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JUNE ISSUE 006

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Allegiance

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MIDWAY

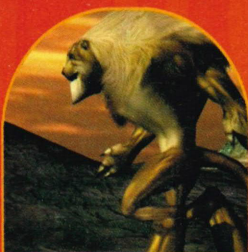
kalisto

Dreamcast

INDOOR CHAOS!

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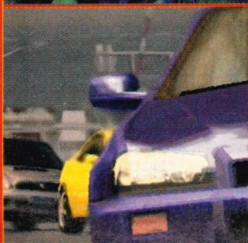
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Editor

James Kelly
james@gamesdomain.com

Art Director

Hatana El Jarn
blaze@gamesdomain.com

Senior Editor

Richard Sutcliffe
rs@gamesdomain.com

Contributors

Mike Smith, Gareth Holden,
Kevan Mander, Dave
O'Donohoe, Maria
Georgiou, Caroline
Wheaton, Kate Glanville,
Peter Oliver, Matt Vickers,
Jeff Kang, Tim Stevens,
Tim Chown, Bruce Geryk,
Karen Zierler, Brandon
Trissler, Dave Kurtz, Rich
Greenhill, Lars Andersen,
Ty Brewer, Scott Steinberg.

Extra Graphics

Claire Davis, Ross
Plumpton

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Brookes on 0121 326 0900
or at:
liesl@gamesdomain.com

For advertising enquiries
contact Sarah Eaglesfield
on 0121 326 0900 or at:
sarah@gamesdomain.com

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625 3819 or at:
maxb@centresoft.co.uk

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GRAND THEFT AUTO 2



"A more than worthy sequel that outclasses and will probably outlast the original."
8/10 DC-UK

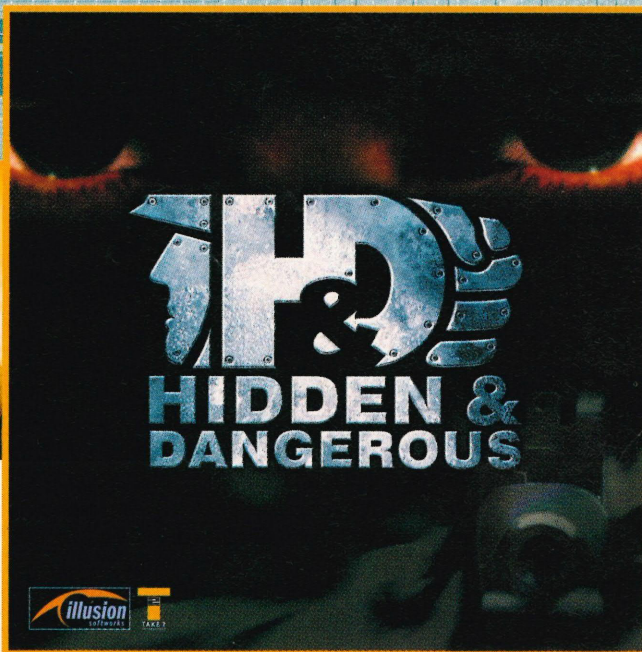
"It can't boast to be massively different from the original but then how do you improve on PERFECTION?"
ARCADE

"GTA2 is nothing short of AMAZING"
TOTAL CONTROL - UK

"If you like games that take good taste to the limit, then GTA2 is going to be right up your street"
GAMES MASTER - UK

FIGHTIN

2 BESTSELLERS FROM TAKE 2



"One of the most versatile 3D engines in existence."
OFFICIAL DREAMCAST

"One of the tensest games of 1999"
DC NEWS FEB 2000



"devilishly good"
 "unadulterated gameplay heaven!"
 "excellent!"
 "so playable, it's criminal!"
 9/10 winning the GAME OF THE MONTH

dreamcast
ON-BOX TECHNOLOGY ONLINE GAMES MONTHLY

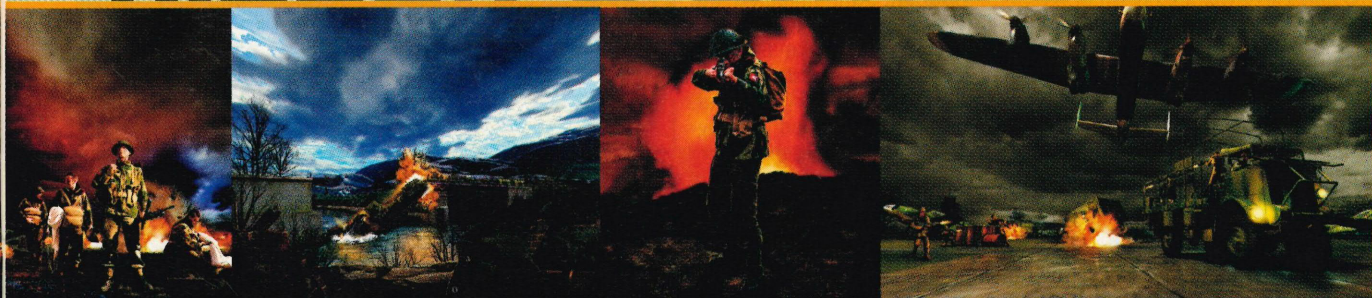


IG TALK



NOW ON DREAMCAST

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



"Anticipation rating 86%"
 "(Graphically), the game is looking totally stunning"
 "Successfully recreating the sinister and deadly atmosphere of the war"
 "Everyone's deamt of creeping around behind enemy lines...and H&D is set to bring this fantasy to life in fantastic style"

"H&D is one of the most atmospheric, utterly engrossing pieces of gaming entertainment to grace the video games scene in the last 12 months."
 "You'd better believe that your heart's going to start pounding"
 "We'll be keeping our evenings clear. We may just need them".

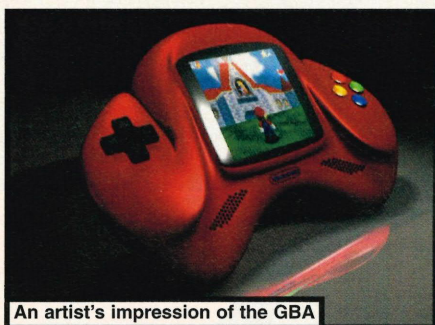
DC MAGAZINE ISSUE 7

DC MONTHLY MARCH 2000



E3 special

Exclusive reports from the world's biggest games event E3, the Electronic Entertainment Exposition, threw open its doors in Los Angeles last month and games industry chiefs unveiled their companies latest offerings amid the usual razzmatazz and hype. A crack team of reporters from Games Domain Online was immediately dispatched to the scene to sort the headlines from the hysteria at the biggest games show in the world.



An artist's impression of the GBA

Nintendo no-show

Nintendo's eagerly awaited console systems were nowhere in sight at E3.

Neither the Game Boy Advance (the would-be successor to the greatest selling console of all time) nor the Dolphin (the company's ultra-secret TV-based console offering for 2001) were on display at E3, leaving the gathered international press scratching their heads as to the reason why.

Game Boy Advance, said to be in stores by the first quarter of 2001, should have a nearly finalised design by now if it's to make its spring deadline. If this is the case it would seem logical to start showing off a prototype unit to get the hype rolling.

And while the Dolphin's release date is still to be announced, Nintendo fans are hoping this console doesn't follow the path of the would-be Ultra 64, delayed repeatedly before finally appearing as the N64 - now struggling to survive in a fiercely competitive marketplace.

With Sony's booth being dominated by PlayStation2, and Sega having plenty of new Dreamcast software and peripherals to show off, Nintendo's E3 booth seemed rather sparse with only run-of-the-mill titles to show. Only time will tell what will become of these new systems.

PlayStation2 launch date confirmed

Sony has finally confirmed the European and US launch date for their PlayStation 2 console, but failed to confirm a European pricepoint.

The company has finally committed itself to a October 26 US and European launch date for its highly anticipated PlayStation2 console. But Sony has remained tight-lipped on its European pricing plans for the new console. A US price tag of \$299 has been confirmed, so it appears likely it will be priced at £299 in the UK.

Around one million machines will be shipped out to both the US and Europe with three million promised for both regions by March 2001.

At a pre-E3 press conference Sony revealed the North American PS2 will be a cut above its Asian cousin.

Sony executive Andrew House declared that while the PlayStation made videogaming part of the entertainment lifestyle, PlayStation2 would redefine that lifestyle.

Electronic Arts' President of Worldwide Studios, Dan Mattrick, confirmed that the world's largest publisher had over 20 PS2 titles in development and was firmly committed to the platform.

Over 200 companies are currently licensed to create content for the PS2 and development on 270+ titles is currently underway.

Westwood flushed Red with success

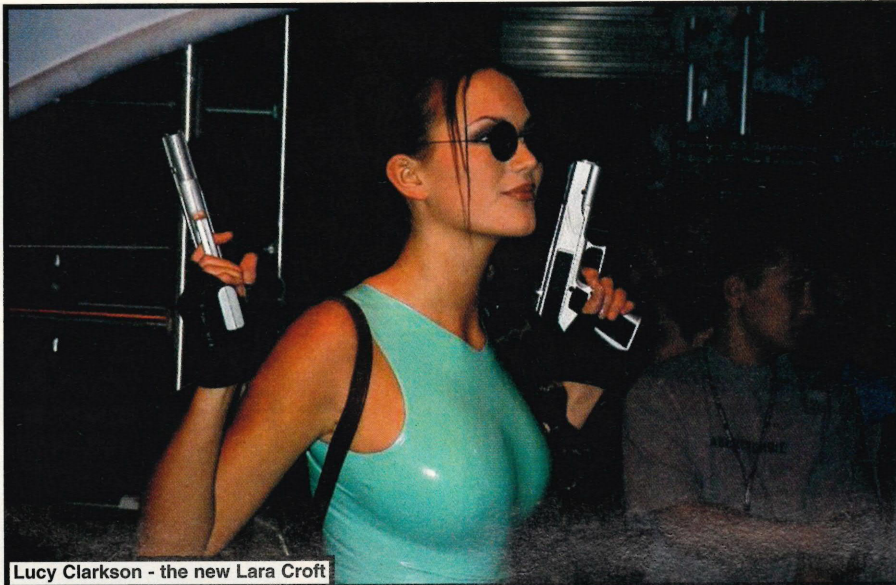
Westwood, flushed with the smash hit success of Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun, revealed the latest in their real-time strategy series at E3. Red Alert 2 has already been in development for a year, meaning Westwood employees have been keeping very tight-lipped about their latest gem.

The Soviet Empire has invaded America, cutting a swathe through Allied forces. New York and Washington were first to fall - so it's not all bad, then. Both sides are kitted out with a mixture of familiar and novel equipment - the Soviets carrying powerful tesla coils and psychic powers, while the Allies have cloaking and matter transporta-



Red Alert 2

tion capabilities. Naval units make a welcome return, and the war will rage over accurate representations of American, Mexican and Russian cities.



Lucy Clarkson - the new Lara Croft

Bear a necessity for Empire party

Starsky and Hutch's twitching informer, Huggy Bear (Antonio Fargas) was at a private party in Empire's meeting rooms at this year's E3. He was there to demonstrate the games publisher's commitment with Sony to develop a 2001 title based on the 70s cop series for PC and PS2.



Huggy Bear

Eidos unveil Tomb Raider babe and a Lara new games

Sweet 16-year-old Lucy Clarkson made her debut appearance at the Eidos stand on day one of the three day show, to draw attention to Eidos' massive selection of new games.

Eidos was keen to show off its 2000 line-up, consisting of a huge 13 titles ranging from arcade platformer Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 to third-person RPG Anachronox to Core's new 3D shooter Project Eden. Eidos also showed their commitment to the Dreamcast, with a large number of their games appearing on PC and DC formats - PS2 games were notable by their absence.

Project Eden, developed by some members of the original Tomb Raider game, is set in the near future and will be released on PC and Dreamcast. Cities have evolved to resemble huge hives, with the affluent rising to live in the heights of the tallest buildings and the criminals and dropouts inhabit the lower floors. A group of engineering technicians has gone missing, and your team of

four has been called in. Each member has individual skills, like engineering and computing. The viewpoint can be switched from first to third-person, and the advanced 3D engine features bump, light and environment mapping for a highly realistic look.

I'm Going In is a new first-person shooter based in Eastern Europe, with a homicidal Russian ex-colonel attempting to turn Europe into a radioactive wasteland. It features a strong plot, enemies that use genuine military tactics against you, and all the latest NATO spy gear and assault weapons. Again, this title is expected on PC and Dreamcast.

Here's a list of what else to expect from Eidos in the near future:

Fear Effect: Retro Helix - prequel to Fear Effect, using the same Motion FX3D technology to produce fully animated backgrounds. PSX only (See preview on page 52).

Sydney 2000 - 32 countries, 12 events and TV-style presentation to bring the Olympics to life. PC, DC, N64, GBC, PSX.

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2 - an update of the successful Legacy of Kain, featuring the same continuous streaming technology to eliminate loading breaks. PSX, PC, DC (See preview on page 52).

Anachronox - a 3D science fiction role-playing game, based on the Quake 2 engine, being developed by Ion Storm. PC only.

Deus Ex - another Ion Storm title, incorporating action, RPG, adventure and FPS elements. PC only.

Commandos 2 - faster paced gameplay and a new engine bring this classic up to date.

Hitman: Codename 47 - take control of the world's most accomplished and wealthy assassin, with a ground-breaking 3D engine and multiple mission paths. PC only.

StarTopia - ex-Bullfrog team Mucky Foot tackles a Sim City-style tale of space station management. PC and DC.

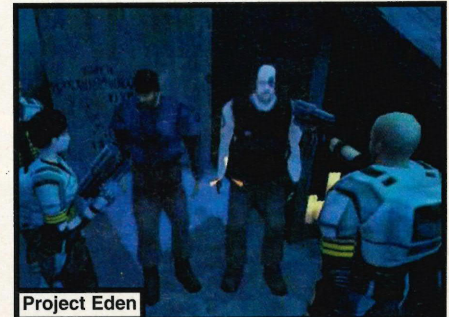
Fate of the Dragon - set in second century China. Establish power through production, construction, trade, science and war. PC only.



Anachronox



I'm Going In



Project Eden



Is that a lightsaber? Or are you just pleased to see me?

Obi Wan to watch

Following Jedi Knight and Dark Forces, Lucas Arts is working on Obi-Wan, a PC action game set in the Star Wars Episode One storyline.

The game gives the player the chance to step into the shoes of the young Obi-Wan Kenobi. Primarily wielding a lightsaber and using the Force, Obi-Wan must work his way through 13 "huge" missions which roughly parallel the plot of Episode 1 and include many locations from the game.

Spectacular Jedi manoeuvres will be possible - such as cartwheels during combat - all of which are being carefully crafted to match the manoeuvres of Obi-Wan from the movie.

The lightsaber can be used effectively for defence as well as offence. Using the lightsaber's deflection capabilities together with the Force allows the player to aim the reflected laser bolts back at the enemy in classic Jedi fashion. Frontal assaults won't be the mainstay of player tactics - there'll be a dose of Thief-like gameplay added to the mix.

The friendly non-player characters will react to the player's action, so if the player goes around indiscriminately killing civilians they are supposed to be protecting, eventually civilians will begin to view them as an enemy rather than a saviour.

The Force is an active element in the players arsenal and can be used variously for attack, defense, or object manipulation. The player has limited Force power but can develop greater and greater abilities with time and use.

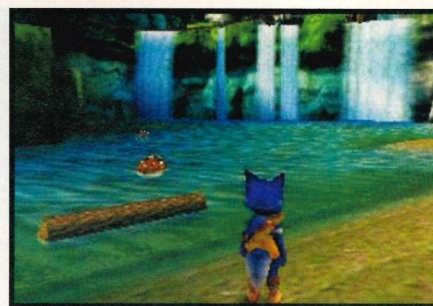
Enemies in the mission game will include (among others) Sith Agents (from a variety of species), Battle Droids, Tuscan, Starfighter Droids and, eventually, Darth Maul.

Client server multi-player is possible in variety of styles: deathmatch, tournament, capture the flag, protect the queen, etc. In multi-player, users can take on a variety of character skins - such as Darth Maul for example.

Obi-Wan is scheduled for a Autumn 2000 release for Windows 95/98.



Dinosaur Planet boasts an enormous 3D environment



Sighting of Rare Dinosaurs

Nintendo 64 owners will be getting a big dose of jurassic adventure this year when Rare releases Dinosaur Planet, their new epic adventure game for the Nintendo 64.

In Dinosaur Planet, players assume the roles of Sabre and Krystal, two fox-like, weapon-wielding protagonists. They team-up with a friendly pterodactyl princess named Kyte and a triceratops named Tricky. Their mission - surprise, surprise - is to save the world from a powerful evil.

The game has the feel of The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, both in terms of graphics and gameplay and, visually, it is treat. The camera floats behind Sabre and Krystal, with players able to press a button for a first-person view. Players can run around

and interact with objects like chests and such, and the 3D combat works very much like Zelda as well. The world is enormous, so players will have plenty of opportunities to explore their surroundings.

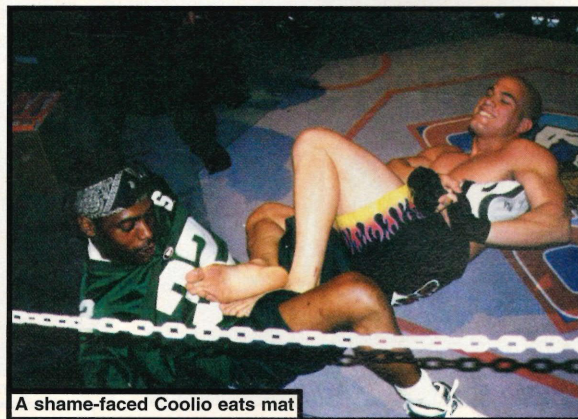
Some of the best computer-generated movies yet seen on the N64 advance the story and blend pretty seamlessly with the game sequences.

Real-time lighting, smooth animation and terrific art design make this a feast for the eyes. The voice acting is well-done, and the Dolby surround sound effects are crisp and often powerful. Dinosaur Planet requires the Nintendo 64 Expansion Pak, and takes full advantage of the extra memory.

Look for Dinosaur Planet later this year.

Coolio eats mat at E3

Bad-assed rapper Coolio made an appearance at the Crave stand at E3 publicising the upcoming Dreamcast wrestling game UFC. Unfortunately, a grinning wrestler soon laid the smack-down on the chart-topper who was left with a mouthful of mat and minus one comedy oversized trainer. Cool, Coolio!



A shame-faced Coolio eats mat



Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty

Metal Gear Solid 2 : Sons of Liberty was, without a doubt, the most exciting game at this year's E3. Shown once every hour on a massive TV wall, the video trailer for the game was, quite literally, a show-stopper. And for good reason. Metal Gear Solid 2 appears to be the most impressive PlayStation2 game revealed to date.

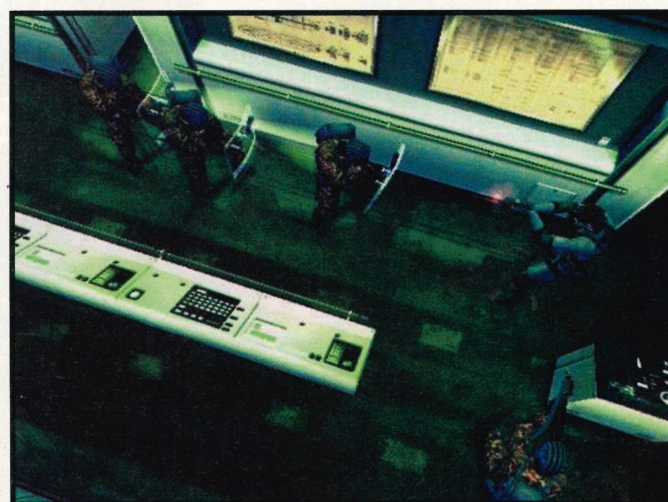
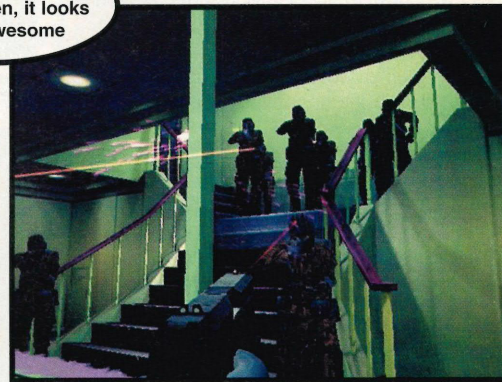
The visual quality of the game was breathtaking. The screenshots on this page give some indication of the awesome 3D characters and environments, but you really have to see it in motion to get a true feel for how much of an advancement has been made over the original Metal Gear Solid. One gunfight showed off shelves full of glass bottles, each of which shattered into polygons as Snake blasted his machine gun around the room.

The sequence included scenes set on a ship, in a windy and rainy storm. The mixture of stealth and action that made the original MGS such a winner seems set to make a welcome return. Neat touches abounded throughout the demo. For example, some enemy soldiers were carrying riot shields. As Snake blasted at them, cracks appeared in the shields but no damage was done to the opponents. However, by lowering his aim, Snake was able to blast open exposed kneecaps, forcing the soldiers to the ground.

MGS 2 will be set in New York, an interesting change from the wilderness of Alaska. With the developers putting emphasis on the need for realistic lighting and air effects, this could be one of the most impressive action games ever released on a console. Meanwhile, work is underway to convert the original MGS onto PC. Watch this space.



MGS is back and, from what we have seen, it looks simply awesome





Romero hits back at Daikatana critics

"Daikatana is a super-fast, Doom-style blast-a-thon. If people don't like it, they don't need to buy it."

Doom co-designer John Romero has hit back at critics of his new release *Daikatana*. He made his defence of the much delayed first-person shooter after numerous on-line critics panned the recently-released demo as being dull, uninspired and graphically mediocre.

"There are way more people out there than the few thousand hard-core gamers who write their negative opinions on-line all day long," he said.

"I'm going to be happy when the real reviews come out because the full version is just awesome, so much better."

Romero then went on to suggest the gaming public would buy *Daikatana* on the strength of his name, despite the criticism the game had received.

"The mass market out there don't know anything about those criticisms," he said.

"Those people will walk into the stores, see the box, and say: 'Oh, this is from the guy that did *Doom*, and *Quake*, and *Heretic*, and all that. Those were cool games, so I'm going to get this one, even though I haven't heard about it'."

Daikatana was not in the mould of current popular titles, Romero said, comparing its gameplay to that offered by the massive hit *Doom*.

"People are getting into the *Rogue Spear* slow, snipey kind of gameplay. This is nothing like it. *Daikatana* is a super-fast, *Doom*-style blast-a-thon. If people don't like it, they don't need to buy it."

Romero stated he had no regrets about embarking on the project, and said he would do it all again, albeit with a few changes.

"I would have hired different people. It all came down to people, nothing to do with the game design at all," he said. "Now we have an awesome team and everybody pulled through."

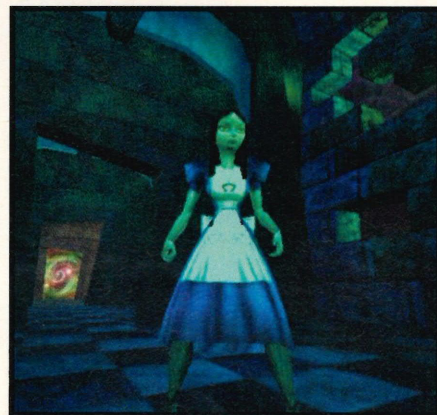
As the PC version will be out on May 22, we'll all be able to make up our own minds. N64 and Game Boy versions - apparently GB *Daikatana* plays like *Zelda* - are due within the next two months.



Outspoken: Doom co-designer John Romero



Daikatana: Demo slated as dull, uninspired and visually mediocre



Not quite the stuff of fairy tales



Alice in chunderland

Like all great children's novels the two books, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice through the Looking Glass*, had a darker edge within them. And this forthcoming EA release is no different.

This third-person game sees a gothic-looking Alice returning to a darker, maligned Wonderland on the verge of collapse.

The land is dying and places are warped from their former glory. Places such as the Pool of Tears, Fortress of Doors, Centipede Lair and Mad Hatter's Castle are points you will visit on your journey to save Wonderland. With the help of mutated toys as weapons you must find the Queen of Hearts and halt her destruction of the land.

Familiar characters such as the Mad Hatter, Cheshire Cat and the Centipede are all here but changed by the strange and evil modification of Wonderland.

The game is expected out at the end of the year.

Those people that have never bought a **WF** game before should...

Wake Up and smell the canvas.

Bang up to date

updated line-up • video entrances • spectacular graphics • facial expressions • realistic lighting

Career mode

play a full career • tag team partners • rivalries • backstage storylines • tv & PAY-PER-VIEW events

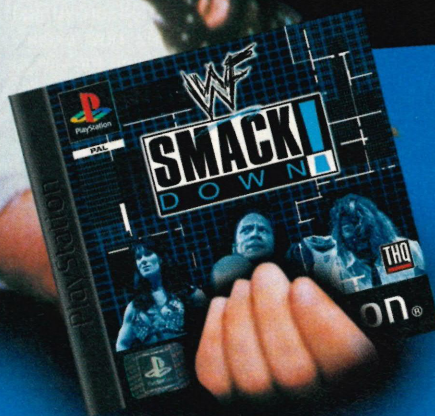
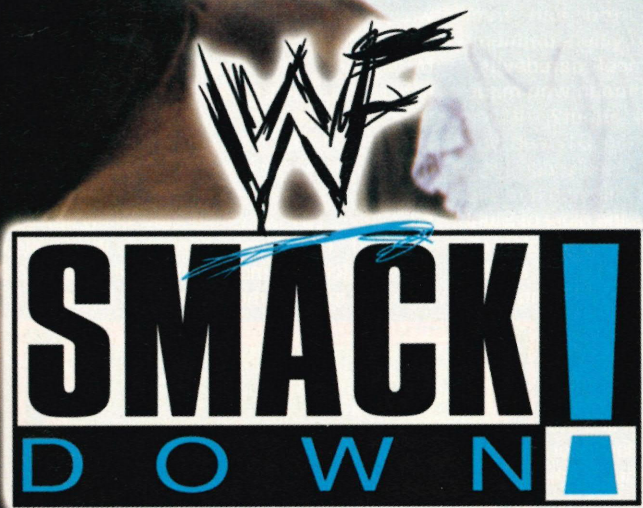
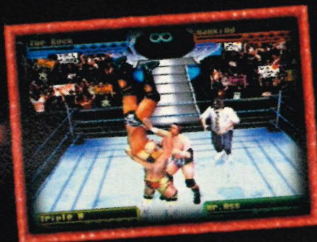
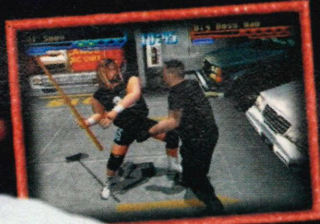
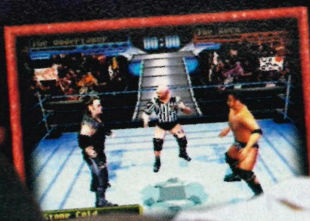
Backstage

fight out of the ring • hallways • boiler room • loading docks • parking bays • kitchen • backstage weapons

Play as referee

count slow/fast • let your ally win • screw-over your foes • cheat like hell • swing matches

**"Demands attention, even if you're not a wrestling fan
more challenging learning than Tekken" C&VG**



92% 9/10
GamesMaster PlayStation Plus

9/10 92%
PlayStation World Play Magazine

BANG ON! 93%
TOTAL PLAYSTATION

5/5 **computer & video**
GAMES ★★★★★

LAYETH THE SMACKETH DOWN!

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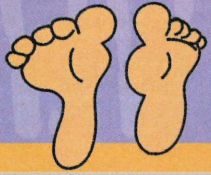
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World Wrestling Federation®





Cheats....Cheats

Jackie Chan: Stuntmaster

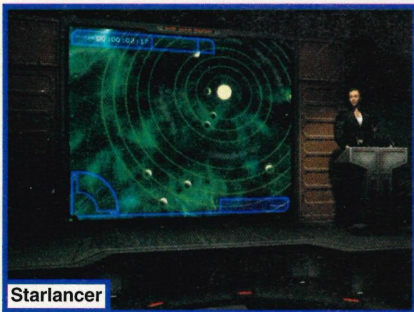
If the flexible Chinese guy's computer game is proving ah-so hard then press these buttons together on the menu screen for unlimited lives - R1, R2, L1, X



Rogue Spear: Urban Operations.

If Urban Operations are proving a little too tricky, relax with these smooth codes by pressing enter and typing the following:

teamgod	Team God Mode
explore	No Victory Conditions
5fingerdiscount	Refill Inventory
avatargod	God Mode
nobrainer	Disable AI
theshadowknows	Invisibility



Starlancer: If Microsoft's latest space epic game is proving a little difficult, and everyone in the street can hear you scream, then heads up soldier. To play any of the missions hold **CTRL** and type "**potatoe**" (deliberately spelt incorrectly) on the main menu. An **M** will appear in the top left-hand corner. Type the number of the mission you wish to play, and then hold **CTRL+ENTER** to access it.

Rayman: If you're having a little trouble with the loveable Rayman on the Game Boy Color then try this. Pause the game, and then hit

Left, A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B, Down, A, Right, B, Up, A, Left, B.



MDK 2

If Kurt Hectic is proving a little too hectic to control on the Dreamcast then try these relax-

ing little features to calm your nerves.

To detach camera - While the game is paused, press the X and Y button together. This removes the pause menu and gives you an obstruction-free view of the spinning Slow-Mo effect.

Party pooper - At anytime while playing the Doctor press left and right trigger, left on the D-Pad, and A on the key pad at the same time to see Doc Hawkins do something "Nasty".

Boxer shorts - If you're into that sort of thing then holding L + R and pressing X, X, X at the main menu and watch Kurt run around in his boxers!

To get the "Matrix Mode" (which is just a slow motion mode), play as Max the dog. Then hold the R trigger and press Up on the D-Pad four times.

replay

You remember Eddie Kidd and Evel Knievel, both great motorcycle stuntmen - but what about four wheel daredevils? Can you name one stuntman who made their name flinging cars about? If you owned an Amiga or an Atari ST then you knew how exciting it was to see a car flying through the air attempting to land on a raised piece of thin track. That was the glory of Stunt Car Racer and it was the creation of a Mr Geoff Crammond who rose to fame as the creator of the highly-realistic Grand Prix series.

Simple ideas can go a long way in a game. All you had to do was race against the computer around a raised track that looked a lot like the Big One rollercoaster in Blackpool. To make things interesting there were jumps, both long and short, for you to negotiate. A league system opened up new tracks for you to race around, providing a harder challenge, and you needed a well-judged trigger finger - we didn't have racing

wheels back then.

Graphics, once again, were simple with brown, grey, white and red being the main colours used on the leviathan structures. The front of the car wasn't 3D modeled but a pretty poor bitmap produced an even poorer flame effect when you engaged the nitro. Like most racing games it was reassuring to see your car's four wheels stay safely stuck to the road. The strange thing was it was also fun to watch your motor flying off the track and plunging towards the ground. Go figure!





Pen and Ink

**Write to us at: Letters, Games Domain Offline, Cuckoo Wharf,
435 Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 7SS.**

-Dear Games Domain Guys

Looking at the PC games reviewed in issue five you can see PC gamers only like top-down, isometric strategy games. PC gamers of my acquaintance have been impressed by my PlayStation games but always went back to the above-mentioned genre. Obviously PC gamers and console owners are two separate species of Homosapien. But without needling spog PC owners too much, I have felt for a while that PS2 is not going to have the same impact as it's predecessor had - lush graphics mean nothing without accompanying leaps in game concepts. And forget the X-Box - who cares? The N64 was shagged from day one because it didn't have a Streetfighter game! The Sega Saturn couldn't even cope with Tomb Raider. What's the X-Box going to have? Sony has several franchises, Sega has the coin-op conversions to pump out on the Dreamcast, but what about Microsoft? Oh well. In closing you do a pretty good magazine. El Sloano, Glasgow.



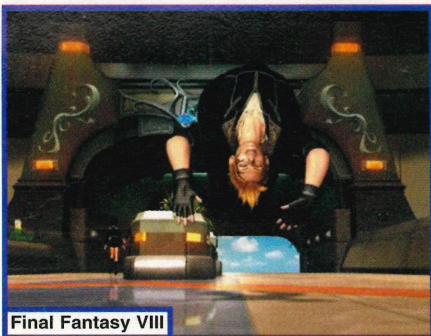
Soldier of Fortune

Blimey, Sloano! You've covered a lot of ground there so lets take it one thing at a time. Firstly, you're right. Last month a lot of strategy games came our way, but that doesn't prove your point that PC gamers shun console-style releases. What about Thief II and Soldier of Fortune: two top first-person shooters - a genre that doesn't convert well to console systems. As for the PS2, don't give up hope yet. There are some great games lined up for it, such as Metal Gear Solid 2 and Fifa 2000, that should provide great gameplay and graphics. And the X-Box? Well, maybe it's too early to tell but we understand a lot of publishers (among them Acclaim, Sierra,

Konami and Activision) have expressed a keen interest in Bill Gates' new baby. But only time will tell if it will succeed.

Dear GDO

I just thought I should write to you and inform you about Final Fantasy VIII. I don't know whether you are aware or not but Computer and Video Games magazine gave it five stars and Official PlayStation Magazine gave it 10/10. These magazines are obviously lacking taste in games. FFVIII deserved six stars and 11/10. Final Fantasy is more or less perfect. It's better than drink, sex and even life. I'm sure you share my opinion and it would be nice to have a mention in your magazine. Alex "Boz" Howard, address supplied.



Final Fantasy VIII

Well Alex, one thing is certain - you don't get out enough. Final Fantasy VIII is a top game, true, but better than sex? I pity your future wife. And as for saying it's better than drink, that's just ridiculous.

Dear GDO,

I would like to say to the writer of the letter printed in issue five calling PC gamer 'spods' that anything that a console can do the PC can do better. PCs carry on getting better and better, while consoles are stuck where they are because they cannot be upgraded. Imagine what advances will be made in PCs over the next five years and then think that the PS2 is going to look the same. David Evans, Sussex.

If our mailbag is anything to go by, it seems war has been declared between console and PC gamers. I'm staying out of it but what do you think? Tell us which platform you prefer and why. Meanwhile I'm retreating to my bunker.



GD Note

Official: GDO is now biggest multi-format games mag in UK

Yes, we're back and bigger than ever. This month GDO's circulation rose to 75,000. To put that in perspective, that's roughly the number of lies an average politician tells in any given six-month period.

If you prefer, it is approximately the number of chips which can be produced from seven medium-sized genetically modified potatoes. Coincidentally, 75,000 is also the average weekly alcohol intake in units of members of GDO staff. Okay, so I made up the the second comparison but it's pretty impressive huh? I ought to point out at this point (before I'm tempted to draw another lame comparison) that GDO is now the biggest multi-format games magazine in the UK! And you don't have to pay a penny to get your copy. Selecta!

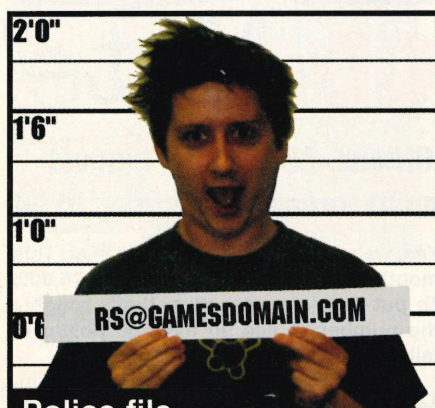
So, what delights are contained within these pages? Well, first off it's probably worth mentioning E3 - the biggest game show in the world - which took place in LA last month. GDO was there and we have brought a planeload of screens, news and previews back with us. Check out Metal Gear Solid on the PS2, the latest Monkey Island jape and use the force with Obi-Wan. To cope with all the E3 goodies we have expanded our news section to five pages and crammed them full of the best from LA. There's even a gangsta rapper. Flava!

Aside from E3 we have our usual games fest. This month's issue has a feature on one of the most talked about games in development ever: Black and White. We also have previews of Baldur's Gate, GT2000, Team Fortress 2, Perfect Dark and Wipeout Fusion. Reviews include NFS: Porsche Unleashed, Lemmings Revolution, Tekken Tag Tournament, and Euro 2000. Recognise. Bo!
james@gamesdomain.com



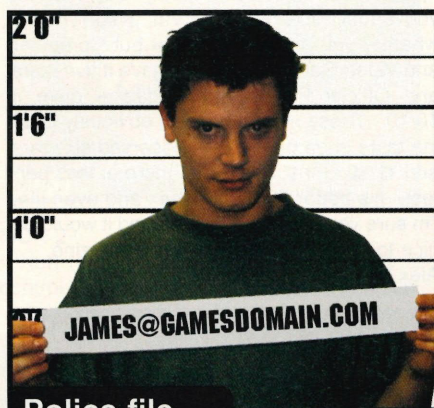
The Unusual Suspects

Yes, I'm afraid it had to be done. You have pored over our magazine (or, more probably, poured something over our magazine) read the reviews and looked at the lovely screenshots and images. Now it's time to name, shame and reveal some of the shadowy underworld figures behind Games Domain Offline. But be warned! These individuals are highly dangerous and armed with all sorts of dull and geeky conversation pieces. More key suspects are being rounded up and their pictures will be released as soon as charges have been brought. Remember this rogues gallery and be on your guard!



Police file

Name: Richard Sutcliffe
Position: Slumped over desk
Aliases: Slim Boy Fat
Previous convictions: Assault and threats to kill (GDO staff)



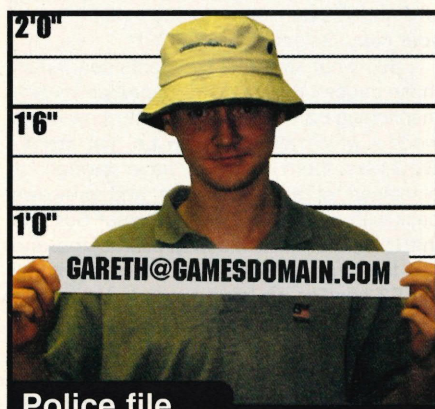
Police file

Name: James Kelly
Position: Flat on back
Aliases: Cheery Jim, Smiler
Previous convictions: Breaches of the Obscene Publications Act



Police file

Name: Liesl Brookes
Position: On stage
Aliases: Liesl Von Tramp
Previous convictions: Foul and abusive singing



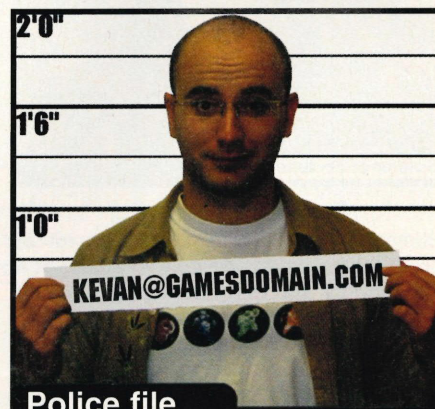
Police file

Name: Gareth Holden
Position: At the wheel
Aliases: Boyracer, maniac
Previous convictions: Possession of contraband trance



Police file

Name: Mike Smith
Position: King Edward VII's bar
Aliases: The Warlock
Previous convictions: Witchcraft, spellcasting, etc



Police file

Name: Kevan Mander
Position: Face down in the gutter
Aliases: Widescreen
Previous convictions: Procuring cheats with intent



COMPETITION



Alright you 'orrible lot. Don't slouch, stand up straight and listen to what I'm telling you. It's not normal army procedure to give away something for nothing but this month we have decided to make an exception in the hope it will make soldiers out of you.

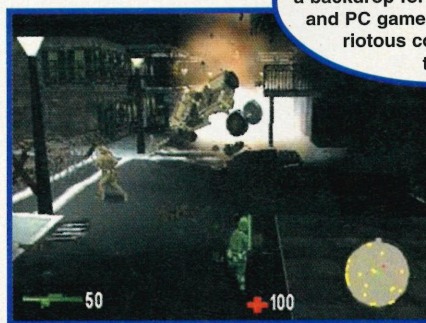
I would have preferred to send you on a 50-mile march with 140lbs on your back but the Captain believes you grunts will respond better to encouragement rather than an endless torrent of high-decibel, foul-mouthed abuse from me. Shame really.

Anyway, he's offering ten lucky Privates and civilians the opportunity to win copies of 3DO's Army Men 3D, Sarge's Heroes and Air Attack. Yes, all three games to ten winners - so you'd better not let him down or you'll 'ave me to deal with. Do you understand? Right, all you have to do is answer this simple question: **The soldiers in the Army Men series of games are made out of what? A) marshmallows B) depleted uranium C) plastic**

Answers on a postcard, or back of an envelope, should be sent to: Army Men competition, Games Domain, Cuckoo Wharf, 435 Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 7SS. And don't come snivelling to me if you don't win!



War!
Huh! What is it good for?
Well, apparently, being used as a backdrop for countless console and PC games. Like this trio of riotous conflict-related titles



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While the cat's away...

Hello, people! Mike's away sunning himself at the games fest known as E3 so I, Kevan Mander, get to write the intro. But what is E3 you may ask?

E3 is one helluva a party where games developers, publishers and journalists get drunk and show off the games they currently have in development. Like some macho arm-wrestling contest, E3 is all about showmanship and it's the company that makes the biggest splash that gets all the attention.

In the build-up, a lot of information on games is deliberately held back so when it eventually gets a public airing at the exhibition it is received like a pretty southern belle at a debutantes' ball.

And in this month's GDO our intrepid team of E3 reporters have brought you a round up of the hottest news from the show.

Coming up in the preview section of this

month's issue we talk to Bioware about their role-playing game Baldur's Gate II and Mike gets to the bottom of spooky goings on at Headfirst Software and the survival-horror game Call of Cuthulu.

Lemmings, the little green haired blighters return from the early 90s and we bring you the lowdown on the return of the most addictive game of our childhoods.

If puzzles aren't your thing then jump into a Porsche with Ty Brewer and hold on tight as he burns rubber and test drives Need For Speed: Porsche Unleashed.

If space is your thing then let Lars Anderson take you through a tour of Imperium Galatica 2 and find out whether it really is out of this world.

If you'd rather be in the cockpit then Richard Greenhill dons his space helmet and hyperspaces into battle to find out if

Starlancer is worthy of the new millennium.

As ever, if you have any suggestions or comments please e-mail me at Kevan@gamesdomain.com or Mike@gamesdomain.com



The Games Domain reviewers hanging out at E3

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Baldur's Gate II

Planescape Torment and Baldur's Gate have a lot in common. Two RPGs using second edition AD&D rules, they used the same Infinity engine developed by Bioware. Both were published by Interplay and they won the GDRewiew Game of the Year - in 1999 and 1998 respectively.

Kevan Mander

Now, Interplay and Bioware have teamed up again to bring us a sequel to Baldur's Gate, entitled Baldur's Gate II: The Shadows of Amn. We talked to producer Ben Smedstad and Bioware joint chief executive officer Dr Gregory P Zeschuk to find out whether more awards would soon be in their hands.

The story starts off with your character caged deep inside a dungeon. Around you, invaders are breaking in causing havoc and pretty soon they set you free to wander around your new surroundings.

"The future looks very bright for the Baldur's Gate II team with yet another classic RPG game on their hands."

Ben said: "The scope and scale of Baldur's Gate II is far greater than Baldur's Gate. You can go to the Underdark, Astral Planes, Abyss, Elven Forests, underwater cities, all sorts of crazy things. The artists had a lot of fun. We've spent a lot of time tweaking the models, relighting, reanimating,



Pink is big this season with wizards

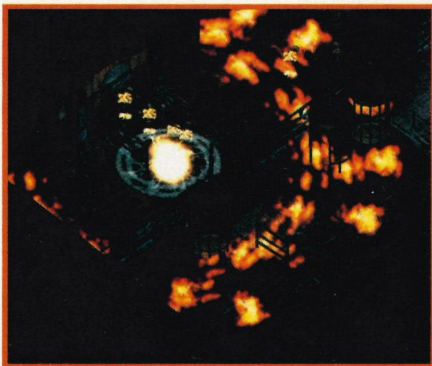
adding more frames, bringing it all up to date - and that's just the models," said Ben.

The Baldur's Gate II world is set in the province of Amn, just south of the coastline that was seen in Baldur's Gate, so everything you see in the world will be new. The guys at Bioware have made it a little easier to travel around with a 30% increase in the walk-speed of the characters. You will also have the option to jump from place to place in Amn instead of having to walk everywhere.

"It's a lot more compact. BGII covers ten times the area of the original but you won't have to walk to every place. You get the highlights," said Ben.

Character creation is the most important part of the game. A new race, the half-orc, has been included on top of the elves, half-elves, dwarfs, halflings and humans. You can play as a fighter, ranger, paladin, cleric, druid, mage, thief or bard. After you have chosen your character, a series of sub-quests become available to you to complete. In addition, kits allow you to refine your character even further. These kits will allow you to add bonus multipliers to attacks but also remove some abilities.

Weapon styles have been changed, so rather than groups of weapons you get specific skills. Statistics bring to life how strong,





Has anyone seen Jaws?



charming, wise or intelligent you are in the game. It is up to you to decide where your character excels and different classes of characters have different requirements. The cleric, for instance, needs to have a high level of wisdom to remember all those spells.

Flesh is put on the bones of your character by the biography - a new feature in the sequel. It is created when you design and create your character but you can write your own if you want. If you play over the net then people can read about your adventurer.

You will be able to port characters in from either Baldur's Gate or the expansion Tales of the Sword Coast. Imported characters will be brought up to the minimum experience level of 89,000 points - this dictates your abilities, what spells you can cast and how effective your ability to attack and defend is. The maximum number of experience points you can gather is 2.9 million making it possible to reach levels as high as 23.

Non-player characters (NPCs), controlled by the computer, have been developed to a greater degree to make a more involving game. Like Baldur's Gate, up to six characters (out of a possible 19, including four characters from the original) can be controlled in-game.

Ben said: "The complexity of NPCs has been increased. We want people to have an attachment to them, we want them to care." This has allowed Bioware to code in more opportunities for role-playing storylines which you are not related to, but you can interact with. And don't be surprised if the opportunity for a little romance appears when you play it. "One NPC has as much scripting, interaction, dialogue and interjection as all 24 characters in Baldur's Gate," Ben continued.

As an addition you will also be allowed to take on any of your party's sub-quests, the importance of which becomes apparent when you learn story role-playing is a main part of the game. Taking part in the plot will reward you more than hacking away at monsters. Greg said: "In general, we want to make sure you are rewarded for taking part in the story, not just watching it, for solving puzzles and using skills wisely."

Should you come across a random encounter or a lair of one of the hideous monsters - like Ettins, Orcs or Beholders - you might feel inclined to dispatch it. Combat in the game has been designed to be as close to the original as possible in its feel, but look and act better. A total of 300 spells have been included and magic weapons, unique weapons and power items will be available.

The game has been given a thorough going over with a view to make the role-playing experience more enjoyable. Backgrounds now feature more detail and 3D card support has been given for spell casting.

"There will be two versions of art for spells, 2D and 3D. Any computer that can run GLQuake can run Baldur's Gate II," said Greg. "As far as game time is concerned the main story will take 50-60 hours of play. If you include all the sub-quests then you're looking at 200-300 hours. We've cleaned it up, made it more intuitive but retained the feel of the original."

Multiplayer is now big and Baldur's Gate was one of the first games to use co-operative multiplay. The only thing Bioware has found fit to change is the way information is passed between players. In Baldur's Gate, if you were having a conversation with someone, the whole group had to read it even if you were just doing a little shopping. In the sequel, important information will always



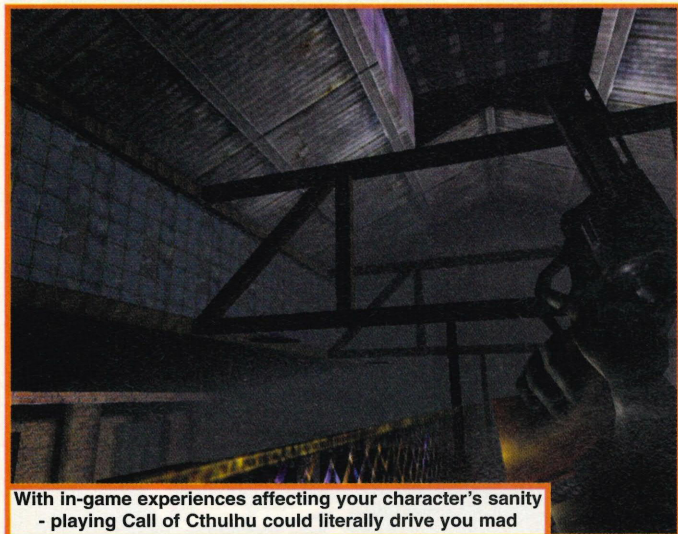
All right, who called me fatty?

appear to the whole group but minor things will allow play to go on interrupted.

The future looks very bright for the Baldur's Gate II team with yet another classic RPG game on their hands. People will soon be even more interested in fantasy games as Lord of the Rings and even a Dungeons and Dragons film are being shot as we speak. And as for a Baldur's Gate III? "Baldur's Gate was always planned as a trilogy. We'll see," Ben said. **GD**



Call of Cthulhu



With in-game experiences affecting your character's sanity - playing Call of Cthulhu could literally drive you mad



A Bjork lookalike hides behind a door

Famed for their **Simon the Sorcerer** graphic adventures, **Headfirst** has decided to move into a rather more adult arena. Assistant project manager **Andrew Brazier** was kind enough to leave the almost-finished **Simon the Sorcerer 3D** for long enough to take **Games Domain** through his interpretation of the **Lovecraft** mythos.

Mike Smith

Call of Cthulhu is a first-person survival horror game, in the style of **Resident Evil** and **Nocturne**, and set in the 1920s. **Deep Ones** - "mutated human-fish things," according to Andrew - have been splicing their genes with the human population of a small US village, **Innsmouth**.

"The Cthulhu stories aren't like **Men in Black**, not like 'people vs. aliens, with guns' - the main theory around the mythos is that Man is an insignificant speck on the earth, in the great scheme of things," Andrew said. "The creatures are far more powerful than Man, and they really own the earth, with humans being a nasty blot on the landscape."

Headfirst has the rights to use any of the Cthulhu mythos as source material, and the variety of background available means there was no problem in finding varied missions for the player.

So how will the plot work? "The player starts to uncover what is going on in **Innsmouth**, after the initial mission. As he goes on, he finds more out," Andrew said.

Initially, four characters are available to choose from, each with their own skills. In the game, different experiences will affect the character's sanity rating. Each character has weaknesses built in from the start, which become more pronounced as they begin to lose their minds.

"It's not going to be a massive physics-fest, like **Trespasser, which relied on the physics and ended up being crap"**

"We will do it subtly, though. We don't want to make the player feel out of control - that is just unfair. We want to build it up over a long time, so the player gradually gets the feeling their character is losing the plot," Andrew said.

The team has been working with the **Havoc** graphics engine for some time. Unveiled to the public at the **Game Developer's Conference** in **San Diego** earlier this year, **Headfirst** has been involved with the beta testing process. It has advanced features like cloth physics - so hanging curtains and clothing will blow about in the wind, and react to collisions realistically.

Many of **Call of Cthulhu's** creatures are "blobby", Andrew said, and the

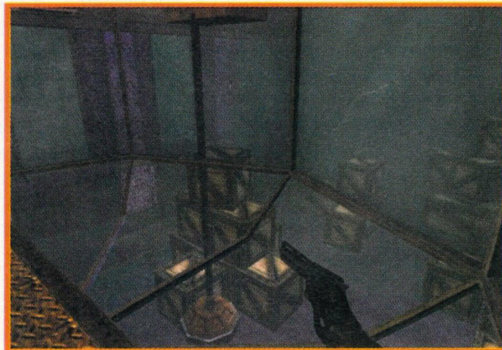
engine allows easy modelling of soft bodies, so the creatures will be able to use **Terminator-style** effects to squeeze themselves through narrow doorways or entrances.

But Andrew was keen to point out **Call of Cthulhu** won't concentrate on flashy modelling over gameplay.

"It's not going to be a massive physics-fest, like **Trespasser**, which relied on the physics and ended up being crap. We are just using it for atmosphere," he said.

Call of Cthulhu will be aimed more towards the **Thief** school of gameplay with lots of interaction with objects. There will also be a realistic damage system, like **Soldier of Fortune**, so if your character gets shot in the leg, his movement rate will decrease - and a headshot will probably mean **Game Over**.

As well as the **PC**, **Headfirst** is planning to release **Call of Cthulhu** on either **PlayStation2** or **X-Box**. **Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth** is expected out late next year. **GD**





Team Fortress 2

Those of you who were clever enough to buy Half-Life and have a net connection will be fully aware of Team Fortress.

Kevan Mander

Team Fortress was originally a mod for the first-person, 3D shooter, Quake. Its popularity and staying power spawned Team Fortress mods for different games, including Quake 2, and one is currently being created for the gore-fest Soldier of Fortune. The success of Team Fortress reached new heights when developers Valve Software decided to re-create it with the Half-Life engine and distribute it free with one of the patches. Such was its success they decided to design a whole new game around the idea, but add a shed-load of features.

In Half-Life: Team Fortress you took on the role of a member of an army squad. You could play as a medic, sniper, marine, spy, commando or engineer who each came with their own skills and weaponry. Although Team Fortress came free with Half-Life, it lacked certain qualities, like bots (computer-controlled opponents), voice communication software and a single-player section. All this is about to change with Team Fortress 2.

Team Fortress 2 will be another first-person shooter with mission-based maps. Although some of the levels will be about eradicating the enemy, we are expecting a flurry of missions that require you to complete objectives. Levels such as 'Kill the President' in the original Half-Life: Team Fortress (where you were either in the team protecting the president or in the squad assigned to assassinate him) will be far more intriguing and strategy-based but with the same frenetic gunplay.

The biggest advance in gameplay to feature in Team Fortress 2 will be the ability to take on the role of a commander, allowing you to direct operations from a command bunker. Commanders will be aided by voice communication software, enabling members of the same team to talk in real-time. For those of you unfamiliar with gaming concepts, a series of training missions, like Half-Life's excellent training room, will be available.

All the classes from Team Fortress will be back. Players with no time to play online or with no modems will be able to play the game



At ease, private!



single-player with bots which are expected to be more intuitive and devious than before.

On the technical side of things the use of scaleable multi-resolution mesh technology means the computer will only show what it needs to show. For instance, high detail will only be depicted on objects close to you. Character movement will utilise a mathematical process known as advanced parametric animation, ensuring realistic character movements because they will be animated in relation to each other using a formula rather than using a strict set of animations.

GDO can't wait to suit up and head on out to the battlefield later this year. **GD**



PREVIEW

Publisher: Sierra **Developer:** Valve Software **Format:** PC **Release:** Christmas



ESCAPE FROM Monkey Island



Elaine and Guybrush get down to some rough stuff

LucasArts is at it again. With new controversial 3D graphics on 2D backdrops, *Monkey Island 4* actually appears highly polished. But what should you expect from this latest incarnation?

Karen Zierler

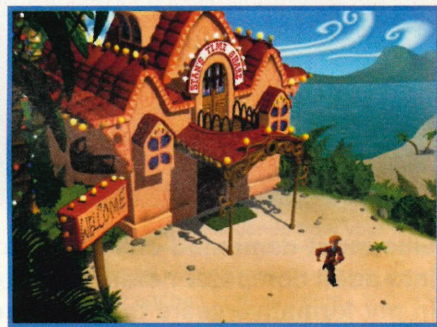
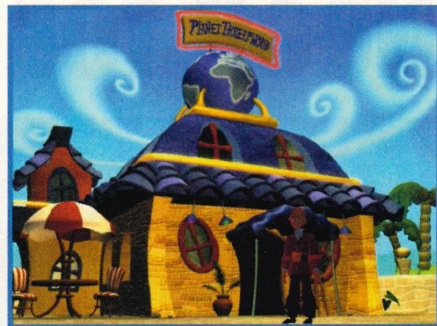
For those of you not in the know, here's a brief summary of what has gone before. The first *Monkey Island* game, *The Secret of Monkey Island*, was created by designer Ron Gilbert and appeared in the mid-nineties quickly establishing LucasArts as the leading developer of the point-n-click adventure.

The tale was of one young man, Guybrush Threepwood, questing to become a pirate. In his attempts to achieve this goal he defeated the ghost pirate LeChuck while saving his beau Governor Elaine Marley - with hilarious consequences.

Catch any PC gamer in his mid-20s and talk to them about *Monkey Island* and you will find it was universally loved and critically acclaimed. The series continued with *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge* and saw LeChuck steal Elaine away again and Guybrush trying to find a treasure called Big Whoop. When Ron Gilbert left LucasArts it seemed the series was dead. But in 1998 *Curse of Monkey Island* appeared with hi-res graphics, a great sense of comedy and Elaine and Guybrush finally getting married. The End?

No. It's time to *Escape From Monkey Island*. This time Elaine and Guybrush return to Melee Island to find Elaine declared dead and the Governor's mansion scheduled for demolition. Guybrush gets sent on what appears to be a rather mundane errand, and all piratey swashbuckling pandemonia breaks out. Actually, behind the scenes Guybrush discovers an Australian land developer has been acquiring real estate and our hero suspects something sinister. Along the way he must once again recruit crew-members, solve puzzles, and investigate scenes in classic style.

So, how do the 3D graphics and the manipulation work together? LucasArts last 3D adventure, *Grim Fandango*, was a bit hard to control. This time round, LucasArts has designed the game to use keyboard com-

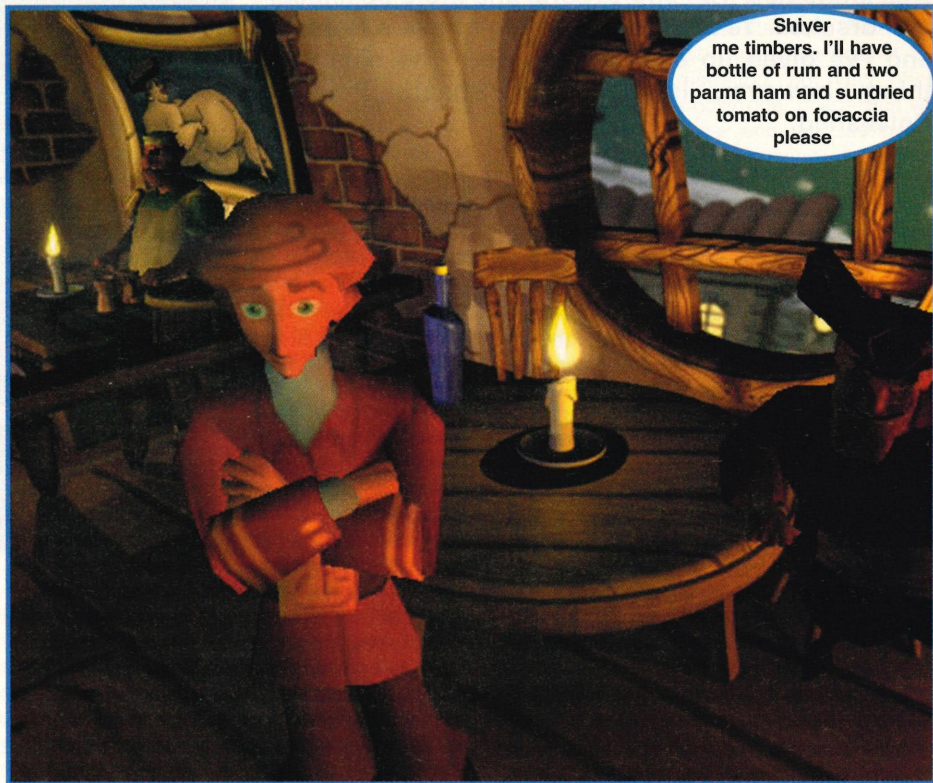


mands for movement, choosing options, dialogues, and actions. Characters run smoothly about and text appears at the bottom of the screen when a hot spot (an area where an object can be used or looked at) is encountered. Some of these objects can be manipulated in more than one fashion and several texts appear on-screen, which allows you to select what action you would like to perform. You just scroll through the actions, using the arrow keys, and pick one.

“Ask any PC gamer in his mid-20s about Monkey Island and you will find it was universally loved”

One of the strange things in *Escape from Monkey Island* is the inventory manipulation. The lack of mouse control means a new inventory user interface has been developed. This works similar to the one in *Tomb Raider* where all objects are seen on-screen in a circle and are rotated. How this will work with combining objects is not clear but the team seems very confident about the system, despite its console feel.

The humour is back, as are many of the characters, some of whom appeared in earlier *Monkey Island* games, such as Meathook. Voices of the characters have many of the same actors returning to their roles, most especially Guybrush Threepwood. It's still up in the air if Elaine will be voiced by the same actress. Humour



is of the same piratey silliness, as part of this, insults are a major thing! They are used in the games instead of action sequences. Pirates will duel and insult each other - if you can come back with a witty retort you strike your opponent. Insult games do make up a fair por-

tion of the title not limiting themselves to sword fighting. So be prepared for variations on this theme...such as...oh, insult arm wrestling. Expect some fond memories in what's shaping up to be a very traditional adventure this autumn. **GD**



Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed



Like most demented children who would later grow into adult computer nerds, I latched on to something in my formative years that bordered on obsession. I was infatuated with sports cars, and more specifically, Porsches. Years later I still don't have a Porsche and I've given up ever owning one. The next best thing, however, is *Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed*.

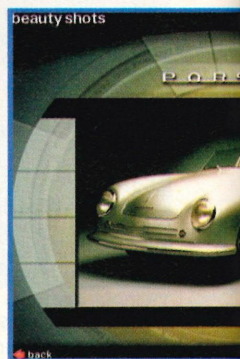
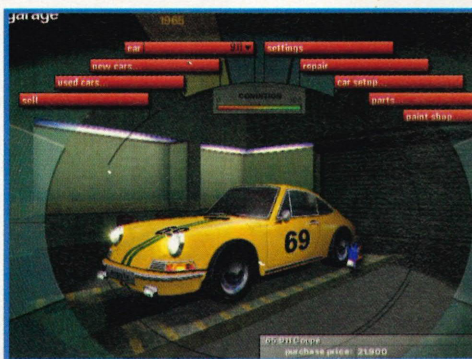
Ty Brewer

Porsche Unleashed is the fifth *Need for Speed* title - not counting the two "SE" versions. While this game builds on past success, an entirely new format has been developed that extends the *Need for Speed* franchise into uncharted territory. Instead of providing seven or eight world-class sports cars, *Porsche Unleashed* delivers practically every major and minor model Porsche since 1950. A total of 80 models - from the 356 to the 2000 911 Turbo - make appearances. Unlike past *Need for Speed* titles, only Porsche models are drivable.

Also new to this release is a four-point physics-based driving model (instead of a rules-based model). This has improved realism greatly but the game is by no means *Grand Prix Legends*. Instead, it drives much like *Need for Speed: High Stakes* but with a bit more predictability and authenticity. This physics engine finally enables a force feedback model that emulates road grip as an alternative of the more pedestrian "collision" and "body roll" effects of past titles. This is a vast improvement but doesn't quite live up to that found in *Viper Racing*. On the other hand, the effects are more than adequate and provide real driving assistance instead of novelty effects.

Because of the Porsche's rear-engine, rear-wheel drive configuration, it handles quite differently to more traditional front-engine layouts. The lack of weight at the front of the car combined with high horsepower and grippy rear tyres creates serious understeer. The new physics engine mimics this Porsche trademark perfectly. By taking a car out on the skidpad I could perform manoeuvres that are downright impossible with other racing games. You can do full 360 degree spins, J-turns and plenty of drift manoeuvres around corners.

Visually, *Porsche Unleashed* provides yet another stunning example of how good racing games can look. Nine road courses and five closed circuits provide enough challenge to keep the most veteran racing fan happy. I am especially pleased so many road courses were included (these were missing from III and IV). These European courses take drivers through the gentle rolling hills of France and the mountains of Italy, as well as forests



and canyons in other locations. The circuit courses provide just as much variety while retaining the flavour of a European driving tour. Most courses include true shortcuts and detours that can cut seconds from your time. The city courses don't follow the design of *Midtown Madness* - you can't drive anywhere you like. Instead, cities are usually set up for racing with barricades and signs to indicate turns.

Gamers who enjoy driving with the interior cockpit overlay will appreciate *Porsche Unleashed*'s variety of cockpits and, as difficult as it must have been, each car sounds distinct. I turned the music off because it was-



Obviously not a UK road judging by the lack of traffic



Most courses include true shortcuts and detours that can cut seconds from your time.



Drive any car you want - as long as it's a Porsche

chase upgraded parts from an inventory of 700 from the official Porsche catalogue. Money is also used to repair and replace damaged parts. Bumping and grinding your way to a sixth place finish with \$5,000 of damage is dumb. Driving the perfect line and finishing with nothing more than bug guts on your windshield is smart. The worst thing that can happen is having to sell a rare and prized 550 Spyder to pay for repairs to a 924. I enjoyed the career mode of Porsche Unleashed more than any other racing game because you truly are moving ahead and con-

stantly upgrading your ride. In another single-player mode, the test driver challenge, you assume the role of a Porsche test driver-in-training. As you complete your training and a variety of challenges, you advance in rank. In the early stages you are relegated to driving the slalom cone course. In later stages you

will be charged with delivering a car to a customer - unscratched in record time.

Most of these tasks require deft handling and an eye on the ever-ticking clock. I liked this feature in Midtown Madness (Blitz) and love it here as well. Competing against the clock is often frustrating, but very often rewarding. On the downside, police cars will try to wreck your car and this sometimes keeps you from completing a course unscathed. Because the police presence is a random event, your ability to complete a course is often frustratingly beyond your control. I played a single course for two hours before success - all because of the police.

If you want a quick thrill, single races provide an instant adrenalin rush. These races only allow you to drive cars and tracks you have unlocked (via test driver school or the evolution career). As a general rule I don't like games that lock cars and tracks but Porsche Unleashed provides a good starting set of cars and doesn't feel as limiting as other games. And when you're not busy racing, check out the multimedia catalogue of Porsche cars.

Porsche Unleashed is the best racing game of a young 2000. It combines the best of previous Need for Speed titles with an enhanced career mode and a wide variety of cars. Everything about Porsche Unleashed screams: "Buy me!" **GD**

n't that good and I wanted to hear the cars.

Last year's High Stakes game attempted to add a career mode, made popular in PlayStation's Gran Turismo. It wasn't much of a success. The high stakes racing was a bit too risky for some and the progression of cars wasn't very rewarding. Every complaint I had has been addressed with the new "Evolution" career mode found in Porsche Unleashed. Evolution play begins with \$11,000 in cash and a very old Porsche. By winning tournaments (and therefore money) a player upgrades through a series of 356s, 911s and other cars through the entire history of Porsche. Along the way players may pur-

stantly upgrading your ride. In another single-player mode, the test driver challenge, you assume the role of a Porsche test driver-in-training. As you complete your training and a variety of challenges, you advance in rank. In the early stages you are relegated to driving the slalom cone course. In later stages you

PROS

- Choice of Porsches
- Excellent driving model
- Terrific gameplay

CONS

- Test drive mode frustration
- Poor in-game music
- I want a real Porsche now!



Imperium Galactica 2

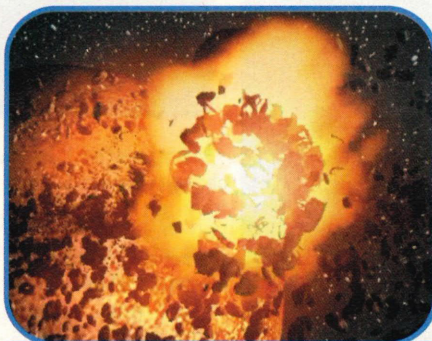
The sequel to Imperium Galactica could hardly have been more different from the original. If you played the original, hated it, and decided not to go for the sequel then it's really your loss. Imperium Galactica 2 blends role-play/adventure, strategy, and some C&C style combat in what I consider to be one of the best games so far this year.

Lars Andersen

Set in space, IG2 challenges you to lead one of three main races through a campaign, or to guide your race through a scenario. The three races have unique characteristics, in a very classic division of skills. The Solarian race is the human part of the game, with average skills in most areas, apart from research where the race excels. Kra'hens are warriors, and that is the strength of the race - fighting. They can not use either diplomacy, trading or spying as they are a secretive race. The Shinari are spies, traders and diplomats, but weak fighters. The division of powers between the three races works well, and appears relatively balanced.

"There are some aspects which are very ordinary, yet at the same time it immerses you deeper than any other game I've played this year."

The game wants to be 3D and the map-view and ground battles are in true 3D - while the map is in 2D. Your space ships can see as far as their radar reaches, depending also on their distance from the nearest of your



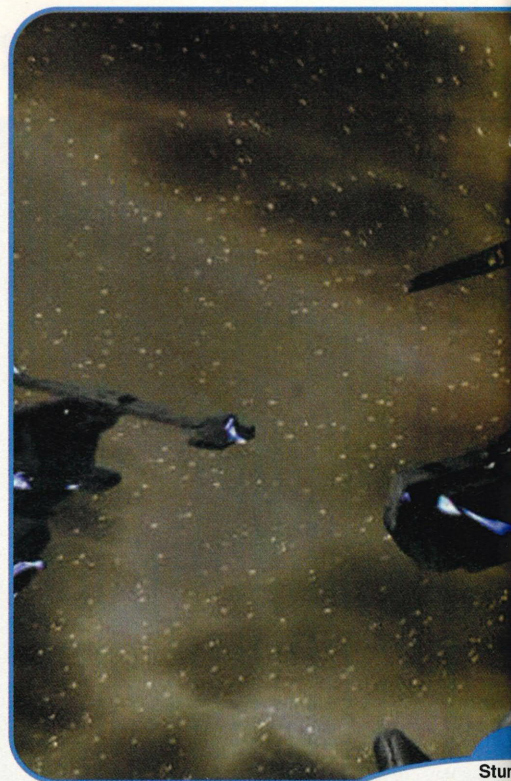
Build an empire - but be prepared to protect it



planets. Battles between ships can be simulated or fought out on a 3D battle field. If one side is too superior, 3D battle will be skipped and an overrun will occur, causing one side to vaporize and the other to proceed unscathed.

While space-combat is more like Homeworld than anything else, ground battles remind me of a simplified Total Annihilation, with tanks going over the same ground that you previously built your colonies on. It's quite impressive to witness, and the graphics look good.

Once your empire grows, occasionally visiting 20 planets to see how the building is going is too much work. You won't be building at all periods of the game, so it's nice that IG2 also has a feature to auto-build the colonies. This is similar to the feature found in Alpha Centauri, and it works well at the lower levels,



Stunning graphics and the play genres make it a top game



although you will have to manage a lot of your building yourself on the medium and high difficulty settings. This is micro-management at its worst, and does make the game a lot of work to play - at least on the most difficult setting or in multiplayer.

The battles are impressive, and tactics are important when fighting them. Various types of tanks and spaceships can be built with different weapons, and the combination of this is often as important as your in-battle tactics. Regrettably, the trick seems to be to build a big stack of warships that are strong enough to defeat anything, and just go from planet to planet until the game is won. This is not as bad if the overrun feature is turned off.

Graphically, the game is set at 640x480, with the option of higher resolutions available from a downloadable setup tool from the



...ning
...ght mix of game-
...G2 one of the best
...f the year



warning, one will turn and fire on the other. It's actually quite funny, until you realize that you must now spend credits on fighting this drug ring on one of your planets.

At the start of each of the three different campaigns are the jewels of the game's movies: long and stunning movie sequences which are different for each of the three races. The quality is incredible and leaves you breathless. From the scenes of fighter planes duelling in space to ground battles and beautiful alien-like cities - all are done with an attention to detail I have never seen in another computer game. This is movie-quality animation, and the movies combined with the great story of the game help to lift it above other space games.



ous genres that make up the most enjoyable experience this reviewer has had with a game in years.

game's website. The graphics seem crisp, with only a few flaws in the 3D-view of your colonies. If you own a big monitor - over 17 inches - the game may look a bit blocky at the low resolution.

Each race has a CD full of movies and speech, played at moments during the game. When you terraform a planet for the first time, a movie plays showing how the terraforming ship is firing at the planet from orbit. Another example is if you have a search party going to a planet to investigate a strange signal, a movie will show the searchers going across a desert in tanks, looking for the signal.

A personal favourite is the movie that plays when a drug ring has been set up on a planet, and a few tanks are going crazy because the crew is on drugs. Two tanks will be going down a city street, and without

There is an art to doing great games. To define what makes a great game is impossible, as different things do it for different people. Most would put innovation high at the top of their list of qualifiers for great game status - yet I don't think there is anything in Imperium Galactica 2 that we haven't seen before. There are some aspects to the game which are very ordinary, yet at the same time it immerses you deeper than any other game I've played this year. It is the mix of the vari-

Why is this game great then? Simple - it's perfectly balanced and although the C&C-style RTS and Masters of Orion-style space strategy are vastly different genres, in Imperium Galactica 2 they blend perfectly. It's not a hardcore strategy game, nor a game that could hold its own against Total Annihilation when it comes to C&C-style RTS, but the mix creates a varied and fun experience. In this case, that makes a great game. **GD**

PROS

- Great movies
- Very immersive
- Compelling storyline

CONS

- No 3D in multiplayer
- No summary screens
- Poor micro-management



Lemmings Revolution

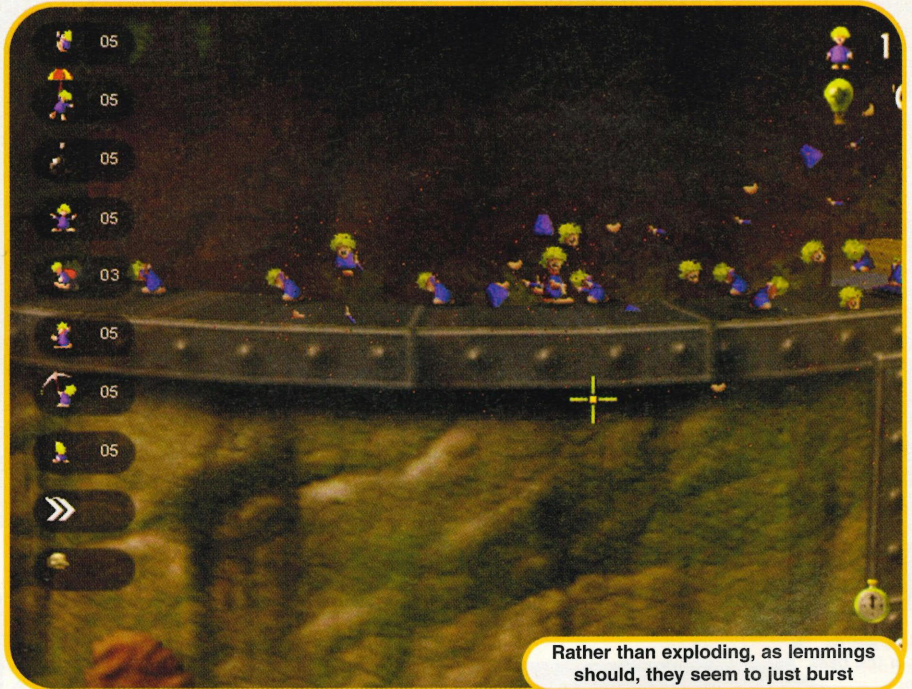
I once went to a fancy dress party as a lemming. No, really, I borrowed a green wig, dyed my granny's best nightie blue, and with a pickaxe over one shoulder I went on my way. When I turned up, everyone thought I was Sid Vicious. Such is life.

Mike Smith

None of which brings me to the latest in the Lemmings series: Lemmings Revolution. Following closely in the footsteps of the classic original, it takes that old, much-loved winning formula and mixes it up with a modern graphics engine. In a 'cunning' play on words, the Revolution of the title does not refer to innovative gameplay but to the way that the old-skool 2D levels are wrapped around a cylinder which can be rotated - nay, revolved - at will, to see the full extent of the level.

If you are young enough to have missed out on the first coming of the green-haired army, let me fill you in. Lemmings was devised back in the days when the Amiga was king, and graphics technology was rather less advanced than it is now. Two programmers at now-legendary DMA Design were arguing about how small a sprite could be made (this was before 3D) while still retaining character. One said 16 pixels high was the limit, the other said it could be done with eight, and made an animation to prove it. Lemmings was born.

DMA took these eight-pixel-high, blue-

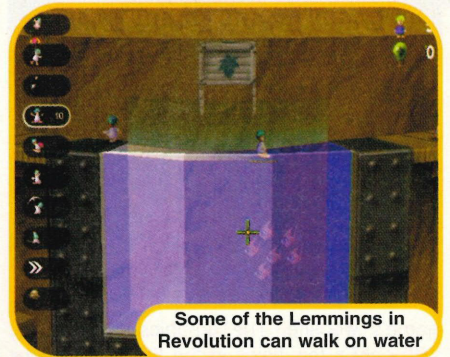


Rather than exploding, as lemmings should, they seem to just burst

clad, green-haired creatures and built a hugely successful game around them. The lemmings were dumped unceremoniously into a world of danger, and it was your job to guide them to the exit. Armed with just enough brains to walk, they would merrily plunge to their death down the nearest chasm if left unaided. So, to help, you could train them to do a variety of tasks - digging, building bridges, and, best of all, exploding. Every Lemmings player has been left with the mental image of an unfortunate lemm' realising its doom, and exploding with a cry of: "Oh no!"

So Lemmings Revolution was received in the office with a mixture of joy and trepidation. Could Tarantula Studios stay true to DMA's original vision? And would the simple, puzzle-based gameplay still cut it? Well, in fact surprisingly little has been changed. The range of skills on offer is identical to the first game, and the design of the levels is broadly similar. Commendably, Revolution has maintained the mixture of frustration and sense of achievement that characterised its predecessors.

A new breed of lemming has been added - dressed in pale robes - who for some reason are able to walk on water. In levels where the two types are combined, you will need to think about each group separately. New invert-o-matic beams cause your lem-



Some of the Lemmings in Revolution can walk on water

mings to walk upside down on the ceiling, and strange wandering brown animals wearing boxing gloves wait to punch your lemmings into oblivion.

Interestingly, there seems to have been a shift in emphasis from the first Lemmings game to Revolution.

In the past, there has generally

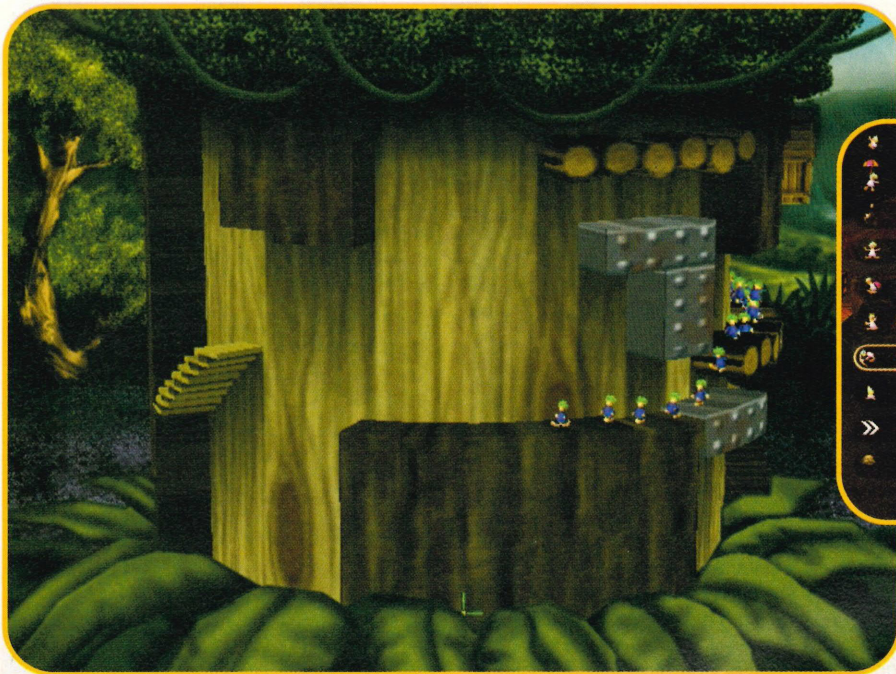
been only one successful way to complete a

level, but the new game

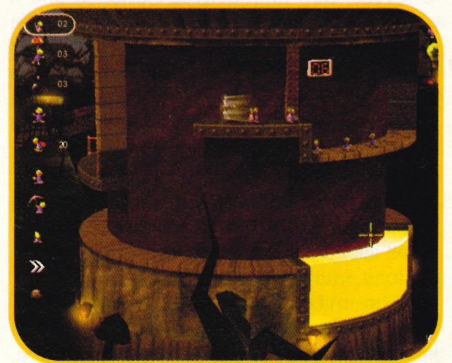
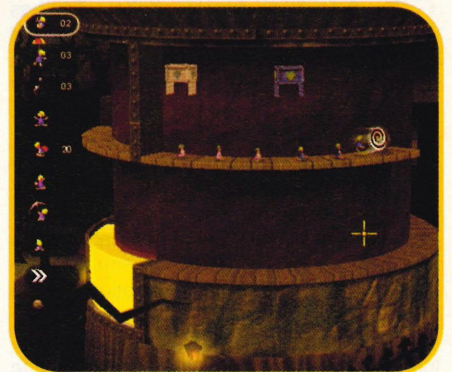
adopts a more open-ended model - rather than

figuring out the one correct method, it takes a more 'think-

ing-on-your-feet' approach. But the omissions will shock fans. When you



Revolution will have you going round and round in circles to save your lemms



opt to press the self-destruct button to wipe out your tiny charges you notice a subtle change has taken place between this game and its predecessors. Rather than exploding, as lemmings should, they seem to just burst, scattering small pieces everywhere, and this doesn't send nearby unfortunates flying around the place like they ought. Strange as it sounds, this minor alteration spoils the balance of the game. Without the satisfaction of nuking all your lemms when proceedings go pear-shaped, frustration takes over, and Revolution starts to annoy. Further irritation comes every time the game decides to drop you back to the desktop for no apparent reason, and the music will have you climbing the walls in annoyance - gone are the catchy tunes of the original. For a new engine, the graphics will also disappoint - lim-



ited to 640x480, which by today's standards is a rather low resolution - they lack the character and humour value of the previous games. In fact, about the only improvement Tarantula has made is to make it easier to pick out individual lemms from a crowd with the zoom mode.

Shameless cash-in? No doubt about it, but sometimes shameless cash-ins can be fun. Lemmings Revolution, though, could only be recommended for those who missed out first time round, and enjoy simple puzzle games in the Tetris mould. Otherwise, you will be left disappointed by what is, in the end, a shoddy, rushed and uninspired clone. **GD**

PROS

- It's Lemmings
- New slant on level design
- Kids will love it

CONS

- Very limited
- Seems rushed
- Disappointing



Cricket 2000

When you watch the England cricket team in action it is hard to believe the English invented the damn game. How many times have you thought: "Wouldn't it be great if they made a computer game of cricket where I could beat the Aussies to within an inch of their lives?" Well look no further, EA's Cricket 2000 is here.

Kevan Mander

Rather than county cricket, EA has gone for the international side of things. A wide range of cricketing nations, from poor Scotland to the rather excellent South Africa, make an appearance. Each have their own strengths, such as Kenya's ability to slog a ball for six almost everytime, but overall the teams seem to balance out quite nicely. You can go for the time-consuming world cup game. Alternatively you can opt for the 'six round' (a sort of mini-league system) a one-day international or the training nets.

Graphically, Cricket 2000 supports resolutions beyond the call of duty. I was playing in a resolution of 1280x1024 at 32bit and it clipped along quite nicely. However, as soon as you up the resolution the text slips out of its moorings and shifts around, due to the image being stretched but the text not being re-aligned. Also, the game jumps around quite a lot and fielders speed up and slow down with almost no indication as to why.

The game concentrates on bowling and batting. You might think this is great but when a ball slips by a fielder without him even diving for it, you will be sorely disappointed.

The artificial intelligence on the opposition is just as bad. Sometimes, if the wicket keeper fumbles the ball and you start a run, instead of knocking off the bails at his end once he has recovered his poise, he will inexplicably throw it to the opposite end, allowing you to reach safety.

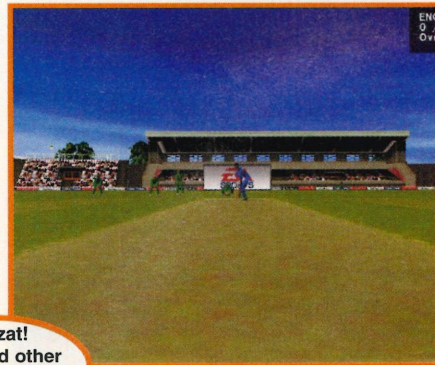
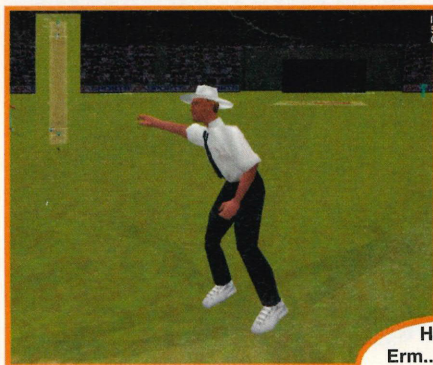
The game apparently uses a tru-spin and tru-bat system. But does this make Cricket 2000 more realistic? No. Bowling has become more difficult than EA's last cricket outing, Cricket World Cup 99 and the results are haphazard. Batting, on the other hand, is

insanely easy unless you put the game into expert mode which removes the control icons such as the bowling marker (where the ball will pitch) and batting cone (where you want to hit the ball).

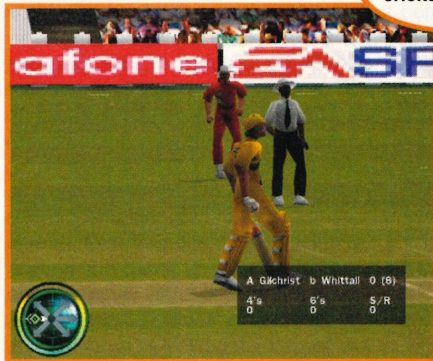
What the game does well is the little animations that players perform, such as stretching or polishing the ball, and batsmen leaning against their bats as they rest up. Commentary is also well performed by cricket stalwarts Richie Benaud and David Gower. Controlling the game is very simple as you only use a direction pad and two buttons, with varying combinations, to operate the game.

To be fair to you, I wouldn't buy Cricket 2000. I'd rather get my mates and go the park for a quick game of short-cricket. Despite its good commentary and nice little animations,

this game's shortcomings conspire to make an experience that just isn't cricket. **GD**



Howzat!
Erm...and other
cricketing terms



PROS

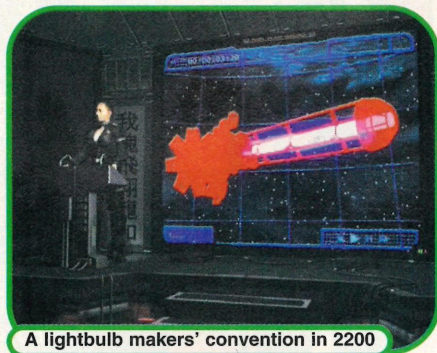
- Balanced teams
- Nice animations
- Simple control system

CONS

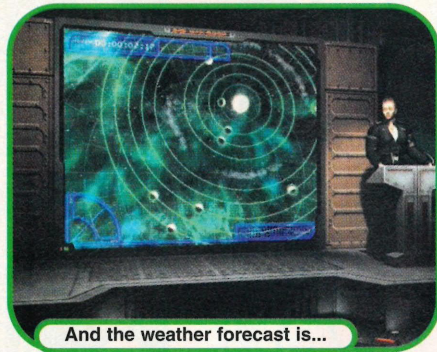
- Haphazard bowling
- Dodgy fielders
- Batting is too easy



Starlancer



A lightbulb makers' convention in 2200



And the weather forecast is...



Many years after the Wing Commander series was launched, we have arrived at Chris and Erin Roberts' next project from newly formed development company, Digital Anvil.

Richard Greenhill

They're making a daring break into all-new territory with... an action-packed, tension-filled space combat game set in the future! Well, ok, perhaps it's a little familiar but Starlancer takes place in a completely different time and universe.

The game's introductory cutscene begins in the mid-22nd century with a vicious surprise assault by the Eastern Coalition (Russia and co) on Western Alliance forces (Europe, America etc) that annihilates the French and Italian fleets in orbit around Mars. What do they want? Well, mainly to be vicious and surprising, apparently, and also take by force what the Alliance has built (I'm assuming sharing wasn't an option).

Starlancer plays with extensive similarities to the WC series. The cockpit, controls and physics of space will all be immediately familiar to players of WC or Privateer. Missions are played linearly like most space sim titles from mission one through to 24. There are, however, some variations and secondary objectives that can affect certain

factors later down the line in a minor way. In a break from Wing Commander tradition, the soap opera cut-scenes have been all but abolished. Instead, character development is advanced in the missions themselves.

Starlancer is beautiful to behold. The many colourful space backgrounds, weapons effects and explosions really showcase the ability of current 3D cards, without any severely detrimental effects on framerate.

The audio effects and musical score are also up to the same professional treatment we've had from every Roberts title. Missions are very dynamic in nature and play out like a heart-pounding action movie. I won't deny the stories never stray too far from cliché - one after another - but it's still great fun being in the middle of it. Companionship, sadness, betrayal, revenge, redemption... it's all there in its own one-dimensional form.

Starlancer's multiplayer capabilities have been heavily touted since the game's inception, not only because of the imaginative deathmatch modes, but also the full four player co-operative mode to play through the campaign. The co-op mode highly extends the game's longevity as I've found myself addicted to playing my favourite missions online, even though I've already completed the game. And this isn't even including the deathmatch modes on offer that are sure to start the usual community of clans and tournaments.

It's a shame though that there's no implementation of the more advanced features from other recent titles in the space sim genre, such as a full in-flight map, the ability to pre-set keys to targets, a display of what every ship is doing and a key that instantly targets the attacker of a friendly ship.

It's also a shame that your wingmen seem less significant now than they did in the WC series - coordinating them is a nightmare. In addition, while your companions are usually perfectly capable of drawing fire in the beginning, there are quirky AI problems that sometimes result in them racing off into the distance and ignoring your commands towards the end of a mission.

As a Wing Commander fan, I found myself largely disappointed with what seemed to be nothing more than an uninspired clone. Maybe there was an opportunity missed here for something earth-shatteringly innovative, but this doesn't mean it's not a decent and very welcome addition to what tends to be a rather scarce genre. **GD**

PROS

- Addictive online play
- Beautiful to behold
- Dynamic missions

CONS

- Quirky AI problems
- Lack of advanced features
- Largely disappointing

Let's Dance

feel the rhythm and move your body...
you'll be a dance Hero!
shake your body



Let's Dance
Europe Vol. 1

Europe vol. 1

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Dancing queens

Hello again, it's good to be back for this latest edition of our mag. This month we've gone dance crazy with Let's Dance, the latest trend to hit our shores from Japan.

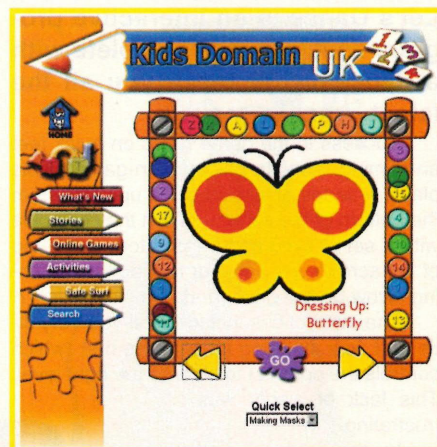
We've been prancing round the office like the girls from Steps, turning into right old dancing queens! What is even better is we've got ten Let's Dance games to give away in our boogie-tastic competition.

Also in this month's issue you can find out all about the Dragon Boat Festival, a special holiday in the Chinese calendar, as well as learning how to make a Chinese dancing dragon to celebrate the occasion.

Catch up with the latest kids' games in our reviews - this month we've got Crazy Castle 4 - the new Looney Tunes adventure for the Game Boy Color, featuring all your cartoon favourites like Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck.

For more new reviews, stories, activities

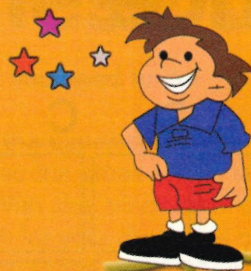
and lots more besides, why not head on over to the site and check it out. There's stacks to do and loads of fun to be had and if you would like to comment on the site or the magazine, why not get in touch with us? All you have to do is email caroline@kidsdomain.co.uk, kate@kidsdomain.co.uk or maria@kidsdomain.co.uk.



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Let's Dance - Europe Vol. 1

Let's Dance is an interactive program which comes complete with a dancemat to teach you all the latest groovin' moves.

Success in the game relies on quick feet and timing. As your choice of in-game music plays, a series of arrows scroll upwards from the bottom of the screen. When they coincide with a set of fixed arrow indicators at the top of the screen you put your foot on the matching arrow on the dancemat. Simple. Or is it?

The instructions included tell you very little so I was stepping all over the mat (which controls the options) to choose the right level.

This lack of clarity was frustrating.

In the training and basic modes the arrows appear too quickly for first time users and some may be discouraged.

Some of the advanced steps are almost physically impossible. Evaluation is based on how many of the right arrows you successfully hit, how many were near

misses and how many were fluffed altogether.

The dual player mode is challenging and inspires competition. Once you have got the hang of following the arrows the moves make sense and you can polish your performance. This is a huge craze in Japan but I would like additional options to create your own dance routines that would add variety.

Strangely addictive with a universal appeal, it was a hit with adults and children despite the lack of instructions. Let's Dance is only available on PC. Suitable for seven years to adult. The mat was due to be released mid-May.



The mat



Timing is the key to success in this fun game

Win 'Let's Dance'

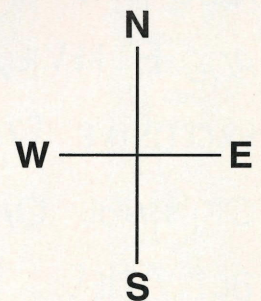
Kids Domain Competition

Now you have read the review for 'Let's Dance', here is an opportunity to win your own copy of the game! We have ten copies of the title to give away and all you have to do is complete the following challenge.

1. Start in box A2. Move two squares east. What do you find in this box?
2. Staying in that square, move three squares south and one square west. What do you find in that box?
3. From this box, move one square north, three squares east and another square north. What do you find in this box?

Once you have the answers, write them down and send them to; Kids Domain Dance Competition, Games Domain, Cuckoo Wharf, 435 Lichfield Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 7SS. To Arrive no later than June 31.

	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					



Key:

- A3 Hifi
- B5 Microphone
- C2 CDs
- D4 Music note
- E1 Cassette
- E3 Speaker

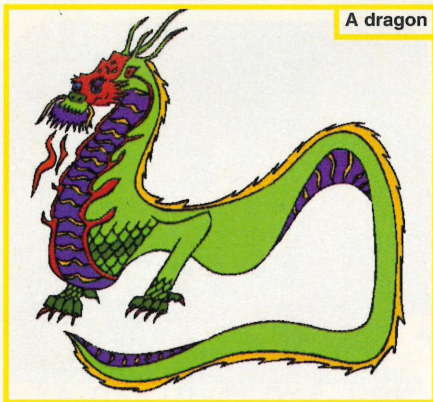


The Dragon Boat Festival

The Chinese people celebrate the Dragon Boat festival during the summer to bring them good luck in the coming year.

Many customs surround this historic festival but the most celebrated and well-known tradition is Dragon Boat racing. The Dragon Boats are long and shallow, like canoes, and fishermen use them all year.

When the festival arrives these



boats are decorated with the heads and tails of dragons, the fire-breathing creatures of myth. Dragon Boat racing is so popular it is now an international sport with championships every year.

Other traditions that are used to celebrate this festival throwing rice dumplings into the river.

These home-made rice dumplings, which are sometime wrapped in bamboo leaves, are also given to friends and family.

Hanging herbs by your front door is another way in which the Dragon Boat festival is marked. The herbs are traditionally believed to keep out bad luck by only letting in the good.

There are many other facts, crafts, recipes and stories to do with the Dragon Boat festival so why don't you come and visit www.kidsdomain.co.uk and find out more?



The Chinese celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival every year

Make a Chinese Dragon

Join in the Dragon Boat festival by making your own dancing Chinese dragon.

This craft is rated: easy/**average**/hard to make

What you will need:

- A paper cup
- Four wooden ice-lolly sticks
- A brightly coloured piece of fabric (10cm x 20cm)
- A sheet of red card
- A sheet of green card
- A length of ribbon
- Some small circle stickers
- A black pen
- Scissors
- Glue

What you need to do:

Take the paper cup and turn it over so the small end is facing up. With the black pen draw a mouth for your dragon. It can be any size or shape you want it to be. Cut this out carefully.

Use two of the stickers for your dragon's eyes and use the black pen to draw in the pupils.

Put a line of glue around the top half of the cup and stick the fabric to it along one of the 10cm edges.

Take the four wooden ice-lolly sticks and put some glue on the end of each of them. Attach two ice-lolly sticks to the fabric near the paper



cup and the other two ice-lolly sticks at the other end of the fabric.

Cut various sizes of triangles from the red and green card and then glue them to your dragon's head and body.

Decorate further with some ribbon.

When the glue has completely dried you will be able to move your dragon around using the ice-lolly sticks.



Bugs Bunny in Crazy Castle 4

After finding an old map, Bugs Bunny thinks he has found a route to the legendary Carrot Castle.

He sets out to find it, but doesn't realise he will risk life and limb to get there - and all he's heading towards is the dreary Crazy Castle.

The aim of this Kemco release is to search for eight keys on each of the ten levels to reach the next stage. Other objects you might find are also useful, from cork guns and extra strength to shields.

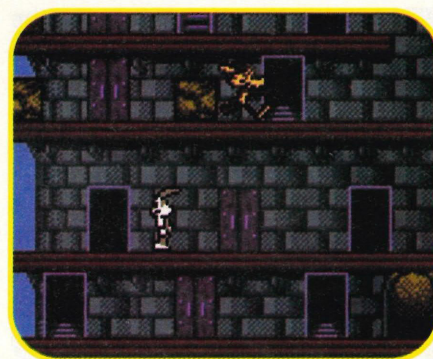
But some characters are trying to stop you. Some will just patrol a certain area. If you time it right you can avoid them. Others, like Daffy Duck, will follow you, but if you walk into a dead end you'll have to face him.

You can try using any weapons you've acquired, but it takes a while to get used to these as most of the action uses the D-pad - you only

need the other buttons to throw weapons.

The graphics in the game are great. When you have all eight keys, a speech bubble will appear above Bug's head, reminding you that you can now go and find the locked door. The music also speeds up at this point, as an extra reminder that you can finish the level.

On the whole, this is an entertaining Game Boy release, with a good difficulty range, starting out easy and getting progressively more difficult. This should help it appeal to a wide range of players. Although it's a simple idea, it's also a lot of fun. Bugs Bunny in Crazy Castle 4 is in the shops now.



Bugs searches for carrot heaven in Crazy Castle 4

Safe Surfing Rules For Kids

There are a lot of fun and educational things for children to do on the Internet. However, there are also a lot of people and web sites, so you need to be careful about where you do your surfing. Here are some rules to remember whenever you are online:

Do not give out any personal information such as address, telephone number, the name and location of your school, or the work address/telephone number of your parents, without permission from your parents.

Do not respond in any way to messages that are mean or that make you feel uncomfortable. Ignore the sender and end all communication. It is not your fault if you get a message like that and if you do, tell your parents right away so that they can contact the service provider.

Do not click on any links that are contained in email from anyone you don't know. Such links could lead to bad web sites.

Tell your parents immediately if you come across any information that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Do not enter contests without asking your parents first.

Always check with your parents before downloading any programs to your computer.

Never send a person your picture (or anything else) without first checking with your parents that this is all right.

Never agree to meet with someone you have "met" online without permission from your parents. If your parents agree to the meeting, make sure that it is in a public place and take your mother or father along.

Do not give out your Internet passwords to anyone (even best friends),

other than your parents.

Talk with your parents so that you can set up rules for going online. Decide with your parents when you can be online, the length of time you can be online, and the right areas for you to visit. **Do not** access other areas without their permission. If you agree to these ground rules with your parents, there is no reason for you to get into trouble.

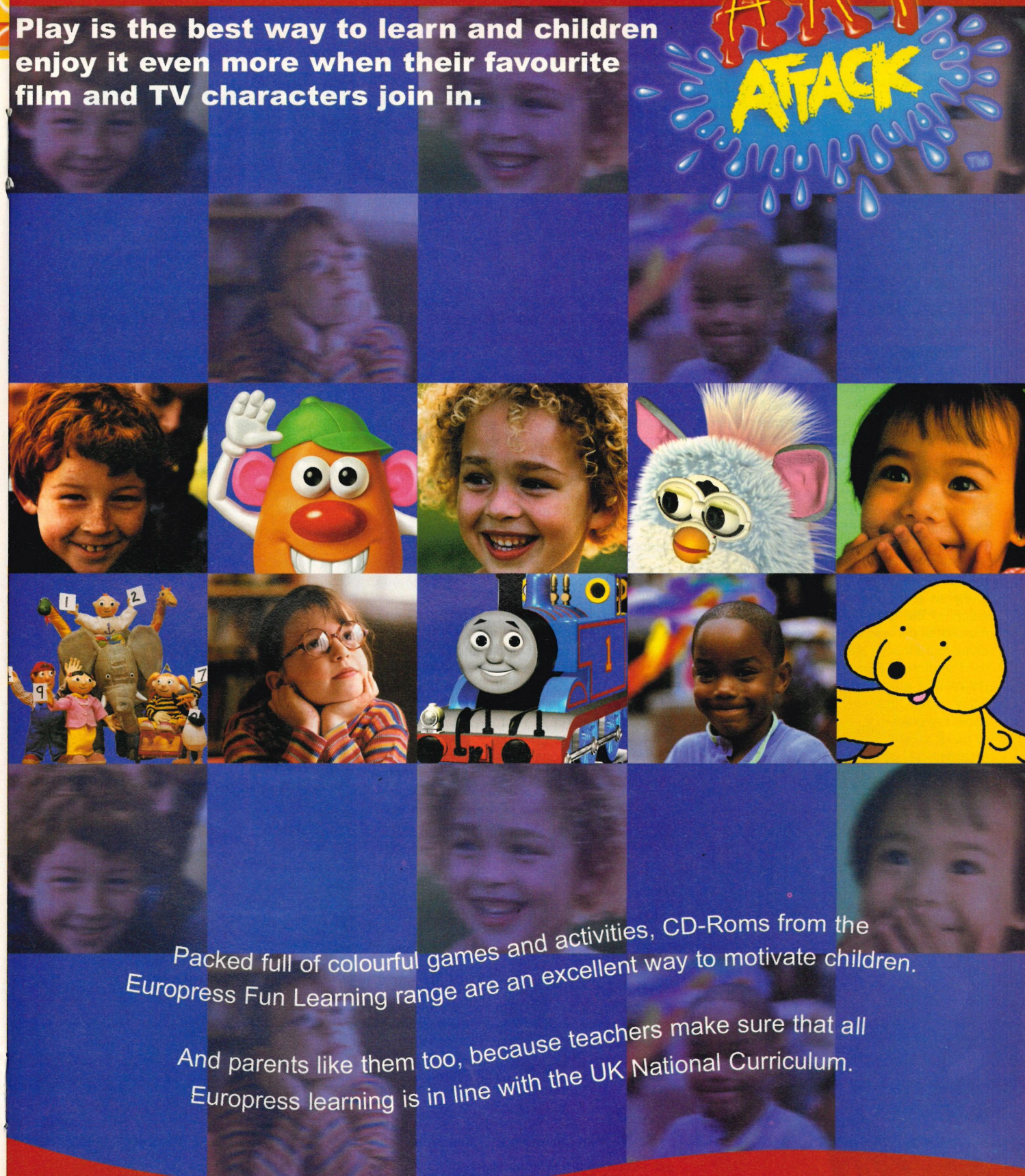
Be a good online citizen and do not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law. Always treat others on the Internet the way you want to be treated.

These guidelines are not there to stop you having fun, they are there to make sure you are safe online. The Internet is an amazing source of information and entertainment - the most important thing is that you can enjoy it safely.

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Black and White

Peter Molyneux ranks as one of the greatest game designers of all time. From humble beginnings - his first game sold just two copies - he made Bullfrog into a huge success, before deciding to move on. The first project from his new studio, Lionhead, is called *Black & White*. Games Domain was lucky enough to see the game, speak to the legend, and meet the creatures.

Mike Smith

It is always easy to spot a Peter Molyneux game. Since his first smash hit, the four million-selling *Populous*, his games have had common themes - little people running around, over whom the player has no direct control, a unique visual style and a tendency to focus on providing a satisfying gameplay experience at the expense of the plot. For *Black & White*, he wants to present another of his enthralling worlds, but bring plot into the game for the first time.

Peter describes *Black & White* as "an RPG where you play the role of God". When journalists gathered at a London presentation of the game with the man himself it was clear it owes more than a little to *Populous*. But unlike that game, *B&W* does not allow the player to make major alterations to the terrain.

A disembodied hand serves as a cursor over the sumptuous 3D landscape which is presented with a free camera - much more like Bullfrog's *Populous III* than the first in the series.

In an interesting move, the 3D engine uses the fashionable level of detail reduction technique to maintain a consistently high frame rate. Peter moved over to show us a small village among a group of fields in a valley. He then demonstrated the capabilities of the engine by zooming right up to an apple and then back out to an overview of the entire map - a large group of islands - in a matter of seconds, seamlessly and smoothly.

Zooming back into his village again, he demonstrated another classic Molyneux hallmark.

"You can do anything you like in an area that believes in you," he said.

Peter then reached out and scooped up an unfortunate villager, and threw her to an ugly death. "But you can't affect anything outside the immediate area of your village," he added. As time goes on, you will be faced with challenges which can be tackled using good or evil methods. Power for *Black & White*'s range of spells comes from your worshippers. More worshippers, more power - simple.

In perhaps the most innovative and impressive feature of *Black and White* you are aided in your tasks by a creature you train and nurture until it becomes an in-game reflection of yourself as a player.

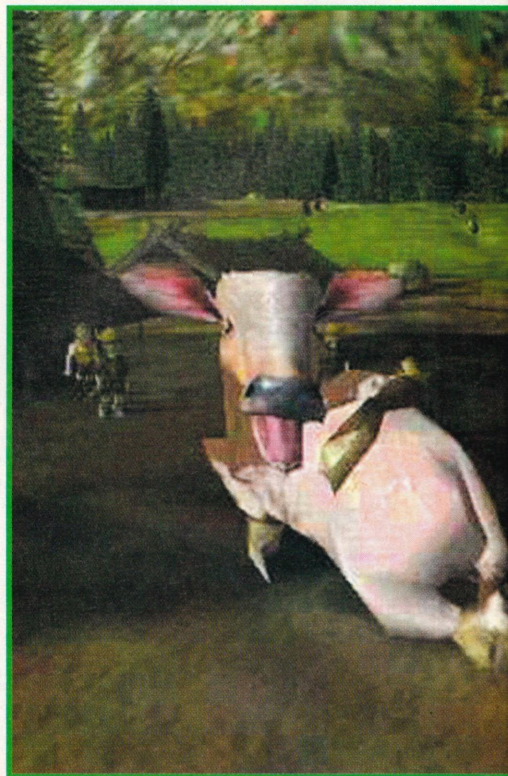
Molyneux is justly proud of this development and it is staggering to see the AI creature in action. You can forget virtual pets - this is the real deal.

Your godly seat of power is the Citadel. When inside, the engine changes to an

equally impressive, but more conventional 3D representation, and you are free to wander around at will.

One of the rooms is lined with windows representing all the challenges in the current world. Peter is considering making it possible to re-visit any challenge after it has been completed, to see what would happen if a different solution had been chosen. *Black & White* would then project the consequences of your actions forward, and modify the present environment so you could see the result. Impressive, but Peter has described it as probably the most difficult thing he has ever attempted.

Lionhead looks to have combined the casual market - the success of *The Sims* shows punters love this kind of 'virtual life' game - with the hardcore gamer appeal the Molyneux name brings. If he can achieve even a part of what he has been promising, *Black & White* will be a colossal success.

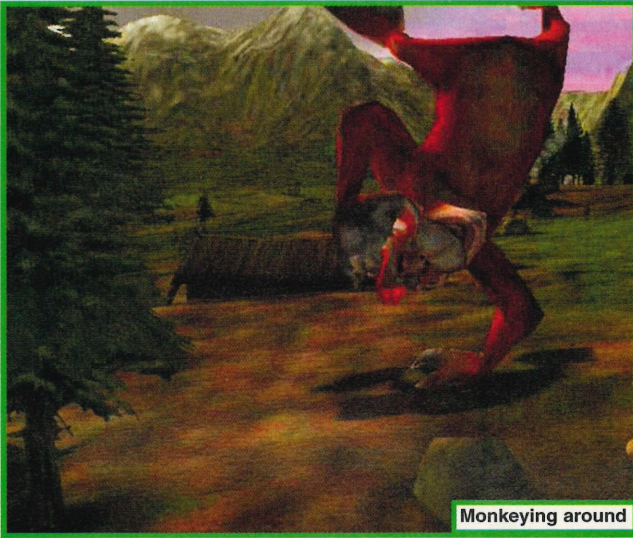




Creature feature

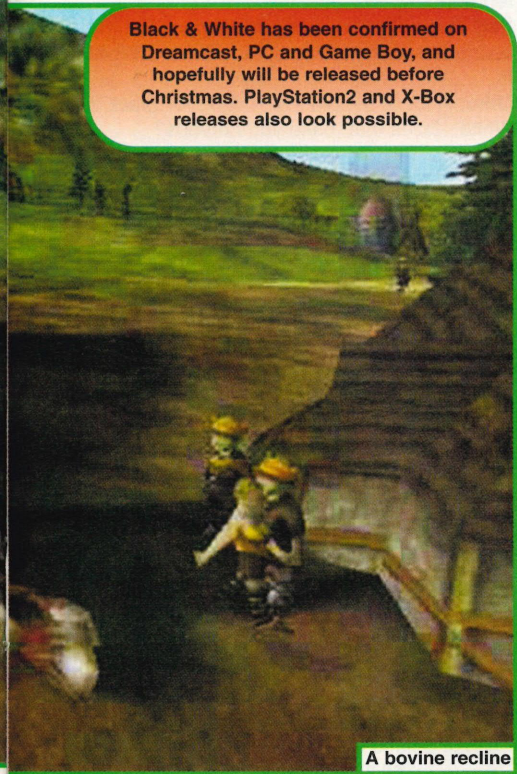
Black & White's creatures indirectly represent the player's presence in the game. Most Molyneux titles have had players directing by suggestion, far above the landscape - not so Black & White.

Right at the start of the game, the player comes across a hidden valley, containing a group of baby animals. Initially choosing from a cow, ape or tiger you adopt a creature and care for it, to increase your power and influ-



Monkeying around

Black & White has been confirmed on Dreamcast, PC and Game Boy, and hopefully will be released before Christmas. PlayStation2 and X-Box releases also look possible.



A bovine recline

ence. Peter's plan is that as you progress through Black & White you will become attached to your creature. You can then put your creature's mind into the body of a different creature so you may end up controlling a turtle or wolf.

For the demo Peter created a giant ape, and showed us how time and the actions of players will change the appearance of their creatures. If they overeat, they get fat and slow. They grow larger as time passes, and after fights, the scars stay on their bodies permanently.

In one of Black & White's most ambitious moves, the creatures watch the actions of the player and learn from them. If you are cruel to your villagers, so will they be. The maliciousness of your actions will reflect themselves in the appearance of your creature, too. Behave badly, and your cuddly creature will grow hunchbacked, sunken-eyed, and have big teeth.

If you play MP3s or CDs through your computer, your creature will listen and, over time, learn how to dance to the kind of music you like. They

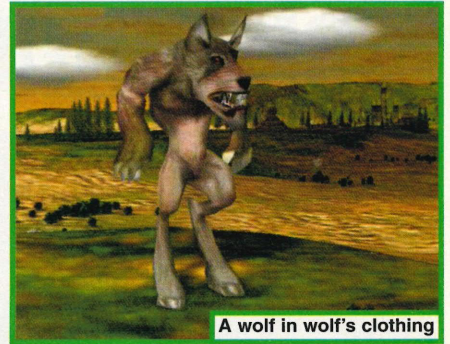
build their lairs in the depths of your Citadel, and decorate them with objects and mementoes of important happenings. Creatures even make their own websites - which can be uploaded for everyone to see - adding images of their friends or other events in their life.

Certain other - ahem - bodily functions have been simulated. Creatures can catch fleas or viruses, and after eating they even take a dump. When two creatures take a dislike to each other, they fight.

Lionhead has implemented a fully-featured fighting system similar to games like Streetfighter or Tekken - so you can control your creature's combat directly, although this can be left to the AI if fighting is not your thing.

Peter said the level of emotional attachment the team has developed to their individual creatures is so high that, once they were considering whether or not creatures could die, they decided it would prove too emotionally stressful.

As time goes on, the creatures begin to take on the personality of their creators. So it must have seemed logical to make them socialise with one another. In Black & White's



A wolf in wolf's clothing

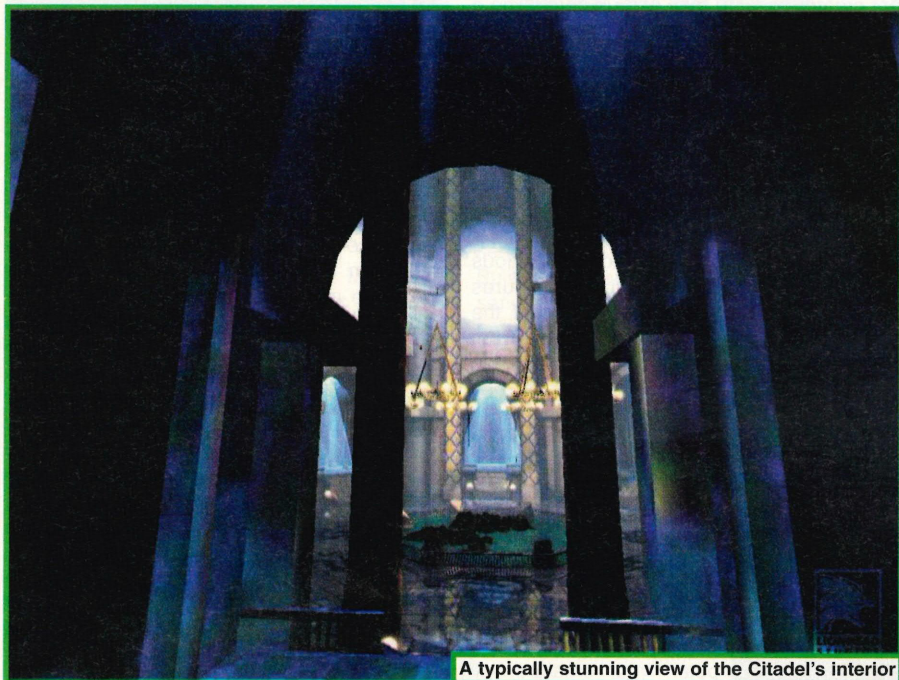
online community, The Gathering, your creature can meet other gamers' creations to socialise and exchange skills. They will be able to play games, run races, form clans and even fight each other. Each creature will be able to mouth all 44 phonemes, so as you chat to other players your creature will appear to be speaking. The Gathering will be

released a month or two before the game, for free download. But without the retail game you will be unable to keep your creature once you leave the world. Sounds like it will be a powerful incentive to buy the full game, as if one were needed.





Molyneux mixes it up



A typically stunning view of the Citadel's interior



Greek

Egyptian

Tibetan

Norse

Make your people worship you for success

Black and White on Dreamcast

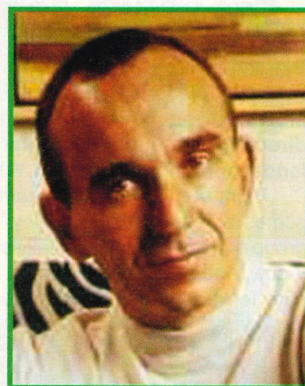
Black and White already looks set to have an awesome impact on the PC games market but just what this hugely anticipated title could do for the ailing Dreamcast is perhaps more interesting.

Much has been made of the Dreamcast's disappointing sales and with a limited choice of often poor games the format has so far failed to make the most of its considerable potential. However, with Black and White likely to hit the Dreamcast before any of the other next generation consoles, Lionhead Studios could have given Sega's baby a much needed shot in the arm.

Last month, in a crowded conference room at a London, an international contingent of games industry journalists were given their first glimpse of Black and white on Dreamcast. And it was just that - a glimpse.

Peter Molyneux enthused about his creation but used a PC version of Black and White to illustrate his presentation. The only sight the journalists were given of the Dreamcast version was one static screenshot. That said the game looks likely to translate well onto the console.

There will be few material differences between the PC and DC versions of his masterpiece. Obviously Black and White on a high end PC is going to look stunning but the Dreamcast version looks set to hold its own visually with just a little less graphical detail here and there. The Dreamcast will also have the VMU facility which Molyneux confirmed would be utilised for Black and White. "I want people to be able to take their creatures away with them. They will feel like they are being taken for a walk," he said.



The man himself: Peter Molyneux told us he believes Black and White is his best work to date

When GDO's Mike Smith spoke to Peter Molyneux he discovered there was more than a bit of colour to Black and White.

Mike: What do the creatures eat?

PM: Anything you want them to! One creature, a human-eating wolf, has been sent into my villages and is getting fat from eating too many people. But some food may make creatures sick.

Mike: Will there be any sort of incentive to take your creature online?

PM: Absolutely. One of the things you can do is trade skills online with other creatures, anything from a stupid dance to a new spell power-up. There is a trading mechanism, where one creature shows off their skill, then the other one shows off theirs, and they trade.

Mike: What about making the creatures reproduce?

PM: Reproduction was an option. But we had to leave something out for Black & White III!

Mike: A lot of people are waiting for Black & White. Does that make you nervous?

PM: It is the most scary thing I have ever done. I have built this pedestal so high, so unbelievably high that it feels like the only place I can go is crashing to the ground, no matter what I make. I have got to say that Black & White is the best thing I have ever done. I can't do better than this - it is impossible. **GD**



Spells, which include fireballs and tornadoes are powered up by drawing symbols on the ground with the pointer - from simple shapes to pentagrams.

MAKE SURE YOU'RE STOCKED UP!



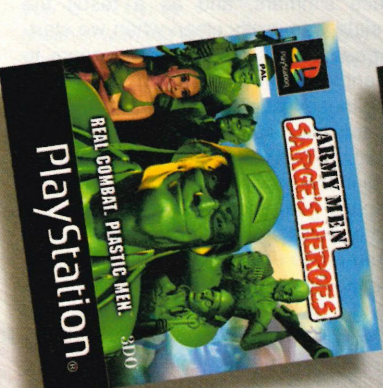
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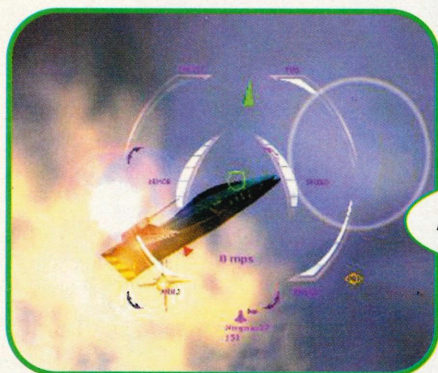
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ALLEGIANCE - The Interview



Easy to learn, difficult to master: Allegiance promises a unique combat-flight experience



There aren't many games that defy categorisation. Microsoft Research's Allegiance, which hits the shops in the UK on April 28, is one of them. Combining the intense firefights of a space combat simulator with the real-time strategy aspects of an orchestrated space battle, Allegiance is a do-it-all type of game.

Jeff Kang

The key feature of Allegiance, however, is that it's been designed from the bottom-up for team-oriented online play. The game is played in a massively multiplayer universe which is dynamically growing and changing, where you choose who you fight for and what your role is -- be it a dogfighting pilot or a gunner on a capital ship's gun battery.

One player takes on the role of the commander, whose responsibilities include deploying the side's units and managing resources and technology. The other players form the fleet at his disposal. Just imagine a real-time strategy game where each unit is controlled by a human player with free will, intellect and ambition - rather than an AI - and you'll have a better grasp of what Allegiance is all about. Players must work as a cohesive team to establish an economic infrastructure, explore the surrounding territories, build and protect outposts, and eventually, seek out and destroy the enemy.

A review of this genre-busting game is coming soon. In the meantime, I had chance to speak with key members of the Allegiance development team: executive producer Joel

"Solap" Dehlin, lead designer/art director Rob "Ribski" Girling, development manager Curt "Dontmess" Carpenter and gameplay developer David "Tkela" Pugh.

GDO: A massively multiplayer action game of this scope has never been tried. What were the hardest lessons you had to learn in pioneering a new genre?

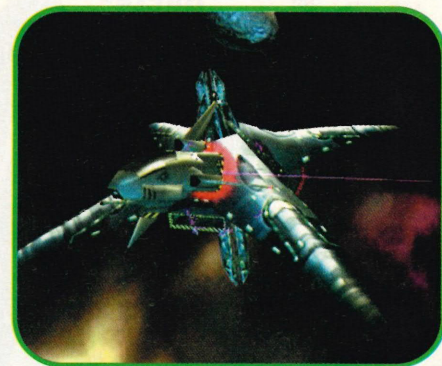
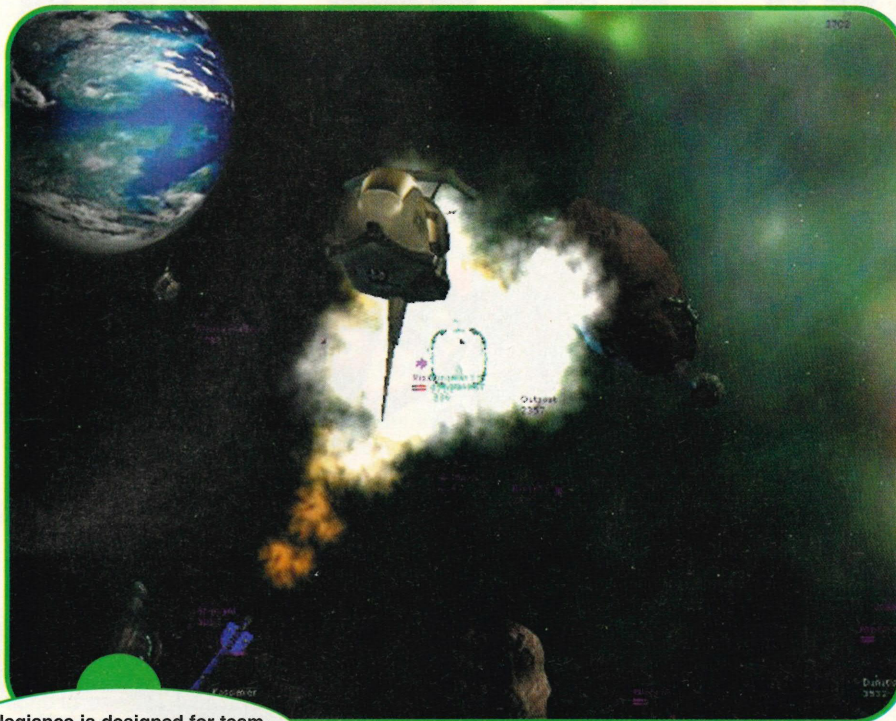
Joel: We learned a lot of lessons. First, we learned to beta test a lot earlier in the cycle. You have to get the game playable - even if it's ugly - and let people give you gameplay feedback all the way through. Second, you should plan to do less in the very beginning but then do everything you planned to do. Cutting features is evil because you have to find ways to fill the holes. Finally, we had to walk the fine line between creating a game that people understood which wasn't as novel and creating a completely novel game which people didn't really understand. We chose the latter route. It means you have to spend more marketing dollars to educate people what the game is all about.

GDO: In recent years there has been a de facto standard set for space combat sims, with games like Wing Commander Prophecy, Freespace, and X-Wing Alliance each produced from a similar mould. How much of this did you borrow in creating the space combat



found in Allegiance?

Rob: Several key members of the team are not space simmers, and as a result the design slate was pretty clean when we started the project. This gave us some room to experiment with different ideas about how to do tackle these issues from scratch, and this ends up making our combat/flight experience quite unique. We also found that what worked fairly well in the previous generation of single player space games didn't always work very well in the multiplayer optimised experience. At the end of the day we didn't want to alienate the space gamers out there but give them something a bit different and fresh. Our goal



Allegiance is designed for team-orientated online play in a massively multi-player universe

was "easy to learn, difficult to master."

GDO: If you took a step away from the game and viewed it as a player, what would be your favourite aspect?

Joel: I'd say the fact that you feel like you're in a real space battle. You're working with your team and all the while, you're flying around, working on fulfilling your own orders. The team aspect is just so awesome and very addictive.

GDO: In most multiplayer games there is an imbalance created by the vast differences in the talent levels of the players. Have you taken any special measures to address this issue?

Rob: Team play somewhat mitigates the issue you are talking about. When you fight one on one, in a neutral and balanced starting situation, sure, most times the talented



player will clean up. However slightly adjust the starting scenario so that one player has better tech or another friendly pilot nearby for support and all bets are off. Our ship types also have a great deal of variance in play styles that really level the playing field out.

GDO: Lag is always an issue with multiplayer gaming. Were any special measures taken to maximize multiplayer performance?

Curt: We were hoping someone would fix that darn speed of light problem so we could have zero-latency games, but it just didn't

happen. We try to take whatever lag is there and mask it by predicting the position of each ship on the screen. Of course, if someone's connection gets hosed for a short time (which isn't uncommon), then they might warp, but other than that, everyone should be able to compete on equal ground, even modem users.

GDO: The game features some awesome visuals, but were you restrained in what you could achieve visually with the game by the limitations imposed by the multiplayer aspect?

Curt: Yes, there were definitely constraints. In a single player game (or small multiplayer, i.e. less than 8) you can limit how many ships (and other stuff) are on screen at once. In Allegiance, I've seen games with 25 or more ships (plus who knows how many unmanned guard towers) all in the same sector, all going crazy shooting weapons, firing missiles, dropping mines, etc. That's a lot of polygons and bitmaps to draw. However, there's still tons of detail in ships you'll notice if you ever get close enough without getting destroyed.

GDO: How much of an effect will a player's chosen faction have on the gameplay?

David: The faction differences are mostly ones of style. The game should feel different depending on which factions are selected but the overall strategies will be the same no matter which factions are used.

GDO: Now that the game has gone gold, what's next for the Allegiance development team? Are you kept together as a team, or reassigned elsewhere in the company?

Joel: We're working on a patch for Allegiance and also starting to work on a new project. Can't talk about the new project, but we'll be staying together.

GDO: How much maintenance do you anticipate that the game will require from the developers?

Joel: We'll continue to produce new content, maps, tech tree items, etc. There will be some cool surprises over the next few months, both for the people playing on the free servers and those paying to play on the zone. Stay tuned!! **GD**

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Console competition hots up at E3

E3 gave us firm evidence of what we already knew. Never before has the marketplace witnessed such fierce competition, with Sony's PlayStation2 and Sega's Dreamcast each vying for a piece of the action and Microsoft's X-Box and Nintendo's Dolphin waiting in the wings to take them on.

Currently, Sony and Sega are in the driving seat, both with consoles on sale now and both able to boast a healthy line-up of blockbusters in the pipeline. Nintendo seems to have slumped from being a market giant to more of a dark horse and while top releases are still scheduled to keep the N64 afloat, it was ultimately frustrating that the Dolphin console was not on display at E3. Who knows? Maybe this strategy will pay off in the long term.

From Sony's corner, the most significant news was the announcement of the official October 26 launch date for the PlayStation2 in Europe and the US. Judging by the reactions to the Metal Gear Solid 2 demonstration, you'd better get saving right away. In the other corner, Sega concentrated on its online strategy and also showboated plenty of top games, with Sonic Adventure 2 being the most highly anticipated and graphically



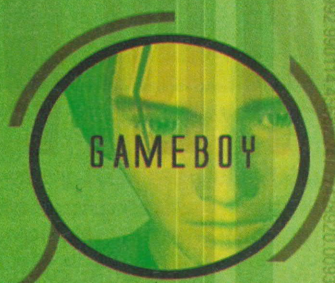
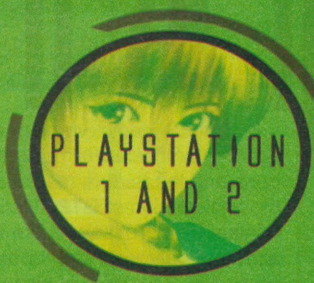
Sonic Adventure 2 looks set to be the little hedgehog's best looking outing yet

impressive of the bunch. On paper, the X-Box is tantalisingly impressive, but in reality Microsoft has yet to show off any software to really answer the cynics.

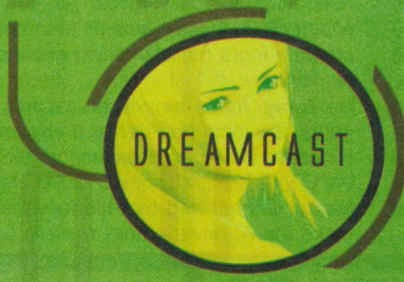
Anyway, for in depth coverage of E3, be

sure to check out our website, but in the meantime enjoy this month's console coverage and as ever feel free to contact me, if only to comment how silly we all look. Email me at: gareth@gamesdomain.com

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GT2000



GT2000 looks better than a kebab after ten pints

Polyphony Digital's Kazunori Yamauchi spent more than an hour at this year's E3 trade show talking to a select group of journalists about his forthcoming project, Gran Turismo 2000.

Pete Oliver & Tim Stevens

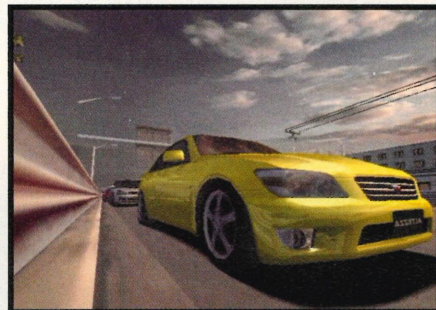
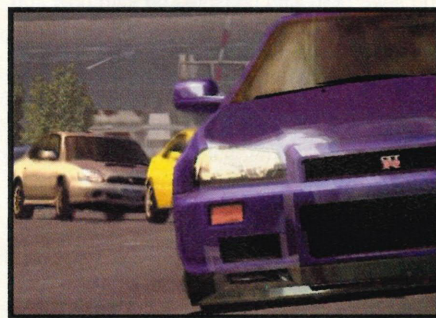
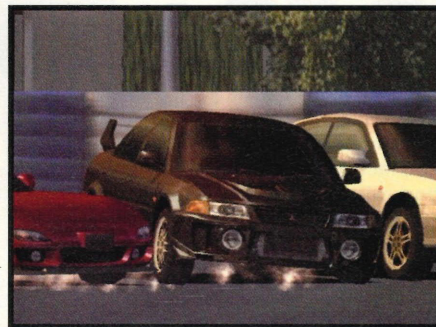
One of the key titles coming to PlayStation2, Sony was keen to take the opportunity to explain the progress made since the PS2 Festival.

An E3 demo of the game was on display on the show floor, but Yamauchi San was quick to explain that this version of the game was only 50% completed. Following the PS2 Festival in February, the team temporarily stopped working on GT2000 as a game and went back to improving the authoring tools and the game engine. With these elements completed in time for E3, the future work on GT2000 will focus on additional visual effects and the entry of car and track data.

The E3 demo version of the game is apparently indicative of the number of polygons and the texture resolution to be used in the final version of GT2000. Compared to the original Gran Turismo, there will be ten times as many polygons and ten times the texture resolution. The team is aiming to get at least as many cars into GT2000 as made it into GT2, but they may fall short of this mark if time pressures prove too much.

Whilst the polygon count and texture resolutions shown in the demo may have been pretty near to the final product, the team are set to spend a lot of time on additional effects. Yamauchi San put a lot of emphasis on the need to realistically model air and lighting effects. Both these elements are important to create a more realistic racing experience, he explained.

Away from the visual aspects of the game, the team feels it has pretty much perfected the physics of the cars through its work on GT, GT2, and now GT2000. Yamauchi San also explained that his focus is now to make the AI drivers more realistic and chal-

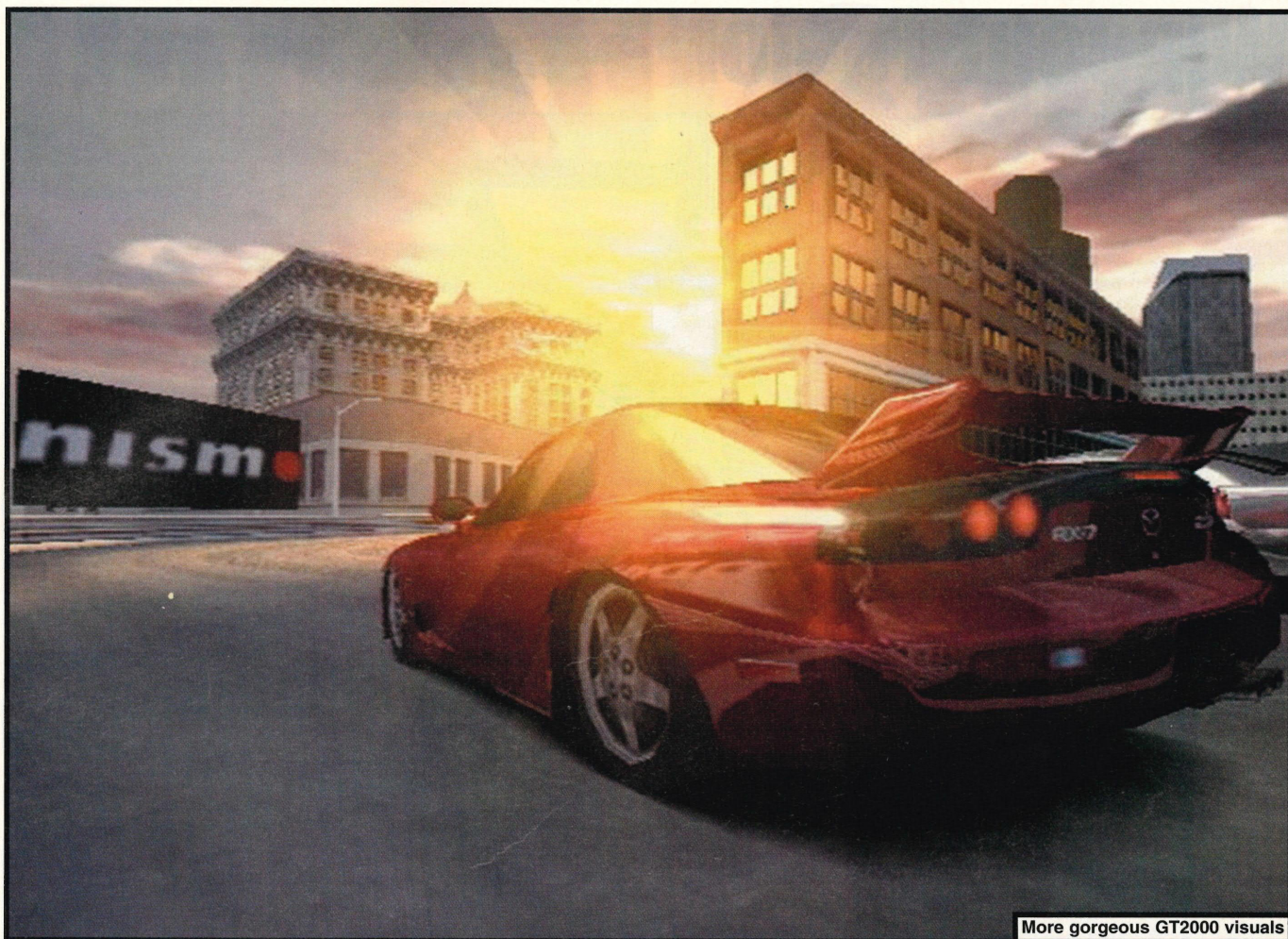


lenging. As with the visuals, his aim here is to provide as realistic a driving experience as possible.

When asked about the possibility of GT2000 boasting an online mode, Yamauchi San explained that time constraints would rule an Internet version out of this latest title in the series but a split screen seems a certainty.

Two new tracks will make it into GT2000 that have not debuted in the previous two titles; Monte Carlo and a track based on a Tokyo course. The rally mode of GT2 should make it back into GT2000 - this time round, it should be more realistic thanks to GT2000's advanced physics engine.

GT2000 looks set to advance the series both visually and in terms of realism. The E3 demo was met with a somewhat mixed reception on the show floor, with some feeling it a tad underwhelming considering it is one of the PS2 flagship titles. Still, there's clearly plenty of features still to be implemented by the team and the GT series has impressive pedigree. **GD**



More gorgeous GT2000 visuals

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited of the fantastic titles scheduled for the PS2, GT2000 betters the previous PlayStation GT incarnations with graphics many times as detailed, bettering by far even their fantastic intro sequences.

Only a few tracks are selectable, including Laguna Seca and the Seattle track from GT2. Developers plan for a few new tracks for release, but there's nothing totally new to offer yet. They're not exactly the same old tracks, though. Laguna Seca, my favourite track from the second Gran Turismo title, has received many new tweaks, not least of which is a brilliant sun shining over the mountains, blinding the player as he roars down the front straight.

Other things, like corner geometries and elevation changes, have been modified slightly to make them more accurate to the original dirt and pavement-based track. Power lines and trees have been added to fill up the backgrounds.

Likewise, controlling the game is largely

unchanged. The current physics model of the game is a carbon-copy of the original, at least as far as one can tell while holding a controller, which means GT fans will be able to pick this title up in no time.

Currently, the only controller setup does not use the right analog stick on Sony's new, all-analog DualShock2 controller, instead placing acceleration and braking back on the X and square buttons, back where they were in the days before analog. These buttons are now analog as well, so pressing firmly on the X button will result in the car accelerating, while a light pressure will give a constant speed. This works decently well, but most players will likely prefer the existing dual-stick mode of control. This is likely to be an option in the final version.

Graphically, nothing is left wanting, as anyone who's seen a screenshot can attest to. Reflections are real-time and are amazingly accurate, to the degree that trees and streetlights reflect clearly on the roofs of cars as they drive beneath. You've never seen

shiny cars like this before, unless you frequent car shows.

Sadly, while the graphics engine flaunts its polygonal prowess, the current physics engine shows its dated nature. The game is roughly 50% at this point, but if the current engine is indicative of the final product, aside from graphics, current GT2 players will have little reason to upgrade. Collisions are as poorly handled as ever. Two cars crashing together will result in both coming to an abrupt halt, but no further dramatics. Likewise, hitting the wall or another car results in that same innocent bounce with zero lost speed that dates back to the original GT.

GT2000 doesn't yet have a firm release date, but will wow the pants off of anyone who takes a look even at this stage. Hopefully, before the title hits shelves, players will have been given a proper collision engine and at least a slightly updated physics engine. Sony could easily get by with just a prettier GT2 at this point - let's hope they don't. **GD**



Wipeout Fusion



Judging by these early screen shots, Wipeout Fusion looks set to be as popular as lager-top at a footballers' convention

The original Wipeout was one of the flagship titles when the PlayStation was first released. Sporting slick graphics, techno-tunes, and addictive gameplay the series has gone on to spawn two highly successful sequels.

Peter Oliver

With the PlayStation2 just around the corner, it comes as no surprise to hear a Wipeout game is on its way for the new, 128bit platform.

Wipeout Fusion is currently under development by Studio Liverpool - the team responsible for the original game. The most immediate improvement is obviously in the visual department. Early screenshots give an indication of how well the team are getting to grips with the PlayStation2's powerful graphical processors.

Set in 2150AD, Wipeout Fusion will be based around the new F9000 league. This means new tracks, ships, weapons, and gameplay features. Apparently, some tracks will include 'freeform' areas where racers do not have to follow a strict route through the track - this sounds like an interesting concept, some sort of bizarre off-road version of



Wipeout perhaps?

Perhaps one of the most important new features is the improved physics engine. The craft in the original Wipeout were modelled on seven parameters. The new, enhanced ships in Fusion will boast a staggering 48 different attributes.

One of the few criticisms levelled at the original Wipeout was that its learning curve was too steep, putting off more casual gamers. The team have taken this on board for the game's first PlayStation2 outing and have designed Fusion to be more accessible, whilst retaining the elements which appealed to the 'hardcore' gamers.

We'll have a hands-on preview of Wipeout Fusion later in the year. **GD**





Vagrant Story

What is it about Squaresoft? Whenever I come across their games they are always, absolutely, jaw-droppingly great.

Kevan Mander

The Final Fantasy series mixed great gameplay, stories and visuals. Well guess what? The boys are ready to do it all again with Vagrant Story.

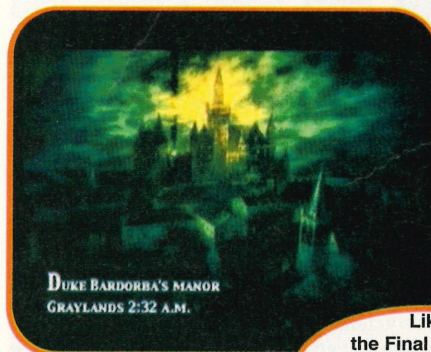
Although not part of the Final Fantasy series, Squaresoft has maintained the feel of those games and managed to blend in more action. Imagine Tomb Raider, Final Fantasy and Expendable all wrapped into one without the bad bits. Stick it all into a medieval European setting and you have Vagrant Story.

Lea Monde, the city of evil, is the setting for this RPG action opus. You are Ashley Riot, a special agent for the Valderian Knights of Peace searching for the evil Sydney Losstarot who has kidnapped the Baron Bardorba's child from his manor house on the outskirts of the city.

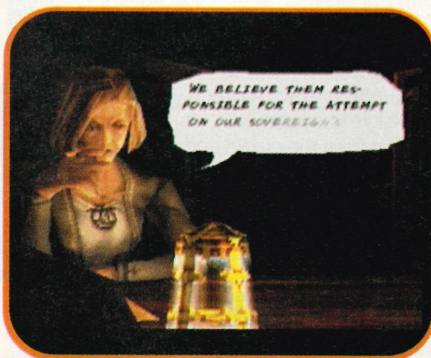
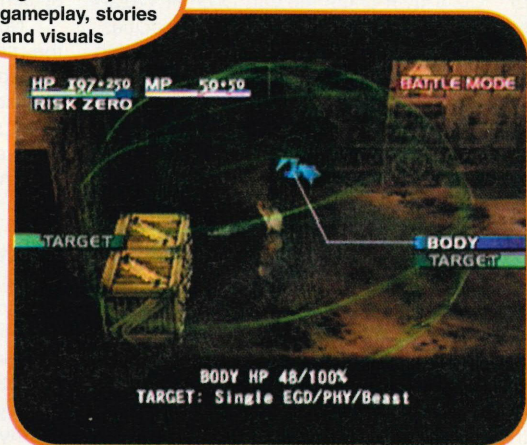
The plot, which I won't give away, develops wonderfully and includes Shakespearean influences in the form of two knights called Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. More factions appear later in the game, including the Mullenkamp cult, the Parliament and even the Valderian Knights of Peace, each with their own designs on the evil city.

Final Fantasy fans will instantly take to Vagrant Story's weird control system. It's more similar to Resident Evil's controls where you can swap weapons, choose spells and set up attacks.

The weapons system is a little complex. You have a certain amount of risk points attached to each - the higher the risk point value of a weapon, the more time you have to wait before you can strike with it again and the higher the chance of missing. For example, a dagger has a low risk point value and can be used repeatedly but a more effective weapon, such as an axe, will have a higher



Like the Final Fantasy series, Vagrant Story mixes great gameplay, stories and visuals



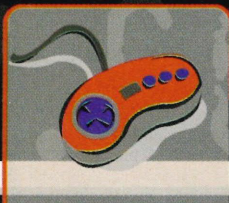
risk rating. As you can imagine, there is a slow brewing tension to fights.

One of the most intriguing things about the game is the hit location system. When you go to attack, a range globe appears showing how far away you can strike your target from. Then you can select which target to

attack and where to hit it. It's a bit disappointing to see that even if you hack away at people's arms they don't drop off, something I'd like to see in the final version.

Spells can be used and your character acts as a sort of warrior wizard, throwing around magic and whirling blades like there's no tomorrow. Pressing assigned buttons at the appropriate moments activates all spells and moves - so timing is very important.

Enemies come in many guises, including animals, the undead, giant dragons and minotaurs and the city of Lea Monde itself is littered with traps. Puzzles, however, are straightforward, reducing the frustration factor. Despite relying on the in-game engine, the cut-scenes are stylish and intelligently directed. Voice acting is not present here but speech bubbles have been used instead and perfectly match the look of the game - and the writing isn't bad either. I can't wait to get my hands on the review version. **GD**



Moho

Ok, so the title doesn't really give much away. You're probably asking, what the hell does Moho mean?

Gareth Holden

As a geological term, it's an abbreviation of Mohorovicic Discontinuity, which is the layer under the earth's crust, capable of morphing under intense velocities caused by earthquakes (that's the science bit out the way!). Set in a futuristic world, as a prisoner of the state, you're forced to compete in gladiatorial events, in a desperate bid to win back your freedom.

Rather unfairly, your legs get the chop and are replaced by a magnetic sphere, which is key to your movement around the concise, but yet addictively challenging levels. I can best describe this game as a mix between the half-pipe trickery of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater combined with the lighthearted puzzle elements of Marble Madness. There are various different styles of level, for which you'll have to complete different tasks. Using the sphere to roll your way and jump between verts, edges and mounds, leaves your upper body free to fight off gladiators and other competitors, in your quest to become the people's champ.

Using familiar event names, such as run the gauntlet and powerball, each arena hosts up to seven different challenges. One challenge may see you repeatedly dodging gladiators and then launching the powerball onto a magnetic strip, the next could be a race to reach the finish point before the progressing scenery crumbles beneath your feet. In other challenges, you may have to actually kill off gladiators in order to unlock new areas.

Plenty of weapons are on hand to dish out a good mulling, ranging from a sword to a sledgehammer, but the fighting element is not over-played. Besides other droids, level obstacles include water, spikes, fire and canons.



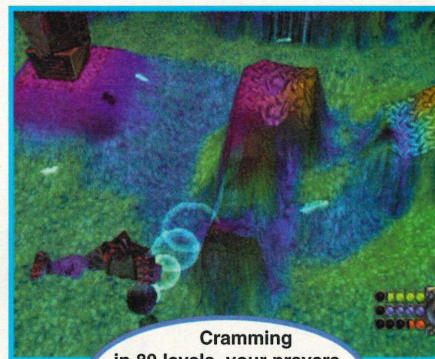
Using colourful 3D environments, the Lost Toys team has managed to employ its experience from past successes, such as Populous, Powermonger and Magic Carpet, to blend fine graphics with slick gameplay. One of the key aspects to achieving this was being able to airbrush effects like grass and gravel onto landscapes. This means that every time an explosion occurs, the landscape will smoothly ripple outwards from the epicentre without a glitch in sight.

Not stopping there, the game then uses the same technology to compliment the gameplay in other ways, such as using the rippling land to make it possible to cross water sections, just like riding on the crest of a wave.

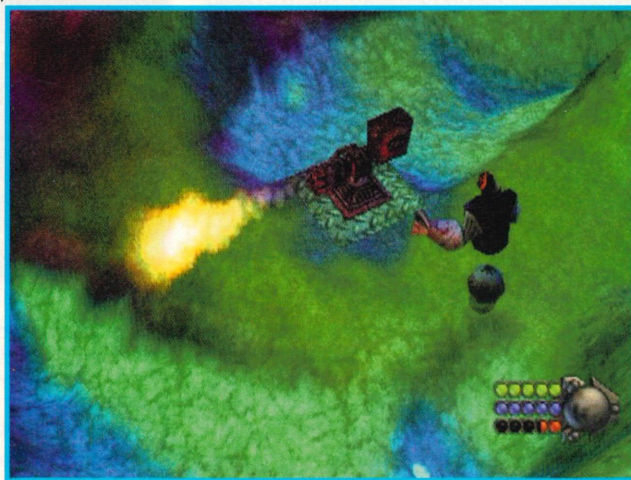
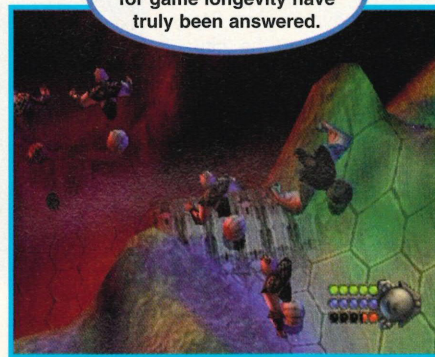
The development team has also managed to throw in some excellent bonus games, including American football and golfing, as a reward to those who progress through the game.

Cramming in a colossal 80 levels over ten incarceration facilities, your prayers for game longevity have truly been answered. There are also five different characters each with slightly different physical attributes and fighting styles to master.

The finished version will allow two players to go head-to-head, but unfortunately this was not quite finished at the game's previewing. Due for release in July, I believe Moho's uniqueness and insanely addictive gameplay will set it apart from the crowd and ensure that it is a huge success. PC and Dreamcast versions are also planned. **GD**



Cramming in 80 levels, your prayers for game longevity have truly been answered.





Perfect Dark

One of the major titles on display at Nintendo's rather large though sparsely populated booth at E3 was their eagerly anticipated title Perfect Dark which has finally hit US stores.



Tim Stevens

Perfect Dark, Rare's non-Bond follow-up to their massive hit Goldeneye, takes the gamer to the year 2023, assuming the role of femme fatal Joanna Dark. With plot lines featuring warring alien races, cloning, and mass conspiracies, this game may sound like a convoluted series of X-Files episodes, but Goldeneye players will quickly feel right at home here.

Those expecting something revolutionarily different, however, may find themselves feeling disappointed. The game is simply too much like it's counterpart to warrant the years that gamers have been waiting anxiously for it. Two years ago, when the first snippets of unplayable gameplay were shown behind closed doors, Perfect Dark looked to be a landmark title far beyond the Bond game that was already over a year old. Well, two years later, with the game finally in playable form, it's no longer quite so impressive.

As mentioned above, the game plays damn-near exactly like Goldeneye - a first-person shooter emphasizing some stealth and strategic gameplay, but packing plenty of firepower to provide the lead-slinging action FPS fans crave. This time around there are even more ways to chuck metal, with some 44 weapons overall, ranging from your standard equipment silenced pistol to some otherworldly hardware hidden deep in those vaults at Area-51.

Also new is a vast array of co-operative multi-player missions, something that gamers have been requesting for years. Players can hit the corridors split-screen and share the carnage. Thankfully, an option is included to disable friendly fire.

That'll come in handy, because those juggy multi-player frame-rates of yore are back, and make co-op gaming a shaky affair. While Rare obviously spent plenty of time improving the graphics, the multi-player frame-rates remain the same as in the old Bond title. Combine a split screen with a couple AI enemies and you can start counting the screen refreshes with your wristwatch.



A Gordan Brittas lookalike stares down the barrel

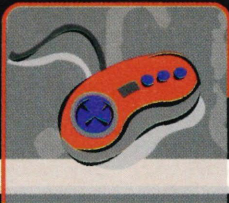


Perfect Dark boasts 44 weapons in total - and the odd saucy lady judging by this pic

And that's with the memory expansion. Without the expansion you won't be doing much. The single-player game is only available for those upgraded ones, with the multi-player game available for all. Obviously, if you want this game and haven't upgraded yet, you'll want to be doing so now.

Sadly, Perfect Dark seems to be just a rehash of an old game most N64 owners have already played to death, rather than the super-title we've all been expecting. **GD**





Fear Effect: Retro Helix

While everyone is looking for sequels to games like Sonic Adventure and Metal Gear Solid in all of the E3 mayhem, Kronos Digital Entertainment has taken a step in the opposite direction.

Following the recent release of its interactive anime thriller, Fear Effect, Eidos is to publish a prequel to the game - Fear Effect: Retro Helix.

The game will concentrate on the histories of the original three mercenaries and the circumstances that brought them together. The three characters are:

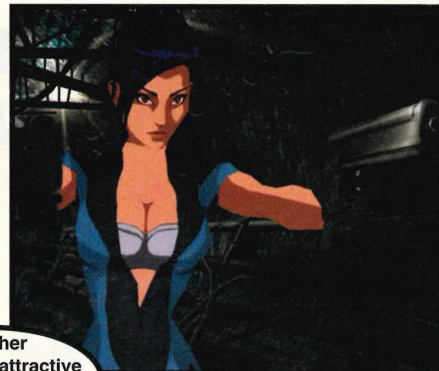
Hana Tsu-Vachel, a beautiful assassin, trained to deal in love and death - Royce Glas, an intelligence expert, with a dark past - Jakob "Deke" Decourt, a cold-blooded killer motivated by money and murder.

Their adventure spans across eight different locations including Hong Kong, New York and China, concluding with a visit to the legendary mountain-island of the immortals, known as Penglai Shan. Once there, a final showdown will see the characters coming face to face with Rain Qin's evil twin sister, where only you will be able to decide who is to live and who will die.

The game will use motion FX3D technology to ensure the character movement will remain as realistic as possible. Boasting a colossal 800 camera angles, the action is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat. No doubt the 120 minutes of interspersed computer generated sequences will help to keep



Another game with attractive women in it - oh well!



the spine-shivering storyline flowing as effectively as in games like Resident Evil. Impatient gamers will be pleased to learn there will be no annoying loading times, even after the death sequences.

In the heat of the action, fans of the sequel will be pleased to know this version contains a greater selection of Melee and Range weapons. Naturally there'll be more

than 60 different types of enemies, each with unique AI, to unleash your artillery onto. For those worried about the replay value of the game, Kronos has included plenty of secret features that can be unlocked after completing the game, including a whole new set of enemies to face.

Fear Effect: Retro Helix is set for release on the PlayStation at the start of 2001. **GD**

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver II

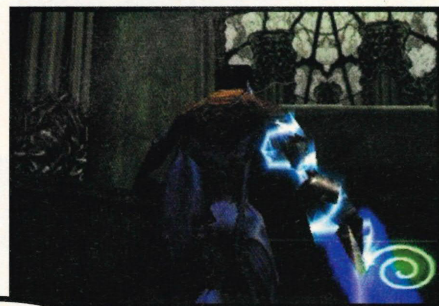
Following the huge success of the original Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, it was only going to be a matter of time before a sequel was officially announced.

Eidos has finally lifted the lid on the unsurprisingly titled Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver II. Although still early in the development stage, Console Domain has managed to gain an overview of the game along with some appetising screenshots.

Once again, assuming the role of Raziel, you travel back through time in a desperate pursuit of your creator and nemesis - Kain. Your aim is to uncover the mysteries surrounding Nosgoth's past and the extinction of the vampire clans. As in the first outing, continuous data streaming will allow the game to appear seamless without any annoying loading sequences. Significantly, new environmental weapons, projectiles and spells are provided to take on the all new vampire



Uncover mysteries surrounding Nosgoth's past and the extinction of the vampire clans - easy



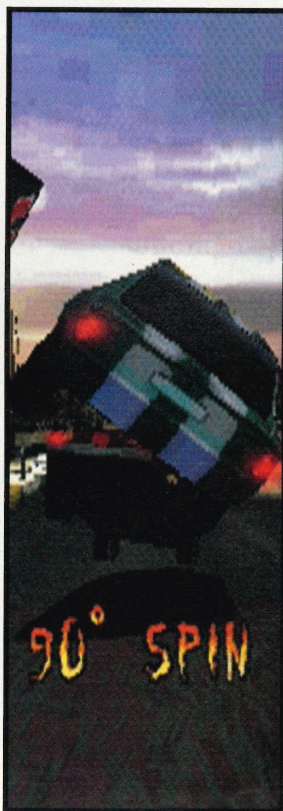
hunters, humans, spectral spirits and demons from parallel dimensions. Expect the game to retain its dark gothic storyline, complete with in-game cinematics to compliment the action.

The game will appear on the PC, PlayStation, PS2 and Dreamcast towards the end of 2000. **GD**





Destruction Derby Raw



A typical day on the UK's motorways



As one of the first titles to grace the PlayStation, the original Demolition Derby was a far from perfect, but still solid and enjoyable mayhem-injected racing experience.

Gareth Holden

The third instalment of the series, Destruction Derby Raw, promises even more spectacular smashes as you scramble for the finish line before your car is reduced to pile of scrap metal.

Carrying on the successful elements from the previous two games, Raw looks to be an altogether more polished product with realistic vehicle handling, vastly improved track details and locations and a load of crazy events to take part in. And there are loads of novelties included, such as police cars, camper vans, trucks and even taxi cabs.

The main event, wrecking racing, sees you up against a whole field of mad motorists. Qualifying for the next race is best achieved

by combining devastating destruction with devilish driving. Points are awarded for smashing into other cars en route with terms like, teeth rattler, bone cruncher, jaw breaker and 360 spin flashing onto the screen when you have successfully battered an opponent. Of course the risk here is you'll wreck your own car and have to abandon the race, so the ideal tactic is to floor your right pedal and win the race for the big points. If you manage to spin a few competitors along the way, all the better.

This mode boasts 25 individual tracks, ranging from straightforward ovals to longer winding routes laden with hairpin bends. Track details are the most impressive of the series so far. Realistic rows of trees and buildings border circuits, while high banked corners, bridges, embankments to slide down and a multitude of crossovers help to ensure collisions aplenty. I especially liked the pyramid shaped system for unlocking new tracks, where you don't have to win them in a predetermined order to progress onto others.

Other modes of destruction include smash for cash, where you have a choice of tracks to annihilate your opponents, and a

series of battle games for up to four human players. Assault is a race for the finish and the classic destruction derby event remains as previously. An all-new skyscraper mode plays just like the destruction derby mode, but places all of the cars on the roof of a building. Naturally, you'll need that handbrake and nitro boost to avoid being forced off the edge. Finally, pass da bomb plays just like a game of playground tag, where one person has to pass on the bomb by hitting another car. If you don't pass it on within a few seconds, it blows you to smithereens.

Car handling varies according to vehicle attributes. The cars' handling felt a little too floaty in Destruction Derby 2 and thankfully this has been rectified. While certain cars seem to handle robustly like barges, others are much more responsive and require fewer grasps of the handbrake. One minor niggle is that the reverse gear did seem a little exaggerated, although this could get repaired for the final version. A heavy metal soundtrack appropriately compliments the metal crunching action. Destruction Derby Raw looks to be shaping up nicely to become the pinnacle of Psygnosis' racing series. **GD**



Tekken Tag Tournament



The hot shoe shuffle

Let's get one thing straight before I start bantering - Tekken Tag Tournament is by far the best beat 'em up currently available. As a hardcore Street Fighter II junkie, I was initially unimpressed when Tekken first crashed onto the PlayStation scene some four years ago. The controls seemed unresponsive, there were graphical glitches galore and the supposed 3D experience was completely over-hyped.

Gareth Holden

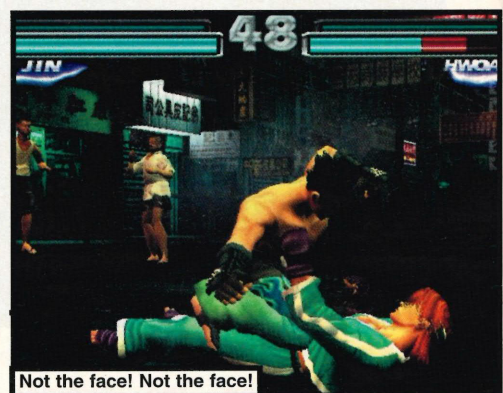
It was only after becoming completely engrossed with Tekken 2 and 3 during many gaming marathons when I was supposed to be studying for my degree, that something struck me - I was gradually being converted to a new school of thought. Gone were the days of hurling endless fireballs and launching flaming dragon punches, Tekken allowed you to get in close and really give your opponent an unforgettable mulling. With each button assigned to a different limb, it's as though you're in the heart of the action raining out the blows, where alternating attacks is more devastating than relying purely on your strongest punch.

Going with the current trend in fighting games, it now seems obligatory to have a tag partner to back you up, just in case things get out of hand. So in TTT you select two fighters

at the character select screen, the first being the one who starts the bout and the second acting as a substitute. You can perform a tag at any time within the bout and as many times as you need to.

Not only does this make the fights more tactical, but it also helps you to pull off some extra special moves. The key advantage is that the fighter who is not involved in the action can then replenish their energy and can be brought back to the action when ready. If the timer runs out then the average energy of your fighters is compared to that of your opponents to decide the winner.

Tagging does take a short while to get used to and, initially, it seems stupid that a player can literally run off half way through receiving an opponent's multi-hitting combo. However, you'll soon realise that as the next player comes on, they'll then end up on the receiving end of the combo's conclusion - often a menacing kick in the teeth. It's also

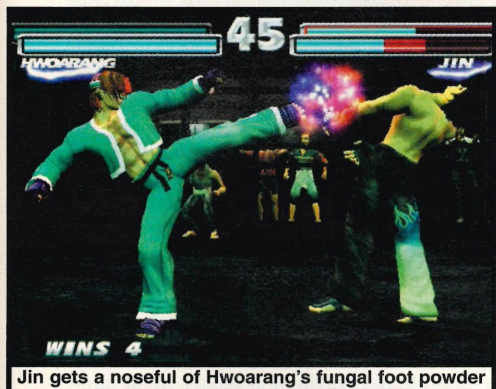
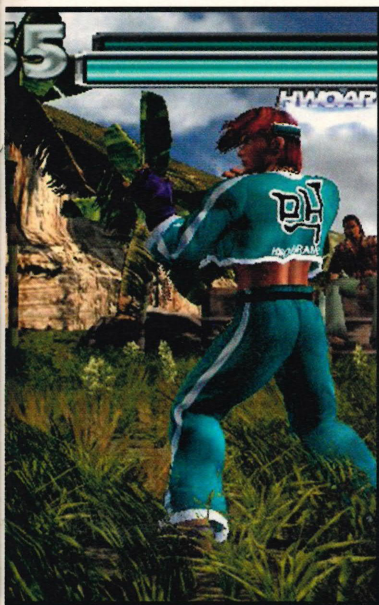


Not the face! Not the face!

possible to knock an opponent to the floor and then switch to your team mate to jump in and dish out further punishment, just like in a wrestling match. For the survival mode, you can even team up with another human to see how many consecutive bouts the pair of you can endure.

Initially, you'll have to complete the arcade mode repeatedly with different characters unlocking secret fighters, alternative costumes and even a couple of hidden game modes. By my reckoning, there are an impressive 37 different characters, including nearly all of the characters ever to have appeared in the Tekken series. From original cast members Jack, Paul and Devil Kazuya to Jun, Wang, Ogre and Tiger - they're all included. There's even a new boss character, whose name is unknown, but she looks like a crazy heroin addict and has a weird spirit to accompanying her in her battles.

I was especially glad to see my favourite character from Tekken 2 - Bruce the kickboxer - making a welcome return. His range of



long reaching kicks combined with Paul's hard-hitting punches provided the ideal combination for a dream assault team.

Along with the expected gaming modes like team battle, survival, one on one and time attack, there's also a novelty Tekken Bowl mode and special gallery mode to unlock. Tekken Bowl lets you take your favourite two characters down to the local ten-pin bowling alley for some lighthearted action. Competing against the computer or another human, your first player always bowls the first bowl, while the second is left to clear up the spare if required. Impressively each character has individual bowling attributes and this fun bonus mode is better than any full bowling game I've played on the PlayStation. The gallery mode lets you capture your favourite freeze frames within the game and then save them to memory card.

As you'd expect when Namco work with Sony's new wonder machine, the quality of visual imagery is simply groundbreaking. Every one of the levels is spectacular, rang-

ing from the palm trees swaying among the grassy dunes to the school yard complete with its posse of individually animated spectators. The lens glare can be so realistic, you'll literally be squinting to avoid being blinded and, combined with the stunning lighting, lightning flashes, misty effects, snow storms and light shading from burning torches, a truly unique atmosphere for each different location is created. Characters are immaculately detailed right down to facial grimaces and strands of hair flopping when they hit the deck.

The gameplay remains fine-tuned from the last Tekken outing, with a few moves added and the action seemingly running both smoother and faster. Even when you have the mighty Panda or Kuma in a throw, there is no glitching often caused by poor collision detection, which clearly shows the sheer quality of this release.

If I had to fault the game, it would be to moan about the otherwise incredible backgrounds, which tend to pivot awkwardly like in the days of parallax scrolling. Although you'll only notice this when watching the game, it does at times give the impression that the fighters are standing on an independently floating island.

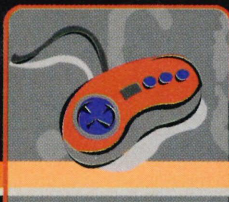
As a complete fighting experience, there is nothing more satisfying than rugby tackling an opponent to the floor and then smashing them around either side of the head before peeling off to snap their arm out of its socket. As with any Tekken game, ultimately you'll try to learn multi-hitting combos and then someone will come along with beginners Eddy or Lei and rely on one move to completely embarrass you. However, this is certainly an essential addition for anyone lucky enough to own a PlayStation2 at the moment and reaffirms Tekken as king of the iron fist. **GD**

PROS

- Best fighter on market
- Awesome graphics
- Plenty of longevity

CONS

- Spinning backgrounds
- Music is rather passive
- It's not here yet!



Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster

Jackie Chan has a lot to answer for. Back when I was a student, we would head down the Union bar, drink enough to floor an adult male elephant and drunkenly recreate scenes from our favourite Chan movies.

Mike Smith

Eventually, after a nameless bloke broke his leg after being flipped over another nameless bloke's back, we abandoned our Chan-inspired, booze-fuelled antics - at least until he was out of plaster.

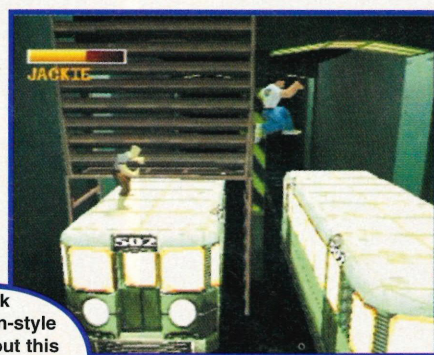
So students everywhere will be pleased for the chance to emulate Jackie's antics without fear of injury. But does the game capture the mix of humour and fast-paced slapstick action the films managed so well?

From the intro onwards, it is clear it has succeeded. Although the graphics appear a little crude at first glance, the movements of the characters are very convincing. Jackie himself was motion-captured for the moves, and it shows. His on-screen persona works just as well as in the films, and as he sprints about he shouts Chan-isms like "This is not my day!" and "Why you trying to kill me?" Fantastic.

"Your fighting is scored on style at each level end, so there's plenty of incentive to expand your repertoire."

Stuntmaster borrows heavily from classics like Double Dragon and Renegade. Jackie moves through urban locations like warehouses and garages. Each room contains a bunch of hoodlums, and after you administer a sound beating to each one, the next is opened. In true-to-life Chan-style, you can pick up and throw pieces of scenery, chairs, mops and so on, to help you clean up the mob. Every so often there will be a platform-based puzzle, or a truck will chase Jackie for a while. Sometimes imaginative jumping or exploring will yield quicker ways out of rooms or shortcuts to avoid enemies. You will meet the odd boss character, like the chef who throws saucapans at you, or the meathead who tries to do you over with an iron girder. Simple, formulaic and timeless.

The controls are easy to master, and as you progress through the first few levels you



Kick ass Chan-style throughout this colourful, entertaining and funny game



den throughout the levels. Collecting all the silver masks on one stage awards Jackie a golden mask - and collecting all the gold masks allows entrance to the Jackie Chan Movie Theatre. Some spectacular Chan cinematics should provide the replay value often lacking in games as simple as this.

But it is a shame the sound hasn't been used more imaginatively. Jackie's random exclamations are all very well, but the game sorely misses some kung-fu type shouts as he slaps one of the 'hood silly. The controls can be a little unresponsive when negotiating the platform sequences too, and this leads to many irritating 'plunge-to-instant-death' moments.

If you are hungering for the joys of immortal 80s arcade classics like Double Dragon or Golden Axe, Stuntmaster will keep you entertained. If you missed out first time round, or you're not a fan of Jackie Chan films, you might want to give this one a miss. **GD**

will be discovering new comedy moves all the time. Chan can jump off walls, spin enemies around, do bizarre spin kicks and all sorts. The fighting is surprisingly complex for a game of this type, and your style is scored at each level end, so there is plenty of incentive to expand your repertoire.

More scope is added by the masks hid-

PROS

- You can be Jackie Chan
- Convincing fighting moves
- Varied locations

CONS

- Kung-Fu shouts needed
- Instant-death factor
- Chan fans only



Rescue Shot

Having developed the G-Con 45 lightgun and then released *Time Crisis* and *Point Blank 1 and 2*, Namco deserves much credit for converting their arcade success onto the PlayStation.

Gareth Holden

The latest first-person shooter from these games perfectionists, *Rescue Shot*, opts more for a cartoony aspect to proceedings, although this time it's just too childish.

Heading out on your adventure, you step into the muddled mind of Bo, a peculiar bunny-shaped creature who has lost his memory. Having been teased by the Bully Brothers, he slipped and fell off a cliff to awake with severe memory loss. Heading out on a mysterious adventure, Bo slowly begins to regain his memory through a series of confrontations with other bizarre creatures like Fox, the amateur detective and Earl Grey, the most notorious thief around.

As Bo trolls around the colourful, yet simple landscapes, your task is to protect him from the likes of the Bully Brothers and other enemies that swoop down and throw barrels at him. Fortunately, you're equipped with a shooter with infinite ammo, although you can collect acorns and then shoot them until your collection is depleted. There are plenty of objects to take a pop at besides the obvious. Sunflowers, windows and huge toadstools are just a few which often hide secret gems, acorns and nasty surprises such as bombs.

Although you have no control over the direction Bo takes, you can avert certain dangers. By shooting his bunny tail, he'll leap in the air to clear rolling logs and broken bridges and by shooting him in the back of the head, he'll drop to the floor without losing any energy. If you do take a hit, one of your six lives will be used, although as the game progresses to more tricky stages, you can win more of these to insure your efforts. It's possible to rejuvenate your energy by finding cherries en route and then shooting them into Bo's path.

There are some nice touches here but



Rescue Shot's cartoon-style graphics are just a bit too childish

they're generally few and far between. The game is definitely aimed towards the younger gamer as there's not a drop of blood shed anywhere and the story telling is both slow and painfully simple. Besides having to hit the obvious targets, there's very little skill involved in the game. With the absence of any reloading mechanisms, you'd expect the on-screen action to be a turbo-charged frantic see-and-shoot type affair as in *Point Blank*. Unfortunately not. At times there are tedious pauses in the action as you travel in between batches of enemies and this really slows the game's pace.



A two player mode allows you to team up against a friend to see who can score the most points. In both one and two player modes, unless you've got a lightgun then it's not even worth trying to compete. Using a traditional controller guided by an on-screen cursor is little fun and too difficult.

Kids will enjoy this game, although I'm not sure they should be encouraged to become sharp-shooters at such an early age. For the rest of us, *Time Crisis Titan* just can't come soon enough. **GD**



PROS

- Colourful, simple graphics
- Accessible gameplay
- Enjoyable bonus levels

CONS

- Too childish for many
- Rather slow paced game
- *Point Blank* is better



Power Stone 2

Power Stone was a crucial release for the Dreamcast, not only because it signalled Capcom's dedication to the console, but also as it was a mighty fine game. With much hype surrounding the sequel, Console Domain has finally got its hands on a Japanese import of the game that promises more of the same mayhem, but with four players at the controls.

Gareth Holden

There's no shortage of fighting games currently doing the rounds on the Dreamcast, with Soul Calibur remaining as the people's favourite. Rather than a straightforward side-on conventional styled beat 'em up, Power Stone opts for more complex 3D arenas with equally exquisite gameplay to match. Washing the screen with fountains of garish colours, there's never a dull moment during a battle. For those new to the Power Stone series, I'll just cover the basics again.

Within the scrolling 3D environments, almost every object is interactive, whether you want to smash a barrel over an opponent's head, swing around a pole to launch a flying attack at them or simply pick them up and hurl them at the scenery instead. Initially, I found the first game slightly frustrating as the computer began launching into horrendously powerful attacks while I was still working out which button did what.

However, once you do work out what's going on, the gameplay really shines through. Without a blocking button, you must punch, kick, combo and jump your way out of trouble, relying on every nook and cranny to shelter from heavy attacks. The power stone element comes into play by giving special powers to any character able to gather up and hold three power stones at the same time. This is far trickier than it sounds because, not only are there a limited number of stones, but every time you are hit you'll lose at least one stone. This means that if you don't dash over and recollect it, someone else is bound to add it to his or her collection.



Power Stone 2 is a garish colour-fest

When you finally amass the three, then the fun really begins. Not since Pocket Fighter on the PlayStation have I seen such an elite selection of wacky special moves. In Power Stone 2, the normal geeky looking Pete character gets transformed into a wind-up toy robot and produces a full army of toy soldiers to unleash a mass of bullets across the screen. The way that Capcom has managed to combine a seriously competent beat 'em up, but still inject plenty of humour is an aspect I really appreciated. Even the simple power-ups like guns, bazookas, sledgehammers and pipes are amusingly oversized (as in a cartoon) and are always a joy to use. Of course, it's not essential to use your special

moves to beat every enemy, it just makes things that bit easier.

As a single player game, you have a choice of routes through the game, with a huge boss at the halfway and end stages. You only ever face one enemy to fight on any one stage and I found that they are now less determined to collect the three power stones than in the first version. Sadly, the end result is that you'll cruise straight through the game within about one hour and even the bosses aren't too tricky.

Two of the most significant developments for Power Stone 2 are the detail and construction of levels and the addition of a four player mode. Levels in the original version



were impressive, but these ones will totally blow your mind. One of the most memorable involves two submarines travelling side by side. As you frantically battle it out, they'll take it in turns to submerge, often leaving the unaware stranded in the water. There's always a scramble to man one of the three gun turrets, which allow you to fire out explosives into the heart of the action or, of course, at one of your opponents. Another fantastic arena provides a small tank for one lucky player to roam around in while blasting the living proverbial out of the others. The only safe place is to climb up to the towering ledges above, which conveniently have some giant catapults to lob boulders down below. Best experienced with four

players, you'll be guaranteed to roll around in a fit of giggles as players get toasted left, right and centre. You can also have any combination of multiplayer battle, with three players able to gang-up onto one if required.

Other improvements include loads of new power-ups and the option to use one of 12 characters plus two extra bonus characters which have to be unlocked. Each character has different attributes. The bigger ones can rip huge pillars out of the ground whereas the smaller ones will use these as a projectile for an attack instead. The advantage of using smaller characters is that they are so much quicker around the arenas, which is vital for making a dash to grab that final power stone or to jump onto moving scenery. There are even skateboards to inject more mayhem into the action and, as a special treat, there's a novelty sky-interlude between one of the levels.

Once again, Capcom can stand back, proud of its achievement with Power Stone 2's graphical display. A tremendous palette of colours injects life into the ambitious level



"The screen awash with fountains of garish colours, there's never a dull moment during a battle."

designs, which manage to move huge objects about the screen amidst spectacular multiple explosions, without even a hint of slowdown. For example, there's one level that borrows from the film, Raiders of the Lost Ark, where a giant boulder chases you down a cave run as you fight to try and get others squished by it. Nifty camera work makes it easy to see all of the action by zooming in and out to include all of the characters at any one time.

There is an Internet link-up facility as well as a bonus shop option within the game. Unfortunately, due to my inability to decipher the Japanese text, I couldn't fully explore either of these.

If you're planning to link up with three friends, then I'd definitely recommend purchasing this game. If however, you don't have



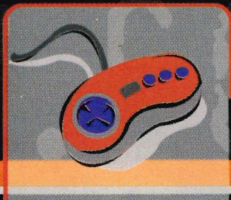
either enough friends or enough controllers, then the game will become repetitive after you've completed all of its levels. Even so, this game is well worth a trial by any fan of the beat 'em up genre, just don't expect to be playing it a month after you've bought it. **GD**

PROS

- Impressive visuals
- Great four player mode
- Mind-blowing new levels

CONS

- Repetitive in 1P mode
- Slightly bizarre concept
- You'll have to wait for it



Hogs of War

Pigs, foul smelly creatures. As Jules put it in Pulp Fiction: "That's a filthy animal. I ain't eating nothin' that ain't got enough sense to disregard its own faeces." Nevertheless Infogrames have gone right ahead and made a game about hogs - fighting to the death.

Kevan Mander

If you've ever played the fantastic Worms then imagine that game in 3D with a bunch of pigs. The plot, if that is what you want to call it, is that the continent of Saustralasia is in turmoil and the pigs are revolting (literally). You must then battle across countries which when seen together on the main map look suspiciously like the outline of a pig and have names such as Hogshhead, the Isle of Swill and Arstralia. As you can see, the cheeky humour of worms has also been moved across.

At the start of the game you can choose the nation of pigs you want to control from a selection that includes England, France, Russia and Japan. The nations only vary in their colour and their exclamations. You can, if you like, name your battle-hungry hogs.

The level objectives are very simple, kill all enemy pigs. So off you trot with your troops. The game is a turn-based strategy game and while this may put some people off, I urge you not to give up. You have a minimum of three pigs on your team and in the one player mode you have 60 seconds for each turn when you can move one of your pigs and fire a weapon. In two player mode this timer can be reduced to crank up the pressure. If you are injured in some way your movement is slowed down, providing further tense moments as you try to move your character out of the line of fire.

Your hog comes equipped with a basic kit of weapons, including a bayonet, rifle and three grenades but you can pick up more powerful arms, such as mortars, along the way. One of the nicer features included in the game is the Metal Gear Solid-style first-person view that allows you to look through a scope to aim guns, but not larger weapons. A



This game is just like Worms - and we're not telling porkies!

lot of the weapons rely on the correct judging of arcs to hit your chosen target - more difficult here than in Worms because Hogs is 3D rather than 2D. Your stock of weapons builds as you go along with promotion points for completing levels, allowing you to advance pig troopers in various fields such as engineering, medicine, espionage and heavy weaponry.

Level design starts off pretty cool, with trenches and battles across rivers but then they dissolve into some ridiculous scenarios with islands that provide little or no cover to defend yourself.

Graphics are, unfortunately, looking a bit dated. Thank god the PS2 is just around the corner. The sounds, with little anthemic riffs for each country are excellent and Rik Mayall provides excellent voice acting for the pigs. If



you've played Worms then you've played Hogs of War. If you haven't, or have a 'thing' about 3D by all means buy this game and you won't be disappointed. It just lacks originality that you find, even in small amounts, in worse games. **GD**

PROS

- Good for a laugh
- Rik Mayall's voice acting
- First-person view mode

CONS

- Not as good as Worms
- Unoriginal idea
- Dated graphics

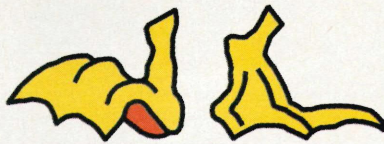
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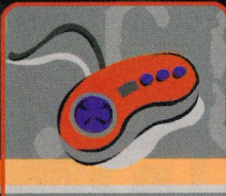
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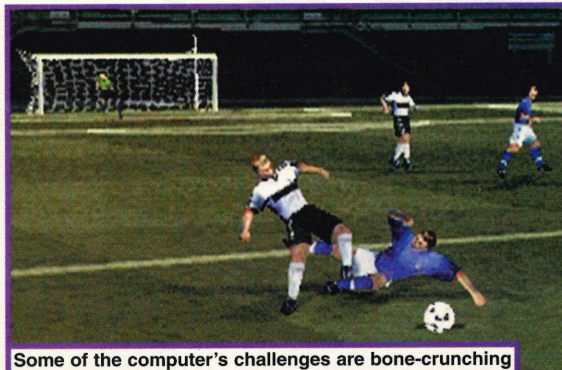
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Euro 2000



If only scoring was as easy as it is in FIFA footie sims



Some of the computer's challenges are bone-crunching



With Euro 2000 just around the corner, the nation is once again preparing to unite in its support for the England boys. Euro 2000 is EA's companion to the championships so at least if - or when - things don't go quite according to plan, you can always head straight for the PSX and recreate what so nearly could have been.

Gareth Holden

Opening up with an impressive video sequence, accompanied by music from DJ Paul Oakenfold, highlights of some of the best European encounters blend into animated character movement from the game.

Naturally, the main event is the Euro 2000 competition, where you start out at the first stage of qualifying. You can randomise

the groups again if your team face a particularly tricky set of opponents, but I definitely preferred the authentic original draw.

Qualifying from the first group stage will see your team grouped against a more elite line-up of opponents, with only the top team and runner-up from each group progressing on to the nail-biting knock-out stage. From then on, it's a case of performing well on the day and at times riding your luck, if you're to prove your continental dominance. A nice feature is the appearance on screen as you play of other relevant group scores and results and commentator Mark Lawrenson drawing your attention to them.

As the tournament progresses, your squad will naturally face injury problems and suspensions, which often pose managerial dilemmas. Acting as both the manager and players, you can head out onto the training field and play your first team against your reserves to find out who's hot and who's not. As you tweak your tactics it's even possible to set your reserves to play in the favoured style

of your next opponents, allowing risk-free experimentation.

Unfortunately, there was no flashy end sequence when I did the nation proud and won Euro 2000. Instead, a new option on the menu screen was unlocked entitled 'classics'. This unlocks up to 40 of the dream teams from years gone by. The classics option compliments the skill drill, golden goal and challenge - which are available from the start - adding extra longevity to proceedings.

Skill drill consists of several sets of tasks, designed to improve your talents on the ball. Under categories like passing, shooting, tackling and one-timers there are up to six tasks to be ticked off. Veterans of the series will ease through all of these at the first attempt. Golden goal is simply a quick match-up where you can set the number of goals needed to win a game in a sudden death-style encounter. To round off the action, the challenge option lets you create a custom tournament, with either four or eight teams.

Throughout graphics remain highly simi-



Experiment with different tactics. Here, the Germans and Dutch go for 11-0-0 formations

lar to FIFA 2000. Using the same game engine, the action flows well with intricate passing, players running into space on overlaps and individual skills helping you to build up attacks.

There are also a number of improvements which help inject more realism. For example, players now get muddy streaks on them after sliding challenges and the multi-coloured flat texture crowd now bounces around. First introduced in FIFA 2000, the quick pass symbols above players' heads now make for easier marking when defending set pieces. By holding the specified button down, this will attract more of your defenders to one particular striker, although you'll still have to keep a sharp eye out for others making last-minute dashes.

For me, the most disappointing factor here is the long-running problem of ease of scoring. Basically, as you run hell for leather by hammering the triangle button, Track and Field style, a simple press of the shoot button when inside the opponent's area will virtually guarantee you a goal every time. FIFA fans will probably love this simple gameplay, but for me the whole skill element is sadly lacking.

Even on the hardest difficulty setting, keepers are easily beaten, although outfield players are much tougher to beat. Similarly, the computer manages to get away with some hideous tackles, with the referee seem-

ingly oblivious. Another retained annoyance is the fact that you can change the difficulty setting during a game, which will obviously assist those who wish to cheat. Most players will be guaranteed an even game against the medium difficulty setting though.

When compared to the current footie game of the moment - Konami's ISS Pro Evolution - Euro 2000 can appear jerky and its physics seem poorly judged. On the fastest game setting, the action can become too much like a frantic game of pinball, where you just don't get any time on the ball and the action judders along.

On the slower settings, the game becomes too laborious. In comparison, playing ISS is a much smoother and rewarding experience, where complex passing moves and through-balls are a joy to pull off. Also, individual player characteristics are better judged in ISS, where there are more noticeable differences in players' shooting abilities and physical appearance.

Although EA claims to have utilised a brand new face texture generator for this

game, players still appear too angular-limbed and block-headed. On occasions, I was actually quite scared by some of the freaky mutant faces of players, putting Resident Evil's zombies to shame. One aspect of recent FIFA games I have not been impressed by is the way the ball seems too floaty. Even when you blast it at the keeper, he will oddly manage to punch it away rather than pull-off a more realistic tip around the post or over the bar.

All of the FIFA series' greatest moments are here, from the correct player name licence and true-to-life competition to the addictive end-to-end gameplay which favours attacking. Although some of the ongoing irritations of this highly successful series remain, it will inevitably sell by the stadium-load as the hype builds before Euro 2000.

If you've already got FIFA 2000 be warned: this is very similar and not enough has changed to warrant owning both. However, if you love the series and want the latest version of it, this will definitely prove an ideal companion to the championships. **GD**

PROS

- Improved visuals
- Enjoyable skills mode
- Comprehensive tactics set-up

CONS

- Too easy to score
- Slightly jerky action
- Poor reality factor



Metal Gear Solid

Konami's Metal Gear Solid has made its way (stealthily) on to Game Boy Color.

In a similar vein to its PlayStation predecessor the storyline sees Solid Snake up against a terrorist organization which has nicked Metal Gear - a large, nuclear missile launching, bipedal tank. But like all challenging games, it will not be as easy as it sounds - there are a countless number of traps, guards, dogs, puzzles and four bosses standing in your way. Stealth as well as speed and skill hold the key to success here.

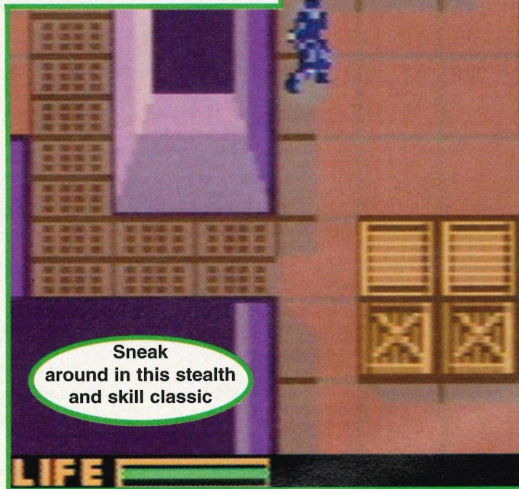
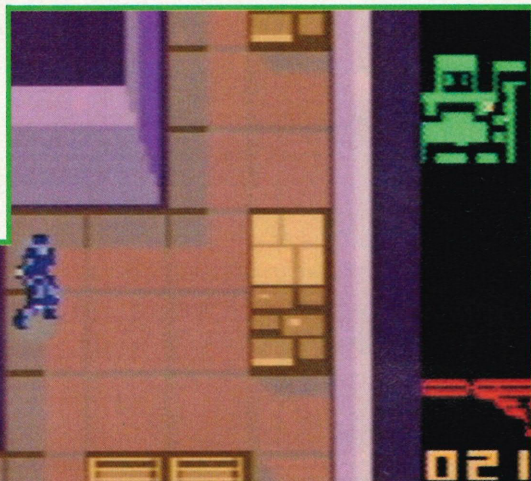
Graphics are basic but SFX are mildly mood-inspiring, with plenty of sounds for alarms, weapons fire and many more effects.

You can prepare yourself for the main game with VR Training. This contains three modes: sneaking (infiltration techniques), weapon handling and advanced (study both simultaneously). All enable you to hone your counter-espionage skills to the maximum with 146 separate engagements.

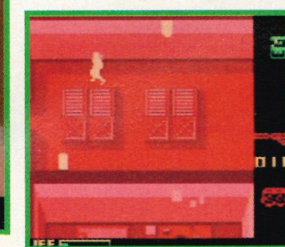
If that isn't enough, maybe you could convince a friend to buy the game. You can then use a link-up cable and have an awesome two-player contest. In this mode both of you will compete to recover three data discs, then reach a goal point safely, all without being discovered and shot by your counterpart.

For those of you who have not had the pleasure of playing any of the Metal Gear series before, go out and buy this title. It's a simplistic version, but for a GBC title it does remarkably well.

By Dave O'Donohoe



Sneak around in this stealth and skill classic



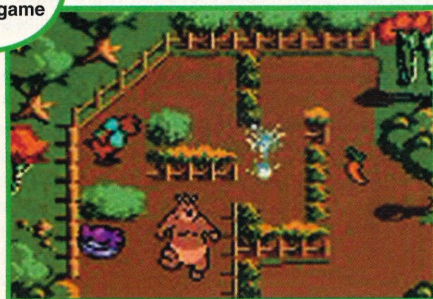
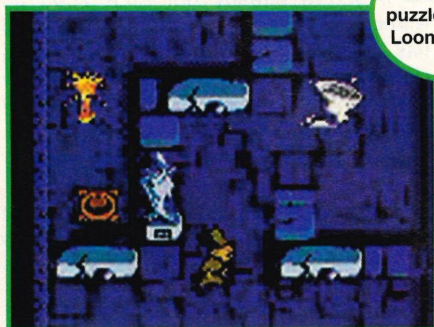
Looney Tunes Collector Martian Alert!



The bizarre premise of this Infogrames cartoon-tastic release is that Marvin the Martian's dog has lost ten of his owner's Earth-eliminating teleporter pieces. Marvin is none to happy as this canine carelessness threatens his Earth-shattering plans.

You, as Bugs Bunny, have to save the world by recovering the teleporter pieces before Marvin reaches them. Along the way you will need to find and defeat other Looney Tunes characters and convince them to join you in your quest (each character has a special ability you'll need).

Colourful action and puzzles in this Looney game



To get the most out of this game, which is out now, you'll have to trade your Looney Tunes characters with a friend (see where this is going?). In the one player adventure there are 12 initial stages, eight playable characters and 25 characters to meet. Using the game link cable or the infrared link you can gain access to a second adventure with eight missions, six playable characters and 22 characters to meet.

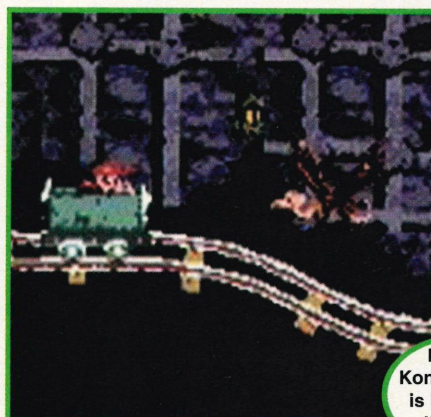
Martian Alert! also has six mini, two player games. In these you can wager your characters based on the outcome. But, if you lose, you can say bye to your character for good! The top-down gameplay is filled with action and puzzles, graphics are colourfully rich in detail and the music perfectly accompanies the action. The game has a save feature too - so none of those annoying passwords to remember.

This may be an attempt by the publisher to cash in on the collecting craze whipped up by Pokémon, but this game is certainly an ingenious idea, great fun to play and adds a different dimension to the Looney Tunes franchise on the Game Boy.

By Maria Georgiou



Donkey Kong Country



Donkey Kong Country is back - on the GBC

Rare is set to release a Game Boy Color version of their SNES classic Donkey Kong Country later this summer. So prepare yourselves - it promises to be nothing short of the full version ported directly from SNES to the wee handheld.

The title will offer all levels, characters, environments and animal side-kicks - with a couple of modern improvements to bring it hurtling into the 21st century. As well as this, look forward to plenty of undisclosed levels to test your ability to monkey around!

A printer and link cable capability will be added so that you can connect to your friends Game Boy for some two player action (as long as they have the game as well) and print off some awesome screenshots of you munching those bananas.

So be forewarned - here begin the restless nights as you dream of either reliving, or playing for the first time, a game that captured the adulation of me and many other gamers across the globe. Can't wait to match up to K.Rool again!
By David O'Donohoe



Cross Country Racing

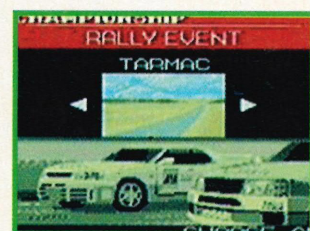
Konami's Cross Country Racing doesn't really offer anything new. Out in the shops now, it has the usual rally, time attack and two player modes.

In rally mode you get the chance to race against AI-controlled opponents on one of three skill settings. The harder the level, the more cars you will find yourself up against.

In time attack you get to choose from any of the 20 racetracks to set your fastest times. And you also have the link option for some high-speed, two player action. Last, but not least, is the championship mode. This gives you the choice of four clubs (groups) to race in and then the type of event you wish to compete in.

The game does, however, throw up something individual. Four meter bars register damage to key parts of your car - tires, gears, engine and shock absorbers. These are all useful in making your decision as to whether to stop for repairs or keep on racing, hell-bent on victory.

Average gameplay destroys Cross Country Racing's chance of impressing and the game is still very slow. Graphics are dull,



the fixed background irritates and the surroundings are repetitive. With these poor visuals you would expect more speed. The only plus is the car you drive. It appears in 3D when turning corners - a nice touch.

Sounds accompanying the game are nothing special - SFX are grating and the music is worthy of a good switching off.

By David O'Donohoe

Meter bars register damage to key parts of your car - useful when deciding whether to stop for repairs or keep on racing, hell-bent on victory

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