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GAME INFORMER

Computer & Video Games

OVER 20 GAME BOY ADVANCE PREVIEWS

XBOX STRUTS ITS STUFF

AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

LEGION: LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR
Medieval Madness Comes To PlayStation 2

XBOX EXAMINED
The Future or Failure?

PS2 TAG TEAM TACTICS
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EYE CANDY
Previews of Halo, Munch's Oddysee, MechCommander 2, Project Gotham, Amped, Test Drive, Medal Of Honor, Blood Omen 2

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MAY 2001

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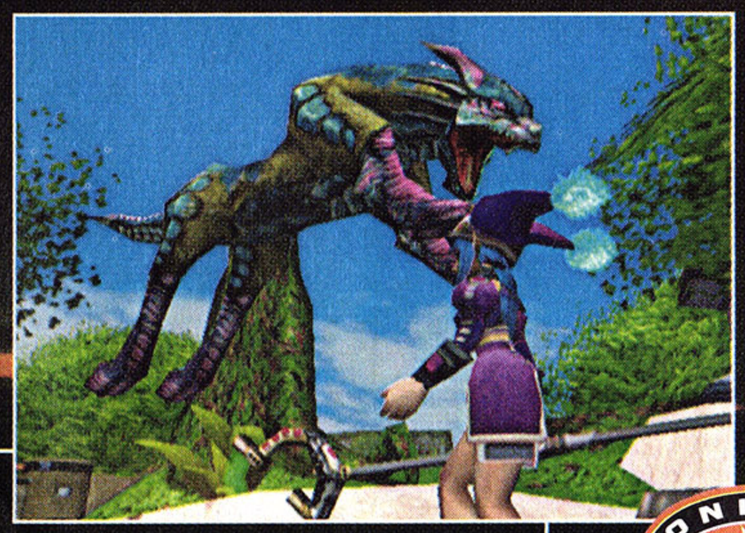

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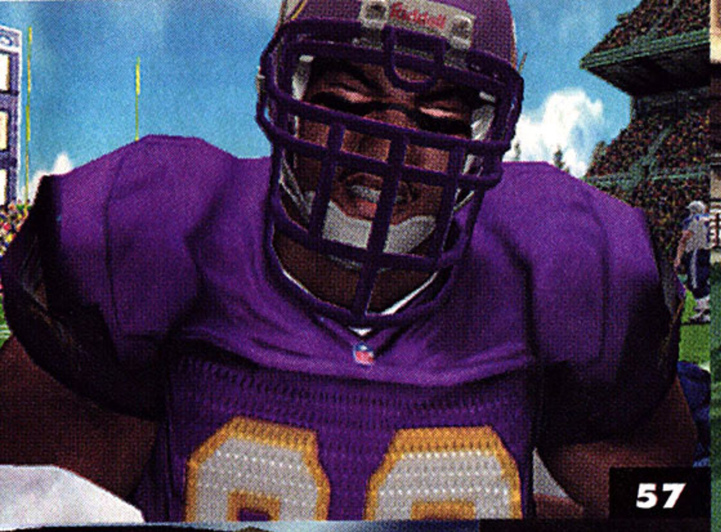

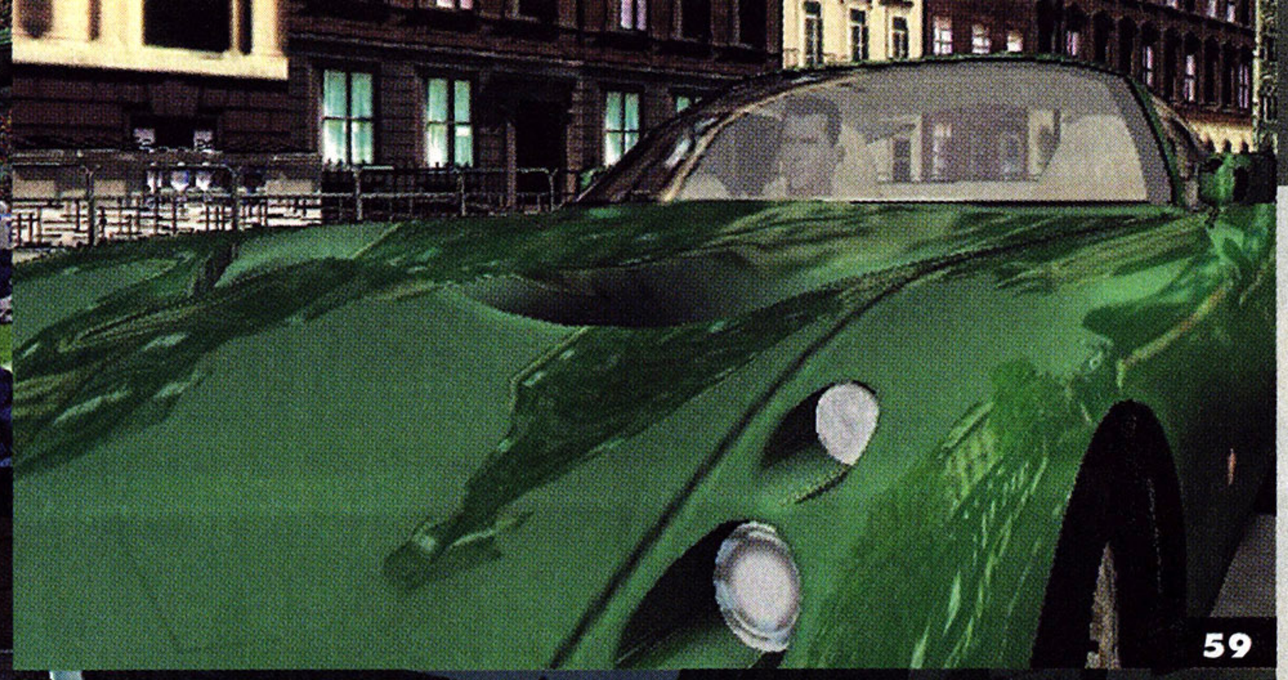

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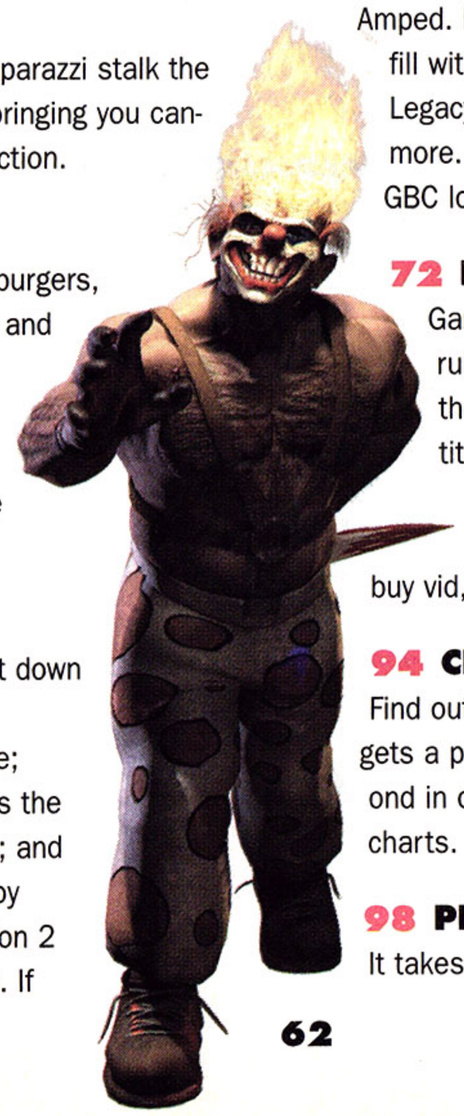

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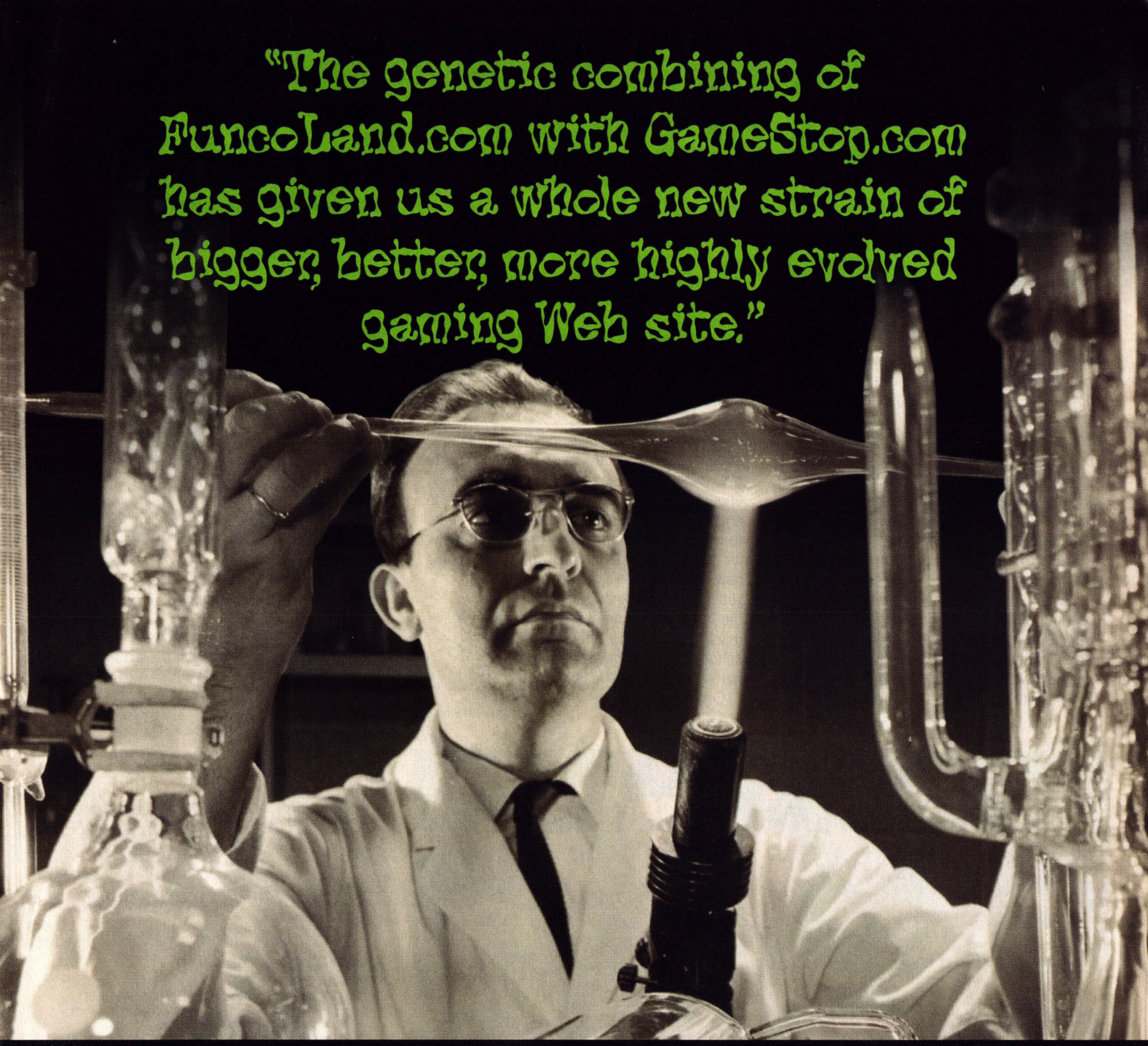

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EDITORS' FORUM

STATE OF THE UNION

I'm sure it's obvious to all our readers that Game Informer has undergone some staff changes over the last couple of months and some of my, and your, favorite reviewers have moved on to do different things in this crazy game we call life.

Last month, we saw Justin come over from our website to join the magazine staff, and Erik, The PC Jedi (God, I love that handle) move on to bigger and better things. As if that wasn't enough change, this month we also bid a sad farewell to longtime Senior Editor Paul, The Game Professor (or the Pro Player, as I like to call him) and welcome Kato to the staff to take his place.

Luckily for us, Paul isn't going far, as he has moved on to the corporate side (or the Dark Side, as I like to call it) of the magazine where he hopes to take Game Informer to new heights while heading up our circulation department. What's a circulation department you ask? Don't worry, I don't know what it is either, but whatever it is, I'm sure it's important.

So while things have been a little crazy on the staff side lately, I can tell you the current rash of changes are done. The new team is in place and I think we have assembled a talented crew that I believe is easily the best in the business.

While we will all miss making fun of Paul (me especially, since I have tortured him for over nine years), Justin and Kato are easy enough targets that we should be able to entertain ourselves at their expense for years to come. Game Informer is close to entering its second decade of delivering hard-hitting news and reviews, and I think you'll come to know and love the new team members as much as you do the old-schoolers who have been here since the beginning.

Enjoy the issue.

Andy McNamara
Editor
andy@gameinformer.com

PAUL, THE GAME PROFESSOR
paul@gameinformer.com

You had better start calling me the Circulation Professor. After much thought (but with no trepidation), I have relinquished my position on the editorial staff. I leave things in the hands of some very talented and intelligent people. My new job focus will be on many business aspects of the magazine that I have kept my eyes on since I started with Game Informer in 1992. With a love of sales reports, circulation audits, and organization structure, I have always been a business geek. If you want to hear more about my new gig, I'll be more than happy to field your questions regarding my goals of increasing the newsstand draw through region-specific targeting. I'm still here, I just moved across the hall.

REINER, THE RAGING GAMER
reiner@gameinformer.com

Not since the day my mother said, "You are the devil's child! I never want to see you again! You ruined this family! You're out of the will!" have I shed a tear. Yet I do so today. Why such a cowardly act? Because one of Game Informer's eldest members, Paul, is departing for greener pastures. I weep not because he was a great friend, but because he was such an easy target. I could spit in his face, pierce his son's nipples, and take his wife to my cabin for a weekend, yet Paul would never say a word. I'll see you in Hell, ya big loser!

MATT, THE ORIGINAL GAMER
matt@gameinformer.com

Today is the last day of deadline, and I still have about 75 pages of the magazine to proofread, so I'll keep this brief. First off, I'd like to send great big hugs and kisses to creators of Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble, one of strangest, coolest games I've played in some time. I'd like to send a shrug in the direction of Microsoft, who, despite bragging and boasting, has yet to prove to me that it fundamentally understands the console market. Lastly, thanks to DJ Snailtrax (and heavy doses of Percocet) for releasing my inner child.

JAY, THE GONZO GAMER
jay@gameinformer.com

For one glorious day this month, I was in charge of the magazine. After ordering Justin to do 300 push-ups for looking at me funny, I told Kristian he should make me a sandwich if he knew what was good for his career. With Matt hard at work writing my biography, Life In The Radical Lane: The Fat & Mighty Times of Fitzloff, I decided to take it easy. It was nearly noon, after all. When I awoke from my nap, I shackled everyone to the couch and headed home. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to change the mag's name to Jay Informer. Maybe next time.

KRISTIAN, THE GAME DAWG
kristian@gameinformer.com

Oh, the Game Boy Advance. So beautiful, so powerful, and so danged small. It's too small, I tell you! I swear I thought I was going to have a permanent GBA-shaped claw after playing it for an hour. But the games are so sweet. Dodgeball is the best handheld game I've ever played, and I've played a butt-load of them. Tony Hawk 2 – so very awesome. $100 is a bit much for a price tag, but you'll definitely know where that money went once you fire it up for the first time. Just be prepared to spend half your gaming time massaging your hands if you're over the age of 14.

JUSTIN, THE DIGITAL DEVIANT
justin@gameinformer.com

You may not have noticed, but the GI staff is one towering unit. I'm 6' tall, which is far from tiny, but I have to look up at everyone else here. The one exception is Jay, who stands 4'3" (sneaky camera tricks have prevented this fact from being exposed). With Reiner, Paul, Matt, and that Xena-wannabe Kristian, it's almost like being on the Milwaukee Bucks in the '80s, back when their whole team was a bunch of tall white dudes; aside from the fact that we're basically talentless, and get winded standing up to pee.

GI SPY

1 2

3

CANDID PHOTOS FROM THE SEAMY UNDERBELLY OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

1 Sony's Charlotte Panther socializes at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose after a day at the Game Developers Conference. **2** Sadly, Charlotte's shoe seems to have paid the price for her party-hardy lifestyle. **3** Head 'em up, move 'em out! Rawhide! Washington Post freelancer/greenhorn cowboy Tom Ham shows off his equestrian skills at Nintendo's Camp Game Boy Advance event. **4** Tina Casalino and Ryan Bowling from Sony PR pose with Gran Turismo 3 producer Taku Imasaki. **5** After previewing the company's E3 software lineup and ingesting copious amounts of prescription painkillers, Matt enjoys a bagel with the Rockstar Games posse. **6** Buff and tough Sony Online/Verant PR guru Greg Rizzer demonstrates why he's been voted the "Most Macho Man in Video Games". **7** Upon arriving at work, Jay was shocked to discover Andy McNamara enjoying an intimate moment with Kirby on the GI office couch. **8** Though they are both technically classified as "white" guys, Reiner and Naughty Dog honcho Jason Rubin exhibit a dramatic difference in skin pigmentation. Quick quiz – Which one lives in Minnesota and which one lives in California?

8

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7 6

5

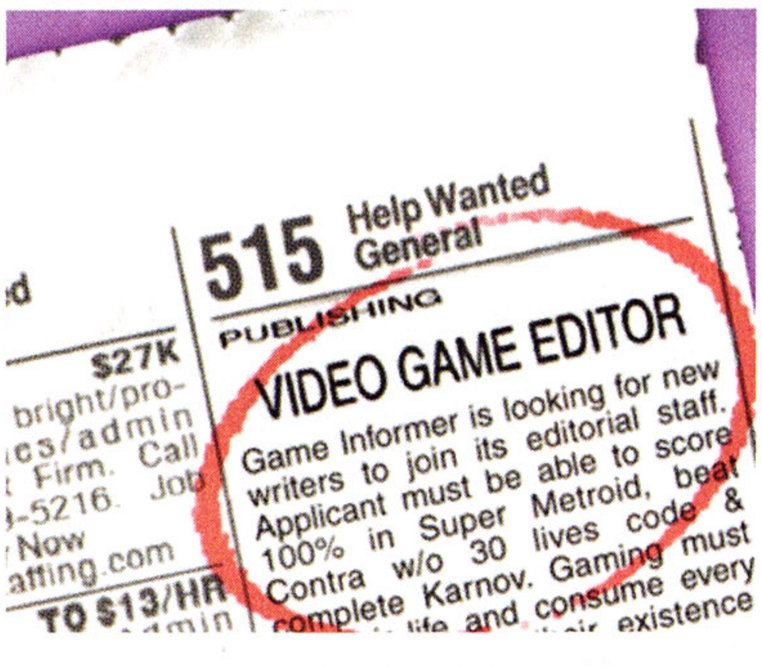
DEAR GI

GENIUS STRIKES

I am a very bright student in my high school. I pull a 4.2 out of a 4.0 in honors classes. This doesn't make me happy, though, because my true passion is video games. Thanks in part to your mag, I am considered the video game know-it-all. I have come to the conclusion that to live a content life I should be in video games. I have decided to apply to Miami University of Ohio to study journalism. I am joining my school's yearbook staff for my senior year to become well versed in the ideas of writing and meeting deadlines. I would appreciate any suggestions or tips that you have acquired through your vast experiences in the video game world. I would be grateful if you would take some time and give me a response.

Brian via AOL.com

We've decided to give you each editor's special personalized suggestion on how to get into video game journalism. Matt said, "I screwed around in college for five and a half years, then I joined a band with a video game magazine editor as the drummer. Things seemed to work themselves out



from there." Andy said, "I don't know. I just showed up at Game Informer when it started and never left. I was watching *The Secret of My Success* a lot at that point in my life." Reiner quipped, "Be sure to become friends with the editorial staff you want to join. That, and send them cases of 20-year-old scotch." Jay and Kristian both had the same thing to say: "Graduate from college, then look in the newspaper classifieds, and luck into finding an ad for editorial writers. If that doesn't work, we really don't know what to tell you." Justin said, "If you ever need a bed, I know a great place you can get them cheap. I tend to break a lot of beds. Hey, there's my girlfriend! Everyone wave!"

A FATHER'S LOVE

Dear Kristian,

Since your sudden disappearance at the age of 16 (or 14...I forget), your mother and I have occasionally thought of you and wondered what befell you.

The son of a neighbor evidently reads the publication you write for and showed it to his father. Gloatingly, he brought it to my attention. I saw the picture. I presume you feel long hair is stylish. I won't go into the rest, other than to suggest that you might want to consider changing your name – to protect the innocent, so to speak. In my position as head of Amalgamated Drug & Tobacco, a large manufacturer of high-nicotine youth-market tobacco products and psychotropic vitamin additives, I have a reputation to protect.

I'm sure you understand. The above notwithstanding, I still harbor fond memories of you as a youngster and your endearing idiosyncrasies (do you still enjoy reading the P section of the phone book aloud...?). Should you come to your senses, I have a place for you here at Amalgamated. You could live once again in the loft over the garage (though the rent has gone up a bit since your pre-teen years) and we could put all this Game Informer nonsense behind us.

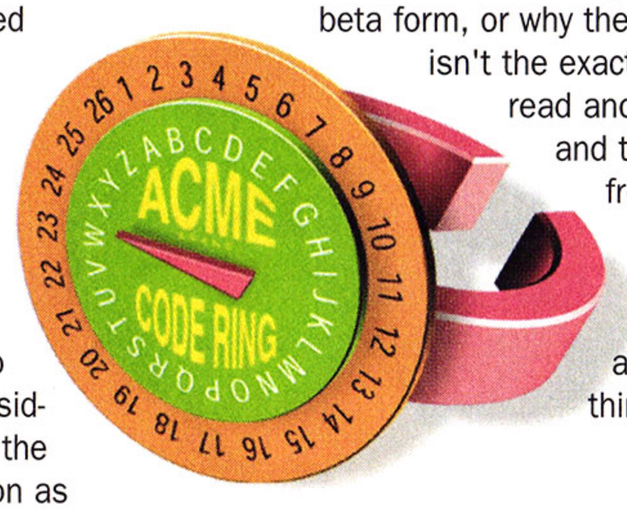
Your concerned father,
Arne

Upon receiving your letter, Kristian immediately went into hiding for an undisclosed period of time. When he resurfaced, he had not only written a rather lengthy and expletive-filled response, but he had reacquired a nasty facial tic which was brought on by being forced to read The Book of the Five Rings repeatedly as a young boy. Game Informer did some checking up on Amalgamated Drug & Tobacco, and it seems the company is deeply in debt after being sued repeatedly in the big tobacco lawsuits of the mid-'90s. In short, you, sir, are flat-ass broke. The Game Informer staff could not in good conscience allow Kristian to be sucked back into the world of above-ground pools and Monte Carlos from whence he came. That would be the cruelest blow of all.

THE AD GAME

About how many letters would you say you get from complete idiots asking why you have to have advertisements, or why the game changed from its beta form, or why the heck the Playstation game isn't the exact same as Dreamcast? I read another magazine (God forbid) and they had all these letters from utter morons complaining that the magazine had ads in it. You probably get tons of these. Just give me a weekly average or something.

Dan via Juno.com

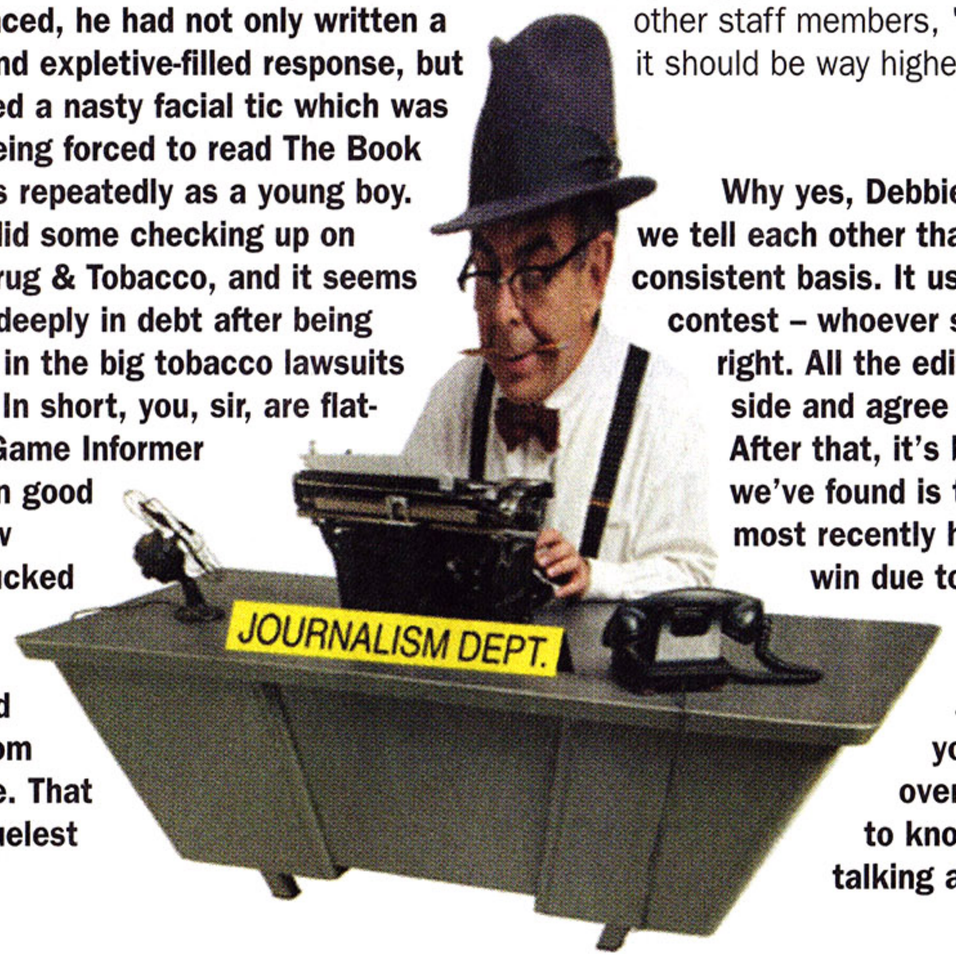


Funny you should ask, Dan. We get many, many letters every month from complete idiots. We need decoder rings to figure out what most of them are trying to say. Only a small percentage complain about the ads. Call it two per week. We don't get too many letters asking why a certain game changed from its beta form, since most people don't get to see games until they're ready to be shipped. PC games are an exception, but generally people realize if a game's in beta, it's still subject to a lot of change. You see, Dan, Game Informer doesn't clog its pages with ads so it's easier for you, the reader, to navigate through. While these other magazines may be making money hand-over-fist through their ad sales, we prefer to make money the old-fashioned way: stagecoach robbery.

THE RATING SYSTEM

Do you guys ever think to yourself, or tell the other staff members, "That's a stupid rating, it should be way higher/lower."?

Debbie McTiernan



Why yes, Debbie. As a matter of fact, we tell each other that very thing on a semi-consistent basis. It usually ends in a spitting contest – whoever spits the farthest is right. All the editors gather around outside and agree on the launch point. After that, it's bombs away. What we've found is the contestant who has most recently had a cold will usually win due to the added phlegm factor. Weight plus force equals distance, and everyone knows if you can hurl a loogie over six feet you've got to know what you're talking about.

Send your comments to Game Informer. **Snail Mail:** Game Informer Magazine • Attn: Dear GI • 10120 W. 76th Street • Eden Prairie, MN 55344 **Email:** deargi@gameinformer.com **WWW:** www.gameinformer.com

HAVE BURGERS, WILL TRAVEL

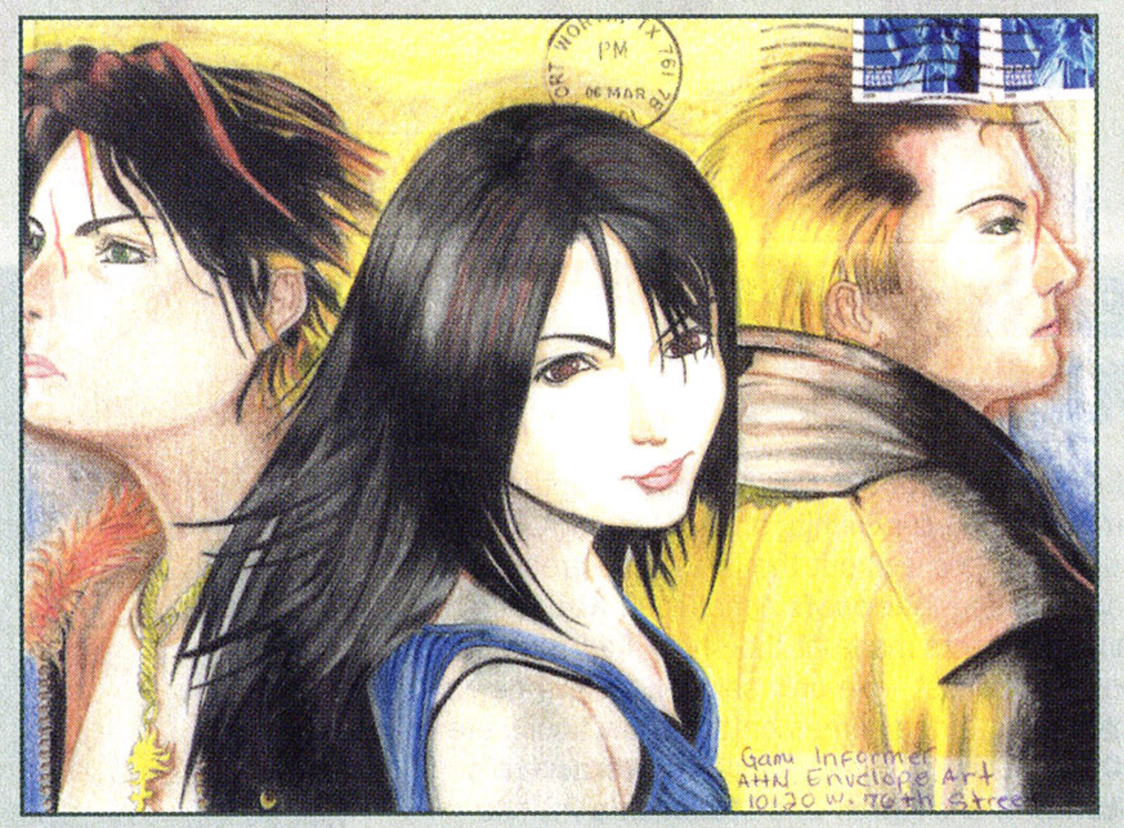
I am a 25-year-old cook and I have one hobby: video games. I had to turn down a job twice from Acclaim because of cooking. Being a cook sucks, but it pays well and you meet a lot of girls. I was thinking of coming to Minnesota and cooking for you guys. Maybe some good home cooking is what you guys need to put in that extra hour playing EverQuest, ANDY! I know this letter is long but I am guilty of never writing a letter to you in the 10 years or more of reading and enjoying every part of your magazine. I still have back issues from the early '90s. My fiancé has been trying to throw out my back issues for the longest time and I tell her, "If they go, I go!" I still go back to old issues for old codes and such. You can imagine the mess I cause looking through all my old Game Informers. I don't know how many different hair colors I've seen on Reiner's head. In 25 years, from playing Intellivision to PS2, there is no other publication that even comes close to the detail and love that you guys put in. I just want to commend you on that. You should all be rewarded fruitfully. It took a long time for you guys to get the credit you so richly deserve. Thank you all for the knowledge and laughter you have given me over the years. If you are ever in New York or Long Island, look me up. I'll show you around town.

Michael
Long Island, NY

Oh Michael, we just love you to pieces. We're not sure if we have the budget for a chef, seeing as how most of us won't even be given parking spots when we move to our new offices, but we'll see what we can do. Maybe you could bake us a batch of cookies and send them in just so we know what we're getting ourselves into. Excellent job with your fiancé, by the way. It is far better to die lonely and broken than let a woman come between you and your Game Informer. Rest assured if any of us are in Long Island, we'll come to your restaurant. Hopefully, you'll be laughing at our magazine for a long time to come, and now that Reiner has a new girlfriend, look for his hair to stay the same color for a while.

ENVELOPE ART

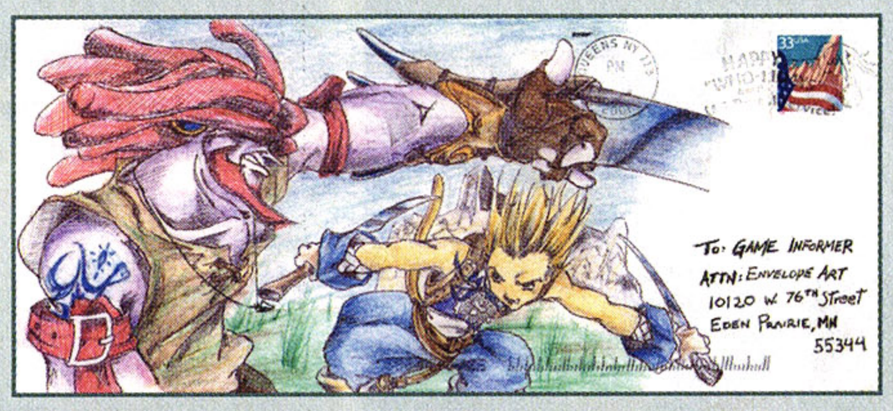
MAY WINNER!



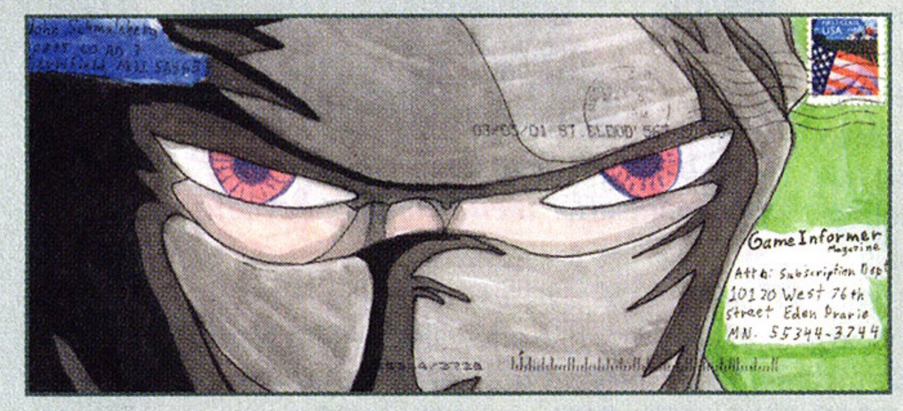
Samuel Velardo
Nice work, but next time lose the nerds and get Rinoa posing with Quistis and Selphie. Roar!

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

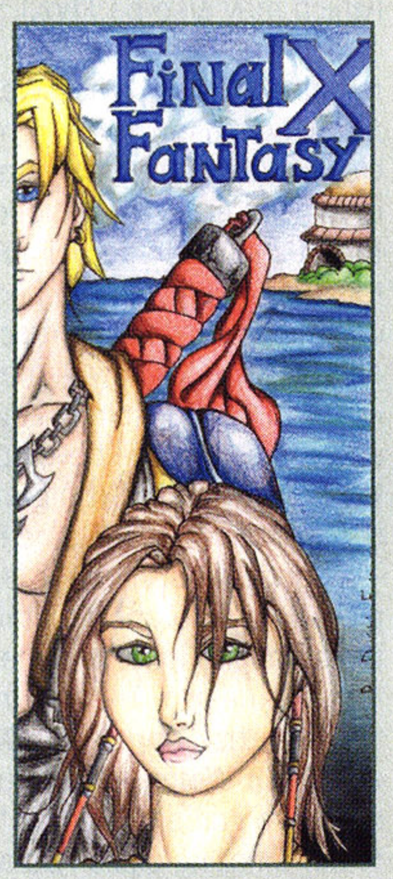
Send to:
Game Informer
Envelope Art Contest
10120 W.76th St.
Eden Prairie, MN 55344



Dong Choi
Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.

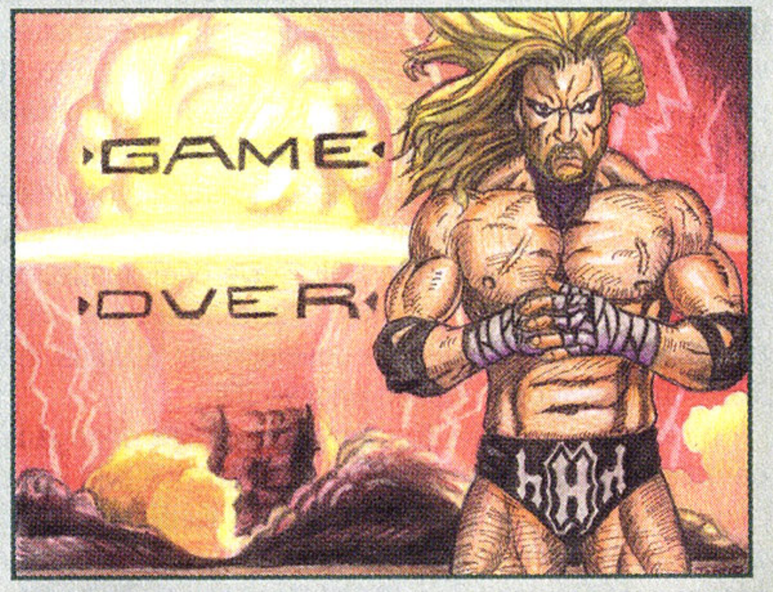


John Schmaleberg
You are getting sleepy...very sleepy.



Dustin Evans
This piece makes Yuna look a little like Britney Spears, but she's NOT...THAT... INNOCENT!

Katie Keable
If ODB wrote captions, he would say, "Gamecube, Zelda, I can't wait!"



Jason Rodriguez
Triple H must have had trouble with losing his underpants at camp, as his mother seems to have labeled all his drawers.

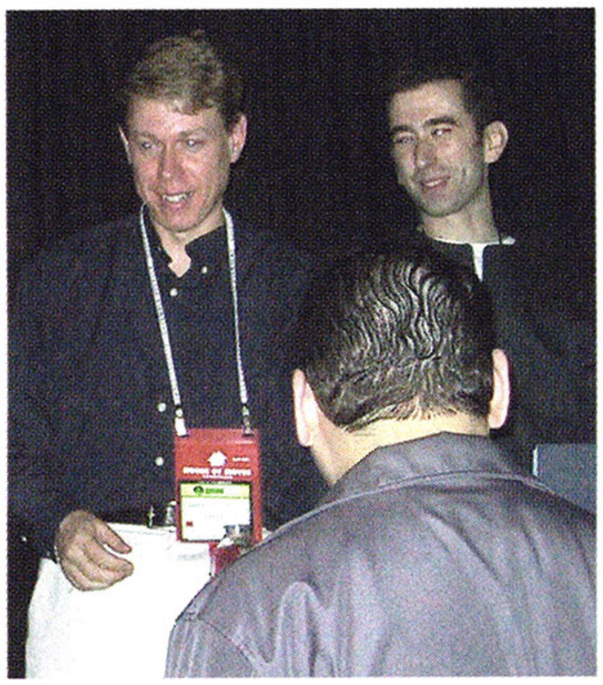
GI NEWS

GDC... YEAH, YOU KNOW ME!

On March 20, the annual ***Game Developers Conference*** swept over the small, yet highly populated metropolitan community of San Jose, CA. Of course, *Game Informer* set up camp to check out the latest and greatest GDC had to offer, but unlike last year, where **Microsoft** announced **Xbox**, there were really no significant announcements made at the show. Additionally, software was scarce – and to be dead honest – we only saw four or five new products on display. The most interesting of the games on the show floor were **Black Isle Studios'** new **PC** title, ***Torn*** (pictured), **Kodiak Interactive's** ***Circus Maximus*** for **PlayStation 2** and **Xbox**, and **Monolith's** PC title (which may also be Xbox), ***Aliens Vs. Predator 2***.

With the LithTech development System V. 3.0 in its engine, Torn operates on a real-time version of the Fallout rules

So what did we do with the remainder of our time? Well, we attended class. That's right – class. When you get sick and tired of looking at the new motion-capture technology and animation tools on display on the floor, you can slip out to a conference room and learn about how games are made through inspiring keynote speeches by game developers. **Will Wright** (***SimCity***) gave a rousing keynote called "Game Plunder" – a speech that more or less displayed ways to apply methods, tools, inspirations, and metaphors to game design. The naughtiest of the **Naughty Dog** team, **Dan Arey** and **Evan Wells**, gave away highly secretive game design techniques in the amazing piece "Balancing Act: The Art & Science of Dynamic Difficulty."



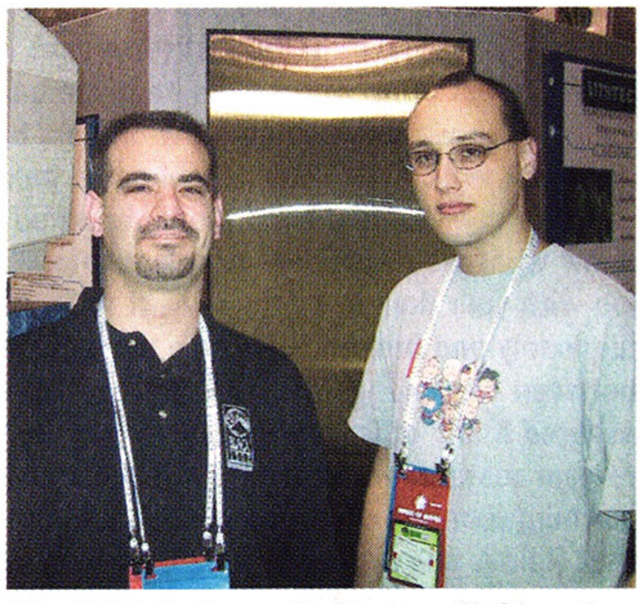
Dan Arey (left) and Evan Wells (right) exuberant after their hour-long keynote

Mecca!!!

For the most part, this show was uninteresting, but a few interesting tidbits did slip through the cracks. **Electronic Arts** hinted at the possibility of porting over ***Madden NFL 2002***, ***NASCAR 2002***, ***SSX: DVD***, and ***NHL 2002*** for the Xbox launch. **Seamus Blackey**, Microsoft's Xbox Technology Director, confirmed a few things as well. Rumor was that Xbox wouldn't release until next March. Seamus cleared this up and assured us that Xbox will launch this fall in the States with roughly 10 to 20 titles accompanying the hardware. Exciting, indeed. The good news continued with the unveiling of the **Mobile Xbox Experience** – a roadside tour bringing Xbox demos to 50 cities. Flexing his muscles even more, Seamus closed with an interesting series of numbers. Over 2,250 Xbox development kits (the XDK) have been issued to 165 different developers. Since its inception, there have been six XDK updates, and the beta XDK should hit development studios in April. The final XDK model will be installed prior to **E3**.

In closing, we'd like to add that **Iomega** announced a zip drive peripheral for the **PlayStation 2** – a device that should link through one of the USB ports on the console. **Kodiak** also announced that work has begun on a first-party Xbox baseball title. Kodiak's previous sports portfolio includes ***WCW Backstage Assault*** and ***WCW Mayhem***. Naughty Dog's top-secret next-gen title is still in the naming stages. At press time, it is codenamed ***Project Y***.

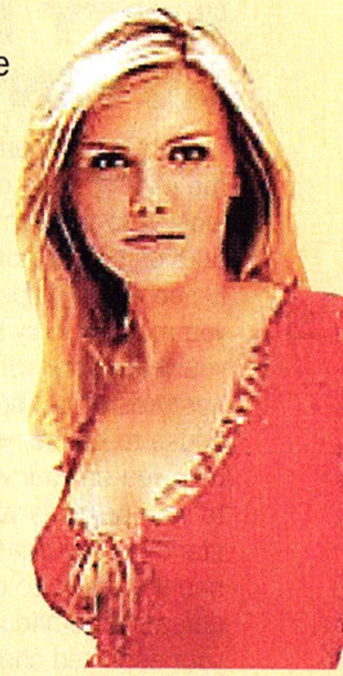
Nerds...everyone of them! Nerds!



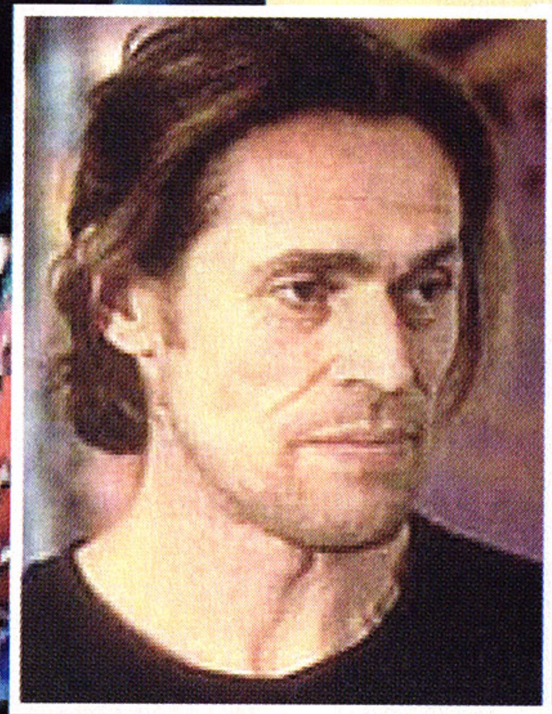
Black Isle's Kenneth Rosman (left) and Dave Maldonado (right) proudly debut the PC title Torn

ACTIVISION STICKS TO SPIDEY

Spider-Man swings again for **Activision** now and almost forever. The company has inked a deal with **Columbia Pictures** and **Marvel Entertainment** for the exclusive rights to video games based on the movie starring **Tobey Maquire** (Peter Parker), **Willem Dafoe** (Green Goblin), and **Kirsten Dunst** (Mary Jane). Directed by cult vet **Sam Raimi**, *Spider-Man* should hit theaters May 3, 2002.



This deal extends over every console under the sun, and also includes the option to make vids for a movie sequel or a new TV show. Similarly, Activision has expanded an agreement with Marvel for long-term rights relating to the comic book.



WWF/WCW JOIN FORCES, THQ/EA NEXT?

WWF and **WCW**'s rivalry has ended, although we doubt there'll be any kissing and making up (we'll settle for Stone Cold smacking around Big Poppa Pump, though). Vince McMahon's brainchild has purchased **World Championship Wrestling** from **AOL Time Warner's Turner Broadcasting System** after the WCW suffered an estimated loss of $80 million in 2000.

In the video game ring, it now remains to be seen if there will be any showdown between publishers **THQ** and **EA**. The former holds the rights to WWF-licensed titles, while the latter holds WCW's cards. The legal departments of both companies are currently reviewing the situation, so who will get the rights to what properties isn't yet known. A spokesperson for THQ did assure us, however, that it would remain exclusively in possession of its current titles.

GI NEWS

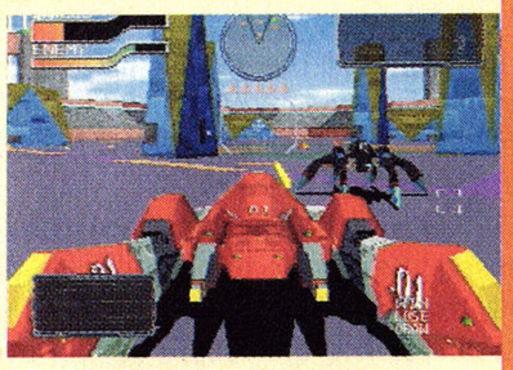
R&D

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

GARBAGE PAIL KIDS: DIRTY DIAPER ADVENTURES

That's right, amigos! The kids you loved to hate in the mid-'80s are coming back to pop-culture and are looking to take America by storm once again. You'll take on the persona of Over Flo, a child who desperately needs her diapers changed. To accomplish this task, you must journey through your neighborhood and find your babysitter who has abandoned you for the greener pastures of her boyfriend's house. As you pass from house to house, you'll pick up other children who will help you on your way. Yul Tied will be the first addition to your party as you save him from being the family's stand-in Christmas tree. Next will come Grate Scott who has the ability to use his head as a cheese grater. After defeating nefarious bosses, and finally unleashing all of your assorted characters' powers on your babysitter's boyfriend, your diapers will be changed and your problems will be over. For added replay value, players can play cooperatively through the use of Over Flo's twin sister, Moist Joyce. Yes, the different obstacles and bosses will be harder, but with courage and a little luck, you'll have those diapers changed before a truly embarrassing situation unfolds.

NAME THAT GAME



Released for the PlayStation back when games still came in the long box, this arcade translation dealing with futuristic hover-tank battles suffered some control problems because the analog controller didn't exist yet.

(Answer on page 17)

TOP 10 WAYS THINGS WILL CHANGE IF MICROSOFT TAKES OVER THE CONSOLE BIZ

10 Japanese video game magazines will wonder what the heck is going on in early versions of RPGs

9 Hardware will get bigger rather than smaller

8 Updated Xbox operating software will come out every year that make the old OS obsolete

7 Sony will start being helpful again

6 All games will somehow incorporate the letter X into their titles

5 Parents will know at least one person involved in the video game industry

4 Game Informer will become Xame InXorXer

3 The Incredible Hulk stops smashing, starts collecting fees as spokesmodel

2 Same crap, different company

1 Rivers will dry up, the moon will turn blood red, and locusts will eat all crops

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

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

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

DEVELOPER **TOP 5**
MATTHEW STIPES
LEAD DESIGNER, AZURIK

1 Ultima VI – PC
2 Wing Commander – PC
3 Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time – N64
4 Warcraft II – PC
5 Quake II – PC

Michael (r) with his anti-hero, Bret Hart (l)

READER **TOP 5**
MICHAEL REGAN
NORFOLK, VA

1 Metal Slug X – Arcade
2 Fire Pro Wrestling 6 Men Scramble – Saturn
3 Perfect Dark – N64
4 Super Mario 64 – N64
5 SSX – PS2

RE MOVIE: JUST A PRETTY FACE (SO FAR)

Constantin Films has released the first shot of the ***Resident Evil: Ground Zero*** movie starring **Milla Jovovich**. Thus, all the bad acting we've come to expect from the *RE* games should carry over nicely into the film...

Milla plays a new **S.T.A.R.S.** character named Alice, as the team tries to stop a supercomputer which is set to release a deadly virus upon the world. Paul Anderson of ***Mortal Kombat*** and ***Event Horizon*** fame will direct and handle *RE: Ground Zero's* screenplay. The movie is expected to hit theaters this Halloween.

GBA LAUNCH PULLS A "PS2"

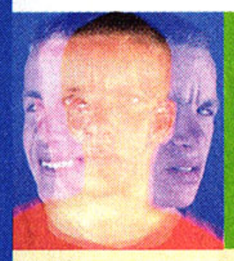
Next-generation system launches in America – the bigger they come, the harder they fall. Nintendo has said that it will actually only have **500,000** units of the **Game Boy Advance** when it comes out here on June 11. That cutting sound you hear is either the GBA's launch numbers being sliced in **half**, or the laughter of **PS2** fans who had to endure a similar fate.

The company says that this development is for "strategic purposes," but it actually may be related to the fact that the handheld almost ran out of its 650,000 shipped units at its premier in Japan on March 21. A statement from **Nintendo** reads, "Nintendo will supply US retailers with more than one million units of Game Boy Advance by the end of June." Work will also be done to "tactically replenish product where it is most needed" just after the launch. Next, Nintendo will strategically work on trying to keep its promises...

INFOGRAMES CALLS ON NIKITA

Infogrames is adding another female spy caper to the ranks of the **PlayStation 2** this fall. A video game based on the third-generation TV show, ***La Femme Nikita***, is in the works. This latest strike against global terrorists will encompass six missions, a wealth of weapons, and all of Nikita's charm.

Players will actually also have the chance to get their hands on Nikita's boss Michael via cooperative gameplay and a story which has its twists and turns. While the title's stealthy action/adventure premise isn't a revelation, perhaps Infogrames can find continued success in this latest outing of the cult series.



THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

GOOD – **Rockstar Games** is keeping its mean, lawless streak alive with a sequel to **PlayStation 2's *Smuggler's Run***. No details are available yet, but we expect to hear more about the title at **E3**.

BAD – **Sega's** dropping of the **Dreamcast** has caused some to dis the console cold. Titles on the chopping block include **Eidos' *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2*** and **Metro3D's *Armada 2*** and ***Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse.***. **Ripcord Games** is mulling the situation over, and after getting out of publishing recently, **Fox Interactive DC** games like ***Planet of the Apes***, ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer, World's Scariest Police Chases***, and ***Alien Resurrection*** probably won't appear on the system either.

GOOD (Luck) – **SCE** President **Ken Kutaragi** claims that **Sony** plans to ship out 20 million units of the **PS2** in the next year. This means doubling the 10 million that were sold this year (3 million in North America), despite **Gamecube** and **Xbox** looming even closer. Apparently the chip problems have been solved, and THIS time Sony means business.

BAD – **Activision** may have bitten off more than it can chew by taking **PS-X's *Simpson's Wrestling*** off the hands of former publisher **Fox Interactive**. Debuted at last year's **E3**, what a difference a year could make, but most likely won't.

UGLY – There's no avoiding the endless **KISS farewell tour**; it's now making a stop at the **PS-X** in ***KISS Pinball***, come April 16. **Take Two** is publishing this new nightmare, which is barely one step up from appearing in a ***Pepsi*** commercial with that freakish living Cabbage Patch Kid.

LOOSE TALK

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

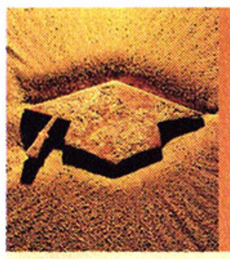
Rare's N64 title ***Dinosaur Planet*** looks to have gone extinct, perhaps at the hands of one crafty Fox (McCloud). Apparently **Nintendo** chief **Shigeru Miyamoto** himself wished the game was actually a ***Star Fox*** product. This fact, along with *DP's* recent disappearance, becomes more alluring when pondering a possible upgrade of the title to the **Gamecube**.

Expect **EA** to make good use of its **Harry Potter** license. Seven titles are apparently being planned to cover all systems around when the film appears for Thanksgiving 2002. On the other hand, **Harry Potter Online** may be binned.

The blood lust over **Crave's *Ultimate Fighting Championship*** series has already spawned a sequel on the **DC** this June. Given the series' popularity, don't be shocked to see editions for bigger fish like the **Xbox** and **PlayStation 2**.

GI News has learned that **Microsoft** plans to sell its **Xbox** titles in green fluorescent DVD cases which match the console's glow. This should also help the games markedly stand out from those of the ***PS2***.

The true nature of **Konami's Xbox** hottie ***Metal Gear Solid X*** is undercover. Word is, however, that it will in fact be an upgrade to ***Metal Gear Solid***, making it a ".5" edition and not an entirely new game.



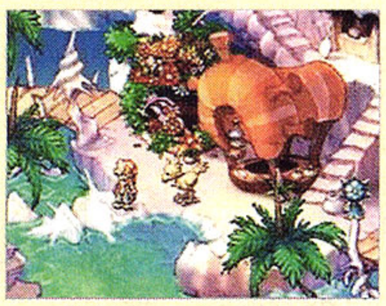
VIDEO GAME TRIVIA

Pull your acid washed jeans out of the closet and inhale the Aqua Net – Video Game Trivia is back to test your skills. Are you loaded like a freight train, talkin' dirty, and ready for action? Try our quiz to find out which hair metal band best describes you. Take a trip back to the '80s, when it was considered perfectly manly for guys to wear spandex and mascara.

Question 1: Who is the executive producer of the Gran Turismo series?

A. Kazunori Yamauchi
B. Hiroshi Yamauchi
C. Fusajiro Yamauchi
D. Kristi Yamaguchi

Question 2: Last June, Square Soft returned to its 16-bit roots with the highly anticipated sequel, Legend of Mana. To say the very least, this title was bizarre. A good majority of its missions and story material go beyond explanation. Which one of these scenarios actually takes place?



A. A cute little Chocobo named Ralphie has lost his way in the Emerald Woods. It's up to you to find the creature and lead him back.
B. Whenever the main character leaves his room, a little cactus comes to life, jumps out of his pot, and runs across the room to scribe his daily exploits on a leaf.
C. Your pet monkey accidentally swallows an entire race of microscopic beings. A wizard shrinks you so you can enter your primate's bosom and lead the frightened people out of the stink tunnel into the light of day.
D. This guy asks how you're doing, then you stab him in the face.

Question 3: Which of these weapons did not make its way into the first Road Rash title on Sega Genesis?

A. Baseball Bat
B. Nunchuks
C. Lead Pipe
D. Billy Club

Question 4: In the Konami game, Snatcher, what is the robot sidekick's name?

A. Saturn SF-Z
B. Gizmo
C. Metal Gear
D. Plock

Question 5: In Ultima 6, one of the greatest PC titles of all-time, a race of creatures was trying to reclaim something that was once theirs. What was it, and what was the name of the creatures searching for it?

A. The Codex of Ultimate Wisdom; Gargoyles
B. The Sacred Oracle Crystal; Sephena
C. The Britannian Hammer; The Red Wizards
D. The Head of the Dark Lord, Mondain

Question 6: In Tomb Raider, Lara Croft bounced from one corner of the world to the other. Where does she shake her booty to secure the booty?

A. Peru, Venice, Egypt, Atlantis
B. Peru, Egypt, Athens, London
C. Greece, Atlantis, Athens, Venice
D. Peru, Egypt, Greece, Atlantis

Question 7: Super Smash Brothers features an all-star cast of Nintendo characters, including the long-awaited return of Samus. Out of the list below, which one of these characters is in the game?

A. Peppy Hare
A. Falco Lombardi
A. Slippy Toad
D. Captain Falcon

Question 8: In Activision's Atari 5200 game, Zone Ranger, how do you complete a level?

A. Shoot down 16 satellites.
B. Save 15 civilians.
C. Destroy the enemy hive.
D. Fly over Washington DC and sky write, "Ronald Reagan is a weak-kneed bastard!"

Question 9: What is the official sub-title of the Genesis game, James Pond II?

A. GoldFlipper
B. Operation: Sand Shark
C. Codename: RoboCod
D. For Your Gills Only

Question 10: In Double Dragon, a few bad guys were named after characters from which classic martial arts movie?

A. Enter The Dragon
B. Bloodsport
C. The Fearless Hyena
D. The Game of Death

Score and Rank

0 Stryper

1-3 Vixen

4-6 Britny Fox

7-9 Cinderella

10 Poison

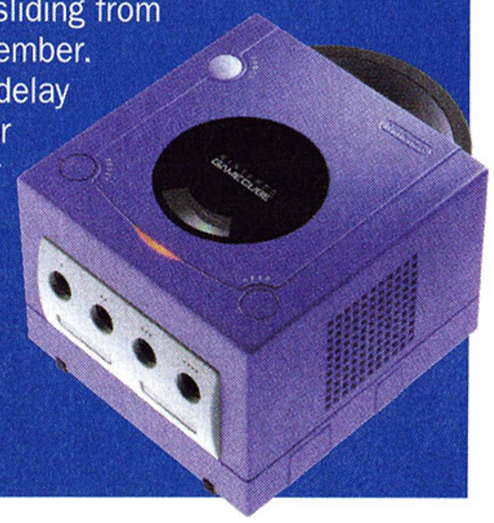
Video Game Trivia Answers:

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

GAMECUBE DELAY THREATENED

Nintendo President **Hiroshi Yamauchi** has recently expressed some concern (he's not the only one) over the company's chances of meeting the launch date for the **Gamecube**. While he said that the system may be delayed in Japan from July to August, he assures us that the GC is "basically on track" for America.

On the other hand, fans may remember that the launch day for the **N64** was pushed back numerous times, even when it had a date assigned, sliding from April 1996 all the way to September. Still, Yamauchi says, "Such a delay would not be a major cause for concern" to those waiting over here. He stresses that "This Christmas season is critically important, especially in the United States. We must release the new machine in October there."



NAMCO ALL FOR PS2 - MAYBE

Namco has stated that it is looking at delivering a dozen **PlayStation 2** and/or arcade games for the future. ***Tekken 4***, ***Soul Calibur 2***, and new installments of ***Ridge Racer*** and ***Moto GP*** are all being considered. Other possibilities include titles for baseball, tennis, and soccer, a new RPG from ***Monolith*** software, and two newbies called ***Vampire Night*** (gun shooter) and ***Tales of X***.

Interestingly enough, the company is expecting to post a loss of $55 million - a chunk of which surely is a result of the low number of PS2s out there. While Namco hasn't signed any paper with **Nintendo's Gamecube** or **Microsoft's Xbox**, the tentative nature of the games above leaves plenty of wiggle room.

BREAK DOWN

40% of the gears in Justin's car are in working order

48% of the things that come out of Kristian's mouth are a lame excuse

50% of the GI staff prefer Cookie

50% of the GI staff prefer Cream

22% weight gain is expected amongst all staff now that we have complimentary snacks

DATA FILE

➤ **Take Two** has announced that the claymation cockfighting of **MTV's *Celebrity Deathmatch*** is to hit undisclosed next-gen consoles in the future. A **PC** version shouldn't be discounted, nor should the possibility of other games for shows like ***Jackass***, etc.

➤ **Sega** chairman and president **Isao Ohkawa** has died following a cardiac arrest. Ohkawa was also the founder and honorary chairman of parent company **CSK**, and had recently donated almost $700 million in assets to Sega. He was known for wanting the company out of hardware so it could focus solely on software.

➤ Want to get snuffed by ***Metal Gear Solid 2's*** Snake? **Konami's** Japanese website is taking applications from fans of any nationality so that their names can appear on enemy soldier's dog tags in worldwide versions of the game.

➤ Work on **PlayStations 3-9** may have just begun. **Sony**, **Toshiba**, and **IBM** have just announced a partnership to develop a processor with 200 times the capacity of those used today. Code-named **Cell**, this chip is being designed for use in multiple broadband devices.

➤ Youngsters will be getting a different kind of sweet tooth this fall, as ***Twisted Metal Kids*** (tentative title) lands on the **PSOne**. Developed by **Incognito**, **TMK** will feature characters from past games in RC cars zooming around pelting each other with spit balls and the like.

➤ **EA Sports** is starting the football season early this year, bringing out the **PlayStation 2's** first college title, ***NCAA Football 2002***, this summer. The fat man also sings early in his second ***Madden NFL*** vid.

➤ **3DO** has filed a trademark infringement suit against **LucasArts Entertainment and Licensing** over the name "***Starfighter***." Apparently, 3DO's 1995 game *Star Fighter* (appearing in the arcade, and on the **PS-X**, **Saturn**, and more) laid claim to the name before LA's *Star Wars* title. LucasArts denies there is any merit to the suit.

➤ The original online game, ***Ultima***, has suffered a setback. **Origin Systems** has cancelled work on ***Ultima Online 2*** so that it won't be a competitor to the first *UO*. ***Third Dawn***, the newest extension, however, is expected shortly. Currently *Ultima Online* has 230,000 subscribers.

Name That Game Answer:

Cyber Sled

EVER ONWARD FOR EVERGRACE

Continuing its own crazy game of dress-up, ***Evergrace 2*** has been announced by **From Software** of Japan for release on the **PlayStation 2** this summer. In this prequel, the interesting use of found objects for equipment will continue ("Does my ass look big in this turnip armor?").

Darius returns for *E2*, this time joined by two friends, Fillna and Ryana. While switching characters was fun in the first title, *Evergrace 2*'s party of three should make for a more intertwined plot and plenty of exciting battles. It is unknown at this time if Agetec will bring this game to the States.

GI NEWS CONTEST:

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Grand Prize (1)
- Battle For Naboo PC game
- Starfighter PlayStation 2 game
- Star Wars Demolition PlayStation game
- LucasArts logo T-Shirt

Second Prize (4)
- Battle For Naboo PC game
- Starfighter PlayStation 2 game
- LucasArts logo T-Shirt

Third Prize (5)
- Battle For Naboo PC game

Your name will be placed in a pool of valid entrants for a random drawing to be conducted on June 4, 2001.

There Are Two Ways To Enter:
(1) Send a POSTCARD with your NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER to:

Game Informer's Battle For Naboo
10120 W. 76th St.
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(2) Send an EMAIL with your NAME, ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER to:

naboo@gameinformer.com

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1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter, send your name, age, address and phone number on a postcard to: Game Informer's Battle For Naboo Giveaway 10120 W. 76TH ST, EDEN PRAIRIE, MN. Or, email your name, age, address, and phone number to: naboo@gameinformer.com. Entries must be received no later than June 4, 2001. One entry per person. Duplicated entries will be disqualified. Game Informer magazine (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late, mutilated, illegible, incomplete or misdirected entries. 2. PRIZES: One (1) grand prize winner will receive the Battle For Naboo PC game, Starfighter PlayStation 2 game, Star Wars Demolition, PlayStation game, LucasArts logo T-Shirt (approximate retail value $125). Sponsor reserves the right to substitute prize of equal or greater value if prize is unavailable. Prizes are non-transferable and no substitutions allowed. 3. WINNER(S): Winners will be determined by random drawings of all valid entries received by the Sponsor, whose decisions are final. Drawing will be held on or about June 4, 2001. Winners shall be notified by mail and/or telephone. Please allow six to eight weeks for delivery of prizes. 4. ODDS OF WINNING: The odds of winning depend on number of valid entries received. 5. ELIGIBILITY: Promotion open to residents of United States only. Return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winner may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 14 days of receipt or forfeit prize. If the winner is a minor, then prize may be awarded to winner's parent or legal guardian. By acceptance of prize, winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor and its parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, division or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that winners might incur as a result of this sweepstakes or receipt of prize. 6. RESTRICTIONS: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.

AZURIK

RISE OF PERATHIA

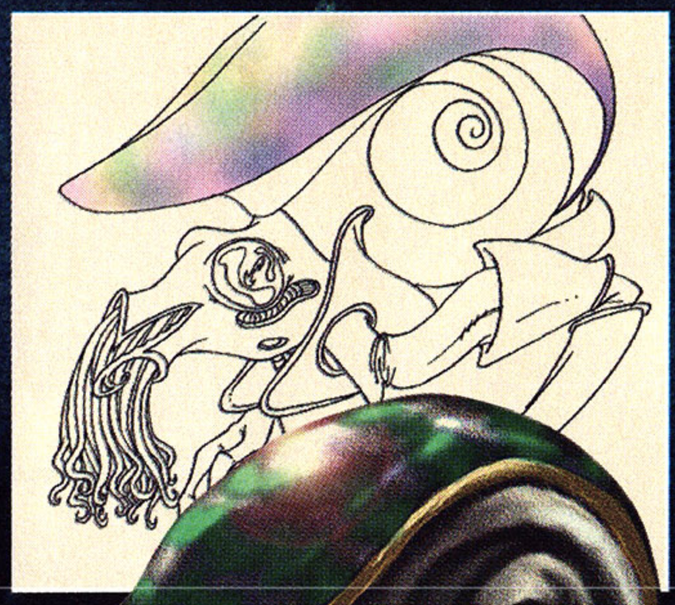
MASTER OF THE

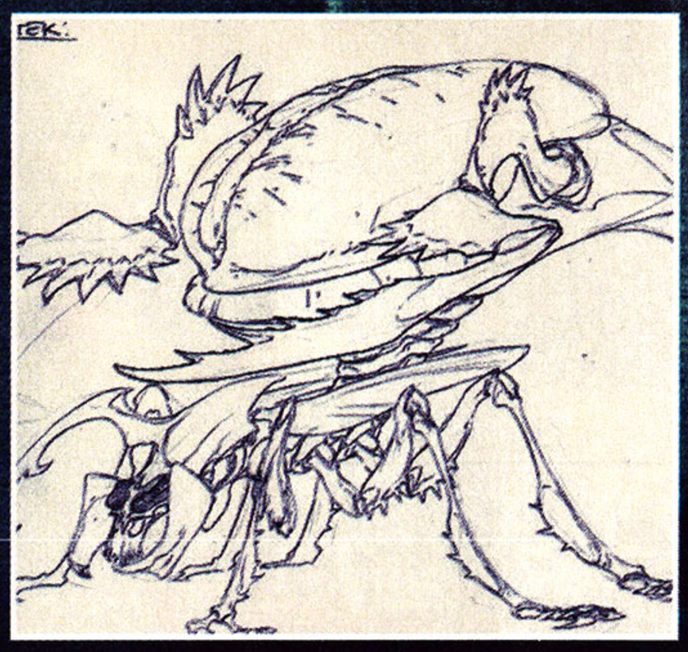
MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

As one of the first games developed for Microsoft's Xbox, the creators of Azurik: Rise of Perathia are challenged with not only producing a fantastic game, but with showcasing the capabilities of the machine itself. The team behind this immersive 3D action/adventure, Adrenium Games, may have taken on a massive undertaking, but even at this early stage in development it's easy to see that some great things are in store for Azurik.

At the Microsoft headquarters in Seattle, Washington, Game Informer had a chance to sit down with some of the key players behind this high-profile Xbox title. What we discovered was more than just an amazing game. Azurik will be a landmark release for the Xbox, and a glimpse of the future yet to come.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** ADRENIUM GAMES ■ **RELEASE** TBD





AZURIK IS BORN

In December of 1999, the Xbox team was knee-deep in the development of Microsoft's first console. As the breakthrough technology was nearing completion, the team members knew that all the power you can squeeze into a box doesn't amount to a hill of beans, unless you have great games to play on it. So Russ Sanchez, Studio Manager for the Xbox Games Group, turned to long-time Microsoft employee Matt Stipes – who had sharpened his skills during five years of creating software for Sidewinder game devices – for the solution.

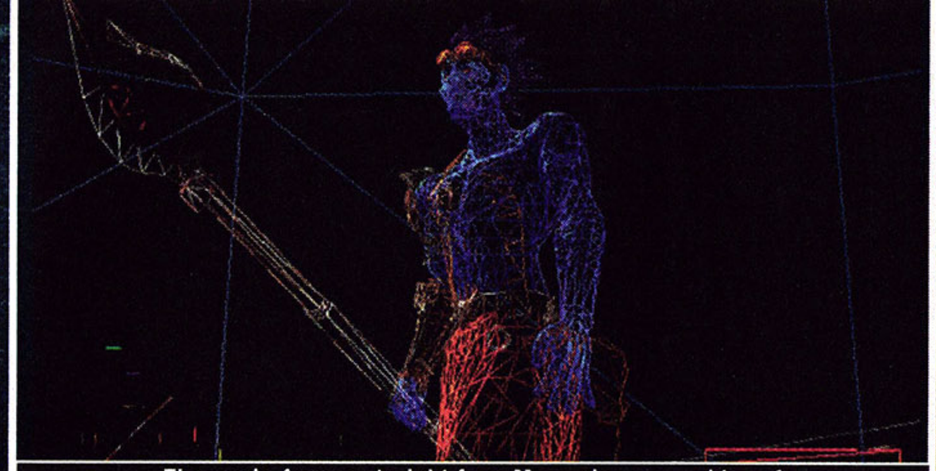
"Russ came and said to me, 'You know Matt, you are an expert gamer and we had talked about you designing games before, and I'd like to give you that opportunity'," Matt Stipes recalls. "We then started looking around for a developer to help us with that, guys who had expertise and had done games before." That's when Sanchez and Stipes found Adrenium, a company they saw as the "perfect fit."

Stipes continues, "These were guys who were really excited about working on one of the first titles for Xbox and excited about the new technology."

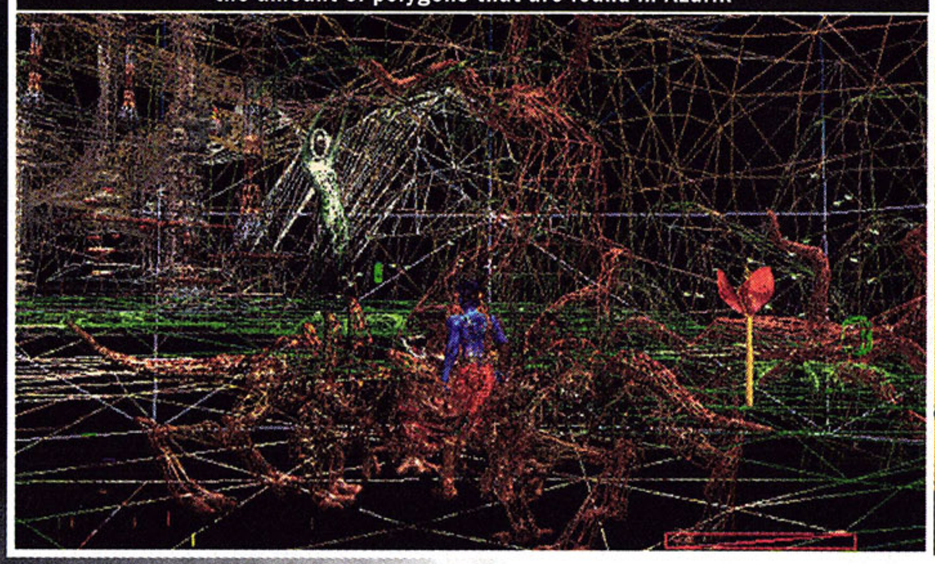
Enter Stephen Clarke-Wilson, one-time head of Virgin Interactive development worldwide and one of the founders of Adrenium Games, and Paul Knutzen, Lead Designer at Adrenium who has credits on Cave Dog's Amen and Lobotomy Software's Powerslave.

When asked about the challenge put before him, Stephen summed it up with a simple, "Video games are pretty much the hardest thing you can do." Coming from a man who has a Ph.D. in computer science and has worked on such things as (we kid you not) the Stealth Bomber, that is quite a statement.

Unabated by his daunting task, Stephen then set out to put together the team that has grown to be 26 members strong. Stephen speaks highly of the crew, "[We hired] people who know what they are doing or can learn fast because everything is actually new – brand new engine, brand new work environment, [and] new tools, Maya, which we are perverting to our own purposes."



These wireframes straight from Maya give you an idea of the amount of polygons that are found in Azurik



MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

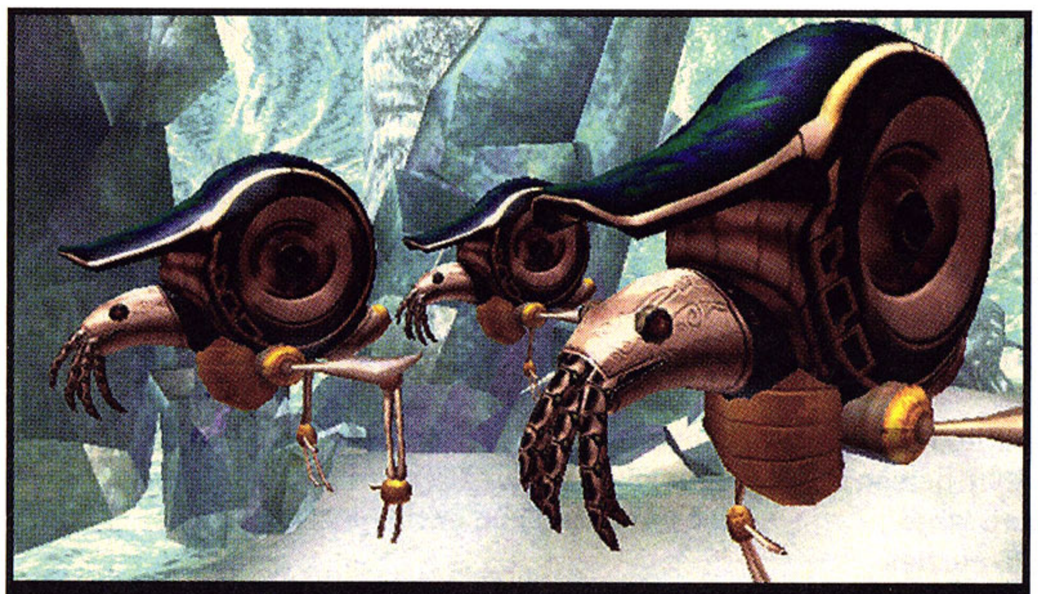
The amount of detail in the textures is astounding. Look closely at the beast head and you begin to understand the level of detail found in Azurik

While Stephen was busy putting the team together, Matt and Knutzen were busy putting together the pieces of the game's design. "The first couple of months of the project was pretty much Matt, myself and Dominick Meissner (another member of the Azurik design team) sitting around hammering out all the details of the original design, and deciding how exactly we were gonna go about getting it done," remembers Knutzen with the look of a man reminiscing about the good old days.

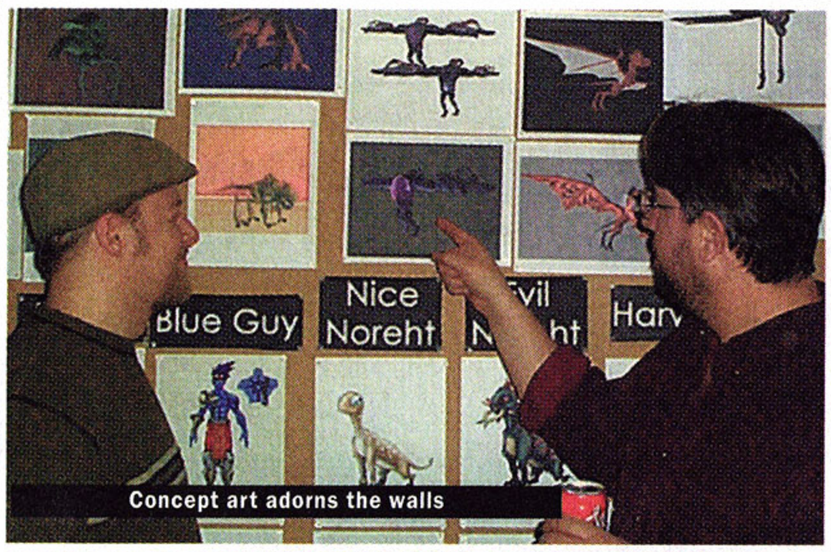
After the basics and the vision of the game were set in the minds of the team, the obvious next step would be to begin work on the game engine, but nothing could have been further from reality. "We did it all on paper first. We have this big board at Adrenium that shows the whole world on paper, like where you can go and every level (or realm) break and how it's all stitched together," explains Matt. "Then we have another wall dedicated just to the artwork and what the concept of each realm's art and what the style and feel would be of that place if you would go there and what it would look like. That was the best thing we could have done."

With the blueprints for Azurik literally becoming the writing on the wall at Adrenium, the production of the game went into overdrive. Programmers Jeff Petkau and Jon Mavor quickly got the engine for Azurik up and running and began delivering tools to the designers and artists. The music composition by award-winning Jeremy Soule was begun and all the pieces to the puzzle were in place.

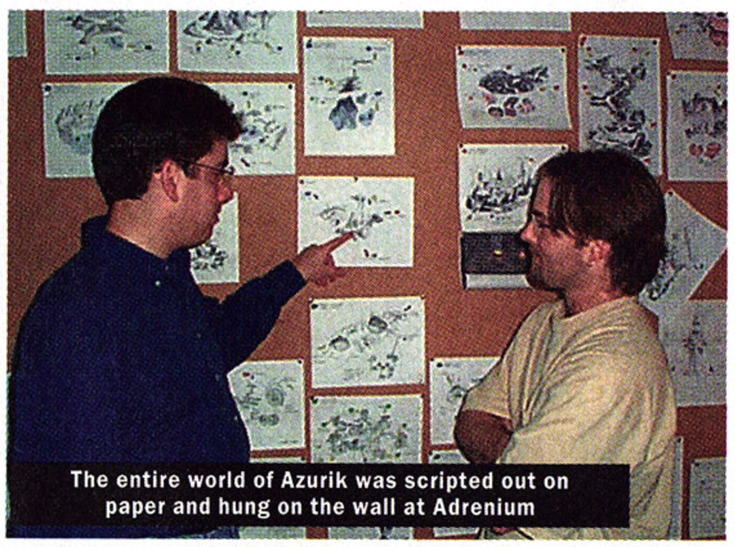
Fast forward to 14 months after the project began, and the game is about 50% complete and looking like a million bucks. The miraculous transformation from Xbox dream to Xbox reality was accomplished with some old-fashioned hard work, sticking to the design plan, and staying the course. Now it's time to take a closer look at Azurik and witness the payoff for all of Adremium's labor.



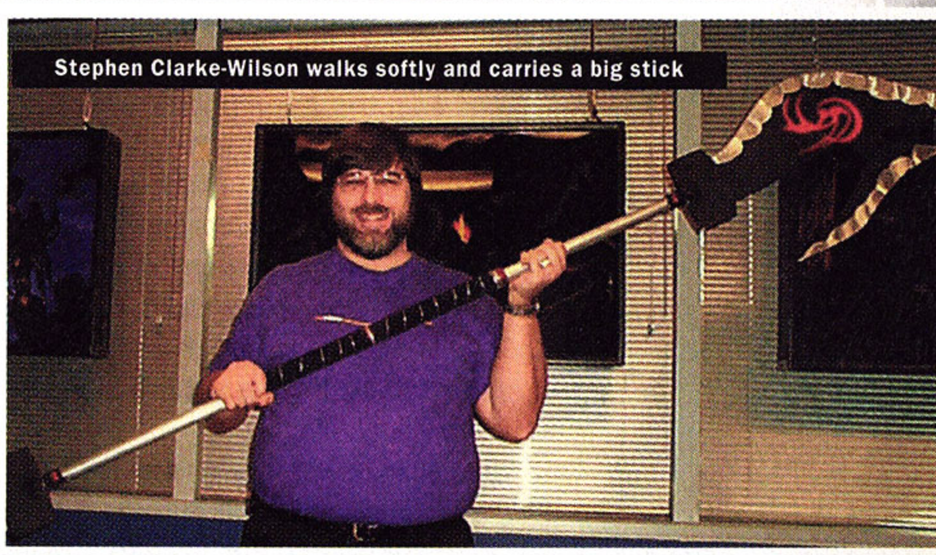
The artists at Adrenium have certainly been busy



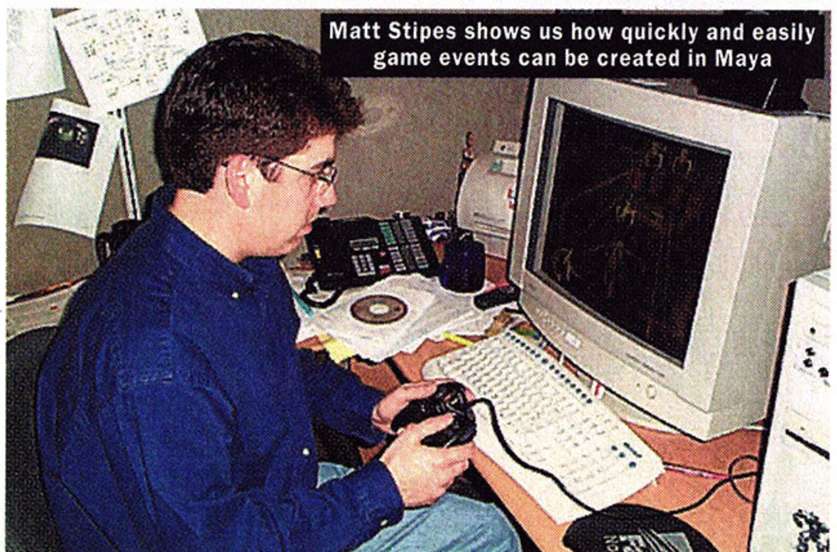
Concept art adorns the walls



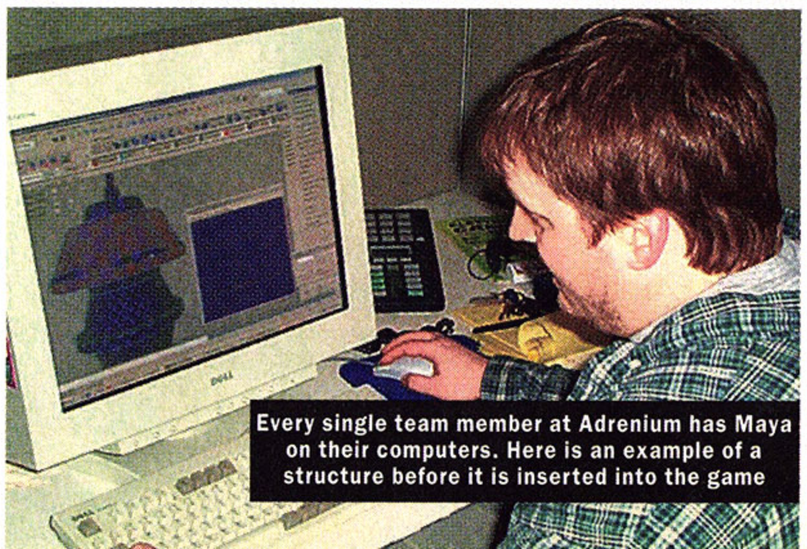
The entire world of Azurik was scripted out on paper and hung on the wall at Adrenium



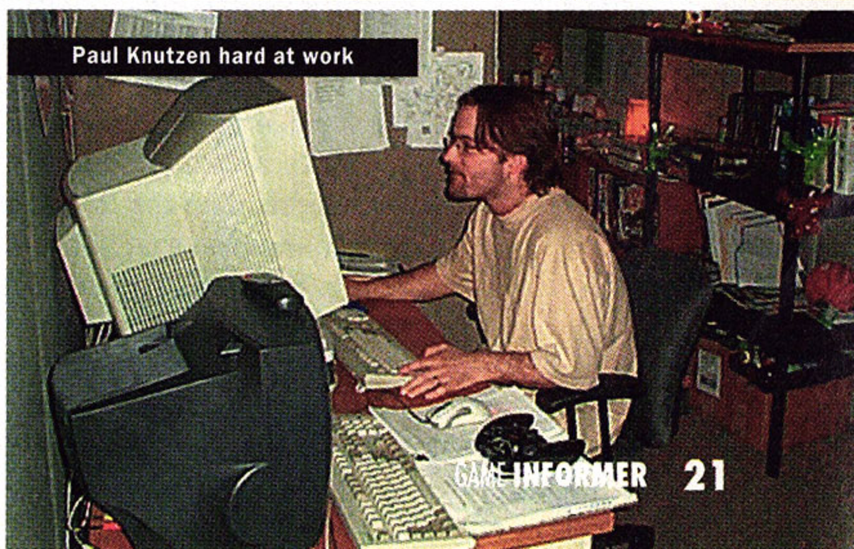
Stephen Clarke-Wilson walks softly and carries a big stick



Matt Stipes shows us how quickly and easily game events can be created in Maya

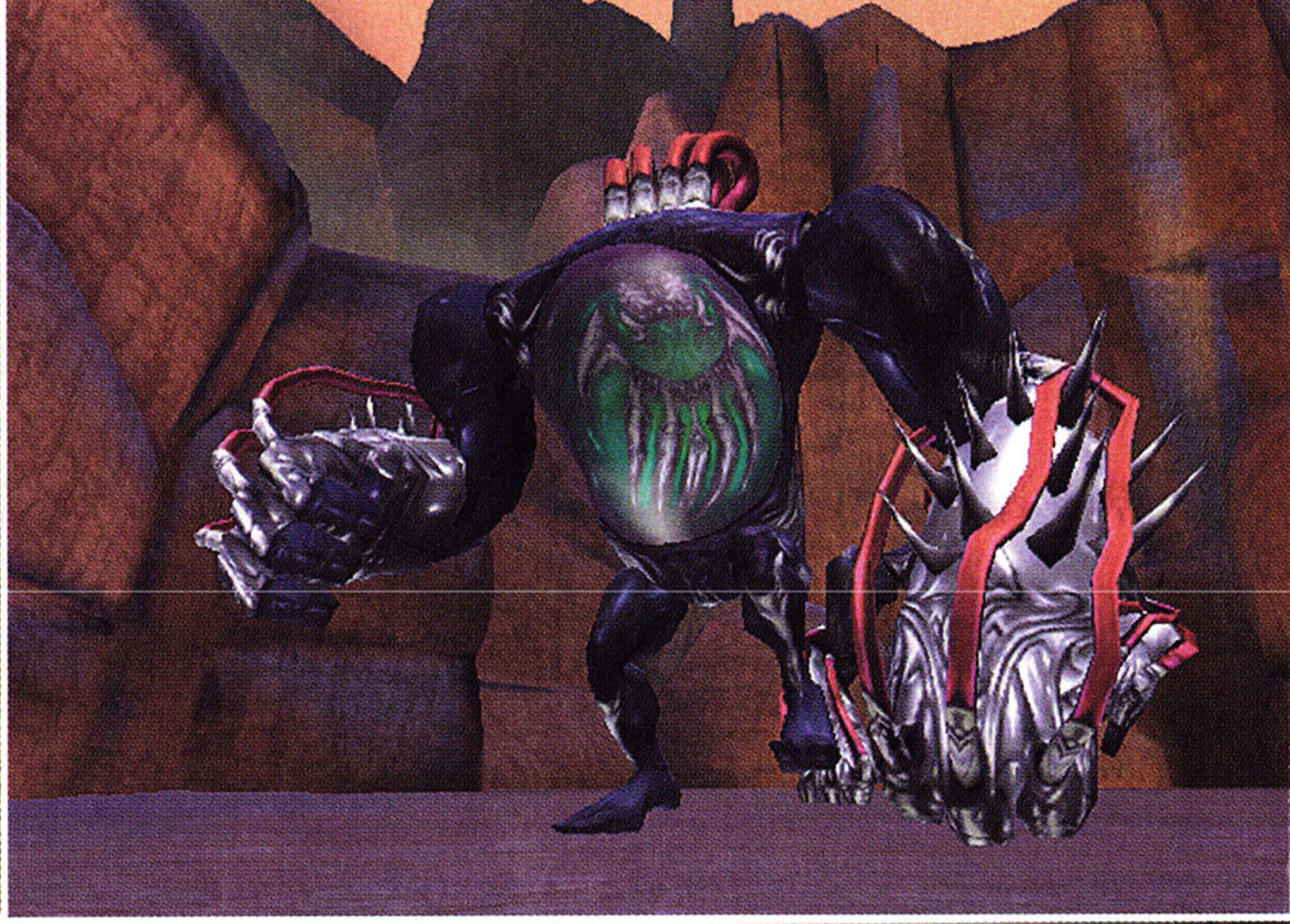


Every single team member at Adrenium has Maya on their computers. Here is an example of a structure before it is inserted into the game



Paul Knutzen hard at work

The normal control interface offers a short attack, a wide attack, a jump, and a roll. Alternating shorts and wides will create various combos that will vanquish hordes of enemies with ease. Azurik can also swim, but this skill is used sparingly



THE POWER OF AZURIK

Even in its unfinished state, Azurik is quite an undertaking. At this stage in development the game is huge, weighing in at a hefty 1.1 Gigabytes compressed with actual source material hitting 5 Gigabytes of data. Many parts of the world are incomplete, but the frame of the game is solid with an engine that moves smoothly even with hardware that is below the final specs.

It's easy to compare Azurik to Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver. Both are third-person 3D action/adventures that feature large environments, enemies to kill, puzzles to solve, and a story to unfold. However, even with all their similarities, there are obvious differences.

For one, the Xbox brings some serious firepower to Azurik. After the game makes the initial load when you start up, the entire adventure is seamless. Everything from the over 50 cutscenes (complete with lip-synched dialog) to the huge Realm Bosses is brought to you as one gigantic piece of video game pie.

But even more impressive is the fact that worlds themselves are so incredibly detailed. Each realm has its own indigenous life that ranges from flying bats and pixies, to harmless little creatures scurrying around your feet, or both. Amazingly enough, all these lifeforms, like the 20 other species of enemies that you will encounter, are wrapped with rich textures, real shading, and spectacular particle effects. For example, little pixies fly around you in a pack, glowing softly like tiny fairies from a dream. In their wake they leave trails of pixie dust slowly descending behind them (and these things are just here to set the mood).

The enemies themselves contain between 3000 and 4000 polygons. Just to give you an idea of the kind of power we are talking about here, that's basically all the power of a PS-X used to create one bad guy. Did we mention that there are a dozen of these creatures onscreen at once, along with all the other life and the beautifully rendered dynamic environments? If that wasn't enough, all these characters have unique AI routines and a wide range of animations including all the aforementioned textures, shading, and particle effects to round them out.

With the power of the Xbox behind it, there is little doubt that Azurik's world is amazing. All these incredible graphical fireworks are nice, but what gamers are really looking for is the next big experience and in this department, Azurik breaks away again...or perhaps we should say, he chops.

Indigenous creatures give the world of Azurik a life of its own

MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

AZURIK THE LUMBERJACK

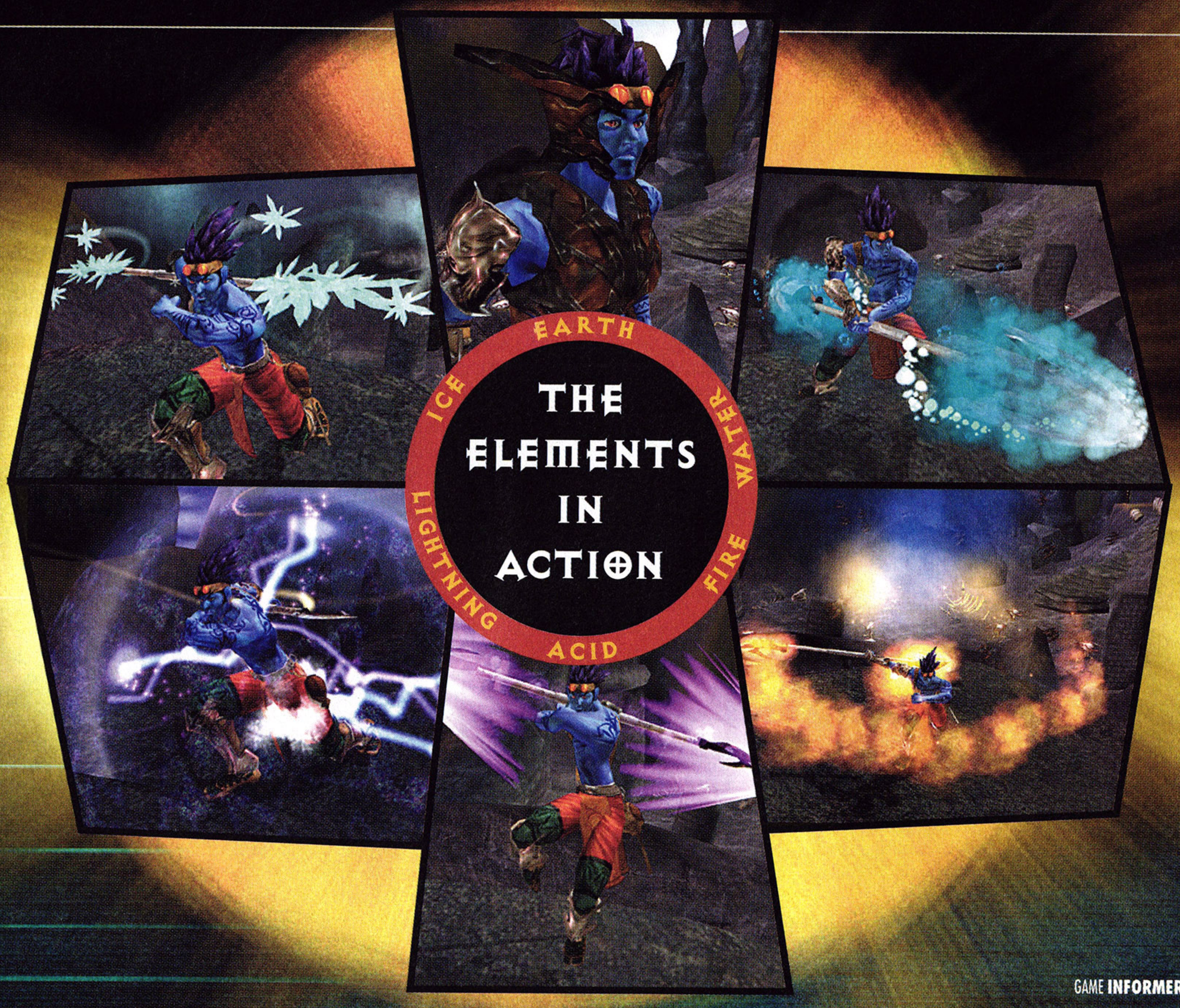
Throughout the entire adventure, Azurik will have his trusty axe at his side (think of him as a futuristic lumberjack chopping down all the evil that crosses his path). But don't let that fool you into thinking that Azurik's gameplay won't be complex. Azurik is endowed with the power to master the elements of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water. As he works his way through his adventure, he will add these various elements to his arsenal of powers.

Each element has a mana pool, or ammo bar, that you must maintain to use your powers (which, like health, can be collected from fallen enemies). These elements are the key to Azurik's fighting style. Since different enemies are affected by different elements, you must call upon various elemental powers during battle if you want to be successful. Fire does more damage to Ice-based enemies and vice versa. Simple enough; however, the elements can also be mixed and matched. For example, Earth and Water bestow your axe with acid; Earth, Water, and Fire make a force shield that protects Azurik; and Air, Fire, and Water charge Azurik's weapon with the power of Lightning.

All these powers must be called upon in the heat of battle as your enemies will be quite varied. This creates a dynamic of arcade action, and also quick thinking, as you must determine how you want to approach your enemies and what powers you will use. However, going Rambo isn't the only solution.

Since all the creatures in Azurik have different characteristics and abilities, sometimes your goals can be met with just some smart thinking. For instance, there are some enemies that can join together to create a new creature. Generally, you wouldn't want to let this happen, but perhaps this new creature dislikes the other enemies in the area and will take care of them for you, leaving only this bigger monster for you to deal with.

Conquering the various obstacles using different techniques gives the player different rewards. Sometimes it's as simple as more ammo; other times it is the key to moving on in the world. Your brainpower and the use of the elements is not limited to combat, either. Many times you must use elements to open up other areas of the game. A Fire-enchanted weapon will enable you to melt ice cubes blocking your path, or powering up Azurik with the Air elemental will enable him to make huge jumps that would otherwise be impossible.



THE WORLD OF AZURIK

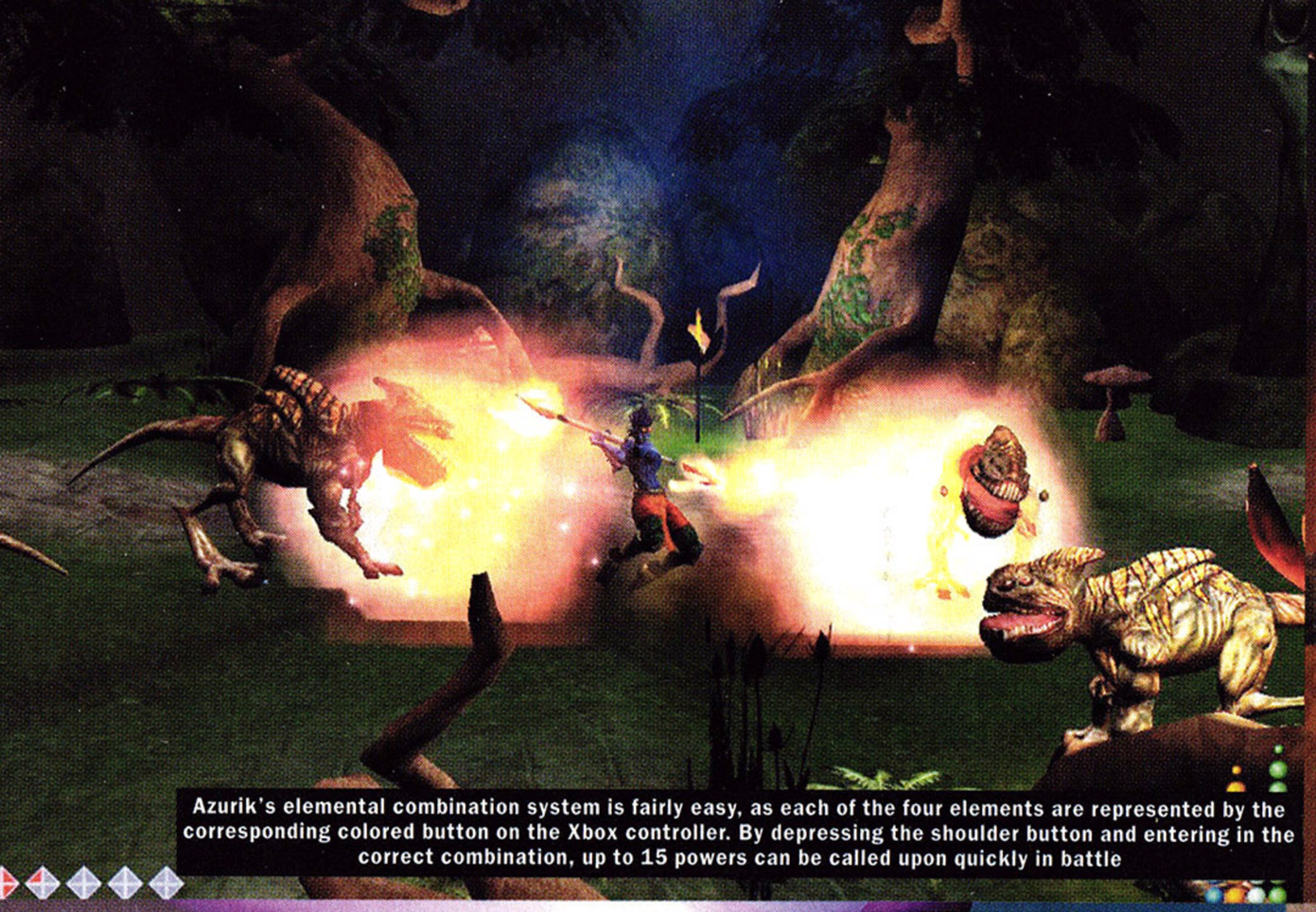
The goal of Azurik is to collect the pieces of the shattered Element Discs and return them to the Temple of the Elements back in your hometown. To collect these pieces, Azurik will have to explore the six realms – Air, Fire, Water, Earth, Life, and Death – discover their secrets, and navigate their perils.

Some areas of Azurik's world are less then hospitable. In fact, the enemies aren't the only thing that Azurik needs to be on the watch for. In the Tesla forest (the current codename for this area), the trees themselves offer up a challenge to Azurik. As he explores the forest, the trees start to shake and then lighting arcs between them creating an obstacle that the player will have to overcome. Another example of the environment versus Azurik is in the Fire realm, where the earth starts to crumble under his feet, and lava starts shooting out of the ground. Quick reactions and some smart thinking will be the key to surviving these disasters.

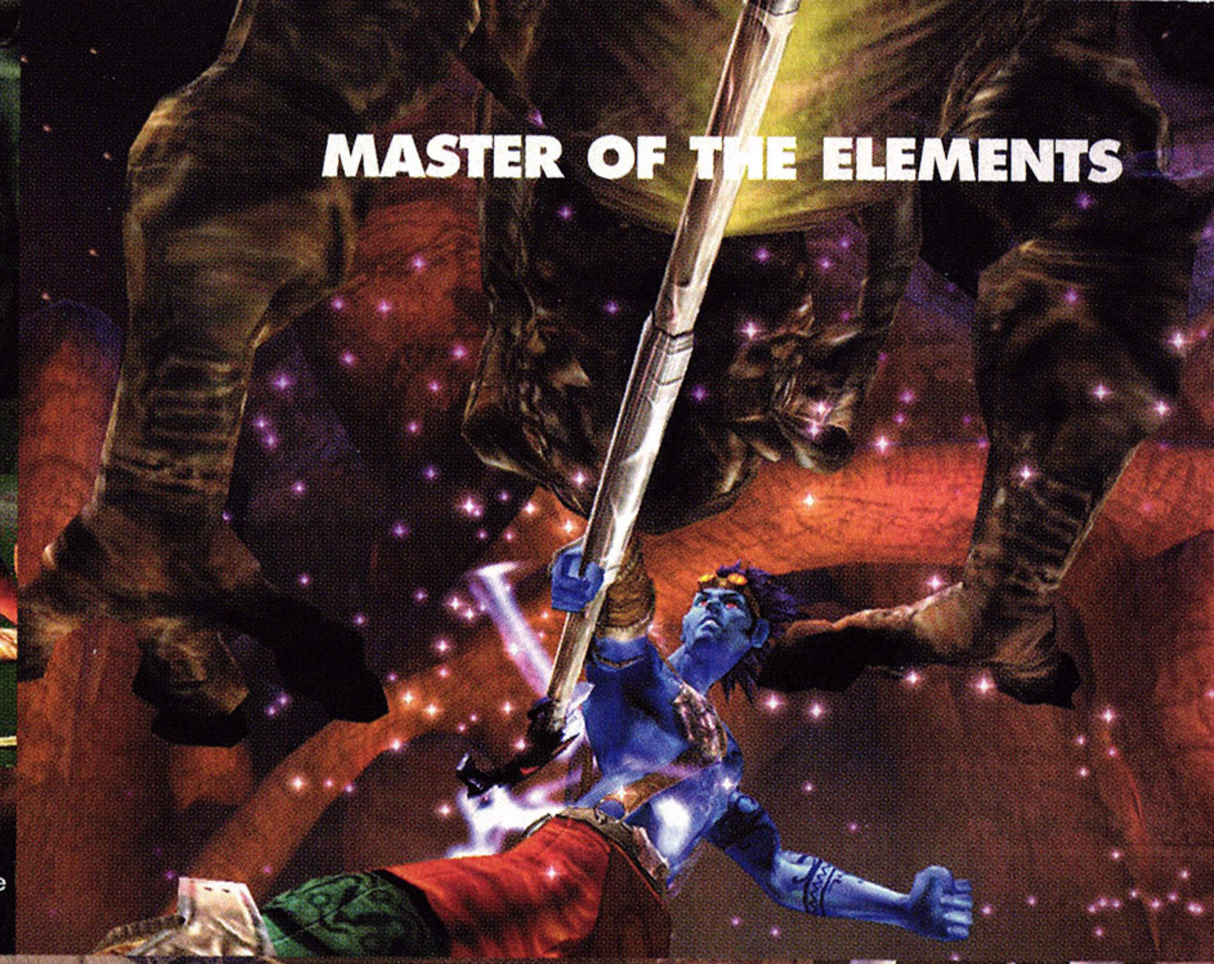
All these obstacles are certainly a handful, but there are even bigger things that stand in the way of Azurik's journey. Each of the realms will feature various mini-bosses and, of course, the almighty Realm Guardian (or boss). Adrenium promises that these creatures will not only be huge, but completely over the top. They will also require more than just figuring out which elemental powers work against them; creative uses of your environment will play a major role in defeating these nasties.

Getting to these Realm Guardians won't be easy, as each world is filled with many puzzles. Some are limited to an area, while others are global and require the player to complete many things throughout Azurik's massive world. One of the unique elements of some of the puzzles is that the player is able to physically take control of items in the world. For example, one particular puzzle we saw requires you to align beams of light by skillfully aiming various mirrors or other outterworldly devices to unlock passage into a temple in the sky.

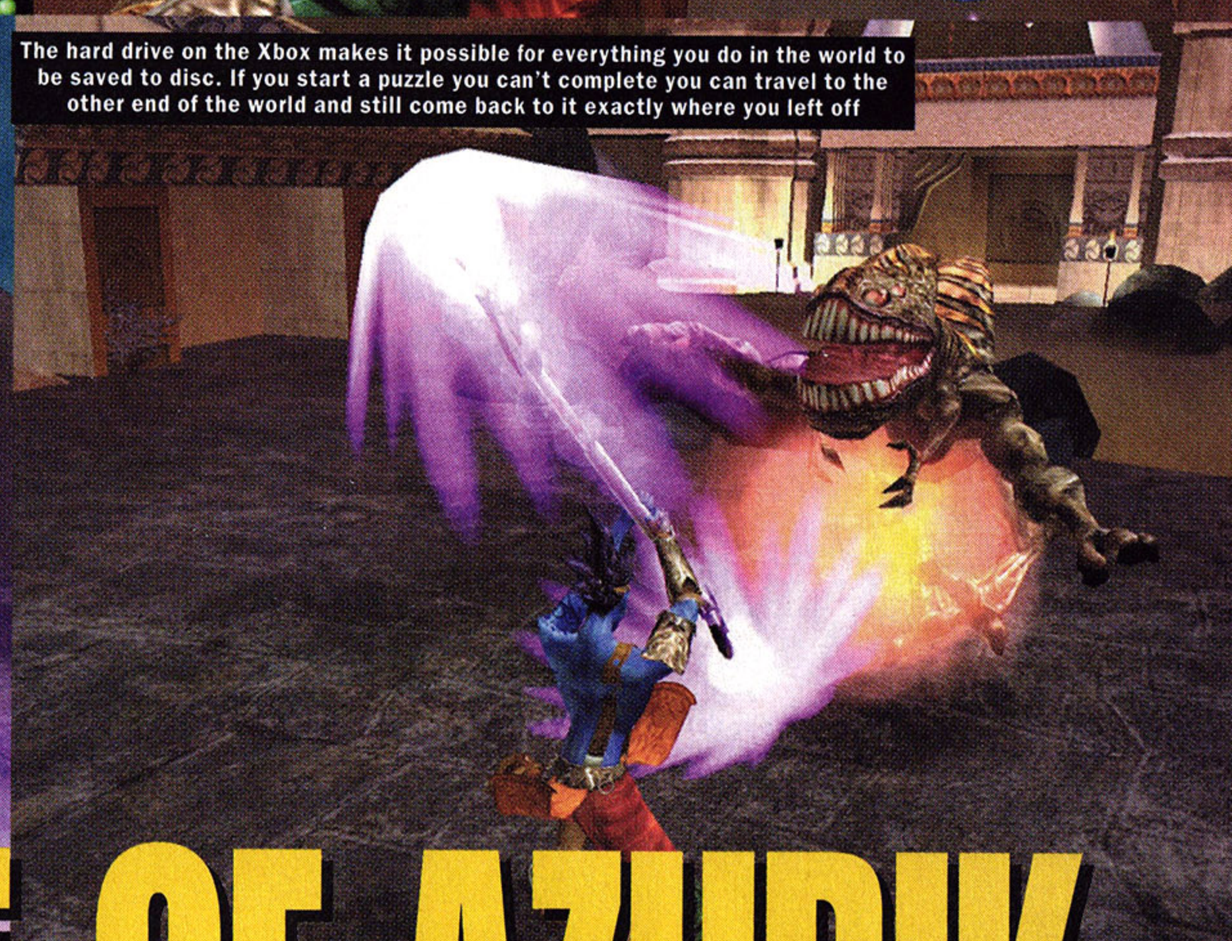
The internal game clock has night and day trading off throughout the entire adventure, so you must pay attention to the time of day as many puzzles can only be solved during the day and some enemies only come out at night



Azurik's elemental combination system is fairly easy, as each of the four elements are represented by the corresponding colored button on the Xbox controller. By depressing the shoulder button and entering in the correct combination, up to 15 powers can be called upon quickly in battle



MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS



The hard drive on the Xbox makes it possible for everything you do in the world to be saved to disc. If you start a puzzle you can't complete you can travel to the other end of the world and still come back to it exactly where you left off

THE FUTURE OF AZURIK

After putting in some time with Azurik and talking to the team, it was easy to see that their vision was indeed grand, and the game may even look grander. From the tiniest details that can be seen in the ornately created environments, to the lumbering walk of a giant enemy, the devil is definitely in the details.

When Azurik wields his axe, he moves smoothly through a ballet of moves that becomes even more impressive when his elemental powers start a display of fireworks the likes of which we have never seen. At this point in development, much of the gameplay is still early, and the designers still have a lot of work to do balancing the playability and stabilizing the controls so the player can make quick work of enemies.

With seven more months to go, we certainly believe Azurik has a shot at being the top Xbox game come its fourth quarter launch. The world is simply that big and that amazing. Plus, the seamless universe really gives you a sense of being in a time and place, as all the story components and cutscenes are done in-game and never let you take your eyes off the gorgeous graphics. Nothing we can write can really prepare you for the visual smorgasbord that is Azurik's world. You will just have to wait until the end of this year to find out for yourself.

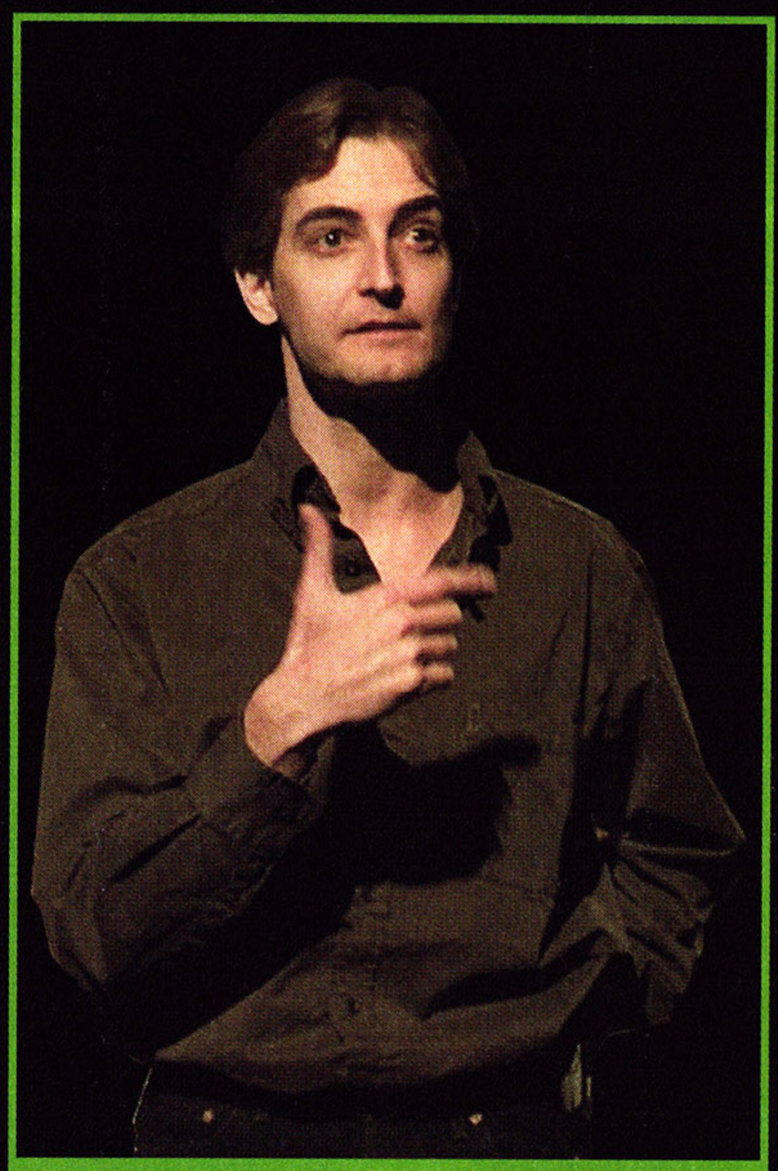
Xbox eXamined

When Xbox was unveiled at the Game Developers Conference 2000, it was a bunch of numbers. Impressive numbers, but numbers nonetheless. Next, it made its debut at CES, where the hardware was shown and a game (Malice, from Argonaut) gave the unit a face. Then came Gamestock on March 13, where Microsoft finally gave the press a chance to really see what Xbox could do by showcasing its first-party games in all their glory.

For a system that is seven months from launch, this is a dangerous move by Microsoft, especially since the hardware is still only in its Alpha stage, and running at what Microsoft zealots claim is a paltry 50 percent of the finished power. This leaves us with the big question: Did the company's gamble pay off?

Before Microsoft let the press get their grubby little hands on some playable Xbox games in an attempt to answer that question, Microsoft sent out Ed Fries to give us a clue as to the direction that Xbox is going. One of the more interesting notes was that he sees video games "in the next five years breaking into the mainstream." While it could certainly be argued that video games are in the mainstream now, he is talking about the big leagues. Hollywood to be exact. So that video games, like Hollywood, are covered religiously by the mainstream press and their designers treated like the Lucases and Speilbergs of the world.

To get there, he believes game design will have to push the envelope farther and break out of the cartoony world. He's also of the opinion that the stiff competition Gamecube and PlayStation 2 bring to the table should be just the thing that drives the market to do bigger and better things. Ed had little doubt that Xbox has the power to take us there, it just comes down to a question of execution.



Ed Fries, Vice President of Xbox Games Publishing at Microsoft, delivers his vision at Gamestock 2001.

Ed Fries challenged his first and second-party developers to "not just create entertainment, but to create art." All the Microsoft developers were on hand, and they gave demos of each of their games, pointing out examples of where the "power of Xbox" (an often-used phrase) came into play. The most common example was how each of the characters had eyes, something that some may have noticed was missing from most 32/64-bit generation products (even Metal Gear Solid, one of PlayStation's shining moments, didn't provide eyes for Snake).

The talk of a vision for the products was also commonplace. But even with the overuse of these catchphrases, it was obvious that Xbox is indeed a powerful machine. Almost all the games featured no loading time, thanks to the hard drive which developers use to buffer and stream the level data.

After the demos, it was easy to be impressed with what Xbox had to offer, especially at such an early point in the development of both the games and the unit. Now, it's time for a test drive.

Test Drive

Game Informer got a chance to sit down with each developer and play each product. It's important to note, once again, that all these games are at least seven months from release, but we felt that giving an update on how the unit was shaping up was more important than giving you yet another glorious Xbox feature that talked about all its marvels. These are just impressions and observations that were gleaned from Gamestock and nothing more. For more information on each of these games, please check out the previews later in this issue.

Halo

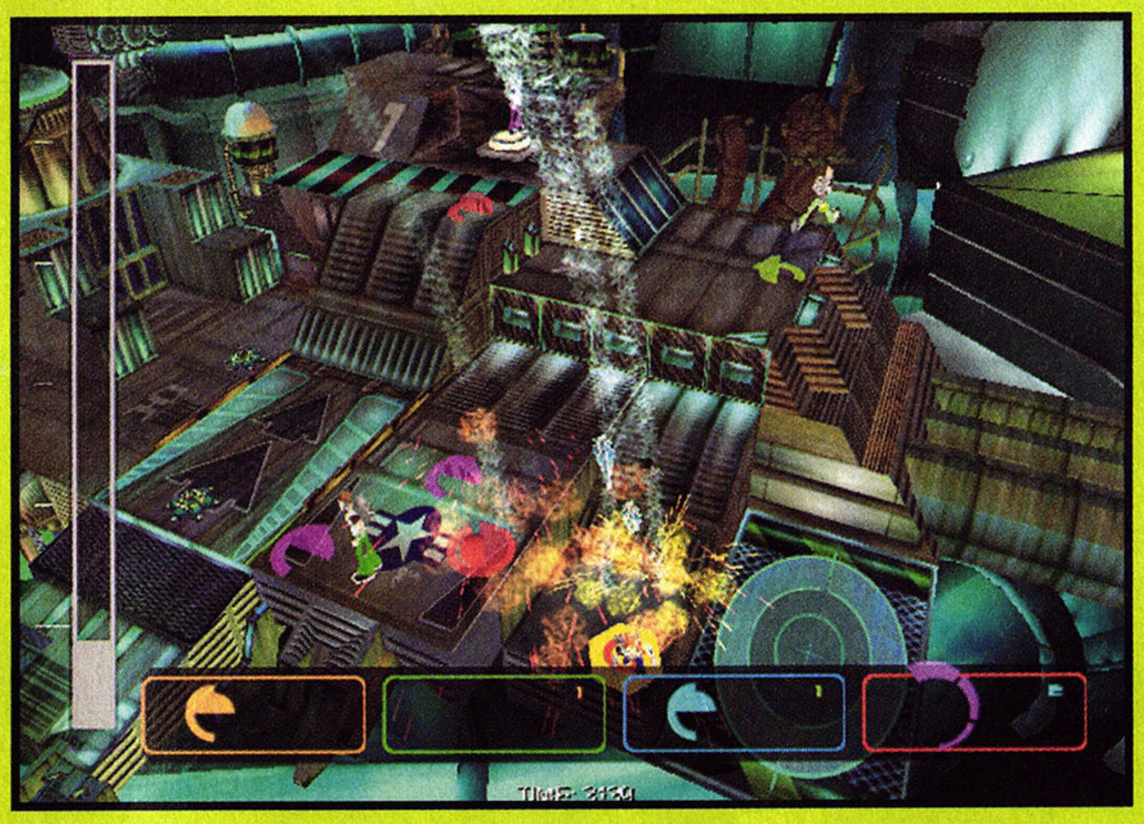
Halo was hands-down the favorite game at the show, but we believe that this achievement comes not only from its great design, but also from the fact that, out of all the games at Gamestock, it was the most playable. Of course, since it's a first-person shooter, the gameplay is easy to get up and running even in the early stages of development. Its use of the hard drive lets the game flow smoothly from area to area with dazzling graphics and effects all over the place, since there was no loading. The use of vehicles is a nice addition, but overall, this game is still very much just a first-person shooter with some nice touches – albeit incredible and dazzling touches that run the gamut of today's high-technology graphical effects. At this point, Halo is the cornerstone of the Xbox's lineup and should be the must-have Xbox title come launch.

Azurik: Rise of Perathia

Chosen as this month's cover story, we believe Azurik has a lot going for it. This very Soul Reaver-esque title featured some breathtaking environments, but suffered from a lack of gameplay development (like so many other titles at Gamestock). In this game's defense, much of the development time has been spent on creating its rather large world that, like the other Xbox titles, strings all the levels together seamlessly with no loading. At this point, the gameplay is a little lacking, but the use of the four elements to help energize the battles should be very interesting when it's complete. Once the gameplay is put together, this could easily be one of Xbox's premier titles.

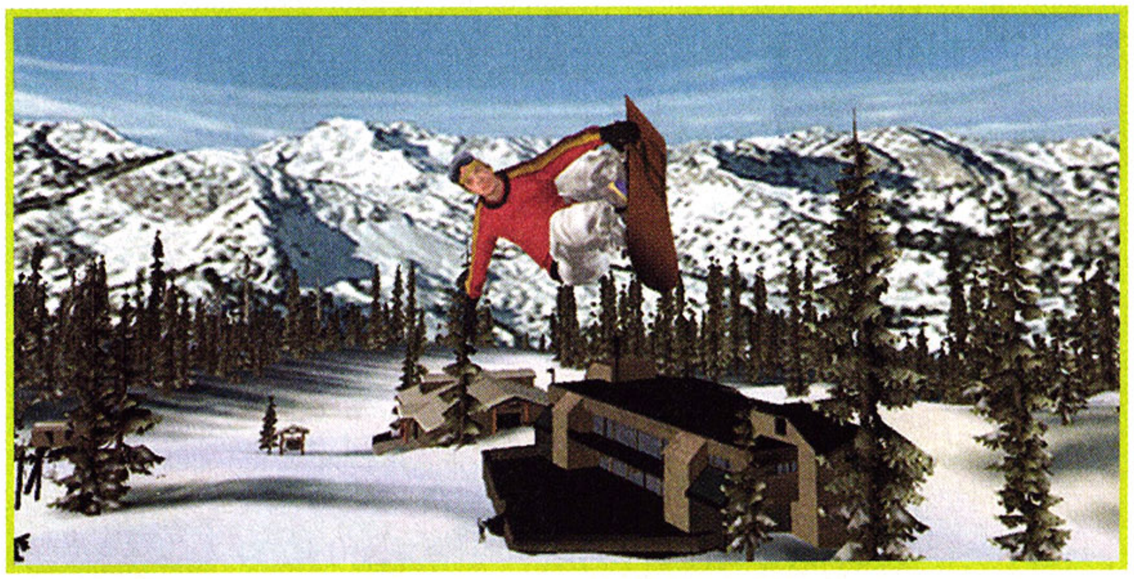
Fuzion Frenzy

This lifestyle/party game was somewhat disappointing to see. Sure, there is some wacky four-player fun to be had, but overall, this title left a sour taste in our mouths as we believe Microsoft could have been putting its development dollars toward something more constructive. It's fun, in that party game kind of way, but the graphics certainly aren't pushing any limits and the character designs are mediocre at best. We don't see too many people getting excited about this one.



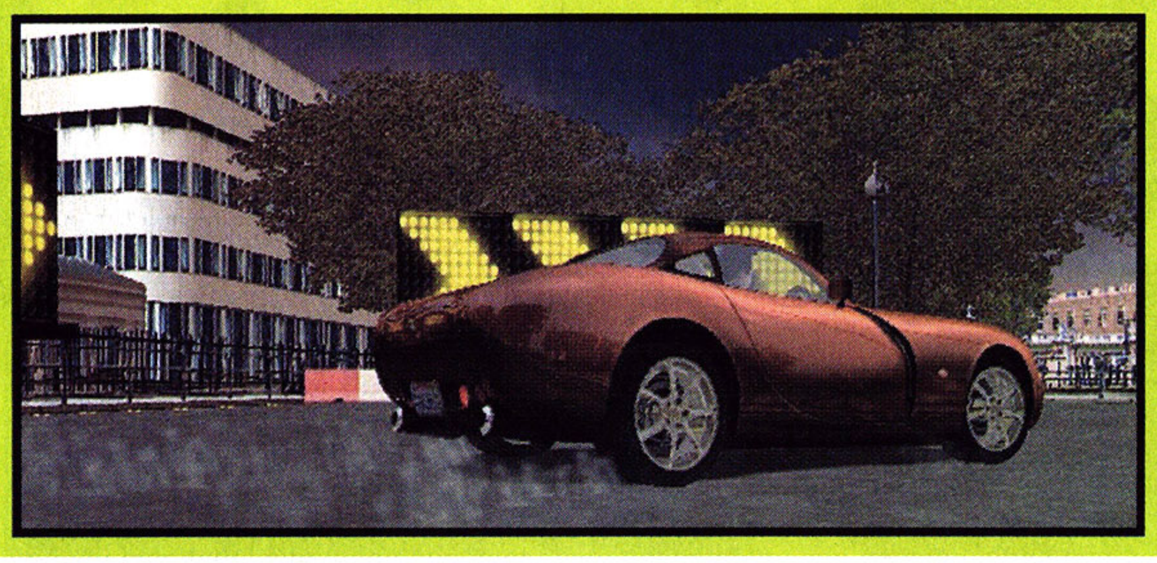
Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding

Featuring seven real-life mountains rendered in all their glory with every run (and even hidden off-the-path cliffs and logs shown to the developers by real-life resort pros), Amped is a sim snowboarder's dream come true. Did we say sim? Indeed we did, as Amped looks to have taken a cue from its Flight and Train Simulator buddies in creating exact replicas of the real deal. We'd say the team accomplished its mission, as there are an astounding amount of polygons showing each and every tree, lift, and fence. Anyone familiar with these runs could pick them out in a second. The gameplay, on the other hand, which was recently added to the title, is somewhere in limbo. The developers hope to get a nice Tony Hawk style of playcontrol once they finalize it, but at this point, after concentrating solely on the environments, it's a long way off. Sure, with some time, Amped could be impressive, but part of Tony Hawk's, or any other extreme sports' gameplay, is the over-the-top environments. Hopefully, reality won't pull the gameplay down, as the sim mountains are spectacular. At this point, the character animations and interactions are lacking, but with seven months of polish left, this game could certainly be amazing. Definitely an Xbox title to watch.



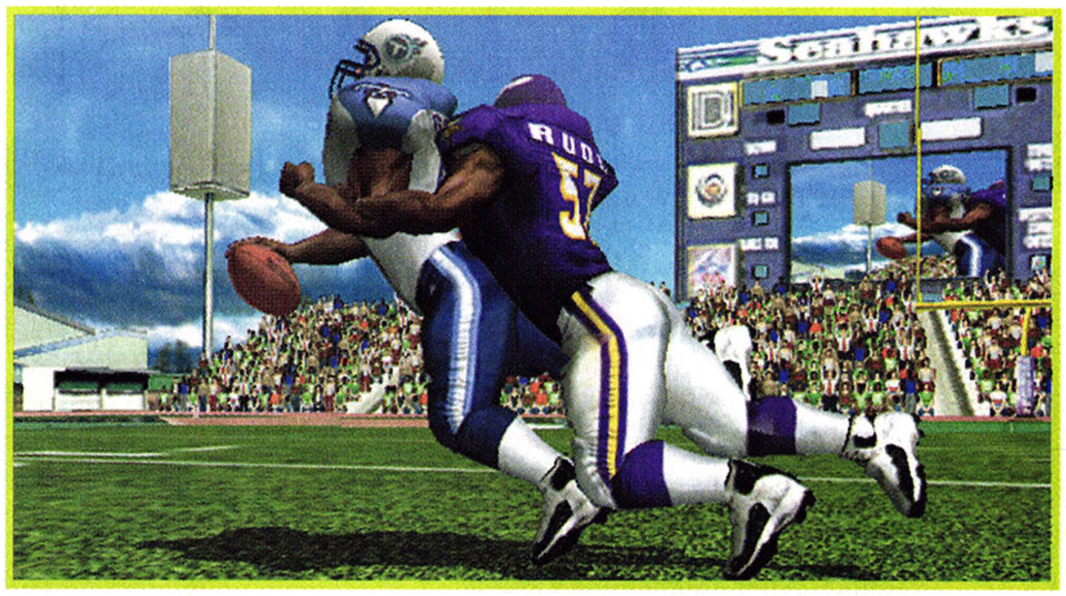
CODENAME: PROJECT GOTHAM

This recent addition to the Xbox library was very, very early. Even with a short amount of development time, however, Project Gotham looked good. Based off the Dreamcast title MSR, you can tell a lot of elements from that game were just quickly ported over to this one, but it is a nice example of how easy it is for developers to get things up and running quickly on the Xbox. Gameplay wise, the cars were fun to drive, but there wasn't much more here than a quick spin around the track. This title will definitely be one to watch as it develops. The high-polygon-count vehicles look great, and as soon as the environments receive the same treatment, and Bizarre Creations puts it all together, this game could be a driving game lover's dream come true.



NFL FEVER 2002

No company can launch a system without trying to get in a version of football, and Microsoft doesn't want to be outdone. Unfortunately, this game probably looks to be the worst of all the titles that were shown. The character animations were amazingly choppy and the players looked odd (even though they featured moving polygonal muscles and full facial expressions). NFL Fever is an ambitious project, but the first order of business may be getting the players to be more fluid and tightening up the gameplay. Otherwise, it may be a losing battle as Madden has already been announced for Xbox.



NIGHTCASTER

An interesting part of the Microsoft lineup, Nightcaster seemed to us to be Azurik's little brother, as it's an action/adventure title just like Azurik, that even features a character who uses the power of the elements to take out his foes. To its credit, Nightcaster's look is a bit more cartoony (which Microsoft had earlier said it was trying to avoid), but we actually like its style. Plus, the special effects were fairly nice. Nightcaster could very well be a solid title, but its look may turn off action fans. As it stands, this game is too close to Azurik in style and may always be known as that "other" adventure game behind Azurik.

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

This high-profile title, that features a developer who openly scorns Sony and the PS2, is definitely going to have to put its money where its mouth is and deliver some impressive gameplay. At this point, the game does look solid, especially the characters, who have some very high polygon counts and a variety of animations. Many of the elements that made us fans of the series are here, and the game looks to deliver a similar experience, though some of the things that make a 2D game entertaining are obviously lost in a 3D world. However, Munch's Oddysee, at this point in development, appears to be just a bigger version of the other products in the series with more eye candy. For us, that is probably enough, but we don't think it's going to make Munch's Oddysee appeal to the masses.

THE VERDICT

The jury is still out on Microsoft's Xbox, but the unit is coming along nicely. From our visit we definitely came away impressed by Xbox's graphical capabilities, especially in regard to its use of the hard drive to keep the games moving, and the experience fast and in your face.

It was also obvious that Xbox is indeed a developer's best friend, especially for those who have spent a fair amount of time working with PC development. However, this does in some ways come back to bite Microsoft. Many of the games we played had an undeniable PC feel to them. Meaning, there is a lot of attention put toward the little touches really make for impressive graphics, but it seems the gameplay is not quite up to console standards.

In Microsoft's defense, there are still seven months to bring the gameplay up to the level that console gamers expect (otherwise they would be PC gamers, wouldn't they?). Perhaps this problem is just localized to Microsoft as it makes the transition from longtime PC developer to console guru. Perhaps the true test of Xbox will lie in what longtime console developers bring to life on it. Perhaps all the games are too early. In any case, Xbox still has a ways to go, as the unit itself is still incomplete.

Game Informer has no doubt the machine is powerful enough to be a player in the upcoming console wars, but Microsoft still has some issues to address. Success in Japan will be crucial to the Xbox's prosperity and this piece of the puzzle still lies in mystery (although some companies like Konami have already admitted that Xbox will not figure heavily into their development plans at the moment). Also, many of the games that have been shown so far aren't in the categories that Japanese gamers have historically flocked to.

Only time will tell as Xbox gets closer to launch, but we can be certain of one thing: Microsoft is not taking this lightly, and you can expect the company to do everything in its considerable power to ensure Xbox is a success. The big question is, will it be able to deliver the games to go along with its obviously powerful hardware?

game boy

Since the inception of video games, people have always wanted a reliable, portable game system they could take with them on trips or to school, to keep them entertained. Starting with companies like Mattel and Coleco, handheld gaming went mainstream in the early '80s. Yet, these carry-anywhere games were one-shot deals. Years later, an obscure tech company known as Enix started shopping its cartridge-based technology. That hardware eventually became the Atari Lynx, but it was Nintendo's release of its Game Boy in 1989 that really changed things. No longer were people chained to their consoles and could carry a full library of games on the go.

Since the advent of cartridge-based handheld gaming, there have been many attempts to draw the droves of portable gaming fans into different companies' particular stables. Lynx, Game Gear, Neo Geo Pocket Color and TurboExpress were just a few of the systems that were ultimately kicked to the curb in favor of Nintendo's superior third-party software library and savvy licensing. 110 million units and 13 years later, Nintendo still rules the handheld market from on high.

A new day is now dawning, both for handheld systems and Nintendo. The birth of the Game Boy Advance has people standing up and taking notice. Touted as a pocket-sized Super Nintendo, GBA has a lot to live up to. Screenshots, rumors and speculation have been flying around the web and print magazines for well over a year, and now for the first time, Game Informer will put the Game Boy Advance through its paces. Read on to find out what works, what doesn't, and what you absolutely can't miss.

HELLO, BAAAYBEH!

Here's an in-depth look-see at the newest arrival in the Game Informer offices.

The control buttons should be very familiar to anyone who has ever played, or seen, a Game Boy. The rigidity and bounce-back of the buttons are very similar to the GBC's

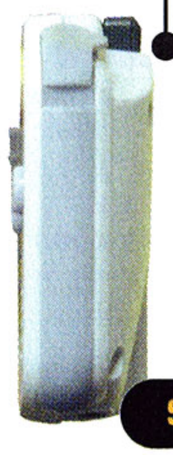
The little power LED emits a pleasant green glow when you fire up the system. Much improved from that nasty red

FRONT VIEW

We would have liked to have seen a couple speakers on the GBA, but this is still a massive improvement over previous Game Boy sound attempts

The screen area is markedly bigger, allowing for more onscreen action and greater detail

The GBA will be quite thin. Maybe too thin for the American market. Time will tell



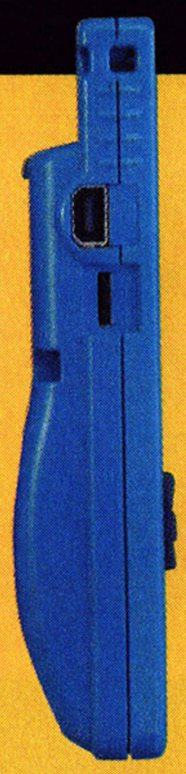
SIDE VIEW

advance
POCKET EVOLUTION

COMPARE & CONTRAST:

The GBA and the GBC are light-years apart in terms of performance, but in terms of dimensions, they are quite similar. Take a look: It's even money when it comes to the depth of each system. Nintendo must feel it has struck a good balance here, and did little to alter it

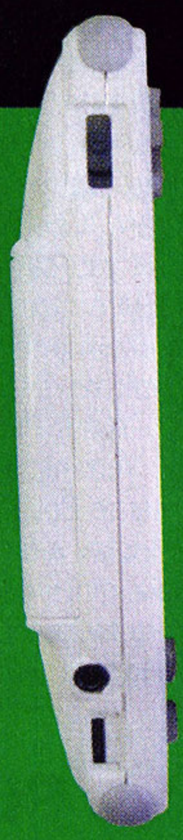
GAME BOY COLOR



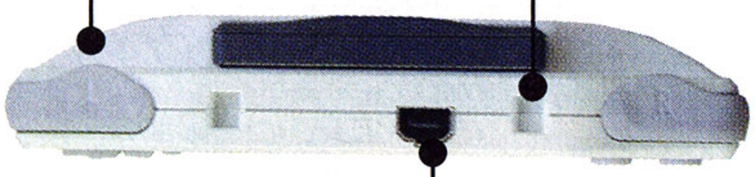
- CPU: 8-bit Z80
- Screen: 160x140 resolution, 32,000 possible colors, 56 simultaneous colors
- Size (mm): 75(W) x 133(H) x 27(D)
- Weight: 138g
- Power: 2 AA batteries
- Battery Life: 10 hours
- Software: Cartridge format, Game Boy compatible
- Original Retail Price: $79.99

GAME BOY ADVANCE

- CPU: 32-Bit ARM with embedded memory
- Screen: 2.9" TFT reflective screen, 240x160 resolution, 40.8mm x 61.2mm screen size, 32,768 possible colors, 511 simultaneous colors in character mode, 32,768 simultaneous colors in bitmap mode
- Size (mm): 82(L) x 144.5(W) x 24.5(D)
- Weight: 140g
- Power: 2 AA batteries
- Battery Life: 15 hours
- Software: Cartridge format, Game Boy and Game Boy Color compatible
- Projected Price: $99.95



TOP VIEW

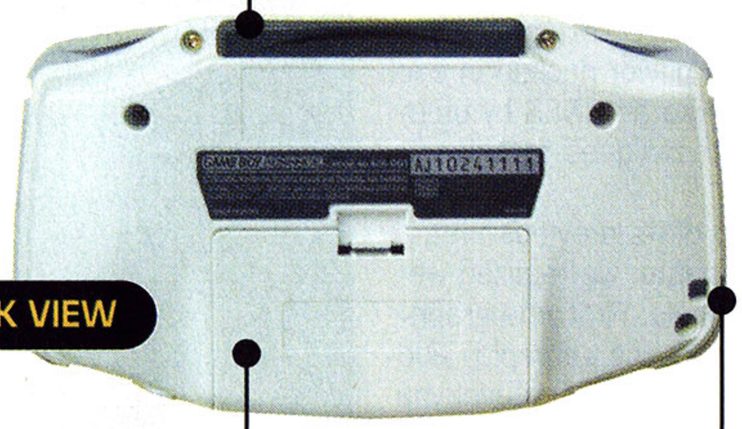


Shoulder buttons have been added to this version of Game Boy

These notches will presumably furnish a toe-hold for assorted accessories

The port for the Communications Cable has been moved to the top of the system. You'll use this for multiplay, as well as to link to your Gamecube

BACK VIEW



The Game Pak port has been elongated to accommodate the increased cartridge size. Normal Game Boy and Game Boy Color games will all work with the GBA

The battery compartment is still back here, but you won't need to open it quite as often as you did with the GBC

We assume this hole will work with a travel strap of some sort

BOTTOM VIEW

power toggle

volume

headphone jack

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

We were waiting like concerned parents on prom night for the arrival of Game Boy Advance here at the Game Informer offices. A battle royal ensued over who would get to touch the box, unit, and games before anyone else. When we finally wore ourselves out and embraced the system as a group, it appeared both smaller in size and more powerful in technology than our wildest portable dreams.

Game Boy Advance transcends the classification between handheld and console systems. It brings the best of both worlds together in perfect harmony, in one condensed masterpiece. GBA is like having a pocket-sized SNES, but better! In both graphics and sound, GBA outperforms its older system sibling, and unquestionably dwarfs Game Boy Color. The quality and quantity of the software is unheard of for a Nintendo hardware launch.

Before playing the games, we first had to let our digits become accustomed to the cut of GBA's jib. As you can see from the side-to-side comparison photos on the previous page, it's shaped like a Game Boy Color laying on its side. The feel was much like that of a SNES controller, complete with shoulder buttons. If only there were X and Y buttons. Start and Select will now require your left hand to press, but you can easily teach an old thumb new tricks. Some may be displeased at GBA's size, and we admit Neo Geo Pocket Color did feel better. However, Pokemon fanatics and kids are obviously a core audience, and their hands are typically smaller. Besides, as we said before, it's a FREAKING SNES THAT FITS IN YOUR POCKET!

Turning on the games, you see the display takes up the entire screen, unlike Game Boy Color. In fact, you can put in a GBC cart just to see the difference in display size (shoulder buttons will resize them to GBA standards). The colors are more numerous than Crayola could ever come up with names for, and there are twice as many of them simultaneously onscreen than Super Nintendo allowed. Missing is the motion blur behind fast-moving sprites, as well as the lack of graphical detail that gives GBC titles that generic look. The first time we saw Mode 7 scaling (F-Zero, Mario Kart) and sprite re-sizing (Mario Advance's big veggies), our jaws hit our shoes. Check out the pictures of Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 or Iridion 3D on later pages, and realize that you're looking at a portable revolution. We do have one complaint: the lack of backlighting. With so much more color and detail, your eyes endure even more strain in substandard room lighting. Dark titles like Castlevania will have you tilting the screen every which way in an attempt to decrease glare, and have accessory manufacturer's pockets growing fatter by remedying this situation.

We've played our share of Game Boy titles, and our ears hate us for it. We hoped Game Boy Advance would alleviate this problem by improving audio quality, but we had no idea the leaps and bounds that would actually result. This isn't just superior to GBC, but SNES as well. Castlevania's thwack of the whip and gothic music flowing from the little right-hand speaker strokes the ear, rather than impaling it with scratchy torture. Mario Advance lets you hear the words of Toad, Luigi, and even the bosses as clear as day. Remember where the volume switch is located on GBA; you'll be turning it up often.

Look at the titles we've listed above, coupled with F-Zero, Dodge Ball, and Mario Kart. These are killer games, and we didn't have to wait two or three years into the system's life to play them. They're launch titles! Compare that to the last system Nintendo released, Nintendo 64, that offered a mere two games on its initial day, and much-hyped killer apps like Legend of Zelda took eons to finally hit store shelves. Game Boy Advance has great games right now.

All of this will run you roughly $100, not a whole lot more than Game Boy Color's current price tag. We've already seen a wealth of advances and a plethora of quality software, making this a no-brainer purchase for the gaming populace. Next-generation home consoles may be the talk of the town, but we're definitely going to be keeping Game Boy Advance close to our hearts, and our pockets.

Video game editors from around the world line up to get their hands on the goods

Game Informer was recently invited to Camp Game Boy Advance to check out Nintendo's best and brightest new games for the fledgling handheld.

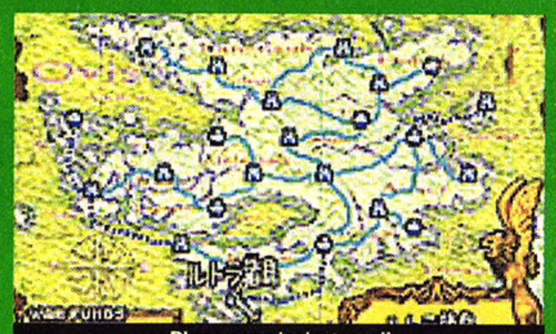
OH GORGEOUSNESS AND GORGEOSITY

One thing is immediately and abundantly clear after playing even five minutes on the Game Boy Advance – the graphics are stunning for such a small system. The boasts comparing the GBA to an SNES seem to be quite accurate. With its increased screen size (50% bigger than the Game Boy Color) and increased resolution (60% better than its predecessor), the 32-bit Game Boy Advance packs a graphical wallop. Nintendo has implemented a new reflective TFT color LCD that uses a high-contrast white panel to help unleash the power packed in each game. The system was developed to look and feel more like an SNES by utilizing more 2D than 3D effects, and even utilizes Mode 7 techniques for titles like F-Zero.

It seems Nintendo was even able to improve on some of its previous hits such as Super Mario Bros. 2. As we played through the game, we realized we actually liked it better than the original on a number of levels. First, the graphics were a little sharper and seemed to flow better. Second, the gameplay additions were subtle enough that you still got a hit of nostalgia for every level you entered, but apparent to the point where you found yourself saying "Hey, that's new." We expect many of the re-release titles Nintendo has lined up will offer up similar experiences, which is good news for gamers everywhere – be them newbies or seasoned vets.

TACTICS OGRE: GAIDEN

Ogre Battle has a special place in video game history as one of the first real-time strategy games to hit the shelves for US audiences. Although there is no set release date for the latest installment in the Ogre Battle series, here are some shots to wet your whistle. The Game Boy Advance will be able to pull off Tactics Ogre as a strategy/RPG, which will challenge players to control legions of troops in an epic struggle of good versus evil. The GBA's processing power will be fully unleashed for this smash, but it's still unknown as to when US fans will be able get their hands on a copy.



Plan your strategy well

RPG elements will be numerous

Man, we love this game

Pick your favorite character and go

New tracks will add to replay value

You gotta love the whales

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE

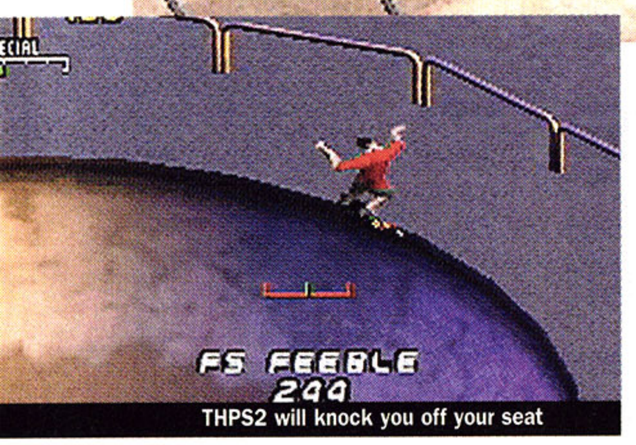
These were great games when they came out, and believe it or not, they've been improved. Mario Bros. was a nationwide smash when it debuted in arcades in 1983. There wasn't really a lot to the game, and there still isn't. However, there's that certain something that makes you want to plow through those levels and rack up points. The GBA version has added little to nothing in terms of gameplay, but the tight graphical presentation, along with the easy controls and large screen, make this game all the more addictive. When you graduate to the Super Mario Bros. side of things, you'll begin to understand what all the hype is about. It's basically an NES Super Mario Bros. 2 clone, but when you realize you're playing SMB2 on a handheld, you'll be duly impressed. There are even added features to make the game more interesting, such as new coins to collect and different types and sizes of enemies and things you pull out of the ground. If there is a better game to have with you on a long trip, we don't know what it is.

Mario Bros. has never looked this good

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

This was the second best game we played at Camp Game Boy Advance. Absolutely astonishing and addictive are a couple of terms that might do this port some justice. If you think you're just going to be able to play this for a few minutes, then put it down, you're fooling yourself. There are new level designs to explore as one of 12 top pro skaters in the world. All the mad tricks and crazy air you grew to love on the PS-X and Dreamcast are jammed into this game without a hint of compromise. This title is simply awesome, and will sell faster than ice cream on a hot summer day.

Back to the old grind



THPS2 will knock you off your seat

You'll still be able to rack up huge scores

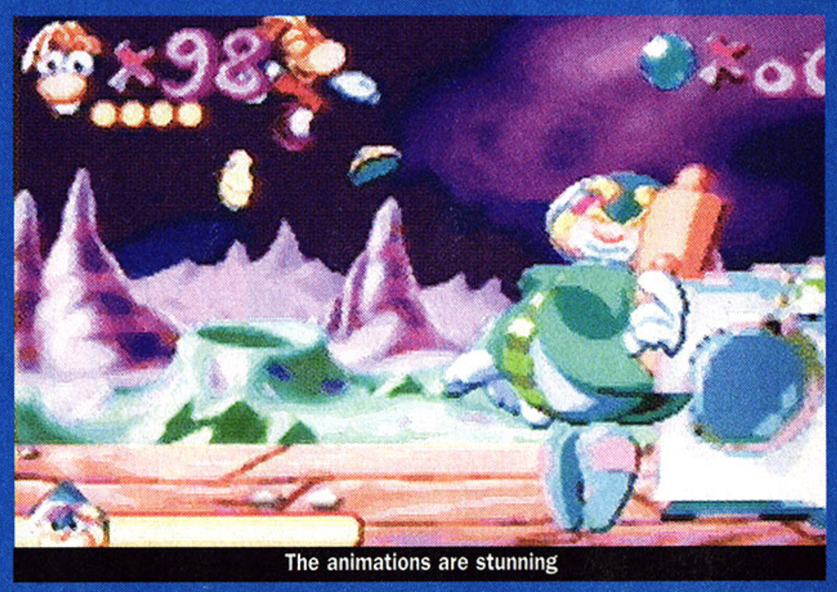
MARIO KART ADVANCE

This might be the closest approximation to an SNES game we saw when Game Informer attended Nintendo's recent GBA gamers summit. There will be 40 tracks for this blockbuster release, including the originals from Super Mario Kart. The gameplay, graphics and sounds are nearly identical, and perhaps a bit better than the original on some levels. This is the perfect game to whittle away the hours, then race against your friends. The experience will be much more intense during multiplayer action, as you won't have the luxury of seeing your opponent's screen to locate him or her on the map. Beware this title – it could rule your life.

RAYMAN ADVANCE

This is the reason the Game Boy Advance was invented. Graphics of this calibur have never before been seen on a handheld system, and the first time you see Rayman, you will be stunned. The animations and background environments are impressive to say the least. In fact, Rayman Advance is reproduced from the PS-X version with near 100% accuracy. Rayman is a fun little platformer with awesome graphics and decent sound. If you want to feel like you're getting your money's worth for what you shelled out to get a GBA, get Rayman.

Gorgeous environments


The animations are stunning

EARTHWORM JIM

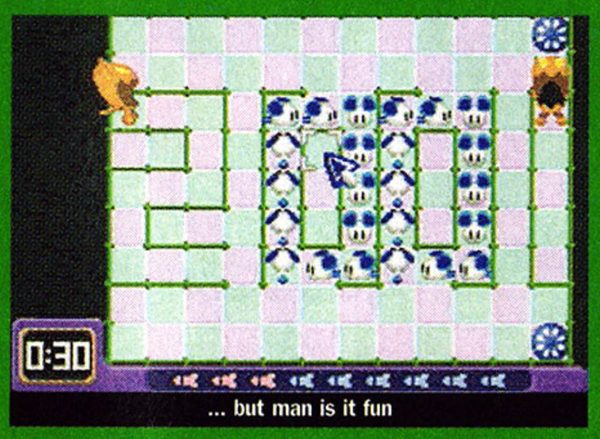
Based on David Perry's original Earthworm Jim release, this Game Boy Advance version will bring players through seven worlds including New Junk City, Andy Asteroids, Intestinal Distress and Snot A Problem (a level where players bungee jump on vines of phlegm to battle the Mucus Phlegm Brain). You'll be faced with the daunting task of keeping your super-powered suit from the clutches of the evil Psy-Crow and other nefarious baddies as you fight to save the Princess. Look for Earthworm Jim to come out around the GBA's June 11 launch date.

Whammo!

CHU-CHU ROCKET

Chu-Chu Rocket almost gave us a heart-attack the first time we played it. When the opening screen launched, the Sonic Team logo faded into focus on the screen. A Sega developed Nintendo title! What's next? Dogs and cats, living together... Mass hysteria! Sega has proven it knows how to develop an awesome game with this title, and the addictive fun you may have played on Dreamcast is waiting patiently for you on the GBA. Numerous modes, levels, and stages will quench you thirst for a pocket puzzle game, and then some.

Chu-Chu isn't easy...

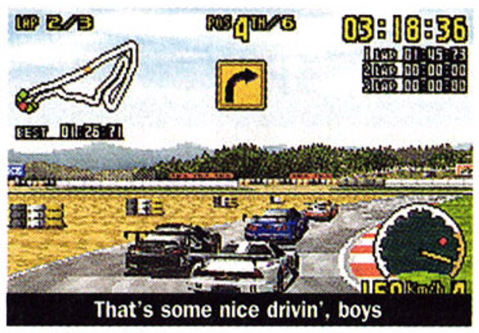


... but man is it fun

TOP GEAR GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Racing games seem to falter a little bit on the GBA. Granted, this title looks incredible compared to anything previous Game Boy systems have presented, but this is one of the only GBA games we've played that really felt like a Game Boy title. The sounds were probably lifted from some racing sound vault somewhere, the controls were so-so, and the graphics were nice, but a little more like Rad Racer than we would expect out of a system that has such power to spare. There are a lot of options for car selection and customization packed in Top Gear, and the weather effects are pretty well done, but the actual racing itself could probably be mimicked pretty closely on a GBC.

Tons of custom features



That's some nice drivin', boys

Choose your ride

DODGE BALL ADVANCE

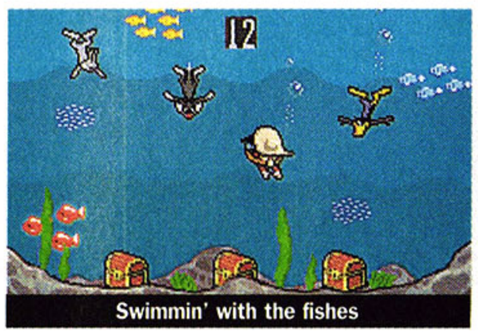
Here it is – The number one game we've played thus far on the Game Boy Advance. A few of you might remember Super Dodge Ball on the NES. Well, we're here to tell you this version blew everything at the GBA summit right out of the water. No other game combined strategy, graphics, gameplay, multiplayer ability and pure addictive quality like Dodge Ball Advance. Innovation is the key word for this game, and there is plenty to be found. Even perusing the game's massive manual showed how much work and thought went into this release. The number of throw and pass combinations, coupled with the customization elements and tactical strategy involved to win a match are just too much to handle in one sitting. You may want to put your box down and look at it with a little grin on your face from time to time during your first playing session, as we did. Do anything you can to get your hands on this game. We have a feeling this cart will be an instant cult classic.

There are a number of special shots you'll be able to throw

This meteor shot had a devestating effect

TWEETY AND THE MAGIC JEWEL

As the first "party" title for the Game Boy Advance, Tweety and the Magic Jewel offers up multiplayer gaming for the entire family. Your job is to save Tweety by collecting five magic jewels before he turns to stone. The game will be set against a backdrop of the Earth, and will have a boardgame feel to it. Gamers will explore different geographic locations using a variety of characters, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Yosemite Sam and Porky Pig. The first player to collect all five magic gems will win the game. It seemed like a solid title when we played it, and it's sure to attract a lion's share of kids who are forced into long car trips with their parents.



Swimmin' with the fishes

Minigames galore!

Search for a Jewel in the Big Apple

More of those huge jumps you loved in the SNES version await you

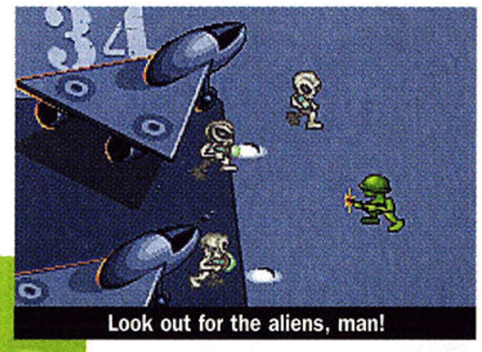
Outta my way, turdling!

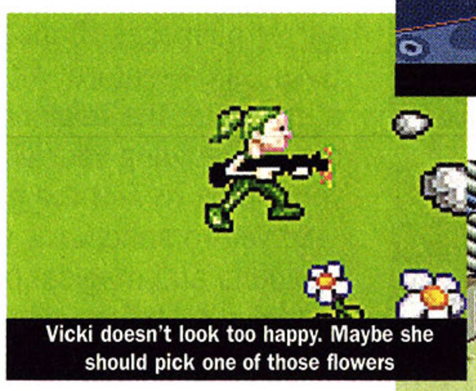
F-ZERO: MAXIMUM VELOCITY

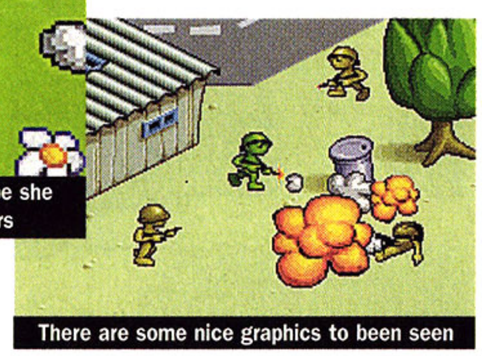
One of the best racing games for the SNES has found a new home on the GBA. The Mode 7 graphics you've come to know and love have been seamlessly transplanted into the realm of the handheld. This game might be more fun on the GBA, since you can now play it anywhere, anytime to get that record lap you've always wanted. F-Zero will be Multi-Link capable, and will provide the opportunity to host up to a four-player race with only one game pak. You will be limited to one vehicle and one track only, but the latitude this feature lends to the game is enormous. There will be 20 all-new tracks and several vehicles to choose from. A must-have for any SNES fanatic.

ARMY MEN ADVANCE

From what we've seen of this game so far, 3DO is still floundering in its Army Men malaise. Army Men Advance's gameplay isn't wonderful, but the graphics are actually worth seeing. There are a variety of levels and situations you'll be faced with, all of them utilizing a good portion of the GBA processing punch. Army Men fans will likely buy this game by the boatload, the rest of us may want to watch over their shoulders.


Look out for the aliens, man!


Vicki doesn't look too happy. Maybe she should pick one of those flowers


There are some nice graphics to been seen

IRIDION 3D

This was a pleasant surprise during the GBA event. We weren't really sure what to expect from this game, and it gave us more than we thought it would. Iridion uses 3D environments to hurl you through tunnels and space. You're basically just moving around the screen shooting at everything that moves, but it's a shooter – what do you expect? Not only that, it's a particularly well done shooter with addictive gameplay and eye-popping graphics.

There will be plenty to shoot at

This boss looks awesome

CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON

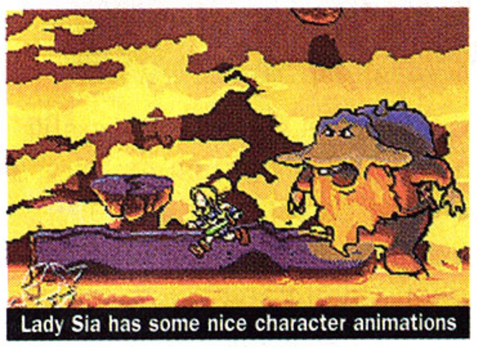
This game kicks some serious booty. It came in a very close third as our favorite game we've played yet on the GBA, and only because numbers one and two are so incredible it would be impossible to put anything before them. Castlevania was first introduced in the US in 1987 on the NES, and has since had many sequels and spin-offs of varying success. You will collect magic items through your pursuits, which grants you enhanced abilities. You'll have an experience meter, and your character will level up after cutting down enough enemies. You will be able to equip armor and weapons as well as use items and accessories which will affect your stats. The graphics are stunning and the gameplay is phenomenal. Prepare to make room in your GBA library for Castlevania: CotM.

Lemme see that whip...

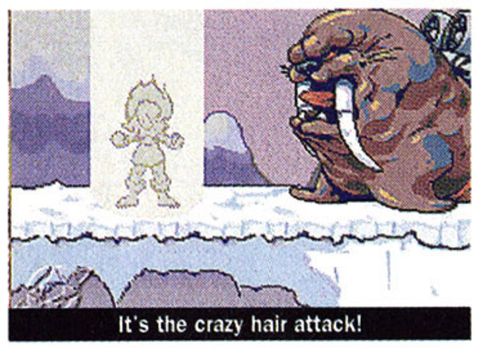
...there it is

Flame pillars? In a video game?

You'll be able to throw a number of different weapons


Lady Sia has some nice character animations

A little magic to brighten your day


It's the crazy hair attack!

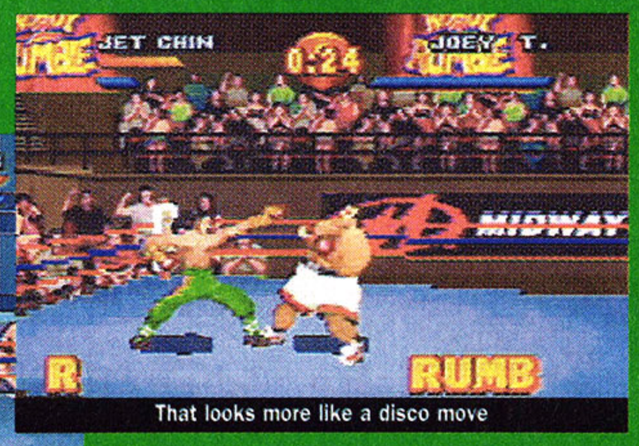
LADY SIA

TDK (the company that makes tapes) has decided to get into handheld gaming with Lady Sia. Vince Bitetti, CEO of TDK Mediactive recently said, "We have the opportunity to reach not only the core handheld audience, but also a new female audience." Well Mr. Bitetti, to do that, you'll have to have a game that does a little better than what Game Informer has seen so far. Lady Sia is pretty raw right now, but TDK hopes to implement 21 enemies, secret passages, bonuses, goals, and a Save Game feature. After finding yourself in a jail cell at the beginning of the game, Sia involves guiding your character to safety. In your quest to find the giant griffin who can take you to sanctuary, you will collect weapons and magical powers. We'll be watching closely to see if TDK can pull off what it's promising.

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2

This was one of the weakest titles Game Informer saw during the Nintendo GBA Summit. This game makes very little use of the power associated with the system it was designed for. The movements of the characters were slow and choppy, the graphics were lacking, and framerate was atrocious. The only saving grace is the sound. There is an awful lot of voice acting crammed into that little cart. For that reason alone it was fun to play, but the rest of the game still has a long way to go.

Afro's about to administer a beatdown



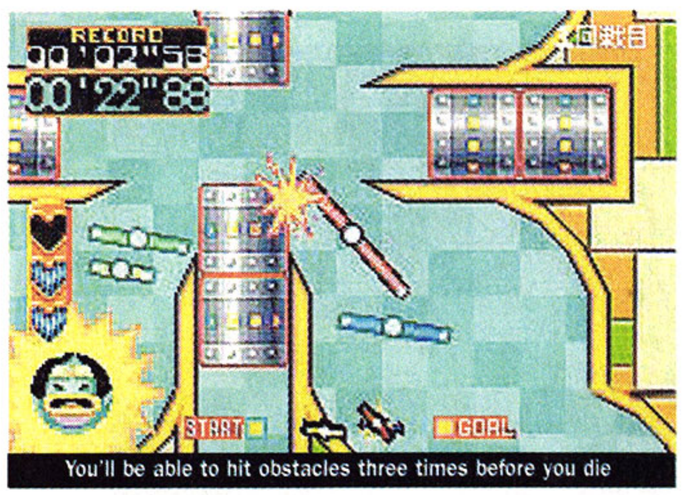
That looks more like a disco move

Your radar will serve you well

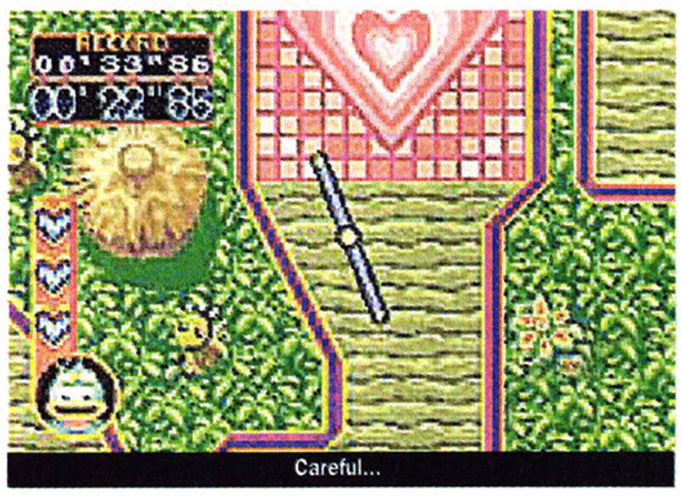
Holy $@#*, that looks awesome

KURU KURU KURU RIN

Kuru is one of those games where you watch someone play it and think to yourself, "That doesn't look that hard. Jay really sucks at this game." Then you play it, and realize that it really is that hard, but Jay still sucks. All you're doing is guiding a line through a maze. However, the line is turning the entire time. If you hit the sides of the maze three times, your vehicle breaks, and you start from the beginning of the level. There's really not that much to it, but man is it addictive. Having Kuru at your side could definitely turn a long trip into a walk in the park.



You'll be able to hit obstacles three times before you die



Careful...

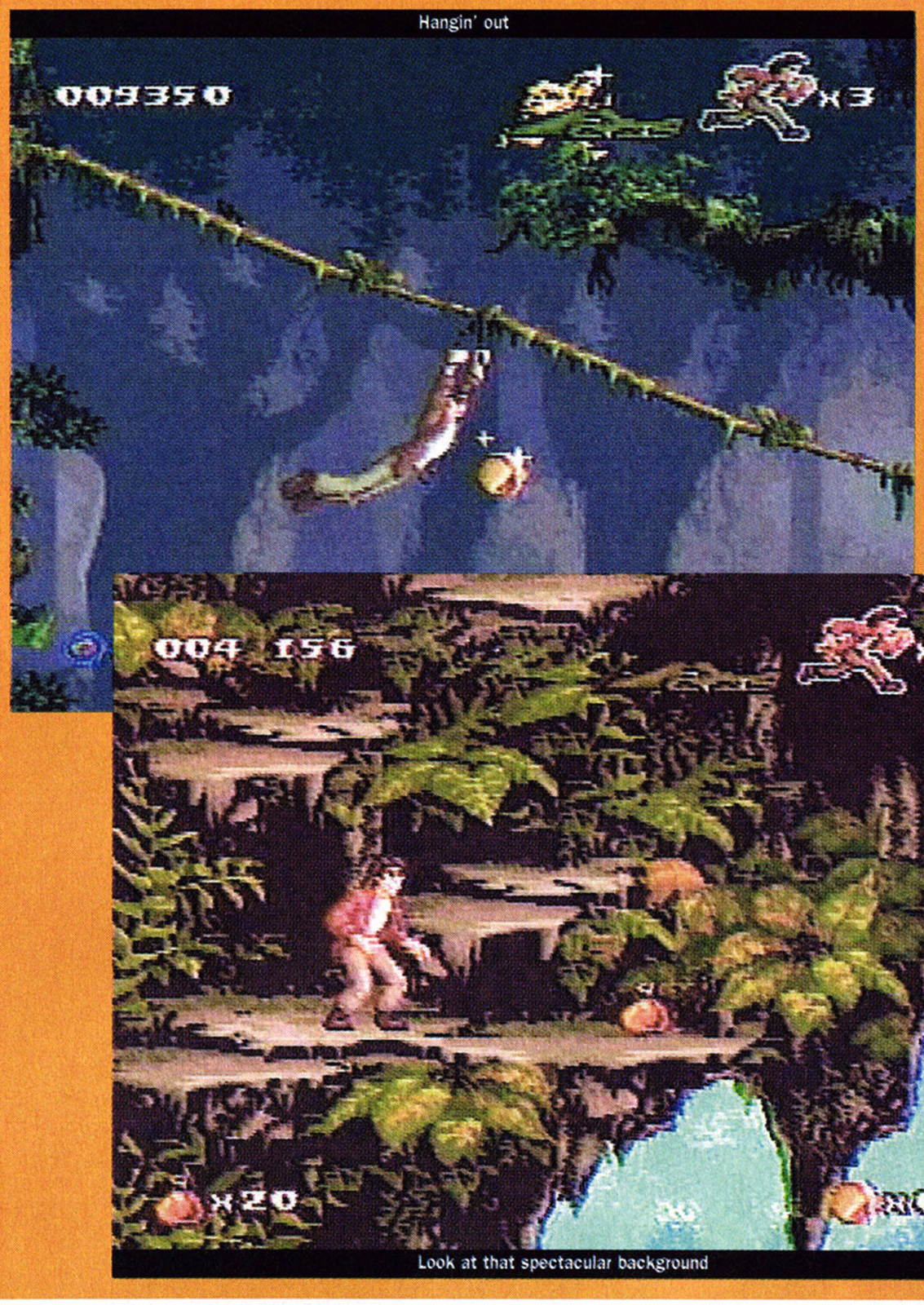
F-14 TOMCAT

NO, that person is not a Nazi. Stop that

Majesco is inviting GBA gamers to get behind the stick of an F-14 Tomcat – the Navy's premier mid-range fighter. Armed with an array of Air-Intercept missiles and a 20mm Vulcan cannon capable of firing 200 rounds per second, you will fly a series of blue water operations while engaging in head-to-head combat with MiG 29s, MiG 24s, and enemy transport aircraft. You'll fly through simulated 3D environments and when you've finished your mission, you'll need to land your bucket of bolts on a carrier. Link up with three buddies for four-player simultaneous combat, or use cooperative modes to battle your way through missions with a little help.

PITFALL: THE MAYAN ADVENTURE

If you're reading this, and you just got really excited about the idea of a GBA Pitfall port, then this game's for you. The graphics for this version are quite well done, but right now the gameplay leaves much to the imagination. You'll take your character through the trees of the South American rainforests in search of golden treasure. There will be ten worlds to explore and bonus levels to unlock. If you yearn for the version from 1982, it will be included. Look out for those rolling logs.



Hangin' out

Look at that spectacular background

Build your castle

Cannons will keep your opponents at bay

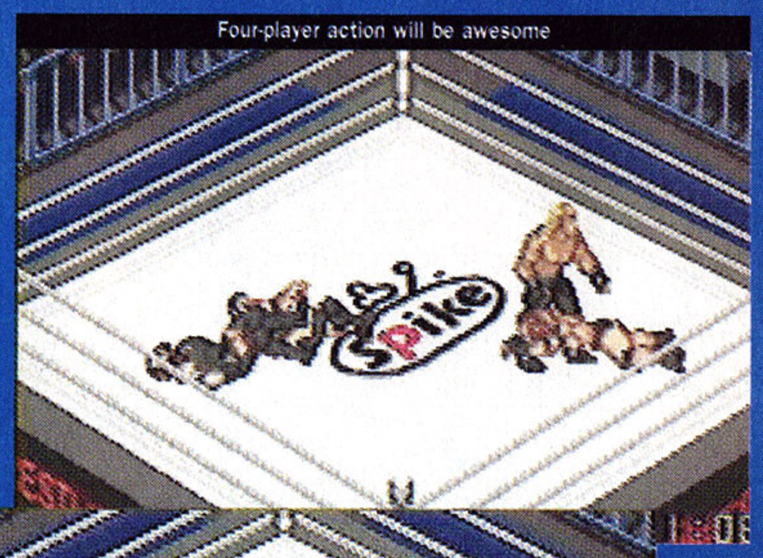
Man, that looks fun

FORTRESS

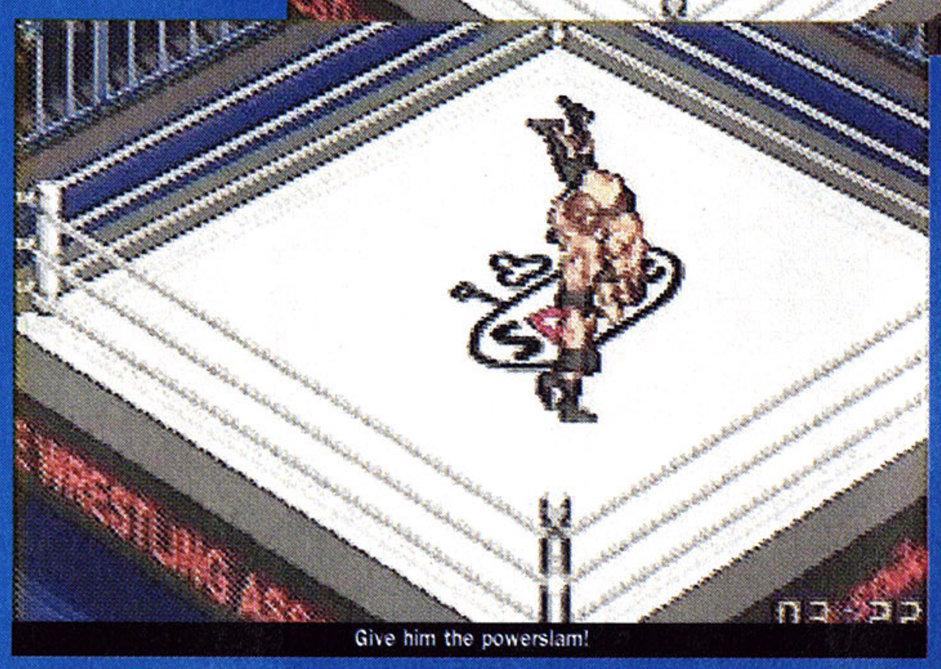
Fortress is one of a new wave of puzzle games headed for the GBA this spring. Players will build castle-style structures and compete against each other to destroy their opponent's edifice. Each level will take place during a different era of history. You'll travel from the Stone Age to the space age building structures reminiscent of each particular time period. Your building components will fall from the top of the screen for an allotted amount of time after which players can position a variety of weapons to reinforce their castle for battle. Players can also utilize certain block combinations to bring monsters to life to support them in battle.

FIRE PRO WRESTLING

Remember Pro Wrestling for the NES? That's the first thing that came to our minds after finally getting into a match. Starman might not be available, but the feel and some of the look is present. There were a ton of menus to peruse as you choose your wrestler. Many of them pertained to character creation, as there was an entire sub-menu for how you want your wrestler to look and what abilities you want him to have. Again, multiplayer should be a blast with this game as you and your friends face off with different characters and strategies.



Four-player action will be awesome


Give him the powerslam!

Look out, Mario! Oh, wait...

Crazy track designs

KONAMI KRAZY RACER

This was not one of our favorites, but it's still a solid effort. It may remind you a lot of Mario Kart Advance. If it does, it's because Konami Krazy Racer is a clone of MKA. It has nice graphics, nice handling on the racers, adequate sound and a goodly amount of tracks to keep things interesting. The only thing we can't figure out is, why wouldn't you just get Mario Kart Advance? Maybe you have a problem with plumbers.

LEGION™
THE LEGEND OF EXCALIBUR

THE QUEST FOR CAMELOT

Never let it be said that the video game industry is running dry on ideas. At times it may appear as though every new game is a blatant rehash of the last one you played. If developers actually took the time to look at the wide variety of options available to them, rather than follow popular trends to make a quick dollar, they'd find a wealth of amazing properties waiting to be tapped. Take Western lore, for example. Particularly, the history surrounding King Arthur. This legend lends itself beautifully to the video game world, and it baffles the mind to think it took decades for a developer to finally bring it to the digital realm. Of course, several companies have created games loosely based on this fascinating tale, but none have truly tapped it for all it's worth.

Come this winter, the legend will finally be unsheathed on the PlayStation 2 through the title Legion: The Legend of Excalibur. Developed by the talented workshop 7 Studios, and published by Midway, Legion will retell the Arthurian myth through story-based gameplay designed by Command & Conquer's mastermind, Erik Yeo. From the Knights of the Round Table to the Lady of the Lake, players will step into the boots of Arthur Pendragon, and will meet such noble allies as Merlin the Enchanter and the Lady Gwenevere. As a Dark Age warrior and King of the Celts, Arthur's quest is for Camelot. Standing in his path are uncertainty, seduction, and the Black Arts dispensed by the sorceress Morgan le Fay.

Holding true to the tale, Legion begins with Arthur as a youthful squire standing in front of an ominous sword in a stone. As the game progresses, you'll watch Arthur grow into knighthood, seize castles, and assemble the 12 members of the Round Table. Combining elements of Baldur's Gate, Diablo II, and Command & Conquer, Legion offers diversity and the perfect gameplay formula to bring Arthur and his legend to video games. The tale is familiar, but Arthur's greatest adventure is yet to unfold...

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY
■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY ■ **DEVELOPER** 7 STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** WINTER

Merlin

The Legend

For obvious reasons, 7 Studios won't follow the written legend of Arthur verbatim. Otherwise, we'd be looking at a series of day-long gameplay segments with Arthur sitting on his throne sipping wine and Merlin in his tower trying to concoct a potion to deal with a burning ulcer. To make the game interesting from beginning to end, 7 Studios had to bend the rules a tad, adding action to every scenario and intensifying the story.

Director of Creative Development Margaret Stohl, who garnered praise for her work on Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun, Zork, Apocalypse, and Spider-Man, had this to add: "We love the legend of King Arthur – really, it's why we built a game in this universe – and have stayed surprisingly true to it in as many ways as we could. We returned to all the original source material – including the 1,400-page 'original' British version written by Geoffrey Monmouth in prison – and used many of the Knights and Knights' tales as the basis for missions. However, since there are so many different 'Arthur' legends, we also had tremendous leeway in many of our design decisions. There are a whole host of different Merlins, Arthurs, Morgan Le Fays, Gweneveres and Lancelots, depending on which legend you go by, so we had lots of flexibility to pick and choose what worked best for the world of our game. However, the game isn't strictly chronological, since in our game all of this happens before [Arthur's] marriage to Gwenevere."

Players will assume control of a semi-mature Arthur in his early 20s. The game pinpoints all of the noteworthy achievements in Arthur's life, including the progression from peasant boy to high king, the seizing of Camelot, the uniting of kingdoms, the search for the Grail, and the creation of the brotherhood of the Knights of the Round Table. A good portion of Legion deals heavily with the assembling of the Round Table Knights. If for some strange reason you don't see a need to establish this dominance in Knighthood, you can march through the game with just a few warriors signed on to your cause. To hire new recruits, you'll need to meet them throughout the game, most of which are hiding out in optional sidequests. The infinitely wise Margaret Stohl relates, "The more sidequests you undertake, the more Knight heroes you will encounter and be able to recruit to the Round Table. Some Knights can only be met on sidequests. For example, you won't encounter any Dwarves or Elves on the main pathway. Yet both of these will add powerful allies to your armies, should you help them along the way."

Other familiar Arthurian tales (like the Lady of the Lake) are integral pieces of Legion's story as well. "You will encounter the Lady of the Lake, also known as Nimue, on the main pathway of the game," says Stohl. "She actually will join the Round Table, if you play your cards right, and will be an amazing asset in your attempt to retrieve the Grail." Another touchy subject, Lancelot, came up. Certainly, through our understanding of the legend, we thought our Dark Age posse would be better off without the Lancenator. Margaret cooled our jets, "Lancelot is the original Ladies' Man, and he's no different in this title. However, though he has his moments of temptation and possibly even treachery, Gwen herself remains true, at least in this chapter of the game..." So basically, for all you worry warts out there, Lancelot won't stab you in the back, unless, of course, there's a Legion II.

Margaret Stohl
Director of Creative Development

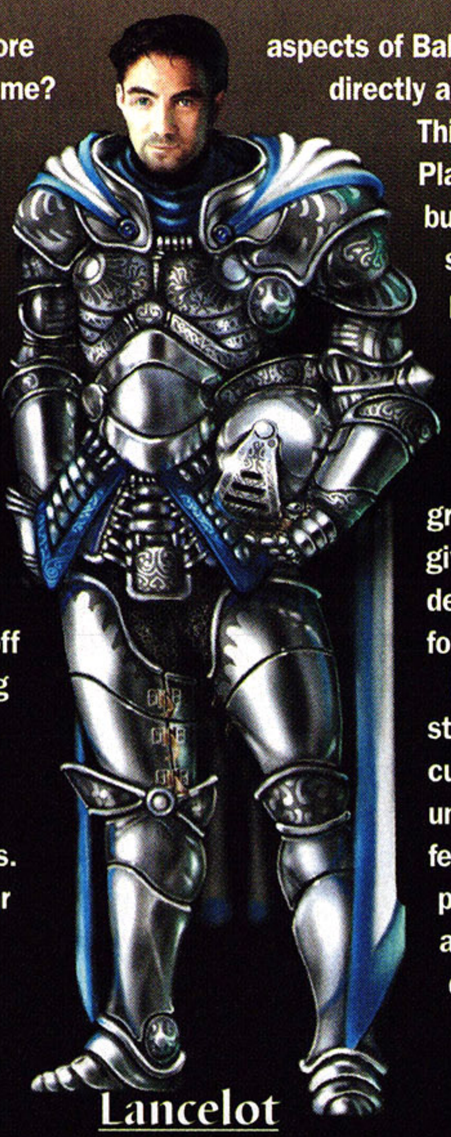
As the name of the game so boldly states, Excalibur plays a large role in the plot, and just like many of the legends, Arthur's acquisition of this sword is how the story kicks off. Certainly, you may be asking yourself, "The most powerful weapon in the game is obtained within the first level of gameplay?" You may get Excalibur early on, but in this tale, Arthur will stumble across even more powerful armaments.

In this breathtaking cutscene, archers mount Camelot's walls

THE POWER WITHIN

Creating a gameplay formula for Arthur's quest couldn't have been more tedious for 7 Studios. Should it just be a typical hack n' slash action game? Possibly, but then the glorious battles and castle seizures wouldn't be as dramatic. Should it just be a strategy game? Again, it would work, but the might of Excalibur – the foundation of this title – would be lost. Instead of rolling a die to decide the outcome, 7 Studios decided to combine every genre that applies. With seasoned industry veteran Erik Yeo on board – a brilliant designer who has been around since the NES days (but who really came into his own with Command & Conquer) – this far-fetched gameplay dream became a workable reality. A reality that every gamer can really sink his or her teeth into. Erik reiterates this fact in saying, "We start you off with a little bit of everything, but we don't force the player down one path or another. The game can be played in an action mode, or a more strategic mode, and both modes are always present. The game starts off with an action feel but quickly expands to encompass strategic thinking and movement."

If comparisons can be made, Legion embodies elements of Kessen, Diablo, Baldur's Gate, and of course, Command & Conquer. A lethal amalgam indeed, Yeo breaks down exactly how each component applies. "Legion has many elements from all those games and others. It's similar to Kessen in that there is a strategic side to the game, but different in that you can participate viscerally in the battles. It's like Command & Conquer in that you can command large numbers of troops and assault bases (or in our case castles, towers, etc.) but unlike it because the minute-to-minute micromanagement of a sprawling base has been removed. Legion shares some of the RPG and character development aspects of Baldur's Gate and Diablo, but allows for larger battles that you control more directly and has an easier to understand rules system."



Lancelot

This may sound overwhelming, especially since the game is limited to the PlayStation 2 controller. Rather than forcing the player to memorize combo button presses, the gameplay is developed more in the action vein, and the strategic elements play second fiddle. If the game were on PC, 7 Studios probably would have tilted the play in a more strategic direction than it did for the PS2 version. Tackling a troublesome hurdle early on, 7 Studios institutionalized a phenomenal camera system – one that gamers needn't worry about. "The camera works in a number of ways," retorts Yeo. "It's fixed to north-facing position, about 50-60 feet off the ground. The camera adjusts depending on the distance of the order being given. There are some default camera angles the player can choose from, depending on whether they want to be close to the action, or further out for a more strategic view."

For a console game, the technology couldn't be better, nor could the storytelling. 7 Studios has implemented a number of real-time and CG cutscenes throughout. To say the CG sequences are incredible would be an understatement. Similar to Onimusha's intro, many of the scenes in Legion feature detailed and smoothly animated 100-man battles, with action taking place in both the fore and backgrounds. If you look closely, you'll see giants and dragons lurking in the distance, arrows piercing Adam's apples, and limbs departing from their owners.

Erik Yeo
Designer, Religious Old Spice User

With a simple click of the trigger buttons, players can freely switch between characters

In the graveyard, difficult undead adversaries await

Lion Heart

THE KING'S ORDERS

Now that you have the gist of what to expect, or at least a whiff of what this game may be like, it's time to learn how the gameplay mechanics work. Of course, Arthur will be the main character on the battlefield, yet as Yeo states, "The player can choose up to four heroes to take into a region. Each hero has a specific role that they play, and some lead a number of troops. The heroes can be played directly (action) or the player can issue orders to them and participate in the battles in a more strategic role, or any combination (Fight with one hero, issue commands and standing orders to the others)."

Arming the troops may sound like a tedious and time-consuming task, but since this is a console game, resource management has been kept to the bare minimum – gold and manpower. Gold begets manpower; however, the player can detail the little things like purchasing new weapons and armor for the troops, and upgrades/additions for Camelot. Citing an example, Yeo explains, "Leather-armored swordsmen are not terribly expensive, but adding an abbey to Camelot is expensive."

With the troops at your side, the interface for issuing commands is context driven (with modifiers in place for attacking and defending) and brawler-esque, where you can simply hack away. In Arthurian lore, Merlin took on the role of a guide and mentor. In Legion, he's 100% controllable, and yes, he also serves as the sage that delivers advice. Having Merlin in your ranks, of course, brings a whole new element to the battlefield – magic. Like most strategy/RPGs, magic is primarily an offensive and defensive weapon. This holds true in Legion, yet there may be a few unexpected side effects. Yeo explains, "Magic plays heavily in the game and is a very important tool. The effect of the magic depends on the spell. Fire burns, ice freezes, etc. If you aren't careful, you can burn down an entire forest while trying to burn down the castle ramparts. Or you can just burn it down because you want to." Retaining an important RPG quality, all the characters improve and gain levels as missions come and go. This is another reason why the sidequests are important. Extra time on the battlefield translates into additional power.

As mentioned earlier, giants and dragons will be on the playing field. Unfortunately, players won't get the chance to command these beasts, as they are tools of Arthur's adversary, Morgan le Fay. Don't stew in self-pity just yet. Some of the heroes have the ability to summon monsters – monsters that can tangle with Morgan's onslaught toe-to-toe. Unlike the C&C series, you won't get the chance to play as the opposing faction, but really, why would you go against Arthur? He's a good kid.

As you'll notice during play, some of the troops are female. Back in the day, Gwen was a rare exception, yet in Legion, she falls right in with her kind. Margaret Stohl clarifies, "We wanted to have more dynamic women characters able to fight alongside Arthur on his quest to save the kingdom. Though Gwenevere was never an archer in any Arthurian legend, there are tales of Ladies of the Court riding on a variety of Hunting Days. But our women warriors are drawn more from the courtly concept of the mythical Amazon warrior, which became the vogue in later British culture. There was a British Queen, I forget who, who became so obsessed with Amazons that she used to wear one exposed breast, like the Amazons. She was equating the right of a woman to rule the empire with the mythical Amazonian precedent of a woman's right to tribal leadership. So there was our cultural crossing, and we just sort of ran with it."

A fascinating makeover already, Legion's most interesting (and quite possibly most harrowing) aspect, seizing castles, is yet to be explained.

Lash

A young Arthur and his troops blaze a path to the Grail

As you can see, magic casting can devastate the terrain. Here, a small village burns after a fire spell misses its target

At times, you'll need to steer clear of the roads and sneak through the adjoining villages

Issuing commands to your troops is a simple context based procedure

SEIZE THE DAY

Yes, this game sounds amazing to begin with, but man! This is where our excitement truly lies. Decapitating soldiers and burning down forests is fine and dandy, but nothing can compare to seizing and defending castles. The options, specifically the siege and defense weapons, are outstanding. Erik Yeo enthusiastically breaks it down, "[When you're] attacking a castle [the outcome] really depends on a number of things – the type of castle, terrain features around the castle, the type of troops guarding the castle, etc. There are several controllable units and environmental effects that can destroy castle walls, but getting close enough to use them if the enemy has archers is another matter. Or if the castle is surrounded by forest, using the cover of the trees is a good idea, unless the enemy burns it down. Siege engines like ballista, the catapult, or trebuchet do a lot of damage from considerable range, but they are slow and vulnerable to foot troops. So, there really isn't one correct way to take a castle; it really depends on the circumstance and how the player wants to go about it. And yes, there are missions where you must protect a castle from invaders."

Oh man...that sounds way too good to be true. While we've blown a lot of sunshine up Legion's skirt thus far, we do have two gripes. This sounds like the perfect multiplayer game – yet the game does not feature multiplayer. Sure, split-screen probably wouldn't work, but the I-link is a different story. Continuing our bashfest, what was the primary means of transportation in the Dark Ages? Magic Carpets? Buses? Nay! Horses! Are there horses in Legion? Can you mount them? The answer to both questions is no! You better have a good explanation for this, Erik. "We decided not to have horses in this game because it really changes the action control scheme and limits the number and types of things a hero can do." A sorry excuse indeed! Pull out the guillotine! This guy deserves to die for treachery against the king!

In all seriousness, though, the lack of multiplayer is a bummer, but it also means 7 Studios focused solely one the single-player and didn't need to tinker with multiplayer balancing. The horses...a tragedy, but hey, we'll live. 7 Studios has delivered almost everything one could desire, and if this first venture is popular, we'll probably see an enhanced sequel within the next year or so. Console-based RTS games fall into a niche genre, but we have a feeling this game will excite the masses. It looks fantastic and we can't wait to get our hands on a packaged copy this holiday season.

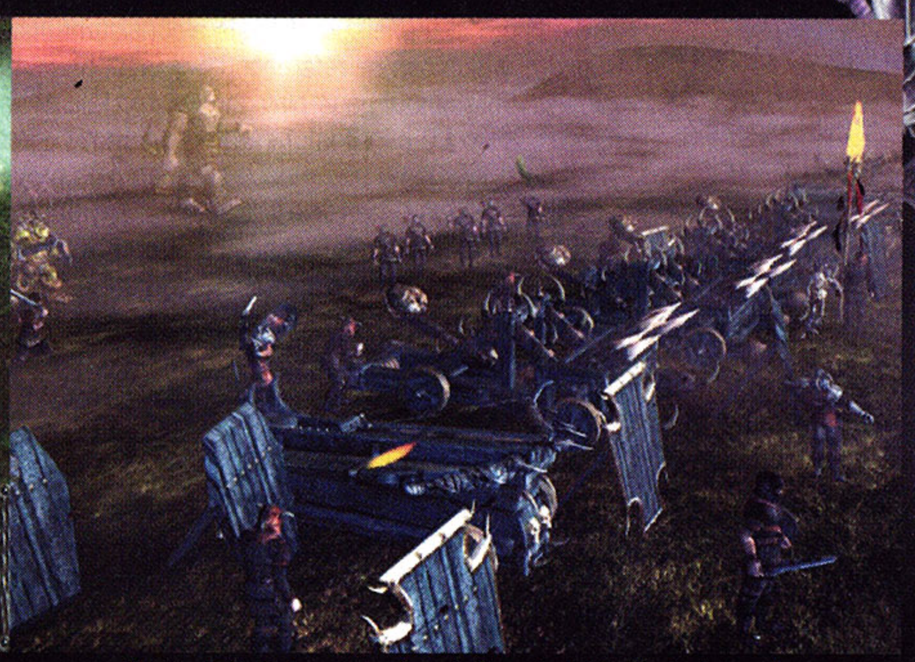
When the catapult makes contact, damage will be shown on the wall, and eventually it will crumble

"What? All the villagers have been turned to ice...this must be the work of Morgan le Fay"

As you approach enemy territory, you'll be warned of what happens to trespassers

Merlin summons a storm atop his tower

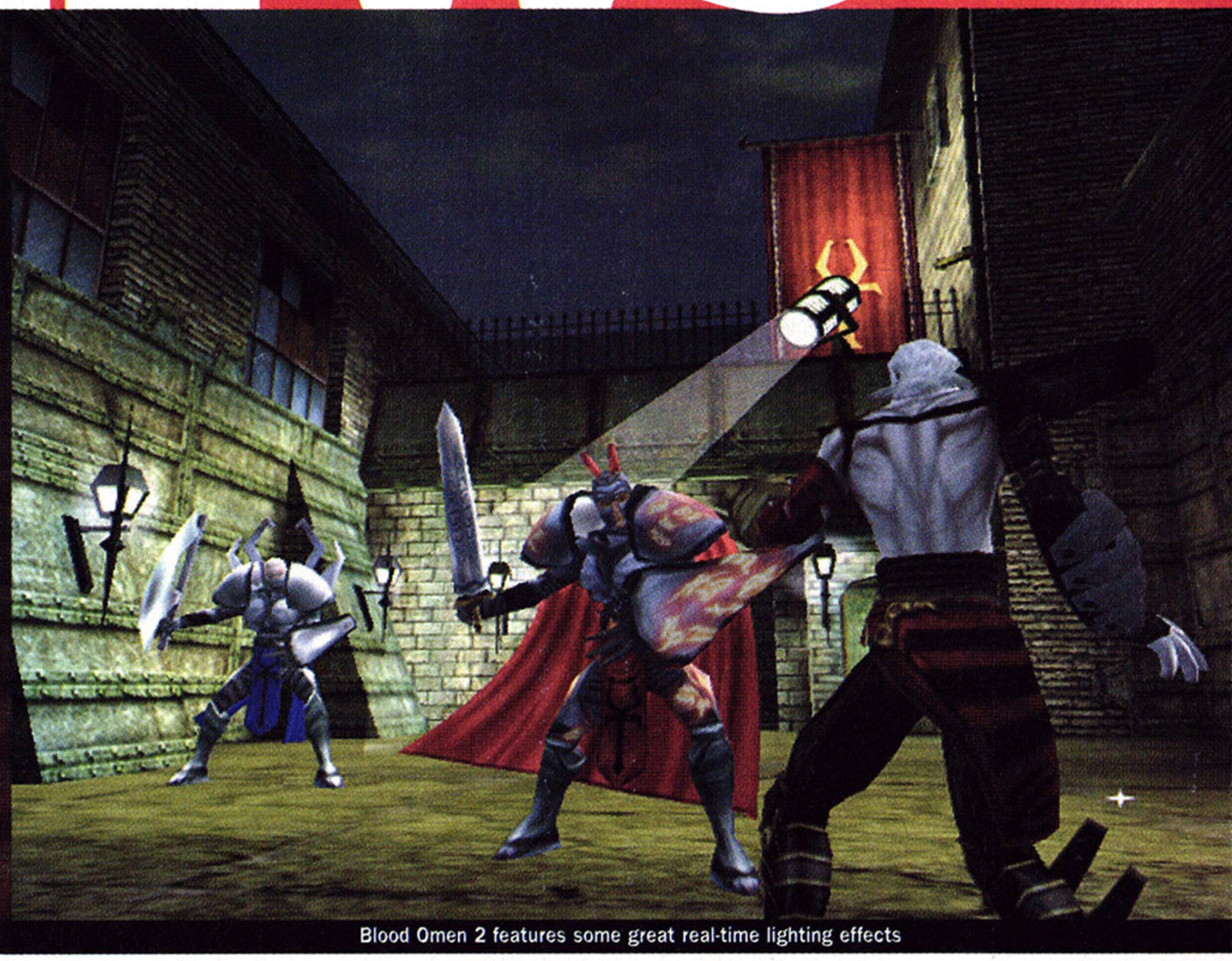
This catapult shot is way off the mark, but at least it will take down a pesky archer



Morgan le Fay's troops stand ready. If you look into the background, you can see a giant heading toward the castle

Gwenevere

Why can't we all just get along?



Blood Omen 2 features some great real-time lighting effects

PLAYSTATION 2

LEGACY OF KAIN: BLOOD OMEN 2

CRYSTAL COAGULATES A KAIN CLASSIC

After watching that young whippersnapper Raziel steal his franchise right out from under him, we would understand if Kain was a little bitter over Crystal Dynamics and Eidos. Imagine – Kain getting beat by a guy that didn't even have a jaw! Silly. Thankfully, all parties involved have put their differences behind them, and Kain has gracefully agreed to appear in a brand new PlayStation 2 sequel to the 1996 classic, Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain. Creatively titled Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2, the game seeks to continue the occult Kain saga, and revisit the dark world of Nosgoth.

Recently, Eidos sent us these amazing new pictures of the game, and Blood Omen 2 producer Sam Newman gave us some insights into the game's development. At this stage, the game is shaping up nicely, and should be a ghastly thrill for PS2 owners upon its release this fall.

The most dramatic difference, and one that might disturb some devotees of the original Blood Omen, is Crystal Dynamics' decision to move the game from an isometric camera view to a more conventional 3D third-person perspective (á la Soul Reaver). While traditionalists might grumble, Newman claims, "Making an isometric-view game wasn't even considered. 3D action/adventure games have a huge amount of potential, and we believe they can be incredibly enjoyable." As you can tell by the screenshots, the look of the game is very similar to Soul Reaver, with intricately detailed environments that could only be accomplished on a next-generation system.

The game takes place 400 years after the original Blood Omen, after Kain has been stripped of his power in Nosgoth by a mysterious being even more powerful than himself. Kain's quest for redemption is the game's central theme, as he tries to win back the empire he lost. When we asked if Raziel makes an appearance in the game, Newman played coy, but did hint, "The Blood Omen 2 and Soul Reaver 2 teams have worked hard to make sure there is a consistent history for Nosgoth, which can be referenced by these, and future, games." Throughout gameplay, the twisted tale will be told through 20 to 30 minutes of in-game cinematic cutscenes.

Although the game has moved away from its roots graphically, Blood Omen 2 will maintain many of the RPG elements that made the first such a classic. Interaction and fact gathering from non-player characters is key to finding your way, as is developing Kain's abilities and powers. One of your main challenges will be dealing with a public that is very hostile to vampires. Although your super powers mean you can easily slay innocent civilians, you run the risk of exposing yourself as a vampire, which will cause the Sarafan to hunt you down. To maintain a low profile, Kain has a new power called Stealth, which allows him to become invisible at will. As you would expect, this makes for some very intriguing gameplay.

In addition to making himself invisible, Kain can also use his Charm ability to turn townspeople into his mindless slaves. Newman explains, "The player can use these charmed 'puppets' to do a variety of tasks such as scouting out a dangerous area, or gaining access to something that Kain cannot reach himself." As with previous Kain games, puzzle solving also comes into play, but not to such a great extent. Newman said, "...[W]e didn't want to do any gameplay puzzles that didn't make sense in the world. You won't see any 'What is that doing there?' puzzles; it all fits into the environment."

The combat system is very simple, just one button for attacking and another for blocking – with a unique twist. The blocks actually react to the opponent's movements, translating into breathtaking swordplay. Newman continues, "Instead of doing a static block stance that deflects everything thrown at Kain, Kain's sword will directly meet the attacker's weapon, blocking it. The effect is very close to some of the scripted cinematics you see in other games."

With all these interesting concepts driving its development, Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2 will likely be the penultimate game in the Kain universe, and might well overshadow the highly anticipated Soul Reaver 2. We are extremely excited about this game, and, after checking out these screens, we expect you are too. Look for more once we get a chance to play it at E3.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS ■ **DEVELOPER** CRYSTAL DYNAMICS ■ **RELEASE** FALL

Somebody's a big Darth Maul fan, apparently

With a little camera adjustment, you can almost simulate Blood Omen's old isometric view

Kain's fluid blocking equals swordplay that towers above the competition

"Keep it up with that Mariah Carey crap and your head's coming off, woman!"

PLAYSTATION 2

EXTERMINATION

KILLS BUGS DEAD

Resident Evil creator Tokuro Fujiwara's new epic, Extermination, shuns the survival horror genre, and instead forges out into new territory referred to as "panic action." Playing like an amalgam of Tomb Raider, Resident Evil, and Metal Gear Solid, Extermination gives more free-flowing movement, while keeping with the themes and patterns that have made the three aforementioned titles so popular.

As one of the first blockbuster first-party titles for the PlayStation 2, Extermination follows US Marine Dennis Riley on a harrowing journey through a seemingly deserted military compound. The pace is as quick as your pulse, and fear is not an option. We flicked off the lights, grabbed a can of Raid, and came up with a great playable peek at Extermination.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
■ **DEVELOPER** DEEP SPACE ■ **RELEASE** JULY

Riley slices, dices, and makes julienned fries in seconds!

CUTTING COMBAT

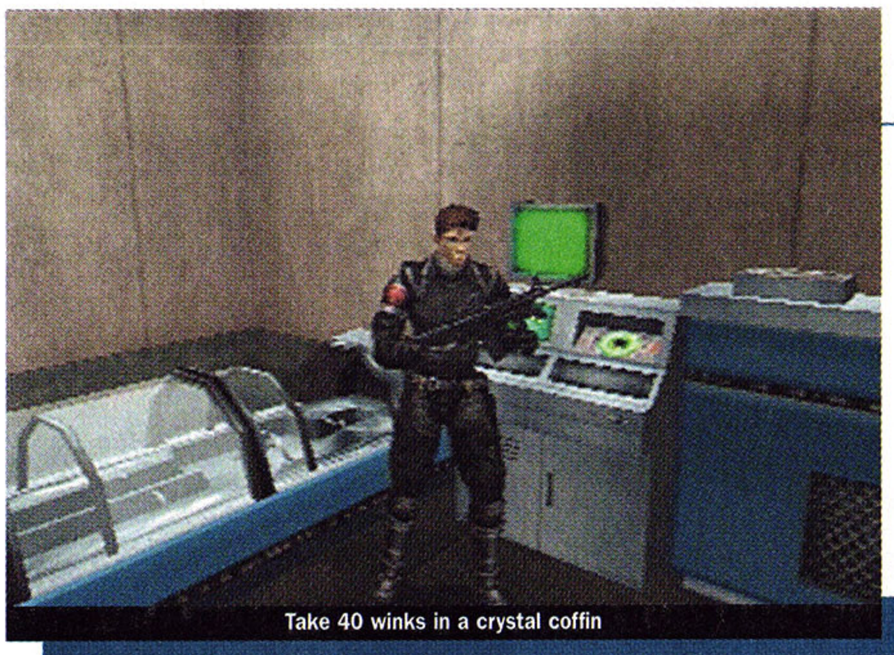
When the enemy is too close to drop bombs on, the knife is your best means of survival. A full upward swing easily dispatches smaller nuisances, while a three-stab combo move hacks away at larger baddies. As an added bonus, the blade can also be used to bust many of the padlocks you come across in Extermination. Evidently the compound's tenants didn't use Master Lock. Unlike many survival horror games, the knife is something you definitely don't want to leave home without.

The gun-mounted flashlight shows the way

THIS IS MY GUN

Riley packs some mean heat, and his firearm only gets better the further you progress. It has both a laser sight and flashlight, can switch between semi-auto and spread fire, has a sniper scope, and can even be held different ways. It is fired in similar fashion to the Resident Evil weapons, but sniper mode (accessed by hitting R2) is more like Metal Gear Solid. Weapon upgrades are picked up through various item boxes in your quest.

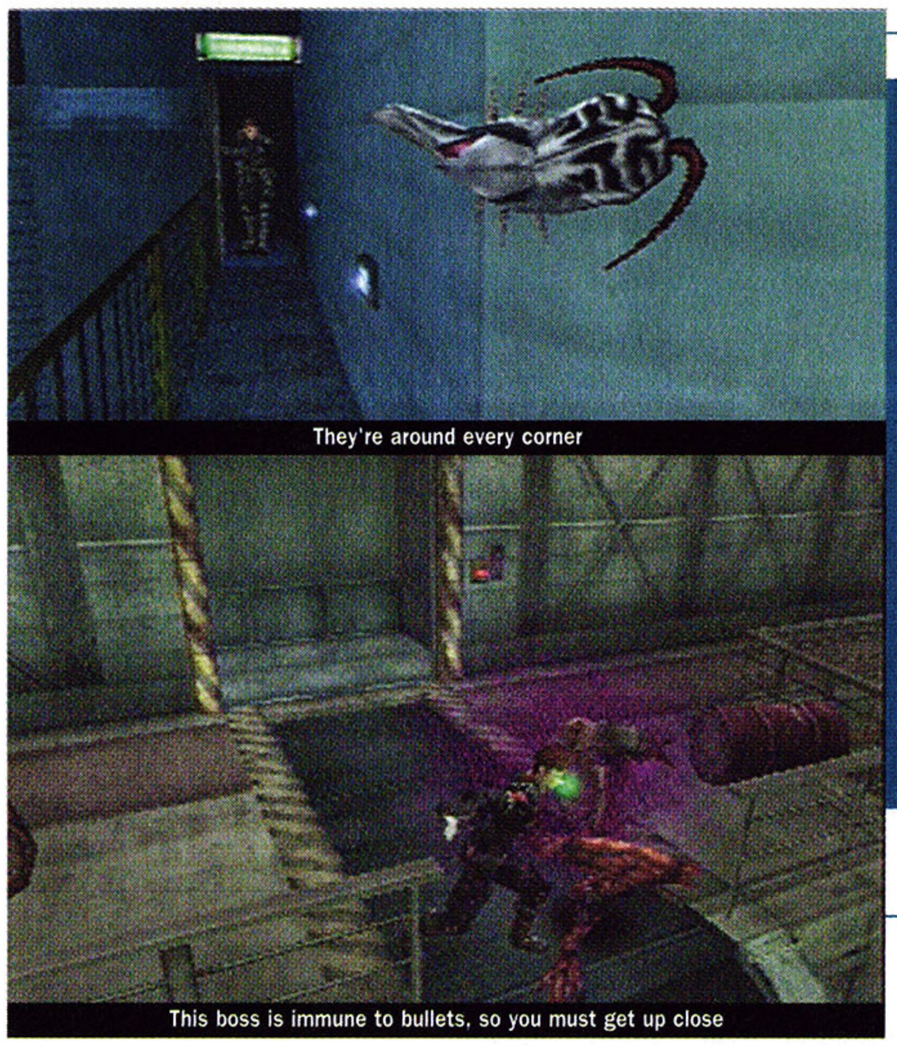
Use the sniper scope to have a look around



Take 40 winks in a crystal coffin

SAFE HAVENS

They are limited, but certain areas and items in Extermination are free of strife and danger, allowing you to take a load off. Nothing invigorates your life force like a cryogenic nap. Ammo stations let you reload your gun to maximum capacity. A charger replenishes your battery's power (which is used to operate certain machines). For healing on the go, there are jellies that revive your health, and vaccines that clear your body of alien contamination.

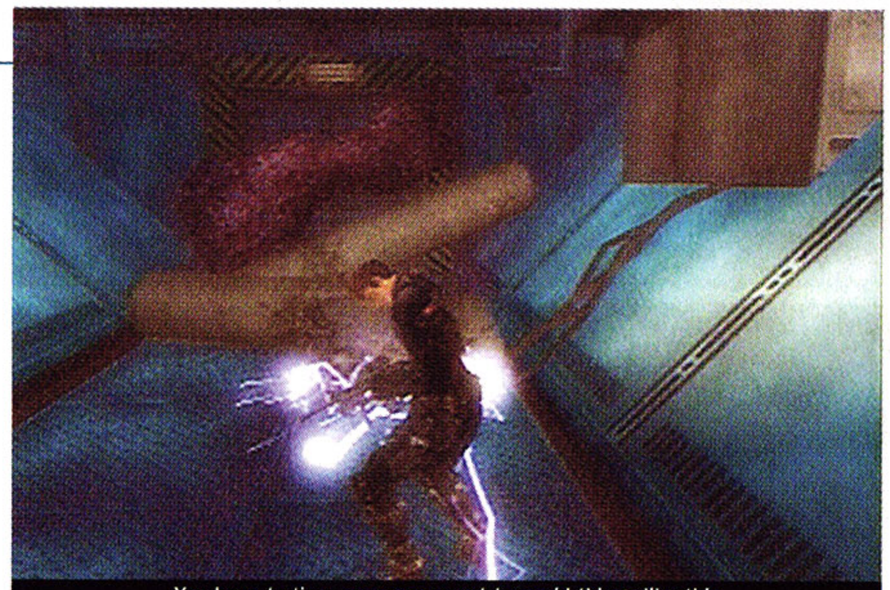


They're around every corner

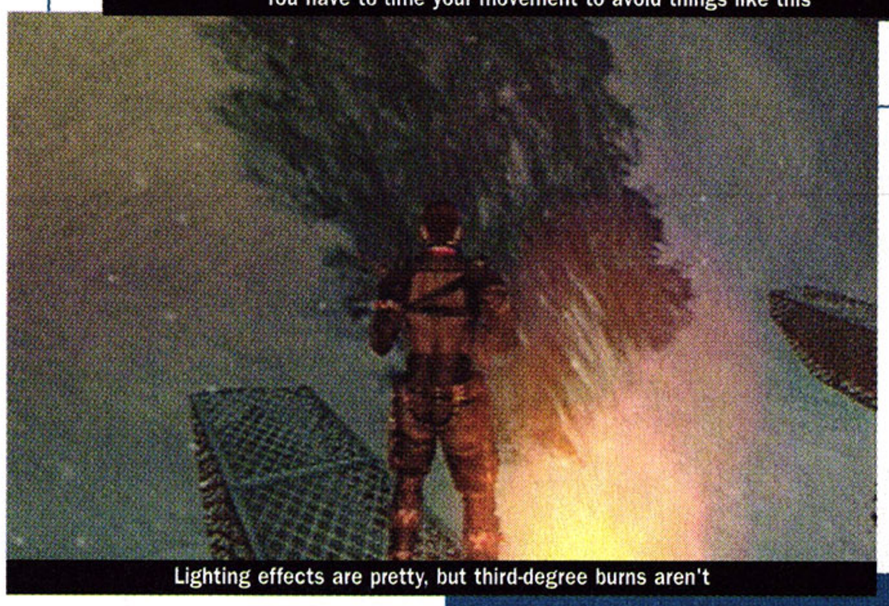
This boss is immune to bullets, so you must get up close

THINGS THAT GO SMOOSH

For the most part, the main targets for your ammunition are the creepy leech-like alien bugs that infest the compound. While small and easily liquified, their numbers and cunning are enough to get your heart rate up. If they get too close, one will latch onto you and steadily toxify your body, causing massive blood loss, so prepare to jam on the buttons in an attempt to escape. Riley encounters other monsters as well, most of which resemble mutated humanoids. These characters' entrances are much more dramatic, and will take more than the bottom of your boot to give up the ghost.



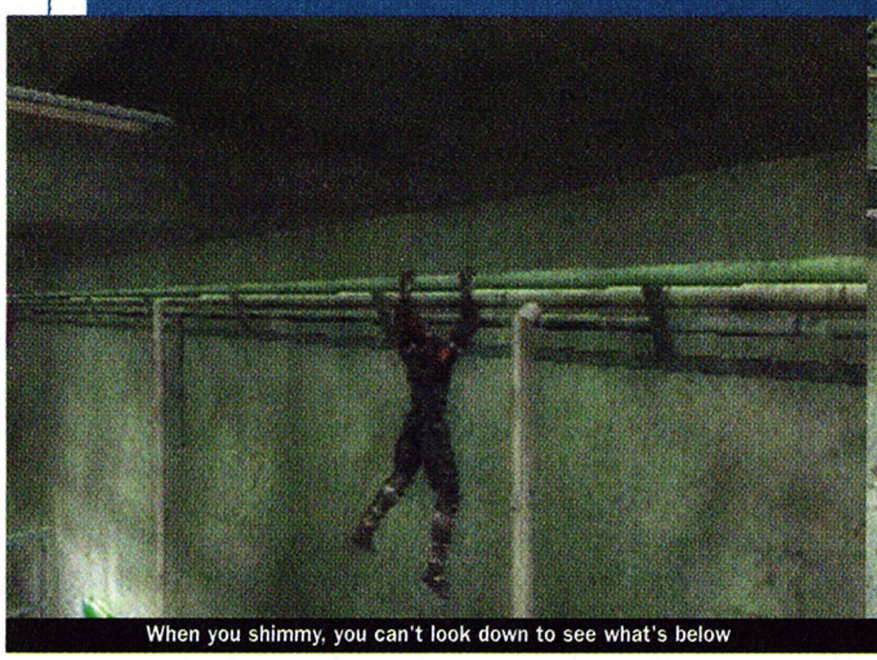
You have to time your movement to avoid things like this



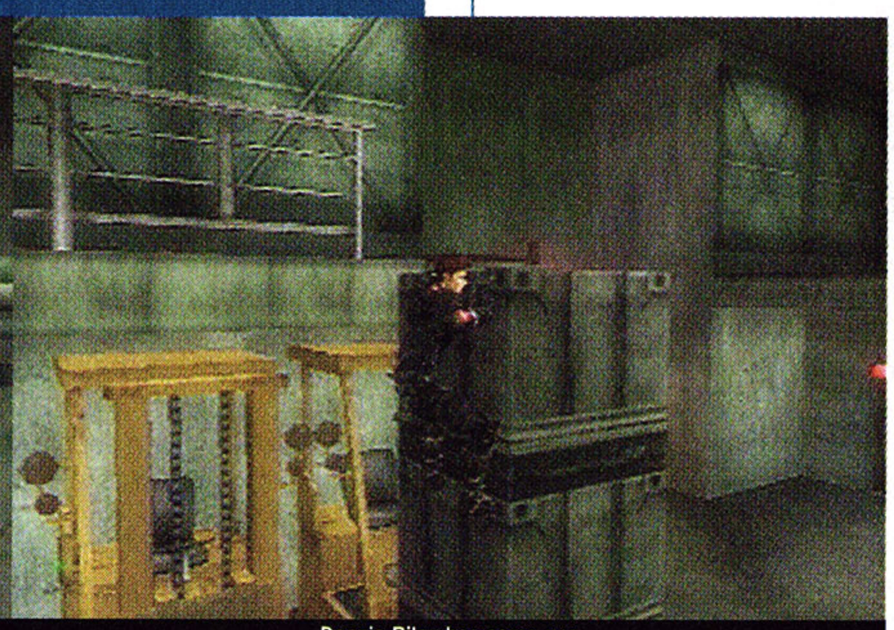
Lighting effects are pretty, but third-degree burns aren't

MOVIN' ON UP

Dennis Riley has the agility of Lara Croft, without all that awkward gravitational pull. He can climb ladders or boxes, shimmy along pipes, and perform accurate long jumps. Most of these actions merely take a single button press to execute. Taking a few pages out of Solid Snake's repertoire are a wall-hugging, slinking maneuver, and some first-person crawling. Simple walking and running in Extermination are more fluid than either Tomb Raider or Resident Evil, and make the game's control more like an action/platformer, rather than a survival horror title.



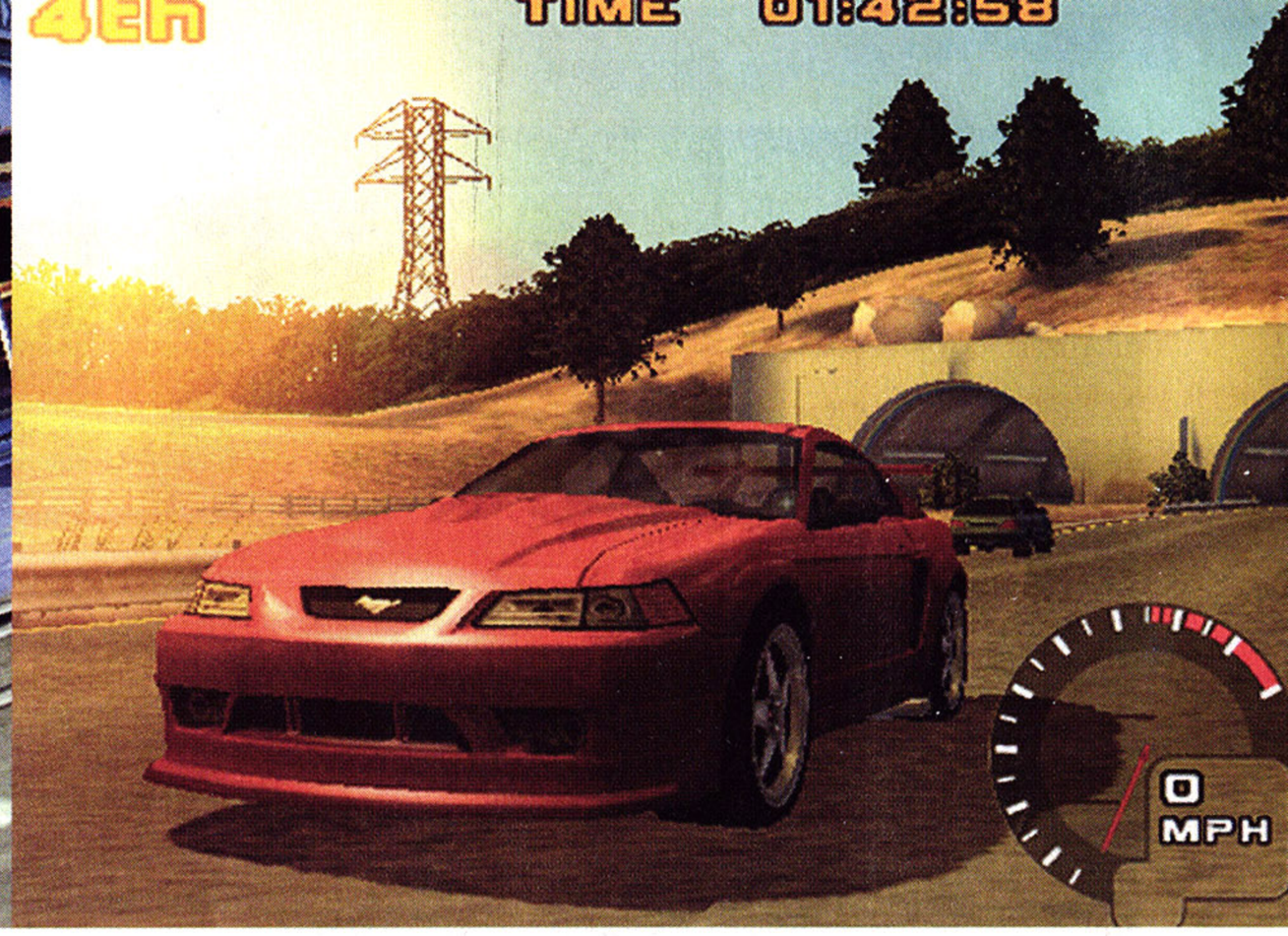
When you shimmy, you can't look down to see what's below



Dennis Riley has some ups

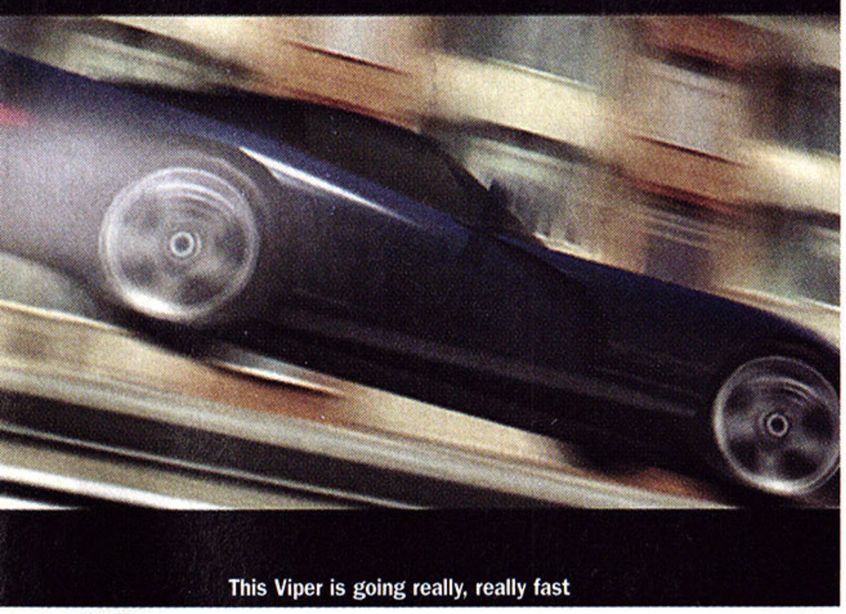
JOB HAZARDS

Surprise, surprise; a run-down compound has several obstacles that are detrimental to your health. Fires pop up all over, security systems that consider you a bug hurl shots in your direction, and the combo of large puddles of water with live electrical wires don't add up to a soothing day at the office. Some of the puzzle elements themselves are killers as well, like the runaway train that hurls itself toward you in a blazing inferno.



Vehicles have been rendered with acute detail

San Francisco will make for some great races



This Viper is going really, really fast

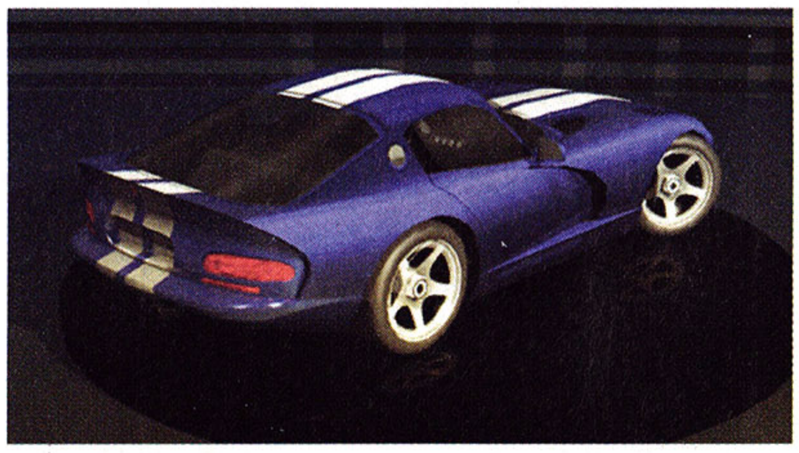
PLAYSTATION 2/XBOX

TEST DRIVE

FLASH, WE'RE IN HOT PURSUIT!

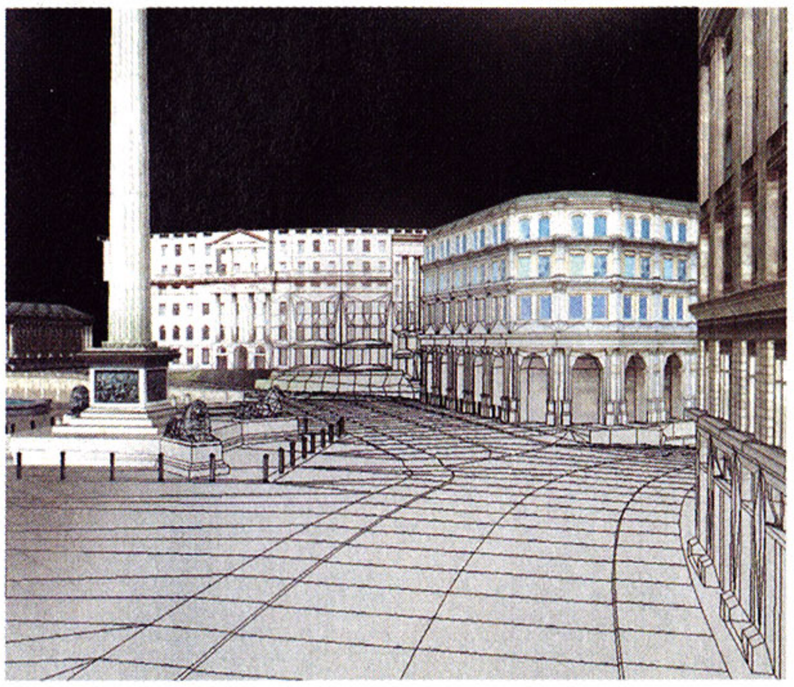
Imagine yourself peacefully driving in traffic, using your turn signals conscientiously, hands at ten and two, making sure not to follow the car ahead of you too closely. Then suddenly you're violently cut off. You might be the type of person who goes completely insane and tracks the perpetrator to plot a lengthy and bloody revenge. Or, you might be the type of person who feels like plowing into a group of pedestrians to vent your rage – even if you weren't cut off. Test Drive will try to help you work on these destructive feelings by attempting to put you in the most realistic racer to date.

Test Drive will feature an entirely new game engine, stunningly realistic physics and visuals, plus the fuzz will be hot on your tail as you race through highly detailed real-world cities. There will be 20 fully licensed sports and muscle cars. Some of the more exotic models will include the Dodge Viper GTS, the Jaguar XK-R, the Aston Martin DB7 Vantage, the Lotus Esprit V8, the Shelby Cobra, and the Nissan Skyline. For you *Dukes of Hazzard* fans, you'll be able to get behind the wheel of a '69 Charger. The rest of you motorheads out there can look forward to putting the Mustang, Ford GT-40, and Plymouth 'Cuda through their paces.



Your races will take place in four painstakingly detailed cities including London and San Francisco. These environments will be fully interactive, and will most likely feature competitive AI, unpredictable cross-traffic, reactive pedestrians, smashable street-side objects, and cops who won't leave you alone if you put the pedal down in city limits. Test Drive will also feature licensed music you can listen to via your radio as you cruise the streets of your city of choice.

Test Drive's game engine has been built from the bottom up with the ability to take advantage of the speed and efficiency of each console. An original software tool was built to create, texture, light, and populate the levels which Infogrames hopes will bring a new level of visual realism and immersion to video game racing. Numerous graphics techniques were used to maximize performance and visual realism including anti-aliasing, mip-mapping and real-time lighting. Multi-level reflection mapping will also bring depth and even more realism to the vehicle models. An AI editor was designed to orchestrate street intersections and vehicle responses in different ways. The system will allow for traffic signals to change from green to red, and traffic and pedestrians will respond appropriately. A fall release should ensure this title is running smoothly before you get behind the wheel in your system of choice. Both versions should push the envelope in terms of realistic control and graphics, but we'll see whether Pitbull can put its money where its mouth is.



■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** THE PITBULL SYNDICATE ■ **RELEASE** FALL

The poly count for the environments will be truly impressive

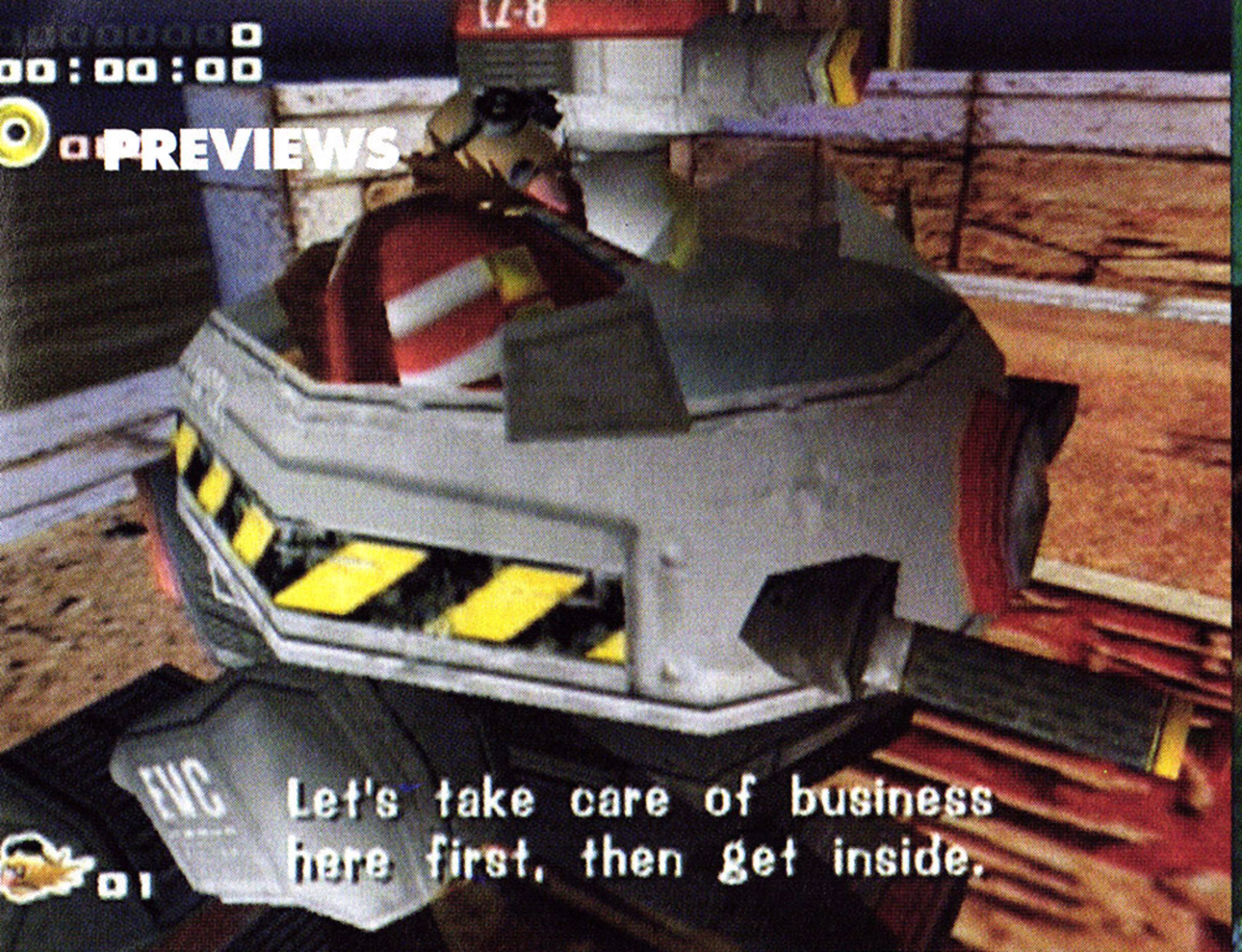
"Look out for that virtual car!"

Here's a rear end for ya

It looks like it's smash-ville for these two

Xbox will have more leeway for textures than the PS2

Subtle lighting and shading are apparent on this Xbox shot



Shadow takes the lead in Heroes vs. Dark

This resembles 16-bit Sonic 2's bonus stage

Chao give good advice, and look like marshmallow Peeps

DREAMCAST

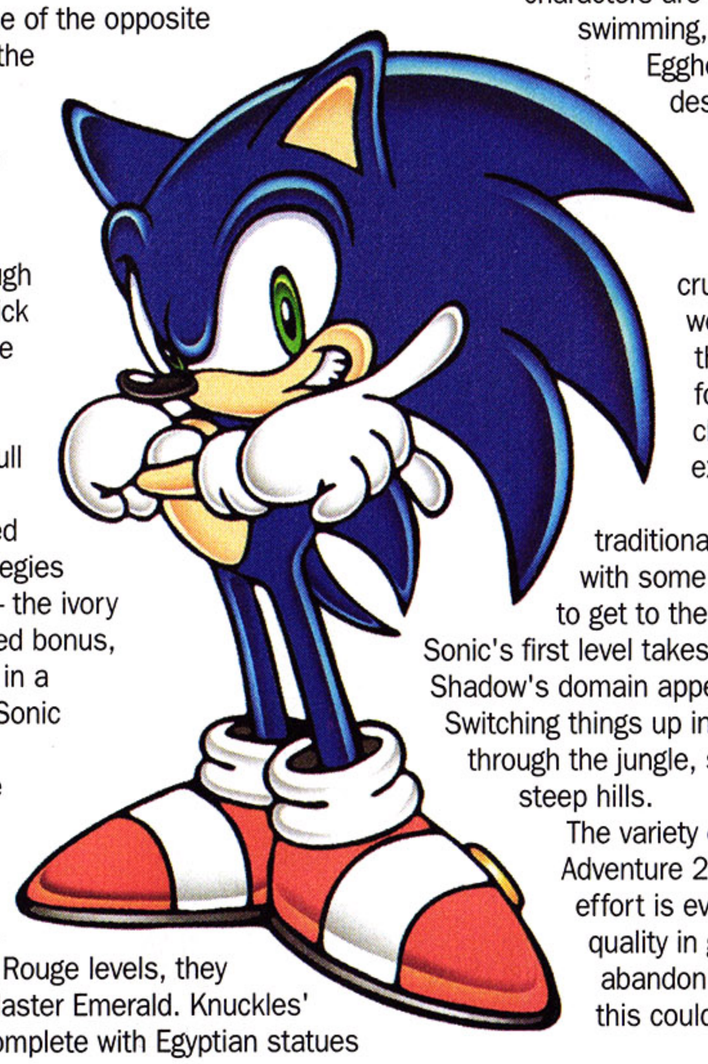
SONIC ADVENTURE 2

NEVER GIVE UP! NEVER SURRENDER!

Sonic may be a captain going down with his sinking Dreamcast ship, but that doesn't mean he can't stick it to The Man one more time in an amazing sequel. Our newest bundle of joy from Sega – an updated preview build – shows that the game's non-blue characters have some game of their own. This includes returning cast members, and a few new playable faces as well.

In an interesting twist, the list of characters to choose from includes three good guys and three villains. Each character pairs up with someone of the opposite persuasion, and both possess the same types of moves. The hedgehog of mystery, Shadow, doesn't just look like posterboy Sonic, he plays like him, too. The eternal antagonist of the series, Dr. Egghead, oddly enough matches maneuvers with sidekick extraordinaire Tails. How can the obese opponent resemble the cute fox? Each one takes up arms in a customized mecha, full of long-range projectiles. The final unlikely pair is the blood-red echidna, Knuckles, whose strategies are duplicated by a newcomer – the ivory spoiled brat, Rouge. As an added bonus, two human players can engage in a competitive standoff battle for Sonic supremacy.

With all the new stages made available to us in the updated copy, more story elements are revealed, but the gist of the plot still remains a mystery. In the Knuckles and Rouge levels, they both search for pieces of the Master Emerald. Knuckles' route goes through a desert, complete with Egyptian statues and a towering wall of wind. His female rival takes a more aquatic approach, and even hitches a ride on the back of a huge turtle. To locate the crystal shards, a radar system assists you. When you're in the general vicinity of a piece, the sensor beeps and turns green. If you get closer, the pace increases and the sensor turns yellow. If you're within spitting distance, your onscreen alter ego will announce it's near, and the color becomes a yellow-and-red flash. Both characters are highly versatile, with their gliding, swimming, and digging capabilities.

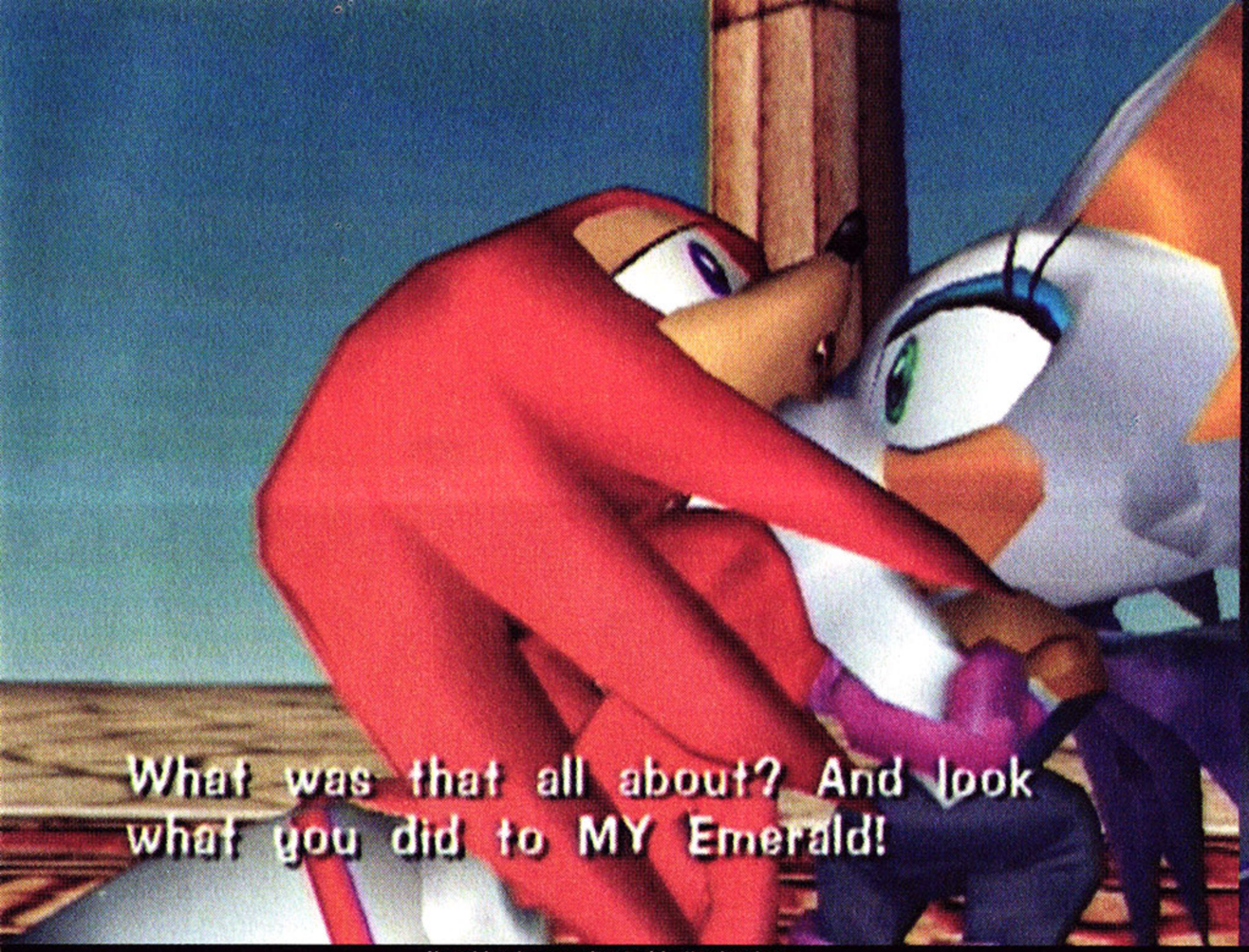


Egghead and Tails encounter more destructive missions, which suit their mechanical weaponry. The mecha can lock on both to a target, and the ammunition it sends your way. Blowing up a group of enemies is crucial for progression, as most doors won't open until you've thrashed all the baddies in an area. As a trade-off for the massive firepower, these characters lumber around at an extremely sluggish speed.

Sonic and Shadow encounter more traditional platform stages. Though doused with some non-linear paths, your mission is still to get to the goal in as little time as possible. Sonic's first level takes place in a typical city, while Shadow's domain appears more dark and futuristic. Switching things up in his next appearance, Sonic races through the jungle, swinging on vines and tearing down steep hills.

The variety of gameplay definitely moves Sonic Adventure 2 into a new realm. Sonic Team's effort is evident in this project, with stunning quality in graphical and audio detail. Don't abandon your Dreamcast just yet, gamers – this could be the grandest jewel of them all.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA/SONIC TEAM ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 19



Knuckles learns about girls the hard way

Ever dance with Shadow in the pale moonlight?

What state's highway commission approved this design?

Knuckles poses for a photo at a tourist trap

Shadow wickedly toys with a feeble foe

Tails ain't takin' no shorts

PC/XBOX

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT

WWII PT. III

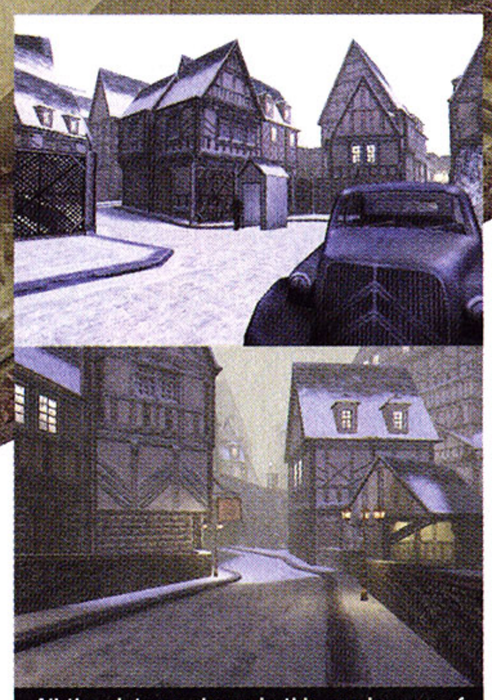
Sometimes great games go undiscovered when released, becoming popular only after it's too late. Years after the fact, fans are begging for a sequel, but the reality is it will never happen. When you think about it, Medal of Honor could easily have become such a casualty. The PlayStation hadn't seen a phenomenally successful first-person shooter in a while, and there was no reason to believe one based in Nazi Germany would fare any better.

However, quite a few factors collided to catapult Medal of Honor to success. Americans were going through a heavy WWII nostalgia phase thanks to movies like *Saving Private Ryan* (and still are, with current films *Enemy at the Gates* and *Pearl Harbor)*; it had the backing of the biggest third-party software company around; and finally – and most importantly – the game kicked serious ass. Never one to ignore healthy sales figures, Electronic Arts is transforming Medal of Honor from a PlayStation exclusive to an all-platform juggernaut. First up in this newly-formed franchise attack is Medal of Honor: Allied Assault for both PC and Xbox.

Allied Assault puts players in the role of Lt. Mike Powell, a member of the 1st Ranger Battalion. As per usual in the Medal of Honor series, this protagonist will do his share of globetrotting to successfully play the part of thorn in the Nazi's side. Traversing through the game's 20+ levels will take Lt. Mike to the deserts of North Africa, the bloody beaches of France during the D-Day invasion, the tundra of Norway, and eventually into Germany itself.

Naturally, Lt. Powell's tour of duty will be a much more pleasant-looking one than that of his PlayStation predecessors. Enemies are to have over 1000 character animations, which should make for some spectacular firefights and a fair share of gruesome deaths. Environments will be highlighted not only by improved weather and time-of-day effects, but also their ability to be more thoroughly destroyed by battles.

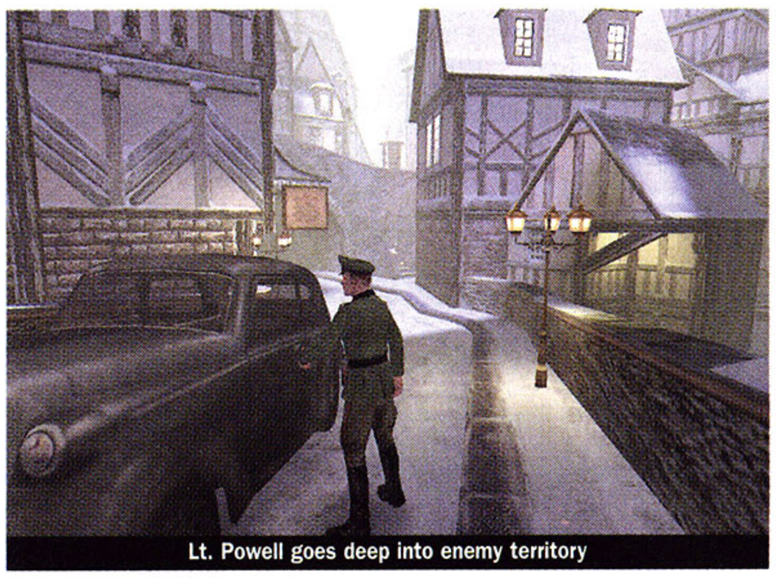
Since it uses the Quake III engine as its foundation, it's fair to say that players of Allied Assault will see their share of violence. There are 21 weapons to pick up, 22 different kinds of troops to use the weapons on, and 18 enemy vehicles to fear – all historically accurate, of course. None of the missions involve blasting away haphazardly, however. Between sabotaging U-boats in the sub pens of Trondheim and holding Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen, Lt. Powell will need to use stealth and the occasional disguise to meet his objectives. In all, Medal of Honor: Allied Assault should be a great beginning to this franchise's impending explosion.



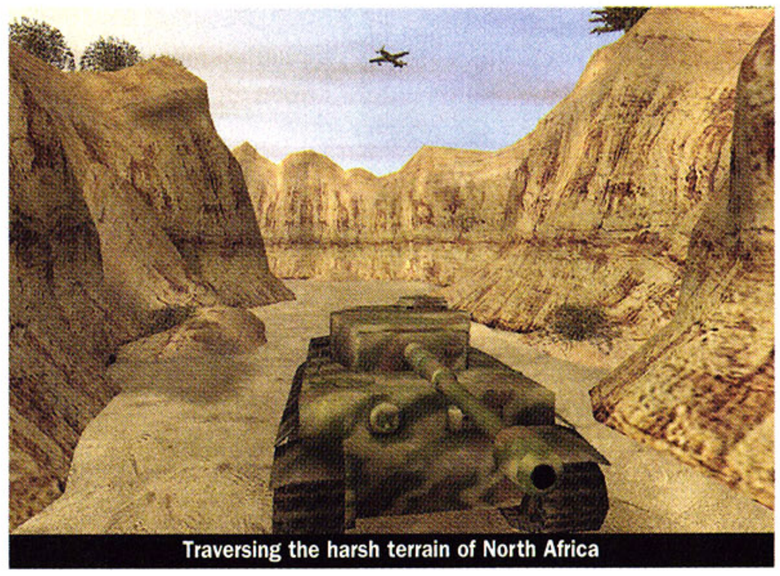
All the pictures shown in this preview are of the PC version. Allied Assault will likely look even better on the Xbox

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** 2015 INC. ■ **RELEASE** FALL

With over 1000 unique character animations, soldiers are incredibly lifelike



Lt. Powell goes deep into enemy territory



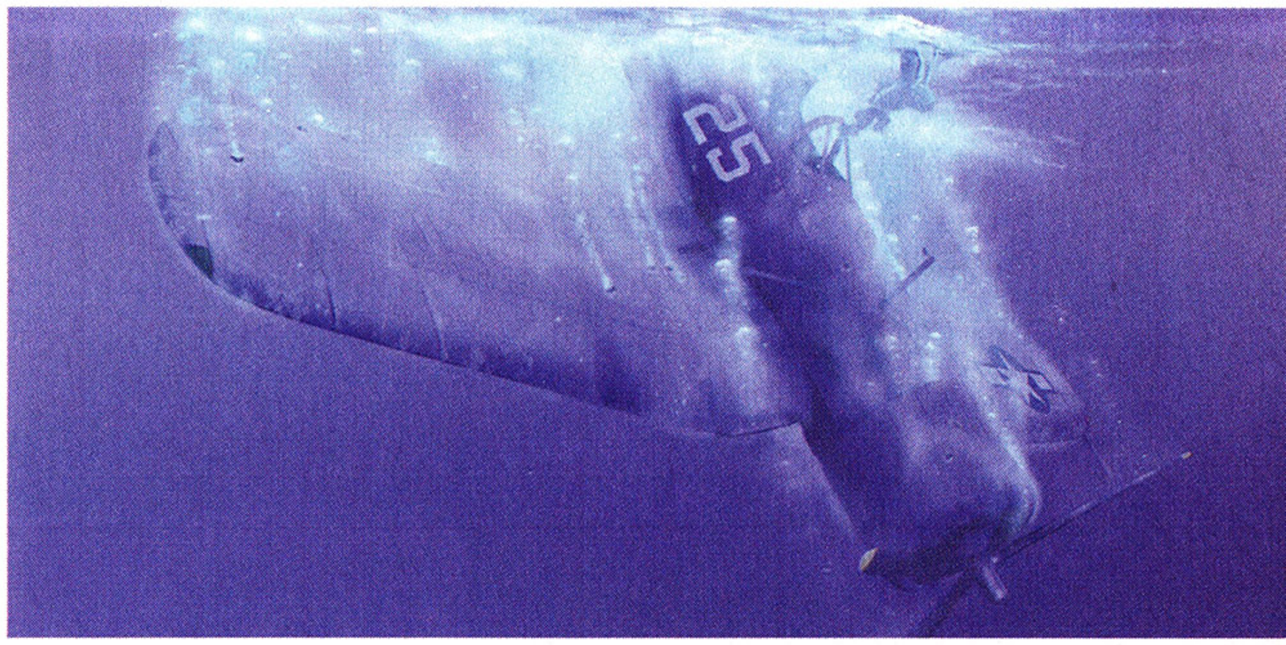
Traversing the harsh terrain of North Africa

In addition to avoiding fire from the game's four stationary gun emplacements, you can take them over and turn them on the enemy

Stealing a page from *Saving Private Ryan*, it's possible to take out tanks with sticky bombs

PLAYSTATION 2

MEDAL OF HONOR: FIGHTER COMMAND



Fighter Command, the second Medal of Honor game to appear on PlayStation 2, will take the series in a new direction – up. Instead of fighting the good fight on the ground, players of Fighter Command will take to the sky – dogfighting, making torpedo runs, and providing air support in a wide variety of WWII aircraft. Players will need to not only learn the different aircraft, but how to man the various positions on each: everything from tail gunner to radar operator. Accessible to the most novice gamer, Fighter Command will have options to crank the difficulty up to a full-fledged flight simulator.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** 2002

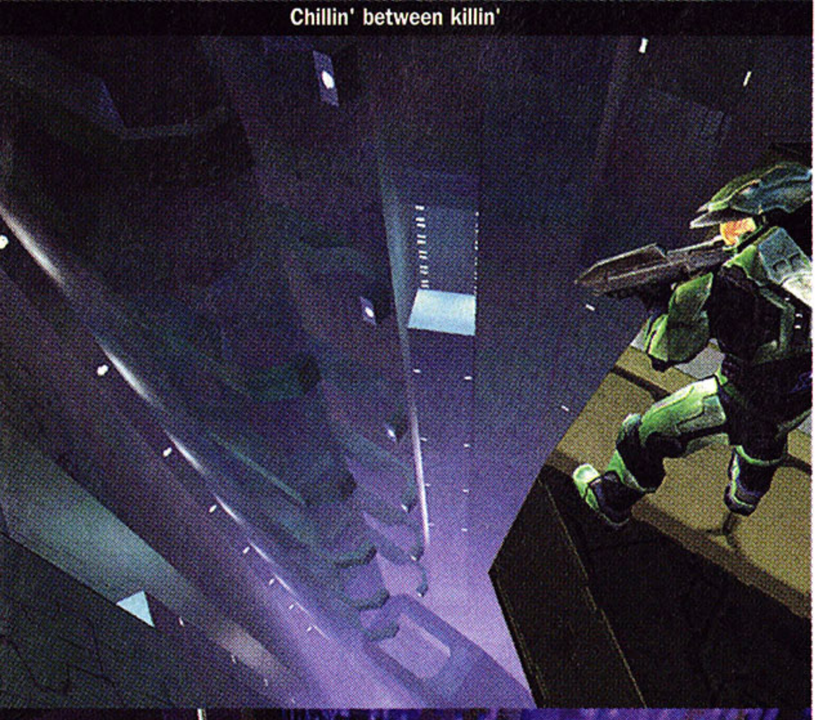
PLAYSTATION 2

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

For the Medal of Honor series' first appearance on the PlayStation 2, all the expected elements will be there. It just wouldn't be MoH without incredible graphics, involving sound, dramatic music, a wide variety of weapons, and a heaping helping of disguises and fake IDs. The biggest addition in Frontline, however, is the opportunity to command a small squad of men. Although the game focuses on one main character, Lt. Jimmy Patterson, certain missions will allow players to communicate with friendly units and give orders to a crack military squad to develop deadly tactics.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** 1ST QUARTER 2002

Chillin' between killin'



"I knew there was something weird about those mushrooms in my salad."

XBOX

HALO

CRASHING THE COVENANT

Before readers take up arms against our blasphemous headline, please read further. Somewhere in the sparkly, hi-tech future, humans are throwing down against the Covenant – our alien archenemy. It appears mankind is now trying to police not only our planet, but the entire galaxy, as this epic battle has spilled over to the mysterious ring-world of Halo. PC developer turned Microsoft adopted child, Bungie Software, has stepped to the plate to chronicle this historical confrontation as one of the most anticipated launch titles on the Xbox.

There are two sides to every facet of Halo. You'll need to do some legwork to traverse the worlds and their many missions, but sleek, svelte vehicles will cut down on cases of runner's knee in your squad. Hijack one of the Covenant's aircraft to dive-bomb from above, or strap yourself into one of your own kind's buggies to speed toward your destination. Turned off by rush-hour traffic? Then man the gunnery spot and just take potshots at the opposition while a human partner takes the wheel. You can even work in conjunction with the vehicles, like a sequence we observed of the buggy's high-caliber gun laying down cover fire for you to work your way into an enemy stronghold.

Weapons range in styles from finesse to brute force. If you want mass destruction, put your faith in a flamethrower or perhaps the subtle charm of a rocket launcher. On the other hand, if you're sporting sneakers (for sneaking), then take aim with a semi-automatic pistol, or stab someone in the back with a Covenant plasma sword. No matter the death-bringing device you select, it's sure to be accompanied by loads of crossfire and an impressive light show, courtesy of Xbox's graphical prowess.

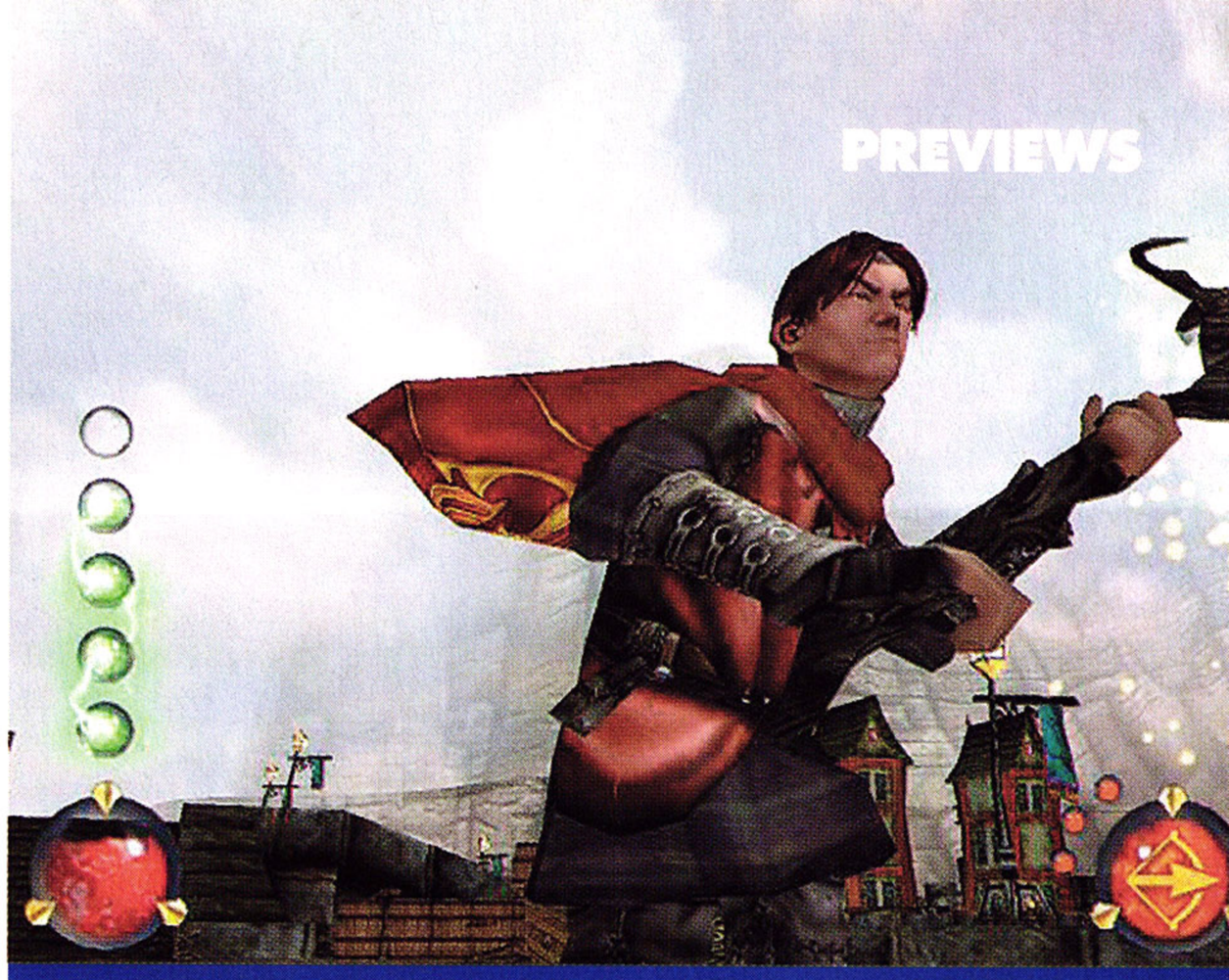
Despite the extraterrestrial locale, environments are very Earth-like in appearance. Blue skies and green grass complement the death and destruction you wreak upon the land. Step indoors, though, and the atmosphere is much darker. Here you have shadowy corners and dead ends, any of which could lead to your demise. The interior seems rather Star Wars inspired, with a very smooth, metallic look, and some bottomless chasms which will bring you to a splattering end. Indoors or out, the variety in Halo's missions are plentiful and diverse.

It's not hard to see a graphical resemblance between Halo and THQ's PlayStation 2 game, Red Faction, especially with both being first-person shooters. These titles may be a good measure of how the two next-gen consoles compare to one another. Halo is a promising Xbox title, and while it doesn't seem to bring many new concepts to the table, it has enough eye candy and action to leave us initially impressed.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** BUNGIE ■ **RELEASE** FALL

This vehicle looks impressive, but it only gets AM

Genetic engineering at work



XBOX

NIGHTCASTER

THEY ONLY COME OUT AT NIGHT

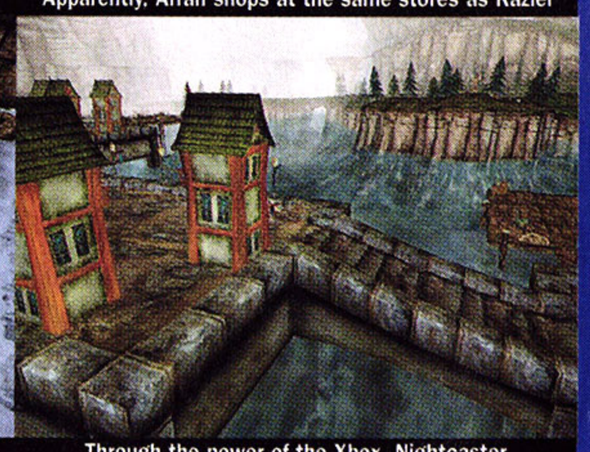
Although Nightcaster didn't receive much attention from the press at Microsoft's recent Gamestock, this title is shaping up nicely and should be a fun, more action-oriented cousin to this month's cover game, Azurik: Rise of Perathia. The game utilizes a third-person, isometric camera view similar to Gauntlet Legends, but focuses on wizardry over hack n' slash action.

Players assume the role of Arran, a young wizard who makes Harry Potter look like a four-eyed nancy boy. Arran's weapon of choice is a long staff with an orb on the end. With the old conjuror's stick, he can cast over 40 spells from four different schools of magic (Light, Dark, Fire, and Water). These spells range from the commonplace (simple projectile attacks like fire and lightning) to the awe-inspiring (a spell that creates a huge volcano which rains down fire on your enemies). To add a new element of maneuverability to the mix, the orb can also float independently from the staff, allowing you to aim with the right analog while you navigate your character with the left. This interesting play mechanic is sure to be one of the features that elevates Nightcaster above its competition.

Certain spells create changes to the landscape

Apparently, Arran shops at the same stores as Raziel

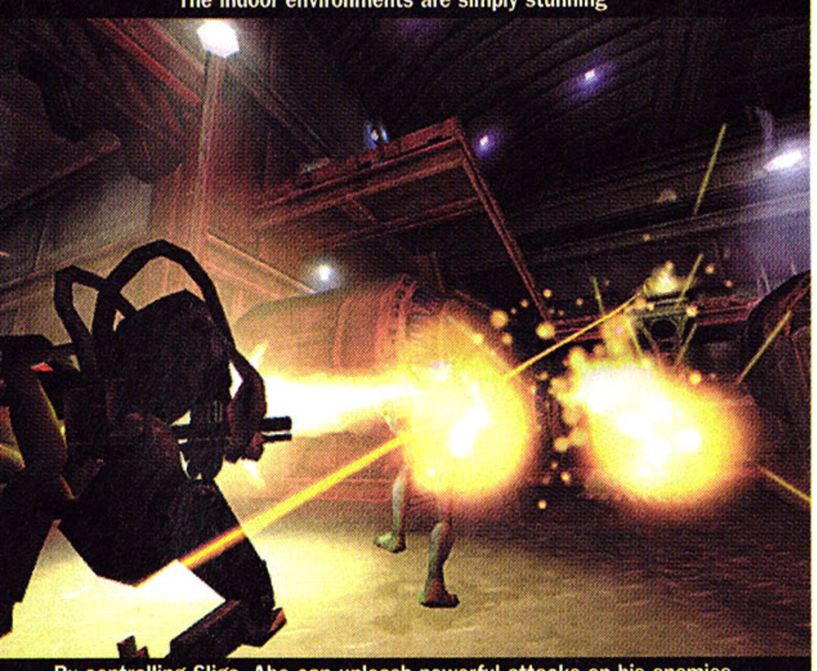
The orb at the end of Arran's staff is used for spell targeting



Through the power of the Xbox, Nightcaster features lush environments

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** VR-1 ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** FALL

The indoor environments are simply stunning



By controlling Sligs, Abe can unleash powerful attacks on his enemies

Thankfully, Munch's Oddysee is handicap accessible

XBOX

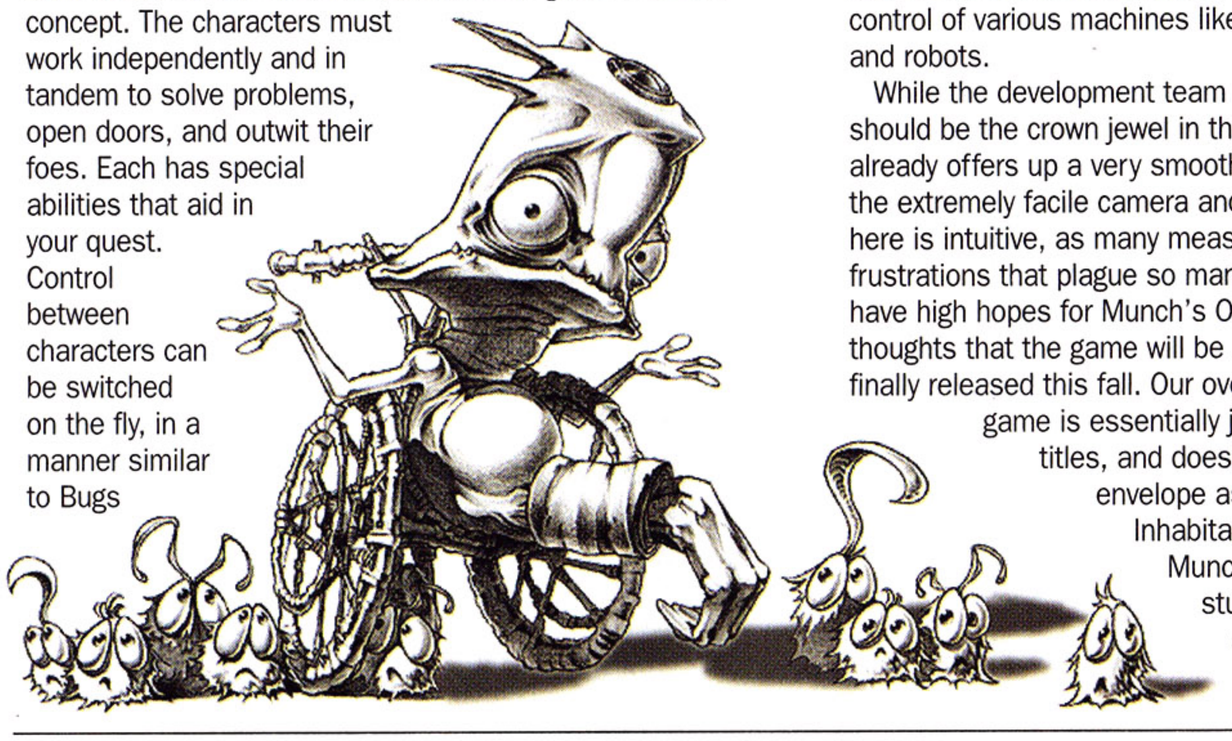
ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

SLIGS, SLOGS, & PARAPLEGIC FISH

Luring Oddworld Inhabitants (and its much-hyped Munch's Oddysee) away from the PlayStation 2 still stands as Microsoft's biggest coup on the Xbox publishing front, so naturally the press assembled for Gamestock were very excited to actually get some playing time on the latest in the quirky Oddworld series. A brief run-through of a demo level left us with a much better impression of Munch's gameplay experience.

First off, it's quickly becoming apparent that Munch's Oddysee is shifting the series toward the adventure genre, and many of the platforming elements that were the hallmark of the earlier games in the series have been taken out. So don't expect a ton of difficult jumping sequences, as the challenge will likely be found more in the game's brain-busting puzzles.

After observing Munch's Oddysee in action, it is clear that the teamwork between Abe and Munch is the game's central concept. The characters must work independently and in tandem to solve problems, open doors, and outwit their foes. Each has special abilities that aid in your quest. Control between characters can be switched on the fly, in a manner similar to Bugs Bunny & Taz Timebusters. As each character has his weaknesses in terms of mobility, savvy character switching will be essential to exploring new areas.



For example, Abe is the more mobile of the two characters, and can climb, jump, and run to conquer hard to reach areas. Munch, who uses a wheelchair while on land to avoid using his rather clumsy lone flipper to hop around, is a deft swimmer who can easily traverse the game's underwater regions. Throughout the game, characters can buy power-ups at vending machines that allow them to walk on walls and perform other extraordinary feats.

The characters' differences do not end here, as they are also equipped with a set of unique psychic powers. As before, the GameSpeak system allows Abe to convince the denizens of Oddworld to help him unlock doors and other similar puzzles. Munch, on the other hand, can use his Sonar Plug to take control of various machines like cranes, security cameras, and robots.

While the development team is still putting the polish on what should be the crown jewel in the Oddworld series, the game already offers up a very smooth gameplay experience due to the extremely facile camera and control system. The key word here is intuitive, as many measures are taken to avoid the frustrations that plague so many 3D platformers. While we still have high hopes for Munch's Oddysee, we are troubled by thoughts that the game will be a little underwhelming when it is finally released this fall. Our overall impressions are that the game is essentially just a 3D update of the old titles, and doesn't push the conceptual envelope as far as Microsoft and Oddworld Inhabitants would have you believe. Still, Munch's Oddysee is a graphically stunning and bizarrely humorous adventure that is sure to captivate fans of the series.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** ODDWORLD INHABITANTS ■ **RELEASE** FALL

XBOX

NFL FEVER 2002

THE REAL XFL

The Xbox and the XFL seem like a perfect marriage. However, after taking an in-depth look at both X-factions, Microsoft and Vince McMahon's army don't have too much in common. Breaking it down, one company is determined to conquer the silicon world; whereas the other syndicate is trying feverishly to titillate its respective audience with bouncing silicone. If Microsoft is destined to seize control of the video game industry, then it'll stay as far away from the XFL as possible. Admittedly, we truly believed Microsoft would try a cross-promotion with the XFL. Billy Gates may be a nerd, but he's not stupid.

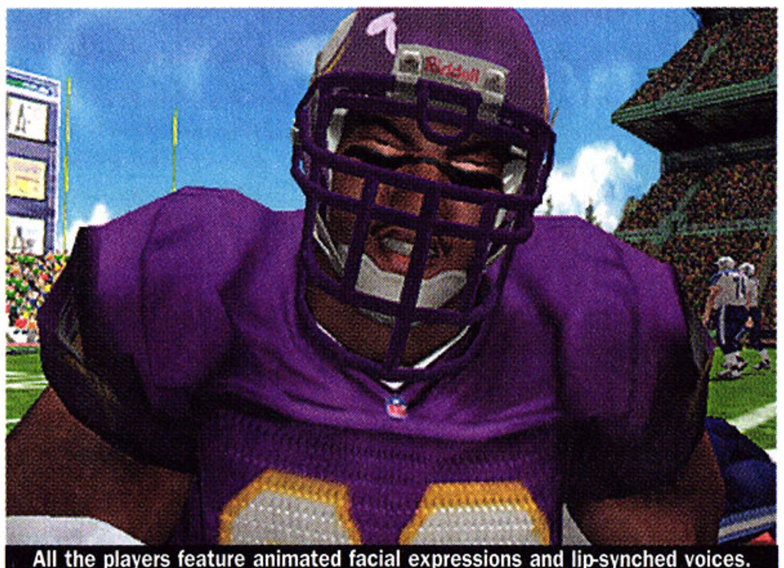
Making the wise decision to side with the NFL, Microsoft's internal development studio has been slaving away to create a football title that outperforms the products Visual Concepts and EA Sports bring to the playing field. Looking at the shots spread across this page, you can clearly see Microsoft has successfully captured a realistic look; one that includes the smallest of details like taped fingers, QB play sheets, shadow casting, and lip-synched facial movements. Amazingly, the player bodies are also proportioned correctly. Wide receivers look like skinny heroin addicts, and linebackers overdosing on steroids results in a neckless upper torso.

NFL Fever 2002 is still early in developmental stages, yet the animation is fluid, the collision fields are right on the money, and the fantasy options couldn't be grander. With a massive development team, Microsoft has pulled out all of the stops to hopefully create the most impressive football package to date. In addition to a complicated gameplay schematic that allows players to break tackles and tiptoe on the sidelines, NFL Fever 2002 is being created with longevity in mind. For those of you who feel a 16-game season is way too short, maybe a franchise mode featuring 25 seasons is more to your liking. With NFL Fever 2002, you'll have the ability to amass trophies galore for both your players and team as you build your dynasty, and fine-tune it season after season. The game will also come equipped with a Hall of Fame, where your trophies and accomplishments are forever chronicled. Also, if you feel today's athletes are too snobbish, the All-Time Challenge mode reanimates the greatest Super Bowl teams of all time. Microsoft may be a newbie console developer, but this game sounds too good to be true.

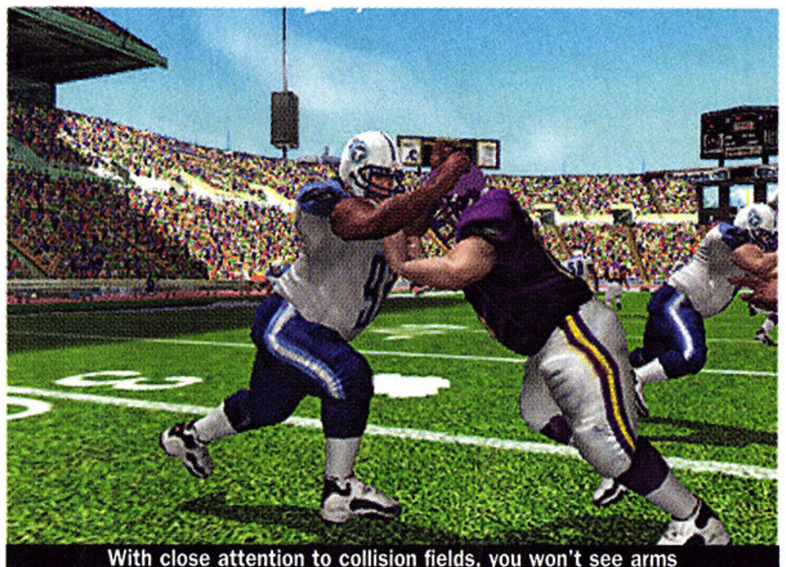
The TV-style presentation will deliver a plethora of in-game statistics

While no sideline activity is currently shown, the stadium detailing is second to none

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** MICROSOFT ■ **RELEASE** FALL

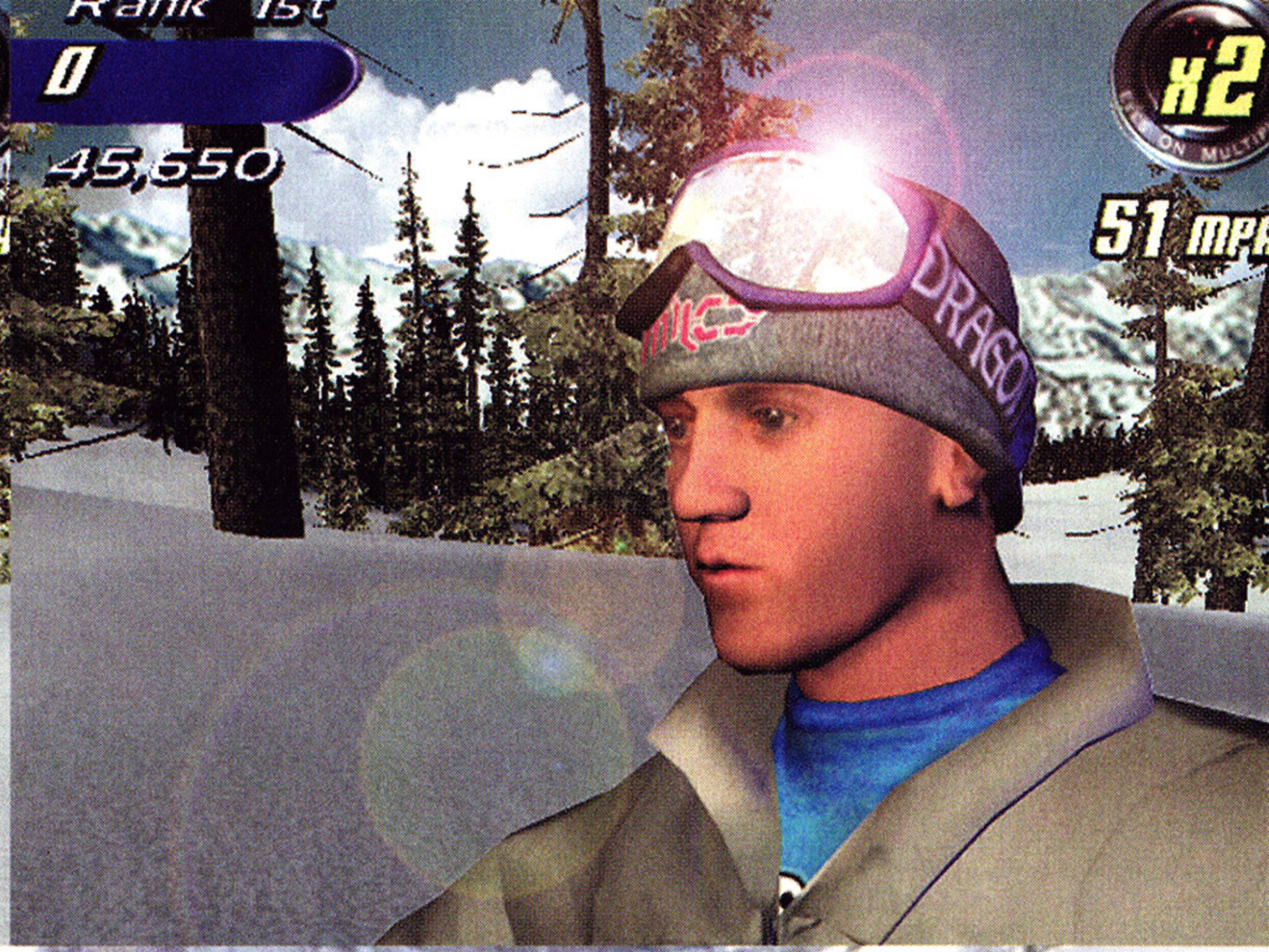


All the players feature animated facial expressions and lip-synched voices. Looks like another grueling defeat for the Vikes



With close attention to collision fields, you won't see arms disappear into player bodies

If the game gets out of hand, players will react emotionally



Don't let the barricades fool you, you can go anywhere

XBOX

AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

PURE WHITE STUFF

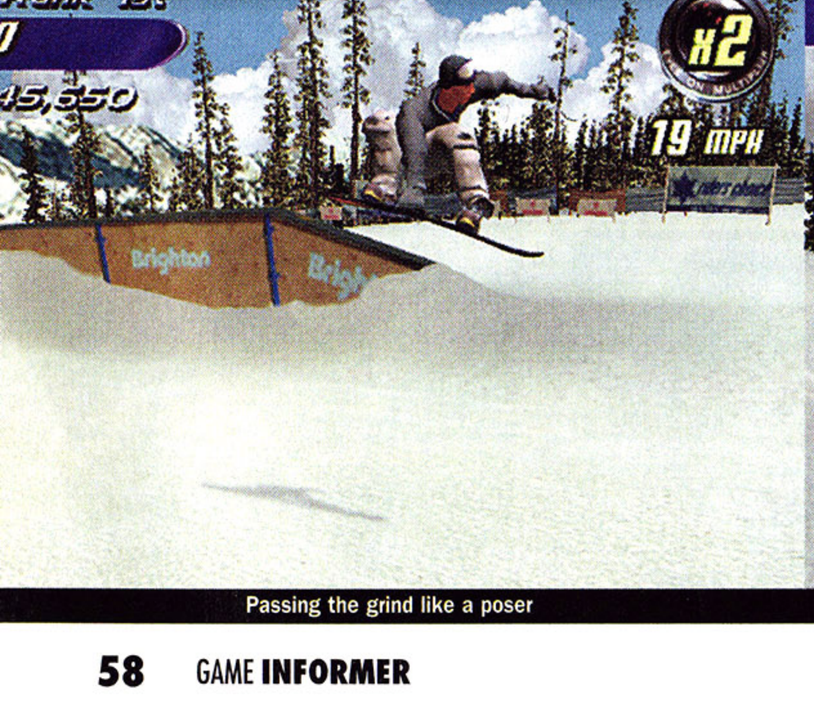
SSX is still selling like gangbusters on the PlayStation 2. Always wary of industry trends, Microsoft plans to one up EA's icy venture with Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding. Far from a clone of the PS2 best seller, though, Amped focuses on realistic environments. The game's seven mountains are each accurately modeled after real-life alps. Microsoft has put so much effort into this aspect of the game, it wants snowboard pros to get déjà vu merely from playing Amped. Tree placement, clearings, and every conceivable perk of each peak will be represented to its fullest. Conditions are static, but effects like snowfall bring an ambient glow to the whole package. Such large areas would be virtually impossible to portray were it not for the hard drive of Xbox.

Amped is, at its roots, not quite a racing game, but more of a popularity contest. The whole mountain is your own private playground, and you can carve your own niche with customized, open runs. You don't want too much solitude at those high elevations, however, as the goal for your shredding effort is to capture the attention of roving cameramen in order to get your face plastered on every newsstand snowboard mag in publication. Spectators are lurking about, just waiting for an ambitious rider like you to strut your stuff. Multiplayer instills more of a spirit of competition, however, as bragging rights are at stake while you endure taunts and errant snowballs tossed by your adversaries.

The images we have are impressive, but a closer look reveals that the HUD was superimposed on the screenshot. Player models didn't look quite this good in person either, but we're told this is because designing the environment has been top priority. Some clever effects we saw with our own eyes include an impressive snowy wake behind the pro boarder's likeness as he speeds down the slope. When he attempted to navigate between narrow trees, snow would fall off them, sometimes landing on his greedy melon.

In terms of control, Amped will borrow from both the most popular snowboard series and the best-selling freestyle games around – Cool Boarders and Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, respectively. The requisite inclusion of grindable objects and air-gaining jumps will litter the mountainside. Extensive exploration will reveal secret cliffs, massive logs, and other props to exploit for big points. This push toward realism may hinder the general gamer from really embracing the style of Amped, though. We won't know for sure until we get more time with this freestyle frost-fest, and that will hopefully happen soon.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** MICROSOFT ■ **RELEASE** FALL



Passing the grind like a poser

That's a fine looking real-time shadow

"Eat my yellow snow!"

Check out the amazing real-time reflections on this car

Look close, and you can see the bad Terminator from T2 behind the wheel

XBOX

CODENAME: PROJECT GOTHAM

RELAX BAT-FANS, IT'S JUST ANOTHER RACING GAME

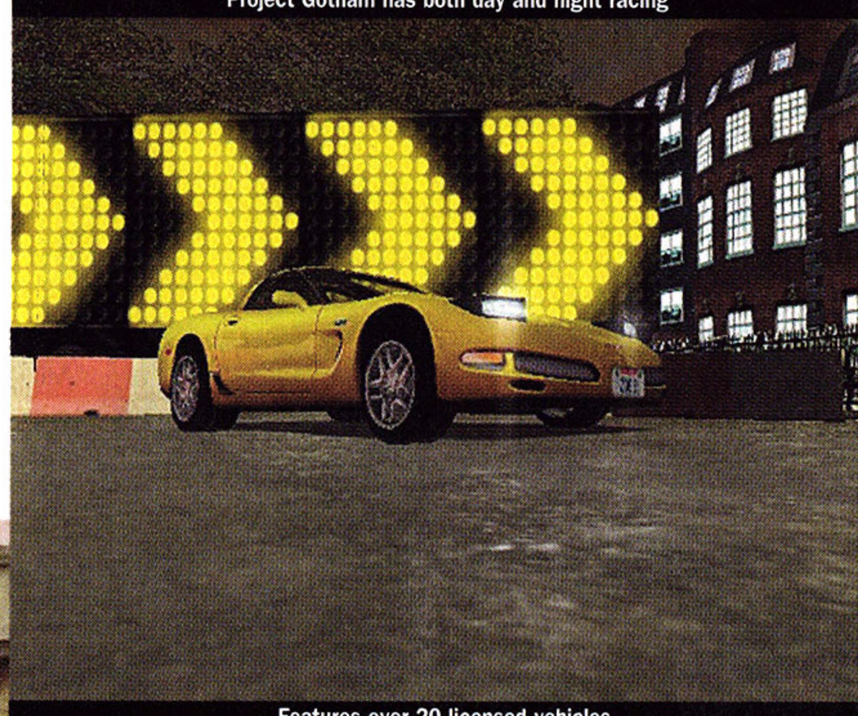
For some reason, Microsoft has given this game the rather goofy title, Codename: Project Gotham, which suggests that the game is another pixelated incarnation of DC's legendary Dark Knight. So, if you're one of the unlucky dozen or so people that bought Ubi Soft's horrific Batman Beyond, don't start calling for Bill Gates' head just yet. You see, Project Gotham isn't a Batman title at all, it's a very promising racing title developed by Bizarre Creations, the development house responsible for the excellent Dreamcast racer, Metropolis Street Racer.

Anyone who has played MSR knows that it was a challenging and addictive urban racing game based on winning skill points called Kudos. So, what do you think Bizarre has up its sleeve for the Xbox? How about a challenging and addictive urban racing game based on winning skill points called Kudos? That's right – it looks as though Project Gotham will be, despite the change of name, an out-an-out sequel to MSR. Not that there's anything wrong with that. In fact, the move to Xbox will allow Bizarre to create an even more graphically stunning experience that is sure to put Project Gotham amongst the top of the Xbox's freshman class of racers. The developers spent an extensive amount of time modeling the real-life cities (London, New York, Tokyo, San Francisco) that provide an eerily realistic setting for the game's tracks. All told, Project Gotham will feature a whopping 300 individual racing circuits, and over 20 sports car models licensed from real manufacturers.

While Bizarre hopes to push the game's visual look into the area of photo-realism, we pray that the developers maintain the high degree of difficulty that made Metropolis Street Racer such a compelling title. We definitely have high hopes for this one, Batman or no Batman.

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** BIZARRE CREATIONS ■ **RELEASE** FALL

Project Gotham has both day and night racing



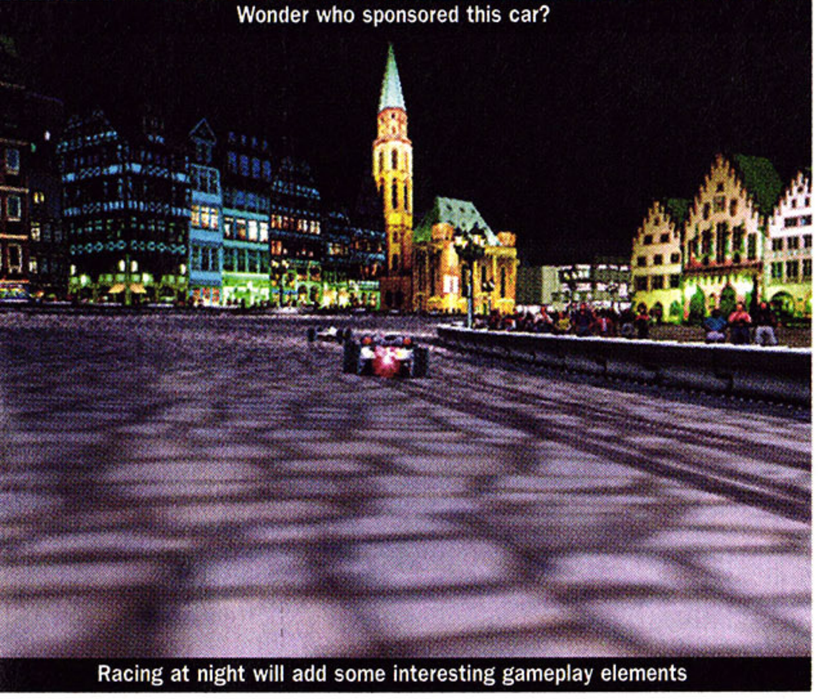
Features over 20 licensed vehicles

The environments feature some very beautiful architecture

When it comes to taking screenshots, game companies really love replay mode!

You can't get any closer than that

Wonder who sponsored this car?



Racing at night will add some interesting gameplay elements

PLAYSTATION 2

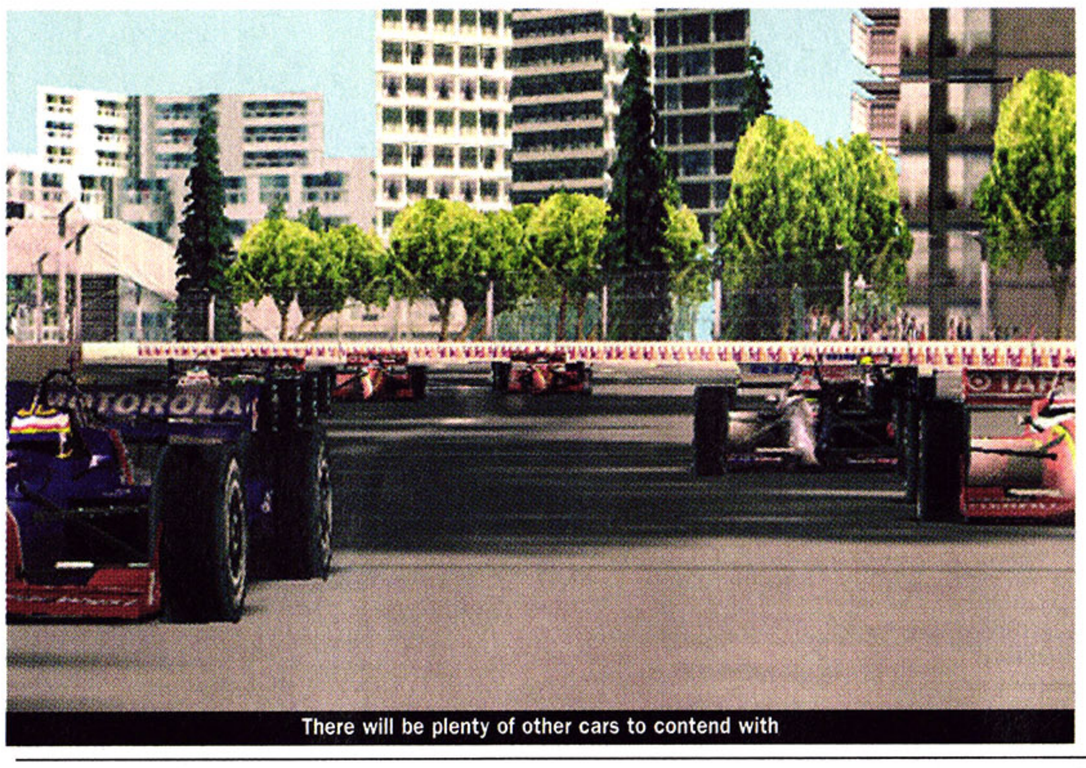
CART FURY

NOT YOUR EVERYDAY CART

With its upcoming release, CART Fury, Midway will throw its hat in the ring for bragging rights as the publisher with the most realistic racer on the market. CART Fury will carry the official CART license, and will feature real drivers, tracks, teams, announcers, manufacturers, and sponsors. This, coupled with the fact that it's the only CART racer available for the PS2, gives Midway high hopes for this highly-touted title.

The game will feature 15 of CART's elite drivers from around the world, plus five hidden CART drivers for players to dig up. Michael Andretti (USA), Christian Fittipaldi (Brazil), Gil de Ferran (Brazil), Adrian Fernandez (Mexico), Mark Blundell (Britain), Jimmy Vasser (USA), Juan Montoya (1999 Season Champion), Max Papis (Italy), Bryan Herta (USA) and Tony Kanaan (Brazil) will be available for normal play. Danny Sullivan, Willy T. Ribbs, Bill Lester, Jenny Sheehy, and Juliana Chiovitti will all have to be unlocked.

Like Andy's underwear, these tracks have some serious skidmarks



There will be plenty of other cars to contend with

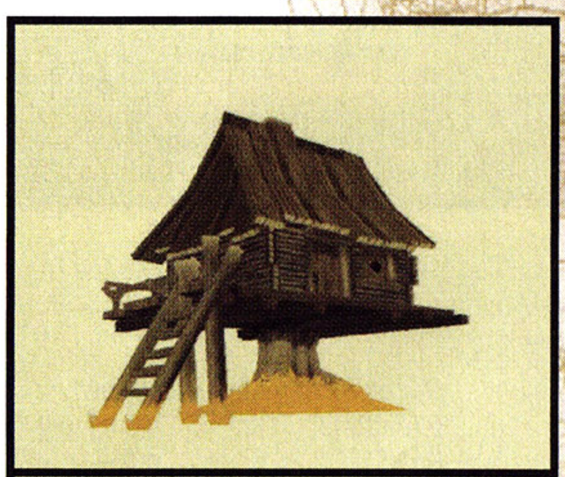
There will be seven CART tracks and 11 fantasy tracks that will be exclusive to the PS2. Five different game modes will await you in CART Fury that include simulation, arcade, season, driving 101, and sub-games to keep things interesting. Midway is promising loads of crashes that you'll be able to enjoy from one of three vantages: cockpit, near-chase and far-chase. Game Informer will be watching this release closely. There will be a lot of competition for the attention of racing fans this gaming season. We're interested to see who will come out on top.

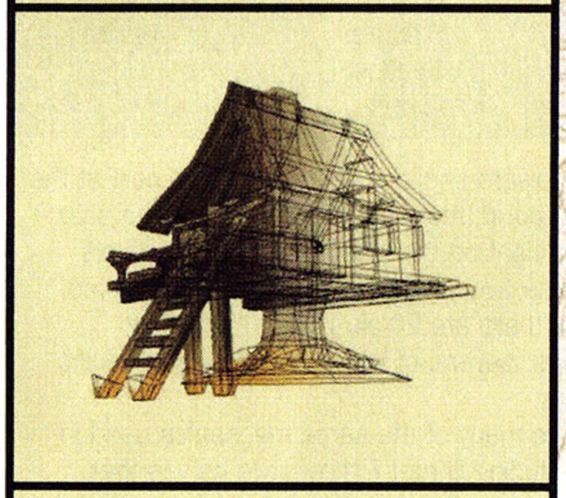
■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **DEVELOPER** MIDWAY ■ **RELEASE** SUMMER

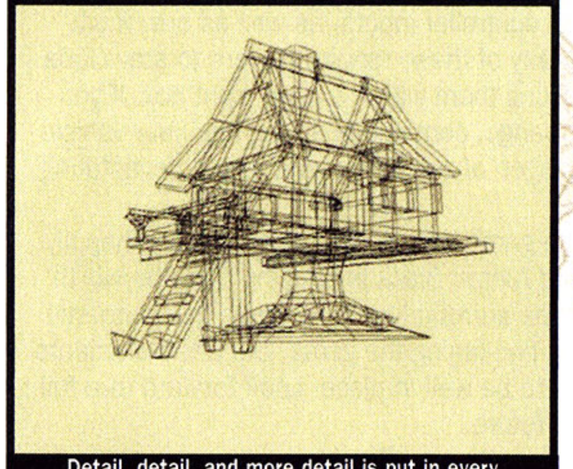
PLAYSTATION 2

HERDY GERDY

TOPSY TURVY







Detail, detail, and more detail is put in every part of the environment for Herdy Gerdy

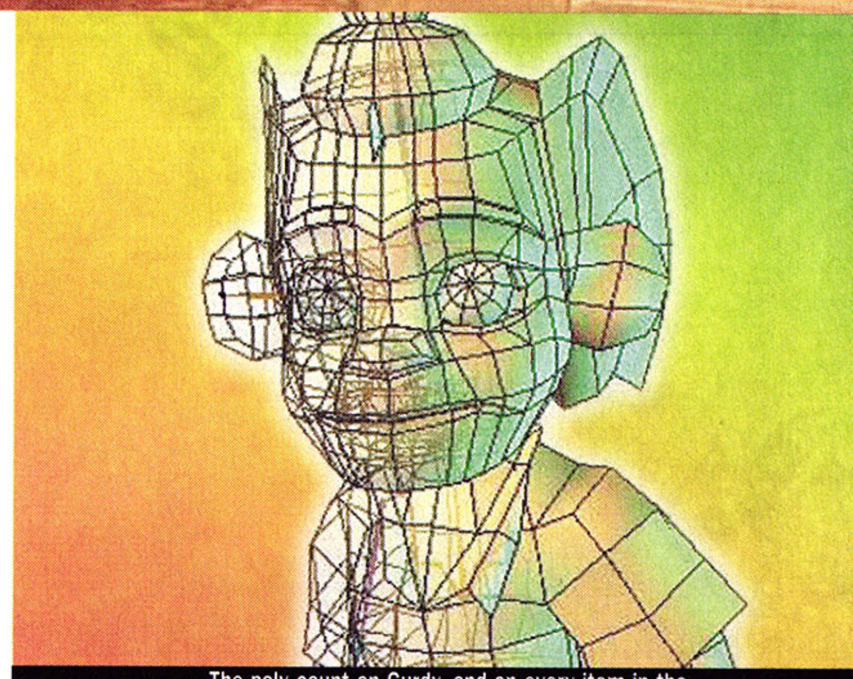
It's supper-time. You're hungry and a little cranky. You don't have any food because you've blown all of your money on that new PS2. Lucky for you, you still have electricity for a couple of days. Sit back, relax, and let Game Informer give you the skinny on one of the most innovative games to come to the fledgling PS2 – Herdy Gerdy.

The story opens with the player taking the role of Gerdy, an apprentice herder as he embarks on a quest to revive his father from an evil spell. The island on which Gerdy has been raised has come under the effects of evil influences, and it's your job to restore things back to the way they were. You may be asking yourself how herding would have anything to do with breaking a spell and cleansing an island. Well, Gerdy must hone his herding skills and compete in a tournament to become a Master Herder. When he has attained this level, he will have saved his land and his father.

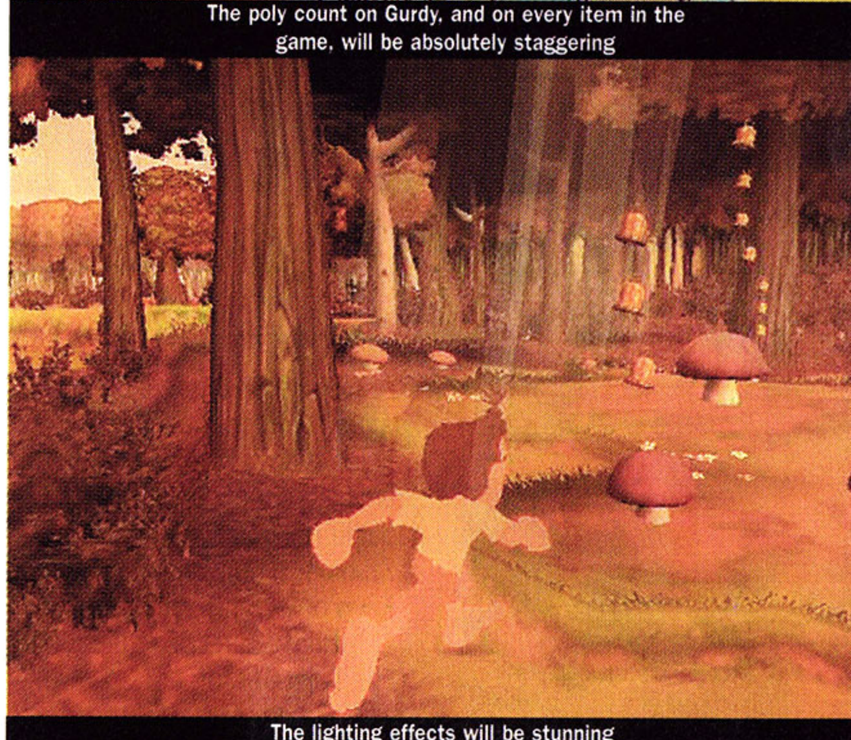
Your main task as Gerdy will be to herd groups of wild creatures to safety. There are a number of different creatures which will vary in terms of intelligence, personality, and reaction to assorted environmental factors. The creatures will then respond uniquely to Gerdy's herding techniques. Your task will be to anticipate these reactions and act accordingly. Gerdy will have a variety of different herding tools to help him in his quest, and each will have advantages with some creatures, and disadvantages with others.

Herdy Gerdy will feature a unique blend of adventure, strategy, and RPG elements. To be sure, we've never seen a game quite like this one. During a recent trip to the Bay area, Game Informer was granted a sneak peak at the nuts and bolts of Herdy Gerdy's gameplay. The graphics are highly stylized and incredibly complex for a console game. Core is working around the clock to make sure there will be no load time for the graphical ingenuity struck in this peerless release.

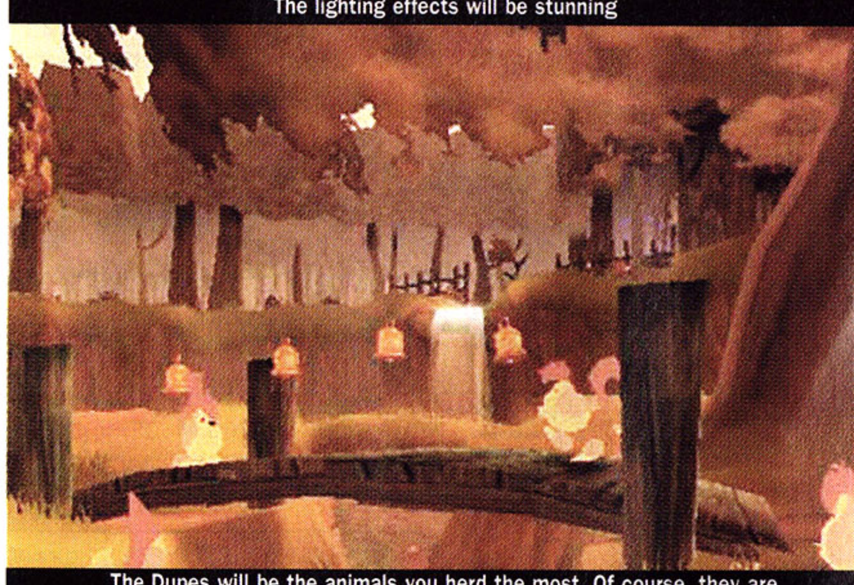
This title will feature exploration, problem solving, and character development along with immersive and original storylines. There will be 12 main interactive characters complementing the 200 non-playable characters. To make sure you're spending your hard-earned money on a title that you'll have to work on for a while, Herdy Gerdy will have 27 rain-busting levels. This game looked very impressive when we saw it in San Francisco, but only time will tell if Core can bring their dream to fruition.



The poly count on Gurdy, and on every item in the game, will be absolutely staggering



The lighting effects will be stunning



The Dupes will be the animals you herd the most. Of course, they are the dumbest animals in the game, so this won't always be easy

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** EIDOS ■ **DEVELOPER** CORE DESIGN ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 2

That 18-Wheel Pro Trucker is having a bad day

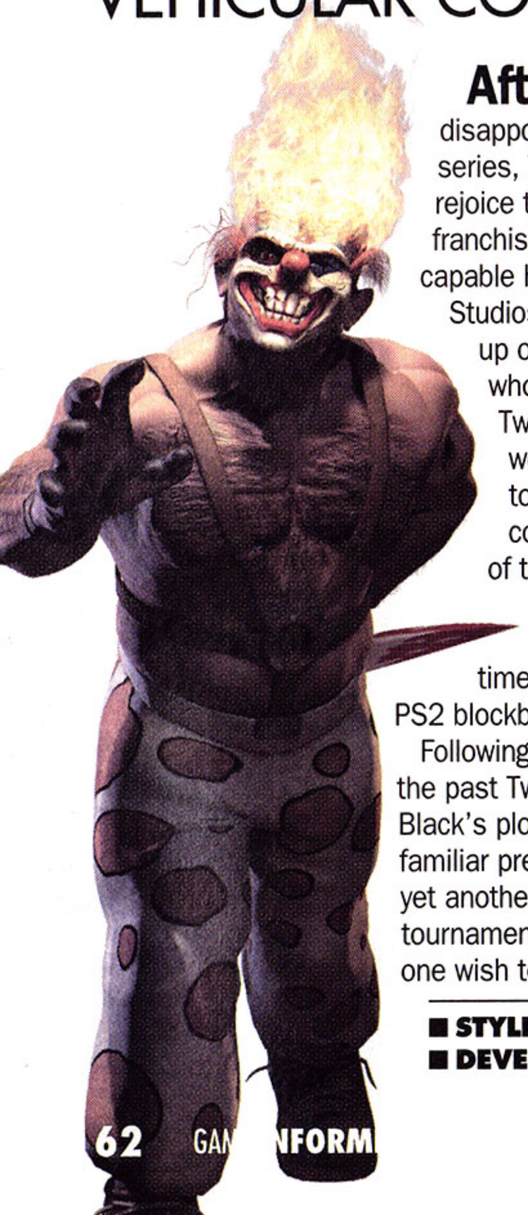
Many of the specials have skill-based bonus stages

Keep him in your sights for big damage

PLAYSTATION 2

TWISTED METAL: BLACK

VEHICULAR COMBAT'S HEART OF DARKNESS



After a couple disappointing sequels in the series, Twisted Metal fans can rejoice that the iconic PlayStation franchise is now back in the capable hands of Incognito Studios, a new company made up of ex-Singletrac staffers who were responsible for Twisted Metal 1 & 2. We were recently invited down to SCEA's Santa Monica complex to pick the minds of the developers and sit down for some long-awaited hands-on time with this upcoming PS2 blockbuster.

Following closely in the tradition of the past Twisted Metal games, TM: Black's plot is built around a familiar premise. Calypso is staging yet another Twisted Metal tournament, with the victor winning one wish to be fulfilled by Calypso. Each character has his or her own macabre storyline, which will be told through a unique intro, middle, and end CG movie. Using a sepia-toned look similar to the film *Seven*, the movies push the envelope of decency, incorporating such dark themes as child abuse, cannibalism, and serial killings. Seeking to improve the overall quality of the cinematics, respected comic book author Paul Jenkins (*Spider-Man, The Inhumans*) was recently tapped to do extensive rewrites of the script. Even at this late stage, Incognito is unsure how much of the story will be trimmed away by Sony censors. In any case, Twisted Metal: Black will be a Mature-rated title when it releases in June.

While the storyline could be considered just more of the same from Incognito, the team has managed to implement a good deal of innovation into the levels and gameplay, while still maintaining the magic that made the first two Twisted Metal titles classics. Tapping into the tremendous processing horsepower of the PS2, the levels are interactive and expansive, and often change throughout the duration of gameplay. For example, on the Prison Ship level, the battle starts in a small, enclosed warehouse. If you can survive the harrowing firefight long enough, the doors on the ends of the room open up, revealing that you are actually on board a huge ship. Gameplay then spills out onto the ship's deck, where precious energy capsules and power-ups lie. The ship continues to sail toward shore, eventually finding port at the dockyards. At this point, the combatants can exit the ship and continue their fight on the wharf. Many of the levels operate in the same way, changing and enlarging as time wears on. All told, there are 20-plus levels, including deathmatch arenas, several of which feature level-specific weather conditions.

Gameplay utilizes many of the same mechanics used in previous titles, including Street Fighter-style moves that require a series of controller inputs, as well as new multi-tiered specials. Many of these require players to stay close to an opponent, fixing them within a laser sight box. If you keep them within range, continue pressing fire, your vehicle will launch new stages of missiles and attacks, devastating your opponent.

After running the game through its paces, we can happily report that Twisted Metal: Black is shaping up to be worth every bit of the hype surrounding it. Although Incognito still has a way to go in fine-tuning the game, the basic elements for success seem to be well in place. Look forward to a full review in the near future.

There will be 16 characters, including some favorites from past. Here's a preliminary list of the characters, although many of these are subject to change:

- Billy Ray Stillwell
- Bloody Mary
- Doll Face
- No Face
- Mr. Grimm
- Sad Sally
- Sweet Tooth
- Brimstone
- Roadkill
- Spectre
- Shadow
- Axel
- Outlaw
- Manslaughter
- Yellowjacket
- Minion

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA
■ **DEVELOPER** INCOGNITO STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** JUNE

PLAYSTATION 2

ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING

GRIND OR GET OFF THE WOOD

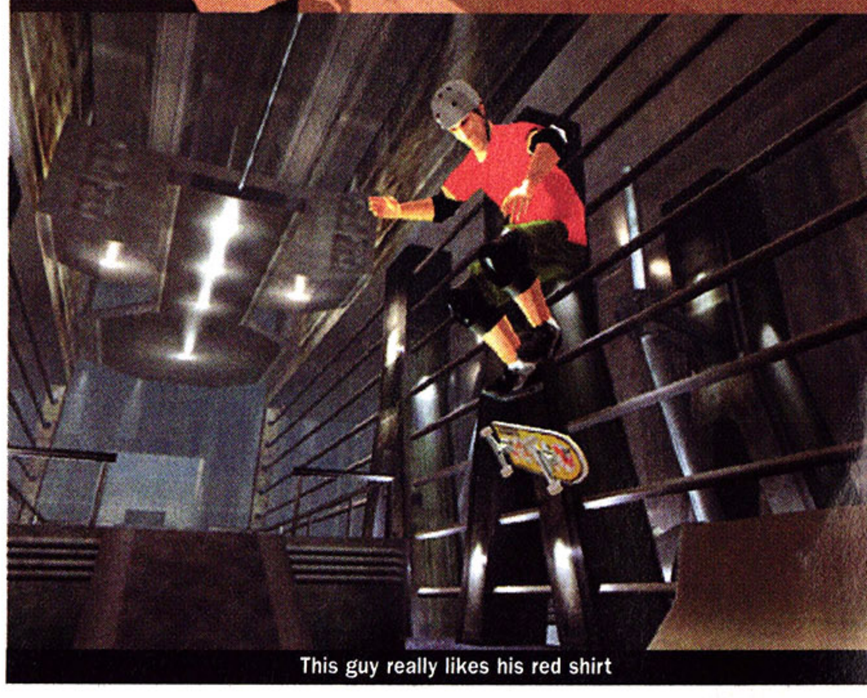
In video games, sometimes being the first is more important than being the best. Tony Hawk is soaring over the PlayStation 2, waiting to swoop down upon the next-gen console. The early bird gets the worm, though, and it appears Konami's ESPN X Games Skateboarding will beat THPS to the punch. If the actual graphics are anywhere near the quality of these images we've been shown, X Games could be the most significant contender for Tony's crown yet.

Stages are broken up in two categories: tournament and action. The three tourney levels simulate the 2000 X Games, which is the percolator of extreme sports. You have a captive audience giving you props, and some stern judges critiquing every kickflip and tailslide. Action street courses are a much more solitary experience, as it's just you and the open pavement. These six levels take place in such urban locales as Los Angeles and New York. Only nine stages, you whine? Need we direct your attention yet again to the amazing detail of the pictures staring at you this very moment?

Eight pro boarders will be signed for X Games. Frankly, with all the skate games out there, it's surprising there are that many professionals not already under contract for a different title. None of the names have been announced yet, leading us to believe Konami is scrambling around for unsigned talent. The generic red-shirted gent in every screen doesn't shed much light on the subject, either. Each character has eight different skateboards to abuse. Each one has its own speed and handling rating. Put skater with board and tackle a partner in two-player split-screen, or transcend poser status in the interactive tutorial.

It's hard not to be skeptical of yet another skate game, especially with Konami's current trend of debauchery in other ESPN licensed PS2 efforts (NBA 2Night, Track & Field). However, attention to detail seems to be there in X Games Skateboarding, and the company's snowboard title was far from a dud. Chances are good that we'll receive a playable of Skateboarding soon, lest it fall victim to the sea of delays that have plagued the majority of Konami's PS2 releases.

Stages have plenty of gap bonus potential



This guy really likes his red shirt

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI ■ **RELEASE** AUGUST

Houses cost money, and use labor. Shacks are free

Weather systems can be seen if you zoom out

Cesar is a teamster – so lazy and surly

PC

TROPICO

YEAH, BUT WILL THERE BE A BAY OF PIGS SCENARIO?

Have you ever been sitting on your couch at home watching a documentary on the Cuban missile crisis and thought to yourself, "Man, I bet I could have run Cuba better than dumb ol' Castro. If only I could travel back in time, rise to power through a bloody coup, and implement my own brand of psuedo-government, then I would be happy." If you've answered yes to that question, you should do two things. First, seek help immediately. After you've found a good therapist, proceed to your nearest software retailer and put your name down for an advance copy of Tropico.

Tropico will be one of the first games ever to attempt the simulation of a third-world economy. In many other city or civilization simulators, you as the leader are usually rather benevolent. In Tropico, you are expected and encouraged to be as big a bunghole to your people as you want to be. Just remember – they won't put up with it forever. If you rule through fear, you may leave yourself open to coups and things of this type. On the other hand, if you're too soft, your population will walk all over you.

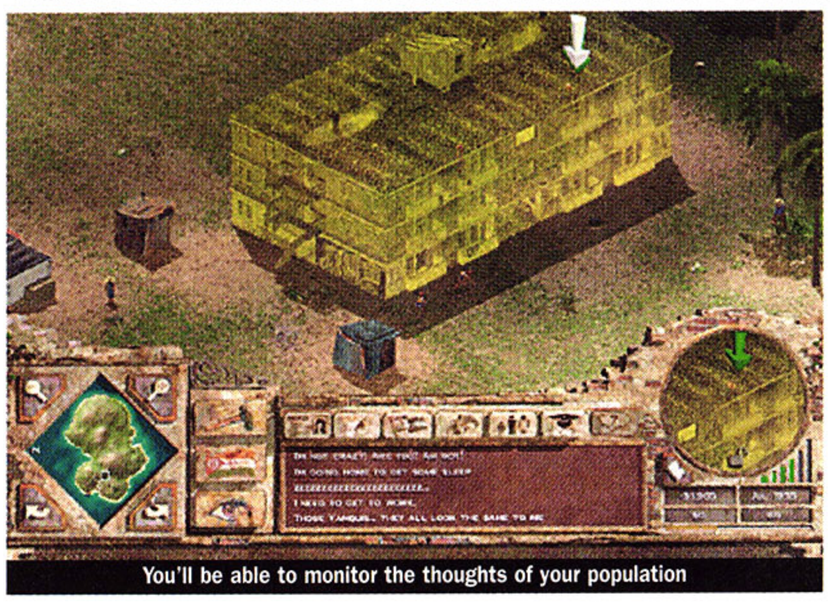
SimCity fans may be chomping at the bit at the thought of being able to control your country's building organization and economy, but the similarities between SimCity and Tropico will be subtle at best. You'll have authority over the placement of a number of different buildings, but you'll be able to micromanage these structures right down to their maintenance expenditures and staff payment. The level of control for this release is quite staggering in a number of respects, but all of them serve the same purpose – keeping your people happy. You have no direct power over your population. You'll need to rely on your persuasion and influence as a leader to move the masses.

As you enter the game, you'll create the type of dictator you want to be. As you choose your background, you'll need to decide how your character came to power. If you came to power through a coup, be ready to fight back pretenders to your throne. If you had an agricultural background, you may be more sympathetic to the farmers of your nation. Next, you can select the good and bad qualities comprising your character. If you want to be a big bastard, the game will allow you to select as many flaws as you want. Your people will, of course, act accordingly.

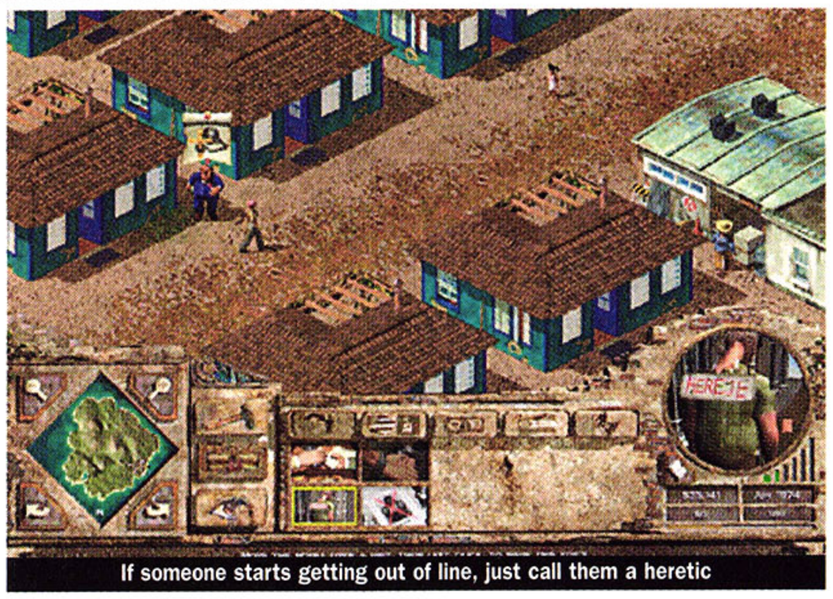
For each citizen of your country there will be 50 different characteristics which will affect their behavior and their relationships with other citizens. Each dock worker, clergyman, teamster, and waitress will have different political views, likes, dislikes, and leadership abilities. There are a few people in your population who will have the ability to garner the support of a segment of your population. Keeping these few in line through whatever means necessary will make sure you maintain a tenuous grasp on your fickle folk.

Tropico looks and feels like a born winner. We'll see if PopTop can keep the bugs out. If it can, you can bet Game Informer will be first in line at the store.

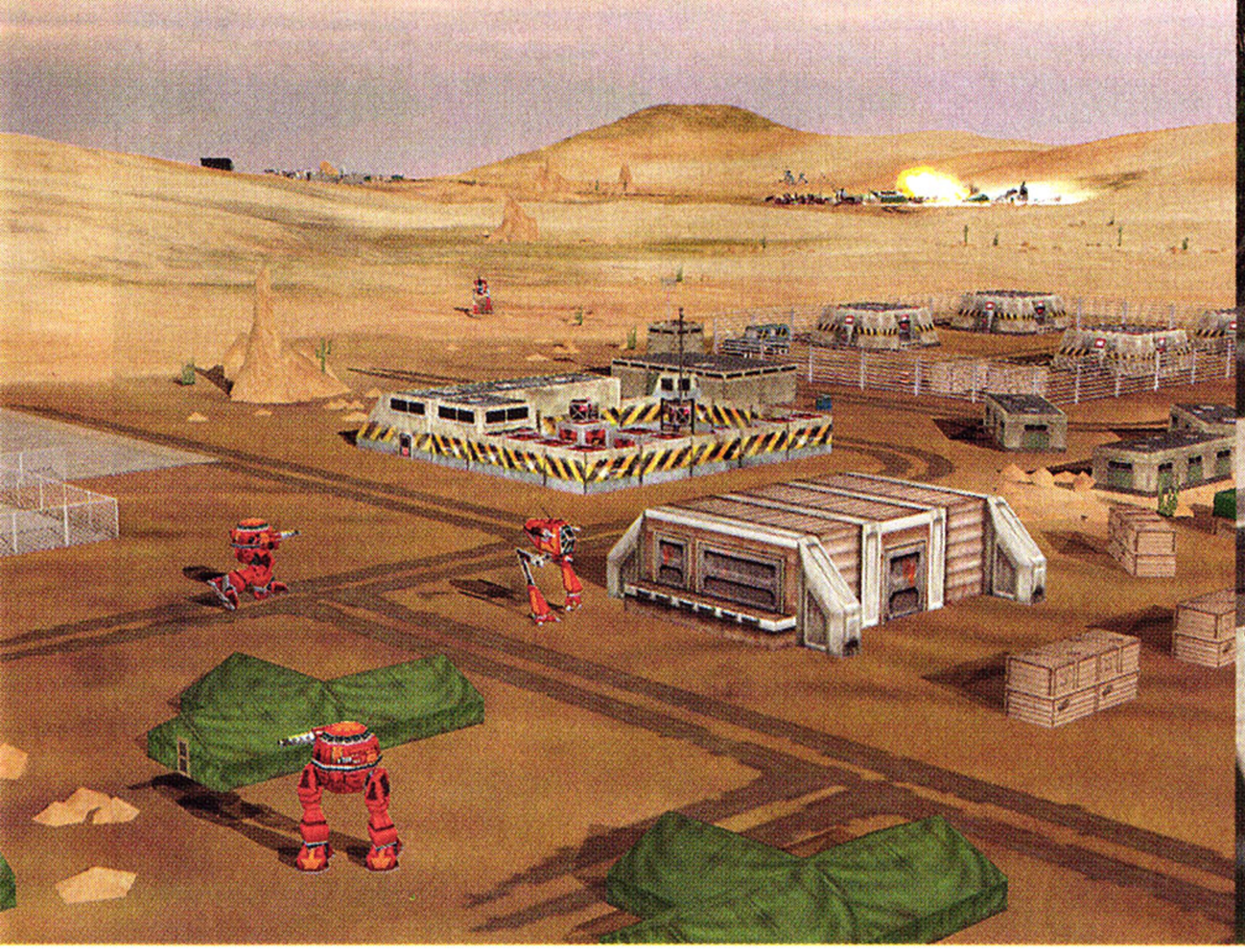
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS ■ **DEVELOPER** POPTOP SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** MAY 16



You'll be able to monitor the thoughts of your population



If someone starts getting out of line, just call them a heretic



PC

MECHCOMMANDER 2

PUT YOUR GAUSS RIFLE IN, TAKE YOUR GAUSS RIFLE OUT...

With MechCommander 2, Microsoft will attempt to transplant those hours upon hours of paper-based gameplay you spent in your friend's basement and bring it to the PC. However, instead of coddling one 'Mech through an eight-hour gaming session, praying to God you don't sustain a game-ending direct shot to your head, you will take command of an entire company of 'Mechs and unsheathe your mechanized sword against three warring noble houses in a region of space known as the Chaos March.

You will assume control of your 'Mech company from an orbital dropship. As you burn through the game, your squads will have access to some of the most popular 'Mechs in the BattleTech universe, as well as four new additions made specifically for this game. Putting the right driver in the right 'Mech will prove to be the deciding factor in many battles as you customize and train pilots to create the best pairing for each machine. Your pilots will use sensor 'Mechs to uncover your enemy's location, long-range 'Mechs for artillery-type assaults, and jump units to bypass and penetrate enemy fortifications.

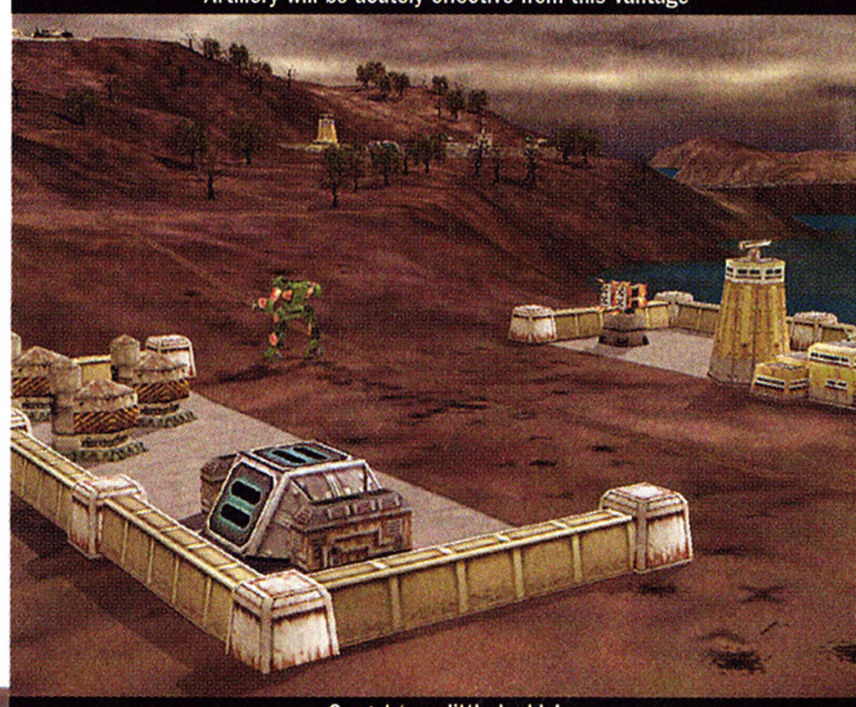
Capturing different structures and machines will lend power and depth to this release's gameplay. Capturing weapons facilities will allow players to refit their units with superior technology to gain the edge in all-out combat. Players can assume command of turret control buildings and watch their enemy's unit get cut to pieces in their own base, or you can grab a downed 'Mech for use against an opponent during a sortie.

Environments will play a key role in MechCommander 2. Each player will be able to knock down trees, blast their way through walls, jumpjet into cliffs, and crush anything unlucky enough to be under the feet of your multi-ton behemoth. Players will need to make good use of their sensors, probes, and scouts when striking out on a mission. Greater camera control will give you the option of zooming out to survey the situation, or getting up close and personal for combat or evasion.

With the multiplayer capability, eight people will be able to partake in the BattleTech universe. There will be new mission types, a versus mode, and cooperative play against bot 'Mechs which will hone and develop your piloting skills. Level designers will allow creative gamers to come up with their own missions using the same tools employed by the game's level designers. These missions can then be traded with other 'Mech fans over the Internet.

MechCommander 2 promises to bring the diehard BattleTech fans a game they've always envisioned, but have never really had.

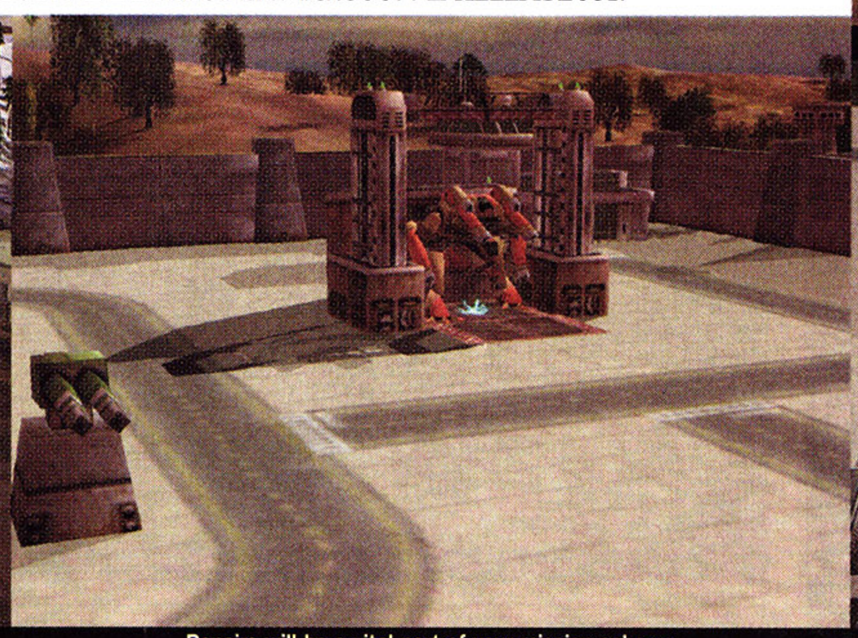
Artillery will be acutely effective from this vantage



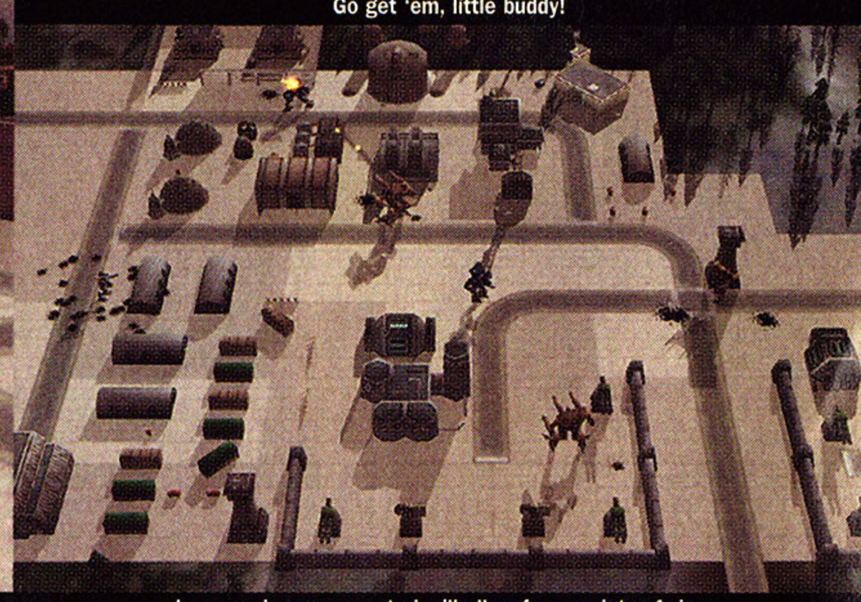
Go get 'em, little buddy!

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** MICROSOFT ■ **RELEASE** JULY

This base is vulnerable to attack from the surrounding terrain



Repairs will be a vital part of your mission scheme



Increased camera control will allow for a variety of views

PC

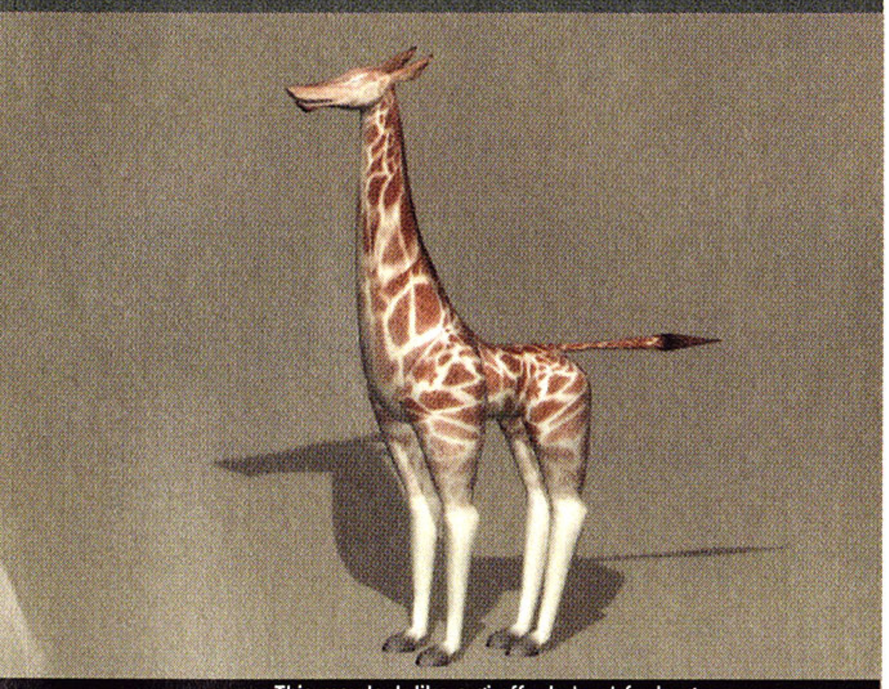
SIGMA: THE ADVENTURES OF REX CHANCE

IT'S A WOODPECKER! IT'S AN AARDVARK! NO, IT'S A PECKERVARK!

Taking cues from its wildly popular 1999 release, Homeworld, Relic will attempt to institute the same addictive gameplay into the highly anticipated upcoming title, Sigma: The Adventures of Rex Chance. Sigma will be set in the 1930s amidst a 3D, real-time strategy format. You'll be pitted against an evil madman as you battle using some of this planet's most formidable animals as building blocks for your army of crazy critters.

You create an army of unique units to protect the unsuspecting world by combining different animals from your creature stable. To help you, Sigma will offer over 50 animals that can be combined and mutated to form a huge army of altered beasts. The environments will be fully 3D dynamic featuring weather patterns, day and night missions and flora and fauna stylized to four different ecologies.

Players will be able to command literally dozens of units ranging from creatures to villagers and henchmen. Multiplayer missions will add much-needed replay value to this title. Players can refine their armies in single-player campaigns, then test their abilities with the same armies when they go online. A winter release is slated for Sigma – more than enough time to make sure the bugs are out and the fun is in.



This may look like a giraffe, but not for long

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** RELIC ■ **RELEASE** 4TH QUARTER

PC

DUNGEON SIEGE

A LITTLE SIEGE IN YOUR EYE

Fusing the styling of a Baldur's-esque release with the hack n' slash mayhem of a Rune-type game, Dungeon Siege will combine role-playing elements with constant battle and action. Beginning with a single character, gamers will travel throughout the expansive world and eventually be given the option of gathering up to seven other party members to add much-needed firepower and experience to their adventuring group. Smart AI used in tandem with role-playing helps the player manage the details of his party while tending to the pressing need for constant attention when battle erupts.

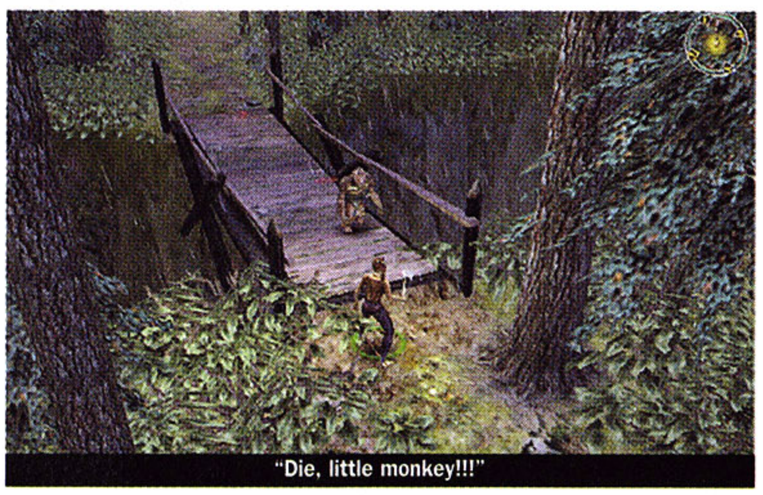
Dungeon Siege will feature an immersive, continuous 3D environment. What this will allow is a gaming experience without the irritation of loading times. Different locations will include castles, secret underground lairs, dungeons, and expansive outdoor environments. Fully-animated 3D characters, special effects, and awe-inspiring vertical landscapes all await you upon release of this stylized title.

Players can customize their party to include any ratio of character types they deem necessary to their playing style. There are no restrictions pertaining to character class, allowing players to build a party consisting entirely of archers if they choose. Dungeon Siege will support up to eight players for simultaneous action. Gas Powered is betting the smart money this gaming season will be on games which draw from numerous successful genres. Upon closer inspection of the shots Game Informer received while on a recent trip, we've found this type of game has a lot of potential – both for greatness and disappointment.

Look out for the squirrels!

Graveyards aren't very friendly places

Beautiful lighting effects are promised



"Die, little monkey!!!"

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** GAS POWERED GAMES
■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 1

Clothes by Ulala, hair by Static X

XBOX

FUZION FRENZY

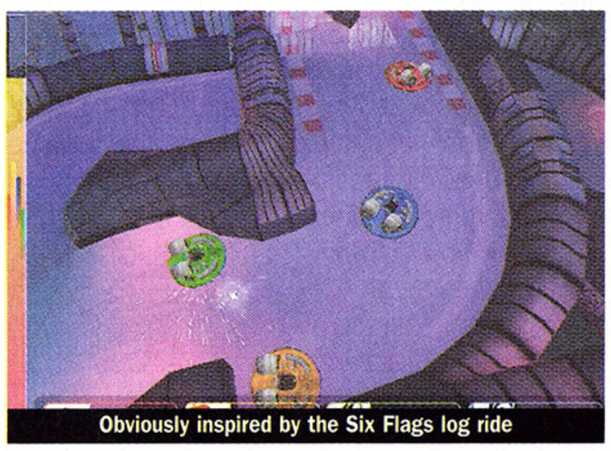
WE'VE GOT PARTY HATS JUST THINKING ABOUT IT

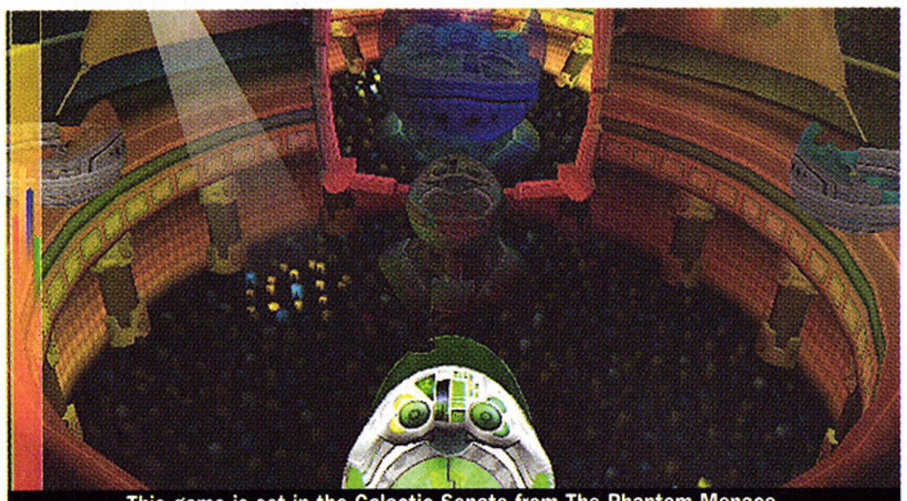
The last few years have seen a proliferation of party games released for every console imaginable. Mario has partied his way through three sequels, Sonic shuffled his way to success on the DC, and Crash bashed out a little PS-X fiesta to lukewarm commercial and critical response. Aiming to fill the party niche for Microsoft's nascent Xbox is Fuzion Frenzy, a futuristic collection of minigames starring...um...a bunch of guys that look like extras from Space Channel 5. The game is being developed by Blitz Games, the company behind such beloved classics as Chicken Run, Glover, Disney's The Little Mermaid II, and Action Man: Mission Extreme. Given Blitz's stellar track record, there is no doubt Fuzion Frenzy will be one of the most highly anticipated Xbox titles coming down the pipe in the next year.

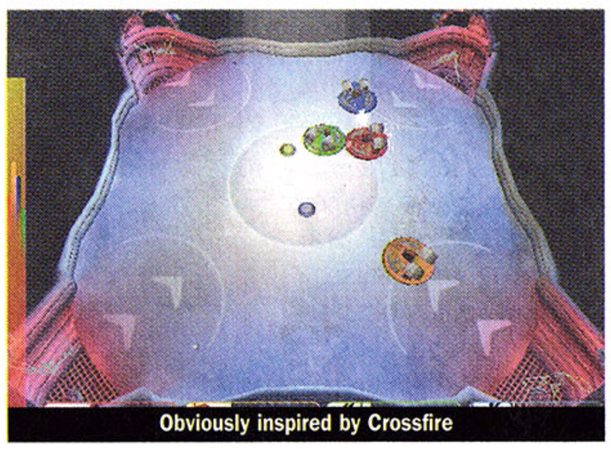
Preliminary information suggests the game will hue close to Nintendo's highly successful Mario Party formula, featuring over 45 unique minigames that can be enjoyed by up to four players at once. Although the gameplay is certain to be familiar to most gamers, Blitz promises that the highly interactive environments will add a new wrinkle to the old party shirt.

Pump up the volume!

As always, coin collecting is key


Obviously inspired by the Six Flags log ride


This game is set in the Galactic Senate from The Phantom Menace. Kristian swears he can spot Senator Jar-Jar in the crowd


Obviously inspired by Crossfire

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER BOARD/ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** BLITZ GAMES ■ **RELEASE** FALL

PC

ZOO TYCOON

MOO

"Oy, mates! Croykie theys wallabies are spittin' mad! You're beautiful, you are!" is exactly what you can be saying after playing Zoo Tycoon for three hours. This release will give gamers the opportunity to build the zoo of their dreams. You'll build habitats, adopt animals, hire staff to run your establishment, and monitor your guests to make sure they're having a good time. Numerous modes will offer added gameplay. Freeplay, for instance, allows players to build their zoo without the constraints of the regular game. There will be 40 different animals to choose from, 60 habitat building types, and 40 building materials with which to enhance your park.

It looks like Toys 'R' Us finally put old Jeffrey out to pasture

"Ezekiel 25:17 – And I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger..."

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** BLUE FANG GAMES ■ **RELEASE** SEPTEMBER 1

PLAYSTATION 2

SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE

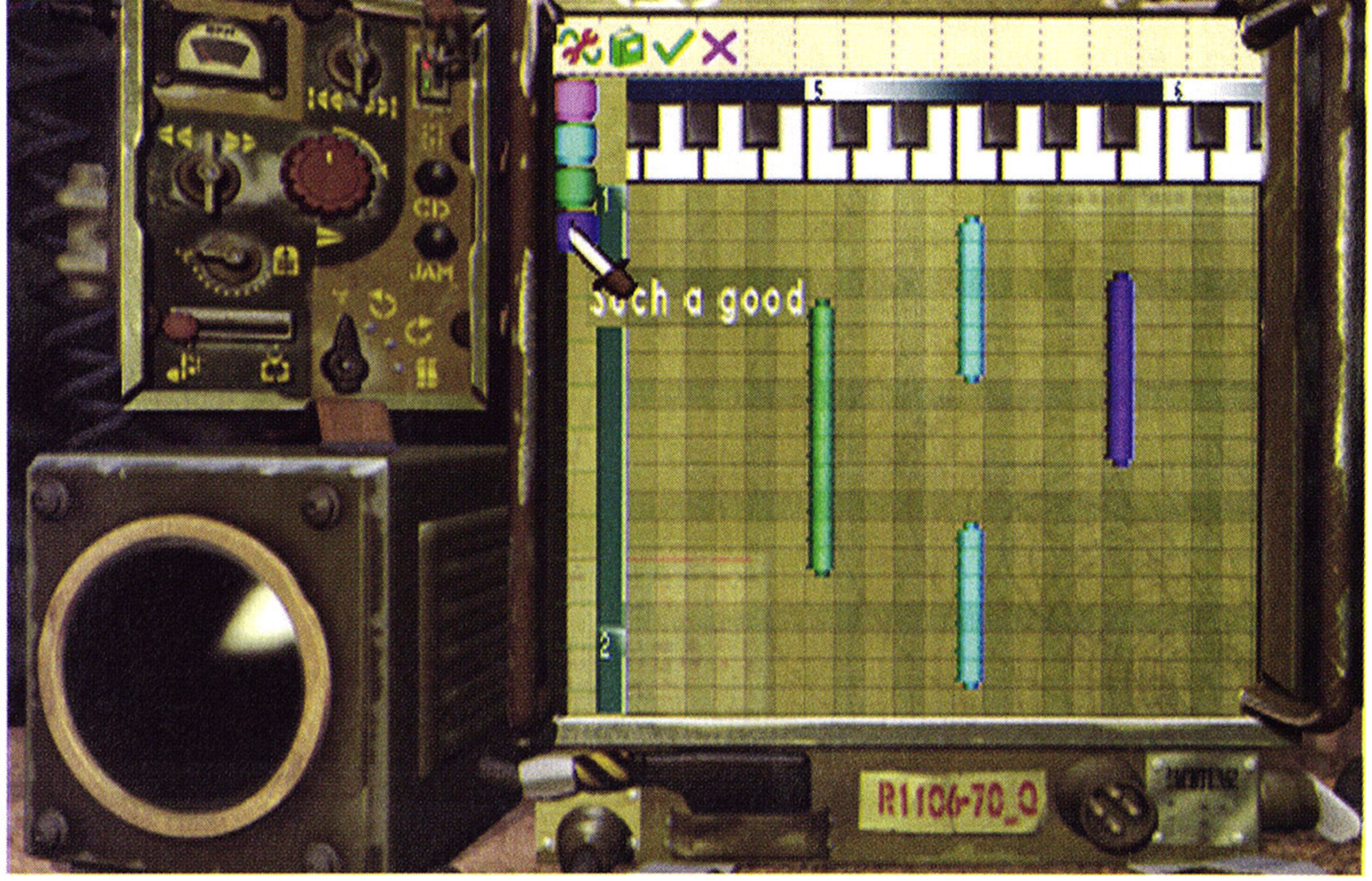
LETHAL NO LONGER

Formerly known as Street Lethal, somebody at Activision must have asked the same question a certain GI editor asked the developer when this game was first revealed at last year's E3 – "What's so lethal about it?" Now emblazoned with a more sensible title, Supercar Street Challenge is ready to roar with as much realism as possible onto the PlayStation 2.

The game itself uses the most basic of racing formulas – race on a track to earn good finishing times and come in first – but it's in the details where it shines. Players get to choose from around a dozen licensed cars, all of which would set you back at least six-figures in real life. If rides like the Lotus M215 or the Fioravanti F100 don't trip your trigger, however, you can go to the Styling Studio to make your own supercar. By choosing a front and rear body, then morphing them together with other exteriors, millions of designs can be made even before things such as paint jobs, engine placement, and accessories are accounted for.

With a vehicle all ready to go, players get to drive through 27 tracks within the cityscapes of London, Paris, Monaco, Los Angeles, Munich, Rome, and Turin. The cities have been painstakingly re-created, and if you're not too busy looking for shortcuts, you can take time out to appreciate landmarks as you careen by them. All this combined with 60 FPS animation, variable weather effects, and admirable multiplayer modes could make this one a lethal contender in the racing market indeed.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER** EXAKT ENTERTAINMENT ■ **RELEASE** JULY 1



PLAYSTATION 2

MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT BEAT

While most of the GI staff groove to rock and rap, Kristian is the mag's resident raver. Why his little Dorfmeister pops a great big Kruder at the mere mention of cutting edge DJs like John Digweed and BT! Now that techno has gone mainstream, we expect that many more will join Krissy in flocking to MTV Generator 2, the sequel to last year's excellent music creation title. If you haven't played the first, it's basically a dumbed-down, console-friendly version of popular PC music editing software like ProTools and Acid Pro.

Music Generator 2 will be instantly familiar to fans of the series, but Jester has implemented a new interface, and a number of enhancements that make the experience of creating phat tracks even more blissful. For one, the song grid now scrolls down, instead of left to right. Each sample takes up only one track, which helps avoid the vertical sprawl that plagued the original. Also, tracks are now grouped by category (Bass, Rhythm, Melody, Vocals, and Sound Effects), which aids in keeping your song organized. The rather clunky interface has been overhauled as well, as there is now a pointer that is controlled by the left analog stick, which functions basically like a mouse. Cutting and pasting samples has also been made easier by the fact that your Riff Palette is displayed in a window at the side of the screen at all times.

On the topic of samples, the increased memory of the PS2 has allowed Jester to add in many more sound bites. There are now eight different genres of samples represented – House, Indie, Trance, Breakbeat, Garage (remember to pronounce it "Gahr-ridge" like the Brits!), Pop, Rock, and R&B. This is one to watch, club kids. Although this might sound strange to some of the hardcore gamers out there, we promise that few games offer as much replay value as MTV Music Generator 2.

MTV Music Generator 2 is endorsed by legendary Tunnel/Hot 97 DJ Funkmaster Flex

These are three of the game's ten different graphical skins/motifs

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SIMULATION ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS ■ **DEVELOPER** JESTER INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** MAY

"Last one to the creek is a blown-out Ford Explorer!"

XBOX

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD: WIDE OPEN

BACK-COUNTRY BEAUTY

If there's one thing we should thank granola-eatin' environmentalists for, it's that they've kept sections of this great country open for unfettered mud-balling. One person's haven of rare dirt and rocks is another's oversized vehicular playground. Infogrames and Angel Studios are seizing these pastures in the name of the newest Test Drive Off-Road installment, due this fall for the Xbox.

While you may think this is just a chance for Infogrames to spread another title to another console, guess again. The Xbox will see its own particular four-wheeled fury with the inclusion of a new exclusive location to go alongside those in Yosemite (CA), Utah, and Hawaii. Although this edition of Test Drive will have one less vehicle than the PS2's (for a total of 15), you'll get to climb into the new Chevy Avalanche, and the parts upgrading should still allow you to spit rocks in your wake even more effectively. Also filling the game's cab are new race modes known as Blitz and Checkpoint Charge.

Beyond the paper specs, Xbox's ability to add more in the graphics department could make this version of Off-Road a souped-powerhouse, and push the free-racing envelope wide open.

Marvel at the world that Angel has created

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** INFOGRAMES ■ **DEVELOPER** ANGEL STUDIOS
■ **RELEASE** 3RD QUARTER

PLAYSTATION

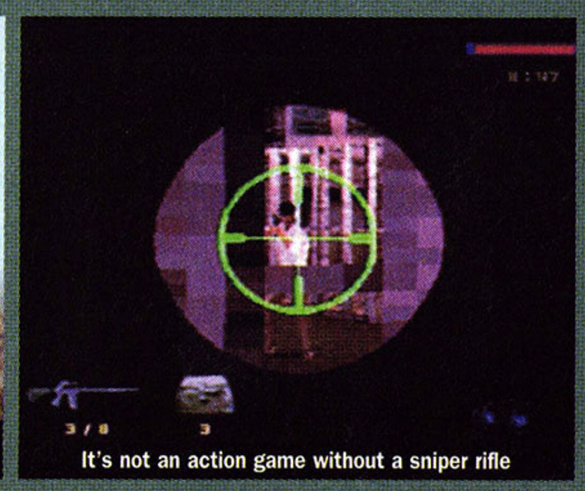
SPEC OPS: RANGER ELITE

TACTICAL COMBAT ON A BUDGET

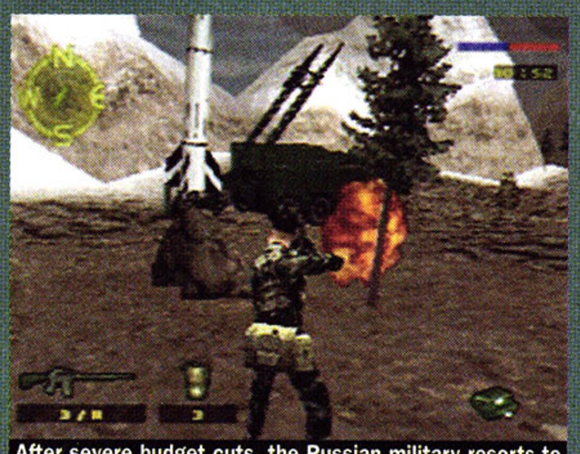
Some people in the industry thought Take 2 was smoking some of the good stuff when it decided to release a spate of low-budget PlayStation games at the unheard of price point of $9.99. Despite the skepticism, most of the games sold surprisingly well, and the strategy turned out to be quite a coup for Take 2. Of all the $9.99 titles Take 2 released last year, Spec Ops was easily the best, and has tallied sales of over a million since its release.

Given the massive success enjoyed by the first, and the over 30 million PlayStations still in American homes, it seems logical that Take 2 tapped Runecraft to create a sequel. Named Spec Ops: Ranger Elite, the game continues the surprisingly deep tactical combat of the first, with missions that span the globe from Alaska to China. As before, you must utilize stealth tactics, and command your rangers to complete a variety of different tasks like diverting drug shipments and disarming nuclear weapons. Admittedly, Spec Ops has the graphical look of a first-generation PS-X title, but those who dig under the surface should find a beauty lying beneath the beastly façade. For ten bucks, it's a solid value, and will be a must for the frugal PS-X action fan.

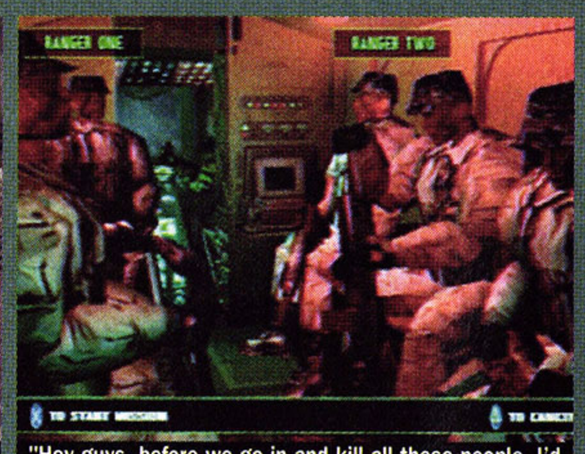
Something about the shape of that missile makes us feel funny, but in a good way



It's not an action game without a sniper rifle



After severe budget cuts, the Russian military resorts to shooting US missile installations with BB guns



"Hey guys, before we go in and kill all these people, I'd like everyone to bow their heads for a group prayer."

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
■ **DEVELOPER** RUNECRAFT ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 27

DREAMCAST

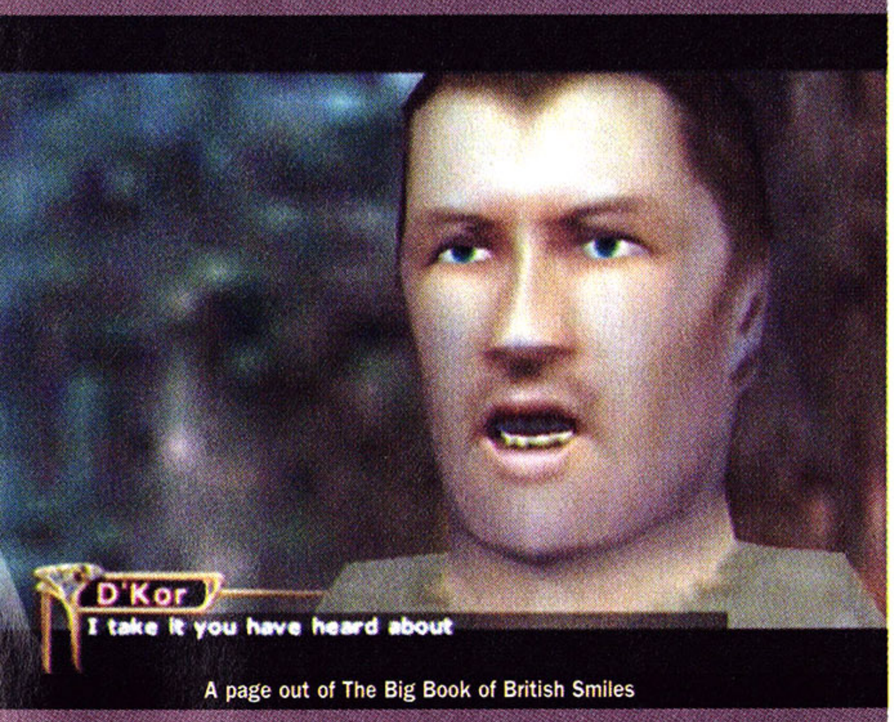
DRAGONRIDERS: CHRONICLES OF PERN

DIRTY PERNOGRAPHY

One may assume that a game named Dragonriders would be something of an exciting journey, filled with fire breathing, fast flight, and intense action. One would be wrong. The early version of this Ubi Soft Dreamcast title has all the markings of a mild, mellow stroll down Boredom Lane.

In the Anne McCaffrey-spawned land of Pern, elite citizens and dragons are bonded together in lifelong alliance. The Weyr in which all of them reside is a bustling community, and D'kor is smack dab in the middle of it, along with his scaly companion Zenth. Most of the game is spent strolling around the area, gathering information and being a gofer for everyone's whims and desires. Much as we hoped against hope, the first few hours brought nothing in the way of fevered firefights high above Pern's surface.

Fear not, though – you will be interacting with your dragon. In fact, Dragonriders' first task is to wash his ass with a big brush. Cool! Future missions include gathering ingredients for a banquet, apologizing for a drunk comrade's actions, and whacking snakes. These are all strung together in open-ended fashion, allowing you to tackle them at your leisure; that is, if you stay awake long enough to get that far.



A page out of The Big Book of British Smiles

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
■ **DEVELOPER** RED STORM ■ **RELEASE** 3RD QUARTER

DREAMCAST

CONFIDENTIAL MISSION

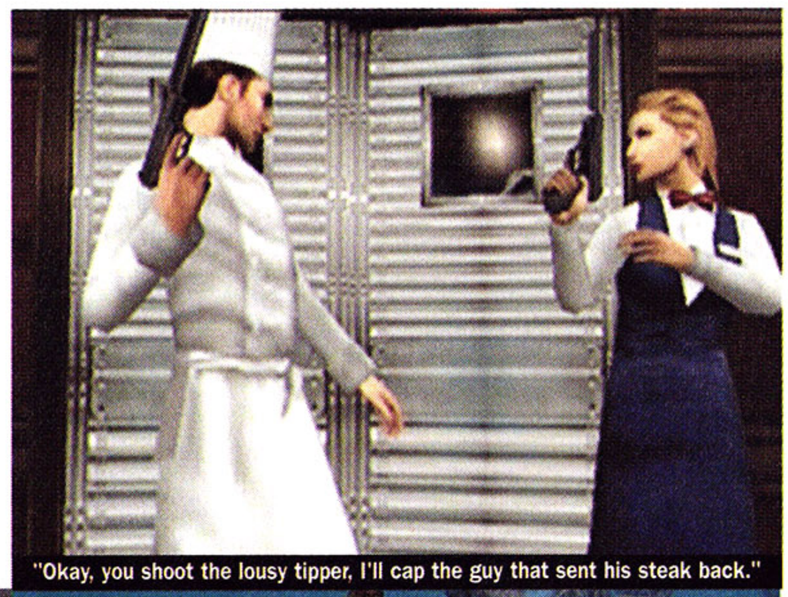
GUN FOR GOOD

If you're amongst the millions (alright, thousands) who bought a gun peripheral to use with House of the Dead 2, rejoice! After only a year and a half wait, there's now another game that your gun is compatible with. Confidential Mission puts up to two players in the role of secret agents whose task it is to stop terrorists from – you guessed it – destroying the world.

The story is a cross between James Bond and Mission: Impossible, and the gameplay is like a hyped-up Virtua Cop. Enemies may fly through doors and do a battle roll before shooting, but familiar-looking crosshairs will warn you when they're about to make an attempt at turning you into Swiss cheese. As expected, there are also civilians and scientists to avoid blasting, and bonus points and power-ups to gain by putting a bullet in environmental objects. To break up the action, quick-firing and button-tapping story objectives are occasionally thrown into the mix.

Confidential Mission is a pure arcade action title, thus the main game ends after only three levels. To make up for this rather lackluster length, the developers have thrown in an Agent Academy where one can attempt to rank highly in an array of minigames. Success in the minigames will supposedly allow players to acquire new weaponry and change the flow of the storyline.

Confidential Mission certainly isn't reinventing the shooter wheel, but it does provide exactly the kind of action you'd expect from a game of its ilk. Dust off that trigger and clean the lens of your light gun, because there's finally going to be something to shoot besides the walking undead.

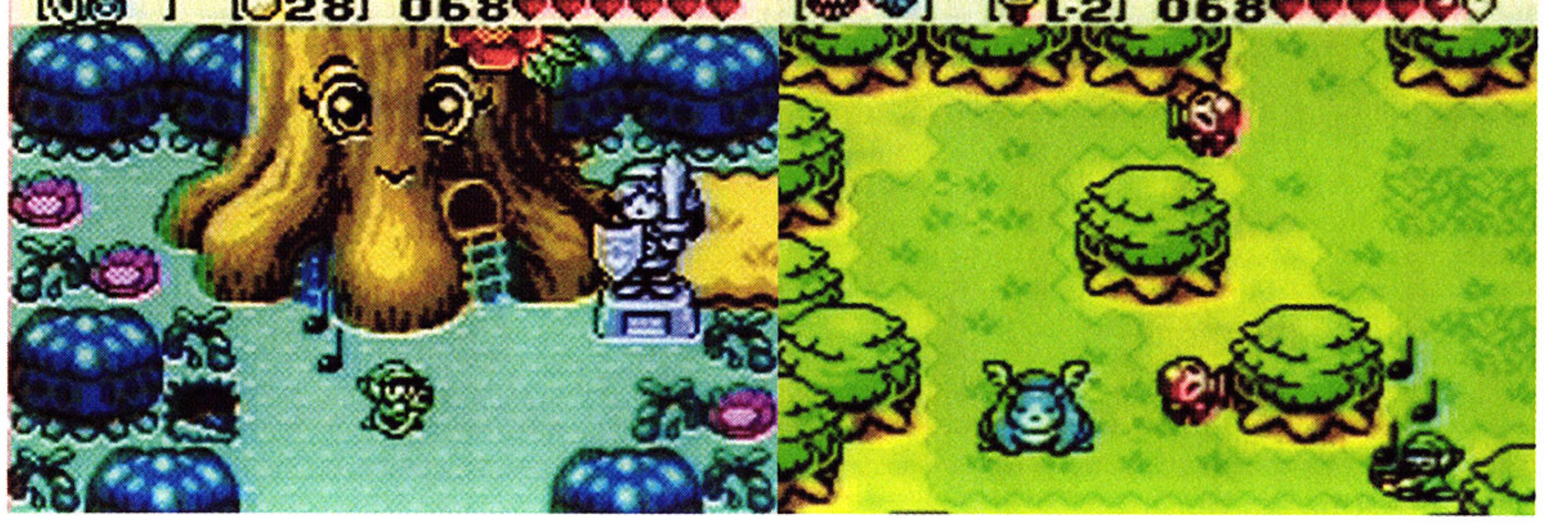


"Okay, you shoot the lousy tipper, I'll cap the guy that sent his steak back."

In this minigame, players have to quickly decide who's the bad guy

Quick timing events break up the action

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** HITMAKER ■ **RELEASE** MAY 15



GAME BOY COLOR

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: ORACLE OF AGES

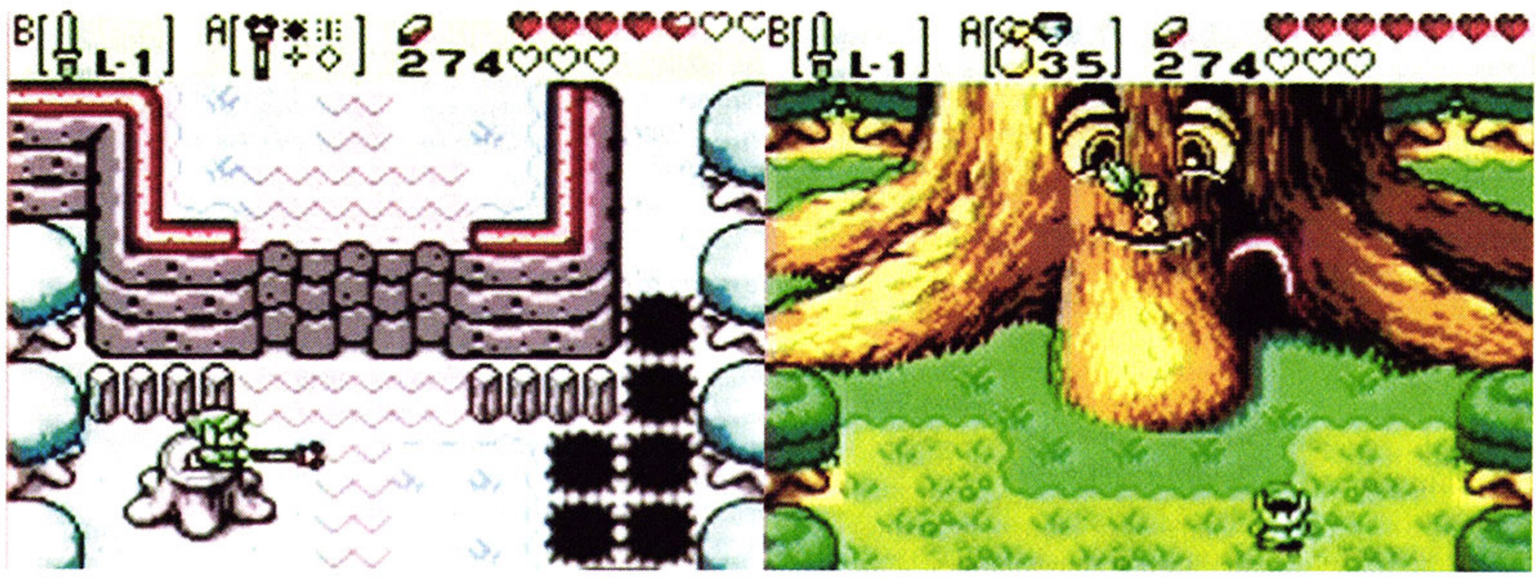
THE ESSENCE OF TIME

After forcing gamers to flip a coin to determine if they would purchase the Gold or Silver version of Pokémon, another simultaneous two-game release is on the way for Game Boy Color. This time around, however, you won't need to play eenie meenie minie moe when choosing which game to bring home. Zelda: Oracle of Ages, and Oracle of Seasons, are in fact completely different games. Always asking gamers to turn their pockets inside out, you'll need to buy both games in order to see the true ending.

That's right! After completing Ages, you'll receive a password that can be entered onto the Seasons cartridge. This 8-bit maneuver not only opens new zones, the story will be broadened and changed, and the final boss will finally be exposed. Several weapons, enemies, and friends will also transfer over.

The big difference between the two titles is Link's item of choice. In Ages he wields the aptly named Harp of Ages – an instrument that allows our hero to travel to the past, present, and future. Link's ultimate goal also differs. in Ages, Link must quest to rescue Nayru, the Oracle of Ages, who has been kidnapped by the evil sorceress of shadows, Veran.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** MAY 14



GAME BOY COLOR

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: ORACLE OF SEASONS

THE ESSENCE OF NATURE

After Link strums away at his wee little Harp, he gets to do what every man loves to do in his free time – play with his rod (the Rod of Seasons, that is). To reiterate the article directly to the north, Oracle of Seasons is a completely different game than Oracle of Ages. The two games feature similar sized maps, yet the towns, characters, and story are completely different. Even more interesting, the Seasons game will transform when a password from Ages is entered. If you just buy one version, you won't see the true ending, nor will you ever encounter the final boss. He's well hidden, and he'll only emerge when the code is entered.

Yes, this is the biggest "up yours" maneuver we've ever seen, but to Nintendo's benefit, the game of choice couldn't have been better. What? You mean we have to play more Zelda? Boo hoo!

As mentioned before, Ages' exclusive item is the Harp, and Seasons' is the Rod. In Ages, you travel through time; in Seasons, you travel through...well...all four seasons. As summer quickly changes to winter, Link will need to navigate the changing terrain to recover the essences of nature.

Both titles hold the gameplay qualities of Zelda: Link's Awakening, and feature many of the characters and traits of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. A deadly duo indeed, these games should be a force to be reckoned with come May 14.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** MAY 14

GAME BOY COLOR

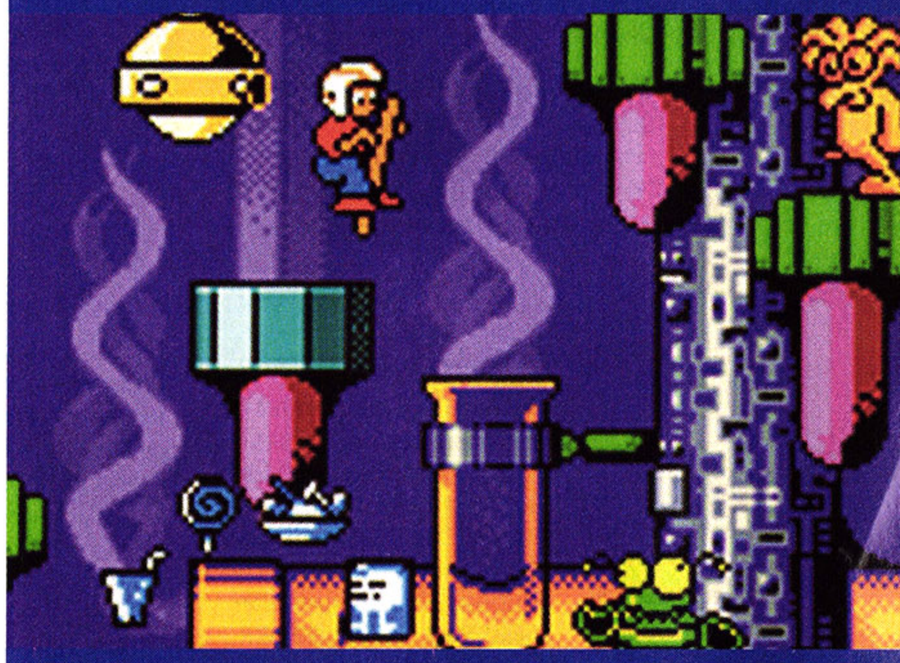
COMMANDER KEEN

IT PUTS THE ID BACK IN KID

For all three of you who think that was a witty headline we came up with there, don't be fooled. It's actually pulled right out of Activision's press release for this title, but it was so darned cute, we just had to use it. Now for the game. Commander Keen marks a return to developing comic book-style adventure games for kids. This version of the popular PC series will find the 8-year-old super hero Billy Blaze on a brand new quest to save the world from his alien enemies, the Droidiccus, Shikadia, and Bloogs of Fribbulus Xax.

Todd Hollenshead, an id representative commented recently that, "Commander Keen [will show] a kinder, gentler side of id Software." That won't be hard, since id has made a name for itself pumping out gore-filled mega-hits like as Doom and Quake. If id made a game where a player only kills one person or thing per hour, it would probably be seen as a kinder, gentler side of a company which prides itself on frag-filled, action-packed titles.

Commander Keen is a side-scrolling platformer challenging players to find Plasma Crystals hidden on three separate alien worlds. Each world will contain numerous multi-level maps clogged with puzzles and enemies. As you make your way through the game, you'll find more than 35 different aliens as well as puzzles, slime pits, magical platforms, secret rooms, and teleporters. Look for a spring release for Commander Keen, but as one PR contact we talked to about the game said, "With id, it'll be done when it's done."



■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER** ID SOFTWARE ■ **RELEASE** SECOND QUARTER

REVIEWS

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

THE SCORING SYSTEM

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

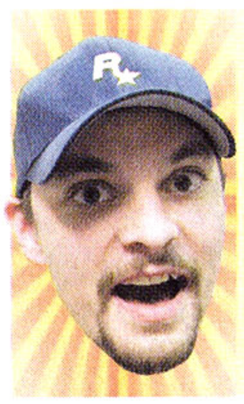
REPLAY VALUE
The longevity of the title.
- **High** - You'll still be popping this game in five years from now.
- **Moderately High** - Good for a long while, but the thrills won't last forever.
- **Moderate** - Good for a few months or a few times through.
- **Moderately Low** - After finishing it,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

ANDY
Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving, Strategy **Interests:** Taco Bell Enchiritos, Pondering How Long 3DO Will Make Army Men Games **Dislikes:** My Way By Limp Bizkit (Might As Well Have Been See You Later Alligator) **Current Favorite Games:** EverQuest, Castlevania Advance, Zone of the Enders

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

PAUL
Handle: The Game Professor **Expertise:** Sports, Action/Adventure, Racing **Interests:** Database Management Software, SCTV, Arcwelder **Dislikes:** Reiner's Sarcasm, Database Management Software, Missing E3 **Current Favorite Games:** Anything on Game Boy Advance, Counter-Strike 1.1

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

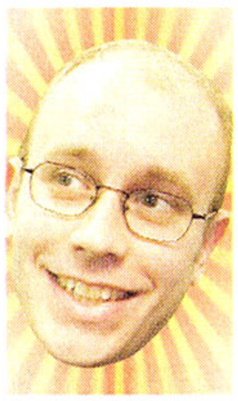


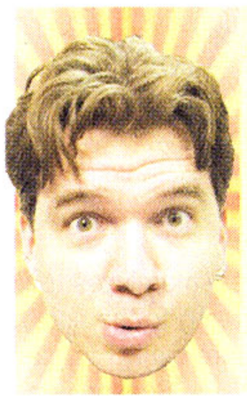
REINER
Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Fighting, Action/Platform, Sports **Interests:** Comic Books, Star Wars, Supermodels (Just Like My Hot Girlfriend) **Dislikes:** Jay, Matt, And Andy's Ugly Girlfriends (Woof Woof!), Jason Rubin's Fake Tan **Current Favorite Games:** Devil May Cry, Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, Zone of the Enders

Reiner considers himself the biggest Star Wars fan in the world. Along with his impressive collection of Star Wars action figures, he has seen the trilogy 509 times. A fan of all game types, role-playing games are his strong suit. In his six years as a professional gamer, Reiner has achieved the impossible. Penetrating the pixel boundary, he not only plays games, he's in one, and can be shot daily in the epic N64 release, Perfect Dark.

MATT
Handle: The Original Gamer **Expertise:** Racing, Puzzle, Action/Adventure **Interests:** The London Season Of The Real World, Apples, DJ Snailtrax, Hawd Gankstuh Rappuhs MC's Wid Ghatz **Dislikes:** Deadline Time, My Rapidly Growing Ulcer, That Greasy German From The London Season Of The Real World **Current Favorite Games:** MTV Music Generator 2, Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble, Sega Smash Pack, Rayman 2

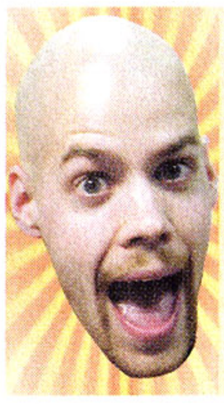
While record collecting, watching reality television, and playing video games might sound like a state of retarded adolescence, Matt manages to scrap together an almost meaningful existence out of these activities. His encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture is either amazing or annoying, depending on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





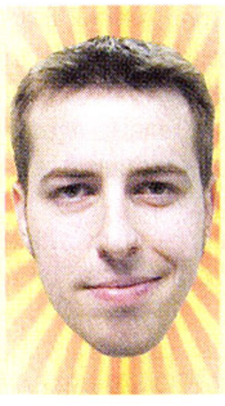
JAY
Handle: The Gonzo Gamer **Expertise:** Strategy, Puzzle, RPGs **Interests:** Dungeons & Dragons, Comic Books, Wrestling, Tiny Embers Restaurants **Dislikes:** Space Vermin, Companies Refusing To Send A Game When They Know It Sucks **Current Favorite Games:** The Adventures of Cookie & Cream, Record of Lodoss War

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



JUSTIN
Handle: The Digital Deviant **Expertise:** Action/Platform, Fighting, RPGs **Interests:** Game Boy Advance, WWF/WCW Merger, Dave Brockie Experience **Dislikes:** Milk Prices, Car/Loan Shopping, The Unexplainable Tuna Smell In My Apartment **Current Favorite Games:** Zone of the Enders, Extermination, UT

Unlike most gaming jabronis, Justin knows there's life outside video vegetation. He doubles as wrestler Helmut Von Strauss in the Minnesota independent scene, where he violently bonds with other sweaty males – a practice that just gets blank stares when attempted on other GI reviewers. Though the youngest on staff, Justin's tastes are highly old-school, and he plays 16-bit classics as often as he plugs into the latest titles.



KRISTIAN
Handle: The Game Dawg **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, Sports **Interests:** Walls, The Orb, Star Wars Action Figures Made Before 1985 **Dislikes:** His Roommate's New Girlfriend, The Original Gamer, Johnny Angel's **Current Favorite Games:** Counter-Strike 1.0, Dodge Ball Advance, Baldur's Gate 2

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

NEWBIE CHEAT SHEET

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

Action – A term we use for games like Rising Zan

Adventure – A term we use for games like Myst

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

Board – A term we use for games like Jeopardy

CG – Computer Graphics

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

DC – Sega Dreamcast

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

Fighting – A term we use for games like Street Fighter

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

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

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

frontend – A game's menus and options

GB – Game Boy

GBC – Game Boy Color

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

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

minigame – A small, simple game within a larger one

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

N64 – Nintendo 64

NES – Nintendo Entertainment System

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

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

PS2 – Sony PlayStation 2

PS-X – Sony PlayStation

Puzzle – A term we use for games like Tetris

Racing – A term we use for games like Ridge Racer

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

SG – Sega Genesis

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

SNES – Super Nintendo Entertainment System

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

SS – Sega Saturn

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

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

Gettin' 'bout it – Becoming angry

GAME OF THE MONTH
ZONE OF THE ENDERS

A child in a mecha becoming savior to the universe may not be the most intriguing plot for a game, but with Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima at the helm and Konami's wealth of PlayStation 2 experience backing his vision, Zone of the Enders will captivate gamers of all types. ZOE raises the bar on every level, with intuitive robotic can-kicking and seamless graphical armageddon. The PlayStation 2 library is steadily starting to shine, and Zone of the Enders just might be its crown jewel. Pg. 74.

That's what I'm waiting for.

Viola is one of your deadliest adversaries

Mummyhead is a heavily armored, long-range foe

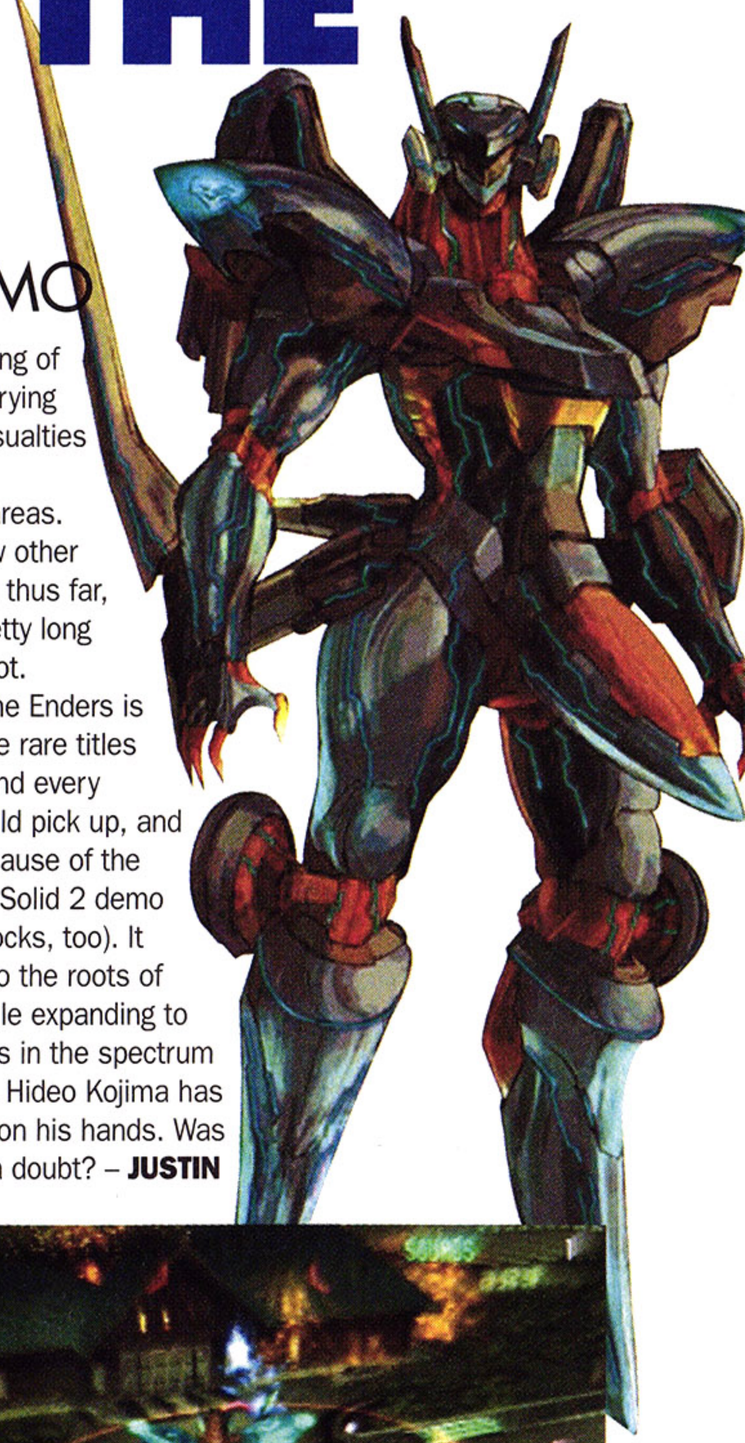
You have such good friends, don't you, boy of enders?

I don't want to know what an "ender" is

PLAYSTATION 2

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

MORE THAN JUST AN MGS2 DEMO



Video games featuring mecha aren't generally the most beloved titles out there. Zone of the Enders is about to change that, because it's good enough, it's smart enough, and doggone it, I really like it. Easily one of the best titles to grace PlayStation 2, ZOE basically blows to smithereens every other action game out there. You can tell Konami has been tooling around with the PS2 for some time, and you know Hideo Kojima can make a good game. These two factors result in Zone of the Enders being completely amazing on nearly every level.

The most impressive aspect of ZOE to me was the control. Piloting this big hunk of walking metal was second nature. Granted, action games don't normally have much of a learning curve, but ZOE gives you a ton of maneuvers, lock-on targeting, and loads of offense, with none of the brain-throbbing "Which button do I press?" panic attacks in the heat of combat. This makes every enemy encounter, whether it's with a menacing boss or a horde of robotic retards, a blissful experience.

ZOE may have the best graphics of any PS2 title to date. I have no idea how many polygons each character is made up of, but it must be a big fat lot of them. The sight of two mecha embraced in the bond of battle, with lasers firing, swords swinging, and the camera spinning around their deadly ballet, is truly captivating. Buildings will crumble in your wake, and fires will start in the skeletons of skyscrapers. Try as I might, I saw nary a sign of any anti-aliasing issues or texture tearing. War might be hell, but it sure is pretty.

Rather than tugging at my heartstrings, Zone the of Enders' story gave me an occasional chuckle. It will probably turn off the majority of American gamers, but you can just skip over it and get to more killing anyway. The game does a good job of giving you the illusion that you're in complete control, when in actuality you're getting your hand held through every mission. These objectives are pleasantly varied, as you will be destroying force field generators, searching for new weapons, and disposing of foes while trying to avoid casualties in heavily populated areas. Unlike a few other PS2 efforts thus far, this is a pretty long game to boot.

Zone of the Enders is one of those rare titles that each and every gamer should pick up, and not just because of the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo (though it rocks, too). It stays true to the roots of gaming, while expanding to new reaches in the spectrum of next-gen. Hideo Kojima has another hit on his hands. Was there ever a doubt? – **JUSTIN**

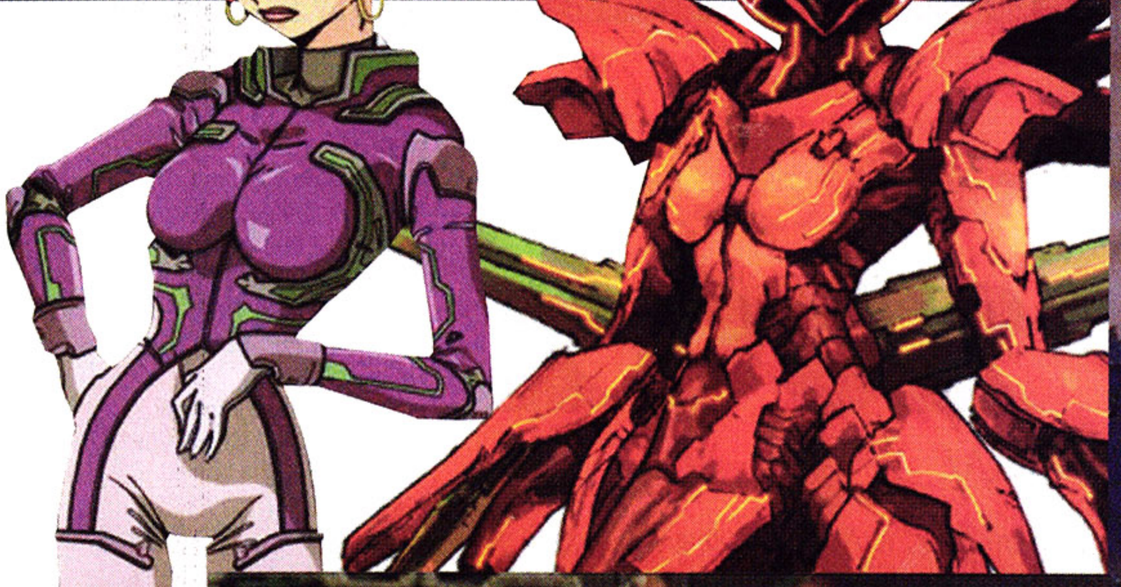
Burnin' down the house!

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KCEJ ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 27

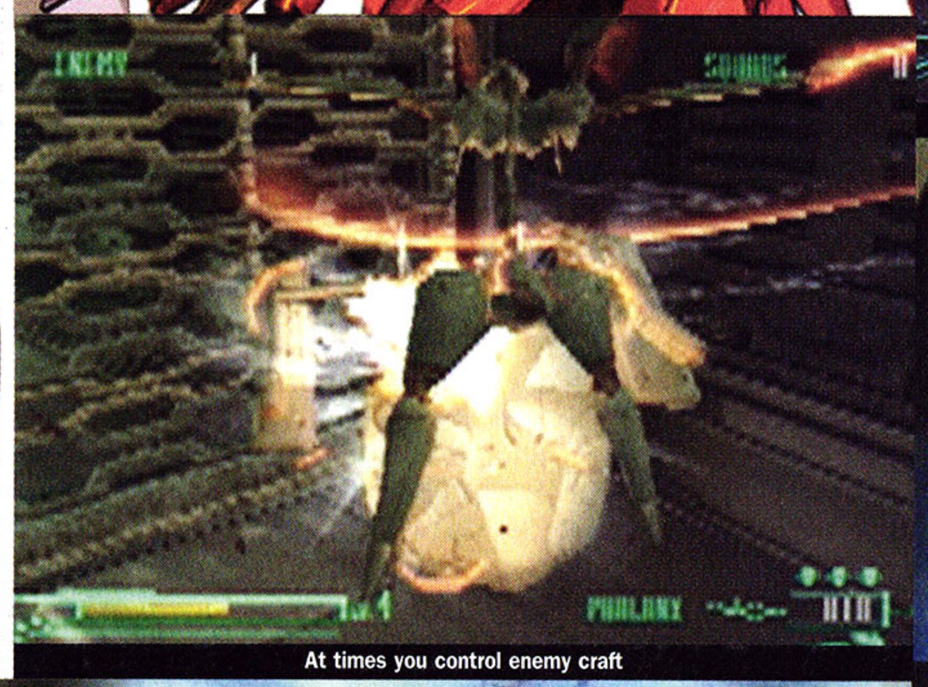
GAME OF THE MONTH

ZONE OF THE ENDERS

"Zone of the Enders is one of those rare titles that each and every gamer should pick up..."



Tempest marks your first boss encounter



At times you control enemy craft

That is you, isn't it Celvice?
Are you alright, Celvice?

Little girls love mecha...or is it horses?

A robotic body slam

Not all your targets fight back

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

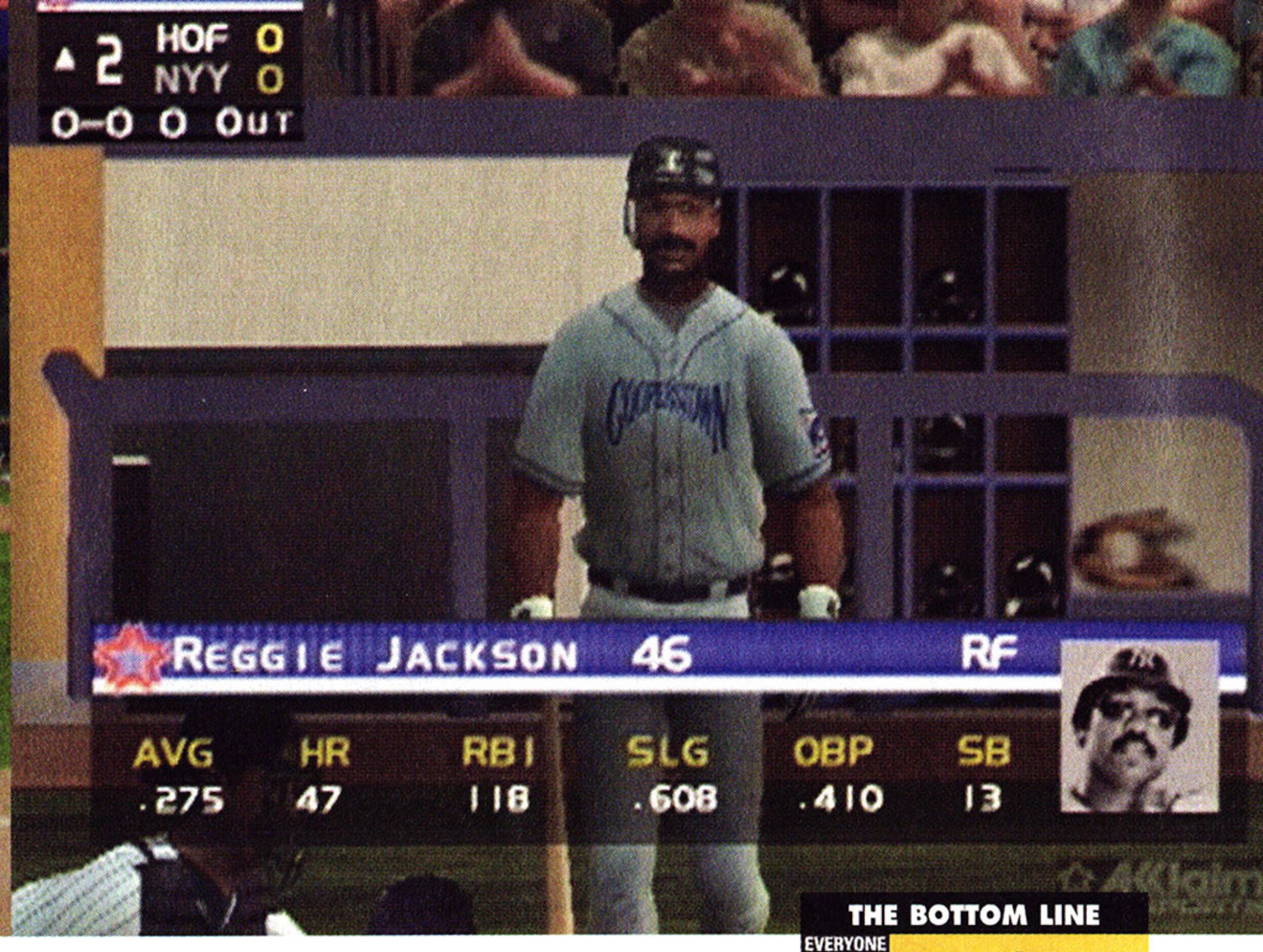
9.25

- **Concept:** Free-floating mecha combat designed by Metal Gear's creator
- **Graphics:** You won't find more detailed models or better pyrotechnics, and the environments are stunning
- **Sound:** Good voice-overs, and the typical sounds of futuristic warfare
- **Playability:** The fact that you don't spend much time pondering the controls is testament to their greatness
- **Entertainment:** Every gaming element blends together to make ZOE addictive and admirable
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Other than brief lulls where you stare blankly out of the cockpit as the main character, Leo, argues with Ada, the mecha's remorseless and highly incompetent artificial intelligence, Zone of the Enders is a masterpiece, and one of the most surprising releases of the year. Not only does the introductory FMV get your juices flowing with insane action, it sends a dark message to the players. As Hideo Kojima once told me, "Technology is the downfall of mankind." In the first few minutes, you'll understand completely. On both the graphical and gameplay fronts, ZOE projects beauty and brilliance, and immediately hooks you with its complexity and revolutionary ways. As far as action games go, ZOE has the PS2 market locked up. Everything else pales in comparison. I pray that Hideo Kojima has a sequel in the works. Whatever you do, don't miss this release!

REINER – 9.5



PLAYSTATION 2

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

"...there's room for improvement, but this is a great start for Acclaim"

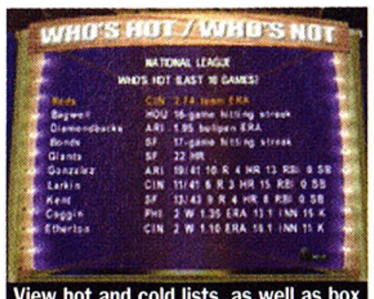
Given Acclaim's track record, I always want to attach a disclaimer to my All-Star Baseball series reviews. "This game may ship buggy." As finely polished as it may appear in its final beta stages, Acclaim has a knack for sending the shrink-wrapped version full of annoying, and oft times, game-ending bugs. Once again, this year's All-Star Baseball looks fantastic, and as I joked to Andy, "No bugs…yet."

If Acclaim can actually send this bad boy to retail in the exact form I spent roughly 30 hours on, I can honestly say this is the best baseball release of the season. Granted, 989 hasn't shown its hand yet, but it does crush Triple Play, and slightly outperforms High Heat. Out of the three games destined to hit the street, All-Star wins the battle not by being the best in a specific category, but by being well rounded. High Heat has the gameplay angle down, yet it lacks depth and a graphical punch. Triple Play is a visual marvel, although I'd hardly call it playable. All-Star has a decent look, one that hasn't changed too terribly much since the N64 days, the largest selection of bonus options and modes, and the gameplay, while a tad cumbersome, is satisfactory.

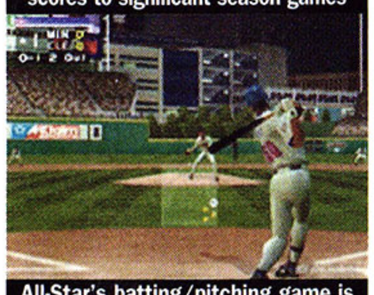
For those of you who've remained loyal to this series, the move to the PS2 holds a few surprises, but nothing truly exciting. On the graphical end, the player models are more refined and a lot smoother. You'll also see team mascots dancing on dugout roofs, onfield coaches telling you to dive or hold up, highly detailed stadiums, and working bullpens. Even with all of this in place, you can tell Acclaim was rushed to get this game out the door, as the TV-style presentation is definitely lacking. You won't see any flashy camera angle changes or off-the-field activities. Basically, it's the same appearance as before, only with a little fluff around the edges.

Concerning gameplay, Acclaim really hasn't changed its existing formula. The new changes are very subtle. The batter/pitcher duel, which I still believe is the best out there, now features an easy batting option, and you can pre-load throws when fielding. The most exciting additions, for me anyway, are the extensive stat tracking, which even shows hot and cold streaks, and the incorporation of the Cooperstown greats. Smacking a homer with Ernie Banks is a truly righteous feeling.

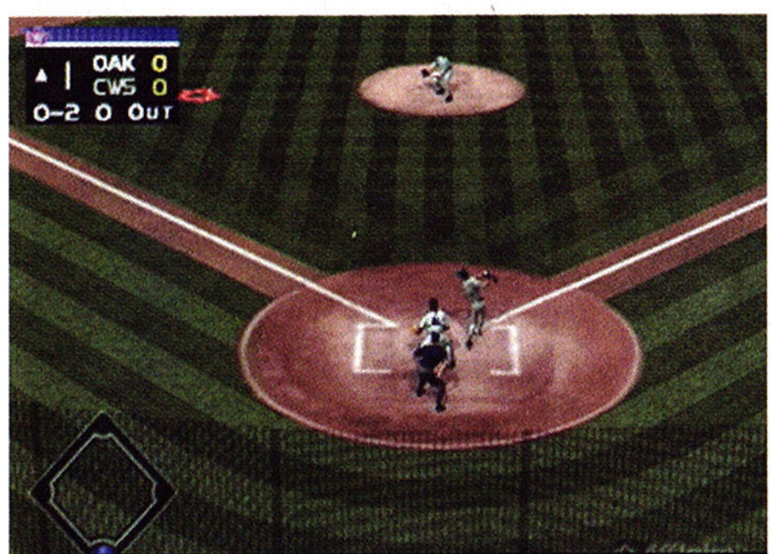
Certainly there's room for improvement, but this is a great start for Acclaim. If you want a baseball game that offers diversity, a solid gameplay package, and a sharp look, this is the title to get. Just don't expect to be blown away like you were with the football games last year. – **REINER**



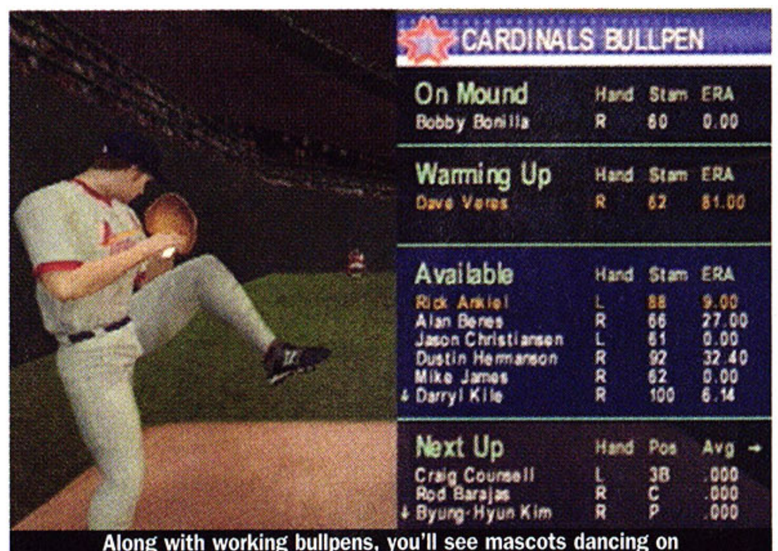
View hot and cold lists, as well as box scores to significant season games


All-Star's batting/pitching game is second to none

The fragile Mark McGwire takes a big cut…and misses



All-Star's fielding is easy to comprehend and manhandle



Along with working bullpens, you'll see mascots dancing on dugouts and field coaches

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **DEVELOPER** ACCLAIM STUDIOS AUSTIN ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 13

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

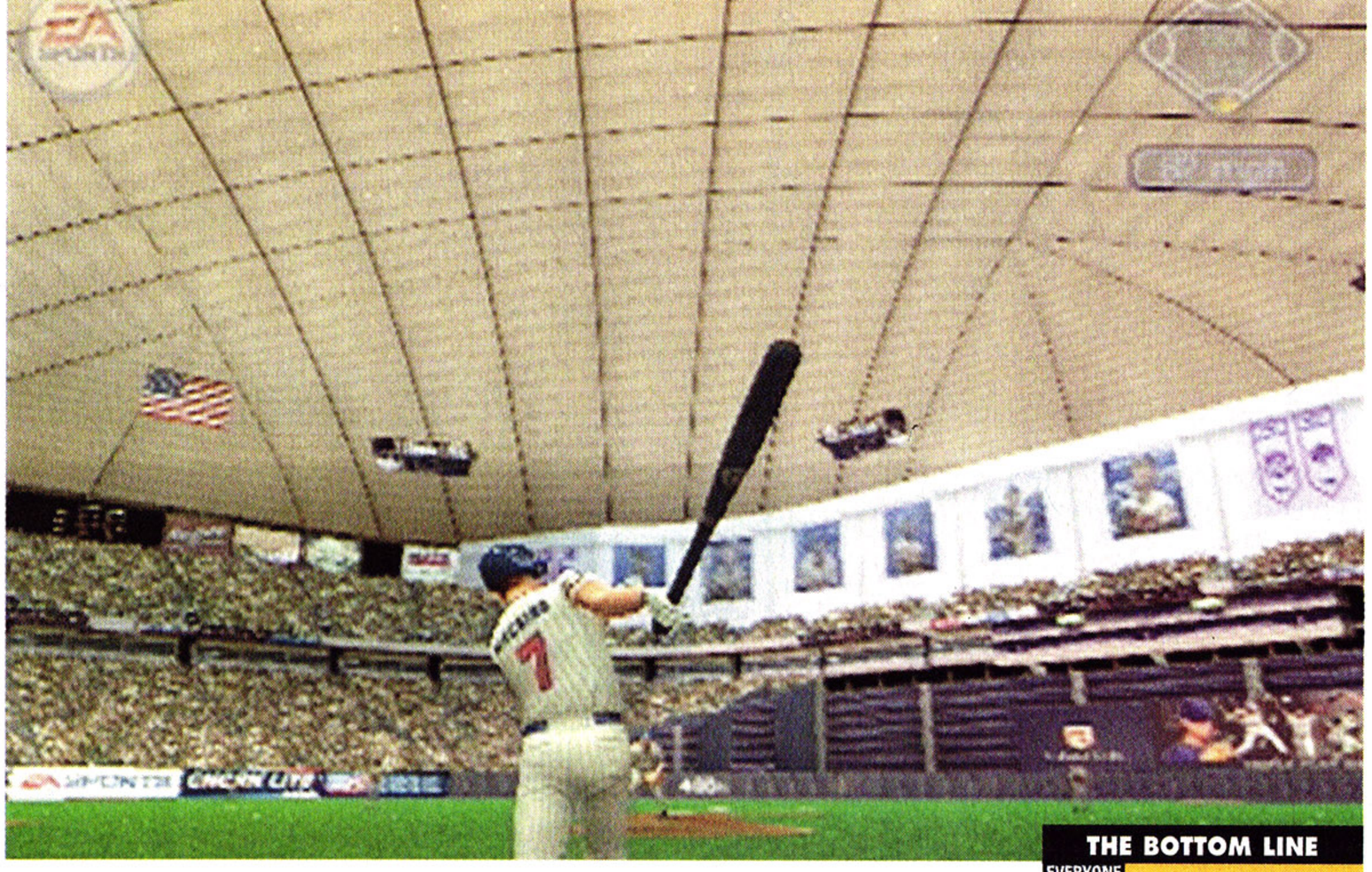
8

- **Concept:** The same great gameplay with an improved look, a Cooperstown team, and additional statistical categories
- **Graphics:** Plump with eye candy, including working bullpens, mascots, and onfield coaches
- **Sound:** The color commentary is fairly stiff, but the crowd is lively and diverse
- **Playability:** The batter/pitcher duel is brilliant, making High Heat and Triple Play feel like slow-pitch softball
- **Entertainment:** Incredibly deep and accurate
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

If I had to choose between the three PS2 baseball games (All-Star, High Heat, Triple Play), I would definitely go with this game. All-Star is the complete package. It offers a great pitching/batter interface, and has most of the other aspects of playcontrol and options covered. I was also impressed by many of the animations, which show infielders getting handcuffed by short-hoppers and a number of other nicely detailed re-creations. However, it is by no means perfect. Most notably, some of the fielding views will cut to a confusing camera angle, which makes it hard to go after the ball. Likewise, balls hit to the wall are almost always just singles. Still, All-Star is fun to play. It might not be as flashy looking as Triple Play, but it more than makes up for this when you take the field.

PAUL - 8.25



PLAYSTATION 2

TRIPLE PLAY BASEBALL

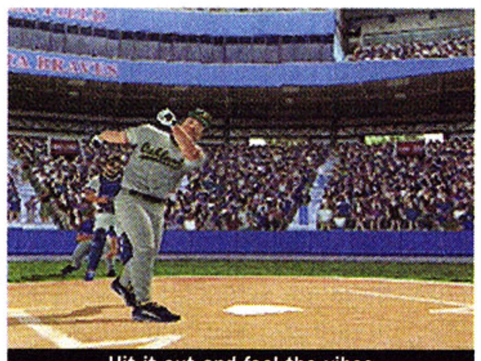
DIG THAT POLYESTER LOOK

Where else but baseball could you have guys making so much money and yet have a work stoppage on the horizon? EA Sports' first appearance on the PS2 coughs up the bucks to come up with some pretty uniforms, but may not last too long before you put your bat down.

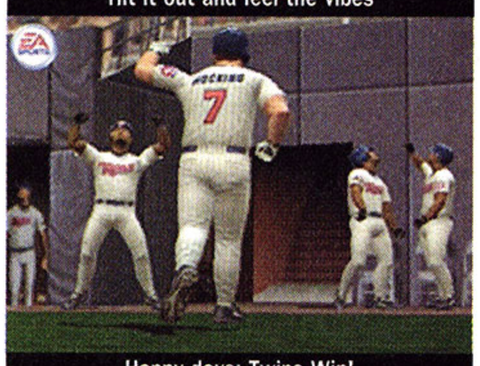
The PS2 cranks out some sweet graphics for TP, it's no lie. Bat swings and pitching motions don't relinquish any of the players' details, and strike-out frustration is shown clearly on camera close-ups. You'll also be delighted that the faces of Triple Play's roster resemble the stars themselves.

Luckily you won't be paying your crew their full MLB salaries, 'cause the game can get in a little trouble. EA was ambitious with the controls (including analog pitching and outfield throws), but this may be bad, as fielding can be difficult. Your defense can roam free, but controlling infielders (who can't cut off the ball) versus outfielders is somewhat disjointed. If it ain't a one-hopper or a deep fly ball, you're in trouble.

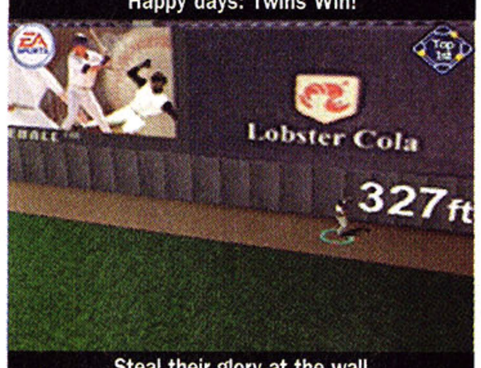
Applause to Triple Play for not trying to water down its franchise on its first next-gen outing (see Sega's World Series Baseball 2K1), but this at-bat may not soar too deep. – **KATO**



Hit it out and feel the vibes

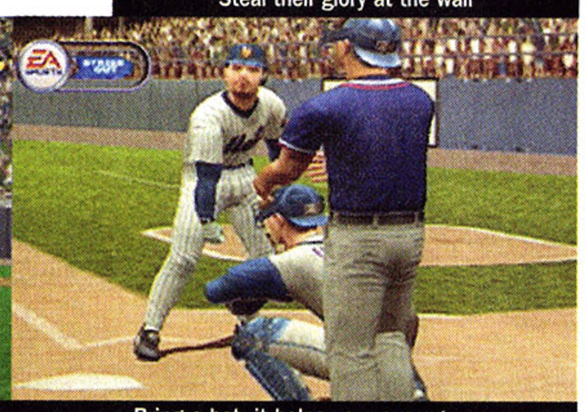


Happy days: Twins Win!



Steal their glory at the wall

There's some foul play going on at first...



Bring a bat, it helps your average

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **DEVELOPER** TREYARCH
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 13

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** Consider it Triple Play's first PS2 spring training
- **Graphics:** Highly detailed and not afraid to flaunt it
- **Sound:** Apart from great commentary from Buck and Sean, the crack of the bat and the roar of the crowd are all you hear
- **Playability:** There's plenty to do control-wise, but it doesn't necessarily all come together
- **Entertainment:** This one looks better than it feels, although it's still not a bad jaunt around the pads
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Falling into stride with EA's coexisting PS2 lineup, Triple Play ignites the screen with extraordinary visual material. From highly detailed player models to out-of-play cinematic sequences, you can't help but stare in awe at the picture EA has painted. However, as gorgeous as it may be, gameplay remains a thorn in Triple Play's side. One would assume that with the expanded power of PS2, the camera switch between batting and fielding would be executed much more smoothly than it was on the PS-X. Certainly, improvements have been made, but overall, it's still troublesome. Fielding, especially in the infield, is very unresponsive, and worse yet, the CPU does most of the work for you. Another blow to this package is the batting system. Making contact is way too easy. Without solid gameplay, this title is worthless in my book.

REINER – 6

PLAYSTATION 2

HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2002

NO FLASH, NO PROBLEM

They always say, "Never underestimate the underdog." With a new digital diamond ripe for the taking, 3DO had a shot at bypassing Electronic Arts and Acclaim as this year's PS2 World Champion. In the gameplay department, 3DO spoke boldly about unparalleled realism and the most accurate game to date. Statistically, yes, 3DO accomplished this mission. The gameplay is also admirable – capturing the essence of the game. However, to truly create a realistic baseball simulation, an authentic look is a must as well.

Other than delivering fantastic star-player facial maps, High Heat's graphical prowess still holds many 32-bit qualities. Along with jerky animations, the TV-style presentation is stagnant. Disappointing indeed, this title really needs some flash, especially in comparison to the competing games. In the end, though, High Heat is a decent release. 3DO did a commendable job shaping a realistic simulation – something purists can really sink their teeth into.
– **REINER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

- **Concept:** 3DO's underdog franchise moves to PS2
- **Graphics:** It's so real? Not quite. Although the character models look sharp, the animations lack fluidity and realism
- **Sound:** The two-man commentary is too mechanical and "Sports Talk"-like
- **Playability:** Graphically lacking, High Heat's gameplay is quick and precise
- **Entertainment:** This year's offering doesn't have much to offer mode – wise, but the gameplay is enjoyable and the stat tracking is right on
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

A valiant effort by 3DO comes up a little short in the graphics department. It has good playcontrol and the AI is excellent. The computer will really exploit your errant throws. One of the best things about this game is that a hit to the outfield will usually score a guy from second. This is a common occurance in real life, but it is something that video games seldom get right.

PAUL – 7

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** 3DO
■ **DEVELOPER** 3DO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 22

PLAYSTATION 2

4X4 EVOLUTION

NOW YOU TOO CAN BE A JERK

"The racing itself isn't necessarily revolutionary, but is well done."

Here in the hinterlands of Minnesota, there is an odd train of thought that goes through the minds of much of the population. Either because of the inclement weather during the winter months or the desire to have a boat in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, many fool themselves into believing that they need a huge four-wheel drive truck. Thus, about 90% of the vehicles on the road in this lovely state are gargantuan gas guzzlers that are rarely seen towing anything or carrying passengers other than the driver. Ironically, it's these same folk that complain most about high gas prices – Andy McNamara, perfect example.

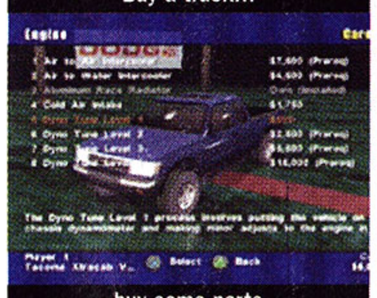
Why am I going on this mini-tirade? To help you understand that I hate non-commercial oversized vehicles; be it a pickup, a minivan, or an SUV. I not only dislike these modes of transport, I hate the drivers of them by default – Andy McNamara, perfect example. Yet, despite all my completely justified prejudices against the game's subject matter, I thoroughly enjoy playing 4X4 Evolution. Perhaps it's a classic "methinks he doth protest too much" case à la Eminem's lyrics versus his professed sexual persuasion, but I don't think so. I think it's just that this is a good game.

4X4's frontend is very reminiscent of the PlayStation classic, Need for Speed: High Stakes. Players are given a minimal amount of cash at the beginning of Career mode to buy their first truck (inexplicably, there's even some 2WD selections) and as many upgrades as they can afford. Fittingly, there's a selection of parts one can buy that do nothing more than make your truck look "cooler." To get more money, one must enter their truck in racing series and special events where cash prizes are awarded. The more grueling the race, the bigger the prize. As one accumulates wealth, more upgrades and trucks can be purchased.

The racing itself isn't necessarily revolutionary, but is well done. The key to winning is to know when to leave the path and off-road it to the next checkpoint. Mind you, this must often be done while avoiding oncoming trains, scattered junk, and other obstacles that most truck owners only wished they faced on a daily basis.

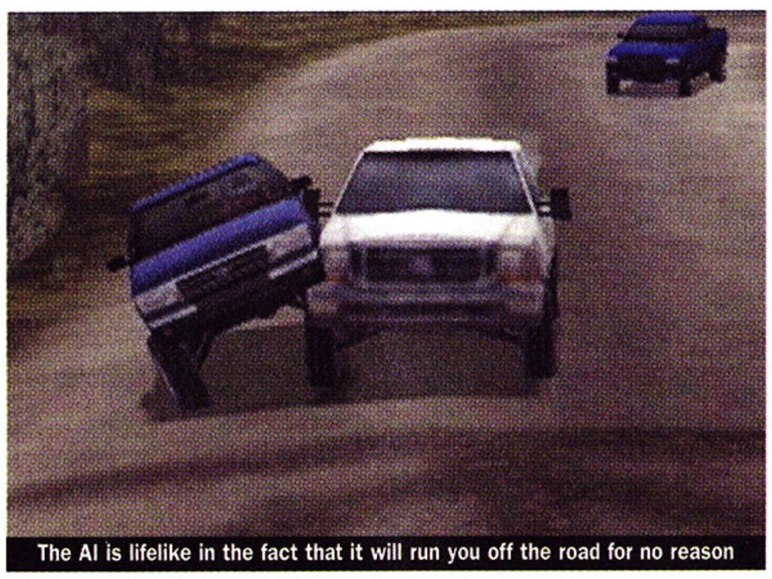
My only complaint with the PS2 incarnation of 4X4 Evolution is that there really isn't that much more here than in the Dreamcast. Other than there being one more onscreen opponent, adjustable AI, and a slightly better look, there isn't much reason to recommend this version over the other. Still, it will serve as an enjoyable distraction until something along the lines of Gran Turismo 3 comes along. – **JAY**

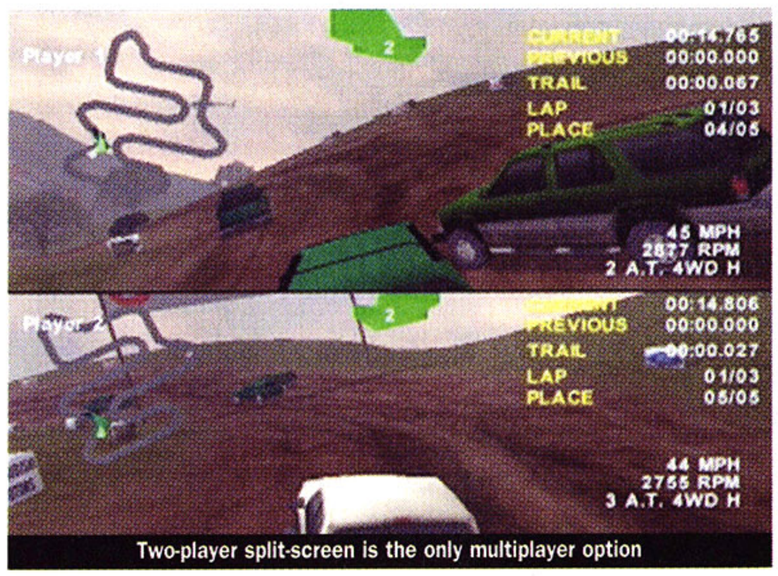
Buy a truck...


...buy some parts...

...get it ready to ride

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS ■ **DEVELOPER** TERMINAL REALITY
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 20


The AI is lifelike in the fact that it will run you off the road for no reason



Two-player split-screen is the only multiplayer option

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

- **Concept:** Cut off as many other people as possible to win races and collect cash so you can upgrade your truck, thereby getting better at cutting people off
- **Graphics:** A slight step up from the Dreamcast version, but not markedly so
- **Sound:** The soundtrack is tolerable
- **Playability:** Balancing an SUV on various inclines and finding the shortest route is a good challenge
- **Entertainment:** If you can get into the upgrades of Career mode, you'll be hooked
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

I've been following this game since its beta stages for the Dreamcast. Every time I've seen it, I've liked it more and more – except this time. Where's the rearview mirror? Seriously, where the heck is it? I can't find it. Maybe my racing team took it out to reduce vehicle weight or something like that. The physics also need to be tweaked a bit. I don't think I should be stopped absolutely dead if I run into a wooden sign post. Likewise, where's the damage? My truck looks absolutely spotless even after I've been broad-sided by that damned Jeep that's always up my tailpipe during races. That being said, the controls are still silky smooth, the graphics are second to none, and the addictive aspect is off the charts. This game is still the best racer out there for console – rearview mirror or not.

KRISTIAN – 8.5

PLAYSTATION 2

MDK2: ARMAGEDDON

SAME GAME, NEW YEAR

In hindsight, MDK2 on Dreamcast was a better game than I gave it credit for at the time. This is obvious to me now, thanks to Interplay re-releasing it on PlayStation 2. As far as I can tell, this is exactly the same game that it was a year ago except for some minor differences.

There are some graphical touch-ups and added lighting effects. Strangely, though, one can see some evidence of choppy framerate on this supposedly superior hardware it's running on. Another new addition is an adjustable camera. This would have been a nice feature if it weren't for the fact that, rather than automatically reverting to the most beneficial angle between switches to sniper mode, as it did on Dreamcast, players are now forced to do all the camera work themselves.

Despite the problems, MDK2 is still a fun game, and those who missed it on Sega's machine will most likely enjoy it on Sony's. The three-character gameplay and spot-on humor make for an enjoyable experience – even if it is the second time around. – **JAY**

SECOND OPINION

There have been few, if any, improvements made over the original Dreamcast MDK2, and the clumsy dual analog control actually feels worse. It's still a great game, but points off for lack of effort.

MATT – 7.75

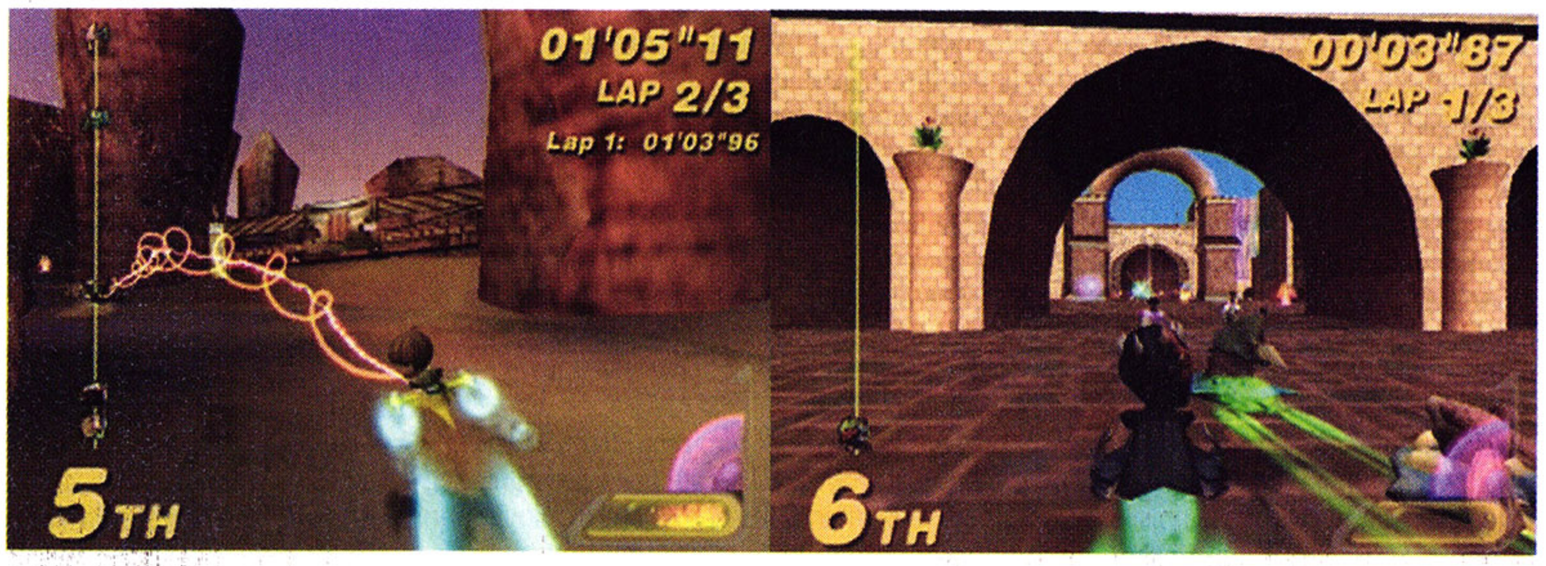
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

- **Concept:** A three-character foofaraw that came out a year ago on Dreamcast
- **Graphics:** Slightly better than the Dreamcast, but not a leap or a bound by any means
- **Sound:** Exactly – and I mean ex-act-ly – what was heard a year ago
- **Playability:** The controls are adjustable, but nagging configuration problems always seem to pop up
- **Entertainment:** If you haven't seen it before (and maybe even if you have) you'll probably like it now
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY ■ **DEVELOPER** DIGITAL MAYHEM/BIOWARE ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 27



PLAYSTATION 2

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING

POOPSA ON YOUSA!

Lucas Learning's entry into the console war, or should I say piggyback attempt to capitalize on a craze, is a superfluous disaster. Instead of sticking to its guns, which is having Jabba the Hutt teach kids about the multiplication tables, the Double L jumped on the Mario Kart bandwagon and pieced together an infectious title with a makeover like the influenza virus. If the virus is in the air, anyone can contract it. If Super Bombad Racing is on retail shelves, people will buy it for the name brand. Influenza makes you interminably sick. The gameplay in Super Bombad does the same thing.

With an insane learning curve and cumbersome controls, the target audience – children – won't get anything out of this game. Instead of laughing hysterically at the characters, I imagine kids will kick and scream when they play this game – an alternative to grounding perhaps? Believe me, I was almost in tears when Jar Jar lapped me. As for adults, the gameplay is way too shallow and the concept all the more obscure. – **REINER**

SECOND OPINION

Some games do make you violent after all. Playing Bombad seriously made me want to hurt myself and others. Stay away, or you may swear off video games forever and take up cross-stitch.

JUSTIN – 3

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

2.5

- **Concept:** Racing with cute, deformed Star Wars characters
- **Graphics:** Unless the characters' heads consist of millions of polygons, there's no excuse for the massive fogging
- **Sound:** Jar Jar-isms galore
- **Playability:** Though obviously targeted toward kids, this title has a fairly difficult learning curve
- **Entertainment:** Boring and uninspired, this racer is poorly designed and lacking in any kind of thrills
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** LUCAS LEARNING ■ **DEVELOPER** LUCAS LEARNING ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 24

Just like driving to lunch with Matt

PLAYSTATION 2

RUMBLE RACING

LET'S GET REEEEADY TO...OOPS, WRONG GAME

Last year's NASCAR Rumble had virtually nothing to do with stock car racing as we know it, so EA wisely ditched the superfluous (and expensive) license in bringing a sequel to the PS2. Now known as plain-old Rumble Racing, the game demonstrates some next-gen horsepower with vastly improved texturing and detailed environments.

For the most part, the game is pretty much the same as last time. The power-ups, tracks, bonus vehicles, and even the annoying hillbilly voice-over dude will be familiar to those that caught NASCAR Rumble on PS-X. The biggest – and other than graphics, only – improvement is the addition of stunts.

In mid-air, players use the left analog stick to flip and roll their cars. The crazier the maneuver you pull off, the bigger the turbo boost you get when you land, making stunts integral to winning races. In fact, I learned quite a bit of racing strategy from watching my computer opponents use even the smallest of ramps for a quick flip.

Rumble Racing isn't going to go down in history as the best racer around, but it is a nice addition to the PS2 racing pantheon. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

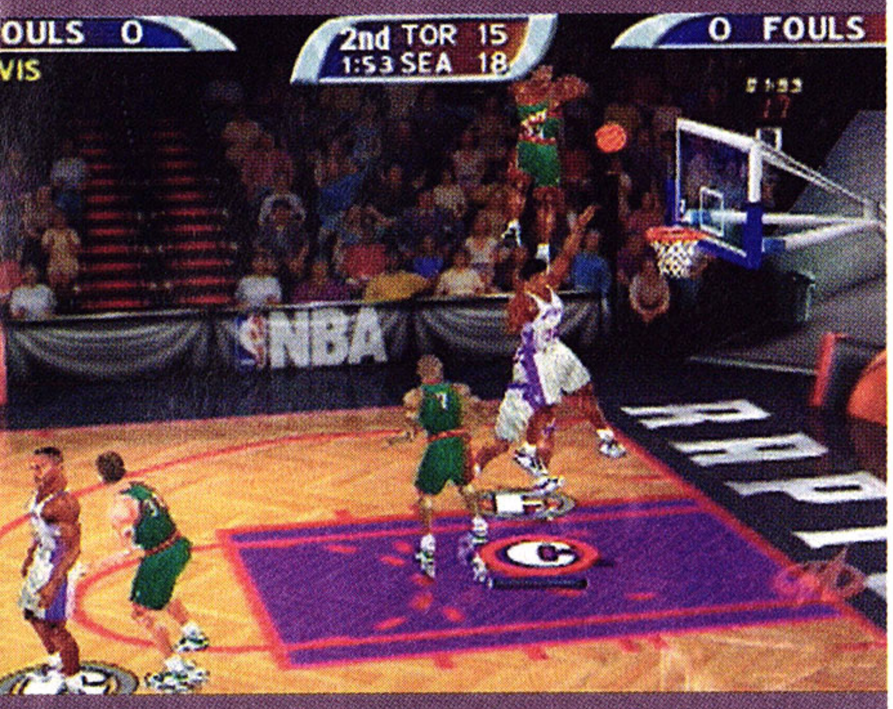
- **Concept:** Kart racing without the karts
- **Graphics:** The graphics aren't detailed, but the framerate is rock-solid, even on two-player
- **Sound:** Each level has its own music, but EA inexplicably kept that annoying announcer from NASCAR Rumble
- **Playability:** There's none of that "realistic physics" crap to get in the way of the fun
- **Entertainment:** A jolly good time, with enough hidden shortcuts and vehicles to keep you busy for a while
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

A little bit Hot Wheels and a lot bit NASCAR Rumble, this game has plenty of racing action without all that realism getting in the way. I personally would have ditched the yokel that rips on you throughout the race, but turning him off takes care of this minor annoyance. A fun diversion that anyone can pick up and play that also has enough depth to keep your tires spinning for more than a weekend.

JAY – 7.5

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **RELEASE** MAY 8



PLAYSTATION 2

NBA HOOPZ

ITZ CRAZEE HOOPZ JAMMIN' SHOWTIME!

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
5.75

NBA Hoopz (spelled with a "z" for extra-dope, keepin'-it-real street cred) is essentially another in the age-old NBA Jam/NBA Showtime series. Longtime fans will find the gameplay and graphics instantly familiar, right down to the old "He's on fire" flaming ball animation. As before, the game doesn't offer much in the way of Xs and Os, just give-and-go offensive shootouts.

I'm no Red Auerbach, so fast arcade action is fine by me, but there are two key faults that force me to tell NBA Hoopz to grab some pine at the far end of the PS2 basketball bench. One, and the most severe, is the graphics. The character models are absolutely laughable. During a game of Around the World, I could see the polygon that made up Vince Carter's neck jutting out through his shoulder blade. Compared to NBA 2K1, it's shameful how shabby NBA Hoopz looks. The second problem actually stems from one of the ostensible "improvements" that Eurocom made – ramping up the action to include three players per side. While this sounds great in theory, it generally manages to bog down the play on the court, as there's just too many people in the lane at once. Look elsewhere for your roundball kicks. – **MATT**

- **Concept:** NBA Jam with three players per team instead of two
- **Graphics:** If it looks this bad on PS2, I'd hate to see the PS-X version
- **Sound:** The announcer is on crack, and the music sounds like C&C Music Factory b-sides
- **Playability:** Stays true to the wacky b-ball action of its forefathers
- **Entertainment:** Other than six-man multiplayer games, there isn't a lot of value here
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

I had to double-check to make sure this wasn't the PS-X version. The graphics blow, with crummy models and one camera angle. The extra on-court player is useless, as his only purpose seems to be inbounding the ball. To be positive, it's nice to finally play 21 in a vid. Hoopz is fun for a bit, but arcade b-ball needs a shot in the arm.

JUSTIN – 5.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 6-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** MIDWAY
■ **DEVELOPER** EUROCOM ■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 15

PLAYSTATION 2

ESPN NHL NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

NO MORE PUCKING AROUND

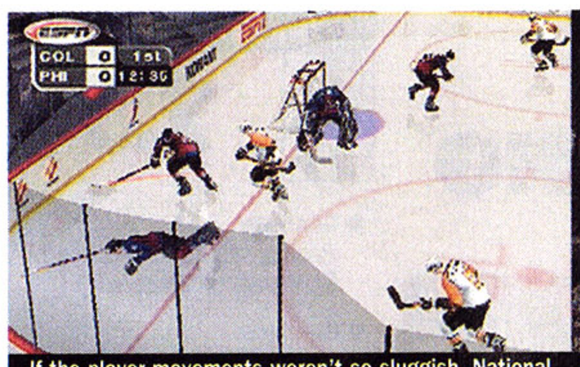
THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
6.25

Perhaps I suffer from delusions of grandeur. Perhaps I have too much faith in the underdog. Perhaps I expected too much from National Hockey Night. For some obscure reason or another, I truly, with all my heart, believed Konami had a shot at blasting a slap shot past EA Sports. It may just be me, but I always fall victim to long development cycles. This game has been under the scalpel for eons, so I naturally assumed it was a monster of a project. Of course, I never look at the flip side, which could very well have been a long gestation period to actually make the game work.

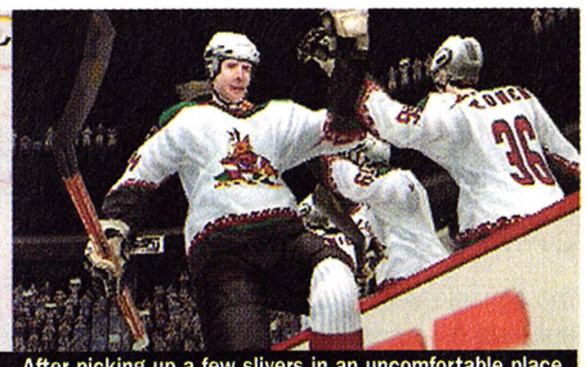
National Hockey Night is leagues ahead of FaceOff, but it comes up way short of the magic that is NHL 2001. While the graphics pale in comparison to EA's portfolio, I commend Konami for striving for realism. The player models are very sharp and the crowds and rinks have a certain flair to them. The animation, however, is a tad stiff, as is the entire gameplay package. The players' motions are way too mechanical and unresponsive. The computer AI is also a tad disappointing. I don't know how many times I watched a puck sail unnoticed through a swarm of players.

Kudos to Konami for trying to incorporate everything right down to drop, flip and no-search passing. If the control was there, maybe, just maybe, EA would have been gnawing on its nails, but without the ability to truly insert yourself into the game, there's no reason to play it. Stick with EA. – **REINER**

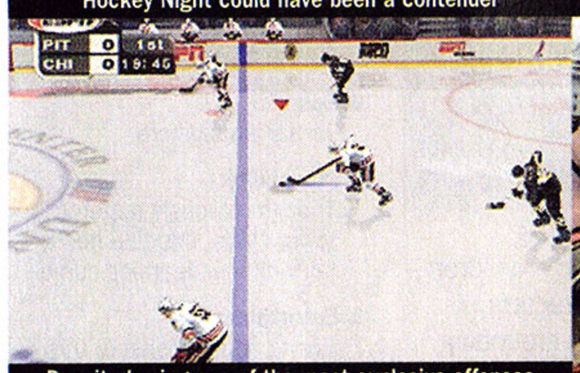
- **Concept:** Hockey with total ESPN integration
- **Graphics:** Not quite at the level where EA is, but impressive nonetheless
- **Sound:** The shallow commentary is repetitive and lacking in interesting information
- **Playability:** The gameplay is advanced, but it never really achieves its full potential thanks to crummy AI and obscure user movement
- **Entertainment:** It can't touch EA's product, but it is much better than 989's disaster
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High



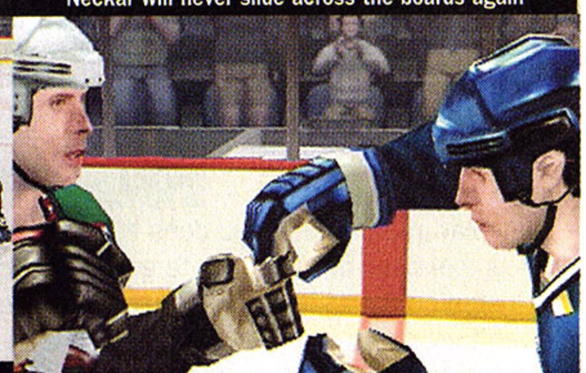
If the player movements weren't so sluggish, National Hockey Night could have been a contender



After picking up a few slivers in an uncomfortable place, Neckar will never slide across the boards again



Despite having one of the most explosive offenses in the league, the Blackhawks just suck



Fighting erupts through hilarious real-time cutscenes

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI/ESPN THE GAMES
■ **DEVELOPER** KCEO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 30

SECOND OPINION

National Hockey Night is a good game that is head and shoulders above most ESPN/Konami releases. Unfortunately, it goes mano a mano with a great game in EA Sports' NHL 2001. In nearly all criteria, NHL 2001 holds the advantage. The ESPN game has decent player models, but they look absolutely bland compared to NHL 2001. The control has a nice ice feeling, but it doesn't give the tightness of NHL 2001. These flaws don't make Hockey Night a terrible title, but a game's got to face off against somebody. ESPN does offer more realism, but that actually makes the game less fun in comparison. Also, I don't like not being able to tweak the rules for an arcade-style contest. If NHL 2001 didn't exist, I'd be singing praises to Hockey Night. If Reiner wasn't such a little wuss, he may have been an NHL All-Star, though, so that means nothing. Spend your puck buck on EA's NHL 2001.

JUSTIN – 6.75

Dirk's cool under pressure

Pathetic game or not, Malone still dominates

PLAYSTATION 2

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT

GET THAT SHOT OUTTA HERE

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

4.25

Let me preface my review by saying I've gotten at least an iota of enjoyment out of every b-ball game I've ever played, until now. ESPN NBA 2Night has broken that streak. How did this happen? I'm glad you asked. There's no turbo. Button functions are strangely inconsistent, and do different things when you press them at different times. The dunks are cheesy, and most times it doesn't look like the ball went through the hoop. Hitting steal causes you to run forward about ten feet. You jump unrealistically high. There's no way to pump-fake. Passes float like runaway balloons. You run through some players like ghosts, while others are immovable brick walls. Menu screens require obscure button presses to be activated. The score overlay disappears at times, especially during the last seconds of a quarter. There's more, but hopefully you get the point. A good TV-style presentation and nice models can't come close to keeping NBA 2Night from being utterly craptacular. – **JUSTIN**

SECOND OPINION

The passing is cumbersome and the lineups are just plain wrong. However, it shows a lot of potential in terms of moves – especially rebounding and drives to the hole.

PAUL – 5.5

- **Concept:** Shoot hoops with the ambience of ESPN
- **Graphics:** The nice-looking player models and ESPN overlay are the game's highlights
- **Sound:** Bounces and squeaks are accurate, and the commentary isn't horrible
- **Playability:** This has worse play than a Bulls/Wizards game
- **Entertainment:** Even if you're a hoop fiend, you'll scorn this title
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS ■ **PUBLISHER** KONAMI ■ **DEVELOPER** KONAMI
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 27

Each new song brings an outfit change

Get a fire extinguisher, cuz Dr. Dance is flamin'

PLAYSTATION 2

UNISON

WE CAN DANCE IF WE WANT TO

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

Unison is a nice twist on the rhythm genre, using both analog sticks on PlayStation 2's controller to play 'follow the bouncing ball' to an eccentric list of popular songs (Barbie Girl, Country Grammar, YMCA, etc.). It requires more skill than PaRappa or Space Channel 5, as you need to both memorize the sequences themselves and be pretty ambidextrous. Repeating the routines over and over to perfect your steps can be a drag, but Unison's clever story mode and great graphics reward your tenacity. It may turn off impatient gamers, but I grooved to the Unison tip. – **JUSTIN**

SECOND OPINION

As rhythm games go, Unison is pretty on the ball. Players need to watch the dancing as well as the analog instructions. Fun story, too. If you like titles of this ilk, check it out.

JAY – 7.5

- **Concept:** Teach the world to dance with three cute girls and their afro-sporting sensei
- **Graphics:** Real-time models are CG quality, and the camera angles are interesting
- **Sound:** Great, eclectic mixture of music, spanning all genres
- **Playability:** One of the more difficult music games, requiring timing with both hands
- **Entertainment:** It has its repetitive moments, but Unison will please rhythm game fans
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 3-PLAYER ACTION/PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** TECMO ■ **DEVELOPER** TECMO
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 23

PLAYSTATION 2

QUAKE III REVOLUTION

YOU'LL SHOOT YOUR EYE OUT

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.75

Quake III Arena has been around for a long time now, with tours on PC, Mac, and most recently Dreamcast. Much like the popular girl in high school, it has been seen on the arm of several big publishers on campus. For PS2, Quake is cruising with varsity jock Electronic Arts, and calling itself "Revolution." New name or not, this is Quake III Arena all the way, but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Not having online play sucks, but I soon got over it. Frankly, playing DC Q3A on lag-prone 56k against seasoned broadband PC veterans wore thin pretty damn fast. Thus, I'm happy to report Revolution's single-player campaign is moderately improved. Move up a tier, and your character gets a makeover and improved attributes. These small rewards are a welcome pat on the back for becoming Dr. Quakenstein. Multiplayer deathmatch is amiable, but I would've liked more options for both bots and match types.

I can't complain about much in Quake, aside from the fact it offers nothing new. PS2 is the system that has TimeSplitters, Unreal Tournament, and will see Red Faction shortly. While quite a bit of fun to play, Quake III Revolution takes a backseat to all of the above. – **JUSTIN**

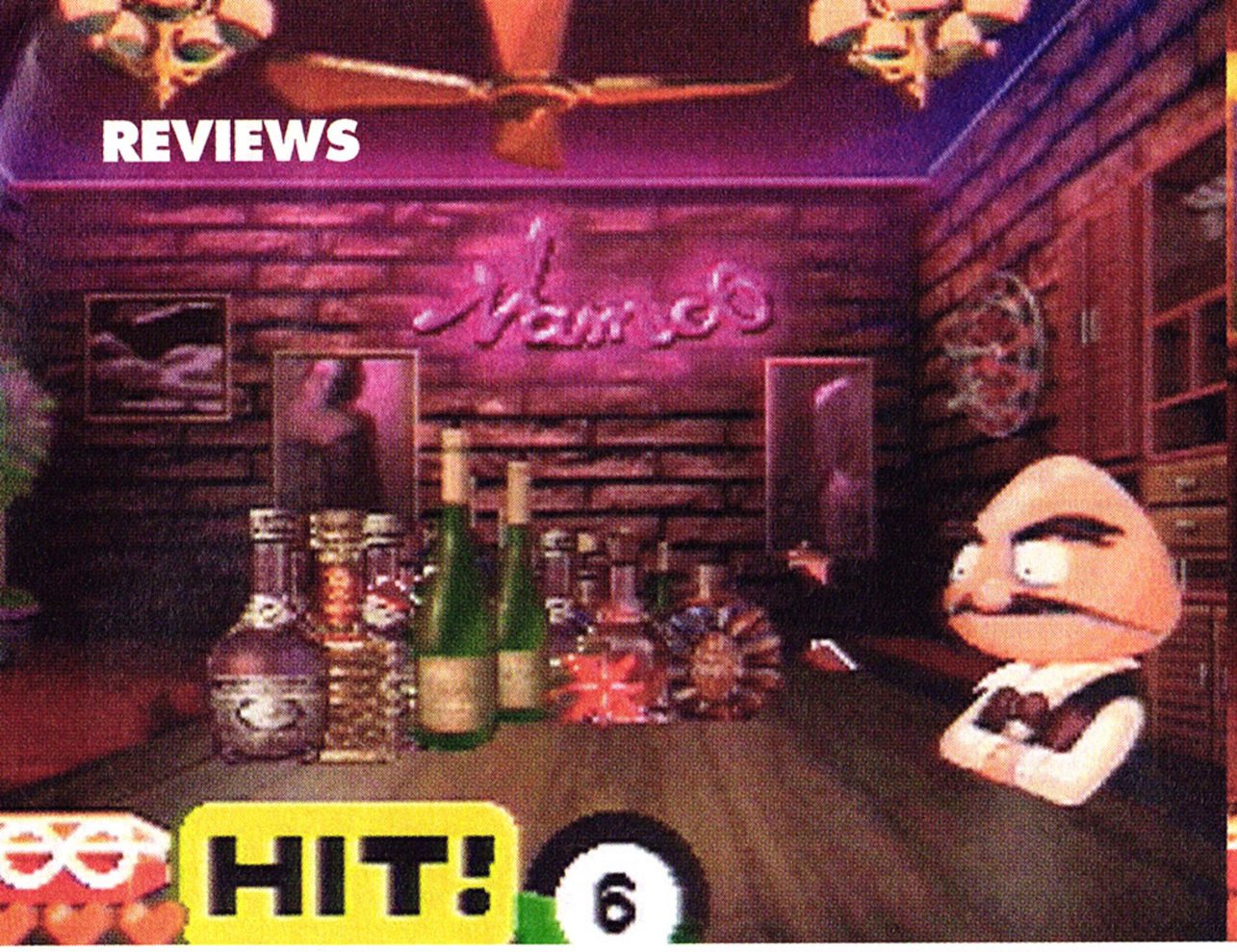
- **Concept:** Frag first, ask questions later
- **Graphics:** Nice textures and effects, but indistinguishable from the Dreamcast version
- **Sound:** Deep and bass-filled music, with NIN influences evident. Sound effects suit mood to a tee
- **Playability:** Old-school controller configuration, but it works well
- **Entertainment:** Good for what it is, but faces tough competition on PS2, especially without online deathmatch
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

This is the quintessential Quake game – if you've liked the previous versions, you'll like this one. The developers actually did a pretty decent job porting Quake down to the console in terms of graphics and gameplay intensity. The controls leave a little to be desired, and saying someone did a good job of porting Quake isn't saying much.

KRISTIAN – 6.75

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** BULLFROG PRODUCTIONS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 27



PLAYSTATION

POINT BLANK 3

I'D LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SHOOT

"If you haven't played the first two Point Blank games, you probably won't miss the lack of a side-quest, and will have a blast."

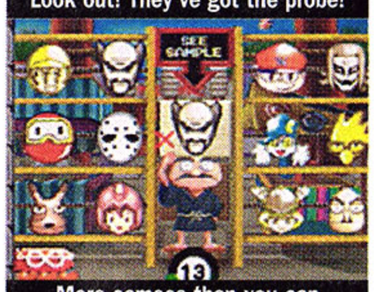
While most coin-op developers were designing gun games that featured serious scenarios and realistic enemies, Namco looked at the lighter side of light guns and gave us Point Blank. This series presented gunslingers with a veritable cornucopia of goofy, short stages, which basically made fun of the grim aura surrounding firearms. Sure, some of these levels would make you blast ninjas or gangsters, but there were far more obscure tasks, such as hitting an apple off Dr. Dan's head with a single shot, or blasting matching pairs of stuffed animals.

Namco, in all its arcade conversion glory, perfectly ported Point Blank to the PlayStation. To increase replay value, Quest mode was added. This extremely fun RPG-ish journey mixed the varied stages together with a lost treasure angle, complete with non-player characters, item shops, and experience points. A sequel was released a year later with all-new stages. Replacing Quest mode was Theme Park mode, another plot-driven endeavor, but this time without the role-playing aspects. While not as fun, it was still a good break from the standard gameplay.

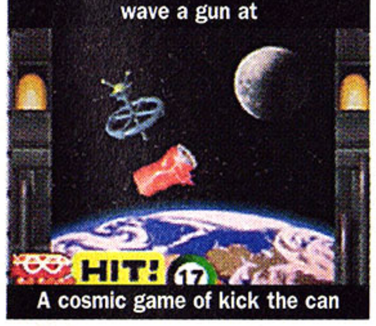
It is now 2001, and the life of the PlayStation is giving way to next-gen consoles. Still, Namco wants to complete the triumvirate with one last Point Blank. There are more stages than before, which number above 80. They include one-shot hit or miss levels, mass enemy eradication, defensive protection drills, and brain-swelling "think before you shoot" exercises. Old standbys like Party, Endurance, Arcade, Versus, and Practice modes are still here, too, so it's all good. Well, maybe not all good, since there isn't a brand new story-driven mode this time around. What's up with that?!

If you haven't played the first two Point Blank games, you probably won't miss the lack of a sidequest, and will have a blast. I think the different stages in Point Blank 3 are of a better variety and higher quality than those of its predecessors. How can you not love shooting at Klonoa, or playing a game of light gun Galaxian? However, there's no way I can give it a higher score when it's lacking a trademark mode. Despite the omission, I still would recommend Point Blank 3 over any traditional gun game out there (Virtua Cop, House of the Dead, etc.). It's a simple matter of fun factor, in which PB3 stands head and shoulders above any of those games. It's just going to have to take third billing to the other titles in its own series. – **JUSTIN**

Look out! They've got the probe!



More cameos than you can wave a gun at



A cosmic game of kick the can

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** NAMCO ■ **DEVELOPER** NAMCO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 27

Point Blank can teach you to tell time

It's Tekken's Mokujin!

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

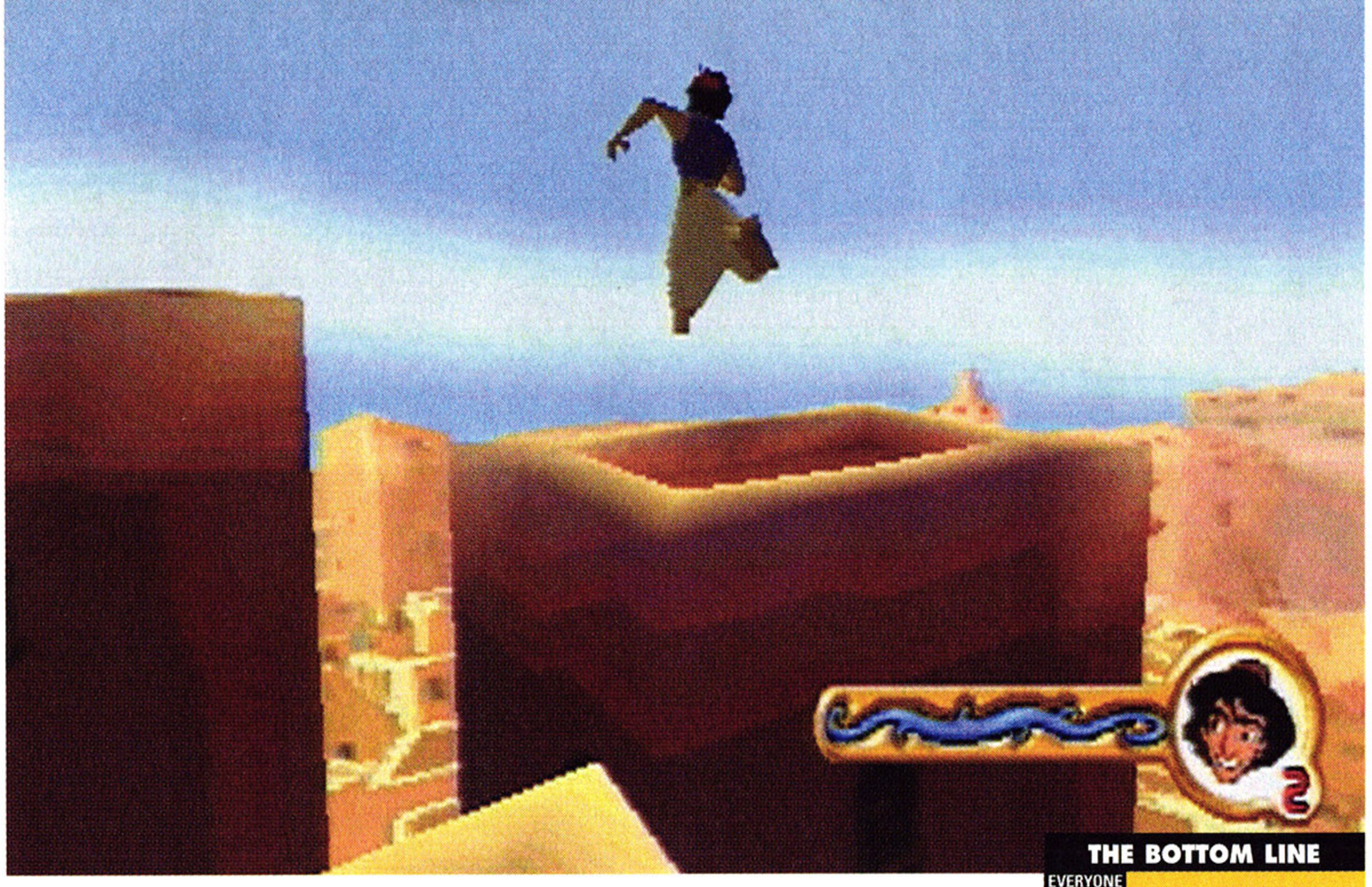
7.25

- **Concept:** Grab your Guncon and take aim in dozens of unique stages
- **Graphics:** Simple sprites get the job done and rarely come off as ugly
- **Sound:** Wacky music and sound effects keep the carnival-esque mood fresh
- **Playability:** There is a wide variety of games, and each controls flawlessly
- **Entertainment:** This series is a blast, but number three offers no new modes
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Years after its introduction, Namco's Guncon is still one of the best video game gun peripherals in the business, but even this isn't enough to make Point Blank three a worthwhile purchase. It's not that the last in this trilogy isn't enjoyable – far from it! The problem is that the wrinkles of age are beginning to show in this series' graphic presentation, and there's really no reason to play number three over number one or two. Oh sure, there are a few new stages thrown in here and there, but it's all basically the same stuff. Plus, if you haven't started on gun games at this point in the PlayStation life cycle, Point Blank 3 isn't going to convince you to do so. Namco, it's time to take the Guncon and the two doctors that go with them to PlayStation 2, and bring this respected franchise up to next-gen speed.

JAY – 6



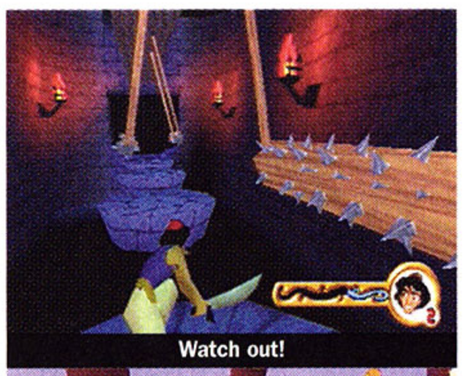
PLAYSTATION

DISNEY'S ALADDIN IN NASIRA'S REVENGE

ALADDIN SANE!

Another day, another Disney platformer. There's been what seems like a million of these released over the past few years, and Nasira's Revenge doesn't do much to distinguish itself from the pack. I rather liked the recent Emperor's New Groove, and I can't help but think that Nasira's Revenge was given to the Argonaut B-squad while it had its more valued employees working on ENG and the highly-anticipated Malice for Xbox. That's not to denigrate the work that the development team put into this title, as it is, in every way, a perfectly decent kid-oriented game. It's just that it really doesn't bring much to the table.

All the standbys of the genre are here: collecting coins, bonus minigames, exploration, and the never-ending quest for keys to open locked doors. Argonaut also implemented some ambitious flying sequences, which, unfortunately, are rendered unduly difficult by a poor framerate and suspect control. Ultimately, there just wasn't anything that made me want to keep playing for more than a few hours. As is often the case, the whole is less than the sum of its parts. Call it mediocre, call it dull, and call it a rental, if that. – **MATT**



Watch out!

Features bonus stages between levels

As in the old SNES classic, Aladdin can chuck fruit at his foes

Take a magic carpet ride in this hectic flying level

Aladdin in a standoff with the female cast of Ally McBeal

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE

6

- **Concept:** A by-the-numbers platformer starring the popular Disney character
- **Graphics:** Pretty choppy, with an inexcusable amount of pop-up
- **Sound:** Features lots of voice-overs, and stars a Robin Williams impersonator. Unfortunately, Gilbert Gottfried was available to revisit his role as Lago
- **Playability:** Satisfactory, if you factor out the camera problems and bad collision
- **Entertainment:** Manages to throw enough different play modes into the mix, but pretty ho-hum in general
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

I'm just going to turn my back and pretend I didn't play this detestable game. Even though Argonaut hasn't delivered a blockbuster title in...oh...six or seven years, I still respect this development house, but...well...this game is just embarrassing. Not only is the control way too sloppy, the graphics are repulsive, and none of the levels really deliver a goal or a purpose. I just ran around aimlessly collecting coins, then without notice, the stage would come to an end. Outside of the actual game, I did enjoy the bonus levels, and for some reason or another, I got a real kick out of watching Aladdin bite the big one. Actually, I felt completely refreshed, opposed to frustrated or upset, whenever Al would die. This, of course, has a significant meaning. I hate this game and I would rather commit virtual suicide than collect stupid coins. Stay away! This game is cursed!

REINER – 5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM ■ **PUBLISHER** SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT AMERICA ■ **DEVELOPER** ARGONAUT ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 13

PLAYSTATION

STRIKERS 1945

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR EPILEPTICS

Traditional shooters don't garner the same support among the gaming community they once did, but that doesn't mean that the aging genre doesn't offer up a unique brand of harrowing gameplay that is missing from many (more graphically sophisticated) modern games. So, if it's been a while since you pushed your reflexes to the breaking point, renting Strikers 1945 for the weekend might be just the gaming workout you need. Featuring the arcade version of Strikers 1945 and Strikers 1945 II, this title doesn't do anything to improve on the originals, other than offer free continues and multiple difficulty levels (the lowest of which are amusingly labeled "Baby" and "Monkey"). As with most shooters, finishing this one on the hardest difficulty setting will be a challenge to say the least. Good fun, but I can't see anyone getting more than a few days of playtime out of Strikers 1945. – **MATT**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN

6.75

- **Concept:** Shoot lots of gigantic aircraft, try not to have a seizure in the process
- **Graphics:** Not too impressive, especially compared to recent PS2 shooters like Silpheed
- **Sound:** Pew! Pew! Pew! Kooosh! Pllooow! Pkooo! Blooooooogh! Boouoaaauuuw!
- **Playability:** Requires Zen-like composure to conquer, but there are seven difficulty levels
- **Entertainment:** Unless you're one of the ever-dwindling cult of shooter fanatics, consider this a rental only
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Other than a difficulty setting for simians, I found nothing significantly original in this arcade shooter. Not a horrible game, but not really worth more than ten bucks.

JAY – 6.5

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** AGETEC ■ **DEVELOPER** SUCCESS/PSIKYO ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 28

Altered Beast

DREAMCAST

SEGA SMASH PACK

SMASH YOUR HEAD ON THE 16-BIT ROCK

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

9

This engaging trip down memory lane should be required in any Video Games 101 curriculum. If you've played any of these gems in the past, rest assured that Sega has done a perfect job of porting them to the DC, right down to the "vintage" slowdown and tinny music. Years later, it's interesting to see which games still seem fresh (Sonic, Vectorman) and which have aged poorly (Altered Beast, Wrestle War). Although you could quibble with a few of the games Sega chose to include (particularly Sega Swirl), this disc will give you some serious playtime, especially when you factor in Phantasy Star II and Shining Force, two long-lost classic RPG titles.

What more can be said about the Smash Pack? If you love classic Sega games, you must own this title. Unfortunately, most of you who care to play a collection of 12, decade-old Genesis classics probably already own a Dreamcast, and the only way you can get this Smash Pack right now is to buy the special edition Dreamcast bundle for $119. Sega has promised to release SSP as a stand-alone title in the future, but for now, keep checking your local used game store. – **MATT**

- **Concept:** Sega packs 12 of its classic 16-bit and arcade titles into one tiny GD-ROM
- **Graphics:** These ports are totally authentic, right down to the slowdown and flicker
- **Sound:** Nothing has been done to enhance the tinny Genesis-era sound, but I guess that adds to the classic ambience
- **Playability:** Good across the board, but caused me to curse the DC's loose d-pad
- **Entertainment:** You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll realize how much Altered Beast really sucked
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

With 12 titles (six beauties, in my opinion) from the 16-bit era and beyond, Smash Pack blows away any other compilation pack. Sonic, Shining Force, Streets of Rage 2...I'm wet.

JUSTIN – 8.5

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER COMPILATION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA
■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA ■ **RELEASE** JANUARY 30

DREAMCAST

WORMS WORLD PARTY

BURROWING INTO CYBERSPACE

THE BOTTOM LINE

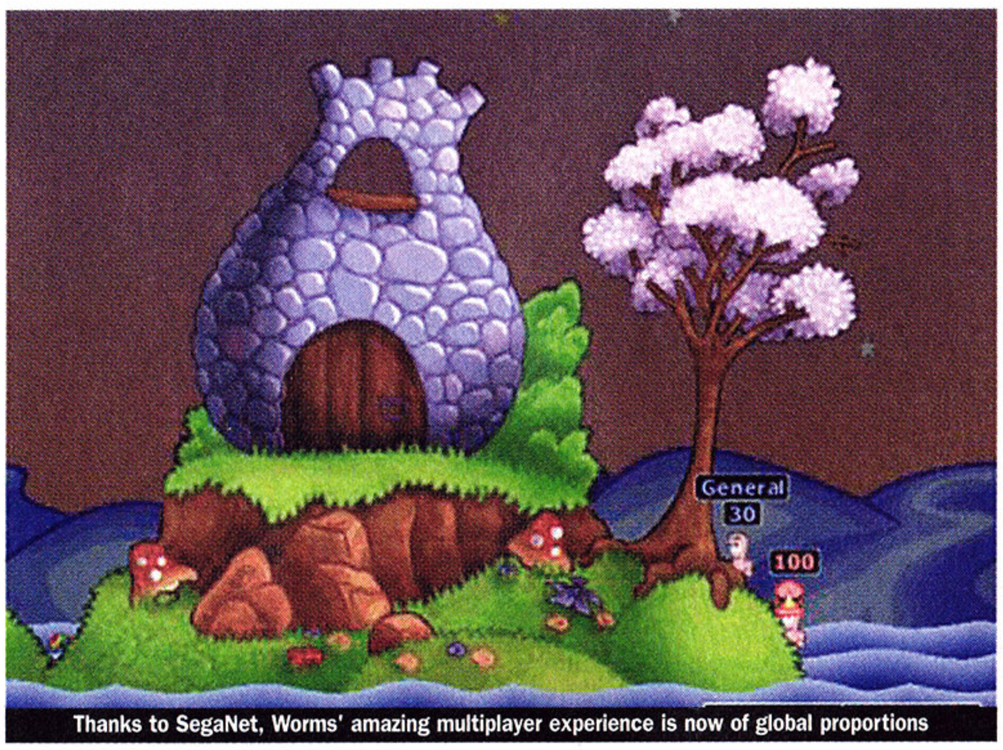
EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

In 1881, Charles Darwin said, "It may be doubted whether there are many other creatures which have played so important a part in the history of the world." He of course was referencing the worm – those little slimy things you run over with your car and drink with your tequila. A wildlife observer myself, I heartily agree with Chuck's statement. Worms rule, especially when equipped with diabolical doomsday devices and weapons of war. On the gaming side, Earthworm Jim made a big splash a few years back, and now Team 17's multiplayer party series, Worms, has wiggled its way into the hot seat of multiplayer gaming.

I wouldn't say Worms' single-player game is valueless, but competing against the computer, as opposed to a friend, just doesn't cut the mustard. The computer's accuracy and movements are always perfect, and unless you're a physics major, you really can't keep up. You more or less have to rely on luck. Even though Worms World Party is equipped with 45 new missions, all of which prove to be quite difficult, the true thrills lie within multiplayer. Not only has Team 17 included a handful of new multiplayer modes, you can also launch Banana Bombs across the globe via SegaNet. Since the makeover of this title is fairly simplistic, you won't encounter lag or choppy framerates when competing online.

A wonderful turn-based strategic game to begin with, Worms World Party takes the franchise to the next level. If you enjoy multiplayer skirmishes, you needn't look any further. – **REINER**



Thanks to SegaNet, Worms' amazing multiplayer experience is now of global proportions

- **Concept:** Earthworms invade Dreamcast cyberspace
- **Graphics:** Who says hermaphrodites can't be adorable? When you see these little buggers running amok, you just want to lean over and give them a hug
- **Sound:** Did you know earthworms produce over 60% of their weight in urine every day?
- **Playability:** 70% of an earthworm's body is protein. That's why birds like to eat them
- **Entertainment:** If you pull off a worm's head, it will grow back
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

What more can you say about this addition of Worms, other than it's just too danged addictive to put down. Worms is not the most complicated game in the world, but that's part of its charm and appeal. All of the different weapons and items to choose from make the game a bit overwhelming if you're a newbie, but after you learn the basics and get your timing down, it's all about finesse. You'll have to become really familiar with all the options and items available to you if you want to have a prayer of beating the single-player games. Of course, these skills will serve you well as you take on your buddies. There aren't many console games out there you can play for five hours and not see anything different from your first five minutes, but still love it.

KRISTIAN – 8.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** TITUS ■ **DEVELOPER** TEAM 17 SOFTWARE
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 14

DREAMCAST

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

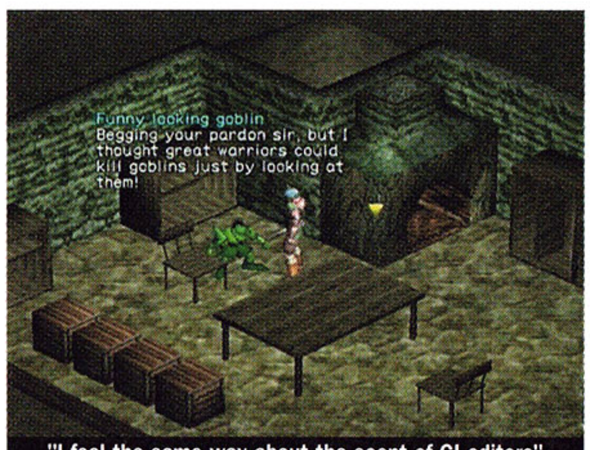
DREAMCAST'S DIABLO

Based on the anime films of the same name, Record of Lodoss War is an action/RPG that can't help but be compared to Diablo. The perspective, equipment screen, mapping, and character attributes are practically lifted from this famed PC game verbatim – but not even Blizzard itself could have made a Dreamcast game as good as this.

There are certainly slight problems with Lodoss War, but every gameplay facet has been fashioned so perfectly one easily forgets the imperfections. The controls are faultless. The item enchantment system is fascinating. The choices for players to make are staggering.

Best of all, the pleasure lasts a long time. There are no random dungeons, but sidequests and places not pertinent to the adventure at hand abound. Even were you to concentrate only on required missions, Lodoss would still take weeks to complete. It's that big.

The ultimate hidden gem in the Dreamcast library, Record of Lodoss War is a fantastic game that's been unjustly underordered by every video game retailer across the country. If you're even remotely interested in it, I suggest you go buy it right away. I guarantee it will be selling for around a couple hundred in a few years. – **JAY**



"I feel the same way about the scent of GI editors"

Slowdown only occurs when the screen is filled with enemies

The interface allows for every player assistance

You'll feel better if you just skip all the CG cutscenes

Adding runes to weapons is almost a game unto itself

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** Diablo without the randomized dungeons
- **Graphics:** There's slowdown during particularly large battles, and the cutscenes are an absolute joke, but otherwise not too bad
- **Sound:** The music that changes according to the situation is usually quite fitting
- **Playability:** Every effort has been made to make the interface as helpful as possible, and it shows
- **Entertainment:** A hack n' slasher that refuses to grow stale no matter how deep into it you are
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Looking at the back of Lodoss' case, you couldn't be blamed for putting it down without a second thought. In actuality, however, RoLW is an engaging title whose similarities to other games doesn't do it any harm. Apart from Diablo, Lodoss has taken a page from Vagrant Story by making your equipment customizable. By inscribing ancient words upon your swords and armor at the blacksmith's, you can improve their abilities. Problems with the game, such as the lack of a fully rotational camera, some slowdown (when mobbed by hordes), and no targeting system, aren't major. This latter fact is overcome by your ability to pivot around while continuously hacking away at limbs. Meanwhile, the environments are huge and overflowing with fodder and riches that will capture your attention.

KATO – 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG ■ **PUBLISHER** CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT
■ **DEVELOPER** CONSPIRACY ENTERTAINMENT/ESP ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 20

DREAMCAST

MARS MATRIX

YOU DIE NOW!

Mars Matrix is gloriously hypnotic and chaotic. One level will hack you up like Sam the butcher bringing Alice the meat. You endure this for a while, saving up enough points to buy extra credits. With a more plentiful fleet, you triumphantly advance past the infinite enemies and crossfire. You stride to the next stage with a cocky swagger, only to get even more mercilessly destroyed. As much aggravation as this brings upon your person, you are powerless to stop, and are doomed to repeat this cycle until the nice men in clean white coats come to take you away (ha ha).

I seriously had to force myself to blink while playing Mars Matrix. Any game that makes your body cease involuntary functions has to be insane. There is so much ammo hurling your way at times you literally can't avoid it, and end up either charging your screen-clearing blast in time to beat baddies to the punch, or dying like a dog. Thankfully, you can fly through all enemies, and are only vulnerable to their fire. Every experience point you collect brings you a hair closer to divinity. The high replay value means everything, and pushes the addiction level of Mars Matrix off the scale. – **JUSTIN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

- **Concept:** Bringing shooter veterans to the breaking point, then spitting in their grimacing faces
- **Graphics:** No slowdown, but primitive in every other respect
- **Sound:** I was too busy swearing like a sailor to notice any audio
- **Playability:** The invincible power-up system enhances the drama, since you have to wait for it to charge
- **Entertainment:** One man's fun is another's insanity
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

What it lacks in graphics and sound it makes up for in heartlessness. Never before has a game been as ruthless as Mars Matrix. A shooter with an interesting experience system, each level contains ever-increasing insanity. It's the most compelling DC shooter since Armada, and it will destroy your ego. Highly recommended.

JAY – 7.75

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER SHOOTER ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM
■ **DEVELOPER** TAKUMI ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 29

PC

FALLOUT TACTICS: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

WHAT IS YOUR MAJOR MALFUNCTION?!

"Fallout is another stellar release in a long line of games done the right way"

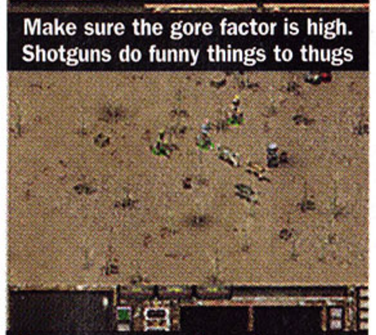
I knew it. I knew it! Ten seconds into the first briefing from the General, I knew it was R. Lee Ermey doing the voice acting – the infamous drill instructor from *Full Metal Jacket*. After a little research, it turned out I was right. That fact alone is reason enough to get this game. R. Lee nails every voice-over he has in this release, and lends a lot of depth to a game already steeped in great gameplay.

These things beg the question: What the hell was Interplay thinking releasing that steaming crap-heap Jagged Alliance 2? I mean, JA2 is only a stone's throw away from being a Fallout clone, but at the same time it's oh-so-far from it. I mean, they had to have known JA2 was going to blow, why not just kick it to the curb and wait for the reigning champion of squad-based combat games, Fallout? I do have to hand it to Interplay, though. Eight times out of ten they deliver incredible games that I stay up until 4:00 in the morning playing because I can't get past this damned Guardian...er, in any case, Fallout is another stellar release in a long line of games done the right way.

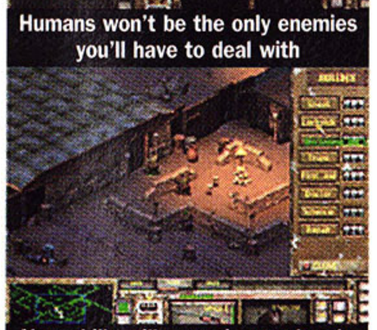
The gameplay in Fallout Tactics is second to none when it comes to accurate command movement. If you tell your squad to move to a certain location that isn't in direct line of sight, they'll almost always find the fastest, safest route to the location. The enemy AI is pretty hit or miss. Sometimes baddies will call for help during a firefight, sometimes they'll just sit there shooting at you with a handgun from 50 yards away. The character AI definitely leaves something to be desired. As you move your squad around they'll tend to bunch together. If you come across an enemy, everyone will start firing, no matter where they are or who's in front of them. My man on the street howitzer kept shooting my sniper in the back every time we got jumped. A formation option would have taken care of that, but lo, it was not to be.

Hypothetical situation: You and I are in a firefight. You have a bat, I have an AK-47. Who do you think will win? I'd say the smart money is on me, even though I'm a terrible shot. Not so in Fallout Tactics. In fact, in most instances, if you can get close enough to an enemy with a melee weapon, you'll take them out faster than you would with a rifle or pistol. Aside from these little snafus, this game is as solid as bedrock. The skills you gain through leveling are varied and interesting, your fighting abilities increase at a good rate, and the open-ended mission structure leaves all sorts of room for improvisation and invention when it comes to tactical strategy. Kudos to Micro Forté for putting together a great pseudo-sequel – something most developers have a lot of trouble with. – **KRISTIAN**

Make sure the gore factor is high. Shotguns do funny things to thugs



Humans won't be the only enemies you'll have to deal with



Your skills will come in very handy throughout the game

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 18-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERPLAY/14° EAST ■ **DEVELOPER** MICRO FORTÉ ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 15

We'll be okay as long as that cow doesn't start wandering around...

...oh darn

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.75

- **Concept:** A squad-based combat game that actually works. Rejoice!
- **Graphics:** Wonderfully gory, highly detailed, and almost faultless. You won't be disappointed
- **Sound:** Lots of voice acting went into this one. Remember the drill sergeant from *Full Metal Jacket*? He's all over this game
- **Playability:** There's a bit of a learning curve involved with getting the ball rolling, but once you've got it, you'll be wondering why it was so hard in the first place
- **Entertainment:** You could spend a couple of hours going through the different attributes alone
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

There's a right way to do things and a wrong way to do things. Micro Forté seems to have used both methodologies in the creation of Fallout Tactics. First, the good. The dark humor of the Fallout series has remained fully intact; so has the wide array of weapons and drugs. Even though it's mostly a real-time strategy game, Tactics does possess a role-playing flavor. As you progress through the many lengthy missions, your crew gain experience, go up levels, and get skill points that are extremely useful on the field. Now, for the bad. The missions can sometimes move at a numbingly slow pace. The AI, especially for your squad, is schizophrenic. There's also some annoying graphic flickers and inconvenient gameplay pauses thrown in for good measure. Fallout Tactics is a good game, but I would much rather have had a Fallout 3.

JAY – 8

PC

CLIVE BARKER'S: UNDYING

HEART ATTACK INDUCING

"Undying is a first-person shooter for people who've decided that they do not want to sleep anymore..."

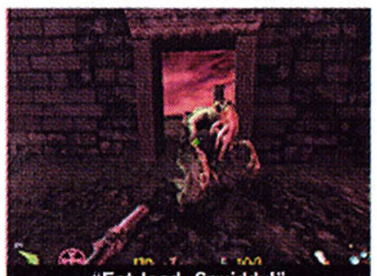
In the vein of American McGee's Alice, Clive Barker's: Undying will have you wishing you didn't play video games so late at night. Undying is an FPS for people who've decided that not only do they not want to sleep anymore, but when they finally do, they want to have nightmares. What makes this title stand out is not its incredible graphics, nor its wonderful gameplay – it's the ambiance. It's the little hairs standing up on the back of your neck as you enter a dimly-lit room.

Undying takes you on a journey through a number of warped and twisted environments all in an effort to seek out the evil that has begun to infest the island home of your friend. Things have not been going well for your buddy. Indeed, since he and his brothers and sisters unlocked some kind of dark magic at a nearby rock formation when they were children, he is now the only one left alive. It is your task to figure out why they died and how to stifle the growing evil on the island.

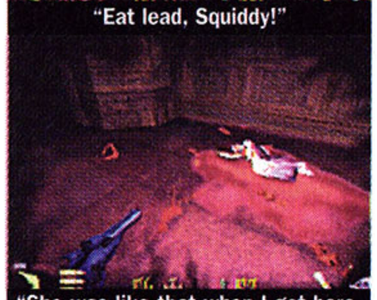
To do this, you'll have a number of weapons and spells at your disposal. Your trusty revolver will be what keeps you safe in the beginning of the game, along with a strange green rock with magical powers. Along your journeys you'll find different spells which are added to your repertoire should you need them. Their effects range from attacking to vision enhancement, and are a hotkey away if you need to switch them quickly. There will also be myriad items scattered throughout the levels to help you on your way. The health pickups are particularly nice in that if you pick one up, but you don't need it, you can save it for later. No more hunting around for all the loose heallth after a particularly heavy monster battle.

Undying is freaky. There's no denying that. If you're lucky enough to have surround sound in your game room, this game will make sure you're looking over your shoulders in a cold sweat. However, Undying falters a bit graphically. You'll see some texture breaking, and there will be some hiccups with walking into walls and items at times. Also, there seems to be a bit of a bug with some of the doors where they'll open with your approach, then as you pull away, they'll close immediately. So basically you can't open a door, then peer in from the safety of the hallway. You'll have to go all the way in.

Solid graphics, great sound, easy gameplay. It's an FPS worth having unless you really hate being scared. How does it compare to Counter-Strike, you may ask yourself? Apples and oranges, baby...apples and oranges. – **KRISTIAN**



"Eat lead, Squiddy!"



"She was like that when I got here, I swear!"

Different people will help you out along the way

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 20

"I told you to knock...

...now take your medicine!"

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M

8

- **Concept:** Blast away at enemies with a variety of weapons, and hope that the lights don't go out
- **Graphics:** A solid effort, but there are chinks in the graphical armor
- **Sound:** Some of the most eerie, disturbing and unsettling sound effects I've heard this side of a movie theatre
- **Playability:** It's an FPS, but there are a couple of extras you'll have to figure out to survive
- **Entertainment:** If you liked Resident Evil, or anything resembling Resident Evil, you'll love this game
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

Don't turn out the lights, and whatever you do, don't play it alone. In typical Clive Barker fashion, Undying is a suspense-filled fright-fest that keeps you on the edge of your seat and terrified of what ghoulish surprise may lurk around the next corner. Not only will unexpected enemy attacks make you jump out of your seat more than you care to, the eerily ambient sounds and disturbing visual content will fill your head with uncertainty and fear. This may just be another FPS, but it packs a wallop. The animations are superb, the environmental decor is simply breathtaking, and the gameplay is fluid and challenging. Outside of the gameplay realm, the cutscenes really don't stand out or tie into the demonic theme at hand. However, the characters are interesting and the plot is quite perplexing. Needless to say, this is a must for horror fans.

REINER – 8.25

PC

EVIL ISLANDS

EVIL SUPRISES

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB **5.25**

Let me start this review by saying that there is no way to equip armor you find when you're out on a quest. That means you have to go back to your base to equip any armor you might come across. That has to be the most ridiculous feature in an RPG I've ever come across. Heck, why allow us to have weapons at all?

Evil Islands reminds me of a dungeon crawler that doesn't really work. It seems like there was a good game in here somewhere at some point. Somehow the gameplay was compromised. I'm not sure if it happened early or late in the game's development, but it's definitely flawed. It's interesting to note at this point that I was probably enjoying the game to a moderate degree before I realized that there were deeper problems than a patch could fix. Along with that, your character tries to be edgy and sassy (at least that's what I think he was trying to do), but during each conversation you have, it comes off like the guy is just being snotty. That's the script's fault, though.

I think Evil Islands is an innovative game that just came up too short on the gameplay side of things for me to be as forgiving as I may have wanted. If it were possible to rent PC games, I might suggest giving it a try. However, since that's not possible, I'd wait until this one is in a bargain bin somewhere. It shouldn't be too long.
– **KRISTIAN**

- **Concept:** It's an RPG that almost works, but comes up short
- **Graphics:** Tight detail, easy camera movement and fluid animation make this title easy on the eyes
- **Sound:** There's actually a good amount of voice acting packed into this game. That, coupled with the unobtrusive music and average battle sounds, make this game easy to listen to
- **Playability:** The tutorials force you to figure out what you're doing, but it turns out EI is your garden-variety action game with some RPG thrown in
- **Entertainment:** It's fun until you realize you can't access your equipment when you're on a quest
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

The main character in Evil Islands is absolutely horrible, as are most of the graphics, but I did find this game mildly entertaining. The quests are pretty interesting, and it takes a fair amount of exploration to find the right solution. Not a bad adventure in the Diablo vein.

ANDY – 7

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 6-PLAYER ACTION/ROLE PLAYING
■ **PUBLISHER** FISHTANK INTERACTIVE ■ **DEVELOPER** NIVAL INTERACTIVE ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 20

PC

THE MOON PROJECT

WHAT WOULD ALAN PARSONS SAY?

The lights on your units will turn on and off depending on the time of day

The tank in the middle of the screen is about to be lifted into the transport chopper

Those bright spots are mineral deposits

It's a good thing tutorials were invented for video games, otherwise I'd still be trying to figure out just how in the heck you get the water bearers to bring water to your people in Zeus. Likewise, if The Moon Project was lacking a tutorial section, I'd still be monkeying around with base construction. You think going into this game that it's going to be just another RTS with a few twists. Like maybe a Starcraft clone or something...but no, my friend, that couldn't be any farther from the truth.

Remember that one game in your gaming career that had you scratching your melon for hours on end trying to get the intricacies down? Well, here's another one for you. The Moon Project is jammed with nuance and subtle unit manipulation. The environments will allow you to attack your opponents by land, air and sea. Not only that, but you'll be able to tunnel your way into your enemy's backyard if you want to. It's up to you. One really awesome feature TMP gives is the ability to withdraw your units from the mission zone to your main base through the use of a large transport helo. If you play your cards right, you can amass quite an armada of units in no time at all.

If you're looking for an RTS with some teeth, this is the game for you. Plus, TopWare is filing for bankruptcy due to embezzlement. Give 'em a few bucks, would you? Those Germans need all the help they can get.– **KRISTIAN**

Bridge building

Wham (not the band)!

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** SSI ■ **DEVELOPER** TOPWARE
■ **RELEASE** MARCH 12

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB **7.75**

- **Concept:** It's an RTS, but there are a lot of bizarre additions that make it feel like something more
- **Graphics:** Very nice graphically, until you zoom in close on your units, that is
- **Sound:** The music is entertaining without being annoying, and the battle sounds don't get repetitive to the point of nausea
- **Playability:** I'd suggest going through the tutorials if you're not an Earth 2150 vet
- **Entertainment:** There is a really fun game in here once you finally figure everything out. That might take a while
- **Replay Value:** Medium

SECOND OPINION

In some games, you have to walk before you can run. In The Moon Project, you have to crawl. Filled with an overwhelming amount of unit production and interface information, a person figure this one out just by fiddling. Once you've logged in your eight or so hours of tutorials, you're ready for some crazy action, right? Not so fast there, hombre. The Moon Project may be filled with plenty of interesting technologies to research, and getting to construct your own vehicles is pretty dang cool, but single-player is never quite frantic. All the missions move at a snail's pace, and only multiplayer offers up any crazy action. The developers also missed a golden opportunity in making fights on the moon move differently due to the gravity. Instead, everything works just as it does on earth. Weak.

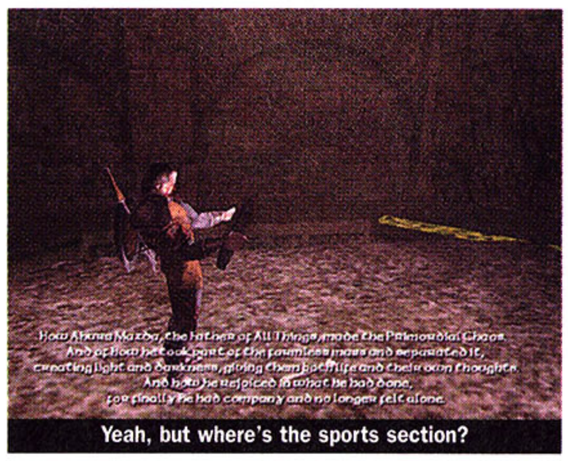
JAY – 6.5

PC

BLADE OF DARKNESS

THEY DON'T CALL IT "HACK N' SLASH" FOR NOTHING

You didn't need that did you? Hello?



Yeah, but where's the sports section?

Imagine yourself sitting in your bedroom. It's been a long day, you're tired and crabby. In fact, you're so crabby you feel like taking a six-foot sword and cleaving someone in two. Well, it's your lucky day, because Blade of Darkness has been developed just for you. Now you can take your aggression out onscreen, and with some spectacular results.

BoD is your quintessential hack n' slasher. You start with a choice of four characters, and within seconds you're putting your metal where the sun don't shine. This is probably one of the most cathartic releases I've played since Rune. Both are very similar, but BoD seems to be a little sharper around the edges. Of course, there is one huge, glaring butt-pimple of a problem with BoD: There's no strafe command. I must have looked for it in the options for ten minutes with utter disbelief etched across my face. How could you even begin to think about making a game like this and not put in a strafe command? It boggles the mind. Other smaller things held this game back from showing up Rune. For instance, if you're unlucky enough to be decapitated by a foe, you'll notice that there's still a shadow being cast from where your head used to be. Or you may have a hand cut off, but you're somehow still holding onto your shield.

That said, the environments are stupendous, and the combat and combo systems are fluid and easy to get the hang of. If you can stand being without a strafe function, I'd say get your hands on this and go crazy. – **KRISTIAN**

Someone's name should be Mr. Cranky Pants

"Yes, you may be bigger than me, but I have beard tufts!"

Hmm, see if you can find what's wrong with this picture

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** CODEMASTERS ■ **DEVELOPER** REBEL ACT
■ **RELEASE** FEBRUARY 21

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATURE M — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.25

- **Concept:** Separate as many of your enemies' heads from their bodies as you can
- **Graphics:** This is a beautiful game with very few graphical hiccups
- **Sound:** Some great sound effects and music are waiting for you in this one
- **Playability:** If you've played an FPS before, you'll have no problem jumping right in
- **Entertainment:** Wildly entertaining until you run out of enemies
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Balance is needed in one's gaming library, and I can't think of too many action titles to fulfill your thirst for gratuitous violence that are more fun to play than Blade of Darkness. There isn't a whole lot to nit-pick about, since the four characters with their weapon specialties provide a lot of replay value, and the quest itself is well put together. Some movements, like grabbing ledges and selecting items, aren't as smooth as I'd like, but the combat makes up for any shortcoming. You'll keep slicing and dicing just to see all the different bloody heaps your foes fall into. Unlike Kristian, I'm not desperately seeking a way to lash out at the world that spit in my face, knocked my books out of my hands, peed in my Mountain Dew and then made me drink it, but I still agree that Blade of Darkness is a good romp, and a fun stress reliever for your more volatile moments.

JUSTIN – 8

PC

THE SIMS: HOUSE PARTY

P-A-R-T WHY? BECAUSE MAXIS SAID SO!

In the previous Sims releases, there really wasn't much of a chance to do major socializing with a bunch of people at the same time. Aside from the hot tub, Sims the world over have been yearning for a way to shake their money makers. Finally, they'll get their chance.

House Party is exactly what it sounds like – a bunch of ways to throw a party, and 100-plus items to help you do it. To impress all your friends in Simville, you'll have a number of different ways to show everyone you can throw a sweet bash. You can gather eight of your Sims around the campfire to sing songs and roast marshmallows. Or you can hang out with a bunch of people and partake in bubble making with a piece of equipment that looks remarkably like a hookah. Hmm...

There are three themes you can choose for your party: Country/western, rave/disco, and luau. In addition to new items pertaining to each theme, there is a ton of new wallpaper and floor designs to keep things interesting. The country/western theme will give you the option of purchasing bull horns, barrel chairs, and a mechanical bull, for instance. For some reason, the game seemed to move a bit faster for me in this version of the Sims. For all of you diehard, downloading, Sim fanatics out there, this'll keep your interest, but probably not for too long. – **KRISTIAN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN T — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

7.5

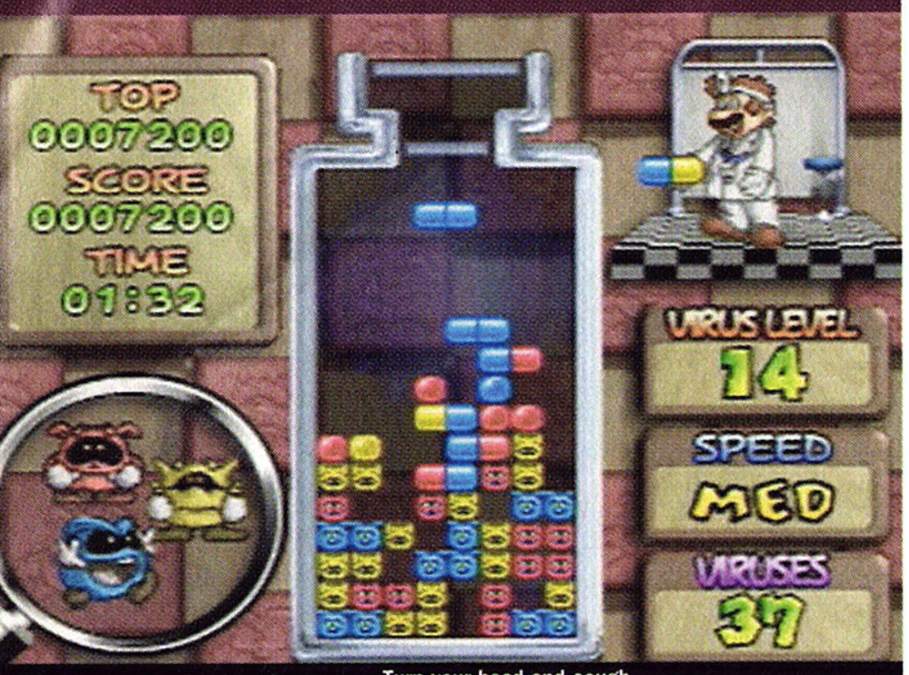
- **Concept:** Take your Sims, and help them throw a rave
- **Graphics:** There's nothing new graphically, aside from the new items and structures
- **Sound:** New music and a few new grunts and groans, but nothing too out of the ordinary
- **Playability:** It's an expansion pack. If you've played the Sims, you'll fit right in
- **Entertainment:** I was looking forward to glow sticks and the police breaking the doors down, but it never happened
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

I liked the stripper-in-a-cake, cage dancing, and other adult-oriented features (the bubble blower will be hacked into a bong in no time). The problem is, most Internet sites have more interesting add-ons than this retail purchase. The best things in life are free, but Sims addicts will still consider this money well spent.

JUSTIN – 6.75

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS
■ **DEVELOPER** MAXIS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 28



Turn your head and cough

NINTENDO 64

DR. MARIO 64

OPEN UP AND SAY "MAAAHHHH-RIO"

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.5

For those of you who haven't already traded in your N64, Nintendo is rewarding your loyalty with Dr. Mario 64, a revival of the classic puzzle game that presided over just about every other previous Nintendo console. I was always a big fan of tossing two-toned pills on like-colored viruses, especially on the NES. I had to strain my eyes a little while engaging in the new four-player simultaneous action in this update, but Dr. Mario 64 is one of the better multiplayer experiences on the console. The rewards you unlock and the different character paths in the game's Story mode make it worth playing through.

While these are novel additions, nothing beats Classic mode. Going from level to level, taking your time defeating stacks of naughty germs, is my idea of gaming nirvana, especially when you toss in the toe-tapping Chill soundtrack as your musical accompaniment. What can I say? I'm nostalgic.

The only bummer about Dr. Mario 64 is the fact that Tetris, which came with it on Super Nintendo, isn't part of the package. I probably would've rather had it on here than the Story mode that replaced it. Whining aside, this is a lot of game for $30, especially in N64 proportions. Unless you're a Pokémon junkie, this could be the last great Nintendo 64 game to come down the pipe. – **JUSTIN**

- **Concept:** Pill-popping puzzle excitement with a new Story mode
- **Graphics:** Not too different from the SNES version, the colors are more vibrant
- **Sound:** Chill is one of the best video game songs of all time
- **Playability:** Nothing to it, and nothing to make excuses over
- **Entertainment:** A great classic puzzler, and the new additions make it even more worthy of your $30
- **Replay Value:** High

SECOND OPINION

The doctor is in, and his game is frustration. For those of you who haven't invested time in Dr. Mario's previous exploits, I strongly suggest you pop some pills with the newly developed N64 release. The same as it ever was, Dr. Mario boggles the mind more so than any other puzzle game on the market, and is demanding of precise timing and dead-on accuracy. Addiction is immediate and withdrawl is impossible. The new game modes and harrowing difficulty will keep you hooked for months.

REINER – 8.25

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO
■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO ■ **RELEASE** APRIL 9

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

4

NINTENDO 64

MARIO PARTY 3

THE FINAL TURD IN THE PUNCHBOWL

Mario Party 3 has new characters for you to play. It has new game boards for you to explore. There's a quick game version called Duel mode for one or two players. Best of all, Mario Party 3 has 70 all-new minigames to play with your friends. Whoop-de-frigging-do.

For the third time in its Easy Bake Oven – no, I'm not even going to make that analogy because it's an insult to Hasbro's fine diminutive cake maker. In fact, there's really nothing for me to say about Mario Party 3 because it's the same thing as the last two, just with new crappy minigames and features. The only joy I derived from playing it was that it gave me a chance to rip on Kristian's inept gaming ability.

How this series has sold well enough to make it to the trilogy milestone is a mystery I'll never understand in my lifetime. I mean, I understand that Mario Party 3 is for a younger crowd, but I can't figure out how pregnant mothers are supposed to get the controller past the cervix so Nintendo can reach its target audience.

I'd actually like to score this lower, but in all reality it's a better game than Mario Party 1 and 2. So instead I've scored it higher than the first (which got a 3.5) for being better, but lower than the second (5.75) for having to suffer this abomination a third time. Now, let us never speak of this game again. – **JAY**

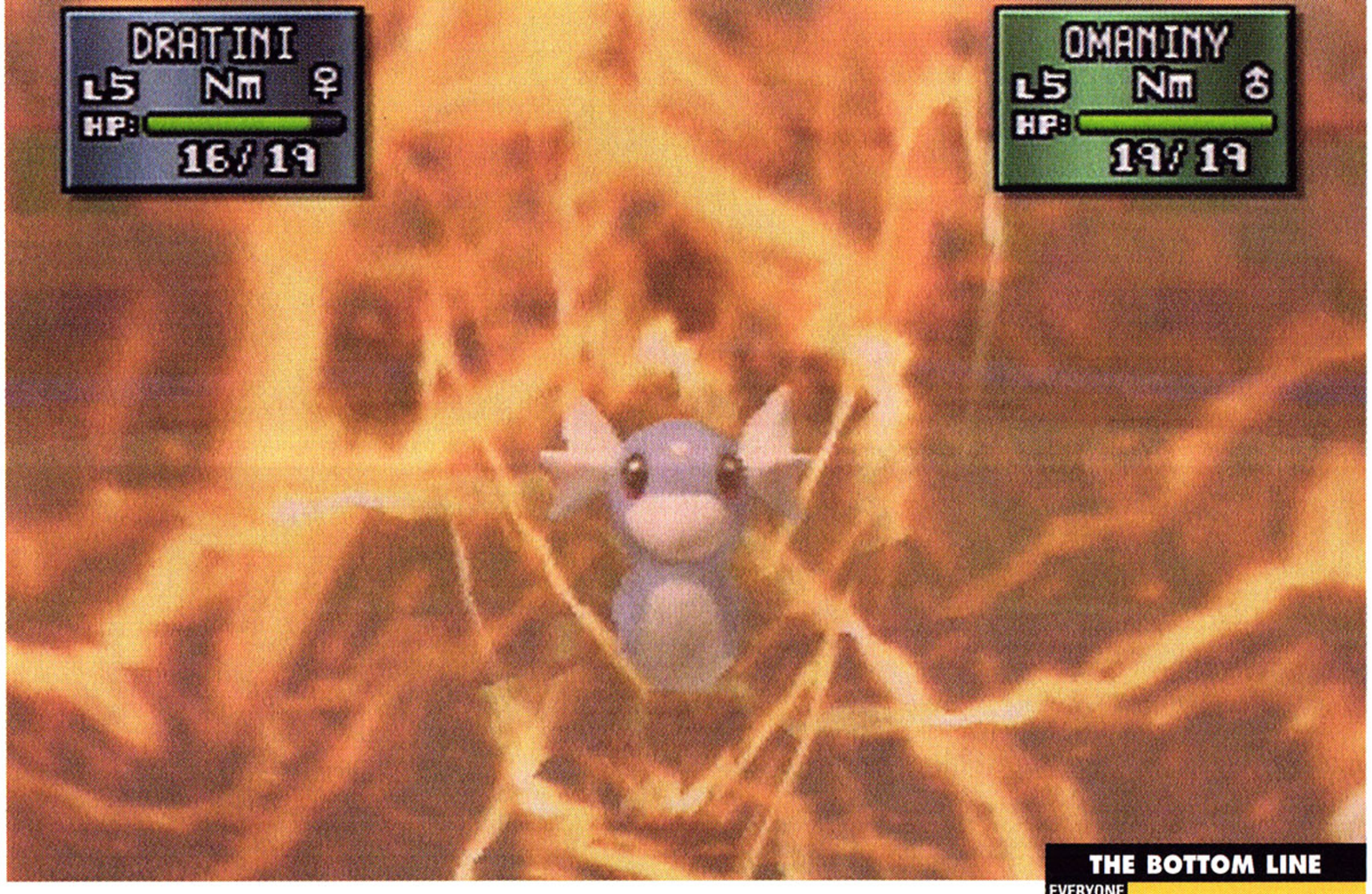
- **Concept:** Nintendo wonders if money can be scraped from the bottom of the barrel for a third time
- **Graphics:** Somehow, the Nintendo 64 is easily able to keep up with all the crazy action
- **Sound:** There's an interesting remix of the Mario music and plenty of overused catchphrases
- **Playability:** As good as it gets! In other words, the same as the other two
- **Entertainment:** Never before has a series done such a good job of making minutes seem like hours
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

SECOND OPINION

Mario Party 3 makes D-Day look like a walk in the park. If the WWII vets out there are offended by this, sorry – this game brings out the demon in me. I can honestly say, whenever this flatulent software pollutes the screen, immediate depression sinks in. I feel like Malcolm McDowell in *A Clockwork Orange*, forced against my will to digest a bunch of meaningless garbage. The only accolade I can give to this wretched title is toward the minigames. Amazingly, they're not as monotonous or repetitive. On the other hand, the board game aspect is, and forever shall be, nauseating and completely uninteresting. I despise this series and pray that the N64 dies before innocent children fall victim to this plague. Run for your lives and God bless.

REINER – 2.5

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER BOARD ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** HUDSON SOFT
■ **RELEASE** MAY 7



NINTENDO 64

POKÉMON STADIUM 2

THE PHENOMENON GOES ON...AND ON...AND ON

Of all the meaningless tasks I do at this magazine, reviewing Pokémon games is among the most futile. By the time this review reaches you, Pokémon Stadium 2 will have been on shelves for a couple of weeks, and will most likely be ensconced at the top spot of the retail sales charts. So, for the few of you that might actually be swayed by my review, let me continue.

I actually enjoyed the first Stadium. However, I didn't enjoy it so much that I was looking forward to playing through the exact same game again – and that's essentially what Pokémon Stadium 2 is. Not that there are no new additions to the game. There are all 249 Pokémon. The Transfer Pak is compatible with every Pokémon game (including the upcoming Pokémon Crystal), and they've added a Library mode that gives you comprehensive reference materials on items, Pokémon types, moves, and egg groups. Don't forget the whole posse of new Gym Leaders, and 12 new mini-games that were apparently too retarded even for Mario Party 3. But when it comes down to it, this is all just window dressing on the same tired turn-based combat system they've been using since the very first Pokémon games.

I am tired of this series. Hopefully the Game Boy Advance and Gamecube will give Nintendo the opportunity to reinvent the Pokémon franchise, because I doubt the kids are going to be hungry for warmed-up leftovers for much longer. – **MATT**

Features all 249 Pokémon

The attack animations are quite trippy at times

Combat is essentially identical to every game in the series

Barrier Ball is the best of the new minigames

■ **STYLE** 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO/CREATURES, INC./GAME FREAK ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 26

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE – CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

6

- **Concept:** The simple economic law of supply and demand
- **Graphics:** Still pretty sharp by N64 standards, some of the new attack and fainting animations are cool
- **Sound:** Same announcer...um...I seem to remember that there was music being played at some point
- **Playability:** Control so easy a child could master, but I guess that makes sense in this case
- **Entertainment:** I think you already know if you're going to like this game or not
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High

SECOND OPINION

Pokémon games have generally been good fun, but Stadium 2 is just a sugarcoated version of the battles you trudged through on Game Boy to find new monsters. This is N64, so where is the quest mode? It's Nintendo's potential to develop this release into a great RPG that makes me so irritated with Pokémon Stadium 2. Sure, it looks great. The detail is evident with every attack, damage, and faint animation. I don't care how good the graphics are, though; all you do is battle! This game is simply cockfighting using adorable critters for bragging rights. Without gaining new monsters, levels, gold, and the other spoils that put the Game Boy titles in the role-playing genre, I see no point. Pokémon Stadium 2's mini-games are a decent diversion, but I didn't play any of them more than four times. Only die-hard Poké-holics need apply, but I'm probably wasting keystrokes mentioning it.

JUSTIN – 5.75

NINTENDO 64

AIDYN CHRONICLES: THE FIRST MAGE

THE WORST & ONLY

For the first time after playing a game, I cannot put into words what I have experienced. Aidyn Chronicles defies all explanation. What was to be the first true RPG on Nintendo 64 has turned out to be the biggest waste of shelf space in video game history.

The graphics rank among the worst on the system. The sound is inferior to most NES games. The combat system lacks both strategy and excitement. The story doesn't give players even a remote chance of involving themselves. The real-time cutscenes often place the camera away from the characters that are speaking, instead focusing on the sky or a shield on the wall for half the scene. Need I go on?

As a matter of fact I do. You see, I'm of the opinion that if a game reaches the completion stage it deserves at least a 1 in the grand scheme of GI ratings. This is what I was going to give Aidyn. I paused in the midst of an in-game conversation with a town guard to tell Matt how putrid this game was, and it crashed on me! This wasn't an early version, either. It was a packaged copy.

I can't even recommend renting Aidyn Chronicles to laugh at it. A garbageman would be embarrassed to have it in his landfill. That's about the nicest thing I can say. – **JAY**

THE BOTTOM LINE

TEEN – CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

0.5

- **Concept:** It will be a miracle if anyone plays far enough into this cart to find the okay ideas hidden within
- **Graphics:** Everyone in Aidyn's world must have an eye poked out at an early age from all the jagged edges
- **Sound:** The soundtrack consists of four chords on an '80s Casio keyboard
- **Playability:** The game moves at such a slow pace, it would be almost impossible to fall below average in this category
- **Entertainment:** A serious contender for the worst RPG of all time
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

N64's search for a real RPG goes on. I'd cut slack if Aidyn were just a piece of eye candy (forget the story and combat), but that it ain't. Angular graphics, jumpy textures, and the lack of battle collision (fights look like mime troupe reenactments) start the nausea rolling. The only choice to make on this game is whether it sucks or blows.

KATO – 2

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER** H2O ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 23

GAME BOY COLOR

MICKEY'S SPEEDWAY USA

THE MEDIOCRE MOUSE

THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
6

For those of you keeping score, be informed that kart racing has recently pulled ahead of both Army Men games and motocross to take the number one spot on the GI Video Game Whipping Boy charts. Although there have been so many notably undistinguished kart racers released in recent months (Woody Woodpecker Racing, RC Revenge Pro, et al), Mickey's Speedway USA was the final nudge that sent the entire genre over the precipice and into the stinky toilet bowl of gaming hell.

In all fairness, the game isn't even that terrible. It's just so generic that playing it feels totally pointless. I don't think I ever need to race cute little cartoon characters around a track again in this lifetime, and Mickey's Speedway USA does little to convince me otherwise. From the vehicles to the power-ups to the track designs, there's nothing you haven't seen done better in other games. Also, controlling your car around corners is extremely frustrating.

The game is even worse when you consider that Rareware, a company that usually delivers top-quality licensed games, developed it. What was Rare doing when it created this clunker? Was this just a way for the boys around the office to kill time during their coffee breaks? – **MATT**

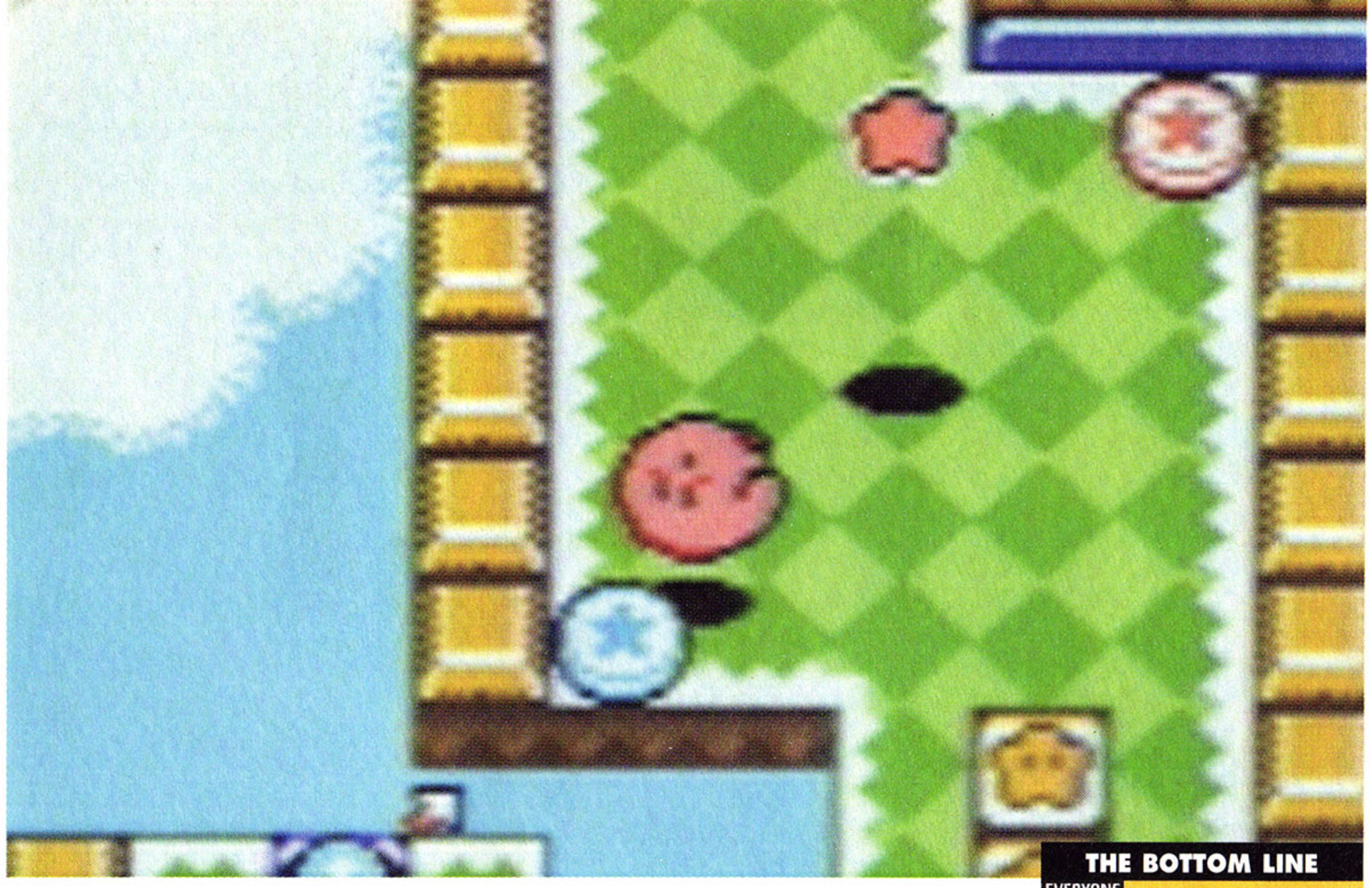
- **Concept:** Another excruciating step on the Kart Racing Trail of Tears
- **Graphics:** Perfectly decent, I suppose
- **Sound:** Features original songs by Eminem, Papa Roach, and Destiny's Child!...Okay, I lied...it actually just has some dinky cartoon music
- **Playability:** The GBC's two-button interface isn't very conducive to kart racing
- **Entertainment:** I had more fun booting up Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble
- **Replay Value:** Moderately Low

SECOND OPINION

I hate Disney and I hate Game Boy racing games. Imagine my surprise when I actually liked Mickey's Speedway. Its RC Pro Am gameplay style is much preferred over the typical crummy "behind the wheel" perspective, and earning licenses is a nice extra. If you want a decent handheld racer, I can't think of a better game.

JUSTIN – 8

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO/DISNEY INTERACTIVE
■ **DEVELOPER** RAREWARE ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 26



GAME BOY COLOR

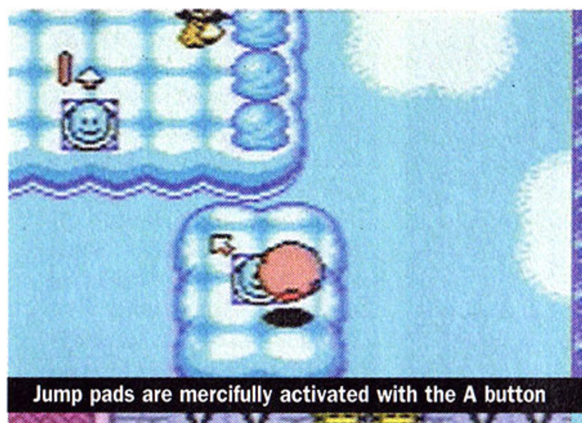
KIRBY TILT 'N' TUMBLE

PINK, YES; BUT I LIKE IT, TOO

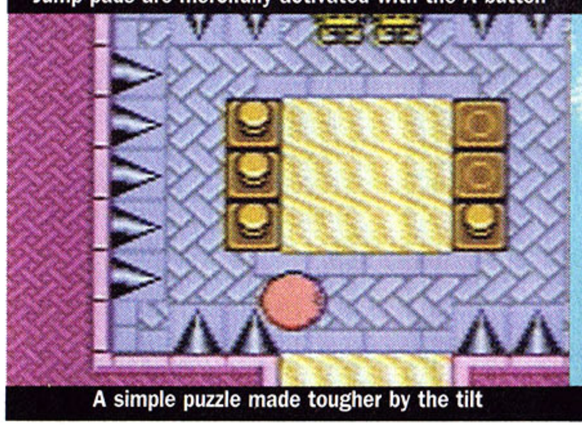
THE BOTTOM LINE
EVERYONE
8.75

My name is Justin, and I'm a Kirby-holic. Since his debut platformer on the black-and-white Game Boy, I've vibed with every game starring the plump pink playa. Kirby Tilt'n'Tumble, however, opens up a whole new can of fluff, since you're required to tilt your Game Boy to move the roly-poly onscreen character. While this sounds simple enough, it actually results in one of the most dramatic, high-tension game scenarios seen on any system. Every move and task will have you on edge, sometimes literally. You must cross narrow platforms, avoid spikes, stop on a dime, and do a million other things that would be a breeze on normal action games, but are now made infinitely more difficult (and fun) thanks to Tilt Response Technology. The only downfall of the control is jumping, done by quickly jostling the Game Boy. This can screw up your center of gravity, resulting in frustration and death. If Tilt'n'Tumble was just a typical isometric title with standard control its length, minigames, and level design would have earned it a decent score. With the tilting concept in tow, though, this game is a truly unique and special title. As a bonus, it's not another freaking Pokémon title (which it almost turned into). – **JUSTIN**

- **Concept:** Move your Game Boy Color around to control Kirby's roll
- **Graphics:** Everything comes out vivid, clear and colorful, with surprising resolution
- **Sound:** Cute music and a good deal of speech pushes GBC's audio to the limits
- **Playability:** The control is a breakthrough, but jumping can be a pain
- **Entertainment:** High level of drama will have you tilting 'till dawn
- **Replay Value:** Moderately High


Jump pads are mercifully activated with the A button

The mic kills enemies softly with Kirby's song


A simple puzzle made tougher by the tilt

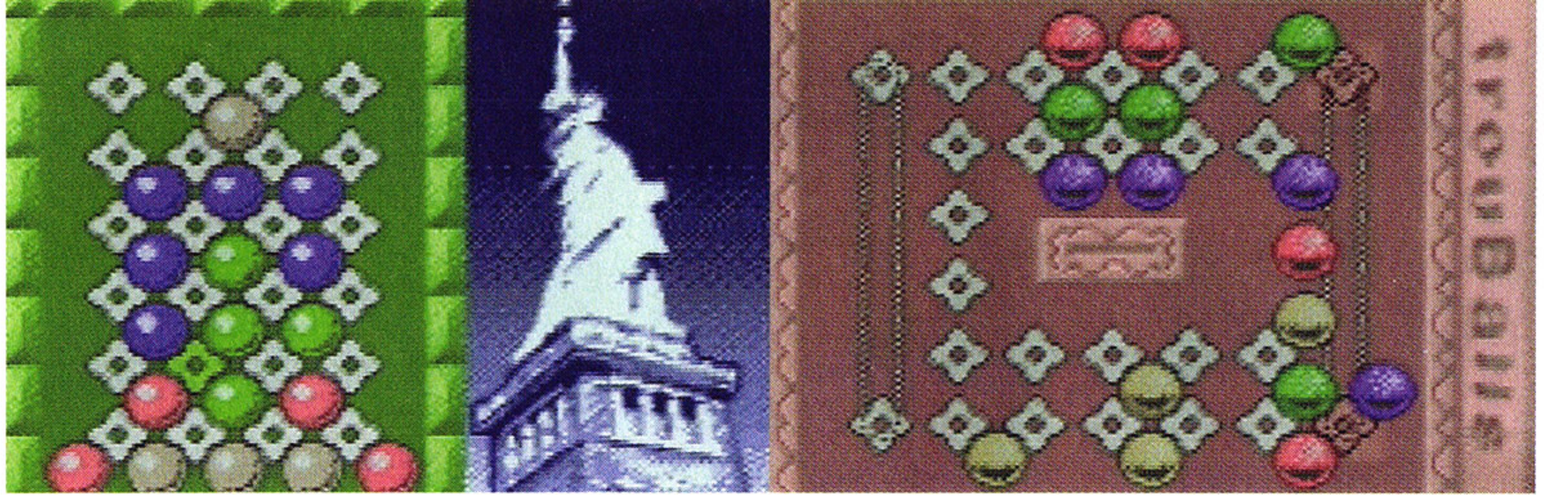
Sometimes the game resembles a shooter

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO ■ **DEVELOPER** HAL LABORATORIES
■ **RELEASE** APRIL 9

SECOND OPINION

Remember the last time you saw something truly original in a game? Well, Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble's brilliant gyroscopic control offers jaded GBC owners something genuinely new. This game easily could have been a terrible mess, but the developers pull this experiment off with aplomb. Even better, they weren't just satisfied in making the odd control scheme work, then rushing out the rest of the game elements. The level designs are well done too, translating into a game that is extremely playable, not just a neat novelty item. Although you could compare it to Marble Madness, Tilt'n'Tumble's amazing control has no precedent. The control will hook you, but the addictive gameplay (and fun between-level minigames) will keep you coming back for more. Hats off, HAL Laboratories. Do yourself a favor and give this quirky little game a go.

MATT – 8.5



GAME BOY COLOR

TROUBALLS

POP-A-MATIC BOUBALL NOT INCLUDED

In these waning days of the Game Boy Color, it seems that many potentially entertaining games fall flat because developers are trying to pack a game of PS2 proportions into the handheld. Trouballs succeeds mostly thanks to knowing the GBC's limitations, and not coming close to stretching them. By rotating the gears onscreen, players must put like-colored balls together, causing them to disappear. Levels come in two types: trying to clear the field of all balls in a short amount of time, or simply trying to survive for an extended time while balls continually fall in a Tetris-esque style. The switch between thinking game and frantic race to stay alive is a welcome dichotomy. By the sixth stage, Trouballs begins busting your balls with its ramped-up difficulty, making this a puzzler that can take you the distance. In all, there's no reason not to like this game other than its simplistic look. Then again, that's what makes it so good in the first place. – **JAY**

SECOND OPINION

Trouballs is going to make you feel stupid, I don't care how high your IQ is. If the humiliation's too much, you will hate this game. If you're proud enough to persevere, there are good times to be had. I dug it...eventually.

JUSTIN – 7.25

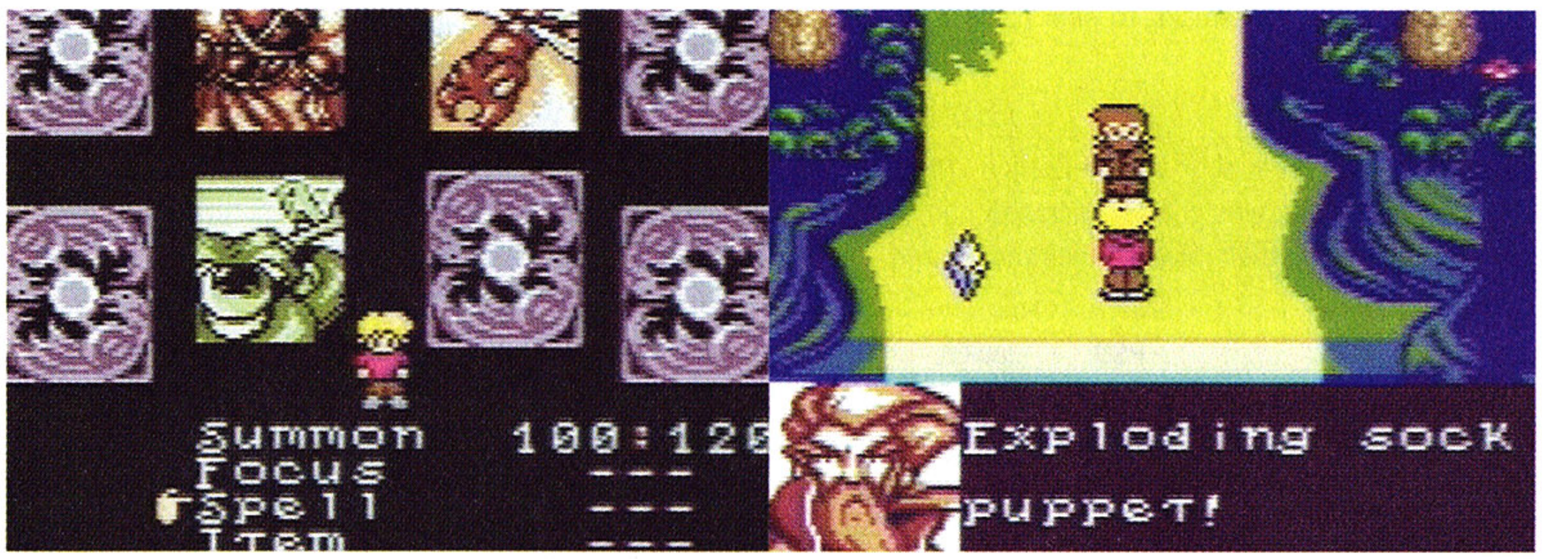
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8

- **Concept:** The ultimate puzzle game mantra: easy to learn, hard to master
- **Graphics:** The color is superfluous, as this could easily have been done at the dawn of Game Boy
- **Sound:** As good as it gets, but still not that good
- **Playability:** The d-pad switches gears, A turns the gear one way, B the other. There, you know it all
- **Entertainment:** For puzzle fans, this can eat up your life
- **Replay Value:** High

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER PUZZLE ■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **DEVELOPER** PARAGON5
■ **RELEASE** APRIL 25



GAME BOY COLOR

MAGI NATION

NOW THAT YOUR TASTES HAVE GROWN UP

Magi Nation restores some credibility to a Game Boy RPG genre dominated by Pokémon games and Poké-pretenders. While still bearing similarities to these titles, Magi Nation brings more maturity to the table, and has the substance and complexity of a console role-playing game.

It's obvious Interactive Imagination took its time with this game. The writing is extremely clever, a big plus in my book. You can hit "action" on nearly any object, and get a chuckle out of your character's response. More evidence of the hard work that went into Magi Nation is the game's sound. I haven't heard music this good on Game Boy in a while, and almost forgot it was possible to use sound to enhance a handheld game.

The card-game style combat works well, though it's too much like Pokémon Trading Card. Unlike that title, though, Magi Nation has enough puzzles and plot-building devices to keep it from going stale. Magi Nation is a good, solid RPG that doesn't limit itself by the system it's on. – **JUSTIN**

SECOND OPINION

Delivering breathtaking visuals, outstanding storytelling, and an engrossing gameplay package, Magi Nation is easily one of the most entertaining RPGs to grace this handheld. Pokémon beware!

REINER – 8.75

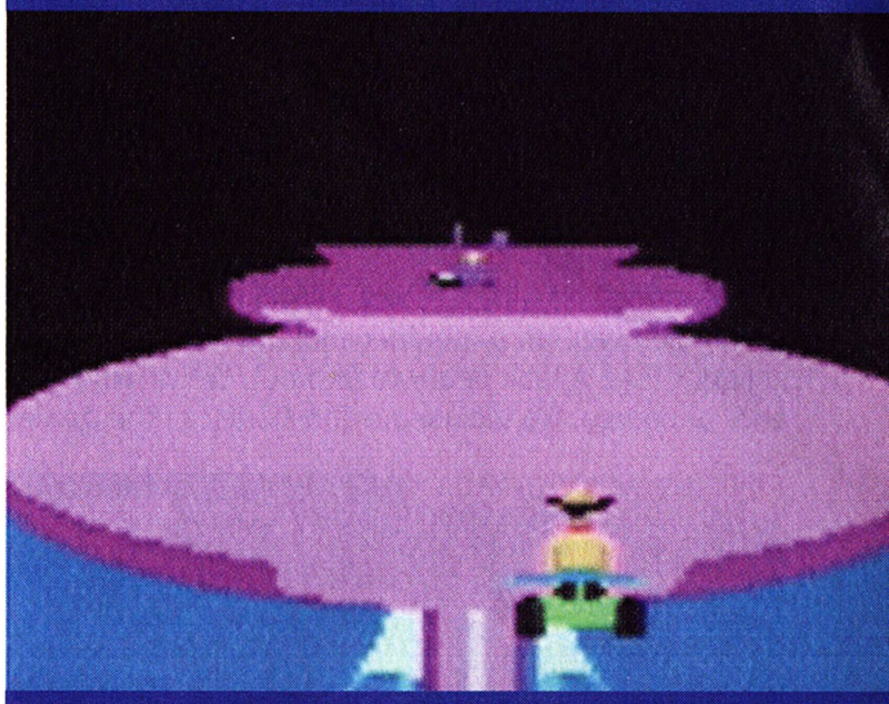
THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

8.5

- **Concept:** A refined RPG experience for Pokémon graduates
- **Graphics:** Characters are plain, but the backgrounds and monster art are peachy
- **Sound:** Effects and music are above par, and actually complement the mood
- **Playability:** Combat flows well, and the run button is a lifesaver
- **Entertainment:** Good enough to be compared to console RPGs
- **Replay Value:** Moderate

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME ■ **PUBLISHER** INTERACTIVE IMAGINATION
■ **DEVELOPER** INTERACTIVE IMAGINATION ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 23



GAME BOY COLOR

TOY STORY RACER

RUNNING ON EMPTY

The original Toy Story wasn't a bad flick, considering it was by Disney. Still, this Toy Story offshoot, coffer-filling madness has got to stop. Who says that just 'cause Buzz and the gang are toys, they have to degrade themselves by racing around in diminutive motorized cars? You've most likely exposed yourself to this genre before, and Toy Story Racer probably won't better the experience.

Toy Story Racer has an intriguing mix of not-too-involving gameplay and yet is semi-competitive. Zooming your way around the title's tracks, it won't take you too long to get into the flow of the racing, as you never really careen out of control. Still, some sections of the races do present quick turns and tight curves. By offering up more road pitfalls (like reverse steering or reducing your speed) than weapons or bonuses, your job is simply not to lose to whoever is hugging your butt.

Activision has never met a license it didn't like, but I'd bet that Toy Story Racer won't be in your good graces. If your eyes strain while you concentrate on the screen, don't mistake this for actually getting sucked into the game. – **KATO**

THE BOTTOM LINE

EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

4

- **Concept:** Somebody step on this latest round of puny kart racing...
- **Graphics:** Nothing extraordinary
- **Sound:** You can't even get any fuzz-box sounds out of the speaker by turning the sound all the way up
- **Playability:** Just make sure you have thumbs before you buy it
- **Entertainment:** Yes, I'd be interested in that, but it's not here
- **Replay Value:** Low

SECOND OPINION

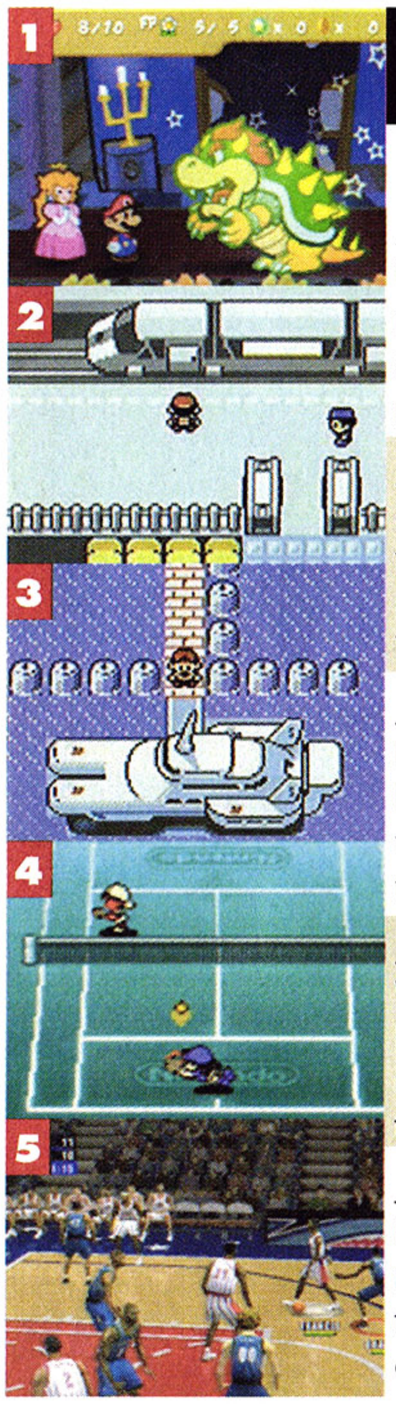
First off, I'd like to apologize to Rare, because this makes Mickey's Speedway USA look like Gran-freaking-Turismo 3! Since it is against Game Informer regulations to give negative scores, Toy Story Racer actually forced me to go back and raise Mickey's by a couple points. Making a decent handheld kart racer must be harder than it sounds.

MATT – 2

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RACING ■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER** TIERTEX DESIGN STUDIOS ■ **RELEASE** MARCH 1

CHARTS

In association with the NPD TRSTS Video Games Service, Charts presents an in-depth listing of the best-selling software on a month-to-month basis. Are the games you spend your hard-earned dollars on top sellers? Take a look below to find out. We've also compiled a listing of the top-selling Japanese software, and, of course, we included a Top 10 list of the games the GI staff is currently enjoying.



NPD TOP 20

Listings Based Upon NPD Data For February 2001
Based On Units Sold

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
1	N/A	**Paper Mario**	N64	Feb-01	$50

With all the hype surrounding *The Sopranos*, 2001 is shaping up to be the year of the fat Italian guy. Gamers seem to have picked up on this trend, pulling out their wallets and sending Nintendo's kiddie RPG to the top of the charts. Leave it to the number one gaming icon of all time to put those pesky little Pokémon in their place. You go, Mario!

2	1	**Pokémon Silver**	GBC	Oct-00	$29

Finally, the evil empire has been toppled from its throne! Wooo-hooo! After dominating the charts for months on end, being forced down to the enviable number two position is a humiliating defeat for the Pokégang. Ha ha! You suck, Pokémon! IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR FACE! IN YOUR FACE!

3	2	**Pokémon Gold**	GBC	Oct-00	$29

Like Puff Daddy, the Pokémon phenomenon is fading fast. We've heard that some of the Poké Posse are in trouble with the law, as well. Apparently, a very intoxicated Charmander was recently arrested at a club in South Padre, Texas, for refusing to wear pants. Can anything save the embattled Pokémon empire?

4	11	**Mario Tennis**	GBC	Jan-01	$28

While everybody and their mother are debating the great Xbox vs. PlayStation 2 battle, Nintendo continues its stranglehold on the top of the sales charts. Microsoft and Sony may have better press, but when it comes to keeping their mind on their money and their money on their mind, Nintendo is still the king.

5	3	**NBA Live 2001**	PS2	Jan-01	$50

Holding onto its position in the top 5 for a second month in a row is EA's next-gen roundball juggernaut, NBA Live 2001. Even though ratings for the real-life NBA are in the toilet, Live is showing that it has some serious legs. Could it pull a surprise slam dunk on Nintendo next month? Not in a million years, but here's hoping.

RANK	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE	PRICE POINT
6	4	**Madden NFL 2001**	PS2	Oct-00	$50
7	N/A	**Star Wars: Episode I Starfighter**	PS2	Feb-01	$50
8	N/A	**Knockout Kings 2001**	PS2	Feb-01	$50
9	5	**WWF SmackDown! 2**	PS-X	Nov-00	$40
10	7	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2**	PS-X	Sep-00	$40
11	N/A	**ATV Offroad Fury**	PS2	Feb-01	$50
12	6	**Driver 2**	PS-X	Nov-00	$40
13	8	**Donkey Kong 64**	N64	Nov-99	$40
14	12	**Gran Tursimo 2**	PS-X	Dec-99	$21
15	N/A	**Mega Man X5**	PS-X	Jan-01	$32
16	N/A	**Phantasy Star Online**	DC	Jan-01	$51
17	15	**Tony Hawk's Pro Skater**	PS-X	Sep-99	$20
18	N/A	**Spec Ops**	PS-X	Apr-00	$10
19	N/A	**Super Mario Brothers DX**	GBC	May-99	$30
20	18	**Tekken 3**	PS-X	Apr-98	$20

Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Service • Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

JAPAN TOP 10

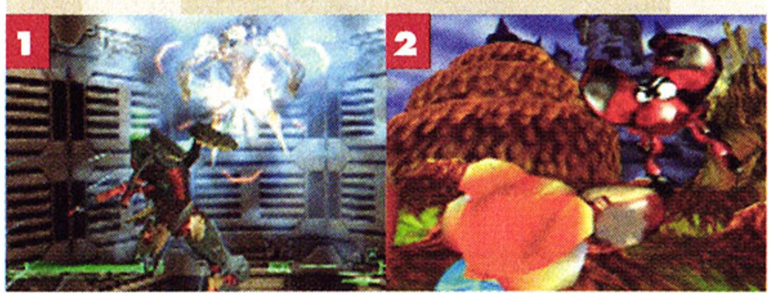
Source: Game Japan
Based On Monthly Units Sold

POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	**World Soccer Winning Eleven 5**	PS2
2	N/A	**Dragon Quest Monsters 2**	GBC
3	N/A	**From TV Animation One Piece**	PS-X
4	N/A	**Tokyo Battle Zero**	PS2
5	N/A	**Densha De Go! 3: Commuting**	PS2
6	N/A	**Satan King and I**	PS2
7	N/A	**Extermination**	PS2
8	3	**Dance Dance Revolution: 4th Mix**	PS-X
9	9	**Onimusha**	PS2
10	N/A	**Fever 4 Sankyo Pachinko Sim**	PS-X

GAME INFORMER TOP 10

The Staff's Favorite Picks

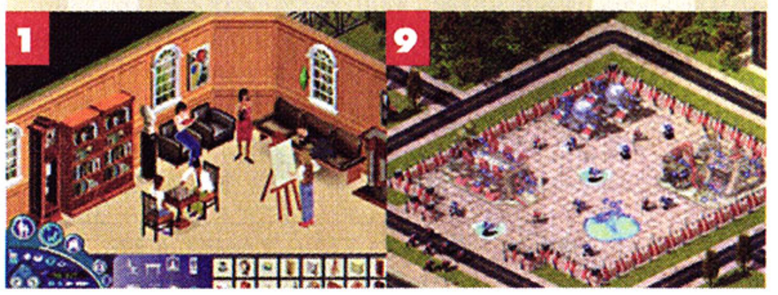
POS.	L. MO	GAME	SYSTEM
1	N/A	**Zone of the Enders**	PS2
2	2	**Conker's Bad Fur Day**	N64
3	1	**Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty**	PS2
4	N/A	**Extermination**	PS2
5	5	**Star Wars: Episode I Starfighter**	PS2
6	N/A	**Halo**	Xbox
7	4	**Ring of Red**	PS2
8	N/A	**Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble**	GBC
9	N/A	**Sega Smash Pack**	DC
10	N/A	**Clive Barker's: Undying**	PC



PC TOP 10

Based On Monthly Units Sold. Source: NPD Interactive Entertainment Sevice Kristin Barnett-Von-Korff (516) 625-2481

POS.	L. MO	GAME	MONTH	PRICE
1	1	**The Sims**	Feb-00	$42
2	2	**The Sims: Livin' Large**	Sep-00	$28
3	3	**Roller Coaster Tycoon**	Mar-99	$27
4	5	**Hoyle Casino 2001**	Oct-00	$28
5	6	**Diablo 2**	Jun-00	$47
6	N/A	**Sierra Sports NASCAR Racing 4**	Feb-01	$49
7	7	**Age of Empires II: Age of Kings**	Oct-99	$28
8	9	**Roller Coaster Tycoon: Loopy Landscapes**	Sep-00	$42
9	8	**Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2**	Nov-00	$19
10	4	**Sim Theme Park**	Nov-99	$19



NBA LIVE 2001

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1 TO 8-PLAYER SPORTS
■ **PUBLISHER** EA SPORTS ■ **REVIEWED** FEB-01

Where this game really excels is in the options and extras. It is missing the NBA Challenge mode that was introduced in the PS-X version, but I especially like the options to adjust the length of time the computer simulates the other games played in a season. A lot of games in the past would let you play shorter games, but your stats would be horrible because all the other computer games would be simulated at a longer time. This is a small feature, but I think it is cool nonetheless. – **PAUL**

8.25

PLAYSTATION 2

Adventures of Cookie & Cream, The	8.75	Mar-01
Armored Core 2	9	Nov-00
Aqua Aqua	6	Mar-01
ATV Offroad Fury	8.5	Mar-01
Bouncer, The	8.5	Feb-01
Championship Surfer	7	Jan–01
Dead or Alive 2: Hard Core	9	Nov-00
Driving Emotion Type-S	8	Feb-01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Mar-01
Dynasty Warriors	8	Nov-00
ESPN International Track & Field	6.75	Dec-00
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	8.25	Jan–01
Eternal Ring	7.5	Nov-00
Evergrace	7	Nov-00
F1 Championship Season 2000	7.75	Feb-01
F1 Racing Championship	8.75	Apr-01
Fantavision	6.75	Dec-00
FIFA 2001	8	Dec-00
Gameday 2001	3	Dec-00
Gradius III & IV	5	Dec-00
Gun Griffon Blaze	7	Nov-00
Kengo: Master of Bushido	7.25	Mar-01
Kessen	8	Nov-00
Knockout Kings 2001	9	Mar-01
Madden NFL 2001	9.75	Nov-00
Midnight Club	7.5	Dec-00
Moto GP	7.5	Dec-00
NASCAR 2001	8.5	Dec-00
NBA Live 2001	8.25	Feb-01
NBA Shootout 2001	6.5	Apr-01
NCAA Final Four 2001	3	Feb-01
NCAA Gamebreaker 2001	3.25	Feb-01
NHL 2001	8.5	Nov-00
NHL Faceoff 2001	1	Apr-01
Oni	6.5	Mar-01
Onimusha: Warlords	8.75	Mar-01
Orphen	4.25	Dec-00
Q-Ball: Billiards Master	4.5	Jan–01
Rayman 2: Revolution	8	Apr-01
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	7.25	Dec-00
Real Pool	5.25	Dec-00
Ring of Red	9	Apr-01
RC Revenge Pro	5.5	Feb-01
Shadows of Destiny	6.75	Mar-01
Silent Scope	7.75	Nov-00
Silpheed	6	Nov-00
Sky Odyssey	7.75	Dec-00
Smuggler's Run	8.5	Nov-00
SSX	9.25	Nov-00
Star Wars: Starfighter	9.25	Mar-01
Street Fighter EX3	6	Nov-00
Summoner	8	Dec-00
Super Bust-A-Move	7	Nov-00
Surfing H3O	3	Jan–01
Swing Away Golf	7.75	Nov-00
Tekken Tag Tournament	8.5	Nov-00
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	6	Apr-01
TimeSplitters	9.5	Dec-00
Theme Park Roller Coaster	7.5	Jan–01
Top Gear Dare Devil	2	Dec-00
Unreal Tournament	9	Dec-00
Warriors of Might and Magic	7.75	Apr-01
Wild Wild Racing	7.5	Nov-00
Winback: Covert Ops	7.5	Apr-01
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	7	Mar-01
X-Squad	7.5	Nov-00

PLAYSTATION

007 Racing	7	Jan–01
102 Dalmations: Puppies to the Rescue	6.5	Feb-01
Action Bass	7	Sep-00
Alien Resurrection	6	Nov-00
Armorines	5	Jul-00
Army Men: Air Attack 2	1	Dec-00
Army Men: World War	2	Aug-00
Army Men World War: Land, Sea, Air	1	Dec-00
ATV: Quad Bike Challenge	6	Nov-00
Ball Breakers	3.5	Sep-00
Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker	0.5	Dec-00
Bedrock Bowling	3.5	Oct-00
Blade	4	Jan–01
Blaster Master: Blasting Again	5	Dec-00
Breath of Fire IV	8.5	Dec-00
Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters	8.5	Feb-01
Builder's Block	8.25	Aug-00
Bust A Groove 2	7.25	Sep-00
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command	5.5	Dec-00
Championship Surfer	7	Jan–01
Championship Motocross 2001 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	6.5	Feb-01
Chrono Cross	9.5	Aug-00
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	7.75	Jan–01
Cool Boarders 2001	5	Dec-00
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn	7.75	Jul-00
Crash Bash	6.5	Dec-00
Countdown Vampires	6.5	Aug-00
Dance Dance Revolution	8.75	Apr-01
Darkstone	7.25	Apr-01
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	7.75	Nov-00
Destruction Derby Raw	7.5	Oct-00
Digimon World	5.25	Jul-00
Dino Crisis 2	8.75	Oct-00
Dinosaur	2.25	Sep-00
Disney's The Emperor's New Groove	8.25	Dec-00
Dragon Valor	7.5	Nov-00
Driver 2	8.75	Jan–01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7	Jan–01
Ducati World	5.5	Feb-01
ECW Anarchy Rulz	4	Nov-00
ECW: Hardcore Revolution	8.25	Mar-01
ESPN MLS: Game Night	8	Aug-00
Eternal Eyes	7.75	Dec-00
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	4.5	Feb-01
Expendable	3.5	Jul-00
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	8.5	Mar-01
FIFA 2001	7.5	Dec-00
Final Fantasy IX	9.75	Dec-00
Freestyle Motocross: Mcgrath Vs. Pastrana	3	Jan–01
Gekido: Urban Fighters	4.5	Jul-00
Golden Tee Golf	5	Jan–01
Grinch, The	5	Feb-01
Grudge Warriors	5	Aug-00
Harvest Moon: Back to Nature	6.75	Dec-00
HBO Boxing	3	Feb-01
Incredible Crisis	7.5	Nov-00
Jarret & Labonte Stock Car Racing	7.75	Jan–01
Jeremy McGrath	4	Oct-00
Knockout Kings 2001	7.5	Dec-00
Koudelka	4.5	Sep-00
Legend of Mana	8	Jul-00
Lego Rock Raiders	1.5	Oct-00
Looney Tunes Racing	6.25	Dec-00
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	7.5	Jan–01
Madden NFL 2001	8.75	Sep-00
March Madness 2001	8.25	Feb-01
Medal of Honor: Underground	9	Nov-00
Mega Man Legends 2	8	Nov-00
Mega Man X5	7	Feb-01
Mike Tyson Boxing	5	Dec-00
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	1.75	Sep-00
Moto GP World Tour	7	Jan–01
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8.25	Aug-00
MTV Sports Skateboarding featuring Andy Macdonald	3	Nov-00
MTV Sports: Pure Ride	6.5	Nov-00
Mummy, The	0.75	Feb-01
Muppet Racemania	5	Nov-00
NASCAR Heat	6.5	Feb-01
NBA Live 2001	8	Dec-00
NBA ShootOut 2001	5.5	Nov-00
NCAA Final Tour	5.5	Jan–01
NFL Blitz 2001	5.5	Nov-00
NFL GameDay 2001	7	Sep-00
NGEN Racing	7.25	Sep-00
NHL 2001	7.75	Nov-00
NHL Face Off 2001	6.5	Nov-00
Parasite Eve II	8.75	Sep-00
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	8	Feb-01
Polaris Snocross	5.5	Nov-00
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	5	Jan–01
Rampage Through Time	4.75	Sep-00
Raycrisis: Series Termination	7.25	Nov-00
Razor Freestyle Scooter	8	Jan–01
RC De Go	7.5	Jan–01
RC Revenge	5.5	Oct-00
Reel Fishing II	6.5	Jul-00
Resident Evil Survivor	4	Nov-00
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	6.75	Jul-00
Road to El Dorado, The	1	Feb-01
RPG Maker	7.75	Aug-00
Sim Theme Park	7	Jul-00
Sno Cross Championship Racing	6	Nov-00
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol	6.5	Aug-00
Spider-Man	8.25	Oct-00
Spin Jam	3.5	Oct-00
Spyro: Year of the Dragon	8.75	Nov-00
Star Trek Invasion	8.5	Oct-00
Star Wars: Demolition	7	Jan–01
Strider 2	6.5	Jul-00
Supercross	5.75	Apr-01
Supercross 2000	4	Oct-00
Surf Riders	6.75	Oct-00
Sydney 2000	2.75	Oct-00
Team Buddies	7.25	Oct-00
Tenchu 2	8.75	Sep-00
Test Drive Le Mans	3.75	Jul-00
World is Not Enough, The	7	Dec-00
Threads of Fate	8	Jul-00
Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf	8	Feb-01
Tomb Raider Chronicles	7	Jan–01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	10	Nov-00
Torneko: The Last Hope	2.75	Dec-00
Toy Story Racer	5	Apr-01
Triple Play Baseball	7	Apr-01
Ultimate Fighting Championship	7	Jan–01
Valkyrie Profile	7.75	Sep-00
Vampire Hunter D	5.25	Sep-00
WCW Backstage Assault	3	Dec-00
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire: 2nd Edition	6.5	Aug-00
Woody Woodpecker Racing	3	Jan–01
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3	Dec-00
WWF SmackDown 2: Know Your Role	9	Dec-00
X-Men Mutant Academy	7.5	Aug-00
You Don't Know Jack: Mock 2	5	Mar-01

NINTENDO 64

Army Men: Air Combat	7.5	Jul-00
Banjo-Tooie	9	Jan–01
Cruis'n Exotica	6	Feb-01
Conker's Bad Fur Day	9	Apr-01
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Feb-01
Duck Dogers	3.5	Oct-00
Fighter's Destiny 2	2	Sep-00
Gundam Side Story 0079	7.75	Jul-00
Hercules: The Legendary Journeys	4.75	Feb-01
Hey You, Pikachu	4	Jan–01
Indiana Jones: The Infernal Machine	6.75	Jan–01
Indy Racing 2000	8	Sep-00
Kirby: The Crystal Shards	7.5	Aug-00
Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask, The	9.75	Nov-00
Madden NFL 2001	8.75	Sep-00
Mario Tennis	8.25	Oct-00
Mega Man 64	7.25	Dec-00
Mickey's Speedway USA	6	Jan–01
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	7.5	Dec-00
Ogre Battle 64	9	Oct-00
Paper Mario	7.5	Feb-01
Pokémon Puzzle League	8.5	Dec-00
Quarterback Club 2001	4	Nov-00
Rally Challenge	4.5	Sep-00
Star Wars: Episode I Battle for Naboo	8.5	Jan–01
Spider-Man	8	Jan–01
World is Not Enough, The	9	Nov-00
Turok 3	8	Oct-00
Walt Disney World Quest: Magical Racing Tour	7.25	Oct-00
WCW Backstage Assault	3.5	Dec-00
WWF No Mercy	9.5	Dec-00

DREAMCAST

4X4 Evolution	8.75	Dec-00
AeroWings 2: Air Strike	7.5	Sep-00
BANG! Gunship Elite	8	Jan–01
Cannon Spike	7	Sep-00
Championship Surfer	5	Mar-01
Chicken Run	5	Jan–01
D2	4.75	Oct-00
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	8	Feb-01
Daytona USA	7	Apr-01
Deep Fighter	6.75	Jul-00
Demolition Racer: No Exit	8	Nov-00
Dino Crisis	6.5	Jan–01
Draconus: Cult of the Wyrm	7.75	Jul-00
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	7	Oct-00
ECW: Anarchy Rulz	3	Mar-01
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	4.5	Mar-01
Evolution 2: Far Off Promise	6	Jul-00
F355 Challenge: Passione Rossa	7.5	Dec-00
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	7	Dec-00
Fur Fighters	7.75	Aug-00
Grandia II	8	Jan–01
Gunbird 2	5.5	Oct-00
Grand Theft Auto 2	7.5	Jul-00
Hidden & Dangerous	7	Oct-00
Jeremy McGrath's Supercross 2000	3.75	Nov-00
Jet Grind Radio	8.25	Dec-00
Kao the Kangaroo	7	Apr-01
Kiss Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child	4.5	Feb-01
Looney Tunes Space Race	7	Jan–01
Maken X	7.75	Jun-00
Marvel Vs. Capcom 2	8	Aug-00
Metropolis Street Racer	9	Dec-00
MDK2	8	Jun-00
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	8	Jan–01
Namco Museum	7.75	Sep-00
NBA 2K1	9.5	Jan–01
NFL 2K1	9.5	Nov-00
Next Tetris: On-Line Addition, The	7	Dec-00
Nightmare Creatures II	5	Sep-00
Omikron: The Nomad Soul	5.5	Sep-00
Phantasy Star Online	9	Mar-01
Pod: Speedzone	3.5	Jan–01
Power Stone 2	8.5	Aug-00
Project Justice	7	Feb-01
Quake III Arena	9.25	Jan–01
Quarterback Club 2001	2.5	Nov-00
Railroad Tycoon II	5	Nov-00
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2	7.5	Jan–01
Red Dog	7.75	Dec-00
Resident Evil 2	8	Jan–01
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	8	Jan–01
Roadsters	5.5	Jun-00
Royal Rumble	6.75	Sep-00
Rush 2049	7	Oct-00
Samba De Amigo	5.5	Dec-00
Seaman	7	Sep-00
Sega GT	9	Oct-00
Sega Marine Fishing	8	Nov-00
Shenmue	6	Dec-00
Silent Scope	7.5	Jan–01
Silver	8	Sep-00
Skies of Arcadia	8.5	Jan–01
Sonic Shuffle	7	Jan–01
Space Channel 5	7.75	Jul-00
Spawn: In the Demon's Hand	6.5	Nov-00
Speed Devils Online	7.5	Jan–01
Starlancer	7	Dec-00
Star Wars: Demolition	7	Jan–01
Star Wars Episode I Racer	8.75	Jun-00
Star Wars: Jedi Power Battles	8	Jan–01
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike	8.25	Nov-00
Street Fighter III: Double Impact	7.75	Sep-00
Street Fighter Alpha 3	8.75	Aug-00
Striker Pro 2000	6.75	Aug-00
Super Magnetic Neo	8.5	Aug-00
Super Runabout: San Francisco Edition	8	Jan–01
Surf Rocket Racers	5.5	Feb-01
Sydney 2000	3.5	Oct-00
Tech Romancer	8.5	Aug-00
Test Drive Le Mans	4.75	Jan–01
Test Drive V-Rally	1	Jan–01
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2	8.5	Nov-00
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	7.75	Jun-00
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	7	Feb-01
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	9	Jun-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	9.75	Jan–01
Toy Story 2	7	Sep-00
Typing of the Dead	9	Feb-01
UFC	8.5	Oct-00
Unreal Tournament	8.5	Apr-01
Vanishing Point	7.5	Mar-01
Virtua Athlete 2000	7	Oct-00
Virtua Tennis	9.25	Sep-00
Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram	7.25	Aug-00
Wacky Races	6	Sep-00
World Series Baseball 2K1	5.75	Sep-00
Xtreme Sports	7	Jan–01

PC

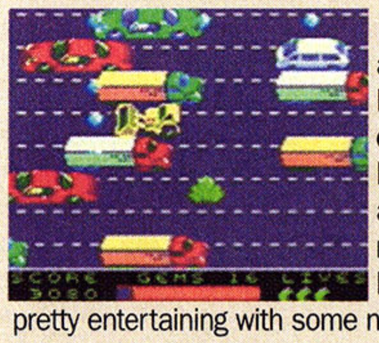
Age of Empires II: The Conqueror's Expansion	9	Nov-00
America	6.5	Apr-01
American McGee's Alice	9	Feb-01
BANG! Gunship Elite	7	Oct-00
Baldur's Gate II	9.5	Nov-00
Blair Witch Volume One: Rustin Parr	6.75	Dec-00
Breakneck	6.25	Oct-00
Call to Power II	6	Jan–01
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	6.5	Apr-01
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	9.5	Dec-00
Crimson Skies	8.25	Nov-00
Escape From Monkey Island	8.25	Jan–01
Everquest: The Scars of Velious	9.5	Jan–01
Freedom: First Resistance	5.75	Mar-01
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	9.25	Feb-01
Gunman Chronicles	8.25	Feb-01
Half-Life: Counter-Strike	9.75	Jan–01
Heavy Metal: FAKK 2	6.75	Oct-00
Hitman: Codename 47	6.75	Feb-01
Homeworld: Cataclysm	8	Nov-00
Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter	9	Apr-01
Insane	7.25	Mar-01
Jagged Alliance 2: Unfinished Business	5.75	Apr-01
Kingdom Under Fire	6.25	Mar-01
Mechwarrior 4: Vengeance	8.75	Jan–01
Midtown Madness 2	7.75	Dec-00
NASCAR Racing 4	8	Apr-01
No One Lives Forever	7.75	Dec-00
Project IGI: I'm Going In	3.5	Mar-01
Quake III: Team Arena	3.5	Mar-01
Rainbow Six: Covert Ops Essentials	8.75	Dec-00
Rune	7.75	Dec-00
Sacrifice	8.5	Jan–01
Sanity: Aiken's Artifact	5.25	Nov-00
Sea Dogs	8.5	Mar-01
Sheep	7.5	Feb-01
Simcoaster	7.75	Apr-01
Sims: Livin' Large, The	7	Nov-00
Soulbringer	6.5	Oct-00
Squad Leader	6.25	Jan–01
Starpeace	7	Apr-01
Starship Troopers	7.75	Jan–01
Star Trek New Worlds	5	Nov-00
Star Trek: Starfleet command Vol.2	8.5	Mar-01
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	8.25	Dec-00
Timeline	5.75	Feb-01
Tomb Raider Chronicles	4	Feb-01
Warlords Battlecry	8.75	Oct-00
Wizards & Warriors	5	Dec-00
You Don't Know Jack: 5th Dementia	8	Jan–01
Zeus: Master of Olympus	8.5	Jan–01

GAME BOY

1942	5.5	Aug-00
Aladdin	7	Feb-01
Action Man: Search For Base X	2.5	Apr-01
Batman: Chaos in Gotham	6	Mar-01
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	2	Dec-00
Chicken Run	4	Jan–01
Croc	5.75	Aug-00
Croc 2	6.5	Apr-01
Crystalis	8.5	Aug-00
Dinosaur	3.75	Aug-00
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	7.5	Jan–01
Donkey Kong Country	8.75	Jan–01
Dragon's Lair	6	Dec-00
Dragon Warrior I & II	7	Dec-00
Frogger 2	7.5	Dec-00
Galaga Destination: Earth	2	Feb-01
Hoyle Card Games	9	Mar-01
Inspector Gadget	6.5	Jan–01
Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure, The	7	Mar-01
Little Mermaid II: Pinball Frenzy	7.5	Dec-00
Looney Tunes Racing	4.25	Mar-01
Mario Tennis	8.75	Feb-01
Marvin Strikes Back!	6	Apr-01
Mega Man Xtreme	7	Mar-01
Metal Gear Solid	9.25	Jul-00
Metal Walker	7.75	Dec-00
M&M's Minis Madness	6	Dec-00
Monster Rancher Battle Card	6.75	Jul-00
Monster Rancher Explorer	7.5	Nov-00
Mr. Driller	8.25	Jul-00
MTV Skateboarding Featuring Andy Macdonald	6.75	Dec-00
MTV Sports Ultimate BMX	7	Apr-01
Perfect Dark	4	Nov-00
Pokémon Puzzle Challenge	8.5	Feb-01
Pokémon Silver & Gold	9	Dec-00
Pokémon Trading Card Game	7.25	Jun-00
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	6.5	Jan–01
Q*Bert	6.5	Feb-01
Rayman	8	Jun-00
Road Champs BXS Stunt Biking	7.75	Apr-01
Road Rash	6	Feb-01
Road To El Dorado	4.5	Sep-00
Spider-Man	4	Nov-00
Star Wars: Episode I Obi-Wan's Adventures	8	Mar-01
Toki Tori	7.5	Apr-01
Tomb Raider	8.25	Aug-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	3.5	Jun-00
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	6	Jan–01
Toonsylvania	7	Sep-00
Triple Play 2001	4	Aug-00
Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion	3.5	Oct-00
Wario Land 3	8.75	Aug-00
Warlocked	8	Sep-00
WCW Mayhem	7.75	Jul-00

FROGGER 2

■ **FORMAT** GAME BOY COLOR ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** MAJESCO ■ **REVIEWED** DEC-00



This version of Frogger 2 is actually pretty close to its Dreamcast counterpart, but obviously the monotony of Frogger works much better on a smaller scale. This modernized version of the Konami arcade classic is pretty entertaining with some new twists like oil slicks and odd-shaped lily pads to keep you on your toes. It's not rocket science, but it is good, clean Game Boy fun. – **ANDY**

7.5

RC DE GO

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** ACCLAIM ■ **REVIEWED** JAN-01

What a pleasant little surprise. Coming from Acclaim, the company that brought us the loathsome Re-Volt, I didn't expect RC de Go to be worth the CD it was pressed on. However, then I noticed it was made by Taito, and was actually a fun throwback to the NES classic R/C Pro Am. This is definitely an arcade game, so don't expect much depth. Still, it's cool to see someone doing a style of racing game that's become pretty rare these days. – **MATT**

7.5

NEW RELEASES ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR MORE DETAILS

Release Date	Title	Publisher/ Distributor	System
04/16/01	Project Justice	Capcom	DC
04/16/01	Mars Matrix	Capcom	DC
04/16/01	Kao the Kangaroo	Titus	DC
04/16/01	Star Trek: Bridge Commander	Activision	PC
04/16/01	Tropico	Gathering of Developers	PC
04/16/01	Desperados	Infogrames	PC
04/16/01	Cossacks:European Wars	Infogrames	PC
04/16/01	Capitalism 2	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
04/16/01	Merchant Prince 2	Take 2	PC
04/16/01	Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	PS-X
04/16/01	KISS Pinball	Take 2 Interactive	PS-X
04/16/01	Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	PS2
04/17/01	Stupid Invaders	Ubi Soft	DC
04/17/01	X-Com: Enforcer	Infogrames	PC
04/17/01	Bombing Islands, The	Crave Entertainment	PS-X

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX

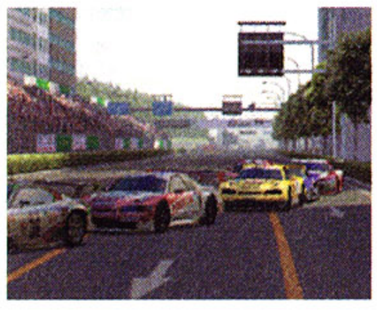
■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION ■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION
■ **PUBLISHER** ACTIVISION ■ **RELEASE** MAY 15

Hoffman blends much of the Tony feel with a two-wheeled slant. If you've put in some time with either of the Pro Skater titles (which we know you have) this game will be a breeze to pick up and play. Having a bike, as opposed to a board, creates some interesting twists, which keeps Hoffman from seeming too much like a THPS clone.

04/19/01	Xtreme Wheels	Bam Entertainment	GBC
04/23/01	Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Domin War	Macmillin	PC
04/23/01	Flight Sim 2000: Real Air Traffic Controller	World Air Simulation Group	PC
04/23/01	Flight Sim 2000: American Airlines	World Air Simulation Group	PC
04/23/01	Disney's Goofy's Fun House	NewKidCo	PS-X
04/24/01	Sega Smash Pack	Sega	DC
04/24/01	Mummy Returns, The	Havas Interactive	GBC
04/24/01	Rune Mission Pack: Halls of Valhalla	Talonsoft	PC
04/24/01	Metal Slug X	Tommo	PS-X
04/24/01	Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	PS2
04/24/01	ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	PS2
04/24/01	Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing	Lucas Arts	PS2
04/24/01	Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	PS2
04/25/01	Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing	TDK Mediactive	PS-X
04/27/01	Half-Life	Havas Interactive	DC
04/27/01	Dragon's Lair II Time Warp	Digital Leisure	PC
04/27/01	Fly! II	Gathering of Developers	PC
04/27/01	Jetfighter IV: Platinum Edition	Talonsoft	PC
04/27/01	World at War	Talonsoft	PC
04/30/01	Virtual Deep Sea Fishing II	Interplay	PC
04/30/01	Metropolis Card Club	Interplay	PC
05/01/01	Spider-Man	Activision	DC
05/01/01	Polaris SnoCross	Vatical Entertainment	DC
05/01/01	High Heat Baseball 2002	3DO	GBC
05/01/01	Portal Runner	3DO	GBC
05/01/01	Power Rangers Time Force	THQ	GBC
05/01/01	SeaDoo Hydrocross	Vatical Entertainment	N64
05/01/01	Independence War 2: Edge of Chaos	Infogrames	PC
05/01/01	Duke Nukem Forever	Infogrames	PC
05/01/01	O.R.B.	Infogrames	PC
05/01/01	Freelancer	Microsoft	PC
05/01/01	Mech Commander 2	Microsoft	PC
05/01/01	World Destruction League: War Jetz	3DO	PS-X
05/01/01	LEGO Stunt Rally	Lego Media	PS-X
05/01/01	Point Blank 3	Namco	PS-X
05/01/01	SeaDoo Hydrocross	Vatical Entertainment	PS-X
05/01/01	World Destruction League: War Jetz	3DO	PS2
05/01/01	Portal Runner	3DO	PS2
05/01/01	Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave Entertainment	PS2
05/01/01	Gauntlet Dark Legacy	Midway	PS2
05/01/01	Adventures of Cookie & Cream, The	Tommo	PS2
05/01/01	F1 Racing Championship	Ubi Soft	PS2
05/07/01	Mario Party 3	Nintendo	N64
05/07/01	Myst III: Exile	Learning Company	PC
05/07/01	Myst III: Exile Collector's Edition	Learning Company	PC
05/08/01	MLB 2002	SCEA	PS-X
05/08/01	Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	PS2
05/09/01	Shrek: Fairy Tale Freakdown	TDK Mediactive	GBC
05/14/01	Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons	Nintendo	GBC
05/14/01	Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages	Nintendo	GBC
05/14/01	Atlantis	THQ	GBC
05/14/01	Anachronox	Eidos Interactive	PC
05/15/01	18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker	Sega	DC
05/15/01	Confidential Mission	Sega	DC
05/15/01	Worms World Party	Titus	DC
05/15/01	Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern	Ubi Soft	DC
05/15/01	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	GBC
05/15/01	Commander Keen	Activision	GBC
05/15/01	Spider-Man 2: The Sinister Six	Activision	GBC
05/15/01	X-Men: Wolverine's Rage	Activision	GBC
05/15/01	Roswell Conspiracies	Ubi Soft	GBC
05/15/01	Top Shot 2: Lock & Load	Activision	PC
05/15/01	Arcanum: Of Steamworks and Magic Obscura	Havas Interactive	PC
05/15/01	Ripley's Believe It or Not!	Havas Interactive	PC
05/15/01	Gamefest: Chess Classic	Interplay	PC
05/15/01	Gamefest: Strategy Classics	Interplay	PC
05/15/01	Worms World Party	Interplay	PC
05/15/01	Dragonriders: Chronicles of Pern	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
05/15/01	Jimmy Buffett's Deep Sea Fishing	Acclaim	PS-X
05/15/01	Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	PS-X
05/15/01	Roswell Conspiracies	Ubi Soft	PS-X
05/15/01	Inspector Gadget	Ubi Soft	PS-X
05/15/01	Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	PS2
05/18/01	Microsoft Best of Entertainment Pak	Electro Source	GBC
05/18/01	Microsoft Pinball Arcade	Electro Source	GBC
05/18/01	Flinstones: Burgertime in Bedrock	Electro Source	GBC
05/21/01	Silent Hunter II	Learning Company	PC
05/22/01	Shogun: Total War Warlord Edition	Electronic Arts	PC
05/22/01	Blast Lacrosse	Acclaim	PS-X
05/22/01	Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX Maximum Remix	Acclaim	PS-X
05/22/01	Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	PS2
05/22/01	Cool Boarders 2001	SCEA	PS2
05/22/01	Red Faction	THQ	PS2
05/28/01	Viper Heat	Titus	PS2
05/29/01	Crazy Taxi 2	Sega	DC
05/29/01	Conflict Zone	Ubi Soft	DC
05/29/01	Razor: Freestyle Scooter	Crave Entertainment	GBC
05/29/01	Conflict Zone: Peacemakers	Red Storm Entertainment	PC
05/29/01	Moter Mayhem	Infogrames	PS2
05/29/01	Dark Cloud	SCEA	PS2
05/30/01	Anteus Rising: Hostile Waters	Interplay	PC
05/30/01	Destroyer Command	Learning Company	PC

GRAN TURISMO 3

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER RACING
■ **PUBLISHER** SCEA ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 1

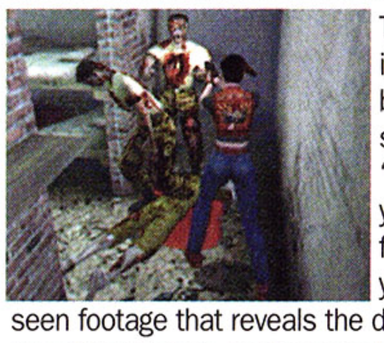


As one of the first games announced for the PlayStation 2, Gran Turismo is taking its sweet time in getting here. But as this franchise consists of the best-selling racing games ever, Polyphony Digital can be patient in creating a complete package. Gran Turismo 3 is still coming together, but we hope to see a finished (or nearly finished) version arriving at our offices in the coming weeks. That being said, what we've seen so far has been excellent.

05/30/01	Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Midway	PS2
05/31/01	Baldur's Gate 2: Throne Bhaal	Interplay	PC
06/01/01	Soldier of Fortune	Crave Entertainment	DC
06/01/01	Outrigger	Sega	DC
06/01/01	World Series Baseball 2K2	Sega	DC
06/01/01	World War 2 On-Line	Infogrames	PC
06/01/01	Fisher Price Rescue Heroes	Havas Interactive	PS-X
06/01/01	18 Wheeler: American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	PS2
06/01/01	Gran Turismo 3	SCEA	PS2
06/01/01	Twisted Metal: Black	SCEA	PS2
06/04/01	M & M's	Havas Interactive	PS-X
06/05/01	Floigan Brothers	Sega	DC
06/11/01	Everquest Trilogy	Sony Online	PC
06/12/01	Return of the Ninja	Crave Entertainment	GBC
06/12/01	Ultimate Surfing	Crave Entertainment	GBC
06/12/01	Hercules: The Legendary Journey	Titus	GBC
06/12/01	Emperor: Battle for Dune	Electronic Arts	PC
06/12/01	Championship Motorcross 2002	THQ	PS2
06/15/01	Razor: Freestyle Scooter	Crave Entertainment	DC
06/15/01	Commandos 2	Eidos Interactive	DC
06/15/01	Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	GBC
06/15/01	Anarchy Online	Funcom	PC
06/15/01	Time Crisis: Project Titan	Namco	PS-X
06/15/01	Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	PS-X

RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA X

■ **FORMAT** PLAYSTATION 2 ■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE
■ **PUBLISHER** CAPCOM ■ **RELEASE** JUNE 15



This is an exciting release, even if it is a rehash of the Dreamcast blockbuster. The "X" actually stands for "additional booty" or "Director's Cut." For those of you who venture into this frightening survival horror world, you'll be treated to never-before-seen footage that reveals the darkest of secrets. As if this wasn't enough to justify a purchase, Capcom is including a playable demo of the highly anticipated title, Devil May Cry. This truly is a wonderful release and we can't wait.

06/15/01	Resident Evil: Code Veronica X	Capcom	PS2
06/15/01	Herdy Gerdy	Eidos Interactive	PS2
06/15/01	Commandos 2	Eidos Interactive	PS2
06/15/01	NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	PS2
06/19/01	Sonic Adventure 2	Sega	DC
06/19/01	Startopia	Eidos Interactive	PC
06/19/01	Motorcross Mania	Take 2 Interactive	PS-X
06/19/01	Test Drive Off Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	PS2
06/19/01	Stunt GP	Titus	PS2
06/22/01	Space Ace	Digital Leisure	PC
06/26/01	Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	DC
06/26/01	Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	GBC
06/26/01	Commandos 2	Eidos Interactive	PC
06/26/01	Gangsters II	Eidos Interactive	PC
06/26/01	Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	PC
06/26/01	Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	PS-X
06/26/01	Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2	Eidos Interactive	PS2
06/26/01	NBA Street	Electronic Arts	PS2
06/26/01	Le Mans 24 Hour Racing	Infogrames	PS2
06/29/01	Pool of Radiance: Ruins of Myth Dranor	Learning Company	PC
06/29/01	Pool of Radiance Collector's Edition	Learning Company	PC
07/02/01	Return to Castle Wolfenstein	Activision	PC
07/02/01	Planet of the Apes	Fox Interactive	PC
07/02/01	Buffy the Vampire Slayer	Fox Interactive	PC
07/02/01	Arc the Lad Collection	Working Designs	PS-X
07/02/01	Dinosaur	Ubi Soft	PS2
07/12/01	Harpoon 4	Learning Company	PC
07/16/01	Museum	Namco	GBA
07/16/01	Pac-Man Fever	Namco	GBA
07/16/01	Stronghold	Gathering of Developers	PC
07/16/01	Sudden Strike Add On	Infogrames	PC
07/16/01	Pipe Dreams 2	Talonsoft	PC
07/16/01	Digimon Card Battle	Bandai	PS-X
07/17/01	Need for Speed: Motor City Online	Electronic Arts	PC
07/17/01	Max Payne	Gathering of Developers	PC
07/17/01	Galleon	Interplay	PC
07/24/01	NCAA Football 2002	Electronic Arts	PS2
07/24/01	Klonoa 2	Namco	PS2
07/25/01	Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	DC
07/27/01	Mafia	Talonsoft	PC
07/27/01	Green Berets	Talonsoft	PC
07/31/01	Throne of Darkness	Havas Interactive	PC
07/31/01	Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	PS2

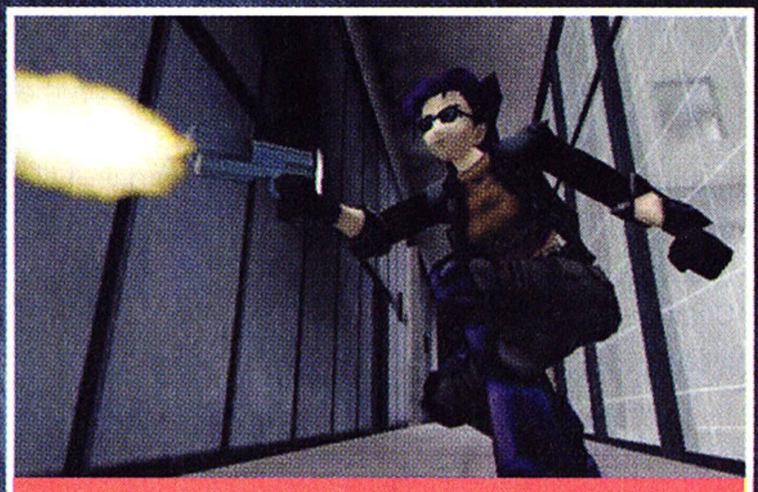
ONI

The Closer You Come, The Darker It Gets.

Machine: PS2 **Genre:** Fighting
Publisher: Rockstar **Available:** January, 2001

"Combining hand-to-hand martial arts combat with weapon slinging gunplay, players get the chance in **ONI** to enter a fully realized 3D world, designed by real world architects, to maximize the game's unique realism. Konoko is a feisty hard-nosed policewoman who's capable of a full range of 3D movement and who must confront ghosts from her past while fighting a brutal set of gangs, thugs, and ruthless crooks intent on stomping her pretty head into mush."

Full contact action, weapons combat, or full contact martial arts.



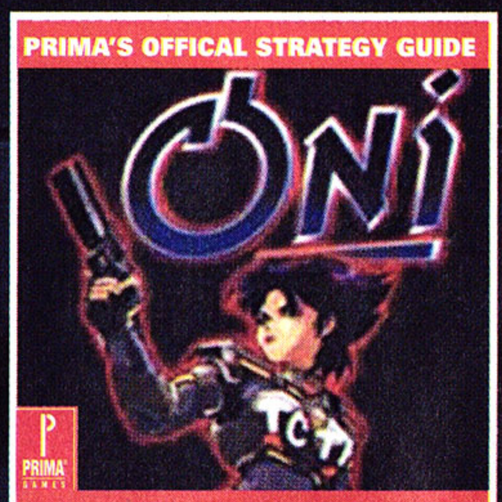
Interpolated animation allows gamers to run, dive, and roll in one smooth motion.

Real 3D world modeling and gorgeous anime artwork.

This awesome stand from Pelican holds your PS2 upright, 6 PS2 games and 2 memory cards.

First In Line or On-Line
Buy newest titles on-line or visit any of our 950 stores nationwide.

PRIMA'S OFFICAL STRATEGY GUIDE



SAVE 20% on Prima's Official Strategy Guide when you buy the game.

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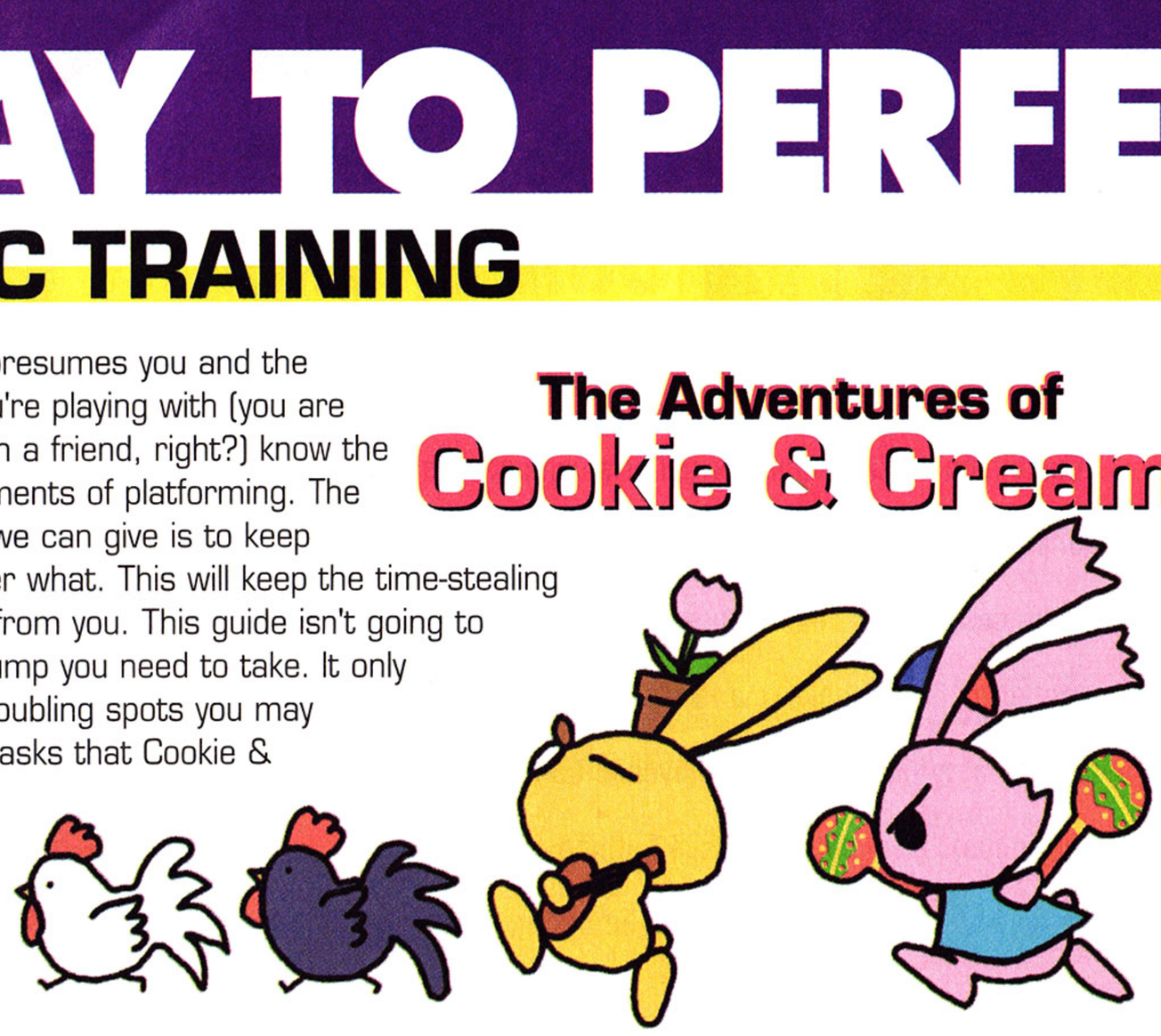
PLAY TO PERFECTION

BASIC TRAINING

This guide presumes you and the person you're playing with (you are playing with a friend, right?) know the rudimentary elements of platforming. The only general tip we can give is to keep moving no matter what. This will keep the time-stealing creatures away from you. This guide isn't going to describe every jump you need to take. It only goes over the troubling spots you may encounter. The tasks that Cookie & Cream must complete are listed for each character, with the numbers before them denoting in what order they must be performed. Also listed within the text is the location of the **Puzzle Pieces** on each stage. Getting all four pieces in a world will open up a new character for multiplayer. The items we didn't list on each level were the hidden gifts. On many stages, a piece of scenery can be picked up. Other than it appearing on the Title Screen, however, we found no use for these items. If anyone out there does figure out a purpose for these, let us know.

The Adventures of Cookie & Cream



JUNGLE WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

1 Hit a button to lower a drawbridge for Cream.

2 Pull on the leash to reign in the alligator for Cream.

4 Step on the sun platform and wait for Cream to cross.

6 Cross the lowered bridge. Stand on the triangle platform until Cream returns to safety.

8 Go back across the bridge and stand on an X or teardrop platform until Cream is across.

CREAM

3 Push the lever wheel to lower a drawbridge for Cookie.

5 Push the lever wheel to lower a drawbridge for Cookie.

7 Cross the triangle platform to get a **Puzzle Piece.**

STAGE 2

COOKIE

1 Step on the white buttons to raise wooden platforms for Cream.

3 Wait on the railed stone platform.

6 Wait at the next railed stone platform.

CREAM

2 Push logs into the lake for Cookie.

4 Rotate the lever wheel to get Cookie across.

5 Push the white button to raise a bridge for Cookie.

7 Rotate the lever wheel clockwise to get Cookie to the **Puzzle Piece**.

8 Rotate the lever wheel counterclockwise a quarter turn once Cookie is back on the platform.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

1 Continually pull on the alligator's leash until Cream is safe.

3 Push the third wall shut after going through to let Cream by.

4 Push over the log resting on the bridge to help Cookie get across the river.

6 Rotate the lever wheel until the moving log is centered.

CREAM

2 Push open the wall, then push it back in place to allow Cookie passage.

5 Pull the levers attached to logs, then push the plungers that appear behind you.

6 Rotate the lever wheel until the moving platform is all the way right.

7 Quick double jump from the positioned log to reach a **Puzzle Piece** to the right.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

1 Push the log lever forward, then pull it back to get Cream through the gates.

3 Jump on the suspended platform lever twice to bridge the gap for Cream.

5 Jump on the end lever with Cream to open the gates.

CREAM

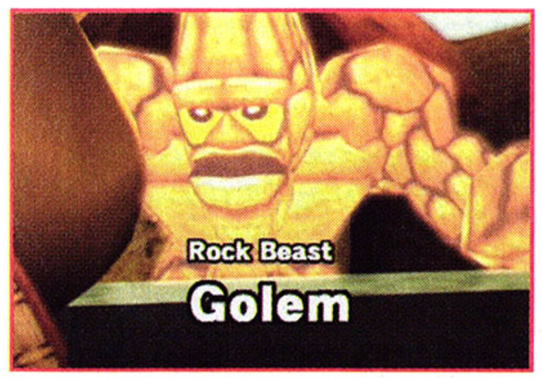
2 Rotate the lever wheels to put platforms in place for Cookie to get a **Puzzle Piece**.

4 Step on the white buttons to make a bridge for Cookie.

5 Jump on the end lever with Cookie to open the gates.

STAGE 5

To beat the Rock Golem, have Cream lead it to the edge near one of the protruding logs. Cookie should then hit the appropriate white button to shoot the log out at it. After being hit three times, this boss is defeated.



DESERT WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

2 Look to the top of a totem pole by three watches to find a **Puzzle Piece**.

3 Jump on the seesaw board to launch a boulder into the ant pit for Cream.

CREAM

1 Pull the plug in the sand to set up the pillars for Cookie.

4 Pull on the suspended rings to drop the rocks and stun the birds for Cookie.

STAGE 2

COOKIE

2 Alternate jumping on platforms with Cream to change water levels so you can cross.

3 Jump on the building to reach the blue platform.

4 Jump to the next platforms nearly simultaneously with Cream.

7 With the red platform up, leap over the cacti.

CREAM

1 Push the log to jam the dino skull.

2 Alternate jumping on platforms with Cream to change water levels so you can cross and get the **Puzzle Piece**.

3 Stand on the red platform, waiting for Cookie to get on a blue platform.

4 Jump to the next platforms nearly simultaneously with Cookie.

5 When the final platform is raised all the way, jump over cacti.

6 Jump on the blue platform to raise the red platform for Cookie.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

1 Simultaneously jump on the blue and red platforms with Cream.

5 Push the egg under the mallet's head.

7 Lead the chick to the wall, then use it as a step to get to the top.

8 Hold onto the rope until Cream gets you across.

10 Press the white buttons to open the spikes briefly for Cream.

11 Jump on the last white button simultaneously with Cream to open the gate.

CREAM

1 Simultaneously jump on the blue and red platforms with Cookie.

2 Use the rock on the seesaw as a platform to reach a **Puzzle Piece**.

3 Jump on the seesaw to launch a rock and scare a chicken.

4 Pull down the rope to raise the mallet on Cookie's side.

6 Release the rope to break open the egg.

9 Pull the lever south to get Cookie across.

11 Jump on the last white button simultaneously with Cookie to open the gate.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

1 Push the metal gate to the right.

4 Enter the revolving door and push it back into its original position.

6 Push the revolving door left.

9 Step on the second and third white buttons.

10 Pull the lever that starts the cart.

11 After Cream gets past the first rotating track junction, step on the first white button.

12 After Cream gets past the fifth rotating track junction, step on the third white button.

15 Pull the lever south until you can pull no farther.

16 Quickly step on the blue platform to make it safe for Cream to let go of the rope.

18 Jump on the changing platform when it's a key to open the gates for Cream.

CREAM

2 Grab the gate's ring and pull it until Cookie is through.

3 Push the revolving door forward.

5 Back out of the revolving door.

7 Step on a white button to move a wall for Cookie, then hit it again so you can get by.

8 Get in the mine cart and wait for Cookie to get you the **Puzzle Piece**.

13 Pull the fuse toward the fire creatures.

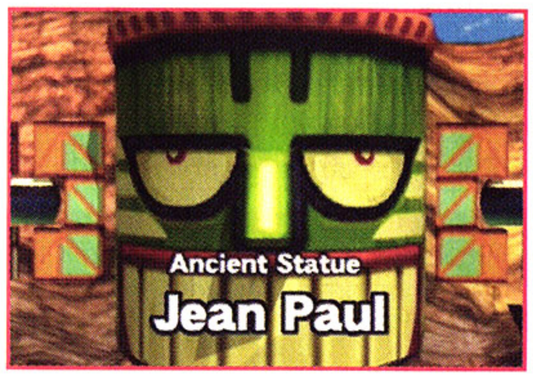
14 Hold onto the rope until there's a platform below you.

17 Pull the rope tied to the first log back far enough for you to make it to the next rope.

19 Pull the second log far enough for Cookie to get across.

STAGE 5

To beat Jean Paul, have one character use the hammer and the other collect time that appears. The character with the hammer needs to get close enough to knock out pole sections. After being hit a few times, the pole will pull out some new tricks, but the goal is still just to nail it with the mallet.



WATER WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

2 Wait for a hippo to come eat the fruit, then ride it to the grass by the gate.

4 Wait for the hippo to go through the gate, and catch another ride.

5 Rotate the wheel lever to open a tunnel under the waterfall on Cream's side.

8 Jump on the barrel and walk south to spin yourself ahead.

9 Move the anchor to pull the raft forward for Cream.

CREAM

1 Step on the end of the catapult to launch some fruit to Cookie's side.

3 Push a white button to open the gate.

6 Go all the way through the tunnel, and make some blind jumps to find a **Puzzle Piece**.

7 Move the anchor to pull the floating barrel toward Cookie.

STAGE 2

COOKIE

3 While riding the rafts across the river, take the fourth raft far left to get a **Puzzle Piece**.

4 Jump in the purple pot to make a ladder for Cream.

6 Go back and stand on the two stone circles to raise platforms for Cream.

CREAM

1 Step on the three platforms on your side to raise those on Cookie's. Keep jumping to keep them from sinking.

2 Pull on the anchor to help Cookie get to the island.

5 Jump on the trampoline to catapult Cookie.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

3 While riding the rafts across the river, take the fourth raft far left to get a **Puzzle Piece**.

4 Jump in the purple pot to make a ladder for Cream.

6 Go back and stand on the two stone circles to raise platforms for Cream.

CREAM

1 Step on the three platforms on your side to raise those on Cookie's. Keep jumping to keep them from sinking.

2 Pull on the anchor to help Cookie get to the island.

5 Jump on the trampoline to catapult Cookie.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

2 Jump on the plunger platform to knock barrels into the water for Cream.

5 Pull the anchors to get the boats on Cream's side into position.

8 Be sure Cream uses the spinner to raise platforms that get you to a **Puzzle Piece** on the right.

9 Jump in the raft.

11 Pull Cream into the floating fruits.

12 Pull Cream to the hippo blocking the exit, and use the fruit to lure it away.

CREAM

1 Rotate the wheel lever a half-turn clockwise to move a wooden plunger on Cookie's side.

3 Rotate the wheel by quarter-turns to help Cookie knock all the barrels in the water.

4 Jump on the paddle wheel to move Cookie across the lake on a chalet.

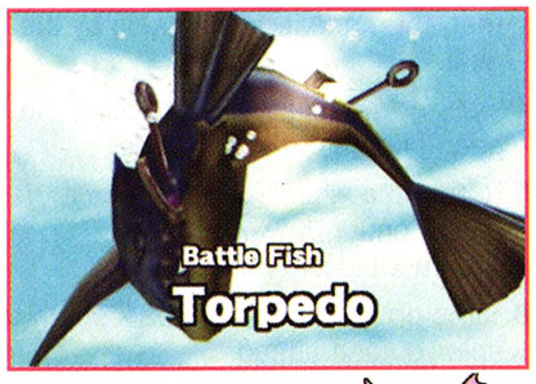
6 Step on the three white buttons to open the wooden gates for Cookie.

7 Step on the white button by the spinner to raise some colored platforms for Cookie.

10 Jump in the life preserver.

STAGE 5

Cookie is in charge of hauling Cream and pushing objects. Cookie needs to pull Cream into the floating bombs. Cream must then throw the bombs at Torpedo when it's surfaced. After four hits, this battle fish is beaten.



ARTIC WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

1 With Cream loaded in his spinner, push in the plunger and let go to launch you both.

2 Turn the wheel lever to raise a bridge for Cream.

4 Pull the lever to raise a bridge for Cream.

6 Pull the lever to raise a bridge for Cream.

CREAM

3 Pull the storks blocking Cookie's path back.

5 The bridge Cookie raises will fall as soon as you land on it. Jump to the first plank, then immediately jump to the island on the left. Continually jump to keep the island from sinking.

7 Jump to the third plank, then immediately to the opposite shore.

8 Jump on the metal platform as Cookie is sliding across the second section of ice to give it enough elevation to get him across.

9 Pull out the two wedges holding back an ice wall on Cookie's side.

10 When the shifting wall scares away the penguin, go to where it was to find a **Puzzle Piece**.

STAGE 2

COOKIE

2 Use the pinball plunger to raise a walrus for Cream.

5 At the end of this stage there are three platforms with shapes on them. Whichever one you jump on is the kind of bridge you'll raise for Cream on the other side.

CREAM

1 Pull up the cage to distract the penguins on Cookie's side with tasty fish.

3 Continually jump on the yellow pumps to steam up ice platforms for Cookie.

4 Past where Cookie avoids a polar bear, jump up the ice platforms to the right to get a **Puzzle Piece**.

STAGE 3

COOKIE & CREAM

1 Jump on the moving platforms when they're coming at you.

2 Jump in the canoe by the giant snowman.

3 To sail the boat, each player needs to row. Rotating the analog stick clockwise rows forward, rotating counterclockwise rows back. One player rowing faster or in a different direction than the other turns the raft. If you're playing with another person, it may be easier for a single player to handle both controls. Avoid sealife, don't get dragged offscreen by strong currents, and be sure to watch the right side for a **Puzzle Piece**.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

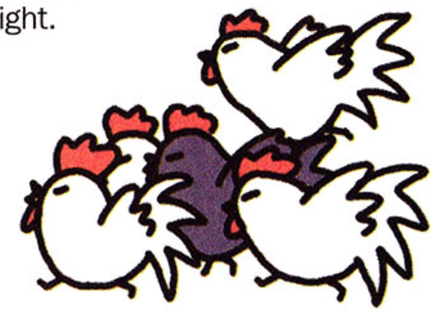
1 Use the same rowing strategy you did in stage 3 until Cookie and Cream split up again.

2 In the maze with the moving ice block, team up with Cream to shove it in the water under the **Puzzle Piece**.

4 Jump on the paddles to drill through the ice.

CREAM

3 Use the lever wheel to move the drill on Cookie's side all the way right.



STAGE 5

Beating Polar Teddy is easy. Step on the buttons to surround yourself with a nut, then use your protective shell to bounce the rocks at the bear. To collect time, bounce the rocks at the penguins. If you lose your nut, simply hit the button to get another one.

MAGICAL WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

3 Jump to the lid, and get in the teapot.

6 Use the teapot lid as a platform to get to the other side.

7 Pull the house over, lining it up with the cannon on Cream's side.

10 Get on top of a pink cart on the merry-go-round.

12 The merry-go-round will raise as it speeds up. Wait until it raises you to the **Puzzle Piece**, then double jump over the metal bars.

13 The two white buttons after the bars work the crane on Cream's side. Stand on the first to move it forward. Stand on the second to move it right. Move the crane's shadow over the handle on the metal bridge to snatch it and put it in Cream's path.

14 After the maze hidden by the tent, turn the wheel lever so the two platforms you turn on Cream's side are both protruding from the water.

CREAM

1 Use the lever wheel to turn the teapots around two positions.

2 Stand on the white button to open the teapot lid.

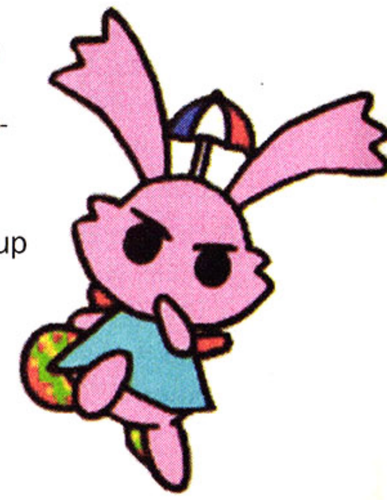
4 Use the lever wheel to turn the teapots around two positions.

5 Stand on the white button to open the teapot lid.

8 Step on the white button to have the cannon shoot out the window.

9 Step on the yellow button to slow down the merry-go-round for Cookie.

11 Step on the blue button to speed up the merry-go-round.



STAGE 2

COOKIE

1 Jump on the four ghosts floating over the chasm to get across.

3 Jump on the pole by the pendulum, then wait for the ghost to get in front of you and use its head to get across the chasm.

5 Open the gate to get punched and reveal a **Puzzle Piece**.

7 Open the gate to get through.

8 Pull on the wooden plug by the large door.

9 Turn the lever wheel counterclockwise.

10 In the graveyard, avoid the moving shadows and stand on the stationary shadow by the gate as Cream does the same on his side.

CREAM

1 Jump on the four ghosts floating over the chasm to get across.

2 Stand on the white button in the graveyard to pull back the pole.

4 Turn the lever wheel one quarter turn clockwise.

6 Turn the lever wheel one quarter turn clockwise.

9 Turn the lever wheel counterclockwise.

10 In the graveyard, avoid the moving shadows and stand on the stationary shadow by the gate as Cookie does the same on his side.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

1 Alternate jumping on the red pump with your partner until the elephant wakes up.

2 Continually jumping will help you cross the wobbly bridge. Keep an eye out for a **Puzzle Piece**, it should be out in the open.

3 With both Cookie and Cream at the top of the short spiral stairs, jump and then grab onto the pole that comes. When near enough to the platforms at the end, jump off the pole and land on the platform.

4 After the bear cage, use the chickens as platforms to get over the chasm.

5 Turn the lever wheel simultaneously with Cream to raise a bridge, and hold it as he crosses.

CREAM

1, 2, 3, & 5 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

1 Get in the cannon and wait to be shot over the gate.

2 On the ball, you'll go the opposite direction you push. Life will be easier if you turn the controller upside-down.

4 Hit the white button to rotate Cream's bridge.

6 Hit the spikes on the wall to lose your ball and get over the fence.

8 Get on the first platform.

10 Double jump to the second platform at the same time Cream pulls the lever back.

11 You'll come to a lake with blue and red platforms. Landing on a blue will raise a red on the other side as the blue sinks. Cookie and Cream must time their jumps so they leap nearly simultaneously toward the next platform. The **Puzzle Piece** awaits high up on a platform on Cookie's side.

12 Don't get in the cannons on the other side unless you want to be launched back to the beginning.

CREAM

1 & 2 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

3 Hit the white button to rotate Cookie's bridge.

5 Hit the white button to lower a bridge for Cream.

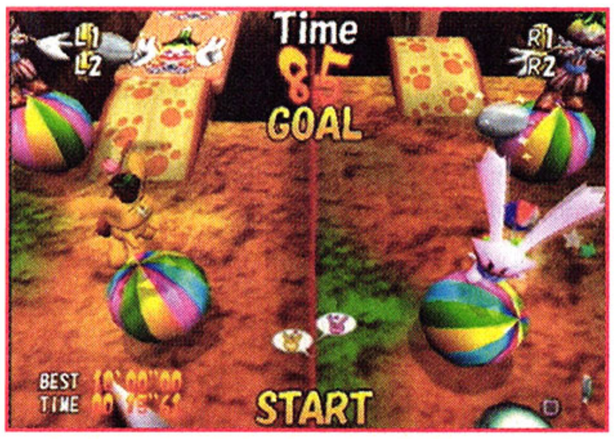
6 Hit the spikes on the wall to lose your ball and get over the fence.

7 Pull the lever back to move a platform to Cookie.

9 Push the lever forward.

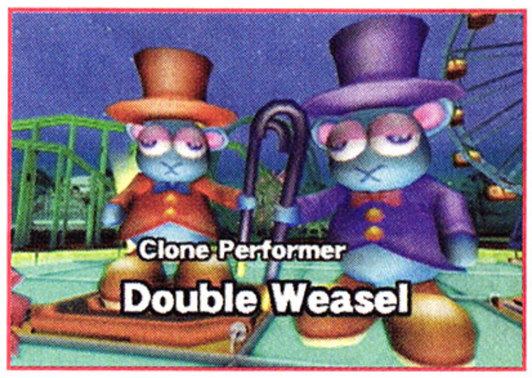
10 Move the lever back as Cookie jumps forward to the second platform.

11 & 12 Follow the same steps as Cookie.



STAGE 5

Wait for one of the weasels to attack. When you know which one is real, attack the one in the same position on the other side. For example, if the red weasel on the northern end of Cookie's side attacks, Cream should smack the northern-most blue weasel on his side. After enough swats, you'll defeat this feral pair of illusionists.



TRICK WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

1 The red buttons open and close the wooden gates. You'll often have to step on the buttons multiple times to get your partner past. Be sure to pick up the **Puzzle Piece** along the way.

2 Get on the platform on the geared logs.

4 Jump on the brass platforms to clear a wall on Cream's side.

5 Jump up on the scale, but don't push the weight off.

7 Push the weight off, then double jump to the Goal.

CREAM

1 Follow the same step as Cookie.

3 Grab the crank and rotate your analog stick clockwise to get Cookie across.

6 Jump up on the scale, and then double jump to the Goal.

STAGE 2

COOKIE & CREAM

1 Get in the robot cockpit.

2 Both push forward to move ahead. Both push back to move backwards. One pushes forward while the other pushes back to make sharp turns. Pushing both L1 and R1 will smash debris in the way. It's pretty simple once you get the hang of it, just keep an eye out for the **Puzzle Piece** floating above some junk on the right.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

2 Pull back the plunger on the chute Cream is in. When the train is passing by, let go so Cream can get a ride.

3 You'll need to use the train as a platform as well, so hurry past the gates.

4 Push the red buttons to momentarily shut off the electricity for Cream.

5 Pull the switch below the stairs to change the track direction.

6 When the train passes under the wooden bridge, push the key on top of the train.

CREAM

1 Get in the wooden chute.

7 When the key gets dropped off on your side, push it to the chest to the south to reveal a **Puzzle Piece**.

8 When you come to trampolines surrounded by wooden walls, wait for the train, then jump on it to get past.

9 Press the red button to open the gates for you and Cookie.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

2 Get on the elevator.

5 Pull on the rope to raise the bucket.

6 After you get past the wooden gears, hit the switch to turn on the electricity.

8 Turn off the electricity.

10 On the balancing platforms you will find a **Puzzle Piece**.

11 Get in the cart.

CREAM

1 Hit the switch in the pit to shut off the electricity.

3 Push the red button to raise Cookie's elevator.

4 Get in the bucket.

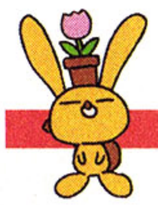
7 Walk through the gates.

9 Turn the key on the robot to open the gate on Cookie's side.

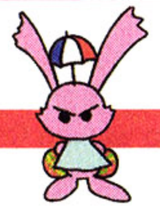
11 Get in the cart.

STAGE 5

Cookie steers left and right, Cream moves forward and back. Cream also works a vacuum on the front of the vehicle. When clockwork chicks are spewed out, suck them in with the vacuum and spit them back at the boss. To get rid of the flying creatures, drive near them but not under them. They'll land next to your vehicle, then fly away.



MUSIC WORLD



STAGE 1

COOKIE

3 Stand by the bongo next to the xylophone.

5 Hit the giant bongo three times to clear Cream's path.

7 Hit the gong three times to get Cream across and raise some platforms for you.

9 Near the end of the rotating platform chasm, jump on a castanet to get across.

CREAM

1 The **Puzzle Piece** is sitting right in front of you as this level starts.

2 Without getting hit by fire creatures, pull the levers on the left to help Cookie past the cymbals.

4 Give the bongo that Cookie's waiting by a good whack with your maracas.

6 Stand on a suspended platform, and wait for Cookie to get you across.

8 Turn the record player crank to turn platforms for Cookie.

STAGE 2

COOKIE

2 Change the trombone tone so the platform by the trumpet is at the right height to blow into it.

3 Get all three trumpet buttons in the down position, then blow to line up platforms for Cream.

5 Blow on the party favor to help Cream across a chasm.

6 Blow the whistle at the end with Cream.

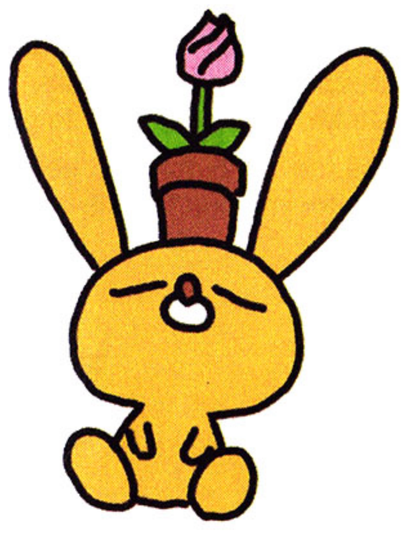
CREAM

1 Look for a reed on the left side, and blow into it to give Cookie a lift.

2 Blow into the trombone.

4 Get the **Puzzle Piece** on the way across the trumpet platforms.

6 Blow the whistle at the end with Cookie.



STAGE 3

COOKIE

1 Use the seesaw to knock the spindles in the water for Cream.

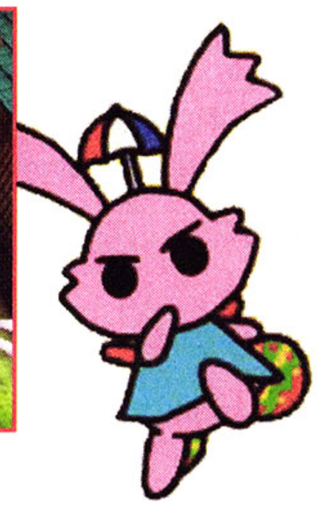
3 Look for a **Puzzle Piece** in a boat as you go past the huge castanet.

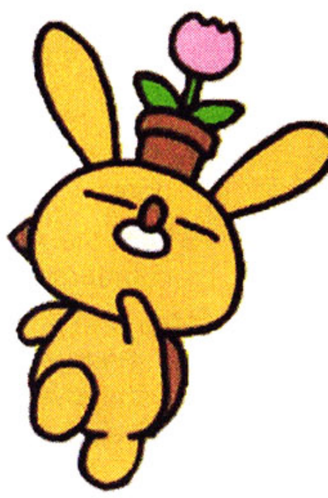
CREAM

2 Blow in the horn to put the huge castanet on Cookie's side to sleep.

4 Open the metal gate for Cookie.

5 Blow into the recorder near the Goal to open a fan for Cookie.





STAGE 4

COOKIE

4 Hold onto the end of the violin bow.

6 At the piano, press the button to hear a tune. You and Cream must re-create this tune. It changes every time, so only a good ear or blind luck can help you. Every time we played, the first tune played was Cookie's middle key, then Cream's far left key, and finally Cream's second from the right key.

7 Jump on the maraca handles to clear the path.

CREAM

1 A **Puzzle Piece** awaits you on the shifting tambourines at the beginning.

2 Turn the music box wheel to put the castanet on Cookie's side to sleep.

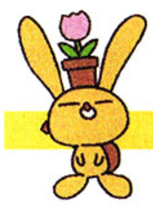
3 Pull open the metal gate for Cookie.

5 Jump and grab the violin bow to get Cookie to the piano.

6 & 7 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

STAGE 5

Simplicity itself. Cookie and Cream have to but hit chimes that the boss' legs are on at nearly the same time.



TUMBLE WORLD

STAGE 1

COOKIE

1 Use the wind from the fans to get across.

2 Turn on the fan to move the cloud on Cream's side over to the **Puzzle Piece**.

CREAM

1 Use the wind from the fans to get across.

3 Grab onto the stick in the balloon that Cookie stands on to pop it and get him across.

STAGE 2

COOKIE

1 Get into the center cannon to dislodge a **Puzzle Piece**.

3 In the flying machine, Cookie controls turning, Cream controls elevation.

4 Jump on a platform with Cream.

CREAM

2 While flying, use R2 to grab bombs. Bring them to the gate and throw them at it. After three bombings, the gate is destroyed.

3 Follow the same step as Cookie.

4 Jump on a platform with Cookie.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

1 Keep jumping on the checkerboard to knock out the lion for Cream.

2 Before Cream raises the water level, jump down into the reservoir to get a Puzzle Piece.

4 Kill all the knights in the room with the swinging chandeliers.

5 Step on the blue button.

6 You'll have a boss battle similar to Jungle World, Stage 5.

CREAM

3 Turn the water wheel to raise the lilypads for Cookie.

4, 5, & 6 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

1 A Puzzle Piece awaits on a disintegrating platform to the left.

2 On the platforms with the exclamation point, you must precisely time your jumps with Cream to make it across.

3 By walking the ledge after the gate, you'll avoid the rolling boulders.

4 You don't have to kill the pink knights if you don't want to.

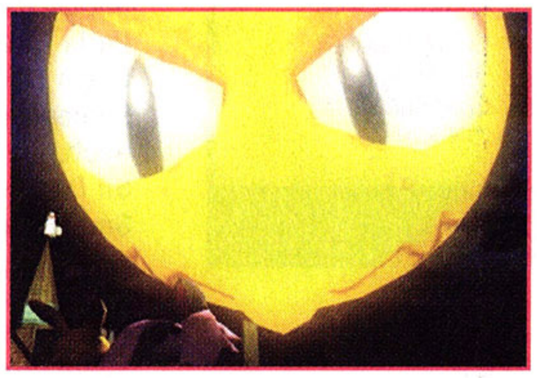
5 Jump onto the green bunny a few times to lower the cage.

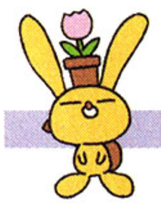
CREAM

2, 3, 4, & 5 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

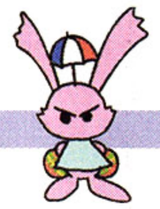
STAGE 5

In the first part of this battle with the delinquent moon, shoot it with the cannons. The moon will normally go after the bunny who shot it last, so it's good to switch blasting responsibility. After enough hits, the moon will split apart into smaller parts. Cookie & Cream must jump on the little moons, then stand next to them and push L2 or R2 to kick them over the edge.





BONUS WORLD



STAGE 1

COOKIE

1 Use the slingshot to shoot down a rainbow for Cream.

3 Swing the bat to get Cream across.

4 Stand on the baseball.

7 Get on the ring and ride it across, jumping off when it circles the pole.

8 Push the orange button to raise a ring for Cream.

10 Use the wheel lever to angle the Legos in better positions for Cream.

CREAM

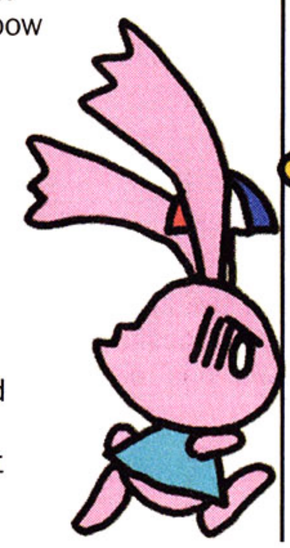
1 Use the slingshot to shoot down a rainbow for Cookie.

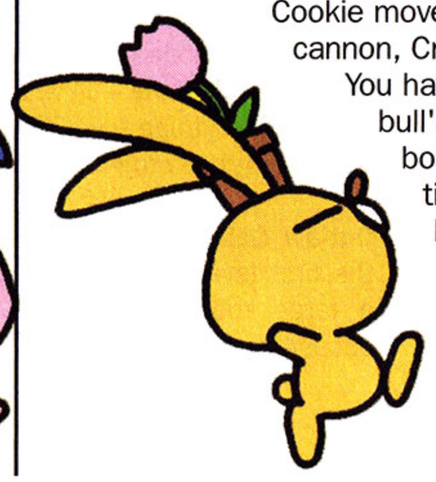
2 Stand on the baseball.

5 Swing the bat to get Cookie across.

6 Push the orange button to raise a ring for Cookie.

9 Get on the ring and ride it across, jumping off when it circles the pole.





Cookie moves the cannon, Cream fires. You have to hit the bull's eye on the boss' belly five times to beat him.

STAGE 2

COOKIE

1 Jump on the spoon handle to reveal pits on Cream's side.

3 Hit the blue button to turn a popsicle around for Cream.

4 Pull the lighter handle to light the candles.

6 Rotate the wheel lever to push the cake over the pit.

9 Rotate the wheel lever to push the cake over the pit.

11 Push the blue button to raise the spikes.

CREAM

2 Push the blue button to open a gate for Cookie.

4 Turn the wheel lever to move the candles into position for Cookie.

5 Stand on the metal platform to raise the cutter.

7 Push the blue button to cut the cake.

8 Stand on the metal platform to raise the cutter.

10 Push the blue button to cut the cake and make a way across.

12 Go into the gingerbread house to impale candy platforms on the spikes.

STAGE 3

COOKIE

2 Pull on the shishkabob.

5 Pull on the kid's finger to get Cream across.

7 Ride the hare and the tortoise across the clouds. Keep jumping on the tortoise to keep it aloft.

CREAM

1 Stand on the chopstick to get hold of a ball.

3 Let go of the chopstick to clear your path.

4 Stand on the kid's mitten.

6 Put in some bookmarks to help Cookie.

7 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

STAGE 4

COOKIE

1 The buttons raise and lower the five platforms in front of Cream. The ones that spin after a button push are the ones that change position – up if they are down, down if they are up. Through experimentation, you need to get all five platforms in the up position.

2 You now have to finish a slide puzzle to get Cream across. The yellow pieces have to form a tunnel from one end to the other. The pieces start in a random position each time, so experimentation is the only way to get through on this.

4 Another "fun" puzzle. This time you and Cream must push the buttons to put together the picture. Again, it's all trial and error. Good luck.

CREAM

3 Stand on the shaped platforms to raise the same shaped platform for Cookie.

4 Follow the same steps as Cookie.

STAGE 5

SECRET ACCESS

PS2 PLAYSTATION 2

4x4 Evolution

Unlock Secret Vehicles – To get the world's coolest truck (emblazened with the Game Informer logo), along with some of the sorriest vehicles on four wheels, go to the game's main menu and press L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1.

"The Rhino"
Toledo, OH

Knockout Kings 2001

To play as "The Greatest," Muhammad Ali, enter SBATISTE as your name in Career mode.

Techno Destructo
Richmond, VA

CODE OF THE MONTH

Oni

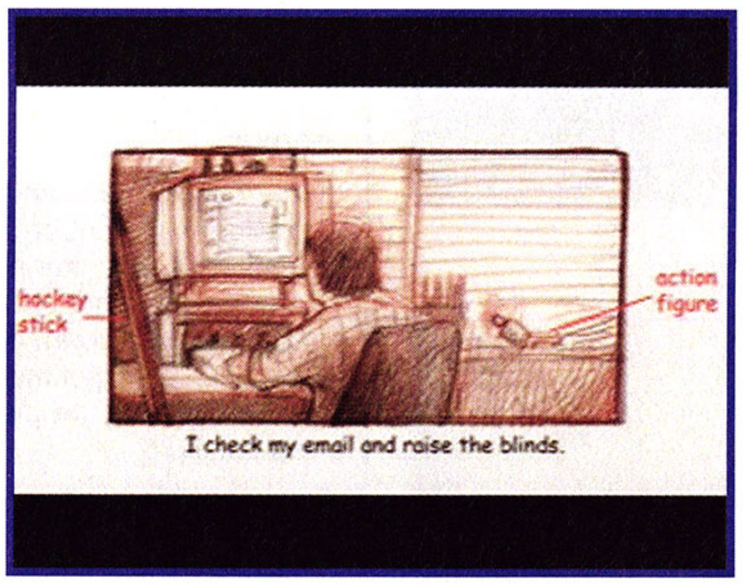
Big Characters – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, R3 (Right Analog Button), □, ○, L3.
Big Head – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, Start, □, ○, Start.
Character Select – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, L2(x4). Keep tapping L2 to see all the characters available, each with their own moves.
Hard Mode – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, R3, L3 (Left Analog Button), ○, □.
Infinite Health – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, R3, L3, R3, ○.
One-Hit Kills – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, L3, R3, ○, □.
Tiny Characters – Hit Select during play. Highlight "Help" and hit L2, L1, L2, □, ○, □, L3, R3, □, ○.

Avery Thompson
Roselle, IL

GunGriffon Blaze

Begin With Extra Bombs – To get a head start in the game, enter your pilot's name as FEA MASTER! Put Mexico as your country, and your sex as female.

Nancy Harlequin
San Diego, CA



Star Wars: Episode I Starfighter

To unlock these secrets, go to the Option screen from the Main Menu. Go into Codes, and enter the following cheats.

Character Sketches – HEROES
The Sith Infiltrator – BLUENSF
Experimental N-1 Fighter (In Bonus Missions) – BLUENSF
Hidden Message – LTDJGD
LEC Team Pic – SIMON
Meet the Developers – TEAM
Multiplayer Mode – ANDREW
Strange Slideshow – JAMEZ
Unlock Everything – OVERSEER
View Planet Sketch-Work – PLANETS

Outlaw Gallery – Don't follow the instructor's ship in the first level. Instead, go the opposite direction, into a large room. Here you will find art for a future LucasArts project.

Sam Foreskin
Cutting Heights, MA

PLAYSTATION

Supercross

Enter these codes in the Code menu to unlock cheats, tracks and riders.

Agent Albert – PEANUTBUTTER
All Joke Riders – JOKERIDERS
Astro Nut – ONESMALLSTEP
Billy Ray MudMullet – POSSUMPANCAKES
Bob Page – FORTYFOUR
Bones – MARROWMAN
Bradley G – DTMHBOSS
Brave Scotsman – PLAIDROCKS
David Bailey – IRONMAN
Doctor Invizzo – LOOKMANOBODY
EA Gal – LETSGOEAGAL
Ecko Rider – WWWECKOCOM
El Luchador – MASKEDMAN
Etnies Freestyle Games – SHOESANDTRICKS
Exploding Text – EXPLODE
FMF Championship – NEEDNEWEXHAUST
Harry Bigfoot – MMMSQUIRREL
Hot Tub Harvey – HARVEYSAYSRELAX
Invisible Bikes – NOBIKES
Invisible Riders – NORIDERS
Johnny O'Marra – 4XUSMXDNCHAMP
Low Fences – LOFENCES
Show Rider Weaknesses – I AM WEAK
Riverbed Track – OTRATTWTGHWG
Launching Pad Track – OSSFMOGLFM
Marimba – SQWAK
Moto Samurai – HONORFIRST
MR-34 Robot – METALDUDE
Parts Unlimited Championship – NUTSANDBOLTSS
Roger DeCoster – 9XBELGIANCHAMP
Sarcophagus Jones – PYRAMIDSCHEME
Scott – THROWMEGOGGLES
Sir Dirthead – JOUSTER
Smitty Sugarlegs – ENDZONEDANCE
Some Guy – WHOSTHAT
Space Overlord – BUNGAVEE
Spitt Polish – THREEPIECESUIT
Supercross Avenger – TRIPLELEAPER
Tie Dye Guy – MELLOWOUT
The King – SIDEBURNS
The Zombie – LOVESBRAINS
Tricky The Clown – POLKADOT
Unlimited Power Clutch – UNLIMITEDPC
Washougal Track – WMXPLIBWWA
Wrenchead.com Championship – SUPPLIESONLINE

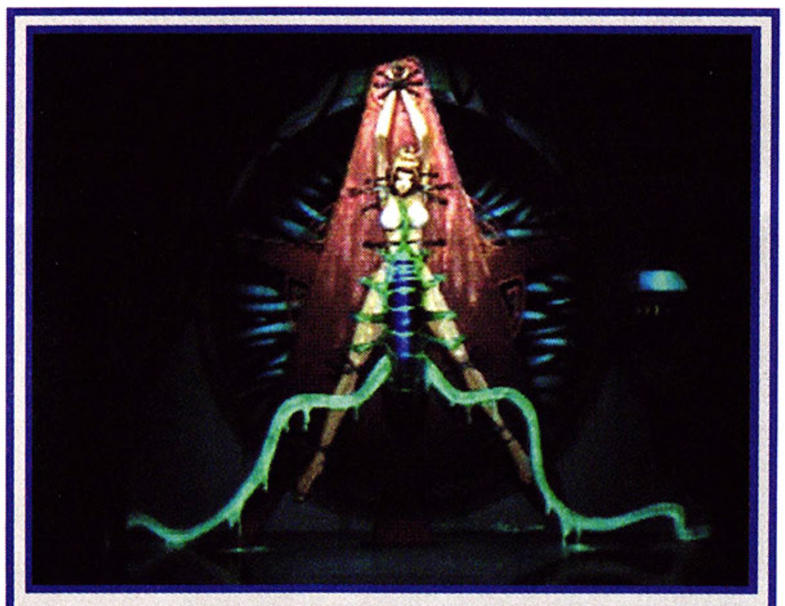
Mike Burk
Webville, COM

Triple Play Baseball

EA Sports Dream Team – Select a single game. At the Team Select screen, alternate hitting Left and Right six times. When this is done, you'll hear the words "Triple Play Baseball." This is a team made up of amped developers.

Cal Eldred's Neighbor
Milwaukee, WI

DREAMCAST



Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix

Beat the game on any difficulty. Begin another game from the same file. Don't hit anything until the starting cutscenes are over. When Rain leaves, there will be a control pad on the wall right after the screen switches. Enter these codes in it to activate the following cheats.

All Weapons – 11692
Big Head Mode – 10397
Infinite Ammunition – 61166

Art Gallery – On disc 1's 'Press Start' screen, hit Left, Right, Up, Down(x2), ○. Select "Option" then "Extra" to access the "Art Gallery" section. On disc 2's 'Press Start' screen, hit Up(x2), R1(x3), □. On disc 3's 'Press Start' screen, hit L1, R2, L1, R2, L1, □. Each one has a different set of sketches, but none are too racy.

Lipstick Lover
Cudjoe Key, FL

Knockout Kings 2001

Go to Career mode, and enter the following codes to unlock these hidden pugilists.

Ashy Knucks – KNUCKS
Baby – BABY
Barry Sanders – SANDERS
Clown – CLOWN
Cyclops – EYE
Gorilla – GORE
Jason Giambi – GIAMBI
Junior Seau – SEAU
Owen Nolan – NOLAN
Steve Francis – FRANCIS

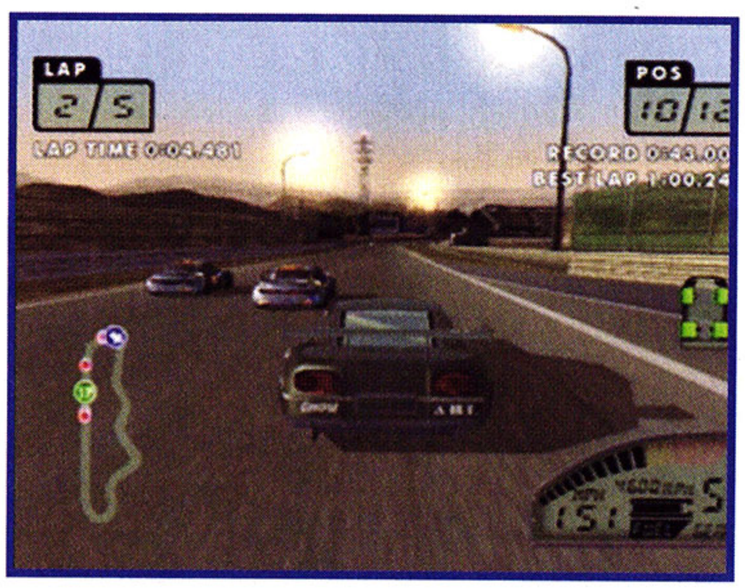
Complete Attributes in Career mode – Enter 100% as your name for Career mode.

Neal The Real Deal
Pittsburgh, PA

Michelin Rally Masters of Race Champions

Unlock Everything – In the Code Entry screen, contained in the game's Options menu, enter J20X4CRFL4ZT.

Jeff Kenzington
Mobile, Alabama



Test Drive Le Mans

For these kickin' codes to the coolest game Paul ever hated, enter them at the name entry screen.

Unlock All Tracks – GOOZ
Unlock Every Championship – CARNAGE
Unlock Regular Le Mans Cars – MONSTA

Ahmed Pikati
Brooklyn, NY

Kiss: Psycho Circus

Hidden Music – If you spent hard-earned money on this turdling, you must be a big KISS fan. To hear some abbreviated music on the GD-ROM (which is more fun than actually playing the game), put the disc in an audio CD player and fast-forward past track two.

Highlights:
Shout It Out Loud – Track 27
Unholy – Track 28
Rock & Roll All Night – Track 29
Detroit Rock City – Track 30
Hotter Than Hell – Track 31
Psycho Circus – Track 32

"Joystick Juggalo"
Lansing, MI

Unreal Tournament

Level Skip – If you're sick of getting blown to bits on the same level, pause the game and enter Up, Down, Left, Right (x2), Left. This will warp you to the next level, far away from the mean and nasty so-and-so's who tormented you before.

Toby Mandola
Provo, UT

Macross M3

Free Mission Mode – Beating this anime-inspired game will unlock the levels in much more easily accessible order.

YF-21 in Free Mission – Once you've beaten Macross, go to Internet, then Passwords, and enter 25193621. Now you can play this level in Free Mission mode, too.

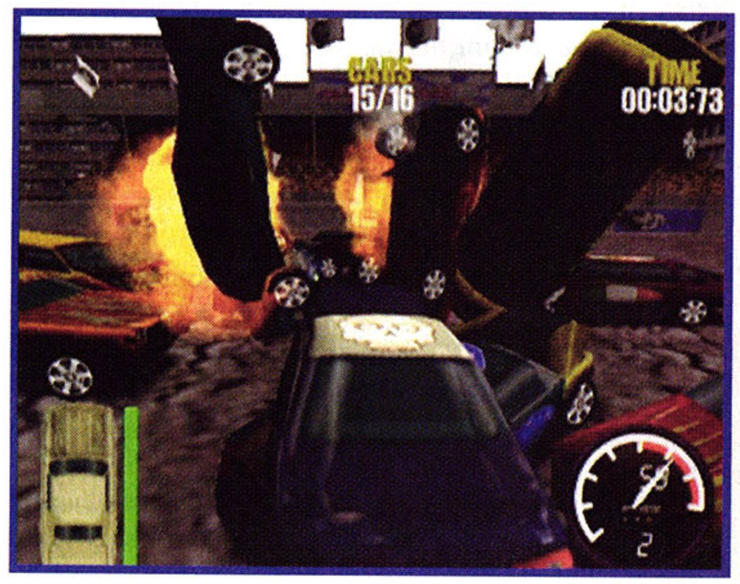
The Maltese Mecha
St. Louis, MO

Kao The Kangaroo

To unlock these cheats, enter the button combos at the in-game map screen.

Extra Checkpoint – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Up, Right, Down, Left, A.
Extra Glove – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Down, Right, Left, Down, A.
Extra Life – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Down, A, Up, Left, A.
Infinite Checkpoints – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Up, Right, Down, Right, Left, A.
Infinite Gloves – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Down, Right, Up, Right, Left, B.
Infinite Health – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Down, B(x2), A, Up, Left, Right.
Infinite Lives – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Down, Left, B, Left, B(x2).
Level Select – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Up, Down, Right, Left, Up, X.
Level Skip – Hold L Button and R Button, then hit Up(2x), Left, Down, X.

Darnell Dingo
Dundee, Australia



Demolition Racer: No Exit

All of these key sequences should be entered at the main menu.

Unlock All Game Modes – X, R Button, Y, R Button, L Button, R Button, R Button, R Button
Unlock Secret Cars – X, Y, R Button, R Button, R Button, R Button, X, Y
Unlock All Extras – L Button, R Button, X, L Button, X, R Button, X, Y

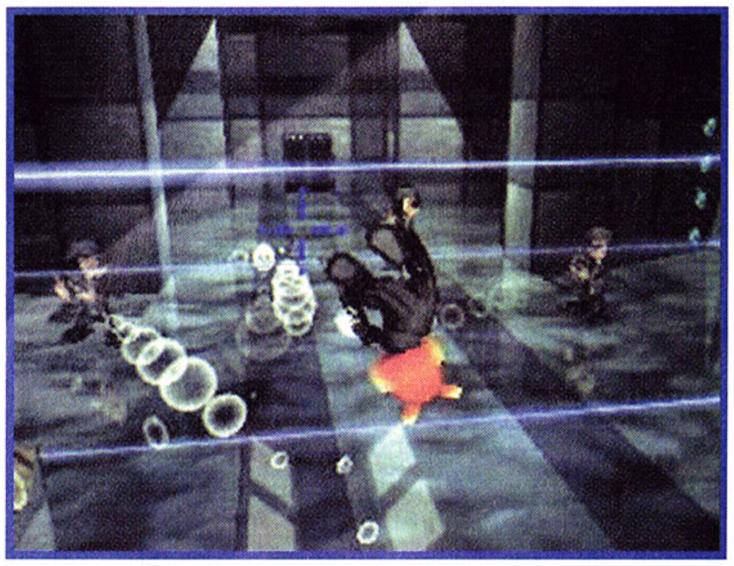
"GI Droid"
(location unknown – last seen putting up missing Paul posters near First Ave.)

Daytona USA

Unlock Net-Battle Car – Accumulate 100 hours of gameplay to get your hands on this car.
Unlock Pywackett Barchetta Car – Merely finish the Three Seven Speedway in a single race with the four default vehicles for this new one.
Unlock Red Cat Car – If you win an online race, this car will be your reward.

"Weird" Will Nelson
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

NINTENDO 64



Conker's Bad Fur Day

Put in these codes at the Cheats screen off of the Options menu.

Barn Boys In Chapters Mode – PRINCEALBERT
Bats Tower – CLAMPIRATE
Caveman In Multiplayer – EATBOX
Conker In Total War Or Race Modes – WELLYTOP
Extra Brutal Multiplayer – SPUNKJOCKEY
Grim Reaper In Multiplayer – BILLYMILLROUNDABOUT
It's War – BEELZEBUBSBUM
Neo Conker In Multiplayer – EASTEREGGSRUS
Slopranos In Chapters Mode – ANCHOVYBAY
Spooky In Chapters Mode – SPANIELSEARS
Uga Buga In Chapters Mode – MONKEYSCHIN
Zombies & Villagers In Multiplayer – BEEFCURTAINS

Curse Comebacks – Type in any common explitive into the Cheat entry screen. We're not giving you any examples here; use your imagination. You'll get a witty response.

Crap & Dank: Refuse Rangers
Dumpster Behind Disney World

Cruisin' Exotica

There are a bunch of cars to unlock. Here's how to get them.

Cooler – Complete Challenge Mode.
Formula 2 – Win Exotica mode with Glide, or rack up 100,000 miles while in the top 3.
Glide – Pick up 2200 miles
Heavyliftin' – Tally 5000 miles
Lil' Lightnin' – Finish the Free Style races
Rail – Finish Exotica mode with Whiplash
Rocket – Earn 100,000 miles
Whiplash – Finish Exotica mode with Formula 2

Matt Jennings
Macon, GA

Indiana Jones & The Infernal Machine

Enter these as your passcodes.

Level Select – FORGEOFF
View Development Team – CHEESE!!
Expert Mode – REALHARD

Jeremiah Matheson
Billings, MT

PC PERSONAL COMPUTER

Clive Barker's: Undying

Hit Tab key to enter in these life-giving codes.

999 Health – set aeons.patrick health 999
All Weapons & Spells – adall
Donkey Spawn – assall
Flight Mode – flight
Framerate Shown – showfps
Increased Spell Level – ampattspell
Infinite Mana – infinitemana 1
More Light – becomelight 1

Tyrone Elmore
Indianapolis, IN

Icewind Dale: Heart of Winter

Find the "icewind.ini" file in the directory. Add "Cheats=1" under the "[Game Options]" section. You may want to make a backup of this file, just in case. When in gameplay, hit [Control] and Tab, then input these case-sensitive codes.

Full Map – CHEATERSDOPROSPER:ExploreArea();
Teleport Party To Pointer –
CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Hans();
Give Selected Characters Indicated EXP –
CHEATERSDOPROSPER:SetCurrentXP([number]);
Add Indicated Gold To Total –
CHEATERSDOPROSPER:AddGold([number]);
Add 500 Gold To Total –
CHEATERSDOPROSPER:Midas();
5 Potions, 5 Antidotes & Scroll Of Stone To Flesh –
CHEATERSDOPROSPER:FirstAid();
Spawn Indicated Item –
CHEATERSDOPROSPER:CreateItem([item name])

"Mr. Monday Night"
Fargo, ND

The Moon Project

During gameplay, type "cheater 1" followed by these codes.

Set Unit Limit To Indicated Number – limit_up [number]
Increase Money To Indicated Number –
moneyfornothing [number]
Toggle Fast Research – mybrainisfaster [0 or 1]
Toggle Full Map – beautifulmoon [0 or 1]
Place Mines – hotground
Lightning & Rain – shower
Lose Scenario – byebye

Mac Tonight
McDonald's

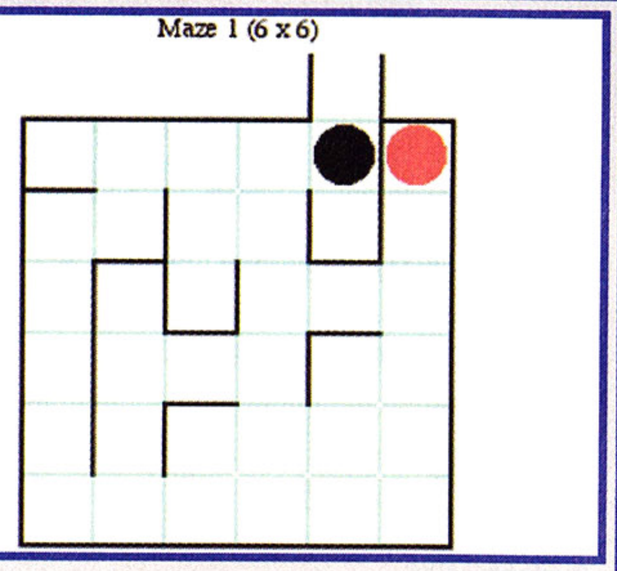
Blade of Darkness – PC

Note: You will need to edit the "menu.py" file in the game's "scripts" folder. Make sure to copy the original, just in case. Open it with a text program and add these exact lines to enable cheat mode:
import cheats
cheats.ActivateMiscCheats()
cheats.ActivateLaserEyes()
cheats.ActivateWeaponGrow()
cheats.ActivateGoreCheatsCheats()
cheats.ActivateLevelCheats()

During gameplay, press the following keys to activate their respective cheat function.
Small sword – 1
Big sword – 2
Big shield – 3
Small shield – 4
Create Lightsaber – G
Sleepy Hollow Gore – H
Start Lightsaber – K
Mutational Gore – M
Change MOV – P
Matrix Type Gore – X
Move Camera Left – [F5]
Move Camera Right – [F6]
Level Up – [F8]
Level skip – [F9]
Toggle Invincibility – [F10]

Carlos Santiago
Austin, TX

DOWNLOAD OF THE MONTH



Game: Aggravating Mind Numbing Puzzles
Download: Robert Abbott's Twisted Mazes
Site: http://www.logicmazes.com
You may snicker at how stupid a lab rat looks in a glass maze, yet we think you'll hold back your laughter after you check out Robert Abbott's plethora of Logic Mazes. Do you have the brain power to reach the cheese at the end of the maze? We doubt it. Sure, the mazes Robert has to offer may look small and easy to navigate, but nothing could be further from the truth. You'll spend countless hours trying to find your way through these twisting labyrinths. Trust us, these games make Minesweeper look like the easiest game ever constructed. You'll cuss, you'll take the Lord's name in vain, and you may even smash your keyboard into a thousand pieces when trying to tackle these puzzles. If you don't have the gonads to figure the mazes out on your own, the solutions lie within Robert's books, Mad Mazes and SuperMazes.

GAME SHARK

PLAYSTATION 2

ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

Master Code –
EC8562A01456E60A (Must Be On)

1-Hit Kill On Final Boss –
0C21FD1814560105
4C21FD181456E7A5

Infinite Health –
4CBF06C81456E70D

Max Magic –
4CBFF9E21456E70D

Max Enhancement Points –
4CBFFFDC145699EE

RAYMAN REVOLUTION

Master Code –
EC8398CC1456E60A (Must Be On)

Infinite Air –
4CAFC2C614562433

RING OF RED

Master Code –
EC8782F41456E60A (Must Be On)

99.9% Accuracy –
4C597F8E145624A5

Infinite Health –
4C597F041456E6B9

Infinite Specials –
4C597F201456E79F

WARRIORS OF MIGHT & MAGIC

Master Code –
EC8857B41456E60A (Must Be On)

Infinite Health –
4C298C4E145625C5

Infinite Level Up Points –
3CD4ADB41456E79F

PLAYSTATION

TRIPLE PLAY BASEBALL

Home Team Scores 0 –
3005f4d0000

Home Team Scores 50 –
3005f4d0032

DARKSTONE

Infinite Gold –
800eb878e0ff
800eb87805f5

Infinite Mana –
800eb8c20064
800eb8c60064

Max Damage –
300eb8d00063

WWF SMACKDOWN 2: KNOW YOUR ROLE

Unlock All Moves & Appearances –
80092000ffff
80092002ffff
80092004ffff
80092008ffff
80092008ffff
8009200cffff
8009200effff

DRIVER 2

All Cities Available –
d01c1308f809
801c130c0000

Jack Police Cars –
d0071e542021
80071e5a2400

VANISHING POINT

All Cars –
8003CBDCffff

Always Score 200 Stunt Driver –
8004701a00c8

Secrets Unlocked –
8003CBF2ffff

DREAMCAST

DAYTONA USA

Always Take First Place –
25C4685AC0707041
25C7685A00000000

Infinite Lap Time –
56D778C80000085B

Start On Last Lap –
7C96D81DC0705041
7C95D81D00000003

DINO CRISIS

Infinite Health –
94F80777000004B0

NFL 2K1

Away Team Score 0 –
447A38CD00000000

Away Team Score 100 –
447A38CD00000064

Home Team Score 100 –
680B4C4500000064

Home Team Score 0 –
680B4C4500000000

Max Catch –
2D9F39B000000064

Max Speed –
AD5B0B6400000064

Max Tackle –
5BEF2DA200000064

SKIES OF ARCADIA

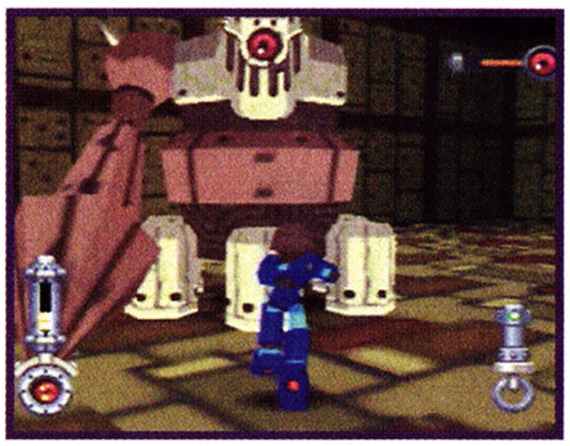
Infinite Gold –
5677A4E005F5E0FF

NINTENDO 64

HERCULES: THE LEGENDARY JOURNEYS

Infinite Gold –
810b604203e7

Infinite Health –
810cf93e270f
810cf942270f



MEGA MAN 64

Master Code –
f10a16802400 (Must Be On)

Infinite Health –
81204a1e0050

Infinite Zenny –
811bc404e0ff
811bc40605f5

Rapid Fire –
80204eb30002

GAME BOY COLOR

MARVIN STRIKES BACK

Infinite Health –
910659c8

Max Gold –
91997dc8
91097ec8

THE SIMPSONS: TREEHOUSE OF HORRORS

Infinite Health –
9120a5c2

No Items To Be Collected –
9100c6c1

Stop Timer –
932b31d0

ENTER TO WIN

Send in your codes and passwords, and if we choose your entry as Code of the Month you'll win a wonderful prize from the Game Informer Vault! All other entries printed within these hallowed pages will receive a Secret Access T-shirt.

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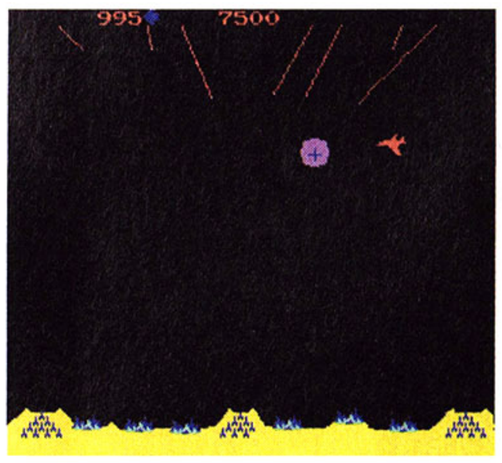
THE PROSPEROUS PIRATES BEHIND MS. PAC-MAN

Go to any place where a video game cabinet can be found – be it a movie theatre, bowling alley, airport, or (gasp!) arcade – and you'll more than likely find Ms. Pac-Man amongst the lineup. Pac-Man may have started a fever in 1980, but it has been his companion that's kept the fires burning over the years. Outselling its male progenitor by around 15,000 units 20 years ago, Ms. Pac-Man holds the title of best-selling arcade unit in America. As further testament to the lady's longevity, Namco has recently released Class of 1981, a cabinet that couples Ms. Pac-Man with another star of her day, Galaga.

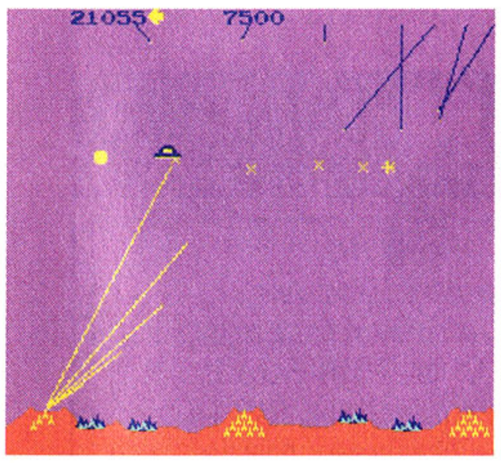
Who is responsible for this game that's enjoyed unprecedented appeal? Toru Iwatani, the creator of Pac-Man, had absolutely nothing to do with it. It was, in fact, the work of a small group of college students. More interesting, though, is the story of how they got the job.

In 1980, Doug Macrae, a student at MIT, had an on-campus coin-op business that consisted of a pinball machine and three Missile Command cabinets. Despite this small selection of games, he pulled in quite a bit of spare money for a time. By the beginning of his senior year, however, it was clear that his customer base was becoming bored with his very limited selection of games, and their quarters began to be spent elsewhere.

Rather than take a large loss by selling his three Missile Commands, Macrae decided to put the engineering degree he was earning to good use. Teaming with Kevin Curran, a friend with an electrical engineering background, the duo began to work on a way they could improve the machines that Macrae already owned.



Missile Command



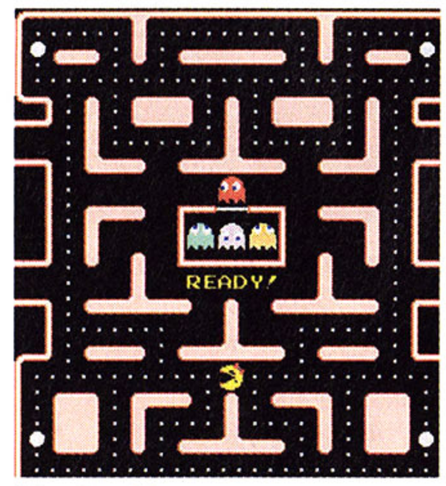
Super Missile Attack

After studying the interior of Missile Command, the two decided to make a device that would piggyback on the game's circuit board, overlaying code onto that which already existed. A few months and a few loans later, their first "software enhancement" board was completed. With the device in place, Missile Command became Super Missile Attack – a more challenging and fast-paced game with a slightly different look. Their inexpensive invention revitalized Macrae's MIT vending route. Both wondered what it might do for the entire video game market.

Calling themselves General Computer Corporation, the duo set up shop with a few friends at a house they were all living in. Ads were placed in arcade trade magazines of the day that touted, "For about 10% of the price of a new game you can get your original investment in your Missile Command working hard for you today."

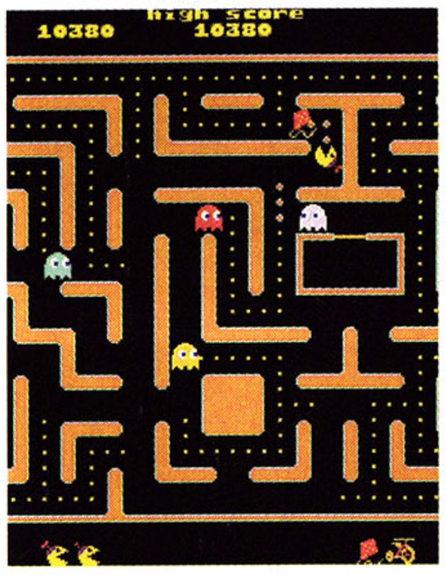
The enhancement boards sold for $295, and cost around one-tenth of that to make. After selling over 1000 units in a few months, the founders of GCC considered their company a success, and set about tackling their next software enhancement: an update to Pac-Man. Called Crazy Otto, the board would add legs to Pac-Man's body and cause the fruit to appear at various places in the maze. They were well on their way to completing this project when Atari brought everything to a screeching halt with a copyright infringement lawsuit over Super Missile Attack.

Not pleased with the prospect of arcade owners being able to circumvent the purchasing of new arcade cabinets by implementing update boards, Atari hoped to crush this upstart company that threatened to incapacitate its coin-op business. Macrae and Curran believed they were in the right due to the fact that they copied none of Atari's code, and their software enhancements would not work without an original unit to attach to. For weeks, injunctions and appeals flew like mad.



Ms. Pac-Man

Ms. Pac-Man



Jr. Pac-Man

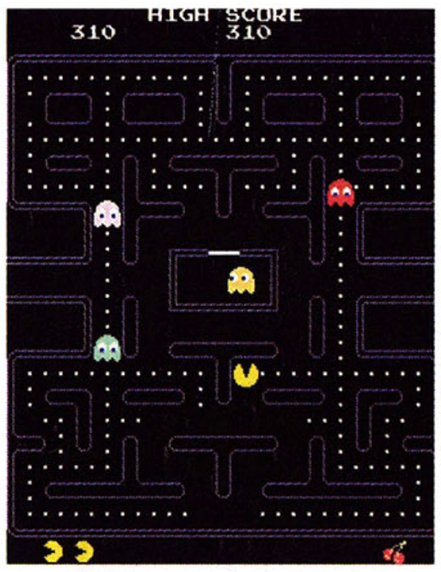
Jr. Pac-Man

With the winner of the case still unclear, Atari's general counsel, Skip Paul, had a meeting with Macrae and Curran, asking them what exactly they were after. When the two responded that they just wanted to make games, Paul was able to come to a resolution that pleased both parties. Atari would pay General Computer Corporation $50,000 a month for the next two years to develop games, but they could no longer make software enhancements unless they had permission to do so from the original copyright holder or original manufacturer.

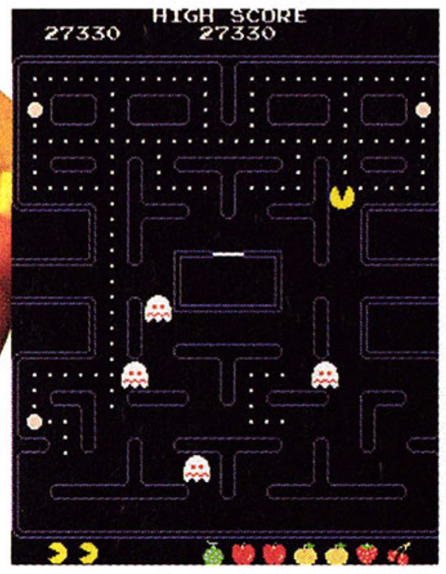
Atari assumed that since it would never give GCC permission to make software enhancements, no other coin-op manufacturer would either. What Atari failed to account for was how desperate Midway was to have another hit to follow up the success it had in manufacturing Namco's Pac-Man. Not wanting to abandon the work they had already begun, Curran and Macrae took their Pac-Man enhancement and court documentation to a meeting with Midway executives. They planned to bluff Midway into thinking that they had beat Atari in court and were going to release Crazy Otto anyway, but would be willing to share the profits if Midway gave its blessing.

Midway didn't care for Crazy Otto or the idea of a separate software enhancement, but it was more than happy to put Curran and Macrae to work on a full-fledged sequel. After kicking around a few ideas, a female version of Pac-Man was thought up. It wasn't long before Ms. Pac-Man was born, and Midway had another huge hit on its hands.

General Computer Corporation later designed Junior Pac-Man for Midway. It didn't do the numbers of its predecessor, but it did give Curran and Macrae the intellectual rights to the idea of a Pac-Family – a right which allowed them to successfully sue Midway for large merchandising royalty sums. Crime may not pay, but enhancement apparently does.



Pac-Man



Pac-Man

THIS MONTH IN GAMING HISTORY

It was in this month of 1989, during an unexpected and highly unanticipated NES controller boom, that Mattel released the Power Glove. By attaching sensors to the top of their televisions and Nintendos, owners could program the Power Glove to control the action onscreen.

There were just two problems – the interface required to program the Power Glove was overly complicated, and players had to hold their arm straight out to use the device. If you planned on playing for more than 15 minutes, an arm rest was a necessity. More novelty than accessory, the Power Glove faded into obscurity, although it did have a brief renaissance amongst computer geeks when someone wired together an adapter and driver that allowed compatibility with PCs.

CLASSIC GI

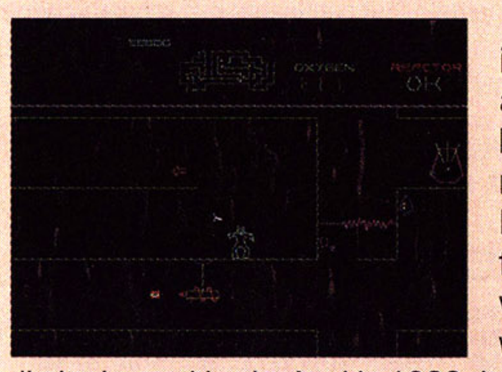
GREATEST GAME OF ALL TIME

By Paul R. Foster

Every month one of Game Informer's readers picks his or her personal choice for Greatest Game Of All Time.

MAJOR HAVOC

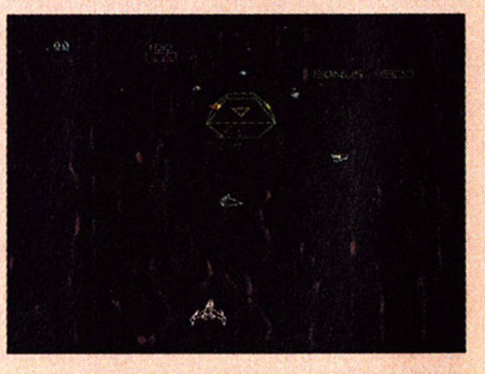
■ **FORMAT** ARCADE ■ **PUBLISHER** ATARI



I only ever saw it in one arcade, and that's probably one of the reasons Major Havoc became my favorite game. A vector game that was released in limited quantities by Atari in 1983, it was designed by Owen Rubin of I, Robot and Battlezone fame. The object was to destroy a fleet of ships protecting a space station, then enter the defenseless station, navigate its halls, set off its reactor, and get the hell out before the whole thing disintegrated into a pile of rainbow splinters.

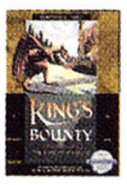
The game had a lot of cool features. As each new board loaded, you got to play Breakout in the corner of the screen for a free guy. If you didn't move in the passageways for a while, Major Havoc would get bored and lean on a wall or start tapping his foot. The greatest thing about Major Havoc, though, was that it had a grace all its own. It had simple yet beautiful graphics, eerie music, and low-gravity physics.

When others were forming lines to play Dragon's Lair or Spy Hunter, I spent the hours of my youth floating the Major to reactor after reactor. There's a flawless version of this game on the Net, and whenever I play it, I can almost smell the must of that mall arcade I first found it in.



SEGA GENESIS

KING'S BOUNTY



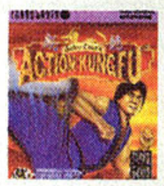
RETRO RATING 9.25

Electronic Arts is best known on Genesis as the premier sports game publisher, but while Madden and NHL Hockey were being released, EA also put out a slew of PC strategy ports. The standout among these, King's Bounty, followed a servant of the king on a quest to find the hidden scepter and capture conspirators plotting against the crown. Accomplishing this feat required the hiring of an army, which consisted of up to five different creatures from 50 different types. There were arrow-firing Orcs, flying Dragons, lumbering Ogres, and soul-stealing Ghosts. Each one had different pay scales and attributes. The king gave you a weekly salary, which you'd need to use to pay off your minions, who squared off against other forces via turn-based combat. The game's four continents had randomly generated treasure locations and recruit placements, so it offered near limitless replay value, but also a long freakin' password system. King's Bounty sits atop the 16-bit strategy throne, and is just as addictive as ever.

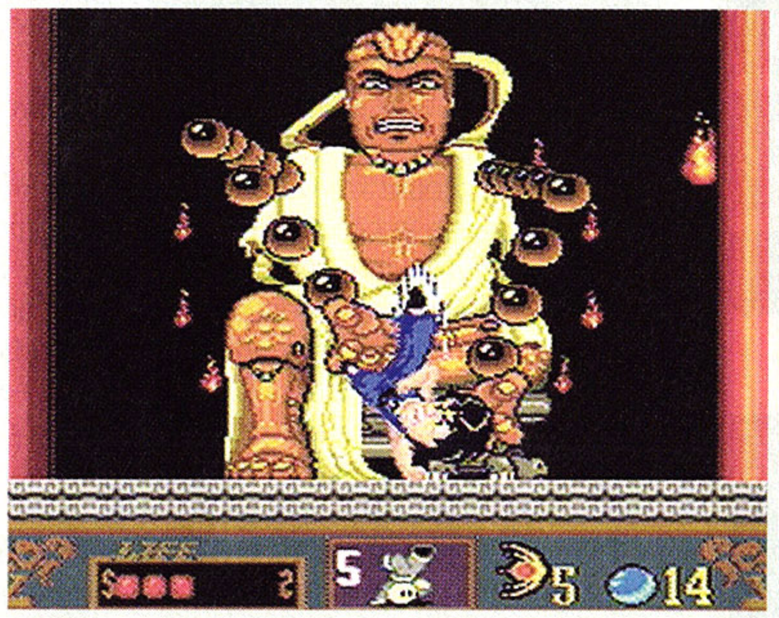
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER STRATEGY ■ **PUBLISHER** ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ **DEVELOPER** NEW WORLD COMPUTING ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1991

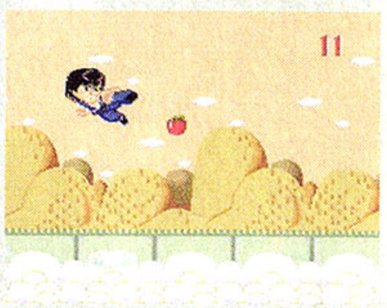
TURBOGRAFX-16

JACKIE CHAN'S ACTION KUNG FU



RETRO RATING 5





Years before he hooked up with Chris Tucker and went big-time in Hollywood, Jackie Chan was already an action legend in Asia. Despite his low profile in the States at the time, Hudson Soft brought out this TurboGrafx upgrade of its NES hit back in 1992. Largely a rip-off of the first-generation NES title Kung-Fu, Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu features side-scrolling chop socky action that will be familiar to anyone who ever owned an 8- or 16-bit system. Despite the TG's 16-bit graphics card, Hudson didn't do much to improve the graphics over the NES version, although the heads of the characters are even more unnaturally large than before. The most disappointing thing about the game is Jackie's lack of acrobatic moves, which are his hallmark on the silver screen. This digitized Chan can jump, run, punch, and kick, but that's about it. Even in its day, the game was pretty derivative and boring. Outside of wanting to own every TurboGrafx game ever released in the States, we can't see any reason to track down this title.

■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** HUDSON SOFT ■ **DEVELOPER** HUDSON SOFT ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1992

PLAYSTATION

SPACE GRIFFON VF-9

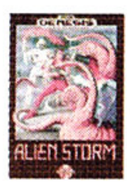
RETRO RATING 9

The launch library for Sony's PlayStation was full of power-packed hits. While games like Toshinden and Ridge Racer were being bought up like mad, some lesser-known titles sat ignored on shelves. One such game, Space Griffon VF-9, brought first-person mecha combat to the PS-X in style, and featured amazing graphics, tons of cheesy voice-overs, and silky smooth gameplay. Though linear, the abandoned space station story had several plot twists, and more than enough drama to keep gamers hooked all the way through. While dusting mutant monsters in a shape-changing mecha, you gain both experience levels and new weapons. The draw distance is short, but textures are very detailed, and the real-time cutscenes were among the first seen on the system. Most PS-X owners have never even heard of Space Griffon, or just passed it by for a more high-profile game. Those of us who actually played Space Griffon, however, know just how good it was, and will always fondly remember it.

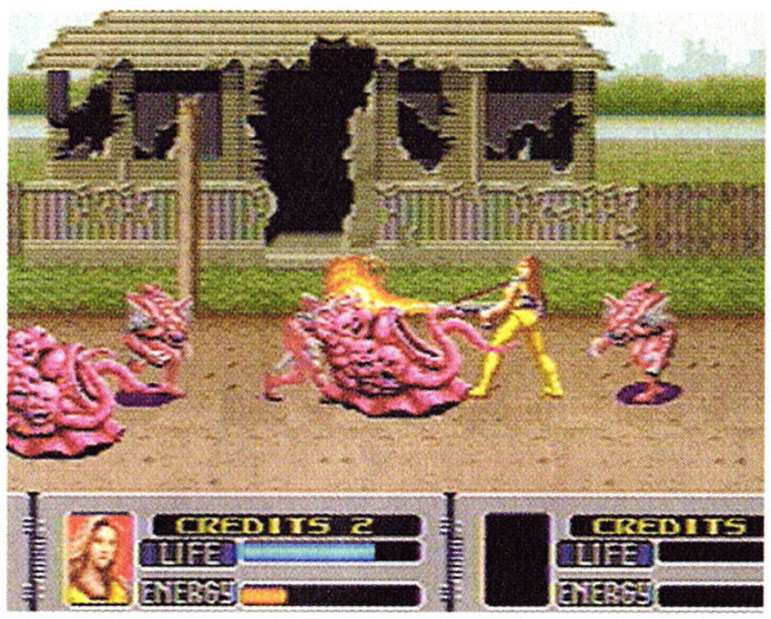
■ **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ **PUBLISHER** ATLUS ■ **DEVELOPER** PANTHER ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1995

SEGA GENESIS

ALIEN STORM



RETRO RATING 8



The early '90s were a time when all it took was a few heroes and some fist/sword/gun fodder to make gamers happy. Playing off the success of previous titles Golden Axe and Streets of Rage was Sega's Alien Storm, a beat-em-up that challenges man (and woman and robot) to fend off an assault of galactic proportions. In terms of quality, Alien Storm falls somewhere in-between the aforementioned titles. Each of the three characters has a large extraterrestrial ass-kicking arsenal, complete with dashes, flip moves, and finishing blows. The enemies and stages are a bit monotonous, but are nicely broken up by bonus stages like a flying shooter-style minigame and a first-person gun game sequence. You can even test your mettle against another human player in the Duel option. The beat-em-up genre became almost extinct when Street Fighter II took physical violence to a new one-on-one level, but there's still some fun to be had in these types of games, and Alien Storm is good proof of that.

■ **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION ■ **PUBLISHER** SEGA ■ **DEVELOPER** SEGA ■ **YEAR RELEASED** 1991

PLAYSTATION

NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 1

GALAGA

Safe Mode – As the ships fly in formation onto the screen, don't shoot any of them. Locate the blue and yellow ships in the first vertical row on the left. When all the ships are on the screen, you may begin shooting, just avoid shooting the aforementioned blue and yellow ships. Once you have destroyed all but those two ships, let them fly around, shooting at you for approximately 15 minutes. At this point they'll stop shooting. Blow them away, and from there, no ships will shoot at you for the entire game.

PAC-MAN

Speed Up Loading – Before the game boots up, during the Now Loading screen, press any button repeatedly. This will speed up the Pac-Man icon. Push the button fast enough, and he will become a blur. This helps speed the loading process.

SPACE GRIFFON VF-9

Full Energy and Ammunition
Pause the game and press ▲, ■, ✖, **L1**, **L2**, **R1**, **R2**

Free the Girl in the Freezing Room
Enter **03050** into the computer on the second level

GAME SHARK CODES

Increased Credits – 80075898 000F

Infinite Energy – 801E0058 1F40

Infinite Rocket Launcher
801E0032 0190
801E0036 000C

SNES

TETRIS ATTACK

Challenge Mode – To play Challenge Mode in 1p VS. Mode:

1. Go to 1p VS. Mode
2. Select **New Game**
3. Put the cursor on **Hard** mode
4. Hold **Up** and **L**, then hit **A**
5. The screen turns red if you did it right

Harder Game – In the beginning of the game, when Yoshi appears on the screen and says, "Nintendo!" press **B**, **A**, **L**, **L**. If you hear a sound, you did it right. Now, when you make a Combo or a Chain, the panels continue to rise, instead of stopping.

TURBOGRAFX

JACKIE CHAN'S ACTION KUNG-FU

Level Select – At the title screen; press **Up**, **Down**, **Left**, **Right**, and **Button II**. You should hear a chiming sound. Now hold **Select** and press and hold **Run**. A stage-select menu will appear.

BONK'S REVENGE

View Endgame – At the Game Select screen hold **Button II** and press **Run**. You'll enter the bonus game practice menu. Highlight **EXIT**, hold **Button II** again and press **Run** for a sneak preview of Bonk's ending sequence

GENESIS

GUNSTAR HEROES

Extra Power-Ups
Kick the power-up pods after they've dropped their goodies and they will drop two more.

No Damage In Level One
After you beat the second boss (the one made out of blocks) and you begin sliding down the hill, go left until you are off the screen. After this, you will take no damage on the way down.

Rotate Title
To make the title logo rotate down instead of up, press **Down** before the logo begins to spin.

Unlimited Health Power-Ups
In level five, be on the lookout for the last power-up pod that appears. Be watchful, as it is easy to miss. Unlike the usual power-up pods, this one keeps dropping power-ups every time you kick it. You can gain up to 999 vitality points.

Weapon Mixing
During gameplay, you can mix weapons by pressing **A** until both weapons are solid and not blinking. Here is a list of some of the best weapon combinations:

Fire with Fire
A huge flame that goes across the entire screen. Very effective.

Lightning with Lightning
A laser sword that kills most enemies, even bosses, very quickly.

Chaser with Chaser
Probably the best weapon in the game, this combo gives you unlimited firepower in the form of stars. You can get through almost any level virtually unscathed with this powerful weapon.

Rapid Fire with Rapid Fire
Produces a Rapid Fire gun with larger bullets.

Lightning with Chaser
A laser that shoots in four directions at once.

Lightning with Rapid Fire
Same as the Rapid Fire/Rapid Fire combination, only this gun shoots in a straight line

Chaser with Fire
A huge fireball shoots across the screen.

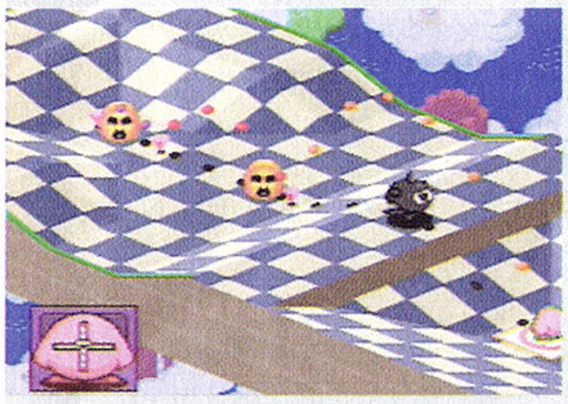
Rapid Fire with Fire
When this large bullet hits the target, it will explode into a large fire circle.

ALIEN STORM

Free Continues
To use this trick, you must play as Scooter (the robot), and you must have enough energy to self-destruct. When your life gets to zero, self-destruct and you can continue the game without dying. Repeat each time you're about to die.

SNES

KIRBY'S DREAM COURSE



COURSE 1

1 Aim at the highest enemy, and square your shot (75% power) so it bounces off and through the second, then right into the cup (formerly the lowest Kabu) for a hole in one. (Optimal score: 1)

2 Shoot the enemy on level with you with enough power so Kirby carries over to the lower area, and hits at least one of the other bad guys. From there it's a simple putt. (2)

3 Smack the Hi-Jump, and backspin near the tee. From here, use the Kick Panels (arrow pads) to your advantage, and roll into the hole. (2)

4 Go into the warp, picking off the first Kabu. You'll come out lower, in the path of another enemy and an invincible Gordo. Time your power (around 45%) so you land in line with the other two, then hit a straight shot to the cup. (2)

5 Take out the top two Kabu with an airborne shot, making sure to clear the Gordo. As Kirby rolls back, use your Hi-Jump to nail the hole in one. (1)

6 Hit a grounded, 60% shot into the Kabu, which follows to the Parasol, and use its power to slowly glide into the cup. This is a tough hole to ace, so don't be unhappy with a two. (1)

7 Give yourself enough topspin to skip over the water, and hit the line right in the hole. (1)

8 Aim your jump angle with enough power, and to the right enough, to nail the higher Kabu. Then hit the second, and float down into the hole. (2)

COURSE 2

1 A simple jump job. Make sure you don't overpower it, and an ace is easy. (1)

2 Roll down the hill, using Spark to get through the Whispys, gathering up enough speed beforehand to take out the pumpkin. Hit the floating enemy via a bounce, and backspin so you go toward the new hole. With any luck, you'll plop in. (2)

3 Aim for the trigger to stop the swirling panels. Use about 75% power, and this should carry you all the way to a hole in one. (1)

4 Go down to the Wheel, using Spark to get through the Kracko. Wheel to the end, then use the A button to chug into the cup. (1)

5 Wheel straight over the water and sand traps. On the way back, you should be near the middle of the island. Bounce to a Kabu, then backspin and Wheel toward the angled wall with a barrier. Bang A for an extra boost, then drop in. (2)

6 Wheel over the sand onto Parasol. Activate it as soon as you go over the ledge. Glide to the first floater, then the second, and into the hole. (1)

7 Get the enemy near you, and angle your barrier rebound so you're a bit right of the hole. The lawn will push you left so you end up in. (1)

8 Bounce up to the highest Squishy, and roll down to the second. The vents will propel you into Broomhatter, and in the cup. (1)

COURSE 5

1 Hit the Dash Panel at around 33% strength. You'll get Parasol and fly over the edge. Float down on or around the Spike. From here, you should be able to just hit a strong ground shot up into the cup. (2)

2 Using full topspin and 100% power, hit the Freeze, and get a good bounce to the pool. Freeze over it, right into the hole. (1)

3 Use one click of topspin, and power a shot through the first three enemies. The pit with the hole is an easy shot away. (2)

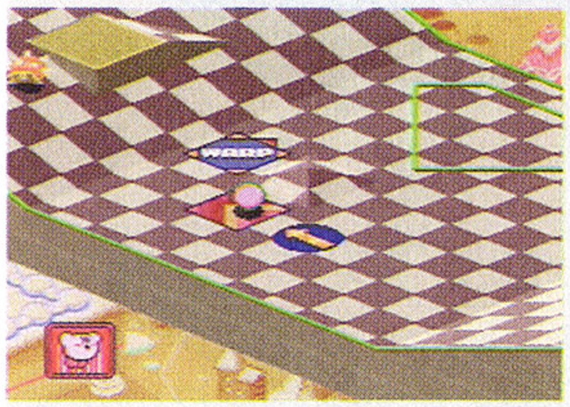
4 Hit the Kabu up top, bounce straight back to the Freeze, use it over the pool, and nail the Kabu on the other side. For a tricky second shot, hop up to the pool, bounce or Freeze across it, then nail the other enemy and roll in the hole. (2)

5 It'll take some skill, but you can get all three Tornados in one shot, then hit the Hi-Jump. Activate it to go up top, and get one guy with the shot. The cup is mere inches away. (2)

6 Take out the enemy with a bit of topspin to get a good chug on the Dash Panel. This will bring you across the gap. Roll all the way to the Kabu, then Hi-Jump onto the floating enemy. For the second shot, Hi-Jump over Kracko to the second floater, which should bounce you into the hole. (2)

7 Aim at Stone, with mad backspin and 50% power. You'll go straight back, nailing the Waddle Dees. Jump up the steps and take out the highest one on the side, and spin back toward the hole. It's a long shot, but you can get it in. (2)

8 Get Spark, and Dash Panel up the hill, using Spark on the row of Whispy. Nail Hi-Jump, and start going back down. Hi-Jump over the Dash Panel, and use the vents to float in the cup. (1)



COURSE 6

1 Aim a shot one click left of the default at about 75% through Fireball. Activate it right before the Kabu, and keep bouncing through the other foes, and into the cup. (1)

2 Nail the first Kabu, and land on the conveyor belt. Hit the arrows straight, then time your Stone to drop in the cup. (2)

3 Give an 80%, mild topspin hop onto the Kabu, then the other two enemies in line. Stone right where the barricade stops, and hit your second shot hard over the arc, so it hits the Squishy on the other side. From here, it should be an easy third shot to the island between the spikes. (3)

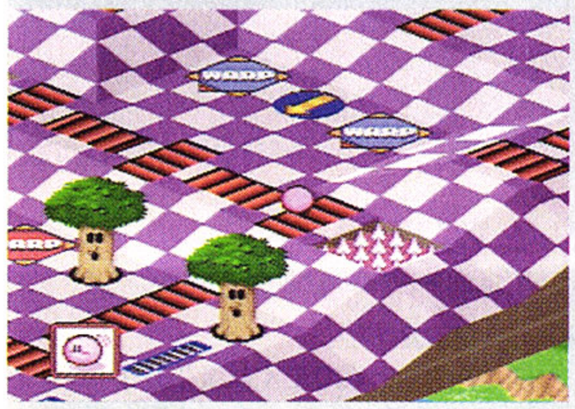
4 Get your first two targets, then Stone adjacent to the switch. Hit the Waddle Dee, and take the arrow straight to the last two enemies, using Stone to get in the hole. (2)

5 Hit the top arrow to get an enemy and Tornado. Still on your first shot, use the power before you hit Spark, work your way down the hill to the Hi-Jump, and get on the lowest conveyor. Hi-Jump before the tree to get the last enemy and the hole in one. (1)

6 Go down the hill, hit the Dash Panel, and nail Spike and the two Kabu. On the hill's top, Spike. Get the two Kabu on the way down, and bounce to the Warp Panel so you end up near the start. Spike here, then it's one quick shot to the hole. (3)

7 Take the leap of faith onto the trampoline. Get enough power to take you to the first Waddle Dee, which leads you right to the hole, with a Spike just in case you overshoot. (1)

8 Aim straight ahead, and rebound to the Fireball. Use it to get the other Fireball and the flying pumpkin. This opens up the easy hole. (2)



COURSE 3

1 Use the trampoline to land right on the first Kabu. On your next shot, use the trampolines to work up to the enemies. A straight shot will give you a deuce, but three isn't bad, either. (2)

2 Hit the far right conveyor belt to end up in-between two enemies. Go after Hi-Jump, then use the Kick Panel to go in the cup. (2)

3 Hopefully you have Hi-Jump from the last hole. Rebound off the wall, hit the Broomhatter nearest you, rebound off the wall again, then Hi-Jump the Whispy and nail at least one other enemy. You should have a clear shot at the hole. (2)

4 Bounce off the wall to hit the first Kabu, then hit the next, and end up on the conveyor. Hi-Jump over Kracko's shots, and roll down the hill, onto Squishy. From here, jump into the cup. (2)

5 Aim for the nearest Stone, and take out the top one as well. While you roll on level with the third (still first shot), use Stone to slide down to him. Skip over the water with 60% power to hit the Broomhatter and use the lawn to get near or in the cup. (2)

6 Aim a bounce at the tree behind you, but backspin back toward the enemies. Hit the first two, then take the vents out. If you miss the floater on the first pass, worry not. You should be able to get grounded Squishy, then float back to the new hole. Use Stone to make sure you go in. (1)

7 Go straight toward Freeze, bounce off the railing, then nail the Kabu. For the second shot, jump over to the middle Kabu, then bounce back toward the hole, with enough power that you can Freeze over the little hump to go in. This is a tough two. (2)

8 Hit the Kabu on the slant, bouncing down toward the other two using some spin. The cup opens near a warp, which you don't want to touch on your final shot. (2)

COURSE 7

1 This is your first exposure to the fun UFO. Bounce up to it, then use it to clear the board of enemies. Stone once you get to the hole. (1)

2 Get the nearby Kabu, then Dash Panel over to the Tornado. Use it quick, then drop to the pit, taking out as many enemies as you can. You should be able to finish the rest off on your second stroke, and drop in the cup. (2)

3 Use the air vents to work up to Spike, using him right away. A short shot to the Warp Panel will bring you out the other side, and through the Dash Panel. Spike right on the hole to sink this. (2)

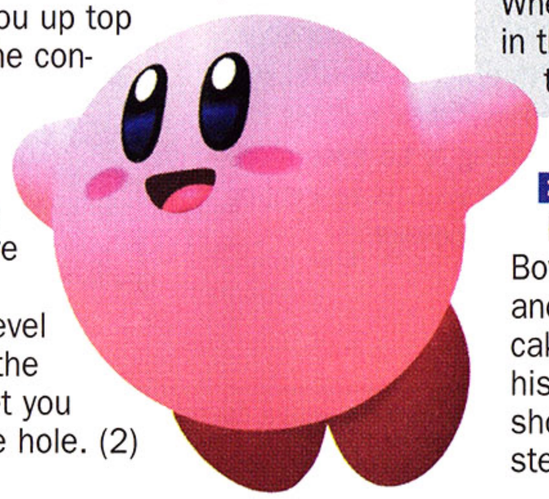
4 Get up to the right-hand conveyor. Use plenty of A bursts up top to nail Broomhatter and go to the other belt. Take it down, hitting all ground enemies, then coming back to the hole, formerly the floater. (1)

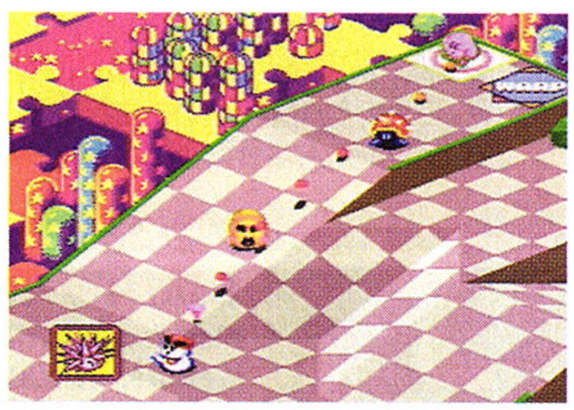
5 Hit the Dash Panels to the left of start to send you over to the lower Hi-Jump. Leap over Krakho, and on the next set of Dash Panels, which send you speeding into the other Hi-Jump. Again, Hi-Jump over Kracko, and into the new hole. (1)

6 Go for the Squishy first, rebounding off the rail. Hit Hi-Jump as soon as you're about to get the Spark, which will bring you up top to the Hi-Jump enemy. From here, just hop on the conveyor to go in the hole. (2)

7 Jump off the back incline to get Spark, then backspin to hit the Kick Dash Panels. Use Spark before the Stone, and smash through the Krackos, hit the floating enemy, and Stone above the cup to drop in. (1)

8 Get the UFO, then activate it at the same level as the pumpkin. Hit the pumpkin, then land on the red warp. Another fancy jump/UFO combo will let you take out the second pumpkin and make it to the hole. (2)





COURSE 4

1 Jump onto Tornado, and hit the slant to get the Broomhatter. From here, turn on Tornado, and sail into the hole. (1)

2 Using some curve and Tornado, you should easily mop up these enemies. (2)

3 Jump up to Stone, but use Tornado right before you hit it. Then wind your way to the second enemy and in the hole. (1)

4 Do a hop with 80% power and some topspin to hit all but two Squishy. Stone to get in position. Then use a little side-winding to clean up and get in the cup. (2)

5 Hit toward the bottom Spike, using enough back and left-spin to get the Squishy above it. From there, bounce a shot in the hole, using Spike if you overshoot to drop in. (2)

6 Hit the middle Dash Panel to sail over the spikes, and into the Kabu, stopping between the other two. Use the bouncy barriers to take out one, then go in the hole. (2)

7 Put a little right-spin in your initial shot, then Spike on or around the Freeze. From here, you've got a nice, level second shot. (2)

8 Hit the right-hand side of the trampoline, adding full left-spin and a little topspin. Use Freeze to get over the pool, and right into Stone. Take out remaining enemies with ease. (2)

COURSE 8

1 Land on the flat panel above-left with some backspin to bounce to the Kabu, then down onto the second, and finally to the bottom. Two shots should get all Squishy, and let you move on. (3)

2 Get Hi-Jump as you go to the Dash Panel. Use it in the water to jump up to the floating enemy, and use the trampolines to propel you near the remaining enemies, which you should be able to decimate in one fell swoop. (2)

3 Put some right-spin on a 70% shot toward the floater to take it, and the first Waddle Dee, out. You should then be traveling down the hill, within distance of the cup. (2)

4 Aim at the Hi-Jump, then rebound off the wall. Hit the air vents, use Hi-Jump, and hit Stone. From here, it's an easy shot in. (2)

5 A short shot will give you Fireball. On shot #2, jump over the barricade so you nail the two floaters, as well as Tornado. Activate that, and try to grab both Broomhatters on the way down the hill to the hole. (2)

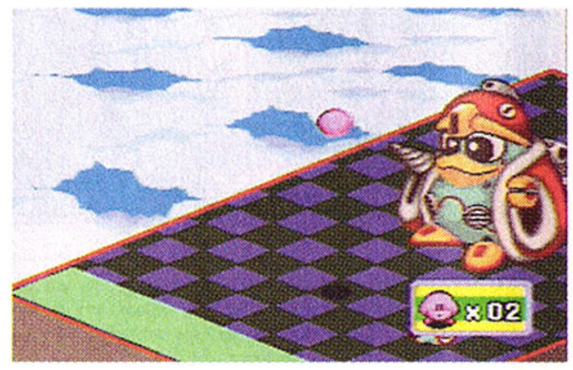
6 Aim toward the first UFO, and put on enough spin so you hit the conveyor. After nailing the Kabu, fire up UFO, hit the other Kabu, and work your way up the ledges. Once you're even with the other UFO, hit it. Activate it if need be, but you should be able to make it to the hole in the original UFO allotted time. (1)

7 Hit the Spike, then use it right at Freeze. Jump into the left-hand warp, which will bring you below, and right onto Tornado. Activate that power, and go after Fireball. Use it to take out Spark, and give you a hole to aim for. (3)

8 This hole is HUGE. Hop Whispy and grab Tornado with enough to take you over the Dash Panel, the water, and to Stone. Use Stone on top of Wheel, then Wheel over the water to Fireball. Hit that barricade, and Fireball in the air to UFO. Activate it, and take out the three floaters, then be-bop to the hole. (1)

BOSS BATTLE

King Dedede was the equivalent of Bowser in Kirby's world. His appearance in Dream Course, however, is a cakewalk. Merely send Kirby flying at his robotic frame, while diverting your shots to the tiny drones when they step out.



ETC

PROMEDIA 2.1 AUDIO SYSTEM

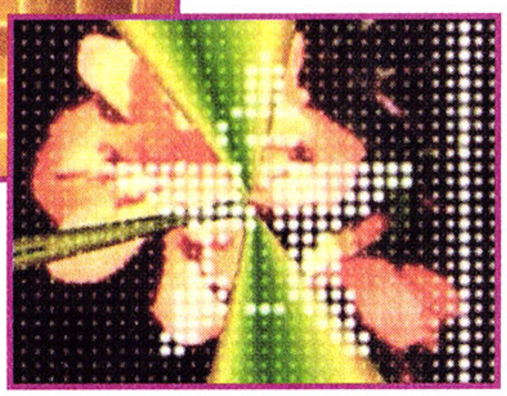
Manufacturer: Klipsch
Website: www.klipsch.com
List Price: $179.99

Klipsch has been a premier manufacturer of home stereo speakers and studio monitors for years, and now it is turning its attention to the world of digital multimedia. The moderately-priced ProMedia 2.1 Audio System is a perfect way to turn your PC, laptop, MP3 player, portable CD player, television, or video game console into a sonic powerhouse. Any device that uses the industry standard stereo mini-plug can tap into the power of this self-powered satellite system. As with any Klipsch product, the sound quality is crystal clear and nearly distortion free.

MINISTRY OF SOUND: INTERACTIVE EDITION

Manufacturer: Moderngroove • Website: www.moderngroove.com • List Prices: £20 UK (US TBD)

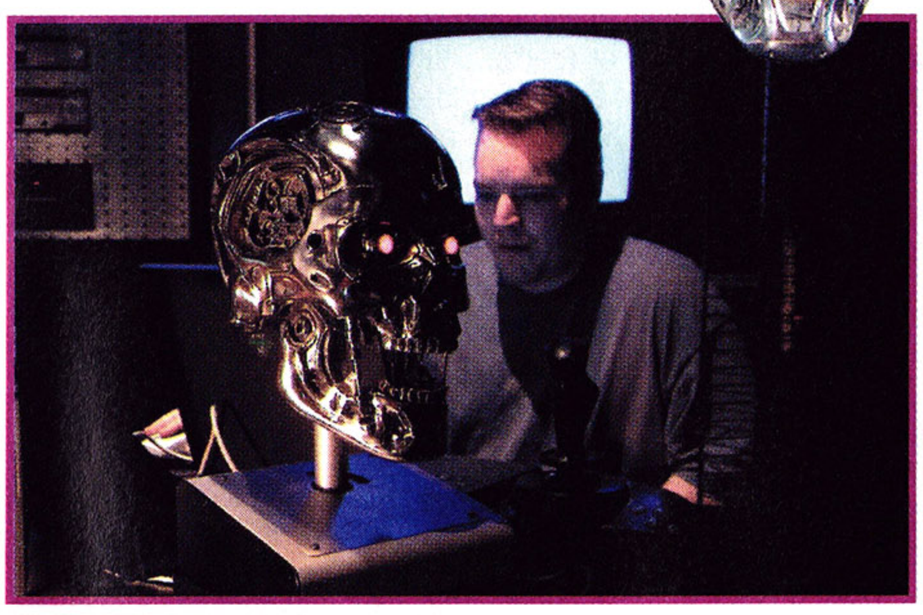
Perhaps eyeing the success of Codemasters' MTV Music Generator, the world-renowned dance label Moderngroove is creating an interactive DJ mix DVD entitled Ministry of Sound: Interactive Edition. Unlike in MTV MG, you don't actually get a hand in creating the tunes, but there are over five hours (60-plus songs) of mixes by leading dance DJs like Tall Paul, Ferry Corsten, and Krafty Kuts. With their capable hands on the wheels of steel, you are free to create a visual accompaniment for the beats, choosing from over 140 animated 3D objects, 80 full-3D backgrounds, 400 original video clips, and 1,500 unique images. Basically, it's like a rave in your television set. Should be the most popular thing to hit stoner dorm rooms since those trippy Frutopia commercials a few years back.



I-C-IT TERMINATOR 2 ENDOSKELETON

Manufacturer: I-C-IT • Website: www.icit.com • List Price: $149.99

Haven't you always wanted a big talking Terminator head that you could plug into your computer? Neither have we, but this crazy new product (which was recently shown at Toy Fair) looks pretty cool nonetheless. Using something called "Intelligent Control Interactive Technology," this unit allows you to talk (via the Internet) with the dozen or so other people who will probably buy this product. Through I-C-IT's network portal, the words you type on your screen come alive at the other end, recited in a scary robot voice. The unit even comes with a joystick that allows you to control the movements of the T2 head at your friend's house, and a digital camera in one of the eye sockets lets you take a sneak peek at him or her. This product is a truly remarkable (and truly disturbing) feat of technology. Check out I-C-IT's website for more information.



GAME BOY ADVANCE ACCESSORIES

Manufacturer: Nyko • Website: www.nyko.com • List Prices: $9.99 (Worm Light), $19.99 (Shock 'n' Rock), $9.99 (Power Link), $9.99 (A/C Adaptor)

Nyko's Game Boy Color peripherals have long been favorites of the Game Informer staff, and now the company is bringing its expertise to Nintendo's next-gen handheld. While the Power Link and the A/C adaptor are perfectly functional (and unexciting), the other two products in Nyko's lineup should prove to be invaluable. The Shock 'n' Rock is a supplemental battery pack/speaker system that helps to lengthen your playtime and offers some improvement in sound quality over the GBA's rather tinny mono speaker. Most importantly, it fits around the bottom and back of the unit, increasing its size and helping to ease the hand-cramping ergonomics of the tiny console. The energy-efficient Worm Light should be useful as well, as the GBA is proving to be even more difficult to play in poor lighting than its predecessor.

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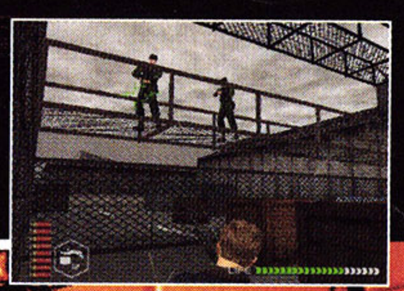

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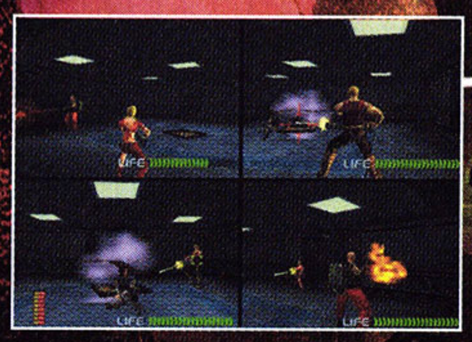

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Animated Violence
Mild Language

PlayStation®2

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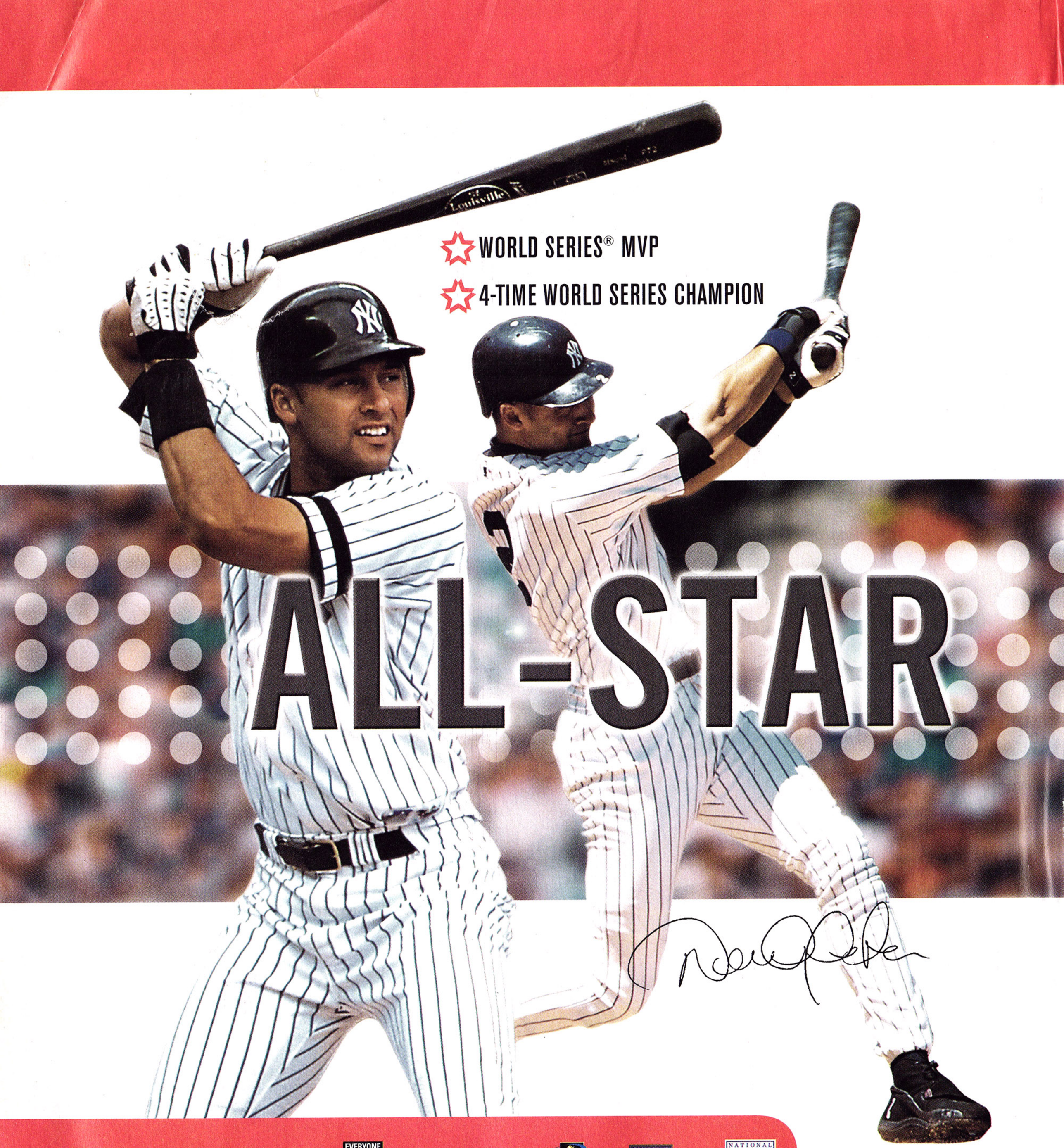

PlayStation®2

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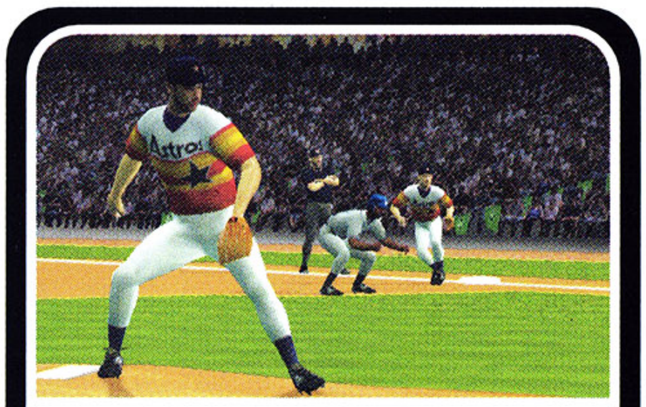
WHERE THE STARS PLAY



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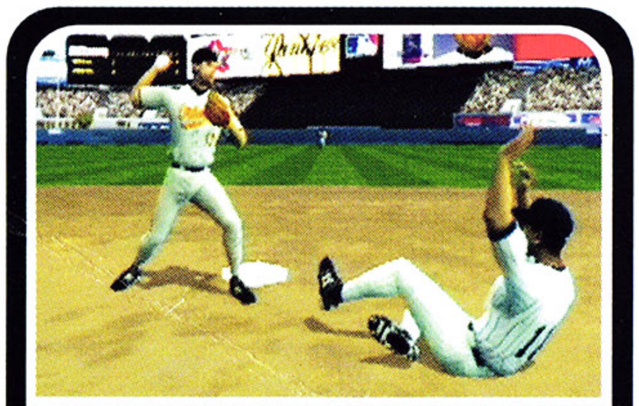

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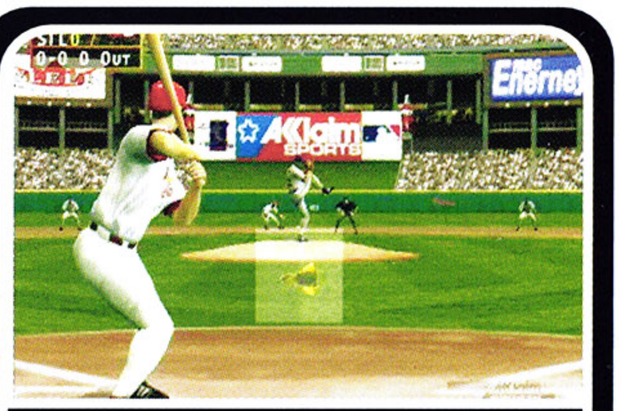

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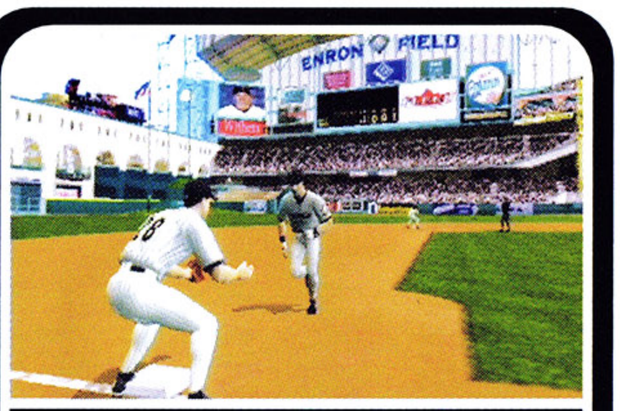

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