

THE SCOOPS ON MAJESICO'S FORTRESS AND IRIDION FOR GAMEBOY ADVANCE!

# Gamers' Republic

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

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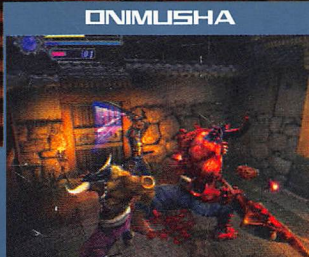
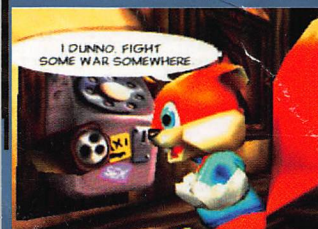
## DEEP, DEEP UNDERCOVER

**GO BEHIND THE SCENES WITH  
ONIMUSHA, SHADOW OF DESTINY  
AND ATV OFFROAD FURY**

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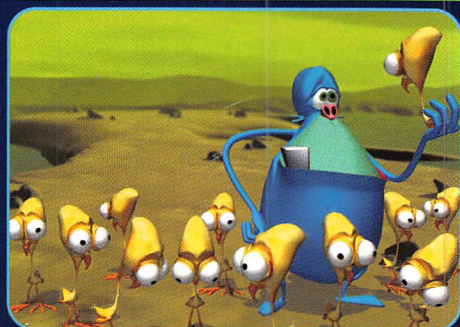
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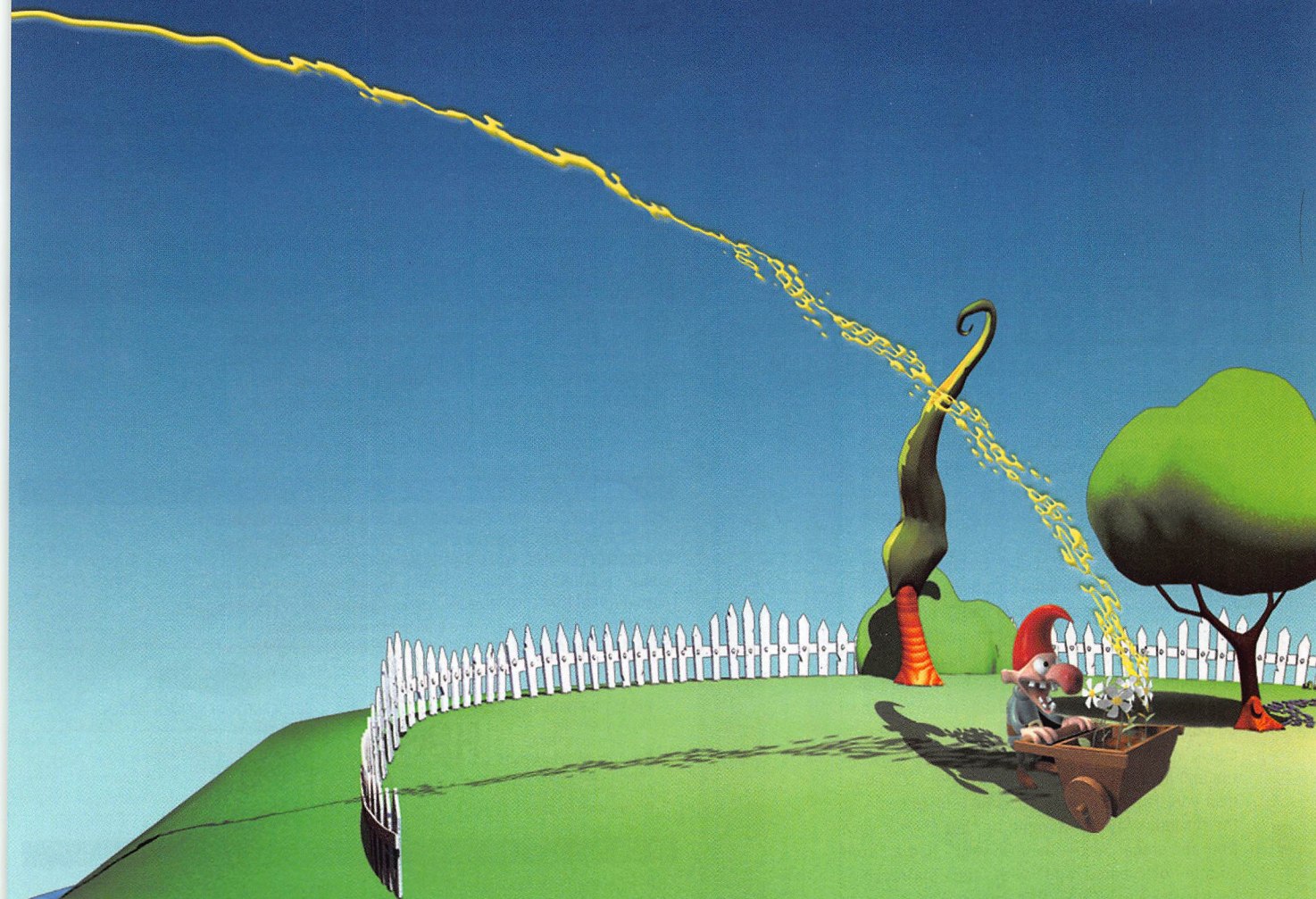
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ISSUE 34 MARCH 2001

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# STUPID INVADERS

COMING SOON....



# GR



## Game's Republic MANIFESTO

The topic on everyone's mind as this issue goes to press is Sega's long-awaited and much-anticipated announcement regarding their plans to let their superstars out of the stable—using their greatest assets, namely their vast array of great licenses, to maximize their potential in the ever-changing gamescape.

January 31 was one of the greatest days in video-game history. Besides becoming one of the world's foremost game developers, Sega will make the Dreamcast hardware available for different delivery systems while liquidating the remaining surplus at \$99.95. So if you want a traditional Dreamcast, this basically means you best go buy one while you still can (Lord knows they're cheap enough), because in the future you may find the architecture in a set-top box, PC, or DVD player near you. There are some 30 games still to come, so the fat lady may be warming up, but she's a ways from the stage. Seeing as how Sega's had a strong couple of years, and with the approaching Gamecube and Xbox, this seems like a sound strategy. Let's break it down like this: Here's what we have to lose—nothing; here's what we have to gain—Sega games on powerful new consoles! I still can't believe that I'm going to fire up my Nintendo and Sony systems and play Sega games! Yuji Naka, Yu Suzuki, Treasure and Miyamoto all making games for the same consoles? Think about the possibilities. The theory at GR was that that Sega would ultimately become Microsoft's most esteemed first party, much like Rare is to Nintendo, but this will be even better. Sonic on Game Boy Advance—can you believe it!? Sega will produce games for Game Boy Advance, PS2, Gamecube, Xbox, handheld computers, cell phones—you name it—making them the world's foremost content provider. Just think, right now Yu Suzuki is developing Virtua Fighter 4 on PS2! "Yu Suzuki—PS2," say it with me. Now try and imagine what Yuji Naka's up to besides Sonic Advance.

Anyway, you can read all about this and much much more right here in this issue, so enjoy. Oh, and say hello to my first sequel: Hunter Shane Halverson!

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TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE  
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## SUPER BOMBAD RACING .16

*Super-deformed Star Wars characters racing through a Star Wars universe shooting at each other and dropping traps, all powered by the newness of the PlayStation 2.*

## ONIMUSHA .50

*An artistic achievement of the highest order, Capcom's Onimusha takes pre-rendered backgrounds and real-time character modeling to another realm, while providing the most satisfying and intuitive swordplay this side of Soul Calibur.*

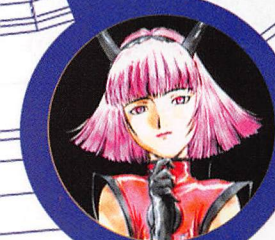
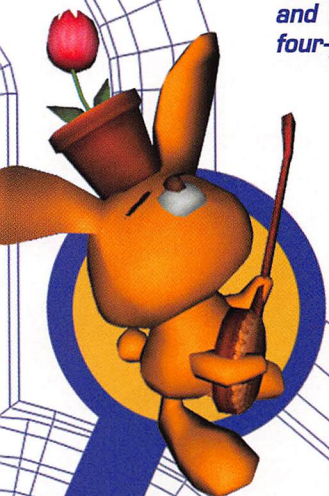


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"Spectacular" doesn't do Sony's ATV Offroad Fury justice. This baby sets the standard for all off-road racers to come. Depth, rockin' tunes, and burnin'-hot visuals drive it home and beep the horn. Read all about it in our four-page feature.



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**A DARK FUTURE...  
AN UNCERTAIN PAST...**

**NO ONE LEFT TO TRUST.**

# Oni<sup>TM</sup>

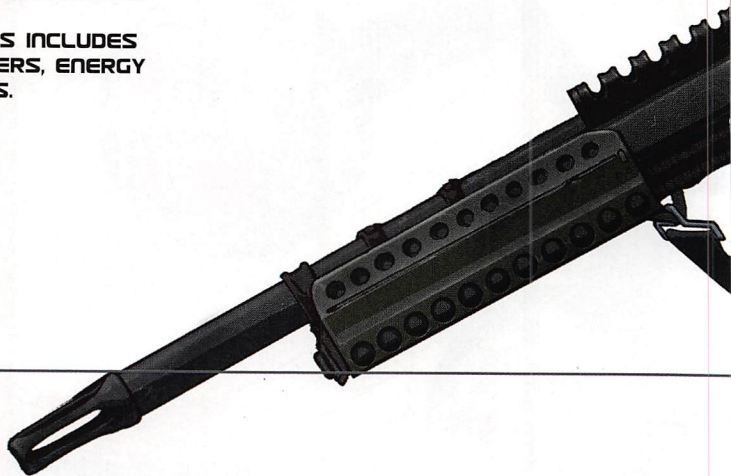
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MONTHLY GAMING NEWS

# FRONTLINES

## SEGAMORPH

Jan 31, 2001. The other shoe finally dropped. Sega of America COO Peter Moore announced in a media-targeted, surprise-filled teleconference call that Sega will officially cease production of the Dreamcast in March and become a "platform agnostic" third-party software developer. Yes, you read that right. Though long rumored, Sega has formally declared their intention to publish games on several platforms, including PlayStation 2, Game Boy Advance, Palm, and Java-capable Motorola cell phones. Xbox and Gamecube development has been hinted at, but nothing official was said as we went to press.

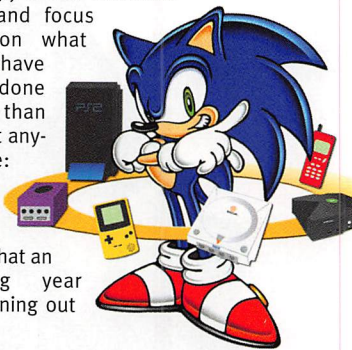
But perhaps even more surprising than Sega's new third-party status was the list of games that are due to be released in calendar year 2001 for systems other than Dreamcast. Most significantly, *Virtua Fighter 4* (!) was announced for PS2, with Yu Suzuki himself handling the honors in this PS2-specific game. A new version of *Space Channel 5* is also coming, along with Japanese favorites *Sakura Taisen* and *Let's Make a Sports Team* games. For Game Boy Advance, Peter Moore announced no less

than *Sonic the Hedgehog Advance*, *Chu Chu Rocket*, and *Puyo Puyo*. Not that it was much in doubt, but this basically gives Nintendo complete and utter control of the handheld market, having both *Sonic* and *Mario* on the same system. It's almost unbelievable. And think of *AM2*, *Sonic Team*, and the myriad other Sega development crews working on whatever platform they deem the most appropriate. The wealth of talent at Sega is almost staggering, and to give this wellspring free reign is really going to shake things up for the likes of Square, Namco, and Konami.

But what is to become of the Dreamcast? For the short term, a price drop to \$99.95 will help Sega shift their remaining two million Dreamcasts in inventory, and Sega is committed to supporting the system with games and peripherals at least until the end of the year. Don't forget, high profile titles such as *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Crazy Taxi 2*, *Shenmue II*, and roughly 30 other titles, are still coming before November. And SegaNet will continue for the foreseeable future, with multiplatform support once Sony and possibly Microsoft announce

their online strategies. Also, the Dreamcast chipset will live on in licensed form in set top boxes and other mixed media appliances, the first such device being the Pace Micro Technology set-top box, which will feature a 40 GB hard drive.

These announcements are nothing but good news, both for Sega, which saw its stock shoot up 50 percent in Japan, and for the gaming public. Specifically, Sega can stop hemorrhaging money battling in the increasingly brutal hardware market, and focus instead on what they have always done better than just about anyone else: design brilliant video games. What an interesting year this is turning out to be.



## "FINAL" FANTASY? I DON'T THINK SO

It looks like 2001 is going to be another huge year for Squaresoft. At this year's business strategy meeting, Square President Hisashi Suzuki discussed the company's plans for the future of *Final Fantasy*. Still on track for a July release in Japan, *Final Fantasy X* is now tentatively scheduled for late November here in the States. Development of the game is being led by Yoshinori Kitase (*Final Fantasy VII* & *VIII*) and Tetsuya Nomura (*Final Fantasy IX*), and Square expects to ship 5.6 to 6.8 million copies worldwide. Suzuki also reaffirmed that *Final Fantasy XI* will be released on both PlayStation 2 and PC under the direction of Hiromichi Tanaka (*Chrono Cross*) and Kouichi Ishi (*Mana* series). The biggest announcement of the day, however, was that *Final Fantasy XII* is also being developed for PlayStation 2. Yasumi Matsuno (*Final Fantasy Tactics*, *Vagrant Story*) and Hiroyuki Itou (*Final Fantasy IX*) are leading the project, and it is slated to be more of a standard RPG than *FF XI*, which will be an online title.

In other *Final Fantasy* news, Square Vice President Hironobu Sakaguchi commented on handheld versions of *FF IV*, *V*, and *VI*, saying that they are "technically impossible to develop on the WonderSwan Color." A new *FF* game is also in the works for an unspecified portable system, but games on Game Boy Advance seem doubtful, considering Nintendo's Hiroshi Yamauchi recently stated that "there is no contract with Square." However, remakes of *FF VII*, *VIII*, and *IX* are coming for PS2.

Square plans to release a total of 23 titles during this fiscal year, with 11 of the 23 slated as remakes. Speaking of which, Square/EA has been polling visitors of its website on whether they'd like to see *Final Fantasy IV* and *Chrono Trigger* released for the PlayStation in the U.S., and an anthology of sorts containing both games is even rumored, so keep your fingers crossed.



## CONKER'S VEGAS

It's almost ready for release: Rare's most ambitious project and Nintendo's first major step in shaking up their innocent image—*Conker's Bad Fur Day*. During a press event in Vegas, we were briefed on how diverse the game actually is. Levels are broken down into chapters and each chapter unfolds into its own sitcom episode. Just watching the game being played, it was obvious that *Conker's* is Rare's most coherent game to date. Later in the night, we were all invited to a suite up in The Aladdin Hotel and Casino, where we shared food, drinks and as much game time with Conker's as we liked. Check out pg.42 to learn more about the game.





## PARAPPA THE ANIME?

The greatest music game has now become a TV anime series. We're talking of course about none other than PaRappa the Rapper. All the characters from the game appear in the anime, according to the director, Mr. Sakurai. "What I want to deliver in this anime is the communication and difference in response between a courageous boy group who is after their dreams and a care-free girl group when



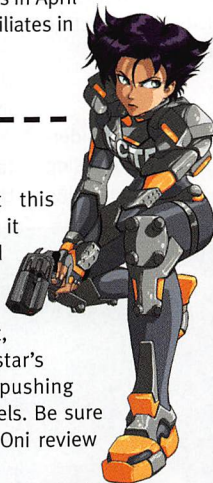
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facing problems in their affairs."

The producer, Mr. Matsuura, claims the game is the game and the anime is the anime, but the overall atmosphere in the anime is close to the one in the game.

Music is an important element in the anime, so popular artists such as Nona Reeves, Elephant Club, and Chara are working on the music. In addition, Rodney Greenblatt, the character artist, added some new characters—and goods, such as figures and gadgets based on the new characters, will be released from Takara in the near future.

The series begins in April on Fuji channel affiliates in Japan.



## WE COULD TELL YOU...

Rockstar recently brought us out to Arizona to celebrate the release of Oni. "Why Arizona?" you ask. Well, because it is home to the largest laser-tag arena in the country. And what better way to commemorate the game than to hunt down your fellow journalists in a game of cutthroat hide-and-seek. At the event, we were also briefed on the strong product lineup Rockstar has planned for 2001, all of which cannot

be disclosed at this time. Sorry. But it should be noted that each concept is refreshing and different, solidifying Rockstar's commitment to pushing games to new levels. Be sure to check out our Oni review in this issue.

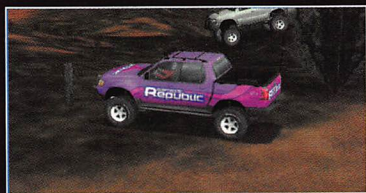


## MORE EVIL RESIDENT

Capcom Japan recently announced their plans to release Biohazard-Nightmare Returns, comprising the complete Biohazard Series minus the poorly received PS-only Resident Evil: Survivor. Available in March and retailing for ¥28,000 (\$250

U.S.), players get a monstrous package that includes Biohazard: Director's Cut Dual Shock Version (PS), Biohazard 2: Dual Shock Version (PS), Biohazard 3: Last Escape (PS), Biohazard Code: Veronica Complete (PS2), Biohazard 5th Anniversary Memorial DVD: Wesker's Report, a Kurowu key chain, a Kurowu silver ring, a Kurowu medal, a Kurowu ballpen, a Biohazard dog tag and a Biohazard binder. It is unknown if this compilation will be available outside of Japan.

## GR TRUCKIN'



You can now select this happenin' GR Dodge in 4X4 Evolution online (wash it when you're done, though). Our thanks to the guys at Terminal Reality for letting us in on the fun.

## WALT SQUARED

Last year Square's Tetsuya Nomura announced plans to work with Disney in creating a 3D RPG involving Disney characters that will be created by members of the Final Fantasy team. While information hasn't been revealed about the game's storyline or style of role-playing, Square announced that the game will premiere on the online Disney Game World in 2002, developed jointly by T&E Soft and Square Entertainment. The unnamed project is scheduled for PS2, Xbox, Gamecube, and PC, with plans for cross-platform play.

## ROGER THAT...

- How much was that doggy in the window? Only Sony knows. They recently purchased Naughty Dog, best known for developing Crash Bandicoot...

- Look for a big addition to EA's next Madden game on PS2. According to the Madden Central Website, the next installment will feature full online play...

- Hideo "Metal Gear" Kojima recently revealed in an interview, conducted by longtime friend Mamoru Oshii, that Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty on PS2 and Xbox will be the last in the series...

- During the Parappa animated series press event, Sony confirmed that there is a PaRappa III game planned for the PlayStation 2...

- Interplay has announced that Giants: Citizen Kabuto will be hitting PlayStation 2 as early as Q2 of this year. The PS2 version will supposedly take full advantage of the hardware's power and feature a new console-friendly interface...

- A Nintendo classic is making a comeback. Nintendo is bringing a four-player Dr. Mario to the N64 this April for the low price of \$29.95...

- The arcade version of Namco's Soul Calibur 2 is being developed for the PlayStation 2-compatible System 246 arcade board...

- Sega has officially announced both The House of the Dead 3 and Toejam & Earl 3 for release on Dreamcast later this year...

- Capcom revealed that all its major franchises are currently undergoing "next-generation" facelifts. Look for Mega Man, Street Fighter and Resident Evil to hit PS2, Gamecube, or Xbox in the near future...

- Digital TV technology provider Pace Micro Technology, has confirmed that the Dreamcast technology will be integrated into their new line of set top boxes. Users will be able to download new Dreamcast games to a 40GB HD on a pay-for-play basis, and access the entire library of Dreamcast software...

- If you were waiting for Enix's action/adventure, Blade Arts, to hit the States (see GR #28), we have some bad news. The project got the axe.



## XBOX AT CES: THE ROCK LIKES WHAT BILL'S COOKIN'

During the keynote speech on the first day of the CES (Consumer Electronics Show), the chairman and chief software architect of Microsoft, Bill Gates, unveiled the design of the Xbox as well as the stock controller and two of the four launch titles: *OddWorld: Munch's Oddyssey* and *Malice*. Both of these titles are exclusive to the Xbox. In addition, THQ's *WWF* game and Activision's *Tony Hawk 2X* are scheduled to complete the launch lineup.

In an effort to build media excitement at the event, Microsoft bolstered their showing by inviting *WWF* fave The Rock—known to be an avid gamer—to join in the proceedings. Acting as co-presenter/crowd pleaser, the big man helped to commemorate the unveiling of the Xbox with his patented comedic lines alongside a wide-eyed Gates. Who would have expected the combo of Microsoft's big cheese and The Rock for a console introduction keynote speech? It made for a lively presentation, indeed.

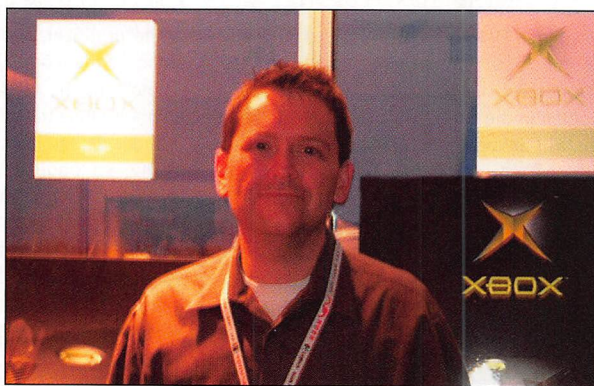
### The Big Bad 'Box Shocks

As you can see in the pics, the actual Xbox console is considerably larger than its competitors. This surprisingly large housing contains the system's massive powerplant—a bleeding-edge chipset architecture lined with custom components from proven hardware manufacturers like Intel and Nvidia, and more on-board memory than any console to date. Guiding the Xbox's powerful hardware is a state-of-the-art, fully customized OS. To give you an idea of its efficiency, it takes less than eight seconds to boot up the system and play, from start-up to game. Clearly, Microsoft is thinking 'big' in every aspect of the system's design, from the console's style to its potential performance and efficiency.

### Ample Support and Promises

The official Microsoft line on third parties has confirmed that over 200 developers are on-board, currently developing games for the Xbox. The company is facilitating the "sign-up" process through their considerable market reach and an attractive business model. Based on the hardware configuration itself, which allows for relatively easy PC-style development using a familiar, yet fully optimized OS environment, the Xbox is expected to be one of the most developer-friendly consoles ever. "Sony's PS2 strategy suggests a life cycle centered around a game machine in the broadband era. Xbox is a pure gaming machine; [the system] can give players graphics and sounds that have not been achieved perfectly on the PC," claimed a jubilant Gates.

In issues 31 & 32, GR provided in-depth interviews with Ed Fries, Seamus Blackley, Chanele Summers and J Allard, key members of the in-house Xbox team. Many pre-launch questions were clarified in these interviews. However, since that time the industry has been buzzing with speculation and the CES intro only fueled the



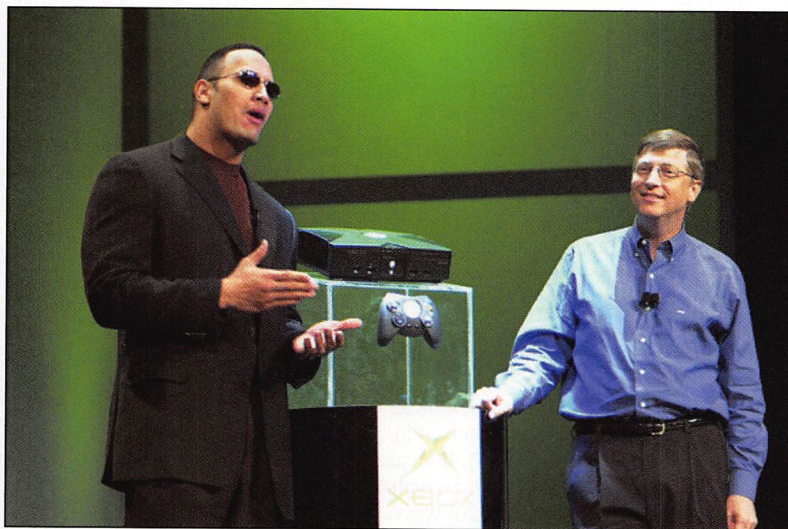
rumor mill. In an effort to quell some of the confusion and second-guessing at the CES, we paid a visit to the intimate Xbox suites at the Hilton and targeted Xbox development Director Don Coyer for interrogation. He graciously provided the following information:

**Gamers' Republic:** There is a rumor that at the time of the Xbox launch, four titles will be included on the system's hard drive. Is this true?

Don Coyer: No, that is not true.

**GR:** The *OddWorld* series was not successful in Japan. How do you guys plan to make it a hit?

DC: We will have a complete team in Japan, consisting of both a main development house and an extensive third-party liaison team. Since the content of Japanese software is for the most part unique, or at least



very different, the whole Japanese team is focused on providing content that is appropriate for Japan. In working with third parties, you discuss the importance of developing such titles. For our first-party group, a gentleman formerly from SCE is building a team over there. It's going to be a pretty large team. We understand the importance of Japan and also understand the different needs of software titles.

**GR:** Are you still vigorously seeking third-party developers for Xbox?

DC: Yes, we have over 200 signed up on a worldwide basis. There are a few key companies that we have not announced as official third parties yet. For example, Square. They are important to us, and we are working to secure them.

**GR:** So Square has not agreed to develop for Xbox yet?

DC: We have not announced that they have, but it is important for us, like the EA announcement in December. When we announce these things we have to carefully consider the timing and how it affects us, not to mention the importance of respecting the third party's strategy. We have to work with their schedule as



well as ours. Sometimes we choose not to announce news as soon as it occurs. It takes time and planning, for all involved.

**GR: There is a rumor that Tecmo's Dead or Alive is coming out for Xbox. Is it going to be the same as the PS2 or DC versions, an arcade port?**

DC: Well, I won't talk specifically about Dead or Alive, but I can tell you that we are not accepting ports on Xbox from PC. Every game that comes out on Xbox has to do something unique that takes advantage of the Xbox system. So any game that also arrives on Xbox is going to look better, may have different levels, etc. Invariably, the graphics will be enhanced. There are lots of things you can do with the

sounds, too. There are a lot of things that developers can do, overall, to enhance the games. WWF is a good example, and Tony Hawk also. The increased detail in these games provide so much more, by default, you won't be seeing the same product on PS2 or any other system. Just watch our demo and you'll understand the capabilities of Xbox. You'll be delighted to see how good the demo looks at just 20 percent completion.

[Note: Later on, we took a look at the games. Don was true to his word. Stuff was looking beautiful at 20 percent completion.]

**GR: Is the memory card going to be Xbox specific for saving game data, or will it be one of the popular SD/Memory Sticks?**

DC: It will be Xbox specific. Look at the controller and you'll see two slots on top. One is for the memory card and the other one is for a chat headset.

**GR: Are you planning to make a PDA compatible with the Xbox?**

DC: No plans at this point.

**GR: Regarding the controller, it is sort of a mixture of the DC and PS2 style, with a touch of Sidewinder design. Did you initially have more radical ideas for the controller?**

DC: Our guys considered hundreds of designs for the controller. Microsoft groups do the controller you mentioned, Sidewinder, and keyboards, mice, etc. With any of these projects, they start with sketches. They put them up on the wall, and eventually build form models. These mockups are then tested. We test the controller with people all over the world for feel and design to make it as comfortable to use as possible. For example, Sony has two triggers. We decided to do one trigger as a result of feedback, because people felt it was hard to tell the difference between two triggers.

**GR: Why did you choose black instead of silver as the Xbox's main color?**

DC: The early model that leaked to the web had a lot of silver in it. As we talked to gamers about it and took a good look at it in-house, the feedback was "black works better." It was a good color for the Xbox motif, helping to define the green contrast more prominently. Basically, there was much discussion before deciding on the black color.



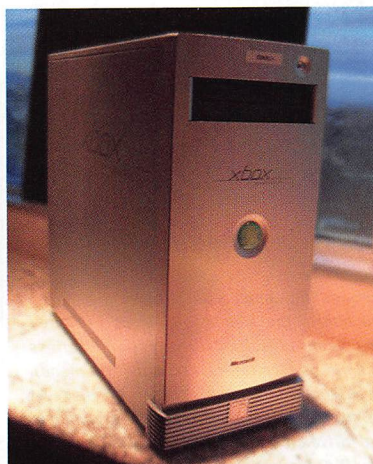
**GR: Will the Xbox strategy include a net business plan, such as downloadable games?**

DC: No. Xbox is a gaming machine and that's all there is to it.

**GR: There are many rumors regarding the intended cost of Xbox. Can you tell us how much the console will be sold for, or if it will be at a competitive price to PS2?**

DC: [Slight pause] We cannot release any exact numbers at this

point, mainly due to the fact that a target price has yet to be decided upon. However, the Xbox price will be comparable to our rivals.



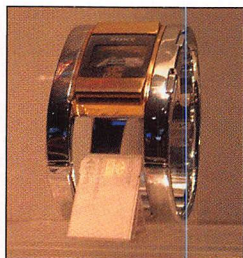


# YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT, DON'T NEED IT, BUT HAVE TO...

Buy it! The big news from this year's Consumer Electronics Show, held January 6-9 in the Las Vegas Convention Center, was Microsoft's Xbox unveiling, but that's far from all that was shown in the realm of personal electronics. The Gamecube quietly reared its head, while a somewhat silly hard drive for the N64 was even shown. But the big trend this year was the proliferation of smaller, more functional, wireless devices, and not just from consumer electronics makers, either: PC hardware companies, such as Intel, are beginning to capitalize on this trend. As Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates claimed in his keynote address, every

single electronic device—game machines, pocket PCs, digital cameras, PDAs—in a household is going to get connected to a PC in the future. At this rate, it really is foreseeable that companies will achieve a seamless environment between electronic goods and PCs in every household. In an industry where technology is always moving and today's state-of-the-art is tomorrow's obsolete, it was great to check out the goodies that people will be playing with later this year.

Here are GR's highlights from the show:



**Sony Memory Stick Watch Camera**

Although a similar product was exhibited at COMDEX, this svelte camera/watch is more refined.



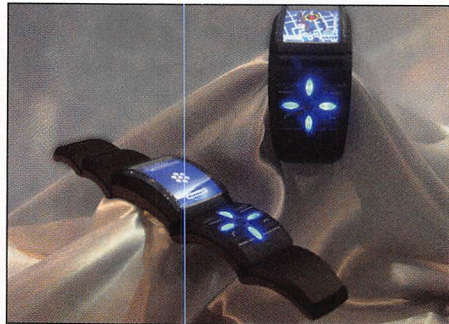
**Sony Duo Music Player**

You can download music in this tiny player and listen to it with ease.



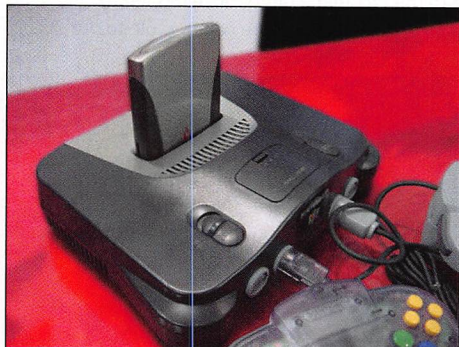
**Seiko Instruments Wrist Companion**

This is not a watch, it is a cellular phone. And it was a working sample. With a 129x92 dot screen with four levels of gray, it is compatible with Bluetooth and comes with a WAP browser. Not only can you talk on the Wrist Companion, but you can also send and receive e-mail. On top of that, it has the ability to install and play games. Seiko Instruments will release the model sometime this year.



**Seiko Instruments 2003 Model Concept**

A much more futuristic phone model from Seiko Instruments. Every thing will be smaller yet more functional. According to the company, "We have been doing this for longer than anybody else. We cannot give up people's left hand to cell phone manufacturers."



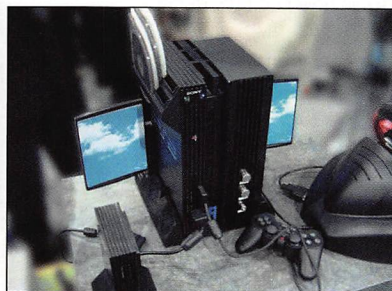
**Iomega Nintendo 64 Hard Drive**

At the Iomega booth, the Nintendo 64 was exhibited together with a removable hard drive called Peerless (created by Japan Alps Electronics, Co., Ltd. for Iomega). The drive was a completed mock-up with no disk yet included in the cartridge. However, Iomega is planning to apply the hard drive to various platforms such as car stereos, VCRs or DVD players starting sometime this year.



**Sony Three Slot Duo Player**

With this, you can play music all day long without repeating the same song. Of course, you have to have a three 128MB Memory Sticks.



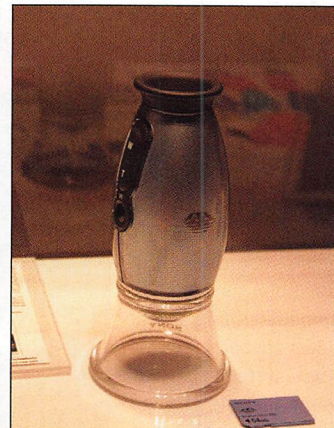
**PS2 With Speakers**

The PS2 with flat speakers and a woofer now unified in a spectacular design. Unfortunately, no digital input comes with it.



**Sony Duo Music Pendant**

A nice pendant-type music player that looks easy to carry and can be a stylish accessory.



**Sony Duo Microscope**

You can magnify specimens up to 30x and take a shot, save it to a Memory Stick, then port it to PC or PDA for viewing or distribution.



**Gamecube**

Somehow, at the corner of the super density (SD) card pavilion, the Nintendo Gamecube was exhibited together with 64 MB SD memory card and adapter.



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# database

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

## top ten selling playstation 2 titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 1, 2001

- |                     |          |                   |          |
|---------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| 1. MADDEN NFL 2001  | EA       | 6. FIFA 2001      | EA       |
| 2. SSX              | EA       | 7. READY2RUMBLE 2 | MIDWAY   |
| 3. NHL 2001         | EA       | 8. TIMESPLITTERS  | EIDOS    |
| 4. TEKKEN TAG TOUR. | NAMCO    | 9. KENGO          | CRAVE    |
| 5. MIDNIGHT CLUB    | ROCKSTAR | 10. SMUGGLERS RUN | ROCKSTAR |



## top ten selling playstation titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 1, 2001

- |                         |                |                          |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1. DRIVER 2             | GT INTERACTIVE | 6. GRAN TURISMO 2        | SONY           |
| 2. T. HAWK PRO SKATER 2 | ACTIVISION     | 7. MADDEN NFL 2001       | EA             |
| 3. FINAL FANTASY IX     | SQUARE         | 8. RAZOR FREESTYLE SCTR. | CRAVE          |
| 4. WWF SMACKDOWN 2      | THQ            | 9. DRIVER                | GT INTERACTIVE |
| 5. T. HAWK PRO SKATER   | ACTIVISION     | 10. TEKKEN 3             | NAMCO          |



## top ten selling nintendos4 titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 1, 2001

- |                         |            |                     |          |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------------|----------|
| 1. ZELDA MM             | NINTENDO   | 6. HEY YOU PIKACHU! | NINTENDO |
| 2. WWF NO MERCY         | THQ        | 7. MARIO TENNIS     | NINTENDO |
| 3. BANJO-TOOIE          | NINTENDO   | 8. MADDEN NFL 2001  | EA       |
| 4. T.W.I.N.E.           | EA         | 9. RUGRATS IN PARIS | THQ      |
| 5. T. HAWK PRO SKATER 2 | ACTIVISION | 10. NFL BLITZ 2001  | MIDWAY   |



## top ten selling dreamcast titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 1, 2001

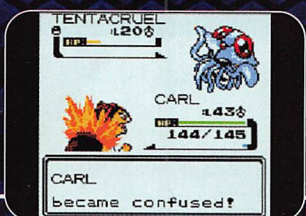
- |                         |            |                     |         |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1. NFL 2K1              | SEGA       | 6. RIPPIN RIDERS SB | SEGA    |
| 2. NBA 2K1              | SEGA       | 7. SONIC ADVENTURE  | SEGA    |
| 3. T. HAWK PRO SKATER 2 | ACTIVISION | 8. CENTIPEDE        | HASBRO  |
| 4. CRAZY TAXI           | SEGA       | 9. READY2RUMBLE 2   | MIDWAY  |
| 5. SHENMUE              | SEGA       | 10. GRANDIA 2       | UBISOFT |



## top ten selling gameboy color titles

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 1, 2001

- |                        |            |                     |            |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1. POKÉMON GOLD        | NINTENDO   | 6. POWER PUFF GIRLS | BAM ENTER. |
| 2. POKÉMON SILVER      | NINTENDO   | 7. 102 DALMATIONS   | ACTIVISION |
| 3. DONKEY KONG COUNTRY | NINTENDO   | 8. GRINCH           | KONAMI     |
| 4. T.HAWK PRO SKATER 2 | ACTIVISION | 9. SUPER MARIO DLX. | NINTENDO   |
| 5. RUGRATS IN PARIS    | THQ        | 10. BUZZ LIGHTYEAR  | ACTIVISION |



## top ten selling overall console titles

FARFETCH'D

#162



HENRY

used ACID!

\*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD WEEK OF DECEMBER 31-JANUARY 1, 2001

- |                           |                |                             |          |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. POKÉMON SILVER-GB      | NINTENDO       | 6. FINAL FANTASY IX-PS      | SQUARE   |
| 2. POKÉMON GOLD-GB        | NINTENDO       | 7. WWF SMACKDOWN 2-PS       | THQ      |
| 3. MADDEN NFL 2001-PS2    | EA             | 8. SSX-PS2                  | EA       |
| 4. DRIVER 2-PS            | GT INTERACTIVE | 9. SUPER MARIO DLX.-GBC     | NINTENDO |
| 5. T.HAWK PRO SKATER 2-PS | ACTIVISION     | 10. DONKEY KONG COUNTRY-GBC | NINTENDO |

## gamers' republic top ten games

\* BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH JANUARY 26, 2001

d. halverson



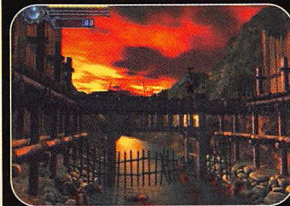
1. CONKER'S BFD N64
2. ONIMUSHA PS2
3. ONI PS2
4. ATV OFFROAD FURY PS2
5. SIN & PUNISHMENT N64
6. JET GRIND RADIO DC
7. PHANTASY STAR O. DC
8. GOEMON PS2
9. ZONE OF THE ENDERS PS2
10. MISCHIEF MAKERS N64

b. siechter



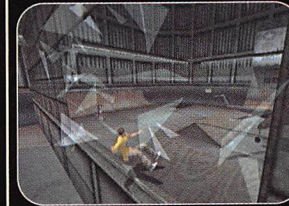
1. ONIMUSHA PS2
2. MDK2 PS2
3. ZONE OF THE ENDERS PS2
4. RIDGE RACER V PS2
5. TEKKEN TAG PS2
6. LUNAR 2 EBC PS
7. MARIO TENNIS N64
8. TIMESPLITTERS PS2
9. KLONOA 2 PS2
10. SSX PS2

milze hobbs



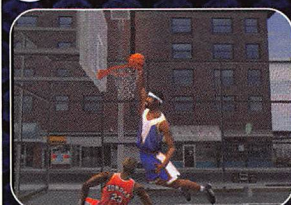
1. ONIMUSHA PS2
2. ZONE OF THE ENDERS PS2
3. KLONOA 2 PS2
4. GRAN TURISMO 3 PS2
5. GIGAWING 2 DC
6. FIFA 2001 (IMPORT) PS2
7. DAYTONA USA 2001 DC
8. SHADOW OF DESTINY PS2
9. COOKIE AND CREAM PS2
10. RING OF RED PS2

r. stratton



1. T HAWKS PRO SKTR 2 PS
2. GUILTY GEAR X DC
3. TRES. OF THE DEEP PS
4. CONKER'S BFD N64
5. ADV COOKIE & CRM PS2
6. NFL 2K1 DC
7. SILENT SCOPE DC
8. ARKANOID NES
9. RALLY CROSS PS
10. DYNASTY W. 2 PS2

pooch



1. NBA LIVE 2001 PS2
2. MADDEN 2001 PS2
3. ESPN NBA 2NIGHT PS2
4. RIDGE RACER V PS2
5. FIFA 2001 PS2
6. R.E. CODE: VERONICA DC
7. JET GRIND RADIO DC
8. SMUGGLERS RUN PS2
9. TIGER WOODS GOLF PS2
10. SSX PS2

s. alinnuso



1. ONIMUSHA PS2
2. SIN & PUNISHMENT N64
3. VANISHING POINT DC
4. EVERQUEST PC
5. P.S.O. DC
6. GIGAWING 2 DC
7. F1 CHAMPIONSHIP PS2
8. TYPING OF THE DEAD DC
9. NFL 2K1 DC
10. SSX PS2

bob elmquist



1. GRAN TURISMO 3 PS2
2. SMUGGLERS RUN PS2
3. GIANTS PC
4. MOTO GP PS2
5. SSX SNOWBOARDING PS2
6. TIMESPLITTERS PS2
7. PERFECT DARK N64
8. PROJECT I.G.I. PC
9. FINAL FANTASY IX PS
10. QUAKE III DC

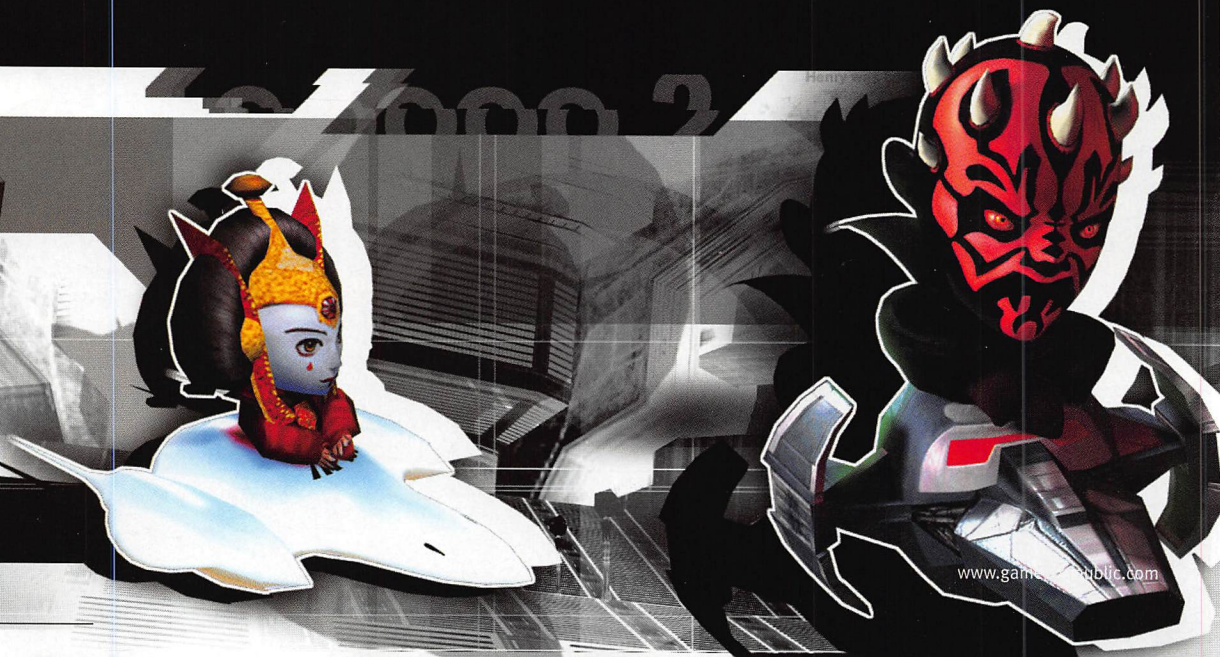
c. hofsmann

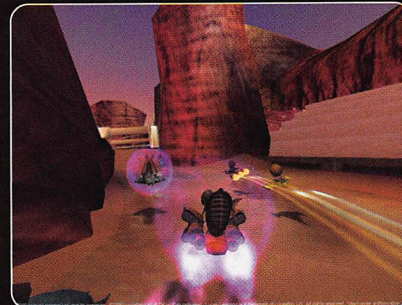
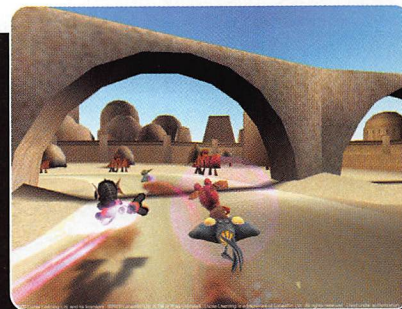
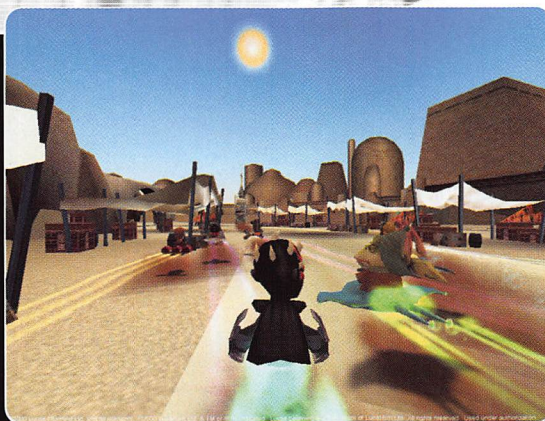


1. KLONOA 2 PS2
2. ONIMUSHA PS2
3. SHADOW OF DESTINY PS2
4. ZONE OF THE ENDERS PS2
5. MEGA MAN XTREME GBC
6. FINAL FANTASY WSC
7. METAL SLUG X PS
8. DEVIL MAY CRY PS2
9. KOF 2000 NG
10. GUNPEY EX WSC

*A long time ago in a galaxy so distant it can  
only be described as far, far away, a kart-racing  
competition was born, where little characters  
with big, fat, bulbous  
heads and names like Sebulba and  
Yoda zipped through swamps and deserts  
and power stations and energy domes, shooting  
energy beams and dropping piles of toxic goo.  
A god named George Lucas approved of this  
creation, and so  
it was called....*

# ***SUPER BOMBAD RACING***





Not all of us can quote scripture, but we all can quote from *Star Wars*: "Use the Force, Luke." With this immortal space opera and the three films that followed, George Lucas has constructed a pop-culture temple, and we bow to the power of the master and his Jedi.

What is it about *Star Wars* that inspires such a child-like wonder and fascination? Analyze the source of its strength and you can come up with all sorts of answers. Distill it to its simplest form, and you're left with one simple fact: *Star Wars* is packed with tons of really cool stuff—grand characters and sidekicks, neat gadgets and ships that scream through the stars, religion and spirituality, good and evil, war and death, dazzling sights and sounds in a universe completely dreamed up. It evokes excitement just thinking about it.

Heavy stuff? Not really—just soaring imagination and loads of fun. The kind of fun that fits well into a video game. The *Star Wars* license has become the mold for an array of games that date all the way back to the early days of the arcade: *Star Wars Arcade* was the first, a simplistic shooter, presented with wire-frame graphics, and booming the incomparable *Star Wars* music. But never has such liberty been taken with the *Star Wars* theme as it has in *Super Bombad Racing*, a kart-racing game with super-deformed characters set mostly in the *Episode One* universe.

"We wanted to do this lighthearted style of kart racer from the start," recalls project lead Michael McCormick. "The starting place was the characters, with their big heads. The initial fears were that licensing wouldn't go for it—going that far with the *Star Wars* characters. But

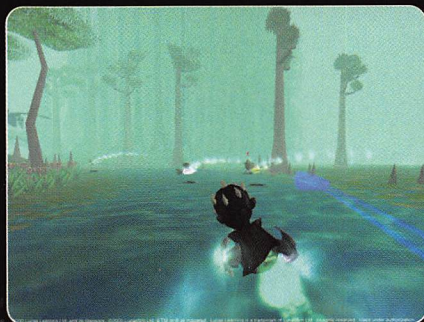
when we pitched it, they loved it."

All the major players from *Episode One* are here, from Jar Jar, Darth Maul and Yoda to Anakin, Queen Amidala and Sebulba, yet they all look...well, a little different. Their heads are much too big for their tiny bodies, and they look a little younger and less menacing than in the movie. Even the music is a little out of whack, the original John Williams score filtered through a cartoon whimsy.

"I call it the super-deformed *Star Wars* music," laughs McCormick. "But the hardcore *Star Wars* fans are like, 'Oh wait, that's...' they can name each one. Each one of them has its own distinct tune. Like the Imperial March [McCormick hums it enthusiastically]. Some are more super-deformed than others."

In some ways, *Super Bombad Racing* is, of course, a familiar kart racer: zip around colorful courses, collect power-ups, use power-ups to secure a first-place finish and a trip to the next circuit. The team points to *Mario Kart*—still the king of the road—as a source of inspiration, but to be influenced does not mean to be bankrupt of new ideas.

"One of our main goals was to differentiate ourselves from the typi-



STAR WARS

NABOO GINGAN



cal racer. Theirs is the racing game, and we're going to be the lighthearted kart game," says associate project lead Patrick Shaw. "And more than just the tire-to-the-road, drive-around-the-track game," adds McCormick. "Our levels are wide-open, with multiple paths and levels. We designed the levels to encourage exploration. You're not stuck on one set course; the environments are larger, exploratory areas... Some of the levels, when you dive into them the first time, it's a little confusing where to go. Part of the game is learning the paths."

"It's interesting to watch people playing—going places we've never gone," adds Shaw.

So each level is a little more complex and daunting than the last?

"Yeah, the tracks are set up to get progressively more difficult. Swamp is the easiest and the Droid Control Ship is the hardest," says McCormick. "Coruscant has more jumps and more places to fall off of, going from nav car to nav car, but the Swamp, the first one you played, has shorter laps, fewer paths, nowhere to fall off. It gets harder and more challenging from there. In the Power Station, where the big final battle takes place, all these little ramps are around these big energy cores, and you can fall off left and right. Some people have complained and said, 'It's too easy to fall off.' I'm saying, 'No, it's a hard level. You have to do the right turns and really focus.'"

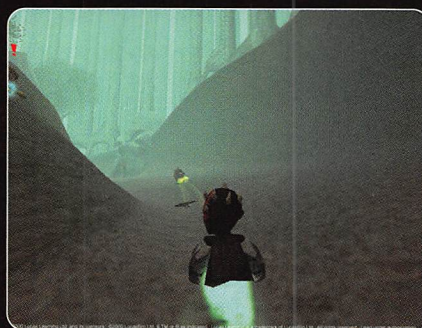
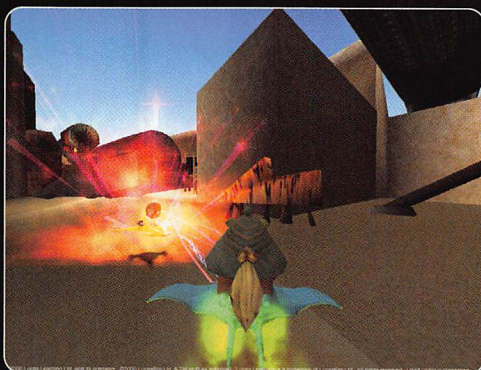
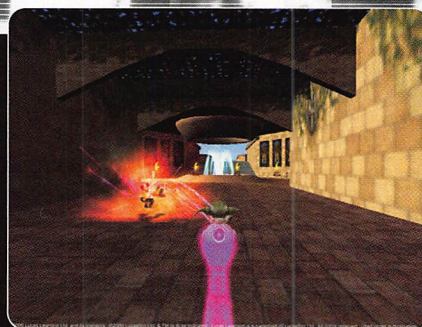
Doing the tight turns sometimes requires the Bombad Turn, a hard pitch that must be mastered to efficiently navigate the obstacle-strewn tracks and move into the obscured shortcuts and safe spots.

"It's for performance, when you need to do a sharp turn," explains McCormick. "Or if you're cutting wrong, you can compensate, or you can use it to dodge gadgets. If you do the Bombad Turn, you can cut around characters when they're coming at you. And also the different characters have different turning radii. Smaller guys can turn sharper."

And also key to capturing the gold is mastering the hop and rocket charge.

"Jump and boost can really get you places," explains McCormick. "And if you pitch back, or pitch down, you can cut a jump shorter. And one thing you want to try to do is hop on top of characters and crush them."

Crushing characters is an advanced technique. But initially, the only crushing going on is the kind that happens when you find yourself



flattened by rolling boulders or smashed between giant steel doors; track-side dangers are everywhere. "Dune City has the Jawas that zap at you," says Shaw. "In the Sarlacc pit, tentacles grab you and pull you in and spit you out." It takes deft racing skills to avoid pitfalls and reach the finish line on top, but ignore the power-ups and the gold cup is going to your opponent.

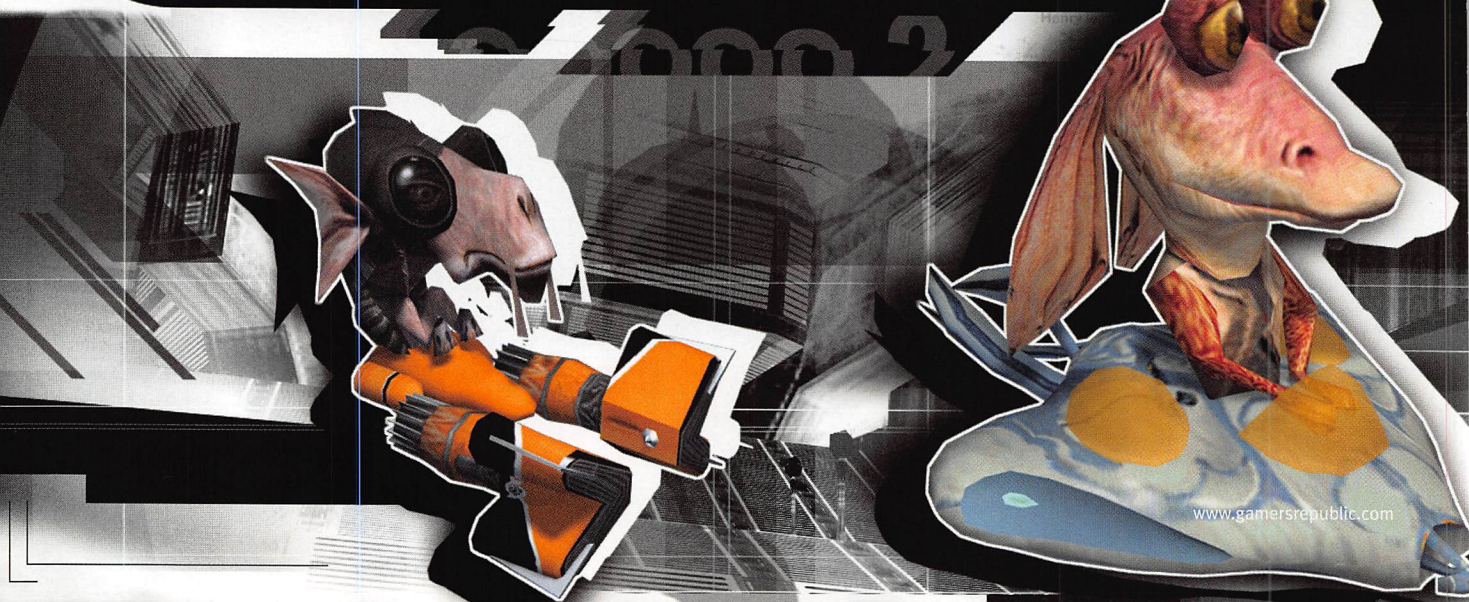
"Winning is more about kicking butt with the weapons, if you ignore the weapons, you'll be in trouble," Shaw points out.

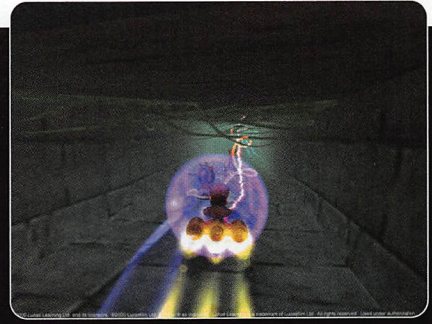
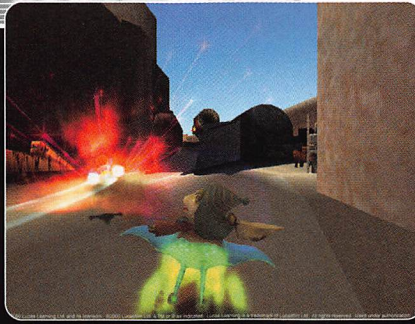
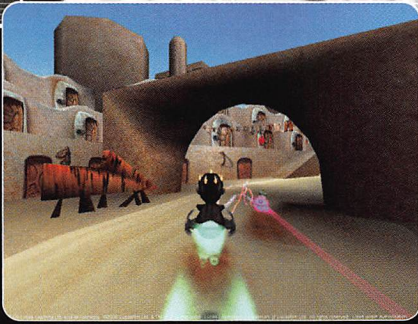
"Yeah, it's more about the interaction between the characters and zapping each other than about all-out speed," adds McCormick.

So explain this gadget system; a lot of time must have been spent tweaking it?

"Yeah," begins McCormick. "And this isn't exactly up to date, but to give you an idea of how the [weapons and boost system] work: Boost, there's the antigravity flying boost in the arenas. Super boost increases your boost capacity. For example, Jar Jar only starts out with a [small] boost capacity. And in the circuit races, it actually carries over. If you have boost energy in one race, it will continue on to the next one. Invincible boost gives you a few seconds of boost, and you can't get hit by gadgets."

"Frontals: there's a bunch of these," continues McCormick: Jammer makes your screen all red and static and makes it





hard to drive for a while. Training droid homes in and bashes people. Photon bursts shoot straight, have puffs of smoke. Probe droid is a first-place zapper that hunts down the leader. Force field coupler is kind of cool; it's only in arenas, and it's a ray that comes out and drains people's force-field energy. In arenas, when you're out of force-field energy, you're out of the game. So it's kind of vampire-like: theirs goes down, yours goes up. And tractor beam is a big one, too. Inversion ray is cool—it sends the racer spinning out of control."

Battling to the front of the pack is just part of the challenge; maintaining the lead requires the handy rear attacks. "Like ion net," says McCormick. "When someone crashes into it, it tangles them up. Goo drops a mess of goo to get stuck in; the goo actually has some physics on it. Energy balls roll around and knock out your force field and boost meter, possibly making you crash. Shields pretty much give you more energy, increase capacity, give you invincibility."

"As for the special gadgets," continues McCormick, "they function differently for each of the racers, so there are actually nine different effects from the special gadget. For example, Darth Maul throws his double-bladed light saber."

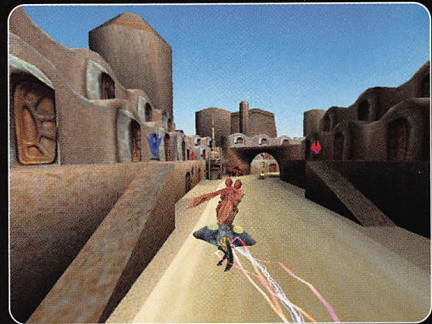
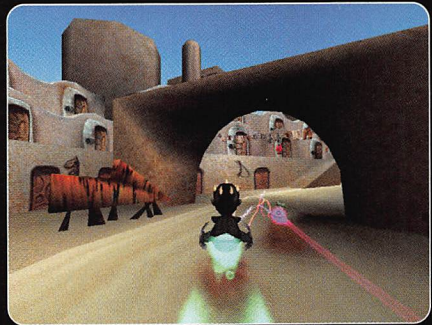
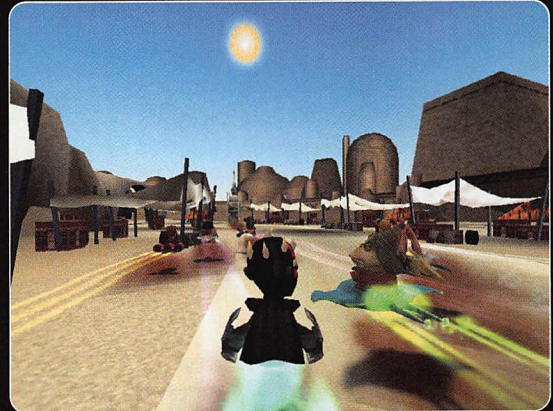
Placing an emphasis on offensive pummeling and boost strategy generates extra game-play energy, but it's always a challenge for kart-game designers to limit the AI from embracing unfair tactics. "The characters do cheat a little bit," says McCormick. "But in kart racing games, you want a lot of clumping, it's about the interaction. Like sometimes in Pod Racer, you're out there, and you never see another racer the whole game. So [in Super Bombad], if you're way far behind, a couple of

racers will wait for you around the corner, so if you're way out ahead, they'll start cheating a bit to take you out. Each track also has a boss racer, someone who knows the best path—at least almost the best path. They don't take every shortcut, so when you learn the track, you can definitely beat them. But they won't wait for you, and they'll go as fast as you can."

Super Bombad Racing is a kart-racing game with big-headed *Star Wars*: Episode One characters who race and battle each other. Forget about backstory. The developers contemplated explaining what all this means, but in the end, they decided that the game is what it is: "wacky *Star Wars* characters in a wacky *Star Wars* universe. We threw around ideas, but in the end it just didn't work. It's just fun racing," says McCormick.

You respond to the game instantly, for the simple fact that you're racing through the *Star Wars* universe: there's the pod race through the desert; the underwater competition on Otoh Gunga, where enormous domes enclose spheres of transparent membranes; and Coruscant, "the big city of sky scrapers: tall buildings, big drop offs, lots of traffic," says McCormick. "Lamp posts are bashable. There are floating nav cars, big floating taxis you drive along the back as ramps. It's kind of like Frogger of old. You have to time the jumps as they're moving along"; and then there's the "power station, which starts in the palace hallway, then you go into where all the catwalks and energy domes are."

"I actually really like this one," adds Shaw.



# NABOO GINGAN



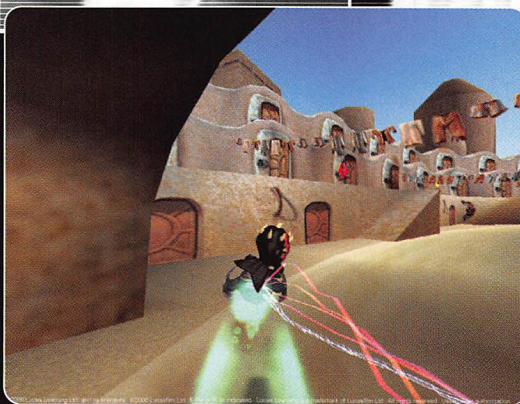
It's my favorite one. You can find a lot of shortcuts, avoiding the catwalks, which are really dangerous. It's very cool. You could stay on them and try not to fall, but you can take the big shortcuts if you're good."

And then there's the Hoth asteroid. "The whole thing is turning, the sky dome is going, undulating gas clouds up there, meteors flying, Millennium Falcon flying around, a big space bug comes out to get people," describes McCormick. "The whole level is dynamically lit. The sun goes down and [affects the level]." Areas like this are actually "big arenas. It's a big bowl, in arenas, there's a unique gadget-flying boost instead of regular speed boost. If you get that, kick it in and pull back on the stick, you can cruise around in the air for a few seconds. Part of the challenge is just getting the special gadgets, which sometimes are floating up in the sky. This is definitely not your typical kart racer, stuck-on-the-ground kind of thing. When you're knocked out, you turn into a pecka pecka, a big bird, so you can cruise around and pick up gadgets and [disrupt the opposition]."

The Naboo Battlefield is going to be a favorite.

"Yeah, this is a fun one," agrees McCormick. "From the movie, this is where the big droids battled the Gungan army under the big energy dome. It's after the battle. There are catapults hanging around, some burning wreckage. You can actually get shot up on the catapults."

Getting launched off a catapult, falling into the abyss of space, passing an opponent, slipping into a trap—all of these moments send the characters screaming and intoning lines of disgust. "All the characters have their little unique voices," says McCormick. "Different voice lines are constantly coming in... Anakin and Jar Jar are the actual voice



actors, Jake Lloyd and Ahmed Best... And each character has a taunt. Some actually have a couple. Yoda says, 'Eat my dust you will.' And Darth says, 'You're no match for a sith.' Jar Jar says, 'You-sa slow.'"

Can you gain a tactical advantage by taunting?

"They're just for fun," says McCormick. "They actually taunt automatically, when the AI passes you into first place, you have characters like Sebulba laughing at you."

"And each racer has its own horn, for more goofiness. Anakin has a little bicycle bell," adds Shaw. "Kind of making fun of the little kid."

"Yeah, we're dead," says McCormick.

Continuing the goofiness are the little sight musings, like the flapping ears of the characters. "Yoda's in his jedi counsel chair, and we attached a rocket on the back," says McCormick. "His ears flap based on the speed. It's all physics and speed based. Speed up, and they start flapping quicker. When he slows down, they slow down. His head turns to look at the other racers."

As a *Star Wars* game, what kind of subtle touches have you brushed into the game to delight the zealots?

"We have these little things. Like chancellor Valorum. He starts the race—'Let the race begin!' Then he walks off, and Palpatine walks in on the second lap. It's a subtle thing most people won't notice, but we kind of sprinkle in some things for the *Star Wars* fans."

What about any extras, for, say, beating all the tracks in first place?

"There's a hidden thing," begins McCormick. "If you race as a particular racer, if you, uh... do we tell them this stuff or not?" **-BRADY FIECHTER**



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# FINAL FANTASY X

ファイナルファンタジー X



## *Final Fantasy XI is going online. Final Fantasy XII has already been announced. Let's catch our breath and take a look at FFX*

**F**inal Fantasy IX was a remarkable achievement, a game that nourished our thoughts and emotions in a way that very few games seem capable of. There are those games that engage, entertain and excite. And then there are those rare treasures that crawl inside us, carry us away and move us to emotional highs. Final Fantasy IX was such a game.

From the comments I've received, it seems that many of you share my love for Square's masterpiece. You spent 40 or so hours of your life lost in a beautiful fantasy world, seduced by the marvelous images and the personalities of rich and colorful characters. And you can't wait for the next journey—Final Fantasy X, the first fully 3D Final Fan-

tasy. You are unusually curious as to the direction this indelible series is going. Is the traditional fantasy aesthetic being exchanged once again for a more antiseptic, sci-fi tone? Is Square capable of successfully investing emotion in its characters through meticulously rendered facial expressions? Will the voice-overs—"added for a whole new dramatic experience"—cripple the drama?

Still more questions: what do the following random, obscure thoughts from Final Fantasy X allude to? "They say your head gets all funny when Sin is near. Maybe what you saw was some kind of dream?"

Our world is crying.

"I will defeat Sin. I must."

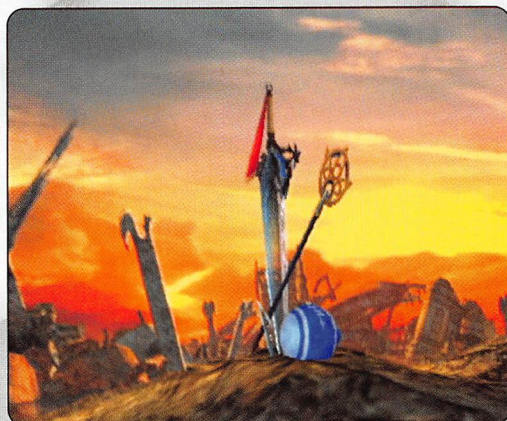
Sin—a trespasser, a scourge upon our land. It falls only to rise again, bringing chaos and destruction.

"It's tough when your father is famous."

Only the Summoners' Last Summoning can defeat Sin.

"Trying to escape from reality... Trying, and failing."

It would seem that much has changed since the last Final Fantasy: FFX project leader Hiroyuki Itou has moved on to Final Fantasy XII, replaced by Takanori Kitase, who lead FFXVII and VIII, with Front Mission battle designer Toshiro Tsuchida creating the battle system. Find out for yourself what all this translates to in November. - **brady fletcher**



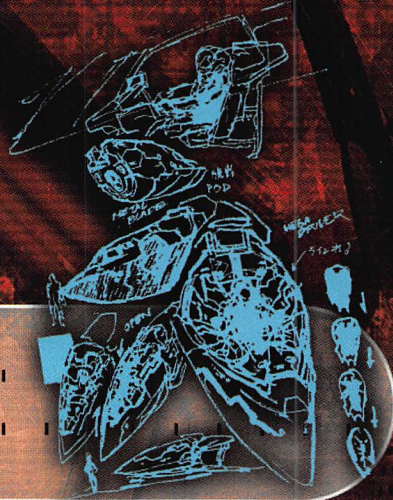
## Games like Konami's *Zone Of The Enders* prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that 3D game design is truly and finally coming of age

The wait is almost over. This is the last Z.O.E. preview. The next time we look at this game, it will be in its finished form. At that time, it will either reveal the deeper brilliance that is hinted at in this one-level demo, or it will never get any better from here. I rate this second option as a near impossibility, for in just this one level, Konami has shown me the most exciting and beautiful 3D action I've ever seen.

Aerial combat is the core of Z.O.E.'s gameplay, and the way it's handled is nothing short of awe-inspiring. A perfectly transparent and intuitive lock-on system makes close-range fighting an absolutely thrilling exercise as you flick

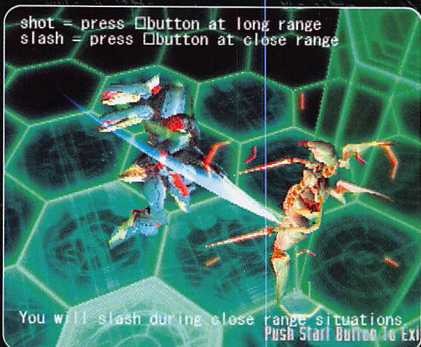
around your target in tight, elliptical orbits, slashing away with your energy sword or going in for a throw. The long-range attacks are equally pleasing, feeling as good as a Virtual On dashing fire move. And, of course, the control, which allows for complete freedom of movement, is perfectly tuned, and it is but a matter of seconds before the game transcends the controller and becomes a welcome part of your nervous system.

But there is something that gives this perfected control the ability to live and breathe, and that is the camera. Without question, this is the best 3D camera ever divined. It's almost super-



# ZONE OF THE ENDERS

BY MIKE HOBBS



Normal Attack

Standard long-range attacks are executed by a rapid-fire gun, but when you approach an enemy, you automatically switch to an energy sword, capable of delivering combos and some of the game's most satisfying action.



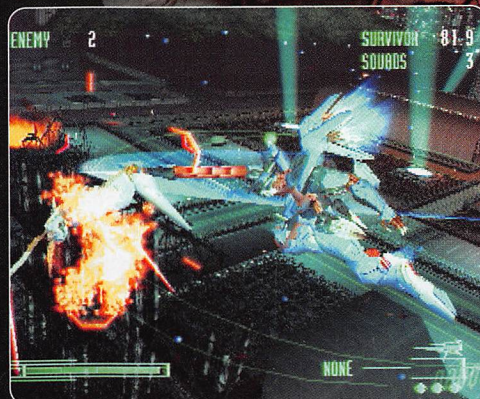
Burst

Activating a Dash while stationary produces the devastating Burst effect, which manifests itself as either a powerful ball of energy that can be hurled at opponents when long range, or as a deadly swipe when up close.



Dash

The most heavily used move in Z.O.E. is the Dash, an unlimited booster that can be utilized in conjunction with attacks and movement commands to give you a surprisingly advanced level of control in the game.



natural in its ability to always be pointed exactly where you want to be looking. Game director Noriaki Okamura admitted that his team worked on the camera system for over a year; it shows. Close-range combat is as incredible to watch as it is to play—so perfectly framed is the light speed action. Make no mistake, the achievement of this camera is staggering.

But as good as the gameplay, control, and camera are, nothing is going to impress you more than Z.O.E.'s graphics. When you inadvertently toss an enemy at a huge skyscraper and watch in near disbelief as the building crumbles and explodes, you too will feel as I did—that we are entering a golden age of 3D here. The Dreamcast was but a stepping stone. This is what we have been waiting for.

It's not often that a single level can impress me as much as Z.O.E.'s did. I'm extrapolating a brilliant game from it, but I don't think I will be proven wrong when the finished product arrives in late March. **GR**



#### Dash Attack

Attacks take on new characteristics when used while Dashing. The long-range attack becomes a bloom of lock-on beams, and when up close, your energy sword takes on new strength as it carves a giant arc.



#### Grab and Throw

A very effective close-range tactic. When near an enemy, you can grab it with an energy field and throw it in any direction you choose, but care must be taken not to toss your foe into a populated structure.



#### Guard

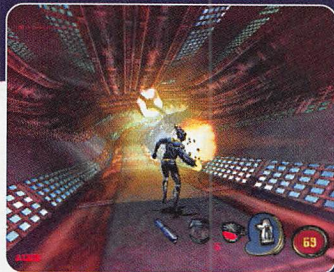
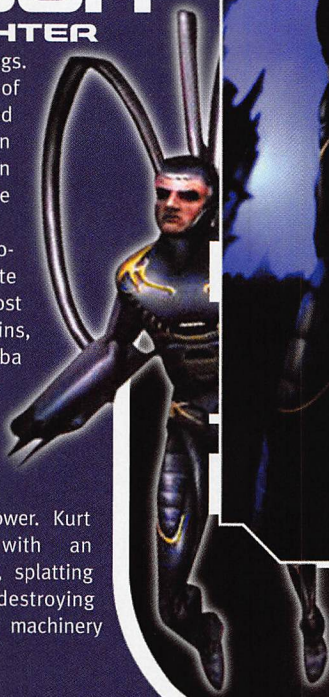
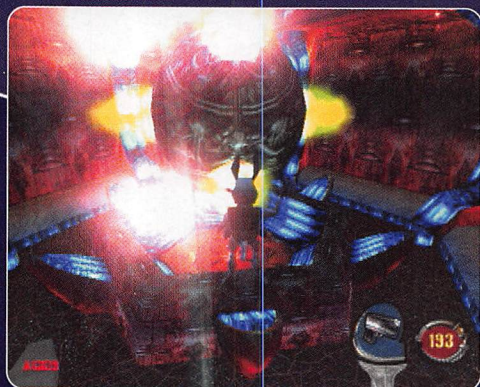
A reflective shield can protect you from enemies' standard short and long range attacks, but does not negate throws or Burst attacks. Available in unlimited supply, the use of the Shield requires astute timing and prediction.

# MDK 2 ARMAGEDDON

BY BRADY FIECHTER

Sometimes the most ordinary people do the most extraordinary things. Take Kurt Hectic. Laboring diligently as an intergalactic janitor on one of the galaxy's more intriguingly atmospheric space ships, Kurt never aspired to be a hero, yet when the nefarious Emperor Zizzy Bulooba took it upon himself to attempt to destroy mankind, Kurt had no choice but to strap on a Coil suit armed with a sniper helmet and chain gun and put an end to the violence.

In MDK 2: Armageddon (think of it as Murder Death Kill 2), to end violence is to create violence. Like most belligerent villains, Emperor Bulooba commands an army of hostile creatures, heavily armed and always quick to use their firepower. Kurt shoots back with an apoplectic fury, splatting aliens and destroying their grinding machinery



## One of the best action games of last year gets an extra boost on the PlayStation 2

and strategically placed weapons. The result of all the death and destruction is a lot of really cool particle effects, big explosions and ribbons of light, and dynamite entertainment.

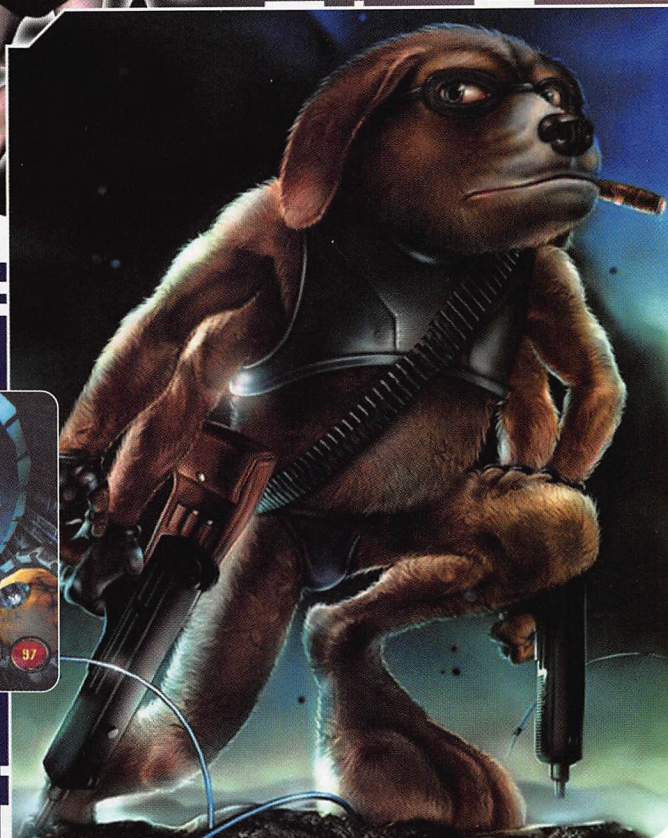
When Kurt's not spraying bullets, he's riding air currents across huge distances with his parachute-like ribbon suit and performing some extremely daunting platforming maneuvers. His high-tech suit was designed by his employer, Dr. Hawkins, the eccentric genius who is forced into action himself after bragging that his ship is impenetrable while watching Emperor Bulooba penetrate it. The doctor takes a more indirect approach to alien disposal, cobbling together helpful items from junk: a leaf blower to push a pack of aliens into the path of a giant mutated venus fly trap; a fish bowel and magnet to manage a space walk. Navigating the ship is equally difficult with the doctor, who is often faced with networks of pipes and ledges and catwalks that must be carefully negotiated.

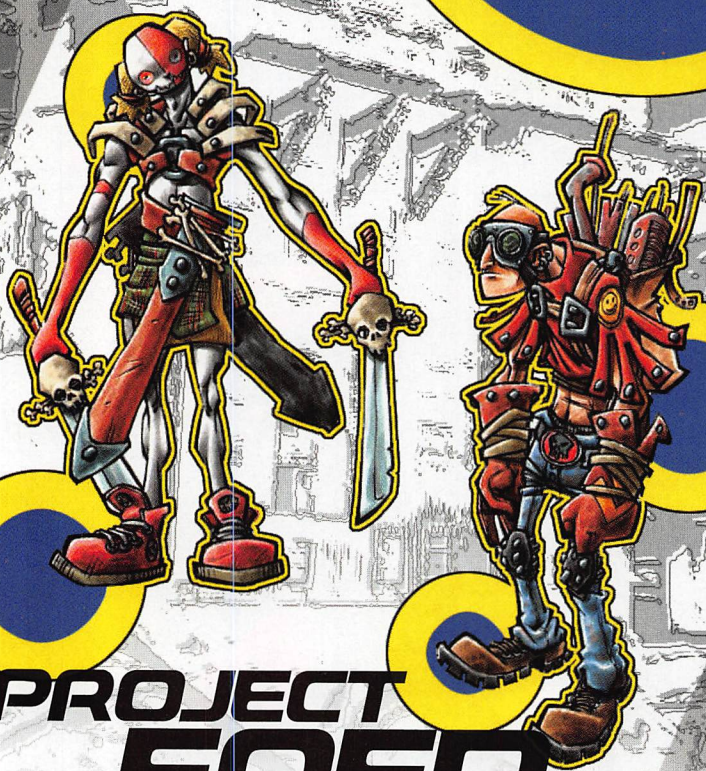
As an inventor, the doctor is fortunate to have created a six-legged robot dog named Max, a best friend and a ruthless killer. Max puts his six limbs to great use, walking on two legs and using the other four to hold guns that are quite adept at laying waste to everything within sight. Max's mission is to shoot those guns with as much force as possible, and like Kurt, he is often going up as much as he is forward, zipping around with a jet pack.

MDK 2 is an exhilarating action game, visually



CONTINUED ON PAGE 109 ▶





# PROJECT EDEN

BY BRADY FIECHTER

*The Real Meat factory isn't just producing yummy meat products. Investigate a place where most fear to travel*

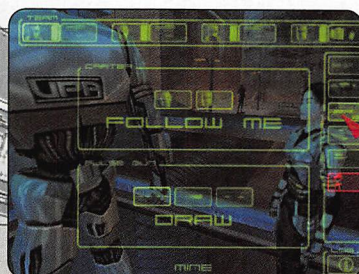
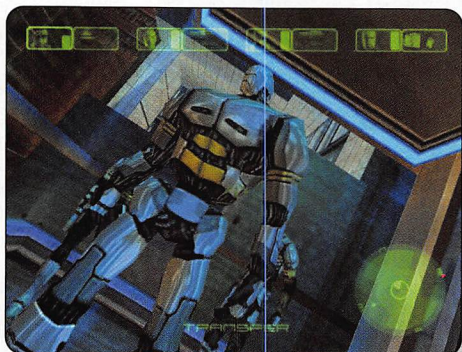
I like visions of the future that are bleak, hopeless and trapped in despair. I like to see people forever caught in the shadows, scurrying like rats through back alleys and seedy neighborhoods that are crumbling, where everything leaks and is underpinned with junk. Post-apocalyptic worlds, unfit for human habitation. Kind of like in Project Eden, an action-adventure game that gathers more intrigue upon each development milestone.

Some time in the future, overpopulation and class warfare has led to wretched conditions that worsen in the underbelly of the city, which descends through a network of steel, concrete and service channels for miles. On top of the landfill of people—rejects, homeless, criminals, monsters, the hopelessly poor—lives the upperclass, their towers reaching into the sky, gasping for what little sunlight is left.

At the bottom of the pile sits the Real Meat factory. Few people from the above dwellings travel to these pits of society, and usually only when forced. One of these instances occurs when the equipment breaks

down at the Real Meat factory, and the technicians sent in for repair fail to return to the surface. Sent in to investigate is the Urban Protection Agency, a group of street cleaners that sweeps up city scum. You are one of four members, starting at the top and working your way down the layers of city into the Real Meat factory. Controlling remote vehicles, cameras, and weapons to chip through the otherwise inaccessible areas, you battle the environments and situations as much as the presence of human opposition.

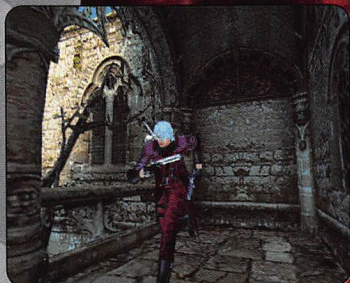
Like in X-Squad, Project Eden allows you to individually manage your four-member crew, setting up diversions, calling for help, combining forces and strategies. If the gameplay is as effectively elaborate as the settings, Project Eden is the next in the steadily filling top-tier category on PlayStation 2. **GR**





# DEVIL MAY CRY

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN



## *Guns, swords, and a 2,000-year-old bid for vengeance. Capcom brings Gothic horror adventuring to PS2*

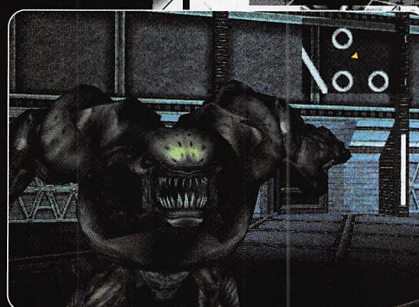
If you saw the early screenshots of *Devil May Cry* that Capcom revealed a few months ago, it's almost certain that you were intrigued and mesmerized by Shinji "Resident Evil" Mikami's dark foray into the world of Gothic horror. Now Capcom has given us our first hands-on experience with the game, and not surprisingly, it seems to have all the makings of another excellent achievement.

In *Devil May Cry*, players are cast as Dante, an investigator of the supernatural. Dante is descended from Spada, a demon swordsman who "awoke to justice" and revolted against the devil 2,000 years ago. Now, the devil is once again rising from hell to take over the Earth, and it's up to Dante to stop him. Unlike Capcom's other horror-game offerings, *Devil May Cry* is much heavier on action than adventure. Gameplay is fast and furious as Dante battles the devil's hell-spawned minions (including demonic marionettes and strange bird creatures) with his mystical sword and twin guns. Dante's battle moves are incredibly animated—his sidestepping

while shooting is extremely realistic—and the swordplay is great, slightly reminiscent of *Sword of the Berserk*. One absolutely awesome move is the ability to launch enemies into the air with your sword and then blast them in midair with the guns until they disintegrate. Also, by collecting Red Oil dropped by enemies, Dante can transform into an immensely powerful demonic form to cause further destruction.

Even in early form, *Devil May Cry*'s visuals look very impressive. Completely real-time, the dark, Gothic castle environments are filled with details such as tattered tapestries and menacing statues. The camera actually pans to follow the player (though angles are fixed), and players are given great freedom of movement. If there's a pile of rubble in the way, it's not a dead end, merely an obstacle to jump over. The game also has a great soundtrack so far and enough puzzle elements to keep things interesting. Even though the fall release date seems far away, Capcom will be bundling a playable demo with *Resident Evil Code: Veronica X* to keep players happy until the game's final release. **GR**





# RUN LIKE HELL

BY BRADY FIECHTER

*In an effort to avoid decapitation by alien claws, Captain Nick Conner must run really fast through a demolished space station*

Nick doesn't have the most exciting or glamorous job in the universe, but he does quite enjoy his routine science expeditions to the mining colony on Centauri II. Returning from an away mission one day to his claustrophobic home on the space station Forseti, Nick notices something out of the ordinary: some of the crew members are missing heads and limbs, and others appear to have been mutilated. It would appear that aliens have taken over the space station, but because Nick is actually Captain Nick Conner, former military pilot with a steely name, he's the kind of guy that is more than capable of taking on an entire army of alien scum.

And so begins the brutality and destruction and bloody violence in *Run Like Hell*, an action-horror game in which you attempt just as much running and calculated strategizing to stop the alien charge as you do direct attacks. The aliens are quite resilient, relentlessly pursuing you until you either: (a) kill them; (b) trap them or halt their pursuit by cleverly leading them into compromising situations; (c) get killed. Running away is a very wise tactic in *Run Like Hell*, and the aliens, while not the fastest killing machines in the galaxy, are uncommonly intelligent and resourceful; a few of them are capable of attaching severed heads to their bodies and absorbing the useful information locked in the victim's brain to better navigate the ship.

The action begins on Day One, moving through a seven-day nightmare that is fed by over three hours of cinematics; this is not merely a cinematic adventure, but the developers are keen on using storytelling and kinetic visual moments to gener-

ate tension and atmosphere. Exchanged lines of dialogue may actually be convincing for a change, voiced by such notables as Lance Henriksen (*Aliens*, *Millennium*) and Kate Mulgrew (*Star Trek Voyager*).

When Digital Mayhem set out to create an action-horror game, they were a bit restrained within rating worries and an insecurity to let their penchant for a graphic presentation run wild. But isn't part of the idea of a horror game to inspire horror with disturbing images? Digital Mayhem, in the end, found the answer to be "yes," and *Run Like Hell* will now how have enough disturbing images to offend and disgust some and delight and entertain others. Sign me up. **GR**



# RED FACTION

BY BRADY FIECHTER

*The first-person shooter is getting a new shot of adrenaline in this ambitious attempt to elevate the genre*

Time Splitters was well crafted, but its strength was in the multiplayer game and it just didn't offer many extras. Unreal Tournament was an acceptable diversion, but it was a lackluster transport from the PC, and the multiplayer game collapsed under the weight of a shoddy frame rate. Now comes Red Faction, the real deal in first-person shooters, a visually dazzling, testosterone-injecting violence simulator that is exactly what its makers promised: kick ass. And it's a dedicated single-player game, rich in story and engaging presentation, heavy on atmosphere—an achievement that will ultimately inspire comparisons to the mighty Half-Life; it's about time.

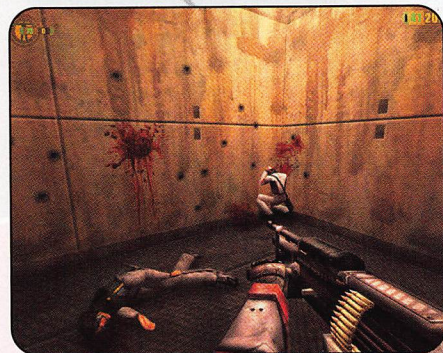
Like most first-person shooters, the thrust of Red Faction is the exploration of shadowy, gritty environments, locating an assortment of futuristic,

military-strength weapons with which to target anything that moves and ensure that it is no longer moving. But here's where the innovation starts to appear: Volition has created a unique engine called Geo-Mod, or Geometric Modification, a technical term for "everything in the environment can be destroyed." Or knocked over, deformed, cracked, pushed aside.

You are not merely in Red Faction's universe, running around and shooting the enemy when they pop up; you are connected, immersed, forced to rethink old strategies and become more of a physical presence in the environments. Even weapons take on a new dimension. Take the rocket launcher, which is wired with an infrared scanner that detects movement through solid objects. It's now possible to pop an unsuspecting enemy around the wall, or simply blow a massive hole through the wall and finish the job face-to-face.

As Parker, leader of a paramilitary unit investigating disturbances in a mining colony on Mars, you're more than just a foot soldier: five vehicles can be commanded for even more destruction—a drill, transport craft, minibus, jeep, and hover vehicle. Traversing the subterranean tunnels and halls of the red planet, crushing, demolishing, shooting and blowing stuff up is the base description of Red Faction.

GR



# KLONOA 2 LUNATEA'S VEIL

BY MIKE HOBBS

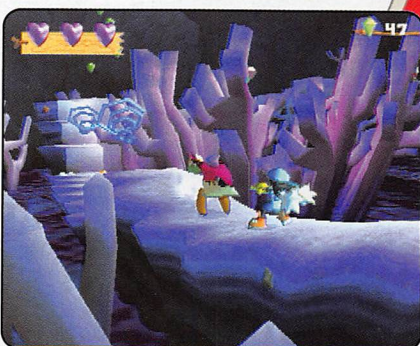
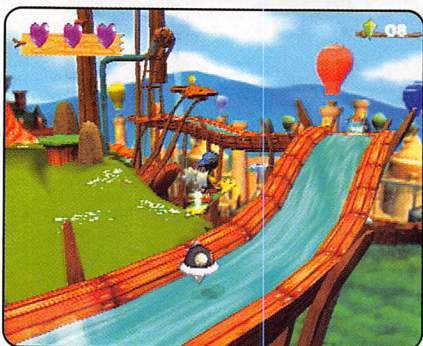
*With each new PlayStation 2 endeavor, Namco continues to display absolute mastery over updating classic series*

There have been some great crimes committed by the game-buying public, but a couple stand out in stark relief for me, both perpetrated on Namco. One was that their absolutely brilliant *Soul Caliber*—one of only two games ever to receive an A+ from us—was outsold on Dreamcast by an unquestionably inferior one-on-one game that shall remain nameless. And the other was that *Klonoa*, surely one of the best, most beautiful platformers ever created, barely made a dent on the PlayStation sales charts.

The first error can never be rectified, but the second can at least be atoned for somewhat. *Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil* becomes more impressive every time we see it, and if this classically bred platformer of aching, vibrant beauty slips by unnoticed, I shall lose even more faith in the populist taste.

I hope this doesn't happen, not so much for my own state of mind, but more because it will be a crying shame if scores of gamers miss out on what will surely be a superlative game. Granted, we've only been allowed yet to play two levels of *Klonoa 2*, one a traditional and gorgeous platforming level and the other an incredible 3D surfing stage, but at this point, I'm way beyond doubting Namco's brilliance. If

you aren't excited for this game, have a little faith and be so. **GR**



# GIGAWING 2

BY MIKE HOBBS

*The maddest shooter the Dreamcast has ever seen, GigaWing 2 takes the art of shooting to dizzying new heights*

Sixteen minutes, 18 seconds. That's the amount of time it took from GigaWing 2's ship selection screen to the start of the closing credits. This is pretty much part and parcel for an arcade-bred overhead shooter (Radiant notwithstanding, of course), so then the issue is, how good and replayable is that quarter of an hour?

In the case of GigaWing 2, that quarter of an hour is absolutely incredible and tremendously replayable. From an action standpoint, the game shows Silpheed the door, and is matched only by Treasure's Bangai-O for sheer excitement. There are moments here where there are literally thousands of sprites onscreen—with slow down of course, great gobs of it—but unlike the

ridiculous and impossible bullet showers in a game like Psikyo's Gunbird 2, you can actually survive the ones here. How? Credit the truly inspired reflect system, introduced in the first GigaWing, which allows you, every four seconds or so, to cast a reflective shell around your ship, gobbling up bullets and spraying them back into the enemies' faces. The more the screen is filled with bullets, the more powerful this attack becomes. As a play mechanic it is hilariously addictive, waiting until the last possible moment before unleashing this massive firepower element that is almost primally satisfying.

But that's not even half of what's good about GigaWing 2. There's also the fact that this is easily the best-looking and -sounding Dreamcast shooter to date, with an amazing set of polygonal backgrounds and a stirring orchestral/classical score. And as if these weren't enough, the game also boasts a rarity in the shooter world—a four-player simultaneous mode. If the one-player game is chaotic, then the four player game represents total entropic meltdown. I can honestly say that no other shooter in history has had such a barrage of onscreen pyrotechnics.

This slice of shooter heaven is coming from Capcom this summer, so prepare yourself now for the unadulterated visual madness that is GigaWing 2. **GR**





# DAYTONA USA 2001

BY MIKE HOBBS

*Better late than never for this classic Sega racer, as the wait has produced a graphically superior game*



What took so long? This thought lingered in my mind as I rediscovered the joy of Daytona in this stunning, Genki-developed update for Dreamcast. Though it shames me now to say so, I had actually forgotten what an incredible racing experience this game represents. A different beast to be sure, but I rank Daytona right up there with Ridge Racer in terms of outright driver satisfaction. Which, again, makes me wonder what took so long for this game to finally reach the DC?

But you won't catch me wondering too hard, however, because there is an upside—a massive one, actually—to the tardiness of this game's arrival; it is graphically astounding for the system. One need only look to the brilliant but engine-deficient Sega Rally or Genki's conversion of Virtua Fighter 3 to see that had Daytona found its way to the DC launch, it would have suffered. Now, deep into the system's life and with several games under Genki's belt, Daytona comes to sparkling life on Dreamcast. Twenty to 40 cars onscreen,

60 frames per second, practically no pop-up, and the greatest sense of speed yet captured on the system have made the wait more than worthwhile.

But this is no straight port of the arcade original. There are tons of additions to be found, not the least of which is a relatively high track count of nine. Some are old, culled from the original Daytona and Championship Edition, and some are new, but all are thrilling in their own right, especially the classic courses like Dinosaur Canyon and Seaside Street Galaxy. They're absolutely brilliant in their layout, easily on par with Namco's best work, and take massive amounts of practice to master—a truly enjoyable exercise, incidentally.

For the U.S. release this March, Sega is promising eight-player online support, but as we are basing this preview on the Japanese release of Daytona, we have yet to sample the quality of networked play. If it's anything like the current crop of online games, it should be very good indeed. Let's go away! GR



Ten people locked in a house with no GR...



For the love of God, don't let this happen to you!

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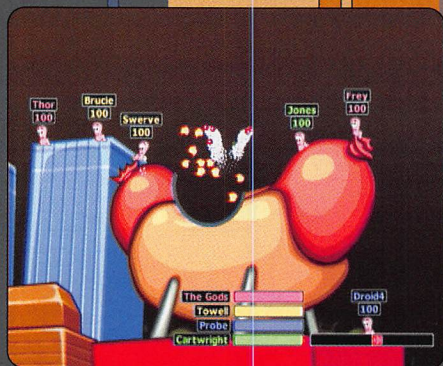
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# WORMS WORLD PARTY

BY STEVE THOMASON

*Get online and battle opponents from around the world.**These annelids know how to party*

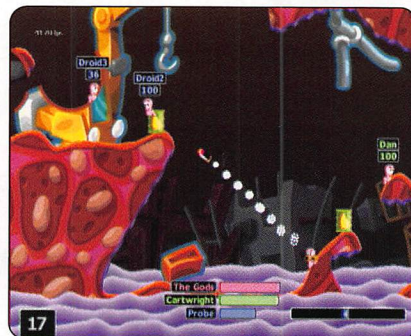
The Worms series has long been renowned for its party-game flavor and surprisingly deep strategic gameplay. Dreamcast owners got a taste of the action last year with the offline Worms Armageddon, but as PC gamers can attest to, the Worms experience isn't truly complete without online play. Enter Worms World Party, Team 17's first foray into the realm of SegaNet. Here, up to six players can battle it out online using dozens of gadgets on a near infinite number of maps and, as always, combat is turn-based so lag is a non-factor.

As great as NFL 2K1 and Quake III Arena have been, I'm definitely ready for something a little more cerebral.

Aside from its network compatibility, WWP is essentially more of a good thing, with a couple of new play modes thrown in for good measure. That's probably enough for the Worms veteran, so let me turn my attention to those of you new to the series. Although it may look innocent enough, with its adorable little characters and simple 2D backgrounds, Worms is

one of the most dangerously addictive titles in all of gaming. Slowly achieving an understanding and later a mastery of the game's various gadgets is immensely satisfying, and the hilarity of playing with four friends is unrivaled. The fact that it's turn-based doesn't hurt the game in the least as it allows even non-gamers to take part in the festivities without too much trouble. If you were able to get some of your friends who normally aren't interested in games hooked on Chu Chu Rocket, this would be the next logical step.

Also worth noting is that new battle maps can be randomly generated, constantly providing fresh terrain to deal with when formulating your strategies. As a result, Worms World Party rarely grows stale, a fact that's sure to be reinforced once the game gets up and running online. I'll see you at the other end of my exploding sheep this April. **GR**



# METAL SLUG X

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

*Big guns. Big bosses. Big action. SNK's awesome Metal Slug series is finally coming to consoles in the U.S.*

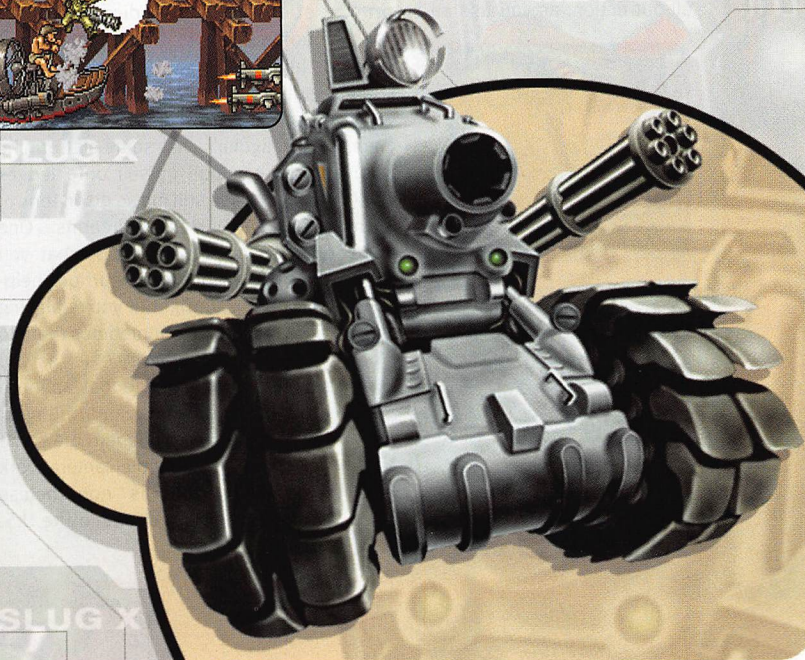
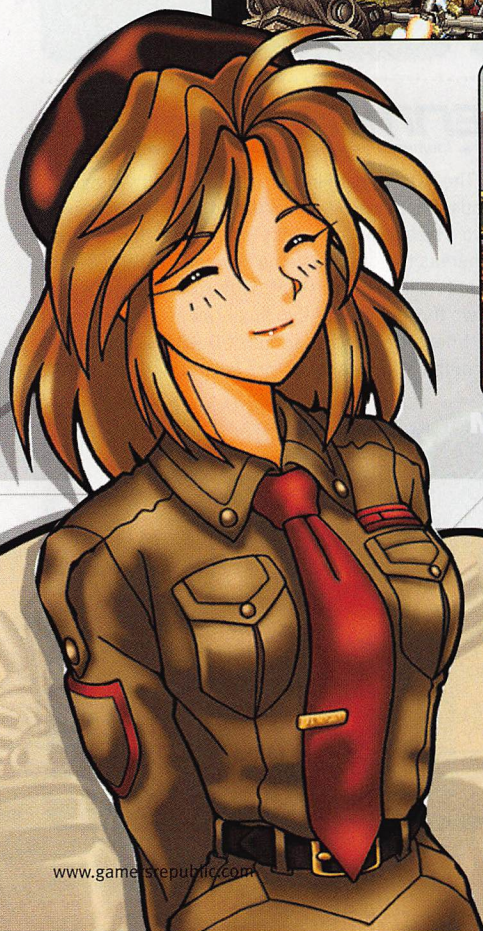
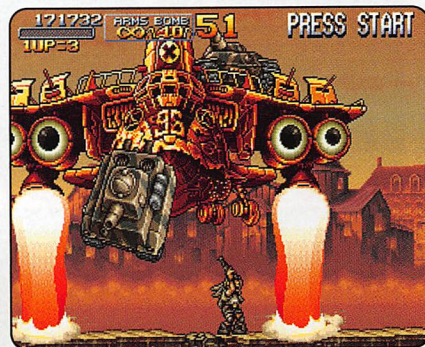
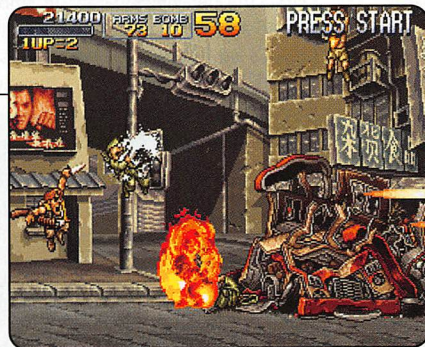
It's time to lock and load! For a while it was a mystery if Metal Slug X would ever see the light of day in the U.S. or Japan, but thanks to Agatec (which recently brought King of Fighters '99 to the States), SNK's ever-awesome action-shooter will be here before we know it. Metal Slug X, essentially a remixed version of the thumb-spraining Metal Slug 2, is 2D mayhem at its finest.

Basically, it's you versus the world: choosing from four characters, one or two players set out through six levels of carnage to destroy the evil Gen. Morden and his Nazi-like army of soldiers. Grenade-tossing stormtroopers, kamikaze helicopters, battle tanks and much more come from all sides, and to make matters worse, Morden even seems to be in league with aliens. To even the odds, though, you can collect more than eight power-up weapons (such as a laser, rocket launcher, flame thrower and shotgun) and you can access the Metal Slugs—powerful

vehicles including the traditional tank, jet, "jalopy" walker and even a decked-out camel.

The hand-drawn graphics in Metal Slug X are excellent, filled with detailed animations (watch the enemies burn, baby, burn!) and destructible environmental elements. At this point, the animations aren't as detailed as they were in the arcade version, and the parallax has been lost in some cases; we're hopeful some might make it back in before all is said and done. Besides, MSX has some options that weren't even in the arcade version: loads of bonus missions and an art gallery.

Right now Metal Slug X looks great and plays great, and it's only in alpha preview form. I can't wait for Agatec to finish localizing this game, because it can only get better. **GR**





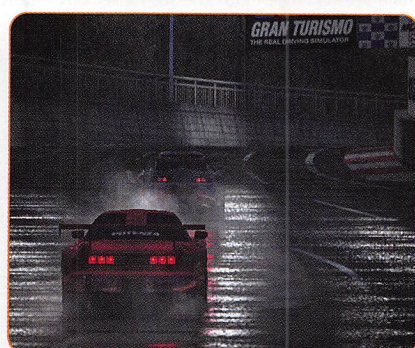
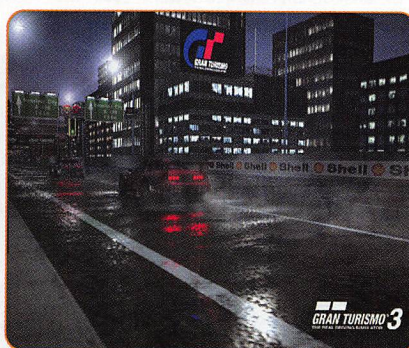
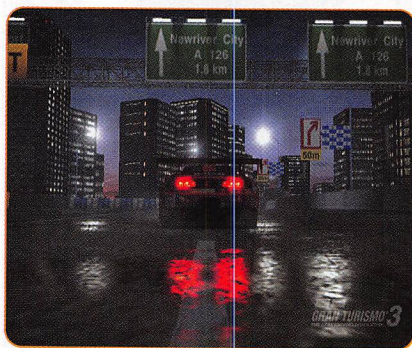
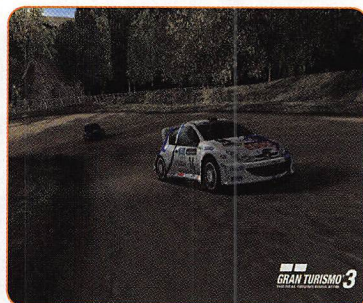
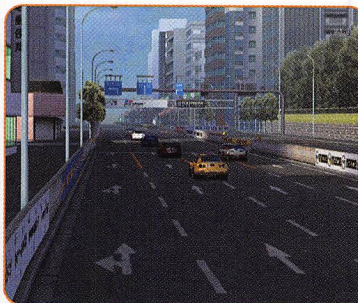
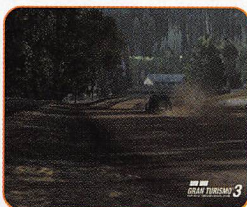
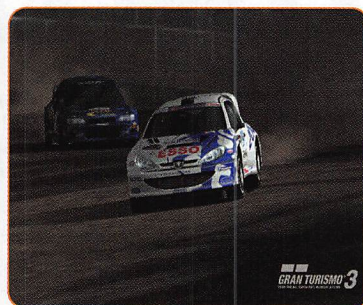
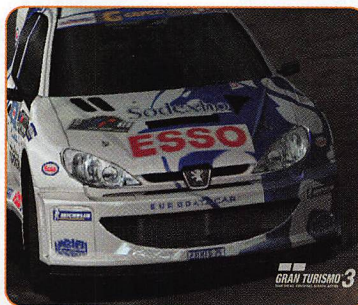
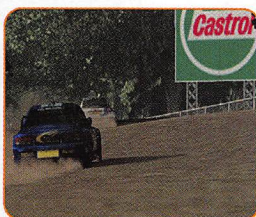
## GRAN TURISMO 3

preview by: m. hobbs • dev: polyphony • pub: sony • avail: april



First, the bad news: Gran Turismo 3 has been delayed again, this time from March to April in the U.S. (it's still March for Japan). Yes, I feel your pain. But now, the good news: Look at these unbelievable screenshots. Coming in at the last possible moment, these are the first official pictures of Gran Turismo 3's rain and rally stages. Have we now made your life a living hell? Sorry.

GR



## 7 BLADES

preview by c. hoffman • dev: kce j east pub: konami • avail: fall



Most comparable to Sword of Berserk or Dynasty Warriors 2, 7 Blades is Konami's entry into the melee-action genre. Using either blade-toting Jigoku or female gunfighter Oyuri, players get to plow through more than eight levels of demonic enemies. With Jigoku, the game is all-out action, as you use an assortment of swords to slice, dice, and mince your opponents, with his most useful weapon being a gigantic arcing sword straight out of Guts' Rage. Oyuri's fight - which goes up against different levels and enemies than Jigoku's - has some platforming involved (she can pull herself onto ledges and the like), but she still mows down tons of enemies with her numerous firearms. One interesting aspect of 7 Blades is that you often have additional warriors helping you in your fight (if you're playing as Oyuri, Jigoku is sometimes there to lend a hand, and vice versa) as you progress through the feudal Japanese forests, landscapes and villages. Recently released in Japan, the game has some questionable camera work and design, but is nonetheless planned for a fall release in the U.S.

GR



## SHENMUE II

preview by s. thomason • dev/pub: sega • avail: november

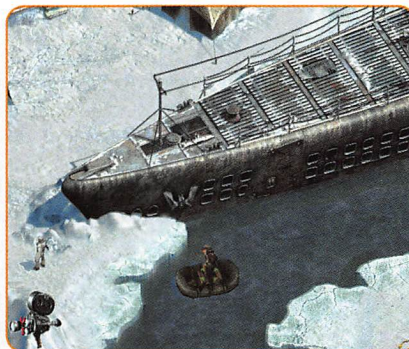
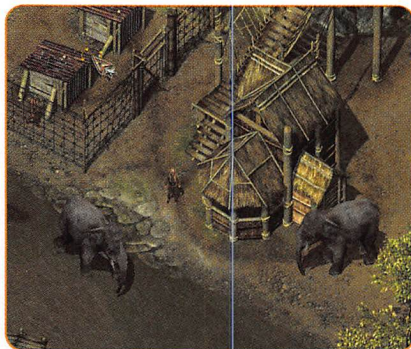


The latest installment of Yu Suzuki's magnum opus, Shenmue II follows the continuing journey of Ryo Hazuki as he seeks to avenge his father's death. Whereas the original game covered only the first of sixteen chapters in the series' epic story, part two will detail chapters two through five as Ryo finally meets the beautiful Shenhua. Shenmue II will span four GD-ROMs and Suzuki hopes to complete the game before fall of this year.

GR







## COMMANDOS 2

preview by: k. kencana • dev: pyro studios • pub: eldos • avail: summer



"The game looks fantastic!" You heard that a lot when Commandos 2 was shown off by project head Gonzo Girard. "Thank you, I did focus on graphics, but it doesn't matter if the game's not fun." Exactly. But it doesn't hurt that Commandos 2, set in an authentic World War

II setting and inspired by such classic wars movies as *Das Boot* and *Saving Private Ryan*, is richly drawn and widely appealing in its militaristic settings. Girard says he wants you to "see new things, feel like you're experiencing a new place." He's on his way to realizing his goals. **GR**

## ILLBLEED

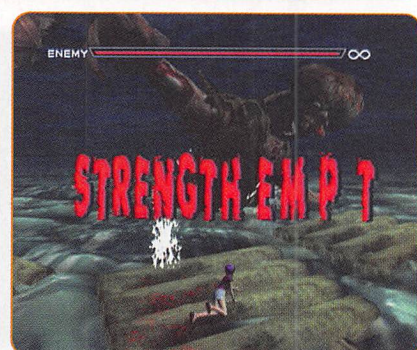
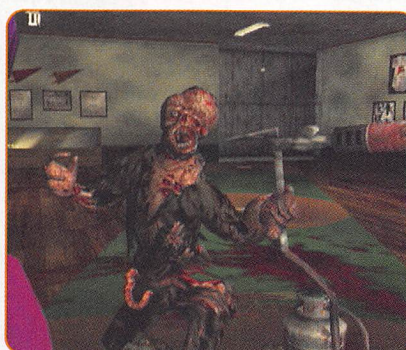
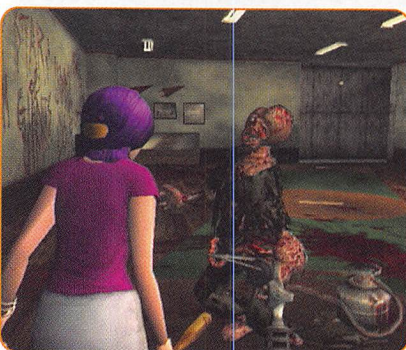
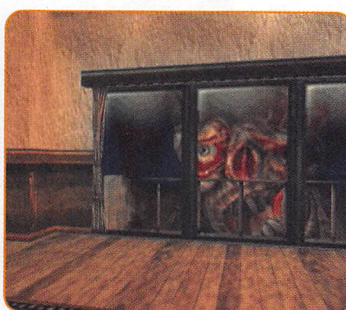
preview by: d. halverson • dev: climax graphics • pub: jaleco • avail: spring



Part ultra-cheesy B-movie, part adventure horror, and part puzzle, Jaleco's next Dreamcast offering—from Climax Graphics, creators of *Blue Stinger*—is all good, and completely bizarre. When three students from the Castle Rock School horror club dare to take on the ultimate theme park—*IllBleed*, an amusement park like no other—all hell breaks loose in a way I couldn't possibly describe in a short preview. The attraction cost its creator, entertainment guru Michael Reynolds, some five-trillion-plus dollars to build, and he's offered one million dollars to anyone that can survive it. The hitch? You lose—you die. Thing is, at the end of the first disturbing scenario, I'd have paid about a million for some Hassy Cola because just when you think it's safe to go back into the water, you get pounded by a giant mutant that would eat Jaws like a sardine. Jimmy's daddy gives a whole new meaning to the word mutant.

The gameplay, a compelling and unique mixture of virtual intrigue

as you balance your strength, heartbeat, and senses, is different, and in its own campy way, extremely welcome. I'll guarantee you one thing: You've never played anything quite like it. It's over-the-top and genuinely twisted. Coupled with excellent graphics (Climax's models have greatly improved since *Stinger*) and a peculiar tone—from the creepy score to the many trademark horror flick shocks—*IllBleed* looks like a real comer. I'm hoping the wrinkle I encountered (namely the lack of items available in the first scenario) was a result of the game still being partially in Japanese. Find out when we review *IllBleed* in the April GR. **GR**





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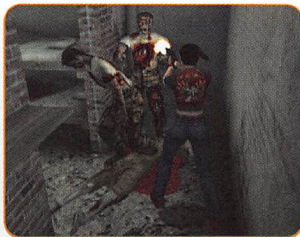
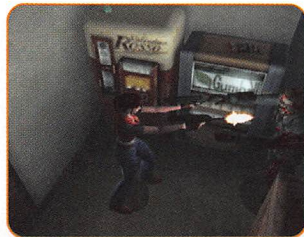
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## RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X

preview by c. hoffman • dev: capcom • avail: may



The game that we called the best Dreamcast game of 2000 is getting set to be even better as Resident Evil Code: Veronica comes to PlayStation 2. Now subtitled Code: Veronica X, the game is essentially a direct port of the DC game with the notable addition of at least 10 minutes of new cutscenes. According to Capcom, the new cinematics will reveal more about Chris' treacherous former comrade, Albert Wesker, and what he's doing on Umbrella's island. One

scene of note features Wesker brutally attacking Claire as she attempts to enter the Ashford mansion. The graphics really don't look any better (not that the game needs a facelift), but instead of coming on two CDs like the DC version, the PS2 game will come on a single DVD. As an extra incentive for players to pick up Code: Veronica X, Capcom will bundle the game with a playable demo of their incredible-looking gothic horror game Devil May Cry (see preview this issue). **GR**

## MTV MUSIC

preview by t. strattton • dev: jester pub: codemasters



The first MTV Music Generator for the PS received The Sony Innovation Award in 2000. This time around, the music editor is set to push your imagination and the PS2 hardware beyond limit. There are thousands of pre-recorded riffs and samples, but users can also write original material, thanks to the riff editor. The biggest surprise is the ability to use the USB port and import sounds from a CD, Mini Disk even MP3 into the program, then go to town tweaking the music to your liking.



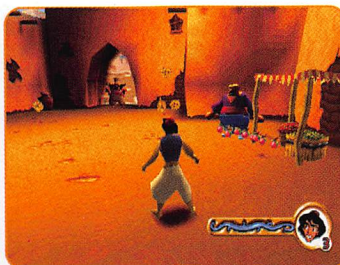
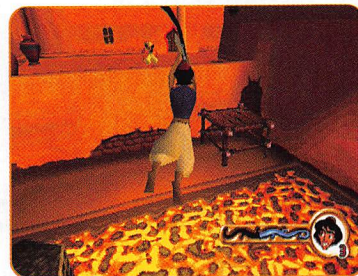
## ALADDIN IN NASIRA'S REVENGE

preview by c. hoffman • dev: eurocom pub: sony • avail: spring



Originally scheduled for release last year, Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge is still coming to a PlayStation near you.

Judging from these screens, the delay in development was time well spent by Eurocom, as the game looks substantially better than before, with a splendid palette, subtle shading effects and character models that look very good for PS1. Players can use numerous moves as they put Aladdin's platforming skills to the test, such as throwing fruit and swinging on ropes, and all the key characters from the movie appear, including Princess Jasmine, Abu, Jafar, and, of course, the Genie. **GR**



## TWISTED METAL BLACK

preview by b. flechter • dev: incognito pub: sony • avail: summer



Purge your mind of the last two Twisted Metal games. Now think back to how intense and new the first two games were. Now imagine the entire experience elevated by an elaborate PlayStation 2 graphics

engine, built by the same talented designers who left the series after the first sequel. This type of game so needs to be on the PlayStation 2, and it so needs to be done they way it is capable of being done—with mind numbing explosions, enormous, multi-tiered levels, endless destruction and loads of intensity. Consider it done. **GR**





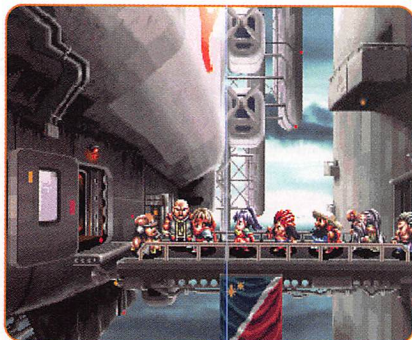
## ARC COLLECTION

preview by c. hoffman • dev: g-craft software pub: working designs • avail: summer 2001



WD's Arc Collection is coming along quite well, as evidenced by a virtually completed English version of Arc the Lad 1 that just arrived at the GR offices. Even though Arc 1 was first released in Japan more than five years ago, it still stands strong as a good introduction to the series. In Arc 1, you play the role of Arc, a young man of royal heritage who follows in his father's footsteps to save the world from impending disaster. After joining up with six allies, Arc embarks on his quest to visit the guardians of earth, water, wind, fire and light, and ultimately find the all-powerful ark...and uncover the truth about what happened to his father ten years ago. Though the graphics are admittedly lacking by today's standards, some nice backgrounds and large sprites keep things easy on the eyes, and the music is quite good. Despite the fact that Arc is always heralded as the PlayStation's first RPG, the game is actually just as much strategy as it is role-playing. The battles take place against huge legions of ene-

mies, and positioning your characters and navigating the terrain is as important as choosing your attacks. Also, like many strategy games, there are few areas that involve actual exploring, and many RPG staples like shops and cities have been left out to keep things straightforward. Fortunately, the battles are fun, there are plenty of spells to learn, and, more than anything, the writing is top-notch. Arc Collection is off to an enjoyable start; let's hope Arc 2 shows up shortly. **GR**



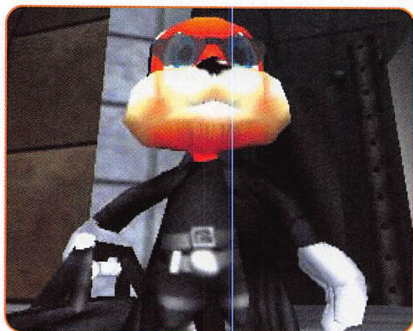
## CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY

preview by t. stratton • dev: rare pub: nintendo • avail: march



Everything about the game defies current N64 standards in look, appeal, gameplay, personality and, most importantly, humor. A quick breakdown of some of the simple yet effective game mechanics: in a scene, very much like one in the film *The Matrix*, Conker finds himself in a long hall, with pillars on each side of the hall extending to the end. His objective is to wax these grunts, pushing closer to the door at the end of the hall. And here's where the fun begins. As you jumping back and forth between these pillars, the camera slows down and begins to sweep across the screen, while Conker dives out into the open, lining up his crosshairs and letting go of some nifty rockets (complete with trailing smoke rings). Not until he is safe behind another pillar does the action just back into normal speed—pure genius. The concept is very simple and highly effective. The one-player game is just as fun to watch as it is to play and the variety in the multiplayer stunts are incredible. We closed just before the product came into the offices, but expect much Conker glory in April.

**GR**



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### Oni

BUNGIE'S ANIME-STYLE  
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IS HEADED FOR THE PS2

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THE RPG SEGA FANS  
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### INTERVIEWS

WITH THE TEKKEN TAG TEAM,  
YUZO KOSHIO, AND  
PS2 DEVELOPER GUST

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## Gamers' Republic

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

# GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEWS

## GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

### DOMESTIC REVIEWS

ATV OFFROAD FURY PS2	A
FEAR EFFECT 2 PS	C+
KENGO PS2	C
KING OF FIGHTERS 2000 NG	B+
LION KING: SMA PS	C-
ONI PS2	B+
ONIMUSHA PS2	A
PHANTASY STAR ONLINE DC	B
POINT BLANK 3 PS	B
RC REVENGE PRO PS2	C
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR DC	B
RING OF RED PS2	B+
SHADOW OF DESTINY PS2	B
SW: BATTLE FOR NABOO N64	B-
VANISHING POINT DC	B+
WINBACK PS2	B-

### IMPORT REVIEWS

COOL BOARDERS ALIEN PS2	B-
FIGHTING VIPERS 2 DC	C+
GUILTY GEAR X DC	B+
LAST BLADE: FINAL ED. DC	B-
SUPER SF II X DC	B

### SPORTS REVIEWS

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001 PS2	C
NBA LIVE 2001 PS2	B+
NCAA FINAL FOUR PS2	C-
NCAA GAMEBREAKER PS2	D+

### HANDHELD REVIEWS

BIG BANG PRO NGPC	B
DIGIMON ZERO TWO WSC	B-
FINAL FANTASY WSC	A-
GUILTY GEAR PETIT WSC	B
GUNPEY EX WSC	B+
HAMSTERS EVERYWHERE WSC	X
MEGA MAN XTREME GBC	B+
RHYME RIDER WSC	B



## GAME OF THE MONTH

### ONIMUSHA

developer/publisher: capcom

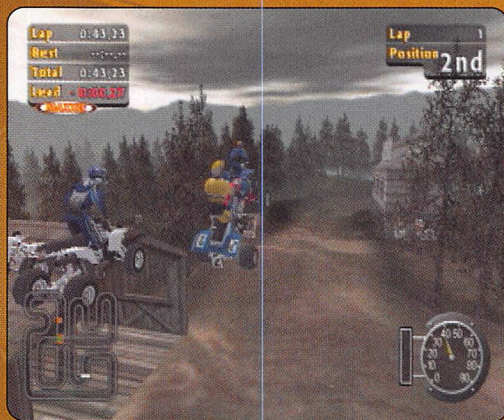


It's one of the most visually striking games ever made, with character models that contain more than 10,000 polygons each. The music, performed by a 200-piece orchestra, is enchanting. The design is magnificent, the gameplay fast and engaging. Game of the month, and surely one of the best games of the year.

# ATV OFFROAD FURY

BY DAVE HALVERSON

*You've never seen a game like this before. Offroad Fury looks so real you may forget you're playing a game at all*



There have been plenty of off-road racing games, but not that quintessential high-water mark (unless you consider WaveRace 64) that sets the standard—until now. The Ridge Racer of off-road games has arrived, and it's the closest to sex a racing game has ever come. Rainbow Studios, the team responsible for Motocross Madness on PC, has been tucked away making this little beauty for some time, but by the time you read this, they'll have rolled it out the door. So if you don't have it, get in the car, and go get it!

To say that this game is beautiful is an understatement. Instantly discernable is the absence of every known quirk in the 3D universe: draw-in, seams, straight edges, jaggies, disjointed models that melt into the bikes. It's all history, replaced by tiny little quad racers and riders that seem alive in your TV, racing around on tracks that look like you could reach in and grab a handful of dirt.

One would think such a game must be flawed in some way—too short, too shallow, bad execution. Something's got to be wrong or missing, given that it's one of the first of its kind to hit the market. But in a ravenous arena where Internet and press will eat their young for an exclusive, here's a deep, nearly photo-realistic racing game for the hottest

console on the planet, and it just kind of popped out—and it's flawless.

As every great racer must be, Offroad Fury is founded on its own brand of special nuances. The analog stick not only acts as a pivot for the ATVs but, by pulling it back at the base of a jump and then pressing forward just as you launch, you can control your trajectory (imagine ExciteBike's turbo, if it didn't run out). The way in which Rainbow Studios takes this dynamic to the

extreme is a big part of what makes ATV so thoroughly enjoyable. From low-speed assaults to full-throttle airborne mayhem, everything must be calculated based on the terrain ahead, and the courses are designed as such. Whether you go Supercross, Nationals, or Enduro, you'll find breathtaking scenery, diversity, and balance, as the



other riders haunt you anytime you're riding less than your best. Once you dial in the controls and the flow of the game, *Offroad Fury* becomes an exercise in rhythm and speed; it's just a total visual and sensory assault. Forget pop-up, by the way: it's non-existent, even in huge wooded areas.

No matter how you like your music, Sony's got you covered there as well: Alice in Chains, Apollo 440, Anthrax, Bender, Cirrus, Primus, Sevendust, Soundgarden, Strawhorse, Strung Out and Ultraspank are all available—anytime, anywhere. The range of ATVs and riders are just as impressive, with male and female racers and every quad type imaginable, from rugged enduro models to race-ready MXers. Of course, the balance you choose, taking into account rider weight, acceleration, traction, top speed, and stability, will greatly affect your performance on the different tracks.

I could ramble on, but the bottom line is that you just have to go out and pick up this game. *ATV Offroad Fury* truly has it all and stands as one of the most impressive first-generation titles ever. It's that good. **GR**



- INFINITE PLAYABILITY
- JAW-DROPPING VISUALS

- INSANE COLLECTION OF TUNES
- INCREDIBLY REALISTIC PHYSICS

**REPUBLIC SAYS...**

THIS IS IT: THE ULTIMATE OFF-ROAD RACING EXPERIENCE. RAINBOW STUDIOS HAS PUT IT ALL TOGETHER AND DELIVERED THE BENCHMARK PS2 RACER.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH: SCEA PRODUCER, FELICE STANDIFER

**GAMERS' REPUBLIC:** With *ATV Offroad Fury*, you've created the PlayStation 2 equivalent of *WaveRace 64*, essentially raising the bar for all off-road games to follow. But beyond the game's excellent depth and playability, the visuals seem far and away the best yet for the PS2. Seeing as how *ATV* must have been in development for a year or more, what did you know (or have) that other PS2 developers didn't?

**FELICE STANDIFER:** Well, thanks a lot for the praise. Rainbow Studios has an excellent team of programmers and artists who have experience in creating a game in this genre: they developed *Motocross Madness* for the PC. We've all been working hard on this title for a year and a half and I think you're really seeing the work pay off in an outstanding title.

**GR:** What was the team's mission going into this project? Did you set some type of goal, like, did you make a pact to smear everything else into the pavement from the get go?

**FS:** The team's overall goal when we started was to create a AAA game for the PS2 that would showcase the stunning graphical capabilities of the console, as well as a great physics engine. As we continued working on the title, this goal turned into reality... the offroad racing was very highly competitive and the environments were very immersive with their changing terrains and massive areas.

**GR:** What would you say is the key element in *ATV's* gameplay? Does success revolve around proper use of the lofting techniques, quad setup, or overall mastery of the physics? Which is the most important in achieving four wheeled one-ness?

**FS:** The key element is to master the bike's physics. Players should choose their *ATV* prior to the race based on the type of race they want to undertake. Are they riding on a snowy surface like *Chateau Halifax*? An *ATV* with a lot of traction is important here. Are they riding within an environment with a lot of straightaways like *Canyon Country*? An *ATV*



with a high top speed could be used in this environment.

**GR:** Incredibly, the terrain doesn't appear polygonal-there are no seams, or straight edges. It almost looks like a little photo-realistic MX track in your monitor? How on Earth did you achieve this?

**FS:** The programmers at Rainbow did a fine job of utilizing streaming information for the graphical textures, providing that smooth appearance without any glitches. The result is spectacular.

**GR:** How long was the development cycle?

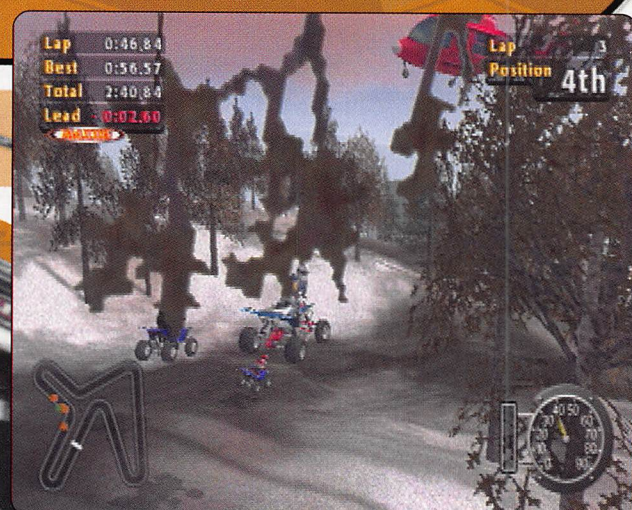
**FS:** It was approximately 18 months from incarnation to launch.

**GR:** Tell us about the *ATV* and rider models? How many polys are there? Also, how much of a challenge was it to incorporate the amazing look and feel of the suspension?

**FS:** The *ATVs* are approximately 3,500 polys each and the riders are around 1,000 polys each. The art was done in 3D based on authentic models from the *ATV* manufacturers. We have several bikes that are not based on authentic *ATV* models and these were created with the talents of Rainbow Studios' art team.

**GR:** Let's talk about the *Enduro* mode for a moment, where you can see pretty much forever. How difficult is this to accomplish and does *ATV* display the maximum possible objects onscreen while doing so? In simpler terms-is there any more gas in the PS2's tank or have you max'd it?

**FS:** There's definitely more available to work with on the PS2. The graphical capabilities of this machine are really amazing. We achieved this distance effect through what we called the L.O.D. - the Level of Detail. The objects that are far away from the rider are lo-res; they have a fairly low poly count. As the rider approaches these objects, higher res models continue to stream in without the player noticing. This smooth tran-



sition between poly models is one of the major accomplishments of this team...it allows for no pop-ups like you see in other games.

**GR: Was there anything you were not able to achieve that you wanted too?**

FS: Everything in the game really came together as we had planned.

**GR: What type of research went into the development in terms of animation, physics models, etc.?**

FS: A great deal of time was spent on the animations of the ATVs to really stress the realism in the game. The way the bikes were created was based on the real ATV models and bike physics from the manufacturers, so we tried to stay as true as we could to these specs.

**GR: What titles have you and the team been involved with prior to ATV?**

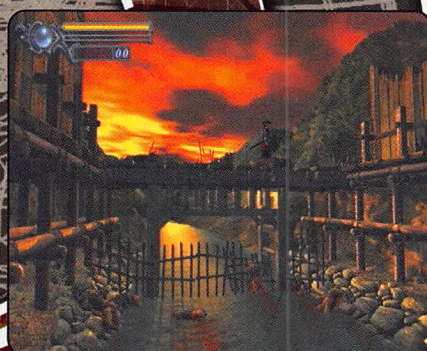
FS: Rainbow Studios has worked on PC titles only...most notably Motocross Madness 1 and 2. This is their first PS2 game. I have worked on a bunch of titles, including Jet Moto and Twisted Metal 2. We used a lot of our past experiences creating racing/driving games while working on ATV Offroad Fury.

**GR: Any chance you guys will follow up by making the world's first truly great motocross game? What is your next project? And please don't say, "We can't talk about that yet." At least give us a hint?**

FS: We'd love to give you the "no comment" line, but we can tell you that we'd love to do a sequel if the opportunity presented itself. Creating this game has really been a great experience.

**GR: Well, all I can say is congratulations. Offroad Fury is spectacular. It looks insane, it's infinitely deep, and it plays perfectly. Way to go. GR**





# ONIMUSHA WARLORDS

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

*Move over Resident Evil. From graphics to gameplay, Onimusha is the new king of survival horror*

**O**nimusha: Warlords is simply staggering. Carefully crafted, exquisitely rendered, Capcom's latest is a monumental feat, accomplishing something that few games have been able to: it is a game that is not only a technological marvel, but is also a breathtaking work of art and is immensely fun to play.

It's impossible to play Onimusha without being pulled in by its astounding visuals. It's no exaggeration to say that Onimusha is one of the best-looking games ever made. Every minute detail of feudal Japan has been beautifully re-created via Onimusha's hires prerendered backgrounds. The grain of wood, the stone foundation of a temple, patterned scrolls on the walls, a Bishamon statue guarding a sacred location—all will have you simply staring at the screen to take in the awe-inspiring majesty. Even the more organic elements are gorgeous: the grass, the trees, the dirt, and the moss growing on the rocks all look better than real life. Especially impressive is the water. Capcom borrowed techniques for rendering water from Hollywood's premier CG artists, and the result is the most astounding water effect ever found in a video game. The artistry of the characters is no less impressive. Boasting an average 10,000 polygons per character, the hero, NPCs and enemies are phenomenal, both in appearance and animation. Faces look real; outfits look authentic. Arguably, these are the best-looking models seen anywhere. As for the game's award-winning CG intro—this





motion-picture-quality epic battle scene must be witnessed to be believed.

Perfectly matching the game's incredible looks is one of the best soundtracks heard in years. Created by renowned Japanese composer Mamoru Samuragouchi, the entire soundtrack is fully orchestrated, performed by the 200-piece New Japan Philharmonic. The effort pays off with a sweeping score that manages to heighten the experience to its fullest, conveying a full range of emotions through its combination of traditional Japanese instruments and modern orchestral sound. If this game's soundtrack is released on CD in the U.S., it will be a joyous moment indeed.

With the game looking and sounding so good, it would have been easy to make gameplay a secondary concern, but fortunately, that didn't happen. The designers have taken the best from Resident Evil and tweaked it to near perfection, resulting in a more user-friendly and enjoyable experience. Since the main character, Samanosuke, is a sword-wielding samurai, the game lends itself to much more action and much better pacing than Capcom's other premier survival-horror franchise. Instead of worrying about your ammo count and running from every encounter, you can now mix it up with the enemies up close and personal through a flurry of blade-wielding skill. Three elemental weapons make up the bulk of your arsenal (swords of wind, thunder and fire), each with awesome magical attacks, but there are also some long-range weapons to use. Capcom has even implemented a semi-auto-targeting feature that keeps the swordplay from ever becoming frustrating.

Worrying about save points and life-ups is also a thing of the past, as each save point can be used infinitely, and you can replenish your health by stealing the souls of your enemies. Additionally, Samanosuke's soul-stealing ability can be used to power-up his weapons—great for tougher enemies, and also a necessity for unlocking advanced areas of the game. The downside to all these amenities is that Onimusha isn't quite as challenging as the average RE title. The puzzles are pretty simple, and the adventure as a whole seems pretty short (eight hours at best). Does this make Onimusha any less satisfying? Not in the slightest. Capcom really went all out on this one, even going so far as to include both English and Japanese dialogue to satisfy everyone. Onimusha: Warlords is an amazing experience and one of the first must-play games of 2001. **GR**



LOOKS AMAZING. EASILY ONE OF THE BEST-LOOKING GAMES EVER.  
INCREDIBLE SCORE SHOULD BE ON ITS OWN CD.

PLAYS LIKE RESIDENT EVIL. ONLY BETTER.  
FINALLY! BOTH ENGLISH AND JAPANESE VOICE ACTING!

REPUBLIC SAYS...

TRULY IMPRESSIVE. ONIMUSHA BREAKS NEW GROUND ON ALL FRONTS WITH AN AMAZING GAMING EXPERIENCE. DON'T MISS IT.



# THE MAKING OF ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

Capcom's Onimusha: Warlords for PlayStation 2 clearly has some of the highest production values of any game ever made. From the incredible prerendered backgrounds to the motion-captured animation to the motion-picture quality orchestral score, the 144 man-years of work and effort that was poured into Onimusha by producer Keiji Inafune and his 70-man development team was well worth it. Here we take a closer look at some of the elements that make up this exceptional game.

## THE SUPERSTAR

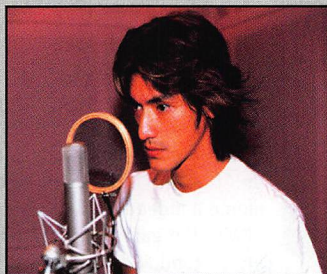
For the first time ever, Capcom has used the likeness of a celebrity as the star for one of its games. Takeshi Kaneshiro, who has been called the Japanese Leonardo DiCaprio, known for his acting, good looks and charm with the ladies, is the star of Onimusha: Warlords. For his role as Samanosuke, Kaneshiro's face was first coated in a silicone mask, which was used to mold a model of his head. The model was then scanned into the computer to create a perfect 3D virtual Kaneshiro model. For the textures, a picture of Kaneshiro's face was scanned and mapped onto the 3D model, and for realistic movement, numerous metal nodes were placed on his brow, cheeks, and chin for the delicate motion-capture process. However, Kaneshiro's work went far beyond just his face. Kaneshiro also did the voice acting for Samanosuke, bringing a rare ultra-professional sound quality to the game. Thankfully, his voice has been retained as an option in the U.S. version. Kaneshiro even did some creative work on Onimusha, coming up with designs for some of the characters, thus earning him the title of "guest creator" for his work on the game. If you want to see more of the 27-year-old actor, you can always check out his 20-plus Japanese feature films, including *Planets in Love*, *Sleepless Castle* and *Too Tired To Die*.

## THE MUSIC

To create Onimusha's sweeping, epic soundtrack, Capcom turned to the composing talents of Mamoru Samuragouchi. The extremely talented Samuragouchi has been composing music since he was four years old, and what makes his work even more impressive is the fact that, much like Ludwig von Beethoven, he is virtually deaf. Capcom had previously worked with Samuragouchi to make the soundtrack for Resident Evil: Director's Cut-Dual Shock Version, but this time the scale was much more grand. The 200-piece New Japan Philharmonic performed the music through a splendid fusion of classical sounds and traditional Japanese instruments, so players will hear the sounds of hichi-riki flutes and ohdaiko drums amidst the violins, cellos and trumpets.

## THE CG

At the SIGGRAPH 2000 Computer Animation Festival, held in July 2000 in New Orleans, Onimusha's computer-generated FMV won the award for "best of show," beating out over 650 other entries,



Guest Creator Kaneshiro (above) and composer Samuragouchi (right).



including the CG special effects in Fight Club, The Perfect Storm, Mission: Impossible and The Matrix. Onimusha's CG, which was produced by motion-capture company Links, grabbed the accolade for one main reason: it's the first production of any kind to motion capture six performers simultaneously. The magnificent CG can be seen in Onimusha's introductory sequence, which features a fight scene where Samanosuke battles five opponents at the same time, as well as a magnificent Kurasawa-inspired battle scene depicting hundreds of soldiers engaged in combat. Other little details, like a drop of sweat falling from a soldier's brow, further reinforce that Onimusha's CG is some of the best in the business.

## THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION

Instead of basing Onimusha in a world of pure fantasy, Capcom (and the writers at Flagship, of Resident Evil fame) chose to put the game in a historical setting amidst real events and characters. Onimusha is set in 1560, during Japan's feudal warlords era, when the mighty Nobunaga Oda attempted to unify Japan through conquest. Nobunaga was known for being an incredible military strategist with the ability to overcome nearly impossible odds: he once defeated an army of 25,000 troops with only 3,000 of his own (plus he has his own series of games from Koei). Although not evil in real life, in Onimusha, Nobunaga is portrayed as the villain, and according to the game's storyline, he gained his strength and skill through demonic means—demonic means that now threaten Japan, and which Samanosuke must destroy. In addition to the time frame, the game also features architecture, costumes, and plant life that all reflect the actual world of feudal Japan. GR



# SHADOW OF DESTINY

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

*Only by confronting the past will Eike Kusch survive. In Shadow of Destiny, death teaches you how to live*

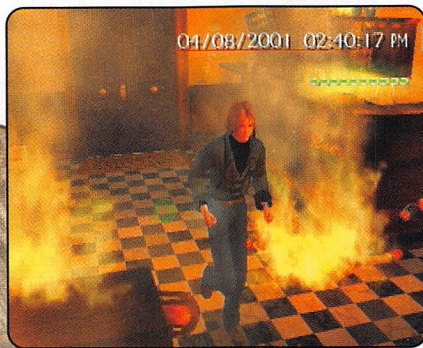
There's really nothing else like Shadow of Destiny. Easily one of the most unique, atmospheric video games ever, SOD tells the intriguing tale of Eike Kusch, a man who seems completely ordinary—with the exception that he's dead when the game begins. Thanks to a mysterious benefactor and a time-travel device, Eike is granted a reprieve from death, and it's up to players to find out how to survive, and ultimately stop whoever is after Eike.

SOD's premise is instantly intriguing, as are the game's deep and likable characters, but it's the impressive graphics that will pull most players in. An incredible amount of work has gone into the character models and faces, resulting in some jaw-dropping facial animations (complete with eye and hair movement) that really let you feel the characters' emotions. The designs are all firmly rooted in the real world, yet still very appealing, and the European architecture of the city is also excellent. Multiple light sources, great use of color and details like steam coming off a coffee cup further enhance the visual presence.

The gameplay, however, has some flaws. Play consists almost entirely of searching for items and watching amazing real-time cutscenes. There are no action sequences, and

the puzzles really only consist of finding an item at A and taking it to B. It's simple fun reminiscent of old PC adventures, but due to the intimate size of the city and relative lack of places to explore, the adventure seems too straightforward. You do more watching than actual gameplay, but fortunately there are multiple ways through the game and five different endings to counteract the short play time.

I enjoyed Shadow of Destiny for being a mature, unique experience, but the style of game certainly isn't for everyone. For something different, try it out. **GR**



■ ASTOUNDING CHARACTER MODELS AND FACES  
■ AWESOME PREMISE

■ FIVE ENDINGS—REPLAY VALUE  
■ TOO LINEAR AND SHORT—LESS THAN 5 HOURS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

THINK SHENMUE, ONLY WAY MORE CONCISE AND WITH WAY MORE STYLE. IT WORKS FOR ME.

**B**

# BUILDING A MYSTERY: BEHIND THE SCENES OF SHADOW OF DESTINY

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

You might not have heard of Junko Kawano up until now, but if her latest effort, *Shadow of Destiny*, is any indication, it won't be long until her name is as familiar to gamers as Shigeru Miyamoto and Hideo Kojima. In *Shadow of Destiny*, players jump into the shoes of Eike Kusch, a man who is fated to be murdered and has to travel through time to prevent his own death. Ms. Kawano is not only the writer and director of this completely unique mystery adventure, but also the producer and character designer, and she even played the "voice" of a kitty in the game. Gamers' Republic was fortunate enough to interview this multitasked game designer and pick her brain about one of the most innovative games to hit consoles in a long time.

**Gamers' Republic:** *Shadow of Destiny* isn't like anything else out there. What were you trying to accomplish when you set out to create this game?

Junko Kawano: I wanted to create a time-traveling game because there weren't any time-traveling games out there. I always want to come up with something new.

**GR:** What was the most challenging aspect of creating something fully unique like *Shadow of Destiny*?

JK: Trying to make sure there are no discrepancies in the storytelling that could result when the player time travels to various time zones.

**GR:** What was it that inspired the "death teaches you how to live" theme of the game?

JK: One of the messages I wanted to give in the game is that you cannot relive your life or go back to a certain time in life to redo what you have done wrong. By being able to do such things in this game, I hope the player learns to take life more seriously and make better decisions in life.

**GR:** Did any movies/books/other games influence the story and/or atmosphere?

JK: The motif of the game is Goethe's *Faust*. I ran into *Faust* in my college days and fell in love with the story. I then wanted to do my version of *Faust* with time-traveling elements.

**GR:** What does the Japanese title of the game, "*Shadow of Memory*," mean? What do you think of the American title, "*Shadow of Destiny*?"

JK: We wanted to come up with a name that could be used in Japan, U.S., and Europe. The name our U.S. office came up with was *Shadow of Destiny*. I like this name. However, due to trademark reasons, we had to change the name to *Shadow of Memories* in Japan and Europe.

**GR:** What is the game's setting? What made you decide to set it there?

JK: The game is set in a fictional European (German) town. The town is imaginary and the time zones are set in a way that allows us to tell a totally fictional story and avoid real historical events. If the game were to be set in Germany, there are certain historical events such as World War II that you could not avoid encountering. Since I wanted to leave out such events, I chose to set the game in an imaginary European town with a German look—German because of the *Faust* motif.

**GR:** The game seems to have a lot of cinematics. How were the cinematics used to further enrich the game experience?

JK: The cinematics are only a means to tell the story. The main part of the game is to decide whom to talk to and make certain decisions in certain time zones to avoid death. But yes, the cinematics definitely add to the player's experience in avoiding death.

**GR:** From what we've seen, the game uses all real-time graphics (which look great). How come you did this instead of using prerendered backgrounds or CG cut-scenes?

JK: Showing everything in real time with polygons enables different camera angles. If the player approach-



es a character from a certain angle, you'll see what follows in that angle. This could not be done with CG cutscenes.

**GR: Can you explain how you used color to emphasize each time period, and why the particular colors were used?**

JK: Different time zones are given different colors throughout the stages. This helps differentiate the stages and the events within them from those of other stages. Since the story is quite complex and confusing (because of the time paradox), a visual binding within each time zone should help the character. I gave the different time zones the color they are assigned simply because those were the colors I associate to them in my imagination.

**GR: Was it difficult to maintain continuity with actions performed in one time period affecting others?**

JK: Absolutely. Since we found many discrepancies within the game after the voice recording, we had to redo certain lines to get rid of the discrepancies. Making sure all the lines work and make sense throughout the time-traveling episodes was definitely the toughest challenge.

**GR: How did the designs for the characters come about? What kind of research was done to reflect the costumes for each time period?**

JK: The main character Eike had to be a handsome man because his attractiveness does play a major role in the game. One thing I did with the other characters is to make the ancestors and descendants look identical. This makes it easier for the player to tell instantaneously who is related to whom. Books and movies did help a lot when working on the costumes.

**GR: What previous games have the design team members worked on? Especially, what other games have the writer, director, producer, and character designer worked on?**

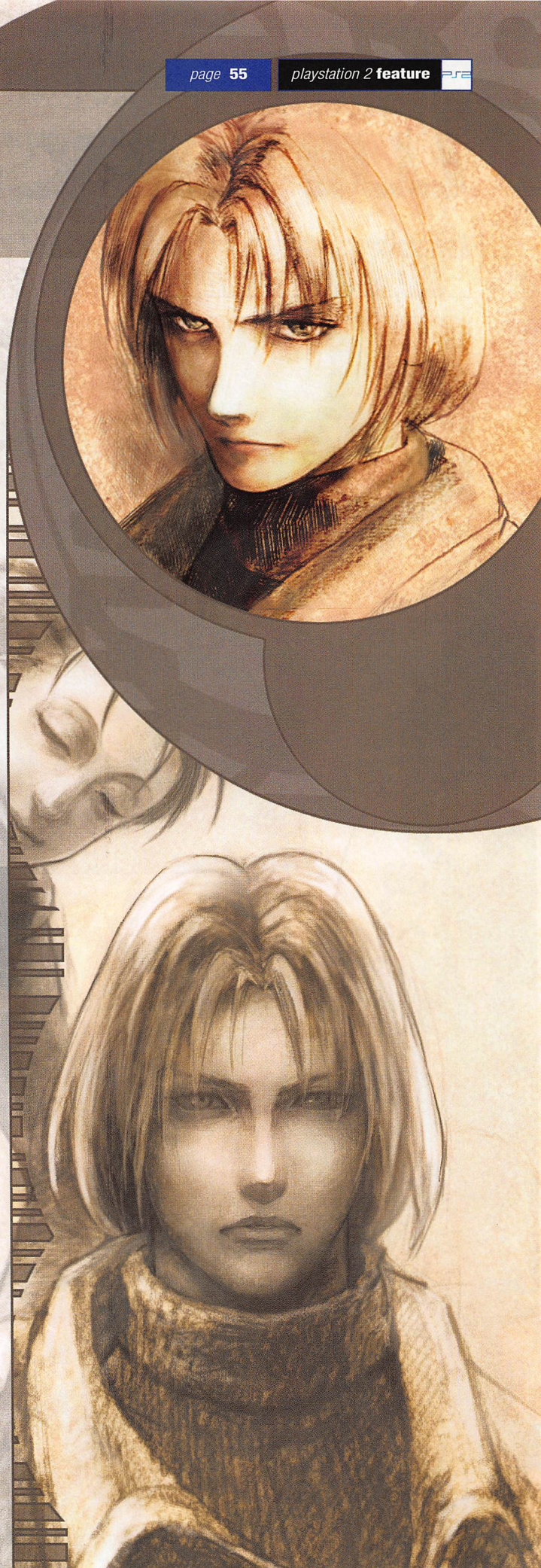
JK: The team members come from various teams. I was the character designer of Suikoden 1, and I was the game planner for Twinbee RPG (sold in Japan only). Mr. Kitao, the [executive] producer, was the producer of Silent Hill (and is that of Silent Hill 2).

**GR: How was the power of the PlayStation 2 used for the creation of this game? Could it have been done on another system, such as Dreamcast?**

JK: The Emotion Engine was used to show the very emotional facial expressions of the characters. Not only do the facial expressions convey the emotions of the characters, but these emotions actually serve as hints in the game. You really want to keep an eye on their facial expressions. This probably would have been very difficult with the Dreamcast.

**GR: What do you want players to feel when they are playing Shadow of Destiny?**

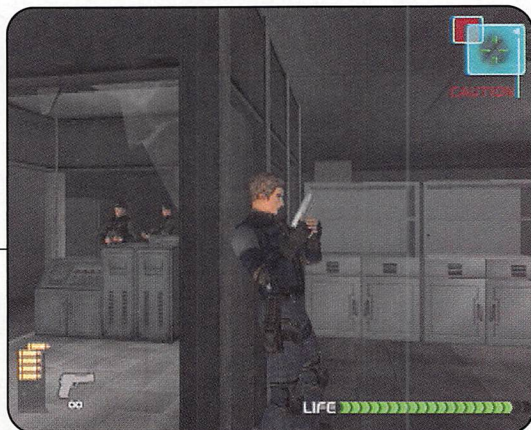
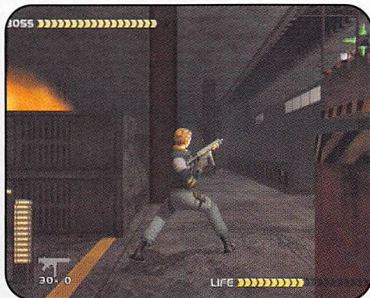
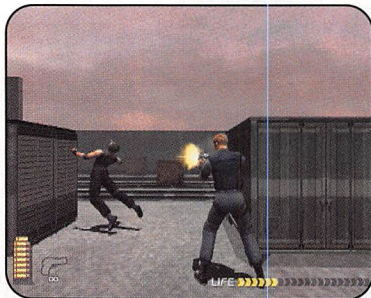
JK: I want players to think about life, take it more seriously, and be more careful when making important decisions in life. You're not Eike, and you don't have a digipad. **GR**



# WINBACK

BY MIKE HOBBS

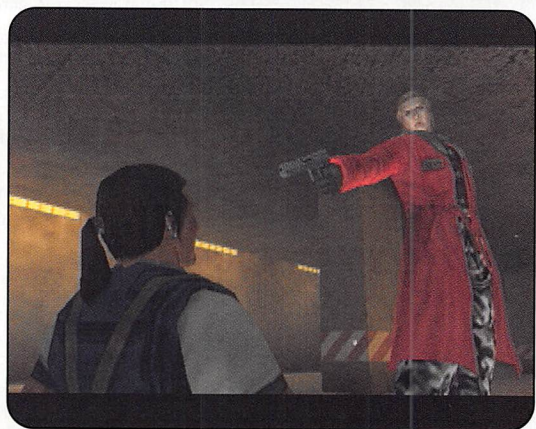
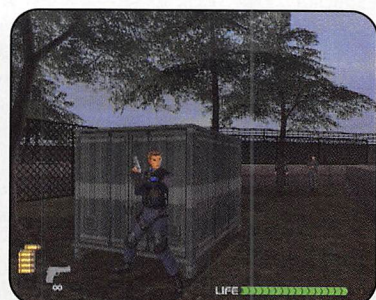
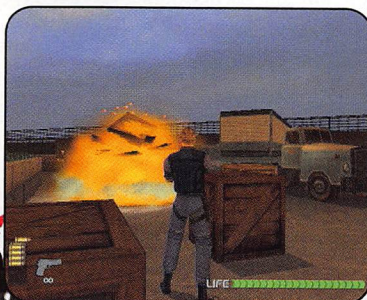
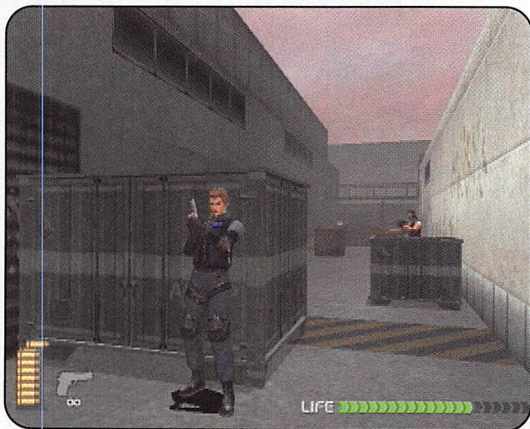
*Koei delivers a straight port of their solid N64 espionage title, leaving all pretense of beauty behind*

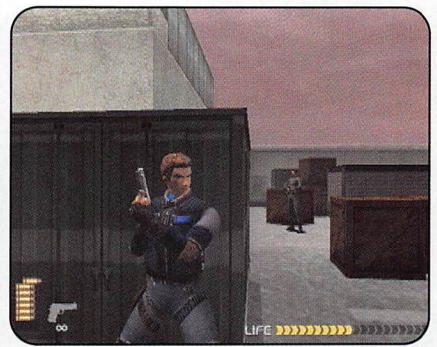
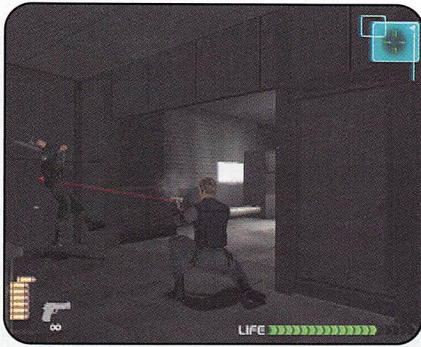


There's been a long-running debate around the office as to the relative worth of straight ports. Some argue that a good game is such on any platform, regardless of whether it has been graphically tuned to take advantage of a superior piece of hardware. Capcom's *Dino Crisis* is often cited as an example of this point of view, where the Dreamcast version of this great game does not have the absolute and decisive visual mastery over the PlayStation original that it should. And then there are those that feel that if a port is not to make enough use of a given platform's strength, then why bother at all, except to fatten the bottom line of a game company's account books—not a devious goal, by the way.

I fall somewhere in the middle on this issue, appreciating that some gamers have just one console and one chance to play a particular game. Yet I still wish that developers would put a little more effort into ports, like the one we have here, Koei's *Winback*.

Making a rather large processing leap from the N64 to the PlayStation 2, *Winback* has been suitably sharpened up in appearance, but it lags far behind native PS2 efforts,





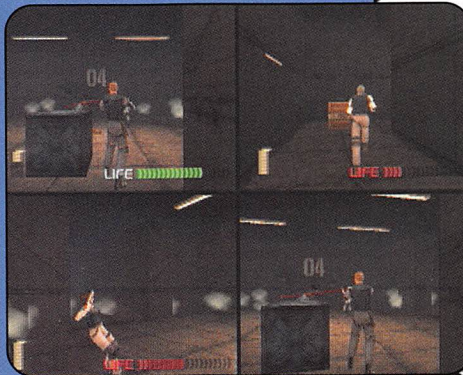
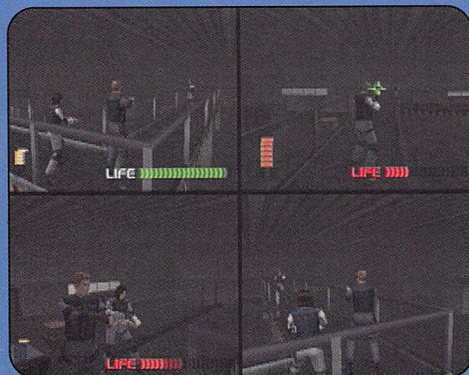
and frustratingly enough, by some of Koei's own original PS2 games. Winback is still a bit foggy and fairly basic in its overall geometry, and the stilted, stiffly directed real-time cinematics look like something from a different era—the 32-bit one.

But to pay sufficient respect to the notion that a good game is a good game on any system, I have to offer that Winback is good. Look past the lead character's almost ridiculous run animation—which I'm surprised Omega Force didn't update—and you'll find an entertaining action game rather unique to the PS2. Credit Winback's ultimate success to the fact that the somewhat contrived and limited levels are held together by the game's one bit of inspiration—the ability to slide behind obstructions, scope out the scene ahead, and then pop out for a bit of shooting action before ducking back to safety. This one idea saves the game from being what would otherwise be a dull run-and-gun, one without the beauty of an X-Squad with which to fill in the dynamic gaps.

So I like Winback on PS2, but no more than I did when I played the game on N64 over a year ago. If you've never played it, it is indeed worthwhile. One of the reasons we all rushed out to get PS2s was to marvel at what the graphic fairies would conjure for us, and Winback just hasn't had quite enough magic dust sprinkled on it. **GR**



**Winback's four-player mode is the sort of addition that you are thankful for at first, but really lackluster level design prevents Winback's multi-player game from making a lasting impression.**



■ SAME GOOD GAMEPLAY FROM N64 ORIGINAL  
■ PREDICTABLY SHARPER GRAPHICS, BUT NOT BY ENOUGH

■ POOR ENGLISH VOICE ACTING  
■ UNSOPHISTICATED A.I.

**REPUBLIC SAYS...**

WINBACK IS A DECENT ENOUGH GAME, WITH ONE GREAT IDEA THAT KEEPS ITS RATHER UNINTERESTING MISSIONS FUN, BUT THIS PORT SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER.

**B**

4-player mode



# ONI

BY DAVE HALVERSON

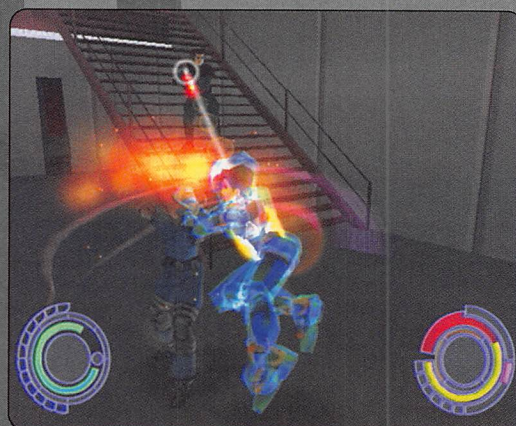
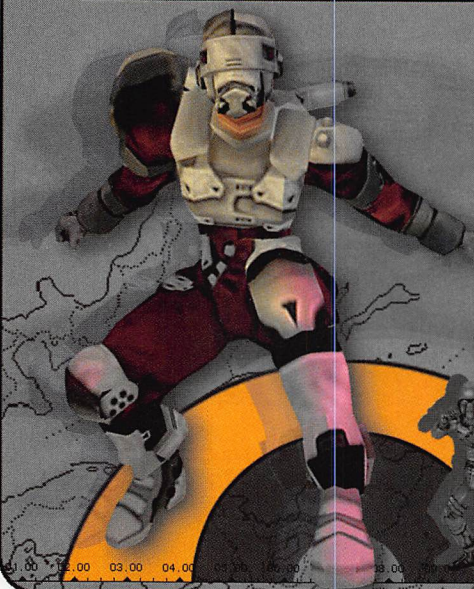
*Bungie's much-anticipated anime epic has finally arrived. Time to jump into Konoko's ghost and make like a gamer*

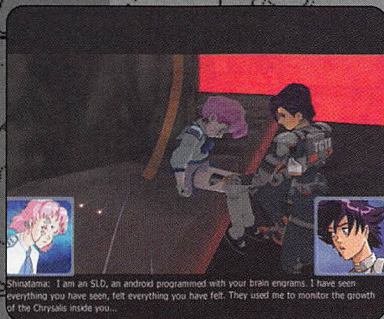
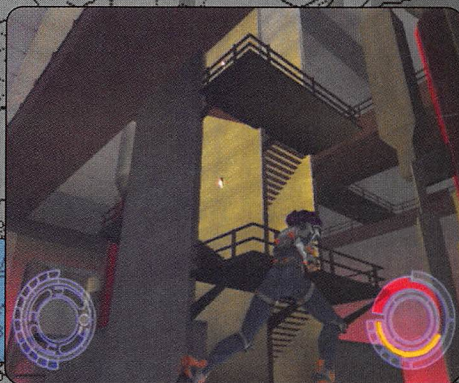
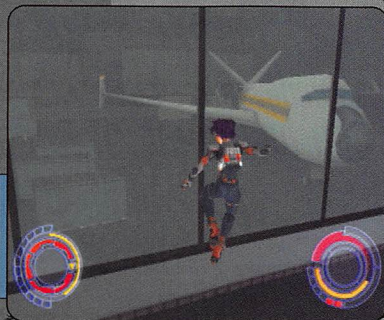
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" the novel on which *Blade Runner* (one of, if not the greatest, science-fiction films ever made) is based, centers around rogue replicants—androids so real that the untrained eye can't distinguish them from humans—and how society deals with them. Masamune Shirow's legendary anime—arguably the preeminent feature-length anime of the last decade—also deals with androids and their struggles as synthetic humans. Part of me (the part that gets lost in video games, no doubt) believes that someday, in the not too distant future, androids will be a reality. Of course, I'd also like to be cryogenically stored and fitted with some nanotech when they wake me up in 2500. It's safe to say that all things humanoid fascinate me to no end.

Oni covers this sacred ground religiously and the resulting ambience is the game's main draw. The operative in the adventure, Konoko, an officer of the TCTF (Technology Crimes Task Force), is an android on the

edge; she's so lethal that it could cost her her life. Without giving too much away, Oni chronicles Konoko's infiltration of the TCTF's main adversary—the shadowy organization known only as the Syndicate—guided by her SLD, a TCTF android in perfect synch with her ghost. The rest you'll want to discover for yourself.

Beginning with Oni's look, it is decidedly simplistic. The models, other than Konoko's and the main enemies, which look great, are fairly low poly count, and the color scheme and textures are understated. The game's architecture, while grand, is also sparse, but surprisingly, the minimalistic approach works to the game's advantage. It's a landscape cramped with concrete towers—a futuristic cityscape so mundane, it gives off a spooky sci-fi vibe. The trade-off for the simplicity is the ability to see vast stretches of real estate, which is key in the game's most important component—deep, immersive gameplay coupled with keen AI. If you're spotted from 100 yards away, the enemy will begin to





charge, and if he has a weapon, fire, which attracts more attention, and you'll soon find yourself surrounded by multiple enemies. Waiting until that same enemy ducks behind his post, you can get in close and creep up behind him, until you're breathing down his neck...then break it, steal his weapon (if it serves you), hypo, or ammo, and move on. The game is filled with such scenarios. Imagine you're in the middle of a massive terrarium partially ravaged by explosions, and you're out of ammo. Across the vestibule a shielded Syndicate foot soldier is dug in like an Alabama tick; every time you poke your head out, he fires relentlessly. What to do? Leap to a floor below, jump across the ruined staircase, make some noise, and he'll run down the stairwell to investigate. Wait for him and strike just as he approaches, flipping him over the edge to his

death (complete with landing grunt). That's what Oni is all about. How you play the game determines how the levels play out, and they are long and extremely well devised. Don't even think about running past enemies and dodging fire to reach your goal. They'll alert foes all around you, and when you stop, nail your ass (and what a fine one Konoko has) to the wall.

Oni's combat is spectacular as well: the *Matrix*-style moves and seamless animation routines conjure up visions of the finest sci-fi. Konoko has more moves than an ex-president, and controls with great precision. You can even configure the controls to your liking, a big plus as the moves get more complex and the enemies smarter, faster, and stronger. Something else I appreciate is that Konoko can only carry one weapon at a time. Ever wonder where video-game characters stow a dozen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 109 ▶



■ MASSIVE ENVIRONMENTS  
■ TRULY ENGAGING GAMEPLAY

■ EXCELLENT SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC  
■ SIMPLE-LOOKING GRAPHICS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

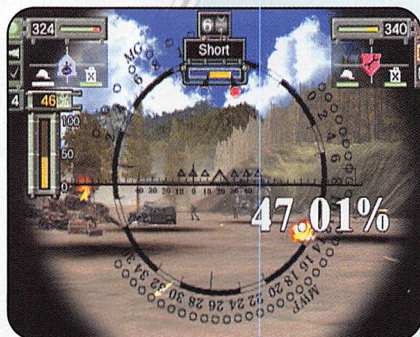
ONI'S AMBITIOUS AI ROUTINES AND DEEP GAMEPLAY HOLD BACK THE GRAPHICS A BIT, BUT THE TRADE-OFF IS WELL WORTH IT. OVERALL, THE GAME LOOKS COOL, BUT IT PLAYS GREAT.

B+

# RING OF RED

BY STEVE THOMASON

*One of the most innovative strategy games in years, Ring of Red marks the beginning of Konami's PS2 dominance*



For history enthusiasts, Ring of Red offers an intriguing alternate past in which Japan is split into communist and democratic halves à la post-WWII Germany, and ground warfare is dominated by mechs called Armored Fighting Walkers (AFWs). After a bitter civil war, the year is 1964 and the two sides are at an uneasy peace until a communist pilot infiltrates South Japan and steals their newest AFW prototype. To prevent the outbreak of further hostilities, the South Japanese military secretly orders a small unit of AFWs into North Japan to retrieve the stolen prototype.

Aside from avoiding the typical post-apocalyptic setting, Ring of Red is a unique turn-based strategy title in that it also allows you to take an active role in the actual encounters rather than just sitting back as a spectator once the pre-battle preparations are complete. Constant management of your AFW's supporting ground troops is vital to maintaining a strategic edge, and firing its main weapon requires you to pull the trigger as the shot slowly zooms in and steadies. This added complexity injects some much-needed innovation into the genre without making things so complicated that it become unwieldy.

Graphically, Ring of Red may not represent the cutting edge of PlayStation 2 technology, but the overall visual presentation comes together nicely to create a pleasing aesthetic. The hand-drawn character portraits are quite attractive and the mech designs are at times truly inspired. Superb sound effects and an unobtrusive soundtrack round out an atmosphere that is

almost unprecedented in its ability to immerse you in the game's proceedings. The only chinks in the armor, so to speak, are some stiff dialogue that prevents the story from achieving its full potential, and a frustratingly restrictive save system. Despite these relatively minor shortcomings, however, Ring of Red stands as a top-notch strategy game worthy of standing alongside March's other, more high-profile PS2 titles. **GR**



■ DEEP, INVOLVING STRATEGY GAMEPLAY  
■ IMAGINATIVE SETTING AND BACK STORY

■ STRONG AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATION  
■ STIFF DIALOGUE HURTS AN OTHERWISE POWERFUL STORY

REPUBLIC SAYS...

AS KONAMI BEGINS THEIR PS2 ONSLAUGHT, I SINCERELY HOPE THAT RING OF RED DOESN'T GET LOST IN THE SHUFFLE. A SUPREMELY INNOVATIVE STRATEGY TITLE.

**B+**

# THE ADVENTURES OF COOKIE & CREAM BY MIKE HOBBS

*What is this? A From Software game that doesn't involve mechs? Yes, and this experiment proves more than worthwhile*

From Software has not earned a reputation over the years for being experimental. Unlike, say, offerings from Treasure or Warp, you always sort of know what you'll be getting in a From Software title. It's generally going to be something like *Armored Core* or something like *King's Field*. But this pigeonholing could be a thing of the past if From's latest endeavor is any indication.

The Adventures of Cookie and Cream—Kuri Kuri Mix to the Japanese—is not only original for a From game, but it's also the most original game I've played in a long time, and certainly on the youthful PS2. At the heart of this originality is the concept of controlling two characters at once—Cookie and Cream—with the left and right analog sticks, the idea being to guide them separately to the common goal at the end of each vertically scrolling level. Naturally, obstacles dot their paths, and teamwork is always required to advance.

Take each character in isolation, and the various enemies and puzzles encountered along the way are a cinch. But when you've got to manipulate both characters at the same time to move a set of platforms or open a door, it becomes very challenging—most

importantly, in a way that has never really been explored before.

But is it fun? The answer is yes, but not always, for the simple reason that you sometimes feel as if you are fighting with your own internal wiring as much as the game itself. One boss encounter in particular, which had Cookie and Cream constantly swapping sides, literally froze my motor responses as I struggled to get a grip on which thumb was controlling which character. Ambidextrous humans may have less trouble in these situations.

Minor synaptic issues aside, I commend From for trying something truly different here. It represents a huge aesthetic and conceptual about-face for the company, and the game succeeds in providing a really novel, if sometimes befuddling, play experience.

GR



■ AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT THAT SUCCEEDS  
■ BRIGHT AND ATTRACTIVE HIGH-RES GRAPHICS

■ WELCOME VS. MODE  
■ CAN SOMETIMES LEAVE YOUR HEAD SPINNING

REPUBLIC SAYS...

FROM SOFTWARE TAKES A CHANCE WITH COOKIE AND CREAM, AND THE END RESULT IS ONE OF THE MOST ORIGINAL GAMES I'VE EVER PLAYED.

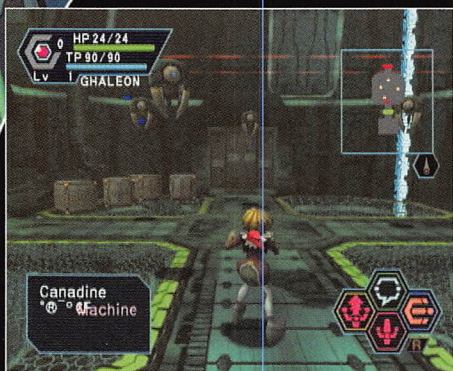




Ramer: He's the man if you're going it alone. Excels with guns; can also use sabers and some techniq

# PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

*Yuji Naka has taken the Phantasy universe and crafted a game for us all-online and off. Bring plenty of Meseta*



**Offline Impressions:** If you're like me (and I'm sure most of you are not), you may be crazy enough to attempt Phantasy Star Offline. Perhaps the thought of sharing Phantasy Star with complete strangers or even friends turns your stomach, or perhaps, like me, you haven't even considered tethering your gaming console to a phone jack. To the three of you remaining, here's the deal: If you want to conquer this mammoth RPG by yourself, the name of the game is relentlessness. You want to brag to your net buddies that you did it alone? Who needs a "party" when you have an iron will and enough Red Bull and beef jerky to last a month? Seriously, you better love every inch of this game—your character, the music, and every yard of organic, almost-colonized soil because you will need to retrace your steps many, many times in order to strengthen your character enough to single handedly defeat the game's stubborn bosses. Fortunately, I do. While I've really probably just nicked the surface, I find PSO a hypnotic random dungeon RPG, even though I had to replay the caves four times to even begin to chip away at the crafty boss. After much pattern study, healing, and shooting, I sank his scaly butt—and I'm a better man for it. I get so zoned out playing PSO that I slip into an odd sort of mental autopilot. It's like my therapy. Something about the mood, music, and premise here has really got a hold of me.

Have I played one game too many? Perhaps. Or maybe after playing games non-stop for 17



**HUnewearl:** Sexy and strong. Good close range attack skills and can use techniques.



years, you just start to go a little crazy. PSO will undoubtedly be my on-and-off, year-long conquest—a between-meal snack that tastes better than the main course, too rich to indulge in but too good not to nibble on everyday. If so, madness is bliss. **Dave Halverson**

**Online Impressions:** For console gamers, playing PS Online for the first time is a spiritual experience. Sega's created a game that truly takes advantage of a worldwide bloodstream, allowing gamers from any digital

tributary the ability to laugh, curse, love, and ultimately kill—now for the first time, together—in this amazing virtual body. If that sounds like fascinating stuff, slow down. For the most part, the best attributes of a truly online RPG, at least for a console, are still the stuff of dreams. For everything that PSO does right, there are glaring design flaws—not technical ones—where PSO will leave you at once awed and underwhelmed. Your preference in RPGs, and how you feel about online gaming, will make the pass or fail determination.

For starters, PSO isn't really an RPG. There's item management, sure, but if you're looking for an engaging story, you'll be disappointed. The focus of the game is centered on battle, and the absence of strafing or a reliable lock-on system (half the time you'll miss your opponent because hit ratio is still based on statistics) is fun in a Final Fight-ish way, but nowhere near as polished as it should be. You'll enter a room, take a swing, run, and repeat the process. As for your trademark expansive world? There's only one town, Pioneer 1, a ship for periodic supplies and mission parameters. The rest of the game takes place in PSO familiar dungeons, caves, forests, and techno-scapes, where you and up

CONTINUED ON PAGE 109 ▶



**FOnewearl:** Defense is high but HP low. Good to have in a group but not as a main character.

- TRULY UNFORGETTABLE MUSIC
- AMBIANCE IS PURE SCI-FI

- A CLUMSY BATTLE SYSTEM MAKES PSO TOUGHER THAN NEEDED
- CHOPPY CONNECTIONS WILL GET YOU BOOTED OFTEN

REPUBLIC SAYS...

IF YOU'VE GOT 3 FRIENDS AND CAN BLOCK OUT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY, PSO IS AN ONLINE HOMERUN. IF NOT, GOOD LUCK. OFFLINE, OUR GUY LOVED IT—BUT HE'S A STRANGE ONE.

OFFLINE

B+

ONLINE

A-

# FEAR EFFECT 2

BY STEVE THOMASON

*Hana and Rain get it on in the sexy and violent, yet tragically flawed, prequel to Fear Effect*

**F**ear Effect 2: Retro Helix could be divided into two very distinct halves. The first half is a cool secret-agent style mission in which Hana Vachel and her partner (in more ways than one) Rain Quin must steal valuable genetic research from one of the world's richest and most powerful men. The second half is a confusing and ill-conceived journey into the world of Chinese mythology. The result is a game that starts strong, but barely manages to limp past the finish line.

At the root of the problem is the brisk pace at which the game moves after Hana and Rain complete their initial mission. The most bizarre of circumstances whiz by one right after another without ever pausing to give us a satisfactory explanation of what exactly is going on. This leaves the player lost and baffled as the story becomes an increasingly incoherent mess. And since it seems to take place just weeks prior to the original game, Retro Helix gives us very little in terms of additional character background other than detailing how Hana, Glas, and Deke originally come to meet.

Disappointments with the story aside, Fear Effect 2 does feature strong voice acting, copious amounts of violence and cleavage, and the same distinct visual style as its predecessor. The gameplay is once again highly reminiscent of Resident Evil, only this time devel-

opers Kronos have sought to add a little variety with such distractions as a primitive war strategy game and a brief stint piloting an ED209-inspired mech. A few of the puzzles are somewhat inane, but the game makes up for it with improved action sequences.

If you enjoyed the first Fear Effect, you'll probably get a kick out of its prequel as long as you don't mind sifting through the convoluted story. I only wish they had stuck with the female James Bond theme throughout instead of switching gears midway. **GR**



■ TOP-NOTCH VOICE ACTING AND DECENT PRODUCTION VALUES  
■ LOTS OF SEX AND VIOLENCE

■ PAINFULLY INCOHERENT STORY  
■ SOMEWHAT AWKWARD CONTROL AND CAMERA ANGLES

REPUBLIC SAYS...

RETRO HELIX WOULD HAVE BENEFITED FROM A SHIFT IN FOCUS AWAY FROM ITS MYSTICAL THEMES AND TOWARDS THE EXPLOITS OF ITS TWO LEADING LADIES.

C+



# KING OF FIGHTERS 2000

BY CHRIS HOFFMAN

*The King of Fighters tournament continues in the new millennium. The old Neo Geo gets better with age*

You can't have too much of a good thing—at least not when that good thing is SNK's premier fighting series, King of Fighters. The King of Fighters 2000 continues the tradition of exceptional team-based fighting action, delivering the same strategic combat we've come to expect, but with some subtle tweaking that builds upon the success of the previous KOF games.

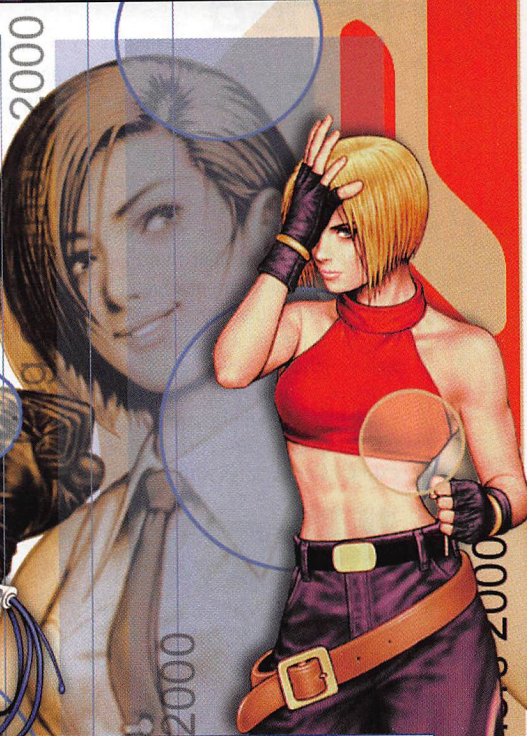
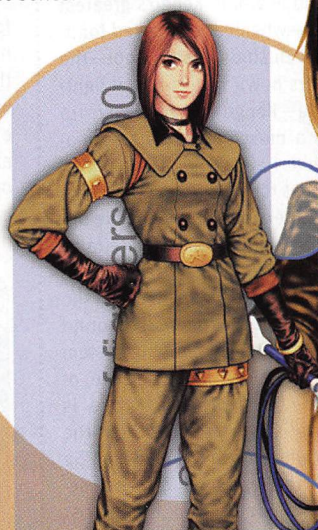
In KOF 2000, 35 fighters have entered the fray to claim the title of world's strongest team. Like in KOF '99, teams are composed of four characters, three of whom you control in combat and the fourth who runs in as a striker. Almost everyone has returned from last year (notable exceptions being Xiangfei and the hoard of Kyos), along with six new characters: Vanessa, a boxer (who was a striker in KOF '99 on Dreamcast); Seth, also a former striker; Hinako, a female wrestler; Kula, the "sister" of K'; Lin, a poison-blooded freak; and Ramon, a fruity ex-Luche-Libre.

The music is nice and, as always, the game is filled with fantastic action and tons of moves. And considering that King of Fighters 2000 is running on decade-old hardware, it looks great too. All the moves animate very well, and the backgrounds are loaded with details like weather effects and moving crowds. The final boss' silky smooth animations would look great on any system. For some strange reason, Mai's bouncy standing animation has been removed, but other than that, there's little for the fanboys to complain about.

Numerous tweaks have been made to the game system to make it even better than in KOF '99. Strikers can now be called in at any time (when you're jumping, attacking, etc.) making them a much more valuable part of the gameplay. Also new is the "other striker" system, which gives you access to more than 35

alternate run-in partners, including all sorts of SNK stars past and present, including Geese Howard, Kaede (Last Blade), Nakoruru (Samurai Shodown) and Fio (Metal Slug). Two power-up modes have also been added. Though it takes a full super meter, players can utilize Counter Mode (for super chain attacks and infinite desperation moves) or Armor Mode (for avoiding chip damage and absorbing hits without being knocked down) for a limited time. The last major change is that super desperation moves are now available by having a max-level super meter, not by having low health, allowing for all-new battle strategies.

All in all, KOF 2000 is another excellent title in this classic series. **GR**



■ THE TRIED-AND-TRUE GAMEPLAY LIVES ON  
■ VASTLY IMPROVED STRIKER SYSTEM

■ NEW ADDITIONS LIKE ARMOR MODE AND MAX-LEVEL SUPERS  
■ NEWER HARDWARE WOULDN'T HURT...

REPUBLIC SAYS...

SNK CONTINUES TO SQUEEZE EVERY LAST BIT OF FUN OUT OF THE OLD NEO GEO. KOF 2000 IS ANOTHER TOP-NOTCH EFFORT.

**B+**



## RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

review by s. akinnuso • dev: esp • pub: conspiracy ent. / crave • avail: now

**B** Blasphemy, I know, but maybe console RPGs do need a kick in the butt. Conspiracy Entertainment seems to think so, and their Record of Lodoss War, an anime-inspired spin on the popular PC Diablo-style RPG, looks good enough, and is engaging enough, to turn a respectable head or two. Putting considerably more emphasis on real-time fighting and item management, Lodoss War marries the action elements of Western RPGs and the necessary story elements of those Eastern titles. At least it attempts to. Following the story of a resurrected knight, players encounter Lodoss familiars while hacking and slashing their way — Gauntlet Legends style — through the worst parts of Marmo. Characters like Pern, Deedlit, and Slayn from the anime actually play roles that affect the outcome of the game. Still, a good portion of your adventure is spent alone, building up your character and mastering the intriguing rune system—a clever bit of micro-management gaming that allows players to learn spells and upgrade various parts of their inventory by enchanting weapons. The downside of all this action is the lack of any emotional attachment with your lot. While the fighting engine is without peer, the story and those well-crafted moments of character intimacy we're familiar with are nowhere in sight. Replaced only by endless maze upon maze to progress the plot, there's a fun game here for the curious RPGer, but possibly too alien for those that feel Final Fantasy writes the book on such fare. **GR**



## KENGO

review by s. akinnuso • dev: lightwave • pub: crave • avail: now

**C** Kengo doesn't come anywhere near Bushido Blade 1 or 2, and that's a big shock being that it's from the game's original creators. The culprit is neither rushed product nor poor programming, because although the game's character models aren't top-of-the-line PS2 caliber, and the backgrounds are often colorless, too similar dojos, there's no indication that they hastily did any of it. Kengo's greatest sin is Lightwave's push for a pure samurai sim—when nobody asked for it. Ditching every element that made the original Bushido Blades cool—the gorgeous outdoor arenas (you only fight indoors now), tactics-based fighting and, of course, the awesome story mode—Kengo forces players to choose a fighter and build characteristics in a most unfriendly create-a-fighter scheme. Slashing scores of drones while training helps the player improve statistically, preparing us for the modest tournament mode where you'll fight even more samurai sporting different textures but negligible differences. There are cute oddities, like building your spirit in waterfalls, extinguishing flames with your sword, and perfecting your balance in movie-clipped rituals; and while the engine is expectedly sound with a precise parrying system and a slow, steady sense of realistic swordplay, Kengo is surprisingly vapid. Without the graphic punch to justify its PS2 worth, Kengo can only be recommended for the most diehard of Bushido Blade fans—and even they may be left wanting. **GR**



## POINT BLANK 3

review by m. hobbs • dev/pub: namco • avail: march

**B** Point Blank 3 in a nutshell: a big collection of hilariously fun shooting mini-games designed for use with Namco's Guncon. This exactly describes Point Blank 1 and 2 incidentally, but who's keeping track.

As it sounds, Point Blank 3 is more of the same, but there's really nothing wrong with that. The shooting games are still very weird and very fun, and one is even a little humiliating. It involves shooting one of six analog clocks which matches the time presented on a digital display.



I came to the shocking conclusion that I could no longer tell time the old fashioned way with any speed. The rest of the games were less embarrassing, which featured the usual mix of chaotic fast shooting and precision targeting.

Namco would have to work at making a bad Point Blank game. They're easy to develop, built on the simplest of ideas, and I get a kick out of them every time. **GR**

## SW BATTLE FOR NABOO

review by m. hobbs • dev: factor 5 • pub: lucasarts • avail: now

**B-** We all know that Factor 5 is a talented developer; one look at Rogue Squadron leaves little doubt. And, as expected, it's made another good game here using the Star Wars license. The only problem is, Episode One is simply not a rich enough wellspring from which to draw environments and situations.

Rogue Squadron had the benefit of using a trilogy of films to form its visual and conceptual backdrop, but Battle for Naboo has but one world and one film to take ideas from, and for this, the game suffers a little. There's just not that much you can do with Naboo, though Factor 5 makes a good effort with simple, entertaining, and challenging missions, along with a fair amount of visual flair, thanks to the hi-res afforded by the optional RAM Pak. But you know, the romance of Star Wars just isn't here. Rogue Squadron was a good game with a great theme. Flying around Cloud City, Hoth, and Tatooine in X-Wing



Fighters, Snow Speeders, and A-Wings, shooting down Tie Fighters was many a GenXers dream. Battle for Naboo, on the other hand, is just a good game. **GR**



## RC REVENGE PRO

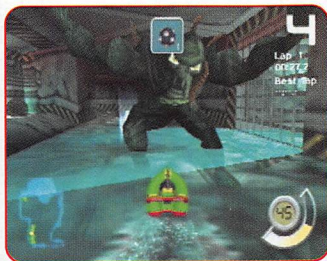
review by s. akinnuso • dev/pub: acclaim • avail: now



Considering that the market was flooded with bad kart racing games in the 32-bit era, I assume we should begin to expect this sort of thing on the PS2. On cue, Acclaim breaks their streak of surprisingly good racers (Dreamcast's F355 and the amazing Vanishing Point) by releasing a wholly by-the-numbers kart racing game within the lifeless RC Revenge Pro.

Continuing a trend of kart clones offering gamers command of mini-RC vehicles, this pedestrian racer's biggest selling point isn't its solid, simple pick-up-and-play feel, but the bonus track editor. Allowing gamers leeway to create more inspired tracks, it's mildly entertaining playing the Picasso architect on courses you and a buddy can pummel through whenever you feel creative.

Still, even a track editor can't absolve the game's inconsistent frame rate, bland colors, and uninspired course design. While some of the levels grab your attention using the PS2's transparency and reflection muscle (see the impressive-looking water in the powerboat level, or the crystal-clear car reflections from rain puddles in the Lost Incan Temples), some of, if not most of, the game's textures would barely tap into the power of a PS, and the game just lacks personality. While in no way a bad game, RC Revenge Pro is strictly five-minute fun for seasoned gamers, perhaps something more exciting for kiddies new to this schtick, but worth no more than a rental, and that's no matter who you are. **GR**



## THE LION KING

review by c. hoffman • dev: paradox • pub: activision • avail: now



What happened to The Lion King? What happened to Paradox? We've got a good license and a good developer, so why is Simba's Mighty Adventure so thoroughly flawed? Even for kids, this extremely basic 3D platformer is the antithesis of fun. Simba is hard to maneuver, even using analog movement, and there's no control over the camera. The levels, based on both *Lion King* movies, are completely bland and straightforward. Virgin's *Lion King* game on SNES and Genesis was far more interesting, and the hand-drawn cel animation of that version was superior to the poorly shaded polys found here, too. Even the cutscenes stream poorly from the CD, resulting in choppy animation and strange-sounding voices. I won't even start with the poor mini-games. This has "rush job" written all over it. **GR**



## VANISHING POINT

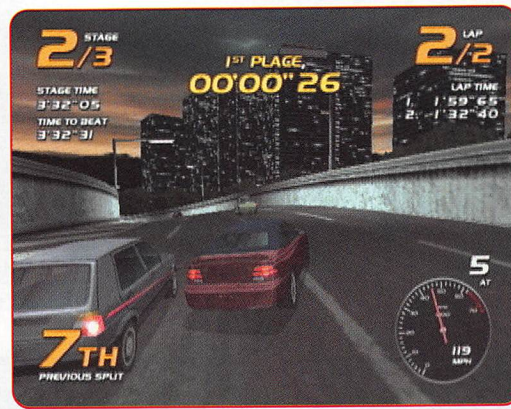
review by s. akinnuso • dev: clockwork games • pub: acclaim



The hype for Acclaim's arcade-y Vanishing Point has been building for months, and with good reason: it's simply the fastest, prettiest, most intense arcade racer on the Sega Dreamcast. Deciding to buck the current trend of realistic driving simulations made popular by the likes of *Gran Turismo* and *Sega GT*, Vanishing Point pays homage to those older racers opting for spectacular crashes over tightly controlled turns. The developer's obvious love for blurring speeds and hairpin passes smothered player-modified micro-management and restricting realism under its adrenaline-powered boot.

Only Daytona gets this fast, and like Daytona, learning to take advantage of the super-sensitive controls and feeling of speed, is this game's biggest selling point. At first, the controls are so loose: the car feels as if it turns on some central axis as opposed to wheels of left and right; you could mistake them for faulty physics. But after a few laps you'll be sliding between cars and navigating corners with such a mastery of the game's power slide that the unique car handling becomes the game's trademark next to that 60-fps speed.

Two players can race in the multiplayer or head-to-head rallies without a loss in speed or frame rate, and for those looking for online fun, Vanishing Point lets you match skills against other players in its worldwide ranking system. While the lack of online head-to-head is a sucker punch to an otherwise awesome title, the worldwide competition through ghost races is quite a parry. Add in one of the best Euro-trance scores I've heard since *Test Drive Le Mans*, and Vanishing Point's a newday classic. **GR**

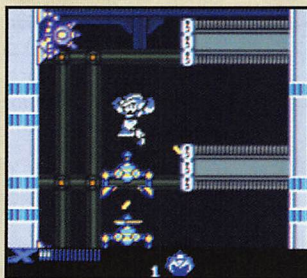


## MEGA MAN XTREME

dev/pub: capcom • avail: now  
reviewed by c. hoffman **B+**

It's been a long time since Mega Man was on the Game Boy, and what a way to return. Combining bosses and levels from the SNES games Mega Man X and X2, Mega Man Xtreme delivers the same great weapon-stealing gameplay and futuristic atmosphere as those 16-bit classics, and it's every bit as fun. From maneuvers to music, hardly anything has been lost in the jump to Game Boy Color. Mega Man can perform all his signature moves and he can still find power-up capsules from Dr. Light to enhance his abilities. The levels look great and even the great tunes have been successfully recreated. While it can be argued that there isn't much new, Capcom has

added new characters and the ability to call in Zero for special attacks, but more importantly, the original concept was purely fantastic to begin with. The only problem is that, for whatever reason, Capcom has made the initial game only four levels long, with an additional four-level "hard mode" opening up after you beat the game. The complete eight-level game only opens up after beating hard mode, but this mode should really be available from the beginning. Oh well - if there was any Game Boy game I'd choose to play through three times, it would be this one. I'm willing to bet there will be few better GB titles this year. **GR**



## DRAGON WARRIOR III

dev/pub: enix • avail: now  
reviewed by c. hoffman

Last year Enix infused the Game Boy RPG market with some much-needed life in the form of Dragon Warrior I & II, and this year looks to be even better with the arrival of Dragon Warrior III on GBC. Obviously based on the NES game of the same name, DWIII is loaded with all the features you'd expect from a game bearing the Dragon warrior name, including Akira Toriyama character designs, more than 165 types of monsters to fight, and a massive 70-hour quest. The graphics are actually more

detailed than they were on the NES, and with larger sprites and a more detailed overworld map, they actually come close to SNES quality. A total of nine different character classes are featured in DWIII (a unique questionnaire at the beginning determines what you'll be), and players get to control parties of up to four characters. DWIII was recently released in Japan, and from the time I spent with that version, it was already clear that the game will be a must-have for RPG players on the go. **GR**



## BIG BANG PRO WRESTLING

dev/pub: snk • avail: now (japan)  
reviewed by the heartbreak chris **B**

Leave it to the Neo Geo Pocket. After having delivered tons of awesome fighting games and action titles in its short life, SNK's little system has now brought forth the best handheld pro wrestling game to be seen in years—possibly ever. Even though it's on the small screen, Big Bang Pro Wrestling has loads of features that you'd only expect from a bigger system: ring entrances, tournament mode, and gimmick matches like coffin matches and money-on-a-pole matches. The graphics are colorful and very well animated, and the cast of fictional characters is as boisterous as those you'd see on TV. There are even plenty of moves and some very cool finish-

ers. I wish the controls were put to better use, as the B button is used for taunting, while you grapple by pushing into your opponent, but they work fine as they are. With WWF No Mercy on hold and no other handheld pro graps titles coming in the foreseeable future, Big Bang makes quite a worthy import. **GR**



## TOHI TORI

dev/pub: capcom • avail: spring  
reviewed by c. hoffman

A bit reminiscent of Lode Runner, Toki Toki is an all-new action-puzzle game for the Game Boy Color. In Toki Toki, players control a little bird creature (a Toki is a rare Japanese bird) who needs to collect his eggs, which are found throughout the game's 60-plus levels. It's easier said than done, as the levels are filled with enemies and traps, and the diminutive bird isn't exactly a powerhouse. Fortunately, players have access to ten types of power-up items (like a short-distance teleporter or a bridgelayer), and it's only through good planning

and skillful use of these precious items that you'll survive. So far Toki Toki seems like an ideal GBC game—simple, challenging and totally addictive. **GR**



## SIMPSONS: TREEHOUSE OF HORROR

dev: software creations • pub: thq • avail: spring  
reviewed by c. hoffman

Homer, Bart, Lisa and the rest of The Simpsons crew are returning to Game Boy in the near future in The Simpsons: Night of the Living Treehouse of Horror from THQ. In this all-new action game, spooky stories have come to life, and it's up to TV's favorite dysfunctional cartoon family to end the nightmares. Like many of the Simpsons games of the past, variety is the key here. One level is a top-down shooter, as Marge runs through Springfield destroying zombies, while another casts you as Maggie, who has been turned into a fly and buzzes around trying to find a cure. Most of the levels are side-

scrolling and involve a mix of platforming and exploration, including Bart's night in a haunted house and a stage where a Futurama-style robo-Homer is trying to find his real body. Seven stages await in all. **GR**



# WONDERSWAN | COLOR



**Size:** 74.3x128x24.3 (with AAA battery); 74.3x128x17.5 (with WS rechargeable battery)  
**Weight:** 95g  
**Battery Life:** 20 hours  
**Screen:** 224x144 FSTN  
**Colors:** 241 out of 4096  
**CPU:** 3.072Mhz 16bit  
**RAM:** VRAM/WRAM: 512Kbit  
**Communication function:** 9600bps/38.4kbps  
**Graphics:** 128 sprites per screen; 32 horizontal sprites per screen  
**Sound:** Four-channel Digital

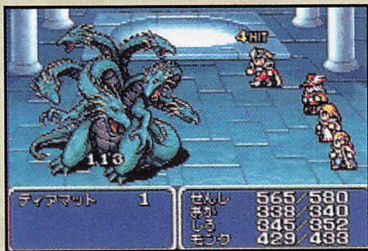
► **Price:** 6,800 yen

The WonderSwan Color sold 300,000 units when it launched in Japan on Dec. 9, 2000, and for a good reason - this most portable of portables is a nice system. Though not drastically different from the black-and-white model, we're pleased to say that its 16-bit CPU and 4,096-color palette are being put to good use, with sprites that have far more colors than anything on Game Boy Color or Neo Pocket. The online compatibility, dual screen-orientation and diminutive size have also been retained. Unfortunately, the screen is hard to see without a lot of light, and the buttons can be hard to use for players with large hands, but the software makes up for it. Hopefully it will come out in the U.S.

## FINAL FANTASY

dev/pub: squaresoft

It's the game that started it all, better than ever on WonderSwan Color. Gameplay is simple compared to more recent Final Fantasy games, but it's still good. The upgraded graphics are awesome, plus there's remixed music and some added user-friendly features. It's a piece of gaming history. This is reason enough to pray that the WonderSwan comes to the U.S. **A-**



## GUILTY GEAR PETIT

dev: arc system works • pub: sammy

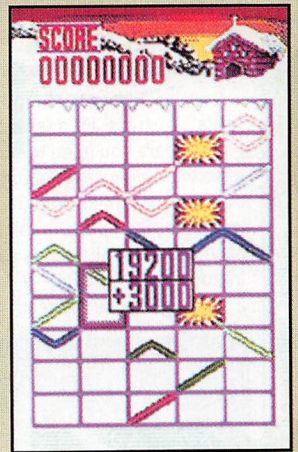
As far as handheld fighters go, Guilty Gear Petit is pretty darn nice. The sprites are the best I've seen in a portable fighter, and the animation and backgrounds are excellent. Eight core characters are here, as are the air combos. There are a few faults—virtually no sound effects, slow gameplay, and funky D-pad action—but it's a solid fighter anyway. **B**



## GUNPEY EX

dev/pub: bandai

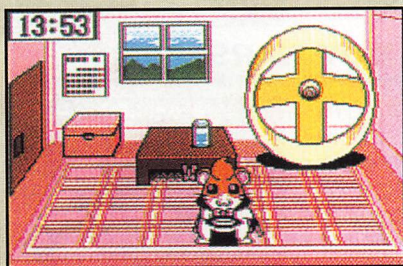
Gunpey EX is the latest version of an incredibly addictive puzzle game. The goal is to clear pieces by making the oddly bent lines stretch across the width of the screen. It gets amazingly frantic, and the combo possibilities are vast. This version looks great on WonderSwan, and it has all the necessary modes: normal stages, endless, puzzle, and time attack. **B+**



## HAMSTERS EVERYWHERE 3

dev/pub: interbec

Hamsters Everywhere 3 is one of those virtual pet simulators that's just plain weird. It lets you play with and care for your very own sickeningly cute hamster, and you can take it for walks at various locations where it makes friends with other hamsters. You can even have the hamster tell your fortune and predict your love life. If you like this sort of thing, it's great. **??**



## DIGIMON ZERO TWO

dev/pub: bandai

Not surprisingly, Bandai's answer to Pokémon has come to WonderSwan Color. By now, you know the scoop: get a bunch of monsters, build up their strength, then fight evil bosses and other trainers in tournament combat. The graphics are far superior to anything Pokémon has presented yet, and it's an all-around decent RPG...if you don't mind it being in Japanese. **B-**



## RHYME RIDER KERORIKAN

dev/pub: bandai

This completely unique title combines side-scrolling action with the music and rhythm genre, resulting in a game that looks good, sounds good, and is fun to play. The prerendered visuals are great, as is the digitized music, but the action, which requires hitting the correct buttons to overcome each particular enemy, is a bit shallow. **B**



# gba: the countdown begins

## IRIDION 3-D

by majesco

Combining the best of traditional shooters with Nintendo's new hardware, Majesco's Iridion 3-D promises to be an action-packed extravaganza. As players navigate seven levels on their mission to stop the evil Iridion Empire, they'll encounter tons of power-ups, huge bosses, and stages set on Earth and in outer space.



## FORTRESS

by majesco

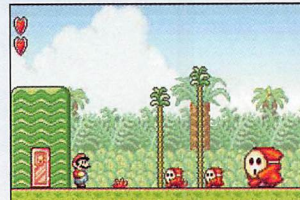
One part Rampart and one part Tetris, Fortress is a strategic battle game where you need to build up your base with falling blocks and then take out your enemies with a variety of weapons. Four players can even battle each other simultaneously, each playing on their own GBA—but using only a single game cartridge!



## MARIO ADVANCE

by nintendo

It's the classic Super Mario 2, only with new enemies, new items, enhanced graphics, and a four-player versus mode!



## F-ZERO

by nintendo

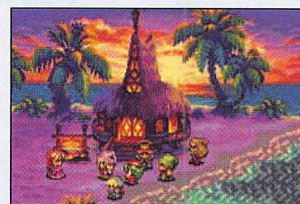
F-Zero is back, but this is no reissue. Set 25 years after the original, this has all-new tracks, all-new vehicles, and four-player play.



## MAGICAL VACATION

by nintendo

This RPG is about a group of magic school students who flee to a parallel world, but who cares about the story when the game looks this utterly fantastic?



## TACTICS OGRE

by nintendo

What's better than being able to take the awesome strategy of Ogre Battle anywhere? The fact that the visuals in this game surpass the PlayStation version.



## MARIO KART

by nintendo

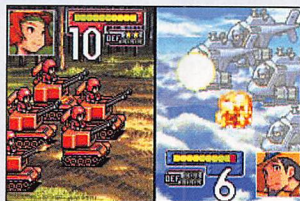
We've seen this one before, but these new shots look so good we had to feature it again. The eight favorite characters from Mario Kart 64 are playable.



## GAME BOY WARS

by nintendo

Game Boy Wars Advance (tentative name) is an all-new strategic war simulation. Expect a variety of battle units and great graphics.



These are the official Game Boy Advance case colors for the March 21 Japanese release of this mega portable. Expect the same for the U.S. debut this summer.

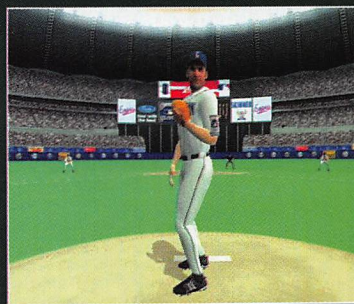
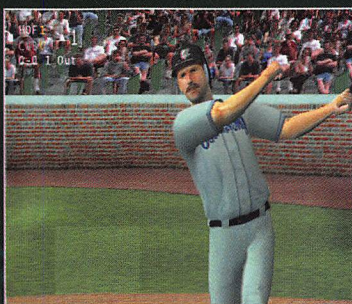
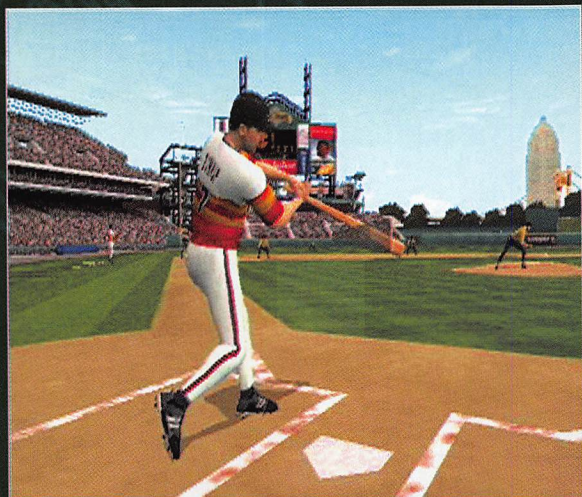


Acclaim Sports' first PlayStation 2 release will be All-Star Baseball 2002. The franchise is part of the trio, along with NFL Quarterback Club and Turok, of the company's bread-and-butter titles. Recently, Acclaim invited members of the press to their highly regarded and accomplished Acclaim Studios Austin (formerly Iguana Studios) to spend some time with a 90-percent complete version of the game.

When All-Star Baseball first hit the Nintendo 64, it stunned the industry and became a hot seller due, in large part, to its previously unseen level of character modeling. The graphics not only complemented but outshone the great gameplay included in the franchise.

But it is a new millennium and Acclaim is rolling out its coveted title with an entirely new engine built from scratch by a team of programmers and artists who actually are fans of the sport and know which main and ancillary features need to be included to make it great—how to successfully combine the simulation, statistics-laden aspects of the sport with the arcade fun and friendliness.

Although quite good, the graphics didn't really have the "Wow!" factor that the first N64 offering had. Maybe it's because we're expecting so much more now. And, although the game did have some gameplay issues—timing and control in the field—that Acclaim said will be addressed and fixed for final release (the game has just gone into Beta testing), the product was fun to play. The unique 3D batting interface returns to the series, where you can angle the bat icon to poke the ball into a certain part of the field,



giving you more control of the placement of the hits. Also returning (okay, so the engine isn't quite entirely new) is the Future Throw Technology feature that allows you to pre-select the base to throw to before the ball is even fielded. This adds to the gameplay as well as to the graphics, as it enables smooth catch-and-throw animation transitions.

Graphically, the new ASB engine includes highly detailed ballparks (30,000 polygons each) and players (5,000 polygons each and 1,500 total animations) and little touches like actual activity in the bullpens, television-style camera angles, and real-time sky transformations from day to dusk to night. And on the audio side, Acclaim hopes to re-create the sounds of the ballpark experience with an aural library of 13,000 different clips: commentary, play-by-play, crowd noises (100 unique clips alone).

We truly hope that the final version of the game is as good as the game's coverboy Derek Jeter (four-time World Series Champion and the only player ever to win both the WS MVP and All-Star Game MVP in a single season). **GR**

**gamers' republic sports**  
**ALL-STAR BASEBALL '02**

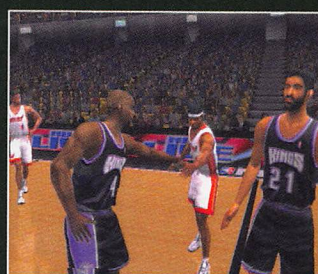
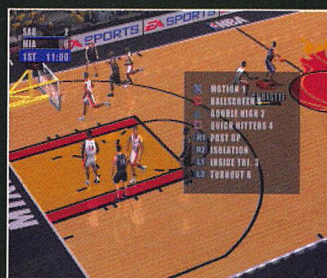
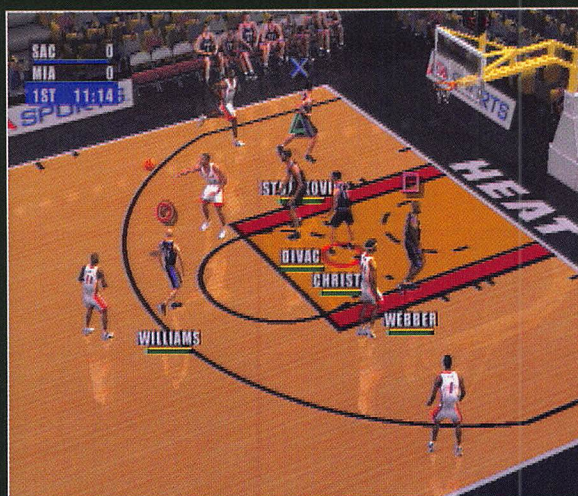
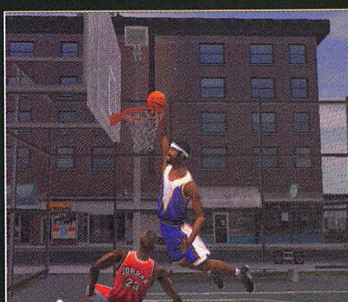
by: m. puccini  
 dev: acclaim austin  
 pub: acclaim  
 available: spring

Acclaim and their Austin Studio wowed us with their ASB N64 debut. Will they be able to do the same with the series' arrival on the PS2?

NBA Live enthusiasts have been waiting for this game since the PS2 was announced and they will not be disappointed. Not only is the game an eye-popping, fast-paced, thrilling multiplayer experience, but it also offers an enjoyable solo outing. In addition to a solid (albeit not perfect) five-on-five AI opponent, there is an excellent experience with the One-On-One mode. I took Wilt Chamberlain one-on-one versus Michael Jordan on the schoolyard court, with plenty of ambient street sounds and trash talking surrounding the duel, and showed His Airness how it was done really, really old-school style.

Being at the forefront of the sports video-game industry, EA is constantly expected to be able to utilize the hardware and with the PS2 they have crafted excellent polygonal players. But one of the areas where they will be able to improve the game in the future is with the actual face mapping of the players, and the hairdos. The

faces aren't exactly spitting images of the real pros, but rather close facsimiles or in some cases not close at all. And with a lot of the players, they look like they have the same barber as Moe Howard from the Three Stooges. On the flip side, the animations are plentiful



and there are cool moves everywhere, like behind-the-back passes and offensive tip-ins and slams off of rebounds.

There is also a good variety of smooth, clean cutscenes: the home team introduction fanfare, players giving high-fives and hand pounds to each other after sinking free throws, activity on the bench at the end of quarters, players complaining as they walk to the bench after having committed fouls, lots of dunking (dunks like the roundhouse one-handed slam make you stop and test out the instant replay features) and, although it is too short, players walking off the court and into the locker room after the game is over.

The gameplay is the same outstanding Live stuff we've come to love. In addition to the icon passing and probably the best free throw mechanism in the industry, there is a nice laundry list of gameplay aspects that make Live simply a tough game to stop playing. I love the defensive blockout stance ability: when being initiated, when the ball is shot, your guy will automatically turn to face the hoop for the rebound. A quick press of the Select button enables a pick on offense and a double team on defense and a prolonged press brings up a menu with eight different set plays. A dual meter - showing turbo and stamina levels - is a great addition to the engine. And, unlike some hoops games, the ball will actually be stolen by the CPU defense in traffic.

Live could use some help in the AI department. It's kind of schizophrenic: sometimes it's so good it pulls surprise alley-oops or I get faked out of my Nike high tops in the low post or, late in the game, it'll switch its defense to full-court press when trailing; on the other hand, loose balls aren't recovered like they should be, the CPU players don't drive the open lane when they should and they don't take the buzzer beater shots when they should.

But, in the end, Live thoroughly pleases and comes highly recommended. **GR**



gamers' republic sports

PS2

## NBA LIVE 2001

by: m. puccini  
dev: ea sports  
pub: ea  
available: now

NBA Live 2001 will unquestionably please fans of the series with a combination of classic gameplay and PS2 gloss.

**B+**



Midway's NBA Jam/NBA Hang-time/NBA on NBC Showtime series were never known for their graphical prowess. Where these games excelled were in the cut-and-dry, hardcore, exciting, frenetic, quick-action, cartoony, arcade-basketball

gameplay. The latest member of the family is NBA Hoopz, and the series has moved from the two-on-two action in favor of three-on-three duels. Gameplay has remained much the same, but now it's somewhat varied and strategic, as well as more multiplayer-friendly.

Hoopz is coming out on PS2, Dreamcast and PS, but we only received playable versions of the latter two and figure that the PS2 game will include all that the Dreamcast version has to offer, but with enhanced graphics.

In addition to the obvious graphical upgrade, the main difference between the PS and DC versions is that the PS version does not include the mini-games, which is too bad because they are quite entertaining. On the flip side, as a multiplayer experience, the PS version offers up competition for six players while the DC only offers gaming for four. That's really the only advantage of the PS version, which, quite frankly, has a lot to overcome in a short amount of time before its release. In addition to shoddy graphics, the PS version suffers from nasty slowdown when too much is happening on the court—sometimes to the point that the game actually freezes up. Hopefully this will be taken care of in the final ver-

sion...but I doubt it.

The DC court and player model graphics are decent (the same kind we saw last year in Showtime) and the facial maps of the players are better than I had expected. For the first time in the series, there is the ability to view replays—even though it is an archaic replay engine with only one camera angle that moves in slow motion. The only graphic mishap so far is that there are some serious collision detection issues in the automatic cutscenes, but nothing the great gameplay can't overcome.

Another first for the series is the addition of a variety of mini-games: 2 Ball, 21, Around the World, Practice, and 3 Point Shootout. The first three games have never been seen before and are quite fun, even though they're based on the accuracy and quick timing of free-throw meters. And you need to be really quick because if you take too long, they automatically stop for you, nowhere near the basket.

Playing solo, in the straight three-on-three competitions, you can select which of the three positions you want to control (guard, forward or center), but it doesn't matter because after you pass to the CPU-controlled players, you switch to complete control of that player. A new gameplay feature is the addition of the Hoopz button which initiates give-and-go and alley-oop passes from teammates.

I'm definitely looking forward to getting my hands on the reviewable DC version as well as the PS2 version. **GR**



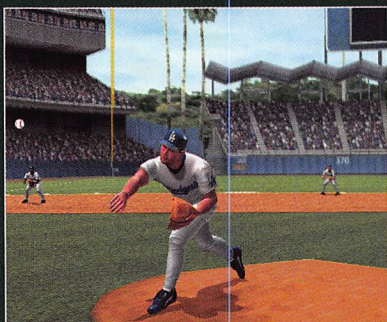
gamers' republic sports



**NBA HOOPZ**

by: m. puccini  
dev: eurocom  
pub: midway  
available: spring

Out of nowhere, these Hoopz preview copies ended up on my desk and it was a 50-50 affair, as the Dreamcast version was a pleasure to play and the PS version was not.



Baseball season is just around the corner and that means that EA is getting set to deliver Triple Play 2002 for both PlayStation and PS2. We received a playable preview copy of the PS game, but just screens of the PS2 game.

As expected for the PS2 version, the graphics will be the most notable difference. The player models will now have various shapes and sizes for the bodies and heads, and EA says that 150 of the most famous MLB players will have facial textures as close to the real thing as possible. Creating a more realistic ballpark experience is the addition of cinematic out-of-play sequences like umpire arguments and end-of-game celebrations.

In addition to the graphic overhaul of the game, there will be two new cameras—Fielding and Pitcher/Batter—and depth of field effects that will show more precise gameplay angles. A new pitcher/batter interface will be adopted and the fielding controls will be updated and more responsive with the use of the analog controller.

EA says that this will be the last iteration of the series on the PS, which is good, because the game seems to be identical to last year's game in nearly every sense, except that the Defensive POV camera-angle option has been removed and, of course, there's the addition of the new rosters and ballparks. This year's game will include the ability to play in a World Tournament, accessible after winning the World Series, where you will be able to play against all-star teams that include players from around the world. Once defeated, these new teams will be made available for regular season play. **GR**



1101001 gamers' republic sports

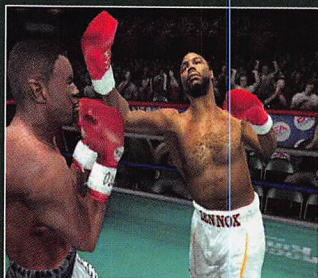


## TRIPLE PLAY 2002

by: m. puccini  
dev: treyarch  
pub: ea  
available: spring

It's baseball time once again and EA's set to release the final TP game for the PS, as well as overhauling the game engine for its debut on the PS2.

You, like me, probably had high hopes for this introduction to the PS2. I mean why not, look how superior SSX and Madden



are. They provide perfect examples of how a sports game can excite and generate tension, further pushing you to peak achievement. Alas, KO Kings provides nothing more than a temporary fix. It's riddled with random animation loops, none of which are exclusive to a particular boxer, pulling any sort of authenticity away from the package. AI is strong, but shoddy collision detect turns the game into a 12 round hen peck. The game is about as middle of the road as you will want to see on the PS2. **GR**



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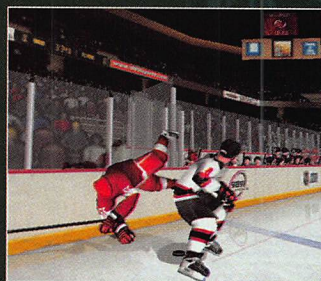
## KNOCKOUT KINGS '01

by: t. stratton  
dev: black ops ent.  
pub: ea  
available: now

It's too bad there weren't any visual bells and whistles to rope in spectators. Though music tracks from Del and Heiro provide great atmosphere. Maybe next year will be better.



We still haven't received a playable version of the latest in this respectable hockey series, but here's what Sony is touting will be in NHL FaceOff 2001 for the PS2. The power of the PlayStation 2 will deliver many new subtle animations and a variety of penalty animations including hooking, slashing, high sticking and elbowing. Player models have poly counts running more than five times the amount of the PlayStation version. Also an exclusive feature in the PlayStation 2 version of NHL FaceOff 2001 is the presence of 13 retired NHL legends including "Mr. Hockey" Gordie Howe, Bobby Orr, Phil Esposito and Marcel Dionne. Gamers can play as or against these retired legends in an exhibition game. The retired players, however, cannot be entered in the draft and placed on other teams. Everything sounds good to me, now let me play it! **GR**



1101001 gamers' republic sports



## NHL FACEOFF 2001

by: t. stratton  
dev: 989  
pub: scea  
available: now

So far 989 has shown nothing out of the ordinary in their sports lineup. Maybe NHL will break them out onto the PS2.

Is it too much to expect great, first-generation games from the software arm of the company who manufactures the hardware? Nintendo does it. Sega does...er...um did it. Why can't Sony? NCAA GameBreaker 2001 looks like a super-charged PSX game, replete with poor collision detection, animation popping and bland, uninspired graphics. It just seems completely rushed.

I had no problems with the gameplay but it's just hard to focus on it when you're constantly looking for graphical mishaps: why are the sideline benches empty during the game yet there's a cutscene of the coach on the sideline?

On the plus side, when the referee is making a call, there is a close-up of his face and his mouth articulates the words perfectly. And there is a cool video box in the center of the play selection menu that shows the huddles while you're selecting the play. And, of course, Keith Jackson's play calling and witticisms are engaging as always.



But with the PS2 Madden game making new friends on a daily basis, competitors' games need to be better, not worse. **GR**

101001 gamers' republic sports

## NCAA GAME BREAKER

by: m. puccini  
dev: red zone int.  
pub: 989  
available: now

Do you get the feeling that the coach in the picture above wishes he too were with all of his players...wherever they are?

**D+**



From the looks and sounds of it, Rumble Racing appears to be a cross between Twisted Metal and Hot Wheels Turbo Racing (a somewhat sequel to NASCAR Rumble). It's interesting to note that the press materials kept touting the fact that the boot-up wait

time is practically nil.

Rumble Racing offers 35 muscle, vintage and sports cars that are lightning fast and have not only the ability to perform airborne stunts but can also set-off a variety of power-ups with names like Twister, Big Hit, Shockwave, and Bad Gas.

Only available for two players as a multiplayer experience, there are 15 tracks to battle on, including three stunt tracks. There will be four modes of play including Stunt Challenge where you'll be able to pull phat mid-air barrel rolls and loop-the-loops complete with cool graphical effects. Other touches in the game include multi-car crashes, moving motor parts and super fast load times (sorry, they kind of got to me). **GR**

101001 gamers' republic sports

## RUMBLE RACING

by: m. puccini  
dev: ea  
pub: ea  
available: summer

EA's PS2 onslaught continues with a new racing game; actually it could be considered the spawn of NASCAR Rumble or of a Twisted Metal/Hot Wheels Turbo marriage.



I think the reason why Sony didn't send out preview copies of NCAA Final Four 2001 is because they knew that the game wasn't going to be well received. It's sad to say, but I must admit that the thing I liked best about the game is the smiling, midriff-bearing

cheerleaders dancing during the time outs. It's surprising that a first-party title is so poorly executed.

There are so many rough spots that it just isn't very fun to play. Most obvious is the shoddy collision detection, with players and referees completely walking through other players. Stiff character animations and poor AI round out the problems. After the opponent scored, every time I brought the ball inbounds all I had to do was turbo down the side and then cut to the basket to score...every time. Also about the AI, half of the time spent playing the game is at the foul line. Not very fun stuff. This doesn't bode well for NBA ShootOut as it runs on the same engine—which we also haven't seen yet. **GR**

101001 gamers' republic sports

## FINAL FOUR 2001

by: m. puccini  
dev: killer game  
pub: 989 sports  
available: now

It's not that Final Four 2001 for PS2 is a tremendously bad outing, it's just that we should expect more from Sony's 989 Sports.

**C-**

I was unexpectedly overjoyed while playing Tiger Woods for PlayStation 2, having just last month trudged through the poor PS version. First and foremost, the gentleman's sport has never looked so brilliant on a home console and there is visual flair throughout the courses. The courses themselves are strikingly beautiful, and the player models are solid.

The camera seems to move about the game effortlessly and while on the green, with a touch of a button, not only do the slopes and curvature of the green reveal themselves, but the camera can move effortlessly, completely around the golfer and the hole in a manner I've never seen before.

There are a lot of great touches in the game, my favorite being the whisper of the play-by-play commentator and the real-time wind indicator. Also, each club has several different strengths in order to use it more effectively.

I had initially thought that trading in the three-button-press swing mechanism for a joystick-based one would be troublesome, but found it to be quite friendly.

Once again, EA looks like they have a winner on their hands. **GR**



101001 gamers' republic sports

## T. WOODS PGA TOUR

by: m. puccini  
dev: ea sports  
pub: ea  
available: spring

Considering the condition of Tiger Woods on the PSX, this game is outstanding and will be a benchmark for future links offerings to follow.

# WORLD REPUBLIC

**[i]** Welcome to another exciting edition of World Republic. This month you've got 2D fighting mayhem in *Guilty Gear X*; it's a trip just to look at. Konami returns to the strange and wonderful universe of *Goemon*, with a 3D adventure that had better be coming out in the States, and soon. And Namco has crafted a work of art in *Seven*, a hand-drawn wonder.

IMPORT GAME REVIEWS FOR  
THE NEW MILLENNIUM

WORLD REPUBLIC  
DATABASE

## WORLD REPUBLIC TOP TWENTY

\* BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH DECEMBER 11 TO JANUARY 21

- |                                   |     |                                |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. POCKET MONSTER CRYSTAL VERSION | GB  | 11. PHANTASY STAR ONLINE       | DC  |
| 2. PACHISLOT ARUZE KINGDOM 4      | PS  | 12. FINAL FANTASY WS           | WS  |
| 3. MARIO PARTY 3                  | N64 | 13. KINNIKUBANUKE              | PS  |
| 4. YUGIO 4                        | GB  | 14. SOCCER TEAM TSUKURO        | DC  |
| 5. POKÉMON GOLD AND SILVER        | N64 | 15. SPACE VINUS MORNING MUSUME | PS2 |
| 6. THE BOUNCER                    | PS2 | 16. TALES OF ETERNIA           | PS  |
| 7. GUNDAM                         | PS2 | 17. POWERFUL BASEBALL          | PS  |
| 8. DRAGON QUEST III GB            | GB  | 18. BANJO AND KAZOOIE 2        | N64 |
| 9. HAJIME NO IPPO                 | PS2 | 19. CUSTOM ROBOT V2            | N64 |
| 10. CRASH BANDICOOT CARNIVAL      | PS  | 20. MARIO TENNIS 64            | N64 |

## WORLD REPUBLIC FRONTLINES

### GAME BOY ADVANCE CELL PHONE ADAPTER

As if the Game Boy and Game Boy Advance weren't appealing enough, Nintendo and KDDI decided to release a device called Mobil Adapter GB on January 27.

The adapter enables users to connect their GB to cellular phones, then go online, download and play games, and send or receive e-mails. The fee is about \$3 for the monthly connection fee, with a seven-cents-per-minute charge for online usage. On top

of that, you have to pay for each game title you download. Maybe too much for kids?

So far, Pocket Monster Crystal, Golf Land, Game Boy Wars, and two GB Advance titles such as Mario Kart Advance are scheduled to be released for Mobile GB use. The price of the adapter is about \$50 and is sold at 2,800 KDDI group retailers throughout Japan.

### Bandai, Banpresto, and Capcom Cooperate to Release a Whole New Gundam

Bandai, Banpresto, and Capcom announced that they will be working together to create joint console and arcade Gundam projects. Under the agreement, Capcom will take over development of Bandai's console titles and Banpresto's arcade title. The first title, Gundam vs. Zion for Naomi board, is scheduled to be released in arcades this March, followed by a DC version. This two-on-two battle game is most likely based on the Power

Stone engine, so the game is expected to look great and be super smooth with no slow down. The game includes the entire line of mobile suits, plus the song and BGM from the anime. Bandai and Capcom are in talks with regards to the development of games for PS2.

### NTT Docomo and SCE Agree to Start Network Service

Sony Computer Entertainment is teaming with NTT Docomo and six other overseas cell-phone giants (AT&T Wireless, Hutchison Telephone Company Limited, Hutchison 3G UK Limited, KG Telecommunications Co., Ltd, KPN Mobile N.Y., Telecom Italia Mobile) to engage in developing a new service using the PlayStation and cellular phones. Both NTT Docomo and SCE

would provide technology and know-how of the PS and iMode (a cellular phone format used in Japan) to affiliates and plan to develop applications and services for Asia, Europe, and North America. If everything goes according to plan, cell phones are going to lead to an entirely new level of gaming interactivity.





# GUILTY GEAR X

World Republic Review • dev. arc system works • publisher sammy • available in japan

Much hyped and gorgeous to look at, Guilty Gear X was supposed to be the Street Fighter beater to put both Capcom and SNK to shame. No worries there. Had it a play depth to match its cocky visual assurances, then Guilty Gear X, only the second game from maverick developers Arc System Works, would walk away with a smile and sexy swagger. After weeks of play, however, plain truth admits that this baby "don't got depth, ain't seen depth, and don't want depth." Fans of gorgeous hand-drawn anime may find the game's hip character designs, acidic soundtrack, and Neo-Japanese influence pure satisfaction. But for the rest of us — those mellowing out from GGX's hallucinogenic color assault—it's the damned play that leaves us wanting.

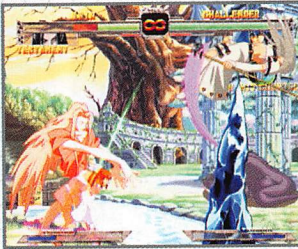
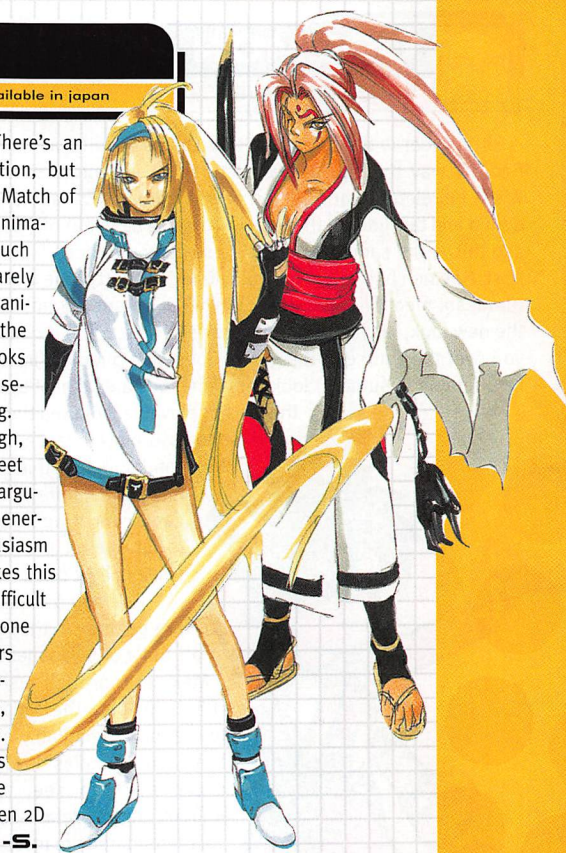
Guilty Gear X is, at every point, a button-masher. Sure, Arc's added parries and Street Fighter-esque air recoveries, but who needs them? Anyone familiar with Capcom control can pound on any selection of buttons and be rewarded with short attacks that launch so quickly, so fiercely, that the inevitable combos look as if they were planned from the start. Matches, even between skilled players, degrade into airborne parades of fireballs and air-dashes. Get in deep, punish with a super move, then stab at the wound with a flurry of short assaults. Find a character with a decent amount of range and power (Milia, anyone?) and cheese your way into a win every time.

Graphically, while these fighters are extraordinarily well drawn (utilizing the game's unique shading techniques), you barely get time to appreciate them. Amidst the cacophony of throwaway explosions, smoke trails, and random light blasts, the game is too busy, seems too

chaotic for its own good. There's an impressive display of animation, but unlike, say, Capcom vs. SNK: Match of the Millennium, none of these animation extras are used with much thought. Backgrounds rarely enhance the scenes, character animations do little in setting the mood. The resulting mess looks great at first glance, but subsequent play takes a bit of rousing.

Despite these flaws, though, GGX is second only to the Street Fighter III series as the biggest argument for 2D gaming. There's an energy about the game, an enthusiasm about the characters, that makes this terribly addictive experience difficult to capture in 3D. As a sequel to one of the most underrated fighters on the original PS, the new characters are fantastic additions, and the old ones welcome faces. If every 2D game looked this good—and yes, the visuals are the game's biggest appeal—then 2D would surely be thriving. **-S.**

AKINNUSO



World Republic says "If every 2D game looked this good, hand-drawn art would still be thriving."

**B+**



## GOEMON

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher konami • available in japan now

Bittersweet is the only word that comes to mind as I struggle to find my way through the latest Goemon adventure out of Japan. While I'm elated that Goemon is making his PS2 debut, I am saddened and bewildered that his U.S. bid has been put on hold. It's not like this is the same quirky Japanese game it's been labeled in the past. Goemon has grown up, going from a squatty little made-up tike to a lean, mean, fighting teen. While I'm personally not wild about the new look, his famous blue 'do is still intact, and it does grow on you over the course of the game. Goemon's buddies (including the insufferable Ibisumaru) look the same, but unlike past adventures, they're not playable. I figured the new look

was to assure acceptance here in the West, and still do. I think that ultimately Konami will bring the game over. It would be foolish to let such a promising PS2 game collect dust.

Goemon's latest adventure begins, as they all do, in an old-world Japanese village. Making thorough use of the PS2's power, the villages and towns look remarkably authentic. Dojos and temples stretch as far as the eye can see, and they embody graphic detail second only to prerendered images, showing no loss of integrity from a distance. This alone is a stunning achievement, and gets the adventure off to a rousing start. I'm happy to say that the action, which all takes place at 60 frames per second, is on par with the visuals, especially if you like to think. Goemon has a sidekick this time

out, a cute lil' tiger cub named Kotora that he saves at the onset of the game. In the absence of Goemon's buddies, Kotora plays an integral role: Goemon can send him on attacks or into tight spots by using a targeting button. Goemon has new abilities, too, including environmental magic, grappling, and wall flipping, and wields a much greater assortment of weapons compared to previous games where he brandished only a range of pipes and coins.

The emphasis of the gameplay is two-fold, split between character interaction while exploring the game's many impressive regions for clues and, once in the levels themselves, wall-to-wall puzzle solving, platforming, and fighting. It's similar to, but creatively better than, what you might find in games like Tomb Raider or Soul Reaver. There are also, of course, plenty of those great old-school boss encounters the series is famous for, although Konami has left the giant robot battles out this time around. The rest of the enemies in the game can only be described as peculiar: bizarre creatures and ancient armored warriors swarm you in the massive fields that separate the regions.

Is the game worth playing in Japanese? Well, unless you can dig up a walk-through or find a Japanese strategy guide, probably not. There's a lot, no, make that a ton of interaction and vital clues needed to help guide you. The game is massive, so without direction you end up wandering aimlessly for hours until you stumble upon the next event. No, if you want to play Goemon for PS2, the best thing to do would be to dial up Konami on the web and let them know. Behind the new Metal Gear and Zone of the Enders, this is the best they've got, so a little push may go a long way.

-D. HALVERSON





## TRUCK KYOSOUKYOKU

World Republic Review • developer/publisher metro • available in japan now

Sometimes, the Japanese display such an overt sense of oddity, you wonder about their reputation for being a relatively drug-free population. Take Truck Kyosoukyoku (literally, Crazy Truck Song) for PS2, a hilariously tripped out and fun item-collection/racing game. Not only do you get to drive around in strangely decorated rigs (pink leopard print interior, anyone?), but you

do so to traditional enkas, the sort of horn-heavy, easy-listening ballads heard cooing from Karaoke bars all over Japan.

Truck's gameplay is equally all over the place. One moment, you'll be racing around a circuit trying to collect floating tuna fish, and all of the sudden, you'll be transported to some other dark dimension where you have to bash a rival truck into submission. And then there are the seriously twisted loading and incidental story scenes (most having something to do with a cat) which practically defy description.

Yes, the good money isn't on a U.S. release for Truck Kyosoukyoku. No matter. This sort of weirdness can only appeal to import shoppers.

**-M. HOBBS**



## LAST BLADE

WR Review • dev./pub. snk • avail. in japan now

If you're a Last Blade fan, then this port is for you. Essentially a port of Last Blade 2, Last Blade: Final Edition has all the characters from the coin-op, including Kaede, Lee and Akari, and it still has the same strategic weapons-based gameplay. What made Last Blade a cult favorite in arcades was that it was the first game to use a parry system, and of course, parrying remains an important part of play in this version. Between the vast number of special moves and this counter-heavy gameplay, Last Blade possesses a rare balance between offense and defense that gives the game a unique feel and makes for nail-biting matches. Unfortunately, the graphics haven't withstood the test of time very well. With the game's backgrounds that are heavily dithered and essentially monochrome, I feel like I'm playing the Neo Geo Pocket version of Last Blade. Additionally, the animation has lost some frames, and even some of the collision is questionable. Even with these nuances, Last Blade: Final Edition can be a

rewarding experience for old-school fighting fans. Be warned though: if you didn't like Last Blade before, this won't change your mind.

**-C. HOFFMAN**



World Republic says "An excellent balance of offense and defense makes this game fun despite some flaws. Fans of the series should love it."

**B-**



## COOL BOARDERS ALIEN

WR Review • dev/pub uep • avail. in japan now

To Cool Boarders Alien's credit, this game is absolutely, positively, not SSX. In fact, short of Konami's quiet ESPN X Snowboarding, released unwisely against the uber-cool SSX, CB: Alien is the most accurate attempt at free-range Snowboarding on the PS2. Players compete in intense—at least as sims go—trick-style and track-based iron man competitions, realism being paramount. While some may scoff at UEP's disregard for absurd grandstanding and vertiginous track design, CB Alien's greatest appeal—and most noticeable difference from SSX—is the lack of discernable track structure. Players chart their own courses without arrows, shortcuts, or land-markings. The trade-off for all of this freedom, of course, is a noticeable absence of racing frills. Often, the excitement spawns from managing your boarder's body aerodynamics while navigating through realistically patterned, if not terribly impressive, terrain. Drop the head down and duck into the wind, and you'll gain precious speed and inches, while a good, but not great, physics engine responds with forgivable delay. In this vein, racing catharsis

comes as much from path exploration as any feat of rapid competition. For sim fans, CB Alien is likely heaven sent. For the wildly impulsive, however, import at your peril.

**-S. AHINNUSO**



World Republic says "So it's not SSX, but it's not trying to be. Pretty cool as a sim."

**B.**



## SEVEN: MORU MORSE'S CALVARY

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher namco • available in japan now

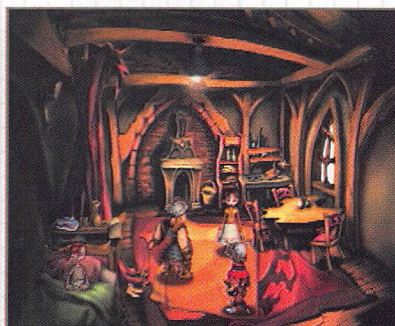
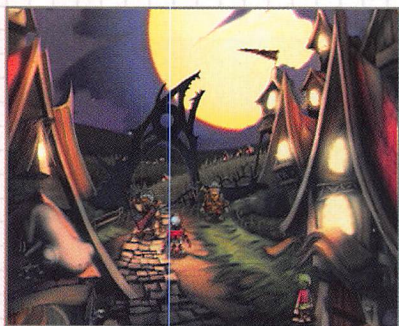
Quick, take a look at the screenshots for this game. Now, without peeking at the info bar, identify the developer. Unless you already knew the answer, I'd bet money that you didn't guess Namco. I certainly wouldn't have been able to tell.

What gives here? Not only does Seven: Moru Morse's Calvary not look like a Namco game, it doesn't even look Japanese, having a far more European visual sensibility about it. But there is a common thread here between this game and other Namco offerings: it is absolutely gorgeous. Completely hand drawn—a look I didn't expect to see much of on PS2—Seven is one of the most visually arresting RPGs I've ever seen. Thanks to the PS2's resolution, the amount of detail found on the finely drawn characters and backgrounds is unprecedented. This is the ultimate expression of what developers were trying to achieve on 16-bit systems. Slightly ironic, yes?

But beyond Seven's arresting characters and locations is an

even more resonant beauty during the game's dream-like story sequences, illustrated in still-form-like pages from a hallucinatory child's book, with a soothing female narrator completing the trance. More than anything, these scenes took me to a place I've never visited in a game before.

What a shame it is, then, to announce that as of this writing, Namco has no plans to release Seven in the States. Let's hope this changes, for even though experienced import players will have little trouble getting through the game and understanding the unique, strategy-oriented battle system, these visuals deserve a wider audience. **-M. HOBBS**



## FIGHTING VIPERS 2

WR Review • dev. am2 • pub. sega • avail. in japan now

I had some great times with Fighting Vipers on Saturn. The game's fast and fun gameplay and appealingly gaudy look were the perfect antithesis to the comparatively snooty and finely-pressed appearance of Virtua Fighter 2.

So with Fighting Vipers 2 on Dreamcast, I was hoping to relive some of that joy, only to have these hopes slightly dashed by an old-looking and sort of ugly port of an arcade sequel that didn't evolve the series hardly at all. Yes, the game is still fun and exciting in the same ridiculous sort of way, bashing opponents

against walls and knocking their armor off. But the backgrounds are flat and uninteresting, and the 3D models are even tackier than the first game and look like warmed-over Saturn graphics. Alright, so that's an exaggeration, but better work has been done on Dreamcast, by older games no less.

Fighting Vipers 2 feels like it's from a bygone era, and while this in itself is not a bad thing, the game just doesn't feel like it belongs in this time. 3D fighting has grown far more sophisticated than what's here.

**-M. HOBBS**



World Republic says "Fighting Vipers 2 is still a fast and fun 3D fighter, but it feels like a relic."

**C+**



## SUPER STREET FIGHTER II X

WR Review • dev./pub. capcom • avail. in japan now

One of the best fighting games of all time is now on Dreamcast: Super Street Fighter II X (Super SF2 Turbo in the U.S.). The main reason Capcom has reissued this true classic is that the lucky Japanese will be able to go head-to-head in online combat, but it's also the best, most complete, home version yet. Even seven years after the game's arcade release, SSF2X holds up incredibly well. The brilliant, precise, strategic fighting is loaded with moves and counter moves, and only by mastering timing and distance and learning how to use every single punch and kick will

you stand a chance. After only a few minutes of throwing sonic booms and hurricane kicks, I was reminded of all the fun intensity from years ago and why Street Fighter is the best fighting series out there. Visually, the game holds its own as well, especially the awesome introduction scene. The only fault is that the online features only work in Japan, and the single benefit over the PS and Saturn versions is virtually no load time, making the game only for the most hardcore Street Fighter fans or those who don't already have this game on another system. **-C. HOFFMAN**



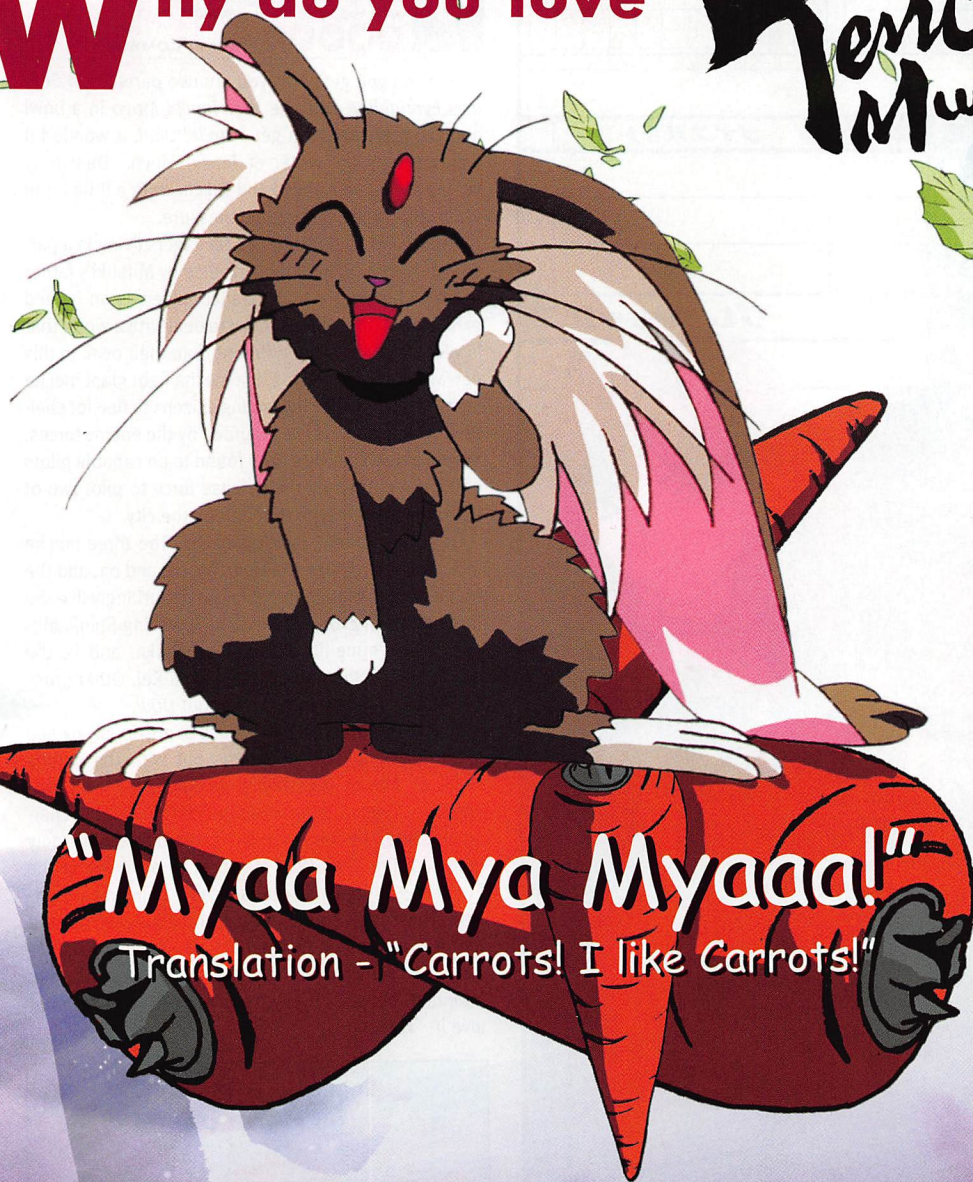
World Republic says "A great port of a great game. If you don't already have this classic on another system, this is requisite playing."

**B**

**W**hy do you love

**Tenchi Muyo!** ?

We asked a random sampling of people off the street...



**"Myaa Mya Myaaa!"**

Translation - "Carrots! I like Carrots!"



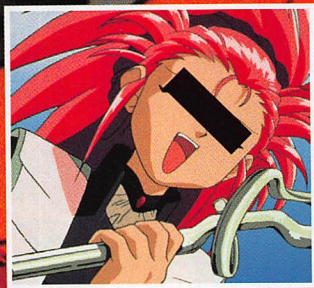
"The action and the space battles kick ... although that ugly Jurai princess is annoying!"



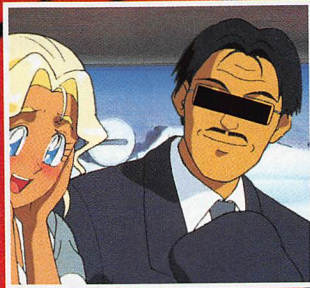
"The sophisticated humor is great! But the space pirate is very obnoxious."



I DON'T like Tenchi Muyo much. The bad guy always loses to some kid.



"I fancy the beautiful scientific genius and her wonderful toys."



"The WOMEN! er. I mean I like the cool merchandise such as T-shirts, trading cards, and action figures... what figures!"



"I love ramen noodles!"

Um... What's the question again?"

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1-800-421-1621 or see  
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**DUAL! VOL 1-2**

Pioneer Entertainment • DVD  
100 minutes • Bi-lingual  
reviewed by christina alexander



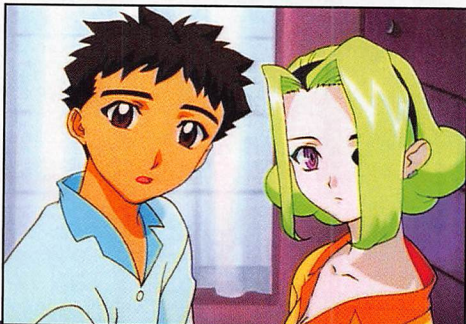
SCI-FI/COMEDY

What do you get when you put two parts *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and one part *Tenchi Muyo* in a bowl and stir it briskly? You get *Parallel Dual*, a wonderful creation from the writer of *Tenchi Muyo*. *Dual* truly seems to be a mix of *Eva* and *Tenchi*, with a little bit of *El Hazard* thrown in for good measure.

Kazuki and Mitsuki are two teenagers living in a parallel universe. Sent to this universe by Mitsuki's father to prove his theory that parallel universes do indeed exist, Kazuki and Mitsuki have to deal with a world that is very similar yet very different from their own. In this new world there is war. Giant mecha fight giant mecha in the streets of the city, forcing citizens to flee for shelter any time an attack is mounted by the enemy forces. Kazuki and Mitsuki are both found to be capable pilots and are recruited by the defense force to pilot two of the three giant mecha that defend the city.

Does this sound slightly familiar? The three mecha look disturbingly like *Eva* Units 00, 01, and 02, and the temperament of the three pilots is disturbingly like the three pilots in *Eva*. Kazuki is the unwilling Shinji, Mitsuki is the gung-ho and jealous Asuka, and D, the cyborg girl, is the unfeeling Ayanami Rei. Other gross similarities run rampant throughout *Dual*.

You'd think that this blatant use of previously owned material would be maddening, but with the writing skills of Masaki Kajishima, *Parallel Dual* isn't just another clone. The beautiful animation, likable characters, and the well-blended computer effects only help seal the deal. *Dual* manages to poke fun at the *Eva* series by stealing scenes without being mean spirited. The series contains an instant magnetism and that is quite unique to *Tenchi Muyo*. Anyone who has seen *Eva* will immediately enjoy the parallels (pun intended) between the two stories. You can't help but love it. **GR**



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# JUBEI-CHAN VOL. 4

Bandal Entertainment • DVD  
75 minutes • Bi-lingual  
reviewed by christina alexander



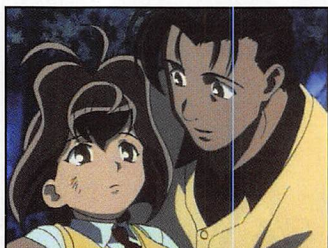
ACTION/DRAMA/COMEDY

Let's just say I was not enamored of *Jubei-chan* when I first saw it many months ago. I attribute that to the horrific dub that had to be endured. This is one of those anime where hearing the original Japanese voices is absolutely imperative. With that said, *Jubei-chan* also teeters on the edge of full-blown absurdity. However, it manages to walk that fine line between the strange and the disturbingly odd with much grace. In fact, the oddity is what makes *Jubei-chan* so enjoyable. From the "mon-

key" boys to Jubei's overly exuberant father, and on to the 300-year-old samurai Koinosuke (the man lives in a doghouse), odd is an understatement for *Jubei-chan*.

But, *Jubei-chan* starts to grow on you. The story just doesn't proceed to get more ridiculous. Instead, it gains depth and character development. There is a deep and caring relationship between Jubei and her father and this last volume of Jubei puts that relationship on the line.

Jubei's fight with the Ryojoji clan isn't over. Jubei must don the lovely eye patch one more time, but the consciousness of Yagyu Jubei, the old samurai lord, has taken over. Jubei is trapped inside her own body, and her father is just learning of the double life his daughter has led for so long. Sai Nanohana realizes that he might lose the thing he cares most about. This last volume of *Jubei-chan* takes what had been a mediocre anime and brings it to its full potential as must-own for any anime fan. **GR**



# SILENT MOBIUS VOL. 7

Bandal Entertainment • VHS  
150 minutes • English Subtitled  
reviewed by christina alexander



SCI-FI/ADVENTURE

I hate knowing that a favorite series is ending, but at least *Silent Mobius* ends with style. With a massive volume of six episodes, we find out what is going to happen to the AMP girls and the rest of the world. All I can do is hope Kia Asamiya will someday return to this story and start writing again.

With Katsumi having to face the tragedy of Robert Device's death, she simply disappears, leaving the rest of her teammates wondering how she is doing. Was this last gift from the Lucifer Hawks enough to sever the rest of her ties with humanity? Even with Katsumi missing, AMP has even worse problems to deal with. With no Lucifer Hawk sightings in six months, the threat to human-

ity is considered non-existent, and therefore the city has no more need of AMP.

Facing the order to disband, the girls finally find their lost sheep, Katsumi. No matter how happy Kiddy is to see her

lost teammate, she can't deny that deep down she, along with everyone else, is suspicious of Katsumi's allegiances. Maybe they haven't really found Katsumi after all.

*Silent Mobius* keeps up its superior brand of storytelling by using a character driven plot that almost forces one to care about the characters. This series is one of the best, and possibly the most overlooked. If you haven't seen it, then go get it. *Silent Mobius* will easily be one of the best anime you have ever seen. **GR**



サイレントモビウス

ANIME: REPUBLIC

アニメ

# What Would You Do With Three Gorgeous Marionettes?



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## GENERATOR GAWL VOL. 2

ADV Films • VHS  
75 minutes • English Dubbed  
reviewed by christina alexander



1/2 MYSTERY/THRILLER

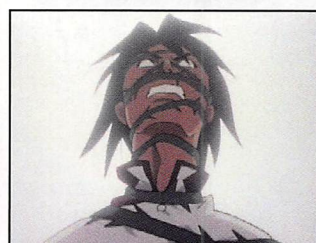
Gawl is a young man with what most people would refer to as an oddity. However, he has an excuse. He and his slightly more normal friends are from the future. On a mission akin to the one in the movie *Terminator*, Gawl must head off human science before it gets too smart for its own good. Unfortunately, there are other groups from the future willing to do anything to stop Gawl, including sending huge bio-mechanical creatures. Luckily, Gawl is what is called a Generator. The rest of us might call it a big scary monster. Gawl can call upon a massive transformation process that metamorphoses his body into a bio-mechanical creature roughly the size of a small building. With this ability Gawl can fight off the creatures that are sent to hunt and kill him. Humans are discovering how to alter their DNA, but tampering with DNA is trouble, and if things are allowed to continue, the future looks mighty bleak.

*Generator Gawl* has a great balance of levity and gravity.

The depth of the situation can easily be understood without letting the story sink into a depressing vortex. The animation is top notch, the characters are very likeable and ADV did an excellent job with the dubbing.

*Gawl* is arguably one of the best dubs made up to this point, and the best new series currently being released by ADV. It's a must own.

GR



## TRIGUN VOL. 5

Pioneer Entertainment • VHS  
75 minutes • English Subtitled  
reviewed by christina alexander



ACTION/ADVENTURE

One would think that with a \$60 billion price tag on one's head, life really couldn't get too much worse. However, in Vash's case, things can always get worse. He didn't earn the nickname "Humanoid Typhoon" by being careful with the good china. For Vash, things are taking an ugly turn for the worse. The more he strives for peace, the more warlike the world around him becomes. All of his opponents up to this point have not rated too high on the danger scale, but with a madman called Legato entering the scene, Vash realizes he might not survive this time. After discovering that Legato caused a huge massacre at a local bar, Vash decides that it's time to ditch Millie and Meryl for their own good.

Legato seems to have some sort of psychic power that allows him to control people's minds, and he has a ruthless gang called the Gung Ho Guns working for him. The Guns also seem to have some special abilities that range above simple gun prowess. Hellbent on helping Legato cleanse the world, the Guns are more than willing to kill anyone in their way.

By revealing a bit more about Vash's secrets, this volume of *Trigun* creates



more questions than it answers. Most viewers will finish this tape wondering, "What in the hell was that thing on Vash's arm?" If you haven't had the chance to see *Trigun* yet, make it a priority to check this series out. GR



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ANIME: REPUBLIC



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## GASARAKI VOL. 3

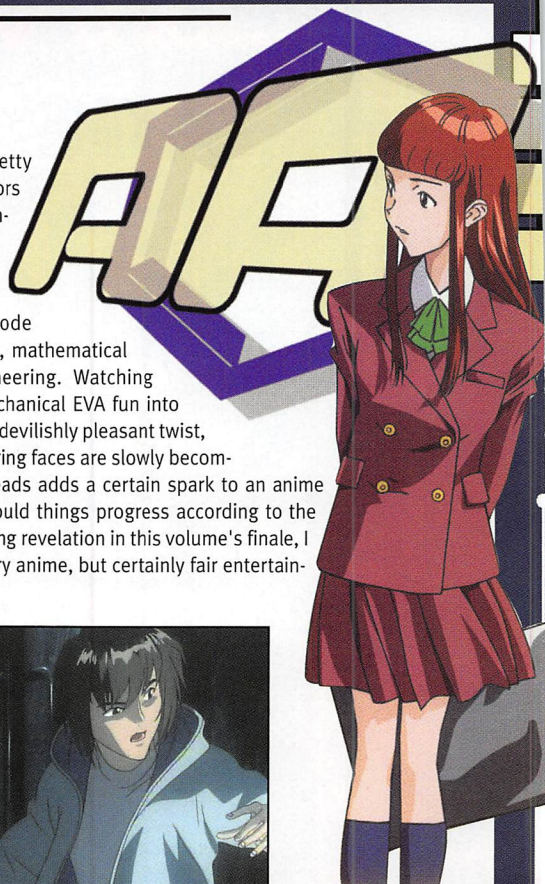
ADV Films • DVD  
75 minutes • Bi-lingual  
reviewed by shola akinnuso



ACTION/DRAMA

For what it's worth, this series has finally started picking up. As much as I ragged on other volumes of *Gasaraki*, I'm finally starting to appreciate, if only a little, why we were forced to go through all of those boring, tech-heavy episodes. All of the silly bits about gravity, Kabuki dancing, and the peculiarities of Captain Goah managed to make for something of a payoff in the latest episode. For starters, Goah's starting to inquire about his past; likewise, the story's beginning to make sense. In traditional anime fashion, there's all sorts of blithering about ancient hidden power and, of course, giant mecha. Watching the TA-Units in the earlier episodes systematically kick the butts of all opposition was little more than setup for how insignificant they are compared to the power of Captain Goah's secret arsenal, and the thick, nearly impenetrable atmosphere of shady governments and military manipulation seems trivial now that the series has taken a decidedly more metaphysical scope. Still, most of the characters are boring as hell, and the action, despite

recent sparks, is pretty generic stuff. The creators here play with a little Gundam science, careful that each of their mechanical units consistently function episode after episode by a strict, mathematical set of real-world engineering. Watching them spin a little biomechanical EVA fun into that measured world is a devilishly pleasant twist, and the fact that reoccurring faces are slowly becoming more than talking heads adds a certain spark to an anime rapidly losing luster. Should things progress according to the startling, rather frightening revelation in this volume's finale, I don't expect revolutionary anime, but certainly fair entertainment. **GR**



## AMAZING NURSE NANAKO VOL. 3

Pioneer Entertainment • DVD  
60 minutes • Bi-lingual  
reviewed by dave halverson



COMEDY/SCI-FI

After the last episode, it was anyone's guess where *Amazing Nurse Nanako* was going. Is she a weapon of some sort? An android? Or just an innocent girl caught up in a mad scientist's dementia? Either way, we knew one thing: she has obscenely large breasts. One scenario I'd never imagined was that somehow Nanako would be linked to the Resurrection... yeah, that one. But as episode five gets underway, that's exactly what we're meant to swallow. From bouncing boobs and fan service to a secret plot to clone the son of God? Okay, I'll bite, it is just anime after all. At the helm of the Vatican's little project to change history for-

ever is Dr. Ogami's oldest rival, the pudgy Griffith, a friend of his father dating back to when Nanako was hired on, and later, died, at Ogami General. Died you say? Nanako's a clone? Oh yeah: each Nanako has actually given birth to the next. And trust me, that's not the half of it.

Somehow amidst this sea of religious and military pandemonium (of course, the Pentagon and some alien DNA squeak in here) the final two episodes of *Amazing Nurse Nanako* manage to remain tongue in cheek. Among unspeakable sins and high drama, Nanako inflicts vomit-inducing curry on her adopted family (cooking on a camping stove where their home once stood), strips naked to lighten the load of a huge cargo plane at the Dr.'s request, and pretty much screws up the second coming...well, the sci-fi version of it anyway. The verdict? I need more! Discovering Dr. Ogami's interest in Nanako opened up a whole new set of questions that goes unanswered. She's definitely around for reasons beyond preparing his fish and radish. Will Nanako continue in outer space? And if it does will Nanako be able to see in zero gravity? We'll find out soon enough. I hope. **GR**



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# GUNDAM-W *Endless Waltz*

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## ARCADIA OF MY YOUTH



AnimElgo • VHS  
130 minutes • English Subtitled  
reviewed by shola akinnuso

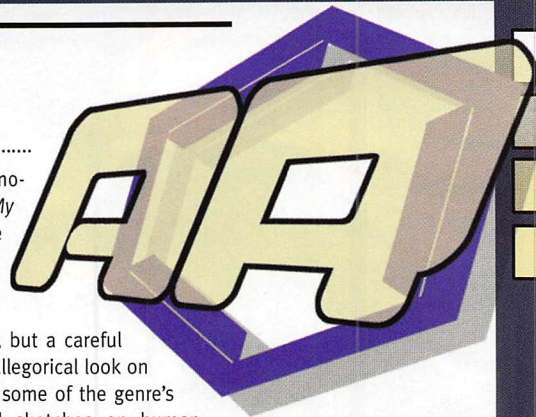


SCI-FI/DRAMA

I'm convinced that when Hiroshima was bombed, Leiji Matsumoto was so deeply traumatized by the experience that he began shifting a significant amount of his creative energies into both re-enacting it and trying to make sense of an obviously absurd moment in history. Proud Japan, in every way, was emasculated. As often goes with history's most passionate literary works, fiction is sprinkled with generous amounts of aged fact. Fresh tales give way to old ideas, and perhaps cautions. But in the best, most memorable cases, that new fiction is as powerful a moral compass as any bit of propaganda could hope. Such, then, is the perspective one must take when watching Matsumoto's captivating *Harlock* works. Carefully hiding revolutionist ideas within throwaway heroic

fiction, Matsumoto's *Arcadia of My Youth* might be all shoot-outs and operatic space gibberish superficially, but a careful eye reveals an allegorical look on life, honor, and some of the genre's most insightful sketches on human character.

Perhaps the granddaddy of all of anime's male archetypes, supermanly Harlock—especially in *Arcadia of My Youth*—is more mythic icon than flesh-and-blood character. A proud captain of Earth's former space fleet, Harlock is disgusted by how the alien-occupied Earth has been sapped of strength and spirit. Driven by revenge and determined to return Earth to former glory, Harlock finds that his people have become so dispirited that only by denying them forever can he instigate his own justice in a universe that has ultimately denied him. Using Harlock as his voice, Matsumoto sells honor, pride, and fighting spirit like an unapologetic pastor. Angry and assured, Matsumoto-san barely hides that he's referring to our own samurai and cowboys. With conviction and deadly resolve, *Harlock* is the type of melodrama that never smiles, often pauses for impact, and takes mood as seriously as possible. Like *Area 88* and elements of early *Gundam*, *Harlock* is the type of hard-nosed, gripping anime that's made for men, and men only. **GR**



## HARLOCK SAGA VOL. 1



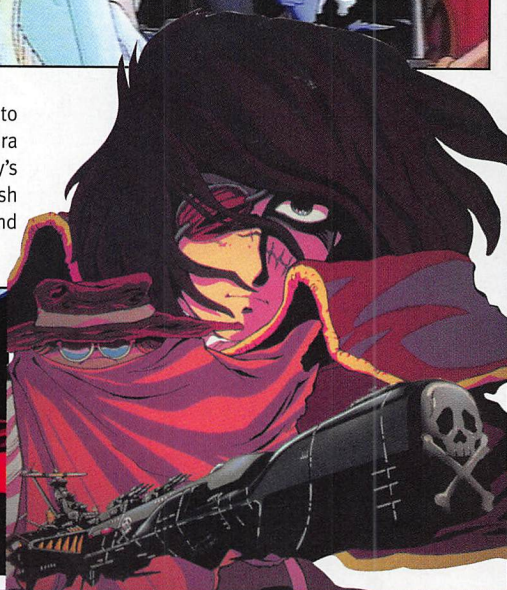
U.S. Manga Corps • VHS  
90 minutes • English Dubbed  
reviewed by shola akinnuso



1/2 SCI-FI/DRAMA

After nearly twenty years missing in action, there really is a new Leiji Matsumoto-helmed *Harlock* available. If that doesn't warrant the trumpet blow, then justice, as they say, is a dream. Life really isn't fair, and no matter how long you wait, expectations and realities rarely meet. As proof, there's U.S. Manga's newest *Harlock* series. Admittedly, it looks incredible. Managing to feel edgy and slick while staying faithful to Matsumoto's original designs, *Harlock* and the entire *Yamato* crew get fancy new camera work, courtesy of modern director Yoshio Takeuchi. Unfortunately, with a less seasoned eye comes newer cinematic sensibilities. While I'm uncertain if watching this dub hurt my impression, I'll surely admit that visually, the story had underwhelming punch. Gone are the dramatic pauses and tight shots emphasizing Harlock's steely resolve. Things now move much too fast, and the camera and cuts are far too kinetic to have any of the resonance of Tomoharu Katsumata's (*Arcadia of My Youth*) vintage work.

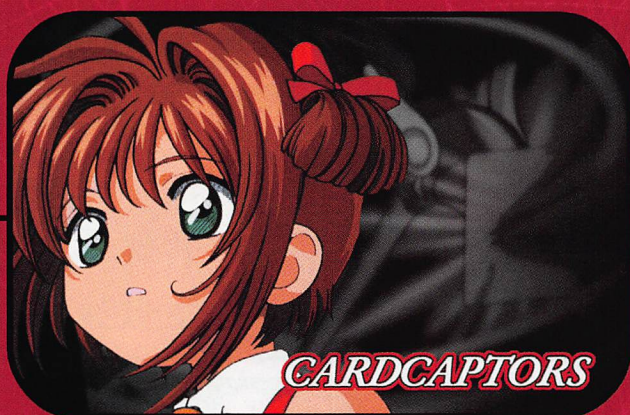
While Richard Wagner's timeless "Der Ring Des Nibelungen" score keeps the whole affair appropriately majestic, the fact that Harlock speaks, much less smiles, puts a shotgun shell right through the hearts of we older fans. The effect is like watching a decent Harlock facsimile; all of the pieces are in place, but something imperceptible is off. To be fair, these are only the first few episodes, and to its credit, even if the Harlock soul is absent, the intent to make this honest-to-goodness space opera more than fills the gap. That, and the story's solid, the animation entertaining. I just wish I'd seen this subtitled. We'll have to wait and see. **GR**



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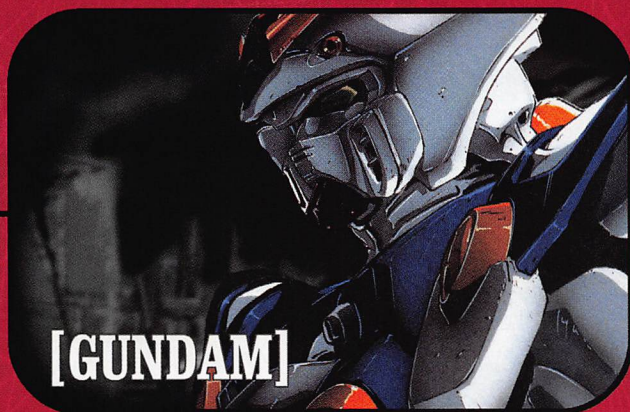
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## DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE DAISY

Bandai Entertainment • DVD  
360 minutes • Bi-lingual  
reviewed by christina alexander



COMEDY

First off, let's just say that there were some seriously illegal narcotics ingested before the writing and creation of this anime. If you don't believe this, then you need look no further than the happy red and white nuclear missile named Mimi who likes to play with beach balls. Mimi has a best friend named Bear, who happens to be a black and white, medium-range air-to-surface missile. Together they cavort above the skies of Japan, terrorizing the population with the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Unfortunately, the focus of the story is not Mimi the drug-influenced nuclear warhead. This story is about a young boy-genius named Techno. Techno has lived a hermit-like existence his entire life, experimenting and inventing in the laboratory beneath his house. After seeing a special girl, whom he nicknames Daisy for lack of her real name, he decides that now is a good time to rejoin

society in the hopes of making her his girlfriend. Techno is a little out of practice in courting girls, and he quickly finds out that kidnapping is not the fastest way to a young girl's heart.

This anime would have gone over much better if I hadn't developed an overwhelming amount of hatred for Techno by the second episode. Having to sit through episode after episode of Techno's heavy-handed tactics ruins the silly humor of what would otherwise be a very fun and likable series.

GR



## ロストユニバース



## LOST UNIVERSE VOL. 4

ADV Films • VHS/DVD  
100 minutes • Bi-lingual  
reviewed by christina alexander



SCI-FI/ACTION

The striking similarities of *Lost Universe* and *Slayers* is no coincidence since they are both created by the same people. Cain Blueriver is an intergalactic mercenary of sorts. He, his companion Canal, the artificial intelligence of his starship, and a young detective named Milly take on odd jobs for money. The three of them don't get along especially well, and their bickering usually means trouble for their jobs and property damage to the places around them.

While visiting his childhood home and the grave of his beloved grandmother, Cain is visited by a man he knew a long time ago. Cain vowed to kill this man if they ever met again. However, it's not that easy. Milly finds out she doesn't know Cain half as well as she thinks she does.

What is amazing to me is how ADV can produce such a frighteningly wide range of quality in its dubs. Where *Generator Gawl* is one of the best dubs ever created, *Lost Universe* falls so far short of that mark, it's scary.



The story takes a serious turn, yet nothing can stay serious for very long in a series like this. Like *Slayers*, *Lost Universe* can't go for over two minutes without someone falling on their face. But *Lost Universe* is missing something. The charm of *Slayers* just doesn't carry over to *Lost Universe* very well. *Lost Universe* is having a hard time trying to step out of the huge shadow of its older sibling.

GR



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2. Parallel Dual! **Pioneer**
3. Trigun **Pioneer**
4. Amazing Nurse Nanako **Pioneer**
5. 3X3 Eyes CE **Pioneer**

**S. Akinnuso**

1. Arcadia Of My Youth **AnimEigo**
2. Harlock Saga **U.S. Manga**
3. Tenamonya Voyagers **Bandai**
4. Star Blazers **Voyager Ent.**
5. Princess Mononoke **Miramax**

**C. Alexander**

1. Generator Gawl **ADV**
2. Silent Mobius **Bandai**
3. Parallel Dual! **Pioneer**
4. Trigun **Pioneer**
5. Jubei-chan **Bandai**



# animetop5

presented by bandai entertainment and gamers' republic

**READERS' TOP 5**

1. Neon Genesis Evangelion **ADV Films**
2. Cowboy Bebop **Bandai**
3. Vision of Escaflowne **Bandai**
4. Princess Mononoke **Miramax**
5. Outlaw Star **Bandai**

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**Runners-Up: (5)**

Gundam Wing Endless Waltz VHS

Gundam Wing Endless Waltz Theatrical Poster

To enter, send your top 5 anime picks on whatever parchment you choose to:

**Gamers' Republic Anime Contest**

32123 Lindero Canyon Road  
Westlake Village, CA 91361

or enter online at:

dhalverson@gamersrepublic.com

**gamers' republic**

To enter the Bandai Entertainment/Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime Contest, simply send us a list of your favorite five anime, new or old. Make sure to include your name, address and age and send it to: Gamers' Republic Top Five Anime, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, suite 218, Westlake Village, CA 91361, or e-mail our venerable leader at dhalverson@gamersrepublic.com. First prize will receive: A Gundam Wing Endless Waltz Special Edition VHS & DVD, 5 Gundam Wing Endless Waltz Deluxe Action Figures, Gundam Wing Endless Waltz Theatrical Poster, and a 1-year subscription to GR. Runners-up will receive: A Gundam Wing Endless Waltz VHS, Gundam Wing Endless Waltz Theatrical Poster, and a 1-year subscription to GR. Good Luck everyone!

Gamers' Republic would like to thank Bandai Entertainment for their support.

No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited.





There goes the Neighborhood!

Coming Spring 2001  
[www.palisadesmarketing.com](http://www.palisadesmarketing.com)

**Nemesis**  
with stinger missile launcher  
Sculpted by: Jon Matthews

# RESIDENT EVIL™

ACTION FIGURES



**Soldier Zombie**  
with zombie dog



**Nosferatu**  
with bendable tentacles



**Leon S. Kennedy**  
with 12 gauge shotgun, VP70  
w/holster stock, mach10, and  
combat knife.

Sculpted by: S.O.T.A Sculpture and Design

In our efforts to constantly improve, the Final product may differ somewhat from the pictured prototypes.

**PALISADES** *Accept the Future*

# SPAWN SERIES 18 INTERLINK 6

**S P A W N**  
interlink 6



It's all about McFarlane's latest and greatest endeavor to date. With Spawn 18-Interlink 6, you can take six toys and, after much stripping and fitting, make one gargantuan mecha Spawn that will blow you away. This is simply the coolest damn toy I have ever seen. Even the stand rocks. The version pictured above is the prototype; the actual finished product, depending on how you polish it off looks even cooler. Where do we go from here? At this point, with McFarlane Toys, anything is possible. RC Spawn Toys, perhaps? Send in the Clown!

# NEW TOYS BY RYAN BROOKHART

## SPIDER-MAN

Toy Biz finally makes good on its promise to release an "ultimate" Spider-Man collection. The first four figures comprise wave one of the Classic Collection. And the figures were worth the wait. Spider-Man, both black and standard outfit, feature 30 points of articulation. Put another way, there has never been a six-inch figure with 30 points of articulation. Put yet another way, this Spider-Man figure can do whatever a Spider-Man can...er, um.

## INDIANA JONES

Your eyes don't deceive you, friends. Those really are new Indiana Jones toys. The tank, micro figure collection, and action figure are all available at Disneyland Parks right about now. If you can't get to a park, seek out the 1-800-number for ordering these figures. Just call Disneyland Park and they'll get you the number. Other pieces in the collection include a 10-inch vinyl figure, a plane and a motorcycle. Special note goes to the action figure: the detail on his jacket and the real braided whip make this an exceptional find.

## BOBA FETT

Marmit, a high-end figure maker, has been creating some startlingly detailed 12-inch figures for the Japanese market for a long time. Recently they turned their attention to Star Wars and out popped the best, if not most fragile, 12-inch Stormtrooper figure ever. Well, it seemed they've learned their lesson in the "can't touch it 'cause it might break" department, because with the release of their 12-inch Boba Fett, Marmit has, arguably, created the best 12-inch figure this writer has ever seen. Yes, he's detailed. Yes, he's posable. But on top of all that, you can play with the damn thing! This figure will set you back a cool \$150, friends. And you know what? It's worth every Mandalorian penny! Again, thanks to Marco Polo Import.

## ROAD WARRIOR

A collective sigh can be heard now that the first series of Road Warrior figures has been released by Ron Hayes and the fine folks at N2Toyz! Yipeel! Although light on articulation, the detail these figures support is spot-on. And here's a scoop: not one, but three vehicles will be shown at this year's Toy Fair in New York! Obviously Max's Interceptor will be there, but can you guess what the other two might be?

## NAZIS

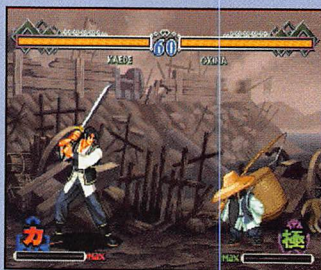
Here's a gaggle full of Nazis heading for Carl's Jr. for some fried zucchini (note: Indy hates Nazis and fried zucchini). The vehicle is a Kubelwagen, a 1/6 scale reproduction of the actual vehicle. Produced by Dragon Models, makers of the figures seen in the car, the Kubelwagen is massive both in size and detail. There is simply no better maker of war-themed figures than Dragon. Special thanks go to Marco Polo Import ([www.marcopoloimport.com](http://www.marcopoloimport.com)) for the car and the figures; they're all for sale right now, but hurry, 'cause quantities are limited.



## LAST BLADE 2 FINAL EDITION

### Fight as original Kaede

So you miss Kaede from the original Guilty Gear? Highlight Kaede at the character selection screen, then quickly press the X button nine times, B, then X five more times. You'll hear Kaede speak if you did the code correctly. Now press A or Y to play as the old Kaede.



### Fight as Houryu:

Much like the Kaede code, highlight Kaede at the character selection screen, then quickly press X ten times, B five times, and X four times. You'll hear Kaede's voice as confirmation. Now press A or Y to play as Houryu.



### Play as secret Kotetsu...well, almost

Shingen's little buddy Kotetsu is actually a secret playable character in the game...kind of. Enter this code for a surprising set of animations: Highlight Shingen at the Character Selection Screen, quickly press X five times, B ten times, and X two times. You should hear a sound letting you know that you've done the code correctly. Now press A or X.



### Play as Haqure:

Highlight Akari at the character selection screen. Quickly press X eight times, B nine times, then wait one second. Now press the X button one more time. Akari will speak to confirm that you've entered the code correctly. Press A or X to play as this surprising new shape-shifting character.



## GUILTY GEAR X

### Play as Testament and Dizzy

Just like the original Guilty Gear on PSX, Guilty Gear X allows you to play as final bosses Testament and Dizzy. Simply play the game in Survival Mode, reach Level 20 for Testament and Level 30 for Dizzy, then when they challenge you, defeat them and they'll become selectable characters in the versus mode.



## RC REVENGE PRO

RC Revenge Pro is a quick thrill on PS2, albeit very short-lived. Finished the game? Try these codes that'll breathe new life into this Kart racer.

### Unlock all cars

Tap L1, L2, R1, R2, CIRCLE, and SQUARE at the Main Menu, and every car in the game will be available.

### Unlock all tracks

Tap L1, R1, R2, SQUARE, and CIRCLE at the Main Menu, and every track in the game opens up like a book.

### Unlock the next cup

Tap L1, R1, R2, L2 at the Main Menu, and you'll be able to access the next highest cup.



## DUCA TI WRC

PlayStation owners struggling through the difficult Ducati World Racing Challenge may have just hit the jackpot. If you have a Gameshark, these official Interact codes should make those heats a bit easier.

### Hit L2 to have all licenses

d01a7d28 feff  
801b6fbc 0001  
d01a7d28 feff  
801b6fc0 0001  
d01a7d28 feff  
801b6fc4 0001  
d01a7d28 feff  
801b6fc8 0001

### Hit R1 for max cash

d01a7d28 f7ff  
801b6fcc e0ff  
d01a7d28 f7ff  
801b6fce 05f5



## MEGA MAN XS

### Ultimate armor mega man:

On the character select screen highlight Mega Man X and press up twice, then down nine times. You'll hear a confirming sound if it worked.

**Dark Zero:**

On the character select screen, highlight Zero and press down twice, then up nine times. You'll hear a confirming sound if it worked.

**TEST DRIVE  
LE MANS****OPEN ALL TRACKS**

As a reward for voting Test Drive Le Mans one of the most popular racing games for the Dreamcast in 2000, Infogrames was kind enough to offer this helpful code that will allow you to open up every track in this gorgeous game:

Enter the Championship Name Entry Screen, and enter GOOZ as your player name.

**KOF 2000****Extra strikers code:**

Several of the fighters in KOF 2000 have an extra hidden striker they can use: Kyo, Iori, Ramon, Chang, Choi, Ryo, Kasumi and Kula. To use these characters, select one of these fighters as your striker, then highlight their "other striker" partner. Now hit Up, Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Down. The "other striker" will become the hidden character,

enabling new strikers such as Rugal and Saishu!

**STAR WARS  
BATTLE FOR  
NABOO**

Click on Passwords under the options menu and enter these codes to get all-new enjoyment out of a game that you've probably already played to death! Who cares, though? The game's so good, these codes will make you play all over again:

"KOOLSTUF"-Graphics Showroom  
"DROIDEKA"-Advanced Shields  
"EWERDEAD"-One Hit Mode  
"TALKTOME"-Commentary  
"RUAGIRL?"-Everything is Pink  
"ADEGAN"-Advanced Lasers

**INDIANA  
JONES**

Click on Passwords under the options menu and enter these codes. Now the game's going to be that much easier. I promise, or my nickname isn't "Bun Boy!"

"CHEESE!!"-Team Photo  
"REALHARD"-Makes Game Harder  
"FORGEOFF"-Unlocks all levels (including the bonus level Peru)  
"ANCIENT"-Unlocks the "Video Showroom"

**TYPING OF  
THE DEAD****Hidden vs. CPU option:**

There's a hidden versus CPU option in Typing of the Dead. Simply enter "DOAKSIM" as a password, and you'll be able to go against the CPU in a typing face off.

**infinite continues, all  
bosses in boss mode, &  
every drill mode level**

Enter these passwords to get infinite continues, all Bosses in Boss mode, all Drill mode levels:

For Infinite Continues: KIKMAHP  
For All Bosses in Boss Mode:  
DKRORCR  
For All Drill Mode Levels: STKZJGH

**KENGO:  
MASTER OF  
BUSHIDO****PLAY AS A student**

At the character selection screen, hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and select a character. Different characters will result in different dojos and students.

**PHANTASY  
STAR ONLINE****Hidden artwork in Phantasy star online**

This isn't as much a secret as it's a very cool feature for PC users. Simply slap your Phantasy Star Online GD-ROM in a PC compatible CD-ROM drive, and you'll have access to images from the game in the "Extra" folder.

**T. HAWK'S  
PRO SKATER  
2**

This is the end-all, be-all of Tony Hawk codes. Admittedly, it's the same code as the PSX version, but this one lets you play as Spider-Man.

**All cheats Activated**

Pause the game, then hold L and press A, A, A, X, Y, Up, Down, Left, Up, X, Y, A, Y, B, A, Y, B. If you entered the code correctly, the pause screen will shake. Then, select the "End Run" option from the pause menu. All cheats, levels, FMV sequences, McSqueeb, Officer Dick, and Spider-Man will be unlocked.

**SPIDER-MAN**

Enter these codes in the cheat menu for a whole world of surprises like being able to play the entire game as Peter Parker, or even playing as the Cosmic-Powered Spidey!

**Every spidey cheat:**

Enter "trublevr" to open everything  
 Enter "turtle" to open invulnerability  
 Enter "stickystuf" for full webbing  
 Enter "help me" to open full health  
 Enter "whosintgm" to open the character viewer  
 Enter "smestory" to open all of the slide shows  
 Enter "cltthmall" to access the comic collection  
 Enter "cov view" to access all of the game's comic covers  
 Enter "listen" to open up all of the sounds in the game  
 Enter "symbspid" to get the freaky symbiote spidey costume  
 Enter "gtatnkfst" to quickly change your costume  
 Enter "powcosmic" to get the Captain Universe costume  
 Enter "sptwoknn" to get the cool Spidey 2099 costume  
 Enter "da clone" for the much hated Ben Reilly costume  
 Enter "mistermj" to play as Peter Parker without a costume  
 Enter "limited ed" for the Spidey Unlimited costume  
 Enter "spid inred" for Ben Reilly's first Scarlet Spider costume  
 Enter "LVLSKIPPER" so you can jump between levels  
 Enter "EORSTUFF" for the developers' "Edge Of Reality Slides"

**BUGS & TAZ  
TIMEBUSTERS**

Enter these Gameshark codes to zip right through this looney adventure.

Infinite Continues  
 800100Ao 0063

Max Carrots  
 80010058 0064

Press L1 For All Gears in Granville  
 D00970BA FBFF  
 80010086 000A

**DVD  
EASTER EGGS****Boogie Nights (DVD)**

Outakes (Special Edition version)

Select the "Color Bars" option, then fast forward until the outtake sequence begins.

**Gladiator (DVD)**

Deleted scene bonus

Insert Disc 2 (bonus features disc), select the "Original Storyboards" option at the main menu, then select the "More" option on the next menu. Select the Rhino Fight deleted sequence, then highlight the rhino on the center of the first story board and press Enter.

Hidden trailer

Insert Disc 2 (bonus features disc), select the "More" option at the main menu, then select the "Trailers & TV Spots" option on the next menu. Press Left to highlight the bird emblem on Marcus Aurelius' chest armor, then press Enter to view a trailer from Chicken Run.

**Dark City (Platinum Edition version)**

Hidden scenes

Enter William Hurt's filmography screen to view a scene from Lost In Space. Enter Kiefer Sutherland's filmography to view a scene from Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me.

**Rush Hour**

Evil Luke Lee feature

Press Title to select Title 4 on the disc. Press Next to play Chapter 3 to view a short film from director Bret Ratner when he was younger. Alternatively, select Chapter 3 during the "Whatever Happened To Mason Reese?" feature.

**The Sixth Sense**

Hidden video

At the main menu, select the "Bonus Materials" option. Go to the second screen and highlight the jewelry box icon. Press Enter to view a short film that was created by the movie's director when he was a child.

**X-Men**

See Spider-Man and the X-Men together

At the main menu, select the "Theatrical Trailers & TV Spots" option. Press Left to highlight the rose in the top left corner of the screen and press Enter to display a hidden screen featuring Spider-Man.

**The Matrix**

"What Is Bullet Time?" documentary:  
 Enter the "Special Features" screen

from the main menu and select "The Dream World". Select the red pill to view the "What Is Bullet Time?" documentary.

"What Is The Concept?" documentary:  
 Enter the "Special Features" screen from the main menu and select "The Cast And Crew Biographies." Select the Wachowsky Brothers to find another red pill. Select the pill to view the "What Is The Concept?" documentary.

**ME, MYSELF, & IRENE**

Blooper segment

At the main menu, select the "Bonus Features" option, then choose the "Deleted Scenes" selection. Move to the first column of deleted scenes, then press down until Jim Carrey's head appears. Press Enter to view a blooper segment.

**Battlefield Earth**

Hidden footage:

Select the "Special Features" option at the main menu. Press Right to highlight the spaceship, then press Enter.

Select the "Special Features" option at the main menu. Advance to the second screen of the special features section, press Right to highlight the pyramid, then press Enter.

Select the "Cast And Crew" option at the main menu. Press Right to highlight the hidden icon, then press Enter.

Select the "Languages" option at the main menu. Press Right to highlight the hidden icon, then press Enter.

Select the "Scenes Selections" option at the main menu. Move through the chapters until a hidden Psycho image is highlighted, then press Enter.

Enable the commentary in the audio options. At various points, a Psycho letter will appear. Select it to view hidden footage. Alternately, advance to Title 19 through 32 and play them to view the footage.

**Magnolia**

Hidden outtakes:

Select the "Set Up" option on the main menu of Disc 1. Select the "Color Bars" option and remain at that screen until a series of outtakes begin to play.



## eVilla

PRICE \$499 // [www.evilla.com](http://www.evilla.com)

No, it's not a late-night horror queen. Sony's eVilla network entertainment center is an attempt to provide an easy, fast, and attractive on ramp to the Internet. A vertically oriented 15" FD Trinitron display makes looking at web pages easy, while the front-mounted Memory Stick slot allows for easy uploading and saving of images and sound files. The ultra stable and modern Be Operating System runs under the gorgeous interface, and the eVilla is perfectly priced at \$499.



## POWERBOOK G4

PRICE \$2,599-\$3,599 // [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

Apple took it on the chin last year with the gorgeous but soft-selling G4 Cube, but no one expects the same fate with the first G4 Powerbook. A typically stunning effort from Apple, the Powerbook G4 is a work of industrial design and packaging art. Cased in titanium, it's one-inch thick, has a slot-loading DVD drive, a 3:2 aspect ratio 15.2" widescreen LCD, weighs 5.3 pounds, has a five-hour battery, and comes with either a 400 or 500 MHz G4 processor.



## SHADOWBLADE

PRICE \$49.99 // [www.interact-acc.com](http://www.interact-acc.com)

Using the same heavy metal casing as their chrome Dreamcast stick, InterAct's flat black Shadowblade for PS and PS2 feels indestructible, a welcome feature in a peripheral that is generally given a good thrashing by any decent 2D fighter. The programmable Shadowblade holds up, and the quiet, positive action of the eight analog-capable buttons is a relief from the cacophony of a cheaper joystick's operation. Plus, there's a handy cord bay on the underside of the stick to keep things tidy.



## MOBILE MONITOR

PRICE \$130 // [www.interact-acc.com](http://www.interact-acc.com)

After seeing the abysmal PS One screen put out by Pelican, we thought we would have to wait for Sony's official screen to enjoy PS gaming on the go, but InterAct proved us wrong. Their Mobile Monitor has a great-looking TFT LCD with solid colors and good edge definition, and the unit's simple, front-mounted push button controls are attractive and easy to use. This will be as good as it gets until Sony's screen comes along.

REAR VIEW ▼



# GAMERS' REPUBLIC INTERVIEWS

# TUFF BREAK!

## MUSIC TO GAME BY

BY MICHAEL PUGGINI

Have you ever wondered how your favorite bands end up on video-game soundtracks? Or how the songs are chosen? To find out the answers to these and other questions, we spoke with former music biz industry veteran Jonnie Forster, now CEO of Tuff Break Entertainment, a company he and his two brothers own that specializes in music consulting and supervision—assisting companies in selecting bands for new games.

Working in the heart of the music industry, with an office located near the famed Roxy and The Whiskey nightclubs on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, Tuff Break has already built a reputable resume of clients and games and has obtained some of the biggest names in music: Sony's *Gran Turismo 2* (Foo Fighters, Garbage), EA Sports' *NBA Live 2000* (George Clinton, Naughty by Nature) and *FIFA 2000* (Jamiroquai, Blur), and Activision's *Vampire* (Primus, Ministry) are part of the growing lists. And Forster says that the soundtrack that they compiled for *Gran Turismo 3* will be the best the industry has ever heard. Looking to the future, the company has already hooked up Snoop Doggy Dog with a video game and is beginning to talk with companies about acquiring bands for Xbox games.

### Gamers' Republic: How did you guys get into the video game industry?

Jonnie Forster: We were working at Capitol Records doing marketing and strategic partnerships and someone came in the office and said, "You play sports games and do all the promotions for the artists. Well, there's a guy I want you to talk to who's working with video game companies." We had a meeting and he said, "I'm working on this game called *FIFA* and I'd like to put you in touch with some people in Canada (EA Canada) about helping them get some of our groups." And at the time we had the Beastie Boys and all these kind of cool, alternative groups and I ended up calling the executive producer of the *FIFA* series and we had a conversation and met and I started supervising their game music. And at first, I wasn't really sure what I was getting involved in. I was just thinking about the cross-promotion opportunities, to get our groups in there and promote them through this great vehicle. Lo and behold, it started to become, "What other groups outside Capitol can you help us with?" And I thought, "You know what, here's an opportunity where I can help this client, possibly picking up Electronic Arts, become a supervisor for them and start a business." So I started working on *FIFA* and we did such a great job with the music, the other producers said to the *FIFA* group, "How'd you get these groups? How'd you do it on that budget?" And they said, "Well, Jonnie Forster in Los Angeles, and his company Tuff Break—they have all the connections with the labels and the publishers and the managers and they don't do everything the traditional route, they go through the groups themselves because they have those relationships." And so then we got called to do *NBA Live* and *NHL* and *Need For Speed*. And it blossomed from there.

### GR: Are the songs that you select for games previously released tunes or original songs made specifically for the game?

JF: The first thing we started doing was licensing popular tracks that were previously released—getting remixes of a song, getting alternate versions. But we're kind of shifting from licensing to going and getting the groups themselves to cut new tracks. We'll take the game footage that we have and say, "Here's what we're talking about, here's the tempo we're looking for, here's the style of song we're looking for, the beats per minute, the lyrical content we're looking for. Because we're very conscious of the ESRB.

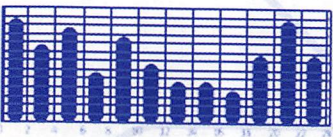
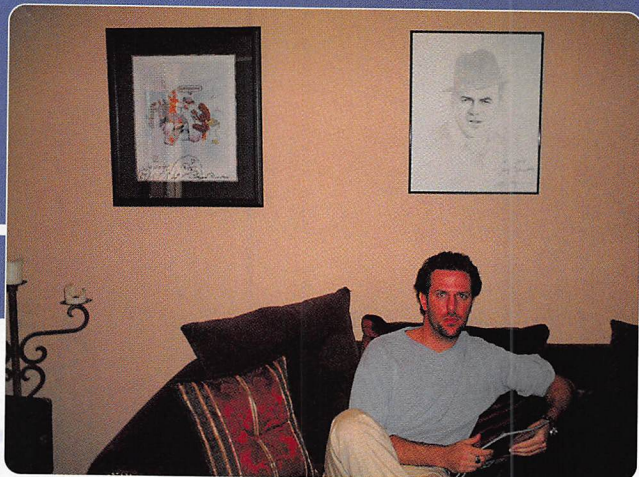
### GR: How do you go about choosing a group or groups for a particular game?

JF: We've been in the record business for over 30 years between all the partners in this company. So we have relationships with basically all the management companies, all the publishers, all the record labels. And what we do is sit down with the game director and the marketing people and the producers and say, "What's the feel you're going for? Who's your demographic?" Then we say, "Stylistically, are you looking for a more urban edge or is it more big beat or trance or rock or alternative rock?" And then we go through our contacts.

### GR: Do you get approached by a lot of bands themselves?

JF: Definitely. Like Stone Temple Pilots for *Gran Turismo 2*. We like the groups who are the gamers because it makes the deal easier to get pushed through and if I have any hiccups or problems, they'll go and fight for me. And their hearts are going to be into it because they understand who the market is, they play the games, they have a personal attachment to it. It's like, "It's not just a payday for me. I love this game. It's an honor for me to be in this game. And I think it's cool as hell to have them on my tour bus and I'm playing the new game and my music is in there."

### GR: Will they write a new song or will they say, "Oh, we never used this track so let's use it here?"



MUSIC

MUSIC

MUSIC



# INTERVIEW

# INTERVIEW

# INTERVIEW

JF: It depends. I try to get music that the consumer hasn't heard before - unreleased tracks, B-sides, remixes. In some cases, if time permits, if they're not on tour, I try to strike a deal for them to cut a new track. And we've been pretty successful with that as well.

**GR: Have you ever missed the mark? Finished a project and then listened to it and said, "It just didn't work"?**

JF: The final decision comes from the video-game client. There are some producers who aren't really entrenched into today's music and...creatively, I've had situations where I've said, "This doesn't work, guys." And they'll say, "Well, we like it and our marketing guys like it..."

**GR: What game/games are you most proud of?**

JF: I think our first FIFA game (FIFA '98) with Blur and the Gran Turismo 2 game are my two proudest achievements.

**GR: What are some of your favorite games?**

JF: I'm a huge EA Sports video game fan. I love Triple Play baseball. Tony Hawk's great.

**GR: What new bands out there excite you?**

JF: Lincoln Park. They're a Warner Bros. group.

**GR: What types of music do you listen to personally?**

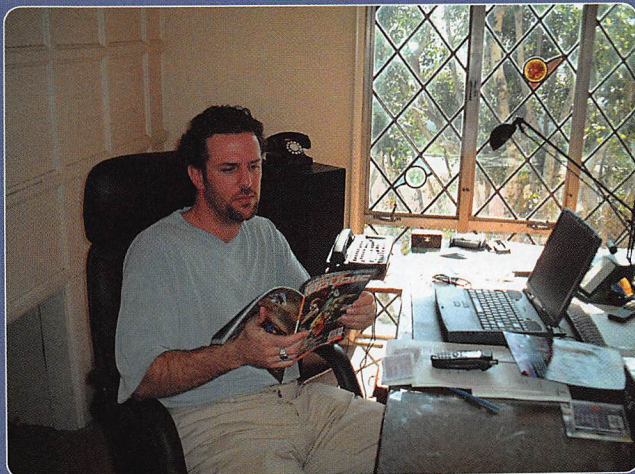
JF: Everything from hip-hop — Dre and Eminem — to Frank Sinatra.

**GR: Do you use your job as a chick magnet?**

JF: Actually, my stylish good looks and my stellar personality overshadow the great business card I have. And I have two Cadillacs [laughs].

**GR: What advice would you give to bands and musicians who might want to get into the business?**

JF: My advice to bands trying to get into the video-game business is to call Jonnie and his brothers at Tuff Break Entertainment. **GR**



## Audiophiles

What GR is listening to this month

### ⚡ D Halverson

1. **DUST FOR LIFE**  
debut
2. **U.P.O.**  
debut
3. **DAVID BOWIE**  
Diamond Dogs
4. **BLACK SABBATH**  
Sabbath Bloody Sabbath
5. **FRANK ZAPPA**  
Strictly Commercial

### ❄ B Fiechter

1. **GLEN PHILLIPS**  
abulum
2. **LAPDOG MUSIC**  
near tonight
3. **LIMP BIZKIT**  
the chocolate starfish...
4. **ORBITAL**  
middle of nowhere
5. **PHILIP GLASS**  
symphony no. 3

### ✱ M Hobbs

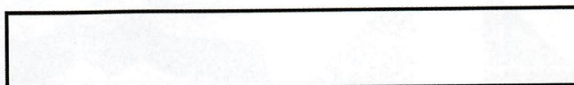
1. **THE ORB**  
cydonia
2. **AMON TOBIN**  
supermodified
3. **TAN DUN**  
crouching tiger; hidden dragon
4. **APHEX TWIN**  
melodies from mars
5. **CLIFF MARTINEZ**  
traffic

### ✈ T Stratton

1. **NELLY FURTADO**  
Whoa Nelly!
2. **AMON TOBIN**  
Supermodified
3. **SNOOP DOGG**  
The Last Meal
4. **BLUES TRAVELER**  
4
5. **PROTOLAB**  
demo

### 🐾 Pooch

1. **MAKAVELI**  
vol. 8 the remix album
2. **TOM PETTY**  
anthology
3. **EMINEM**  
marshall mathers
4. **THE PHARCYDE**  
frontlines
5. **LENNY KRAVITZ**  
greatest hits



GRAND PRIX



# GAMERS' REPUBLIC INTERVIEWS

# An Interview with ICE T

BY TOM STRATTON

**Gamers' Republic: So, when did your interest with video games start?**

Ice-T: Well, I'm older so I know all about the Atari games back in the day. I remember Pong and all that kind of stuff and those games were real cool. As games started to really develop, I had all of them. The Sega games, the Nintendo stuff, but Nintendo had stuff that was towards kids. So I got away from Nintendo and started playing the Sony PlayStation. I'm pretty much an adventure games type of guy. The games have become more and more elaborate; so adventure games keep getting better. I like to just chill with a one-player game and do my thing.

**GR: Nice. What's your favorite adventure game to date?**

Ice: Back in the day I played a lot of the ninja games like Shinobi or Strider. I also really liked Contra. Right now it's all about the Resident Evil series and stuff like that. You know, action with some puzzle solving. But I've never really gotten into the first-person games. I played Doom and Quake and that stuff. I hope there aren't any hardcore Doom or Quake fans, but if you ask me, if you've played one, you've played them all. It's pretty much different types of grunts and a little bit of motion sickness and there you go. And plus, I got pissed at Quake because I went online and tried to play and as soon as I landed I got whacked. And it happened every time I touched down. Someone was right there to murder me. A buddy of mine was telling me that I had to try a few low-handed tactics, like come into the game stocked with weapons. So I might try it again.

**GR: Your current involvement with the FOX Interactive games. How did that come about?**

Ice: What happened was, I've done different game reviews for magazines and soon it became word on the street that Ice plays video games. I like to play a lot of games, since I'm into music and entertainment. I don't necessarily think my work has more stress than anything else, but me playing a video game allows me to take away my stress. Because the character on the screen in every game I've played is faced with way more stressful shit than me [laughs]. So, for a minute, twenty minutes, three hours or whatever, I'm focused on a damn dragon instead of my taxes or a record that isn't done. So, it's a great escape to transfer or exchange the pressures to something else. Now I also have a friend, Arabian, that works at FOX and he's a programmer of one of the games. He told me that they wanted me to be one of the voices for a video game. It sounded real cool, so I went over to their offices and checked out Sanity. I haven't had a chance to play through the entire game, but I jumped around, level to level. Soon after, I recorded some voice samples for the game. It's kinda hip, you know, being a video-game character.

**GR: Being so fascinated with video games, do you feel fortunate to be immortalized inside one?**

Ice: [Smiles] I don't know if it's any sort of major achievement or anything. It's definitely real cool and if the game hits that would be cool too. But the character I play says some really cool things and I think one of the things people will do when they play it, is get to a point to peep what Ice is going to say next.

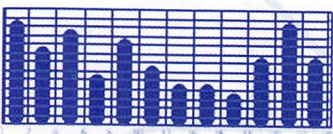
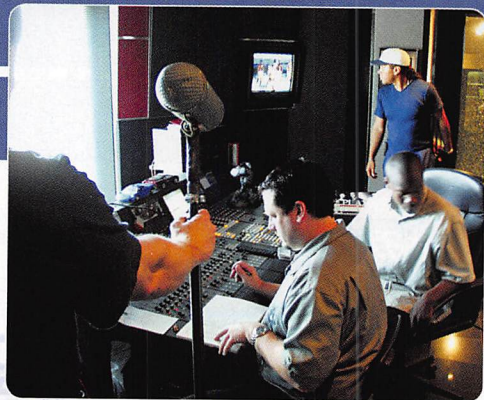
Right now, I'm working on my own video game. I'm basically producing, directing and outlining this thing on my own, without the help of a video game developer. But this [Sanity] is a good experience for me to go in and see how games are made. Making video games is a big project, for anyone out there that doesn't know. It's not as simple as when we get the game and just plug in a controller and power up. These games take years to make. A lot of work and re-working goes on and I like the process.

**GR: Is FOX Interactive open to you laying a track or two for Sanity or America's Scariest Police Chases?**

Ice: Well, what happened was, for Sanity the deal they did with us was for us to read the lines for the main character, Cain, and come up with a title track from my group. So Body Count recorded a track called Sanity and submitted it, but of course they came back and said they couldn't use it, because it was too aggressive. I let them know that you know this is what Body Count is. They asked me to take the cursing out and I said, "No!" I'm still not sure if we are going to re-submit a clean version, but that's like an oxymoron for our group. I'm going to try and make sure players can unlock the real song with some sort of code so they can hear the raw version. Maybe beating the game in a certain amount of time. We'll see.

**GR: What about World's Scariest Police Chases? How much are you involved with it?**

Ice: Actually, with World's Scariest while we were at FOX doing stuff for Sanity, the guys making WSPC came into the offices and kept saying, "Man, Ice-T is here. Yo, you got to be one of our bad guys; you've got to be one of the main guys, you've got to have a part in our game." So I'm doing the same thing for World's Scariest that I did for Sanity. Voice-overs





and a title track. I haven't done too much work yet, but the game play looks hot. I'm a big fan of Driver. And this is going to be a lot better than Driver is, so it'll be interesting.

**GR: Was it important to you to see the game before committing to a project?**

**Ice:** Well, they did show me the game. But they are still early in development, so they talk you through telling you where things are going to be places, but you can catch the vibe and tell if the game is going to be good. With Sanity, my character had a strong presence in the way he moved and looked and I thought that was cool. With World's Scariest, I saw some of the sequences going down and got a good understanding for it.

**GR: Any other projects in the works for you, video-game-wise? You lightly touched on the fact that you are creating your own video game. Can you tell us more?**

**Ice:** Well, the game that I'm puttin' out, you know, not that I'm tryin' to overpower FOX and the stuff I did with them, but my game is the most violent, wrong, disturbing game put onto a disc. It's called Street Hustler and it's going to be on a DVD. So it won't be made for game machines. It will move along like a stop-action movie and you'll move a pointer on the screen to check shit out or move yourself into different areas. It plays a bit like Phantasmagoria and games like that. I'm directing the film and the game is going to be totally wrong. You'll need to carjack, go to dope houses, have sex in every level. It's hot. And the reason I designed a game to release on the DVD format was because we knew no one working with Sony, Nintendo or Sega would touch the game. I think when we're done, Street Hustler will have the same effect Postal did on the gaming world. It will probably only be available to buy on the Internet, unless someone is crazy enough to step in and release it. But if FOX had this game, people would burn the FOX offices down for being connected to it. Street Hustler: The Game. Look out for it, its going to be hot! And to be honest, I've got some of the hottest programmers and designers in the gaming industry working on this game. These cats know their business, and I asked them to moonlight for my project. So all the names in the credits will be aliases.

**GR: Holy shit! You gotta tell me how the game opens.**

**Ice:** It starts with a shot of these flies, swarmin' over this pile of shit in a toilet that hasn't been flushed in however long. The camera swings over to this guy who's gettin' out of bed and he's scratchin' his nuts, reaches over to grab his 40 oz. and looks out of his window. He sees me jumping into this car, throwin' money in the air with all these girls kickin' it while we speed off. He looks at the camera and says, "Man, this broke shit sucks, I need to get some fu\*\*\*\* money, I'm gonna be a hustler." Then the game starts. You can grab things from around his house, like a glock, some money or a condom, walk out of the house and begin to hustle. And while you're movin' down the street you might pass a girl and try to rap to her. The scene will cut to a shot of her face saying, "You motherf\*\*\*\*, you look broke, what the f\*\*\* do you think you're doing talking to me. You ain't even got shoes." [Laughs] I'm tellin' you; this game is way out there. Later on when you start pullin'

in that scratch, she'll say something totally different. But any mistake you make, like gettin' shot or some sort of deal goes bad, or you don't say the right thing and get brought to jail. The game is over. It's only four levels long. But they are long and tough to get through.

**GR: Are you going to only allow one mistake and it's back to the beginning? Or how will that work?**

**Ice:** Well, you get to make one mistake in the first level. But anything else will come to take care of you in the end. Say like, you make it to the last level and you're to the last broad, but in level three you only pistol whipped the dude inside the crack house, instead of poppin' him. Well, he'll kick in the door, say, you know, "You thought the game was gonna end like this!" and blast you in the chest sending you across the bed. So you got to deal with certain situations correctly or you're gonna die. Street Hustler: The Game. Yeah man, that's what it's all about. It's shot like a movie, and when you win the game...[smiles]. Shit, if you win the game, it's just going to be very exciting. Oh yeah! The best part of it is our disclaimer. A video comes up and warns the parents that if a kid is playing this game, get the controller out of his or her hands and shut the shit down. Turn it off. And at the end we tell the kids that if they didn't have the volume on mute, during the verbal disclaimer, they already lost the game [laughs].

**GR: Man, it's cool that you are making a game that you want and you're not worried that it is going to offend anyone or get heat during an era of growing school-yard violence.**

**Ice:** I'm a person that believes that human beings get bent out of shape for...hold on. There are real issues in the world, like homelessness. But I don't believe that music or movies have anything to do with it. You can go into a library today and find the recipe to make a hydrogen bomb, you know. If you want to find that information, it's out there. So to go on, for those people who get bent out of shape because of this level or kind of entertainment isn't cool to them, I'm here to push it in their face and make them more uneasy with their lives. And that's just my angle on it. Being in entertainment for as long as I have and having done and knowing crime—from a real criminal's perspective, I can say that movies didn't influence my reasons for doing what I did [laughs]. Social conditions did. You don't see Harvard students dropping out and robbing liquor stores. It doesn't happen, you know.

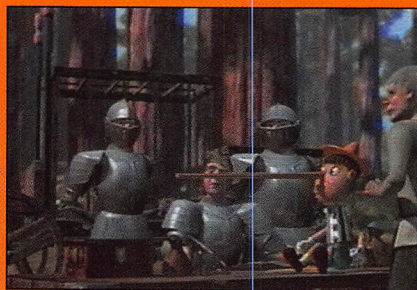
**GR: Yeah. I feel that. Well, it looks like some people are waiting inside the studio for you. What work are you going to do today?**

**Ice:** Extra work, for free. Meaning, they came in my house before, I did everything they wanted me to and now they're back again. Telling me they need some more stuff for me to do, that they aren't going to pay me for. But I got my foot in and I'm going to finish the work, 'cause again, my friend Arabian is part of this. I think we are going to try a clean up of the song for the game too. We'll see.

**GR: Nice. This was real cool. Thanks for sitting down and allowing me this time.**

**Ice:** Yeah. Feel free to kick it, grab yourself a drink and we'll run that Sanity track in a minute. **GR**





### BATTLEFIELD EARTH **F**

WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO RATED R

*Battlefield Earth* should be remembered as one of the worst big-budget movies ever made. Here is a movie so bad, so inept, so clumsy that it leaves you watching in awe, fascinated by its uncommon ability to lumber along through one disastrously staged scene after another.

The plot: well, I'm still not sure what the movie is about entirely. It sputters along with no rhyme or reason, throwing around asinine situations into a bitter soup of utter nonsense. The year is 3000, aliens called Psychlos have conquered Earth. They like gold, so they force what's left of the human race to mine the gold. Fortunately for the humans, the I'm-unusually-clever-and-born-to-be-a-leader-and-outwit-the-alien-head human, Jonnie Good-boy Tyler (Barry Pepper), takes charge and decides to become the leader and outwit the aliens by pillaging Fort Knox, finding all the gold necessary to appease the Psychlos and avoid the slave labor. Fortunately, the Psychlos couldn't locate the gold themselves, because the "walls are lined with lead."

Tyler soon gets smart, force fed by the aliens with an energy

beam that uploads all sorts of knowledge through his eyes. He quickly extends his new-found understanding of the world to his fellow cavemen, teaching them geometry and how to fly a fighter jet; actually, the humans sort of

learn on their own, taking a crash course in a flight simulator that somehow still runs.

The villains are awkwardly played by John Travolta and Forest Whitaker, who walk on elevated shoes and have ridiculously elongated skulls. Breathing tubes hang from their noses like strings of mucus. They look like they have never taken a bath.

Both these men are fine actors, but this movie mires them in slop. Their dialogue is inane and senseless, and they can only manage to expand the vacuum, acting as if they had given up hope and had no idea what to do. Travolta's obnoxious laugh is almost fitting, a self-effacing chuckle inspired by the catastrophe he saw closing in around him on the set every day in production.

How did this movie get made? Travolta pined for years to bring L. Ron Hubbard's written word to the screen, but *Battlefield Earth* has nothing to do with Scientology. It has nothing to do with anything.

The movie is drab and lifeless. Its large budget does peak through all the sludge, but to what effect? The director, Roger Christian, shows no sense of rhythm or staging. He enjoys the canted camera angle so much so that he employs it nearly every scene, and to jarring effect. And what's the deal with the incessant wipes? All involved would surely love to wipe this cinematic pant-load clean from their collective memories. **Brady Fiechter**

### ME MYSELF AND IRENE **D**

FOX HOME VIDEO RATED R

It's okay for Jim Carrey to go back to his roots doing the type of physical humor that's made him sinfully rich, but trashy humor? From *There's Something About Mary* writers the Farrelly brothers, every minute of this movie is measured in degrees of bad taste. Bestiality? Stereotyped blacks? Dismemberment in humor's name? Absolutely nothing's too taboo to Carrey and crew, and it's that care-free disregard for balancing humor and insult that makes *Me, Myself & Irene* the flop that *Mary* could've been. You'll chuckle once or twice at the anal jokes and Carrey's astounding physical performance, but most of the time you'll just be embarrassed for laughing at all.

**Shola Akinnuso**

### COYOTE UGLY **F**

BUENA VISTA HOME VIDEO RATED R

Let's just grade *Coyote Ugly* on what it was supposed to be: soft-core porn. Why else would we watch a movie that has over 30 minutes of nearly naked women table dancing in dripping water while serving drinks to a bar full of horny men? There's a plot here, but who cares? In porn, even soft-core, there's sex. *Coyote Ugly* only teases with it. Ergo: what the hell's the point? **Shola Akinnuso**

### THE ART OF WAR **C**

ARTISAN HOME VIDEO RATED R

Wesley Snipes tries his best Tom Cruise in this predictable Mission Impossible-styled thriller, and ends up infinitely more likeable, though not nearly as athletic. The plot's certainly thick enough with cliché innuendo of sinister government officials, assassinations, and Hong Kong triads, but making the

logical link between them is where the script falls short. Snipes stays suitably watchable as an agent on the run with quick hands and a quicker gun, but the espionage and pseudo-political babble is more popcorn fluff than exposition, and the cartoon characterization's simply filler between the kung-fu and gunfights. This by-the-numbers thriller is an entertaining, albeit forgettable, rental. **Shola Akinnuso**

### DINOSAUR **C**

DISNEY HOME VIDEO RATED G

Had Disney stuck with its original intentions and released *Dinosaur* as a non-dialogue film, its images may have been set free to reach a poetic grandeur. Instead, the movie is strapped to an inane story, and the banter between the talking dinosaurs is limp and generic. There are moments of grand excitement and visual wonder, but *Dinosaur*'s biggest achievement is in its technical artistry, not its imagination or inspiration; marvel at the strands of hair on the Lemurs, balk at the languid pace and soporific tale of dense dinosaurs making a trek across the wilderness to find a new home. **Brady Fiechter**

### WHAT LIES BENEATH **B**

20TH CENTURY FOX HOME VID RATED R

Robert Zemeckis is a master of spinning genre material into fine form, but despite the few bursts of intelligence and subtle power, his psychological thriller, *What Lies Beneath*, is empty entertainment. At times chilling, always creepy in its cool tones and gray colors, the movie still manages to take its ghost tale into unique territory, propelled mostly by the CG effects and Zemeckis' skilled camera. Rent it for the bathroom scene alone. **Brady Fiechter**

CINEMATRIX  
DVD reviews

CINEMATRIX

## WAR PLANETS: SHADOW RAIDERS VOL. 1 &amp; 2

B-

ADV HOME VIDEO

VHS • 240 MIN

RATED G

REVIEWED BY SHOLA AKINNUSO

ADV is running with these old Mainframe licenses, and while *War Planets: Shadow Raiders* wasn't nearly as popular as their *Reboot* franchise, looking at these early episodes leaves argu-

ment that the series was entirely too short-lived. Clearly inspired by the more serious cartoons of the '80s, *War Planets* is traditional, action-based sci-fi with a clear emphasis on visual luster. While it doesn't leave as much brain food as *Reboot*, or even their current hit *Action Man*, there's certainly a lot to like in its dedicated approach to keeping all of the themes and characters as simple as possible. The main good guys, representing the primary elements, come from the Planet Ice, Planet Fire, Planet Rock, and Planet Jungle. There's a major threat from the big bad Beast Planet, and there's a sideline hero from Planet Tek (as you've likely guessed, she's techno-organic). The hero's the clichéd, strong, yet honorable, self-doubting type; the reptilian is your good guy with a sinister twist; and your fire and ice characters are hot-headed and cool-tempered, respectively. This isn't rocket science, folks. So what, then, is the appeal of the show? For starters, of all the Mainframe properties, *War Planets* is the series they most flexed their creative visual talents on. Whereas most of the characters in their popular shows were undeniably human-based, *War Planets'* entire premise is a galactic conflict. Each of the primary worlds must come to an uneasy alliance in order to fight the Unicron-like threat of the Beast World: the Planet Devourer. Calling on Mainframe to come up with distinctive attributes for each of the planet's inhabitants, soldiers, and planetscape was an awesome task. There's simple drama in these episodes, and the action is superbly directed. But the biggest joy is watching what amazing creatures these CGI masters will come up with next. The writing is decent, certainly nothing too memorable, and as for the teenage entertainment it was supposed to provide, it's a sight better than most of what's on television now. Check it out, if only as a rental.

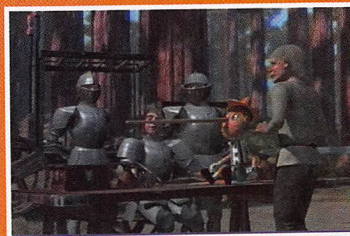


War Planets™, Shadow Raiders™ & © 1997 Mainframe Inc. A Mainframe Animation

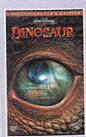
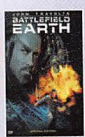
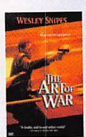
## THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

Dreamworks sent a hilarious trailer for their upcoming CG fantasy/buddy comedy *SHREK*, starring Mike Meyers and Eddie Murphy. More exciting than the legendary comic talent however, was *SHREK's* gorgeous animation. Pixar, watch out.

Comic book fans should be doing backflips with the triple-cool news of Ang Lee (director of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) and David Hayter (*X-Men*) doing a dramatic new *Incredible Hulk* film; Stephen Norrington (*Blade*) is signed—and excited—about doing Marvel's *Shang Chi: Master of Kung Fu*, and *Batman: The Animated Series'* Bruce Timm has secured 26 episodes of a new Justice League of America cartoon on the Cartoon Network for fall 2001. Most of *Batman Beyond's* writing and animation crew has shifted over to this new project.



## CINEMATRIX DVD REVIEWS



DAVE HALVERSON

MIKE HOBBS

BRADY FIECHTER

SHOLA AKINNUSO

GR SAYS

ART OF WAR warner bros.

D- D D C-

D

BATTLEFIELD EARTH warner bros.

F D- F F

F

DINOSAUR disney

B- C+ C C

C+

ME, MYSELF, AND IRENE 20th century fox

C+ C- C D

C-

HOLLOW MAN artisan ent.

B- D D+ D

D+

WHAT LIES BENEATH 20th century fox

B B B- C-

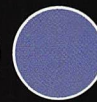
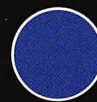
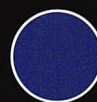
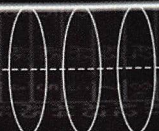
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DVD Release Matrix: Feb 6 *Battle Beyond The Stars*, *Cherry 2000*, *JFK: Special Edition Director's Cut*, *The Mighty Quinn*, *Navy Seals*, *Votoms Collection* Feb 13 *Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle* Feb 20 *Clerks Uncensored (Series)*, *The Doors: Special Edition* Feb 26 *Navigator: A Time Travel Adventure* Feb 26 *Dr. Strangelove: Special Edition*, *The Cook*, *The Thief*, *His Wife & Her Lover*

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## FALLOUT

Should you wish to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), please write to:

Fallout, Gamers' Republic, 32123 Lindero Canyon Road, Suite 215,  
Westlake Village, CA 91361 USA (editorial@gamersrepublic.com)

Hello,

I have been a big fan of yours since the days when GAMEFAN was cool. I used to freak out over your spreads on PC-Engine, Neo Geo, PC-FX, Marty, and more. I have a few questions for you...

1. There have been rumors for years that Strider was completed for the SuperGrafx and I have even seen two screenshots (one was a beta screen). Do you know anything about it? That would be the only SG game I am missing. What a mysterious title this is.

2. I really appreciated your spread last year about Zenki FX for the PC-FX but you said that it and Battle Heat were the only good games for it (or something to that effect). I believe there were many more like Der Langrisser FX, Yuna FX, Miraculum, Boundary Gate, Arabian Nights, and Team Innocent, to name a few. Anyway, I was just in Japan where I picked up a non-playable demo of Pia-Welcome to Carrot 2.5 which is coming out in a couple of months for the DC. This is a sequel to another great PC-FX game and it looks awesome! Another NEC game, Canvas, a PC Engine game, is also coming to the DC. Any chance your mag can mention something about either one? I know a review is impractical, but mere mention of these would be cool.

3. You were the only reviewer, of the many I read, who liked D2. I am still awestruck by that game. Every reviewer has TRASHED it and I can't figure out why. Were any changes made from the original M2 version?

What is your take on this whole SEGA issue? I don't think it's that big a deal. They are not discontinuing the DC anytime soon. Sega has too large a user base now. There is no backing out. I am personally not worried about them developing for the other consoles. It's nothing they haven't done before. The NES and Turbo Grafx saw many SEGA titles: After Burner, Golden Axe, and Space Harrier to name a few. They just need to pay a couple of bills and maybe build up some funds for the proposed hardware upgrade to the DC in 2002. So, let Sony have Crazy Taxi, Sega has made its millions off of it already. And by the time CT comes to the PS2, the DC will have CT2.

-George

George,

*Strider for the SuperGrafx ended up being downgraded for play on the PC Engine CD. I waited forever for that game! It came out, but it was a flickfest hampered by slowdown and missing graphics. I imagine it's really hard to get. But something tells me you'll find one.*

*Team Innocent! Wow, you're accessing my deep memory. I loved that game! It looks like a dinosaur now—dig those choppy scaling sprites on pre-rendered backgrounds—but the anime style will never get old. The other games you mentioned I recommend as collectibles only. Langrisser is actually pretty cool, but they're all hard to play without some Japanese. I so miss NEC: Bonk, Legendary Axe, Download, Ninja Sword—those were great times. As for D2, is the whole world smokin' paint? If it's not a thrill-a-second shooter, they can't get behind it? For me, a unique and compelling adventure that integrates story and action is like a breath of fresh air. It's a break from the norm, and a welcome one at that. The game was an extension of Kenji's vision for the M2 game so we got the real deal. It's a shame his unique content is not appreciated more. The American gaming scene is changing, no doubt about it. Hard core users like yourself (and us) are becoming somewhat endangered. Just look at the so-so numbers on Super Magnetic Neo, a game that would have sold 100,000 or more two years ago, or the reviews (other than ours) on Treasure's Sin and Punishment. At this point I feel lucky every time a real game comes my way. The question is, how much longer will they continue to be made if the demographic that buys them continues to shrink? God, what I wouldn't give for just one more 2D Castlevania like Symphony. Right now I'm diggin' Oni and Onimusha. They're both the real thing, but in different ways. Is it just a coincidence that they both begin with Oni? Hmmm. More and more games are being created with the casual user in mind now that gaming is full-on mainstream but as long as the developers who got us this far are around we'll always be covered. Let's just hope they pass their genius on to their offspring, or else my child will be*

*playing sing-along with Britney Jr. 25 years from now.*

*Regarding Sega, I think they're making all the right moves. Their content will now be enjoyed by a much, much wider audience and the Dreamcast architecture had a healthy lifecycle. Most importantly, though, Sega will surely turn a healthy profit as a result, and that means more Sega for everyone in the years to come. Now, if they'd only resurrect Golden Axe, Panzer Dragoon, Kid Alex, Shinobi... How much space do we have?*

GR,

Wow, you sure weren't kidding about RED DOG! Helluva game!! I sure hope somebody besides me discovers this excellent, awesome game (and with your positive review, certainly someone should). I can't get over how much FUN this game is! Sure, it's tough; it's challenging—but it's done SO WELL, I don't mind replaying the level until I can beat it. I'm a little embarrassed to say I've only gotten to the ice flows in Level 2, but if this is any indication of what the later levels are like, RED DOG is a full-fledged masterpiece! Everything about it, from the video-physics of the Blaster-Master-ish ATV, to the cool as all get-out enemies, to the incredibly far-reaching visuals (looks like you can see a mile away at times) and the neat ability to target enemies & machinery a'la Panzer Dragoon...aw, it just don't get no better than this!

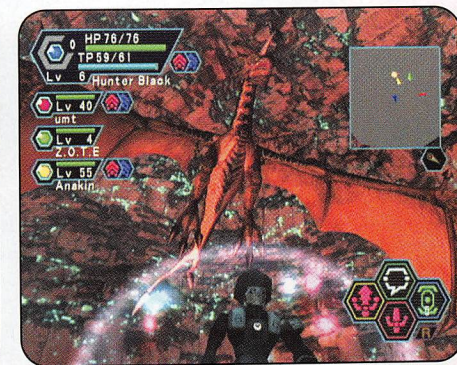
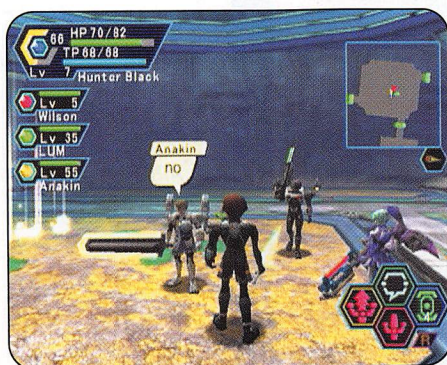
Thanks for turning me on to RED DOG!

*See, the game rocks! Can you believe Crave just tossed it out there with no marketing? I can't believe Argonaut didn't wig. Red Dog should have come from Sega. Argonaut has to be the most underrated developer in the world. They consistently pump out quality but it just kind of leaks out with no fanfare. Buck Bumble is another cool one that never got its due. Something tells me their Xbox game, Malice, is going to be their biggest since Star Fox.*

*It's time to send and email your comments on the recent Sega announcement! We really want to know what you think!*

### ► PHANTASY STAR ONLINE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 62-63

turbingly little to do with any previous PSO game. The emphasis now is placed on the Zelda-like battle system: build up your stats to increase your attack and defense proficiency, upgrade your inventory, and PSO's play becomes straightforward, real-time, battle. As a single-player game, despite it's beauty, PSO is average stuff. Find four friends, however, and make no mistake - your enjoyment of PSO is proportional to who you play with - and its repetitious style becomes an exercise in teamwork and camaraderie. Few feelings are more satisfying than helping friends, trading items, and jumping into heroic moments of self-sacrifice to save a fallen buddy. Teaming up to exterminate some fantastically horrific creature - and these character designs are unbelievable - is an almost indescribable ecstasy. PSO is



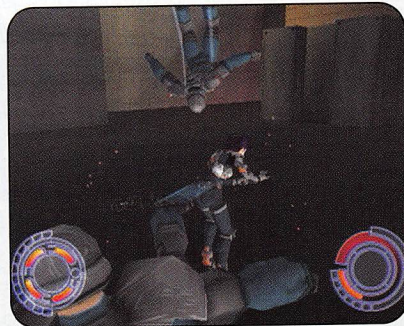
such a polished social experiment that you'll overlook the game's flubs like the quirky camera, occasional lag, and awkward saving system (Online games must be completed in one sitting). PSO is a terribly addictive experience that is a significant evolution in console gaming. Whatever your preconceptions about PSO, remove them. Few games are so engaging, so stunning, and truly so revolutionary. **-Shola Akinnuso**

### ► ONI, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58-59

or so guns? Well, she carries one and when it's empty, drops it, kicks someone's ass and steals theirs.

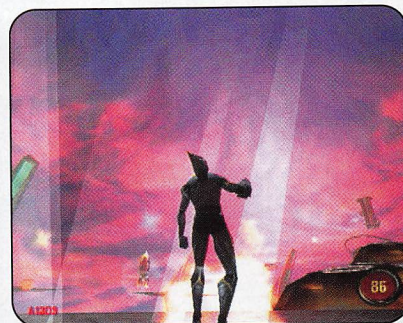
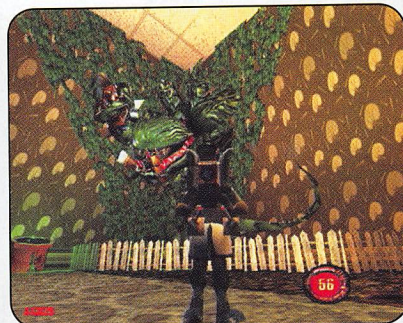
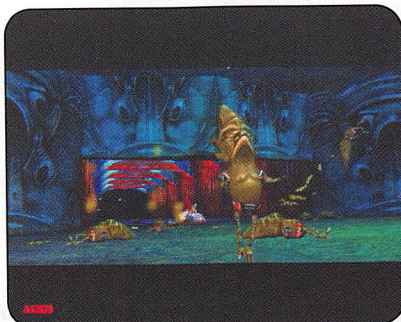
Oni's long, vastly replayable, and is filled with mood-inducing music used to great dramatic effect. It may not blow your mind in the graphics

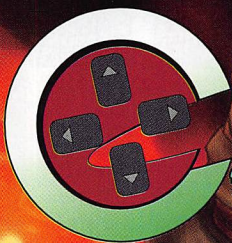
department (then again, it just might especially towards the end), but you'll be too busy crackin' heads and staring at Konoko to notice. I'll take Oni's simple looks and deep gameplay over a game like Bouncer, where beauty is only skin deep any day of the week. Perhaps in the not so distant future, we'll get both. Oni 2 perhaps? **GR**



### ► MDK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26-27

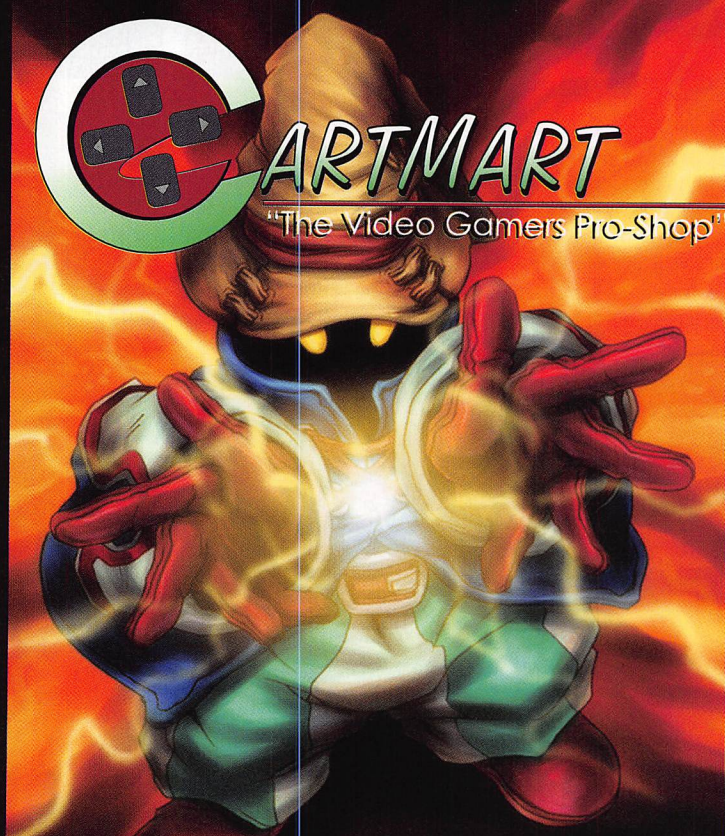
exciting and superbly constructed, highly charged and boldly designed. On the Dreamcast it was one of last year's best games, and this PlayStation 2 transplant — beefed up with more speed, better resolution and control, and added lighting—is even better. **GR**





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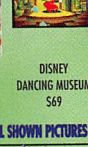
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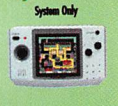
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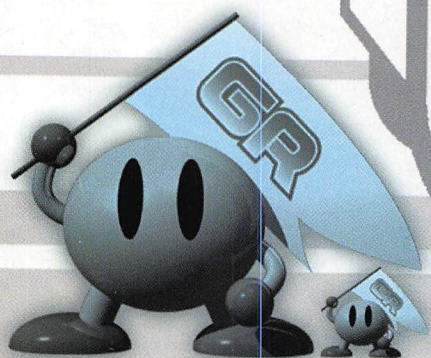
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april 2001

**M**etal Gear Solid 2 has already been proclaimed Best Game Ever, receiving so much hype that you'd think nothing else for PlayStation 2 really matters. Forget about Solid Snake for a moment and get ready, finally, for next month's detailed look into Hideo Kojima's other anticipated project, Zone of Enders. Now that the PS2 has started to take off, the PS is starting to fade away, so we thought this would be the perfect time to look back at some of the great moments that defined Sony's first console. And finally—finally!—we get to see if Conker's Bad Fur Day is more than just deplorably delightful raunch—an engaging game that justifies the four-year design marathon.

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