the previous and current PS-X versions, the game will probably be quite familiar to you too. Getting past the graphics – which are very well done and include some great detail – the play control is dead-on. There is never a question of why the ball went where it did, nor is there trouble in gaining possession of the ball. The major difference between playing this version over the PS-X is the computer AI. Defenders contest and intercept passes far more frequently in this game. Still, the seasoned player will want to play on the hardest of the three difficulty settings, as there is little challenge otherwise.

In terms of options, FIFA does a great job by providing easy-to-use menus and logical formats for the Season, Tournament, and Practice modes. Plus, with over 60 teams, there is definitely a big selection (I prefer the Netherlands). However, this game definitely needs some extras – possibly a challenge mode like Madden and Live. – **PAUL**

Players show off a variety of expressions and can be heard complaining to the official

This perspective offers a classic view of FIFA's action



Notice the shadows covering the edge of the pitch

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA CANADA
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

8

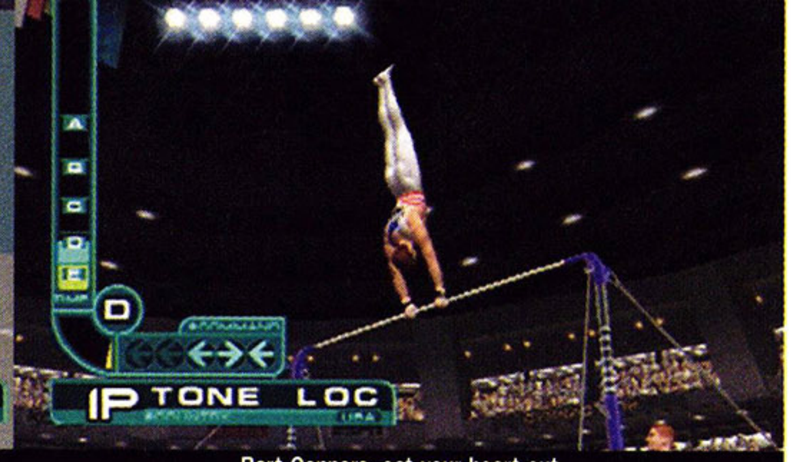
- **Concept:** It seems that EA basically took the PS-X version and ramped up the AI and graphics
- **Graphics:** As this is really the only footie game for PS2, it's hard to argue that this isn't the best-looking soccer game to date
- **Sound:** Excellent commentary, sound effects, and crowd noise
- **Playability:** With only three difficulty settings, mastering the game may be a snap for some. Yet, the control is excellent
- **Entertainment:** FIFA packs in a ton of teams and players. Not a breakthrough game by any means
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Thanks to Electronic Arts' launch lineup, my checking account is tapped. Madden – gotta have it. NHL – wouldn't miss it for the life of me. SSX – playing it as we speak. EA's sports onslaught continues with FIFA 2001. For those of you who have followed the series, a good majority of the PS2 alterations are of a graphical nature. Along with enhanced animation, EA pumped hundreds of polys into the character models. The stadiums also harness the smallest of details. Shadows of the flags mounted on the top of the stadium are projected down onto the field, and the crowd is animated to be as rowdy as the real deal. The gameplay still fits like a glove, yet the AI has been tweaked to play a more aggressive game. With over 60 teams, and a wealth of interesting options, FIFA's PS2 debut is powered by a mighty kick.

REINER – 8

Explore your artistic side in rhythmic gymnastics



Bart Conners, eat your heart out

PLAYSTATION 2

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS RULE!

Unfortunately, the Olympics suck. It goes on forever, and it's a bunch of sports no one cares about. It wasn't even live this year, which meant you had to sit through countless "personal history" segments in which that pompous ass Bob Costas told you about how some steroid-swilling mutant was the orphaned son of some legless Lebanese lesbian lettuce farmers. Gag me.

I'm usually not a fan of button mashers, either, but International Track & Field was a fine diversion for a few hours. I especially liked the horizontal bar and rhythmic gymnastics events, which featured some Bust-A-Groove style action. Almost innovative, really. Of course, the best event in any game of this genre is Trap Shooting, because you actually get a gun. How about a first-person shooter called Munich Massacre '72: Olympic Village Sniper? I'd definitely buy that. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

I'm still of the opinion that Track & Field games just suck. But they can be fun for a small amount of time, and Konami's latest effort is definitely one of the best (if that's sayin' much, which is isn't).

ANDY – 6.5

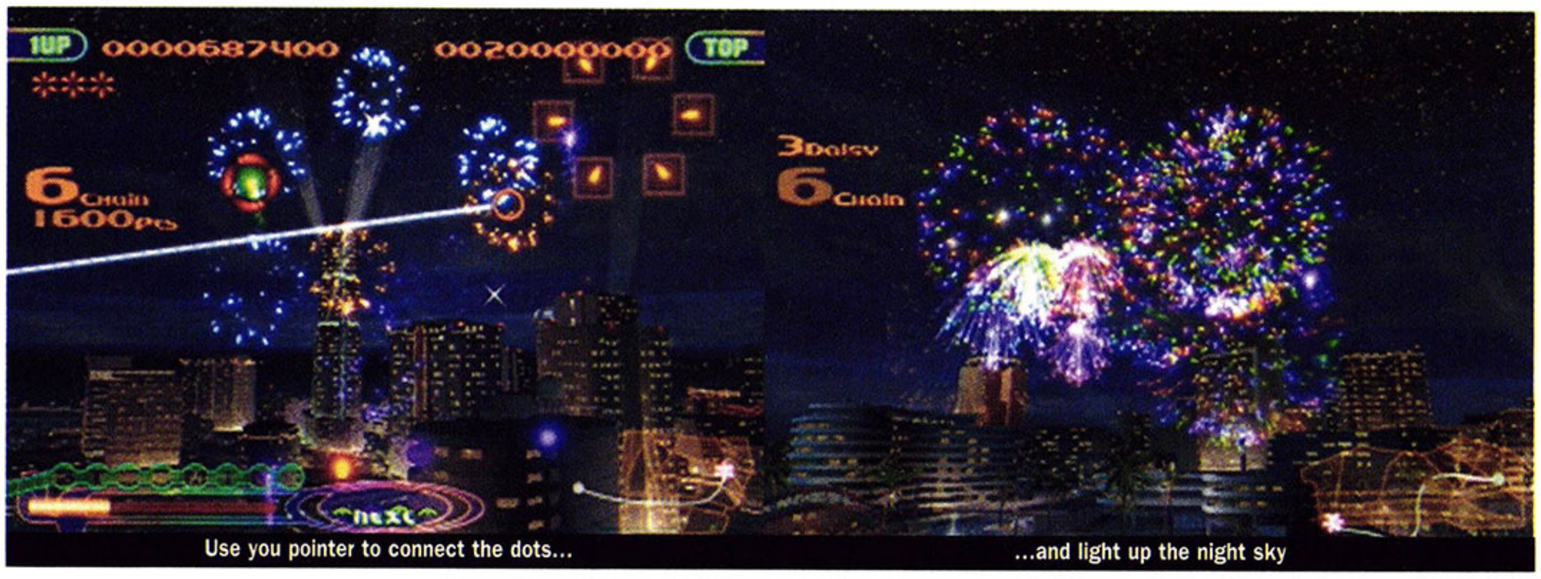
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.75

- **Concept:** Press buttons make go fast!
- **Graphics:** Detailed character models and smooth motion-capture moves bring the games to life
- **Sound:** Ho-hum; more effort could have been made to implement commentary
- **Playability:** Competent button mashing for the most part, but gymnastics push the envelope a bit
- **Entertainment:** Most will be able to get by with a weekend rental
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26



Use you pointer to connect the dots...

...and light up the night sky

PLAYSTATION 2

FANTAVISION

KISS THE SKY

If you're more into hydroponics than Hydro Thunder, here's the game for you. Remember those psychedelic Fruitopia commercials that were a big hit with the fanny-pack-and-Birkenstocks crowd a few years back? Fantavision, a mesmerizing fireworks puzzle game, should become the next craze among devotees of the sweet leaf. Even sober folks will fall under the spell of its beautiful effects.

The gameplay is similar to Bubble Bobble, forcing you to use your pointer to connect multicolored fireworks in order to ignite them. Some charges split into multiple rockets, which, if detonated correctly, create dazzling displays. It isn't as refined as others of its genre, but the urge to create even more awe-inspiring flurries will keep you playing. Think of Fantavision as an amazing screensaver built into an average puzzle game. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

This nifty technology demo shows the PS2's ability to easily handle particle effects. Wait...this is a game? And Sony wants you to shell out 50 bucks for it? Screw that!

JAY – 5.5

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.75

- **Concept:** Bubble Bobble + Missile Command = a fascinating, if flawed, puzzle game
- **Graphics:** The firework effects are stunning, and almost hypnotic to watch
- **Sound:** The twee music is kept low in the mix, allowing the explosions to have maximum impact
- **Playability:** Control is fairly accurate, but play can get chaotic
- **Entertainment:** Strangely soothing, but needs more depth
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 20-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
■ **DEVELOPER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26

PLAYSTATION 2

GRADIUS III & IV

SHOOTER? I THOUGHT YOU SAID COOTER!

Gradius III & IV is just as you might have guessed – a little combo title featuring two Konami shooters from the past. As you would expect, there is plenty of challenge here. So much so that even with unlimited continues you aren't gonna go anywhere fast in this one, unless you're a shooter game wunderkind. Neither game is bad, but neither is impressive. Sure, Working Designs' Silpheed wasn't groundbreaking, but at least it was made for PS2. This game is just a classics collection being pawned off as a PS2 title. Shame on you Konami. – **ANDY**

SECOND OPINION

I adore the Gradius series and drool over the prospect of a PS2 sequel. Yet if Konami wanted to do a classic collection, all the Gradius titles should have been included.

REINER – 6

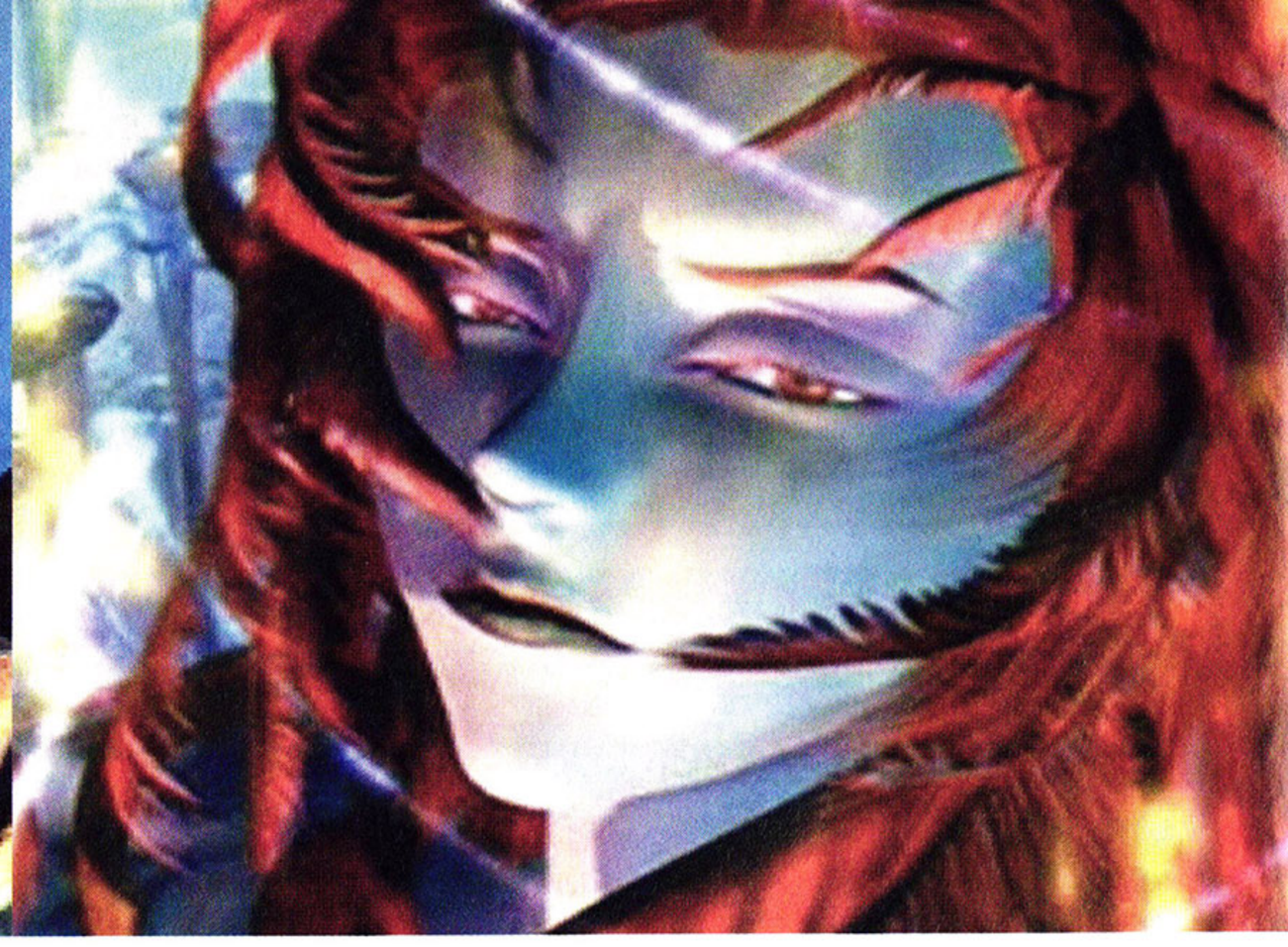
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

- **Concept:** Shooter from '89 + shooter from '98 = new PS2 game in 2000
- **Graphics:** Each game looks good for its time, but seems terribly outdated on PS2
- **Sound:** Techno beats that move your feets
- **Playability:** Classic shooter challenges and control
- **Entertainment:** Do you consider frustration entertainment?
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI
■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 26



After taking so much damage, characters enter a Trance state where new and deadly abilities become open to them

Quina gains new spells by eating weakened creatures

The environments will blow you away

PLAYSTATION

FINAL FANTASY IX

BACK TO BASICS

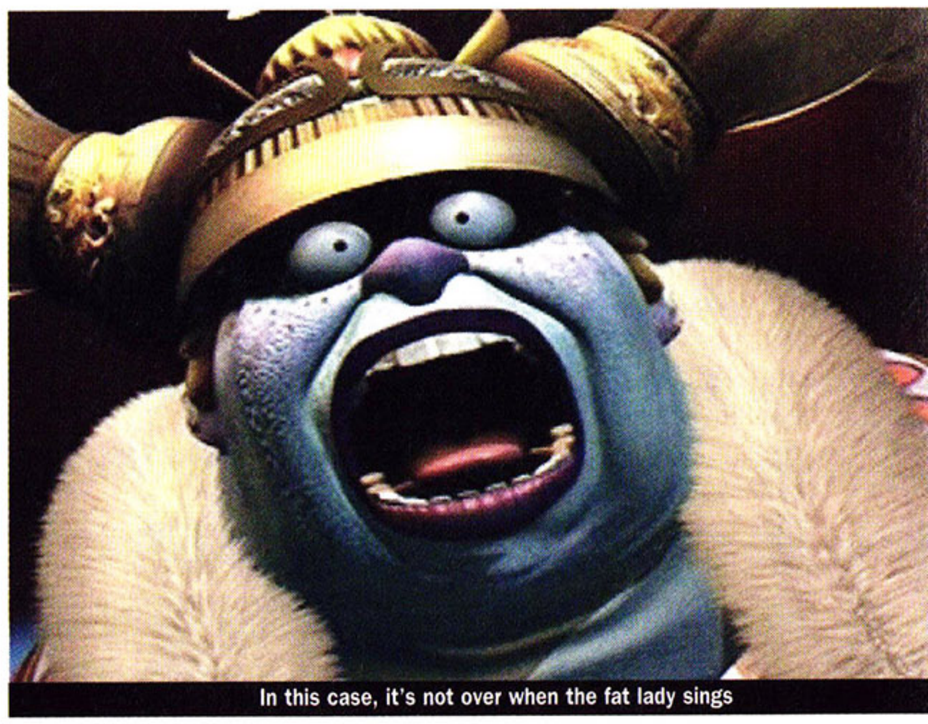
Final Fantasy fans are always quick to argue about which is the best in the series. Many of these die-hards scoff at Square's first two PlayStation efforts, admitting that they were pretty to look at, but complaining that the fun somehow got lost in the glitz. Final Fantasy IX certainly doesn't lack in flash, but its back-to-basics gameplay structure is sure to keep both new-school and old-school FF fans happy. In fact, I predict that years down the road Final Fantasy IX will be the most fondly remembered of the PlayStation run.

First and foremost, it must be said that Square has outdone itself on the graphical presentation front – and that's saying a hell of a lot. The FMVs are, of course, top-notch as always, but the real eye-grabber of the game is the environments. The combining of painted backgrounds with rendered graphics and streaming animations brings the cities to life. Also, veering away from the realistic presentation of FFVIII allows for more exaggerated character animations that serve to attract even more attention.

Gameplay has made a return to its roots in a big way. For the first time on PlayStation, up to four characters can be on the battlefield. This extra person is a serious boon since no longer can all characters do all things. For example, Steiner is a straightforward fighter, and he'll never be able to use black magic like Vivi or steal items like Zidane. To give players a bit of control over their characters' specific focus, Square has implemented an ability system. Equipping items to certain characters allows them to use abilities ranging from being immune to poison to always regenerating hit points in combat. Each ability takes a certain number of Ability Points to learn (which are gained after combat along with experience) and require a set number of Magic Stones to activate (which are gained by characters as they go up levels). Once an ability is learned, that character no longer needs to have that item equipped to have access to it.

Though players will be more than pleased with the main meat of the game, it's the multitude of minigames that will send them into ecstatic (and frustrated) fits. There are tons of small games – such as jumping rope, choreographing a sword fight, and running races – to take up an hour or so of your time, but there are also games that run through the entire course of the adventure – such as Quad Mist, Chocobo digging, and the mystery of Mognet – that are so huge they barely qualify as minigames. A person who barrels through Final Fantasy IX could probably finish it in 40 hours, but a completist is likely to spend three times that amount.

Personally, I spent around 70 hours playing Final Fantasy IX before writing this review. About halfway through the endeavor, it was all I was thinking about when I wasn't at my PlayStation, and I even dreamed about it at night. I'm still not sure if it's my favorite of all-time, but this level of obsession certainly says to me that it's a great RPG. There are tons of inside jokes for those who have followed the series all the way through, yet plenty to draw in those who are jumping on for the first time. All in all, a great end to a great run. – **JAY**



In this case, it's not over when the fat lady sings

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** SQUARE SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** SQUARE SOFT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

FINAL FANTASY IX

When the words "Active Time Event" flash in the corner of the screen, pressing Select will allow you to see what other characters are up to

"...Final Fantasy IX will be the most fondly remembered of the PlayStation run."

"Um. which one of us is that question aimed at?"

Summons still play a large part. Here, Odin rides through a group of monsters, slaying them all

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9.75

- **Concept:** A conglomeration of people, places, and ideas from all the Final Fantasys gone by
- **Graphics:** Square showcases its mastery at pulling every iota of power from the PlayStation hardware
- **Sound:** Again, a combination of music and effects from past FF games
- **Playability:** Anyone familiar with the series will instantly know the basics, but the ability system gives everyone something to ponder
- **Entertainment:** The main story of the game draws you in, and the minigames can become an obsession
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Tapping into the Final Fantasy genealogy, Square's latest endeavor encompasses elements from the entire FF lifeline. As you know, everyone has a different favorite. Final Fantasy IX is Square's answer to this dilemma – an answer that wraps the most noteworthy aspects from each game into one masterful release. Unlike the recent PS-X titles, character classes are now more prominent, where spells and abilities are individualized between characters. Keeping the stunning background quality intact, the characters have de-evolved into more of a 16-bit mold. Square has also created a slew of amusing minigame diversions, and has ironed out the combat chemistry. The story is once again one of the best in the industry, and the experience gained through playing this incredible game is something you'll cherish for a lifetime.

REINER – 9.75

You see yourself
as a great warrior...

Your opponents see
you as spare parts.

ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM™ ROBOTS ARENA

10 menacing robots, each with its own special way to turn enemies into scrap metal.

Devastate your opponent with weaponry like missiles, flame throwers and lasers.

Learn incredible combo moves that will make your competitor's head spin (if it's still attached).

PlayStation

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence

PARADOX DEVELOPMENT

MATTEL INTERACTIVE™

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Rock 'Em Sock 'Em™ Robots Arena gives you the power to rip off your opponent's body parts and attach them to yourself. Turn your enemy into rubbish with their own weapons. Or save the parts you collect for future victims. The more you win, the more powerful you become. You're not just competing for pride and honor, you're fighting for limbs.

www.rockemsockemrobots.com

"Adding to the customization fire, your fictional wrestler is only the tip of the user creations."

PLAYSTATION

WWF SMACKDOWN 2: KNOW YOUR ROLE

THE SMACK YOU NEED

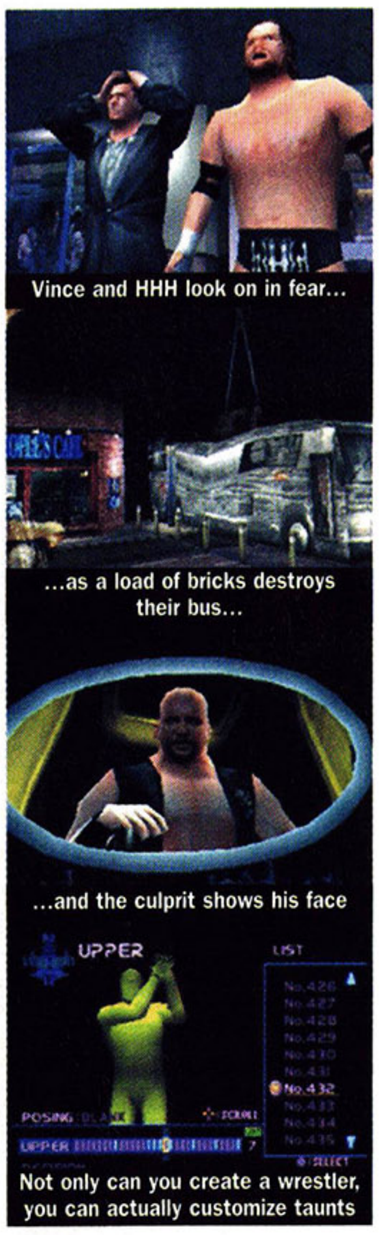
A stellar release to begin with, the changes THQ has made to the existing property are astronomical – outperforming my every expectation and paving the way for the future of wrestling games. Picking up right where the action left off, the sequel boasts more innovations than the first offering. In addition to this, if some features were lacking in comparison to competing wrestling games, THQ went to the extreme to put its series on top. Most notably, the Create-A-Superstar, an area Acclaim excelled in with its wrestling games, is now the most comprehensive editor on the market. Not only is it equipped with hundreds of cosmetic choices, but players can actually tweak the dimensions of a wrestler's body — making chins longer, and torsos thicker.

Adding to the customization fire, your fictional wrestler is only the tip of the user creations. Wrestling Stables consisting of any WWF superstar can be formed and named, managers can be assigned duties, and through a snazzy frame-by-frame editing system, taunts can be constructed. As if this wasn't enough, the in-ring action has received a hefty touch up as well. Casket, Hell In A Cell, Table, and Ladder matches accompany the standard fare. For all of you who feel the Cactus Jack versus The Undertaker Hell In A Cell match is the greatest bout ever, you can re-create it, and yes, Cactus falls through the cage, but no, his tooth doesn't go up his nose.

The only downfall to this gargantuan sequel is the alterations made to Season mode. Extensive loadtimes run as long as commercials, and instead of flipping past CPU vs. CPU matches, the player actually has to watch a 30-second sequence where the game decides who won. It's slower than baseball, folks. Thankfully though, the amusing backstage activity and story arcs are still in place. Again, they often have little to do with anything whatsoever, but they are worth a chuckle or two, and some of the material, like Stone Cold destroying the McMahon's bus, is accompanied by a stellar graphical assault.

Not messing with a good thing, the actual gameplay is little more than a rehash of last year's chemistry. The backstage commotion has been improved ever so slightly, and to take another shot at WCW, the interaction and look of these environments crushes everything Backstage Assault has to offer.

THQ still needs to work on character collision fields and fluidity of play for SmackDown to truly shine like its N64 brethren. – **REINER**



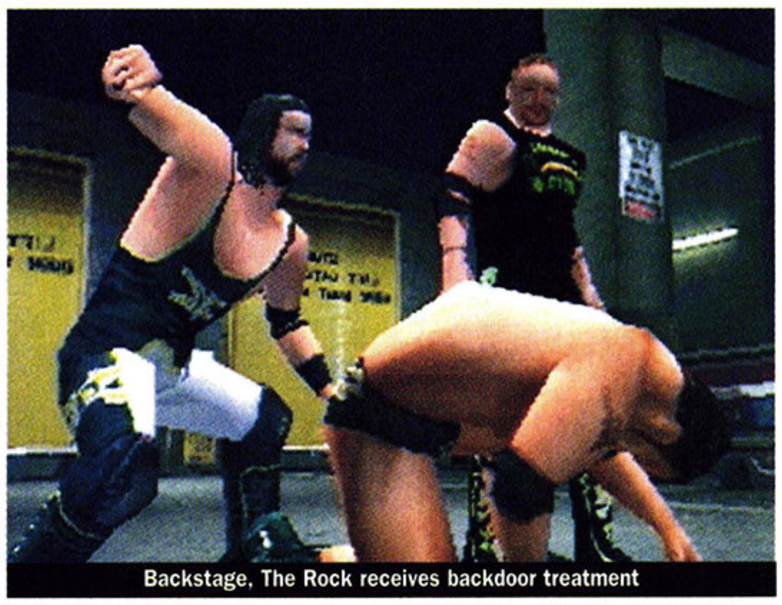
Vince and HHH look on in fear...

...as a load of bricks destroys their bus...

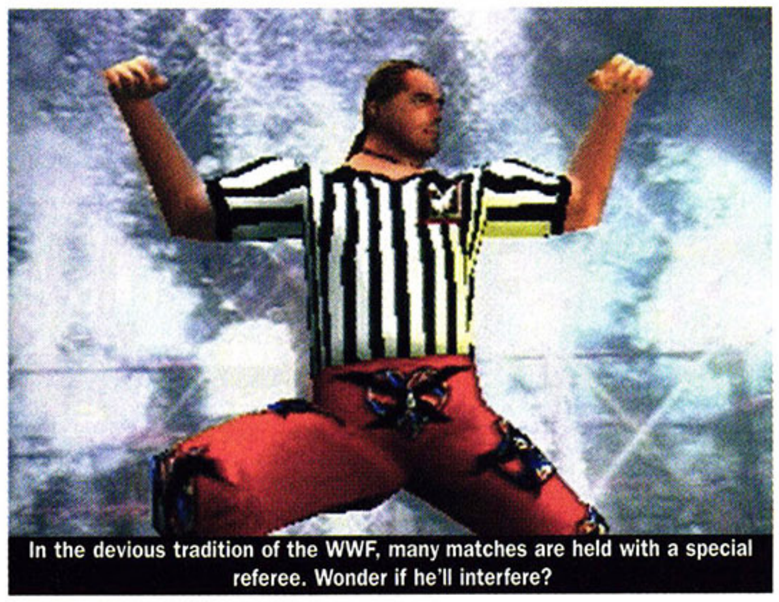
...and the culprit shows his face

Not only can you create a wrestler, you can actually customize taunts

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** YUKE'S ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 8



Backstage, The Rock receives backdoor treatment



In the devious tradition of the WWF, many matches are held with a special referee. Wonder if he'll interfere?

REPLICATION

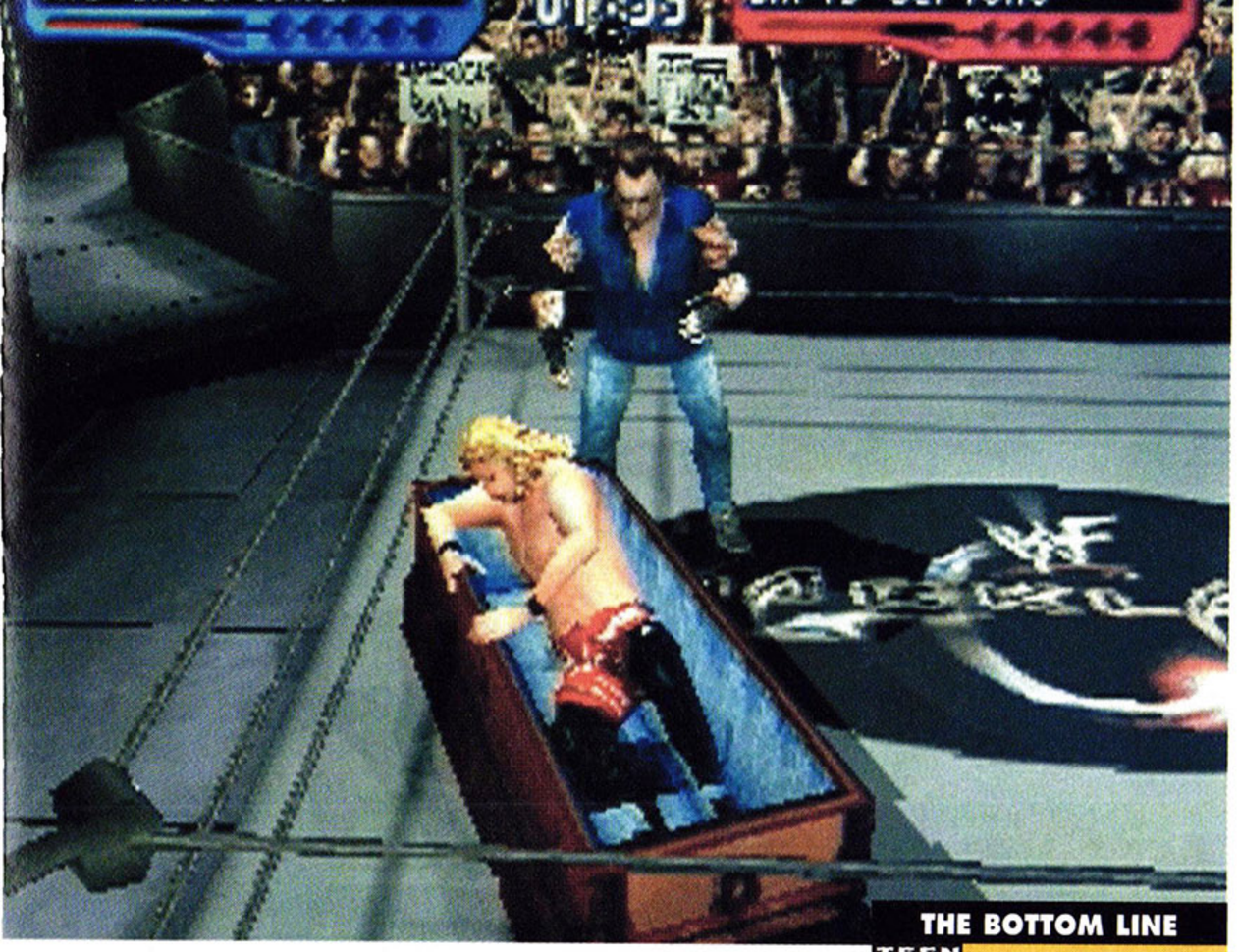
For the introductions, the wrestlers still don't walk to the ring, which is kind of a bummer, yet THQ has done a tremendous job incorporating clean Titontron movies and all of the wrestler's signature movements. The Rock ascends an invisible ring post to give the people's eyebrow, Too Cool dances up a storm, Blackman shows his charisma, Triple H pours water over his head, Austin flips the bird, and The Undertaker enters on his groovy motorcycle.

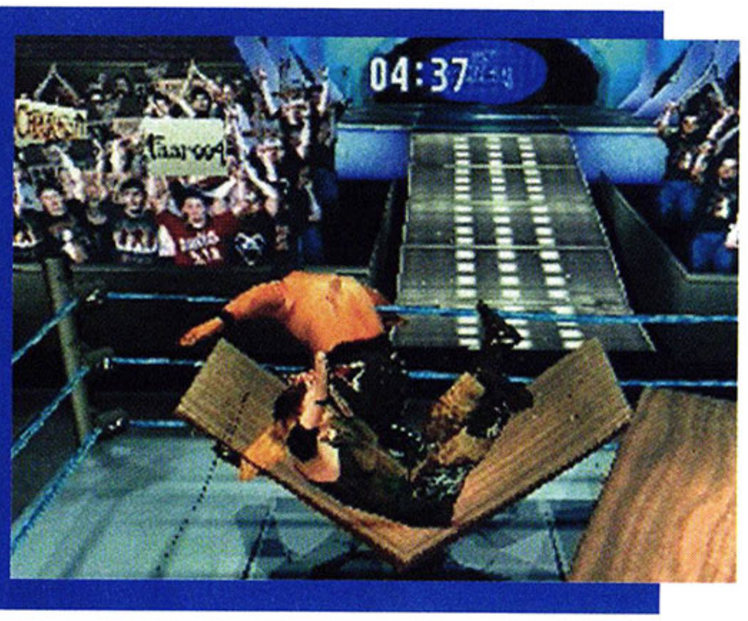
MATCHES

Almost every match type has squirmed its way into SmackDown 2. Not only is the Hell in a Cell present with a collapsible roof; but Table, Ladder, and Casket matches have been added for your pummeling pleasure. As you can see in the picture, multiple tables can be set up in the ring, and yes, you can actually launch off of the ladder to the outskirts of the ring. Now all that's missing is Strap, Inferno, and Four Corner matches.

WHO'S WHO

THQ has managed to include over 60 different wrestler's into this sequel, all complete with signature moves and animation's. Many of the wrestler's who really don't exert themselves in the ring, like The Rock, have more than just slaps and elbows in their arsenal. They can actually perform high-flying moves and slams. Without fear of hurting their prized bodies, all of the characters can also take bumps through tables and such.





THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** The next level in wrestling complete with Ladder and Casket matches, plus enhanced story arcs, backstage activity, and customizable options
- **Graphics:** The soft-skinned character models are still the best in the biz. The character collision fields remain a tad off
- **Sound:** Still no chants, but all the entrance music is there
- **Playability:** The CPU is intelligent and the in-ring action is incredibly fast
- **Entertainment:** If you can overlook the loading, immediate addiction is inevitable
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Acclaim has officially been stripped of its Create-A-Wrestler championship title. Your new champion is SmackDown 2. It would be impossible to even briefly describe the overwhelming amount of options in Create-A-Superstar, so I won't. I'll just say it's the best, that the Create-A-Taunt is brilliant, and leave it at that. The rest of the game plays identical to the original, but with enough match options to keep things interesting for a looooooong time. There's only one chink in this juggernaut's armor, and that's the Season mode. Not only must you suffer through events that you take no part in, you have to watch quirky match simulations and cutscenes that have absolutely nothing to do with the character you're playing. Aside from this asinine feature, however, SmackDown 2 is a sequel well worth the admission price.

JAY – 9

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

PLAYSTATION

MIKE TYSON BOXING

ATTEMPTING TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF THE BOXING MARKET

- **Concept:** A platoon of fantasy boxers fight for the chance to take on Iron Mike
- **Graphics:** Shoddy character models and jerky animation collide
- **Sound:** Minimal crowd sounds, music, and no commentary
- **Playability:** Boxers' reaction times are extremely slow, making it hard to pull off combos
- **Entertainment:** Not worthy of a purchase, or even a rental. Check out Knockout Kings instead
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

You wouldn't think that a convicted rapist with a third-grade IQ, an effeminate lisp, and a penchant for cannibalism would be a very appealing video game license. Then again, Tyson's stock has sunk so low Codemasters probably signed him for a case of Mickey's Big Mouths and some food stamps. No doubt Codemasters was hoping that NES fans with fond memories of Mike Tyson's Punch Out would turn out to buy this game in droves. Guess again. Point blank – if you loved Punch Out, don't buy this game. It's not even in the same league as that classic. Heck, it's not even in the same league as Ready 2 Rumble.

There are so many problems with this game it's hard to know where to begin. Its appearance is severely lacking. The characters are blocky, and their movements appear unnatural and sluggish. The arena environments are drab, which adds to the half-hearted feeling that permeates this game. I suspect the developers had good intentions, but were not given the time or money required to create a top-notch title.

Of course, graphics wouldn't matter if the gameplay was there, but this is sadly not the case. I would expect a game with such little graphical detail to at least run fast. Unfortunately, the action offers little depth and runs at a snail's pace. Avoid. – **MATT**

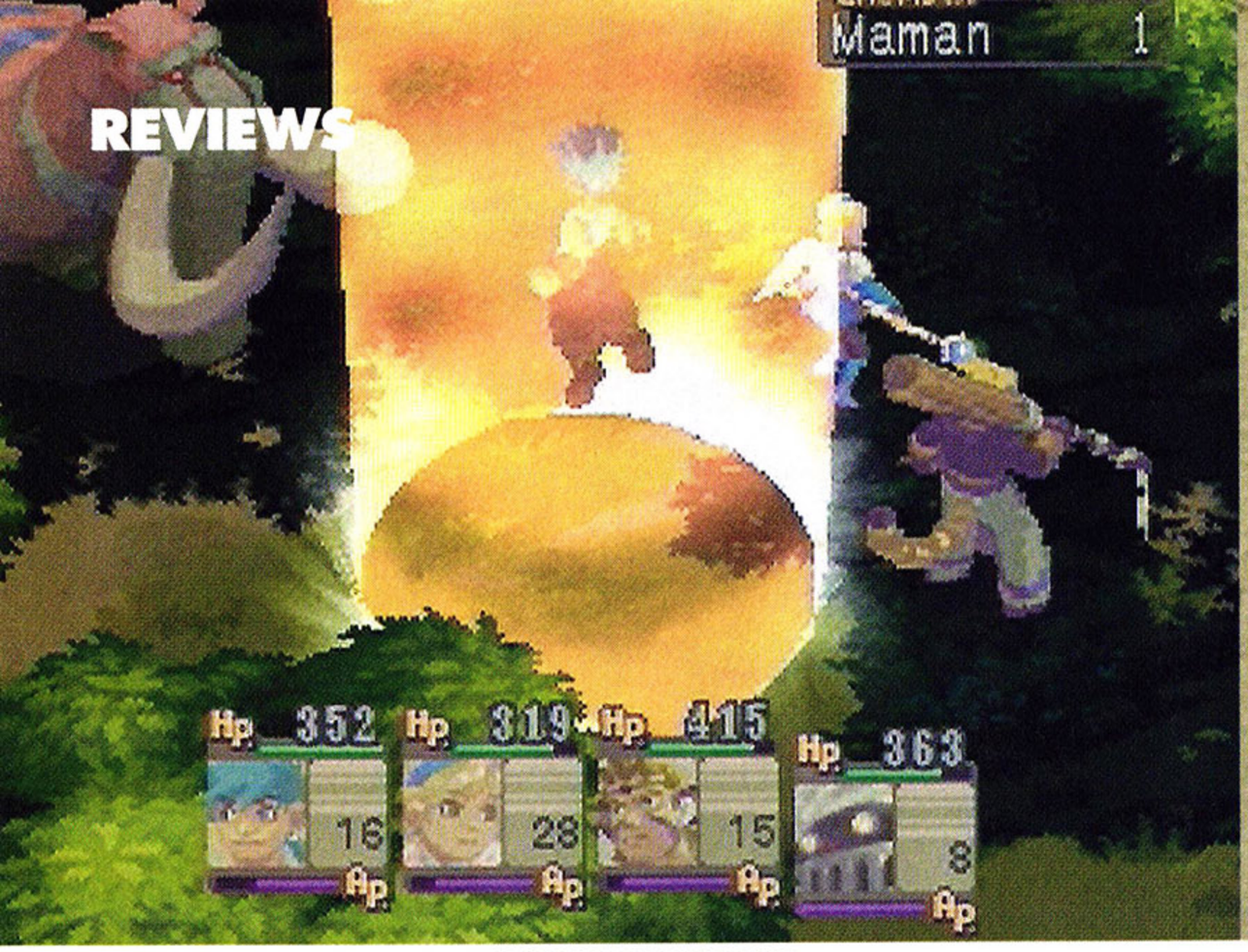
"Ifth you wanna beat me, you betta twain hawd!"

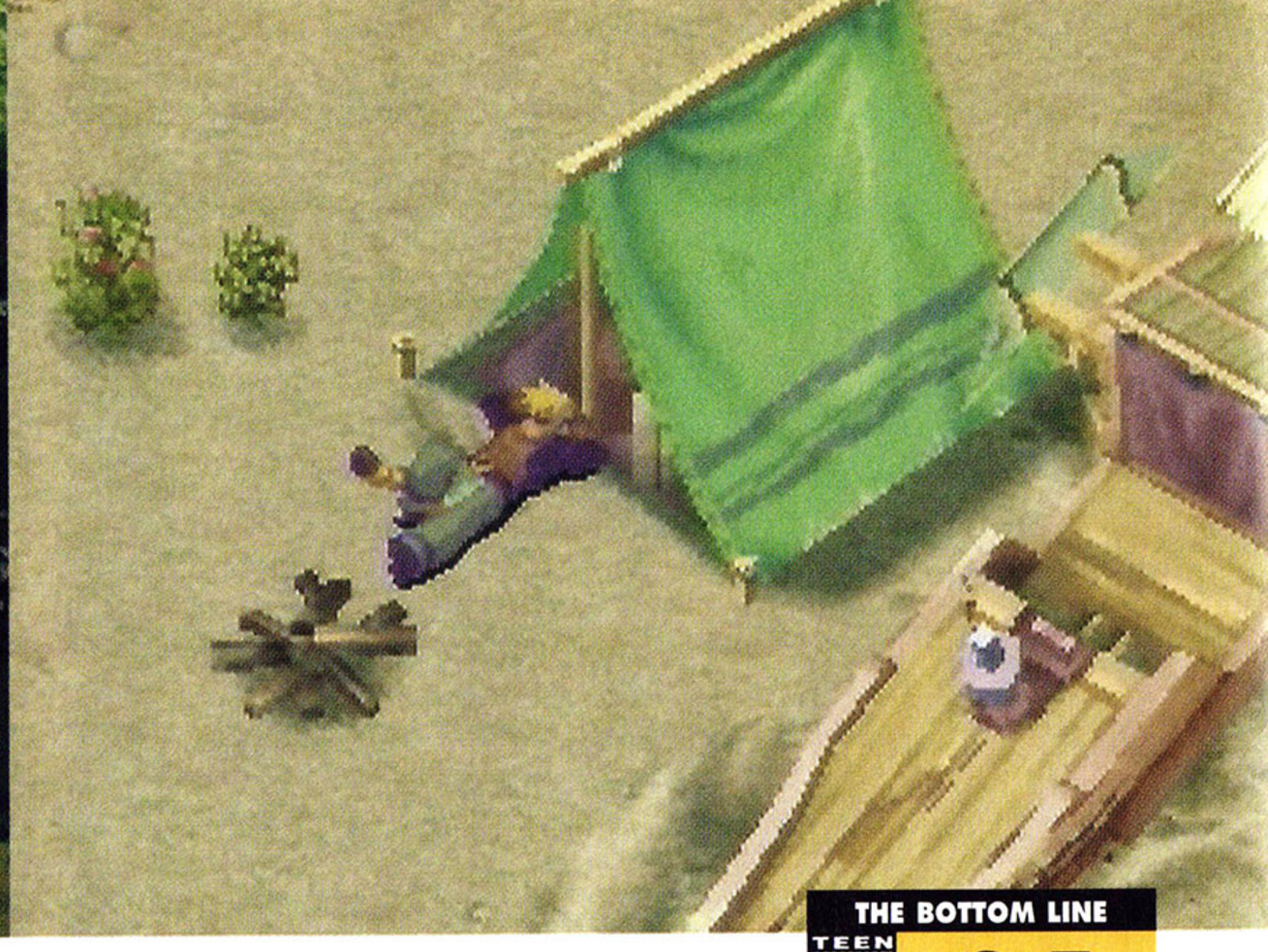
SECOND OPINION

After playing and reviewing Knockout Kings in this very same issue, I would have to say its virtues far exceed this joke of a title. The animation is a freaking disgrace. Did the artists on this game ever watch a boxing match? A better question is: Are they boxing? It sure doesn't look like it. The boxers contort and move so unnaturally. Next, the entire concept of the career mode is entirely stupid due to the fact that it goes through these useless newspaper reports on fighters that you don't give a rip about. Ugh! I didn't even want to play the career after one fight anyway. I had to struggle against the controller to get my guy turned toward the opponent. This game completely blows chunks. As it stands now, this is clearly the worst game I have played all year. Yuck.

PAUL – .25

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS
■ **DEVELOPER** CODEMASTERS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 24





PLAYSTATION

BREATH OF FIRE IV

BURNING IN THE RING OF FIRE

"While the last endeavor was a tad too problematic for the masses, Capcom has ironed out the wrinkles and constructed a sequel that has something for everyone."

A dark horse role-playing series since its Super Nintendo inception, the Breath of Fire lineage has yet to receive the attention it truly deserves. While the last endeavor was a tad too problematic for the masses, Capcom has ironed out the wrinkles and constructed a sequel that has something for everyone. The annoying loading times that plagued Breath of Fire III – wasting countless hours of our lives staring at a blank black screen – have miraculously disappeared and the game now flows at a feverish pace.

Combat, another not-so-friendly element of Breath of Fire III, has been completely revamped and drastically improved. The battles may seem simplistic from the get-go, but as you trench further into this gigantic game, depth unfolds through hefty doses of innovative techniques. Instead of just three members of your party clashing with the opposition, all the other characters eagerly await in the back row. These characters can be swapped into combat, they replace characters that die, and even lend a hand by launching distant attacks. With the added firepower coming from behind the lines, the enemies are stronger and more of a nuisance than ever before. On top of this, Breath of Fire IV features over 200 different spells. Starting out with barely any spells, you'll need to train under different NPCs to learn new spells and abilities. Another interesting addition is the ability to create new spells during combat itself. When two characters cast spells back to back, there's a chance the two attacks may meld into one powerful blast, which in turn becomes a new choice.

To break up the monotony of traversing from village to dungeon, a slew of minigames rear their heads at any given moment. While most of these events are quite simple, some can easily drive you to the brink of insanity. As always, and to cool your nerves, you can drop a line in a fishing hole and try to collect every aquatic species in this dangerous world.

Sticking to the roots of the series, Breath of Fire IV is sculpted from an artist's perspective. Over 3,000 frames of hand-drawn animation bring each scene to life with vibrant details, while all of the backdrops are filled with stunning visuals, ambient life, and cinematic camera angles. The only complaint I have with this release is the interaction between the 2D characters and the 3D world. During play, they slide around way too much, and examining objects can be a serious nightmare.

Other than this, Breath of Fire IV is an excellent release. It offers plenty of interesting plot twits, and a gameplay package that will keep you hooked until the very end.

– **REINER**

As always, the latest Breath of Fire includes humorous story breaks

Real-time cinematic sequences don't get much better than this

In dragon form, Ryu is nearly unstoppable

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

The popular fishing sequences are back and better than ever. You can even catch Piranhas!

From races to eating contests, your quest is constantly interrupted by inventive minigames

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** A fairly straightforward RPG with interesting plot twists
- **Graphics:** With over 3,000 frames of animation and highly detailed backdrops, this RPG is a graphical knockout
- **Sound:** The score is elegant and very 16-bit
- **Playability:** Reinventing the battle system added depth, and the annoying load times from Breath III have been cut in half
- **Entertainment:** After 15 minutes of play, you want to see the ending
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

I loved Breath of Fire III, but the pace of that game made me wish for death many times (or at least for the game to hurry along). Breath of Fire IV is not only sped up, but is also well orchestrated to create a fantastic and twisted tale that features cinematic cutscenes and tons of great 2D art that will tickle the fancy of any RPG fan. Certainly, BOF IV doesn't have the flair of a Final Fantasy or Chrono, but it is close, with the biggest drawback being its somewhat small environments that require you to use the camera to rotate around to find treasures (which is clumsy to use at best). This epic will definitely keep you glued to your TV for a number of days and is a great addition to the PlayStation's already impressive lineup of RPGs this fall, which includes Final Fantasy IX and Chrono Cross. If you dig RPGs, Breath of Fire IV should fit well into your library.

ANDY – 8.75

The inventive pogo stick game is addictive, fast, and furious

PLAYSTATION

CRASH BASH

THE BANDICOOT SHUFFLE

Trouble within the Bandicoot family has forced Crash and his colleagues to turn tail and hunt for a new development house. With Naughty Dog, the original Crash creator, out of the picture, Sony has enlisted the talent of Eurocom to continue the legacy and reinsert Crash into the limelight of gaming. The latest marsupial offering is Crash Bash, Sony's answer to Mario Party. It's designed with the multiplayer crowd in mind, and instead of focusing on minigames with a board game aspect attached, Eurocom has tossed the dice out the window and opted to focus solely on the games.

Crash does his best Poy Poy impersonation

Keeping the flavor of the original Crash games intact, almost every significant character has returned, sporting unique abilities and moves. Many of the minigames are familiar, with gameplay stylized after Pong and Combat. One game even mimics Poy Poy to a tee. Along with these copycat concepts, Eurocom has created several innovative games, some of which I'm sure other developers will steal ideas from. Entertaining indeed, but the thrills are definitely limited. The quest mode doesn't really seem to have a purpose, and repeating the same games over and over again with subtle variations in AI, rules, and appearance makes you crave variance and something more. But alas, Crash Bash has nothing else to offer. – **REINER**

Four-player Pong with multiball

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
■ **DEVELOPER** EUROCOM/CERNY GAMES ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

6.5

- **Concept:** Sony's answer to Nintendo's Mario Party
- **Graphics:** The environments and character designs blend nicely with Naughty Dog's work; however, the distant camera is often troublesome
- **Sound:** Wacky as always
- **Playability:** All of the minigames are challenging, and many bear innovative concepts
- **Entertainment:** The minigames lose their flavor after a few hours, and other than multiplayer, there really is nothing else to see
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

It's pretty clear that Universal and Sony took a look at Nintendo's success with Mario Party and thought they might do the same with good ol' Crash. Why not just exploit the Crash franchise and try to sucker some of the millions of Crash fans into picking up a party game? Don't fall for this crap. If you've been reading these pages for a while, you probably recall my distaste for Mario Party. Likewise, Crash Bash leaves an equally foul taste in my mouth. In fact, I think Crash Bash is even worse, since you don't even have an overlying game that ties all the minigames together. I will give this game credit for having more playable minigames than Mario Party, but that is of little consolation because Crash Bash is just plain lame. It doesn't even register to me as fun, and I wouldn't suggest you even consider picking this game up.

PAUL – 2

PLAYSTATION

COOL BOARDERS 2001

A NICE SURPRISE, BUT STILL NOT ENOUGH

On the graphical front, nothing really jumps out, and to be quite frank, the collision fields are serious monstrosities. Annoying graphical flickers appear all the time, and the camera is always a nuisance. However, the gameplay is something to admire. Adding a great deal of variance to the mix, the play continually shifts between events, offering something a little different with each run. The trick system has also been simplified to give players the utmost control. At the very most, this is a fair rainy-day game, for a time when there's nothing else to play. – **REINER**

SECOND OPINION

There has been a steady decline in this game's quality over the years. This is one ugly-looking game. The animation is pure terror and the playcontrol is equally as scary.

PAUL – 5

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

5.5

- **Concept:** Steering away from the standard CB formula, Idol Minds implemented several new events and tweaked the gameplay
- **Graphics:** The collision fields are horrible and the framerate is pathetic
- **Sound:** What in the world happened here?! The effects sound like they are from an Atari 2600 Game
- **Playability:** The control is responsive and the new events rock
- **Entertainment:** Moderately amusing if you can overlook the graphical problems
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

The new courses are beautiful creations that offer plenty of air and extensive trick time

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** IDOL MINDS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 24

PLAYSTATION

DISNEY'S THE EMPEROR'S NEW GROOVE

GETCHA GROOVE ON!

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.25

- **Concept:** A fresh spin on the familiar
- **Graphics:** Not as smooth as Spyro, but nice
- **Sound:** Tons of voice-overs featuring Kuzco's snide personality
- **Playability:** Control is solid, although platform jumping is a chore
- **Entertainment:** If you're not burned out on cutesy platformers, New Groove is highly recommended
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

There's something to be said for pulling off an extremely competent rip-off. Sure, I could spend my review grousing about the numerous similarities between Emperor's New Groove and the Spyro series, but why bother? I had fun playing this game. The graphics, while not spectacular, are more than adequate. The storyline and voice-overs didn't make me want to puke, which is more than can be said for the majority of 3D platformers out there. Most importantly, Argonaut packed this game with a ton of different minigames, which run the gamut from racing to Crash-style running levels, water rafting, and even some maze-puzzle levels. This variety helps lift Emperor's New Groove above the dozens of mediocre titles out there. Worth checking out – just tell the guy at the store you're buying it for your little brother. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

If you want a lackluster Spyro-esque release with a David Spade impersonator providing sarcastic dialogue, this is the game to get. It offers variety and a good challenge.

REINER – 7.75

River levels evoke the arcade classic Toobin'

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** ARGONAUT ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

PLAYSTATION

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

MEDAL OF HONOR THIS AIN'T

THE BOTTOM LINE

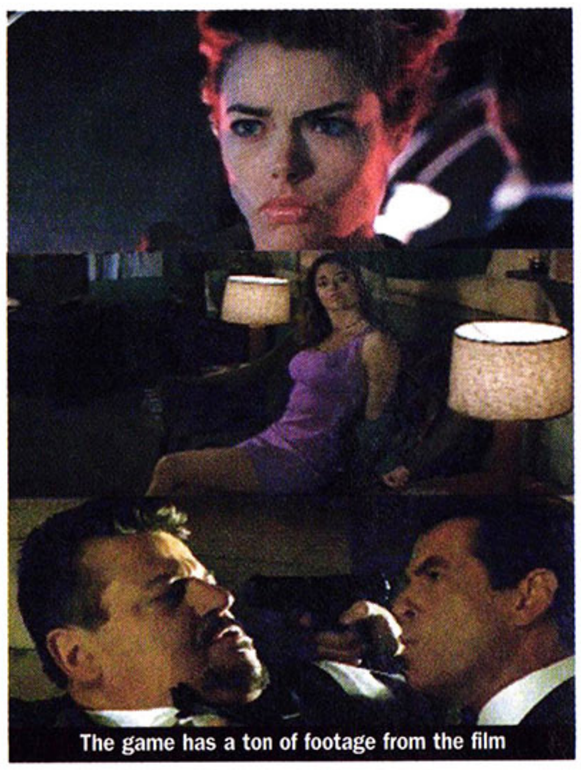
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

- **Concept:** The first-person shooter engine is healthy considering the ill nature of the last PS-X Bond game. Still, the level structure isn't spectacular
- **Graphics:** The game moves at a good rate and the enemy animation is very nice. There are some instances of slight slowdown
- **Sound:** The soundtrack includes the familiar Bond theme and some great sound effects
- **Playability:** The playcontrol is adequate, but there are also instances of collisions that hang up your character
- **Entertainment:** A sometimes frustrating, but challenging, game that is over way too quickly
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

Certainly, TWINE's first-person engine is more in tune with the video game Bond that GoldenEye made famous, and is far more enjoyable than the hodgepodge that was Tomorrow Never Dies. However, this PlayStation game fails in aspects of control, game design, and overall entertainment.

The playcontrol is fairly straightforward and a configuration screen will provide options to tailor the buttons to your liking. For the most part, moving around the environments and gunning down enemies is not a problem. However, things get a little suspect when toggling on the manual targeting. The problem with this system becomes apparent when your weapon reloads itself and the perspective quickly switches away from your target.



The game has a ton of footage from the film

Speaking of targeting, the design of the weapons is suspect. Virtually every weapon seems to have nearly the same strength and there is no worthy use for a weapon such as the sniper rifle. Furthermore, with only ten levels, the game comes up way short in playtime. There are two difficulty settings, but one time through is enough as 70 percent of the missions are predictable, lacking in both action and intrigue.

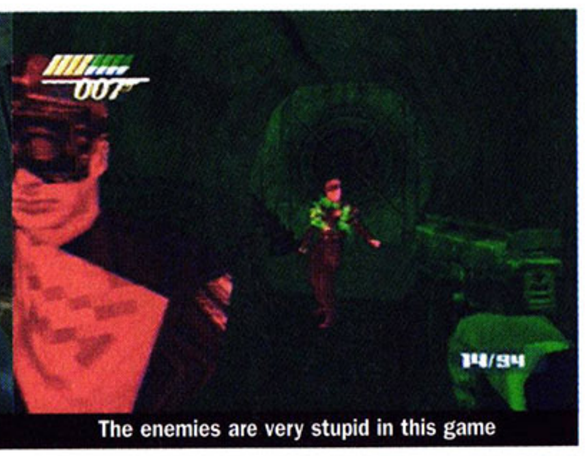
TWINE falls short of its N64 counterpart, as well as the Medal of Honor series on PS-X. If you hadn't guessed yet, I can't recommend this as more than a quick rental. – **PAUL**

SECOND OPINION

After thoroughly enjoying the N64 offering, I was excited to get a chance to play it again on PlayStation. Unfortunately, even though the games carry the same name, they are quite different. The N64 version not only has better levels, but the flow of the game seems to make some sense. The PS-X version just goes from scene to scene and lets you take over after you watch a clip from the movie. I was really expecting a lot from this game as Medal of Honor: Underground is a truly impressive shooter, but TWINE is extremely disappointing. There are some nice touches to this version, like the voice-over mission overviews from M, R, and Moneypenny, but the gloss isn't enough to cover up this game's flaws. TWINE is a definite must on N64, but this PS-X wannabe is best left on the shelf.

ANDY – 6

Combing the subway for nasty villains



The enemies are very stupid in this game

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** EA GAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK OPS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

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PLAYSTATION

WCW BACKSTAGE ASSAULT

EMBARRASSING EVEN BY WCW STANDARDS

In one of the backstage areas, you can stick a 2x4 in a fire, then use it to ignite your opponent. I'm not saying this is really amazing, I'm just trying to come up with an aspect of Backstage Assault that doesn't suck. Let's see if I can come up with something else. Um, the opening FMV is okay...I guess.

Now for the bad news. The graphics are worse than the already lackluster N64 version. Much of the commentary is repeated from Mayhem, and Mark Madden isn't one of the announcers. Not having a ring in a wrestling game is as stupid as not having one in a boxing game. – **JAY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

3

- **Concept:** There are many new ideas – and all of them are bad
- **Graphics:** Why does every wrestler have stick-legs and Gumby arms?
- **Sound:** A lot of the commentary is reused from Mayhem
- **Playability:** Horrid controls and collision do little to improve upon a terrible game
- **Entertainment:** More fun could be had by sticking your tongue on the receptors of a 9-volt battery
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

The loading screens outshine everything else this game has to offer. No joke. The remainder of this mangled wrestling venture is nothing short of flaming elephant dung. Stinky!

REINER – 2.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** KODIAK INTERACTIVE **RELEASE** OCTOBER 17

Get used to field work, you'll be doing a lot of it

The horse races are a good way to raise some money

PLAYSTATION

HARVEST MOON: BACK TO NATURE

DOWN ON THE FARM

I'll say this– Harvest Moon's agrarian mix of role-playing and farm simulation is a unique package to say the least. Between tending to your crops, raising livestock, attending local festivals, and searching for a mate, there are a huge number of things to do in this game. I have no doubt that this game will attract a rabid cult of followers who succumb to its quirky charms. I will not be one of them. Maybe it's the fact that, growing up on farm, I've done enough chores for one lifetime. Tending to fields every day is not my idea of fun. To add to my boredom was the slow pace at which the game unfolds. There are only two or three events each month, and you must spend the rest of the time working and talking to the slack-jawed yokels that populate the village. I respect Natsume's efforts, but there are dozens of better RPGs out there. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

This farming simulator is actually quite entertaining. That is, if you're into raising crops and livestock. I wouldn't go as far to call it a sequel to the N64 release, but an update.

REINER – 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.75

- **Concept:** Farming, romancing, cooking, dancing, and animal husbandry collide in a whimsical RPG
- **Graphics:** The graphics are a throwback to the 16-bit era; won't dazzle FF fans
- **Sound:** Rocks that dope tinkly-winkly harpsichord, homeslice!
- **Playability:** Easy to pickup and play, but this farming stuff is hard work!
- **Entertainment:** Moves slow, and the tedium of labor to wear after awhile
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** NATSUME ■ **DEVELOPER** NATSUME
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

PLAYSTATION

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

EA'S SUCKER PUNCH

EA Sports has continually tried to pack a lot into Knockout Kings. The roster of boxers, which includes some of the greatest boxers ever to enter the ring, is one of the game's strong points. This year they've also added women boxers to the fray. The game still plays quite a bit like last year's title, but there have been modifications to the game's graphics that give the play a slightly different feel. Even so, the control, although great in concept, is fairly cumbersome – especially when going to the body. In the end, this is the boxing title, but you will save yourself a few bucks by picking up last year's game. – **PAUL**

SECOND OPINION

The Career mode is deep enough to keep you playing for months on end, yet the gameplay is really nothing special. The character movement is choppy and a tad slow. Wait for the PS2 version.

REINER – 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

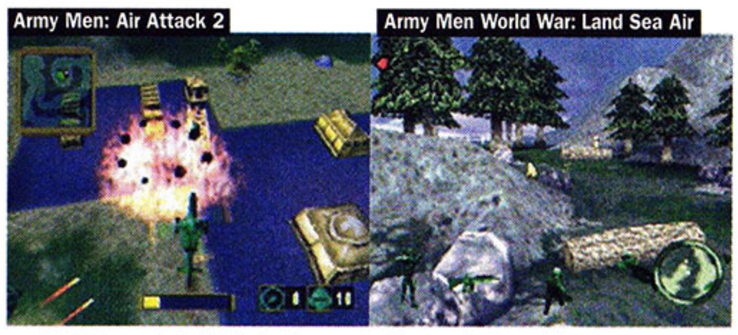
7.5

- **Concept:** With a roster of virtually every well-known boxer, this game is hard to beat
- **Graphics:** The likenesses of the real boxers are well done, but the game's engine seems a lot slower
- **Sound:** The entrance tunes are excellent, but the commentary suffers from repetitiveness
- **Playability:** There are a ton of combos, but you may find that you only use a few punches
- **Entertainment:** It's a lot like last year's game, with slightly different graphics
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** EA SPORTS
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 31

ARMY MEN WORLD WAR: LAND SEA AIR & ARMY MEN: AIR ATTACK 2

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** 3DO
- **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 19



At this point, I think Game Informer's position on Army Men games is quite clear – we're tired of them and we want them to go far, far away to a place where they will never again sully our PlayStations. Thus, we have now decided to give every new Army Men game a 1 until some serious improvements are made to the series. On a brighter note, did you know I just got some new coasters? Yeah. They're really cool, made out of heavy black felt. They were on sale at Target for only $1.99, so I couldn't pass them up. – **MATT**

1

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR OF STAR COMMAND

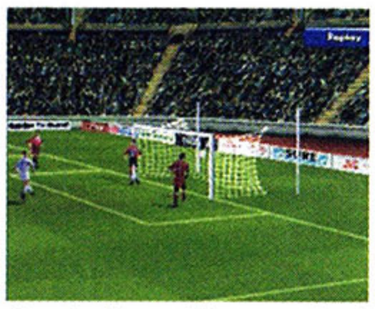
- **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
- **RELEASE** OCTOBER 3

Note to self: Jump on a bandwagon before it grows stale. Otherwise, something like Buzz Lightyear of Star Command might happen. Granted, running after a boss and shooting things in the process is a way to pass the time, but only for a grand total of five minutes. Graphically not all there, and with gameplay that made me run for the hills, BL will not be on my top 50 games to buy. Please, Activision, no more Buzz. – **KRISTIAN**

5.5

FIFA 2001

- **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS
- **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS
- **RELEASE** OCTOBER 24



Craving a soccer game for your PlayStation? EA Sports has everyone beat in terms of options and teams, while the playcontrol has always been very solid. However, as with most of the EA Sports lines, this game isn't a whole lot different from last season's. If you don't follow the roster changes of the soccer world, there is even less of a difference. I can't find a reason to recommend this game. At the most it's a rental. – **PAUL**

7.5

BATMAN BEYOND: RETURN OF THE JOKER

- **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
- **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

Holy bat droppings, Batman! This is without a doubt the most atrocious release of 2000. Just to give you an idea of how terrible this game truly is, it makes Titus' Superman look somewhat decent. Every inch of this title is revolting. Whoever made the decision to release this game must be blind. If you're collecting for the worst games ever made, here's another heap of guano for your library. – **REINER**

0.5

LOONEY TUNES RACING

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
- **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES
- **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

Here's one to play at a friend's house. Or even better, at a friend of a friend's house. Infogrames will probably end up selling a few Looney Tunes Racing units to the kiddies, but it'll stop there. It should stop there. LTR is fun to look at, it'll make you giggle at the little sounds and music, but the cart-racing specter raises its ugly head and dooms this game to mediocrity. Super Mario Kart it ain't. – **KRISTIAN**

6.25

NBA LIVE 2001

- **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS
- **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS
- **RELEASE** OCTOBER 17

With Garnett on the cover, I was almost ready to give this game a 10. However, it is far from perfect. There are some nice additions to the presentation and the NBA Challenge is really a lot of fun. Yet, the early release of the game might have prevented EA from making last-minute roster adjustments – namely Pat Ewing. I'm more eager to see what EA does on PS2. – **PAUL**

8

WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
- **PUBLISHER** 3DO
- **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 28

P.T. Barnum once said, "a sucker is born every minute," and if you buy this game you are proving Barnum's theory as WDL is just awful. It's just Battle Tanks all over again with a new name and improved "attitude" – if you can call that an improvement as the machismo cheese factor runs quite thick here for a bunch of hosers who blast each other in tanks. If the concept wasn't bad enough, WDL also features enemy vehicles that pop in and out of the battles as the program struggles to keep up with its mediocre play. – **ANDY**

3

PLAYSTATION

NASCAR 2001

WHERE'S DICK TRICKLE?

Gamers, please take this quick litmus test. Fact: This is the first NASCAR game to include the legendary Daytona 500 as one of the season races. Does this fact make you, um, anxious? If so, please skip this review, run to a store and buy this game. For the rest of you, this might be a game you can do without. Graphically, there are few improvements over last year's model. The cars handle well, and there were times when I was enthralled by jockeying for positions around corners. I just can't get over the lack of track variety. EA makes a fuss about having Daytona in the game, but what's the point? It may mean something to fans, but to everyone else it's just another boring track in a game filled with them. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.75

- **Concept:** Racing around oval tracks. Many of the cars have colorful paint jobs and stickers
- **Graphics:** Slightly touched-up texturing, but choppiness and seam-tearing run rampant
- **Sound:** Communication with pit crew is absent; generic bar band blooze-rock is present
- **Playability:** Control is solid, but cool interactive pit options are gone this year
- **Entertainment:** Unless you've a burning desire for all things NASCAR, your racing dollar could be better spent elsewhere
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I've enjoyed this series over the years, but it is for the NASCAR fan only. The cars are excellently reproduced, but otherwise I'm a little sick of the choppy graphics.

PAUL – 7.75

The interactive pit stops from last year have been jettisoned

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** BLACK BOX ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 19

PLAYSTATION

BLASTER MASTER: BLASTING AGAIN

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

I'd like to blast the stupid blastards that blasted my childhood memories of Blaster Master into smithereens. These rehashes always seem to be some crass attempt to take some easy money off nostalgic game fanatics – sort of like a washed-up athlete taking his Olympic medals to the pawn shop.

This redux of the classic Sunsoft NES title fails in the same way that most revived old-school games do – it fails to capture the charm and addictive gameplay of the original. While all the elements are there on paper (cavern exploration plus platform/shooter action), the levels and mission goals are so tedious I didn't feel compelled to play on.

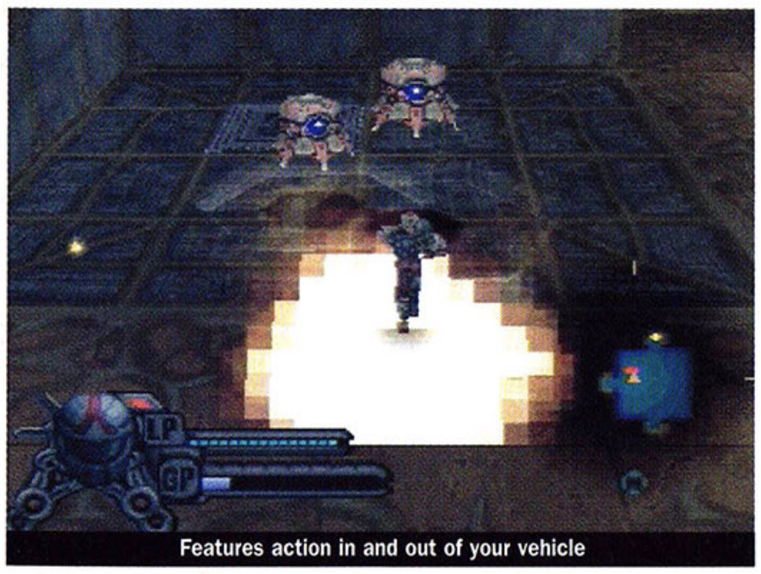
It didn't help that Blaster Master: Blasting Again looks like absolute rubbish. The texturing and character models are laughable, with camera problems and seam tearing at nearly every turn. Playability is severely hampered by the camera, especially when out of the vehicle and the angle must be adjusted manually. I guess the developers had trouble fixing the camera, and just decided to make you do the work for them. Sorry guys, but you'll have to pay me at least time and a half to play this stinker. – **MATT**

- **Concept:** Stays true to the premise of the NES classic; features both in and out-of-vehicle action
- **Graphics:** I'm tempted to say the old version looks better; the cave walls look vaguely like burnt toast
- **Sound:** Rock guitar dukes it out with lackluster sound effects
- **Playability:** Unlike in the first, you can't move your gun turret
- **Entertainment:** This game succeeds only in reminding me of how much better the old Blaster Master is
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

"Crappy-Crapper" might have been a better title for Blaster Master. Although I'm a fan of driving around in a jumping car and shooting stuff, this just didn't quite float my boat. Maybe it was the subpar graphics, maybe it was the boring missions, or maybe, just maybe it was because this is a game that should never have been released. Some of the FMV was good, and a few of the lighting effects were worth watching, but that's too little too late for a game that had a lot to live up to. Sunsoft! What's the matter with you? Don't you know better than to release a game that doesn't have a prayer of success? Unfortunately, I think Blaster Master will fold faster than Superman on laundry day.

KRISTIAN – 4



Features action in and out of your vehicle

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SUNSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** SUNSOFT
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

PLAYSTATION

TORNEKO: THE LAST HOPE

NOT OLD-SCHOOL, JUST OLD

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

2.75

- **Concept:** Arbitrary rules and weird control make this game dumb
- **Graphics:** Aside from the cutscenes, pretty crappy
- **Sound:** Wacky in an irritating way
- **Playability:** Simple yet awkward and nonsensical
- **Entertainment:** You can play it without getting angry, but why bother?
- **Replay Value:** Low

Why the !@#$ did they bring this title to the US? Is it because they thought "World of Dragon Warrior" would sell it? While I enjoy the fact that the main character is a big fat ass, the dialogue is juvenile, the control is stupid, and the game is loaded with arbitrary bizarreness. There isn't much of a story and the dungeon crawling itself is horrendously lame. This game is an outdated, ugly piece of crap whose silly antics will charm no one. There are so many better RPGs out there. – **ERIK**

SECOND OPINION

Not only is this game about five years behind the times, it would still have been considered sucky even if it had been released on a 16-bit machine. Pointless to the extreme.

JAY – 3

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ENIX ■ **DEVELOPER** CHUN SOFT
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 16

PLAYSTATION

ETERNAL EYES

LOOK INTO MY EYES

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** Final Fantasy Tactics blended with some watered-down Pokémon elements
- **Graphics:** The graphics look a lot like FFT, which was an attractive game
- **Sound:** The music was just a little too dandy for my taste
- **Playability:** Simpler than FFT, but basically the same exact thing
- **Entertainment:** Criticism aside, it's a fun game, but not too hard to put down
- **Replay Value:** Moderately

At first, I was convinced I was playing a 100% total rip-off of Final Fantasy Tactics and I got excited. The truth of the matter, however, is that while the gameplay is practically identical, all you really do is collect and mutate monsters that differ only in their spells and a single physical attack. There are 169 possible monsters to create, and you can bring up to three of them into a battle, but the main character is primarily a measure of his equipment and doesn't change classes. It's surprisingly addictive, but no FFT. – **ERIK**

SECOND OPINION

Eternal Eyes is a wonderful RPG full of interesting plot lines and wonderful graphics. That is exactly what I would be saying about this game were it five years ago. Now, I say this game's cheese went hard long before it ever went to press.

KRISTIAN – 3.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** SUNSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** TAMTAM
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 17

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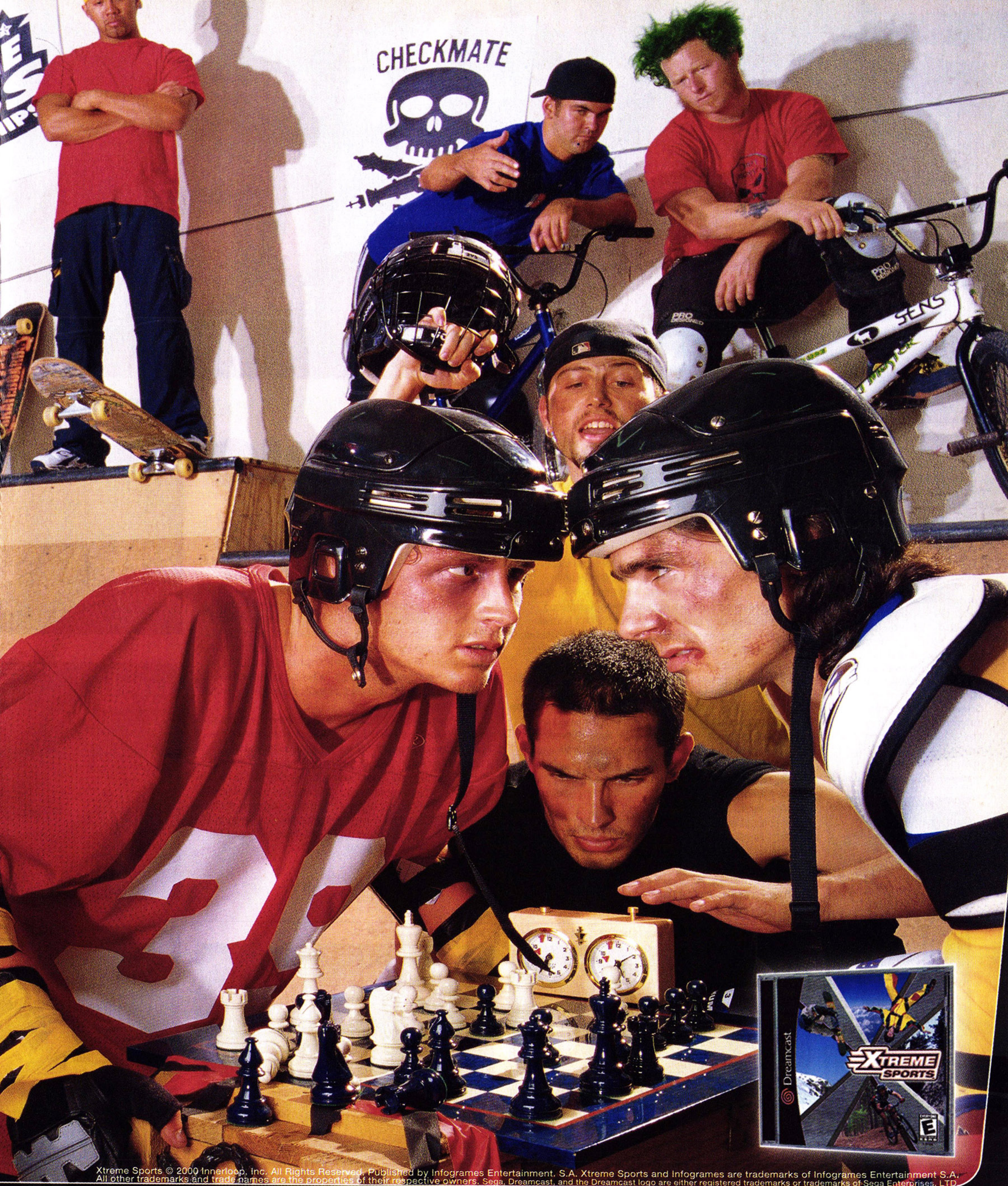
EVERYONE E ESRB Mild Animated Violence

INNERLOOP

INFOGRAMES

Dreamcast.



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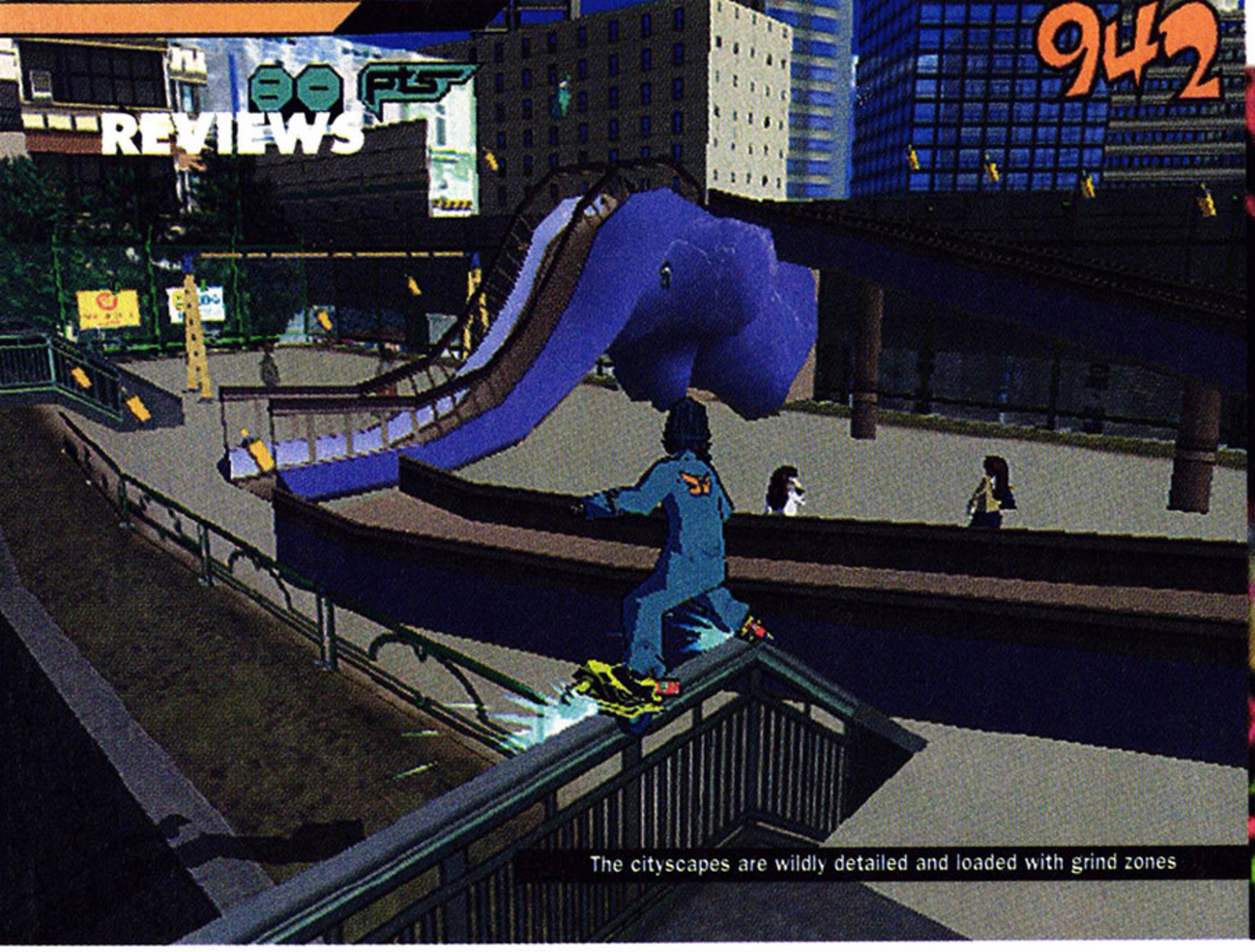
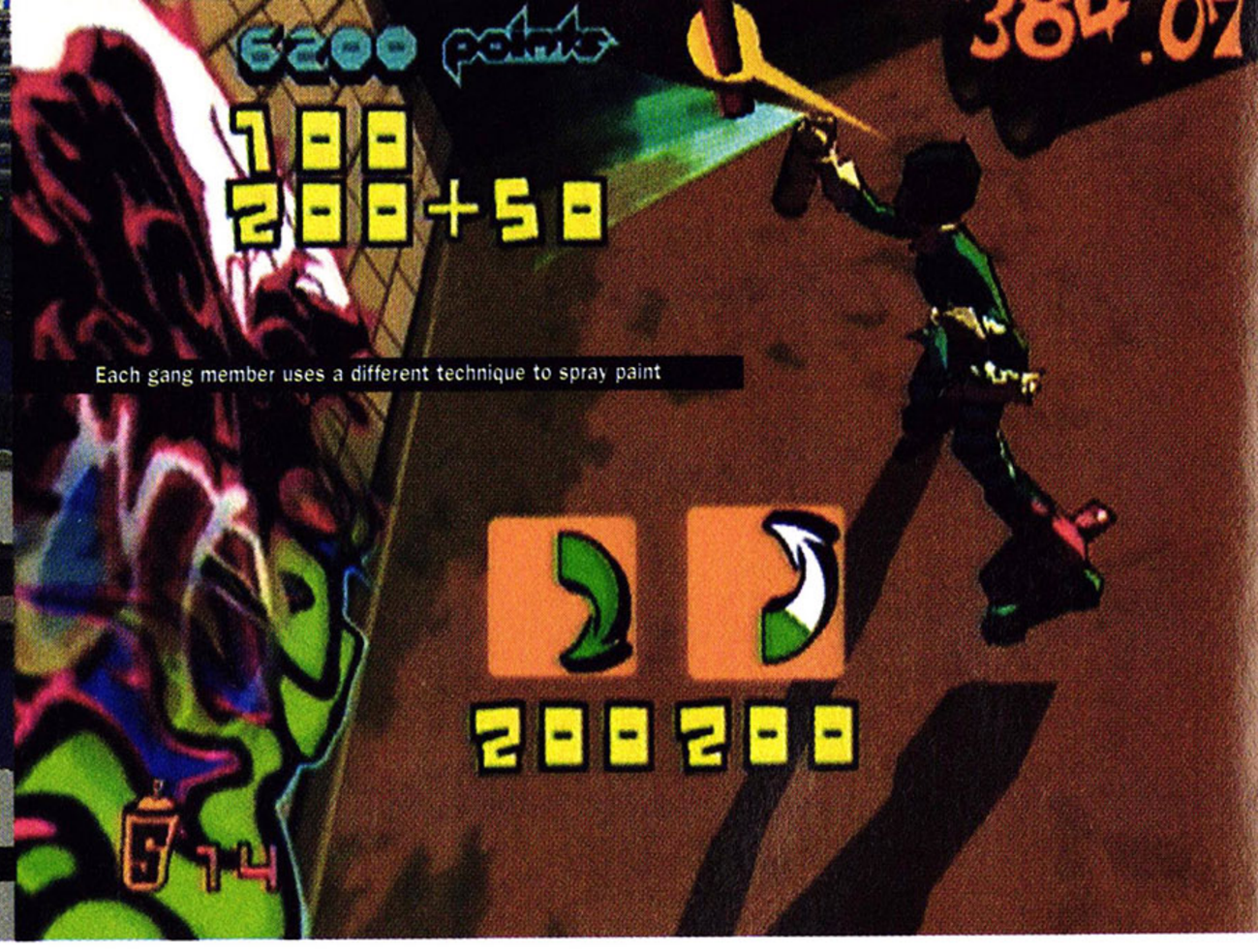


The cityscapes are wildly detailed and loaded with grind zones



Each gang member uses a different technique to spray paint

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Mayor P.J. Whazisnuts

DREAMCAST

JET GRIND RADIO

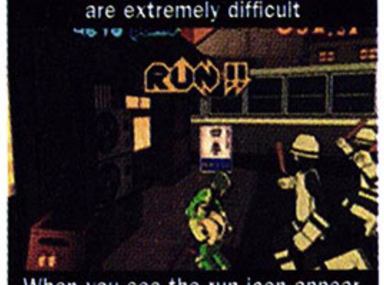
MARK YOUR TERRITORY

I've always had the greatest respect for Sega's ability to steer away from the mainstream and create unique software. With Jet Grind Radio, Sega has boldly stepped into the unmapped quadrant of gaming and has pieced together a completely original game that doesn't borrow concepts or mimic other games. Even the artistic angle holds many innovative qualities. Instead of mapping the polygons with standard textures, Sega created a new art style that makes everything in the game appear as if it were from a 2D comic or a Saturday-morning cartoon. The time and effort Sega spent forging these landmark graphics is the foundation that will intrigue gamers and pull them into the world of Jet Grind Radio. At times, this experimental technology shows a few holes, especially in some of the effects, but altogether, the detailing is marvelous, hitting the smallest of details like rippling clothing and realistic shading. The authenticity also includes ambient life, ranging from stunned city dwellers to non-stop traffic.

The concept is not as intriguing though, and to be dead honest, I have a feeling most gamers will either be confused or turned off by its obscure presentation. The entire game revolves around a town overrun by gang activity and a pirate radio program called Jet Grind Radio. Players assume the role of an upstart gang, and hit the streets to overtake rival gangs' territories. Through 18 massive missions, the goal is simple – spray paint your gang colors over those of the opposing gang. Each of these stages is timed and the police are always in pursuit. When you enter a stage, you can choose from different gang members, all equipped with different abilities. Additional members can be added by completing training exercises that pop up through the course of the game. To ease the burden of spraying everything in sight, each gang member wears rocket-fueled roller blades and can jump, grind, and abuse practically everything within the city limits.

As entertaining as it is to blade all over the city, the play just isn't where you would like it. The control schematic is way too loose, especially when the game asks you to complete some pretty crazy jumps and grinds. Because of this, most of the game is played with a feeling of frustration and anger. The rewards are magnificent, and each stage is something to behold, but the gameplay is mediocre at best. I tip my hat to Sega for trying something new, and even though it drives me nuts, Jet Grind Radio is a game that must be seen by everyone. – **REINER**

Some of the character challenges are extremely difficult



When you see the run icon appear, you'd better hit the road, or the cops will take you down

The cartoon-styled graphics deliver realistic shading and amazing animation

■ STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION **■ PUBLISHER** SEGA **■ DEVELOPER** SEGA **■ RELEASE** OCTOBER 31

This dude is way whacked, yet he knows all the latest gossip and sprays it across Jet Grind Radio

This may look like Tony Hawk, but rest assured, the gameplay is something completely different

DESIGN DOCTORS

To join a gang nowadays, you have to prove you're capable of living the gangsta lifestyle. Your pants must be baggy enough to conceal metal objects, and your graffiti spraying must be completely illegible. To help you out, Jet Grind Radio is equipped with a graffiti editor that allows you to design your own graffiti for use within the game. Spray whatever you want, but make sure you can't make heads or tails of what it actually says!

GRAFFITI WARFARE

The goal of this obscure game is to roller blade, pull off huge tricks, and spray paint your gang's symbol all across town. Not loved by the law, the city police are in hot pursuit and want to end your vandalizing streak. Level completion occurs when all the graffiti zones bear your emblem, or when the cops bust a cap in your rear. They'll even come at you with dogs, helicopters, and rocket launchers.

CHARACTER CHALLENGES

Every so often, usually after stage completion, an unknown gang banger will interrupt your crime spree and challenge you to match his or her moves. If you can do this, the banger think you're pretty fly and will join your cause, becoming a new selectable character with unique abilities.

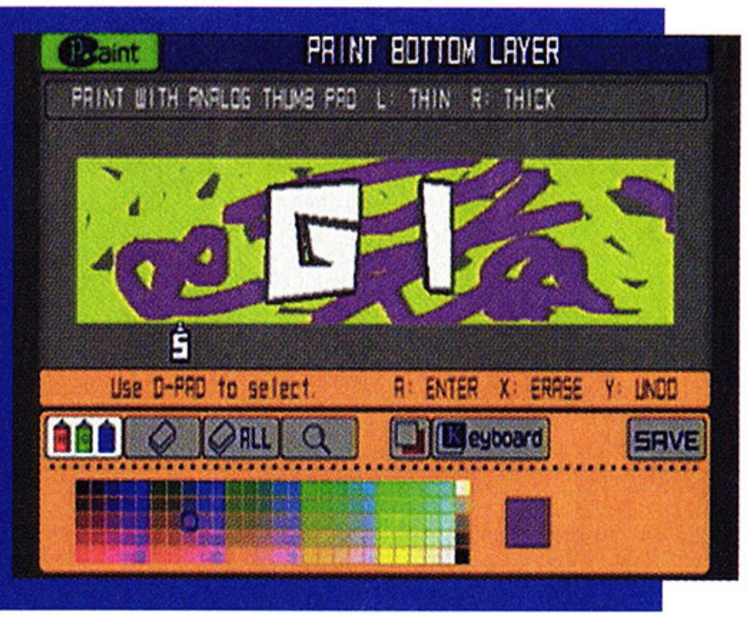
With the capability to drive across town and showcase your gang sign to millions, the sides of trucks are one of the most highly-craved graffiti zones

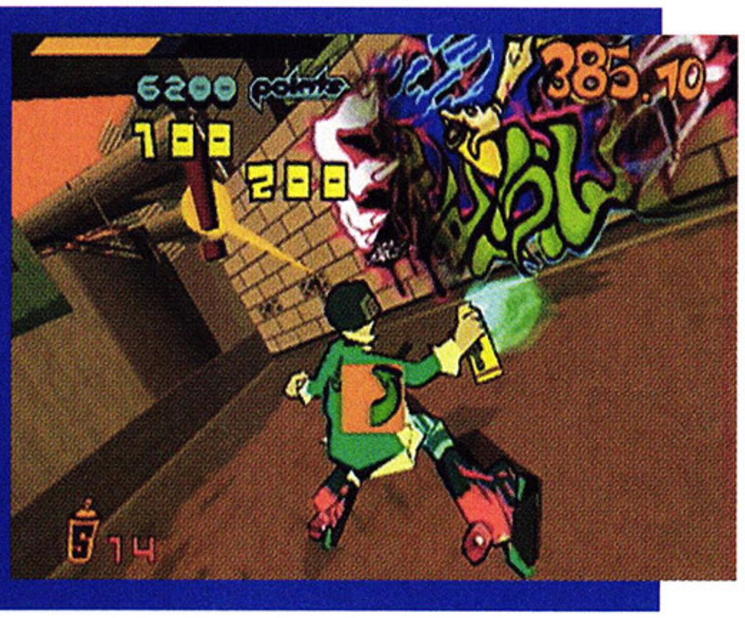
THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.25

- **Concept:** Innovative play combines graffiti with roller-blading gangs
- **Graphics:** With cartoon-styled textures sewn into a 3D polygonal world, Jet Grind has a unique look that is stunning
- **Sound:** The original urban/industrial soundtrack is funky and fresh
- **Playability:** The controls are way too loose, which makes many of the challenges overly difficult
- **Entertainment:** Originality and decent gameplay combine to forge an addictive package with plenty of rewards
- **Replay Value:** Moderate





SECOND OPINION

Sega is definitely an innovator in this industry. Not only that, Sega has style and is willing to take chances (which is rare indeed in this industry nowadays). Sometimes it leads them to failure; other times, amazing success. Luckily, Jet Grind Radio is one of those instances when Sega's unique style puts an original twist on an old game concept and puts together a great package. The skating and trick system is actually very basic and really easy to get the hang of. About the only problem you'll find with the playability is when you lose some momentum and the game doesn't want to let you off a rail. The graffiti aspect is really cool, and can be quite challenging with the cops hot on your trail (other times it's just getting to the spot where you have to mark that's the challenge). On a whole, the game isn't that deep (though it starts to offer more challenge later), but it scores extra points with me for its incredible art direction. Definitely one of my favorite Dreamcast games yet.

ANDY – 8.75

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

DREAMCAST

STARLANCER

FIGHT THE POWER

Let me start by saying X-Wing this is not. Of course, flight sims have been plagued by the same problem for years – there's only so much you can do with dogfighting. Some developers tried inserting RPG elements, others have steered toward realism in the attempt to keep our interest. X-Wing struck a perfect combination, making the game an instant hit. Starlancer approaches X-Wing quality, but comes up short.

As part of the 45th Volunteers Squadron, you fly against the Ruskies, but now they're called the Eastern Coalition. It's your mission to ensure peace in the galaxy. Sound familiar? I hope so. So, it's not Starlancer's story that keeps a guy's hands wrapped around a controller. Interestingly enough, it's the mission detail and customization options that really set the hook. You get a choice of 12 different ships (eventually) which you can load with a variety of 20 different types of weapons. Each weapon has strengths and weaknesses that you'll have to manipulate in battle.

The technical side of Starlancer is decent, with an adequate framerate and polygon count that add to believability. Online play may help those teetering on the buying fence. Starlancer didn't blow my hair back, but I wasn't bored – **KRISTIAN**

Some nice cut-away shots

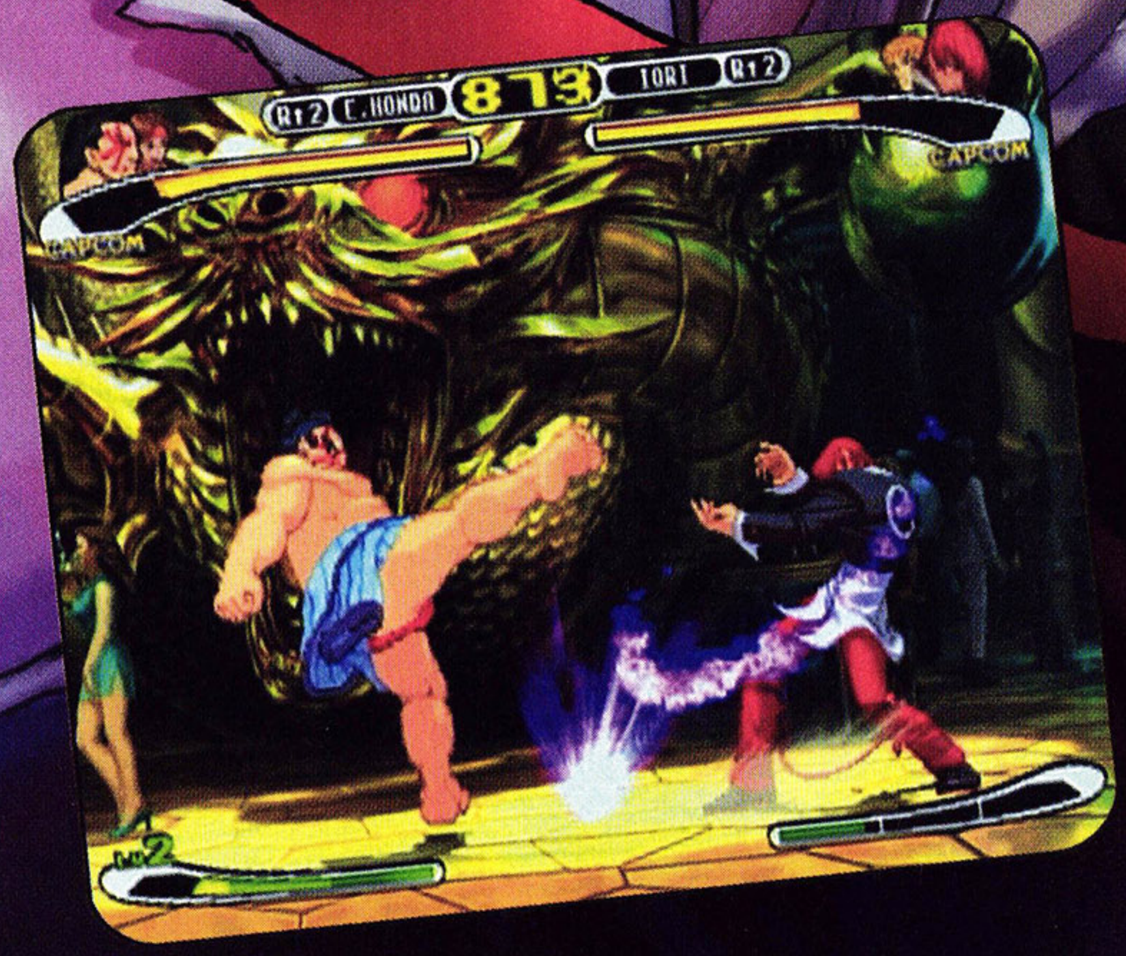
- **Concept:** Fly faster and shoot straighter than the other guy
- **Graphics:** Run-of-the-mill flight sim graphics with some nice lighting effects
- **Sound:** Hearing your enemies gasp for their last breath is always nice
- **Playability:** This is a game that's hard to catch up with, so plan for a big learning curve
- **Entertainment:** The fun comes when you're done throwing your controller
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

After witnessing the opening movie, there is little doubt that you're in for a disappointment. As much as I like flight combat games of any kind, Starlancer just reeks. It really gave me a feeling of playing another version of Colony Wars. Not exactly a bad thing, but this game offers nothing new. I will give the game credit for having some decently designed ships, and the control scheme, although a little confusing, makes good use of the DC pad. However, there is little here that is either interesting or revolutionary. Horrible voice acting and a completely dull storyline, combined with a very average space combat game, is a recipe for boredom. I remember reviewing Deep Fighter for DC a few months back. I didn't like it, but compared to this it's quite good. Do not consider taking this game for a spin.

PAUL – 4.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 6-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE
■ **DEVELOPER** WARTHOG ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 24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TIME TO SETTLE THE SCORE ONCE AND FOR ALL.

FREE

CAPCOM® VS. SNK™

Two monster corporations at war. One solution.
A massive martial arts event, Millennium Fight 2000, is organized to settle the score and eliminate all conflict between the two parties. Many of the world's most famous warriors have joined and the public is going mad with anticipation. Join over 25 brawlers from Capcom's legendary Street Fighter and SNK's world-renowned King of Fighters series' as they fight for universal domination. Capcom vs. SNK…the ultimate collision of strength and power.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Suggestive Themes

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Dreamcast™

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DREAMCAST

SHENMUE

THE SAVIOR COMES UP SHORT

"...not the next step in video games; merely a glimmer of what the future of gaming might hold."

Here it is. The game that we've been hearing about since the Dreamcast was first announced. The game that's to change video games forever. The game that, whenever the chips were down, Sega claimed as its savior. Shenmue has arrived, and I'm sorry to say that it isn't even close to everything you hoped for.

Players will certainly be enamored for much of the first disc. The world is more "alive" than any we've seen before in gaming. People shuffle about the streets, all willing to say at least something of interest to your character if you take the time to talk to them. Storefronts open and close on regular schedules – many filled with items you can buy but don't need. The attention to detail is so exacting that even the most unimportant of objects seems vital to those of us used to being force fed facts through years of linear RPGs.

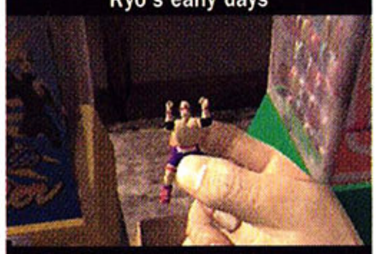
It literally takes hours before anything of consequence happens, and that's exactly how you want it during your early moments spent with the game. But then cracks start to appear in Shenmue's comely façade. You start to see the same actions repeated over and over, notice that many of the people always have the same thing to say, and realize that the world you're presented with isn't quite as big as you once thought it was.

By the second disc, you're familiar with the formerly amazing surroundings and ready for some action – but it never comes. Every critical encounter is handled either through a cutscene, a Quick Time Event (where you tap the buttons that flash across the screen), or a Virtua Fighter-like battle. Each lasts for less than a minute, and if you fail, you simply try again, then it's back to wandering around for a few hours.

If Shenmue required players to concentrate heavily on the mystery at hand, this pace might be acceptable. Unfortunately, what once seemed so intricate in the Japanese version has become elementary now that the language barrier is broken. Determining your character's next move requires little more than talking to someone, who will then tell you who to see or where to go.

Shenmue is not the next step in video games; merely a glimmer of what the future of gaming might hold. Once planned as a 16-part epic, then downsized to a trilogy, rumor now has it that this first effort will be the last, and I will not lament its early passing. After the fun of playing slots and Space Harrier has worn off, all that's left is a guy walking around an amazingly detailed environment. If I wanted to experience that, I could see it in another game with proven endless entertainment value. It's called life. – **JAY**

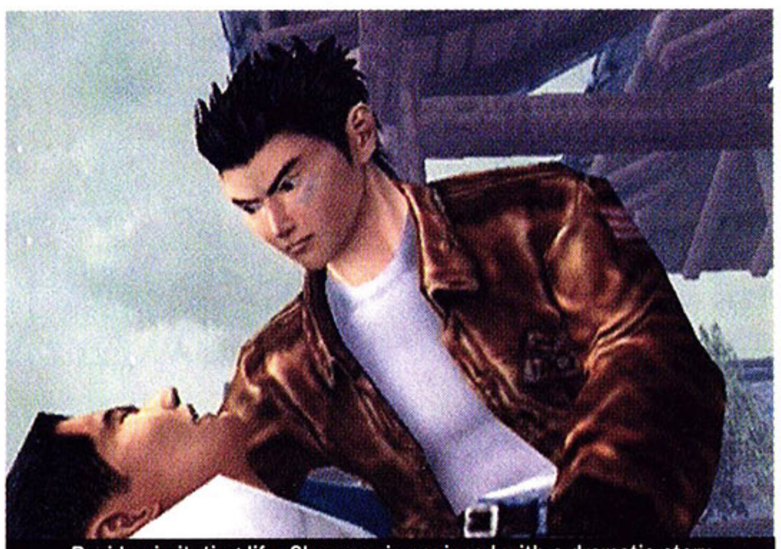
Some sequences flash back to Ryo's early days



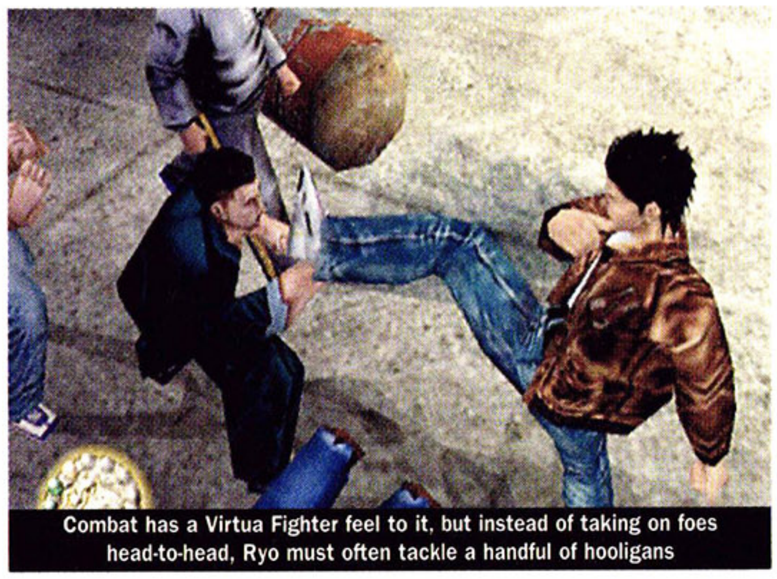
Just like the real world, you can spend your cash on worthless junk

Many of the village folk have interesting stories to tell

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 11



Besides imitating life, Shenmue is equipped with a dramatic story



Combat has a Virtua Fighter feel to it, but instead of taking on foes head-to-head, Ryo must often tackle a handful of hooligans

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6

- **Concept:** Not as completely fresh as the overabundant hype would have you believe
- **Graphics:** The game's strong point. The entire game looks like a cutscene, which it almost is
- **Sound:** The voice-overs are plentiful, highly varied, and surprisingly well acted
- **Playability:** When the action finally does go down, you'll have no problem keeping things in control
- **Entertainment:** Questionable. Very questionable
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

If you play video games to escape the arduous tasks of life, Shenmue should be avoided at all costs. As scary as it may sound, Shenmue is more of a life simulator than it is a game. Granted, there is an interesting story, plenty of puzzles, and a good dose of fighting, but all of this takes place around the day-to-day activities of a teenager named Ryo. Along with going home to sleep at night and checking in on mom, Ryo can hit the arcade, hang with his peeps, and spend cash on junk. Many of these events are amusing, yet just like the real world, there are great lulls in Ryo's lifestyle, boring conversations, and meaningless tasks. I applaud Sega's groundbreaking concept, yet for a game like Shenmue to be thoroughly engrossing, the developer needs to learn how to overcome the monotony and dullness of existence.

REINER – 7.5

DREAMCAST

METROPOLIS STREET RACER

KUDOS FOR RACING

"...this fresh racer brings some new racing concepts to the table and emerges as a top-quality game."

After more than two years in the making, Metropolis Street Racer has finally hit the Dreamcast. Although this racer may have slipped from the minds of many gamers due to its rather long development, it does bring some new racing concepts to the table and emerges as a top-quality game.

While we've all probably seen or played games that touted environments based on actual cities, MSR provides this feature with exceptional attention to detail. The design team at Bizarre Creations is said to have used over 40,000 photos and hours of video footage to re-create the look of MSR's three urban environments – Tokyo, San Francisco, and London. Having spent a fair amount of time in all of these cities, it is easy for me to say that the detail is phenomenal. Even though there are only three cities to race in, the 80-plus circuits each city offers is a completely mind-boggling number for a racing fan like me. While this kind of environment re-creation may go unnoticed by a lot of players, things like the animated drivers and car detailing – that includes working odometers – are equally well done. Speaking of cars, MSR has a selection of authentic rides from such manufacturers as Mercedes, Mitsubishi, and Toyota just to name a few. However, I do wish MSR gave me the ability to modify performance, or jack with the appearance a little more.

The meat and potatoes of MSR is, of course, the racing, but the game takes a different approach to things. The Street Racing mode is split up into 25 different chapters and each of the chapters contains ten or so events. Acquiring points, known as "Kudos," opens new events and subsequent chapters. The Kudos are awarded based on three factors: skill (meeting the event criteria), penalties (keeping crashes to a minimum), and style (racing with powerslides and counter-steering). The events are broken down even further by providing the ability to adjust the skill level by, for example, lowering the time limit to complete a lap. Being the sort of person who never picks up the game manual, the concepts of the Kudos awards and adjusting the skill was somewhat confusing at first. However, the structure of the game came to light after ten or so races. The one thing that didn't come to light was progress into the game. While the second chapter was not too hard to open, the difficulty goes up steeply after that. This may be a great thing for some, but I found the balance to be a little off.

Even with MSR's insane difficulty, I found the game's control and physics to be exceptional. Likewise, the graphics are brilliant and are probably the best of any racing game on the Dreamcast. If you are looking for something post-Sega GT, I highly recommend this racer. – **PAUL**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

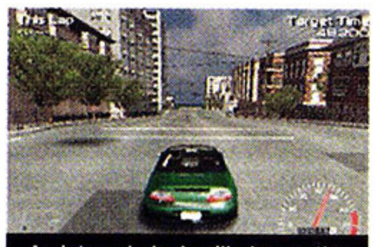
9

- **Concept:** Street racing with style and authentic cityscapes is a nice formula
- **Graphics:** From the driver in the car to the beautifully re-created environments, the look of this racer is exceptional
- **Sound:** A bunch of tunes and radio stations give the soundtrack a huge variety
- **Playability:** Superb control is only hampered by MSR's insane difficulty
- **Entertainment:** A challenging and sharp-looking racing game, MSR ranks as one of the best on DC
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

With a wide array of tracks, courses, and cars, Metropolis Street Racer has a lot going for it. The control is great, but there aren't many subtle powersliding nuances to master, nor are there large differences between the cars. The around-the-clock racing concept is cool, although sometimes the night courses are so dark it interferes with your enjoyment of the game. Somebody should call the city council and get some more streetlights in the neighborhood! Most of all, I liked the scoring system. Unlike most racers, MSR really forces you to perfect your skills by awarding points for shaving seconds off your time and avoiding fender benders. Cutting a near-perfect lap is required to pass many of the races. This high level of difficulty will annoy many, but hardcore racing junkies should give it a spin.

MATT – 8.5



An internal clock will change the racing settings from day...

...to dusk...

...and then to late night

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** BIZARRE CREATIONS ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

A typical foggy evening in San Francisco

When racing, you'll see the driver shift gears and jostle the wheel

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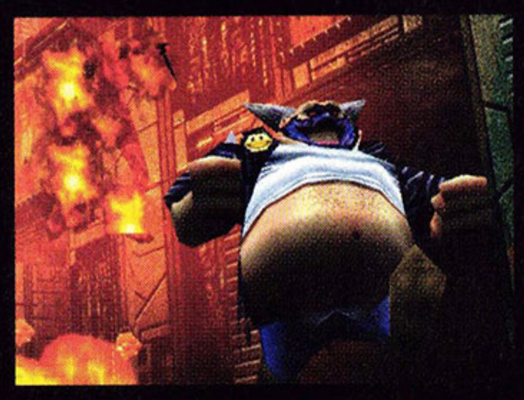
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood
Animated Violence

TAKING HELL TO THE NEXT LEVEL.



Dreamcast

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TODD McFARLANE ENTERTAINMENT
SPAWN.COM

"The true essence of all that is Spawn." –Gameweek

–Todd McFarlane's blockbuster comic book characters come to life on Sega Dreamcast

–Compete in the four-player simultaneous Battle Royal mode

–Includes the original Arcade Mode and tournament style Dreamcast Mode

–All your favorite characters from the Spawn series are faithfully recreated in the ultimate death match challenge

DREAMCAST

SAMBA DE AMIGO

SEGA'S MONKEY MAMBO

Other than breaking a sweat and getting some much-needed exercise, I found this innovative game to be pointless. This crazy Latino release can be conquered in a whopping 15 minutes, and the additional minigames can be tackled in under five. Wow! Is it worthy of purchase? Heck no! Unless, of course, you want to see your lady friends shake profusely. I suggest you avoid the hyperactive monkey dance and invest your hard-earned cash in a title with a little more depth and a higher difficulty level. It's way too short, way too easy, and completely dedvoid of a story or a purpose. – **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5.5

- **Concept:** A spin on Sony's PaRappa, but much shorter
- **Graphics:** You gotta love the hyperactive monkey. The blue balls also have nice reflections
- **Sound:** Will the Macarena ever go away!!!
- **Playability:** With the requirement to move more body parts than just your thumb, Samba will surely tire out any hardcore gamer
- **Entertainment:** If the shallow play doesn't spark your interest, you can always whack yourself on the head with the maracas. Fun indeed!
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

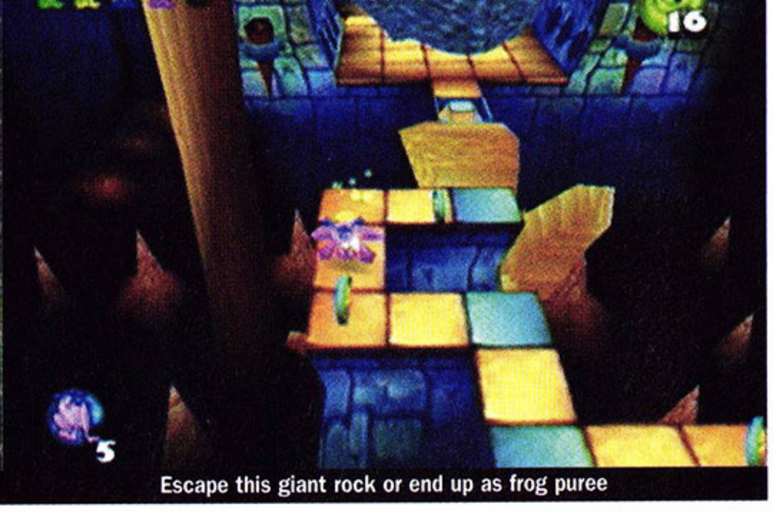
Samba is a gadget game. Plugging in the maracas and shakin' what your mama gave you is definitely fun. However, the game lacks depth and quickly becomes a party game where you stand around and laugh at your friends. I like this kind of crap, but the audience is limited.

ANDY – 6.5

The minigames can be toppled in under five minutes

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA/SONIC TEAM ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 17

Some minigames are reminiscent of the classic Frogger



Escape this giant rock or end up as frog puree

DREAMCAST

FROGGER 2: SWAMPY'S REVENGE

DOING IT FROGGY STYLE

In Frogger 2, our green hero nearly manages to redeem himself from the unadulterated mess that was his first comeback attempt. Frogger for the PlayStation just out-and-out sucked, with unsightly graphics and a confusing camera system. The move to 128-bits has actually turned this homely amphibian into an attractive character, with colorful and vibrant visuals. The levels revisit the simple hop 'n stop gameplay of the '80s classic, albeit in a more complex, quasi-3D world. Some twists to the formula include a multitude of new minigames and levels in which you must flee from a giant rolling stone à la Crash Bandicoot. Like most revisited classics, the enjoyment gets pretty thin once the nostalgia value wears off. Definitely a rental only. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

I was pleasantly surprised by this one, as I definitely wanted to hate Frogger 2 with a passion. It does do a good job of revamping a classic and giving the player a good feeling of nostalgia with some new twists. However, it only lasts so long.

ANDY – 6.5

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

- **Concept:** Nothing amazing, but some of the level designs are quite clever
- **Graphics:** A vast improvement over Frogger for the PlayStation
- **Sound:** Features music and sound effects
- **Playability:** Overhauled camera system enhances playability
- **Entertainment:** Frogger fans will find this a nice way to kill a couple of hours
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** HASBRO INTERACTIVE
■ **DEVELOPER** BLITZ GAMES ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 12

These races can be harrowing experiences

Go head-to-head in split-screen mode

DREAMCAST

F355 CHALLENGE: PASSIONE ROSSA

RIDIN' LIKE CROCKETT & TUBBS

For some reason, F355 Challenge has been saddled with the subtitle Passione Rossa for its debut on Dreamcast. I guess they wanted it to sound like a wine cooler flavor or something. First off, I have to give Sega props for creating a top-notch racing engine. The graphics are detailed and run smooth as silk. However, I feel more could have been done with this game to make it a longer, more compelling experience. There is only one car in the game, and few tweaking options. Secondly, there are no alternate views – just the cockpit perspective. F355 Challenge was breathtaking when played in the three-monitor coin-op unit, but it seems to lose impact on Dreamcast. Also, the Network Race mode is little more than an elaborate time-posting function. I would recommend checking out Sega GT and Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2 instead. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

Although the arcade version is extremely impressive, the racing on the DC is pretty short-lived. Unless you've got some obsession with Ferraris, I would not take this game for a spin.

PAUL – 7

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

- **Concept:** Few enhancements. A variety of cars and camera views would be appreciated
- **Graphics:** Looks as good as the arcade version, on par with almost any console racer
- **Sound:** Features a Japanese Sammy Hagar impersonator
- **Playability:** Novice mode provides assist functions, but still offers a stiff challenge
- **Entertainment:** Great gameplay, but suffers from lack of depth and options
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 1

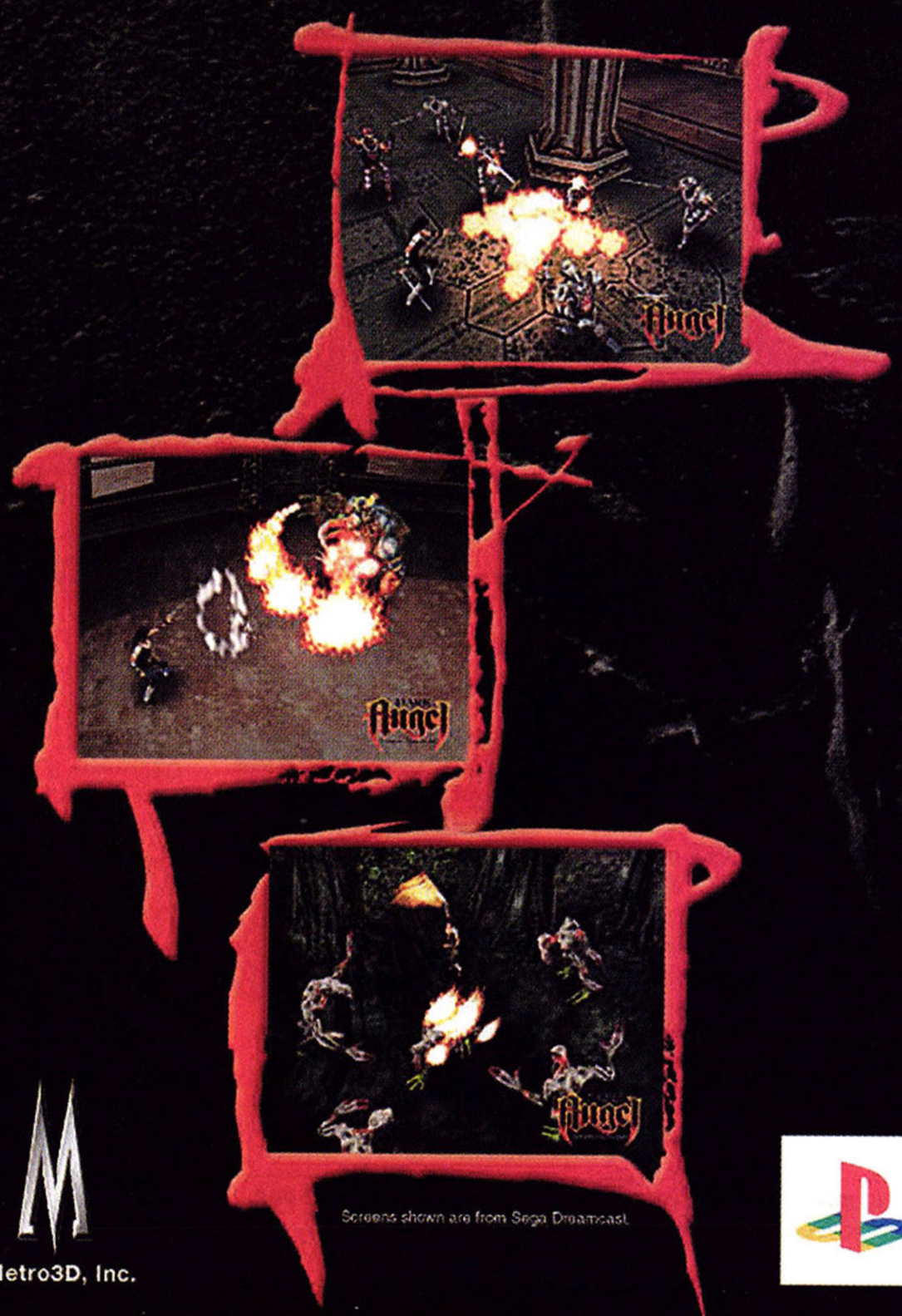
She's out for Blood.

AND WITH VICTORY AT HAND, SHE CAN ALMOST TASTE IT

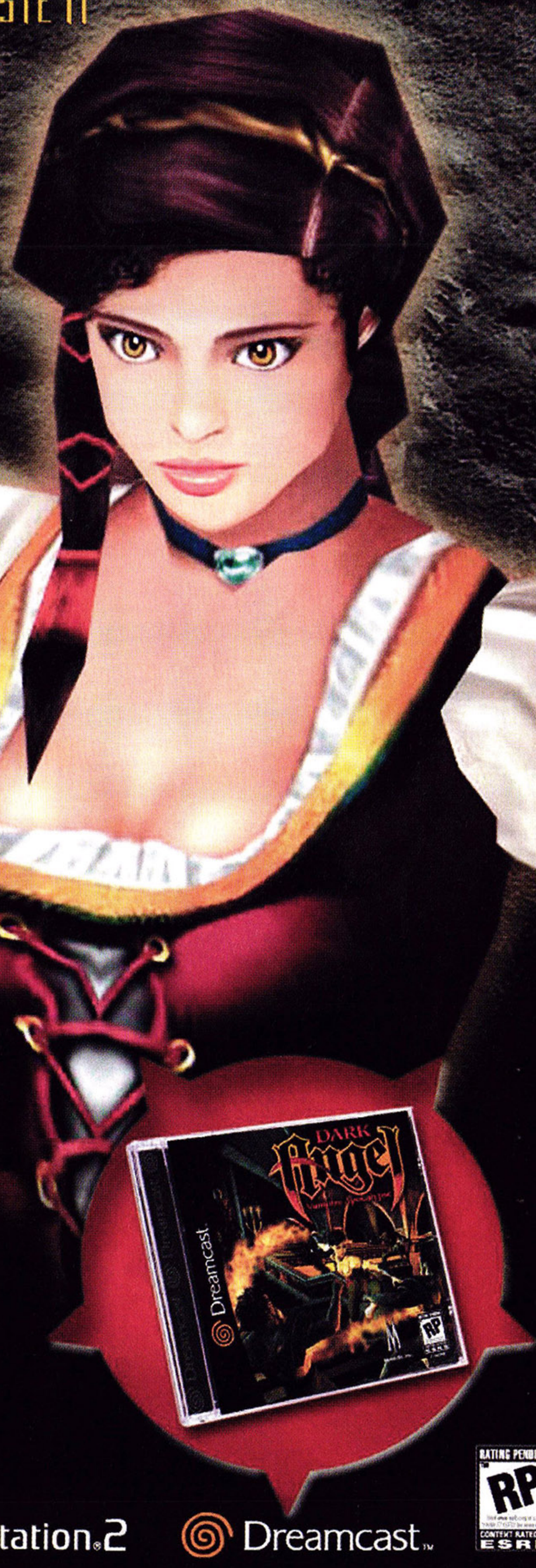
DARK Angel

Vampire Apocalypse

- Explore secluded swamps and dark dungeons, tranquil forests and ancient crypts
- Crouch, jump, roll, side-step, and slash and dash
- Experience ever-changing landscapes, based on player performance
- Roam freely throughout open architecture kingdoms.



Screens shown are from Sega Dreamcast.



Metro3D, Inc.

PlayStation 2

Dreamcast

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

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DREAMCAST

RED DOG

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

Vehicular combat fans should appreciate Red Dog for its intriguing weapon scheme and gorgeous graphics. The weapons are what hooked me – you have one main cannon that can be powered up for short periods, several secondary weapons you acquire throughout the game, and a defense shield that goes up in front of your turret. The missions also demonstrate enough variety and invention to lift Red Dog out of the throng of auto-destructive knock-offs. If you discount the fact that you're piloting a vehicle, Red Dog is really more of a traditional action game – and a good one at that. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** The futuristic, heavily-armed dune-buggy game has been around since Moon Patrol, but Red Dog's enormous levels and secondary weapons make it new again
- **Graphics:** Superb. The detailed textures and character models whiz by at a brisk clip, thanks to the fast framerate
- **Sound:** The score doesn't do much to heighten the drama, neither do the sound effects
- **Playability:** The camera can be quite troublesome, and aiming is difficult
- **Entertainment:** A good time, but would have been rated higher if not for control problems
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

The interesting aspects of Red Dog get muddled by its slow pace and physics that apply only to you. Plus, I can't get over the fact that my vehicle's just a moon rover with a gun.

JAY – 5.5

Powerful secondary weapons bring the pain like BLAUGH!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE
■ **DEVELOPER** ARGONAUT ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 31

The backgrounds are fancier, but it's the same old Tetris

Don't think we're going to get out of this round alive

DREAMCAST

THE NEXT TETRIS: ON-LINE EDITION

TEACHING THE OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

Tetris has been a staple of the gaming diet for years. Its countless imitators have come close to besting the original, but have never created a formula that is so beautifully simple, yet extremely addictive. Indeed, there are few gamers who have not fallen under its spell for a time. Of course, this begs the question, "Why should I buy yet another Tetris title?"

For some, the newly added Internet functions might be reason enough. Via SegaNet, you can log on to engage in an online two-player match with anyone around the world. Unfortunately, it quickly becomes obvious that it's really no different than playing a traditional two-player contest. Sure, it's a neat feature, but I can't see Tetris On-Line becoming much of a phenomenon amongst gamers. Still, if you couldn't get enough of Chu Chu Rocket, this might be a satisfying purchase. – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

I'd gotten plenty of Tetris back in the NES days and the 'Next Level' of the game is hardly worthy of a purchase, considering you can find so many versions of the game around.

PAUL – 5

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7

- **Concept:** The greatest puzzle game of all time goes online
- **Graphics:** There's lots of fancy background animations that can be distracting at times
- **Sound:** I still miss the old Russian music from the NES Tetris
- **Playability:** It's really impossible to improve on perfection, although I wouldn't have minded some new block shapes
- **Entertainment:** No matter how tired this series becomes, it remains intensely addictive
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** BLUE PLANET SOFTWARE ■ **DEVELOPER** CRAVE
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

Jumping for joy

He's on my six!

DREAMCAST

4X4 EVOLUTION

HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE

Sega will debut at least two online racers very soon, and this is far and away the best. Featuring a Career mode that allows players to build up their racing stats and modify their vehicles to an almost comical degree, 4X4 Evolution will become a pioneer for online racers, and could very well prove to be Sega.com's flagship title. If addictive qualities alone were the sole basis on which games were scored, 4X4 would have received a 10. Begin playing 4X4 at your own peril, race fans. It is destined to rule your free time with the iron-fisted ruthlessness of an 18th century dictator. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

This game almost makes SUVs seem cool. Sure, a lot of its gameplay formula is borrowed from Need For Speed, but necessitating off-road driving adds a challenging twist.

JAY – 8

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.75

- **Concept:** Win the race, get the cash
- **Graphics:** Every vehicle is beautifully rendered and the courses are gorgeous
- **Sound:** Your run-of-the-mill engine and tire sounds
- **Playability:** The controls and camera settings are easy to learn, but hard to master
- **Entertainment:** This will rob you of many hours of your life
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS ■ **DEVELOPER** TERMINAL REALITY ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 30

Frogger®

Game Boy ® Color Screenshot

Game Boy ® Color Screenshot

Frogger® 2
Available on

GAME BOY COLOR

HASBRO Interactive™

KONAMI

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Frogger® 2:
Swampy's Revenge
Available on
Dreamcast.

Sega Dreamcast™ Screenshot

Sega Dreamcast™ Screenshot

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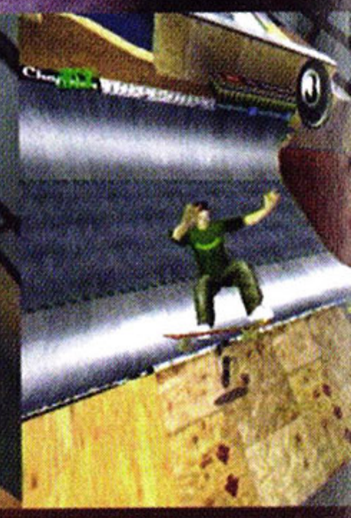
Andy Macdonald
1999 X-Games Gold Medal, Vert Doubles
1999 World Cup Vert & Overall Combined Champion
World Record for Longest Skateboard Jump - 56' 10.75"



Featured Skaters-Andy Macdonald
Danny Way
Colin Mckay
Rick Howard
Brian Howard
Rob Dyrdek
Josh Kalis
Stevie Williams
Alan Petersen
Keith Hufnagel
Jen O'Brien
Salvador Barbier
Scott Johnston
Heidi Fitzgerald

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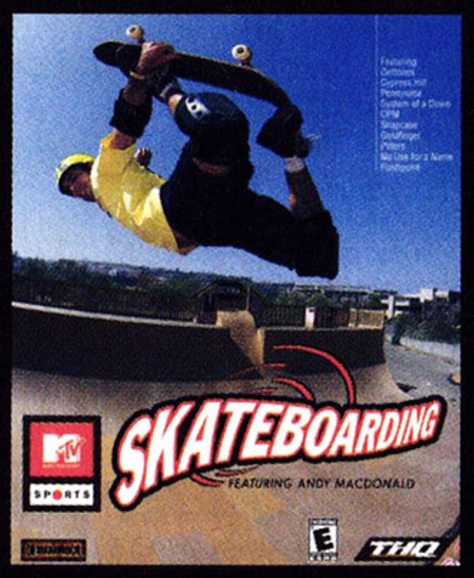
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Mild Animated Violence
Mild Language

SKATEBOARDING

FEATURING ANDY MACDONALD™

Deftones
Cypress Hill
Pennywise
System of a Down
OPM
Snapcase
Goldfinger
Pilfers
No Use for a Name
Flashpoint



PlayStation

WINDOWS 95/98

GAME BOY COLOR

Sega Dreamcast.

You Can't Defy Gravity. But You Can, However, Taunt It A Little.

THQ™

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PC

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT II

CRY HAVOC AND LET LOOSE THE COWS OF WAR

"Without a doubt, Red Alert 2 is one of Westwood's finest."

I've had a really good feeling about this game from the first day I heard about the wacky units. The fact that they actually managed to balance the forces out so well is a true feat, given the remarkable diversity of the units and structures in the game. Both sides of the conflict have been painstakingly tweaked to create a web of strategic thinking that will have people writing FAQs and strategy guides for a long time.

Red Alert 2 sticks with the same general balancing philosophy of the first C&C RA, but adds a few twists. Once again, the Allies still have the subtle advantages of superior information gathering, advantageous base structures, and stealth options, while the Soviets continue to crush their enemies with brute force. However, each side has been given a few new options to make up for their shortcomings.

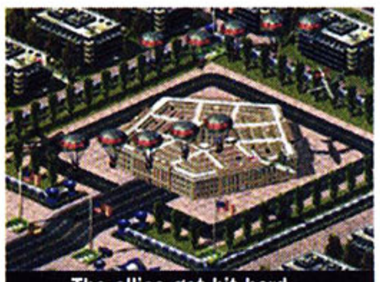
The Soviets, for instance, can combine mind control with their special Crazy Ivan demolition units to send kamikaze cows (or any other neutral critter) into hapless enemy bases for some devious bovine destruction. The Soviets also gain some much-needed intel-gathering skill, with a Psychic Sensor device that detects incoming attacks targeted at base structures, then plots the course of the offending unit.

The Allies add some oomph to their land-based units and base defenses with prism technology. Prism Towers and Prism Tanks unleash devastating beams of focused light that split into multiple beams when nailing enemies, making them deadly against tightly-grouped enemy formations.

There are also some new gameplay features. The Mobile Construction Yard, for instance, can now be redeployed back into vehicle form after establishing a base in multiplayer. This eliminates the need for sandbagging, which no longer works. Infantry have also become a lot more useful in urban environments, where they can garrison buildings with up to ten units, allowing them to take out small groups of tanks and large forces of enemy infantry with ease.

The humorous cutscenes are another star feature of the game. One of my favorites depicts a beleaguered US President Dugan, after some devastating losses, making a press announcement in a run-down shack. In the middle of a statement about the need to maintain secrecy in regards to his present location, a Canadian flag falls from the backdrop and a frantic Marine quickly removes it.

As for the multiplayer game, it's barely been 24 hours since I crushed Kristian and several very nice, and undeserving Westwood employees, and I'm kicking myself for not having tried a mass monkey-bomb attack on someone. Seriously though, I can't stop thinking of things to try, and I haven't even played around with the Allies yet. Without a doubt, Red Alert 2 is one of Westwood's finest. – **ERIK**


The allies get hit hard...

...real hard...

...but revenge is sweet

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** WESTWOOD STUDIOS
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 24

Crazy Ivan makes this kamikaze-cow attack possible

Once Kirov battle blimps start dropping their payload, it's all over

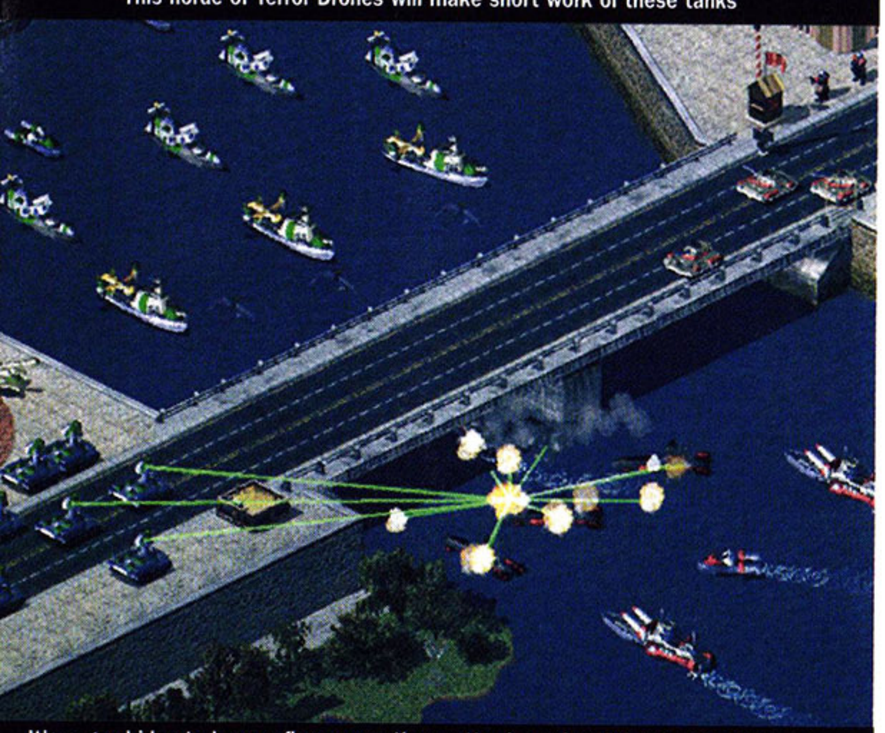
THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9.5

- **Concept:** The same old C&C style with well-updated features and excellent unit balancing
- **Graphics:** They won't blow your mind, but they won't slow you down either
- **Sound:** Fantastic voice-overs, sound effects, and the best music since the original C&C
- **Playability:** C&C veterans can jump in right away, but a few new features will pleasantly surprise them
- **Entertainment:** You might want to postpone any long-term relationships or other commitments
- **Replay Value:** High

This horde of Terror Drones will make short work of these tanks



It's a good idea to keep a finger near the scatter key when Prism Tanks show up

SECOND OPINION

Oh Westwood Studios, where would we be without you? By we, I of course mean RTS fans worldwide. We've been yanked and jerked in all directions by umpteen production houses promising the "next best thing" in RTS gaming, only to be given a half-baked piece of cold, hard crap (Force Commander, I'm looking in your direction). Westwood has done the smart thing – it's not saying RA2 is going to change the face of gaming, it's taking something that works, then adding to it. RA2 is an RTS gamer's fantasy. Detailed missions, numerous and varied units, as well as Internet play are just a few of the things designed to keep us coming back for more. That Westwood would stick to its guns, and make a good game even better, is indicative of the company's focus on us, the gaming public, instead of pandering to cube slaves who insist that if a game doesn't "expand the genre" it's a failure.

KRISTIAN – 9.25

PC

RAINBOW SIX: COVERT OPS ESSENTIALS

BRAINS, BRAWN, AND BULLETS

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

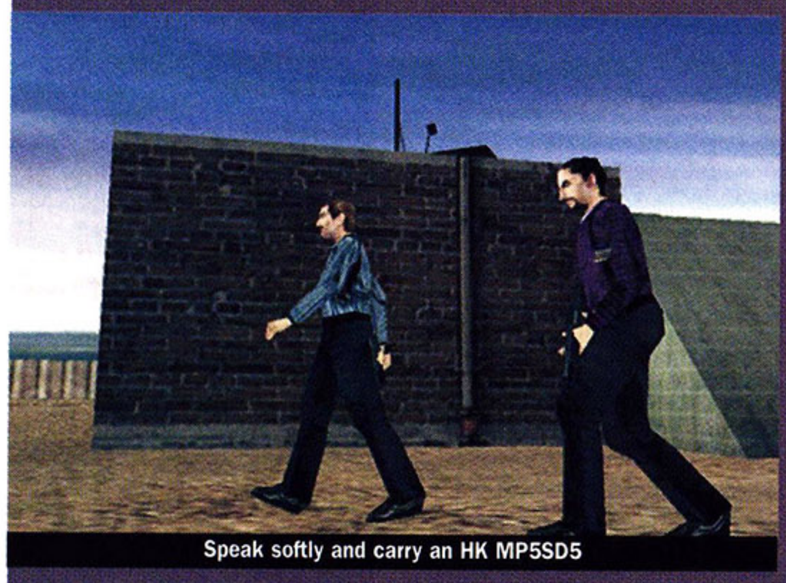
8.75

- **Concept:** A thinking man's shooter
- **Graphics:** Dy-no-mite!
- **Sound:** Getting blown away never sounded so good
- **Playability:** The learning curve is quite high if you're not accustomed to the engine
- **Entertainment:** Once you figure everything out, it's hard to quit
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

All you Clancy fans out there may have to change your pants after spending five minutes with Covert Ops Essentials. Anyone who's ever read a Clancy novel and wondered what it would be like to actually be in the action will have all questions answered with COE.

To begin with, there are two discs: a training disc and a mission disc. Being a Clancy fan, I was expecting a lot of attention to detail. There's so much detail in the training disc that I was actually paying attention to these enormous texts about everything from nonlethal weaponry to covert insertion techniques. There's anything and everything you military sim fans ever wanted to know about the ups and downs of primary weapons like the Steyr Aug or secondary weapons like the HK .45 Mark 23. Plus, there are interviews, articles, and just about anything else you could ever want for your own invasion of Iraq, or neutralization of an irritating neighbor's meth lab.

The mission disc runs on the same engine as Rogue Spear, but there are some minor tweaks. The landscapes have been given a facelift. Hills are more realistic looking and the backgrounds are sharper. The sounds and general ambiance of the missions are smooth as silk. This is a game for the hardest of the hardcore Clancy/military sim buff. Anyone else just won't understand – **KRISTIAN**



Speak softly and carry an HK MP5SD5

SECOND OPINION

The nine missions in Essentials are challenging and cool, but the real goods are on the game's training CD. It's an information stockpile of fascinating information, videos, pictures, and tests to see how much information you managed to absorb into your noggin. The topics range from tactics and weapons to psychology and history. I found myself deeply fascinated by most of the material, especially the historical stuff. I was a little disappointed in the future weaponry section of the training. The military is working on pretty interesting stuff and it's being perfectly open about it, but only two new technologies were mentioned. I also thought the speculation about sticking with gunpowder was a little shortsighted. Not an ultimate encyclopedia, but a great jumping point for Clancy addicts and war nerds.

ERIK – 8.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT INC. ■ **DEVELOPER** MAGIC LANTERN PLAYWARE ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 20

PC

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

PAISLEY PANTS AND ROCKET LAUNCHERS

I tend to think that No One Lives Forever should have been called No One Waits Forever, since that's what it seemed like I was doing from time to time. I'm not a Ritalin addict who needs to be entertained every second, but for a PC game to drag its feet on a top-of-the-line system like I have is something to furrow one's brow about. Granted, the environments are very large, and there's a lot going on in them, but two minutes between mission briefings and the actual game is a bit excessive.

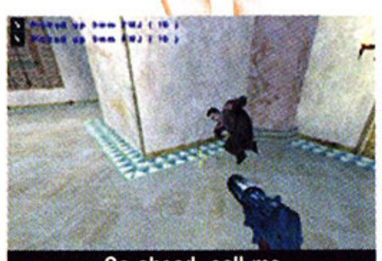
Speaking of excess, this is what NOLF is all about. If you like cleavage, there's excessive cleavage at every turn. If you like taking a guy down, then pouring more shots into his head at point blank range, well, you're going to have a lot opportunity for that. There's just a ton to do in this game. The speech is another feature that adds to gameplay. The reactions NPCs have to different situations is particularly impressive. If you're lucky enough to be able to sneak up on a couple of guards having a conversation, you'll be able to eavesdrop until you're bored, then pull back to put a slug through one of their heads. If you let his partner react, he'll probably lean over the body and say something like "Are you okay?". Feel free to send the second person home to his creator at that point.

There are over 30 weapons and gadgets to play with, including a briefcase that launches rockets, exploding lipstick, and a robotic poodle. With each weapon comes advantages and disadvantages. The AK-47 will give you great suppressing fire, but the muzzle blast inhibits your vision and the kick affects its accuracy. The revolver has great knockdown power, but can't be fitted with a silencer. They're all things that add to the realism and gameplay.

Technically, the game is trying quite hard. There are a lot of elements present in No One Lives Forever that haven't been done well before and, unfortunately, still haven't. The texturing on the faces is a step in the right direction in terms of coloring and simulating realistic movement, but it's not anything that wasn't being toyed with a year ago. The environments are very impressive, but there are still pop-up issues and polygon integrity problems that hamper the game.

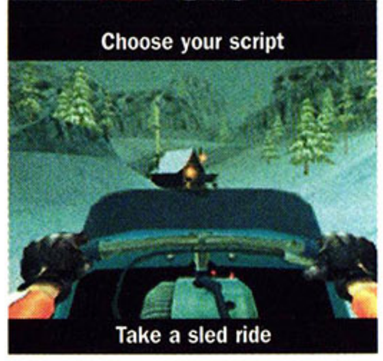
On the plus side, there are 18 different zones where NPCs will respond to damage inflicted, with specific recoil and death animations for each. AI is particularly impressive during a firefight as units will coordinate their attack by laying down suppressing fire for each other, or will fan out to search for you once you've been spotted. These, plus other delectable details should make sure this title sees its share of daylight.

– KRISTIAN



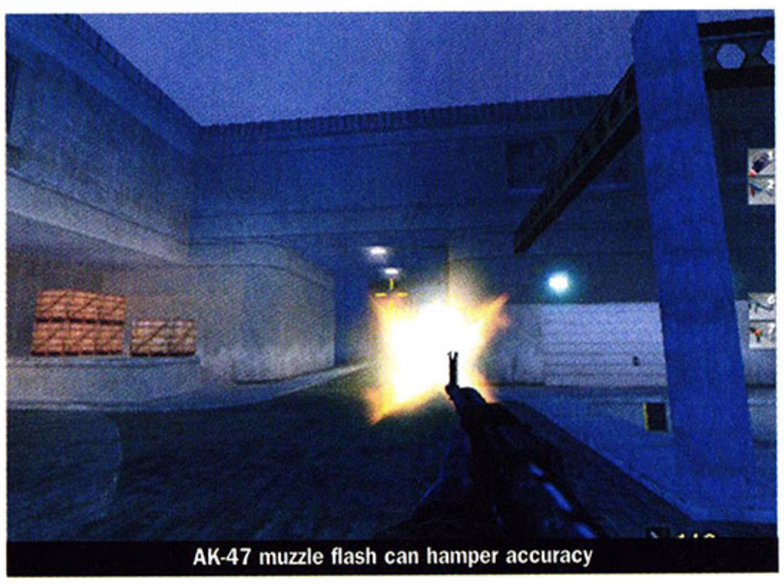
Go ahead, call me "sweetheart" again

Choose your script

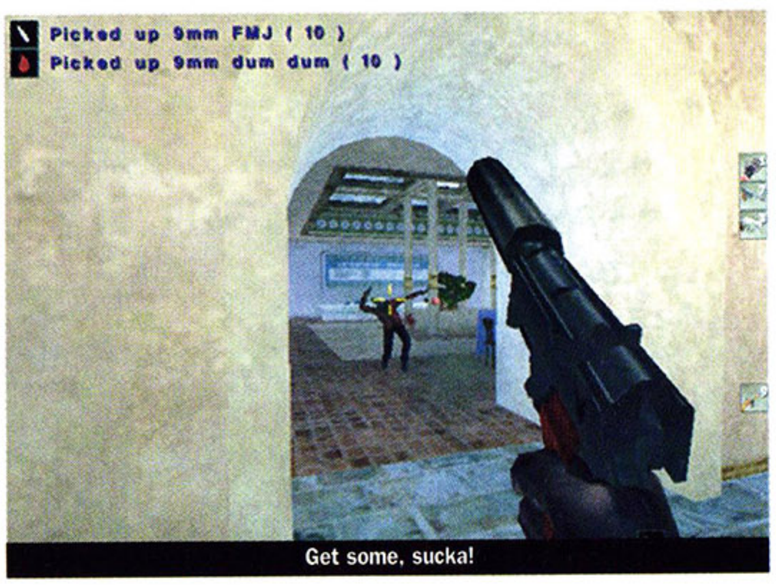


Take a sled ride

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** FOX INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** MONOLITH
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 10



AK-47 muzzle flash can hamper accuracy



Get some, sucka!

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

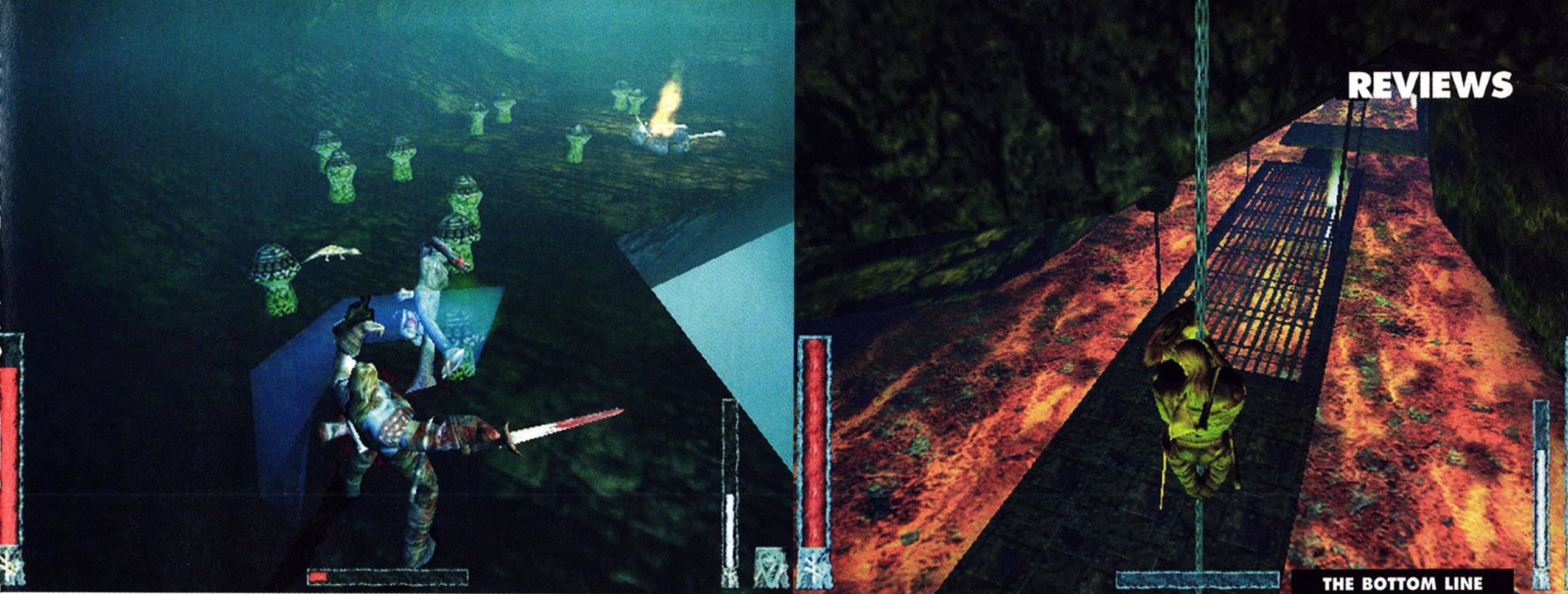
7.75

- **Concept:** Assume the role of vixen spy Cate Archer circa 1964, travel to exotic places, and shoot people.
- **Graphics:** Choppy framerates can tax your patience at times, but otherwise adequate enough so you're not thinking about it
- **Sound:** Typical sounds for this genre, but there are a few goodies here and there
- **Playability:** An easy game to jump into. The controls are intuitive and don't get in the way
- **Entertainment:** A fun little shooter when you're not waiting for load time or a cut scene
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I was really looking forward to checking this game out after seeing it at E3, but I was a little disappointed. To its credit, it's an attractive game with a fairly solid engine. Although, the frames tended hook up from time to time, even on our recently acquired gigahertz machines. I certainly wouldn't recommend it to anyone with a PC that's more than a year old. I think my major problem is that the game can't seem to decide what it wants to be. At times it's a goofy series of mini-games and somewhat humorous or interesting cutscenes. At other points it's a serious FPS spy game where stealth is key. As far as first-person shooters go, however, it's not very innovative. Many of the gadgets were really just weapons with a noncombative secondary function and the regular guns aren't too exciting. NOLF is solid, but nothing to write home about.

ERIK – 7.5



"The detail that goes into each and every object is reminiscent of the quality of Norse craftsmanship itself."

PC

RUNE

RAGNAR ROCKS

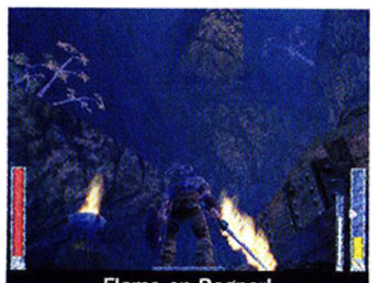
In Rune, players take on the role of Ragnar, a young Viking warrior chosen by Odin to hack and slash his way through hordes of monsters in an attempt to thwart the evil Loki's plans. Hacked mythology aside, one thing Human Head Studios did an incredible job on was the game's gorgeous environments. The landscape is loaded with an enormous number of different textures and beautiful art. The detail that goes into each and every object is reminiscent of the quality of Norse craftsmanship itself.

That aside, the gameplay is pretty basic. Ragnar can open doors, jump, and climb ropes, but melee abilities get the heaviest use. Ragnar can attack and do combos, and he can even throw weapons (including disembodied limbs and heads) at enemies. For defense, shields can be picked up and used to block attacks, although they break apart after absorbing too much damage.

Ragnar can find swords, blunt weapons, and axes throughout the game. Each category of weapon has certain advantages and disadvantages. Swords are quick and work best against lightly armored opponents, while axes are better at getting through slower, medium-armored opponents. Blunt weapons do their best number on shields and heavy armor. There are six unique weapons for each category. Each weapon possesses its own set of attacks and combos, plus a special power.

As Ragnar moves through the game, he picks up runes that enable him to use magic. With rune magic, each weapon in the game gets a special power. These range from subtle and protective abilities like invisibility and a magic shield, to more potent, destructive abilities like lightning and a vampiric attack that heals Ragnar every time he scores a hit. Although some of these abilities are extremely powerful, the required runes are pretty far and few between, forcing the player to conserve rune energy for tough situations. With all the attacks, combos, thrown weapons, and rune powers, there are over 400 attack animations in the game.

When Ragnar isn't killing something, he's usually trying to find a switch, navigate a series of tricky jumps, or simply figure out where the heck the entrance is to the next area. This is one aspect of the game I'm not exactly blown away by. While some of the puzzles are fairly interesting, most of it's pretty standard Tomb Raider/FPS stuff. Thank Odin you don't have to push blocks around. I had also hoped there would be a little more story to accompany the incredible artistry. If the developers had done a better job of capturing the essence of Norse mythology, rather than using it as a pretty backdrop for a hack n' slasher, it could have been a much more interesting experience. – **ERIK**



Flame on Ragnar!

Random jets of flame in a dungeon?!

The Viking elevator was way before its time

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 16-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS ■ **DEVELOPER** HUMAN HEAD STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 31

Argh! It's a...Fjord Crab!

It's love at first sight for Ragnar

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** Kill stuff, flip switches, and search for the right path
- **Graphics:** Drop-dead gorgeous
- **Sound:** I would have enjoyed the voice-overs more if they'd been Scandinavian, but still good
- **Playability:** The FPS-style control is simple and effective
- **Entertainment:** The game has beautiful environments that are a pleasure to hack through, but the switch puzzles get pretty old pretty fast
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

I, being of Viking descent, had a particular interest in Rune. Hoping that it wouldn't suck, I loaded it on my machine, expecting the worst. The instant the game began, I knew this would be one for the All-Time Best vault. Rune kicks ass on so many levels, it's hard to pick just a few. Cinematically, this game swept me off my feet. The beginning sequence is truly something to be seen (if you're a self-respecting PC gamer). Gameplay and graphics are easy and engrossing respectively, while the seamless FMV comes at all the right times. The Rune powers may be a bit on the so-so side, but the weapon and armor designs make up for it. The realism of the different weapons, coupled with the subtle and incredibly effective sounds, add depth where many hack n' slashers are particularly lacking. Rune is a well designed, well planned, and well implemented romp. Be a berserker, buy this game.

KRISTIAN – 9

PC

WIZARDS & WARRIORS

A FEW CLOWNS SHY OF A CIRCUS

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

5

As an upgrade to the style of role-playing made popular in the long-running Might & Magic and Wizardry series, Wizards & Warriors clings to too many of the old ideas without doing enough justice to the new style of environments. Roaming about in 3D environments is nice, but kind of pointless due to the serious lack of detail. Plus, switching between magic, weapons, and special skills is simply too awkward when enemies come straight at you with their bows firing. I still might have enjoyed it, but the constant bugs were driving me crazy. – **ERIK**

- **Concept:** Wizardry and Might & Magic style role-playing with a 3D touch-up
- **Graphics:** I've seen worse, but it's definitely below the bar
- **Sound:** Plenty of voice-overs and sounds, but most of them are lame
- **Playability:** The party system is awkward at best and needs a serious upgrade
- **Entertainment:** If it hadn't crashed so often, I might have enjoyed it for a couple of hours
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

Oh, Activision, why dost thou forsake us? This game can be summed up in two words – crap sandwich. Crude graphics and horrendous gameplay are only the beginning of W&W's problems.

KRISTIAN – 4

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** HEURISTIC PARK ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 27

PC

MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

A LEAD-FOOT'S FANTASY

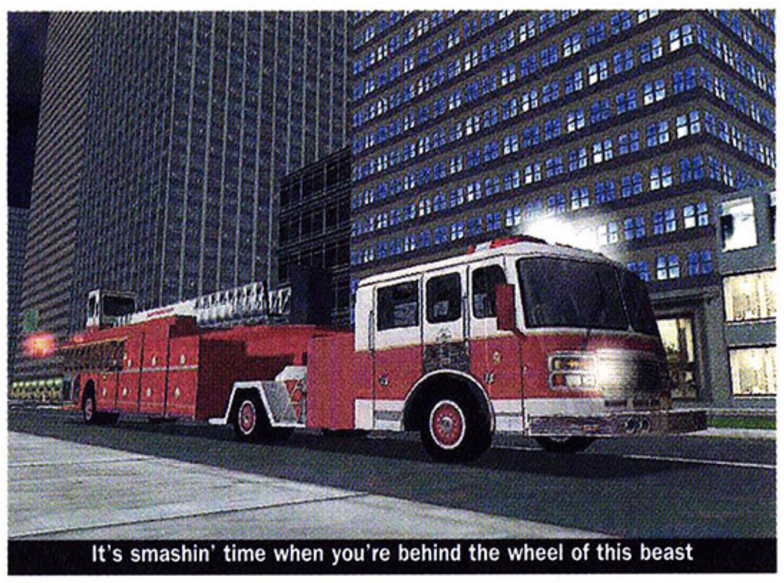
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

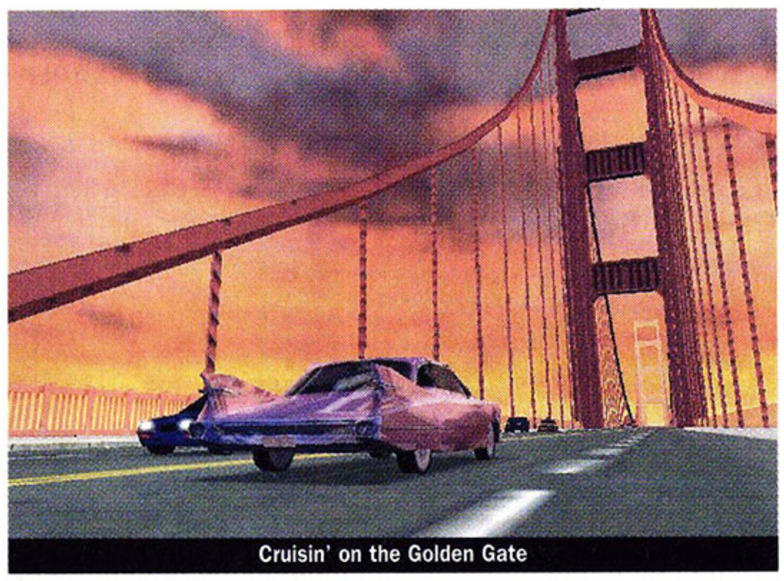
8.25

Oh, how I long for the day when I can take my Audi TT out for a night of destruction in a consequence-free environment. Until that day comes, I'll stick with Midtown Madness 2. I guess you could call this game a Driver clone without the '70s theme, but that would be an understatement.

Like any other racer you play, it's always more interesting when you can come up with your own routes. MM2 not only allows creative pathfinding, it encourages it. The more you play, the better you learn the city you're driving in. You have to pick your way through the back streets, and even some buildings, to unlock the different vehicles and paint jobs in the game. You do this through checkpoint races, disabling other drivers' rides, or following someone as they make their way through the city. The paint jobs can be pretty cool, but the different cars you unlock are just sweet. Plus, they all handle differently: the TT turns on a dime, the Caddy drives like a boat.



It's smashin' time when you're behind the wheel of this beast



Cruisin' on the Golden Gate

For the road rager, MM2 is a nice place to release all the pent-up anger that results from getting your license suspended. Your races can be customized to alter the number of cops in your area, the traffic density and time of day, plus more. I would definitely suggest anyone who liked Driver go buy this game. The game's customizable features and addictive gameplay will keep you coming back. – **KRISTIAN**

- **Concept:** Tear ass around London and San Francisco in cool new rides. Smash said rides to pieces
- **Graphics:** The vehicles are tight, but the different cities' polys could be better
- **Sound:** The sounds are better than I expected for a racing game. From sirens to the screams of terrified pedestrians, you won't be disappointed
- **Playability:** Easy to play, and easy to learn
- **Entertainment:** Everybody would love to plow into a cop at 103 mph. MM2 gives you ample opportunity to do this, and more
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

Since Twisted Metal 2 and Felony 11-79, I've come to enjoy car mayhem and combat games immensely. Midtown Madness isn't all that spectacular graphically, but it is a refreshing wild ride through the city. The physics ignore reality and make it possible to smash through hordes of cars, telephone poles, and hundreds of other objects with relative ease. As far as shocking Congress goes, it's a relatively tame game. Pedestrians leap out of the way instead of splattering on your windshield, and the level of destruction is limited to objects on the streets, rather than entire buildings and monuments. Overall, it's nothing spectacular, but the level of challenge and diversity of vehicles to try keeps it real.

ERIK – 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** ANGEL STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 21

PC

BLAIR WITCH VOLUME ONE: RUSTIN PARR

TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6.75

- **Concept:** Murder, death, kill...
- **Graphics:** Wait a second, I thought I'd already played Nocturne
- **Sound:** The screams and gunshots will keep you on your toes
- **Playability:** Nocturne veterans will have no problem jumping in
- **Entertainment:** It's an acquired taste
- **Replay Value:** Low

Congratulations to Terminal Reality, the latest in a long line of bandwagon jumpers trying to get a piece of the Blair Witch action. Unfortunately, the developers made a mediocre attempt. In Blair Witch Volume One: Rustin Parr, you play a young Englishwoman named Doc Sullivan. Doc tries like hell to find Rustin Parr, the Burkettsville baddie. It seems he has done not-so-nice things to local children, and you are charged with finding out why. Along your search, you encounter various foul-tempered monsters that try to devour you. This, of course, means you must shoot them in the face...or anywhere, it doesn't really matter. Combat is your basic point-and-shoot interface, and interaction with the world around you is a bit awkward. The graphics are adequate, but BW's real strength comes in the sounds and situations your character passes through. Some are refreshingly cinematic at times, and even I felt my heart start beating faster now and again.

This aside, you might put this game in your machine and think that it looks really familiar. Well, you'd be right. What Terminal Reality has done here is dump a Blair Witch scenario on top of its Nocturne engine. Dark and clumsy, it doesn't make for the best gaming experience in the world. If you're a fan of Nocturne, you'll probably dig this. I'm not, so I didn't. Go figure. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

I was actually surprised by this game. Once I realized it was just Nocturne with the Blair Witch name tagged on, I was ready to cut it to ribbons. Fortunately, they did improve a bit on level design and the game has taken on a much more investigative nature, rather than simply being a monster hunt in gothic noire clothing. I was also impressed by the use of more sophisticated scare tactics a' la Resident Evil. However, the game still suffers from Nocturne's clumsy control. Also, for some bizarre reason, every single woman in the game sports double Ds regardless of age, role, or general attractiveness. I've got better games to play, but if you liked Nocturne, you may like this one even more.

ERIK – 7.25

That's one big muzzle flash

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS ■ **DEVELOPER** TERMINAL REALITY ■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 2

PC

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

JANEWAY'S JUGGERNAUT

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.25

- **Concept:** Shoot the bad guys, try not to get dead
- **Graphics:** The levels are solid, and the effects are quite nice
- **Sound:** A ton of authentic Star Trek sounds add a lot; the voices are the icing on the cake
- **Playability:** If you're a shooter pro, no problem
- **Entertainment:** I'm not a big Star Trek fan, and I dug this game
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

For basically being a rehash of ye olde first-person shooter genre, Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force is really well done. It's difficult to find a Star Trek shooter that the average gamer can sink his or her teeth into. EF is the closest I've seen. The Star Trek name typically either turns you on to a game, or turns you off. If it turns you off, EF tries very hard to win you over anyway. The sounds and graphics compliment each other perfectly, and the missions give you a taste for the frontal assault, as well as the covert op.

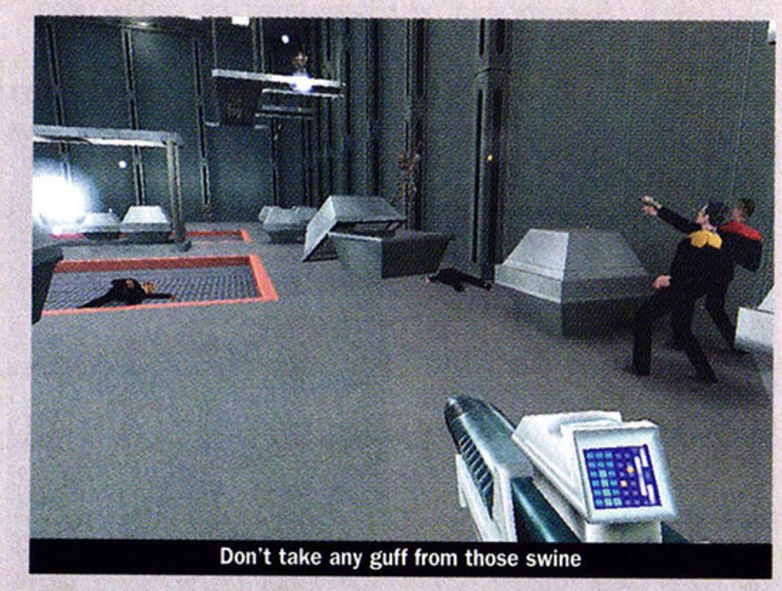
The amount of speech in the game was something that grabbed me immediately. Characters can be overheard having their own conversations about a conduit they're repairing, or even the food they're eating. Not only that, it's obvious the Voyager television actors spent a bunch of time in the Foley studio for this one. All of their voices add a lot to the realism in EF.

For the Trekkie and the shooter fiend, this is a must. The sounds, the voices, and the painstaking realism are just too much to pass up. For the rest of us, if renting PC games was possible, I would say have at it. There are things that will turn your crank. Otherwise, a nice foot massager would probably give you the same satisfaction. – **KRISTIAN**

SECOND OPINION

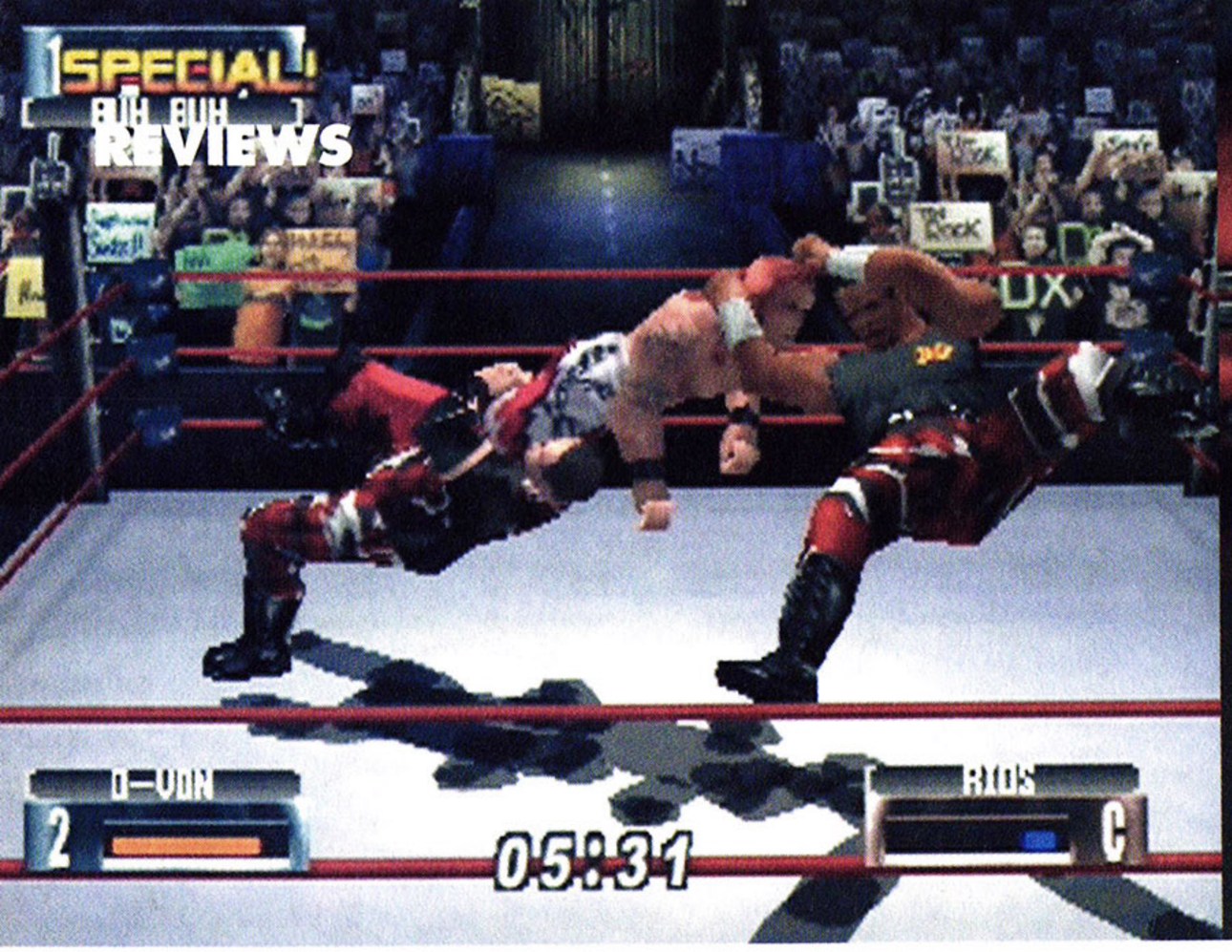
This is the best Star Trek game I've ever played. That's not saying much so let me elaborate. The level designs kick ass; the weapons and their secondary functions are very cool; and the plot is actually quite interesting. What really blows my mind is that despite Voyager being my least favorite of the Trek series, I really enjoyed the character interaction. On top of that, the game plays surprisingly smoothly and the graphics are top notch. This is the first time I've seen a game with TV/movie license that actually took advantage of the story and character of the show rather than simply relying on the name alone. Trekkies (not Trekkers, you PC hand-fed freaks) will love it, and shooter fans will too. Voyager: Elite Force is top notch.

ERIK – 9



Don't take any guff from those swine

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 12-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** RAVEN SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 26



NINTENDO 64

WWF NO MERCY

A FABULOUS FINISHING MOVE

"...the best wrestling game the current generation of consoles will have."

You've got to appreciate THQ's approach to its wrestling lines. It makes sure to acquire very playable and versatile engines for the first game, then continues to make improvements that don't bog down the fun as the series goes along. WWF No Mercy is a perfect example of this business model. It has the same gameplay of WCW Revenge, and most of the accoutrements of WrestleMania 2000, yet hoards of new features make it a must-have for N64 owners.

The Create-A-Superstar has been beefed up considerably. Players still have the ability to micromanage their wrestlers' repertoire down to the most minor of moves, but appearance options are at least twice those of its predecessor. I'd even go so far as to say that it nearly rivals Acclaim's (but I give more props to No Mercy since you actually want to play the game with the wrestlers you make).

Multiplayer is what will give this game longevity, but I'm glad to see that major efforts have been made in the single-player arena. Championship mode allows players to go after their choice of the federation's seven belts. With each belt comes a unique story with branching plotlines that change depending on whether you win or lose certain matches – and winning the belt doesn't even take you through half of the tale to be told. For every win in Championship, cash is awarded that can be used to hire characters, or purchase costumes, weapons, and moves.

No Mercy even shares a few features with its PlayStation brethren. Backstage areas are now accessible when there isn't a count out, giving Hardcore matches much more flair. Players can also relive all their favorite Hardy Boyz moments by participating in a Ladder Match. Use the ladder to grab the belt suspended above the ring, or as a convenient platform for high-risk maneuvers.

All these improvements have created a few flaws, however. Slowdown is noticeable with four characters onscreen (especially during a Ladder Match), and adding more reversals has made the computer AI a bigger pain in the ass than it already was. It's certainly challenging to have your opponent counter everything you do, but about as fun as chewing gravel. And could somebody please think of a clever way to keep tag and four-corner matches from taking a half-hour?

Despite my complaints, there's no denying this is a great game – probably the best wrestling game the current generation of consoles will have. Long after the sun has set on the Nintendo 64, you'll still be pulling it out of the back of your closet to play a few more rounds of No Mercy. – **JAY**

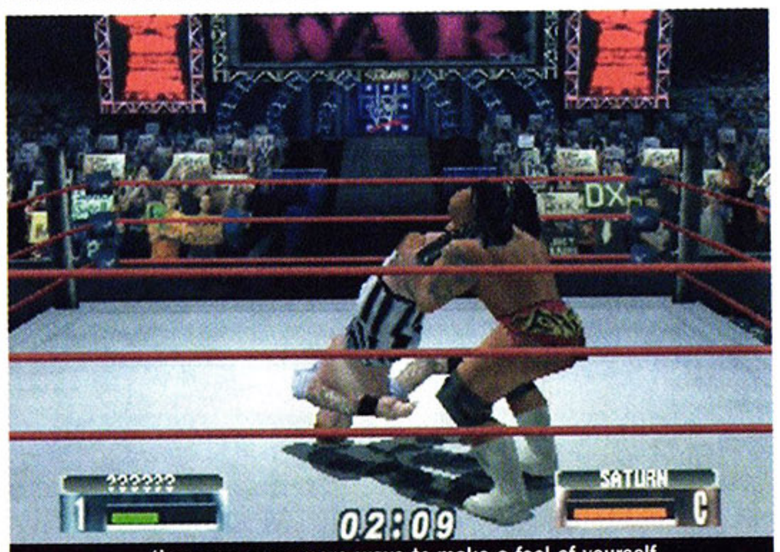
Although not as interactive as those in SmackDown...

...the backstage environments have a few things...

...to make Hardcore matches more interesting

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** ASMIK/AKI ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

Thanks to the expanded Create-A-Superstar...



...there are even more ways to make a fool of yourself

GOING FOR GOLD

In the expanded Championship mode, there is a branching storyline for every belt in the federation. Winning or losing key matches will veer the plot path in very diverse directions. Once you win the belt, the battle has only begun. Around 75% of the Career mode revolves around your wrestler's difficulty in holding onto the gold. Along with the requisite trash talking, many a challenger will approach you with strange and difficult match stipulations.

SMACKDOWN MALL

Winning matches in Championship mode earns players cash that can be used in the SmackDown Mall to purchase new characters, weapons, costumes, and moves. The more exotic the item or person, the more expensive it is. For example, adding a briefcase to the list of available weapons will only run you a grand, but unlocking one of the Godfather's Ho's as a playable character will cost you $500,000! Damn, those are some fine-ass ho's!

SPECIALITY MATCHES

In addition to the Ladder Match, there are many other specialty matches to experiment with. Shown is the Guest Referee match, where a player can call it down the middle or be completely one-sided. Other specialty matches include Royal Rumble, King of the Ring, Ironman Match, and the Cage Match (but not Hell In A Cell). Players can also create their own Pay-Per-View, deciding where it will take place and declaring up to 15 matches to take place within it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9.5

- **Concept:** The same engine you know and love stacked with new features galore
- **Graphics:** More animations, and a bit sharper looking, but with noticeable slowdown when four characters are onscreen
- **Sound:** The same as always, but the nutshot wouldn't be the same without that ding
- **Playability:** More reversals make for better multiplayer action and more-frustrating AI
- **Entertainment:** If you like wrestling, this is the cart you'll still be pulling out years from now
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

The continuation of the Nintendo 64 series was in need of some significant changes, and THQ answered the call of all the whiney wrestling fans out there. Borrowing a few moves from the PS-X release, SmackDown, this 64-bit update now features a hefty TV-style presentation that has it all – backstage capers, taunting between rivals, and strange twists by the devil himself, Vince McMahon. Along with this key ingredient, the Career mode offers story branching and the ability to spend cash on clothing, bodyguards, and new moves. THQ also worked wonders with the Create-A-Superstar, allowing players to tweak practically everything. As expected, the gameplay hasn't changed too terribly much. The CPU AI is a tad more vicious now, but that's about the extent of it. Despite the familiar ring play, the new material is too cool to pass up.

REINER – 9.25

NINTENDO 64

WCW BACKSTAGE ASSAULT

BACKDOOR ASSAULT IS MORE LIKE IT

What do you get when you take the wrestling ring and arena out of a wrestling game? I don't know, but I know I don't like it. After an admirable start with Mayhem, EA has taken a bizarre swerve that belies the developer's scant knowledge of what wrestling fans want from a video game.

Nary a rope or turnbuckle can be found in Backstage Assault. Rather, all matches begin in one of a handful of environments that are presumably located in the bowels of an arena. Here players will find makeshift weapons to bash opponents with, and objects to climb and leap off.

You might think that since there is no ring, the backstage areas would have many interactive facets to them – but you'd be wrong. Both No Mercy and SmackDown have better-designed backrooms. That's beside the point, however. For even if this game's engine, environments, and graphics were as good as those games, I'd still rip it a new hole for choosing against any in-ring action whatsoever.

With the absence of a squared circle, one starts wondering why there's announcers, or even the sounds of a crowd reacting. Why even bother including elements of professional wrestling when what you're creating isn't even a wrestling game? EA should have buried this project early in the conceptual process. – **JAY**

The Create-A-Superstar is barely adequate

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

3.5

- **Concept:** Is a wrestling game without a ring still a wrestling game?
- **Graphics:** Even with an Expansion Pak, everything is blurry and undefined
- **Sound:** Commentary without Mark Madden isn't worth listening to
- **Playability:** Bad collision fields and characters who don't automatically face one another create unparalleled frustration
- **Entertainment:** Even the most dedicated WCW fans (all three of them) will have trouble enjoying this
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Did the lead designer have a lobotomy done prior to the development of this unsound wrestling title, or is the rumor true that everything the WCW logo touches turns to crap within a year? I was quite impressed with EA's maiden release, Mayhem, and I would have loved to see a follow-up rather than this defective departure. I suppose the "wrestling out of the ring" aspect could work, but why not make it an additional feature to the standard mix like THQ has done with No Mercy and SmackDown? Backstage Assault is a catastrophe, a terrible, terrible game, and another stake into the heart of WCW. What's EA's next step? Oh wait...I know! Maybe it will be a Tomb Raider-like game with Sting searching for the Scorpion Stone. Better yet, it could be WCW in hell, where Goldberg must take on the devil to win the belt.

REINER – 3

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER FIGHTING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** KODIAK INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 21

NINTENDO 64

MS. PAC-MAN MAZE MADNESS

THE DIVINE MS. P

I was a big fan of this game on the PlayStation, and I'm happy to report that the addictive, puzzle-oriented gameplay remains untouched. I admire the way the developers took the basis of what made the original Pac-Man games so compelling, and managed to reinvent it by sending Ms. Pac-Man into a world of large mazes filled with puzzles, doors, and switches. It's not a grand concept, but its simple pleasures were enough to keep me playing. On the downside, I was very perturbed to see that this port is plagued by some annoying slowdown in the framerate. C'mon people, if Capcom can pull off a reasonably good version of Resident Evil 2 on N64, I think the technology exists to port this modest little game without any graphical hitches. Consider Maze Madness a solid effort marked down for sloppy execution. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

7.5

- **Concept:** A blend of maze action and box puzzles
- **Graphics:** Almost identical to the PS-X version, but what's up with the chuggy framerate?
- **Sound:** Revives the legendary "chomp" sound effect
- **Playability:** Control is solid, making it easy to negotiate the mazes and obstacles
- **Entertainment:** Enjoyable, but graphical slowdown is hard to ignore
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

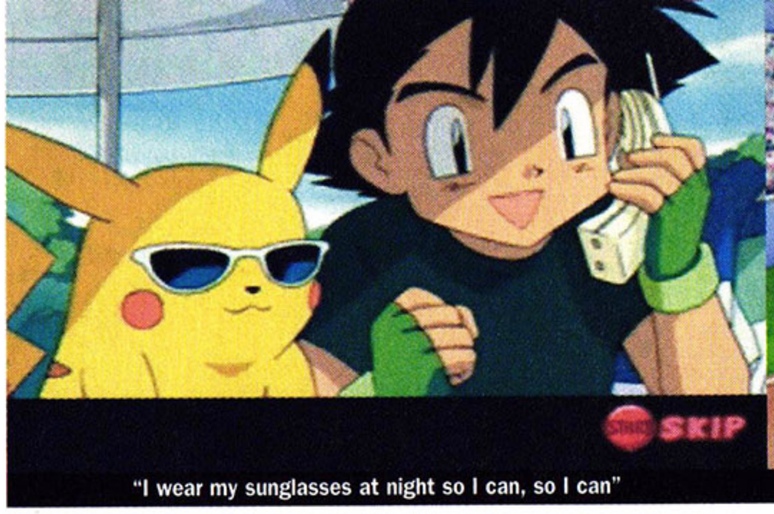
SECOND OPINION

This update of the classic is definitely fun, even though it's incredibly easy. So with that in mind, I think it's a good rental as you can check out the cool level designs and pass the time with some old-school fun.

ANDY – 7

Using blocks to fill in holes is a common task

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** MASS MEDIA ■ **RELEASE** DECEMBER 12



"I wear my sunglasses at night so I can, so I can"

The new 3D mode adds a nice twist to the already irresistible gameplay

NINTENDO 64

POKÉMON PUZZLE LEAGUE

TETRIS ATTACK MEETS PIKACHU

Personally, I can't stand Pokémon any more, but when you slap the franchise on a classic SNES game like Tetris Attack and add a 3D mode, you're going to get me hooked. For those of you unfamiliar with Tetris Attack, the concept is simple. You switch the location of two pieces of the puzzle trying to make combos and large blocks that in turn dump blocks on your opponent. The bigger the combo or block, the bigger the mess you drop on your opponent. With puzzle, training, multiplayer, and single-player games there is plenty here; but be prepared for a barrage of Pokémon sound effects and art. If you are into puzzlers, I can't recommend this game enough, even if you don't like Pokémon. If you do, they are an added bonus. – **ANDY**

SECOND OPINION

I think Andy and I share the feeling that Tetris Attack is the most addictive puzzle game on the planet. The new options make this incarnation even more desirable.

REINER – 8.5

THE BOTTOM LINE

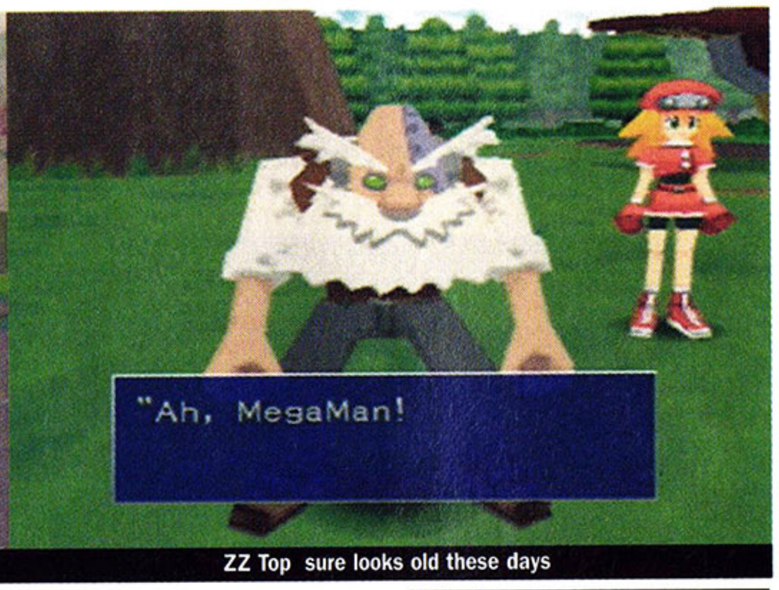
EVERYONE

8.5

- **Concept:** Take a great puzzler, add Pokémon, and sell millions
- **Graphics:** Nothing spectacular, but the Pokémon art is nice if you are into that kind of thing
- **Sound:** Pokémon making lots of Pokémon noises…annoying, but bearable
- **Playability:** With six play modes, mostly in 2D and some 3D modes, Tetris Attack…uh…I mean Pokémon Puzzle League is a great twist on the classic puzzler
- **Entertainment:** Addictive as can be, with a great multiplayer mode
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGY ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 25

Boss battles are not for the faint of heart



ZZ Top sure looks old these days

NINTENDO 64

MEGA MAN 64

THE GAME REMAINS THE SAME

Mega Man 64 perfectly illustrates the frustrations that Nintendo owners have had to suffer. It's not a bad game. Far from it. It's just a port of a game that everyone played two years ago on PlayStation, only with slightly worse graphics, and control hampered by the awkward N64 controller. Excited yet? Me neither. Of course, Nintendo stalwarts who have already finished Majora's Mask may not have many other options this holiday season.

The game's long quest and whimsical story will still charm those Mega Man fans who haven't already played the superior PlayStation version, and the boss battles are thrilling as ever. However, the control – especially the auto-aim and camera rotation – is not a pleasant experience. Capcom should have worked harder to make Mega Man 64 a more satisfying (and unique) experience – **MATT**

SECOND OPINION

Mega Man Legends was a good game when it came out back in September of 1998 for PlayStation, but now this title seems old (and even looks worse than it did on the PS-X long ago). Sad part is, since N64 gamers don't have many choices, this thrown-together rehash of an old PS-X title is not a bad way to pass the time.

ANDY – 6.75

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

7.25

- **Concept:** A no-frills port of the original Mega Man Legends for PS-X
- **Graphics:** The graphics have definitely suffered in the move to N64
- **Sound:** Capcom managed to pack nearly all of the numerous voice-overs into this cartridge
- **Playability:** The two-button auto aim is extremely frustrating
- **Entertainment:** Not bad, but falls short of the standards of the series
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 15

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NINTENDO 64

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"I thoroughly enjoyed my return to the Poké-pastures, and am sure the kids who invest time with it will love it as well."

GAME BOY COLOR

POKÉMON SILVER & GOLD

THE ADDICTION CONTINUES

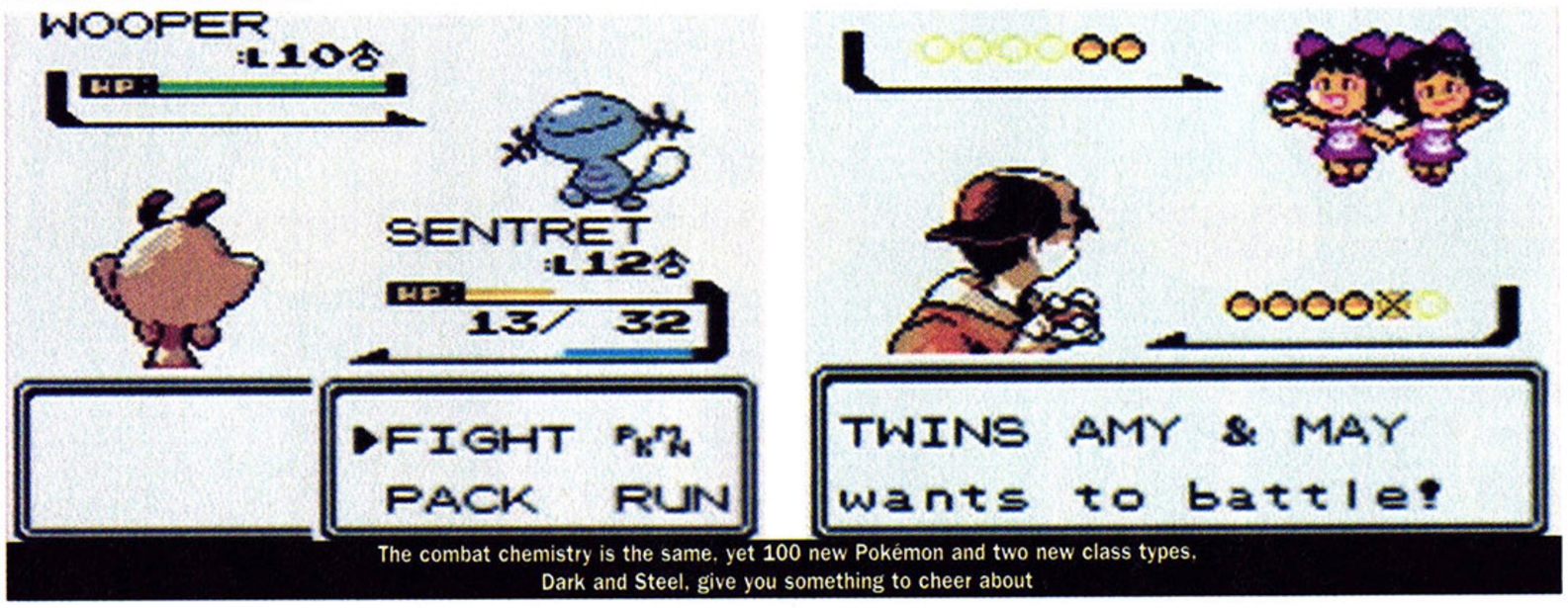
Nintendo has high hopes for the long-awaited return of its flagship Game Boy series, and is expecting Poké-fanatics to devour a record-breaking 10 million units of Silver and Gold. Showing that kids still love their cuddly war demons, Nintendo secured 600,000 presales; last year's Yellow has already sold 4.5 million units; and, in total, Pokémon games have reached an astounding 18.7 million units sold to date. If the phenomenon is as hugely successful as it was last year, Nintendo really shouldn't have a problem reaching this landmark figure, but several key factors may make this release a disaster. Have kids outgrown the fad? Do kids really want to catch 'em all again?

After investing serious time in both versions of this sequel, I was once again hooked and fully immersed in the collectibility and frenzied battle Pokémon delivers oh so well. Initially, as I searched high and low for fuzzy new creatures, I fought sleep by drinking cans of Coca Cola just so I could search a new area. Ultimately, I found myself growing tired of the game, and finally reached a state of nauseating boredom. Developed with toddlers in mind, this Pokémon product is so easy to play and fully understand that even monkeys could comprehend it. The story, or should I say rehash of Blue and Red's plot, does little to entice. Rolling over the gameplay from the previous versions, Nintendo hasn't spiced up the combat or overworld exploration either. Granted, this is a GBC release, and you really can't ask for too much, but some differences other than splashes of color would have been nice.

Nintendo has added several aspects to the mix – and to be quite frank, these are the only things that kept me going. Both Silver and Gold are equipped with a new clock feature, where when your day turns to night, it happens in the game as well. Events take place in real-time, and certain Pokémon only come out at day or night. After combing the land for new finds during the day, you'll need to do it in the morning and night as well. In addition to this, some of the Pokémon feature genders; and no, your character doesn't need to lift the tail to find out what sex he found. When you pair a male with a female, your Pokémon will mate, and produce an egg that hatches to reveal a new baby Pokémon. In total, 100 new Pokémon can be found, many of which introduce new Dark and Steel-type combat abilities.

I thoroughly enjoyed my return to the Poké-pastures, and am sure the kids who invest time with it will love it as well. It's addictive, a great multiplayer experience, and a worthy sequel. – **REINER**

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** GAME FREAK/CREATURES/NINTENDO
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 16



The combat chemistry is the same, yet 100 new Pokémon and two new class types. Dark and Steel, give you something to cheer about

THE BOTTOM LINE

E EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

- **Concept:** 100 new Pokémon...need I say more?!
- **Graphics:** The combat still lacks pizzazz; however, the overworld is much more detailed
- **Sound:** One word: Irritating!
- **Playability:** Geared toward kids, the gameplay is easy to grasp and quite simplistic in theory
- **Entertainment:** It's not the most innovative sequel around, but it is addictive, lengthy, and a stellar multiplayer experience
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

I seriously enjoyed the first Pokémon games, but now that Pokémon has become a cultural phenomenon, I am more than slightly annoyed by them. In fact I would have a hard time choosing between taking them or 'N Sync out. But even with all my hatred for Pokémon, I have to admit Silver and Gold are impressive games. The additions of Pokémon eggs, new Dark-type and Steel-type Pokémon, as well as the use of real-time to make you venture for Pokémon during weird hours of the day are all quite compelling. The game is still basically the same, but there definitely is a whole lot more to do and find, especially when you get into mating females and males to make eggs. Fans will definitely gobble this up, but I don't feel compelled to play through this one as the graphics and gameplay are identical. Perhaps Game Boy Advance will inspire me to hop on the wagon again, but until then, I've had Pokénough.

ANDY – 8.5

GAME BOY COLOR QUICKIES

FROGGER 2

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 22

This version of Frogger 2 is actually pretty close to its Dreamcast counterpart, but obviously the monotony of Frogger works much better on a smaller scale. This modernized version of the Konami arcade classic is pretty entertaining with some new twists like oil slicks and odd-shaped lily pads to keep you on your toes. It's not rocket science, but it is good, clean Game Boy fun. – **ANDY**

7.5

DRAGON WARRIOR I & II

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING-GAME
■ **PUBLISHER** ENIX
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 1

For anyone who's ever wanted to play the original Dragon Warrior, or play it again, here's your big chance. Except for some minor editorial and graphical tweaks, this is the same game you fell in love with 11 years ago. You might want to just savor the memory of past DW experiences, as this one loses something in the jump from NES to GBC. Some people like their music on vinyl; likewise, I like my DW on the NES. – **KRISTIAN**

7

LITTLE MERMAID II: PINBALL FRENZY

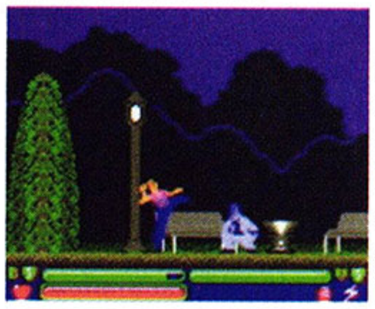
■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 4

Most of our readers might be concerned that owning this title will brand them a pansy for the rest of their elementary school careers. This is true. If you're comfortable enough in your own sexuality to own a girl game, though, you'll find Little Mermaid II: Pinball Frenzy a worthwhile pastime. Not as good as Pokémon Pinball, and not worth getting beat up at recess every day, but still fun. – **JAY**

7.5

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
■ **RELEASE** OCTOBER 1

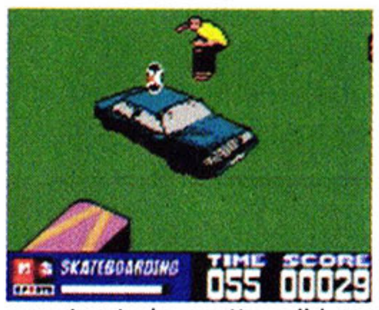


Unless you're one of those pathetic dorks who spends all day downloading Sarah Michelle Gellar pictures off the Internet, avoid this game like the plague. An inane beat-em-up interspersed with dreadfully slow cutscenes, Buffy the Vampire Slayer might well be the most pathetic excuse for a video game I've seen in a while. Please Fox, next time just pound a stake through my heart – it will be quicker and less painfull. – **MATT**

2

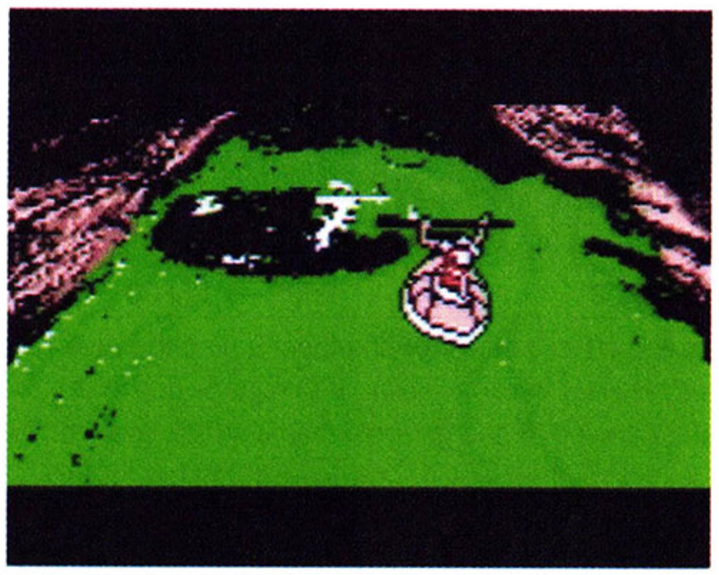
MTV SKATEBOARDING FEATURING ANDY MACDONALD

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SPORTS
■ **PUBLISHER** THQ
■ **RELEASE** JULY 15



Finally, a Game Boy Color game that's better than its PlayStation sibling. Although, given the putrid reviews MTV Skateboarding has garnered, that's not saying much. Dark Black has constructed a pretty solid graphics engine here and this game easily outshines the GBC version of Tony Hawk. Unfortunately, there are too few tricks (a mere eight), and the levels lack variety. With a little more depth, this could have been a solid game. – **MATT**

6.75



DRAGON'S LAIR

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 7

I was truly impressed that developer Digital Eclipse managed to take a laser disc game like Dragon's Lair and capture the look and spirit of this 1983 arcade hit. Unfortunately, even though it looks great, it is missing some elements from the original as some scenes are cut short. Even so, old-school gamers will find this to be a fun blast from the past. But be warned – the nostalgia doesn't last long as you soon remember that death comes easy in this one. – **ANDY**

6

M&M'S MINIS MADNESS

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM
■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO
■ **RELEASE** NOVEMBER 14

They may be amusing in the commercials, but the antics of the M&Ms falls flat in the field of gaming. You control the four different-colored candies, each with unique abilities, trying to find levers to correct problems in the M&M factory. If you succeed, you get to find more levers in another factory. A fine premise if only the game were fun for more than five minutes. This game melts your mind, not your hands. – **JAY**

6

Evolved to
M. LAUNCHAS!

GAME BOY COLOR

METAL WALKER

THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
7.75

First, let's dispense with the obvious – Metal Walker is a Pokémon clone. However, it has some features which give it an identity all its own. The most intriguing aspect is the battle system, which is unlike any I've seen before. You cannot select special attacks; rather they are thrown onto the battlefield in an order you specified before combat. In battle, you choose the direction of attack with an arrow icon, then launch your volley. You can hit your opponent head-on, or direct your character into a special-attack icon. New attacks are learned from scanning enemy data, then exchanging them at junk shops. The only thing that kept me from giving this a higher score was the inordinate number of random encounters, which slows the pace to a crawl. If you have the patience, Metal Walker is a fine alternative to Pokémon. – **MATT**

■ **Concept:** Addictive Pokémon rip-off with a unique battle system
■ **Graphics:** Virtually identical to Pokémon
■ **Sound:** Minimal sound effects and rinky-dink GBC music
■ **Playability:** Combat system is interesting, but too many random battles
■ **Entertainment:** The engrossing story will hook many Pokéfans
■ **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

It's obvious Metal Walker is a Pokémon rip-off when you walk up to Metal Ball and the first thing he says is "Piki." One of the only differences is the Bust-A-Move-style battle system that is interesting, but not very compelling. The robots are cooler than Pokémon, but unfortunately the game isn't.

ANDY – 7

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 16

CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best selling software on a month to month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also teamed with Gamestop to bring you a listing of the top selling used software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.

NPD TOP 20

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	1	**Madden NFL 2001**	PS-X	Aug-00	$40

For the second month running, Electronic Arts' latest PlayStation pigskin is at the top of the retail charts. Sony's lackluster GameDay has bumped its way up to the tenth slot, yet it's still a far cry from touching ugly John Madden. It's hard to believe Madden and GameDay used to compete on the same level. Nowadays, it's no contest.

2	N/A	**NFL 2K1**	DC	Sep-00	$49

Whoa! It appears as though Sega's red-hot football franchise is making a sneak attack on EA. To the company's benefit, Sega is approaching big John from behind. You never want to go head-to-head with him. Staring at his fat head for too long may turn you to stone! Needless to say, we expect NFL 2K1 to top Madden next month.

3	N/A	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**	PS-X	Oct-00	$41

In a recent competition, Tony Hawk pulled off another 900, and there's no better way to celebrate than with a big wad of royalty checks from Activision. If this game doesn't reach the number-one slot next month, damned be the gaming community! It received Game Informer's first – that's right, first perfect 10 rating – meaning it'd better hit the top, otherwise we'll look kind of foolish.

4	4	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater**	PS-X	Sep-99	$29

Just like Harry Potter on the New York Times bestseller list, Tony Hawk has not one, but two games in the top five, and the first release hasn't even reached its Greatest Hits sales point yet. Could next month's top two slots belong to Mr. Hawk? Oh yeah, baby!

5	15	**Gran Turismo 2**	PS-X	Dec-99	$26

With Gran Turismo 3 continually getting pushed back, we fear that gamers are confused and are buying number two again, thinking it's actually the long-awaited sequel. Silly fools! Again, here's a game that will benefit from Sony's Greatest Hits program. Last month it ranked number 15 with a retail price of 35 bucks. This month, it rose to number 5 with a retail price of 26 clams. Next month...eek! Don't bump out Tony 2!!!

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	N/A	**Mario Tennis**	N64	Sep-00	$49
7	N/A	**Spider-Man**	PS-X	Aug-00	$41
8	3	**Star Wars: Episode I Racer**	N64	May-99	$11
9	7	**Spec Ops**	PS-X	Apr-00	$9
10	N/A	**NFL GameDay 2001**	PS-X	Aug-00	$40
11	2	**Chrono Cross**	PS-X	Aug-00	$41
12	6	**Driver**	PS-X	Jun-99	$23
13	8	**Pokémon Red**	GB	Sep-98	$25
14	N/A	**Mario Party 2**	N64	Jan-00	$49
15	5	**Pokémon Yellow**	GB	Oct-99	$25
16	10	**WWF SmackDown!**	PS-X	Mar-00	$39
17	17	**Tekken 3**	PS-X	Apr-98	$23
18	N/A	**Crash Team Racing**	PS-X	Oct-99	$24
19	N/A	**Madden NFL 2001**	N64	Aug-00	$50
20	N/A	**Ultimate Fighting Championship**	DC	Sep-00	$49

JAPAN TOP 10

Source: Game Japan
Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	**Dragon Quest VII**	PS-X
2	N/A	**Eternal Arcadia**	DC
3	N/A	**Mysterious Dungeon: Shiren the Wanderer 2**	N64
4	N/A	**Meadow Story GB: Boy Meets Girl**	GB
5	N/A	**Kirby 64: Crystal Shards**	N64
6	N/A	**Dino Crisis 2**	PS-X
7	N/A	**Amusement King: Duel Monsters III**	GB
8	N/A	**Fighting Illusion K-1GP 2000**	PS-X
9	N/A	**Kamurai**	PS-X
10	N/A	**Pocket Monsters Puzzle**	GB

GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	1	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**	PS-X
2	4	**Final Fantasy IX**	PS-X
3	2	**Madden NFL 2001**	PS2
4	1	**TimeSplitters**	PS2
5	N/A	**Driver 2**	PS-X
6	6	**WWF No Mercy**	N64
7	5	**NFL 2K1**	DC
8	N/A	**WWF SmackDown! 2**	PS-X
9	N/A	**Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn**	PC
10	N/A	**Pokémon Silver & Gold**	GB

PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Sevice Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	N/A	**The Sims: Livin' Large**	Sep-00	$26
2	10	**Age of Empires II: The Conquerors Expansion**	Aug-00	$27
3	2	**The Sims**	Feb-00	$42
4	1	**Diablo 2**	Jun-00	$51
5	3	**Roller Coaster Tycoon**	Mar-99	$29
6	N/A	**Madden NFL 2001**	Aug-00	$35
7	4	**Who Wants To Be A Millionaire 2**	May-00	$18
8	N/A	**Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows of Amn**	Sep-00	$46
9	5	**Who Wants To Be A Millionaire**	Nov-99	$10
10	17	**Sim Theme Park World**	Nov-99	$21

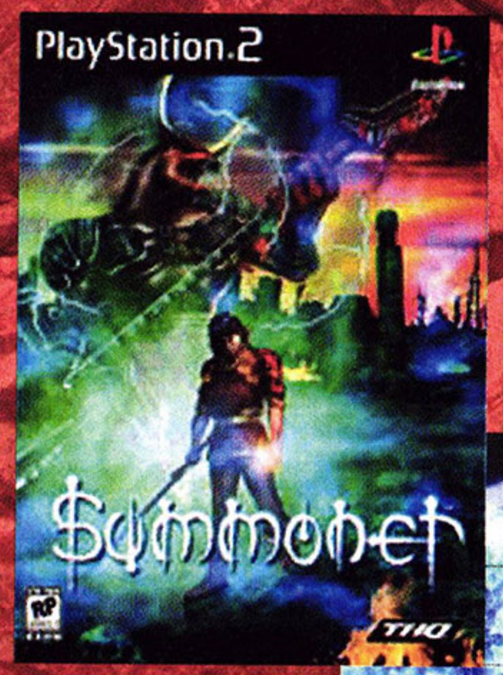
Congratulations. Your Holiday Shopping Ends Here.

The Bouncer
by EA SQUARESOFT

Get ready for a cinematic action experience like no other. Battle through the mean streets of the future with amazingly realistic, interactive environments like you have never experienced before. An incredible storyline and visuals await those who cross into the Dog Street.

Kessen
by Electronic Arts

Become a Japanese General and conquer the world in Kessen from Koei. Players plan out strategies, then watch as armies carry out their orders in real time with this intense strategy game for the PlayStation 2.

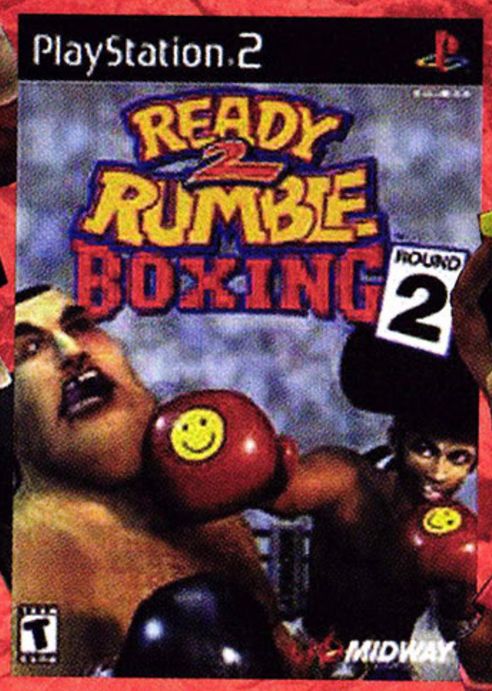


Summoner
by THQ

A Summoner's inheritance is a power greater than magic. With rings of channeling, Summoners call forth demons and golems, supernatural servants and elemental creatures. Summoners have toppled empires and challenged gods.

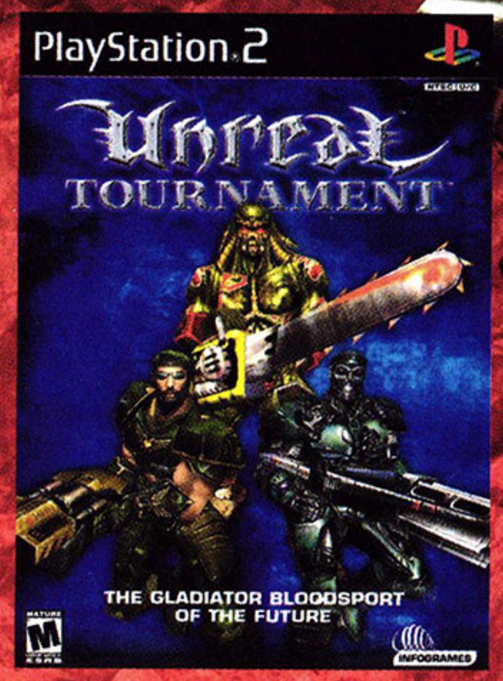
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing 2
by Midway

Return to the ring for more wild boxing action with **Ready 2 Rumble Round 2**. Select from 24 boxers and tons of new options. Pick your fighter and step into the ring, if you dare!



Unreal Tournament
by Infogrames

From the creators of the mind-blowing **Unreal** comes **Unreal Tournament**, the ultimate in competitive gameplay. **Unreal Tournament** showcases the enhanced hugely popular Unreal engine, the benchmark of 3D graphical excellence and immersive gameplay.



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PLAY TO PERFECTION

PLAYSTATION

FINAL FANTASY IX

A step-by-step walkthrough of everything in Final Fantasy IX would take up much more than ten pages, and probably more pages than are in this magazine. Rather than holding your hand every step of the way through this game, we're going to make a bold assumption this time around – that you aren't stupid. You might need a hint here or there, but you know how RPGs work. If someone in the game tells you to go somewhere, you're smart enough to follow their directions.

In keeping with this theme, you'll find a walkthrough sidebar that lays out the bare essentials to finishing FFIX. This has been kept purposefully vague so as not to ruin the story. In-between these bars, we'll detail the many minigames and secrets to be explored and found.

Does this guide have every little, teeny-tiny, itsy-bitsy secret in the game? Nope. But it does have a huge percentage of them — enough to keep you busy for 100 or so hours. Have fun!

DISCLAIMER

This PTP was assembled by playing a not-quite-complete version. All major points of the guide will be correct, but a misspelling of a name here and there is likely.

WARNING

This guide tries to keep spoilers to a minimum, but even perusing is bound to give away a surprise or two. If you want to enjoy FFIX to the fullest, keep your eyes away from these pages as much as possible.

Basic Training

• Search everywhere. Many items are hidden in back corners and hard-to-reach places. Luckily, you'll always know you're standing near something thanks to a "!" that will appear above your head. If you do a detailed search of every place the first time you go there, you won't have to backtrack to find something you missed, or at least you'll know you have to come back later to get something inaccessible at the time.

• Keep equipment on until you've learned the ability from it. Abilities are the key to winning in battles, and if you keep haphazardly upgrading and switching your armaments, you'll never gain enough AP to learn the really good ones. Even if you have a better weapon or armor to equip, it's often worth it to keep the inferior product on until you've scored more AP.

• Save everything. Never EVER sell off extra items. You may later meet a new party member who can use it to learn an ability, or one of your old items could be the key ingredient to a great weapon at a synth shop. If you need a quick cash fix, sell something you know you can buy back later or acquire during gameplay, like Tents.

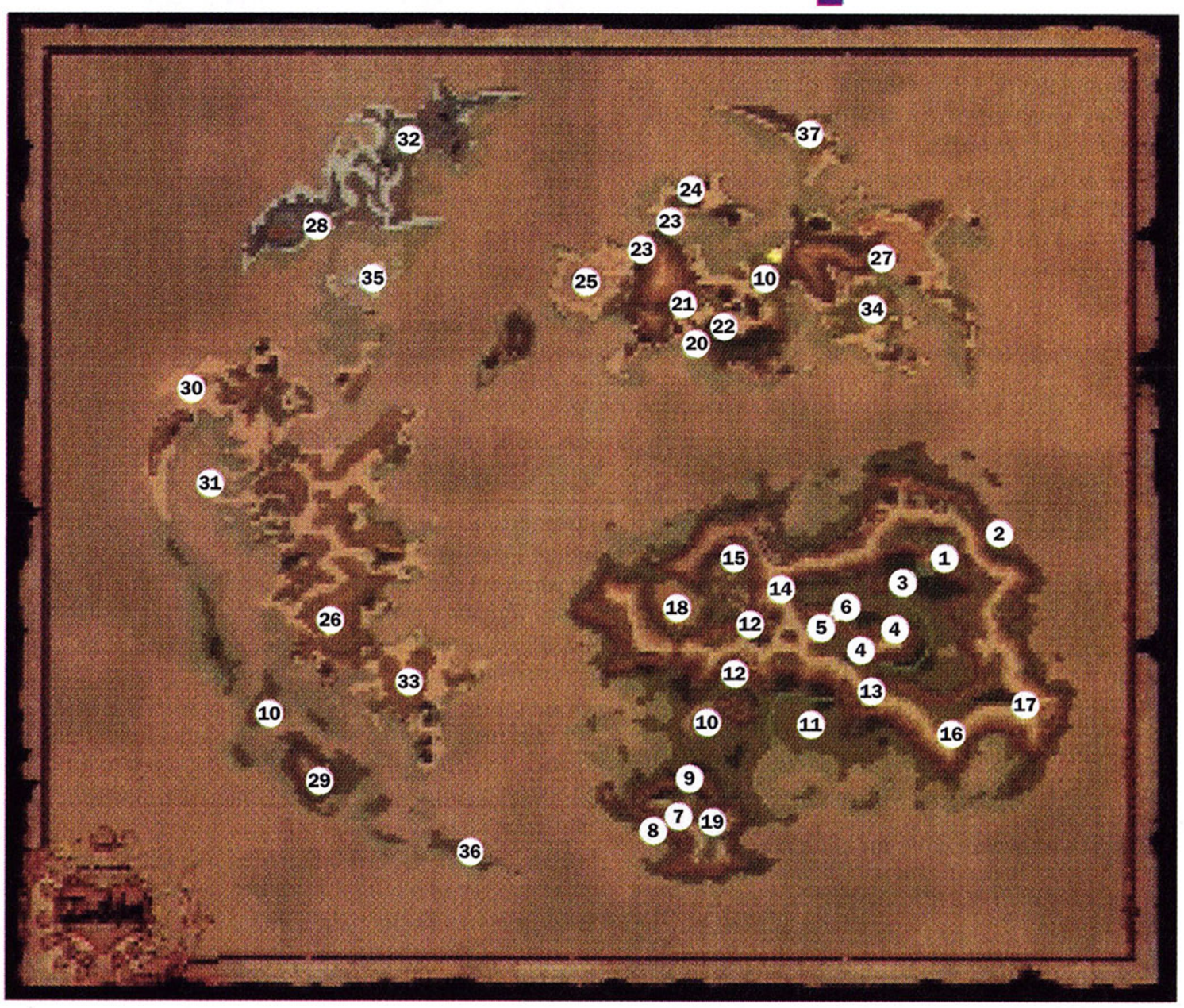
• Always do the Active Time Events. You'll see more of the story, and sometimes get new items.

• Always steal from bosses. Zidane will almost always be in your party, and some advanced equipment can usually be acquired by having him steal from major enemies. This isn't always possible since you may desperately need Zidane to fight, but if you can spare the time, steal.

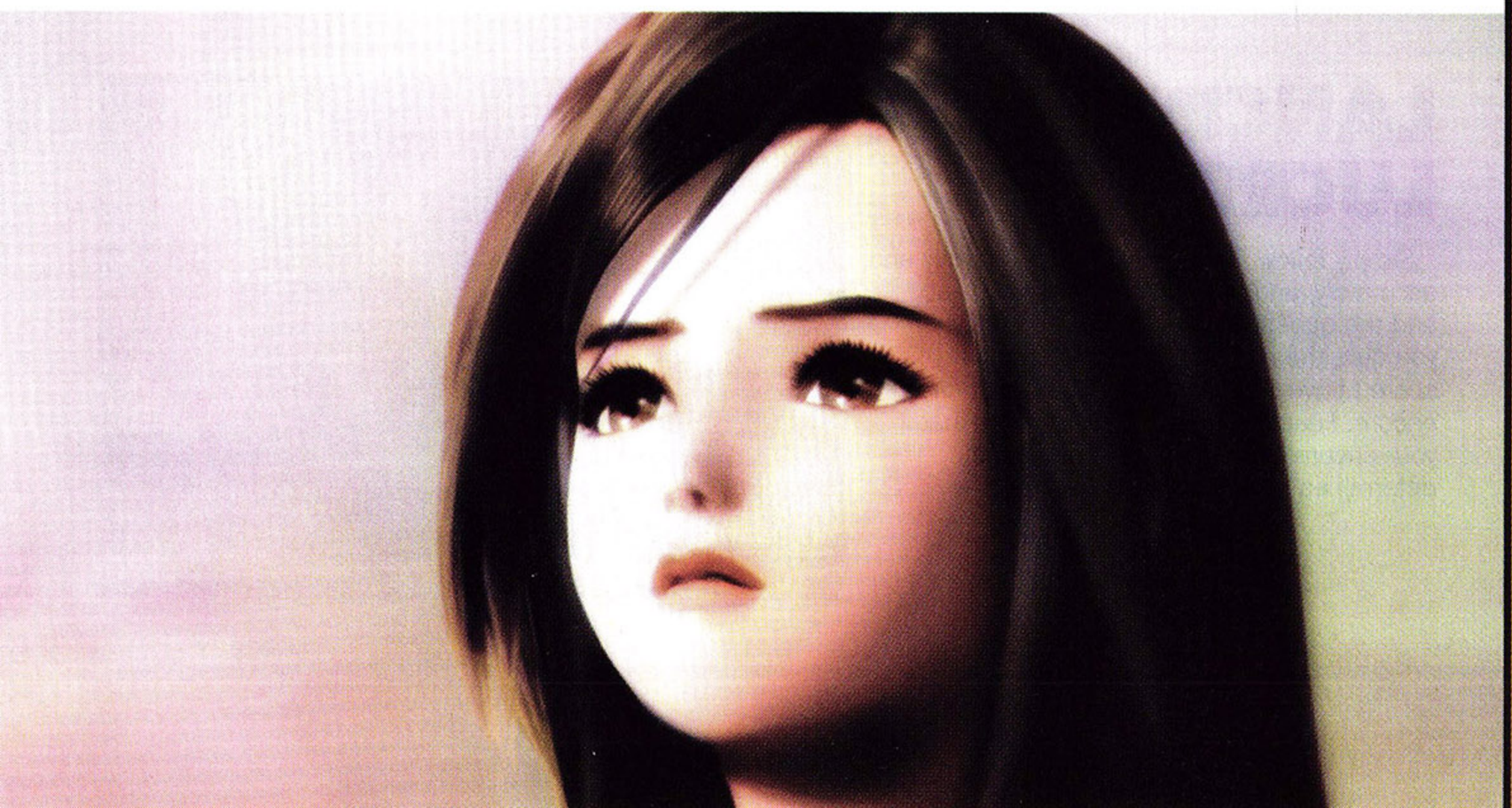
Boss Battles

If a boss beats you once, shame on it. If a boss beats you twice, shame on you. During a boss battle, pay attention to its tactics. That way if you lose, at least next time you'll know what to expect and how to approach the battle. For example, if it uses a lot of Thunder magic, be sure to equip items that absorb Thunder damage if you have to fight it again. In some cases, it may just be that your party isn't tough enough to fight the boss, and you'll have to level up before facing it again.

World Map



1. Alexandria
2. Alexandria Harbor
3. Evil Forest
4. Ice Cavern
5. Dali
6. Observatory Mountain
7. Lindblum
8. Lindblum Harbor
9. Lindblum Dragon's Gate
10. Qu's Marsh
11. Chocobo's Forest
12. Gizamaluke's Grotto
13. South Gate
14. North Gate
15. Burmecia
16. Treno
17. Quan's Dwelling
18. Cleyra
19. Pinnacle Rocks
20. Fossil Roo
21. Conde Petie
22. Black Mage Village
23. Mountain Path
24. Madain Sari
25. Iifa Tree
26. Oeilvert
27. Desert Palace
28. Esto Gaza
29. Daguerreo
30. Ipsen's Castle
31. Water Shrine
32. Fire Shrine
33. Wind Shrine
34. Earth Shrine
35. Shimmering Island
36. Chocobo's Lagoon
37. Mognet Central



Disc One

– As Zidane, walk forward and light the candle.
– Enjoy your first fight.

Alexandria

– As Vivi, go south and search the area for cards.
– Leave this area.
– Follow the crowd.
– In the town square, talk to the dude at the Ticket Booth.
– If you like, jump rope.

(see Jumping Rope)

– Refuse to play with Rat Kid for now.
– At the docks, climb the bell tower and pull the rope to get three Quad Mist cards.

(see Quad Mist)

– Talk to the boy around the corner from the bell tower. Find his kitty in town, then return to speak with him for another Quad Mist card.
– Return to Rat Kid. Agree to be his slave.
– Follow Rat Kid.
– Be sure to talk to the Moogle to save, learn about Mognet, and get your first delivery assignment.

(see The Mystery Of Mognet)

– After the cutscenes, have a fake fight.
– Have Zidane spar with Blank.

(see Lancing For Lucre)

Alexandria Castle

– Have Zidane go up the stairs.
– As Steiner, scour the castle. Your search ends when you go outside, to the left, and up a long spiral staircase.
– As Zidane, chase after Garnet.
– In-between cutscenes and FMVs, three fights with Steiner occur. In the last one, he blocks you from a bomb, which leads to...

Evil Forest

– After saving and talking with everyone at the wreckage, head south to the forest.
– Random combats begin in this area, so be prepared.
– Follow the path to Vivi and Steiner facing a plant monster.
– Explore the ship and its ATEs.
– Once you've recruited Steiner and Vivi to your cause, head back out to the forest.
– Follow the path through the forest.
– The healing spring makes leveling up easy.
– Boss battle.
– Run!
– Learn some lessons from the Moogles.
– Once you're on the open field of the Mist Continent, head south to the...

Ice Cavern

– This is a pretty straightforward dungeon. Just follow the path, making sure to use Vivi's fire magic to find all the chests.
– When you come to a place where you can exit left or right, go left first to find a Moogle.
– Boss battle.
– Once out of the Ice Cavern, head west-ish to...

Village of Dali

– Look around until you've searched everywhere, bought

new equipment, seen some ATEs, and found Vivi and Garnet.
- After meeting back at the inn with Garnet, go to where you last met Vivi.
- Go into the windmill building and investigate the hatch.
- Go down.
- Follow after Vivi through the underground passage.
- After rescuing Vivi, investigate the room beyond the double doors, then exit and continue right.
- As Steiner, talk to Morrid inside the building at the bottom of the watchtower.
- Leave this area.
- Boss battle.
- You can stay in Dali if you need a rest, or depart immediately. There's nothing new to be discovered for the time being, so your choice.
- Explore the airship.
- Boss battle.

Lindblum Grand Castle
- Follow Minister Artania, or explore the castle a bit and then follow Minister Artania.
- As Zidane, explore the Business District before boarding the airship across from the inn.
- Go to the Theater District and look around.
- Go to the Industrial District and look around.
- Go to Lindblum Castle and find Garnet.
- Try to get past the guard blocking the lift
- Talk to the sleeping guard below Garnet's room.
- Take the lift and find Garnet.
- After the Festival of the Hunt is explained, SAVE YOUR GAME! This way, if you don't win you can try again.

(see Festival Of The Hunt)
- Go to the basement level of the castle and take the left trolley to Dragon's Gate.
- Stock up on potions since you'll be going without Garnet for a while, then head outside.
- Go north and a little east to...

Qu's Marsh
- Search the marsh until you find Quina trying to catch a frog.
- Pick up a frog and give it to Quina.
- Let Quina join your group.
- Play the frog catching minigame.

(see Frog Catching)
- Leave the marsh.
- Go east, cross the bridge over the river, and go straight to...

Chocobo's Forest
- After getting the Gysahl Greens, go back to the overland map and use them while standing on some Chocobo footprints.
- Return to Chocobo's Forest on the Chocobo.
- Talk to the Moogle to learn about the Chocobo Digging minigame.

(see Chocobo Digging)
- Once you've dug to your satisfaction, leave Chocobo's Forest, cross the bridge, and follow the mountainside northwest to...

Gizamaluke's Grotto
- Talk to the dying man to get a Gizamaluke Bell.
- Use the bell to open the door.
- Fight the stray Black Mage to get another bell.
- Use it on the door to the far left.

JUMPING ROPE

In all likelihood, this is the first minigame you encounter. The best method to do well at this event is to hit ✖ as soon as Vivi's feet touch the ground. Awards are given for performing 20, 50, 100, 200, 300, and 1,000 jumps.

The jump roping girls disappear for a while after their first appearance, but return near the end of disc three. To find them, go to Alexandria's bell tower with either Vivi or Eiko in the party.

QUAD MIST

The basics of this game are explained to you well enough, except for one glaring omission – no one can tell you what the numbers and letters at the bottom mean. You can research this mystery on your own and find all the answers by disc three, or you can just read our spoiler. We recommend the latter.

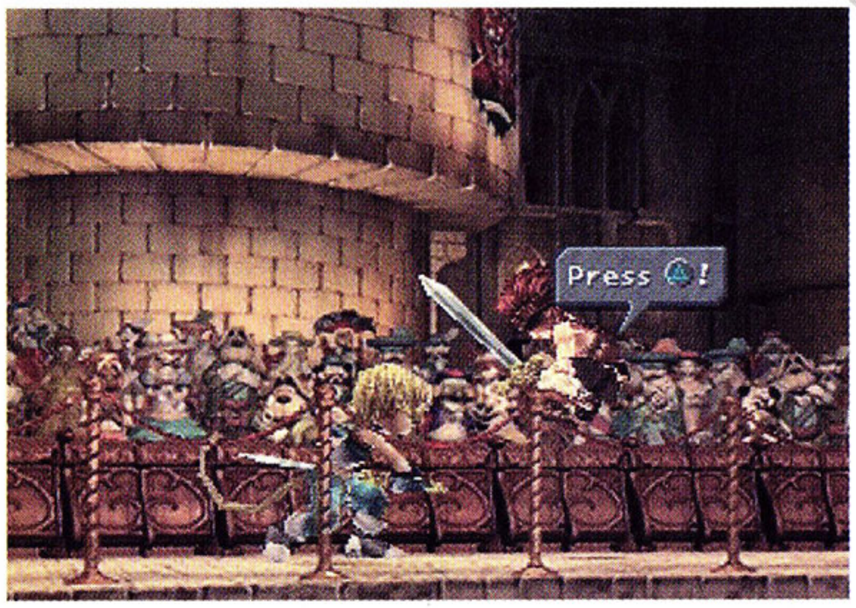
The first digit is the card's attack power. The third and fourth digits are its defense power. The higher the number, the stronger the card is in this area, with letters being stronger than numbers. The strength ratings break down as follows:

(Strongest) E-D-C-B-A-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-0 (Weakest)

The second of the four digits tells you which of the defense numbers the card's attack number will go up against. If the card has a P, it will go against the third digit. If it has an M, it will go against the fourth. Once in a rare while, a card will have an X for a second digit. We never quite figured out how these cards worked, but they occur so infrequently it shouldn't cause too much of a problem.

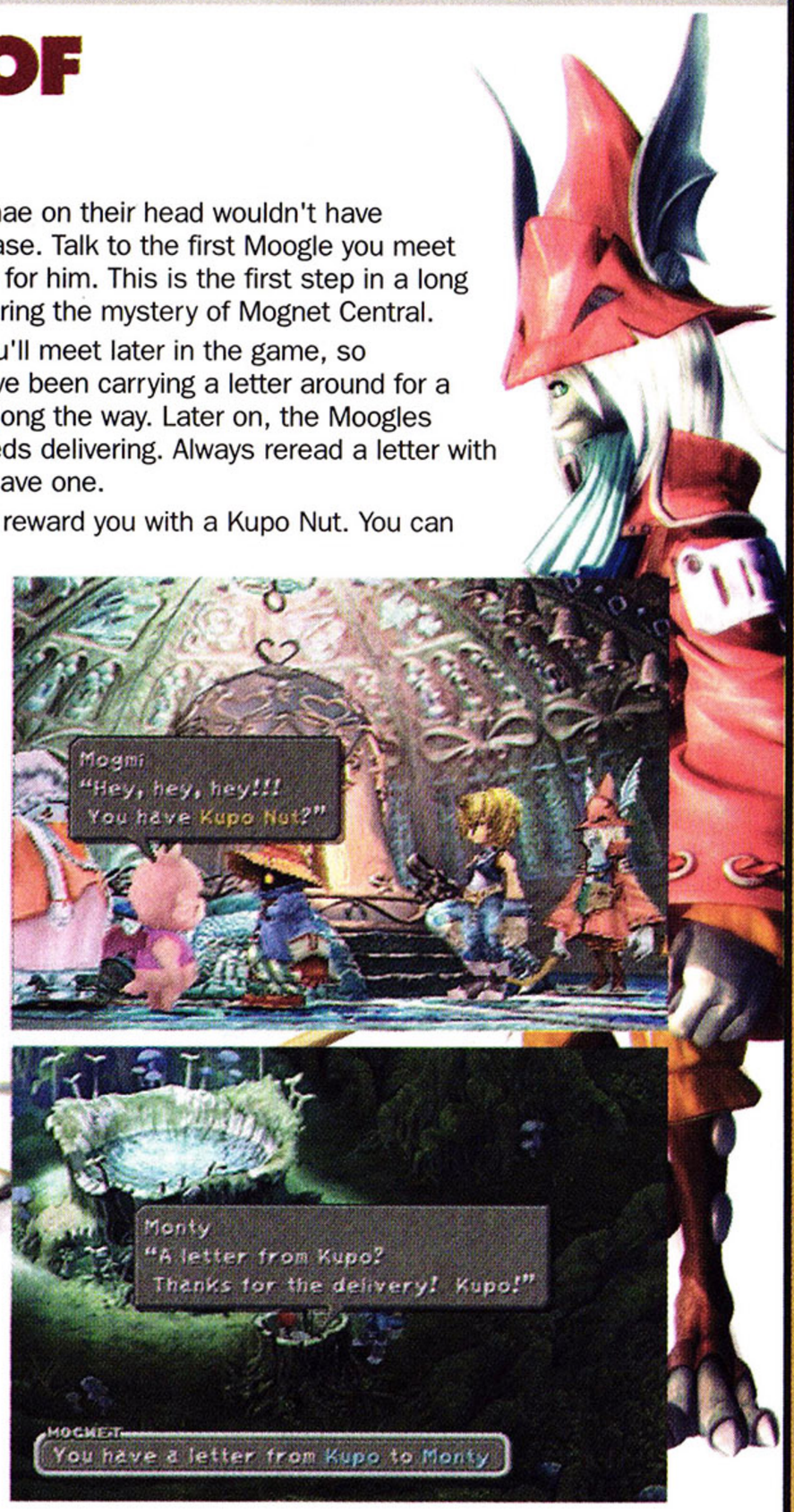
If you're intent on collecting all 100 Quad Mist cards, then you should be sure to press ■ instead of ✖ when talking to someone to challenge them to a game. Many hard-to-find cards can only be acquired by winning against other people two or three times, so be sure to play multiple games with someone until you're sure they don't have anything you need. Also keep in mind that the most cards you can carry is 100, so occasionally dump duplicates so you don't miss out on getting any rare cards.

LANCING FOR LUCRE



Simply follow Blank's commands quickly and accurately, and you'll impress the audience and the queen. The higher your score when you quit, the more Gil you get as tips. If you score above 90, the audience will ask for an encore. Feel free to do so, but realize that if your encore score is lower, that is what determines how much money you make.

THE MYSTERY OF MOGNET



You'd think a race of creatures with giant antennae on their head wouldn't have problems communicating, but that just isn't the case. Talk to the first Moogle you meet about Mognet, and he'll ask you to deliver a letter for him. This is the first step in a long chain letter that will eventually lead you to discovering the mystery of Mognet Central.

The letters you deliver always go to a Moogle you'll meet later in the game, so delivering them isn't too much of a hassle. If you've been carrying a letter around for a while, though, you may have missed a pink kitty along the way. Later on, the Moogles aren't always forthright about having mail that needs delivering. Always reread a letter with every Moogle, and they'll give you a letter if they have one.

As a reward for bringing them mail, Moogles will reward you with a Kupo Nut. You can only have one of these at a time, but whenever you're without one, the next Moogle you make a delivery to will give you one. At Gizamaluke's Grotto, you'll meet Mogmi, who is "kupo for Kupo Nuts!" Give him the nut and he'll give you an item. The more Kupo Nuts you bring him, the better (and stranger) the items get. If you're a courier for Mognet, be sure to bring Mogmi your Kupo Nuts as soon as possible.

Eventually you'll start wondering, along with all the Moogles, where exactly Mognet Central is. To find it, you have to have a flying Chocobo (see Chocobo Digging for details on how to achieve this lofty goal) and a Dead Pepper. Go to the island north of the Outer Continent on a flying Chocobo and use the Dead Pepper by the cracks in the mountain.

After finding Mognet Central, you may be wondering what it is you have to do to get it up and running. Go to the following locations, in order, and exchange letters with the Moogles there.

- Burmecia
- Black Mage Village
- Ipsen's Castle
- Qu's Marsh (Mist Continent)
- Daguerreo
- Alexandria
- Talk to the injured soldier to get another bell.
- Use it on the door to the far right.
- If you've been exploring Mognet, give the frantic Moogle the Kupo Nut.
- Open the chest that was under the giant bell to get another bell.
- Open the door to the right to find a save point.
- Climb the vine to see something cool, and then be killed by it.
- Load your last save.
- Leave the Moogle's room and you'll be given a Holy Bell.
- Use the Holy Bell to open the door to the left.
- Boss battle.

South Gate

- As Steiner, approach the gate.
- Talk to the people in your way.
- Move towards the alleyway.
- Talk to the guard.
- Go into the alleyway.
- Board the train.
- As Zidane and crew, go north to...

Burmecia

- After the fight with the Black Mages, go through the door up the stairs to the right.
- Search inside until a balcony falls as you try to cross it.
- Go back outside and take the door on the left.
- When given the opportunity, go out on the balcony to leap to another area.
- Check under the bed to get the Protection Bell.
- Go back outside and back in the door on the right.
- Ring the bell at the locked door.
- In the outer courtyard area, be sure to explore both doors before heading up the stairs.
- Boss battle.

Disc Two

- As Garnet, explore the rest area.
- When your train arrives, get on.
- Boss battle.
- Visit Dali if you wish (there's not much to see). Otherwise, take the right path to get to...

Dark City Treno

- As Steiner, explore Treno. Garnet will be found in the Auction House. You can also take some Stellazzio to the queen for a reward.

(see The Auction House)

(see Stellazzio Stumper)

- As Garnet, go talk to Marcus at the inn.
- Talk to Baku.
- Go to the formerly locked tower on the west side of town.
- Talk to Tot and he'll open the path to Gargan Roo.

Quan's Dwelling

- It isn't required that you come here, but there's some interesting things to see and collect here. Head east of Treno, through the forest, and look for a cave in the mountains. Be sure to have Vivi and Quina in your party.
- After you've started collecting Dead Peppers in the Chocobo Digging minigame, return here and use one by the cliff. You'll find a buried treasure.

FESTIVAL OF THE HUNT

The key to winning the Festival of the Hunt is to pay a visit to the synth shop before it begins. If you've been combing dungeons, you should have the funds and items required to make the best weapon available to Zidane at this point in the game. With, and the Bird Killer and Beast Killer abilities, Zidane will be able to kill most monsters he faces in one blow.

Always keep on the move, looking for monsters to take out. Once you've cleared one district, move on to another. If you end up facing a monster with Freya, this is a good sign that you're about to take top prize.

Gargan Roo
- Take the left passage.
- Pull the lever.
- Go back out and take the right passage.
- Pull the rope.
- Pull the lever marked "Feed."
- Boss battle.
- As Zidane, head southwest and enter the giant sandstorm.

Cleyra's Trunk
- To get all the items in this dungeon, make sure you search everywhere before pulling levers or sticking your hand into holes. Doing this opens new passages, but blocks off others.
- Eventually, you'll reach...

Cleyra Settlement
- Take the guided tour.
- Explore Cleyra.
- Eventually a Burmecian soldier asks for help. Follow him.
- Boss battle.
- As Freya, explore the town again.
- Try to leave Cleyra.
- Head to the Cathedral.
- Boss battle.
- Search the airship for Queen Brahne.
- Follow Vivi.
- Get in the pods.
- As Steiner, swing to freedom.
- Take the far ladder up.
- You have 30 minutes to find Garnet.
- Go to the uppermost part of the castle.
- Move the purple candle in the Queen's room.
- Go down the long spiral stairs.
- Boss battle.
- With Garnet in hand (literally), go back up the spiral stairs.
- Boss battle.
- As Zidane, fight your way down the stairs.
- Boss battle.

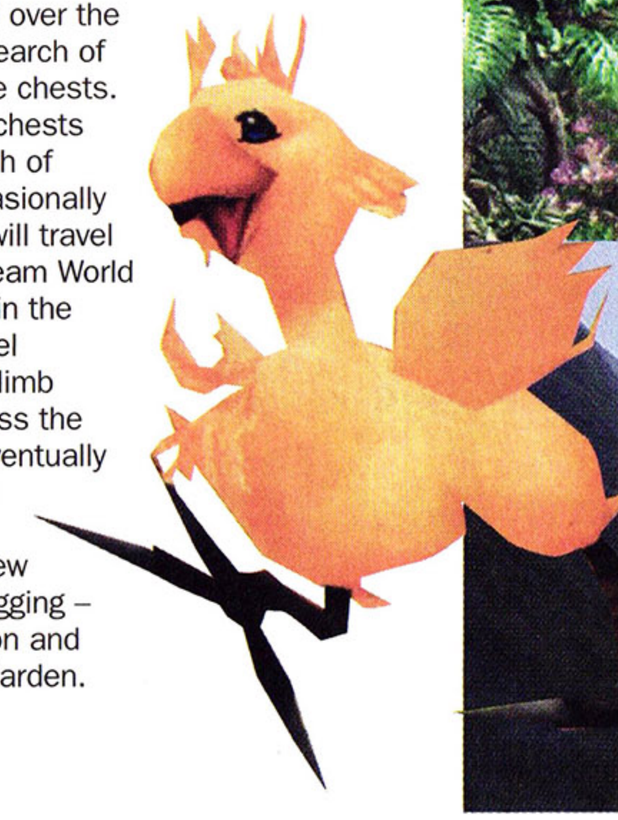
Pinnacle Rocks
- Take Ramuh's challenge.
- Leave.
- Find Cid in Lindblum.
- Be sure to visit everywhere you can in Lindblum before getting led out.
- Return to Qu's Marsh.
- Talk to Quina.
- Search the easternmost reeds for the passage to...

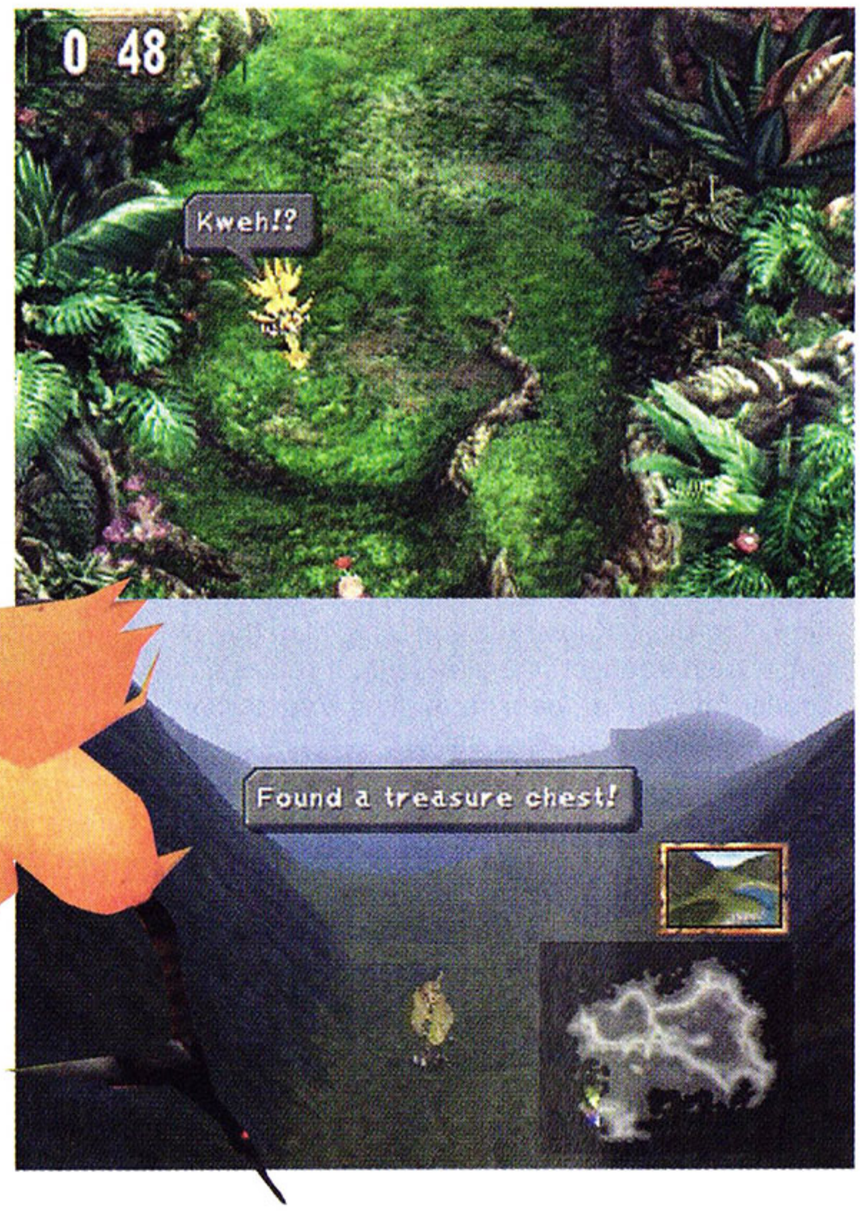
Fossil Roo
- Run away from the steamroller while avoiding pendulums.
- Boss battle.
- Use flower to ride Gargant.
- Explore area.
- Ride Gargant east of the Moogles, open chest, return.
- Ride northernmost Gargant.
- Find and flip switch 1.
- Ride Gargant.
- Find and flip switch 2.
- Ride Gargant.

CHOCOBO DIGGING

This is the biggest minigame in Final Fantasy IX and, fortunately, one of the most entertaining as well. Use some Gysahl Greens on the tracks outside Chocobo's Forest to summon a Chocobo. Ride it into Chocobo's Forest and talk to the Moogle about playing Chocobo Hot & Cold. After enough play, you'll dig up a Chocograph.

These small pictures will lead you all over the world map in search of hidden treasure chests. Most of these chests contain a wealth of items, but occasionally your Chocobo will travel to Chocobo Dream World where it will gain the abilities to travel across reefs, climb mountains, cross the oceans, and eventually fly. As you find chests, you'll also learn of new places to go digging – Chocobo Lagoon and Chocobo Sky Garden.





Here's a rough idea of where to go looking for all the Chocographs. Note: This is not the order in which the Chocographs are found, but the order they are presented in the game. If you're unable to reach one of these places, be patient. The acquisition of an airship later on makes Chocobo Digging much easier.

1 – A beach near Chocobo's Forest.

2 – A beach west of the Mist Continent's Qu's Marsh.

3 – The mountains south of Evil Forest.

4 – A beach north of Cleyra.

5 – A beach south of Outer Continent's Qu's Marsh.

6 – Southwest of the Lost Continent's eastern beach.

7 – In the waters near the islands between the Lost Continent and the Forgotten Continent.

8 – In the waters directly east of the Forgotten Continent's northwest peninsula.

9 – In the shallow waters southeast of Black Mage Village.

10 – The waters surrounding an island west from the Mist Continent's Qu's Marsh.

11 – On a beach on an island south of Chocobo's Forest.

12 – Waters south of Treno, near a long island.

13 – In a forest surrounded by mountains west of Dali.

14 – A plateau northwest of Evil Forest.

15 – On the lower ledge of a plateau of the Forgotten Continent, almost directly north from Daguerreo.

16 – On a plateau near the beginning of the Forgotten Continent's northwest peninsula.

17 – In the sea north of the Wind Shrine, and northeast of Oeilvert.

18 – Search the sea west of an island of the Forgotten Continent with long stretches of beach. Almost directly west from Oeilvert.

19 – The bay west of the Fire Shrine.

20 – Near two islands northeast of Alexandria Harbor.

21 – On an island northeast of the Desert Palace.

22 – The island southeast of the one where Mognet Central is.

23 – The island southwest of the Iifa Tree.

24 – On an island to the east of the Forgotten Continent's Qu's Marsh.

FROG CATCHING

There are three Qu's Marshes scattered about the world, and in each one is a place where frogs spawn. With Quina in the party, go to one of these frog pits and s/he'll ask if there's time to catch a few. If you say yes, you'll be in control of Quina. Simply run around and grab them all. Don't worry about depleting the swamp's supply of amphibians. Even if you take them all, more will appear there later.

Not only does Quina's Frog Drop spell get more powerful as she catches more frogs, Quina also gets a reward from her master for catching 2, 5, 9, 15, 23, 33, 45, and 99 frogs (but we recommend waiting until your party is over level 40 before catching frog number 99). If you plan on using Quina in the party a lot, partaking in this activity is highly recommended.

If you really want to burn through the Chocobo Digging minigame, keep digging up Chocographs until you learn of these chests, which contain Chocobo upgrades. Once your Chocobo can fly, gathering treasure is much easier.

Reef Upgrade – Chest 4
Mountain Upgrade – Chest 12
Sea Upgrade – Chest 14
Flying Upgrade – Chest 20

Once your Chocobo can fly, you can go to Chocobo's Paradise. It's located on an unmarked island that can be found in any corner of the world map. Use a Dead Pepper (an item you'll start digging up when your Chocobo can fly) on the cracks in the mountain, and voila! After this, use the clues on the Chocograph Pieces to find Chocobo's Sky Garden and other hidden treasures.

– Flip switch 1.
– Ride Gargant.
– Ride Gargant east of the Moogles.
– Hit switch 4.
– Ride Gargant.
– Open chest.
– Ride Gargant.
– Hit switch 4.
– Ride Gargant.
– Explore all the passages off the vines before hitting switch 3.
– Mine for Ore and a Moogle if you wish.
– Hit switch 3.
– Climb the vines to the bottom right passage.
– Ride Gargant.
– Walk to the light and you'll be on the...

Outer Continent
– To the northwest, on a bridge, is...

Conde Petie
– Find Vivi and talk to him.
– Go to the item shop.
– Leave town.
– Head southeast through a valley of trees to get to the forest.
– Read the sign, and go the direction in which there are no owls.
– Repeat until you reach...

Black Mage Village
– Find Garnet.
– Find Vivi.
– Go to the inn and talk to Vivi.
– Rest when ready.
– Return to Conde Petie.
– Speak to the dwarf blocking your way by the Kirkboat.
– Find his holiness walking by the inn.
– Travel down the...

Mountain Path
– Meet Eiko.
– Find the Moogles.
– Take the path to the left of them.
– Boss battle.
– You now have access to the four colored stones. Get them all and deposit them in the altar located to the right of the Moogles.
– Take the high road east to the overland map, then search the island for...

Madain Sari
– Take a look around and see some ATEs.
– Try to go into Eiko's house.
– Follow your Moogle tour guide.
– Find Dagger.
– Return to the Eidolon Wall.
– Go to Eiko's house.
– Get the pot off the table.
– Bring it to Eiko.
– Rest.
– Return to the Mountain Path.
– Take the northern exit to the overland map.
– Go southwest to the big tree.

lifa
– Ask Eiko for help.

– Follow the path.
– Ask Eiko for help.
– Follow the path down.
– Get in some fights and discussions on the leaf elevator.
– Search around.
– When the ground shakes, go get Garnet.
– Boss battle.
– Return to Madain Sari.
– Find Eiko.
– Go to rescue Eiko.
– Boss battle.
– Find Eiko and tell her to come with you.
– Outside Eiko's house, there's a new "!" to explore.
– Return to Iifa.
– Follow the path.
– Chase after Garnet.

Disc Three

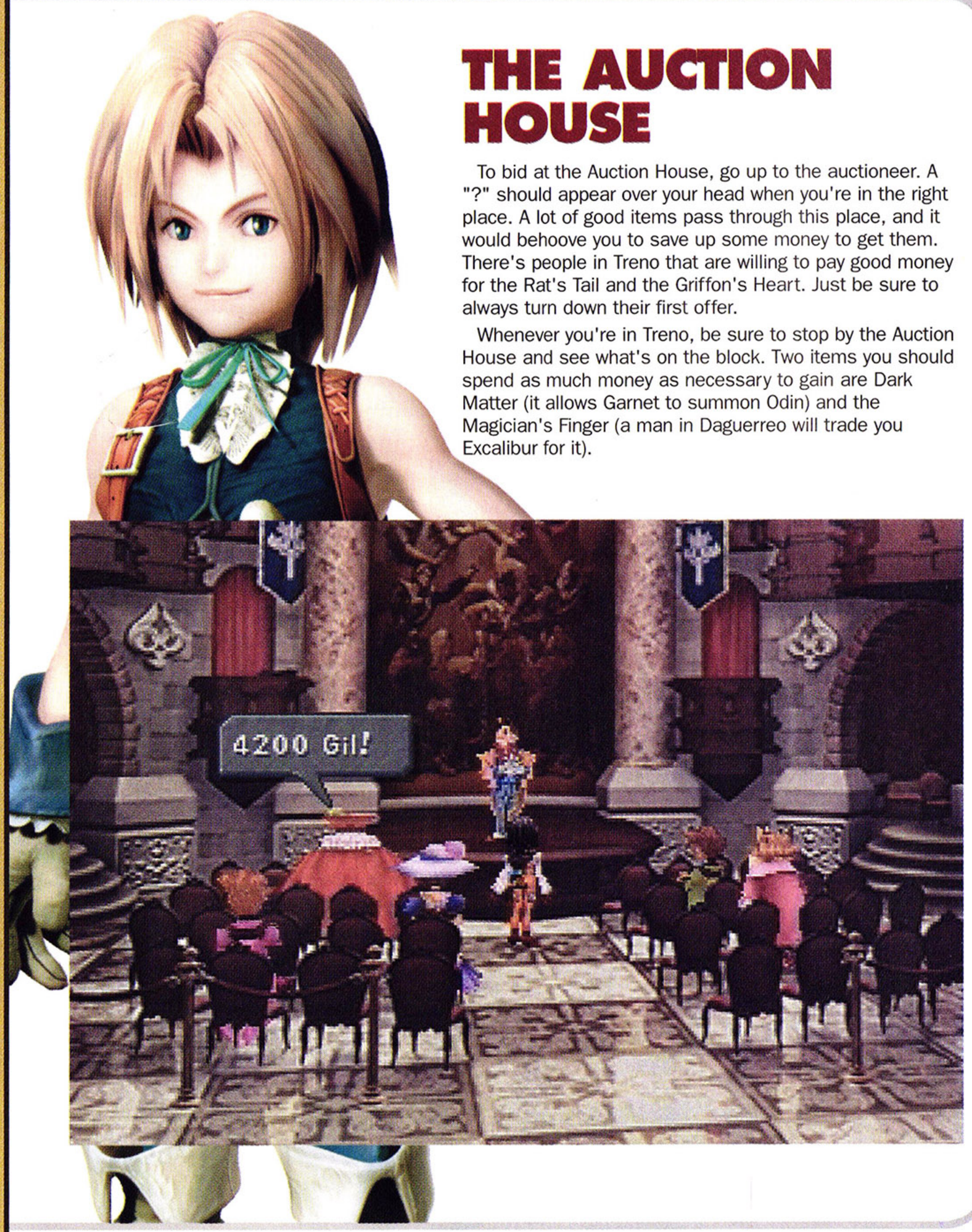
– As Vivi, explore Alexandria. Head east and race if you like.
(see Hippos Can't Run)
– When ready, talk to Blank in the alley, and agree to see the play with him.
– Go down the stairs behind Blank.
– As Eiko, explore the castle.
– As Zidane, take the boat to the castle.
– Explore Treno.
– When ready to move on, go to the Quad Mist Stadium.
– Win three games of Quad Mist (winning the tournament is worth it).
– Protect Alexandria with Steiner and Beatrix.
– Have Garnet go upstairs to the left tower.
– As Zidane, go after Garnet.
(see Optional Bosses)
– Back in Lindblum Castle, go see Cid.
– Go to Garnet in the guest room.
– Go to town to find the three potions.
– Ask Alice outside the Business District's weapon shop for the Beautiful Potion.
– Talk to the artist in the Theater District about potions, then search his shop to find the Strange Potion.
– Go ask Cinna in the Theater District about the Strange Potion.
– Take the potions to Cid.
– Go pay Quina's pickle bill in the Business District.
– Take the trolley in the lower castle level to Serpent's Gate.
– Board the boat.
– Return to the Outer Continent.
– Go to Black Mage Village.
– Find Vivi.
– Go to the Chocobo shack.
– Take the boat to the northeast side of the Outer Continent.
– Go to where there's four sinkholes in the sand.
– Three lead to fights with antlions, one leads to a dungeon.
– As Zidane, follow the path laid out by Kuja.
– Form a party. Remember, magic will not work in Oeilvert, and the members you don't take will form another party later. Save Freya for the second group.

COFFEE ANYONE?

An old man at Dali's watchtower is willing to trade you a nice model if you can find him three coffee types. These can be found at South Gate, Eiko's Kitchen, and behind the windmill's locked door in Dali. To get the mayor's key to open this door, go to his room during disc three before the Quad Mist tournament in Treno.

So what the hell can you do with the model? Not much. But if you can buy the matching Cid and Burmecia figurines at Treno's Auction House, and nab the Brahne figure from under the chair in the mayor of Dali's house, you'll be well on your way to making the four-armed man in Daguerreo jealous.

THE AUCTION HOUSE



To bid at the Auction House, go up to the auctioneer. A "?" should appear over your head when you're in the right place. A lot of good items pass through this place, and it would behoove you to save up some money to get them. There's people in Treno that are willing to pay good money for the Rat's Tail and the Griffon's Heart. Just be sure to always turn down their first offer.

Whenever you're in Treno, be sure to stop by the Auction House and see what's on the block. Two items you should spend as much money as necessary to gain are Dark Matter (it allows Garnet to summon Odin) and the Magician's Finger (a man in Daguerreo will trade you Excalibur for it).

STELLAZZIO STUMPER

The queen of Treno is a collector, but she's very particular about what she wants. She's looking for coins with symbols of the zodiac on them that tell a story – and she's willing to give out big rewards if someone can bring them to her. You'll probably find a few of these without even trying too hard, but here's the location of all of them so you know you won't miss any.

Aries – The windmill in Dali.

Taurus – Behind the item vendor's cart in Treno.

Gemini – Keep giving the fountain by Treno's entrance money until you get this.

Cancer – Behind a broken cart in Burmecia.

Leo – In Alexandria Castle anytime during disc three or four. Look around the statue of Neptune in the west tower.

Virgo – The inn of Black Mage Village.

Libra – Behind the fountain in Madain Sari.

Scorpio – In Quan's Dwelling.

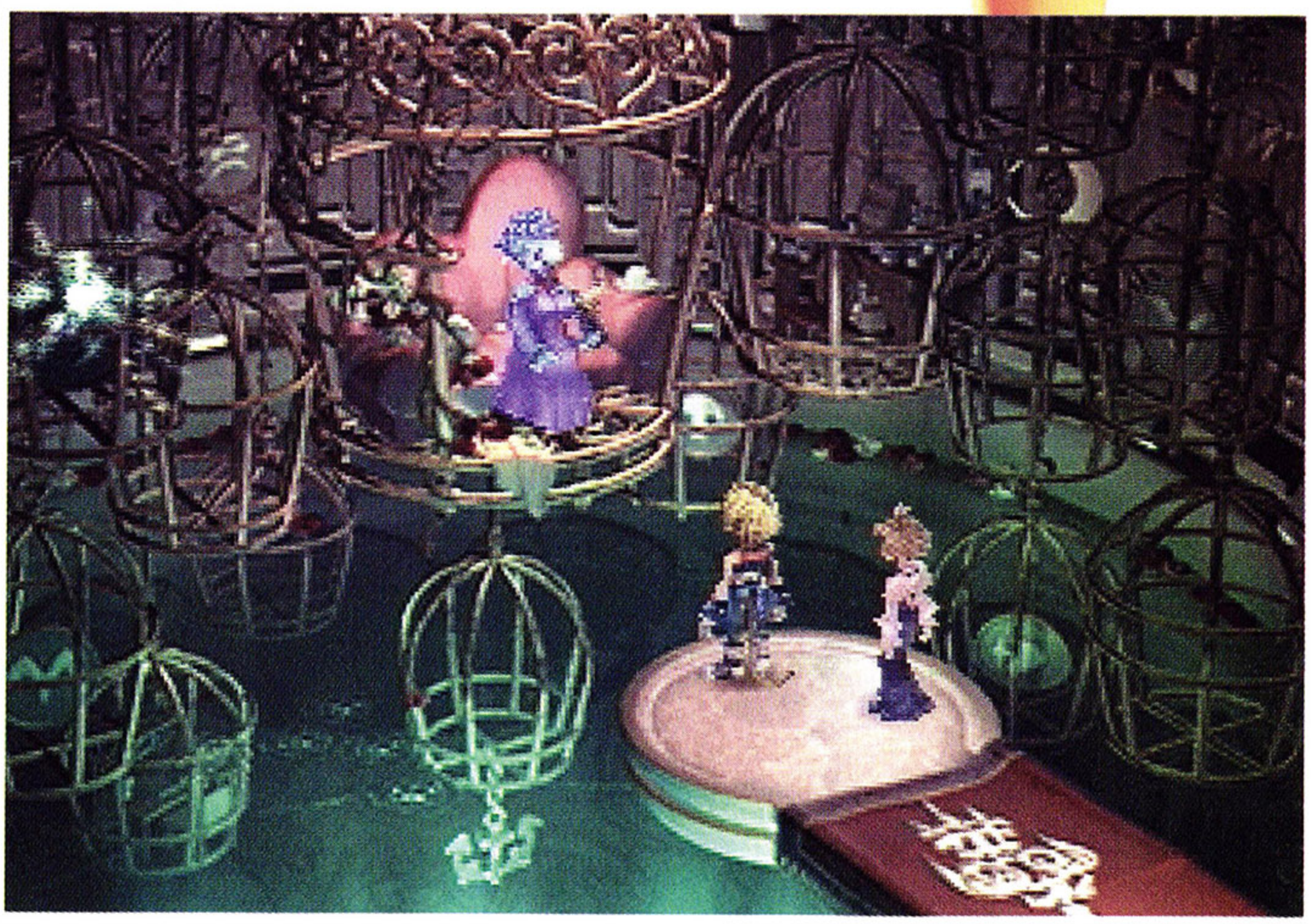
Sagittarius – In the business district of Lindblum anytime during disc three or four. Look to the west of the pickle vendor.

Capricorn – In Daguerreo.

Aquarius – The entry hall of Ipsen's Castle.

Pisces – Aboard the Invincible on disc four.

After bringing the queen all 12, inform her that there's still one missing. You'll find the thirteenth Stellazzio, Ophiucus, in Quan's Dwelling where you found Scorpio.



– Head for the airship.
– You will be taken to the...

Forgotten Continent

– If the encounters here are too much, find some Chocobo tracks.
– Head south, through many twisting valleys, to find...

Oeilvert

– You cannot cast spells inside Oeilvert, so stock up on healing items from the Moogle outside.
– From the beginning room, take the central path.
– Touch the orb.
– Return to the beginning room, take the left passage.
– Turn on the four ship hologram projectors.
– Touch the orb in the middle of the huge staircase.
– Go through the formerly locked blue door.
– Return to the beginning room, take the right passage.
– Get on the platform.
– Boss battle.
– Grab the Gulug Stone.
– As Cid, go to the right room.
– Press ● when the monster isn't looking to get the key.
– Put the clay, stone, and iron weights on the scale.
– Have Cid climb the scale.
– As the second party, go to the right room to save and buy any equipment needed.
– Head left and up the stairs to reach...

Desert Palace

– Light the candles on the left.
– Touch the bloodstone on the right.
– Go up the stairs and left past the three statues.
– Light all the lamps in the library.
– Return to the three statues and go right.
– Go up the path that appears and light the candles.
– Return to the library and touch the bloodstone that appears.
– Go through the right passage.
– Light the candle.
– Touch the bloodstone.
– Go up the stairs.
– Light the candle.
– In another library, light candles to open secret passages.
– When you hear a Moogle, go left.
– Make both gargoyles' shadows go left.
– Go up the stairs that appear.
– Attempt to light the candles.
– Boss battle.
– Light the candles.
– Step on the lit platform and press ✖.
– As Zidane, follow the path off the airship and activate the teleport pad.
– Go talk to Kuja.
– Exit past where the airship was.
– Hit the lever.
– Climb down the ladder and exit the screen to reach the...

Lost Continent

– Get a Chocobo if the random encounters are too much for you here.
– Head west to reach...

Esto Gaza
- Go inside.
- Do some shopping.
- Head right from the Moogle to reach...

Mount Gulug
- Do a thorough search of the upper area before going down the rope.
- Once down the rope, search this level.
- Once satisfied, pull the lever by the well down three times.
- Go down the rope.
- Fight some red dragons.
- Boss battle.
- Once back to Lindblum Castle, go to the conference room.
- Soon you'll have an airship of your very own.

Daguerreo
- Located in a cave between some waterfalls on one of the islands of the Forgotten Continent, it isn't required that you come here, but the shopping makes it worth it.
- When you come to the panel with three levers, hit the left one until a hole is revealed. Grab the stick leaning on the bookcase and put it in the hole. The man at the top will now sell you weapons.
- After going here, and having some fun exploring, check your world map to find...

Ipsen's Castle
- Let Amarant go it alone.
- Weaker weapons do more damage here. Equip the least-damaging armaments you have to your characters.
- Keep exploring until you find Amarant.
- Collect the four mirrors on the wall.
- Boss battle.
- Leave the castle.
- Go back in the castle.
- Go down the pole and move south to find Amarant.
- Your next goal is to find the four elemental shrines.
- The Water Shrine is a whirlpool south of Ipsen's Castle.
- The Fire Shrine is a volcano northeast of Esto Gaza.
- The Wind Shrine is in a valley southeast of Oeilvert.
- The Earth Shrine is southwest of the Desert Palace, between three rocks.

Earth Shrine
- Get ready to press ✖ quickly to avoid traps.
- Put the mirror in its place.
- Boss battle.
- Take the airship to the newly appeared Shimmering Island.
- Head in.

Terra
- Follow the girl (but take some detours to find good items).
- Once you catch up to her, continue on past her.

Bran Bal
- Find the inn.
- Go downstairs from where the giant glowing gem is.
- Talk to the girl.
- Leave.
- As Eiko, find Amarant, Quina, and Vivi.
- Take the path beyond the gate with the green glow.

HIPPOS CAN'T RUN

When Vivi returns to Alexandria on disc three, look for a fat hippo kid and his mom. Talk to his mother and she'll tell you that her son is out of shape from playing too much Quad Mist, and she asks you to raise his metabolism by racing him.

To win, you need to jam out on ● and ■ alternately. The more distance you beat Hippaul by, the more his level goes up (which you can check by talking to him after a race). Eventually, Hippaul will get so fast that you can only raise his level one at a time. When you get him to level 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, and 100, his mother will give you a reward.

NON-LETHAL ENCOUNTERS

While wandering in the wilderness, every so often you'll come across random encounters of a different kind. Rather than the normally intense battle music, you'll hear a lighthearted tune, and meet either a creature who wants some minerals or a strange looking thing with a question to ask you.

If a monster asks you for minerals, give it to them if you can. Select the item and use it on the monster. If you do this, the monster will thank you and tell you of the next creature type you need to seek out. In all, there are nine begging monsters to find. Being generous with these creatures is always worth it, since the characters involved are given a ton of AP for doing so.

When a red creature appears with an X and an O next to him, it's time for a pop quiz. This weirdo will ask you one of 13 questions (always presented in the same order, so if you miss one, you can reset your game and answer correctly the next time). If you get it right, he'll give you an ever-increasing amount of Gil. If you get all 13 correct, he'll give you a Memory Ring.

OPTIONAL BOSSES

Per usual, there are a number of places in the game where there's a fight waiting for those who can find it. The easiest to locate and to beat are in Treno. Talk to the weapon shop owner about the interesting creature living below the floor. Eventually, you'll have the option of going one-on-one against this beast with a character of your choice. Check back every so often, and you'll find that new, and tougher, monsters will take the place of the ones you kill.

At the beginning of disc three, your characters are hurriedly running to the top of Alexandria Castle to save Garnet. If you dare, take a detour through the libraries. Atop a bookshelf is a tome that likes to talk trash. Accept its challenge for a very tough boss battle.

If you manage to find Chocobo's Sky Garden, examine the large rock in the northern part of it. A deadly boss battle awaits. If you've managed to appease the nine beasts looking for minerals in the woods (see Non-Lethal Encounters), then this battle will be easier. Regardless, it is worth doing, since winning it is the only way to get Garnet's final summon.

THE OTHER CARD GAME

Who knows why it's there, but it is. Beat the game, and at the The End screen tap R2, L1, R2, R2, Up, ✖, Right, ●, Down, ▲, L2, R1, R2, L1, ■, ■. You'll hear a jingle. Press Start to bring up a game of blackjack. If you lose all your money, just reenter the code at the The End screen again to start up another round.

– Talk to the girl.
– As Zidane, follow the path north.
– Follow Garland.

Pandemonium

– Keep following and talking to Garland.
– Zidane fights through three introspective battles.
– Head east to find your buddies.
– Keep backtracking to find a good item under the throne.
– Head west.
– In the room filled with pedestals, hit the button.
– You must avoid the lights and make it across the bridge in 30 seconds.
– Screw with the elevator and its controls for a while.
– Return to the room and half the party will control the elevator through an ATE.
– Set the lift to 3.
– Board where appropriate.
– Go up and get on where setting 3 is again appropriate.
– Get a chest full of Gil.
– Go down and to the left.
– Set the lift to 4.
– Go up one floor.
– Keep messing around with the teleporters until you've opened the three chests and met the Moogle.
– Go east from the Moogle.
– Boss battle.
– Boss battle.
– Boss battle.
– Go back to Bran Bal.

Disc Four

– Do all the levelling up and treasure hunting you need to do.
– It's not a bad idea to do some shopping at Daguerreo. New items have arrived.
– When prepared, take the Invincible through the portal atop the Iifa Tree.
– Boss battle.
– There is only one way to go. Go that way.
– Boss battles with the four elemental guardians along the way.
– Move towards the shimmering light.
– Follow the crystal path.
– Boss battle.
– You can leave, use a Tent, and save before having to continue.
– Boss battle.
– Final battle.

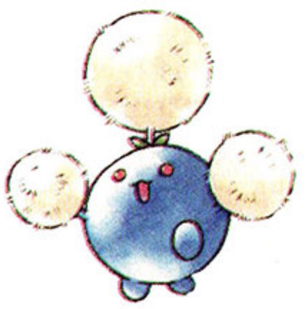
SECRET ACCESS

GAME BOY COLOR

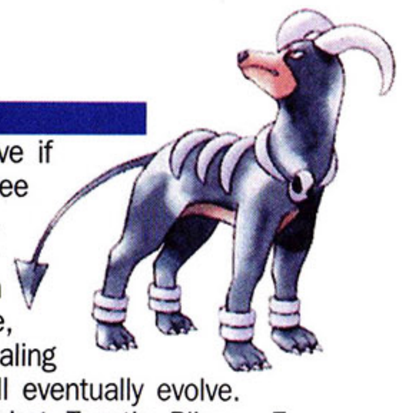
Pokémon Silver & Gold

Game Informer's crackpot Poké-fans scoured the earth for the locations of all of the new creatures in both Gold and Silver. The listing is easy to use and more detailed than any official strategy guide on the market. Actually, this is the only guide that lists every location or strategy needed to snatch all of the exciting new beasties.

Pokémon	Location	Version
025 Pikachu	Route 2	●/●
152 Chikorita	New Bark Town, Elm Lab	●/●
153 Bayleef	Evolved Chikorita (L 16)	●/●
154 Meganium	Evolved Bayleef (L 32)	●/●
155 Cyndaquil	New Bark Town, Elm Lab	●/●
156 Quilava	Evolved Cyndquil (L14)	●/●
157 Typhlosion	Evolved Quilava (L 36)	●/●
158 Totodile	New Bark Town, Elm Lab	●/●
159 Croconaw	Evolved Totodile (L 18)	●/●
160 Feraligatr	Evolved Croconaw (L 30)	●/●
161 Sentret	Route 1, 29	●/●
162 Furret	Evolved Sentret (L 15)	●/●
163 Hoot Hoot	(Night) Route 1, 2, 29-31, 35-37	●/●
164 Noctowl	Evolved Hoot Hoot (L 20) Route 2, 8,12,14,15, 43	●/●
165 Ledyba	(Morning) Route 2, 30, 31, 37	●
166 Ledian	(Morning) Route 2	●
167 Spinarak	(Night) Route 2, 30, 31, 37	●
168 Ariados	Evolved Spinarak (L 22), (Night) Route 2	●
169 Crobat	Evolved Golbat (Tameness)	●/●
170 Chinchou	Route 21	●/●
171 Lanturn	Evolved Chinchou (L 27)	●/●
172 Pichu	Breed Pikachu	●/●
173 Cleffa	Breed Clefairy/ Clefable	●/●
174 Igglybuff	Breed Jigglypuff/Wigglytuff	●/●
175 Togepi	Egg in Violet City, Breed Togetic	●/●
176 Togetic	Evolved Togepi (Tameness)	●/●
177 Natu	Ruins of Alph, Grass strip to the left	●/●
178 Xatu	Evolved Natu (L 25)	●/●
179 Mareep	Route 32, 42, 43	●/●
180 Flaaffy	Route 42, 43, Evolved Mareep (L 15)	●/●
181 Ampharos	Evolved Flaaffy (L 30)	●/●
182 Bellossom	Evolved Gloom with Sun Stone	●/●
183 Marill	Mt. Mortar, Talk to Parry on Route 45	●/●
184 Azumarill	Evolved Marill (L 18)	●/●
185 Sudowoodo	Route 36, Water tree with Squirtbottle	●/●
186 Politoed	Trade Poliwag and Poliwhirl with King's Rock	●/●
187 Hoppip	Route 13, 14, 15, 32, 33	●/●
188 Skiploom	Route 14, Evolved Hoppip (L 18)	●/●
189 Jumpluff	Evolved Skiploom (L 27)	●/●
190 Aipom	Shake Tree Route 42	●/●
191 Sunkern	Shake Tree In National Park	●/●
192 Sunflora	Evolved Sunkern With Sun Stone	●/●
193 Yanma	(Night) Route 35, Talk to Arnie	●/●
194 Wooper	Route 32, 33	●/●
195 Quagsire	Evolved Wooper (L 20), Union Cave, Route 9, 10	●/●
196 Espeon	(Day, Morning) Evolved Eevee (Tameness)	●/●
197 Umbreon	(Night) Evolved Eevee (Tameness)	●/●
198 Murkrow	(Night) Route 7, 16	●/●
199 Slowking	Trade Slowpoke or Slowbro with King's Rock	●/●
200 Misdreavus	(Night) Mt. Silver	●/●
201 Unown	Ruins of Alph	●/●
202 Wobbuffet	(Flash) Dark Cave	●/●
203 Girafarig	Route 43	●/●
204 Pineco	(Night) Shake Trees Route 31, 34	●/●
205 Forretress	Evolved Pineco (L 31)	●/●
206 Dunsparce	(Flash) Dark Cave, Talk to Anthony	●/●
207 Gligar	Route 45	●
208 Steelix	Trade Onix while holding metal coat	●/●
209 Snubbull	Route 38, Talk to Chad	●/●
210 Granbull	Evolved Snubull (L 23)	●/●
211 Qwilfish	(Fishing) Route 32, Talk to Ralph	●/●
212 Scizor	Trade Scyther with Metal Coat	●/●
213 Shuckle	Smash Rock Route 40, 41, Cianwood Island	●/●
214 Heracross	Shake Trees Route 42	●/●
215 Sneasel	(Night) Route 28	●/●
216 Teddiursa	Route 45	●
217 Ursaring	Route 28, Victory Road, Mt. Silver, Evloved Teddiursa (L 30)	●
218 Slugma	Route 16-18	●/●
219 Magcargo	Evolved Slugma (L 38)	●/●
220 Swinub	Ice Cave	●/●
221 Piloswine	Evolved Swinub (L 33)	●/●
222 Corsola	(Fishing) With Super Rod	●/●
223 Remoraid	Route 44, Talk to Wilton	●/●
224 Octillery	Evolved Remoraid (L 25)	●/●
225 Delibird	Ice Cave	●
226 Mantine	Route 41	●
227 Skarmory	Route 45	●
228 Houndour	(Night) Route 7	●/●
229 Houndoom	Evolved Houndour L 24	●/●
230 Kingdra	Trade Horsea or Seadra with Dragon Scale	●/●
231 Phanpy	Route 45, Use Fastball	●
232 Donphan	Victory Road, Mt. Silver, Route 28, Evolved Phanpy (L 25)	●
233 Porygon 2	Trade Porygon with Upgarde	●/●
234 Stantler	Route 36, 37	●/●
235 Smeargle	Ruins of Alph, Grass to the left	●/●
236 Tyrogue	Talk to Karate Master in Mt. Mortar, Breed Hitmonchan/Hitmonlee/Hitmontop	●/●
237 Hitmontop	Evolved Tyrogue	●/●
238 Smoochum	Breed Jynx	●/●
239 Elekid	Breed Electabuzz	●/●
240 Magby	Breed Magmar	●/●
241 Miltank	Route 38, 39	●/●
242 Blissey	Evolved Chansey (Tameness)	●/●
243 Raikou	Burned Tower, Use Sleep & Fastball to Capture	●/●
244 Entei	Burned Tower, Use Sleep & Fastball to Capture	●/●
245 Suicune	Burned Tower, Use Sleep & Fastball to Capture	●/●
246 Larvitar	Silver Mountain	●/●
247 Pupitar	Evolve Larvitar (L 30)	●/●
248 Tyranitar	Evolve Pupitar (L 55)	●/●
249 Lugia	Whirl Islands	●/●
250 Ho-Oh	Tin Tower	●/●



PLAYSTATION



Tameness

Certain Pokémon only evolve if their mood is right. If you see (Tameness) in our listing, then you'll need to take special care of certain Pokémon. Use them in battle, let them hold items, use healing agents on them, and they'll eventually evolve. You won't be able to get Crobat, Togetic, Blissey, Espeon, or Umbreon without setting their mood. Also, Pichu, Cleffa, and Igglybuff won't evolve unless they are happy.

Swarms

By talking to certain characters in the game, you'll learn about Pokémon swarms – timed events where rare Pokémon show up in greater abundance. Even if you are miles away, these characters will call you and let you know that a swarm is happening. Snubbull, Remoraid, Dunsparce, Yanma, Qwilfish, and Marill are easiest found in swarms.

Evolve Tyrogue

This funky fighter evolves at level 20, but the new creature you unlock is based on the balance between attack and defense. Here's how to balance the scale to get the goods.

Hitmonlee – Attack > Defense
Hitmonchan – Attack < Defense
Hitmontop – Attack = Defense

New Items

Certain Pokémon imported from Red, Blue, and Yellow enter the new world with exciting new items attached. Be sure and load all of your old Poké-pals onto Gold or Silver!

Unown Reward

After solving all of the puzzles in the Ruins of Alph, capture all of its forms (A through K), then talk to the scientists, to unlock the ability to print out pictures of Unown on your Game Boy Printer.

Poké-Breeding

Bring a male and female Pokémon to the Breeding Center on Route 33 south of Goldenrod City. Eventually, this couple will produce an egg. When it hatches, a new Poké-baby awaits. Also, if you don't have the opposite sex, you can always use like Pokémon or a Ditto.

Timed Events

Here's a list of all the timed events in the game.

National Park Bug Catching – Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
Rival at Indigo Plateau (After Mt. Moon) – Monday, Wednesday
Rival at Dragon's Den (After Mt. Moon) – Tuesday, Thursday
Brother at Goldenrod Salon – Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
Young Brother at Goldenrod Salon – Sunday, Thursday, Saturday
Goldenrod Trinket Shop Opens – Monday
Goldenrod Pharmacy Opens – Sunday, Saturday
Union Cave Lapras – Friday
S.S. Aqua Departs for Vermilion – Monday, Friday
S.S. Aqua Departs for Olivine – Sunday, Wednesday
Mt. Moon Clefary Dance – Monday Evening
Pokémon Radio Plays Lullaby – Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Pokémon Radio Plays March – Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
Frieda on Route 32 – Friday
Wesley at Lake of Rage – Wednesday
Arthur on Route 36 – Thursday
Tuscany on Route 29 – Tuesday
Sunny on Route 37 – Sunday
Monica on Route 40 – Monday
Santos in Blackthron – Saturday
Lucky Number Radio Chooses Number – Friday

CODE OF THE MONTH

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Neversoft Skaters – At the Main Menu, hold L1, then press Up, □ (x2), △, Right, Up, ○, △. Doing this will make the wheel spin. Now, enter Create-A-Skater and input any of the Neversoft team names like Mick West, Connor Jewett, Joel Jewett, Nolan Nelson, or Noel Hines. Just look in your game manual under the Credits to see who the team consists of.

Cheat Menu – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press ✕ (x3), □, △, Up, Down, Left, Up, □, △, ✕, △, ○, ✕, △, ○. Now, end the run to unlock Spider-Man, Officer Dick, Hawaii, and Skater Haven.

Full Special Meter – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press ✕, △, ○ (x2), Up, Left, △, □.

Raise Stats 10x – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press ✕, △, ○, □, △, Up, Down.

Turbo Mode – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press Down, □, △, Right, Up, ○, Down, □, △, Right, Up, ○.

Blood Mode – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press Right, Up, □, △.

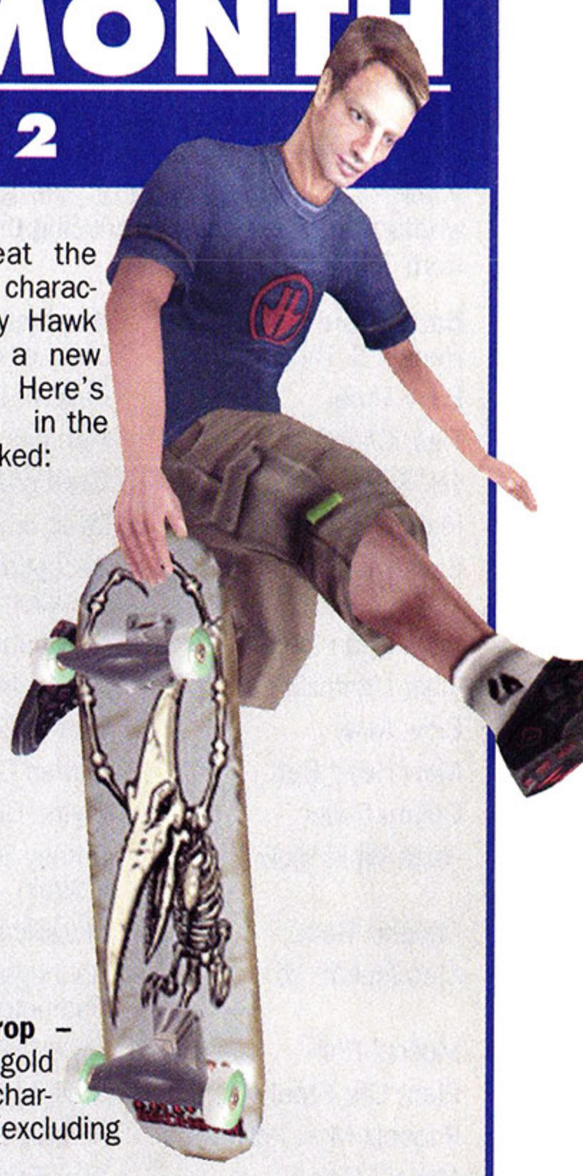
Fat Skater – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press ✕ (x4), Left, ✕ (x4), Left, ✕ (x4), Left.

Big Head Mode – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press □, ○, Up, Left (x2), □, Right, Up, Left.

Skinny Skater – During gameplay, pause, then hold L1 and press ✕ (x4), □, ✕ (x4), □, ✕ (x4).

Additional Cheats
Each time you beat the game with different characters (excluding Tony Hawk and Officer Dick), a new cheat is revealed. Here's the listing of cheats in the order they are unlocked:

Officer Dick
Skip to Restart
Kid Mode
Perfect Balance
Always Special
STUD Cheat
Weight Cheat
Wireframe
Slow-Nic
Big Head Cheat
Sim Mode
Smooth Cheat
Disco Mode
Level Flip



Hawaii Chopper Drop – Simply earn three gold medals with every character in the game (excluding Private Carrera).

Skater Haven – Beat the game with every character, each with a 100% rating and three gold medals, to get this awesome new course.

Spider-Man – As cool of a secret this is, it's really easy to access. All you have to do is complete the game with a 100% rating and three gold medals with a created skater. When you do get this web crawler, check out his special moves!

80's Tony Hawk – Beat the game with a 100% rating and three gold medals with Tony Hawk. Simply go the Bullring with 80's Tony and win a medal to see a new video.

Private Carrera – Complete every gap in the game, a difficult feat indeed, to get this hot skater.

Moon Gravity – Unlock Officer Dick, and use him to beat the game with a 100% rating and three gold medals to unlock this other worldly cheat.

Martin Sweet
Plano, TX

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

Play as Slim Jim – In Pro Quest mode, go to the Rider Selection screen and press Down (x2), Left, Right, Up (x2), ○ to unlock the big Slim Jimmy.

All Bikes – In Pro Quest mode, go to the Bike Selection screen and press Up, Left, Up, Down, Up, Right, Left, Right, ○ to get all of the fun little bicycles.

All Levels & Styles – In Pro Quest mode, go to the Style Selection screen and press Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, ○ to get the booty you crave so dearly!

Aaron Groute
Webville, COM

Hogs of War

Enter all of these interesting cheats as player names.

Team Lard – MARDY PIGS
All Movies – PRYING PIGS
Extra CG – WATTA PORK

"Virtual Gap Boy 2001"
Phoenix, AZ

Star Trek: Invasion

Cheat Menu – At the Mission Selection screen, press Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, then simultaneously press L1 and R1, then L2 and R2.

"Daddy Fat Sax"
Memphis, TN

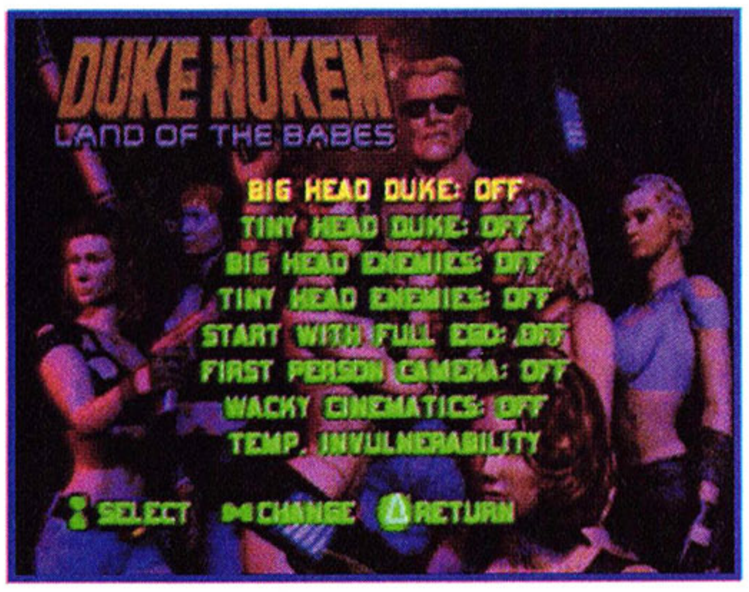
PLAYSTATION

Monster Rancher Battle Card: Episode II

By inserting different music and game CDs into your PlayStation, you can create different battle cards. Here's a comprehensive list revealing the CDs needed to unlock some of the rarest cards in the game. To no surprise whatsoever, the games producing the rarest cards are all from Tecmo.

Battle Card	Required CD
Henger & Thunder Bolt	Dead or Alive (PS-X)
Busy Time	Kagero: Deception 2 (PS-X)
Tiger Charge	Monster Rancher 2 (PS-X)
Jell Stab	Dead or Alive 2 Demo (DC)
Plant Seed Gun	Dead or Alive 2 (DC)
Suezo Tail Slap	Deception III: Dark Delusion (PS-X)
Hare Rush Punch	No Doubt – Return of Saturn
Tiger Lightning	No Doubt – Tragic Kingdom
Blow Away	Blink 182 – Enema of the State
Mew Head Butt	Mariah Carey – #1's
Golem Roller	Celine Dion – Falling Into You
Naga Whirl Blow	Britney Spears – Oops! I Did It Again
Phoenix Beak	Metallica – And Justice For All
Metalner Yo Yo	Soundgarden – Badmotorfinger
Mocchi Roll	Jewel – Pieces of You
Plant Life Steal	Dave Matthews Band – Crash
Phoenix Mys. Power	Andrea Bocelli – Sacred Arias
Mocchi Hide	Fear Factory – Remanufacture
Tiger Sonic Move	Brian Setzer Orchestra – Dirty Boogie
Twinkling	Kiss – Greatest Kiss
Gali Evil Dance	Guns N' Roses – Appetite for Destruction
Naga Evil Shots	Korn – Life is Peachy
Dino Throw Away	Rob Zombie – American Made Music to Strip By

"Vince, The Game Visualizer"
Otter Creek, IL



Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes

Debug Code – Enter then Options menu, then access the Cheats menu and enter: L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, L1, L2, R2, R1, ○ (x4), ✕ (x4), □ (x4), Select (x4).

Michael Kohut
Scranton, PA

NASCAR 2001

To access these codes enter the Options menu, select Credits, then choose Development. After the movie plays, and the credits begin to role, enter one of the codes below.

EA.Com Car – Hold L1, then press □, △, □, ○, □, ✕.
EA Sports Car – Hold L2, then press □, ○, △, ✕.
Exotic Blackbox Car – Hold R2, then press □, ○, ✕, Up, Down, Left, Right.
Blackbox Classic Car – Hold R2, then press □, ○, ✕, Down, Up, Right, Left.
John Andretti Second Car – Hold R1, then press □, △, □, △.
Treasure Island Track – Hold L2, then tap □, ○, □, Up, Up, Down, Up, Left, Right, ✕.
Blackbox Track – Hold R1, then press Left, ○, Up, Down, Right (x3).
Wrecking Ball Effect – Hold L2, then press ○, △ (x5), ✕.
1 On 1 Mode – Hold R1, then press ○ (x3).

"EA Lover"
Jellystone, NY

Hot Shots Golf 2

Simply enter "2GSH" as a Player Name to unlock all of the characters, all of the courses, and the Top-Pro difficulty.

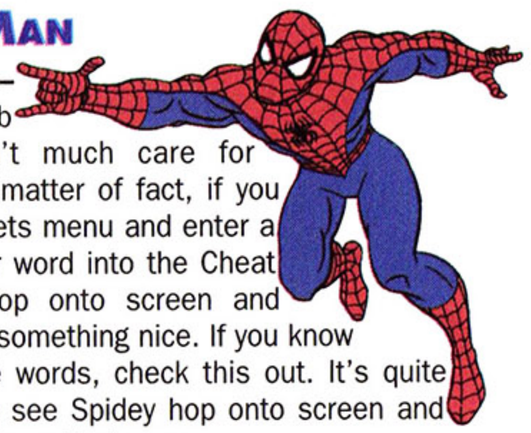
"The Kramer Gamer"
Whitefish, MT

MTV Sports: Skateboarding

Cheat Mode – Enter Lifestyle mode, then input PASWRD at the Name Entry screen. This code will unlock all of the boards, costumes, skaters, and parks.

Candy Nadora
Toronto, Canada

Spider-Man



No Swearing – Marvel's web slinger doesn't much care for cussing. As a matter of fact, if you enter the Secrets menu and enter a salty four-letter word into the Cheat menu, he'll pop onto screen and replace it with something nice. If you know some of these words, check this out. It's quite entertaining to see Spidey hop onto screen and erase your foul-mouthed spew.

Jimmy Martin
Nashville, TN

DREAMCAST

San Francisco Rush 2049

Cheat Menu – At the Press Start screen, hold the L and R Buttons, and X and Y, then tap Start to display the Cheats function. Now, enter the Cheats menu and input any of the codes below. Note: These codes must be entered at lightning speeds.

Demolition Battle Mode – Highlight Demolition Battle, then old the L Button and A, and press Y, X. Release these buttons, then hold the R Button and A, then tap Y, X.

Random Battle Weapons – Highlight Random Weapons, then hold the L Button and A, and tap X, Y. Release L and A, then hold the R Button and A, then tap X, Y.

Invincibility – Highlight Invincible, then hold the L Button and X, the tap Y, A. Release L and X, then hold the R Button and A, X, and Y.

Super Tires – Highlight Super Tires, the hold the R Button, and press X (x3). Release R, then hold the L Button and press A (x2), Y.

Master Brakes – Highlight Brakes, the press Y (x3), the hold the L and R Buttons, A, and X.

Track Orientation – Highlight Track Orientation, then hold the L and R Buttons and press X. Release these buttons, then tap A, X, Y. Lastly, hold L and R again, then press X.

Invisible Tracks – Highlight Invisible Track, then quickly tap R Button, L Button, Y, X, A (x2), X, Y. Now, hold the L and R Buttons and press A.

Invisibility – Highlight Invisible, then hold the L Button and X. Release these buttons, hold the R Button and Y, then tap A. Release R and Y, then hold the L and R Buttons, and press X. Finally, release the button combo and press Y (x3).

Heavy Cars – Highlight Mass, then hold A, and press X (x2), Y. Release A and tap the L Button, then the R Button.

"Scarecrow"
Burnt Hills, NY

F355 Challenge

Hidden Tracks – From the Main Menu, enter the Options menu, then hold X and Y. This will unlock the Password screen. Enter this new menu, without letting go of X and Y. Now, input any of the case sensitive codes below to unlock a new course.

Fiorano Track – CinqueValvole
Nurburgring Track – LiebeFrauMilch
Laguna-Sega Track – Stars&Stripes
Sepang Track – KualaLumpur
Atlanta Track – DaysofThunder

Carrie Fischer
Endor Moon Hills, NM

Seaman

Awareness Message – Place the Seaman GD-ROM into any CD player and listen to the tracks to find a strange kitchen awareness message.

William Aterblou
Orlando, FL

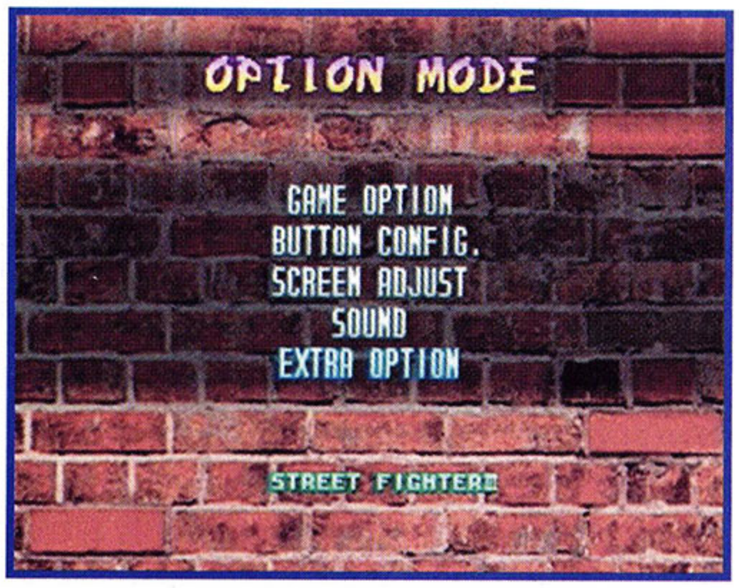
NINTENDO 64

Ultimate Fighting Championship

Super Fighter – Enter Career mode, the input "Best" as the first name, and "Buy" as the last name to unlock a fighter with 999 creation points.

Bruce as Referee – In Career mode, unlock Bruce as a character, then choose a fighter, then when the match is loading, hold the L and R Buttons to swap the announcer with the ref.

Henry Schultz
AOL, COM



Street Fighter III: Double Impact

For either game, head to the Options screen. Hold the L and R through the entire code sequence. Start off by highlighting Game Option and pressing Left (x2), X (x2), Right (x2). Next, highlight Button Config and press Left (x2), Y (x2), Right (x2). Continue on to screen Adjust and press Left (x2), X, Y, Right (x2). Lastly, highlight Sound and press Left (x2), Y, X, Right (x2). Entering this command will open the extra options. This cheat is actually quite difficult to access, yet if you are truly determined, you'll nail the sequences and it will appear right before your burnt viewing eyes.

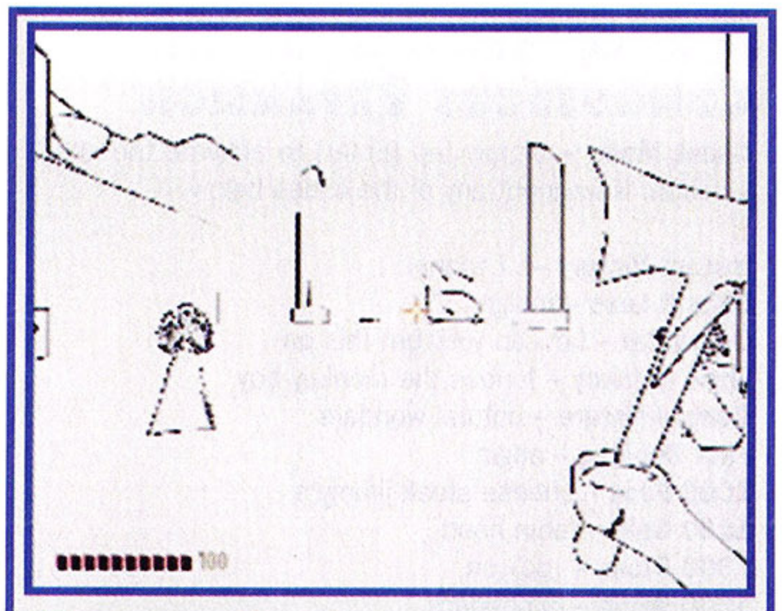
Clarence Waters
Webville, COM

Spawn: In The Demon's Hand

Hidden Characters – Complete Arcade mode with different characters to unlock exciting hidden characters like Gold Spawn, Green Spawn, Medievil Spawn, Future Spawn, some other Spawn, and many other versions of Spawn.

Character Galleries – Complete Tournament Battle with different characters to unlock artwork for each of the combatants you choose. Just wait until you see all the Spawn shots!!!

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH



Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion

Simply enter the Secrets menu and input any of the codes below. After you enter a code, you'll need to activate it before entering the game.

Invincibility – Raven, Fish, Eagle, Bear, Lizard, Rabbit
All Weapons – Owl, Bear, Owl, Beetle, Hawk, Owl
All Keys – Lizard, Dragonfly, Bull, Bear, Wolf, Eagle
Warp Level 1 – Frog, Elk, Horse, Dragonfly, Wolf, Rabbit
Warp Level 2 – Owl, Owl, Horse, Elk, Elk, Elk
Warp Level 3 – Owl, Rabbit, Bear, Beetle, Frog, Cougar
Warp Level 4 – Bear, Horse, Raven, Eagle, Horse, Coyote
Warp Level 5 – Bear, Dragonfly, Horse, Bear, Frog, Elk
Headless Mode – Lizard, Elk, Eagle, Owl, Fish, Horse
Big Head Mode – Cougar, Wolf, Snake, Rabbit, Lizard, Coyote
Big Limbs – Lizard, Lizard, Dragonfly, Horse, Lizard, Coyote
Stick Characters – Horse, Eagle, Snake, Cougar, Insect, Fish
Small Characters – Frog, Frog, Fish, Beetle, Wolf, Cougar
Deathmatch Mannequins – Snake, Bull, Snake, Frog, Bear, Elk
Pen & Ink Mode – Jaguar, Horse, Elk, Fish, Jaguar, Hawk
Gasping Mode – Dragonfly, Bull, Rabbit, Fish, Eagle, Raven
Gouraud Mode – Lizard, Fish, Beetle, Fish, Wolf, Dragonfly
Menu Madness – Rabbit, Owl, Horse, Beetle, Bear, Bear
Full Pause – Rabbit, Owl, Lizard, Elk, Fish, Rabbit
Credits – Elk, Elk, Elk, Elk, Elk, Elk

"GI Droid"
(Location unknown – last seen hugging Kurt Cobain's grave)

Mario Tennis

Enter the Special Games menu and choose Ring Tournament as your game of choice. Now, input the codes below to unlock exciting new tourneys.

Peach Cup – 0F9XFQOFR
Bowser Cup – N24K8QN2P
Donkey Kong Cup – MM55MQMMJ
MarioTennis.com Cup – 48HWOR482
Blockbuster Cup – ARM6JQARU

Kim Watts
Wilhelm, OH

San Francisco Rush 2049

Cheat Menu – At the Main Menu, highlight the Players icon, then hold the L and R Buttons, Z, Up C, and Right C to open the Cheats menu. Now, input any of the codes below.

All Parts – Highlight All Parts, then hold the L and R Buttons, and press Z. Release these buttons, then press Down C, Up C, Left C, Right C. Lastly, hold the L and R Buttons, then press Z.

Invincibility – Press Right C, L Button, R Button (x2), L Button. Now, Hold Left C and Down C, then tap Z.

"The Vidman"
Uptown, MN

Pokémon Puzzle League

High Speed Marathon – At the Title Screen, hold Z then press B, A, L Button (x2).

Very Hard Difficulty – At the Difficulty screen, hold Z, then press L Button (x2), A, B.

Super Hard Difficulty – At the Difficulty screen, hold Z, then press R Button, L Button, A, B.

All Puzzles – At the Title Screen, hold Z, then press A, B, R Button, A (x2), B, R Button, A to unlock every puzzle within the Puzzle University.

Jenny Simmons
Red Meadows, WA

Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2

Enter all of these codes at the Password screen.

Silver Uniforms – TNMN
Level 17 – WHSWZRD

"The Milkman"
Tellos, TN

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Rogue Spear: Urban Operations

Simply hit [Enter] to input any of the codes below.

God Mode – avatargod
Refill Inventory – 5fingerdiscount
Invisible Player – theshadowknows
Team God – teamgod
No AI – nobrainer
No Victory Conditions – explore

"Mac, The Video Master"
San Diego, CA

Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows of Amn

Cheat Mode – To enable these cheats, you'll need to edit a game file, so make a backup before proceeding. Edit the "baldur.ini" file within the game folder. Add the line: "Debug Mode=1" under the Program Options heading. Now, begin a game and press [Control] and [Space] to enable the console window. After entering any of the case-sensitive codes below, press [Enter], then press [Control] and [Space] again to activate the code.

Set Gold – CLUAConsole:AddGold ("<number>")
Set Experience – CLUAConsole:SetCurrentXP ("<0-2950000>")
Enable Key Cheats – CLUAConsole:EnableCheatKeys()
Teleport – CLUAConsole:MoveToArea ("<location number>")
Full Map – CLUAConsole:ExploreArea()
Spawn Monsters – CLUAConsole:CreateCreature ("<monster name>")
Spawn Items – CLUAConsole:CreateItem ("<item name>")
Spawn Multiple Items – CLUAConsole:CreateItem ("<item name>",<number>)

"Amnfan102"
Webville, COM

Star Trek: New Worlds

Level Select – This code requires a text editor to edit the "game.ini" file, so make a backup before proceeding any futher. Simply change the following lines to their new values.

FedLevel=100
KliLevel=200
RomLevel=300
TauLevel=400
MetLevel=500
HubLevel=600

Osborn Woltenwood
Rocky Bluffs, RI

Age of Empires II: The Conquerors Expansion

Cheat Mode – Simply tap [Enter] to activate the cheat function. Now, input any of the codes below.

Instant Victory – i r winner
Instant Loss – resign
Cobra Car – how do you turn this on
Little Monkey – furious the monkey boy
Control Nature – natural wonders
Fast Building – aegis
1000 Food – cheese steak jimmy's
1000 Gold – robin hood
1000 Stone – rock on
1000 Wood – lumberjack
Flying Dogs – woof woof
Full Map – marco
Kill All Opponents – black death
Kill Opponent 1 – torpedo1
Kill Opponent 2 – torpedo2
Kill Opponent 3 – torpedo3
Kill Opponent 4 – torpedo4
Kill Opponent 5 – torpedo5
Kill Opponent 6 – torpedo6
Kill Opponent 7 – torpedo7
Kill Opponent 8 – torpedo8
Saboteur Unit – to smithereens
Tall Villager – i love the monkey head
Suicide – wimpywimpywimpy

Jake Henderson
San Rio, NV

Blair Witch: Rustin Parr

Press [F10] to display the console window. At this point, any of the codes below may be entered at your leisure.

Invincibility – iworkforgod
Full Health – givemefaith
Invisibility – nod3d
Easy Combat – combatisscary
Easy Difficulty – isuck
Hard Difficulty – irule
Easy Puzzles – puzzlesarescary
Dismemberments – gibnplenty
All Weapons – getintomybelly
Crossbow – mediumrare
Shotgun – bigstickofdeath
Tommygun – meetmypaltommy
Elephant Gun – smileynomore
Flame-Thrower – burnyourassoff
Night Vision Goggles – icansee
Gas Mask – thedogfarted
Dynamite – goodtimesman
100 Bullets – iamawimpforthis
Silver Ammo – wwbeware
Lith Ammo – vampbeware
Mercy Ammo – demonbeware
Flaming Ammo – flameonastick
Charge Radiance Emitter – sunofgod
Metallic Skins – t2000
Recharge Flashlight – recharge
Disable AI – hellfreezeover
Big Head Mode – bighead
Rain – thunderstorm
Snow – snowstorm

Haley Dent
Salt Lake City, UT

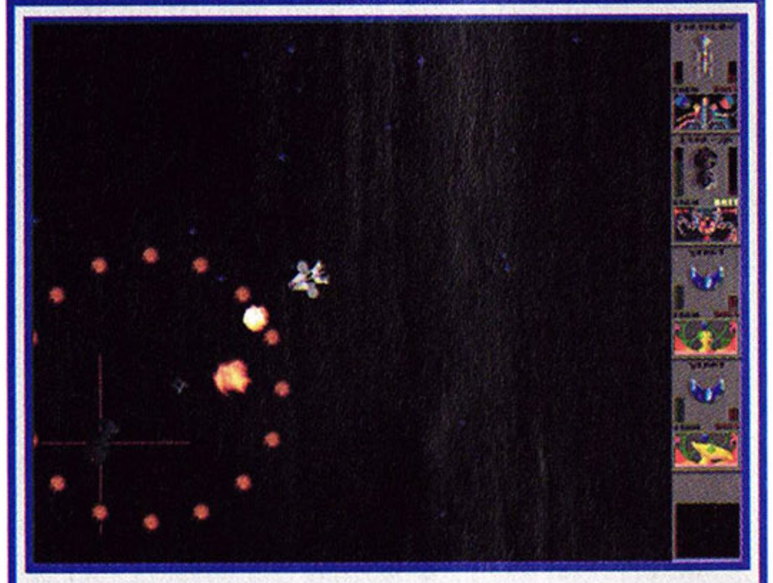
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force

Cheat Mode – Press [`] to display the cheat console. Now, enter one of any one of the following codes.

God Mode – god
Level Select – map (level name)
Hidden Zone – map brig
999 Health – undying
All Weapons – give weapons
Unlock Items – give (item name)
No Clipping – noclip
Invisibility – notarget
Third person View – cg_thirdperson 1
Set Third Person Range – cg_thirdpersonrange (1-100)

Nate Strizinski
Webville, COM

DOWNLOAD OF THE MONTH

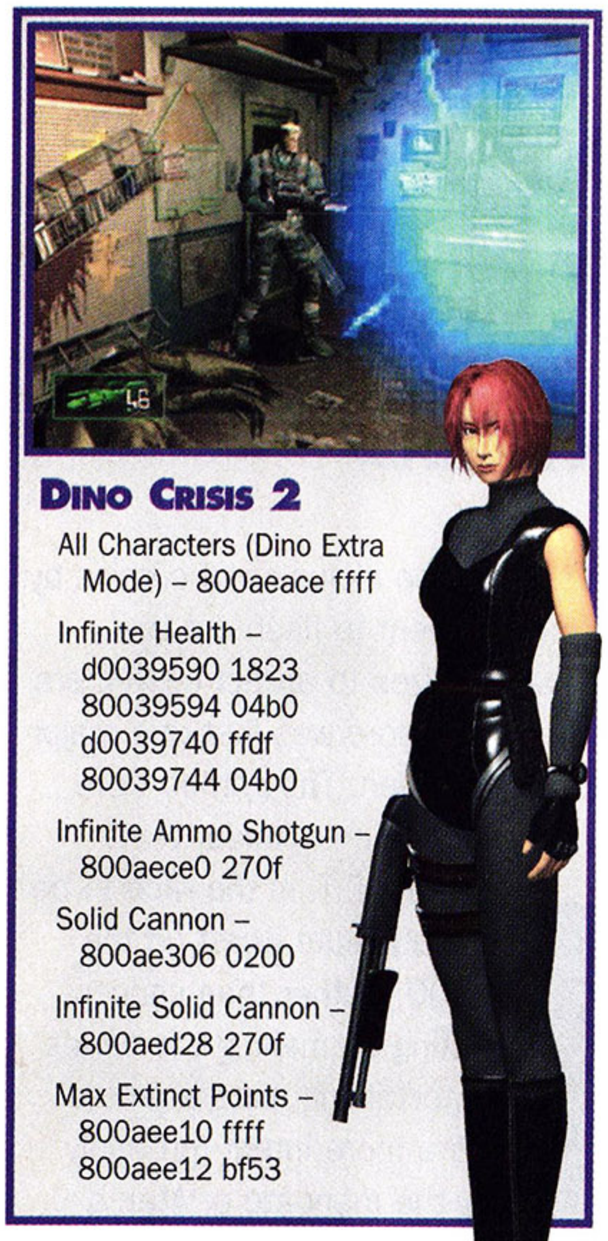


Game: Star Control 2
Download: A Hacked Sequel Called Time Warp
Site: www.starcontrol.com/timewarp

These talented maniacs hacked into the Star Control 2 code in order to create a freeware fan-based sequel for one of the coolest PC games of all time. While the game is still nowhere near finished, they have made it possible to fight with multiple ships on the screen instead of SC2's limited one-on-one style of combat. They've even gone so far as to create a couple of new ships although they're still no match for a Thraddash vessel with a talented pilot at its helm. Once they've perfected melee mode, they even have plans to create a new adventure portion of the game. The project has been in development since 1998 and the game still seems like it's a long way from completion, but we'll be checking the site at least once a month, and so should every Star Control 2 fan.

GAME SHARK

PlayStation



Dino Crisis 2

All Characters (Dino Extra Mode) – 800aeace ffff

Infinite Health –
d0039590 1823
80039594 04b0
d0039740 ffdf
80039744 04b0

Infinite Ammo Shotgun –
800aece0 270f

Solid Cannon –
800ae306 0200

Infinite Solid Cannon –
800aed28 270f

Max Extinct Points –
800aee10 ffff
800aee12 bf53

Knockout Kings 2000

Infinite Stamina –
8002184c1000
8002184e3221
800218521020

Infinite Stamina (Player 2) –
8002184c1000
8002184e3221
800218521420

Infinite Creation Points –
800c56980064

Infinite Health –
8001dabc082b
8001dabe0277
8001dac61420

Infinite Health (Player 2) –
8001dabc082b
8001dabe0277
8001dac61020

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

Win Gold Metal –
50000302 0000
800c2266 03e8
50000502 0000
800c2360 03e8

Stud Cheat –
800bbd4c 0001

Wire Frame Cheat –
800bbd54 0001

Big Head Cheat –
800bbd5c 0001

Smooth Cheat –
800bbd64 0001

Level Flip Cheat –
800bbd70 0001

Disco Mode Cheat –
800bbd6c 0001

Moon Physics Cheat –
800bbd68 0001

Sim Mode Cheat –
800bbd60 0001

Slo-Nic Cheat –
800bbd58 0001

Weight Cheat –
800bbd50 0001

Always Special Cheat –
800bbd48 0001

Kid Mode Cheat –
800bbd40 0001

Perfect Balance –
800bbd46 0001

Danger Girl

Infinite Health –
80061b40 2400

Infinite Pistol Ammo –
800ef518 03e7

Infinite Pistol Clips –
800ef51a 03e7

Infinite AK47 Ammo –
800ef578 03e7

Infinite AK47 Clips –
800ef57a 03e7

Infinite Sub Machinegun Ammo –
800ef5d8 03e7

Infinite Sub Machinegun Clips –
800ef5d8 03e7

NHL 2001

Max Momentum (Away) –
8011ffd8 03e8

No Momentum (Away) –
8011ffd8 0000

Max Momentum (Home) –
8011ffdc 03e8

No Momentum (Home) –
8011ffdc 0000

Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes

All Cheats –
8006ff20 ffff

All Secrets –
300ea17a 0003

Flame Thrower –
800ea040 0001

Infinite Flame Thrower Ammo –
800ea042 00c8

Grenade Launcher –
800ea030 0001

Infinite Grenade Launcher Ammo –
800ea032 0014

Torpedo Launcher –
800ea028 0001

Laser Gatling –
800ea038 0001

RPG –
800ea048 0001

Bullet Proof Vest –
800e9f50 2710

Stealth Generator –
800ea088 0001

Shrinker –
800ea080 0001

Dynamite –
800ea060 0001

Infinite Ego –
800e9d32 2710

Infinite Air –
800e9f52 2e85

Quest Item –
800ea168 0002

Timer Always at 00:00 –
800ea164 0000
800ea166 0000

Infinite Continues –
300ea17b 0000

MTV Sports: Pure Ride

All Extras Unlocked –
800d5510 ffff
800d5512 ffff
800d5518 ffff
800d551a ffff
800d5520 ffff
800d5522 ffff
800d5528 ffff
800d552a ffff

Muppet RaceMania

First Place Finish –
d10c3572 0000
800c3572 0001

All Cars –
800e02bc ffff
800e02be ffff

Studio Track –
800e0256 0161

Arches Track –
800e025e 0161

Fraggle Track –
800e0266 0161

Disco Track –
800e026e 0161

Dreamcast

Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike

Infinite Health –
e76f2451000000a0

Low Health –
e76f245100000001

Infinite Health (Player 2) –
523f4b93000000a0

Low Health (Player 2) –
523f4b9300000001

Buzz Lightyear of Star Command

Infinite Health –
32f9270f00000190

Max Credits –
cc33e4b0000003e7

Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2

Infinite Cash –
d8c0836800000010

Sega GT

Low Lap Time –
24d7adeb00000000
f2e95a9500000000

Plenty Of Cash –
1634d44405f5e0ff

Nintendo 64

Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2

Infinite Armor –
8135c5180600

Infinite Health –
8135c5160600

All Weapons & Ammo –
8115d06e0001
8116368e0001

Ogre Battle 64

Infinite Goth –
81196a6e ffff

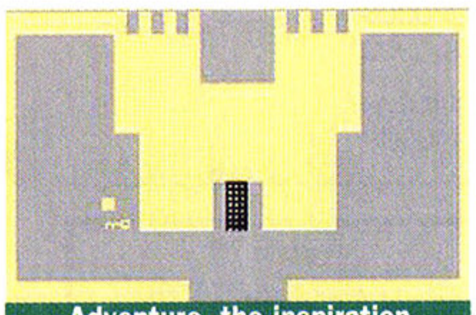
CLASSIC GL

SWORDQUEST

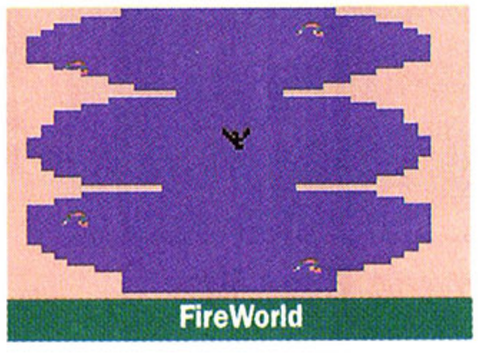
THE ADVENTURE THAT NEVER ENDED

In 1982, Atari was anxious to make a sequel to Adventure, one of its most popular (and profitable) games for the 2600 console. Wanting to create a much larger experience than the predecessor, Atari decided to make the sequel a four-cartridge series. Perhaps because the hidden Easter egg in Adventure, which contained the programmer's initials, had succeeded in generating volumes of word of mouth sales, Atari also resolved to have the games revolve around hard-to-find, hidden clues.

The series' name was changed from Adventure II to SwordQuest, with the four individual games known as EarthWorld, FireWorld, WaterWorld, and AirWorld, each to be released six months apart. The cartridges would come packaged with a comic book that would be integral to the quest. Through playing the game, clues could be gathered that would point to certain panels in the comic where words were hidden within the artwork. In all, there would be ten hidden words in each comic – five of them the ones people needed to find, and five of them fake words so people couldn't win just by combing through the comic.

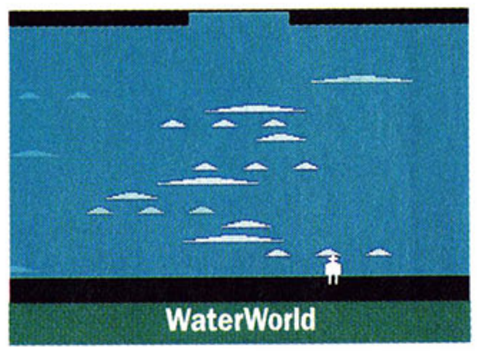


Adventure, the inspiration behind the SwordQuest series

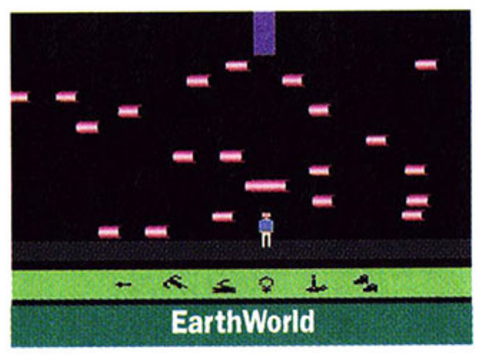


FireWorld

To add even more enticement to this already attractive package, Atari put up $150,000 in prizes. Those who sent in the correct words to Atari had a chance to be among the 50 finalists flown out to San Francisco to play a special version of the game, and the first to complete it would win a valuable treasure. According to the September/October 1982 issue of Atari Age magazine, the winner of the EarthWorld tournament would get a "spectacular 18kt solid gold Talisman, studded with 12 diamonds and 12 other precious stones." The winner of FireWorld would obtain "a gorgeous Goblet of platinum and gold, glistening with rubies, sapphires, diamonds, and pearls." The victor of WaterWorld would receive a "golden Crown, encrusted with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, green tourmalines, and aquamarines." AirWorld's prize would be "a modern-day version of the mythical Philosopher's Stone, encased in an 18kt gold box studded with emeralds, rubies, diamonds, and citrines." Each of these prizes had an evaluated worth of $25,000, but the four who earned these would have a chance at an even greater prize: "...an incredible jewel-encrusted Sword, with 18kt gold handle and gleaming silver blade, blazing with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires – a $50,000 sword!"



WaterWorld



EarthWorld

All the pieces were in place: a great idea based on one of the 2600's best-sellers, the inclusion of comics by some of DC's best talent to flesh out the story, and valuable prizes to attract customers and media attention. There was just one major flaw in Atari's master plan. The games were some of the most boring ever made, even besting E.T. in the race to be the absolute worst on the 2600. Rather than concentrating on making the series entertaining, programmers were more intent (probably by the mandate of Atari's executive board) on making it as arduous a process as possible to find clues. The SwordQuest titles were basically games of trial and error, where not only could a mistake deny you further advancement in the game, it would be hours before you realized you needed to start over.

What could have been the Zelda of its era ended up being one of the biggest flops of all time. The first in the SwordQuest series, EarthWorld, enjoyed a modest level of success, but even the chance to win big-money prizes couldn't entice anyone to continue buying into this quartet of vileness. Further hurt-

The Talisman, Goblet, Crown, and Philosopher's Stone

ing SwordQuest's sales was the "beginning of the end" for the home video game market, as the great crash was just around the corner. Only EarthWorld and FireWorld were released to store shelves. WaterWorld was only made available through direct-mail order to Atari Club members in late 1983 (and is a highly collectable item today), and AirWorld was never released in any form.

The prize for winning the EarthWorld tournament

The EarthWorld and FireWorld finals were held as planned, but only 15 (rather than 50) finalists were invited out for the WaterWorld finals, which ended up never happening. Atari gave $15,000 each to the winners of the first two tournaments, and $2,000 each to the 15 WaterWorld finalists as compensation for the contest being suspended indefinitely. The Crown, Philosopher's Stone, and Sword were never awarded, and rumor has it that all three of these valuable pieces of trivia are resting on the mantle of Jack Tramiel, the person who became the co-owner of Atari Corp. in 1984.

In an unusual twist, the comics that came with SwordQuest were much better than the game itself

THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

By 1984, Nintendo was having astounding success with its Famicom home console in Japan, and was hoping to keep its fortune streak rolling by bringing the system to the US. It was quite a bold move considering the fallout that had occurred in this country a little over one year earlier, and the only kind of home video games business being conducted was the kind that lost money.

Undaunted, the newly named Nintendo Entertainment System was test marketed in New York City in December 1985. The NES exceeded all expectations, and was quickly expanded to nationwide sales. Within a year, everyone would have Super Mario Brothers mania, and the rest, as they say, is history.

CLASSIC GI

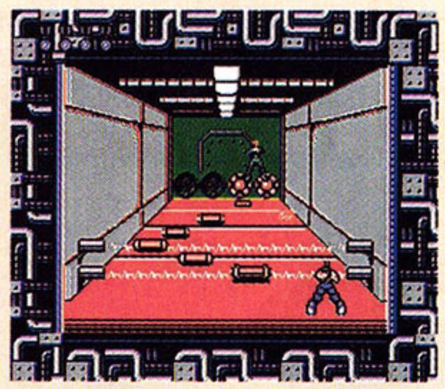
GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Matthew Johnson

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.

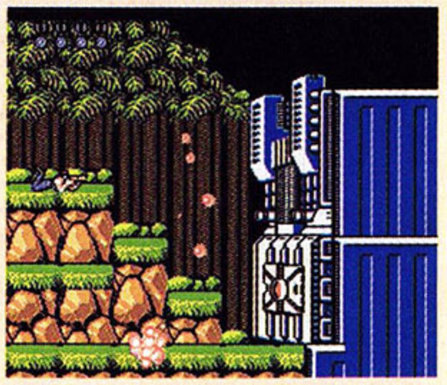
CONTRA

■ **FORMAT** NES ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI



I have just one word to say about what the greatest game of all time is – Contra. Everyone has played this classic. Everything about it is so awesome – the music, the gameplay, the intensity. Who cares about the story? The game was all about kicking alien butt; blasting through each stage with a machine gun, laser gun (which I thought wasn't really effective until certain bosses), and the spread gun.

Who could ever forget about that alien with the snake-like arms at the end of the vertical stage? I keep laughing at that because when I was playing with my brother, I would always keep on jumping, and he would fall behind and lose a life. When he ran out of lives, he would of course steal mine through that trick. And speaking of tricks, everyone who's played Contra will have the Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, B, A, Start for 30 lives code embedded in their memories until the day they die. This game should definitely be considered the greatest game of all time. Too bad the modern Contra games will never be in the running for a "best anything" list.



SNES

KIRBY'S DREAM COURSE

RETRO RATING 8.75

Prior to the release of this game, Nintendo's semi-popular puffball was only seen in an action/platform setting. If you couldn't tell by the name, Kirby's Dream Course is actually a take on mini golf, and surprisingly this game was Nintendo's first such attempt. Dream Course has some semblance of golf as you attempt to use the fewest strokes to make it into the hole. However, it differs slightly from a straight-up mini golf game because the hole is hidden and the ball is actually Kirby. The game contains 64 holes dispersed over eight courses. Each hole contains a number of enemies, and you must put Kirby into contact with these baddies to uncover the hole. Mixing elements of billiards and action/platforming, Dream Course is a thinking game just as much as it is action. Lining up the multiple bank, jumping-floater shot will take some skill and thought. For this reason – and Dream Course's excellent playability – this is one no SNES fan should go without.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** HAL LABORATORIES ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1995

GENESIS

SKITCHIN'

RETRO RATING 8.5

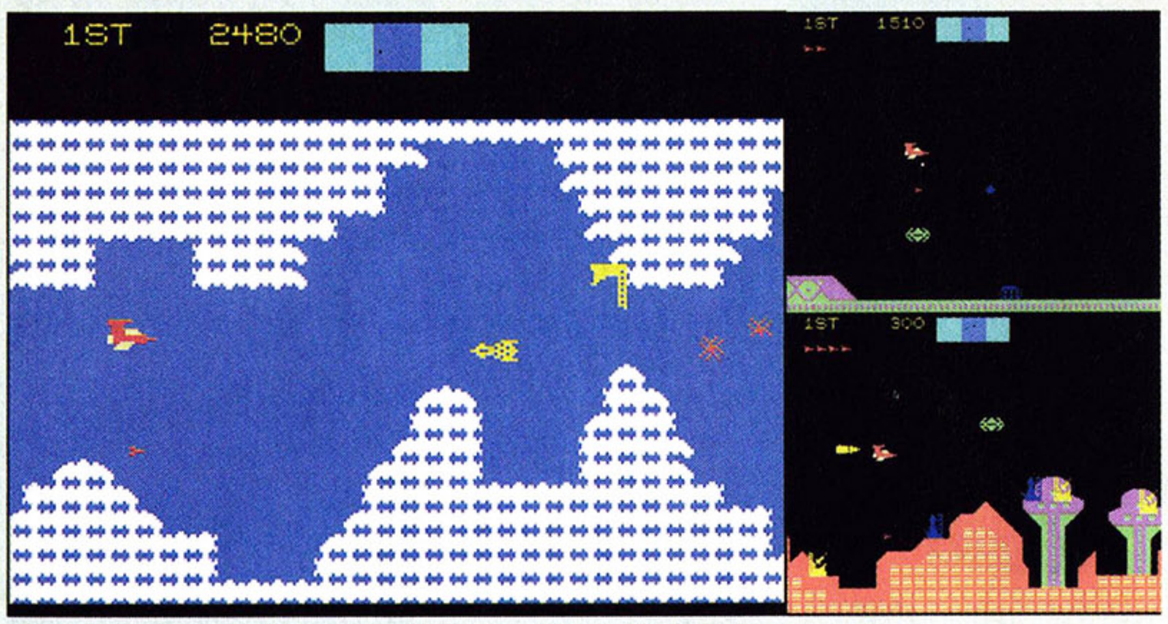
If you're not familiar with the slang term "skitchin'," it involves hanging on a car's bumper and hitching a ride. Yeah, you know, just like Michael J. Fox in *Back to the Future*. Anyway, this game came on the heels of another popular Electronic Arts game, Road Rash, and is very much like that game. In a race to the finish, players take the role of an inline skater. Competing against 14 other skaters, you must skate the streets, rack up cash by doing tricks, and avoid a slew of vehicle traffic. Of course, the traffic is where the skitchin' comes in. Grabbing onto a car will boost up the speed and help you place near the top. Like Road Rash, you can battle with other skaters using your fists and other acquired weapons. After each race, players can purchase new equipment such as new skates, pads, and the like. For its time, Skitchin' was an excellent spin-off of the Road Rash franchise, and the concept is altogether crazy. This is one title we'd love to see updated.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1994

COLECOVISION

COSMIC AVENGER

RETRO RATING 7.75



This side-scrolling shooter was one of the first games released for the Colecovision system, and thus garnered much playing time from those early adopters. The game is based on the arcade title of the same name, which in turn was an almost exact copy of Scramble, the arcade title from Konami. Regardless of its origins, the game is a very nice adaptation of an existing arcade title – something that was a strong selling point for the Colecovision at the time. Cosmic Avenger puts the player in control of a spaceship equipped with lasers and bombs. Through successive waves of air and ground-based enemies, you unload your ammunition on as much as possible. Obviously, as with most shooters of this type, the action gets progressively more difficult as you go along. Thus, the challenge of Cosmic Avenger is quite steep. This game may not be the most brilliant of Colecovision games, but it still holds a spot in history as one of the most memorable.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** COLECO ■ **DEVELOPER** COLECO ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1982

JAGUAR

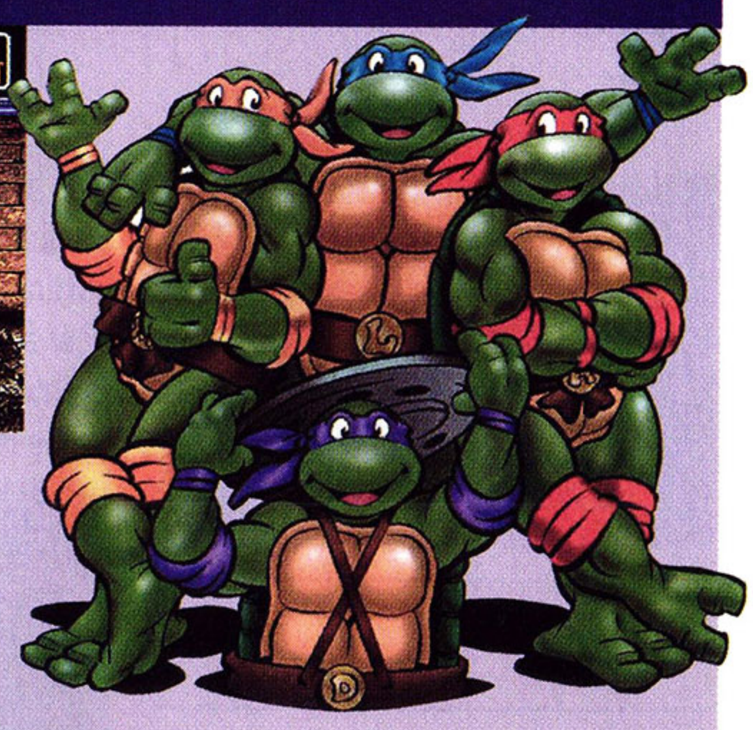
CYBERMORPH

RETRO RATING 9

As requested by Chris in Wilton, CT, here is a Jaguar game review. However, he must understand that the 14 Jaguar fans in the world can't expect too much ink in Classic GI because when you pick through the library of Atari Jaguar games, there are a bunch of games that standout as utter junk, while only a few are recognizable as worthwhile. Luckily, Cybermorph is the latter. Looking back at this game, its polygonal, textureless graphics suffer from some of the same problems that games of its time do – they just don't look that cool now. Even so, the gameplay is pretty solid. The basics of the game require you to navigate through the world, pick up a set amount of pods, and keep the enemy off your tail. One of the more interesting aspects of Cybermorph's playcontrol is the ability to switch perspectives. This turns out to be an essential gameplay element, as certain levels require precise navigation that is difficult to do from the normal perspective. Cybermorph shows its age, but is clearly one of the best games on the Jaguar.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** ATARI ■ **DEVELOPER** ATARI ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1993

GENESIS



TMNT: HYPERSTONE HEIST
Quick Continue – Right before you lose your last life, press **Start** on Controller 2.

Level Select – At the Konami logo, hit **C**, **B**, **B**, **A**, **A**, **A**, **B**, **C**. Then at the Title screen, press **A**, **B**, **B**, **C**, **C**, **C**, **B**, **A**. Start the game and a Select screen should appear.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
Secret Control Mode – At the title screen, press **Up**, **C**, **Down**, **C**, **Left**, **C**, **Right**. Start a game and then pause it. You can now use **A** to restart, **B** for slow motion, and **C** for frame advance.

BATMAN FOREVER
Cheat Menu – At the main menu, highlight the words Play Game. Then press **Left**, **Up**, **Left**, **Left**, **A**, **B**.

STRIDER
More Continues – Hit **A**, **C**, **B**, **C**, **A**, **Start** at the Intro screen.

NES

HEAVY SHREDDIN
99 Lives – At the Title screen, press and hold **A** + **B** + **Left**, then press **Start**.

BAD DUDES
63 Lives – On controller 2 at the Title screen, enter **B**, **A**, **Down**, **Up**, **Down**, **Up**, then press **Start** on controller 1.

VICE PROJECT DOOM
Level Select – When the game starts, hold **A** and press **RESET**. Now, press **A** or **B** to select a level.

DOUBLE DRAGON
Skip 2nd Boss – After climbing the ladders on the 2nd Mission, you will be greeted by a boss. Simply go to the ladder and continue to climb down. The boss will soon be defeated using this simple maneuver.

Get Hearts Quickly – To get hearts quickly and subsequently acquire more moves, simply use only the punch attack on the first level.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
Enter these at the Password screen.

Area 1 – **LRHN**
Area 2 – **HMPR**
Area 3 – **KMVW**
Area 4 – **XDGJ**
Area 5 – **TVJL**
Area 6 – **QBYZ**

3DO

CAPTAIN QUAZAR
Disappearing Walls – Pause the game and hit **R**, **L**, **B**, **B**, **B**, **R**, **L**, **Up**.

Life Refill – Pause the game and press **L**, **R**, **L**, **R**, **L**, **B**.

GEX
99 Lives – First, pause the game. Then hold the **Right Shift** button and press **Down**, **Right**, **A**, **C**, **Up**, **Left**, **A**.

JAGUAR

CYBERMORPH
Bonus Levels – To access the bonus levels, enter the password **6009**. Choose the planet in the lower right-hand corner to receive a bunch o' goodies.

2	**1328**
3	**9325**
4	**9226**
5	**3444**
?	**6009**

GAME BOY

CONTRA: ALIEN WARS
Enter the following codes at the Password screen.

Level 2 – **3KNT**
Level 3 – **MDWH**
Level 4 – **2S3W**
Level 5 – **1Z5C**

Infinite Lives – **B32R**

Level Skip – **H2F2** (press **Start** to advance)

HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER
Level Select – At the Player Select screen press **B**, **Select**, **Left**, **Right**, and then press **Start**.

Extra Missiles – For 25 extra missiles, hold **A** + **B**, then press **Up**, **Down** when the sub course is displayed.

Extra Ships – For 25 submarines, hold **A** + **B**, then press **Select**, **Up**, **Down** when the sub course is displayed.

SNES

BUBSY
Password – Enter these password to gain access to each level.

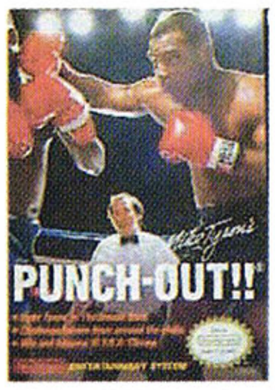
1	**JSSCTS**
2	**CKBGMM**
3	**SCTWMN**
4	**MKBRLN**
5	**LBLNRD**
6	**JMDKRK**
7	**STGRTN**
8	**SBBSHC**
9	**DBKRRB**
10	**MSFCTS**
11	**KMGRBS**
12	**SLJMBG**
13	**TGRTVN**
14	**CCLDSL**
15	**BTCLMB**
16	**STCJDH**

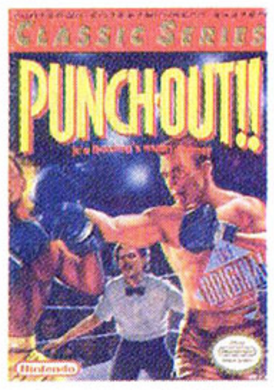
NAL FIGHT
Options Menu – To open the Options Menu, hold **L** and press **Start** at the Title screen.

Bonus Stage – To uncover an extra stage, at the game Start screen hold **L** + **R** and the hit **Up**, **Up**, **Down**, **Down**, **Left**, **Left**, **Right**, **Right**.

NES

PUNCH-OUT!!





GENERAL STRATEGY

Star Uppercuts: Most of the earlier boxers in the game will give you stars if you nail them at the proper times, particularly right before they are about to attack you. Be sure to nail your opponents a few times to stun them before hitting the Start button to initiate an uppercut. Otherwise they might dodge the attack. If you take a hit or block, you will lose a star.

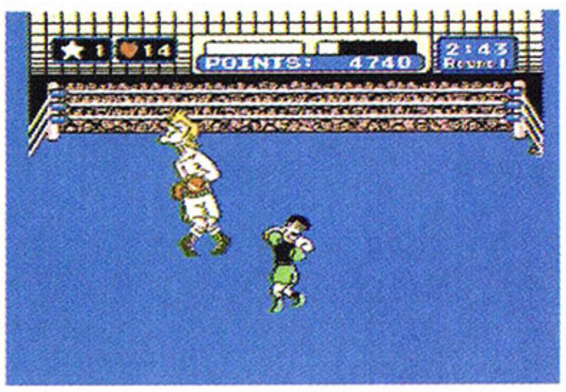
Heal Up: Once a match, you can hit select during intermission to heal up a little.

Second Round TKO: When boxers start getting too tough to take out in the first round, sometimes it helps to knock their healthbar all the way down to a near knockdown toward the end of the first round and then wait for the next round to begin. This will allow you to take them out at the very beginning of the next round, giving you almost three minutes to get two more knockdowns for a TKO.

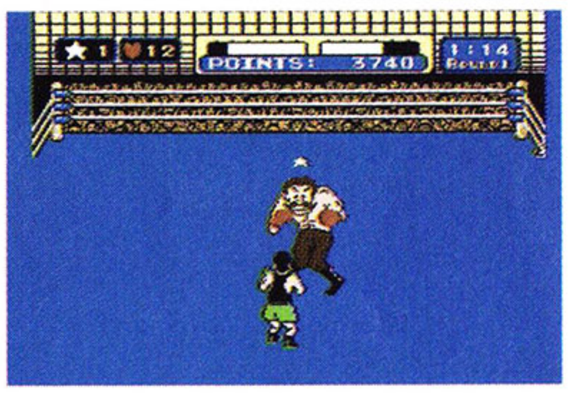
Attacks and Dodges: When dodging, the direction you choose seems to be irrelevant. In fact, when dodging multiple blows, attempting to switch direction only seems to slow you down. We did find that using certain combos of right and left attacks seemed to allow us to hit certain enemies for a longer period of time than if we had just pounded them with one fist, but it's hard to tell. The rumor that you do more damage with your right fist appears to be an urban myth.

MINOR CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIP

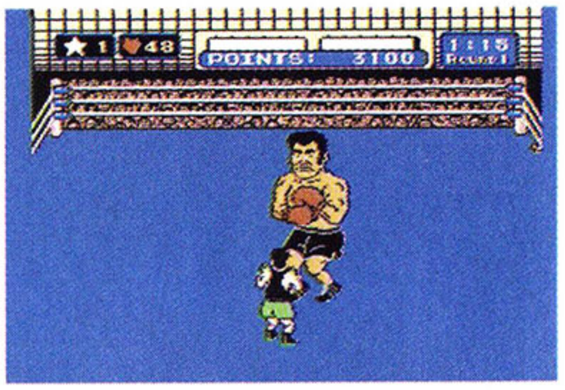
Glass Joe: You can pretty much punch the crap out of this pathetic boxer at your leisure. When he blocks, just start hitting him in the location you haven't been (if head, then gut or vice versa). If he backs up, taunts, and then rushes forward for a pathetic special, just punch this Frenchman named Joe in the gut to drop him for good.



Von Kaiser: Von Kaiser has two basic attacks. When he wiggles his head, he takes a jab at you. If you hit him in the face early enough, you can get a star and interrupt his attack. When he crouches, he's going for an uppercut. Just gut-punch him to get a star and interrupt him again.



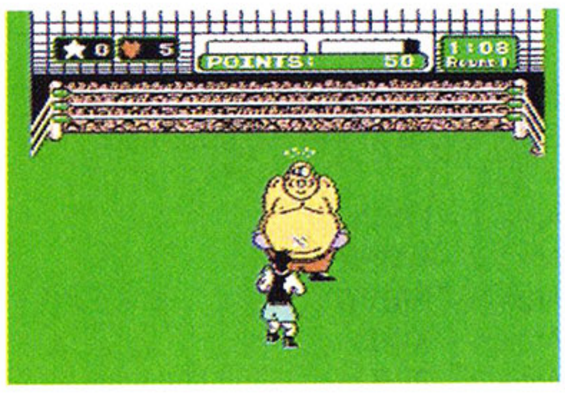
Minor Circuit Champion – Piston Honda: Piston is tougher, but he still gives away all of his attacks. If he ducks, twitches his eyebrows, or winds up, just dodge and hit him repeatedly in the head. If he backs up, dances around, and then charges, punch him in the gut to drop him with one punch. Shortly after he twitches his eyebrows, he lifts up his gloves. If you're quick, you can punch him in the gut for a star.



Minor Champion Perfect Score: 005 737 5423

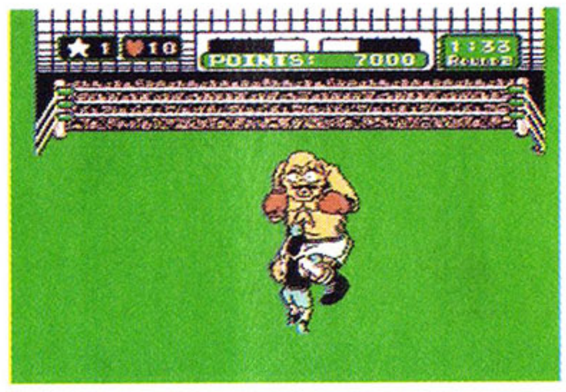
Don Flamenco: Don is pathetic. When he taunts you, pop him one and then dodge. After his uppercut, hit him in the head with alternating left and right punches. This should put him down eventually. When he gets up, he'll try to uppercut you right away. Sidestep it and repeat the alternating left-right punches to the head to put him down for good.

King Hippo: Like Don, King Hippo is a one-trick pony. Do your best to dodge his punches, but whenever he twitches and opens his mouth, pop him one in the teeth and then go nuts on his exposed belly. Repeat until KO'd.



Great Tiger: The Great Tiger has two basic attacks. Dodge when the jewel on his turban flashes or when he crouches, and come back at him with head hits. If he suddenly twitches around, get ready to block his teleporting spin attacks. Every time you hear a high-pitched sound, block. Eventually he will stop and one punch to the head will put him down.

Major Circuit Champion – Bald Bull: Bald Bull is fast but not unbeatable. He gives away his attacks by whirling his gloves around, winding up, and crouching low. You can get stars by throwing a punch at his head when he winds up. His nastiest attack, the Bull Rush, can be dodged fairly easily, but if you nail him in the gut right before he attacks, you'll get a one-hit knockdown.

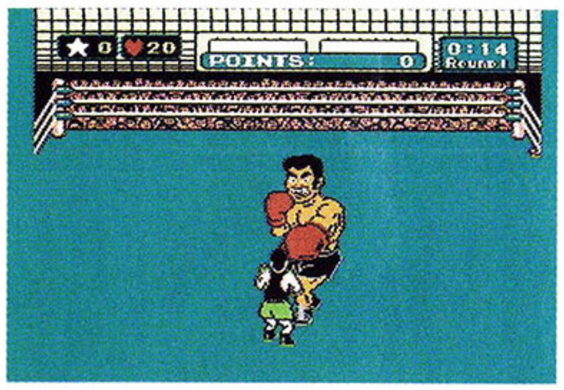


Major Circuit Champion Perfect Score: 777 807 3454

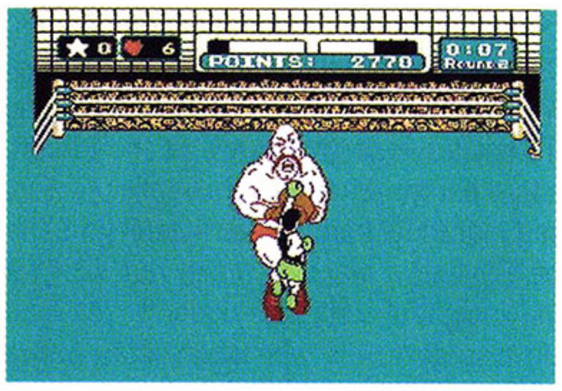
WORLD CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIP

Piston Honda: Piston returns for a rematch, but this time he has some new moves. Whenever his eyebrows twitch, he comes at you with two to three punches. You can dodge them all. You can get stars by hitting before he punches, but it's difficult to avoid getting hit by the next one. He also ducks for an uppercut, and ducks and turns back and forth for a delayed

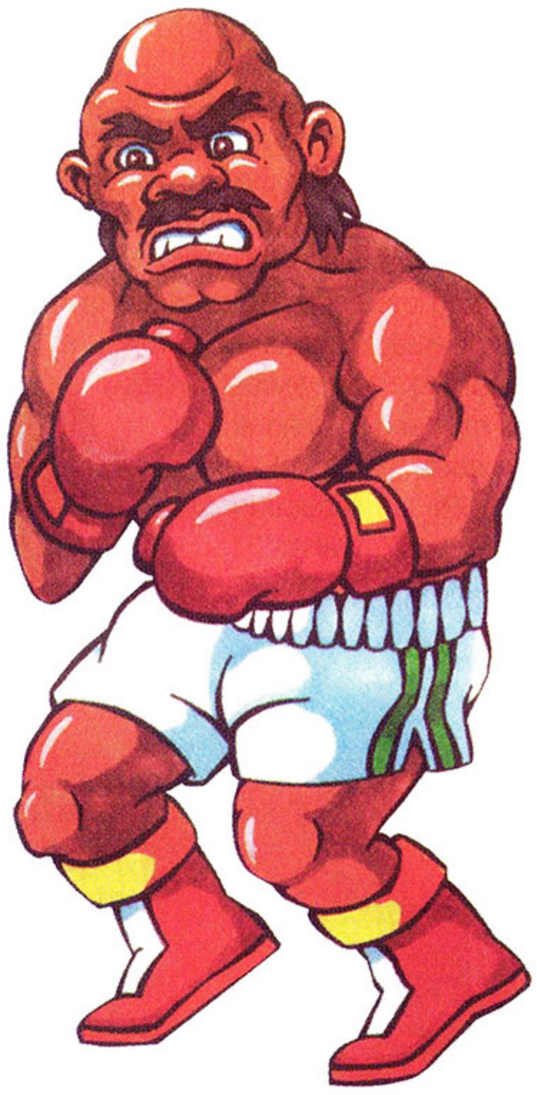
super uppercut. Both attacks can be avoided fairly easily. He still does a charge, but rather than dancing around first, he backs up and comes straight at you. If you manage to punch him in the gut you will either KO him or get a star. If you only get a star or miss with the punch, you will have to block his follow-up punches.



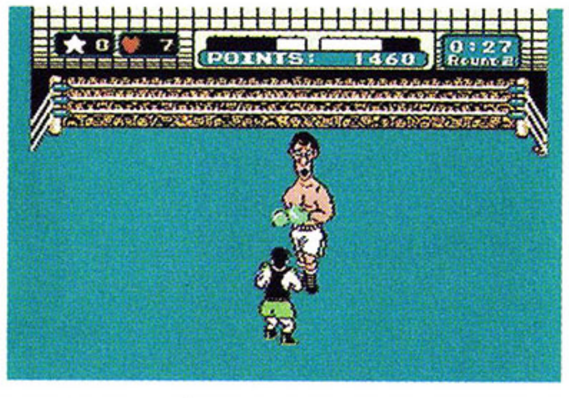
Soda Popinski: Soda's timing is difficult to get down. If he rears his right arm back, wait half a second before dodging and following up to the head. He also has two different duck and uppercut moves that move at different speeds. If he starts to slap his gloves together, wait for him to do it three times and then dodge the next three punches. You can jab him in the head after each punch, but as with Piston, it's hard to avoid the next attack. Just dodge.



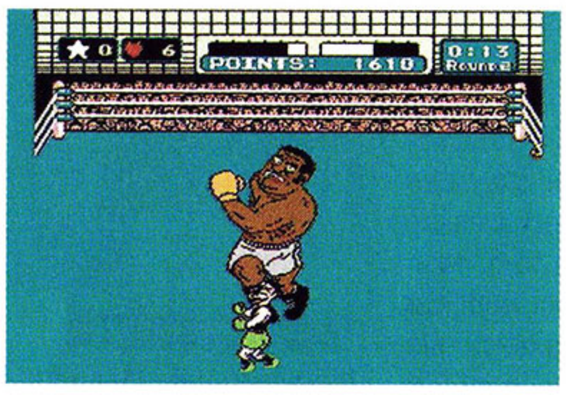
Bald Bull: The second Bald Bull is intimidating, but stay cool. Whenever he twirls his gloves, dodge quickly to avoid one of his tornado punches and follow up on his head. He also has duck and uppercut and quick uppercut where he lifts his gloves up and down before punching. Dodge and follow up with punches to the head. There are only two ways you can knock him down – with a star uppercut when his health is low or by gut punching him during his new and improved bull rush. You can get stars by punching him whenever he lifts his gloves up and down repeatedly. It's best to save the stars until you're sure the uppercut will finish him. If he does a bull rush, dodge the first charge. He will back up halfway up the screen and do a second charge. Just punch him as you did the first time and he'll go down.



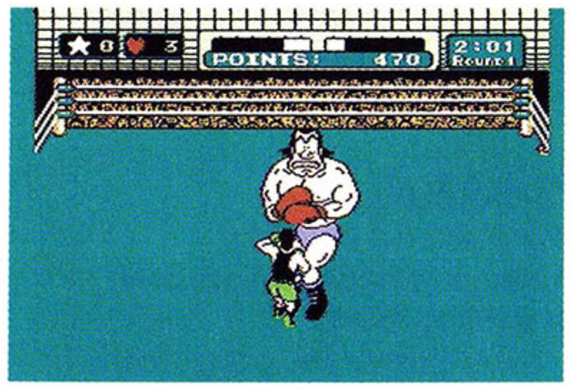
Don Flamenco: The new Don has a hook and a jab that don't really come with warning, but each attack is slow enough that you should be able to dodge it. When he starts taunting you, hit him and dodge right away. Most of the time he just blocks so be prepared to run out of stamina (hearts). If this happens, he starts throwing hooks like mad. Keep on dodging until you are no longer purple and then counter his last punch. This will cause him to start blocking again. Don's second coming is really pretty irritating.



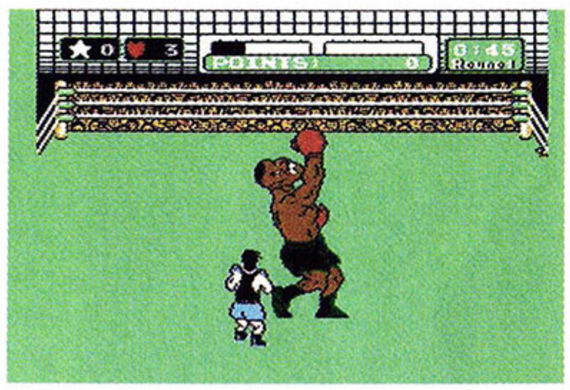
Mr. Sandman: Sandman is the most intimidating boxer aside from the big T himself. He does Bald Bull's tornado punches, but about twice as fast. Dodge his initial flurry of tornado punches. You can get in a head hit after each tornado punch about half the time, but it's a risky proposition if you don't connect. Eventually, he starts attacking with uppercuts. When he switches his hands around, dodge and then hit him in the head once and three times in the gut. He also has an even faster duck and uppercut attack that can be countered in the same fashion. When he doesn't attack you for a long time be prepared for the worst, because this typically means that he's preparing for his triple uppercut combo. The split second that he twitches and flashes, start dodging or he'll nail you to the wall. Only dodge in one direction or you're sure to get slammed. If you manage to dodge all three devastating attacks, hit him in the head and then pummel him with gut punches until he comes to. Be prepared, as he also tends to start off with the triple uppercut after getting up from a knockdown as well. We beat this game years ago, but it still took us a long time to finally take Sandman down all over again.



World Champion – Super Macho Man: At first, fighting Super is almost a walk in the park compared to Sandman. His normal attacks are much more easily evaded, and you can usually get in several head hits before he starts defending himself after each follow-up. Unfortunately for you, he has two devastating spin attacks. One is a single attack that is difficult to avoid. The other is much like Sandman's triple uppercut. Without warning he flashes and then starts throwing spin punches like crazy. You have to dodge them all and then wail him in the head for as many hits as you can get.



Undefeated World Circuit Champion: 007 373 5963



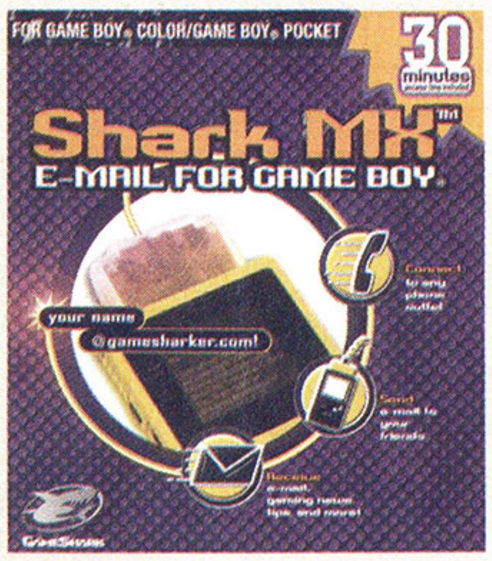
Mike Tyson: Tyson is absurdly difficult, and the second you beat him once, you won't want to ever do it again. For the first minute and a half of the first round, he flashes and throws super uppercuts that will knock you down in one hit. Dodge and follow with a couple hits to the head. After the longest minute-thirty in your life is over, he starts launching more easily avoided hooks at you. Whenever he winks, dodge and follow up with a punch to the head. At the beginning of the next two rounds, he attacks with nigh undodgeable jabs so be ready to block if you have to. He will still do the super uppercuts on occasion, but they won't knock you down in one hit unless you've already been beaten down to a near pulp. In the last round, he will sometimes do a double jab and then an uppercut combo, so be prepared to do some dodging. His only other move is to sit there and twitch and wink for a while. Smack him in the face and block a long series of jabs. Good luck, and remember that throwing your controllers or NES across the room will not defeat Mike Tyson.

ETC

SHARK MX

Manufacturer: InterAct
Website: www.interact-acc.com
List Price: $39.99

Now, kids on the playground will have a great prop when they play businessman board meeting. The Shark MX turns your Game Boy into a personal organizer with a calculator, address book, and calendar you can make notations on. If you plug a phone cord into the back of the cart, you can also make use of the 30 minutes of free online time that comes included to send and receive email (although your address has to be at gamesharker.com, the message length is limited to 2,000 characters, you can't send or receive any pics, and you have to use the d-pad to enter messages). Handy device, especially for those who would prefer to look like a Pokémon nerd rather than a Palm Pilot nerd.



BUILD-YOUR-OWN KITS

Manufacturer: Sun-Mate
Website: www.sun-mate.com
List Price: $14.99

A ton of ridiculous crap comes across our desks, but a new standard in uselessness has been set with the Build-Your-Own Kits. You get all the pieces required to assemble your own $5 item for only $14.99, and the casings are made of thin cardboard rather than plastic. "Wow, it's like a real AM radio, except it falls apart in my hand!" As an added bonus, each piece of junk comes with an educational instruction book. Wahoo!

THE SCUMMIEST CAR BATTERY ON THE PLANET

Manufacturer: Unable to determine due to corrosion
Website: Nope
List Price: This is the kind of thing you pay other people to get rid of

For those who have lived in terror since we reported on Erik's lack of braking power in the September issue, you may now rest easy. The two-tone beater has finally met its junkyard fate. The car Erik currently drives (acquired through means best left unmentioned) lacks a key feature that his Volvo had, however – its headlights don't shut off automatically. Thus, it didn't take long before Erik was asking coworkers for a jump start. Most were more than willing to oblige – until they saw what was lurking under the hood. The battery was so tainted, most were afraid to connect cables to it, fearing it would either explode or somehow infect their car with some form of vehicular leprosy. Here's a quick rule of thumb for all motorists out there: when the weight of a battery's corrosion appears to be greater than the battery itself, it's time to get a new one.

RAYEARTH

Manufacturer: Manga Video
Website: www.manga.com
List Price: $19.95 each

Some of you may remember Working Designs' Magic Knight Rayearth for the Saturn, or perhaps the anime series it was based upon. If you were fond of either, you should definitely check out the Rayearth videos. This entirely new trilogy once more follows the adventures of Umi, Fuu, and Hikaru. Having recently graduated from junior high school (is any heroine in anime over 18?), the girls are worried that attending different high schools will break up their friendship. Luckily, alien forces from another dimension show up to do battle. Nothing strengthens the bonds of companionship like saving the planet together.

THE DANGERS OF FREE PARKING

Manufacturer: Unbelievable Jolly Machine
Website: www.worldofstuff.com/ujm
List Price: $10

If you scan the liner notes of this and other Unbelievable Jolly Machine albums, you'll find that two-thirds of the band have the same names as a couple of editors here at Game Informer. Barely known for being a part of the soundtrack for Scud on Sega Saturn, UJM's recent CD release party boasted a crowd of well over two dozen people – and that's not even including the bar staff! To get an impartial review of the album, we asked a random person what they thought of it. This totally non-biased individual said, "After listening to The Dangers of Free Parking, I want to make out with fat chicks." If this insightful critique doesn't tell you enough, you can also go to the web page listed above and listen to a few sample tunes.

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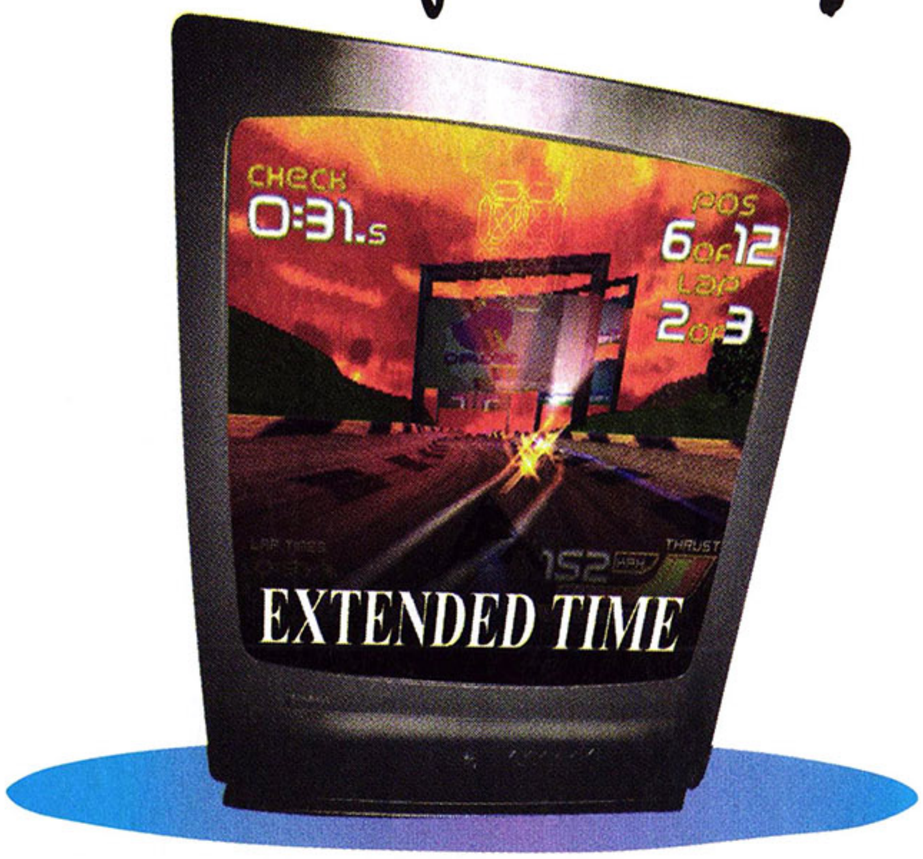
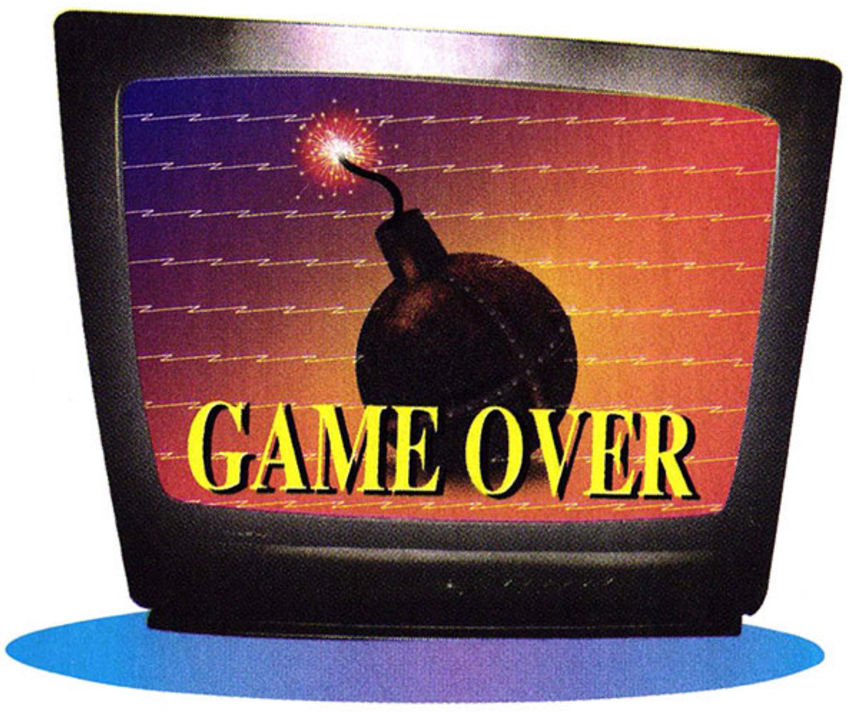
This is your game.

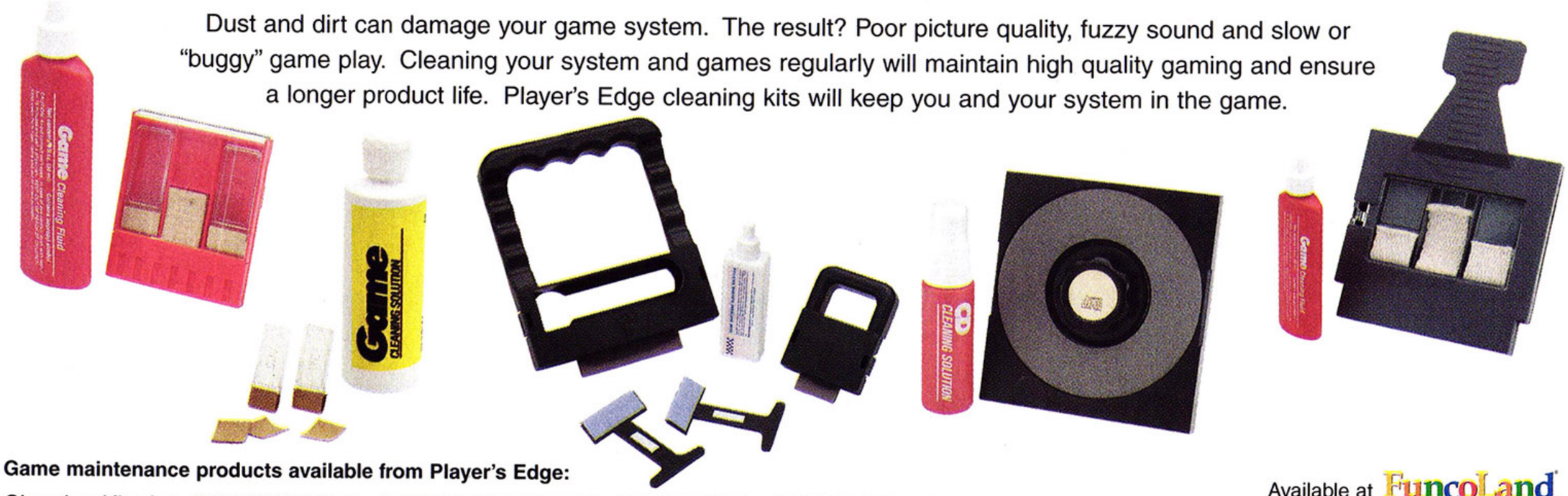


This is your game on the blink.



ANY QUESTIONS?

Dust and dirt can damage your game system. The result? Poor picture quality, fuzzy sound and slow or "buggy" game play. Cleaning your system and games regularly will maintain high quality gaming and ensure a longer product life. Player's Edge cleaning kits will keep you and your system in the game.



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Cleaning Kits for: NINTENDO® 64 • SUPER NINTENDO® • NINTENDO® • SEGA™ GENESIS™ • GAME BOY® • GAME GEAR™ • MULTIMEDIA & GAME CDs

Available at FuncoLand

PLAYER'S EDGE™

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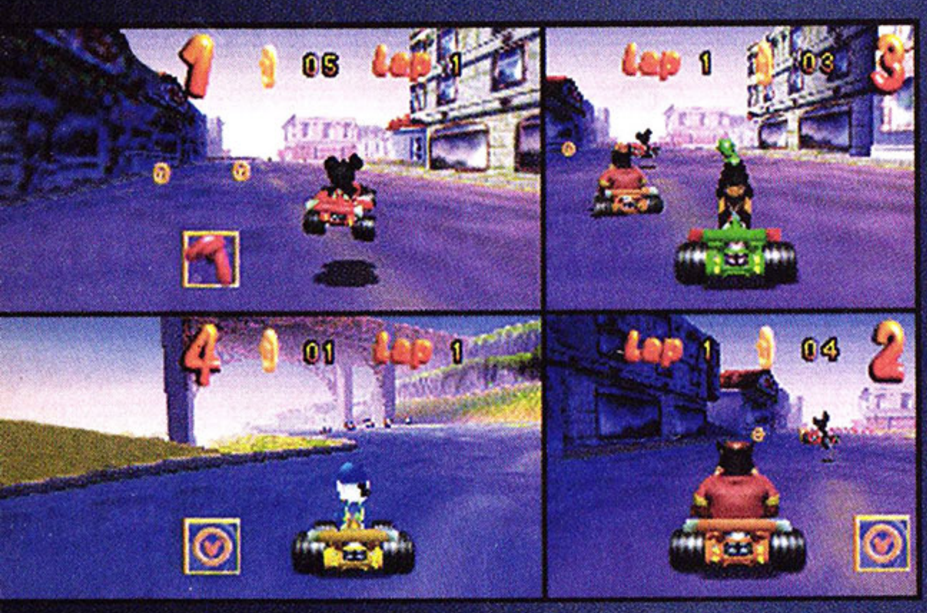
MICKEY'S SPEEDWAY USA



Okay, aerodynamic he's not.

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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Rareware logo is a trademark of Rare.
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www.nintendo.com

But Mickey and his friends still tear it up with 4-player action and 16 magical tracks.

THEY'RE

BIGGER,

FASTER,

SMARTER.

AND RIGHT

BEHIND YOU.

DINO CRISIS 2™

Yes, Regina is back in the action-packed sequel to the blockbuster survival-horror hit. Sent in for search and rescue, she is now armed with even more dino-fighting, heavy artillery. Only Regina is prepared for the adrenaline-pumping battles the recon team will soon encounter. More action! More intensity! More prehistoric predators! One question remains... are you the hunter – or the hunted?

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Animated Blood and Gore

Animated Violence

PlayStation

CAPCOM EDGE

CAPCOM

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NEW RELEASES

ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS.

Release Date	Title	Publisher/ Distributor	System
NOVEMBER			
11/15/00	Cannon Spike	Capcom	DC
11/15/00	Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	DC
11/15/00	Gunbird 2	Capcom	DC
11/15/00	Half-Life	Havas Interactive	DC
11/15/00	Batman Beyond	Ubi Soft	GBC
11/15/00	Hoyle Card Games	Havas Interactive	GBC
11/15/00	PowerPuff Girls: Bad Mojo Jojo	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
11/15/00	Rugrats in Paris	THQ	GBC
11/15/00	WWF: No Mercy	THQ	N64
11/15/00	Heist	Monte Cristo	PC
11/15/00	Heroes Chronicles: Clash of Dragons	3DO	PC
11/15/00	Heroes Chronicles: Masters of Elemnts	3DO	PC
11/15/00	Legend of the Blade Masters	Ripcord Games	PC
11/15/00	Arthur Ready to Race	Mattel	PS-X
11/15/00	Batman Beyond	Ubi Soft	PS-X
11/15/00	Moto Racer World Tour	Infogrames	PS-X
11/15/00	Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	Atlus	PS-X
11/15/00	Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	PS2
11/15/00	Fusion GT	Crave Entertainment	PS2
11/16/00	Hercules: The Legendary Journey	Titus Software	GBC
11/16/00	Blues Brothers 2000	Titus Software	N64
11/16/00	Links LS Classic	Microsoft	PC
11/16/00	MechWarrior 4: Vengeance	Microsoft	PC
11/16/00	Rising Sun Gold	Talonsoft	PC
11/16/00	Star Trek: StarFleet Command 2	Interplay	PC
11/16/00	Torneko: The Last Hope	Enix	PS-X
11/17/00	Hot Wheels Williams F1 Team Driver	Mattel	PC
11/17/00	Original War	Interplay	PC
11/20/00	Championship Surfer	Mattel	DC
11/20/00	Disney's Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	DC
11/20/00	Donkey Kong Country	Nintendo	GBC
11/20/00	Dragon Tales: Dragon Wings	NewKidCo	GBC
11/20/00	Grand Theft Auto 2	Take 2 Interactive	GBC
11/20/00	Lemmings Revolution	Take 2 Interactive	GBC
11/20/00	Tom & Jerry: Mouse Attack	NewKidCo	GBC
11/20/00	Banjo-Tooie	Nintendo	N64
11/20/00	Scooby Doo Classic Capers	THQ	N64
11/20/00	Spider-Man	Activision	N64
11/20/00	B-17 Flying Fortress 2	Hasbro Interactive	PC
11/20/00	Blair Witch 3: The Elly Kedward Tale	Gathering of Developers	PC
11/20/00	Kingdom Under Fire	Gathering of Developers	PC
11/20/00	Disney's Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groo	Ubi Soft	PS-X
11/20/00	Disney's Goofy's Fun House	NewKidCo	PS-X
11/20/00	Obi-Wan	THQ	PS-X
11/20/00	Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	PS-X
11/21/00	The Grinch	Konami	DC
11/21/00	Sno Cross Championship Racing	Crave Entertainment	DC
11/21/00	Army Men Air Combat	3DO	GBC
11/21/00	Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	GBC
11/21/00	Cannon Fodder	Activision	GBC
11/21/00	Dexters Lab: Robot Rampage	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
11/21/00	Godzilla 2	Crave Entertainment	GBC
11/21/00	The Grinch	Konami	GBC
11/21/00	Batman Beyond	Ubi Soft	N64
11/21/00	WCW Backstage Assault	Electronic Arts	N64
11/21/00	American McGee's Alice	Electronic Arts	PC
11/21/00	Insane	Activision	PC
11/21/00	007 Racing	Electronic Arts	PS-X
11/21/00	Nicktoons Racing	Hasbro Interactive	PS-X
11/21/00	Powerspike Volley	Infogrames	PS-X
11/21/00	FIFA 2001	Electronic Arts	PS2
11/21/00	Rayman 2: Revolution	Ubi Soft	PS2
11/21/00	Roadsters Trophy	Titus Software	PS2
11/22/00	Looney Tunes Collector: Attack!	Infogrames	GBC
11/22/00	Looney Tunes Racing	Infogrames	GBC
11/24/00	Silent Hunter II	Mindscape	PC
11/24/00	Detective Barbie: The Mystery Cruise	Mattel	PS-X
11/24/00	Hot Wheels Extreme XTR Racing	Mattel	PS-X
11/27/00	Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	DC
11/27/00	Doug's Big Game	NewKidCo	GBC
11/27/00	M & M's Minis Madness	Majesco	GBC
11/27/00	Nicktoons Racing	Majesco	GBC
11/27/00	Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	PS-X
11/28/00	Star Wars: Demolition	Lucas Arts	DC
11/28/00	Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	DC
11/28/00	Little Nicky	Ubi Soft	GBC
11/28/00	Test Drive 2001	Infogrames	GBC
11/28/00	World Destruction League:Thunder Tank	3DO	GBC
11/28/00	Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	PC
11/28/00	F1 World Grand Prix 2000	EIDOS Interactive	PC
11/28/00	Army Men Arcade Blast	3DO	PS-X
11/28/00	Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	PS-X
11/28/00	Big Ol' Bass 2	Konami	PS-X
11/28/00	F1 World Grand Prix 2000	EIDOS Interactive	PS-X
11/28/00	March Madness 2001	Electronic Arts	PS-X
11/28/00	Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	PS-X
11/28/00	World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	PS2
11/29/00	MTV Sports: Pure Ride	THQ	GBC
11/30/00	Who Wants to Beat Up a Millionaire?	Havas Interactive	DC
11/30/00	MTV Sports: BMX Freestyle	THQ	GBC
11/30/00	Chess 2000 Grandmaster	Interplay	PC
11/30/00	Pipe Dreams 2	Talonsoft	PC
11/30/00	F1 Racing Championship	Ubi Soft	PS2
DECEMBER			
12/1/00	Prince of Persia	Mattel	DC
12/1/00	Backyard Football	Infogrames	GBC
12/1/00	NASCAR Heat	Majesco	GBC
12/1/00	NASCAR Racers	Majesco	GBC
12/01/00	Duke Nukem Forever	Infogrames	PC
12/01/00	Great White Hunter	Humongous Entertainment	PC
12/01/00	IceWind Dale: Heart of Winter	Interplay	PC
12/01/00	Independence War 2: Edge of Chaos	Infogrames	PC
12/1/00	Backyard Football	Infogrames	PS-X
12/1/00	Championship Surfer	Mattel	PS-X
12/1/00	NASCAR Heat	Hasbro Interactive	PS-X
12/1/00	NASCAR Racers	Hasbro Interactive	PS-X
12/1/00	Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots	Mattel	PS-X
12/1/00	Worms Pinball	Infogrames	PS-X
12/4/00	3-D Ultra Pinball	Havas Interactive	GBC
12/4/00	Barbie Pet Rescue	Mattel	GBC
12/4/00	Blue's Clue's Alphabet Book	Mattel	GBC
12/4/00	Kirby Tilt 'n Tumble	Nintendo	GBC
12/4/00	Pokemon Puzzle Challenge	Nintendo	GBC
12/4/00	Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	GBC
12/4/00	Tyco R/C Racin' Ratz	Mattel	GBC
12/4/00	Sabrina the Teenage Witch	Havas Interactive	PS-X
12/5/00	Grandia II	Ubi Soft	DC
12/5/00	Heroes Might & Magic III	Ubi Soft	DC
12/5/00	Force 21	Ubi Soft	GBC
12/5/00	Harley Davidson	Infogrames	GBC
12/5/00	Mummy, The	Konami	GBC
12/5/00	Playmobile: Hype	Ubi Soft	GBC
12/5/00	Road Champs BMX: Stunt Biking	Activision	GBC
12/5/00	Woody Woodpecker Racing	Konami	GBC
12/5/00	Disney's Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	N64
12/5/00	The Road to El Dorado	Ubi Soft	PS-X
12/5/00	Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubi Soft	PS2
12/5/00	ESPN NFL Prime Time	Konami	PS2
12/5/00	NHL Faceoff 2001	Sony	PS2
12/5/00	Theme Park Rollercoaster	Electronic Arts	PS2
12/7/00	Robopon (Sun Version)	Atlus	GBC
12/11/00	Armada 2: Exodus	Metro3D	DC
12/11/00	Hitman: Codename 47	EIDOS Interactive	PC
12/12/00	Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	GBC
12/12/00	Star Wars Episode I: Battle for Nabo	Lucas Arts	N64
12/12/00	NBA Live 2001	Electronic Arts	PC
12/12/00	Rayman: Brain Games	Ubi Soft	PS-X
12/12/00	SeaDoo Hydrocross	Vatical Entertainment	PS-X
12/12/00	Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	PS2
12/15/00	PowerPuff Girls: Battle Him	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
12/15/00	PowerPuff Girls: Paint the Town	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
12/15/00	Sgt. Rock	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
12/15/00	Yogi Bear: Great Balloon Bla	Bam! Entertainment	GBC
12/15/00	EverQuest: Scars of Velious	989 Studios/Verant	PC
12/15/00	F/A-18E SuperHornet Gold Edition	Interplay	PC
12/15/00	Steel Panthers: World at War	Mindscape	PC
12/15/00	Tribes 2	Havas Interactive	PC
12/15/00	Carrier	Jaleco	PS2
12/19/00	Powerspike Volleyball	Infogrames	GBC
12/19/00	Supercross 2001	Electronic Arts	PS-X
12/19/00	NBA Shootout 2001	Sony	PS2
12/19/00	NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony	PS2
12/19/00	NCAA Gamebreaker 2001	Sony	PS2
12/19/00	Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	PS2
12/26/00	Army Men Air Attack 2	3DO	PS2
12/27/00	Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure	Activision	GBC
12/27/00	Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure	Activision	PS-X
12/28/00	Super Bowling 64	Tommo	N64
12/28/00	MDK 2 Armageddon	Interplay	PS2
12/29/00	Max Steel	Mattel	GBC
JANUARY			
1/1/01	Age of Empires II	Konami	DC
1/1/01	Deer Avenger	Havas Interactive	DC
1/1/01	Gorka Morka	South Peak	DC
1/1/01	Legend of the Blademaster	South Peak	DC
1/1/01	Max Steel	Mattel	DC
1/1/01	Combat Flight Simulator	Konami	DC
1/1/01	Outtrigger	Sega	DC
1/1/01	Shrapnel: Urban Warfare 2025	South Peak	DC
1/1/01	Stunt GP	Infogrames	DC
1/1/01	Croc 2	THQ	GBC
1/1/01	Scooby Doo Classic Creep Capers	THQ	GBC
1/1/01	Tech Deck Skateboarding	Activision	GBC
1/1/01	Paper Mario	Nintendo	N64
1/1/01	SeaDoo Hydrocross	Vatical Entertainment	N64
1/1/01	4X4 Trophy	Interplay	PC
1/1/01	Dragon Riders	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
1/1/01	Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	Acclaim	PC
1/1/01	Freelancer	Microsoft	PC
1/1/01	Mech Commander 2	Microsoft	PC
1/1/01	LEGO Stunt Rally	Lego Media	PS-X
1/1/01	ATV Off Road Fury	Sony	PS2
1/1/01	Dark Cloud	Sony	PS2
1/1/01	ESPN NBA 2 Night	Konami	PS2
1/1/01	Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Midway	PS2
1/1/01	Gran Turismo 3	Sony	PS2
1/1/01	Stunt GP	Titus Software	PS2
1/5/01	Command & Conquer: Renegade	Westwood Studios/EA	PC
1/9/01	Disney's Jungle Book	Ubi Soft	PS2
1/9/01	F1 Championship Season 2000	Electronic Arts	PS2
1/9/01	NBA Live 2001	Electronic Arts	PS2
1/10/01	Oni	Take 2 Interactive	PS2
1/15/01	Project Justice	Capcom	DC
1/15/01	Dragon's Lair	Capcom	GBC
1/15/01	Flinstones: Burgertime in Bedrock	Electro Source	GBC
1/15/01	Mario Tennis	Nintendo	GBC
1/15/01	Matchbox Mission Bravo	Mattel	GBC
1/15/01	Mega Man Xtreme	Capcom	GBC
1/15/01	Metal Walker	Capcom	GBC
1/15/01	Microsoft Best of Entertainment Pak	Electro Source	GBC
1/15/01	Microsoft Pinball Arcade	Electro Source	GBC
1/15/01	Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage	THQ	N64
1/15/01	Mega Man 64	Capcom	N64
01/15/01	Clive Baker's Undying	Electronic Arts	PC
01/15/01	Legends of Might & Magic	3DO	PC
01/15/01	MS Links 2001 Course Pack 1	Microsoft	PC
01/15/01	Shrapnel: Urban Warfare 2025	South Peak	PC
01/15/01	Sudden Strike	EIDOS Interactive	PC
01/15/01	Summoner	THQ	PC
01/15/01	Team Fortress 2	Havas Interactive	PC
1/15/01	Digimon World II	Bandai	PS-X
1/16/01	Dragon Riders	Ubi Soft	DC
1/16/01	Stupid Invaders	Ubi Soft	DC
1/16/01	The Bouncer	Square	PS2
1/22/01	Conker's Bad Fur Day	Nintendo	N64
1/25/01	The Simpsons	THQ	GBC
1/25/01	MTV Sports: TJ Lavins Ult. BMX	THQ	PS-X
1/30/01	The Mummy	Konami	DC
1/30/01	Inspector Gadget	Ubi Soft	GBC
1/30/01	Hercules: The Legendary Journey	Titus Software	N64
01/30/01	Oni	Gathering of Developers	PC
1/30/01	Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	EIDOS Interactive	PS-X
1/30/01	Driving Emotion Type-S	Square	PS2
1/30/01	Offroad Outlaws	Interplay	PS2
01/31/01	Age of Sail II	Talonsoft	PC
01/31/01	Duke Nukem Endangered Species	Gathering of Developers	PC
01/31/01	Rowan's Battle of Britain	Empire Interactive	PC
1/31/01	Time Crisis Project Titan	Namco	PS-X

REVIEWS ARCHIVE

More reviews available at
www.gameinformer.com

BL = BOTTOM LINE

DECEMBER 2000

PLAYSTATION 2

TITLE	BL	DATE
Armored Core 2	9	Nov-00
Dead or Alive 2: Hard Core	9	Nov-00
Dynasty Warriors	8	Nov-00
Eternal Ring	7.5	Nov-00
Evergrace	7	Nov-00
Gun Griffon Blaze	7	Nov-00
Kessen	8	Nov-00
Madden NFL 2001	9.75	Nov-00
NHL 2001	8.5	Nov-00
Silent Scope	7.75	Nov-00
Silpheed	6	Nov-00
Smuggler's Run	8.5	Nov-00
SSX	9.25	Nov-00
Street Fighter EX3	6	Nov-00
Super Bust-A-Move	7	Nov-00
Swing Away Golf	7.75	Nov-00
Tekken Tag Tournament	8.5	Nov-00
Wild Wild Racing	7.5	Nov-00
X-Squad	7.5	Nov-00

PLAYSTATION

TITLE	BL	DATE
40 Winks	7	Feb-00
Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere	7.75	May-00
Action Bass	7	Sep-00
Alien Resurrection	6	Nov-00
Alundra 2	6.5	May-00
Arcade Party Pak	7.5	Dec-99
Armored Core: Master of Arena	7.5	Apr-00
Armorines	5	Jul-00
Army Men: Air Attack	6.75	Dec-99
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes	5.5	May-00
Army Men: World War	2	Aug-00
ATV: Quad Bike Challenge	6	Nov-00
Ball Breakers	3.5	Sep-00
Ballistic	7	Jan-00
Bass Rise	4	Nov-99
Battle Tanx II: Global Assault	7	Apr-00
Bedrock Bowling	3.5	Oct-00
Boombots	4.5	Jan-00
Broken Sword II	6.75	Jan-00
Builder's Block	8.25	Aug-00
Bust A Groove 2	7.25	Sep-00
Bust-A-Move '99	8	Apr-99
Championship Bass	8	May-00
Championship Motocross	6.75	Oct-99
Chocobo's Dungeon 2	6.75	Jan-00
Chrono Cross	9.5	Aug-00
Colin McRae Rally	7	Feb-00
Colony Wars: Red Sun	8.25	Apr-00
Cool Boarders 4	7.75	Dec-99
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn	7.75	Jul-00
Crash Team Racing	9	Nov-99
Crusaders of Might and Magic	7.25	Mar-00
Countdown Vampires	6.5	Aug-00
Cyber Tiger	7.25	Dec-99
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	7.75	Nov-00
Deception III: Dark Delusion	6.25	Apr-00
Destruction Derby Raw	7.5	Oct-00
Demolition Racer	7.5	Dec-99
Die Hard Trilogy 2	7	Mar-00
Digimon World	5.25	Jul-00
Dino Crisis 2	8.75	Oct-00
Dinosaur	2.25	Sep-00
Dragon Valor	7.5	Nov-00
Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home	6	Mar-00
Dune 2000	7.75	Nov-99
ECW Anarchy Rulz	4	Nov-00
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	8.25	Mar-00
ESPN MLS: Game Night	8	Aug-00
Evil Zone	5	Oct-99
Expendable	3.5	Jul-00
Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition	3.75	Mar-00
Fear Effect	8.25	Mar-00
FIFA 2000	8.75	Dec-99
Fighting Force 2	5.5	Feb-00
Fisherman's Bait 2	6	Dec-99
Final Fantasy Anthology	8.75	Oct-99
Formula One '99	7.75	Jan-00
Front Mission 3	9	Apr-00
G Police: Weapons of Justice	4.75	Oct-99
Galerians	8	Jun-00
Gallop Racer	6	Nov-99
Gauntlet Legends	6.5	May-00
Gekido: Urban Fighters	4.5	Jul-00
Gran Turismo 2	9.5	Feb-00
Grand Theft Auto 2	7.75	Dec-99
Grandia	7.25	Nov-99
Grind Session	6.75	Jun-00
Grudge Warriors	5	Aug-00
Hot Shots Golf 2	8	Mar-00
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	6.25	Nov-99
Hydro Thunder	7.75	Apr-00
Incredible Crisis	7.5	Nov-00
International Track & Field 2000	7	Dec-99
Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster	6.5	Mar-00
Jedi Power Battles	8	May-00
Jeremy McGrath	4	Oct-00
Jet Moto 3	7	Oct-99
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure	8	Apr-00
Juggernaut	6.5	Nov-99
K-1 Grand Prix	5.5	Feb-00
Killer Loop	6	Mar-00
Knockout Kings 2000	8	Dec-99
Koudelka	4.5	Sep-00
Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed	2.5	Jun-00
Legend of Dragoon, The	9	Jun-00
Legend of Mana	8	Jul-00
Lego Rock Raiders	1.5	Oct-00
Lunar: The Silver Star Story Complete	7.75	Jul-99
Madden NFL 2000	8.75	Oct-99
Madden NFL 2001	8.75	Sep-00
March Madness 2000	8.25	Feb-00
Medal of Honor	9.25	Dec-99
Medal of Honor: Underground	9	Nov-00
MediEvil II	7.75	May-00
Mega Man Legends 2	8	Nov-00
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions	3.75	Nov-99
Mission: Impossible	8.25	Feb-00
Misadventures of Tronne Bonne, The	7	May-00
MLB 2001	7.75	Jun-00
Mobil 1 Rally Championship	5.75	May-00
Monkey Magic	5.25	Nov-99
Monster Rancher 2	8.5	Oct-99
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	1.75	Sep-00
Mr. Driller	8	Jun-00
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8.25	Aug-00
MTV Music Generator	7.25	Jan-00
MTV Sports Skateboarding featuring Andy Macdonald	3	Nov-00
MTV Sports: Pure Ride	6.5	Nov-00
Muppet Racemania	5	Nov-00
NASCAR 2000	7	Nov-99
NASCAR Rumble	7.75	Mar-00
NBA in the Zone 2000	6.5	Jan-00
NBA Live 2000	8.5	Jan-00
NBA Showtime	6.5	Jan-00
NBA ShootOut 2000	4.75	Mar-00
NBA ShootOut 2001	5.5	Nov-00
NCAA Final Four 2000	7	Jan-00
NCAA Football 2000	8	Oct-99
NCAA Gamebreaker 2000	7.5	Oct-99
Need for Speed: Porche Challenge	7.75	Jun-00
NFL Blitz 2001	5.5	Nov-00
NFL GameDay 2000	8.25	Oct-99
NFL GameDay 2001	7	Sep-00
NFL Xtreme 2	8.25	Sept-99
NGEN Racing	7.25	Sep-00
NHL 2000	8.5	Nov-99
NHL 2001	7.75	Nov-00
NHL Blades of Steel 2000	5.5	Dec-99
NHL Championship 2000	7.25	Dec-99
NHL Face Off 2000	7.25	Nov-99
NHL Face Off 2001	6.5	Nov-00
Nightmare Creatures II	5.25	Jun-00
No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking	4.25	Jan-00
Omega Boost	7.75	Oct-99
Pac-Man World	8	Oct-99
Parasite Eve II	8.75	Sep-00
Polaris Snocross	5.5	Nov-00
Quake II	7.5	Dec-99
Railroad Tycoon II	7.5	Apr-00
Rainbow 6	6.75	Feb-00
Rampage Through Time	4.75	Sep-00
Rat Attack	6.75	Nov-99
Raycrisis: Series Termination	7.25	Nov-00
RC Revenge	5.5	Oct-00
R/C Stunt Copter	7	Oct-99
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing	6.5	Feb-00
Reel Fishing II	6.5	Jul-00
Resident Evil 3	9.25	Dec-99
Resident Evil Survivor	4	Nov-00
Re-Volt	3.25	Nov-99
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	6.75	Jul-00
Road Rash: Jailbreak	7	Mar-00
Rock the Rink	8	May-00
Rollcage: Stage II	7.25	Apr-00
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI	7.25	Mar-00
RPG Maker	7.75	Aug-00
SaGa Frontier 2	8	Jan-00
Sammy Sosa High Heat 2001	3.75	May-00
Sammy Sosa Softball Slam	5.75	Jun-00
Shadow Man	6.75	Nov-99
Shadow Tower	7.5	Nov-99
Silent Bomber	7.75	Mar-00
Silhouette Mirage	7.5	Feb-00
Sim Theme Park	7	Jul-00
Smurfs, The	5.5	Mar-00
Sno Cross Championship Racing	6	Nov-00
South Park Chef's Luv Shack	3.25	Feb-00
South Park Rally	4.5	Mar-00
Space Invaders	8	Dec-99
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol	6.5	Aug-00
Speed Punks	7	May-00
Spider-Man	8.25	Oct-00
Spin Jam	3.5	Oct-00
Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage	8.75	Dec-99
Spyro: Year of the Dragon	8.75	Nov-00
Star Trek Invasion	8.5	Oct-00
Star Wars: The Phantom Menace	7.25	Oct-99
Street Fighter EX2 Plus	7.75	Jun-00
Street Sk8er 2	7	Jun-00
Strider 2	6.5	Jul-00
Suikoden II	9	Oct-99
Superbike 2000	4	Jun-00
Supercross 2000	4	Oct-00
SuperCross Circuit	3.5	Dec-99
Surf Riders	6.75	Oct-00
Sydney 2000	2.75	Oct-00
Syphon Filter 2	9	Apr-00
Tail Concerto	7.75	Nov-99
Team Buddies	7.25	Oct-00
Tenchu 2	8.75	Sep-00
Test Drive 6	7.5	Dec-99
Test Drive Le Mans	3.75	Jul-00
Test Drive Off-Road 3	8	Nov-99
Thousand Arms	7.75	Nov-99
Thrasher: Skate and Destroy	8	Jan-00
Threads of Fate	8	Jul-00
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000	7.5	Feb-00
Tiny Tank (Revised)	5.5	Nov-99
TOCA 2: Touring Car Challenge	6.5	Jan-00
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	8	Jan-00
Tomba! 2: The Evil Swine Return	8.75	Jan-00
Tomorrow Never Dies	7.25	Jan-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	9.5	Nov-99
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	10	Nov-00
Toy Story 2	8	Jan-00
Trick'N Snowboarders	4.25	Oct-99
Triple Play 2001	8	May-00
Twisted Metal 4	9	Jan-00
V-Rally 2	7.25	Jan-00
Urban Chaos	2.75	Jun-00
Vagrant Story	9	May-00
Valkyrie Profile	7.75	Sep-00
Vampire Hunter D	5.25	Sep-00
Vanark	7	May-00
Vandal Hearts II	7.75	Dec-99
Vanguard Bandits	7.75	Jun-00
Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense	7.75	Jan-00
Walt Disney World: Magical Racing Tour	6.5	May-00
Warpath: Jurassic Park	6.75	Dec-99
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire: 2nd Edition	6.5	Aug-00
Wild Arms 2	8.5	May-00
Wipeout 3	7.75	Nov-99
Worms Armageddon	8	Dec-99
Wu-Tang: Shaolin Style	6.25	Dec-99
WWF Smackdown	9	Apr-00
X-Files	3.75	Jan-00
X-Men Mutant Academy	7.5	Aug-00
Xena: Warrior Princess	7.75	Nov-99
You Don't Know Jack	8	Feb-00

NINTENDO 64

TITLE	BL	DATE
Airboardin' USA	5.5	Oct-99
All-Star Baseball 2001	7.75	May-00
Armorines	7.25	Jan-00
Army Men: Air Combat	7.5	Jul-00
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes	7	Dec-99
Bassmasters 2000	8	Mar-00
BattleTanx II: Global Assault	7.25	Nov-99
Battlezone: Rise of the Black Dogs	3.25	May-00
Blades of Steel 2000	3.5	Jan-00
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	5.25	Jan-00
Castlevania: Legacy of Darkness	5.25	Mar-00
CyberTiger	7.25	May-00
Destruction Derby 64	7.25	Dec-99
Donkey Kong 64	8.75	Dec-99
Duck Dogers	3.5	Oct-00
Earthworm Jim 3D	5.75	Dec-99
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	8	Mar-00
Excitebike 64	7.25	Jun-00
Fighter's Destiny 2	2	Sep-00
Gauntlet Legends	7	Dec-99
Harvest Moon 64	7.25	Mar-00
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	7	Oct-99
Hydro Thunder	7.5	May-00
Indy Racing 2000	8	Sep-00
International Track & Field 2000	7	Apr-00
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	5	Apr-00
Jet Force Gemini	7.75	Oct-99
Kirby: The Crystal Shards	7.5	Aug-00
Knockout Kings 2000	8.25	Dec-99
Lego Racers	7.75	Jan-00
Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask, The	9.75	Nov-00
Madden NFL 2001	8.75	Sep-00
Mario Party 2	5.75	Feb-00
Mario Tennis	8.25	Oct-00
House of the Dead 2	8	Oct-99
Gundam Side Story 0079	7.75	Jul-00
Namco Museum 64	8	Jan-00
NBA Courtside 2	7.25	Jan-00
NBA In the Zone 2000	5.5	Jan-00
NBA Jam 2000	6	Dec-99
NBA Live 2000	8.25	Dec-99
NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC	7.25	Dec-99
NFL QB Club 2000	5	Oct-99
Nuclear Strike	8.75	Feb-00
Ogre Battle 64	9	Oct-00
Paperboy	4.25	Dec-99
Perfect Dark	9.25	Jun-00
PilotWings 64	9.5	Aug-96
Pokémon Stadium	8	May-00
Quarterback Club 2001	4	Nov-00
Rainbow 6	8	Feb-00
Rally Challenge	4.5	Sep-00
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	7.75	Nov-99
Resident Evil 2	8.75	Nov-99
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing	6.5	Feb-00
Re-Volt	4.75	Oct-99
Ridge Racer 64	7.25	Feb-00
Road Rash 64	8	Oct-99
Roadsters Trophy	7	Jan-00
Rocket	8	Nov-99
StarCraft	8	Oct-99
Starshot	4.5	Nov-99
Supercross 2000	6.75	Jan-00
Super Mario 64	9.75	Aug-96
South Park Rally	4.5	Apr-00
Tarzan	7.25	Mar-00
The World is Not Enough	9	Nov-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	9.25	Mar-00
Top Gear Hyper Bike	7.25	Feb-00
Top Gear Rally 2	6.75	Dec-99
Toy Story 2	7.5	Jan-00
Turok 3	8	Oct-00
Turok: Rage Wars	8	Dec-99
Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense	8	Jan-00
Walt Disney World Quest: Magical Racing Tour	7.25	Oct-00
WaveRace 64	9	Nov-96
Winback	7.75	Nov-99
WCW Mayhem	7.5	Oct-99
Wrestlemania 2000	9	Dec-99
Xena: Talisman of Fate	3.5	Jan-00

DREAMCAST

TITLE	BL	DATE
4 Wheel Thunder	7.25	Jun-00
AeroWings	7	Oct-99
AeroWings 2: Air Strike	7.5	Sep-00
Airforce Delta	7.75	Oct-99
Armada	6.5	Feb-00
Blue Stinger	5.25	Oct-99
Cannon Spike	7	Sep-00
Carrier	6.75	Apr-00
Chu Chu Rocket	8.75	Apr-00
Crazy Taxi	8.75	Feb-00
D2	4.75	Oct-00
Dead or Alive 2	9	Apr-00
Deep Fighter	6.75	Jul-00
Demolition Racer: No Exit	8	Nov-00
Draconus: Cult of the Wyrm	7.75	Jul-00
Dynamite Cop	7	Nov-99
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	7	Oct-00
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	7.75	May-00
Elemental Gimmick Gear	7	Mar-00
Evolution	7	Dec-99
Evolution 2: Far Off Promise	6	Jul-00
Expendable: Millennium Soldier	4	Oct-99
F-1 World Grand Prix	7.75	Feb-00
Fighting Force 2	5.25	Mar-00
Flag to Flag	4.5	Oct-99
Fur Fighters	7.75	Aug-00
Gauntlet Legends	7.75	Jun-00
Giga Wing	7.5	Mar-00
Gunbird 2	5.5	Oct-00
Grand Theft Auto 2	7.5	Jul-00
Hidden & Dangerous	7	Oct-00
Hydro Thunder	8	Oct-99
Incoming	5.5	Mar-00
Jeremy McGrath's Supercross 2000	3.75	Nov-00
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure	8	Mar-00
King of Fighters Dream Match 1999	8	Oct-99
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	8	Mar-00
Maken X	7.75	Jun-00
Marvel Vs. Capcom	7.5	Oct-99
Marvel Vs. Capcom 2	8	Aug-00
MDK2	8	Jun-00
Monaco Grand Prix	7	Oct-99
Mortal Kombat Gold	7.25	Oct-99
Namco Museum	7.75	Sep-00
NBA 2K	9	Jan-00
NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC	7.25	Dec-99
NFL 2K	9.25	Oct-99
NFL 2K1	9.5	Nov-00
NFL Blitz 2000	9	Oct-99
NFL Blitz 2001	5.25	Nov-99
NFL Quarterback Club 2000	2.25	Feb-00
NHL 2K	8.25	Apr-00
Nightmare Creatures II	5	Sep-00
Omikron: The Nomad Soul	5.5	Sep-00
Pen Pen Trilcelon	4	Oct-99
Plasma Sword: Nightmare of Blistein	7.25	May-00
Power Stone	8	Oct-99
Power Stone 2	8.5	Aug-00
Psychic Force 2012	7	Jan-00
Quarterback Club 2001	2.5	Nov-00
Railroad Tycoon II	5	Nov-00
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	8	Apr-00
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing	7.25	Oct-99
Resident Evil Code: Veronica	9.5	Apr-00
Re-Volt	5	Feb-00
Rippin' Riders	7	Dec-99
Roadsters	5.5	Jun-00
Royal Rumble	6.75	Sep-00
Rush 2049	7	Oct-00
Seaman	7	Sep-00
Sega Rally Championship	7.5	Jan-00
Sega GT	9	Oct-00
Sega Marine Fishing	8	Nov-00
Shadowman	7.75	Feb-00
Silver	8	Sep-00
Slave Zero	6.25	Jan-00
Soul Calibur	9.25	Oct-99
Soul Fighter	5.5	Jan-00
South Park Chef's Luv Shack	3.5	Feb-00
Space Channel 5	7.75	Jul-00
Spawn: In the Demon's Hand	6.5	Nov-00
Speed Devils	7.25	Oct-99
Star Wars Episode I Racer	8.75	Jun-00
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike	8.25	Nov-00
Street Fighter III: Double Impact	7.75	Sep-00
Street Fighter Alpha 3	8.75	Aug-00
Striker Pro 2000	6.75	Aug-00
Super Magnetic Neo	8.5	Aug-00
Suzuki Alstare Extreme Racing	7	Dec-99
Sword of the Berzerk	8	Apr-00
Sydney 2000	3.5	Oct-00
Tee Off	6.25	Apr-00
Tech Romancer	8.5	Aug-00
Test Drive 6	8	Feb-00
Time Stalkers	6.5	May-00
TNN Hardcore Heat	5.75	Oct-99
Tokyo Xtreme Racer	5.75	Oct-99
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2	8.5	Nov-00
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	7.75	Jun-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	9	Jun-00
Toy Commander	8.75	Nov-99
Toy Story 2	7	Sep-00
TrickStyle	7.75	Oct-99
UFC	8.5	Oct-00
Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense	8	Mar-00
Virtua Athlete 2000	7	Oct-00
Virtua Fighter 3tb	7.75	Nov-99
Virtua Striker 2	5.25	Mar-00
Virtua Tennis	9.25	Sep-00
Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram	7.25	Aug-00
Wacky Races	6	Sep-00
Wetrix+	5	Mar-00
Wild Metal	3	May-00
World Series Baseball 2K1	5.75	Sep-00
WWF Attitude	8.5	Jan-00
Zombie Revenge	6.75	Feb-00

PC

TITLE	BL	DATE
Age of Empires II: The Conqueror's Expansion	9	Nov-00
BANG! Gunship Elite	7	Oct-00
Baldur's Gate II	9.5	Nov-00
Breakneck	6.25	Oct-00
Crimson Skies	8.25	Nov-00
Heavy Metal: FAKK 2	6.75	Oct-00
Homeworld: Cataclysm	8	Nov-00
Sanity: Aiken's Artifact	5.25	Nov-00
Sims: Livin' Large, The	7	Nov-00
Soulbringer	6.5	Oct-00
Star Trek New Worlds	5	Nov-00
Warlords Battlecry	8.75	Oct-00

GAME BOY

TITLE	BL	DATE
1942	5.5	Aug-00
All Star Tennis	6.5	Dec-99
Bass Masters Classic	7.25	Feb-00
Beauty and the Beast	4.75	Jan-00
Billy Bob's Huntin' 'N Fishin'	3.75	Dec-99
Bionic Commando: Elite Forces	8.25	Mar-00
Blaster Master: Enemy Below	8.25	Apr-00
Catwoman	4.75	Dec-99
Chase HQ: Secret Police	5.5	Dec-99
Contra: The Alien Wars	8.75	Oct-99
Croc	5.75	Aug-00
Crystalis	8.5	Aug-00
Deja Vu I & II	7.5	Dec-99
Dinosaur	3.75	Aug-00
Dragon Warrior Monsters	8	Mar-00
Duke Nukem	6.75	Dec-99
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	2	May-00
FIFA 2000	4.5	Dec-99
Gex 3: Deep Pocket Gecko	7.5	Mar-00
Ghosts N' Goblins	7	Nov-99
Klustar	5	Oct-99
Lucky Luke	7.25	Oct-99
Madden NFL 2000	7.75	Dec-99
Mario Golf	8.75	Nov-99
Metal Gear Solid	9.25	Jul-00
Mickey's Adventure Racing	8	Mar-00
Micro Machines 1 & 2	8	May-00
Millenium Winter Sports	7.25	Jan-00
Missile Command	1.75	Jan-00
Monster Rancher Battle Card	6.75	Jul-00
Monster Rancher Explorer	7.5	Nov-00
Mr. Driller	8.25	Jul-00
Ms. Pac-Man	7.75	Nov-99
Perfect Dark	4	Nov-00
Pokémon Trading Card Game	7.25	Jun-00
Pokémon Yellow	6.5	Nov-99
Rayman	8	Jun-00
Road To El Dorado	4.5	Sep-00
Spider-Man	4	Nov-00
Star Wars: Episode I Racer	8.25	Mar-00
Tomb Raider	8.25	Aug-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	3.5	Jun-00
Toonsylvania	7	Sep-00
Toy Story 2	5.25	Feb-00
Triple Play 2001	4	Aug-00
Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion	3.5	Oct-00
Wario Land 3	8.75	Aug-00
Warlocked	8	Sep-00
WCW Mayhem	7.75	Jul-00
Wings of Fury	7	Mar-00
WWF Wrestlemania 2000	7.25	Dec-99
Yar's Revenge	6.25	Jan-00